



©2026, Issue #5 Free by request to residents of  
East Brookfield, West Brookfield, North Brookfield, Brookfield, Leicester and Spencer

SEND YOUR NEWS AND PICS TO [NEWS@STONEBRIDGEPRESS.NEWS](mailto:NEWS@STONEBRIDGEPRESS.NEWS) Friday, February 6, 2026

# Brookfield police reduce coverage amid staff shortages

**BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT**

**BROOKFIELD** — The Brookfield Police Department has announced limitations to their overnight operations starting this month as part of a larger staffing issue plaguing the town and other surrounding communities in recent years.

Brookfield Police Department Chief Michael Blanchard posted a statement on the department's official Facebook page at the end of January revealing a "critical staffing shortage," with three confirmed vacancies in the force. He stated that as a result the department would no longer be able to continue its round-the-clock service to the community as of Feb. 1.

"Due to the changing nature of law enforcement, increased state regulations regarding Officer qualifications, and a competitive job market, it has become increasingly difficult to retain and recruit Officers," said Blanchard. "This department has provided 24/7 police services to the residents of Brookfield without interruption for over 25 years. Unfortunately, and regrettably, we are temporarily unable to continue to provide that high level of service that the citizens of this town need and deserve."

For the foreseeable future, the department will not include an on-duty officer between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. The Chief stated the State Police Barracks in Brookfield will still be available for emergencies and has been informed of the local department's situation.

"We are actively working to resolve this issue as fast as possible and hope that new Officers will be hired quickly to bring our staffing up to the level the citizens of this town expect," the Chief concluded.

Brookfield's most recent resignation from the department was recorded on Jan. 6 with the departure of Officer Lee Murphy. The town's situation is reminiscent of other struggles faced by communities throughout the commonwealth to hire and maintain emergency responders. Locally West Brookfield has also struggled in recent years with its own police staff shortages.

However, Brookfield has also seen noted employee departments and staffing issues in other town departments away from the police department. At recent Select Board meetings citizens expressed their concerns about the larger trend of staff turnover, asking town officials to take measures to understand the reasoning behind these departures and how the town can better maintain its workforce.



Reader Lee Weber from Leicester sent in this shot of her grandson building an igloo complete with outdoor seating after the Nor'Easter that dropped 22 inches of snow on the area last month.

# Leicester Senior Citizens Club launches membership drive

**LEICESTER** — The Leicester Senior Citizens Club is a group of older adults that meets at the Leicester Senior Center twice a month. The club is looking to attract new members from all the area towns and cities.

The group meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month. Meetings begin at 10 a.m. At the conclusion of each meeting, there is a scheduled form of entertainment or informational presentation.

The Leicester Senior Citizens Club is linking older adults with each other, and to opportunities that improve their health, well-being, and sense of community. It is the club's way of reducing the effects of isolation. We want to offer special programs beyond normal hours, and we need input and ideas from new members to help get us there. Membership is open to all individuals aged 60 and older. The cost to join is \$10 for an annual membership.

To learn more about the membership drive or to sign up, please visit the Leicester Senior Center at 40 Winslow Ave., Leicester, during operating hours (Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.), or call David Wood, Program Director at the senior center, at (508)-892-7016.

# Brookfields Lions Club accepting scholarship applications

**NORTH BROOKFIELD** — The Brookfields Lions Club is now accepting applications for its annual scholarship program, according to club president Bill Cass.

Each year, the club awards a scholarship of up to \$1,000 to a graduating senior in each of the club's member communities, Cass said. Recipients of the 2026 Brookfields Lions Club scholarship awards will be announced in June.

To qualify for consideration, applicants must live in one of the member communities -- Brookfield, East Brookfield, North Brookfield, West Brookfield, and New Braintree -- and submit an application before their school's spring break. The application must include the student's class rank and be signed by the school's guidance director.

The application form is now available for download on the club's website at [brookfieldslionsclub.org/scholarships](http://brookfieldslionsclub.org/scholarships). The completed form should be mailed to the scholarship selection committee care of Brookfields Lions Club, Scholarship Committee, P.O. Box 128, North Brookfield, MA 01535.

For additional information, please contact the Turn To APPLICATIONS page A8



The David Prouty High School Mock Trial team is back! After a hiatus of several years, we are glad to have this extracurricular activity available once again for Prouty students. The team has competed in three trials against other high school teams in the month of January, most recently defeating Tantasqua's team yesterday. Many hours of research, practice, effort and teamwork has led to the success of this group. The DPHS team moves forward to the regional portion of the tournament that takes place in March. Many congratulations to the team which includes: Kenzie Bailey, Scarlet Busse, Paige Fritze, Geoffrey Gardiner, Braydn LaFountain, Althea Richer and Lauren Tufis as well as advisor Mr. Hauske! Interested in learning more about Mock Trial? Visit this site: [massbar.org/mock-trial](http://massbar.org/mock-trial). Photo courtesy of the school's Facebook page.

# Mill and Valley Street construction expected to begin this year

**BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT**

**SPENCER** — The Spencer Board of Selectmen recently received an update on the longstanding construction project at Mill and Valley Streets which will see many infrastructure enhancements when all is said and done.

The board hosted a public information meeting on Jan. 27, where town officials and project leaders provided a brief update on the status of the work. The current work is the second half of the grant funded project.

The first phase of the project, which was funded by a grant, included water line, roadway, and sidewalk improvements. This second phase, financed by a second grant of \$1.35 million through the Community Development Block Grant program, focuses on drainage, sewer main lining, sidewalk work, and street surface improvements. The project is designed by Haley Ward, and the town recently awarded a bid to ML Partlow & Son with a pre-construction meeting set to take place in the coming months.

Spencer Superintendent of Utilities and Facilities Peter Boria told selectmen the project is coming along nicely after many years of planning and grant work.

Turn To CONSTRUCTION page A8



# Fourth Annual National Baseball Poetry Festival looking to increase student participation

## LOCAL POET SERVES AS FESTIVAL AMBASSADOR

WORCESTER — The National Baseball Poetry Contest and Festival is readying for its fourth season, where adults and students write about and celebrate the sport of baseball. The Festival includes two poetry contests, the first for grades 4-12, and the second for adults 18 and older. The adult contest deadline is March 27, and the youth contest deadline is April 17. Entries may be sent in any time before those deadlines. The Festival culminates

May 7-10 in Worcester with a welcome reception, a youth poetry event, an open mic night, two Triple-A baseball games, a fireworks display, and other activities. Prizes will be awarded to 80 poets, 20 in each of the following categories: elementary school, middle school, high school, and adult.

Pamela Gemme is a baseball poet and Festival ambassador who joined the festival poet’s committee at its inception. Gemme is

again helping promote the festival, which is the only one of its kind in the nation.

“The aim of this contest is to get students and adults writing poetry on a fun subject that so many love. We are already receiving contest entries from around the country and even from India, Turkey and Nigeria. We also would like to see an increase in entries from Spanish speakers this year. I would encourage student and adult poets to submit a

poem and hopefully join us at Polar Park in Worcester next spring,” she said.

According to Festival founder Steven Biondillo, the National Baseball Poetry Festival is the first-ever festival to unite sports and the fine arts.

“For the youth who make submissions and/or attend the event, the Festival fosters the appreciation of poetry and the fine arts through the lens of base-

ball,” Biondillo said.

Teachers and parents interested in involving their students can visit [www.BaseballPoetryFest.org](http://www.BaseballPoetryFest.org), where two complete lesson plans and a contest form can be found.

“Please reach out to me directly for more information,” encourages Gemme. “I’m happy to again be helping with the contest and Festival and can be reached at [pamelagemmepoetry@gmail.com](mailto:pamelagemmepoetry@gmail.com).”

The National Baseball Poetry Festival is a project of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce and Biondillo Associates, LLC. Worcester—the birthplace of Ernest Thayer, author of “Casey at the Bat”—is the Festival’s permanent home and early-May—which follows National Poetry Month—its strategic place in the calendar.

# Maeve McCann named to Flagler College President’s List

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — Maeve McCann of Spencer was among a distinguished group of students who were recognized for their academic excellence earlier this month.

The President’s List is compiled in recognition of students achieving a high standard of academic excellence and is distributed by the Office of Academic Affairs. To qualify for this award, McCann had to earn at least a 4.0 GPA with at least 12 semester hours of graded credit.

President John Delaney acknowledged the rigor of qualifying for the award, noting that maintaining an untarnished GPA reflects an exceptional level of academic discipline and sustained effort.

“Earning a 4.0 GPA is not just about academic ability. It takes determination and real strength of will,” Delaney said. “Many of these students are balancing part-time jobs, competing as student-athletes, or supporting their families outside the classroom, and that makes this achievement

even more impressive.”

In his ceremonial remarks, the Dean of Academic Life, Dr. Craig Woelfel, congratulated McCann and the other recipients on what he considers a remarkably hard-earned accomplishment.

“While this is of course a tremendous individual accomplishment for each student, I’m always struck by how much the whole campus benefits from their efforts. When students bring their ‘A’ game, it lets faculty to do the same; and the conversation that ensues

raises up the entire classroom and, ultimately, the entire academic community,” said Dr. Woelfel.

He also pointed out the friends, family, peers, and professors who attended the ceremony in support that afternoon, taking a moment to acknowledge the dedication of Flagler’s professors and the bar he encourages them to set in the classroom.

About Flagler College Flagler College is a private, nonprofit, accredited institution located in the heart of St. Augustine,

Florida—the nation’s oldest city. With 44 majors, 47 minors, and two master’s degree programs, Flagler offers students a dynamic and personalized academic experience shaped by small class sizes and world-class faculty who are dedicated to teaching, connecting, and supporting students.

Home to approximately 2,200 students, Flagler fosters a close-knit community where curiosity is encouraged, leadership is cultivated, and purpose is pursued. The College is consistently ranked among the top

regional institutions by U.S. News & World Report and is nationally recognized for its distinctive historic campus, which has earned recognition as one of the “10 Most Beautiful Universities in the World” and one of the “12 Most Beautiful College Campuses Around the World.”

At Flagler, students are inspired to think boldly, turn ideas into reality, and make history. For more information about Flagler College, visit [www.flagler.edu](http://www.flagler.edu).

# Nominations wanted for Educator & Hero of the Year

PALMER — The Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce, the area non-profit that promotes business, development and tourism within surrounding communities of Hampden, Hampshire, and Worcester counties, is seeking nominations for its 2026 Choice Awards. Nominations are needed in the categories of Community Hero and Educator of the Year.

Nominations can be submitted on the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce official website, [QHMA.com](http://QHMA.com) through Feb. 13. Online voting for this year’s finalists will be open to the public and conducted from Feb. 15 through March 15, also at [QHMA.com](http://QHMA.com).

Finalist voting will also include a number of Chamber-member specific categories honoring local non-profits, manufacturing and service businesses. All finalists will be honored and the announced at the Choice Awards Dinner on Wednesday, May 6 taking place at the Steaming Tender Restaurant, located at the former historic Palmer Railroad Station site.

“The annual Choice Awards is one of the most distinguished programs the Chamber conducts. It is an honor each year to cel-

ebate a new class of extraordinary individuals who make our region so special. Last year, we received more than 22,000 finalist votes, which is a testament to how deeply our communities appreciate those who make a difference in our lives every day,” said James Przypek, Chief Executive Officer of the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce.

The criteria to nominate are:

Community Hero of the Year

An individual (citizen, resident, veteran, first responder) who has gone above and beyond via a single outstanding act within the last 12 months, or a series of contributions over an extended period for the betterment of their community. The individual must reside or have performed their act or work within the Quaboag Hills 15 member communities.

Educator of the Year

An individual who has positively impact-

ed the school (public, regional, private or independent) and the students for which they work. The individual must reside, or the school for which they work must be located within the Quaboag Hills 15 member communities.

About the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce

Established in 1978 and headquartered in Palmer, the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce’s purpose is to advance economic growth, interests and tourism for our members through policies, programs and development in the Quaboag Hills region, including the fifteen towns of

## New storytelling group, The Story Exchange, forming in Brookfield

BROOKFIELD — A new community storytelling group, The Story Exchange, is forming in Brookfield and will hold its organizational meeting at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 10 at the Merrick Public Library Annex, 18 Common St., Brookfield.

The Story Exchange is designed for individuals interested in telling and developing true, personal stories, shared aloud in a supportive, structured environment. The group emphasizes storytelling craft, focused listening, and constructive feedback, and welcomes participants of all experience levels. Stories shared during meetings are expected to be true, personal narratives, typically five to seven minutes in length, focused on a single moment or experience rather than a full life history.

The group will be facilitated by Joe Klimavich, an accredited public relations consultant and adjunct professor of communication at Worcester State University, who has taught effective speaking and communication courses for many years. While facilitated, The Story Exchange is intended to be largely member-driven, with participants shaping discussions, stories, and feedback through shared experience.

If you’ve lived a little, noticed a lot, and you’re curious about shaping real moments into meaningful, well-told stories, you’ll feel at home with this group.

“As a public relations professional and educator, telling stories - my own and those of my clients - has always been central to my work,” said Klimavich. “Inspired by programs like The Moth and Stories from the Stage, The Story Exchange grew out of a belief in the power of true stories, told well, and the value of listening as much as sharing.”

Participation will be limited to six to eight storytellers per session. There is no cost to participate, but advance registration is required. Interested individuals should send a brief introductory email to [joe.klimavich@gmail.com](mailto:joe.klimavich@gmail.com) and indicate whether you are interested in sharing a story during the first meeting.

Following the organizational meeting, The Story Exchange will meet on the first Tuesday of each month at the Merrick Public Library Annex.

Belchertown, Brimfield, Brookfield, East Brookfield, Hardwick, Holland, Monson, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Palmer, Spencer, Wales, Ware, Warren, and West Brookfield.

SPENCER ALMANAC

REAL ESTATE

BROOKFIELD

None.

EAST BROOKFIELD

\$670,000, 199 N Brookfield Rd, A & D LLC, to Wigwam Real Estate LLC.

\$339,000, 111 Drake Ln, Sosik, Michael J, and Sosik, Christine M, to Allison, Kyle J.

\$140,000, 113 Lashaway Drive Cir, Ledoux, Diane J, and Gablaski, Brian M, to Gablaski, Brian M.

\$99,900, 101 Gleason Ave, Mantha Jr, Richard P, and Mantha, Susan J, to Mantha, Jeffrey R.

LEICESTER

\$585,000, 2 Crestwood Rd, Monahan Rt - 2023, and Monahan Sr, Leo R, to Yulia Tolo RET - 2025, and Tolo, Yulia.

\$395,000, 2 Victor Ave, Servidio, Anthony, to Dasilva, Erisson B.

\$320,000, 19 South St, Jebola Properties Inc, to Lux Link Co LLC.

NORTH BROOKFIELD

\$389,000, 157 School St, Lincoln, Dianne E, and Cranston, Paul M, to Fritze, Brian E.

SPENCER

\$881,000, 43 Lambs Grv, White, Brian M, and White, Susan M, to Linzell, Daniel G, and Linzell, Cindy H.

\$575,000, 8 Wilson St, Jr Siding Inc, to Guimaraes, Sara.

\$358,500, 16 Old Farm Rd, Richards, Heather, and Ashmore, CJ, to Milott, Patrick H.

\$300,000, 2 Laurel Ln, Pataky Margaret M Est, and Pataky, George L, to Zabecca LLC.

\$190,000, 358 Main St, Doray, Paul S, and Doray, James M, to Prunier, Kayla.

WARREN

\$495,000, 920 Old West Brookfield Rd, Aj Realty Group LLC, to Pinto, Marco A, and Pinto, Stacey.

\$460,000, Boston Post Rd, Fountain Clifford G Est, and Fountain, Eric D, to Rust, Peter.

WEST BROOKFIELD

None \$479,900, 201 Pierce Rd, Leblanc Oil LLC, to Mosher, Eric, and Mosher, Catherine.

\$460,000, Boston Post Rd, Fountain Clifford G Est, and Fountain, Eric D, to Rust, Peter.

\$430,000, 16 Hadley Path, Dion, Brett J, and Dion, Portia P, to Taddeo, Jessica L.

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# Leicester Democratic Town Committee to hold 2026 Democratic Caucus

LEICESTER — The Leicester Democratic Town Committee (LDTC) will hold its 2026 Democratic Caucus on Monday, March 9, at the Leicester Public Library, located at 1136 Main St., Leicester.

The caucus will begin promptly at 6 p.m., with doors opening at 5 p.m. Registration will open at 5:30 p.m. and close at 6:15 p.m. All eligible Democrats are encouraged to arrive early to ensure timely registration and participation.

Democratic caucuses are an important part of the party's grassroots process, allowing registered Democrats to participate in the selection of delegates and alternates to Democratic conventions and to engage directly in party governance at the local level.

Participants must be registered Democrats in the Town of Leicester and meet all eligibility requirements as outlined by the Massachusetts Democratic Party. Same-day party registration may be available in accordance with party rules.

The caucus location is ADA accessible. Individuals requiring other aids are encouraged to contact the Leicester Democratic Town Committee in advance at [ldtcmass@gmail.com](mailto:ldtcmass@gmail.com) so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

The Leicester Democratic Town Committee welcomes community members who are interested in civic engagement, democratic participation, and helping shape the future of the Democratic Party in Leicester and across the Commonwealth.

For additional information or questions regarding the caucus, please contact the Leicester Democratic Town Committee at [ldtcmass@gmail.com](mailto:ldtcmass@gmail.com) or other auxiliary aids, are encouraged to contact the Leicester Democratic Town Committee in advance at [ldtcmass@gmail.com](mailto:ldtcmass@gmail.com) so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

The Leicester Democratic Town Committee welcomes community members who are interested in civic engagement, democratic participation, and helping shape the future of the Democratic Party in Leicester and across the Commonwealth.

# Ag Commission to host educational program to address invasive plant species

BROOKFIELD — On Feb. 10, the Brookfield Agricultural Commission will host a program at 6:30 p.m. at the hall at the Brookfield Congregational Church 8 Common Street to educate both farmers and interested landowners on how to address invasive plant species. All are welcome.

Plants like Japanese Knotweed are highly aggressive plant that can damage infrastructure. Multiflora Rose are thorny shrub that outcompetes native plants. Common Buckthorn is a shrub that forms dense thickets, displacing native species. These are just a few plants common to Massachusetts. This program looks to identify these and others with ideas to combat them.

This program is an example of the objectives of local AG Commissions. Under the Right to Farm statute AG Commissions look to Increase public awareness of agriculture, and the positive impact it has on the town. Communicate the guiding principles of Right-to-Farm Bylaw. Act as a mediator in disputes. Work in close cooperation with other Town boards and committees to promote agricultural activities. Bring awareness to farms and farmers of federal, state and other programs. Encourage the pursuit of agriculture, promoting agriculture based economic opportunities, and protecting farmlands within the community by allowing agricultural uses and related activities to function with minimal conflict with abutters and town agencies.

# Berthiaume announces local office hours

REGION — State Rep. Donnie Berthiaume and Chief of Staff, Donna, and Senator Peter Durant's office invites Constituents and town officials to meet them to express any concerns, ideas, or issues that they may need assistance with. Please feel free to contact Donna if you would like a private meeting. 774-402-4742

Wednesday, Feb. 11 — In the Town of West Brookfield, at the Senior Center 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 11 — In the Town of Brookfield at the Town Hall, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 12 – Town of North Brookfield – Senior Center 11 a.m.- noon

Wednesday, Feb. 18 — In the Town of Leicester at the Senior Center, 9 – 9:45 a.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 18 — In the Town of Spencer, at Howe Village, 10 – 11 a.m. - With Tammy Ruda from Rep Marsi's Office.

Wednesday, Feb. 18 – In the Town of East Brookfield at the Senior Center 11:15 a.m. – noon

# DPHS band invites community to annual spaghetti dinner

SPENCER — Looking for a date night and music? The David Prouty High School Band is putting on the Fourth Annual Spaghetti Dinner. The dinner and music event will be held at Mary Queen of the Rosary Parish in Spencer on Feb. 7 at 5:30 p.m.

DPHS Jazz band and concert band will be performing music from The Lion King, Earth, Wind & Fire, Moana, and more! Dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m., and the show begins at 6:45 p.m.

Ticket Information: Looking forward to sharing the amazing talent with our friends and families.

For further updates, please visit the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 12. Tickets can be purchased ahead of time from a David Prouty Jazz Band or Concert Band musician. Tickets can also be purchased at the door.

# Fall Dean's List announced at Stonehill College

EASTON — Stonehill College is pleased to recognize the students named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List. To qualify for this honor, undergraduate students must have achieved a semester grade point average of 3.50 or higher with a minimum of 12 credits from courses graded with standard letter grades.

Kelly Daige of North Brookfield  
Julianna Rondeau of Spencer  
About Stonehill College

Stonehill College, a Catholic institution of higher learning, was founded by the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1948. Located on the beautiful 384-acre campus and former estate of Frederick Lothrop Ames in North Easton, Massachusetts, it is a community of scholarship and faith, anchored by a belief in the inherent dignity of each person.

Through more than 100 academic programs in the liberal arts, sciences, business and pre-professional field, Stonehill College provides an education of the highest caliber that fosters critical thinking, free inquiry and the interchange of ideas for over 2,500 students.

Stonehill College educates the whole person so that each Stonehill graduate thinks, acts and leads with courage toward the creation of a more just and compassionate world.

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## Friday's Child



**Jalexa  
Age 10  
Registration #8336**

Jalexa is a joyful and happy child with a vibrant, magnetic personality. She is spunky, free-spirited, and has a natural way of capturing the hearts of those around her. Jalexa loves being active and enjoys riding her bike, playing outside, and swimming, especially when she has opportunities to laugh, explore, and stay on the move. When it's time to slow down, Jalexa enjoys watching movies and playing games on her tablet, giving her a nice balance between active play and relaxation. She also enjoys participating in a variety of community activities and thrives in environments where she can interact with others and feel included. Jalexa is an extremely resilient child with a strong, outgoing personality. She loves being the center of attention and brings energy, enthusiasm, and warmth into every space she enters. With a family who can celebrate her spirited nature and provide consistent love and guidance, Jalexa has the potential to continue growing into her joyful, confident self.

If you're at least 18 years old, have a stable source of income, and room in your heart, you may be a perfect match to adopt a waiting child. Adoptive parents can be single, married, or partnered; experienced or not; renters or homeowners; LGBTQ+ singles and couples. As an adoptive parent, you won't have to pay any fees, adoption from foster care is completely free in Massachusetts.

The process to adopt a child from foster care includes training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you. These steps will help match you with a child or sibling group that your family will fit well with. To learn more about adoption from foster care visit [www.mareinc.org](http://www.mareinc.org) . Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) can give you guidance and information on the adoption process. Reach out today to find out all the ways you can help children and teens in foster care.



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FRANK G. CHILINSKI  
PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE  
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

A winter of community resilience

Spencer and its neighboring towns are well into the rhythm of winter — and already showing how the season can bring out a deeper sense of community. Rather than retreating indoors and slowing to a crawl, families, neighbors and civic groups in our communities are finding ways to stay engaged, supportive and connected even when the temperatures dip.

Some of these efforts are modest — a morning story-time for toddlers, a weekly group for knitters and crocheters, board and committee meetings to plan for spring — yet they are meaningful. They signal a community not content to let winter be a period of isolation, but instead one that embraces the collective warmth of shared interest and purpose. These gatherings, in libraries and town halls, remind residents that togetherness can take many forms — from educational playgroups to discussions about local budgeting priorities.

A thread tying many of these winter activities together is the role played by community institutions, particularly the library. The Richard Sugden Library in Spencer, for example, continues to adapt its offerings — even amid ongoing interior work that has limited some in-house programs — by promoting early literacy activities like “Bee Ready” for preschoolers and music and movement sessions for families. These programs help reinforce the idea that learning is year-round and that public spaces can be hubs of intergenerational connection.

Beyond these structured activities, the various town board and committee meetings happening in the week ahead — from select board sessions to conservation and water commission meetings — underscore the non-seasonal work of town governance. Residents attending these hearings help shape policies that will affect services through the spring and beyond. Engagement in local government is not always headline-grabbing, but it is essential. When residents participate in budget talks, review bylaws or sit on advisory committees, they contribute to the civic health of the region in a way that matters all year.

This winter, then, is not a lull, but a season of adaptation and engagement. It shows that community life in Spencer and its neighboring towns doesn't shrink when snow covers the ground. It changes shape, with more indoor gatherings and meetings, but remains vibrant. What remains constant is the commitment of residents to show up — for their children's programs, for craft nights, for board meetings and for each other. In a challenging world, that is something worth celebrating.

Letter submission policy

Letters to the Editor must include the author's name, address, and a daytime 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.

VIEWPOINT

OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS



Courtesy

SAINT JOSEPH SCHOOL ANNOUNCES DECEMBER STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to the following students who were selected as December Students of the Month at Saint Joseph School. Pictured with Principal, Mrs. Beth Boudreau, are the following — Pre-K 3-year-old: Amelia Deptula; Pre-K 4-year-old: Grayson Larsen; Kindergarten: Marcus DiTullio-Cedeno; Grade 1: Dominik Kicilinski; Grade 2: Liam Buschle; Grade 3: Paulina Obyrcki; Grade 4: Tamara Giteru; Grade 5: Mia Reed; Grade 6: Kirolos Ibrahim; Grade 7: Grayson Dollar; Grade 8: Ivonka Warnajtyts. Students are awarded Student of the Month for their outstanding exemplification of Religion, Respect, and Responsibility. Keep up the great work!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Smoke and mirrors

To the Editor:

I caution you all to stop watching Faux News. Kimmel played a montage of Fox hosts justifying the killing of Alex Pretti because of the gun he threatened agents with. Here are the facts, and even Trump knows the fiction is just not going to play.

Pretti attended a rally and was carrying a gun it was legal for him to have and carry, located in his belt. When an ICE agent knocked a woman to the ground, who was yelling at them. While trying to help her, Alex, the ICU nurse, brandishing his phone/camera, was knocked to the ground face down, While 6 of them held him down, while still filming, one agent

extracted his gun from his belt and yelled gun. They then shot him in the back 10 times, and then tried to put the gun back on him.

Watch the photographic evidence. Do not let them tell you what you saw. Do not let the masked unidentified killer get away with it.

The Twin Cities have about 1,200 police. ICE presence should never exceed half that number. Want to meet quotas? Go to Texas; they have millions of illegals.

KEN KIMBALL  
BROOKFIELD

What Cardinal Tobin says about opposing Trump's attacks on America's Constitution, our government, & our peaceful, affordable American way

To the Editor:

Cardinal Tobin of Newark, N.J. is close to Pope Leo, and a member of the American Council of Bishops. After a 3,000 man ICE surge in Minneapolis which resulted in their killing of two innocent persons, lying senior Trump officials and five year old child sent to a terrible Texas dentation center etc., the Cardinal, along with other religious leaders, spoke out. One killed was an Intensive Care nurse at a government veterans' hospital. The Trump administration called him a violent terrorist

These religious people set out what they called a “National Faith Call to Action” In particular, Cardinal Tobin said:

“Say no to violence.”

“We say names.”

“We mourn for a world, for a country that allows five year olds to be legally kidnapped and protestors be slaughtered.”

“Every day, people from many faiths communities go to (dentation) centers

and they say no by standing at the gates, by talking with the ICE personnel, by insisting in the rights of detainees within.”

Even more importantly, the Cardinal also asked “How will you say no?” “Will you contact your congressional representative (for most of us, Richard Neil, 413-785-0325) to vote against renewing the funding of the (ICE) lawless organization? How will you scrawl your answer on the wall?”

In addition to the Cardinal's, I suggest a beginning with a more personal way. Let your family, friends and community know that you say “No” to Trump and his administration's attacks on our Constitution, our (not his) government and our American way of life.

They, and Trump, will not change on their own.

KEVIN KANE  
SPENCER

Trump lacks empathy

To the Editor:

Elon Musk once opined that “Empathy is the fundamental weakness of western civilization.” Thanks to the Trump administration, we now know what a world without empathy looks like.

When you lack empathy, you blame the victim when heavily armed federal agents gun him down in the street. You claim self-defense when they fire bullets into an unarmed mother's face. You tout national security when accosting five-year-olds, dragging terrified people out of their cars, breaking into people's homes, and roaming schools, hospitals, and places of worship in search of human prey.

You justify the murder of Venezuelans by labeling them “narco-terrorists” (without evidence). You threaten military action against friend and foe alike, cut aid to suffering people, and poison public discourse with a torrent of hatred, belligerence, insults, and lies.

Without empathy, your lizard brain val-

ues power above all else and views basic decency as a weakness. But empathy has nothing to do with weakness. It's a step up the evolutionary ladder. You can have empathy and still support strong borders, law and order, and national security. In fact, democracy itself is grounded in empathy.

Empathy led to the creation of public schools and hospitals, parks and playgrounds, water and sewer systems, the energy grid, Social Security, and countless programs that protect ordinary people. It enabled the growth of the middle class and gave “geniuses” like Elon Musk the foundation on which to amass their fortunes.

Today, our democratic institutions are besieged by an administration devoid of empathy. Those of us who value democracy must continue to resist.

RACHEL FAUGNO  
SPENCER

Love languages can help you enjoy Valentine's Day on a budget



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Valentine's Day doesn't have to break the bank. In fact, the most meaningful expressions of love often cost little to nothing. The key is understanding your partner's love language and tailoring your approach accordingly. When you know what makes your partner feel truly valued, you can create memorable experiences without the financial pressure that often accompanies this holiday.

The five love languages — words of affirmation, acts of service, receiving gifts, quality time and physical touch — offer a roadmap for showing affection without overspending. Here's how to express your love while staying financially smart this Valentine's Day.

Words of affirmation: For partners who value verbal expressions of love, heartfelt words matter far more than expensive gifts. Write a letter expressing what you appreciate about them, create a personalized playlist with songs that remind you of your relationship or record a video message. All are free but carry immense emotional value. For this love language, thoughtful expression surpasses financial investment every time.

Acts of Service: If your partner feels loved through helpful actions, Valentine's Day is about sweat equity, not spending. Cook their favorite meal, tackle chores they've been dreading or, for those who have expressed frustration with budgeting, create a simple budget tracker or spreadsheet tucked into a decorative folder. Your time and effort demonstrate your love. The beauty of acts of service is that they cost little to nothing but demonstrate care and attention.

Receiving Gifts: Even gift-oriented partners don't need expensive presents to feel valued. Focus on thoughtfulness and personalization over price tags. Try DIY crafts that show you put time into creating something. Explore thrift stores for vintage treasures or consider giving stock in a company your partner loves — a retail store, a tech brand or a coffee chain. Many platforms offer fractional shares, so you don't need a huge budget. Remember: A \$10 item chosen with care can mean more than a \$100 generic gift.

Quality time: For those who value undivided attention, experiences often cost less than gifts. Check for free museum days, plan a scenic hike, go stargazing or create a cozy home movie night with homemade popcorn. The key is being fully present without distractions. For a longer-term outlook, consider a future fund jar for shared goals, like a couples massage or a trip. Make the first deposit and pair it with a handwritten note about building dreams together.

Physical Touch: Intimacy and affection are inherently free, but small comfort investments can enhance closeness. Create an at-home spa experience with inexpensive bath products, invest in cozy blankets for cuddling, or clear space in your living room for dancing together. These minimal purchases amplify connection without requiring significant spending.

There's no wrong way to celebrate Valentine's Day, and overspending isn't necessary. If you're diligent about budgeting, you'll know what you can afford to spend. Understanding your partner's love language empowers you to express affection in ways that resonate deeply — without the financial stress. The best Valentine's celebrations come from the heart, not the wallet.

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.



# Where thumbtacks and neighbors meet

There is a corkboard inside our local post office that I pass every time I mail a letter. It is cluttered in the best possible way. Thumbtacks hold up handwritten notes, curling flyers and business cards that have seen better days. Guitar lessons. Snow plowing services. A lost cat notice that has been there long enough to feel like part of the décor. Community dinners. Yard sales scheduled and then rescheduled with a pen scribble in the margin.

Most people walk past it without stopping. They are in a hurry to drop mail, grab a package and get back to their day. But every now and then, someone pauses. They lean in. They read. Sometimes they smile. Sometimes they pull out a phone to take a picture of a phone number written in blue ink.

That board is not fancy. It is not digital. It does not send notifications. Yet it quietly does its job, connecting neighbors in a way that feels very Massachusetts.

I grew up in a time when community news traveled slowly and personally. You heard things at the counter of the general store, in the pews at church or while waiting for your coffee to cool. Today, information moves faster than ever, yet it often feels less human. We scroll past announcements without really seeing them. We click “interested” on events we never attend. We collect more information but fewer connections.

That corkboard is a small act of resistance to that trend. It says: here is a place where real people leave messages for other real people. It is imperfect. It is slightly crooked. It smells faintly of paper and tape. And it works.

You see similar boards in libraries, town halls and coffee shops across our region. They are community living rooms in miniature. Each note represents someone taking a chance that a neighbor might need what they are offering or offering what they need.

There is something brave about pinning up a piece of paper with your phone number on it. It is a quiet statement that says, “I am part of this place, and I am willing to be found.”

It made me think about how often we hide behind screens. We text instead of talk. We email instead of knock on doors. None of that is wrong, but it does change the texture of community life. A handwritten sign taped to a window or pinned to a board carries a different weight. You can see the handwriting. You can tell if the person was in a hurry or took their time. You can sense effort.

I watched an older woman stop at the post office board last week. She read carefully, adjusting her glasses, nodding slightly at a few notices. Then she pulled out a small stack of papers and added one of her own. I did not see what it said, but I saw the care she took in placing it just right, smoothing the corners before stepping back to admire her work.

That moment felt important. It was not loud. It was not broadcast to hundreds of followers. It was one neighbor speaking quietly to another through paper and thumbtacks.

We often talk about keeping Main Street alive. We focus on storefronts, parking spaces and foot traffic. Those things matter. But so do these smaller, almost invisible threads that tie us together. Bulletin boards. Flyers. Handwritten notes. Conversations that start because someone stopped long enough to read.

Next time you pass one of these boards, take a moment. Read a few notices. You might find something useful. You might learn something new. Or you might simply be reminded that community is not built by algorithms. It is built by ordinary people sharing space and information in ordinary ways.

Sometimes the lanterns along Main Street are not hanging from poles or glowing in windows. Sometimes they are pieces of paper, quietly lit by the simple hope that someone else is paying attention.

# Auction news and goodbye

It's been a few weeks since I shared the latest auction news, and plenty has taken place since then.

Beginning with local news, a Western Massachusetts historical society recently consigned a piece of furniture for auction that generated significant funds for the group. I've noted in previous columns that most antique furniture has dropped in value over the years. This piece was certainly an exception. The Swift River Valley Historical Society's website describes themselves as “the leading resource in preserving the artifacts, stories and records of the lost towns of the Quabbin Valley.” It is the historical society for the towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts took residents' properties in those four towns by eminent domain, and everyone had to relocate by April 28, 1938. The land was flooded several months later to create the Quabbin Reservoir, which provides water to the Eastern part of the state. The Swift River Valley Historical Society had a cabinet from 1677 that had been donated by Annie Frances Ballard, according to the Greenfield Recorder. Ballard was a descendant of one of the cabinet's original owners. The cabinet door was crafted with two sevens for 1677 and a heart with the initials of Symon and Rebeckah Horne. They were an Andover, MA, couple who commissioned the cabinet after the birth of their first son. It was kept in a temperature-controlled room, but the historical society could no longer secure and insure it. It sailed past the auction estimate of \$600,000 to \$800,000, sell-



ing for \$1,636,000 earlier this month. According to the Greenfield Recorder, the historical society will use the funds to make their “building accessible for



ANTIQUES, COLLECTIBLES & ESTATES  
• • • • •  
WAYNE TUISKULA

people with disabilities, and mak[e] the facility more user-friendly for archivists and historians.” An auction of memorabilia related to our nation's history also took place earlier this month, with two George Washington paintings selling very well. A 1783 painting depicting Washington as a general by Charles Peale Polk brought \$577,850, while a Gilbert Stuart portrait of Washington went for \$2.8 million, according to Artnet News. A printed copy of the Declaration of Independence from 1776 sold for \$5.6 million, and a printed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation signed by Abraham Lincoln earned \$6.7 million. A draft of the United States Constitution with notes by founding father Rufus King was the highest selling piece, bringing \$7.3 million.

A more contemporary item set an

auction record in November. Auction records for sports memorabilia and comic books are frequently being broken, and a rare Superman 1939 first issue comic book has done it again. The comic book was discovered by three brothers who were cleaning out their mother's attic, according to an AP article. The copy graded a 9.0 out of 10, remarkable for an issue that old. It went up, up, and away, fetching over \$9 million.

I've greatly enjoyed the 10-plus years I've been writing this column. It's been wonderful meeting many of you who've invited me to appraise items at local appraisal events, asked me to lecture about antiques, have consigned items with me, or have taken the time to email me about articles I've written. Our workload has been increasing every year, leading me to take a hiatus from writing. Please keep my contact information in case you may need help in the future. Once again, thank you to everyone who has read this column and thank you for your support.

Our single-collector Civil War auction starts next week. The following sale will include fine jewelry, sterling silver, art, and other antiques and collectibles. We'll be running a major sale with sports cards and memorabilia in the summer. We are accepting consignments for our next two sales. Please visit our website <https://centralmassauctions.com> for links to upcoming events.

Contact us to consign items or for auction information at: Wayne Tuiskula Auctioneer/Appraiser Central Mass Auctions for Antique, Collectibles Auctions and Appraisal Services [info@centralmassauctions.com](mailto:info@centralmassauctions.com) or (508-612-6111).

## Music & Movement at the Merrick Public Library in Brookfield

BROOKFIELD — Every Wednesday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., join Julie at the Merrick Public Library in Brookfield for songs kids know and love! Stretch, move, sing, and dance, all while developing early literacy skills through music and rhythm! Recommended for ages five and under, but all ages are welcome. Drop in--no registration necessary. This program is sponsored by the Jeppson Memorial Grant and the Friends of the Merrick Public Library.

## WEEKLY POLICE BLOTTER

### Spencer

The Spencer Police Department did not report any arrests during the week of Jan. 21-27.

### Leicester

The Leicester Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Jan. 22-28.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on Jan. 23 for operating an Uninsured Motor Vehicle.

Jeanette Marie Evers, age 45, of Cherry Valley was arrested on Jan. 25 for operating an Uninsured Motor Vehicle.

## Bebe Deatte of West Brookfield earns Dean's List honor at Millersville University

MILLERSVILLE, Pa. — Millersville University is pleased to announce that Bebe Deatte of West Brookfield has been named to the Dean's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Students are eligible for the Dean's List if they earn a semester GPA of 3.50 or higher.

Deatte is a Class of 2029 Meteorology major.

Millersville University of Pennsylvania is a top-ranked public university located in picturesque Lancaster County, in the northeast region of the United States. It is committed to offering students a high-quality, comprehensive university experience of exceptional value. Dedicated to providing nationally recognized programs that embrace the liberal arts, Millersville offers academic opportunities that are supported by outstanding faculty who are accomplished scholars and practitioners. Founded in 1855 as the first Normal School in Pennsylvania, Millersville University is one of 14 universities within Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education.

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# Bay Path graduates sought for Class of 1976 reunion

REGION — Hello, lassmates of Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School Graduating Class of 1976. Can you believe it's been 50 years?!

A small group of us have gotten together to begin planning our 50th class reunion. The people in this group are Bonnie (Aker) Courtemanche, David Saad, Jeff Mitchell and Clifford Cloutier.



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We are searching for our classmates for a 50th year class reunion. We have a Facebook page setup that you can go to and let us know your contact information and if you are interested in a reunion party. You can reach out to the Facebook page BAY PATH VOCATIONAL HIGH CLASS OF 1976.

We would like to hear from you even if you don't think you will be able to make it. We invite you to send a message/well wishes to your classmates. We can share your messages for others to read that night.

We will be compiling a list of those we have not heard from in hopes that classmates we have heard from can help locate them. We would love to get this message out to all our classmates.

We hope to hear from you and see you at our reunion.



Courtesy Saint Joseph School seventh grader Sophia Surowaniec proudly holds her winning Lions Clubs International Peace Poster Contest entry, "Together as One," alongside Dr. John Kalinowski of the Webster-Dudley Lions Club, who visited the school to notify her that her poster is advancing to the district level.

## Saint Joseph School student advances in Lions Peace Poster Contest

WEBSTER — A seventh-grade student at Saint Joseph School has been selected as the school's winner in the 2025 Lions Clubs International Peace Poster Contest, earning the opportunity to advance to the district level.

Sophia Surowaniec, daughter of Piotr and Kristy Surowaniec of North Grosvenordale, Conn., received the news during a visit to Saint Joseph School by Webster-Dudley Lions Club member Dr. John Kalinowski, who personally notified her that her poster was moving forward and posed for photos with the student.

This year's contest theme, "Together as One," encourages students to share their vision of peace through original artwork. The Peace Poster Contest aims to allow children in schools and youth groups everywhere to express their visions of peace through their art.

Lions Club members, through local service, strive to spread joy, kindness, hope, and peace within the community.

Sophia is a repeat winner for Saint Joseph School—her 2024 entry was also selected to move on in the competition. She is also deeply involved in school leadership and service as a member of Saint Joseph School's Eagles Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society, Treasurer of the Children of Mary Sodality, a member of the Varsity Cheer Team, and an Assistant Coach for the Eaglets Cheer Team.

Students develop and refine their contest ideas in art class with Saint Joseph School's Art Instructor and Fine Arts Director, Ms. Brigid Campbell, who supports students in connecting artistic choices to the message they want to communicate.

School leaders noted that the contest aligns closely with Saint Joseph School's mission of Religion, Respect, and Responsibility, giving students a meaningful way to express compassion, unity, and respect through creativity.

Congratulations to Sophia Surowaniec on this achievement.

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# The Groundhog Day verdict is in!



## CORNELIA’S PREDICTION AT ECOTARIUM COMES AS NO SURPRISE

WORCESTER — Monday morning at the EcoTarium, Worcester’s very own weather-predicting groundhog, Cornelia, emerged from her burrow and carefully looked around her habitat, sniffing at lettuce and other treats. Mayor Joe Petty watched Cornelia carefully and then delivered the official Groundhog Day proclamation before a crowd of teachers, students, and community leaders.

“Today, Cornelia has emerged from hibernation to search the ground at the EcoTarium for her shadow, as, like her ancestors before her, Cornelia has acquired the fascinating ability to predict the arrival of spring with 50 percent accuracy,” said Petty with a smile. “I hereby decree that, on this sunny day, Cornelia did in fact see her shadow and thus proclaimed six more weeks of winter weather for the City of Worcester, Massachusetts. I urge all citizens to join in the Groundhog Day celebration across the City, and to keep your hats and mittens close at hand.”

The crowd let out a loud moan at the news of more winter.

“No matter the weather, we always embrace the fun of this time-honored tradition,” said Noreen Smith, EcoTarium President & CEO. “This really is Cornelia’s day to shine. While most groundhogs were still asleep, Cornelia was hard at work analyzing the conditions and making her forecast.”

Guests were treated to a close-up experience with Cornelia, as her dedicated keeper shared fascinating insights into her daily care: “Cornelia is still shaking off her winter sleepiness, as at the EcoTarium, Cornelia does not fully hibernate, although she does slow down between October and March, eating less and sleeping for most of the day. She managed to wake up to enjoy breakfast with all of us this morning. She enjoyed a spread of greens and vegetables. After eating, she quickly made herself comfortable again in her toasty nest!”

# New \$750,000 historic preservation grant program launches in Central Massachusetts

WORCESTER — A new regional grant program will support the preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties across Central Massachusetts, helping communities protect significant buildings while strengthening local economies and downtowns.

The Central Massachusetts Heritage Circuit Subgrant Program will make up to \$616,000 available through competitive subgrants to preserve historic properties listed on, or eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places. Eligible activities include planning, design, and construction work that meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

The Central Massachusetts Heritage Circuit Subgrant Program is funded by the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, under the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program. Funding for this program is provided through congressional appropriations to support the preservation of historic and cultural resources nationwide.

by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The contents and opinions expressed in this press release do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of the Interior or the National Park Service, nor does the mention of trade names or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Founded by the Legislature in 1963, CMRPC provides a variety of services to its constituencies and brings a regional perspective to planning and development. One of 13 Regional Planning Agencies in Massachusetts, CMRPC serves the City of Worcester and 39 surrounding communities in the southern two-thirds of Worcester County. CMRPC’s programs include Transportation, Regional Collaboration and Community Planning, and Geographic Information Systems.

The program is administered by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) in partnership with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC). Montachusett Enterprise Center (MEC), MRPC’s affiliated nonprofit organization, serves as the fiscal sponsor and grantee of record for the federal award. The Architectural Heritage Foundation (AHF) will provide preservation technical expertise to support program design and implementation.

Funding recommendations will be informed by a Project Selection Committee operating under formal conflict-of-interest procedures. Final award decisions will be made by the fiscal sponsor in accordance with federal requirements.

The program will serve communities throughout Central Massachusetts, including municipalities in the CMRPC and Montachusett regions, with a focus on historic commercial districts, civic buildings, and other significant properties that contribute to local identity and long-term economic vitality.

“This program is designed to help communities address real preservation needs while keeping historic buildings in active use,” said Janet A. Pierce, CMRPC Executive Director. “By combining federal investment with regional planning and preservation expertise, we are supporting projects that will deliver lasting public benefit.”

Subgrants will be awarded through a transparent, competitive process. Additional information on eligibility, application materials, and program timelines will be released later this year.

This project is funded in part by the Historic Preservation Fund, administered



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APPLICATIONS

continued from page A1

Brookfields Lions Club at [brookfieldslionsclub@gmail.com](mailto:brookfieldslionsclub@gmail.com), or visit the Club’s Facebook page at [facebook.com/BrookfieldsLionsClub](https://facebook.com/BrookfieldsLionsClub).

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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CONSTRUCTION

continued from page A1

“It’s a nice project. It was split into two parts because previously the CDBG grant didn’t give us enough funding to do the project in one swoop, so we had to break it apart. This will be phase

two to complete the project in that area. Also included in this work that we proposed is relining some of the sewer infrastructure in that area as well so that would be done at the same time,” Boria said.

Corey Brodeur, a Project Manager from Haley Ward, said that with the design

phase complete and a contractor bid awarded, project work should finally begin later this year.

“The plan is to start in the spring and work through the summer and try to have it done before or around October,” said Brodeur.

The water department

had previously performed work in the area in anticipation of the construction, and both Brodeur and Boria confirmed that there will be officials on hand to monitor the project to ensure there is no impact on local gas lines.

The public information session was a require-

ment of the CDBG grant to ensure the public was properly made aware of the status of the project. It was sparsely attended, and there was no input shared from citizens during the discussion.

Brookfield Council on Aging hosting seminar on thinking ahead

BROOKFIELD — The Brookfield Council On Aging invites the community to a seminar, “Something to Think About: Planning Ahead, Being Prepared,” on Tuesday, Feb. 10 at 10:30 a.m. Lunch will be served.

Pre-sign up is required by e-mailing [seniors@brookfieldma.us](mailto:seniors@brookfieldma.us), or you may drop by in person Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, 10 a.m.-noon at the Brookfield Congregational Church, 8 Common St.

Leicester KOC hosting family dinner

LEICESTER — Leicester Knights of Columbus, located at 90 Mannville St., will have a Family Dinner on Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 6 p.m.

The menu features choice of Pulled-pork Mac ‘n cheese or Baked Fish. Cost is \$15, and includes salad, dessert and coffee.

Call Don at 508-615-8434 or email at [ohnog7@yahoo.com](mailto:ohnog7@yahoo.com) by Monday, Feb. 9 for reservations. All are welcome.

Roger Williams University announces Fall Dean’s List

BRISTOL, R.I. — Select students have been named to the Fall 2025 Dean’s List at Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I. Full-time students who complete 12 or more credits per semester and earn a GPA of 3.4 or higher are placed on the Dean’s List that semester.

Bella Kulla of Leicester  
Abigail Morrison of Rochdale  
Connor Parke of Rochdale  
Emily Soter of Spencer  
About RWU

Roger Williams University offers professional studies and liberal arts programs, with campuses in Bristol and Providence, Rhode Island. We provide real-world learning that empowers students to become the changemakers and leaders our world needs next.

LEGALS

**Notice of Public Hearing—Planning Board**  
**The Spencer Planning Board will be holding a Public Hearing on Tuesday February 17, 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:**  
**Minor Site Plan and Special Permit—Applicant: East Brookfield & Spencer Railroad, LLC/ George Bell; Owner: Holston Land Co. Inc, Location: 22 Podunk Pike, Spencer, MA Assessor’s Map R21-39. The applicant is looking for a Minor Site Plan under section 7.4.6 (Minor Site Plan) and a Special Permit under section 4.8.9 (Solar Photovoltaic Generating Installations) of the Spencer Zoning Bylaw to install a thirty-five foot wide by eighteen foot wide opened wall canopy with a free-standing solar array. The property is located within the Industrial (I) zoning district.**

January 29, 2026  
February 6, 2026  
February 13, 2026

**NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE’S SALE OF REAL ESTATE**  
By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Akyeamong Associates, LLC to New Silver Lending LLC dated January 18, 2024 and recorded with the Worcester County (Southern District) Registry of Deeds in Book 70108 at Page 82, as affected by an assignment from New Silver Lending LLC. to NS Pool LLC. dated January 23, 2024 and recorded with the Worcester County (Southern District) Registry of Deeds in Book 70229 at Page 345, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder by assignment, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at Public Auction at 12 o’clock P.M. on the 20th day of February 2026 at 27 Maple Street in Spencer, Worcester County, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage,  
To wit:  
Property Address is: 27 Maple Street, Spencer, MA 01562  
A certain parcel of land with the buildings thereon and all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging situated in Spencer on the east side of Maple Street and being shown on Plan of House Lot in Spencer dated April 23, 1946 by E. A. Chamberlin, said plan recorded in Plan Book 139, Plan 4 and being more particularly bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at the most westerly corner of the parcel herein described on the easterly line of said Maple Street; THENCE N. 40° East by said easterly line of Maple Street eighty-one (81) feet to a point at a stone wall; THENCE S. 82° East by a stone wall and land of William Forrest one hundred five (105) feet to a point at another stone wall; THENCE Southwesterly by said wall one hundred (100) feet to a point; THENCE N. 83° West continuing by said wall and part of the way eighty (80) feet to the place of beginning. BEING the same premises conveyed to the Mortgagor by deed recorded herewith.  
Premises to be sold and conveyed subject to and with the benefit of all rights,

rights of way, restrictions, easements, covenants, liens or claims in the nature of liens, improvements, public assessments, any and all unpaid taxes, tax titles, tax liens, water and sewer liens and any other municipal assessments or liens or existing encumbrances of record which are in force and are applicable, having priority over said mortgage, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the deed.  
Terms of sale: A deposit of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The balance is to be paid by certified or bank check at Barton Gilman, LLP, One Liberty Square, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02109 within thirty (30) days from the date of sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. In the event of an error in this publication, the description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control.  
Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale.  
NS Pool LLC  
Present holder of said mortgage By its Attorneys,  
Barton Gilman, LP  
One Liberty Square, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Boston, MA 02109  
January 30, 2026  
February 6, 2026  
February 13, 2026

(SEAL)  
**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT 26 SM 000261 ORDER OF NOTICE**

TO:  
Jamie Marie Nelson; Edward C. Mello and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act: 50 U.S.C. c. 50 § 3901 (*et seq*): NewRez LLC claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in East Brookfield, numbered 130 Faith Drive, given by Jamie Marie Nelson to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Caliber Home Loans, Inc., dated September 7, 2021, and recorded at Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 66006, Page 210, and now held by the plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant’s/Defendants’ Servicemembers status.  
If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at **Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108** on or before March 9, 2026 or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the grounds of noncompliance with the Act.  
Witness, GORDON H. PIPER, Chief Justice of said Court on January 23, 2026.  
Attest:  
Deborah J. Patterson  
Recorder  
February 6, 2026

**LEGAL NOTICE**  
**Fiscal Year 2027 SCHOOL BUDGET HEARING**  
**Leicester Public Schools Notice of Public Hearing**  
**Date of Public Hearing: Monday, March 2, 2026**

In accordance with Chapter 71 Section 38N of the General Laws, the Leicester School Committee will hold a public hearing on its proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget on **Monday, March 2, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Leicester Town Hall, in Room #3, at 3 Washburn Square, Leicester, MA 01524.

February 6, 2026

**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. WO25P4405EA INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE**  
Estate Of:  
**Phyllis G. Sasseville**  
**Date of Death: September 5, 2025**  
To All persons interested in the above-captioned estate, by Petition of **Deanne Benicaso of Spencer MA** a Will has been admitted to informal probate.  
**Deanne Benicaso of Spencer MA**

has been informally appointed as Personal Representative of the estate to serve without surety on the bond. The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.  
February 6, 2026

**NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE’S SALE OF REAL ESTATE**  
By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Eva Adjoian to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for HarborOne Mortgage LLC, dated November 26, 2019 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 61494, Page 1, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, by assignment from: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for HarborOne Mortgage LLC, its successors and assigns to Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., recorded on December 1, 2023, in Book No. 69952, at Page 104 Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. to NewRez LLC DBA Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing, recorded on February 7, 2024, in Book No. 70172, at Page 364  
for breach of the conditions of said

mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing, the same will be sold at Public Auction at 9:00 AM on March 3, 2026, on the mortgaged premises located at 132 North Brookfield Road, East Brookfield, Worcester County, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, TO WIT:  
The land in East Brookfield, Worcester County, Massachusetts, with the buildings thereon, situated on the easterly side of the State Highway leading to North Brookfield and bounded and described as follows:  
BEGINNING at a point in the easterly line of said State Highway at land now or formerly of one Snay; THENCE northeasterly by said Snay land 162.25 feet to land of the North Brookfield Railroad Company; THENCE northwesterly by said railroad land 77.35 feet to land now or formerly of one Balchunas; THENCE southwesterly by said Balchunas land 181.25 feet to said highway; HENCE southeasterly by said highway 75 feet to the place of beginning. Containing about 12,881 square feet of land, and being the premises shown as Lot No. 5 on a plan of House Lots in East Brookfield, owned by Arthur Ledoux”, which said plan is recorded with the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 41 Plan 54.  
For mortgagor’s(s’) title see deed recorded with Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 61493, Page 394.  
These premises will be sold and conveyed subject to and with the benefit of all rights, rights of way, restrictions, easements, covenants, liens or claims in the nature of liens, improvements, public assessments, any and all unpaid taxes, tax titles, tax liens, water and sewer liens and any other municipal assessments or liens or existing encumbrances of record which are in force and are applicable, having priority over said mortgage, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the deed.  
TERMS OF SALE:  
A deposit of Ten Thousand (\$10,000.00) Dollars by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The balance is to be paid by certified or bank check at Harmon Law Offices, P.C., 150 California St., Newton, Massachusetts 02458, or by mail to P.O. Box 610389, Newton Highlands, Massachusetts 02461-0389, within thirty (30) days from the date of sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. The description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of an error in this publication.  
Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale.  
NEWREZ LLC D/B/A SHELLPOINT MORTGAGE SERVICING  
Present holder of said mortgage  
By its Attorneys,  
HARMON LAW OFFICES, P.C.  
150 California St.  
Newton, MA 02458  
(617)558-0500  
28366  
February 6, 2026  
February 13, 2026  
February 20, 2026



## All Saints students visit Worcester Art Museum



WORCESTER – Grade 6 students from All Saints Academy recently visited the Ancient Civilizations galleries at the Worcester Art Museum, where they explored artwork from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and beyond. In addition to touring the galleries, students participated in a hands-on studio workshop focused on Egyptian cartouches. A cartouche is an oval shape that encloses a pharaoh’s name in hieroglyphs and symbolizes protection and eternity. Reserved for royalty, cartouches often displayed both a ruler’s birth name and throne name and later became essential to historians in deciphering hieroglyphs, including those found on the Rosetta Stone.

This immersive experience brought classroom learning to life by allowing students to see firsthand the artifacts, symbols, and artistic techniques they have been studying. Concepts discussed in class—such as the role of writing in ancient societies, the significance of art in expressing power and belief, and the daily lives of ancient peoples—became more meaningful as students observed authentic works of art up close. Creating their own cartouches helped students better understand the importance of names, symbolism, and written language in ancient Egypt while reinforcing lessons on hieroglyphs and historical interpretation.

During the visit, students also stopped by the Center for Nonviolent Solutions, where they were excited to view artwork created by 7th grade students from All Saints Academy on display. The pieces were submitted in the fall as part of a project that asked students to respond to the question, “What does peace look like in your community?” Seeing student artwork displayed in a museum setting made the experience especially meaningful, inspiring students to connect history, art, and their own voices in powerful ways.

## All Saints Academy comes together to honor local veterans

WEBSTER — The All Saints Academy community came together to honor local veterans with a special breakfast and ceremony this past Veterans Day.

In the school gym, decorated by Grades 4 and 5 with handmade cross table decorations symbolizing gratitude for veterans’ brav-

ery, courage, and service, we gathered to honor local veterans from our community as well as veterans invited by our students. A Veterans Wall, thoughtfully created by Grade 6, displayed meaningful acrostic poems that reflected students’ appreciation and respect for those who have

served our country.

The morning began with a warm welcome to our honored guests, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 proudly recited poems expressing thankfulness and admiration for our veterans. Grades 7 and 8 played an important role throughout the event by assisting with serving food and engaging the veterans in friendly, respectful conversation.

The veterans were extremely appreciative of the morning and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share their experiences. They were especially touched by our commitment to teaching students the importance of honoring and understanding the sacrifices made throughout their military careers. Students greatly enjoyed listening to the veterans’ stories and learning firsthand about their service, making the celebration both meaningful and memorable for everyone involved. Through this special event, we wanted our veterans to know that they are remembered, valued, and appreciated not only on Veterans Day, but every day.



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# Worcester State University announces Dean’s List

WORCESTER — Worcester State University congratulates the following students on being named to the Dean’s List for the fall semester of 2025.	M McGrail, Krrish Patel, Catherine E Pavone, Richard J Payne, Jordyn M Poirier, Kyleigh Sutherland, Izabela Warnajtys, Oliver A Weiland, Rileigh A Zacek, Ashlee E Zaleski	Megan R Shea, Quinn L Trumbull-Olsen	North Brookfield Emily E Brown, Jessica L Frigo, Caylie E Fuhrmann-Bell, Christopher M Halvorsen, Sophia Hearnlaye, Nason J Omasta, Roan K Testa	Jones, Mackenzie M Matuzek	Sean R Hicks, Kaia M Lavine, Madisyn R Lucia, Rebecca Manzano Howard, Comfort Owusu, Jonathan R Rochford, Rielly A Sobaleski, Benjamin T Szydlík, Danielle M Weaver
Auburn Ethan M Adamiak, Adriano Alvarez, Brendon S Bailey, Owen A Barrera, Abigayle M Belanger, Lily R Bishop, Alec R Borelli, Logan E Bostock, Abigail Bouasy, Hannah M Brown, Esther Businge, Cody K Callaghan, Eireni Chatzopoulos, Megan D Crosbie, Kali N Day, Jolena N Deeds, Gianna F DiPadua, Siiri A Govoni, Emelis Henriquez, Maeve F Holmes, Griffin Hurley, Alec Huynh, Owen C Kosciolk, Irene E LeBlanc, Elefteria Liti, Christopher K Martin, Julia G Mathews, Christena Mena, Chanel J Napoli, Jimmy L Nguyen, Emma R Penney, James D Phillips, Gabriel Rodriguez, Lydia J Skaparas, Brendan J Slomski, Sarah D Stevens, Zachary M Stomski, Isaac J Swedberg, Claudia R Symonick, Vivian T Tran, Nicolas Vanegas, Amelia A Whitney, Thomas W Willette, Abigail J Zicuis	Charlton City Jaclyn K Morrison	Fiskdale Aiden Dieffenwierth, Carina M Holt, Caleb S Thompson, Norah M Tracy, Alexis M Yap	North Grafton Gabrielle A Bobolia, Lauren E Bobolia Sr., Emma G Boggess, Cassidy A Burns, Connor P Garlick, Adam Hillerstrom, Brendan R Molczyk, Becky S Ogello, Bonnie E Williams, Ava G Zaleski	Southbridge Aiden R Brunelle, Kirsten L Congdon, Emma E Cote, Samuel E Dehoyos, Tyler A Ethier, Genesis M Gonzalez, Giovanni L Hernandez, Payton S Leone, Gianaleze O Lopez, Evangelina C Melendez, Andrea A Melendez Rojas, Yerilian K Miranda, Duyen T Nguyen, Eyerusalem Orlandini, Morgan E Schwartz, Ava S Simon, Ava G Tougas, Christopher S Tyznik, Mya K Veras, Natyarie P Villanueva	Upton Grayson T Campbell, Carlie J Capistran, Caydence C Carr, Norah Conley, Alexander J Cook, Alexander J Guertin, Daphne Sweeney
Brimfield Mohamed Boweden, Connor E Dufault, Kelsie E Lucas, Makenna F Perro	Douglas Fani Angelidaki, Kaylie E Ciccone, Gavin C Delgado, Jared S Dermoshegian, Holly N Kaczor, Celina P Moore, Olivia M Muscatell, Grace C Parker, Mya G Sanford, Ryleigh M Sawash-Perro, Amelia M Skiba Terrinha, Victoria A Surrette, Addison E Taylor, Ethan C Vassar	Grafton Chloe M Bergeron, Kyra R Brown, Tessa M Cacciapouti, Linda M Casey, Kaylee Chen, Taylor M Coonan, Tiffany Druker, John W Errara, Nicolas A Flores, Jasmin Ouweijan, Nicholas V Pucillo, Anna Y Riley, Hira F Rizvi, Cleo Sharon, Liam T Walsh	North Oxford Devon V Chhoeun, Jennifer L Garajau, Julia Obyrcki	SPENCER, MA: Lawrence O Austria, Allison Barham, Amberlyn A Brindle, Ariana M Burgos, Draven C Casey, Catherine A Comeau, Rachel M Dorsey, Carrie A Ferreira, Cameron J Goodrich, Benjamin B Granville, Farrah Griffin, Payton G Griffin, Lucas K Hafner, Matthew J Heffernan, Thomas J Heffernan, Isabelle Herholz, Kaitlyn R O’Neill, Martyna J Stolarczyk, Zachary Zephir	Uxbridge Mikayla G Baccari, Peyton Bly, Emily G Capellupo, Anthony L Cifizzari, Madison D Departie, Jenna M Devine, Adam B Ells, Dakota K Gelinaz, Zachary Goddard, Maia G Harris, Tia M Jacobs, Isabelle J Kling, Lauren C Lachapelle, Ami E Lamontagne, Darren J Oliver, Marcus R Oliver, Samantha M Omar, Marissa M Osimo, Brianna M Pare, Olivia L Pirrotta, Sadie N Schultzberg, Katelyn A Silveira
Charlton Jake Beaudette, Jianna A Clouthier, LeeAnn D Dagnese, Ava Iozzo, Jaden L Jaiillet, Taylor Kochinskaz, Florence S Lundi Jr., Rhiannon L Mansur, Ayla	Dudley Amanda S Adamuska, Michalyn A Annese, Dominic M Beauchesne, Catalina M Burden, Haley M Coggans, Angelina Demce, Abigail M DeWitt, Marlee E Eckbold, Lauren L Gajewski, Timothy V Garcia, Isaiah I Giblin, Adrian Golemo, Kaia T Gray, Keller G Holmes, Giovanna Krettli Oliveira Costa, Gabriela A Laska, Kathryn E McFarland, Maggie P Montville, Collin A Moody, Manar Morgan, Justin A Murray, Natalie G Nayfeh, Alek J Poirier, Abigail E Reilly, Patrysia E Rivera Kwiatkowska, Brett Spiewakowski, Maximous Tawadrous, Athanasia R Towadros, Athanasios R Towadros, Sean Wang, Amanda Wisnowski	Leicester Johnathon M Beford, Erin K Brown, Richard Cichowski, Jacob A Cruz, Matthew W Dizenzo, Alexis K Herbert, Deanna Herbert, Kayla Kobel, Morgan L Merrell, Brendan P Salek, Jenna L Savoie, Haley M Soden, Julia R Soden, Dan H Vuong, Maeve T Whittemore	Northbridge Katelyn A Barrows, Andrew Ceruti, Samantha J Driver, Daniel M Fung-A-Fat, Annika R Holm, Izamar Y Laboy, Alexandra Y Lambert, Juliette L Lannon, Ankita R Sheoran, Jayden T Tran	Sturbridge Ian W Anderson, Zachary G Beaudoin, Gerson W Catun-Teni, Emma J Heintz, Isabel Mediavilla, Sydney Ng, Alexander Ramos, Courtney M Roy, Levi Shepard, Heather M Sluhocki, Sophie E Werner	Webster ShyAnn J Baillargeon, Izabella M Bezak, Savannah R Bjork, Jayden G Casey, Heather Dodd, Camden L Heenan, Hlaing T Htoo, Madyson J Koziak, Daniela A Narvaez, Joel M Norman, Kailey E O’Connell, Garrett L Papierski, Daniel C Parker, Meagan A Peck, Riley P Peters, Angel E Shenette, Victoria N Spitz, Luke Walcek, Isabella L Williams
East Brookfield		Millford Ethan Brewis, Lorraine T DeSouza, Lauren E Flanagan, Kevin Flores, Sadrac Gaspard, Edward W Hough, Aery Kang, Glenda L Nunez Santos, Alicia A Pacheco, Kyle A Perry, Kristel Ann A Regala	Oxford Mary A Alliy, Danielle E Antwi, Isabella R Capuano, Olivia Clarkson, Sophia J Cornacchioli, Alexander L Duval, Victoria Lemay, Ellie M Makowiecki, Kyle P McGown, Julie A Mercer, Kaylynn E Nolan, Isabella M Padilla, Emma M Rannikko, Patrick A Reed, Hannah Wroblewski	Sutton Ian P Clayton, Caitlin J Conley, Madalyn Davagian, William H Demers, Angelo J Frasca, Conor J Hickey,	West Brookfield Elias W Berthel, Jacque Boulais, Paige M Dion, Laine R Hatstat, Emilio Herrie, Abigail E Jolin, Hannah R Manzano, Dallas J McDonnell, Katelynn Swistak

## College presidents kick off coast-to-coast Super Bowl showdown

WORCESTER — With excitement building for Super Bowl LX, the presidents of Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) and North Seattle College (NSC) are bringing some friendly competition of their own to the field.

The two institutions have announced a lighthearted wager tied to their respective hometown NFL teams. If the New England Patriots prevail, North Seattle College President Dr. Rachel Solemsaas will don QCC apparel and New England football gear, posting a celebratory photo on social media. If the Seattle Seahawks take home the victory, QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja will do the same in NSC colors and Seahawks gear.

Building on a long friendship that grew from work with the American Association of Community Colleges, the presidents’ bet is meant to spotlight the pride and passion that students, alumni and community members feel for both institutions and their local communities.

“The Patriots are a great team, and we respect New England very much. That said, the Tree Frogs of North Seattle College must align with our hometown heroes, the Seattle Seahawks, in the big game,” said Solemsaas. “I’m sure my good friend, President Dr. Luis Pedraja and the amazing fac-

ulty, staff and students at Quinsigamond Community College will understand that this is Seattle’s year. The memory of 2015 is a heavy burden that we’ve been carrying around for 11 years. But now it is payback time.”

QCC is getting into the Super Bowl spirit this week with an on-campus tailgate party and a Patriots apparel donation drive for students.

“As Super Bowl Sunday approaches, our campuses are buzzing— QCC Wyverns and North Seattle Tree Frogs alike—cheering on our favorite teams with all the enthusiasm our faculty, staff and students can muster. And while I am good friends with Dr. Solemaas, even friendship can’t stop a little spirited coast-to-coast rivalry,” said Pedraja. “Here in New England, we are absolutely convinced the Patriots are ready to repeat their 2015 magic...and yes, we fully believe they’re going to win! Consider this our playful warning that bragging rights are already warming up on the sidelines. Here’s to a great game, and a friendly rivalry that brings our campuses even closer, no matter which mascot hops or soars away victorious.”

Follow QCC’s Facebook or Instagram (quinsigcc) and NSC’s Facebook or Instagram (north\_seattle\_college) for updates and some pre-Super Bowl hype videos.

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# Cornerstone Bank renews support for Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester to expand ESOL and workforce readiness programs

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank has committed \$4,000 in continued support to Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester (LVGW) to help expand its English as a Second Language (ESOL) and Workforce Readiness Program for New Americans, strengthening access to English language education and employment pathways for immigrants, refugees and migrants in the greater Worcester community.

The 2025 contribution builds on Cornerstone Bank's prior support of \$3,000 in both 2023 and 2024 and will help LVGW expand class offerings, recruit and train volunteer tutors and provide individualized career and employment assistance. The program addresses critical barriers to employment, education and civic partic-

ipation faced by New Americans while supporting long-term economic stability in the region.

"With strong community partners like Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester, we can help ensure that opportunity is accessible to everyone," said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. "By supporting ESOL and workforce readiness programs, we are investing not only in individual success, but in the strength and vitality of the entire Worcester community."

In 2025, LVGW helped 451 adult learners benefit from English instruction, individualized tutoring and direct pathways to greater economic security. LVGW has served nearly 12,000 adult learners from more than 120 countries since its founding

in 1973.

Cornerstone Bank's renewed investment will support the program's second year of expansion, helping New Americans gain the English language and workforce skills they need to succeed in work, school and daily life.

About Cornerstone Bank

Cornerstone Bank was formed in 2017, born of a long history of supporting the community, and providing a strong foundation to help people and businesses thrive. 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, which is a subsidiary of PeoplesBankCorp,

MHC, operating independently under its own name and brand, provides the highest level of service and expertise for individuals, businesses, and community organizations with branch locations throughout Central Massachusetts. Cornerstone works to connect customers with opportunities through a broad range of deposit and loan products and services. Built on Trust is not just a tagline, but also one of our guiding corporate values. Whether a business or personal partnership, Cornerstone stands on the foundation that relationships are built on trust. To learn about Cornerstone Bank's personal and business banking offerings, please visit [cornerstonebank.com](http://cornerstonebank.com) or call 800-939-9103.



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# Boat America safe boating course offered at Bay Path March 10 & 12

CHARLTON — The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Tri-State Flotilla, Massachusetts will be instructing the Boat America course that meets current and future state mandated educational requirements offered in a two-night format developed to provide the skills and confidence needed to explore the coast and inland waters by boat. Basic knowledge and skills are needed to have safe and enjoyable boating experiences.

This course is perfect for families that have just purchased any type of boat or are planning to in the future, and for the boater keeping up with changes to boating regulations and laws. Basic marlinespike seamanship (knots etc.) will also be included.

Successful completion of the BA course will certify any minor, from 12 to 16 years of age, to operate a powerboat, including a Personal Water Craft / Jet Ski (for 16 & 17-year-old operators), on all Massachusetts waters; in conjunction with the Mass. Environmental Police. Approved by National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) it will also cover the requirements to operate a vessel in most other states & many countries where boating safety education is mandatory including Rhode Island and Connecticut.

The Hanson-Milone Boater Safety Act, signed into Mass. Law Jan. 8, will now require all Massachusetts motorboat operators to complete an approved Safe Boating Certificate course before April 1, 2026 for anyone born after Jan. 1, 1998, and by April 1, 2028 for boaters born before Jan. 1, 1998. Enforcement of the new law will begin on September 1, 2026. The BA course meets the future Mass. requirement. Most boating insurance companies offer a discount on premiums for successful completion of this course.

Participants 16 years old and under must be accompanied, in person, by a registered parent/guardian. Space is limited, so register soon:

Register online at via [www.baypath.augusoft.net](http://www.baypath.augusoft.net) Fun & Play>Sports & Leisure links.

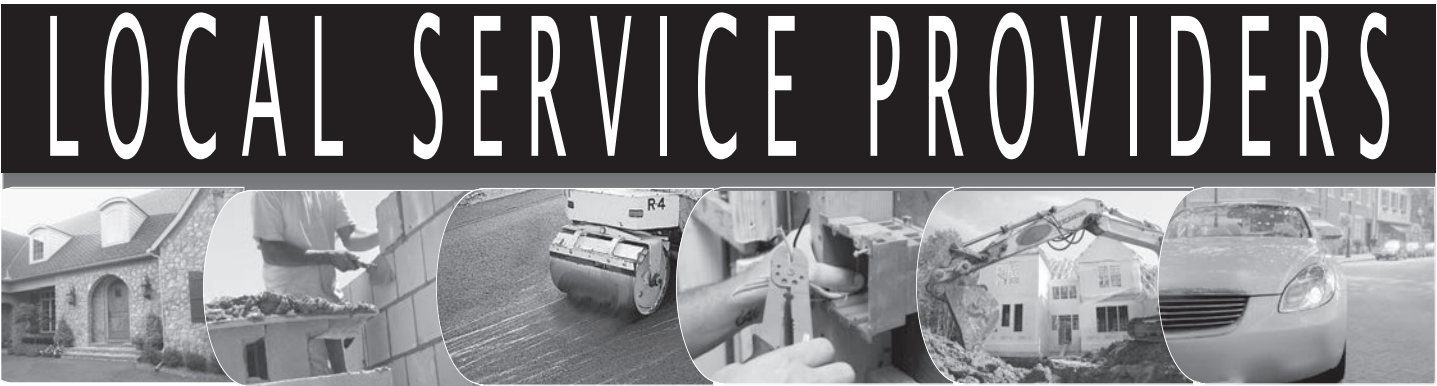
Class ID 42920 or by calling Sheri Dreitlein (508) 248-5971 email [sdreitlein@baypath.net](mailto:sdreitlein@baypath.net)

You can also contact our Public Education Officer Phil Kubat for registration or additional

information: email [phil.uscgaux@verizon.net](mailto:phil.uscgaux@verizon.net) or call (508) 478-3778.

To locate these and other USCG Auxiliary courses go to: [https://www.cgaux.org/boat-inged/class\\_finder/index.php](https://www.cgaux.org/boat-inged/class_finder/index.php)

The Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed civilian component of the U.S. Coast Guard and supports the Coast Guard in nearly all mission areas. The Auxiliary was created by Congress in 1939. For more information, please visit [www.cgaux.org](http://www.cgaux.org).



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