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

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Friday, January 31, 2025





Members of the David **Prouty High School indoor** track team competed earlier this week at the MSTCA **Coaches Invitational Meet** at Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center in Boston vs. Division 3,4, & 5 Small Schools. The Panthers had many outstanding performances highlighted by their 4x200 relay team of Zoe Barnett, Morgan Kates, Elyse Da Silva and Grace Kates placed 4th with a time of 1:53, as well as their 4x50 relay team of Zoe Barnett, Alicia Sauvageau, Lauren Tutlis and Morgan Kates placed time of 26.39. **Congratulations, Panthers!** 

# Local author offers writing workshop

BY KEVIN FLANDERS STAFF WRITER

WEST BROOKFIELD — Award-winning author Ed Londergan invites local writers to attend a workshop that will help them take the next steps toward publi-

Londergan's ninth annual creative writing and publishing workshop will be held on Sunday, March 9, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Salem Cross Inn.

"Everyone has a story to tell," said Londergan, who penned popular colonial New England novels like "The Long Journey Home" and "The Devil's Elbow." "The writing workshop aims to help those who want to write but don't know where to start, as well as those who have had an idea for a story that's been bubbling in their head for years and finally want to put it on paper."

Added Londergan, "I also help people who have written something and need to know how to move ahead."

The workshop will cover the entire process of writing and manuscript creation, including idea development and sources of inspiration; drawing from storytelling traditions; developing the plot structure and flow; bringing characters to life; creating dynamic dialogue; and managing the always daunting editing

Additionally, the workshop covers publication processes for those seeking to transform their stories into print. Several publishing options exist, and it can often be tricky for authors to decide which routes to take.

Londergan always enjoys sharing his experiences with writers and helping them choose the best paths to publication. These might include working with agents or traditional publishing houses; exploring self-publishing opportunities; or focusing on maximizing e-book and audiobook markets.

The publishing process can be confusing and frustrating. I'll take the group through the various publishing options available. There will also be some fun writing exercises," Londergan said.

Whether you're a student seeking to complete your first novel, or a senior hoping to publish a memoir for friends and family members to enjoy, Londergan's workshop is helping to make writing dreams a reality.

'Past workshops have been attended by people of all ages and occupations, from 12-year-old students to retirees," Londergan told the New Leader. "Five attendees have written books and had them published, while others have had stories and articles placed in various

The workshop is also helpful for guests seeking Turn To WORKSHOP page A10 Turn To SAFETY page A10

**New Haston Library** Director excited to start next chapter



Lia Tulip recently became the new **Director of Haston Free Public Library.** 

BY KEVIN FLANDERS

STAFF WRITER

NORTH BROOKFIELD — Newly hired Haston Free Public Library Director Lia Tulip is excited to start the next chapter of her career.

Having previously worked as a library media specialist in local high schools, including NBHS, Tulip brings many valuable skills she can translate to her new role. These include experience with managing library resources, curating collections, and developing programs that engage a wide range of audiences.

'My background as a high school library media specialist has shown me just how much libraries can impact people's lives. I'm eager to bring new ideas and programs to

Turn To TULIP page A10

# Local students learn about water safety

**BY KEVIN FLANDERS** STAFF WRITER

REGION — Even at the height of winter, with temperatures in the single digits and local water bodies frozen, youngsters are still enjoying the thrill of swimming thanks to a special program.

Each summer, the Wild Bill Swim and Paddle Challenge, held in memory of the late gold medalist and local swimming leg-



Local students enjoy swim lessons and water safety programming.

# North Brookfield selectmen nix override proposal

BY KEVIN FLANDERS STAFF WRITER

NORTH BROOKFIELD Facing stiff financial challenges, selectmen confirmed during a recent meeting that an override vote is off the table this budget season.

Many residents have pushed for an override to cover the town's general budget, but Select Board members nixed the proposal during their Jan. 14 meeting.

"Budget season is upon us, and there are a lot of questions that come up regarding the budget. There have been a lot of people insisting that we have an override vote," said Select Board Chairman Jason Petraitis, who outlined the town's dire financial situation during a presentation.

An override request can only be put forth to voters by the Board of Selectmen. It cannot be done by a citizen's petition, officials said.

During the financial presentation, Petraitis highlighted several key metrics reflecting challenges for residents. These include North Brookfield's median household income (\$81,010) and its unemployment rate of 4.2 percent (higher than the state average). Additionally, about 30 percent of the town's population is comprised of residents age 60 and above. Many of these residents are living on fixed incomes, officials said.

Earlier this winter, selectmen were considering whether to hold an open town discussion on the override proposal. Run by the Moderator, the forum would have allowed townspeople to share their opinions on the proposal.

But after speaking to several residents, researching detailed numbers, and sharing the data, Board members said there was no sense in furthering override

"Based on the numbers that I showed you, our people can't afford it." Petraitis said. "As the Chairman of the board, I won't be entertaining any discussion on an override.

Added Selectman Vaughn Schlegel, "I have talked to a lot of people in town, and it seems that most citizens' consensus is that they don't think they can afford an override. Everybody's already being hurt by the taxes that have increased, and I don't know that they can afford anything more at this point."

Among the town's financial challenges, selectmen pointed to sewer costs projected to increase due to an EPA-mandated upgrade of North Brookfield's sewer system, with a cost of approximately \$23 million.

Additionally, selectmen said the school portion of the budget is another major source of strain. The school district currently enrolls 397 students, from Pre-K through Grade 12.

With low enrollment and high costs across the district, North Brookfield officials have explored school regionalization opportunities for years. In Nov. 2024, the Quaboag Regional School Committee (serving Warren and West Brookfield) rejected a proposed regionalization between North Brookfield Public Schools and the QRSD.

In the absence of a regionalization opportunity, North Brookfield officials are faced with tough decisions on how to afford education, especially at the high school level.

"Based on the salary level and the budget at the school, I would recommend to the School Committee to start looking at tuitioning the high school kids out. We can't afford that," Petraitis

Turn To **OVERRIDE** page **A10** 

# Funds proposed for infrastructure statewide

BY KEVIN FLANDERS STAFF WRITER

REGION Gov. Maura Healey recentannounced major upgrades planned for the state's roads, bridges, and regional transportation systems.

During an announcement earlier this month. the Governor outlined \$8 billion in infrastructure projects targeted over the next decade. The investments will be made without raising taxes, officials pledged.

The plan will be filed as legislation in the coming weeks as part of the Governor's Fiscal Year 2026 budget proposal and an accompanying supplemental budget.

'This historic transproposal portation represents smart, for-

ward-thinking fiscal management, and it will have an impact on people in all regions of our state," said Healey. "We're going to invest billions of dollars to deliver better roads, less traffic, safer bridges, and a transit system that works in every region."

central Across Massachusetts, officials have long called upon state leaders to make significant investments in road and bridge improvements. The Governor's new plan is expected to bring relief to drivers whose daily commutes not only cause traffic headaches, but also damage to vehicles due to banged-up roads.

"This plan will accelerate our efforts to repair crumbling bridges, fix our culverts, and

advance important projects throughout the state," said Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll. "Our administration knows the role a safe, reliable, and efficient transportation system plays in the future of Massachusetts, and this plan represents a gigantic step forward."

If approved, the proposal would direct \$857 million in surplus Fair Share revenue from FY24 to public transportation. Additionally, the proposal would dedicate \$765 million in Fair Share resources from FY26 to the Commonwealth Transportation Fund.

As part of the capital expansion effort, Governor Healey intends to file a multi-year Chapter 90 bill later this month that would grow

the funding pool directed to cities and towns to \$300 million per year for five vears.

The transportation proposal includes \$2.5 billion for road and bridge repairs across the state through MassDOT, with money set aside for culverts, small bridge repairs, and safety and congestion hotspots.

The funding would also allow for projects advancing east-west rail operations. These include proposed capacity improvements near Pittsfield, track work and accessibility upgrades in Springfield, and station planning in Palmer. The ultimate goal is to reduce traffic congestion by offering fast, reliable rail service linking the

"Gov. Healey Lt. Gov. Driscoll have stressed that transportation systems must work if we want our communities to thrive," said Massachusetts **Transportation Secretary** and CEOMonica Tibbits-Nutt. "With the Governor's plan, we are taking very actionable steps to increase the use of Fair Share revenue and offer municipalities more money through the

Chapter 90 program." Additional proposed funding includes \$400 million to address workforce and safety initiatives identified as necessary by the Federal Transit Authority; \$25 million for a Winter Resilience Assistance Program for municipalities; and \$25 million for RTA workforce recruitment and retention.

The Governor also plans to use \$1.2 billion in **Grant Anticipation Notes** (GANs) to borrow against future federal highway grants to finance priority projects statewide.

The financing plan was heavily informed by the work of the Transportation Funding Task Force, which was created by Governor Healey through executive order last January. The task force spent the past year reviewing current and projected revenue sources.

To learn more about the Governor's transportation and infrastructure proposals, visit www. mass.gov.

# CC's Dental Clinic offers free preventative dental services for seniors and veterans

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College's Dental Hygiene Clinic is continuing to offer free preventative dental services to anyone aged 55 or older, as well as active military members and veterans. The clinic, located at QCC's West Boylston Street campus, offers dental assessments, teeth cleaning, X-rays and fluoride treatments. For patients who are not in the afore-

mentioned categories, rates are \$25 for adults and \$20 for children.

"We currently have a relationship with Senior Connection (formerly Central Mass. Agency on Aging) through a grant that gives our senior patients free services in the dental clinic," said Dental Clinic Operations and Facilities Manager Sheryl Ficorilli.

The grant, which

began in January of 2022, has supported over 750 senior patients. The program also provides transportation to and from the dental hygiene clinic.

QCC's dental hygiene students are required to spend a certain number of hours in direct patient care and the patients from this program provide that valuable interaction.

"This helps our students gain the necessary skills to graduate and become active in the area dental community," Ficorilli added.

To make an appointment or for more information, call 508-854-4306 or visit www.QCC.edu/dental-hygiene-clinic.

# Regis announces fall Dean's List

– Regis announces the students that met academic requirements to be named to the university's fall 2024 Dean's List, in recognition of their outstanding academic achievements. To earn a spot on the Dean's List, Regis students must earn a grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or higher; first-year students must have a GPA of 3.25 or higher.

This year's Dean's List includes: Serenity Ayala of North Brookfield Alexis Gosselin of Spencer

"Being named to the Dean's List is an honor earned by students who show a persistent commitment to their academic journey throughout the semester," said Dr. Mary Erina Driscoll, PhD, the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. "At Regis, we prioritize the development of students' character and confidence, equipping them with the skills they need for a successful career and life of meaning. Recognition on the Dean's List reflects a student's continuous dedication to academic excellence and we congratulate them on this well-earned recognition.

Founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph nearly a century ago, Regis challenges, inspires, and supports students who are driven by passion, purpose, and a pursuit to positively impact the world within a learning community that embraces inclusivity and innovation and builds strong character, confidence,

Regis College is a coed university 12 miles west of Boston in Weston, founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston nearly a century ago. With over 3,200 undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students enrolled on campus and in fully online graduate programs, Regis provides an academically rigorous education within the schools of nursing, arts and sciences, business and communication, and health sciences. In line with Regis' mission of providing innovative, industry-focused learning opportunities, the university offers academic partnerships with hospitals and local employers, a clinical dental center in Waltham, Mass., and bachelor's completion and accelerated nursing programs at its campus in Lawrence, Mass. The university's 20 NCAA Division III athletic teams compete within the Great Northeast Athletic Conference (GNAC). Regis challenges, inspires, and supports students who are driven by passion, purpose, and a pursuit to positively impact the world within a learning community that embraces inclusivity and innovation

and builds strong character, confidence,

## **CLUES ACROSS**

- 7. Miller beer variety

10. Ageless

- 12. River in SE Europe 13. Able to be repaired
- 14. Type of wrap
- 15. Atomic #54
- 16. Type of tent 17. U.S. Treasury position
- 18. Opposed to
- 22. Clouding of the lens
- 27. Priestess of Hera loved
- by Zeus
- 28. Unacceptable
- 19. Protective covering
- 21. Bridge building degree

**CLUES DOWN** 

Egyptians

2. Nevada city

4. Bird's beak

5. Language

11. Repeat

1. Supreme god of ancient

6. Midway between south

and southeast

8. Small biting flies

9. Sportscaster Patrick

10. A way to get around

12. A way to cook with fat

14. Temporary loss of

consciousness

17. Reciprocal of a sine

20. "Transformers" director

18. Fir tree genus

7. Punjab village

3. Energy, style and enthusiasm

33. Mr. T's "The A-Team" character51. Discourages from doing

# Charley Blair named to President's and camore. List at Plymouth State University

PLYMOUTH, New Hampshire — Charley Blair of Leicester has been named to the Plymouth State University President's List for the Fall 2024 semester. To be named to the President's List, a student must achieve a grade point average of 3.70 or better for the Fall 2024 semester and must have completed at least 12 credit hours during the semester, at least nine of which must confer grade points, at the time the lists are finalized. Blair is a Environmental Science & Policy major at Plymouth State.

Established in 1871, Plymouth State University serves the state of New Hampshire and the world beyond by transforming our students through advanced practices where engaged learning produces well-educated undergraduates, and by providing graduate education that deepens and advances knowledge and enhances professional development. The Plymouth State Cluster Learning Model emphasizes open, integrative, and project-based experiences. With distinction, we connect with community and business partners for economic development, technological advances, healthier living, and cultural enrichment with a special commitment of service to the North Country and Lakes Region of New Hampshire. To learn more about Plymouth State University, visit www.

About Plymouth State University

# plymouth.edu.



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E-MAIL

44. Type of drug (abbr.) 45. Spanish soldier 46. It precedes two 47. Illuminated

36. One point south of due east

personification of Earth

39. A major division of geological

41. English family dating back to

48. Former Milwaukee Buck Michael

50. Passports and drivers licenses

37. Assist in a crime

time

44. Discounts

49. Hostile

38. Greek mythological

40. German courtesy title

45. South American nation

23. Criminals who steal

25. Music product

30. Doctors' group

31. African nation

38. Deprives of vigor

41. Where you live

42. Muslim ruler title

40. Used to have (Scottish)

32. Ageless

36. Worn

43. Basics

26. "Talk to you"

24. Genus of leaf-footed bug

29. Santa says it three times

35. When you hope to get somewhere

Norman times

Michael ВВ T | 3 | 0 I M I N I

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# SPENCER ALMANAC

REAL ESTATE

### **BROOKFIELD**

\$565,000, 59 Molasses Hill Rd, Spink, Dylan J, to Bettencourt, Robert.

### EAST BROOKFIELD

\$325,000, 135 Baker Hill Rd, Dubois, Keith, to Dubois, Samuel G, and Grenier, Evan.

### LEICESTER

\$595,000, 5 Sandys Cir, Masterson, Lynne, to Cross, Chrisa, and Cross, Colin L.

# NORTH BROOKFIELD

### **SPENCER**

\$599,900, 5 Lambs Grv, Mts Realty & Dev LLC, to Usher, Brenda. \$425,000, 1 Willow Ln, Carlson,

Marie, and Carlson, Kurt, to Weideman Ft, and Weideman, Thomas E.

\$370,000, 103 Maple St, Rivelli, Mark A, to Tuffaha, Amer, and Adam,

\$270,000, 5 Watson St, Kelly Michael J Est, and Widen, Barbara A, to Zabecca LLC.

### WARREN

\$250,000, 381 Town Farm Rd, Gelinas, David L, to Costa, Eric P, and Costa, Leigh A.

\$205,000, 970 East Rd, Wilson, Joanne R, to Naultaug Valley Farm

### WEST BROOKFIELD

\$1,125,000, 58 John Gilbert Rd, Highview Campground Inc, to Wb Rv LLC.

\$154,447, 59 Lake View Ave, Lane, Heather A, and Us Bank TNa Tr, to Tiki Properties Iii LLC.

# Legislators seek support for those dealing with crumbling foundations

BY KEVIN FLANDERS STAFF WRITER

REGION — For area residents who have grappled with the crumbling foundations crisis since 2017, disappointment and setbacks have become all too familiar. But in spite of the latest hitch endured when the State House of Representatives failed to take up a bill meant to support affected homeowners, the new year is bringing fresh waves of hope.

During the final legislative session of 2024, House members took no action on the bill that was approved by State Senate members. Had the bill been greenlighted, it would have provided desperately needed support to homeowners.

"It's frustrating that the House failed to take up the crumbling foundations bill in the previous legislative session, but we're not giving up and will refile legislation this month," said State Sen. Peter Durant (R—Spencer). "I am hopeful that we can garner support from our colleagues in the House, many of whom have constituents struggling with this

The crisis began in 2017 with the discovery of multiple deteriorating foundations in northern Connecticut and west-central Massachusetts, all of which were constructed with concrete produced from stone aggregate that was supplied by the same

quarry in Willington, Conn.

A 2018 investigation confirmed that the presence of a naturally occurring iron sulfide mineral-pyrrhotite-tainted the stone aggregate produced from one vein of the quarry. Because the mineral causes a slow deterioration of concrete foundations when exposed to oxygen and water, problems didn't start surfacing at homes until many years after they were built.

Homes constructed between 1983 and 2015 could be impacted by the crisis, officials said. The majority of the tainted concrete was supplied by the now defunct J.J. Mottes Concrete and Septic Supply Company

in Stafford, Conn.

Cracking, flaking, bowing, and separation of concrete are all indicators of a problem that could jeopardize the entire house if not addressed, officials warn.

The cost to replace a foundation ranges between \$150,000 and \$250,000 per house. Most home insurance policies do not cover costs associated with the crisis.

In recent years, many homeowners whose foundations are showing signs of deterioration have been afraid to get testing done and risk being unable to sell their properties. Other residents have passed up opportunities to buy homes because they weren't able to get extensive testing

done in finished basements.

Having spent eral years advocating for affected homeowners, local legislators explained that it's critical to continue putting pressure on their colleagues and conveying the direness of the situation.

"We often hear about affordable housing and ways the legislature can work to provide that, yet we have people who can afford their homes until their foundations crumble from a naturally occurring element, and we are not working quickly enough to help them retain their homes,' Durant said.

This year's refiled bill would establish a comto study the best ways to deal with the growing problem of crumbling concrete. Bay State legislators are hoping to catch up to their counterparts in Connecticut, who have already taken several significant actions to assist homeowners.

"Connecticut has established a workable program, and we certainly could use that as a model, or find a method more suitable for Massachusetts," Durant said.

Last year, the proposed legislation was passed in the Senate at a formal summer session, then again at an informal December session.

# DA's office receives \$50,000 to implement Juvenile Diversion program

Worcester County District Attorney's Office has received a \$50,000 grant to expand its youth diversion program to the residents of Southbridge and Fitchburg, according to Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr.

The grant from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) will allow the office, in collaboration with Choices, Inc., to expand the Early Diversion Worcester (EDW) program, which diverts vulnerable adolescents between the ages of 12 to 18 who might otherwise enter the criminal justice system due to the impact of school suspensions.

"By reaching kids early, we can work to adapt and modify behavior, while hopefully preventing a lifetime of involvement with the criminal justice system," Early said. "This is crime prevention at its best."

The current Early Diversion Program has successfully enrolled and screened 60 youth since its full implementation in February 2024. One parent of a participant shared, "The Choices program is a supportive, accepting environment that has had a huge impact on my son and our family. In just a couple of months, he has made new friends and has found the motivation to strive for his dreams again. We are forever grateful.

Research by Citizens For Juvenile Justice (CFJJ) has shown that youth are twice as likely to be arrested during periods of school suspension or expulsion. In response to this issue, the Healey-Driscoll Administration allocated nearly \$200,000 through the Title II Formula Grant Program to support nonprofit organizations, local police, and state agencies working to prevent at-risk youth from entering the juvenile justice system. The funding is designed to improve outcomes for adolescents through community-based organizations that offer essential services and support.

The program offers a pre-arrest diversion model that provides comprehensive, trauma-informed, recovery-oriented, and equity-based behavioral health services to youth and their families. These services will be provided at the Choices program center in Worcester, where participants will receive individualized care.

Voluntary participants in the program will undergo a comprehensive intake and assessment, which will guide the development of a person-centered care plan. This plan will consider the child's current risk status, history, available resources, and the needs of both the child and their family. In addition, participants will have access to daily programming and free transportation to the Choices center in Worcester. It is anticipated that the program will assist 20 to 25 youth through the duration of the grant.

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Local students earn Dean's List honors at Nichols College

 $\hbox{DUDLEY--Nichols College is proud to recognize the academic accomplishments of students on the}\\$ fall 2024 Dean's List.

Dean's List recognizes those students who achieve high grades during a single semester. In order to be included on the Dean's List, a student must have a minimum grade point average of 3.5 for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and must have received no grades below B- during the semester.

The following local students have achieved Dean's List honors for the fall 2024 semester:

Zoe Cataldo of N. Brookfield Anthony Costello of Spencer Alannah Downs of Spencer Nicholas Michaelian of Leicester Brennan Ogert of Spencer

About Nichols College

Nichols College has earned business accreditation from the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the longest serving global accrediting body for business schools and the largest business education network connecting learners, educators, and businesses worldwide. Founded in 1815, Nichols transforms today's students into tomorrow's leaders through a dynamic, career-focused business and professional education. Nichols offers real-world learning focused on professional depth - combined with vibrant living, competitive athletics, and an unmatched alumni advantage - equipping students to exceed their own expectations. www.nichols.edu

# Local students earn President's

List honors at Nichols College

DUDLEY — Nichols College is proud to recognize the academic accomplishments of students on the fall 2024 President's List.

President's List recognizes those students who achieve high grades during a single semester. Students whose semester grade point average is 3.85 or higher for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and no grades below B- will receive President's List honors.

The following local students have achieved President's List honors:

Kiana Barnes of E Brookfield Olivia Charette of Spencer Timothy Charette of Spencer Dylan Clark of Brookfield Stephen Comtois of Brookfield Faith Lamonda of Spencer Jett Reilly of Spencer

About Nichols College

Nichols College has earned business accreditation from the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the longest serving global accrediting body for business schools and the largest business education network connecting learners, educators, and businesses worldwide. Founded in 1815, Nichols transforms today's students into tomorrow's leaders through a dynamic, career-focused business and professional education. Nichols offers real-world learning focused on professional depth - combined with vibrant living, competitive athletics, and an unmatched alumni advantage - equipping students to exceed their own expectations. www.nichols.edu

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# POLICE REPORTS

### Leicester Police Log

Thursday, January 16

12:10 a.m.: disturbance (Stafford Street), resolved; 8:27 a.m.: restraining order service (Pleasant Street), report taken; 8:28 a.m.: assist other PD (Main Street), services rendered; 8:53 a.m.: accident (South Main Street), report taken; 8:56 a.m.: mv stop (South Main Street), citation issued; 10:12 a.m.: ambulance (Main Street, Worcester), resolved; 10:31 a.m.: mv stop (Huntoon Memorial Highway), verbal warning; 10:41 a.m.: fraud (South Main Street), report taken; 11:13 a.m.: mv stop (Huntoon Memorial Highway), spoken to; 11:39 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), spoken to; 12:07 p.m.: welfare check (Mill Street), services rendered; 12:32 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), spoken to; 12:43 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), spoken to; 12:51 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), no action required; 1:03 a.m.: ambulance (Main Street, Worcester), transported; 1:13 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), name and address redacted from police log, op w/suspended license, criminal application issued; 1:43 p.m.: summons service (King Street Extension), unable to serve; 1:57 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), spoken to; 2:13 p.m.: ambulance (Huntoon Memorial Highway), transported; 2:14 p.m.: investigation (Pleasant Street). report taken; 4:07 p.m.: welfare check (South Main Street), unable to locate; 5:10 p.m.: summons service (King Street Extension), unable to serve; 5:53 p.m.: mv stop (Pleasant Street), written warning; 6:08 p.m.: summons service (King Street Extension), unable to serve; 8:07 p.m.: abandoned 911 call (Warren Avenue), resolved; 8:18 p.m.: disabled mv (Paxton Street), resolved; 8:27 p.m.: mv stop (Whittemore Street), written warning; 8:46 p.m.: ambulance (Merrick Street), transported; 9:16 p.m.: ambulance (Huntoon Memorial Highway), transported; 9:29 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), spoken to; 9:46 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17 7:06 a.m.: suspicious mv (Douglas Drive), resolved; 8:54 a.m.: investigation (Main Street), report taken; 9:18 a.m.: assist other agency (Main Street), services rendered; 9:47 a.m.: investigation (Main Street), report taken; 11:05 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), name and address redacted from police log, op w/suspended license, improper operation, criminal application issued; 11:40 a.m.: suspicious mv (McNeil Highway), resolved; 11:55 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 1:15 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; 1:16 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), citation issued; 1:35 p.m.: mv stop (South Main Street), written warning; 1:39 p.m.: mv stop (South Main Street), verbal warning; 1:44 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), spoken to; 1:52 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), resolved; 2:01 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; 2:10 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), citation issued; 2:19 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; ambulance (Silver Street, Worcester), transported; 3:58 p.m.: ambulance (Huntoon Memorial Highway), transported; 5:07 p.m.: ambulance (Pleasant Street), transported; 5:48 p.m.: ambulance (Hawley Street), transported; 5:48 p.m.: erratic operator (South Main Street), gone on arrival; 6:02 p.m.: ambulance (Main Street), transported; 8:02 p.m.: residential alarm (Pleasant Street), call canceled.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18

1:50 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 2:44 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; 3:25 a.m.: accident (Main Street), Kristopher J. Dufault, 40, 19 Willow Street, North Brookfield, OUI liquor, marked lanes violation, arrest; 8:08 a.m.: transport (South Main Street), transported to hospital; 8:10 a.m.: ambulance (Virginia Drive), transported; 9:01 a.m.: assist other PD (Main Street), services rendered; 10:58 a.m.: ambulance (Main Street), transported; 11:25 a.m.: shoplifting (Soojians Drive), name and address redacted from police log, shoplifting by asportation/second offense; 11:48 a.m.: assist other PD (Main Street), services rendered; 12:54 p.m.: ambulance (Henshaw Street), transported; 2:07 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; 2:15 p.m.: ambulance (Rawson Street), transported; 4:37 p.m.: ambulance (Redfield Road), transported; 4:53 p.m.: assist citizen (South Main Street); 5:34 p.m.: assist citizen (South Main Street); 9:19 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), name and address redacted from police log, uninsured mv, op w/suspended registration, criminal application issued; 11:10 p.m.: commercial alarm (Main Street), false alarm.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19 1:22 a.m.: erratic operator (Main Street), unfounded; 1:30 a.m.: assist other police (Main Street, Spencer), services rendered; 2:46 a.m.: commercial alarm (Main Street), false alarm; 3:46 a.m.: attempted b&e (Salminen Drive), investigated; 4:45 a.m.: plowing/sanding requested (Town Beach Road), resolved; 8:01 a.m.: ambulance (Salminen Drive), transported; 8:18 a.m.: accident (Main Street), report taken; 8:42 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 9:16 a.m.: assist citizen (Sargent Street); 9:21 a.m.: mv stop (South Main Street), verbal warning; 9:33 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 9:51 a.m.: mv stop (Auburn Street), verbal warning; 9:55 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 10:23 a.m.: missing person (Whittemore Street), report taken; 10:40 a.m.: ambulance (Whittemore Street), transported; 11:30 a.m.: abandoned 911 call (Flint Way), resolved; 12:47 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), name and address redacted from police log, unlicensed operation, no inspection sticker, criminal application issued; 1:19 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 1:25 a.m.: mv stop (South Main Street), verbal warning; 1:33 p.m.: suspicious mv (Main Street), resolved; 2:00 p.m.: mv stop (Paxton Street), verbal warning; 2:20 p.m.: assist other agency (Marlboro Drive), resolved; 2:26 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 2:30 p.m.: animal complaint (Parker Street), referred; 3:42 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), name and address redacted from police log, uninsured mv, unregistered mv, op w/suspended registration, criminal application issued; 6:13 p.m.: disturbance (Auburn Street), peace restored; 6:28 p.m.: accident (Stafford Street), report taken; 7:51 p.m.: parking complaint (Burncoat Lane), resolved; 8:43 p.m.: disabled mv (Main Street), referred; 10:18 p.m.: disabled mv (Marshall Street), assisted.

MONDAY, JANUARY 20 8:41 a.m.: commercial alarm (Main Street), false alarm; 3:42 p.m.: welfare check (Birchwood Drive), assisted.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21 12:24 a.m.: erratic operator (Main Street), unable to locate; 6:59 a.m.: investigation (South main Street), report taken; 10:45 a.m.: mv stop (Pleasant Street), written warning; 12:59 p.m.: investigation (Rawson Street), report taken; 1:15 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), written warning; 2:19 p.m.: ambulance (Mulberry Street), transported; 6:08 p.m.: disturbance (Soojians Drive), services rendered; 6:16 p.m.: ambulance (Waterman Street, Worcester), transported; 11:03 p.m.: ambulance (Huntoon Memorial Highway), transported; 11:51 p.m.: ambulance (Wheelock Street, Oxford), transported.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22

3:18 a.m.: ambulance (Huntoon Memorial Highway), transported; 8:24 a.m.: animal complaint (Washburn Street), referred; 8:51 a.m.: shoplifting (Soojians Drive), name and address redacted from police log, shoplifting by asportation, criminal application issued; 9:15 a.m.: accident (Bond Street), report taken; 9:24 a.m.: ambulance (Denny Place), transported; 9:44 a.m.: ambulance (Stafford Street), transported; 11:48 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; 12:04 p.m.: mv stop (Whittemore Street), verbal warning; 12:30 p.m.: larceny (Fairview Drive), call canceled; 12:49 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 12:52 p.m.: ambulance (Main Street), transported; 3:56 p.m.: assist citizen (Tanglewood Road); 4:51 p.m.: accident (Main Street), report taken; 5:12 p.m.: ambulance (Main Street, Worcester), transported; 6:32 p.m.: welfare check (Baldwin Street), transported to hospital; 7:02 p.m.: ambulance (Huntoon Memorial Highway), transported; 10:29 p.m.: ambulance (River Street), transported; 11:39 p.m.: assist other PD (Soojians Drive), unable to locate.

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# Spencer Police Log WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15

12:30-2:26 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 7:18 a.m.: LTC issued (West Main Street), assisted: 7:32 a.m.: LTC issued (West Main Street), assisted; 8:47 a.m.: fire alarm (McCormick Road), referred; 11:14 a.m.: medical/ general (West Main Street); 11:15 a.m.: fraud (Sumner Street), report taken; 11:43 a.m.: medical/general (Main Street); 12:48 a.m.: medical/ general (Mechanic Street); 1:16 p.m.: juvenile matter (Paxton Road), DA notification; 1:43 p.m.: medical/general (Church Street); 2:11 p.m.: officer wanted (North Spencer Road), re: call from former customer; 5:38 p.m.: 911 call (Craig Street), child w/phone; 5:39 p.m.: medical/general (Wall Street), lift assist; 5:40 p.m.: medical/general (Lincoln Street); 6:15 p.m.: fire/woods/ grass (Mechanic Street), referred; 7:10 p.m.: officer wanted (Valley Street), roommate dispute; 9:52 p.m.: 911 call (Richland Avenue), hang-up; 10:01 p.m.: officer wanted (Maple Street), mailbox stolen; (total daily mv stops – 1).

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16

12:23-2:44 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 12:41 a.m.: suspicious mv (Howe Road), investigated; 2:27 a.m.: parking violation (Grove Street), ticket issued; 6:51 a.m.: LTC issued (West Main Street), assisted; 7:58 a.m.: medical/ general (Church Street), lift assist; 8:58 a.m.: medical/general (Valley Street); 9:04 a.m.: 911 call (West Main Street), accidental; 9:52 a.m.: illegal dumping (East Charlton Road), investigated; 9:54 a.m.: animal complaint (Wilson Avenue), re: dog waste; 10:03 a.m.: medical/general (Bixby Road); 12:53 p.m.: officer wanted (Greenville Street), req. escort/retrieve belongings; 12:47 p.m.: medical/general (Valley Street); 1:52 p.m.: officer wanted (Main Street), req. welfare check; 3:37 p.m.: suspicious persons (Lincoln Street), investigated; 4:05 p.m.: hit/run accident (North Spencer Road), report taken; 4:42 p.m.: accident (West Main Street), report taken; 6:20 p.m.: accident (West Main Street), report taken; 6:51 p.m.: medical/general (Bixby Road), lift assist; 7:02 p.m.: 911 call (West Main Street), open line; (total daily mv stops – 1). FRIDAY, JANUARY 17

12:13 a.m.: mv repossessed (Cottage Street), info rec'd; 12:45-1:42 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 1:48 a.m.: parking violation (Main Street), ticket issued; 2:00 a.m.: mv theft (Meadow Road), plates stolen from mv; 4:29 a.m.: medical/general (Sherwood Drive), lift assist; 7:36 a.m.: medical/general (Mechanic Street); 7:55 a.m.: disabled mv (Main Street), services rendered; 8:15 a.m.: disabled mv (Main Street), assisted; 11:53 a.m.: medical/general (Cherry Street); 3:03 p.m.: officer wanted (Howe Village), req. welfare check; 3:05 p.m.: restraining order service (Wilson Street); 3:26 p.m.: 911 call (West Main Street), response not noted on police log; 5:09 p.m.: officer wanted (Franklin Street), reg. escort; 5:49 p.m.: fire/woods/grass (East Charlton Road), illegal burn; 6:01 p.m.: medical/general (Lincoln Street); 6:22 p.m.: mutual aid (Route 49), assist East Brookfield PD; 6:54 p.m.: restraining order service (Paxton Road); 7:56 p.m.: suspicious persons (Pleasant Street), investigated; 9:38 p.m.: officer want-



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ed (Chestnut Street), issue w/neighbor; 11:29 p.m.: medical/sudden death (Cranberry Meadow Road); (total daily

mv stops – 2). SATURDAY, JANUARY 18

medical/general a.m.: 12:05 a.m.: medical/general (Lakeview Drive); 1:34-2:27 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 1:55 a.m.: DPW call (Paxton Road), wire down; 2:35 a.m.: parking violation (Mechanic Street), ticket issued; 2:42 a.m.: mutual aid (West Main Street), assist Brookfield PD/mv stop; 7:58 a.m.: medical/general (Longview Drive); 8:07 a.m.: officer wanted (Maple Street), spoken to: 8:09 a.m.: medical/general (Marble Drive), lift assist; 9:11 a.m.: medical/general (Treadwell Drive); 10:29 a.m.: restraining order service (Paxton Road); 11:28 a.m.: mutual aid (Main Street), assist Leicester PD/Walmart shoplifter; 12:35 p.m.: mutual aid (West Main Street), assist Worcester PD/locate male; 12:51 p.m.: accident (Main Street), report taken; 1:11 p.m.: animal complaint (Cherry Street), loose dog; 1:54 p.m.: medical/general (Paxton Road); 3:10 p.m.: officer wanted (West Main Street), re: lost wallet; 4:07 p.m.: animal complaint (Wire Village Road), loose dogs; 5:06 p.m.: RV complaint (Clark Road) kids/quads on ice; 5:48 p.m.: disturbance (Chestnut Street), noise complaint; 6:00 p.m.: suspicious persons (Smithville Road), investigated: 6:41 p.m.: accident (Cranberry Meadow Road), report taken; 6:46 p.m. officer wanted (Church Street), unwanted parties; 7:19 p.m.: accident (North Brookfield Road), mv vs deer; 7:23 p.m.: accident (West Main Street), report taken; 8:34 p.m.: residential fire (North Brookfield Road), referred; 8:47 p.m.: medical/general (North Brookfield Road); 9:14 p.m.: officer wanted (Valley Street), rep. harassing text msgs.; 9:26 p.m.: officer wanted (Main Street), restaurant lights left on; (total daily mv stops -1).

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19 12:13-1:12 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 1:19 a.m.: disturbance (Main Street), m/f verbal dispute; 1:34 a.m.: mv complaint (Main Street), erratic operator; 4:24 a.m.: DPW call (West Main Street), rep. slippery conditions;

4:43 a.m.: LTC issued (West Main Street), assisted; 8:09 a.m.: medical/ general (Browning Pond Road); 9:22 a.m.: medical/general (Longview Drive); 9:53 a.m.: DPW call (Delude Avenue), icy conditions; 10:31 a.m.: mutual aid (West Main Street), pt. left residence/has dementia; 10:33 a.m.: 911 call (Bond Street), hang-up; 10:52 a.m.: mv complaint (Bond Street), req. speed board; 11:55 a.m.: officer wanted (Park Street), c/o unsafe ice; 12:05 p.m.: illegal dumping (Kingsbury Road), tires left on property; 12:07 p.m.: medical/general (Donnelly Road); 12:46 p.m.: hit/run accident (Church Street), report taken; 12:50 p.m.: medical/general (Lincoln Street); 1:43 p.m.: accident (Main Street), report taken; 2:40 p.m.: mv complaint (West Main Street), rep. violating no passing zone; 2:54 p.m.: medical/general (Maple Street); 3:27 p.m.: medical/ general (West Main Street); 3:27 p.m.: disturbance (Elm Street), noise complaint; 3:40 p.m.: 911 call (West Main Street), response not noted on police log; 3:53 p.m.: medical/general (Cherry Street); 4:48 p.m.: mutual aid (Main Street), assist State Police/mv stop; 7:14 p.m.: medical/general (Donnelly Cross Road); 8:23 p.m.: accident (Smithville Road), report taken; 8:32 p.m.: mv complaint (Chestnut Street), c/o mv in roadway; 9:55 p.m.: medical/general (Howe Village); 10:45 p.m.: mv complaint (Adams Street), rep. poss. accident; 11:10 p.m.: officer wanted (Main Street), DPW req. mvs removed by library; 11:39 p.m.: intelligence/parole (West Main Street), info rec'd; (total daily mv stops -2).

MONDAY, JANUARY 20

1:25-1:41 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 2:36 a.m.: intelligence/parole (West Main Street), info rec'd; 4:28 a.m.: DPW call (Charron Street), snow blocking d/way; 6:41 a.m.: medical/general (Maple Street), lift assist; 8:42 a.m.: fire alarm (Pleasant Street), referred; 9:49 a.m.: officer wanted (Church Street), rep. stolen items; 9:51 a.m.: medical/ general (Candlewood Drive); 10:49 a.m.: medical/general (Pioneer Valley Drive); 11:05 a.m.: medical/general (Briarcliff Lane); 12:34 p.m.: accident (Clark Road),

report taken; 1:25 p.m.: suspicious persons (Linden Street), juveniles entered bldg.; 1:37 p.m.: fraud (Main Street), report taken; 2:42 p.m.: mv complaint (Pleasant Street), my obstructing plow; 3:03 p.m.: 911 call (Woodside Road), accidental; 4:36 p.m.: DPW call (West Main Street), DPW advising will treat roads; 5:10 p.m.: mv lockout (Main Street), assisted; 6:21 p.m.: mv complaint (Route 49), erratic operator; 7:28 p.m.: officer wanted (Main Street), unwanted party; 7:49 p.m.: 911 call (Mechanic Street), open line; 8:45 p.m.: disturbance (Cherry Street), verbal altercation; 10:20 p.m.: medical/general (Mechanic Street); (total daily mv stops -0).

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21 12:58 a.m.: medical/general (Westland Drive), lift assist; 6:55 a.m.: LTC issued (West Main Street), assisted; 7:58 a.m.: accident (Main Street), report taken; 8:35 a.m.: accident (Ash Street), report taken; 8:40 a.m.: fire alarm (Mercury Drive), maintenance; 9:40 a.m.: medical/general (Greenville Street); 10:10 a.m.: fraud (Borkum Road), report taken; 10:40 a.m.: juvenile matter (West Main Street), DA referral; 11:32 a.m.: medical/general (Sherwood Drive); 11:50 a.m.: fire alarm (Pleasant Street), referred; 12:04 p.m.: illegal dumping (Mill Street), hot water heater dumped; 12:20 p.m.: restraining order service (West Main Street): 12:40 p.m.: officer (Main Street), c/o pharmacist refusing to fill Rx; 1:00 p.m.: abandoned 911 call (Paxton Road), misdial; 1:06 p.m.: medical/general (Donnelly Road); 2:25 p.m.: harassment prevention order service (West Main Street); 2:42 p.m.: medical/ general (Bixby Road); 4:11 p.m.: fire/ woods/grass (Debbie Drive), referred; 4:29 p.m.: accident (Main Street), report taken; 6:00 p.m.: medical/general (Maple Street); 6:33 p.m.: mv lockout (North Spencer Road), assisted; 7:25 p.m.: officer wanted (West Main Street), c/o issues w/mv purchased; 7:31 p.m.: medical/general (Valley Street); 10:57 p.m.: medical/general (Collier Circle), lift assist; (total daily mv stops – 1).

###

# Paxton Senior Explorers planning trip to Norway

PAXTON — Ever wished to travel to Norway? Here's your opportunity to join the Paxton Senior Explorers as we plan a trip to Norway in September.

Trip highlights include: Bergen, Fløibanen Funicular Nordfjord Folk Museum Geirangerfjord Cruise Loen Skylift Flåm Railway Borgund Stave Church, Oslo

The trip details are as follows: Nine-day trip from Sept. 12-20 Includes seven breakfasts and five dinners

There is an optional three-night post-tour to Iceland (Collette supplied) If there are 10 people interested, we will offer an optional custom planned three-day pre-tour trip to Sweden, including

Flight to Stockholm, with transfers to Hotel and back to airport Tour of Stockholm sites Dinner **Breakfast** Ferry to one or two archipelagos Swedish smorgasbord supper Breakfast

Flight to Norway

We have arranged a presentation by Collette about the trip details at the Paxton Senior Center 19 West St (Route 31) on Feb. 19 at 10 a.m. If interested, I hope you can attend! If you are interested but cannot attend the presentation, please contact Bill Murwin at (508)-756-3192.



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**EDITOR** 

### **EDITORIAL**

# Keeping it local local —why our community matters most

Big stories from far away dominate our feeds, leaving little room for the stories that directly impact our daily lives. But here in New England, we have something special, a culture of pragmatism, resilience, and a commitment to our neighbors that deserves more of our attention than any distant drama.

When you know what's happening in your town, you can make better decisions, participate in meaningful ways, and strengthen your community. From town meetings and school board decisions to the opening of a new business or a neighbor organizing a food drive, these are the stories that impact our daily lives.

Local news reminds us that what happens right outside our door often affects us far more than what's unfolding hundreds of miles away. Sure, keeping an eye on national or global events is important, but the real opportunities for change and impact start right here.

Living in New England is a badge of honor. This isn't an easy place to call home, and we like it that way. The winters are brutal, the terrain is rugged, and the people. We're straightforward, skeptical of nonsense, and fiercely independent. But beneath that no-nonsense exterior is a deep sense of loyalty and community.

We might argue about who makes the best chowder or complain about tourists clogging the roads in leaf-peeping season, but when someone in our community needs help, we show up.

Social media and national headlines are filled with division and negativity, but we know better. We've built a culture where actions matter more than words and where we measure people not by their politics, but by how they

treat others.

Ask yourself, how can I make an impact here? Can you volunteer at a local food pantry? Mentor a student? Organize a block party to bring people together? These small, tangible actions might not make national news, but they'll make a world of difference to the people around you.

At the end of the day, we're New Englanders. We don't fall for the fluff or the fearmongering. We know life is about the relationships we build and the community we create. It's about showing up, speaking truth, and taking care of the people around us.

# 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.

# OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Getting what we deserve

To the Editor:

I have previously pointed out that Trump kept none of his campaign promises in his first term. We have hit the jackpot this term, with him spending much of his first day, signing executive orders that either created new rules or undid Biden term initiatives. In fact, I think the Gulf of America concept might even have been created post election. While many of his executive actions, may be desirable, the here are many the courts must rule on and some are just illegal.

He has removed the Medicare pharma negotiations, price protections and watch for the cap on insulin to go away. One of his minions is looking to pare down the number of federal employees. If he fired them all, it would save less than a trillion dollars, but still plans to borrow four and a half trillion to give tax breaks to his group. Considering that Elon Musk's net worth has gone from \$40 billion to \$500 million, I fully expect his \$500 million influence purchase will make him the first trillionaire.

Trump is not a racist; it is people who are not rich that he dislikes. It is just coincidence that many of the not rich are also not white. When asked by an aide why he gets away with so many lies, he replied that his cellar dwellers will believe anything he repeats often enough.

He loves the uneducated, and has tried to expand their majority.

I am not saying that all of his cabinet selections are awful, because, with absolute loyalty being the major prerequisite, choices, especially for jobs that require judgement and honesty, limits choices. With the Sec Def choice, my granddaughter and several female friends, are rethinking their potential if they stay in. Tell me you are just kidding about no polio vaccine. When I heard the DOJ was going to focus on drugs and sex trafficking, I did not realize he meant putting someone experienced at both, in charge as AG. When choosing a national security advisor familiar with our major adversaries, I did not think meant someone who visits them.

In putting a convicted felon, who has threatened to weaponize the DOJ against his detractors, is not an excellent reason to issue them all pardons' then the guy who pardoned his posse last term and all of the cop beating insurrectionists this term, does not prove that he is a mob boss, you probably voted for him and don't care.

If anything he said or did during his campaign, led you to believe he would improve your lives, you have my sympathy. I have long explained that you can tell he is lying when his lips move. Let the buyer's remorse commence, if not immediately, when you go buy eggs or lumber.

KEN KIMBALL BROOKFIELD

# Can we put Humpty Dumpty back together again?

To the Editor:

Like Humpty Dumpty, our United States just fell off a wall. Can we put it back again?

Our now current President indicated that if elected, he would begin as "dictator for a day." As with the numerous others like him, he really meant day after day after day.

In the case of our country, this means, from the first day, dumping our country's great and mostly successful 250 year old democracy, which has been the envy of the world. It means into that Mar-A-Lago garbage bag goes our Constitution, our democratic values, rule of laws and our separation of powers between Congress, the Supreme Court and the Presidency.

It also means that unlike our great presidents of the past -Washington, Lincoln, the Roosevelts, Truman, Eisenhower and others, who governed with the advice and consent of those powers, we now have a President who says "I alone" have the power and ability to govern all the United States.

After growing up in working class family in Auburn and Spencer, I had the opportunity to work and live in most parts of the world. Doing this, I

got to see and work in many democracies and dictatorships.

Democracies, even young ones, since they govern with "We the people," while they most often do a better job for the people, like, say, those in Eastern Europe.

Dictatorships by the "We alone will govern" concentrate on control and providing wealth and benefits to the "Making Great" leader and their billionaire supporters, like, say, Elon Musk.

With democracies, if you aren't happy with a particular government, you can vote it out of power.

With dictatorships, you can't, and once a country goes down that road, it becomes very, very, hard to come back. Like, say, Putin's Russia.

We now most certainly have to take one road or another – keeping and saving our 250 American democracy or taking the "I Alone" road.

Like Ben Franklin, I hope we put in the hard work needed to keep democ-

> KEVIN KANE SPENCER

# Walt Disney

Positively

SPEAKING

TOBY

Many people feel they can't have the life they want because of their past limitations or failures.

Maybe your family wasn't there for you, you didn't get the proper education, or you've been fired from multiple jobs or mistreated in relationships.

Many things aren't fair and can cause a chain reaction of events that can take us far off course. Sometimes, we make bad choices and miss out on the life we want, but that doesn't mean it has to stay that way

"All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them." – Walt Disney.

But what gives a person the courage to pursue their dreams? One factor is a positive vision of what's possible.

The problem isn't that people lack vision—it's that their vision of the future is often shaped by the failures and limitations of their past. In other words, they do have a vision—but it's a negative one.

One trait of a successful person is they don't allow themselves to be defined by their failures or their present unfavorable circumstances.

Instead, they define themselves by a positive vision of their future.

That seems odd when you think about it. They define themselves by

something that hasn't even happened yet.

It's easy to look at a great person and assume they had everything handed to them or that somehow life was much easier on them than it was on you.

I have many fond memories of my parents taking me to Disney World. I've been on the rides, seen the movies, and heard about the man who built it all, Walt Disney. I've driven past the Disney skyscraper in Burbank, Calif., hundreds of times;

dozens of times.

When surrounded by all that accomplishment, it's hard to imagine that Walt ever faced any hardship.

I've auditioned at Walt Disney Studios

Most don't know that Walt Disney was fired from his job at the Kansas City Star after his newspaper editor told him that he didn't have enough imagination or creativity!

What if Walt Disney allowed himself to be defined by that moment, and for the next 20 years, he wandered from job to job, telling himself, "I'm not creative, I don't have a good enough imagination...."

Instead, imagine Walt in Kansas City after Laugh-O-Gram failed, sitting alone in his office, staring at

Turn To **POSITIVELY** page **A7** 

# You can put more into your 401(k) this year



FINANCIAL FOCUS

TREVOR NIELSEN

Once you retire, you'll likely need to draw on a variety of financial sources — and one of the most important ones may be your 401(k). And for 2025, you can put even more money into your plan than ever.

You can invest in your 401(k) in one of two ways, depending on your employer's plan. With a traditional 401(k), you contribute pre-tax dollars, which can lower your taxable income, and your money can grow tax deferred. If you have a Roth 401(k) option, you can contribute after-tax dollars, which aren't deductible, but your eventual withdrawals will be tax-free if you've had your account at least five years and you're at least 59 and a half.

For either a traditional or Roth 401(k), as well as similar plans such as a 457(b) (for government employees) or a 403(b) (for educators and employees of some nonprofit groups), the contribution limit has increased by \$500 for 2025, to \$23,500. If you're 50 or older, you can contribute an additional \$7,500, for a total of \$31,000. And under the SECURE 2.0 legislation, if you are between 60 and 63, you have a higher catch-up contribution — \$11,250, instead of \$7,500, for a total of \$34,750.

If you can afford to contribute the full amount to your 401(k) or similar plan, consider doing so. Of course, not everyone is in that position. If you're a younger worker, you may well have other financial obligations, such as paying off student loans. And even if you've been in the workforce for a while, you may be putting away money for other things — such as your children's education — as well as your own retirement. But even if you can't "max out" on your 401(k), try to contribute at least enough to earn your employer's matching contribution, if one is offered.

Regardless of how much you contribute to your 401(k), consider these suggestions on managing the money within your plan:

Create a portfolio that fits your risk tolerance. Most 401(k) plans offer up to a dozen investment options, while some plans offer many more. You obviously want to increase your 401(k) balance as much as possible, but that doesn't necessarily mean putting all your 401(k) dollars into the most aggressive funds available. Instead, consider spreading your 401(k) contributions among a range of investments, which can help you lower your risk level while still giving you opportunities for long-term growth. Everyone's risk tolerance is different, though, so you'll want to evaluate yours when constructing your 401(k)

Adjust your portfolio as needed. It's a good idea to review your 401(k)'s investment mix at least once a year to see if it's performing as you'd hoped. But be patient — one "down" year doesn't necessarily mean you must make changes. However, as you approach retirement, you may want to lower the risk level of your 401(k) by moving some of your dollars into more conservative vehicles. Still, even when you're retired and have started drawing money from your 401(k), you might want to keep some growth potential in it to help you stay ahead of inflation.

By contributing what you can afford to your 401(k), and by carefully managing the investments within your plan, you can help maximize the value of this powerful retirement savings vehicle—and give yourself a key asset to help you enjoy your retirement years.

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.

# Kid- and pet-friendly indoor gardening

Secure plants against accidental tipping by

inquisitive pets and

kids with mounting

putty. A couple of pieces

on the bottom of the pot

will help reduce the risk

of spilled plants and

soil. Invest in pots with

wider bases for floor

plants or secure several pots together to reduce

Creating an indoor oasis of greenery can help lift your spirits, reduce stress and improve your overall wellbeing. Challenges arise when growing indoor plants with kids and pets in the house. Keep them safe by selecting pet- and kid-safe plants and pest management strategies.

Increase your indoor gardening success by selecting plants suited to your home's growing conditions and gardening style. If you tend to overwater your plants, grow moisture-loving plants or opt for more drought-tolerant plants if you practice benign neglect. Once you have your list, double-check their people and pet toxicity. Consult with your veterinarian and visit the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) website for a list of pet-safe and toxic plants. Consult with your pediatrician, local botanical garden, and children's hospital for a list of kid-friendly indoor plants.

Keep an ongoing list of all the plants you are growing. Include both common and botanical names for accurate identification. Research the care they need and their toxicity to your pets and youngsters in the home. If you suspect your pet or child has ingested a toxic plant, you'll have the proper plant name when contacting your veterinarian or poison control center.

Display any toxic plants out of the reach of curious kids and pets. This can be challenging if your cat or child is skilled at jumping and climbing. With so many beautiful houseplants, play it safe and avoid those that are toxic or too tempting.



GARDEN Moments MELINDA **MYERS** 

the risk of tipping.

Cover the soil surface to prevent children and pets from digging. Fiber mulch and plant pot grid covers create a barrier between the soil and those who like to dig.

Once you narrow down the list, place your kid- and pet-friendly plants where they will receive the necessary amount of sunlight. An east- or west-facing window provides enough light for most indoor plants. Keep those that need brighter light within two feet of the window. Those that prefer lower light can be grown near a north-facing window or up to six feet back or off to the side of an east- or west-facing win-

Regularly groom and wipe dust off the leaves of your indoor plants to help reduce the risk of insect damage. Remove spotted leaves when they appear and adjust your watering. This is often enough to



Prayer plant (Maranta leuconeura) is a tropical plant with beautiful, unique foliage that's non-toxic to pets and people.

correct fungal disease problems. Enlist children in the ongoing care of your indoor plants. This will help them gain respect for the plants and may instill a love of gardening.

Give kids a hand lens and go on an indoor pest hunt. Children often find bugs more interesting than plants. Have them place yellow sticky traps like Summitâ Sticky Traps in various pots to help monitor and trap insect pests.

Always look for kid- and pet-friendly options when intervention is needed. Start with a strong blast of water to dislodge pests like aphids and mites. Follow with an application of a lightweight horticulture oil like Summitâ Year-Roundâ Spray Oil. This organic spray controls aphids, mites, immature whiteflies, and all stages of scale and mealybugs.

And if those tiny fruit-fly-like gnats are annoying to tolerate, consider managing them with a Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis product like Summitâ Mosquito Bitsâ(SummitResponsibleSolutions.com).

It's labeled for controlling fungus gnat larvae and is non-toxic for people, pets, and plants. Always read and follow label directions when using any product. You'll have better results and prevent problems caused by misapplication.

Proper plant selection and ongoing care will help keep your indoor plants healthy and children and pets safe from harm.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the Midwest Gardener's Handbook. 2nd Edition and Small Space Gardening. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" instant

video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and was commissioned by Summit for her expertise to write this article. Myers' website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

# Tips for Painting Perfection!

Are the winter doldrums setting in? Why not perk up your space with a paint project? Since nothing transforms a space quicker or cheaper than paint, it's a natural choice for a mini makeover. Whether you're painting an entire room or a piece of furni-

ture, the following ideas and techniques can help ensure paint perfection!

Paint is one the easiest, cost effective ways to alter and enhance the spaces you live in. The golden rule to painting walls is that dark colors absorb light, making a room appear smaller, and whites and pastels reflect the light, creating a spacious feel. To expand a small room, paint the walls a color from the cool end of the color wheel. In fact, paint company Sherwin-Williams recommends choosing blue, green or violet hues to make walls appear to recede.

Paint can also be used to visually correct architectural flaws. To widen a long narrow room, use a slightly darker color on the shorter walls and a lighter color on the longer walls. To make a low ceiling appear higher, be sure the ceiling is a lighter color than the walls. A long hallway can be shortened by painting the wall at the end a dark color to bring it closer. And rectangular rooms can instantly appear more symmetric by painting the two short end walls a darker shade.

The proper paint finish can be used to camouflage imperfect walls. For example, Paints that have no sheen, also known as "flat" or "matte" finishes absorb the light. These porous finishes are ideal for hiding flaws in ceilings and walls and are especially appreciated when working with old, plaster surfaces. The downfall is they cannot withstand cleaning and scrubbing so they are not practical for kitchens, bathrooms, children's rooms or other high traffic areas.

Eggshell finish has a slight sheen, similar to that of an eggshell, so it is still somewhat effective at hiding flaws. Its velvety look makes it a popular choice and eggshell finish is a bit more reflective than flat paint so it doesn't show every scuff and can tolerate light cleaning. Satin finish paint is more durable

Take THE HINT KAREN

eggshell finishes. It has a light sheen, and resists moiswhich ture, makes it a popular option for TRAINOR kitchens and bathrooms.

than matte or

Semi-gloss finishes reflect light and offer a bright, glossy finish which can really add to a room's appeal. Surfaces are easily cleaned, however the shiny finish shows surface imperfections, making it impractical for many applications. Newer trims and moldings are ideal candidates for semi-gloss paint.

A glossy finish provides a high gloss shine, is very durable and easy to clean. The brilliant shine is typically used for small accent areas, as the finish is very reflective and too distracting for most area applications.

Not sure how much paint to buy? Most major paint companies and home centers offer easy to use paint calculators on their websites for precise measuring. Or, to estimate the amount of paint you need in order to cover the walls of a room, multiply the perimeter of the room by the ceiling height to get square feet. Subtract 20 square feet for each door and 15 square feet for each average-sized window in the room. The figure you end up with is a pretty close estimate of the actual wall area. Keep in mind, you can expect one gallon of paint to cover approximately 350 square feet.

Want to know the most efficient order of painting a room? Experts advise painting ceiling, walls, trim, cabinets, and doors.

**Quick Tips** 

For a quick patch job on walls, simply use items on hand: Mix equal parts of starch and salt, with just enough water to make a thick paste. Apply and smooth over cracks or small holes.

When mixing up commercial plaster, you'll reduce lumps if you add the powdered plaster to the water instead of adding water to the plaster.

Sanding is a tedious chore. To reduce sanding on plastered walls, simply go over freshly applied joint compound with a wet paint brush for a smooth finish.

Ensure a smooth surface: Before

painting over an old bureau or other piece of furniture, you can easily clean the finish by wiping it down with a lintfree cloth dampened with straight turpentine. This method picks up any stray dust and helps smooth out the surface to prepare it for painting.

When painting new plaster, or other porous surface, paint on a solution of water mixed with PVA glue first. This seals the surface and stops the paint from soaking into the plaster, giving a better finish and making the paint go further!

When painting with a brush, always keep a wet edge as you paint, and work away from that wet edge. If you paint over a dry edge, you will get overlap marks.

Aerosol paint is a popular choice for revamping furniture and small accessories, but it can be frustrating when the paint does not dispel evenly. Here's a trick to ensure a finer and more even coat of paint: Simply place the can in warm water several minutes prior to spraying. The higher temperature helps the paint to flow out more easily, and smoothly.

Win a Three Course Dinner for Two at the Publick House

Your tips can win you a great dinner for two at the historic Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge! Simply send in a hint to be entered into a random drawing. One winner per month (or whenever I receive enough tips for a column) will win a fabulous three course dinner for two at the renowned restaurant, located on Route 131 across the town common in historic Sturbridge. Because I'm in the business of dispensing tips, not inventing them (although I can take credit for some), I'm counting on you readers out there to share your best helpful hints!

Do you have a helpful hint or handy tip that has worked for Do you have a question regarding household or garden matters? If so, why not share them with readers of Stonebridge Press newspapers? Send questions and/ or hints to: Take the Hint!, C/o the Southbridge Evening News, PO Box 90; Southbridge, MA 01550. Or E-mail KDRR@aol.com. Hints are entered into a drawing for dinner for two at the historic Publick House Inn.

### **POSITIVELY**

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empty walls. He had no money, no plan, and no clear way forward. Perhaps he wondered if his editor had been right all along-maybe he didn't have what it takes. It would've been so easy to give up then, to let the weight of failure convince him to settle for less.

But he didn't.

He sold his camera, scraped together enough for a one-way train ticket to Hollywood, and took a leap of faith. That train ride wasn't just a change of scenery it was a statement of hope.

Walt was choosing to believe in a future that hadn't been written yet, even when his circumstances told him otherwise. The rest is history.

I often wonder how many potentially great people never accomplish their vision because they believe in their failures more than in their dreams. They accept what their present circumstances are telling them instead of what their future vision could create.

If Walt Disney had been one of those people, we'd have missed out on one of the most creative minds of the 20th century.

He wouldn't have created Mickey Mouse, one of the most beloved characters of all time. There'd be no Snow White, no Cinderella, no Fantasia—classics that redefined animation forever.

He wouldn't have built Disneyland, the first-ever theme park of its kind, or Epcot, a visionary concept of a utopian community.

The Disney legacy wouldn't have touched billions of lives through films, theme parks, and innovations that continue to inspire the generations.

Walt Disney refused to let his failures or limitations define his future, so he became one of the most influential people of all time.

Like all great people, he focused on what could be instead of what had been.

We have the same choice—focus on what could be and take the first step toward your vision.

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# University of Rhode Island names area students to Dean's List

KINGSTON, R.I. — The University of Rhode Island is pleased to announce that several area students have been named to its Fall 2024 Dean's List. Among them

Gabriella Cervi of Spencer Colby Constantine of Leicester Elizabeth Czaja of West Brookfield Jack Dorman of West Brookfield Megan Genaway of Brookfield Haven Hubacz of Brookfield Luke Snow Girard of Spencer

To be included on the Dean's List, fulltime students must have completed 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable during a semester and achieved at least a 3.30 quality point average. Part-time students qualify with the accumulation of 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable earning at least a 3.30 quality point average.

Students named to the Dean's List represent nearly all of Rhode Island's cities and towns, all six New England

states, New York and New Jersey, and many other states and countries.

About the University of Rhode Island The University of Rhode Island is a diverse and dynamic community whose members are connected by a common quest for knowledge. As a global education leader and the state of Rhode Island's flagship public research institution, URI offers distinctive opportunities designed to meet the global challenges of today's world and the rapidly evolving needs of tomorrow. Founded in 1892, URI now enrolls more than 18,000 students and offers more than 200 degree programs across nine schools and colleges. As a land- and sea-grant institution, URI is a key driver of economic development in Rhode Island and contributes significantly to the health and vitality of the state, the ily dinner on Wednesday, Feb. 12, at 6 New England region, and the nation. To p.m. learn more, visit: uri.edu.

# Abigail Radebaugh named to Dean's List at Plymouth State University

PLYMOUTH, New Hampshire — Abigail Radebaugh of Brookfield has been named to the Plymouth State University Dean's List for the Fall 2024 semester. To be named to the Dean's List, a student must achieve a grade point average between 3.50 and 3.69 during the Fall 2024 semester and must have completed at least 12 credit hours during the semester, at least nine of which must confer grade points, at the time the lists are finalized. Radebaugh is a Nursing major at Plymouth State.

About Plymouth State University Established in 1871, Plymouth State University serves the state of New Hampshire and the world beyond by transforming our students through

advanced practices where engaged learning produces well-educated undergraduates, and by providing graduate education that deepens and advances knowledge and enhances professional development. The Plymouth State Cluster Learning Model emphasizes open, integrative, and project-based experiences. With distinction, we connect with community and business partners for economic development. technological advances, healthier living, and cultural enrichment with a special commitment of service to the North Country and Lakes Region of New Hampshire. To learn more about Plymouth State University, visit www. plymouth.edu.

### Stonehill announces fall Dean's List

EASTON — Stonehill College proudly recognizes the students named to the Fall 2024 Dean's List. To qualify for this recognition, students must achieve a semester grade point average of 3.50 or better. They must also have successfully completed all courses for which they were registered during the term.

Isabella Ortiz of Leicester Shelby Wessell of Rochdale 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 387-acre campus and former estate of Frederick

Lothrop Ames in North Easton, 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 more than 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.

### Local students earn Dean's List recognition at Norwich University

NORTHFIELD, Vt. — The following students from your readership area have been recognized on the Dean's List at Norwich University for the Fall 2024 semes-

Kyle Stapel, Leicester David Splaine, Rochdale Ashley Parker, Spencer Matthew Czaja, West Brookfield

Full-time undergraduate students, who earned a semester grade point average of at least 3.40 are awarded Dean's List honors. About Norwich University

Norwich University is a diversified academic institution that educates traditional-age students and adults in a Corps of Cadets and as civilians. Norwich offers a broad selection of traditional and distance-learning programs culminating in baccalaureate and graduate degrees. Norwich University was founded in 1819 by Captain Alden Partridge of the U.S. Army and is the oldest private military college in the United States of America. Norwich is one of our nation's

six senior military colleges and the birth-Savannah Cole named place of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). www.norwich.edu

# Leicester Knights of **Columbus** hosting family

LEICESTER — The Leicester Knights of Columbus will host a fam-

The cost of dinner is \$15 per person, which includes a salad; choice of pot roast or baked fish; a dessert; and cof-

To reserve your spot, please call Don at 508-615-8434, or send an email to: ohno7g7@yahoo.com.

Please make your reservations by Feb. 6.

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# to Dean's List at University of New England

BIDDEFORD and PORTLAND, Maine Savannah Cole of North Brookfield has been named to the Dean's List for the 2024 fall semester at the University of New England.

Dean's List students have attained a grade point average of 3.3 or better out of a possible 4.0 at the end of the semester.

The University of New England is Maine's largest independent university, with two beautiful coastal campuses in Maine, a one-of-a-kind study-abroad campus in Tangier, Morocco, and an array of flexible online offerings. In an uncommonly welcoming and supportive community, we offer hands-on learning, empowering students to make a positive impact in a world full of challenges. We are the state's top provider of health professionals and home to Maine's only medical and dental colleges, a variety of other interprofessionally aligned health care programs, and nationally recognized programs in the marine sciences, the natural and social sciences, business, the humanities, and the arts. Visit www.une.edu.



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### **WORKSHOP**

continued from page **A1** 

to overcome the dreaded writer's block. Through a combination of fun exercises and group discussions, the program has assisted several writers with getting their creative trains back on track.

'One of the things past attendees have enjoyed and learned from is the writing exercises," said Londergan, whose latest novel, "Unlike Any Other," has captivated New England readers. "The writing exercises this year are different than what I've done in the past. I enjoy seeing the creative ideas that come out of them."

Writers also benefit from meeting and engaging with others who enjoy reading, writing, and creating. Many workshop attendees have developed friendships and regularly share ideas with each

"Back-and-forth discussion is always a popular part of the day," Londergan added. "Attendees learn from each other. Individual issues or problems anyone has with their writing are discussed, and the group helps them with suggestions and observations."

The workshop is limited to 14 participants. The cost is \$110 per person, and lunch is included.

Registration is required for participation in the workshop. The deadline to register is Feb. 28.

If you would like to register for this year's program, send an email to: ed.londergan@gmail.com. You may also call 508-864-8685 to learn more.

### **OVERRIDE**

continued from page A1

Asked whether the town has a Plan B for dealing with mounting budgetary challenges, selectmen urged residents to seek assistance from higher levels.

"I would encourage everybody to call your state legislators, call your federal legislators and senators, call the Governor, and tell them to fix things,' Petraitis said. "The state had billions of dollars in surplus last August, so they can alleviate a lot of the strain, depend-

are in much worse shape than we are, despite what people think."

ing on what they do." Added Petraitis, "There are towns that





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### SAFETY

continued from page A1

end Bill Yorzyk, raises funds to support youth swimming lessons. The event is organized by Yorzyk's daughter, Jennifer Yorzyk Triger, a longtime supporter of water safety programs for area

In recent weeks, third graders from Wire Village School and East Brookfield Elementary School have benefited from the swim lessons held at the Tri-Community YMCA in Southbridge as part of the Just Get in the Water Program.

We have worked hard to establish a program that promotes water safety, health, and wellness. Thanks to Jenn Triger of Wild Bill Swim and her philanthropy, our Grade Three students from Wire Village School and East Brookfield Elementary, for the second year in a row, are fortunate to be able to go off campus and take part in learning to swim as part of our physical education, health, and wellness classsaid Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District Superintendent Paul Haughey. "I cannot thank Jenn Triger enough for her philanthropic efforts over these past two years. The

benefits to our students are quite amazing.'

Held each year at South Pond in Brookfield, the Wild Bill Swim and Paddle Challenge features several offerings, including an open-water swim, a short-distance swim, a onemile stand-up paddleboard challenge, and a family fun flotilla.

The fundraiser always brings together participants from throughout the area and the region to support youth water safety activities offered by the Just Get in the Water Program.

"We created this event to honor my father and his commitment to swimming by making sure everyone feels safe," Yorzyk Triger said in a previous statement. "Everything we raise in this annual event goes to teaching local kids water safety and to swim.'

Funds raised during the event cover the costs of transporting kids to the local YMCA pool, in addition to providing swimsuits and goggles for youth partic-

"We are so excited to be a part of this program for the second year. The Just Get in the Water Program provides such an amazing opportunity for the third grade students in the SEBRSD to receive four sessions of swim lessons free of charge," said East Brookfield Elementary School Principal Christine

SEBRSD leaders thank everyone who played a role in making the lessons possible, including Yorzyk Triger and her team; the WaterWise Foundation; volunteers and supporters at the Wild Bill Swim and Paddle Challenge; the YMCA of Southbridge; and all SEBRSD parents, faculty, and staff members who have volunteered their time.

"This program is geared toward a non-traumatic approach to water safety and fun in the water," Lavin added. "The emphasis is given to skills that nurture comfort in their surroundings, basic safety skills, and pool etiquette."

Each year, drowning is a leading cause of accidental deaths in children under the age of 14 nationwide. Through the Just Get in the Water Program, local youngsters are learning invaluable lessons to help stay safe in the water and also protect other swimmers.

"Proper education can significantly reduce the risk of accidents and potentially save lives," Lavin said. "This can also help the children to establish a healthy respect for water and, in turn, they are more likely to make safe choices near swimming pools, lakes, and oceans.'

School officials and volunteers have enjoyed seeing the kids getting comfortable in the water during their les-

"The students were so excited to start their lessons these last two weeks and could not stop talking about their time at the Southbridge YMCA when they returned to school," Lavin told the New Leader. "They are looking forward to their next lessons and what they will learn."

To find out more about the Wild Bill Swim and Paddle Challenge, or to discover ways you can support youth water safety programs, visit www.WildBillSwim.org.

"When I started the Wild Bill Swim and the WaterWise Foundation, I did not realize the deep community impact it would have," Yorzyk Triger said. "We are creating the next generation of swimmers and lifeguards. I am grateful every single day for being able to provide this to children who may have never been in a body of water."

### **TULIP**

continued from page A1

the Haston Library while building on the strong foun-dation it already has," Tulip

When the opportunity presented itself to apply for the library director position, Tulip was excited about the possibility of joining the team and utilizing her experience to better the commu-

"I was drawn to the director's position at Haston because I've been a member of the North Brookfield community for nearly 15 years, and I care deeply about its success," Tulip told the New Leader. "Libraries aren't just about books-they're about bringing people together, offering resources, and creating opportunities for learning and connection. The chance to step into a leadership role at such an important community hub really excites me."

For Tulip and her team, it's important to focus on offering a strong lineup of programs and activities for guests of all ages.

"I love the idea of creating

make a real difference," said a space where everyone whether they're kids, par-Tulip, who was slated to ents, or older adults—feels start her new role on Jan. 27. Tulip earned her BA in

writing and literature from Emmanuel College, then spent several years gaining certifications and participating in continuing programs in childbirth education. She later became a certified birth and postpartum doula, as well as a certified lactation counselor with the Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice.

Tulip eventually co-founded a community center for new and expectant families.

"These experiences allowed me to support families through the pregnancy and birth process. Later, I transitioned into high school library media specialist roles, where I applied my skills in program development, community engagement, and education," Tulip

Prior to officially taking over as Library Director, Tulip was welcomed by several leaders. She thanks everyone in the community for their support and guid-

"I've already had the pleasure of meeting both the staff and the board of trustees. Their enthusiasm for the library and commitment to the community really stood out to me. It's clear they care deeply about making the library a vibrant resource for North Brookfield, and I'm excited to work alongside them," Tulip said.

Looking ahead, Tulip is eager to meet more patrons, families, seniors, and guests from North Brookfield and surrounding communities who use the library. She plans to assess current programs, learn what's working well, and identify areas for future growth.

"I'm really looking forward to getting to know the community and hearing directly from them about their needs and hopes for the library," Tulip said. "In my first few months, I plan to focus on listening, whether that's talking with staff, engaging with patrons, or connecting with community members. Understanding the library's role in people's lives and the challenges of a small rural town like North Brookfield will be key for

One of Tulip's main goals is to support the strong foundation of programming already in place at the library, while also looking for ways to enhance services. Opportunities might include expanding programming, creating new initiatives, or building partnerships with local organizations.

"This will be a collaborative process, and I'm looking forward to working alongside the library staff and board of trustees to ensure we're providing the best possible service to the people of North Brookfield," Tulip

Away from work, Tulip enjoys spending time with her three teenagers, gardening, baking, and fishing. She also loves foraging and studying botany and mycology.

For reading interests, Tulip is drawn to historical fiction, fantasy, and YA novels, along with nonfiction titles related to her areas of

welcome and supported. This role feels like a great opportunity to make a difference in a place I truly care about," Tulip said. Having worked with

countless students over the years to help them secure the resources they needed for projects, Tulip is well-prepared for the demands of finding the right materials to keep patrons of all ages engaged, informed, and inspired. "I worked closely with

teachers and students to create a culture of reading and learning, which often meant tailoring resources and events to meet the needs of diverse groups," Tulip said. "In all my roles, I've prioritized creating welcoming and inclusive spaces where people can learn, connect, and grow. Whether it's running events, working on budgets, or finding the right resources for a patron, I've always focused on ensuring everyone feels supported and valued.'

In addition to her library leadership experience, Tulip also ran a small busi-

ness that helped keep her skills sharp in community engagement, resource coordination, and program expansion.

"I'm excited to bring that same approach to the Haston Library, working with the community to provide services and programs that

# Friday's Child Hi! My name is Mikel and I can make one handed three shots in basketball! Mikel is a thoughtful, ma-Mikel

Age 17 Registration # 7138

ture and likeable teen. When asked to describe his personality, Mikel stated "I am friendly, and I try to be kind to others." Mikel has a variety of interests. He loves watching and playing sports, specifically basketball and football. Mikel enjoys singing and dancing to pop and HipHop music. He is a real fan of songs by Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak. Mikel also

likes playing video games such as Mario and NBA 2K. https://adopt.mareinc.org/waiting-child-profiles#gallery/ child/7138

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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 . 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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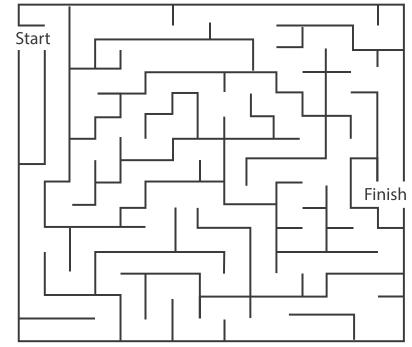


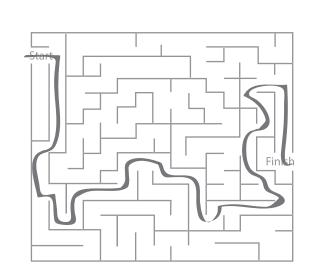
Having sold more than 600 million copies worldwide, this book series is the best-selling in history.

Answer: Harry Potter

### **Maze Craze**

Find the way through the maze to the finish line.







**1785:** The University of Georgia is founded, becoming the first state-chartered public university in the United States.

**1880:** Thomas Edison receives a patent for his incandescent lamp.

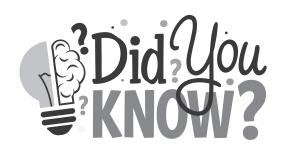
**2010:** Apple announces the iPad.



a natural ability to do something



**English:** Page Spanish: Página Italian: Pagina French: Page **German:** Seite



Reading a book in bed before going to sleep can promote a better night's rest.





Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Library card catalog

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Solve the code to discover words related to slow cooking. Each number corresponds to slow cooking. (Hint: 22 = E)

24 26 11 9 26 20 Α.

Clue: Not quickly

14 10 11 14 6 В.

Clue: Ceramic vessel

15 18 17 10 22 23 15 22 18 16 24 redients

Clue: Parts of a recipe C.

14 11 5 22 10 22 23 D.

Clue: With the top on

SUDOKU

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2	9		Zoodas .		7		8	
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**Fun By The** Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Level: Advanced

### Here's How It Works:

Answers: A. slowly B. crock

D. covered

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

1	6	₽	3	2	9	8	www	S
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**HANSMA** 

# **LEGALS**

### **Commonwealth of Massachusetts Worcester Probate & Family Court** WO25E0004P

**Petition to Partition Citation** (A.C. 92A)

To Brian E. Fritze and to all other interested persons.

A petition has been presented to said Court by Dianne E. Lincoln of Fiskdale in the County of Worcester representing that he hold as tenant in common undivided part or share of certain land lying in North Brookfield in said County Worcester and briefly described as follows

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 157 School Street, North Brookfield, Massachu-

The land and the buildings thereon situated on the northerly side of School Street in North Brookfield, Worcester County, Massachusetts, and being shown as Lot #7 on a Plan of Land Owned by Brian K. Marvelle, dated November 3, 2000, by Donald A. Para Land Surveyor, Inc. and recorded in the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 762, Plan 41, and bounded and described as follows:

BEGINNING at drill hole in a stone wall at the southeasterly corner of the lot to be described on the northerly side of School Street, also being a corner of Parcel B shown on Plan Book 555, Plan 15 no or formerly owned by Christi Cournover:

THENCE South 65° 41' 29" West along a stone wall on the northerly side of School Street, eighty-seven and ninety-four hundredths (87.94) feet to drill hole;

THENCE South 63° 53' 18" West along a stone wall on the northerly side of School Street, ninety-four and sixty one hundredths (94.61) feet to drill hole;

THENCE South 48° 04' 18" West along a stone wall on the northerly side of School Street, sixty-eight and three hundredths (68.03) feet to a point;

THENCE North 16° 08' 13" West along Lot #2, two hundred fifty(250.00) feet; THENCE North 65° 17' 27" East along Lot #2, three hundred eighteen and forty-five hundredths (318.45) feet to a point at land of said Cournoyer.

THENCE South 0° 56' 23" West along Parcel B said Cournoyer land, two hundred fifty (250.00) feet to the point of beginning.

Containing an area of 1.473 acres according to said plan.

BEING the same premises as conveved to the Gilbert Bailie by deed of Richard E. Kennan and Karen Kennan dated June 29, 2004 and recorded with

Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Book 34039, Page 51.

setting forth that he/she desires that all the aforesaid described part of said land may be sold at private sale for not less than Four Hundred Thirty Thousand (\$430,000) dollars, and praying that partition may be made of all the land aforesaid according to law, and to that end that a commissioner be appointed to make such partition and be ordered to make sale and conveyance of all, or any part of said land which the Court finds cannot be advantageously divided either at private sale or public auction, and be ordered to distribute the net proceeds thereof.

If you desire to object thereto you or your attorney should file a written appearance in said Court at Worcester before ten o'clock in the forenoon on the Eleventh day of February, the return date of this citation.

Witness, LEILAH A. KEAMY, Esquire, First Judge of said Court, this fifteenth day of January. Stephanie K. Fattman

Register of Probate January 31, 2025 February 7, 2025 February 14, 2025

**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. WO25P0153EA CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

Estate Of: Joseph John Williams Also Known As: **Michael Williams** Date of Death: 12/16/2024

To all interested persons: A Petition for Formal Appointment of **Personal Representative** 

has been filed by Michael T Williams of Brookfield MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that:

Michael T Williams of Brookfield MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE** 

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to

this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 02/11/2025.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

**UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)** 

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

WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court. Date: January 15, 2025

Stephanie K. Fattman, Register of Probate January 31, 2025

> **Town of Spencer** Notice of Public Hearing

Notice is hereby given under Chapter 138, Sec. 15A of the Massachusetts General Laws that a public hearing will be held on February 10, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the McCourt Social Hall at the Memorial Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Spencer, on the application of Miguel

A. Perez for a change in location/ alteration of premises change for the all-alcoholic beverages license for Tulence, Inc., 117 Main Street, Spencer, MA. Described premises: 4,400 square feet with one floor.

John J. Howard, Chairman, Board of Selectmen January 31, 2025

At the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting to be held on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, in the McCourt Social Hall of Memorial Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Spencer, MA, a public hearing will be held on the following items starting at 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as can be heard: Notice of Public Hearing – Spencer

**Zoning Board of Appeals** Special Permit & Variance- Applicant/ Owner: Jimmy George: Location: 20 Whittemore Cove, Spencer Assessor's Map U17-08. The applicant is seeking a Special Permit under Sections 4.9.2 (Nonconforming Structures) and a Variance under Sections 5.5.3 (Maximum building Coverage) of the Spencer Zoning Bylaw to build an addition of deck with overhang that is 5 feet from the side property line. The property is in the Suburban Residential (SR) zoning district.

January 24, 2025 January 31, 2025

> **Town of Spencer Conservation Commission PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

In accordance with the requirements of the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act, MGL c. 131, s. 40 and the Spencer Wetlands By-Law:

Matt McLaughlin has filed an NOI with the Spencer Conservation Commission for herbicide treatment located at R57-999 Browning Pond, Spencer,

Jay Gallant has filed an RDA with the Spencer Conservation Commission to add an earthen berm located at 69 **Browning Pond Road, Spencer, MA.** Applications can be reviewed at the Office of Development and Inspectional Services, Town Hall. A public hearing regarding these filings will be held by the Spencer Conservation Commission in McCourt Social Hall at Town Hall, 157 Main Street, on Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at which time all persons having an interest may be present or call in remotely to participate. Conservation Commission meetings open at 6:15 p.m.

Mary McLaughlin, Chairwoman January 31, 2025

**NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE** OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 9 Hebert Road, Spencer, Massachusetts

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Keith Scott to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. ("MERS"), as mortgagee, as nominee for Nationstar Mortgage LLC d/b/a Mr. Cooper its successors and assigns and now held by Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC, said mortgage dated December 17, 2019, and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 61605, Page 268, as affected by an Assignment of Mortgage dated July 5, 2023, and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry

of Deeds in Book 69343, Page 170, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at Public Auction on February 14, 2025 at 11:00 AM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

Land in Spencer, Worcester County, Massachusetts, with the buildings thereon, on the southerly side of Hebert Road being shown as Lot 9, on a plan of lot in Spencer, Mass. owned by James D. McGrath, dated July 26, 1973, plan and survey by Theodore P. Drazek, R.L.S. and recorded with the Worcester District Registry of Deeds on July 31, 1973, Plan Book 385, Plan 20, and being more particularly bounded and described as follows:

Beginning at a point on the southerly side of Hebert Road said point being 242.72 feet from the southeastern corner of the intersection of Hebert Road and Jolicoeur Road, being the northwestern corner of the lot herein described:

Thence S. 19° 31` 50" E. 267.70 feet along other land now or formerly of James D. McGrath to a point at other land now or formerly of McGrath;

Thence N. 42° 33` 10" E. 78.70 feet along other land now or formerly of Mc-Grath to a point;

Thence S. 80° 59` 10" E. 69.93 feet along other land now or formerly of Mc-Grath to a point;

Thence N. 15° 30` 42" W. 270.34 feet along other land now or formerly of Mc-Grath to a point in the southerly line of Hebert Road;

Thence S. 68° 24` 40" W. 150 feet along the southerly line of Hebert Road to the point of beginning.

Containing 35,300 sq. feet of land, more or less.

The description of the property contained in the mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

For Mortgagor's Title see deed dated December 17, 2019, and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 61605, Page 266.

TERMS OF SALE: Said premises will be sold and conveyed subject to all liens, encumbrances, unpaid taxes, tax titles, municipal liens and assessments, if any, which take precedence over the said mortgage above

TENTHOUSAND (\$10,000.00) Dollars of the purchase price must be paid by a certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check at the time and place of the sale by the purchaser. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid by a certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check within forty-five (45) days after the date of sale.

Other terms to be announced at the sale. Marinosci Law Group, P.C. 275 West Natick Road, Suite 500 Warwick, RI 02886

Attorney for Lakeview Loan Servicing,

LLC Present Holder of the Mortgage Telephone: (401) 234-9200

MLG File No.: 23-05010 January 17, 2025 January 24, 2025 January 31, 2025



Valentine's Day indulgence done devilishly right



If asked to describe the favored foods of Valentine's Day in a single word, "decadent" might prove the most apt descriptor. Foodies and non-foodies alike recognize that Valentine's Day and chocolate are intertwined, making the day an ideal time to indulge in something decadent. This Valentine's Day. couples can share their love for decadent delights by working alongside one another to whip up this recipe for "Devil's Food Layer Cake" from Elisabeth M. Prueitt and Chad Robertson's "Tartine" (Chronicle Books).

### **DEVIL'S FOOD** LAYER CAKE

Yields 1 10-inch cake; 12 to 16 servings

Cake layers

cups all-purpose flour

tablespoons cornstarch

powder 1/2

teaspoon baking

teaspoon baking soda

cups cocoa pow-11/4

Town-to-Town

ter, at room temperature cups sugar 23/4large eggs 11/4 cups full-fat but-

termilk

teaspoon salt

cup unsalted but-

Chocolate Ganache ounces or 32 ounces bittersweet choc-

olate 3 cups or 4 cups heavy cream

cup plus 1 tablespoon caramel

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Butter and lightly flour the sides of two 9-inch cake pans, knocking out the excess flour. Line the bottom of each pan with parchment paper cut to fit exactly.

To make the cake layers, sift together the flour, cornstarch, baking powder, baking soda, cocoa powder, and salt into a bowl and set aside. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium-high speed until light and creamy. Slowly add the sugar and continue to beat on the same speed light in color and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing well

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after each addition until incorporated before adding the next egg. Stop the mixer and scrape down the sides of the bowl with the rubber spatula. With the mixer on low speed, add the flour mixture in 3 equal batches alternately with the buttermilk in 2 batches, beginning and ending with the flour mixture. Stop the mixer, scrape down the sides of the bowl and then mix again for another few seconds.

Divide the cake batter evenly between the prepared cake pans. Bake until the top springs back when lightly touched or a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Let the cakes cool completely in the pans on a wire rack.

When the cakes are cool, turn them out by inverting the pans, and then turn the cakes upright. Using a serrated knife, slice off the domed portion from the top of each cake to make the tops flat. If you want to decorate the cake with crumbs as described in the headnote, reserve the slices for making the crumbs.

To make the crumbs, preheat the oven to 250 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a nonstick liner. Break up the cake slices and spread on the lined baking sheet. Place in the oven and toast until completely dry, about 1 hour. Let cool completely, then transfer to a food processor or blender and process until finely ground. Sift the crumbs through a medium-mesh sieve. (Don't use a sieve with fine mesh or the crumbs won't pass through.) Set aside.

To make the ganache, place the chocolate in a heatproof bowl, using the smaller amount of each ingredient if you will be decorating the cake with crumbs and the larger amount if you will not. Bring the cream to just

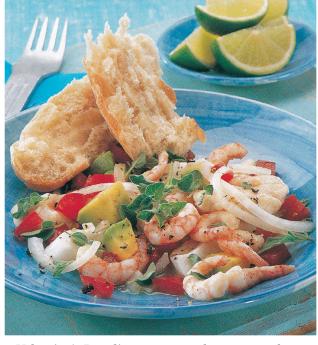
# Ceviche makes Valentine's Day dinner special

under a boil in a small saucepan. Pour the cream over the chocolate. Let the mixture sit for a few minutes without stirring until the chocolate is partially melted, and then stir with a rubber spatula until smooth and shiny.

To assemble the cake, split each cake into 2 layers to make 4 layers in all. Transfer 1 layer to a serving plate. Using an offset spatula, spread 3 tablespoons of the caramel evenly over the cake layer. Spread a thin layer of ganache (about 1/4-inch thick) over the caramel. Top with a second cake layer, and again spread with 3 tablespoons caramel and then a thin layer of ganache. Top with the fourth cake layer. Refrigerate the cake until the center seems firm, 1 to 2 hours. Cover the remaining ganache with plastic wrap and leave at room temperature for finishing the cake.

Remove the cake from the refrigerator. Using the rest of the ganache, frost the top and sides of the cake with the offset spatula. If you are going to coat the cake with the toasted cake crumbs, the cake must be evenly frosted and the ganache must be soft enough for the crumbs to adhere. If the ganache has hardened, use a kitchen torch to soften it slightly, or put the whole cake into a 400 F oven for 10 seconds or so, just until the chocolate looks shiny. Sprinkle the crumbs evenly over the top of the cake, then tilt and turn the cake so that they spill over the sides, adhering to them as they fall. If you are using only the ganache and not the crumbs, the ganache will be thicker on both the top and sides.

Serve the cake at room temperature. To store, cover tightly and keep in a cool place for up to 4 days. It is not necessary to keep this cake in the refrigerator for 8 hours or overnight. refrigerator.



Valentine's Day dinners out on the town can be special. However, there is no denying that reservations can be difficult to come by and some establishments must limit their menus for this busy night to make it easier to serve a packed house. Because restaurants can be so busy on February 14, some couples may opt to stay in and enjoy a special home-cooked, romantic

Shellfish may not be served at home on a regular basis, which makes it an option for a memorable Valentine's Day dinner. Ceviche is popular along Mexico's western seaboard and consists of very fresh raw seafood that is "cooked" by the action of lime juice.

This Valentine's Day, romance-minded home cooks can whip up this recipe for "Ceviche" from "The Complete Mexican, South American & Caribbean Cookbook" (Metro Books) by Jane Milton, Jenni Fleetwood and Marina Filippelli.

### **CEVICHE**

Serves 6

ounces raw peeled shrimp

ounces shelled scallops 7

ounces squid, cleaned and cut into serving pieces

7 limes

3 tomatoes

small onion ripe avocado 1

1/4 cup chopped fresh oregano, or 2 teaspoons

dried teaspoon salt Ground black pepper

Fresh oregano sprigs, to garnish Crusty bread and lime wedges to serve (optional)

1. Spread out the shrimp, scallops and squid in a non-metallic bowl. Squeeze six of the limes and pour the juice on the mixed seafood to cover it completely. Cover the dish with plastic wrap and set aside in the

2. Drain the seafood in a colander to remove the excess lime juice, then pat it dry with paper towels.

Place the shrimp, scallops and squid in

3. Cut the tomatoes in half, squeeze out the seeds, then dice the flesh. Cut the onion in half, then slice it thinly. Cut the avocado in half lengthwise, remove the pit and peel, then cut the flesh into 1/2-inch dice.

4. Add the tomatoes, onion, and avocado to the seafood with the oregano and seasoning. Squeeze the remaining lime and pour on the juice. Garnish with oregano and serve with crusty bread and lime wedges, if desired.

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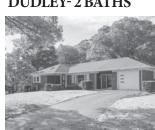
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# Spencer's Nancy Local realtor Bishop joins awarded RSPS Thrive Support certification & Advocacy staff

**Nancy Bishop** 

MARLBOROUGH — Thrive Support & Advocacy, a nonprofit empowering youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Central Massachusetts, today announced six appointments, including internal promotions and new hires, including Nancy Bishop of Spencer.

"I am certain our dedicated staff members will continue to excel in their new senior roles and look forward to welcoming new members equipped with the expertise needed to provide the individuals we serve with the tools to thrive," said Thrive President & CEO Sean Rose. "We are thrilled that our agency's continued growth puts us in a position to make these key appointments.

President of Individualized and Integrated Services, overseeing the nonprofit's various residential programs, Family Support Center services and clinical services. Previously, Bishop served as chief clinical officer at another human services provider. She earned a bachelor's degree in social work from Anna Maria College, a master's in social work from Boston University and a certificate in project management from Bryant University.

About Thrive Support & Advocacy

youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to lead active and self-directed lives local expertise, passion for the lifestyle, and commitsince 1973. The Marlborough-based nonprofit supports ment to exceptional service make her the trusted partmore than 1,200 individuals and families living in the Worcester County and Middlesex West regions of Massachusetts, providing recreational and social initiatives for youth and adults, community residences, REALTORS® or consumers interested in learning and individual and family supports. For more information, visit www.icanthrive.org.



**Cindy Leinonen** 

EAST BROOKFIELD — Cindy Leinonen with Houseworks Realty LLC has been awarded the Resort and Second-Home Property Specialist (RSPS) certifi-

The RSPS certification is a nationally-recognized certification awarded by the National Association of REALTORS® to real estate professionals who wish to demonstrate and promote – to consumers and their peers alike – their expertise in the resort and second-home specialty.

Leinonen joins more than 4,000 real estate professionals who have earned the RSPS certification. REALTORS® who receive the RSPS certification have successfully completed the Resort & Second-Home Specialist (RSPS) Certification Course. She now joins other real estate professionals who specialize in buying, selling, or managing second-homes in a resort, recreational, and/or vacation destination and properties for investment, development, or retirement.

Nancy Bishop, of Spencer, has joined Thrive as Vice Leinonen, a seasoned REALTOR® with MORE THAN 25 years of experience, specializes in helping her Central Massachusetts clients find their dream homes locally or their ideal vacation homes in Southern Vermont, including the highly sought-after Mount Snow area. As a snowboarder and snowmobiler, and an expert in Vermont's vibrant four-season real estate market, Cindy brings unmatched dedication to guiding clients seeking second homes, vacation retreats, or investment properties. She understands what makes Southern Vermont a year-round paradise for outdoor enthusiasts. When she's not assisting clients, Cindy enjoys spending time with her husband, Cliff Leinonen—also a REALTOR® at Houseworks Realty Thrive Support & Advocacy has been empowering in Massachusetts and Four Seasons Sotheby's in Vermont—and their yellow Labrador, Colby. Cindy's ner for your next dream home, whether it's in Central Massachusetts or Southern Vermont!

> more about the program can visit www.nar.realtor/ resort or contact RSPS Member Services at 800/874-6500, ext. 8320.

> > Cotton

# Leicester Public Library offers vacation week activities

STAFF WRITER

FLANDERS

LEICESTER — February vacation week activities will highlight a busy schedule of programs at Leicester Public Library next month.

School vacation week programs will take place from Feb. 17-21. A variety of activities will be offered for students of all ages, including an Intro to Coding with OzoBots workshop. See the library calendar for details and a complete list of events.

On Thursday, Feb. 20, "Intro to Tarot Cards" with Laura Campagna will be offered from 6-7:15 p.m. This event is free to the public, with no registration

The following day, guests will have the opportunity to learn how to play the ukulele from Julie Stepanek (Friday, Feb. 21, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.). Intended for guests ages eight and older, this event is free to the public. Registration is required to attend. On Tuesday, Feb. 25, from 6-7:30 p.m., a program high-

lighting the importance of superfoods will be delivered by Kim Larkin. This free educational culinary workshop celebrates the powerhouses of nutrition. The event is suitable for older teens and adults; registration is required to attend.

On Tuesday, March 11, from 6-7:30 p.m., a winter sowing event will be offered to guests.

Learn how to start seeds using recycled materials to get a jump on your gardening and grow delicious, nutritious food year-round," read a statement released by library officials.

This free program is suitable for teens and adults. No registration is required to attend.

Meanwhile, the Friends of the Library plant sale will be held from Feb. 25 through March 1.

On Thursdays, Feb. 6 and March 6, office hours with State Representative David LeBoeuf will be held from 5-6:30 p.m. Stop by the library and ask questions or share concerns with Rep. LeBoeuf. No appointments are necessary.

A complete list of upcoming library programs and events can be found in the online calendar section available at: www.leicesterlibrary.org.

The only way to register for library programs is through the Web site calendar.

# As temperatures drop, Cornerstone Bank is helping families stay safe and warm

WORCESTER — Temperatures are dropping and Cornerstone Bank, a community bank with locations throughout Central Massachusetts, wants to help make sure residents have the tools they need to get through the coldest months. Cornerstone is donating \$25,000 toward the Worcester Community Action Council's Emergency Fuel Fund.

We know the high price of fuel is making it difficult for families to stay warm as winter sets in," said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. "That's why we appreciate the Worcester Community Action Council's work to make sure our neighbors are taken care of.'

The Emergency Fuel Fund helps homeowners and renters pay home heating bills and past due balances on utility bills incurred from November through April of each year. Income-eligible residents can apply for aid through the agency's federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

'As a community bank, we are committed to supporting causes that improve the quality of life for those around us," said Tallman. "We hope this donation helps offer some relief to residents facing challenges trying to safely get through the winter."

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