

SPENCER NEW LEADER

©2024, Issue #47

Free by request to residents of

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

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Friday, November 22, 2024

Election Day projects help LES students learn about democracy



Courtesy

Leicester Elementary School students recently took part in unique projects to learn about elections and voting.



BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

LEICESTER — On an Election Day fraught with anxiety and acrimony across the nation, students at one local school used a creative activity to celebrate the joy and freedom of the voting process.

Leicester Elementary School art teacher Kristen Pike and her fourth-grade students worked in partnership

with Town Clerk Pamela LaFleur to design "I Voted" stickers for the election.

School leaders, students, and residents were thrilled with the results of the project, which helped bring community members together on a day darkened by divisions.

"Before diving into this project, students gained background knowledge about the election process



and discovered what a high-quality sticker looks like," Pike said. "Using the information they gathered, it was time to create. Once students finished their designs, staff members from the town offices chose four winning designs and four runners-up."

The students' designs were printed and distributed to Leicester residents after they voted on Election Day.

The following students' submissions were selected as winning entries: Mallory Brunell, Victor Medina Garcia, Nora Rowden, and Audrey Sanborn.

The following students

are congratulated for their runner-up contest entries: Jacob Varney, Myles Derick, Cristian Guzman, and Aubrey Colby.

"It's an honor to work with other departments in town to find a creative way to teach people of any age and get them excited about any process that affects them and their future," LaFleur said.

Also on Election Day, Nov. 5, LES students took part in another project celebrating the voting process, as the school held its very own election.

Turn To **DEMOCRACY**
page **A14**

Man found guilty of 2018 quadruple homicide

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

WEST BROOKFIELD — Mathew Locke was found guilty on four counts of first-degree murder in the 2018 deaths of a West Brookfield mother and her three children.

Locke, 38, formerly of Ware, was convicted of all four murder counts in the killings of Sara Bermudez, 38, and her children Madison Bermudez (eight), James Bermudez (six), and Michael Bermudez (two).

On the afternoon of March 1, 2018, the victims were found stabbed to death inside their 10 Old Warren Road home in West Brookfield.

More than six years later, on Nov. 15, a jury at Worcester Superior Court found Locke guilty of first-degree murder with deliberate premeditation, extreme atrocity and cruelty, and felony murder. The additional felonies were armed burglary and aggravated rape, according to Worcester County District Attorney Joseph Early, Jr.

The jury also found Locke guilty on the charge of armed burglary and arson of a dwelling. Evidence indicated that there had been a fire in the home that extinguished itself, officials said.

Locke's trial spanned nearly four weeks of testimony, including more than 1,000 exhibits presented and upwards of 70 witnesses called to the stand. The jury deliberated for about ten hours before reaching its verdict.

Officials thank all prosecutors for their hard work in putting together the case, which wrapped around the pandemic.

"The deaths of this mother and her children were

Turn To **LOCKE** page **A14**

DPHS construction project enters next phase

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

SPENCER — With the holiday season fast approaching, the David Prouty High School construction team is preparing for a busy year of projects.

School officials are thrilled with the progress seen over the last year, as Prouty transitions to the next stages of its \$111.6 million addition-renovation project.

Nick Pimentel, a construction representative for Colliers Engineering and Design (the project's OPM), provided a list of recently completed projects. These include roofing work; framing work in the Pre-K wing; insulation of exterior walls; and the installation of gym lobby stairs and railings.

"The flat roofs at the gymnasium, as well as the portion above the Pre-K wing, is complete," Pimentel said.

Ongoing projects involve ductwork, electrical wiring, and plumbing. Additionally, the fire suppression system is being installed.

Turn To **DPHS** page **A14**

Community partners step up to support Little League

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

SPENCER — A pair of community partners teamed up to hit a grand slam supporting Spencer-East Brookfield Little League.

Cornerstone Bank and

the Spencer Exchange Club made donations to cover the cost of a new scoreboard to replace the aging unit and help augment the facility. The donations also funded the purchases of two additional new scoreboards.

"Little Leagues are part of the fabric of our communities, keeping us connected in such a special way," said Todd Tallman, the CEO of Cornerstone Bank. "When organizers told us their scoreboard was outdated and barely functioning, it was a no-brainer for us to pitch in for a new one."

The scoreboard on the baseball field was dedicated to Cornerstone Bank, while the softball

field scoreboard was dedicated to the Exchange Club. The dedications were celebrated with the installations of signs recognizing the donors.

"The league also received help from three local businesses to install the scoreboards and signs," said Mark Poce, the president of Spencer-East Brookfield Little League. "We'd like to thank Mike Richards, of Diamond Construction;

Tony Toscano, of A.F. Toscano Electric; and Dom Rueli, of Rueli Builders, for their help and contributions to making this project happen."

The leadership team at Cornerstone Bank, a community bank with locations throughout central Massachusetts, strives each year to give back across the region. Officials were thrilled to assist Spencer-East Brookfield Little League (SEBL), a nonprofit organization run by volunteers.

"Cornerstone Bank's

local presence and community-based banking model enables a unique ability to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch," read a statement released by bank officials.

The mission of the SEBL organization is to provide opportunities for kids to learn T-ball, baseball, and softball in a safe and friendly environment. Teams are made up of children from Spencer, East Brookfield, and North Brookfield, starting as young as four

Turn To **LITTLE LEAGUE**

page **A14**

Early deadlines for Thanksgiving

The offices of the Spencer New Leader will be closed Thursday, Nov. 23 in observance of Thanksgiving.

To ensure that our Nov. 29 edition arrives in subscribers' mail boxes on schedule despite the holiday, the submission deadline for any press releases and letters to the Editor intended for publication that week has been moved up to Sunday, Nov. 24 at 4 p.m. Submissions can be e-mailed to Editor Brendan Berube at news@stonebridgepress.news.

The staff of the New Leader thanks our readers for their cooperation with this scheduling change, and wishes one and all a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday.



Courtesy

Spencer-East Brookfield Little League recently purchased new scoreboards thanks to donations from Cornerstone Bank and the Spencer Exchange Club.

Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy Director attends Equity Leadership Conference

MARLBORO — The 2024 Fall Partners in Equity Leadership Conference was held at the Courtyard by Marriott Boston Marlborough. In attendance as guest, was Filipino American and Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy Director Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN of Athol, formerly of

Dudley and Douglas.

The keynote presentation by Dr. Darnisa Amante-Jackson was on deepening cultures of relevance and Strong Tier 1 instruction. Dr. Darnisa Amante-Jackson led a dynamic session to support leaders in gaining skills in understanding key roadmaps, best practices, and strategies to deepen Strong Tier 1 instruction through academic and behavioral strategies. Conference participants had a chance to learn roadmaps around enacting belonging, tools for leaders and teachers in monitoring increased relevance, and engage in break-out sessions to process learning.

Dr. Bolandrina's attendance was made memorable by the participation of her children Lilly and Max Bolandrina who performed with the Iskwelahang Pilipino (www.ipbahay.org) Dance Performance Group. The Bolandrina children are graduates of the Philippine cultural school in Boston. It was through the invitation of Alpha Sanford, MEd, CAGS, Director of Special Education and Student Services, Randolph Public Schools that Iskwelahang Pilipino came to share traditional dances from the Philippines. The Iskwelahang Pilipino Dance Performance Group performed four traditional dances, Sakuting, Pandango sa Wasiwas, Binasuan, and Tinikling, all from Luzon, the largest island in the Philippines.

Photo shows Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy Director Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN and fellow Filipino American Irene Cala of DESE during a break at the conference.



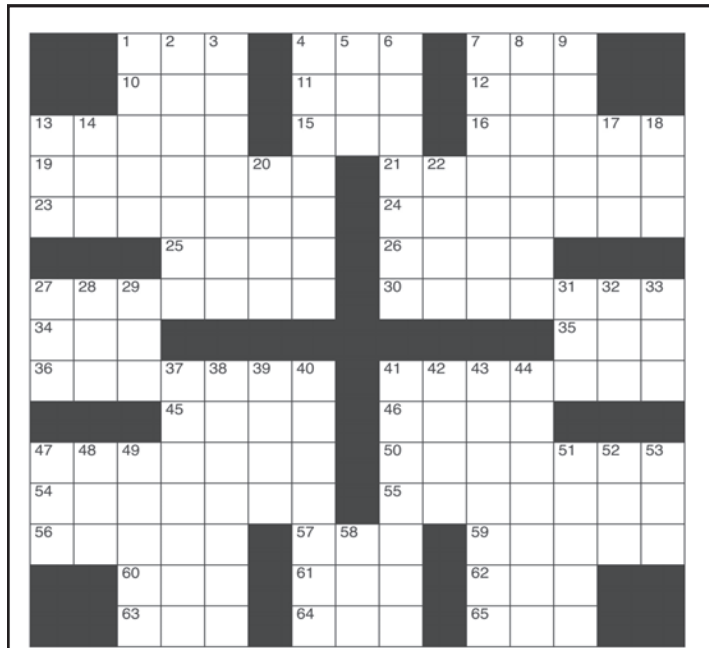
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- Games • Glassware •Sterling Silver • Coins • Gold
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CDL required with HEO required within 6 months.
Must be available for emergency calls days, nights, weekends & holidays.

Applications are available at the Highway Garage, 58 School St, No. Brookfield (508)867-0213
Equal Opportunity Employer



- CLUES ACROSS**
1. Defunct airline
 4. Beverage container
 7. A team's best pitcher
 10. Unit of liquid capacity
 11. It comes before two
 12. Male child
 13. Type of wheat
 15. One's mother
 16. Upper side of an organism
 19. United is one
 21. Extraction process
 23. A being with lesser divine status
 24. People living together in a community
 25. Luxury automaker
 26. This (Spanish)
 27. Semitic language
 30. Period for a defined purpose
 34. Wander aimlessly in search of pleasure
 35. Up in the air (abbr.)
 36. American marsupial
 41. Decadent dessert
 45. Aquatic plant
 46. About aviation
 47. Summer footwear
 50. Rugged mountain ranges
 54. With tin
 55. Cut on the surface of a hard object
 56. Wrapped in cloth
 57. Defensive nuclear weapon
 59. "American Idol" contestant Clay
 60. Midway between east and southeast
 61. Court decision "___ v. Wade"
 62. Born of
 63. Soviet Socialist Republic
 64. Actress ___-Margaret
 65. Not even

- CLUES DOWN**
1. Heat unit
 2. ___ Faulkner, American writer
 3. Guatemalan town
 4. Of funny things
 5. Actress ___ de Armas
 6. Agents of one's downfall
 7. Takes forcibly
 8. Body lice
 9. Large nest of a bird of prey
 13. Unhappy
 14. Popular holiday dessert
 17. Habitual drunkard
 18. Used of a number or amount not specified
 20. Complications
 22. Fail to win
 27. Before the present
 28. Musical genre
 29. Flurry
 31. 007's creator
 32. Indiana Pacer Toppin
 33. Midway between north and northeast
 37. Feeling
 38. Damage another's reputation
 39. Mottled citrus fruit
 40. Beauty product
 41. They man first, second and third
 42. Harness
 43. Herb
 44. Expressed concern
 47. Mississippi scientific area (abbr.)
 48. Consumed
 49. Nostrils
 51. Gathered fallen leaves
 52. Express good wishes
 53. Monetary unit of Brunei
 58. Japanese Buddhist festival

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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Saint Nicholas Fair

Location: Christ Church
Routes 44 & 169 • Pomfret, CT
- 1 Mile South of The Vanilla Bean Cafe -
Christchurchpomfret.org • 860.315.7780

Saturday, December 7th
(Snow Date: Saturday, December 14th)

In-Person Dair: 10:00am-1:00pm

Holiday Gifts, Yummy Treats & Much More!
Luncheon Served 11:00 am- 1:00pm

Online Auction runs
November 23 (noon)- December 4 (noon)
www.biddingowl.com/ChristChurchPomfret

Benefits Local Outreach

Spencer library to host holiday open house

SPENCER — The Richard Sugden Library team invites guests of all ages to attend a festive open house this holiday season.

The event is set for Tuesday, Dec. 3, starting at 5 p.m. Guests are encouraged to wear their best Victorian era finery.

To learn about other upcoming events at the library, or to sign up for a program, call 508-885-7513.

SPENCER ALMANAC
— REAL ESTATE —

BROOKFIELD
\$577,000, 2 W Main St, Parker, Kevin S, and Parker, Justyna M, to Conlin, Thom, and Oconnell, William.

EAST BROOKFIELD
None

LEICESTER
\$625,000, 506 Pine St, Pmz Development LLC, to Alade, Oluwatosin M.
\$430,000, 11 Tanglewood Rd, Crowe, Nadine L, to Desmarais Jr, Wallace J.

NORTH BROOKFIELD
\$335,000, 103 S Main St, Couture, John M, and Couture, Donna K, to Magario, John A, and Magario, Melissa.

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GUTTER CLEANINGS

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SPENCER
\$415,000, 32 Lincoln St, Barton, Michael W, and Barton, Tracy L, to Welch, Thomas E, and Welch, Nina.
\$400,000, 29 Main St, Ledoux, Adrian R, to Leon, Mariso.

WARREN
\$340,000, 520 Southbridge Rd, Otte, Audrey B, to Lamb, Erin E, and Ducharme, Sarah K.

WEST BROOKFIELD
\$100,000, 24 Hilltop Dr, Waltos, Howard W, to Kemp, Robert, and Kemp, Kelly.
\$100,000, 28 Hilltop Dr, Waltos, Howard W, to Kemp, Robert, and Kemp, Kelly.

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Quaboag students shine at stock market competition



WARREN — On Thursday, Nov. 7, Quaboag Business teacher Jean DiRico took 50 students from her Personal Finance classes on a field trip to participate in the Junior Achievement of Springfield's annual Stock Market Competition.

This marked the 19th annual Stock Market Competition hosted by the Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts which took place at the Cedars Banquet Facility in Springfield.

The event began with each team having a fictitious one million dollars to invest in an artificial market that simulated the New York Stock Exchange. There were a total of 60 rounds which were labeled as days that lasted exactly one minute each.

Out of the 14 schools and 66 teams that participated in the event. One of Quaboag's teams, "The Stock Stars" from Quaboag won third place. The students in this team were Isabelle AberleChloe Smith, Toby Chaplin, and Erin McGrath.

The team finished the game with an impressive net worth of \$1,614,103.38 and an outstanding ROI of 61.41 percent—achievements that earned them both a trophy and well-deserved recognition.

QCC's Community Impact Award goes to ACE volunteer

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College has announced Ayman Abdelgadir as the recipient of its most recent Community Impact Awards. Abdelgadir received the award in response to his work with African Community Education (ACE), an organization that aims to empower African refugee and immigrant youth through educational, leadership and cultural programming.

Abdelgadir has been volunteering with ACE since 2009, becoming the volunteer and mentoring coordinator in 2019. His role includes recruiting volunteers and mentors for ACE's programs to assist with academic support, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and career development. He is also the head coach of the ACE youth soccer team.

"I take pride in working with all newcomers to the community and helping them flourish to their full potential. It brings me

tremendous joy to see both the youth and adults continuously reach new milestones and build a successful future," said Abdelgadir.

The Community Impact Award is a project developed by QCC's Director of Community Engagement Sean Harris in 2023. An award is given out during each athletic season to highlight individuals and/or organizations in Central Massachusetts who do impactful work with young people from underserved communities.

"I garnered feedback from our student-athletes and Ayman's name came up repeatedly from his work with the ACE soccer team. Not only that, but also his reputation precedes him in local community organizations. Everyone has high regard for Ayman," Harris said.

Abdelgadir was born in Sudan and raised in Worcester, receiving two graduate degrees from Clark University. He appreciated QCC's recognition of community development organizations and praised progress made by the many groups in the city.

"I share this award with every staff member at ACE and the other organizations in Worcester that are doing phenomenal work. In this field, we don't compete with each other, we work together," said Abdelgadir.

TOYS FOR KIDS DONATIONS

Donations as of 11/15/2024

11/4/2024	Ronald & Anne Marie Jette	\$100.00
11/4/2024	Jeanne Gaucher	\$100.00
11/9/2024	Maureen & Daniel Dalton	\$100.00
11/13/2024	Adrea Gordon	\$50.00
11/13/2024	Gary & Carol Herl	\$150.00
11/14/2024	Spencer Exchange Club	\$1,000.00
11/15/2024	John & Eileen Prizio	\$100.00
11/15/2024	Bemis Farms Nursery	\$100.00

Monetary Donations may be sent to: Spencer Toys for Kids, P.O. Box 186, Spencer, MA 01562.

New, unwrapped toys can be dropped off at: Spencer Fire Dept, Cornerstone Bank (Spencer office), ERA Key Realty Services (415B Main St). If you would like to sponsor a child, please contact Donna at donnaflannery@erakey.net or call 508-885-6336. If you are in need of assistance, applications can be picked up at: Spencer Post Office, Mary Queen of the Rosary Food Pantry, Town clerk's office in the town hall, or ERA Key Realty Services (outside mailbox). You can see updates on Facebook at Spencer Toys for Kids.

P.E.T. of the Week

Sponsored by Leicester Veterinary Clinic, LLC

Hey there! I'm Tiger, a dapper 9-year-old orange tabby with a personality as vibrant as my fur. I'm a neutered gentleman with a touch of attitude, but don't let that fool you—I've got a heart full of love and a knack for charming my way into your lap. I've spent my years perfecting the art of being a fabulous feline, and I'm looking for a special human who appreciates a cat with character. I've got a bit of sass and a lot of personality, so if you're ready for a cat who will keep you on your toes (and maybe give you a playful swat or two), then we're going to get along famously. I'm a pro at lounging in sunny spots and keeping you entertained with my quirky antics. Once I'm comfortable, I'll be your loyal sidekick, providing companionship and a few purrs to brighten your day. I may not be a kitten anymore, but I've still got plenty of love and life to share! If you're looking for a feline friend with a bit of flair and a whole lot of charm, come meet me! Let's see if we're a purr-fect match.



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Dr. Colm P. Scanlon
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LEICESTER ROD AND GUN MEAT RAFFLE

Sundays 2-5 Until November 24th
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Cash Bar- Kitchen Is Open



Raffling Off Over 2000 Lbs. Of Meat
Lobster And Prime Rib

ARTIST OPEN HOUSE

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Saturday the 30th of November
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Toro Power Max 828LXE
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\$125
 508-450-1413



Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, December 7, 2024
 9:00 am – 3:00pm

St Joseph's Church Hall
 10 H Putnam Rd Ext., Charlton, Mass

We are actively seeking crafters and vendors for this event.
 Call Joyce at 774-262-0820 for a registration form or information.



Friday's Child



Shane
 Age 12
 Registration # 7779

Hi! My name is Shane and I love riding horses!

Shane is a very friendly boy who is engaging, happy, very sociable and friendly. He enjoys riding horses, running, and swimming. Shane loves to explore the outdoors and be involved in community events like local fairs, festivals and farmer's markets. When he goes out Shane likes eating at restaurants, going to the movies, playing in parks and in playgrounds. When staying inside he likes to use his iPad, watch TV and listen to music.

<https://adopt.mareinc.org/waiting-child-profiles#gallery/child/7779>

Can I Adopt?

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

The process to adopt a child from foster care includes training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you. These steps will help match you with a child or sibling group that your family will fit well with.

To learn more about adoption from foster care visit www.mareinc.org. 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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groups in the city. "I share this award with every staff member at ACE and the other organizations in Worcester

that are doing phenomenal work. In this field, we don't compete with each other, we work together," said Abdelgadir.

LEICESTER HIGH SCHOOL RELEASES HONOR ROLL

LEICESTER — Leicester High School has released its honor roll for the first quarter of the 2024-2025 school year.

12th Grade High Honors
Kayla Bouchard, Sophia Danforth, Dylan Delage, Madeline Milionis, Alexander Ngo, Gia Norcia, Lucas Ricarte

11th Grade High Honors
Brandon Escobar, John Gahagan, Natalia Kallio, Zoe Morales, Nicole Tuson

10th Grade High Honors
Ty Gully, Mary Van Hazinga

9th Grade High Honors
Brady Bouchard, Andrew Boucher, Haylee Kularski, Charlotte Mercer, Alivia Perry, Paula Roberts, Ryan Sweeney

12th Grade Honors
Jenna Abusalah, Sean Alves, Jayden Benton, James Colonies-Kelley, Jacob Cruz, Ryan Delage, Kathryn Dolimount, Vanessa Finney, Jason Fournier, Jacqueline Gallant, Vivian Giles, Alexis Herbert, Aynslei Holmes, Angela Kitchen, Jack Ledbetter, Ngoc Ly, Joseph Nelson, Jordan Patterson, Kadienne Patterson, Tyler Pierce, Sedona Richard, Brendan Salek, Jenna Savoie, Ella Smith, Elizabeth Sosa, Mariel Swenson, Cooper White

11th Grade Honors
Kate Barbato, Avery Bullock, Evan Castellanos, Sophia Comeau, Jacob Cosper, Alessandra Flores, Shane Garrahie, Brody Grant, Eliannie Guzman Bueno, Shawn Heffernan, Rowen Hennessy, Emily Hunt, Jeremiah Kinsumba, Crislary Martinez Castillo, Elias Narvaez, Stephen Osei-Bonsu, Nola Perry, Kassidy Poce, Lucas Sampaio, Jack Skoglund, Johanna Torres, Nathan Wilder, Tyler Williams, Dakota Zinkevich

10th Grade Honors
Destiny Barshell, Jacob Beaulac, Karsyn Bulak, Alexa Butler, Kelsey Cole, John Coleman, Alexander Fournier, Taylor Gallant, Ariana Gursky, Kenneth Lane, Jeremy Ledbetter,

Valerie Maynard, Joshua McCormick, Robert O'Neil, Arunas Orloff, Gianna Panepinto, Laila Paquin, Ava Petruzzi, Jillian Rodrigue, Phuc Truong, Abigail Valinski, Camron Wells, Sabrina Wright

9th Grade Honors
Matthew Alves, Rory Barrett, Kennedy Bates, Emma Bernabei, Jude Campbell, Zachary Couture, Allison Gagne, Joseph Kulla, Brock Lopez, Matthew Magoun, Alena Martinkova, Julianna McCormick, Trinity Medeiros, Max Milionis, Trevor Moorghen, Nikolai Ngo, Juliana Ormon, Maryangelie Rivas, Nicholas Stuart, Shane Stuart, Jayke Williams, Jameson Wood

LEICESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL ANNOUNCES HONOR ROLL

LEICESTER — Leicester Middle School has released its honor roll for the first quarter of the 2024-2025 school year.

8th Grade High Honors
Camden Beaudry, Elijah Belisle, John Derrick, Javier Flores, Liam Gentile, Benjamin Hagglund, Avril Halbedel, Liana LaFlamme, Papayaw Larbi, Rocco Lauder, Tighe Lauder, Kingston Nguyen, Nick Nguyen, Jaedyn Perry, Malin Stimson, Hunter Wright

7th Grade High Honors
Fiona Liebman, Cadence Medeiros, Sonya Potvin, Joseph Ukoh, Leah Varney

6th Grade High Honors
Juliette Bellisario, Edmund Besse, Aubrey Bullock, Anna Derrick, Rylee Garrahie, Raegan Higgins, Larissa LaFlamme, Nanakwasi Larbi, Nora MacDonnell

5th Grade High Honors
Skylar Backstrom, Vivienne Belizaire, Huy Bui, Leah Cunningham, Calvin Fryer, Hunter Hayes, Rosalie Hayes, Aoife Kane, Adhuresa Latifi,

Jonathan Letourneau, Benjamin Machado, Santy Melendez Vasquez, Emmaline Milgate, Benjamin Miller, Tyler Moorghen, Blake Potvin, Taymiyyah Sullivan, Enzo Valente Senna, Madison Westberg, Dylan Williams, Finian Wood

8th Grade Honors
Jansen Benton, Brody Dufries, Braydon Herbert, Natalie LaPointe, Ryan Lynch, Arilyn McNally, Lincoln Meloche, David Pacheco, Thinh Pham, Gia Rigiero, Evelyn Stewart, Marielee Valentin, Robert Zinkevich,

7th Grade Honors
Elisa Aguirre, Beverly Ampaw, Griffin Bayer, Trey Blais, Jolene Boudreau, Justin Cai, Olivia Cardona, Avery Cole, Michael Cormier, Mila Cortes, Bridget Dillon, Adalynn Grant, Shelby Grant, Christopher Harrington, Cameron Hipple, Juliette Hoekstra, Damien Kelley, Tyler Kularski, Aaliyah Layne, Ayla Lis, Reagan Lyon, Benjamin Marjault, Charlie Marttila, Mayotte Chloe, Emma Mercier, Andrew Michaelian, Cole Milgate, Owen

Murphy, Sophia Muzzy, Grace Ngima, Isabella Nugent, Devin Robert, Hailey Rooney, David Sanborn, Kayzen-Kalani Santana-Ernestburg, Zander Shepard, Jackson Trainor, Aaliyah Trought, Oliver Underwood, Aiden Valinski, Amy Van Hazinga, Brady Walsh, Brody Weber, Gianna Wooden

6th Grade Honors
Brooklyn Bullock, Victoria Cardona, Daniel Ciciliane, Celeste Couture, Logan Curren, Jayden Gleason, Alessandro Guzman, Damon Kobel, Kris Lapi, Olivia Maki, Jackson McKenzie, Benjamin Murphy, Iaan Narcisse, Dominic Oldham, Ian Pennycook, Hugo Salas, Kason Ward

5th Grade Honors
Gannon Arnberg, Kaydence Beamenderfer, Nolan Beaudry, Summer Blais, Stratton Bombard, Elizabeth Cooper, Angelica De Brito, Khaleesi Dejesus, Tyler Dube, Giuliana Escobar, Arthur Estrela, Draven Fernandes, Bailey Foley, Alianna Gaul, Owen Giddix, Sophia Heguys, Hunter Leclair, Noah Loosmore, Olivia Mason, Jackson McCauley, Dylan Mercier, Layla Mullins, Addison Murphy, Anna Nguyen, Chris Njoroge, Cobby Obeng, Bentley Payne, Autumn Schimke, Rayden Singharaj, Richard Spratt, Julianna Trainor, Branden Ukpong, Anthony Walsh, Tristan Walsh, Julian Wooden

Knights of Columbus invite public to turkey raffle

LEICESTER — The Leicester Knights of Columbus invite guests to attend their annual turkey raffle. The event will take place on Sunday, Nov. 24. Doors open at noon, and the games will begin at 1 p.m. Prizes include turkeys and gift cards. There will also be a 50/50 raffle, a flash raffle, a full Thanksgiving dinner raffle, and a lottery ticket raffle. The location is 91 Manville St.



Courtesy

Veterans are honored during a ceremony in Leicester.

LEICESTER COMMUNITY HONORS THOSE WHO SERVED

LEICESTER — Members of the police department joined Leicester VFW Post 443 in honoring those who served at a Veterans Day ceremony.

"At the 11th hour, on the 11th day, in the 11th month, we joined with Leicester VFW Post 443 and other local patriots to commemorate Veterans Day at Bean Square," read a statement released by the LPD. "As is tradition, we had the honor of observing the annual flag retirement ceremony organized by the VFW Post on Main Street in Cherry Valley, with the assistance of local Girl and Boy Scout troops."



Officials also remind residents that the police station features a flag drop box in the lobby. For those seeking to respectfully retire a flag, please place it in the box.

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Leicester Senior Center thanks volunteers, officials for support



Congressman Jim McGovern thanks local veterans for their service.

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER
LEICESTER — Senior Center officials thank all volunteers, local leaders, and students who came together to make the annual veterans' breakfast a success. The Nov. 7 program welcomed veterans from throughout the area. Highlights included a

POW/MIA ceremony led by members of the South High Community School Air Force Junior ROTC, as well as an invocation delivered by RN Nancy Lamb, a retired Air Force nurse who now serves as the Senior Center's outreach coordinator. Several local officials attended the event, including Congressman

Jim McGovern, Registrar of Deeds Kate Toomey, State Sen. Peter Durant, State Rep. David LeBoeuf, Leicester Public Schools Superintendent Brett Kustigian, members of the Select Board, Police Chief Ken Antanavica, Fire Chief Michael Dupuis, and Worcester County Sheriff's Office representative Donna

Ostiguy. "The event was very touching and respectful, as always," said Chief Antanavica. "The Police Union sponsored the veterans' breakfast. Officers Lombardozzi and Santiago helped serve up a fantastic breakfast while I was preparing eggs. A fantastic time was had by everyone as we honored our veter-

ans." Even though the event's keynote speaker was unable to attend due to an emergency, officials in attendance combined to deliver speeches honoring and thanking veterans for their service. "I was honored to join the Leicester community for a Veterans Day breakfast, celebrating the incredible men and women who've served our country," McGovern said. "We owe them our deepest gratitude, today and every day."

Additional community members stepped up in several ways to assist veterans at the event. These included Senior Center staff members, students from local schools, and first responders.

"Thank you to David Wood, Assistant Facilitator for our Hybrid Program, and Anthony Maio, Comptroller for the Senior Citizens Club of Leicester, who were here to welcome our veterans and to help seat them," said Senior Center Director Rachelle Cyr. "Without so many hands helping, these events would not be possible."

William Moore, an Air Force veteran and also

the Chair of the Council on Aging, delivered the program's introduction.

Cyr and her staff are thanked for putting together the breakfast each year. The program requires several months of preparations.

Additionally, all local officials and students who volunteered at the event are thanked for their efforts. The program always features Leicester municipal leaders and students eager to help in various ways and thank veterans.

Further contributors to the event include the following individuals, businesses, and organizations: Camosse Family Foundation, Morin Funeral Home, George McKenna Insurance, Lions Club, Barbers Crossing, Senior Citizens Club of Leicester, the Worcester County Sheriff's Office, Vibra Hospital, the Leicester Police Alliance, and several others.

"I am blessed to have so many who are involved in this event," Cyr told the New Leader.

New 2 You Thrift Shop to hold Christmas Bazaar

LEICESTER — The New 2 You Thrift Shop & Furniture Annex at St. Joseph-St. Pius X Parish will hold its Fourth Annual Christmas Bazaar Saturday, Dec. 7 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., featuring Flippo the Juggling Magician, who will be performing a combination of juggling and magic show with balloon sculptures from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., plus shopping, kids' activities, raffles, food, and more! Santa is also scheduled to arrive at 1 p.m., so bring your cameras!

The thrift shop is located at 759 Main St., Leicester.

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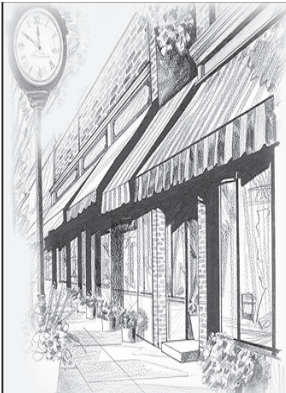
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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
 PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
 EDITOR

EDITORIAL

Save Main Street: Shop local and keep our towns alive

In a world dominated by two-day shipping and digital convenience, it's easy to forget the personality of our communities, the small businesses that line our Main Streets. These aren't just shops; they're the heartbeats of our towns, and the places where neighbors gather. They are the framework of New England's charm, the pillars of local economies, and the custodians of our town's character. Without them, what remains?

The reality is stark: every time we opt for an online order instead of visiting a local shop, we make a choice about the future of our communities. Small businesses are facing a relentless uphill battle, competing not only with giant corporations but also with the shifting habits of modern consumers. And when these businesses close, they take more than their storefronts with them—they take jobs, vibrancy, and a sense of belonging.

Shopping locally isn't just about buying goods; it's about investing in the people around us. That cup of coffee from the corner café supports a family. That thrift store find funds local charities. That gift shop purchase puts money back into the local economy, where it's reinvested to improve schools, roads, and public services. Your dollar goes further when spent locally because it stays local.

But this requires a conscious effort. Yes, online shopping is convenient, but at what cost? Do we really want to trade ease for a future of shuttered windows and hollowed-out Main Streets? Do we want our children to grow up in communities where "downtown" is a relic of the past?

We have a choice. This holiday season and beyond, let's make an intentional effort to visit our local bookstores, bakeries, and boutiques. Explore the unique treasures of thrift shops. Say yes to the farmer's market, the family-owned hardware store, and the independent art gallery. These businesses are run by our neighbors—people who support our schools, sponsor our Little League teams, and show up when we need them most.

If we don't invest in them, who will? Let's work together to keep our towns alive, vibrant, and full of opportunity. Let's shop local—not because it's trendy, but because it's essential.

Our communities depend on it. Let's not let convenience rob us of connection. Together, we can ensure that our Main Streets remain places we're proud to call home.

Letter submission policy

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

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

VIEWPOINT

OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

God bless this President-elect and this country

To the Editor:

It is through the grace of God and the majority of the people's votes that appointed, elected Donald Trump as the new President of this country, USA. Now, it is our responsibility to continue to pray for our President, Donald Trump, that he will be submissive to God's instructions, guidance, and moral laws.

We, God's faithful who have voted for Donald Trump — I am suggest-

ing you, we, daily pray for President Trump and this country, USA, that God, through President Trump, will make this country great again.

John 13:34-35: God's love requires we must love one another as God (Jesus) loves us; we need to do our part as individuals, God's children.

Fall for Jesus; he will never leave you!

Dwell in peace!

ROLAND BLAIS
 BROOKFIELD

Trump 2024

To the Editor:

As sung by the Late Tom Petty, "The waiting is the hardest part." The wait is over, and the American people have loudly proclaimed, "We want Trump!" winning both the electoral college and the popular vote in what can only be hailed as the election of the century. My personal belief is that the popular vote is of little consequence, but the libs bring it up so often, I felt it needed to be mentioned at least once.

After being installed as the Democrats presidential candidate, Kamala tanked her campaign in a fashion that gave the Titanic a glimmer of hope that it could, once again, be buoyant. When asked if she would have done anything different than Biden, instead of creating some distance between her and the former vice president, she replied, "I can't think of anything I would have done differently." Her inability to answer even the most basic of questions was not lost on the voters. At least that might explain the fact that 15 million less Democrats voted in this election. It

couldn't be that those 15 million votes in the 2020 race were... fraudulent.

In 2019, I went to bed with guarded optimism as I watched the results trend towards another Trump victory. However, in what can only be a peculiar series of coincidences, the perfect number of votes were found in the dead of night to help the former vice president overtake Trump and claim victory. This year, I stayed up until I was sure, Trump's victory was certain.

It'll be amusing to see what the local libs have to say about this election. I can't wait to read the mental gymnastics needed to explain the abject failure of the Harris/Walz assault on America. For those of us with our eyes wide open, the results are a clear indication that an overwhelming majority of Americans reject what the left were offering.

God Bless America, and God Bless Donald J. Trump!

MATHEW HERHOLZ
 SPENCER

Moving forward...

To the Editor:

Thank you to all of you who wrote intelligent, well informed letters in support of Harris/Walz and the future of our country. Although things didn't turn out as we hoped, it is what it is.

We need to unite, stand tall, be strong and put one foot in front of the other so we can move on. It won't be easy!

Let's spread kindness, not hate and anger. A simple handshake, a smile, a

hello, a pat on the back, a hug would be a good place to start. We can all use it right now, and in the days to come.

Anger and hate will never make America great.

NOREEN FERNANDES
 WEST BROOKFIELD

Mistakes and moving on

To the Editor:

First, my mistakes. I estimated that Vice President Harris would win the overall 2024 vote and that she might just win the Electoral College vote. Both of these predictions proved wrong. Ex-President Trump won just over 50 percent of the total vote and, by a large margin, the Electoral College vote. This happened in what was generally a free and fair election (although there existed efforts to make it difficult for likely Democrats to vote).

Notice too that the difference between now and Trump's effort in beginning in 2020 to question the results of the election with dozens of court cases, claims of the results being "rigged," President Trump urging his followers to march on our Capital to overturn the results, storming the Capital, threatening to hang our Vice President and never accepting that Trump had lost the 2020 election.

Instead, this time - just as before Trump - and as had happened in our country for at least 100 years, Vice President Harris politely conceded her loss and President Biden began, with dignity and without delay, began our country's peaceful transfer of power.

Permit too a worry about Trump's initial appointments to our government. This example concerns the proposal that Tulsi Gabbard become

the Director of National Intelligence. It means that she would receive and control secret information from our dozen or intelligence (or "spy") agencies This includes, for example, the CIA or Central Intelligence Agency. To begin, Ms. Gabbard has little, if any, experience or qualifications for the position. Even more importantly, she appears to have close ties to Putin and the Russian government. In fact, Trump's former National Intelligence Director, the ultra-conservative John Bolton (and others) calls her a "Russian Agent." This frightens our national security experts. It also frightens our allies all over the world. They worry that their and our intelligence secrets could be shared with Russia, a country that is no friend of our democracy, has invaded Ukraine and seeks to replace the United States as a world leader.

Finally, appreciation and thanks to the publisher, editor, staff and New Leader advertisers. Across the United States many communities of our size have no local newspaper. They have become "news deserts." In the New Leader, we have weekly local articles, thoughtful editorials, and a space for a large variety of views.

Thank you, one and all, for this vital ingredient of American democracy.

KEVIN KANE
 SPENCER

Social Security COLA can sweeten your finances



FINANCIAL FOCUS

TREVOR NIELSEN

If you're receiving Social Security benefits, you will see some bigger checks in 2025. How can you best take advantage of this increase?

First, here's some background: Each year, the Social Security Administration adjusts payments based on the rate of inflation. In 2025, this cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA, will be 2.5 percent. While this figure is lower than the 3.2 percent bump for 2024, and significantly lower than the 8.7 percent increase in 2023, when inflation was much higher, it's still close to the 20-year average of 2.6 percent.

The actual dollar amount increase you'll see will depend, of course, on the size of your regular Social Security payments. In any case, though, you may find that the bigger checks can help you in these areas:

Withdrawals from investment portfolio — Once you retire, you'll likely have to start tapping into your traditional IRA, 401(k) and other investment accounts. Naturally, your goal is to avoid taking out so much in your early retirement years that you risk running low on money later. A higher Social Security payment may allow you to keep withdrawing the same amount, or possibly even lower your taxable withdrawals. This is especially important when the inevitable market downturns occur — as much as possible, you'll want to avoid withdrawing money, which essentially means selling taxable investments, when the market is down.

Cash reserves — It's generally a good idea for retirees to keep up to 12 months' worth of portfolio withdrawals in cash, so the money is readily available when you need it, along with another three to six months of spending kept in an emergency fund. Having these reserves available can help you avoid dipping into your long-term taxable investments to pay for short-term needs, such as a major car repair or a needed home improvement.

Debt reduction — If the higher Social Security payments allow you to improve your cash flow, you might be able to pay down some debts, especially those that carry a high interest rate. And lowering your debts, just like building your cash reserves, can help protect you from increasing your withdrawals from your retirement accounts.

In addition to implementing the new COLA, the Social Security Administration is also raising the earnings limit for those reaching their full retirement age, which, for most people, will be between 66 and 67. If you are under your full retirement age for all of 2025, Social Security will deduct \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you earn above the new limit of \$23,400, up from \$22,320 in 2024. If you reach your full retirement age in 2025, Social Security will deduct \$1 in benefits for every \$3 you earn above \$62,160, up from \$59,520 in 2024. Starting with the month you reach your full retirement age, you can earn as much as you want without having your benefits reduced. At that point, Social Security will also recalculate your benefit amounts to give you credit for the months you received reduced benefits due to your excess earnings.

And here's one final COLA-related change: For 2025, the Social Security tax limit will rise to \$176,100, up from \$168,600 in 2024.

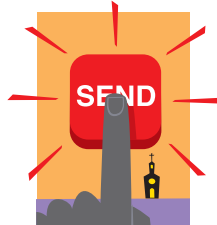
It's not all that often when a source of your guaranteed income goes up. So, start thinking now about how you can use these COLA changes to improve your financial situation in 2025.

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.



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Turkey Tips

Thanksgiving is arguably the most anticipated annual holiday, and the

Auction news



There's been lots of auction news since my last update.

Beginning with an item from the 16th century, a pair of Ming Dynasty jars sold well above their estimate at auction recently. The "fish jars were made during the reign of the Jiajing Emperor, from 1522-1566," according to CNN. They were made with advancements in ceramics design and depict golden carps along with lotus and other plants. The jars were in a home in Wiesbaden, Germany, but were moved after the start of World War II and placed in a secure location. The jars far exceeded the £1 million (\$1.3 million USD) estimate selling for £9.6 million (\$12.5 million USD).

Some rare presidential memorabilia including artifacts from two of America's greatest presidents will hit the auction block later this month. A lock of George Washington's hair inside a locket is one of the pieces being offered. The locket was given to a family friend of Washington's and was documented as it passed down through the generations. It's estimated to sell for \$30,000 to \$40,000.



ANTIQUES, COLLECTIBLES & ESTATES
WAYNE TUISKULA

Another important artifact was recently discovered in a Florida museum, according to the Chicago Sun-Times. The museum manager found an old dusty shadowbox containing an American flag. The flag is dated April 14, 1865, the day after Abraham Lincoln's assassination. It was draped over Lincoln's coffin as his body traveled 1,654 miles to be buried in Springfield, Ohio. The flag was signed by New York physician Lewis Applegate, who went to school with one of the pallbearers. It's believed Applegate's school friend gave the flag to him. After Applegate signed the border, other owners followed suit which provided a documentation of ownership over the years. It has an auction estimate of \$800,000 to \$1.2 million.

Moving to an item from more recent times, a collection of "Star Trek" memorabilia from the popular 1960s television show had many items selling past their estimates and even saw an auction record broken. A vintage red velour duty uniform worn by Nichelle Nichols when she played Nyota Uhura had an estimate of \$3,000 and sold for \$114,300, according to mylanews.com. Captain Kirk's yellow velour tunic and Starfleet Command Bridge trousers worn by actor William Shatner in the first season sold for \$455,000, well above the \$65,000 estimate. A communicator and phaser used by William Shatner as Captain Kirk were considered "lost." The original owner "was a veteran of Hollywood's prop industry," according to ArtNet. Don Hillenbrand, a long-time collector and researcher compared the items to those that appear in early episodes and to a documentary book on the series. The effort paid off when the phaser, estimated at \$100,000, boldly went where no man has gone before, setting an auction record for a "Star Trek" prop at \$910,000.

We are currently cataloging for an online antiques auction in a Beacon Hill Boston estate and a large Civil War collection from a local estate. We are accepting consignments of all types for future auctions. Please visit our Web site, <https://centralmassauctions.com>, for links to upcoming events.

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

highlight of an annual Thanksgiving celebration is the fabulous feast, with a turkey served up as the crowning centerpiece of the both the table and the holiday. A large, golden brown bird, roasted to perfection and surrounded by a medley of delicious accompaniments has no culinary competition at the dining table.

With so much at stake (and so much to go wrong), it's no wonder we're obsessed about turning out a feast on par with the roasted beauties we recall from our childhoods. Thus, this week's column offers a guide to preparing a Thanksgiving turkey along with some fun facts about the holiday bird. Happy Thanksgiving!

Many a novice cook has been intimidated by the mere thought of preparing a turkey for dinner, nonetheless for a Thanksgiving feast. The good news is turkeys are not difficult to cook, and all it takes is a little advance preparation to ensure a turkey success:

Not sure how big a bird to cook? A general rule of thumb is to allow one pound of uncooked turkey per person from an 8 to 12 pound turkey. Larger birds have a larger proportion of meat to bones, so three quarters of a pound per person should serve well when purchasing heavier birds.

Like all protein foods, should be thawed in the refrigerator, never at room temperature. When foods are thawed at room temperature, surface bacteria can rapidly multiply to dangerous levels at temperatures of 40 degrees F and above. The National Turkey Federation offers the following guidelines to properly defrosting frozen turkeys: For safety and superior quality, leave turkey in the original packaging and place in a shallow pan. Thaw, in the refrigerator, using the simple formula: whole turkeys thaw at a rate of 4 to 5 pounds per 24 hours. Example: A 15-pound frozen bird will take 3 to 4 full days to thaw in the refrigerator. To speed thawing, keep turkey in the original tightly sealed bag and place in a clean and sanitized sink or pan. Submerge in cold water and change the cold water every 30 minutes. The turkey will take about 30 minutes per pound to thaw. Refrigerate (at 40 degrees F or below) or cook the turkey when it is thawed. Do not refreeze uncooked, defrosted turkey.

Stuffing is a delicious requisite for most Thanksgiving meals, but it's important not to stuff a turkey until just before it is placed in the oven for roasting. If preparing the stuffing ahead-of-time, wet and dry ingredients should be refrigerated separately and combined right before stuffing the turkey. The turkey should be stuffed loosely, with about three quarters of a cup

of stuffing per pound of turkey. It's also important to test the internal temperature of the stuffing as well as the turkey. The internal temperature in the center of the stuffing should register 160 to 165 degrees F.



TAKE THE HINT
KAREN TRAINOR

Did you know?

* The average price of a whole turkey is expected to increase by just 8% in 2024, jumping from \$27.9 in 2023 to \$30.15

*Half of all whole turkeys sold in the United States are consumed on Thanksgiving

*A frozen turkey keeps up to a year, but usually loses some flavor; according to the folks at Butterball.

*Even a "pre basted bird" can benefit from hand basting. Basting gives your bird color, crisps the skin and helps hold in juices. Rub the bird with a few tablespoons of softened butter and pour two cups of turkey broth, chicken broth or water into your roasting pan. Baste every half hour or so. And be sure to baste quickly, because the oven temperature will reduce every time you open the oven door.

*Some seasoned chef's recommend rubbing the inside of the turkey with a cut lemon before stuffing.

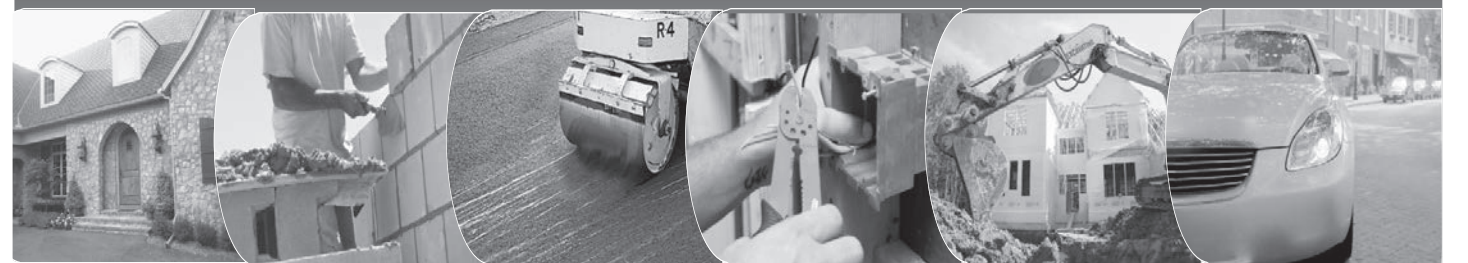
*A turkey will carve more easily if you let it sit for 20 minutes to allow juices to set.

*According to the Center of Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), the Thanksgiving turkey can be safely eaten for just four days after cooking.

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Do you have a helpful hint or handy tip that has worked for you? 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.

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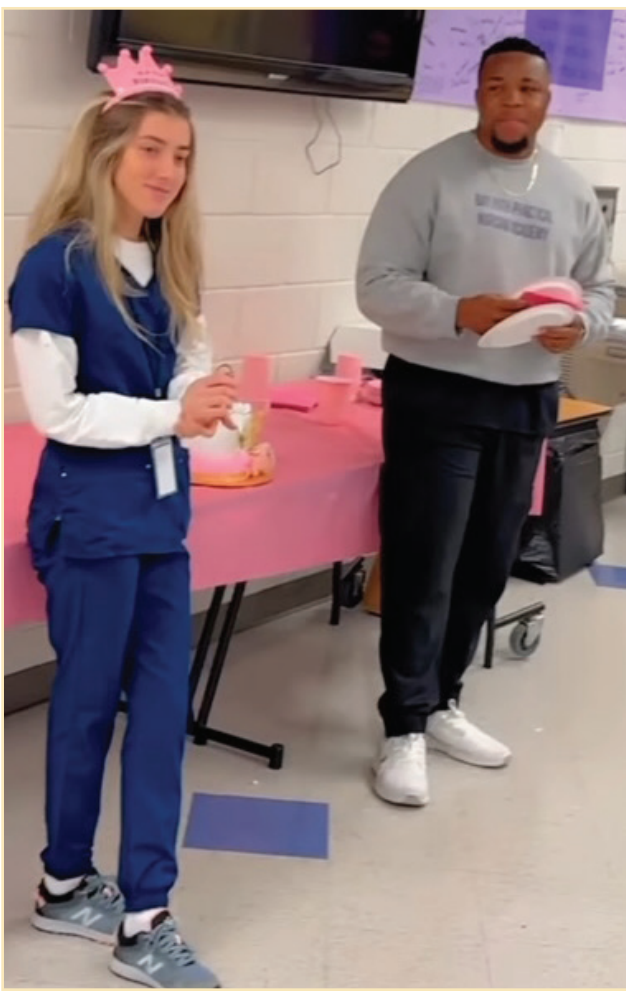
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November birthday celebrants and acts of kindness at Bay Path



CHARLTON — Donita Bytyqi of Grafton and Flory Muleka of Worcester, both members of the Practical Nursing (PN) Class of 2025 at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy celebrated their November birthdays through the acts of kindness of the rest of the PN Class of 2025 as coordinated by Nadeige Octavius, also of Worcester.

Octavius recognized that some practical nursing students struggle to find the balance not just of work-life but in their nursing journey, work-life-school balance. The struggle to check in mentally, physically, and emotionally be fully balanced while juggling home, work, and school is real. By celebrating birthdays and engaging in acts of celebration, the idea is to lessen the struggle. Octavius gladly stepped up to help celebrate her peers. Her acts of kindness do not go unnoticed. According to research, "spreading kindness not only helps others feel better about themselves -- it can also boost the giver's health and happiness!"

November 13th is World Kindness Day and the PN Class of 2025 shared simple ways they connected through kindness, even the smallest acts can create a ripple effect strengthening our connections to one another. Practicing kindness gives the PN Class of 2025, faculty, staff, and alumni of Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy a powerful way to connect to each other, themselves, and their values. "Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for a kindness," wrote Seneca.

Kindness is powerful, and it shapes lives in ways that one may not easily realize. Kindness is sharing in someone else's humanity. Kindness is choosing to act with care, even when it is difficult to. Sometimes, choosing kindness is a small, quiet choice. But kindness leaves an indelible mark.

Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN Academy Director is grateful for the members of the PN Class of 2025 for sharing their kind gestures.

"Our student nurses continue to make the world a better place," she said. "Our faculty and staff not only produce competent and prudent nurses they are kind-hearted nurses. All acts of kindness, big and small, change the world, and kindness given to others is also a gift to oneself."

Here, members of the PN Class of 2025 share their acts of kindness. Kindness that they do every single day, even in the smallest ways.

"An act of kindness I did over the weekend, at work I was on a two on one, and I tidied up both patients' room, so they had a clean room to wake up to!" said Katelyn Smith

"Sharing an act of kindness from Donita. Last week she bought our clinical group dinner on Wednesday (pizza and soda) when she did not have to! It was exceedingly kind of her and very much appreciated," Johanna Marrero shared.

"I would like to call out not just one act of kindness done to me, but multiple acts of kindness this person has done. Nadeige has the greatest heart and always makes sure I am good. When we first started school, she would always cook for her four children and always made sure to bring some for me and Britney, even though she did not know Britney, she just knew she was my friend. Last week, my washer machine broke, so I had my laundry bucket in my car. Nadeige saw it when we were at school, so she took it without telling me and washed my clothes and called me the next day to go to her house and pick it up. This time last year was when we met at work. Just a few days before my birthday. She found out through other coworkers that it was my birthday, so she threw a surprise birthday party for

me with a cake and a big basket filled with a bunch of gifts. She will do anything to see people happy. Nadeige goes out of her way to help everyone she can. Just in 2 months in this school, more than half of the class can say she has done something to help them out with whatever it may be. I am more than blessed to have such a kind soul in my life, and I hope one day I will be able to do anything and everything in return for her," said Donita Bytyqi.

"Last year, during the month of December, I met a young woman with three small children in my local grocery store. As I shopped, I watched as this young woman kept counting how much she was spending and explaining to her children this week we cannot buy some of the items her children had brought to the cart. Being in this same situation many years ago, I stayed behind her picking up the items that this young woman kept putting back on the shelves because she could not afford them, along with some essentials that I thought could help. I quickly used the self-checkout and waited for the family to go to their car. As she was loading the small number of groceries she could afford into a car, I walked over with my cart and said, 'Let me help you.' When I began giving her bags from my cart, she explained that those were not hers, I said 'Yes they are, I've been in your shoes, and I want to help,'" said Bobbiejo Smith.

"I would like to share how Abigail white and Nadeige supported me when my car was repossessed. What they did really brought me to tears because we all are students and struggling financially but they choose to sacrifice to help me out. I am grateful and pray God bless them. Adelaide also picked me up,

advised, and prayed for me. In the morning, she called to make sure I was okay," recalled Miriam Botuo.

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'Tis the season: is a donor advised fund right for you?

BY CHRISTOPHER MALLON
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,
PROGRAM MANAGER

LPL REGISTERED PRINCIPAL, THE
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The months of November and December usher in two of America's biggest holidays - Thanksgiving and Christmas. Friends and relatives plan get-togethers, begin gift shopping, and children eagerly make lists for Santa Claus. For many Americans, these holidays also lead to increased feelings of gratitude and generosity. The term "Giving Season" is often used to describe this time of year, and up to 34 percent of annual online charitable donations occur within December alone.

According to the Giving USA 2023 Annual Report, Americans gave a total of \$557.16 billion in 2023 with the largest source coming from individuals (individuals gave \$374.40 billion or 67% of total).

If you are one of the millions of Americans that are charitably inclined, perhaps you've heard the term 'Donor

Advised Funds' (DAFs). If you haven't heard of DAFs - or if you don't understand their potential benefit - please read on.

DAFs were created in the 1930s but they weren't formally recognized by the IRS code until 2006. Since then, they've become one of the fastest-growing vehicles for philanthropy, with grants from DAFs accounting for nearly 10 percent of all giving in the United States. Today there are approximately 1.9 million DAF accounts in the U.S.

Because most Americans don't have the financial means to create their own endowment or foundation, a DAF can easily function in a similar capacity and be set up for low minimums. Depending on the sponsor firm chosen, the minimum initial contribution often ranges between \$5,000 and \$25,000.

Simply put, a DAF allows any individual (or business) to open an account, receive an immediate up-front tax deduction, and rec-

ommend grants from the account over time. Donors have the flexibility to add to their DAF as frequently or infrequently as they like. They can recommend grants to their favorite charities whenever desired, all from the convenience of one streamlined account. Plus, the assets can be prudently invested to seek growth and years of potential giving.

Common scenarios when a DAF could be worth consideration:

- You are in a high tax bracket due to the sale of a business (or appreciated asset)
- You want to lower your Adjusted Gross Income and "bunch" several years of donations into one tax year
- You typically give to multiple charities and want to simplify the administrative process
- You want to create a DAF in memory of a specific loved one, family, or organization
- You already plan to bequest a portion of your estate to charity

Most donors name

their Donor Advised Fund after themselves or family members, for example: John and Jennifer Smith Fund, or Jones Family Charitable Fund. Others name their funds for a purpose, such as: Local Children's Health Fund. If the DAF is created on behalf of a business entity, it could even be named after the organization and accept employee donations.

Everyone's charitable and financial goals are unique, and there are additional rules and regulations regarding DAFs. As a result, you should consult with a knowledgeable Financial Planner and/or Tax Consultant. Together they should be able to answer your questions and assist in determining if a DAF is right for you. Working with a professional can help simplify the setup, administration, and ongoing investment management. Maintaining a DAF does involve a combination of annual fees (administrative + investments), but the total cost is often less than donating to charity via a credit card.

At The Capstone Planning Group, we utilize an independent business model and have the flexibility to help clients choose from a variety of DAF sponsors. We also have the freedom to create investment portfolios using stocks, bonds, ETFs and mutual funds from companies including (but not limited to): American Funds, Fidelity, Blackrock, Invesco, JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs, PIMCO, State Street, Vanguard and many more

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Dream of holidays

As the holiday season heats up and the smell of roasted turkey and pumpkin pie fills the air, it's easy to get caught up in the magic of the season—and just as easy to let your dreams slip into the background.

Between family gather-

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ings, festive celebrations, and endless to-do lists, the holidays can feel like both a time of joy and a reminder of what you haven't yet achieved. But what if this season could be the spark to reignite your fire for your dreams?

The holidays are distracting. There's shopping to do, meals to prepare, and social media posts showing everyone else's highlight reels. That can leave you comparing your progress to others and wondering if you've fallen behind. But here's the thing—the holidays aren't

about competing; they're about connection, reflection, and renewal. And that goes for your dreams, too.

Think about the power of this time of year. Latch onto the holiday spirit, express gratitude, reflect on where you've been, and just as importantly, set your sights on where you're headed.

What about that book you're writing, the weight you're losing, or the business you started that hasn't quite taken off yet? Now is not the time to hold back. Wake up a little earlier, stay up a little later—don't let your dreams take a holiday break only to resurface as New Year's resolutions. Keep the fire burning!

Let the warmth of the season fuel your ambitions. Let the love and laughter of family remind you why you're chasing your dreams in the first place. Let the joy of giving inspire you to give your all in pursuit of your goals.

Even history's greatest dreamers didn't take the holidays off when their vision was on the line. In the winter of 1879, Thomas Edison worked tirelessly at his lab in Menlo Park, perfecting the electric light bulb. His assistants reported working through snowstorms and late into the night by lamplight. The breakthrough came on New Year's Eve when his

bulb successfully burned for over 13 hours, proving it was commercially viable.

Edison later said, "Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration." His dedication reminds us that even in the season of comfort, a little extra effort can lead to monumental breakthroughs.

Of course, no one wants to become a workaholic. Ebenezer Scrooge learned the hard way that all work and no play leads to misery, though his ghostly intervention came at Christmastime. Thanksgiving reminds us of balance. Gratitude is as much about appreciating where you are as it is about striving for more.

Here are a few ways to stay motivated while savoring the season:

Reflect: Take a moment to look back—not to beat yourself up, but to celebrate the progress you've made. Even small steps matter.

Write down your dreams: Grab a notebook and jot down your biggest aspirations. Putting them on paper makes them more real.

Visualize success: As you sip on cider or watch the leaves fall, close your eyes and imagine achieving your goals. What does it look like? How will it feel?

Share your passion: Talk about your dreams with family and friends who support you. Their encouragement can spark new ideas or give you a much-needed boost.

Set a small goal before the New Year: Don't wait for January 1 to start fresh. Take one small, actionable step toward your goal now.

The holidays are the perfect reminder that life combines work and play, effort and joy, dreaming and doing. As you prepare your Thanksgiving plans—whether it's organizing a menu, tidying up the house, or coordinating with loved ones—take a moment to prepare for your goals.

Just like a well-thought-out meal comes together with care and attention, your dreams need thoughtful planning and action to thrive. Let the spirit of the season inspire you to dream bigger and work harder.

Gratitude and ambition go hand in hand. Some might argue that being happy with what you have might stifle your drive to achieve more. But think of an athlete who cherishes every victory while relentlessly training for the next one.

Here's to chasing your dreams as fiercely as you chase seconds on pumpkin pie!

Holiday cacti add weeks of color and enjoyment

Add weeks of colorful flowers and decades of enjoyment to your indoor plant collection with holiday cacti. Dress one up with a decorative basket, container, or foil wrap and give it to a favorite gardener or holiday hostess. You'll find a variety for sale at your local garden center or florist.

The plant sold as a Christmas cactus may in fact be a Thanksgiving cactus. The true Christmas cactus blooms later and has small segments with rounded edges. The Thanksgiving cactus, though often sold as the Christmas cactus, has toothed or jagged segments and typically blooms earlier. To add to the confusion, there are hybrids of the two that bloom in between these.

Fortunately, their growing requirements and care are essentially the same so the plants will do fine no matter the name on the label. Keep your flowering holiday cactus in a cool bright location to extend its bloom time for as long as four to eight weeks. Avoid hot and cold air drafts, moisture stress, and other environmental changes to reduce the risk of bud and flower drop.

These holiday cacti are epiphytes that naturally grow on trees in the rainforests of Brazil. They all prefer bright indirect light, high humidity, and thorough watering when the top few inches of soil begin to dry. Don't overwater, but don't let the soil dry completely. Water a bit more often when the plant is in bloom.

Grow them in an organic well-drained potting mix for best results. Water thoroughly and pour off any excess water that collects in the saucer to avoid root rot. Reduce maintenance and improve the growing conditions with the help of gravel trays.



Melinda Myers

The Thanksgiving cactus has toothed or jagged segments and typically blooms earlier than the Christmas cactus.

Place a layer of pebbles, decorative stones, or marbles in the saucer or bot-



GARDEN
MOMENTS

MELINDA
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tom of the foil wrap or basket. The pot will be elevated above any excess water collecting in the pebbles. As this water evaporates it increases the humidity around the plant.

Fertilize with a dilute solution of flowering houseplant fertilizer once it finishes blooming and throughout spring and summer as needed. Grow your cactus in a north-facing window or back from an east- or west-facing window where it receives bright indirect light throughout the year. Too much sun turns the leaf segments dark red.

Don't be anxious to move these plants to a bigger container. They prefer to be somewhat pot-bound and can remain in the same pot for years.

Encourage a new flush of flowers with cooler night temperatures around 55 to 60 degrees

and slightly drier soil. An uninterrupted dark period will also help promote flowering.

Next fall, start the dark treatment in early October to get holiday flowers. Cover the plants or move them to a location free of artificial light, indoors or outside, each night for 14 hours and provide bright, indirect sunlight each day.

Any interruption in the dark period from outdoor, street, or reading lights can delay or prevent flowering.

Make this the year you add holiday cacti to your indoor plant collection and consider purchasing a few for friends and family. These easy-care flowering beauties will brighten indoor holiday décor and everyone's mood.

Melinda Myers has written over 20 gardening books, including *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* radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine. Myers' Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

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Why you should shop local for the holidays and beyond

Various components come together to make the holiday season a festive time of year. There is a lot to get done in a short amount of time during the holiday season, and part of that includes shopping for all of the family members and friends on your shopping list. Shopping can be a complicated process that involves identifying which stores will be the best places to shop. Local retailers make the perfect place to shop for holiday items.

According to the American Express Business Economic Impact Study, more than two-thirds of every dollar spent with a local business stays in the community. Indeed, shopping local benefits consumer and community alike. The following are some of the many perks to shopping locally throughout the holiday season.

- Personalized attention: Small businesses are known for their personalized

customer service and owners and staff are often lauded for taking the time to interact and learn about their customers, a dynamic that is impossible at larger retailers.

- Meet and interact with people: Shopping in-person at local stores, you'll see faces from your community and become better known in the local area.

- Shorter lines: Local stores are bound to have smaller crowds and thus shorter lines. That translates to less stress and hassle when it comes to getting in and out with holiday gifts.

- Smaller carbon footprint: Pollution, traffic congestion, habitat loss, and resource depletion may not occur on the same levels when shopping locally compared to patronizing big box stores. That's because local retailers tend to create or source their products locally, whereas many big box stores secure

their goods overseas.

- Easier parking: This goes hand-in-hand with smaller crowds, as shopping locally does not typically require driving up and down endless aisles at malls or standalone retail stores in an effort to find a parking spot. Local retailers in town may have on-street parking or closed lots that are convenient to shoppers.

- Small batch shopping experience: Consumers can secure items in small businesses that are not carbon copies of those found across the country at major retail chains. When seeking a unique, thoughtful gift, shopping locally is the way to go.

Shopping locally this holiday season provides an array of benefits to consumers, and helps to solidify a strong Main Street in communities.



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Crossword Puzzle

1		2		3		4	5
6							7
8							
9							

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1493: Christopher Columbus first sights the island now known as Puerto Rico.

1883: American and Canadian railroads institute five standard continental time zones.

1963: The first push-button telephone goes into service.

Book FACT:

This is a fictional story of book length, that often represents character and action.

Answer: Novel

ACROSS

- Collection of writings
- Movie rating
- Timing of events
- Jewish religious leader
- Newspapers or magazines

DOWN

- One who creates a written piece
- A space in a home
- Green onion
- Start to move
- Corrections

Answers:
 Across
 1. Works 4. Pg 6. Timeline 8. Rabbi 9. Journals
 Down
 1. Writer 2. Room 3. Scallion 5. Go 7. Edits

NEW WORD

AUTHOR

the writer of a book, article or report

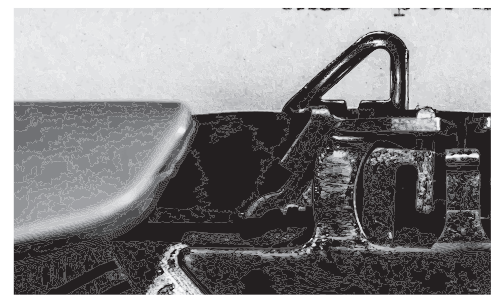
How they say that in...

- English:** Word
- Spanish:** Palabra
- Italian:** Parola
- French:** Mot
- German:** Wort

Did You Know?

Children who love reading perform better in school overall. Plus, the more kids like to read, the more they tend to do it, becoming better at reading in the process.

Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Typewriter

⊙ * ✂ ☺ ✱ ~ ⓪ ☯ ✧ ✨ ✖ ✱ ✚ ✽ ✪ ✫ ✬ ✭ ✮ ✯ ✰ ✱ ✲ ✳ ✴ ✵ ✶ ✷ ✸ ✹ ✺ ✻ ✼ ✽ ✾ ✿ Ⓜ ✪ ✫ ✬ ✭ ✮ ✯ ✰ ✱ ✲ ✳ ✴ ✵ ✶ ✷ ✸ ✹ ✺ ✻ ✼ ✽ ✾ ✿

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to Halloween. Each number corresponds to cooking. (Hint: 10 = E)

- A. 25 4 2 12 10 21 25 10 4 7 26

Clue: They make a meal

- B. 7 25 19 25 4 2

Clue: Duration

- C. 19 10 9 17 26

Clue: Dinner and breakfast are two

- D. 20 12 10 20 9 12 10

Clue: Get ready

Answers: A. ingredients B. timing C. meals D. prepare

SUDOKU

				2		3		
				7	8			
	2			1		9	7	
	3			9				
4	9		1					
6								7
8			4	6				
	6					3		
		5	7	9				

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: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

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!

8	6	1	9	3	7	5	4	2
5	4	3	1	2	8	9	6	7
9	2	7	6	4	5	3	8	1
7	9	2	5	3	4	9	7	6
3	5	6	8	1	7	9	4	2
1	8	4	2	9	6	7	5	3
2	4	3	6	5	1	9	7	8
6	3	8	7	9	4	2	1	5
4	5	6	3	4	7	8	2	1

ANSWER:

POLICE REPORTS

Leicester Police Log

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7
10:46 a.m.: suspicious mv (Towtaid Street), unfounded; 11:13 a.m.: assist citizen (Main Street); 11:53 a.m.: shoplifting (Soojians Drive), James Travis Clark, 46, 1038 Main Street, #2R, Worcester, larceny under \$1200, trespassing, possession Class E drug, arrest; 12:20 p.m.: ambulance (Huntoon Memorial Highway), transported; 2:11 p.m.: assist citizen (Marshall Street); 3:00 p.m.: mv stop (Paxton Street), spoken to; 3:17 p.m.: welfare check (Stafford Street), resolved; 6:13 p.m.: ambulance (Outlook Drive, Worcester), transported.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8
12:05 a.m.: mv stop (South Main Street), verbal warning; 12:54 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; 1:26 a.m.: suspicious mv (Rawson Street), gone on arrival; 1:58 a.m.: assist other agency (Oxford Street North, Auburn), services rendered; 9:05 a.m.: debris in road (Paxton Street), resolved; 10:29 a.m.: welfare check (Stafford Street), transported to hospital; 11:42 a.m.: ambulance (Main Street), transported; 2:22 p.m.: erratic operator (South Main Street), services rendered; 2:32 p.m.: accident (Main Street), report taken; 3:24 p.m.: assist citizen (Carleton Road); 4:03 p.m.: welfare check (Denny Place), assisted; 4:15 p.m.: ambulance (Main Street), transported; 6:50 p.m.: erratic operator (Stafford Street), unfounded; 8:45 p.m.: debris in road (Parker Street), resolved; 10:08 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9
1:29 a.m.: accident (Charles Street), report taken; 3:15 a.m.: hit/run accident (Rawson Street), name and address redacted from police log, leaving the scene of a property damage accident, negligent operation, marked lanes violation, speeding, criminal application issued; 4:53 a.m.: accident (Rawson Street), report taken; 6:12 a.m.: commercial alarm (Stafford Street), false alarm; 6:54 a.m.: investigation (South Main Street), report taken; 7:38 a.m.: commercial alarm (Pleasant Street), resolved; 7:48 a.m.: ambulance (Paxton Street), transported; 10:37 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 11:09 a.m.: malicious mischief (Rawson Street), report taken; 12:32 p.m.: illegal dumping (Bond Street), report taken; 12:38 p.m.: ambulance (Winslow Avenue), transported; 12:53 p.m.: ambulance (Pleasant Street), transported; 2:54 p.m.: shoplifting (Soojians Drive), report taken; 3:56 p.m.: property found (Main Street), resolved; 4:25 p.m.: animal complaint (Pleasant Street), referred; 5:22 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), written warning; 6:08 p.m.: animal complaint (Main Street), referred.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10
4:14 a.m.: family problem (Towtaid Street), assisted; 8:59 a.m.: ambulance (Stafford Street), transported; 11:16 a.m.: larceny (Blueberry Lane), report taken; 11:58 a.m.: larceny (Huntoon Memorial Highway), report taken; 3:25 p.m.: welfare check (Pleasant Street), transported to hospital; 5:44 p.m.: welfare check (Main Street), unfounded; 7:22 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; 9:12 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), written warning; 9:42 p.m.: disturbance (Soojians Drive), resolved.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11
2:59 a.m.: ambulance (Huntoon Memorial Highway), transported; 5:57 a.m.: commercial alarm (Pleasant Street), false alarm; 6:11 a.m.: commercial alarm (Main Street), false alarm; 9:43 a.m.: mv stop (Watson Street), written warning; 10:13 a.m.: mv stop (Soojians Drive), spoken to; 12:09 p.m.: mv stop (South Main Street), verbal warning; 12:39 p.m.: ambulance (Cricklewood Drive), transported; 1:24 p.m.: investigation (Huntoon Memorial Highway), report taken; 1:42 p.m.: assist other PD (Huntoon Memorial Highway), services rendered; 3:10 p.m.: ambulance (Mulberry Street), transported; 3:53 p.m.: vandalism (Locust Street), report taken; 6:49 p.m.: erratic operator (Main Street), unfounded; 8:30 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), name and address redacted from police log, op w/suspended license, criminal

application issued.
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12
12:00 a.m.: assist other agency (South Main Street), services rendered; 3:54 a.m.: welfare check (Stafford Street), unable to locate; 7:29 a.m.: welfare check (Stafford Street), assisted; 7:53 a.m.: stolen mv (Stafford Street), report taken; 10:31 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), written warning; 10:35 a.m.: ambulance (Willow Hill Road), transported; 10:45 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; 10:54 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), offenses omitted from police log, criminal application issued; 10:55 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), Jose M. Rivera, 42, 114 Southbridge Road, Dudley, speeding, op w/license revoked as habitual traffic offender, arrest; 12:51 p.m.: residential alarm (Collier Avenue), false alarm; 2:11 p.m.: arrest warrant service (Henshaw Street), unable to serve; 2:16 p.m.: suspicious mv (Leela Lane), unable to locate; 2:37 p.m.: ambulance (Whittemore Street), transported; 5:03 p.m.: mv stop (Pleasant Street), verbal warning; 5:16 p.m.: ambulance (Pleasant Street, Worcester), transported; 5:19 p.m.: mv stop (Pine Street), verbal warning; 5:32 p.m.: mv stop (South Main Street), citation issued; 5:52 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 6:41 p.m.: mv stop (Paxton Street), written warning; 8:36 p.m.: investigation (Soojians Drive), report taken; 8:53 p.m.: welfare check (Main Street), transported to hospital; 11:15 p.m.: commercial alarm (Main Street), false alarm; 11:35 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13
1:18 a.m.: disabled mv (Stafford Street), investigated; 3:15 a.m.: commercial alarm (Main Street), false alarm; 4:56 a.m.: commercial alarm (Main Street), false alarm; 7:33 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), citation issued; 7:46 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), name and address redacted from police log, unlicensed operation, criminal application issued; 8:00 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 8:05 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), written warning; 8:27 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), name and address redacted from police log, unlicensed operation, criminal application issued; 10:10 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 10:16 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), written warning; 10:55 a.m.: mv stop (South Main Street), verbal warning; 11:07 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; 11:16 a.m.: welfare check (Siani Road), assisted; 12:47 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 1:17 p.m.: ambulance (Main Street), transported; 1:34 p.m.: investigation (South Main Street), report taken; 1:44 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), spoken to; 2:20 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; 2:21 p.m.: assist citizen (Huntoon Memorial Highway); 4:31 p.m.: abandoned 911 call (Ingram Road), resolved; 5:42 p.m.: restraining order service (Charles Street), served; 6:26 p.m.: mv stop (Paxton Street), spoken to; 8:05 p.m.: welfare check (Denny Place), assisted; 9:19 p.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning.

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Spencer Police Log

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6
2:30-2:39 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 5:12 a.m.: commercial alarm (Main Street), services rendered; 5:34 a.m.: intelligence/parole (West Main Street), info rec'd; 6:56 a.m.: 911 call (Hastings Road), open line/man yelling at woman; 7:44 a.m.: larceny (Browning Pond Road), report taken; 8:12 a.m.: fire/woods/grass (Paxton Road), illegal burn; 8:23 a.m.: LTC issued (West Main Street), assisted; 9:41 a.m.: animal complaint (Bixby Road), surrendering cat; 10:59 a.m.: elderly matter (Church Street), services rendered; 12:19 p.m.: medical/general (Lincoln Street); 1:50 p.m.: fire/woods/grass (McDonald Street), illegal burn; 2:54 p.m.: juvenile matter (Ash Street), re: earlier school incident; 4:42 p.m.: accident (Pleasant

Street), report taken; 4:56 p.m.: animal complaint (Howe Village), cat locked in empty apt.; 5:05 p.m.: medical/general (Chestnut Street); 5:22 p.m.: disturbance (Chestnut Street), noise complaint; 5:24 p.m.: residential alarm (Greenville Street), services rendered; 5:41 p.m.: officer wanted (Norcross Road), info from Danvers PD; 6:00 p.m.: mv complaint (Main Street), erratic operator; 8:24 p.m.: officer wanted (Chestnut Street), req. welfare check; 8:43 p.m.: medical/general (Lincoln Street); 9:01 p.m.: 911 call (West Main Street), hang-up; (total daily mv stops - 2).

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7
1:55-3:01 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 2:03 a.m.: suspicious mv (West Main Street), investigated; 2:08 a.m.: suspicious mv (Main Street), investigated; 4:05 a.m.: intelligence/parole (West Main Street), info rec'd; 6:00 a.m.: medical/general (Wilson Avenue); 6:45 a.m.: LTC issued (West Main Street), assisted; 7:30 a.m.: mv lockout (Woodside Road), assisted; 7:56 a.m.: medical/general (R. Jones Road); 9:27 a.m.: medical/general (Treadwell Road); 10:35 a.m.: medical/general (Franklin Street); 10:51 a.m.: medical/general (Northwest Road); 11:48 a.m.: medical/general (Lincoln Street); 11:58 a.m.: officer wanted (West Main Street), rep. shoplifting; 1:57 p.m.: fire alarm (South Spencer Road), testing; 2:20 p.m.: mutual aid (West Main Street), station coverage/Paxton fire; 2:37 p.m.: mutual aid (West Main Street), forestry truck to Holden fire; 2:55 p.m.: officer wanted at school (Paxton Road), Olivia Paris Trudell, 29, 5 Crillon Road, Worcester, trespassing, disturbing the peace, arrest; 3:08 p.m.: 911 call (Meadow Road), accidental; 3:14 p.m.: disturbance (Main Street), rep. belligerent customer; 3:25 p.m.: lost/found (Cherry Street), wallet found; 3:59 p.m.: medical/general (Church Street); 6:45 p.m.: officer wanted (West Main Street), rep. threats; 7:04 p.m.: mv theft (West Main Street), boyfriend took mv; 7:21 p.m.: officer wanted (Paxton Road), concern w/family member; 7:53 p.m.: medical/general (Main Street); 9:31 p.m.: medical/general (Main Street); 10:33 p.m.: suspicious mv (Main Street), investigated; 10:50 p.m.: building checked, secure; 11:23 p.m.: residential alarm (Sunberg Road), services rendered; accident (Pleasant Street), mv vs deer; (total daily mv stops - 2).

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8
12:06 a.m.: commercial alarm (Main Street), services rendered; 1:03-2:11 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 4:08 a.m.: intelligence/parole (West Main Street), info rec'd; 8:46 a.m.: officer wanted (Meadow Road), rep. sale multiple pistols/revolvers; 8:50 a.m.: officer wanted (West Main Street), c/o tents/encampment; 9:03 a.m.: animal complaint (Bixby Road), loose dogs; 11:10 a.m.: animal complaint (Main Street), loose dog; 12:49 p.m.: medical/general (Pearl Street); 12:55 p.m.: medical/general (Temple Street); 1:18 p.m.: 911 call (West Main Street), no contact; 1:59 p.m.: commercial alarm (Main Street), services rendered; 2:45 p.m.: abandoned mv (West Main Street), services rendered; 3:02 p.m.: medical/general (Cherry Street); 3:03 p.m.: larceny (West Main Street), report taken; 3:12 p.m.: juvenile matter (Wilson Street), spoken to; 4:19 p.m.: officer wanted (Paxton Road), poss. restraining order violation; 6:02 p.m.: officer wanted (Mechanic Street), dispute over mv damage; 6:32 p.m.: accident (North Spencer Road), mv vs deer; 11:32 p.m.: disturbance (Main Street), noises complaint; (total daily mv stops - 1).

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9
1:47 a.m.: officer wanted (Deer Run Road), req. check of home; 2:09-2:29 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 4:18 a.m.: mutual aid (R. Jones Road), assist Leicester PD; 5:20 a.m.: intelligence/parole (West Main Street), info rec'd; 8:42 a.m.: medical/general (Church Street), lift assist; 9:56 a.m.: mutual aid (Langevin Street), assist Worcester PD; 12:43 p.m.: fire/woods/grass (Charlton Road), leaves burning; 2:41 p.m.: officer wanted (Greenville Street), re: suspicious mv in Leicester; 4:02 p.m.: juvenile matter (Wilson Street), kids swinging into road; 4:57 p.m.: medi-

cal/general (Howe Village); 7:03 p.m.: 911 call (Meadow Road), hang-up; 7:45 p.m.: medical/general (Pine Acres); 8:34 p.m.: fire/woods/grass (Charron Street), illegal burn; 9:05 p.m.: fire/woods/grass (Powers Street), illegal burn; 9:07 p.m.: vandalism (Main Street), report taken; 10:31 p.m.: officer wanted (R. Jones Road), c/o light shining toward house; (total daily mv stops - 7).

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10
4:13 a.m.: fire alarm (North Street), referred; 4:18 a.m.: medical/general (Main Street); 6:57 a.m.: animal complaint (Mechanic Street), re: dead cat; 7:05 a.m.: illegal dumping (West Main Street), rep. drug paraphernalia; 8:52 a.m.: medical/general (Grove Street); 10:16 a.m.: medical/general (Main Street); 10:46 a.m.: disturbance (Vista Lane), re: issue w/neighbor; 11:15 a.m.: medical/general (Valley Street); 11:55 a.m.: medical/general (Northwest Road); 12:39 p.m.: medical/general (Lincoln Street); 12:56 p.m.: medical/general (Gold Nugget Road); 1:19 p.m.: animal complaint (Ash Street), rep. injured cat; 2:17 p.m.: accident (Northwest Road), report taken; 3:05 p.m.: illegal dumping (Main Street), items on sidewalk; 3:08 p.m.: medical/general (Lake Street); 3:15 p.m.: 911 call (West Main Street), accidental; 4:37 p.m.: mutual aid (West Main Street), family dispute; 5:05 p.m.: accident (West Main Street), report taken; 7:30 p.m.: officer wanted (Ash Street), req. welfare check; 8:19 p.m.: officer wanted (Kittredge Road), req. welfare check; 11:35 p.m.: officer wanted (Main Street), struck cat/in mv; (total daily mv stops - 1).

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11
12:01-2:47 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 2:55 a.m.: medical/general (Cherry Street); 7:09 a.m.: abandoned 911 call (Ash Street), misdial; 8:39 a.m.: disturbance (Adams Street), noise complaint; 8:48 a.m.: medical/general (Ash Street); 9:02 a.m.: LTC issued (West Main Street), assisted; 9:24 a.m.: officer wanted (West Main Street), rep. sale multiple pistols/revolvers; 9:42 a.m.: medical/general (Thompson Pond Road); 11:31 a.m.: fire alarm (Main Street), cooking set off alarm; 12:30 p.m.: accident (Pleasant Street), report taken; 1:38 p.m.: disabled mv (Charlton Road), assisted; 1:55 p.m.: abandoned 911 call (G.H. Wilson Road), no emergency; 2:09 p.m.: medical/general (Howe Village); 2:11 p.m.: RV complaint (Howard Hurley Road), c/o dirt bikes; 2:52 p.m.: medical/general (Pleasant Street); 3:46 p.m.: fire/woods/grass (Main Street), illegal burn; 5:56 p.m.: commercial alarm (Mechanic Street), services rendered; 8:54 p.m.: officer wanted (West Main Street), re: emails rec'd; 10:00 p.m.: mutual aid (West Main Street), Charlton PD bolo; (total daily mv stops - 1).

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12
12:00 a.m.: medical/general (Pearl Street); 12:12-2:37 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 12:14-2:44 a.m.: parking violations/13 (various streets), info flyers issued; 7:09 a.m.: LTC issued (West Main Street), assisted; 8:04 a.m.: accident (Pleasant Street), report taken; 8:53 a.m.: abandoned 911 call (Route 49), unable to make contact; 9:25 a.m.: medical/general (Robin Road); 11:01 a.m.: medical/general (Howe Village), lift assist; 11:26 a.m.: restraining order service (West Main Street); 12:09 p.m.: officer wanted (Town House Court), c/o tenant stealing electricity; 12:30 p.m.: medical/general (Howe Village); 1:16 p.m.: medical/general (Mechanic Street); 2:22 p.m.: DPW call (Thompson Pond Road), low-hanging tree limbs; 2:37 p.m.: suspicious mv (North Spencer Road), investigated; 3:26 p.m.: juvenile matter (Ash Street), issue btw juveniles; 3:50 p.m.: medical/general (Irving Street); 3:53 p.m.: DPW call (Pope Street), tree on wires; 5:18 p.m.: fire alarm (Cherry Street), referred; 5:32 p.m.: illegal dumping (Main Street), unauth. use of bin; 6:28 p.m.: officer wanted (West Main Street), rep. harassment; 7:28 p.m.: suspicious persons (West Main Street), investigated; 7:33 p.m.: suspicious persons (Lake Street), screaming heard at school; (total daily mv stops - 1).

###

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DEMOCRACY
continued from page A1

“With the help of the Town Clerk, students were shown three possible designs for the new town dog tags. After viewing the designs (a fire hydrant, a star, or a dog paw) and learning the importance of voting, students had the opportunity to cast their ballot

for their favorite design,” Pike added. Students enjoyed the entire process while learning about voting, elections, and the importance of ensuring fair outcomes and respectfully accepting the results. “The students went through a voting process at school. Their classes were assigned to ‘precincts’, they waited in line, they were given a

ballot with the choices, and made their decisions individually in a voting booth,” Pike added. “Each student placed their ballot in a box and the results were tallied. This allowed the students to feel their votes were important and had meaning.” After casting their votes, students received one of the winning stickers that proudly pro-

claimed: “I Voted.” For the dog tag election, the winner determined by LES students was officially declared as the dog paw. The winning tag will be printed and ready for our furry friends in March 2025. Leicester Public Library Director Suzanne Hall is also thanked for her support and assistance with the project. “I really look forward

to working with everyone again because it was a success in my eyes,” LaFleur said. “We hope to have another assembly in February or March to show the children the winning design and further help them understand that, while you vote on something today, the end result may come a little while later.”

LOCKE
continued from page A1

some of the most heinous ever seen by this office,” Early said. “I appreciate the hard work of Senior First Assistant District Attorney Jeffrey Travers, Assistant District Attorney Terry McLaughlin, and First Assistant District Attorney Jane Sullivan, whose dedication and meticulous efforts led to this verdict today.”

Locke is a cousin of Moses Bermudez, who was working in California when his wife and three children were murdered. Locke was held by authorities on March 26, 2018, after being arrested for misleading a police investigation into the murders. According to investigators, Locke lied to police by fabricating stories about gang involvement in the killings.

Officials thanked several law enforcement agencies that worked on the case over the past six years, including the State Police Detective Unit assigned to the Worcester County District Attorney’s Office; the West Brookfield Police Department; the State Police Crime Scene Services Section; State Police civilian forensic scientists; the State Police Gang Unit; the State Fire Marshal’s Office; and members of the Medical Examiner’s Office.

“I also want to thank the men and women of the jury who had to listen to these horrible facts, witness the graphic crimes that had been committed, and were still able to do their job. To them, we are very grateful,” Early said. “We hope this outcome can provide some measure of justice for the victims’ family.”

Locke will be sentenced at a later date.

DPHS
continued from page A1

Meanwhile, significant outdoor work has taken place in recent months to overhaul Prouty’s athletic facilities.

“The football field has received a new irrigation system and sod,” Pimentel added. “The football field goalposts, lighting, and scoreboard have also been installed.” The school community can expect to see several projects take place this winter. These include the installation of metal panels along the Pre-K roof; waterproofing and drywall work; additional

framing, electrical, and plumbing work; and exterior masonry projects.

“The rooftop air handling units will be hoisted to the roof and set on their respective curbs. The electrical switchgear will be delivered and installed,” Pimentel said.

Additional interior stairwells will also be installed, and project leaders will then turn their attention to third-floor mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work.

Outside, the football field grandstand bleachers are expected to be installed this winter. The football field and track

are scheduled to be ready for use in 2026.

Meanwhile, the spring and summer of 2025 are slated to see a renovation of the baseball field. The project will include upgrades to the concession stand, and use of the facilities is scheduled for 2027.

The tennis courts will be renovated in the summer of 2026, with use of the facilities expected in the fall of that year.

The summer of 2026 will also feature the demolition of Prouty’s current classroom building. By then, the new class-

room wing will be fully constructed and ready for student use.

“The David Prouty High School building project is moving forward well,” said Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District Superintendent Paul Haughey. “These are exciting times as our facilities are aligning well with our high-quality educational programs and services, with designs to meet the challenges for the 21st century and beyond.”

Jones Whitsett Architects, Inc., is serving as the architect for

the project. The general contractor is Fontaine Bros., Inc.

Looking ahead, school officials can’t wait to watch further progress unfold this winter ahead of a busy spring. When the project eventually reaches its conclusion, students will enjoy state-of-the-art academic and athletic facilities.

“David Prouty High School is the flagship for what will be the home of the next generation of education for all of our staff and students,” Haughey said.

LITTLE LEAGUE
continued from page A1

years old. Participants with the organization go all the way up to age 18, creating

memories that will last a lifetime.

Members of the Spencer Exchange Club take part in several projects and activities each year to help improve the community and support

local residents.

“The Exchange Club has also donated thousands of dollars to scholarships, gifts, equipment, sponsorships, educational endeavors, and other community causes and

events,” read a statement released by the club.

For more information about the Exchange Club, visit www.spencerexchangeclub.org.

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LEGALS

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Worcester Probate and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508)831-2200
Docket No. WO24E008PP
A. C. 92A
Petition to Partition
To: Amy Gerstel and to all other persons interested.
A petition has been presented to said Court by Richard Herman Henry III of West Brookfield in the County of Worcester representing that he hold as tenant in common part or share of certain land lying in Warren in said County of Worcester and briefly as follows:
Setting for that he/she desire all the aforesaid described part of said land may be sold at private sale not less than three hundred twenty thousand (\$320,000.00) 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 same 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 new proceeds thereof.
If you desire to object thereto you or your attorney shall file a written appearance in said court at Worcester before ten o'clock in the forenoon on the seventeenth day of December 2024 the return date of this citation.
WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A Keamy, Esq., First Justice of this Court, this first day of November 2024.
Stephanie Fattman, Register of Probate
November 22, 2024

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. WO24C0503CA
CITATION ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME
In the matter of:
Lillian Margaret Haines
A **Petition to Change Name of Adult** has been filed by
Lillian Margaret Haines of Spencer MA requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:
Lillian LaMountain Haines
IMPORTANT NOTICE
Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: Worcester Probate and Family Court before 11/19/24 at 10 a.m. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.
WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A Keamy, First Justice of this Court.
Date: October 18, 2024
Stephanie Fattman, Register of Probate
November 22, 2024

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. WO24P3872EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
Estate Of:
Pamela Jeanne Velazquez
Date of Death: 11/29/2023

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by
Jeremie L Witlin of Woodsocket RI requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that:
Jeremie L Witlin of Woodsocket RI be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **With Personal 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 12/10/2024**
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.

Date: November 08, 2024
Stephanie K. Fattman, Register of Probate
November 21, 2024

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. WO24P3854EA
Informal Probate Publication Notice
Estate Of:
Richard H. Witz
Also known as Richard P. Witz
Date of Death: September 27, 2024
To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of:
Petitioner **Hyman G. Darling of Springfield, MA**
Hyman G. Darling of Springfield, MA has been informally appointed as Personal Representative of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.
The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
November 22, 2024



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From left: Lainie Petrou from the Worcester County District Attorney's Office, Logi Nathan from the British Swim School of Blackstone Valley, Julie LeBeau of the Autism Resource Center, Janine LaPrade, swim instructor at Worcester Fitness, Kristen Cariglia, Director of the Autism Resource Center, Kelly Sampson of the Worcester JCC, Eileen Shea from the Worcester County District Attorney's Office, and Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr.

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