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SPENCER NEW LEADER
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Friday, November 6, 2026
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Spencer renews talks about government format

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

SPENCER — Efforts have renewed to examine Spencer's government format potentially bringing the first updates to the document in 30 years, although the process remains a slow and steady one.

The Spencer Board of Selectmen had previously debated examining the Spencer Governmental Act, which was established and approved by the state legislature in 1998 setting up the government format the town employes today. In September, the board established plans to meet with legal counsel but had not held major discussions regarding the process, leaving the project at a minor standstill.

While the project has not been ignored, board chair Gary Woodbury made another push to keep the review as a major priority for the town bringing it back to the forefront of discussions at the board's Oct. 26 meeting.

"I think it's a good idea to look at it. There may be revisions that need to be done," Woodbury said. "I think a lot of that is imperative to what we're trying to do, and that's to bring everything up to date and make any revisions. What was good in 1998 — here we are in 2026 almost 30 years later, and I think it needs to be looked at. It could very well not need anything, but if we don't look at it, we're not doing our due diligence."

The idea of putting together a working group to lead the review also resurfaced and selectmen charged Town Manager Jeff Bridges with creating a charge statement that could be reviewed at a future meeting. Bridges also reiterated that the town's legal counsel should be brought in to discuss the different processes for review and possible amendments.

While there has been no recommendation or indication that Spencer will inevitably change its government format, any change to the language of the document would require an act by the state legislature which is often a lengthy process. One possible change already discussed is moving from a legislative act to a town charter system which codifies the town's government format in local bylaws, making them easier to amend. Another possibility brought up in past meetings was examining the current need for a supermajority for approval.

The charge of the working group would be to examine what, if any, changes like these may be necessary to bring Spencer's government format up to date with modern times. As the process is still in its infancy, a timeline has yet to be established.



Courtesy

The halls of Leicester Elementary School were teeming with ghosts, goblins, ghouls, and superheroes Friday, Oct. 30 as students and staff celebrated Halloween in costume. Photo courtesy of the school's Facebook page.

Spencer community prepares for holiday fairs, Scout fundraiser

SPENCER — The holiday season is approaching, and several local organizations are preparing to welcome residents for a series of community events, including craft fairs, a spaghetti dinner fundraiser and a Christmas faire.

The festivities begin Saturday, Nov. 7, with the annual craft fair at the Spencer Senior Center, located at 68 Maple St. The event will run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., offering residents an opportunity to get an early start on their holiday shopping while supporting a local community tradition.

Later that evening, Boy Scout Troop 116 will host a spaghetti dinner fundraiser at Mary Queen of the Rosary parish hall from 5 to 8 p.m.

Tickets will be available at the door for $10 per person, with a discounted price of $8 for children younger than 8. The dinner provides an opportunity for residents to enjoy a meal while supporting the local Scout troop and its activities.

Looking ahead to December, Mary Queen of the Rosary Parish is preparing for its annual Christmas Faire, scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 5, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Organizers are seeking donations to help make this year's event a success. Gently used Christmas ornaments, holiday decorations and themed raffle baskets are among the items being requested.

Turn To **SPENCER** *page* **A8**

Spencer selectmen support firefighter and EMS unions

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

SPENCER — The Spencer Board of Selectmen has approved the unionization of both the town's firefighters and EMS personnel.

On Oct. 13, representatives of both the fire department and the International Association of Fire Fighters met with selectmen to seek support for the voluntary unionization of the fire district. Selectmen tabled the matter to consult legal counsel, but only a few weeks later, on Oct. 26, they unanimously approved the request.

The board approved two motions: the voluntary recognition of the Spencer Firefighters Union and the Spencer Emergency Medical Services Union, respectively. Both unions will serve under unified representation in negotiating with the town.

Despite the unanimous approval, at least one board member was frustrated by the request. Board Chair Gary E. Woodbury said the sudden unionization of the fire and EMS caught people off guard after the town voted to support maintaining several firefighters and absorbing the Spencer Rescue Squad over the last year.

"This town stood up and passed an override of $368,000 and change to keep four firefighters. I talked to several elderly people in town who are struggling to get through who actually voted for this, and they're a little disconcerted about what's going on. The other thing we did was we held on to the Spencer Rescue Squad and took them on," said Woodbury. "We all got behind it. We took on those employees, held all their vacation time, and also gave them a retirement plan they didn't have."

Woodbury admitted he was frustrated by the development and wanted his statements on the record but left it at that choosing to side with the rest of the board for a unified decision.

It was stated at the Board of Selectmen's Oct. 13 meeting by union representatives that the decision to unionize was not made due to any conflict or disagreement with the town, but rather to provide a collective voice for future negotiations.

The unions will represent a combined 19 individuals between the fire department and EMS.

Nativities From Around the World exhibit returns to North Brookfield Dec. 3-6



NORTH BROOKFIELD — The Christmas season will be celebrated with an international perspective when the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints hosts its "Nativities From Around the World" exhibit Dec. 3-6.

The four-day event will take place at the church, located at 108 New Braintree Road (Route 67), approximately 2.2 miles north of North Brookfield Town Center. Admission is free, and the public is welcome to attend.

The exhibit will feature Nativity scenes representing Christmas traditions from around the world, offering visitors an opportunity to appreciate different artistic and cultural interpretations of the birth of Jesus Christ.

The event will be open Thursday, Dec. 3, from 4 to 8 p.m.; Friday, Dec. 4, from 4 to 6 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 5, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 6, from 12:30 to 6 p.m.

A special musical performance by the Weir River Concert Band is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 4, at 6 p.m., with refreshments to follow. The concert will provide an additional opportunity for visitors to enjoy the holiday season through music and fellowship.

The exhibit is open to individuals and families throughout the surrounding communities, with no admission charge.

For more information about "Nativities From Around the World," contact 508-246-5887.

Spencer Exchange Club to present 18 Under 18 Youth Leadership awards

SPENCER — For the sixth consecutive year, the Exchange Club of Spencer will in November announce the recipients of their 18 Under 18 awards to those under the age of 18 who reside in the towns Spencer or East Brookfield. The Exchange Club membership has annually been made aware of young men and women whose impact on their communities may have gone unnoticed. They are not necessarily the highest academic achievers, star athlete or the most popular among their peers. They are those unassuming young adults who demonstrate attributes of leadership, passion, a caring and supportive nature, selflessness and citizenship. They are making a difference to others and their communities.

The Exchange Club has acknowledged and awarded nearly 100 young adults with the 18 Under 18 award over the past five years who were nominated by their teachers, employers, school counselors or others who felt they made a difference in their communities. Award recipients were recognized with citations and presented with monetary awards. This year's award ceremony will be held during a Worcester Railers game at the DCU Center in Worcester on Sunday, Nov. 22.

The Exchange Club membership is purposefully invested in the present and future of the Spencer and East Brookfield communities. They wish to highlight the innate talents that our youth exhibit unselfishly every day in what sometimes seems like the simplest of actions of caring and the ability to relate to others. They believe that curiosity, analytical thinking, dependability and a strong work ethic make the greatest difference where we all live, work and play. The club's vision of the future is that these young men and women will carry on the Exchange's mission of "Unity for Service."

Application and nomination forms may be accessed on the Facebook pages of the Spencer Exchange Club, Spencer Bulletin Board or atwww.spencerexchangeclub.org. Sponsorship forms may also be accessed at those locations.

Open poetry reading series coming to Merriam-Gilbert Library

WEST BROOKFIELD — Local poets, readers and lovers of the written word will have a new opportunity to share their favorites when the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library hosts "One Poem," an open poetry reading series beginning in September.

The program is designed to provide a welcoming venue for writers to share their own poetry while introducing participants to the work of other published poets.

For each original poem a participant reads, organizers ask that the reader complement it with a poem by an established, published writer. Selections can range widely, from Shakespeare and Anne Bradstreet to Charles Bukowski, William Butler Yeats, Rumi, Adrienne Rich and contemporary poets.

Participants do not need to be poets themselves. Those without original work are welcome to read favorite poems by published writers, while community members who would rather listen are equally encouraged to attend.

Readings will take place in round-robin fashion, with participants sharing no more than two poems during each turn. The number of opportunities each person has to read will depend upon attendance. Organizers ask participants to avoid particularly lengthy selections so everyone has an opportunity to take part.

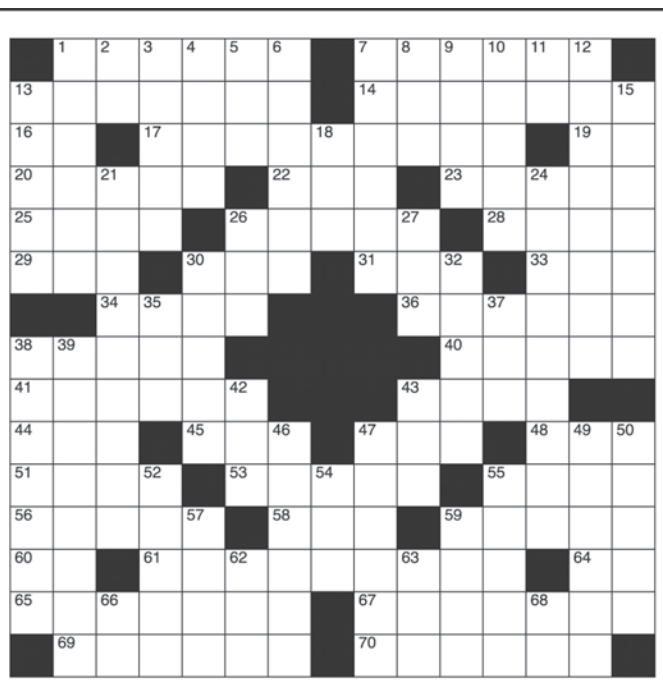
The series is intended to foster a creative community of writers and readers while exposing participants to poets and styles they might not otherwise encounter.

"One Poem" will run from September through May, generally on the third Thursday of each month from 4 to 6 p.m. Some dates may be adjusted because of holidays.

Programs will be held in the upstairs meeting room at the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library on Main Street in West Brookfield. The meeting room is accessible by elevator.

The series is open to the Central Massachusetts community.

"Come: read, listen, learn, savor," organizers invite participants.



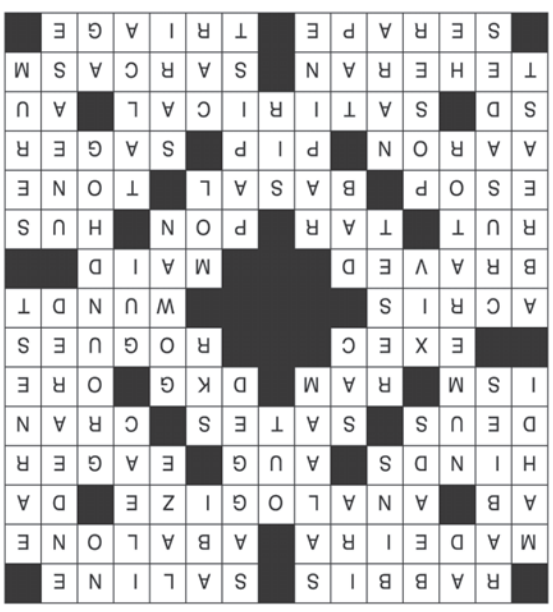
CLUES ACROSS

1. Spiritual leaders
7. Containing salt
13. Fortified wine
14. Edible mollusk
16. Blood type
17. Make a comparison
19. Government lawyer
20. "Game of Thrones" actor Ciaran
22. 8th month of the year (abbr.)
23. Very willing
25. __ ex machina
26. Satisfies
28. New Zealand mountain
29. A doctrine
30. Popular Dodge truck model
31. Dekagram
33. Naturally occurring solid material
34. Company higher-up
36. Villains
38. Cricket frog genus
40. Influential early psychologist
41. Endured
43. Servant
44. You can get stuck in one
45. __ and feather
47. Passive optical network
48. French ballet dynasty
51. Employee stock ownership plan
53. Forming a bottom layer
55. Sound
56. Yankees slugger Judge
58. Dickens character
59. Beloved late sportscaster Craig
60. "The Mount Rushmore State"
61. Sarcastic and critical
64. Atomic #79
65. Longtime Atlanta Braves pitcher
67. Humor
69. Shawl
70. Preliminary assessment of patients

CLUES DOWN

1. Animal disease
2. Commercial
3. Craft supplies
4. Containers
5. A way to save for your golden years
6. Common Arabic greeting
7. Bulged downward
8. Acquired brain injury
9. Lay about
10. Intestinal
11. Not yes
12. In a way, pleased
13. Messianic figure in Islam
15. Resulting from intense conviction
18. Not in
21. Number above the line in a fraction
24. Lawn pest
26. Pouch
27. Ancient language (abbr.)
30. Start anew
32. Wild flower
35. Fourteen
37. Graphical user interface
38. Facing the same way
39. Campaigns
42. Touch lightly
43. "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
46. Violent seizure of property
47. One who supports the Pope
49. Malaise
50. Body fluid
52. Inauthentic person
54. Title of respect
55. Moth genus
57. Central Japan city
59. Silk garment
62. Draw from
63. Automobile
66. A male
68. Powerful government lawyer

PUZZLE SOLUTION



Music & Movement program returns to Merrick Public Library

BROOKFIELD — The Merrick Public Library is once again inviting young children and their families to enjoy music, dancing and interactive fun with the return of its popular Music & Movement with Julie program.

The program takes place Wednesdays at 11:30 a.m., and is recommended for children from birth to age five.

Led by Julie, the weekly sessions feature familiar children's songs, stretching, movement, singing and dancing. The activities are designed to provide an entertaining experience while helping young children develop important early literacy skills through music and rhythm.

Music and movement activities can help children build listening skills, recognize patterns and sounds, develop coordination and become more comfortable expressing themselves. Singing familiar songs also provides opportunities for children to develop language skills while interacting with other youngsters and their caregivers.

The program offers families an opportunity to introduce their youngest children to the library in a relaxed, welcoming setting while encouraging a lifelong interest in learning.

Music & Movement with Julie is free and open to the public, and no advance registration is required. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to bring their little ones for a morning of songs, dancing and fun.

For more information about the program and other library activities, contact the Merrick Public Library in Brookfield.

Weekly Police Blotter

Spencer

The Spencer Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Oct. 21-27.

Brian Jose Diaz, age 25, of Spencer was arrested on Oct. 24 for Operating Under the Influence (Liquor).

Leicester

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

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on Oct. 24 for Unlicensed Operation of a Motor Vehicle and a Number Plate Violation.

Joseph Frank Shivick, age 44, of Rochdale was arrested on Oct. 25 in connection with a straight warrant.

Raphael Jude Kamga Foko, age 25, of Worcester was arrested on Oct. 27 in connection with a straight warrant.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on Oct. 27 for Shoplifting By Asportation.

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PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER
FRANK G. CHILINSKI
frank@salmonpress.news

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

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

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

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

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SPENCER ALMANAC

REAL ESTATE

BROOKFIELD

NONE

EAST BROOKFIELD

$345,000,120 Blaine Ave, Buzzell, Timothy H, and Buzzell, Amy, to Herlihy, Ryan, and Herlihy, Dawn.

LEICESTER

$625,000, 43 Salminen Dr, Smith, Ronald W, and Smith, Linda J, to Levesque, Brien, and Levesque, Lynn.

$610,000, 11 Hyland Ave, Lavin, Joseph P, and Lavin, Deborah, to Chamcho, Brian, and Chamcho, Angelliese.

$575,000, 202 Baldwin St, Pike, Melissa, to Raynaud, Carline, and Raynaud, Ralph.

$260,000, 1080 Stafford St, Hanlon, James E, and Hanlon, Karen A, to 1080 Stafford Street LLC.

NORTH BROOKFIELD

$799,000, 4-B Mccarthy Rd, R J & Danielle M Hill Ret, and Hill, Richard J, to Davis, Richard Henry, and Davis, Ruth Ann.

$376,500, 82 Walnut St, Bator, Bradley T, and Newkirk, Rachel E, to Carr, Jeffrey, and Carr, Michelle.

SPENCER

$685,000, 51 Cherry St, Judith D Lamoureux Irt, and Lamoureux, Richard J, to Short, Raymond.

$515,000, 10 Lyford Rd, Gomes, Corey, and Gomes, Stacey, to Bond, David, and Bond, Lee Anne N.

$475,000, 10 Ethier Dr, Dulmaine, Jeanne M, and Dulmaine, William E, to Dulmaine, Christopher M.

$470,000, 12 Oak Ln, Renard, Tammy Ltatro, to Spillane, Kevin G.

$325,000, 80 Meadow Rd, Kenward, Karen A, and Kenward, Douglas N, to Zingarella, Melissa Leigh.

$320,000, 26 Elm St, Cassvant John F Est, and Caffarena, Dianna J, to Foster Virtual Svcs LLC.

WARREN

$430,000, 215 Sarty Rd, Locke, Christine, to Sheldon, Wayne Rodney, and Sheldon, Jo Ann Milas.

$390,000, 777 Coy Hill Rd, Spain Frederick G Est, and Spain, Elizabeth K, to Russo, Ashley Kavangh, and Russo, Albert J.

$200,000, 29 River St, Zahiri, Joe, to Lavalley Jr, Joseph Bruce.

WARREN CORRECTION

$365,000, Lot 23 on Southbridge Road, Laska Philomena J Est, and Plankey, Nancy, to A J Realty Group LLC.

$55,000, Lot 22 on Southbridge Road, Plankey, Nancy, to A J Realty Group LLC.

WEST BROOKFIELD

$285,000, 6 N Main St, Fieldfarm LLC, to Morrison Properties LLC.

Brookfield groups present new films on New England Indigenous cultures

BROOKFIELD — The Friends of the Merrick Public Library and The Friends of Brookfield will present "New England's Hidden Landscapes: Acknowledging and Incorporating Our Indigenous Cultures" on Saturday, Nov. 14 from 1 to 3 p.m. in the sanctuary of the Brookfield Congregational Church, 8 Common St., Brookfield. The program is free and open to the public. It is the latest in the Robert Wilder Memorial Presentation series, begun in 2023.

The program features two new films by T.W. (Ted) Timreck, a Peabody Award–winning documentary filmmaker known for his biographies of Thomas Eakins, the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Frederick Law Olmsted (designer of New York's Central Park), and the composer Charles Ives, among many others, including a series of contemporary interviews for the Kennedy Center. Timreck's films have been featured on PBS and other networks around the globe. In addition to his work in biographical films, Timreck is known for his anthropological documentaries on prehistoric civilizations in North America, including the widely viewed "The Mystery of the Lost Red Paint People," a special on the Viking explorations to North America produced for NOVA, and the current series "Hidden Landscapes." Timreck has been affiliated with the Smithsonian for more than four decades and is a Research Associate of its Arctic Studies Center.

The first film, the hour-long "Acton," premieres in Acton, Massachusetts, on Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2026, sponsored there by the Friends of Pine Hawk. The film continues Timreck's "Hidden Landscapes" series and highlights new developments in the discovery of Native American ceremonial landscapes in the Northeast. Collaborating with archaeologists and tribal representatives, Timreck presents multiple lines of evidence for early migrations; stone prayers, structures and markers; and astronomical and cultural sophistication, suggesting that New England's Indigenous cultures are far older and more complex than popularly believed. Rather than offering definitive conclusions, the film points to promising directions for further investigation.

In the second film, the 20-minute "Crossroads New Lebanon," Timreck, recently appointed Town Historian of New Lebanon, N.Y., proposes a vision for the town's economic future built on its heritage of Indigenous knowledge and culture.

This memorial series honors the work and memory of Robert (Bob) Wilder (1933–2015), a Brookfield resident, author, historian, cartographer, Old Sturbridge Village interpreter, U.S. Marine Corps veteran and, for twenty-five years, an aerospace engineer.

"Bob Wilder's dedication to studying and teaching history inspired many of us to continue his work. He worried history would be forgotten," said Dan Hamilton, actor and Emmy-winning director, who helps present the series. "We hope these presentations will remind us of Brookfield's place in early America, and of its significance as home to Native people who have lived here for thousands of years. I think the Town of Brookfield, which is also facing questions of how best to honor its own Indigenous sites and cultures, could profit from the examples shown in these films."

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Brookfield Council on Aging to host Fraud Squad presentation Nov. 17

BROOKFIELD — The Brookfield Council on Aging will welcome back the Fraud Squad for an informative and entertaining presentation aimed at helping older adults recognize scams and protect themselves from fraud.

The program will take place Tuesday, Nov. 17, at 10:30 a.m. in the fellowship hall of Brookfield Congregational Church, located at 8 Front St.

Returning by popular demand, the Fraud Squad features senior volunteers who bring real-life scams to the stage through live performances. The presentation is designed to demonstrate how scammers operate, the tactics they use to pressure potential victims and the warning signs that can help people recognize fraudulent schemes before becoming victims.

As scams become increasingly sophisticated, the program emphasizes the importance of staying informed and knowing when to question suspicious requests. Through realistic scenarios, participants will learn how fraudulent situations unfold and how to respond when confronted with high-pressure tactics.

The presentation aims to help older adults feel more confident identifying potential scams and saying no to suspicious offers or demands.

The Brookfield Council on Aging invites area seniors to attend the program and learn practical ways to safeguard themselves against fraud.

The presentation will be held Tuesday, Nov. 17, at 10:30 a.m. at Brookfield Congregational Church, 8 Front St.

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Spencer Exchange Club hosting Fall Food Fest Nov. 14

SPENCER — As the cozy sweater weather arrives, the Spencer Exchange Club invites you to enjoy a delightful evening at their annual Fall Food Festival on Saturday, November 14 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Spencer Country Inn! Come and enjoy a variety of delicious food, wine tastings and much more, all prepared by talented local chefs and businesses.

This year's participants include Yamato Asian Bistro, 308 Lakeside, Black & White Grille, Uncle Sam's Pizza, The Clambox, Savage Smash Burgers & Brews, Savage Wraps, Savage Catering, The Goods Bakery & Café, Timberyard Brewing Company, Spencer Country Inn, Tijuana Bar & Grill, Hardwick Winery, Rapscallion Brewery & Taproom.

All proceeds from this event will benefit the Exchange Club's civic service fund that supports the Mary, Queen of the Rosary Food Pantry, Warm Coats for Spencer East Brookfield school children, sponsorship of area youth sports programs and facilities, support for local scouting groups and many other local, worthwhile projects.

Tickets are priced at $35 per person and may be purchased at Uncle Sam's Pizza, Savage Smash Burgers & Brews or from any Exchange Club member.

The Exchange Club of Spencer is a group of volunteers dedicated to making our community a better place to live while building leadership and teamwork skills for its members.

The event is proudly sponsored by Cornerstone Bank. Serving Worcester County, Massachusetts, Cornerstone Bank's local presence and community-based banking model enables a unique ability to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch. Cornerstone provides the highest level of service and expertise for individuals, businesses, and community organizations with branch locations throughout Central Massachusetts.

Novena to St. Jude
St. Jude, glorious Apostle, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the name of the traitor has caused you to be forgotten by many, but the true Church invokes you universally as the Patron of things despaired of; pray for me, who am so miserable, pray for me, that finally I may receive the consolations and the succor of Heaven in all my necessities, particularly (make request), and that I may bless God with the Elect throughout Eternity. Amen. (repeat each day sincerely until granted; publish as granted.)
Thank you St. Jude for answered prayers. **BC**

P.E.T. of the Week

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Breed	Domestic Shorthair/Mix
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Gender	Male
Size	Medium
Color	Black/Brown
Spayed/Neutered	
Declawed	No

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Friday's Child



Jasiah
Age 5
Registration #9543

Jasiah is a sweet, silly, and resilient boy who brings lots of energy and fun wherever he goes! He loves staying active and enjoys playing soccer and basketball, running around, and swinging on the swings. Whether he's playing outside or finding a new way to have fun, Jasiah loves keeping busy. When it's time to slow down, he enjoys playing card games like Uno and Go Fish. He is also a big superhero fan, especially Spider-Man, and loves pretending to be an action hero. One of his favorite moves is flipping onto his beanbag! Jasiah attends elementary school and enjoys going each day. With his playful personality and love of both active games and quieter activities, Jasiah has lots of fun interests to share with others.

https://www.mareinc.org/child/62513655906

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.

1872-2007

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PO Box 90 Southbridge, MA 01550
Telephone (800) 367-9898
Fax (508) 764-8015
www.StonebridgePress.com

FRANK G. CHILINSKI
PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

VIEWPOINT

OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

EDITORIAL

A good government should never be afraid of a second look

Nearly 30 years is a long time for any document to go without a thorough review, particularly one that determines how a community governs itself.

That is why the Spencer Board of Selectmen is right to revisit the Spencer Governmental Act, the legislation approved in 1998 that established the framework for the town's current government.

The discussion is still in its early stages, and there is no indication that sweeping changes are necessary or even desirable. But taking the time to examine whether the existing system continues to serve residents effectively is a worthwhile exercise.

Communities change over the decades. Their populations evolve, municipal responsibilities grow, technology transforms the way public business is conducted, and expectations for efficiency and accountability increase. A government structure that worked well in 1998 may still be perfectly appropriate in 2026, but that should be determined through careful examination rather than assumption. Board Chair Gary Woodbury made that point during the Oct. 26 selectmen's meeting when he encouraged his colleagues to keep the review moving forward. His argument was not that the current system is broken, but that the town has a responsibility to make sure it remains suitable.

Too often, discussions about changing government structures become unnecessarily contentious. Residents may worry that familiar institutions will disappear, that authority will shift away from voters or that changes are being proposed to benefit particular officials. Those concerns deserve to be heard, but they should not prevent a community from asking reasonable questions about how its government operates. The first step should be understanding exactly what the current legislation requires, what flexibility it provides and where it may create unnecessary obstacles. That is why involving legal counsel early in the process makes sense.

Establishing a working group could also provide an opportunity for a broader discussion, particularly if its membership includes residents with different experiences and perspectives. Such a group should have a clearly defined mission. Its responsibility should be to examine the existing structure, identify potential areas for improvement and explain the advantages and disadvantages of any proposed changes. It should not begin with the assumption that a particular outcome has already been decided.

Among the possibilities mentioned in previous discussions is whether Spencer should consider moving toward a town charter system that could provide greater flexibility for future amendments. Questions surrounding supermajority voting requirements have also been raised.

These are significant issues. Changes to voting thresholds, the distribution of authority or the procedures for amending government rules can have lasting consequences. They deserve more than a quick discussion at a selectmen's meeting.

Equally important is recognizing that not every provision needs to be changed simply because it is old. Stability has value in municipal government. Residents and officials benefit from established procedures, clear responsibilities and a system they understand. The goal should be improvement where improvement is warranted, not change for its own sake.

There is also no reason to rush the process. Because amendments to the existing governmental act would require legislative action, any recommendations must be carefully considered and properly developed. Still, patience should not become an excuse for indefinite delay. Once a working group is established, reasonable milestones and opportunities for public input would help keep the effort moving.

Spencer residents should have a meaningful opportunity to understand what is being examined, ask questions and express their opinions before any major recommendations advance.

Ultimately, the strength of local government is not measured by how frequently its structure changes. It is measured by how well that structure serves the people who depend on it. A review may reveal several opportunities for improvement. It may produce only modest recommendations. It may even conclude that the existing framework remains the best choice. Any of those outcomes would be worthwhile if reached through an open, thoughtful and informed process.

After nearly three decades, Spencer's governmental framework deserves a careful second look. The community deserves to know that its system of government is being maintained with the same attention and care expected of every other important town responsibility.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thank you for a wonderful, relatable column

To the Editor:

This is for "Charles," who writes your "Lanterns Along Main Street" columns.

I don't know how you manage to come up with these close-to-home topics every week that I can relate to so well! And you have a wonderful way of describing the minutiae of whatever subject is at hand. Wonderful stuff! Please keep writing. Perhaps some day, these columns can be put into book form!

Thank you to this newspaper for printing these entertaining columns, and for giving me the opportunity to give you this reader's feedback.

NANCY J. NOWAK
SPENCER

Priorities

To the Editor:

By the time you read this, the midterm elections should be decided and, if the polls are correct, the Democrats have made substantial gains.

The bad news is, these gains will not be realized until 2027, and the man/baby, who keeps bragging about passing tests that I can only assume are given suspecting he is suffering some form of dementia, will continue to enjoy no push back from the intended co-equal branches. He has already that we can do nothing about many bad things he does, because he can. Knowing that this empowerment will end abruptly in January, I think we can all count on him delivering a something less than joyous holiday season.

In addition to likely ramping up the war he promised we would not have, and which will get defunded as soon as the new speaker puts it on the floor. His penalty taxes on us for buying foreign goods, will also be re-claimed as levy of tariffs being the job description of things the house of representatives does, along with the entire purse. When the courts threw out the ludicrous lawsuit where the DOJ settled of $177.6 billion, planned to be used to reward the Jan. 6 thugs, he was unable to pardon not winning in 2020 , but did day one this time, and needing to rethink how to reward the people he transported and housed for Jan. 6, they will now individually sue us and Trumps man Blanche, will settle those claims using millions of our tax dollars and rush them through before the new congress is seated. Even as we are being outrageously priced out of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, I think the coming two months we may witness purchases and spending levels unrivaled in history, and actions that will not pass the smell test of a lame duck congress.

Kegsbreath is already a lame duck, which is why little Mikey sent everyone home. If Dems do not have the numbers, I hope some GOP patriots will step up to save their party and our nation. If they do not, the election in two years, will be known as the elephant graveyard. I grew up liking Ike, in a conservative wasp family.

I have always worked for what I got, and two thirds of my career, long hours. My second retail boss took me to the storefront, when I asked my hours. He showed me that they were posted on the front doors. It was while working that 60-hour-a-week job and stopping at the all-night market to buy a few groceries, standing behind two baskets full of junk food and steaks, paid for with food stamps, that I realized life is not fair. It would take a full page of this paper to cover the revisions that I think should be changed, starting with the 250-year-old document written for 13 colonies, up to the ludicrous mess we have created since..

Grouping Social Security, with other charity entitlements, insults our intelligence. Having invested in FICA the entire 55 years I worked, I feel entitled to my retirement fund. I am hearing that Social Security is going broke. Incarcerating the illegals who were paying in, but could not collect it, transitioning to expensive incarceration won't help, but removing the cap that has billionaires who derive their sustenance from our citizens, paying off their entire FICA on the first day of the year, increasingly brings to mind the French citizen red hats, who dragged out the royals and wealthy to the guillotine. Starving freezing people are harder to appease with rhetoric.

When we arrive at January, impeachment should be off the table. Only Article II, Section #4 makes sense. Replacing the guy taking constant cognition tests with the guy supporting him, is nutso. Fire the whole circus. RFK restored measles, Marco sent real estate speculators as diplomats, McMahon wants to eliminate the department she "runs," at least one more Epstein friend, Kegsbreath, is firing all the brass smarter than him, which has been many, and he is absolutely a war criminal [maybe Musk too}. The criminal investigations will yield far mor convictions then the current charade and crap show.

Let's hope the exterior decorator can be corralled before any mor of our heritage monuments are destroyed and replaced with one man's whims. Let's pass the Trump Act in his honor, removing presidential immunity.

KEN KIMBALL
BROOKFIELD

Whatever happened to a little mystery?

LANTERNS ALONG MAIN STREET
By CHARLES

I was thinking the other day about how much we know about everybody else's business these days, whether we want to or not.

There was a time when you could go a whole week without knowing what your neighbor had for supper, where your cousin went on vacation, or what some fellow you haven't seen since high school thinks about the price of eggs. Now all that information is available before you've finished your morning coffee. And apparently, we're supposed to be interested.

Don't get me wrong. I enjoy hearing from old friends, and I'm glad there's a way to keep up with people who live far away. It's a wonderful thing to see pictures of a new grandchild or hear that somebody's daughter graduated from college.

But somewhere along the way, we seem to have decided that every moment of our lives needs an audience. I don't quite understand it.

The other day, I saw somebody announce on the Internet that they were heading out to buy groceries. Not that they'd found some extraordinary bargain or discovered a new store. They were simply going grocery shopping. A little while later came another announcement. They'd arrived. Then a picture of the shopping cart. And finally, a report that

Turn To LANTERNS page A5

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.

The questions that come after you've built your wealth



FINANCIAL FOCUS
TREVOR NIELSEN

Preserving wealth requires asking different questions from the ones that built it. Once you've accumulated meaningful assets, the focus shifts from growth alone toward stewardship — keeping what you've built, directing it purposefully and making sure it continues to serve the people and causes that matter most to you.

The most important conversations often have little to do with investments. How wealth moves through a family, and what it carries with it, can matter just as much as asset allocation. How do you want future generations to steward family wealth? What values do you hope to pass on alongside financial assets? These are deeply personal questions, and the answers shape more than a balance sheet. They shape a family's story for generations to come.

Your needs at this stage run the gamut, spanning family and legacy, taxes and trusts, and access to specialized investments and services. Few of these decisions exist in isolation. A charitable gift may shape your tax strategy. A trust review may influence your estate plan. The sale of a business or a concentrated stock position may create new opportunities and new risks. One choice ripples into the next, and the connections between them create complexities that often require professional expertise to manage appropriately.

You may need guidance that spans multiple disciplines. Executive compensation rules, business succession structures, and charitable trust strategies each carry their own complexities.

Then there is the element of change. The sale of a business, an inheritance or retirement often brings a rush of decisions, and the options can feel overwhelming. Choices multiply, and the window to make a decision can be narrow.

Family dynamics can add another layer of complexity, particularly when wealth is tied to a farm, ranch, family business, or other shared asset that not all heirs will manage in the same way.

Whether your goal is early retirement or a more traditional path, a financial advisor can help you with a plan for your goals and the path ahead.

The opportunities that come with wealth are often accompanied by new risks. A concentrated stock position, an unexpected health event, a business transition or even family disagreements can have lasting financial consequences. Protecting what you've built requires thoughtful attention to risk, liquidity, and long-term planning.

A financial advisor can help bring perspective to complex financial decisions. This may include understanding not only your investments but also the family dynamics, tax considerations, estate plans, and legacy goals that surround them. By taking the time to understand what matters most to you, they can help you evaluate important decisions and coordinate the appropriate team of professionals when you need them. They also can help bring perspective during moments of significant change, when the stakes are highest and the options feel overwhelming. If your circumstances or priorities change, they evolve alongside you, adapting your plan as your needs and expectations shift over time.

Finding a financial advisor who's the right fit for your unique situation is what turns complexity into coordinated action and helps ensure that your wealth keeps working for the life you envision.

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

LANTERNS

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they were back home. I suppose I should have been relieved that the expedition ended safely.

Now, I'm not suggesting that people shouldn't enjoy themselves. If somebody wants to photograph a sandwich before eating it, that's their business. I simply wonder when we started believing that the rest of the world needed to see the sandwich, too.

When I was growing up, there was a certain amount of mystery surrounding other people's lives. You knew your neighbors, of course. You might know where they worked, what kind of car they drove, and whether they were the sort who kept their lawn looking like a golf course.

But you didn't know every thought that passed through their heads. And that wasn't necessarily a bad thing. If somebody had a disagreement with a relative, the entire town didn't hear about it before lunchtime. If a couple went out for their anniversary, they didn't need to provide photographic evidence. And if somebody made a particularly good pot roast, the family enjoyed it without waiting for strangers to offer their approval. There was something comfortable about that.

I'm not pretending the old days were perfect. Small towns have always had their share of gossip. Sometimes people knew more about their neighbors than they had any right to know. The difference was that gossip generally traveled at the speed of conversation. Nowadays, it travels at the speed of a button. And once something gets out there, good luck putting it back.

I sometimes wonder what my father would have thought of all this. He was a man who didn't waste many words, and he certainly wasn't interested in broadcasting his daily activities.

If somebody had handed him a telephone and suggested he use it to tell hundreds of people what he was having for lunch, I suspect he would have looked at them for a long moment before asking whether they had anything useful to do. He had a way of making a point without making a speech.

Of course, the younger crowd might say I'm missing the point. Sharing things is how people stay connected now. And they're not entirely wrong.

I've seen some wonderful examples of that connection. Old friends finding each other after decades. Families sharing happy occasions across thousands of miles. People offering encouragement to somebody having a difficult time. Those are good things, and I'd be foolish to pretend otherwise. But I still think there's value in keeping a few things to ourselves.

Not every pleasant afternoon needs to become a public announcement. Not every disagreement needs a jury of strangers. And not every opinion needs to be delivered to the world before we've had a chance to think it through.

Sometimes an experience is better when we're fully occupied enjoying it instead of figuring out how to describe it afterward.

A good meal tastes every bit as good without a photograph. A beautiful sunset doesn't require an audience. And a conversation with an old friend can be meaningful even if nobody else knows it happened. Maybe that's what I miss most. The idea that a person's life could contain a few quiet chapters that belonged entirely to them.

I'm not planning to throw away my phone or move into the woods. I like modern conveniences as much as anybody, especially when they work properly, which is another matter altogether.

But I am making an effort to keep a little mystery in my life. For instance, yesterday afternoon I went somewhere, did a few things, and came home. Had a perfectly nice time, too. And that's all you're getting out of me.

Brookfield Council on Aging to host advance planning seminar Nov. 10

BROOKFIELD — The Brookfield Council on Aging will host an advance planning seminar Tuesday, Nov. 10, at 10:30 a.m. at 8 Common St., offering residents an opportunity to learn more about planning ahead and making informed decisions about future arrangements.

The program, titled "Something to Think About," will be presented by Varnum & Charbonneau Funeral Homes and will focus on providing information, exploring available options and helping participants gain peace of mind through advance planning.

The seminar is intended to encourage individuals and families to consider important decisions before the need arises, allowing time to explore their choices and discuss personal preferences.

Lunch will be provided for those attending.

Those interested in attending are asked to RSVP by calling 508-208-7692.

East Brookfield Library to host Thanksgiving centerpiece workshop

EAST BROOKFIELD — The East Brookfield Public Library is inviting adults to get creative this holiday season with a two-part Thanksgiving centerpiece workshop scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 5, and Thursday, Nov. 12, at 3:30 p.m.

Participants will have the opportunity to design and create their own Thanksgiving centerpiece, adding a personal touch to their holiday decorations or dinner tables.

The project will be completed over the course of two sessions, allowing participants to work on their creations in preparation for the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday.

Because the workshop is designed as a two-week project, participants must be available to attend both sessions to complete their centerpieces.

The program is open to all adults, but advance registration is required.

Both sessions will take place at the East Brookfield Public Library, located at 122 Connie Mack Dr.

Those interested in participating are encouraged to sign up in advance at the library.

Leicester resident receives Albert H. Gordon Summer Research Fellowship

MANCHESTER, New Hampshire — Saint Anselm College student Abigail Bernabei of Leicester, a Politics major and Campaign Management and International Relations minor in the class of 2027 has been awarded the 2026 Albert H. Gordon Summer Research Fellowship.

The Albert H. Gordon Summer Research Fellowship provides deserving students with a well-rounded experience that will enhance their career planning, postgraduate opportunities, and active citizenship. It represents the lifelong commitment of its sponsor, the late Albert H. Gordon, to education and opportunity for Saint Anselm students.

The position is made available through a competitive application process to students of all majors upon completion of their junior or senior year. Those receiving the prestigious appointment are chosen in recognition of leadership and critical thinking skills, a proven commitment to civic education and engagement, and a high degree of intellectual depth and inquisitiveness.

East Brookfield Library to celebrate Thanksgiving with Charlie Brown movie and feast

EAST BROOKFIELD — The East Brookfield Public Library will celebrate the Thanksgiving season with a special screening of "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving" on Thursday, Nov. 19, at 3:30 p.m.

The holiday program will feature the classic Charlie Brown Thanksgiving movie, followed by a Charlie Brown-themed feast for attendees.

The event offers an opportunity for community members to enjoy a seasonal favorite and celebrate the upcoming holiday together at the library.

The movie and feast are scheduled to begin at 3:30 p.m. at the East Brookfield Public Library.

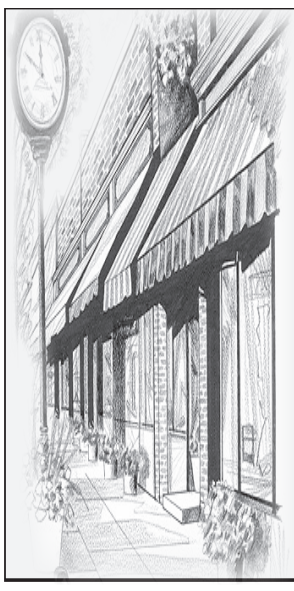
Those interested in attending can contact the library for additional information.

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Worcester native, QCC trustee in running to become Logan Airport's new voice



Max German

WORCESTER — Max German, a member of the Quinsigamond Community College Board of Trustees, has been selected as one of eight finalists in Massport's "Voice of Logan" contest, which will determine the next official voice heard by millions of travelers passing through Boston Logan International Airport.

German, born in Worcester and raised in Shrewsbury, was chosen from over 5,000 applicants after submitting an audition that showcased his distinctly Massachusetts voice.

"It's been such a fun experience since becoming a finalist. I've been texting everybody I know," said German, who traces his Worcester-style New England accent to his mother and grandparents.

German is among eight finalists competing for the chance to become the newest voice welcoming visitors to Boston throughout Logan Airport. Public voting is underway and will help determine the winner.

While German will represent his current Dorchester neighborhood in the contest, he remains deeply proud of his Worcester roots and his connection to QCC.

"QCC was so formative," German said. "I graduated high school and didn't know where my path would lead, but I was able to figure it all out at QCC. I got my grades up, got involved, and haven't looked back."

At QCC, German was involved in initiatives such as the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society's effort to establish a campus food pantry. What began as a closet stocked with shelf-stable groceries has since grown into a comprehensive resource center offering fresh produce, hygiene products and connections to housing and other community supports.

After graduating from QCC, German transferred to Boston College, where he earned a bachelor's degree. He is now enrolled at Boston College Law School. In 2025, he joined the QCC Board of Trustees as a way to give back to the college and community that helped launch his academic and professional journey.

If he doesn't become the "Voice of Logan," German said he would be happy to serve as a voice for QCC instead.

"I would welcome people to the college by saying, 'QCC is the place that no matter who you are or where you are from, you will have an opportunity here for a better life,'" he added.

Audition videos and voting for the "Voice of Logan" can be found at voiceoflogan.com/Voting.

Three-time American Ninja Warrior finalist to attempt world record for most Murph Workouts in 24 hours

WORCESTER — Three-time American Ninja Warrior national finalist Jonathan Godbout will attempt to break the unofficial world record for most "Murph" workouts completed in 24 hours. The attempt starts at 9 a.m. Friday, Nov. 13, at CrossFit Worcester and ends at 9 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 14. The event is open to the public and will stream live on Instagram (@atpfitco), with a mini documentary to follow on YouTube (@ATPFitCo). The attempt, two days after Veterans Day, is dedicated to service members and veterans.

The current record of 20.16 Murphs belongs to Australia's Russell Stringer. To beat it, Godbout plans to finish 20.5. One Murph is a 1-mile run, 100 pull-ups, 200 push-ups, 300 squats and another 1-mile run, all in a 20-pound vest. Twenty and a half of them add up to 41 miles of running, 2,050 pull-ups, 4,100 push-ups and 6,150 squats. That works out to one Murph every 70 minutes, around the clock, with no sleep. The full 24 hours will be filmed, and CrossFit coaches will monitor and judge every rep.

The workout is named after Navy SEAL Lt. Michael P. Murphy, who was killed in action in Afghanistan in 2005 and posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. For Godbout, the dedication is personal. Jonathan has always been inspired by his grandfather, a Vietnam veteran awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star, who battled through physical and psychological wounds while excelling for decades in civil service leadership roles as deputy chief of the MBTA Police and at the Department of Homeland Security.

"I have tremendous respect for the people who serve, and this is my way to honor them," Godbout said. "Twenty-four hours of Murph will never come close to what they've been through. If you are inspired in any way by my challenge, please extend gratitude to a veteran in your own way — write a letter, send a care package or visit a memorial."

Godbout has taken on endurance challenges before, including running one more mile every day until he hit a full marathon on day 26, and climbing stairs equal to the height of Mount Everest. This time he has trained for eight months: five days a week of CrossFit classes, hundreds of Murphs and physical therapy. He has completed test runs of five, 10 and 12 Murphs at record pace. "On my past challenges I went in cold and just sent it," Godbout said. "This one I've been building toward specifically for eight months. I'm not leaving anything on the table."

The attempt puts into practice the idea behind the name of Godbout's coaching company, Adaptation Through Perseverance (ATP): challenging yourself is what creates real change.



November 2026 interpretive programs at Blackstone River Greenway Visitor Center at Worcester

WORCESTER — All programs are free and open to the public. Registration is not required. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Dress for the weather and wear appropriate footwear. Meet at the Visitor Center unless otherwise stated. Programming is subject to change or cancellation. For the most up to date programming information, call (508) 373-7056. Reasonable accommodations available upon advance notice. To make a request, please contact Moneesha Dasgupta at (617) 645-0358 or moneesha.dasgupta2@mass.gov. The Blackstone River Greenway Visitor Center at Worcester is located at 3 Paul Clancy Way, Worcester MA 01607.

Visitor Center Exhibit Tour

Saturdays, 11 – 11:30 a.m.

Join us on a tour of the Heritage Center's exhibit hall! Learn how the Blackstone Canal helped transform Worcester from a sleepy county seat to a thriving industrial city and hub for immigration and innovation. Appropriate for ages 6 and up.

Mill to Meadow

Saturdays, Nov. 7 & 21, 2 – 3 p.m.

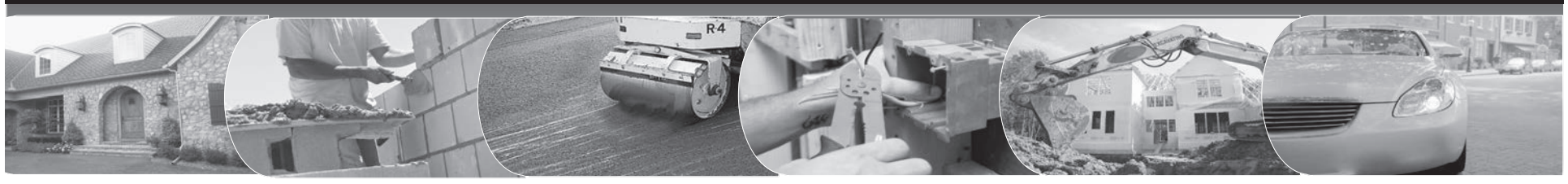
The land on which the Visitor Center stands was once the largest factory complex in Worcester — and now not a single building remains! In this short walk, find out about "brownfield" reclamation on site and how it fits into the Blackstone Valley's environmental renaissance. Appropriate for ages 12 and up. About ¼ mile over paved surfaces.

Woodlands and Waterways

Saturday, Nov. 14, 2 – 3 p.m.

Walk along the banks of the Blackstone River and learn about the life that it supports. We'll look for signs of wildlife as we discuss the ways we can keep our watershed clean! Appropriate for ages 12 and up. The walk is roughly one mile over a paved surface with slight inclines. Meet 205 North Main Street, Millbury. Bathrooms and water are not available at this site.

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Antonio Marcuccio named Saint Joseph School's 2026 Volunteer of the Year

WEBSTER — During the Family Mass celebrated at Saint Joseph Basilica on Sunday, Oct. 4, Saint Joseph School recognized Antonio "Tony" Marcuccio as the recipient of the 2026 Saint Joseph the Worker Volunteer of the Year Award.



Courtesy

Pictured on the altar of Saint Joseph Basilica following the award presentation are, from left, Father Richard Polek, pastor and headmaster; Antonio Marcuccio, recipient of the 2026 Saint Joseph the Worker Volunteer of the Year Award; and Principal Beth Boudreau.

Presented annually, the award honors an individual whose generosity, talents, and commitment have made a meaningful difference in students' lives. Recipients embody the qualities of Saint Joseph through humility, service, faithfulness, and dedication to hard work.

Born and raised in Southington, Conn., Marcuccio moved to Killingly in 1992 and graduated from Killingly High School in 1996. He and his wife, Katie, now live in Thompson with their sons. Jacob graduated from Saint Joseph School in 2026 and now attends Marianapolis Preparatory School, while Johnny is currently in seventh grade at Saint Joseph School.

Marcuccio rarely misses a field trip, school play, athletic event, or opportunity to help. He began coaching intramural basketball in 2022 and continued for three seasons before becoming an assistant coach for the JV boys' basketball team. He has also coached fall cross-country. When spring cross-country needed coaches, Tony and Katie stepped forward immediately. This year, Tony will serve as the varsity boys' basketball coach.

"If you see Mr. Marcuccio at a Saint Joseph athletic event, he is usually wearing a hat," said Athletic Director John Kottori. "As a volunteer in the athletic program, Mr. Marcuccio has worn many hats. Each hat is a sign of his dedication to supporting all of the students in our community."

Kottori described Marcuccio as a "champion volunteer" and a role model whose selfless service strengthens the athletic program and demonstrates the school's mission through his actions.

Marcuccio's contributions extend well beyond coaching. He regularly helps set up and break down intramural games. Drawing on his 28 years of construction experience, he repaired large openings in the school's exterior brickwork when ventilation ducts were removed during the conversion of the former kitchen into a STEM lab. He also repaired the school's front steps after vandals damaged them.

During the winter, Marcuccio could often be found at school late at night or as early as 4 or 5 a.m., shoveling and blowing snow from the entrance and sidewalks so students and staff could enter safely. These are only the acts of service known to school administrators; he has undoubtedly helped the athletic program, teachers, and school community in many other ways.

Marcuccio has never asked for reimbursement or recognition. He simply keeps asking what more he can do.

During the presentation, Principal Beth Boudreau recalled the time Bishop Robert J. McManus drew Marcuccio's winning raffle ticket during a recent Open House. When Marcuccio was called to the office over the intercom, he arrived apprehensively, believing he was in trouble with the principal. This time, Boudreau assured him he was being called forward again for a very good reason.

The presentation also included a lighthearted reference to Marcuccio's devotion to the Buffalo Bills, who were playing the New England Patriots that day. Boudreau joked that honoring a Bills fan in Patriots country proved that "Christian charity truly has no limits."

"But all football rivalries aside, there is no question that Tony has always been on Saint Joseph School's team," Boudreau said. "We are incredibly fortunate to have him."

"I love the Saint Joseph School community," Marcuccio said. "I think, as a whole, we really stand out compared to other schools. That is special, and I am proud to be a part of it."

Saint Joseph School is deeply grateful for Marcuccio's humble and generous service and is blessed to honor him as the 2026 Saint Joseph the Worker Volunteer of the Year.

Mirick welcomes Jennifer Matthew as Human Resources and Legal Support Manager

WORCESTER — Mirick is pleased to announce that Jennifer "Jenn" A. Matthew, MBA, SHRM-SCP, PHR, has joined the firm as Human Resources and Legal Support Manager. In this role, Jenn will assist with recruiting and hiring and supervising the firm's client services and business services teams, overseeing workflow, employee relations and performance management.

Jenn brings more than 20 years of human resources and operations experience to Mirick. Most recently, she served as Chief Human Resource Officer at MetroWest YMCA and as Senior Team Operations Manager for Workhuman's Consulting Practice.

"I had been looking for the right opportunity to return to the legal industry, and when the chance to join Mirick came along, I jumped at it," said Matthew. "I have always admired and respected Betsy Landry and Mirick's reputation, both as a leading law firm and as a great place to work. I'm thrilled to be part of this team and look forward to supporting the people who make this firm so special."

Jenn's arrival comes as longtime team member Kathleen "Kathi" Goulet, Mirick's Human Resources and Staffing Manager, retires after a career at the firm spanning more than 45 years.

"We are delighted to welcome Jenn to Mirick," said Betsy Landry, Chief Human Resources Officer. "While I am sad to see my longtime colleague Kathi Goulet retire and leave Mirick, I am comforted and excited to have Jenn on board. Her experience and talent for bringing people together make her a wonderful fit for our firm, and I know our team will benefit from her leadership."



Jennifer Matthew

Jenn is a SHRM Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP) and Professional in Human Resources (PHR), and she also holds a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt certification. She previously was a member of the Association of Legal Administrators from 2015 to 2022.

Jenn earned her M.B.A., with a concentration in Human Resources, from Assumption College and her B.S. in Business Management from Fairfield University.

About Mirick

Mirick is the largest full-service law firm based in Central Massachusetts, with 76 attorneys in offices in Worcester, Westborough, and Boston. Founded in 1916, the firm advises corporations, institutions, and individuals across industries, including banking and finance, healthcare, education, and manufacturing. Mirick is led by Co-Managing Partners Paul W. Carey and Robert L. Kilroy. Beyond its legal work, Mirick maintains a long-standing tradition of community service throughout Central Massachusetts and beyond. For more information, visit www.mirick-law.com.

Scouting America to host family safety and community outreach event

WORCESTER — Families throughout Worcester County are invited to attend a free community safety event hosted by the Massachusetts State Police, Worcester State University, and the Heart of New England Council, Scouting America, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 10, at Worcester State University.

Designed as both a fun family experience and a valuable community outreach opportunity, the event will bring together public safety professionals, community partners, Scouts, and local families for a day focused on child passenger safety, community engagement, and education.

A key feature of the event will be free child car seat inspections and installations conducted by certified Massachusetts State Troopers. Families will have the opportunity to ensure that their child safety seats are properly installed and appropriately fitted to help keep children safe while traveling.

The Massachusetts State Police will also showcase specialized equipment and resources used in their public safety efforts, providing attendees with a unique opportunity to learn more about the role of law enforcement in protecting and serving communities across the Commonwealth.

One of the day's most anticipated attractions will be the Massachusetts State Police rollover simulator, an interactive demonstration that vividly illustrates the importance of wearing a seat belt. The simulator provides participants with a memorable, hands-on experience that reinforces safe driving practices and highlights how seat belts can save lives.

Scouts and volunteer leaders from local Packs and Troops throughout Worcester will assist with activities, welcome attendees, and share information about the many opportunities available through Scouting. Families interested in learning more about Scouting will have the chance to meet current Scouts and leaders and discover programs that promote leadership, citizenship, service, outdoor adventure, and personal growth.

"This event represents the power of community partnerships," said Jason Pigg, Scout Executive and CEO of the Heart of New England Council, Scouting America. "By bringing together the Massachusetts State Police, Worcester State University, and local Scouts, we can provide an important public service while introducing families to the positive impact Scouting has throughout our communities."

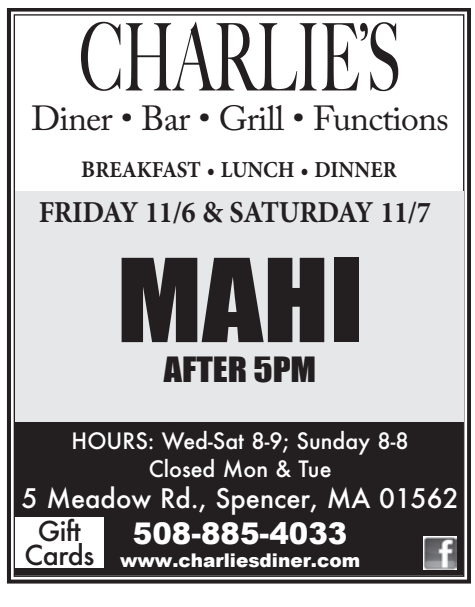
Organizers hope the event will strengthen connections between families and community organizations while promoting safe transportation practices and highlighting resources available to local residents.

The event is free and open to the public. Families are encouraged to bring their vehicles and child safety seats for inspection and to take advantage of the educational exhibits, demonstrations, and opportunities to engage with community partners.

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OBITUARIES

Ronald E. "Skip" Cole, 61



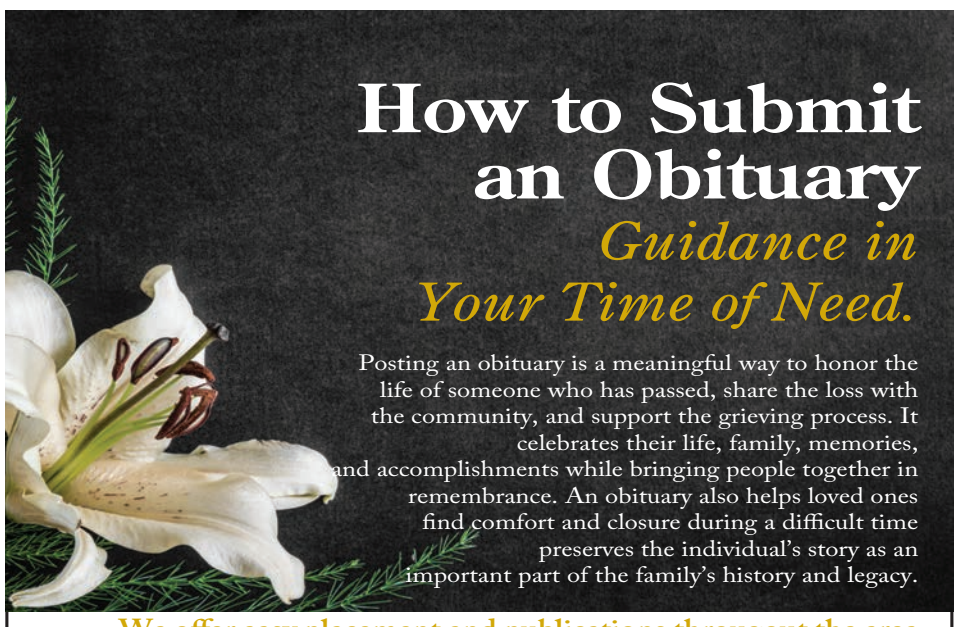
Ronald E. "Skip" Cole, 61, passed away on October 22, 2026, following a short battle with a heart condition. Known affectionately as "Skip" to many, he will be remembered fondly by his family, friends, and all those whose lives he touched.

Skip was predeceased by his father, Ronald E. "Skip" Cole; his sister, Christine Cole-Ingalls; and his brother-in-law, David Ingalls. He leaves behind his two beloved children, Michael Cole of East Brookfield and Katrena Cole and her partner, Robert, of Shrewsbury; his mother, Carolyn (Kowalski) Cole of North Fort Myers, Florida; his sister, Cynthia Cole of North Brookfield; and his brother, Robert Cole of East Brookfield. He also leaves his nieces, Elizabeth Cole and her partner, Nick, and Jackilyn Melanson, along with several great-nieces and great-nephews.

Skip worked at Flexcon in Spencer for many years, holding various positions throughout his career. He was known for sharing his knowledge and experience, training many employees and helping them learn their jobs. He will be deeply missed by many, especially those who followed "Skipper and his crew," a special part of the memories and connections he leaves behind.

A celebration of Skip's life will be held on November 21,2026 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Spencer Fish and Game. His remains will be laid to rest in Evergreen Cemetery in East Brookfield in the spring where his ashes will be placed beside his beloved father.

Skip will be remembered with love and missed by all who knew him. Arrangements are under the care of Pillsbury Funeral Home 44 Gilbert St. North Brookfield.



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SPENCER
continued from page A1

Donations of Christmas ornaments, decorations and themed raffle baskets may be dropped off at the parish hall from Nov. 8 through Nov. 21.

The parish is also seeking gift cards and lottery tickets for its raffle trees. Those contributions may be delivered directly to the parish office.

Local vendors interested in participating in the Christmas Faire can obtain table applications at the church entrances, the parish office or through the parish website.

The three events offer opportunities for residents to support local organizations, enjoy community gatherings and prepare for the upcoming holiday season.

Additional information about the Christmas Faire and vendor applications is available at maryqueenoftherosary.org.

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

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

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

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

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

Dad, thanks for keeping me safe. Love, LH

New support group offered for people with physical disabilities

LEICESTER — A new support group for people living with physical disabilities has been developed by two women who know the challenges that come with physical impairments. Peg Erickson, from Spencer, and Trish McCormick, from Leicester, are each living with physical disabilities. They have experienced the challenges of completing everyday tasks, difficulty accepting their altered bodies, and the fear of what the future may hold. Believing that others with physical disabilities may face the same issues, they decided to join forces to begin a support group.

Their purpose is to create a place where people with physical disabilities can meet and express their feelings, share their experiences, and provide mutual support for each other in a private environment. The intention is to offer an opportunity to feel accepted, share effective coping skills, exchange practical information and resources that will improve their daily lives, and to socialize in a welcoming environment.

Anyone with a physical disability is welcome to attend. The first meeting will be held at the Leicester Public Library, 1136 Main St., Leicester, on Oct. 29 at 5 p.m. The accessible entrance is located at the rear of the building. Contact Peg Erickson at racerpeg@charter.net with questions.

LEGALS

Town of Spencer
Conservation Commission
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

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

John & Ruth Green have filed an **NOI** with the Spencer Conservation Commission to rebuild a retaining wall located at **15 Washburn Terrace**, Spencer, MA.

65 R Jones Condominium has filed an **NOI** with the Spencer Conservation Commission to replace a septic system located at **65 R Jones Road**, Spencer, MA.

Jamie Fafard has filed an **RDA** with the Spencer Conservation Commission to rebuild a deck located at **31 Lakeview Drive**, Spencer, MA.

Albert A. Starr Jr. has filed an **NOI** with the Spencer Conservation Commission for a Adu Unit, culvert replacement, sewer line connection located at **1 Washburn Drive**, Spencer, MA.

Jeremy Crocker has filed an **NOI** with the Spencer Conservation Commission to replace the retaining wall located at **3 Lake Avenue**, Spencer, MA.

Applications can be reviewed at the Office of Development and Inspectional Services, Town Hall. A public hearing regarding these filings will be held by the Spencer Conservation Commission in McCourt Social Hall at Town Hall, 157 Main Street, on Wednesday, November 18, 2026 at which time all persons having an interest may be present or call in remotely to participate. Conservation Commission meetings open at 6:15 p.m.

Mary McLaughlin
Mary McLaughlin, Chairwoman
November 6, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate
and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. WO26P3395EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
Estate Of:
Ronald N. Brown
Date of Death: 09/15/2026
To all interested persons:

A Petition for **S/A - Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Jennifer Fleming of Spencer MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: .

Jennifer Fleming of Spencer MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration.**

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 11/24/2026.**

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. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.
Date: October 21, 2026
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
November 6, 2026

Town of Spencer Notice of Public Hearing

Notice is hereby given under Chapter 138, Section 15A of the Massachusetts General Laws that a public hearing will be held on August 12, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the McCourt Social Hall, Memorial Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Spencer, on the application of KP Spencer Shell LLC located at 94 Main Street Spencer MA 01562 for a transfer of license for a Wine and Malt Package Store off premises license from Vrushank Patel to Dharmeshkumar Patel
Gary E. Woodbury
Chairman, Board of Selectmen
November 6, 2026

(SEAL)
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
LAND COURT
DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT
Docket Number: **26 SM 003387**
ORDER OF NOTICE

TO: Dan K. Simons and Robin J. Simons
and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. App.
§ 3901 *et seq.*:
U.S. Bank National Association, as Trustee for Towd Point Mortgage Trust 2021-1
claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in East Brookfield, Massachusetts, numbered 120 Harrington Lane, given by Dan K. Simons and Robin J. Simons to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as nominee for First Lincoln Mortgage Corp. dated October 19, 2007, recorded with the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 42003 Page 337, and now held by the plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendants' Servicemembers status.

If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at **Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108** on or before 12/7/2026 or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the ground of noncompliance with the Act.

Witness, Gordon H. Piper, Chief Justice of said Court on 10/21/2026
Attest:
Deborah J. Patterson
Recorder
November 6, 2026

(SEAL)
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
LAND COURT
DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT
26 SM 003441
ORDER OF NOTICE

TO:
Richard Clifford
and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act: 50 U.S.C. c. 50 § 3901 (et seq):
Freedom Mortgage Corporation
claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Spencer, numbered 62 Borkum Road, given by Richard Clifford to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Synergy One Lending, Inc. dba Mutual of Omaha Mortgage, dated December 30, 2019, and recorded at Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 61680, Page 44, as affected by a Loan Modification Agreement dated August 26, 2021 and recorded at said Registry in Book 66439, Page 53 and now held by the plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant's/Defendants' Servicemembers status.

If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at **Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108** on or before December 7, 2026 or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the grounds of noncompliance with the Act.

Witness, GORDON H. PIPER, Chief Justice of said Court on October 23, 2026.
Attest:
Deborah J. Patterson
Recorder
November 6, 2026

Knights of Columbus to host spaghetti dinner

WEST BROOKFIELD — Knights of Columbus Council 11080 is sponsoring a Spaghetti Dinner on Saturday, Nov. 14 in Dugan Hall, Sacred Heart Church, 10 Milk St., West Brookfield. Take out begins at 5:30 p.m. and sit down dinner at 6 p.m.

Proceeds from this event will benefi local charitable needs. Dinner includes pasta fagioli, garden salad, meatballs & sausage, spaghetti & sauce, Italian bread, dessert, water, soda, and coffee. Cost is a $15 donation and $10 for children under 12 years old. Admission tickets are also good for entry for a special door prize! Raffle tickets for a 50/50 Raffle and more will be available! Advance ticket purchase is encouraged and appreciated! Tickets are available from any Knight or by calling (413) 813-8100 or by emailing wallyconnor122@gmail.com. Tickets will only be available at the door while they last!

Turkey Bingo returns to Gaudette-Kirk Post 138 Nov. 22

SPENCER — A favorite Thanksgiving-season activity returns to the Gaudette-Kirk Post 138 Spencer American Legion on Sunday, Nov. 22, with the Post's Annual Turkey Bingo.

The fun begins at 1 p.m. at 175 Main St., Spencer, with 20 rounds of bingo and plenty of chances to take home a prize. Winners can receive turkeys, hams or gift certificates, making the afternoon a perfect way to kick off Thanksgiving week.

Cards are just $1 each, and hot dogs and snacks will be available for purchase throughout the event.

Friends, families, neighbors and community members are welcome to join Post 138 for an afternoon of bingo, prizes and community spirit.

Mark the calendar for Sunday, Nov. 22, and come take a chance at bringing home a Thanksgiving winner!

North Brookfield Senior Center to host second annual Night of Entertainment Nov. 7

NORTH BROOKFIELD — The Friends of the North Brookfield Council on Aging will present their second annual Night of Entertainment on Saturday, Nov. 7, offering an evening of comedy, magic and musical nostalgia at the North Brookfield Senior Center.

The event will run from 6 to 8:30 p.m., and feature performances by comedian and magician Phil Volonino and Elvis Presley tribute artist Robert Black.

Volonino will entertain guests with a combination of comedy and magic, while Black will bring the music and showmanship of the King of Rock 'n' Roll to the stage with his tribute to Elvis Presley.

The evening is designed to bring community members together for a night of entertainment and socializing while supporting the Friends of the North Brookfield Council on Aging.

Light refreshments will be served during the event.

Tickets are $10 per person and may be purchased at the North Brookfield Senior Center. Space is limited, and those interested in attending are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance.

Now in its second year, the Night of Entertainment provides another opportunity for residents to gather at the Senior Center and enjoy live performances in a welcoming community setting.

The event is presented by the Friends of the North Brookfield Council on Aging, an organization dedicated to supporting the local senior community.

For tickets or additional information, residents may visit the North Brookfield Senior Center.

www.StonebridgePress.com

Christ Memorial Episcopal Church to host Red Door Fayre Nov. 14

NORTH BROOKFIELD — Christ Memorial Episcopal Church will welcome the community to its annual Red Door Fayre on Saturday, Nov. 14, from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the church, located at 133 N. Main St., at the corner of Spring and Main streets.

The event will feature a variety of tables offering holiday items, handmade crafts, baked goods and other selections for shoppers preparing for the Christmas season.

Visitors can browse the Christmas Table, Craft Table and Exquisite Table, along with a Bake Table featuring homemade treats and pies. Raffles will also be part of the festivities.

A homemade luncheon will be available during the event, featuring soups, sandwiches and apple crisp.

The Red Door Fayre offers residents an opportunity to enjoy a seasonal community gathering while browsing holiday merchandise and homemade foods.

The event will take place at Christ Memorial Episcopal Church, 133 N. Main St., North Brookfield, on Saturday, Nov. 14, from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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Bay Path named 2026 School of Recognition by Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

CHARLTON — Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School is the only regional vocational technical school in Massachusetts named a 2026 School of Recognition by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The annual honor goes to a small group of schools for progress toward state accountability targets, especially improved achievement in English language arts and math. This year, 56 public schools statewide made the list.

Bay Path met 60 percent of its state accountability targets this year, up from 49% in 2025. That moved the school into DESE's "substantial progress" category and placed it in the 76th percentile of Massachusetts high schools. The gains came while Bay Path's roughly 1,200 students also trained across 23 vocational programs. The students come from Auburn, Charlton, Dudley, North Brookfield, Oxford, Paxton, Rutland, Southbridge, Spencer and Webster. Bay Path is the only school from those ten towns on this year's list.

"As a school community we are very proud of this accomplishment," said Kyle Brenner, Superintendent/Director. "Over the past several years, we have been intentional about building strong systems of learning. We've raised academic rigor, strengthened curriculum and instruction, and brought our academic and vocational programs into closer alignment. This recognition reflects the work of our entire school community."

Bay Path students demonstrated measurable academic growth in the following areas:

English Language Arts achievement increased 3.4 points.

Mathematics achievement increased 3.8 points.

English Language Arts growth exceeded typical growth.

Mathematics growth exceeded typical growth.

Four-year graduation reached 98.9 percent.

The annual dropout rate was 0 percent.

Chronic absenteeism decreased from 11.1 to 10.2 percent.

"These numbers represent real progress for our students," said Dean Packard, Bay Path principal. "This is what happens when educators collaborate around student needs, when students take ownership of their learning, and when adults across our building refuse to settle for what was good enough yesterday."

About Bay Path

Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School prepares students for both college and careers through a rigorous blend of academic coursework and hands-on technical training. Accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Bay Path serves ten Southern Worcester County communities: Auburn, Charlton, Dudley, North Brookfield, Oxford, Paxton, Rutland, Southbridge, Spencer, and Webster. Opening in 1972 atop Muggett Hill, the school has spent more than five decades offering 23 career areas alongside its academic program.

DA hosts discussion on understanding addiction and supporting recovery



WORCESTER — On Oct. 14, Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr. hosted the Prevention and Support Network's annual event, bringing together community partners for a discussion on addiction, recovery, and the importance of coordinated support to help individuals build stable, healthy lives.

The event featured Dr. Stephen Loyd, Chief Medical Officer at Cedar Recovery and the real-life physician portrayed by Michael Keaton in Hulu's "Dopesick," and Troy Sandifer, founder and CEO of H.U.S.T.L.E. (How U Survive This Life Everyday) Recovery, a Tennessee-based organization that connects individuals with addiction treatment and recovery support services.

Dr. Loyd shared his personal experience with addiction and recovery, while Sandifer discussed H.U.S.T.L.E. Recovery's respite housing model and its role in supporting individuals as they work toward long-term stability.

Dr. Loyd discussed the complex factors that can contribute to addiction, including genetics, trauma, and underlying mental health challenges. Drawing on his professional experience and personal journey through recovery, he emphasized the importance of understanding addiction and addressing the underlying factors that can contribute to substanceuse. He also spoke about the importance of breaking generational cycles of addiction and creating opportunities for individuals and families to move forward.

Sandifer also shared his personal journey through addiction and the criminal justice system and how those experiences inspired him to dedicate his work to helping others find recovery. Through H.U.S.T.L.E. Recovery, he works to connect individuals with recovery services and employment opportunities that can help them build stability and independence.

The discussion highlighted the importance of a comprehensive, collaborative approach to addiction that balances accountability with access to treatment and support. Addressing the opioid crisis requires more than a criminal justice response; it also calls for coordination among law enforcement, treatment providers, community organizations, and other partners to help individuals access the resources and opportunities they need to sustain recovery.

"These leaders came up from Tennessee to offer our community successful programs that help save lives. Their work interrupts death," said District Attorney Early. "They shared with us the importance of having people with real-life, lived experience help people overcome this disease and improve public safety."

The event offered an opportunity for members of the Prevention and Support Network to learn from the speakers' experiences and consider how their approaches could inform local efforts in Worcester County. Their work reinforced that lasting recovery requires more than access to treatment alone. It also depends on coordinated support and a commitment to helping individuals build stable lives in recovery.

Sandifer emphasized the critical step of securing stable housing and employment options for individuals in early recovery, "Treatment is not recovery. Treatment is stabilization. Recovery begins after treatment."

Early has long been committed to addressing substance use, trauma, and mental health in Worcester County. In 2015, he established the Central Massachusetts Opioid Taskforce, which later became the Prevention and Support Network, which continues to fostercollaboration among professionals, law enforcement, and community organizations to address substance use and its impact on individuals, families, and communities throughout Worcester County.

Healing Heroes Foundation launches equine-assisted recovery program

WHITINSVILLE — Responding to the growing need for mental health resources for first responders across Massachusetts, the Healing Heroes Foundation announced the launch of its Equine-Assisted Recovery Program.

The skills-based program utilizes horses as a bridge to mindfulness and grounding to combat high stress and post-traumatic stress disorder that heavily impact firefighters, EMTs, law enforcement officers, military veterans, and other first responders. Healing Heroes Foundation is a Massachusetts-based nonprofit dedicated to fostering community, connection, and camaraderie across first responders, military members, veterans, and their families.

"This experiential, relationship-based program provides the space, community, and support for first responders to ground themselves and engage with one of nature's most empathetic creatures," says Jaime Nicholas, Co-Director of Healing Heroes Foundation. "First responders across the country are facing significant mental health and wellness challenges, and we felt a responsibility to help address that need here in Massachusetts by introducing a unique program that fosters meaningful connection and mental well-being so first responders don't have to navigate life's challenges alone."

Hosted in Whitinsville, the eight-week Equine-Assisted Recovery Program is made possible through partnerships between the Healing Heroes Foundation, Cornerstone Community Care, and Superior Stables. At the end of the program, participants will be connected with financial health resources through a partnership between Healing Heroes Foundation and First Responders Credit Union.

The program is led by Christina Cronin, LICSW, President and Clinical Director of Cornerstone Community Care. Participants will engage in structured interactions with the horses through activities such as observing, grooming, leading, and other groundwork designed to support mindfulness, self-regulation, communication, and connection. Among the horses participating in the program is one cared for by a U.S. Army veteran and current psychiatric registered nurse, further reflecting the program's connection to the communities it serves.

The Healing Heroes Foundation has filled two cohorts of participants for its Equine-Assisted Recovery Program, showing a regional demand for this innovative resource. With a focus on solidifying the curriculum and measuring outcomes with its inaugural cohort, the organization's long-term goal is to grow the program's impact and geographical reach so this critical resource can be available to first responders across the state. It is currently in talks with additional Massachusetts stables.

Equine-assisted approaches have proven to meaningfully complement clinical therapy, exposing participants to a more active, relationship-based setting. Interactions with horses such as approaching, handling, leading, and caring can make abstract concepts like consent, trust, self-regulation, and communication more tangible.

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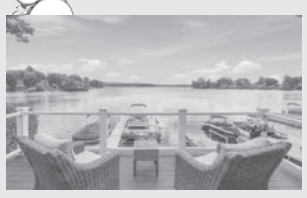
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24 Laurelwood Dr Webster Lake Waterfront



On the shores of prestigious Webster Lake! Experience ultra-luxury lakefront living with direct water access. This young modern craftsman lake home is masterly designed to maximize panoramic Western views through a two-story architectural tower. The home boasts 3,790 +/- square feet of sophisticated, three-story living space, complete with multilevel waterside decks, a radius stone faced patio, and a tiered landscape with its own waterfall. The living room flows seamlessly onto an expansive open deck and into an exquisite sun-drenched sitting room. A magnificent primary bedroom suite offers a private full bath, double sink vanity, walk-in closet and dressing room. The purposely designed lower level delivers effortless, large-volume entertainment, featuring a full second kitchen and a sprawling recreation room that opens to a substantial lakeside patio. With 2 additional bedrooms and bath, this level easily serves as a private guest floor. This Lake property is designed to create long-lasting memories!
MLS#73563787 **$1,750,000**

Webster ~ 33 Slater Street

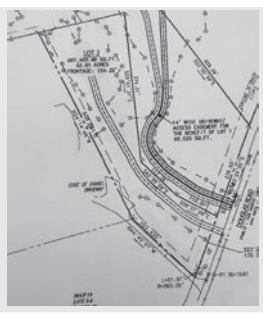


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MLS # 73500183 **$464,900**

Thompson CT ~ 303 Riverside Dr



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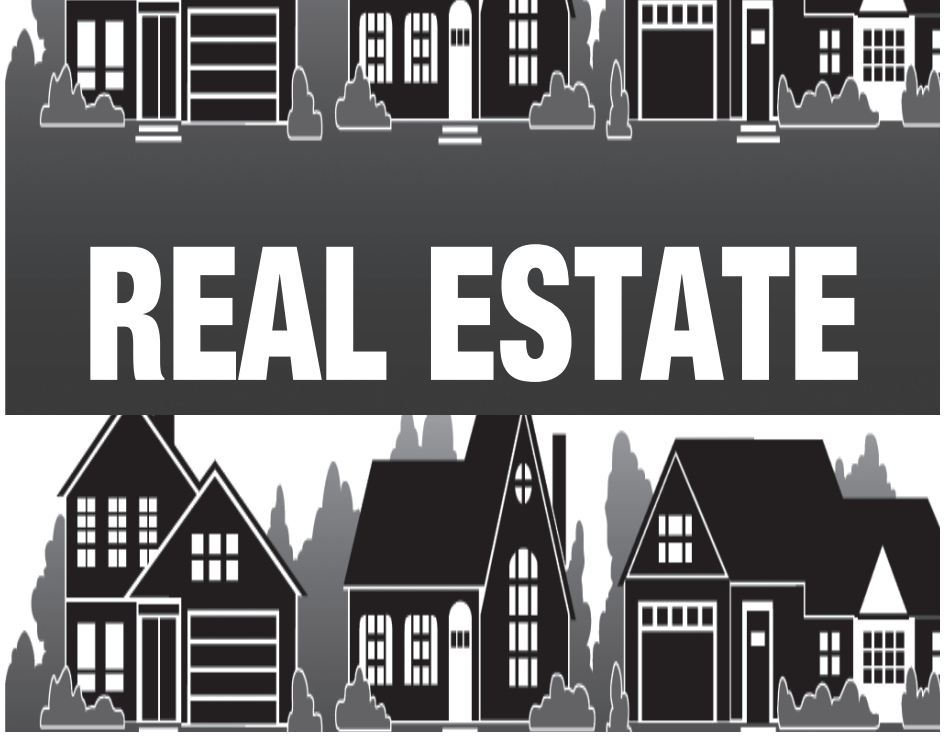


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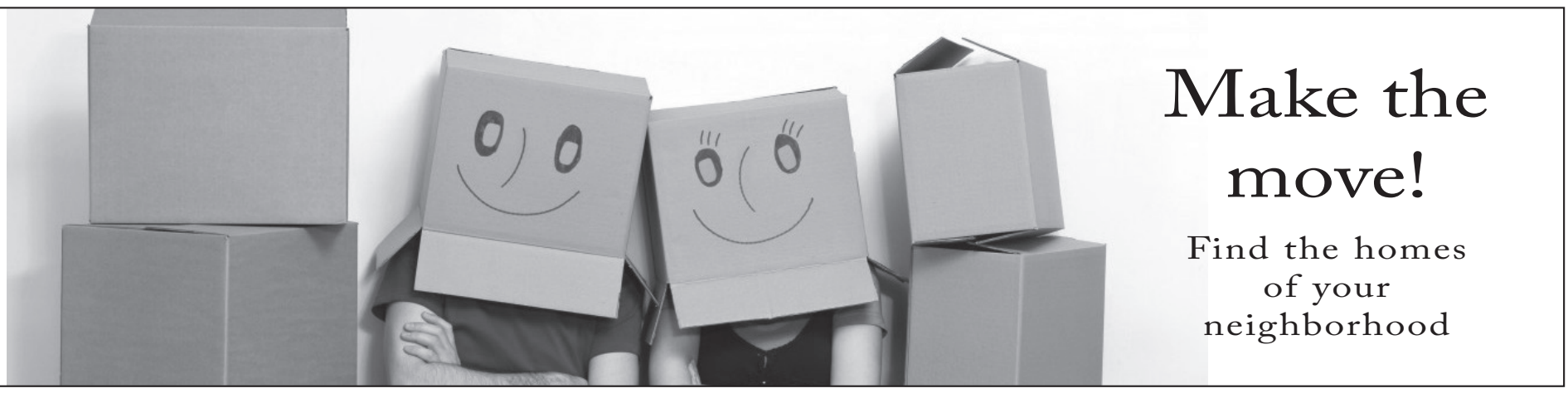
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QCC receives nearly $2 million to support parenting students and their children



WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College was recently awarded a Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program (CCAMPIS) grant of more than $1.9 million. The College will use the grant to fund its Parent Success at QCC (PSQ) program, which will provide access to childcare for eligible students.

"At QCC, over 30 percent of students are parents, many of whom work full-time and part-time jobs," QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja said. "Due to the high cost of living and low availability of childcare, these students are often in the difficult position of missing classes to take care of family responsibilities. The PSQ program will help alleviate this challenge for many parents by providing childcare assistance and support services, enabling them to remain enrolled, complete their studies, and graduate. In turn, they will be better positioned to advance their careers, improve their families' quality of life, and contribute meaningfully to their communities."

PSQ is a collaborative initiative that brings together many areas of QCC such as Parenting Student Support Services, The Children's School: Early Childhood Education Lab School, and various other departments of the college. The program will also work with licensed childcare providers in the community to subsidize care for eligible students.

"Having to be in two places at the same time has been difficult," a recently surveyed QCC student said. "…I have to drop my child off at school and be at clinical during my nursing rotation at nearly the same time."

Associate Director of Parenting Student Support Michelle Brennan has seen studies showing that more than 50 percent of student parents who don't receive proper support end up leaving school without a degree. However, at QCC, 80 percent of students Brennan has supported have continued their education.

"Our goal is to empower these students who are working incredibly hard to improve the lives of their families," Brennan said. "We've seen that quality childcare and education promote upward mobility and increased earnings for parents, and eventually for their children as well. "

The PSQ program will utilize a case management approach to connect students with community resources, build peer support networks, and provide workshops covering topics such as child development and time management.

According to Brennan, services will be integrated to benefit the entire family. She described the "whole-family" model used in education and social services, which offers support to both parents and children to foster educational success and financial security.

"When we run a workshop on a topic such as financial literacy, children will have a parallel activity and then come back together for a family conversation on the topic. We're helping them build the skills to plan for their families together," Brennan said.

Brennan also noted that funding the PSQ program through CCAMPIS will help fill in the gaps that are often present between the K-12 and higher education schedules.

"Finding childcare when QCC is in session and my daughter does not have school is super hard, whether that be school vacations, professional development days, or snow days. I have missed several days of school as a result," said another QCC student.

The four-year CCAMPIS grant is issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (HHS/ACF) on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

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