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SPENCER NEW LEADER

Free by request to residents of
East Brookfield, West Brookfield, North Brookfield, Brookfield, Leicester and Spencer

SEND YOUR NEWS AND PICS TO NEWS@STONEBRIDGEPRESS.NEWS Friday, April 17, 2026

Community sees savings from LHS Building and Property Maintenance program

Spencer selectmen approve new TA and police contracts

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT



Courtesy

Teacher Joe Richardson and LHS BPM students.

LEICESTER — The Building and Property Maintenance (BPM) program at Leicester High School is learning lifelong lessons and saving valuable resources at the same time. The program is in its third year and paying dividends to the school community. Teacher Joe Richardson resides in Leicester, and his

class is making a difference well beyond traditional classroom walls.

Richardson said, “Our students are transferring the skills that they are gaining in the classroom and applying them directly to the school district and our community.”

Richardson, the former Facilities Director for Fitchburg, knows first-hand how expensive building maintenance is.

He continued, “Whether it is cleaning up the Town Common or troubleshooting problems, I have a crew that can do it all.”

Superintendent Brett Kustigian added, “Mr. Richardson is not only building a talent pipeline for the trades, but he is providing relief to the local taxpayer in ways we are just starting to recognize. Building maintenance is now front and center in Leicester, allowing students to gain hands

on experience on real projects building confidence and creating a greater sense of community.”

Projects to date include fixing bathroom facilities, repairing floors, installing doors, servicing HVAC units, spring & winter clean-up, assisting at the senior center with projects, servicing washers/dryers and helping the Department of Public Works. DPW Director Kris Lauzon and Joe work hand in hand.

Lauzon stated, “This is a valuable resource for our entire community.”

Principal Zawada explained the collaboration he is seeing beyond the classroom walls and with the academic peers, “Our students are more motivated and engaged with authentic, hands-on career based learning. Teamwork and collaboration is the norm with LHS students being prepared for college, career and advanced training at all levels.”

The school administration also wanted to recognize the many partners and industry professionals for their support.

Selectman’s race highlights North Brookfield election

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

NORTH BROOKFIELD — Election season is fast approaching, and North Brookfield will be one of the first local towns to decide its new leadership on Monday, May 4. The Town Clerk’s office recently posted the official election ballot following the March 30 deadline, which features several seats up for grabs.

The most prominent contest will no doubt be for the single three-year seat on the Board of Selectmen, especially with incumbent board chair Jason Petraitis not returning as a candidate. The ballot lists Peter Orsi and John Tripp as the only candidates. Orsi is currently a member of the Fire and Highway Building Committee while Tripp, a former selectman, currently serves on the Planning Board.

Three candidates for Water Commissioners are represented on the ballot, two contending for a single open seat and one seeking to fill a vacancy for two years. Incumbent Donald Gillette is on the ballot for the vacancy, while Richard Kennan and James Arcese are the candidates for the open seat. Gillette is also the lone candidate for a seat to represent the town in the Southern Worcester County Regional Vocational School District running as an incumbent.

Two candidates for two openings are on the ballot for the Planning Board. Karen Hubacz is the lone candidate for a five-year seat while Sadie Kelly is on the ballot to fill a vacancy for four years. Incumbent Ethan Melad is unopposed for a position on the Board of Health. Also unopposed are Library Trustee Carol Kelley, Cemetery Commissioner Kirk Burnham, and Housing Authority member Darlene Lavin. Brandon Avery is the lone candidate for a three-year term on the Board of Assessors with two other positions on that board also available to fill vacancies, although there are no candidates listed on the ballot.

Notably, two school committee positions are up for grabs with no candidates listed. The ballot shows one available three-year seat and one vacancy to be filled. Without official candidates, these spots may be filled with write-in candidates come Election Day.

The official ballot has been posted on the Town Clerk page of the North Brookfield town Web site.

Housing Court Judge Sergio Carvajal visits with Leicester Middle School students

LEICESTER — Recently, eighth-grade students at Leicester Middle School were visited by Judge Sergio Carvajal of the Massachusetts Housing Court. Carvajal visited the students to explain the role of the judiciary in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and to help students understand why courts are such an important part of state government.

Carvajal serves as the First Justice in the Central Housing Court, which hears cases involving housing issues such as

evictions, code enforcement, and other property-related disputes.

During his visit, Carvajal explained that the judiciary is the judicial branch of government. In Massachusetts, the judiciary is responsible for interpreting laws, ensuring they are applied fair-

ly, and resolving conflicts among people, businesses, and the government. He helped students see that judges do not make laws like the legislature and do not enforce laws like the executive branch. Instead, judges listen carefully to facts, review the law, and make decisions based on the Constitution and the laws of Massachusetts.

Students also learned that the judiciary plays a major role in protecting fairness and justice. Carvajal showed that courts are tasked with remaining neutral, meaning judges should not choose sides based on opinions or emotions. Instead, they must follow the law and treat everyone equally.

This visit helped students connect what they learned in civics class to real life. The visit provided



a valuable learning experience for the 8th-grade students. Carvajal’s presentation helped them better understand how the Massachusetts judiciary works and why it matters in everyday life. By meeting a

judge and hearing directly about the courts’ responsibilities, students gained a clearer picture of how state government serves the people of Massachusetts.

SPENCER — The Spencer Board of Selectmen has approved a slew of contracts securing both the town administrator and two police officials in new deals despite opposition from a pair of board members.

The board approved new contracts for Town Administrator Jeff Bridges, as well as Police Chief Michael Befford and Lt. Norm Hodgerney on March 30, despite some disagreement over the timing of the vote on Bridges’ deal and provisions within the police contracts regarding compensation in the event of non-work-related injuries. All three contracts were approved by a majority of the board with Vice Chair John Viner voting against all three while member Greg Woodbury voted against the Town Administrator and Police Chief deals.

Bridges joined Spencer at Town Administrator in 2021, succeeding Thomas Gregory on a then three-and-a-half-year contract. In his annual review, Bridges received a 3.38 out of a maximum score of 4.0. His new contract extends his deal with the town through June 30, 2028. His most recent contract was a one-year deal activated in October of 2025 as part of a clause that stated his contract would automatically renew for a single year if a long-term renewal was not decided eight months prior to its expiration. The new long-term deal is backdated to the expiration of his previous contract on June 30, 2025.

Selectman Jonathan Viner questioned why the board was voting prior to the upcoming election. Selectman Ralph Hicks, who acknowledged at

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Richard Sugden Library hosting Happiness Party



Wendy O'Leary

SPENCER — A Happiness Party is planned at the Richard Sugden Library on May 2 at 2 p.m. to celebrate the newest publication by local author Wendy O'Leary.

Wendy O'Leary, Spencer resident, has her 5th publication coming out on April 21, a card deck for children called "Let's Grow Happiness." All her publications focus on ways to support families and children in building emotional resilience, with an emphasis on mindfulness and self-compassion.

Though her books focus on children and families, Wendy also works with adults. She has been facilitating a meditation group for adults at the Richard Sugden Library since moving to Spencer eight years ago. Having the opportunity to create community and

practice tools for wellbeing and resilience with others is the driving force behind her work.

This recent project, co-authored with Dr. Helen Maffini, highlights ways that happiness can inspire us to live wholeheartedly even amid difficulties. The 50 cards in the deck offer a variety of practical, fun, and engaging ways to grow happiness: cultivating gratitude, focusing on our connections with others, being more present in the moment, being playful and silly, moving our bodies, being in nature, and so much more. Though written for children, the deck offers fun and meaningful ideas for adults as well.

O'Leary shares that the deck is great for classrooms, families, therapists, and camp settings. The activities in the deck would be great for planning playdates and parties, and most can be used by children, either alone or in group settings.

Something happy is coming to Spencer. It's a Happiness Party for all ages!

PART-TIME PROGRAM ASSISTANT

The Town of North Brookfield is looking for a part-time Program Assistant for the Council on Aging. Please submit a resume with a letter of interest to the Selectmen's Office, 215 Main St., North Brookfield, MA 01535; or by email to selectmen@northbrookfield.net.

Brookfield Council on Aging announces late April programs for local seniors

BROOKFIELD — The Brookfield Council on Aging will host several programs later this month at its site inside the Brookfield Congregational Church, offering seniors opportunities for learning, conversation and creative activity.

On Wednesday, April 23, the Council on Aging will present a follow-up session in its "Donuts with the Director" series from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. The program will feature representatives from Varnum Funeral Home, who will be available to answer one-on-one questions from attendees. The session is intended to give seniors a chance to discuss planning topics and related concerns in an informal setting.

A local history presentation is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. The program will explore Brookfield's past and is designed for residents interested in learning more about the town's heritage and development.

Later in the week, on Thursday, April 30 at 10:30 a.m., participants can take part in a cardmaking workshop led by Rhonda Breault. A \$3 materials fee will be collected for those attending the session.

Also on April 30 at 10:30 a.m., Elise Provost will lead a crochet and handcrafts gathering, offering another opportunity for seniors to work on projects together and enjoy social time with fellow participants.

All programs will be held at the Brookfield Council on Aging offices located at the Brookfield Congregational Church, 8 Common St. Seniors with questions or those interested in participating may contact the Council on Aging at 508-867-2930, ext. 13, or by email at seniors@brookfieldma.us.



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Saturday, May 2
 Federated Church
 64 Main St, Charlton, MA

Saturday, May 9
 Crawford Library
 40 Schofield Ave, Dudley, MA

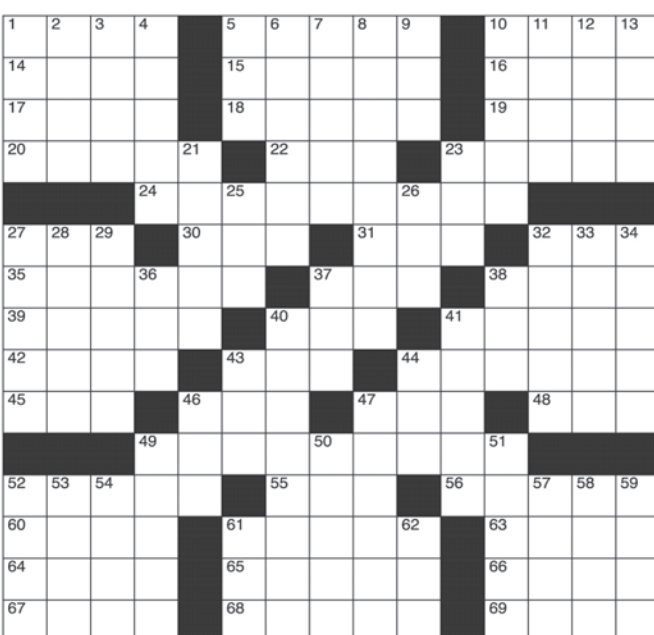
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CLUES ACROSS

- Greek goddess of marriage
- Tropical American blue jay-like bird
- Abba __, Israeli politician
- Dark olive black
- Light, crinkled fabric
- Notre Dame has a golden one
- Leaked blood
- Confronted
- Negligible amount
- Facilitated
- Hill or rocky peak
- Minneapolis suburb
- Songs to one's beloved
- Brake horsepower
- Angry
- Children's game
- Spelling is a type of one
- Obtained in return for labor
- Indicates center
- Chinese dynasty
- Old World buffaloes
- Slang for time off
- Fabric
- Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- Defunct regional economic organization
- Philly footballers
- Female sibling
- Peter Griffin's daughter
- Digital audiotape
- Insecticide
- Scientific instrument
- Pages may be dog-__
- Israeli city __ Aviv
- Type of sword
- Middle Eastern military title
- Wise individuals
- French Polynesian island Bora __
- Popular shoe type
- One of 50
- Divulge a secret
- Dish of cooked meat mixed with potatoes
- Actress Zellweger
- Romanian city

CLUES DOWN

- Greek cupbearer of the Gods
- Ancient Syrian city
- Small Eurasian deer (pl.)
- Range of mountains
- One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
- Spoke
- City in Georgia
- Theatrical
- CNN's founder
- Icelandic poems
- Bjorn __, tennis player
- Bowfin genus
- One point north of northeast
- Political divisions in ancient Greece
- Electroencephalograph
- Cool!
- Male parent
- Where some gymnasts work
- Capital of Vietnam
- Sailboats
- Shelter (Scottish)
- Completed
- Discharge
- Arrest
- Partner to cheese
- Coffee receptacle
- Stagnate
- Satisfies
- Snakelike fish
- Consume food
- Type of school
- Erase
- Inform
- Girl's given name
- Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- Every one of two or more things
- Northern India city
- Seventeenth stars in a constellation
- Weapon
- Amounts of time
- Isodor __, American Nobel physicist
- Soviet Socialist Republic
- Witness

PUZZLE SOLUTION

H	E	R	A		M	O	M	O	T		E	B	A	N
E	B	O	N		C	R	A	P	E		D	O	M	E
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A	N	O	A	S		V	A	C		S	U	E	D	E
M	O	A	B		E	E	C		E	A	G	L	E	S
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C	R	O	C		S	T	A	T	E		B	L	A	B
H	A	S	H		R	E	N	E		E	I	A	S	I

Asparagus chowder is back!

WEST BROOKFIELD — On Saturday, May 16 during the town of West Brookfield's Asparagus, Heritage and Flower Festival on the town common (10 a.m. - 3 p.m.), the First Congregational Church, UCC (36 N. Main St.) will offer their famous Asparagus Chowder from their Chowder Tent located on the church lawn.

Hot chowder by the cup, cold chowder by the quart to take home, yummy brownies and cold drinks will be available from 10 am until it runs out. Inside and outside dining is available. Cold quarts of chowder as well as a handmade quilt raffle will also be available on the town common near the food court.

Call the church for more information at 508-867-7078.

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BROOKFIELD
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EAST BROOKFIELD
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LEICESTER
 \$1,150,000, 6 Brickyard Rd, Qs Lending T, and Ross, Steven A, to Thomasian, John H.
 \$305,000, 8 Locust St, Reed, Karter K, to Reed, Derek.

NORTH BROOKFIELD
 \$470,000, 8 Elm St, Mccarty, Ted, and Mccarty, Lorrie, to Fuster, Joel.
 \$357,000, 8 Cider Mill Rd, Wiewel, Andrew, and Standfield, Catriona H E, to Thibault, Devin.
 \$265,000, 28 E Brookfield Rd, Chaffee, Frank, to Colburn, Dann.
 \$55,000, 19 S Main St, Dziel, Kasey, and Dziel, Samuel, to Dziel, Kasey, and Dziel, Samuel.

SPENCER
 \$525,000, 31 Clark St, Premier Soln & Logistics, and Lowell, Marvin, to Sierra, Erick F.
 \$449,900, 108 Paxton Rd, Amdt LLC, and Keka, Arben, to Fortier, Michelle, and Seymour, Nicholas.
 \$436,000, 118 Hastings Rd, Lusignan, Jeannine A, and Lusignan, Randy J, to Lusignan, Craig, and Lusignan, Elizabeth.
 \$430,000, 129 Hastings Rd, Hansen, Daniel E, and Hansen, Alyssa S, to Pedercini, Austin, and Pedercini, Briana.
 \$365,000, 163 Ash St, Bumpa Ft, and Gradowski, Deborah L, to Akana, Kobe Brice, and Akana, Kelly Anne.
 \$365,000, 6 Dale St, Shemeth 3rd William R Est, and Shemeth, Carol T, to Smith, Robert R, and Griffin, Farrah A.
 \$351,000, 42 Mechanic St, Valley Vw Rlty & Dev LLC, to Garcia, Dasani, and Ramos, Lillian.

WARREN
 \$359,000, 111 Quaboag St, Brecht, Timothy R, and Brecht, Jodi-Ann, to Knight, Amanda J, and Marcano, Xavier Luis.

WEST BROOKFIELD
 \$220,000, 207 Shoreline Dr, Steele, Cory G, to Dold, Jennifer, and Dold, Robert.

JOY (Just Older Youth) Adventurers offers journey through Canadian Rockies & Pacific Northwest

PAXTON — This journey traces an unforgettable path from Canada's Pacific Coast deep into the heart of the Rockies, blending vibrant cities with some of North America's most awe-inspiring wilderness. Beginning in Vancouver, the adventure opens amid coastal mountains, historic neighborhoods, and lush green spaces before drifting across the Gulf Islands to the charming capital of Victoria. Here, manicured gardens, waterfront views, and rich heritage set an elegant pace.

The landscape soon transforms as the route

climbs inland through British Columbia's dramatic highways toward alpine terrain. Highlights include the soaring presence of Mount Robson and the pristine beauty of Jasper National Park, where glacier-fed lakes, rugged peaks, and serene wildlife encounters define each moment. A cruise on Maligne Lake and time along the iconic Icefields Parkway lead to the immense Columbia Icefield, offering rare access to ancient glaciers and sweeping mountain vistas.

Further south, the turquoise waters of Lake Louise and the storybook

charm of Banff National Park deliver classic Rocky Mountain magic, balancing outdoor exploration with relaxed town life. Crossing into the United States, the journey continues through the untamed grandeur of Glacier National Park, where alpine passes, historic lodges, and cultural storytelling reveal the soul of the "Crown of the Continent."

The experience concludes as forests and mountains give way to vineyards, lakes, and the energetic waterfront of Seattle. From coastal elegance to icy glaciers and iconic skylines, this trip

weaves together nature, culture, and comfort into a richly layered exploration of western North America.

Pricing: \$7,625 per person (double) - includes 14 days with 20 meals, hotels, and all transfers within tour; but does not include airfare and transportation to airport. Pricing for airfare and ground transportation to airport will be finalized soon, but plan for under \$1,000 per person. For more information, contact Bill Murwin at wlmurwin@gmail.com or by phone 508-756-3193.



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Throwdown! Food Truck Festival returns to Spencer Fairgrounds May 16

SPENCER — The Throwdown! 2026 Food Truck Festival will be held Saturday, May 16 from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. at the Spencer Fairgrounds, 49 Smithville Rd. Admission is \$5 at the gate (children under 12 free).

Throwdown! 2026 is Worcester County's longest running and largest annual Food Truck Festival and Craft Fair. A panel of judges and event attendees cast votes for their favorite food truck to be honored with the prestigious "Best of Worcester County Food Trucks" and the ever coveted "People's Choice" awards. Along with great food from dozens of food trucks, customers may browse among the over 50 artisanal craft vendors, enjoy carnival style games, listen to music or participate in an array of yard games such as corn hole, giant blocks, ladder toss and other fun activities just for the kids. Enjoy craft beer and wines at this year's event from "The Stein & Vine", Central Massachusetts' favorite mobile bar service. It's a fantastic way to spend a Spring afternoon with family and friends in a beautiful outdoor setting.

WooTrucks has been the most trusted name in reliable food truck booking for over a decade. Our commissary, commercial kitchen, and base of operations for food trucks, caterers, bakers, and food entrepreneurs is located at 67 Main St., Boylston. Our fully permitted and approved facility to prepare food was established to foster a transparent, self-policing community of food trucks and food entrepreneurs practicing only the highest standards of customer service while maintaining strict adherence to health, sanitation and food codes. WooTrucks operates food truck festivals throughout the region and supplies food trucks to corporate clients, private businesses, breweries, academic institutions, and local municipalities.



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As I approach my 69th birthday, I find this moment both meaningful and bittersweet as I step into retirement from Varnum & Charbonneau Funeral Homes, now an entity of Milestone Funeral Partners.

Over the past 13 years, I've had the privilege of meeting so many wonderful, caring, and appreciative families, along with dedicated clergy, church and cemetery personnel, town clerks, staff, and colleagues, and have made many friends. Serving in this second career as a Funeral Director has truly been an honor.

Thank you to everyone who trusted me to support you and your loved ones—it means more than words can express.

Wishing you all health, peace, and well-being. Live long and be well.

Sincerely,
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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
 PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
 EDITOR

EDITORIAL

Learning by doing benefits students and taxpayers alike

One of the most encouraging developments in local education in recent years has not come from a new building or a new test score report. It has come from students picking up tools, solving real problems and discovering that their work matters beyond the classroom.

The Building and Property Maintenance program at Leicester High School is a strong example of what happens when education is connected directly to community needs. Now in its third year, the program is already showing how hands-on learning can strengthen both student confidence and municipal resources at the same time.

Under the leadership of instructor Joe Richardson, students are applying what they learn in class to real projects across the school district and around town. That type of experience cannot be duplicated through textbooks alone. It teaches responsibility, teamwork and pride in a job done well.

It also teaches something else that is sometimes overlooked in conversations about education. It shows students that their skills have value right now.

The list of completed projects speaks for itself. Students have repaired bathrooms, fixed flooring, installed doors, serviced HVAC equipment, assisted with seasonal cleanup and supported work at the senior center. They have also worked alongside the Department of Public Works, gaining exposure to the kinds of challenges municipal departments address every day.

These efforts are not symbolic exercises. They are meaningful contributions that reduce costs and strengthen community partnerships.

Superintendent Brett Kustigian noted that the program is already easing pressure on local taxpayers. That benefit will likely continue to grow as the program expands and students gain additional experience. At a time when every town is looking carefully at budgets, programs that combine education with practical savings deserve attention and support.

There is also another long-term advantage that may be even more important.

Communities across Massachusetts and throughout New England continue to face shortages in skilled trades. Programs like this one help address that challenge by introducing students to career paths that are stable, needed and rewarding. Not every student wants to follow the same route after graduation, and schools serve communities best when they recognize that success can take many forms.

Principal Zawada's observation that students are more engaged through authentic career-based learning should not surprise anyone who has watched a young person discover a skill they enjoy using. When students see the results of their work in real spaces used by neighbors, teachers and families, motivation follows naturally.

The partnership with the Department of Public Works also reflects something worth celebrating. Schools and towns function best when they collaborate rather than operate separately. Shared projects build relationships and remind everyone that education is a community effort.

It is also important to recognize the role of local industry professionals who support programs like this one. Their willingness to mentor and guide students helps create opportunities that last well beyond graduation day.

Programs such as Leicester High School's Building and Property Maintenance initiative show what is possible when schools trust students with real responsibility. They prepare young people for careers, strengthen civic pride and make practical improvements that residents can see with their own eyes.

That is education doing exactly what it should do.

VIEWPOINT

OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Help instead of hating

To the Editor:

I don't know about anyone else, but personally, I have had more than enough of the "KK guys" and their weekly, extensive Trump-bashing letters. Week after week, these lengthy and excessive diatribes are present in this local newspaper. I believe these two need something better to do with their time.

May I suggest that instead of devoting so much time to hating our President, they instead contribute time to helping our elderly and handicapped neighbors with yard cleanup and basic home repair? Put effort into helping instead of hating.

PAT SWEET
 SPENCER

Disgusted

To the Editor:

Like him surrendering Afghanistan, but waiting until post-election to pull out, figuring could not run again in a win and dumped on successor in a loss. I am already seeing the downside of Trump being duped to a war, by Israel. Nobody doubts Iran being a sponsor of terrorism, and my gut tells me that killing the new Ayatollah's father, wife and child is not likely to de-escalate the tension. Anyone who thinks we did not poke a hornet's nest is not paying attention.

Although I have not seen a final version of the "agreement," I have heard about \$2 million "tolls" for use of Hormuz, removal of all that remains of Obama era nuclear deal he got the world to accept, no change of regime, us paying reparations for the damage the billions of dollars in armaments we expended to create said damage. We will need to restock our own, and likely, Israel's munitions. This being likely before we can sell needed arms to Ukraine while Russia benefits by relaxed sanctions on their oil.

I am hearing talk of seizing Cuba. One assumes because we need another island in need of billions in infrastructure repairs. If you still believe DOGE created anything resembling government

efficiency, want to buy housing in the Everglades? On that note, we are buying up empty warehouses and converting them to giant, for-profit, communal bathrooms, to house the former low wage immigrants, costing millions on our tab.

I hope you all got to read our leader's Easter message. It threatened to wipe the history of Persia off the planet, and to eradicate its population. The Department of Justification certainly will not do anything to rein in him or his Secretary of War Crimes. Do you believe that you are paying for the persecution of Mark Meadows secretary (Hutchinson) whose crime was telling the truth, which we all know, Trump abhors. Where is DOGE when we are wasting millions to not convict his enemies?

The fact that we have already seen the lowest gas prices we will ever see in this lifetime and can still support this grifting moron means you have lost any respect I might ever have had for you. You were warned at every stage, from Project 2025 to the war you were promised would not happen. I still think you lose bets on replays. Proudly wear those hats so you can be avoided.

KEN KIMBALL
 BROOKFIELD

The old road map in the glove compartment

The other afternoon, I went looking for my car registration and found something I had not touched in years.

It was an old paper road map.

Folded the wrong way, of course.

I do not even remember when I put it there. The edges were soft from being opened too many times, and there were little pen marks along Route 20 and Route 9 from trips I must have taken when my children were younger and every ride somewhere counted as an adventure.

These days, most of us travel with a calm voice coming from the dashboard telling us exactly when to turn left and exactly when to turn right. It is efficient. It is helpful. It is also a little lonely compared to the way we used to get around.

Paper maps required cooperation.

Someone had to hold the map. Someone had to read it. Someone had to admit when the map was upside down. And someone had to say, "I think we missed that turn about two miles ago."

Usually that last person was me.

There was a time when every glove compartment in Massachusetts seemed to hold at least one folded map of the state, sometimes two if you counted the one that covered the Berkshires and the one that covered the eastern half where the roads never seem to go quite the way you expect

them to.

You could tell how old a map was by which highways were missing.

Route numbers changed. Interchanges appeared where

nothing had been before. Whole bypasses arrived that made you feel as if the world itself had shifted slightly while you were not paying attention.

Still, we trusted those maps.

They helped us find county fairs we had never visited before. They helped us get to Little League games in towns we could not pronounce. They helped us discover ice cream stands that were never advertised anywhere except by the number of cars already parked outside.

A map did not simply tell you where to go. It invited you to notice where you were.

I remember sitting in the passenger seat while my wife drove through towns neither of us knew very well, tracing the road ahead with one finger and announcing each turn like it was part of an expedition. The children in the back seat always seemed to believe we were traveling somewhere important, even if it was only the next town over for a school concert or a Saturday errand.

There was a sense that we were figuring things out together.

Today, when the dashboard voice tells me to turn, I turn. When it says I have arrived, I believe it. There is nothing wrong with that. It gets me where I am going every time.

Still, finding that old map reminded me how much of small-town life used to depend on learning the roads slowly.

You learned where the river crossed under the highway. You learned which towns had the best shortcut when traffic backed up near the rotary. You learned which back roads felt longer in winter and shorter in June.

Most of all, you learned how close everything really was.

Massachusetts is full of places that seem far away until you discover they are only twenty minutes down a road you had never taken before. A folded map used to make that clear in a way a glowing screen never quite does.

I put the map back in the glove compartment when I finished looking at it. I do not expect I will need it again. The car already knows how to get me where I am going.

But I am glad it is still there.

It reminds me that for a long time, getting somewhere was not only about arriving. It was about paying attention to the turns along the way, and sometimes even missing one or two and finding something better because of it.

Sustainable investing means investing with purpose



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When you think about investing, you probably want your money to grow. But maybe you also want it to make a positive difference in the world while you continue pursuing your financial goals. That's the foundation of sustainable investing — an approach that considers environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors alongside traditional financial analysis.

Sustainable investing allows you to support better business practices through your investment choices. It looks at how companies address issues ranging from climate change to worker well-being to corporate ethics. At its core, it's about aligning investments with personal values while still focusing on long-term financial outcomes.

Here are the three main areas of sustainable investing:

Environmental considerations include how companies respond to climate change, use natural resources, and manage pollution.

Social factors address workforce well-being, product safety, and efforts to reduce social inequities.

Governance focuses on corporate behavior, ethics policies, and financial transparency.

You may wonder whether investing sustainably means sacrificing returns. Research suggests it doesn't. New York University's Stern Center for Sustainable Business reviewed more than 1,000 studies from 2015–20 and found that incorporating ESG factors does not inherently diminish returns, and in many cases is associated with improved financial performance. As with any investment approach, it's important to focus on high quality investments that help support more consistent long-term returns.

Sustainable investing can take several forms:

ESG intentional strategies spread out your investments and have clear goals for choosing companies that follow strong environmental, social and governance practices.

Sustainable thematic strategies focus on specific issues, such as clean energy or water conservation.

Impact investments go a step further, targeting measurable environmental or social outcomes. Because they prioritize more narrow, specific objectives, they may carry higher volatility and potentially lower returns.

One concern you may hear about is "greenwashing," which happens when companies or funds exaggerate their environmental efforts. To help prevent this, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission created a rule in 2023 that requires any fund with "ESG" in its name to keep at least 80 percent of its assets in ESG aligned investments.

Another challenge is data consistency. Today, 99 percent of S&P 500 companies report ESG metrics, according to the Center for Audit Quality, but different rating providers still use different methods. Looking at relative rankings can help you compare companies and mutual funds in a more consistent way.

Deciding whether to include sustainable investments in your portfolio really depends on your values and financial goals. You can build a well-diversified portfolio with or without them. A qualified financial advisor can help you understand whether adding sustainable investments fits your overall strategy and makes sense for your situation.

As more companies disclose ESG data and more funds offer sustainable options, investors have increasing opportunities to align their portfolios with their values — without sacrificing their financial objectives.

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

Letter submission policy

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

Swan Tavern Historical Museum launches 2026 programs

LEICESTER — The Swan Tavern Leicester Historical Museum is about to start its 2026 presentation series starting in the first week of April. The tavern staff is enthusiastic and once again, will combine a mix of presentations and performances and will be inclusive of local history.

Lost Voices: The Letters of George Gould” In July 1862, the second year of the Civil War, a twenty-nine-year-old man named George W. Gould from Leicester enlisted in the 25th Volunteers to fight for the Union, leaving his wife Almira and their three young children at home. Private Gould was killed on June 6, 1864 at the bloody battle of Cold Harbor. One hundred fifty

years later, graduate student Morgan Kolakowski Zhang shared her collection of Gould’s letters with Stan Prager, owner of GoGeeks Computer Rescue in East Longmeadow, as well as an independent historian with an interest in the Civil War era. Stan was moved by the letters, and—in what he termed the perfect “marriage of history and technology”—set out to digitize and transcribe

the letters, and create a website to honor George W. Gould. Join him in the story of PVT Gould and the tale to preserve his story.

Thursday, Oct. 29 at 7 p.m.: Vampires in Early New England In time for Halloween, Tom Kelleher returns to the Swan Tavern for presentation on Vampires in Early New England. The question of why

scores of people opened graves of their sweethearts, sons, or daughters, along with husbands and wives will perhaps not be what you expect. What terror would drive these people to take this extreme stance? How does Count Dracula fit into the picture? Answers to these and many other questions will be revealed.

Thursday, Dec. 4 at 7 p.m.: “Traditional Songs of Christmas” Come visit the Swan Tavern as it is bright with warm Christmas décor for a live musical performance by the Olde Towne

Carolers of Boston. Dressed in period Victorian attire, the performance of traditional Christmas songs will last approximately 45 minutes. This event is free to the public, but reservations are requested.

All programs are presented by the Friends of Swan Tavern and/or the town of Leicester Historical Commission. This project is supported in part, by a grant from the Leicester Arts Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Grace McGovern receives Honorable Mention for WPI’s Class of 1879 Prize

WORCESTER — West Brookfield resident Grace McGovern, a member of the class of 2026 majoring in Business, received honorable mention for Worcester Polytechnic Institute’s (WPI) Class of 1879 Prize for outstanding work in the Humanities and Arts, with a project titled, “The Importance of Being Gwendolen.”

The Class of 1879 Prize is awarded by the Humanities and Arts Department yearly for excellent work in the culminating project for the Humanities & Arts Requirement. These projects must demonstrate exceptional creativity and skill in conceiving, developing, and expressing a theme within any discipline in the humanities and arts.

WPI has recognized exemplary work in the humanities and arts since 1872, when the department of English and Modern Languages established an award for the best paper in composition classes. At its reunion in 1900, the Class of 1879 endowed this prize for a paper “on a topic of general interest.” The endowment was continued by Spencer Miller 1879, who wanted “to encourage graduates of the Institute to develop the art of clear and lucid English in the discussion of engineering subjects.” The Class of 1879 Prize was then awarded annually to the best term paper in the departments of English, History, and Languages until the adoption of the WPI Plan in 1970. In 1983, the department of

Humanities & Arts began to award the Class of 1879 Prize to the best Humanities Requirement Projects.

The Class of 1879 Prize has evolved alongside WPI. Today’s prize-winning projects rarely concern engineering subjects, and some aren’t even traditional essays. But we still honor the spirit of Mr. Miller’s prize, to encourage and reward the highest achievements of human expression.

About Worcester Polytechnic Institute Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) is a top-tier, STEM-focused university with an R1 research classification and global leadership in project-based learning. Founded in 1865, WPI’s distinctive approach integrates classroom theory with real-world practice, preparing students to tackle critical challenges through inclusive education, impactful projects, and interdisciplinary research. With more than 70 bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree programs across 18 academic departments and over 50 global project centers, WPI advances knowledge and innovation in fields such as life sciences, smart technologies, advanced materials and manufacturing, and global innovation. Learn more at www.wpi.edu.

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WEEKLY POLICE BLOTTER

Spencer
The Spencer Police Department reported the following arrests during the week April 1-7.

Robert Dewayne Kyser, Jr., age 42, of Spencer was arrested on April 1 for Disorderly Conduct and Disturbing the Peace.

Melissa Lee Barrett-Thomas, age 47, of Spencer was arrested on April 2 in connection with a warrant.

Leicester
The Leicester Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of April 2-8.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on April 4 for Operating a Motor Vehicle after suspension of registration, operating an

Uninsured Motor Vehicle, and operating an Unregistered Motor Vehicle.

Robert Jeffrey Cheevers, age 57, of East Boston was arrested on April 4 as a Fugitive From Justice on a Court Warrant and in connection with a warrant.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on April 4 for Unlicensed Operation of a Motor Vehicle and Unsafe Operation of a Motor Vehicle.

Jason L. Cronin, age 37, of Spencer was arrested on April 4 for Operating a Motor Vehicle after suspension of license for OUI and Unsafe Operation of a Motor Vehicle.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on April 7 for a Number Plate Violation to Conceal ID, Unlicensed Operation of a Motor Vehicle, and operating an Uninsured Motor Vehicle.

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Solo/Duet series to blend poetry and chamber jazz at Merriam-Gilbert Public Library

WEST BROOKFIELD — A monthlong series celebrating poetry and jazz will return to the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library in April, offering four evenings of live readings and chamber jazz performances in recognition of National Poetry Month and National Jazz Month.

The program, titled "Solo/Duet," will take place Tuesday evenings at 6 p.m. throughout April at the library, 3 W. Main St. Each session pairs local poets with small-ensemble

jazz performances, creating a format in which spoken word "bookends" instrumental sets.

Organizers describe the series as an opportunity for residents to experience two art forms together in an informal and accessible setting. Admission is free, though seating reservations are encouraged by calling the library.

The April lineup begins April 7 with bassist Jerry Wilfong and percussionist-trumpeter Dick Hummel. Poets Glenn D'Alessio and

Susan Roney-O'Brien will provide readings that evening.

On April 14, Wilfong will return alongside guitarist Mitch Seidman and harmonica player Chet Williamson. Poetry readings that night will be presented by Clair Degutis and Jim Beschta.

The April 21 program will feature Wilfong with guitarist Rich Falco and trombonist Rich Ardizzone. Judith Ferrara and Jonathan Blake are scheduled to read selections during the ses-

sion. The series concludes April 28 with a solo bass recital by Wilfong. The final evening's readings will be delivered by Beth Sweeney and Stephen Campiglio.

According to program organizers, the series is structured to highlight the connections between improvisational music and contemporary poetry, offering audiences a chance to hear how rhythm, phrasing and narrative interact across disciplines. The alternating format allows listeners

to experience both arts as complementary rather than separate performances.

Funding support for the series is provided through the West Brookfield Cultural Council, with additional backing from the Massachusetts Cultural Council's local cultural council program.

Library staff say the program continues a tradition of spring arts programming tied to National Poetry Month, observed each April across the country, and National Jazz Appreciation

Month, which recognizes jazz's cultural and historical significance in American life.

Residents of West Brookfield and surrounding communities are invited to attend any or all of the Tuesday sessions. Organizers recommend advance reservations due to limited seating in the library's program space.


For more information or to reserve a seat, contact the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library at 508-867-1410.

NOTICE
HYDRANT FLUSHING
TOWN OF SPENCER

The Town of Spencer Water Department will be flushing fire hydrants throughout the western part of the distribution system starting April 13th thru April 30th 2026.

Flushing removes sediment from the water mains to help maintain water quality. When the Water Department staff is in the immediate area, residents could experience loss of pressure and short periods of rusty water. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause. A daily list of the flushing locations will be posted on the Spencer town website www.spencerma.gov each day by 8:00AM (click on Departments, then click Water Department, then click Hydrant Flushing 2026).

If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact the Spencer Water Department office at 508-885-7525. Thank you.



Courtesy

Last Tuesday evening, the Leicester Police Department held a pinning ceremony for the two recent promotions of Lt. Matthew Brady and Sgt. Travis McCauley (pictured here with Chief Kenneth Antanavica). Thank you to their family and friends in attendance for making the evening special. The department would also like to thank the Leicester Select Board for their hospitality during the ceremony, as well as State Sen. Peter Durant and State Representatives Donnie Berthiaume and Paul Frost for attending.



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Spencer readies for election, town meeting next month

SPENCER — Residents of Spencer will gather in early May for the community's annual opportunities to weigh in on town government, with both the Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election scheduled within the same week.

The Spencer Annual Town Meeting is set for Thursday, May 7, at 7 p.m. Town Meeting serves as the town's primary legislative session, where registered voters consider and vote on the municipal operating budget, capital expenditures, bylaw proposals, and other warrant articles that shape local policy for the coming fiscal year.

As in many Massachusetts communities that use the open Town Meeting form of government, Spencer's Annual Town Meeting allows residents to speak directly on issues before casting votes. Participation helps determine funding priorities for municipal services such as schools, public safety, roads, and infrastructure, along with decisions on special projects and long-term planning initiatives.

The Annual Town Election will follow the next week on Tuesday, May 12, with polls open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Voters will elect candidates to a range of local offices, which may include positions such as Select Board members, School Committee representatives, Planning Board members, and other municipal roles depending on the year's ballot.

Together, the Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election form the foundation of Spencer's local democratic process. The meeting determines how the town will operate in the coming fiscal year.

Residents are encouraged to confirm their voter registration status in advance and review polling locations through the Town Clerk's office. Participation in both the meeting and election helps ensure that local government reflects the priorities and voices of the community.

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ATTENTION WEST BROOKFIELD RESIDENTS Hydrant Flushing



The West Brookfield Water Department will be flushing hydrants April 20th through May 1st during the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Flushing will cause some disturbance in the water mains. The water may appear cloudy but will eventually dissipate. **Please plan water use accordingly.**



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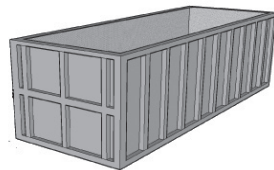
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LEGALS

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 April 28, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the McCourt Social Hall, Memorial Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Spencer, on the application of Teds 3x located at 10 West Main Street d/b/a Country Spirits, Kevin Grillo, Manager, to transfer an All Alcohol Off Premises Package Store License to Narendra & Ramila Corp. Described premises: 5400 square foot retail building, no basement, 3 exits, mezzanine floor. Jared J.B. Grigg, Chairman, Board of Selectmen April 17, 2026

THE TOWN OF EAST BROOKFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing will be held on Monday, April 27, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, Memorial Town Complex, on the petition of National Grid and Verizon, as follows:

ADAMS ROAD - National Grid to install 6 JO Poles on Adams Rd. beginning at a point approximately 330 feet north of the centerline of the intersection of Podunk Rd @Adams Rd and continuing approximately 1,950 feet in a northeast direction. National Grid to install new JO Poles on Podunk Rd: Pole 68-50, Pole 70-50, Pole 82-75. National Grid to install new midspan poles on Adams Rd: Pole 0- 50, Pole 1-50, Pole 5-50, Pole 6-50, Pole 7-50, and Pole 8-50. National Grid to install new anchors: Install 20' anchor in the south direction from Pole 0-50; install 15' anchor in the northeast direction attached to Pole 8-50.

ADAMS ROAD - National Grid to install 1 SO Pole on Adams Rd. National Grid to install new SO mid span Pole 10-50 approximately 90' east of existing PIO Adams Rd.

SHORE ROAD- National Grid to install 4 SO Poles on Shore Rd. National Grid to Relocate 5 SO Poles on Shore Rd. beginning at a point approximately 0 feet north of the centerline of the intersection of Quaboag St@ Shore Rd and continuing approximately 2,845 feet in the southeast direction. National Grid to install new SO mid span poles on south side of Shore Rd: Pole 18-50, Pole 17-50, Pole 16-50 and Pole 9-50. National Grid to Relocate SO Poles: Pole 9 approximately 100' east, Pole 8 approximately 65' east; Pole 7 approximately 40' east; Pole 6 approximately 35' east; Pole 5 opposite side of the road, approximately 165' west of Pole 4.

PODUNK RD - National Grid to install 3 JO Poles on Podunk Rd. National Grid to Relocate 4 JO Poles on Podunk Rd., beginning at a point approximately 175 feet southeast of the centerline of the intersection of Draper Rd @ Podunk Rd and continuing approximately 3,855 feet in a southeast direction. National Grid to install new JO Poles on Podunk Rd: Pole 68-50, Pole 70-50, Pole 82-75. National Grid to Relocate JO Poles on Podunk Rd: Pole 74-50 approximately 15' north, Pole 80 approximately 20' east, Pole 81 approximately 15' east, Pole 82-50 approximately 45' west. National Grid to install new anchors: Pole 68-50 with anchor lead length of 20' northeast.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the office. Thank you for your attention and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,
Sharon A. Larocque
Executive Administrative Assistant
Board of Selectmen
April 10, 2026
April 17, 2026

Brookfield Planning Board Notice of Public Hearing

In accordance with M. G. L., Chapter 40A, Section 5 and the provisions of the Brookfield Zoning Bylaws Section 13.D, the Brookfield Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on proposed amendments to the Town of Brookfield Zoning Bylaw concerning Accessory Dwelling Units.

The hearing will take place on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, in the Banquet Hall of Brookfield Town Hall, 6 Central St., Brookfield, MA, starting at 6:45 pm or as soon thereafter as can be heard. Meeting details and agenda will be posted at www.mytowngovernment.org/01506. A copy of the proposed amendments may be inspected at the office of the Town Clerk at Brookfield Town Hall during normal business hours.

Kevin Erkkila, Chair
Brookfield Planning Board
April 17, 2026
April 24, 2026

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 10 Jones Street, Spencer, MA 01562

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Amanda M Davin to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Guild Mortgage Company LLC, and now held by **Guild Mortgage Company LLC**, said mortgage dated July 11, 2022 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 67888, Page 298, said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as Mortgagee, as nominee for Guild Mortgage Company LLC to Guild Mortgage Company by assignment dated April 9, 2024 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 70394, Page 273; said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as Mortgagee, as nominee for Guild Mortgage Company LLC to Guild Mortgage Company LLC by assignment dated June 4, 2024 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 70607, Page 115; said mortgage was assigned from Guild Mortgage Company LLC to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as Mortgagee, as nominee for Guild Mortgage Company LLC by assignment dated August 13, 2024 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 70903, Page 62; said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as Mortgagee, as nominee for Guild Mortgage Company LLC to Guild Mortgage Company LLC by assignment dated December 19, 2024 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 71491, Page 134; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at **Public Auction** on May 14, 2026 at 02:00 PM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

T R A C T 1:
The land in Spencer, Worcester County, Massachusetts, situated in the south side of Starr Street, viz, BEGINNING at the northeast corner of the south line of said street by land formerly of H.P. Starr; THENCE by said Starr land, S. 9° W., 99 feet; THENCE by land formerly of Joseph Pope, N. 86 1/2° W., 66 feet; THENCE still by said Popeland, N. 9° E., 99 feet to the south line of Starr Street; THENCE by said street line, S. 86 1/2° E., 66 feet to the point of beginning..

T R A C T 2:
The land in Spencer, Worcester County, Massachusetts, situated on the south side of Starr Street, viz., BEGINNING at the northwesterly corner of the south line of said street, at a point 165 feet easterly of the easterly line of Grove Street; THENCE S. 86 1/2° E., by the southerly line of Starr Street, about 82 1/2 feet to land formerly of Eli Jacobs; THENCE S. 9° W., by said Jacobs land, 99 feet; THENCE N. 86 1/2° W., by land formerly of Joseph Pope, about 74 1/2 feet to a point on the easterly side of a two rod private street, now called Jones Street, and 165 feet easterly of the easterly line of Grove Street; THENCE N. 3 1/2° E., by the easterly line of Jones Street, 99 feet to the point of beginning.. Being the same premises as granted to Mortgagor(s) by virtue of a Deed from Sidney Cardona recorded in the Worcester County Registry of Deed Herewith.

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

For Mortgagor's Title see deed dated July 7, 2022 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 67888, Page 294.

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

FIVE THOUSAND (\$5,000.00) Dollars of the purchase price must be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check at the time and place of the sale by the purchaser. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check within thirty (30) days after the date of sale.

Other terms to be announced at the sale.

Brock & Scott, PLLC
23 Messenger Street
2nd Floor
Plainville, MA 02762
Attorney for Guild Mortgage Company LLC

Present Holder of the Mortgage

(401) 217-8701
April 17, 2026
April 24, 2026
April 31, 2026

(SEAL) COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT 25 SM 002046 ORDER OF NOTICE

TO:
Shane A. Bayer
and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act: 50 U.S.C. c. 50 § 3901 (*et seq*): NewRez LLC f/k/a New Penn Financial, LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing
claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Spencer, numbered 4 Lambs Grove, given by Shane A Bayer to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Inland Bank and Trust, dated April 27, 2018, and recorded at Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 58736, Page 343, 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 May 25, 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 April 8, 2026.
Attest:
Deborah J. Patterson
Recorder
April 17, 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. WO26P1094EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**
Estate Of:
**Donald Paul Yelle, Jr.
Also known as: Donald P Yelle,
Donald P Yelle, Jr.
Date of Death:12/26/2025**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Melissa Yelle of Alcove NY** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that:
Melissa Yelle of Alcove NY be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the estate in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 05/05/2026**.

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: April 03, 2026
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
April 17, 2026

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION
NOTICE OF A VIRTUAL DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

**Project Description: West Brookfield- Bridge Replacement, W-19-002 (187), Long Hill Road Over Quaboag River
Project File No. 613143**

A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed project in West Brookfield, MA.

WHEN: 6:00 PM, Wednesday, April 29, 2026

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Bridge Replacement, W-19-002 (187), Long Hill Road Over Quaboag River project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project consists of fully replacing existing Bridge No. W-19-002 carrying Long Hill Road over the Quaboag River. The existing span length of the bridge will be increased from approximately 95 feet to 140 feet. The new structure will consist of a steel multi-girder superstructure on pile supported concrete abutments. The existing roadway on the bridge will be widened by 1 foot on each side to provide an 11-foot-wide lane and 5-foot-wide shoulder in each direction. The existing 5-and-half-foot wide sidewalk on the south side of the bridge will be replaced with a 6-foot-wide sidewalk to meet current criteria. Sidewalk ramps are proposed at the bridge approaches to transition pedestrians to the shoulder. Long Hill Road will be repaved for approximately 300 feet on each side of the bridge. Roadway upgrades are proposed within the paving the limits including new guardrail, curbing, and drainage structures. The shoulder widening has been provided in accordance with applicable standards to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian use.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The Town of West Brookfield is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisitions will be presented in the hearing.

Project inquiries, written statements and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking may be submitted to Carrie E. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us or via US Mail to Suite 7550, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Project Management, Project File No. 613143. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days (14 calendar days) after the hearing is hosted.

This hearing is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g. interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible and prior to the hearing, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the hearing.

This hearing will be hosted, or a cancellation announcement posted, on the internet at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events>.

**JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR
CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER**

April 10, 2026
April 17, 2026

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NEWS

Donations needed for Community Baby Shower

LEICESTER — Organizers are seeking donations for the Leicester Regional Public Health Coalition's Community Baby Shower for expectant parents coming up May 7 from 1-4 p.m. at the Leicester Town Hall Gym, sponsored by Walmart, Hannaford, Deja New, and C.A.R.E. Leicester.

Items needed include diapers (newborn to size three), baby wipes, rash cream, clothing (onesies), sleepers, sleep sacks, hats, socks, and newborn outfits), hygiene & health items such as baby wash, shampoo, lotion, manicure sets, thermometers, and hand sanitizers), feeding equipment (bottles), formula, burping cloths, bibs, nursing pads, and pacifiers), gear & bedding (swaddle blankets, crib sheets, pack 'n plays, strollers, and car seats), and safety items such as outlet covers and cabinet locks.

Donation drop-off bins are located at the Leicester Public Library, Town Hall, Senior Center, and Deja New.

Hydrant flushing to begin April 13 in Spencer

SPENCER — The Town of Spencer Water Department will be flushing fire hydrants throughout the western part of the distribution system starting April 13 through April 30.

Flushing removes sediment from the water mains to help maintain water quality. When the Water Department staff is in the immediate area, residents could experience loss of pressure and short periods of rusty water. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause. A daily list of the flushing locations will be posted on the Spencer town Web site, www.spencerma.gov, each day by 8 a.m. (click on Departments, then click Water Department, then click Hydrant Flushing 2026). If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact the Spencer Water Department office at 508-885-7525.

Knights of Columbus hosting spaghetti dinner

WEST BROOKFIELD — Knights of Columbus Council 11080 is sponsoring a Spaghetti Dinner on Saturday, April 18 in Dugan Hall, Sacred Heart Church, 10 Milk St., West Brookfield.

Proceeds from this event will benefit Supporting Orphans Nationally & Globally (S.O.N.G.). 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. Take-out is available at 5:30 p.m., and sit-down dinner is served at 6 p.m. 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!

Applications welcome for Quaboag Historical Society scholarship

REGION — The Quaboag Historical Society is proud to announce its annual scholarship program, designed to support high school seniors with a passion for history and a commitment to preserving the past. This \$1,000 scholarship aims to assist students planning to pursue higher education in any historical related field.

The scholarship is only offered to a student who resides in one of the Quaboag Plantation towns of Brookfield, East Brookfield, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Warren, or West Brookfield. It is offered to a current high school senior planning to enroll in a college or university for the upcoming academic year who will pursue a degree in one of the following fields: Education, History, Museum Studies, Anthropology, Women's Studies, American Studies, or Archaeology. Students wishing to study closely related fields are encouraged to apply.

The application deadline is May 15. For applications or more information, please contact Jeff Robbins at jeffrobbins@charter.net or 508-579-4786.

LEGALS

Pursuant to the Brookfield Zoning By-Laws, Section 7) Dimensional Requirements, subsection C) Dimensional Regulation Table. The Brookfield Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on an application from Kyle Brenner for a Variance to construct a house at 2 Prospect Street. This property is in the Business A District. The hearing will be held on April 29, 2026, at 6:00 PM in the Banquet Room of the Town Hall located at 6 Central St. Brookfield, MA. The purpose of this hearing is for a variance in the Business District according to the Brookfield Zoning By Laws, Section 7-Dimensional requirements sub-section C and non-conforming land uses and structures according to a denial from the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

Holly Chisholm, Clerk to the ZBA
April 10, 2026
April 17, 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. WO26P1071 EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
Estate Of:
Brian Stephen Nicolas
Also known as: Brian S Nicolas
Date of Death: 01/18/2026

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Mary Ellen Tenore of Dennis Port 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:
Mary Ellen Tenore of Dennis Port MA and Michael Tenore of Dennis Port MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the estate in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 05/05/2026**.

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: April 02, 2026
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
April 17, 2026

CONTRACTS

continued from page A1

least two new individuals will be joining the board after election season due to incumbents not returning, argued it was best for the current selectmen, who were more familiar with Bridges's work, decide his contract.

"We know the effort that he has put in for the job and the job that he has done. Two new people coming in will think they know because they're citizens and they have their opinion, but frankly being a citizen and being on this board gives you two entirely different perspectives," said Hicks.

Selectmen Viner and Gary Woodbury eventually voted against the contract renewal while Hicks, John Howard and Jared Grigg voted to approve the deal.

The meeting also saw the approval of new contracts for both Befford and Hodgerney despite debate over clauses in both contracts guaranteeing compensation if these officers were to be injured off the job preventing them from performing their duties for the department.

Viner voiced his concerns about the clauses during the lieutenant discussion, which was a driving force behind his eventual vote against both contracts.

"I just find it unreasonable that the contract language states that the town would be obligated to pay out a one-year severance in the circumstance that the lieutenant were to become disabled off the job, especially when there's disability insurance that specifically covers that kind of circumstance," Viner said.

Woodbury voiced his agreement with Viner in a later discussion about the chief's contract, which contained a similar clause albeit for only six months rather than a full year's salary. He felt that future contract discussions should work to remove this language.

"This has been in the contract, so it's kind of difficult to start changing now, but I definitely think down the road that needs to be looked at," Woodbury said.

While Viner was the lone vote against the lieutenant contract, he was joined by Woodbury in voting against the chief's contract. It was implied that their votes were based specifically on the disability provisions rather than the performance of either officer. Regardless, both deals were approved thanks to a majority vote from the rest of the board.

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Meet the candidates for Spencer offices April 27

SPENCER — Residents of Spencer will have an opportunity later this month to hear directly from candidates seeking local office ahead of the town's Annual Town Election during a public Meet the Candidates session scheduled for Monday, April 27, from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

The event is designed to give voters a chance to learn more about individuals running for office in the Tuesday, May 12 town election, including any declared write-in candidates. Each participant will be provided up to five minutes to introduce themselves, outline priorities, and respond to questions from attendees.

Candidate forums have long served as an informal but important part of Spencer's civic calendar, offering residents a chance to compare perspectives on issues facing the community before casting ballots. Unlike formal debates, the sessions are typically structured to allow each candidate equal time to speak while encouraging respectful audience engagement.

Local races on the Annual Town Election ballot often include positions such as Select Board, School Committee, Planning Board, and other municipal offices that influence budgeting decisions, policy direction, and long-term planning. Participation in forums such as Meet the Candidates can help voters better understand the experience and goals of those seeking to serve.

Organizers are encouraging all candidates appearing on the May ballot, as well as those planning write-in campaigns, to attend. Community members interested in submitting questions or seeking additional information about the session may contact Carolann, according to event organizers.

The Spencer Annual Town Election will take place Tuesday, May 12, with polls open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Leicester Senior Citizens Club launches membership drive

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

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

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

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

Transfer Station stickers on sale starting April 13

SPENCER — Town of Spencer 2026-2027 Transfer Station stickers will be on sale at the Water Department

beginning April 13 during regular business hours: Monday to Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sticker fee is \$75.

Second stickers for same household cost an additional \$30.

Renewals can be paid online at www.spencerma.gov or by mailing your completed form with check/money order.

Please include a stamped self addressed envelope to:

Department of Utilities & Facilities
Attention: Stickers
3 Old Meadow Rd.
Spencer, MA 01562

Questions? Call 508-885-7515.

LWPA organizes Lake Wickaboag Area Cleanup for April 25

WEST BROOKFIELD — In conjunction with Earth Day, the Lake Wickaboag Preservation Association ("LWPA") is once again hosting its annual cleanup effort around Lake Wickaboag shorelines and roadsides on Saturday, April 25, from 9 a.m. to noon, rain or shine. All are welcome!

Please meet at the town beach at 12 Lakeview Ave. in West Brookfield at 9 a.m. Light refreshments will be provided as will trash bags and clean up location assignments. Cash prizes will be awarded!

There will be an information table with lake and LWPA-related brochures and flyers. A member of the LWPA Board will be on hand for anyone who wants to "Ask the Expert" about Lake Wickaboag's water quality, weeds, treatments, etc. A wide selection of LWPA merchandise will also be available for sale.

The LWPA will sponsor its first-ever "Reduce. Reuse. Recycle! Lake Gear Swap." Bring paddle boards, water skis, tow ropes, kayaks, life vests, etc. in good condition that you no longer need or use and swap it for something else, if you'd like! Corn hole will also be set up at the beach.

Bring your gloves and bring your energy to help bring back the spring sparkle to the area. For additional information, please email lwpa01585@gmail.com.



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Featured Listing ~ New To Market!
Webster ~ 33 Slater Street



Sprawling 62'x30' fieldstone faced 1 Level Ranch, located on a +/- 0.5-acre level, w/24'x24' 2 car att'd garage. Offers: 1,860 sf main level plus 1,000 sf +/- finished lower level, 3 BRs, 2-1/2 Baths, 2 stone fireplaces w/pellet stove inserts, FHW BB heat by oil. Open floor plan w/15'x13' kitchen, 15'x22' living rm, 13'x11' dining rm, 10'x28' breezeway w/sliders to rear deck, and 3 season sunroom, hardwood & c-tile floors, replacement windows/doors & more, more, more! How do you like it? **Call today to schedule a showing!** \$525,000

Webster - 24 Cooper Rd
New Construction - Craftsman Style home



Tucked away on Cooper Rd. Webster Lake with access at Lakeside beach/boat ramp. 3rd of 4 homes being built at this site. Offers 2,155 sq. ft +/- of living area, 7 rms, 4 brs, 2 1/2 baths, 9ft ceiling, wood flooring throughout with ceramic tile baths. Spacious main BR Suite w/ walk-in closet, and private full bathr, double sink vanity, finished lower level walk-out w/ slider. Central AC, garage

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Webster Lake Waterfront Listing!!
On Indian Point # 10 "Private Rd"



Astounding Panoramic Views across mid-section of Webster Lake! Sun drenched from early morning sunrise till sunset! View the lake from all windows. Located on a peninsula providing 2 Shorelines. Fireplaced Living Room! Recent Kitchen & Bath! Primary Bedroom w/walk-in closet. Hardwood Floors. 2 Baths. FHW Oil Heat! Central Air. Garage. \$900,000.

Webster Lake - 302 Killdeer Island



Renovated + move-in ready lakefront home w/1,700+/- sq ft. Open kitchen/dining/living w/cathedral ceilings + wall of windows. Primary suite w/private bath! 2 add'l bedrooms, 2nd Full bath. Lower level family room w/walkout to water. Wraparound deck, new vinyl railings, terraced yard, sandy beach, professional landscaping. Many updates \$775,000


Webster Lake Waterfront - 31 Bayview!!



Panoramic View, from this absolutely lovely home. 2600 +/- SF, 3+ Beds, 2 full baths, 2 car detached garage! 63' +/- waterfront. .37 Acres! Sandy Waterfront! \$1,100,000



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Richard Sugden Library announces upcoming events

SPENCER — The Richard Sugden Public Library will host a series of community programs in May highlighting student creativity, personal storytelling and adult career training opportunities.

The David Prouty High School Annual Art Show will be on display at the library from May 7 through May 21, featuring work by student artists from across the school's visual arts program. An opening reception is scheduled for Thursday, May 7 at 6 p.m., offering residents a chance to meet the young artists and view a range of student-created pieces. The exhibit continues a longstanding partnership between the school and the library that brings student artwork into a public setting each spring.

Later in the month, the library will host "Share Your Tattoo Story," an informal community conversation on Monday, May 11 from 6 to 7 p.m. The gathering invites participants to talk about the meaning behind their tattoos or attend simply to listen as others share personal experiences. Organizers describe the event as an opportunity to explore how body art can reflect identity, memory and life milestones.

On Thursday, May 14 at 6 p.m., Bay Path Career Technical Institute's Career Technical Institute for Adult Learners will present a free informational session for adults ages 18 and older who are unemployed or underemployed and interested in hands-on career training. The presentation will outline training options and career pathways in fields such as culinary arts, automotive technology, diesel technology, auto collision repair, electrical work, manufacturing, building maintenance, HVAC and welding.

Attendees will also learn about program eligibility requirements and the types of support available to help participants complete training and enter the workforce. Organizers say the session is designed to provide a clear overview of the institute's offerings in an accessible, informal setting.

All programs will be held at the Richard Sugden Public Library, 15 Main St., Spencer. Residents interested in attending may contact the library for additional details.

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