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Friday, January 9, 2026

# A Month of Love at the Douglas Common

**BY LYNN PARESKY**  
DOUGLAS COMMON  
PRESERVATION SOCIETY, INC.

DOUGLAS — Hearts and roses are returning to the Douglas Common during February, the Month of Love, as the Douglas Common Preservation Society, Inc. offers the

opportunity for the community to share Messages of Love as part of a mini FUNdraiser. Four-inch hearts will be personalized with one of five messages and hung from the gazebo for the month of February for each donation of \$10 received. The donor gets to choose from five mes-

sages for their heart(s): Be Mine, I Love You, I Miss You, XOx, and Forever Yours, and the message also includes their first name and the first name of their valentine. Webster First Federal Credit Union is sponsoring this fun community event which offers positivity,

light-hearted fun and love. To take part in the Month of Love, make your donation either by check payable to the Douglas Common Preservation Society, Inc., 76 NW Main St., Douglas, MA 01516 or via Venmo @ Turn To MONTH page A9

## Public hearing planned on Uxbridge school budget

UXBRIDGE — The Uxbridge School Committee invites you to attend a public hearing regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 School Budget. Your input is a vital part of this process, and we encourage all residents to participate.

As required by Chapter 71, Section 38N of the Massachusetts General Laws, the hearing will be held both in person and via a hybrid remote option Tuesday, Jan. 13 from 6-9 p.m. in the Uxbridge High School Library.

How to join remotely  
Video Call Link: <https://meet.google.com/tep-xkvf-ken>  
Phone: +1 562-641-5971 (PIN: 442 202 836#)  
Additional Numbers: Find more phone numbers here

Copies of the proposed budget will be available for public review starting Monday, Jan. 5. You may access the budget through the following methods:

In-Person: Visit the Business Office (9 North Main St.) between 8 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.  
Online: Visit the UPS Website Budget Page at <https://www.uxbridgeschools.smartsiteshost.com/budget>.

Public input will be accepted during the hearing. We look forward to your participation as we plan for the upcoming school year.

## Douglas Police Department undergoing MPAC accreditation

DOUGLAS — The Douglas Police Department is currently in the process of being re-evaluated by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MPAC). Our agency's last award cycle ended in June of 2023. In January of 2026, we will begin to finalize the last phases of our evaluation to remain in good standing with the commission.

Since June of 2023, our agency has worked to maintain compliance with approximately 350 individual standards established by the commission. These range in scope from organization and operations, policies and procedure,

rules and regulations and encompass everything from fleet maintenance, training, evidence, records and budgeting.

Over the last year, our agency has worked to complete a thorough self evaluation reviewing, maintaining and updating as applicable in all of these areas. Once this was completed, we initiated a mock assessment with 5 independent assessors from various agencies across the state.

This January, MPAC has scheduled the third phase of this process, which is a formal assessment conducted by a facilitator and four assessors. They will work on behalf of MPAC to review information and approve standards they find in compliance. Once completed, their information will be forwarded to the commission for a fourth and hopefully, final review.

More information regarding the MPAC, as well as detailed descriptions of their accreditation standards and process, can be found at [masspoliceaccred.net](http://masspoliceaccred.net).

## NHS Robotics team competes in FTC qualifying match

**BY NICOLAS SILVA**  
NORTHBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

NORTHBRIDGE — On Saturday, Jan. 3, the Northbridge High School Robotics Team participated in an FTC qualifying match held at Assabet High School in Marlborough. At this event, we competed alongside 25 other teams from the area to complete this National First Tech Challenge.

The qualifier began with judging of our team portfolio and an inspection of our robot. Going through this process helped us reflect on our design choices and sparked new ideas as we prepared for our matches in the arena. This year's challenge required robots to collect balls and shoot them into a high basket. Our robot successfully completed many of these shots; however, several did not perform as consistently as we had hoped.

With our next qualifier about a month away, we plan to use what we learned from this experience to redesign and refine our robot. Our team is excited to apply these improvements and continue to program our robot to success.



# BVCC’s annual “Love Your Legislator” Breakfast returns to Galliford’s Restaurant & Tavern

MENDON — The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce (BVCC) is excited to announce the return of our highly anticipated Annual “Love Your Legislator” Breakfast on Friday, Feb. 6, hosted once again at the quaint Galliford’s Restaurant & Tavern, located at the Southwick Zoo, 2 Southwick St., Mendon.

This long-awaited-for event begins with networking at 7:30 a.m., followed by the legislative panel

program at 8 a.m. sharp, and concludes at 9:30 a.m. Dive into meaningful discussion as we explore new legislation, upcoming plans for 2026, and the latest governmental developments shaping our region. This event offers a unique opportunity for entrepreneurs and residents to connect directly with the leaders who advocate for the Blackstone Valley. A special Q&A session will offer community members the chance to directly inquire about matters

impacting the Blackstone Valley, making this event a vital platform for dialogue and connection.

Executive Director of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, Liz O’Neil, shared her enthusiasm, noting, “The ‘Love Your Legislator’ Breakfast is more than just an event; it’s a celebration of collaboration and dialogue within our community. We’re thrilled to create this space where our members and residents can connect directly with their

representatives to discuss issues that matter most.”

This year, we are thrilled to welcome back UniBank as our Presenting Sponsor, along with Fidelity Bank as our Major Sponsor. Their generous support continues to make this event a success.

Members of the BVCC are invited to attend for a fee of \$55, while the price for future members is set at \$65. Interested parties are encouraged to RSVP by Jan. 30 to secure their place at this presti-

gious event. We also invite you to submit any questions you may have for the legislators, or if there are any specific topics you would like addressed. For more information, and/or to submit questions, please contact Liz O’Neil at 508-234-9090, ext. 102 or email O’Neil at loneil@blackstonevalley.org.

Don’t miss this opportunity to engage directly with state legislators and share your questions and concerns about key issues affecting

your business and community, all while enjoying a delightful breakfast with your peers in Galliford’s rustic and cozy atmosphere.

The Mission of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce is to preserve and enhance the economic vitality of the Blackstone Valley by addressing the needs and concerns of businesses and providing leadership, support and resources in connection with issues which impact commerce and the quality of life in the Valley.

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR JANUARY 9–16

Friday, Jan. 9  
Chess Meet-Up  
3 p.m.  
Whitinsville Social Library, 17 Church St., Whitinsville  
A casual chess gathering open to players of all ages and skill levels. Boards provided.

Saturday, Jan. 10  
Blackstone Canal Winter Hike  
10:30 a.m.–noon  
Various trailheads along the Blackstone Canal, including Uxbridge area access points  
A free, guided winter walk exploring the historic Blackstone Canal corridor. Dress for conditions.

Sunday, Jan. 11  
Inside & Out Sculpture Exhibit Reception  
2–4 p.m.  
Whitin Mill Complex, Whitinsville  
Opening reception and awards ceremony for the New England Sculptors Association exhibit, featuring indoor and outdoor works.

Monday, Jan. 12 – Friday, Jan. 16  
Friends of the Whitinsville Library Book Drive  
Library hours  
Whitinsville Social Library, 17 Church St., Whitinsville  
Drop off gently used books to support the Friends group’s upcoming book sale. Donations accepted throughout the week.

Friday, Jan. 16  
Legislative Breakfast at the Library  
7:30 a.m. breakfast; program at 8 a.m.  
Whitinsville Social Library, 17 Church St., Whitinsville  
A public legislative breakfast featuring State Sen. Ryan Fattman, with discussion on library funding and local issues. Registration requested.

Ongoing  
Winter Hiking Opportunities  
Various dates and times  
Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor  
Self-guided and scheduled winter hikes continue throughout the season along the Blackstone Valley trail network.



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**DOUGLAS**  
\$480,000, 3 Nautical Way #3, Fritz, Jessica, and Fritz, Sherry, to Viswanathan, Hareesh.

**NORTHBRIDGE**  
\$1,005,000, 91 Clubhouse Ln, Sr Golf Club LLC, to Re North Rock LLC.  
\$850,000, Railroad St, Northbridge Mills LLC, to Re North Rock LLC.  
\$850,000, Sutton St, Northbridge Mills LLC, to Re North Rock LLC.  
\$815,000, 708 Marston Rd #78R, Vasquez, Jessika M, and Vasquez, Stanley J, to Capra, David, and Capra, Jennifer.  
\$659,900, 84 Mikes Way #2, Ariel Development Corp, to Akoury, Elias, and Aboody, Mayassa.  
\$310,500, 94 Heritage Dr #94, Bellion, Khadija, to Ross, Debbie A, and Ross, Robert.  
\$235,000, 2120 Providence Rd, Van Houten Scott D Est, and Van Houten, Joshua D, to Centura Bay LLC.

**UXBRIDGE**  
\$650,000, 48 Homeward Ave, Wescott Custom Homes LLC, to Rooney, Kelly, and Rooney, Chelsie.  
\$579,000, 35 Glendale Ave, Genese, Matthew, and Cnossen-Genese, Cydney B, to Neill, Brody R.  
\$520,000, 371 Hartford Ave E #371, Dossantos, Mariana D, and Guilherme, Andre, to Morgan, Milad.  
\$364,900, 256 Mendon St, Mcdonough Jr, Sean M, and Miller, Jacqueline M, to Cadavid, Natalia I.  
\$270,000, 385 River Rd, Youngsma Norman R Est, and Cooper, Rebecca J, to Millville Investment LLC.

**CLUES ACROSS**

1. Lakes

6. Electromotive force

9. Invests in little enterprises

13. Longtime Utah Jazz coach

14. Small sailboat

15. Actor Idris

16. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls

17. System that detects objects under water

18. Harsh, grating noise

19. Steward

21. A fencing sword

22. Infections

23. Actress Ryan

24. Sodium

25. Swedish castle

28. A lump of slime

29. African antelope

31. Insurance providers

33. Choosy

36. Ringworm

38. Unpolished

39. Drenches

41. Pant style

44. Son of Noah

45. Spiritual being

46. Upton Sinclair novel

48. Journalist Tarbell

49. Popular sports highlight show

51. Born of

52. Rich tapestry

54. S. China seaport

56. State of being unclothed

60. Surrounded by

61. Residue

62. Away from wind

63. Dried-up

64. Visionary

65. A very large body of water

66. Garden tools

67. Screen type

68. Ancient Scandinavian poet

29. One from the Big Apple

30. Genus of woolly lemurs

32. Songs to one's beloved

34. Indigenous person of N.E. Thailand

35. Supplemented with difficulty

37. Farewell

40. Investment account (abbr.)

42. One from Utah

43. Begets

47. A male child

49. Break apart

50. Brief appearance

52. Partner to "ooohed"

53. A light informal meal

55. Fabric with smooth, shiny surface

56. One billionth of a second

57. Ancient Italian-Greek colony

58. Close tightly

59. Mail out

61. Language

65. Computer characteristic

**CLUES DOWN**

1. Millisecond

2. Spanish city

3. A sudden very loud sound

4. "The Indiana Jones of beer"

5. Tin

6. Sea eagles

7. Volcanic crater

8. Type of coat

9. Women's apartments in Ottoman palace

10. Divulge a secret

11. Norwegian playwright

12. "It's a Wonderful Life" director

14. Poisonous perennial plant

17. 18-year astronomical period

20. Clothes

21. Places to sit

23. Family of regulator genes

25. New York ballplayer

26. Impressive in size or scope

27. Jacques \_\_\_, French biologist

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# Uxbridge & America’s “Inner Freedom Trail”

**BY PAUL M. PIWKO**  
*SPECIAL TO THE BLACKSTONE VALLEY TRIBUNE*

UXBRIDGE — New England would be an even better place if more people knew about the beauty, history, and culture of Uxbridge, Massachusetts - and that since Colonial times people in Uxbridge have cared about what life feels like. As America’s 250th approaches, the time is now to tell this story.

Like Andover to its north, Uxbridge has had a sincere interest in men-

tal health since before the Revolutionary War. Each town offered natural beauty, farms, faith, and the promise of new treatment practices to those who struggled with mental health in the 1700s. Each town can claim to be a cornerstone of the American mental health revolution and America’s Mental Health & Wellness Corridor.

By examining the history of innovation and national leadership in mental health that has emanated from Eastern Massachusetts and

the Blackstone Valley for 250+ years, the America’s Mental Health & Wellness series is holding up history in order to deepen a culture of wellness in the here-and-now. America’s Mental Health & Wellness Corridor was first discussed at a National Park Service event in 2022. Since then, the effort to create America’s Mental Health & Wellness Trail has received non-financial support from the Smithsonian’s Lemelson Center for Innovation and been discussed by the

Massachusetts Department of Travel & Tourism.

In September 2025, Chapter One of the America’s Mental Health & Wellness Corridor series launched on the Freedom Trail in Boston at the Old State House. “Patriot, Hero, Distracted Person: James Otis, Jr. and Mental Health in the Eighteenth Century” tells story of an American hero who is sometimes referred to as the Father of the Fourth Amendment. Yet, Otis struggled with mental illness and died by lightning

strike in the Andover countryside while in respite from the pressures of Colonial Boston and the Revolutionary War.

Andover’s role in the early-American mental health movement is beginning to be told. The granite threshold from the country home where Otis received care and died was recently recovered by the Andover Preservation Commission. With family members of Otis’s fellow Patriots John Hancock and Paul Revere having received care in Uxbridge, will 2026 be the

year when Uxbridge begins to celebrate its important place in America’s mental health movement – and deepen the region’s culture of wellness in the process?

Paul M. Piwko is a Milford resident, co-founder of the National Museum of Mental Health Project, and teaches at Boston University. His family has hiked along the Blackstone River, up King Philips’ Rock, and swam at West Hill in Uxbridge.

# Cornerstone Bank, Athol Savings Bank finalize merger

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank today announced the closing of its merger with Athol Savings Bank (ASB), effective Dec. 31, uniting the two long-standing community institutions. The completed transaction results in an expanded banking network that brings Cornerstone Bank’s full suite of digital services to the North Quabbin region while preserving ASB’s trusted local identity and five branch locations.

“As of today, our partnership is officially complete, and we are excited to move forward as one organization,” said Todd Tallman, CEO of Cornerstone Bank. “This merger strengthens our ability to serve customers with improved technology, expanded products and deeper community investment, while staying true to the values that define both banks.”

With the closing, Daniel J. Zona, former President and CEO of ASB, has begun his new role as President of Cornerstone Bank, succeeding the retiring Randal Webber. The Cornerstone Bank Board of Directors has also expanded to include four new members, including Zona, broad-

ening leadership representation across the regions the combined bank now serves.

“This is a meaningful moment for both banks,” said Zona. “Our teams share a strong commitment to customers, employees and the communities we call home. With the merger now finalized, we can begin fully delivering the enhanced services and opportunities that come with joining forces.”

All ASB employees have been retained, ensuring continuity for customers. Customers can expect ongoing communications and a smooth transition as Cornerstone and ASB align systems and expand access to digital banking tools, financial planning resources and new product offerings.

Luse Gorman, P.C. served as legal counsel for Cornerstone Bank while Piper, Sandler & Co. served as Financial Advisor. Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C. served as legal counsel for Athol Savings Bank.

About Cornerstone Bank

# Cornerstone Bank invests in enriching experiences for youth in foster care

NORTHBRIDGE — Cornerstone Bank has donated \$3,000 to the Rise Above Foundation to support its Third Annual Rise Above & DCF Sibling Fall Fest in Northbridge. The event creates a meaningful opportunity for siblings separated within the Massachusetts foster care system to reunite in a warm, welcoming environment designed for connection and joy.

The Fall Fest brings foster care siblings together for a day of activities, play and shared moments that are often difficult to create due to placement changes and geographic separation. Rise Above’s mission is to provide children in foster care with enriching opportunities that help restore a sense of normalcy, build confidence and strengthen emotional well-being.

“Children in foster care deserve moments of joy, connection and belonging,” said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. “We’re proud to support an organization that ensures siblings can stay connected and continue building memories together, even during challenging transitions.”

By helping make the Fall Fest possible, Cornerstone Bank continues its commitment to uplifting

local families and supporting partners that advance the wellbeing of children across Massachusetts. Cornerstone’s involvement reflects its broader community-first philosophy and belief in creating access to positive, formative experiences for all youth.

About Cornerstone Bank

Cornerstone Bank was formed in 2017, born of a long history of supporting the community, and providing a strong foundation to help people and businesses thrive. Serving Worcester County, Massachusetts, Cornerstone Bank’s local presence and community-based banking model enables a unique ability to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch. Cornerstone, which is

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

# WCS presents “12 Angry Jurors”

WHITINSVILLE — The Whitinsville Christian Drama Club is pleased to present “12 Angry Jurors,” a stage play adapted from Reginald Rose’s original teleplay, “12 Angry Men.”

This drama follows a jury of twelve people in a jury room as they deliberate the guilt or innocence of a young man accused of murder. It explores differing perspectives as the jurors debate the evidence, and one juror slowly sways the others to reconsider the case.

Performances are Jan. 9 and 10 at 7 p.m., and tickets are available at [whitinsvillechristian.org](http://whitinsvillechristian.org).



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Milford Federal Bank is proud to sponsor the Pawfect Life Rescue PAW of the WEEK!

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EDITOR

EDITORIAL

# Winter tests more than our roads

Winter in New England always arrives with a mix of anticipation and apprehension. Snow-covered fields and quiet mornings can be beautiful, but winter also tests patience, planning, and cooperation in ways other seasons do not.

Every year, the same challenges return. Roads must be cleared quickly and safely. Schools and municipal buildings must decide when conditions are too dangerous to operate as usual. Emergency responders must prepare for longer response times and more hazardous calls. Behind the scenes, public works crews, police officers, firefighters, and town administrators spend long hours making decisions that most residents never see.

Those decisions are rarely simple. Closing a road or declaring a parking ban helps plows do their work but inconveniences residents. Delaying school can help ensure student safety while creating childcare challenges for families. Every choice has tradeoffs, and none will satisfy everyone.

What winter reminds us, year after year, is how much local government matters. These decisions are not made by distant agencies or anonymous offices. They are made by neighbors serving on boards, working town jobs, or volunteering their time. In small towns like those across the Blackstone Valley, many of the people making winter-related decisions live on the same streets affected by them.

Winter also reveals the importance of personal responsibility. Clearing sidewalks, obeying parking bans, and slowing down on icy roads are not just matters of convenience. They are acts that help protect emergency responders, public employees, and fellow residents. When everyone does their part, even in small ways, the entire community benefits.

There is also a quieter side to winter that deserves attention. Colder months can be isolating, particularly for seniors and residents who live alone. Simple gestures such as checking on a neighbor, offering a ride, or sharing information about local resources can make a meaningful difference. Community strength is not measured only during emergencies but also in these everyday moments of care.

It is easy to grow frustrated during the winter. Snow piles up where it is least wanted. Schedules are disrupted. Travel becomes slower and more stressful. Yet winter also offers an opportunity to reflect on how interconnected small towns truly are. Few places rely on cooperation more than a New England community in January.

As another winter season unfolds, patience will be tested again. So will resilience. This region has weathered far harsher conditions than a stretch of cold or a few storms, not by accident, but through shared effort and understanding.

Winter does not ask for perfection. It asks for preparation, flexibility, and a measure of grace. If those qualities guide us through the months ahead, the season will pass as it always does, leaving behind lessons worth remembering long after the snow has melted.

# OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Blackstone Valley and beyond

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Laws are for you and me, not for them

To the Editor:

Did you know that Massachusetts’ wholesale natural gas price is 239 percent of the national average?

Thank you, Governor, for stopping two natural gas pipelines that would have saved the tax payers of Commonwealths on our gas bills. Our electric bills are 72 percent higher than the average rates in other states! Do you wonder why?

Did you know that just one natural gas pipeline to our region would have provided substantially more energy than our five wind turbine projects combined? And would have been cheaper. Trump paused all five wind projects. Too expensive.

Many electric and natural gas customers are now paying double what they paid last year, but Maura and the Dems are all about “affordability!”

Has everyone forgotten Biden “affordability?” Prices were up 18 per cent overall, housing was up 19 percent — making homes unaffordable, groceries up 20 percent, and gas was up 32 percent. And 20 million illegals competing for housing.

Did you know that our state government agencies do not follow their own Green Clean Climate regulations for reducing emissions from their fleet vehicles? The Commonwealth Beacon (CB), a leftist online news service, reported that “No state agency submitted reports to comply with a 2017 rule requiring cuts to the emissions from state-owned vehicles. Environmental regulators didn’t enforce the rule, either.” Of course they didn’t.

“Massachusetts agencies that own or lease at least 30 passenger vehicles, from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to the Department of Transportation, are compelled to reduce the pollution stemming from that vehicle fleet each year by specific amounts and submit reports to the Department of Environmental Protection [Mass DEP] in order to show compliance,” CB said.

But, guess what! “Mass DEP has no records of these reports and didn’t follow up with the relevant agencies to demand that data for each year going back to 2019, when the reports were first due, according to the court documents filed in the lawsuit the state brought against Exxon Mobil,” according to CB.

Way back In 2016, a court ruled that the “state needed to issue more specific stringent agency regulations in order to meet the [state’s own] 2050 climate commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.” Gov. Baker ordered new strict regulations for

agencies. The state agencies never complied.

In the Exxon lawsuit this year, “Mass DEP made the admission.” The state had sued Exxon, “accusing the company of deceiving the public and investors about the risks of climate change and its role in contributing to it.” Guess who filed that litigation? Comrade Healey, the then Attorney General.

Exxon tried to get “data and documents pertaining to Massachusetts’s vehicle fleet rule via discovery.” The court rejected their request. Exxon filed a public records request. The state denied that record request. Exxon sued. In March, they got a few documents. “Exxon, believing that the state was withholding additional information, pressed the state for more. That’s when, in defense of the state’s motion to dismiss the records case, DEP admitted that “no agencies had submitted reports under the fleets regulation.” Wait, what?!

The Conservation Law Foundation complained that they fought for these Global Warming Solutions Act regulations to ensure real climate action by agencies. “All levels of government are bound. When they’re ignored, it’s a step backward for the climate goals!” says the CLF. No one noticed and nothing happened to the climate.

Baker, who left the state to ruin the NCAA, signed an executive order to require the state’s fleet to be 100 percent zero-emission by 2050. Healey has spent millions of dollars for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The state will have to triple its annual rate of new charging systems by 2030 “to achieve its climate commitment of cutting pollution in half.”

Our state DEP took no action to require agencies to report their own compliance. In a deposition in the Exxon lawsuit, the DEP Deputy Director for Air and Climate programs admitted that “DEP has no documents showing any instances of “compliance verification or other enforcement actions in spite of the fact that no agency appears to have filed reports detailing the emissions of its vehicle fleet.”

No reports. By state agencies. Ever.

I am shocked. Are you? Laws are for you and me, not for them. They have refused to submit to an audit required by referendum law passed in 2024. Beacon Hill is terrified we will find out what they have done with our money.

BEV GUDANOWSKI  
UXBRIDGE

### “We interrupt our regularly scheduled programming...”

To the Editor:

I had prepared an exhaustive accounting of Pervert Hoover’s...I mean, President Trump’s...latest and most flagrant corruption, breaches of law, and aberrant behavior - including Jack Smith’s damning testimony that proved once and for all that Trump is guilty of conspiracy to defraud the United States in the Jan. 6 insurrection attempt - all of which are now on hold.

While I usually just laugh at Bev’s Bleating’s, the weekly right wing, religious cult claptrap from the Uxbridge misanthrope, her latest polemic really got to me. In brief, she blamed the shootings at Brown University on everyone and everything...except the availability of guns in this country. Bev would rather have us live in a hermetically sealed, guarded, and monitored Wardian case, where we are constantly in fear for our lives, than suggest that we do something about guns, and mental health. How Republican of her!

She did put some of the blame on DEI, because...well, because Republicans blame everything on DEI, immigrants, or Joe Biden and the Democrats. We have a failing economy, the highest unemployment in decades, millions with neither food nor health care, prices are through the roof, Trump and his family are grifting billions of dollars — how about those phantom ‘Trump cell phones’! - the rest of the world hates and distrusts us...but it’s all someone else’s fault. Bev, bless her heart, never has a complaint about any of that. She did give

a shout out to Ella Cook, one of the two fatalities at Brown, who just so happened to be white, Christian, and the vice president of Brown’s College Republicans. A coincidence, I’m sure. No mention of the other victim, Mukhammad Aziz Umurzokov, an aspiring neurosurgeon. Could it be because he isn’t white and Christian, therefore not even worth mentioning? Not even a ‘thoughts and prayers?’

Speaking of which, since when is it considered ‘mocking those who pray’ to declare that offering ‘thoughts and prayers’ is not enough response to the horrifying number of mass shootings in this country? Tell me, Bev, what good have all your ‘thoughts and prayers’ done? What good has your being ‘sanctified’ done for all those left dead or wounded? 44,000 gun deaths last year. No one cares if Christians pray — not your interminable-scapegoat ‘communists and socialists,’ nor atheists like me. We do care that all the “thoughts and prayers” in the world will never make any difference when a million alienated, mentally challenged with guns, are running around our country. And most of them are white, Christian, and American citizens. Meanwhile, Trump and RFK Jr. have cut funding for mental health and social services. The gun lobby owns our politicians. We are going to need a lot more “thoughts and prayers,” Bev! You know those kneepads Howie Carr sent you?

RICK BEVILACQUA  
WHITINSVILLE

### 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.

## New Year’s financial resolutions: Making them stick



FINANCIAL FOCUS  
**DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS**

As the calendar flips to a new year, millions of Americans pledge to improve their financial lives. But without a concrete plan, those well-intentioned resolutions often fade quickly.

Financial goals consistently top the list of New Year’s resolutions. A 2025 CFP Board study shows that financial resolutions are prominent, with saving more money (45 percent) and reducing debt (32 percent) ranking among the top three goals.

Unfortunately, most resolutions don’t last. A 2023 Forbes Health poll found that over half of people give up on resolutions by the four-month mark and only 1% make it the full year.

The challenge isn’t a lack of desire for change. People may set the same resolution year after year, revealing a disconnect between intentions and action. Or it may be that they try to tackle too many goals at once, or aim higher than is realistic, setting themselves up for disappointment.

Set smart financial goals. Before crafting your action plan, consider which financial priorities matter most to you. If you need ideas, here are some areas where you may want focus in 2026:

- Regularly review your financial goals and track progress toward meeting them
- Increase your 401(k) contributions or max out your IRA and/or HSA contributions
- Pay down debt strategically and negotiate lower interest payments
- Build an emergency savings fund of six to 12 months
- Save more consistently
- Be specific. Vague resolutions like “save more money” rarely succeed. Instead, it can help to make goals specific and measurable. For example, rather than making a resolution to “start an emergency fund,” commit to a specific goal, such as, “I will put \$100 a month into an emergency fund.”
- This shift from general to specific transforms wishful thinking into actionable steps. When goals are attainable, it’s easier to track progress and stay motivated.
- Find an accountability partner. Don’t go it alone. Having someone to check in with can help you stay on track. This could be a spouse, friend or family member who shares similar goals.
- Consider working with a financial advisor who can help you create a realistic plan, monitor your progress and adjust strategies as needed. A professional can provide expertise and accountability, making it easier to stay on track throughout the year.
- Start small and build momentum. Rather than overhauling your entire financial life all at once, focus on one or two priority areas. Identify where the largest gap exists between your current situation and where you want to be, then concentrate your energy there.
- Breaking larger goals into smaller, manageable actions makes them less overwhelming and more achievable. Each small win builds confidence and momentum for tackling the next challenge.
- The new year offers a fresh start and renewed motivation to improve your financial health. With specific goals, a solid action plan and the right support system, this could be the year your financial resolutions finally stick.



# Lanterns Along Main Street

There is a particular moment most evenings when the house settles into itself. The dishes are done, the day’s noise has burned off, and the television hums more out of habit than interest. It is in that quiet stretch that I find myself paying attention to small, almost unnoticed things. The kind of things you don’t put on a calendar or make plans around, but that somehow shape a day all the same.

One of those things is light. Not the bright kind. Not the glare from screens or headlights or store signs blinking at us from every corner. I mean the steady, ordinary light that shows up when it is supposed to. A porch lamp clicked on at dusk. A kitchen window glowing softly against the dark. The faint shine from a streetlight that has been standing in the same place longer than most of us have lived on the block.

I do not remember anyone ever talking about light when I was growing up. It was simply there, or it wasn’t. You flipped a switch, and life went on. But lately I’ve noticed how much comfort comes from knowing it will be there when you expect it.

On winter evenings especially, when the cold presses in early and the daylight gives up before it feels fair, those small lights do real work. They tell us someone is home. They tell us the day isn’t quite finished yet. They give shape to streets that would otherwise feel empty and unwelcoming.

I have walked through town many nights when the sidewalks were quiet and the stores long closed, and I have found myself slowing down without realizing it. There is something grounding about seeing the same lights you saw yesterday, and the day before that, and the year before that. The hardware store sign still glowing. The corner house still lighting the same window. The library’s exterior lamps still shining over the steps, even when the doors are locked.

It is not nostalgia exactly. It is steadiness.

So much of life now feels temporary. Apps update overnight. Buildings change names. Businesses come and go so fast that by the time you remember what used to be there, it has already been replaced by something else. In the middle of all that motion, there is comfort in the things that quietly stay put.

Light does that. It doesn’t ask for attention. It doesn’t demand praise. It simply

LANTERNS  
ALONG  
MAIN  
STREET  
By CHARLES

does its job. I think that is why I have grown more appreciative of routines as I have gotten older. Not exciting routines. Plain ones. The same walk. The same drive. The same chair by the window. These habits act like small lanterns of their own, marking time and place when everything else feels like it is rushing past.

There was a time when I thought routine meant giving up something. Youth, possibility, adventure. Now I see it differently. Routine is what gives those things a place to land. Without it, everything floats.

Even the people we rely on most often show up this way. The neighbor who always waves. The clerk who remembers your name. The librarian who knows where to find what you’re looking for without checking the computer. None of them make speeches. They just show up, day after day, like a porch light at dusk.

I suspect that is how communities really hold together. Not through grand gestures or big announcements, but through small, dependable acts repeated over time. Lights turned on when they are supposed to be. Doors opened when promised. People doing what they said they would do.

There is something reassuring about driving home after dark and recognizing where you are by the pattern of lights alone. The curve in the road marked by three houses close together. The long stretch of trees broken by a single lamp. The center of town announced not by noise, but by glow.

You know where you are. You know you belong there.

I don’t know when I started noticing these things. Maybe it happens slowly, without permission. Or maybe it happens the first time you realize how unsettling it feels when a familiar light doesn’t come on. When a house goes dark for good. When a storefront stays empty longer than expected.

That is when you understand how much those quiet, ordinary lights mattered all along.

So if tonight feels unremarkable, that might be because it is doing exactly what it should. The lights are on. The street looks the way it always has. The town is steady, at least for the moment. And sometimes, that is more than enough.

# Collision with tree claims Whitinsville man’s life

NORTHBRIDGE — On Monday, Dec. 29 at approximately 7:20 p.m., the Northbridge Police Department responded to a single-vehicle motor vehicle crash on Main Street at the intersection of North Main Street.

The sole occupant and operator of the vehicle was ejected and pronounced deceased at the scene. The

operator was identified as a 21-year-old male from the Whitinsville section of the Town of Northbridge.

Preliminary investigation indicates the vehicle was traveling westbound on Main Street at a high rate of speed when it left the roadway and struck a tree. Alcohol and speed are believed to have been contributing factors in the

crash.

The incident remains under investigation by the Northbridge Police Department in conjunction with the Central Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (CEMLEC) Accident Reconstruction Team, led by Sgt. Jeffrey White.

# Northbridge schools continue winter instruction as district moves into 2026

NORTHBRIDGE — With the calendar turning toward the second half of the school year, Northbridge Public Schools officials are continuing regular instructional programming while preparing for winter operations across the district’s schools.

According to information published by Northbridge Public Schools, the district serves students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, with schools operating on standard winter schedules following the December holiday break. District calendars posted online show no major structural changes to the academic year at this point, with regularly scheduled school days, professional development days, and school committee meetings continuing through January and February.

Enrollment figures reported to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education indicate that Northbridge

has maintained relatively stable student enrollment in recent years, with modest fluctuations typical of mid-sized Central Massachusetts districts.

Winter months typically require additional coordination between school administrators and the town’s Department of Public Works, particularly during snow events. District policies note that school delays or closures are communicated through established notification systems, including the district Web site and phone or email alerts to families.

The Northbridge School Committee continues to serve as the district’s governing body, overseeing policy decisions, curriculum standards, and budget planning. Meeting agendas and minutes posted on the town website show that committee discussions in recent months have included routine operational matters, approvals of warrants, and ongoing review of

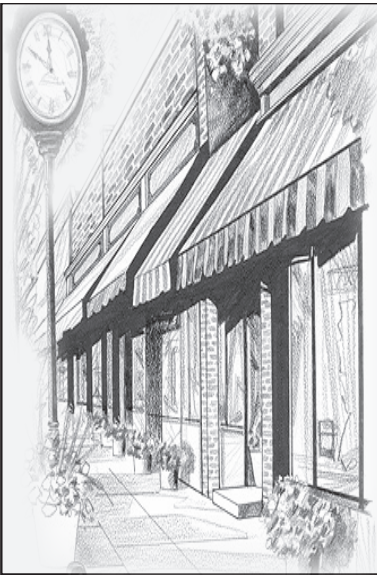
district needs, though no major policy shifts have been announced publicly as of this writing.

Families seeking updated information on school schedules, transportation, or weather-related notices are encouraged to monitor official district communications. The district’s Web site also maintains links to school calendars, committee agendas, and state reporting data for public review.

As winter progresses, school officials typically shift attention toward planning for the following academic year, including budget preparation and staffing considerations. At this time, no formal announcements regarding changes to programming or school operations have been posted.



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Courtesy

Congratulations to the following students who were selected as November Students of the Month at St. Joseph School — Pre-K 3-year-old: Natalia Santos; Pre-K 4-year-old: Cameron LaFlash; Kindergarten: Robert Thrun; Grade 1: Kaya Sudol; Grade 2: Rayna Parslow; Grade 3: Kamila Biela; Grade 4: Callum Bergman; Grade 5: Luke Zeglen; Grade 6: Cameron Tremblay; Grade 7: Evelyn Macko; Grade 8: Neli Kuznecki. Students are awarded Student of the Month for their outstanding exemplification of Religion, Respect, and Responsibility. Keep up the great work!



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Courtesy

It was a bittersweet New Year's Eve at the Douglas Police Department, as we said goodbye to an incredible member of our team. After working alongside our officers and dispatchers for nearly three years, today marks our Jail Diversion Co-Response Clinician Danielle Machado's last day. We thank Macahdo for her dedication, compassion, and unwavering support to our community! Your impact will be felt long after you are gone! We wish you nothing but success and happiness in your next chapter! Photo courtesy of the department's Facebook page.



FIND YOUR  
BEST NIGHT'S  
SLEEP TODAY

FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

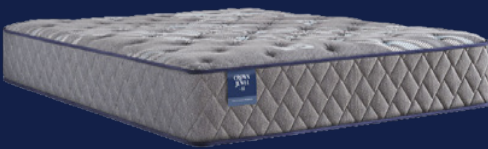
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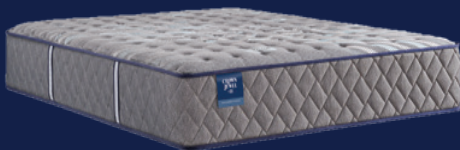
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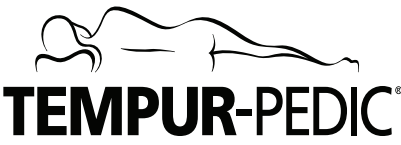


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# 100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

The month of January has been home to many historical events over the years. Here’s a look at some that helped to shape the world in January 1926.

- The first radio station in Ireland, 2RN, begins broadcasting on January 1.
- The worst flooding in the German city of Köln occurs on January 1. A torrent of water rises 35 feet, forcing roughly 50,000 people to evacuate their homes.
- General Theodoros Pangalos declares a state of emergency in Greece and assumes dictatorial powers on January 3. General Pangalos had become Prime Minister of Greece in June 1925 after orchestrating a coup d’état.
- Great War cemeteries

in France are submerged on January 7 due to ongoing downpours affecting various areas throughout Europe. The same rains flood the London subway system as well.

- Gracie Allen and George Burns are married by a justice of the peace in Cleveland on January 7. The newlyweds ultimately gain renown as the comedy duo Burns and Allen.
- Twelve-year-old Prince Nguyen Phúc Thụy is crowned Emperor of Vietnam on January 8. The prince’s father, Emperor Khai Dinh, died two months earlier on November 6.
- Herman, Henry and Hillel Hassenfeld incorporate the Hassenfeld Brothers company on January

8. The company initially manufactures school supplies but eventually begins to make toys under the name “Hasbro.”

- Twenty Mexican rebels open fire aboard a train traveling from Guadalajara to Mexico City on January 9. The bandits escape with the equivalent of \$150,000 USD.
- The four-masted schooner Prinz Valdemar capsizes on January 10, blocking all ship traffic in and out of Biscayne Bay and the harbor of Miami, Florida. All aboard are rescued unharmed, but two ocean liners are prevented from leaving the harbor.
- United States Representative John W. Langley of Kentucky resigns from Congress on January

11. Langley’s resignation comes after the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed his jail sentence for violating prohibition laws by illegally selling alcohol to New York-based bootleggers with ties to organized crime.

- Michael Bond is born in Newbury, Berkshire, England, on January 13. Bond would survive a 1943 air raid in Reading during World War Two before authoring his first book, A Bear Called Paddington, in 1958.
- Twenty-year-old Ayn Rand departs Russia by train on January 17. Rand’s early life in Communist Russia heavily influenced the philosophy reflected in many of her more notable works.

- Voting rights activist Indiana Little leads several hundred Black men and women on a march to the Jefferson County registrar’s office in Birmingham, Alabama, on January 18. Little is arrested for disturbing the peace and would not be registered to vote for another 30 years.
- Multiple ships near New York City are threatened by a gale on January 20. The U.S. luxury liner SS President Roosevelt completes a rescue of the British freighter SS Antiope on January 28 after initial reports indicating the latter ship sank in the storm.
- Chaplin Court Treatt and Stella Court Treatt complete the first successful journey across Africa

by motorcar on January 24. The duo began their journey one year, four months and 11 days before completing the trip in Cairo, Egypt.

- Speaking on behalf of the British Empire Cancer Campaign during a luncheon on January 25, British surgeon Sir Berkeley Moynihan says that cancer of the tongue is traceable to two things, including smoking.
- Thousands of mourners line the streets of Brussels to watch the funeral procession of Belgian national hero and cleric Cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier on January 28. Cardinal Mercier was known for his staunch opposition to the German occupation of Belgium during World War I.
- Violette Neatley Anderson becomes the first African American woman to be admitted to practice law before the U.S. Supreme Court on January 29.
- The Chamber of Deputies passes “Law Number 100” on January 31. The law grants Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini the right to issue judicial norms without prior consultation with the Italian parliament.



## Math Blocks

Fill in the missing blocks with numbers between 0-20.  
The numbers in each row add up to the totals on the right.  
The numbers in each column add up to the totals on the bottom.

		11	34
2		15	27
	5		20
29	18	34	

8	5	7
51	10	2
11	3	20

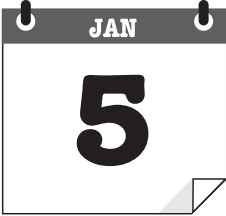
Solution

## Get Scrambled

Unscramble the words to determine the phrase.  
**KMEA A SERVRENOTAI**

Answer: Make a reservation

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY



**1781:** Richmond, Virginia, is burned by British naval forces during the American Revolutionary War.

**1875:** The opera house the Palais Garnier opens in Paris.

**1911:** Kappa Alpha, the oldest Black fraternity, is founded.

## People FACT:

This term for restaurant workers typically refers to those who wait on tables.

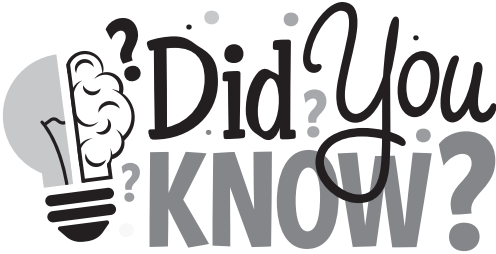
Answer: Servers

## NEW WORD GRATUITY

a tip given for service

## How they say that in...

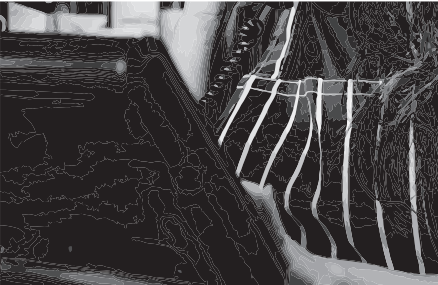
**English:** Food  
**Spanish:** Comida  
**Italian:** Cibo  
**French:** Nourriture  
**German:** Essen



When it comes to the busiest day of the year for the restaurant industry, Mother’s Day tops the list for bookings and footfall.



## Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Restaurant host



## MONTH

continued from page A1

Kathleen-Sugrue-Richards (make sure to provide your Valentine's Name and your choice of Messages of Love). To start the process, visit the Douglas Common Preservation Society, Inc. on Facebook and click on the link or print out the flyer with form to enclose with your check. Once your form and payment are received, a personalized heart (or hearts) will be prepared for you and hung from the Douglas Common gazebo for the month of February.

Whether your valentine is your girlfriend or boyfriend, husband or wife, child or grandchild, parent or grandparent, or a special friend, why not be part of the fun, support a good cause, and declare your love for your valentine during the Month of Love at the Douglas Common. This year we have added a new message, "I Miss You," -- perfect as a memorial message. We hope to have even more hearts decorating the gazebo with Messages of Love this year! They will add to this February's Hearts and Roses decorations at the Common! Come out and enjoy the Common and its

February beauty! We've added a few new surprises!

The Douglas Common Preservation Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving, maintaining and beautifying the Town-owned Douglas Common. Made up entirely of volunteers, it relies on donations for funding to accomplish its projects and activities. As always, 100% of all donations are tax-deductible and are used to benefit the Common and its activities. We hope you will support us during the Month of Love and have some fun in the process!

## PLUMMER PLACE

Home of the Northbridge Senior Center

The following events will take place at Plummer Place, Home of the Northbridge Senior Center. We are located at 20 Highland St. in Whitinsville. Telephone: (508) 234-2002. Northbridge residents have priority for all programming and events.

### Regular Programs:

Mindful Meditation with Kelly  
Every Thursday at 9:30am  
Writing Your Way with Lori  
Thursday, January 22nd at 2:00pm  
Scrabble  
Monday, January 12th at 9:30am  
Book Club  
Wednesday, January 21st at 10:30am  
Dull Men's Club  
Tuesday, January 27th at 9:30am

### Special Events and Programs:

Looking for a New Health/Wellness Perspective for the New Year?

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*Featured Listing*  
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*Webster Lake -*  
**302 Killdeer Island**

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

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**WEBSTER - 24 COOPER RD**  
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**Webster Lake Waterfront - 31 Bayview!!**

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**Webster Lake - 53 Colonial Rd**

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# Local food pantries prepare for continued winter demand

REGION — As winter continues across Central Massachusetts, local food pantries and social service organizations serving the Blackstone Valley remain focused on meeting ongoing community needs during what is typically a demanding season.

Organizations such as People First Food Pantry of Uxbridge (508-278-5506), open Tuesdays from 5-7:30 p.m. and Wednesdays from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 6:30-8 p.m. at 19 Douglas St., and the Northbridge Food Pantry (774-246-6410) at 20 Highland St. in Whitinsville, open Tuesdays 10 a.m.-noon, Thursdays 1-3 p.m. and the last Saturday of the month from 10 a.m.-noon, provide food assistance to residents facing food insecurity, including families, seniors, and individuals experiencing temporary financial hardship. These organizations rely on a combination of donations, volunteers, and partnerships with regional food banks to maintain regular distribution schedules.

Other area pantries include St. Denis Church in Douglas, open Mondays from 4-6 p.m. and Wednesdays 1-3 p.m.; the Second Congregational Church, also in Douglas, open weekly on Tuesdays at 2:30 p.m.; Faith Fellowship Church in Uxbridge, open the second and fourth Tuesday of every month from 6-8 p.m.; and the Veterans Food Pantry in Millbury, open Tuesday through Thursday from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Winter months often bring increased challenges for households managing higher heating costs, weather-related work disruptions, or fixed incomes. Nonprofit agencies across Massachusetts regularly note that colder months place added pressure on food assistance programs.

In addition to food distribution, some local organizations offer referrals to fuel assistance, housing support, and other social services through state and regional programs. Town Web sites in several Valley communities provide links to these resources, directing residents to appropriate agencies for help.

Pantries typically encourage residents who may need assistance to reach out directly, as eligibility requirements and hours of operation can vary. Many organizations also welcome community support through food donations, monetary contributions, or volunteer service, particularly during winter when staffing can be more difficult due to weather conditions.

Residents seeking assistance or looking to contribute are advised to consult official nonprofit websites or town social service pages for the most up-to-date information regarding hours, donation needs, and contact details.

# Public safety officials stress winter safety

REGION — As winter weather continues to affect travel and daily routines across the Blackstone Valley, local police and fire departments are emphasizing preparedness, safety, and routine operations during the colder months.

Departments in communities including Northbridge, Uxbridge, Sutton, Douglas, and Whitinsville regularly issue winter safety reminders related to roadway conditions, snow emergencies, and cold-weather hazards. Information posted by the Northbridge Police Department and the Uxbridge Police Department notes that residents are encouraged to follow posted parking bans during snow events to allow plowing and emergency access.

Fire departments across the region also highlight seasonal fire safety concerns, including the safe use of space heaters, proper disposal of fireplace ashes, and the importance of working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Winter months historically see an increased risk of residential fires due to heating equipment and alternative heat sources, though I do not know of any recent incidents that prompted new advisories.

Municipal fire departments, including the Northbridge Fire Department, maintain regular training schedules year-round to ensure readiness for medical calls, fire suppression, and vehicle accidents, which can increase during icy conditions. Departments also coordinate closely with public works crews during storms to respond to emergencies and ensure access to roadways.

Police officials typically remind residents to allow extra travel time during snow or ice events and to reduce speed when road conditions deteriorate. Emergency responders also caution against attempting to clear hydrants or roadways in active storm conditions without proper equipment or training.

Residents are encouraged to monitor official department communications, including town websites and verified social media pages, for updates on weather-related advisories, parking restrictions, and emergency notifications throughout the winter season.

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