



STURBRIDGE VILLAGER

©2026, Issue #8

Free by request to residents of Sturbridge and Holland

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Thursday-Friday, February 26-27, 2026

Ice carving winner announced

STURBRIDGE — On Feb. 14, the Friends of Sturbridge Trails (FrOST) held its sixth annual ice carving competition on the Riverlands open space property. Twelve blocks of ice were taken out with 10 blocks returned and set out along the Grand Trunk Trail section of the Riverlands. In addition to viewing the ice sculptures that had a theme of “celebrating our 250th Anniversary,” visitors to the Ice carving display were also treated to two professional ice carvers demonstrating their craft, and to keep it festive, there was a warming barrel and hot chocolate available. Ice carvings set out along the trail were lit by candles, presenting a nice evening stroll.



Courtesy Photo

Calib Allen proudly holds the “Golden Chisel” his family won for their ice carving “Eagle with American Flag.”

The judges favorite for “best of theme” was the “Eagle with American Flag,” carved by the Allen Family. They were presented the “Golden Chisel” and a \$25 gift certificate to Deep Roots Distillery, who also provided the hot chocolate, Thankyou Deep Roots.

The Friends would like to thank the Sturbridge DPW for plowing out

the trail and parking lot, Sturbridge Police for the light stand and assistance, Old Sturbridge Village for use of their parking lot for parking, the Sturbridge Tourist



Association for event funding, and the crew of FrOST Volunteers led by Jen Scherer for pulling this all together.

The Friends of Sturbridge Trails is a 501 3c non-profit open to anyone who would like to support trails in Sturbridge. If you have questions or wanting to help in the organizational effort please email us directly at: Froststurbridge@gmail.com More information on FrOST or to “like us” can be found on our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Sturbridge-Trails-476149822433894/> and To learn more about trails in Sturbridge and membership information and link visit the Sturbridge Trails website: <http://www.treksturbridge.org/>

Author Chuck Collins to speak at Charlton Public Library

CHARLTON — On Tuesday, March 31 at 6 p.m., author Chuck Collins will speak about his latest book *Burned by Billionaires: How Concentrated Wealth and Power Are Ruining Our Lives and Planet*. He is a senior scholar at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C., and a co-founder of Wealth for Common Good.

Collins is an expert on economic inequality in the US, and has

pioneered efforts to bring together investors and business leaders to speak out publicly against corporate practices and economic policies that increase economic inequality.

This event is in collaboration with: Merrick Public Library in Brookfield, Charlton Public Library, Pearle L. Crawford Library in Dudley, Oxford Public Library, Joshua Hyde Library in Sturbridge, and Merriam-Gilbert Public Library in West Brookfield.

Charlton Library will hold a book discussion on Tuesday, March 10 at 6 p.m. for anyone interested in reading and discussing the book before the author talk.

Everyone is welcome, no registration is required. Additional parking is available at the Charlton Town Hall and at Charlton Elementary School on Burlingame Road.

Charlton Public Library is located at 40 Main St.

Southbridge Cultural Council presents 2026 awards

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Southbridge Cultural Council, a local agency, is part of the overall grant program of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, which provides allocations to each of the 351 cities and towns of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in support of cultural activities. The Massachusetts Cultural Council receives its funding from the Massachusetts Legislature and from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Southbridge Cultural Council ranked second highest after the city of Worcester for the 2026 grant cycle funding in the South-Central area of Worcester County. All grant applications for 2026 are initially approved online by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Then the 2026 applicants receive the final acceptance for funding from the Southbridge Cultural Council for the 2026 cycle which was \$24,700.

The 2026 grant applications receiving partial or full support are:

Christine Higginbottom, "Home Garden Workshop on Growing and Storing Onions"; Richard Hamelin, "Colorful Clay Tile Relief Presentation"; Zack Combs, "African Crocodile River Music." Seema-Jayne Kenny, "Your Tree Begins Here: Learn Family Ancestry"; Michelle Wilson, "Michelle - evil gal - Wilson Performance"; Bernadette Meade, "Petals on Main Streetscapes - 250th Anniversary, Spring thru Winter"; Robin Oherin, History of Protest Music - Its Part in Peaceful Protest"; Alexandra Burpee, "Traveling Petting Zoo"; Garine Arakelian, "A Whale of a Time With Puffer Fish"; George Sateriale, "Magic With George"; Aaron Larget-Caplet, "Revolutions in Music - Celebrating USA 250"; Elizabeth Silvia, "Catnip Junkies Live in Concert"; Delvena Theater Company, "Mangia, Meatballs and Murder"; Paula Bradley, "Finding Her Voice - Women in Early Country Music"; Henry Lappen, "Henry the Juggler"; Alexandra Burpee, "The Zoo Show"; James J. Manning, "Stomp, Chromo & Read"; Ricardo Frota, "Ecology of Sound"; Michael Bent, "Abrakidabra Summer Reading Show"; Leslie Havens, "Quintessential Brass Concert"; Bridget Nault, "Badger and Nault Old Time and Traditional Songs"; and Sarah Clay & Company, "Day Dream."

Old Sturbridge Village Maple Days return for the season

STURBRIDGE — Old Sturbridge Village is open during the winter months with many seasonal programs, workshops, and special events happening each week. In 2026, extended hours begin just in time for school vacation week on Wednesday, February 18th with the start of the Village’s annual Maple Days. The museum will be open Wednesday through Sunday, 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

During Maple Days on February 18th through March 15, visitors can explore the historic Village and watch as costumed historians demonstrate the entire sugar-making process, from tapping the trees to “sugaring off.” Learn how maple sugar was used in early New England and why it was more common than maple syrup. Step inside historic homes and interact with interpreters as they cook period foods using maple products, watch the tinner and the cooper making maple-related items, and much more.

Guests can stop by the Miner Grant Store and the Ox & Yoke Mercantile to purchase a variety of maple-themed items, including syrup, candy, books, soaps, lotions, and more!

Maple Days are included with general daytime admission. The Village is open 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. Guests are encouraged to reserve tickets in advance for their date of arrival. For a limited time, Feb. 14 through 22, general daytime admission tickets



are buy one get one half off with code LOVEHISTORY.

Tickets and more information can be found online at

www.osv.org/event/maple-days.

St. Anne – St. Patrick’s Calendar Raffle celebrates Lucky Month

STURBRIDGE — St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish is celebrating the month of March with a St. Patrick’s Day Calendar raffle. One lucky winner will be drawn each day. The winning ticket will be reentered for more chances to win. Raffle tickets are \$10 each.

The calendar features four \$100 prizes drawn every Saturday in March as well as several random cash prizes throughout the month. On St. Patrick’s Day, the lucky winner will receive \$500.

Other prizes include gift cards to St. Anne’s Gift Shop, Tutti Quanti, Napoli’s Pizzeria, Elm Street Café, Big Bunny Supermarket, Nova’s Restaurant Holland, Publick House, and tickets to Entertainment Luxury Theater.

Raffle tickets may be purchased in the St. Anne Gift Shop

and in the St. Anne – St. Patrick office. Proceeds benefit St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish.

St. Anne - St. Patrick Parish is an active parish community. It offers daily Mass for worship, religious education, and community ministries. It welcomes visitors to St. Anne Shrine, the new Memorial for the Unborn, the Hall of Saints, the Russian Icon Exhibit, the Votive Chapel, the Generations Statue, and the Angel of Hope Monument. Our pilgrims feel at peace walking the ground, including the Stations of the Cross and the Holy Stairs. And weather permitting, pilgrims also have access to a picnic grove. The Daily Rosary is recited at 3 p.m. in the St. Patrick Chapel, and weekend Masses are celebrated in its outdoor pavilion in the summer. Its religious gift shop is open every day from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Brimfield to mark 250th anniversary of Independence

BRIMFIELD — Save the date! On Saturday, June 13, a community-wide celebration marking the 250th anniversary of our nation’s freedom will take place in Brimfield.

In recognition of this year’s historic milestone, a full day of remembrance and celebration is planned. All are welcome to attend

the day’s events, which include the following: Revolutionary War themed cemetery tours, a ceremony at the town common gazebo, a parade, and fun-filled festivities at the Brimfield Winery. The evening will close out with a spectacular fireworks display.

Additional details and updates will be available through the Friends of Historic Brimfield event Web site, www.fohbrimfield.org. Tax-deductible donations can also be made in support of this celebration through this website, and in gratitude, donors will be recognized in the event program. Donations can also be mailed to: Friends of Historic Brimfield, P.O. Box 52, Brimfield, MA 01010 with “Spirit of Brimfield” in the memo.

This event is currently being sponsored by the Massachusetts Army National Guard and Classic Hits 97.7 FM. If you or your company are interested in any level of corporate or business sponsorship, please visit the event website at www.fohbrimfield.org. Additional volunteers are needed for both planning and to help with activities during the event, or if you are interested in putting a float in the parade, contact Friends of Historic Brimfield at (413) 239-0288 for more information.

Be sure to save the date for this celebration of the founding of our country! More information will follow.

Southbridge Lions Club hosting annual Texas Hold ‘Em Poker Tournament

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Southbridge Lions Club is set to host its highly anticipated annual No Limit Texas Hold ‘Em Poker Tournament, on Saturday, March 7. The event will take place at Maqui’s, located at 61 Chestnut St., Southbridge.

Poker enthusiasts are encouraged to register early, as participation is limited to the first 150 players. Same-day registration will be available at the door starting at 4 p.m., though early registration is strongly recommended. The tournament officially kicks off shortly after 5 p.m., with appetizers served to attendees. A \$100 donation secures

players \$8,000 in chips, and competitors will be vying for \$2,500 guaranteed first-place. Additionally, for every 10 players beyond the first 30, extra prize placements will be awarded. All prizes will be paid via money orders. Participants must be at least 18 years old to enter the tournament.

Proceeds from the event will benefit individuals in need within the local community, reinforcing the Lions Club’s commitment to service.

For more details on playing or volunteering, contact Russ Labarge at 774-230-1624 or Wayne Boiteau at 774-230-1982.

REAL ESTATE

Charlton \$795,000, 44 Hycrest Rd, Patel, Shailesh A, and Patel, Nayana S, to Asante, Emmanuel, and Asante, Adeline. \$725,000, 57 Richardson Corner Rd, Little River Rt, and Ciesla, Michael L, to Little River Farm T, and Peterson, Ronald V. SOUTHBRIDGE \$650,000, 96 Sayles St, Ledbetter, Aurelia, and Ledbetter, Karl, to Catacombs 1 LLC. \$88,000, 325 Ashland Ave #2, Henderson, Karen L, to 325 Ashland Avenue Rt, and Sfikas, Peter. STURBRIDGE \$607,500, 51 Fiske Hill Rd, Central City Prop LLC, to Naicker, Monish, and Spring, Janine C. \$368,000, 175 Leadmine Rd, Simpson, Matthew J, to Sokol, Nicholas J, and Sokol, Sara C.

VILLAGER ALMANAC

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Saturday: 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (May 25 will be our last open Saturday until Labor Day) Sunday: Closed

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Tuesdays 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Friday Closed

visit www.townofcharlton.net or more information.

Individual offices may vary

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For library hours please check

www.charltonlibrary.org

POLICE DEPARTMENT (248-2250)

Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For emergencies, dial 911

FIRE DEPARTMENT (248-2299)

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..... (508) 248-5971 or (508) 987-0326

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1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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Weekdays 9:00-4:30 and Sat. 9:00 -12:00

STURBRIDGE 508-347-6463

Weekdays 8:30 – 5:00 and Sat. 9:00 -12:00

BRIMFIELD: 413-245-3451

Weekdays: 9:00 – 4:30 and Sat. 9:00 -12:00

WALES: 413-245-9808

Weekdays 8:30 – 12:30 and 2:00 – 4:30 and

Sat. 9:00 – 12:00

CHURCH LISTINGS

• **Central Baptist Church**

256 Main St., Southbridge, MA 01550

Tel 508/764-6365; Worship 10:00 A.M.

• **Charlton Federated Church**, 64 Main St., 508- 248-

5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. Summer worship is

9:30 a.m. www.fed-church.org

• **Charlton Baptist Church**, 50 Hammond Hill Road,

248-4488, www.charltonbaptist.org,

Sunday worship 10 a.m.

• **Charlton City United Methodist**, 74 Stafford St. 248-

7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org

Sunday worship and Children’s church 10am

• **St. Anne St. Patrick Church**, 16 Church St., Fiskdale

(508) 347-7338

www.stannestpatparish.com

Saturday Vigil Mass at 4 pm, Sunday 8 am, 10 am, 12

noon, Youth Mass (September to May) 5 pm. Daily

Mass Mon - Thurs 7:30 and 10 am, Fri and Sat 7:30 am

• **Elm Street Congregational Church**,

61 Elm Street, Southbridge, Ma 01550

Phone: 508-764-8085 • Sunday service 10:00 am

Pastor Kathryn Light

• **Faith Baptist Church**,

515 Dennison Drive, Southbridge

Phone number 508-764-6132,

Worship Service: Sunday 10:00 a.m.

• **St. Joseph’s Church**, 10 H. Putnam Ext, 248-7862,

www.stjosephscharlton.com, Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30

p.m., Sunday Mass 8 a.m., Sunday Family Mass 10

a.m., Sunday LifeTEEN Mass 5 p.m., Weekday Mass

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 a.m.

• **Wayside Church**, 6 Haggerty Road, 248-5144

• **Assemblies of God Southern New England District**

Headquarters, Route 20, 248-3771, snedag.org, Office

hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

• **Living Word Church of Charlton**, 10 Main Street -

Grange building 1st Floor, Charlton, Ma 01507, Pastor

Craig Bellisario, (508) 233-8349

Sunday Service 10:00am.

www.livingwordcharlton.com

info@livingwordcharlton.com

• **New Life Fellowship A/G, SNED Chapel**,

307 Sturbridge Road, Rt. 20, Charlton, MA,

Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.

• **Federated Church of Sturbridge and**

Fiskdale - 8 Maple St. Sturbridge, 774-304-1021

www.sturfed.org

Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.

• **Bethlehem Lutheran Church-**

345 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566

Phone 508-347-7297

Web: www.bethlehemsturbridge.org

Services - Sunday 9:00 am

Pastor Dan Purtell

• **Holland Congregation Church**

“Where the Bible is preached.”

11 Sturbridge Road, Holland, 413-245-9926

Hollandchurch.org

Sunday Service @ 10:00 am

Pastor Dan Maketansky

• **Holy Trinity Episcopal Church**

446 Hamilton St., Southbridge, MA 01550

Phone: 508-765-9559

Web: www.holytrinitysouthbridge.org

Sunday Service 11:00 am

Pastor Dan Purtell

• **St. John Paul II Parish**

279 Hamilton St., Southbridge

Rev. Carlos Ardila, Pastor

Weekend services Saturday 4 p.m.,

Sunday 8 a.m., 10 a.m., and noon

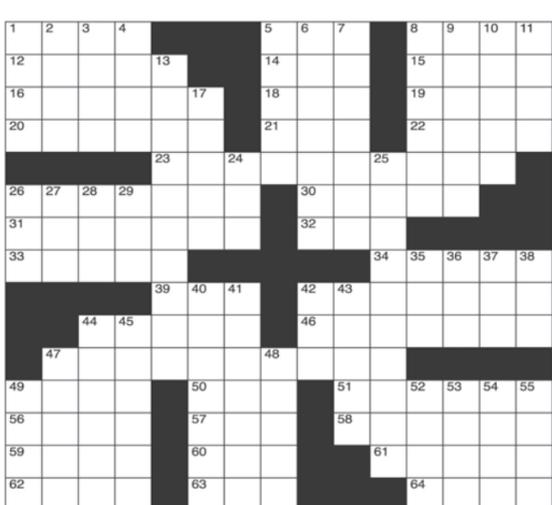
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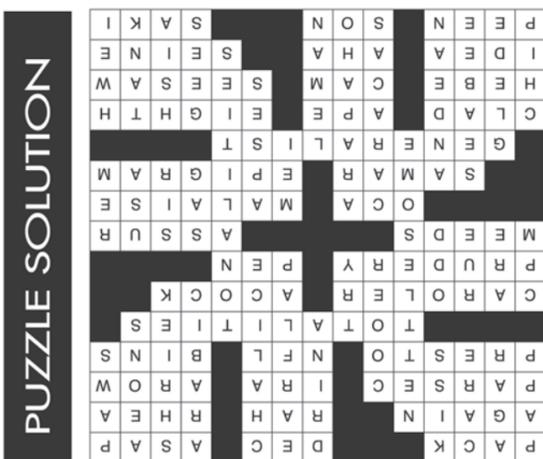


CLUES ACROSS

- 1. What travelers must do
- 5. Calendar month
- 8. Hopefully quickly
- 12. Once more
- 14. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
- 15. “Cheers” actress Perlman
- 16. Astronomy unit
- 18. Savings vehicle
- 19. Get your ducks in this
- 20. Right away
- 21. Popular sports league
- 22. Containers
- 23. Entreties
- 26. One who wassails
- 30. Turned-up position
- 31. Extreme modesty
- 32. Writing utensil
- 33. Rewards (archaic)
- 34. Ancient capital
- 39. S. American wood sorrel
- 42. General discomfort
- 44. Philippine island
- 46. A witty saying
- 47. One who summarizes
- 49. Covered in
- 50. Mimic
- 51. Henry was a notable one
- 56. Daughter of Hera and Zeus
- 57. Retired NFLer Newton
- 58. Playground equipment
- 59. Concept
- 60. Satisfaction
- 61. Fishing net
- 62. Hammer end
- 63. A father’s male child
- 64. Japanese drink

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Off-Broadway figure
- 2. Gelatinous substance
- 3. Concern
- 4. “Lick It Up” rockers
- 5. Serbian river
- 6. Part of a hat
- 7. Bowl-shaped drinking vessel
- 8. Semitic language
- 9. Utter a shrill cry
- 10. Long times
- 11. Animal parts
- 13. Causing annoyance
- 17. Amorous talker
- 24. Attempt
- 25. Harmonic effects
- 26. Cost per mile
- 27. They _
- 28. Bitterly regret
- 29. Not even
- 35. A way to drop
- 36. Title of respect
- 37. World leader
- 38. Georgia rockers
- 40. National capital
- 41. Great Plains people
- 42. Duck-sized dinosaur genus
- 43. Architectural recesses
- 44. Member of U.S. Navy
- 45. Mountainous
- 47. Kite bird
- 48. Sweetheart (archaic)
- 49. Popular snack made of potato
- 52. 70s songsters The Bee _
- 53. SE China port _men
- 54. Something to fill up
- 55. League of Legends character



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Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale Irish Feast coming March 16

STURBRIDGE — A Sturbridge tradition returns just in time for your St. Patrick's Day celebration. The Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale will host its annual Irish Feast on Monday, March 16, at the historic Publick House Restaurant, inviting the community to gather for good food, good company, and a good cause.

Irish Feast will benefit both the Federated Church and The Center of Hope Foundation, Inc., a Southbridge-based nonprofit that supports people with disabilities and their families from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, helping them access resources, services, and opportunities to live meaningful, fulfilling lives. "We're fortunate to part-

ner once again with the Publick House, which makes this evening possible year after year," said event chair Ken Benson. "This dinner has always been about community, and we're especially proud that it will also support the important work being done by The Center of Hope right here in our region." Pastor Rev. David Cote added, "An Irish

Feast is about more than corned beef and cabbage. It's about neighbors sitting down together, sharing a meal, and supporting organizations that reflect our shared values of care, inclusion, and compassion." Guests will enjoy a buffet-style Irish dinner featuring corned beef and cabbage, boiled potatoes, carrots and turnips, dinner rolls and Irish soda bread, a choice of beverage, and a cupcake for dessert. Dinner will be served in two seatings: The early seating will take place from 4:30 - 6 p.m., while a later seating happens from 6:30 - 8 p.m. Adult tickets are

\$18, and children ages four to 12 are \$7. Tickets must be purchased by March 15 as no tickets will be sold at the door. Tickets will be available Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon starting February 13 in the Federated Church of Sturbridge parlor, 8 Maple Street, where you may use cash, check, credit/debit card, or Venmo.

The church website at sturfed.org and Facebook page both offer payment links and QR codes for those wishing to purchase tickets using PayPal. You may also purchase tickets electronically using Venmo

at @Federated-Church. Please include your address, the number of meals you wish to purchase, and your preferred seating time. Time permitting, tickets purchased by Venmo will be mailed to the address provided. Late orders will be held at the door. For more information or to purchase tickets, contact the Church Office at 774-304-1021 or Ken Benson at 774-

230-3848. The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale joyfully celebrates Christ's presence and God's grace in our lives. Learn more at sturfed.org or email churchoffice@sturfed.org.

Local residents named to Simmons University Dean's List

BOSTON — The following local residents have been named to the 2025 fall semester dean's list at Simmons University in Boston.

- * Isabel McLam, Charlton
- * Jessica Hennessey, Fiskdale
- * Isys Patterson, Wales

To qualify for dean's list status, undergraduate students must obtain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher, based on 12 or more credit hours

of work in classes using the letter grade system. About Simmons University Located in the heart of Boston, Simmons is a respected private university offering nearly 50 majors and programs for undergraduate women and graduate programs open to all on campus, in blended formats or entirely online, in nursing and health sciences, business, communications, social work, public health, library and information science, and more. Founded in

1899, Simmons inspires a culture of education, connection, and action through high-impact learning with engaged faculty, an immersive community that forges lifelong networks, and career-centered programs that accelerate professional success. The result is a Simmons experience that prepares graduates to thrive as they launch and advance in their careers. For more information, please visit www.simmons.edu.

Family Dining & Gift Guide
Too Busy to Cook? Ask your favorite local restaurant if they offer dine-in or take-out! Treat yourself to a nice dinner out anytime! Restaurant gift cards make perfect hostess gifts! Call Mikaela at 774-200-7308 or email mikaela@stonebridgepress.com to advertise on this page.

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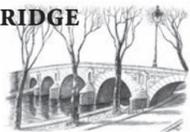
Friday's Child
Heily Age 16 Registration #5217
Heily is a bright and engaging teenager who demonstrates remarkable resilience and an impressive ability to adapt to new environments. She brings creativity into many aspects of her life and is able to express herself thoughtfully and confidently. Heily enjoys creative activities such as arts and crafts, baking, and experimenting with hair paint, which allows her to showcase her individuality and imagination. Music is another important outlet for Heily, and she enjoys listening to her favorite songs to relax and express herself. She also enjoys being out in her community and appreciates opportunities to stay connected and involved. Heily has a deep love for animals and is especially caring and gentle with them, often showing compassion and responsibility in their care. She is a personable and warm young person who cares deeply about the people in her life and values meaningful relationships. With the right support and encouragement, Heily has the potential to continue thriving, growing her creativity, and building strong connections with a loving, permanent family.
<https://www.mareinc.org/child/22549428086>
If you're at least 18 years old, have a stable source of income, and room in your heart, you may be a perfect match to adopt a waiting child. Adoptive parents can be single, married, or partnered; experienced or not; renters or homeowners; LGBTQ+ singles and couples. As an adoptive parent, you won't have to pay any fees, adoption from foster care is completely free in Massachusetts.
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PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER
BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

A small-town welcome still matters

In our corner of Massachusetts, it does not take long to notice when something new arrives.

A fresh sign goes up along Route 20 in Sturbridge. A storefront light flicks on again in Southbridge. A family unloads a moving truck on a quiet side street in Charlton. Word travels quickly here, not through social media alone, but through conversation. At the post office. In the coffee line. At a Friday night game.

We are towns that value familiarity. We know which diner opens early. We recognize the teachers who have taught generations of local children. We can trace family names back decades, sometimes centuries. That continuity is a source of pride.

But continuity only thrives when it leaves room for welcome.

In recent years, our communities have seen change. New housing developments. Businesses that reflect shifting tastes. Families relocating from busier cities, drawn by good schools, open space and a slower pace. Some changes feel gradual. Others feel fast. It is natural, in towns with deep roots, to feel protective of what we have built.

Yet the strength of a small town has never been in standing still. It has been in absorbing new energy without losing its character.

Think of the businesses that define our town centers today. At one time, each of them was "the new place." Someone took a risk. Someone signed a lease. Someone wondered whether the community would show up. And over time, because neighbors gave them a chance, those businesses became woven into daily life.

The same is true of families. Every long-time resident was once the newcomer. Every child who now feels rooted here once walked into a classroom for the first time, unsure of the faces around them.

A community's tone is set in small moments. A wave from across the street. An invitation to join a youth team or a civic group. A few minutes of conversation at a town event. These gestures cost nothing, but they shape how a place feels.

Welcome does not mean surrendering standards or abandoning traditions. It means confidence. It means knowing that the values we cherish are strong enough to be shared. When we greet new residents warmly, when we encourage new businesses, when we take the time to explain how things work in our towns, we are not weakening our identity. We are reinforcing it.

Small towns across the Commonwealth compete every day for families, for investment, for vitality. School enrollment, local commerce and volunteer boards all depend on people choosing to plant their lives here. If we want vibrant Main Streets and thriving classrooms, we need to ensure that those who arrive feel they have found not only a house, but a home.

The measure of a community is not only how well it preserves its past, but how graciously it shapes its future.

In Sturbridge, Southbridge and Charlton, we have always prided ourselves on neighborliness. This season, as new faces continue to appear along our roads and in our school parking lots, perhaps the simplest civic act we can offer is the oldest one.

A handshake. A hello. A genuine welcome. In a small town, that still goes a long way.

Letter submission policy

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

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

OPINION

Unlock the full potential of your 401(k)

Your 401(k) is one of the most powerful tools for securing your financial future. The question is: Are you using it to its full potential?

Here are some strategies to help you maximize its benefits:

- Earn your employer's match. It's a good idea to contribute as much as you can afford to your 401(k) plan. (In 2026, you can put in up to \$24,500, or \$32,500 if you're 50 or older. If your plan allows, there's also a "super catch-up" contribution of \$11,250 for people aged 60 to 63, for a total contribution limit of \$35,750). At least put in enough to earn a matching contribution if one is offered. Otherwise, you're shortchanging yourself. For example: Your employer matches 50 percent of your contribution up to \$5,000. If put in \$8,000, your employer's 50 percent match is \$4,000, and you're leaving \$1,000 "on the table."

- Give your plan a raise. When your income increases, consider increasing contributions to your 401(k). When you get a bonus or a tax refund, you could use some or all of that to boost your retirement savings.

- Evaluate the Roth option. When you invest in a traditional 401(k), you contribute pre-tax dollars, lowering your taxable income that year. Your earnings grow tax-deferred and are taxed when you withdraw. If your employer offers a Roth 401(k), you contribute after-tax dollars, so your taxable income doesn't drop that year. However, withdrawals in retirement, contributions, and earnings alike, are generally tax-free. (Employer matching contributions and related earnings remain taxable.) If you expect a higher tax bracket in retirement or want to diversify tax treatment for flexibility in retirement, consider the Roth option. In 2026, the Roth option must be used for catch-up contributions if you earn more than \$150,000 and you are 50 or older. Consult your tax advisor before deciding.

- Build an appropriate investment mix. You may have



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multiple investment options in your 401(k). The driving principle early on is growth so your plan can fund a long retirement. But growth-oriented investments are naturally riskier than fixed-income vehicles. When starting your career, you may prefer a portfolio weighted toward aggressive growth, as you have years to recover from downturns. Nearing retirement, though, consider shifting to a more conservative mix. A financial advisor can help you

choose an appropriate mix at different stages, based on your risk tolerance, time horizon and goals.

- Keep your plan intact. At times, you may feel a financial pinch that leads you to consider taking out loans or early withdrawals from your 401(k). However, this can cause you to incur taxes and penalties and will likely slow the growth needed to help reach your retirement savings goals. Taking steps to prepare for unexpected expenses, such as building an emergency fund containing three to six months' worth of living expenses, can help you avoid dipping into your 401(k). You may also be able to find other ways to access cash.

By following these steps, you can unlock the full potential of your 401(k) and position it as a cornerstone of your retirement income.

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

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The knowledge that never makes the manual

LANTERNS ALONG MAIN STREET By CHARLES

There is a certain kind of knowledge that never makes it into a manual.

You learn it by watching. By listening. By standing quietly off to the side while someone who has done a thing for a long time does it without explanation. No checklist, no diagram. Just habit, muscle memory, and a rhythm built over years.

I think about that kind of knowledge more now than I used to.

It shows up in ordinary places. The person who knows exactly how much force it takes to close a stubborn door without slamming it. The clerk who can tell, just by the sound, whether a register is about to jam. The neighbor who can look at the sky and know, with surprising accuracy, whether you ought to bring the chairs in tonight.

These are not skills anyone brags about. They are simply carried, quietly, until one day they're gone.

I noticed this recently while trying to fix something simple. Simple, that is, for the person who used to handle it. I followed the instructions. I watched a video. I did everything "right," and still ended up with a result that worked, but not well. It functioned, but it lacked the ease of the original.

That's when it occurred to me that what was missing wasn't information. It was judgment.

In small towns, we are surrounded by people who carry that kind of judgment. They know when to tighten something just a little more, and when to leave it alone. They know when to speak up at a meeting, and when silence does more good. They know which traditions matter, and which ones we only keep because we always have.

Much of this knowledge never gets passed along formally. It transfers sideways, through example. A younger person

watches an older one. A newcomer notices how things are done. A habit forms, not because it was required, but because it made sense.

The trouble is, this kind of knowledge doesn't announce when it's about to leave. One day the familiar person retires. Or moves. Or simply stops showing up. And only then do we realize how much was being held together by someone's steady presence.

I don't think this is something to panic about. Towns have been losing and gaining quiet experts forever. What matters is whether we notice them while they're still around.

There's value in paying attention to how things are done, not just that they get done. In asking why a process works the way it does. In recognizing that experience has a texture that can't always be replicated by instructions alone.

At home, this shows up, too. We all have ways of doing things that make sense to us but might look odd to someone else. Over time, households develop their own unwritten rules. You don't realize how many there are until someone breaks one accidentally.

Living alongside other people, whether in a family or a town, means learning these invisible systems. It also means being patient when someone hasn't learned them yet.

I suppose what I'm really saying is that wisdom often arrives quietly and leaves the same way. If we're too busy, we miss it entirely. If we're paying attention, we can catch pieces of it before it goes.

And maybe pass a little of it along, not in a lecture, but in the way we do things day after day. That's usually how it's been done around here, and it's worked pretty well so far.

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Contact Mikaela Today

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Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale announces 2026 Lenten services schedule

STURBRIDGE — The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale has announced its 2026 schedule of Lenten services, starting with Ash Wednesday, and culminating in the Easter Sunday celebrations. Services are held at the church located at 8 Maple Street and the community is welcome to attend.

The Rev. David W. Cote will officiate the services, which begin on Feb. 18 with a 6:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday service and continue through Easter Sunday on April 5.

Refreshments will be served in Fellowship Hall following each of the Sunday services.

On April 3, Good Friday, the congregation will gather in the Chapel at noon for meditation and prayer. An ecumenical Stations of the Cross service will also be held at St. Anne's Shrine, 16 Church St., Fiskdale.

"On Easter Sunday, the community is invited to join us at 6:00 a.m. as we celebrate with a special sunrise service at the original Baptist Meetinghouse, which is now located

at Old Sturbridge Village," says Rev. Cote. "Following the sunrise service, we will return to the Federated Church Meeting House sanctuary at 8 Maple St. for our 9:30 a.m. Easter morning service."

The sunrise service at Old Sturbridge Village is an ecumenical service, with local faith communities participating, including Bethlehem Lutheran Church (Sturbridge), Brookfield Congregational Church (Brookfield), Elm Street Congregational Church (Southbridge), Holy Trinity Church (Southbridge), and St. Anne/St. Patrick Catholic Church (Fiskdale). Area residents who wish to attend are advised to enter the Meetinghouse by way of the security gate at the top of the parking lot, dress appropriately for the weather and wear sturdy walking shoes. Food and drink are not permitted, except for bottled water. The Village will not be open for touring during this event and restrooms will not be available.

The Lenten season includes the following services:

- February 18 - 6:30 p.m., Ash Wednesday
- 22 - 9:30 a.m., First Sunday of Lent March
- 1 - 9:30 a.m., Second Sunday of Lent
- 8 - 9:30 a.m., Third Sunday of Lent
- 15 - 9:30 a.m., Fourth Sunday of Lent
- 22 - 9:30 a.m., Fifth Sunday of Lent
- 29 - 9:30 a.m., Palm Sunday April
- 1 - 6:30 p.m., Maundy Thursday
- 3 - 12 p.m., Good Friday, Meditations and Prayer (Federated Church)

Ecumenical Stations of the Cross (St. Anne's Church)

- 5 - 6 a.m., Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service at Old Sturbridge Village
- 9:30 a.m., Easter Sunday Service (Federated Church)

The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale joyfully celebrates Christ's presence and God's grace in our lives. Community members are always welcome to join in worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Services are also live-streamed on the church's Facebook page. For more information, call 774-304-1021 or visit sturfed.org.

Webster First Federal Credit Union achieves top rankings in 2025

WORCESTER — Webster First Federal Credit Union has been recognized as a leader in Massachusetts lending, earning multiple top positions in Banker & Tradesman's "Top Lenders of 2025" rankings. These achievements highlight the institution's strong contributions to both commercial and multi-family lending statewide.

- 2025 Rankings Highlights
- #1 in Number of Commercial Loans
 - 31 commercial loans closed
 - #1 in Multi-Family Lending – Dollar Volume
 - \$37,141,050 in multi-family loans
 - #1 in Multi-Family Lending – Number of Loans
 - 22 multi-family loans closed
 - #2 in Commercial Lending – Dollar Volume
 - \$45,544,150 funded
 - #4 in Non-Purchase Consumer Loans – Dollar Volume
 - \$67,264,864 in HELOCs and refinances
 - #8 in Non-Purchase Consumer Loans – Number of Loans
 - 205 non-purchase transactions processed

Senior Vice President of Commercial Lending, Bryan Regele, credited the lending team and leadership with the institution's ongoing success, commenting, "These achievements reflect the support of our leadership, the collaboration of our team, and a shared commitment to serving our members with practical, thoughtful solutions. We look forward to continuing this work and strengthening the value we provide to our members and the communities we serve."

Webster First's recognition comes as the credit union continues to expand its services and support for local businesses and homeowners. The institution's consistent performance across a range of lending categories demonstrates its reliability and unwavering commitment to meeting the financial needs of its members.

About Webster First Federal Credit Union

Webster First is a member-owned financial institution serving communities across Massachusetts. With a focus on outstanding service and comprehensive financial solutions, the credit union offers a variety of personal and business banking products, including checking accounts, mortgages, and commercial loans. Webster First is dedicated to member satisfaction and community support.

What does it take to become a Friend?

STURBRIDGE — Is being a Friend important? "Of course!" would probably be your first thought, and today what we're talking about is being a Friend of the Joshua Hyde Public Library in Sturbridge and yes, it's very important! And what does it take to become a Friend you may ask? Respond to the annual membership drive! <https://bit.ly/FriendsofJHPL>

For those of you that currently use the library you obviously know the fundamentals; get a library card and borrow books for free. But many people know the library is much more than that, offering everything from book discussion groups to technology help, museum passes to puzzle swaps and so much more. Many parents have enjoyed bringing their children of all ages to programs ranging from baby story time to teen cupcake decorating. These offerings have not only filled the immediate need or desire, but cultivated friendships made possible through shared interests.

Libraries are an amazing foundational resource for our community with the basics covered by tax dollars, but the bulk of the programs offered are funded by the Friends of the Joshua Hyde Library, a non profit organization run by volunteers in our community. By becoming a member of the Friends and pay-

ing your annual dues (Individual \$15, Family \$25, Senior Citizen \$10) you will unlock a number of benefits and if you are able, opportunity to share your time and talents as well.

Benefits? You will be the first to know about upcoming library events by email, you will be able to reserve museum passes up to two weeks in advance, the ability to purchase presale tickets to events, a subscription to the Friends quarterly newsletter, and of course your dues are tax deductible. But most importantly you will be contributing to the wonderful programming that is offered to the community through the library.

Opportunities? Support the Friends with their fundraising activities! For some people this is through their annual membership dues, which is less than the cost of one book, and when you consider how many books you may take out of the library each year, you know what a bargain that is. Others are able to donate additional funds which are greatly appreciated. Some people are able to donate their time and talents to fundraising activities which is also paramount to their mission. For example, you could join the Friends book sale team. There is no weekly commitment and the hours are very flexible. Just jump in when you can and help with a variety of tasks

which include receiving book donations, sorting, and organizing books into categories, prepping for book sale days and on sale days helping excited book lovers find their next favorite read. Volunteers are also needed to help with our mini golf fundraiser, which is an annual event which turns the library into a mini golf course. You can showcase your talents by sponsoring a hole or just help the weekend of the event. These events help us raise funds to support the library and are a lot of fun for everyone! But the biggest fundraiser each year is the annual membership drive. Help spread the word by telling everyone you know who uses the library about this great opportunity to support the Friends of the Joshua Hyde Library. Even though the membership fee is low, the benefits are so high for the community. This is an easy way to help.

You can complete your membership online by visiting <https://www.sturbridgelibrary-friends.org/get-involved> or simply stopping by the library and asking for a membership form. If you love the library and all it offers our community, please consider becoming a Friend in whatever capacity you are able. If you have any questions please visit www.sturbridgelibraryfriends.org.



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Cornerstone Bank announces three executive promotions

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank has promoted three senior leaders whose expanded roles will directly support business customers, strengthen internal operations and enhance the employee experience across the organization. Daniel D'Amico, Donna Tibbetts and Tracey Jeffries have each assumed new responsibilities aligned with the bank's strategic priorities.

"These promotions reflect our commitment to strong leadership in every part of the organization," said Todd Tallman, president and CEO of Cornerstone Bank. "Dan, Donna and Tracey play critical roles in how we serve our customers, support our associates and position the bank for continued success."

Daniel D'Amico has been promoted to Senior Vice President, Commercial Services Manager. With nearly 13 years at Cornerstone Bank and 20 years in the banking industry, D'Amico leads the Commercial Services team and works closely with business clients to deliver tailored banking and lending solutions that support growth and long-term success. In his free time, he



Daniel D'Amico

Courtesy Photo



Donna Tibbetts

Courtesy Photo



Tracey Jeffries

Courtesy Photo

Worcester County Sheriff's Medical named Wellpath Facility of the Year



Courtesy

Sheriff Lewis Evangelidis presents a congratulatory plaque to the WCSO Medical Team for being named 2025 Wellpath Facility of the Year.

WORCESTER — The Worcester County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) is proud to announce that the Worcester County Sheriff's Office Medical Team, the Office's subcontracted medical provider, has earned the title of Facility of the Year by its parent company, Wellpath. The award recognizes excellence in leadership, innovation, and the delivery of high-quality correctional healthcare.

Sheriff Lewis Evangelidis noted that shortly after taking office in 2011, he decided to privatize the WCSO Medical Department, believing that it was one of the best decisions of his tenure.

"Subcontracting medical services through Wellpath significantly reduces liability for the Commonwealth while allowing us to provide a higher level of care to those in our custody," Evangelidis said.

The recognition reflects a year of sustained progress under the leadership of Anjali Richard, Health Services Administrator, and Kayla Carlo, Assistant Health Services Administrator. Together, Richard and Carlo built upon the facility's strong foundation by strengthening workplace culture, refining clinical and operational processes, and expanding access to care through enhanced interdisciplinary coordination.

Anjali Richard commented, "This award highlights the hard work, resilience, and teamwork demonstrated every day by our

staff, as well as the strong collaboration with the Sheriff's Office in supporting a safe, respectful, and effective environment for care."

Wellpath is an international provider of contracted healthcare services for correctional facilities and other high-risk environments. The company employs more than 8,000 professionals and serves nearly 300 facilities across the United States and Australia, providing care to approximately 200,000 patients each day.

The WCSO medical team includes physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, and other healthcare professionals who provide 24/7 medical coverage. The medical unit is housed within the Sheriff's Office Intake and Medical Unit, a modern, purpose-built facility that opened in 2021 and was designed to centralize intake, medical screening, and long-term care.

Key accomplishments contributing to the Facility of the Year designation include securing a \$25,000 UMass Medical School grant to expand ophthalmologic services and vision care, as well as partnering with MCPHS University to enhance dental health education through student involvement. The facility also prioritized workforce development by establishing a nurse-led onboarding committee, implementing shift huddles and a staff Idea Board, achieving zero first-year

staff turnover, and maintaining 100 percent compliance with annual training requirements.

Additional partnerships with Anna Maria College allowed 27 Bachelor of Science in Nursing students to complete clinical observation hours. Collaboration with UMass hospital case managers further improved continuity of care for patients returning from hospital stays. Operational enhancements included the creation of an Infirmary Committee to support compliance with updated NCCHC standards and the launch of regular interdisciplinary meetings with non-Wellpath mental health partners.

"This award affirms the meaningful progress we have made over the past decade to strengthen the operations of the Worcester County Sheriff's Office," said Lewis Evangelidis. "I'm especially proud of the strong partnership we have built with our healthcare team and the professionalism our corrections staff demonstrates in working alongside them to support those in our care."

Through consistent results across patient care, workforce engagement, partnerships, operational processes, and performance outcomes, Worcester County Jail Medical exemplifies Wellpath's Five P's and is a deserving recipient of the Facility of the Year award.

enjoys travelling with his wife; their goal is to visit all 50 US states before they turn 50 years old. D'Amico also serves on the board of the Rainbow Child Development Center, is the former President of the Worcester Young Businessmen's Association and on the Business Partners Committee at the Worcester Art Museum.

Donna Tibbetts has been promoted to Vice President, IT Service Delivery. With 32 years at Cornerstone Bank and more than 40 in the banking industry, Tibbetts provides strategic oversight of technology service delivery, ensuring secure, reliable and efficient systems that support customers, associates and regulatory requirements. In her free time, she is a loving and devoted grandmother to five grandkids. Tibbetts enjoys volunteering at the Habitat for Humanity Playhouse Build and Jacob Edwards Library. She has also worked with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program.

Tracey Jeffries has been promoted to Vice President, Talent and People Strategy. With eight years at Cornerstone Bank and 20 years of experience in human resources, Jeffries leads talent acquisition, development and people programs that strengthen the workforce and reinforce the bank's culture. In her free time, Jeffries enjoys spending time with her family, camping and watching her daughter play soccer. Jeffries volunteers often at St. Johns and El Buen Samaritano food pantry. She also attends multiple financial literacy events throughout the year.

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 cornerstonebank.com or call 800-939-9103.

Public invited to Opacum Land Trust's Annual Meeting Breakfast

PALMER — Do you enjoy hiking, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, or other outdoor recreation? Are you interested in protecting local land, water, and wildlife? Are you curious about Opacum Land Trust, land conservation, or how you could get involved? Join Opacum Land Trust for their Annual Meeting Breakfast. All are welcome to this free event! This free breakfast will be held on Saturday, March 21 at Pathfinder High School, Panek St, Palmer, from 10 a.m. to noon.

In addition to local conservation updates, attendees will hear from guest speaker and Director of Rural Affairs of Massachusetts, Anne Gobi. Director Gobi will speak about her involvement with the MILUS (Massachusetts



(Right) Opacum member Jim Newland and Opacum Vice President Toni Uliana, both of Monson, share a laugh during last year's annual meeting.

Courtesy

Integrated Land Use Strategy) Project and PILOT (Payments in Lieu of Taxes) commission and how they relate to conservation in the state.

Please RSVP by March 6. You can RSVP on our Web site at <https://www.opacumlt.org/events>, through the Facebook event, or call the Opacum Land Trust office at (508) 347-9144.

About Opacum Land Trust

Opacum Land Trust is a regional, non-profit land conservation organization that protects land, water, and wildlife for current and future generations. Founded in 2000, Opacum currently protects over 4,000 acres of land and is actively working to protect more land across south-central Massachusetts.

Reach out to us at Opacum Land Trust, PO Box 233, Sturbridge, MA 01566; info@opacumlt.org, (508) 347-9144 and check out our website for events, properties you can visit, and ways to get involved at www.OpacumLT.org

Retired Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy Director & husband lead 'Bikes for Change' road trip

ROCKVILLE, Md. — A chance breakfast conversation in Gardner has turned into a life-changing mission for the North Quabbin community, led by a familiar face in local education. Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN, who recently retired as the Academy Director of the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy in Charlton (October 2025), has traded the classroom for the open road to deliver hope on two wheels.

Alongside her husband, Joseph, the retired director spearheaded a "Road Trip to Deliver Bikes for Change," a mission fueled by the overwhelming support of the Bay Path community, local residents, and the spirit of global Bayanihan (a core Filipino cultural value representing communal unity, work, and cooperation to achieve a common goal without expecting anything in return.)

A legacy of service continues: Partnership of Purpose, 2012–2026

Having spent over a decade guiding future nurses at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, Dr. Bolandrina is no stranger to humanitarian efforts. While her retirement in late 2025 marked the end of an era for nursing education, it signaled the beginning of a new "tour of duty" alongside her husband.

The 2026 project began when the Bolandrinass visited Bruce and Mary Willoughby, the retiring owners of O'Neil's Bicycle Shop in Gardner. Faced with hundreds of used bicycles that needed a new home, Joseph reached out to Bikes for the World (BfW), a non-profit they have supported for years and have helped to send shipments to the Philippines (coordinated with Bikes for the Philippines).

This mission is the continuation of a shared passion; both Joseph and Gretheline have been volunteers with Bikes for the Philippines since 2012. For 14 years, the couple has worked in tandem—collecting, organizing, and delivering donated bicycles from their local Massachusetts community to the BfW headquarters. Their long-standing partnership has been instrumental in ensuring that hundreds of bicycles have reached the



Gretheline Bolandrina with Yvette Powell Hess of Bikes for Change.

Philippines through Bikes for the Philippines, transforming the lives of students and workers across the archipelago. Hundreds more for the rest of the world through Bikes for the World.

Powered by the Bay Path community The mission was a true team effort. The Bay Path community—comprising former students, faculty, and local friends—helped

the Bolandrinass reach their fundraising goals. A key celebration and fundraiser held on Gretheline's 59th birthday at Kuru Kuru Ramen shop in the Worcester Public Market provided the necessary funds to rent the 20-foot U-Haul truck required for the long haul to Maryland.

"I have seen how second-hand bikes enrich lives," Joseph explained. "From helping a student graduate to giving a small-scale entrepreneur a way to reach the market, these bikes are tools for independence."

Navigating the "Plan B" route The trek to the Bikes for the World headquarters in Rockville, Md., tested the couple's resolve. The duo spent hours navigating around New York's low-clearance parkways.

"Every time we saw a 'NO TRUCKS' sign on a parkway on-ramp, we had to scramble for a Plan B," Joseph shared. Despite adding hours to their transit time, the couple arrived safely to deliver 55 bicycles to BfW leaders Yvette Powell Hess and Taylor Jones.

A commemorative honor In recognition of their years of advocacy, Yvette presented Joseph with an Official Bikes for the World 2005–2025 Commemorative Coin. The Bolandrinass plan to keep the coin as a family heirloom, eventually passing it to their grandson, Tidus, to inspire the next generation of service.

For the retired Academy Director, the journey was a reminder that while she may have stepped down from the helm of the practical nursing Academy, her mission to heal and help the world is far from over.

"Life is best shared," the couple reflected. "We are tired, but we have a grateful grin that isn't going away."

Joshua Hyde Public Library to host lecture on "Remarkable Women of the American Renaissance"

STURBRIDGE — The Joshua Hyde Public Library in Sturbridge will present the first of two spring illustrated lectures on Remarkable Women of the American Renaissance on Wednesday, March 4 at 2 p.m. in the Library Meeting Room. Lecturer Ellen Duzak will focus on Louisa May Alcott and her mother and sisters in this talk. The author of Little Women and her family were dedicated to abolition, social reform, education for all, and a deep love for the humanities and arts.

The second lecture, on Wednesday, April 1 at 2 p.m. in the Joshua Hyde Library Meeting Room will focus on Margaret Fuller, a powerful influence on the rights of women movement in its beginnings in the 1800's. She was also a great influence on Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nathaniel Hawthorne and her frequent presence in Concord gave her access to the Alcott women.

These illustrated lectures are part of a four-part series which provides a detailed picture of women who made great contributions to the American Renaissance of the 1800's. The series is supported in part by a grant from the Sturbridge Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass

Cultural Council, a state agency. Two more lectures will be presented on Oct. 7 and Nov. 4 on the Peabody Sisters and Women of the Old Manse.

The project shines a light on the little-known stories of inspiring women of the American Renaissance. It was a time when the unique voice of America developed and, with it, our national culture, ethics, literature, and philosophy. Transcendentalism, the rights of women, the anti-slavery movement, the desire for education and enlightenment for all citizens pulsed strongest in New England, especially in nearby Concord. The men at the forefront of this time are well-known to all. Less familiar, but equally important are the remarkable women whose voices and lives the lectures will explore.

Ellen Duzak is retired Professor of Psychology at Becker College where she taught for 20 years. Once retired, Ms. Duzak taught a wide variety of courses for the Worcester Institute for Senior Education (WISE) at Assumption College for 10 years. In recent years, she has given talks at local libraries and other organizations.

The talks are all free and open to the public.

Saint Joseph School Student Council puts faith into action with winter drive



Courtesy

Student Council Officers from Saint Joseph School present donated coats, hats, scarves, and gloves to Webster Police Chief Michael Shaw. The items will be distributed through the Webster-Dudley Food Share.

WEBSTER — At Saint Joseph School, Student Council is designed to help students become thoughtful leaders who serve their community. Elected annually by their peers, Student Council members represent the voice of the student body and support school life through outreach projects, student-led initiatives, spirit activities, buddy programs, and school dances. The goal is not only to build leadership skills, but also to form students who understand that leadership includes responsibility and service.

Student Council members are guided by Beth Boudreau, Principal, Mary Ann Weaver, Teacher Moderator, and Rev. Richard Polek, Pastor and Headmaster.

That mission was especially visible when the Student Council partnered with the Webster Police Department for its annual coat, hat, and glove drive. With support from school families, the Council collected 40 coats, 48 hats, 36 scarves, and 90 pairs of gloves, making it the most successful drive the school has held to date. Students presented the donations to Webster Police Chief Michael Shaw. The items will be distributed through the Webster-Dudley Food Share to help local families stay warm during the winter months.

School leaders noted that the drive's success reflects both the generosity of families and the commitment of stu-

dents who organize and lead service projects that benefit others.

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St. Anne – St. Patrick Lenten mission to focus on St. Augustine

FISKDALE — St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish will hold its annual Lenten Mission on March 9, 10, and 11 in St. Joachim's Chapel, 16 Church St., Fiskdale (Sturbridge). All presentations begin at 7 p.m.

This year's mission focuses on St. Augustine, one of the great Fathers of the Catholic Church and the patron of St. Anne – St. Patrick's parish religious community, the Augustinians of the Assumption, also known as the Assumptionists.

Father Salvatore Musante, A.A., pastor at St. Anne – St. Patrick, explains that the parish religious community are members of the broader Augustinian family to which

Pope Leo XIV also belongs.

The Lenten Mission features three presenters who are current or past professors at Assumption University in Worcester. The university is sponsored by the Assumptionists.

On March 9, Father Richard Lamoureux, A.A., will present "Augustine, Desire: the Heart of Prayer." He is adjunct professor in the Art and Music Department and has served as provost at Assumption University. With a specialty in Italian Renaissance art and thought, he has taught, extensively researched, and written about Michaelangelo.

On March 10, Marc LePain, Ph.D., pro-

fessor emeritus, will address the question: "What does it mean to confess?" He has taught the Bible, Foundation of Western Civilization: Religion and Philosophy, Asian Traditions, and Dante's "Comedy" at Assumption University.

Visiting Assistant Professor of Theology, Father Roger Corriveau, A.A. will present "Augustine and That Inside Job of Yours" on March 11.

A reconciliation service will be held on the last day of the Lenten Mission, Wednesday, March 11. All are welcome to participate in the mission. For more information, please call the parish offices

at 508-347-7338.

St. Anne - St. Patrick Parish is an active parish community. It offers daily Mass for worship, religious education, and community ministries. It welcomes visitors to St. Anne Shrine, the new Memorial for the Unborn, the Hall of Saints, the Russian Icon Exhibit, the Votive Chapel, the Generations Statue, and the Angel of Hope Monument. The Daily Rosary is recited at 3 p.m. in the St. Patrick Chapel, and weekend Masses are celebrated in its outdoor pavilion in the summer. Its religious gift shop is open every day from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

LEGALS

SALES OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Under G.L. c.255 Sec.39A Notice is hereby given by Cruise Control Transportation Inc.

Pursuant to the provisions of Under G.L. c.255 Sec.39A that on or after March 6, 2026, at Cruise Control Transportation Inc. The following motor vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

VEHICLE MAKE:

2011 BMW 5 Series
VIN # WBAFU7C52BC780855
Last Registered Owner:
Papee Paye
36 Honeysuckle Rd
Worcester Ma, 01607-1824

VEHICLE MAKE:

2016 Ford Escape
VIN # 1FMCU9GX7GUA24951
Last Registered Owner:
Kayla Jensen
67 Catharine St Apt 2
Worcester Ma, 01605

VEHICLE MAKE:

2006 Honda Accord
VIN # 1HGCM56306A047128
Last Registered Owner:
Michael Adu-Gyamfi
104 Elm St
Southbridge Ma, 01550

VEHICLE MAKE:

2013 Infiniti G37 Sedan
VIN # JN1CV6AR6DM764757
Last Registered Owner:
Ria Chanel Lovel
2 Elton St APT 4H
Brooklyn NY, 11208

VEHICLE MAKE:

2011 Chevy Impala
VIN # 2G1WG5EK2B1269114
Last Registered Owner:
Aria Alyssa Mayo
362 Leicester St
Auburn Ma, 01501-1441
Timothy Fortuna
124 Old County Rd
Holland Ma, 01521-3218

VEHICLE MAKE:

2016 Toyota Corolla
VIN # 2T1BURHXGC712372
Last Registered Owner:
Reginald James-Ray Rushin
26 Caron St APT 1
Southbridge Ma, 01550-2612

VEHICLE MAKE:

2002 Ford Explorer Sport Trac
VIN # 1FMZU77E62UC81802
Last Registered Owner:
Lori Reid
49 Pleasant Valley DR #205
Worcester Ma, 01605-1574

VEHICLE MAKE:

2006 Dodge Ram 1500
VIN # 1D7HU18206S551924
Last Registered Owner:
Deusdedit Dos Santos Junior
8 Lanesboro Rd APT 1
Worcester Ma, 01606

VEHICLE MAKE:

2014 Audi A5
VIN: WAULFAFH3EN002590
Last Registered Owner:
Gerard Planas
91 Grafton St
Shrewsbury, Ma 01545

February 20, 2026
February 27, 2026
March 6, 2026

In accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act, Chapter 131, Sec 40, a public hearing by the Conservation Commission will be held on Tuesday 03/10/2026 at 6:30 p.m. in the Conservation Commission Room, second floor, in the Holland Town Hall, 27 Sturbridge Rd, Holland, MA. This meeting is to review a Notice of Intent (NOI) filed by Thomas & Terri L. Plasse for construction of a sin-

gle-family home & septic system at 83 Sandy Beach Road (Map R38-E-15) Holland, MA 01521. To comply with the Open Meeting Law, all public hearings are scheduled for 6:30 PM and, barring unforeseen circumstances, will be taken in the order in which they appear on the agenda. This meeting will be held in person. The application is available for review by at the Conservation Commission Office, Town Office Building on Mondays (12:30 PM – 4:00 PM) and Tuesdays (9:00 AM – 4:00 PM).
Conservation Commission
Town of Holland
February 26, 2026

The Brimfield ZBA will hold a public hearing at 4:15 pm on March 03, 2026, at the Town Annex, (Clerk's Office), on behalf of Michael Partlow of 114 Dudley River Rd, Southbridge, MA 01550 for his vacant land at 145 Sturbridge Rd, Brimfield, MA. The applicant seeks a variance to extend the business district from 500 ft limitation to 625 ft as defined in Brimfield's Zoning map and section 3.1 and 3.7 of Brimfield's Zoning Bylaws. Abutters and members of the public are welcome to attend and provide feedback.
February 26, 2026
March 5, 2026

The Brimfield ZBA will hold a public hearing at 4:00 pm on March 03, 2026, at the Town Annex, (Clerk's Office), on behalf of Bevin and Kimberly Fish of 200 Butler Rd. Monson, MA 01057 for their property at 28 Third St. Brimfield, MA. The applicants seek to remove two existing single-family homes on the property and construct one new single-family home. The applicant has combined two existing parcels to create a single parcel. The proposed single-family structure will be less non-conforming to the side and rear setbacks. Abutters and members of the public are welcome to attend and provide feedback.
February 26, 2026
March 5, 2026

PUBLIC HEARING ON FY 27 WALES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUDGET

A public hearing on the proposed Wales Elementary School budget for 2026-2027 will be held on **Wednesday, March 04, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. at the Wales Elementary School**, in accordance with M.G. L., Chapter 71, S. 38N. Copies of the proposed budget are available from the Office of the Principal, Wales Elementary School. **The regular school committee meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m.**
February 27, 2026

TOWN OF STURBRIDGE Board of Selectmen Public Hearing

National Grid has made a petition to the Sturbridge Select Board to construct a line of underground electric conduits on Podunk Road. National Grid to install beginning at a point approximately 378' feet northeast of the centerline of the intersection of Wells State Park Rd & Podunk Rd and continuing approximately 300' feet in a north direction. Install 300' of conduit between P30 & P31-50 on Podunk Rd. Installation of (2) Manholes. The pole hearing will take place on **Monday, March 2, 2026 at 6:35 p.m.** at the Sturbridge Town Hall, 2nd floor, Veteran's Memorial Hall located at 308 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566.
February 26, 2026

SOUTHBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with the Votes Act of 2022 and effective as of June 2022, section 25B, the Southbridge Town Council will hold a public hearing on Monday, March 23, 2026, at 6:30 PM in the MacKinnon Council Chambers, upper level, Town Hall, 41 Elm St, Southbridge, MA.

The purpose of the public hearing is to consider the Votes Act of 2022, and effective as of June 2022, section 25B, the Southbridge Town Council will vote to opt out of Early Voting by mail for the annual Southbridge Town Election to be held in June 2026.

Any person interested or wishing to be heard on the issue should appear at the time and place designated.

John D. Jovan, Jr.
Town Manager
February 26, 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. WO26P0515EA CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
Estate Of:
Eleonore Guertin
Date of Death: 04/24/2025

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Donald Guertin of Charlton 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: **Donald Guertin of Charlton MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/17/2026.**

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: February 18, 2026
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
February 26, 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. WO26P0444EA CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
Estate Of:
Joseph David Freitas
Date of Death: 12/16/2025

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Alexis Freitas of Atlanta GA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that:

Alexis Freitas of Atlanta GA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/10/2026.**

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: February 13, 2026
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
February 26, 2026

Town of Sturbridge Zoning Board of Appeals Public Hearing Notice Special Permit Stanley & Kathryn Iwanicki

In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 40A, §11, the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 6:35 PM** at the **Center Office Building located at 301 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566** and/or by virtual means if circumstances warrant, in accordance with applicable law; on the application of Stanley and Kathryn Iwanicki.

The applicant is requesting a Special Permit pursuant to Article XVIII §300-18.2 (2) and a Finding pursuant to Article XV §300-15.2A of the Zoning Bylaw to allow the raze and rebuild of a single-family home, with an increase in coverage from 11% to 18.5%, on the property located at **21 Long Avenue** in accordance with the plans and application submitted.

The proposed request can be viewed at <https://www.sturbridge.gov/zoning-board-appeals/pages/recent-filings> or arrangements can be made to view the application packet by contacting the Sturbridge Planning Department.

Any person interested or wishing to be heard on this proposal should appear at the time and place designated. Members of the public may watch the meeting online via the Town's on demand video broadcast or via cable television on Channel 191.

It is the intent to have this Public Hearing in person. However, if circumstances warrant, the Board may choose to hold this Hearing via virtual or hybrid (in person and virtual) means. In the event of a virtual or hybrid meeting, please follow this link: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/472675877>.

Please note that the meeting/hearing will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law.

Diane Trapasso, Chair
Sturbridge Zoning Board of Appeals
February 26, 2026
March 5, 2026

Burgess third graders kick off Sturbridge celebration of America 250

STURBRIDGE — One-hundred and twenty “Happy Birthday America” cards created by Burgess Elementary School third graders are now hanging in the Senior Center. This project was developed in collaboration with the Sturbridge America 250th Anniversary Committee, established in January 2025. In the coming months, residents and visitors will enjoy a number of community programs created by and coordinated with this Committee.

Expect to see special commemorative banners featuring an historical flag posted on poles along Routes 20 and 131. Look for programs focusing on the history of America at the Joshua Hyde Public Library, and from the Sturbridge Historical Society. Old Sturbridge Village is hosting Revolutionary Game Nights at the Ox & Yoke Café. Participants will have the chance to win prizes such as special event tickets, Village crafts, and more! Check out “Revolutionary Bingo” March 27 and May 29 and “Revolutionary Trivia” Feb. 27, April 24, and June 26. For more information about these events and the many other new 250th events that the Village will be hosting, go to: osv.org.

Additional events sponsored by the Committee include an essay program for Grade 5 students titled “What Does America Mean to You?” with an option for students to voluntarily submit essays to a Town-wide recognition contest. Local restaurants will participate in a “Taste of Sturbridge” event during March and April featuring patriotic-themed offerings. Opacum Land Trust will incorporate Sturbridge historical landmarks into its April 2026 Vacation Scavenger Hunt. Also planned for May at the Senior Center are a tree planting and the burying of a time capsule.

Events will culminate in May and June. A Family Fun Day on May 16 features a Children’s Bike Decorating and Parade, followed with activities on the Common including: a Mini Big-Top Circus, face painting, T-shirt decorating, yard games, potato sack and 3-legged races, music and more. A hot dog cart will also be available. The Committee’s signature event will be held on June 27, 2026 and will feature a parade along Route 20 and Route 131, followed by a community festival on the Town Common. More information on these events will be forthcoming.

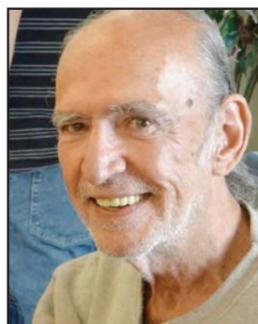
Volunteer recruitment and community engagement have been central to the Committee’s work. The Committee extends its appreciation to all residents, volunteers, non-profit organizations, and local businesses supporting the America 250th Anniversary celebration. If you are interested in participating in either/both the Family Fun Day and the Parade, or simply wish to find more information, please contact the Sturbridge250 Committee by email at Sturbridge250@gmail.com.

OBITUARIES

Donald E. Cournoyer, 83

PUTNAM — Donald E. Cournoyer, 83, died on Sunday, January 25th, 2026.

Born on September 16th, 1942, he was the eleventh of twelve children of Aime & Beatrice (Maynard) Cournoyer. He was brought up on the Cournoyer family farm on Fiske Hill in Sturbridge. He attended Notre Dame School and went on to start working at the Publick House at an early age.



of Tory, Missouri; Melissa Goyette of Southbridge, MA; and Roger Cournoyer of Putnam, CT. His legacy remains in his seven grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. Donald is also survived by his two brothers, George Cournoyer of Florida, Aime Cournoyer of West Brookfield, MA, and his sister, Margaret Biron of Florida. He also leaves many cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Donald was an excellent cook and baker, always enjoying preparing food for the family and the large functions (especially during the holidays). He also had a green thumb for plants and flowers. Donald had a unique love for ducks, shown in his huge collection of duck memorabilia, which including some live ones that lived in the backyard of some of his houses.

He leaves his four children; Jean Janezyk and her husband Mark of Putnam, CT; Andrea McBride and her husband Jason

Donald was predeceased by his brothers, Roger, Robert, David, Raymond, Michael, Richard, Albert, and Ronald.

The funeral services for Donald will be private and are entrusted to the Belanger Bullard Funeral Home, at 51 Marcy Street in Southbridge.

Burial will be at the convenience of the family.

For an online guestbook and tribute video, please visit www.BelangerFuneralHome.com

Brimfield Senior Center welcomes UFO expert

BRIMFIELD — On Wednesday, March 11 at 10:30 a.m., join us at the Brimfield Senior Center as we welcome back Ronny LeBlanc for an updated presentation on UFO activity and his evolving research into interdimensional phenomena.

Recent reports of unidentified aerial vehicles—often described as “drones”—appearing across New Jersey, the East Coast, and around the globe have raised new questions. These objects have reportedly flown over military installations, gone dark when approached, and vanished without explanation. Witnesses have also described unusual orbs of

light that appear and disappear suddenly.

Ronny LeBlanc, known for Discovery Channel’s “Paranormal Caught on Camera” and “Expedition Bigfoot,” will explore these sightings and their connection to longstanding UFO activity in New England. As the author of the “Monsterland” nonfiction series, he examines UFOs, orange orbs, and other anomalous phenomena that—despite renewed media attention—are not new occurrences. Reports include objects emerging from the ocean, hovering over reservoirs and restricted airspace, and outrunning military aircraft. What are

people witnessing, and what might these patterns reveal?

Drawing from field investigations, eyewitness testimony, paranormal case studies, and ongoing developments in UAP research, Ronny discusses how these encounters often concentrate in geographic “hot spots”—areas where energy, history, geology, and unexplained phenomena intersect. He proposes that these locations may serve as points where dimensions interact, allowing brief but significant contact with non-human intelligences.

His presentation will explore:

- The interdimensional

theory and why it is gaining wider consideration

- Connections among UFO sightings, Bigfoot encounters, orbs, and other high-strangeness reports

- Notable U.S. and New England hot spots with recurring activity

- What emerging patterns may suggest about our world—and who might be visiting it

Engaging and thought-provoking, Interdimensional invites audiences to reconsider the boundaries of our reality.

We will be serving a light lunch immediately after the event. Please call 413-245-7253 to reserve your seat. Space is limited.

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SPRING TODDLER TIME - Tuesdays at 10:45am

A play-based story time where toddlers will work on valuable skills with their caregivers and socialize with kids their own age.

SPRING BABY TIME - Wednesdays at 10:45

Join Ms. Meredith for songs, rhymes, fingerplays and stories. For children 2 years and younger with an adult caregiver.

SPRING WINTER STORY TIME - Fridays at 10:45

Stories, songs, rhymes and a craft. Designed for children ages 3-5 years old but open to kids of all ages with an adult caregiver.

WEEKLY TECH HELP - Wednesdays from 5:00pm to 7:00pm

Free hands-on tech assistance! Bring your own device or use our available computers. We can assist with: Printing, E-mailing, Microsoft Office Suite, Google Suite, word processing, digitizing photos and scanning documents, setting up eBooks and audio books through Libby onto your tablet or smartphone, device setup and updates, basic smartphone and tablet use, accessing library databases and resources, and more. Need help with something else? Just ask! Please note: This is BASIC tech assistance. We cannot repair broken devices, recover lost passwords, or enter your private information (such as a bank number) online. Please have your passwords ready.

Tuesday, March 10 at 1:00 pm AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP

This month's book is "Sarah's Key" by Tatiana de Rosney

Wednesday, March 18 at 6:30 pm ARMCHAIR TRAVELERS BOOK GROUP

This month's book is "Little Fires Everywhere" by Celeste Ng

Tuesday, March 24 at 6:30pm

Brandon Sears of Fiskdale earns degree from University of Maryland Global Campus

ADELPHI, Mad. — Brandon Sears of Fiskdale earned a Master of Science in Cybersecurity Technology from University of Maryland Global Campus in fall 2025.

Sears was one of more than 6,400 students worldwide who earned degrees from UMGC in the fall 2025 term.

University of Maryland Global Campus was founded more than 75 years ago specifically to serve the higher education needs of working adults and military servicemembers. Today, UMGC is the largest provider of postsecondary education in Maryland and continues its global tradition with online and hybrid courses, more than 175 classroom and service locations worldwide, and more than 135 degrees and certificates backed by the reputation of a state university and the University System of Maryland. For more information, visit umgc.edu.

WORLD BUILDING BOOK GROUP

This month's book is "The Color of Magic" by Terry Pratchett

Now through March 15 ANNUAL BOSTON BRUINS PAJAMA DRIVE

The JHPL is a drop-off location for the Boston Bruins Annual Pajama Drive. The Boston Bruins, Cradles to Crayons®, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, and Wonderfund are partnering to rally communities in support of children in need across Massachusetts by encouraging donations of new pajamas. We are collecting brand new pajamas in all sizes, including adult. The most needed sizes for this season are 12-18 months, 18-24 months, and 18/20 (both boys and girls sizes). Feel free to bring pajamas to the library or make a monetary donation. You can also donate directly to Cradles to Crayons using the QR Code at the library.

Wednesday, March 11 - 6:15pm to 8:30pm - at the Publick House

STEWING OVER MYSTERIES: TESS GERRITSEN

Join us for an evening where suspense simmers and stories unfold at Stewing Over Mysteries, hosted by the Friends of the JHPL at the historic Publick House in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. This special literary dinner event features bestselling author Tess Gerritsen, acclaimed for her gripping thrillers and the beloved Rizzoli & Isles series. Guests will enjoy a delicious meal while diving into the art of mystery writing with Tess Gerritsen. She will read from her latest book, share insights on her writing, and conclude with an audience Q&A. Tickets include a dinner of beef stew or vegetarian/gluten-free butter-nut squash bisque, rolls, coffee/tea and dessert. Prices: Ticket only - \$22; Ticket & Book Bundle - \$36 (save \$3); Book only - \$17. Tickets may be purchased online at sturbridgelibrary.org or at the library. Get your tickets soon! This event usually sells out.

Saturday, February 28 from 10:30am to 4:30pm & Sunday, March 1 - 12:30pm to 4:00pm

FRIENDS OF THE JHPL MINI-GOLF FUNDRAISER

Get ready to showcase your skills by joining the fun at the Friends of the JHPL's indoor mini golf course! \$5 per person. \$20 max per family. Children 10 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Support the library by playing mini golf!

Monday, March 2 through Friday, March 6 - All day

DROP-IN RAMADAN CRAFTS

Stop by the Children's Room anytime during the week for crafts focusing on Ramadan! For kids of all ages.

Wednesday, March 4 - 2:00pm to 3:30pm

WOMEN OF THE AMERICAN RENAISSANCE: LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

This project shines a light on the little-known stories of inspiring women of Concord, MA during the American Renaissance of the 1800's. This presentation focuses on Louisa May Alcott, author of Little Women, and a family dedicated to abolition, social reform, education for all, and a deep love for the humanities and the arts. Presented by Ellen Duzak. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Sturbridge Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Wednesday, March 4 - 5:30pm to 7:30pm

COLOR ME CALM

Slow down, settle in, and color. Drop by the library for a friendly, low-key coloring session. We'll provide a wide variety of coloring pages and plenty of supplies. Come explore a creative activity that has been shown to support mindfulness and reduce everyday stress. This program is suitable for teens and adults.

Friday, March 6 - 6:30pm to 8:30pm - at the Sturbridge Senior Center

FILM SCREENING: THE M FACTOR 2, BEFORE THE PAUSE - PERIMENOPAUSE

Perimenopause can begin in a woman's mid-30s and last up to a decade, yet it remains widely underdiagnosed and misunderstood. This prequel to the M Factor focuses on perimenopause and aims to provide awareness, support, and solutions for thriving through it. There will be time for discussion and Q&A at the conclusion with Kelly Tull, WHNP-BC, CSC of the Venus Collective-Women's Health & Intimacy. Coffee & pastries will be provided. Registration is required.

Saturday, March 7 - 10:30am to 12:30pm

NEEDLE FELTED BOOKMARKS - rescheduled from 1/31/26

Discover the fun of needle felting in our Bookmark Workshop! By the end of the session, you'll take home your finished piece, a handmade reminder of the joy of creating something yourself. This event is full.

Monday, March 9 - 3:30pm to 4:30pm

FAMILY CRAFT TIME: ORIGAMI BUTTERFLIES

Let's welcome March in with some colorful origami! Kids will follow along with simple origami folding techniques to make a rainbow array of butterflies. This program is intended for ages 7-12 with a caregiver. Registration is required.

Monday, March 9 - VIRTUAL - 7:00pm to 8:00pm

"VACATIONS CAN BE MURDER: THE MID ATLANTIC STATES" WITH TRUE CRIME AUTHOR DAWN M. BARCLAY

This is a virtual event and registration is required. This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Ashland Public Library and is in partnership with a multitude of MA Libraries.

Tuesday, March 10 - 6:00pm to 7:00pm - at the Charlton Public Library

BOOK DISCUSSION: BURNED BY BILLIONAIRES

Join us for a special book discussion about "Burned by Billionaires" by Chuck Collins in advance of the author's visit in Charlton on Tuesday, March 31st. See the author talk for more information. Registration is appreciated.

Saturday, March 14 - 1:00pm to 2:30pm

SCULPT A DRAGON EYE WITH POP UP ART SCHOOL

Participants will design and sculpt their very own dragon eye using a glass eye and air dry clay to build realistic textures, and shimmering metallic paints to bring it to life. You will learn simple sculpting and painting techniques to add detail, depth, and personality to your mythical creation. If time allows, participants will also make a dragon egg. For ages 13 to 18. Registration is required.

Monday, March 16 - VIRTUAL - 7:00pm to 8:00pm

SHANNON MCKENNA SCHMIDT DISCUSSES "YOU CAN'T CATCH US" A STORY OF LADY BIRD JOHNSON

This is a virtual program and registration is required. This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Ashland Public Library and is in partnership with a multitude of MA Libraries.

Thursday, March 19 - 6:00pm to 7:00pm

POKEMON CLUB

Young Pokémon fans, ages 5 to 12, and their caregivers are invited to join us for themed activities and fun! Kids can also bring their card collections to play the official TCG game or simply show off their favorites. Registration is required.

Monday, March 23 - 3:30pm to 4:30pm

FAMILY CRAFT TIME: DRAGONFLY ORNAMENTS

Kids ages 5-12 are invited with their caregiver to come make their own dragonfly ornaments and decorate them with all sorts of glitz and glam. Registration is required.

Monday, March 23 - VIRTUAL - 7:00pm to 8:00pm

AUTHOR MATTHEW ALGEO DISCUSSES "NEW YORK'S SECRET SUBWAY"

This is a virtual program and registration is required. This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Ashland Public Library and is in partnership with a multitude of MA Libraries.

Thursday, March 26 - 6:30pm to 7:45pm

YOUR TREE BEGINS HERE: LEARNING ANCESTRY.COM FOR FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH

Getting Started with Ancestry.com: A Practical Introduction to Family History Research. This beginner-friendly session introduces you to the core features of Ancestry.com, including how to navigate your family tree, evaluate hints, and manage your research standards. Through live demonstrations and helpful tips, you'll learn how to confidently search, analyze, and organize genealogical information on one of the most widely used family history platforms.

Tuesday, March 31 - 6:00pm to 7:00pm - at the Charlton Public Library

AUTHORTALK: CHUCK COLLINS - "BURNED BY BILLIONAIRES"

Chuck Collins is an American author and a senior scholar at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, DC, where he directs the Program on Inequality and the Common Good. He is also co-founder of Wealth for Common Good. He is an expert on economic inequality in the US, and has pioneered efforts to bring together investors and business leaders to speak out publicly against corporate practices and economic policies that increase economic inequality. Registration is appreciated. In collaboration with: Charlton Public Library, Pearle L. Crawford Library in Dudley, Oxford Public Library, and Joshua Hyde Public Library in Sturbridge.

All programs are sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL unless otherwise indicated.

To register for programs or for more information go to sturbridgelibrary.org.

Local students named to Dean's List at Tufts University

MEDFORD — Trevor Wallace, Class of 2026, of Charlton and Sebastian Suprenant, Class of 2028, of Fiskdale were named to the dean's list at Tufts University for the fall 2025 semester. Dean's list honors at Tufts University require a semester grade point average of 3.4 or greater.

Tufts University, located on campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville and Grafton, and in Talloires, France, is recognized among the premier research universities in the United States. Tufts enjoys a global reputation for academic excellence and for the preparation of students as leaders in a wide range

of professions. A growing number of innovative teaching and research initiatives span all Tufts campuses, and collaboration among the faculty and students in the undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs across the university's schools is widely encouraged.

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* June Cazeault * Laurie Sullivan * Lori Johnson-Chausse * William Gilmore II * Maureen Cimoch * Bryan Pelletier

Impressive view!



Impressive view! 1/2 acre overlooking Cranberry Meadow Pond! Nicely appointed Colonial, better than new! 3 bedrooms, 2-1/2 Bath! Master Bedroom Suite. 2 car garage Howe State Park close by. Deeded Beach Rights! a Must See! assisted sale \$345,000



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Condominium - 78 Athol Street Killingly, Ct.
End Unit! Nice floor plan! 2 Bedroom, 1-1/2 Bath, Sliding Door to Deck. Basement w/Bulkhead. Priced to Sell! assisted sale \$205,000

On the shores of Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg

Webster Lake Waterfront Listing!!
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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

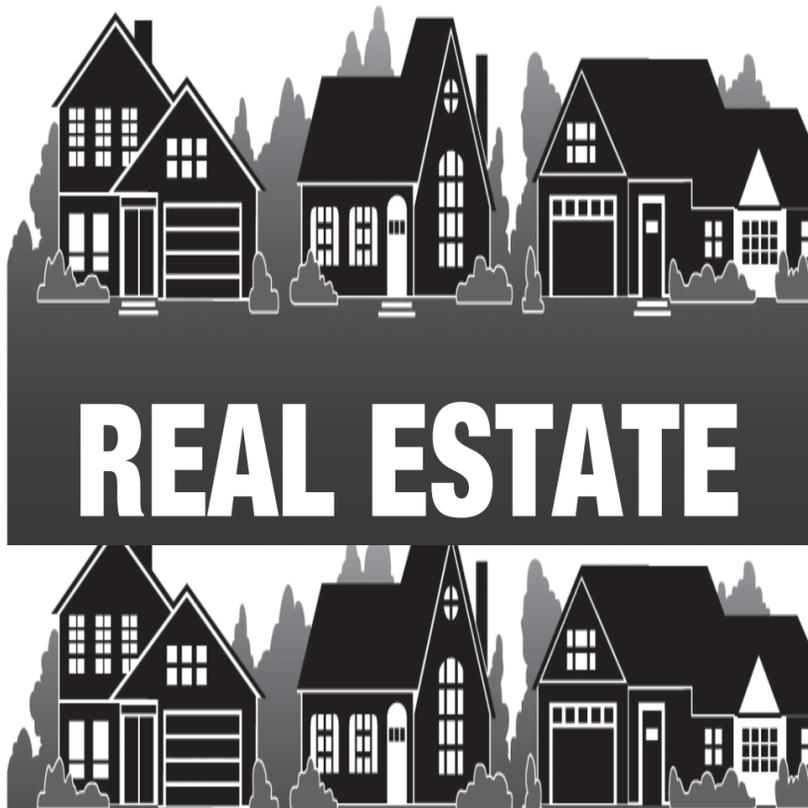


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Webster Lake Waterfront - 31 Bayview!!



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Master Masons hold 12th Annual Chinese New Years Party

BY BRO. JIMMY FALZONE
MAJOR GENERAL SALEM TOWNE
LODGE

SOUTHBRIDGE — On Saturday, Feb. 21, Master Masons converged to the Major General Salem Towne Lodge (MGST) in Southbridge for their 12th Annual Chinese New Year's Party (The Year of the Fire Horse).

MGST's annual Chinese New Year party continues to expand in size every year. The party included Brethren and their families from all around the 24th District. Most oriental food



Courtesy

Master Masons along with family and friends enjoy the great evening with many laughs but most the fraternalism and comradery.

served was store-bought, a few dishes were home-made. There were games for adults and children to play. There were fraternalism and many laughs

to make for a great night. A movie was shown featuring Jackie Chan called "Ride On."

Fraternalism and com-

radery, being with brethren's, family and friends is what freemasonry is all about. If you would like more information

about Freemasonry, go to www.massfreemasonry.org to find a lodge near to you.



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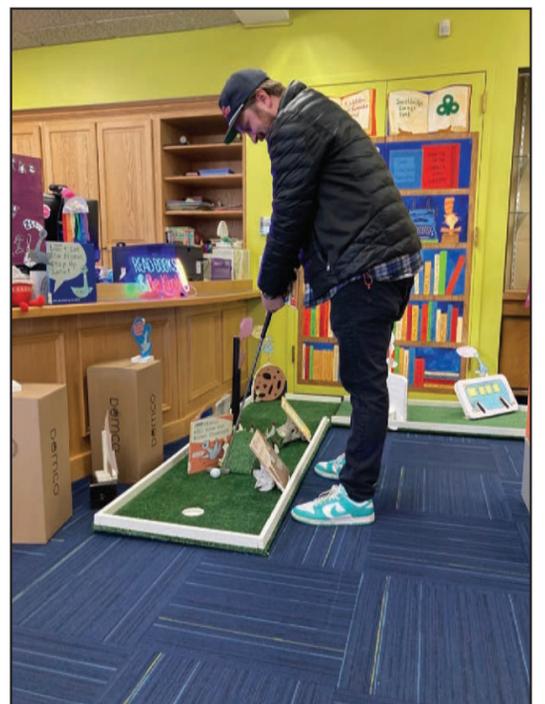
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Move over, Tiger Woods! Mini Golf is back at the Joshua Hyde Public Library!

STURBRIDGE — Got a case of the Winter Blues? Feeling stir crazy? Looking for a fun way to get the kids off the couch? Come to the Joshua Hyde Public Library in Sturbridge Feb. 28-March 1 for a round of Mini-Golf!

That weekend, the library will be transformed into a multi-hole mini-golf course that wends its way through the entire three floors of the library. Holes will take you through mystery, travel, science fiction... up, down and all around. Don't miss this chance to have a "hole" lot of fun and support your library at the same time!

Event organizer Kadion Phillips reports that volunteers have been diligently working to create fun, yet challenging holes that will test your golf mettle. Some old favorites will return, like the always-talked-about down-the-stairs challenge and local groups will show off their creativity. Tantasqua High School golf coach Aaron Berthiaume's players are dreaming of Augusta with their design while other Tantasqua CAD students will try to outdo them. Even the Cub Scouts are planning a hole worthy of Pebble Beach.



The course will be open Saturday, Feb. 28 from 10:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 1 from 12:30 – 4 p.m. The price is \$5 per person with a \$20 maximum per family. Children 10 and under must be accompanied by an adult. A big Thank You goes out to Bogey Lanes in East Brookfield for supplying the golf clubs for this event.

Volunteers are still needed to help work the event. If you're interested, please reach out

to Kadion Phillips at kadion@gmail.com. This event is sponsored by the Friends of the Joshua Hyde Public Library and is its most fun FUNdraiser of the year. All money raised will benefit our community and library patrons throughout the year with equipment, supplies, program offerings, book discussion groups, museum passes, children's programs, art and craft programs, and so much more!

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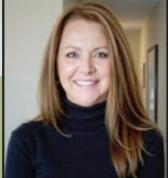
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Lynch named Parish Organizer for annual Catholic Men's Conference

STURBRIDGE — John Lynch, parishioner at St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish, has been named the parish organizer for the 25th annual Catholic Men's Conference, which will be held on Saturday, March 21 at the DCU Center in Worcester. This year's theme is "Be Not Afraid."

Former Bishop Daniel Patrick Reilly founded the Catholic Men's Conference, the first in the country, 25 years ago. At that time fewer than 100 men attended the event. Now, more than 1,000 men participate in the all-day conference, which has become a national event.

"This is a legacy to Bishop Reilly," said Lynch.

"It is the oldest conference and has grown into the most successful."

The Catholic Men's Conference offers men of all ages the opportunity to connect with others, find new ways to grow in their faith, and hear noted national and international speakers on topics relevant to today's challenges. They can also browse a variety of exhibitors featuring books, different ministries, religious orders, retreats, priesthood recruiters, and others.

Lynch said, "The conference is for men who want to go one step further and deepen their faith."

The sacrament of Reconciliation is a big part of the event, Lynch added.

He attended the first conference 25 years ago and has attended every conference since.

Lynch encourages all men to consider attending the Catholic Men's Conference. "Initially, there may be a level of resistance," he said. "But the day is generally all about you as a man and takes you to another level of awareness of your faith."

Parishioners from St. Anne – St. Patrick who need transportation may contact the parish office at 508-347-7338.

For more information about the conference, the speakers, or the exhibitors and to register, please visit the Web site: www.catholicmenworc.com.

Fiskdale Legion post hosting corned beef dinner

FISKDALE — The Champeau Vilandre American Legion Post 109, 507 Main St., Fiskdale, is having our corned beef dinner on March 8, from 3 to 5 p.m.

Dinner will include corned beef, cabbage, carrots, potato, desserts, coffee and tea.

There will be raffles, and a 50/50 drawing. All proceeds will benefit our Veteran and Youth programs.

Tickets will not be sold at the door. Please contact the Legion at 508-347-3248 for more information or to purchase tickets.

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