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Friday, February 6, 2026

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Local adaptive water ski leaders awarded scholarships to attend national conference



Ryan DesRoches (left), Founder and Director of the Adaptive Ski Program.

Webster Water Ski Collective is proud to announce that Ryan DesRoches, Director of Adaptive Programs and founder of the organization's Adaptive Water Ski

Gazda, adaptive skier and certified adaptive ski instructor, have been selected to receive full scholarships to attend the 2026 Move United Education Conference.

awarded through a grant made possible by the VA Adaptive Sports Grant, which supports the development of adaptive sports opportunities for disabled veterans and other individuals with disabilities across the United States.

The Move United Education Conference will be held April 18–23 in Hyannis, and brings together adaptive sports professionals, volunteers, and leaders from across the U.S. and Canada. The event includes sessions on inclusive coaching, program



Cindi Gazda, Adaptive Instructor and Skier along with an adaptive skier.

development, nonprofit management, equipment innovation, and hands-on adaptive sports clinics.

“This is an incredible opportunity for us,” said Ryan DesRoches. “As a 100 percent volunteer-run organization, we’re always looking for ways to improve and grow. Being able to connect with other adaptive sports leaders and learn from their experiences will help us strengthen every part of our program — from how we support athletes with different disabilities, to how we manage and sustain our organization long-term.”

DesRoches founded the adaptive water ski program

six years ago after a chance encounter with a skier with cerebral palsy inspired him to make water skiing more accessible. Today, the organization supports more than 120 adaptive participants annually, including hosting one of the largest Veteran adaptive water ski events in the country, as recognized by USA Water Ski & Wake Sports.

The Webster Water Ski Collective has also expanded its reach by hosting adaptive clinics throughout Massachusetts, and in 2026 will be partnering with the Electric City Water Ski Show Team to host their first clinic in New York State. The organi-

zation values collaboration and has actively forged partnerships with other ski clubs and adaptive organizations including the Aqua Riders of Holland Show Ski Team, Team Hoyt New England and the Jack Trotter Foundation.

Cindi Gazda, a traumatic brain injury survivor, began as a participant and has since become one of the Collective's most dedicated volunteers earning her safety and instructor certifications through USA Water Ski & Wake Sports shortly after participating at her first event with the Adaptive Ski Program. She now plays a

Turn To SKIERS page A12

Gladys E. Kelly Library receives grant for family programming

WEBSTER — The Gladys E. Kelly Public Library received a generous grant from the United Way of South Central Massachusetts. This grant will be used to fund family programs for our patrons on Saturdays, from January through April.

We have already done one kickoff event to celebrate the grant funding, which was Tom Knight's Puppet Show on Saturday, Jan. 10. Eighty-five people attended the event.

Our Youth Services Librarian, Paige St. Lawrence, has been planning several events that she thinks will be popular for our patrons.

“I planned a wide variety of programs for our diverse patron population. I think there will be something for everyone!” St. Lawrence said.

Our next major event for this grant cycle is Joys of Nature: New England Animals in Winter with two sessions on Saturday, Feb. 14. Sign up at gladyskellylibrary.org, or call the Library at 508-949-3880.

Personal bests highlight Week 5 for Bartlett indoor track

NORTHBRIDGE — Congratulations to the members of the Bartlett Indoor Track Team for their efforts during the Week 5 CMAC performance highlighted by multiple personal bests and finishes.

In the 50 yard dash, Cam Forsythe and Annabelle Reed recorded their personal-best times. Britney Jubin achieved a personal best in the 300 meter run, while Alexis Benito posted a personal best time in the 600 meter run securing him a top-ten finish.

Top ten finishes in the 50 meter dash were earned by Hunter Claypool, Deborah Lamptey, and Brittney Jubin. In the 300 meters, Eryk Piwowarczyk and Deborah Lamptey both secured top ten placements. Ben Horan finished in the top ten in the mile, while Cam Forsythe placed top ten in the shot put. Rounding out the meet, Eryk Piwowarczyk captured a top five finish in the boys high jump.

Turn To TRACK page A12

Board of Health partners with Dudley Woman's Club for month-long diaper drive

DUDLEY — When recently asked ‘What is your constant and immediate need?’ the folks at the Webster-Dudley Food Share said, “Diapers.”

With this, the Dudley Board of Health and Dudley Woman's Club teamed up to sponsor a February Diaper Drive.

The month-long initiative seeks disposable diapers of any size (no pull-ups please) to assist young families relying on support from the Food Share.

A collection bin will be located in the Dudley Town Hall lobby, 71 West Main St., through Feb. 27.

Please, if you are able, help us support young families who could use a bit of neighborly care by dropping your donation, no matter how large or small, at the Dudley Town Hall.



Courtesy

PIETRZAK EARNS 100TH WIN AT OXFORD

On Jan. 20, Joe Pietrzak, the longtime head coach of the Oxford High School Girls' Varsity Basketball team, secured his 100th career coaching victory. The milestone win came on the road in Framingham, where the Pirates defeated Keefe Tech by a score of 56-36. Pietrzak has served as the Girls' Varsity Head Coach since 2014. His tenure has been defined by his commitment to player development and his ability to build competitive teams year after year. This victory not only marks a personal achievement for Pietrzak, but also highlights the sustained success of the Oxford Girls' Basketball program under his guidance.

Care Equipment joins U-Haul dealer network to support Dudley

DUDLEY — U-Haul Co. of Massachusetts and Ohio, Inc. is pleased to announce that Care Equipment, a local rental store, signed on as a U-Haul® neighborhood dealer to serve the Dudley community.

Care Equipment at 121 W. Main St. will offer essential services like U-Haul trucks, trailers, towing equipment, and moving supplies.

Normal business hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Reserve

U-Haul products at this dealer location by calling (508) 213-4119 or visiting <https://www.uhaul.com/Locations/Truck-Rentals-near-Dudley-MA-01571/014264/> today.

Care Equipment owner Joe Dion is proud to team with the industry leader in do-it-yourself moving and self-storage to better meet the demands of Worcester County.

U-Haul has teamed with independent dealers to offer rental equipment to do-it-yourself movers since 1945. During these challenging times for small businesses, more than 22,000 dealers across the U.S. and Canada are gener-

ating supplemental income through their U-Haul affiliation. When customers rent from a U-Haul dealer, they are directly supporting an independent small business in their community.

Because no financial investment is required to be a dealer, these local affiliates are not U-Haul franchises. They are simply small businesses that have committed a portion of their lot space for U-Haul equipment, and a portion of their time to help meet the mobility needs of their neighbors.

Learn more about the dealer program and how to join by visiting uhaul.com/dealer.

Need moving labor services with your U-Haul rental? Since 2002, Moving Help® has been the No. 1 choice of customers seeking labor for loading and unloading, packing and unpacking, home safe moving, piano moving, clean-

ing, and U-Box storage container services during their moves. Customers choose the number of workers, hours, and service date needed from a network of 7,800 customer-rated local and independent Moving Help Providers across the U.S. and Canada. Transparent upfront pricing is given, and payment release is subject to customer approval when the job is completed using Moving Help's patented payment code. Reserve moving labor services at MovingHelp.com.

About U-HAUL

Celebrating our 80th anniversary in 2025, U-Haul is the No. 1 choice of do-it-yourself movers with more than 24,000 rental locations across all 50 states and 10 Canadian provinces. The U-Haul app makes it easy for customers

to use U-Haul Truck Share 24/7 to access trucks anytime through the self-dispatch and -return options on their smartphones with our patented Live Verify technology. Our customers' patronage has enabled the U-Haul fleet to grow to 203,000 trucks, 137,400 trailers and 41,700 towing devices. U-Haul is the third largest self-storage operator in North America and offers 1,111,000 rentable storage units and 96.5 million square feet of self-storage space at owned and managed facilities. U-Haul is the top retailer of propane in the U.S. and the largest installer of permanent trailer hitches in the automotive aftermarket industry. Get the U-Haul app from the App Store or Google Play.

Knights of Columbus Free Throw competition announced

WEBSTER — Webster/Dudley Knights of Columbus Council #228 with District 14 will be holding its annual Free Throw Competition Saturday, February 14th at St. Joseph's School, 47 Whitcomb St., Webster.

This free competition is open to all area boys and girls ages nine to 14. Age is determined as of Jan. 1, with proof of birthday required at registration. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m., with the completion starting promptly at 9:00 AM. Winning shooters will represent Council #228 and District 14 at the Central Region Competition in March at Nichols College.

Questions can be directed to Paul Perry, PGK: 508-943-9345 or email: pjpknight@yahoo.com.

Lindsey Remillard named to Champlain College Online Dean's List

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Lindsey Remillard of Oxford was named to the Champlain College Online Dean's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Students on the Dean's List have achieved a grade point average of 3.5 or higher during the semester. Remillard is currently majoring in Marketing.

Making the Dean's List is a tremendous achievement. Many of the high achievers balance their career-focused classes with jobs, internships, clubs, and volunteering. We congratulate them on this great accomplishment and honor.

Founded in 1878, Champlain College is a small, not-for-profit, private college in Burlington, Vt., with additional campuses in Montreal, Canada, and Dublin, Ireland. Champlain offers a residential undergraduate experience from its beautiful campus overlooking Lake Champlain. Additionally, Champlain College Online provides an expansive portfolio of online degrees and certificates, reaching students across all 50 states and U.S. territories, while fostering strategic partnerships with forward-thinking workforce organizations. The College is known for its distinctive and innovative approach to career-focused education and its Upside-Down Curriculum, which helps students be ready for work, ready for life, and ready to make a difference. Champlain is ranked as one of the "Best Colleges" by U.S. News & World Report for 2025, and was named one of the "Best 390 Colleges" by The Princeton Review for 2025, including among its "Best Northeastern colleges." For more information, visit www.champlain.edu.

Fall Dean's List announced at Stonehill

EASTON — Stonehill College is pleased to recognize the students named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List. To qualify for this honor, undergraduate students must have achieved a semester grade point average of 3.50 or higher with a minimum of 12 credits from courses graded with standard letter grades.

Patrick LeClair of Oxford
Remonda Mankarios of Dudley
Matthew Anderson of Webster
Lauren Gingo of Webster
Sarah Dawson of Auburn

About Stonehill College

Stonehill College, a Catholic institution of higher learning, was founded by the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1948. Located on the beautiful 384-acre campus and former estate of Frederick Lothrop Ames in North Easton, it is a community of scholarship and faith, anchored by a belief in the inherent dignity of each person.

Through more than 100 academic programs in the liberal arts, sciences, business and pre-professional field, Stonehill College provides an education of the highest caliber that fosters critical thinking, free inquiry and the interchange of ideas for over 2,500 students.

Stonehill College educates the whole person so that each Stonehill graduate thinks, acts and leads with courage toward the creation of a more just and compassionate world.

Eastern student Ella Springer of Dudley makes Dean's List

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. — Eastern Connecticut State University recently released its Dean's List for the fall 2025 semester, in which 1,311 students were recognized for maintaining high GPAs.

Among them is Ella Springer of Dudley, a full-time senior who majors in Health Sciences.

To qualify for Dean's List, full-time students must complete a minimum of 12 credits in letter-graded courses with an average GPA of 3.5 or higher in the semester. Part-time students are eligible if they've accumulated 15 or more credits of letter-graded coursework with an average GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Eastern Connecticut State University is the state of Connecticut's public liberal arts university, serving upwards of 4,000 students annually on its Willimantic campus. A residential campus offering 41 majors and 68 minors, Eastern offers students a strong liberal arts foundation grounded in a variety of applied learning opportunities. Ranked among the top 25 public institutions in the North by U.S. News & World Report in its 2025-26 Best Colleges ratings, Eastern has also been awarded 'Green Campus' status by the Princeton Review 15 years in a row. For more information, visit www.easternct.edu.

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PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER
FRANK G. CHILINSKI
FRANK@SALMONPRESS.NEWS

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

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

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

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

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Courtesy

Congratulations to Caitlyn Costello and Erika Blais, who were elected to three year terms at the Jan. 18 annual meeting of Zion Lutheran Church, Oxford. They join Isaac Gilliard (President), James Costello (Vice President), Caitlin Seaman (Secretary), Shirley Rossmeisl (Treasurer), Lee Elliot (Financial Secretary) and members at large Paula Kilian Clark, Susan Pierce, Jonathan Costello, Mark Ide, and Scott Zajkowski. Pastor Michael Bastian and the Zion Council invite all to worship with us on Sunday mornings at 8:45 a.m. at 70 Main St. We are family friendly and offer Sunday School and a toddler group during services. Come and see!

Bay Path graduates sought for Class of 1976 reunion

REGION — Hello, lassmates of Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School Graduating Class of 1976. Can you believe it’s been 50 years?!

A small group of us have gotten together to begin planning our 50th class reunion. The people in this group are Bonnie (Aker) Courtemanche, David Saad, Jeff Mitchell and Clifford Cloutier.

We are searching for our classmates for a 50th year class reunion. We have a Facebook page setup that you can go to and let us know your contact information and if you are interested in a reunion party. You can reach out to the Facebook page BAY PATH VOCATIONAL HIGH CLASS OF 1976.

We would like to hear from you even if you don’t think you will be able to make it. We invite you to send a message/well wishes to your classmates. We can share your messages for others to read that night.

We will be compiling a list of those we have not heard from in hopes that classmates we have heard from can help locate them. We would love to get this message out to all our classmates.

We hope to hear from you and see you at our reunion.

QCC’s Commonwealth Honors program promotes research

WORCESTER — Students in Quinsigamond Community College’s Commonwealth Honors program presented their research findings at a recent Honors Colloquium Student Showcase. The Honors Colloquium is an interdisciplinary course required for students completing designated honors pathways. Designed to foster intellectual curiosity and collaboration, the course brings together faculty from multiple disciplines to explore a central theme from diverse perspectives.

Each student develops a thesis related to the semester’s theme, conducts in-depth library research and produces a research paper. The experience culminates in a poster presentation, shared both in class and at the Honors Colloquium Student Showcase, where students present their work to the broader QCC community. Many participants also take their research beyond campus, presenting at the Undergraduate Research Conference at

UMass Amherst.

One section of the Honors Colloquium course, co-taught by Associate Professor of Biology Opeyemi Odewale and Professor of English John Stazinski, employed the theme “The Small Engines of Humanity: Germs, Cooties, and Diseases – Microbial Impact & Societal Transformation.”

“The Honors Colloquium is unique among classes at QCC in that the students, every single semester, become very close and end up forming a true learning community,” said Stazinski. “They’re genuinely engaged by each other’s projects and tend to keep each other on track.”

At last month’s showcase, students presented their research on how microbes influence contemporary societal challenges.

Student Luis Cruz investigated the gut-eye axis, inspired by his background in ophthalmology and future plans for graduate school and a Ph.D. His project explored early eye treatment options to prevent surgery. Another student, Emma Dattis, examined how music and social networks influence the gut microbiome, uncovering links between cultural factors and microbial health.

Other sections of the Honors Colloquium included “The World in 2050: A Certain Uncertainty,” “(Hi) stories of American Violence” and “Truths or Consequences: Examining Movements for Change.”

For more information on QCC’s Commonwealth Honors Program, visit qcc.edu/learn-qcc/commonwealth-honors-program.



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Friday's Child



**Jalexa
Age 10
Registration #8336**

Jalexa is a joyful and happy child with a vibrant, magnetic personality. She is spunky, free-spirited, and has a natural way of capturing the hearts of those around her. Jalexa loves being active and enjoys riding her bike, playing outside, and swimming, especially when she has opportunities to laugh, explore, and stay on the move. When it’s time to slow down, Jalexa enjoys watching movies and playing games on her tablet, giving her a nice balance between active play and relaxation. She also enjoys participating in a variety of community activities and thrives in environments where she can interact

with others and feel included. Jalexa is an extremely resilient child with a strong, outgoing personality. She loves being the center of attention and brings energy, enthusiasm, and warmth into every space she enters. With a family who can celebrate her spirited nature and provide consistent love and guidance, Jalexa has the potential to continue growing into her joyful, confident self.

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/21189474864>

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

The process to adopt a child from foster care includes training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you. These steps will help match you with a child or sibling group that your family will fit well with. To learn more about adoption from foster care visit www.mareinc.org. Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) can give you guidance and information on the adoption process. Reach out today to find out all the ways you can help children and teens in foster care.



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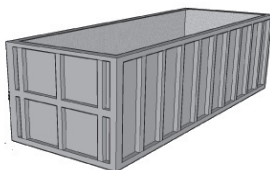


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To register for events or sign up for the newsletter go to www.crawfordlibrary.org or call 508-949-8021.

The library will be closed on February 16th in observance of Presidents’ Day.

New to the Library! www.newspapers.com Search obituaries, announcements, news, ads, comics, and more—right from home with your Dudley Library card. Join us for a hands-on tutorial exploring the largest online newspaper archive on Monday, February 9th @ 5:45

Please join us in February to celebrate local artist Kalia Pfeiffer. Kalia is self-taught in watercolors. A variety of her work will be on display for you to enjoy in the Fels Room whenever the Library is open.

CrafterNIGHT 3D Layered Art
Monday, February 2nd 6:00-7:00
or
Crafternoon 3D Layered Art
Tuesday, February 3rd 1:00-2:00

Paint your own wooden 3-D layered art. Four different designs to choose from! Deer, swans, sea horses or hummingbirds.

Design quantities are limited, first-come, first-served
Registration is required.
Ages 17+

Gentle Yoga
Mondays in February-NO SESSION
February 16th
10:00-11:00

Join yoga instructor Patricia, for a traditional “on the mat” yoga class with chair yoga modifications. This truly is a one size fits all class.

Bring your own mat. Wear layers, do not eat heavily 1.5-2 hours before class.
Registration is required.

Mahjong at the Pearle
Every Wednesday
10:00-12:30 Fels Community Room

The game consists of players competing to form distinct sets or pairs of tiles, similar to gin rummy.

Everyone is welcome, registration is not required.

Quilting Group
Every Wednesday
1:30- 3:30

All quilters and would-be quilters are invited to join our new group. Bring your projects!

Knit & Crochet Group
Every Thursday 5:30-7:45 and Friday 10:00-12:00

All stitchers are welcome for this informal group.
Bring your project, enjoy the company

Pearle’s Picking Parlor Jam, a “mostly” Bluegrass Focused Jam Session
1st Saturday of every month
Saturday, February 7th
10:00-12:00 in the Fels Community Room

This is the group that played at our 15 Year Celebration!

This is an unplugged acoustic jam. All talent levels welcome...beginners on up!

Don’t want to play? No problem, listeners are welcome too!

Once Upon A Crime Book Club- Out of the Woods by Gregg Olsen
Friday, February 6th
11:00-12:00

Do you have a passion for true crime and

examining the details of each case? This book club is for you! The “Once Upon A Crime Book Club” meets the first Friday of every month in the adult reading area. All books will be pre-ordered and available for pick up at the circulation desk.

Friends of the Library Monthly Meeting
Monday, February 9th @1:15

Join the Friends of the Library for the monthly meeting.

Pearle’s Genealogy Group
Monday, February 9th
4:00-5:30

Let’s regrow our genealogy group! Join us in the Local History Room on the second Monday of every month. Facilitated by professional genealogist Patricia St. Marie.

Introduction to Newspapers.com
Monday, February 9th
5:45-6:45

Join us for a hands-on tutorial exploring the largest online newspaper archive. Search obituaries, announcements, news, ads, comics, and more—right from home with your Dudley Library card.

The Missing Piece Puzzle Race
Saturday, February 14th
11:00-12:30

Teams will compete against each other, with the ultimate goal of completing a puzzle faster than their opponents. The first team to assemble the puzzle wins! Don’t have enough for a team? Don’t worry, we will match you up! There is enough room for 6 teams! Registration is required.

Seasonal Painting with Jean Walker
Thursday, February 19th
6:00-7:45

Join Jean to create a seasonal acrylic masterpiece! No experience needed—all materials provided. Ages 17+Registration required

“Cook the Book” Book Club
Monday, February 23rd
6:00-7:00

Book: Once Upon a Chef: Weeknight/Weekend by Jennifer Segal

Pick one recipe from the book selected for the month, the dishes don’t have to be complicated or fancy. Any recipe from the book is fair game, except alcoholic beverages-sorry! Prepare the recipe at home and share it at the library. We cannot reheat or keep food warm, so consider this when choosing your recipe.

You are responsible for bringing serving utensils. We will provide paper goods and utensils for eating.

There will be a place to include your recipe selection in the reservation form. Registration required.

National Grid Community Advocates
Thursday, February 26th
10:00-2:00

National Grid has a team of Community Advocates dedicated to assisting low-to moderate-income customers in navigating their utility needs. Our Advocates provide personalized support and can help residents with a variety of services. Drop in for one-on-one help between 10-2.

Crawford Library Book Group
Thursday, February 26th
The Wager by David Grann
6:00-7:30

Books are available at the circulation desk for checkout one month prior to discussion.
No Registration Required.

Popular Music and Veterans with Jon Waterman
Thursday, February 26th
6:00-7:30

“Popular Music and Veterans” is an off-shoot of the “Roots of American Popular Music” program with an exploration through songs of some of the experiences and sacrifices of veterans throughout American history- the Revolution, the Civil War, World Wars I and II, Korea and Vietnam- alongside some related popular music history.

Funded, in part, by a grant from the Dudley Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Children’s Programming

Guest Reader-Mason Road Teacher-Mrs. Lundquist
Monday, February 2nd
6:00-7:00

Baby Open Play
Fridays in February
10:00- 12:00

Open play for babies! Parents and caregivers can let babies play while getting to know others in the community. Come anytime between 10-12 or stay the whole time! No Registration Required

Pre-K Power
Tuesdays in February-NO SESSION
February 17th
10:00-10:45

For ages 3-5 and their caregiver (siblings always welcome!). Join us for stories, songs, fingerplays, scarves, shaker eggs, moving our bodies to music, activities, bubbles, a craft, and free play!
No Registration needed.

Toddler Storytime
Wednesdays in February-NO SESSION
February 18th
10:00-10:45

Best for children 6 months - 36 months and their caregiver (siblings always welcome!). We’ll have fun with songs, fingerplays, a story, moving our bodies to music, shaker eggs, scarves, and bubbles! There will be time for free play and socialization, too.
No Registration needed.

Graphic Novel Book Club-Max Meow Cat Crusader
Thursday, February 12th
6:00- 6:45

Do you love graphic novels? Join us for Graphic Novel Book Club! Each month we will meet to discuss the graphic novel of the month. Copies of the book will be located at the circulation desk in the Children’s Room. Best for ages 8 and up. Registration not required. This is not a drop off program.

Local Author Storytime with Louise Chadborne
Tuesday, February 17th
11:00-11:45

Join local author, Louise Chadborne, as she reads her book, “Granite: The Bullmastiff Story”. There will be a fun craft after the story. This is best for children ages 4-8 and siblings are welcome!

Build Your Own Clay Snowman
Tuesday, February 17th
1:00-3:00

Drop by the Fels Room on Tuesday,

February 17th anytime between 1:00-3:00 to make your own clay snowman! While supplies last. No registration needed.

How to Draw Mario Brothers Characters with Pop Up Art School!
Wednesday, February 18th
1:00-2:30

Join us as Pop Up Art School guides you step-by-step while you learn to draw your favorite Mario Brothers characters! This program is for ages 8 -14 only and registration is required as space is limited. This is not a drop-off program.

Playful Engineers
Thursday, February 19th
11:00-12:30

With space to work and play, time for trial and error, and access to open-ended materials, children will learn how the world works, through their own exploration and discovery. Jay Mankita from Playful Engineers will be there to facilitate as children engage in playful engineering activities! For children ages 4 and up only, as there will be many small parts. No registration needed. This is not a drop-off program.

Pokemon Club
Thursday, February 19th
6:00-6:45

Do you love everything Pokemon? Join us for Pokemon club! Each month we will have exciting crafts and activities! Best for ages 6 and up. No Registration Required. This is not a drop off program.

Yoga for Children
Friday, February 20th
10:00-10:45

Join certified Yoga instructor, Patricia (also known as Buffy), for a 45-minute yoga class for children ages 3-5 and their caregivers! Caregivers are encouraged to participate in the class, but it is not required. If you will be participating, please bring your own mat. (Yoga mats will be provided for the children.) Registration is required as space is limited.

Deb’s Sing & Swing-The Way I Feel
Friday, February 27th
10:30-11:15

Pre-K Music & Movement offers a 45-minute interactive program featuring singing, guitar music, dancing, rhythm instruments, stories, and a variety of fun props, including a parachute, beanbags, scarves, and pom poms. These programs are theme-based, and cover everything from holidays and seasons to dinosaurs and bugs!

Teen Programming

Dungeons & Dragons Game
Thursdays in February
6:00-7:30
Ages 14-19

Are you looking to play a game that contains action, adventure, and drama?
Come play the world’s number one role-playing game.

Step-by-Step Winter Painting for Teens
Monday, February 2nd
3:30-4:45

Join Art Educator Julie Harrold in this fun winter fox landscape! Participants will learn art and brush techniques to build this fun painting! Acrylic paint on 11x14 canvas. All materials will be provided. This program is for teens ages 12 to 17 only. Registration is required.

WEBSTER SENIOR CENTER

5 Church St.
(508) 949-3845
Email: SeniorCenter@Webster-MA.gov

Senior Center hours are Monday- Friday 9 a.m.- 4 p.m., with one Thursday a month 9 a.m.-7 p.m.

Like the Webster Senior Center Facebook page to view our photographs, news and announcements. Please stop by to pick up our monthly newsletter for a complete list of activities, upcoming events, and our monthly lunch menu. You may also join our email list to view our newsletter online. You do not have to be a resident of

DUDLEY POLICE LOG

DUDLEY — The Dudley Police Department reported the following arrests during the month of January.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication was arrested on Jan. 1 for Violation of an Abuse Prevention Order.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication was arrested on Jan. 3 for Vandalization of Property, Violation of an Abuse Prevention Order, and Assault on a Family or Household Member. A second individual whose identity was also withheld was arrested during the same incident for Violation of an Abuse Prevention Order and multiple counts of Resisting Arrest.

Kenneth Michael Leblanc, age 51, of Dudley was arrested on Jan. 6 in connection with an out of agency warrant.

Webster to participate in our activities and programs. ALL Seniors are welcome!

Tri-Valley Lunches are served Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 11:30 am. Please call (508) 949-3845 at least three business days in advance to reserve or cancel your meal. A \$3.00 donation for 65 and up, and \$5 for 55- 64 is appreciated. All meals include milk, bread, and dessert. This week’s menu: Tuesday, 2/3: Meatloaf with gravy, garlic mashed potatoes, green beans. Wednesday, 2/4: Roast turkey with gravy, apple cornbread stuffing, roasted brussels sprouts. Thursday,

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication was arrested on Jan. 7 for Assault & Battery on a Family or Household Member, Resisting Arrest, and Vandalization of Property.

Arthur Tolman Christian, age 39, of Dudley was arrested on Jan. 9 in connection with an out of agency warrant.

Selien Dorvilus, age 40, of Dudley was arrested on Jan. 12 for Operating Under the Influence (Liquor), Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle, and making an Improper Turn.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication was arrested on Jan. 12 for Domestic Assault & Battery.

Gabriel Alan McLenithan, age 22, of North Adams was arrested on Jan. 16 in connection with an out of agency warrant.

2/5: Teriyaki beef, steamed rice, broccoli and peppers. Friday, 2/6: Honey mustard pork, mashed sweet potatoes, Scandinavian vegetables.

Need Transportation? Contact SCM Elderbus at 1-800-321-0243 at least two business days in advance to schedule transportation. Elderbus is available Mondays-Fridays 8:30 am- 3:00 pm.

Come down to the Bomba Beauty Salon at the Webster Senior Center! Call 508-341-8724 for an appointment. Bomba Beauty Salon is open for walk in appointments on Wednesdays from 10:00 am- 1:00 pm, and Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays by appointment only from 10:00 am- 3:00 pm. Please call (508) 341-8724 to schedule an appointment.

Think you have a secret admirer? Come check out the Valentine’s Day Party on February 13th! From 1:00-2:30 pm, the Friends of the Webster Senior Center will be hosting our lovely party, with Live Music by Max to serenade you!

Chair Dancing Exercise classes with Forty Arroyo are the perfect workout for any fitness ability! The cost is a recommended \$3.00 donation per class. A new video class will be offered Thursday and Friday mornings, free of charge.

Now introducing Line Dancing with Forty Arroyo! Classes will be held from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm on the last Monday of the month.

Knitting/Crochet group meets on Mondays from 10:00 am- 12:00 pm.

Bingo is every Tuesday and starts

promptly at 1:00 pm. Please plan to arrive by 12:30 pm to allow time to buy your bingo sheets. Bingo sheets are not sold after 12:45 pm.

Do you like to play Cribbage? Our weekly Cribbage group meets every Thursday at 1:00 pm. Feel free to join us!

Calling card players or interested persons to the Webster Senior Center! Come join us for six-card or thirteen-card pitch! Six-card pitch meets on Wednesdays at 1:00 pm. Thirteen-card pitch meets on Thursdays at 1:00 pm.

Mahjongg group meets every Friday at 1:00 pm. Beginners welcome!

We now have an official Bridge group! We will be meeting every Friday from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm in the upstairs activity room. All that are interested are welcome to join!

The Worcester County Sheriff’s Office House Numbering Program will create a custom wooden sign with your house number free of charge. One sign per senior household. Please contact the Webster Senior Center at (508) 949-3845. if you are interested in having a house number sign made for you.

Senior SAFE is a program that supports fire and life safety education for seniors. The Webster Fire Dept. will do a home visit to ensure that you have the correct smoke and CO2 alarms, and that they are working properly. This is at no cost to you! All you have to do is give them a call at (508) 949-3875.

GLADYS E. KELLY MEMORIAL LIBRARY

2 Lake St., Webster
508-949-3880
Library Hours: Monday-Thursday 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; Friday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
The Library will be closed on Monday, Feb. 16 for President's Day

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST!
Want to receive updates about our upcoming events? Sign up for email alerts by visiting our website or contacting our Adult Services Librarian Jessica Fontaine at jfontaine@cwmmars.org

Adult Programming
Literacy Volunteers: ESL Classes – Tuesdays at 6:00pm
The Literacy Cafe is a free weekly English conversation class offered by Literacy Volunteers of South Central Massachusetts (LVSCM). This class is free to attend and is open to all adults. No pre-registration is required. For more information, email us at info@lvscm.org.

Grief Support Group – 2nd Tuesday and 4th Saturday of the Month (6:30pm on Tuesdays; 10:00am on Saturdays) in the Local History Room
Losing a loved one is never easy. Please know that you are not alone. If you need support in trying to navigate the changes in your life, join us in a place of safety and comfort with others who have also experienced loss. This grief support group is a place to find understanding as we explore our grief, share coping strategies, and begin to heal.

Yoga – Saturdays at 9:30am
Join Julie or Lauren at the Gladys E. Kelly Library for a vinyasa yoga class for all levels. A typical class involves centering the mind with the breath, aromatherapy, movement of the body to release energetic blockages, and, finally, rest and relaxation. Classes are free. Funded by the Friends of the Gladys E. Kelly Public Library.

Yoga Nidra with Jess – Fridays in January, at 8:15am; No Class on January 23rd
Join Adult Services Librarian Jess for a relaxing yoga nidra practice to start your day. Jess will guide participants through a few simple yoga asanas to release physical tension. Participants will then settle into a reclined position for a guided relaxation (yoga nidra). This program takes place before the library officially opens. Registration is required and Jess will meet you at the program door. If you have your own yoga mat, please bring it and be sure to dress in comfortable clothing.

Cookbook Club – Wednesday, February 11th at 6:00pm
Join our cookbook club this month as we cook recipes from the same book. We always have a great time eating and discussing our experiences with the book. February's cookbook is The Don't Panic Pantry Cookbook: Mostly Vegetarian Comfort Food That Happens to be Pretty Good for You by Noah Galuten.

Paint Night for Adults with Julie Harrold: Snow Drops – Thursday, February 12th at 6:00pm
Join Art Educator Julie Harrold in painting a cosy Winter scene! Participants will learn about underpainting, and blending and adding just the right touch of details to make a fun whimsical painting! Painting done with acrylic paint on a 9-10 inch round stretched canvas.

Programming for All Ages
The Dangerous Art of Chainsaw Sculpture! – Saturday, January 24th at 11:00am
A fun, interesting, interactive and engaging journey through the amazing career of world-famous Master Chainsaw Sculptor, Dr. "The Machine" Jesse Green (AMERICAN CHAINSAW on National Geographic Channel, ESPN/ Disney and more.) Through an incredible series of photos, the process of creating gigantic, death-defying works of art from trees is brought to life in a BIG way! Attendees will be able to ask questions throughout and fully participate in the discussion. You've never seen anything like it!

Bingo – Saturday, January 31st at 11:00am
Join us for a fun all ages Bingo event! Mystery prizes will be rewarded to the winners. All are welcome, no registration required.

Programming for All Ages
Library for All – Mondays and Fridays at 10am
Library for All is an inclusive pro-

gram for teens and adults of all abilities and their caregivers. Please let us know if you need any special accommodations! Join us every Monday and Friday! The 1st week of the month is coloring, the 2nd week is LEGO, the 3rd week is chair yoga, and the 4th week of the month is painting.

Puzz Fest: Disco Life – Thursday, February 5th at 6:00pm
Assemble your team (up to 5 people!) and join us to see which team can complete their puzzle first. We'll have snacks to keep you fueled as you tackle your 500 piece jigsaw. All teams will get to keep their puzzle. Registration is required.

Drop-In Valentine's Day Cards – Monday, February 9th 4:30-6:30pm
It's Valentine Season! Drop by the library to make personalized cards to send to your family and friends! All ages are welcome.

Joys of Nature – Saturday, February 14th at 11:00 and 12:30pm
Brrr, winter is cold in New England! How do animals survive here? Joys of Nature will teach us about what mammals, birds, insects and reptiles do in the winter. All audience members will get the chance to meet live animals up close. This intergenerational program is designed for ages 4 and up, registration is required.

Children's and Young Adult Programming
Play-Doh Storytime – Mondays at 10:30am
Join us for an engaging storytime filled with interactive stories and Play-Doh fun! Kids are invited to explore, squish and make new creations each week. This sensory-friendly program is perfect for young learners and their grown-ups.

Creators Club – Mondays from 4:00-5:30 PM
We will have a variety of craft materials available to put your creativity to the test! Come explore our newly rebranded Monday night program: Creators Club! February's theme is: Wooden Art Magnets! Kids will decorate different wood pieces to bring home. All creations left behind will be displayed in the Children's program room for the rest of the month.

Tiny Groovers – Tuesdays at 10:30am
Join Miss Paige for a new storytime! Toddlers ages 2-5 and their caregivers will dance to popular kids' tunes using while instruments and playful props, and enjoy an interactive story each week.

Mighty Builders – Tuesdays at 4:00pm
Unleash creativity in our free-build program featuring LEGOs, magnet tiles, wooden blocks, marble runs, and more!
Mini Chefs Club – Wednesday, January 28th at 5:30pm
Welcome to Mini Chefs Club! Our food focused series is back, offering kids 7-12 the opportunity to practice knife safety while learning new recipes that involve cutting a variety of ingredients. During this second session, participants will often be split into groups of two or more and collaborate to prepare larger dishes for everyone to share. Due to limited supplies, registration is required.

Pokémon Party – Saturday, February 8th 11:00-12:30pm
Calling all Pokémon fans! Join us for a Pokémon Party packed with games, crafts, and Pokémon themed activities. At noon we will kick off Pokémon trivia where kids will get to show off their knowledge and fans could go home with some awesome raffle prizes.

Paint Night for Tweens and Teens with Julie Harrold: Cosy Winter Window – Thursday, February 12th at 4:00pm
Join Art Educator Julie Harrold in painting a cosy Winter scene! Participants will learn about underpainting, and blending and adding just the right touch of details to make a fun whimsical painting! Painting done with acrylic paint on a 9-10 inch round stretched canvas.

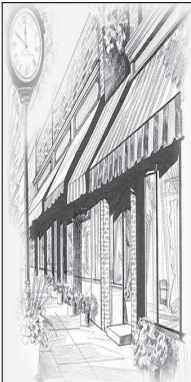
Read to Ginger OR Maple, the Therapy Dogs – Tuesday, February 17th Appointments from 9:30-11:30am
Join us for a cozy event as families get to select a picturebook to read to Ginger or Maple the Therapy Dogs! Each session will be 10 minutes long to allow for multiple families to enjoy this experience. You will randomly be assigned a dog to read to at the start of your time slot. Registration is required.



Courtesy
Saint Joseph School seventh grader Sophia Surowaniec proudly holds her winning Lions Clubs International Peace Poster Contest entry, "Together as One," alongside Dr. John Kalinowski of the Webster-Dudley Lions Club, who visited the school to notify her that her poster is advancing to the district level.

Saint Joseph School student advances in Lions Peace Poster Contest

WEBSTER — A seventh-grade student at Saint Joseph School has been selected as the school's winner in the 2025 Lions Clubs International Peace Poster Contest, earning the opportunity to advance to the district level.
Sophia Surowaniec, daughter of Piotr and Kristy Surowaniec of North Grosvenordale, Conn., received the news during a visit to Saint Joseph School by Webster-Dudley Lions Club member Dr. John Kalinowski, who personally notified her that her poster was moving forward and posed for photos with the student.
This year's contest theme, "Together as One," encourages students to share their vision of peace through original artwork. The Peace Poster Contest aims to allow children in schools and youth groups everywhere to express their visions of peace through their art. Lions Club members, through local service, strive to spread joy, kindness, hope, and peace within the community.
Sophia is a repeat winner for Saint Joseph School—her 2024 entry was also selected to move on in the competition. She is also deeply involved in school leadership and service as a member of Saint Joseph School's Eagles Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society, Treasurer of the Children of Mary Sodality, a member of the Varsity Cheer Team, and an Assistant Coach for the Eagles Cheer Team.
Students develop and refine their contest ideas in art class with Saint Joseph School's Art Instructor and Fine Arts Director, Ms. Brigid Campbell, who supports students in connecting artistic choices to the message they want to communicate.
School leaders noted that the contest aligns closely with Saint Joseph School's mission of Religion, Respect, and Responsibility, giving students a meaningful way to express compassion, unity, and respect through creativity.
Congratulations to Sophia Surowaniec on this achievement.



Community Connection



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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
STONEBRIDGE PRESS PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

The value of small decisions close to home

Not every important decision in Webster arrives with fanfare. Most do not come wrapped in speeches or marked by ribbon cuttings. Instead, they take place quietly, in meeting rooms on ordinary weeknights, through votes that rarely draw crowds and discussions that seldom make headlines. Yet these are the decisions that shape the texture of everyday life in town.

Local government is often judged by its largest projects, but it is sustained by its smallest actions. Routine agenda items, license approvals, budget adjustments, and policy clarifications may appear minor in isolation. Taken together, they determine how smoothly municipal services operate and how consistently rules are applied. They affect how quickly roads are repaired, how public spaces are maintained, and how accessible town services remain for residents of all ages.

In a community the size of ours, governance is necessarily close to the ground. Board members are neighbors. Department heads are familiar faces. Decisions are made not in distant offices but in rooms where residents can sit, listen, and speak. This proximity is one of the town’s greatest strengths, but it only works when the process is steady and visible.

Consistency matters. Boards that meet regularly, post clear agendas, and maintain accurate minutes build confidence over time. Residents may not agree with every outcome, but they are more likely to trust decisions that are made openly and thoughtfully. Transparency does not require perfection. It requires effort, follow-through, and a willingness to explain how and why choices are made.

Public participation plays an important role, even when it is quiet. Attending a meeting does not always mean stepping to the microphone. Sometimes it means observing, understanding how decisions unfold, and recognizing the work being done. Presence alone can reinforce accountability and remind those serving that their work is part of a larger civic fabric.

It is also worth remembering that many of the people who keep Webster, Dudley and Oxford running do so with limited resources and little recognition. Board members, committee volunteers, and municipal staff balance public responsibilities with jobs, families, and personal commitments. The decisions they make are rarely simple, and they often involve competing priorities. A functioning local government depends on patience as much as participation.

Small decisions, made carefully and consistently, are what allow a town to manage larger challenges when they arise. Long-term planning does not happen all at once. It is built gradually, through regular oversight, routine maintenance, and attention to detail. When those building blocks are in place, Webster is better prepared to respond to growth, economic pressures, and changing community needs.

In the end, the health of a town is measured not by dramatic moments but by reliability. When residents know where decisions are made, how to access information, and how to engage respectfully, trust has room to grow. Paying attention to the quieter work of local government, even occasionally, helps ensure that Webster continues to be governed with care, stability, and a strong sense of community.

Letter submission policy

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

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

Viewpoint

Curtis Street

BY HELEN POIRIER
AUBURN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

When entering the information in a database about the founding fathers in what was then, the South Parish of Worcester, a name popped up that was familiar, Oliver Curtis. Oliver’s family originally came from the Sudbury area of Massachusetts. They were farmers. Oliver’s parents, Ephraim and Mary [Rice], moved to Worcester on Pakachoag Hill sometime before Oliver’s brother Samuel was born in 1730, Oliver was born in 1740. The part of Worcester that they moved to eventually was annexed to create the South Parish. Not all families living in the Pakachoag area were thrilled about being taken away from Worcester, and the Curtis family was one of them. According to former town historian, John Hartwell, these families were permitted to remain tied to Worcester even though their property was in South Parish. These were prominent families and were about one fifth of the town acreage. For about 75 years petitions were sent to the General Court asking to be reunited with Worcester, and all were denied.

Oliver was active in town government starting in 1773 when he was involved with the meeting house construction. There was an absence of Oliver’s name in town affairs from April 19, 1775, when he marched on the alarm in Lexington as a private in Captain Samuel Lamson’s Company, and served 3 days. According to the “Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors who served in the Revolutionary War,” in May of 1777 he was in Capt. Jesse Wyman’s Co., in Col. Josiah Whitney’s regiment at Point Judith and was discharged July 1777. He was also listed in Rhode Island as a sergeant in Captain Edward Richardson’s Company, in Colonel Thomas Poor’s regiment where payroll accounts had him at West Point in Sept. 1778, and King’s Ferry in November. He was finally discharged in December of 1778.

The town reports had Oliver listed 1778 –

field driver, a field driver was a town officer responsible for capturing and impounding domestic farm animals roaming loose. The field driver’s role was codified in Massachusetts law (Massachusetts General Laws Part I Title VII Chapter 49 Section 240) “Duties of field driver; taking up untended animals.” In 1779, he was listed as a Fence Viewer. Their job was to make sure fences in the town were properly maintained to cut down on internal squabbling and difficulties. In 1780, Oliver was tasked to purchase beef for supplying patriot soldiers, 1781 [committee of] correspondence, and court attendee which were involved with the state constitution, and 1782- correspondence which was the network for information that each town had.

Since Curtis Street is off of Pakachoag Street it could be possible that was the area where the Curtis family had their farm thus needed a road to get to it. There was an advertisement in the Massachusetts Spy dated March 20, 1799 stating that “the house of Oliver Curtis in Ward, a farm containing about 100 acres of land; consisting of mowing, pasturing, tillage and woodland, well-watered — a house, corn house and barn will be fold with the above, or separate, as shell best suit the purchaser. Terms of payment made easy; for further particulars, enquire of Oliver Curtis.” The 1800 census had Oliver living in Sharon, so the farm must have sold.

The 1810 census showed that Oliver and his wife were living Dudley. Oliver died in 1815 in Pelham at the age of 75 after a short illness. His last will had his wife as executor and inherited everything until his son turned 21. His son, Ephraim, married and moved to Otselic New York and daughter Betsy married Joseph Beebe of Sutton and had 5 children. Eventually the family moved to Chenango, New York. By 1850, all the original families in the Pakachoag area that were part of Worcester sold off their land and moved away.

Auction news and goodbye

It’s been a few weeks since I shared the latest auction news, and plenty has taken place since then.

Beginning with local news, a Western Massachusetts historical society recently consigned a piece of furniture for auction that generated significant funds for the group. I’ve noted in previous columns that most antique furniture has dropped in value over the years. This piece was certainly an exception. The Swift River Valley Historical Society’s website describes themselves as “the leading resource in preserving the artifacts, stories and records of the lost towns of the Quabbin Valley.” It is the historical society for the towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts took residents’ properties in those four towns by eminent domain, and everyone had to relocate by April 28, 1938. The land was flooded several months later to create the Quabbin Reservoir, which provides water to the Eastern part of the state. The Swift River Valley Historical Society had a cabinet from 1677 that had been donated by Annie Frances Ballard, according to the Greenfield Recorder. Ballard was a descendant of one of the cabinet’s original owners. The cabinet door was crafted with two sevens for 1677 and a heart with the initials of Symon and Rebeckah Horne. They were an Andover, MA, couple who commissioned the cabinet after the birth of their first son. It was kept in a temperature-controlled room, but the historical society could no longer secure and insure it. It sailed past the auction estimate of \$600,000 to \$800,000, selling for \$1,636,000 earlier this month. According to the Greenfield Recorder, the historical society will use the funds to make their “building accessible for people with disabilities, and mak[e] the facility more user-friendly for archivists and historians.”

An auction of memorabilia related to our nation’s history also took place earlier this month, with two George Washington paintings selling very well. A 1783 painting depicting Washington as a general by Charles Peale Polk brought \$577,850, while a Gilbert Stuart portrait of Washington went for \$2.8 million, according to Artnet News. A printed copy of the Declaration of Independence from 1776 sold for \$5.6 million, and a printed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation signed by Abraham Lincoln



earned \$6.7 million. A draft of the United States Constitution with notes by founding father Rufus King was the highest selling piece, bringing \$7.3 million.



ANTIQUES, COLLECTIBLES & ESTATES
WAYNE TUISKULA

A more contemporary item set an auction record in November. Auction records for sports memorabilia and comic books are frequently being broken, and a rare Superman 1939 first issue comic book has done it again. The comic book was discovered by three brothers who were cleaning out their mother’s attic, according to an AP article. The copy graded a 9.0 out of 10, remarkable for an issue that old. It went up, up, and away, fetching over \$9 million.

I’ve greatly enjoyed the 10-plus years I’ve been writing this column. It’s been wonderful meeting many of you who’ve invited me to appraise items at local appraisal events, asked me to lecture about antiques, have consigned items with me, or have taken the time to email me about articles I’ve written. Our workload has been increasing every year, leading me to take a hiatus from writing. Please keep my contact information in case you may need help in the future. Once again, thank you to everyone who has read this column and thank you for your support.

Our single-collector Civil War auction starts next week. The following sale will include fine jewelry, sterling silver, art, and other antiques and collectibles. We’ll be running a major sale with sports cards and memorabilia in the summer. We are accepting consignments for our next two sales. Please visit our website <https://centralmassauctions.com> for links to upcoming events.

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

What should you do with your tax refund?



FINANCIAL FOCUS
DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

It’s almost time for people to begin receiving their tax refunds. If you get one, what will you do with it?

The answer will depend somewhat on the size of your refund. Last year, the average was \$3,167, according to the Internal Revenue Service’s Filing Season Statistics report.

Whatever the size of your refund, you’ll want to maximize its benefit. Here are some suggestions:

Contribute to your IRA. If you receive \$3,167, it could go a long way toward funding your IRA for the year, but any amount would help. You have until April 15 to contribute for the 2025 tax year, but if you’ve already “maxed out” contributions, you could use your refund for 2026, when the annual contribution limit for an IRA is \$7,500, or \$8,600 if you’re 50 or older. Beginning early toward fully funding your IRA can help reduce the pressure of coming up with large amounts later.

Build an emergency fund. Your tax refund could help you start or expand an emergency fund. It’s a good idea to keep three to six months’ worth of living expenses in such a fund, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account, separate from the funds you use for your daily expenses. You might need to draw on this fund for unexpected expenses, such as a major home or car repair or a large medical bill. Without an emergency fund in place, you might be tempted to dip into your IRA or other retirement accounts to pay for these types of costs, and that could be expensive, resulting in taxes, penalties and lost opportunities for growth.

Contribute to a 529 plan. If you have children or grandchildren and want to support their education, you might consider investing in a 529 education savings plan. Earnings and withdrawals are federally tax free, provided the money is used for qualified education expenses. Your 529 plan may provide state tax benefits, too. (It’s possible, though, that 529 withdrawals could affect financial aid packages, depending on who owns the account.) A 529 plan can be used to help pay for college, accredited trade school programs, some K-12 expenses and even some student loans.

Pay down debts. You may wish you could reduce your debt load. Your tax refund could offer you that chance. But which debts should you tackle first? You could follow the “snowball” method by paying off the smallest of your loans or debts as quickly as possible. Or you could choose the “avalanche” route by making minimum payments on all debts and using extra funds – such as your tax refund – to pay off those with the highest interest rates. Either method could help you save money in the long term.

Prepare for other tax obligations. Your refund can also be set aside in a separate savings account to pay estimated quarterly taxes or personal property or real estate taxes.

It’s not often that you receive a financial windfall such as a tax refund — so think carefully about how you can maximize its benefits.

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Where thumbtacks and neighbors meet

LANTERNS ALONG MAIN STREET
By CHARLES

There is a corkboard inside our local post office that I pass every time I mail a letter. It is cluttered in the best possible way. Thumbtacks hold up handwritten notes, curling flyers and business cards that have seen better days. Guitar lessons. Snow plowing services. A lost cat notice that has been there long enough to feel like part of the décor. Community dinners. Yard sales scheduled and then rescheduled with a pen scribble in the margin.

Most people walk past it without stopping. They are in a hurry to drop mail, grab a package and get back to their day. But every now and then, someone pauses. They lean in. They read. Sometimes they smile. Sometimes they pull out a phone to take a picture of a phone number written in blue ink.

That board is not fancy. It is not digital. It does not send notifications. Yet it quietly does its job, connecting neighbors in a way that feels very Massachusetts.

I grew up in a time when community news traveled slowly and personally. You heard things at the counter of the general store, in the pews at church or while waiting for your coffee to cool. Today, information moves faster than ever, yet it often feels less human. We scroll past announcements without really seeing them. We click “interested” on events we never attend. We collect more information but fewer connections.

That corkboard is a small act of resistance to that trend. It says: here is a place where real people leave messages for other real people. It is imperfect. It is slightly crooked. It smells faintly of paper and tape. And it works.

You see similar boards in libraries, town halls and coffee shops across our region. They are community living rooms in miniature. Each note represents someone taking a chance that a neighbor might need what they are offering or offering what they need.

There is something brave about pinning up a piece of paper with your phone number on it. It is a quiet statement that says, “I am part of this place, and I am willing to be found.”

It made me think about how often we hide behind screens. We text instead of talk. We email instead of knock on doors. None of that is wrong, but it does change the texture of community life. A handwritten sign taped to a window or pinned to a board carries a different weight. You can see the handwriting. You can tell if the person was in a hurry or took their time. You can sense effort.

I watched an older woman stop at the post office board last week. She read carefully, adjusting her glasses, nodding slightly at a few notices. Then she pulled out a small stack of papers and added one of her own. I did not see what it said, but I saw the care she took in placing it just right, smoothing the corners before stepping back to admire her work.

That moment felt important. It was not loud. It was not broadcast to hundreds of followers. It was one neighbor speaking quietly to another through paper and thumbtacks.

We often talk about keeping Main Street alive. We focus on storefronts, parking spaces and foot traffic. Those things matter. But so do these smaller, almost invisible threads that tie us together. Bulletin boards. Flyers. Handwritten notes. Conversations that start because someone stopped long enough to read.

Next time you pass one of these boards, take a moment. Read a few notices. You might find something useful. You might learn something new. Or you might simply be reminded that community is not built by algorithms. It is built by ordinary people sharing space and information in ordinary ways.

Sometimes the lanterns along Main Street are not hanging from poles or glowing in windows. Sometimes they are pieces of paper, quietly lit by the simple hope that someone else is paying attention.



Courtesy

SAINT JOSEPH SCHOOL ANNOUNCES DECEMBER STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to the following students who were selected as December Students of the Month at Saint Joseph School. Pictured with Principal, Mrs. Beth Boudreau, are the following – Pre-K 3-year-old: Amelia Deptula; Pre-K 4-year-old: Grayson Larsen; Kindergarten: Marcus DiTullio-Cedeno; Grade 1: Dominik Kicilinski; Grade 2: Liam Buschle; Grade 3: Paulina Obrycki; Grade 4: Tamara Giteru; Grade 5: Mia Reed; Grade 6: Kirillos Ibrahim; Grade 7: Grayson Dollar; Grade 8: Ivonka Warnajtyts. Students are awarded Student of the Month for their outstanding exemplification of Religion, Respect, and Responsibility. Keep up the great work!

Boat America safe boating course offered at Bay Path March 10 & 12

CHARLTON — The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Tri-State Flotilla, Massachusetts will be instructing the Boat America course that meets current and future state mandated educational requirements offered in a two-night format developed to provide the skills and confidence needed to explore the coast and inland waters by boat. Basic knowledge and skills are needed to have safe and enjoyable boating experiences.

This course is perfect for families that have just purchased any type of boat or are planning to in the future, and for the boater keeping up with changes to boating regulations and laws. Basic marlinespike seamanship (knots etc.) will also be included.

Successful completion of the BA course will certify any minor, from 12 to 16 years of age, to operate a powerboat, including a Personal Water Craft / Jet Ski (for 16 & 17-year-old operators), on all Massachusetts waters; in conjunction with the Mass. Environmental Police. Approved by National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) it will also cover the requirements to operate a vessel in most other states & many countries where boating safety education is mandatory including Rhode Island and Connecticut.

The Hanson-Milone Boater Safety Act, signed into Mass. Law Jan. 8, will now require all Massachusetts motorboat operators to complete an approved Safe Boating Certificate course before April 1, 2026 for anyone born after Jan. 1, 1998, and by April 1, 2028 for boaters born before Jan. 1, 1998. Enforcement of the new law will begin on September 1, 2026. The BA course meets the future Mass. requirement. Most boating insurance companies offer a discount on premiums for successful completion of this course.

Participants 16 years old and under must be accompanied, in person, by a registered parent/guardian. Space is limited, so register soon:

Register online at via www.baypath.augusoft.net Fun & Play>Sports & Leisure links. Class ID 42920 or by calling

Sheri Dreitlein (508) 248-5971 email sdreitlein@baypath.net

You can also contact our Public Education Officer Phil Kubat for registration or additional information: email phil.uscgaux@verizon.net or call (508) 478-3778.

To locate these and other USCG Auxiliary courses go to: https://www.cgaux.org/boat-indexed/class_finder/index.php

The Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed civilian component of the U.S. Coast Guard and supports the Coast Guard in nearly all mission areas. The Auxiliary was created by Congress in 1939. For more information, please visit www.cgaux.org.

Cornerstone Bank renews support for Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester to expand ESOL and workforce readiness programs

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank has committed \$4,000 in continued support to Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester (LVGW) to help expand its English as a Second Language (ESOL) and Workforce Readiness Program for New Americans, strengthening access to English language education and employment pathways for immigrants, refugees and migrants in the greater Worcester community.

The 2025 contribution builds on Cornerstone Bank’s prior support of \$3,000 in both 2023 and 2024 and will help LVGW expand class offerings, recruit and train volunteer tutors and provide individualized career and employment assistance. The program addresses critical barriers to employment, education and civic participation faced by New Americans while supporting long-term economic stability in the region.

“With strong community partners like Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester, we can help ensure that opportunity is accessible to everyone,” said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. “By supporting ESOL and workforce readiness programs, we are investing not only in individual success, but in the strength and vitality of the entire Worcester community.”

In 2025, LVGW helped 451 adult learners benefit from English instruction, individualized tutoring and direct pathways to greater economic security. LVGW has served nearly 12,000 adult learners from more than 120 countries since its founding in 1973.

Cornerstone Bank’s renewed investment will support the program’s second year of expansion, helping New Americans gain the English language and workforce skills they need to succeed in work, school and daily life.

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.

College presidents kick off coast-to-coast Super Bowl showdown

WORCESTER — With excitement building for Super Bowl LX, the presidents of Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) and North Seattle College (NSC) are bringing some friendly competition of their own to the field.

The two institutions have announced a lighthearted wager tied to their respective hometown NFL teams. If the New England Patriots prevail, North Seattle College President Dr. Rachel Solemsaas will don QCC apparel and New England football gear, posting a celebratory photo on social media. If the Seattle Seahawks take home the victory, QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja will do the same in NSC colors and Seahawks gear.

Building on a long friendship that grew from work with the American Association of Community Colleges, the presidents’ bet is meant to spotlight the pride and passion that students, alumni and community members feel for both institutions and their local communities.

“The Patriots are a great team, and we respect New England very much. That said, the Tree Frogs of North Seattle College must align with our hometown heroes, the Seattle Seahawks, in the big game,” said Solemsaas. “I’m sure my good friend, President Dr. Luis Pedraja and the amazing faculty, staff and students at Quinsigamond Community College will understand that this is Seattle’s year. The memory of 2015 is a heavy burden that we’ve been carrying around for 11 years. But now it is payback time.”

QCC is getting into the Super Bowl spirit this week with an on-campus tailgate party and a Patriots apparel donation drive for students.

“As Super Bowl Sunday approaches, our campuses are buzzing—QCC Wyverns and North Seattle Tree Frogs alike—cheering on our favorite teams with all the enthusiasm our faculty, staff and students can muster. And while I am good friends with Dr. Solemsaas, even friendship can’t stop a little spirited coast-to-coast rivalry,” said Pedraja. “Here in New England, we are absolutely convinced the Patriots are ready to repeat their 2015 magic...and yes, we fully believe they’re going to win! Consider this our playful warning that bragging rights are already warming up on the sidelines. Here’s to a great game, and a friendly rivalry that brings our campuses even closer, no matter which mascot hops or soars away victorious.”

Follow QCC’s Facebook or Instagram ([quinsigcc](https://www.facebook.com/quinsigcc)) and NSC’s Facebook or Instagram ([north_seattle_college](https://www.facebook.com/north_seattle_college)) for updates and some pre-Super Bowl hype videos.

New members join Fraternal Family



Courtesy
From left to right—new members Brother Brendan Shunaman, Brother Harmon Hirtz, Master Paul Davidson (Major General Salem Towne Lodge), and Brother Aidan McCann.

BY BRO. JIMMY FALZONE
MAJOR GENERAL SALEM TOWNE MASONIC LODGE
SOUTHBRIDGE

SOUTHBRIDGE — On Saturday, Jan. 31, brethren from all around the 24th Masonic District, and dignitaries from the Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts from Boston gathered at the Major General Salem Towne Masonic Lodge, Webster Masonic Apartments.

Many of these men traveled from long distances to witness and congratulate 3 young men who were raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. They are Brothers Harmon Hirtz of Charlton, Brother Brendan Shunaman of Southbridge and Brother Aidan McCann of Charlton. These men, along with other men, have followed this path and joined this great fraternity because of “Who We Are.” We’re men, each trying to be the best version of ourselves. We find it’s easier to do that when we’re with other men who share the same values. We’re there for our brothers no matter what life may bring, and our brothers are there for us. We help others, not just because it’s the right thing to do, but also because it helps us grow. We value Honor and Integrity. We believe there’s always more to learn. As Freemasons we thrive to make good men even better.

Major General Salem Towne Masonic Lodge was chartered in 1859. What we do know is that after 167 years, the Major General Salem Towne Masonic Lodge and Freemasonry have continued to grow and make good men better. This is because we value our old traditions, and we think this is what attracts this younger generation of men. These men want to see and learn how it used to be and what it is like to value honor and integrity. If you would like more information about Freemasonry and to find a lodge nearest you, visit our website at www.massfreemasonry.org



Master Masons from the Major General Salem Towne lodge and the 24th Masonic District along with dignitaries from the Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts from Boston.

All Saints students visit Worcester Art Museum

www.StonebridgePress.com



WORCESTER – Grade 6 students from All Saints Academy recently visited the Ancient Civilizations galleries at the Worcester Art Museum, where they explored artwork from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and beyond. In addition to touring the galleries, students participated in a hands-on studio workshop focused on Egyptian cartouches. A cartouche is an oval shape that encloses a pharaoh’s name in hieroglyphs and symbolizes protection and eternity. Reserved for royalty, cartouches often displayed both a ruler’s birth name and throne name and later became essential to historians in deciphering hieroglyphs, including those found on the Rosetta Stone.

This immersive experience brought classroom learning to life by allowing students to see firsthand the artifacts, symbols, and artistic techniques they have been studying. Concepts discussed in class—such as the role of writing in ancient societies, the significance of art in expressing power and belief, and the daily lives of ancient peoples—became more meaningful as students observed authentic works of art up close. Creating their own cartouches helped students better understand the importance of names, symbolism, and written language in ancient Egypt while reinforcing lessons on hieroglyphs and historical interpretation.

During the visit, students also stopped by the Center for Nonviolent Solutions, where they were excited to view artwork created by 7th grade students from All Saints Academy on display. The pieces were submitted in the fall as part of a project that asked students to respond to the question, “What does peace look like in your community?” Seeing student artwork displayed in a museum setting made the experience especially meaningful, inspiring students to connect history, art, and their own voices in powerful ways.

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Courtesy

On March 1, Worcester Model Railroaders, Inc. will hold its Annual Show & Sale, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Auburn Elks Club, 754 Southbridge St. Admission \$6, children under 12 are free. For more information, contact Ralph Kimball at 508-868-5189, ralphkimball@charter.net and www.wmrr.org. The show has approximately 25 model railroad dealers offering items for sale as well as HO& N scale operating layouts available for viewing. Raffle tickets for a complete four-by-eight-foot model railroad layout (on display) will be available at the show. The 60-by-40-foot Worcester Model Railroad Club layout will be open and operating using Digital Command Control and is only 15 minutes from the show in Webster. For directions go to www.wmrr.org.

All Saints Academy comes together to honor local veterans

WEBSTER — The All Saints Academy community came together to honor local veterans with a special breakfast and ceremony this past Veterans Day.



In the school gym, decorated by Grades 4 and 5 with handmade cross table decorations symbolizing gratitude for veterans' bravery, courage, and service, we gathered to honor local veterans from our community as well as veterans invited by our students. A Veterans Wall, thoughtfully created by Grade 6, displayed meaningful acrostic poems that reflected students' appreciation and respect for those who have served our country.

The morning began with a warm welcome to our honored guests, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 proudly recited poems expressing thankfulness and admiration for our veterans. Grades 7 and 8 played an important role throughout the event by assisting with serving food and engaging the veterans in friendly, respectful conversation.

The veterans were extremely appreciative of the morning and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share their experiences. They were especially touched by our commitment to teaching students the importance of honoring and understanding the sacrifices made throughout their military careers. Students greatly enjoyed listening to the veterans' stories and learning firsthand about their service, making the celebration both meaningful and memorable for everyone involved. Through this special event, we wanted our veterans to know that they are remembered, valued, and appreciated not only on Veterans Day, but every day.

Roger Williams University announces Fall Dean's List

BRISTOL, R.I. — Select students have been named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List at Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I. Full-time students who complete 12 or more credits per semester and earn a GPA of 3.4 or higher are placed on the Dean's List that semester.

Danielle Denolf of Auburn
Lauren Smith of Auburn
Brooklyn Bonczyk of Dudley
Jason Lavallee of Oxford
Madison Stewart of Dudley

About RWU

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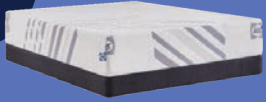
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LEGALS

NOTICE OF SALE, NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE’S SALE OF REAL ESTATE, Premises: 2 Aleda Drive, Auburn, MA 01501, By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Raymond Fortin to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Pacific Union Financial, LLC , dated October 25, 2018, and recorded with the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 59596, Page 152, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder by assignment of mortgage from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Pacific Union Financial, LLC to RoundPoint Mortgage Servicing Corporation, dated December 12, 2019, and recorded with said Registry in Book 61610, Page 346, and by an assignment of mortgage from RoundPoint Mortgage Servicing Corporation to Freedom Mortgage Corporation, dated October 16, 2020, and recorded with said Registry in Book 63625, Page 83, and by an assignment of mortgage from Freedom Mortgage Corporation to U.S. Bank National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely as legal title trustee for RMTP Trust Series 2021 Cottage-TT-V, dated June 10, 2022, and recorded with said Registry in Book 68002, Page 239, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold by Public Auction at 10:00 o’clock A.M. on the 4th day of March, 2026, at the mortgaged premises located at 2 Aleda Drive, Auburn, MA 01501, Worcester County, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, To wit:A certain tract of land in said Auburn situated in the northerly side of Aleda Drive and further bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at a point in the northerly line of Aleda Drive at the southeasterly corner of the land now or formerly of Raymond Hallberg, said point being N. 78 4 7’ E. forty (40) feet from a stone bound set at an angle in said street line; THENCE N. 78 47” E. ninety (90) feet by said street lien to a stone bound at a corner of land now or formerly of Verner Richardson et ux; THENCE northerly one hundred (100) feet by said Verner Richardson land to a point at other land now or formerly of Werner W. Richardson et ux; THENCE S. 78 47’ W. ninety (90) feet more or less to the northeasterly corner of said Hallberg land; THENCE S. 11 13’E. one hundred (100) feet by said Hallberg land to the point of beginning. CONTAINING 9,000 square feet by approximation and being Lot 9 on a Plan of Ridgewood, a development by Werner Richardson in Auburn, date May 1951, approved by Auburn Planning Board July 23, 1951, recorded with the Worcester District Registry of Deeds, Plan 176, Plan 23. The above premises are conveyed subject to the following restrictions: That no buildings shall be erected on the said premises other than a one-family type home to cost not less than \$10,000.00 and garage in connection therewith. Being the same premises as conveyed to the Grantors by deed of Virginia M. Soloperto dated July 11, 2012, and recorded with Worcester District Registry of Deeds Book 49389, Page 374. Premises to be sold and conveyed subject to and with the benefit of all rights, rights of way, restrictions, easements, covenants, liens or claims in the nature of liens, improvements, public assessments, any and all unpaid taxes, tax titles, tax liens, water and sewer liens and any other municipal assessments or liens or existing encumbrances of record which are in force and are applicable, having priority over said mortgage, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the deed.

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. High bidder to sign written memorandum of sale upon acceptance of the high bid. The balance of the purchase price is to be paid by certified or bank check at Friedman Vartolo LLP, 1325 Franklin Avenue, Suite 160, Garden City, New York 11530, within thirty (30) days from the date of the sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. In the event of an error in this publication, the description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control. Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale. U.S. Bank National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely as Trustee for RMTP Trust, Series 2021 Cottage-TT-V, Present holder of said mortgage by its Attorneys, **Friedman Vartolo LLP** 1325 Franklin Avenue, Suite 160, Garden City, New York 11530
February 6, 2026
February 13, 2026
February 20, 2026

(SEAL) COMMONWEAL TH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURTDEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT
Docket No.26 SM 000250
ORDER OF NOTICE

TO:
Brian H. Amaral, as Personal Representative of the Estate of Stephen J. Amaral The Heirs, Devisees, and Legal Representatives of the Estate of Mary J. Amaral The Heirs, Devisees, and Legal Representatives of the Estate of Michael E. Amaral Brian H. Amaral Gregory J. Amaral
and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. c. 50 §3901 (*et seq*):
Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A. as Trustee for Mortgage Assets Management Series I Trust
claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in **Auburn, numbered 6 George Street**, given by **Mary J. Amaral to Financial Freedom Senior Funding Corporation, a Subsidiary of IndyMac Bank, F.S.B.**, dated **March 28, 2007**, and **registered at Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry District of the Land Court as Document No. 92126 and noted on Certificate of Title No. 19137**, and now held by the Plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant’s/Defendants’ Servicemembers status.

If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at **Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108** on or before 03/09/2026 or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the ground of noncompliance with the Act.

Witness, GORDON H. PIPER Chief Justice of this Court on 1/23/2026
Attest:
Deborah J. Patterson
Recorder
February 6, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Worcester Probate and Family Court 225 Main Street Worcester, MA 01608 (508) 831-2200 Docket No. WO26P0245EA CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
Estate Of:
Edward B. Dembinski
Date of Death: 11/10/2025
To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Anne H. Dembinski of Webster 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:
Anne H. Dembinski of Webster 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 02/24/2026**.
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.
Date: January 28, 2026
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
February 6, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Worcester Probate and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508)831-2200
Docket No. W026P0243EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
Estate of:
Patricia Anne Carrigan- Mann
Date of Death: April 5, 2025
To all interested persons: A Petition for Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Melissa Pepin of Fairfield CT requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

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 February 24, 2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an Affidavit of Objections within thirty (30) days of the return date, 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: January 23, 2026
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
Publication Dates LNE00448061
February 6, 2026

Town of Dudley Public Hearing Board of Selectmen
The Board of Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, February 23, 2026, at 6:35pm in the Dudley Municipal Complex, 71 West Main Street, Dudley, MA in the Veteran’s Memorial Hall, Room 321A.
The purpose of this Hearing: To Act on an Application for a Class II License for Pro Automotive located at 191 West Main St., Dudley, MA 01571. Applicant: Jason Rousseau.
Anyone wishing to be heard should appear at the date and time specified or submit their concerns in writing.
Jana Deschenes, Chair
Dudley Board of Selectmen
February 6, 2026

Town of Dudley Public Hearing National Grid/Verizon New England Pole Petition
In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 166, section 22, a Public Hearing will be held on Monday, February 9, 2026 at 6:35pm at the Dudley Municipal Complex, 71 West Main Street, Dudley, MA in Room 321A. The Purpose of this Hearing: To Act on a National Grid/Verizon New England Pole Petition: No. 31178149 Old Southbridge Rd. – National Grid to install 1 JO pole on Old Southbridge Rd. beginning at a point approximately 180 feet east of the centerline of the intersection of Roberts Road and Old Southbridge Rd. Installing Stub Pole #30-84 to support pole line. Pole line was originally supported by tree guy and anchor, but the tree is gone and no longer supporting utility pole line.
Anyone wishing to be heard should appear at the date and time specified or forward concerns in writing.
Jana Deschenes
Chair
Board of Selectmen
February 6, 2026

Town of Dudley Public Hearing
In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 166, section 22, a Public Hearing will be held on Monday, February 9, 2026 at 6:35pm at the Dudley Municipal Complex, 71 West Main Street, Dudley, MA in Room 321A. The Purpose of this Hearing: To Act on a National Grid/Verizon New England Pole Petition: No. 31209149 Cottage Road – National Grid to install 1 JO Pole on Cottage Road beginning at a point approximately 335 feet northwest of the centerline of the intersection of Cottage Rd. and Pierpont Rd. Installing Stub Pole 3-84 with anchor attached to support Pole #3 and accompanying pole line.
Anyone wishing to be heard should appear at the date and time specified or forward concerns in writing.
Jana Deschenes

Chair
Board of Selectmen
Please note: This Public Hearing was originally scheduled for January 26, 2026 but was cancelled due to snow emergency.
February 6, 2026

The Attorney General Office has approved Article 11 from the October 20, 2025, Dudley Special Town Meeting. The entire text of this by-law is posted in the following five places in accordance with G.L.c. 40 § 32: Dudley Municipal Complex, Pearle Crawford Memorial Library, Mason Road School, Dudley District Court House and Shepherd Hill High School.
Attest: Lori A. Smith,
Dudley Town Clerk
January 29, 2026
February 6, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Worcester Probate and Family Court 225 Main Street Worcester, MA 01608 (508) 831-2200 Docket No. WO26P0142EA INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE
Estate Of:
Jesse Carson Huffman, Jr.
Also Known As: Jesse Huffman
Date of Death: 11/19/2025
To All persons interested in the above-captioned estate, by Petition of **Lorena Huffman of Webster MA Lorena Huffman of Webster MA** has been informally appointed as Personal Representative of said estate to serve without surety on the bond. The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
February 6, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Worcester Probate and Family Court 225 Main Street Worcester, MA 01608 (508) 831-2200 Docket No. WO26P0102EA CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
Estate Of:
Robert K. West
Date of Death: 09/22/2025
To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Alison West of Wareham 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:
Alison West of Wareham 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 02/17/2026**.
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: January 13, 2026
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
February 6, 2026

New \$750,000 historic preservation grant program launches in Central Massachusetts

WORCESTER — A new regional grant program will support the preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties across Central Massachusetts, helping communities protect significant buildings while strengthening local economies and downtowns.

The Central Massachusetts Heritage Circuit Subgrant Program will make up to \$616,000 available through competitive subgrants to preserve historic properties listed on, or eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places. Eligible activities include planning, design, and construction work that meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

The Central Massachusetts Heritage Circuit Subgrant Program is funded by the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, under the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program. Funding for

this program is provided through congressional appropriations to support the preservation of historic and cultural resources nationwide.

The program is administered by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) in partnership with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC). Montachusett Enterprise Center (MEC), MRPC’s affiliated nonprofit organization, serves as the fiscal sponsor and grantee of record for the federal award. The Architectural Heritage Foundation (AHF) will provide preservation technical expertise to support program design and implementation.

Funding recommendations will be informed by a Project Selection Committee operating under formal conflict-of-interest procedures. Final award decisions will be made by the fiscal sponsor in accordance with federal requirements.

The program will serve communities throughout Central Massachusetts, including municipalities in the CMRPC and Montachusett regions, with a focus on historic commercial districts, civic buildings, and other significant properties that contribute to local identity and long-term economic vitality.

“This program is designed to help communities address real preservation needs while keeping historic buildings in active use,” said Janet A. Pierce, CMRPC Executive Director. “By combining federal investment with regional planning and preservation expertise, we are supporting projects that will deliver lasting public benefit.”

Subgrants will be awarded through a transparent, competitive process. Additional information on eligibility, application materials, and program timelines will be released later this year.

This project is funded in part by the

Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The contents and opinions expressed in this press release do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of the Interior or the National Park Service, nor does the mention of trade names or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Founded by the Legislature in 1963, CMRPC provides a variety of services to its constituencies and brings a regional perspective to planning and development. One of 13 Regional Planning Agencies in Massachusetts, CMRPC serves the City of Worcester and 39 surrounding communities in the southern two-thirds of Worcester County. CMRPC’s programs include Transportation, Regional Collaboration and Community Planning, and Geographic Information Systems.

LEGALS

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
Docket No. W025P2880GD
NOTICE AND ORDER:
Petition for Appointment
of Guardian of a Minor
In the interests of
Isaiah Alexander Adams
of Dudley, MA
Minor
NOTICE TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

1. Hearing Date/Time: A hearing on a Petition for Appointment of Guardian of a Minor filed by on 08/15/2025 by Michelle M. Adams of Dudley, MA will be held 03/30/2026 08:30 AM Guardianship of Minor Hearing Located **Worcester Probate & Family Court**

2. Response to Petition: You may respond by filing a written response to the Petition or by appearing in person

at the hearing. If you choose to file a written response, you need to: File the original with the Court; and Mail a copy to all interested parties at least five (5) business days before the hearing.

3. Counsel for the Minor: The minor (or an adult on behalf of the minor) has the right to request that counsel be appointed for the minor.

4. Counsel for Parents: If you are a parent of the minor child who is the subject of this proceeding you have a right to be represented by an attorney. If you want an attorney and cannot afford to pay for one and if you give proof that you are indigent, an attorney will be assigned to you. Your request for an attorney should be made immediately by filling out the Application of Appointment of Counsel form. Submit the application form in person or by mail at the court location where your case is going to be heard.

5. Presence of the Minor at Hearing: A minor over age 14 has the right to be present at any hearing, unless the Court finds that it is not in the minor’s

best interests.

ORDER TO PETITIONER(S)
IT IS ORDERED THAT copies of this Notice and the Petition for Appointment of Guardian of a Minor be served in hand on the minor, (if 14 or more years of age and not the petitioner), the guardian, the parents of the minor, and any other person if ordered by the Court, at least **fourteen (14)** days prior to the hearing date listed above. **Service must be made by the sheriff, constable, or other person approved by the Court.**

If service in hand cannot be accomplished on any interested party. **IT IS ORDERED** that copies of this Notice and the Petition for Appointment of Guardian of a Minor be served on the interested party by leaving at and mailing by regular first class mail to last and usual place of residence of the interested party at least **fourteen (14) days** prior to the date of hearing listed above.

If the identity of whereabouts of an interested party is **not known**, **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that copies of

this Notice and Petition for Appointment of Guardian of a Minor be served on all interested persons at least **fourteen (14)** days prior to the hearing date by mailing first class mail and by publishing a copy of the Order and Notice once in **Webster Times, Webster** publication to be at least **Seven (7)** days prior to the hearing date.

If required, service on the United States Veteran Administration and the Department of Children and Families may be accomplished by regular first class mail at least **Seven (7)** days prior to the hearing.

THIS IS A LEGAL NOTICE: An important court proceeding that may affect your rights has been scheduled. If you do not understand this notice or other court papers, please contact an attorney for legal advice.

Date: January 28, 2026
Stephanie K. Fattman
Register of Probate
February 6, 2026



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- Blackstone Valley Tribune

OBITUARIES

Diane W. (Kijek) Gajewski, 76

Thompson, CT- Diane passed away peacefully in her home on January 29, 2026, after a long battle with Alzheimer’s Disease. She is survived by her husband, Leonard; son, Keith and his wife, Kimberly; mother, Wanda Kijek; sister, Frances Brandin and her husband, Martin; sister-in-law, Nancy Kijek; brother-in-law, Thomas Gajewski; niece, Ashley Brandin Lobosco and her husband, Thomas; son-in-law, Richard Nolin, and grandchildren, Theodore Gajewski, Cara Nolin, and William Nolin. She was pre-deceased by her father, Edward Kijek; daughter, Kimberly Nolin; and brother, Jeffrey Kijek.

Diane was born and raised in Dudley and was a graduate of St. Joseph School and Bartlett High School in Webster. After marrying Leonard, the two moved to Honolulu, HI while her husband served in the Navy. When they returned to central Massachusetts, Diane worked for

many years in administration at St. Vincent Hospital and upon retirement helped her family greatly with appointments, baby-sitting, and serving as a caregiver to her mother. She loved reading novels, traveling, and always enjoyed a “refreshing” dip in her pool.

Diane had a deep faith and devoted much of her time, talent, and treasure to St. Joseph Parish and School in Webster. She was a member of several organizations in the Parish and served on many committees as well as being a CCD Teacher and Lector.

A funeral mass will be held for Diane on Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 11am at St. Joseph Basilica, 53 Whitcomb Street, Webster, MA. A private burial will be held at the family’s convenience. Donations in her memory may be made to Saint Joseph School, 47 Whitcomb Street, Webster, MA 01570.

Kurt E. Trimby, 40



BROOKFIELD - Kurt E. Trimby, 40, of Brookfield, passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. He leaves behind his beloved wife, Lorell; his parents, Cheryl and John; his siblings, Kimberly and her husband Andrew, Keith and his wife Joanna. He is also survived by his cherished nieces and nephews, Maddy, Matt, McKenna, Millie, Layla, and Silas, along with many loving aunts, uncles, and friends. Kurt spent most of his life working in kitchens, where he found his true passion in cooking. In his later years, he worked

at Flexcon, where he formed many meaningful friendships that he deeply valued. Kurt was a true car enthusiast who loved sharing his knowledge and passion for automobiles with anyone who would listen. He was also an avid fisherman and was rarely without his fishing pole, always ready to cast a line into any lake he passed on his travels. Kurt will be truly missed by all who knew and loved him. He fought his illness with incredible strength and determination, enduring trials, chemotherapy, and radiation in the hope that his journey might one day help others facing this terrible disease. A calling hour will be held on Sunday, February 22, 2026 from 10:00AM

William Francis Herra, 66



William Francis Herra, 66, of Webster passed away peacefully on January 1, 2026, after his battle with small cell lung cancer reached its final conclusion.

He is survived by his beloved wife Laurie A. Herra of Webster; their son William J. Herra & spouse Gillian Hohne of Millbury; sister Charlene & husband Louis Martelli of Portland, TN; brother Brian & wife Diane of Huntington, TN; brother John & wife Patricia of Plymouth; parents-in-law Geroge H. Reid, Jr. & wife Lorraine of Brockton; brother-in-law James Anusevitch & wife Karen of Rochester, NH; sister-in-law Michelle & husband Michael Musto of Taunton; sister-in-law Theresa McDonald of San Diego, CA; and dog Teddy. He will always be remembered as the fun uncle by his many nieces and nephews. Bill was predeceased by parents John Herra & Anita Gracey; sister Karen Whalen; brother Charles; mother-in-law Anna Nutt; sisters-in-law Janet & Kimberly Reid; brother-in-law Thomas Reid; and one of the best dogs ever, Buddy.

Bill was born in Lowell, MA as one of John J. Herra & Anita F. Gracey’s six children together. He spent his early years in Lowell before moving to Somerville. He graduated top of his class from Somerville Technical Trade High School in 1977 receiving the Director’s Outstanding Tradesmen Award for the Painting & Decorating Department. He married his childhood sweetheart Laurie in 1981. She gave birth to their son in 1984. In 1991 they moved to Thompson, CT where they resided until moving back to Massachusetts in 2008.

Over the years Bill enjoyed volunteering at many different organizations. While his son attended St. Joseph’s elementary and middle school in North Grosvenordale, CT he volunteered as one of the “lunch ladies” for many years. He also chaperoned field trips and all the kids always wanted to be in his group. He was a great coach for all who had the pleasure of playing on the

various baseball teams he helped coach over the years. In more recent years he also volunteered for the Webster Dudley Food Share and Meals on Wheels. For the past five years he had been serving on the Board of Commissioners for the Webster Housing Authority as a Federal Resident Commissioner.

Bill was a wonderful husband and great father. He was truly a lover of life and was always quick with a joke. He was a fierce friend to all who had the pleasure of calling him one. He would’ve given you the shirt off his back if you needed it. He loved music and going to concerts; especially all the Ozzfests over the years with his son, niece Sarah Lawson, and son’s friend Craig Lefler. He often reminisced of the summers spent on bike rides with his son and son’s friends Joseph & Jason Manzi. He enjoyed golf, disc golf, and anything involving being in the great outdoors. He took much pride in his flower gardens outside his apartment at Golden Heights. He loved to garden and share his tomatoes with some of the neighbors. He received great joy from making food for the people in his life. He loved to entertain and always looked forward to the annual Fourth of July cookouts he and Laurie put on for many years at their house in Thompson. Bill was a lifelong Red Sox and Patriots fan. He and Laurie frequented Polar Park to see the WooSox play.

There will be no services at this time as Bill did not want any. Please do something nice for someone in your life, or even a complete stranger, as helping others was truly a passion of Bill’s. Perhaps volunteer at your local soup kitchen, donate to your local food bank, or donate to his favorite charity, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. Our family would like to thank all of the staff at Umass Memorial Medical Center – University Campus and Preferred Transitions of Milford, MA, who handled his hospice care, for their kindness and exceptional care throughout Bill’s battle.

Let’s all toss on some good tunes and just remember all the great times we had together with Bill as that is truly what he would have wanted us to do.

REAL ESTATE

AUBURN
\$424,000, 6 Newton St, Vandenberg, Elijah, to Tran, Tuan K.
\$387,000, 11 Inwood Rd, Lebel, Richard H, and Lebel, Pauline Y, to Croteau, Victoria, and McIntosh, Abbigayle.
\$160,000, 22 Coolidge St, Wehner, Therese A, to Sherbourne, Abigayl A.
DUDLEY
\$450,000, 7 Dudley Hill Rd, Berkshire Prop Bldrs LLC, to Skinner, Marisa K, and Skinner, Allison N.
\$449,900, 21 Prospect Ave, Stawiecki, Robert, and Stawiecki, Paula J, to Ribeiro, Brandon C.
\$403,300, 4 Charlton Rd, Goddard Joseph R Est, and Goddard, Dawn, to Snow, Diane M, and Snow, Lincoln C.
\$150,000, W Main St (off), Martin L Nieski Lt, and Nieski, Martin L, to Matts Dudley LLC.
OXFORD
\$650,000, 8 Turk Hollow Rd, Curtis, Michael W, and Curtis, Kimberly J, to

Deszendeffy RET, and Deszendeffy, John R.
\$450,000, 28 Holly St, Nicastro, Amanda, and Nicastro, Timothy, to Resendes, Lucas, and Cunha, Isadora.
\$200,000, 124 Charlton St #F, Prashaw, Jason M, to Wyman, Corydon B.
WEBSTER
\$1,175,000, 194 Kildeer Rd, Guay Sr, Glenn A, and Guay, Helena A, to Garabedian Lt, and Garabedian, Peter.
\$550,000, 177-179 N Main St, Mankarios, Botros, to Delarosa, Roniel M, and Delarosa, J.D.
\$455,000, 31 Whitcomb St, Mills, Alexandria E, to Costedio, Lauren N.
\$421,000, 9 Scenic Ave, Heavenly Hm Solutions LLC, to Perpignan-Eknaian, Sonja, and Eknaian, Herman.
\$280,000, 19 First St, Brissette, Lorraine M, and Daveau, Michelle, to Finn, Ora E, and Nierodzinski, Malcolm J.
\$234,900, 107 Lake St #B, Christopher F Ryan T, and Ryan, Christopher F, to Roderick, Jonathan M.

SKIERS

continued from page A1

vital role at nearly every clinic, offering both lived experience and technical expertise that deeply benefits the program and its participants.

“Adaptive sports helped me find purpose again,” Gazda said. “Being able to attend this conference and bring back new ideas, skills, and connections will help us continue to deliver experiences that change lives.”

The knowledge and resources gained

from the Move United Conference will be instrumental in helping the Webster Water Ski Collective continue its mission to provide life-changing experiences for people with disabilities through adaptive water skiing.

For more information about the Webster Water Ski Collective and its adaptive programs, visit www.websterwaterski.org or follow the organization on Facebook and Instagram <https://facebook.com/WebsterWaterSki> and <https://instagram.com/websterwaterski>.

TRACK

continued from page A1

The BHS Indoor Track Team will travel to the New Balance Center in Boston, next Sunday, Feb. 8, to compete in the Division 5 CMAC Small School Championship.

During the previous week, the Indians delivered multiple personal bests across sprinting, long distance,

and field events during their Division 5 CMAC Meet at Tantansqua Regional High School. Leading the way was Xavier Sarfo who had an exceptional race in the 55m dash, running a personal best of 6.70 seconds. Xavier finished in the top three by finishing 3rd overall in a highly competitive event. Also setting personal records in the 55m dash were Hunter Claypool and Eryk Piwowarczyk. Moving

to the long distance running events, Alexis Benito Torres achieved his personal best time in the 1,000 meter event while Abigail Ciara-Paulino achieved her best personal time in the 600 meter run. Finally, in the boys’ and girls’ shot-put, Johan Vanlamoen Lopez and Annabelle Reed both recorded their personal best shot-put throws during competition.

Area reps co-sponsor comprehensive energy reform bill to lower costs for Massachusetts ratepayers

WILL GENERATE SAVINGS OF ABOUT \$147 MILLION IN FIRST YEAR AND \$2.38 BILLION OVER 10 YEARS

BOSTON — State Representatives Paul K. Frost (R-Auburn), Donald R. Berthiaume, Jr. (R- Spencer), Joseph D. McKenna (R-Sutton) and John J. Marsi (R-Charlton) are co-sponsoring comprehensive energy reform legislation put forth by Republican State Legislators to provide financial relief to Massachusetts ratepayers who are struggling to pay high energy bills. The proposal would generate energy bill savings of about \$147 million in the first year and \$2.38 billion over 10 years for Massachusetts residents and businesses.

per year to ratepayers, and between \$198 million and \$207 million over three years.

Additional first-year savings of \$78 million will be realized through basic service and energy contract changes contained in the bill, including language giving electric distribution companies the flexibility to procure default service supply through procurements of varying lengths and in combination with other companies, as well as provisions extending the contract period from 1 year to 1 ½ years and allowing electric distribution companies to collectively procure its energy supply (gas, electric, transmission, transportation or any combination thereof) together. Along with the ACP changes, this is expected to produce about \$147 million in combined savings for ratepayers in each of the first three years of implementation.

House Docket 5554, An Act addressing energy costs, transparency, and sustainability, was recently filed by Representative Frost, Representative Berthiaume, Representative McKenna and Representative Marsi along with their Republican colleagues. It contains a series of reforms to address rising energy costs in Massachusetts including proposals to restructure the Mass Save program, allow older homeowners and renters to factor in a portion of their utility bills to determine their eligibility for the Senior Circuit Breaker tax credit, and provide more cost transparency for consumers.

The bill also includes several proposed changes to the Mass Save program, which is an energy efficiency initiative funded by Massachusetts ratepayers through a monthly surcharge on their gas and electric bills. The program’s three-year budget for 2025-2027 is currently set at \$4.5 billion.

Their bill caps Mass Save administrative spending at 10% of the total funds allocated for the program. It also limits spending on the program’s next three-year plan (running from 2028-2030) by prohibiting the budget from exceeding the cost of the 2022-2024 plan, plus 6.25%. As the 2022-2024 plan was funded at \$4 billion, the 2028-2030 plan cannot increase by more than \$250 million. This means that by 2030, the combined annual savings from the ACP returns, basic service changes, and the Mass Save spending reduction will produce an estimated \$396 million in ratepayer savings per year, or approximately \$2.38 billion in savings over 10 years.

It updates the Senior Circuit Breaker tax credit for homeowners and renters who are 65 or older by allowing 50 percent of their utility costs to be calculated into their income used to determine their eligibility for the credit.

Their legislation directs the Massachusetts Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, in consultation with the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, to develop and implement the framework of a regional compact among the New England states for the purposes of research and development regarding nuclear fusion energy and establishes a Fusion Research Council to provide additional guidance. Fusion energy, although some years off from being able to supply the power grid, has the potential benefits of traditional nuclear power but without the radioactive waste.

The bill prohibits third-party competitive electric suppliers from using predatory practices to enroll customers at an artificially low rate that will increase dramatically in a short period of time. It also limits automatic contract renewals to those instances where the customer provided expressed written consent at the time of their initial enrollment.

The bill also seeks to create a special commission to analyze natural gas costs in the Commonwealth and recommend measures to contain and reduce those costs for residential and commercial consumers.

Frost commented, “Massachusetts residents and small businesses are getting crushed by some of the highest energy costs in our nation. Everyone is struggling to heat and power their homes. Businesses, especially small businesses, face difficult challenges as well and are forced to decide whether to pass those increased energy expenses onto their customers or cut elsewhere to get by. Our bill provides both short-term and long-term savings and relief for everyone.”

“Massachusetts has some of the best schools, colleges, hospitals, businesses, sports teams, and tourism in the country. It also has some of the highest costs of living in the country forcing people to leave at alarming rates because they simply cannot afford to live here,” McKenna added. “We must do everything in our power as legislators to pursue policies that will lower costs that consumers are paying for life necessities like heating their home or business.”

Marsi said, “I talk to constituents, residents, and businesses every day about the high cost of electricity and gas, where some must make heartbreaking decisions about what to spend their hard-earned money on. People with fixed incomes such as our seniors can’t sustain these out of control increases on their monthly bills. We need to do everything possible to drive legislation to ensure people can afford to power and heat their homes and businesses.”

“The ever-increasing upward trend regarding the cost of energy in the Commonwealth is unsustainable and out of reach for the average middle class family,” Berthiaume said. “This meaningful legislation will seek to mitigate the high energy costs that users pay and give families some much needed breathing room when it comes to their energy bills”

Their bill seeks to provide immediate short-term relief for Massachusetts ratepayers by requiring 50 percent of Alternative Compliance Payments (ACPs) made pursuant to the Renewable Portfolio Standard to be returned to utility customers in each of the next three years. These ACPs are currently deposited in a custodial fund overseen by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center for use in clean energy projects. This change alone will return approximately \$66-\$69 million

Worcester State University announces Dean’s List

WORCESTER — Worcester State University congratulates the following students on being named to the Dean’s List for the fall semester of 2025.	Dagnese, Ava Iozzo, Jaden L.Jaillet, Taylor Kochinskas, Florence S Lundi Jr., Rhiannon L Mansur, Ayla M McGrail, Krrish Patel, Catherine E Pavone, Richard J Payne, Jordyn M Poirier, Kyleigh Sutherland, Izabela Warnajtys, Oliver A Weiland, Rileigh A Zacek, Ashlee E Zaleski	Rivera Kwiatkowska, Brett Spiewakowski, Maximous Tawadrous, Athanasia R Towadros, Athanasios R Towadros, Sean Wang, Amanda Wisnowski	North Brookfield Emily E Brown, Jessica L Frigo, Caylie E Fuhrmann-Bell, Christopher M Halvorsen, Sophia Hearnlaye, Nason J Omasta, Roan K Testa	M Gonzalez, Giovanni L Hernandez, Payton S Leone, Gianaleze O Lopez, Evangelina C Melendez, Andrea A Melendez Rojas, Yerilian K Miranda, Duyen T Nguyen, Eyerusalem Orlandini, Morgan E Schwartz, Ava S Simon, Ava G Tougas, Christopher S Tyznik, Mya K Veras, Natyarie P Villanueva	Uxbridge Mikayla G Baccari, Peyton Bly, Emily G Capellupo, Anthony L Cifizzari, Madison D Departie, Jenna M Devine, Adam B Ells, Dakota K Gelinas, Zachary Goddard, Maia G Harris, Tia M Jacobs, Isabelle J Kling, Lauren C Lachapelle, Ami E Lamontagne, Darren J Oliver, Marcus R Oliver, Samantha M Omar, Marissa M Osimo, Brianna M Pare, Olivia L Pirrotta, Sadie N Schultzberg, Katelyn A Silveira
Auburn Ethan M Adamiak, Adriano Alvarez, Brendon S Bailey, Owen A Barrera, Abigayle M Belanger, Lily R Bishop, Alec R Borelli, Logan E Bostock, Abigail Bouasy, Hannah M Brown, Esther Businge, Cody K Callaghan, Eireni Chatzopoulos, Megan D Crosbie, Kali N Day, Jolena N Deeds, Gianna F DiPadua, Siiri A Govoni, Emelis Henriquez, Maeve F Holmes, Griffin Hurley, Alec Huynh, Owen C Kosciolek, Irene E LeBlanc, Elefteria Liti, Christopher K Martin, Julia G Mathews, Christena Mena, Chanel J Napoli, Jimmy L Nguyen, Emma R Penney, James D Phillips, Gabriel Rodriguez, Lydia J Skaparas, Brendan J Slomski, Sarah D Stevens, Zachary M Stomski, Isaac J Swedberg, Claudia R Symonick, Vivian T Tran, Nicolas Vanegas, Amelia A Whitney, Thomas W Willette, Abagail J Zicuis	Charlton City Jaclyn K Morrison	East Brookfield Megan R Shea, Quinn L Trumbull-Olsen	North Grafton Gabrielle A Bobolia, Lauren E Bobolia Sr., Emma G Boggess, Cassidy A Burns, Connor P Garlick, Adam Hillerstrom, Brendan R Moleczyk, Becky S Ogello, Bonnie E Williams, Ava G Zaleski	SPENCER, MA: Lawrence O Austria, Allison Barham, Amberlyn A Brindle, Ariana M Burgos, Draven C Casey, Catherine A Comeau, Rachel M Dorsey, Carrie A Ferreira, Cameron J Goodrich, Benjamin B Granville, Farrah Griffin, Payton G Griffin, Lucas K Hafner, Matthew J Heffernan, Thomas J Heffernan, Isabelle Herholz, Kaitlyn R O’Neill, Martyna J Stolarczyk, Zachary Zephir	Webster ShyAnn J Baillargeon, Izabella M Bezak, Savannah R Bjork, Jayden G Casey, Heather Dodd, Camden L Heenan, Hlaing T Htoo, Madyson J Koziak, Daniela A Narvaez, Joel M Norman, Kailey E O’Connell, Garrett L Papierski, Daniel C Parker, Meagan A Peck, Riley P Peters, Angel E Shenette, Victoria N Spitz, Luke Walcek, Isabella L Williams
Brimfield Mohamed Boweden, Connor E Dufault, Kelsie E Lucas, Makenna F Perro	Douglas Fani Angelidaki, Kaylie E Ciccone, Gavin C Delgado, Jared S Dermooshegian, Holly N Kaczor, Celina P Moore, Olivia M Muscatell, Grace C Parker, Mya G Sanford, Ryleigh M Sawash-Perro, Amelia M Skiba Terrinha, Victoria A Surette, Addison E Taylor, Ethan C Vassar	Fiskdale Aiden Dieffenwierth, Carina M Holt, Caleb S Thompson, Norah M Tracy, Alexis M Yap	North Oxford Devon V Chhoeun, Jennifer L Garajau, Julia Obrycki	Sturbridge Ian W Anderson, Zachary G Beaudoin, Gerson W Catun-Teni, Emma J Heintz, Isabel Mediavilla, Sydney Ng, Alexander Ramos, Courtney M Roy, Levi Shepard, Heather M Sluhocki, Sophie E Werner	West Brookfield Elias W Berthel, Jacque Boulais, Paige M Dion, Laine R Hatstat, Emilio Herrie, Abigail E Jolin, Hannah R Manzano, Dallas J McDonnell, Katelynn Swistak
Charlton Jake Beaudette, Jianna A Clouthier, LeeAnn D	Dudley Amanda S Adamuska, Michalyn A Annese, Dominic M Beauchesne, Catalina M Burden, Haley M Coggans, Angelina Demce, Abigail M DeWitt, Marlee E Eckbold, Lauren L Gajewski, Timothy V Garcia, Isaiah I Giblin, Adrian Golemo, Kaia T Gray, Keller G Holmes, Giovanna Krettli Oliveira Costa, Gabriela A Laska, Kathryn E McFarland, Maggie P Montville, Collin A Moody, Manar Morgan, Justin A Murray, Natalie G Nayfeh, Alek J Poirier, Abigail E Reilly, Patrysia E	Holland Zane L Salameh	Oxford Mary A Alliy, Danielle E Antwi, Isabella R Capuano, Olivia Clarkson, Sophia J Cornacchioli, Alexander L Duval, Victoria Lemay, Ellie M Makowiecki, Kyle P McGown, Julie A Mercer, Kaylynn E Nolan, Isabella M Padilla, Emma M Rannikko, Patrick A Reed, Hannah Wroblewski	Sutton Ian P Clayton, Caitlin J Conley, Madalyn Davagian, William H Demers, Angelo J Frasca, Conor J Hickey, Sean R Hicks, Kaia M Lavine, Madisyn R Lucia, Rebecca Manzano Howard, Comfort Owusu, Jonathan R Rochford, Rielly A Sobaleski, Benjamin T Szydluk, Danielle M Weaver	Whitinsville Stacy Asante, Gary Bunis, Kevin J Cazares Aceves, Paige E Chausse, Emily R Curley, Cameron DeForest, Marie A Delgado, Asa M Flannery, Ansha Khan, Elizabeth C Kramer, Hannah Lomonaco, Caitlyn M Mahoney, Agathon E Malik, Morgan J Mawn, Erin Vierck

Fitchburg State announces Dean’s and President’s Lists

FITCHBURG — Fitchburg State President Donna Hodge has announced the students who qualified for inclusion on the Dean’s List and President’s List for the Fall 2025 semester.	Holland Charles L. Moran	QCC receives \$148,000 for program to support adults with disabilities	Samaritan’s Purse celebrates 12.2 million Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts
A student is placed on the Dean’s List for the semester if an average grade of 3.20 or better is attained, and the student is attending the university full time.	Leicester Paige L. Ward	W O R C E S T E R — Quinsigamond Community College has received a \$148,993 grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to support its Massachusetts Inclusive Postsecondary Education (MAIPSE) program. MAIPSE programs provide adults with significant disabilities, ages 18 to 22, with integrated access to higher education. QCC’s MAIPSE program provides resources to students, including textbooks, laptops and peer support. Peer mentors assist with classroom navigation, social engagement and completing coursework assignments. The funding also supports presentations and speakers on topics such as neurodiversity. “This investment benefits students in the program, but also the campus community because we are all receiving education about disabilities,” said Director of Student Accessibility Services & Assistive Technology Kristen Proctor. “Community colleges are perfect for MAIPSE because having all students belonging and learning together parallels the mission of QCC and embeds inclusion into the fabric of the college.” After partnering with seven local schools for referrals, the MAIPSE program has grown to more than 20 students, with signs of continued growth and demand, according to Proctor. “ S o m e t i m e s ,	REGION — Samaritan’s Purse is celebrating a successful season after collecting 12.2 million Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts in 2025, sharing the love of Jesus with children in need around the world. The milestone reflects the generosity of millions of shoebox packers helping to fill shoebox gifts with toys, school supplies and personal care items. Across the U.S., the project collected 10.9 million shoebox gifts in 2025. Combined with those collected from partnering countries, the ministry is now sending over 12.2 million shoebox gifts to children worldwide, including those whose lives were turned upside down by Hurricane Melissa, a category 5 storm that recently struck Jamaica. “Each shoebox gift is an opportunity to remind boys and girls around the world that God loves them,” said Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan’s Purse. “We are so thankful for the generosity of every person who packed a shoebox. These gifts are bringing joy and the hope of the Gospel to children in need.” For many children, a shoebox gift is the first gift they have ever received. Each one is a tangible expression of God’s love,
The President’s List honors students for consistently high academic achievement. A student is named to the list after achieving a 3.75 average in each of three successive semesters.	Milford Owen S. Archer, Anthony L. Oliveira Dalicandro, Melvin B. Yupa	you don’t know when you have assumptions and biases about students who have more significant disabilities. This program helps people understand that the limitations we put on people might not be needed,” said Student Accessibility Services Coordinator Cassandra Estey. Many students in the MAIPSE program have been in self-contained classrooms throughout the majority of their lives. Being in a QCC classroom offers an integrated setting and room for growth. Staff who work with MAIPSE students have noticed an increase in their communication skills, especially when interacting with non-disabled adults in the community. Estey noted that these interactions can improve the communication skills of non-disabled adults as well, especially those coming directly from high school. Estey has witnessed several students find success after the MAIPSE program, by enrolling at QCC as fully matriculated students or going on to obtain employment in areas they might not have considered before completing the program. One such student gained employment at Assabet Valley Collaborative after gaining interest and skills from a psychology course. For more information on QCC’s MAIPSE program, visit www.QCC.edu/support/specialized-support/student-accessibility-services .	offering hope to children facing war, poverty, disease and disaster. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 244 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 170 countries and territories. While local drop-off locations are closed until National Collection Week, Nov. 16 – 23, anyone can participate year-round by packing a shoebox gift online at samaritanpurse.org/buildonline . These shoebox gifts built online go to the hardest-to-reach areas in the world—whether deep jungles, city slums, or steep mountainsides. Information about ways to get involved year-round can also be found at samaritanpurse.org/occ . Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan’s Purse, seeks to demonstrate God’s love in a tangible way to children in need around the world and, together with the local church worldwide, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 244 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 170 countries and territories.
President’s List Webster Kaleigh S. Papierski	Millbury Lillian J. Bousquet, Sophia R. Burrows, Luke Charron, Emma L. McRae, Patrick J. Sheehan	South Grafton Dominic R Boscia, Hollie A Carabba, Sarah Elshaarawy, Keyara L Jones, Mackenzie M Matuzek	
Dean’s List Auburn Arielys Almeyda, Emily R. Gillespie, Mackenzie J. Mackin, Lukas M. Skalecki	Oxford Susan A. Cicerchia, Raegan L. Perreault, Aaliyah B. Szkutak	Southbridge Aiden R Brunelle, Kirsten L Congdon, Emma E Cote, Samuel E Dehoyos, Tyler A Ethier, Genesis	
Brimfield Gabriel A. Rice	Southbridge Grace Hope K. Kentsa, Vanshika S. Patel		
Brookfield Zachary J. Sweet	Sutton Gabriela De Mora Cooper, Kerri Grenache, Molly J. Jenkins		
Charlton Cassidy M. Bousquet, Jordan A. Goulas	Upton Kelsey E. Fournier		
Douglas Hunter G. Dunn	Uxbridge Nathaniel J. Badzmierowski, Jessie M. Demalia, Samantha L. Jones, Rheannon A. March, Rylee A. Spear, Caileen J. Wilson		
Dudley August C. Eaton, Alexander Siwik			
Fiskdale Tafari U. Byfield-Felton, Carsyn M. Knapik, Madison M. Luce	West Brookfield Juliette R. Boos		
Grafton Joshua R. Miller, Elizabeth C. Morin	Wales Michael T. Bouthiller		
Groton Aia A. Almathkhor, Kayla R. Hanlon, Christopher J. Hickman, Keren J. Noonan, Ryan M. Robichaud, Deven G. Sorrentino	Webster Salaila L. Lewis, Maya S. Ortiz, Zachary C. Sargent, Rachael C. Waterson		
	Whitinsville Jessica K. Caggiula, Nicolas Salamack		

Bay Path nurse and educator honored at UMass Chan Medical School's 38th Annual MLK Jr. Tribute



Elizabeth Mirkuaa

WORCESTER — UMass Chan Medical School held its 38th annual tribute to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Jan. 26, celebrating the intersection of healthcare, service, and social justice. The virtual ceremony was highlighted by the recognition of Elizabeth Mirkuaa Lartey, an alumna and dedicated Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy educator, and UMass Chan doctoral student, as a recipient of the 2026 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Student Service Recognition Award. Lartey, a resident of Worcester and a second-year Doctor of Nursing Practice

(DNP) student at the Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing, was selected from a record-breaking pool of nominees. The award recognizes students whose community-focused projects and clinical dedication significantly advance health equity and justice in the Worcester area.

"Elizabeth's work truly stood out for its dedication, impact, and commitment to health equity," the Service Subcommittee noted during the selection process. "Her efforts honor the enduring legacy of Dr. King by advancing justice through service to others."

A career rooted in com-

munity and care

Lartey's recognition comes as she balances a rigorous academic load with a deep commitment to the nursing profession. She currently serves as a Med/Surg Charge Nurse at UMass Memorial Medical Center and has been a vital mentor to the next generation of healthcare workers when she worked as an Adjunct Faculty member at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy. With a professional history spanning long-term care at Life Care Center of Auburn to specimen analysis at Quest Diagnostics, Lartey has consistently focused on patient education and therapeutic communication. Her current academic work, where she maintains a 3.83 GPA, focuses on the Family Nurse Practitioner specialization to further serve the diverse needs of Massachusetts families.

Ceremony highlights

The event featured a keynote address by Jennifer Bradford, MD, assistant professor of family medicine and community health, who spoke on the importance of mission-aligned impact. Following the keynote, Dean Terence R. Flotte presented the service awards, emphasizing the school's commitment to Dr. King's vision of a «Beloved Community.»

The annual tribute remains a cornerstone of the UMass Chan calendar, reinforcing the institution's mission to prioritize underserved populations and foster a culture of inclusive excellence in medicine.

About UMass Chan Medical School

UMass Chan Medical School is the state's first and only public medical school, consistently ranked as a top-tier institution for primary care education and a global leader in biomedical research.

Cornerstone Bank supports South Worcester families with donation to Jeremiah's Inn

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank has donated \$5,000 to Jeremiah's Inn to support the ongoing operations of its Nutrition Center, one of the largest food pantries in Central Massachusetts. This contribution builds on the bank's history of giving to the organization, including previous donations of \$5,000 in 2023 and 2024 for the Nutrition Center and additional support for the organization's recovery program and food drives.

This year's donation will help Jeremiah's Inn meet the growing demand for nutritious food among low-income residents in South Worcester, where food insecurity has reached unprecedented levels.

In 2024, Jeremiah's Inn served more than 32,000 individuals, a 30 percent increase from the previous year and a 167 percent increase over the past two years. At the same time, the Worcester County Food Bank reduced food

distributions to the pantry by 30 percent, creating a critical gap between supply and demand. Cornerstone Bank's continued support ensures that children, seniors and families who rely on the Nutrition Center have access to essential meals and resources.

"Supporting our neighbors in times of need is a core part of our mission," said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. "We are proud to continue our partnership with Jeremiah's Inn and help ensure local families have access to the food they need to grow and thrive."

About Cornerstone Bank
Cornerstone Bank was formed in 2017, born of a long history of supporting the community, and providing a strong foundation to help people and businesses thrive. Serving Worcester County, Massachusetts, Cornerstone Bank's local presence and community-based banking model enables a unique

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

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Laborer/Driver STURBRIDGE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Town of Sturbridge D.P.W. is accepting applications to fill a Laborer/Driver Position. This is a full-time position. Valid Class A or B CDL and Equipment Hydraulic License 2A are preferred and required within 6 months of appointment. See the Job Description for more information. The starting rate for the position is \$24.64/hr. Applications are available at the Sturbridge Municipal Garage, New Boston Road Extension, Sturbridge, MA or on the Town of Sturbridge website under job opportunities. Applications are due by February 6, 2026. The Department is a Union shop. The Town is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE).



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



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Webster Lake Waterfront 8 Long Island



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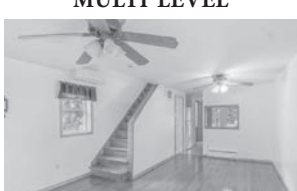
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The Groundhog Day verdict is in!



CORNELIA’S PREDICTION AT ECOTARIUM COMES AS NO SURPRISE

WORCESTER — Monday morning at the EcoTarium, Worcester’s very own weather-predicting groundhog, Cornelia, emerged from her burrow and carefully looked around her habitat, sniffing at lettuce and other treats. Mayor Joe Petty watched Cornelia carefully and then delivered the official Groundhog Day proclamation before a crowd of teachers, students, and community leaders.

“Today, Cornelia has emerged from hibernation to search the ground at the EcoTarium for her shadow, as, like her ancestors before her, Cornelia has acquired the fascinating ability to predict the arrival of spring with 50 percent accuracy,” said Petty with a smile. “I hereby decree that, on this sunny day, Cornelia did in fact see her shadow and thus proclaimed six more weeks of winter weather for the City of Worcester, Massachusetts. I urge all citizens to join in the Groundhog Day celebration across the City, and to keep your hats and mittens close at hand.”

The crowd let out a loud moan at the news of more winter.

“No matter the weather, we always embrace the fun of this time-honored tradition,” said Noreen Smith, EcoTarium President & CEO. “This really is Cornelia’s day to shine. While most groundhogs were still asleep, Cornelia was hard at work analyzing the conditions and making her forecast.”

Guests were treated to a close-up experience with Cornelia, as her dedicated keeper shared fascinating insights into her daily care: “Cornelia is still shaking off her winter sleepiness, as at the EcoTarium, Cornelia does not fully hibernate, although she does slow down between October and March, eating less and sleeping for most of the day. She managed to wake up to enjoy breakfast with all of us this morning. She enjoyed a spread of greens and vegetables. After eating, she quickly made herself comfortable again in her toasty nest!”

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