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Friday, April 3, 2026

Former Spencer police officer reflects on marathoning journey



Courtesy

Former Spencer Police Sgt. Valarie Morin discusses her experiences partaking in marathons around the world.

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

SPENCER — Marathons often serve as a physical and mental challenge for running enthusiasts, testing their abilities and their conditioning on all kinds of terrain. Embarking on these challenges in the United States, and even just New England, can be hard enough but to take on all different elements and environments around the world adds a whole new layer of adventure to the hobby.

One local marathon runner, former Spencer Police Department Sgt. Valarie Morin, took on those adventures earning the 6 Star Medal for running six

World Marathon Majors spread throughout different continents worldwide. She has also competed in marathons on all seven continents of the globe on courses that have taken her through historic backdrops and even wildlife preserves to reach the finish line. Morin recently showcased photographs and insight from her journey and the unique experiences that come with what are deemed “adventure marathons” in a special presentation on March 9 at Spencer’s Richard Sugden Library.

Morin’s record includes full marathons in North America, including the United States, Canada, and Bermuda. She has also completed marathons

on Easter Island, Costa Rica, London, Berlin and Athens, Dublin, Tokyo, Australia, and in such environments like the Great Wall of China, a wildlife conservancy in Kenya, Africa, and King George Island near Antarctica. She also completed half-marathons in Madagascar-Africa and Greenland. She has now visited and participated in marathons on all seven continents, earning her the 7 Continents Finisher Medal. Morin’s six World Major marathons took place in New York, Boston, Chicago, London, Berlin, and Tokyo.

During her presentation Morin showed pictures from her many trips, including some of the more unique marathons. One of the more dangerous events saw runners race through the Lewa

Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya, Africa with actual free wildlife roaming all around them.

“You were actually loose in the conservancy with the animals. To guard the course, they actually had fixed-wing planes, helicopters, dirt bikes, and dune buggies with armed guards on them. The race started and they had to shew a lion off the kids’ course,” Morin explained.

One of the most structure races was a marathon in Tokyo, Japan, where Morin said the event, and timing loops, are taken more seriously than many other countries around the world.

“They have very strict cutoff times. You have to reach this point by a certain time and this point by a certain time. The last cutoff point is at 40K. So, you could reach the 40K point, not

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School District granted waiver on 180-day requirement

SPENCER — Superintendent Paul Haughey announced today that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has officially granted a waiver to the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District regarding the 180-day school year requirement.

In a letter dated March 27, Commissioner of Education Pedro Martinez (acting on behalf of the Department) approved the district’s request to reduce the instructional year by three days for the 2025-2026 calendar year. The waiver was requested following the emergency cancellation of classes at David Prouty High School due to a significant burst pipe in late December of 2025.

Under the terms of the approval:

The instructional requirement for the current school year is adjusted to 177 days.

The final day of school for students at David Prouty High School is now scheduled for June 18.

“We appreciate the Commissioner’s understanding of the unique challenges posed by this facility emergency,” said Superintendent Haughey. “This waiver allows our district to maintain a firm closing date for the year while ensuring we continue to provide a high-quality educational experience for our students.”

For further information regarding the revised academic calendar, please visit the district Web site.

LES students participate in MMEA All-State Treble Chorus

LEICESTER — Leicester Elementary School fourth graders Kelsie Menard and Aubrey Place recently participated in the Massachusetts Music Educators Association (MMEA) All-State Treble Chorus. Featuring nearly 200 students, the chorus is a teacher recommended ensemble of the top Massachusetts singers in grades 4-6.

LES students began the

process by auditioning with their music teacher, Alyssa Hiltz, to be selected for the ensemble. Students were chosen not only for their singing abilities, but for their leadership skills in chorus. After students were chosen, they stayed after school several times to learn the music ahead of their first rehearsal with the group.

This year, 195 students from 58 Massachusetts ele-

mentary and middle schools participated in the ensemble. Students rehearsed for the first time with the group on March 20, then participated in a full-day rehearsal and concert for their families on the 21st at Doherty Memorial High School in Worcester. The program consisted of songs of renewal and nature, notably featuring songs about the rain and sun.

The festival was conducted by Sophia Miller, a conductor who regularly works with children’s choirs around the country. They were accompanied on piano by Adam Podd, who was also the arranger of “Here Comes the Sun” which students performed as part of their program.

“I always love bringing students to this event,” says Hiltz, who has now brought 20 LES students to All-State over the last seven seasons. “Students return with a new level of confidence and leadership after performing with such a high-caliber ensemble, and I am also inspired and refreshed as a teacher by watching expert conductors work with this chorus.”



Courtesy

Aubrey Place and Kelsie Menard.

DPHS’ Matthew McNicol named Worcester County Superintendents’ Association Scholar

SPENCER — The Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District is proud to announce that Matthew McNicol, a standout senior at David Prouty High School, was honored last week as the 2026 Worcester County Superintendents’ Association (WCSA) Scholar. Matthew was recognized for his exceptional academic achievements and leadership at the annual WCSA Scholars’ Recognition Luncheon held at the Hogan Center on the campus of the College of the Holy Cross.

“The WCSA Scholar Award is a prestigious honor presented to one high-achieving senior from each school district in Worcester County.

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Swan Tavern Historical Museum launches 2026 programs April 2

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

Thursday April 2 at 7 p.m.: “French Captives in Massachusetts” Steve & Bronya Joanis return to the Swan Tavern with presentation on Acadians forcibly brought to Massachusetts from 1755 to 1763 during the French & Indian War. Although this will be a media presentation, the presentation will be in period costume appropriate for 1786 and offer a remembrance or eulogy for Joseph Robichaux, the son of a French Neutral who died in a shipwreck in December of 1786 as well as focus on the Robichaud family, Nova Scotians relocated to the New England States during the war. Come learn about this little talked about,

but fascinating time in our local history.

Thursday, May 21 at 7 p.m.: “Resurrecting Lost Voices: The Letters of George Gould” In July 1862, the second year of the Civil War, a twenty-nine-year-old man named George W. Gould from Leicester enlisted in the 25th Volunteers to fight for the Union, leaving his wife Almira and their three young children at home. Private Gould was killed on June 6, 1864 at the bloody battle of Cold Harbor. One hundred fifty years later, graduate student Morgan Kolakowski Zhang shared her collection of Gould’s letters with Stan Prager, owner of GoGeeks Computer Rescue in East Longmeadow, as well as an independent historian with an interest in the Civil War era. Stan was moved by the letters, and—in what he termed the perfect “marriage of history and technology”—set out to digitize and transcribe the letters, and create a website to honor George W. Gould. Join him in the story of PVT Gould and the tale to preserve his story.

Thursday, Oct. 29 at 7 p.m.: Vampires in Early New England In time for Halloween, Tom Kelleher returns to the Swan Tavern for presenta-

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

Thursday, Dec. 4 at 7 p.m.: “Traditional Songs of Christmas” Come visit the Swan Tavern as it is bright with warm Christmas décor for a live musical performance by the Olde Towne Carolers of Boston. Dressed in period Victorian attire, the performance of traditional Christmas songs will last approximately 45 minutes. This event is free to the public, but reservations are requested.

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



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

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

The program, titled “Solo/Duet,” will take place Tuesday evenings at 6 p.m. throughout April at the library, 3 W. Main St. Each session pairs local poets with small-ensemble jazz performances, creating a format in which spoken word “bookends” instrumental sets.

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

The April lineup begins April 7 with bassist Jerry

Wilfong and percussionist-trumpeter Dick Hummel. Poets Glenn D’Alessio and Susan Roney-O’Brien will provide readings that evening.

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

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

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

According to program organizers, the series is structured to highlight the connections between improvisational music and contemporary poet-

ry, offering audiences a chance to hear how rhythm, phrasing and narrative interact across disciplines. The alternating format allows listeners to experience both arts as complementary rather than separate performances.

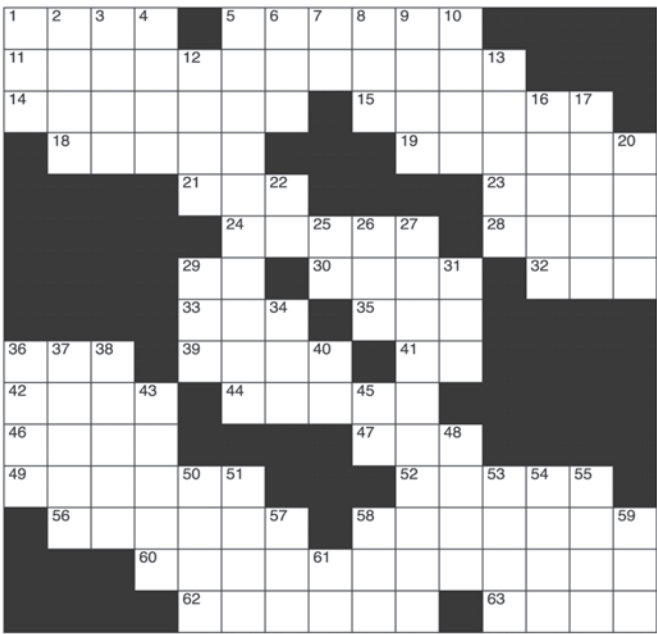
Funding support for the series is provided through the West Brookfield Cultural Council, with additional backing from the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s local cultural council program.

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

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

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

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



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Absence of difficulty
- 5. Preserve a dead body
- 11. Gratitude
- 14. The act of coming together again
- 15. More cushy
- 18. Visionaries
- 19. Large fish-eating bird
- 21. Indicates near
- 23. Former CIA and CIA critic
- 24. Icelandic poems
- 28. Pop
- 29. Hammer is one
- 30. Selfs
- 32. Thyroid-stimulating hormone
- 33. Nowhere to be found
- 35. Electronic data processing
- 36. Drivers’ licenses and passports are two
- 39. Snake-like fishes
- 41. Air Force
- 42. Popular personal computers
- 44. Stages in ecological succession
- 46. Wings
- 47. In the center
- 49. Pleasantly smooth
- 52. Jeweled headdress
- 56. In slow tempo
- 58. ___ Falls
- 60. Reiterations
- 62. Eras
- 63. Hyphen

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Body part
- 2. Mimics
- 3. Expel or eject (variant sp.)
- 4. Sea eagle
- 5. Taxonomic category
- 6. Chinese languages
- 7. Mr. T’s “A-Team” character
- 8. Consumed
- 9. Chinese dynasty
- 10. NFL legend Randy
- 12. Ireland
- 13. Palm trees with creeping roots
- 16. Fungal disease
- 17. Tall, slender-leaved plants
- 20. Affirmative! (slang)
- 22. It says who you are
- 25. Atlantic coast state
- 26. Grow older
- 27. Associations
- 29. Woman (French)
- 31. Sunscreen rating
- 34. Brew
- 36. Leader
- 37. Indigo bush genus
- 38. Burn with a hot liquid
- 40. Junior’s father
- 43. Mackerel genus
- 45. Morning
- 48. Straight line from side to side (abbr.)
- 50. Type of molding
- 51. Small, thin or twisted bunch
- 53. Worn by exposure to the weather
- 54. Mars crater
- 55. Humanities
- 57. Relating to the ears
- 58. “To the ___ degree”
- 59. Residue when something is burned
- 61. It cools a home



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SPENCER NEW LEADER
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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@villagernews.com

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Leicester Senior Citizens Club launches membership drive

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

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

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

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

www.Stonebridge Press.com

School District accepting applications for Kindergarten & Preschool

SPENCER — The Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District is now accepting Kindergarten & Preschool applications for the 2026-2027 school year.

Kindergarten (for children who will reach the age of five years old by Aug. 31) Letters were mailed out last week to all families that listed their eligible child(ren) on the 2025 town census and emails were sent to all resident families that have a child currently enrolled in our Cubs' Corner Preschool program that will be of age by the cut-off date.

Kindergarten is offered at both Wire Village School in Spencer and East Brookfield Elementary School in East Brookfield. Students are enrolled at the school in their town of residence, in accordance with District policy. School hours are 8:25 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., Monday through Friday. There is no registration deadline.

Medical forms must be completed by a physician and must detail that your child has been given the following immunizations (including the dates the immunizations were given):

- 5 doses Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Tetanus (DTaP)
- 4 doses Polio
- 3 doses Hepatitis B
- 2 doses Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
- 2 doses of Varicella Vaccine or Chicken Pox disease

Proof of Lead Screening
Vision and Hearing Screenings

Cubs' Corner Preschool The Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District's Cubs' Corner Preschool will be relocated to the all-new preschool wing at David Prouty High School starting with the 2026-2027 school year. Our program is an integrated preschool with tuition-paying students, as well as special needs students. The resident rate is \$20/day for half days and \$40/day for full days. The non-resident rate is \$22.50/day for half days and \$45/day for full-days.

Sessions will be filled on a first come, first served basis. The following sessions are offered:

- Monday/Wednesday/Friday: AM, PM or Full Day
- Tuesday/Thursday: AM, PM or Full Day
- Monday-Friday: AM, PM or Full Day

Preschool Eligibility Requirements

Age requirement: Those attending a tuition-based preschool slot must be three (3) years old by the Aug. 31 cut-off date to be eligible to attend the current school year. District residents that qualify for Special Education services may attend once they turn three, regardless of the birth date cut-off.

Toilet Training: All tuition-based preschool students must be reliably toilet trained (no

diapers or pull-ups) at the start of school. Children who do not evidence signs of reliable toilet training while in school will be found ineligible for enrollment.

Registration process

All student registrations are done online. If you would like to register your child to attend, please complete the Pre-Registration Form to begin the registration process and select the 2026-2027 school year. Once your form has been approved, you will receive an email with further instructions to create your PowerSchool online parent portal account where you will complete all of the required enrollment forms and upload required documentation. Families must provide a birth certificate (original or copy with a seal), most recent physical/immunization records/lead test (dated within one year of school start date), and two forms of proof of residency from the accepted documents listed on the address form. Tuition-based preschool families must submit a deposit equal to one week's tuition to secure their child's spot.

If you do not have access to the internet to complete the forms, we have a kiosk set up inside the Student Services office at David Prouty High School for families to use. An appointment is required to ensure that the kiosk will be available and a staff member is present to assist. The office is

open for appointments Monday through Thursday, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Please call 508-885-8515 (opt. 0) with any questions, to schedule an appointment or to provide supporting documentation.

For more information about the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional

School District and to stay up-to-date on the latest happenings across the district, please visit the website at www.sebrsd.org, follow us on Twitter and Facebook, and download the SEBRSD mobile app.

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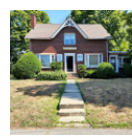
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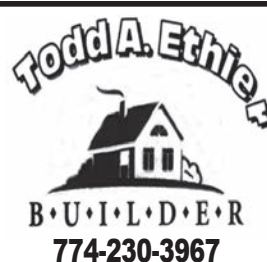
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First Congregational Church of Paxton

HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY
March 29th 10am

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MAUNDY THURSDAY
April 2nd 7:00 pm

Travel with us to the Upper Room and then to the Garden in this Service of Tennebrae

GOOD FRIDAY
April 3rd 12 pm

We will travel with Jesus as He moves from condemnation to the tomb

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE
April 5th 6:30 am

Join us to celebrate our Risen Lord on the Bridge at Moores State Park

EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
April 5th 10am

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First Congregational Church - 1 Church Street - Paxton, MA
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JOY (Just Older Youth)

Adventurers offers journey through Canadian Rockies & Pacific Northwest

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

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

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

The experience concludes as forests and mountains give way to vineyards, lakes, and the energetic waterfront of Seattle. From coastal elegance to icy glaciers and iconic skylines, this trip weaves together nature, culture, and comfort into a richly layered exploration of western North America.

Pricing: \$7,625 per person (double) - includes 14 days with 20 meals, hotels, and all transfers within tour; but does not include airfare and transportation

to airport. Pricing for airfare and ground transportation to airport will be finalized soon, but plan for under \$1,000 per person. For more information, contact Bill Murwin at whmurwin@gmail.com or by phone 508-756-3193.

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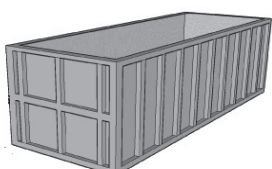


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EDITORIAL

A hometown story that stretches around the world

It is easy to think of marathon running as something that happens somewhere else.

Boston has its famous race. New York closes streets for thousands of runners. Chicago and London make headlines each year with elite competitors and crowds lining the course. These events can feel distant from everyday life in small Central Massachusetts communities.

But sometimes, the world arrives right here at home.

Former Spencer Police Department Sgt. Valarie Morin's recent presentation at the Richard Sugden Library offered a reminder that remarkable achievements often begin with ordinary people who happen to live next door. Her completion of the six World Marathon Majors and full marathons on all seven continents places her in rare company internationally. It also places Spencer on the map in a quieter but meaningful way.

There is something especially powerful about accomplishments like Morin's because they are not built overnight. They represent years of preparation, persistence and willingness to step outside familiar surroundings again and again. Running across continents, climates and cultures requires more than athletic ability. It requires curiosity, resilience and a willingness to keep moving forward even when conditions are unfamiliar or difficult.

That spirit is recognizable to anyone who has spent time in local public service.

Morin's career with the Spencer Police Department already reflected a commitment to her community. Her marathon journey shows how that same dedication can carry someone far beyond town boundaries without ever losing connection to home. When residents gathered at the library to hear her speak, they were not only learning about races in Kenya or Antarctica. They were seeing what sustained effort can make possible over time.

Stories like this matter because they expand the sense of what is possible for others.

Young people sitting in that audience may have come for the photographs of penguins in Antarctica or runners on the Great Wall of China. What they also saw was someone from their own town setting ambitious goals and reaching them. That kind of example can stay with a person for years.

Adults, too, benefit from reminders that achievement does not stop after a certain age or career milestone. Morin's accomplishments came alongside a demanding professional life and family responsibilities familiar to many residents. Her experience shows that exploration and personal challenges do not belong only to elite athletes or international travelers. They can grow from local roots.

Equally important is the setting where the story was shared.

Libraries remain among the few places where residents of all ages can gather to hear firsthand accounts of experiences that reach far beyond their own neighborhoods. Events like this presentation reinforce how local institutions continue to connect communities with the wider world in meaningful ways.

It is not every day that someone from Spencer runs past lions in Kenya, penguins in Antarctica and ancient ruins in Greece before returning home to speak with neighbors at the library. Yet moments like this remind us that even in small towns, there are people quietly accomplishing extraordinary things.

Recognizing those achievements strengthens community pride and encourages others to set goals of their own. Sometimes the longest journeys begin right here.

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

OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I pray we can outlast Trump

To the Editor:

Have you noticed that every time it appears that we are going to get the thousands of Epstein documents which are being held back, the prez (small letters deliberate) does something, anything, to divert attention?

He bombed many small boats off the South American coast with no proof of who they belonged to or what they were doing. They might have been fishermen bring their haul to another island, or farmers bringing their crops elsewhere, or they could have been carrying drugs. The thing is, we don't know! Over 100 human beings were murdered without our knowing why. There were two survivors in one of the bombings that we may have learned what they were doing, but they were blown to smithereens. But don't forget, they were probably brown or black, so they didn't matter. If he is so concerned with stopping drugs from coming into this country, why did he pardon a drug czar who brought in tons of drugs? I just don't get it.

And, there is missing testimony from a 14 year girl that not only did the prez abuse her, but also hit her. Why is this information being withheld from the public? What is he hiding?

So, now, we are bombing Iran spending billions a week to do so. Why? It is impossible to get a clear answer from him or anyone in the administration; they all say something else.

We can spend billions bombing another country but we can't afford to give our own people health insurance and food to eat. I guess they will just have to enjoy the ballroom.

We have already lost some American service people. How many more are injured, possibly maimed for life? The prez is so ignorant, he believes that he can insult and demean our allies and they will be okay with it. He doesn't understand why they refuse to assist in the Iran fiasco. If other countries do join the prez, can't this lead to a world war? Our people are serving this maniac and if they die, so what, aren't they "suckers and losers". Do you think his son will go into the military or did he inherit the family bone spurs?

What happened to our support for Ukraine, a democracy. Where are our priorities?

DOGE

To the Editor:

I am told that we still fund a Department of Government Efficiency. Having seen that shuttering USAID, a well received JFK invention that partnered with UNICEF, Save the Children, pharmaceutical company outreach, doctors without borders — essentially, all of the world outreach this Christian nation, was able to provide efficiently to the rest of the world. Dissing and tariffs have destroyed farmers' world markets, so the ability to sell their surplus to this program, after investing in appropriate packaging and handling supplies, saved their bacon. Closing it will result in bankruptcy for 75 percent of the family farms who participated.

Then there was gutting the \$3 billion budget of the Consumer Protection Agency, that had returned 18 billion to consumers in its last year, because, we all know this DOJ is doing a great job on fraud, when not to busy investigating and prosecuting political enemies (on our dime), and not devoting so many resources to redacting Epstein files (poorly, but also on our dime).

I originally thought it a bad idea to cut the National Park budget, but with so few wanting to come here as tourists, dirty bathrooms are not an issue.

I wonder if the DOGE staff could examine the efficiency of ICE. They seem to be skimping a little too much on de-escalation techniques, constitutional laws regarding search and seizure, appropriate use of firearms. Considering that these people do not appear to do their

Every day, there is something happening, every day. We know about his bro-mance with Putin. He rolls out a red carpet for him and what does his good buddy do? He is supporting Iran advising them where our people are. Whatta pal.

I have said for the last 10 years that the prez is Hitler re-born. He wants to build "camps" all over the country for people who never get a trial to prove why they should be there. He also doesn't care about the effect of these "camps" on the surrounding communities. I remember reading about these camps that Hitler had and millions died in horrible conditions.

How about these young Republicans who say they love Hitler? They are the future leaders of this country unless stopped. Where are the rest of the Republicans who know this is wrong.

I'm hearing about this election bill he is trying to get passed, the Save America Voting Act. It is merely a ruse to shut out people wanting to vote. I and other friends need the mail-in ballots for health reasons. The prez wants the "right voters." Don't hold your breath that there will be mid-term elections. He knows he is in trouble and will do anything to keep his power. If he has his way, they won't be "free elections."

He wants to punish media stations for not reporting the "war" in Iran as he wants. That's another hallmark of tyranny, controlling the media.

This man is the epitome of a malignant sociopath. He must win. He must be the best. If he is bombing Iran or Venezuela, you can be sure there is something in it for him. He cares only for himself and money. The extent of the graft and corruption of this administration will never be known but you can be sure, you are paying for it.

He criticized Obama all the time for taking a vacation and yet he costs us a million dollars in security each time he plays golf which seems to be every weekend. He seems to have recovered from his bone spurs.

The leader of our country is callous, pathetic, infantile, bigoted, incompetent, and a world class liar.

I hope, and pray, we can outlast him.

JUDY ROSE
 EAST BROOKFIELD

Four stages of raising confident, money-smart kids



FINANCIAL
 FOCUS

TREVOR
 NIELSEN

Good financial habits are a little like brushing your teeth. When you learn them early, they become second nature, and you carry them with you for life. And while money can feel complicated, especially today, the foundation starts simply.

Parents can begin the conversation with very young children, and young adults can build on those basics as they take on more responsibility. Step by step, these habits create confidence that helps build long term financial security and a more fulfilling life.

The following are the four key stages of financial growth.

Stage 1: For very young children, the goal is to make money feel simple and manageable. A great place to start is with three jars labeled "Spend," "Save" and "Share." When kids can see their money grow or shrink, the idea starts to make sense. Saving also introduces them to goal setting, and working toward paying for a small toy or outing teaches patience. Most important, you're helping your children see money as a tool they can understand easily and use with confidence.

Stage 2: If you have tweens (children roughly nine to 12 years old), they're usually ready for slightly bigger financial ideas. This is a great time for them to earn money through chores or small jobs, helping them see the connection between effort and reward and building a sense of ownership. Conversations about needs versus wants also to become more meaningful, because kids are now making real choices with money, they earned themselves. Your tween may be ready for a simple savings account to watch their savings grow, or a reloadable cash card for spending.

Stage 3: By the time teens reach high school or young adulthood, budgeting becomes essential. This doesn't need to be overly strict or complicated. A simple system that helps them track deposits and withdrawals can make all the difference. Whether they use an app, a paper notebook or a spreadsheet, the real goal is awareness. Teenagers also benefit from learning how credit works. Understanding how to build a healthy credit score and how to use credit wisely protects them from costly mistakes in later life.

Stage 4: Then come the early working years, when habits shift from learning to building. One of the smartest steps at this stage is paying yourself first. Automatic transfers to savings or retirement accounts help establish stability without extra effort. Even small retirement contributions matter more than most people realize, because time allows compounding to do the heavy lifting. This is also when young adults can start organizing their money into different buckets for rent, automobile payments, emergencies, retirement, and everyday spending. These habits help lay the groundwork for financial freedom down the road.

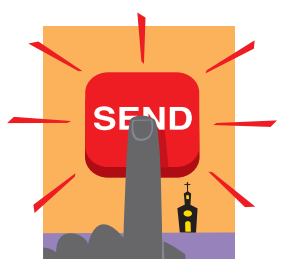
Throughout every stage, the theme is confidence. Each small success creates a sense of control, and each good habit makes the next one easier. Over time, these habits turn into a lifetime of financial security and fulfillment. When you start strong and stay consistent, money becomes a tool that helps your children support the lives they want.

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

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

My two cents

To the Editor:

My two cents — here it goes:

Our standard is that the American Flag is a symbol of freedom. The Pledge of Allegiance is a statement of loyalty to the U.S.A. The most powerful nation on the Earth, Barnone. It cites we are a Republic, not a Democracy. One nation under God and our money states "In God We Trust." We are a Christian nation.

It seems the Pledge of Allegiance is not being said in some schools. Either you are a patriot and law abiding, or you are not. Sounds like an indoctrination of the youngsters to be violent protestors.

Who gave the okay for them to not take part in their obligation to the U.S.A.? Men have three years active and three years inactive obligation to serve their country. Did Obama serve, did Biden or Clinton? Shame, shame. It seems like their party side-steps the truth. Jesus says 1. You shall know them by their fruit and 2. Know the truth and it shall make you free (John 8:32; Math 7:16; Luke 6:45).

In conclusion, I plead with my law-abiding brothers and sisters to evaluate their relationship with the Almighty. He's angry and giving us curses right now. He's pleading with us to make it right before his fulfillment of His end time appointment; the second advent (2 Peter 3:8-10; Psalms 119).

A Brother in Christ,

DENIS LEO
SPENCER

Share your memories of Lake Lashaway

To the Editor:

2028 marks a truly special milestone for our community—the 200th Anniversary of Lake Lashaway in East and North Brookfield!

As we come together to honor two centuries of natural beauty, cherished memories, and shared history, we're asking for your help in creating a lasting tribute to the lake we all love.

We are collecting stories, personal anecdotes, and photographs with captions that celebrate Lake Lashaway's rich past and vibrant present.

Whether it's a tale from childhood summers, a family tradition, a memorable fishing trip, or a stunning sunset photo—your contributions will help us paint a beautiful, collective portrait of life on and around the lake.

Please send your stories and images to Lashaway200thAnniversary@gmail.com or mail them to:

Lake Lashaway 200th Anniversary Committee
122 Connie Mack Drive
East Brookfield, MA 01515

If you have a photo that you don't want to part with, let us know, we can set up a time to scan it to a digital copy!

When you send something, you are giving us permission to use it in an upcoming commemorative display, booklet, or online archive as part of the 200th Anniversary Celebration. Please include:

- * Your name and contact information
- * A brief description or caption for any photos.
- * Approximate date or year of the memory or image.

Let's celebrate the spirit of Lake Lashaway— Past, Present, Future— Together! Thank you for being part of this special occasion!

Warm regards,

BRANDON AVERY
NORTH BROOKFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

HEATHER GABLASKI
EAST BROOKFIELD HISTORICAL COMMISSION/LAKE LASHAWAY 200TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

Easter morning on Main Street

Easter has always felt a little different from the other holidays that come around each year. It does not arrive with the deep certainty of Christmas, when the calendar and the weather seem to agree with each other. Easter comes when it is ready, sometimes in snow flurries, sometimes in warm sunshine, and often right in the middle of that muddy, hopeful stretch we call early spring here in Massachusetts.

When I was younger, I used to think Easter was mostly about new shoes and stiff collars. My mother believed strongly that everyone ought to look their best that morning, and she was not alone. If you stood outside almost any church in town back then, you would see a line of families stepping carefully across damp grass, children holding woven baskets and fathers brushing lint from jackets they had not worn since the year before.

Even now, I still notice those small details on Easter Sunday. The parking lots fill earlier than usual. The bells seem to ring a little longer. People who have not seen one another since winter's first snowfall stop to talk in the sunshine as if they had been waiting all season for that chance.

There is something comforting about that rhythm.

In many of our towns, Easter also means the return of activity on the common. Before long, there will be egg hunts organized by local volunteers, bright plastic eggs scattered across grass that only weeks ago was hidden under snowbanks. Parents stand along the edges with coffee cups in their hands, calling out reminders not to run too fast, while the youngest children move carefully as if each egg might be a small treasure.

Those moments matter more than we sometimes admit.

They remind us that spring is not only a change

in temperature. It is a change in spirit. After months of early sunsets and quiet evenings, people begin opening their doors again. Neighbors wave from across driveways. Someone starts raking leaves that should have been gone last November. Someone else sets a chair on the porch for the first time in months.

Easter seems to arrive right when we need that reminder most.

Over the years, I have also come to appreciate the quieter side of the holiday. Not every Easter is crowded or busy. Some are spent around a kitchen table with only a few voices. Some pass with a short walk after church and a long conversation later in the afternoon. And some are marked simply by noticing the first real warmth in the air and being thankful for it.

There is a steadiness in that kind of celebration.

In small towns like ours, holidays have a way of carrying memories forward. The same churches still open their doors. The same streets lead to the same town halls. The same families return to the same pews, sometimes with new generations sitting where their grandparents once did. Even when things change, there is a sense that the day itself still knows its way around town.

I think that is why Easter continues to feel important, even for people who mark it quietly. It is not only a religious observance or a children's holiday with colored eggs and chocolate rabbits. It is a signal that winter is finally loosening its grip and that our communities are waking up again together.

By the time evening settles in on Easter Sunday, the sun usually lingers a little longer than it did the week before. That extra light feels like a promise of what is ahead. Gardens will soon be planted. Ball fields will fill again. Windows will stay open later into the evening.

And just like that, another New England spring has begun along Main Street.

WEEKLY POLICE BLOTTER

Spencer

The Spencer Police Department had no arrests to report for the week of March 18-25.

Leicester

The Leicester Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of March 19-25.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on March 19 for Leaving the Scene of Property Damage, Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle, a Marked Lanes Violation, Vandalization of Property, and driving at a rate of speed greater than was reasonable and proper.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on March 20 for Operating a Motor Vehicle after suspension of license.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on March 23 for Leaving the Scene of Property Damage and Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle.



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P.E.O. Chapters R and AA join forces to revive beloved “Chocolate Sunday” fundraiser



CHARLTON — After a hiatus of several years, a cherished local tradition is making a decadent return. Sheila Ansley of P.E.O. Chapter R recently announced that the organization’s signature “Chocolate Sunday” is officially back on the calendar, thanks to a dynamic new partnership with Chapter AA.

The fundraiser—an afternoon dedicated to sampling gourmet chocolate treats, coffee, and tea—was previously sidelined due to the intensive labor required for a single small group to manage. However, after Chapter R reached out to their sisters in Chapter AA, the two groups agreed to a joint venture. By splitting the workload, the chapters have found a sustainable

way to bring the sweetness back to Charlton.

Event details
Date: Sunday, May 17
Time: 2 p.m.
Location: The Performing Arts Center at The Overlook, Charlton
Mission: All proceeds support the P.E.O. Sisterhood’s mission of providing life-changing educational opportunities and scholarships for women.

Contacts: Sheila Ansley 508-434-2649 or Elizabeth Pacek 508-829-4504

A season of sisterhood: Chapter R’s Active Winter The revival of Chocolate Sunday comes on the heels of a busy winter for Chapter R. Despite a string of “historically biting” temperatures, members remained

dedicated to their cultural and social calendar.

In December, members braved one of the coldest nights of the year to tour the “Winter Reimagined” display at Tower Hill Botanic Garden. While the air was frigid, the spectacular light installations proved well worth the chill.

The momentum continued into January with two standout events:

Musical excellence: Members attended a moving organ concert performed by Amanda Mole, daughter of Jackie Mole. The performance offered a warm, soaring reprieve from the January frost.

Founders Day: The group honored the P.E.O. Sisterhood’s 1869 roots at

the Founders Day Program. Members «toughed out» the New England cold to enjoy a commemorative meal and program honoring the seven women who started the organization over 150 years ago.

Looking ahead to spring As the frost thaws, Chapter R is looking forward to milder weather and continued community engagement.

For over a century and a half, the P.E.O. Sisterhood has focused on the intersection of friendship and philanthropy. Through various grants and STAR scholarships, they continue to help women reach their educational goals, one “Chocolate Sunday” at a time.

NBES’ Jacqui Fernandez nominated for Quaboag Hills Choice Awards Teacher of the Year

NORTH BROOKFIELD — Jacqui Fernandez has been nominated for this year’s Teacher of the Year through the Quaboag Hills Choice Awards!

Fernandez serves as one of our outstanding Pre-K educators at North Brookfield Elementary School, and has been instrumental in building and strengthening our Pre-K and Kindergarten Bridges program. Her dedication to early childhood education, her commitment to creating engaging and nurturing classrooms, and her tireless work to support our youngest learners truly exemplify the very best of North Brookfield Public Schools.

Community members are encouraged to take a few minutes to show your support for Fernandez by voting and helping her earn this well deserved recognition. We are incredibly fortunate to have her as part of our NBES family! Please visit QHMA.com to cast your vote for Ms. Fernandez.

Leicester Knights of Columbus hosting family dinner

LEICESTER — The Knights of Columbus, 91 Manville St., Leicester, will have a family dinner on Wednesday, April 8 at 6 p.m. The menu features a choice of baked ham or baked fish. Cost is \$15, and includes Salad, Entree, Dessert and Coffee.

Call Don at 508-615-8434 or email at ohno7g7@yahoo.com by Monday, April 6 for reservations. All are welcome.

World of Life Church invites community to Easter service

SPENCER — Word of Life Church Spencer invites the community to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ with us Easter Sunday, April 5, at 9 a.m. at the American Legion Hall, 175 Main St., Spencer.

QCC awarded \$10,000 for Auxilium Center for Entrepreneurship

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College was recently awarded \$10,000 as part of the Inspiring Generosity Matching Grant Program through donations from the Esler Family Foundation. The funding will support the growth of the Auxilium Center for Entrepreneurship at QCC, an initiative designed to expand access to entrepreneurial education and strengthen the economic ecosystem of Central Massachusetts.

“This grant is a powerful vote of confidence in the work we are doing at the Auxilium Center for Entrepreneurship,” said Rocky Knight, director of the Auxilium Center for Entrepreneurship. “We are deeply thankful for this support, which will help us enhance student-centered initiatives such as our campus pitch competition and the growth of our incubator in 2027. These programs create pathways for students to build confidence, test ideas and access the tools they need to move from concept to action.”

The grant will allow the Auxilium Center to scale programming, expand mentorship opportunities and deepen partnerships with regional organizations that support earlystage entrepreneurs. Funding will also help to establish QCC’s Auxilium Center as a regional hub for next-generation entrepreneurs, as well as a catalyst for workforce development and community revitalization.

In the short term, the grant will support opportunities for students to test business ideas, develop investorready pitch materials and gain realworld traction through sales and business formation. Students will also benefit from increased access to mentors, industry partners and alumni who can help guide their entrepreneurial journeys.

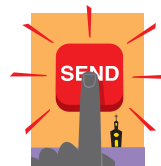
“The generosity shown by the Esler Family Foundation represents an investment in our students and the future of our regional economy. The Auxilium Center is becoming a cornerstone of equitydriven innovation at QCC, and this support ensures that more students will gain the resources and confidence they need to transform their communities,” said QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja.

Over the next three years, the Auxilium Center has planned a schedule of workshops, seminars, pitch events, networking mixers and other experiences aimed at building entrepreneurial mindsets and practical skills. In 2027, the Center will launch its capstone program, the QCC–Auxilium Incubator, a nineweek accelerator that will guide students from concept to commercialization.

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Achayo’s first-attempt NCLEX success highlights legacy of leadership and excellence



Elizabeth Achayo

CHARLTON — When Elizabeth Achayo of Worcester received confirmation that she had passed the NCLEX-PN on her first attempt, it marked more than a personal milestone—it reflected years of discipline, leadership, and a deep commitment to service that defined her journey into nursing.

The Feb. 21 achievement was shared to Dr. Gretheline Bolandrina, former Academy Director of the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, who described Achayo as a model of what the program strives to cultivate in its graduates.

A student leader with pur-

pose Throughout her time at Bay Path, Achayo distinguished herself not only academically, but as a leader among her peers. She was inducted into the National Technical Honor Society and earned recognition as a nominee for the Dr. A. Healy Clinical Excellence Award—an honor reserved for students demonstrating exceptional clinical skill and professionalism.

Her leadership extended beyond academics. Achayo served as an officer for the UNICEF Club and was selected as a nominee for Lead Reader of the Nurses’ Pledge, a symbolic role

reflecting both trust and respect from faculty and classmates.

Service rooted in community

Achayo’s dedication to nursing was evident in her extensive volunteer work. She contributed her time and skills to local initiatives, including health screenings and blood pressure clinics at the Charlton Senior Center, and supported the medical team for the Shepherd Hill Show Choir.

Her commitment to community health reflects a broader philosophy: that nursing extends far beyond clinical settings and into everyday acts of care and

connection. A strong foundation of training

In addition to her academic achievements, Achayo built a robust portfolio of certifications, including Dementia Care, Mental Health First Aid, Stop the Bleed, and Domestic Violence training. She has also completed post-graduate QPR training, further strengthening her ability to respond to patients in crisis.

These credentials, combined with hands-on clinical experience, positioned her well for success on the NCLEX-PN—an exam widely regarded as a critical gateway into the nursing profession.

The role of mentorship Achayo credits much of her success to the mentorship she received during her training, particularly from Dr. Bolandrina.

“I am here to share the great news... your encouragement kept me going,” Achayo shared in a message following her results. “You have never left, always extending a helping hand and offering an opportunity for us to ask for help. We appreciate you.”

For Bolandrina, who concluded her tenure in late 2025, Achayo’s accomplishment represents the enduring impact of mentorship in nursing education.

Looking ahead Now officially a Licensed Practical Nurse, Achayo enters the healthcare field prepared not only with technical knowledge, but with a strong foundation in leadership, advocacy, and compassionate care.

Her first-attempt success on the NCLEX-PN stands as a testament to her dedication—and signals a promising future for a nurse whose journey has already begun to make a meaningful impact.

Brookfield Council on Aging announces April programs for seniors

BROOKFIELD — The Brookfield Council on Aging has announced a full slate of April programs designed to keep local seniors active, informed and connected through a mix of educational presentations, wellness classes and social gatherings at the Senior Center on Common Street.

The month begins April 7 with a Bingo and pizza gathering, offering participants a chance to enjoy a relaxed afternoon of games and conversation. Later in

the month, residents can meet with a Tri-Valley Options Counselor on April 13 for information about benefits, services and planning resources available to older adults and their families.

Safety and wellness remain a focus as well. A fall prevention and safety presentation scheduled for April 14 will provide practical strategies for reducing risks at home and maintaining independence. Regular weekly fitness programs also continue, including

Functional Fitness classes held Mondays at 11 a.m. and Thursdays at 9 a.m., along with Chair Yoga on Tuesdays at 9 a.m.

Social opportunities remain central to the Council on Aging's programming. "Donuts with the Director" returns April 23 and will include a follow-up presentation from Varnum Funeral Home, offering residents another chance to ask questions and continue earlier conversations on planning topics of interest.

Later in the month, a presentation on Brookfield history scheduled for April

28 will highlight the town's past and provide participants with a deeper connection to their community. The program is expected to appeal to longtime residents as well as those newer to the area.

Creative activities round out the schedule. A card-making session planned for April 30 offers participants a hands-on craft opportunity, while ongoing crochet and handcraft gatherings take place Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. Game Day options throughout the month include Pitch, Skip-Bo, cribbage and Yahtzee.

In addition to group pro-

gramming, the Council on Aging continues to offer appointments for services such as the foot clinic and manicures. These services must be scheduled in advance.

Programs are held at the Brookfield Senior Center, 8 Common St., and are open to area seniors. Organizers encourage residents to fol-

low the Brookfield Council on Aging on social media for updates and calendar reminders, or to contact staff directly for more information about registration and availability.

Additional details are available by email at seniors@brookfieldma.us.

West Brookfield Historical Commission announces 2026 scholarship

WEST BROOKFIELD — The West Brookfield Historical Commission is pleased to announce its 2026, 15th annual scholarship in the amount of \$2,000. Qualified students must reside in West Brookfield and may attend Quaboag Regional High School, or be school-choice students, home schooled students, and independent school students.

This award is made possible through the J. Irving and Jane L. England Charitable Trust.

Application criteria:

The students must be planning to attend either a four-year college/university program or a two-year college with the intent to transfer to a four-year college. The Commission will show preference to study plans with concentration on History and History-related areas. Major or minors may include Political Science, Social Studies, Anthropology, Archaeology, Historical Preservation, Museum Studies, and Education in any of these related fields.

Applicants must submit a brief essay based on one of the Notable Persons or Significant Places listed on the application. All necessary information will be found on the West Brookfield Historical Commission website. <http://westbrookfield.org>

Essays are due no later than April 6.

E-mail- info@westbrookfield.org

Mail: West Brookfield Historical Commission, PO Box 372, W. Brookfield, MA 01585.

The application and details can be found on the Historical Commission Web site, <http://westbrookfield.org>.

Applications welcome for Quaboag Historical Society scholarship

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

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

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

Nomination papers for Brookfield town election due March 16

BROOKFIELD — Brookfield will hold its Annual Town Election Monday, May 4, with polls open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Town Hall, 6 Central St.

Nomination papers for the Brookfield Annual Town Election are available until the March 16 filing deadline at the Town Clerk's Office. The following offices and terms are open to candidates:

- Moderator (1 Year Term)
- Select Board (3 Year Term)
- Assessor (3 Year Term)
- Planning Board (5 Year Term)
- Planning Board (4 Year Term)
- Elementary School Committee (3 Year Term)
- Water Commission (3 Year Term)
- Board of Health (3 Year Term)
- Trustee For Merrick Public Library (2 - 3 Year Term)
- Cemetery Commissioner (2 Year Term)
- Cemetery Commissioner (3 Year Term)
- Town Collector (3 Year Term)

Monday, March 16, 5 p.m.

Last day to obtain and return nomination papers (49 days before election)

Monday March 30, 5 p.m.

Last day for registrars to certify Nomination Papers: (35 Days before election)

Monday, March 30, 5 p.m.

Last day for candidates to withdraw (Letter to the Town Clerk)

Please note you can now register to vote online at: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/>.

Donations needed for Community Baby Shower

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

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

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

Leicester Senior Center announces May & April events

LEICESTER — The Leicester Senior Center will offer the following events during the months of April and May.

Wednesday, April 1st - April Fools Breakfast @ Leicester Senior Center. Time and menu to be determined.

Wednesday, April 8th - Bemis Farms Workshop - "Spring Watering Can" - 10:00 AM - Cost \$25 - Payment and reservations in advance. Call the Leicester Senior Center.

Thursday, April 16th - "Senior-Senior Prom" - Leicester High School - 5 PM - Cost \$20 per person. More details by calling the Leicester Senior Center.

Thursday, April 23rd - Monthly Community Breakfast - 9:00 AM - Cost = \$4.

Monday, April 27th - "Tea & Talk" - 1:00 PM - Eric Spahl - "Celebrating our 250th with a tour of national landmarks".

Wednesday, April 29th - Judy Palken - Nutrition Presentation - 10:00 AM.

Wednesday, May 6th - "Women Celebrating Women" Luncheon at the Senior Center - 12:00PM - Sponsored by Vibra.

Friday, May 8th - Leicester High School National Honor Society "Game Day" - 1:00 PM - senior center dining hall.

Monday, May 18th - "Tea & Talk" - Rusty Guertin "Singing Performance" - 1PM.

June 29th - "Tea & Talk" - Jimmy "Rag Tag" Oneil - Singer - 1 PM.

The Leicester Senior Center now has its own dedicated website. It can be found at "LeicesterSeniorCenter.com," no spaces. The Senior Center also has its own dedicated YouTube page @ "Leicester Senior Center."

East Brookfield Library's seed program returns

EAST BROOKFIELD — The East Brookfield Public Library's seed program is back for another exciting growing year. Either come or call the library with the number of the items you would like. Our seeds are re-bagged, so if you need growing instructions see Carolann.

Did you know she was named Massachusetts Agriculturist of the year by the National Grange in 2000, and has won a number of vegetable growing competitions including the heaviest tomato contest and the heaviest pumpkin at the Big E. She has been named Grand Champion in the vegetable contest at the Big E 19 out of the 26 times she has entered! She knows her vegetables and is more than willing to answer any questions you may have.

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North Brookfield Student Council has done it again!

Members of the North Brookfield High School Student Council recently attended the Massachusetts Association of Student Councils State Conference. We are proud to share that the NBHS Student Council once again earned the Gold Council of Excellence designation, recognizing the outstanding leadership and service work of our students. In addition, the group received a Top 10 Project Award for their work organizing the Junior Conference, an event that NBHS hosts each year for student leaders from across the region. Congratulations to all the members of student council and to their advisor Ms. Malone for their tremendous work this year and every year.

North Brookfield's Sophia Giangrande

honored with Superintendents' Scholar Award

NORTH BROOKFIELD

— On Wednesday, March 25, North Brookfield High School proudly participated in the annual Scholar Luncheon held at the College of the Holy Cross. This event brings together top seniors from across Central Massachusetts to recognize their outstanding academic achievement and leadership.

We are proud to share that Sophia Giangrande was selected as NBHS's recipient of the Massachusetts Superintendents' Senior Scholar Award. Sophia has distinguished herself as a leader both in the classroom and throughout the school community. Her commitment to excellence is evident not only in her academic work, but also through her active involvement in student council and athletics.

Giangrande was one of just 45 seniors from across Central Massachusetts honored at this year's event, an incredible accomplishment and a testament to her hard work and dedication. Congratulations to her on this well-deserved recognition!



Kindergarten registration now open; free Integrated Preschool available for Leicester families

LEICESTER — The Leicester School District is pleased to announce that Kindergarten registration is now open for the 2026–2027 school year. We are also excited to continue offering tuition-free enrollment in our integrated preschool program for Leicester residents.

Children who turn five years old on or before Aug. 31 are eligible to enroll in Kindergarten at Leicester Elementary School. School hours are 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. There is no registration deadline, and families are encouraged to register as soon as possible to help us prepare for the upcoming school year.

To enter Kindergarten, students must provide:

- Proof of a lead screening with results
- A physical exam dated within 13 months of the start of school
- 5 doses of Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP)
- 4 doses of Polio
- 3 doses of Hepatitis B
- 2 doses of Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)
- 2 doses of Varicella vaccine or documentation of chickenpox disease

Families are invited to attend Kindergarten Information Night on Wednesday, April 8, from 5–7 p.m. at the Leicester Middle School Fine Arts Center. The evening will include an informative presentation, a question-and-answer session, and a tour of Leicester Elementary School. It is a wonderful opportunity for families to learn more and begin building connections within the school community.

Registration information can be found at: https://leicester.k12.ma.us/for_parents/student_registration.

In addition to Kindergarten registration, Leicester is proud to offer a tuition-free integrated preschool program for in-town residents. Children who turn three or four years old on or before Aug. 31 are eligible to apply. District residents who qualify for special education services may begin attending once they turn three, regardless of the birthdate cutoff.

Children enrolling in the preschool program must be independently toilet-trained (no diapers or pull-ups), unless a specific special education service requires otherwise. Children who are not yet independently using the restroom during the school day will need to wait to begin the program until they are developmentally ready.

More information about the integrated preschool program can be found at: <https://sites.google.com/lpsma.net/leicester-integrated-preschool?usp=sharing>.

For questions about Kindergarten or Preschool registration, please contact Leicester Elementary School at (508) 892-7050.

We look forward to welcoming our newest learners and partnering with families as they begin this exciting educational journey in Leicester!

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John Gahagan receives Superintendent Scholar Award



Left to right: Patricia Gahagan (mom), John Gahagan, Superintendent Kustigian, and Principal Zawada.

LEICESTER — Congratulations to John Gahagan (LHS Class of 2026) for receiving the Superintendent's Scholar Award for Leicester High School. He is currently ranked first in his class and has earned the title Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction. He is looking to pursue a degree in biology at Boston College, Worcester State or UMass Amherst after graduation.

Gahagan was honored on March 25 at Holy Cross College along with other scholars from the Central Massachusetts.

He wishes to thank his mother, Patricia, for the countless hours of sacrifice, dedication and support. He said, "She is the reason I was able to receive this award. Without her, it wouldn't have been possible."

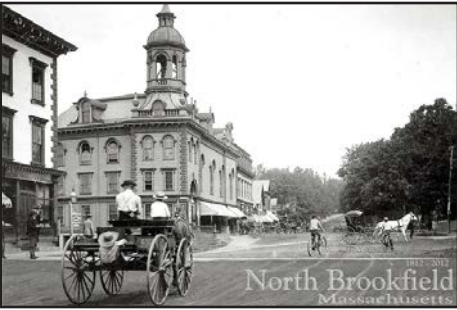
Superintendent Brett Kustigian said the future is bright with students like Gahagan leading the way. He continued, "Leicester High School has a solid tradition of producing top-notch scholars like John. While we continue to celebrate our vocational programs, academics remain

front and center. In fact, the focus on college and career preparation raises the bar for everyone."

In addition to his leadership duties, LHS Principal Ted Zawada also teaches early college high school courses allowing students to take college-level courses for free, earning both high school and college credits simultaneously.

Zawada has John in class and he stated, "John is a true scholar and very deserving of the award. Great things are in his future, especially in the field of science."

Community Heart & Soul coming to North Brookfield



NORTH BROOKFIELD — Developed and field-tested over a decade in partnership with more than 100 small cities and towns across America, Community Heart & Soul is a proven process for engaging a community in shaping its future. And it is coming to North Brookfield!

Lifelong residents and those new to town are being asked to participate in this program that could help identify ways to enhance the character of North Brookfield. By gathering input from neighbors, local officials, business owners and other stakeholders, citizens will be able to chart a path for their town's future.

A dedicated group of community volunteers are leading the way, guided by a Community Heart & Soul coach. Funded through a grant from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, the two-year process works in phases: identifying what matters most to the community; bringing in different stakeholders to be involved with the discussion; planning for the "long game" to

chart priorities and potential plans for future growth; and helping the town prepare to act on these goals.

Residents are encouraged to join our group at the Hoston Free Public Library from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 11 to learn about the benefits of the Community Heart & Soul program, share what they love most about our community, and decide if they want to actively participate in this "home grown" effort to shape the future of North Brookfield.

Refreshments will be provided by Subway. If you are unable to attend on April 11, or would like more information before our event, you can refer to the Community Heart & Soul Web site, www.communityheartand-soul.org.

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LEGALS

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. WO26P0926EA
INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION NOTICE
 Estate Of:

Nathan Keith Fitzgerald
Also Known As:
Nathan K. Fitzgerald
Date of Death: February 21, 2026

To All persons interested in the above-captioned estate, by Petition of **Joshua Fitzgerald of Brimfield MA** a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

Joshua Fitzgerald of Brimfield 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.

April 3, 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. WO26P0929EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR
FORMAL ADJUDICATION
 Estate Of:

Leo Benjamin Swett
Date of Death: 06/02/2025

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Marie F Swett of Warren 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:

Marie F Swett of Warren MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the estate in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/21/2026.**

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: March 23 2026

Stephanie Fattman,

Register of Probate

April 3, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family Court

225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
Docket No. WO24P1799PM
CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF
CONSERVATOR'S ACCOUNT

In the matter of:
Cole J. Allard
Of: Warren, MA
 Protected Person/Disabled Person/
 Respondent

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, you are hereby notified pursuant to Rule 72 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court, that the 1st account(s) of Susan Hoey of Westfield, MA Ryan Allard of Warren, MA

as Conservator of the property of said Respondent has or have been presented to the Court for allowance

You have the right to object to the account(s). If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **04/21/2026.** This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to object to the account(s). If you fail to file the written appearance and objection by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you, including the allowance of the account(s).

Additionally, within thirty days after said return day (or within such other time as the Court upon motion may order), you must file a written affidavit of objections stating the specific facts and grounds upon which each objection is based and a copy shall be served upon the Conservator pursuant to Rule 3 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court. You have the right to send to the Conservator, by registered or certified mail, a written request to receive a copy of the Petition and account(s) at no cost to you.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
like outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both.

The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State

WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.

March 19, 2026

Stephanie K. Fattman
 Register of Probate

April 3, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family Court

225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
Docket No. WO24P1805PM
CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF
CONSERVATOR'S ACCOUNT

In the matter of:
Cameron S. Allard
Of: Warren, MA
 Protected Person/Disabled Person/
 Respondent

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, you are hereby notified pursuant to Rule 72 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court, that the 1st account(s) of Susan Hoey of Westfield, MA Ryan Allard of Warren, MA

as Conservator of the property of said Respondent has or have been presented to the Court for allowance

You have the right to object to the account(s). If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **04/21/2026.** This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to object to the account(s). If you fail to file the written appearance and objection by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you, including the allowance of the account(s).

Additionally, within thirty days after said return day (or within such other time as the Court upon motion may order), you must file a written affidavit of objections stating the specific facts and grounds upon which each objection is based and a copy shall be served upon the Conservator pursuant to Rule 3 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court. You have the right to send to the Conservator, by registered or certified

mail, a written request to receive a copy of the Petition and account(s) at no cost to you.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

like outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. **The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State**

WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.

March 19, 2026

Stephanie K. Fattman
 Register of Probate

April 3, 2026

Town of West Brookfield
Zoning Board of Appeals

A public hearing will be held on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the West Brookfield Town Hall, to act on an application for a Special Permit, for William King, for the property located at 25 Shore Drive, ext., West Brookfield. The applicant wishes to build a house on a grandfathered lot.. A special permit is required as per section(s) -4.2 Nonconforming dimensional requirements (a) (et al).

March 27, 2026

April 3, 2026

At the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, in the McCourt Social Hall of Memorial Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Spencer, MA, a public hearing will be held on the following items starting at 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as can be heard:

Notice of Public Hearing – Spencer Zoning Board of Appeals

Special Permit Finding– Applicant/ Owner: Robert Laprade: Location: 14 Bay Path Road, Spencer Assessor's Map U22-73. The applicant is seeking a Special Permit under Sections 4.8.3.D (Customary Home Occupation) of the Spencer Zoning Bylaw to sell Class 6 live bait fish to locale fisherman for four months of the year (winter season). The property is located in the Suburban Residential (SR) district.

Variance Finding– Applicant/ Owner: Robert Lamothe: Location: 15 William Casey Road, Spencer Assessor's Map R01-14. The applicant is seeking a Variance under Sections 4.9.2.A.3 (nonconforming structure /Single-Family/increase in nonconformity) and 7.3 (Variance Requirements) of the Spencer Zoning Bylaw to build a deck in the side setback. The property is located in the Rural Residential (RR) district.

Special Permit Finding– Applicant: Peter Kamal, Owner: 43 Orient LLC: Location: 7 Cherry Street, Spencer Assessor's Map U07-53-0. The applicant is seeking a Special Permit under Sections 6.1.1 (Parking/Number of Spaces) of the Spencer Zoning Bylaw to have a two-family home with reduced amount of parking spaces. The property is located in the Town Center (TC) district.

March 27, 2026

April 3, 2026

Town of West Brookfield
Zoning Board of Appeals

A public hearing will be held on Tuesday, July 8, at 6:00 p.m. at the West Brookfield Town Hall, to act on an application for a Special Permit, for the property located at 39 Foster Hill Road, West Brookfield. The applicant wishes to construct a building on an undersized lot. A special permit is required.

March 27, 2026

April 3, 2026

At the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, in the McCourt Social Hall of Memorial Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Spencer, MA, a public hearing will be held on the following items starting at 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as can be heard:

Notice of Public Hearing – Spencer Zoning Board of Appeals

Amendment of Special Permit Extension of Alteration, finding it is not substantially detrimental to the neighborhood for a non-conforming structure– Applicant/ Owner: Jimmy George: Location: 20 Whittemore Cove, Spencer Assessor's Map U17-

08. The applicant is seeking a Special Permit under Sections 4.9.2.A.2 (Nonconforming Structures) of the Spencer Zoning Bylaw to amend the approved Special Permit from April 8, 2025, meeting, to add a roof to the proposed 10x14 deck to increase the building coverage by 20 square feet. The property is in the Suburban Residential (SR) zoning district.

Special Permit Finding– Applicant: David & Sharon Gregoire; Owners: David & Sharon Gregoire, Stephen Kary, and Jenelle Jones: Location: 15 Northwest Road, Spencer Assessor's Map R39-43. The applicant is Special Permit under Sections 4.9.2.A.2 (Nonconforming Structures) of the Spencer Zoning Bylaw to add 300 square feet above an extended garage to be used as a bedroom. The property is located in the Rural Residential (RR) district.

March 27, 2026

April 3, 2027

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 130 Faith Drive, East Brookfield, MA 01515

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Jamie Marie Nelson to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Caliber Home Loans, Inc., and now held by **NewRez LLC**, said mortgage dated September 7, 2021 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 66006, Page 210, said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Caliber Home Loans, Inc. to NewRez LLC D/B/A Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing by assignment dated July 9, 2025 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 72230, Page 242; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at **Public Auction** on April 27, 2026 at 10:00 AM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

The land in East Brookfield, Worcester County, Massachusetts, with the buildings thereon situated on the westerly side of Faith Drive and bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at the southeasterly corner thereof at a point in the westerly line of Faith Drive which is also the northerly corner of a proposed street to be called Jean Avenue; THENCE S. 52 degrees 29' W. by said proposed street 122.15 feet to a point at land now or formerly of Albert Freeman et ux; THENCE N. 21 degrees 52' W. 180.63 feet to an iron pin; THENCE N. 88 degrees 33' E. 150 feet to an iron pin in the westerly line of Faith Drive; THE two preceding courses being by other land now or formerly of Albert Freeman et ux; THENCE S. 8 degrees 25' E. by Faith Drive 98 feet to the place of beginning. Being the same premises conveyed herewith.

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

For Mortgagor's Title see deed dated August 27, 2021 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 66006, Page 206.

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

FIVE THOUSAND (\$5,000.00)

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

Other terms to be announced at the sale.

Brock & Scott, PLLC
 23 Messenger Street
 2nd Floor
 Plainville, MA 02762
 Attorney for NewRez LLC
 Present Holder of the Mortgage
 (401) 217-8701

March 27, 2026

April 3, 2026

April 10, 2026

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email: legals@stonebridgepress.news

MORIN
continued from page A1

make the time, you're done and not allowed to finish whereas with New York, okay the marathon is over but if you move to the sidewalk, we'll let you finish," said Morin. Her other journeys took her to the religious Uluru rock of Australia, alongside the famous heads of Easter Island, alongside and on the Great Wall, through the chilly landscapes of Kings George Island where Antarctic penguins engaged with runners like they were old friends, past the historic buildings of London, and through the ruins of ancient Greece. Many of these iconic landmarks served as the start or finish line for the marathons. While Morin may be taking a small step back from marathoning after over a decade of traveling the world, her ventures put her in rare company as both a runner and a world traveler. Those in attendance at her presentation were able to explore the world through the eyes of an adventurer who had the rare distinction of testing her abilities and endurance beside some of the most committed runners around the globe.

MCNICOL
continued from page A1

Honorees are selected based on their distinguished academic records, community service, and contributions to their school environment," said Superintendent of Schools, Paul Haughey. "With plans to pursue biology and health sciences, I want to express how proud I am of Matthew."

Academic Achievement Award recipient, McNicol is recognized for his leadership as Student Council Vice President and his dedication to the National Honor Society. An AP Scholar, he has received the Rensselaer Medal and the «18 Under 18» award.

For further updates, please visit the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District website at <https://www.sebrsd.org>.

A 2026 M.A.S.S.

A night of harmony and hope

JAK-L FOUNDATION TO HOST DUELING PIANOS IN AUBURN



Courtesy

AUBURN — Get ready to sing, dance, and make a difference. On Saturday, May 2, the local community will gather at J. Anthony's Italian Grill for a high-energy "Dueling Pianos" event presented by the JAK-L Foundation.

The evening promises a vibrant blend of music and laughter, but the mission behind the melodies is deeply personal. Proceeds from the event will directly support youth mental health and suicide prevention programs within the local community.

Turning pain into purpose The JAK-L Foundation was established in 2023 by President Joy Kochinskas. For Kochinskas, a local salon owner and stylist for

more than 25 years, the cause is an intimate one. After losing her sister to suicide in 2017, she became a dedicated advocate, participating in the "Out of the Darkness" walks for years before founding the JAK-L Foundation to create a more direct impact on mental health awareness.

"I'm hoping to make more of an impact on the mental health society," Kochinskas said regarding the foundation's mission. Alongside an active event committee, the foundation is working to transform how the community discusses and supports mental wellness.

Event details The event kicks off at 8:00 PM, though supporters are encouraged to arrive early.

When: Saturday, May 2

Time: 8 – 10 p.m. (doors open at 7:30 p.m.)

Where: J. Anthony's Italian Grill, 917 Southbridge St., Auburn

Admission: \$35 per person (plus fees)

Pro-Tip: Guests who enjoy dinner at J. Anthony's prior to the show will receive priority seating for the performance.

Community support The success of the JAK-L Foundation is driven by a

dedicated team of volunteers. The event committee includes David Boucher, Christine Afful, Joy Kochinskas, Devon Renfro, and Steve Kochinskas. Supporting the front lines are team members Karen Sisko, Kathy Konkol-Saad, Kim Sterczala, Shirley Shepardson, Kerry Bielicki, Ruth Cahill, and Laurie Boucher.

By attending, guests aren't just buying a ticket to a show—they are helping to "spark meaningful change" for local youth who may be struggling in silence.

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BHS Class of 1986 seeks community's help locating classmates for 40th reunion

REGION — As the Bartlett High School Class of 1986 prepares to celebrate its 40th reunion on Sept. 26, organizers are asking the community for assistance in locating classmates who have not yet been reached through social media or via text.

To make the process simple, the reunion committee has created a short contact-information form and is encouraging residents, friends, and former classmates to help spread the word. If you know someone on the "missing classmates" list, organizers ask that you text them the link to the form so they can update their information.

Contact Info Form: <https://tinyurl.com/BHS1986-40Years>

If it's easier, you may also complete the form on a classmate's behalf—so long as you have their current contact details. Organizers emphasize that any help tracking them down is truly appreciated, as personal connections often succeed where digital outreach falls short.

A list of classmates the committee is hoping to locate appears below. With the community's support, they hope every member of the Class of '86 will have the opportunity to join this milestone celebration.

- Peter Allain
- Beth Antonopoulos
- Marie Aperges
- Andrew Baca
- Austin Bailey
- David Beardsley
- Frank Belanger
- Carolyn Bembek
- Richard Bernier
- Sheila Bialonick
- Beth Bialy
- Jason Borski
- Doreen Bourget
- Eric Brisbois
- Kathleen Brown
- Paul Browning
- Paul Bugan
- Cindy Bullens
- Sandra Butt
- Mont Canterbury
- Stephen Carlson
- Daniel Chapdelaine
- Kelly Cobb
- Ken Cournoyer
- Timothy Decker
- Tammy Deschenes
- Aaron Dorcas
- Daniel Doyle
- Dorothy DusoSelina Fife
- James Gardner
- Jeffrey Gatto
- Tina Giakoumis
- Alicia Goudreau
- Richard Guerin
- Robert Hamm
- Scott Horanzy
- Jane Houle
- Todd Hufault
- Joseph Hughes
- Melissa Jankowski
- Thor Johnson
- Nena Johnston
- Lisa Kozlowski
- Robert Krasnecky
- Jill Krause
- Michael Kryger
- Rick Lawson
- Deborah Leite
- Linda Lifer
- Patricia Majewski
- Renee Marchand
- Jennifer Marsh
- Jennifer Mason
- John Meagher
- Fumiyo Mochizuki
- Deborah Munsch
- Brett Napierata
- Wayne Parmentier
- Brian Poplawski
- Gary Poplawski
- Edward Powers
- William Radcliffe
- James Remy
- Debra Ross
- Collin Salmon
- Dale Schleis
- Theresa Sergel
- Henry Skiba
- Alan Standrowicz
- Jeffrey Surozenski
- Karen Toukonen
- Joseph Veronick
- Douglas Waldron
- Robert Wheeler
- Edward Zdrok

Saint Joseph 1-25 Club receives 2026 Partners in Education Award

WEBSTER — Saint Joseph School is proud to recognize the Saint Joseph 1-25 Club as the recipient of this year's Partners in Education Award, presented in appreciation for the organization's long standing dedication and support of the school.

Founded in 1976 by Monsignor Stanislaus Kubik—originally as the 1-20 Club—the organization was created to help offset the school's winter heating costs while bringing members of the parish community together in fellowship. Over the years, the club has remained a cherished tradition, combining its weekly drawings and membership banquets with a shared commitment to supporting Catholic education at Saint Joseph School.

While the club's primary mission has always been to provide financial assistance to the school, it has also fostered a strong sense of community. The gatherings and dinners have created opportunities for friendship and fellowship that have strengthened the bonds within our parish for nearly fifty years.

Saint Joseph School



Pictured following the presentation of the 2025-2026 Partners in Education Award at Saint Joseph School's Annual Migration Mass on Sunday, March 15, are members of the Saint Joseph 1-25 Club Leadership with Bishop Robert McManus, Fr. Richard Polek, and Principal Beth Boudreau. From left to right: Felicia Kolodziejczak, Fr. Richard Polek, Jane Wilk, Bishop Robert McManus, Sheryl Bergeron, Lorraine Biadasz, Marlene Proulx, and Beth Boudreau.

extends sincere gratitude to the many volunteers who have sustained the club through the years, including its early leaders: Theresa Jankowski, Constance Czechowski, Magdalen Gromelski Bibeau, Jo-Ann Canty, Elizabeth Meagher, Eleanor Noga, Patricia

Parslow, and Theresa Wagner.

Today, the 1-25 Club continues to thrive under the leadership of Marlene Proulx (Director), Lorraine Biadasz (Co-Director), Sheryl Bergeron (Captain), and Barbara Kryger (Captain), along with

the dedicated kitchen crew managed by Felicia Kolodziejczak and Jane Wilk, whose meals and hospitality have become a hallmark of the club's gatherings.

We congratulate and thank the 1-25 Club for nearly five decades of

generosity, fellowship, and unwavering support of Saint Joseph School. Your dedication continues to strengthen both our school and our parish community.

Safe Boating certificate courses scheduled at Milford and Webster locations

REGION — The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Tri-State Flotilla, Massachusetts will be instructing two upcoming boating safety classes that meet current state mandated educational requirements.

The Boat America Course is offered in a one-day 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 marline-spike seamanship (knots etc.) will also be included. Successful completion of

the 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 RI and CT.

The Hanson-Milone Boater Safety Act, signed into Mass. Law, will now require ALL Mass. motorboat operators to complete an approved Safe Boating Certificate course before April 1, 2026, for any-

one born after 1/1/1998, and by April 1, 2028, for boaters born before 1/1/1998. Enforcement of the new law will begin on September 1, 2026. This course meets the new 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:

Milford High School – Saturday, May 2, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Milford High School courses offered at 31 West Fountain St., Milford. Registration is managed through the Milford Community School Use

Program,

https://milfordcommunityprogram.activityreg.com/selectactivity_t2.wcs#

Adult-Spring-2026 – Education - Boat America Certificate Class or call Laura Farrell (508) 478-1119, email lfarrell@milfordma.com.

The registration deadline is April 26.

For additional USCGAux. information: phil.uscgaux@verizon.net or (508) 478-3778.

Webster Fire Department – Saturday, May 16, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Webster Fire Department Classroom, 55 Thompson Rd., Webster

The registration deadline is May 10.

Contact our Public Education Officer Phil

Kubat for registration or additional information: email phil.uscgaux@verizon.net or call (508) 478-3778.

To locate the BA meeting certification requirements, and other USCG Auxiliary courses offered go to: https://www.cgaux.org/boating/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

Announcing WCPA call for poems for Three Decker summer issue

WORCESTER — The Worcester County Poetry Association and the editors of The Three Decker request submissions of poetry and short fiction for their third issue, Summer 2026. Writers living, studying, or working in Worcester County are encouraged to submit up to three poems or short fiction of up to 1,000 words through Submittable, in an email to irena@worcestercountypoetry.org or by mail to Worcester County Poetry Association,

PO Box 804, Worcester, MA 01613, and include a self-addressed return envelope. Submissions open from Feb. 27 through April 11.

While there is no specified theme for this issue, we encourage submissions of unpublished work with local flavor. Literary, experimental, or magical realism fiction are accepted. Science fiction, fantasy, horror, or romance are not

accepted. Please visit our call for poems on their Web site, <https://threedecker.org/submit>, for a complete list of guidelines.

For this third issue, the editors are hosting two Zoom Meet and Greets, and one in-person to potential submitters to gain more insight into the submission process. Those interested may join the editors on Zoom Monday, March 16 from 4:30-5:30 p.m.,

and Wednesday, March 25 from 7-8 p.m. The editors will host in-person at the Grafton Public Library on Saturday March 21 from 10-11 a.m. at the Grafton Public Library in the Common Room.

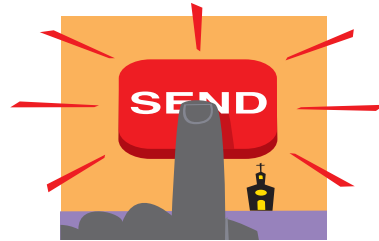
About the Worcester County Poetry Association The Worcester County Poetry Association (WCPA) was founded in 1971 with a threefold mission: celebrate the rich literary history and creative energy of Central Massachusetts through pub-

lic readings, workshops, festivals, scholarly conferences, and other programs; support the publication of the literary journal, The Worcester Review; and collaborate with libraries, bookstores, colleges and universities, museums, churches, schools, community centers, businesses and a variety of cultural organizations to promote poetry events. The WCPA is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit.

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Founder of Paragus IT to deliver Nichols College commencement address

DUDLEY — Nichols College has announced that Delcie D. Bean IV, founder and CEO of Paragus IT, will give the commencement address at the 2026 commencement exercises, which will take place Saturday, May 2, at the DCU Center in Worcester.

"Nichols College is honored to welcome Delcie Bean as we celebrate the remarkable achievements of the class of 2026. His entrepreneurial spirit, creative business acumen and deep commitment to under-represented communities embody the values we seek to instill in our graduates," says Nichols College President Bill Pieczynski. "We know Delcie's words will inspire our students to trust their instincts and take risks as they pursue their dreams, while continuing to lift others as they advance in their careers. We look forward to commemorating this milestone with him and our Nichols community."

Since founding the company at the age of 13, Bean has transformed Paragus

IT into one of the most successful, fastest-growing information technology (IT) firms in the region. The company's unique corporate culture and strategic approach to providing outsourced IT services to small- to medium-sized businesses have earned many accolades, including being named to Inc. magazine's list of 5,000 fastest-growing businesses and Forbes magazine's 25 Small Giants list.

As the company has grown, so has Bean's commitment to equity and inclusion. In 2014, he created Tech Foundry, an educational nonprofit designed to address the need for a skilled IT workforce by providing in-depth training for individuals from marginalized or underrepresented communities.

In 2016, Bean began the process of transitioning Paragus to a 100 percent employee-owned company, which he completed in 2024. He is currently working to grow Paragus into a \$250-million firm with

offices across the country. In doing so, he aims to create more than 100 employee-owner millionaires.

Bean has advised state leadership on economic and technology matters and has served as a member of the Board of Trustees for Bay Path University. He has received multiple Entrepreneur of the Year and 40 Under 40 honors from Business West and the Worcester Business Journal, and Paragus has been recognized by WBJ as Best Employee-Owned Company for 2026.

Bean and his wife of 15 years live in southern New Hampshire with their three boys. He will receive an Honorary Doctor of Business Administration degree at Nichols College's May commencement ceremony.

Constantine "Gus" Alexander, a former member of the Nichols College Board of Trustees, served as senior counsel in the law firm of Nutter, McClennen & Fish in their Corporate and Transactions

Department for over 40 years and was a member of the firm's Life Sciences and Medical Devices practice group. He represented a diverse client base comprised of public and private corporations, investment banks, venture capital firms, and CEOs and other senior executives, and he was often retained by special committees of boards of directors for advice and representation. He will receive an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree at the Nichols commencement ceremony.

Alexander acted as primary outside counsel to clients such as Anadys Pharmaceuticals, Autoimmune, BioLink, BridgeStreet Accommodations, Chadwick's of Boston, Commerce Insurance, Damon Biotech, Damon Corporation, GenRad, Ground Round Restaurants, M/A-COM, Nabi Biopharmaceuticals, Phillips Screw Company, Provant and NewKidCo International. He has repre-

sented companies in numerous public offerings, private placements and other private financings and was lead counsel in more than fifty purchases or sales of companies.

Early in his legal career, Alexander was a law clerk to Wilson Cowen, the former chief judge of what is now the Federal Circuit of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. He was also past chairman of the Securities Law Committee of both the Massachusetts and Boston Bar Associations and a past chairman of the Corporate Law Committee of the Massachusetts Bar Association. He lectured and authored in the corporate and securities law fields and taught at the Boston University School of Law. He also served on the Cambridge, Massachusetts, Zoning Board of Appeals for two decades, acting as chairman for much of that time. In addition, he was treasurer of the Boston Chamber Music Society.

A magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa graduate of

Tufts University and cum laude alumnus of Harvard Law School, Alexander lives in Cambridge with his wife, Linda Reinfeld.

About Nichols College has earned business accreditation from the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the longest serving global accrediting body for business schools and the largest business education network connecting learners, educators, and businesses worldwide. Founded in 1815, Nichols College transforms today's students into tomorrow's leaders through a dynamic, career-focused business and professional education. Nichols offers real-world learning focused on professional depth - combined with vibrant living, competitive athletics, and an unmatched alumni advantage - equipping students to exceed their own expectations. www.nichols.edu

P.E.O. Chapter R to host informational meeting on educational funding for women

WORCESTER — Women seeking financial assistance for their educational goals are encouraged to attend an upcoming informational meeting hosted by P.E.O. Chapter R of Worcester. The event will focus on the variety of low-interest loans, grants, scholarships, and awards available through the Philanthropic Educational Organization (P.E.O.).

The P.E.O. Sisterhood is a U.S.-based international women's organization that was founded in 1869 by seven young women at Iowa Wesleyan College. Dedicated to its mission: "where women educate, motivate, and celebrate women," P.E.O. has grown to nearly a quarter of a million members across the U.S. and Canada, passionately committed to advancing women's education.

The organization's philanthropic work is extensive. P.E.O. proudly sponsors six international philanthropies that provide financial assistance to women at various stages of their academic journey. These programs include:

P.E.O. Program for Continuing Education



(PCE): Provides need-based grants to women whose education has been interrupted and who must return to school to improve their marketable skills.

P.E.O. STAR Scholarship (STAR): A competitive scholarship for exceptional high school senior women

entering post-secondary education.

P.E.O. Educational Loan Fund (ELF): A low-interest loan program to assist qualified women students in securing a higher education.

P.E.O. International Peace Scholarship (IPS): A scholarship for internation-

al women students to pursue graduate study in the U.S. and Canada.

P.E.O. Scholar Awards (PSA): Merit-based awards for women pursuing doctoral-level degrees.

In addition, P.E.O. owns and supports Cottey College, an independent,

baccalaureate-granting liberal arts and sciences institution for women in Nevada, Missouri.

Chapter R, led by Christine White (paws@townisp.com), invites the public to learn how these resources can provide opportunities for women

pursuing various educational paths, including those returning to school, seeking career development, or continuing their academic studies.

Attendees will receive details on eligibility requirements and the application processes for the organization's various financial programs. All P.E.O. financial projects require a recommendation from a local chapter, making this local information session a crucial first step.

What: Informational Meeting on P.E.O. Educational Funding

Who: P.E.O. Chapter R, Worcester

Where: Shrewsbury Public Library, Meeting Room A

When: Wednesday, May 6, from 1 to 3 p.m.

Join the mission

Chapter R is also actively seeking new members who share their commitment to empowering women through education. The meeting offers a great opportunity for women interested in philanthropy and fellowship to learn more about the organization's work and how to join the local chapter in their mission to motivate, educate, and celebrate women.

Three advisors at Bartholomew & Company earn FIVE STAR Wealth Manager Award



WORCESTER — Bartholomew & Company, a financial planning and wealth management firm based in Worcester, Massachusetts, is proud to announce that three of its advisors have

been named 2026 FIVE STAR Wealth Managers.

Senior Wealth Advisors Jim Cushman, AIF®, Tom Bartholomew, AIF®, and Joshua Paul, CFP®, AIF®, have each been recognized with the

2026 award. This year marks the tenth consecutive year that both Mr. Bartholomew and Mr. Paul have received this distinction. Mr. Cushman, who joined Bartholomew & Company in 2018, is cele-

brating his fourth consecutive year as a FIVE STAR Wealth Manager.

The Five Star Professional award recognizes a select group of wealth management professionals who demonstrate outstanding service and commitment to their clients, based on objective, thirdparty criteria developed by Five Star Professional.

"We are incredibly proud to see Jim, Tom, and Joshua recognized once again for their dedication to serving clients with integrity and expertise," said Michelle Fuller, CIMA®, CEPA®, Managing Director of Strategy & Operations at Bartholomew & Company. "Their continued commitment to excellence reflects the high standard we strive to uphold across our entire firm."

About Bartholomew &

Company

Bartholomew & Company has been providing individuals and organizations with financial guidance since 1994. With offices at 370 Main St., Suite 1000, Worcester, and 405 Cochituate Rd., Suite 305, Framingham, the firm prides itself on developing tailored financial strategies for every client.

For more information, please visit www.bartandco.com or call 508-753-8807.

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*2026 FIVE STAR Wealth Manager award, created by Five Star Professional. The 2026 award was presented in March 2026 based on

data gathered within 12 months preceding the issue date. 4,973 Bostonarea wealth managers were considered for the award; 449 (9% of candidates) were named 2026 Five Star Wealth Managers. Advisors pay a fee to hold out marketing materials. Not indicative of advisor's future performance. Your experience may vary. For more information, please visit www.fivestarpromotional.com.

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OBITUARIES

Eric M. Gerhard, 50

West Brookfield- Eric M. Gerhard, 50, passed away peacefully on February 20, 2026 surrounded by his family at his home. He is survived by his mother, Brenda Ziehl, and his step-father, Gerald Ziehl, with whom he lived. He leaves his two brothers, Jeremy Gerhard of Southfield, MI and Adam Gerhard of Newmarket, NH; his four step-sisters, Tara Patenaude of Cherry Valley, Jennifer Fraser of Princeton, Melissa Starratt of Leicester, and Margaret Ziehl of Dudley. Also, his father, Richard Gerhard, Jr. of Palm Bay, FL, as well as his aunts, uncles, and cousins. He was predeceased by his maternal grandparents,

Melvin and Nina Williamson, his paternal grandparents, Richard and Mary-Wilah Gerhard, and his aunt, Lynne Dunham.

Eric also leaves behind his extended family, Regina Franz, Colette Enno, and Karen & Normal Kell.

He was born on June 7, 1975 in Southbridge, and lived in West Brookfield his whole life.

Graveside services for Eric will be held privately in the spring.

Varnum Funeral Home, 43 East Main St., in West Brookfield is honored to serve Eric's family. An online tribute page is available at varnumfuneralhome.com

Joan R. FitzGerald



West Brookfield - Joan Ruth FitzGerald of West Brookfield, Massachusetts passed away in Hospice care at home on March 16, 2026, surrounded by family after a long struggle with heart disease.

She leaves her husband, David of West Brookfield, a sister, Cheryl Prior of Torrington, Connecticut, a son, Richard Fiske of Rockwall, Texas, a daughter, Lauren Fiske of Jamestown, Rhode Island, and a daughter, Jean Murray of Fairhaven, Massachusetts, as well as 7 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

Joan was born in Spencer, Massachusetts on February 3, 1937, one of 3 children of

Kenneth K. Adams and Irma E. Prouty. She graduated from West Brookfield Elementary School and David Prouty High School and later graduated as a registered nurse from Newton-Wellesley School of Nursing.

In her retirement years, she was an early woman participant in long-distance running, winning many age group awards, and completing 2 Boston Marathons. She was also an excellent gardener, joining her husband David in caring for their property in West Brookfield. She was also an excellent hooker of rugs, many of which will be treasured memorials of her in the family.

Varnum Funeral Home, 43 East Main St., in West Brookfield is honored to serve her family with her care and arrangements. An online tribute page is available at varnumfuneralhome.com

Peter Michael O'Neil



On Sunday, February 22nd, 2026, Peter Michael O'Neil, loving husband and father, passed away at the age of 84.

Peter was born in Appleton, Wisconsin in 1942. Pete has 3 younger brothers, Sean O'Neil, of Brewster, MA; Bill O'Neil (married to Kris Hallberg) of Florence, MA; and Dan O'Neil, of Springfield, MA. Pete's family moved to Florida; later to Mamaroneck, New York; and then Armonk, New York. In Armonk, he graduated from Pleasantville High School, later attending Paul Smith College in Brighton, NY.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Susan (McEvoy) O'Neil, of Merritt Island, FL; his son Peter Mark O'Neil (married to Sherri (Benoit) O'Neil) of Brookfield, MA; daughter Tracey O'Neil of Warren, MA; son Jeffrey O'Neil of Barton, VT; and his three grandchildren, Phillip O'Neil of Waterbury, VT; Allison (O'Neil) Herndon, of Salem, MA; and Kevin O'Neil of Brookfield, MA.

Pete joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1961 where he served at several postings, including one year in Okinawa, Japan. While still in the Marines, he married Susan and was then stationed at the Boston Naval Shipyard. Due to the Vietnam War his service was extended.

He started his career at sales at Wyeth Laboratories offices in Albany, NY. He moved to Sales Manager at Chase Precast Concrete in North Brookfield, MA, where he worked for over 25 years. He then joined Old Castle Precast Concrete, an Irish company in Albany, NY, until he retired to Florida in 2004.

For more than 50 years, Pete was an avid woodworker. In his later years, he focused on woodturning; creating bowls, plates, vases, and other beautiful pieces, a hobby he pursued well into retirement.

Pete was active in multiple golfing activities throughout his time in Florida. Over the years, he enjoyed volunteering at several men's and woman's professional golf tournaments. He worked at the Savannah's Golf Course, in Merritt Island for 21 years as a starter and later worked in the Pro Shop. He was instrumental in starting the couple's golf league in 2007, became a Board Member of the Savannah's Golf league, and participated in many activities through 2025. He always had a welcoming smile and remembered the names of new and old players. Pete will be missed by many good friends and golfers.

The O'Neil family will have a celebration of life in remembrance of Pete this summer in Massachusetts.

Send all obituary notices to Stonebridge Press, PO Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550, or by e-mail to obits@stonebridgepress.com.

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Friday's Child



Robert
Age 10

Registration #9142

Robert is a creative and imaginative boy with a bright personality and a big heart. He loves exploring the world around him and has a special fascination with nature and animals. Robert enjoys learning fun facts about different creatures and can talk about them with excitement and curiosity. Always on the move, Robert loves to stay active. You can often find him riding his new bike, shooting hoops, or finding new outdoor adventures to dive into. When it's time to relax, Robert enjoys watching his favorite movie, The Lion King, and playing with his collection of Lion King stuffed animals—characters that spark his imagination and make him smile. Robert is a funny, kind, and sweet boy who gets along well with others and loves to make new friends. His friendly nature and sense of humor make him a joy to be around. Robert would thrive in a family that shares his love of the outdoors and encourages his creativity, helping him continue to grow into the bright and caring young person he's becoming.

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

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Webster - 24 Cooper Rd
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Webster Lake - 302 Killdeer Island



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Webster Lake Waterfront - 31 Bayview!!



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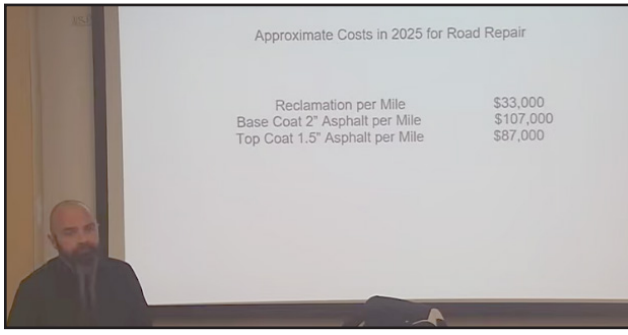
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North Brookfield selectman provides insight into Chapter 90 funding



Courtesy

Selectman Jamie Gilman provided a presentation to educate the public on the advantages and limitations of Chapter 90 funds.

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

NORTH BROOKFIELD — Like many communities in the commonwealth, keeping up with road conditions has been a long-standing struggle in North Brookfield. Although the town has tried its best to utilize state funding to offset some of the maintenance and repair costs, realistically those resources can only be stretched so far, making deteriorating road conditions simply a fact of life.

This was the central theme of a recent presentation by North Brookfield Selectman Jamie Gilman on March 24, who delved into the finer details of one of the most dependable financial resources at the town's disposal, Chapter 90 funding. The state funds are allocated to towns based on the miles of roadway, population size, and employment numbers and serve as a reimbursement once the towns have already paid for those investments.

Chapter 90 provides funds for communities to invest in road infrastructure which includes paving, roadwork, engi-

neering, sidewalks, and even the purchase of equipment to maintain these roads. Gilman stressed the importance of Chapter 90 for North Brookfield as the town doesn't budget local taxpayer money for paving. While locals may be familiar with the term "Chapter 90," many may not understand its full limitations and how just because the town might receive significant dollars in a single year that realistically can't translate to a full rehab of all roadways.

Gilman called Chapter 90 a "lifeline" that helps keep the roads and infrastructure going. He broke down the estimated cost of paving roads in North Brookfield and how much they would need to invest to complete them all and examined how the Chapter 90 funds have been expended over the last five years. He hoped these figures would allow citizens a better understanding of how Chapter 90 funds can help mitigate road issues but is not an end-all solution to bring all North Brookfield's roadways up to date.

According to Gilman's estimates, road reclamation costs \$33,000 per mile and the two-step process of paving includes a base coat of two-inch asphalt at \$107,000 per mile and a top coat of one and a half inch asphalt at \$87,000 per mile.

"The thing to keep in mind is, if you're replacing an older road, it comes to about \$227,000 per mile. That's excluding any type of drainage work that needs to be done, anything funky," Gilman said. "When you bear that in mind, the \$227,000, I would argue that by the time you get going, you're probably upwards of \$250,000 a mile."

Gilman estimated the town has 84 miles of roadway. At \$250,000 per mile, it would cost tens of millions to fully resurface every roadway, not considering what roads have already been done in recent years. He also estimated that roads last around 20 years. North Brookfield receives an average of \$520,000 in Chapter 90 funds per year, keeping in mind not all of that is dedicated to paving. Using those numbers, Gilman concluded it would take decades to cover

all the roads with just Chapter 90 funding, and by the time they finish, they'd need to start all over again.

"If we have 84 miles of road, that's 40 years. So rough numbers, what does that equal? Unhappiness. No one in North Brookfield will ever be happy with our road system. We can have our opinions, but the numbers spell it out. Forty years," Gilman said.

His presentation was not meant to create distress over the roadways or detract from the significance of Chapter 90 funds, but simply to acknowledge the realistic limitations of what has become the primary source for paying for paving and roadways work. He made sure to stress that this money is not being wasted. Over the last five years the funds have helped with several paving, reclamation, and resurfacing projects, and engineering for a Complete Streets Grant for North Main Street. The money is being used well. It's just not enough to satisfy every continuous need for all roadways in town all at once.

"At \$524,000 in state funds a year, with 84 miles of road, with nothing at all in our yearly budgets to pay for paving, our roads will never look like Boston, never look like a suburb of Boston. They will continue to crumble. This is a reality that we have to face, unless the state is going to do something different," said Gilman.

He hopes that talks around Chapter 90 funds continue to be more transparent so that the public has a better idea of what the town is getting and how it's being used. However, he wants everyone to understand North Brookfield doesn't have the coffers or the tax base to fund its roadway issues by itself or even make up the difference of what Chapter 90 can't cover. For now, like many other small towns, crumbling roadways will remain a nuisance that locals will need to endure with patience unless a much larger source of funding or revenue comes along to put North Brookfield in a position to make a larger investment.

Leicester Elementary School holds Families in Phys. Ed. Week

LEICESTER — Families at Leicester Elementary School had a unique and energetic opportunity last week as they stepped into the gym alongside their children for a special physical education event. More than 321 family members laced up their sneakers and joined students in a variety of activity stations, where students proudly took on the role of teacher.

The event transformed the gym into a lively space filled with movement, laughter, and connection, as families and students worked together through games and activities designed to promote fitness and fun. It was a chance not only to be active, but also to strengthen the bond between school and home.

Physical Education teacher Sandy Woods, who hosted the event, shared how meaningful the experience was. "Hosting this event and welcoming so many family members into our PE classes was incredibly meaningful," Woods said. "It's about more than just physical education—it's about building family connections and promoting a healthy, active lifestyle together."

Woods noted that the program holds special personal significance. Inspired by her own parents—who she describes as her coaches, heroes, and biggest supporters—she hopes to pass along the same love of activity that shaped her childhood. She fondly recalls spending time playing four-square on the beach, basketball, and neighborhood badminton with her family.

"That love and support shaped who I am," she said, "and I hope to pass that same experience on to our students and their families."

The event was a clear success, bringing together students and their families in a joyful celebration of movement, connection, and community.



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