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Friday, September 12, 2025

# Douglas Oktoberfest returns with fun, music, and magic on Main Street

DOUGLAS — Save the date! The annual Douglas Oktoberfest is back on Saturday, Oct. 4, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Main Street. This cherished fall tradition offers a full day of festivities for all ages—celebrating community, creativity, and autumn's charm.

## Beer Garden & Live Music

Raise a glass in our vibrant beer garden, featuring locally crafted brews from Greater Good. Enjoy live performances by the talented Jon Short, and Rob Ledoux setting the tone for a joyful day.

Little Dog Races, By Dog Orphans Douglas & Street Magic by Ed the Wizard

Don't miss the crowd-favorite little dog races—a playful spectacle right down Main Street. Throughout the day, Ed the Wizard will enchant guests with illusions and balloon creations that spark wonder.



Douglas High School Band and Chorus will be performing at Douglas Oktoberfest this year! Their music brings a spe-

cial energy to the day, and we're excited to have them join the celebration

## Four Stages of Entertainment

With four stages offering a variety of performances, there's always something to see, hear, and enjoy. From music to dance to interactive acts, the energy never stops.

## Family Fun & Kids' Activities

Families will find plenty to explore, with Bounce Houses, Trike Races, Cash Cube, inflatable knockerballs, two train rides, a variety of games and hands-on activities designed for children of all ages. Whether you're crafting, playing, or watching

magic unfold, there's joy around every corner.

## Annual Car Show, by In-Gear Transmissions & Automotive Services

Car Show at Douglas Ma Oktoberfest 2025 Saturday Oct. 4.

If you are interested in showing your car or truck, all years, makes and models are welcome. Please

contact In-Gear by calling 508-476-3926. Space may be limited so reserve yours now

100+ Vendors to discover

Shop, snack, and support local. With over 100 vendors, you'll find hand-made goods, delicious treats, and unique products that showcase the best of our region.

## Volunteer opportunities

Want to be part of the magic? We are looking for volunteers to join the celebration. Sign up to help at [www.douglasoktoberfest.com](http://www.douglasoktoberfest.com) or email us at [douglas\\_oktoberfest@yahoo.com](mailto:douglas_oktoberfest@yahoo.com).

## Celebrate Autumn with us

Come together with neighbors, friends, and visitors to celebrate the season at Douglas Oktoberfest. We can't wait to see you there.

Douglas Oktoberfest is a beloved annual event that brings the community together for a day of music, games, local vendors, and magical performances. It's a highlight of the fall season and a celebration of everything that makes Douglas special.

## Northbridge Cultural Council seeks grant applications, announces free grant writing workshop

NORTHBRIDGE — The Northbridge Cultural Council (NCC) is currently accepting grant applications from local artists, performers, schools, and nonprofit organizations. The Local Cultural Council (LCC) Program of the statewide Mass Cultural Council enriches the cultural life of all cities and towns in Massachusetts. Led by municipally appointed volunteers, LCCs will award over \$5.7 million in FY26, supporting more than 6,000 cultural programs in arts, humanities, and sciences for public benefit and community engagement. The Northbridge Cultural Council provides support for a wide range of activities, including field trips, lectures, festivals, performances, and educational experiences. The NCC conducts annual surveys to gather information regarding the community's interests. This information assists in the awarding of grants. The annual survey is available on the town of Northbridge's website. The grant cycle is now open, and all grant applicants must submit completed applications by the statewide deadline of Oct. 16.

The Northbridge Cultural Council is offering a free grant workshop on Sept. 24 at the Memorial Town Hall, Whitinsville, 3 – 4:30 p.m. This grant workshop will help individuals or organizations determine whether they qualify for a grant, provide information on the grant application process, and assist with the actual writing of the grant. Additional details regarding the Northbridge funding priorities, guidelines, and applications are available at the MassCulturalCouncil Web site at <https://massculturalcouncil.org/massculture.org> and at [northbridgemass.org/cultural-council](http://northbridgemass.org/cultural-council) and the Town of Northbridge Web site at [northbridgemass.org](http://northbridgemass.org). If you have questions regarding the cultural council grant process or Northbridge's local funding priorities, email [Northbridgeculturalcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:Northbridgeculturalcouncil@gmail.com).

## Local man honors wife while supporting Douglas Common fall donation drive

DOUGLAS — David Maenzo of Douglas is honoring his late wife, Nancy, by supporting the Douglas Common Preservation Society, Inc. with a very generous donation of 150 "1,000,000 Bonus Wins" Scratch Tickets for them to use in conjunction with their Fall Donation Drive.

The Society's board members were very surprised and grateful when David called and offered the tickets.

Maenzo said, "With a retail value of \$750, I thought the tickets would make a very desirable prize for the Fall Donation Drive Thank You Drawing – just think how much the winner might win after scratching all those tickets!"

Courtesy Photo

(Right) David Maenzo



Since the Society relies on donations received from the Fall Donation Drive to help with the expenses of putting on the popular Holiday Lighting Celebration, they agreed that David's scratch ticket prize would be very helpful and add a little incentive for people to participate in the Fall Donation Drive by making a donation to the 501(c)(3) organization.

"We provide free entries into the Drawing to everyone making a donation -- 15 entries for each \$25 donated! And the donations are also tax deductible," said Lynn Paresky of the Society. "David's only request was that we hold the drawing on Oct. 22."

Maenzo is no stranger when it comes to doing good for the community. It's something he has been doing to perpetuate his late wife's memory ever since she passed in 2018.

"Nancy would have wanted to support the Douglas Common Preservation Society's mission of beautifying and maintaining our Town Common, and she especially would have enjoyed the joy and sense of community that the Holiday Lighting Celebration fosters," explained Maenzo. "So I am honoring her memory by making this donation."

Donations may be made by check payable to the Douglas Common Preservation Society, Inc., 76 NW Main St., Douglas, MA 01516 or via Venmo @Kathleen-Sugrue-Richards – more information is available on the Douglas Common Preservation Society, Inc. Facebook page.

# The fruits (and veggies) of their labor

## New energy-efficient equipment enhances student meals and hands-on learning at BVT

UPTON — At Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT), every new piece of equipment is more than just an upgrade—it's an opportunity to learn, innovate, and grow. Thanks to a Healthy Meals Incentives grant from Action for Healthy Kids, the Food Services program is now equipped with a state-of-the-art walk-in cooler and freezer tailored to its unique needs. This energy-efficient unit not only boosts safety and efficien-



Courtesy

Lincoln Shaw of Northbridge, a junior in the Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration (HVAC&R) program at BVT, helped install the new system.

cy in their kitchen but also allows them to store fresh, local ingredients that support healthier meals for its students.

"With an increase in scratch cooking and the ability to store more fresh ingredients, we're able to prepare restaurant-quality meals that are both nutritious and delicious," said Chef Eric Carlson, Director of Food Services. "Offering students a wide variety of healthy options supports both learning and lifelong wellness."

Working alongside our dedicated Food Services team, Chef Carlson and Nutritionist Lisa Ciarametaro ensure that every school lunch







# First Student hoping for smoother experience heading into new school year

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY / CHARLTON — Following an at times frustrating year for First Student in Dudley and Charlton, the company has entered the new school year confident it can close any gaps that resulted in staffing shortages and delays in route change notifications to help make for a more consistent experience for both parents and students.

Denise Bales, an Operation Supervisor for First Student, which is the contracted bus service for the Dudley Charlton Regional School District, provided an update to the School Committee in late August acknowledging that the previous year wasn't ideal and the company is working to make the new year

more efficient. The school year started with 42 drivers on the fleet for 39 routes, which include some drivers still undergoing their licensing process and fill-in drivers in case of emergencies. The discussion included input concerning analytics and how the district and the company can work together to address times of increased driver shortages without interrupting the educational experience.

Last year intermittent driver shortages forced routes to be delayed, combined, or even canceled altogether causing frustration for parents who needed to work around their schedule to get their kids to stop locations or the schools. Bales said January was particularly difficult due to a stomach bug sidelining

numerous drivers during a short time span. Bales said they had four reserve drivers and that she herself could step in to drive if needed. She's confident the company can maintain its routes and staffing to make for a smoother year overall.

"I have hope that this year we're going to be a thousand percent better. Our pay is competitive, there's no reason why people shouldn't be lining up for the job quite honestly," said Bales.

School Committee member Anthony Aube said he would like to see data collected so that both the district and First Student can better understand peaks and valleys in driver absences which can help both parties better predict when there will be a shortage and work around

these times when it comes to field trips, sports and other programs that require extra bus transportation accommodations.

"To a degree, there's a pattern of yes, there are these are high times of people getting sick because of the nature of the industry. But if we start seeing the analytics that show these are the normal spikes we can plan for those and we don't double up on the needs in those areas, but we only know that if we have the analytical data," Aube said.

Bales said she does keep her own record on file of any absences, when and why they occur, however she agreed there can be a more collaborative approach between First Student and the school district.

Joseph DeSantis, Director

of Finance and Operations for the district, said they requested data from First Student at the end of the last school year which served as a general chart of missed routes and the reasoning. He hopes further data collection can help the district and First Student better predict increased needs and prepare for any shortages ahead of time.

"This was our first time collecting that information as a district, so what we plan on doing is utilizing that as our starting comparison point, receiving the data on a monthly basis throughout the year from First Student, and then coupling and utilizing that information together to hopefully come up with some tangible action plans moving forward on how we can

close any type of gap between open and missed routes and amount of drivers," DeSantis said.

Another major topic in the update was First Student's implementation of the updated FirstView 1.0, an application utilized by parents to track bus route information but also now utilized by the drivers to record any incidents of poor behavior by stu-

dents on any given bus. Until this year there was a written disciplinary card, but the new implementation of FirstView will allow drivers to log incidents in a system that keeps a running log of any situations involving specific buses of students.

As for FirstView as a resource for parents, school officials are asking everyone to keep their app updated

to the new version 1.0. Instructions for the update or how to access FirstView have been made available on the Student Transportation page of the district's Web site, along with other information regarding bus routes and how any changes or alterations to transportation are communicated and handled within the district.

## Tantasqua golf team notches three wins

FISKDALE — The Tantasqua varsity golf team travelled to Heritage C.C. on Tuesday afternoon, Sept. 2 to play the Oxford Pirates. The final score was 146 to 217 in favor of the visiting Warriors. Medalist honors went to junior Andrew Weeden who shot a 1 under par 34, followed by junior Andrew Radebaugh with a 36, senior Sam Pieczynski with a 37, and Tyler Phillips with a 39. With this win, Tantasqua improved to 3-0.

The team hosted Bartlett on Thursday afternoon, Sept. 4 at Hemlock Ridge. The final score was 159 to 234 in favor of the host Warriors. Medalist honors went to senior Keegan

Blood and junior Andrew Weeden, who both carded 3-over par 39s. Tantasqua improved to 4-0 with this win.

The Warriors closed out the week by pulling off a big win against Wachusett at Bedrock Golf Club on Friday afternoon, Sept. 5. The final score was 195-199 in favor of the visiting Warriors. Medalist honors went to senior Sam Pieczynski, who shot an even par 36. Other Tantasqua players counting included Tyler Phillips with a 38, Wyatt Fay with a 39, and Keegan Blood and Andrew Radebaugh contributing with 41s. Tantasqua now improves to 5-0.

# Blackstone Valley Chamber hosts Cows, Charcuterie & Cheese: A tasty night on the farm!

SUTTON — The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce (BVCC) is invites you to experience a one-of-a-kind networking evening at Cows, Charcuterie & Cheese. A celebration of community, culinary craftsmanship, and nearly 80 years of Whittier Farms family farming. This event will be held at the rural and relaxed setting of Whittier Farms, located at 90 Douglas Rd., Sutton, on Thursday, Sept.

18 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Attendees will enjoy networking on the farm with light bites crafted from local fare, a curated selection of charcuterie, and samplings of house-brewed beers by Rushford & Sons alongside wine from Broken Creek Vineyard. From guided wagon tours to a farm and food presentation, guests will gain insight into Whittier Farms' deep agricultural roots and sustainable practices, all while mingling

with fellow professionals under the open sky.

"This event will have an unforgettable farm charm like no other," said Liz O'Neil, BVCC's Director of Programs, Events, and Membership. "It is the perfect blend for fun, flavor, and fresh air. There is nothing better than connecting with the community, while enjoying the incredible local food and the story behind it."

This event is selling out fast, and limited tick-

ets are available. Members can attend this unique experience for \$45, and Future Members for \$60. Please RSVP by Sept. 11 to reserve your space! Register online at [www.blackstonevalley.org/events](http://www.blackstonevalley.org/events). For more information, visit [www.blackstonevalley.org/events](http://www.blackstonevalley.org/events). We look forward to seeing you there!

This is a farm-friendly, partially outdoor event, and will be held rain or shine. Please dress accordingly

and come ready as this event promises connections, charm and of course cheese!

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

# Charlton Cultural Council seeks grant funding proposals

CHARLTON — The Charlton Cultural Council has set a deadline of Oct. 16 for organizations, schools, and individuals to apply for grants supporting Charlton community cultural activities including community-oriented arts, humanities, and science programs. The online Grant Application form and more information about the Charlton Cultural Council Program are available at <http://www.townofcharlton.net/322/Cultural-Council>.

This year, the Charlton Cultural Council will distribute almost \$10,000 in grants. CCC will prioritize partial funding of multiple projects over fully funding fewer projects, therefore allowing more programs for the

Charlton community.

According to Charlton Cultural Council Chairperson Angela Casasanto, these grants can support a variety of artistic projects and activities in Charlton, including exhibits, festivals, field trips, short-term artist residencies, performances in schools, workshops, and lectures.

New applicants and new programs will be prioritized over repeat applicants and repeat programs to broaden the variety of cultural events and activities that we are able to bring to our community. Performances that take place in Charlton and are for the general public will be prioritized ahead of target audiences, as the CCC strives

to fund projects that will benefit as much of the Charlton community as possible.

The Charlton Cultural Council is part of a network of 329 Local Cultural Councils (LCCs) serving all 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The LCC Program is the nation's largest grassroots

cultural funding network, supporting thousands of community-based projects in the arts, humanities, and sciences every year. The state legislature provides an annual appropriation to Mass Cultural Council, a state agency that allocates funds to each community.

For local guidelines and com-


plete information on the Charlton Cultural Council, send a message to [Cultural.Council@town-ofcharlton.net](mailto:Cultural.Council@town-ofcharlton.net). The online Grant Application form and more information about the Charlton Cultural Council Program are available at <http://www.townofcharlton.net/322/Cultural-Council>.

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### PAW of the WEEK

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He's an 8 month old, 28 lb, Male, Lab/Hound mix. Crackle is a sweet boy, who's looking for a safe and loving family to give him the time to warm up and come out of his shell. We think Crackle may do best in a home with another dog to lead the way and help him build his confidence.

Do you think Crackle could be a Pawfect addition to your family?  
\*\*This dog is currently in foster care. If you're interested in meeting Crackle, please email [info.pawfectlife@gmail.com](mailto:info.pawfectlife@gmail.com) \*





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PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER

**BRENDAN BERUBE**  
EDITOR

## EDITORIAL

### Strong schools make for strong communities

When we talk about what makes a community thrive, we often focus on the obvious: safe streets, reliable services, vibrant businesses. But at the foundation of it all are our schools. The health of our schools directly shapes the health of our towns, from the opportunities afforded to children to the vitality of our property values and civic life.

Across our area, from Northbridge to Millbury, many of our school buildings are showing their age. Roofs leak, heating systems struggle, and classrooms designed for smaller enrollments now overflow. State programs such as the Massachusetts School Building Authority provide critical support for repairs and modernization, but the need often outpaces the funding. That leaves communities with difficult decisions about how much to invest, how quickly, and in what priorities.

These choices are not easy. No resident wants to see their tax bill rise, and every town board must balance a long list of competing needs. But we must remind ourselves: investments in education are not optional luxuries. They are necessities. Every time we patch a roof instead of replacing it, every time we defer an upgrade to heating or air circulation, we send a message to students that their learning environment is less important than it should be. Over time, that short-term savings comes at a high cost—both in dollars and in the morale of students and staff.

Strong schools also mean strong towns. Businesses considering where to locate look at school rankings and graduation rates. Families looking to put down roots weigh the quality of the local district before deciding to buy a home. When schools suffer from disrepair or inadequate resources, communities lose opportunities to attract and retain both residents and investment. In our region, we are fortunate to have strong traditions of civic pride and volunteerism. Our PTOs, booster clubs, and community organizations pour countless hours into raising money for extras, from playground equipment to band uniforms. But the essentials—safe, modern classrooms; up-to-date technology; adequate staffing—cannot rest on bake sales and raffles. They require public commitment at the ballot box and at town meeting.

Investing in our schools is, in truth, investing in our future. It is a commitment not only to today's students but also to the long-term vitality of our communities. If we want to see our region thrive in the decades ahead, we must ensure that our children are learning in environments that inspire and prepare them. That means stepping up, even when the costs sting, because the return—measured in opportunity, stability, and community strength—is immeasurable.

### 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.

Remember that time you were about to jump into something big—a new business, a major life change, a dream you finally decided to chase? At first, your mind lights up with excitement. You see the vision, you make the plans, you picture the success. But then, almost like clockwork, the thought creeps in: “So, what’s your Plan B?”

Of course, having a backup plan makes sense. If Plan A falls apart, you’ve got to have a Plan B, right?

It almost feels a bit controversial writing about not having a Plan B. I think that’s because the idea is often misunderstood.

When I say “Plan A,” I’m not talking about a single project or a business idea—I mean your overarching mission. The bigger picture. The thing that gives your life direction and meaning. It’s the north star you measure everything else against. That’s what I’m getting at when I speak about Plan A—not the small detours or adjustments, but the core mission that defines where you’re going.

When I talk about Plan B, I don’t mean little adjustments—like taking the side

## OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Blackstone Valley and beyond

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Lest we forget the 1960s

To the Editor:

Recently, that revolutionary, U.S. Rep. Jim Mc Govern [allegedly from Worcester], said that his Democrat Commie colleagues need to understand that “no one’s playing by the old rules. We can’t unilaterally disarm. We’re going to get down and dirty. If Republicans throw a punch, I’ll throw a punch right back at them.”

First, feisty Jim has never thrown a punch. Secondly, Jim was Nancy Pelosi’s right-hand guy, so he’s mad that he lost power: Let’s remember that McGovern’s district has been gerrymandered to nullify conservative Central Massachusetts by including far-left towns like North Hampton and Framingham. These towns vote overwhelmingly for Sen. “President for Life” Karen Spilka. Jim’s district sprawls over five counties! Five! Just to allow far left voters to overwhelm conservatives.

This district, which once looked like a dragon or a salamander, now resembles a ginormous boot. Appropriate. They have put the liberal boot on the neck of conservative Central Mass.

Do you know how many Massachusetts Speakers of the House have been indicted over the years and gone to federal prison?

Speaker Sal DiMasi, Speaker from 2004 to 2009, charged and convicted in 2011 for extortion and fraud for accepting kickbacks in exchange for steering state contracts to a software company. Naughty, naughty.

Tom Finneran, Speaker from 1996 to 2004, pled guilty in 2007 to obstruction of justice. He lied under oath to a federal court regarding his involvement in the 2001 redistricting process.

Finneran got into a little spat with Marty Meehan, the Lowell representative, and redistricted him out of a district. But never fear, Dems took good care of Marty Meehan, a lackluster politician, now President of UMass, to the tune of nearly \$1 million a year in pay. He is worth more than the Presidents of multi-billion dollar corporations that actually produce a thing you can buy. Meehan is not an educator. He is not a Ph.D. of anything, but he has a solid degree in politics.

To continue. Charles Flaherty, Speaker from 1991 to 1996, pled guilty to felony tax evasion for failing to report thou-

#### The people have prioritized curriculum reform, not new schools

To the Editor:

When it comes to making our schools healthy and safe, we must begin with the simple facts.

Such as the fact that in 2024, Donald Trump beat out Kamala Harris in the Blackstone Valley, as well as across the republic.

Here in Northbridge, Trump trounced Harris with 54 percent of the vote to her 44 percent. With it slightly less in his favor in the Whitinsville section, with its vote of 52 percent for Trump.

All of which, and more, totally redefines what the words “healthy” and “safe” mean, as well as represent, across this valley and beyond.

sands of dollars in rental income. He also confessed to violating the state conflict of interest law by accepting free vacations from lobbyists. I am not shocked. You are not shocked.

Speaker Tom McGee [circa 1960’s] was indicted as part of a corruption inquiry.

Gerry Studds, the gerrymandered Dem rep from the Cape, is a descendent of Elbridge Gerry. Gerry designed the first gerrymandered district in Massachusetts to re-configure the Central Court of Massachusetts [now the House of Representatives] in around 1813. It looked like a salamander, and the press labelled it “gerrymandering.”

In 1977, two state legislators were sentenced to federal prison for soliciting \$40,000 in bribes from a consulting firm connected to the construction of the new UMass Boston campus. Phil Johnston, a democrat from Marshfield, proposed the office of a State Inspector General. Tom McGee said: “over my dead body.” It did pass, and we were the first state with an independent inspector general.

Where is the inspector general today? Our state auditor has found \$4 million in fraud in our state, 79 per cent of it in our state Medicaid system in just the last quarter. In the prior quarter, she found \$2 million in fraud. Again, 79 percent of the fraud was in the state Medicaid system. Can you say illegal alien Medicaid fraud?

We are still waiting for the audit that we all voted for in 2024. Every county in the state voted for an audit of the legislature, but Attorney General Andrea “Joy” Campbell refuses to enforce the law.

Are you holding your breath? Me neither.

You know that we in Massachusetts - despite having the biggest population of Independents - have no Republican representatives in Congress? We voted in big numbers for President Trump, but no Republican reps in Washington. None. Maine, Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New Hampshire? None. Not a single one.

Can you say gerrymandered out of existence?

Bev Gudanowski  
Uxbridge

Thus calling into question the true need for new school buildings of any sort because the nature of the curriculum is now by far more paramount by order of the American people and their votes.

So until such time as the entirety of the Blackstone Valley totally scraps something on the order of 75 percent of its formerly imposed, ridiculously “Woke” K-12 curriculum, there is no point in wasting people’s time on any left-wing pipe dream of building new schools.

Stephen Gambone  
Northbridge

## Cornucopia: A Nostalgic Nod to Bountiful Harvest

Nothing quite captures autumn’s bounty as a classic cornucopia. For generations, a symbol of harvest has been the cornucopia basket overflowing with the fruit (and vegetables) of the season. Once a common centerpiece of the autumn table, it appears the nostalgic “horn of plenty” may be making a comeback as backyard farming celebrates a return to simple abundance.

Read on for some history, facts, and ideas about cornucopias!

History: The cornucopia, a.k.a. Horn O Plenty, has a history dating back to ancient Greece. According to legend, when the young Zeus was playing with Amalthea, the goat who had suckled him in a cave on the island of Crete, he accidentally broke off one of her horns. To make amends, Zeus promised that from that day forward, the horn would always be filled with whatever fruit she desired.

In another Greek legend, Heracles broke the horn off of an advisory during a fight over a beautiful maiden. The Naiads treated the horn as a sacred object, filling it with fragrant flowers.

Copia, the goddess of Plenty later adopted the horn, thus named the Horn of Plenty, or Cornucopia.

The Cornucopia came to symbolize a plentiful bounty, a tradition that has carried over to the harvest season and onto the Thanksgiving table.

Today, a growing number of people choose to keep the tradition alive by displaying a cornucopia on a mantle or dinner table. The colorful leaves, acorns and pinecones of New England provide the perfect backdrop for a Horn O Plenty overfilled with garden delights. Here are some suggestions to assemble a traditional cornucopia centerpiece:

Cornucopia baskets are easy enough to find at a craft or department store during



TAKE THE HINT  
KAREN TRAINOR

the harvest season, but if you can’t locate one, a cone shaped basket will do. If you steam the cone end, it can usually be shaped into a curved horn shape.

Fill the inside of the basket with freshly fallen fall foliage, choose the brightest yellow and orange leaves. Sprigs of hay and grape vine also add texture to a display. Place the largest vegetables, such as squash, Indian corn, and sugar pumpkin in the widest part of the basket. Add some interesting gourds.

Next, choose fruits served the first Thanksgiving feast, such as plums and grapes, allowing the display to overflow onto the table.

Add a few bright red apples, and sprinkle chestnuts, pinecones and cranberries to finish it off. Use your imagination to create a creative cornucopia that offers interesting eye appeal. For example, artichokes, oranges, and pomegranates all add color and interest. Best of all, your family can enjoy the “fruits” of your labor, as most of it is edible.

A faux cornucopia can easily be created by laying a deep basket or large, shallow door basket on its back. Fill with squash, gourds, miniature pumpkins, Indian corn, apples and other fruits and vegetables of the season, allowing them to spillover onto the table. Provide coordinating light to the centerpiece by boring a hole in a couple of miniature pumpkins to form natural candleholders for tapers in assorted heights.

Did you know?

- For centuries, the cornucopia has symbolized gratitude for the many blessings of life.
- The term ‘cornucopia’ actually dates back to the 5th century BC in the form of

sharpening focus and creativity. But when you create a Plan B, dopamine drops—and so does motivation. In other words, the moment you create a Plan B, you’re signaling to your brain, “Relax, no need to give it everything,” and your effort slips.

Studies from the University of Pennsylvania, Zurich, and Wisconsin all point to the same conclusion: people with backup plans perform worse on their main goals. Even thinking about a Plan B reduces persistence and creativity.

Why? Because the brain is built to save energy. The moment it realizes it can relax, it will relax.

Take Howard Schultz, the man behind Starbucks. When he first tried to raise money to expand the company, investors laughed him out of the room. Banks turned him down more than 200 times. He could have walked away, gone back to a “safe” job in corporate America, taken a Plan B. But he refused. Starbucks was Plan A. Period. He doubled down, kept pitching, and eventually found a hand-

ful of believers. Today, Starbucks is a household name around the world.

The science explains the story: when your brain knows there’s no escape hatch, it goes all in. Dopamine spikes, focus sharpens, and creativity ignites. You start to see options you’d never notice otherwise. Pressure forces breakthroughs. That’s the hidden gift of burning the boats.

That’s the real danger of Plan B. Most of the time, it isn’t strategy—it’s fear in disguise. It feels responsible, but really, it’s a quiet permission slip to play small, to quit when things get uncomfortable.

The science is clear, and the stories back it up: extraordinary results only come when you stop keeping one foot out the door. So burn the boats, shut the exits, and commit like there’s no other option.

Because that’s the moment your full potential wakes up. Don’t plan for escape—plan for victory. That’s how you find out what you’re really capable of.

Toby Moore is a columnist, the star of Emmy - Nominated A Separate Peace, and the CEO of Cubestream Inc.

## Plan B!

POSITIVELY  
SPEAKING  
TOBY MOORE



# Healey works to ensure vaccine access

BY KEVIN FLANDERS  
STAFF WRITER

REGION — Amid heightening confusion over vaccine availability across the country, Gov. Maura Healey recently announced a series of measures to ensure that vaccines remain accessible to Massachusetts residents.

National vaccine access took center stage last week, when Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., was grilled by members of the Senate Finance Committee over policymaking and recent actions taken at the federal level.

In Massachusetts, leaders are hopeful that the Governor’s recently announced actions will alleviate fears. With flu season fast approaching, residents statewide have flooded their elected leaders with questions over COVID vaccine access.

“Massachusetts has the best healthcare in the world,” said Healey. “We won’t let Donald Trump and Robert Kennedy get between patients and their doctors. When the federal government fails to protect public health, Massachusetts will step up. The actions we are announcing today will make sure people can continue to get the vaccines they need and want in Massachusetts.”

At Healey’s direction, the Division of Insurance (DOI) and Department of Public Health (DPH) issued a bulletin that requires insurance carriers in Massachusetts to continue covering vaccines recommended by DPH, and not rely solely on CDC recommendations. Massachusetts is the first state in the nation to guarantee insurance coverage of vaccines recommended by the state.

These include respiratory virus vaccines, like COVID, flu and RSV, as well as routine vaccines for children, like measles, chickenpox, and Hepatitis B.

This action follows legislation filed by Governor Healey last month that would give DPH authority to set independent standards for vaccine purchasing and recommendations.

“We are so fortunate to live in Massachusetts, where we prioritize science and support patients,” said State Secretary of Health and Human Services Kiame Mahaniah. “With Gov. Healey’s leadership and collaboration between DPH and DOI, those who want to get vaccinated will be able to without added cost or confusion because of decisions made at the federal level.”

CVS is now administering COVID vaccinations in the Bay State. This followed a period of uncertainty during which Massachusetts pharmacies were unable to offer the vaccine due to a lack of required federal guidance.

After the Governor’s new order opened up availability, residents secured COVID vaccine appointments at pharmacies, as of last Friday.

“As an infectious disease physician, I have seen the extraordinary impact vaccines have had in saving lives and preventing serious illness.

Limiting access to vaccines is not just shortsighted – it is reckless,” said Public Health Commissioner Robbie Goldstein. “Massachusetts will not allow ideology to override evidence. We must continue to be guided by science and data. And we must do what is right, even when it is hard, because protecting public health is not optional – it is a responsibility.”

Children under the age of five can receive the vaccine through their pediatrician.

Additionally, Massachusetts officials are leading efforts to create a public health collaboration with states in New England and across the northeast.

The multi-state collaborative, if launched, would focus on developing evidence-based recommendations on vaccinations, disease surveillance, and emergency preparedness, among others.

“The Commonwealth has a long history of serving as a national leader in healthcare, especially

during moments of federal mismanagement, and this action from Gov. Healey is the latest example of that leadership,” said House Speaker Ronald Mariano.

Added Senate President Karen Spilka, “Vaccines save lives and protect families. Period. The Healey Administration’s actions will help ensure federal drama does not affect our access to vaccines that are essential to public health.”

To learn more about the Governor’s order, visit [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov).

## Senior exercise classes available

UXBRIDGE — The Uxbridge Senior Center is proud to present two different exercise programs for an eight-week session.

1. Balance & Power Exercise Classes: this exercise is a lightweight strength circuit with gentle movements to improve flexibility. Most exercises will be seated with a focus on improving muscle strength especially around the knee area which is crucial for balance and walking and hopefully avoiding falls. Some poses can also be done standing using a chair for support. This program can help improve your flexibility, concentration and strength, while boosting your mood, and reducing stress and joint strain. The program will begin Tuesday, Oct. 21 from 12:15-1:15 p.m.

2. Move & Groove Exercise Classes: this fitness program fuses entertainment and cardio into an exhilarating workout. The benefits of this program include improved balance, range of motion and coordination. Additional benefits include increasing blood flow to the brain, enhancing attention and concentration skills, as well as burning calories and meeting new friends! The program will begin Tuesday, Oct. 21 from 1:30-2:30 p.m.

All classes will take place at the Uxbridge Senior Center Satellite Site which is located at the McCloskey School at 62 Capron St. The classes will run for one hour, one day a week, on Tuesdays, for an eight-week time frame. Participants are asked to bring a water bottle, light hand

weights (if you have them), and wear comfortable clothes, and supportive footwear. This is a specialized program designed for seniors, Pam Landi is our instructor and is a certified Personal Trainer.

The classes are free for Uxbridge residents, compliments of the State Formula Grant or \$25 for non-residents. Interested individuals should call or stop by the Uxbridge Senior Center at 508-278-8622 for more information and receive their application and waiver forms prior to the start of the program. The Center is located at 36 South Main St. in Uxbridge, and is open Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Please note, there are no classes on Nov. 11.

## Sturbridge Historical Society presents tour of Old Burial Ground

STURBRIDGE — Join local historian Bill Barnsley on a walking tour of the Old Burying Ground in Sturbridge on Saturday, Sept. 20 at 10 a.m., covering 170 years of early Sturbridge history. Through 24 stones, we will explore some notable people who shaped our town, and some unique stones that illustrate the development of stone carving and beliefs in the afterlife. Note: We will be "off-trail" on some very uneven surfaces. Wear your sturdy

shoes!

Bill Barnsley is a writer, storyteller, and local historian with a lifelong passion for uncovering the stories of the past. In 2018, with the help of his very patient wife, Jude MacDonald, conducted a complete survey of Sturbridge’s Old Burial Ground, documenting every gravestone and researching the lives behind them. His work connects early town families, Revolutionary War veterans, and the artistry of New England

stone carvers, preserving their history for future generations. When he isn’t leading tours, Bill writes children’s books, teaches, and volunteers in community projects.

The Old Burying Ground is located at 308 Main St. Parking is available behind the Center Office Building and along the road in front of the Old Burying Ground, as well as behind the cemetery. Registration is requested: [sgibquig@gmail.com](mailto:sgibquig@gmail.com).

## BBQ chicken supper at CCUMC

CHARLTON — Saturday, Sept. 20, Charlton City United Methodist Church will be preparing their delicious chicken barbecue supper. Come and enjoy delicious food and fellowship with friends and neighbors

Supper is served from 5-6:30 p.m.,

and as always, there will be continuous serving and take-out available. Adults \$15, children six to 12 \$7, children five and under free. Family maximum: \$50. Tickets may be purchased at the door although reservations are appreciated. Call the church office at (508) 248-7379

for information and reservations. The building is handicap accessible with plenty of parking. Invite the whole family and friends for a nice Saturday out in a family friendly place.



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# Wolperdinger: A fantasy-horror haven



Gus Steeves

Katie Billington with just a few of the things available at Wolperdinger Bookstop.



BY GUS STEEVES  
CORRESPONDENT

Ever heard of a wolperdinger? I hadn't until I walked into Wolperdinger Bookstop in Putnam, where a cuddly rabbit with horns and wings named Wolpy is the mascot and hero of owner Kathy Newman's children's book series. "We're trying to promote him," said assistant manager Katie Billington, noting the store is "kind of like the face of" Newman's

58 Publishing House. Beyond that, they aim to be "a safe place for people to be creative and express yourself." One aspect of that is the upstairs "journaling section," where visitors are encouraged to jot down thoughts. Some of them have ended up on the wall leading up those stairs. For the most part, Wolperdinger is a store that focuses on science fiction, fantasy, horror and Wolpy-related merchandise. (The first book of the series should be out later this year.) When it comes to selecting titles, Billington said she likes "to follow book bloggers and book talkers [online], and see what a lot of people are talking about" to



Gus Steeves

The store's mascot Wolpy is a much cuddlier version of the Germanic wolperdinger than myths would suggest.

get ideas. Sometimes, she added, they simply scroll through recent releases and see what strikes their fancy. Last month, the store celebrated its one-year anniversary with a week of events. One involved Scholastic, the large kids-book publisher, who promoted "Wings of Fire" in which several young people showed up in costume. Billington said they also host "tot spot" bookreadings, a few author events for older audiences, do book events at Rectory School, and are reaching out to other schools, among other things. Their front door posts flyers for various events they host, including the monthly "Horror Seeker" writers' group, which is



Gus Steeves

The store from outside, on Main Street in Putnam.

not just for horror, but for "all walks" of novels, stories, poetry and script-writing. Although Wolperdinger has a Main Street storefront in the Montgomery Ward building that's been beneficial during public events, Billington noted the building is full of services (a yoga studio and real estate firm among them) that don't create a lot of daily foot traffic. Originally, they wanted "that big space upstairs" to host events, and "we have a fantasy of expanding into some of the stores behind us" over the next few years, to include a cafe and more books, she said.

"We've had a lot of people come in and say they don't want to support Amazon and want to do local first, which we really appreciate, obviously," she noted. The theme came from Newman's German husband, as did the fact there's a shelf of German-language books upstairs. But the original wolperdinger was not a cuddly creature; Billington described it as "a scary being in the Bavarian forest." According to Wikipedia, the first references date to the 17th century and "No two Wolpertinger [sic] look alike because they are

supposed [to be] the result of crossbreeding between animals in the area such as foxes, roebucks, hares, ducks, and pheasants." The concept can be found in various forms around the world, identified as jackalopes in the US southwest, al-miraj in Arabia, and by other names. All of them "might be images of rabbits infected by the Shope papilloma virus, which causes tumors that can resemble horns or antlers," the webpage states.

Gus Steeves can be reached at [gus.steeves2@gmail.com](mailto:gus.steeves2@gmail.com).

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## Beautify and expand your indoor garden



Keep your houseplants looking their best with a bit of pinching, trimming and cleanup. A few well-placed snips can improve a plant's appearance and create cuttings to start new plants. Start by removing any dead stems and leaves. Improve the overall beauty of spider plants, dracaenas and palms by trimming away the brown leaf tips caused by fluoride from tap water accumulating in the leaves. Avoid the problem by using rainwater, well water or water treated by reverse osmosis.

Trimming to improve the plant's growth habit and size can provide immediate and long-term benefits. Removing a small or large portion of the stem tip encourages the plant to form more branches and compact growth. When you remove the stem tip you reduce the amount of the growth hormone auxin that promotes upward growth and discourages branching. Encourage more branching without greatly reducing the plant's size with a soft pinch. Remove just the uppermost portion of the stem where new leaves are developing. Use a hard pinch to remove the tip and several inches of the leafy stem when you want to reduce the overall size and promote fuller growth on leggy plants.

Make a clean cut using sharp micro snips or pruners like Corona's houseplant pruners ([coronatools.com](http://coronatools.com)). The rust proof, stainless steel blades can cut up to a quarter inch in diameter and are shaped to make it easier to cut the intended leaves and stems. Your plant will look better, and the wound will close more quickly. Avoid leaving stubs and keep the plant looking its best by making cuts above a set of healthy leaves or a node, the place where leaves once grew. Pruning elsewhere distracts from the plant's appearance and the stubs



Courtesy — Corona Tools

Trimming with a sharp houseplant pruners or micro snips will improve a houseplant's growth habit and size.

create entryways for insects and disease. When you finish pinching and pruning, do a bit of cleanup. Use a dry or damp soft cloth to wipe away any dust that accumulates on the leaves. Use a cosmetic brush to clean fuzzy leaved plants like African violets. Or give your plants a gentle warm shower in the sink or tub. Wrap the pot in a plastic bag if needed to keep soil out of the drain and plumbing. Removing the dust allows more light to reach the leaves for photosynthesis which is essential for plant growth. Use the trimmings from heirloom and non-patented plants to expand your houseplant collection. It's easy to start new plants from leaf stem cuttings of various houseplants like inch plants, philodendron, pothos, dieffenbachias, dracaenas, and many more. Use a sharp knife, snips or bypass pruners to cut three- to six-inch-long pieces from firm, mature non-woody stems. Remove the lowest leaf or two from the stem where roots will form. Stick the cutting in a small container filled with vermiculate, perlite or a well-drained potting

mix. Loosely cover the potted cutting with a plastic bag left open at the top to increase the humidity around the cutting while it forms roots. Set the container in a bright location out of direct sun for several weeks as the roots develop. Once rooted, pot it up and place it in a space that receives the sunlight it prefers. You'll be amazed at how a bit of grooming and propagating can perk up a tired indoor garden. Share or trade extra rooted cuttings with family and friends so each of you can grow your indoor garden and memories. Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the *Midwest Gardener's Handbook*, *2nd Edition* and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" instant video series* and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and was commissioned by Corona Tools for her expertise to write this article. Her Web site is [www.MelindaMyers.com](http://www.MelindaMyers.com).

**Friday's Child**

Jaiden is a sweet, loving, and happy young person whose smile can light up any room! He's a big fan of Disney adventures—whether he's singing along to Moana or cheering on Tarzan's jungle swings, he's completely in his element. Jaiden has a bold side when it comes to food, happily diving into spicy flavors and never missing a Taco Tuesday. Social and friendly, he loves spending time with friends and family, but he also enjoys having quiet moments to relax and recharge. With his caring heart, fun-loving spirit, and zest for life, Jaiden is a joy to be around.

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/25964365697>

**Can I Adopt?**

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

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



# Presentation examines motives for Mars exploration

BY GUS STEEVES  
CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHBRIDGE — Why go to Mars?

In recent years, that's been a question floating around the internet and elsewhere, often spearheaded by various tech tycoons for their own interests.

But much closer to home, local NASA Ambassador Dino Tata has a fairly simple answer: "Ensuring our survival."

Last week at the Senior Center, he argued Mars is a necessary project because we will eventually face extinction if we remain "one-planet species." He points to the fact it's happened before – five major extinction events (defined as killing 70 percent of life or more within two million years) have marked Earth's geological history, and some argue we're in the middle of (and partly causing) the sixth. All but one were caused by massive

climate change, usually triggered by very long and large volcanic episodes spewing a lot of CO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub> and other gases.

The exception was 65 million years ago, at the end of the Cretaceous Era, when an asteroid estimated at the size of Mt Everest plowed into the Yucatan Peninsula, leaving a crater 20 miles wide and 9 miles deep. Its fiery debris covered much of North America and some sources say it ignited massive fires globally, killing 76 percent of all life. Tata noted there's some evidence it hit during a volcanic era (some sources say it may have triggered the volcanism) in India's Deccan Traps.

To Tata, those incidents and our current issues with climate change, pollution, deforestation and other practices make space exploration crucial. But he also notes it'll



Gus Steeves

Dino Tata with a model of the Curiosity rover 3D-printed by Bay Path students.

help us "answer the question 'Are we alone?'" develop new technology, and "advance science in general."

On the other hand, Mars is not a very inviting place to live.

It has a deadly atmosphere just 10 percent as dense as ours, almost entirely made of CO<sub>2</sub>; about a third of our gravity; no magnetic field protecting from celestial radiation;

and an average temperature of -76 degrees that often drops to -195. (He didn't mention this, but it also has occasional planet-wide dust storms that last for months.)

Since then, Tata said, "the world has had a 53 percent success rate of landing on Mars," with the US having a higher rate – 21 successes and six failures. Three missions are now active there – the US-owned

Astronauts in low gravity are already seeing various health effects – including weakening of bones and organs, and effects on eyes and brain – from a few months in orbit. He noted the journey to Mars takes at least seven months one way, and any sojourn there would require living underground or building very thick-walled habitats. Because of the way the two planets orbit, a launch can only happen every 17 months, so a round trip will last at least two or three years.

Despite all those factors, humanity has had a presence on that world since the Viking 1 orbiter left its lander there July 20, 1976. According to Wikipedia, the lander ran for 6.25 years before a Mission Control attempt to reprogram its failing battery accidentally overwrote its antenna commands, cutting off contact.

Valley and beyond. Grafton Arts Inc., a 501 (c)(3) organization is the financial sponsor of the Festival.

The festival organizers appreciate the support of these organizations: Brigham Hill Foundation, Grafton Cultural Council, Greater Worcester Community Foundation, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Millbury Cultural Council, Upton Cultural Council and Yesod Foundation and businesses: EverRise, Gastonart & Frame, Gaudette Insurance, Homefield Credit Union, New England School of Fine Art, Sydney Padgett, Realtor, PepperoniExpress, Pulte Homes, Uncommon Cow and UniBank.

"Curiosity" and "Perseverance" projects and China's "Zhurong." The last two both landed in 2021, but Curiosity has been there since 2012.

The missions have different goals. Perseverance is collecting samples hoping to find microbes and testing surface chemistry; Curiosity is assessing water supplies and other geological details. The former had assistance from the Ingenuity drone helicopter, which "made 72 flights before it tipped over and broke its propeller. It'll never fly again," Tata said.

The idea of exploring Mars dates back at least a century, and has periodically played a role in popular culture. Italian astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli (1835-1910) started the modern trend when he drew a published map of what he called "canali" on Mars in 1877. Although the term actually just means "channels," popular press in English translated it as "canals" and triggered a lot of fantasy about who might have built such "canals."

As telescopes improved, it became clear they

were not intelligently-designed canals, but were very likely evidence of ancient water flowing on Mars. But science fiction took off with speculation. One of the early and most famous examples was HG Wells' War of the Worlds, the Martian invasion tale published in 1897. It got a lot of publicity – and freaked millions out – when Orson Wells turned it into a radio drama in 1938.

"Some people headed for the hills. Some people gathered their guns and hunted Martians," Tata said. "... The whole country panicked and Orson Wells had to leave the country for a few years."

He said NASA already has (joke) boarding passes for human Mars missions, showing those he and his wife have that grant them "33 million frequent flyer miles." But he doesn't expect to actually go there.

"If I'm on a ship going to Mars, I've got nothing to lose anyway," he noted.

He is repeating this talk at Jacob Edwards Library Dec. 4.

Gus Steeves can be reached at gus.steeves2@gmail.com.

## Small Stones Festival of the Arts announces art call, exhibit dates

GRAFTON — Art Call opens Monday, Sept. 15 for submission of work to the 2026 Small Stones Festival of the Arts, the region's largest juried fine art and photography exhibition. Fine art artists and photographers are welcome to join the area's finest painters, photographers, water colorists and other two-dimensional artists in the eighth year of the festival.

The two-week exhibition sponsored by the Blackstone Valley Art Association and the Worcester County Camera Club opens Jan. 24, 2026, at the Community Harvest Project barn located at 37 Wheeler Rd. in N. Grafton. The Festival runs until Feb. 1, and is free



to the public.

The Art Call is open until Oct. 15. All forms of two-dimensional fine art work and fine art photography are accepted with a maximum of five entries per artist. Juried artwork will be displayed at the exhibit and showcased in the hardbound exhibition catalog. The Festival's Web gallery will feature all submitted artwork

meeting minimum requirements. Visit <https://smallstonesfestival.org/> to submit artwork.

A panel of six jurors who have distinguished careers as practicing artists or in curatorial capacities at area museums, galleries and colleges will select approximately 144 works to be displayed. Awards include first, second and third cash

prize winners and juror's choice (six awards). Cash awards are \$500 for first; \$250 for second; and \$100 for third place. A popular choice award for each category will be voted on by attendees.

The mission of the Small Stones Festival of the Arts is to elevate the practice and appreciation of fine art and photography in the Blackstone

## Whitinsville Christian School expands Outdoor Education program



WHITINSVILLE — Whitinsville Christian School is growing its popular Outdoor Education program, bringing the more opportunities for hands-on, nature-based learning to students. After successfully introducing the program to 48 Kindergarteners last year, the school will now include first graders in this environmental experience. Students in Kindergarten, first, third, and fourth grades will now participate in outdoor education as part of their regular curriculum. Outdoor Ed is also available as a

middle school elective.

Held in the school's on-site forest classroom, Outdoor Ed offers students the chance to explore, create, and grow beyond the walls of a traditional classroom. From building forts, climbing boulders, and sledding down snowy hills, to experimenting in the mud kitchen, this program nurtures collaboration, problem-solving, and a love for God's creation.

Last year's activities included kindergarten students tapping maple trees and following along as their teacher turned the sap into syrup. The

class celebrated with an outdoor pancake party. The class also created early reader books about the entire process and practiced reading to each other and the middle school outdoor education stu-

dents. These experiences not only strengthen academic learning, but also inspire students to become generous caretakers of themselves, others, and the world around them.

Parents, grandparents, and community members are invited to keep an eye on this growing program and share in the joy of seeing children discover the world beyond the classroom.

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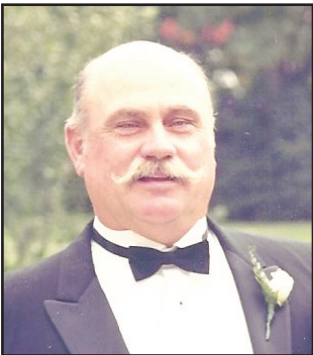
# OBITUARIES

## Marcus John Deane, “Jack”

Northbridge--Marcus John Deane, “Jack”, died Monday, September 1, 2025, at home, with loved ones at his side. A son of Marcus A. and Gladys (Potter) Deane, he was born January 16, 1936, and lived in Whitinsville for most of his life. In 1953, he graduated from Northbridge High School where he was co-captain of the football team. After graduation he attended Worcester Academy, then UMASS Amherst on football scholarships. He later played football at Dean Jr. College before earning a bachelor’s degree from Clark University. While a student at Clark, Marcus won awards for writing.

Marcus spent his entire career in construction, more specifically in drilling and blasting. In 1960, he co-founded Deane and Brown and in 1971 he established Deane Drilling and Blasting, which he owned and operated for 20 years. Not to be one to “retire”, Marcus continued working with Austin Powder Company and Tom Browne Drilling and Blasting for several years. Considering how hard he worked his entire life, it is fitting he passed on Labor Day.

When he wasn’t working, “Jack” enjoyed watching sports or listening to Jazz and Classical music. He enjoyed good conversation, maybe with a glass of Jameson. He was also known for his storytelling--es-



pecially of growing up in “The Brick House” and his many adventures with his best friend, Gary Trottier. His parents passed on a strong work ethic and good morals. His mother always had a special spot in his heart. Above all else, he enjoyed being with family and friends, especially seeing all of his grandchildren.

Marcus leaves his wife of 35 years, Lynne (Bishop) Deane; three children: Catherine Brochu and her husband Michael, of Northbridge; Jeff Deane and his wife Alison, also of Northbridge; Sean Deane and his wife Katie, of Medford; 7 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. In addition, he leaves a sister Fay VanDyke, in Connecticut and a brother, Dudley Deane and his wife Mary Ann, in Michigan. He was predeceased by his son Marc Deane and a sister Beverly Gellatley. Memorial Calling Hours at Carr Funeral Home, 24 Hill St., Whitinsville, were Friday, September 5, 2025. Burial is private. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to either VNA Hospice and Palliative Center, 100 Trade Center, Suite G500, Woburn, MA 01801, or to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, PO Box 849168, Boston, MA 02284. To share a memory or condolence with the family, please visit [www.carrfuneralhome.com](http://www.carrfuneralhome.com)

# The Overlook Senior Living to celebrate ribbon cutting

CHARLTON — The Masonic Health System of Massachusetts and The Overlook Health & Rehabilitation Center will mark an important milestone on Friday, Sept. 12, with a private ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the renovation and expansion of its Short-Term Rehabilitation Unit.

The addition features 13 new patient rooms, bringing the total number to 40 private suites. Along with beautifully refreshed common areas, state-of-the-art culinary spaces, and enhanced therapy services, the expansion reflects The Overlook’s ongoing commitment to providing exceptional care, comfort, and wellness to the surrounding community.

Tameryn Campbell, President and CEO of Masonic Health System of Massachusetts, shared “This expansion reflects our dedication to high-quality health care and the individuals we serve each day. These new private suites and refreshed spaces — including dining and gathering areas — provide a more modern, welcoming environment that offers

greater comfort, choice, and dignity for our Overlook Residents and citizens in the surrounding

area, who turn to The Overlook as a trusted resource.” Building on this momentous occasion, The Overlook’s Ribbon Cutting Ceremony also marks the completion of The Overlook’s Master Planning Phase 1, which comprises a much larger and ambitious Master Planning Project designed to reposition and modernize the Charlton Campus.

About The Overlook For nearly 115 years, The Overlook has provided a continuum of care and services for Massachusetts Residents and their families. Today, The Overlook tailors its services to older adults with a wide variety of needs – from independent living to skilled nursing, and recently has enhanced its Campus offerings beyond health care, hospitality and housing, with retail and commercial businesses that provide for even greater enrichment. Learn more at [Overlook-Mass.org](http://Overlook-Mass.org).

## UGRADES

*continued from page A1*

includes detailed nutritional information to help students and staff make informed food choices.

The benefits of this grant go beyond the cafeteria. Lincoln Shaw, a junior in the Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration (HVAC&R) program, helped install the new system alongside instructor Matthew LaJoie. From setting up refrigeration units to installing ductwork and electrical components, Lincoln gained invaluable hands-on experience with commercial-grade equipment.

“HVAC&R technicians are often called

on to work with walk-in coolers and freezers in commercial environments,” said LaJoie. “This was a perfect opportunity for a student to apply classroom knowledge in a real-world setting—right here on our campus.”

As a Healthy Meals Incentives grantee, BVT is proud to partner with the USDA and Action for Healthy Kids to strengthen its school meal program. Thanks to grant funding, in-house expertise, and student involvement, the Food Services program continues to deliver high-quality, nutritious, and cost-effective meals to its school community—one scratch-cooked dish at a time.

About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT)

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills. For more information about the school, visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us).



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# LEGALS

(SEAL)  
**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
**LAND COURT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT**  
**25 SM 002631**  
**ORDER OF NOTICE**

**TO:**  
**Bear Iona McColloch; Courtney R. McColloch**

and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act: 50 U.S.C. c. 50 § 3901 (et seq): Freedom Mortgage Corporation claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Uxbridge, numbered 54 Carney Street, given by Bear Iona McColloch and Courtney R. McColloch to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Cardinal Financial Company, dated April 18, 2024, and recorded at Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 70411, Page 210, and now held by the plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant’s/ Defendants’ Servicemembers status. If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108 on or before October 20, 2025 or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the grounds of noncompliance with the Act. Witness, GORDON H. PIPER, Chief Justice of said Court on September 3, 2025.

Attest:  
Deborah J. Patterson  
Recorder  
September 12, 2025

**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. WO25P2978EA**  
**CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**  
Estate Of:  
**Joseph M Dias**  
**Also known as:**

**Joseph Manuel Dias**  
**Date of Death: 08/01/2025**

To all interested persons:  
A Petition for **S/A - Formal Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Joseph Dias of Plymouth 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:  
**Joseph Dias of Plymouth MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 10/04/2025.**

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. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.**  
Date: September 05, 2025  
Stephanie Fattman,  
Register of Probate  
September 12, 2025

**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. WO24P2850EA**  
**CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF**

**COMPLETE SETTLEMENT**  
Estate Of:  
**Richard Alfred Morrison**  
**Also known as: Richard A. Morrison**  
**Date of Death: 07/10/2024**

A Petition for Order of Complete Settlement has been filed by **James R. Day of Honolulu HI** requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account , and first account and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 09/30/2025 .** 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.

**WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.**  
Date: August 29, 2025  
Stephanie Fattman,  
Register of Probate  
September 12, 2025

(SEAL)  
**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
**LAND COURT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT**  
**Docket Number: 25 SM 002534**  
**ORDER OF NOTICE**

**To:**  
**Keryn Riel**  
and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. c. 50 §3901 (et seq): Citizens Bank N.A. as Trustee for Ameriquest Mortgage claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in 41 Heather Hill, Whitinsville, MA 01588, given by Keryn Riel to Citizens Bank, N.A., dated February 9, 2022 and recorded in the Worcester County Registry of Deeds in Book 67241, Page 37, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant’s/Defendants’ Servicemembers status. If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you

may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at: Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108 on or before 10/6/2025, or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the ground of noncompliance with the Act. Witness, GORDON H. PIPER, Chief Justice of this Court on 8/25/2025

Attest:  
Deborah J. Patterson  
Recorder  
24-010627  
September 12, 2025

**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. WO20P2508PM**  
**CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT**  
Estate Of:  
**Holly E. Johnston**

A Petition for Order of Complete Settlement has been filed by **Lisa Judkins of Auburn MA** requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account, Temporary 1st, 2nd and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 09/23/2025 .** 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.

**WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.**  
Date: August 28, 2025  
Stephanie Fattman,  
Register of Probate  
September 12, 2025



# Faith in Film Series continues at Charlton Federated Church

CHARLTON — The Faith in Film series continues this autumn at Federated Church of Charlton (FCC) with a four-movie series exploring the theme of community. On the third Friday of each month at 6:30 p.m. members of the congregation and the public can view and discuss movies. All are invited to join in the Faith in Film series at no charge. A handout with pertinent and interesting information, key concepts and discussion questions about each film is distributed at each movie night. Refreshments are also served.

The Faith in Film Series this autumn include the following:

Sept. 19 – “The Englishmen Who Went up a Hill and Came Down a Mountain” (1995) – Hugh Grant leads the cast in this charming and quirky film about English surveyors in 1917, who discover that a beloved mountain is only a hill, causing great consternation in the local village that is very proud of its mountain.

Oct. 17 – “The Crucible” (1996) – Arthur Miller wrote the screenplay based on his own classic play of the same name which premiered in 1953. This film version stars Wynona Ryder, Paul Scofield and Daniel Day Lewis. As with the play, the story is based upon the Salem Witch Trials of the 1690s and examines how a community grapples with perceived evil.

Nov. 21 – “Rear Window” (1954) – Jimmy Stewart and Grace Kelly star in this masterpiece by director Alfred Hitchcock. Stewart plays a photographer who while recovering from a

broken leg spies on his neighbors and discovers a possible murderer among them.

Dec. 19 – “It Happened on Fifth Avenue” (1947) – A clever and wise vagrant (Victor Moore) moves into the vacated Manhattan mansion of a millionaire while he winters in Virginia. The vagrant forms a community of veterans and their families as well as, unknowingly, the millionaire and his family, in this heartwarming Romantic Comedy set during the Christmas holidays. This Academy Award nominated film directed by Roy Del Ruth also stars Don DeFore, Ann Harding, Charles Ruggles, and Gale Storm.

Movies in the Faith in Film program explore religion and theology broadly and may include films that explore various denominations and faiths. The films also explore Christianity, and the ethics and morals found in the teachings of Jesus Christ. While some films may showcase historical and Biblical characters and events, others may take a more abstract approach to faith and how people respond to and interact with God and the teachings of Christ.

Whenever possible the series showcases a variety of genres, tones and periods. Thus, it explores silent films, foreign cinema, classic films, well-known and obscure works all with the aim to entertain, enjoy and enlighten.

Faith in Film screenings take place in the Fellowship Hall of the Church at 64 Main Street in Charlton. For further information please call the Church at 508-248-5550 or email Pastor Shannan

Hudgins at [pastor@fed-church.org](mailto:pastor@fed-church.org).

About the FCC

The Federated Church of Charlton is a federation of the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Association in Christian worship

together. The Church descends from several churches active in the Charlton community over the centuries starting in 1761. Worship services are held on Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. The church also has an active Sunday School and youth program.

## Southbridge police log

SOUTHBRIDGE—The Southbridge Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Aug. 25 to Sept. 1.

Raynald L. Bouchard, age 31, of Southbridge was arrested on Aug. 25 in connection with a warrant for Violation of an Abuse Prevention Order.

A 39-year-old male from Southbridge received a summons in lieu of arrest on Aug. 26 for Nighttime Felony Breaking & Entering into a Building and Violation of an Abuse Prevention Order. A 38-year-old female, also from Southbridge, received a summons during the same incident for Nighttime Felony Breaking & Entering into a Building.

Jacquelyne Malave, age 45, of Southbridge was arrested on Aug. 27 for Assault & Battery and Simple Assault & Battery.

Lorenzo Theo Tijndaal, age 38, of Southbridge was arrested on Aug. 27 for Domestic Assault and Battery

and in connection with a warrant for operating an uninsured and unregistered motor vehicle.

A 35-year-old male from Worcester received a summons in lieu of arrest on Aug. 28 for operating a motor vehicle with No Inspection Sticker and Unlicensed Operation of a Motor Vehicle.

A 24-year-old male from North Brookfield was taken into protective custody on Aug. 30.

Luis A. Verges, age 36, of Southbridge was arrested on Aug. 31 for Disorderly Conduct, Disturbing the Peace, and Threatening to Commit a Crime. Yessenia J. Llanos, age 37, also of Southbridge, was arrested during the same incident for Disorderly Conduct.

A 49-year-old male from Sturbridge was taken into protective custody on Aug. 31 for a Marked Lanes Violation, Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle, and Operating Under the Influence (Liquor).



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# State officials confirm second case of West Nile Virus

**BY KEVIN FLANDERS**  
*STAFF WRITER*

REGION — Area residents are asked to take precautions after the Massachusetts Department of Public Health announced the state's second human case of West Nile virus (WNV).

Officials confirmed that a woman in her 60s contracted the virus in Essex County.

As a result of ongoing evidence of WNV in mosquitoes, risk levels have been elevated to high in several eastern Massachusetts communities. Meanwhile,

Worcester County residents are asked to remain vigilant and take steps to avoid mosquitoes.

"Massachusetts is in peak season for the spread of West Nile virus," said Public Health Commissioner Robbie Goldstein. "While the temperatures have dropped slightly, this is the time of year when most people get exposed to the virus."

The first WNV-positive mosquitoes in the state this year were announced on June 17. Since then, 364 mosquitoes have tested

positive for WNV, including samples taken in Worcester and Hampden Counties.

There has also been one animal case of WNV reported this year.

Currently, the risk for WNV is moderate in 183 cities and towns across Barnstable, Berkshire, Bristol, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk, and Worcester Counties.

In addition to WNV, eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) has also been detected in mosquitoes in Massachusetts this year. There have been

21 EEE-positive mosquito samples, with no human or animal cases reported.

WNV and EEE are generally transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. There were 19 human cases of WNV reported in Massachusetts last year, plus four human cases of EEE, leading to one death.

One of the best ways to protect your family against mosquitoes is to avoid outdoor activities during peak mosquito hours from dusk to dawn. If you must be outside during these

hours, be sure to apply insect repellent and maximize clothing coverage of exposed skin.

Residents can also reduce the number of mosquitoes around their homes by draining sources of standing water. Mosquitoes often lay their eggs in small pools, wheelbarrows, rain gutters, and drains. Residents are advised to frequently empty flowerpots and wading pools, in addition to changing the water in birdbaths daily.

It is also important to make sure that window and door screens

fit tightly. Screens with holes or openings should be replaced, officials said.

Looking ahead, local leaders will post additional resources and updates on conditions within specific communities throughout the month.

Residents are also urged to take steps to protect their pets from mosquitoes.

Additional information about EEE and WNV, as well as reports of current and historical virus activity in Massachusetts, can be found by visiting: [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov).

## Medicare presentation announced at Uxbridge Senior Center

UXBRIDGE — The Uxbridge Senior Center, in collaboration with our Blue Cross Blue Shield Representative, Luisa Lewis, are proud to present an informational meeting tailored for those who are retiring soon and for individuals approaching Medicare eligibility.

There are some things to think about when it comes to Medicare enrollment. Life gets so busy, and we often neglect certain details that may have significant impact on our spouses and dependents. It is very important to have a good understanding of your eligibility and

your enrollment and delay options. Planning ahead will avoid costly Medicare sign-up mistakes. Join us at the Uxbridge Senior Center located at 36 South Main St. on Oct. 7 at 6 p.m.

This event is open to the public and is ideal for individuals who may still be working and looking to transition. Topics include an explanation of Medicare, the Medicare enrollment timeline, Medigap and Medicare Advantage plans, and programs available to early retirees. Please RSVP by Oct. 3 by calling 508-278-8622 or email [lbernard@uxbridge-ma.gov](mailto:lbernard@uxbridge-ma.gov).

## Skyler Criasia of Northbridge enrolls at James Madison University

HARRISONBURG, Va. — Northbridge resident, Skyler Criasia, has enrolled at James Madison University for the fall 2025 semester. Criasia is majoring in Business Management - BBA.

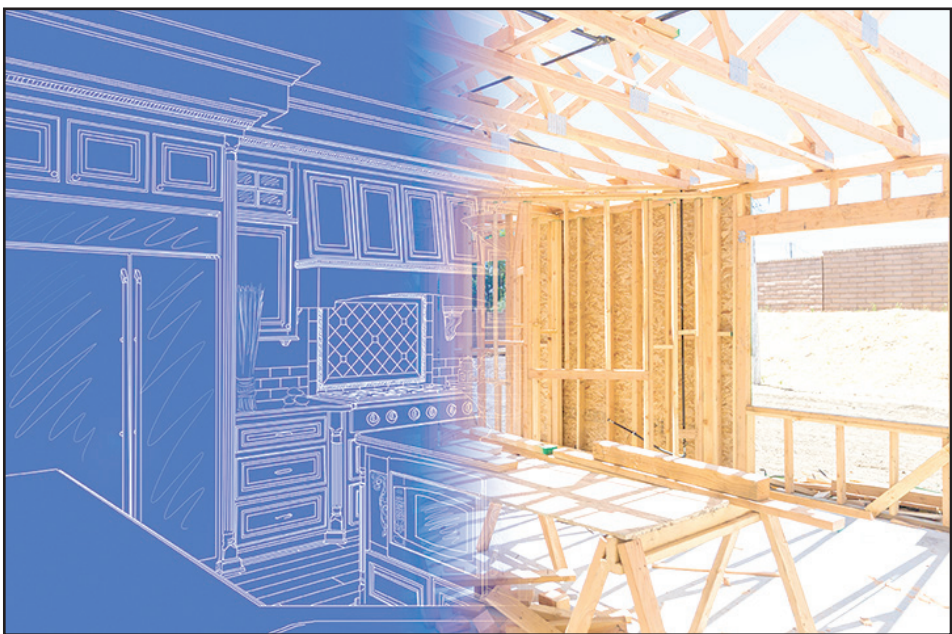
Founded in 1908, James Madison University is a public university located in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. JMU is one of the nation's leading lights in higher education, where students enjoy engaging relationships with world-class faculty who drive education innovation and support advanced research. With state-of-the-art amenities and facilities, students have access to NCAA Division 1 athletics. JMU also has the highest post-graduation job levels of all Virginia colleges.

There are many reasons homeowners consider adding a room to their current homes. Some outgrow an existing space, while others take up new hobbies or have different needs that were not apparent when purchasing the home. Indeed, a room addition can remedy a host of issues affecting a home.

Those considering adding a room may wonder what is involved in this type of project. According to The Spruce, no home improvement project is more complicated or expensive than building an addition. The National Association of Realtors says building an addition can cost between \$90,000 and \$270,000, depending on the size and intended purpose of the room. An addition structurally changes a home, which requires the work of professionals whether homeowners plan to build upwards or outwards.

With so much to ponder when considering a home addition, here's a look at what homeowners can expect of the process.

- Design and planning: Homeowners must



determine the purpose behind the addition and how it will integrate with the existing home. A bedroom design likely will be different from a garage addition or family game room.

- Hire an engineer and contractor: An addition changes the footprint of a home. Homeowners will require professional contractors and structural engineers/architects to properly design the addition and ensure that it will not compromise the existing structure. Detailed architectural plans will be drawn up considering the layout, size and

integration with the existing structure. The home may require a new property survey as well.

- Comply with building codes: The project will have to meet with local zoning regulations, building codes and homeowners association rules.
- Timing involved: Adding a room is a major overhaul of a space. It may require months of a home being in upheaval. If the renovations are particularly extensive, homeowners may need to temporarily move out of the space. Electrical,

plumbing and HVAC must be considered, and drywall and finishing the interior are some of the last steps to make the room habitable.

- Demolition: Adding a room may involve taking down walls or modifying existing spaces, necessitating hiring a dumpster to remove debris. This is an added consideration and expense.

Putting an addition on a home is a complex process that will take time and money. Such a project requires careful planning and consultation with an array of experts.

## What to expect of a room addition project

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# Community Calendar

Friday, Sept. 12

- Rhode Island Parrot Rescue Presentation – 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Douglas Adult Social Center, 331 Main St., Douglas. Learn about parrot care and rescue efforts. Refreshments provided. Sign-up required (508-476-2283).

Saturday, Sept. 13

- No large public events confirmed; check local libraries and cultural councils for updated week-end activities.

Sunday, Sept. 14

- Live Music: Jonny Taylor – 308 Lakeside, East Brookfield, 12–5 p.m. (reservation info: 774-449-8333).

Monday, Sept. 15

- WISE Program: “Soul Searching with Oprah”

– 1–3 p.m., Plummer Place (Northbridge Senior Center). Five-week lifelong learning course for older adults. Fee: \$25. Call 508-234-2002 to register.

Tuesday, Sept. 16

- Senior Lunch – Manicotti & Green Beans – Noon, Douglas Adult Social Center. RSVP by Sept. 12 (508-476-2283).

Wednesday, Sept. 17

- National Grid “Connect to Caring” Program – 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m., Uxbridge Senior Center, 36 S. Main St., Uxbridge. Customer advocates available to help with energy bills and assistance programs. Open to all.
- WRTA Five-Million-Rides Celebration (Riders’ Forum) – 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Worcester Central Hub. Community giveaways and updates from WRTA staff.

Thursday, Sept. 18

- Free Lunch & Learn with Azza Law Firm – Noon, Douglas Adult Social Center. Attorney Amy Azza will discuss legacy planning and emergency folders. Sign-up by Sept. 10.
- Blackstone Valley Gardeners Open House with Warren Leach – 6:30 p.m. hospitality, 7 p.m. program. United Methodist Church, 61 Linwood Ave., Whitinsville. Leach will discuss “Celebrating the Winter Garden.”

Friday, Sept. 19

- Douglas Sunshine Club Ham & Bean Supper – 6 p.m. (doors open 5:30 p.m.), Douglas Adult Social Center, 331 Main St., Douglas. Live entertainment by the “Driveway Chicks.” Tickets \$8, advance purchase required.



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

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CHARLTON — When Bobbiejo and Katelyn enrolled at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, both were seeking a new path. What they found, in addition to rigorous training and a shared passion for healing, was a deeper connection to each other and a profound understanding of what it truly means to care. Although both share the last name Smith, they are not related by blood. Today, both are proudly Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), having passed their NCLEX-PN on the very first attempt – a testament to their dedication and Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy's comprehensive program.

Their story is a powerful reminder that while the science and skill of nursing are vital, it's the human element, the quiet strength of kindness, that leaves the most indelible mark.

"What makes nursing so powerful isn't always the science or the skill," stated Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN, Academy Director. "It's the way kindness leaves a mark long after the moment has passed. The patients may not always

remember every word you said, but they'll remember how you made them feel when they were at their most vulnerable. That quiet comfort, that steady calmness. Kindness doesn't fade; it settles quietly in the lives touched, in the moments you've shown up when no one else did."

Indeed, "showing up when no one else could" seems to be a motto for the Smiths. Katelyn, an alumna of Path Regional Vocational Technical High School's Class of 2018 Cosmetology shop, brings a remarkable background of compassion and community involvement to her nursing studies. She holds certifications in Dementia Care, Mental Health First Aid, and Stop The Bleed, and has received training in Domestic Violence awareness. Her dedication to service is demonstrated through her volunteer work at the Charlton Senior Center Blood Pressure Clinic and her receipt of a Random Act of Kindness Award (RAK Foundation). She is an active member of the UNICEF Club and participated in the JAK-L Foundation's Strides for Mental Health event. Katelyn has also been honored with prestigious

# Friendship and lifesaving

## The Smiths' journey from Bay Path to nursing excellence

scholarships, including the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc., and the Greater Worcester Community Foundation's Cynthia & Harrison Taylor Scholarship.

Bobbiejo has pursued a similarly broad range of certifications and volunteer experiences, embodying the same spirit of compassionate care. She is certified in Dementia Care, Mental Health First Aid, and Stop The Bleed, and has completed train-

ing in Domestic Violence awareness and Narcan administration. Bobbiejo's academic excellence is highlighted by her induction into the National Technical Honor Society and her perfect score of 100% on the Medication Calculation Test. She actively participated in numerous Bay Path workshops and events, including Summer Workshops I & II and Accepted Students Night Art Therapy. Additionally, Bobbiejo advanced her career

through the DSW to LPN Certificate Program. Her commitment to community service is reflected in her volunteer work at the Charlton Senior Center Blood Pressure Screenings. Like Katelyn, she was honored with a Random Act of Kindness Award.

The Smiths' shared journey through Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy not only equipped them with the clinical expertise to save lives but also reinforced

their belief in the transformative power of human connection. As they embark on their careers as LPNs, they carry with them not just their certifications, but the profound understanding that in nursing, compassion is truly the most powerful medicine. Their success is a shining example to the Bay Path community, illustrating that dedication, kindness, and a commitment to showing up can lead to extraordinary achievements.

# Fulfilling a father's promise

## Bay Path alum journeys from Ghana to LPN

CHARLTON — For Miriam Botuo, becoming a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) at The Meadows is more than a professional milestone—it is the fulfillment of a promise and the continuation of a legacy rooted in love, perseverance, and the unwavering faith of her late father.

Botuo began her new role as an LPN on September 4, 2025. She dedicates this achievement to her father, Mr. Gabriel Botuo, who passed away in March 2024. His belief in her potential served as a guiding light throughout her journey.

"My dad always told me, 'You will be a nurse,'" Buoto recalls. "Even on his sickbed, he told the hospital staff, 'My daughter will soon be a nurse.'"

From Ghana to the United States

Miriam's path to nursing began on Sept. 7, 2017, when she arrived in the United States from Osino, a town in Ghana's Eastern Region. The second of three children of



Mr. Gabriel Botuo and Madam Stella Oppong Afrakomah—a retired Headmistress—Miriam was placed on a trajectory toward success from the very beginning. Her father enrolled her at The Fieldstone School, where she became a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). With the support of a scholarship from Workforce Central, she also earned certifications as an EKG Technician and a Phlebotomy Technician.

A journey of dedication and growth

Over the next seven years, Miriam gained invaluable hands-on experience in healthcare. She worked as a CNA at facilities such as CareOne at Millbury and St. Mary's Healthcare, and as a PCA II in the oncology unit at UMass Memorial Hospital. She further developed her skills as a Mobile Phlebotomist for Quest Diagnostics.

In August 2024, determined to honor her father's dream, Miriam enrolled in the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy. Her clinical rotations took her to Quaboag Rehabilitation

& Skilled Care Center and Life Care Centers of America in Auburn. There, she sharpened her skills in patient assessment, medication administration, and complex nursing procedures.

Miriam's time at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy was marked by an extraordinary level of dedication. She received her certifications in Dementia Care, Mental Health First Aid, and Stop the Bleed, while also receiving training in domestic violence awareness. Her leadership was equally notable—she organized a Sleep Awareness Night, volunteered on the Graduation Committee, and was elected and served as the Lead Reader for the Practical Nursing Pledge at the Class of 2025 Graduation and Pinning Ceremony. She also gave back to her community by volunteering at the Charlton Senior Center's Blood Pressure Clinic.

Her efforts were widely recognized. Miriam was awarded a MassHire Grant to support her studies and received the Random Act of Kindness

Award. She was also nominated for the prestigious Dr. Adelina Healy Clinical Excellence Award—a reflection of her compassion, professionalism, and academic performance.

A seamless transition to nurse

From the end of June to early September 2025, Miriam completed her nurse apprenticeship (as a graduate nurse) at Vibra, the Meadows. Her transition from student to full-time LPN was seamless, underscoring both her exceptional preparation and the patient-centered care philosophy she embraces—one nurtured and supported by her education at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy.

Continuing a legacy

Now officially a Licensed Practical Nurse, Miriam Botuo exemplifies the qualities she has developed over the years: critical thinking, clinical excellence, teamwork, and deep compassion. Her nursing license symbolizes far more than personal achievement—it is the realization of a journey across continents, a tribute to her father's enduring faith, and a promise fulfilled.

"I promised myself I would graduate so I could continue Dad's legacy," Miriam shared.

To Bay Path Academy Director Dr. Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN, Miriam offered heartfelt thanks, saying, "I am forever grateful."

For Miriam Botuo, LPN, nursing is not just a career—it is a calling, a legacy of care, and a powerful testament to love, resilience, and purpose all in honor of her father, Mr. Gabriel Botuo.

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