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Thursday-Friday, July 16-17, 2026

Shepherd Hill students hosting Tackle the Stigma 5K to promote mental health awareness

CHARLTON — The Shepherd Hill Regional High School cheerleading program, in partnership with the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District community, is inviting residents to lace up their running shoes and help break down barriers surrounding mental health during the annual Tackle the Stigma 5K and 2.5K Walk/Run on Saturday, Sept. 27.

The event will begin at 10 a.m. at the Shepherd Hill football field and is designed to raise awareness about mental health and mental wellness while encouraging open conversations throughout the local community.

Organizers hope participants of all ages will come together to demonstrate support for those facing mental health challenges and reinforce the message that no one has to struggle alone.

"This event is very important to us as we work to raise awareness about mental health and mental wellness throughout our local community," organizers said in announcing the event.

The walk and run carries the theme, "Run toward awareness, stand up for support, and tackle the stigma one mile at a time," reflecting its focus on education, compassion and community involvement.

Mental health advocates continue to emphasize the importance of reducing the stigma surrounding anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions, which can often prevent individuals from seeking help. Community events such as Tackle the Stigma aim to create a welcoming environment where conversations about mental wellness are encouraged and support resources are highlighted.

In addition to providing an opportunity for exercise and community engagement, the event serves as a reminder that mental health

is an important part of overall well-being. Organizers hope the day will inspire participants to check in with friends, family members and neighbors while promoting a culture of understanding and acceptance.

The Shepherd Hill cheerleaders have made mental health awareness a priority, using the event to unite students, families, educators and community members around a common cause. By bringing together participants from across Dudley, Charlton and surrounding communities, they hope to build momentum for ongoing conversations that extend well beyond race day.

Whether participants choose the full 5-kilometer course or the shorter 2.5-kilometer walk/run, organizers say every step represents a commitment to supporting mental wellness and reminding those who may be struggling that help is available.

Registration information and additional event details are expected to be available through Shepherd Hill Regional High School and the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District as the event approaches.

Frisbie's Dairy Barn to celebrate National Ice Cream Day with 24 hours of scooping!

STURBRIDGE — In honor of National Ice Cream Day on Sunday, July 19, Frisbie's Dairy Barn is taking on its biggest celebration yet: keeping all six locations open for 24 consecutive hours. The walk up window at 195 Charlton Rd. will hold its first ever 24 hour celebration!

From breakfast-inspired ice cream flavors, limited-edition flavors and surprises throughout the day, guests are invited to celebrate the sweetest holiday of the year anytime—morning, noon, or midnight.

"It's a celebration of everything we love about ice cream throughout the year- you may also see some seasonal favorites reappear for one day only!" said co-owner Kendra Walker. "You'll have to stop by to check out exactly what we've got going on!"

What began as a fun tradition at Frisbie's original New Britain location in 2021 has grown into an annual celebration that customers look forward to each year. Now in its sixth year, the tradition has expanded alongside the company's growth, with all Frisbie's locations participating in the 24-hour event for the first time. We will open at midnight

into Sunday morning and stay open until 11:59 p.m.

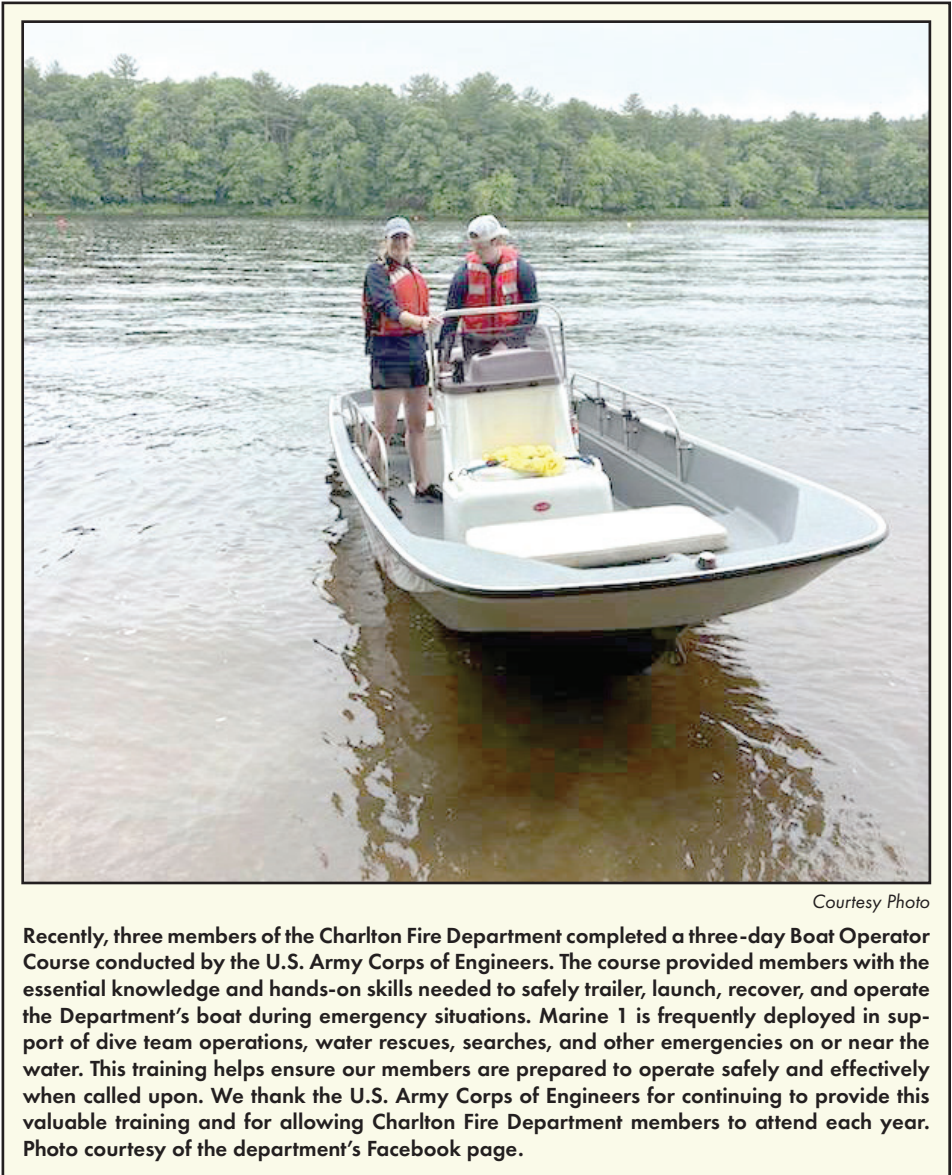
"We're attempting something that nobody has done before—operating all six of our locations for 24 straight hours," said owner Paul Parks III, who came up with the idea 6 years ago. "It's a huge undertaking, but it's a celebration worthy of ice cream. National Ice Cream Day is our favorite holiday, and we can't think of a better way to celebrate with our communities."

Participating locations include New Britain, Windsor, East Lyme, West Hartford, North Attleboro, and Sturbridge.

For updates and event details, follow @FrisbiesDairyBarn on instagram.

About Frisbie's Dairy Barn

Founded in New Britain, Connecticut, Frisbie's Dairy Barn is a family-owned ice cream company known for its homemade, small-batch super premium ice cream. With six locations across Connecticut and Massachusetts, Frisbie's is dedicated to creating memorable experiences and serving handcrafted ice cream to communities throughout the region.



Courtesy Photo

Recently, three members of the Charlton Fire Department completed a three-day Boat Operator Course conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The course provided members with the essential knowledge and hands-on skills needed to safely trailer, launch, recover, and operate the Department's boat during emergency situations. Marine 1 is frequently deployed in support of dive team operations, water rescues, searches, and other emergencies on or near the water. This training helps ensure our members are prepared to operate safely and effectively when called upon. We thank the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for continuing to provide this valuable training and for allowing Charlton Fire Department members to attend each year. Photo courtesy of the department's Facebook page.

St. Anne–St. Patrick Parish & Shrine announces 139th Annual Novena to Saint Anne

FISKDALE — St. Anne–St. Patrick Parish & Shrine invites the public to the 139th Annual Novena to Saint Anne, taking place Saturday, July 18 through Sunday, July 26. The Novena offers nine days of prayer, worship, and fellowship, bringing together Catholics from many cultures and communities throughout New England.

"This year's theme is 'One in Christ, United in Mission,' which reflects the diversity of the Church and the unity we share through our faith," said Fr. Salvator Musande, pastor. "As diverse as we might be, we share in the common mission of the Church: making missionary-disciples," he added. "Everyone is welcome to attend one day, several days, or the entire Novena."

For more than a century, pilgrims and visitors have gathered at St. Anne Shrine to honor Saint Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary and grandmother

Rosary Procession held before the Novena Mass in the Outdoor Pavilion. Photo provided by St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish.

of Jesus. The tradition of praying a novena dates back to the nine days of prayer between Christ's Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Today, novenas continue to be a cherished Catholic devotion, offering an opportunity for prayer, thanksgiving, healing, and spiritual renewal.

Each evening of the Novena includes:

- 5:30 p.m. – Sacrament of Reconciliation in the St. Anne Church Sacristy
- 6:30 p.m. – Rosary Procession beginning at the Generations Statue near the Gift Shop
- 7 p.m. – Novena Mass in the Outdoor Pavilion

This year's guest celebrants and participating communities include:

- Saturday, July 18 – Filipino Community, Rev. Alex Castro, A.A.
- Sunday, July 19 – Vietnamese Community, Rev. Peter Tam Bui
- Monday, July 20 – Hispanic Community, Rev. Hugo Cano
- Tuesday, July 21 – Polish Community, Rev. Richard Polek
- Wednesday, July 22 – Parish Community, Rev. Dominic Mbaeze, A.A.
- Thursday, July 23 – African Community,

Rev. Enoch Kyeremategang

- Friday, July 24 – Brazilian Community, Rev. Cleber de Paula
- Saturday, July 25 – The Cursillo Movement, Rev. Donald Ouellette

The Feast of Saints Anne and Joachim will be celebrated on Sunday, July 26, with:

- Noon – Healing Mass with Anointing of the Sick, celebrated by Rev. Salvator Musande, A.A.
- 7 p.m. – Closing Liturgy featuring the Parish Choir, celebrated by Rev. Chi Ai Nguyen, A.A., Provincial of the Assumptionists, North American Province

Saint Anne is known as the patron saint of mothers, grandmothers, women in labor, and those seeking to conceive. As the grandmother of Jesus, she is a beloved figure to whom many bring their prayers, hopes, and intentions. For additional information, directions, or a complete Novena schedule, visit www.StAnneStPatrickParish.com.

Town of Charlton accepting applications for Opioid Settlement Funds Grant Program

CHARLTON — The Town of Charlton is accepting applications for funding through the Town's Opioid Settlement Funds Grant Program.

The purpose of this program is to support initiatives that prevent opioid misuse, expand access to treatment and recovery services, reduce the harms associated with substance use disorders, and improve the health and well-being of Charlton residents. Funding is made available through the Town's allocation of national opioid settlement funds and must be used for eligible purposes consistent with applicable settlement agreements and guidance. Funding may be requested to a maximum of \$2,500 per applicant. Final awards will be distributed based on available funding as well as demonstrated need and community impact.

Eligible applicants may include:

- o Nonprofit organizations
- o Educational institutions
- o Healthcare providers
- o Community-based organizations

Other organizations serving Charlton residents

Projects may include, but are not limited to:

- o Prevention and education programs
- o Treatment and recovery support services
- o Harm reduction initiatives
- o First responder or public safety initiatives related to opioid response
- o Behavioral health and mental health services
- o Community outreach and support programs
- o Data collection, evaluation, and other evidence-based strategies that address opioid use disorder

Applications will be evaluated based on demonstrated community need, alignment with eligible opioid settlement uses, measurable outcomes, organizational capacity, and the anticipated impact on Charlton residents.

Completed applications and all required supporting documentation for the first round of this grant program must be submitted by Aug. 31. Late or incomplete applications may not be considered.

Cooper Way of Charlton graduates from Eastern Connecticut State University

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. — More than 800 Eastern Connecticut State University students received undergraduate and graduate degrees in the 2025-26 academic year, culminating this past May in two commencement ceremonies at the conclusion of the spring 2026 semester.

Cooper Way of Charlton graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English.

From first-generation college students to seasoned professionals pursuing advanced degrees, the Class of 2026 hails from nearly all of Connecticut's 169 towns, 24 U.S. states, and 28 foreign countries. The graduates range in age from 19 to 81, with 28% being the first in their families to graduate from college and 11 percent being NCAA Division III student athletes. Women make up 60% of the class, and

approximately 30% of students identify as people of color.

The graduates went through the University's School of Arts and Sciences, School of Education and Professional Studies, and Graduate Division. Popular undergraduate majors included business administration, psychology, English, health sciences, and art. At the graduate level, students received advanced degrees in applied data science, management, accounting, education (early childhood, elementary, secondary), special education, and educational studies/technology.

During her keynote speech at the undergraduate commencement ceremony, Beth Regan '79, justice and chairwoman of the Mohegan Tribal Council of Elders, urged the graduates to be flexible as they enter their careers. "The universe may have other plans," she said. "When those moments are presented to you, embrace them. If you allow yourself that flexibility, you may experience the best adventure you never could have imagined."

President Karim Ismaili offered his congratulations to the Class of 2026. "What you have accomplished is no small thing," he told the graduates. "You have navigated deadlines and exams, long nights and early mornings, work, family responsibilities, leadership roles, internships, athletics, and all the unexpected realities of life."

U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal was among the special guests. "We live in difficult, sometimes dark and daunting, times. ... We have been through tough times before. We are a resolute and resilient nation, and it is you whose service and dedication will help get us through."

During his remarks at the graduate ceremony, World Bank Executive Harold Tavares, recipient of Eastern's second annual Distinguished Public Service Award, told the graduates to lead with courage and to pave the way for others. Reminding them that they are in the minority of Americans with an advanced degree, he said, "Doors are opening for you. Be sure to hold them open for those around you. Each of you has the power - and the responsibility - to improve the human condition."

Eastern alumnus James Woulfe '09, chief of staff for the mayor of the City of Hartford, welcomed the graduates to the University's alumni family. He reminded the graduates that they are not alone on this journey. "Tonight, you become a part of the Eastern alumni family. Stay connected. Lean on one another, and lean on us."

REAL ESTATE

Charlton
\$525,000, 24 George St, Nikitin, Ivan, and Fazlullakh, Indira, to Rattray, Matthew, and Rattray, Haley.
\$487,500, 230 Southbridge Rd, Laperle, Constance, and Carpenter, Robert, to Anderson, Alicia.
\$480,000, 30 Bond Rd, Paquin Allen A Est, and Paquin, Judy K, to Lane, Nicole, and Green, Alexander J.
\$235,000, 105 Stafford St, Karlou, Nancy, and Karlou, John, to Kinovate Homes LLC.
\$215,000, 93-C Depot Rd #55, Anderson, Alicia, to St Laurent, Emilee P.
\$111,000, 189 Daniels Rd,

Young Mens Christian Assn, to Pmz Development LLC.
SOUTHBRIDGE
\$580,000, 22 Goddard St, Tlcj Properties LLC, to Riverwalk Partners Invs L.
\$323,750, 84 Park Ave, Latour, Christopher, and Latour, Vivian M, to Willis 3rd, Lowell W, and Josephson, Heather L.
\$300,000, 172 Fiske St, Simonini, Rodney, to Osorio Jr, Alexander.
\$180,000, 97 Worcester St, Curboy, Brian, to Le, Hoa.
STURBRIDGE
\$525,000, 292 Cedar St, Gregoire, Ruth A, to Lin, Bingjie, and Zuo, Liujiyi.



Attorneys Lori Granat and Michelle Murray have moved to Worcester.

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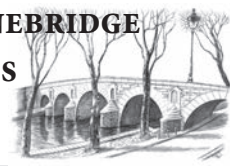
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The Charlton Villager (USPS#024-954) is published weekly by Stonebridge Press, Inc., 25 Elm St., Southbridge, MA 01550. Periodical postage paid at Southbridge, MA and additional mailing office(s). POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Stonebridge Press P.O. Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550.

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Friday Closed

visit www.townofcharlton.net
or more information.

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For library hours please check
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..... (508) 943-6700
Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical
High School
..... (508) 248-5971 or (508) 987-0326

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256 Main St., Southbridge, MA 01550
Tel 508/764-6365; Worship 10:00 A.M.
- **Charlton Federated Church**, 64 Main St., 508- 248-5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. Summer worship is 9:30 a.m. www.fed-church.org
- **Charlton Baptist Church**, 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488, www.charltonbaptist.org, Sunday worship 10 a.m.
- **Charlton City United Methodist**, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org Sunday worship and Children's church 10am
- **St. Anne St. Patrick Church**, 16 Church St., Fiskdale (508) 347-7338
www.stannestpatparish.com
Saturday Vigil Mass at 4 pm, Sunday 8 am, 10 am, 12 noon, Youth Mass (September to May) 5 pm. Daily Mass Mon - Thurs 7:30 and 10 am, Fri and Sat 7:30 am
- **Elm Street Congregational Church**, 61 Elm Street, Southbridge, Ma 01550
Phone: 508-764-8085 • Sunday service 10:00 am
Pastor Kathryn Light
- **Faith Baptist Church**, 515 Dennison Drive, Southbridge
Phone number 508-764-6132,
Worship Service: Sunday 10:00 a.m.
- **St. Joseph's Church**, 10 H. Putnam Ext, 248-7862, www.stjosephscharlton.com, Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30 p.m., Sunday Mass 8 a.m., Sunday Family Mass 10 a.m., Sunday LifeTEEN Mass 5 p.m., Weekday Mass Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 a.m.
- **Wayside Church**, 6 Haggerty Road, 248-5144
- **Assemblies of God Southern New England District Headquarters**, Route 20, 248-3771, snedag.org, Office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Living Word Church of Charlton**, 10 Main Street - Grange building 1st Floor, Charlton, Ma 01507, Pastor Craig Bellisario, (508) 233-8349
Sunday Service 10:00am.
www.livingwordcharlton.com
info@livingwordcharlton.com
- **New Life Fellowship A/G, SNED Chapel**, 307 Sturbridge Road, Rt. 20, Charlton, MA, Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.
- **Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale-** 8 Maple St. Sturbridge, 774-304-1021
www.sturfed.org
Sunday Service 9:30 a.m.
- **Bethlehem Lutheran Church-** 345 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566
Phone 508-347-7297
Web: www.bethlehemsturbridge.org
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Pastor Dan Purtell
- **Holland Congregation Church**
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Hollandchurch.org
Sunday Service @ 10:00 am
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- **Holy Trinity Episcopal Church**
446 Hamilton St., Southbridge, MA 01550
Phone: 508-765-9559
Web: www.holytrinitysouthbridge.org
Sunday Service 11:00 am
Pastor Dan Purtell
- **St. John Paul II Parish**
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Rev. Carlos Ardila, Pastor
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Sunday 8 a.m., 10 a.m., and noon
Weekday masses 8:30 & 8:45 a.m., St. Mary's Church (508) 765-3701

CLUES ACROSS

- Listen to
- Presents
- A type of guitar
- Actor Idris
- A citizen of Iran
- Pretentiously artistic
- Harness
- Diamond weight measurement
- "Better Call ____"
- Fervent support
- Male cat
- Jewish spiritual leader
- Disposed to venture or take risks
- A way to nail
- Cool!
- Women's ____ movement
- "Losing My Religion" rockers
- Step-shaped recess
- A princess can detect it
- Tractor-trailer
- Leslie and Leon are two
- Color at the end of the spectrum
- Lines where fabrics are sewn
- Dodgers great Hersher
- Floor covering
- Traveled aimlessly
- Rocker Stewart
- Body art
- Congressman (abbr.)
- No seats available
- Breaks apart
- Hand gesture
- Ballplayer's tool
- Sword
- Baseball team
- Upper bract of floret of grass
- Italian Seaport
- Mars crater
- Tube on a shoelace
- U. of Miami mascot
- South American nation
- Video game series "Max ____"
- Upper body part

CLUES DOWN

- German courtesy title
- Ancient Greek personification of mercy
- Jewish calendar month
- Family of long-legged frogs
- Photo
- Delivered a speech
- Lute used in Indian music
- Decorated
- Cease to stand
- The bottom layer
- Member of a Semitic people
- Part of a ticket
- Defunct monetary unit
- Challenges
- Body part
- Tell on
- By way of
- Shady green alcove
- Egyptian city
- ____ and flowed
- Widens a hole
- Eurasian wheat
- Act incorrectly
- "Be back later"
- Al Bundy's wife
- Ocean
- Large root eaten as a vegetable
- Units of subjective loudness
- Music genre
- A way to drench
- Popular hot beverage
- Silk-like cotton fabric
- Rumanian city
- Come back
- Vaccine developer
- Canadian law enforcers
- Wings
- Observational comedian Bill
- Small fry
- ____ Clapton, musician
- Take a chance
- Semi-liquid food for babies
- Consumed food

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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Community Broadband Networks and Massachusetts Broadband Institute announce launch of high-speed Internet initiative in South Worcester County

SOUTHBRIDGE — Community Broadband Networks (“CBN”), funded by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech), is pleased to announce the launch of its project within the Residential Retrofit Program, bringing affordable, high-speed fiber internet service to residents across South Worcester County. The initiative formally commenced with a Go-Live event on June 17, 2026, at 60 Charlton Street in Southbridge, the first property to receive CBN service under this transformative program.

Supported by funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the American Rescue Plan Act’s Capital Projects Fund, the Residential Retrofit Program is designed to deliver reliable, gigabit-capable broadband infrastructure to underserved multi-dwelling communities. This investment represents a significant step forward in expanding digital access and ensuring that residents in historically underserved areas have the connectivity necessary to participate fully in today’s digital economy.

The June 17 Go-Live event celebrated the activation of service at the Southbridge Housing Authority property located at 60 Charlton Street. Residents had the opportunity to learn more about available service offerings, engage directly with the CBN team, and take advantage of early enrollment opportunities. The event also served as a community gathering to mark the beginning of a broader effort to modernize connectivity throughout the region.

“This launch represents a meaningful milestone not only for Southbridge, but for the entire region,” said James Orioli, Chief Operating Officer of Community Broadband Networks. “Our mission is to ensure that reliable, high-speed internet is both accessible and affordable for all residents. Through our partnership with MBI, we are proud to deliver critical infrastructure that will support education, workforce development, healthcare access, and overall quality of life for the communities we serve.”

Gateway Players celebrate music of Jimmy Buffett

SOUTHBRIDGE — Gateway Players Theatre in Southbridge presents “Jimmy Buffett’s Escape to Margaritaville,” with book by Greg Garcia and Mike O’Malley, music and lyrics by Jimmy Buffett. Performance dates are July 31 and Aug. 1 at 7:30 p.m. & Aug. 2 at 2 p.m. at the Southbridge Middle School Auditorium, 132 Torrey Rd., Southbridge. Directed by Patricia Haddock, Produced by Kathi Grenier, Music Director Chris Rubenacker, and Choreographer Harlie Packard. Presented by permission through special arrangement with Concord Theatricals.

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$18 for seniors and youth under 18. Tickets may be reserved by calling Gateway at 508-764-4531. Online credit card ticket sales are available at <https://events.ticketleap.com/tickets/gateway-players/jimmy-buffett-s-es->

cape-to-margaritaville The cast includes: Andrew St. George, Sarah Tonkin, Jonathan Martin, Abi Simpson, Billy Bolster, Gwen O’Brien, Peter Amaral, Chris Lam, Asher McCoy, Shawn Davis, Hillary Robertson, David Yutzler, Ray Petrelli, Cheri Cooper, Mari Cordero, Emma Holtz, Tiffany Betty, and Lydia Woznicki.

On a small island in the Caribbean, vacation goes and the laid-back staff of the Margaritaville bar flirt, unwind and sip drinks under the sun. When an ambitious tourist named Rachel arrives with her friend Tammy for a much-needed vacation, she finds an unexpected romance with

Tully, the island bartender and musician. As paradise collides with real life, both are faced with deciding what they want beyond the sandy beaches of Margaritaville. This tropical romantic comedy has plenty to laugh at and a sweet love story – all underscored by Jimmy Buffett’s classic tunes, including “Cheeseburger in Paradise,” “Margaritaville,” “It’s Five O’Clock Somewhere,” “Fins,” “Volcano,” and many more. With a book by Emmy Award winner Greg Garcia (My Name is Earl, Raising Hope) and Emmy nominee Mike O’Malley (Survivor’s Remorse, Shameless), this hilarious, heart-warming musical is the party you’ve been waiting for!

The 60 Charlton St. deployment represents the first phase of a broader infrastructure initiative that will extend throughout South Worcester County, including communities such as Southbridge, Charlton, Sturbridge, Oxford, Webster, and surrounding areas. Construction across the project footprint is scheduled to occur through July 2026, with phased service activations continuing thereafter as each location is completed.

As part of the Residential Retrofit Program, CBN is deploying a fiber-to-the-premises network architecture within participating properties, enabling residents to access high-capacity, low-latency broadband service. The network is designed to deliver symmetrical gigabit speeds, with scalability to support future increases in demand. In addition to infrastructure improvements, the program includes a strong emphasis on digital equity, ensuring that residents have not only access to service, but also the tools and support necessary to fully benefit from connectivity.

“Through the Residential Retrofit Program, MBI is providing affordable and reliable access to help residents gain digital skills, apply for jobs and access community resources,” said MBI Director Michael Baldino. “Our partnership with CBN across South Worcester County will uplift historically marginalized communities, narrowing the digital divide and expanding economic opportunity in the region.”

The project includes enhancements to in-building infrastructure, expanded connectivity to individual residential units, and improvements to shared spaces to support reliable internet access throughout each property. These investments are intended to create a long-term, sustainable broadband solution that meets the needs of residents today while preparing communities for the future.

The Go-Live event at 60 Charlton Street marks the beginning of this broader regional deployment and underscores the shared commitment of CBN and MBI to closing the digital divide across Massachusetts.

Community members interested in learning more about the service or upcoming availability are encouraged to contact Community Broadband Networks for additional information.

About Community Broadband Networks (CBN)

Community Broadband Networks is dedicated to expanding access to reliable, affordable broadband services in underserved and unserved communities. Through strategic partnerships and investment in modern infrastructure, CBN delivers high-quality connectivity solutions that support economic development, education, and community growth.

About the Massachusetts Broadband Institute at MassTech

A division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) is working to extend high-speed internet access and availability across the state. To achieve this, MBI uses state and federal funding to launch infrastructure expansion programs that target areas of the state that lack high-speed internet access as well as digital equity programs that tackle barriers to internet adoption and increase availability, addressing critical issues around affordability, enhanced public Wi-Fi, the need for internet-enabled devices, and digital literacy training.

Investigation leads to Charlton man’s arrest

CHARLTON — On Wednesday, July 1, members of the Charlton Police Department assisted the Massachusetts State Police in the execution of a search warrant and an arrest warrant on Dresser Hill Road in the Town of Charlton.

The warrant stemmed from an investigation conducted by the Portsmouth, R.I. Police Department, with assistance from several units of the Massachusetts State Police, including the Cyber Crimes Unit, the Special Tactical Operations Team, and Crime Scene Services.

As a result of the investigation, a 25-year-old Charlton man was

arrested without incident at the Massachusetts State Police Barracks in Sturbridge on charges originating in Rhode Island. He was arraigned later that day in Dudley District Court. The individual also faces Massachusetts charges resulting from the execution of the search warrant.

The individual arrested in connection with this investigation is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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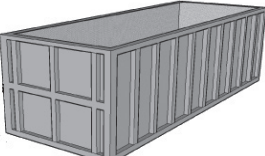
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EDITOR

Tackling the stigma starts with showing up

Mental health can be difficult to talk about, especially for young people. Too often, those who are struggling remain silent because they fear judgment, embarrassment or the possibility that others will not understand.

That is why the Tackle the Stigma 5K and 2.5K Walk/Run at Shepherd Hill Regional High School deserves broad community support.

The event, organized by the Shepherd Hill cheerleaders and the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District community, will begin at 10 a.m. Sept. 27 at the Shepherd Hill football field. Its message is simple and important: Run toward awareness, stand up for support and tackle the stigma one mile at a time.

That message matters because stigma remains one of the most stubborn barriers to mental health care. A person may recognize that something is wrong yet hesitate to speak up out of concern about how friends, classmates, co-workers or relatives will respond. Even when support is available, shame and fear can keep people from reaching for it.

Community events cannot solve every mental health challenge. They can, however, change the atmosphere in which those challenges are discussed.

When students, parents, educators, coaches and residents gather for a shared purpose, they send a public message that mental wellness is not a private failure or a source of shame. It is part of overall health, and it deserves the same seriousness and compassion as any physical condition.

The leadership shown by Shepherd Hill students is especially encouraging. Young people often understand the pressures facing their peers in ways adults do not. Academic expectations, athletics, social media, family responsibilities and uncertainty about the future can create burdens that are difficult to see from the outside.

By putting their name and energy behind this event, the cheerleaders are doing more than organizing a walk and run. They are helping create permission for honest conversations. That may be the most valuable result of all.

A student who hears classmates speak openly about mental wellness may feel less alone. A parent may recognize the importance of checking in with a child. A teacher or coach may become more attentive to changes in behavior. A friend may find the courage to ask a difficult but necessary question.

Those moments can matter greatly.

The community also has a responsibility to make sure that support for mental health does not end when the event is over. Awareness must be followed by action. Families should learn where local resources are available. Schools should continue fostering environments where students feel safe asking for help. Adults should model language that is compassionate rather than dismissive.

Most of all, people should listen.

There is a tendency to believe that the right response to someone who is struggling is to offer quick advice or reassurance. Often, the more helpful response is to give that person time, attention and the confidence that their concerns are being taken seriously.

The Tackle the Stigma event is an opportunity for Dudley, Charlton and surrounding communities to demonstrate that kind of support publicly. Participants do not need to be competitive runners. They do not need to have personal experience with a mental health condition. They only need to understand that building a healthier community requires empathy and participation.

Showing up at Shepherd Hill on Sept. 27 will not erase stigma overnight. It will, however, add another voice to the growing recognition that mental health deserves openness, respect and sustained community attention.

Every mile walked or run will carry the same message: No one should have to struggle in silence, and no one should be made to feel ashamed for asking for help.

Letter submission policy

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

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

OPINION

Debunking five common Social Security myths

Social Security is often one of the most important income sources in retirement. Yet widespread myths about how it works can lead to confusion, unnecessary worry and poor planning decisions. Here's the truth behind five of the most common misconceptions.

Myth 1: Social Security is going broke. You've probably heard this one, but the full picture is more nuanced. According to the 2026 Social Security Board of Trustees Report, if Congress does nothing, the program would need to reduce benefits starting in 2032, paying roughly 78 cents for every dollar owed.

But that's just one scenario. Congress could raise the combined payroll tax from 12.4% to 16.65%, which the trustees estimate would secure full benefits through 2100. Other options include eliminating the earnings cap subject to payroll tax or adjusting retirement ages. Lawmakers have tools to address this.

Myth 2: Social Security will cover all your retirement needs. Think of Social Security as a financial foundation, not the full building. According to the Social Security Administration, benefits replace only about 40 percent of pre-retirement income for a median earner. That means you'll likely need to account for most of your retirement income yourself. Building a strong personal savings strategy now can help close that gap.

Myth 3: You lose benefits permanently if you keep working. Not true. Social Security does have an "earnings test" that can temporarily reduce benefits for people who claim early and keep working. If your earnings exceed a set annual cap – which changes each year – Social Security will withhold a portion of your benefits. But once you reach full retirement age, the Social Security Administration adjusts your monthly check higher to repay those withheld amounts over time.

Myth 4: An ex-spouse's benefits come out of your own.



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If you were married for at least 10 years and are currently unmarried, your former spouse may be eligible to collect on your earnings record, or you may be able to collect on theirs. Divorced spouse benefits can be up to 50 percent of the other person's full retirement benefit. But those payments don't affect yours. Your monthly benefit is not reduced by anything paid to an ex-spouse or even a current spouse.

Myth 5: Social Security benefits are no longer taxed. Recent legislation caused some confusion here. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act did not eliminate taxes on Social Security benefits. If your combined income exceeds certain thresholds, you'll still owe taxes on a portion of your benefits.

The law also created a temporary deduction (available through 2028) for people 65 and older. Eligible taxpayers can deduct \$6,000 per qualifying filer if their modified adjusted gross income is \$75,000 or less for singles or \$150,000 for couples. The deduction phases out at \$175,000 for singles and \$250,000 for joint filers.

The more you understand Social Security, the more control you have over your retirement outcome. Grounding your decisions in facts rather than assumptions can make a meaningful difference in your long-term financial security.

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

Edward Jones and its financial advisors cannot provide tax advice. You should consult your qualified tax professional regarding your situation

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The last place you can still wander

LANTERNS ALONG MAIN STREET

By CHARLES

There are fewer and fewer places these days where you can simply wander.

Everything seems to have a purpose now. We drive to the store because we need something. We head to work because we have to. Even a walk is often measured by a smartwatch that reminds us how many steps we've taken, how fast we walked and whether our heart rate was acceptable. Somehow we've managed to turn wandering into another assignment.

But every once in a while, I find myself in an old hardware store.

Not one of the giant warehouse places where you need a map to find a box of screws. I mean the kind of hardware store with wooden floors that creak just enough to let everyone know you've arrived. The place where shovels stand in one corner, fishing lures somehow occupy another, and there's always a mysterious shelf full of oddball parts that haven't changed since the Reagan administration.

I never get through one of those stores in less than half an hour. It's impossible.

You walk in looking for a hose washer, and suddenly you're examining cast-iron hooks that would look good in the garage. Then you notice birdseed on sale. Around the corner is a display of flashlights that makes you wonder if yours still works. Before long you're comparing paintbrushes even though you haven't painted anything in years.

None of it is urgent. None of it was on the list. That's the beauty of it.

When I was younger, I thought efficiency was the goal. Get in, get out, cross another errand off the list. Now I'm beginning to appreciate places that don't rush you.

The best hardware stores aren't really selling tools. They're selling possibilities.

You start imagining projects you'll probably never tackle. Maybe this is finally the year you'll repair that loose porch step. Perhaps you'll organize the workshop. You stand there holding a packet of vegetable seeds, briefly convinced

you're about to become the sort of fellow who grows prize-winning tomatoes.

Then your wife gently reminds you that the last basil plant barely survived because you kept forgetting to water it. She's usually right.

What I enjoy most, though, are the conversations. Someone asks where to find a particular bolt, and another customer answers before an employee has the chance. Advice travels up and down the aisles as naturally as if everyone were old neighbors. Nobody seems bothered by the interruption. That doesn't happen very often anymore.

In most places, people stare at their phones while waiting in line. At the hardware store, they're debating the best way to remove a stripped screw or whether oil-based stain still beats the newer products. Somehow complete strangers become temporary teammates, united by whatever stubborn home repair brought them there.

I suspect that's one reason these stores have survived when so many small businesses haven't. They offer something that can't be delivered to your front porch in two days. They offer human nature.

Of course, I rarely leave with only what I intended to buy. Somehow a five-dollar errand becomes a small bag full of things that "might come in handy someday." My garage is living proof that someday hasn't arrived yet. Still, I don't regret it.

Those little detours through the aisles remind me that not every minute needs to be optimized. Not every trip needs to be timed. Sometimes it's enough simply to wander, discover something unexpected, exchange a few words with a stranger and head home feeling like the afternoon was well spent. That's getting harder to find.

So if you happen to disappear for a while on a Saturday morning, don't worry if you haven't traveled very far. You might just be wandering through the last place where nobody expects you to be in a hurry.

And honestly, I think we could all use a little more of that.

Overlook launches free summer concert series in Charlton

CHARLTON — Music lovers have six opportunities to enjoy live outdoor performances this summer as The Overlook hosts its annual Summer Concert Series on Tuesday evenings throughout July and into August.

The free concerts will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. on the outdoor commons at The Overlook, 88 Masonic Home Rd., offering a variety of musical styles ranging from jazz and brass to classic rock and blues. Guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and enjoy an evening of live entertainment with family and friends. In the event of rain, performances will move indoors to the Performing Arts Center.

On July 14, Quintessential Brass will take the stage, showcasing the rich sound of a traditional brass band.

Fans of classic rock can enjoy The

Long Run: Songs of The Eagles on July 21, featuring many of the legendary band's best-known hits.

The Salty Sister Project Acoustic Trio will perform July 28, offering an evening of acoustic favorites and harmonies.

The series continues into August

with The Reminisants on Aug. 4, bringing audiences back to the golden era of 1950s and 1960s rock and roll.

The final concert will be held Aug. 11, when The Lustre Kings perform a mix of blues, rhythm and blues, and rockabilly music.

The Summer Concert Series has

become a popular seasonal tradition, offering residents and visitors an opportunity to gather outdoors and enjoy live music in a relaxed setting.

Admission is free and open to the public.

For more information, call 508-403-4987 or visit OverlookMass.org/events.

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Tuesdays at 10:45am - 7/21, 7/28 & 8/4

FRONT LAWN FRIDAYS - Join us for stories and outdoor play.
Fridays at 10:45am - 7/24 & 7/31

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS
Registration is required. All children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult caregiver.

GILBERT THE PARTY PIG
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*No-Sew Muppets is for kids ages 9 to 13. Kids must attend both parts.

SCAVENGER HUNTS - In the Children's Room
Archaeology - July 8 through July 21
Ice Age - July 22 through August 4

SUMMER COLORING CONTEST
Pick up a coloring page at the library and return it by August 5. Entries will be displayed in the stairwell and one winner from each age group (3-5yrs; 6-9yrs; 10-12yrs) will be chosen by the staff.

TEEN & ADULT PROGRAMS
Registration is required.

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Tuesday, July 21 at 2:00pm. For ages 16+

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

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Drought conditions prompt water restrictions

SOUTHBRIDGE/CHARLTON — The Massachusetts Drought Task for issues a Level -2 Significant Drought status for Worcester County. The Town of Southbridge now has to require that all Southbridge and Charlton water customers refrain from all outside water use except for handheld watering between the hours of 5 and 9 p.m. Please turn off all outside sprinkler systems.

This declaration from the State also applies to homes with private wells.

Certain water uses are not subject to restrictions such as production of food and fiber, health and safety reasons,

maintenance of livestock, and core functions of a business (for example irrigation for a nursery).

For the general public's information, Currently the Southbridge Water Departments reservoir system is at 100.1 percent of total capacity. This is within our historical average for this time of year.

The declaration is a county wide declaration, and not due to any current water storage shortfalls within the Southbridge Water Department. This declaration is part of new laws and regulations put forth by the State legislature, and enforcement went into effect

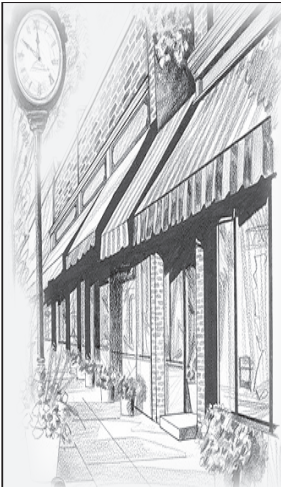
in April of 2025.

To be clear, the Southbridge Water department is not experiencing any water storage shortages currently.

The declaration of Level- 2 significant drought will remain in effect until the State Drought Task Force deems that the conditions within Worcester Country have returned to acceptable levels.

More information can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/drought-management-task-force>

Please feel free to contact the Southbridge Water Department at 508-764-3207 if you have any questions or concerns.



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OBITUARIES

Robert A. Levite, 76

Fiskdale: Robert Alan “Bob” Levite, 76, formerly of Fiskdale, passed away on June 1, 2026, while residing at Cedarbrook Village in Ware, Massachusetts, following a long battle with dementia.

Born on June 3, 1949, in Steubenville, Ohio, Bob was the son of the late Miriam Jeanne and David Morris Levite. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from The Ohio State University in 1972, a Juris Doctor from Boston College Law School in 1976, and later attended Vermont Law School.

An environmental attorney dedicated to public service, Bob devoted his career to water resources, land protection, and environmental law throughout New England. He served in legal roles for the Vermont Water Resources Board, the Massachusetts Division of Energy Resources, and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. He also taught at Harvard Law School and supported the work of Mass Audubon, Opacum Land Trust, the Nashua River Watershed Association, the Littleton Conservation Trust, and served on the Board of Directors for the Kestral Land Trust. His work reflected a lifelong commitment to protecting the natural world he loved so deeply.

Bob will be remembered for his intelligence, quick wit, generosity, and willingness to lend a helping hand. He had a curious mind, a sharp sense of humor, and



an appreciation for life’s simple pleasures. He found joy in hiking, camping, traveling, gardening, birdwatching, music, chocolate, and spending time with the people and animals he loved. Some of his happiest adventures were motorcycle rides and RV trips shared with the love of his life, Deb.

An animal lover throughout his life, he adored his Australian Shepherd, Tula, who predeceased him, and shared a special bond with Tika, who remained a treasured companion in his later years.

Bob is survived by his beloved partner of 12 years, Deb Ciprari of Fiskdale; his sister-in-law, Kimberly Levite of Ohio; nieces Jay Levite and Denise Yocum; and nephews Dan Levite and Larry Yocum. He was predeceased by his brother, Bernie Levite, and his sister, Michele Yocum.

The family extends its heartfelt gratitude to the compassionate caregivers and staff of Cedarbrook Village for the kindness, dignity, and support they provided to Bob throughout his residency.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Opacum Land Trust, P.O. Box 233, Sturbridge, MA 01566.

A celebration of life will be held at Cedarbrook Village, 73 South Street, Ware, MA, on Friday, August 7th, at 11:00 a.m.

Raymond E. Lotter Sr., 83



Dudley-Raymond E. Lotter Sr., 83, died at home with his family July 6, 2026 in Dudley, MA. Ray was born on October 5, 1942 in Upland, PA, Ray was the son of the late Edward and Edith (Boyer) Lotter.

In the 1950s, Ray and his parents relocated to North Scituate, RI where Ray was a 1961 graduate of Scituate High School. After high school Ray entered the Coast Guard and proudly served his country for 4 years.

In 1965 he married the love of his life, wife of 61 years, Geraldine Thurston.

In 1969 they then relocated with their daughter to a small house on a once quiet road with a big yard in Dudley, MA where they then proceeded to proudly add 7 sons to their family. (the road was quiet no more)

Besides his wife, Ray is survived by his 8 children: Gerrie Nowicki and her husband Steve, Ray, Jr and his wife Linda, Kenny and his wife Jen, Scott and his wife Lacey, Dennis, Glenn and his wife Jen, David and his wife Melissa, and Keith and his wife Amanda.

His 20 grandchildren: Jeffrey Nowicki and his wife Kaitlin;

Stephanie Kielinen and her husband Zak; Katelyn Healy and her husband Austin; Arin Landry and her husband Travis, Jacob, Steven, Megan, Heidi, Cameron, Jack, Kevin, Isabel, Alison, Samantha, Gabrielle, Ryan, Madelyn, Emerson, Max and Gabriel Lotter.

His 13 great-grandchildren: Kennedy, Elliette, Wilhelmina, Lockwood, Macklin, and Marketta Nowicki; Adam, Elias, and Isla Kielinen; Carter, Kinsley, and Annie Healy; and Henry Landry. He was so proud of his large happy family. His great-grandchildren brought such great joy to him in his last days.

Ray was predeceased by his siblings: Edward H. Lotter, Jr and Elizabeth Brinsfield

Ray worked for many years as an auto-mechanic in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts. He retired in 2011 as a Service Manager for Knight Chevrolet in Southbridge.

Ray took pride in a well-equipped basement workshop where he repaired and crafted many items. He enjoyed surfing the internet and keeping up with baseball, football, and NASCAR. He was a longtime Dudley Little League coach & director. He also took great pride in his model train set that was enjoyed by both his children and grandchildren every Christmas.

The family extends a heartfelt thanks to Janira & Jess his Visiting Angels & Kerry the family’s Health Care advocate along with the Veteran’s Association. These angels helped the family make Ray’s last months comfortable and happy at home where he wanted to be.

Calling hours & Service will be held at Bartel Funeral Home 33 Schofield Avenue in Dudley on Friday July 17, 2026 from 10AM to 12PM Noon. Prayer Service at 11:30 AM In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Veteran’s Association’s locally the Webster- Dudley Veterans Council C/O the Webster Veterans Home 4 Veterans Way Webster Ma. 01570 Att. Veterans Agent Stephen Rogerson. www.bartelfuneralhome.com

Bernard George Perry, 77



he was an Extra Class Accredited Volunteer Examiner and National Volunteer Examiner Coordinator call sign KB3SMQ.

Bernie enjoyed time with family and friends. He

was always offering a listening ear and quick to make you laugh when it was needed the most.

On August 14, 1996, he married the love of his life Susan. Together they enjoyed Sunday morning grocery shopping and traveling to different beaches in Maine, Maryland, and Florida.

He is survived by his wife Susan Perry,

his children Marc Perry and wife Deb of Monson, MA, Crystal Palomino and husband Dan of Saint Petersburg, FL, and Brian Kerns and wife Stephanie of Nampa, ID. His grandchildren Kassandra Perry, Devaney Kerns, Kassidy Collins, Kyler Kerns, Kaetlynn Kerns, JK Kerns, and Briana Palomino (RIP). His siblings Louise Perry of Southbridge, Paul Perry and wife Diane of Dudley, MA, Jeanne Lynskey and husband Paul of Hampton, NH, and many nieces and nephews as well as his beloved dogs Charlie and Hank.

A celebration of life will be planned by his family at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in his memory to Pinellas County Humane Society. <https://humanesocietytampabay.org/>

LEGALS

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family
Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
Docket No. WO26P1995PM
CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF
PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF
GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED
PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L. c.
190B, §5-304
In the matter of:
Joshua J Cooper
Of: Charlton, MA
RESPONDENT**

Alleged Incapacitated Person
To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by

Cheri L. Cooper of Charlton, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that **Joshua J Cooper** is in need of a **Guardian** and requesting that **Cheri L. Cooper of Charlton, MA** (or some other suitable person) be appointed as **Conservative to serve Without Surety** on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is disabled, that a protective order or appointment of a Conservator is necessary and that the proposed conservator is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **07/21/2026**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person’s right to make decisions about personal af-

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

WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.
Date: June 22, 2026
Stephanie K. Fattman
July 16, 2026

TOWN OF STURBRIDGE Select Board Public Hearing

National Grid has made a petition to the Sturbridge Select Board to install one (1) JO Pole on Gardner Avenue beginning at a point approximately 50 feet west of the centerline of the intersection of Maple Street and Gardner Avenue. Installing Pole #0-50 in a public way for guying support. The pole hearing will take place on **Monday, August 3 at 6:35 p.m.** at the Sturbridge Town Hall, 2nd floor, Veteran’s Memorial Hall located at 308 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566.
July 16, 2026

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE’S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Angela Broden, Alan Broden to Bank of America, N.A., dated August 23, 2006 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 39630, Page 1, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, by assignment from:

Bank of America N.A. to Nationstar Mortgage, LLC, recorded on March 20, 2012, in Book No. 48693, at Page 132 Nationstar Mortgage LLC to Select Portfolio Servicing, Inc., recorded on July 1, 2024, in Book No. 70707, at Page 350

Select Portfolio Servicing, Inc. to Wilmington Savings Fund Society, FSB, as Owner Trustee of the Residential Credit Opportunities Trust IX-C, recorded on January 29, 2026, in Book No. 73135, at Page 293

for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing, the same will be sold at Public Auction at 1:00 PM on August 3, 2026, on the mortgaged premises located at 71 Shepard Road, Sturbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage,

TO WIT:
the land in said Sturbridge, with the buildings thereon situated, and all privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging, bounded and described as follows:

Being Lot No. 9 as shown on plan entitled “Revised Plan of Lots in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, owned by William A Swiacki, dated April 1967, Robert F. Para, Land Surveyor” said Plan not of record, and more particularly bounded and described as follows:
BEGINNING at an iron pin on the easterly side of Shepard Road;
THENCE N. 14° 00’ E. along the easterly side of said Street, a distance of one hundred thirty-five (135.0) feet to an iron pin in the ground;
THENCE S. 76° 00’ E. a distance of one hundred eighty (180) feet;
THENCE S. 14° 00’ W. a distance of one hundred thirty-five (135.0) feet;
THENCE N. 76° 00’ W. a distance of one hundred eighty (180) feet to the point of beginning.

For mortgagor’s(s’) title see deed recorded with Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 39629, Page 389.

These premises will be sold and conveyed subject to and with the benefit of all rights, rights of way, restrictions, easements, covenants, liens or claims in the nature of liens, improvements, public assessments, any and all unpaid taxes, tax titles, tax liens, water and sewer liens and any other municipal assessments or liens or existing encumbrances of record which are in force and are applicable, having priority over said mortgage, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the deed.

TERMS OF SALE:

A deposit of Ten Thousand (\$10,000.00) Dollars by certified or

bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The balance is to be paid by certified or bank check at Harmon Law Offices, P.C., 150 California St., Newton, Massachusetts 02458, or by mail to P.O. Box 610389, Newton Highlands, Massachusetts 02461-0389, within thirty (30) days from the date of sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. The description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of an error in this publication.

Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale.
WILMINGTON SAVINGS FUND SOCIETY, FSB, AS OWNER TRUSTEE OF THE RESIDENTIAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES TRUST IX-C
Present holder of said mortgage
By its Attorneys,
HARMON LAW OFFICES, P.C.
150 California St.
Newton, MA 02458
(617)558-0500
27034
July 9, 2026
July 16, 2026
July 23, 2026

Public Notice

Notice is hereby given under Chapter 138, Section 12 of Massachusetts General Laws of a public hearing to be held in the Seaver Rice Meeting Room, first floor of the Town Hall, 41 Elm Street, Southbridge, MA, on Thursday, August 27, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. during the regular scheduled Liquor Licensing Board Meeting in regard to an application for a new Liquor License.

This hearing pertains to the Airport Seafood and Grill, LLC., 220 Access Rd., Southbridge, MA, 01550. Anyone wishing to speak will be given the opportunity to be heard. This notice is also published electronically on www.stonebridgepress.com and on www.masspublicnotice.org Town of Southbridge Liquor Licensing Board
July 16, 2026

Bay Path celebrates 59 CTI graduates, expands workforce training programs

CHARLTON — Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School proudly celebrated the graduation of 59 students from its Career Technical Initiative (CTI) program last evening, marking a significant milestone in the program's continued growth and impact.

The CTI program, launched in 2024, provides adult learners with access to high-quality, hands-on technical training designed to meet regional workforce demands. Last night's graduates represent a diverse group of individuals who demonstrated dedication, perseverance, and a strong commitment to building new career pathways. Many balanced work, family, and personal responsibilities while completing rigorous 200-hour training programs that prepare them for immediate employment in high-demand industries.

"This graduating class represents the heart of what the CTI program is all about—opportunity, access, and workforce readiness," said Marci Komssi, Program Coordinator. "We are incredibly proud of these 59 graduates and the determination they demonstrated throughout the program."

The success of the CTI program is made possible through continued state investment and workforce development partnerships. As part of the Commonwealth's commitment to economic recovery and growth, \$24.2 million was awarded to 23 organizations throughout Massachusetts to train 2,490 individuals. These strategic investments, led by the Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet, are designed to expand access to career pathway programs and better position residents to fill critical workforce needs across the state.

Building on this momentum, Bay Path is expanding its program offerings to reach even more adult learners. For the first time, the school will offer a 200-hour Building Maintenance program in a five-week hybrid summer format, running from June 29 through July 31. This program is offered in partnership with MassHire, with applications opening this week.

Looking ahead to Fall 2026, Bay Path will offer nine CTI programs, further increasing access to career training opportunities. These programs include:

- Building Maintenance
- HVAC
- Culinary
- Manufacturing
- Auto Collision
- Auto Technology
- Diesel Mechanic
- Welding
- Electrical

Since its inception, the CTI program has continued to expand in both enrollment and program diversity, attracting students from

local communities as well as across the region. The program remains a critical component of Bay Path's efforts to support workforce development and provide meaningful career pathways for adult learners.

For more information about the CTI program or to apply for upcoming opportunities, please contact Marci Komssi at mkomssi@bay-path.net.

All Saints Academy celebrates Kindergarten graduation

WEBSTER — All Saints Academy proudly celebrated the graduation of its Kindergarten Class with a joyful ceremony attended by family and friends. The students delighted the audience with a heartwarming musical program that showcased the knowledge, faith, and confidence they have developed throughout the school year.

The program began with "Hello" and "Welcome," followed by inspiring performances of "Show Me How to Spend This Day," "Hold My Hand," the Pledge of Allegiance, and The Star-Spangled Banner. The graduates continued with an uplifting collection of songs, including "I Am Special," "It's a Beautiful Day," "Creation," "One Small Voice," "Friendship," "The Butterfly Song," "Chicken Soup With Rice," "Thank You, Lord," "I Know Numbers," and "Kindness."

Following the musical presentation, each student proudly crossed the stage to receive a kindergarten diploma, marking an important milestone in their educational journey. The celebration concluded with the touching songs "The End is Near" and "Goodbye," bringing smiles, laughter, and a few happy tears from parents and grandparents alike.

The kindergarten graduation recognized not only the students' academic accomplishments but also the growth they have shown in faith, character, and friendship throughout the year. All Saints Academy congratulates its kindergarten graduates and wishes them continued success as they look forward to beginning first grade in the fall.



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QCC professor gives voice to formerly incarcerated in new documentary

WORCESTER — What is it like to get out of prison and start over? QCC Professor of Criminal Justice Kristy Glover spent her sabbatical researching this question and creating “Voices of Justice,” a documentary film that she produced, filmed and edited herself.

“Voice of Justice” features accounts from three men who have firsthand experience with the justice system. The documentary highlights how multiple support systems are critical for re-entry, the period of time when individuals are transitioning out of incarceration. Support from family members, community organizations and probation officers, along with raising awareness to reduce stigma, were all mentioned as ways to reduce recidivism and

influence personal and professional growth.

“There are so many things that we expect of individuals when they’re just getting released. They have to get a job, pay their monthly supervision fees and find a place to live,” Glover said.

Glover witnessed the re-entry process during her time as a parole officer for the state of Georgia, but the connection is also personal. Her grandfather encountered challenges when he was released from prison, which left a lasting impression on the family, including Glover’s mother, who also joined law enforcement, eventually becoming a police captain.

In the documentary, Glover interviews Mario Rivera, who spoke about his own re-entry experience



Kristy Glover

Courtesy Photo

vice and includes multiple certifications upon successful completion. In “Voices of Justice,” Rivera shared that during the program, he realized education was a vital part of his path to a new future. After his release, he enrolled at QCC and in the Liberal Arts for Returning Citizens (LARC) program at Clark University.

“The culinary program has had a significant impact on hundreds of incarcerated individuals,” said Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis. “We are proud to have helped Mario build a successful path forward after incarceration.”

Anthony Bryant, who also appeared in “Voices of Justice,” has seen multiple sides of the criminal justice system. Before he was incarcerated, he held roles as a corrections officer, a deputy sheriff and a highway patrolman.

“Law enforcement is not just a job; it’s your identity. And losing that role can produce deep internal shame,” Bryant shared.

Bryant, however, drew on his law enforcement training to stay calm and focused during his incarceration, using that discipline as a foundation for working to improve his life. As his release date approached, he didn’t receive any re-entry preparation from the prison, so he got ready by reading self-help books and journaling.

After his sentence, Bryant relied on employment assistance programs, but he was often steered into manual labor

positions that didn’t reflect his skills, making it difficult to rebuild his professional career.

In addition to family and community programs, both Bryant and Rivera said that a strong relationship with a probation or parole officer can make a positive difference. They noted that the stigma of having a criminal record can be detrimental to progress, but even one person who sees past their mistakes can be instrumental. They hope others can offer the same grace to those who are going through re-entry.

“People change when their dignity is restored, responsibility is entrusted gradually and their story is allowed to mean something more than their worst decision,” Bryant remarked. “It’s a mindset shift that many people and legislators don’t understand.”

Rivera and Bryant have also taken it upon themselves to help others with similar experiences. Bryant has become an ethics trainer for law enforcement and other public service organizations. Rivera has stayed connected with Legendary Legacies to educate others and advocate for those in the re-entry process.

“I’m taking accountability in my own life for the things that I’ve done,” Rivera said. “Some people might not be receptive to my situation, but I take it as motivation to do better.”

“Voices of Justice” can be viewed at [youtube.com/watch?v=odTT-0Stx3Tg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odTT-0Stx3Tg).

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rience. Rivera praised Worcester-area nonprofits such as Legendary Legacies and Open Sky Community Services for providing services such as counseling and assistance with obtaining a laptop and hygiene products. He also acknowledged his family as a large source of support.

“Without initial help in the first 60 days of me coming home, my progress wouldn’t have taken off the way it did,” Rivera said.

Rivera didn’t wait until he was released to start preparing. He completed QCC’s culinary re-entry program, a partnership with the Worcester County Jail and House of Correction that teaches skills needed to work in food service.

Outdoor summer concert returns Aug. 21 in downtown Worcester with

Jazz+ Live™ featuring The Love Dogs

WORCESTER — have made them one of New England’s premier live bands and a favorite among music lovers of all ages.

“Jazz+ Live™ has become one of Worcester’s signature summer traditions because it brings together outstanding live music, strong community partnerships, and people who simply enjoy spending an evening together,” said Melanie Le-Boeuf, Executive Director of WICN Public Radio.

The outdoor concert will take place on Friday, Aug. 21, behind The Hanover Theatre in downtown Worcester. Gates open at 5 p.m., with the concert beginning at 6:00 p.m.

For more than two decades, The Love Dogs, fronted by the charismatic Eddie Scheer, have entertained audiences across the United States, Canada, and Europe with their irresistible blend of jump blues, New Orleans R&B, swing, and early rock ‘n’ roll. Their powerhouse horn section, boogie-woogie piano, soulful vocals, and infectious stage presence

offering reserved seating with the best views of the stage. Tickets are available through The Hanover Theatre Box Office and online at TheHanoverTheatre.org.

About WICN Public Radio

WICN Public Radio 90.5 FM is an independent, nonprofit public radio station serving Central Massachusetts and beyond. Through award-winning jazz, roots, blues, world music, and locally produced programming, WICN connects listeners with the arts, culture, education, and conversations that enrich the region. WICN’s mission is to inspire, entertain, and engage diverse audiences while supporting the cultural vitality of the communities it serves. Broadcasting throughout Central New England and streaming worldwide, WICN brings exceptional music and local voices to audiences wherever they are.

General admission tickets are \$30 in advance and \$35 on the day of the event. Guests should bring their own lawn chairs. VIP front-row tables for four are available for \$175 per table,

Friday's Child

Angel is a bright, independent young man with a kind and compassionate heart. He is funny, witty, and enjoys connecting with others through his great sense of humor. An exceptionally talented athlete, Angel loves sports and especially enjoys playing baseball and football. Although he modestly describes his abilities as “just alright,” his confidence and skill are evident every time he steps onto the field. His dedication, teamwork, and natural athleticism make sports an important part of his life. When he’s not playing sports, Angel enjoys spending time playing video games and watching movies. Looking ahead, he dreams of becoming an athlete, though he remains open-minded and excited to explore other possibilities for his future. Angel is a thoughtful, determined young man with a bright future ahead of him. He is eager to continue pursuing his interests, exploring new opportunities, and building meaningful connections with those around him.

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/21181421315>

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. Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) can give you guidance and information on the adoption process. Reach out today to find out all the ways you can help children and teens in foster care.

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

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

To make the process simple, the reunion committee has created a short contact-information form and is encouraging residents, friends, and former classmates to help spread the word. If you know someone on the “missing classmates” list, organizers

ask that you text them the link to the form so they can update their information.

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

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

A list of classmates the committee is hoping to locate appears below. With

the community’s support, they hope every member of the Class of ’86 will have the opportunity to join this milestone celebration.

Peter Allain
Beth Antonopoulos
Marie Aperges
Andrew Baca
Austin Bailey
David Beardsley
Frank Belanger
Carolyn Bembenek
Richard Bernier
Sheila Bialoncik
Beth Bialy
Jason Borski
Doreen Bourget
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Kathleen Brown

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Lisa Kozlowski
Robert Krasnecky
Jill Krause
Michael Kryger
Rick Lawson
Deborah Leite
Linda Lifer
Patricia Majewski
Renee Marchand
Jennifer Marsh
Jennifer Mason
John Meagher
Fumiyo Mochizuki

Deborah Munsch
Brett Napierata
Wayne Parmentier
Brian Poplawski
Gary Poplawski
Edward Powers
William Radcliffe
James Remy
Debra Ross
Collin Salmon
Dale Schleis
Theresa Sergel
Henry Skiba
Alan Standrowicz
Jeffrey Surozenski
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MLS #73512426 List Price: \$ 615,000

Dudley - 3 Marshall Terrace

A Contractor's Opportunity! 8,000 SF (80'x100') level lot, great location, est. neighborhood, key resources > town water & sewer & natural gas in street. By appointment only!

MLS No. 73544127 \$155,000.

Webster - 18 DiDonato Ave

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MLS #7353410 \$533,000

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MLS#73542689 \$1,650,000.

Webster ~ 33 Slater Street

Sprawling fieldstone faced Ranch! Located on a +/- 0.5-acre, 2 car garage. Offers: 1,860 sf main level plus 1,000 sf +/- finished lower level, 3 BRs, 2-1/2 Baths, 2 stone fireplacesFHW BB heat. Open floor plan kitchen, living rm, dining rm, breezeway w/sliders to rear deck, and 3 season sunroom MLS # 73500183 \$479,900

Webster - 24 Cooper Rd
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Tucked away on Cooper Rd. Webster Lake with access at Lakeside beach/boat ramp. 3rd of 4 homes being built at this site. Offers 2,155 sq. ft +/- of living area, 7 rms, 4 brs, 3 1/2 baths, 9ft ceiling, wood flooring throughout with ceramic tile baths. Spacious main BR Suite w/ walk-in closet, and private full bathr, double sink vanity, finished lower level walk-out w/ slider. Central AC, garage

MLS # 73534271 \$649,900.00

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Hitchcock's Summer Concert Series rocks Brimfield Town Common on Wednesday evenings

BRIMFIELD — The Hitchcock Summer Concert Series sponsored by Country Bank will take place on Wednesdays, 6 to 8 p.m., July 1 through Aug. 19 on the Brimfield Town Common. In the case of rain, concerts will move to Thursday. A food truck will be on site at each event. Picnics are also welcome; chairs and blankets are encouraged.

The series kicks off on July 1 with Woodshed, bringing Acoustic Folk, Country & Americana. Members Jason Wood of Brimfield, along with A.J. Kiernan, Karen Gallant, and Mike St. Germain are four musical friends who found each other through a love of music and mutual admiration, and are known for their signature three-part harmony. BT's Smokehouse will be on site.

July 8 brings The Island Castaways whose love of Buffet-style escapism infuses the pride they take in creating a relaxing atmo-



sphere where there are many smiles, laughter and dancing, and lasting good

time memories that create the ultimate Trop Rock experience. The featured

food truck will be Flippin' the Bird BBQ.

After a weeklong hia-

tus for July's Brimfield Flea Market, The New England Digital Accordion Orchestra returns on July 22. Conducted by Sam Falcetti, the nation's first digital accordion orchestra features about 20 musicians from across New England. Using state-of-the-art Roland digital accordions, the group replicates the sounds of various instruments like flutes, trumpets, and a rhythm section to showcase an impressive range of genres including Big Band, Broadway, Ethnic, Country, and Rock. BT's Smokehouse will return on this evening.

July 29 is all about polka with the return of The Eddie Forman Orchestra, also known as "E.F.O.," is a western Massachusetts polka band that has been performing before audiences since 1968. Eddie Forman started the band while he was still in high school, and has been creating and recreating music ever since, garnering one of the largest polka followings in the New England area. Off The Hook will be the evening's featured food truck.

August 5th brings the Brimfield debut of The Willies - a popular, community-focused classic rock and Americana band based out of Belchertown. The band performs across the Western Mass region, playing high-energy hits from the 1950s through the 1980s, modern country, and rock standards. Flippin' the Bird BBQ returns for this concert.

Long-time series favorite CobbleStone Road of Connecticut returns on August 12th with high-energy country. Well-known throughout the region for playing modern and classic country hits from the 1990s to today, their energetic style mixes classic country with rock and blues. Smashing Patties will have their concert series debut this evening.

The series closes out on August 19th with Hard Knox, a Westfield, Massachusetts-based party rock and cover band known for their high-energy shows and "forgotten classics" setlist. Instead of regular cover tunes, they play unique, underappreciated gems from the '70s and '80s, making them a fixture in the Western Mass and Northern Connecticut music scenes. BT's Smokehouse will return to bookend this year's food truck lineup.

In addition to Presenting Sponsor Country Bank, this program is supported in part by a grant from the Brimfield Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council.

Hitchcock Summer Concert Series At-a-Glance:
July 1 Woodshed
Acoustic Folk, Country & Americana | BT's
July 8 The Island Castaways
Tropical Rock | Flippin' the Bird BBQ

July 15 No concert
(Flea Market Parking Fundraiser)
July 22 NE Digital Accordion Orchestra
Big Band, Broadway, Ethnic, Country & Rock | BT's
July 29 Eddie Forman Orchestra
Polka Band | Off the Hook
Aug. 5 The Willies
'50s, '60s, '70s & more! | Flippin' the Bird BBQ
Aug 12 CobbleStone Road
Country | Smashing Patties

Aug. 19 Hard Knox
Classic sounds of the '70s, '80s, & '90s | BT's

For more information, visit www.hitchcockacademy.org. Hitchcock Academy is a community center located at 2 Brookfield Rd. in Brimfield serving the community with educational, recreational, and cultural programming.

Big smiles and bright futures at Saint Joseph School Pre-K graduation

WEBSTER — On Tuesday, June 9, Saint Joseph School's Pre-K 4-year-old students and their families gathered in the Richard A. Nowak Gymnasium to celebrate an exciting milestone as the students marked the completion of their preschool journey and received their diplomas. The special graduation ceremony recognized a year filled with tremendous academic, social, and spiritual growth as the students prepared to take their next big step into kindergarten.

The ceremony began with the traditional Graduation March, followed by welcoming remarks from PreK 4-year-old program Instructor, Ms. Robyn Dodge. Students proudly participated in several recitations, including the Pledge of Allegiance, The Hail Mary, and The Our Father, before delighting family members with a collection of songs that showcased



Courtesy

Congratulations to the Saint Joseph School Pre-K Class of 2026! These young graduates celebrated the completion of an exciting year of learning and growth before beginning their Kindergarten journey this fall.

both their enthusiasm and the confidence they developed throughout the school year. Musical selections included "Books! Books!," "I Might Be Small," "Thank You," "Kindergarten Here We Come," and the always entertaining "Tooty Ta."

Following their performance, the proud graduates were presented their diplomas by Principal Beth

Boudreau before joining their families to enjoy a special photo slideshow, highlighting memorable classroom moments, friendships, and the many milestones achieved throughout the 2025–2026 school year. The celebration reflected the joy and accomplishment of a wonderful year of learning, discovery, and growth.

This year, 23 students

advanced to Kindergarten: Emma Artuso, Maria Attalla, Rita Dostoler, Fatima Sofia Garcia, Noah Huynh, Giavanna Khalil, Elias Kielinen, Grace Kubiak, Cameron LaFlash, Skylette Lancellotta, Grayson Larsen, Avery Lewandowski, Forrest Lovett, Olive MacPherson, Divya Nasis, Max Piehl, Abigail Prendergast, Hunter Smith, Henry Surowaniec, Anzio Vega, Lucas Wierchowicz, Freya Williamson, and Maximus Zona.

Saint Joseph School's Pre-K 4-year-old program is led by Ms. Robyn Dodge and supported by teacher assistants Mrs. Pier Cutler and Miss Molly Brennan, whose dedication and care helped create a nurturing environment where students were able to learn, grow, and thrive throughout the year. Congratulations to the Class of 2026 Pre-K Graduates as they begin their Kindergarten journey!

Summer Clearance Sale!

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