



©2025, Issue #35

# Community shows support for Charlton firefighter’s cancer battle

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — The Charlton community is rallying around one of their own after local firefighter, paramedic, and former Army medic Stevie LeBlanc was diagnosed with a brain tumor while recovering from unrelated workplace injury.

LeBlanc was injured on the job earlier this year and underwent an X-ray at the request of her neurologist to determine if she was ready to get back to work. The X-rays revealed a tumor in her brain that required surgery to remove and test to determine any cancer risk. While her initial injury didn’t cause



Courtesy

Turn To **LABLANC** page 14 Charlton firefighter Stevie LeBlanc recently underwent surgery to remove a tumor detected in her brain.

## Southbridge Lions Club cancels cornhole tournament

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Southbridge Lions Club has announced the cancellation of its upcoming Cornhole Tournament, which had been scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 25.

Club representatives said the decision was not made lightly, but after careful consideration, they felt it was the best course of action at this time.

“We want to thank everyone who showed interest and supported the event,” the Lions Club shared in a statement. “We truly appreciate the community’s enthusiasm and understanding.”

Those who had already registered or who have questions are encouraged to contact event organizers directly. For assistance, reach out to Mike Comeau at 774-431-0768 or Chris Colon at 774-230-6944.

The Lions Club expressed gratitude for the community’s continued support and looks forward to future events.

## Sturbridge officials exploring regional dispatch

BY GUS STEEVES  
CORRESPONDENT

STURBRIDGE — The town took a step toward regionalizing its dispatch system Aug. 18, as the select board looked at the results of its feasibility study of that process. But members wanted more time to actually read the contract with the Central Mass Regional Emergency Communication Center before voting on it.

The proposal would have Sturbridge become the seventh town in that group. The center started in 1984 as a Rutland and Oakham project, and has since added Hubbardston, Barre, Warren and, just a few weeks ago, Spencer. It has been

based in Rutland, but is now close to inking a deal to buy a new facility in Auburn.

For Town Administrator Robin Grimm, one key issue is future funding.

“I’m more confident that centrals [regional systems] will continue to be funded than our locals,” she said.

That was in response to Mary Blanchard noting, “I get very leery of grant money from the state,” particularly over the long term. (Grimm agreed with that, saying she was not historically in favor of such regionalization, but thinks this proposal will be a good one.)

For Sturbridge, two

key issues are driving this exploration: high turnover among dispatchers (13 people in five years) and having communications dead zones in certain parts of town due to topography. The latter will require \$6-\$7 million to address, and Grimm said the state will fund new towers if Sturbridge joins the region.

“We cannot absorb \$7 million in our budget,” she said. “It would cause an override and this will allow us to avoid that cost.”

More specifically, Sturbridge’s entry into the new region is state grant funded for several years. The first three are 100 percent funded, year

four is 75 percent, year five is 35 percent. After that, Sturbridge will start being assessed an annual fee to cover its share of the cost. She said the feasibility study determined the center’s salaries will cost about \$530,000 a year and technology about \$26,000. By going regional, she said she’d shift the public safety building to having a staff of rotating night clerks to keep it open, saving about \$170,000.

Other benefits include having more dispatchers on duty at the same time – she noted there have been problems when multiple calls come in at the same time – specialized training for police and fire dispatchers, 24/7 supervision, with all current dispatchers getting priority for hiring into the new center. In general, she summarized it as “far greater service than we now have.”

The new “regional” system is governed by three boards, one of town administrators, one of representatives from local police and fire departments, and a finance committee. Decisions are made by majority vote on each. That’s distinct from a previous form Sturbridge looked at, which was a “hosted” district. In that form, one town basically runs and staffs the center, and members share paying for it, without the board structure that gives them oversight powers. (The Rutland center was “hosted,” but the Auburn site will be “regional.”)

The local chiefs supported the concept. Fire



Jason Bleau  
Bernie Courtney of the Southern new England Witch Dancers leads students in learning the “witch dance” popularized by the Wolfshäger Hexenbrut dance group of Germany.

## Charlton hosts “Witch Dance” tutorial

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — Back in 2016, a viral video showcased a group of

dancers dressed in witch makeup and costumes performing a mesmerizing routine that took the world by storm. Now

known as the “witch dance,” performed by Germany’s Wolfshäger Hexenbrut dance group, the choreography has

been adapted by countless groups in the United States including locally by the Southern New England Witch Dancers

who recently shared the routine with patrons of the Charlton Public Library.

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Turn To **STURBRIDGE** page 14



SOUTHBRIDGE POLICE LOG

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Southbridge Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Aug. 18-25.

Richard James Ormond, age 41, of Webster was arrested on Aug. 18 in connection with a warrant.

Pedro Perez Nieves, age 35, of Southbridge was arrested on Aug. 18 in connection with a warrant.

A 63-year-old male from Southbridge was taken into protective custody on Aug. 18.

A 19-year-old from Southbridge received a summons in lieu of arrest on Aug. 19 for a Motor Vehicle Lights Violation and operating a motor vehicle after suspension of license.

A juvenile, age 15, was arrested on Aug. 20 in connection with a warrant.

A 37-year-old female from Southbridge received a summons in lieu of arrest on Aug. 20 for operating an Uninsured and Unregistered Motor Vehicle and a Number Plate Violation to Conceal ID.

Esmerelda A. Davila, age 26, of Southbridge was arrested on Aug. 21 for Operating a motor vehicle after suspension of license and operating a vehicle with Obstructed or Nontransparent Windows.

Arthur Konrad Lewandowski, age 39, of Southbridge was arrested on Aug. 22 for Operating Under the Influence (Liquor)-third offense and Operating Under the In-

fluence after suspension of license for OUI.

A 36-year-old female from Southbridge was taken into protective custody on Aug. 23.

Nautica L. Gomez, age 25; Taisha Marie Rodriguez, age 22; and Sugeily M. Colon, age 24, all of Southbridge,

Joshua Hyde Library hosting presentation on forest bathing

STURBRIDGE — Join Nadine Mazzola for a special presentation, “The Healing Power of Green: Exploring Forest Bathing,” on Sept. 16 from 2-3 p.m. at Joshua Hyde Public Library, 306 Main St., Sturbridge.

Forest Bathing is not just a walk in the woods; it is an invitation to awaken your senses and experience the profound benefits of nature's embrace. Learn how this gentle practice can soothe your mind, invigorate your spirit, and foster a deeper connection to the living world around you - from your backyard oasis to your favorite natural sanctuary. Discover accessible ways to integrate this calming ritual into your life for lasting wellness.

Nadine Mazzola is founder of New England Forest Therapy Counseling. She has a deep passion for connecting people with the healing power of nature by guiding groups in the gentle practice of Forest Bathing (Shinrin-Yoku).

This program is being co-sponsored by the Southbridge Garden Club, the Sturbridge Senior Center, and the Joshua Hyde Public Library.

Registration is required for this event. Go To Joshua Hyde Public Library, to September Calendar; Click on Sept. 16, and press Register to place your reservation.

Registration will close on Sept. 16 at 2 p.m.

REAL ESTATE

CHARLTON

\$525,000, 366 Stafford St, Porter, Jason M, and Palmerino, Kelly A, to Ackumey, Doreen.

\$520,000, 3 Hayes Pond Cir, Brodeur, Thomas B, and Brodeur, Denise A, to Mikulski, Michael, and Mikulski, Aniela.

\$435,000, 169 Sunset Dr, Barber, Christina L, to Finizza, Michael, and Finizza, Heidi.

\$360,000, 31 Cranberry Meadow Shore Rd, Benoit Ft, and Benoit, Kathleen M, to Mahoney, Danielle.

HOLLAND

\$425,000, 183 Mashapaug Rd, Glenn, Scott, and Kennedy, Dayna, to Remillard, Lisa M, and Remillard Jr, Raymond J.

\$230,000, 6 Hillside Rd, Holdcraft, John D, to Harvey, Kyle.

\$165,000, 7 Chaffee Rd, Crapo, Thatcher, to Smith, Daniel F, and Smith, Daniel C.

SOUTHBRIDGE

\$503,000, 213 Marcy St, De La Cruz, Henry, to Augustin, Loudson.

\$455,000, 273 Elm St, Royal House Invs LLC, to Breezy Realty LLC.

\$450,000, 421 E Main St, D & M LLC Redcarpet Quali, to Guertin Re Hld Co LLC.

\$440,000, 28 Plimpton St, Dougwill LLC, to Donastorg, Lorena O.

\$430,000, 31 Highland St, Roman, Felix, to Rodriguez, Laura, and Negron-Colon, Harry.

\$390,000, 36 School St, Greenberg, Jeffrey P, and Gilgeous, Zamani O, to Rodriguez, Zuleyka M.

\$379,900, 126 Oak St, Levitsky, Valery, and Bitner, Inna, to Mangual, Michael A, and Sakasa, Debra A.

\$370,000, 74 Ellis Rd, Temple, Paul A, to Tanon, Juan R, and Pagan, Nilmaris S.

\$339,900, 35 Brook Rd, Ryan, Thomas H, and Ryan, Debora E, to Gilbert, Darnelle.

\$315,000, 46 Pleasant St, Vinyard, Michael L, and Vinyard, Bernadette E, to Platt, Migdalia.

\$300,000, 115 Old North Woodstock Rd, Stevens, David A, and Stevens, Kathleen G, to Clunis, Dillon, and Clunis, Sharon.

\$200,000, 36 Thomas St, Shang, Zhengping, and Mullaney, Mark S, to Hunt, Craig.

STURBRIDGE

\$795,000, 18 Preserve Way, Lanier, Lauren E, and Lanier, Nathan P, to Caldwell, Thomas J, and Caldwell, Nicole K.

\$570,000, 54 Clark Rd, Hargis, Jonathan, and Hargis, Kristen, to Longabucco, Andrew J, and Longabucco, Megan S.

\$255,000, 15 Tantasqua Shore Dr, Comtois, Kerstin, and Boniface, Jeffrey, to Jette, Chelsea.

\$180,400, 205 Cedar St, Waraika, Robert D, to Christiansen, Jason, and Christiansen, Jennifer.

were arrested on Aug. 23 for Disorderly Conduct and Disturbing the Peace.

Maria P. Gutierrez, age 28, of Southbridge was arrested on Aug. 23 for Shoplifting by Asportation in an amount totaling more than \$250, Shoplifting of a Shopping Cart, Shoplifting by Asportation (third offense), and Resisting Arrest.

VILLAGER ALMANAC

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Thursday: 8 a.m.-8 p.m.  
Friday: 8 a.m.-12 p.m.

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Tuesday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Wednesday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Thursday: 9 a.m.-8 p.m.  
Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Saturday: 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (May 25 will be our last open Saturday until Labor Day) Sunday: Closed

CHARLTON TOWN HALL (508) 248-2200  
Office Hours:  
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..... 7:30 a.m to 5:00 p.m.  
Tuesdays..... 7:30 a.m to 7 p.m.  
Friday..... Closed

visit www.townofcharlton.net or more information.  
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Heritage School ..... (508) 248-4884  
Charlton Middle School..... (508) 248-1423  
Shepherd Hill Regional High School  
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Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School (508) 248-5971 or (508) 987-0326

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

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

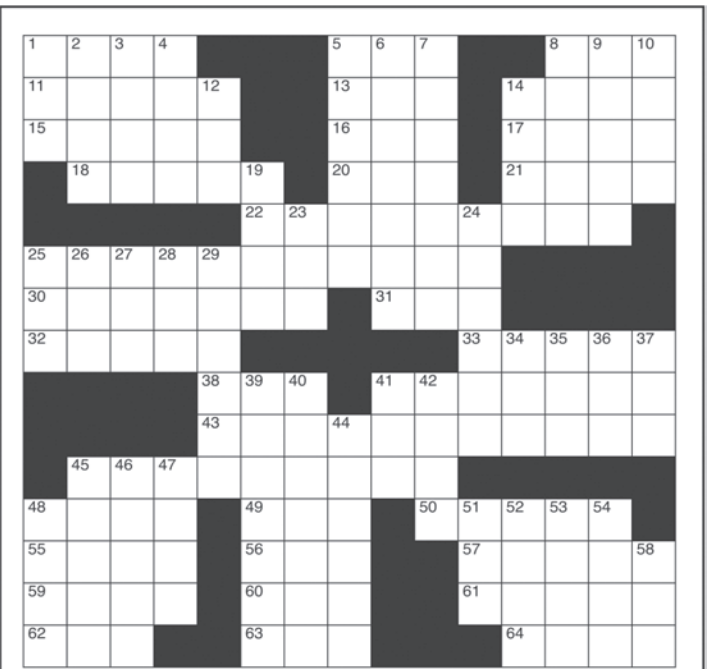
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Weekdays: 9:00 – 4:30 and Sat. 9:00 -12:00

WALES: 413-245-9808  
Weekdays 8:30 – 12:30 and 2:00 – 4:30 and Sat. 9:00 – 12:00

CHURCH LISTINGS

• Central Baptist Church  
256 Main St., Southbridge, MA 01550  
Tel 508/764-6365; Worship 10:00 A.M.  
• Charlton Federated Church, 64 Main St., 508- 248-5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. Summer worship is 9:30 a.m. www.fed-church.org  
• Charlton Baptist Church, 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488, www.charltonbaptist.org, Sunday worship 10 a.m.  
• Charlton City United Methodist, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org  
Sunday worship and Children's church 10am  
• St. Anne St. Patrick Church, 16 Church St., Fiskdale (508) 347-7338  
www.stannestpatparish.com  
Saturday Vigil Mass at 4 pm, Sunday 8 am, 10 am, 12 noon, Youth Mass (September to May) 5 pm. Daily Mass Mon - Thurs 7:30 and 10 am, Fri and Sat 7:30 am  
• St. Joseph's Church, 10 H. Putnam Ext, 248-7862, www.stjosephscharlton.com, Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30 p.m., Sunday Mass 8 a.m., Sunday Family Mass 10 a.m., Sunday LifeTEEN Mass 5 p.m., Weekday Mass Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 a.m.  
• Wayside Church, 6 Haggerty Road, 248-5144  
• Assemblies of God Southern New England District Headquarters, Route 20, 248-3771, snedag.org, Office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
• Living Word Church of Charlton, 10 Main Street - Grange building 1st Floor; Charlton, MA 01507, Pastor Craig Bellisario, (508) 233-8349 Sunday Service 10:00am.  
www.livingwordcharlton.com  
info@livingwordcharlton.com  
• New Life Fellowship A/G, SNED Chapel, 307 Sturbridge Road, Rt. 20, Charlton, MA, Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.  
• Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale- 8 Maple St. Sturbridge, 774-304-1021 www.sturfed.org  
Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.  
• Bethlehem Lutheran Church- 345 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566  
Phone 508-347-7297  
Web: www.bethlehemsturbridge.org  
Services - Sunday 9:00 am  
Pastor Dan Purtell  
• Holland Congregation Church "Where the Bible is preached."  
11 Sturbridge Road, Holland, 413-245-9926  
Hollandchurch.org  
Sunday Service @ 10:00 am  
Pastor Dan Maketansky  
Holy Trinity Episcopal Church  
446 Hamilton St., Southbridge, MA 01550  
Phone: 508-765-9559  
Web: www.holytrinitysouthbridge.org  
Sunday Service 11:00 am  
Pastor Dan Purtell

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Taxis
- 5. Space Systems Command
- 8. Plant seed by scattering
- 11. Alliances
- 13. Fiddler crabs
- 14. Heroic tale
- 15. Yemen capital
- 16. Misleading gesture
- 17. Cain and \_\_
- 18. Simple shoe
- 20. Hundredweight
- 21. Children's toy in the snow
- 22. Gets rid of
- 25. Free of deceit
- 30. Performed a dance
- 31. Chinese philosophical principle
- 32. Exaggerated
- 33. Refrain from inflicting
- 38. A doctrine
- 41. Can be subdued
- 43. A place to bathe
- 45. Land used for pasture
- 48. Curved piece of iron
- 49. Automobile
- 50. Fencing sword
- 55. Breezes through
- 56. Child
- 57. NBA legend Iverson
- 59. Horsley and Iacocca are two
- 60. Midway between northeast and east
- 61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- 62. U.S. leader during much of WW2
- 63. Lair
- 64. Fibrous material

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Home of "60 Minutes"
- 2. Expression of sorrow or pity
- 3. \_\_ fide: legitimate
- 4. Immune response
- 5. Assistance and support
- 6. Glared
- 7. Spanish saloon
- 8. Pitch black
- 9. S-shaped lines
- 10. Statistical test
- 12. \_\_ Paulo, city
- 14. Graduation garb
- 19. A way to record
- 23. Not good
- 24. Weather events
- 25. A pituitary hormone
- 26. Jamie Foxx film
- 27. Rocker's accessory
- 28. One point east (clockwise) of due north
- 29. One who obtains pleasure from another's pain
- 34. Consume
- 35. Licensed for Wall Street
- 36. Sick
- 37. Israeli city \_\_ Aviv
- 39. Removed the husk
- 40. Mass of rocks and sediment
- 41. Two-year-old sheep
- 42. Area units
- 44. Prison overseer
- 45. Walked
- 46. Wartime escort aircraft carrier
- 47. Tax
- 48. 50 percent
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Tatle
- 53. Actor Idris
- 54. Resist authority (slang)
- 58. Egg of a louse

PUZZLE SOLUTION

1	S	V	B		N	E	D		H	D	J
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PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER  
FRANK G. CHILINSKI  
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RYAN CORNEAU  
860-928-1818 EXT. 102  
ryan@salmonpress.news  
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR  
JIM DiNICOLA  
508-764-6102  
jim@stonebridgepress.news  
EDITOR  
BRENDAN BERUBE  
508-909-4101  
news@stonebridgepress.news  
PRODUCTION MANAGER  
JULIE CLARKE  
508-909-4105  
julie@villagernewspapers.com

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# Officials warn of elevated West Nile Virus risk

BY KEVIN FLANDERS  
STAFF WRITER

REGION — With several communities across the state at elevated risk for mosquito-borne diseases, officials are urging residents to take precautions.

Last week, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health announced that the risk for West Nile virus (WNV) is now high in multiple communities due to evidence of mosquito samples carrying the virus.

The risk level for WNV has been elevated in the following municipalities: Acton, Bedford, Billerica, Boston, Brookline, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Dracut, Lowell, and Newton.

The Massachusetts Public Health Laboratory confirmed the state's first WNV-positive mosquitoes this year on June 17. Since then, there have been 168 WNV-positive mosquito samples collected from several counties across the state, including Worcester County.

Thus far, there has been one animal case of WNV confirmed this year in

Lunenburg. No human cases of WNV have been confirmed in Massachusetts in 2025.

Meanwhile, eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) has also been detected in mosquitoes across Massachusetts this year. The Hampshire County towns of Belchertown, Granby, Pelham, and Ware are currently at moderate risk for EEE.

There have been seven EEE-positive mosquito samples detected this year, with no confirmed human or animal cases.

“Both West Nile virus and EEE pose risk to the people in Massachusetts,” said Public Health Commissioner Robbie Goldstein. “The weather remains warm and somewhat humid, which increases mosquito activity. I encourage everyone to take measures to protect themselves.”

WNV and EEE are generally transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. There were 19 human cases of WNV reported in Mas-

sachusetts last year, plus four human cases of EEE, leading to one death.

“WNV findings in mosquitoes have accelerated rapidly over the last several weeks,” said State Epidemiologist Catherine Brown. “We are now in the peak time for transmission of mosquito-borne disease to people, and it is important for people to know that so they can take steps to protect themselves.”

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 late summer and fall months.

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

“The weather this summer is creating the opportunity for it to be a busy WNV season, and it is important to take steps to prevent mosquito bites,” Brown added.

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).

## Walk the walk to support those in need

STURBRIDGE — The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Fiskdale, presents the Second Annual Friends of the Poor Walk, followed by its first Family Fun Day featuring Maggie the Clown, alpacas from Ledgecreek Farm, a variety of vendors, food, games for both children and adults, a DJ, live music by G Note & The Tinman, and much more Saturday Sept. 13 from noon to 6 p.m. on the Sturbridge Town Common.

Proceeds from the fundraiser will go toward supporting local individu-

als and families in need across Brimfield, Brookfield, Holland, Sturbridge, Wales, and other nearby towns. The St. Vincent de Paul Society in Fiskdale provides practical assistance throughout the year, including emergency housing, rental and utility help, food, clothing, and other essential needs—serving people of all backgrounds and faiths.

The Fiskdale conference raises funds through parish poor boxes, public donations, and events such as this

one. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul operates in 153 countries, with more than 4,000 local conferences, and is run entirely by members committed to tackling poverty in all its forms.

For more information contact [svdp-fiskdalepr@gmail.com](mailto:svdp-fiskdalepr@gmail.com).

To make a donation, visit our website: [svdpfiskdale.org](http://svdpfiskdale.org) and click on the “Donate” button.

To register for the event, scan QR code or go to the events tab at [svdpfiskdale.org](http://svdpfiskdale.org).

## Charlton Library hosting book discussion series on “Stamped From the Beginning”

CHARLTON — We're happy to announce that the Charlton Public Library is a Great Reads MA 2025 participating partner!

This year's featured book is “Stamped from the Beginning: A Graphic History of Racist Ideas in America” by Ibram X. Kendi, adapted and illustrated by Joel Christian Gill. Community members are invited to read the book and participate in book discussions at the Charlton Library during the month of September.

We will discuss Parts 1 and 2 on:  
Thursday, Sept. 4 at 6 p.m. in Dexter Hall  
Monday, Sept. 8 at 2 p.m. in the Community Room

We will discuss Parts 3, 4, and 5 on:

Friday, Sept. 12 at 10:30 a.m. in Dexter Hall  
Tuesday, Sept. 23 at 6 p.m. in Dexter Hall

We will discuss Parts 1-5 on Tuesday, Sept. 16 at 10:30 a.m. in the Community Room.

We will have a virtual discussion with Joel Christian Gill on Thursday, Sept. 25 at 6 p.m.

Copies of the book, along with discussion guides, are available at the main circulation desk. Registration for the discussions is requested and can be done on the Library Web site at [charltonlibrary.org](http://charltonlibrary.org) or by phone at 508-248-0452.

Charlton Public Library is located at 40 Main St.

## University of Rhode Island celebrates new graduates during 2025 Commencement

KINGSTON, R.I. — The University of Rhode Island celebrated more than 3,500 of its newest alumni during the University's 2025 Commencement. Nearly 3,600 undergraduate degrees and 600 graduate degrees were conveyed to students during the ceremonies which took place May 16-18, 2025.

Among the graduates were:

Mary Godek of Wales graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Communicative Disorders

Kevin Izzio of Sturbridge graduated with a Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Sciences

Students who received the honor summa cum laude graduated with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.7; students who received the honor of magna cum laude graduated with a GPA of at least 3.50; and students who received the honor of cum laude graduated with a GPA of at least 3.3.

To view ceremony highlights, visit: [uri.edu/commencement/y2025/](http://uri.edu/commencement/y2025/).

About the University of Rhode Island

The University of Rhode Island is a diverse and dynamic community whose members are connected by a common quest for knowledge. As a global education leader and the state of Rhode Island's flagship public research institution, URI offers

distinctive opportunities designed to meet the global challenges of today's world and the rapidly evolving needs of tomorrow. Founded in 1892, URI now enrolls more than 18,000 students and offers more than 200 degree programs across nine schools and colleges. As a land- and seagrant institution, URI is a key driver of economic development in Rhode Island and contributes significantly to the health and vitality of the state, the New England region, and the nation. To learn more, visit: [uri.edu](http://uri.edu).

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# United Way to host comedy fundraiser at Samuel Slater’s Restaurant

WEBSTER — The United Way of South Central Massachusetts (UWSCM), in partnership with Funny 4 Funds, is excited to announce a Comedy Night Fundraiser on Friday, Sept. 19 at Samuel Slater’s Restaurant in Webster.

“This year has presented significant challenges,” said Kristin McCarthy, Executive Director of UWSCM. “According to philanthropy.org, charitable giving has declined by \$65 billion since 2021 and we are seeing the impact right here at home. Many local workplace giving campaigns have been reduced or eliminated, federal funding has been cut, and demand for services provided by our partner agencies continues to grow. We are hoping to close out the year strong and what better way to do that than with an evening full of laughter and community spirit?”

Doors open at 6 p.m., with the show kicking off at 7 p.m. Guests can enjoy a cash bar and pub menu, exciting raffle prizes, and a 50/50 drawing all while supporting a meaningful cause. Tickets are \$25 and are available at [www.uwscm.org/events](http://www.uwscm.org/events).

UWSCM extends heartfelt gratitude to our Platinum Level sponsor - Hyde Tools. Thanks also to our Gold Level sponsors - Guild of St. Agnes, Savers Bank, and Starkweather & Shepley, Silver Level sponsors - Rampco Construction, KARL STORZ Endoskope, Webster Five, UMass Memorial Health Harrington, and Open Sky Community Services, and to Bronze Level sponsor - JLA Contracting – for making this event possible.

The United Way of South Central Massachusetts is a nonprofit organization committed to improving lives in Charlton, Dudley, Southbridge, Sturbridge, and Webster by funding local initiatives that help our neighbors strengthen their resilience by advancing health, youth opportunities, and financial security.

To learn more or to donate, visit [www.uwscm.org](http://www.uwscm.org).

## Charlton Garden Club meets Sept. 8

CHARLTON — The Charlton Garden Club’s Monday, Sept. 8 meeting welcomes all to a free program on “The Do’s and Don’ts of Ornamental Landscaping.”

Speaker Kyle McDonald of Immaculate Plant Care is an ISA Certified Arborist who specializes in the science and art of pruning trees. Whether you’re a novice or accomplished gardener, the Charlton Garden Club is a great place to meet other gardening enthusiasts, learn about plants and planting, and to share your gardening tips and experiences. This meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. at the Charlton Public Library.

For more information, please email [charltongardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:charltongardenclub@gmail.com).

## Cornerstone Bank awards \$40,000 in scholarships to 16 local high school graduates

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank, a community bank with locations throughout Central Massachusetts, is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2025 Scholarship Awards Program. Sixteen outstanding local high school graduates have each been awarded a \$2,500 scholarship to help support their college education, for a combined total of \$40,000.

“At Cornerstone Bank, we believe in the power of education to transform lives,” said Todd Tallman, CEO of Cornerstone Bank. “These students have demonstrated dedication, leadership and a commitment to their communities. We’re proud to support them as they take the next step in their academic journey.”

The 2025 Cornerstone Bank scholarship recipients are:

- Jackson Landine, Tantasqua Regional High School, attending University of Rhode Island
- Sydney Scott, Sutton High School, attending University of Connecticut
- Jolie Nguyen, Shrewsbury High School, attending Assumption University
- Alexa Benson, South High Community School, attending University College Dublin
- Jake Melillo, Tantasqua Regional High School, attending Syracuse University
- Haley Case, Wachusett Regional High School, attending UMass Amherst
- Ashley Alvarenga, Worcester Technical High School, attending UMass Dartmouth
- Colin Resener, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, attending UMass Amherst
- Matthew McDonough, Shrewsbury High School, attending St. Anselm College
- Salma Bayi, Wachusett Regional High School, attending Westfield State University
- Shane McGlone, Marianapolis High School, attending UMass Amherst

Turn To **SCHOLARSHIPS** page 14



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FRANK G. CHILINSKI  
PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE  
EDITOR

# Everyone is living a story you don't know

We've all heard the saying, "Everyone is fighting a battle you know nothing about." But how often do we really live by that?

It's easy to nod in agreement when we hear it. Of course, we know people carry invisible pain. Of course we want to be kind. But then we get cut off in traffic, or someone's short with us at the store, or a neighbor doesn't return our wave, and we forget. We assume the worst. We get annoyed. We judge.

The truth is, every day, we pass by people who are grieving. People who just got bad news. People recovering from trauma or showing up to work while caring for a sick parent, or silently holding the pieces of a life that's shifted beneath them.

Not everyone wears their struggle on their sleeve. Some of the strongest people you'll meet are walking around looking perfectly "fine," while their world has been anything but.

This isn't a plea to excuse bad behavior or ignore our own boundaries. It's a reminder to pause before reacting. To lead with compassion. To offer a little grace to the person in line ahead of us, to the driver who seems distracted, even to ourselves.

Kindness doesn't always look like grand gestures. Sometimes it's just not snapping back. Sometimes it's patience. Sometimes it's letting someone go first. Sometimes it's just choosing not to assume.

We say we want a more empathetic world. That begins with practicing empathy when it's inconvenient, not just when it's easy. Every day is an opportunity to remember that we don't know the whole story, but we can still be part of a kinder one.

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

## Summer antiquing



We are nearing the end of the summer, but there are still plenty of opportunities to do some antique hunting before the cold weather sets in.

September is a good time to take in the Brimfield Antique Flea Market. The last of three Brimfield shows takes place Sept. 2 through Sept. 7. The flea market itself is nearing antique status. The first show took place in 1959, over 65 years ago. Here are some insider tips if you plan to attend. Serious bidders get there early. A lot of the best finds are found when the dealers first start putting out their wares. Be ready for any kind of New England weather. It can be incredibly hot and dry one day. The next day there may be torrential rain, and the fields could be flooded. I've been there overnight in the fall and there was frost on the ground during the night. Be ready for lots of walking and say hydrated. The food court and several other places offer you a nice play for a midday break after all the walking.

Mariers-Palmer Antique Flea Market runs prior to Brimfield during all three sessions. Their last session runs from Aug. 28 to Sept. 1. I've seen Brimfield dealers set up there prior to Brimfield and dealers and buyers hunting for items prior to Brimfield.

The Web site for Elephant's Trunk in New Milford, Conn. says that it's the largest weekly flea market in New England. They are open every Sunday from April to December. The gates open for dealers at 4:15 a.m. Early buyers can enter from 5:30 to 6:45 a.m. for a \$20 entry fee. General admission from 7 a.m. on is \$7. Elephant's Trunk claims to have a different mix of vendors every week.

The Mansfield Flea Market at the Mansfield Drive-Inn in Connecticut is listed as Eastern Connecticut's largest



ANTIQUES, COLLECTIBLES & ESTATES  
.....  
WAYNE TUISKULA

flea market. Their website lists antiques and new and used items among the offerings. Admission is \$3 per car and runs on Sundays from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm.

The Grafton Flea Market's website says that it's been in business for over 40 years. It's located in Grafton, Mass. and runs from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. It also has a mix of antiques, new, and used items.

The Rietta Flea Market in Hubbardston, Mass. opens for vendors at 5 a.m., and is open to buyers at 6:30 a.m. on Sundays. Their Web site describes it as "one of the largest and most popular outdoor and indoor flea markets in the Northeastern United States."

Todd Farm Flea Market in Rowley, Mass. has an antiques focus. The flea market is open to customers on Sundays from 5 a.m. to 2 p.m. from April to November. I have yet to attend but many reviews mention their food offerings of coffee, scones, donuts, and burgers. So, even if you don't find the antiques you wanted, you won't go away hungry.

Our online auction of the Harlansburg Transportation Museum in Pennsylvania is running and ends on Sept. 9. We continue to work on the Laurel and Hardy memorabilia auction and Civil War memorabilia auction. We are accepting quality consignments for other upcoming auctions. Please visit our Web site, <https://centralmassauctions.com>, for links to upcoming events.

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

## Financial tips for first-time college students



FINANCIAL  
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TREVOR  
NIELSEN

Sending your child to college is an exciting milestone filled with new experiences, friendships and opportunities for them to grow. For many families, it's also the first time your student will be managing their own money independently.

The good news is that helping your child develop smart money habits doesn't have to be overwhelming. With a few simple strategies, you can guide them to take control of their finances and avoid common pitfalls that trip up many college students.

Start with a budget. Creating a budget might sound boring, but it's instrumental in helping your student take control of their finances. Many people use the 50/30/20 rule, which calls for putting 50 percent of income toward needs, 30 percent toward wants and 20 percent toward savings and other financial goals. So, if your child has \$1,000 per month from financial aid, work or family support, they'd spend \$500 on essentials like textbooks and food, \$300 on fun activities and \$200 on savings or paying down debt.

Encourage them to track their spending and subtract anything they pay out from their total monthly funds. This helps them know exactly how much money they have at any given time. There are plenty of free apps to help monitor expenses, or they can simply use a notebook to write down what they spend each day.

Guide them toward smart credit habits. That first credit card in college can be both exciting and scary for parents. The key is helping students understand how to use credit wisely by paying off their balance on time every month. This helps build a positive credit history that will help them qualify for better rates on car loans, apartments and eventually a home mortgage.

Make sure your student understands that credit cards aren't free money. It takes discipline to charge only what they can afford to pay off completely when the bill arrives. Otherwise, late fees and interest charges can be substantial.

Pay attention to everyday expenses. College life doesn't have to break the bank. Remind your child to take advantage of student discounts available at restaurants, clothing and grocery stores and entertainment venues.

Help them set spending limits for discretionary categories like entertainment, dining out and personal expenses. Here's where that budget can help set clear limits to prevent overspending. It's easier to say no to that expensive coffee or designer clothing when they know it would put them over their weekly limit.

Think about the future. While it might seem early to worry about life after college, making smart financial moves now can benefit them later. If your student has loans, consider encouraging them to make small payments while they're still in school, even though they're not required to do so. This reduces the amount of interest that builds up over time.

Encourage an emergency fund, even if they can only save \$25 per week. Having money set aside can give them flexibility after graduation, whether they want to move to a new city for a job, take time to travel, purchase a used car or pursue graduate school.

Teaching your child to manage money in college isn't just about helping them survive until graduation. The habits they develop now will shape their financial future for decades to come. By guiding them to start with a simple budget, use credit responsibly and make thoughtful spending choices, you're helping set the stage for success in college and beyond.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Trevor Nielsen, your local Edward Jones Advisor in Sturbridge at 508-347-1420 or [trevor.nielsen@edwardjones.com](mailto:trevor.nielsen@edwardjones.com).*

POSITIVELY  
SPEAKING

TOBY  
MOORE

You can have the strongest mindset in the world, but hang out with the wrong people, and that mindset will begin to sink like an anchor.

I remember my parents drawing strict lines around who I could hang with—and it infuriated me. They were my friends, after all. But as I've grown, I've realized my parents understood something my youthful optimism didn't: the attitudes, habits, and moods of others seep into your life—unnoticed, until they've stuck.

I was a sneaky teenager, a little rebellious, always finding ways to hang out with my friends despite my parents' disapproval. Over time, I started to notice something strange—my thoughts, my behavior, even the way I talked started to sound less like me and more like them. Deep down, I knew something was off, because the way I was thinking didn't line up with how my parents raised me—it was more like I had borrowed my friend's mind without realizing it.

My dad took me to see the famous motivational speaker Jim Rohn one time, and I heard Mr. Rohn say, "You

## Friends!

are the average of the five people you spend the most time with." At the time, it sounded like one of those catchy quotes you jot down and forget. But as the years have gone on, I've realized it was more than a nice line—it was a scientific truth.

Ever hear of mirror neurons? These are neurons in your brain that fire when you see someone else act or feel something. In a way, your brain copies them without asking permission. Studies show that if your friends are negative, lazy, or full of doubt, your brain begins to mirror that state. Your focus drops, your motivation decreases, and slowly, their reality becomes your reality. You begin to think and act like them.

And it doesn't stop with your closest circle. Researchers at MIT ran a study on the "hidden influence of social networks." They found that our moods, choices, and even levels of ambition ripple out three degrees. That means your friend's friend's friend—someone you've never even met—can still be shaping your outlook.

It's called emotional contagion. Emotions spread through groups like the flu. If your circle is pessimistic, it spreads. If they're optimistic, that spreads too.

There's also something called the





Boost the bee and pollinator appeal of your lawn by incorporating microclover, self-heal, creeping thyme, crocus, grape hyacinths and other bee-friendly flowering plants in your lawn. You'll create and enjoy a carpet of green with splashes of color and one that requires less ongoing maintenance. The pollinators will benefit from the nutritious sources of nectar and pollen your bee lawn provides.

Flowering bee lawns include traditional lawn grasses combined with other hardy grasses, like fine fescues as well as warm season centipede grass. Kentucky bluegrass and Bermuda grass also combine well with bee-friendly plants but require more ongoing care than fescues and centipede grass. You'll be creating a more diverse lawn that not only appeals to bees but also is more resilient to pests and environmental stressors than

traditional lawn grasses. Consult your local university extension service for help in selecting the best lawn grasses and bee-friendly plants.

Like any new addition to the landscape or garden, it does require some effort. But once established, you'll be spending less time with ongoing care like watering, mowing and fertilization.

Start by evaluating your current lawn situation. If grass is growing well in the area, so will a bee lawn. This is not an all or nothing endeavor and like any new undertaking, starting small is always a good strategy.

Consider converting just lesser-used spaces. This allows bees and butterflies to forage in peace. And even though native bees are docile and typically don't sting, neither the kids nor bees want to share the same space.

Keep your neighbors in mind when selecting a space for your bee lawn. Those neighbors with pristine lawns may be less tolerant of your

bee lawn. Selecting areas surrounded by walks and drives will also help keep aggressive plants inbounds.

Consider starting your bee lawn by overseeding the white microclover into your existing lawn. Clover is adaptable, tolerates foot traffic and drought, and blooms for a long period, providing bees with high-sugar-content nectar and protein-rich pollen. Microclover can also be combined with other bee-friendly plants. You can seed these at the same time or add them later as you expand your bee lawn.

Sow microclover seed in late winter, early spring, or late summer in the south and early spring or late summer in the north. Outsidepride's Miniclover® with Nitro-Coat (outsidepride.com) aids in establishment and allows you to use no-till, minimum-till, and broadcast seeding techniques. Even though it is not native, research



Courtesy — Outsidepride

**Boost the bee and pollinator appeal of your lawn by incorporating a microclover, like this Miniclover, found to attract and support a diverse group of native bees.**

found clover attracts and supports a diverse group of native bees.

Once your bee lawn is established, mow high, at least three inches, so the flowering plants can bloom and support the bees and other visiting pollinators. Leave the grass clippings on the lawn. This is a good practice for both traditional and bee lawns. Short clippings break down quickly, adding moisture and nutrients back to the soil. Once established, you'll only need to water

during extended dry periods, and seldom if any, fertilization. Skip the pesticides that can harm the pollinators you are trying to attract.

Increase your landscape's pollinator appeal further by growing more bee- and pollinator-friendly plants in your gardens. Helping these important members of our community is good for the environment and all of us.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, includ-

ing 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 Outsidepride for her expertise to write this article. Myers' Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.



For over a century New England has been hailed for its exceptional apples, and for generations of families, the local apple harvest has come to represent an abundance of both fruit and fun. As we welcome this year's apple crop, this column features some insight an apples!

\*\*

Want another reason to visit local apple orchards this season other than the farm experience which often includes "pick your own apples", tractor rides, fresh pressed cider and baked goods? How about this: Local apples are consistently fresh. Buying apples in season at the grocery store doesn't necessarily mean you're getting that season's crop of apples. In fact if you buy imported apples at the supermarket, chances are they are over a year old!

According to Martin Lindstrom, author of Brainwashed: Tricks Companies Use to Manipulate Our Minds and Persuade Us to Buy, the average imported supermarket apple is 14 months old.

\*\*

U.S. farmers produced approximately 260 million bushels of apples last year. Apple Crop Facts for 2024 reveals the annual crop of orchard apples were consumed as such:

Approximately 67%

of the U.S. crop is eaten fresh and one-third goes to processed uses (apple juice, applesauce, apple butter, packaged apple slices, etc.)

\*\*

Apple varieties change over time. Today, Gala claims the title of the most produced apple, knocking Red Delicious of the list a half dozen years ago. (Note: Red Delicious was the top grown apple for 50 years.)

\*\*

As consumer tastes shift, apple growers adapt their orchards, but trimming the trees down to a main trunk and several large branches, and then grafting growing tips of the new variety into those remaining branches. This allows growers to quickly produce the new variety to meet consumer demand. An example of this is Honeycrisp, which was developed in the 1960s, but not introduced commercially until 1997. It is ranked among the most popular apple today.

\*\*

Some favorite apple varieties offered at local orchards include: McIntosh; Honeycrisp; Red Delicious; Rome; Gala; Paula Red; Jersey Mac; Ginger Gold; Empire; Northern Spy; Macoun; Cortland; Baldwin; Braeburn; Spencer; Idared; Mutsu.

\*\*

Did you know? The apple peel contains certain antioxidants that aren't present in the ap-

ple's flesh. Multiple studies have shown that the antioxidant capacity of apple peel is up to four times higher than apple flesh.

\*\*

Pectin Power: Apples are high in pectin, a soluble fiber found in the tissue of plants. Plentiful in the skin and pulp of fresh apples, the substance is more than a thickener for jellies and jams. Various studies confirm pectin's valuable health benefits that include lowering cholesterol, lowering blood pressure, reducing the risk of heart disease, aiding digestion and promoting weight loss.

So what exactly is pectin's magic bullet? Pectin is a gel like complex carbohydrate that binds substances in the body. Its properties have been shown to reduce LDL (the "bad") cholesterol. Further, studies reveal pectin has the ability to absorb up to four times its weight in cholesterol.

Research shows as little as two apples a day is enough to aid in cholesterol reduction.

Medical studies also show apples can help manage blood sugar in diabetics by stabilizing insulin levels normal. Pectin does this by slowing the absorption of sugar in the intestines.

In addition pectin has been hailed as an effective remedy for constipation and is being studied for bowel diseases. Further claims report the pectin in apples can accelerate weight loss.

\*\*

Apples in History: Here in New England, Johnny Appleseed is hailed as a local hero as well as the father of the apple industry. Massachusetts boasts the birth of Johnny Appleseed, who was born in 1774 at Leominster, MA.

Legend has it since a young man, Johnny Appleseed a.k.a John Chapman, planted apple seeds all along his walking journeys, eventually establishing orchards from Virginia to Indiana.

Read on for more ways apples have played a role in history:

\*Sir Isaac Newton's formulation of law of gravity is attributed to an apple that fell onto his head.

\*When William Tell refused to bow to an Austrian nobleman, he was forced to shoot an apple off his son's head.

\*Newton Pippin apples were the first apples exported from America in 1768, some were sent to Benjamin Franklin in London.

\* Presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were apple growers. They traded apple wood with another for grafting purposes.

\*Records of the Massachusetts Bay Company indicate that apples were grown in New En-

gland as early as 1630.

\*Gravenstein apples are thought to have come from castle Gravenstein (Denmark) in the 1600's. Today they are grown in the U.S. and Europe.

\*In 1737 Robert Prince established the first commercial apple tree nursery in America in Flushing, New York. His nursery was hailed by colonists. During the Revolutionary War the William Prince Nursery was considered so valuable it had armed guards to protect it.

\*Many travelers of the Oregon Trail brought apple trees with them as they traveled west in covered wagons. In fact, apple trees were often planted on the new homestead before even shelter.

\*\*

Easy Homemade Apple Cider

Have extra PIY apples you can't eat fast enough? Use your crockpot to make a warm batch with little effort!

Ingredients Ten apples; four cups water; one cinnamon stick

Directions: Wash, core and slice apples (do not peel). Place apples into slow cooker. Add four cups water. Cook on low for eight hours.

Pour into a sieve and press. Allow liquids to drain into a clean bowl. Pour liquid back into slow cooker. Press apples to collect more liquid and add to liquid in crock pot. Place a cinnamon stick into the

liquid and allow it to cook for at least an hour. Serve warm or refrigerate. Spike with dark rum if desired.

\*\*

Win a Three Course Dinner for Two at the Publick House

Your tips can win you a great dinner for two at the historic Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge! Simply send in a hint to be entered into a random drawing. One winner per month (or whenever I receive enough tips for a column) will win a fabulous three course dinner for two at the renowned restaurant, located on Route 131 across the town common in historic Sturbridge. Because I'm in the business of dispensing tips, not inventing them (although I can take credit for some), I'm counting on you readers out there to share your best helpful hints!

\*\*

Do you have a helpful hint or handy tip that has worked for you? Do you have a question regarding household or garden matters? If so, why not share them with readers of Stonebridge Press newspapers? Send questions and/or hints to: Take the Hint!, C/o the Southbridge Evening News, PO Box 90; Southbridge, MA 01550. Or email KDRR@aol.com. Hints are entered into a drawing for dinner for two at the historic Publick House Inn.

**FRIENDS**  
*continued from page 6*

Default Mode Network, or DMN, in your brain. Think of it as your mental autopilot—the backdrop of your identity, self-image, and the story you tell yourself about who you are. Neuroscience shows your DMN is highly malleable. Spend too much time around people who doubt them-

selves, and you'll doubt yourself too.

But here's the flip side. Mirroring isn't destiny. Just as negativity rubs off on you, so does passion. Hang around people who are building, creating, chasing their vision, and your brain taps into that energy too. Watch someone take bold risks, and your own neural circuits for courage light up. Inspi-

ration isn't magic—it's your brain being reshaped by the people around you.

That's why Warren Buffett once said, "It's better to hang out with people better than you. Pick out associates whose behavior is better than yours and you'll drift in that direction."

And it echoes an even older truth, passed down in different forms

for centuries: "Show me your friends, and I'll show you your future."

Curate your circle like it's an investment in your future. Spend time with people who believe bigger, live with more discipline, and push themselves further—not because they're flashy, but because their habits rub off on you. Their standards become your standards. Your brain

literally rewires itself to match the company you keep.

So before you beat yourself up for not living up to your full potential, pause and look around. Who are you spending most of your time with? Their doubts—or their dreams—are setting the boundaries for what you believe is possible.

If your people are impatient dreamers,

grounded believers, creative disruptors—keep them close. If they're dragging you into doubt, laziness, or "good enough" thinking, let them go—gently, but firmly.

Your brain is wiring itself every single day. Intentionally choose people who light sparks—not just for your mood, but for your mind, your vision, and your future.



# Local expert chronicles French experience in Southbridge

BY GUS STEEVES  
CORRESPONDENT  
SOUTHBRIDGE — In Southbridge, a huge number of people have some French-Canadian ancestry, even if their names don't reflect that. In some cases, those names were changed specifically because they were French, either by personal choice or by official action. As Jeanne Douillard explored last week at the library, many such changes came from people of French descent trying to avoid facing outright discrimination. That's quite old: she quoted 19th century state Sen FK Foster, who termed them "immoral" and "a blight on society."

For a long time, people tried "moving into a future that has no past" by basically hiding who they were, but in recent years Francophone historians and writers of various types have been challenging that ideology. Douillard said that means acknowledging that "our cultural stories live within us," accepting the "proud, stubborn and courageous people who did the best they could under very challenging circumstances," and "carry[ing] it forward with pride."

It's a long history, longer than many people might think, and actually has two main roots, not just one. While the English had a centuries-long experience with representative government dating back to the Magna Carta of 1215, the French didn't see anything like that until the late 1700s. Thus, when the first French came to America, their experience was of absolutist, feudal royal rule and strong Catholic Church control.

Despite that, their two Canadian colonies – Acadie (the modern Maritimes, 1605) and Canada (today's St Lawrence Valley of Quebec, 1608) – took two different routes



Jeanne Douillard, right, talks to Margaret Morrissey after her presentation.

(Right) Jeanne Douillard demonstrates how a traditional gigou doll dances to the song "Y A Ben du Changement."

of development, partly due to meeting and intermarrying with the local Native Americans. In Acadie, the people had little contact with France or Quebec, but more with British and the Algonquian tribes, and used "their innate willness to get what they wanted," Douillard said. That developed into self-governance of a more democratic nature than in Quebec, where church and French nobility were more entrenched.

When the French government's energy shifted to focus on Europe after 1672, they gave part of Acadia to Britain. The English allowed Acadians to elect some of their own leaders, but demanded a loyalty oath that would've required Acadians to fight fellow Frenchmen, so they refused. A later oath allowed them to remain neutral, but the "very precarious situation" left them isolated from the French in Quebec.

The Brits took total control of Acadia in 1755, and began expelling Acadians in what they term "Le Grande Derangement." Douillard described it as "ethnic cleansing," in which families were split and about 15,000 people were

forced onto "human cargo ships" to be sent basically anywhere else – Massachusetts, France, Haiti, the Falklands and Louisiana, among them. Around 1,000 died in transit, others soon after arrival, and most of those left in Acadia fled to Quebec or were forced into rocky areas.

In Quebec, "the strict class system ... was starting to dissolve" around this time, with intermarriages among the classes, locals rising into leadership roles, and people starting to see themselves as both French and Canadian. But they were still a small number of people; while the French claimed a huge swath of America, the government's focus on gold, silver and furs meant they didn't really colonize it. The French population in Quebec numbered about 60,000, with about 15,000 in Acadia, vs 1.6 million British to their south. That disparity proved militarily detrimental in 1759's Battle of the Plains of Abraham (outside Quebec City), when Paris sent no support to Canada and the British conquered it.

Later years saw some British concessions to the French, but also tension as London feared

revolt, especially after the French Revolution of 1783 and French support of the US Revolution. Among other tactics, London used the Catholic Church "to keep those people down," Douillard said.

By the 1840s, the French, especially remaining Acadians, were "in a subservient position" with a depressed economy, and were "being crushed by the heavy weight of church and state," she said. Over subsequent decades, around a million emigrated to the US, some of them seeking work in the mills of New England.

Douillard cited historian Yves Roby as saying they were "totally defeated creatures" who were "ideal candidates for the mills." They were skilled, passive, hard-working and unwilling to challenge authority.

Arriving here, they found the long animosity between English and French meant "they were not beloved," and faced "severe social class conflict" where millowners wanted them and many residents didn't. That split also along religious lines, with most resident Americans being Protestant while the French were Catholic,



and fueled the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan as an anti-French, anti-Catholic group in this region. Among other horrors, a forced sterilization effort in the 1930s targeted French and Abenaki people in Vermont.

US citizens criticized French people, who sometimes traveled back and forth to Canada, for not being willing to settle here, but French leaders also did not encourage assimilation and promoted "la survivance." Douillard didn't mention this, but that was still strong in Southbridge in the early 1900s, as espoused by our town's first French selectman, Felix Gatin-eau.

The struggle led many people to change their French names and sometimes religion, stop using the language in public or teaching it to their kids, and otherwise walk away from their culture, she said. Many came to "expect nothing," and she cited famous Francophone writers (including Annie Proulx and Jack Kerouac) as saying they felt "tainted" when younger and "prayed to be ghosts."

The big changes that hit France itself with

the French Revolution took until the 1960s to reach French residents here in the US. By then, though, "people were determined to reclaim their dignity and their pride, and this they have done," she said.

In her own life, she was "ashamed" to speak French in Massachusetts as a youth, but went to Denver as an adult. There, she "saw how the Mexicans were treated. I had experienced that as a French-American in New England," and she found people were "impressed" that she was fluent in French.

Ironically, today's French-Canadian speakers are more likely to get criticism from Parisians than other Americans; she noted the European French see Canadian French as "not real French." In fact, it's older than today's version – Douillard cited a fairly recent Parisian exhibit in which historians recreated how French sounded during Louis XIV's long reign (1643-1715) and modern Quebecois heard it as being the same as their dialect.

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



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# SEPTEMBER EVENTS AT CHARLTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

For further details and to register for programs, please visit our web-site (charltonlibrary.org)

Additional parking is available across the street at Town Hall and at the Elementary School.

### Movies @ The Library

All showings are on Tuesdays at 1:00 pm ONLY unless noted - Dexter Hall - No registration required.

September 2: THE PHOENICIAN SCHEME. Wealthy businessman Zsa-zsa Korda appoints his only daughter, a nun, as sole heir to his estate. As Korda embarks on a new enterprise, they soon become the target of scheming tycoons, foreign terrorists and determined assassins. 2025 Rated PG-13. 101 minutes. Starring Benicio Del Toro, Mia Threapleton, and Michael Cera.

September 9: HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON. On the rugged isle of Berk, where Vikings and dragons have been bitter enemies for generations, Hiccup stands apart. The inventive yet overlooked son of Chief Stoick the Vast Hiccup defies centuries of tradition when he befriends Toothless, a feared Night Fury dragon. Their unlikely bond reveals the true nature of dragons, challenging the very foundations of Viking society. 2025. Rated PG. 125 minutes. Featuring Mason Thames, Nico Parker, Gerard Butler, and Nick Frost

September 16: KARATE KID: LEGENDS. After a family tragedy, kung fu prodigy Li Fong is uprooted from his home in Beijing and forced to move to New York City with his mother. Li struggles to let go of his past as he tries to fit in with his new classmates, and although he doesn't want to fight, trouble seems to find him everywhere. When a new friend needs his help, Li enters a karate competition – but his skills alone aren't enough. Li's kung fu teacher Mr. Han enlists original Karate Kid Daniel LaRusso for help, and Li learns a new way to fight, merging their two styles into one for the ultimate martial arts showdown. 2025. Rated PG. 118 minutes. Starring Jackie Chan, Ben Wong, Ralph Macchino, and Joshua Jackson

September 23: CESAR CHAVEZ. Celebrate Hispanic Heritage History Month with a film based on a true story. This biopic follows civil-rights activist Cesar Chavez as he attempts to balance his fight against social injustice with his duties as a husband and father. 2014. Rated PG-13. 101 minutes. Featuring Michael Pena, America Ferrera, Rosario Dawson and John Malkovich.

September 30: MCFARLAND, USA. Celebrate Hispanic Heritage History Month with a film based on a true story. Inspired by the 1987 true story, “McFarland, USA” follows novice runners from McFarland, an economically challenged town in California’s farm-rich Central Valley, as they give their all to build a cross-country team under the direction of Coach Jim White, a newcomer to their predominantly Latino high school. Soon something beyond their physical gifts becomes apparent—the power of family relationships, their unwavering commitment to one another and their incredible work ethic. 2015. Rated PG. 129 minutes. Starring Kevin Costner, Maria Bello, and Morgan Saylor.

Drop-in Needle Felting for Adults  
Wednesday, September 3, 10:00-11:30 am - Community Meeting Room

Tuesday, September 9, 6:00-7:30 pm - Community Meeting Room  
This time is just for you to drop-in and work on your projects! There will be needles, wool, and pads for use but no formal instruction or project planned. Feel free to bring a project you've already started or use our supplies to bring your ideas to life. This program is for adults 18 and over due to the nature of the materials being used.

Genealogy Group  
Thursday, September 4, 6:00-7:30 pm - Community Meeting Room

The Charlton Library Genealogy Group is a friendly group of people who share an interest in genealogy. We meet monthly on the first Thursday of the month from 6:30-7:30. Meetings will alternate between general discussion topics and guest presenters. The meetings are free and open to the public.

LEGO Club  
Friday, September 5, 3:30-4:30 pm - Storytime Room - no registration required

LEGO Club encourages children to learn while having fun! Creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork are some of the skills that "playing" with LEGOS can teach children. Join us on the first Friday of each month to complete a LEGO challenge. All LEGOs will be provided. Try out the Lego Challenge, or create your own design! Bring your friends! This is a drop-in program recommended for ages 5-10.

Craft Materials Drop Off  
From August 25-September 5 we will be collecting arts and crafts materials only (fabrics, yarn, paper, patterns, tools, beads, etc.) We will NOT accept office supply donations (binders, file organizers, etc.) items must be able to be reused (new or gently used, not expired.) When in doubt, use the best friend rule – would I give this to my best friend? We cannot accept opened liquids such as paints, chemicals and glue. Items should be brought to the circulation desk in the adult area. PLEASE do not put items in the outside material returns or leave them outside the Library. Our very popular Craft Supply Swap will be back on Saturday, September 6 from 10 am - 2 pm. Everyone is welcome to come and take materials regardless of whether they donated any.

Craft Supply Swap  
Saturday, September 6, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm - Dexter Hall  
Members of the community have been donating a variety of new and used craft supplies for the past two weeks! Drop in anytime between 10 am and 2 pm today and take what you need for FREE! This is great for new and experienced crafters, anyone who wants to try a new craft, or teachers who need supplies! Bring your own bags!

Threaded Together Fiber Arts Group (formerly Silver Needles Knit & Crochet Group)  
Thursdays from 1:00-3:00 pm - Sibley Reading Area - no registration required  
Bring your current project and relax with friends. All are welcome regardless of skill level.

Drop-in Tech Help - Local History Room - no registration required  
Saturdays from 10 am - noon  
Do you have a few quick questions about technology? Would you like to learn how to use apps like Libby or Kanopy? Drop in and speak with Charlton Library's Digital Skills Instructor and get the dedicated support you need. If you will need more than 15 minutes of tech help, please make a one-on-one appointment in

person at the library, online, or by calling 508-248-0452. We cannot assist with setting up a new device; fixing/restoring/repairing a broken or infected device, app, or email account; entering sensitive information for you (e.g. credit card information, social security number, online banking, etc.); keyboarding, typing, or proofreading documents. We cannot provide medical, legal, and business advice or opinions.

One-on-One Tech Help - Local History Room - registration required  
Tuesday, September 2 & September 9 at 5:00, 5:30, 6:00, or 6:30 pm  
Thursday, September 4 & September 11 at 5:00, 5:30, 6:00, or 6:30 pm

Do you have a more complicated question than we can cover during Drop-in Tech Help? Would you like to learn some basic email or internet skills? Make a one-on-one appointment with the Charlton Library's Digital Skills Instructor and get up to 60 minutes of dedicated support. Please make a one-on-one appointment in person at the library, online, or by calling 508-248-0452. We cannot assist with setting up a new device; fixing/restoring/repairing a broken or infected device, app, or email account; entering sensitive information for you (e.g. credit card information, social security number, online banking, etc.); keyboarding, typing, or proofreading documents. We cannot provide medical, legal, and business advice or opinions.

Introduction to Technology Series - Each course will be held twice for increased availability. This series was funded by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute at the MassTech Collaborative under the Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program. Funding was provided by Massachusetts ARPA State Fiscal Recovery Funds.

Intro to Internet Basics - Local History Room - Registration Required

Saturday, September 6 from 1:30-2:30 pm OR Tuesday, September 16 from 6:00- 7:00 pm

Learn the essentials of navigating the online world with this beginner-friendly Internet basics course. You'll explore how to safely browse the web, use search engines effectively, and understand key online tools and services. Whether you're brand new to the internet or want to build a stronger digital foundation, this course will give you the confidence and skills to connect, communicate, and find information with ease.

Intro to Google Docs- Local History Room- Registration Required  
Saturday, September 13 from 1:30-2:30 pm OR Tuesday, September 23 from 6:00- 7:00 pm

Join this hands-on Google Docs course designed to help you confidently create, edit, and share documents like a pro. Whether you're new to the platform or looking to sharpen your skills, you'll learn essential features such as formatting text, inserting images and tables, collaborating in real time, and organizing your work efficiently. Perfect for students, professionals, or any-

one wanting to boost productivity, this course will give you practical tips and tricks to make the most of Google Docs' powerful tools.

Intro to Google Sheets- Local History Room- Registration Required  
Saturday, September 20 from 1:30-2:30 pm OR Tuesday, September 30 from 6:00- 7:00 pm

Discover the power of Google Sheets in this interactive course that takes you from basic spreadsheets to efficient data management. You'll learn how to enter and organize data, use formulas and functions, create charts, and collaborate with others in real time. Whether you're tracking budgets, analyzing information, or streamlining workflows, this course will equip you with the skills and confidence to make the most of Google Sheets' versatile features.

Wiggles & Giggles  
Mondays, September 8, 15, 22, 29, 10:00-11:00 am - Community Meeting Room - Registration required

Children, ages 2-5, with a parent/caregiver, will sing, move, play musical instruments, learn rhythm, and listen to stories in this FREE series facilitated by music teacher Laine Hanlon! “Wiggles & Giggles” fosters physical, cognitive, social, and emotional learning through music and motion. Registration is required. Space is limited.

This series is sponsored by the YMCA Family & Community Partnership (YFCP) and hosted by the Charlton Public Library. YFCP is a Massachusetts Coordinated Family & Community Engagement (CFCE) grant funded by the Department of Early Education & Care and awarded to the YMCA of Central Massachusetts.

Fiber Arts Club for Tweens & Teens

Mondays, September 8 & 22, 3:30-4:30 pm - Storytime Room - no registration required

Are you interested in knitting, crocheting, sewing, embroidery, needle felting, or other fiber art? Join us to hang out, practice your

Turn to CPL page 12



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# Southbridge resident embarks on new nursing career

SOUTHBRIDGE — After years of dedicated service in community support, local resident Ashley Rincon, LPN, is set to begin a new chapter in her professional life. On Sept. 8, she will start her career as a nurse at Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital, bringing a wealth of experience and a passion for patient care to her new role.



Ashley Rincon

For Rincon, this transition is the culmination of a journey she describes as one of “growth, resilience, and compassion.” Having recently completed her Practical Nursing certificate from Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, she passed the NCLEX-PN on her first try.

“Each step from studying to hands-on patient care has strengthened not only my skills, but also my heart for serving others,” Rincon said. “It hasn’t always been easy, but every challenge has shaped me into the nurse that I will become.”

Rincon is no stranger to the healthcare field. She has been a Direct Support Professional with Venture Community Services (and its predecessor, Life-Skills Inc.) since 2018. In this role, she provided essential daily care to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, assisting with personal care, medication administration, and medical appointments. Her experience also includes a tenure as a House Man-

ager, where she supervised staff and ensured resident safety, demonstrating strong leadership and organizational skills.

Her new career path is supported by extensive clinical training in patient-centered care, vital sign monitoring, and medication dispensing. She is skilled in specialized procedures such as G-tube feeding, ostomy care, and sterile techniques. Her commitment to professional development is further highlighted by a long list of certifications, including BLS/CPR, Mental Health First Aid, and Dementia Care.

Rincon’s academic and competitive excellence has also been recognized. In 2025, she achieved remarkable success in the SkillsUSA competitions for Medical Terminology, earning a silver medal at the district level, a gold medal at the state level, and placing in the top 10 nationally. Her education was supported by a MassHire

Grant, an award recognizing her potential and dedication to her chosen field.

Known for building trust with patients and families through empathy and patience, Rincon looks forward to applying her compassionate approach and extensive skills to her new role at Fairlawn Rehab.



SOUTHBRIDGE — Arthur N. Pond, 73, died Tuesday, August 19, 2025 in Brookside Rehabilitation & Nursing Center after a struggle with pancreatic cancer.

He leaves a half-brother, Mark Pond of North Carolina; a sister, Sharon Alexander and her husband Tom, and a nephew Herbert Groll, all of Phoenix, AZ; and his companion and caregiver, Shirley A. Ramsey of Charlton. He also leaves his beloved dog Calvin.

He was born on July 10, 1952 in Worcester to Albert N. and Phyllis L. (Ross) Pond and lived here for many years.

He served in the United States Army as a parachutist from 1970 to 1972.

Mr. Pond owned and operated the Fantastic Finish Floor Cleaning Company until his illness.

A Harley-Davidson enthusiast, he participated five times in the Hoka Hey

Lakota Tribe Competition, a fund raiser that required motorcyclists to cover 48 states in only two weeks.

He was an active member of the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah Witnesses in Oxford.

Funeral services will be held privately. Arrangements are under the direction of Sitkowski, Malboeuf & Hickey Funeral Home, 340 School Street, Webster. Donations in his name may be made to the Friends of Charlton Animal Shelter, P.O. Box 322, Charlton, MA 01507.

www.websterfunerals.com



## Adam Faucher completes intensive research project

WORCESTER — Adam Faucher from Charlton, a member of the class of 2027 majoring in Society, Technology and Policy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), was a member of a student team that recently completed a professional-level research-driven project titled “Innovating Innovate: Addressing Barriers in V&A Innovate.”

Known as the Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP), this project is a core part of the innovative undergraduate experience at WPI. Centered around project-based learning, this hands-on approach offers students opportunities to help develop thoughtful solutions to open-ended problems. These real-world problems affect the quality of life for people in the communities where students work, giving students a chance to make a difference in the world before they graduate. All WPI undergraduates are required to complete an IQP, usually in their junior year, through which they apply science and technology to address an important societal need or issue. About two-thirds of WPI students complete their IQP at one of the university’s more

than 50 off-campus project centers located in more than 30 countries around the world.

“The WPI project-based curriculum’s focus on global studies brings students out of the classroom and their comfort zones and into the global community to apply their knowledge and to solve problems,” said Professor Kent Rissmiller, professor of International & Global Studies and associate dean of The Global School. “Students are immersed in all aspects of a different culture—from the way people live and work to the values they hold to the foods they eat, all valuable perspectives for surviving and thriving in today’s global marketplace. They also learn the meaning and magic of teamwork; make a real and meaningful difference in their host community; and gain a competitive edge for any resume, or graduate or professional school application.”

About Worcester Polytechnic Institute

WPI is a top-tier STEM-focused research university and a recognized pioneer and global leader in project-based learning. Found-

ed in 1865 on the principle that students learn most effectively by applying the theory learned in the classroom to the practice of solving real-world problems, WPI’s continued mission is to transform lives, turn knowledge into action to confront global challenges, and revolutionize STEM through distinctive and inclusive education, projects, and research. WPI’s project-based curriculum engages undergraduates in solving important scientific, technological, and societal problems throughout their education and at more than 50 project centers around the world. Today WPI offers more than 70 Bachelor’s, Master’s, and doctoral degree programs across 18 academic departments in science, engineering, technology, business, the social sciences, and the humanities and arts. To help address ongoing challenges, improve lives, and help create a more sustainable world, WPI faculty and students pursue groundbreaking research in such areas as the life sciences, smart technologies, materials and manufacturing, and global initiatives.

## LEGALS

**CHARLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

In accordance with the Wetland Protection Act of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter 131, Section 40, the Charlton Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on September 10, 2025, at 7PM on the application of David Faulkner.

The applicant has filed a Request for Determination of Applicability for the demolition and construction of a garage within 100FT of a BVW. The project location is: 137 Hammond Hill Road, Charlton, MA 01507. Parcel ID: 20-C-7

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting of the Charlton Conservation Commission will be conducted in person and via remote means. Members of the public who wish to participate can access the meeting remotely by request. Copies of the NOI may be examined at the Conservation Office by appointment during business hours.

Thomas O’Malley  
Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission  
August 28, 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. W025P2814EA CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION Estate Of: Robert A Langevin Date of Death: 05/22/2025**

To all interested persons:  
A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Richard R Langevin of Worcester 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:

**Richard R Langevin of Worcester 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 09/16/2025.** 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: August 13, 2025  
Stephanie Fattman,  
Register of Probate  
August 28, 2025

**Town of Holland Zoning Board of Appeals Notice of Public Hearing**

In accordance with M.G. L Chapter 40A the Holland Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on

**Wednesday, September 10, 2025 at 7:15 p.m.** at the Holland Town Hall, 27 Sturbridge Rd, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Community Room, Holland, MA 01521.

If dial in access is needed, please contact the Town Hall at 413-245-7108 x101.

The purpose of the hearing is to consider a request from **David Tremblay** for a **Special Permit** according to Holland Bylaw section 7.

**Relief requested:** An Accessory Dwelling Unit with a 2 car garage and 2 bedroom apartment above.

The property located at: **306 Mashapaug Rd.** Parcel ID # **R07 / D5**

Don Beal, Chairperson  
Zoning Board of Appeals  
Date: 8/13/2025  
August 21, 2025  
August 28, 2025

The Brimfield ZBA will hold a public hearing at 5:00 pm on September 22, 2025, at the Town Annex Clerk’s Office 23 Main St Brimfield, MA 01010, on behalf of Patricia and James Roach of 262 Little Alum Rd, for their lot on Little Alum Rd, Assessor’s Parcel 4-E-6.3. Deed recording book 17341, page 327. The applicants are seeking relief from the 1.5-acre minimum lot size required to build a single-family home, per Brimfield Zoning Bylaw 11.2. Abutters and members of the public are encouraged to attend and provide feedback.

August 28, 2025  
September 5, 2025

**Town of Brimfield Conservation Commission Public Hearing Notice**

In accordance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, Chapter 131, Section 40, the Brimfield Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, September 10, at 6:00 PM to review a Notice of Intent (NOI) submitted by Sherman & Frydryk c/o Bevin Fish. The NOI requests the deconstruction of two homes, repairs to the shoreline stone wall, construct-

ing a single-family residence, a pavilion and leach facility with multiple retaining walls.

**Project Location:** Third Street (Assessor’s Map (5C-A-25 & A26)

**Meeting Location:** Public Participation will be In-Person at Hitchcock Academy at 2 Brookfield Road, Brimfield, MA 01010 on September 10, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

Any person(s) interested or wishing to be heard on this request should appear at the time and place designated. A copy of the permit application and plan may be inspected at the Brimfield Town Annex in the Conservation Commission Office, Salisbury Annex Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 23 Main Street, Brimfield, MA 01010 or contact the office at 413-245-4100 ext. 1101.

Roger deBruyn & Joseph Venezia Co-Chairs  
August 20, 2025  
August 28, 2025

In accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act, Chapter 131, Sec 40, a public hearing by the Holland Conservation Commission will be held on Tuesday 09/09/2025 in the Conservation Commission Room, second floor, in the Holland Town Hall, 27 Sturbridge Road, Holland, MA. This meeting is to review a Notice of Intent (NOI) filed by Jonas Putz to build a small retaining wall approximately 41 feet long, at Harper Street, Holland, MA 01521 (MAP R01-F-1). To comply with the Open Meeting Law, all public hearings are scheduled for 6:30 PM and, barring unforeseen circumstances, will be taken in the order in which they appear on the agenda. This meeting will be held in person and virtual; for virtual meeting login information contact Holland Conservation at conservation@hollandma.org or call (413) 245-7108 x114.

Conservation Commission  
Town of Holland  
August 28, 2025



# bankHometown promotes Coveny to VP, commercial lending

OXFORD — bankHometown recently promoted Sean Coveny to vice president, commercial lending, based at its 109 Elm St., Millbury, office.

Coveny has nearly 13 years of banking experience and joined bankHometown in 2018 as a commercial credit analyst III. He earned a bachelor's degree in resource economics from UMass Amherst, as well as an MBA from the Isenberg School of Management at UMass Amherst. Coveny also earned a certification through The New



Sean Coveny

England School for Financial Studies with the Massachusetts Bankers Association.

In his new role, Coveny will develop and manage commercial loan portfolios while building relationships in the business community. He will continue to excel in evaluating credit risk within the commercial lending department.

About bankHometown

Founded in 1889, bankHometown is headquartered in Oxford. We have \$1.6 billion in assets

and offer a complete line of consumer and business deposit and lending products and services through 16 branches located throughout Central Massachusetts and northeast Connecticut. We're proud to fulfill our community banking mission—providing individualized financial support, a suite of comprehensive products and services, and smart banking technology—all to ensure our customers can unlock their potential and build a successful future.

Through our sponsor-

ship and charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, bankHometown and the Hometown Bank Community Foundation support non-profit organizations and causes throughout Worcester and Windham Counties. In 2024 alone, The Giving Tree donated nearly \$325,000 and over the last decade has donated \$3 million. bankHometown is proud to be named a Corporate Citizenship Award winner by Boston Business Journal for the past six years. For more information, visit bankhometown.com.



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# LOCAL FOLKS

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CPL continued from page 9

craft, learn from more experienced friends, or teach others! Please note: we cannot guarantee that someone will be there to teach specific crafts at every meeting. Don't forget to bring your current projects! This group is best for tweens and teens ages 9-18. Registration is not required!

**Tiny Tots Storytime**  
Tuesdays, September 9, 16, 23, 30, 10:00-10:45 am - Storytime Room

For babies - age 2.5 with a caregiver. Join us for songs, fingerplays, board books, shakers, scarves, dancing, motor skills activities, and free play! Due to the high number of attendees, this is now a ticketed program. A certain number of tickets will be given to each child on a first-come-first-served basis. Once all tickets have been passed out, the program will be full. Late Arrivals: Available tickets will be given out until 5 minutes after the program has started. After that time, the program will be closed until free play time. We thank you for your understanding.

**Friends of Charlton Public Library**

Tuesday, September 9, 3:30-4:45 pm - Community Meeting Room

The monthly meeting of the Friends of Charlton Public Library. Everyone is welcome to attend.

**Baby Storytime**  
Wednesday, September 10, 10:00-10:45 am - Storytime Room - no registration required

For infants - 12 months only. Join us for board books, songs, fingerplays, music, shakers, scarves, bubbles & free play! This is a drop-in program. No registration or ticket required.

**Film Screening: In the Realm of Death and Dreaming**

Thursday, September 11, 2:00-3:30 pm - Dexter Hall

This afternoon we'll be screening the film *In the Realm of Death & Dreaming*: Does consciousness continue after death? A lot of study has been and continues to be done around the question, does consciousness continue after death. There is no definitive proof that consciousness ends at death and no definitive proof that it continues after death. So it remains a mystery. This allows us all to wade around this territory and the film helps us to explore what it might mean to us? The film is not intended to tell anyone what to think. It is intended to give people different ideas and thoughts to think about and reflect on in their own life and with their own values. Because there isn't a definitive answer about what happens to consciousness after death it becomes more of what feels right for you. If you don't believe that consciousness continues, there is nothing wrong

with your point of view. Right now is the most important moment in our lives and is where our attention should be to live the best version of ourselves that we can. The invitation offered by this film is to reflect upon what happens when we die and whether consciousness continues after we die? The hope is that this kind of reflection might help to reduce anyone's fear of dying and set the ground for healthier living right now which may lead to dying with dignity and peace. This program will run 90 minutes. The film runs 51 minutes. The remaining time will be used to allow opportunity for those who might have a desire to share their thoughts and feelings about what this information means to them. There will be a facilitated discussion in the hope that the film will raise questions for you so that you might discuss them with your medical team and your loved ones in order for everyone to know what you want when the time comes. Registration is appreciated but not required.

**Tween & Teen Craft: Bracelet Making**

Thursday, September 11, 5:30-6:15 pm - Storytime Room - registration required

Make some fun bracelets with colorful clay beads! For ages 8+.

**CPL Book Discussion - LULA DEAN'S LITTLE LIBRARY OF BANNED BOOKS** by Kirsten Miller

Thursday, September 11, 6:00-7:00 pm - Community Meeting Room - no registration required

Books are available for checkout at the adult circulation desk one month prior to discussion.

**Preschool Storytime**  
Fridays, September 12, 19, 26, 10:00-10:45 am - Storytime Room

For ages 4 & 5. Join us for stories, songs, fingerplays, scarves, activities, crafts, and free play! This is a TICKET-ED program. A certain amount of tickets available for each child will be given out on a first-come-first-served basis. Once all tickets have been passed out, the program is full. Late Arrivals: Available tickets will be given out until 5 minutes after the program has started. After that time, the program will be closed until free-play begins. We thank you for your understanding.

**Kids Yoga with Lindsey**

Fridays, September 12 & 19, 4:00-4:30 pm - Community Meeting Room - registration required

In these classes, we will practice breathing techniques (pranayama), yoga postures (asana), and more to help participants connect with their bodies, minds and spirits. This focus invites kids to recognize the ability to act and behave mindfully with compassion, to be brave, to know happiness, and to find

inner peace and calm. While yoga helps to build strength and flexibility, it also aids in developing techniques to handle stress. Dress comfortably, and bring water and a mat if you have one. For ages 5-11. Registration is required. Please register under the child's name, not the caregiver's. Thank you!

**Mom & Me Book Club (MOCA)**

Saturday, September 13, 10:30-11:30 am - Community Meeting Room - no registration required

Join our new book club for early readers! Read the monthly book selection at home with your child, and join us for a short discussion, activity, and snack. September Book: *Elephant & Piggie: My New Friend is So Fun!* by Mo Willems. This club is sponsored & presented by the Moms of Charlton Area, and is best suited for children 4-7. Registration is not required. For more information, please send emails to: momsofcharltonarea@gmail.com

**Local Author Talk: Rev. John H.D. Lucy**

Tuesday, September 16, 6:30-7:30 pm - Community Meeting Room - registration is appreciated

Join us as local author and pastor of Charlton City United Methodist Church, Rev. John H.D. Lucy, discusses the release of his third book. Come explore how we can live more peacefully in community—whether or not we attend church. Registration is appreciated but not required.

**Alzheimer's Caregivers Support Group**

Thursday, September 18, 6:00-7:30 pm - Community Meeting Room - no registration required

The Alzheimer's Support Network Caregiver Support Group is led by Alzheimer's Care Professionals and experienced caregivers. We offer information, resources, and strategies specific to caring for someone with Alzheimer's and other Dementias along with support for transitioning to different care settings. Co-sponsored by Tri-Valley and Charlton Public Library.

**Fandom Club: Pokemon**

Thursday, September 18, 5:30-6:15 pm -

Storytime Room - no registration required

Introducing Fandom Club! Each month we'll be exploring a new fandom and enjoying related activities/crafts. Be sure to bring along your Pokemon cards and binders if you'd like to participate in optional trading! For ages 8+.

**Death Cafe**

Thursday, September 18, 6:00-7:30 pm - Dexter Hall - no registration required

A Death Café is a group-directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives or course of action, no set conclusions and no judgement. It provides a safe environment to gather, eat cake, drink tea or coffee, and enjoy open-minded conversation about dying and death. It is an opportunity to share, explore and question our own perceptions of death. It's not a bereavement session – just an open conversation about a topic that we often find taboo. Questions? Email kwalker4@mac.com.

**Gentle Flow Yoga**

Saturday, September 20, 10:00-11:00 am - Dexter Hall - registration required

Breathe, stretch, and unwind in this relaxing 60-minute yoga class. Perfect for beginners and experienced yogis alike, this class will blend gentle, mindful movement with calming breathwork and end in a deeply restful savasana. Bring a mat, water bottle and any props. (Some blocks and knee pads available). Led by Erin Anderson – RYT-200 yoga instructor and SEL facilitator.

**Saturday Acoustic Roots Jam-SARJ**

Saturday, September 20, 12:00-1:30 pm - Community Meeting Room  
An acoustic only music jam. Open to all 18+. Email Rich at Cule5632@gmail.com for more information.

**Mandala Craft**

Tuesday, September 23, 6:00 - 7:30 pm - registration required

Wednesday, September 24, 10:30 am - 12 noon - registration required

Join us to paint mandalas. We'll warm up by practicing on paper and then make beautiful patterns on stones. For adults and teens ages 13 and up, registration is required.

**Writing a 10 Minute Play Workshop**

Wednesdays, September 24, October 1, 8, 15, and 22, 3:00 - 4:30 pm - registration required

Have you thought about writing a play but didn't know where to start? Join us for this 5 week class with local playwright Bruce Menin and write your own 10-minute play! This is a 5 week class series, by registering you are committing all 5 sessions.

**Get Enough Protein! A Plant Based Talk**

Thursday, September 25, 6:00-7:15 pm - Dexter Hall - registration required

"But where do you get your protein?" If you've asked this—or been asked—you're not alone. In this down-to-earth talk, Jill Ahlstrand shares what she's learned about protein on a plant-based diet, including how much you need, where to find it, and how to keep meals satisfying. Perfect for the plant-curious and seasoned veggie lovers alike. Jill is a plant-based coach and the founder of Harvesting Flavor, a platform dedicated to helping people eat more plants, grow some of their own food, and feel great doing it.

**Tiny Tots @ Night**

Thursday, September 25, 6:00-6:30 pm - Storytime Room - registration required

This is an evening version of our Tiny Tots program! Best for babies - age 3. Includes songs, fingerplays, scarves, shakers, music, books & free play!

**Charlton Ukulele League & Ensemble**

Thursday, September 25, 6:00-7:30 pm - Community Meeting Room - no registration required

Experienced musicians and newbies all welcome. Questions? Email Cule5632@gmail.com.

**Critical Thinking Discussion Group - FEDERALIST PAPERS #9+10**

Friday, September 26, 1:00-2:00 pm - Sibley Reading Area - no registration required

No experience with critical thinking discussion groups is necessary. Books/materials are available for checkout one month prior to discussion. Questions? Email saga3@charter.net.

**Crafternoon for Kids**

Friday, September 26, 3:30-4:30 pm - Storytime Room - registra-

tion required

Drop by the Storytime Room and make a fun craft! This month, we are making Pinwheels! Best for ages 5-10. Please register so we know we will have enough supplies!

**Pet First Aid**

Tuesday, September 30, 6:00-7:30 pm - no registration required

When every second counts, would you know how to help your pet? We will discuss how to respond to common emergencies like injuries, bloat, poisoning, and seizures. You'll also learn safe transport techniques and when to seek veterinary care. Gain the confidence and skills to act fast and potentially save your pet's life. Lead by Pro Pet Hero Cat & Dog First Aid and CPR Certified Instructor Wendi Hall.

**Friendship Corner: Supporting Girls with Different Abilities**

Tuesday, September 30, 6:00-7:00 pm - Storytime Room - registration required

Friendship Corner is an adaptive and encouraging space for girls with disabilities aged 8+ to have fun, make friends, and feel connected. Please join us for some fun activities! Registration is requested. Please register the attendee only.

**Book Discussion Series: Stamped: From the Beginning**

We're happy to announce that the Charlton Public Library is a Great Reads MA 2025 participating partner! This year's featured book is *Stamped from the Beginning: A Graphic History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi, adapted and illustrated by Joel Christian Gill. Copies of the book are available to check out at the main circulation desk.

Discuss Parts 1 and 2 on:

Thursday, Sept. 4 at 6 pm in Dexter Hall

Monday, Sept. 8 at 2 pm in the Community Room

Discuss Parts 3, 4, and 5 on:

Friday, Sept. 12 at 10:30 am in Dexter Hall

Tuesday, Sept. 23 at 6 pm in Dexter Hall

Discuss Parts 1-5 on Tuesday, Sept. 16 at 10:30 am in the Community Room

On Thursday, Sept. 25 at 6 pm we will have a virtual discussion with Joel Christian Gill.



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Book

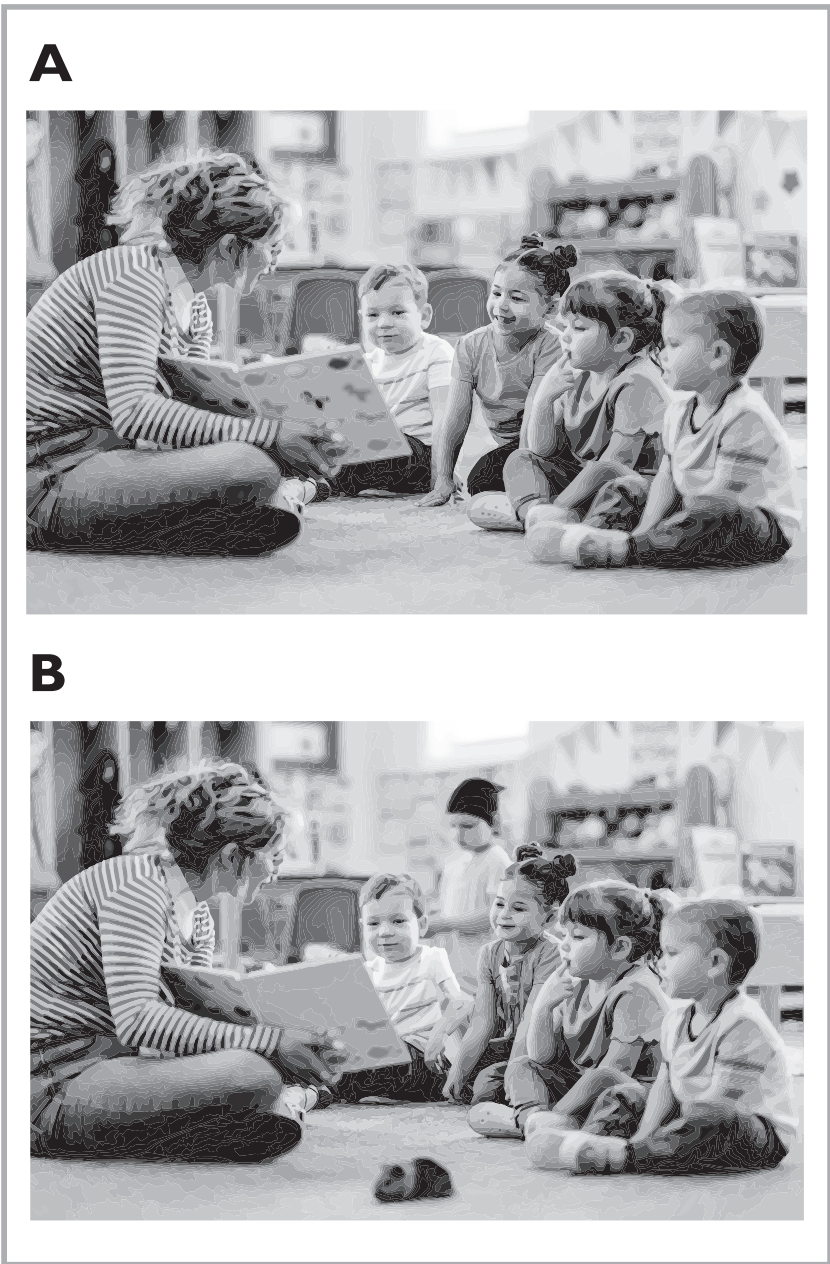
FACT:

In English-speaking countries, the works of this playwright are widely studied in school.

Answer: William Shakespeare

### What’s the Difference?

Find the four differences between the two pictures.



Answers: Guinea pig on rug 2. Missing shapes on book cover 3. Child standing in background 4. Missing stars on wall

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

AUG

26

**1883:** The volcano Krakatoa, located on an island near Indonesia, erupts.

**1920:** The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution is certified, giving women the right to vote.

**1972:** The Games of the XX Olympiad open in Munich.

NEW WORD

SYLLABUS

an outline of the subjects in a course of study

How they say that in...

**English:** Locker

**Spanish:** Taquilla

**Italian:** Armadietto

**French:** Casier

**German:** Schließfach

Did You Know?

Harvard University and the College of William & Mary are the oldest colleges in the United States, opening in 1636 and 1693, respectively.

Get the PICTURE?

Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: School bus

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to the school year.  
Each number corresponds to a letter.  
(Hint: 6 = s)

A. 26 18 25 21 20 7 26

Clue: Teach

B. 11 26 6 6 14 4 6

Clue: Plans for teaching

C. 21 11 20 6 6 12 14 14 13

Clue: Where students gather

D. 6 16 11 11 20 23 25 6

Clue: Course outline

Answers: A. educate B. lessons C. classroom D. syllabus

SUDOKU

9				2	8	1		
		4			5			
	5	2	9	1				
	4				7			
2				9		7		1
7	6	5	1		2	4		9
						3		
		1		3	6	5	9	2
3		8		7	9			4

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

ANSWER:

4	6	1	4	9	7	5	8	3
2	5	9	6	8	1	7	4	2
8	7	3	2	4	1	6	5	9
9	3	4	2	8	5	1	6	7
1	5	7	4	9	6	3	8	2
6	8	2	7	3	5	4	1	9
7	6	5	1	8	2	4	3	9
5	1	6	8	3	9	7	2	4
3	2	7	4	1	6	5	9	8



LEBLANC

continued from page 1

the tumor, it's possible that LeBlanc's diagnosis would not have happened if the incident never occurred.

LeBlanc, a mother who recently married an Auburn firefighter, has made a career of helping those in need, but over the past month she has found her lifelong passion for service repaid as countless supporters have pitched in to assist with her expenses as she recovers. Her journey has also spawned a GoFundMe fundraiser and calls from LeBlanc herself to improve the screenings for first responders and veterans to better detect

cancers.

Charlton Chief Rob Barton described LeBlanc as a fighter who has approached her recovery journey with optimism and a continued love for life in the face of adversity. While the Charlton Fire Department does have a partnership with Harrington Hospital to provide cancer screenings for its members, Barton acknowledged that sometimes diagnoses are missed which ironically means the accident may have helped save LeBlanc's life.

The chief revealed that since the news broke about LeBlanc's condition the crew has shown immense support and

the public outpouring of prayers, well wishes, and donations has been humbling for everyone.

"We were all upset that she got hurt. We were all starting to get really excited when we heard she was healing and coming back to work, but I got the news first and had to break it to the department. The immediate response was rallying around Stevie. Everyone wanted to know what they could do and what she needed – Stevie just wanted support and prayers. She's going into this with such a positive attitude, for herself and her family and children," said Barton.

LeBlanc underwent

successful surgery on Aug. 22 to have the tumor removed which will now be tested to determine if it is cancerous or benign. Any further treatment for her cancer will be handled by Dana Farber according to Chief Barton.

Prior to the surgery, LeBlanc spoke about her diagnosis and how she made the choice to continue to live life happy as the process plays out.

"I'm just thankful. As overwhelming as it could be, I don't feel any of that. I just feel gratitude – I'm not miserable, upset, or unhappy. I haven't had negative emotions at all. I can either be super miserable and have brain surgery, or I

can stay in good spirits and get brain surgery. I'm in a good place about it," said LeBlanc.

One major takeaway that LeBlanc hopes comes from her situation is more attention towards the need for better services for veterans and fire responders. LeBlanc acknowledged the screenings available to those in her profession but noted how her situation shows there is still work to do to make sure those who serve and protect have a better chance at early detection.

"I have had multiple cancer screenings with multiple fire departments and obviously things like this are missed all the time. Just

sharing to get the word out there is important to me. I'd love to see, through all of the attention I'm getting, that people are able to help other people in need. I'm just one person, and I'm thankful for the support, but there are tons of other firefighters and veterans out there that could use the same amount of support I've been getting," said LeBlanc.

A GoFundMe page set up on LeBlanc's behalf has amassed \$37,391 towards a \$40,000 goal as of this writing. A link to the GoFundMe page has been made available through the Charlton Fire Department Facebook page.

STURBRIDGE

continued from page 1

Chief John Grasso said "this particular model and particular center is the right fit for us," and noted they've had "significantly" fewer dispatchers than they need for some days' calls.

Police Chief Earl Desert agreed, saying it's

"been very challenging to be fully staffed." They aim to have two dispatchers on at all times, but sometimes can't do that. The regional center will have more than that at any one time.

Center director Mike Moriarty said the new system will start in early 2027.

Last year, State 911 project director Peter Kinnes said, the state awarded \$50 million to such regional centers that isn't available to individual towns. That money is dedicated from federal 911 surcharges on cellphone service and, although it passes through the state, the

state cannot take it for other uses.

He noted Massachusetts now has 32 such regions, some of them with more than 20 member towns.

Jamie Goodwin was still skeptical, saying he's concerned about "the rug being pulled out" in future years and

asking if other towns have bailed out of regions. He later noted many questions will likely be answered by reading the group's charter/contract.

Kinnes said one town switched regions, but didn't know of any who'd reverted to local dispatch. The way the

contract is structured and the state oversees such regions, "There has to be a clear public safety reason" to change.

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

WITCH

continued from page 1

The Southern New England (SNE) Witch Dancers started adapting the dance in 2022 and while they have since recreated several other routines by the Wolfshäger Hexenbruts, the popular "witch dance" remains a crowd favorite. Bernie Courtney, a founder and co-administrator of the SNE Witch Dancers, not only leads the troupe but shares the dance with those eager to learn including around 15 patrons of the Charlton Public Library

who attended a special training course on Aug. 19.

Courtney presented the basics of the routine, going step by step teaching the exact choreography as performed by the Wolfshäger Hexenbruts. The dance's origins are from Germany where it has become a staple of Walpurgis Night, the final night of April that leads into the first day of May known as Beltane. The night has a heavy focus on witches as its namesake Saint Walpurga is associated with battling witchcraft. Revelers often dress up

as demons and witches themselves during the event, which many feel wards off evil spirits. In the United States, the dance has been adapted to fit our own witchy season of Halloween which Courtney said has likely played a big part in its popularity.

"So many of these groups first started just trying to get Halloween performances going. We start in the spring with a Beltane performance. We do a lot of different types of dances - We are a performance group inspired by not just the Wolfshäger Hexenbruts,

but just to do more as performers," Courtney said. "I think in the big picture, to be witchy right now is the trendy thing. Even though it's not necessarily a spiritual commitment, it's an 'in' thing right now."

While Courtney enjoys being a part of the larger dance troupe, being able to share her longtime passion for dance and the group's love for the Wolfshäger Hexenbruts is something special. Most of the people that take part in her tutorials are just starting out and exploring something new. For

Courtney, it's a chance for everyone to have some fun and, maybe, inspire new dancers to explore their interests even more.

"They learn the steps to the dance, which is not complicated. Hopefully it gets them inspired to want to do more," said Courtney. "It's funny because I've been doing this for four years, I trained dancers for 40 years, but when I see these groups and I turn around and see the entire group behind me just having a blast I start laughing because it's just exhilarating."

The SNE Witch Dancers will be on the road for much of the next few months, particularly in October where they have packed their weekend schedules with shows across New England. Those looking to catch a performance or potentially join the group can learn more by visiting their many informational and fan pages on social media by searching the Southern New England Witch Dancers. Locally, the group will perform at the Sturbridge Harvest Festival on Oct. 19.

SCHOLARSHIPS

continued from page 5

olis Preparatory School, attending Boston College

- Emily Manfield, Saint Paul Diocesan Jr. Sr. High School, attending Suffolk University
- Jackson Checkosky, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, attending Providence College
- Leandro Jean-Pierre, Gateways Academy, attending Fitchburg State University
- Christian Rutter, Leicester High School, attending Worcester State University
- Ashley Dickhaut, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, attending University of Connecticut

"Each of these students has shown not only academic promise but also a strong sense of purpose and responsibility," Tallman added. "We're honored to invest in their potential and can't wait to see what they achieve in the years ahead."

Applicants were evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Graduation from high school in 2025
- Full-time enrollment at an

accredited college or university

- Planned study in business or finance
- Academic excellence and extracurricular/community involvement
- Submission of an official transcript and GPA
- A personal essay outlining goals and interests

For more information about this year's scholarship winners, visit: <https://cornerstonebank.com//cornerstone-bank-2025-scholarship-recipients/>

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