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SEND YOUR NEWS AND PICS TO [NEWS@STONEBRIDGEPRESS.NEWS](mailto:NEWS@STONEBRIDGEPRESS.NEWS) Friday, August 21, 2026

# Local Scout cleans up Spooner Well



Edith Simpson (sitting center) and other Scouts and leaders from Troop 163 at the newly cleaned up and refurbished Spooner Well site in Brookfield.

## Plan ahead for 26th Annual Leicester Harvest Fair

LEICESTER — The Leicester Harvest Fair committee welcomes exhibits from residents of Leicester and surrounding towns to enrich the Harvest Fair and display local handiwork. Entries will be exhibited and judged in two departments: Adults older than 18, and Youth – boys and girls under 18 as of Jan. 1, 2026.

Plan now to enter vegetables and flowers from your gardens and eggs laid by your backyard hens. Food artisans are invited to bring your home-baked pies, breads, muffins and cookies, as well as canned pickles, jams and jellies. Adults 21 and older can enter home-brewed beer, wine, cider/perry or mead. Artists and crafters are encouraged to display their photography and their fiber arts including quilting, sewing, knitting and crocheting, spinning and weaving, rug hooking, embroidery and tatting work.

More information with class lists, exhibit entry rules and helpful hints for a skilled display can be found on the Leicester Harvest Fair Facebook page and in Premium booklets available at the Leicester Town Hall, Senior Center, Public Library and at local businesses. Exhibitors should plan to bring their entries to the Town Hall on Friday, September 18, from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. Ribbons will be awarded the best three entries in each class.

The Massachusetts Master Gardeners will offer garden advice and free soil tests. Plan to gather a soil sample from your garden in advance and bring it to the Fair for pH analysis and recommendations. Instructions for collecting a soil sample can be found on the Harvest Fair Facebook page, or by clicking “gather your soil sample” at <https://massmaster-gardeners.org/educational-resources/soil-testing>.

Fair activities on and around the Town Common will entertain Fair-goers of all ages, rain or shine. Skilled artisans will demonstrate historic crafts, and local crafters will sell their wares. Food booths will offer a tasty selection of lunch choices, beverages and sweets. The Leicester High School CTE students will host booths, the Tri-M school band will perform, and there will be games and activities for children. Traditional folk music performances at the band stand will feature Yankee Notions, The Doolin Lads, and Slo-Grass. There will be a guided tour of historic buildings, and the Swan Tavern will be open to visitors.

Mark your calendar now and plan to join the festivities on the Leicester Common, in the Town Hall and nearby buildings!

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

BROOKFIELD — Hidden along the roadside of East Main Street in Brookfield is the site of a significant moment in United States history – a crime that would eventually lead to one of the first capital murder cases in

the country.

The Spooner Well has long been considered a historic landmark in Brookfield, but for many years was inaccessible due to overgrowth including an abundance of poison ivy. Thanks to a local scout, the site is now clean and refurbished and serves as a reminder of the horrible acts dating back to the country’s founding, the murder of Joshua Spooner.

In 1778, Joshua Spooner’s wife Bathsheba recruited three revolutionary soldiers to kill her husband and dispose of his body. They decided to hide him in a well nearby their home which today is known as Spooner Well. Bathsheba and her accomplices were eventually arrested and hung in Worcester in one of the first capital murder cases of the new republic.

Over the last year, the well has been the focus of a local scout who decided to revitalize the location for her Eagle Scout project.

Edith Simpson, a member of Scouting American Troop 163, worked with supporters to clean the property, adding an educational display and stone and a bench and while maintaining the wells lasting historic structure. The project was performed

in partnership with the Friends of Brookfield and neighboring property owners.

The Troop and members of the local community held a special reveal ceremony on August 8 where Edith told reporters that she was proud to see the project come to fruition.

“It’s a big relief to know that all the work is done, and I’m very proud of having accomplished this,” she said. “I had so many people come help and it was great to everyone come together with this in mind.”

During the ceremony, Don Chافت, a member of the Friends of Brookfield, said they were happy to see one of the future leaders of America take such devoted interest in one of their town’s historical sites.

“We’re a small non-profit group of citizens who enjoy trying to make the town better. What better project than partnering with Edith and the scouts to repair and make improvements to an iconic Brookfield location? We love it,” said Chافت.

Thanks to the efforts of Edith and her volunteers, the well will now stand once more as a site for those who want to ponder a dark but significant part of Brookfield’s history - a criminal murder case that has been etched in the nation’s history as one of the first legal cases of its kind.

## North Brookfield Town Meeting approves lighting project funds

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

NORTH BROOKFIELD — North Brookfield held a short but productive special town meeting on Aug. 11 where funding allocations for salaries and a lighting improvement project were all approved.

The meeting featured six articles, the first focusing on a lighting project for the Haston Free Public Library and North Brookfield Police Station, and the others focused on fire department salaries and police department electricity costs. Most of the night’s discussion centered around the lighting project, which officials said would be a huge boost for the town.

Following an audit of the town’s energy usage led by Roger Brooks, a member of the Finance Committee who selectmen thanks profusely for his contributions, North Brookfield received a grant for an energy management program which eventually brought lighting at the library and police station to the forefront of the discussions. The request at the Aug. 11 meeting was to transfer \$28,448 from the Capital Stabilization Fund to cover the cost.

The project in question is projected to save the library just short of \$15,000 annually and the police department roughly \$4,000 each year. The town secured a zero percent interest loan from National Grid.

Roger Brooks justified the project during the town meeting as a vital investment that would not only provide much needed upgrades but also significant savings in the long run that would potentially pay for itself.

“With a zero percent consideration from National Grid, it makes this a really tremendous project for us to do for the town,” said Brooks. “It’ll reduce the expenses across both the police station and the library. They’ll provide updated lighting for each facility which are both needed based on the appraisal that was done, and so I just think this is a real positive project for the town.”

Board of Selectmen Chair Jamie Gilman told voters that the numbers are actually more than what the project is expected to cost. North Brookfield proposed an allocation on the higher end of the price tag to make sure everything would be covered, with the excess set to be returned to the Capital Stabilization Fund at the annual town meeting.

“There were a lot of moving parts as we were getting into this, and we needed to have the number for this motion,” said Gilman. “I know some of us feel a little bit more apprehensive than others, but there’s been nothing signed as of yet, and the incentive situation changed relatively recently as to how the bill payment was going to work.”

The plan was approved soundly by the required two thirds majority, as were the other five items on the night’s warrant.

Articles 2 through 5 were all related to salaries associated with the fire

Turn To FUNDS page A8

## Spencer Summer Concert Series concludes with Miss Fairchild



SPENCER — The Spencer Parks & Recreation Commission’s 2026 Summer Concert Series concludes on Sunday, Aug. 23 from 2 to 5 p.m. at Powder Mill Park, corner Smithville and Meadow Roads, Spencer, with Miss Fairchild.

For the last two decades under the stage lights, New England’s Miss Fairchild has built a reputation on spectacle, musicianship, awe, and entertainment. Capably combining “juicy bass, slick grooves, and that peaches-and-cream brand of rhythm and blues” (Dig Boston) the band’s live performances have come to resemble one of Prince’s storied after shows: a mélange of

original-song staples, B-side cover tunes, and extended jams that would make even the Purple One smirk and bat his lashes with approval.

The concert series is proudly sponsored by Cornerstone Bank. Serving Worcester County, Massachusetts, Cornerstone Bank’s local presence and community-based banking model enables a unique ability to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch. Cornerstone provides the highest level of service and expertise for individuals, businesses, and community organizations with branch locations throughout Central Massachusetts.

# Russell Buzzell named Town House Artist of the Month



Russ Buzzell

NORTH BROOKFIELD — Russell (“Russ”) Buzzell has been named Artist of the Month for August by the Friends of the North Brookfield Town House.

Buzzell is a painter and illustrator from North Brookfield whose work is closely tied to the rural landscape, wildlife, and the history of central Massachusetts. He has had a professional career spanning many years, moving from illustration to fine art and historical painting.

Buzzell grew up on his family’s farm in North Brookfield. He milked the cows, drove the tractor, and participated in all the other jobs required of a farm family. But art was his first love.

A close family friend and artist known to young Buzzell as “Uncle Louie” nurtured his interest in art and helped him develop his skills. Russ graduated from North Brookfield High School in 1960 and the Art Institute of Boston in 1966.

He spent several years illustrating the publications of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. His impressive work there led to his being called upon to illustrate books and magazines, including “Animals Nobody Loves” by Ronald Rood, “The Farm Book” by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, and “The Wilderness Home of Giant Panda” by William G. Sheldon. He also illustrated for Gray’s Sporting Journal and Wisconsin Sportsman magazines and freelanced for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Buzzell’s most notable artwork includes “Sunday Afternoon on the Buzzell Farm” and the historical rendition of “Wheeler’s Surprise,” the ambush by Nipmuc Natives during the King Phillips War in West Brookfield on Aug. 2, 1675.

Buzzell works out of his Buck Hill Studio in North Brookfield where the majority of his time is spent on privately commissioned paintings and drawings of New England farms, landscapes, and wildlife. He works with oils, scratchboard, watercolor, and pen and ink.

People attending the 2026 Backroads Studio Tour Oct. 3 & 4 will be able to visit Russell Buzzell’s Buck Hill studio to appreciate his work in person. While there, they can purchase original art, limited edition numbered prints, and greeting cards.

For more information on Russell Buzzell visit [nbtownhouse.com](http://nbtownhouse.com) and click on featured artists.

The Friends of the North Brookfield Town House is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on restoring, preserving, and sustaining the historic Town House in the center of North Brookfield. Every month this organization recognizes a featured artist in their community.

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## Alex Cordy Memorial Golf Tournament set for Sept. 12

OAKHAM — St. Carlo Acutis Parish, Brookfield/West Brookfield/Warren, is having their Ninth Annual Alex Cordy Memorial Charity Golf Tournament at Quail Hollow Golf and Country Club, 1822 Old Turnpike Road, Oakham, Massachusetts on Saturday, Sept. 12. Registration begins at 7:15 a.m., with a Shotgun Start at 8 a.m.

As many of you are aware, Alex Cordy was an integral part of our West Brookfield Community for many years. In memory of his outstanding service to his community, his parish, and being a founding member of our Knights of Columbus Council 11080, this tournament will once again benefit our Youth Activities Fund to support the youth in our local community, a cause that was very important to Alex. We were able to award two \$1,000.00 scholarships this past year from the proceeds of this event to two local high school seniors, as well as fund many other youth activities. We ask that you please consider supporting our event by sponsoring or participating in the tournament individually or with a foursome. Tournament Raffle Items and General Donations to this event are always welcomed and appreciated!

Registration and sponsorships are now available for this tournament. To register, and for more information, please call (413) 813-8100 or email [wallyconnor122@gmail.com](mailto:wallyconnor122@gmail.com).

## Heather Bouchard of West Brookfield earns University of Nebraska-Lincoln degree

LINCOLN, Neb. — Heather C. Bouchard of West Brookfield was among 595 graduates who received degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln during a combined graduate and undergraduate commencement ceremony Aug. 15 at Pinnacle Bank Arena.

Bouchard earned a Doctor of Philosophy from the Office of Graduate Studies.

The graduates are from 42 countries; 40 U.S. states and Puerto Rico; and 55 Nebraska communities.

For the full list of August graduates, visit <https://go.unl.edu/grads-aug26>.



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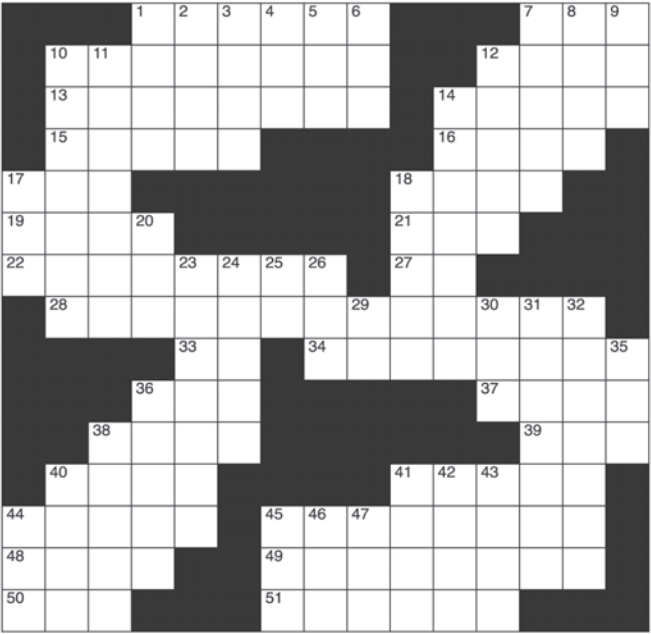
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### CLUES ACROSS

1. A vast desert in Africa

7. Reciprocal of a sine

10. Type of phone

12. Biblical figure

13. One who renounces a religious belief

14. Warren and Monroe are two

15. Wild ox

16. Dismounted a horse

17. Cave dweller

18. Where infants sleep

19. Popular type of shoe

21. Clumsy large person

22. Evil-like

27. Integrated circuit
28. Austin-based athlete

33. Postscript

34. Follows 18

36. People of Gambia

37. Popular actor Nicolas

38. Platform for a lectern

39. Taxi

40. American songwriter Sammy

41. Iranian city

44. Heavy clubs

45. One who is expelled

48. In bed

49. Lifelessness

50. Former CIA

51. Most slick

### CLUES DOWN

1. Slovenly person

2. In addition

3.hovels

4. Pie \_\_\_ mode

5. Subway rodent

6. They \_\_\_

7. Indigenous S. American people

8. Fine sand

9. Central nervous system

10. Nightclub entertainment

11. The perfect example of something

12. Supreme Islamic leader

14. Pain

17. Binary-coded decimal

18. Projecting corner of an angle

20. “Succession” actor Brian

23. Dinner table decor

24. Ancient settlement in modern Turkey
25. You can call Paul Simon this

26. Opposite of a pro

29. Atomic #28

30. Type of drug (abbr.)

31. Arrives at

32. Nullifies

35. Bird’s beak

36. Partner to “oohed”

38. Ray-finned fishes

40. Taxis

41. Sat on and controlled

42. Sea eagles

43. Remain as-is

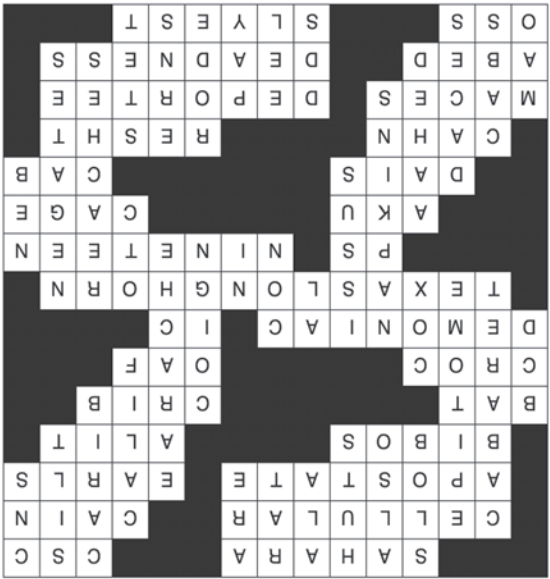
44. Chinese revolutionary

45. Tooth caregiver

46. Snakelike fish

47. Compensate

### PUZZLE SOLUTION



# bankHometown strengthens Retail Banking team with key leadership appointments



Jerusa DeBrito

OXFORD — bankHometown is pleased to announce the addition of four experienced banking professionals across its retail network. These appointments reflect the bank's continued investment in customer service, employee development, and community-focused banking throughout Central Massachusetts and north-eastern Connecticut.

Jerusa DeBrito appointed AVP, Branch Officer in Leominster

Jerusa DeBrito has joined bankHometown as assistant vice president, branch officer of the bank's 9 Sack Blvd., Leominster office.

With nearly 30 years of retail banking experience, DeBrito most recently served as AVP, bilingual branch manager at M&T Bank. She is known for her relationship-focused approach and commitment to serving customers and the community.

DeBrito serves as a board member of Fresh Start Furniture Bank and She's Local and is a member of the American Heart Association's Go Red Awareness Committee. She earned a Certificate in the Fundamentals of Banking from the New England College of Finance and has participated in the Certified Financial Educators' Financial Wellness Program.

Alison Tozzi named AVP, Branch Officer in Putnam

Alison Tozzi has joined bankHometown as assistant vice president, branch officer of its 182 Main St., Putnam, Connecticut office.



Alison Tozzi

Tozzi brings nearly 30 years of banking experience to the organization. Most recently, she served as branch manager at KeyBank and previously worked as a senior personal banker at Bank of America. Her extensive background in branch leadership and customer service will support the continued success of the Putnam team.

Dhimitri Piluri joins Worcester Office as Branch Officer

Dhimitri Piluri recently joined bankHometown as branch officer of the bank's 1001 Millbury St., Worcester office, bringing more than 10 years of banking experience to the role.

Most recently, Piluri served as branch manager at Savers Bank and previously held positions as a relationship banker at Main Street Bank and Santander Bank. He has developed expertise in customer service, relationship management, and retail banking operations.

Piluri holds a Bachelor's degree in marketing from La Sapienza University in Italy and a master's degree in information technology from Southern New Hampshire University. A strong advocate for financial education, Piluri has volunteered with Junior Achievement, assisting with lessons on budgeting, saving, credit, and loans. He has also participated in financial workshops for immigrants and low-income families and served through the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

Maria Baker joins



Dhimitri Piluri

Sturbridge office as Assistant Branch Manager Maria Baker recently joined bankHometown as assistant branch manager of its 331 Main St., Sturbridge office.

Baker has 25 years of banking experience and most recently served as market manager at Cornerstone Bank. Her extensive knowledge of retail banking and customer relationship management will be an asset to the Sturbridge team and its customers.

"At bankHometown, our success is driven by the talented individuals who serve our customers and communities every day," said Robert Morton, president & CEO of bankHometown. "We are excited to welcome these accomplished banking professionals to our team. Their experience, leadership, and commitment to relationship banking will strengthen our ability to deliver exceptional service, build meaningful customer connections, and support the communities we proudly serve."

About bankHometown Founded in 1889, bankHometown is headquartered in Oxford, Massachusetts. We have \$1.6 billion in assets and offer a complete line of consumer and business deposit and lending products and services through 15 locations throughout Central Massachusetts and north-east Connecticut. We're proud to fulfill our community banking mission—providing individualized financial support, comprehensive products and services, and banking tools—to ensure



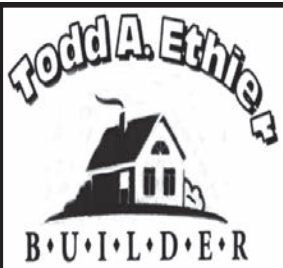
Maria Baker

our customers can unlock their potential and build a successful future.

Through our charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, we support non-profit organizations and causes throughout Worcester and Windham Counties. In 2025 alone, The Giving Tree donated more than \$550,000 and over the last decade donated more than \$3.3 million. bankHometown was named a Corporate Citizenship Award winner by Boston Business Journal for the past six years, reaffirming our status as one of Massachusetts' most charitable companies. Additionally, we were named a 2025 Top Place to Work award winner by The Boston Globe, and both bankHometown and our parent company, Hometown Financial Group, were recognized as five-time USA Today Top Workplaces award recipients. For more information, visit bankHometown.com.

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<https://www.mareinc.org/recruitment-group/51030325292>

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

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BRENDAN BERUBE  
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

Preserving even the darkest chapters of local history

History is not always comfortable. Every community has stories it proudly celebrates, from military service and civic achievement to successful businesses, beloved institutions and generations of families who helped shape a town. But there are other stories that are darker, more difficult and sometimes easier to allow to disappear.

Brookfield’s Spooner Well belongs to that second category.

The site along East Main Street is connected to the 1778 murder of Joshua Spooner, whose wife, Bathsheba, recruited three Revolutionary War soldiers to kill him. His body was placed in a well near the family home. Bathsheba Spooner and her accomplices were eventually arrested and executed in Worcester in a case that became one of the earliest capital murder proceedings of the new republic.

It is a grim story. It is also part of Brookfield’s history and, on a larger scale, the history of the young United States.

For years, however, someone looking for the site would have had difficulty appreciating its significance. Overgrowth, including poison ivy, had made the property largely inaccessible.

That has changed because Edith Simpson of Scouting America Troop 163 decided the site was worth preserving.

Simpson chose the Spooner Well for her Eagle Scout project and spent the past year working with volunteers, the Friends of Brookfield and neighboring property owners to reclaim the site. The project cleaned the property while respecting the historic well itself and added an educational display, stone and bench. The result was unveiled Aug. 8.

There is something particularly appropriate about a young person undertaking this kind of preservation project. Historic stewardship ultimately depends upon one generation deciding that the experiences of previous generations are worth passing along to the next.

That does not mean celebrating everything that happened in the past. Preservation and celebration are very different things.

Nobody visits the site of a murder because the crime deserves admiration. Such places are preserved because history loses something when difficult chapters are erased from the landscape. The Spooner case provides a window into crime, punishment, law and society at the very beginning of the American republic. The physical location gives that history an immediacy that a paragraph in a book cannot entirely reproduce.

There is also value in what Simpson’s project demonstrates about historic preservation in small communities.

Not every important historic site has a professional staff, a large endowment or government funding available for its upkeep. Many survive because local historical organizations, property owners, volunteers and residents decide they matter.

Sometimes, one determined person can provide the spark.

Simpson credited the many people who came together to help complete her project. Don Chافت of the Friends of Brookfield similarly described the effort as a partnership between the organization, Simpson and the Scouts to improve an iconic Brookfield location.

That partnership has accomplished something that should endure well beyond an Eagle Scout project.

Visitors can once again find the Spooner Well, learn what happened there and consider what the episode tells us about Brookfield and the country that was emerging around it in 1778.

History should not be limited to the stories that make a community feel good about itself. It should tell the truth about what happened, including those events that are tragic, disturbing or complicated.

Thanks to Edith Simpson and those who helped her, one of those stories will remain visible in Brookfield.

That is preservation in its most meaningful form.

# VIEWPOINT

OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

There’s a good reason we don’t see much of Richard Neal

To the Editor:  
On Tuesday, Sept. 1, Massachusetts voters get to vote to select their state and federal candidates that will appear on the November ballot. I am writing in support of Congressman Richard Neal in the Democratic primary.

Although from Springfield, he does not forget his constituents in Central Mass. I have personally known of many area residents who were bogged down with Washington red tape and not getting their veterans’ benefits, Social Security or even immigration hearings until Congressman Neal intervened on their behalf.

On a more widespread scale, when I was a selectman, I worked with Congressman Neal in getting funds to help replace Spencer’s century or older sewer pipes that were made of clay or wood. Yes, wood! These broken pipes were allowing millions of gallons of rainwater to go to our wastewater treatment plant that became over tasked and creating massive pollution problems f our downstream neighbor in the Brookfields. This grant was for nearly \$1 million, which is money that our sewer rate payers do not have to pay. Congressman Neal was able to obtain this grant for Spencer because he is the

ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee. Should he be re-elected and the Democrats take control of the House of Representatives, he will then become the Chairman of the powerful House Committee. Imagine what he could then do for Central and Western Mass.

Lastly, some residents complain that they never see him. This spring he did visit the Spencer town hall and met with the Board of Selectmen and any residents who chose to stop by. When I was superintendent of schools, he would always have time to meet with the East Brookfield 6th grade students when they went to Washington. He also annually visited East Brookfield Elementary School to meet with the students. He did not represent Spencer at that time. He represents 83 cities and towns in Central and Western Mass. Many of his days are spent in Washington representing those communities. There are only 365 days in the year, and his primary duties are in the nation’s Capital. Do the math!

Please join me on Sept. 1 in voting for Congressman Richard Neal. Thank you for your consideration.

RALPH E. HICKS  
SPENCER

Who will stand up?

To the Editor:

It could not be any clearer that this administration has put itself in a position to ignore laws, rules, norms and the constitution. We put Martha Stewart in prison for acting on insider information she received.

We are now seeing a President who has added selling insider information to pardons as a cottage industry. Imagine making rules and depleting inventories of munitions, then buying them from companies your sons are owners of.

All prior administrations have eschewed crypto currencies, knowing that unlike other currencies with intrinsic backing, crypto has none. this president has more than tripled his own net worth, by interacting with and inviting foreign investment. Between that and receiving a jet from Qatar (FYI, that “free” jet will cost us about two billion, between refitting, purchasing to identical parts planes and a special hanger to house it). The speculation that it will be given to Trumps library at the end of his term, is nutso, Qatar was retiring them because they were too expensive to fly and maintain. If there is anything we do not need, it is increased costs.

Remember DOGE? The Department of Government Efficiency, originally captained by Elon Musk , was supposed to cut two trillion in wasted spending. The actual savings will be about 250 billion, but do not hold your breath awaiting a refund check. So what was accomplished? Not only is the richest man in the world starving the poorest children in the world, but USAID was so efficient that UNICEF’s Save the Children, World Church Services and pharmaceutical supporting doctors without borders all depended on them. In addition, the 75 percent of family farms who relied on it to survive against the big corporate farms, are going bankrupt and being sold off to the big operators now raping us.

Other cuts include fraud protections, meat and lettuce inspectors, every inspector general

So, even if we get through the November election, without the Stalin style nationalization (Stalin said, it makes no difference who votes or how, only who counts the votes), and won the house and senate, and impeached the grifter in chief, who would enforce it?

KEN KIMBALL  
BROOKFIELD

Simple budgeting tips that fit real life



FINANCIAL FOCUS

TREVOR NIELSEN

If you’ve just started managing your own finances, recommitted to doing it well or noticed your spending isn’t making you as happy as you’d hoped, a budget might be exactly what you need. When you know where your money is going, you’re likely to feel more in control and more confident your finances reflect what matters to you.

A simple budgeting framework to start: The 50/30/20 rule

One of the easiest ways to structure a budget is the 50/30/20 rule. The concept is refreshingly straightforward: Put 50 percent of your after-tax income toward necessities (housing, groceries, utilities, transportation), 30 percent toward wants (dining out, entertainment, streaming subscriptions) and 20 percent toward savings or paying down debt.

The 50/30/20 rule is a great foundation, but you may need to adjust it a little. If you live in a high-cost city, housing alone might require more than half your paycheck. Or you may have high income and can save more than 20 percent. Think of the 50/30/20 rule as a starting point you can adjust as your life evolves.

Not sure where your money goes?

That’s completely normal. If you honestly don’t know what you spend each month, try a low-pressure approach first. Spend a few months simply observing. Check your accounts without judgment, noting money coming in and going out. Think of it as a financial check-in rather than a report card. You can’t change the past, but you can absolutely adjust for the future.

From there, small steps go a long way. Even spending 15 minutes a week on your budget can make the whole process feel far less daunting.

Make technology your easy button

Some budgeting apps do the routine work for you, syncing with your accounts and tracking spending automatically. Others are more hands-on, encouraging you to map out your spending plan in advance. There’s likely one out there for every style of budgeting. The goal is to find a system you’ll use and stick with.

When the numbers feel discouraging

Sometimes looking at spending brings up more stress than relief. If that happens, start by shifting your perspective. Focus on the expenses that brought you real value — a modest gift that meant the world to a friend or how your rent provides a comfortable, stable life. Then look for changes that align your spending with your values. Substituting expenses, reducing expenses, or creating more income could all be used to help you keep your spending below your income.

Build a buffer

If you can, consider building a small buffer into your budget for unexpected expenses such as birthdays, minor repairs or spontaneous plans. Adding perhaps 3 percent of your income or a set dollar amount, like \$200, helps keep those costs from throwing your whole plan off course.

The bottom line

With a few simple steps, budgeting becomes easier to stick with and more meaningful over time. At its core, it’s a way to align your money with what matters while enjoying today and planning for tomorrow.

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

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# The great household thermostat negotiations

LANTERNS  
ALONG  
MAIN  
STREET  
By CHARLES

There are few subjects capable of revealing the fundamental differences between two people quite as efficiently as the thermostat. My wife and I have been married for roughly three decades. We have successfully navigated mortgages, children, home repairs, family holidays and countless decisions involving considerably more money and consequence than the temperature inside our house. Yet we remain unable to agree on what number should appear on that little box on the wall.

This becomes particularly complicated in August.

New England summers have a way of producing days when the house feels perfectly comfortable at breakfast, slightly tropical by lunch and suitable for growing orchids by late afternoon.

This is when the negotiations begin.

I tend to believe that air conditioning should be used with restraint. I am not against modern technology. I simply have an ingrained suspicion that every degree I lower the thermostat causes the electric meter outside to spin fast enough to affect the Earth's rotation.

My wife takes a different approach. If we own an air conditioner, she reasons, perhaps we should occasionally experience the benefits of air conditioning. It's difficult to argue with that.

I will walk past the thermostat and notice that it has been lowered. I raise it two degrees. An hour later, I walk past again. It has been lowered. Nobody says anything.

This is important. We are not arguing. We are participating in a silent competition involving climate control. Eventually, one of us breaks the silence.

"Did you change the thermostat?"

"No."

This answer is technically incorrect but strategically useful. Then comes the inevitable question.

"Why is it 74?"

I explain that 74 is a perfectly reasonable

indoor temperature.

Apparently, it is not.

The funny thing is that nobody ever agrees on what "comfortable" actually means. One person says the house is warm. Another says it feels fine. Someone opens a window. Someone else points out, correctly, that opening a window while the air conditioner is running makes absolutely no sense. The window gets closed. Ten minutes later, somebody turns on a fan.

This raises another question: If the air conditioner is running and the ceiling fan is running and a portable fan is running, at what point are we simply attempting to manufacture weather?

I remember growing up without any of this. On hot nights, we opened windows. We had box fans that sounded like small aircraft engines. If it was still hot, we complained about it. That was our cooling system.

Nobody checked an app to see what the "feels like" temperature was because we already knew what it felt like. It felt hot. Of course, nostalgia becomes much easier when you're sitting in an air-conditioned room.

I have no intention of returning to the days of lying awake on an August night hoping a breeze might wander through the bedroom window sometime before sunrise. I've become soft. I accept this.

Still, there is something amusing about the amount of thought modern households devote to achieving the perfect indoor temperature.

We can heat our homes in January and cool them in August. We have programmable thermostats, remote controls and fans with six speeds.

And yet two adults who have shared a house for decades can stand beneath the same ceiling and experience entirely different climates.

Perhaps that's the real lesson of marriage. Communication is essential. And if you quietly change the thermostat, always remember what number it was on before.

## Webster First Federal Credit Union promotes Colleen Carney to Chief Risk Officer



Colleen Carney

WORCESTER — Webster First Federal Credit Union has announced the promotion of Colleen Carney to Chief Risk Officer. The appointment reflects the growing importance of risk management within the credit union and recognizes Carney's leadership in supporting Webster First's continued success.

"Colleen brings a strong and well-rounded background in banking, operations, finance, revenue management, and risk management," said President and CEO John Thomasian, "As Webster First continues to demonstrate strong performance and sustained growth, the importance of a comprehensive and proactive risk management function has never been greater. I am confident that Colleen will excel in this important leadership role."

Before joining Webster

First, she spent 10 years at Flagship Bank in Worcester. She earned a B.S. in Business Administration, magna cum laude, from Worcester State University.

Carney joined Webster First in October 2007 as Spencer Branch Manager. During her tenure, she earned an M.S. in Management from Worcester State University and later transitioned to the Accounting Department as Assistant Vice President of Risk Management in July 2018. She was promoted to Vice President of Revenue in October 2020, and in January 2024 assumed responsibility for risk management as Vice President of Risk and Revenue. In this role, she expanded and strengthened the credit union's risk management function, enhanced the work of the Risk Committee, and helped ensure that risks across the organization are appropriately assessed, evaluated, mitigated, and managed. She is currently pursuing an M.S. in Enterprise Risk Management at Boston University.

Carney said "I am hon-

ored to step into the newly created role of Chief Risk Officer and grateful for the opportunity to help shape this important function for the credit union. Establishing this position reflects our continued commitment to strong governance, thoughtful risk management, and long-term organizational strength. I look forward to working collaboratively across the organization to protect and support our members, employees, and community while helping guide sound decision-making and responsible growth."

About Webster First Federal Credit Union Webster First Federal Credit Union ranks among the largest credit unions operating in Massachusetts. Since its founding in 1928, Webster First has grown its operations, services, and membership to serve four counties across the state, Worcester, Essex, Middlesex, and Suffolk with branches throughout. For more information, visit [websterfirst.com](http://websterfirst.com).

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# Workshop13 presents Eighth Annual Northeast Fine Arts Exhibition

WARE — The eighth annual juried Northeast Fine Arts Exhibition opens on Saturday, Aug. 22 with a reception from 1-4pm. Awards will be announced at 3 p.m., including a \$1,000 prize for Best in Show. This annual exhibition of realism is held in the unique Urban Hall gallery (formerly Grand Hall gallery) of Workshop13, a non-profit cultural arts and learning center located at 13 Church St. in Ware. Located on the second floor of Workshop13's renovated church building, the newly renamed Urban Hall is now accessible by vertical chair lift.

The Eighth Annual Northeast Fine Arts Exhibition will be on display from Aug. 22 to Sept. 6, and can be visited on Fridays from 4-7 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 p.m. This year's exhibition gathers dozens of breathtaking works by artists throughout the northeastern U.S., including sculptures, paintings, drawings, and mixed media works.

The juror for the eighth annual NEFAE is Scott Prior. Scott Prior lives and works in Northampton, Massachusetts, where he has been a resident since 1971. Born in Exeter, New Hampshire, he received a

BFA in printmaking from the University of Massachusetts in 1971. He has artwork in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the DeCordova Museum, the Danforth Museum, the New Britain Museum of American Art, the Rose Art Museum and other major public and private collections. He has shown extensively in one-person and group shows in the United States and abroad. In 2001 he had a mid-career retrospective at the DeCordova Museum. Scott Prior is represented by the Alpha Gallery

in Boston and William Baczek Fine Arts in Northampton.

About Workshop13  
Workshop13 is a dynamic center where arts, culture, and community converge—expanding access to the arts and nurturing creativity and self-expression in our rural region. For more information, visit workshop13.org, or call 413-277-6072.



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"Cabin at Sunset" by Scott Prior, juror for the eighth annual NEFAE.



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# ArtWorks Gallery welcomes you to view “Through the Lens”

WARE — Workshop13’s ArtWorks Gallery in Ware presents a photography exhibition called “Through the Lens: Presence and Absence.” This exhibition explores the relationship between visibility and implication—spaces that suggest human presence, objects that stand in for memory, or scenes where absence speaks as strongly as presence. ArtWorks Gallery is located at 69 Main St. in Ware.

“Through the Lens: Presence and Absence” is on display through Sept. 13. Gallery hours are Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4pm. For those who cannot attend the show in person, a virtual gallery is available for viewing at workshop13.org.

Fine art photographer James Gehrt served as the juror for this exhibition. Stephen Johnas was awarded Best in Show for the striking black and white photograph, “The Second Story of Hope.” Vern Mcclish’s “Abandoned



“The Second Story of Hope” by Stephen Johnas.

Machine Shop” was awarded Best Color and Joanne Holtje’s “Ferry” was awarded Best Black and White.

The Honorable Mention for Color went to Damien O’Halloran’s “You and Me,” and the Honorable

Mention for Black and White went to Bora Pina’s Source of Truth. Each of these photographers and

their works will be spotlighted on Workshop13’s social media pages as well as in their weekly news-

letter.

ArtWorks Gallery has two calls for art currently open. The Unexpected Portrait closes its call for unique portraits in almost any medium at midnight on Aug. 20. “Americana: Pictures of Our Community” is accepting photos from residents of Ware and surrounding areas through Oct. 11. Visit workshop13.org for more information.

About ArtWorks Gallery and Workshop13

ArtWorks Gallery is Workshop13’s gallery on Main Street. This space features numerous art exhibitions each year and is also available to rent for individual or group shows. Workshop13 is a dynamic center where arts, culture, and community converge—expanding access to the arts and nurturing creativity and self-expression in our rural region. For more information, visit workshop13.org, or call 413-277-6072.

## Leicester Public Schools offers meals at no cost for students

LEICESTER — Leicester Public Schools participates in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. As part of this program, all schools offer healthy meals every school day at NO COST to the students due to the implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision for school year 2026-2027. Students receive breakfast and lunch at school without having to pay a fee or submit a household application.

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## Girl Scout Troop welcomes new members

SPENCER — Girls entering grades Kindergarten and 1 in the fall are invited to join Troop 65501. The troop meets in Spencer every other Sunday, 4:30-5:45 p.m. Girl membership registration fee is \$111, and is active until September 30, 2027. Financial Assistance is available.

Girl Scouts is the premier organization for girls to learn about leadership, financial literacy, life skills, the outdoors, community service, science and technology. Girl Scout programming is customizable for all types of learners! Previous Girl Scout experience is not necessary.

You can register for a spot in the troop at <https://go.gscwm.org/troop65501>. Questions? E-mail [info@gscwm.org](mailto:info@gscwm.org) or call

508-365-0115.

About Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts

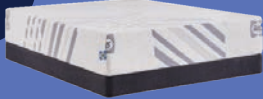
Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts serves nearly 6,000 girls in grades K through 12 with the strong support of over 2,500 adult volunteers in 186 towns and cities in central and western Massachusetts. The Girl Scout program allows girls to discover the fun, friendship, and power of girls together while building their personal leadership qualities. GSCWM supports girls by giving them extraordinary opportunities to explore, experience, and learn about their world and helps girls recognize that they are vital members of their communities.



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# Open poetry reading series coming to Merriam-Gilbert Library

WEST BROOKFIELD — Local poets, readers and lovers of the written word will have a new opportunity to share their favorites

when the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library hosts “One Poem,” an open poetry reading series beginning in September.

The program is designed to provide a welcoming venue for writers to share their own poetry while introducing participants to the work of other published poets.

For each original poem a participant reads, organizers ask that the reader

complement it with a poem by an established, published writer. Selections can range widely, from Shakespeare and Anne Bradstreet to Charles Bukowski, William Butler Yeats, Rumi, Adrienne Rich and contemporary poets.

Participants do not need to

be poets themselves. Those without original work are welcome to read favorite poems by published writers, while community members who would rather listen are equally encouraged to attend.

Readings will take place in round-robin fashion, with participants sharing no more than two poems during each turn. The number of opportunities each person has to read will depend upon attendance. Organizers ask participants to avoid particularly lengthy selections so everyone has an opportunity to take part.

The series is intended to foster a creative community of writers and readers while exposing participants to

poets and styles they might not otherwise encounter.

“One Poem” will run from September through May, generally on the third Thursday of each month from 4 to 6 p.m. Some dates may be adjusted because of holidays.

Programs will be held in the upstairs meeting room at the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library on Main Street in West Brookfield. The meeting room is accessible by elevator.

The series is open to the Central Massachusetts community.

“Come: read, listen, learn, savor,” organizers invite participants.

# Registration open for Brookfields Lions Club Golf Tournament

NORTH BROOKFIELD — Registration is now open for the 2026 Brookfields Lions Club golf tournament, according to event chair, Marc Kokansky.

The annual event is taking place on Saturday, Aug. 22 at the Quail Hollow Country Club, 1822 Old Turnpike Rd., Oakham. The four-person scramble tournament begins with registration at 12 p.m., followed by a 1 p.m. shotgun start.

The entry fee is \$100 per golfer, which includes 18 holes of golf, cart, skins competition, closest-to-the-pin contests, and a meal following the tournament at Quail Hollow Country Club.

Proceeds from the tournament will benefit the Brookfields Lions Club’s charitable programs and community service projects throughout the area. Through fundraising events such as this tournament, the club supports local organizations and individuals while carrying out the Lions’ mission of serving those in need.

To register a team or obtain additional information, contact Marc Kokansky at 508-847-9843. Registration is open now through August 15.

As the world’s largest, youngest and most active service organization, the mission of Lions Clubs International is to empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace, and promote international understanding. Members of the Brookfields Lions Club are dedicated to service and support in the communities of Brookfield, East Brookfield, North Brookfield, West Brookfield, and New Braintree.

# Spencer Sunoco to host ‘Spencer’s Bravest Family Fun Day’

SPENCER — Spencer Sunoco will bring residents together later this month for an afternoon of food, games and family activities while raising money to support local first responders.

“Spencer’s Bravest Family Fun Day” will be held Sunday, Aug. 30, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Spencer Sunoco, 73 W. Main St.

Organizers are inviting families, friends and neighbors to attend the community fundraiser, with 100 percent of proceeds slated to support Spencer firefighters and police officers.

The event will feature hamburgers and hot dogs, along with a lemonade stand. Activities for children and families will include face painting, temporary tattoos and games.

Local vendors will also participate throughout the day, and visitors will have opportunities to enter raffles.

The event is intended to provide residents with a fun end-of-summer gathering while showing appreciation for the firefighters and police officers who serve the Spencer community.

Organizers are encouraging residents to bring family members, friends and neighbors and spend part of the day supporting the fundraiser.

“Together we can make a big difference,” organizers said in announcing the event.

Spencer Sunoco is located at 73 W. Main St. The Family Fun Day runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 30.

# WEEKLY POLICE BLOTTER

## Spencer

The Spencer Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Aug. 5-11.

Cyrus W. Louis, age 44, of Worcester was arrested on Aug. 5 for Possession of a Class B Drug, Disturbing the Peace, and Disorderly Conduct.

## Leicester

The Leicester Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Aug. 6-12.

Eamonn Elisha Bard, age 50, of Worcester was arrested on Aug. 7 for an RO Violation.

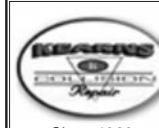
An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on Aug. 10 for operating an Uninsured and Unregistered Motor Vehicle.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on Aug. 12 for Operating a Motor Vehicle after suspension of registration and operating an Uninsured Motor Vehicle.



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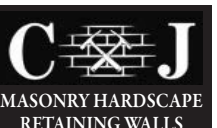


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# Heather Bouchard of West Brookfield earns University of Nebraska-Lincoln degree

LINCOLN, Neb. — Heather C. Bouchard of West Brookfield was among 595 graduates who received degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln during a combined graduate and undergraduate commencement ceremony Aug. 15 at Pinnacle Bank Arena.

Bouchard earned a Doctor of Philosophy from the Office of Graduate Studies.

The graduates are from 42 countries; 40 U.S. states and Puerto Rico; and 55 Nebraska communities.

For the full list of August graduates, visit <https://go.unl.edu/grads-aug26>.

# Spencer Town Moderator launches new community television show, “The Brewster Call”

SPENCER — Jason Brewster, the newly elected Town Moderator of Spencer, is announcing the launch of “The Brewster Call,” a new community television show on Spencer Cable Access, Channel 192.

The show airs Fridays from 6 to 6:30 p.m. and focuses on informed civic participation and respectful dialogue.

Special thanks to Spencer Cable Access for making this program possible and for its continued commitment to local programming and community engagement.

“The Brewster Call” is produced by Jason Brewster in his capacity as a private citizen. The views expressed are his own and should not be construed as official statements or positions of the Spencer Town Moderator or the Town of Spencer.

For questions or episode suggestions, email [thebrewster-call@gmail.com](mailto:thebrewster-call@gmail.com).

# Vendors wanted for flea market on W. Brookfield Common

WEST BROOKFIELD — The First Congregational Church 36 N. Main St., W. Brookfield, UCC has been hosting their Flea Market on the town Common for more than 50 years. This year the Flea Market will be held on Saturday, Sept. 12 from 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (vendor check-in 6:30 - 8:30 a.m.).

Sellers of all kinds are welcome - flea folk, antique dealers, crafters, product vendors, and those emptying out basements and attics! No food vendors, please. Spaces are available for \$40 for a 20-by-20-foot grassy spot. Vendors must bring their own tables and tents. The church will sponsor a food tent with grilled food, cold drinks and sweet treats. Email to [fccofwbfleamarket@gmail.com](mailto:fccofwbfleamarket@gmail.com) for an application or call Karen at 508-801-7692.

Mark your calendars; the tradition continues!

# Knights of Columbus plans walk, Mass at Nazareth Grotto

LEICESTER — The Knights of Columbus will hold a walk to the Nazareth Grotto followed by a special Mass on Sunday, Aug. 30.

Participants are invited to meet at noon at the Knights of Columbus council building, 91 Manville St., Leicester. Those attending may walk to the grotto with the group or drive separately and park at the grotto.

Bishop Robert J. McManus will celebrate Mass following the walk.

After Mass, participants are invited to return to the Knights of Columbus building on Manville Street for lunch and refreshments.

Community members are welcome to participate in the gathering.

# Spencer announces early voting schedule for state primary

SPENCER — The Town of Spencer has announced its in-person early voting schedule ahead of the Massachusetts state primary on Tuesday, Sept. 1.

Early voting will be held at Spencer Town Hall beginning Saturday, Aug. 22, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. That date is also the final day to register to vote in the state primary.

Additional early voting hours will be offered Monday, Aug. 24, through Wednesday, Aug. 26, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Early voting will conclude Thursday, Aug. 27, with voting available from 7:30 a.m. to noon.

The state primary will be held Tuesday, Sept. 1. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Residents planning to participate are encouraged to take note of the registration deadline and early voting hours when making their voting plans.

# 41st Valley Friendship Tour raises nearly \$110,000 for Open Sky Community Services



Worcester-based nonprofit Open Sky Community Services brought together over 250 participants for its 41st annual Valley Friendship Tour fundraiser. The community event, for all ages and abilities, was held on June 6 in Whitinsville to support Open Sky’s programs throughout Central Massachusetts.

WORCESTER — The 41st annual Valley Friendship Tour drew more than 250 participants who walked, ran, and rolled through the Blackstone Valley on June 6 and raised nearly \$110,000 to benefit Open Sky Community Services, a nonprofit behavioral health and human services organization.

The Valley Friendship Tour, which starts and ends at Alternatives’ Whitin Mill, is Open Sky’s signature fundraising event for the agency’s nearly 150 programs serving children, adults, and families with

mental health challenges, intellectual and developmental disabilities, substance use disorders, brain injury, homelessness and other complex challenges. Since it began just over four decades ago, the tour has raised millions in support of individuals and families in Central Massachusetts.

“The Valley Friendship Tour is a visual representation of Open Sky’s mission – individuals of all abilities coming together in the community with purpose,” said Ken Bates, President & CEO of Open Sky Community Services. “We are grateful to this community that has been created over the past four decades and for its unwavering support of our neighbors throughout Central Massachusetts facing complex challenges. Thank you to our participants, attendees, sponsors, and staff for making this year’s Tour another one to remember.”

Teresa Pitaro, a resident of Norwood who has a fam-

ily member served by Open Sky, was the top fundraiser for the fifth year in a row. She raised nearly \$7,000 for the 2026 Valley Friendship Tour.

The individual and team participants of all ages and abilities had the option of a 1-mile walk, 5K run or walk, or a 30-mile bike ride through the Blackstone Valley. The all-day event featured lunch, live music, raffles, and entertainment on the Dennis H. Rice Community Plaza at Alternatives’ Whitin Mill.

About Open Sky Community Services

Open Sky Community Services is a 501(c)3 nonprofit agency based in Worcester that has been helping individuals in our community achieve more than they imagined possible for over 50 years. The agency provides a wide range of services throughout Central Massachusetts for children, adults and families with mental health challenges, intellectual and developmental disabilities, substance use disorders, brain injury, homelessness, and other complex challenges. Open Sky Community Services has over 1,300 dedicated employees and nearly 150 programs throughout the region, supporting more than 8,000 individuals annually. Open Sky is committed to equity and belonging, and promotes a trauma-informed, whole-person care culture. For more information, please visit [www.openskyscs.org](http://www.openskyscs.org).



Lorie Martiska (right), Open Sky Executive Vice President and Chief Advancement Officer, poses with Teresa Pitaro, the 2026 Valley Friendship Tour top fundraiser. Pitaro, of Norwood, has been the top fundraiser for five years in a row and she raised nearly \$7,000 for this year’s community event.

# Bay Path Continuing Education’s fall catalog available

CHARLTON — We are excited to announce that the Fall 2026 catalog is now available at [www.baypath.net/bpce](http://www.baypath.net/bpce). There is something for everyone, featuring offerings in trades exam preparations, continuing education, professional development, health & wellness, art, food & entertaining, financial wellness, and much more.

Here are some of the new classes available:

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Registration Opens on July 20 – Make sure to sign up early for the classes that catch your interest so you don’t miss this opportunity! You can reach us at [www.baypath.net/bpce](http://www.baypath.net/bpce) or call 508-248-5971, ext. 1715. Bay Path has been providing engaging adult continuing education classes for the past 30 years, conveniently located at 57 Old Muggett Hill Rd., Charlton.

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# Leicester Summer Concerts come to a close with rescheduled New Grown-Ups Band show

LEICESTER — The Leicester Summer Concert Series is coming to a close with an extra make up concert on Aug. 26.

The July 29 and 30 concerts with The New Grown-Ups Band were rained out both nights. It has been rescheduled for Aug. 26 at the same time, 6:30-8:30 p.m. This was a concert we were all looking forward to and are so happy to be able to schedule this make up night!

The music is a modern twist on American roots music! A blend of folk, country blues, Celtic and blue grass into a snafu of great contemporary acoustic music. This seven-piece band of skilled musicians have electrical rollicking enthusiasm!! You are going to love this band! This band of young folks are seen at many of the great blue grass venues around New England for several years. now.

The Aug. 26 concert will complete our 36th Summer Series here in Leicester on the Common.

# Leicester Women’s Club meets Sept. 16

LEICESTER — The Leicester Women’s Club’s September Dinner & Meeting will be Pine Ridge Country Club on Wednesday, Sept. 16 at 6 p.m. The event is both a social gathering for members, prospective members and guests. The dinner, which includes salad, entrée, bread, dessert, coffee and tea, is \$28, payable at the door. A cash bar is available. For reservations, contact Linda Monahan at 508-330-9250 before Wednesday, Sept. 9.

The Leicester Women’s Club, founded in 1962, is both a community service organization and a social club. It is open to women who are residents of Leicester and surrounding towns. Annual dues are \$20, and meetings are monthly from September through April. Members hold a basket raffle at the Leicester Harvest Fair in September to raise money for local scholarships, and a holiday auction in November to raise money for local charities. For information about membership, please call Renee McCue-Hall at 508-892-0186.

# Spencer Republican Town Committee to hold inaugural meeting Aug. 27

SPENCER — The Spencer Republican Town Committee will hold its inaugural meeting on Thursday, Aug. 27 at 7 p.m. in the event hall at Charlie’s Diner, 5 Meadow Rd., Spencer. Spencer Republicans and unenrolled voters are invited and encouraged to attend. The meeting will offer residents an opportunity to meet the committee, learn about its work, and become involved in local civic and political life. The committee intends to meet regularly on the final Thursday of each month, holidays notwithstanding. Any questions can be emailed to [spencer-marepublicans@gmail.com](mailto:spencer-marepublicans@gmail.com).

# Local residents named to Simmons University Dean’s List

BOSTON — Vanessa Sanchez of Spencer and Eden Riel of Cherry Valley were named to the 2026 spring semester dean’s list at Simmons University in Boston.

To qualify for dean’s list status, undergraduate students must obtain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher, based on 12 or more credit hours of work in classes using the letter grade system.

About Simmons University Located in the heart of Boston, Simmons is a respected private university offering nearly 50 majors and programs for undergraduate women and graduate programs open to all on campus, in blended formats or entirely online, in nursing and health sciences, business, communications, social work, public health, library and information science, and more. Founded in 1899, Simmons inspires a culture of education, connection, and action through high-impact learning with engaged faculty, an immersive community that forges lifelong networks, and career-centered programs that accelerate professional success. The result is a Simmons experience that prepares graduates to thrive as they launch and advance in their careers. For more information, please visit [www.simmons.edu](http://www.simmons.edu).

# East Brookfield seeks public input for Open Space and Recreation Plan update

EAST BROOKFIELD — The Town of East Brookfield, with assistance from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), is updating its 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan and is seeking input from residents.

Community members are encouraged to participate in a survey to share their thoughts on open space, recreational opportunities, and priorities for the future. Public feedback will help guide the development of the updated plan, which is required to maintain the Town’s eligibility for State grant funding for conservation and recreation projects.

Residents can complete the survey online at <https://tinyurl.com/yv7b23fy>. Hard copies are also available at Town Hall, the East Brookfield Public Library, and the Senior Center.

The Town encourages all residents to take part and help shape the future of East Brookfield’s parks, recreation resources, and open spaces.

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