

SPENCER NEW LEADER

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East Brookfield, West Brookfield, North Brookfield, Brookfield, Leicester and Spencer

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Friday, July 31, 2026



Courtesy
During the July 21 meeting of the Leicester Select Board, Police Chief Kenneth Antanavica and town leadership took a moment to recognize a long-time and beloved officer embarking upon his well-deserved retirement. Michael Lombardozzi, or “Lombo” as he is affectionately known, officially retired this past month after 18 dedicated years of service to the Town of Leicester. Lombo is the epitome of a dedicated public servant. From his military service to the nation in the US Coast Guard, to his 18 years with the Town of Leicester, he has left an indelible mark on the town for others to aspire to.

Brookfield enters contract for water operations

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

BROOKFIELD — The town of Brookfield is proceeding with a contract that would see a third-party entity operate the town’s water treatment plant while local officials determine a path forward for the vacant superintendent post.

At a meeting in late July, the Brookfield Select Board approved a contract with East National Water LLC to take over operations of the town’s water treatment facility at a cost of \$8,250 per month, paid for through funds currently budgeted for primary and secondary operators. Donald Taft, the Chair of the town’s Water Commission, explained that the situation resulted from difficulties filling the superintendent position.

In December, the town had partnered with a secondary operator who ran the plant until February. At that time, a new superintendent had been hired who had yet to be approved for his T1 treatment license. The state had approved a six-month emergency operator certificate to allow the new superintendent to run the plant, however as the end of that timeline drew to a close the town learned that the new hire’s T1 application was not approved. The superintendent submitted a two-week notice on July 1, forcing Brookfield to take swift action to put a plan in place for operation starting next month.

The Water Commission held an emergency meeting and approved the contract with East National Water LLC. They then presented it to the Select Board on July 16 who also approved the contract with the plan to proceed with a superintendent search.

Taft said they did their due diligence when choosing the company, even on a tight timeline, and feel confident that East National Water LLC will provide exceptional service during the duration of the contract.

“We reached out to any number of water operators, engineering firms, companies that have been approved by Mass DEP or that have worked for other communities. This company has worked for about five or six different communities where they ran their system. We did reach out to a number of communities, and they were very pleased with the services they were provided,” said Taft.

With a temporary plan in place, attention turned to the future and whether a third-party operator versus a hired superintendent should be explored as a permanent solution. Taft admitted there has been little interest in the job. Select Person Richard Chaffee noted that continuing with a third-party operator might actually be a better option for the town.

“I think this may be the best solution to the problem, even in the long term. If it works out, it’s certainly more cost effective in the end,” Chaffee said.

All parties admitted there’s plenty of nuance that needs to be worked out and explored before the town makes any final decision on that front. For now, Brookfield will proceed with a full-time superintendent search and now has a solid plan in place to keep things running in the meantime.

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.

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 fccowbfleamarket@gmail.com for an application or call Karen at 508-801-7692.

Mark your calendars; the tradition continues!

Blind Tiger Swing Posse next up in Spencer’s Summer Concert Series



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

the Blind Tiger Swing Posse.

Blind Tiger Swing Posse is seven pieces of hard-driving swing and rock made up of some of New England’s most sea-

soned professionals. Band members include Doug Moore on vocals and lead guitar, Pete Levesque on saxophone, William Fanning on trumpet, Jeff Galindo on trombone, Jim Heffernan on piano, Joe D’Angelo on bass guitar and Billy MacGilvray on drums. Each musician brings their unique skill set that delivers a timeless mix of jazz, blues, swing, pop, soul and rock.

Following Blind Tiger Swing Posse, the series continues on Aug. 9 with Gold Dust Refugees.

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.

Local residents to participate in Pan-Mass Challenge to support cancer research

NEEDHAM — This Aug. 1 and 2, the Pan-Mass Challenge (PMC) will bring together more than 6,000 cyclists and 4,000 volunteers on Aug. 1 & 2 to raise money for cancer research and patient care at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Participants from local communities will be among those helping support the PMC's mission to fund lifesaving cancer research and treatment.

Local Participants Include:

Pam Rockwood of North Brookfield
M e r e d i t h Laughlin of West Brookfield
R o b e r t Laughlin of West Brookfield
D a v i d Balducci of West Brookfield
J e s s i c a Piwowarski of West Brookfield
M a t t h e w Pillsbury of Spencer
M a r g a r e t Pillsbury of Spencer
Erin Rosenlund of Spencer
M i c h a e l Giguere of Rochdale

Seth Cormier of North Brookfield
Richard Carr of Leicester
S t e p h e n Lefemine of East Brookfield
Susan Brogan of Brookfield
Ellen Varnum of Brookfield
Cecelia Gray of Brookfield

The PMC, which raises more money for charity than any other single athletic fundraiser in the world, is aiming to raise more than ever this year, with a fundraising goal of \$79 million.

This year's PMC comes at an especially critical time, with federal research support shrinking, grant approval rates reaching historic lows, and cancer cases continuing to rise. For the 20th consecutive year, 100 percent of every rider-raised dollar will go directly to Dana-Farber, one of the nation's top three hospitals for cancer research and care.

"The theme for this year's PMC, which is 'now, more than ever,' underscores the paramount importance of every single dollar raised in fueling the search for a cure," said Billy Starr, founder and chairman of the PMC. "We are endlessly grateful to every rider, volunteer, donor, and sponsor who makes the PMC possible. Because of their training miles, long hours of volunteering, generous support, and unwavering commitment, we are moving ever closer to a world without cancer."

Since its inception in 1980, the PMC has raised \$1.125 billion for Dana-Farber, making it the organization's largest single contributor and accounting for 67 percent of the annual revenue of The Jimmy Fund, Dana-Farber's community-driven fundraising arm. This unrestricted annual funding has empowered and accelerated advancements in cancer research, deeply benefitting patients across the world.

During each annual PMC weekend, thousands of cyclists and volunteers come together from across the world, hailing from 47 US states and 12 countries, with a shared purpose of raising as much money as possible for Dana-Farber. Cyclists ride routes ranging from 25 to 177 miles. Included among these participants is the PMC Living Proof community, riders and volunteers who were previously treated or are currently undergoing cancer treatment and serve as Living Proof of the progress made through raising funds for cancer research and treatment.

Local students graduate from Nichols College

DUDLEY — Nichols College congratulates the 2026 graduating class, who earned their academic degrees at the College's commencement ceremony on May 2, 2026, at the DCU Center in Worcester, Mass.

Delcie D. Bean IV, founder and CEO of Paragus IT, an employee-owned managed information technology (IT) services firm that is one of the most successful, fastest-growing IT firms in the region, delivered the commencement address.

The following local students earned the degrees listed:

Brennan Ogert of Spencer earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
Colin Wallace of N Brookfield earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
A s h l e y Ottman of North Brookfield earned a Master of Business Administration
James Manzano of West Brookfield earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
N i c h o l a s Michaelian of Leicester earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
C o l i n Wallace of N Brookfield earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
A s h l e y Ottman of North Brookfield earned a Master of Business Administration
James Manzano of West Brookfield earned a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership

We applaud these students for their achievement.

About Nichols College

Nichols College has earned business accreditation from the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the longest serving global accrediting body for business schools and the largest business education network connecting learners, educators, and businesses worldwide.

Founded in 1815, Nichols transforms today's students into tomorrow's leaders through a dynamic, career-focused business and professional education. Nichols offers real-world learning focused on professional depth - combined with vibrant living, competitive athletics, and an unmatched alumni advantage - equipping students to exceed their own expectations.

www.nichols.edu

UMass Amherst announces Spring Dean's List

A M H E R S T — The following students were named to the Spring 2026 Dean's List at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Students are appointed to the Dean's List at the end of a semester in which they have completed a minimum of 12 graded credits and have earned a grade point average of 3.500 or better.

Brookfield	Lanne Emma	Altman Erin	Gabriella Saint-Vil
Aracely Burnett	Anne	Nicole	Zachary Soulor
Cody Chen	McGinty Lily	Gerber Gabrielle	Angela Rose
Aiden Earle	Marie	Pietri	Niver
Michael Alan	Melanson Sierra Murray	Rochdale	Scarlet Elizabeth
Frey Abigail	Aman Nehela	Jillian Marie	Sergel
Grace	Jacob Michael	Morrison	Oneida Sharif
Hildick Ayla Shae Iwaniec	Peterson Jared J Peterson	Spencer William	Megan Catherine
Kiarie	Raymes Quinn	Robert	St. Jean
Grace	Eleanor June	Anderson	Jenny Lee
Landon	Reynolds	John Peter Bowler	Wagenhoffer
Willem	Sydney Riley	Zachary Edward	
Gage	Warren	Hinman	
Lane	Leicester Jacob	Layne Michael	
Jakob Alexander	George	Perchak	

UMass Amherst announces Spring graduates

AMHERST — Approximately 7,000 students received bachelor's degrees in over 100 majors at the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Undergraduate Commencement on May 15, 2026 at the McGuirk Alumni Stadium.

Laci Marie Burt
Alexandra Marie Holmes
Tiffany Andrea Schultz

Below is a list of students from your area that received a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts Amherst:

Brookfield
Caleb Maxwell Aiken
Michael William Casey
Aiden Earle
Abigail Grace Hildick
Jakob Alexander Lanne
Jacob Michael Peterson
Neida O Portillo
Sydney Riley Warren

Leicester
Erin Nicole Gerber
Rachel Paige Lopriore

Spencer

FOR RENT

Townsend, CT
Route 197
10x40 mobile unit with
12x16 porch
Full bath, furnished
OHA
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**RUDOLF SMITH**

Attorneys **Lori Granat** and **Michelle Murray** have moved to Worcester.

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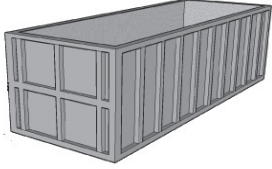
Qualified contractors are invited to bid on a set of contract documents for the construction of The Mechanic Street and Pleasant Street Complete Streets Improvements in the Town of East Brookfield. Class of work is Highway-Construction. Invitation for Bidders (IFB) Packages with specifications and a sample contract will be available on June 23, 2026. Request for bid documents can be emailed to Christopher Lyman at clyman@hshassoc.com. Sealed bids entitled "Bid for Mechanic Street and Pleasant Street Complete Streets Improvements" will be accepted at the East Brookfield Highway Department, located at 424 East Main Street, East Brookfield, MA 01515, until July 28, 2026, at 10:00 A.M., at which time the bids will be publicly opened and read. Bids submitted after this time will not be accepted.

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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

A practical solution today, a thoughtful decision tomorrow

When it comes to essential public services, there is little room for uncertainty. Residents expect that when they turn on the tap, clean, safe drinking water will be there. That expectation depends on skilled professionals working behind the scenes every day, often without much public attention.

Brookfield recently found itself facing a challenge that many small communities are experiencing. Qualified operators for specialized municipal positions are increasingly difficult to find. In this case, the town was confronted with the unexpected departure of its water treatment superintendent after licensing issues prevented the position from becoming permanent. Rather than allowing the situation to become a crisis, town officials acted quickly to ensure uninterrupted service by contracting with an experienced outside operator.

That deserves recognition.

The Water Commission and Select Board had little time to react, yet they sought references, consulted other communities, and selected a company with an established record of operating municipal water systems. That careful approach reflects responsible stewardship of an essential public resource.

Perhaps even more encouraging was the conversation that followed.

Rather than viewing the contract as merely a temporary fix, local officials openly discussed whether third-party management could become a long-term option. That willingness to examine every possibility is exactly what taxpayers should expect from local government.

For generations, municipalities have assumed that every essential service must be provided by in-house employees. Increasingly, however, changing labor markets are challenging that assumption. Specialized positions in water treatment, engineering, information technology, and public health have become harder to fill, particularly in smaller towns competing with larger communities and private industry.

That does not necessarily mean outsourcing is always the answer. There are advantages to having a dedicated local superintendent who knows the system, understands the community, and can respond quickly when problems arise. Local employees often become valuable institutional resources whose experience cannot easily be replaced.

At the same time, professional firms can sometimes provide broader expertise, multiple licensed operators, vacation coverage, continuing education, and regulatory compliance that would be difficult or expensive for a small town to maintain on its own.

The important point is that neither model should be accepted or rejected based on tradition alone.

Instead, Brookfield should evaluate whichever approach delivers the safest water, the greatest reliability, and the best value for taxpayers. Cost matters, but it should never be the only consideration. Public accountability, emergency response, institutional knowledge, regulatory compliance, and long-term stability all deserve equal weight.

The encouraging news is that town leaders appear committed to making that evaluation carefully. They are continuing the search for a superintendent while allowing themselves time to see how the outside contract performs before making any permanent decisions.

That is not indecision. It is good governance.

Sometimes the best leadership comes from acknowledging that circumstances have changed and that yesterday's solutions may not automatically be tomorrow's. Communities across Massachusetts are confronting similar workforce shortages, and many will face the same questions Brookfield is asking today.

Residents may ultimately prefer a traditional town employee or conclude that a qualified outside operator offers greater stability. Either outcome can be successful if it is based on facts rather than assumptions.

Clean drinking water is among the most fundamental services any municipality provides. Brookfield's residents deserve a system that is reliable every day, regardless of who operates it.

For now, the town has secured that stability while taking the time to thoughtfully consider its future. That is a practical approach worthy of support.

VIEWPOINT

OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The new normal

To the Editor:

When you reach my age, you really can appreciate, if not celebrate, how much the world has changed. I recall discussing the changes my grandmother saw, with her. One of her husband's attributes was being good with horses. Electricity became common as did telephones. Cars evolved almost to the advent of electric ones. Individuals started owning computers. We were talking about space travel and had broken the sound barrier. Organ and joint transplants were no longer science fiction. Truman had dropped an atomic bomb and her 4 boys could now come home.

As a baby boomer, upward mobility was rampant. As technology and consumerism advanced, virtually everyone could own a home, a car, a TV and enjoy recreation. Gas stations, supermarkets and big box stores bust onto the scene. Main street gave way to malls. Vehicles went from transport to style and muscle. Camping became an affordable vacation. We were confident in a bigger, better future, the American way and prosperity just around the corner and readily achievable.

Fast forward to having worked for 55 years, travelled the world, raised to Army vet sons and being very close to my grandkids (two vets, one still in). I can't say there were never financial struggles, but, as planned, retired debt free with savings. Able to support a son's home remodel, and hoping to be able to help the grandkids in a world that has become hard to recognize. I grew up in \$20,000 homes, bought \$100,000-\$200,000 homes, seeing those same homes inching towards being \$1M homes, I worry how grandkids will be able to make those kind of payments.

On our honeymoon in Mexico almost 50 years ago, the guide told us the economy there was the 1 percent with vast wealth, 5 percent well off, 10 percent comparable to our middle class, the rest struggling with poverty. I have to say, I think we are moving into the same scenario. Just as buying stocks on margin crashed the stock market in the great depression, and just as we bailed out too big to fail banks, I have to disagree with Trumps

cheshire cat Hassett, that people maxing out their credit cards to buy gas and groceries is an expression of confidence in the economy.

Does anyone remember the clown show called DOGE? I pretty much disagree with the impact of those cuts across the board, but the savings are a bad joke when you look at government spending these days. No bid contracts like the 18 million reflecting pool fiasco, that Trump drove a motorcade over its uncured surface, voiding any warrantee, vanity projects putting his face and name on everything, a «Free» ballroom that would no touch the Whitehouse and a «Free» plane, both of which will cost billions.

You almost cannot conceive of a cost number on the Iran war. Even if you can do some kind of cost accounting, I promise it will not begin to represent what it cost the world, our nation and all of us individually. It appears that we no longer even raise an eyebrow seeing spending numbers resembling phone numbers DOJ has come back to the well without even being able to offer what more money would get us.

Speaking of money, Trump and his family gifting is very successful, Congress has now claimed they must do insider trading to survive (They might be right, living in D.C. and maintaining a district home on a \$200,000 salary, may no longer be reasonable.) Do we want our entire congress and government of, by and for the people, to only mean wealthy ones? These folks overspend in trillions (Trump responsible for 19 of the 32 trillion debt). Pay at least a million and get better help. The alternative new normal is so far from most of we the people's life, that things like affordability of healthcare, gas, food, housing, education, childcare, even if on our radar, are not on theirs. A new congress must start raising money immediately, and your lobby does not have it.

KEN KIMBALL
BROOKFIELD

Thank you for giving pets the second chance they deserve

To the Editor:

On behalf of everyone at Second Chance Animal Services, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the many golfers, volunteers, donors, sponsors, and community members who made our 14th Annual Charity Golf Tournament such a tremendous success.

When a community comes together, amazing things happen for pets in need. The funds raised will help provide affordable veterinary care through our Community Veterinary Hospitals, ensuring more pets receive the medical care they need while staying with the families who love them.

We are especially grateful to our generous sponsors whose support helped make this event possible. Our sincere thanks to Tito's Handmade Vodka, Teddy Bear Pools & Spas, The Republican, and Herlihy Insurance Group for their leadership support. We also thank Cornerstone, Embie Industries, IDEXX, Southbridge

Credit Union, and SEM (Security Engineered Machinery) for their valued partnership.

We're equally grateful to the businesses and individuals who donated auction and raffle items, the volunteers who gave their time, Cold Spring Country Club for hosting another outstanding tournament, and everyone who chose to spend the day supporting our mission.

Together, you are helping ensure that families facing financial challenges can still access quality veterinary care for their beloved pets. Your generosity truly makes a difference, and we are honored to have such compassionate supporters standing beside us.

Thank you for helping pets receive the second chance they deserve.

Sincerely,

LINDSAY DORAY
CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
SECOND CHANCE ANIMAL SERVICES
EAST BROOKFIELD

What the polls and Trump MAGA says about this year's election tells us

To the Editor:

First, the polls. The well regarded conservative British Magazine The Economist (that started publishing in 1843) and the also well regarded polling firm YouGov have been have been tracking we Americans opinions of Donald Trump's second term since it began about 555 days ago. Here are the key issues they have been tracking

Inflation/prices (or "Affordability"- partly caused by ongoing Trump tariffs)

Jobs and the economy

Foreign Policy (Including Iran, the war Trump chose to begin and despite massive cost and harm

Immigration (where before the 2024 election, Trump forced Republicans to withdraw a strong Congress bill that would have effectively and peacefully taken care of immigration problems .

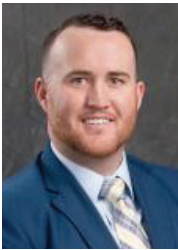
tracked Trump's approval rating by state. They found that in about 48 out of our 52 states more people disapproved of Trump policies and actions than approved of them.

On to election interference.

In less than four months, "We the People" will vote for members of the "United States" House of Representatives and Senate. Trump has shown again and again that he has little regard for democracy and that he admires those who rule as dictators like those in Russia and China. So with very negative approval ratings and his desire to "rule," it should come as no surprise that Trump might both not want a "free and fair election," and that he would try to negatively affect election results.

Instead, it seems that Trump wants a "Heads I Win, Tails You Lose" 2026 American Election. That is either for citizens who might go against his candidates,

Building your child's education fund, one brick at a time



FINANCIAL FOCUS

TREVOR NIELSEN

Every solid house starts with a good blueprint and a strong foundation. Saving for a child's education is very similar.

College costs can seem daunting. In addition to tuition, you'll need to account for housing and food, books and supplies, transportation, and other expenses. The average annual budget at an in-state public university runs around \$30,990 today, and a private school is \$65,470 according to the College Board. While most families won't pay a college's list price, you'll still want to start saving as early as possible to be ready when your child is.

Lay the foundation early. You don't have to wait until you have the perfect set of plans to start building. There are specific accounts designed to save for education, and some do not require a minimum opening deposit. Setting up automatic recurring contributions, even modest ones, lets you build steadily over time without requiring constant attention.

As your child ages, look for ways to redirect expenses you no longer have towards the build. For example, daycare costs, which can exceed \$1,000 a month, can be shifted into a college savings account once your child enters school. Tax refunds and annual bonuses make excellent additional contributions. And others can pitch in – instead of birthday or holiday toys, ask grandparents or relatives to contribute directly to a college savings account.

Know the size of the house you're building. Families saving for community college followed by two years at a public university might target around \$65,000. Those aiming for four years at a public school are looking at roughly \$100,000. Whatever the goal, plan for education inflation of about 4% annually, which can roughly double costs over 18 years.

You don't have to source all the building materials yourself. Scholarships, grants, student loans, and income from part-time work are all legitimate ways to help finish the structure.

Don't let one project consume the whole budget. One risk for parents is pouring so much into the college fund that the retirement fund goes neglected. Remember, loans and grants exist for college, but not for retirement. Striking the right balance may mean targeting a more affordable school, planning to cover only a portion of costs, or adjusting retirement timelines slightly.

Choose the right building materials. For many families, a 529 plan is the right foundation. Earnings grow tax-free, distributions are federally tax-free when used for qualified education expenses, and many states offer additional income tax deductions for contributions. Even better, anyone – such as grandparents or friends – can contribute.

Additionally, qualified expenses for a 529 plan go beyond tuition and cover books, computers, internet access, room and board, and more. Vocational and trade schools often qualify, too, opening the door to careers in skilled trades, healthcare, and technology.

No contractor builds alone. A knowledgeable financial advisor can help you draw up a realistic blueprint and make sure the college project doesn't crowd out the rest of your financial future. The earlier you break ground on that conversation, the stronger the structure will be.

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.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Steve Kerrigan has shown us what real leadership looks like

To the Editor:

By now, many of you have seen the news about MassDems Chair Steve Kerrigan’s OUI case and his sentencing to probation. I’ve been asked what our committee thinks, and I wanted to share that in my own words rather than let the headlines speak for us.

Let’s be honest about it: drunk driving is dangerous, full stop. It puts our neighbors, our kids, our friends at risk on the road, and I won’t pretend otherwise just because it was someone on our side. That matters to me as a resident of Leicester long before it matters to me as a Democrat.

But here’s the truth, and I’ll say it as plainly as I can: none of us are infallible. Not me, not you, not anyone. Every single one of us has a moment we wish we could take back, a decision we’re not proud of, a night we’d do differently if we could. That’s not an excuse, it’s just what it means to be human. What actually separates a real leader from everyone else isn’t some myth of never messing up. It’s what you do the moment after. Steve didn’t run from this. He didn’t lawyer it away, didn’t spin it, didn’t make us read between the lines of some carefully worded non-apology. He stood up and said, plainly and without hedging, that this was on him. That takes more backbone than most people in public life ever show, and I refuse to pretend otherwise.

So let me be direct about where we stand: we are not walking away from Steve, and we are not going to pretend we are for the sake of a headline. We stand behind him, fully, because he has met this moment the

way we’d want any of us to be met if the roles were reversed, with honesty instead of hiding. We are holding him to a real standard, and he is meeting it in front of all of us, in public, with no do-overs. That is what accountability actually looks like, and our committee is proud to stand with him through it.

I’ll also say this, because it needs saying: contrast that with what we’re watching out of the current administration in Washington. We are living through a moment where the people at the very top dodge every question, deny every wrongdoing, and never once say the words ‘I was wrong.’ No accountability, no responsibility, just deflection and blame cast on everyone but themselves. Steve showed us the opposite of that. He showed us what it actually looks like when a leader tells the truth and faces the consequences instead of hiding from them. That difference matters, and it’s exactly the kind of leadership our party should be proud to stand behind.

One more thing, and this one comes from the heart. If you’re heading out this summer for a cookout, a fundraiser, a night with friends, please plan your ride home before you have your first drink. Grab a cab, call a friend, use a rideshare app. It’s such a small thing to do, and it can save a life, maybe even your own.

ELIZABETH M. ZITO
CHAIR
LEICESTER DEMOCRATIC TOWN
COMMITTEE

LETTER

continued from page A4

Trump makes it difficult for them to vote, or if the vote goes against them, he says the election was “rigged.”

A list of what election specialists think Trump may or will try follows.

Saying the elections were “rigged”

Saying China interfered

Saying despite the fact that state and local officials like ours have consistently well run elections, that his federal government must take over our elections

Saying mail in voting and voting machines can cause fraud

Saying we need to present their passport or birth certificate to register to vote.

Saying that state and local officials need to turn over their voting rolls to the federal government

Stationing ICE or federal similar law enforcement officials at voting sites.

We need to loudly support state and local election officials and organizations like The League of Women voters, the Brennan Center, and the ACLU as they continue to protect our free and fair American elections.

KEVIN KANE
SPENCER

When every errand took a little longer

I had three stops to make the other day. On paper, it should have taken about 30 minutes. Pick up one item, drop off another, grab a gallon of milk, and head home. An hour and 15 minutes later, I finally pulled into the driveway.

The funny thing is, I wasn’t delayed by traffic. I was delayed by people.

At the hardware store, I bumped into a fellow I hadn’t seen since last fall. We spent a few minutes talking about the weather, which, in New England, is less a conversation starter than an ongoing community project. We compared notes on gardens, wondered whether we’d ever get enough rain, and somehow ended up discussing high school football schedules.

At the post office, another familiar face asked how my wife was doing. Before I could answer, someone else joined the conversation because they had overheard the question and knew exactly who we were talking about.

By the time I reached the grocery store, I had already had three conversations and learned about a church supper, a grandson’s first job, and a neighbor’s new puppy. None of it had anything to do with why I left the house.

It reminded me that errands used to be more than chores. They were social occasions.

You never knew who you’d run into, and that was part of the experience. If someone spotted your car in a parking lot, there was a decent chance you’d meet them inside before you made it to the checkout.

Nowadays, efficiency seems to be the goal. Order online. Pick up curbside. Self-checkout. Tap your card. Head home.

There’s nothing wrong with any of that. Sometimes convenience is exactly what

LANTERNS
ALONG
MAIN
STREET
By CHARLES

we need.

But convenience has quietly eliminated some of the unexpected moments that make living in a small town feel different from living anywhere else.

Those chance encounters don’t accomplish much in the traditional sense. They don’t shorten your to-do list or make you more productive. What they do is remind you that you’re part of a community. You hear that someone’s daughter earned a scholarship. You learn that a longtime business owner is finally taking a vacation. You find out a neighbor had surgery and could use someone to mow the lawn next week. None of those updates arrive through an app. They travel the old-fashioned way—one conversation at a time.

I suppose that’s why I’ve never been too bothered when an errand takes longer than expected. If I leave the house with a list of five things to do and come home having completed all five, that’s a successful trip. If I also come home knowing a little more about the people who share this corner of Massachusetts with me, that’s an even better one.

The older I get, the more I appreciate those unscheduled conversations. They can’t be penciled into a calendar or squeezed between appointments. They simply happen when neighbors cross paths. And maybe that’s why they’re worth protecting. Because someday we’ll all finish our errands. What we’ll remember are the people we met along the way.

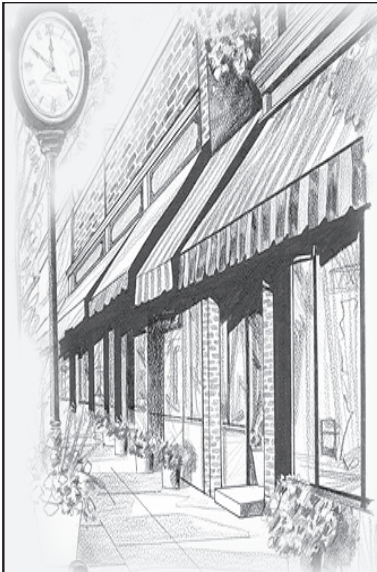
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Letters to the Editor must include the author’s name, address, and a daytime phone number for purposes of verification in order to be considered for publication. Only the author’s name and the town in which they reside will be published. Letters submitted 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.

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Major collaborative milestone marked at QCC Center Topping Off

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College celebrated a major construction milestone with a Topping Off Ceremony for its new QCC Center, marking the completion of the building's structural frame. State and local leaders, project partners, and members of the college community gathered to witness the raising of the final beam and celebrate the progress of this transformational project.

"Through careful planning, advocacy, fundraising, design and construction, the vision is now becoming a reality," said QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja. "Most importantly, this will create opportunities for students to develop the skills they need to succeed in today's workforce and strengthen the connection between education, industry and our community."

The event featured a ceremonial beam signing and remarks from Pedraja; State Sen. Robyn Kennedy; State Rep. James O'Day; Worcester Mayor Joseph Petty; Assistant Secretary Robert LePage of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education; Deputy Commissioner Dr. Richard Riccardi of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education; Commissioner Adam Baacke of the Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM); and Craig Skurka, operations manager for Gilbane Building Company.

"The raising of the beam is a moment for us to give gratitude and thank those who have stepped up to make this a reality," Kennedy said. "As you join into the growing skyline of Worcester, we continue to grow with you. By signing our names to these beams, we are signing our commitment to make sure the school continues to be successful."

The Topping Off Ceremony commemorated the progress of the \$37.4 million renovation and expansion project, which is transforming a 1960s-era athletic facility into a modern, accessible hub for learning, workforce development and student life.



Left to right: Deputy Commissioner Dr. Richard Riccardi of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education; QCC Trustee Dr. Barur Rajeshkumar; QCC Trustee Dr. Satya Mitra; Commissioner Adam Baacke of the Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM); QCC Board Chair Dr. Linda Maykel; QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja; State Sen. Robyn Kennedy; State Rep. James O'Day; Assistant Secretary Robert LePage of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education; Worcester Mayor Joseph Petty; QCC Student Trustee Dawit Quilty and Craig Skurka, operations manager for Gilbane Building Company.

Upon completion, the 57,000-square-foot facility will feature advanced manufacturing and robotics laboratories, hospitality training spaces, flexible classrooms and revitalized athletic facilities. The project also includes significant upgrades to aging infrastructure and accessibility improvements designed to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all students.

"This project is so important to the mission and vision of Quinsigamond Community College, the region it serves and the Commonwealth," Riccardi said. "We know that holistic student success incorporates curricular and co-curricular initiatives, and this project provides the infrastructure to check both of those boxes."

Speakers highlighted the collaborative partnership among the college, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and project stakeholders that have made this investment possible.

"It is a necessity that we continue to improve our community college environments," O'Day said. "The legislature has made it very clear that not only is higher ed important, but certainly the community college segment is equally as important. It's been an honor to be able to represent the college."

While the majority of the renovation is funded by DCAMM, the project reflects the type of transformational campus investment envisioned through the Commonwealth's BRIGHT Act (An Act to Build Resilient Infrastructure to Generate Higher Education Transformation). The statewide initiative is designed to support modernization of public higher education facilities.

"I want to thank our legislative partners for championing the BRIGHT Act to date and hopefully getting it across the finish line so we can keep doing impactful projects like this one," Baacke said. "As someone whose parents both worked at community colleges, I know there are few things we do that are more important in changing the lives of residents across the Commonwealth than what community colleges do every day."

Designed to achieve LEED Gold certification, the facility will support improved energy performance, enhanced indoor air quality and long-term sustainability goals.

"Buildings like this bring jobs to your community – great-paying opportunities for advancement. We are looking forward to continuing to make these investments. They are about the future of the economy," LePage said.

Skurka recognized the efforts of the construction team and project partners in reaching the milestone safely and efficiently.

"Today's event celebrates a significant construction milestone and the many people and partnerships helping us bring this project to life," Skurka said. "At Gilbane, we are committed to creating healthy, safe and sustainable spaces that have a lasting effect on the community. We are honored to partner with QCC on this transformative project."

The QCC Center is expected to open in Fall 2027 and will serve as a centerpiece of the college's campus, creating new opportunities for hands-on learning, workforce training and community engagement.

"When we look at this structure, we aren't just looking at steel beams and concrete; we're looking at the literal framework of Worcester's economic future," said Petty. "True progress means lifting everyone up. By expanding physical accessibility and producing state-of-the-art, energy-efficient systems, QCC is ensuring our green energy and equity goals move forward."

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K'Lonie
Age 16
Registration # 5794

K'Lonie is an active and vibrant teenage girl, known for her love of all things girly. She enjoys getting her hair and nails done, experimenting with makeup, and expressing her creativity through different styles. K'Lonie also has a passion for photography and enjoys capturing moments through pictures. She loves watching videos and graphics that align with her interests, always looking for inspiration. In addition, K'Lonie is a music lover who enjoys humming along to her favorite songs. She has a warm and engaging personality, making her a joy to be around.

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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. 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.



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 thebrewstercall@gmail.com.



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ArtWorks Gallery invites art-lovers to LandEscape

WARE — Workshop13’s ArtWorks Gallery in Ware presents a new exhibition called LandEscape. This exhibition aims to expand or even reimagine the traditional landscape as a personal sanctuary and to document the diverse spatial forms of escapism that we need to recharge our spirits. ArtWorks Gallery is located at 69 Main St. in Ware. LandEscape is on display from June 27 through Aug. 2. 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 artist Shona Macdonald served as the juror for LandEscape. Kathy Halper was awarded Best in Show for her striking painting, “Tree Shadows.” Halper is self-taught, exhibiting artist with 30+ years of experience and a portfolio of work ranging from painting, mixed media, and textiles, to sculpture. Career highlights include exhibition opportunities at Art Basel Miami, gallery representation in NYC/ Los Angeles/Chicago, a profile in Huffington Post as well as other international publications.

Porter Gifford received an Honorable Mention: Work on Paper for Pool “#3174, Concord, MA,” and Jackie Boudreau Kinsey received an Honorable Mention: Painting for “Shivelight Dream.” Three works received an Honorable Mention: Creative Interpretation: “Consolation” by Cai Vail, “Refuge: Azores Beach” by Richard Wollman, and “Small Feather” by Cathy Durso. Each of these artists and their works will be spotlighted on Workshop13’s social media pages as well as in their weekly newsletter.

ArtWorks Gallery is offering a free plein air painting session outside the gallery (inside if it’s raining) facilitated by fine artist Loretta Medeiros. This



Courtesy Photo

Art-lovers at the opening reception of LandEscape.

session will take place on Saturday, July 18, from 1:30-4 p.m. Artists can bring their own materials, and Workshop13 can supplement. This plein air session is free and open to the public.

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.

East Brookfield Summer Concert series underway

EAST BROOKFIELD — The East Brookfield Bandstand Committee is once again bringing live music to Connie Mack Field this summer with six free Thursday evening concerts celebrating local talent, classic rock, and community traditions. Organized entirely by volunteers, the committee relies on sponsorships, food sales, and donations to make the annual series possible.

This year's lineup features a variety of musical styles, beginning with The Otters on July 16, followed by hometown favorites Big Gunz (July 23), classic rock tribute band Brookfield Rhythm (July 30), Beatles tribute 4Ever Fab (Aug.

6), the rotating ensemble 'Dentity Crisis (August 13), and the Brookfield-based rock trio Moonlight Saints closing the season on Aug. 20. Highlights include 'Dentity Crisis's special performance celebrating the 45th anniversary of The Rolling Stones' rehearsals at Long View Farm in neighboring North Brookfield, as well as the farm's connections to The J. Geils Band and Aerosmith.

The East Brookfield Summer Concert Series continues to provide an opportunity for neighbors and visitors alike to gather, enjoy live music, and celebrate the community. We would love to see you there!



Courtesy Photo

Michael Pillsbury, Director, of Pillsbury Funeral Homes in North Brookfield, Brookfield, Barre, and Spencer, is proud to celebrate 35 years as a licensed Massachusetts Funeral Director. Together with his wife Michelle, Michael owns and operates the four family-run funeral homes, continuing a proud tradition of service that began over 60 years ago. The Pillsbury's have dedicated their lives to providing compassionate, professional care to families throughout Central Massachusetts, upholding the values of dignity, respect, and community that define the Pillsbury name. Michael and Michelle are the proud parents of five children — Kory, Katelyn, Michael Jr., Colin, and Connor — and are deeply grateful to the many families who have placed their trust in Pillsbury Funeral Homes over the years, as well as to their devoted staff for their continued commitment and care.

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Leicester Democratic Town Committee plans second annual potluck barbecue

LEICESTER — The Leicester Democratic Town Committee is inviting Democrats from across Central Massachusetts to gather for an afternoon of food, conversation, and community at its second annual Potluck BBQ.

The event is designed to bring together local residents and party members to reconnect with friends, meet new people, exchange ideas, and strengthen relationships ahead of the upcoming election season.

Organizers encourage attendees to bring a favorite dish to share while enjoying an informal afternoon focused on fellowship and civic engagement.

"Come together with Democratic friends

from across Central Massachusetts for an afternoon of great food, laughter, and meaningful conversation," organizers said in the event announcement. "It's a chance to reconnect with old friends, make new ones, share ideas, and strengthen the relationships that will help us work together during the upcoming election season."

Participants are asked to bring a potluck item and are encouraged to RSVP by Sunday, Aug. 16. Registration is required, as the event location will only be provided to those who register in advance.

Organizers said they hope attendees will leave with new connections, fresh ideas, and

renewed enthusiasm for the months ahead.

For more information or to register, visit the Leicester Democratic site, ldtcmass.org, or to register, visit the Town Committee's Web

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

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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All Saints Academy eighth graders experience learning beyond the classroom

WEBSTER — The eighth-grade students of All Saints Academy recently traveled to Outdoor Classroom in Freedom, New Hampshire, for an unforgettable three-day educational experience that blended outdoor adventure, environmental science, engineering, teamwork, and personal growth. This field study served as a culminating activity of their years at the school and was selected by them among several opportunities.

During their stay, students engaged in hands-on science and engineering activities that brought key concepts to life. In a bridge-building challenge inspired by Leonardo da Vinci, they constructed wooden structures held together solely by gravity and friction—without nails or glue—and tested their strength by walking across them. They also collaborated to build a four-level, 25-foot-tall PVC geodesic dome, gaining a deeper understanding of the physics behind its stability. In addition, students applied practical outdoor skills through cooking activities, building fires and preparing food while connecting scientific concepts to real-world applications.

Beyond their academic experiences, students participated in team-building activities that fostered communication, leadership, cooperation, and problem-solving. Whether hiking wooded trails, engaging in group initiatives, learning new outdoor skills, or simply enjoying the tranquility of the lake at sunset, they built confidence while deepening trust and strengthening peer relationships.

Evening programs provided opportunities for reflection, recreation, and community building, with sing-alongs creating lasting memories that will remain with students long after graduation.



The Outdoor Classroom experience offers meaningful opportunities for students to grow academically, socially, and personally while enjoying the beauty of New Hampshire’s natural surroundings. All Saints Academy is grateful to the dedicated professionals whose passion and commitment help foster a lasting connection between students and the natural world, making this memorable educational adventure possible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Saint Joseph School celebrates Kindergarten Class of 2026



Courtesy Photo

The Saint Joseph School Kindergarten Class of 2026 proudly displays their graduation certificates following their ceremony on Wednesday, June 10, in the Richard A. Nowak Gymnasium.

WEBSTER — On Wednesday, June 10, Saint Joseph School Kindergarten students and their families gathered in the Richard A. Nowak Gymnasium to celebrate an exciting milestone as the students participated in their Kindergarten Graduation Ceremony. Dressed proudly in traditional Saint Joseph School red and white caps and gowns, the students processed into the gymnasium as family members, faculty, and friends looked on with pride.

The ceremony began with welcome remarks from Kindergarten Instructor, Mrs. Alicia Maurer, followed by the students leading the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance, The Our Father, and The Hail Mary. The graduates then showcased their talents through musical performances of “One Small Voice,” “Hosanna!,” and “Kindergarten Graduation,” inspired by songs from the beloved musical Grease.

One of the highlights of the morning

was the students sharing what they hope to become when they grow up. Their dreams reflected both creativity and ambition, with students sharing aspirations of becoming teachers, singers, a nurse, police officer, astronaut, soccer player, veterinarian, zoologist, artist, baker, banker, builder, construction worker, gymnastics coach, ballerina teacher, dog sitter, reading teacher, and even a Savannah Bananas baseball player. The wide variety of responses brought smiles to the audience and served as a reminder of the limitless potential within this special group of students.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of graduation certificates by Principal Beth Boudreau, followed by a special slideshow celebrating memorable moments from the school year and the many accomplishments of the Kindergarten Class of 2026.

This year, 23 students proudly

advanced to First Grade: Joel Anobah, Gloria Basha, Wesley Goulet, Maeve Haynes, Anna Berry, Zuzanna Bialik, Faustyna Kicilinski, Giovanni Laramee, Alex Chruslicki, Emy Corbin, Lillith Marchand, Elliette Nowicki, Sadie Dejordy, Milena Deptula, Eve Pytko, Sonny Saad, Marcus DiTullio-Cedeno, Sophia Dowd, Robert Thrun, Brody Walker, Charles Dziedzic, Aceson Wright, and Emilia Dziobak.

Saint Joseph School Kindergarten students are taught by Mrs. Alicia Maurer, with the support of Mrs. Sandra Gibson, whose dedication, encouragement, and care helped prepare these young learners for a successful transition into First Grade.

Congratulations to the Saint Joseph School Kindergarten Class of 2026. We wish each of these students continued success as they begin the next chapter of their educational journey!

- Peter Allain
- Beth Antonopoulos
- Marie Aperges
- Andrew Baca
- Austin Bailey
- David Beardsley
- Frank Belanger
- Carolyn Bembenek
- Richard Bernier
- Sheila Bialoncik
- Beth Bialy
- Jason Borski
- Doreen Bourget
- Eric Brisbois
- Kathleen Brown
- Paul Browning
- Paul Bugar
- Cindy Bullens
- Sandra Butt
- Mont Canterbury
- Stephen Carlson
- Daniel Chapdelaine
- Kelly Cobb
- Ken Courmoyer
- Timothy Decker
- Tammy Deschenes
- Aaron Dorcas
- Daniel Doyle
- Dorothy DusoSelina Fife
- James Gardner
- Jeffrey Gatto
- Tina Giakoumis
- Alicia Goudreau
- Richard Guerin
- Robert Hamm
- Scott Horanzy
- Jane Houle
- Todd Hufault
- Joseph Hughes
- Melissa Jankowski
- Thor Johnson
- Nena Johnston
- Lisa Kozlowski
- Robert Krasnecky
- Jill Krause
- Michael Kryger
- Rick Lawson
- Deborah Leite
- Linda Lifer
- Patricia Majewski
- Renee Marchand
- Jennifer Marsh
- Jennifer Mason
- John Meagher
- Fumiyo Mochizuki
- Deborah Munsch
- Brett Napierata
- Wayne Parmentier
- Brian Poplawski
- Gary Poplawski
- Edward Powers
- William Radcliffe
- James Remy
- Debra Ross
- Collin Salmon
- Dale Schleis
- Theresa Sergel
- Henry Skiba
- Alan Standrowicz
- Jeffrey Surozenski
- Karen Toukonen
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Bay Path celebrates 59 CTI graduates, expands workforce training programs

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

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

ment in high-demand industries.

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

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

programs and better position residents to fill critical workforce needs across the state.

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

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

- Building Maintenance
- HVAC
- Culinary

- Manufacturing
- Auto Collision
- Auto Technology
- Diesel Mechanic
- Welding
- Electrical

Since its inception, the CTI program has continued to expand in both enrollment and program diversity, attracting students from local communities as well as across the region. The program remains a critical component of Bay Path's efforts to support workforce development and provide meaningful career pathways for adult learners.

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

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

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A Contractor's Opportunity! 8,000 SF (80'x100') level lot, great location, est. neighborhood, key resources > town water & sewer & natural gas in street. By appointment only!
MLS No. 73544127 \$155,000.

Webster - 18 DiDonato Ave



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THIS IS THE ONE: AN AFFORDABLE-ONE-LEVEL-MOVE-IN-READY-RANCH! Offers 980 SF+, 2 BRs, 1 Bath & partially finished walk-out LL Family Room. Situated on a 7,104 sf level lot w/80' road frontage, a fenced backyard, & 2 CAR GARAGE! Conveniently located in East Village. First Time Offered!
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**Featured New Listing!
Webster Lake Waterfront
"Newly Constructed" - 26 Laurelwood Dr
Up & Ready For Your Viewing!**



Open House Sunday 11 - 2
Experience ultra-luxury lake-front living on prestigious Webster Lake. This masterfully designed, brand-new construction masterpiece spans 2,556 square feet of sophisticated, two-story living space optimized for panoramic Western water views and direct lake access. The upper level features a magnificent primary bedroom suite, anchoring an exquisite year-round sunroom that flows seamlessly onto an expansive open deck. Designed for seamless entertaining, the lower level serves as a private guest floor, complete with a full second kitchen, additional bedroom, and premium finishes throughout. From morning coffee to sunset gatherings, you'll enjoy every minute while overlooking the water from the lakeside deck, gorgeous covered patio, open 2nd story deck/sunroom. Every detail of this high-end estate redefines waterfront elegance.
MLS#73542689 **\$1,550,000.**

Webster ~ 33 Slater Street



Open House Sunday 11 - 1
Sprawling fieldstone faced Ranch! Located on a +/- 0.5-acre, 2 car garage. Offers: 1,860 sf main level plus 1,000 sf +/- finished lower level, 3 BRs, 2-1/2 Baths, 2 stone fireplaces/FHW BB heat. Open floor plan kitchen, living rm, dining rm, breezeway w/sliders to rear deck, and 3 season sunroom MLS # 73500183 **\$479,900**

**Webster - 24 Cooper Rd
New Construction - Craftsman Style home**



Tucked away on Cooper Rd. Webster Lake with access at Lake-side beach/boat ramp. 3rd of 4 homes being built at this site. Offers 2,155 sq. ft +/- of living area, 7 rms, 4 brs, 3 1/2 baths, 9ft ceiling, wood flooring throughout with ceramic tile baths. Spacious main BR Suite w/ walk-in closet, and private full bathr, double sink vanity, finished lower level walk-out w/ slider. Central AC, garage
MLS # 73534271 **\$679,900**

On the shores of Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg

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22 Union Point Snug Harbor Villa**



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On Indian Point # 10**



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Webster Lake Waterfront - 31 Bayview!



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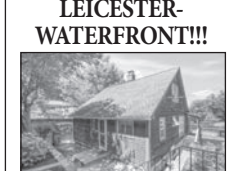
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Klem's hosts Pickle Fest in Spencer



Jason Bleau

Servers outside Klem's pass out samples of a dill pickle pizza.



Jason Bleau

Rocco's Donuts was a popular stop for visitors serving all kinds of delicious treats.



Jason Bleau

Hardwick Winery showed off their newest product, a dill pickle wine that made its debut and sold out during the festival.

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Jason Bleau

Jason Bleau

(Left) The mascot of the event, Mr. Pickle was a popular photo op for families. A visitor spins a prize wheel for a chance a several different pickle-themed prizes.

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Jason Bleau

A pickle-themed raffle featured all kinds of fun goods for all ages.

(Right) The tasting section outside Klem's created a line that quite literally spanned most of the parking lot.



Jason Bleau

State Representatives Paul Frost and John Marsi stopped by to enjoy the festivities, trying some fudge treats from Brookfield Orchard.

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SPENCER — Pickles have become one of the most popular growing food crazes in the country and locally Klem's in Spencer decided to join the hype with a pickle festival of their own. The event brought together vendors and businesses from throughout the region and drew a massive crowd creating lines out the door to try the treats, drinks, and meal samples all based on dill pickles. The day also included photo ops and games for the kids as well as a golden pickle search where customers who found the hidden golden pickles could receive a special prize.

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