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Friday, May 29, 2026



Courtesy

The Exchange Club of Spencer recently presented the distinguished A.C.E of the Year Award to Brayden Gilbert at a dinner held at the 308 Lakeside restaurant in East Brookfield. Gilbert is a graduating Senior at David Prouty High School. The award honors students for their accomplishments in "Accepting the Challenge of Excellence" during their high school years. Congratulations to Gilbert, and best wishes as you graduate! Photo courtesy of the club's Facebook page.

## Brookfield Cemetery, Tantasqua Chestnut Project team up for chance to bring a long-lost species to historic grounds

BROOKFIELD — Students and teachers of the Tantasqua Chestnut Project recently teamed up with officials of the Brookfield Cemetery for a chance to bring new life to the historic burial grounds.

The first seeds of potentially blight resistant, regionally adapted chestnut trees, developed by students over the past 10 years in the school's near 200-tree orchard were chosen and planted by students across five locations in the Cemetery's newest burial block. American chestnut trees, likely present throughout the Town of Brookfield before the turn of the last century, fell victim to a deadly fungus that was accidentally imported to the U.S.

The Brookfield Cemetery plantings mark the Tantasqua Chestnut Project's 10-year anniversary and a possible rebirth of the iconic American chestnut tree amongst the hallowed graves of those who certainly knew the tree in centuries past. The plantings will be monitored over time by students and teachers of the Project and evaluated for health and vigor. With some luck, and perhaps a replacement or two as needed, the Town of Brookfield may become host to the first healthy American chestnut trees in the area for over 100 years. In celebration of the cemetery plantings and

the 10th anniversary of the Tantasqua Chestnut Project, students and teachers will be making a special public presentation. Join them at the Merrick Library in Brookfield on Thursday, May 28, at 7 p.m. to look back into history at the rise and fall of a socially and environmentally important species, and understand its possible return at the hands of thousands of dedicated scientists, including the students and teachers of the Tantasqua Chestnut Project.

History of the tree and its downfall

More than a century ago, American chestnut trees, the "Redwoods of the East," were one of the dominant forest species in Eastern forests of the U.S. It is estimated that a quarter of the total community of Eastern forest trees was composed of American chestnut. Their abundance, paired with their value as a common timber and food product led to the old saying, "American chestnut takes a person from cradle to grave." Unfortunately, just after the turn of the last century, a devastating blight arrived in the

United States. Four billion American chestnut trees, inhabitants of our forests for 40 million years, were wiped out in a mere 40. Today, American chestnut trees are functionally extinct, a thwarted remnant smoldering in the understory of our Eastern forests, unable to fulfill their historic ecological or social role.

History of the effort to save it  
Since the beginning of the demise of the American chestnut tree, those who loved and valued it worked to save it. Attempts ranged from simple to heroic but in the end, none

Turn To CHESTNUT page A8

## Spencer selectmen approve changes to employee cost sharing

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

SPENCER — The Spencer Board of Selectmen approved changes to health insurance cost sharing for town employees on May 18, and appointed new leadership following the recent town election which added two new members to the board.

One of the major decisions of the night regarding employee health insurance cost sharing reducing the percentage that active employees will need to pay from 40 to 30 percent. Town Administrator Jeff Bridges said the move helps Spencer remain an attractive place to work and retain employees.

"For many years, our insurance cost share rates were 60/40, where the employees pick up 40 per-

cent. We made it a goal to get that down to 30," said Bridges. "The budget was developed with that. The negotiations with the unions were focused on that as an element of compensation — This is for the active non-union employees."

Selectmen asked about the police union's cost share, which Bridges explained has a unique language. The latest contract was signed last year and includes the 60/40 cost sharing split but also states that in the event the town lowers the cost sharing, 25 percent of their members' savings would be donated into OPEP funds in each individual name of those who contribute.

For retirees, the cost sharing will remain the same, with a 60/40 split for medical but not dental. Bridges

said they want to explore more parity with retirees within the next year.

The two proposals, for employee cost sharing decrease and maintaining the cost sharing percentage for retirees, were approved by selectmen with Bridges calling the changes "outstanding."

"That's a big move for the town. That's 40 years in the making," Bridges said.

The meeting also established new leadership for the Board of Selectmen. Gary Woodbury was voted as the new chair with Jonathan Vier remaining as vice chair. Newly elected board member Chris Woodbury will serve as Clerk. The rest of the board consists of Norman Letendre, Jr., who was also recently elected, and Jared Grigg.

## Dash Into Summer at family friendly 5K

WEST BROOKFIELD — The West Brookfield Elementary School PTO is hosting a summer 5K and family festival. The event will include a 5k, a fun run for kids, family games and activities, food trucks, vendors and more! We are looking for sponsors to help make this event memorable for everyone. In return, let us thank you by putting your logo on our runner's t-shirts. We are offering 4 sponsorship tiers—Bronze \$100, silver \$200, Gold \$300, Dimond \$100.

If you are interested in being a sponsor or a runner, please email wbrookfieldpto@gmail.com. Proceeds of the 5K, event go to the 501(c)3 WBES PTO who use it to fund a variety of student events throughout the year.

## North Brookfield School Committee approves changes to physical restraint policy

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

NORTH BROOKFIELD — The North Brookfield School Committee has approved a change to its policy regarding physical restraint of students and the use of time out rooms.

The committee hosted the third reading of the policy change on May 18, where Superintendent Timothy McCormick explained the proposal moved away from time out spaces in line with state trends.

"We are obviously complying with (the state), and we're doing so in a way where we're engaging our teachers and support staff, and training them in TCIS. Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools is really, I think, that next layer that we've adopted for our teachers and support staff to deal with students in crisis and to mend those relationships with those students when they come out of crisis," said McCormick.

The shift will put more of a focus on safety care training, which is a form of de-escalation, rather than restraint although there will be teachers trained in restraint if absolutely necessary. McCormick said the goal is to keep the students in the classroom and minimize the disruption to the educational experience.

"This policy just talks about moving away from putting a student in a time-out space and making sure we de-escalate that student within the classroom as much as we can," confirmed McCormick.

The third reading of the policy was met with little resistance from the committee. It was confirmed to be a change of an existing policy rather than a brand new policy for the district.

The document was previously reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee in April. The School Committee voted in the affirmative to apply the policy changes with one abstention.



Courtesy

As National Police Week came to a close last week, the Leicester Police Department applauded two of its very own who poured their hearts into an incredibly meaningful and physically demanding tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Sgt. Craig Guertin and Officer Michael Lombardozzi joined more than 2,000 fellow officers from across the country in the 2026 Police Unity Tour, which cycled from New Jersey into Washington, D.C. Photo courtesy of the department's Facebook page.

# Cherry Valley Post 443 continues Gold Star Square tradition ahead of Memorial Day

CHERRY VALLEY — Members of Cherry Valley American Legion Post 443 and the Legion Family recently traveled throughout Leicester to conduct the Post's annual Gold Star Memorial Square rededication ceremonies ahead of Memorial Day.

Every year, members stop at each of the town's Gold Star Squares to honor and remember the local servicemembers whose names appear on them. The squares serve as lasting memorials to Leicester residents who gave their lives in service to our country.

Members of the Post, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and Honor Guard traveled together by bus throughout town as ceremonies were held at each location. For many members, it is one of the most meaningful traditions the Post carries on each year leading into Memorial Day.

The community is also invited to attend Leicester's annual Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony on Monday, May 25. The parade steps off at 10:30 a.m. from Memorial Drive and proceeds to Leicester Town Common, where a Memorial Day ceremony will follow.

After the ceremony, Cherry Valley American Legion Post 443 will host an open house at the Post located at 167 Main St. in Cherry Valley. The public is invited to stop by for refreshments, conversation, and to spend time with local veterans and members of the Legion Family.

Memorial Day is a time to remember and honor those who never made it home, and Post 443 hopes the community will join in that remembrance throughout the weekend and on Memorial Day itself.



## Local land trust celebrates 20 years of land conservation

LEICESTER — Do you recognize the name Common Ground Land Trust? As an all-volunteer, private, non-profit (501c3) organization, we dedicate our time and energy to open space protection in Spencer and Leicester. With support from individuals, students, families, organizations, and businesses, our membership has grown over the years since inception in 2006. This year, Common Ground Land Trust is celebrating its 20th anniversary. Help us celebrate and become a member!

Do you enjoy outdoor recreation? If you engage in activities such as birding, hiking, hunting, fishing, or simply listening to the tranquil sounds of nature around you, Common Ground Land Trust may be a good partner for you.

Do you believe in the preservation of land, water, and open space? Join our land trust, become more informed, and share your thoughts and talents.

Are you curious or interested in partnering with us? To learn more about our goals and accomplishments you can find us at:

Web: [CommonGroundLT.org](http://CommonGroundLT.org)  
 Email: [info@commongroundlt.org](mailto:info@commongroundlt.org)  
 Phone: 774-371-0156

Common Ground Land Trust, PO Box 400, Leicester, MA 01524

As stewards of multiple properties in Spencer and Leicester, our work is on-going and involves time, energy, and community camaraderie. Whether you are a resident of Spencer, Leicester, or any other community, Common Ground Land Trust welcomes you! Join today, get involved, and protect the integrity of our rural towns.

### Explore Prince Edward Island This Summer or Fall

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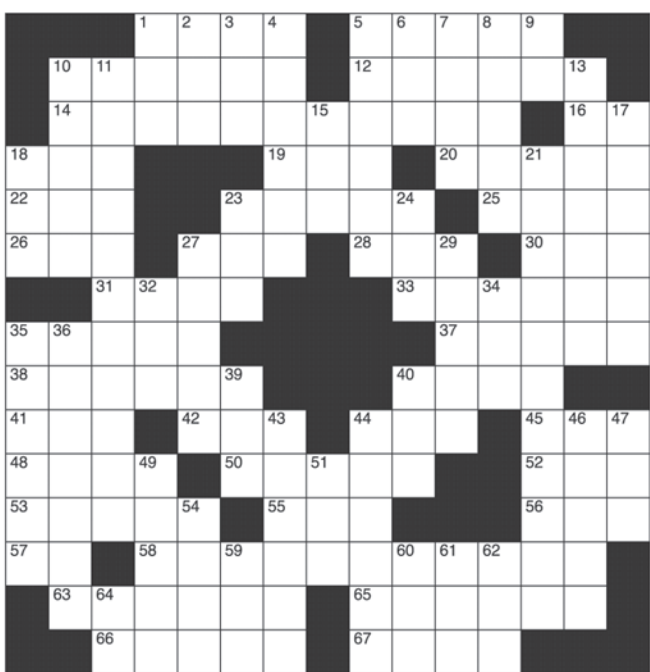
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### CLUES ACROSS

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Streetcar                                       | 35. Perfumery practice            |
| 5. Take ___ of it!                                 | 37. Indian film director Sultan   |
| 10. SW Asia peninsula                              | 38. Member of U.S. Navy           |
| 12. Beating wings to escape from a perch           | 40. Wing-like                     |
| 14. One who revitalizes                            | 41. Very fast airplane            |
| 16. Indicates position                             | 42. Slang for cigarette           |
| 18. Dishonorable man                               | 44. Most cars still need it       |
| 19. Singer King Cole                               | 45. Political war chest           |
| 20. Short-tailed marten                            | 48. Cools down                    |
| 22. One point east (clockwise) of due north        | 50. Diminish toward one end       |
| 23. The god of the underworld in ancient mythology | 52. Indigenous person of Thailand |
| 25. Dirt   | 53. Combined                      |
| 26. Superconducting super collider                 | 55. Container                     |
| 27. Not good                                       | 56. Expression of satisfaction    |
| 28. A way to sink                                  | 57. Thou                          |
| 30. Unwell   | 58. Return a favor                |
| 31. Follow orders                                  | 63. Go over once more             |
| 33. Deep ravine                                    | 65. Removed                       |
|  | 66. "Silence of the ___"          |
|  | 67. Comedian Rogan                |

### CLUES DOWN

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Children's game                           | 29. Aspirations                                      |
| 2. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.) | 32. Baby's eating accessory                          |
| 3. Own (Scottish)                            | 34. Actress Thurman                                  |
| 4. Female follower of Bacchus                | 35. Turn into bone                                   |
| 5. Subsidies                                 | 36. One who saves you                                |
| 6. Protects from weather                     | 39. Consume  |
| 7. Spanish municipality                      | 40. Swiss river                                      |
| 8. Supermarket chain                         | 43. A part of a river where the current is very fast |
| 9. Domain name                               | 44. Categories                                       |
| 10. Semitic peoples                          | 46. Expressed amazement                              |
| 11. Designs anew                             | 47. It's important in respiration (abbr.)            |
| 13. City associated with Jesus               | 49. Greek war dance                                  |
| 15. Cool!                                    | 51. Bland, semi-liquid food                          |
| 17. Bank employee                            | 54. Regard in a specified way                        |
| 18. Central nervous system                   | 59. Taxi   |
| 21. Standardized piece of text               | 60. Naturally occurring solid material               |
| 23. A type of fever                          | 61. Feline   |
| 24. Baglike structure in a plant or animal   | 62. Post-burning residue                             |
| 27. Threaten persistently                    | 64. Elevated railroad                                |

### PUZZLE SOLUTION



## SPENCER ALMANAC REAL ESTATE

### BROOKFIELD

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### EAST BROOKFIELD

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### LEICESTER

\$505,000, 404 Rawson St, Cadoret, Brian C, and Brunyak, David, to Decaro, Peter.

\$370,000, 135 Henshaw St, Reaf Acquisition T, and U S Bank Trust Na, to Goncalves, Josias.

### NORTH BROOKFIELD

\$135,000, 47 Elm St, Omara Joseph W Est, and Wilson, Karen, to Flipping Good Inc.

### SPENCER

\$326,500, 333 Main St, Tillotson, Andrew C, and Tillotson, Shelley E, to Lajeunesse, Kelsey, and Lajeunesse, Jonathan.

### WARREN

None

### WEST BROOKFIELD

None

# Leicester Concerts on the Common returns for 36th season

LEICESTER — Music, dancing, and summer tradition will once again fill the Leicester Common as the Leicester Concerts on the Common series returns for its 36th season this summer.

The longtime community concert series will feature eight weeks of free performances running Wednesday evenings from July 1 through Aug. 19, bringing a mix of big band, classic rock, blues, country, folk, and tribute acts to the town center.

Concerts are scheduled from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on the Leicester Common and are supported in part through grants from the Leicester Arts Council and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, along with contributions from local businesses, sponsors, the Fontaine Fund, and community donations.

The season opens July 1 with The Abletones Big Band performing a patriotic “Salute to America” concert ahead of Independence Day celebrations. The 15-piece ensemble will feature vocalist Rhiannon Hurst, along with a flag presentation by VFW Post 7556. Organizers describe the evening as a showcase performance to kick off the summer season.

On July 8, The Love Dogs will bring a mix of jump blues, funk, swing, and jazz to the Common. Known for their energetic horn section and boogie-woogie piano, the

band has built a strong following across New England. The concert is sponsored by Country Bank, with a rain date scheduled for July 9.

The following week, July 15, The Deloreans will take audiences back through the music of the 1970s and 1980s with a seven-piece band featuring brass, keyboards, and rock vocals. The concert is sponsored by Cornerstone Bank, with a rain date of July 16.

Fans of 1960s music can enjoy “Holding Back the ‘60’s” on July 22. The performance will highlight British Invasion favorites, Motown classics, and rock-and-roll hits from the era. A rain date is set for July 23.

The New Grown-Ups Band performs July 29, blending folk, country blues, Celtic influences, bluegrass, and contemporary acoustic music. Organizers describe the group as combining strong musicianship with a lively stage presence. The rain date is July 30.

August begins with “Moondance” on Aug. 5, a tribute concert celebrating the music of Van Morrison. Sponsored by the Fontaine Fund, the show promises a lineup of Morrison classics spanning decades of the Irish singer-songwriter’s career. The rain date is Aug. 6.

Country music takes center stage

Aug. 12 with the Heartland Radio Band, which organizers describe as one of New England’s premier country acts. The performance is sponsored by the Leicester Concerts Arts Committee, with a rain date of Aug. 13.

The series concludes Aug. 19 with “Viva Las Elvis,” featuring Dan Fontaine and The Memphis Sun Mafia Band performing a tribute to Elvis Presley. The concert is sponsored by MAPFRE Insurance, G.F. McKenna Insurance, and community donations. The rain date is Aug. 20.

Over the past three decades, the Leicester concert series has become a staple of the town’s summer calendar, regularly drawing residents and visitors to the Common with lawn chairs and picnic blankets for evenings of live entertainment and community gathering.

Organizers encourage attendees to check the town website for weather-related postponement information.

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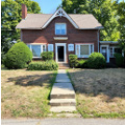
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# Spencer Legion to host suicide prevention training

SPENCER — American Legion Post 138 will host a public suicide prevention training event on Saturday, June 20, aimed at helping community members recognize warning signs and support individuals who may be struggling with suicidal thoughts or emotional crisis.

The event, titled “Turning Conversations into Lifelines: Identifying & Helping Veterans and Those in the Community Who Need Immediate Support,” will feature instructors connected with the Columbia Lighthouse Project, an organization focused on suicide prevention through education and intervention strategies.

The training centers on the Columbia Protocol-Suicide Severity Rating Scale, commonly known as the C-SSRS, a tool used internationally by healthcare providers, counselors, educators, veterans organizations, and emergency responders to assess suicide risk.

According to organizers, the Columbia Lighthouse Project’s

message is simple: “Just ask. You could save a life.”

The 90-minute program is being organized by American Legion Post 138 and its auxiliary members, who invited the instructors to Spencer in an effort to expand access to mental health awareness and suicide prevention resources within the local community.

The event is open to the public and intended not only for veterans and their families, but for anyone interested in learning how to identify and respond to warning signs in friends, neighbors, co-workers, or loved ones.

Following the training, participants are expected to learn how to use the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale to help determine whether an individual may be at risk. The session will also cover common warning signs and risk factors, the different forms of suicidal ideation and behaviors associated with imminent risk, and methods for communicating effectively with someone who may be in crisis.

Organizers say the training is designed to be practical and approachable for everyday community members, not just healthcare professionals.

The event will begin with coffee and pastries from 9 to 10 a.m., followed by the formal program from 10 a.m. to noon. A question-and-answer session and networking opportunity will follow the presentation.

The training will take place at American Legion Post 138.

Suicide prevention and mental health awareness have remained significant concerns nationwide, particularly among veterans, first responders, and individuals facing isolation or emotional distress. Organizers hope the training will help equip local residents with the confidence to have difficult conversations and intervene when needed.

For more information, residents may call Mariann LoSasso at 508-885-3132 or email post138spencerma@gmail.com.

# Seth Newton returns to Workshop13 for pre-tour show



Worcester, Massachusetts, and has gone on to build a broad and dynamic solo career — releasing dozens of original studio recordings and performing on some of the most prestigious stages around the world.

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](http://workshop13.org), or call 413-277-6072.

WARE — Workshop13 is excited to welcome Seth Newton back to their Grand Hall stage to kick off his international “Across the Sea” European tour. This pre-tour show takes place at 13 Church St., Ware, on Sunday, May 31. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and the performance begins at 6 p.m. This all-ages event will start with opening band Woodshed, a folk/country/americana band that loves putting harmonies in your ear. Tickets are available on a sliding scale from \$10-\$20, and can be purchased in advance at [www.workshop13.org](http://www.workshop13.org).

Seth Newton is an internationally touring, signed singer-songwriter known for his strong, distinctive four-octave

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BRENDAN BERUBE  
EDITOR

## EDITORIAL

# Planting hope for the next century

There is something fitting about planting American chestnut trees in a cemetery.

Not because cemeteries are places of endings, but because they are also places of memory, continuity and quiet hope. The recent effort by students involved in the Tantasqua Chestnut Project to plant potentially blight-resistant American chestnut trees at the Brookfield Cemetery represents far more than a science lesson or environmental project. It is a reminder that communities can still think long-term, work together and invest in something they may never fully live to see completed.

For many New Englanders today, the American chestnut exists mostly as a story. A century ago, it was one of the dominant trees of the Eastern forest, towering above hillsides and providing food, lumber and shade throughout the region. Generations depended on it. Then, in only a few decades, a blight nearly erased it from the landscape. Four billion trees vanished. Entire ecosystems changed with them.

It would have been easy for people to simply accept that loss as permanent. Instead, scientists, volunteers, teachers and students kept working decade after decade to bring the species back. That persistence deserves recognition.

What makes the Tantasqua Chestnut Project especially encouraging is that it places students at the center of genuine scientific and environmental work. Too often, young people are told about problems but rarely given meaningful opportunities to help solve them. Here, students are not completing hypothetical assignments. They are collecting seeds, crossbreeding trees, monitoring growth and participating in a project with consequences that could stretch well beyond their own lifetimes.

That matters. Education is at its strongest when students can see the direct connection between classroom learning and the world around them. The Tantasqua students are learning biology, ecology, conservation and genetics, but they are also learning patience, stewardship and responsibility. They are discovering that important work is often slow, uncertain and deeply collaborative.

The origins of this local effort also carry a powerful lesson. The project traces back to the devastating 2011 tornado that tore through parts of Western and Central Massachusetts. Amid destruction, sunlight reached the forest floor and struggling native chestnut trees briefly found room to grow and flower again. Teachers and students recognized an opportunity where others might have seen only damage.

That spirit feels especially important today.

Communities often face challenges that can seem overwhelming, whether environmental, economic or social. It is easy to become cynical or assume problems are too large to address. Yet the story of the chestnut project shows how meaningful progress often begins quietly, with local people deciding to do what they can where they are.

There is also symbolism in placing these trees among the graves of Brookfield residents who likely knew the American chestnut during their own lifetimes. In a sense, the project reconnects generations. The people buried there witnessed the disappearance of the species. Today's students are helping lead its possible return.

No one can say with certainty whether every tree will survive. The project leaders themselves acknowledge that success will require monitoring, patience and perhaps replacement plantings over time. But that uncertainty is part of the point. Communities grow stronger when they are willing to invest effort into something worthwhile even without guarantees.

The American chestnut may never fully reclaim the forests it once dominated. Still, every healthy tree planted today stands as proof that loss does not always have to be final.

Sometimes, the most important thing a community can do is plant something whose full shade future generations will enjoy.

# VIEWPOINT

OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Show me the man and I'll show you the crime

To the Editor:  
Mr. K... No, the other K...opined of a watery fantasy, where he expects the House and Senate to turn blue in November, placing the Democrats back in power. Then, with the help of Article 2, Section 4, President Trump, Vice President Vance, and all civil Officers of the United States will be removed from office. Each convicted of treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors... "Draining the Swamp," as he so plagiarizingly put it (typical for a Biden supporter).

If only I had a dollar for every time I heard that over the past ten years...

Ken... Kenny... Ken-meister... While you shake your fists at an empty sky, accusing the President of using the Department of Justice (DOJ) as his personal hit squad, you failed to show the same outrage when the Biden administration was actually doing just that! I realize 2020 - 2024 was so long ago, and you may have some trouble recalling everything that Biden did to "save" America.

I could mention that Biden weaponized the IRS to target conservatives, but since you prefer to wear horse blinders when it comes to the ills perpetuated by the real Swamp Creatures, your beloved democrats, what point is it to try and bring anything to light? I noted your indignation regarding the Trump Administrations use of funds for the Board of Peace (BoP) as well as the "arsenal clearing" actions in Iran. What you failed to mention is the fact that the BoP was formed, initially, as a limited body tasked with overseeing post-war Gaza. It didn't take me very long to find that piece of peace. It surprises me that someone who has so much information to share didn't include that part of the BoP's mission.

As far as "depleting" the US Arsenal, I wouldn't call strategic strikes, "blowing up Iran". Technology has come a long

way from the WWII (that's World War Two, Ilhan) era of Carpet-Bombing. On top of taking out the head cheese and a large portion of successive terrorists, these strikes may have also ended the 47-years of oppression of women at the hands of the Ayatollah regime. I'm sure you pride yourself as a White Knight for all women and feel the need to step in and shout down the toxically masculine patriarchy when needed, right? Since 1979, the women of Iran have been forced to literally cover themselves from head to toe at the threat of being beaten. Sexy ankles can surely drive a man to lose control of his lustful desires! It must be a tough spot for you to be in. Trump makes it possible for millions of oppressed women to throw off the bed sheets they've been forced to wear, but, as you so concretely believe, Orange Man Bad!

While I believe the Biden administration's policies were very destructive to the United States, Biden did provide us with some very entertaining speaking engagements. From waving to a backdrop, shaking hands with nobody, and getting lost on an empty stage, there was always something there to surprise us. The left put on a master class in wringing every bit of worth out of a washed-up politician. The democrats took on the "Weekend at Bernie's" strategy and paraded former vice president Biden out wherever and whenever they could. When they couldn't hide the fact of his failing mental state, in a panic, they propped up a candidate with even less mental acuity. Enter in, the queen of word salads, Kamala Harris.

That's your democrat party in a nutshell. Let's just throw everything at the wall and see what sticks.

MATHEW HERHOLZ  
SPENCER

### Thanks to all who helped with Clean-Up Day

To the Editor:  
This letter is to acknowledge and thank those who participated in the this year's Clean-Up Day:

The American Legion for the use of their hall for sign-up and the lunch.

The Highway Department for the gloves, trash bags and pick-up of the trash collected.

Woody's Auto Body, The Goods and Big Y for donations for the lunch.

To Sam DeLuca and the Spencer Conservation Committee for posters,

advertising and clean-up.

Our First Congregational Church members and mostly the volunteers who worked cleaning the roadways and areas.

We are grateful for all the support for the project. It has been held for many years, and we look forward to continuing this worthwhile community event.

Thanks to all!

PATRICIA A. STARK  
FOR THE FRIST CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE  
SPENCER

### There are angels among us

To the Editor:  
With all the negativity in the news recently, may I offer evidence of angels among us?

Last November, I was shopping our Spencer Big Y. A man approached me, handed me an envelope, and wished me a happy Thanksgiving. I said, "Thank you!" and opened it. There was a gift card inside. I looked for the man to thank him again, but he was out of earshot.

I attend the monthly meals at my church. After one of the meals, my truck wouldn't start. The battery was dead. AAA couldn't come until morning. My friend drove me home and back the next

day. A tech installed the battery. When I tried to give him payment, he said, "You're all set."

"What?" I replied.

He answered, "Thank your church!"

My friend and I went out for brunch after Sunday Mass. We struck up a conversation with the couple at the next table. We enjoyed socializing with them! After they left, our waitress told us they paid for our meal!

Evidence of angels in today's crazy world!

PAT SWEET  
SPENCER

### Letter submission policy

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

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

## Five questions that could change how you see retirement



FINANCIAL  
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Saving for retirement is important, but it's only part of the picture. If you're within five to 10 years of your target retirement date, it's time to start thinking about what you actually want your retirement to look like. After all, getting to retirement isn't the end goal — it's what you want to do once you're there that matters.

Start by asking yourself these five questions.

When do you want to retire? The age at which you retire matters more than you may realize. Retiring early sounds appealing, but it means saving more and having less time to do it. It can also create gaps in health care coverage and income before key benefits kick in. For example, Social Security benefits can begin at 62, but at a reduced amount. Full benefits are available between ages 66 and 67, depending on birth year, and waiting until 70 means the maximum benefit. Medicare doesn't start until age 65, and penalty-free withdrawals from retirement accounts generally aren't allowed until age 59½.

For couples, timing gets even more complicated. Staggering retirement dates can sometimes maximize benefits; in other cases, retiring at the same time works better.

A financial advisor can help you sort through these decisions and find the approach that makes the most sense for your situation.

How do you want to spend your time in retirement? Many new retirees are surprised to find that having unlimited free time feels disorienting rather than freeing. Thinking ahead about how to fill the days with meaningful activity — whether that's travel, volunteering, pursuing hobbies or spending more time with family — can make the transition smoother.

It helps to sketch out what a typical week, month or even first year might look like. If there are big gaps, it's worth thinking now about what might fill them in rewarding ways.

Where do you want to live as a retiree? Some retirees stay put, while others downsize or relocate entirely. Either way, it's wise to consider whether a chosen location will work well as you get older, taking into account factors like proximity to family, access to health care, cost of living and climate.

What will your retirement lifestyle cost? It's not uncommon for retirees to discover that their travel, entertainment or leisure expenses were higher than expected. The more active and involved you plan to be, the more you will likely need to budget.

Does your retirement involve giving back? Retirement often brings both the time and motivation to be more generous. Whether the goal is helping family members, donating to charity, or volunteering in the community, it's worth defining those goals and building them into an overall plan.

Now that your vision is taking shape, turn it into a plan. Work with your financial advisor to align your savings with the life you want — and revisit that plan as your priorities evolve so your retirement keeps pace with you.

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 last real waiting rooms

The other morning, I found myself sitting in a small-town Massachusetts waiting room with six other people and absolutely nothing to do.

No television blaring headlines nobody asked for. No giant digital screen flashing advertisements for prescription drugs with side effects worse than the original illness. No music pounding through hidden ceiling speakers.

**LANTERNS** Just silence.  
**ALONG** Well...not complete  
**MAIN** silence.  
**STREET** There was the occa-  
**By CHARLES** sional page turning from a woman reading a paperback novel. Somebody coughing politely into a handkerchief.

A coffee machine making tired little gurgling noises in the corner. Rain tapping against the windows.

And every single person in that room was pretending not to notice each other while secretly noticing everybody.

New Englanders are specialists at that.

The gentleman across from me wore a Red Sox cap that had clearly survived several presidential administrations. One woman had one of those enormous handbags that probably contained everything short of snow tires and jumper cables. An older fellow near the door kept folding and unfolding his umbrella like he was trying to solve a puzzle.

Nobody spoke for nearly 15 minutes. Then, as always happens in small towns eventually, somebody cracked first.

A woman looked out the window at the rain and sighed, "Well, I guess the gardens needed it."

That was it. The opening pitch. Within two minutes, the entire room had become a committee on tomatoes.

One man said his plants were late this year. Another insisted you shouldn't put them out before Memorial Day no matter what the weather says. Somebody else brought up rabbits. Then chipmunks. Then how nobody can keep woodchucks out of anything anymore.

And suddenly the room wasn't quiet anymore.

People laughed.  
People nodded.

The fellow with the umbrella told a story about his grandfather covering tomato plants with old bed sheets during a June frost back in 1962. The woman with the giant handbag offered everybody butter-scotch candies from somewhere deep inside it like a magician pulling scarves from a hat.

For 20 minutes, nobody looked at a phone.

I noticed that afterward.

Not because phones are evil. Lord knows I use one often enough myself. My son can somehow pay bills, check the weather, order dinner, and watch a baseball game all on one little screen. Meanwhile I still occasionally press the flashlight button accidentally and spend five minutes wondering why my pocket's glowing.

But there was something comforting about that waiting room conversation because it reminded me of an older kind of American life that seems to be slipping away around the edges.

We used to talk to strangers more.

Not deeply. Not dramatically. We weren't pouring our souls out in the hardware store aisle. But there was an understanding that if you sat beside somebody long enough, eventually one of you would mention the weather, the roads, the Red Sox, or how expensive blueberries have gotten.

And from there, conversation simply happened.

I worry sometimes that younger folks are losing those tiny everyday interactions that quietly hold communities together.

Not friendships exactly.

Something smaller than friendship, but important all the same.

Recognition.

Familiarity.

The sense that you belong among other human beings instead of merely passing beside them.

A town isn't only buildings and roads. It's thousands of little moments where people acknowledge each other's existence. Holding doors. Waving from pickup trucks. Talking about gardens in waiting rooms.

That's the glue.

You remove enough of those ordinary moments and eventually people begin feeling lonely without quite understanding why.

I don't think most of us need giant solutions nearly as much as we need small reminders that we still live alongside one another.

A conversation about tomato plants can do more good than people realize.

Eventually the nurse called my name, and as I stood up, the fellow in the Red Sox cap nodded toward the rain outside and said, "Good soaking rain, anyway."

Everybody murmured agreement like members of a town council.

I smiled all the way down the hallway.

And I thought afterward that maybe the last real community centers in America aren't fancy places at all.

Maybe they're ordinary waiting rooms where strangers still talk about gardens while the rain falls outside.

# Kindergarten registration now open; free integrated preschool available for Leicester families

LEICESTER — The Leicester School District is pleased to announce that Kindergarten registration is now open for the 2026–2027 school year. We are also excited to continue offering tuition-free enrollment in our integrated preschool program for Leicester residents.

Children who turn five years old on or before Aug. 31, 2026 are eligible to enroll in Kindergarten at Leicester Elementary School. School hours are 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. There is no registration deadline, and families are encouraged to register as soon as possible to help us prepare for the upcoming school year.

To enter Kindergarten, students must provide:

- Proof of a lead screening with results
  - A physical exam dated within 13 months of the start of school
  - 5 doses of Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP)
  - 4 doses of Polio
  - 3 doses of Hepatitis B
  - 2 doses of Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)
  - 2 doses of Varicella vaccine or documentation of chickenpox disease
- Registration information can be found at: [https://leicester.k12.ma.us/for\\_parents/stu-](https://leicester.k12.ma.us/for_parents/stu-)

dent\_registration

In addition to Kindergarten registration, Leicester is proud to offer a tuition-free integrated preschool program for in-town residents. Children who turn three or four years old on or before Aug. 31, 2026, are eligible to apply. District residents who qualify for special education services may begin attending once they turn three, regardless of the birthdate cutoff.

Children enrolling in the preschool program must be independently toilet-trained (no diapers or pull-ups), unless a specific special education service requires otherwise. Children who are not yet independently using the restroom during the school day will need to wait to begin the program until they are developmentally ready.

More information about the integrated preschool program can be found at <https://sites.google.com/lpsma.net/leicester-integrated-preschool?usp=sharing>.

For questions about Kindergarten or Preschool registration, please contact Leicester Elementary School at (508) 892-7050.

We look forward to welcoming our newest learners and partnering with families as they begin this exciting educational journey in Leicester!

# First Congregational W. Brookfield to host concert June 20

WEST BROOKFIELD — The First Congregational Church of W. Brookfield, UCC, 36 N. Main St., W. Brookfield, will host a concert on Saturday, June 20 at 7 p.m., preceded by a social hour from 6 - 7 p.m.

Solstice Sing for Peace and Justice - Songs to Cultivate Community, Compassion, and Commitment will feature local singing group, A Chorus for These Times, directed by Nym Cook with instrumentalists & guest artist Leslie Sweetnam.

All are welcome! Free yummy snacks!

There is no admission charge but donations will be accepted to support Abby's House, Worcester's largest provider of affordable housing specifically designed to meet the needs of women and children.

For more information, Call the church at 508-867-7078, contact Karen Murphy (kmurphy718@charter.net) or Nym Cooke (nymcooke@gmail.com).



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# Camp Invention's fun, action-packed summer STEM program coming to area

REGION — Camp Invention®, a nationally recognized, nonprofit summer enrichment program, is coming to the following locations. Auburn: Auburn Middle School the week of July 6 - July 10. Uxbridge: Our Lady of the Valley Regional School the week of June 22 - June 26. Regional program sponsors include Johnson Controls Foundation and Overdeck Family Foundation. A program of the National Inventors Hall of Fame® in partnership with the United States Patent and Trademark Office, Camp Invention challenges children in grades K-6 to tap into their natural curiosity and use their creativity to solve problems. Through hands-on activities, Camp Invention promotes STEM learning; builds confidence, leadership, perseverance and resourcefulness; and encourages entrepreneurship in a fun and engaging environment. Each year, the program features new curricula inspired by some of our nation's most world-changing inventors at the National Inventors Hall of Fame Inductees. This year's Spark program encourages children to be confident in their ideas and explore their innovativeness through hands-on activities including: Space Morphers™: Kids build a DIY rocket and launch an epic mission to transform a new planet's atmosphere, terrain and ecosystem. After a high-energy Rover Race to collect samples and data, they grow dazzling crystal trees and



In Camp Invention's Make Waves experience, children ride the waves of entrepreneurship and invention by creating prototypes, pitching their products and building a billboard boat.

hatch a mysterious animal egg in a Space Lab. Make Waves™: Campers ride the waves of entrepreneurship and invention! Inspired by a surfer's journey, they create prototypes, pitch their innovative products to hook investors and build a billboard boat to set sail and "make waves" in the ma Fur-ensics™: Kids sharpen their animal detective skills with Cap E. Bara and a fleet of robotic capybaras. They investigate a trail of footprints, collect bits of fluffy fur and examine suspicious splatters before forensically analyzing evidence that has a surprising twist. The Infringers™: Campers use their invention superpowers to solve

challenges in their community and around the world. They miniaturize top-secret innovations, safeguard their designs using cryptography and protect their intellectual property from the Infringers. "I love that this camp lets my kids step out of the usual roles that they have at home and in school, and explore different parts of themselves," said the parent of 2025 Camp Invention campers. "At camp my son learns to be more creative and my daughter learns to be more independent." All local Camp Invention programs are facilitated and taught by qualified educators who reside and teach in the community. Camp Invention serves 147,000 students every year and partners with more than

2,600 schools and districts across the nation. For more information or to register, visit [invent.org/camp](http://invent.org/camp). About Camp Invention Camp Invention is the only nationally recognized summer program focused on creativity, innovation, real-world problem solving and the spirit of invention. Through hands-on programming, Camp Invention encourages children entering kindergarten through sixth grade to explore science, technology, engineering and mathematics curricula inspired by some of the world's greatest inventors. Since 1990, our education programs have served more than 3.3 million children, and 297,000 teachers and Leadership Interns. Regional program sponsors include the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

## Open Sky appoints two psychiatrists to Medical Director roles



Dr. Sarah Langenfeld



Dr. Prerna Moorjani

WORCESTER — Open Sky Community Services, a nonprofit behavioral health and human services organization, today announced the appointment of two new medical directors: Dr. Sarah Langenfeld and Dr. Prerna Moorjani.

"We are delighted to welcome Dr. Moorjani to Open Sky and to appoint Dr. Langenfeld to a well-deserved leadership position," said Ken Bates, President and CEO of Open Sky. "Both doctors have proven expertise in navigating the complexities of behavioral health within the core populations and communities we serve. Their insightful, empathetic approach will strengthen our whole person care model, while ensuring inclusive and accessible services across all Open Sky programs."

"I view these additions as a huge step forward for Open Sky in our efforts to provide comprehensive care and the highest quality of clinical services," added

Manny Oppong, Executive Vice President and Chief Program Officer of Open Sky. "These psychiatrists are coming to Open Sky with years of experience and specialized expertise that will truly support, enhance, and grow our services."

Dr. Langenfeld, of Worcester, has more than two decades of experience as a board-certified psychiatrist and has spent the last four years practicing part-time at Open Sky's Program of Assertive Community Treatment, where she has provided treatment to individuals with intensive, long-term mental health conditions. She has also served as Medical Director for a Community Behavioral Health Center and as an Attending Psychiatrist in outpatient services for an area provider. In 2023, Dr. Langenfeld was recognized as a Champion of Health Care by the Worcester Business Journal.

As Medical Director,

Dr. Langenfeld will support all of the agency's state Department of Mental Health and Department of Public Health-contracted programs. She will also administer psychiatric pharmacology care at Open Sky's Bridge Counseling Center.

Dr. Langenfeld earned a Bachelor's degree from Bates College in Maine and a Doctor of Medicine degree from the UMass Chan Medical School.

Dr. Moorjani, of Shrewsbury, is a board-certified adult, child, and adolescent psychiatrist with years of clinical experience in central Massachusetts, specializing in intergenerational trauma and neurodevelopmental disorders. Dr. Moorjani will serve as Medical Director of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Child and Family Services Division. She will also provide care at Open Sky's Behavioral Health Urgent Care clinic. In her previous role, Dr. Moorjani served as a child and adolescent psychiatrist at a community-based provider in Central Mass.

Dr. Moorjani earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Rutgers University and a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from the New York Institute of Technology's College of Osteopathic Medicine.

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# QCC's Class of 2026 demonstrates strength and resolve at 61st Commencement



Courtesy  
Dr. Matilde Castiel delivers the keynote address during Quinsigamond Community College's Commencement ceremony.

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College conferred more than 1,500 graduates, the most since 2020, at its 61st commencement ceremony today. Keynote speaker Dr. Matilde Castiel, a physician, public health leader and former commissioner of Health and Human Services for the City of Worcester, commended graduates for their resilience and encouraged them to focus on humanity and take care of others.

Castiel detailed a journey that started when she left Cuba at age seven, without her parents, through Operation Peter Pan, a U.S.-backed initiative from the early 1960s that relocated over 14,000 unaccompanied Cuban children to America. Like many of the children, Castiel and her brother lived in foster homes until their parents could enter the country. They worked hard to build a new life and Castiel eventually began her pursuit of serving communities through healthcare.

"If that seven-year-old girl...at the Havana airport, holding a small suitcase and knowing only three English sentences, could one day stand here speaking to all of you," Castille said. "Then I promise you this: there is no limit to where your journey can take you."

Castiel noted how in the past, she questioned if she belonged in a field where only 2 percent of physicians are Latina women, yet Latinos make up nearly 20 percent of the population. Inspired by her hardworking parents, she didn't shy away from the challenge, but she emphasized that there is still work to be done in terms of access to educational and professional opportunities.

"Graduates of Quinsigamond Community College, you already possess something powerful. You know how to keep going when the odds are stacked against you. This degree is not just a credential; it is proof that you belong in every room that you walk into," Castille said.

Student Government Association President Ryan Heath spoke at the ceremony about the external pressure he faced after graduating high school. While enrolling at QCC wasn't usually part of the advice he received, he

realized the choice was his alone. Heath, who is transferring to Worcester Polytechnic Institute in the fall, encouraged graduates to stay true to their beliefs even when others don't see the same vision.

"What I love about our community college is that all of us were able to reach the same mountain top, yet we've all had our own complex and challenging paths of climbing here," Heath said. "Some of us are balancing multiple jobs or raising a family. Some of us are trying to balancing a social life while stressing about that 11:59 due date. Yet despite all of the roadblocks that were ahead of us and all of the doubt, we still made it."

QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja acknowledged the perseverance of the graduates and recognized QCC faculty and staff for supporting students throughout their journeys of pursuing higher education.

"Graduations are the culmination of years of hard work, overcoming obstacles, and pushing onward," Pedraja said. "Graduation does not signal the end of a chapter, but the start of a new one. It is a commencement, a beginning, a launchpad for future possibilities. It is the beginning of a career, of further studies, of a profession, of a new life."

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**CHESTNUT**

continued from page A1

succeded to stop the spread of the disease, nor revitalize what had already been lost. It seemed that the cause was hopeless. In 1983, more than 30 years after the last hold-out trees succumbed to the blight, a group of scientists and lay people, guided by corn geneticist, Charles Burnham and Nobel Prize winning plant breeder, Norman Borlaug, set out on a new path, to breed a tree able to defend itself against the blight.

The Tantasqua Chestnut Project and Brookfield Cemetery

On June 1, 2011, an EF3 tornado tore a swath

of destruction across 38 miles and many local communities, from Westfield to Charlton. Homes were destroyed, forests lay in ruin, but quietly, as the dust settled, a silver lining began to emerge amongst the wreckage of the forests. Bright sunlight reached all the way to the ground amidst the tangle. Blighted native American chestnut trees that had been withering in the shade of the understory for more than 100 years instantly began to grow, old roots still intact. Though still under siege by the blight, they reached for the sky, temporarily relieved

of the usual pressure of their competitors, and bathed in light, they began to flower. Discovered on the slopes of Mt. Ella in

Monson's Flynt Park, these unexpected trees became the center of a school project that has made a real-life, long-term science project accessible to over 3000 students to date, many of whom have dedicated their time to it outside of school hours as members of the Tantasqua Chestnut Club. With support from the national and local level of the American Chestnut Foundation

and the MA/RI Chapter, along with an invaluable partnership with the RePlanting Monson Tree Committee and the Monson Parks and Recreation Department, students and teachers from Tantasqua Junior High have spent the past 10 years as part of the modern effort to save the species.

They used the window of opportunity opened by the 2011 tornado to cross breed hybrid, potentially blight resistant American chestnut trees developed by the American Chestnut Foundation with native flowering chestnut trees at the Monson site. The resulting seeds, potentially blight resistant and regionally adapted to the New England climate, were harvested and planted in a research orchard at Tantasqua Junior High. The trees planted in the Brookfield Cemetery are the "grandchildren" of those original natives from the mountain, the first offspring to be harvested from the Tantasqua orchard since it began 10 years ago.

About the Tantasqua Chestnut Project

The Tantasqua Chestnut Project was founded by a group of students and teachers who were inspired by the might of a struggling species which has lasted in our forests for over 120 years at a severe handicap caused by the ever-present chestnut blight. With the opportunity created by the 2011 tornado, the decision to join the effort to save a species became a no-brainer. With open minds and a willingness to work together to figure out what to do first, and second, and third... students and teachers of the Project have worked together, to develop what we now call the Tantasqua Chestnut Project. The Project has evolved to focus on three pillars of effort; 1. Contribute to the development of a chestnut tree

that can resume its ecological role in Eastern forests. 2. Contribute to the re-establishment of American chestnut trees within our region. 3. Contribute to the public understanding of this ecological issue. The successes of the Project have been made possible through a network of community supporters including the Tantasqua School Committee and administration, the Tantasqua Education Foundation, the American Chestnut Foundation, and wonderful partnerships with the RePlanting Monson Tree Committee, the Monson Parks and Recreation Department, and now the Brookfield Cemetery Commission.

# LEGALS

Please be aware that the Burncoat Pond Watershed District will hold a meeting on June 16, 2026 at the Leicester Town Hall gymnasium, 3 Washburn Square, Leicester, MA 01524, at 6:30 PM in order to move free cash in the amount of \$88,326.00 to Dam Maintenance. All proprietors are welcome. May 29, 2026

**Notice of Public Hearing— Planning Board**

The Spencer Planning Board will be holding a Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 16, 2026, in McCourt Social Hall of Memorial Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Spencer, MA, and the hearing will be conducted in person and remotely on the following items starting at 6:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as can be heard:

**Public Hearing Stormwater and Scenic Road Permit— Applicant: Land Planning, Inc.; Owner: Bedrosian Realty Trust; Location: William Casey Road, Spencer, MA (street address not yet assigned), Assessor's Map R01-18-01. The applicant is seeking a Stormwater Permit under Article 14 (Stormwater Management Bylaw) of the Spencer General Bylaws and a Scenic Road Permit under M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 15C, to build a new single-family home with septic, well, and a new driveway. The property is located within the Rural Residential (RR) zoning district.**

**Public Hearing Stormwater and Scenic Road Permit— Applicant: Land Planning, Inc.; Owner: Bedrosian Realty Trust; Location: William Casey Road, Spencer, MA (street address not yet assigned), Assessor's Map R01-18-02. The applicant is seeking a Stormwater Permit under Article 14 (Stormwater Management Bylaw) of the Spencer General Bylaws and a Scenic Road Permit under M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 15C, to build a new single-family home with septic, well, and a new driveway. The property is located within the Rural Residential (RR) zoning district.** May 29, 2026 June 5, 2026

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Worcester Probate and Family Court 225 Main Street Worcester, MA 01608 (508) 831-2200 Docket No. WO26P1573EA CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION** Estate Of: **Jon Charles Eccleston Date of Death: 01/21/2026**

To all interested persons: A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Susan Mitchell of East Brookfield MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that: **Susan Mitchell of East Brookfield MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the estate in **unsupervised administration.**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE** You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your

attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 06/09/2026.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

**UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)**

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

**WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.**

Date: May 12, 2026  
Stephanie Fattman, Register of Probate  
May 29, 2026

Worcester, SS  
To the District Clerk: GREETINGS: You are hereby directed to notify the Voters of the Burncoat Pond Watershed District to meet in the town hall gymnasium, 3 Washburn Square, Leicester, Massachusetts, on June 16, 2026 at 6:45 p.m., to act on the following articles:

Article 1: To see if the District will vote to elect a District Moderator for one (1) year or to take any action thereon.

Article 2: To see if the District will elect a District Clerk to hold office one (1) year from this annual meeting, a clerk shall be elected by ballot for one year or to take any action thereon.

Article 3: To see if the District will elect a District Treasurer to hold office one (1) year from this annual meeting, a treasurer shall be elected by ballot for one year, or to take any action thereon.

Article 4: To see if the District will vote to elect a member of the Management Committee to hold office for a term of three (3) years, a member of the Management Committee shall be elected by ballot, or to take any action thereon.

Article 5: To see if the District will vote to adopt a budget for fiscal year 2027, the appropriation of monies to be raised by assessment upon the proprietors in support thereof, or to take any action thereon.

All proprietors are welcome. Paul Gagne BPWD Clerk  
May 29, 2026

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Worcester Probate and Family Court 225 Main Street Worcester, MA 01608 (508) 831-2200 Docket No. WO26P1662EA CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**

Estate Of: **Betty G Pualwan Date of Death: 02/15/2026**

To all interested persons: A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will**

**with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Benjamin Pualwan of Charlotte VT and Emily Pualwan of Avondale Estates GA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that: **Benjamin Pualwan of Charlotte VT and Emily Pualwan of Avondale Estates GA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration.**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 06/16/2026.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

**UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)**

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

**WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.**

Date: May 18, 2026  
Stephanie Fattman, Register of Probate  
May 29, 2026

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Worcester Probate and Family Court 225 Main Street Worcester, MA 01608 Docket No. WO26P1671GD CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G. L.c. 1908, § 5-304 & § 5-405 In the matter of: Patrick Carleo Of: North Brookfield, MA RESPONDENT**

Alleged Incapacitated Person To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Brigham & Women's Hospital of Boston, MA** in the above captioned matter alleging that **Patrick Carleo** is in need of a Guardian and requesting that **Lisa Barkoskie of N. Brookfield, MA Aven Barkoskie of N. Brookfield, MA** (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court.

**You have the right to object to this proceeding.** If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **06/16/2026.** This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

**The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.**

**WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.**

Date: May 21, 2026  
Stephanie K. Fattman Register of Probate  
May 29, 2026

**LEGAL NOTICE**

A public hearing on the proposed North Brookfield Public School budget for the 2026-2027 school year will be held on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 6:00 p.m., at the North Brookfield High School, KIVA, in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 71, s38N. Copies of the proposed budget are available from the Office of the Superintendent, 10 New School Drive.

Matthew Grant, Chairman  
North Brookfield School Committee  
May 29, 2026

**Town of Spencer Conservation Commission PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

In accordance with the requirements of the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act, MGL c. 131, s. 40 and the Spencer Wetlands By-Law:

**C.R. Hansen Construction LLC** has filed an **NOI** with the Spencer Conservation Commission to construct a single-family home, septic and driveway located at **Lot 4 I. Capen Rd, Spencer, MA.**

**Joshua & Elizabeth Kilmonis** have filed an **RDA** with the Spencer Conservation Commission to demolish and remove unsafe structures located at **25 Kingsbury Rd, Spencer, MA.**

**Barry Sullivan** has filed an **RDA** with the Spencer Conservation Commission to remove trees located at **58 S Spencer Rd, Spencer, MA.**

Applications can be reviewed at the Office of Development and Inspectional Services, Town Hall. A public hearing regarding these filings will be held by the Spencer Conservation Commission in McCourt Social Hall at Town Hall, 157 Main Street, on Wednesday, June 10, 2026, at which time all persons having an interest may be present or call in remotely to participate. Conservation Commission meetings open at 6:15 p.m.

Mary McLaughlin, Chairwoman  
May 29, 2026

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# Honor society at QCC wins international and regional awards

WORCESTER — The Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society chapter at Quinsigamond Community College recently earned international and regional awards, including being placed in the top 10 percent of chapters worldwide.

At the international level, QCC's Alpha Zeta Theta chapter was named a Top 100 Chapter, an honor based on equally weighted scores from PTK's Honors in Action and College Project initiatives. With close to 1,250 active PTK chapters globally, QCC's recognition reflects the chapter's academic integrity, leadership and community engagement.

"I am so proud of the work our PTK officers put in this year," said Program Coordinator of PTK Lizette Reid. "They worked hard, formed strong bonds and made a huge impact on campus."

QCC's PTK chapter also earned designation as a REACH Rewards Chapter, recognizing its success in inviting, engaging and following up with eligi-



From left: Assistant to the Program Coordinator for PTK Matthew Vitolo, Program Coordinator for PTK Lizette Reid, and PTK officers Allison Castaneda, Santa Maria Sessarego and Eli Tripp.

ble students. The chapter increased membership growth by more than 45 percent, exceeding national benchmarks for student engagement and outreach. In addition, the chapter

received multiple awards at the 2026 Phi Theta Kappa New England Regional Convention, including:

First Place Honors in Action Distinguished Theme Award, honoring

the highest-scoring project related to the 2024-2025 Honors Study Topic, "The Power of Stories"

Five Star Chapter designation, the highest level of achievement in PTK's Five

Star Chapter Plan, recognizing exceptional organization, activity, and impact

Second Place Distinguished Chapter Award

Action Project Award for the project titled, "Unspoken Heritage: Institutional Naming in the Absence of Indigenous Stories"

Reid was also honored at the regional level, including:

First Place Horizon Award for New Advisors, honoring dedication to student engagement and the creation of a supportive learning environment

Second Place Paragon Award for New Advisors, recognizing significant contributions to the growth of their members, campus advocacy and involvement at the local, regional, and international levels

Phi Theta Kappa is the international honor society for students at associate degree-granting colleges. Membership is based on academic excellence and a commitment to leadership and service.

For more information about Phi Theta Kappa at Quinsigamond Community College, visit [www.qcc.edu/ptk](http://www.qcc.edu/ptk).

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## Brookfield Unitarian Universalist Church to hold clothing drive

BROOKFIELD — The Committee for Ecology and Social Action of the Brookfield Unitarian Universalist Church is sponsoring a clothing drive through Helpsy, the largest clothing collector in the Northeast. Textile waste is a fast-growing problem, and occupies nearly 5 percent of all landfill space, but 95 percent of unwanted clothing can be reused, repurposed, or recycled. Only 15

percent currently is. From Monday, July 6 through Saturday, July 12, the church will be open between 3 and 7 p.m. so you can bring your old clothing (including slips, bras, underwear, socks) and certain other acceptable items, such as shoes, accessories (including hats, bags, belts, scarves and jewelry), luggage, stuffed animals and linens (including sheets, blankets, curtains, table lin-

ens and quilts). All items in any condition are acceptable if they are clean, dry, and odorless. The Brookfield Unitarian Universalist Church is located at 9 Upper River Street on the Brookfield Common, near the junction of Route 9 and Route 148. For more information, contact Barbara Hale at blh.buuc@gmail.com.

## West Brookfield Farmers Market returns for 16th season

WEST BROOKFIELD — The West Brookfield Farmers Market returns on Wednesday, June 3 on the beautiful West Brookfield Common for its 16h consecutive season!

The 2026 Season market will feature 15 vendors with a wide array of locally grown and made goods including 3 NEW vendors sure to please our customers.

The West Brookfield Farmers Market is held every Wednesday afternoon from 3 to 6 p.m. on the West Brookfield Common starting on June 3 through Oct. 7, rain or shine.

2026 featured vendors:  
 Autumn Leaf Mushrooms all sorts, eggs, microgreens, Roundtable cheese  
 Bucha Bros. Kombucha  
 \*Dragonfly Flower Farm  
 Freshly grown flowers- treat yourself  
 Flourish Farms Organic vegetable and herb plants, microgreens, turmeric and ginger root, figs in season

Grime's Apiary Honey, honey sticks, Bee pollen, hand cream, whipped honey  
 \*Hoffman Breads Artisanal breads, pastries  
 JARS Savory pastries, premade foods, baking and soup mixes  
 Joy of Beans Fresh roasted coffee, whole bean or ground, specialty teas  
 Kate Bakes Sweet baked goods  
 Naultaug Farm Maple syrup  
 \*Nonna's Kitchen Granola, granola bars, herb blends for the kitchen  
 \*Stillman Farm Fresh produce, vegetable and fruits  
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## Kelly Daige graduates from Stonehill College

EASTON — Kelly Daige of North Brookfield received a Bachelor of Science degree at Stonehill College's 75th Commencement on Sunday, May 17.

At this year's ceremony, Leo J. Meehan III '75, president and CEO of W.B. Mason, served as keynote speaker. He also received an honorary degree alongside Matt Brown '16, who established the Matt Brown Foundation, and Sister Andrea Lee, I.H.M., former president of St. Catherine University and Alverno

College. Read our full Commencement recap here. About Stonehill College Stonehill College, a Catholic institution of higher learning, was founded by the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1948. Located on the beautiful 387-acre campus and former estate of Frederick Lothrop Ames in North Easton, Massachusetts, it is a community of scholarship and faith, anchored by a belief in the inherent dignity of each person. Through more than 100

academic programs in the liberal arts, sciences, business and pre-professional fields, Stonehill College provides an education of the highest caliber that fosters critical thinking, free inquiry and the interchange of ideas for over 2,500 students. Stonehill College educates the whole person so that each Stonehill graduate thinks, acts and leads with courage toward the creation of a more just and compassionate world.

## Celebrating America from the beginning at upcoming library programs

EAST BROOKFIELD — Come learn about how the National Parks played key roles in the Revolutionary War, enter for your chance to win a book and view a musket, and pick up the National Commemorative Stamp and coin, that tells the history of the National Parks. Refreshments from the Revolutionary

War will be served. This is a two-part program: "Road to Independence" Monday, June 29 at 5:30 p.m. "World Turned Upside Down" Monday, Aug. 10 at 5:30 p.m. All ages are welcomed; however, the program should hold the interest

of people from 12 and up. Vincent Kordack is an East Brookfield resident with more than 38 years of experience as a National Park Ranger. He was assigned to 16 of the 18 National Parks that revolve around the Revolutionary War. Will share his vast knowledge with you.

## Adult learners at QCC benefit from \$38,000 Bridges to College grant

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College was recently awarded \$38,208 by the Healey-Driscoll Administration for its Bridges to College program, which helps low-income and entry-level adults transition to higher education.

Bridges to College is a free summer program that prepares participants for math and English courses, while simultaneously exposing them to the college environment.

"The Bridges to College summer program gives students a free opportunity to refresh their English and math skills before the Fall semester begins," said Director of Mentoring & Special Programs Kalan Lewis. "Participants gain confidence in college-level coursework, learn about campus resources and connect with faculty and staff who are committed to their success."

Since the program began in 2019, it has received funding from the Department of Higher Education and other key partners, including Hanover Insurance Foundation and Greater Worcester Community Foundation.

Program data from 2019-2023 showed that of the students who completed the Bridges to College program, 70 percent received a C or higher in ENG 101 and 102, and almost 70 percent received a C or higher in a college-level math course.

For more information, visit [QCC.edu/learn-qcc/adult-basic-education/bridges-college](https://www.qcc.edu/learn-qcc/adult-basic-education/bridges-college).

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## Friday's Child

**Justice**  
Age 12  
Registration #9115

Justice is a social, caring young person with a great sense of humor that easily brings smiles to those around him. He enjoys connecting with others and has a natural ability to make people feel comfortable, often using his humor and easygoing personality to build positive relationships with both peers and adults. Justice's kind and thoughtful nature shines through in his interactions, and he values spending time with people who share his interests. Justice has a strong love for reading, particularly when it comes to anime and graphic novels. He enjoys diving into imaginative storylines and following his favorite characters, which allows him to relax while also fueling his creativity. These interests give him a unique way to express himself and connect with others who enjoy similar genres. In his free time, Justice loves to get out and enjoy good food—especially at two of his favorite spots, Popeyes and Applebee's. A meal out at either of these restaurants is a guaranteed way to make his day a little brighter. He also takes great pride in his gaming skills and often jokes that he is a "professional" video gamer. Whether he's playing competitively or just for fun, gaming is something he truly enjoys and feels confident in. Overall, Justice is a fun, engaging, and genuine young person who thrives in environments where he can connect with others, share laughter, and enjoy the things he loves. With the right support and encouragement, he has so much to offer and will continue to grow and shine.

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/22666079150>  
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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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 Raindate is June 7th.

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Webster - 106 East Main St (Rte 12)  
Commercial Opportunity!



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Featured Listing  
Webster ~ 33 Slater Street



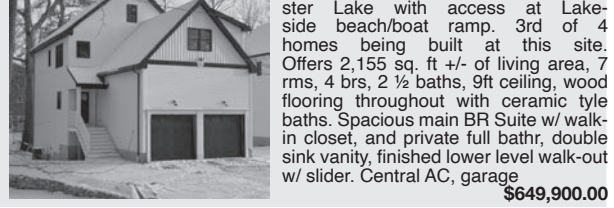
Sprawling fieldstone faced 1 Level Ranch, located on a +/- 0.5-acre level, w/24'x24' 2 car att'd garage. Offers: 1,860 sf main level plus 1,000 sf +/- finished lower level, 3 BRs, 2-1/2 Baths, 2 stone fireplaces w/pellet stove inserts, FHW BB heat by oil. Open floor plan kitchen, living rm, dining rm, breezeway w/sliders to rear deck, and 3 season sunroom, hardwood & c-tile floors. \$525,000

Webster - 34 Eastern Ave Condos  
~ Unit M ~



Original Owner, 1st Time Offered, Well-Kept, 2-BRs, 1-1/2 Baths, 1,500+ SF, LL Living Potential, Private Deck, 20-Unit Complex, Desirable Setting, 1395 in mins. \$310,000

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, 2 1/2 baths, 9ft ceiling, wood flooring throughout with ceramic tile baths. Spacious main BR Suite w/ walk-in closet, and private full bath, double sink vanity, finished lower level walk-out w/ slider. Central AC, garage \$649,900.00

## On the shores of Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg



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Webster Lake -  
302 Killdeer Island




Lakefront home w/1,700+/- sq ft. Open kitchen/dining/living w/cathedral ceilings + wall of windows. Full baths. Lower level family room w/ walkout to water. \$775,000


Webster Lake Waterfront -  
31 Bayview!!



Panoramic View, from this absolutely lovely home. 2600 +/- SF 3+ Beds, 2 full baths, 2 car detached garage! 63' +/- waterfront. .37 Acres! Sandy Waterfront! \$1,100,000



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# 15th Annual Worcester Food Truck & Craft Beverage Festival returns June 6

WORCESTER — Food Truck Festivals of America (FTFA) is excited to bring back the 15th Annual Worcester Food Truck & Craft Beverage Festival on Saturday, June 6, from noon to 5 p.m., with an exclusive VIP & Beverage Lovers Hour from 11 a.m.–noon.

Join us at Worcester Common as some of Massachusetts' favorite food trucks and top craft beverage vendors come together for one unforgettable day packed with flavor, fun, and festival vibes.

Come hungry and explore mouthwatering eats from more than a dozen food trucks serving everything from street tacos, juicy burgers, and lobster rolls to sweet treats, whoop-

ie pies, and fresh-squeezed lemonade. Wash it all down with an incredible selection of local and national craft beverages.

The fun goes far beyond the food! Enjoy music, lawn games, henna art, and an artisan market featuring unique local vendors and handmade goods — making this the perfect summer outing for foodies, families, and friends alike.

**Tickets & Packages — Buy Early & Save!**

**General Admission** — \$5 online in advance | \$10 at the gate  
Children 10 & under are free

**Foodie VIP Package — \$20 Online Only**  
• Early admission at 11 a.m.  
• One free dessert from the VIP Dessert Truck  
• Bottled water while supplies last

**Beverage Lovers Package — \$32 Online Only**  
• Early admission at 11 a.m.

• Three beverage tickets  
• Official FTFA Koozie  
• Bottled water while supplies last

**Beverage Six-Pack-age — \$59 Online Only**  
• Early admission at 11 a.m.  
• Six beverage tickets  
• Official FTFA Koozie  
• Bottled water while supplies last

Grab your tickets now at <https://Worcester2026.eventbrite.com>.

**Festival Location:** Worcester Common, 455 Main St.

Follow @FTFofAmerica on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok for festival updates, food truck announcements, giveaways, and more!

Since 2012, Food Truck Festivals of America has hosted more than 300 festivals nationwide, bringing together the best food trucks, craft beverages, artisans, and local communities for unforgettable experiences coast to coast.



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## Central Mass. farmers' market season starts now!

REGION — May marks the semi-official beginning to farmers market season, with many of the seasonal farmers' markets in our region starting their regular schedules, with more starting in June. Central Mass Grown is proud to support more than two dozen farmers markets across the Worcester County area.

Just in the city of Worcester, residents can choose from no less than six different markets, including the markets run by the Regional Environmental Council, both the Beaver Brook Market (306 Chandler St.) Friday mornings starting June 12 and the University Park Market (965 Main St.) Saturday mornings starting June 13, plus the Out To Lunch Market on the Worcester Common Oval behind City Hall every Wednesday from June 24 to Aug. 26. On Sundays, there's

both the Market on Exchange Street starting May 17th and the Brussels Street Market starting June 7. And on Thursdays, check out the Burncoat Center for Arts and Wellness at 78 Burncoat St. for their new farmers market starting May 14th. Some of these markets feel like festivals, while others are farmers markets in the truest sense, focused on offering fresh food and agricultural products directly from local farms.

Throughout the region, there's a market nearly every day of the week: for example, the Sturbridge Farmers Market on Sunday, Holden on Tuesday, Grafton on Wednesday,

Westborough on Thursday, and Westminster on Friday. And so many, many more markets featuring a wide variety of items you won't find anywhere in supermarkets, including

purple cauliflower, celeriac, husk cherries, goat cheese, duck eggs, or alpaca wool socks!

Every farmers' market is important to the farmers and other vendors that are there.

According to Central Mass Grown Executive Director David Reed, "Farmers markets are a vital source of revenue for farmers, because every dollar goes right back to them. And they are an important way for consumers to see where their food, flowers, wool, and soap all come from. If you usually shop in a big box store or online, you've never had a real chance to know anything about what you are buying."

Most farmers markets in our region have one or more farms that participate in the Healthy Incentives Programs, a benefit connected to the Supplemental

Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP recipients can use their EBT card to purchase fresh produce from participating farms and receive an immediate refund to their card, up to a monthly limit that is based on household size. The end result? Free farm-fresh fruits and vegetables, and the reward of knowing you supported your local farm!

So this summer season, visit a farmers' market and take a second to say hi to your local farmers. The farmers want to meet you. They want to say hi. Because farming is hard work, and they do it because they love it and they want you to love it, too.

Find out more about local farmers markets at [centralmass-grown.org](http://centralmass-grown.org).

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## New Bocce League open to community

SOUTHBRIDGE — Bay Path Continuing Education & the Southbridge Italian Club have teamed up to launch an exciting new bocce league on Tuesday nights throughout May and June.

Bocce is a game that all can enjoy—no special skills or talents are required! If you can roll a ball, you can play! These two community organizations are thrilled to bring this sport to a wider audience. Both Bay Path Continuing Education and the Southbridge Italian Club are dedicated to offering various events for people to engage, socialize, and have fun. This new league is a perfect fit. Here are the details:

- Tuesdays: May 12 – June 30 (eight weeks)
- Teams of four to eight players
- \$240 per team
- One game per week at either 6 or 7 p.m.
- Maximum of eight teams – don't wait!
- Only team captains need to register for their team.
- A brief informational captain meeting will be held before the season starts.
- Gather your friends (18 and older), form a team, and come join us for a fantastic time on the court!
- Games will be held at:  
Italian American Club  
20 North St., Southbridge
- To register your team, call Bay Path Continuing Education at 508-248-5971, ext. 1715. Spots for teams are limited, so don't hesitate—call today!

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