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ree by request to residents of
Douglas, Northbridge, Uxbridge, Linwood, Whitinsville and North Uxbridge

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Friday, February 6, 2026

Suspect charged in connection with Peppercorn Trail fires

UPTON—A Milford man was arrested recently for allegedly setting one of several recent illegal fires along the Peppercorn Trail, said Upton Fire Chief Michael Marchand, Upton Police Chief Nicholas Palmieri, and State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine.

Cameron Griffin, 28, was apprehended on the night of Jan. 22 at the scene of an outdoor fire near the Peppercorn Hill parking area along Crockett Road. He was charged with unlawful burning, disorderly conduct, and disturbing the peace in connection with the fire. He was additionally charged with child endangerment in light of a child who was in his vehicle at the time of the incident.

An off-duty Upton firefighter saw the blaze in its early stages after being alerted by his wife and drove from his nearby home to the scene. The firefighter positioned his vehicle to block Griffin's escape and remained on scene until Upton Police arrived and took him into custody.

Upton Fire Chief Michael Marchand identified the firefighter as Firefighter/EMT Matthew Kerr.

"Matt didn't hesitate to respond to what could have grown to a significant brush fire," said Marchand. "Once at the scene, his decisive action helped Upton Police take the suspect into custody and likely end this spree of incendiary fires. On behalf of the Upton Fire Department and our brothers and sisters at Milford Fire, I want to recognize his efforts to protect public safety in our community."

Thursday's fire was one of several in the area since last summer, with at least five reported between July 25 and July 26, and another on Jan. 13. These fires

Turn To FIRES page A8



Whitinsville Christian Preschool loves a visit from Mystic Aquarium, especially when they bring the touch tanks!

Douglas High School honored by College Board

DOUGLAS — Douglas High School was recently recognized by the College Board with Advanced Placement Honor Roll status.

This distinction reflects the outstanding work of our students and the dedication of their teachers. Students demonstrated notable score improvements across several Advanced Placement courses, including AP Calculus, AP Chemistry, AP English Language, AP English Literature, and AP U.S. History.

Overall, Douglas High School students earned an impressive average AP exam score of 3.20, highlighting a strong commitment to academic excellence.

Special events coming up at Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park

UXBRIDGE — The Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park has announced its program offerings for the month of February.

Meet in the River Bend Farm Visitor Center unless stated otherwise. All programs are free and open to the public. Registration is not required. Appropriate for all ages. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Programming is subject to change or cancellation. For the most up to date programming information, call (508) 278-7604 or visit bit.ly/blstupdates.

Reasonable accommodations available upon advance notice. To make a request, please contact Moneesha Dasgupta at moneesha.dasgupta2@mass.gov or (617) 645-0358.

The Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park is located at 287 Oak St., Uxbridge.

Maple Sugaring Weekend
Saturday, Feb. 21 and Sunday, Feb. 22, 10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park
It's that sweet time of year again! Join us on February 21st and 22nd for our annual Maple

Turn To EVENTS page A8

Coffee Break Women's Bible Study turns to 1 & 2 Peter

WHITINSVILLE — Coffee Break, a community Bible study for women, will continue its winter/spring season with a study of 1 & 2 Peter: Built to Belong on Feb. 10. God loves us and has wonderful plans for our lives — no matter what the current events look like. Come join with others in a study of 1 & 2 Peter: Built to Belong as we look at who God is and the power and glory He is about to display in the earth. Our God is so trustworthy. All peace and joy are found in Him. You're only allowed to be a newcomer the first week. After that, we're all friends. We look forward to meeting you.

Refreshments and childcare are provided— There's loving care for your babies and toddlers through age five.

Coffee Break is held each Tuesday from 9:30 to 11 a.m. and offers women in the Blackstone Valley an opportunity to read and discuss the Bible, share questions and concerns, and develop new friendships. There's no "homework" required, and no previous Bible knowledge is necessary. Study guides and Bibles are provided free of charge.

Pleasant St. Church is located at 25 Cross St. in Whitinsville. For directions, questions, or to get more information, please call Anna 774-287-9449, email churchoffice@pscr.org or visit <https://www.pscr.org/adults>.



Courtesy

The Uxbridge Police Department would like to extend a huge thank you to Hellen Fuels Corp. for their generous donation of this banner in remembrance of Officer Stephen LaPorta. You'll be sure to see this out at events in the community. Photo courtesy of the department's Facebook page.

Douglas ranked #1 for fastest-selling homes in Massachusetts

BVCC’s Women’s Success Network hosts Business After Hours at District V House in Sutton

DOUGLAS — A recent Boston 25 News report, using Redfin housing data, ranked Douglas as the #1 fastest-selling housing market in Massachusetts — with homes going under agreement in an average of just 5 days.

For our team at S.C.E. Real Estate, this reflects what we’ve been seeing firsthand: strong demand, motivated buyers, and growing appreciation for what Douglas offers.

The numbers behind the ranking Douglas stood out statewide based on key market indicators:

- Average days on market: 5
- Median sale price: \$705,000
- Average sale-to-list ratio: 100.6 percent
- Homes off the market within two weeks: 66.7 percent

In simple terms, well-prepared homes in Douglas are moving quickly, and buyers are competing.

Why Douglas?

Douglas isn’t a high-density city market — it’s a town people choose intentionally.

The town has long offered a balance of space, charm, and community. Buyers are drawn to larger lots, scenic roads, and a quieter lifestyle, while still being within reach of major routes and everyday conveniences. Over time, Douglas has grown steadily while still holding on to the character that makes it feel like home.

Through our work at S.C.E. Real Estate, we’re seeing buyers prioritize:

- More space inside and out
- A strong sense of community
- A setting that feels peaceful, but not isolated

Douglas consistently checks those boxes.

What this means for homeowners

For homeowners, this ranking confirms what many have already felt — demand in Douglas is strong. When homes are priced appropriately and presented well, they’re attracting serious interest quickly.

It’s not just about speed. It reflects buyers recognizing the long-term appeal of living in a town like Douglas.

A town we’re proud to serve

For us at S.C.E. Real Estate, this isn’t just a statistic — it’s personal. Douglas is where we work, support our clients, and build relationships every day. Seeing it recognized statewide reinforces what locals have known all along. It’s a special place to live, and clearly, more people are discovering that.

S.C.E. Real Estate is located at 295 Main St. Douglas. 508 - 476 - 5484 | sce-realestate.com

SUTTON — The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce’s (BVCC), Women’s Success Network (WSN) invites local professionals and business leaders to attend the Business After Hours on Thursday, Feb. 12 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at District V House, located at 356 Manchaug Rd., Sutton.

Please join us for this engaging networking event offering attendees the opportunity to connect with fellow professionals, build meaningful business relationships, and enjoy a relaxed evening in one of Sutton’s most stylish local spaces. Guests will have the chance to sip, shop, and enjoy light bites while learning more about the businesses and organizations that make up the Blackstone Valley’s vibrant economy.

“Business After Hours events are more than just networking, they’re about bringing professionals together in a way that feels genuine and welcoming,”



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\$437,000, 23 Quaker St, Bedard FT, and Lee, Michelle A, to Dudley, Seth M.
\$345,000, 121 East St #121, Koch, Andrew M, and Koch, Megan, to Menezes, Damian.
\$320,000, 24 Crescent St #24, Farley, Dawn C, to Bean, Carolyn.

UXBRIDGE
\$754,900, 128 Mantell Rd, 47 Dodge Deco LLC, to York, Eric M, and York, Pamela S.
\$475,000, 215 Chestnut St, Bean, Carolyn, to Mills, Alexandria, and Bernard, Corey.
Ware
\$492,450, 12 Malboeuf Rd, Taylor, James E, to Roach, Norma G.
\$382,000, 82 Monson Turnpike Rd, Ragno, Kyle J, to Nicoson, Hunter M, and Newcomb, Ryley.
\$305,000, 1 Anna St, Edwards, Allen C, to Killmer, Steven.
\$200,000, 48 Eddy St, Bryant, Dana J, and Bryant, Elizabeth A, to Azusa Rt, and Kirchner 2nd, Dominic.
\$196,350, 7 Dugan Rd, Krol, Edwin M, and Country Bank For Savings, to Yellowbrick Property LLC.

February 5, 2026, to secure their place. Register online at, www.blackstonevalley.org/events. For more information, please contact Liz O’Neil at, 508-234-9090, or loneil@blackstonevalley.org.

The Mission of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce is to preserve and enhance the economic vitality of the Blackstone Valley by addressing the needs and concerns of businesses and providing leadership, support and resources in connection with issues which impact commerce and the quality of life in the Valley.

Whitin Community Center announces Children’s Benefit celebrating more than 50 years of impact

SUTTON — The Whitin Community Center (WCC) is proud to announce its upcoming Children’s Benefit, taking place on Wednesday, March 25 at 5:30 p.m. at the beautiful Pleasant Valley Country Club in Sutton.

This special evening will celebrate more than 50 years of memories, milestones, and meaningful impact made through WCC’s children’s programs. Designed as a fun event to celebrate the successes of our youth, the event will bring together alumni, families, community members, and supporters for a night of connection, celebration, and giving.

Guests will enjoy a cocktail hour with passed hors d’oeuvres, followed by a light buffet. The evening will also feature alumni recognition and community spotlights, highlighting individuals and stories that exemplify the positive influence of the WCC’s children’s programs. A special Youth Theatre performance will showcase the talent and confidence fostered through the Outreach program.

In addition, attendees will have the opportunity to support WCC’s mission through a Fund-A-Need, directly benefiting children’s programs that continue to enrich and empower youth throughout our community.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for businesses and individuals looking to make a meaningful impact while gaining visibility within the community. Those interested in sponsoring the event are encouraged to contact Development Director, Victoria Waterman at Victoria.Waterman@OurGym.org.

Tickets for the WCC Children’s Benefit will be available online soon. For updates and additional information, please visitwww.WhitinCommunityCenter.com or call 508-234-8184.

The Whitin Community Center is committed to enhancing the health and well-being of individuals and families and building a strong community in the Blackstone Valley. We offer social, recreational, educational, and outreach programs that bring community members of all ages and backgrounds together. The Whitin Community Center is the Blackstone Valley’s most complete family and recreation center with two swimming pools, a gym, fitness center, early learning programs, summer camps and a seven and a half acre park. For more information, call 508-234-8184 or visit www.WhitinCommunityCenter.com.

Join Blackstone River Greenway Visitor Center for a tour through local history

WORCESTER — Join the Blackstone River Greenway Visitor Center at Worcester for the exhibit “From Small Town to Heart of the Commonwealth” Saturdays through February from 1 – 1:30 p.m.

Join us on a tour through the exhibits of the Blackstone River Greenway Visitor Center, highlighting the history of the Blackstone Canal, the Industrial Revolution, and the City of Worcester.

Meet at the Visitor Center. Appropriate for ages eight and up. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Reasonable accommodations available upon advance request. For ADA/Reasonable Accommodations, please call 617-645-0358 or e-mail Moneesha.dasgupta2@mass.gov.



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This sweet girl is smart and eager to learn, and she’s looking for a family committed to continuing her training so she can keep growing into the best version of herself. After a day of play, Latke’s favorite place is right by your side, she’s a total cuddle bug who loves to snuggle up and soak in affection.

If you’re an active family ready for playtime, and lots of love, Latke might just be your perfect match. **Learn more at BaypathHumane.org**

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New England Legends presents Valentine’s Day Freak Formal to benefit Project Just Because

MILFORD — New England Legends, the creators of the popular New England Legends podcast, are thrilled to announce the return of their much-anticipated annual charity ball on Saturday, Feb. 14 at 7 p.m.

The “Freak Formal” is a ghoulishly delightful event that will take place at the DoubleTree Hotel in Milford, Massachusetts, promising attendees an unforgettable night of monsters, ghosts, zombies, dancing, games, raffle prizes, and a pizza party—all in the spirit of raising funds for Project Just Because, a 501(c)3 charity based in Hopkinton

that provides for struggling families in their times of greatest need by supplying basic necessities including warm clothing, food, and school supplies.

Hosted by Jeff Belanger and Ray Auger, the minds behind the New England Legends podcast, the Freak Formal has become a cherished alternative celebration for those looking to escape the clichés of Valentine’s Day.

“We look forward to this parade of the macabre all year long,” said Jeff Belanger, author and co-host of the New England Legends podcast. “Formerly called ‘Zombie Prom,’ we decid-

ed to rename it to the Freak Formal to cast the horror net a little wider.”

“People can dress up as any weird character they like, or just attend to watch the spectacle—all for a great local cause,” added Ray Auger, co-host of the New England Legends podcast. “Best costumes will be crowned King and Queen of the Freaks!”

Uniting horror enthusiasts and those with a taste for the macabre, this event offers a unique, entertaining, and light-hearted experience for attendees to revel in the delight of the unconventional.

Event Details:
Date: Saturday, Feb. 14

Time: 7 p.m.
Location: DoubleTree Hotel, Milford
Ages: 18 and up
Entertainment
Highlights:
– Dance the night away to the beats of DJ Neto Neto.
– Engage in games and activities throughout the evening.
– A chance to win exciting raffle prizes.
– Indulge in a delicious pizza party to satisfy your undead appetite.
– A cash bar, and food available from Legends Restaurant inside the hotel.

Ticket Information:
Ticket information for Freak Formal 2026 can be purchased at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/freak-formal-event-presented-by-new-england-legends-tickets-1980103869978>.

Join the New England Legends Facebook Group for more information and updates.

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Gavin Francisco named to Champlain College President’s List

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Gavin Francisco of Douglas was named to the Champlain College President’s List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Students on the President’s List have achieved a grade point average of 4.0 or higher during the semester. Francisco is majoring in Computer Networking & Cybersecurity.

Making the President’s List is a tremendous achievement. Many of the high achievers balance their career-focused classes with jobs, internships, clubs, and volunteering. We congratulate them on this great accomplishment and honor.

Founded in 1878, Champlain College is a small, not-for-profit, private college in Burlington, Vermont, with additional campuses in Montreal, Canada, and Dublin, Ireland. Champlain offers a residential undergraduate experience from its beautiful campus overlooking Lake Champlain. Additionally,

Champlain College Online provides an expansive portfolio of online degrees and certificates, reaching students across all 50 states and U.S. territories, while fostering strategic partnerships with forward-thinking workforce organizations. The College is known for its distinctive and innovative approach to career-focused education and its Upside-Down Curriculum, which helps students be ready for work, ready for life, and ready to make a difference. Champlain is ranked as one of the “Best Colleges” by U.S. News & World Report for 2025, and was named one of the “Best 390 Colleges” by The Princeton Review for 2025, including among its “Best Northeastern colleges.” For more information, visit www.champlain.edu.

Eastern student Collin Falconer of Whitinsville makes fall Dean’s List

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. — Eastern Connecticut State University recently released its Dean’s List for the fall 2025 semester, in which 1,311 students were recognized for maintaining high GPAs.

Among them is Collin Falconer of Whitinsville, a full-time senior who majors in Communication.

To qualify for Dean’s List, full-time students must complete a minimum of 12 credits in letter-graded courses with an average GPA of 3.5 or higher in the semester. Part-time students are eligible if they’ve accumulated 15 or more credits of letter-graded coursework with an average GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Eastern Connecticut State University is the state of Connecticut’s public liberal arts university, serving upwards of 4,000 students annually on its Willimantic campus. A residential campus offering 41 majors and 68 minors, Eastern offers students a strong liberal arts foundation grounded in a variety of applied learning opportunities. Ranked among the top 25 public institutions in the North by U.S. News & World Report in its 2025-26 Best Colleges ratings, Eastern has also been awarded ‘Green Campus’ status by the Princeton Review 15 years in a row. For more information, visit www.easternct.edu.

Nominations welcome for Uxbridge High School Athletic Hall of Fame

UXBRIDGE — The Uxbridge High School Athletic Hall of Fame will be accepting nominations for its next induction class. Nominations can be submitted on an ongoing basis, and the review of nominations for this class will be taking place in April and May of 2026. The ninth induction is being planned for November of 2026. Nominations can be submitted online using a form available on the Uxbridge High School Web site or by following this link: <https://bit.ly/UHSHOF23>.

The UHS Athletic Hall of Fame honors the tradition, commitment, and excellence of athletics at Uxbridge High School. Nominations are accepted in four categories: individual student-athletes, coaches, contributors, and teams. Criteria are available on the by-laws; individuals must have graduated from UHS at least ten years ago (prior to 2016), while a ten-year waiting period from the time of the team’s distinction must have passed before a team can be considered for induction.

Questions regarding the nomination process can be directed to the Uxbridge High School Athletic Hall of Fame Committee, via the Committee’s recording secretary or to the high school principal or athletic director.

For more information, visit <https://uhs.uxbridgeschools.com/hall-of-fame>.



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Friday's Child



Jalexa
Age 10
Registration #8336


Jalexa is a joyful and happy child with a vibrant, magnetic personality. She is spunky, free-spirited, and has a natural way of capturing the hearts of those around her. Jalexa loves being active and enjoys riding her bike, playing outside, and swimming, especially when she has opportunities to laugh, explore, and stay on the move. When it's time to slow down, Jalexa enjoys watching movies and playing games on her tablet, giving her a nice balance between active play and relaxation. She also enjoys participating in a variety of community activities and thrives in environments where she can interact with others and feel included. Jalexa is an extremely resilient child with a strong, outgoing personality. She loves being the center of attention and brings energy, enthusiasm, and warmth into every space she enters. With a family who can celebrate her spirited nature and provide consistent love and guidance, Jalexa has the potential to continue growing into her joyful, confident self.

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/21189474864>

If you're at least 18 years old, have a stable source of income, and room in your heart, you may be a perfect match to adopt a waiting child. Adoptive parents can be single, married, or partnered; experienced or not; renters or homeowners; LGBTQ+ singles and couples. As an adoptive parent, you won't have to pay any fees, adoption from foster care is completely free in Massachusetts.

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





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PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

Small steps still move a town forward

In a time when headlines often focus on big projects, large budgets, or sweeping change, it is easy to overlook the smaller decisions that quietly shape everyday life in our towns. Yet in places like Douglas, Northbridge, and Uxbridge, progress often comes not through dramatic announcements, but through steady, incremental work.

A sidewalk repaired. A piece of aging equipment replaced. A zoning bylaw clarified. A policy updated to better reflect how a town actually functions today. These are not the sorts of actions that spark debate on social media, but they are the ones residents notice over time.

Local government operates largely in this space of small steps. Committees review line items. Boards revisit policies written decades ago. Staff members look for efficiencies that save money without cutting services. None of it is glamorous, but all of it matters.

There is a tendency to judge municipal government only by what feels urgent or visible. Snow removal after a storm. Emergency response times. Tax rates. Those things are important, but they are supported by months of quieter work that rarely draws attention. The winter meeting season, in particular, is when much of that groundwork is laid.

This is also when patience becomes a civic virtue. Change at the local level is often slower than residents would like. It involves legal requirements, public hearings, and financial constraints. While that can be frustrating, it also provides safeguards. Deliberation reduces costly mistakes. Transparency builds trust. Incremental progress prevents sudden disruptions.

Communities in the Blackstone Valley have long been shaped by people willing to put in that kind of steady effort. Volunteers who serve year after year. Town employees who know the history behind a decision. Residents who show up not just when something goes wrong, but when things are simply being discussed.

As winter continues, it is worth remembering that forward movement does not always look dramatic. Sometimes it looks like a meeting agenda, a revised policy, or a carefully considered vote. Over time, those small steps add up, and towns move forward not with a leap, but with purpose.

Letter submission policy

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

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

OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Blackstone Valley and beyond

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Central planning fails

To the Editor:

While Boston makes grand plans and passes laws to control our ability to make our own decisions, reality has other plans.

The Governor's grand plan to make us zero emissions by 2030 has failed because renewables are failing and cannot possibly provide the heat and electricity needed in the Northeast. Especially in the cold.

She had a grand plan to cut our utility bills by 25 percent for February and March, and in essence defer our payments to the summer. But she was defeated by extreme cold and piles of snow. Our utility bills are going up higher than she planned because of reality. Extreme Global cooling. So, we will pay more anyway.

She had a grand plan to lower our utility bills by using Hydro Quebec to save us \$50 million until Global warming met Globe cooling. Shortly after making the deal a few weeks ago, Hydro Quebec said: "Nyet" and pushed the "off" button. Turns out, demand soared and output failed due to extreme cold and snow in Canada.

The majority of our energy during the cold snap came from oil fired electric plants or oil or natural gas heat. Burning wood and burning garbage exceeded wind renewables in providing heat and electricity during the cold snap!

The grand plan to force towns and cities who receive MBTA service to build housing units near rail and bus lines has also failed.

According to my favorite news outlet, the Commie Wealth Beacon, "the MBTA Communities Act – touted as a landmark transit oriented housing development law, aiming to spur construction of desperately needed new housing in Greater Boston, and to have those new homes built using smart growth principles at high density near transit service" has failed.

"Only 30 percent of homes in the law's permitting pipeline are easily walkable to a transit station (within a half mile)," as required by the law. Only 7,000 units are in the permit process thus far, and most are in just a few towns. Eighty percent of the new proposed units are only in 10 towns out of the 177 in the law.

The state's plan is to have 220,000 new homes by 2035. Not happening.

If you consider the towns near the rail lines like Franklin or Worcester, there is no open land on which to build close to MBTA service. These are old towns and old locations with lots of old, decrepit housing or million dollar condos near public transit as you see in Cambridge, Newton, and Somerville.

Didn't the Communists think of that when they drew up this grand plan of forcing everyone onto public transit? Also, public transit tends to be near wetlands, highways, parks, schools, and waterways – river valleys made level land for rails.

Our Attorney General is suing seven towns for failing to change their zoning laws and start building, among them Holden, Winthrop, East Bridgewater, and Halifax, to comply with the law. Meanwhile, she has bought a home in rural Dartmouth, far from diverse Boston and commuter rail.

Remember, the law is for you and me, not for her.

The law requires the 177 cities and towns "with or near MBTA service" to create at least one zoning district that allows multifamily housing "as of right." Those dangerous Communist words mean you cannot object. You must comply.

Little of the first housing is within an easy walk of transit "within a half mile." Would you like to walk a half mile in winter or July to get to a train or bus?

The law applies to cities like Cambridge and Somerville with tons of housing, apartments, two and three family homes nearly on top of transit lines, and to towns like Ashby with 3,000 folks and no transit service on the New Hampshire border. Why Ashby is included, I cannot tell you, but if the Commie Wealth Beacon says it, it must be so.

Logical? No, but Communists never let reality stop them from central planning. The Commie Wealth Beacon suggested we look to California's law so we can increase housing density along transit routes.

When the Commie plan fails, they think doing more of it will work. And these geniuses have proposed a new law to limit your driving and get you on buses.

BEV GUDANOWSKI
UXBRIDGE

Expecting a different outcome?

To the Editor:

Two weeks ago, a mockery was made of freedom of religion. An organized mob of agitators stormed a church, terrified children and accused adults of 'white supremacy.' This shameful display erased feelings that 'safety' would prevail.

For weeks, the main aim of protests, especially in Minneapolis, was to interfere with I.C.E. function of its lawful authority and duty to enforce finding and deporting criminal illegal aliens wherever found. Faced with ever more aggressive civilian acts, and in the absence of local law enforcement aid, more federal agents were required to 'protect' I.C.E. personnel as they conducted operations under 'riot' conditions. To "assemble" is another Freedom granted by the Constitution, but no sane person can call what I.C.E. faces 'peaceful'. Adding to daily responsibility, they endure doxing (tracking) with death threats to themselves and families; subject to obscenity and hyperbolic name-calling; spitting, car-ramming, bottle-throwing', even refusals of basic service for lodging, bathrooms and food.

Loss of life from use of deadly force is never desired and always regretted. However, no 'mindful' person was surprised by outcomes of current events. This scenario has been seen before when communities and colleges were disrupted; neighborhoods

burned and small businesses destroyed: riots and demonstrations over BLM, anti-Israel/pro-Hamas-Palestine, immigrant border crossings, & DOGE.

Today, screaming obscenity passes for 'free speech'; 'anarchy' rules, but true word-meanings are twisted constantly in reporting today. A 'sanctuary' shelters criminals, and now 'domestic terrorists' if honest in labeling. Meanwhile, innocents suffer mayhem and murder. Add the current movement to "Free Luigi Mangione," a cold-blooded murderer who some think sought only to make a 'statement' against the US healthcare system! Really, because by such 'logic' unacceptable acts are, slowly but surely, deemed 'acceptable' by society!

Will illogic and civil chaos be stopped? This is no hair-brained conspiracy theory, but it seems today's demonstrators are not primarily composed of Mr. and Mrs. John Q public. Rather, 'agitators,' funded by outside sources, are actually organized anarchists/insurrectionists whose first aim is to undermine America's foundation as a land based on laws with no one above them. Their goal is Society's total collapse. Instituted to protect, government is required to take measured action before the virus of 'chaos' spreads beyond control.

JANE F. KEEGAN
UXBRIDGE


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What should you do with your tax refund?



FINANCIAL FOCUS

DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

It's almost time for people to begin receiving their tax refunds. If you get one, what will you do with it?

The answer will depend somewhat on the size of your refund. Last year, the average was \$3,167, according to the Internal Revenue Service's Filing Season Statistics report.

Whatever the size of your refund, you'll want to maximize its benefit. Here are some suggestions:

Contribute to your IRA. If you receive \$3,167, it could go a long way toward funding your IRA for the year, but any amount would help. You have until April 15 to contribute for the 2025 tax year, but if you've already "maxed out" contributions, you could use your refund for 2026, when the annual contribution limit for an IRA is \$7,500, or \$8,600 if you're 50 or older. Beginning early toward fully funding your IRA can help reduce the pressure of coming up with large amounts later.

Build an emergency fund. Your tax refund could help you start or expand an emergency fund. It's a good idea to keep three to six months' worth of living expenses in such a fund, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account, separate from the funds you use for your daily expenses. You might need to draw on this fund for unexpected expenses, such as a major home or car repair or a large medical bill. Without an emergency fund in place, you might be tempted to dip into your IRA or other retirement accounts to pay for these types of costs, and that could be expensive, resulting in taxes, penalties and lost opportunities for growth.

Contribute to a 529 plan. If you have children or grandchildren and want to support their education, you might consider investing in a 529 education savings plan. Earnings and withdrawals are federally tax free, provided the money is used for qualified education expenses. Your 529 plan may provide state tax benefits, too. (It's possible, though, that 529 withdrawals could affect financial aid packages, depending on who owns the account.) A 529 plan can be used to help pay for college, accredited trade school programs, some K-12 expenses and even some student loans.

Pay down debts. You may wish you could reduce your debt load. Your tax refund could offer you that chance. But which debts should you tackle first? You could follow the "snowball" method by paying off the smallest of your loans or debts as quickly as possible. Or you could choose the "avalanche" route by making minimum payments on all debts and using extra funds – such as your tax refund – to pay off those with the highest interest rates. Either method could help you save money in the long term.

Prepare for other tax obligations. Your refund can also be set aside in a separate savings account to pay estimated quarterly taxes or personal property or real estate taxes.

It's not often that you receive a financial windfall such as a tax refund — so think carefully about how you can maximize its benefits.

Where thumbtacks and neighbors meet

There is a corkboard inside our local post office that I pass every time I mail a letter. It is cluttered in the best possible way. Thumbtacks hold up handwritten notes, curling flyers and business cards that have seen better days. Guitar lessons. Snow plowing services. A lost cat notice that has been there long enough to feel like part of the décor. Community dinners. Yard sales scheduled and then rescheduled with a pen scribble in the margin.

Most people walk past it without stopping. They are in a hurry to drop mail, grab a package and get back to their day. But every now and then, someone pauses. They lean in. They read. Sometimes they smile. Sometimes they pull out a phone to take a picture of a phone number written in blue ink.

That board is not fancy. It is not digital. It does not send notifications. Yet it quietly does its job, connecting neighbors in a way that feels very Massachusetts.

I grew up in a time when community news traveled slowly and personally. You heard things at the counter of the general store, in the pews at church or while waiting for your coffee to cool. Today, information moves faster than ever, yet it often feels less human. We scroll past announcements without really seeing them. We click “interested” on events we never attend. We collect more information but fewer connections.

That corkboard is a small act of resistance to that trend. It says: here is a place where real people leave messages for other real people. It is imperfect. It is slightly crooked. It smells faintly of paper and tape. And it works.

You see similar boards in libraries, town halls and coffee shops across our region. They are community living rooms in miniature. Each note represents someone taking a chance that a neighbor might need what they are offering or offering what they need.

There is something brave about pinning up a piece of paper with your phone number on it. It is a quiet statement that says, “I am part of this place, and I am willing to be found.”

It made me think about how often we hide behind screens. We text instead of talk. We email instead of knock on doors. None of that is wrong, but it does change the texture of community life. A handwritten sign taped to a window or pinned to a board carries a different weight. You can see the handwriting. You can tell if the person was in a hurry or took their time. You can sense effort.

I watched an older woman stop at the post office board last week. She read carefully, adjusting her glasses, nodding slightly at a few notices. Then she pulled out a small stack of papers and added one of her own. I did not see what it said, but I saw the care she took in placing it just right, smoothing the corners before stepping back to admire her work.

That moment felt important. It was not loud. It was not broadcast to hundreds of followers. It was one neighbor speaking quietly to another through paper and thumbtacks.

We often talk about keeping Main Street alive. We focus on storefronts, parking spaces and foot traffic. Those things matter. But so do these smaller, almost invisible threads that tie us together. Bulletin boards. Flyers. Handwritten notes. Conversations that start because someone stopped long enough to read.

Next time you pass one of these boards, take a moment. Read a few notices. You might find something useful. You might learn something new. Or you might simply be reminded that community is not built by algorithms. It is built by ordinary people sharing space and information in ordinary ways.

Sometimes the lanterns along Main Street are not hanging from poles or glowing in windows. Sometimes they are pieces of paper, quietly lit by the simple hope that someone else is paying attention.

LANTERNS
ALONG
MAIN
STREET

By CHARLES

Auction news and goodbye

It’s been a few weeks since I shared the latest auction news, and plenty has taken place since then.

Beginning with local news, a Western Massachusetts historical society recently consigned a piece of furniture for auction that generated significant funds for the group. I’ve noted in previous columns that most antique furniture has dropped in value over the years. This piece was certainly an exception. The Swift River Valley Historical Society’s website describes themselves as “the leading resource in preserving the artifacts, stories and records of the lost towns of the Quabbin Valley.” It is the historical society for the towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts took residents’ properties in those four towns by eminent domain, and everyone had to relocate by April 28, 1938. The land was flooded several months later to create the Quabbin Reservoir, which provides water to the Eastern part of the state. The Swift River Valley Historical Society had a cabinet from 1677 that had been donated by Annie Frances Ballard, according to the Greenfield Recorder. Ballard was a descendant of one of the cabinet’s original owners. The cabinet door was crafted with two sevens for 1677 and a heart with the initials of Symon and Rebeckah Horne. They were an Andover, MA, couple who commissioned the cabinet after the birth of their first son. It was kept in a temperature-controlled room, but the historical society could no longer secure and insure it. It sailed past the auction estimate of \$600,000 to \$800,000, selling for \$1,636,000 earlier this month. According to the Greenfield Recorder, the historical society will use the funds to make their “building accessible for people with disabilities, and mak[e] the facility more user-friendly for archivists and historians.”

An auction of memorabilia related to our nation’s history also took place earlier this month, with two George Washington paintings selling very well. A 1783 painting depicting Washington as a general by Charles Peale Polk brought \$577,850, while a Gilbert Stuart portrait of Washington went for \$2.8 million, according to Artnet News. A printed copy of the Declaration of Independence from 1776 sold for \$5.6 million, and a printed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation signed by Abraham Lincoln earned \$6.7 million. A draft of the



ANTIQUES,
COLLECTIBLES
& ESTATES
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United States Constitution with notes by founding father Rufus King was the highest selling piece, bringing \$7.3 million.

A more contemporary item set an auction record in November. Auction records for sports memorabilia and comic books are frequently being broken, and a rare Superman 1939 first issue comic book has done it again. The comic book was discovered by three brothers who were cleaning out their mother’s attic, according to an AP article. The copy graded a 9.0 out of 10, remarkable for an issue that old. It went up, up, and away, fetching over \$9 million.

I’ve greatly enjoyed the 10-plus years I’ve been writing this column. It’s been wonderful meeting many of you who’ve invited me to appraise items at local appraisal events, asked me to lecture about antiques, have consigned items with me, or have taken the time to email me about articles I’ve written. Our workload has been increasing every year, leading me to take a hiatus from writing. Please keep my contact information in case you may need help in the future. Once again, thank you to everyone who has read this column and thank you for your support.

Our single-collector Civil War auction starts next week. The following sale will include fine jewelry, sterling silver, art, and other antiques and collectibles. We’ll be running a major sale with sports cards and memorabilia in the summer. We are accepting consignments for our next two sales. Please visit our website <https://centralmassauctions.com> for links to upcoming events.

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

Natalie Ottaviano named to Muhlenberg College Dean’s List

ALLENTOWN, Pa. — A graduate of Newton North High School, Natalie Ottaviano of Newtonville, has been named to the fall 2025 Dean’s List while studying Theatre and Dance at Muhlenberg College.

To be eligible for the Dean’s List, Muhlenberg College students must earn a GPA of 3.5 or better while taking three or more course units during a semester.

Founded in 1848, Muhlenberg is a highly selective, four-year, residential, liberal arts college in the city of Allentown, Pa., with nearly 2,000 bachelor’s and master’s degree-seeking students and a high return on investment. The college’s curriculum and experiences are designed opens doors to new ideas, discoveries, friendships and a lifetime of personal and intellectual growth.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The loophole Gudanowski missed

To the Editor:

Had the author of last week’s letter out of Uxbridge been given a few more of the pertinent facts, she likely would have been elated, rather than so admirably disgusted, with the more “Woke” sections of the building codes that she so clearly disagrees with for very good reason.

The reality is that presently existing residential rooftop electricity-producing solar panel installations are on the verge of being recalled for their multiplicity of code violations. With the Electric Code violations quite blatantly leading the pack. Which is why that ginormous loophole the Uxbridge author missed is so readily apparent to anyone who knows how such code regulations have routinely played out over time.

It took well under two minutes to prove beyond doubt what loophole builders and contractors will exploit to the hilt for greater profit at government and electric company expense. And but a few minutes longer to get an AI entity to sum up the initial analysis for the layperson. With much of it due to that “Right to Charge” law that empowers homeowners to ditch their solar arrays and replace the lot of them with rooftop propane-powered standby generators at no expense whatsoever.

Here is a verbatim, introductory AI analysis:

Role of Propane-Powered Standby Generators:

A rooftop propane-powered standby generator provides a consistent and reli-

able energy source when solar production is inadequate. This ensures that essential systems remain operational, particularly during periods of low solar energy during winter months.

Feeding Excess Power into the Grid:

When the standby generator runs and produces excess electricity, it can be configured to feed this power back into the grid. This allows homeowners to potentially offset their energy costs, especially during winter when solar panels may not be generating as much.

Balanced Rooftop Energy Strategy:

Combining rooftop hot water solar panels with a propane-powered generator creates an effective energy strategy. While solar thermal panels can utilize available sunlight to heat water, the generator can provide backup power when solar output is limited, enhancing overall energy management.

Conclusion

Adopting a combination of rooftop hot water solar panels and a propane-powered standby generator aligns well with Massachusetts rooftop regulations. This integrated approach ensures reliable power supply during winter months when solar energy production may falter, while also enabling the potential to contribute excess power back to the grid. Collectively, these rooftop systems offer a comprehensive solution to meet energy needs effectively and efficiently year-round.”

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Tex's Troubadours to perform at Grass Roots Coffeehouse



NOTHBRIDGE — The Grass Roots Coffeehouse will be hosting Tex's Troubadours on Saturday, March 7, at 7 p.m. The band is making its first appearance at Grass Roots, as well as here in central Massachusetts.

The group often is mix of various New England based Bluegrass musicians and is led by Dave (Tex) Orlomoski on guitar, banjo and vocals from western Connecticut. This particular group has played together for three years and also features John Stey on mandolin, guitar and vocals from western Connecticut, Ellen Carlson on fiddle and vocals from the seacoast area of New Hampshire, and Bob Dick from Northbridge on bass and vocals. We'll be playing a mix of standard and original bluegrass music with some traditional country and fiddle tunes mixed in.

The concert will take place in function room of the Rockdale Cong.

Church, 42 Fowler Rd., Northbridge. Prior to the show, come have a bowl of soup or chili, or hot slider sandwich, and at intermission have dessert and coffee. Proceeds go to the Church.

Admission to the show is \$20 at the door only. Doors will be open at 6 p.m. Seating is at a first come/first served basis. For more information, call or text Bob Dick at 617-429-0347.

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Courtesy

Douglas Public Schools Food Service applied for and won the HMI Award for Innovation in Nutrition Education for the 25-26 school year! The HMI Recognition Awards recognize and share best practices from school food authorities (SFA) who made operational changes to improve the nutritional quality of their school meals, as well as SFAs who engage students and families in nutrition education and in the planning and preparation of nutritious school meals. DPS Foodservice implemented several nutrition education activities and introduced local produce to the menu to increase student awareness of nutritious food choices and enhance the overall quality of school meals.

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Our Lady of the Valley announces honor roll

UXBRIDGE — Our Lady of the Valley Regional School has released its honor roll for the second quarter of the 2025-2026 school year.

High Honors
Grade 8: Matthew Auger, Anthony Baldwin, Nolan Calnan, Allison Creighton, Zephaniah Fritz
Grade 7: Angelina Lucchetti, Joseph Podles, Felicity Walek
Grade 6: Patrice Altidor, Jovie Brant, Annabelle Brown, Nora Eland, Logan Lariviere, Liam Power, Aya-Sophia Saliba
Grade 5: Amilia Abdulmassih, Abigail Berger, Miranda Calnan, Ellen Consigli, Madeline Findlay, Keegan O'Brian, Colin Shimko, Luke Siciliano, Johanna Talamini, Rosalie Walek
Grade 4: Rosalie Brown, Dominic Clemente, Sophia Foxworthy, Mary French, Leo Glennon, Norah Glennon, Colton Guy, Dino Lucchetti, Trevor McGovern, Lucciana Tyrell, Madelyn Vaidya

Honors
Grade 8: Charlee Bellefeuille, Cameron Berger, Gavin Chapman, Peter Colonero, William Horrigan, Noah Sunkett, Aimee Talbot, Brennan Tatro, Molly Till, Nathan Weed
Grade 7: Maddox Andrew, Benaiah Arsenault, Jacob Carter, Cassius Clinker, Abigail Cook, Catalina Goncalves, Caelyn Kent, Audrey Keough, Sophia Pica, Graeme Pintarich, Liam Roy
Grade 6: Elias Azar, Bodie Bellefeuille, Gideon Fritz, Scarlett Hendricks, Gracyn Lambert, Cecilia Oliveira, Andrew Patnode, Aubrey Thayer, Chloe Westenfelder, Jason Youssef
Grade 5: Anna Auger, Cecilia Dutra, Isaac Eland, Caden Menard, Jacob Viveiros
Grade 4: Sophia Andreozzi, Tessa Bashaw, Jonah Brant, Marc Bullio, Reghan Devaney, Beatrice Fritz, Olivia Pavone, Scarlett Roy

Northbridge Elementary announces Kindergarten registration

NORTHBRIDGE — Kindergarten registration for the 2026-2027 school year is currently open online through Feb. 20.

Children currently enrolled in the NES Pre-School program are already registered and do not need to do anything. Any Northbridge child who will turn five on or before Aug. 31 is eligible to attend Kindergarten in fall of 2026.

The first step for all new Kindergarteners is completion of the online registration.

Visit the district website at www.nps.org and click on Northbridge Elementary School. You will then choose «2026-2027 Kindergarten Registration» from the «Latest News» section of the NES webpage. Visit the «Registration Information & Link» for further instructions on how to begin your online registration (OLR). Once your OLR is received, an email will be sent to schedule an in-person appointment to complete your child's registration.

Wine tasting event to benefit Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter

UXBRIDGE — The community is invited to support the Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter at a wine tasting fundraiser event Saturday, March 7 from 7 to 10 p.m. at Blissful Meadow Golf Club in Uxbridge.

Tickets are available at bvemergencyshelter.org.

Love, Lace & Legacy

ENJOY A VALENTINE’S EVENING AT ASA WATERS MANSION

MILLBURY — The Asa Waters Mansion invites the community to step into an evening of romance, history, and timeless elegance with Love, Lace & Legacy: A Valentine’s Evening at the Mansion, taking place on Friday, Feb. 13.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. at the historic Asa Waters Mansion, located at 123 Elm St., Millbury.

This unique Valentine’s event blends local history, social charm, and classic romance, highlighting the fascinating story of Esther

Howland, a pioneering Worcester, Massachusetts entrepreneur who revolutionized Valentine’s Day with her beautifully adorned cards.

Guests will enjoy a cocktail reception, seasonal Valentine inspired sweet and savory bites, raffles, and a cash bar provided by Spicy Water Distillery and Broken Creek Winery. The evening also features an engaging historical presentation by Robert Stacy, Historian from the Museum of Worcester, offering insight into Esther Howland’s lasting impact on American culture, and Valentine’s Day. Attendees will be treated to exclusive tours of the Mansion, and the Millbury Historical Society will also be open for guests to explore, adding depth and discovery to the evening’s experience.

Designed for couples, friends, and history enthusiasts alike, Love, Lace & Legacy offers a fresh and meaningful alternative to traditional Valentine’s celebrations, in a unique atmosphere.

“Esther Howland’s legacy reminds us that love, creativity, and entrepreneurship have always gone hand in hand. Events like Love, Lace & Legacy allow us to connect the past with the present, creating meaningful moments guests will carry with them long after the evening ends,” said Traci Parath, Executive Director, Asa Waters Mansion.

Register online at <https://unipaygold.unibank.com/transactioninfo.aspx?TID=36943> or scan the QR code on our flyer. The cost to attend is \$30 per person, with limited seating available, and advanced ticket purchase is required. For more information, please contact Traci Parath at 508-865-0855 or email Traci at tparath@millbury-ma.gov.

Saint Joseph School student advances in Lions Peace Poster Contest



Courtesy Saint Joseph School seventh grader Sophia Surowaniec proudly holds her winning Lions Clubs International Peace Poster Contest entry, “Together as One,” alongside Dr. John Kalinowski of the Webster-Dudley Lions Club, who visited the school to notify her that her poster is advancing to the district level.

WEBSTER — A seventh-grade student at Saint Joseph School has been selected as the school’s winner in the 2025 Lions Clubs International Peace Poster Contest, earning the opportunity to advance to the district level.

Sophia Surowaniec, daughter of Piotr and Kristy Surowaniec of North Grosvenordale, Conn., received the news during a visit to Saint Joseph School by Webster-Dudley Lions Club member Dr. John Kalinowski, who personally notified her that her poster was moving forward and posed for photos with the student.

This year’s contest theme, “Together as One,” encourages students to share their vision of peace through original artwork. The Peace Poster Contest aims to allow children in schools and youth groups everywhere to express their visions of peace through their art. Lions Club members, through local service, strive to spread joy, kindness, hope, and peace within the community.

Sophia is a repeat winner for Saint Joseph School—her 2024 entry was also selected to move on in the competition. She is also deeply involved in school leadership and service as a member of Saint Joseph School’s Eagles Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society, Treasurer of the Children of Mary Sodality, a member of the Varsity Cheer Team, and an Assistant Coach for the Eaglets Cheer Team.

Students develop and refine their contest ideas in art class with Saint Joseph School’s Art Instructor and Fine Arts Director, Ms. Brigid Campbell, who supports students in connecting artistic choices to the message they want to communicate.

School leaders noted that the contest aligns closely with Saint Joseph School’s mission of Religion, Respect, and Responsibility, giving students a meaningful way to express compassion, unity, and respect through creativity.

Congratulations to Sophia Surowaniec on this achievement.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR FEBRUARY 6-13

Monday, Feb. 9

- Douglas Board of Selectmen Meeting, 7 p.m., Douglas Municipal Center, 29 Depot St. Regular meeting covering town operations and public matters.

- Northbridge Select Board Meeting, 7 p.m., Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main St. Public session with ongoing municipal business.

Tuesday, Feb. 10

- Uxbridge School Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Uxbridge High School Media Center, 300 Quaker Hwy. District business and policy items as posted.

- Northbridge Planning Board Meeting, 7 p.m., Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main St. Planning and zoning matters as listed on agenda.

Wednesday, Feb. 11

- Douglas Planning Board Meeting, 7 p.m., Douglas Municipal Center, 29 Depot St. Zoning and development items as posted.

Thursday, Feb. 12

- Uxbridge Finance Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Uxbridge Town Hall, 21 South Main St. Budget review and fiscal planning.

- Uxbridge Select Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Uxbridge Town Hall, 21 South Main St. Regular meeting with departmental updates.

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OBITUARY

Bruce W. Allen, 86



Bruce W. Allen, 86, of Whitinsville, MA, died at home on January 24, 2026 surrounded by family.

Born on December 27, 1939, in Yarmouth Nova Scotia.

Bruce lived a life rooted in his Christian faith. He is survived by his wife Diane and six children: Brett & Beth Allen, Bonnie & Mike Riley, Eric & Susan Allen, Todd & Lori Allen, Craig & Susan Allen, and Brenda & Jeff Hitchcock, 13 grandchildren and 10 great grandchild; stepchildren, Bill & Susan Curboy, 4 more grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren who all called him Grampy.

Many memories were made with Grampy and his grandchildren at the lake, jumping off the dock, boat rides, and trips to pirate island. Bruce was preceded in death by his parents Percy & Marjorie Allen, step-son Chris Curboy, and daughter-in-law Sandy Curboy.

Bruce found strength and comfort in his relationship with the Lord and was actively involved in many churches over the years, most recently attending service at Grace Christian Fellowship in Woonsocket Rhode Island. Bruce played in worship bands, fellowshipped in mens groups, was a Gideon member, and led nursing home ministries. Bruce's family

came to the United States in 1952 and became naturalized citizens.

He graduated from Rindge Technical High School where he found his gift and love for the drums, and then went on to earn a degree from Curry College. Over his lifetime Bruce worked at Zayre Corporation, United Life Insurance, and many years in land development/construction business. During his retirement Bruce kept busy driving adults with disabilities to and from day programs. In between drop off and pick up you could often find him at Peg's Dinner making connections in the community.

The family would like to thank the wonderful nursing and aid staff at Notre Dame Hospice. Their guidance, support, and special way they cared for Grampy (and his family) was instrumental in keeping him comfortable at home. He formed a special bond with many and looked forward to their visits.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that a memorial gift can be made to ministries Bruce held dear; Walking in Light Ministry at PO Box 906, Douglas MA 01561 & Grace Christian Fellowship.

A Memorial service will be held at Grace Christian Fellowship Church, at 298 Blackstone Street, Woonsocket RI, 02895 on Friday February 13, 2026 at 11am, followed by a reception in the fellowship hall.

Burial will be held at a later date.

EVENTS

continued from page A1

Sugaring Weekend. Guided tours will be offered at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 12 p.m., 1 p.m., and 2 p.m., running for about

90 minutes.

Registration is not required but preregistration for guided tours is strongly recommended as capacity is limited. Preregistration is available online at bit.ly/blstsugaring26. Same

day registration for guided tours is limited but available at the door on a first-come, first-serve basis. Tours include outdoor elements. Please dress for the weather and wear appropriate footwear.

FIRES

continued from page A1

are being investigated by the Upton and Milford police and fire departments, the Department of Conservation & Recreation, and the State Police Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office. Investigators plan to seek additional charges

in connection with these incidents, all of which took place in the Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area.

"Upton Police and our law enforcement partners in Milford take great satisfaction in this arrest," said Palmieri. "Any fire can be dangerous, but especially one in an outdoor setting frequented by residents and visitors who deserve to

enjoy our natural resources."

"The 2024 Massachusetts wildfires showed all of us just how quickly an outdoor fire can spread," said State Fire Marshal Davine. "Intentionally setting a fire in a wooded area is courting disaster, and this arrest demonstrates that it will have consequences."

Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild to hold biennial show March 14 & 15

UPTON — Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild will hold their biennial quilt show on Saturday and Sunday, March 14 and 15, at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Visitors to the show will have the opportunity to view the TPQG Raffle Quilt and to purchase raffle tickets to win this beautiful quilt.

The quilt measures 74.5 by 74.5 inches, and is named Dresden Bloom. The quilt was created by TPQG members Karen Pierce, Glory Torres, and Rita Partridge. Their focus in creating this quilt was to find a pattern that showcased both applique and piecing techniques. Once the pattern was determined fabrics were selected that were bright and cheerful. The quilt was custom quilted by Kimberly Cloutier of Blooming Quilts.

You are invited to attend the quilt show and view this quilt in person and purchase

raffle tickets. Tickets are also available from quilt members before the show and are \$2 each or six for \$10.

Roger Williams University announces Fall Dean's List

BRISTOL, R.I. — Select students have been named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List at Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I. Full-time students who complete 12 or more credits per semester and earn a GPA of 3.4 or higher are placed on the Dean's List that semester.

Olivia Deluca of Douglas
Connor Fleming of Douglas
Alex Quaranta of Northbridge
Ryan Robertson of Whitinsville
Jonathon Spiller of Whitinsville
Molly Stinchfield of Douglas
Emily Wildfeuer of Northbridge
About RWU
Roger Williams University offers professional studies and liberal arts programs, with campuses in Bristol and Providence, Rhode Island. We provide real-world learning that empowers students to become the changemakers and leaders our world needs next.

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LEGALS

(SEAL)
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT
26 SM 000300
ORDER OF NOTICE

TO:
Ryan L. Bacigalupo a/k/a Ryan L. Bacigalupo; Kristen A. Bacigalupo and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act: 50 U.S.C. c. 50 § 3901 (*et seq*): Nations Lending Corporation claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Uxbridge, numbered 35 Beverly Avenue, given by Ryan L Bacigalupo and Kristen A Bacigalupo to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Nations Lending Corporation, dated October 20, 2022, and recorded at Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 68398, Page 56, and now held by the plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant's/ Defendants' Servicemembers status. If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at **Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108** on or before March 16, 2026 or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the grounds of noncompliance with the Act. Witness, GORDON H. PIPER, Chief Justice of said Court on January 28, 2026. Attest: Deborah J. Patterson Recorder February 6, 2026

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT COMPLAINT TO FORECLOSE TAX LIEN
[seal]

No. 22 TL 000706
TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN and to any former members, managers, creditors, and any other persons claiming any interest in TMC Assets, LLC, a dissolved Massachusetts limited liability company formerly of Worcester, Worcester County, and said Commonwealth; Hunter Foote, as he is Manager, Secretary of the Commonwealth Signatory, Real Property Manager, and Resident Agent of said TMC Assets, LLC, now or formerly of Webster, Worcester County, and said Commonwealth, and also now or formerly of Wales, Hampden County, and said Commonwealth; or their heirs, devisees, legal representatives, successors, and assigns: A Complaint has been filed by the Plaintiff Tallage Brooks, LLC of Boston, Suffolk County in said Commonwealth. The Complaint asks the Court to enter a judgment ending any ownership rights or interests in the land described below. The Complaint is about one parcel of land located in the Town of Uxbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts, described in the Complaint as follows: A parcel of land with any buildings thereon, approximately 0.54 Acres located and known as 319 WEST ST shown on the Town of Uxbridge Assessors Records as Parcel Identifier 270327800000 and being part of the premises recorded in book 35036 on page 181 in the Worcester Registry of Deeds. **To respond to the Complaint, you or your attorney must take these steps by the Deadline to Answer, which is the twenty-third day of March in the year two thousand and twenty-six.** First, prepare a written Answer. You may write your own Answer or use the form or the online guided interview program on the Court website. Second, file your

Answer with the Land Court Recorder's Office, or in the Assistant Recorder's Office at the Registry of Deeds where the land is located, or using the Court's online eFiling system. Third, serve a copy of your Answer to the Plaintiff by mail or e-mail. **If you do not answer the Complaint by the above Deadline to Answer, this Court will find you in default.** You may lose the chance to answer or dispute the facts listed in the Complaint or pay the taxes owed. You may lose all ownership rights or interest in the land described above. If a judgment of foreclosure is entered, you will lose ownership of your property. If the property is worth more than the amount owed to cover the tax debt and foreclosure costs, you may be entitled to receive any remaining funds (excess equity) from the Plaintiff. It is ordered that this citation be published right away, once in Blackstone Valley Tribune a newspaper published in Southbridge. Witness, **GORDON H. PIPER**, Esquire, Chief Justice of said Court, this twenty-seventh day of January in the year two thousand and twenty-six. Attest with Seal of said Court. Deborah J. Patterson Recorder Plaintiff's Attorney: John D. Finnegan, Esq. and Kaitlyn C. Baptista, Esq., Hill Law, 6 Beacon St. Suite 600, Boston, MA 02108 Tel: (617) 494-1500 February 6, 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. WO26P0263EA CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION Estate Of: Stephen A LaPorta Date of Death: 01/07/2026

To all interested persons: A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Shannon LaPorta of Uxbridge 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: **Shannon LaPorta of Uxbridge MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 02/17/2026.** 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: January 23, 2026 Stephanie Fattman, Register of Probate February 6, 2026

Logan Potter of Douglas named to President’s List at Hudson Valley Community College

TROY, N.Y. — Logan Potter of Douglas has been named to Fall 2025 President’s List at Hudson Valley Community College. Potter is studying in the Exercise Science academic program at the college. The college’s President’s List recognizes students each fall and spring term who earn a term GPA between 3.5 and 4.0 and receive no grades of D, F, I or Z, or their remedial equivalents. Full-time students must successfully complete at least 12 college credits, and part-time students must complete at least six. A grade of W, remedial coursework and previously attempted courses do not disqualify a student as long as all other requirements are met. About Hudson Valley Community College Founded in 1953, Hudson Valley Community College is the largest community college in upstate New York and offers more than 85 degree and certificate programs in three schools: Business and Liberal Arts; Health Sciences; and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM); and also administers the Educational Opportunity Center for academic and career training at no cost to those who qualify. One of 30 community colleges in the SUNY system, Hudson Valley enrolls more than 19,000 students in credit and non-credit courses and is a recognized leader in distance learning and workforce development. The college has more than 90,000 alumni. To learn more, please visit www.hvcc.edu.

Fitchburg State announces Dean’s and President’s Lists

FITCHBURG — Fitchburg State President Donna Hodge has announced the students who qualified for inclusion on the Dean’s List and President’s List for the Fall 2025 semester.

A student is placed on the Dean’s List for the semester if an average grade of 3.20 or better is attained, and the student is attending the university full time.

The President’s List honors students for consistently high academic achievement. A student is named to the list after achieving a 3.75 average in each of three successive semesters.

President’s List

Webster
Kaleigh S. Papierski

Dean’s List

Auburn
Arielys Almeyda, Emily R. Gillespie, Mackenzie J. Mackin, Lukas M. Skalecki

Brimfield
Gabriel A. Rice

Brookfield
Zachary J. Sweet

Charlton
Cassidy M. Bousquet, Jordan A. Goulas

Douglas
Hunter G. Dunn

Dudley
August C. Eaton
Alexander Siwik

Fiskdale
Tafari U. Byfield-Felton, Carsyn M. Knapik, Madison M. Luce

Grafton
Joshua R. Miller, Elizabeth C. Morin

Groton
Aia A. Almathkhor, Kayla R. Hanlon, Christopher J. Hickman, Keren J. Noonan, Ryan M. Robichaud, Deven G. Sorrentino

Holland
Charles L. Moran

Leicester
Paige L. Ward

Milford
Owen S. Archer, Anthony L. Oliveira

Dalicandro, Melvin B. Yupa

Millbury
Lillian J. Bousquet, Sophia R. Burrowes, Luke Charron, Emma L. McRae, Patrick J. Sheehan

Oxford
Susan A. Cicerchia, Raegan L. Perreault, Aaliyah B. Szkutak

Southbridge
Samuel E. Carrasco, Adam L. Fournier, Angelica Vega

Spencer
Lucinda M. Asare-Yeboah, Emilee E. Larson, Liam O’Coin, Angelika Osowiecki, Braeden M. White

Sturbridge
Grace Hope K. Kentsa, Vanshika S. Patel

Sutton
Gabriela De Mora Cooper, Kerri Grenache, Molly J. Jenkins

Upton
Kelsey E. Fournier

Uxbridge
Nathaniel J. Badzmierowski, Jessie M. Demalia, Samantha L. Jones, Rheannon A. March, Rylee A. Spear, Caileen J. Wilson

West Brookfield
Juliette R. Boos

Wales
Michael T. Bouthillier

Webster
Salaila L. Lewis, Maya S. Ortiz, Zachary C. Sargent, Rachael C. Waterson

Whitinsville
Jessica K. Caggiula, Nicolas Salamack

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DAILY ACTIVITIES: All our daily activities are free of charge.

Monday: Painting class 9:45am to 11:45am, Balance & Strength Exercise 12pm, Mat yoga 2pm

Tuesday: Walking club 9am, Cribbage 9:00am, Lunch & Bingo 11:30am, Technology class 1pm (call to make an appt.), Line dancing 2pm

Wednesday: Balance & strength 10am, Darts 11:30am, Mahjong 12:45pm, Dominoes 1 to 2:30pm

Thursday: Walking club 9am, Chair Yoga 9:30am, Pitch 9:00am, Hand and Foot card game 12:30pm

Friday: Balance & strength 10am, Zumba 11:30am

The Adult Social Center Food Pantry is open to any resident/ family in town. We have a large variety of food, personal care items, household cleaners, and fresh bread from Panera. We are open Monday – Thursday from 9 to 3, and Friday from 9 to 11:30. If you are homebound we are more than happy to deliver to your home.

We will accept non-perishable items during our regular business hours. Monday- Thursday 9-3 & Fridays 9-12. Please DO NOT leave anything on our ramp after hours.

Inclement weather: The center is closed to patrons if school is cancelled. If school is delayed we will open at our regular time.

Tuesday & Thursday lunch club, please call the Friday before to sign up. Lunch is \$4.00 per person. If you would like to attend we offer free rides to and from the center and are willing to waive the lunch fee is necessary.

February Lunch Menu:

Tuesday 2/3: Broccoli & cheese quiche, fruit & banana bread

Tuesday 2/10: Stuffed peppers, carrots, & fruit

Tuesday 2/17: Kielbasa jambalaya, fiesta corn, & baby cakes

Thursday 2/19: Tomato soup, grilled cheese, & brownies

Tuesday 2/24: Stuffed chicken, mashed potatoes, carrots, & pudding

Friday Shopping Schedule: Please call 48 hours in advance to schedule your ride. Grocery shopping pick up starts at 9:30.

Hannaford: 2/6

Walmart: 2/13, 2/27

Price Chopper: 2/20

FEBRUARY EVENTS:

WELLNESS CLINIC DATES: Monday February 9th & Tuesday February 24th. Clinic is open from 10 am to 12 pm.

- Thursday February 12th @ 12 pm: Murder Mystery Valentine’s Party. Refreshments will be served. Sign up by 2/6.
- Wednesday February 19th @ 12 pm: Carbon Monoxide Screening. Lunch is tomato soup, grilled cheese & brownies. Lunch is \$4.00 per person. Come in and learn about the dangers of carbon monoxide and how to keep your levels low. Sign up by 2/13.

PLEASE CALL (508) 476-2283 TO SIGN UP FOR PROGRAMS & CLASSES

Check our website for events that may not be listed here <https://www.douglas-ma.gov/202/AdultSocial-Center-Senior-Center>

www.StonebridgePress.com

Cornerstone Bank renews support for Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester to expand ESOL and workforce readiness programs

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank has committed \$4,000 in continued support to Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester (LVGW) to help expand its English as a Second Language (ESOL) and Workforce Readiness Program for New Americans, strengthening access to English language education and employment pathways for immigrants, refugees and migrants in the greater Worcester community.

The 2025 contribution builds on Cornerstone Bank’s prior support of \$3,000 in both 2023 and 2024 and will help LVGW expand class offerings, recruit and train volunteer tutors and provide individualized career and employment assistance. The program addresses critical barriers to employment, education and civic participation faced by New Americans while supporting long-term economic stability in the region.

“With strong community partners like Literacy

Volunteers of Greater Worcester, we can help ensure that opportunity is accessible to everyone,” said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. “By supporting ESOL and workforce readiness programs, we are investing not only in individual success, but in the strength and vitality of the entire Worcester community.”

In 2025, LVGW helped 451 adult learners benefit from English instruction, individualized tutoring and direct pathways to greater economic security. LVGW has served nearly 12,000 adult learners from more than 120 countries since its founding in 1973.

Cornerstone Bank’s renewed investment will support the program’s second year of expansion, helping New Americans gain the English language and workforce skills they need to succeed in work, school and daily life.

About Cornerstone Bank
Cornerstone Bank was formed in 2017, born of a long history of supporting

the community, and providing a strong foundation to help people and businesses thrive. 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, which is a subsidiary of PeoplesBankCorp, MHC, operating independently under its own name and brand, provides the highest level of service and expertise for individuals, businesses, and community organizations with

branch locations throughout Central Massachusetts. Cornerstone works to connect customers with opportunities through a broad range of deposit and loan products and services. Built on Trust is not just a tagline, but also one of our guiding corporate values. Whether a business or personal partnership, Cornerstone stands on the foundation that relationships are built on trust. To learn about Cornerstone Bank’s personal and business banking offerings, please visit cornerstonebank.com or call 800-939-9103.

QCC’s Commonwealth Honors program promotes research

WORCESTER — Students in Quinsigamond Community College’s Commonwealth Honors program presented their research findings at a recent Honors Colloquium Student Showcase. The Honors Colloquium is an interdisciplinary course required for students completing designated honors pathways. Designed to foster intellectual curiosity and collaboration, the course brings together faculty from multiple disciplines to explore a central theme from diverse perspectives.

Each student develops a thesis related to the semester’s theme, conducts in-depth library research and produces a research paper. The experience culminates in a poster presentation, shared both in class and at the Honors Colloquium Student Showcase, where students present their work to the broader QCC community. Many participants also take their research beyond campus, presenting at the Undergraduate Research Conference at UMass Amherst.

One section of the Honors Colloquium course, co-taught by Associate Professor of Biology Opeyemi Odewale and Professor of English John Stazinski, employed the theme “The Small Engines of Humanity: Germs, Cooties, and Diseases – Microbial Impact & Societal Transformation.”

“The Honors Colloquium is unique among classes at QCC in that the students, every single semester, become very close and end up forming a true learning community,” said Stazinski. “They’re genuinely engaged by each other’s projects and tend to keep each other on track.”

At last month’s showcase, students presented their research on how microbes influence contemporary societal challenges.

Student Luis Cruz investigated the gut-eye axis, inspired by his background in ophthalmology and future plans for graduate school and a Ph.D. His project explored early eye treatment options to prevent surgery. Another student, Emma Dattis, examined how music and social networks influence the gut microbiome, uncovering links between cultural factors and microbial health.

Other sections of the Honors Colloquium included “The World in 2050: A Certain Uncertainty,” “(Hi) stories of American Violence” and “Truths or Consequences: Examining Movements for Change.”

For more information on QCC’s Commonwealth Honors Program, visit qcc.edu/learn-qcc/commonwealth-honors-program.

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Bay Path graduates sought for Class of 1976 reunion

REGION — Hello, lassmates of Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School Graduating Class of 1976. Can you believe it’s been 50 years?!

A small group of us have gotten together to begin planning our 50th class reunion. The people in this group are Bonnie (Aker) Courtemanche, David Saad, Jeff Mitchell and Clifford Cloutier.

We are searching for our classmates for a 50th year class reunion. We have a Facebook page setup that you can go to and let us know your contact information and if you are interested in a reunion party. You can reach out to the Facebook page BAY PATH VOCATIONAL HIGH CLASS OF 1976.

We would like to hear from you even if you don’t think you will be able to make it. We invite you to send a message/well wishes to your classmates. We can share your messages for others to read that night.

We will be compiling a list of those we have heard from in hopes that classmates we have heard from can help locate them. We would love to get this message out to all our classmates.

We hope to hear from you and see you at our reunion.

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For more information and to apply, contact Wally Connor, Facility/HR Manager at (508) 885-8700 Ext. 550 or by email: wally@spencerabbey.org

Laborer/Driver

STURBRIDGE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Town of Sturbridge D.P.W. is accepting applications to fill a Laborer/Driver Position. This is a full-time position. Valid Class A or B CDL and Equipment Hydraulic License 2A are preferred and required within 6 months of appointment. See the Job Description for more information. The starting rate for the position is \$24.64/hr. Applications are available at the Sturbridge Municipal Garage, New Boston Road Extension, Sturbridge, MA or on the Town of Sturbridge website under job opportunities. Applications are due by February 6, 2026. The Department is a Union shop. The Town is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE).

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PLUMMER PLACE

Home of the Northbridge Senior Center

The following events will take place at Plummer Place, Home of the Northbridge Senior Center. We are located at 20 Highland St. in Whitinsville. Telephone: (508) 234-2002. Northbridge residents have priority for all programming and events.

Regular Programs:

Bereavement Group
Monday, February 9th at 1:00pm
Brew Crew
Wednesday, February 4th at 9:30am
Book Club
Wednesday, February 18th at 10:30am
Mindful Meditation with Kelly
Every Thursday at 9:30am

S c r a b b l e

Mondays, February 9th and 23rd at 9:30am
Women’s Collective
Thursday, February 12th at 10:00am
Writing Your Way with Lori
Thursdays, February 12th and 26th at 2:00pm

Special Events and Programs:
NEW Women’s Collective!
Ladies — ignite your next chapter with our new Women’s Collective — where a fresh focus on community meets bold creativity. Next meeting date: Thursday, February 12th at 10:00am. No sign up required! Please drop in and join us. Coffee/tea/hot chocolate will be available. Any questions? Please call Amy at (508) 234-2002 x1305.

Active Agers Health Fair

Get moving, get informed, and get inspired! Please join us at Plummer Place’s first-ever Active Agers Health fair for older adults! This event is packed with fun and engaging activities, screenings, and wellness tips to keep you thriving! Your health, your way, your day!
Wednesday, February 25th
12:30pm-2:30pm

The first 20 people in the door will receive a free reflective drawstring backpack. Free door prizes will be drawn throughout the afternoon and grab and go snacks will also be available, as well as bone density and blood pressure screenings. There is a \$5 attendance fee, payable in cash at the door the day of this event. Please call the main office to sign up so we can gauge attendance.



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



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Webster Lake Waterfront Listing! KILLDEER RD

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Webster Lake Waterfront - 31 Bayview!!

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

Webster Lake - 302 Killdeer Island

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Webster Lake Waterfront 8 Long Island


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The Groundhog Day verdict is in!



CORNELIA’S PREDICTION AT ECOTARIUM COMES AS NO SURPRISE

WORCESTER — Monday morning at the EcoTarium, Worcester’s very own weather-predicting groundhog, Cornelia, emerged from her burrow and carefully looked around her habitat, sniffing at lettuce and other treats. Mayor Joe Petty watched Cornelia carefully and then delivered the official Groundhog Day proclamation before a crowd of teachers, students, and community leaders.

“Today, Cornelia has emerged from hibernation to search the ground at the EcoTarium for her shadow, as, like her ancestors before her, Cornelia has acquired the fascinating ability to predict the arrival of spring with 50 percent accuracy,” said Petty with a smile. “I hereby decree that, on this sunny day, Cornelia did in fact see her shadow and thus proclaimed six more weeks of winter weather for the City of Worcester, Massachusetts. I urge all citizens to join in the Groundhog Day celebration across the City, and to keep your hats and mittens close at hand.”

The crowd let out a loud moan at the news of more winter.

“No matter the weather, we always embrace the fun of this time-honored tradition,” said Noreen Smith, EcoTarium President & CEO. “This really is Cornelia’s day to shine. While most groundhogs were still asleep, Cornelia was hard at work analyzing the conditions and making her forecast.”

Guests were treated to a close-up experience with Cornelia, as her dedicated keeper shared fascinating insights into her daily care: “Cornelia is still shaking off her winter sleepiness, as at the EcoTarium, Cornelia does not fully hibernate, although she does slow down between October and March, eating less and sleeping for most of the day. She managed to wake up to enjoy breakfast with all of us this morning. She enjoyed a spread of greens and vegetables. After eating, she quickly made herself comfortable again in her toasty nest!”

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