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Psychologist and author Jack McClintock named Friends of the North Brookfield Town House Artist of the Month

NORTH BROOKFIELD — Jack McClintock lives in North Brookfield, having moved from Worcester a decade ago with his wife Kathleen. He’s quick to say that while you can’t pick your family, you do get to choose where you live, and he’s never regretted exchanging the anonymity of urban life for the small-town warmth of a real community. He proudly states that he started working at age nine, delivering copy for a local newspaper, and he’s still working part time to this day, offering mental health services online for a large international corporation.

Rogers selected as new Treasurer/Tax Collector in Leicester

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

LEICESTER — The Town of Leicester has a new Treasurer/Collector with the recent confirmation of Susan Rogers taking over the role. Rogers has worked in the Treasurer/Collector office as Assistant Treasurer for more than six months. While the town Web site still listed her in that position as of this writing, her promotion was confirmed during a meeting of the Select Board of Dec. 3. Rogers was soft spoken in her acceptance of the job but said she was excited to get started. “I’m looking forward to the opportunity to be in my new position. We’ve got a great team up there,” she said. Her promotion was popular among Select Board with Board Chair Doug Belanger crediting her with helping put together fundraising efforts for injured police officers. She received equal praise from Town Administrator David Genereux, who said Rogers was perfect for the job. “Sue has been excellent in her role and we have full confidence in her going forward,” said Belanger. “She’s been doing a great job as the Assistant Treasurer and she’s ready for her step up.” Rogers assent to Treasurer/Collector has been swift. She

Turn To ROGERS page A14

If you give him a chance, McClintock tell you that work is the core of a meaningful life, but he’s quick to point out that all jobs aren’t equal, some can be dangerous, while others are simply toxic. Writing, he says, “isn’t a job, it’s a safety valve.”

Turn To MCCLINTOCK page A14

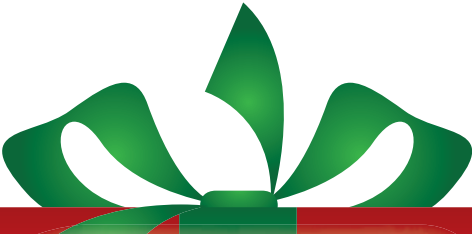
Leicester girls cross the finish line with confidence at Polar Park 5K



LEICESTER — At a recent School Committee meeting, a group of dedicated students, including Reagan Beveridge, Skylar Connor, Delaney Copper, Madelynn McNally, Alexa Perez, Zoelys Perez, and Chloe Worster, all from Leicester Elementary and Middle School, presented a new program called Girls on the Run to the School Committee. Girls on the Run is a nationally recognized program that empowers young girls through a blend of physical activity, goal setting, and confidence-building lessons. Throughout the season, participants met regularly to engage in discussions about self-esteem, teamwork, perseverance, and healthy decision-making, while also training for their final race. The program encourages participants to believe in themselves, support one another, and recognize the strength they possess both inside and out. On Nov. 16, this group of dedicated LES students, laced up their sneakers and took on an exciting challenge led by their coaches Jessica Monfreda, Shannon Beveridge, Autumn Connor, and Caitlin Morris — running a 5K at Polar Park as the culminating event of their participation in the Girls on the Run program. Race day was a moment of celebration, determination, and pride for

the Leicester runners. Surrounded by cheering families, friends, and community members, the girls demonstrated their hard work and commitment as they crossed the finish line at Polar Park — each step representing not only miles completed, but confidence gained. Donna McCance, School Committee Chair, stated, “It’s valuable for our students to participate in programs that help them to become self-empowered, a mindset that will serve them well throughout their adulthood. The students were very well spoken, and I appreciated them sharing that their mission is to ‘encourage people instead of competing against them.’ This is also a treasured mindset that encourages compassion and teamwork throughout their lives.” Leicester Public Schools are proud of these amazing students for their dedication and positive spirit throughout the program. Their participation in Girls on the Run serves as an inspiring reminder that with encouragement and perseverance, young learners can accomplish incredible goals. Superintendent Kustigian thanked the students

and the parents for an outstanding presentation.



Holidays make for early deadlines

The submission deadlines for our Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 editions will fall a bit earlier than usual in order to ensure that the paper arrives in subscribers’ mail boxes prior to the Christmas and New Year’s holidays.

Any press releases or letters to the Editor intended for publication the week of Dec. 26 should be submitted no later than 4 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 18.

For the week of Jan. 2, the submission deadline will be Friday, Dec. 26 at 4 p.m.

Submissions can be e-mailed to news@stonebridgepress.news.



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Free by request to residents of East Brookfield, West Brookfield, North Brookfield, Brookfield, Leicester and Spencer

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Friday, December 12, 2025 Annual Holiday Craft Fair benefits LHS music programs



Jason Bleau

Leicester High School music students pose for a photo with Santa following the annual Holiday Craft Fair at Leicester Middle School.

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

LEICESTER — Leicester Middle School hosted the 21st iteration of the annual Holiday Craft Fair on Dec. 6, with proceeds benefiting the Leicester High School Performing Arts program.

The holiday staple brings together crafters from all different locals and specialties to showcase their goods for a small entry fee. The proceeds from the event have long played an important role in supporting Leicester High School’s music programs by allow-

ing them to showcase their talents in annual competitions. Alexis Phillips, Leicester High School’s Music Director, explained the importance of the Holiday Craft Fair and how it has

Turn To FAIR page A14



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Cornerstone Bank donates \$20,000 to Worcester County Food Bank to support families facing ongoing food insecurity

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank has reaffirmed its commitment to addressing hunger in Central Massachusetts with a \$20,000 donation to the Worcester County Food Bank. The contribution continues Cornerstone’s annual tradition of redirecting funds typically spent on holiday cards. The bank contributed \$10,000 in both 2022 and 2023, and increased its support this year to meet rising community need.

While the recent federal government shutdown has concluded, many families continue to feel the ripple effects of tem-

porary delays in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. With food costs still elevated and demand for assistance remaining high, Cornerstone Bank prioritized support for local hunger relief efforts.

“As a community bank, we believe our resources should create meaningful, measurable impact for our neighbors,” said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. “Redirecting holiday card spending allows us to invest directly in helping families access healthy meals during a season that can be especially difficult for many.”

The Worcester County Food Bank, a Feeding America member, distributes nutritious food through a network of local pantries and meal programs while working to reduce hunger through advocacy and equitable access. The Bank’s funds will be allocated directly to distribution efforts to

support residents in immediate need.

“We want our community to feel supported, not just during the holidays, but throughout the year,” Tallman added. “This donation reflects our ongoing commitment to strengthening the well-being of the neighbors we serve.”

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.

DA urges participation in 24th Annual Worcester County Gun Buyback Program

WORCESTER — Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr. is urging participation in the 24th annual Guns to Gardens program, an opportunity for members of the community to turn in unwanted firearms at participating police departments on Saturday, Dec. 13.

Since the program’s start in the City of Worcester in 2002, more than 4,000 guns have been voluntarily turned in across the county. This annual program encourages participants from all of Worcester County to turn in firearms at participating police department headquarters stations in Charlton, Fitchburg, Northborough, Milford, Worcester, or City Welding & Fabrication, 10 Arant St., Worcester.

Anyone who turns in an operable firearm will receive a gift card in exchange (\$50 for a rifle, \$100 for a pistol, and \$150 for an automatic or semi-automatic weapon). Free gun locks are also available, even if you are not turning in a firearm.

“By getting unwanted and unsecured firearms out of the house and safely disposed of, we can help prevent accidental tragedies, theft or misuse. This not only helps reduce gun-related tragedies and save lives, but also avoid the high costs of medically treating gunshot victims,” said District Attorney Early. “I commend Worcester Division of Public Health Medical Director

Dr. Michael Hirsh, who started this program, and all our local police departments for their continued efforts to advocate for gun safety and protect our communities.”

“Every gun that we can get out of homes that are not safely secured or not in an environment where it is safe to keep them at home is a win for a peaceful holiday season in the Woo,” said Dr. Hirsh.

As in the past, Mr. Early will relax law enforcement of the law prohibiting the carrying of firearms for those participating in the program. Participants may bring firearms without any registration requirement, and anonymity is guaranteed for everyone. All weapons should be brought unloaded and wrapped up or in a bag. Replica guns and ammunition will also be accepted. Ammunition should be separately bagged. Residents are reminded to treat all firearms as though they are loaded and dangerous.

Participants can watch their weapons be destroyed at the City Welding & Fabrication location. In recent years, these destroyed firearms have been turned into garden tools to be used in the UMass community garden, which is maintained by members of the UMass community and produces fresh produce that is donated to those in need.

Guns to Gardens is sponsored by the Worcester County District Attorney’s Office, UMass Memorial Medical Group, the City of Worcester, the Worcester Police Department, and the Worcester Department of Public Health.

Firearms can be turned in at the following locations during the specific hours:

- Charlton Police Department from 10 a.m. to noon
- Fitchburg Police Department from 10 a.m. to noon
- Milford Police Department from 10 a.m. to noon
- Northborough Police Department from 10 a.m. to noon
- Worcester Police Department from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Worcester City Welding & Fabrication (10 Arant St., Worcester) from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.



ARTHRITIS?

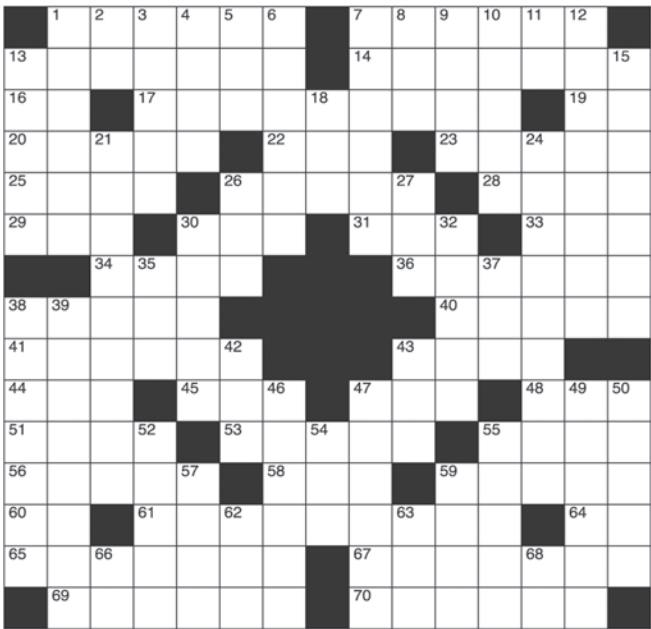
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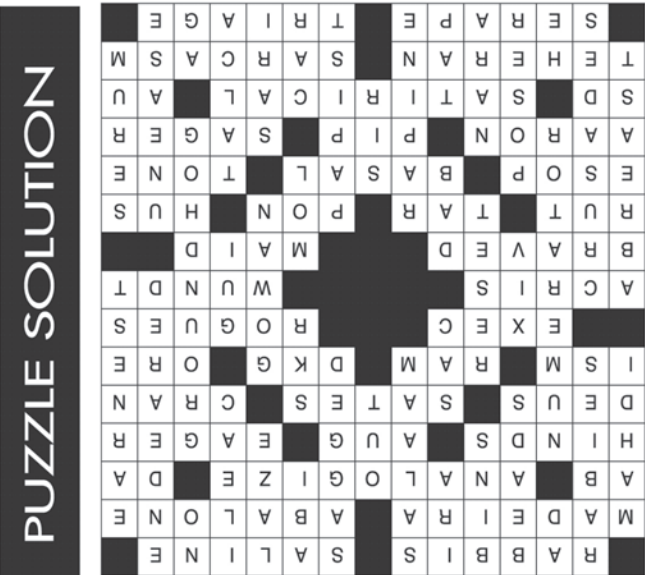


CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Spiritual leaders
- 7. A type of solution
- 13. Fortified wine
- 14. Edible mollusk
- 16. They precede C
- 17. A way to compare
- 19. Government lawyer
- 20. “Game of Thrones” actor Ciaran
- 22. The eighth month (abbr.)
- 23. Very willing
- 25. ___ ex Machina
- 26. Makes happy
- 28. Type of berry
- 29. A doctrine
- 30. Popular Dodge truck model
- 31. Dekagram
- 33. Naturally occurring solid
- 34. Company officer
- 36. Villains
- 38. Cricket frogs
- 40. Influential German psychologist
- 41. Endured
- 43. A female domestic
- 44. You can get stuck in one
- 45. Cigarette (slang)
- 47. Fiber optics network
- 48. Group of blood disorders (abbr.)
- 51. Employee stock ownership plan
- 53. Belonging to the bottom layer
- 55. Sound
- 56. MLB legend Hank
- 58. Very attractive person
- 59. Late beloved sportscaster Craig
- 60. South Dakota
- 61. Mocking
- 64. Symbol for gold
- 65. Longtime Braves pitcher Julio
- 67. Humor
- 69. Shawl
- 70. Preliminary patient assessment

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Animal disease
- 2. Commercial
- 3. Necklace material
- 4. Containers
- 5. A way to save for your future
- 6. Colorado Heisman winner Rashaan
- 7. Dipped down
- 8. Head injury (abbr.)
- 9. Lay about
- 10. Intestinal
- 11. Opposite of yes
- 12. Caused to be loved
- 13. Spiritual leader of Islam
- 15. Businesslike
- 18. Not in
- 21. Number above the line in a fraction
- 24. An animal with its own day
- 26. Pouch
- 27. Swedish krona
- 30. Start over
- 32. Field flowers
- 35. Fourteen
- 37. A visual way to interact with a computer
- 38. Up-to-date
- 39. Campaigns
- 42. Touch lightly
- 43. “Boardwalk Empire” actress Gretchen
- 46. Violent seizure of property
- 47. Supporter of the Pope
- 49. Anxiety
- 50. Body fluid
- 52. One who’s faking it
- 54. Title of respect
- 55. Chilean city
- 57. City in central Japan
- 59. Silk garment
- 62. A form of dance
- 63. Automobile
- 66. The man
- 68. Justice Dept. head honcho



WEEKLY POLICE BLOTTER

Spencer

The Spencer Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Nov. 26 to Dec. 2.

Isaiah Robert Dirsra, age 25, of Worcester was arrested on Nov. 30 for Vandalization of Property, Disorderly Conduct, and Disturbing the Peace.

Leicester

The Leicester Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Nov. 27 to Dec. 3.

Jason Edward Parker, age 47, of Fitchburg was arrested on Nov. 27 for Larceny of More Than \$1,200 By Single Scheme.

Rexford Toah, age 36, of Spencer was arrested on Nov. 27 for Operating Under the Influence (Liquor), Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle, and a Marked Lanes Violation.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on Dec. 1 for Operating a Motor Vehicle after suspension of license and Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle.

An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on Dec. 2 for Operating a Motor Vehicle after suspension of registration and operating an Uninsured Motor Vehicle.

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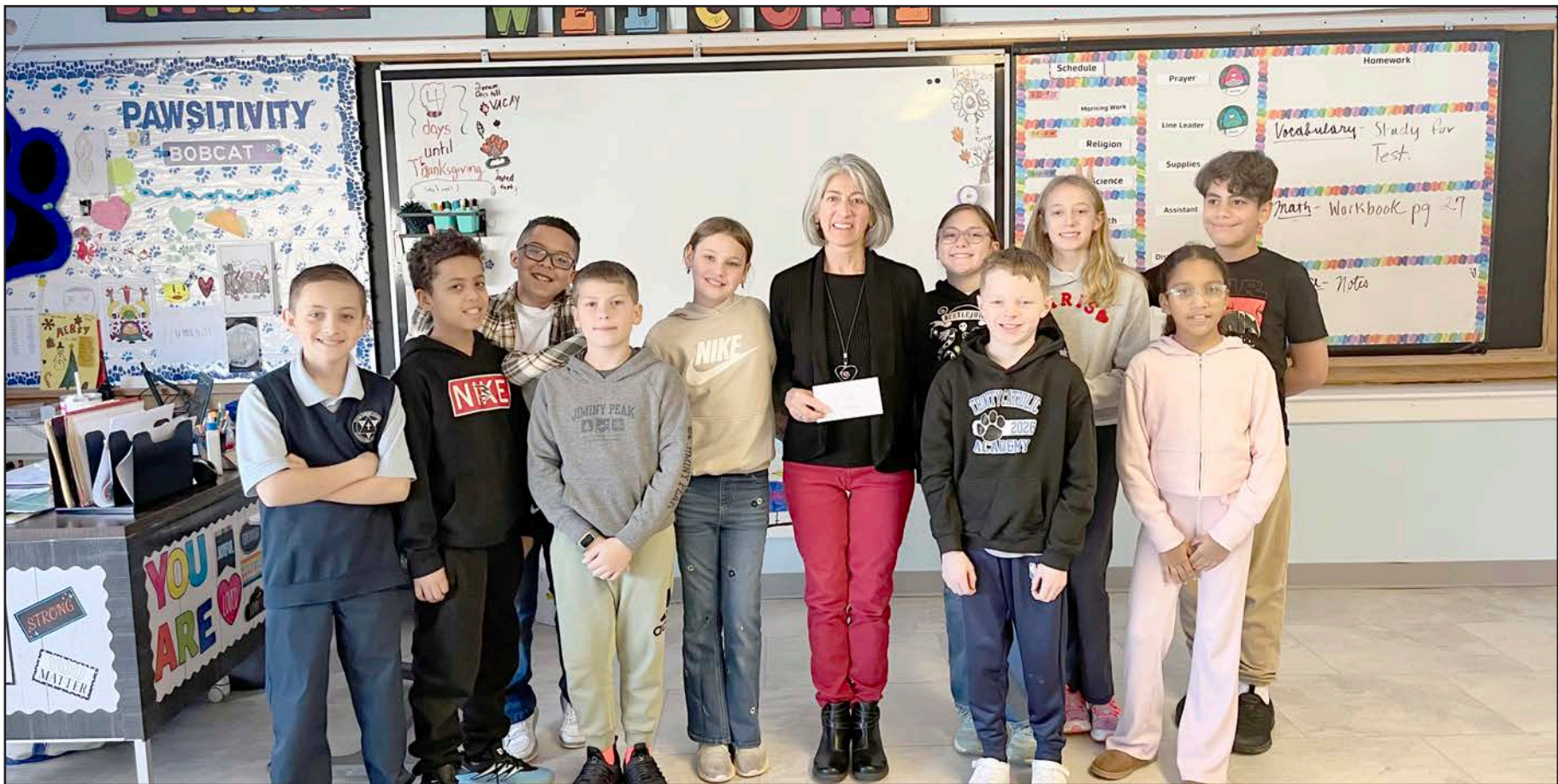
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Courtesy

TCA IS PROUD!

Trinity Catholic Academy is incredibly proud of our fifth grade and NJHS students for making the needs of others a priority. At the recent Vendor Fair, our fifth graders sold handmade jewelry, cards, and birdhouses, raising over \$400. Just a few days later, our NJHS members collected much needed personal care items to fill backpacks for the homeless. All donations were delivered to St. Luke's Guesthouse in Southbridge. At TCA, we strive to teach our students not only strong academics but also the importance of compassion, service, and caring for those who are less fortunate. Their efforts are a beautiful example of faith in action.

Giving thanks, giving back: A Thanksgiving tradition at Saint Joseph School

WEBSTER — As Saint Joseph School students, faculty, and staff began the holiday week, they gathered in prayer for the school's annual Thanksgiving Prayer Service—an opportunity to thank God for the many blessings of the past year while also remembering neighbors in need. Organized by Religion Instructor, Sr. Mary Ann Papiez and the Grade 6 students, the service reminded everyone that gratitude is more than a feeling; it is an invitation to respond with generosity, compassion, and love.

A cherished part of this tradition is Saint Joseph School's ongoing support of the Webster-Dudley Food Share. Each year, the school community unites around the belief that no family should face the holidays without the basic necessities—and that even the smallest contributions, offered with great love, can make a meaningful difference.

In the days leading up to the prayer service, students participated in the Spare Change, Big Hearts! Thanksgiving Coin Drive. Families were invited to send in spare change from home, and students were encouraged to “do good to give good” by completing kind deeds and helpful chores—serving siblings, assisting parents/guardians, and finding simple ways to bring joy to others. Through this effort, students learned that generosity begins in the heart and grows through everyday acts of service.

During the Prayer Service offertory, representatives from each class—from PreK-3 through Grade 8—processed forward to present containers filled with the spare change they had collected throughout the week. The sight of students of all ages bringing forward their gifts was both moving

and joyful, a powerful reminder that everyone has something to give and that they are strongest when they act together as one school family.

Adding to the excitement was the class challenge: the class that collected the most spare change earned a fun celebration of ice cream sundaes and extra recess with Assistant Principal, Mr. Richard Skrocki. Congratulations to the Saint Joseph School Kindergarten class for collecting the most “spare” change—contributing \$399.84 to the overall school total of \$1,937.96. While the students certainly enjoyed the friendly competition, the lasting message was clear—their gifts are most meaningful

when they offer to help others.

Saint Joseph School is grateful to every family that supported this initiative and helped make this tradition possible. Through the leadership of Sr. Mary Ann Papiez and the Grade 6 students, this year's Thanksgiving Prayer Service beautifully reflected the mission of Saint Joseph School, and the Gospel values the students strive to live each day. It is a reminder that as they enter the holiday season and prepare their hearts for Advent, they do so with renewed gratitude for God's blessings—and a deeper commitment to share His love with others, especially those most in need.

Donations as of 12/5/2025

11/30/2025	Steven & Carol Crozier	\$50.00
11/30/2025	Robert & Donna Anderson	\$100.00
11/30/2025	Wentworth Donation	\$400.00
11/30/2025	Andrea Gordon	\$100.00
11/30/2025	Robert & Lynn Esposito	\$150.00
11/30/2025	Lee & Jeanette Jarvis	\$250.00
11/30/2025	Spencer Garden Club	\$100.00
12/1/2025	In Memory of Bobby Boulette	\$50.00
12/1/2025	In Memory of George Rusiecki	\$50.00
12/4/2025	American Legion Riders Post 138	\$250.00
12/4/2025	Jeanne Gaucher	\$100.00

Monetary Donations may be sent to: Spencer Toys for Kids, P.O. Box 186, Spencer, MA 01562.
New, unwrapped toys can be dropped off at: Spencer Fire Dept & ERA Key Realty Services (415B Main St), Cornerstone Bank (Spencer office), Choice Physical Therapy. If you would like to sponsor a child, please contact Donna at donnaflannery@erakey.net or call 508-885-6336. If you are in need of assistance, applications can be picked up at: Spencer Post Office, Mary Queen of the Rosary Food Pantry, Town clerk's office in the town hall, or ERA Key Realty Services (outside mailbox). You can see updates on Facebook at Spencer Toys for Kids.



Courtesy

Saint Joseph School Kindergarten teacher Mrs. Alicia Maurer assists student Sadie Dejordy as she carries the kindergarten class's jar of “spare change” to the offertory during the Annual Thanksgiving Prayer Service. The donations were collected during the school's “Spare Change, Big Hearts!” Thanksgiving Coin Drive supporting the Webster-Dudley Food Share.

Legacy Showdown Game at DPHS Dec. 27

SPENCER — Get ready for an epic clash between the Legends and the Rising Stars at the David Prouty High School Gymnasium! Join us for a night of hoops, alumni pride, and an alumni cheerleader performance Dec. 27 at 6 p.m. Tickets: \$5 at the door

DPHS fans — this is your moment! Dig out your vintage gear or rock your freshest swag and come cheer loud for your team. Let's show the players what school spirit really looks like!

Whether you're backing the past, the future-or both, this is a showdown you won't want to miss. Let's pack the gym and celebrate the legacy of DPHS Basketball!

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OBITUARIES

James A. Paquette, 71



West Brookfield – James A. Paquette, 71, of West Brookfield passed away on Sunday, November 30, 2025, at Baystate Wing Hospital in Palmer.

He leaves behind his beloved wife, Terri L. Paquette of West Brookfield; his daughter, Lisa Audette and her husband, Matthew, and their two children, Henry and Edith, of Belchertown; his son, Adam Paquette and his significant other, Candace Bombard, and their two children, AdaLynn and Noah, of Brookfield; his siblings Norman, Laureen, Judy, and Dennis, as well as several nieces, nephews, and friends. He was predeceased by siblings Edmund, Raymond, and Richard. He was the son of the late Edmund and Eileen Paquette.

Jimmy, as he was known by his family and friends, grew up in West Brookfield as one of eight children. He met his high school sweetheart, Terri, at the age of 15. They married at 19 and went on to build a life together, raising two children who were the pride of his life. From an early age, he developed passions that stayed with him throughout his life—cars, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling. He even learned to fly, a testament to his love of challenge.

Robert Paul Kresco 1940 – 2025



Robert Paul Kresco, age 85, of East Brookfield, beloved husband of Claire (LeBoeuf) Kresco, died peacefully at home on Thursday, November 27, 2025, surrounded by his loving family.

Born in Brimfield, MA, Robert was the son of the late Edward Sr. and Blanche (Cloutier) Kresco.

Robert spent many years as a proud Teamster with the Local 170 truckers’ union. He worked as a shipper and receiver for Premium Beverage Co. in Worcester, MA as well as Nature Poultry, and Brown Shoe Company. He was also a proud member of the East Brookfield Volunteer Police Department from 1972-1978.

His happiest place was always his home. He took tremendous pride in tending his beautiful garden and carefully landscaping his yard, a place admired by all who passed by. He was known for his love of cooking and for hosting unforgettable meals for family and friends. The surest way to Dad’s heart was through the full stomach of his guests; nothing brought him deeper happiness than feeding the people he loved. His lobster boils were the stuff of legend, with carafes of clarified butter set out on every table.

Robert was once an avid hunter, fisherman, and golfer. He also loved spending time in his workshop. He was a self-taught, skillful taxidermy artist and automobile painter. Endlessly creative and resourceful, he could make anything work with his own two hands. There was nothing he could not fix or build. Above all else, Robert was an extraordinary man and

Jimmy learned masonry from his father, a humble start that built not only his skills but also his work ethic, patience, and pride in craftsmanship. He built and worked on many landmarks throughout the community. Known by all as someone who could fix anything, Jimmy had a remarkable ability to figure things out, no matter how difficult the task. If something was broken, he would find a way to make it work again. If someone needed help, he showed up—quietly, without hesitation, and always with that old-fashioned kindness that defined him. Though not always a man of many words, he expressed his love by doing: offering help, solving problems, and working tirelessly for the people he cared about. Stopping was never in his nature; he was always moving, always giving. Jimmy will be remembered for his generosity, quiet strength, and the love he showed through action.

Calling hours for Jimmy will be held on Wednesday, December 10, 2025, from 4:00-6:00 PM with a Funeral Service to follow at Varnum Funeral Home, 43 East Main Street, West Brookfield, MA. Burial will be held at a later date.

Varnum Funeral Home is honored to serve the Paquette family. An online tribute page is available at www.varnumfuneralhome.com.

father. He embodied kindness, generosity, and integrity. He treated everyone with love and respect, and this was reflected in the outpouring of care he received during his final days. Though he now leaves us missing his culinary creations, Robert’s ingenuity, attention to detail and zest for life will live on in the hearts of his family, friends, and community.

In addition to his wife of 65 years, Claire, Robert is survived by his daughter Donna Farmer and her husband William of Spencer; his two sons Steven Kresco and his wife Denise of Westlake Village, CA, and Daniel Kresco and his partner Julie Lake of Taos, NM; his sister Doris Woods of Spencer; two brothers, Donald Kresco of Montana and Alfred Kresco of North Brookfield. He also leaves his grandchildren Joshua Farmer and his wife Amy, Patrick Farmer and his partner Karla, Robert Farmer, Brett Kresco, and Mikayla Kresco; and his great-grandchildren Madison, Zackery, Brady, and Jack. He is also survived by his nephews Donald Kresco and Glenn Kresco, as well as his nieces Terry Klosek and Denise Kresco, whom he loved as daughters. Robert’s family is deeply grateful to his two devoted caregivers, Elizabeth and Rebecca, who our family feels were a gift from heaven.

He was predeceased by his brother Edward Kresco, his sister Sylvia Lemerise, and his brothers-in-law Daniel Lemerise and William Woods.

There are no calling hours. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. Shaw-Majercik Funeral Home and Cremations, 48 School Street, Webster, has been entrusted with Robert’s arrangements. A memorial guestbook is available at www.shaw-majercik.com.

JUNIORS NAMED TO BAY PATH HONOR ROLL

CHARLTON — Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical School congratulates the following students in grade 11 on being named to the honor roll for the first quarter of the 2025-2026 school year.

High Honors
Anais Annette Alamo-Abad, Boden Richard Barrell, Kayleigh Rose Bissell, Sagesse Mpolo Budimbu, Olivia Raychal Burgos, Clara Mae Burlingame, Jenna Lynne Ciani, Naomi Natania Cooper, Brianna Nyarkoa Dwomoah, Adrian Dariusz Golemo, Liam Reed Greenwood, Emma Grace Harrington, Owen John Kennedy, Owen David Lemansky, Jared Thomas Magnusson, Julie-Anna Marie Marchetti, Ava June McKellick, Jayden Anthony Minardi, Miles Joseph Moriarty, Johnny Ly Nhan, Anastasia Marie Nieuwenhoff, Devin Matthew Robinson, Autumn-Rayne Rondeau, Owen Wajer Sanford, Kayla Lynn Schroeder, Isabella Christina Sepulveda, Travis Jacob Tong, Payton Cailee Ziemski

Honors
Monica Jelis Alvarez-Rivera, Lacie Rose Andrews, Lillian Lauren Araujo, Winifred Donna Aucoin, Collin William Bachand, Kennadie Taylor Balcunas, Vincent Louis Balducci, Nolan Scott Barton, Benjamin Whitman Bassett, Samantha Mackenzie Belanger, Brett Julius Beltzer, Alexandria Helene Blanchard, Alyssa Rose Brown, Dominic Francis Carofaniello, Michaela Sarah Carter, Evalynn Rose Cedillo, Dominic William Cincotta, Leianna Marie Collins, Liam Zachary Colon, Madelyn Lily Creelman, Trinity Chevelle Crompton, Benjamin Jackson Cryan, Liam Michael Cunniff, Destiny Love Fortunata Daviau, Eric Murphy Day, Hunter William Defosse, Livia Cassandra Deluca, Nathan Stephan Donnelly, Molly Elizabeth Dwyer, Jackson Christopher Edwards, Ava Lila Erkoc, Elias Noah Erraihani, Samantha Lynn Fleck, Aria Faith Fournier, Brooke Nicole Fuller, Aliyah Marie Gauvin, Julia Abigail Holton, Dominik Ignatovich, Vkrum Kanchan Jha, Kelsey Rose Karlowicz, Finnian John Keefe, Jayme Douglas Kenney, Alexander James Kowalski, Filip Tadeusz Kulma, Benjamin Mitchell Labbe, Sangey Dawa Lama, Maximilian Thomas Lapriore, Evan Anthony Latuga, Ethan Michael Lemire, Bret Robert Leonardi, Damon James Libby, Perry Khai Lima, Emily Arlene Maliua, Christopher Warren Martin, Aaron Robert Mazur, Finn McDaniel, Colin Archak McIlvaine, Nicholas Isaac Meneguzzo, Alexis Kayla Moore, Samantha Jean Morley, Miguel Angel Mosqueda,

Nathaniel Thomas Munson, Kaiya Rowan Murphy, Thomas Andrew Nault, Daniel Anthony Nowlan, Corey Amoako Ntim, Jacey Okyere-Tawiah, Izabella Grace Paquin, Matthew Dean Parmenter, Kiley Marie Paronto, Mayli Ann Pedersen, Iban Alexander Pelaez, Jacob Jan Perry, Kyla Carmen Farai Pierre, Katie Ann Putnam, Sophia Morrigan Ramirez-Murphy, Ava Marie Rennie, Jayliana Rivera, Evan Mitchell Roberts, Dani Roemer, Jake Albert Roemer, Leilani Marie Rohena Torres, Trevor Anthony Rose, Jordyn Alexandra Sabotka, Eziajah Gianni Santiago, Isaiah Omar Santiago, Logan James Schoff, Ella Lanmei Schofield, Michael Ryan Scott, Zachary Stephen Sirard, Addisyn Theresa Skeates, Allison Marie Smith, Brady Patrick Smith, Duane Caden Stephens, Sean Michael Francis Sullivan, Marley Ray Talbot, Eskil John Tranes, Nicholas Aiden Tremblay, Kara Marie Trevathan, Timothy Nicholas Tripp, Brady Matthew Weeks, Dashiell Robert Williams, Jazzelle Gia Wolverson, Nico Anthony Yacavace, Lucy Vivian Zaleski

Principal’s List
Trevor Riley Amaral, Benjamin Russell Boulmetis, Braiden Corey Chumsae, Aidan Connor Clyne, Madisson Clara Drewry, Nicholas George Erickson, Tobias Michael Falco-Foreman, Jacob Paul Ferguson, Hailey Savannah Ferrara, Michael Conner Fitzpatrick, Luciana Isabel Flores, Corbin Vance Fredette, Ely Eric Gemboski, Jinnette Lynn Goguen, Jadyne Marie Goodwin, Emma Lynn Grensavitch, Kaebrielle Amberleigh Hammond, Brady Nicholas Johnson, Cameron Joseph-Michael Kittredge, Abena Kwartemaa Kwarteng, Jaxon David Kevin Leoanrd, Andrew Tadeusz Levitzky, Winters Aleksei Levitzky, Apollo Ridge Logan, Michael Joseph Loverro, Jack Moriarty Maroney, Kiya Isabella McCart, Shaun Kenneth McGrath, Joshua Daniel McLaughlin, Johannys Marie Melendez, Alexander Joseph Morales, Melany Tuyet Ngo, Kiera Ashley Pederson, Isabella Lynn Richard, Gianna Kaylee Rosario, Jaelynn Elizabeth Royea, Benjamin Michael Rucho, Anthony Mark Savasta, Jannessa Ellie Sepuka, Lucas Clement Silva, Julia Rose Simpson, Tiano Joseph Caole Sousa, Hadleigh Anne Splaine, Alexander Gregory St. Jacques, Logan Frederick Stake, Nicholas Ryan Thebeau, Ryan James Ugrinow, Annabelle Lilly Ustinovich, Isabella Anna Vangel, Bryce Joseph Vautour, Sophia Ann Vigeant

Friday's Child



Shakespearean
Age 15
Registration #7384

Shay is a sweet, polite, and lovable young girl with a warm, engaging personality. Her social worker describes her as imaginative, funny, and incredibly kind. Shay has an empathetic nature that draws people to her, and she's well-liked by all the adults in her life. She has a creative spark and loves music, singing, and making fun videos. Shay also enjoys playing volleyball, experimenting with makeup, and getting her hair done. Active and confident, she even played on her middle school basketball team—showing both her team spirit and determination.

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/22536707877>

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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Reliant Foundation awards more than \$1 million in community grants to area nonprofits

WORCESTER — Reliant Foundation has announced that it is awarding \$1,065,000 in Community Grants to 59 nonprofits across Central and Metro West Massachusetts. This brings the Foundation's 2025 grant total to \$1,125,000, marking the second consecutive year the Foundation has awarded more than \$1 million in Community Grants.

Reliant Foundation's mission-driven grants program is focused on strengthening mental health and behavioral health resources for children and youth; helping individuals of all ages reach recovery from substance use; building the pipeline of professionals to provide mental health, behavioral health, and recovery services; and supporting initiatives to reduce stigma around mental health and substance use. Over the past eight years, the Foundation has provided nearly \$6.6 million in funding to area nonprofits.

"Last year marked the first time in our history that we granted more than \$1 million; to be able to do it for a second consecutive year gives us an immense sense of pride and impact," said Reliant Foundation president Kelsa Zereski. "As nonprofits everywhere are having to make difficult programming decisions, driven largely by funding constraints, we feel an even greater obligation to support their missions. Fortunately, our donors and volunteers continue to step up year-after-year to help us fundraise so we can provide this level of funding, and our Board of Trustees has remained steadfast in their commitment to expanding our impact."

"Our grantees are doing extraordinary work under increasingly precarious circumstances - facing rising community needs with fewer resources than ever before. Their resilience inspires us, but it also underscores just how essential sustained donor support is to the health of our non-profit ecosystem," said Kristine Bostek, Reliant Foundation Board Chair. "Every contribution—large or small—helps ensure that vital services remain available to those who rely on them. On behalf of our entire board, I want to express our deepest gratitude to all who stand with us. Your generosity enables our mission, strengthens our partners, and brings hope to the communities we collectively serve."

The following non-profits, located throughout Central, North Central, South Central and MetroWest Massachusetts, are receiving grants from the Foundation this fall:

508 Cheers – Teen Trauma Tuesdays programming
 Abby's House - Evidence-Based Support: Women's Services Program
 African Community Education – Think/Give learning activities at Saturday Program
 Addiction Referral Center - Project B.R.A.V.E. (Building Recovery Accessibility through Validation)
 Adolescent Consultation Services - Youth Mental Health Services at Framingham Juvenile Court
 Advocates – Clinical mental and behavioral health care to uninsured and underinsured youth
 Anna Maria College – JOBS Initiative (pathway for training and student support)
 Bancroft School Worcester Partnership –

Worcester Partnership Program with Elm Park School
 Behavioral Health Partners of MetroWest - MetroWest Care Connection Program
 Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Central MA and Metro West – Rise Together Mentoring Program at Girls Inc.
 Boston Bulldogs Running Club – Weekly Run program in Worcester to help individuals reach recovery

from substance use disorder and reduce stigma around addiction
 Boys & Girls Club of MetroWest – Licensed social worker position at Framingham Clubhouse
 Boys & Girls Club of Webster-Dudley – Mental health and behavioral health programs
 Boys & Girls Club of Worcester – Mental health and behavioral health programs
 CASA Project Worcester - Shine the Light Initiative
 Center for Health Impact – Multilingual Recovery Coach training
 Community Harvest Project – Nutritious foods for Worcester's residential recovery programs
 Community Healthlink – Programming at residential recovery homes, substance use disorder programs
 Dismas House - Substance use prevention Initiative
 Doc Wayne - Community Clinic for youth and families in the Metrowest region
 Edward Street – Master Teacher Coaching Program
 GAAMHA, Inc. – R.O.O.T.S. Therapeutic Farm Program at Evergreen Grove
 Genesis Club - Zero Stigma Project
 Girls Inc. of Worcester – Wellness Institute Program for Teen Girls
 Girls on the Run Worcester County - Mind & Motion: Building Resilience in Girls across Central MA
 Jeff's Place – Children's Bereavement Center
 Jeremiah's Inn – Renovations for the new Edward Street Residential Recovery Program
 Latin American Health Alliance - Bilingual Recovery Coach Training
 Legendary Legacies – Legacy transport program
 MA Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children – Survivor services program for

children and youth
 MARE (MA Adoption Resource Exchange) - Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) Caregiver Training Series and a TBRI Family Support Group
 Open Sky Community Services - Inner Voice Outer Change self-empowerment model at THE PLACE for Empowerment
 Our Bright Future - Our Bright Future SEL Coordinator
 Pernet Family Health Services - Pernet Youth Program
 Rainbow Child Development Center - Mental Health Program for Underserved Children
 Regional Environmental Council - YouthGROW Program
 Recovery Collaboration Project - Program support services including sober housing scholarships and outreach supplies
 Revive of the USA - Sustaining programs and services at Recovery homes in Leominster and Worcester
 for women and men
 RFK Community Alliance - Behavioral health services for children
 Ready Inspire Act – Sisters Leading Sisters Peer Support
 RISE Above - Pro-social opportunities that improve mental and physical health and build resiliency for children in foster care
 Riverside Community Care - Pediatric Behavioral Health Urgent Care (PBHUC) Program
 Safe Exit Initiative – Harbor Drop-in Center support
 Senior Connection Inc. - Carelink: Mobile Mental Health for Grandfamilies
 Seven Hills - Expansion and full implementation of a Social Disconnection Specialty Practice within the
 Seven Hills Behavioral Health system of care
 Spark Kindness - Addressing the Emotional Health and Resilience of Children, Youth and Families Project
 Spoonfuls - Food recovery and hunger relief work in MetroWest to Recovery homes
 Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services - Reducing barriers to clinical help for vulnerable populations

Spoonfuls - MetroWest food rescue and distribution to recovery homes
 The Club: Lunenburg Teen Center - GROW SMART Initiative-gaining resilience and overall wellness through skills mastery and resilience training
 Veterans Inc. – Recovery Coach and Mobile Case Management Position
 Westborough Connects - Together We Thrive: connecting community to strengthen mental and behavioral health
 Whitin Community Center - WCC Youth Outreach and Social Skills Program
 Worcester Addresses Childhood Trauma - Trauma Training Tuesday Series
 Worcester RISE for Health - Ubuntu: RISE's behavioral health program
 Worcester State University - Peer to Peer Healthy Minds Initiative for WSU Students
 YMCA of Central MA – Behavioral Health Clinician at the Montachusett YMCA
 Youth Villages Massachusetts - LifeSet program for young people aging out of foster care
 YWCA of Worcester - Social emotional health support in the early education and care center

For more information about Reliant Foundation, or about how you can make a difference in the lives and health of our community, visit reliantfoundation.org.

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 Wednesday, December 17th: Beltone Hearing Aid Center Presentation @ 10 AM. Light snacks included.
 Thursday, December 18th: Monthly Community Breakfast with Santa: Cost -\$4. @ 9 AM. Leicester Public School students entertaining after the meal.
 Friday, December 19th: Leicester Public School students presenting a Holiday Show: @ 9:30 AM.

ADDITIONAL LEICESTER SENIOR CENTER INFORMATION: The Leicester Senior Center now has its own dedicated website. It can be found at "LeicesterSeniorCenter.com", no spaces. The Senior Center also has its own dedicated YouTube page @ "Leicester Senior Center".

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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

Winter roads and the cost of keeping them safe

December always brings a familiar mix of anticipation and tension across Central Massachusetts. The holidays arrive, daylight shortens, and public works crews across our towns begin the quiet, unglamorous work of preparing roads for the months ahead. While plowing tends to get most of the attention when storms arrive, the choices our communities make long before the first snowfall have long-term impacts on budgets, infrastructure, and the environment.

One issue drawing growing statewide scrutiny is road salt. Massachusetts applies more than 800,000 tons of de-icing salt each winter, according to MassDOT. The material is effective and comparatively inexpensive, which explains why it has become the default tool for keeping roads passable. But decades of use have made its downsides harder to ignore. The state’s Department of Environmental Protection has documented rising chloride levels in groundwater in several regions, and the U.S. Geological Survey notes that elevated chloride can affect drinking water, roadside vegetation, and long-term soil health.

Towns in our region face a difficult balance. Residents expect safe roads, and rightly so. Emergency vehicles, school buses, and commuters depend on predictable winter maintenance, and no one wants our highway departments forced to cut corners during storms. At the same time, municipal budgets have grown tighter, and the cost of salt has climbed steadily over the past decade. Every ton spread on local roads is a ton taxpayers must fund—and a material the environment must ultimately absorb.

Across Massachusetts, some communities have begun adjusting their approach, blending salt with sand again, calibrating equipment more precisely, or applying brine before storms to reduce the total amount needed. These strategies are not universally effective, and they require staff time, training, and up-front investment. Still, they reflect a willingness to take a broader view of winter maintenance—one that accounts for long-term costs as well as the immediate needs of a storm.

Our towns may find value in exploring these options in the months ahead. Spencer, Leicester, the Brookfields, and Warren all maintain extensive networks of local roads, many of them rural. That means our highway departments must cover more miles with fewer people than larger municipalities. The challenge is not small. Yet any steps that preserve road quality, protect well water, and keep budgets stable merit consideration.

No one can pretend there is a simple answer. Salt remains the fastest and most reliable tool available in harsh conditions, and no one is suggesting that crews reduce safety measures when weather turns dangerous. But setting aside time for a public conversation—through select board updates, budget discussions, or even an informational forum—would help residents better understand the true cost of winter road safety and the choices facing local leaders.

Winter in Central Massachusetts always tests resilience, but it also rewards planning. As the season begins, this is the moment to look honestly at what is working, what is wearing out, and what might need a closer look before another decade accumulates beneath our feet.

VIEWPOINT

OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Our “K”-shaped economy

To the Editor:

Many people who follow the ups and downs of our American economy say that it has become shaped like the letter “K.” By this, they mean that unlike in earlier times — when I grew up and later raised a family when we shared our economy’s benefits more equally — now the right side of a “K” more and more of its’ benefits rise to top 10 to 20 percent of the people. Meanwhile, less and of it goes to the 80 to 90 percent rest of us.

They estimate that the “K” cut-off point of who now do and live well have an annual income of \$180,000 or more.

Below that most of us struggle to stay afloat from pay-check to pay-check and are now unable to put any money aside. We worry that a big, unexpected, expense like a health problem or a lost job will sink us. We find that the finer things of life that a family used to enjoy like an owned home or a vacation to Disneyland or a National Park costs more than we can afford.

These collected quotes express how many of us feel:
“squeezed”
“can’t keep up with the necessities of life”

“have \$200 to my name”
“have student loans and medical debt”
“can only buy now, pay later for bigger purchases”

In contrast, a person who studies the economy says, “The folks at the top part of the economy and wealth distribution are doing fabulously well.”

And as another says, “Families above that (\$180,000), they’re living that vida loca (good life), they’re out there. They’re spending on birthday parties, and lavish weddings and big trips abroad and growing their spending month after month. And the rest of America, the bottom 80 percent (not so).”

What does all this tells us? Perhaps not since the time before the Great Depression of the 1920’s has our country’s division between the wealth and the rest of us been so wide. Likewise, most of us face an affordability crisis and worry that we and our families will never escape from this ongoing crisis.

Time does not permit for a discussion of causes, effects, or possible solutions, but hopefully, another time.

KEVIN KANE
SPENCER

Too late smart

To the Editor:

I am one of those TDS (Trump Delusion Syndrome) suffers, largely because I never would have thought the land that I love, could be so susceptible to dis information. I understand whataboutism. It is the answer to questions you neither can, or wish to answer. While brother Buckley did cite some Trump related issues, about half was about Maura Healey, which I will not address. I will confine myself to the TDS issues.

Trump was actually only resoundingly elected by one and a half percent. That was accomplished by a man with unlimited resources and a staff of cyber ninjas, targeting creating electoral college wins. Musk, in a period where he and the Don had fallen out, stated that he created the win and would not have done so after seeing the whole impact. As we approach the season of giving, where many churches collect for the less fortunate in the world, I hope you are all aware that DOGE elimination of US Aids, which was an initiative started by John Kennedy upon seeing the poverty of the third world, while we were loading our surplus onto retired ships and using them for target practice. Once started, farmers started proudly displaying signs saying “We Feed the World” and investing in packaging and shipping equipment to support the program, while receiving a stipend that funded their efforts. An elaborate distribution system, that enabled other charities to tag on, like UNICEF, Doctors without Borders, Pharma donations to control malaria, AIDS and the variety of maladies that might make their way to us. Even Bill Gates lamented he could no longer address diseases he hoped to eradicate.

I am told that this closing will likely bankrupt 75 percent of the small farmers who supported it and still in debt for doing so. Delivery of 500 tons of food was cancelled and the food incinerated. Donated and low cost pharmaceuti-

cals, having lost their ride, now rack up many thousands of dollars for storage. Since, we no longer have ground support out there, we only have estimates of over 100 million deaths it caused.

If you think it is about savings or addressing debt, explain why we are borrowing trillions to give tax cuts to people, including the guy paid a trillion this year? Would it not seem logical to cap them at 100 million earnings, and save half the cost? How much money do you think sending a carrier group to sink little wooden boats, likely being operated by men, whose families are likely being held at gun point by the cartel? You do not really think kingpins are on them, or operators are enthused at going? It is my belief that the plan is seizure of Venezuela, an oil rich country, now that Greenland and Canada are off the table. The precious elements we negotiated as Ukraine’s “dues” will be off the table as they are under territory we support gifting to Russia

I will say again, what I have said before “It is easier to con someone, to create a shortage, because there is now no one to convince them they were conned.” Let’s start with the fiasco of the Caribbean boat attacks. If we bothered to seize one, it is likely cocaine, not fentanyl they carry. Fentanyl likely arrives in containers, trucks and the mail, from China via Mexico. Maybe if we did what the bipartisan immigration bill, that Trump vetoed, we would have the equipment and personnel to address it. Maybe even reassign some of the 31,000 masked ICE thugs, who are rounding up maids, dishwashers and landscapers, and re-focused on fentanyl, we could create a shortage where there is none now. Considering that it kills people, that is China’s goal, not a repeat business model. Get smart before it is too late, if it is not already

KEN KIMBALL
BROOKFIELD

Managing risk at different stages of life



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As an investor, you will always need to deal with risk of some kind. How can you manage the risk that accompanies the volatility of the financial markets? The answer depends somewhat on where you are in life.

When you’re starting out ... If you’re early in your career, with perhaps four or five decades until you retire, you can likely afford to invest primarily for growth, which also means you’ll be taking on a higher level of risk – because risk and reward are positively correlated. But, given your age, you will have time to overcome the market downturns that are both inevitable and a normal part of investing. Still, even at this stage, being over-aggressive can be costly.

When you’re in the “middle stages” ... At this time of your life, you’re possibly well along in your career and working on at least a couple of financial goals, such as saving for retirement and your children’s college education. You’ll want to begin adjusting the balance in your portfolio between assets with higher growth and those with lower growth since there will be progressively less time to rebuild losses. You’ll need to decide on the balance between risk and growth that’s right for you.

When you’re a few years from retirement ... You may have already achieved some key goals – perhaps your children have finished college, and you’ve paid off your mortgage. As a result, you may have more money available to put away for retirement. Growth still matters because your retirement could be 25 or 30 years long, and you’ll need investments that can keep up with inflation. But you’ll also need investments designed to help provide for your income needs in retirement and provide more stability. Also consider reducing your exposure to higher-risk investments and instead consider investing more in stable dividend-paying stocks, government and investment-grade bonds, and cash.

When you’re retired ... Once you’re retired, you might think you should take no risks at all with substantial assets held in cash. However, you could spend two or three decades in retirement, so you may need some growth potential in your portfolio to stay ahead of inflation. A more balanced mix between equities and fixed income is generally appropriate. Establishing a withdrawal rate that’s appropriate for your lifestyle and projected longevity can help reduce the risk of out-living your money. Of course, if there’s an extended market downturn during any time of your retirement, you may want to temporarily lower your withdrawal rate.

Managing investment risk is a lifelong process that evolves with your goals, responsibilities, and time horizon. While you’ll look for balance among your investments based on your life stage, having a balanced and diversified portfolio doesn’t fully protect against a loss. Still, aligning your strategy with your stage of life can help navigate market volatility and stay on track toward long-term success while avoiding emotional investment decisions. The key is staying informed and making intelligent choices that reflect your current income needs and future aspirations.

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.

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.

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Lanterns Along Main Street

The first real snow of winter always seems to arrive with a lesson attached. It is rarely the deep, postcard snow that shows up on calendars and greeting cards. More often, it is the practical kind. The kind that needs shoveling. The kind that turns a five-minute errand into a twenty-minute production. The kind that reminds us, gently but firmly, that winter is no longer theoretical.

In small Massachusetts towns, that first snowfall sets off a familiar chain reaction. Plow trucks rumble through neighborhoods long before dawn, their orange lights blinking patiently as they inch along narrow streets. Driveways develop neat piles at the ends just after you fin-

LANTERNS ALONG MAIN STREET By CHIPPY

us do, at least once. But alongside the annoyance, there is a quieter awareness that kicks in this time of year. A sense that things are happening as they are supposed to.

Snow brings out the unspoken systems that keep a town functioning. Someone is already awake, clearing roads before most people have hit the snooze button. Someone else is scraping the town hall steps. Somewhere, a contractor is answering a call about a furnace that chose the wrong night to quit. None of these

ish clearing them. Sidewalks become unofficial obstacle courses, with patches of careful walking between the salt.

It is easy to grumble about all of this. Most of

tasks come with applause, but they matter more than most of what we talk about on a regular basis.

I've noticed that winter has a way of slowing conversations down, too. People linger a little longer at the post office counter. A neighbor checks in across the driveway, shovel paused mid-task. Even brief exchanges seem more intentional when the cold presses everyone closer to shared routines. We are reminded that help is often nearby, even if we do not always need it.

There is also something clarifying about snow. It erases the clutter temporarily, covering lawns, curbs, and roadside distractions in the same clean layer. Familiar places look different, not because they have changed, but because we are seeing them stripped down.

A simple line of houses. A quiet town common. A road leading somewhere familiar, just softened at the edges.

For children, the first snowfall still carries a certain magic. Even now, you can feel it in the air. Will school be canceled? Will there be enough for sledding? Can snowmen be built before the sun dulls the edges? For adults, the magic may be quieter, but it has not disappeared. It shows up in the first footprints across an untouched yard, or in the sound of snow falling late at night when the world feels temporarily hushed.

Winter also sharpens our awareness of the margins. We notice which steps are icy. Which homes have lights on late. Which businesses stay open even when foot traffic slows. The sea-

son quietly reminds us that not everyone experiences it the same way. That awareness does not always translate into action, but it should at least translate into attention.

Massachusetts towns have lived with winter for a long time. The older houses were built to face it. Main streets developed ways of adapting to it long before anyone used the phrase "winter preparedness." There is no drama in how communities respond. Just repetition, experience, and a steady sense of responsibility.

As the season settles in, snow will become less novel. The complaints will get louder. The novelty will wear thin. But beneath all of that is a structure that works because people make it work, day after cold day. The plow driver. The public

works crew. The neighbor with an extra shovel. The shop owner who keeps the lights on even when the street is quiet.

Winter does not ask us to be heroic. It asks us to be steady. To show up. To do what needs doing. Our towns manage that reasonably well most years, not because of grand gestures, but because of ordinary ones repeated often.

When you hear the plow go by tonight, or step carefully across a salted sidewalk tomorrow morning, you are seeing that quiet agreement in action. It is not celebrated, but it is dependable. And in winter, dependability counts for a great deal.

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Santa helps begin the countdown to the lighting of North Brookfield's holiday tree.



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North Brookfield hosts Santa Parade

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Community turns out in force to “Stuff the Bus”



REGION — This past weekend, AA Transportation employees were out in force to collect toys for our 10th annual «Stuff the Bus» campaign.

This year, Leicester did an absolutely amazing job collecting toys for those in need. The Police, Firefighters and Teachers Association did a great job with the signs this year and helping us to promote the toy drive.

North Brookfield also had an amazing turnout. We want to thank Hannaford’s for allowing us to use their lot for our toy drive. North Brookfield Police and Fire Departments weathered the cold with us to help families in need.

Spencer was also a hot spot for collecting toys this weekend. Thank you to Klem’s for letting us take over your upper lot for our toy drive and for helping us promote our “Stuff the Bus” campaign. Spencer Police and Fire Departments were also out in the cold with us, collecting toys and spreading cheer. Thank you, Santa and Officer LaPorte, for the special attention to our little donors!

The cold weather did not stop us from getting out there to help people in our communities. We are so very proud to have spearheaded this wonderful event. Each year we get wonderful donations for families in need in each community we help. Thank you to all that donated.

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Estate Of:
**Pamela Jeanne Velazquez
Date of Death:11/29/2023**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **S/A - Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Joshua Velazquez of Spencer 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:
Joshua Velazquez of Spencer MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **With Personal 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 12/30/2025.**

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

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.
Date: November 8, 2025
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
December 12, 2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Worcester Probate & Family Court, Docket No. WO25E0029PP. To Gary A. McComas and all other persons interested: A petition has been presented to said Court by Cynthia S. Roberts and Laura Lee Shortt of North Brookfield and Dover in the County of Worcester and Kent, representing that the petitioner holds an undivided part of certain land in said County, described in the petition, and requesting that such land be sold at private sale for not less than \$50,677.47 and praying that partition may be made of all the land aforesaid according to law, and to that end that a commissioner be appointed to make such partition and be ordered to make sale and conveyance of all, or any part of said land which the Court finds cannot be advantageously divided either at private sale or public auction, and be ordered to distribute the net proceeds thereof. If you desire to object thereto you or your attorney should file a written appearance in said Court at Worcester before ten o'clock in the forenoon on the twenty third day of December, 2025, the return day of this citation. Witness, Leilah A. Kearny, Esq., First Judge of said Court, this twenty eighth day of October, 2025. It is ordered that notice of said proceeding be given by delivering or mailing by registered mail or certified mail as a copy of the foregoing citation to all persons interested whose addresses are known fourteen days at least before said return day, and if any person is not so served, by mailing a copy thereof to the last known address of such person fourteen days at least before said return day; and by publishing a copy thereof once in each week for three successive weeks in the New Leader, a newspaper published in North Brookfield, the last publication to be seven days at least before said return day. Witness, Leilah A. Kearny, Esq., First Judge of said Court,

this twenty eighth day of October, 2025. The land in North Brookfield, Worcester County, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, being a certain parcel of land with buildings thereon situated on the westerly side of Lake Lashaway bounded and described as follows: Lots #1 & #2 of Block 4 on a plan of Pinecroft Lots owned by Howard S. Hill made by E.A. Chamberlain, Engineer, dated September 22, 1923 and recorded with the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 40, Plan 81. Being the same premises conveyed to Richard S. McComas and Wilma P. McComas by deed of William J. Vahey and Alma S. Vahey, husband and wife, recorded with the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Book 4050, Page 577.
Kent Boyle
November 28, 2025

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE
By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Eva Adjoian to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for HarborOne Mortgage LLC, dated November 26, 2019 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 61494, Page 1, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, by assignment from: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for HarborOne Mortgage LLC, its successors and assigns to Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., recorded on December 1, 2023, in Book No. 69952, at Page 104 Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. to NewRez LLC DBA Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing, recorded on February 7, 2024, in Book No. 70172, at Page 364 for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing, the same will be sold at Public Auction at 12:00 PM on January 12, 2026, on the mortgaged premises located at 132 North Brookfield Road, East Brookfield, Worcester County, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, TO WIT:
The land in East Brookfield, Worcester County, Massachusetts, with the buildings thereon, situated on the easterly side of the State Highway leading to North Brookfield and bounded and described as follows:
BEGINNING at a point in the easterly line of said State Highway at land now or formerly of one Snay;
THENCE northeasterly by said Snay land 162.25 feet to land of the North Brookfield Railroad Company;
THENCE northwesterly by said railroad land 77.35 feet to land now or formerly of one Balchunas;
THENCE southwesterly by said Balchunas land 181.25 feet to said highway;
HENCE southeasterly by said highway 75 feet to the place of beginning. Containing about 12,881 square feet of land, and being the premises shown as Lot No. 5 on a plan of House Lots in East Brookfield, owned by Arthur Ledoux", which said plan is recorded with the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 41 Plan 54.

For mortgagor's(s') title see deed recorded with Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 61493, Page 394.

These premises will be sold and conveyed subject to and with the benefit of all rights, rights of way, restrictions, easements, covenants, liens or claims in the nature of liens, improvements, public assessments, any and all unpaid taxes, tax titles, tax liens, water and sewer liens and any other municipal assessments or liens or existing encumbrances of record which are in force and are applicable, having priority over said mortgage, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the deed.
TERMS OF SALE:
A deposit of Five Thousand (\$5,000.00) Dollars by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The balance is to be paid by certified or bank check at Harmon Law Offices, P.C., 150 California St., Newton, Massachusetts 02458, or by mail to P.O. Box 610389, Newton Highlands, Massachusetts 02461-0389, within thirty (30) days from the date of sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. The description of the

premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of an error in this publication.
Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale.
NEWREZ LLC D/B/A SHELLPOINT MORTGAGE SERVICING
Present holder of said mortgage
By its Attorneys,
HARMON LAW OFFICES, P.C.
150 California St.
Newton, MA 02458
(617)558-0500
28366
December 12, 2025
December 19, 2025
December 26, 2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate
and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. WO25P4102EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR
FORMAL ADJUDICATION**
Estate Of:
**Bernard T Vink
Date of Death:05/10/2020**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Late and Limited Formal Testacy and/or Appointment** has been filed by **Jean M Vink of NewYork NY** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that:
Jean M Vink of NewYork NY 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 12/23/2025.**

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

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.
Date: November 25, 2025
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
December 12, 2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate
and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. WO09P2095PM
CITATION ON PETITION
FOR ORDER OF
COMPLETE SETTLEMENT**
Estate Of:
George R. Paradis

A Petition for **Order of Complete Settlement** has been filed by **Jewish Family and Children's Services of Waltham MA** requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account , 1st-14th and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.

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 12/23/2025** . This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this

proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.
Date: November 20, 2025
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
December 12, 2025

**Town of Spencer, MA
Tree Public Hearing**
In accordance with MGL Ch 87 §3, The Town of Spencer, MA Tree Warden will hold a public hearing in-person or remote on **Monday, December 15, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.** at 3 Old Meadow Road, Spencer, MA. (Water Dept.) to consider National Grids proposed removal of two trees: Spring Street.
The Remote meeting may be accessed by:
Dialing in from your phone: 1 (224) 501-3412
Enter Access Code: **928-904-381**
Or join from your computer: <https://meet.goto.com/TownofSpencerUF/meeting-room>
Information pertaining to these particular trees may be viewed at spencerma.gov.
Ray Holmes
Tree Warden
December 5, 2025
December 12, 2025

**Notice of Special Public Hearing
East Brookfield
Zoning Board of Appeals**
This Zoning Board hearing will take place at the East Brookfield Memorial Town Complex, 122 Connie Mack Drive, East Brookfield, MA on Thursday, January 8th, 2026. Hearing will commence at 6:00PM or soon thereafter as can be heard. Interested parties can attend in person.
Applicant: Reece Ornell, owner of the property at 206 East Main Street, East Brookfield, MA. The applicant is requesting a "Special Permit" for a side setback of 1.5 feet. The required side setback for the residential zone is 20 feet. Additionally, a "Finding" to determine if the proposed deck replacement is not more detrimental to the neighborhood then the existing non-conforming use.
December 12, 2025

**(SEAL)
COMMONWEALTH OF
MASSACHUSETTS
LAND COURT
DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL
COURT
25 SM 003793
ORDER OF NOTICE**

TO:
Christopher R Logan; Carissa B Briggs
and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act: 50 U.S.C. c. 50 § 3901 (*et seq*):
Truist Bank
claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in East Brookfield, numbered 567 Podunk Road, given by Christopher R Logan and Carissa B Briggs to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Northpoint Mortgage, Inc., dated November 16, 2017, and recorded at Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 58056, Page 109, 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 January 19, 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 December 3, 2025.
Attest:
Deborah J. Patterson
Recorder
December 12, 2025

For Legal Advertising Information, Call 508-909-4127
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LEGALS

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. WO25P4104EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR
FORMAL ADJUDICATION
 Estate Of:
John P Vink
Date of Death:10/20/2025

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Testacy and/or Appointment** has been filed by **Jean M Vink of NewYork NY** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that:

Jean M Vink of NewYork NY 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 appear-

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

WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.

Date: November 25, 2025

Stephanie Fattman,

Register of Probate

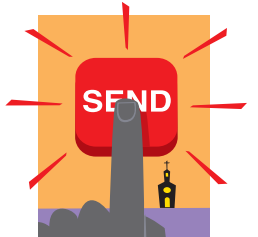
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LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES

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Brookfield Ecumenical Food Pantry
St. Mary’s Church
4 Howard Street, Brookfield, MA 01506
Distribution: Wednesday 9:30 AM-11 AM:
Saturday 9:30 AM-11AM

CHARLTON
Chip - In Food Pantry
McKinstry Building
37 Main Street, Charlton, MA 01507
Distribution: 3rd Saturday 9 AM-12 Noon

St. Joseph’s Church, Charlton
Tuesday 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Wednesday 9-11 a.m.
Everyone is welcome.

LEICESTER
Leicester Food Pantry
St. Joseph-St. Pius X Parish
759 Main Street, Leicester, MA 01524
Distribution: Tuesday 5 PM-7 PM

NORTH BROOKFIELD
St. Joseph’s Food Pantry
Located in the church hall at 296 North
Main St. North Brookfield
Distribution is the 1st Thursday of the
month from 5:00-6:30PM
the 3rd Thursday of the month from 12
Noon-1:15PM
Any questions should be directed to the
Rectory office 508 867-6469.
St. Joseph’s Food Pantry is a community
partner affiliated with the Worcester County
Food Bank.

OXFORD
Oxford Ecumenical Food Shelf
Oxford Community Center
4 Maple Road
Oxford, MA 01540
Distribution: Thursday 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

ROCHDALE
The Lord’s Cupboard Food Pantry
Greenville Baptist Church
674 Pleasant St.
Rochdale, MA
Distribution: Every Monday from 12:00 -
2:00 p.m. Open to everyone.

SOUTHBRIDGE
St. John Paul II Parish Food Pantry
279 Hamilton St., Southbridge
Tuesday 3-5 p.m., Wednesday 9-11 a.m.
(508) 765-0245

Southbridge Food Share
Located at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church,
lower level
446 Hamilton St,
Southbridge, MA 01550
Email:
Southbridgefoodshare.org@gmail.com
Phone: 508-764-6583
Open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday,
from 10:00 am to 11:15 am.

SPENCER- EAST BROOKFIELD -
RESIDENTS ONLY
Mary Queen of the Rosary Food Pantry
60 Maple St, Spencer, MA 01562
Distribution: Thursday 10 AM-12 Noon

STURBRIDGE
Saint Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry,
Located in the St. Anne Church basement,
16 Church Street, Fiskdale, MA 01518
Stocked by donations
Contact: 508-347-6398

WEBSTER
Webster-Dudley Food Share
4 Church St #2
Webster, MA 0570
Distribution: Tuesday and Thursday from
8:30 -11:00 am. Open to Webster and
Dudley residents.
Please call ahead: 508-943-9171

WEST BROOKFIELD
Sharing Cupboard Food Pantry
First Congregational Church
36 North Main Street,
W.Bookfield, MA 01585
Distribution: Wednesday 10 AM-11:30 AM
Thursday 7 PM- 8 PM

Holiday shopping tips you can’t afford to miss

(544 words, US, UK,
CAN)

The festive and fun nature of the holiday season can make it easy to forget the benefits of being frugal. Many people go overboard on holiday spending, making this time of year costly for consumers.

Sales between the beginning of November 2023 and Christmas Eve 2023 climbed 3.1 percent from the year earlier, according to the Mastercard SpendingPulse. The National Retail Federation reported in November 2023 that holiday spending was expected to reach between \$957 and \$966 billion. Trading Economics, a financial market indicator and forecast provider, said personal spending in the United States only rose 0.2 percent in May 2024 from the previous month, which marked the lowest increase since January 2024.

Shoppers who want to spend less and stick to a budget for holiday entertaining and gifting can keep these budgeting tips in mind.

- Set a value to gift recipients. It may sound harsh, but certain people on holiday shopping lists may be assigned a higher value than others. For example, you wouldn’t necessarily spend the same amount on a gift for a child’s teacher as you would for a grandmother. Putting a dollar figure next



to each name on the shopping list helps you identify your expected spending and where you can cut back, if necessary.

- Establish your overall budget. Once you have an idea of your potential holiday expenditures, set a firm budget. Avoid the temptation of impulse buys, which can make it easy to go over budget.

- Begin shopping early. Start scouring ads and looking for deals prior to Thanksgiving or Black

Friday. Keep a running list of gift ideas and when the price is right, purchase those items.

- Price check “perfect gifts.” If you’ve spotted the perfect gift for someone but it’s beyond budget, see if you can find a better price elsewhere, says Better Money Habits. There are apps that allow users to scan barcodes and check items across various retailers. Many stores also have price-match policies that can save shoppers money.

- Look for deals all of the time. Many people get hung up on perceived deep discounts from Black Friday and Cyber Monday offers. However, industry experts say there often isn’t a huge difference in markdowns between these promotions and those during other sales. Some retailers even increase prices on goods only to mark them down for Black Friday to make it appear that there is a discount. Only by knowing the average price for items can you know if a sale is legitimate.

- Sign up for store rewards. If you don’t want your regular email inbox inundated with offers, set up a separate email account for in-store and online shopping. Then you can sign up for the rewards programs at checkout. Utilize the coupon codes and advertisements for sales to save money without having your primary email data shared with other marketers.

- Track spending carefully. If you don’t know how much you’re spending, then you cannot possibly stick to a budget. After each purchase, keep a running tally of all holiday spending to see how far you are from the finish line.

The holidays can be expensive, but with smart budgeting and dedication to savvy shopping, it’s possible to stay out of financial trouble.

Why you should shop local for the holidays and beyond



Various components come together to make the holiday season a festive time of year. There is a lot to get done in a short amount of time during the holiday season, and part of that includes shopping for all of the family members and friends on your shopping list. Shopping can be a complicated process that involves identifying which stores will be the best places to shop. Local retailers make the perfect place to shop for holiday items.

According to the American Express Business Economic Impact Study, more than two-thirds of every dollar spent with a local business stays in the community. Indeed, shop-

ping local benefits consumer and community alike. The following are some of the many perks to shopping locally throughout the holiday season.

- Personalized attention: Small businesses are known for their personalized customer service and owners and staff are often lauded for taking the time to interact and learn about their customers, a dynamic that is impossible at larger retailers.

- Meet and interact with people: Shopping in-person at local stores, you’ll see faces from your community and become better known in the local area.

- Shorter lines: Local stores are bound to have

smaller crowds and thus shorter lines. That translates to less stress and hassle when it comes to getting in and out with holiday gifts.

- Smaller carbon footprint: Pollution, traffic congestion, habitat loss, and resource depletion may not occur on the same levels when shopping locally compared to patronizing big box stores. That’s because local retailers tend to create or source their products locally, whereas many big box stores secure their goods overseas.

- Easier parking: This goes hand-in-hand with smaller crowds, as shopping locally does not typically require driving up and down endless aisles at malls

or standalone retail stores in an effort to find a parking spot. Local retailers in town may have on-street parking or closed lots that are convenient to shoppers.

- Small batch shopping experience: Consumers can secure items in small businesses that are not carbon copies of those found across the country at major retail chains. When seeking a unique, thoughtful gift, shopping locally is the way to go.

Shopping locally this holiday season provides an array of benefits to consumers, and helps to solidify a strong Main Street in communities.



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Unique places for holiday shopping

Although the holiday season is a relatively brief period, it still can consume months of time in regard to preparation, shopping and hosting. According to a SWNS Digital survey of 2,000 adults in the United States, the average American spends six weeks preparing for the holiday season. Five weeks are devoted to planning presents, meals and other essentials, while an entire week is just for decorating.

Shopping for presents can consume a lot of time, especially for those who aren't quite sure what to get. Thinking outside of the typical retail box may help with inspiration, and shoppers may encounter smaller crowds and find better deals. Here are some unique places to shop to grab great holiday gifts.

- **Pharmacies:** While you're picking up your prescription or medicine cabinet essentials, take a spin around the store to see what else might be available. Typically, pharmacies have entire aisles dedicated to seasonal merchandise, so you might be able to find holiday decorations, gift wrap, candles, pampering items, and even food-related items and gift baskets.
- **Farmer's market:** Farmer's markets pop up



in towns on set days of the week. Although plenty of farm-related produce and plants are available, these markets also attract many other small businesses. You can find craftsmen, jewelry makers, niche food sellers, and so much more.

- **School (or church) bazaar:** In an effort to raise funds for the PTA or other organizations, schools and churches often host holi-

day fairs and bazaars right before the holidays. Area businesses rent table space and set up booths with an array of different products for sale. This is a great spot to grab interesting finds all under one roof. Plus, you're supporting the local community in the process.

- **Home improvement retailer:** Plenty of people will appreciate practical gifts that they can use in

and around the home. A visit to a hardware store or home improvement retailer offers up aisles of essentials for the do-it-yourselfer. While new shelving for the garage or a set of flashlights may not be the most glamorous gifts, these items can come in handy.

- **Craft store:** Cater to recipients' favorite hobbies by ensuring they'll be flush with plenty of supplies.

Craft stores have a bevy of items for every interest imaginable. They're also surprisingly good places to grab deals on picture frames, housewares, food-making supplies, and decorative items.

- **Specialty food store:** Head to small specialty food stores to load up on unique items larger supermarkets might not carry. Ethnic markets may have flavorful

and interesting ingredients to group together in a food basket that makes an ideal gift for transplants missing the flavors of home.

Before a person logs on to the internet for online shopping or heads to the nearest strip mall, he or she can explore various unique places to shop for holiday gifts.



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Double Word Puzzle

Unscramble the individual words to reveal letters for the phrase.

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1		2		

CVROE

3			4	

KAMR

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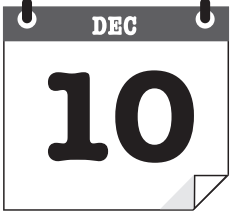
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Answer: Read a book

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1768: The first edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica is published.

1817: Mississippi becomes the 20th U.S. state.

1901: The first Nobel Prize ceremony is held in Stockholm on the fifth anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death.

NEW WORD

SYNOPSIS

a brief summary of something

Book FACT:

This term refers to reading texts quickly but not completely.

Answer: Skim

How they say that in...

- English:** Cover (book)
- Spanish:** Forro
- Italian:** Copertina
- French:** Couverture
- German:** Umschlag

Did You Know?

Some of the best ways to find new books to read is by asking friends for recommendations. You also can explore online reading communities.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Little Free Library

FAIR
continued from page A1

helped the music program grow immensely over the years.

“This allows the students to go to competitions that they usually wouldn’t be able to attend. Before I started working at the high school the students didn’t have the opportunity to go to competitions like Music in the Parks we do every year. Since we’ve been able to do that, they’ve scored well above other districts, but because we’re so small, we never had that opportunity to grow before. Since we’ve built this program and taken over the craft fair, we’ve excelled and the kids have been able to take that and show off their talents and skills across the state,” said Phillips.

While the crafters are a big part of making the fair a success, the students play an even

bigger role in the event by providing assistance to the vendors and shoppers all day long. Phillips said the students know how important the event is to the program and they give their all to make it happen.

“If it wasn’t for the students, I don’t think people would keep coming back as much as they do,” said Phillips. “I can coordinate as much as possible, but the students put in so much hard work and dedication into everything that they do.”

The profit from the event also helps support and fund the annual Friends of Leicester Music Scholarship, which Phillips said she is particularly proud to have brought to the district. The scholarship supports students who have participated in Leicester’s Performing Arts programs all four years of their high school experience.

MCCLINTOCK
continued from page A1

McClintock has spent more than 50 years as a practicing psychologist in mental health services of nearly every kind. He’s worked in rehabilitation and psychiatric hospitals, in prisons and private practice, in community clinics as well as urban and rural school districts. Over time, he’s experienced practically every situation a therapist can encounter, from tragically abused children bent upon suicide, to ruthless adults unrepentant for savagery that can scarcely be grasped.

“I’ve worked with cannibals and killers, monsters and madmen; been attacked physically, threatened, demeaned, and brutalized in nearly every way imaginable,” he says.

This sort of thing might have driven a lot of people out of the profession, but McClintock insists that being allowed into the lives of others enabled him to mature, adopt a healthy respect for life, and devel-

op a deep sense of gratitude for the things which bring him joy.

The experiences of his professional life have been his drawing board, his template, and workbench. Learning has been his passion, and the wellspring of creativity that’s resulted in several published books. Starting in 2012, he began publishing a series of literary works beginning with an autobiography called “Sin Eater: Confessions of A Prison Psychologist.” Next came a retrospective called “The Son of The Servant,” followed by a book of poems called “A Turn of Phrase,” and then a very different kind of work, something he characterizes as a historical fiction called “New Age Warrior Book 1: The Sword of Retribution.” He’s just finished a second edition of that book, which will be reaching bookshelves at the same time as his newest work, a sequel to New Age Warrior called “The New World Order.” Both volumes deal with the societal crisis of today.

Speaking of his newest release, McClintock says, “I guess you’d

call it a story steeped in conspiracy theory.”

“Except,” he said with a smile, “the conspiracy at the story’s core is true.”

When asked about his authorship of so many different types of literature, McClintock says, “It’s opened my eyes to reality, and enabled me to share what wisdom I’ve found with those making the journey with me. Writing enables me to vent the fears, frustrations, and negative feelings that listening to problems for a living can generate.”

Pressed a bit more about why he writes, he confided, “I’ve always written for myself, but I’m also motivated to share my understanding of things with others in hope that talking frankly about those things can make the world a better place.”

“My books are my therapy,” he says with a smile, “and everybody needs a bit of therapy along the way.”

Readers can find McClintock’s books on Amazon.

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ROGERS
continued from page A1

was hired as the Assistant Treasurer in April after the resignation of her predecessor. At that time the Select Board voted to split the Assistant Treasurer/Collector into two positions, hiring Rogers as Assistant Treasurer and Kaitlyn Cloutier as Assistant Collector. No decision has been made on her own successor as Assistant Treasurer as of this writing.



Susan Rogers accepts her promotion to Treasurer/Collector in Leicester.

Worcester County Sheriff’s Office warms communities with annual winter coat distribution

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The Spencer Housing Authority has an opening for a Full-Time Maintenance Laborer

The Spencer Housing Authority is seeking a qualified full-time Maintenance Laborer. The individual hired for this position must have general knowledge of property maintenance, carpentry, floor repairs, minor plumbing, and electrical repairs. Applicant should also have experience with painting, cleaning, plowing, shoveling, and snow removal. Individuals must be available for rotating on-call shifts as well as being available for any weather-related emergencies. Must be able to lift 50 pounds or more. General knowledge of maintenance systems, building equipment and small tools a plus. This is a full time (40 hours) benefited position. Retirement is through the Worcester County Retirement Office. Must possess a valid driver’s license and be insurable under Housing Authority insurance. The selected applicant must be able to pass a criminal background check (CORI), and pre-employment physical.

Base wage rate is determined by the current Department of Labor (DOL) wage rates in effect at the time of hire. Additional compensation is paid for on-call and after-hours’ service.

Incumbents will be required to obtain a valid Pesticide Certification/License within one year of hire.

The Spencer Housing Authority offers a generous benefits package including health, dental and vision insurance.

Applicants should submit a cover letter and resume to: Spencer Housing Authority 13 McDonald Street Spencer, MA 01562 Attn: Kimberly Hurlbrink

You may also email cover letter and resumes to Kimberly Hurlbrink: **kim.hurlbrink@spencerhousing.org**

Resumes will be accepted until 2:00PM on December 19, 2025. Spencer Housing Authority is an equal Opportunity Employer



Sheriff Low Evangelidis and Staff from the WCSO Webster Regional Resource Center pose for a photo with AJ Alkire, Webster Dudley Food Share Director.

REGION — Throughout November, Worcester County Sheriff Low Evangelidis and staff from the Worcester County Sheriff’s Office visited Webster Dudley Food Share (Webster), Reconciliation House (Webster), Tradewinds Clubhouse (Southbridge), House of Destiny (Southbridge), the Milford Police Department (Milford), and several other local nonprofits to deliver hundreds of brand-new winter coats for community members in need.

These Southern Worcester County visits were part of the Sheriff’s Office Annual Winter Coat Drive, which included more than thirty stops countywide. The Sheriff’s Office distributed 4,000 winter jackets during November. All jackets were purchased by the Worcester County Reserve Deputy Sheriff’s Association, a nonprofit that raises funds year-round to support the coat drive and other community-focused programs.

“Many of our residents have little social support and are working to regain stability. The Sheriff’s winter coat drive not only meets a practical need for warm coats but also shows them community support they often don’t expect, and it is deeply appreciated,” commented Jose Vazquez, House Director at Reconciliation House, Inc.

“We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Sheriff’s Department for their generous donation of winter coats to the Tradewinds Clubhouse,” commented Christine Regan, Clubhouse Director. “This act of kindness made a meaningful impact on our members, many of whom expressed relief and gratitude knowing they will be warm and prepared for the colder months ahead. Moments like this strengthen the sense of

belonging and dignity that is central to the Clubhouse model.”

“Handing out these coats each year is truly a joy,” said Sheriff Evangelidis. “They represent far more than a warm layer for winter. They reflect a community and law enforcement organization that cares. The individuals who receive these jackets are always grateful, and this drive gives our department a special opportunity to connect with the communities we serve.”

This year’s initiative was made possible thanks to the generosity of many community partners, including Saint Francis Community Health Care, The Gun Parlor, Mercadante Funeral Home, Cliff & Susan Rucker Foundation, The Krock Family & Commerce Associates, CareOne at Millbury, The Overlook, Diamond Auto Group, KAL Construction & Remodeling, Chop Chop Convenience, Falcone Enterprises, NEPBA Local 550 Worcester County Correction Officers, Pat’s Service Center, Quality Companies, Rockland Trust Bank, and Pam Massad in memory of ‘Duddie’ and Bette Massad, along with numerous additional supporters.

“The level of support we receive each year is remarkable,” added Sheriff Evangelidis. “Every contribution directly helps make our communities stronger and safer.”

Beyond their stops in South County, Sheriff Evangelidis and his team delivered coats to nonprofits in the greater Worcester area and Northern Worcester County, ensuring residents across the region have access to warm winter apparel as the cold weather approaches.



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

Webster Lake -
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WATERFORD CT - 20 AVERY LN.



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Webster Lake Waterfront - 31 Bayview!!



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Webster Lake - 53 Colonial Rd



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Webster Lake Waterfront 8 Long Island




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All Saints Academy students answer the call

WEBSTER — Food insecurity does not have one face. Children, seniors, veterans, college students, and so many others may experience it at different points in their lives. Some individuals rely on assistance for long periods of time, while others only need temporary support to get through an unexpected challenge.

Many people who have always had food on their tables are surprised to learn that some families must choose between buying groceries and paying for essential expenses like housing, childcare, utilities, medical costs, and other basic needs. Lack of proper nourishment affects both mental and physical health, and for children it can weaken the immune system, hinder development, and make learning significantly more difficult.

So, what can be done to help local food banks?

At All Saints Academy, the answer came from our families. The All Saints



Academy National Junior Honor Society hosted a themed food and hygiene drive during New England Catholic Schools Week—and our school community donated more than 1,100 items to support area food pantries (St. Vincent de Paul, Buckey’s Food Pantry, Thrive Food Pantry and some local families directly).

To make the week fun and engaging, NJHS introduced a daily theme and a special challenge to “hide the Knight,” our school mascot, under the mountain of donations: Munchie

Monday kicked off the week with over 100 snack items such as granola bars, peanut butter crackers, and nuts; Two-Can Tuesday brought in more than 300 canned goods; Wellness Wednesday added over 250 hygiene items, including toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, and soap; Thankful Thursday focused on Thanksgiving staples, collecting 286 items; Family Favorite Friday revealed that our students love pasta, macaroni & cheese, and peanut butter (greater than 165 items).

By the end of the week, we had successfully covered the ASA Knight—and even more importantly, students gained a deeper understanding of food insecurity, the challenges many families face, and the power they have to help. They also walked away with a renewed sense of gratitude for the food they enjoy every day.

Saint Joseph School celebrates annual Thanksgiving feast, honors retired Fire Chief

WEBSTER — On Tuesday, Nov. 25, Saint Joseph School gathered as one faith-filled family for its annual Thanksgiving Feast—one of the most cherished traditions of the school year. For the occasion, the school gymnasium was transformed into a warm and welcoming dining area, complete with two buffet lines to serve

more than 300 students, faculty, staff, and guests.

Principal Mrs. Beth Boudreau opened the celebration by welcoming students, guests, and the many parent volunteers whose generosity and teamwork made the day possible. Mrs. Boudreau also offered heartfelt thanks to school chef Mr. Keith Lukasek,

who spent hours preparing a delicious turkey dinner for the entire community.

The feast was made even more special by the presence of honored guests, including benefactors John and Jane Gogolinski, Dr. John Kalinowski, and Mrs. Marilyn Fels. Members of the Saint Joseph School Consultative Board were also in attendance, including Chairwoman Mrs. Catherine Kabala and her husband Stanley, and Vice Chairperson Mr. Donald Cushing. The Parish Council was represented by Mrs. Nancy Dowgiewicz and her husband Mark, and Mrs. Gosia Kicilinski and Robert Wojcik. Co-Chairperson Krystal Kolesnik represented the SJS Home and School Association. Saint Joseph School also welcomed community safety partners from the Webster Fire Department including Chief Brian Hickey, Chief Jeffrey Saad, and several firefighters.

Following introductions, Pastor and Headmaster Fr. Richard Polek led the community in a meaningful Thanksgiving Prayer, encouraging gratitude for God’s gifts and awareness of those in need. Afterward, parent volunteers served a traditional meal of turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, stuffing, and butternut squash, with 8th graders delivering plates to guests and students, exemplifying leadership and service.

After dinner, the assembly continued with a heartfelt presentation honoring retired Fire Chief Brian Hickey for his 43 years of dedicated service to the Town of Webster. Student Council President Mychael Jones and Vice President Tenleigh Dowd expressed gratitude on behalf of



Courtesy

Saint Joseph School Student Council President Mychael Jones and Vice President Tenleigh Dowd present a commemorative plaque to Retired Webster Fire Chief Brian Hickey, honoring his 43 years of dedicated service and steadfast commitment to the safety of the Saint Joseph School community.

the entire community, recognizing Chief Hickey’s steadfast commitment to protecting and caring for their school family.

They presented a plaque to Chief Hickey, inscribed with the following: “In grateful recognition of 43 years of dedicated service and steadfast commitment to the safety of the Saint Joseph School community. With heartfelt thanks from the students, faculty, and staff of Saint Joseph School. May God richly bless you in your retirement and always.”

The celebration con-

cluded on a joyful note, as the Saint Joseph School Choir led the community in song with “Trading My Sorrows”—a spirited reminder of faith, gratitude, and the strength found in togetherness.

All Saints Academy announces Honor Roll

WEBSTER — All Saints Academy has released its honor roll for the first quarter of the 2025-2026 school year.

Grade 8
High Honors: Noah Beaudette, Samantha Gardner, Sophia Martocci, Gianna Monticelli, Connor Shelburne
First Honors: Kallie Fales, Maggie Keegan, Dominic Kistner, Alanna Yelu-Attigah
Recognition: Caleb Latino, Benjamin Mukuha

Grade 7
Head of School: Cristian Cruz
High Honors: Lydia Burke, Raegan Duquette, Lucy Messenger, Fiona Radcliffe, Keon Yelu-Attigah
First Honors: Jackson Dunkley, Emma Healy, Nathan Ruiz, Charlotte Wentworth

Grade 6
Head of School: Norah Healy, Graceanne Troiano
High Honors: Mia Beaudette, Rozlyn Rekowski, Felicity Sweetland, Francesca Zicaro
First Honors: Angelo Bageris, Bennett Drew, Aleena Peterson, Camden Trainor, Lila Turner, Olive Wilson
Recognition: Julia Hansen

Grade 5
High Honors: Aryianna Botelho, Sydney Duquette
First Honors: Nayvalee Ruiz, Isabella Wester
Recognition: Landon McGrail, Brayden Shelburne, Lydia Vienneau

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