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SPENCER NEW LEADER

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Friday, October 25, 2024

Spencer police officer honored by National Exchange Club

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
 STAFF WRITER

SPENCER — The Exchange Club of Spencer recently presented the National Exchange Club's Blue and Gold Award to Lieutenant Norman Hodgerney, Jr., of the Spencer Police Department.

Surrounded by family, friends, and SPD colleagues, Lt. Hodgerney received the award during a ceremony at 308 Lakeside in East Brookfield.

"Lt. Hodgerney has been actively involved in initiatives to support the homeless community in Spencer. He has worked closely with Open Sky and the Central Mass. Housing Alliance to provide services and housing for the local homeless population," read a statement released by the Exchange Club.

Since early last year, when Hodgerney began working with area volunteers and organizations to provide assistance, several formerly homeless residents have been able to secure housing.

"Upon issuance of a troubling annual homeless census by Open Sky in 2023, the Spencer Police Department took an active role in helping

this population. With the leadership of Lieutenant Hodgerney, the Spencer Police Department initiated their partnership with Open Sky and Central Mass Housing Alliance," the Exchange Club's statement read.

In addition to his work in the community assisting homeless populations, Hodgerney and members of his department also regularly attend meetings to identify new strategies for assistance. These include working with members of the Senior Center and other departments eager to help.

SPD Chief Michael Befford was on hand at the ceremony to congratulate Hodgerney. It's been a thrill for Befford and his team to work with leaders like Hodgerney who always seek out the next opportunities to help those in need.

"Through his hard work and dedication, we were able to reduce our homeless population down to one. We have been able to maintain this level through Lt. Hodgerney's partnership with Open Sky, as well as other homelessness agencies," Befford said. "He has gone above and beyond on this project, and the award presented

by the Exchange Club is well-deserved."

Although the extra efforts of first responders are often overlooked, Hodgerney's commitment to his community is difficult to miss.

"We are extremely proud to have Lt. Hodgerney as a member of the Spencer Police Department. His level of community involvement goes well beyond public safety to include helping those most in need," said Town Administrator Jeffrey Bridges. "He is a role model for those who wish to be in public service."

The Blue and Gold Award is presented by Exchange Clubs across the country to recognize law enforcement, firefighters, and other first responders for their outstanding service to their communities.

"The award acknowledges bravery, sacrifice, and dedication to protecting their citizens and ensuring public safety," the club's statement read. "This award celebrates those who go above and beyond in service to their community."

Local Exchange Clubs can nominate and acknowledge individuals for the Blue and Gold Award.

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Courtesy

Spencer Police Department Lieutenant Norman Hodgerney, Jr., center, recently earned a major community award.

West Brookfield police navigate staffing challenges

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
 STAFF WRITER

WEST BROOKFIELD — Facing a critical staffing shortage, the police department is taking steps toward expanding its roster.

Following a recent hiring, the department now has five full-time officers, including Chief Nathan Hagglund.

Having received Select Board approval to increase its full-time roster to seven officers, the department is seeking two additional hires.

For now, Chief Hagglund and his team continue to deliver for the community despite limited personnel and resources.

"This issue is not unique to West Brookfield, as police agencies across the state and nation are faced with similar challenges," read a statement released by the Chief.

Several factors have contributed to the staffing crisis, including changes in state regulations requiring that all

part-time police officers receive the same level of training as full-time officers. This has led many part-time officers throughout the area to seek full-time jobs in larger towns and cities, while others have opted to exit law enforcement and choose new careers.

For small communities like West Brookfield, which has seen its roster of part-time officers shrink from ten to one, the new regulations

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Residents invited to take part in Hazard Mitigation Plan survey

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
 STAFF WRITER

SPENCER — Residents are invited to take a survey that will guide officials in the update of Spencer's Hazard Mitigation Plan.

From ice storms and flooding events, to droughts and tornadoes, New England residents have to be prepared for a wide range of weather emergencies.

With the launch of an online survey, officials are providing residents with an opportunity to help shape Spencer's revised Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) and improve the town's readiness for dangerous weather.

"In August 2024, Spencer started the planning process to update its Hazard Mitigation Plan," read a statement released by town officials. "An

updated HMP will help the town identify strategies to reduce its vulnerability to hazards."

Available by visiting the town Web site, www.spencerma.gov, the survey features ten questions that allow residents to share their recommendations and concerns. Among the topics, respondents are asked to rank their level of concern

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Wreaths Across America seeks community's support



Courtesy

Community members are invited to honor those who served by supporting the Wreaths Across America program.

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
 STAFF WRITER

WEST BROOKFIELD — Community members are invited to honor those who served by supporting the Wreaths Across America program.

On Saturday, Dec. 14, West Brookfield will see its first ever full wreath-laying initiative, a community mission that falls under the national Wreaths Across America organization.

The proceedings will begin with a noontime

ceremony at the Veterans Monuments on the Town Common. From there, volunteers representing several local organizations will take part in wreath-laying exercises at Pine Grove Cemetery and another town cemetery.

The services will honor more than 400 of West Brookfield's veterans.

"The mission of Wreaths Across America is to remember the fallen, honor those who serve, and teach the next gen-

eration the value of freedom," said event coordinator Nadine Morin.

The Quabbin Navy JROTC Color Guard will also attend the services, along with representatives from Adams-Coney-Frew American Legion Post 244 and the Westover Civil Air Patrol.

The wreath-laying exercises will include volunteers representing the American Legion, Country Bank, and the Quaboag Regional School District, among others.

Additional volunteers are requested to take part in the services. Community donations from residents and business owners are also encouraged to help support an event honoring everyone who served.

"This event is meant to honor all veterans, deceased or living, retired or active duty. These include Medal of Valor recipients, Purple Heart recipients, POWs, DAVs, Gold Star Mothers and Families, amongst many others," Morin said. "West Brookfield has had several residents awarded these honors for their service."

Organizers thank all area residents, volunteers, business owners, and contributors for supporting the program.

"Wreaths will be delivered to West Brookfield through the generosity of Foster Hill Transport, LLC, who has participated in the Wreaths Across America convoy to the Massachusetts National Cemetery and other participating locations for many years," Morin added. "Owner Michelle Dusza has continued the honor fleet tradition in

honor of her late husband, Randy Dusza, since 2020 by wrapping two trailers for this event and delivering to Wreaths Across America participating locations."

If you would like to support the effort, donations can be mailed to: Wreaths Across America, PO Box 249, Columbia Falls, ME 04623.

To make an online donation, visit www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org.

Nationally, more than two million volunteers and supporters will gather at participating Wreaths Across America locations in all 50 states.

"No matter where they served, Wreaths Across America strives to ensure that no one is forgotten," read a statement released by the national organization.

West Brookfield began its partnership with Wreaths Across America in 2023. This year, leaders are hoping to see even more residents and business owners support the cause. They will be joined across the state and the country on Dec. 14 by those committed to honoring and thanking ser-

vicemembers.

"We are forever grateful for the thousands of supporters who dedicate their time, energy, and resources to fulfilling our mission all year long," said Karen Worcester, the Executive Director of Wreaths Across America.

If you would like to get involved, there are several opportunities to join the mission. These include sponsoring a wreath for one or multiple West Brookfield veterans. Wreaths cost \$17 each.

Additionally, you can sign up as a sponsorship group and help place wreaths at a local or national cemetery while raising funds for your own group or program.

Even the simple task of sharing the wreath-laying date with your family members, friends, and colleagues can go a long way toward increasing participation.

"Your generous support will ensure that all of our veterans are acknowledged and the mission of Wreaths Across America continues," read a statement released by event organizers.

Seven of New England's top comics take the stage to support Manny 267 Foundation

WORCESTER — Seven hilarious comics will come together Nov. 2 at the DCU Center in Worcester to raise money for the Manny 267 Foundation. The foundation is named in honor of Worcester Police Officer Emmanuel “Manny” Familia, who tragically died in 2021 while attempting to save a 14-year-old boy from drowning. Hosted by comedian Harrison Stebbins, the night of comedy will feature nationally touring comedians who all call New England home including Emily Ruskowski, Orlando Baxter, Corey Rodrigues, Brian Glowacki, Rafi Gonzalez and Paul Nardizzi. Tickets for the 267 All-Star Comedy Night are on sale now at EventBrite.com.

The Manny 267 Foundation aims to raise awareness about the hazards of drowning. The foundation provides funding for floatation devices that are installed in emergency vehicles to be used as life-saving tools when responding to aquatic emergencies, as well as supporting water safety training for police officers and swimming lessons for young people.

“Manny’s legacy continues to live on through the incredible work the foundation is doing to insure no other families have to go through the pain and loss that we have suffered,” said Elvin Familia. “One hundred percent of the proceeds from this comedy show will go towards providing Manny Tubes and water rescue training for police departments around Massachusetts.”

Manny is described by his friends and family as “always the funniest person in the room,” making the All-Star Comedy Night a fitting tribute to his legacy.

The line-up at the DCU Center includes:

Harrison Stebbins, Host
With a sarcastic wit and an improvisational style, Stebbins’ unique blend of high-energy physical comedy and clever insights, keeps audiences laughing long after he has left the stage. Not only is Harrison widely regarded as one of New England’s funniest headliners, but he has also performed with some of the most popular national comedians working today.

Emily Ruskowski
Ruskowski is a one-woman charm offensive. With a style that’s totally approachable and instantly impressive, she is equally comfortable diving into personal insecurities or workplace nonsense. With an irrepressibly cheerful demeanor, she commands attention and delivers stories loaded with punchline after punchline. Ruskowski’s comedy combines a quick mind, an infectious energy, and a totally unique eye for observation. She brings a genuine sense of fun to material that ranges from a career in social work to a passion for boy bands. She has been featured in

The Washington Post and Boston Globe and has appeared on the popular 2 Dope Queens Podcast and Laughs TV on Fox.

Orlando Baxter
Baxter exploded onto the Boston comedy scene in 2005, and was quickly established as one of the area’s hottest comics. His fresh perspective and unique relatability soon made this former high school teacher a fan favorite and led to a string of finalist positions in a host of contests and festivals all over the world including NBC’s ‘Stand Up for Diversity,’ Boston Comedy Festival, and Montreux Comedy Festival. In 2016, Baxter made his late night TV debut on the Conan show on TBS. He has since appeared on television shows like ‘Comedy Up Late’ in Australia, B.E.T.’s ‘50 Central,’ Laff Mobbs’ Laff Track on Tru TV and TBN’s Mike Huckabee show. Orlando currently tours across the country performing at clubs, colleges and festivals at home and overseas.

Corey Rodrigues
Rodrigues is a highly sought-after national touring college, club, and corporate performer. He was the winner of The Catch a New Rising Star, The Funniest Comic in New England, and the 2017 Big Sky Comedy Festivals. Rodrigues has been featured on the hilarious Gotham Live, Laughs on Fox, and True TV’s Laff Mobbs Laff Tracks. In 2018 he released his Dry Bar Comedy special, was voted “best of the fest” at the Big Pine Comedy Festival, and was picked as one of TBS’s Comics to Watch at the New York Comedy Fest. In 2019, Rodrigues made his late-night TV debut on the Conan O’Brien show. In 2020 he released another 30-minute Comedy Special for the EPIX series ‘Unprotected Sets.’ His comedy is honest and fun, constantly peppering in stories from his life and the lives of those around him. Mix that with a hilarious point of view and he’s able to talk about just about anything.

Brian Glowacki
Glowacki’s comedy feels like home. His playful style and originality have quickly taken him from a small town class clown to a nationwide crowd favorite. His likability on stage paired with sharp observations on life have quickly catapulted him into one of the nation’s premier emerging talents. Brian is the national touring opener for comedian Bob Marley as well as headlining many clubs and festivals on his own. Most notably he became the first independent, local comedian to headline the historic Wilbur Theatre in Boston. ‘BGlows’ has performed at the Funny or Die ‘Oddball Comedy and Curiosity Festival’. He received ‘Best of Fest’ honors at Burbank Comedy Festival, Big Pine Comedy Festival and San Diego Comedy Festival. He connects daily to his growing tribe on social media through short videos about his family and his travels.

Rafi Gonzalez
A stand-up comedian from Puerto Rico, Gonzalez originally found success as the lead singer of a nationally touring rock band. In 2015, Gonzalez switched gears and exploded onto the New England and Boston comedy scenes. In 2021, he appeared on HBO MAX’s Ha Comedy Festival. In 2022, Rafi participated in the prestigious San Francisco Comedy Competition. He was a finalist in the Boston Comedy Festival in 2023, and was also voted ‘Best of the Fest’ in The Noho Comedy Festival and The Burbank Comedy Festival in Los Angeles. In 2024, he was voted ‘Comedian of the Year’ in the Boston Comedy Choice Awards. Rafi has also taken his comedy to the sea after being hired by several cruise lines. Check him out across all social media platforms, where Rafi has accrued millions of views.

Paul Nardizzi
Nardizzi began his comedy career in 1990, quickly becoming a Boston area favorite and a national headliner within four years. Paul Nardizzi has made numerous appearances on Late Night with Conan O’Brien, Comedy Central, NESN Comedy All-Stars. He also won the Boston Comedy Festival Competition, HBO’s U.S. Comedy and Arts Festival and is one of the most requested acts on XM Satellite Radio. As a top stand-up comedian in Boston and the New England Area, he is known for his rapid-fire comedy, ability to engage the crowd, and tailor material to audiences. He can be seen performing in clubs nationwide in addition to providing corporate entertainment and working at charity events and parties.

All-Star Comedy Night to benefit The Manny 267 Foundation takes place on Saturday, Nov. 2, at 8 p.m. at DCU Center, 50 Foster St., Worcester. Tickets and information are available at EventBrite.com.



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NOTICE HYDRANT FLUSHING TOWN OF SPENCER

The Town of Spencer Water Department will be flushing fire hydrants throughout the eastern part of the distribution system starting September 30th thru October 31st 2024. Flushing removes sediment from the water mains to help maintain water quality. When the Water Department staff is in the immediate area, residents could experience loss of pressure and short periods of rusty water. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause. A daily list of the flushing locations will be posted on the Spencer town website www.spencerma.gov each day by 8:00AM (click on Departments, then click Water Department, then click Hydrant Flushing 2024). If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact the Spencer Water Department office at 508-885-7525. Thank you.

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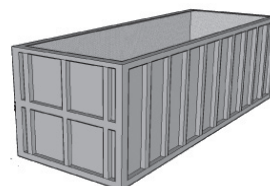


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- Thursday, October 24, 2024: 9:00 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.
- Saturday, November 16, 2024: 11:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
- Monday, December 16, 2024: 5:30 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.
- Wednesday, January 8, 2025: 9:00 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.
- Monday, February 3, 2025: 4:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Scan QR code to RSVP



Water Power: Bathe Away What Ails You

What could be better than a relaxing soak in a hot tub? How about the knowledge the simple act of bathing can provide drug free relief from a myriad of ailments.

When we sit in a tub to relieve back pain, run cold water over a skin burn, or even seek solace in a long, hot bath, these familiar actions employ the ancient practice of hydrotherapy - using water to heal. From calming anxiety and relieving pain to combating insomnia and detoxing the body, baths are beneficial for health. While water has been used as therapy for centuries, thankfully the modern world is rediscovering the simple art of bathing and its many virtues. Read on for some surprising ways a good soak can do a body good!

Note: If you are pregnant, have high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, or any other medical condition, get your doctor's OK before bathing in hot water. Hot water therapy is not for infants, children or elderly.

Some Like it Hot: Hot baths can ease muscle and joint pain, constipation and respiratory ailments. To loosen tense muscles and reduce the pain of backaches, experts suggest a bath tempera-

ture of 102°F to 106°F. For minor sprains, the combination of a hot bath and Epsom salts can bring welcome relief as the Epsom salt draws fluid out of the body and helps shrink swollen tissues, easing pain. The salts also draw out built up lactic acid, which can contribute to muscle aches. For maximum benefit, add two cups of Epsom salts to a warm bath, and relax.

A nice, long soak is also hailed for cutting short cold and flu symptoms. Submerge as much of your body as you can in a tub of comfortably hot water. Immediately after the bath, dress warmly and go to bed under warm covers for a nap. To combat the chills, add about eight drops of lavender and four drops of cinnamon essential oils to the warm bath.

Do you have trouble sleeping? Combat insomnia by bathing in hot (up to 103 degrees) water approximately two hours prior to bedtime. If congestion is the culprit to your insomnia, soak in a hot tub and place a warm washcloth over your face. Breathe through the cloth several times. The combination of the bath and the warm steam should relieve congestion and promote sleep.

Neutral Soak: If you are anxious, irritable, or suffer from panic attacks, a neutral bath can relieve symptoms and offer soothing comfort. Bath water should be between 94 and 97 degrees for optimum results. Submerge as much of your body as you can, relax, and soak for at least 20 minutes. Warm water has been proven to halt the physiological part of the fight-or-flight response, so familiar to panic sufferers.

Aromatherapy and Hydrotherapy can also work together to alleviate anxiety. Try this formula: Add six drops geranium and four drops basil oils to a tub of warm water. Soak for at least 20 minutes. To relieve hot flashes, naturopathic experts advise taking a neutral bath each morning to "improve vasodilatation, which might help release the heat of a hot flash." Soak for about 20 minutes in water slightly cooler than body temperature. Refill water to keep temperature steady.

This simple bath blend has been praised for its antidepressant properties: Add three drops of rose essential oil and four drops of ylang ylang essential oil to a tub full of warm water. To induce



TAKE THE HINT
KAREN TRAINOR

further relaxation, bathe by candlelight.

Cool It: Cold water prevents itching, making it the perfect treatment for summer skin maladies. To further relieve the itch of sunburn, bug bites or psoriasis, add about two cups of vinegar to the bath water. A cool water bath is also effective way to fight fatigue. Cold water increases the consumption of oxygen to the skin, helping your body "wake up" quicker.

A cold footbath had long been used to treat varicose veins, circulatory problems, or sleeplessness. Fill a basin or tub with cold water and submerge feet at least calf depth. Soak feet until water is no longer cold.

Proper Bathing: The deeper you can submerge your body, the more effective the hydrotherapy will be. If you can, strive for neck deep water. (Those with heart or respiratory problems should not bathe in water higher than the heart.) If you

are using a regular tub, fill it as high as possible, and lie down, submerging your hands and feet for optimum coverage. Experts advise soaking in a bath for 15 to 20 minutes. However, if you show any signs of dizziness or overheating, get out of the tub immediately.

Detox Baths: Hot baths are natural detoxifiers. Here's why: Hot water draws toxins out of the body to the surface of the skin. While the water cools, it pulls those toxins from the skin. Salts added to a bath accelerates this process by promoting sweating. Common salts used in detox baths include sea salt, dead sea salt, baking soda and Epsom salts. Detox Salts: Mix together Two cups baking soda; one cup sea salts; one cup Epsom salts. Pour about a quarter cup of the mix into the bath while tub is filling. If desired, add; one tablespoon glycerin to prevent dry skin. Ginger Bath: Some naturalists tout a ginger bath as a great way to sweat out toxins. Simply add about one eighth cup of ginger under running hot bath water. Lie down and soak for at least 30 minutes.

Win Dinner for Two at the Publick House

Your tips can win you a great dinner for two at the historic Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge! Simply send in a hint to be entered into a random drawing. One winner per month (or whenever I receive enough tips for a column) will win a fabulous three course dinner for two at the renowned restaurant, located on Route 131 across the town common in historic Sturbridge. Because I'm in the business of dispensing tips, not inventing them (although I can take credit for some), I'm counting on you readers out there to share your best helpful hints!

Do you have a helpful hint or handy tip that has worked for you? Do you have a question regarding household or garden matters? If so, why not share them with readers of Stonebridge Press newspapers? Send questions and/or hints to: Take the Hint!, C/o the Southbridge Evening News, PO Box 90; Southbridge, MA 01550. Or E-mail KDRR@aol.com. Hints are entered into a drawing for dinner for two at the historic Publick House Inn.



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Disposing of problem plant debris

You've probably read you should remove and dispose of insect pest-infected and diseased plant material to reduce these problems in next season's garden. This is not as easy as it seems. Most compost piles do not heat up and maintain hot enough temperatures to kill weeds, weed seeds, disease organisms, and insect pests. In many locations burning is not allowed and it negatively impacts air quality. So, what's a gardener to do?

Start by calling your local municipality and asking about disposal options. Many communities allow you to dispose of invasive plants in the garbage after placing them in a clear plastic bag labeled invasive.

Solarization is an option for managing weeds. Place small amounts of plant debris in clear plastic bags. Then place the bags in a warm sunny location before composting. For larger quantities, set the problem plant debris on a sheet of plastic and securely cover it with a 2- to six-mil clear plastic tarp. The plastic helps create a greenhouse effect, trapping heat while blocking access to water. The seeds will sprout and then seedlings and other plants are killed by the high temperatures and lack of water. It is most effective when the days are long and hot.

This may be effective if the temperatures are hot enough to kill plant insect pests and diseases. Most plant pathogens are killed when moist soil remains at 145 degrees Fahrenheit for 30 minutes, 160 degrees for bacteria, and 180 degrees for weed seeds.

If battling jumping worms, the

University of Maryland has found creating a solarization package is effective for managing them in soil, compost, and mulch. Spread a sheet of clear plastic on the ground. Place a six to eight inch layer of mulch, compost, or soil on the plastic tarp, leaving enough excess to wrap and completely and securely cover the enclosed material. On a sunny day, the material inside can reach 150 degrees. Research varies on the number of days needed to kill the jumping worms. Several University sources recommend three or more days of at least 104 degrees or 105 degrees to kill the eggs, cocoons, and adult jumping worms.

You may want to enlist this strategy when harvesting your compost before applying it to the soil. This extra step may help reduce the risk of introducing problems back into the garden.

Burying diseased material can help reduce the source of future infection of some diseases. Dig a hole, fill it with plant debris, mix it with soil, and then cover it with an inch or two of disease-free soil. Speed up the decomposition of buried material by shredding it before burying it. Avoid growing plants susceptible to the disease in that location the following season.

Remember to disinfect your pots, stakes, and tools that may have housed or touched diseased plants. Disease-causing organisms can survive on these items, increasing disease risk in next year's garden. Soak pots for 30 minutes in a 10 percent bleach solution, rinse with clear water and air dry. Store in a clean location. This is much more effective



Melinda Myers

A peony plant infected with blight.

with clay and ceramic pots than plastic. Consider rotating plantings as you would in the garden and changing display areas when using plastic containers if you do not want to dispose of them.

Disinfect garden tools by dipping them in a 70 percent alcohol solution using rubbing alcohol or something similar for at least 30 seconds. Or you can spray your tools with a disinfectant spray containing about 70 percent alcohol.

Investing time in prevention will result in fewer problems and better results in next year's garden.

Melinda Myers has written over 20 gardening books, including *Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition* and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything"* instant video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine. Myers' Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Skinwalker Ranch

As Halloween approaches, I'm wrapping up my spooky season series with a tale that fits perfectly into the Strange, Dark, and Mysterious. We've explored unsettling phenomena in previous weeks, but for the finale, I'm diving into one of the most bizarre and mysterious places in the United States—Skinwalker Ranch. This 500-acre ranch in Uintah County, northeastern Utah, known for tales of supernatural occurrences, has intrigued investigators, scientists, and paranormal enthusiasts for decades.

In 1994, the Sherman family purchased the ranch, hoping to lead a quiet life as cattle ranchers. When the Shermans arrived, they found the home oddly fortified with metal bars on the windows, heavy-duty door locks, and chains, presumably for guard dogs, on each side of the house. It was as if the previous owners were preparing for an intrusion.

Soon after settling in, the Shermans began experiencing a series of unsettling incidents. One day, Terry Sherman spotted a huge wolf in the distance. The animal, which appeared to be nearly as tall as a human's chest, calmly approached the family and their cattle. With a muscular build and piercing blue eyes, the wolf seemed tame initially, but suddenly, it lunged at a calf and locked its jaws around the animal's neck. Terry grabbed a rifle and shot the wolf several times, yet the bullets seemed to have no effect. Eventually, the wolf casually turned and walked away; as if it wasn't riddled with bullets, it trotted back into the woods.

This bizarre encounter was only the beginning. The Shermans began noticing heavy equipment disappearing or moving to strange places. On one occasion, a 70-pound post digger vanished and was later found high up in a tree.

One of the strangest incidents involved the sudden disappearance of four bulls, which were later found crammed into a locked trailer in a seemingly trance-like state. The trailer's latches were still locked, and there was no reasonable explanation for how the bulls could have ended up inside alone. It was as though something had teleported them there.

At times, they felt an invisible presence following them. On one occasion,

proving nearby. It was as if a cloaked entity was stalking them.

Cattle mutilations became another terrifying issue. The family started losing cattle at an alarming rate. These cattle were found dead with surgically precise incisions, with organs missing but no signs of blood anywhere near the scene.

The Shermans frequently heard strange, disembodied voices above their ranch, speaking in an unknown language.

Even more chilling were the glowing orbs that frequently appeared. The most unsettling encounter involved a bright blue orb that seemed to pulse with energy, giving off an almost electric crackle. These orbs filled the air with an inexplicable dread as if deliberately manipulating the family's emotions.

As they dug deeper, the Shermans learned that their property had long been considered cursed by local Indigenous tribes. The Ute people, in particular, believed the land was associated with Skinwalkers, creatures known for their shape-shifting abilities. Because of this lore, the ranch eventually became known as Skinwalker Ranch.

Unable to cope with the ongoing

disturbances, the Shermans moved out. Before they left, they shared their experiences with the media, drawing the attention of billionaire Real Estate Tycoon Robert Bigelow, who had a long-standing interest in the paranormal. In 1996, Bigelow purchased the ranch to conduct his investigations, enlisting a team of scientists and researchers to study the strange phenomena.

Terry remained the ranch manager, eager to help Bigelow's team uncover the truth. The paranormal activity continued, with cattle mutilations, glowing orbs, portals, UFOs, and encounters with mysterious creatures.

In another chilling event, one of Bigelow's researchers claimed that a giant creature had "taken over his mind," leaving him with a message that they were being constantly observed.

Today's Skinwalker Ranch remains shrouded in mystery, heavily guarded, and off-limits to the public.

While I can't confirm the truth behind every tale I've shared this spooky season, the lingering mysteries at Skinwalker Ranch continue to warrant serious attention. As we enjoy the eerie delights of Halloween, remember that some of the strangest stories aren't found in horror movies—they're hidden in remote places like Skinwalker Ranch.

POSITIVELY
SPEAKING
TOBY
MOORE

P.E.T. of the Week
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Hey there! I'm Tiger, a dapper 9-year-old orange tabby with a personality as vibrant as my fur. I'm a neutered gentleman with a touch of attitude, but don't let that fool you—I've got a heart full of love and a knack for charming my way into your lap. I've spent my years perfecting the art of being a fabulous feline, and I'm looking for a special human who appreciates a cat with character. I've got a bit of sass and a lot of personality, so if you're ready for a cat who will keep you on your toes (and maybe give you a playful swat or two), then we're going to get along famously. I'm a pro at lounging in sunny spots and keeping you entertained with my quirky antics. Once I'm comfortable, I'll be your loyal sidekick, providing companionship and a few purrs to brighten your day. I may not be a kitten anymore, but I've still got plenty of love and life to share! If you're looking for a feline friend with a bit of flair and a whole lot of charm, come meet me! Let's see if we're a purr-fect match.

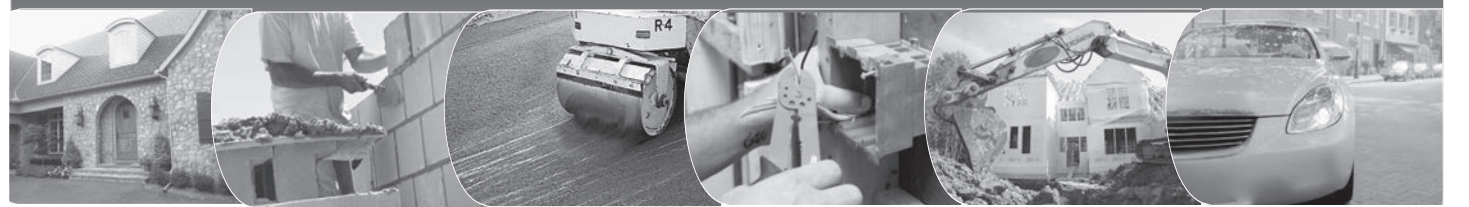
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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
 PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
 EDITOR

EDITORIAL

Collaboration is key

As election season approaches, voters are faced with critical decisions that go beyond party labels. It's essential to understand the core values of both Republicans and Democrats, and more importantly, to consider how those values align with your own interests and the needs of your community. This election, one of the most important things voters must ask themselves is whether a candidate is willing to work across the aisle—because that's the only way real solutions happen in a democracy.

In times like these, collaboration is key. One of the candidates in this election has shown a willingness to work with people from both parties to solve real problems. That kind of bipartisanship is exactly what we need right now. Our country, and especially local communities, can't afford to be gridlocked by partisan infighting. When elected officials are willing to compromise and work with others, that's when meaningful change can happen.

The other candidate has made it clear that they are more interested in self-serving politics. They've proven time and again that they aren't interested in listening to or working with those across the aisle. This is not what democracy is about. Democracy thrives when ideas are debated and when leaders can come together to create solutions that work for everyone, not just their own base.

It's important to remember that your vote is your voice, and it's crucial to vote in line with your values and interests. Voting against your own interests because of party loyalty or negative campaign tactics can have lasting impacts on your community and country. What truly matters is having representatives who will work for the common good—people who prioritize problem-solving over political grandstanding.

This election, take the time to think critically about the candidates on your ballot. Who is willing to put in the effort to work with those on the other side? Who is willing to compromise for the greater good? The future of our democracy depends on leaders who will work across party lines to create a better future for everyone, not just a select few. Don't let divisive rhetoric or blind partisanship determine your vote—vote for the candidate who will work for you, for your neighbors, and for a stronger, more unified community.

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.

VIEWPOINT

OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Do we want peace in this life, country?

To the Editor:
 The choice is obvious: we must live by God's laws. Unless I, you, we submit our desire to walk, live in God's truth, laws, we will experience chaos. It is our responsibility, desire, to reach out to God through Jesus to obtain the guidance of God's Holy Spirit.

Again! The question you, we, need to ask ourselves – do I want peace and love in this country and in our lives? If the answer is yes, then humble yourself and ask God to teach you, teach me Your way, Lord.

When we cry out to God, we must cry out in humility, sincerity. God

knows our hearts. God has a special care for His people who are broken, needy; the choice is yours, ours.

It is our responsibility to ask God to teach us His ways. God likes to be asked from our heart. It is our responsibility to walk in God's truth, Amen! (Psalm 86:1-3/11-13)

I am sharing with you an appropriate invitation for this season, fall (autumn), and for all seasons. Fall (autumn) for Jesus; He will never leave you!

Dwell in peace!

ROLAND BLAIS
 BROOKFIELD

We need your help to give all Spencer's children a Merry Christmas

To the Editor:
 We are getting ready to kick off the 2024 Christmas season, and it is our hope to help make a Spencer child's Christmas a happy one. Last year, more than 240 Spencer children received gifts for Christmas through the efforts of this generous community. We cannot do it without your help. Monetary donations, new toys and family/child sponsors who "adopt" them are what makes our world go around.

We are under the Spencer Exchange Clubs Charitable Trust Foundation. Spencer Toys for Tots is now called Spencer Toys for Kids. With this merge we are able to use their 501(c)3 status so we will not have to pay tax on the toys we purchase. This helps us a lot! I've been a proud member of Spencer Exchange Club for more than 25 years and the generosity of its members is second to none!

Spencer Toys for Kids has been helping Spencer families for more than 60 years. We have a main distribution the third week of December, but we will fill all needs right up to Christmas. Children 14 years old and younger receive gifts & stocking stuffers. Applications will be available starting the 1st week of November at Spencer Post Office & ERA Key Realty (415B) Main St. We have also downloaded them to our Facebook page. Monetary donations can be sent to: Spencer Toys for Kids, P.O. Box 186, Spencer, MA 01562. One hundred percent of these donations go right to the kids. We have no administrative fees! New, unwrapped toys can be dropped off at Spencer Fire Dept & ERA Key

Realty. If you would like to "adopt" a family let us know! We will supply you with a child/family "wish list." This part of our program is amazing! It enables us to do a little bit better for the kids that are not sponsored. I wish you could see the wonderful gifts that come in.

My office at ERA Key Realty Services becomes Santa's workshop in November and December where we collect, sort & distribute to the families. We are grateful to the owners for allowing us to take over the building and sometimes the staff to get this done.

We have a handful of dedicated shoppers who run with the rest of the lists and purchase items with such great care with your monetary donations. They shop the sales, multiple stores and even venture out on Black Friday to get the most bang for your buck. They do this year after year, and we are lucky to have them.

Items like mittens, warm socks, hats, fuzzy blankets are always great to have also! Follow and like us on Facebook Spencer Toys for Kids. We will keep you updated on our page as to what is going on during the Christmas season with our program. This program runs as well as it does because we are blessed with people who care in this community. Let's work together to help make a Spencer child's Christmas a happy one. Thank you!

DONNA MORIN-FLANNERY
 DIRECTOR
 SPENCER TOYS FOR KIDS

The CPA returns our investment

To the Editor:
 If the Community Preservation Act is adopted by Spencer voters on Nov. 5, Spencer will finally be able to access the money it has already paid into the in the State Trust Fund. The Trust Fund is used to augment the CPA money raised locally. Last year the state matched 20 percent of the local funds.

Since the year 2000 (when the CPA was enacted by then Governor Cellucci), many of us have unknowingly paid into this trust fund. We have done this by either buying a house, buying property or re-financing our mortgages. State Trust Fund money is generated through fees placed on real estate transactions at the Registry of Deeds. The more real estate that is sold and the more refinancing that is done, the more fund money is collected. It is

not generated through taxation.

Up to this point, money that is rightfully ours has gone to other towns which have adopted the CPA, towns like Sturbridge, Hubbardston and West Boylston. They have all benefited, while Spencer has missed out. It's time to get our fair share.

It is also important to note that the Trust Fund is not part of the state budget process and thus not subject to state budget wrangling.

The CPA is a unique opportunity to get back the money we have already invested. Please vote "Yes" on Nov. 5 for the CPA.

ROGER FOSS
 SPENCER

Peter Durant is a champion for small towns

Peter Durant has not only been a good friend to me, but he has also been a good friend to North Brookfield. There have been many occasions as a Selectman where I have had the opportunity to work with him and his staff.

Peter is the kind of candidate that cares about small towns like ours. He understands the

challenges we face and how often we are ignored by those in Boston. He has fought to provide funding for all our towns here in Worcester County including North Brookfield. Many politicians

are consistently unavailable to the public and go out of their way to distance themselves from your regular citizens. This cannot be said of Peter.

We need someone like him on Beacon Hill willing to protect our communities from controversial mandates given by the state, the Governor's handling of illegal immigration, and to help provide the assistance that we're often denied. Join me in helping to re-elect Peter Durant this November.

VAUGHN SCHLEGEL
 NORTH BROOKFIELD

Take advantage of open enrollment



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TREVOR NIELSEN

If you work for a midsize or large company, you may soon be able to review your employee benefits package, as we are entering the open enrollment season. So, consider your options carefully, with an eye toward making changes appropriate for your needs.

Here are some of the key areas to look at:

Retirement plan – Depending on your employer, you could change your 401(k) or similar retirement plan at any time of the year, but you might want to use the open enrollment season to review your contribution amounts. If your salary has gone up over the past year, you might want to boost your pre-tax contributions (including catch-up contributions beginning at age 50). At a minimum, try to put in at least enough to earn your employer's match, if one is offered. At the same time, look over how your contributions are allocated among the various investment options in your plan. You'll want your investment mix to reflect your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon.

Life insurance – If your employer offers group life insurance at no cost as an employee benefit, you may want to take it – but be aware that it might not be enough to fully protect your family should anything happen to you. You may have heard that you need about seven to 10 times your annual income as a life insurance death benefit, but there's really no one right answer for everyone. Instead, you should evaluate various factors – including your mortgage, your income, your spouse's income (if applicable), your liabilities, the number of years until your retirement, number of children and their future educational needs – to determine how much insurance you need. If your employer's group policy seems insufficient, you may want to consider adding some outside coverage.

Disability insurance – Your employer may offer no-cost group disability insurance, but as is the case with life insurance, it might not be sufficient to adequately protect your income in case you become temporarily or permanently disabled. In fact, many employer-sponsored disability plans only cover a short period, such as five years, so to gain longer coverage up to age 65, you may want to look for a separate personal policy. Disability policies vary widely in premium costs and benefits, so you'll want to do some comparison shopping with several insurance companies.

Flexible spending account – A flexible spending account (FSA) lets you contribute up to \$3,200 pre-tax dollars to pay for some out-of-pocket medical costs, such as prescriptions and insurance copayments and deductibles. You decide how much you want to put into your FSA, up to the 2025 limit. You generally must use up the funds in your FSA by the end of the calendar year, but your employer may grant you an extension of 2½ months or allow you to carry over up to \$640.

Health savings account – Like an FSA, a health savings account (HSA) lets you use pre-tax dollars to pay out-of-pocket medical costs. Unlike an FSA, though, your unused HSA contributions will carry over to the next year. Also, an HSA allows you take withdrawals, though they may be assessed a 10 percent penalty. To contribute to an HSA, you need to participate in a high-deductible health insurance plan.

Make the most of your benefits package — it can be a big part of your overall financial picture.

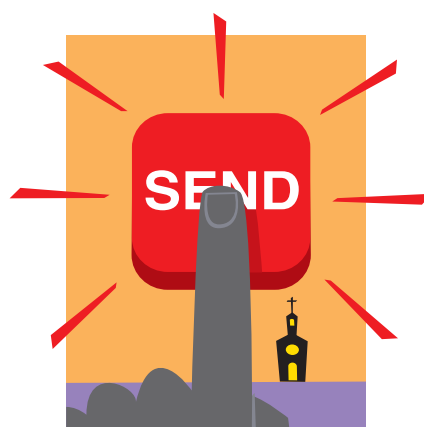
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Time for updating draws near

To the Editor:

My first comment references the comments of David W. Brown. He states that even if Al Gore had received any of Florida's electoral votes, he would have won. Some of us are old enough to remember Florida's hanging chad issue, which was created because they were using punch cards. Because using them often left "hanging chads" not thoroughly punched through and removed, they embarked on a cyber ninja style count involving determining voter intent. The various attempts had multiple partial count scenarios. The frustration with declaring a winner was given to the Supreme Court. They voted 5 to 4 to award the state to Bush, and declared him the winner. Gore conceded even though, when the count was actually completed, Gore won.

Does anyone wonder what the current Supreme Court might do, given the chance? Does anyone doubt that the MAGA machine is doing its level best to make sure that Trump gets the job, no matter what voters decide. It was only a matter of about 240 years before someone would figure a way to keep democracy out of the equation. When they could not subvert the electoral college (an accommodation to slave states, that should have gone with slavery), they tried to invoke the fail safe of one vote per state by their legislature. This would have guaranteed a GOP win as Utah and Montana, would have equal say to California and New York.

This goes all the way back to 13 states. If fairness then was one equal vote per state, why, now that we can go to the moon, have we not advanced to one person, one vote equality? Why do we continue to let six or seven states decide for all of us? If Trump is not crushed in the coming election, nothing he or they might do, will surprise me.

Mark Robillard is at it again. They name streets after him Dead end and One Way.

Despite anyone going to the southern border or throwing towels or meals at disaster sites, those are not only just photo ops, but distract from solutions. Senator Lanford R- Oklahoma, crafted a masterful bipartisan immigration bill Biden mentioned it at the last State of the Union he gave, and said he would sign it upon arrival. That bill would have provided the additional border agents, equipment to detect and stop the flow of drugs, and, most important, add judges so that immigration and asylum cases are heard within six months, not several years. Trump instructed his puppets in congress not to pass that bill, because bitching about immigration is his main campaign issue. Had that bill gone forward then, those cases would be done and people on your dime gone or working now.

I hate agreeing with Trump about anything, but we should cap running for president at 65 or 70.

Fact or fiction

To the Editor:
The 2016-2020 economy benefitted all Americans. Fact.

Joy and hope will pay the mortgage, fuel bills and food bills. Fiction.

The 2016-2020 border was secure and under control. Fact.

The border wall is "racist, anti-immigrant and a waste of taxpayer money." Fiction.

Harris wants to dismantle Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Fact.

Fentanyl is not a function of the border crisis. Fiction.

Restricting and eliminating fossil fuels is part of the Democrat agenda. Fact.

The sun and wind can heat and cool the world. Fiction.

Electric vehicles are subsidized by the

Anyone who is paying attention to 78 year old Trump, knows you are actually voting for Vance. If you are paying close enough attention, if he is elected and thinks to do some of what he said, they will invoke the 25th amendment and put him in a rubber room.

Vance's one job was as an investment counselor to Peter Thiel, the foreigner who bought him his Senate seat. mix in Rupert Murdoch who owns Fox and Elon Musk, and they will turn us into wholly owned subsidiaries of foreign interests. I am pretty sure that Russia already owns Trump.

In the meantime. Biden, who is still effectively doing his job,, is trying to rein in Bibi, who he hates but defend Israel, and called Putin , warning him not to introduce tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. Defense Secretary Austin, soon received a call from his counterpart in Russia, telling him we do not respond well to threats. Secretary Austin said; I am in charge of the largest most powerful military in the world. We do not do threats. Myself and many others are so glad that our country is in the hands of competent people. Those same people, whether retired or active, Republican or Democrat, including his former presidential staffers (the ones he did not pardon), have said he is not qualified for the job. I am not enthusiastic about the guy who "danced" for 39 minutes, at a rally. instead of answering questions, having the nuclear codes.

If him being a perverted, draft dodging con man, insurrectionist and convicted felon, is not enough, not only to not vote for him, but for Harris instead, let's try a little intelligence test instead. True or false, putting 200 percent tariffs on tractors, will reduce food prices?

Will not bankrupt the farmers already struggling with climate issues? Will not result in more farms being sold to China and Bill Gates?

The inflation will go down because tariffs will not actually be paid by you, but by foreigners too dumb to raise prices to cover it. It will only impact foreign cars because all the electronics in all cars and appliances ,,et all, are not made in China, Bwa ha ha.

NATO members pay dues (actually, requirement is spending percentage of GDP on defense), so after Trump gives Ukraine to Russia (did you know they already invaded and subdued Georgia and Chechnya), he probably will not want Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland back.

Now that even the mainstream media realizes that it is their fault that Donald being Donald is a buffoon and should not ever be president, he is telling you they are corrupt and his social media is the only truth, I have a \$100,000 watch for sale.

LEN KIMBALL
BROOKFIELD

American taxpayer. Fact.

Lithium-ion batteries materialize out of thin air. Fiction.

Democrats are adamant about a woman's right to choose. Fact.

Democrats champion school choice. Fiction.

Generations of Americans are dependent on the government. Fact.

The "Great Society" solution has eliminated poverty and dependence. Fiction.

2020-2024 has been the most expensive quadrennial in the history of the United States. Fact.

Voting Nov. 5 based on propaganda, peevs and perception will yield relief. Fiction.

JEN GAUCHER
SPENCER

To the Editor:

Your vote this fall is to decide what kind of country you want to live in. Do you want to live in one where they care more about the global migrants or one where they care more for US citizens. It will directly affect your pocket book, your par, and the taxes imposed on you.

An example of the Biden/Harris priority is FEMA. Under them, FEMA's 2022-2026 strategic plan, an overarching document created by agencies to lay out their priorities, named its first goal not as disaster relief, but instead diversity, equity and inclusion. In its first goal, the plan promised to "Instill equity as a foundation of emergency management. Its second named priority is to "lead whole of Community in climate resilience. "FEMA's "readiness" comes in as the third goal in the plan. A vote for Harris is a continuation of this policy. A vote for Trump is to change this to US citizens being their priority.

Here in Massachusetts, where we are run by Gov. Healy, who is a Harris proxy, we will see a continuation of our tax monies being spent on illegal immigrant programs. Your tax monies being taken to support the relocation, feeding, and education of millions of them. The CPA act they are trying to get you to vote yes on is in fact an end-around to Proposition 2 1/2. It will require an increase in your property taxes to "Fund Community Preservation." This means affordable housing projects in your community funded by the CPA property tax override on you. Don't fall for the Democrats tricks. They think voters like you are stupid. Healy/Harris has already cut you state tax rebate, used up all the available local aid funds,

and drained out budgets to fund their global illegal immigration project. It was Trump who said in 2020 that your suburban housewives need to listen up. They are coming after the suburbs. We all know now he was right. A vote for Harris means more housing projects being built in any community served by the MBTA. That means Spencer and Leicester. It means 2 1/2 tax overrides as our communities' struggle under the high inflation and the inevitable strikes by teachers' unions who supported Biden/Harris. A vote for Trump means an end to the money being taken from our budgets to support the Dems illegal migration project. It means a big increase in the affordable housing stock as the illegals currently living rent free are deported back to their homelands. These apartments will come onto the free market and result in lower rents/waits for our US citizens. The freed-up state tax monies can then be used to provide local aid to communities broken by the Healy/Harris policies. School cost will come down as fewer children of illegal's means less teachers.

So, it comes down to this for the average US citizen. Do you want your towns run like they did in 2016-2019? Do you want the cost of food, insurance, energy, and cars to be lower? Do you want the illegal immigration to stop? If you do then vote for Trump/Vance in 2024. If you want the economy and the illegal immigration to continue the vote for Harris/Waltz. It as simple as that. It's a vote for your life!

MARK ROBILLARD
SPENCER

What is motivating the continued support for Trump?

To the Editor:

I have a question: After all the information out there about what Trump has done and what he plans to do to people who disagree with him, to leaders who warn against him, to nonpartisan reporters who simply report facts, and for convicted criminals who commit crimes on his behalf, what motivates those on the Right to continue their support of him? There is plenty of denial and rationalization going on but, I'm sorry, at this point it seems there must be some additional analysis needed to explain the Right's unshakable allegiance to the MAGA movement and their leader.

My friend drives by a flag every day that has the usual Trump 2024 lettering, but on this flag there is the subtitle - Make Liberals Cry Again. Of course, I thought that this element of the flag was unnecessarily nasty. However, after some thought, it just may have provided me with at least a partial answer to my question. It feels like that second part of the flag should be the heading and not the subtitle.

My guess is that in some ways this election is not really about Trump. It's about what he enables. He allows supporters to blame everyone but themselves for what they don't have, what they can't do, what they don't know, or what they can't seem to achieve. Just like him! It's not their fault. It's some conspiracy-driven thing that "snowflakes" are doing to them or to their world that, in their mind, prevents America from being "Great Again." Adopting that attitude is SO much easier than accepting the truth. To simply blame others and throw the gameboard

on the floor because the other side is "cheating" is so much more convenient than taking steps to try to overcome the obstacles they may face.

But, if Trump wins, it won't be just liberals who will be crying. It will be many more women who will lose their right to their own bodily autonomy when faced with horrible circumstances like rape or even a choice of their own survival. It will be immigrants who have come to America, legally or otherwise, to escape harm or seek a better life. It will be journalists who lose their jobs or who are forced to print only what they are told. It will be Democratic, Independent, and Republican leaders who have dared to speak what they know to be the truth. It will be seniors who will lose Social Security and Medicare benefits. It will be children who are not taught the truth about their ancestors because it will be eliminated from the educational system. It will be young people who are not allowed to be who they truly are because they don't fit in with someone's idea of "normal." It will be anyone who follows their own religious convictions if they happen to be anything other than the Right's version of "Christian!"

So, what is the motivation for his supporters to pull the lever for him? At this point, it seems to me there is a strong case to be made for the theory that stirring fear of, and diverting blame onto, others is a powerful piece of it. For me, that strong impulse, seen so often in the talk on the Right, is the deepest tragedy facing us as a nation right now.

REGINA EDMONDS
WARREN

ADDITIONAL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR,
SEE PAGE A-12


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Durant hopes to continue as Worcester-Hampshire Rep



Sen. Peter Durant

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION — In his campaign for re-election to the Worcester-Hampshire District, State Sen. Peter Durant is focused on a range of issues affecting his communities.

“Last year, I had the honor of being elected to fill the unexpired term of State Senator for the Worcester-Hampshire District. Stepping into the Senate mid-term, we hit the ground running, tackling important issues, filing legislation, and supporting bills already introduced by my colleagues,” said Durant (R—Spencer).

After spending 12 years as the state representative for the 6th Worcester District, Durant was already well-acquainted with the challenges facing central Massachusetts. His leadership role for more than a decade prepared him well to bring the needs of his communities to Beacon Hill, this time as a senator.

Even before his state leadership roles, Durant was already advocating for residents in several municipal capacities.

“My experience as a small business owner, a Finance Committee member, and a selectman in my hometown of Spencer

has given me a strong

foundation to serve effectively,” Durant told the New Leader. “My key responsibilities to the citizens of the Worcester-Hampshire District are ensuring that

public funds are spent wisely, protecting our rights, keeping you safe, and ensuring government support in times of need.”

Durant has worked with his colleagues to advocate for prioritizing educational funding. This advocacy has helped secure more than \$1.5 billion in early education funding, as well as increases for

regional school transportation.

“By providing our children with the resources they need to succeed, we all succeed,” Durant said.

In recent years, Durant has criticized state leadership for its handling of the migrant crisis and the resulting impacts on municipal governments. He continues to demand that officials make major changes.

“I’ve been a vocal opponent of the unchecked spending on illegal immigration, which costs over a billion taxpayer dollars annually to provide services like housing, food, and medical care—services that are often inaccessible to legal citizens,” Durant said. “The lack of transparency surrounding this issue is alarming.”

Durant introduced legislation aimed at ensuring that taxpayer-funded benefits are available only to legal residents. He is also pushing for several reforms to existing legislation.

“I will continue to advocate for reforms to our outdated right-to-shelter law, ensuring it serves those it was originally intended to help when it was enacted in the 1980s,”

Durant explained.

Another priority for the Senator is making Massachusetts more affordable by addressing issues related to housing, taxes, and utility rates.

“My bipartisan and collaborative approach has led to traditionally opposing groups such as the National Federation of

Independent Business and the Laborers’ Union both endorsing my candidacy,” Durant said. “This collaborative approach led to one of my proudest moments in the Senate. Working with my

Senate colleagues and affected homeowners, we unanimously passed a bill to support homeowners dealing with crumbling foundations caused by pyrrhotite in concrete. Although

ultimately blocked by House leadership, this is a top priority for me, and I will continue this effort as I push for its passage before the end of this legislative session.”

Added Durant, “Connecticut has a successful program to help homeowners, and Massachusetts must follow suit to protect our homeowners. This is a prime example of how government can be a force for good during tough times.”

If re-elected, Durant looks forward to connecting with even more residents, organizations, and agencies from throughout his district to learn how he can best advocate for improvements to issues crossing town lines.

“In my first year in the Senate, I’ve had the pleasure of meeting many of our state’s sportsmen and women and fully support them,” Durant said. “I visited Junior Conservation Camp, where young people spend two weeks camping, learning archery,

riflery, fishing, and other outdoor skills—without cell phones. I’ve met with veterans’ groups and will always go the extra mile for them as they did for all of us.”

Added Durant, “I understand that a seat in the Senate is earned through hard work, not through political party affiliation or by riding the coattails of those who came before. In a half-

term as your Senator, I have never stopped working to earn your vote. I have surrounded myself with great people and listen to many who are wiser than I.”

Durant continues to promote transparency, accessibility, and accountability in all facets of government.

“As I did in my roles as

selectman and state representative, I promised that I would always be an accessible leader, hold both myself and our government accountable for their actions, and

never take for granted the hard work you do and the trust you place in me as your voice on Beacon Hill.”

The election will take place on Nov. 5.

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OBITUARIES

Gary S. Johnson, 57



Gary S. Johnson, 57, of Brookfield, MA passed away unexpectedly on October 16th, 2024. He leaves behind his loving wife of 39 years, Tammy DeCelle-Johnson of Brookfield; his two children Amanda DeCelle and her significant other Jon Rose of Warren, and Coty DeCelle and his wife Alicia DeCelle of West Brookfield; and five grandchildren who he cherished dearly: Madison, Jayden, Gabriel, Harper, and Greyson. He also leaves behind his mother Sharron Johnson of Auburn, as well as many in-laws who he considered family, nieces and nephews, and many friends he considered family as well. Gary was predeceased by his father Gary Johnson of Leicester and his brother in-law Tom DeCelle.

Gary's greatest treasure was spending time with his family, including foot-

ball Sundays and spoiling his grandchildren endlessly. Every year Gary and his son would take a fishing trip to the Cape to catch strippers, and he enjoyed many rock concerts with his daughter. Gary enjoyed date nights with his wife, going to the movies and trying new restaurants. Gary worked as a truck driver for many years, most recently working at KeHe. Gary enjoyed vacationing with his family and was looking forward to an upcoming trip to the Outer Banks. Gary enjoyed fishing and working on cars with his son, and attending sporting events for his grandchildren. All who knew him knew that he would go above and beyond for them, giving them the shirt off his back; he always made sure that his wife, children, and grandchildren were well cared for. Gary will be deeply missed and loved by all who knew him.

Calling hours will be Saturday, October 26th, 2024 from 1-2 p.m. at Pillsbury Funeral home in Brookfield, MA. Graveside services will be private.

Virginia M. Grenier, 83



NO. BROOKFIELD- Virginia M. (Poland) Grenier, 83, of No. Brookfield, died Thursday, Oct. 10th after a brief illness.

She was the beloved wife of Richard J. Grenier for 52 wonderful years until his passing in 2014. She leaves her sons; Michael R. Grenier and his wife Judith of Palm Desert, Calif., and Brian J. Grenier and his wife Jennifer of Fresno, Calif., her daughter; Suzette A. Howland and her husband Robert of New Braintree, MA., her two sisters; Joan Cormey and her husband Wesley of NJ, and Sandra Burnham (wife of William) of Charlton, her grandchildren; Jamison and Kayli Howland, Edward and Woodrow Yeakel, nieces and nephews.

Ginny, as she was affectionately known by all, was born in Worcester, the daughter of Charles A. and Marguerite D. (Cook) Poland. Aside from a few years away during Richard's military service, the Lake Lashaway area has been her home, with early years spent on the E. Brookfield side of the lake and the final years of her life on the N. Brookfield side. She graduated from David Prouty High School in Spencer, Class of 1959, where she and Richard were highschool sweethearts.

In addition to many years as a loving fulltime Mom, Ginny was the Executive Assistant to the President of Clark University in Worcester for over 20 years, retiring in 2000. She was a longtime active member of Christ Memorial Episcopal Church in No. Brookfield, a 3rd generation family

member strongly supporting our beautiful community church. She was a former trustee of the David Prouty Memorial Scholarship Fund, organizer of the North Brookfield Youth Group, and a cherished member of the Spencer Garden Club.

Her grandchildren were her pride and joy, actively involved in their daily lives while cheering them at sporting events and school functions. Her favorite activities included golf, sewing, book club, and nightly crossword puzzles, but all of these were trumped by her passion for maintaining a beautifully manicured yard filled with all kinds of flowers in bloom year round. Everyone walking by would stop and admire her storybook setting. Vacationing with her husband in Vero Beach Fla. during winter months filled her retirement years with sun and warmth alongside many New England and Canadian friends.

Virginia's funeral service will be held on Friday, Oct. 25th at 11 a.m. in Christ Memorial Episcopal Church, 133 No. Main St., No. Brookfield (friends and relatives are asked to go directly to the church). The service will be followed by a graveside ceremony at Evergreen Cemetery, E. Brookfield then a reception at Christ Memorial.

Calling hours are Thursday, Oct. 24th from 5 to 7p.m. in the JHENRI MORIN & SON & SON FUNERAL HOME, 23 Maple Terr., Spencer. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Virginia M. Grenier Memorial Fund c/o Christ Memorial Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 43, No. Brookfield, MA 01535.

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AWARD

continued from page A1

Gold Award based on acts of exceptional service in the line of duty.

The National Exchange Club is a service organization founded in 1911 in Detroit, Michigan. The organization is dedicated to promoting community service, leadership, and civic responsibility.

Across the country, members of Exchange Clubs volunteer in thousands of activities and initiatives aimed at improving their communities.

STAFFING

continued from page A1

have made it difficult to recruit and retain qualified officers.

"Part-time officers are really hard to find because they are held to the full-time training requirement," Hagglund told the New Leader. "We used to be able to rely on part-time officers to fill a lot of the gaps."

With the sharp reduction of its part-time staff, the department has seen a strain on the rest of its team. To provide assistance, the State Police are temporarily filling overnight shifts in town.

"All our officers have been working tirelessly over a prolonged period of time to maintain coverage, often at the expense of their own health, wellbeing, and time with

their own families," the Chief added.

WBPD officials thank the State Police for providing resources to the community while it addresses the staffing crisis.

Another challenge facing the department involves the high costs associated with sending officers through the entire training process. This includes equipment and tuition for the Police Academy.

Surrounding towns are grappling with the same hiring and retention adversities, as officers often receive full-time training at the expense of their communities, only to spend a short time with their departments before moving on to cities.

Additional hiring and occupational challenges, experienced by police

departments nationwide, have led to staffing shortages across the law enforcement spectrum.

"The pool of qualified candidates is very small. We're excited about our latest appointment," Hagglund said. "Every officer in uniform makes it easier for the rest of us to carry the load and do our part."

Looking long-term, department leaders are eager to further expand the WBPD roster and make the best use of limited resources.

"We are committed to finding long-term solutions to our staffing crisis. We understand that this is a challenging time for our community, and we appreciate your understanding and support," the Chief's statement read.

SURVEY

continued from page A1

regarding the impacts of weather events on local infrastructure; business and the economy; and natural resources, among others.

"Climate change may shift the extent and severity of certain natural hazards, including those that already impact Spencer," read the statement released by town officials and posted to the survey webpage. "By participating in this survey, you will help the Town of Spencer understand the current and future natural hazards that residents are most concerned about."

In recent years, some of the most damaging weather impacts across central Massachusetts didn't result from tornadoes, hurricanes, or ice storms—but instead seemingly unremarkable summer storms that caused major flooding and lightning damage.

In June 2023, a lightning strike caused a fire that collapsed the historic First Congregational Church of Spencer. Two years earlier, in July 2021, a West Brookfield garage was destroyed by a fire

sparked by lightning. Police responded quickly during the line of strong pre-dawn thunderstorms, helping three residents escape the home.

Additionally, several communities across the region have endured extreme flooding events in recent summers, causing significant property and infrastructure damage. Spencer residents and officials told the New Leader they're concerned about the possibility of similar floods, as well as the overall increased intensity they have seen from storms nationwide over the past two decades.

In June 2011, residents in the Route 9 corridor assisted their neighbors to the south and west after multiple communities were devastated by a deadly EF-3 tornado.

In 2008 and 2011, major ice storms crippled the northeast with millions of power outages.

More recently, wildfire smoke crossing the country from western states and Canada have impacted air quality across New England.

With the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan, Spencer will be better positioned to navigate future weather impacts, officials said, regardless of what Mother Nature

decides to unleash next.

"The Hazard Mitigation Program and Plan is a process of identifying potential hazards in the community, such as flood or storm damage; utility vulnerabilities; traffic and infrastructure issues; dam and bridge systems; debris handling, etc., to develop an actionable list to work toward addressing these potential hazards," said Town Administrator Jeffrey Bridges. "This plan is being paid for with a grant. Once updated, grant funds may be available to work on those actionable items identified in the plan."

Survey responses will be accepted until Jan. 1, 2025.

Looking ahead, opportunities to improve local storm resilience and hazard mitigation efforts may include one or more of the following projects: improving stormwater management infrastructure; planting climate-resilient tree species; and trimming a greater number of hazardous trees near roadways.

To learn more about the survey and access a link, visit www.spencer-ma.gov.

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East Brookfield police receive grants to upgrade equipment

EAST BROOKFIELD — The East Brookfield Police Department was recently awarded multiple state grants that will help upgrade equipment and technologies.

A \$59,350 grant for law enforcement body-worn cameras was awarded by the state's Office of Grants and Research. This award will provide officers with updated camera equipment.

Additionally, a \$100,000 municipal cybersecurity grant will help the department upgrade its infrastructure and develop new software programs.

Finally, a \$20,000 award from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration will be used for speed enforcement activities and other operations. These include the department's participation in the Click it or Ticket campaign.

"The Chief would like to extend his thanks to the Governor's Office for its continued support," read a statement released by the EBPD. "In addition, a huge thank-you to Officer Valley for all of his efforts in putting these grants together."

LEGALS

Town of West Brookfield Zoning Board of Appeals

A public hearing will be held on Tuesday, November 12, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. at the West Brookfield Town Hall, to act on an application for a Special Permit, for Quaboag Rehabilitation for the property located at 47 East Main Street, West Brookfield. The applicant wishes to add an addition. Special Permit as per section(s) -1.5 Nonconformity & §1.52 Nonconforming Structures (a) (et al).
October 25, 2024
November 1, 2024

Town of West Brookfield Zoning Board of Appeals

A public hearing will be held on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the West Brookfield Town Hall, to act on an application for a Special Permit. Susanne Russell 50 Birch Hill Road, West Brookfield. wishes to build a carport. A Special Permit is required -4.2 Schedule of Dimensional Requirements.
October 18, 2024
October 25, 2024

Notice of Public Hearing Town of Spencer

The Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on November 18, 2024 at 6:00 pm in the McCourt Social

Hall of Memorial Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Spencer on the Annual License Renewals for 2024, including Class II, Class III, and Gravel.
John J. Howard, Chairman
October 25, 2024

Notice of Public Hearing Town of Spencer Tax Classification

The Board of Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing on November 18, 2024 at 6:00 pm in the McCourt Social Hall of Memorial Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Spencer, to discuss the percentage of the tax levy to be borne by each class of real and personal property for Fiscal

Year 2025, pursuant to MGL Chapter 40, Section 56, relating to classification and taxation of property according to use.

Interested taxpayers may present their views verbally or in writing to the Board of Selectmen at Memorial Town Hall prior to or during said hearing.

If you are not able to attend in-person, you may dial in from your phone:
1 866 899 4679 Enter Access Code: 479-429-349

Or join from your computer, tablet, or smartphone:
<https://www.gotomeet.me/TownofSpencerMA/boardofselectmen>
October 25, 2024

LEICESTER SENIOR CENTER OFFERS BUSY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

LEICESTER — The Senior Center invites guests to take advantage of a busy schedule over the next month, highlighted by a salute to those who served. The annual veterans' breakfast at the Senior Center is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 7, at 9 a.m. Bill Moore will once again serve as the program's master of ceremonies, and Lt. Col. Shannon McLaughlin was selected as the guest speaker. McLaughlin has served as a State Judge Advocate with the Massachusetts

National Guard. Additionally, Senior Center outreach coordinator Nancy Lamb, a retired Air Force nurse, will deliver the invocation. Local students, town leaders, and regional guests are also expected to attend the breakfast. The event always provides a great opportunity for the community to honor and thank veterans. In years past, the Air Force JROTC based at South High Community School in Worcester has led the event's MIA/POW ceremony. The program also typically includes handmade cards prepared for veterans by elementary school students. On Nov. 19, the Senior Center will hold a turkey dinner, allowing the senior community to celebrate Thanksgiving early with friends. The Senior Center also has several programming and staff updates to announce. Phil George, a clinical biochemist and certified personal trainer, has taken over the position of facilitator for the center's Hybrid program. "He has been here to offer seminars every Wednesday at the Senior Center," read a statement released by Senior Center Director Rachelle Cyr. "Also, we have

hired Meaghan Casey to replace Genevieve Grenier as our newsletter editor." Casey will help support a number of activities at the center, including garden programs. She holds a degree in multimedia journalism, which provides the center with versatility in promoting programs. "She has done interviews with our elders, and they have welcomed her as part of our team," Cyr added. Meanwhile, Select Board member Dianna Provencher has volunteered to oversee the center's Massachusetts Council on Aging grant to create a field demonstration for the garden project. Additionally, Provencher serves as the project manager for the center's monthly Tea and Talk program. "She also oversees a nutrition program offered every other week," Cyr added. "Dianna is able to offer produce from our garden." To learn more about upcoming programs at the Senior Center, or to sign up for an activity, call 508-892-7016. The center is located at 40 Winslow Ave.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lies that hurt

To the Editor:
Donald Trump is a pathological liar. Sadly, his lies often hurt people. He has claimed that FEMA funds were diverted to bring "illegal immigrants" across the southern border from Mexico which meant that there were not funds enough to help the victims of hurricanes Helene and Milton. Lie! Trump wants to campaign on "illegal immigrants" being a danger to our country, so he seized this opportunity to build his case. Then he claimed that FEMA would only provide \$750 to hurricane victims. Lie! That is the first emergency amount with more to follow after further investigation of needs. Victims then became upset that funds were used to bring "illegal immigrants" into the country instead of aiding them. Trump went on to say beware of FEMA reps who might be coming to claim victims' property. Lie! Trump doesn't seem to care that his lies hurt people and brought mistrust to such a reliable government agency as FEMA. And the irony is that Trump diverted FEMA funds to build detention centers. Remember those cages of kids? Children and parents were separated with no records kept. President Biden set up a commission to reunite them. Sadly, there are some who are still not back with families. This is a case of projection which Trump often uses. Such a cruel lie.

Trump's lies not only caused much concern and hurt for the victims of Helene and Milton, but they denigrated FEMA in the process. FEMA has been a reliable government source of aid through many catastrophic weather events over the years. His lies brought grief for the victims and FEMA. He seems to have no clue or care of the hurt his disinformation brought. It is

alarming that so many people continue to support him when his lies have been so hurtful.

In the midst of convictions from four trials, Trump has shown his disdain for the "rule of law." Trial number one was for sexual misconduct aka rape and defamation of character. He went out the evening of the next day and defamed her again on CNN national station. E. Jean Carroll sued him again which resulted in another guilty verdict. The fines for these two trials total 91 million dollars. The third trial was for business fraud that went back over decades. Remember the millions he had to pay back when people found that Trump University was a scam/fraud? This was one example of fraud. Others were committed for many business ventures for years. Assessed damages for this third trial were 454 million dollars bringing the total damages for these three trials to half a billion dollars! For the fourth trial he was found guilty of 34 felony counts by a unanimous jury vote. As he had done for the previous trials, he appealed this one as well. However, this last trial conviction could lead to jail time. Has he appealed these trials with the plan to be elected president again and he can pardon himself?

Trump may try to claim the trials are witch hunts, but they took place in courts of law with real convictions. He seems to believe the law doesn't apply to him. I believe no one is above the law not even a sitting president or a past president.

Lies and convictions of crimes yet Trump claims he has done nothing wrong. Recently he joked he has as many trials as Al Capone. This is no joking matter. I cannot understand why so many still support him. Do they really want a liar and criminal in the White House?

PATRICIA JACKMAN
NORTH BROOKFIELD

Convenient Lies

To the Editor:
I was recently listening to an interview with Kamala Harris in which she was asked about her decision to have a Republican member on her Cabinet. She responded that she not only will do that, but also will have a bipartisan panel of advisors; because she values the exchange of different viewpoints. That exchange of ideas is important for formulating the most effective policies to address the many and complex challenges our country and world face.

Contrast that with Trump, a malignant narcissist who surrounds himself with sycophants who will not question him and who will blindly follow him down a path that not only threatens our democracy but also the health of our planet. If Trump were to once again gain the power of the Presidency, what would that path look like? He has promised a reign of retribution. Will he execute those who have dared to try to hold him accountable for his many crimes. His Vice President is unlikely to sway him from a violent path of retribution. Vance recently endorsed a book called "Unhumans." This book praises autocratic dictators of the past like Pinochet of Chile (who considered his opponents as unhumans, killing them and throwing them out of airplanes). Trump has admired the "strong" governing style of Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un, and we know what happens to their political opponents.

Trump has not admitted losing any state in the 2020 election. He has even claimed that he won in California, where Biden received 63.5 percent of the vote, beating Trump by a 29.2 percent margin. In an interview with Dr. Phil this August, Trump stated "If Jesus came down and was the vote counter, I would win California." I suppose he is at least consistent, as he also claims he is "endorsed by Jesus Christ." His running mate appears to be content to accept the big lie. During the Vice

Presidential debate, he would not admit that Trump lost the 2020 election to Biden.

Trump has lied so frequently that some news organizations no longer consider that news worthy of reporting. Many people expect his lies, saying that is "just Trump". They appear to have become numb to his nonsense, like the proverbial frog that becomes numb to the fact that it is gradually being boiled alive (actually a myth).

Unfortunately, the strategy of repeating a falsehood over and over until people begin to believe it works for some people. In Trump's current mental condition, I believe that he has convinced himself that many of his lies are true. Acceptance of Trump's lies in 2020 led many followers to engage in a violent attempt to overturn the results of a free and fair election. Will history repeat itself?

During the 2000 election, there were many people who could not accept the "inconvenient truth" that we had to face the threat of global warming or suffer severe consequences down the road. During the Presidential debate, Trump admitted that he only had some concepts of a replacement for the Affordable Care Act. Wouldn't you think that a person who has already attempted to eliminate that legislation would have more than a few concepts to offer for its replacement? I would not be alive today if it weren't for Medicare, and I am sure that many of you would not want to return to a health care system that allows insurance companies to refuse to insure those with pre-existing conditions. During this election there appear to be many who are willing to accept a "convenient lie." I hope we are able to jump free of the hot water before it is too late.

DAVID W. BROWN
NORTH BROOKFIELD

2024 election choices, massive and everyday

To the Editor:

I want to be as personal and focused on the everyday as I can.

First, the personal. I grew up in Catholic family and extended family. None of us grew up rich. (My father, for example, spent all his working years in a Rochdale factory.) However, all of us were taught to know right from wrong. Call it following the 10 Commandments, if you wish. Then my parents, with some sacrifice sent me to a Catholic

college. There, in addition to my history major, they used different words and thoughts, but in essence they said here, like the 10 Commandments is right and here is wrong.

In terms of American politics, I have lived through about a baker's dozen of presidents, some Republicans, some Democrats, some in my opinion good, some mediocre and some not so good. But almost in all cases, they tried to do the "right thing."

For more than 40 years, I have lived, worked and travelled around the world sometimes with and for our American government, sometimes for international organizations and sometimes on my own.

Along the way, I got to observe or even somewhat know a number of national leaders. Two that I greatly admire are old fashioned conservatives females. First, Eugenia Charles of the Caribbean country of Dominica, who worked closely with Ronald Reagan. Second, Angela Merkel of Germany, who grew up in Dictator Stalin's East Germany and had to deal with Stalinist dictator Vladimir Putin.

I also got to do the same, with a number of dictators.

The basic difference between the two groups is, the first tried and often succeeded in doing the "right" thing while the second basically just cared about themselves.

Now let's move on to the 2024 Presidential election.

First, Kamala Harris.

I have, and I think you should have, no doubt that she would govern like those moderate Democratic presidents before her - Truman, Kennedy, Johnson, Carter, Clinton, Obama and Biden. Just like them she is nowhere near being a radical.

Second, Donald Trump. To begin, he is not like previous Republican Presidents before him- Eisenhower, even Nixon, Ford, Reagan and the two Bushes.

All those two Presidential groups tried to do the best thing for our coun-

try.

Trump has, and will only do, what is best for himself. Or to put it another way, the 10 Commandments mean nothing to him.

Now, the final everyday election ballot questions.

Question 4, Limited Legalization and Regulation of Certain Natural Psychedelic Substances. I have mixed feelings about this question. To begin, because I know (a) people who, with supervision, who have benefitted from medical marabunta, and (b) respected medical specialists say some people would benefit from supervised psychedelics, I can understand a "yes" vote. However I also know that our state especially our "uncontrolled" sometimes corrupt legislature has done a poor job of regulating marijuana, gambling etc.. So I can also understand voting "no". In the end I will vote a hesitant "yes."

Question 5 Minimum Wage for Tipped Workers A "yes" vote here. First, I believe all hard working people deserve a livable working wage. Second I have observed in most parts of the "Developed" what the question calls "tipped" workers who receive a living minimum plus tips and the service is, if anything better. Third the minimum wage will be phased in over a period of years so restaurants and customers have a time to adjust to it.

Question 6, Community Preservation Act. A "yes" vote here, because to do otherwise would be 'penny wise - dollar foolish,' or like not having a car because gas costs money. As elsewhere indicated solid benefits include; increased property values, protected and improved open spaces and recreational areas, affordable housing and preserved historic buildings.

KEVIN KANE
SPENCER

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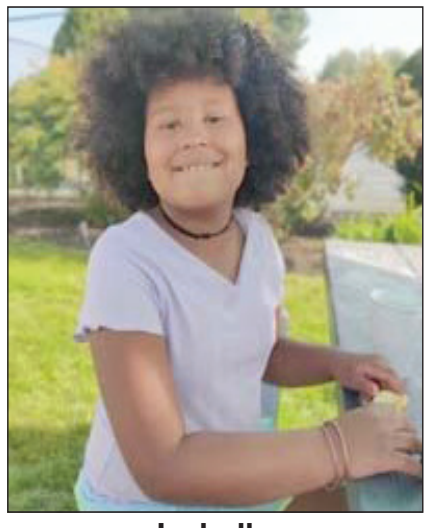


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Friday's Child



Hi! My name is Izabella and I love nature and the outdoors!

Izabella, who also goes by Izzy, is an inquisitive, outgoing, and outspoken girl in search of her forever family. She loves to explore the outdoors and nature, which include various community activities, gardening, and collecting small insects for her "bug sanctuary" that she advocated to have. She always willing to try new things and new foods. Izzy also enjoys arts and crafts and going to the library to pick out books to read. Her biggest strength is her ability to advocate and speak up for herself.

<https://adopt.mareinc.org/waiting-child-profiles#gallery/child/6966>

Can I Adopt?

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.

Spencer Veterans Day Parade details announced

SPENCER — The Spencer Veterans Day Parade will take place Monday, Nov. 11 at 6 p.m., with lineup at 5:30 p.m. The traditional parade route will start and end at the American Legion.

We welcome all groups and organizations to attend this year's services. For more information, please contact Peggy Sullian, Senior Vice Commander, Gaudette-Kirk Post #138 in Spencer, at (478) 951-9094.

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QCC generates \$349.8 million in annual economic impact

WORCESTER — A recent economic impact study revealed that Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) contributed \$349.8 million to the regional economy in fiscal year 2022-23. The study, conducted by Lightcast, demonstrates QCC's role in supporting local jobs, boosting student earnings and providing a strong return on investment for students, taxpayers and society.

According to the study, through its operations and construction spending, student spending and alumni impact, QCC added \$349.8 million in income to the economy of its service area, equivalent to supporting 3,930 jobs.

Key findings of the study included:

Alumni Impact: Former QCC students generated \$276.9 million in added income for the regional economy, sup-

porting 2,738 jobs.

Student Return on Investment: The average associate degree graduate from QCC will see an increase in earnings of \$11,200 each year compared to a person with a high school diploma or equivalent working in Massachusetts.

Taxpayer Benefits: State and local taxpayers see a return of \$1.30 for every dollar invested in QCC.

Societal Impact:

Society receives \$7 in added state revenue and social savings for every dollar invested in QCC.

"This report clearly demonstrates the influence QCC has on our local economy, area industries and the workforce," said QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D. "As one of the largest colleges in Worcester, QCC continues to make an indelible impression on our communities. This study

shows what we do here each and every day - facilitate student success, which translates into our region's success."

QCC's day-to-day operations and construction spending added \$69.3 million to the regional economy, while student spending contributed an additional \$3.6 million.

The college serves as a key source of employees for regional industries, particularly in health-care. The study found

that QCC's impact supported 1,043 jobs in the Health Care & Social Assistance sector alone.

Lightcast based its report on several sources including QCC's academic and financial reports, data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

POLICE REPORTS

Leicester Police Log

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10

12:48 a.m.: ambulance (Charlton Street), transported; 7:18 a.m.: mv stop (Paxton Street), verbal warning; 8:44 a.m.: ambulance (Huntoon Memorial Highway), transported; 12:33 p.m.: family problem, Daniel Alvarez, 40, 191 Main Street, Cherry Valley, threatening to commit a crime/murder; malicious destruction of property over \$1200, use of mv w/out authority, criminal application issued; 2:09 p.m.: ambulance (Pleasant Street), transported; 2:14 p.m.: transport prisoner (Lincoln Square, Worcester), services rendered; 2:16 p.m.: accident (Stafford Street), report taken; 4:29 p.m.: ambulance (Howe Village, Spencer), transported; 5:33 p.m.: assist citizen (Main Street), restraining order served; 6:50 p.m.: accident (Main Street), report taken; 8:34 p.m.: ambulance (Huntoon Memorial Highway), transported; 9:35 p.m.: suspicious mv (Stafford Street), resolved; 9:42 p.m.: suspicious person (Soojians Drive), report taken.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11

12:00 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 12:30 a.m.: mv stop (Paxton Street), citation issued; 1:45 a.m.: mv stop (Huntoon Memorial Highway), verbal warning; 3:17 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), citation issued; 3:34 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), citation issued; 4:38 a.m.: ambulance (Main Street), transported; 6:27 a.m.: ambulance (Crestwood Road), transported; 9:04 a.m.: ambulance (Pine Street), resolved; 9:06 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), written warning; 9:28 a.m.: investigation (Main Street), report taken; 9:36 a.m.: disabled mv (Stafford Street), assisted; 9:51 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; 10:01 a.m.: mv stop (Huntoon Memorial Highway), written warning; 10:01 a.m.: mv stop (Huntoon Memorial Highway), verbal warning; 1:36 p.m.: lobby servicer (Woodland Road), report taken; 1:51 p.m.: mv stop (South Main Street), verbal warning; 2:00 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), written warning; 2:11 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), written warning; 5:03 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), written warning; 5:13 p.m.: welfare check (Pleasant Street), assisted; 6:22 p.m.: ambulance (Soojians Drive), no service; 6:27 p.m.: suspicious person (Leela Lane), resolved; 6:36 p.m.: suspicious mv (Soojians Drive), Zachary Ryan Moriarty, 31, 15 Linwood Street, #2, Webster, off w/suspended license/subsequent offense, number plate violation to conceal ID, uninsured mv, arrest.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12

12:12 a.m.: assist other PD (Siani Road), resolved; 1:19 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 1:34 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), written warning; 7:54 a.m.: ambulance (Parker Street), transported; 9:46 a.m.: debris in road (Winslow Avenue), referred; 10:45 a.m.: debris in road (Huntoon Memorial Highway), resolved; 3:26 p.m.: assist other PD (Pleasant Street), no action required; 3:37 p.m.: assist other PD (Stafford Street), unable to locate; 4:56 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), name and address redacted from police log, uninsured mv, criminal application issued; 4:58 p.m.: ambulance (Huntoon Memorial Highway), transported; 5:34 p.m.: trespassing (Soojians Drive), Evan Charbonneau, 31, 306 Greenwood Street, Worcester, trespassing, disguised to obstruct justice, possession Class A drug/subsequent offense, possession Class B drug/subsequent offense, possession Class E drug/suboxone, failure to appear upon recognizance, attempting to commit a crime/shoplifting, arrest; 7:41 p.m.: assist other PD (Siani Road), message delivered; 8:56 p.m.: larceny (Soojians Drive), report taken; 9:32 p.m.: mv stop (South Main Street), verbal warning; 9:57 p.m.: ambulance (Main Street), unfounded; 11:41 p.m.: ambulance (Hemlock Street), transported.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13

1:17 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; 1:46 a.m.: ambulance (Elmwood Avenue), transported; 2:03 a.m.: family problem (Peter Salem Road), services rendered; 2:56 a.m.: ambulance (Huntoon Memorial Highway), call canceled; 10:07 a.m.: ambulance (Siani Road), transported; 10:25 a.m.: residential alarm (Baldwin Street), resolved; 10:56 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), citation issued; 3:00 p.m.: ambulance (Edward Street),

transported; 3:13 p.m.: ambulance (Auburn Street), transported; 5:27 p.m.: assist other PD (South Main Street), resolved; 5:33 p.m.: suspicious mv (Pine Street), resolved; 6:55 p.m.: ambulance (Deer Pond Road), transported; 8:52 p.m.: welfare check (Flint Way), assisted; 9:18 p.m.: ambulance (Main Street, Spencer), transported; 9:52 p.m.: suspicious mv (Mannville Street), resolved; 10:24 p.m.: suspicious mv (Stafford Street), spoken to.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14

12:38 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 12:52 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), verbal warning; 1:01 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), written warning; 1:20 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), resolved; 1:31 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 3:31 a.m.: disabled mv (Stafford Street), mv towed; 8:58 a.m.: suspicious person (Main Street), transported (no destination noted on police log); 9:05 a.m.: ambulance (McNeil Highway), transported; 9:58 a.m.: welfare check (Mannville Street), assisted; 12:42 p.m.: ambulance (Upsala Street, Worcester), transported; 3:47 p.m.: harassment (Pine Street), name and address redacted from police log, violation of abuse prevention order, criminal application issued; 3:50 p.m.: accident (Henshaw Street), mv towed; 5:37 p.m.: welfare check (Ackley Drive), unable to locate; 11:45 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15

2:18 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), citation issued; 4:29 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), citation issued; 4:49 a.m.: mv stop (Broad Street), verbal warning; 4:58 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), citation issued; 7:53 a.m.: accident (Main Street), report taken; 8:56 a.m.: mv stop (Pleasant Street), verbal warning; 9:52 a.m.: ambulance (Main Street), transported; 10:05 a.m.: ambulance (Main Street), transported; 10:26 a.m.: mv stop (Pleasant Street), citation issued; 10:39 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), citation issued; 2:47 p.m.: ambulance (Stafford Street), transported; 2:52 p.m.: residential alarm (Pine Street), false alarm; 3:44 p.m.: accident (Stafford Street), report taken; 4:06 p.m.: harassment (Stafford Street), report taken; 4:38 p.m.: suspicious mv (Collier Avenue), gone on arrival; 4:54 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 7:57 p.m.: ambulance (Marble Street, Worcester), transported.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16

12:18 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), written warning; 2:19 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 2:21 a.m.: ambulance (Main Street), transported; 4:04 a.m.: mv stop (South Main Street), verbal warning; 4:18 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 4:31 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 4:40 a.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 5:26 a.m.: mv stop (Pleasant Street), written warning; 10:07 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), spoken to; 10:48 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), citation issued; 10:56 a.m.: mv stop (Stafford Street), written warning; 11:29 a.m.: ambulance (Huntoon Memorial Highway), transported; 1:36 p.m.: mv stop (Main Street), verbal warning; 3:20 p.m.: animal complaint (Henshaw Street), referred; 5:37 p.m.: ambulance (Willow Hill Road), transported; 6:08 p.m.: arrest warrant service (Pleasant Street), unable to serve; 8:30 p.m.: ambulance (Main Street, Worcester), call canceled.

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Spencer Police Log

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9

12:36-2:14 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 12:55 a.m.: suspicious mv (Howe Road), investigated; 12:58 a.m.: intelligence/parole (West Main Street), info rec'd; 1:10 a.m.: medical/general (Cherry Street); 5:30 a.m.: intelligence/parole (West Main Street), info rec'd; 6:45 a.m.: medical/general (Chestnut Street); 9:27 a.m.: medical/general (Chestnut Street); 9:44 a.m.: LTC issued (West Main Street), assisted; 9:45 a.m.: FID card issued (West Main Street), assisted; 10:29 a.m.: 911 call (West Main Street), resolved; 11:17 a.m.: medical/general (Main Street); 12:36 p.m.: LTC issued (West Main Street), assisted; 12:39 p.m.: restraining order service (West Main Street); 2:58 p.m.: mv lockout (Main Street), assisted; 3:02 p.m.: medical/general (Howe Village);

3:12 p.m.: officer wanted (West Main Street), LTC change of address; 3:19 p.m.: abandoned mv (Maple Street), landlord req. mv towed; 3:41 p.m.: abandoned 911 call (West Main Street), no status recorded in police log; 5:13 p.m.: parking complaint (Brown Street), mv on sidewalk; 5:23 p.m.: parking complaint (Brown Street), mv blocking road; 5:23 p.m.: residential alarm (Main Street), services rendered; 6:07 p.m.: animal complaint (Pleasant Street), kittens found; 8:12 p.m.: mv complaint (Thompson Pond Road), TT problem turning around; 8:43 p.m.: medical/general (Maple Street); 8:51 p.m.: medical/general (Crestview Drive); 9:00 p.m.: officer wanted (Main Street), req. welfare check; 9:08 p.m.: disturbance (Pleasant Street), customer threatening manager; (total daily mv stops - 4);

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10

2:10-2:38 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 3:00 a.m.: intelligence/parole (West Main Street), info rec'd; 6:50 a.m.: medical/general (Oakland Drive); 10:10 a.m.: medical/general (Pleasant Street); 10:29 a.m.: officer wanted (West Main Street), re: juvenile matter; 10:54 a.m.: accident (Condon Drive), report taken; 11:34 a.m.: commercial alarm (Mechanic Street), services rendered; 11:49 a.m.: medical/general (Taylor Drive); 11:56 a.m.: medical/general (Mechanic Street); 12:02 p.m.: medical/general (Howe Village); 12:29 p.m.: arrest warrant service (Chestnut Street), Cheryl E. Herring, 51, 40 Maple Street, Spencer, warrant, arrest; 1:15 p.m.: mutual aid (West Main Street), Leicester PD bolo; 1:54 p.m.: mutual aid (West Main Street), RMV immediate threat; 2:50 p.m.: 911 call (West Main Street), accidental; 3:00 p.m.: restraining order service (West Main Street); 3:30 p.m.: medical/general (Chestnut Street); 4:20 p.m.: medical/general (Howe Village); 4:51 p.m.: 911 call (West Main Street), resolved; 4:54 p.m.: medical/general (Valley Street); 6:15 p.m.: suspicious persons (South Spencer Road), investigated; 6:54 p.m.: mutual aid (Thornberry Circle), re: Paxton PD FedEx issues; 8:38 p.m.: mv repossessed (Highland Street), info rec'd; 9:40 p.m.: 911 call (Paula Bay), status not noted on police log; (total daily mv stops - 1).

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11

6:54 a.m.: accident (Chestnut Street), report taken; 7:00 a.m.: vandalism (West Main Street), rep. tires slashed; 8:11 a.m.: 911 call (West Main Street), resolved; 8:13 a.m.: medical/general (Wall Street); 8:58 a.m.: commercial alarm (Water Street), services rendered; 8:58 a.m.: officer wanted (West Main Street), re: social media issue; 10:32 a.m.: suspicious mv (Grove Street), investigated; 10:32 a.m.: commercial alarm (Water Street), services rendered; 10:53 a.m.: officer wanted (Prospect Street), re: ex-bf's mv; 11:01 a.m.: fire/woods/grass/other (Church Street), rep. stuck in elevator; 11:49 a.m.: 911 call (Fairview Drive), resolved; 2:17 p.m.: animal complaint (Woodside Road), re: stray cats; 2:26 p.m.: 911 call (Mercury Drive), resolved; 2:34 p.m.: mv complaint (Main Street), no problem noted on police log; 2:48 p.m.: mv complaint (Main Street), erratic operator; 3:08 p.m.: residential alarm (Hastings Road), services rendered; 3:34 p.m.: animal complaint (Taylor Drive), re: poor living conditions; 4:07 p.m.: fraud (Charlton Road), report taken; 4:09 p.m.: medical/general (North Spencer Road); 5:11 p.m.: disturbance (Howe Village), rep. loud argument; 6:10 p.m.: fire (Northwest Road), referred; 6:43 p.m.: 911 call (Main Street), accidental; 7:24 p.m.: 911 call (West Main Street), resolved; 9:21 p.m.: abandoned 911 call (Main Street), no status recorded on police log; 9:33 p.m.: intelligence/drugs (West Main Street), info taken; (total daily mv stops - 5).

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12

12:28-2:30 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 2:33 a.m.: 911 call (Mechanic Street), resolved; 5:10 a.m.: intelligence/parole (West Main Street), info rec'd; 9:23 a.m.: medical/general (Maple Street); 9:29 a.m.: DPW call (Debbie Drive), rep. no power; 10:19 a.m.: medical/general (Greenville Street); 10:44 a.m.: officer wanted (Main Street), rep. call port in roadway; 12:06 p.m.: DPW call (Tom Casey Road), tree in roadway; 12:50 p.m.: medical/general (Paxton Road); 2:35 p.m.: medical/general (Main Street); 4:21 p.m.: larceny (Brooks Pond Road), report taken; 4:44 p.m.: medical/general (Bixby Road); 5:08 p.m.: disturbance (Debbie Drive),

noise complaint; 5:51 p.m.: officer wanted (Clark Street), req. welfare check; 6:56 p.m.: animal complaint (Donnelly Road), loose dog; 8:19 p.m.: suspicious persons (Laliberte Lane), info taken; 8:21 p.m.: mv complaint (Main Street), rep. poss. drunk driver; 8:40 p.m.: accident (Main Street), report taken; (total daily mv stops - 4).

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13

12:45-2:58 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 1:13 a.m.: 911 call (Wilson Avenue), hang-up; 2:06 a.m.: disturbance (North Spencer Road), noise complaint; 7:54 a.m.: lost/found (Wire Village Road), debit card found; 11:12 a.m.: mv lockout (West Main Street), assisted; 12:02 p.m.: officer wanted (Adams Street), spoken to; 3:27 p.m.: fraud (R. Jones Road), report taken; 5:22 p.m.: mutual aid (West Main Street), Sturbridge PD bolo; 5:37-6:04 p.m.: buildings checked, secure; 6:53 p.m.: fire alarm (Greenville Street), referred; 8:37 p.m.: medical/general (High Street); 9:09 p.m.: medical/general (Main Street); 9:56 p.m.: suspicious mv (Meadow Road), investigated; 11:27 p.m.: officer wanted (Fourth Avenue), husband locked out of house; (total daily mv stops - 0).

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14

12:23-2:28 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 1:06 a.m.: fire alarm (Ash Street), referred; 5:55 a.m.: animal complaint (Main Street), coyotes in area; 7:12 a.m.: commercial alarm (Main Street), services rendered; 7:26 a.m.: medical/general (Ash Street); 8:32 a.m.: LTC issued (West Main Street), assisted; 9:25 a.m.: officer wanted (Howe Village), rep. concern for client; 11:10 a.m.: sex offender registration (West Main Street), assisted; 12:02 p.m.: animal complaint (Cherry Street), poss. stray cat; 12:12 p.m.: animal complaint (Ash Street), loose dog; 12:35 p.m.: abandoned 911 call (Cranberry Meadow Road), no emergency; 12:35 p.m.: abandoned 911 call (West Main Street), no contact; 1:28 p.m.: commercial alarm (Old Meadow Road), services rendered; 2:17 p.m.: mv complaint (Main Street), txr from Leicester PD; 2:21 p.m.: hit/run accident (West Main Street), report taken; 3:05 p.m.: 911 call (West Main Street), no status noted on police log; 3:18 p.m.: officer wanted (West Main Street), LTC change of address; 3:41 p.m.: officer wanted (Prospect Street), issue w/neighbor; 4:09 p.m.: disable mv (Route 49), assisted; 6:15 p.m.: RV complaint (Donnelly Road), dirt bikes up/down road; 6:27 p.m.: medical/general (West Main Street); 6:27 p.m.: DPW call (Clark Road), tree hanging over roadway; 7:26 p.m.: medical/general (Whittemore Court); 9:14 p.m.: medical/general (Route 49); 9:32 p.m.: accident (Main Street), report taken; 10:05 p.m.: medical/general (High Street); 11:55 p.m.: building checked, secure; (total daily mv stops - 2).

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15

12:16-2:43 a.m.: buildings checked, secure; 12:25 a.m.: suspicious mv (Church Street), investigated; 1:01 a.m.: medical/general (Woodside Road); 2:08 a.m.: commercial alarm (Old Meadow Road), services rendered; 3:28 a.m.: commercial alarm (Old Meadow Road), services rendered; 5:51 a.m.: building checked, secure; 6:59 a.m.: FID card issued (West Main Street), assisted; 7:00 a.m.: LTC issued (West Main Street), assisted; 8:05 a.m.: DPW call (Bay Path Road), box truck struck wire; 10:12 a.m.: abandoned 911 call (Old Meadow Road), no emergency; 10:32 a.m.: suspicious persons (North Spencer Road), investigated; 11:31 a.m.: accident (West Main Street), report taken; 11:43 a.m.: abandoned 911 call (Maple Street), accidental; 12:58 p.m.: abandoned 911 call (Town House Court), no emergency; 3:00 p.m.: assault (Dustin Street), Calon Alexander Milam, 37, 756 Main Street, Worcester, assault/battery on elderly/disabled person, disorderly conduct, disturbing the peace/subsequent offense, arrest; 4:36 p.m.: residential alarm (Hastings Road), services rendered; 5:14 p.m.: officer wanted (West Main Street), water shut off; 5:40 p.m.: intelligence/criminal (West Main Street), info taken; 7:27 p.m.: residential alarm (Main Street), referred; 9:23 p.m.: mv complaint (Main Street), erratic operator; 9:48 p.m.: suspicious mv (West Main Street), investigated; 11:24 p.m.: juvenile matter (Condon Drive), juv. has not returned home; (total daily mv stops - 5).

###

kids' corner

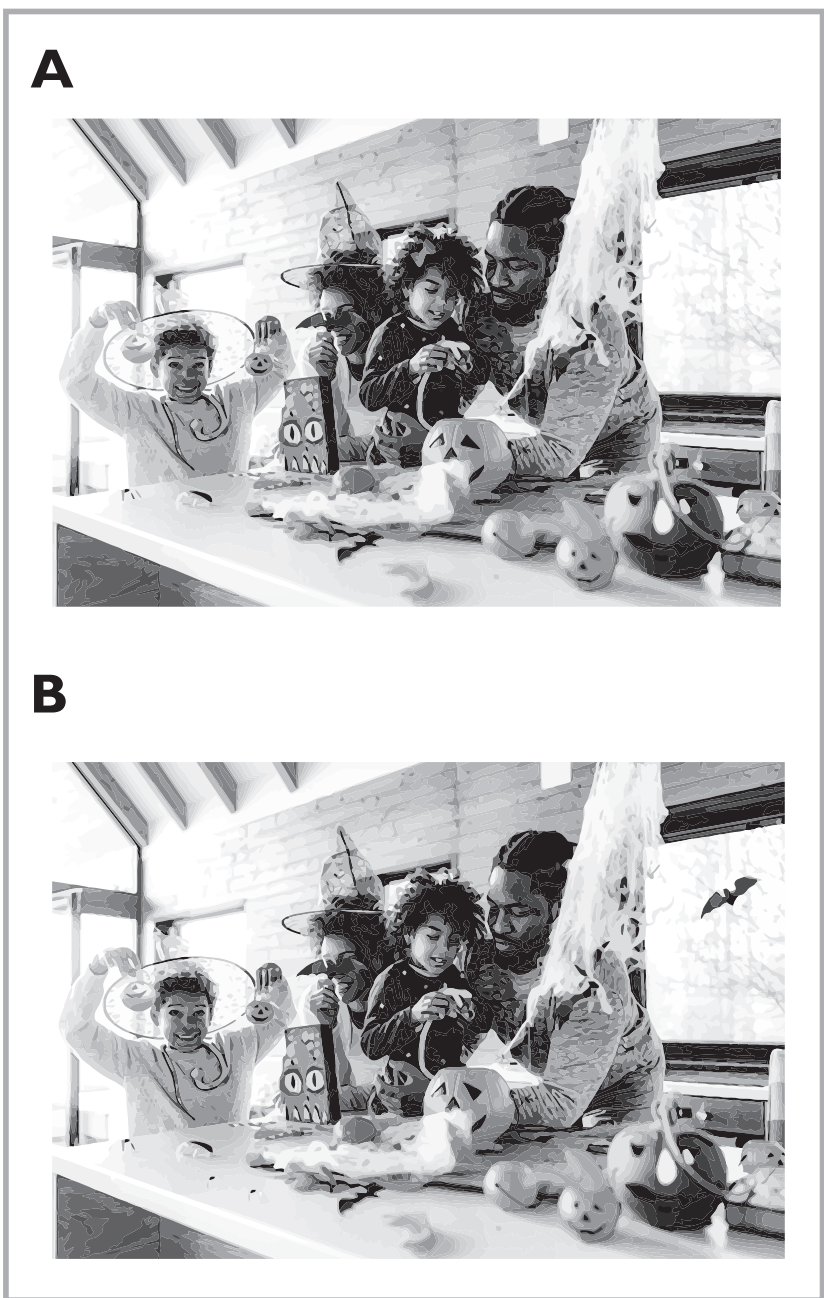
Fun FACT:

This was one of the most popular Halloween costumes in 2023.

Answer: Barbie

What's the Difference?

Find the four differences between these pictures.



Answers: 1. Extra spiders on counter 2. Eye is different in Jack-o'-lantern in back 3. Bow in girls' hair is missing 4. Bat on window

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1760: King George III succeeds to the British throne on the death of his grandfather.

1940: Benjamin O. Davis Sr. is named the first African American general in the United States Army.

2001: Microsoft releases its Windows XP operating system.

NEW WORD

DECEIVE

cause to believe something that is not true

How they say that in...

English: Costume
Spanish: Disfraz
Italian: Costume
French: Costume
German: Kostüm

Did You Know?

Edgar Allen Poe's poems are spooky enough to be read around Halloween time. One of his more famous is called "The Raven."

Get the PICTURE?

Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Skulls

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to business. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 15 = E)

A. 14 8 8 15 1
 Clue: Valuable thing

B. 6 9 2 15 8 1
 Clue: Provide money

C. 24 2 15 16 12 15 14 18
 Clue: Costs or expenses

D. 21 17 18 23 15 1
 Clue: Estimate expenses

Answers: A. asset B. invest C. overhead D. budget

SUDOKU

9	7	3		4		5		8
		5			2			
	2				8		9	
		8	2	4				
7	9			5			8	
			1			6		4
	8		9					1
	5		4	1				
3					7	2		5

Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:
 Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

3	1	9	8	6	7	2	4	5
2	5	7	4	1	3	8	6	9
4	8	6	9	2	5	7	3	1
5	3	2	1	8	9	6	7	4
7	9	4	3	5	6	1	8	2
1	6	8	2	7	4	9	5	3
6	2	1	5	3	8	4	9	7
8	4	5	7	9	2	3	1	6
9	7	3	6	4	1	5	2	8

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

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Dibb looks to unseat Durant in Worcester-Hampshire District

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER
REGION — Challenging for the Worcester-Hampshire District Senate seat, Sheila Dibb brings an extensive background of municipal service and community leadership.

In addition to serving 13 years on her town's Select Board, Dibb (D—Rutland) has held several other leadership positions that contributed to community betterment. With each role and service project along the way, she has enjoyed opportunities to meet residents, understand their needs,

and work collaboratively toward solutions.

"My passion has always been local government. It is the front lines of representing people and has the most direct effect on people's lives," Dibb told the New Leader. "I'm proud of my 13-year record in Rutland, which included state-level advocacy for many of the issues our communities are concerned about."

After earning a degree in political science, Dibb spent multiple years in property management and project management, in addition to serving on the Select Board from 2007-2020.

Following her career on the Board, Dibb served as the com-

munications coordinator for the Rutland Regional Vaccine Clinic, the largest regional COVID-19 vaccine clinic outside of Boston. The experience showcased the power of leadership when all contributors are aligned with a mission.

"With over 90,000 doses provided to people who journeyed to the center of Massachusetts from across the entire state, I saw what government together from all levels—local, state, and federal—can accomplish when everyone is in it for the right reasons and working together toward a common goal," Dibb said. "My experience with that agile, responsive, focused, and collaborative team was one of the honors of my life, and showed me what good government is really capable of achieving for the people it serves."

Residing in Rutland, which lies near the geographic center of both the state and the Worcester-Hampshire District, Dibb understands the unique composition of the district and the range of challenges facing residents.

"We have one of the most diverse districts in the Commonwealth. Within our 22 communities are a slice of the second-largest city in the state, the gateway city of Gardner; suburban and rural Wachusett, our North Central towns, and the hill towns of our western edges," Dibb said. "I happen to have a unique combination of life and professional experience in cities, towns, and rural communities."

Dibb grew up in Lowell and Uxbridge. In addition to her professional and municipal roles, she also served as a project contractor for the Mass Commission on the Status of Women.

If elected, Dibb would prioritize finding solutions to several issues connecting all towns and



Sheila Dibb

cities in the district. The first surrounds water safety, accessibility, and management.

"One of the most important issues that runs through this entire district is water. Yet it's an issue that people don't think about until suddenly something goes very wrong—a boil water order, or a pause in service," Dibb added. "While we have a diverse district, every single one of our communities has some issue with water, whether it is balancing water protection lands with access; protecting open source water; hosting the Quabbin aqueduct; providing enough water to our growing communities; addressing the price of water; or balancing Boston's seemingly unquenchable thirst for the water that our district protects with our own needs."

At the state level, Dibb says work is needed to ensure that everyone has access to safe, potable, and affordable water. She is also committed to making sure the needs of central Massachusetts towns aren't overlooked in Boston.

Moreover, the crumbling foundations crisis is also a major focus for Dibb. She told the New Leader that much more needs to be done by legislators to protect those impacted by the crisis.

"A n n e Gobi worked on this issue for seven years, and

it's incredibly frustrating to have had it fail on the Conference Committee floor due to a lack of earned support from outside our district," Dibb said. "Collaboration and coalition—and leaving national politics at the door—is essential to getting things done for us in Boston-centric Boston."

Long-term, Dibb is focused on ensuring that district communities have the support they need from the state to improve their municipal infrastructure; increase support for students and educators; and secure resources for public safety departments.

"That means working to ensure that any grant funding or programs from the state provide soup to nuts support, from studies and engineering on forward, and are not just won by those communities inside 128 and 495 who have professional planners, engineers, and grant writers on their staffs," Dibb said.

Away from work and service, Dibb enjoys hiking Wachusett Mountain and other area attractions.

"From the top of Wachusett, you can see the entire Senate district and well beyond it," Dibb said. "I'm also about half-way through hiking the NH 4,000-footers. Every one I've completed so far has been a breathtaking and worthwhile challenge, and I'm looking forward to finishing my list."

Dibb also enjoys biking along rail trail systems across the state, as well as urban biking throughout the district.

The election will take place on Nov. 5.

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With over 47 years of experience, I have a home office in Dudley. The RE/Max Vision office is located on 25 Union Street in Worcester. Being a real estate agent is more than just placing an ad in the newspaper or marketing online. I act as a counselor to my client (buyer or seller). I provide assistance in marketing, staging, inspections, negotiation, and educating them to real estate values. It is a full time job. In order to provide good service, I have a client coordinator, Vicki Bennett assisting me.

I was originally a math teacher and always had an interest in real estate. When I acquired a license I approached a local broker and began my real estate career. I am still actively involved in teaching. I have taught real estate licensing and conducted numerous real estate education classes in buying foreclosures and landlord/tenant classes in Night-life programs at Bay Path Vocational and Assabet Valley Technical School.

The business has changed because of technology and the information network making it easier for buyers to obtain much of their needed information through the internet. For sellers, environmental issues and more informed consumers has made it critical that sellers get professional assistance early to sell their home. Buyers are all watching HGTV and have very specific expectations. Sellers need guidance in staging and making sure they have prepared their house for home inspections. Professionals are able to make it a more pleasurable experience for both buyers and sellers by counselling them.

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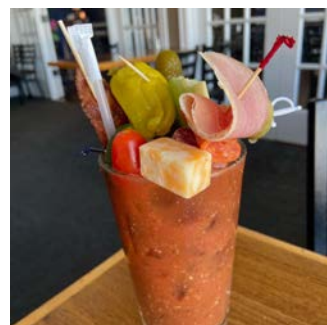
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Easy ways to support small businesses

It's easy to overlook how integral small businesses are to local, national and even global economies. The Small Business Administration and the U.S. Census Bureau indicate small businesses account for 99.7 percent of all American businesses, employing 56.8 million people. Similarly, according to Statistics Canada, local businesses classified as micro or small businesses made up 98.1 percent of all the employers in Canada in 2021.

Since small businesses are the economic engine of many neighborhoods and communities, it's in everyone's best interest to pitch in and ensure such firms' success. Thankfully, it's easy for anyone to support the small businesses that make their communities unique.

- Shop locally and online from small businesses as much as possible. If you cannot shop right away, consider purchasing gift cards to the retailer or service provider and share them as gifts to others.

- Before you immediately go with a well-known chain or e-commerce giant, find out if a local retailer offers the same items you need and shop there.

- Actively discover new brands, check them out, and then spread the word about your findings to others.

- Share posts from small businesses on social media. It's good exposure for them and can help to widen their customer base.

- Attend special events or promotions hosted by local businesses. Well-attended events may spark others' curiosity.

- Share a quick photo of something you bought at a small business or of a service they provided. For example, if a local landscaping company did a wonderful job putting in a new patio or pavers, share the before and after with those you know.

Communities can embrace various strategies to support the small businesses that make Main Street unique.

How communities benefit when consumers shop local

Ideas about shopping are never set in stone, and the pandemic illustrated just how quickly consumer trends and opinions can change. Many individuals are now reevaluating how they spend their hard-earned money, particularly since inflation has affected just how far a dollar can be stretched. When consumers think about which stores to patronize, locally owned businesses may be the smartest option for a number of reasons — not the least of which is the way such enterprises benefit the communities they call home.

More money kept in the community

Shopping locally means that more money will stay in the community. According to recent research from Civic Economics, local eateries return nearly 79 percent of revenue to the community, compared to just over 30 percent for chain restaurants. Overall, for every \$100 spent at a local business, around \$73 remains in the community, versus roughly \$43 when shopping at a non-locally owned business.

Get a personal touch

Local business owners typically are inclined to go the extra mile for their customers and are personally invested in the services and products they are selling. As a result, shopping locally tends to be a personalized experience. Furthermore, a local business owner may be more amenable to ordering products for specific clientele. Such personalized service is typically not accessible when shopping big box stores or other shops where owners are off-site.

Lines are short

Waiting in long lines for check-out or to pick up merchandise ordered online can drain consumers' energy and contribute to stress. Local businesses tend to have short lines and small crowds, which can lead to a more pleasant shopping experience.

Generates tax revenue

Local businesses generate more tax revenue per sales dollar, according to Rubicon, a digital marketplace for waste and recycling businesses. Taxes paid by local small businesses go to support schools, parks, roads, and other programs that benefit the community as well.

Support nonprofits

Local businesses often support good work in the community, such as nonprofit groups. These can include schools and sports teams, among other groups. According to Dr. Sue Lynn Sasser, professor of economics at the University of Central Oklahoma, studies indicate nonprofits "receive 250 percent more support from small businesses than larger ones."

Support other local businesses

Local business support other local businesses by buying and selling among each other. A local, independently owned restaurant may source its ingredients from local farms, which means visitors to such eateries are supporting multiple local businesses each time they dine out.

Small businesses are a boon to the economy, particularly local economies. These enterprises help their communities in a multitude of ways.



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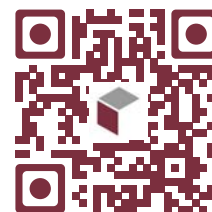


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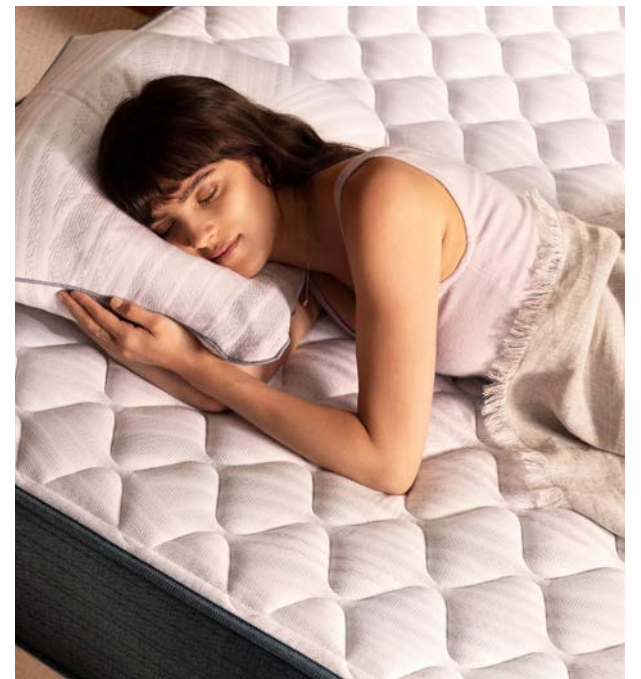


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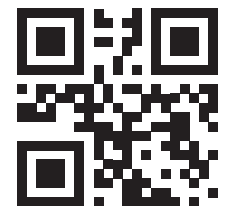
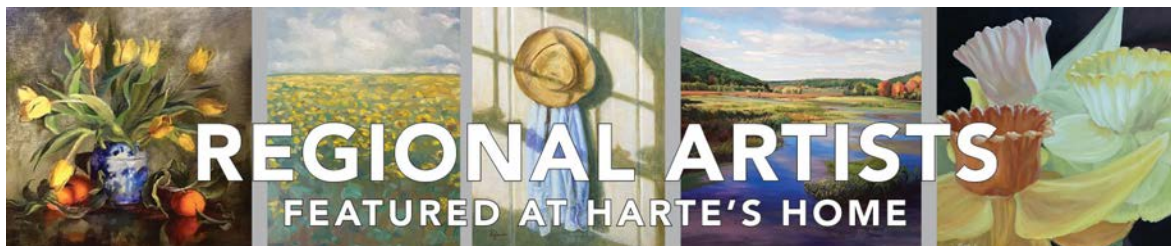
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