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Thursday-Friday, November 27-28, 2025

Our Bright Future purchases former Polish Club, plans Youth Learning Center

SOUTHBRIDGE — A historic chapter is beginning in Southbridge as Our Bright Future (OBF), a rapidly growing youth empowerment organization, has officially purchased the former Polish Club—one of the community’s most cherished landmarks. The acquisition marks a milestone not only for the nonprofit but for families across the region who will soon benefit from expanded educational and enrichment opportunities.

“This is a dream come true for our organization and the community we serve,” said Executive Director Kwasi Acheampong. “We are honored to continue the legacy of this building and transform it into a space that inspires learning, leadership, and innovation.”

A new vision for a beloved landmark

OBF plans to redesign the former Polish Club into a state-of-the-art learning center, offering STEAM-focused programs for children, teens, and families in Southbridge and neighboring towns. The transformed space will serve as a vibrant hub for:

- Robotics & engineering
- 3D printing and technology design
- Arts and creative workshops
- Leadership development

ment

- Homework support and academic enrichment
- Sports, social-emotional learning, and financial literacy

The center will also expand OBF’s mission of empowering youth and fostering future leaders, with a strong commitment to diversity, education, discipline, and respect.

“Our goal is to give young people early exposure to the tools and technologies shaping tomorrow’s world,” Acheampong said. “We want them to walk through these doors and see endless possibilities.”

Community partnerships made purchase possible

OBF credits a long list of partners and supporters who helped make the purchase a reality.

Acheampong expressed deep gratitude to the Polish Club Board of Directors, who entrusted the organization with the building’s future.

He also acknowledged several key partners who guided the process:

- Attorney Brian Roode, for his legal expertise
- Realtor Jeff Borus, for his professionalism in navigating the transaction
- Mike O’Brien of Galaxy Development, for offering expertise and insight



throughout the process

OBF further recognized the generosity of donors whose support helped bring the project to life, including:

Hyde/Dexter-Russell Foundation
Savers Bank
Southbridge Credit

Union

Cornerstone Bank
The Mary & Terence O’Coin Charitable Foundation
Webster Five Foundation
Stoddard Charitable Trust
The Bolger Foundation

ConvenientMD Urgent Care.

Two anonymous donors “Your generosity is building a brighter future for thousands of young people,” Acheampong said.

Phase Two begins: A call to the community

With the purchase complete, OBF is now turning its attention to Phase Two—preparing the building for renovation and transformation.

Local businesses, foundations, and skilled tradespeople are invited to partner with OBF as it begins this ambitious redevelopment.

“We’re asking the community to join us,” Acheampong said. “Whether you’re a tradesperson, a business owner, or a foundation looking to invest in the future, there’s a place for you in this

next phase.”

Anyone interested in contributing can contact Kwasi Acheampong at info@ourbrightfutureinc.org.

A Bright Future ahead
As construction plans develop, excitement continues to grow around what this new center will mean for Southbridge and surrounding communities.

“This is more than a building,” Acheampong said. “It’s a promise to our youth—a promise that we believe in their potential and are investing in their future.”

With its expanded footprint and strengthened community partnerships, Our Bright Future is poised to make an even greater impact in the years ahead. And for Southbridge, the future is looking brighter than ever.

Master Masons receive recognition

BY BRO. JIMMY FALZONE
MAJOR GENERAL SALEM TOWNE
MASONIC LODGE
SOUTHBRIDGE

SOUTHBRIDGE — On Monday, Nov. 17, the Major General Salem Towne Masonic Lodge (MGST) of Southbridge held its monthly meeting. This meeting was also a Fraternal visit from the 24th District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM) Brother Gordon Forsberg.

This evening, the lodge was packed to witness two local men receive their recognition. DDGM Brother Gordon Forsberg presented to Brother Paul Davidson of East Brookfield a Letter of Commendation from the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts of Boston, Brother George Forest Hamilton. This commendation was for faithfully serving as Master of Webster Lodge for two

consecutive years. Brother Damian Tavernier of Webster received his Masonic Diploma from the Grand Lodge of Masons of Massachusetts, located in Boston, after being raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on June 28. This diploma signified his journey was worth the wait to be a fellow Master Mason who values honor and integrity.

Major General Salem Towne Masonic Lodge (MGST) was chartered on Sept. 6, 1859. What we do know is that this Masonic Lodge has been going strong for 166 years and we continue to make good men even better. If you would like more information about Freemasonry and to find a lodge nearest you, visit our Web site at www.massfreemasonry.org.



Courtesy

Left to right: Brother Paul Davidson smiles holding his Letter of Commendation and Brother Damian Tavernier very happy to receive his Diploma, from the Grand lodge of Masons in Massachusetts of Boston.

St. Anne and St. Patrick Parish conclude first Alpha Program, plan January session

STURBRIDGE — St. Anne and St. Patrick parish recently completed its first Alpha session, a program that fosters spiritual enrichment, invites people to bring friends for a conversation about faith, and serves as an exercise in community building. More than 30 parishioners and non-parishioners participated.

Alpha embraces three key ingredients: Connect, Watch, and Discuss. At St. Anne and St. Patrick participants first connected over a meal, prepared by the Alpha team of 14.

The participants then watched a talk on one of life’s biggest faith questions and broke into small group sessions where they were encouraged to freely express their thoughts and personal opinions.

During these informal conversations participants explored the larger issues in life and faith, examining the basics of Christian



belief. For example, the group addressed questions related to who is Jesus, why and how do you pray, how does God guide us in everyday life, and other

critical ideas.

After exploring the faith-related questions, participants had the opportunity for further discussion, and contributed

their own perspective in a welcoming, non-judgmental environment. The facilitators served as conversation starters without preaching or teaching.

After attending the first session, Sue Kinsella said, “I feel that I evolved in my intellectual understanding and experienced a deeper spiritual connection.” She added that the videos helped her develop new perspectives.

For Kathy Cole, the experience helped to deepen her faith. She expressed gratitude to the entire Alpha team for sponsoring the program.

Alpha is not limited to those who practice the Christian faith but is open to those from all faith journeys or those with no faith.

The program runs for 11 weeks; people are encouraged to participate for the first few weeks to see if Alpha is right for them.

One of the team members, Ashley C., first experienced Alpha in college where she learned more about the basics of her Christian faith. “It was nice to revisit the concepts

in a deeper way coupled with life experience,” she said, referring to this Alpha session.

She added that the diverse group of participants shared their enthusiasm for the program and praised its positive impact, noting, “The Alpha team looks forward to hosting another session this January. It’s perfect for those reconnecting with faith or exploring it for the first time. Consider coming and also inviting someone you know!”

To learn more about Alpha, visit <https://alphausa.org>. Click the QR code for a video that explains the program and to register. A video can also be accessed at <https://alphausa.org/what-is-alpha/>. For more information on the Alpha program at St. Anne and St. Patrick, please contact alphasturbridge@gmail.com. The Alpha program is open to the public.

Cornerstone Bank named one of nation’s Best Banks to Work For

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank has been recognized as one of the 2025 Best Banks to Work For, ranking #15 nationwide on the annual listpublished by American Banker. It’s the second year in a row Cornerstone has earned this honor celebrating banks that excel at creating supportive, engaging workplaces where employees feel valued and empowered to succeed.

The Best Banks to Work For program, now in its 12th year, is conducted by American Banker in partnership with Best Companies Group. This year, 90 banks across the country earned a place on the list following an in-depth evaluation of workplace policies and anonymous employee surveys assessing engagement and satisfaction.

“We’re incredibly proud to be recognized among the best banks to work for in the nation,” said President and CEO Todd Tallman. “Our employees are the heart of Cornerstone Bank, and this recognition reflects their dedication, teamwork and commitment to our customers and communities.”

According to American Banker Editor-in-Chief Chana Schoenberger, “The banks recognized as Best Banks to Work For are institutions employees want to join and stay. They understand how to give workers reasons to find purpose in their jobs.”

To determine the rankings, each participating bank was evaluated through a two-part process: a review of workplace practices, policies and benefits (25 percent of the total score) and an anonymous employee survey (75 percent). The combined results determined the final ranking.

About Cornerstone Bank
Cornerstone Bank was formed in 2017, born of a long history of supporting the community, and providing a strong foundation to help people and businesses thrive. Serving Worcester County, Cornerstone Bank’s local presence and community-based banking model enables a unique ability to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch. Cornerstone, which is a subsidiary of Peoples-BankCorp, MHC, operating independently under its own name and brand, provides the highest level of service and expertise for individuals, businesses, and community organizations with branch locations throughout Central Massachusetts. Cornerstone works to connect customers with opportunities through a broad range of deposit

and loan products and services. Built on Trust is not just a tagline, but also one of our guiding corporate values. Whether a business or personal partnership, Cornerstone stands on the foundation that relationships are built on trust. To learn about Cornerstone Bank’s personal and business banking offerings, please visit cornerstonebank.com or call 800-939-9103.

About American Banker
American Banker empowers banking professionals with insight into the ideas transforming their industry. Through journalism, events, and research, it connects more than 850,000 industry leaders online, in person, and in print every day.
About Best Companies Group
Since 2004, Best Companies Group has identified and recognized great employers through independent research and employee surveys designed to measure workplace satisfaction and culture.

Community Calendar
Nov. 28–Dec. 5

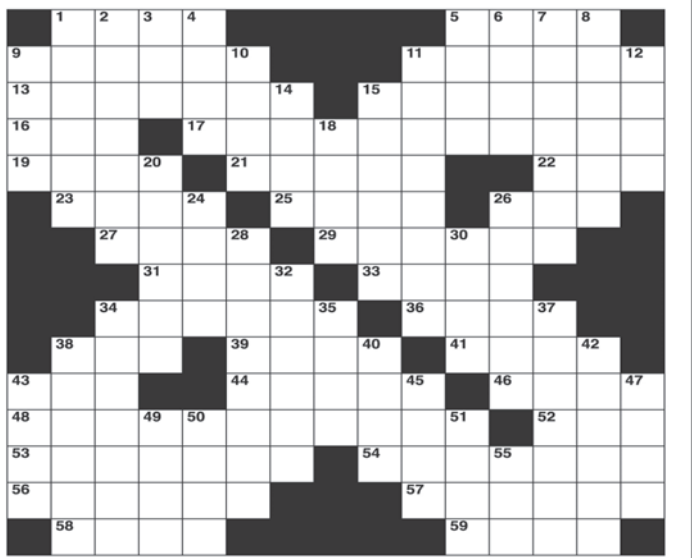
From turkey leftovers to twinkling lights,
Here’s where to go on these late-fall nights.
Mark your days and circle your dates—
The season is shifting, and winter awaits.
Friday, Nov. 28
A stroll through town is a fine place to start,
But stop by Jacob Edwards Library for books of the heart.
Open at 9, they’ll help you find
A story to match your holiday mind.
Saturday, Nov. 29
In Sturbridge, Old Sturbridge Village glows,
With candlelit paths where the cold wind blows.
“Christmas by Candlelight” begins at 3,
A festive walk for the family.
(Nov. 29–30; advance tickets required.)
Sunday, Nov. 30
The Charlton Public Library at 1 p.m. calls
With crafts for kids in its welcoming halls.
Glue, glitter, paper—holiday cheer,
A perfect way to end the month’s final day here.
Monday, Dec. 1
Bundle up early and shake off the chill—
Town offices open in Charl-

ton and Brimfield.
A practical stop, but a timely one too,
If permits or filings are waiting for you.
Tuesday, Dec. 2
At Holland Town Hall, plans take flight
When boards and committees meet at night.
Check the agenda on the town’s website,
Then join in the work that shapes local life.
Wednesday, Dec. 3
Hitchcock Academy in Brimfield at six
Offers yoga to help with the seasonal mix.
Stretch and breathe in a warm, calm space—
A quiet midweek, unhurried pace.
Thursday, Dec. 4
Southbridge Senior Center hosts coffee at nine,
With conversation warm as the rising sunshine.
Drop in to chat or greet a friend—
A cheerful routine that never should end.
Friday, Dec. 5
The week concludes with a gathering bright:
Sturbridge’s Tree Lighting at dusk’s first light.
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CLUES ACROSS

1. Difficult

5. Coarsely ground corn

9. There’s one for the “world”

11. Loved Romeo

13. Sticky situation

15. Pelvic areas

16. An informal debt instrument

17. Cannot be repaired surgically

19. A device attached to a workbench

21. Related on the mother’s side

22. Sound unit

23. ___ Sagan, astronomer

25. Utah city

26. A disappointing effort

27. Steal goods during a riot

29. Wakes up

31. Hair salon service
33. Serenaded

34. Looked intensely

36. U.S. Air Force expert Robert F.

38. A type of cast

39. One’s duty

41. Where golfers begin

43. Make a mistake

44. Semitic sun god

46. Ancient Greek City

48. Having had the head cut off

52. A place to stay

53. Unwise

54. Most unnatural

56. Dennis is a notable one

57. Ointments

58. Students’ exam

59. Leaked blood

CLUES DOWN

1. Brave

2. Act of awakening

3. Jest at

4. Sandwich store

5. Chapter of the Koran

6. Dismounted

7. Small vehicle

8. Irked

9. One who earns by disreputable dealings

10. Monetary unit of Samoa

11. Long, mournful lamentation

12. Weight unit

14. Alone, single

15. Decreases

18. Indicates beside

20. Worn by exposure to the weather

24. A body of traditions
26. College students’ ultimate goal

28. Amino acid

30. Nasal mucus

32. US government entity

34. Swinish

35. Legislative body in Russia

37. Grant an exemption to

38. Put in advance

40. Satisfy

42. Felt

43. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls

45. Witnesses

47. Picnic invaders

49. Gастeyer and de Armas are two

50. Ancient person of Scotland

51. Cheerless

55. Unwell

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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CHURCH LISTINGS

- Central Baptist Church
256 Main St., Southbridge, MA 01550
Tel 508/764-6365; Worship 10:00 A.M.
- Charlton Federated Church, 64 Main St., 508- 248-5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. Summer worship is 9:30 a.m. www.fed-church.org
- Charlton Baptist Church, 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488, www.charltonbaptist.org, Sunday worship 10 a.m.
- Charlton City United Methodist, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org
Sunday worship and Children’s church 10am
- St. Anne St. Patrick Church, 16 Church St., Fiskdale (508) 347-7338
www.stannespaparth.com
Saturday Vigil Mass at 4 pm, Sunday 8 am, 10 am, 12 noon, Youth Mass (September to May) 5 pm. Daily Mass Mon - Thurs 7:30 and 10 am, Fri and Sat 7:30 am
- Elm Street Congregational Church, 61 Elm Street, Southbridge, Ma 01550
Phone: 508-764-8085 • Sunday service 10:00 am
Pastor Kathryn Light
- Faith Baptist Church, 515 Dennison Drive, Southbridge
Phone number 508-764-6132,
Worship Service: Sunday 10:00 a.m.
- St. Joseph’s Church, 10 H. Putnam Ext, 248-7862. www.stjosephscharlton.com, Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30 p.m., Sunday Mass 8 a.m., Sunday Family Mass 10 a.m., Sunday LifeTEEN Mass 5 p.m., Weekday Mass Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 a.m.
- Wayside Church, 6 Haggerty Road, 248-5144
- Assemblies of God Southern New England District Headquarters, Route 20, 248-3771, snedag.org, Office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Living Word Church of Charlton, 10 Main Street - Grange building 1st Floor, Charlton, Ma 01507, Pastor Craig Bellisario, (508) 233-8349
Sunday Service 10:00am.
www.livingwordcharlton.com
info@livingwordcharlton.com
- New Life Fellowship A/G, SNED Chapel, 307 Sturbridge Road, Rt. 20, Charlton, MA, Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.
- Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale- 8 Maple St. Sturbridge, 774-304-1021
www.sturfed.org
Sunday Service 9:30 a.m.
- Bethlehem Lutheran Church- 345 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566
Phone 508-347-7297
Web: www.bethlehemsturbridge.org
Services - Sunday 9:00 am
Pastor Dan Purtell
- Holland Congregation Church “Where the Bible is preached.” 11 Sturbridge Road, Holland, 413-245-9926
Hollandchurch.org
Sunday Service @ 10:00 am
Pastor Dan Maketansky
- Holy Trinity Episcopal Church 446 Hamilton St., Southbridge, MA 01550
Phone: 508-765-9559
Web: www.holytrinitysouthbridge.org
Sunday Service 11:00 am
Pastor Dan Purtell
- St. John Paul II Parish 279 Hamilton St., Southbridge
Rev. Carlos Ardila, Pastor
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PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

The quiet gratitudes that carry us

Thanksgiving tends to arrive with a familiar rhythm. Families set out serving dishes that appear only once a year. Relatives return to the same kitchens and the same stories. Even the drive to a holiday gathering is often unchanged—past the same landmarks, down the same roads. It is a holiday built on repetition, and because of that, it invites reflection. After seasons of steady work, shifting routines, and the pressures that come with daily life, this moment of pause carries more weight than it seems to on the surface.

Across the local community, many residents have experienced a long and challenging year. Some families faced illness or unexpected hardship. Others navigated changes in work or housing, or shouldered the growing responsibility of caring for aging relatives. Yet despite the strain, people continued to show up for one another. They delivered meals, watched neighbors’ children, offered rides, checked in after difficult news, and kept small acts of kindness moving quietly through the community.

Those everyday gestures rarely make headlines, but they form the backbone of town life. Local institutions—schools, libraries, senior centers, churches, small businesses, volunteer groups—depend on them. A teacher who stays late to help a student, a volunteer firefighter who responds during dinner, a coach who encourages a child who has had a rough week, or a business owner who donates to a fundraiser without being asked: these choices strengthen the sense of belonging that small towns rely on.

Thanksgiving offers a rare chance to notice this network of support. Gratitude is not simply a feeling to acknowledge around a holiday table. It is a habit that shapes how communities endure, adapt, and grow. When residents recognize one another’s efforts—large or small—they reinforce the cooperative spirit that keeps these towns grounded. A sincere word, a quiet thank-you, or a moment of acknowledgment can be enough to remind someone that their contribution matters.

This spirit becomes especially important as the region heads into winter, when early sunsets and cold weather can make days feel heavier. Neighbors checking in on one another, making sure someone has heat, companionship, or a shoveled walkway, continues a tradition that’s older than any of the towns themselves. These are the small, steady assurances that help people feel rooted during the darker months.

Thanksgiving is also an opportunity to remember the value of gathering after a long year. Not every table will be full; not every celebration will be easy. Some families will be noticing an empty chair for the first time. Others will be far from relatives or celebrating in smaller, quieter ways. Yet even in those situations, the holiday’s core purpose remains: to reflect on the sources of steadiness we still have, and to recognize the people who helped carry us from one season to the next.

As the holiday arrives, consider reaching out to someone who made your year easier—a neighbor who lent a hand, a coworker who offered support, a community volunteer whose presence you’ve come to rely on. These simple acknowledgments help sustain our towns far beyond Thanksgiving weekend. They affirm the truth that communities do not stay strong on their own; they stay strong because people choose to care for one another, again and again.

The coming winter will bring its share of work, decision-making, and change. But if this region continues to rely on the same quiet generosity it has shown throughout the year, it will move into the next season with confidence. Gratitude, practiced steadily, becomes a form of resilience. It reminds us not only of what we have, but of who we have—and why that still matters.

Letter submission policy

Letters to the Editor must include the author’s name, address, and a daytime phone number for purposes of verification in order to be considered for publication. Only the author’s name and the town in which they reside will be published. Letters submitted without all of the required information will not be accepted.
It is the sole prerogative of the Editor to determine whether a submission satisfies our requirements and decency standards, and any submission may be rejected at any time for any reason he or she might deem appropriate.

OPINION

The Old Mashapaug Road: A corridor through Sturbridge’s past

Long before traffic streamed along Route 20, and well before Sturbridge became known for its museums, inns, and tourist center, a rough track through the woods connected scattered farms along what is today Mashapaug Road. The modern corridor, which borders the Wells State Park region and feeds into the Tantasqua school area, carries centuries of local history—some of it well documented, some still visible only in the landscape.

Mashapaug Road takes its name from Mashapaug Pond, a body of water that predates English settlement and appears in early maps as part of a network of Nipmuc hunting, fishing, and travel routes. The word “Mashapaug,” translated from an Algonquian root, has been interpreted as “large pond” or “standing water,” consistent with descriptions recorded by colonial surveyors in the early 1700s. The pond and surrounding forest were long-used seasonal grounds, and early archaeological surveys documented evidence of Indigenous presence in the region stretching back thousands of years.

European settlement arrived in the early 18th century, when the area that became Sturbridge—formally incorporated in 1738—began dividing and selling large tracts of land for farming. Mashapaug Road emerged not as a formal street but as a farm-to-farm track, connecting homesteads that relied on one another for labor, trade, and news. Sturbridge’s first town records reference property boundaries in this district by natural landmarks—stone heaps, birches, brooks—many still recognizable to hikers

who venture off the main road.

By the early 1800s, Mashapaug Road had become a modest but important artery, connecting farmers to the growing village center along present-day Main Street. The nearby Quinebaug River powered sawmills and gristmills, and local families traveled this route to bring timber, grain, dairy, and handmade goods to market. Land records from the period show numerous small farmsteads, some long vanished, that once lined the corridor.

A turning point came in 1837, when the state authorized a new east–west turnpike to replace the rutted public road. The resulting route—today’s Route 20—shifted traffic south of Mashapaug Road and upended the rhythms of daily life. Inns and taverns sprang up along the turnpike, travelers and commercial wagons passed through Sturbridge in increasing numbers, and the old northern farm road quieted almost overnight. Many families remained, but Mashapaug Road grew more secluded as the century wore on.

Still, it retained its importance as a route of access to wooded tracts that fueled the region’s charcoal and firewood industries. Sturbridge’s 19th-century town reports frequently document timber cutting, orchard planting, and livestock grazing along the ridgeline. Some cellar holes, stone walls, and abandoned pastures visible today in Wells State Park correspond to farms that relied on Mashapaug Road as their link to the rest of town.

The 20th century brought another transformation. As Sturbridge modernized, the

land surrounding Mashapaug Road shifted increasingly toward recreation and conservation. The creation of Wells State Park in 1935 placed roughly 1,400 acres under state management, preserving a landscape that resembled parts of 19th-century Sturbridge far more than the growing commercial strip to the south. Hikers moving through the park’s eastern trails pass near historic foundations connected with families who once farmed the uplands accessed by Mashapaug Road.

Despite development pressures in the postwar period, the road retained much of its rural character—an uncommon continuity in a region shaped by tourism and commercial activity. Today, portions of Mashapaug Road remain bordered by forest, wetlands, and stone walls that mark the outlines of long-gone farm fields. The road’s proximity to the Tantasqua Regional campus underscores its connection to generations of local families; many students travel a route their ancestors might have walked with oxen, wagons, or farm tools.

Local historians continue to study the corridor, drawing from old survey maps, diaries, and property records preserved by the Sturbridge Historical Society. The landscape still holds traces of earlier centuries: boundary markers, remnants of cart paths, and the subtle rise and fall of hand-built walls. For those who take the time to look, Mashapaug Road remains not merely a modern street but a living cross-section of Sturbridge history.

Lanterns Along Main Street

LANTERNS ALONG MAIN STREET By CHIPPY

It’s amusing what a person notices when not rushing. The shorter days pull more of life indoors, and the world seems to contract around kitchens and living rooms. People talk about “getting ready” for the holidays, but it’s rarely the big things that occupy them. It’s whether the good tablecloth is clean. Whether they remembered where they stored the roasting pan. Whether the dog will behave when company arrives—a concern that has caused more tension in households than any political conversation ever could.

One of the quiet joys of living in a small town is seeing how people approach the holidays in different ways but still end up making the season feel shared. Some neighbors decorate their homes early, glowing like beacons long before most of us have untangled our extension cords. Others keep things modest: a candle in each window, a wreath that’s been hanging on the same nail for twenty years, and maybe a single lighted star that looks as though it’s been guiding the same wise men around since the early ’90s.

What I’ve always appreciated, though, is the feeling that no matter how people get ready—enthusiastically, reluctantly, or somewhere in between—there is an underlying sense of kindness in the air. You see it in the way people hold doors for each other without needing to think about it. Or how

someone lets another driver pull out first on a busy road, even if they themselves are late. These aren’t sweeping gestures, but they carry the same weight as any grand holiday message.

Most of us don’t need reminders about the importance of slowing down, but we take them anyway. Something about this season taps us on the shoulder and says, “Look, there is still warmth here. There is still softness.” It might be in the first smell of cookies baking, even if they come from a store-bought tube. Or in the way a grandparent leans in to listen to a story they’ve heard fifteen times but still pretend is new. Or in the laugh of a child who doesn’t yet understand what it means to worry about time.

And maybe that’s the purpose of this in-between season—the weeks when daylight shrinks and streetlights flicker on a little earlier each afternoon. It gives everybody permission to notice the lanterns along their own main street, whether actual lights or the people who brighten things simply by being there.

Winter will arrive soon enough, with all its demands and routines. But right now, in this softer stretch of the year, the world feels like it’s whispering instead of shouting. And if you’re willing to listen closely, you might hear something reassuring in that whisper: we’re all doing our best, we’re all moving at our own pace, and we’re all trying to bring a little light with us into the dark.

Sometimes, that’s enough.

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Another strategy, however, is to leave your HSA funds alone if you can afford to pay medical expenses out of pocket. This approach lets that money grow for future healthcare needs, including retirement.

This strategy transforms your HSA from a spending account into a powerful savings tool. You can always reimburse yourself later for those out-of-pocket medical expenses, even years down the road, so long as you keep your receipts.

Invest for growth. Most HSAs offer investment options, yet only 9 percent of account holders take advantage of them according to a 2025 Devenir HSA survey. The remaining 91 percent keep their entire balance in cash, missing out on potential growth opportunities.

Consider investing at least a portion of your HSA funds, especially if you don’t expect to need the money soon. Just keep

deductions.

- Think long-term. Many people treat their HSA like a checking account,

enough cash available to cover any immediate and significant medical expenses you might face.

- Avoid early penalties. Before age 65, taking HSA money for non-medical expenses means paying income tax plus a 20 percent penalty. But once you hit 65, that penalty disappears and your HSA works much like a traditional IRA for non-medical withdrawals.

Of course, using HSA funds for qualified medical expenses remains tax-free at any age, making it the ideal use for these dollars.

- The bottom line: With healthcare costs continuing to rise, an HSA offers an opportunity to save money while reducing your tax burden. Whether you’re planning for next year’s medical bills or healthcare costs decades away, maximizing your HSA contributions could be one of the smartest financial moves you make.

Whether you’re planning for next year or catching up for 2025, your HSA can help turn today’s savings into tomorrow’s financial security.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Trevor Nielsen, your local Edward Jones Advisor in Sturbridge at 508-347-1420 or trevor.nielsen@edwardjones.com.

Gateway Players announce auditions for “Godspell”

S O U T H-
BRIDGE — Gateway Players Theatre, in conjunction with Elm Street Congregational Church, are hosting auditions for "Godspell." Written, conceived and originally Directed by John-Michael Tebelak. Music and Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz. Auditions will be held on Jan. 4 & 5 at 6 p.m. in the church sanctuary at Elm Street Congregational Church, 61 Elm St., Southbridge.

Actors should be prepared to sing a song from the show. Performance dates are March 20 & 21 at 7 p.m., and March 22 at 2 p.m. Rehearsals will be held on Sunday and Wednesdays beginning January 11th. Presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). The cast consists of adults ages 18 and up. Directed by Lynn

Boucher, produced by Lou-El-len Corkum, and Music Director is Chris Rubenacker. For more information, please contact Gateway at 508-764-4531.

Prepare ye for the timeless tale of friendship, loyalty and love based on the Gospel According to St. Matthew. A small group of people help Jesus Christ tell different parables by using a wide variety of games, storytelling techniques and hefty doses of comic timing. An eclectic blend of songs, ranging in style from pop to vaudeville, is employed as the story of Jesus' life dances across the stage. Dissolving hauntingly into the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, Jesus' messages of kindness, tolerance and love come vibrantly to life.

Characters: Jesus
C h a r i s m a t-

ic and high energy, yet gentle and loving. He is the deceptively calm leader of the troupe. He is eventually betrayed by Judas and persecuted.

Gender: male, Age: 18 to 30, Vocal range top: G5, Vocal range bottom: A3
John The Baptist / Judas

He possesses the attributes of two Biblical figures: he is both Jesus' lieutenant and most ardent disciple, and also the doubter who begins to question and rebel. Like Jesus, he is also charismatic, but in an overt revolutionary way. Handsome and masculine with a subtle undertone of sexuality.

Gender: male, Age: 18 to 35, Vocal range top: G5, Vocal range bottom: A3
Ensemble Soloists, featured actors, and others, 8-10 performers, all genders.

HOUSING PURCHASE PROGRAM OPPORTUNITY

The Sturbridge Affordable Housing Trust will make GRANTS available to assist income and asset qualified First-Time Homebuyers for the purpose of financing the gap between the affordable price and the selling price of an existing-market rate home in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. Participants will be selected by Lottery.

Maximum Income Limits 2025:

Household size	1 person	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6 persons
80% AMI Limits	\$69,850	\$79,800	\$89,800	\$99,750	\$107,750	\$115,750

MAXIMUM PURCHASE PRICES, based on State Housing Calculations for 2025				
Home Size	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms
Maximum Sale Price (includes Maximum per unit subsidy of \$100,000)	\$360,000	\$392,500	\$425,000	\$451,000
Maximum Affordable Purchase Price/Net price to buyers after the subsidy is applied	\$260,000	\$292,500	\$325,000	\$351,000

Applicants must secure approval for a mortgage loan, submit evidence of such approval and availability of funds for a down payment together with the application. Other requirements apply.

INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS:

Tuesday, December 2, 2025, 6pm-8pm and Saturday, December 6, 2025, 10am-12pm, Sturbridge Town Hall, 308 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA. 01566

Attendance is recommended but not required

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

January 22, 2026, by 2pm

APPLICATIONS AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE:

Town of Sturbridge, Planning Department, Housing Coordinator, April Griffin
Center Office Building, 301 Main Street,
Sturbridge, MA. 01566

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Bring a bit of spring indoors this winter



Pot them up, give them a chill and enjoy spring flowering bulbs indoors or outside on a patio, deck or porch. Forcing spring-flowering bulbs like tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, grape hyacinths and crocus is a great way to use those bulbs that didn't get planted in the garden or were on sale late in the season.

All you need is a suitable container, some well-drained potting mix, the bulbs and a place to give the bulbs the chill necessary to force them to bloom. Gather all your supplies and clear a space to assemble your bulb planter.

Select a container with drainage holes that is deep enough to accommodate the largest bulbs. Shorter varieties

are less likely to flop but taller ones can be held upright with stakes, twigs and other decorative supports. Cover the bottom of the container with two inches of a well-drained potting mix. Place the bulbs close together about one half the bulb width apart with the neck of larger bulbs at or just below the soil surface. Set tulips with the flat side of the bulb facing the pot for a better display.

Create a spring garden in a larger container by using a deep container and planting the bulbs in layers. Select a variety of bulbs that bloom at the same time for greater impact or use a combination of early-, mid- and late-blooming spring-flowering bulbs to extend the bloom time and your enjoyment. The package usually lists the color, height and bloom time of the bulbs.

Place an inch or two of soil in the bottom and set the largest bulbs in place. Cover



A container of forced grape hyacinth, daffodil and tulip bulbs.

these bulbs with soil and add the smaller bulbs, like grape hyacinths and crocus, on the next level. Plant these bulbs close together for greater impact. Cover this layer with at least an inch of soil. Water thoroughly until the excess water drains out the bottom of the pot.

Move your bulb-filled containers to a cool location where temperatures remain above freezing and between 35 to 45 degrees Fahrenheit for 12 to 15 weeks. A spare

refrigerator works well for this. Just avoid storing the bulbs with fruit, like apples and pears, that emit ethylene gas that can negatively impact flowering. If refrigerator space is limited, you can store the unplanted bulbs in a paper bag, so they take up less space in the fridge for the needed chill before planting.

Those gardening in colder climates can also store the pots in an unheated garage. Just water the containers

whenever the soil is thawed and dry. Or sink the container into a vacant garden space in your landscape. Mulch the soil once the ground starts to freeze with evergreen boughs. The winter mulch makes retrieving the container easier in winter or early spring.

Begin moving the containers out of cold storage once the 12- to 15-week chilling period is complete. Extend your enjoyment and the bloom time by removing one or just a few pots every week. Place the pot in a cool, bright location to encourage more compact growth. Water thoroughly when the top few inches of soil begin to dry. Soon the leaves will begin to sprout, and flowers will appear in about three to four weeks.

Provide ongoing care if you plan on moving the bulbs into the garden. Remove the faded flowers, place the leafy plants in a sunny window and water

thoroughly whenever the top inch of soil is dry. Fertilize with a dilute solution of any flowering houseplant fertilizer. Move them into the garden once the danger of frost has passed. Be patient because it may be a year or two before they bloom again.

Plant plenty for you to enjoy and share with others. Everyone will appreciate the extra spring color the forced bulbs provide.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the Mid-west Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition and Small Space Gardening. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" streaming courses and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and her Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.



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Sheriff’s Office receives national award for reentry efforts in Worcester County

WORCESTER — The Worcester County Sheriff’s Office Regional Reentry Center received the Community Activism Award from the National Organization for Human Services at the organization’s national conference on Nov. 8. The Regional Reentry Center was recognized for its holistic, person-centered approach to supporting successful reentry and long-term stability for individuals involved in the criminal justice system and returning to Worcester County communities.

Worcester Mayor Joseph Petty and the Worcester City Council formally recognized the Worcester County Sheriff’s Office Regional Reentry Center (RRC) during the Worcester City



Sheriff Evangelidis, the WCSO RRC team, and Worcester City Officials pose for a photo with the NOHS award, a Proclamation from the city, and a citation from the Massachusetts State Senate.

Council meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 18, at Worcester City Hall. The ceremony highlighted the Center’s selection as the recipient of the Community Activism Award from the National

Organization for Human Services (NOHS), a national nonprofit dedicated to enhancing human services, supporting professionals, and promoting excellence through advocacy, profes-

sional development, and collaboration.

The NOHS Community Activism Award honors individuals, groups, and organizations that demonstrate exceptional commitment to

the communities they serve, equitable access to services, and community transformation. In its notification, NOHS highlighted the Reentry Center’s leadership, collaboration, and model of

systemic advocacy, noting the program’s lasting impact on individuals and families throughout Central Massachusetts.

Sheriff Lew Evangelidis expressed deep gratitude for the recognition, noting that it reflected the dedication of the Regional Reentry Center team and the broader mission of the Worcester County Sheriff’s Office.

"This award is particularly gratifying because the concept of a reentry center originated with one employee through a grant and donated space," explained Evangelidis. "Over the past 15 years, the reentry center has evolved into an extraordinary service organization that serves as a national model. It was incredibly humbling for our Regional Reentry Center to receive this national award, especially among so many outstanding initiatives and dedicated professionals across the country."

The Regional Reentry Center, located at 365 Main St., Worcester, provides a comprehensive continuum of services to those involved in the criminal justice system, including:

- Transitional and permanent housing assistance
- Mental health and substance use treatment
- Workforce development and employment opportunities
- Peer recovery coaching
- Full wraparound supports tailored to individual needs

These programs help individuals rebuild their lives, reduce recidivism, and strengthen the Worcester County community. To learn more about the center, visit the main street location, or call 508-752-1212.

Experience the joy of the season with Federated Church Holiday Concert and Sing-Along



The Fanfare Brass Ensemble will be the featured performers at a holiday concert and sing-along on Nov. 30.

STURBRIDGE — The Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale will present a holiday concert and sing-along on Sunday, Nov. 30, at 3 p.m. in the church sanctuary at 8 Maple St., Sturbridge, according to Rev. David W. Cote, pastor.

The concert will feature music of the season from the Fanfare Brass Ensemble and the Sturbridge Federated Church choir, under the direction of choral director, Andrew Kosiba.

The Fanfare Brass Ensemble, established by David Neill in 2008, draws its inspiration from the acclaimed Philip Jones Brass Ensemble. The Fanfare Brass Ensemble is composed of experienced brass musicians including David Neill (Bass Trombone), Trumpet players Robert Venables, Sheldon Ross, Ken McCance, and Melissa Willis, Jean Jeffries (French Horn), Trombon-

ists David Sporny and Charles Emery, Ernie Adams (Bass Trombone), and David Winer (Tuba).

The event is free to the public, with a voluntary goodwill offering to be collected during the performance.

For more information about the event, please visit the church website at sturfed.org or contact the church office at (774) 304-1021 or via email at churchoffice@sturfed.org.

The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale joyfully celebrates Christ’s presence and God’s grace in our lives. Members of the community are welcome

and invited to join in worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Services are also live-streamed on the church’s Facebook page.

Ideal gifts for those who love the outdoors

Many people find that the great outdoors is the perfect place to spend their days. Activities run the gamut from hunting and fishing to hiking and camping. Plenty of other interests, like birdwatching or mountain biking, also maximize time spent in the outdoors.

According to the "Outdoor Participation Trends Report" from the Outdoor Industry Association, gateway activities like hiking, camping and fishing each gained more than two million new participants over the last year. There's also been a surge in participation in such activities among seniors and youth, contributing to a more multigenerational outdoors experience. There's also been participation growth among Black and Hispanic Americans, indicating long-term momentum toward equity and inclusion.

When it comes to holiday giving, tapping into the interests of outdoor enthusiasts is a great way to offer gifts that will be used and appreciated. Here are some ideas when making holiday shopping lists.

• First aid kit: No matter the activity, having an up-to-date and well-stocked first aid kit can be a lifesaver when spending time in the

outdoors. The kit should include items like splints and bandage wraps for immobilizing ankles or limbs in the event of sprains.

• Quality wool socks: Nothing can derail an outdoor adventure faster than wet, cold or blistered feet. Wool socks are a must because they are moisture-wicking, warm and comfortable.

• Insulated, waterproof jacket: A high-quality jacket for outdoor adventures that will be efficient at trapping heat, windproof and water-resistant is a thoughtful gift. Patagonia is a popular brand of outerwear, but retailers like Columbia and REI also merit consideration.

• Trail shoes or sandals: Supportive, comfortable and non-slip footwear is a given when enjoying the great outdoors. Depending on the activity, there are plenty of options from boots to hikers to trail sandals to consider.

• Waist pack: Packing light for short jaunts in the wilderness may include stocking a waist pack (also known as a fanny pack) with must-have items. They are lightweight, comfortable and spacious enough for the essentials without getting bogged down by a backpack or another bag.

• Buff: A buff is a tube of lightweight, stretchy material that serves innumerable functions in the great outdoors. It can be used to shield the neck from the sun or wind, or to absorb sweat or keep hair out of the face. A buff can be useful on a hiking or backpacking trip, or just about any outdoor activity.

• Headlamp: Visibility is essential when enjoying the great outdoors, and many activities happen during dawn and dusk when light may be at a premium. A headlamp keeps things hands-free and sheds light on surroundings or up-close tasks, like setting up fishing hooks or field dressing game.

• Satellite communicator: A satellite communicator can keep outdoors enthusiasts safe and at ease when off the grid. Certain regions have spotty cell coverage, and satellite devices will do better at sending out messages or SOS signals should something go awry.

• Hiking poles: Telescoping hiking poles are adjustable and lightweight, and offer extra support and balance when on trails.

Outdoor enthusiasts will benefit from gifts tailored to their love of nature, wildlife and adventure.

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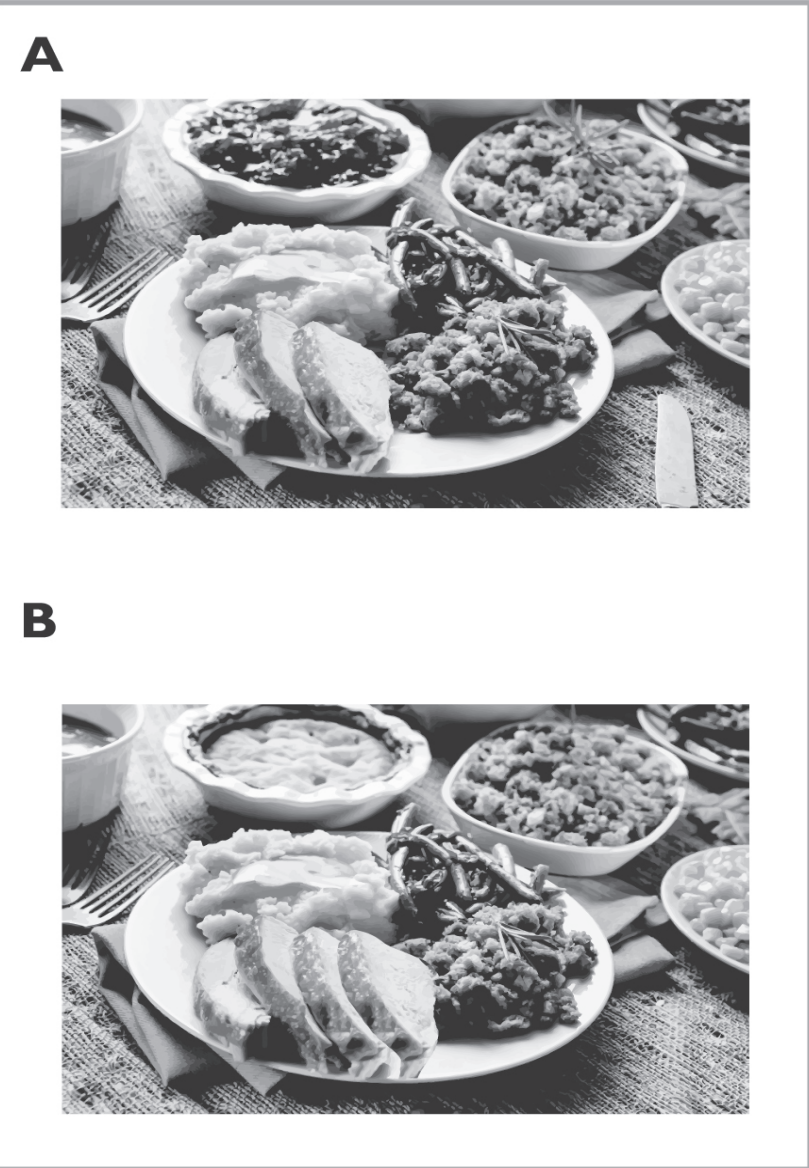
World
FACT:

This country celebrates Thanksgiving in October.

Answer: Canada

What’s the Difference?

Find the four differences between the two pictures.



Answers: 1. Garnish missing from stuffing 2. Extra slice of turkey 3. Missing knife 4. Pie in place of cranberries

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25

1833: A massive undersea earthquake rocks Sumatra.

1915: Albert Einstein presents the field equations of general relativity.

1963: The state funeral of John F. Kennedy takes place and the President is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

NEW
WORD

GRATITUDE

the quality of being thankful

“How they say that in...”

English: Turkey
Spanish: Pavo
Italian: Tacchino
French: Dindon
German: Truthahn

Did You Know?

Pumpkin pie is a popular dessert served on Thanksgiving. Apple pie also is popular on this beloved holiday.

Get the PICTURE?

Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Cranberry sauce

LEGALS

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES
Under G.L. c.255 Sec.39A
Notice is hereby given by Cruise Control Transportation Inc. Pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, Section 39A. that on or after November 8, 2025 at Cruise Control Transportation Inc. the following motor vehicle/s will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicle:
VEHICLE MAKE: 2017 Chevrolet Equinox
VIN: 2GNFLGE36H6136074
LAST REGISTERED OWNER: Robert Dube
471A Mill St
Worcester MA 01602
VEHICLE MAKE: 2014 Nissan Sentra
VIN: 3N1AB7APXEY204775
LAST REGISTERED OWNER: Thomas Maher
2 DEB RD
WOBURN MA 01801
VEHICLE MAKE: 2006 Acura TL
VIN: 19UUA66266A028268
LAST REGISTERED OWNER: Angel Ortiz Cruz
30 1/2 HACKER ST APT 2
Worcester MA 01603-2821
VEHICLE MAKE: 2004 Ford Taurus
VIN: 1FAFP53254A205030
LAST REGISTERED OWNER: Sandra M. Zadrick (203) 460-2985
410 EMAIN ST APT 209
MERIDEN CT 06450
VEHICLE MAKE: 2014 Chevrolet Sonic
VIN: 1G1JC5SH3E4241653
LAST REGISTERED OWNER: Hanlon, John J
5638 ELEUTHERA WAY
NAPLES FL 34119
VEHICLE MAKE: 1999 moped
VIN: LJ7TCA2F7RZ515647
LAST REGISTERED OWNER: Trobaugh, Jules A
15 WESTLAND ST
WORCESTER MA 01602-2128
November 24, 2025

November 31, 2025
December 7, 2025

Town of Holland Conservation Commission Public Hearing Notice
In accordance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, Chapter 131, Section 40, the Holland Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, December 09, 2025, at 6:30 PM to review a Request for a Notice of Intent (NOI) submitted by Landscape Evolution co/Stacy Stout. The NOI proposes to repair a failing retaining wall.
Project Location: 10 Collette Drive (Assessor's Map (R14-A-11))
Meeting Location: Public Participation will be at the Holland Town Hall, 27 Sturbridge Road, Holland, MA 01521 on December 09, 2025, at 6:30 PM. Any person(s) interested or wishing to be heard on this request should appear at the time and place designated. A copy of the permit application and plan may be inspected at the Holland Town Hall in the Conservation Commission Office, 2nd Floor, 27 Sturbridge Road, Holland, MA 01521 or contact the office at 413-245-7108 X114.
November 27, 2025

(SEAL)
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT
Docket No. 25 SM 003495 ORDER OF NOTICE
TO:
The Heirs, Devisees and Legal Representatives of the Estate of Denise Leger John W. Leger
and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. c. 50 §3901 (et seq):
Deutsche Bank National Trust Company as Trustee for Merrill Lynch Mortgage Investors Trust, Mortgage

Loan Asset-Backed Certificates, Series 2007-MLN1
claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in **Southbridge, numbered 16 Clarke Street a/k/a 16 Clark Street**, given by **Denise Leger to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Mortgage Lenders Network USA, Inc., its successors and assigns**, dated November 22, 2006, and recorded in **Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 40238, Page 202**, and now held by the Plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant's/Defendants' Servicemembers status.
If you now are, or recently have been, in the **active** military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at **Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108** on or before 12/29/2025 or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the ground of noncompliance with the Act.
Witness, GORDON H. PIPER Chief Justice of this Court on 11/13/2025
Attest: Deborah J. Patterson Recorder
November 27, 2025

Town of Sturbridge Zoning Board of Appeals Public Hearing Notice Variance Thomas & Joanne Hamerly
In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 40A, §10 & §11, the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, **December 17, 2024 at 6:35 PM at the Center Office Building located at 301 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566** and/or by virtual means if circumstances warrant, in accordance with applicable

law; on the application of Thomas & Joanne Hamerly for the property located at **143 Walker Pond Road**. Pursuant to §300-18.2 of the Zoning Bylaw, the applicant is requesting a Variance from Article XIV Intensity Regulations, §300-14.2 Table of Standards which requires 20' setbacks in the Rural Residential District to permit the construction of a shed within approximately 2' off the side property line.
The proposed request may be viewed at <https://www.sturbridge.gov/zoning-board-appeals/pages/recent-filings> or arrangements can be made to view the application and plan by contacting the Sturbridge Planning Department at (508)347-2508 or by email at jlacy@sturbridge.gov. Any person interested or wishing to be heard on this proposal should appear at the time and place designated.
Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted in person and may be conducted via remote means if circumstance warrant, in accordance with applicable law. This means that members of the public body as well as members of the public may access this meeting in person, or via virtual means.
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/472675877>
Every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post of the Town's website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of the proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.
Diane Trapasso, Chair
Sturbridge Zoning Board of Appeals
November 27, 2025
December 4, 2025

Gateway Players hosting auditions for “Remedial”

SOUTHBRIDGE — Gateway Players Theatre in Southbridge is hosting auditions for "Remedial," written by local playwright Jordan Miller. Auditions will be held on Dec. 14 and 15 at 6:30 p.m., with a weather date of Dec. 17 at 6:30 p.m. if needed, in Fellowship Hall at Elm Street Congregational Church, 61 Elm St., Southbridge.

Auditions will consist of cold readings from the script. Performance dates are Feb. 27 & 28 and March 6, 7 & 8. Rehearsals will be held on Monday and Wednesday nights. Character information is listed below. Directed by Jordan Miller, and Produced by Stephen Jean. For more information, please contact Gateway at 508-764-4531.

Robin is a disillusioned author who reluctantly takes a job teaching remedial English to a group of adult students. Bitter from past trauma and career setbacks, Robin initially struggles to connect with these diverse students, each of whom carries their own burdens. As the story unfolds, the classroom becomes a space for unexpected growth, where Robin and the students challenge each other’s assumptions and learn to confront their insecurities. Through humor, conflict, and shared vulnerability, "Remedial" explores themes of resilience, empathy, and the transformative power of understanding and human connection.

Character Information (Gender is flexible, except where mentioned)

ROBIN: An English professor and author. Intelligent and generally good-hearted, but jaded and aloof. About 55

DR. HAMILTON: Robin’s therapist. Friendly and helpful, but also firm when needed. Any age

ANGEL: A hard-working, streetwise parent trying to go back to college. Intelligent, but not very well educated. Upbeat and witty. Early 30's. Should be played by someone assigned female at birth.

DEVIN: A generally clueless dunce. Devin provides much of the comic relief. Early 20's

JAMIE: A young adult who was unable to have a childhood. A hard worker and a no-nonsense person. Early to mid 20's. Should be played by someone assigned male at birth

MORGAN: A decidedly average adult trying to make changes for their two children. Early 40's

CAMERON: A person reluctantly going back to school. They are unmotivated and unserious. Mid 20's to mid 30's.

BLAKE: A person with autism. Blake is very helpful and intelligent, but lacks some traditional social skills. 20's or 30's.

Eastern student Jordyn Szretter of Charlton participates in “Cinderella” opera

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. — The Department of Music at Eastern Connecticut State University showed its latest opera production this November, with a reimagining of the classic fairytale "Cinderella." Students brought the production to life in two showing on Nov. 14 and 16 in the Fine Arts Instructional Center Concert Hall.

Among the students who participated was senior Jordyn Szretter of Charlton, a Music major who took part as alto.

This whimsical 60-minute production featured a new English adaptation by Professor Emily Riggs and musical direction by Professor David Ballena, bringing to life Viardot's witty and tuneful take on the timeless story. In keeping with the original story, the opera followed Cinderella as she outsmarts her stepfamily, encounters her fairy godmother, and wins the heart of Prince Charming - all set to Viardot's delightful and lyrical score.

Riggs explained that opera's small cast with piano accompaniment makes it a wonderful choice for an undergraduate opera program, while the familiar story offers a prime introduction to opera for young audiences or first-time opera goers.

"At the same time, Viardot's mature musical score and witty libretto offer something special for seasoned opera lovers and present an exciting challenge for young singers," she wrote in her Director's Notes. "This new English translation endeavors to retain Viardot's distinctive humor and highlight her confident and spirited portrayal of the opera's titular character, which brings fresh life to a timeless tale."

OBITUARIES

Beverly A. Beaudette, 89

CHARLTON – Beverly A. (Mitchell) Beaudette, 89, of Morton Station Road, died Saturday, November 15, 2025, in her home in hospice care

She was predeceased by her husband, Robert Beaudette, who died in 2008. She is survived by her daughter, Debra Beaudette of Charlton; her brother, Brian Mitchell of Sturbridge, her sister, Diana Prescott of Dudley; six grandchildren, Tauran Choinski, Jaren Choinski and Arianne D’Agostino, and Alison, Lucas and Jake Beaudette; and two great grandchildren, Maybee Choinski and Auguste Choinski.

She was predeceased by a son, Michael Beaudette who died in 2013; and two sisters, Patricia Mitchell and Virginia Meinsma.

She was born in Charlton, daughter of the late Herbert K. and Beulah F. (Adams) Michell, and was a lifelong resident of Charlton. She graduated from Charlton High School in 1954.



Mrs. Beaudette worked for New England Industrial Waste prior to retirement. In addition, she was manager of the Worcester Children’s Friends Society. She was the tax assessor for the Town of Charlton, and served on various town committees including the School Need Committee, which was the committee to establish Bay Path R.V.T. High School. Mrs. Beaudette was a proud member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and a Queen of her chapter of the Red Hat Society. She was a descendant of the Adams family of Massachusetts, and enjoyed tracing her family ancestry.

A private graveside service will be held at West Ridge Cemetery in Charlton. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Second Chance Animal Shelter, P.O. Box 136, 111 Young Road, East Brookfield, MA 01515.

Paradis-Givner Funeral Home in Oxford is directing the arrangements.

John “Jack” Edward Taylor



John “Jack” Edward Taylor of Sturbridge, MA died peacefully at home at 3:43 PM on Friday, October 24th, 2025 surrounded by loved ones.

He was born in Somerville, MA on June 14th, 1930 where he lived until age 10 when his family moved to Wakefield, MA. He attended Wakefield Memorial High School before pursuing higher education at Trinity College in Hartford, CT, getting a degree in Economics and served in the Air Force ROTC.

After graduating in 1952, Jack was deployed to Japan to manage logistics for the Korean War. He returned to the States in 1953 and developed a career in the insurance industry, for which he worked until his retirement from McGrath Insurance Agency at age 79.

It’s during his college and post-college time that Jack developed a love for rock climbing. This was his life’s passion. It would proliferate throughout Jack’s life including legendary climbs throughout New England, the Canadian Rockies, and the Grand Tetons. As a testament to his climbing prowess, a climbing route on New York’s Shawangunks is named in his honor: “The Jackie”

In 1960, Jack met Judy Taylor to whom he celebrated 63 years of marriage before her passing in 2022. The newlyweds settled in Sturbridge, MA where they raised three daughters.

His twilight years involved visits to Fort Myers Beach, FL, his family’s cottage in Nova Scotia, and Echo Lake Camp with family into his 90’s, and hiking until the end. He loved reading, music, and plays, often bursting into song while adventuring. The cruelty of age robbed him of sight, but his loving caregivers kept his mind active until his last day. They gave him his best years.

Jack is predeceased by his loving wife of 63 years, Judith “Judy” Dickinson Taylor, mother, Margaret Elizabeth Taylor (Vidito), father, Howard Arthur Taylor, and grandson, Gregory Rothammer.

He is survived by his three daughters: Deborah Taylor; Sarah Rothammer and her two sons, Zachary Gene Rothammer and Connor John Rothammer; and Rebecca Jean Taylor, her husband Tiki Archambeau, and their son Alden Taylor Archambeau. His treasured nieces and their families: Pam Hallet, her husband B.J. and children Grace and Drew; and Barb Paquette, her husband Peter and son Michael.

A memorial service will be held at the Federated Church in Sturbridge at 10:30 AM on Saturday, November 29th, 2025. A luncheon reception will be hosted at the Publick House immediately thereafter.



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Unique holiday traditions across the globe

The holiday season is a special time of year. Regardless of which holiday people celebrate in December, billions of people across the globe embrace chances to be a little more festive and spend additional time with family and friends over the final month of the year.

Tradition contributes to the special feeling felt in many communities each December. Holiday celebrants who can't get enough seasonal magic can take note of some of the many unique traditions across the globe that help make the month of December such a special time of year.

The Yule Lads, Iceland

In a tradition that might call to mind the seven dwarves who welcomed Snow White into their home in the classic fairy tale, the Yule Lads of Iceland are said to leave a small gift for children who leave a shoe on their windowsills before going to bed beginning on the night of December 11. The tradition continues through Christmas Day, with each night featuring a visit from a different Yule Lad.

Hiding Brooms, Norway

Norwegian folklore suggested evil spirits and witches awoke on Christmas Eve, and this unique tradition is rooted in efforts to keep those unwelcome holiday guests grounded and avoid lost brooms. On the night of Julafte (Christmas Eve), Norwegians hide their brooms in closets inside their homes to keep them from being stolen by ill-intentioned witches.

Night of the Radishes, Oaxaca, Mexico

Held annually on December 23, the Night of the Radishes is a local celebration in Oaxaca, Mexico. This unique event celebrates oversized radishes, which certainly merits the celebration's inclusion on any list of unusual holiday season celebrations. The event involves the carving of large radishes into figures, a tradition that began as a way to attract more customers to Oaxaca's Christmas market. A formal radish-carving competition was instituted in the late nineteenth century, and the Night of the Radishes continues to draw visitors today.

Krampus Parades, Austria (various sites)

The holiday season might be a heartwarming time of year in many locales, but the various Krampus parades throughout Austria turn that notion on its head. Krampus is a horned anthropomorphic figure



in central and eastern Alpine folklore. Krampus is something akin to Santa Claus's alter ego who's said to punish bad children rather than reward good ones with gifts. Legend says Krampus and his band of less-than-jovial elves roamed an area of the Alps and delighted in causing mayhem. Austrian Krampus parades take place at night and feature revelers dressed in scary costumes, making this a unique if not exactly lighthearted holiday season tradition.

Tradition figures prominently during the holiday season, and some customs stand out for their uniqueness.

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Friday's Child

Alanis is a beautiful, sweet, and loving little girl who adores music—especially Cocomelon! She loves being held and comforted by her caregivers, and nothing makes her giggle more than when they whisper softly to her. Alanis enjoys making sounds and listening to herself, delighting in the way she can express happiness and contentment. She feels especially at ease when her basic needs are met—after being fed, bathed, and having her diaper changed. Alanis currently receives early intervention services, which focus on oral stimulation, mirror play, sensory engagement with toys, and plenty of nurturing physical contact to support her growth and development.

Alanis Age 4 Registration #8733

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/21177206691>

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.

Budget-frendly holiday shopping tips

Holiday shopping and entertaining involve a whirlwind of activity to round out the end of the year. The holiday season also tends to be an expensive time of year. According to Capital One Shopping, the average spending for holiday travel, gifts and entertainment expenses is \$1,638. The National Retail Federation says American consumers spend an average of \$997.73 on gifts and other holiday items each Christmas.

For some people, adding an additional \$1,000 to their November or December budgets can be challenging, and many individuals seek budget-friendly solutions for their holiday celebrations. The following guidelines can help corral spending this year.

Plan your list

Make a list of everyone you need to purchase gifts for, along with gift ideas and estimated costs. Set a dollar amount for each individual, particularly if you will not be spending the same amount on each person. Having numbers in black and white, and comparing them to what you have allocated for gifts, will enable you to see whether you are overspending or on budget.

Shop early

Begin holiday shopping as early as possible, even months before the holidays arrive. Such an approach enables you to take advantage of sales as they come up. Also, you will not fall victim to impulse buys or last-minute purchases because you are under a time crunch.

Set a budget

It's impossible to keep a budget if one is never established in the first place. Determine how much you can comfortably spend on gifts, travel and entertaining, as well as any other holiday expenses. Once the number is calculated, divvy up spending accordingly.

Track spending

Utilize whatever method works for you to keep apprised of spending. It may be jotting down numbers on a piece of paper or using a budgeting app on a smartphone. Having a clear idea of what you have spent and any dollars remaining will help you keep your overall spending in line with your budgeted amount.

Get coupons

Signing up for stores' loyalty programs can enable you to receive members-only coupons or digital codes to your phone or email. Compare the discounted final price with other stores' offers to make sure that you are getting the best deals. Browser extensions also can search automatically for coupons and apply them to the checkout when online shopping.

Use credit cards wisely

Credit cards come with various perks, many of which are points or cash back accumulated with each purchase. Utilize a card that works best for your needs, whether it's to get airline miles or score extra spending money for a particular retailer. Only charge what you can pay in full when the bill arrives; otherwise, the benefits may be negated by high interest rates.

Holiday spending can derail financial plans for those who do not establish a firm budget and commit to spending wisely towards the end of the year.

Sturbridge Affordable Housing Trust launches homeownership program with up to \$100,000 in assistance

STURBRIDGE — The Sturbridge Affordable Housing Trust is proud to announce the Sturbridge Buy Down Program, a new initiative designed to help first-time homebuyers purchase a home in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. Through this program, eligible applicants may receive up to \$100,000 to help reduce the cost of purchasing a home — making homeownership more attainable for families and individuals.

Program Highlights:

- Up to \$100,000 in financial assistance toward your first home

- May include funds for necessary home repairs
- Homes remain affordable for future buyers through a deed restriction

Eligibility requirements:

- Must be a first-time homebuyer
- Must meet income and asset limits

- Completion of a certified homebuyer education course is required
- Home must be used as the buyer's primary residence

Affordable home prices range from \$360,000 to \$451,000, depending on the size and type of home.

Qualified applicants will be selected through a lottery process. Applications must be submitted by the Jan. 22, 2026 at 2 p.m., to be entered into the lottery.

Information sessions will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 2, 6-8 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 6, 10 a.m.-noon, Sturbridge Town Hall, 308 Main St. Attendance is recommended, but not required.

Questions? Call Town of Sturbridge, Planning Department, 774-304-1434 for more information.



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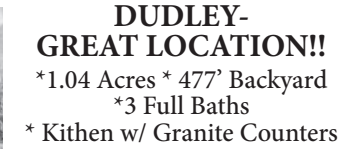


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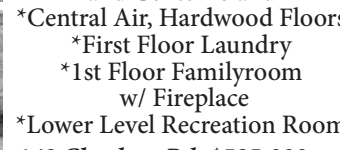
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Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale announces Holly Berry Fair vendors

STURBRIDGE — The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale will hold its annual Holly Berry Fair on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the church’s Fellowship Hall at 8 Maple St., Sturbridge.

Co-chairs Nancy Castendyk and Janet-Rae Sinanian say the annual event will feature an impressive line-up of local artists and makers offering one-of-a-kind gifts—from leather goods and alpaca items to cozy knits and seasonal décor. Shoppers can also stop by Koinonia’s booth, where members of the Federated Church women’s group will be selling their much-loved



Courtesy
Handcrafted items like these cute reindeer will be offered at this year’s Holly Berry Fair on Dec. 6.



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baked goods and homemade treats.

“It’s a wonderful way to kick off the holiday season,” says Castendyk. “There’s always something special to discover, and it’s all in support of our local artisans and community.”

Featured local artisans include Penny Adams (aromatherapy), Corinn Algier (herbalism/salves), Charles Batterby (leather goods), Mary Bernstein (tie dye), Sandi Bostrom (handbags), Benjamin Brigham (country decor), Susan Bundeff (stained glass), Tamara Cook (snowflake tree), Bonnie Fancy (knitted items), and Collette Gage (alpaca items).

The fair will also feature Madison Gallipeau (crocheted items), Emma Lane (stone jewelry), Linda McManus (table runners), Missy Peters (wooden

items), Julia Plasse (handbags), Mary Shaw (crocheted scarves), and Janet Sinanian (iris folded cards).

For additional information about the Holly Berry Fair or other upcoming events, please visit the Church website at sturfed.org, visit the Church’s Facebook page @Federated-ChurchSturbridgeFiskdale, or contact the Church office at (774) 304-1021 or churchoffice@sturfed.org.

The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale joyfully celebrates Christ’s presence and God’s grace in our lives. Members of the community are welcome and invited to join in worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Services are also live-streamed on the church’s Facebook page.

Southbridge Garden Club readies for annual Holiday Greens Sale

SOUTHBRIDGE — Members of the Southbridge Garden Club are preparing for its annual sale of hand-crafted wreaths, swags, container arrangements, and other natural holiday decorations. This always popular sale will take place on Friday, December 5 from noon to 5 pm, and Saturday, Dec. 6 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Ruth Wells Center for the Arts, 111 Main St., Southbridge.

The members will be decorating Noble Fir wreaths with their hand-crafted designer-quality bows, as well as natural and other decorative items. Additionally, they have been collecting greens throughout the area

and from their own yards and gardens to create unique swags, to fill variously sized containers with lovely arrangements, and to tie up into bundles for those who want to “DIY.” Each item is a unique creation that will enhance your holiday decorating.

The proceeds from the sale supports scholarships, programs, and beautification projects sponsored by the Southbridge Garden Club. The Club is a non-profit regional organization whose mission is to share an interest in horticulture and to expand our knowledge of gardening for our mutual benefit and that of our local communities.

Spotted Lanternflies spotted in Charlton

CHARLTON — The Mass. Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) recently confirmed an infes-

tation of the invasive insect known as spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula* or “SLF”) in Charlton.

Spotted lanternfly is a pest that attacks tree-of-heaven, grapevines, maple trees, hop vines, and many other types of plants. This pest is known to impact grape/wine producers and other agricultural commodities, and can also interfere with outdoor recreation if infestations reach high levels, due to the swarming behavior of adult SLF in late summer and fall. The insects themselves do not bite or sting - they are a nuisance because they gather in large numbers in areas where people are, and cover anything they are on with a sticky, sugary waste product known as honeydew.

You may see surveyors from MDAR and/or USDA periodically through the fall and winter, checking trees in the area to determine the extent of the infestation. If you are able, we encourage you to report any sightings of this pest. You can do this through the SLF Web page.

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