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SEND YOUR NEWS AND PICS TO News@StoneBridgePress.news Friday, October 9, 2026

West Brookfield Police Chief tapped to lead Spencer department

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

SPENCER — The Town of Spencer didn't have to look far for their new police chief, with current West Brookfield Chief Nathan Hagglund officially appointed to the position on Sept. 28.

Hagglund's appointment, which follows the recent retirement of former Spencer chief Michael Befford, received unanimous approval by selectmen with no debate, and Hagglund himself was soft-spoken in his immediate response to the vote simply thanking the board for their support. Hagglund was one of three candidates interviewed for the post on Sept. 17 — along with Larry Bateman and Steven Patriarcac.

While Hagglund didn't offer any immediate statements upon his appointment, his interview said a lot about why he chose to move to Spencer.

He admitted he had previously considered applying when Befford was hired as chief but decided he was not ready for the position. After spending years in law enforcement and emergency response, including his recent tenure in

Nathan Hagglund

West Brookfield, he finally felt it was time to join Spencer even consulting now-retired Spencer Police Lt. Norman Hodgerney to determine if he and the town would be a good fit for each other.

Hagglund also attended the lieutenant and chief's respective retirement celebrations where he determined for sure

that Spencer was where he wanted to be.

"What really impressed me was that all of the board members made these events. People in the community made these events. That tells me this is a good place that really supports their police department. That was really impressive to me," Hagglund said in his

interview. "Then I got to see how the officers engaged and whether it was at work or out of work, they had fun and that was really awesome to see. You want to be a lot of business, but you need to have fun as well."

He describes himself as a "progressive" chief, and feels that culture creates the foundation of a department and that the ceiling for a department's growth is infinite. He also complimented the Spencer Police Department as one already on stable ground, saying he only wants to make a great department even better.

Hagglund holds a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Fitchburg State University, and a master's degree from Anna Maria College in public administration and brings a long resume of public service. At 16, he served as a volunteer firefighter, and he served in Leicester as a dispatcher. He eventually worked in different capacities in Nantucket, Provincetown, Auburn, and Sudbury. While in Sudbury, he helped start the department's drone unit, an experience he plans to bring to Spencer to bring their own unit to fruition.

West Brookfield officials approve new agreement with Spectrum

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

WEST BROOKFIELD — The West Brookfield Board of Selectmen unanimously approved a new deal with Spectrum securing a multi-year partnership between the town and the cable provider for production and broadcast of town programs.

The board met with Shelley Winchenbach, a Government Affairs Director from Spectrum's parent company Charter Communications, and the town's Cable Advisory Committee on Sept. 29 before agreeing to a negotiated contract. West Brookfield had previously maintained a franchise agreement with Spectrum for PEG (Public, Education, and Governmental Access) television broadcasting including local interest programs and public meetings through West Brookfield Community TV, which also operates a YouTube channel.

Cable Advisory Committee Chairman Paul Lapenas said the agreement was the product of an extensive process to renegotiate with Spectrum taking into consideration revenue, operation cost, and broadcasting capabilities.

"It took us a long time to get to this place where we are, and we've worked a good nine months with Shelley," explained Lapenas. "We've got a more robust definition of gross annual revenue which is a key to any financial calculations made that would benefit the town for funding for the broadcasting and for capital improvements for purchasing equipment. We've also improved some definitions that provide assurances and more stringent protections for town interests."

Lapenas said the new contract does more to "protect the town." While it doesn't offer as much in return for enhancements, it does provide a larger piece of the income compared to the last contract.

"We've been able to secure, with Shelley's help, a \$25,000 capital grant which is for the purchase of more broadcasting equipment that will undoubtedly depreciate over time and we've increased from 1.5 percent of gross annual revenue of Spectrum to now 4.5 percent gross annual revenue and that increases our PEG funding operating fund

Turn To SPECTRUM page A10

Something new is coming to North Brookfield this October

NORTH BROOKFIELD — For many years town organizations have worked individually to meet the needs of various segments of the community — seniors, veterans, business owners, youth and faith-based groups, neighbors in need of food and fuel assistance. Now we have an opportunity to join together in a town-wide effort to identify North Brookfield's strengths and weaknesses, form a consensus, and put our efforts toward meeting the

most pressing needs of the entire community

If you care about your town and the people in it come join us on Oct. 21, 6 – 7:30 p.m. at the North Brookfield Junior Senior High School Kiva Room as we launch North Brookfield's Community Heart & Soul initiative. Come learn about the CH&S program, share your ideas, and see what you can do to help chart the future of North Brookfield.

Over the course of our

Community Heart & Soul project, which is expected to take up to two years to complete, we will attempt to reach every resident in North Brookfield to gather their stories. From these stories, we hope to find common themes of what residents love most about the area and their hopes for the future. These themes will become our guide and be used to identify needs, improve connections, and develop a long-term action plan for the future of our

community. In this way North Brookfield residents will be directly involved in shaping their town's future and working together to achieve it.

We hope to see you at the Junior Senior High School Kiva Room at 6 p.m. on Oct. 21.

Come meet your neighbors and talk about your town. Bring your ideas and enthusiasm. We will bring pizza, salad and fall treats.

Lauring Construction completes new worship facility for First Congregational Church of Spencer

SPENCER — Lauring Construction, a third-generation construction management firm headquartered in Worcester, announced today it has completed construction of a new worship facility and community gathering space for the First Congregational Church of Spencer. The original church, a historic structure dating back to 1863, was destroyed by a lightning strike in June 2023.

Located at 207 Main St. in Spencer, the new structure isn't a replica of the towering building that burned but a thoughtful exercise in creating a space the community would continue to use as a central gathering place and house of worship. Lauring's team began with a robust pre-construction exercise to assess what scale of a replacement facility was feasible on the site, which required building into a rock ledge located at the edge of the

Turn To CONSTRUCTION page A10

Adventure tours of Warren

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MAY 23-30, 2027

November 7	Great Gatsby at PPAC	\$165
December 5	Vermont Country Store with Lunch	\$175
June 12	Escape to Rockport	\$120
Sept. 12-18	Canadian Rockies, Glacier Nat. Park	\$5049
Oct. 18-26	Sunny Spain, Madrid, and Costa del Sol	\$5249

Share the Adventure with us soon!

For further information call Randall at (413) 436-5357 or email adventuretours@att.net or visit www.adventuretoursofwarren.com for details

Fall tradition continues with 47th Annual Apple Country Fair

BROOKFIELD — One of Central Massachusetts’ favorite fall traditions returns to the Historic Brookfield Town Common on Saturday, Oct. 10 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hosted by the Brookfield Community Club, the 47th Annual Apple Country Fair features close to 100 local crafters, artisans, and bakers, along with live music, food trucks, lawn games, face painting, raffles, and plenty of family fun.

The fair brings together the best of small-town charm with a vibrant mar-

ketplace of booths filled with hand-knit clothing, pottery, wooden décor, homemade soaps, pet toys, maple syrups, beaded jewelry, locally-harvested honey and delicious small-batch treats—perfect for early holiday shopping or treating yourself.

But the fair is more than just shopping—it’s a full day of entertainment and activities for all ages. Enjoy live music by local favorites Chuck and Mud and Spooner Well, let the kids enjoy lawn games and face-painting, and dig into

delicious bites from a variety of food trucks.

Don’t miss the raffle drawings held throughout the day, including a classic 50/50 raffle and chances to win great prizes like family passes to regional museums, gift certificates to local restaurants and shops, sporting events and the ever-popular community-stitched quilt. In the days leading up to the Fair, be sure to visit the Merrick Public Library to see this year’s themed quilt on display. The quilt is created through the talents and contributions of Brookfield

community members, and will also be featured in the Fair raffle, giving one lucky winner the opportunity to take home this unique piece of Brookfield community history.

A favorite Fair tradition, the Apple Pie Baking Contest is open to bakers of all ages, with youth and adult categories. Bring your best homemade apple pie and show off your baking skills! Entries for the apple pie contest will be accepted at the Library Annex (18 Common St) on the Day of the Fair until 9:45 a.m. There are three Judging categories: children under 12,

ages 13-19, and adults ages 20 and older.

The Brookfield Community Club has been organizing the Apple Country Fair since 1979. The money raised at the Apple Country Fair has generated grants for community service projects, including (but not limited to):

Supplies for the Town’s annual luminary display on Christmas Eve

Programs and speakers for Brookfield Council on Aging

Equipment for Brookfield Fire Department and EMS Improvements to

Brookfield Recreation’s Lewis Field

Equipment for Brookfield Scout Troops

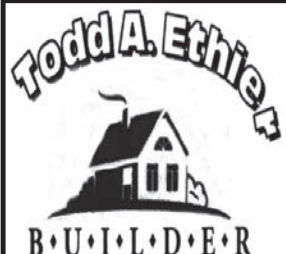
Programs at the Merrick Public Library

Diane Martell Community Service Award for a graduating Brookfield Senior

The fair is held outside on The Common rain or shine.

Mark your calendar, gather your friends and family, and come celebrate fall in Brookfield.

For more information, visit AppleCountryFair.com.



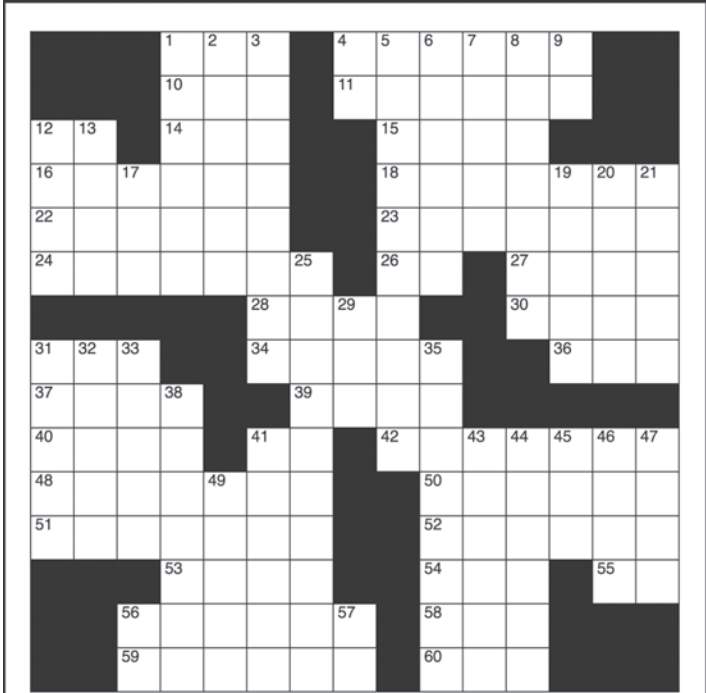
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- ### CLUES ACROSS

 - Small Eurasian deer
 - Province in Northern Ireland
 - A major division of geological time
 - Broadway actor Lane
 - Canadian province (abbr.)
 - Human gene
 - Two
 - A notable one was “blue”
 - Utter repeatedly
 - Ring-shaped objects
 - Sullies
 - Occurs
 - Commercial
 - Near
 - Tools you may need
 - A pledge
 - They start the alphabet
 - Silk garments
 - Soviet Socialist Republic
 - Longtime mayor of Rio
 - Hot meal
 - A type of gin
 - Atomic #84
 - \$10 bill
 - About ground
 - Medicine man
 - Seedless raisin
 - National capital of Albania
 - Appendage
 - OJ trial judge
 - European government entity (abbr.)
 - Bike parts
 - Friend to “Barbie”
 - Stretched to see or hear
 - Commercials
- ### CLUES DOWN

 - Make up for
 - Baltimore ballplayer
 - Wages
 - International organization of countries
 - Engravers of gems
 - Declared as fact
 - One who steals
 - Jewelry
 - Hospital worker
 - Nonsense (slang)
 - Town in Galilee
 - Value
 - Alternative identity
 - Sheep in their second year
 - Town in Surrey, England
 - Appropriate to a time of year
 - Creative work
 - Recesses
 - Largely forested municipality in Germany
 - Rider of Rohan
 - Ancient symbol co-opted by Nazis
 - Pioneer
 - Scribe
 - Painted a bright color
 - Member of British nobility
 - “Pulp Fiction” actress Thurman
 - Helps people walk
 - Crest of a hill
 - People of southeastern Alaska
 - One’s own device
 - The Mount Rushmore State

PUZZLE SOLUTION



Betty Gundersen Studio of Dance offers Dance Discovery Week



Students at the barre in the Betty Gundersen Studio of Dance.

WEST BROOKFIELD — Betty Gundersen, director of the Betty Gundersen Studio of Dance, is pleased to announce that the studio will be holding Dance Discovery Week from Oct. 26 through Oct. 31.

“During Dance Discovery Week, current students of the studio are invited to “Bring a Friend” to take a free class and experience what we’re all about,” says Gundersen. “And, if you or your child don’t yet have a friend at the studio, you are welcome to join us too! We offer classes for children starting at pre-school and continuing through high school and above.”

The Betty Gundersen Studio of Dance offers a full range of classes designed to nurture local boys and girls at every age and stage. All classes in the studio’s regular schedule – jazz, acrobatics, contemporary, hip-hop, ballet, tap and adult tap, Zumba - will be available for this free-trial participation.

“This week is our way of opening our doors — no pressure, just movement, music, and meeting new people. This is a great opportunity to meet our talented instructors, explore a dance style you’ve never tried, see our facilities and perhaps begin a dance journey — or simply have fun and see what it feels like.”

Parents of interested students may view the entire week’s schedule online at bettygundersendance.com to plan which class or style they would like to try. You will also be able to download a copy of the parent permission slip that is required for all participants in Dance Discovery Week.

For additional information, or to reserve your, or your child’s free trial spot in a regularly scheduled class, please call the studio at (508) 867-8925, or send an

email to bgstudioofdance@gmail.com and include the name of the participant and their preferred class.

SPENCER ALMANAC

REAL ESTATE

BROOKFIELD

\$510,000, 39 Rice Corner Rd, Santucci, Jennifer L, and Santucci, Stephen, to Basden, Jacinta.

EAST BROOKFIELD

\$427,500, 453 Howe St, Curtis, Brian H, and Curtis, Jean M, to Oldroyd Jr, Richard.

LEICESTER

\$670,000, 323 Auburn St, Moran, Patrick K, and Moran, Kristy A, to Aldulaimi, Thab Ali.

\$500,000, 154 Boyd St, Dziemian, Neil A, to Fell, Janet G.

\$410,000, 93 Pine St, Witkowski, Matthew, and Witkowski, Alicia, to Wenckus, Brian.

NORTH BROOKFIELD

\$1,300,000, 18 River Rd, J Warren T, and Trentacosta, Joseph J, to Souza, Kathleen Ann.

\$285,000, 63 King Rd, Willett, Kevin R, to McCall, Daniel.

SPENCER

\$483,500, 3 Shady Dr, Gordon Anne J Est, and Gordon, James D, to Iriyama Lake House T, and Jewell, Mari Iriyama.

\$442,825, 5 Irving St, Cote, Melissa J, to Eroh, Ethan Charles, and Eroh, Amsey Thomas.

\$395,000, 7 Westland Dr, Standing, Todd M, and Standing, Danielle M, to Perron, Robert David, and Lupo, Sarah.

\$335,000, 16 Highland St, Santana, Gilderson, and Tathiana, L De Santana L, to Farrell, Sonia Marlene C, and Garcia, Luis D Farrell.

WARREN

\$385,000, 236 South St, Quintin, Bruce, to Packard Iv, Albert B.

\$235,000, 136 Quaboag St, Green Pastured Rt, and Macdonald, Dawn, to Prevost, Storm William, and Dunn, Kaci.

WEST BROOKFIELD

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PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER
FRANK G. CHILINSKI
frank@salmonpress.news

BUSINESS MANAGER
RYAN CORNEAU
860-928-1818 EXT. 102
ryan@salmonpress.news

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR
JIM DINICOLA
508-764-6102
jim@stonebridgepress.news

EDITOR
BRENDAN BERUBE
508-909-4101
news@stonebridgepress.news

PRODUCTION MANAGER
JULIE CLARKE
508-909-4105
julie@villagernewspapers.com

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Spencer announces early voting, state election and Special Town Meeting dates

SPENCER — Spencer residents will have several important civic dates to keep in mind this fall, with in-person early voting beginning in October, the state election scheduled for Nov. 3 and a Special Town Meeting following two days later.

The Town of Spencer has announced that in-person early voting for the 2026 state election will begin Saturday, Oct. 17, and continue through Thursday, Oct. 29.

Early voting will take place at Spencer Town Hall, 157 Main St. The hours will vary during the early voting period, and residents are encouraged to consult the town's website for the complete schedule before heading to Town Hall.

The early voting period gives registered

voters an opportunity to cast their ballots before Election Day rather than visiting the polls Nov. 3.

Election Day itself is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 3. Spencer voters will cast ballots in the Great Hall at Town Hall, with polls scheduled to be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Town officials are encouraging eligible residents to participate in the election.

The November election will be followed closely by another important date on Spencer's municipal calendar.

The town will hold a Special Town Meeting on Thursday, Nov. 5, beginning at 7 p.m. Town Meeting provides registered voters with the opportunity to consider and

vote on municipal matters placed on the meeting warrant.

Additional information about the Special Town Meeting, including the warrant and matters scheduled for consideration, is expected to be available through the town as the meeting approaches.

The Town Clerk's Office oversees election and voter records in Spencer. Town Clerk Sandra Fritze's office is located at Town Hall and can be reached at 508-885-7500, ext. 150. Regular Town Clerk's Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and 7:30 a.m. to noon Thursday.

Residents seeking the latest election information, including the complete sched-

ule of early voting hours, should check the town's website as the dates approach.

Richard Sugden Library offers support group for widows

SPENCER — The Richard Sugden Library invites widows to an informal conversational group.

"Every ending has a beginning." "He's in a better place." We've heard it all. But, we have experienced a loss that was unique, equal to no other. We've also experienced love like no other. The Widows Group (WG) intends to build a community of love, support, patience, and understanding.

Please join us Wednesdays (the first and third of each month) beginning Sept. 2 from 1 - 2 p.m. Lifting hearts, one-at-a-time. September get-togethers will be Sept. 2 and 16 at the Richard Sugden Library, Spencer.

A Haunted Story Swap will be held at the Richard Sugden Library on Sept. 10 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. Share your eerie experience. We're gathering a record of otherworldly

experiences that have occurred in Spencer and want to hear from you! Our main goal is to collect cemetery-based accounts, but other stories will also be noted afterwards. Please join us for this exchange of tales of trepidation and haunted happenings! Sponsor: Spencer Historical Commission and hosted by Prof. Garret D. Langlois, Ph.D.

Grow Happiness with Wendy O'Leary at the Richard Sugden Library, Spencer. Adult Happiness Club kicks off Sept. 17 from 1-2 p.m. Monthly schedule: Oct. 29, Nov. 19, Dec. 17, Jan. 21, Feb. 18, March 18, April 15, May 13 and June 17. The in-person group will have an optional activity following the session from 2-2:30 p.m. Sign up with Wendy O'Leary at woleary25@gmail.com. Sponsor: Friends of the Library.

Traditional Folk Music in the 21st

Century will be held at the Richard Sugden Library on Thursday, Sept. 17 from 6 - 7 p.m. Music is an essential part of connection. Derek Piotr, folklorist, performer, and composer shares his Fieldwork Archive, featuring more than 2,000 recordings of "non-singers" poems, hymns & songs. Sponsor: Friends of the Library.

Sound Healing experience at the Richard Sugden Library, Spencer. Immerse yourself in therapeutic sounds that calm the mind, heal the body, and uplift the spirit. Adults are invited to join us as Allison, from Friendly Ass Farm, leads this time of relaxation. Join us on Sept. 23 from 6-7 p.m. Tune into wellness. Vibrate with Harmony. Sponsor: Friends of the Library.

Spencer Exchange Club to present 18 Under 18 Youth Leadership awards

SPENCER — For the sixth consecutive year, the Exchange Club of Spencer will in November announce the recipients of their 18 Under 18 awards to those under the age of 18 who reside in the towns Spencer or East Brookfield. The Exchange Club membership has annually been made aware of young men and women whose impact on their communities may have gone unnoticed. They are not necessarily the highest academic achievers, star athlete or the most popular among their peers. They are those unassuming young adults who demonstrate attributes of leadership, passion, a caring and supportive nature, selflessness and citizenship. They are making a difference to others and their

communities.

The Exchange Club has acknowledged and awarded nearly 100 young adults with the 18 Under 18 award over the past five years who were nominated by their teachers, employers, school counselors or others who felt they made a difference in their communities. Award recipients were recognized with citations and presented with monetary awards. This year's award ceremony will be held during a Worcester Railers game at the DCU Center in Worcester on Sunday, Nov. 22.

The Exchange Club membership is purposefully invested in the present and future of the Spencer and East Brookfield communities. They wish to highlight the

innate talents that our youth exhibit unselfishly every day in what sometimes seems like the simplest of actions of caring and the ability to relate to others. They believe that curiosity, analytical thinking, dependability and a strong work ethic make the greatest difference where we all live, work and play. The club's vision of the future is that these young men and women will carry on the Exchange's mission of "Unity for Service."

Application and nomination forms may be accessed on the Facebook pages of the Spencer Exchange Club, Spencer Bulletin Board or at www.spencerexchange-club.org. Sponsorship forms may also be accessed at those locations.

Congressman McGovern joins comedian Jimmy Tingle for "For the Love of Democracy" fundraiser

LEICESTER — The Leicester Democratic Town Committee (LDTC) will host "For the Love of Democracy: A Comedy Fundraiser" on Thursday, October 1, at the Leicester Social Club, 91 Mannville St. Comedian and political satirist Jimmy Tingle will perform a one-man show, with doors opening at 6:15 p.m. and the show beginning at 7 p.m.

Proceeds benefit three local Democratic campaigns: State Representative David LeBoeuf (17th Worcester District), State Representative candidate Nick Lazzaro (7th Worcester District), and State Senate candidate Shannon Teabo (Worcester and Hampshire District). Proceeds also support the ongoing work of the LDTC.

Tingle brings decades of comedic and political insight to the stage. He spent two seasons on CBS's "60 Minutes II," starred in his own HBO comedy special, and has appeared on "The Tonight Show" and CNN. His film credits include Next Stop Wonderland and Boondock Saints.

The evening will be emceed by Chris Zito, former host of "Zito in the Morning" on WSR 96.1 and Mix 93.1. Each candidate will offer brief remarks before Tingle takes the stage. Congressman Jim McGovern will attend the VIP meet and greet, which opens at 5:15 p.m., and is limited to 50 guests. Other state elected officials may also be in attendance.

"Leicester is a purple town, and we've spent the last year and a half proving that a small, determined committee can make a real difference here," said Elizabeth McKenzie Zito, Chair of the Leicester

Democratic Town Committee. "This night is about bringing people together, laughing a little, and investing in candidates who will show up for our community."

"For the Love of Democracy" is the inaugural production of Just Sayin' Productions. Seating is theater-style and limited to 300 guests. A cash bar will be available. Tickets are on sale now at secure.actblue.com/donate/ldtc-comedy.

**ATTENTION
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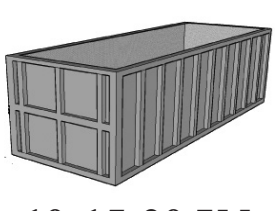


The West Brookfield Water Department will be flushing hydrants 10/19 through 10/30 during the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Flushing will cause some disturbance in the water mains. The water may appear cloudy but will eventually dissipate. Please plan water use accordingly.

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Meet Rosie!

Rosie is a sweet, gentle, and sensitive girl looking for her forever home. She can be shy when meeting new people and will need a little time to feel safe and comfortable. Rosie is the kind of girl who needs patience, understanding, and someone willing to let her warm up at her own pace.

Rosie is also sensitive about being picked up, so her new family will need to respect her boundaries and allow her to build trust gradually. She may take some time to come out of her shell, but once she feels safe and secure, we know her sweet personality will shine.

Rosie does need a dental surgery, which is why she will be placed as a foster-to-adopt. Her dental procedure will be done through our veterinarian, and our rescue will cover the full cost of her dental care. Her foster-to-adopt family will simply provide her with a safe, loving home while she receives the care she needs.

Rosie is looking for someone who understands that love and trust don't always happen overnight. She may need a little extra time, but she is absolutely worth it. With patience, kindness, and consistency, Rosie has the chance to blossom into a wonderful companion.

Second Chance Animal Services

www.secondchanceanimals.org

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Fundraiser Benefit Dinner

Please join us for an evening of great food and fun. Learn about our rescue and the horses and donkeys in our care. CNEER is a grassroots rescue located in West Brookfield, MA .Our mission is to rescue, heal and restore the spirit of the horse when it has been damaged through abuse, neglect and abandonment. We are committed to making a difference - one horse at a time.

October 24, 2026

Hardwick Crossing Country Club

262 Lower Road, Gilbertville, MA01031

Doors open at 5 pm, Buffet Dinner served at 6 pm

Single ticket \$100 - Bundle of Two Tickets \$175

Payment must be received by October 10th

To purchase tickets online please use the QR code or this link: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/fall-fundraiser-banquet>



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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

A familiar face takes on a new challenge

When a community chooses a new police chief, it is choosing more than the person who will occupy an office or wear a particular badge. It is selecting someone who will help set the tone for a department, establish expectations for its officers and shape its relationship with residents.

Spencer’s choice of Nathan Hagglund offers an interesting advantage in that regard. Although he will be new to the Spencer Police Department, he is certainly not new to the region.

Hagglund comes to Spencer after serving as police chief in neighboring West Brookfield. His career has also taken him through Leicester, Nantucket, Provincetown, Auburn and Sudbury, giving him experience in communities with different needs, challenges and approaches to public safety.

That experience matters, but perhaps equally encouraging is the amount of thought Hagglund appears to have put into applying for the Spencer position.

During his interview, Hagglund explained that he had considered applying for the job years earlier, when Michael Befford was ultimately selected as chief. At the time, Hagglund decided he was not yet ready.

There is something to be said for that kind of self-assessment. Leadership positions should not be pursued simply because they become available. Experience, timing and preparation matter.

Years later, Hagglund believed the time was right. Even then, he did some homework.

He spoke with retired Spencer Police Lt. Norman Hodgerney about the community and attended retirement celebrations involving members of the department. What impressed him was not simply the police officers themselves, but the presence of town officials and residents who came to recognize those who had served.

That observation says something important about Spencer.

Police departments function best when there is a healthy relationship between officers and the people they serve. That does not mean residents and police will always agree. Nor should support for a department prevent legitimate questions about policies, spending or decisions. Public safety agencies, like every municipal department, are accountable to the community. But mutual respect provides a strong foundation.

Hagglund also spoke during his interview about department culture, describing it as the foundation upon which an agency is built. That may prove to be one of the most important aspects of his leadership.

Police work is difficult. Officers encounter residents on some of their worst days, respond to emergencies that can change without warning and make decisions under circumstances most people will never experience. A department needs professionalism and accountability, but it also needs officers who trust one another and leadership that establishes clear expectations.

Hagglund inherits a department he has already described as being on stable ground. That is an important distinction. A new chief does not necessarily need to arrive with plans to remake everything. Sometimes good leadership means recognizing what already works, preserving it and finding thoughtful opportunities for improvement.

One example could be Hagglund’s experience helping establish a drone unit while serving in Sudbury. He has indicated an interest in bringing that experience to Spencer as the town works toward developing its own program. New technology can offer useful public safety tools, provided its implementation includes appropriate policies, training and oversight.

The unanimous appointment on Sept. 28 begins a new chapter following Befford’s retirement, but the transition does not need to represent a departure from what came before.

The strongest municipal leadership transitions often combine continuity with new ideas.

Hagglund already knows this part of Massachusetts. More importantly, his comments suggest he took the time to learn something about Spencer before deciding he wanted the job.

Now comes the more important task of earning the community’s confidence while leading the department forward.

VIEWPOINT

OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trump’s illegal bribe

To the Editor:

At the recent RNC convention Trump said he will give \$5,000 to every adult American citizen if Republicans retain control of the house and senate after the midterms. Impossible!

It is our money to begin with! Think about it! With today’s prices on housing, gas, food, clothing, medicals, etc., \$5,000 is not going to go very far. Yet he wants you to sell your soul to the Devil for it.

How stupid does Trump think we are? I guess that is a rhetorical question given the amount of people contemplating being bought and giving up our democracy for a measly \$5,000.

I find myself saying “you can’t fix stupid” more and more these days.

Wake up!

NOREEN FERNANDES
WEST BROOKFIELD

I hope this clears things up

To the Editor:

In reference to my letter from last week, I would like to clarify something. I said that people who support the current President are vile.

If you truly, truly believe that this country is headed in the right direction, I was not talking about you.

If you truly, in your heart of hearts, believe that the current President is working on behalf of the American people, I was not talking about you.

If you truly, truly believe that black and brown people are not as good as whites, I was not talking about you. I don’t understand you, but I was not talking about you.

If you truly believe the head of a country should be getting richer while the people he is working for get poorer and poorer, I was not talking about you.

If you have studied history — for

instance, Germany — and understand what happened there to its people, I was not talking about you.

If you truly, truly believe that the Epstein files didn’t hurt anyone and should be kept secret, I was not talking about you.

The people I was, and am, talking about are those around the current President who see and hear him day in and day out and can see clearly what is happening. These are the ones I was talking about. These are the people who also don’t care about you or this country, and only care about enriching themselves at our expense.

By the way, the same letters in vile are in evil.

Hope this clears things up.

JUDY ROSE
EAST BROOKFIELD

Stand with us — this isn’t over

To the Editor:

This November’s midterms matter more than most. Across the country, people are exhausted, anxious, and angry - and for good reason. Too many of the people meant to serve us have instead served themselves, their party, or one man. I don’t say that lightly. It’s why I believe we need to get involved.

What worries me most isn’t just the election itself — it’s what could happen after the election. Retired federal judge J. Michael Luttig, a Republican appointed by George H.W. Bush, has warned publicly that if Democrats win a House majority this fall, the outgoing House could attempt to replace the Clerk of the House with someone willing to leave duly elected members off the official roll - in effect, refusing to recognize them, even though voters chose them. If that happens, Congress can’t function: no laws, no oversight, no check on the president. In plain terms: Congressional power stays paralyzed until those newly elected members are properly and legally seated.

This outcome isn’t set in stone, but what happens next depends on what we’re willing to do. We can still be heard: Write letters. Put up a lawn sign. Contact our representatives. Show up to a rally — all you have to do is stand or sit with us, whichever feels right. We each started as a first-timer. The more of us who show up, the more empowered we become and the harder we are for those in power to ignore.

Oct. 17 is No Kings Day; millions of us will show up to a rally to defend our right to vote. To find your closest No Kings rally, go to indivisible.org. Your presence matters, even if you never say a word.

We may be strangers to each other, but we’re all Americans, standing together to save our country from those who’d rather rule than represent us.

Do what you can now — don’t wait and assume it’ll just work out. If we don’t help take back the House, there may be no way left to challenge and stop what’s happening.

KATHY J. ANTALEK
WEST BROOKFIELD

The “common good”

To the Editor:

As a child, including my family, way back then I had the chance to benefit from a lot of mainly good influences, my parents and extended family, listening to the Priests at St . Josephs in Auburn and St Aloysius in Rochdale and learning from good history and ethics teachers like Rochdale’s Ralph Leonard

They all came from we now call America’s “Greatest Generation” the one that united all Americans around the “Common Good” cause of fighting and winning the war against Hitler’s Nazis and other dictatorships. Later they did the same from Presidents Truman and Eisenhower to Carter and Reagan to contain and then pull down Stalin’s Russia (now reborn under very Stalin-like Putin).

Later on, I studied at a Jesuit run Catholic college. Recently I read an article from a director at a similar college on the “Common Good” and the current American government – The Trump administration.

Near the beginning, he defined the Common Good as about “creating (an American society where everyone has the chance to thrive and live together peacefully. In simpler terms, it means that our systems- Like education, health care, and a clean environment should work in a way that’s accessible and beneficial to everyone, without “leaving anyone out. “

Writing in 2025, he said “The Trump administration hit the ground running in early 2025 with a bunch of executive orders and policy changes. These moves have sparked a lot of conversations across the country about what’s ethical (or moral), how government should operate and whether these changes truly benefit everyone . We’re talking about everything from education and the environment to

civil rights and how the U.S. deals with other countries. The big question is: ‘Are these actions helping the well-being of all Americans?’

Then he looks at what the Trump administration has done in areas including:

Education Policy — Stop teaching materials it considers Anti-American and punishing well known universities, including important ones those in Massachusetts. He indicates that limits learning, damages the universities ability to do needed research and their global reputation.

Environmental policy — He says a healthy environment benefits everyone with clean air, safe water, and a stable climate. Also when the environment suffers, so do public health and future generations. He goes onto say The Trump Administration instead seems to give priority to individual “freedom” and big business over shared environmental protections.

Civil Rights — Many see the Trump administrations actions her as undermining protections for marginalized groups. This could create more division and discrimination instead of promoting inclusion an equal opportunity for everyone.

Immigration — The Trump administration actions show a vision where asses of shared benefits and potential to produce for the “Common Good” are restricted along the lines of nationality, religion of legal status.

He concludes by saying this about the Trump Administration: “Trump’s early days policies offer one that leaned towards division and prioritizing private interests over public ones.”

And so it continued, including Iran May we begin to end it with the 2026 elections.

KEVIN KANE
SPENCER

A retiree’s guide for National Retirement Security Month

FINANCIAL FOCUS

TREVOR NIELSEN

If you’re retired, it’s easy to let your finances go on autopilot. Since October is National Retirement Security Month, it’s a good time to revisit some areas that can impact your long-term financial security and help your money last a lifetime.

Consider these suggestions:

- Manage your withdrawal rate. You’ll likely need to tap into your retirement accounts — your IRA and 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan. But think carefully about how much income you withdraw every year. If you take out too much, especially in the early years of your retirement, you risk outliving your resources. You have the option of withdrawing from these accounts at age 59 and a half. Once you turn 73, you’ll be required to take out at least a certain amount each year based on your age and account balance.
- Estimate health care costs. When you turn 65, you will be eligible for Medicare, but you may still need a Medicare supplement plan, both of which will require premium payments. You’ll probably also incur a variety of other unreimbursed expenses for doctor visit copays or deductibles, prescription drugs and vision, hearing, and dental care. Additionally, about 70% of adults ages 65 and older will need some form of long-term support, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. This may include a paid home health aide (average cost of \$77,792 per year), an assisted living residence (average cost of \$70,500 per year) or nursing home care (private room average cost of \$127,750 per year). (Cost estimates are from Genworth 2024 Cost of Care Survey.) Over the course of your retirement, these can add up, so be realistic when budgeting for health care expenses in retirement.
- Consider when to take Social Security. You can start receiving monthly Social Security checks at age 62, but your payments will generally be larger if you wait until your “full” retirement age of 66 or 67. (The size of your payments will “max out” at age 70.) If you believe you have longevity working in your favor, and you can afford to wait, you may well be better off by delaying Social Security as long as possible.
- Avoid investing too conservatively. Once you’re retired, you might think you should take as few chances with your investments as possible — after all, you have less time for them to bounce back from a downturn than you did during your working years. Nonetheless, it’s important to consider keeping a reasonable percentage of growth-oriented investments in your portfolio to help you stay ahead of inflation. Even at a low rate, inflation can erode your purchasing power over time.
- Keep your generosity in check. If you have grown children who need financial help, or grandchildren heading to college someday, you’d no doubt like to do what you can to assist them. However, the hard truth is that they have more time than you to find workable financial solutions, whereas if you deplete your funds through your generosity, you could put yourself in a precarious position. So, be as giving as you can afford — but try not to go beyond that. By preserving your financial independence, you’ll end up benefiting your family as well.

Retirement is ideally an enjoyable time in your life, especially if you feel financially stable. So, take time to check in periodically to keep that stability on track.

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@edward-jones.com. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reversing global warming is for all the marbles

To the Editor:

Kevin Kane brought up global warming in this space on September 18. I would like to add important detail to what he said.

I began studying climate change three months after I got my Ph.D. from Cornell University in 1989.

The situation is much worse than he and most climate scientists tell us. You've heard that Earth's global surface temperature (GST) is already 1.4 degrees Celsius hotter than when the Industrial Revolution began (+1.4 degrees Celsius). But warming does not stop when we stop emitting carbon dioxide (CO2).

Far from it! Global warming is accelerating. The rate doubled from 1975-2000 to 2015-25. Warming will continue, in spades, after we stop our emissions.

When Earth last wore this much CO2, GST was +5.5 degrees Celsius, as we know from eras both colder (4 ice ages) and hotter (2-25 million years ago) than now.

Why? The CO2 level was the same. The sun's output was almost the same (0.5 degrees Celsius cooler at Earth orbit 25 million years ago). But Earth reflected less sunlight.

For less reflection now, start with loss of sulfur aerosols, as we phase out burning coal without scrubbers. Add loss of white ice, snow, and especially clouds. Where sunlight hits them, they reflect most of it away, so it doesn't heat up Earth as much. But oceans, forests, and most rock absorb most sunlight hitting them. With less clouds, ice, snow and aerosols, Earth heats up.

Using data new in late 2024, scientists (me included) found that, over 1984-2019, the Pacific and Atlantic oceans gradually lost 12 percent of their cloud cover. That is huge. Clouds cover about 55 percent of Earth (formerly 60 percent). In all, loss of reflection over 2000-25 led to radiative forcing (which brings future warming, ice melt, etc.) more than twice as much (230 percent) as from the greenhouse gases (GHGs - CO2 etc.) we emitted over those same years. Earlier, over 1975-2016, Earth's loss of reflection caused only 62 percent as much warming as GHGs we emitted over those 42 years. Loss of reflection has accelerated and surpassed GHGs as a source of future warming. It will be big even after we stop our own emissions.

Moreover, as Earth keeps warming, permafrost, oceans,

soils, and forests start emitting more carbon than they absorb. So far, this is only about 15 percent as much as our own emissions, led by permafrost. But that percentage will continue rising as Earth warms more and we taper off our own emissions.

So, we have committed Earth to 5.5°C warming. What will conditions be?

According mostly to a study for Congress (and the UK, led by the World Bank's chief economist) twenty years ago, +4 degrees Celsius will bring (1) freshwater shortages for almost everyone; (2) world crop yields down 30-50 percent; (3) great migrations and water wars; (4) two thirds of the Amazon basin a savanna instead of rainforest, (5) great ice sheet melt, with seas eventually 100-150 feet higher; (6) 20 to 60 percent of today's species extinct; and (7) 30 percent of Earth's land too hot and humid for us to survive, up from 1 percent now. Above 4.5 degrees Celsius, it gets worse.

Can we prevent that? Yes, we can. But will we? That's iffy.

We need to do three things, at the same time. We need to (1) stop putting carbon in the air, (2) take out the carbon we've already put in, plus what we WILL put in, and (3) cool Earth off till we remove all our GHGs. We need to scale up CO2 removal 1 million-fold. But we cannot do that fast enough. Cooling buys us time to scale up and slow emissions from permafrost, etc. Two out of three is not good enough; then we would lose everything we care about, roughly a century from now. Just ending our emissions by 2050 would postpone the collapse of everything by about 25 years.

To stop our emissions, make our electricity carbon-free and electrify everything. (2) To remove our legacy and future CO2 from the air, use direct air capture, enhanced rock weathering, biochar, ocean alkalinity enhancement, stop deforestation, etc. (3) To cool Earth off, use stratospheric aerosol injection, brighten marine clouds, increase cloud condensation nuclei for cirrus clouds, re-freeze Arctic sea ice, use mirrors, etc. Postponing cooling Earth guarantees the demise of civilization.

DR. GENE FRY
BROOKFIELD

The great October thermostat standoff

There comes a morning every October when a man wakes up and realizes that his house has become an experiment in refrigeration.

LANTERNS
ALONG
MAIN
STREET
By CHARLES

You know the morning. You get out of bed, put your feet on the floor and immediately reconsider every decision that brought you to this point in life. The floor is cold. The bathroom is colder. And somewhere downstairs, your wife is wearing a sweatshirt and giving you the kind of look that says the heating season has officially begun, whether you have accepted it or not.

I have always believed there should be rules about turning on the heat. Not actual rules, mind you. Nothing involving town meeting or the Legislature. We have enough regulations already. I mean personal rules.

Mine is that the furnace should remain off until sometime in October when it becomes absolutely necessary. The trouble is defining "absolutely necessary." My wife and I have different standards. To her, the appearance of frost on the lawn is compelling evidence. To me, frost is merely nature making a suggestion. She will walk past the thermostat and glance at it. I will notice her glancing at it. Neither of us will say anything. This is marriage after 30 years. You don't need words for the important negotiations. The thermostat sits there quietly between us, waiting to see who cracks first.

I usually attempt several delaying tactics. First comes the sweatshirt. Then the heavier socks. Then I begin making helpful observations such as, "It's supposed to warm up this afternoon." This is technically true, although warming from 43 degrees to 58 degrees isn't quite the argument I think it is. Eventually, my wife asks the obvious question: "Why don't we turn the heat on?" I never have a particularly good answer.

There is something psychological about that first firing of the furnace. Once you hear it rumble to life, summer is officially over. There is no going back. Windows that were open every evening suddenly get locked. The ceiling fans stop spinning. The extra blanket returns to the bed. Somewhere in the garage, the snow shovel begins plotting its comeback. Turning on the heat feels like signing paperwork acknowledging that another New England winter is on its way.

And winter never arrives alone. It brings heating bills, icy windshields, frozen door locks, driveway shoveling and the annual mystery of where I put the good gloves. So I resist. Not effectively, but symbolically. I suspect generations of New Englanders have done the same thing.

We live in a part of the country where stubbornness is sometimes confused with thrift, and thrift is occasionally confused with sitting in your own living room wearing a winter coat. Eventually, of course, common sense wins.

One evening the temperature drops, the house gets genuinely chilly and somebody finally walks over to the thermostat. Click. A few seconds later comes the familiar sound of the furnace starting. Warm air begins moving through the house. And almost immediately, I wonder why I spent three days pretending I wasn't cold.

That is another October tradition around here. The leaves change. The days shorten. The pumpkins appear on front steps. And grown adults engage in silent contests with their thermostats.

I know how ours will end. The heat will go on. My wife will be comfortable. And I will stand near the vent enjoying the warm air while maintaining, purely for the historical record, that I could have held out another week.

Letter submission policy

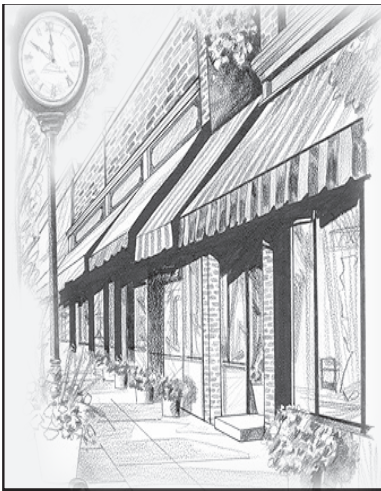
Letters to the Editor must include the author's name, address, and a daytime phone number for purposes of verification in order to be considered for publication. Only the author's name and the town in which they reside will be published. Letters submitted without all of the required information will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

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Mechanics Hall marks year of growth, investment and expanded programming at 183rd Annual Meeting

WORCESTER — The Worcester County Mechanics Association, the nonprofit organization that owns and operates Mechanics Hall, marked a year of growing community support, expanded programming and continued investment in the historic venue at its 183rd Annual Meeting on Sept. 29.

The meeting reflected the first full year under Executive Director Meghan Montaner, who assumed leadership of Mechanics Hall in July 2025. During the year, membership increased 30 percent and annual fund contributions grew 55 percent, while Mechanics Hall expanded its own programming and increased opportunities for young people to experience music and theatre at the Hall.

“The growth we’ve seen in our membership, donor support, programming and youth initiatives tells us that more people see themselves as part of the life of Mechanics Hall,” said Montaner. “Our job now is to keep opening those doors wider—bringing more people into the Hall, creating more reasons for them to return, and making sure this extraordinary place continues to be an active part of Worcester’s cultural life.”

The Association also presented its highest honor, the Master Mechanic Award, to former Executive Director Kathleen Gagne, recognizing more than 30 years of service to Mechanics Hall and her lasting contributions to its artistic, institutional and community life.

During her remarks, Montaner highlighted a year that balanced investment in the Hall's historic building with efforts to expand how the community experiences it. Facility projects included new carpeting in the Boyden Salon, Dickens Room and Great Hall perimeter; new window treatments; refinishing of the Great Hall and Washburn Hall floors; and

continued conservation of the Hall's historic portrait collection. Four portraits—Clara Barton, George Frisbie Hoar, James Barnard Blake and Governor John Albion Andrew—were restored during the year as part of the Hall's ongoing multiyear conservation initiative.

One of the year's most significant preservation projects took one of Mechanics Hall's two Hamburg Steinway Model D concert grands far beyond Worcester. The instrument traveled to Germany for a comprehensive \$80,000 restoration before returning to the Great Hall stage, ready once again to serve the exceptional musicians who perform and record at Mechanics Hall.

Mechanics Hall also expanded its role as a presenter, increasing the number and range of programs produced by the Hall and creating more opportunities for audiences of all ages to experience its stages. The 2025–2026 season included “L’Chaim: A Toast to the Jewish Legacy of Broadway” and other Mechanics Hall-presented performances, reflecting a growing commitment to broaden the mix of genres and artists while reaching new audiences.

That expansion extended to the Hall's youngest patrons. Many Voices: Mechanics Hall Youth Singers expanded enrollment beyond the city of Worcester to students throughout Worcester County, extending the reach of its tuition-free choral program. Student matinees and educational partnerships also brought thousands of students across the community into Mechanics Hall for "Cinderella" through a new partnership with the Met HD in Schools program, TheaterWorksUSA's *The Pout-Pout Fish*, and the longstanding *Conversations in Jazz* in partnership with CultureLEAP.

The Hall plans to build on that momentum in the

coming year, with more Mechanics Hall-presented performances, a broader range of genres and artists, and expanded opportunities for young people to experience and participate in the arts.

Financial position continues to strengthen

Treasurer Andrew Joyce reported operating revenue of \$2.34 million for fiscal year 2026, driven in part by a 9 percent increase in event rental revenue. Annual Fund contributions increased 55 percent, reflecting growing philanthropic support for the Hall and its mission.

The Association reported a net operating loss of \$167,000, an 11 percent improvement over the previous year and largely in line with budget expectations as Mechanics Hall continued investing in programming and facility operations. After investment returns, capital support and depreciation, the organization finished the year with positive net income of \$17,000.

Financial reserves increased 5 percent to a record \$5.91 million, strengthening resources available for preservation, future capital needs and long-term organizational stability.

Gagne receives Master Mechanic Award

The evening's Master Mechanic Award recognized Kathleen Gagne, who retired in 2025.

following more than three decades at Mechanics Hall, including seven years as Executive Director.

Throughout her career, Gagne played a central role in programming, marketing, fundraising and preservation while helping expand the Hall's relationship with the Worcester community. As Executive Director, she guided Mechanics Hall through the COVID-19 pandemic and an 18-month shutdown while continuing to invest in the building and its future.



Courtesy

Executive Director Meghan Montaner speaks during the Worcester County Mechanics Association's Annual Meeting.

Her tenure also brought several initiatives that continue to shape Mechanics Hall today. Gagne launched Many Voices: Mechanics Hall Youth Singers in 2022 and the popular Washburn Hall series “Club 321” in 2024, while championing educational concerts and the Worcester Organ Performance Series. She also led the initiative to commission portraits of prominent 19th-century Black Americans for the Great Hall Portrait Gallery, expanding the history represented within the Hall’s collection.

As Executive Director, Gagne oversaw major lighting and sound upgrades in both performance halls, pairing modern technical capabilities with stewardship of the historic building.

Reflecting on the Hall and its history, Gagne said, "Remembering the remarkable reminds us that human beings are capable of extraordinary creativity...it is not the nature of common architecture to uplift and encourage. Mechanics Hall does that. It has wisdom in its walls. It has the sweat of labor in its beams. It is proof that in this New England city dreams of a better life were encouraged and through education and disciplined work, those dreams could come true."

The Master Mechanic Award recognizes individuals and organizations whose innovation, enterprise and leadership contribute to a culture of excellence in Central Massachusetts.

New officers elected

The Association elected James Goldsberry of NextUp2Lead as President, succeeding Peter Thomas, who will continue his service as a Vice President.

Andrew Joyce of Baystate Financial was elected Treasurer and Evan Maloney of MCPHS University was elected Clerk.

Vice Presidents elected were Jen Antkowiak, Soundshine Productions; Bruce Ellis, R.P. Masiello, Inc.; Victoria Mariano, Downtown Worcester BID; Scott Ober, Hassett Donnelly; Liz Parker Gagne, UMass Memorial Health; and Peter Thomas, Westbridge.

Trustees include Kim Ciborowski; Patricia Davidson, Mirick O'Connell; Anthony D'Elia,

Revelation Productions;
Akash Garg, Merrill Lynch
Wealth Management;
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Madigan Company, Inc.;
Lorie Martiska, Open Sky
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Satya Mitra, The Guru
Tax & Financial Services;
Matthew Sabacinski,
TD Bank; Adi Tibrewal,
Merrill Lynch Wealth
Management; and Margaret
Wong, Quinsigamond
Community College.

Newly elected trustees include: Tanner Bolton Harris, Saint-Gobain; Patrick Dacey, Bento Box Entertainment; Dennis A. Dean, II, PhD, Quinsigamond Community College; and Amanda B. Wittman, Ph.D., Worcester

Polytechnic Institute.

Honorary Trustees are Judith Collins, Kathryn Crockett, Linwood M. Erskine Jr., Patrice M. Muchowski, Michael Refolo, David Smith and Joseph N. Stolberg.

Steeped in the rich history of 19th-century Worcester, Mechanics Hall is internationally

regarded as one of the world's great concert halls. Regionally, it is a gathering place known for its central New England location, architecture, acoustics and extraordinary history.

The world's renowned orchestras and performers—including the London Philharmonic, Yo-Yo Ma, Ella Fitzgerald and Linda Ronstadt—have taken the Hall's stage. Among the many notable figures who have spoken at Mechanics Hall are Charles Dickens, Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass and Mark Twain.

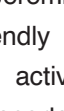
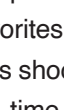
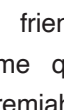
In addition to serving as a performance venue, event destination and recording site, Mechanics Hall offers cultural experiences through concerts, community events, youth programming and collaborations with educational and non-profit organizations.

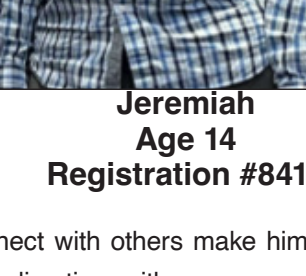
Mechanics Hall is a nonprofit organization owned and operated by the Worcester County Mechanics Association, established in 1842, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Learn more at MechanicsHall.org.





Friday's Child



Jeremiah
Age 14
Registration #8413

Jeremiah is an easygoing and friendly boy who enjoys staying active and loves all kinds of sports. Football is one of his favorites, and he especially enjoys shooting hoops and spending time playing basketball with his friends. When he wants some quiet time to himself, Jeremiah enjoys playing video games. Jeremiah is described by his friends and teachers as funny, kind, and a natural leader. He is a positive role model to those around him and enjoys making others laugh. His easy-going personality and ability to connect with others make him a great friend and someone people enjoy spending time with.

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/21182352036>

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.









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Musician Stan Matthews named Friends of the North Brookfield Town House Artist of the Month

NORTH BROOKFIELD — Musician, songwriter and performer, Stan Matthews has always loved music. He listens to a wide variety of styles and draws inspiration from everything he hears. He remembers being immersed in the music of performers such as Louis Armstrong, Eddy Arnold, Hank Williams, Roy Acuff, Tommy Makem, and the Clancy Brothers as a child, thanks to his mother, father, and maternal grandparents. It's safe to say that the musical tastes of his family helped start him on his musical journey.

Matthews also credits the performance of the Beatles on "The Ed Sullivan Show" for influencing his desire to perform, explaining, "My mom put me in front of our black and white tv to watch The Beatles. After that nothing was the same."

When he was 12, it was the guitar riff to "Smoke on the Water" by Deep Purple that motivated him to tell

his father that he wanted to learn how to play guitar. The next day his father came home with a Jimi Hendrix record and told him that if he really wanted to learn how to play the guitar, he needed to listen to Hendrix, because he was the best.

Matthews started a band with his best friends in high school and upon graduation went on to Berklee College of Music in Boston. Not content playing other people's music in cover bands, he started writing his own songs making use of the interest in poetry he had developed in high school.

He recorded a demo at a recording studio in Worcester, and his songs did get some airplay on WAAF and WBCN, the big rock stations back then. After shopping his songs to record companies in New York and London, Stan's frustration with the reality of the music business led him to what he calls a "per-



sonal hiatus."

It was the release of Johnny Cash's "American Recordings" series that

brought Matthews back to his love of music and renewed his desire to create once again. His big challenge by that time was to

juggle a renewed interest in songwriting with a wife, three children, and a full-time job as a truck driver.

Stan Matthews, the dad, emphasizes to his now adult children that what matters is not whether you end up being famous or being unknown. Like everything that we do in life, the important thing is to try. Here he uses the words of Vince Lombardi, "It's not whether you get knocked down, it's whether you get up." When he was much younger, he believed that I wanted to be a rock star. Now he is glad that he never did. Fame has a high price -- just look at Johnny Cash, Hank Williams, Jimi Hendrix and many more. Stan is convinced that he is much happier as a family man who also makes music than he would have been if he had made it to the big time. He is determined that he'll continue making music until they put him "in the ground. My music will last long after I'll have turned to dust. I did it my way," he insists.

Matthews views each song as a painting. To him each instrument, musical note and word is color on a canvas. He writes as each song is a personal experience. His music is stark, stripped bare, and the lyrics are honest. He sings about life from the perspective of the working man. The

intent of his music is to take you on life's journeys: a search for love, the joy of a child's birth, the struggle of relationships, the anguish at the loss of a job, the sorrow at a loved one's passing.

Matthes has released four CD's and won an award from the International Singer Songwriter's Association. He continues to write and record music and poetry. Most Fridays he can be found at the open mic series at Lost Towns Brewing in Ware. For more information on new releases or future events, you can check out his Web site at www.stanmatthewsmusic.com.

Matthews has lived in North Brookfield for seven years with Tonya, his wife of thirty-three years, their five children and at the moment, eleven chickens.

The Friends of the North Brookfield Town House would like to thank Stan Matthews for helping us put a spotlight on the arts as our "Artist of the Month for October."

The Friends is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on restoring, preserving, and sustaining the Town House as a cultural center of North Brookfield. Every month this organization recognizes a featured artist in their community.

Girl Scout Troop welcomes new members

SPENCER — Girls entering grades Kindergarten and 1 in the fall are invited to join Troop 65501. The troop meets in Spencer every other Sunday, 4:30-5:45 p.m. Girl membership registration fee is \$111, and is active until September 30, 2027. Financial Assistance is available.

Girl Scouts is the premier organization for girls to learn about leadership, financial literacy, life skills, the outdoors, community service, science and technology. Girl Scout programming is customizable for all types of learners! Previous Girl Scout experience is not necessary.

You can register for a spot in the troop at <https://go.gscwm.org/troop65501>. Questions? E-mail info@gscwm.org or call 508-365-0115.

About Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts
Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts serves nearly 6,000 girls in grades K through 12 with the strong support of over 2,500 adult volunteers in 186 towns and cities in central and western Massachusetts. The Girl Scout program allows girls to discover the fun, friendship, and power of girls together while building their personal leadership qualities. GSCWM supports girls by giving them extraordinary opportunities to explore, experience, and learn about their world and helps girls recognize that they are vital members of their communities.

WEEKLY POLICE BLOTTER

Spencer
The Spencer Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Sept. 23-29.
Justin Lee Eggleton, age 40, of Warren was arrested on Sept. 26 as a Detained Prisoner.

Leicester
The Leicester Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Sept. 24-30.
Joseph Frank Shivick, age 44, of Rochdale was arrested on Sept. 24 for Operating Under the Influence (Liquor; third offense).
Justin Lee Eggleton, age 40, of Warren was arrested on Sept. 26 for Operating Under the Influence (Drugs), Refusal by the Operator of a Motor Vehicle to Identify themselves, Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle, Operating a Motor Vehicle after suspension of license (subsequent offense), and a Marked Lanes Violation.

Francisco Ortiz-Rivera, age 45, of Spencer was arrested on Sept. 27 for Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle.
An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on Sept. 27 for Shoplifting By Asportation.
An individual whose identity has been withheld from publication received a summons in lieu of arrest on Sept. 29 for Felony Daytime Breaking & Entering into a Building, Larceny From a Building, and Trespassing.

Take your puzzle game to the next level at Leicester Public Library

LEICESTER — Calling all jigsaw puzzle enthusiasts -- take your puzzle game to the next level. Grab a few friends or family members and see if you can complete a jigsaw puzzle faster than your friends and neighbors. Each team will receive the same 500-piece puzzle provided by the library.

The team that finishes first or completes the most before time is called wins! If you don't have a team, email the library at library@leicesterlibrary.org and ask if there is room on the library team. Adults, teens, and families with children aged 8+ are welcome to participate. Registration is required- only one person from each team should register. Teams can have up to four members. Register through the calendar at www.leicesterlibrary.org.

Upcoming Puzzle Races are Thursday evenings, Oct. 22, Nov. 12 and Dec. 10 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. at the Leicester Public Library, 1136 Main St.

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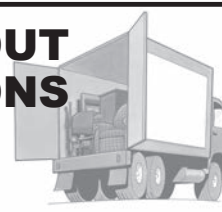
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East Brookfield seeks public input for Open Space and Recreation Plan update

EAST BROOKFIELD — The Town of East Brookfield, with assistance from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), is updating its 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan and is seeking input from residents.

Community members are encouraged to participate in a survey to share their thoughts on open space, recreational opportunities, and priorities for the future. Public feedback will help guide the development of the updated plan, which is required to maintain the Town’s eligibility for State grant funding for conservation and recreation projects.

Residents can complete the survey online at <https://tinyurl.com/yv7b23fy>. Hard copies are also available at Town Hall, the East Brookfield Public Library, and the Senior Center.

The Town encourages all residents to take part and help shape the future of East Brookfield’s parks, recreation resources, and open spaces.

East Brookfield library plans annual craft fair, Halloween movie

EAST BROOKFIELD — The East Brookfield Public Library will welcome local artisans for its Annual Craft Fair on Saturday, Oct. 17, while families can also look forward to a special Halloween-themed movie event later in the month.

The Annual Craft Fair will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the library, 122 Connie Mack Dr.

Organizers are emphasizing that items offered at the fair must be completely handcrafted. Those interested in participating are required to submit photographs of their work for review by emailing cmacmaster@cwmar.s.org.

Prospective participants may also bring one or two samples of their work to the library for review.

Later in October, the library will get into the Halloween spirit with a special installment of its Movie Time program.

On Thursday, Oct. 29, at 3:30 p.m., children and families are invited to the library for a screening of the Charlie Brown Halloween special featuring the Great Pumpkin.

Children are encouraged to attend in costume. Following the movie, youngsters will have an opportunity to continue their Halloween celebration by heading to Town Hall for additional festivities.

The movie program is also intended to provide an informal opportunity for residents to meet others in the community. Guests are welcome to bring a snack to enjoy during the screening.

Both programs will be held at the East Brookfield Public Library, 122 Connie Mack Dr. in East Brookfield

East Brookfield Library plans two-week Ghost Craft program

EAST BROOKFIELD — The East Brookfield Public Library is getting into the Halloween spirit with a two-part Ghost Craft Program planned for October.

Adults are invited to visit the library and create their own centerpiece ghost display during sessions scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 8, at 4 p.m. and Thursday, Oct. 15, at 3:30 p.m.

The craft is designed as a two-week project, with participants working on their

displays during both sessions. Because the project requires both programs to complete, participants must be available to attend on both dates.

The program is open to all adults, but advance registration is required.

The Ghost Craft Program is among the seasonal activities offered by the East Brookfield Public Library and gives local residents an opportunity to create a Halloween decoration of their own while spending

time with others in the community.

Those interested in participating should contact the East Brookfield Public Library to sign up for the program.



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LEGALS

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate
and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. WO26P3172EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR
FORMAL ADJUDICATION
Estate Of:
Leo C Hebert
Date of Death: 08/03/2026
To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Michelle L Terry of Brookfield MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that: .
Michelle L Terry of Brookfield MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 10/27/2026.**

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

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

WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.
Date: September 25, 2026
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
October 9, 2026

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 97 East Charlton Road, Spencer, MA 01562
By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Jared L. Armstrong to Mortgage Electronic

Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for loanDepot.com, LLC, and now held by **loanDepot.com, LLC**, said mortgage dated August 10, 2022 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 68071, Page 127, said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for loanDepot.com, LLC, its successors and assigns to loanDepot.com, LLC by assignment dated May 1, 2025 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 71936, Page 222; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at **Public Auction** on November 5, 2026 at 11:00 AM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit: *BEGINNING at an iron pipe in the easterly line of East Charlton Road at a point which is one hundred twenty-two (122.00) feet, measured along the easterly line of said East Charleton, Road, from the southerly end of a curve connecting said line with the southerly line of Bacon Hill Road; Thence from the point of beginning as defined above N. 27° 58' E. along the easterly line of said East Charleton Road, one hundred and twenty-two (122.00) feet to a point; Thence by a curve to the right having a radius of 22.95 feet, and length of 26.57 feet to a point in the southerly line of Bacon Hill Road; Thence 8. 85° 42' E. by the southerly line of said Bacon Hill Road, three hundred and forty-six (346.00) feet to an iron pipe at a stone wall; Thence 8. 9° 04' W. along said stone wall and by land now or formerly of William V. & Alta M. Cambell, four hundred and sixty-seven (467.00) feet to an iron pipe; Thence N. 56° 15' W. by a wall, seventy-one and 43/100 (71.43) to an angle; Thence N. 44 degrees 08' W. still by said wall, one hundred and sixty-three and 13/100 (163.00) feet to an angle; Thence N. 51 degrees 00' W. still by said wall, one hundred and ninety-two and 55/100 (192.55) feet to an angle; Thence N. 10 degrees 12' W. still by said wall eighty and 11/100 (80.11) feet to an angle; Thence N. 53 degrees 21' W. seventeen and 30/100 (17.30) feet to the point of BEGINNING. Meaning and intending to convey said premises as described in deed dated July 30, 2019 and recorded August 6, 2019 with Worcester South Registry of Deeds in Book 60837, Page 23.*

The description of the property contained in the mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

Upon information and belief, the third and fourth bounds above

should state S. and not 8. due to a typographical error.

For Mortgagor's Title see deed dated July 30, 2019 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 60837, Page 23.

TERMS OF SALE: Said premises will be sold and conveyed subject to all liens, encumbrances, unpaid taxes, tax titles, municipal liens and assessments, if any, which take precedence over the said mortgage above described.

FIVE THOUSAND (\$5,000.00) Dollars of the purchase price must be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check at the time and place of the sale by the purchaser. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check within thirty (30) days after the date of sale. Other terms to be announced at the sale.

Brock & Scott, PLLC
23 Messenger Street
Plainville, MA 02762
Attorney for loanDepot.com, LLC
Present Holder of the Mortgage
(401) 217-8701
October 2, 2026
October 9, 2026
October 16, 2026

Town of Spencer
Notice of Public Hearing
Notice is hereby given under M.G.L. c. 140, §§ 58-59 the Spencer Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on October 26, 2026, at 6:00pm at 157 Main Street Spencer, MA 01562 located in the McCourt Social Hall to consider the application of KAR Sales LLC for a Class II used motor vehicle dealer license located at 324/326 Main Street Spencer MA 01562.
Gary E. Woodbury
Chairman, Board of Selectmen
October 9, 2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate
and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. WO25P4318EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR SALE OF REAL ESTATE BY A PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
Estate of:
David Lewis Cataldo
Date of Death: 08/02/2025
To all interested persons:

A Petition for Sale of Real Estate has been filed by:
Leah M O'Brien of West Boylston MA

requesting that the court authorize the Personal Representative to sell the

decedent's real estate at a private sale.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 11/03/2026.

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

WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.
Date: JSeptember 28, 2026
Stephanie Fattman,
Register of Probate
October 9, 2026

Notice of Public Hearing for Zoning Amendment – Planning Board

The Spencer Planning Board will be holding a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, October 20, 2026**, in McCourt Social Hall of Memorial Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Spencer, MA, and the hearing will be conducted in person and remotely on the following items starting at 6:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as can be heard:

Newly Proposed Article: Zoning Bylaw Article 4.8.12, Temporary Moratorium on Data Centers, in effect through November 5, 2027

Interested parties may review the proposed bylaw at the Office of Development & Inspectional Services and the Town Clerk's office, located in Memorial Town Hall, during regular business hours, as well as posted on the Planning Board's webpage at www.spencerma.gov.

October 2, 2026
October 9, 2026

Town of Spencer
Notice of Public Hearing
Notice is hereby given under Chapter 138, Sec. 15A of the Massachusetts General Laws that a public hearing will be in person on October 26, 2026 at 6:00pm located at 157 Main Street, Spencer MA on the application of Raul Urbina for a transfer of an all-alcoholic beverages license for Urbysons Inc. d/b/a Tijuana Bar & Grill located at 117 Main Street, Spencer, MA.
Options to participate:
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>
Gary E. Woodbury
Chairman, Board of Selectmen
October 9, 2026

Friends of the Leicester Public Library announce Fall Book Sale

LEICESTER — “If you are doing fall cleaning, the Friends of the Leicester Library would appreciate donations of unwanted books, board games, puzzles, DVD’s, and CD’s for our Fall Book Sale,” Charissa Berube, Friends of the Leicester Library Chair, says.

The Friends group holds

a Book Sale every Fall and every spring.

“The Book Sales are huge events, and we’re able to provide opportunities to purchase all sorts of books for all age groups at truly discounted prices,” Berube explains. “It’s a terrific event that helps the library as well as people who come looking for books and the

many other items we sell, and our Friends group truly enjoys helping through the events.”

The Fall Book Sale will be held on Saturday, Oct. 10 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and on Tuesday, Oct. 13 from 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Proceeds from the Book Sale are used to purchase arts and craft supplies for

children’s and adult programs and to sponsor special educational presentations and programs.

“The monies raised are truly important and helpful, as we’re able to offer popular programs that the library would not be able to afford otherwise,” Berube continues.

All the items that are sold

at the Book Sale are contributed by area residents.

“We count on the kindness of people who might be looking to clear out unwanted items and help the library in the process,” Berube states.

Please bring the items you would like to contribute to the inside of the library any day and time it is open.

Please, no encyclopedias or medical textbooks.

Bring your unwanted items to the Library over the next few weeks, then come to the Book Sale and find some great prices on books, games, and other items that you will use and enjoy!

Spencer Cultural Council now accepting applications!

SPENCER — The largest grassroots cultural funding network in the nation, the Local Cultural Council (LCC) Program enriches the cultural life of all cities and towns in Massachusetts. Led by municipally appointed volunteers, LCCs award \$6.6 million every year, supporting 7,400 cultural programs that include everything from field trips to lectures, festivals, and dance performances.

The Spencer Cultural Council grant cycle is now open (closes Oct. 15). This is a very easy grant to apply for. Grants are awarded/denied by Jan. 1. The grants need to be completed by Dec. 31, 2027. Grants are reimbursed to grantees when paperwork is submitted after the program. For questions, contact Denise at dfarmosa@cwmar.org. The online application can be found at <https://massculturalcouncil.org/communities/local-cultural-council-program/application-process/>.

Who is eligible to apply for an LCC grant?

Applicants must reside or be located in Massachusetts. Local Cultural Councils may accept applications from anyone included in the list below:

Individuals. Individual applicants must show that a public benefit results from the project for which they are applying.

Incorporated private nonprofit organizations.

Unincorporated associations that can establish a nonprofit objective.

For-profit organizations whose application demonstrates public benefit.

A group of individuals coming together with a common purpose (e.g., local community band, theater group) that do not have nonprofit status.

Public schools, libraries, other municipal agencies, and the Local Cultural Council itself.

Religious organizations. Religious organiza-

tions or groups with a religious affiliation are eligible to apply for funding for a project or program that: Is available to the general public. Has the purpose of benefiting the public, not the religious organization.

LCCs cannot fund activities that are “inherently religious” such as religious worship, instruction, and proselytization.

The Mass Cultural Council is extremely appreciative of the efforts made

by Local Cultural Council members in ensuring public access to culture in our communities. LCCs and their grant recipients are vital partners in our attempt to raise awareness about public funding for arts and

culture in Massachusetts, both in the Legislature and with the public. The Spencer Cultural Council is a local agency funded by Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Open poetry reading series coming to Merriam-Gilbert Library

WEST BROOKFIELD — Local poets, readers and lovers of the written word will have a new opportunity to share their favorites when the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library hosts “One Poem,” an open poetry reading series beginning in September.

The program is designed to provide a welcoming venue for writers to share their own poetry while introducing participants to the work of other published poets.

For each original poem a participant reads, organizers

ask that the reader complement it with a poem by an established, published writer. Selections can range widely, from Shakespeare and Anne Bradstreet to Charles Bukowski, William Butler Yeats, Rumi, Adrienne Rich and contemporary poets.

Participants do not need to be poets themselves. Those without original work are welcome to read favorite poems by published writers, while community members who would rather listen are equally encouraged to attend.

Readings will take place in round-robin fashion, with participants sharing no more than two poems during each turn. The number of opportunities each person has to read will depend upon attendance. Organizers ask participants to avoid particularly lengthy selections so everyone has an opportunity to take part.

The series is intended to foster a creative community of writers and readers while exposing participants to poets and styles they might not otherwise encounter.

“One Poem” will run

from September through May, generally on the third Thursday of each month from 4 to 6 p.m. Some dates may be adjusted because of holidays.

Programs will be held in the upstairs meeting room at the Merriam-Gilbert Public Library on Main Street in West Brookfield. The meeting room is accessible by elevator.

The series is open to the Central Massachusetts community.

“Come: read, listen, learn, savor,” organizers invite participants.



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SPECTRUM
continued from page A1

revenue by some 300 percent,” explained Lapenas.

For her part, Shelley Winchenbach, acknowledged that they wish Charter Communications could have offered more in grants, but she feels this is a good deal that allows for an adaptable relationship between Spectrum and West Brookfield.

“It’s unfortunate that we weren’t able to give them more money. I saw their studio and I’d really like to be able to do more for the PEG channel. So, hopefully, maybe something will happen in the future. We wrote some language in there that we don’t know if, in the future, streaming and telephone would be part of the gross revenue because right now it’s just cable. So there’s language in there too that watches out for that in the future if anything changes with federal law,” Winchenbach said.

The deal also allows for five town departments to continue to have complimentary TV subscriptions at no cost to the town.

CONSTRUCTION
continued from page A1

original cemetery in the rear of the property.

While the new church doesn’t feature the iconic steeple, it does offer numerous enhancements over the original design. For instance, the modern facility features ADA access and is fully sprinklered, greatly enhancing accessibility and safety for its patrons. Energy-saving measures like modern windows and insulation also help enhance the efficiency of the church, along with meeting new code requirements. Lauring’s self-perform trades oversaw significant portions of the construction, including site-work, concrete (foundations and sidewalk), wood framing, wall framing, doors and hardware, finish millwork, carpentry, and trim, enhancing quality while reducing costs for the client.

The finished project incorporates numerous community-facing features that enhance services available in the former church while introducing new resources. A thrift shop, continuing education classrooms, social gathering spaces, and administrative offices are all part of the new design, which was overseen by architect Amanda Normandin of A. Normandin Design in Sturbridge. Lauring’s team also oversaw installation of acoustical wall panels to help with sound control and absorption, along with movable partitions in the Fellowship Hall to easily modify the space

for smaller and larger gatherings.

“We are so pleased to have chosen Lauring Construction for our church rebuild,” said Sandra Buxton of the First Congregational Church of Spencer. “They have been a perfect fit to guide us through this project and were always respectful of our needs and how sensitive we were rebuilding after such a tragedy. Their team was in constant contact with our church building team, and available for every question and concern.”

For over three generations, Lauring has served Worcester County via a wide range of specialized building and renovation projects. The company has managed construction of multiple worship facilities across the region that enable local religious communities to serve the residents of Worcester County and surrounding areas, including St. Joseph’s Church in Charlton and the Chapel of the Holy Spirit at Assumption University in Worcester.

“Lauring Construction was honored to be selected for this project, and we recognized there was an emotional component for the congregation to ensure they once again had a place to gather and support one another,” said Mike Lauring, vice president, Lauring Construction. “We are pleased to have utilized our self-perform teams to create a new worship space that will support the First Congregational Church’s mission while honoring its past.”

Leicester Agricultural Commission
to host “Massachusetts Health
Update” presentation

LEICESTER — The Leicester Agricultural Commission invites local area Agricultural Commissions, Conservation Commissions, Boards of Health, Garden Clubs, Land Trusts, Scout groups, and all interested citizens to a “Massachusetts Forest Health Update” presentation.

Felicia Hubacz, a forest health specialist with the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), will update attendees as to the health of Massachusetts’ forests. She will concentrate on three of the emerging threats to the state’s forests – the emerald ash borer, beach leaf disease caused by nematodes, and white pine needle damage complex and what can be done to help control these invasives.

Hubacz will also speak briefly about the spotted lantern fly invasion. The presentation will take place on Monday, Oct. 19 at the Leicester Senior Center, 40 Winslow Ave., Leicester, at 7 p.m. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. There will be a question-and-answer session after the presentation. Light refreshments will be served.

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Haston Library plans Pooh
celebration, haunted house
and Halloween fun

NORTH BROOKFIELD — October will bring birthday celebrations, scares and plenty of Halloween activities to the Haston Free Public Library, with several special events planned for residents of all ages.

The festivities begin Wednesday, Oct. 14, when the library hosts a Winnie the Pooh Party marking the 100th anniversary of A.A. Milne’s famous children’s character.

Milne’s “Winnie-the-Pooh” was first published Oct. 14, 1926, introducing readers to Pooh and the inhabitants of the Hundred Acre Wood. A century later, the stories and characters remain familiar to generations of children and adults.

The Haston Library will celebrate the milestone from noon to 5 p.m. Oct. 14 with themed refreshments, activities and crafts. Free door prizes will also be offered for both children and adults.

All ages are invited to drop in during the five-hour celebration.

Later in the month, the library will trade the Hundred Acre Wood for something considerably spookier when it hosts its second annual

Haston Haunted House on Friday, Oct. 23, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Organizers are planning three floors of activities designed to provide different levels of Halloween fun.

The library’s main floor will feature tarot readings, raffles, music and refreshments. The upper floor will be designated as a “scare-free” area geared toward younger visitors, with games, crafts and other activities.

Those looking for a bigger fright can head downstairs, where the library’s book stacks will be transformed into a Haunted House featuring scare actors and spooky scenes. Costumes are encouraged.

Admission is by a suggested donation of \$5 per person or \$10 per family. Proceeds will benefit the Friends of the Haston Free Public Library and help support library events and programs throughout the year.

The library is also seeking community help to prepare for the Haunted House. Donations of Halloween decorations are welcome, and volunteers are needed to

serve as scare actors and assist with decorating.

Those interested in volunteering or donating decorations may contact the library at hastonfree-publiclibrary@cwmar.org or 508-867-0208.

The Halloween activities will continue through the end of the month.

The Haston Library will participate in North Brookfield’s Trunk or Treat on Saturday, Oct. 31, with a Peanuts-themed trunk. Library representatives will distribute candy along with non-food treats and other goodies. Trunk or Treat is scheduled from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Together, the events will give local families several opportunities to visit the library during October, whether they are looking to celebrate a century of Winnie the Pooh, brave a trip through a Haunted House or collect some Halloween treats.

The Haston Free Public Library is located in North Brookfield. For additional information about October programs, contact the library at 508-867-0208.

North Brookfield Senior Center
offers full slate of October programs

NORTH BROOKFIELD — The North Brookfield Senior Center has a busy October planned, with programs ranging from health clinics and Medicare assistance to art classes, technology help and nutrition education.

The month’s special programming begins Monday, Oct. 5, with Music Bingo at 11 a.m. A National Grid presentation will follow Tuesday, Oct. 6, at 1 p.m.

Several opportunities for residents to explore their creative side are planned throughout the month. Free art classes will be offered Thursday, Oct. 8, and Thursday, Oct. 29, at 11 a.m. A free drawing and painting class is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 15, at 11 a.m.

A Coffee and Craft program will be held Saturday, Oct. 10, at 9 a.m. The cost is \$5, and advance registration is required.

Residents will also have opportunities to receive assistance with government programs and services. State Rep. Donald Berthiaume will hold office hours Thursday, Oct. 8, from 10 to 11 a.m. A SHINE

representative will be available Tuesday, Oct. 13, and Monday, Oct. 26, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Both SHINE sessions are available by appointment only.

The veterans agent will be available Wednesday, Oct. 14, from 10 to 11 a.m., followed by a blood pressure clinic at 11 a.m.

Medicare specialist Ed Spater will be available Thursday, Oct. 15, and Thursday, Oct. 29, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Appointments are required.

Later in the month, Tech Help with Alex will be offered Monday, Oct. 26, at 10 a.m. The Tri-Valley Nutrition Program will present “Healthy Eating on a Budget” Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 1 p.m.

A fraud prevention presentation from Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr.’s office is also planned during October. The information provided by the Senior Center lists the program for Oct. 2, but the date should be confirmed with the center before publication. The presentation is scheduled to begin at

11 a.m.

A blood pressure and glucose clinic will be offered Wednesday, Oct. 28, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

In addition to the special events, the Senior Center continues to offer a regular schedule of weekly activities.

Coffee is available daily, while the Walking Club meets Mondays and Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. Food distribution for North Brookfield and Brookfield residents takes place Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m.

Lunch is served Tuesdays and Wednesdays at noon, and the Crafting Group meets Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.

Gentle Yoga is offered Thursdays at 1 p.m. for \$5, while Functional Fitness takes place Fridays at 10:30 a.m., also for \$5.

Residents interested in programs requiring advance registration or appointments should contact the North Brookfield Senior Center for availability and additional information.

North Brookfield Cultural
Council seeks funding proposals

NORTH BROOKFIELD — Proposals for community-oriented arts, humanities, and science programs are due Oct. 15.

The North Brookfield Cultural Council has set an Oct. 15 deadline for organizations, schools, and individuals to apply for grants supporting community cultural activities.

According to LCC spokesperson Nancy Waldron these grants can support a variety of artistic projects and activities in or around North Brookfield, including exhibits, festivals, field trips, short-term artist residencies, performances in

schools, workshops, and lectures.

The North Brookfield Cultural Council is part of a network of 329 Local Cultural Councils (LCCs) serving all 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth. The LCC Program is the nation’s largest grassroots cultural funding network, supporting thousands of community-based projects in the arts, humanities, and sciences every year. The state legislature provides an annual appropriation to Mass Cultural Council, a state agency that allocates funds to each community.

This year, the North Brookfield

Cultural Council will distribute about \$7,200 in grants. Previously funded projects include: production of “Legally Blonde 2, “programs “Birds of Prey,” “Watercolor Painting” at the Haston Library; Hip Hop Square Dance at the Senior Center.

For local guidelines and complete information on the North Brookfield Cultural Council, contact Nancy Waldron at nancy.rachel@comcast.net. Application forms and more information about the Local Cultural Council Program are available online at www.massculturalcouncil.org.

Quaboag Valley Amateur Radio
Club to meet Oct. 27

WEST BROOKFIELD — The Quaboag Valley Amateur Radio Club (QVARC) will hold its upcoming membership meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 27, at the Senior Center in West Brookfield at 73 Central Street. Doors open at 6 p.m., with the meeting starting at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

The presentation at our meeting this month will be “Using AI to Design a Ham Shack.” The presentation will be done by one of our club members, Liam, KC1YRP.

The summary of his presenta-

tion will be location topography analysis to antenna optimization to rig recommendations. AI can be a great tool to assist a new, a novice or an experienced ham design his or her shack.

Outline:

- Brief summary of AI tools selection and AI best practices
- Site Topography Analysis
- Antenna Recommendations and Design
- Gear research and selection
- Shack layout and setup

QVARC warmly welcomes area

hams and anyone curious about amateur radio to reach out and get involved. Whether you’re a licensed operator, a lapsed one looking to get back on the air, or simply curious what ham radio is all about, there’s a place for you in the club as it heads toward its 40th year.

For more information about QVARC, upcoming events, or how to get involved, visit www.qvarc.com or find the club on Facebook at Quaboag Valley Amateur Radio Club.

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Webster ~ 33 Slater Street



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Sprawling fieldstone faced Ranch! Located on a +/- 0.5-acre, 2 car garage. Offers: 1,860 sf main level plus 1,000 sf +/- finished lower level, 3 BRs, 2-1/2 Baths, 2 stone fireplaces-FHW BB heat. Open floor plan kitchen, living rm, dining rm, breezeway w/sliders to rear deck, and 3 season sunroom **MLS # 73500183 \$464,900**

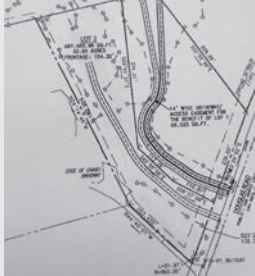
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TRINITY CATHOLIC ACADEMY HOLDS ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

A huge thank you to all of the golfers, sponsors, donors, volunteers, and supporters who helped make this year's Trinity Catholic Academy golf tournament such a success! Your generosity is a beautiful reminder of what makes the TCA community so special. Every donation, sponsorship, and hour of volunteer time helps strengthen our school and provides our students with meaningful opportunities, resources, and experiences that enrich the education we are able to give them. A very special thank you to our amazing tournament committee, spearheaded by Paula Toti, for all of the time, energy, and heart they put into making this event happen! And congratulations to this year's Recognition of Service Award recipient, Sherry Jovan! We are truly blessed to have so many people who believe in Trinity Catholic Academy and are willing to invest in our students and their future. It takes a community to make a difference, and we are so grateful to have the very best community behind our Bobcats!

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AUBURN — Webster Five is pleased to announce the addition of two seasoned banking professionals to its Treasury Management team, deepening the Bank's expertise and enhancing its ability to deliver strategic treasury solutions to businesses throughout the region.

Joining the team are Elora Campos, who comes to Webster Five from Needham Bank, and Francisco Gonzalez-Rauschkolb, who joins the Treasury Management Sales team after serving as Webster Five's Shrewsbury Market Manager.

Campos brings more than a decade of financial services experience, with a focus on cash management and relationship banking. Most recently, she served as Assistant Vice President, Cash Management Relationship Manager at Needham Bank, where she partnered with business clients to

develop customized treasury solutions and strengthen banking relationships.

Gonzalez-Rauschkolb has been with Webster Five since 2023 and has played a key role in leading the Bank's Shrewsbury market. Throughout his tenure, he has built strong relationships within the local business community and helped clients identify banking solutions that support their financial goals. In his new role, he will focus on growing treasury management relationships and helping commercial clients improve their financial operations. In the community, he serves on the Board of Casita Cultura Latina and the Finance Committee of OUT MetroWest.

"We are thrilled to welcome Elora to Webster Five and to see Francisco bring his expertise to our Treasury Management team," said Lesly Murray, Director of Treasury Management, Webster Five. "Both individuals bring a consultative approach, a passion for helping businesses succeed and the experience needed to deliver innovative treasury solutions. Their additions position us to better serve the evolving needs of our commercial clients throughout Central Massachusetts and beyond."

Campos was drawn to Webster Five's strong community focus and commitment to relationship banking.

"Webster Five has a well-earned reputation for putting customers first and investing in the communities it serves," said Campos. "I'm excited to join such a respected organization and help local businesses scale their operations through treasury management solutions."

For Gonzalez-Rauschkolb, the new role provides an opportunity to deepen relationships with business clients and support their growth in new ways.

"Throughout my career, I've enjoyed partnering with business owners to understand what drives their success and connecting them with the right financial solutions," said Gonzalez-Rauschkolb. "I'm thrilled to bring that experience to the Treasury Management team and help our clients streamline processes, manage cash flow more effectively and position their businesses for future growth."

Campos and Gonzalez-Rauschkolb join Jane Cullen, SVP, Treasury Management Sales, a longtime member of the Webster Five team with deep expertise serving the Bank's business and commercial banking clients. Cullen also partners with the Bank's dedicated Nonprofit Banking team, where she is a trusted resource known for her treasury management knowledge, responsiveness and commitment to helping clients succeed.

The team's growth reflects Webster Five's continued investment in specialized expertise and commercial banking solutions designed to help organizations operate more efficiently, mitigate risk and achieve their strategic objectives.

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Courtesy

Webster Five's Treasury Management team. From left, Francisco Gonzalez-Rauschkolb, Assistant Vice President, Treasury Management Sales Officer; Elora Campos, Vice President, Treasury Management Sales Officer; Lesly Murray, Director, Treasury Management; and Jane Cullen, Senior Vice President, Treasury Management Sales.

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