SPENCER NEW LEADER

©2026, Issue #

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

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Friday, November 27, 2026

Spencer-East Brookfield begins superintendent search process

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

SPENCER/EAST BROOKFIELD — The Spencer-East Brookfield School Committee has begun its search process for a new superintendent following the departure of Dr. Paul Haughey over the summer.

On Nov. 3, the committee moved to make RFPs available by Nov. 6, with the goal of hiring a third-party group to lead to search. Committee Co-Chair Heather Messier explained that the approach was in line with recommendations made at a recent workshop.

"We seemed to be in agreement that the best course of action would be to hire an outside consultant just due to the fact that we're all busy, working individuals and it would be very time consuming for us to go it alone as a school committee," said Messier.

The brief discussion saw input from several committee members on how they wanted to proceed, including the possibility of adjucting the services requested from consultants to save money by reducing redundant tasks the committee themselves would complete.

Committee member Jason Monette noted that the process would be very involved and agreed that having a third party take the lead would be the best option.

Turn To SEARCH *page* A10



Courtesy

The U12 Leicester Spencer Raiders are headed to Nationals in Florida after they won 1st place at Regionals. To help support them on their journey, the team will be hosting a pancake breakfast at Leicester High School Saturday, Nov. 28 from 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. $10 adults, $7 kids, under 3 is free!

Community Holiday Sing-along planned at Richard Sugden Library

SPENCER — The Richard Sugden Library will welcome residents of all ages for a Community Holiday Sing-along on Dec. 5 from 6 to 7 p.m., offering an opportunity for families, friends and neighbors to gather and celebrate the winter holiday season through music.

The free program will feature Ashe and Eric Esperance, who will lead participants in a festive evening of holiday singing. Attendees are invited to join in the music and enjoy the spirit of the season in a welcoming community setting.

The event is open to all ages, making it an opportunity for children, parents, grandparents and other community members to share in a seasonal tradition.

The program is funded in part by a grant from the Spencer Cultural Council, a local agency supported by Mass Cultural Council, a state agency dedicated to promoting arts and cultural programming throughout Massachusetts.

There is no admission charge, and all are welcome to attend.

East Brookfield Elementary School to host holiday craft fair Dec. 5

EAST BROOKFIELD — East Brookfield Elementary School will welcome the holiday season with its annual holiday craft fair on Saturday, Dec. 5, offering an opportunity for residents to shop for handmade gifts, enjoy seasonal treats and support local students.

The fair will take place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., and will feature a variety of handmade merchandise, small business vendors and activities for children and families. Proceeds from the event will support the school's sixth-grade class spring trip.

Among the attractions will be a children's market featuring student vendors, giving young participants an opportunity to showcase and sell their creations. The fair will also feature local small businesses offering merchandise for holiday shoppers.

Visitors can browse a selection of handmade gifts while enjoying baked goods, seasonal treats and warm beverages. Face painting and craft activities will also be available, providing entertainment for younger attendees.

The event offers families an opportunity to get a head start on their holiday shopping while supporting the sixth-grade students as they prepare for their spring trip.

Admission to the craft fair is free, although separate charges will apply for food, face painting and certain crafts and vendor purchases.

The annual holiday craft fair will be held Saturday, Dec. 5, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at East Brookfield Elementary School. The event is open to the community.



Courtesy

Students at Leicester Elementary School celebrated kindness by participating in random acts of kindness throughout the day. They also took time to write down their ideas for showing kindness and placed them in our Kindness Basket to share. Our Junior Leadership Team visited classrooms to read a kindness book, and some special friends helped Ms. G share a kindness story with the entire school. Photo courtesy of the school's Facebook page.

Brookfield explores adding chair lift using CDBG funding

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

BROOKFIELD — The Town of Brookfield is exploring adding a chair lift to its town hall utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

Brookfield currently has $192,000 remaining from an existing grant allotment, and adding ADA compliance and handicapped accessibility has been a priority voiced by the public at large for the town hall, including the historic Great Hall on the second floor. During a discussion at the Select Board's Nov. 4 meeting, member Beth Coughlin said she felt it was time to make a chair lift a priority.

"If this is an eligible project, I would strongly support executing what town meeting has told us twice what they want in the Town Hall, which is appropriate handicap access to the second floor," said Coughlin.

Town Administrator Ryan Egan and John O'Leary, a Principal Planner in Community Development at the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), both agreed the project would be in line with the CDBG parameters as an ADA initiative. The project is not only seen as a public demand, but also a way to open up the second floor for town meetings and allow the lower levels to be used for other purposes.

There were questions about the long-term maintenance of the chair lift as O'Leary confirmed that the CDBG funding can only pay for purchase and installation. The Select Board also wanted to think bigger, examining other handicap accessibility concerns as well.

The Select Board eventually voted to authorize the chair and the town administrator to take steps to utilize the remaining CDBG funds for procuring and installing the lift and exploring additional eligible ADA accessibility improvements that could be covered by the remainder of the grant which needs to be expended before the end of June of 2027.

East Brookfield library announces December holiday programs and activities

EAST BROOKFIELD — The East Brookfield Public Library is celebrating the holiday season with a variety of programs throughout December, including wreath making, a visit from Santa Claus, children›s crafts, holiday movies and its annual Mitten Tree collection to benefit local families in need.

The month's activities will begin Thursday, Dec. 3, at 2 p.m. with an adult wreath-making program. Participants will learn how to create a holiday decoration using wire ribbon and a wire frame. All necessary supplies will be provided, and no materials are required from participants. The program is intended for adults only, and advance registration is requested.

Santa Claus and a few of his friends will make a special appearance at the library Thursday, Dec. 17, at 10:45 a.m. Families are invited to attend the holiday visit, and friendly, well-behaved dogs are also welcome to come along for pictures.

Children will have an opportunity to get creative during a Pine Cone Snow Owls craft program Tuesday, Dec. 29, at 2 p.m. The activity is open to children of all ages and will provide a chance to make a seasonal craft during the school vacation week.

The library will also offer a series of holiday movies throughout the month. Visitors are welcome to bring their lunches, enjoy a film and spend time with other community members.

The movie schedule includes "White Christmas" on Monday, Dec. 21, at 1 p.m.; "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" on Thursday, Dec. 24, at 11:30 a.m.; and "It's a Wonderful Life" on Monday, Dec. 28, at 1 p.m.

In addition to its holiday programming, the library is once again organizing its Mitten Tree collection, an annual effort to provide clothing and essential household supplies to local residents who could use additional assistance.

Community members are encouraged to donate new mittens, hats, gloves and scarves for people of all ages. The collection also welcomes personal care products and everyday household necessities.

Requested items include shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, laundry detergent, toilet paper, deodorant, barrettes, hair ties, socks, aluminum foil, trash bags and dish soap, among other essentials.

All collected donations will be distributed to local families and individuals in need.

The Mitten Tree provides residents with an opportunity to share some holiday generosity while helping neighbors obtain items that are often overlooked during seasonal charitable collections.

With activities ranging from hands-on crafts to classic holiday films and opportunities to help others, the library's December schedule offers several ways for residents of all ages to participate in the season's festivities.

Residents interested in the adult wreath-making program are reminded to register in advance.

WANTED TO BUY
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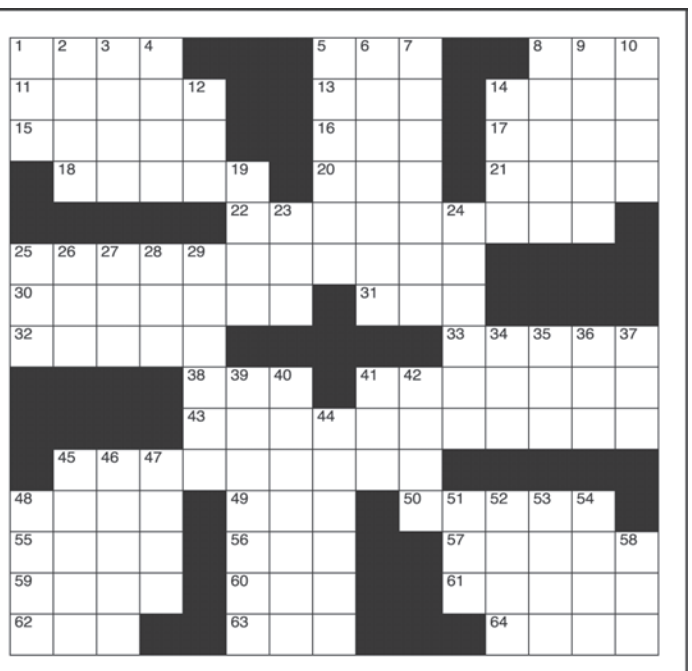

CLUES ACROSS

1. Insect feeler
5. Central processing unit
8. Part of (abbr.)
11. Typical
13. Tall, rounded vase
14. __ Alto, California city
15. Lustrous, velvet-like fabric
16. "Fresh Prince of __ Air"
17. Hebrew calendar month
18. British surgeon who discovered bone disease
20. Agreement between debtor and creditor (abbr.)
21. Elongated part of anatomical structure
22. Acts slowly on
25. Keeps a little too safe
30. Greek seaport
31. "Baba O'Riley" rockers
32. Vision
33. Potassium nitrate in mineral form
38. Midway between northeast and east
41. Not a pro
43. Give a new look
45. Sensational
48. Nobel Prize-winning physicist
49. Annoy constantly
50. Vaccine developer
55. Lying down
56. Type of language (abbr.)
57. Flat-bottomed boat
59. Smallest or slightest
60. Bind
61. Speeds
62. The products of human creativity
63. Consume food
64. Ancient Greek sophist

CLUES DOWN

1. A young canine
2. As fast as can be done
3. Soviet moon probes
4. Sharp spasm of pain
5. One who adheres to a specific art movement
6. Show parts of
7. Unfasten
8. San Diego ballplayer
9. Santa
10. Rocky peaks
12. "Matt Houston" actor Horsley
14. A written agreement between two sides
19. Beginning to end (abbr.)
23. Greek goddess of the dawn
24. Not written in any key
25. Organized missions
26. Seven
27. Work unit
28. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
29. Broadway legend Bernadette
34. Belonging to a thing
35. Vietnamese offensive
36. Bitterly regret
37. Make a mistake
39. Newborn child
40. A combined landmass
41. Satisfaction
42. Hilly peninsulas in Denmark
44. Young swine
45. Type of sword
46. Siskel's partner
47. Brood of pheasants
48. Hindu model of ideal man
51. Suitable in the circumstances
52. La __ tar pits
53. Unstressed-stressed metrical foot
54. California wine country
58. Badly

PUZZLE SOLUTION

P	A	L	P	■	■	■	C	P	U	■	■	P	C	T
U	S	U	A	L	■	■	U	R	N	■	P	A	L	O
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■	■	■	■	E	N	E	■	A	M	A	T	E	U	R
■	■	■	■	R	E	U	P	H	O	L	S	T	E	R
■	S	E	N	S	O	R	I	A	L	■	■	■	■	■
R	A	B	I	■	N	A	G	■	S	A	B	I	N	■
A	B	E	D	■	A	S	L	■	■	P	R	A	A	M
M	E	R	E	■	T	I	E	■	■	T	E	M	P	I
A	R	T	■	■	E	A	T	■	■	■	A	B	A	S

Leicester library announces upcoming events for adults

LEICESTER — December is very busy at the Leicester Public Library!

The Friends of the Leicester Library will be holding their annual Cookie Sale at the library on Thursday, Dec. 17, from 2 to 8 p.m. The public is invited to come and choose from a wonderful selection of cookies baked by members of the Friends and others! The event has been a very successful fundraising project and is a fantastic way to purchase-at super prices-holiday and Christmas cookies for your family or work holiday parties!

If you would like to help the Friends by baking, please drop your cookies off at the library on Tuesday, Dec. 15, Wednesday, Dec. 16, or Thursday, Dec. 17 (by 2 p.m. on the 17th).

Visit the library and pick up your Central Mass Library Passport! The Passport lists many of the libraries in the region and invites patrons to visit all the libraries in the area and let us know what you liked at each one. You are also invited to share photos with the Leicester Library via scanning, or by sharing them on Facebook and tagging the Leicester Library!

On a monthly basis, the library holds many other educational and /or family fun events. Puzzle races are held almost every month, and teams can include families or friend groups or club groups. Several book clubs hold their meetings at the library or work with the library to obtain books for their club members.

A number of organizations conduct meetings at the library, and you can often find opportunities to meet with government officials or representatives at regularly scheduled times or at special presentations.

Please visit the library's calendar at www.leicesterlibrary.org on a regular basis to see what's coming up next! See you at the Cookie Sale!

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.



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Upcoming Leicester Public Library children's activities

LEICESTER — The Children's Room at the Leicester Public Library is a wonderful place to bring your children throughout the year, and every month Children's Librarian Kae Hart plans special programs and events.

Every Tuesday afternoon from 4 to 5 p.m., children of all ages are welcome to participate in programs that change monthly. For instance, during the month of November children can learn about coding at Intro to Coding. Using Ozobots, children develop skills like pattern making and recognition which helps them jumpstart their coding skills. Ozobots use markers and paper to code for a screen-free lesson.

On Nov. 21, the library will host a Birthday Party for Arthur Read! Arthur is a popular character created by author Marc Brown which was turned into a PBS show in 1996. Arthur is beloved for his reliability and heavily relied on friendships. The party will include Arthur crafts and activities and lots of snacks to celebrate and is open to all ages!

Every month, the Children's Room hosts Homeschool Hangout. Families who homeschool are welcome to attend, provide an opportunity for their children to meet and play games and with toys along with other children who are also homeschooled. Please check the calendar at: www.leicesterlibrary.org for the date and time in December.

The library is a fabulous place to arrange to meet other parents or caregivers along with your children! The Children's Room has many toys and educational toys, board games, card games, computers, and resources (including books and DVD's) appropriate for children from 6 months to about 11 years of age, and the library also has a terrific space upstairs for pre-teen and teens!

Also every month, Miss Kae runs a number of additional special programs! Please regularly check out what's coming up weekly at: www.leicesterlibrary.org!

SPENCER ALMANAC

REAL ESTATE

BROOKFIELD

$295,000, 8 Martin Rd #7, Richard J Cancelmo Jr Lt, and Cancelmo Jr, Richard J, to 413 Rents LLC.

EAST BROOKFIELD

None

LEICESTER

$455,000, 9 Harding St, Feldman Albert A Est, and Feldman, Jason, to Servideo, Angelina L, and Labeossiere, Chanelle.

$385,000, 33 Deed Pond Dr, Kerrissey, Alyson, to Papa, Vincent D, and Papa, Caitlyn Marie.

$365,000, 82 Waite St, Andrade, Robert, to Ashman, Emily, and Letendre, Nick.

$214,000, 75 Huntoon Memorial Hwy #2-2, Hewett, Linda A, to Andresen, Joan A.

NORTH BROOKFIELD

$491,000,137 Ward St, Bessette, Thomas A, and Bessette, Natalia, to Farnsworth, Brandon, and Griffin, Grace.

SPENCER

$560,000, 42 Jolicoeur Ave, Couture Jr, Hector J, to Esiason, Justin, and Esiason, Amanda.

$550,000, 1 Deer Run Rd, Russin, Patricia A, to Bates, Kristin, and Mogstad, Brycen.

$509,630, 34 Shore Dr, Mullaney, Charleen M, to Thomas, Didi.

$490,000, 4 Valley View Dr, Anderson, Joan A, to Gant, Laurain.

$405,000, 18 Crown St, Crown Street 2019 Rt, and Canane, Susan, to Gronski, Paul Xavier, and Loftus, Emily Elizabeth.

$345,000, 29 May St, Haines, Bryce, and Lemountain, Lilliam, to Miranda, Claudiano.

WARREN

$519,000, 893 Cronin Rd, Mary Dickson Cressy Ret, and Dunn, Katherine B, to Toppin, Joshua, and Toppin, Kylie.

$215,000, 166 Main St, Connolly Brian Paul Est, and Connolly, Denise M, to Madigan, Shannon.

$155,000, 892 Cronin Rd, Bonneau, Darren J, and Bonneau, Michelle M, to Bonneau, Darren J, and Bonneau, Michelle M.

WEST BROOKFIELD

$895,000, 91 Lake Shore Dr, Nappi, Bruce, to Francis, John Vincent, and Wozniak, Robin Lynn.

$438,000, 152 Pierce Rd, Roman, Julian E, to Kunz, Timothy, and Dionne, Rachael.

$300,000, 11 Clearview Dr, Marione Gagnon Ft, and Gagnon, Marion E, to Hebert, Gary A, and Hebert, Laurie A.

$280,930, 6 Poplar St, Senosk Jr, John R, to Secretary Of Hsng & Urban.

AA Transportation to host 11th annual 'Stuff the Bus' toy drive Nov. 28

SPENCER — AA Transportation is preparing to spread some holiday cheer throughout the region with its 11th annual "Stuff the Bus" toy drive, scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 28, at three locations in Leicester, Spencer and North Brookfield.

The annual campaign brings together AA Transportation employees, local police and fire departments, businesses and community organizations to collect toys for children and families in need during the holiday season.

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., AA Transportation buses will be stationed at participating businesses in all three communities, where residents are encouraged to drop off new, unwrapped toys for children of all ages.

In Leicester, AA Transportation will partner with Walmart, the Leicester Police Department, Leicester firefighters and the Leicester Teachers Association. A school bus and Leicester fire trucks will be parked outside Walmart from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to accept donations.

Following the event, the collected toys will be delivered to Maureen Doyle, who will coordinate their distribution to Leicester families in need.

In Spencer, the campaign will take place at Klem's, 117 West Main St., where AA Transportation will be joined by the Spencer Fire Department, Spencer Police Department and Klem's employees.

Residents can bring their donations to the bus parked outside the store between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. After the collection concludes, the toys will be delivered to Donna Flannery, who will oversee their distribution to local families in need.

In North Brookfield, AA Transportation will team up with the North Brookfield Police Department for a collection at Hannaford Supermarket, also from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Toys collected at that location will be turned over to the North Brookfield Police Department, which will arrange for their distribution to area families.

Organizers emphasize that all donated toys must be new and unwrapped. Gifts suitable for children of all ages are welcome, allowing the campaign to assist families with children ranging from infants to teenagers.

For residents unable to attend the Nov. 28 collections, donations may also be dropped off in advance at the Spencer Fire Station, North Brookfield Police Department, Leicester Police Station or any AA Transportation bus yard.

Donations can also be given directly to AA Transportation bus and van drivers, providing another convenient way for families to participate.

Now entering its 11th year, the Stuff the Bus campaign has become an annual holiday tradition for AA Transportation employees and the communities they serve.

The effort reflects the company's commitment to supporting local families while providing an opportunity for residents, businesses and public safety personnel to work together for a common cause.

AA Transportation organizers say their drivers at every location are enthusiastic about the upcoming collection and hope to make this year's campaign the most successful yet.

With the holiday season approaching, organizers are encouraging anyone who is able to contribute to stop by one of the three locations and help fill the buses with gifts that will brighten the holidays for local children.

The 11th annual Stuff the Bus campaign will take place Saturday, Nov. 28, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Walmart in Leicester, Klem's in Spencer and Hannaford Supermarket in North Brookfield. All toys collected will remain in the communities served by the campaign.

West Brookfield to honor veterans with Wreaths Across America ceremony Dec. 19

WEST BROOKFIELD — The community will come together Saturday, Dec. 19, at noon for its fourth annual Wreaths Across America ceremony, honoring the men and women who served in the United States Armed Forces and ensuring their sacrifices are never forgotten.

The ceremony will take place at the Veterans' Monuments on the West Brookfield Common, joining a nationwide effort to remember fallen veterans, honor those who serve and teach future generations about the value of freedom.

West Brookfield is the only scheduled Wreaths Across America location in 2026 among the communities of Brookfield, East Brookfield, North Brookfield, Warren, New Braintree, Oakham, Hardwick, Spencer, Sturbridge and Charlton, according to local organizers.

Now in its fourth year, the local observance has become an opportunity for residents to recognize the military service and sacrifices of veterans whose final resting places are in West Brookfield.

Organizers are seeking community support to sponsor wreaths for the nearly 600 servicemembers buried in town. Each wreath sponsorship costs $17, with 100% of the proceeds supporting West Brookfield's Wreaths Across America event.

The goal is to ensure that every veteran laid to rest in the community is remembered with dignity and gratitude during the holiday season.

The local ceremony is part of a much larger national remembrance effort. According to information provided by organizers, last year's Wreaths Across America observance involved more than 5,594 participating locations and approximately 4 million volunteers nationwide, who placed nearly 3.1 million wreaths in honor of veterans.

The annual tradition serves as a reminder that the sacrifices made by military personnel remain an important part of the nation's history, whether those individuals served during wartime or in peacetime.

For West Brookfield, the ceremony also provides an opportunity to recognize the generations of local residents who answered the call to serve their country. Through the placement of wreaths, the community pays tribute to those individuals while helping preserve their memory for future generations.

Organizers hope residents, families and community organizations will participate in the Dec. 19 observance and consider sponsoring wreaths to support the local effort.

Those interested in learning more about the ceremony or sponsoring a wreath may contact Nadine Morin at 774-200-3396 or by email at 01585wreathsacrossamerica@gmail.com.

Additional information about the national program is available at Wreaths Across America.

TOYS FOR KIDS DONATIONS

11/6/2026	Alison Chalifoux & Jeffery Anderson	$50.00
11/8/2026	Andrea Gordon	$100.00
11/10/2026	Spencer FireFighters Assoc. Inc.	$1,000.00
11/13/2026	Linda & Arthur White III	$50.00
11/14/2026	Anonymous	$1,500.00
11/16/2026	Audettes Towing & Recovery Inc.	$1,000.00
11/14/2026	Young's Tree Service	$500.00
11/15/2026	Richard and Charlene Kaiser	$100.00
11/15/2026	Mary & Stanley Kulesza	$50.00
11/16/2026	Robert & Donna Anderson	$100.00

Monetary Donations may be sent to: Spencer Toys for Kids, P.O. Box 186, Spencer, MA 01562.

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

North Brookfield library to hold Letters to Santa event

NORTH BROOKFIELD — The Haston Free Public Library in North Brookfield will be holding its annual Letters to Santa event on Saturday, Nov. 28 from 3-5 p.m., before the town parade and tree lighting. This event is organized by the Friends of the Haston Free Public Library and includes something for all ages.

Come write a letter to Santa and tell him what you'd like for Christmas; he is guaranteed to write back! Holiday crafts will be available to make on-site, as well as a special story-time with Children's Librarian Miss Bri. Listen to holiday tunes courtesy of On Q Piano students, and take home some tasty treats from the cookie sale. All proceeds will benefit the Friends of the Haston Free Public Library, and will help the library to continue offering free programming and activities throughout the year.

For more information, please email hastonfreepublicliibrary@gmail.com, call 508-867-0208, or find the North Brookfield Library on Facebook for updates. The library Web site, northbrookfieldlibrary.org, also has updates on events and programs.

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Friday's Child



Thomas
Age 16
Registration #8537

Tommy is an energetic and passionate young person who truly enjoys connecting with others — both adults and children. He thrives in conversation and especially loves a thoughtful debate with a trusted adult. Curious and confident, Tommy brings enthusiasm and insight to the topics he cares about. He has a strong love for techno music and Pokémon, and he enjoys sharing what he knows with others. When he's not diving into his interests, Tommy is often outside riding his scooter around the neighborhood or helping his foster mother with gardening and yard work. He takes pride in being active and contributing at home. Tommy also has an impressive entrepreneurial spirit. He is currently developing a small business plan to mow neighbors' lawns, showing initiative, responsibility, and creativity well beyond his years. Golf is another passion of his. Tommy is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to different club styles and putting techniques, and he enjoys learning more about the game whenever he can. With his drive, curiosity, and determination, Tommy has so much potential to continue growing and thriving.

https://www.mareinc.org/child/21177981306

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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VIEWPOINT

OPINION AND COMMENTARY FROM SPENCER, LEICESTER AND THE BROOKFIELDS

EDITORIAL

Choosing the right leader for our schools

The search for a new superintendent in the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District represents one of the most consequential responsibilities the School Committee will undertake in the coming months. The person ultimately selected will help shape the educational experiences of hundreds of students, guide teachers and administrators, oversee district finances and establish priorities that could influence both communities for years to come.

It is a decision that deserves careful consideration, meaningful public involvement and a commitment to finding the right person rather than simply filling a vacancy.

The School Committee's decision to seek outside assistance in conducting the search is a sensible starting point. Hiring a superintendent is a complicated undertaking, involving everything from developing qualifications and evaluating applicants to navigating public meeting requirements and negotiating a contract. Committee members are volunteers with professional and personal responsibilities of their own, and expecting them to manage every aspect of such an extensive process would be a considerable burden.

An experienced consultant can provide valuable guidance, particularly when it comes to identifying qualified candidates and ensuring the process is conducted fairly and transparently. However, the committee is also right to consider the expense involved. School districts face constant financial pressures, and every dollar spent on administrative services is a dollar that cannot be directed elsewhere.

Finding the appropriate balance between professional assistance and fiscal responsibility should remain a priority.

Equally important is the question of who will participate in the search itself. A superintendent does not serve the School Committee alone. The position carries responsibilities to students, parents, teachers, support staff, taxpayers and the broader communities of Spencer and East Brookfield. Each of these groups has a legitimate interest in the district's future, and their perspectives should be represented as the search moves forward.

Parents may prioritize communication, student services and academic achievement. Teachers and staff can offer insight into the leadership qualities necessary to maintain a productive educational environment. Residents without children in the schools may be particularly concerned about financial management and accountability.

These interests are not necessarily competing. In fact, a successful superintendent must understand how they fit together.

The search committee should reflect that diversity of experience and perspective. Public forums, community surveys and opportunities for meaningful input would also help ensure that the eventual selection reflects more than the preferences of a handful of individuals.

There is also the matter of timing. The committee hopes to identify a new superintendent by March, an understandable goal

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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.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Socialism is not Communism

To the Editor:

Parliamentary socialism, as practiced in much of Europe, holds the advantage that when a no confidence vote is called and taken, the reasons for it can immediately be addressed and corrections made. It would be hard to make the case that the election we held on Nov. 3 was not a "no confidence" vote in the current administration. Unfortunately, unlike the Brits, whose governing has evolved to taking powers from Royals and giving it to the people, our forefathers never envisioned what a bad actor might do with the exceptional powers with which we have endowed the presidency.

This particular presidency mocks the planned co-equal checks and balances plan, and a packed Supreme Court, has actually exempted the presidency with exemptions from needing to even follow the laws he has vowed to preserve, protect and defend. We will all now be the spectators as we watch to see if those GOP officials who witnessed the blue tsunami, will heed its message and assist those we have elected in making the peoples will reality. We have already seen an impeached president call 57 of the 60 needed votes, complete exoneration. He just called Hegseth's survival, the same thing.

We have voted against corruption. How should we react to investigations that prove it, not being pursued by a corrupted concierge DOJ? How long will we tolerate a Supreme Court that should have enforced the ban contained in section #3 of the 14th Amendment. Failing to remove him from the ballot, knowing it required 2/3 of both houses to lift the ban is criminal intent.

Having promoted Steven Miller and Gym Jordan, it is fair to assume that the will of the people will be obstructed at every turn, for as long as Trump remains.

I hope two years hence, when so much will have been obstructed, voters will remember.

KEN KIMBALL
BROOKFIELD

Volunteer to volunteer

To the Editor:

On the chilly Sunday morning of Oct. 11, six board members from Common Ground Land Trust (CGLT) participated in the annual Midstate Massive Ultra Trail 50K event at Howe State Park in Spencer. Arriving at 5:30 a.m. with mixed emotions of excitement and some trepidation for the unknown, they awaited instructions from race directors. Early morning darkness in a woodland setting delivered a sense of serenity, a calmness amidst pre-race activities as race directors spoke. Were the six CGLT members listening? Yes, but not as runners. They had volunteered to be volunteers! Bundled in warm jackets, hats, and gloves, volunteers helped setup, direct parking, and check in the more than 100 registered runners from the USA and beyond. They mingled and chatted with race attendees and viewed a gorgeous fall sunrise. Nature and humanity were on display!

As a noun, the word "volunteer" is defined as a person who willingly offers to engage in a task or event by choice and without monetary compensation. Volunteering presents in all shapes and sizes. Town litter cleanup, food banks, animal shelters, and tutoring are a few examples among a multitude of volunteering opportunities. The volunteer efforts of CGLT members is another example. Without likeminded people and groups such as CGLT whose goal is to protect land in Spencer and Leicester, there may not be a Howe State Park. There may be fewer opportunities for Midstate Massive Ultra Trail runners to physically and spiritually experience the benefit of an outdoor run against the backdrop of a breathtaking early morning sunrise.

Think about it. Volunteering juxtaposed with conserving open space. Self-fulfillment combined with future land preservation. Learn more about Common Ground Land Trust by contacting the website CommonGroundLT.org. Volunteer to Volunteer!

LOU ANNA HINCKLEY
SPENCER

A Thanksgiving worth remembering

LANTERNS ALONG MAIN STREET

By CHARLES

Thanksgiving has a way of sneaking up on a fellow. One minute, you're mowing the lawn and complaining about the heat, and the next, you're standing in the grocery store wondering how a frozen turkey can cost that much and whether anybody in the family actually likes cranberry sauce.

I've reached the age where Thanksgiving means something a little different than it did when I was younger. Back then, I was mostly interested in the food, the football and finding a comfortable chair before somebody recruited me to wash dishes. These days, I still appreciate all three, although I've learned that volunteering for dish duty can be a pretty good way to escape a conversation about politics.

The older I get, the more I realize that Thanksgiving isn't necessarily about having everything we want. It's about recognizing how much we already have, even when life hasn't turned out quite the way we expected. That's not always an easy thing to do.

We live in a world where somebody is constantly reminding us of what we're missing. A better car, a bigger house, a newer television, a vacation someplace warm. Apparently, according to the advertisements, happiness can be purchased in convenient monthly installments. I haven't found that to be particularly true.

Some of the happiest Thanksgivings I can remember took place around tables that were too small, in houses that were too crowded, with folding chairs borrowed from wherever we could find them. Somebody always got stuck sitting next to the kitchen doorway, somebody complained that the gravy was too thin, and somebody inevitably asked when we were going to eat, usually about 20 minutes after being told. Nobody seemed to mind very much.

I remember when Thanksgiving dinner was a production that began days in advance. The good dishes came out of the cupboard, the dining room table got its annual polishing, and there was a certain amount of nervous discussion about whether the turkey would be ready on time.

There was always one person who insisted the meal should begin at noon and another who thought three o'clock was perfectly reasonable. Somehow, we usually managed to eat around two. And there was always enough food to feed twice as many people as showed up.

Nowadays, the gatherings are a little smaller. The kids have grown, schedules have become complicated, and the old familiar faces aren't all around the table anymore. That's the part of getting older nobody puts in the holiday advertisements. You notice the empty chairs.

You remember the relatives who used to tell the same stories every year, the ones you pretended to be tired of hearing. Funny thing is, you'd give quite a bit to hear one of those stories again.

But Thanksgiving shouldn't become an exercise in counting what's missing. Those memories are worth keeping, certainly, but so are the people and moments we still have in front of us.

My wife and I have been married long enough to know that a successful holiday doesn't require everything to go according to plan. In fact, some of our favorite memories involve things going completely sideways.

A burned dinner roll isn't a catastrophe. Neither is a lumpy potato or a pie that looks like it lost a fight with the oven. And if somebody forgets to put the cranberry sauce on the table, there's a decent chance nobody will notice until Friday.

I think one of the great advantages of growing older is that you finally

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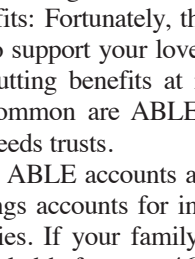
Saving for special needs without risking benefits



FINANCIAL FOCUS

TREVOR NIELSEN

One of the most common mistakes families make is transferring money or leaving assets directly to a loved one with special needs without realizing it could affect eligibility for government benefits.

While you want to support their well-being today and for years to come, there's a delicate balance to strike — providing financial support without accidentally jeopardizing the government benefits they may rely on.

Government benefits like Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid can be a lifeline for families, covering essentials from medical care to daily support. Yet these programs often come with strict income and asset limits. If your loved one accumulates too many assets or exceeds income thresholds, they could lose access to the very benefits that help them thrive.

Parents often start planning with a will, but special needs planning typically requires a broader approach, one that addresses financial support, caregiving, and continued eligibility for government benefits.

Saving for the future without risking benefits: Fortunately, there are tools designed to support your loved one›s future without putting benefits at risk. Two of the most common are ABLE accounts and special needs trusts.

ABLE accounts are tax-advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities. If your family member became disabled before age 46, they may be eligible. For 2026, you can contribute up to $20,000 and hold up to $100,000 in the account without affecting Supplemental Security Income benefits. Medicaid eligibility stays intact even if the balance exceeds that amount. Contributions may qualify for a state tax deduction and the Saver's Credit, and the assets can grow tax-free when used for qualifying disability expenses.

Special needs trusts, sometimes called supplemental needs trusts, offer another path. These let you set aside assets for your loved one without disqualifying them from government benefits. They can be funded by the individual with a disability or by someone else, and they generally cover expenses that government assistance doesn't. Because they can be more costly to set up and administer, you might prioritize an ABLE account if your loved one is eligible, then supplement with a trust if total assets are projected to be at least $150,000.

Planning for caregiving: It›s also worth thinking about who will make decisions for your loved one in the future. Guardianship or conservatorship can help manage personal and financial decisions, though the process varies by state and can be expensive. Not every individual with a disability needs this level of support, so it›s worth evaluating what fits your family›s situation and planning ahead before a crisis forces a decision.

Special needs planning touches on financial, legal, and medical considerations all at once. The best time to put a plan in place is before benefits become an issue, not after eligibility is questioned. Because these issues can be complex, consider bringing in a professional team to help. A financial advisor and an estate planning attorney knowledgeable in special needs can work together to build a strategy tailored to your family. Review your plan at least annually to help keep it aligned with your goals and avoid losing key benefits.

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Spencer community prepares for holiday fairs, Scout fundraiser

SPENCER — The holiday season is approaching, and several local organizations are preparing to welcome residents for a series of community events, including craft fairs, a spaghetti dinner fundraiser and a Christmas faire.

Looking ahead to December, Mary Queen of the Rosary Parish is preparing for its annual Christmas Faire, scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 5, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Organizers are seeking donations to help make this year's event a success. Gently used Christmas ornaments, holiday decorations and themed raffle baskets are among the items being requested.

The parish is also seeking gift cards and lottery tickets for its raffle trees. Those contributions may be delivered directly to the parish office.

Local vendors interested in participating in the Christmas Faire can obtain table applications at the church entrances, the parish office or through the parish website.

The three events offer opportunities for residents to support local organizations, enjoy community gatherings and prepare for the upcoming holiday season.

Additional information about the Christmas Faire and vendor applications is available at maryqueenoftherosary.org.

LANTERNS

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begin to understand which things matter and which things don't. The tablecloth doesn't matter. The centerpiece doesn't matter. Whether the turkey looks like the photograph in the cookbook certainly doesn't matter. What matters is the conversation, the laughter, the opportunity to spend a few hours with people who know your faults and love you anyway. And sometimes, what matters is simply having a peaceful afternoon.

Not everybody has a house full of relatives coming for dinner. Some people will spend Thanksgiving working. Others will be alone, whether by choice or circumstance. Some families are dealing with illness, financial worries or the first holiday after losing someone they love.

It's worth remembering that a holiday celebrated with such enthusiasm can be difficult for others. A phone call, an invitation or a plate of leftovers delivered to somebody's door might mean more than we realize. It doesn't have to be a grand gesture. Most worthwhile things aren't.

I also think Thanksgiving offers us a chance to reconsider what we call good fortune. Having a roof that doesn't leak, a reliable vehicle that starts on a cold morning, a friend who answers the telephone and somebody who notices when we haven't been around for a while are all pretty substantial blessings. They don't make for exciting television commercials, but I'd put them ahead of most things being advertised.

This year, I intend to enjoy my Thanksgiving dinner, probably eat more than I should, and settle into a comfortable chair afterward with every intention of staying awake. I will almost certainly fail at that last part. But before the day is over, I hope to spend a little time appreciating the ordinary things that have made my life a good one. The people who have stood beside me, the lessons I learned the hard way, and the many kindnesses I probably didn't appreciate enough when they happened.

And if the turkey comes out a little dry, I'll reach for the gravy. At my age, I've learned that most things in life can use a little gravy.

Happy Thanksgiving, folks.

EDITORIAL

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that would provide time for a transition before the next school year. Nevertheless, an ambitious schedule should not become an inflexible deadline.

The district has already experienced a significant leadership change following the departure of Dr. Paul Haughey over the summer. Stability is certainly desirable, but stability comes from selecting someone capable of building confidence and establishing a clear direction, not merely from having a permanent name on the superintendent's office door.

The strongest candidate will need more than an impressive résumé. Effective communication, sound financial judgment, experience working with educators and an appreciation for the particular challenges facing a regional school district should all weigh heavily in the decision.

Perhaps most importantly, the next superintendent must recognize that Spencer and East Brookfield are distinct communities united by a shared responsibility to educate their children.

That relationship requires cooperation, patience and an understanding that decisions affecting the schools also affect households, municipal budgets and the long-term vitality of both towns.

The School Committee has an opportunity to demonstrate the kind of thoughtful leadership it should expect from the person it hires. That means establishing clear expectations, welcoming public participation, respecting financial limitations and resisting the temptation to rush a decision simply to meet a target date.

The superintendent's position is too important to approach as an ordinary administrative vacancy.

A successful search will not be measured by how quickly a contract is signed, but by whether the district finds a leader who earns the confidence of its educators, families and communities.

That is an investment worth making carefully.

St. Joseph-St. Pius X to host sixth annual Christmas Bazaar Dec. 5

LEICESTER — The holiday season will be in full swing Saturday, Dec. 5, when the St. Joseph-St. Pius X New 2 You Thrift Store & Furniture Gallery hosts its sixth annual Christmas Bazaar, offering a day of shopping, family activities, food and holiday festivities.

The event will take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 759 Main St. in Leicester, with activities planned for visitors of all ages.

The annual bazaar will feature a variety of unique gifts and holiday merchandise, providing shoppers with an opportunity to find presents for family and friends while enjoying the festive atmosphere. The New 2 You Thrift Store & Furniture Gallery will also offer extended shopping hours, along with special purchases and discounts throughout the event.

Visitors will have several opportunities to try their luck with raffles, including a 50/50 drawing, a raffle table featuring assorted prizes and a scratch ticket raffle.

Children will have plenty to enjoy as well, with face painting, games, crafts and a balloon artist among the activities planned for younger visitors.

One of the day's highlights will be a special appearance by Santa Claus and his helper, giving children and families an opportunity to share in the excitement of the Christmas season.

A selection of food and refreshments will also be available throughout the bazaar. The menu will include sausage, pepper and onion subs, pizza, macaroni and cheese, hot dogs, popcorn, desserts and other treats.

Now in its sixth year, the Christmas Bazaar brings together holiday shopping, entertainment and seasonal activities in one location, offering residents of Leicester and surrounding communities an opportunity to celebrate the season.

The event is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 5, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the St. Joseph-St. Pius X New 2 You Thrift Store & Furniture Gallery, 759 Main St., Leicester.

Workshop13 invites you to take art Off the Wall

WARE — Come join the fun and support Workshop13 and local artists at this whimsical fundraising event where you can take art right off the wall. "Off the Wall" will take place in Workshop13's ArtWorks Gallery at 69 Main St., Ware, on Saturday, Dec. 5, from 7-9 p.m. Each ticket entitles the holder to appetizers and drinks, live music, and an eight-by-eight-inch work of original, one-of-a-kind art made by a local artist.

Mix and mingle with artists and art-lovers. Enjoy a live musical performance by Paul Provost. Savor gourmet appetizers, signature cocktails and mocktails, and Treehouse beer. Try your luck at our raffle featuring fabulous, curated prize baskets. You can also purchase additional paintings by the participating artists or grab exclusive Workshop13 merchandise like sweatshirts and mugs. And, most importantly, take home a unique piece of art of your own choosing!

General admission (The Andy Warhol) tickets are $88 each, entitling you access to all of the above. Premiere tickets are also available, receiving priority in selecting the 8x8" works of art. The Leonardo ($888) grants the holder the exclusive first choice of the night. Five people can purchase The Dali at $350 to be in the second group to select their artworks, and ten people can purchase The Van Gogh tickets at $175 to be in the third group to select. Tickets are limited in supply.

Every ticket purchased directly helps Workshop13 continue providing creative programming, classes, and resources for our community. Support this vibrant local arts center, have an unforgettable evening, and take a piece of art off the wall to bring home and hang on your own.

About Workshop13

Workshop13 is a dynamic center where arts, culture, and community converge—expanding access to the arts and nurturing creativity and self-expression in our rural region. For more information visit workshop13.org, or call 413-277-6072.

Music & Movement program returns to Merrick Public Library

BROOKFIELD — The Merrick Public Library is once again inviting young children and their families to enjoy music, dancing and interactive fun with the return of its popular Music & Movement with Julie program.

The program takes place Wednesdays at 11:30 a.m., and is recommended for children from birth to age five.

Led by Julie, the weekly sessions feature familiar children's songs, stretching, movement, singing and dancing. The activities are designed to provide an entertaining experience while helping young children develop important early literacy skills through music and rhythm.

Music and movement activities can help children build listening skills, recognize patterns and sounds, develop coordination and become more comfortable expressing themselves. Singing familiar songs also provides opportunities for children to develop language skills while interacting with other youngsters and their caregivers.

The program offers families an opportunity to introduce their youngest children to the library in a relaxed, welcoming setting while encouraging a lifelong interest in learning.

Music & Movement with Julie is free and open to the public, and no advance registration is required. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to bring their little ones for a morning of songs, dancing and fun.

For more information about the program and other library activities, contact the Merrick Public Library in Brookfield.

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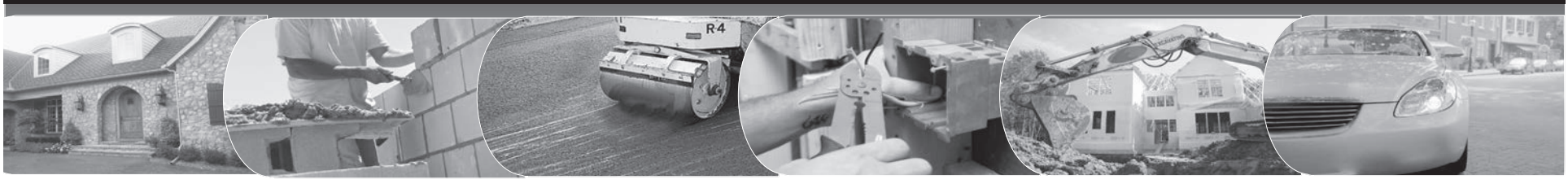

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Buck Hill Studio to host Holiday Open House Dec. 6

NORTH BROOKFIELD — Artist and illustrator Russell "Russ" Buzzell will welcome visitors to a Holiday Open House on Sunday, Dec. 6 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Buck Hill Studio, 25 Tucker Hill Rd., North Brookfield.

Visitors can meet Buzzell, browse his work and shop for gifts inspired by the landscapes, wildlife and history of rural New England. Signed prints, paintings and note cards will be available, with subjects ranging from farm animals and woodland wildlife to familiar buildings and country scenes.

Joining him will be his sister-in-law, Diane Buzzell, author of The Artist, the Farmer, the Hunter, and the Good Guy. Signed copies of her book will be available for purchase. The book tells the story of Russ and his brothers growing up in North Brookfield, offering a glimpse of the family and farm life that have influenced much of his artwork.

Among the prints available for purchase is Buzzell's pen-and-ink drawing of the historic Brookfield Inn, the first in a planned series depicting Massachusetts taverns, or "ordinaries," as they were commonly known during the colonial period. The series reflects his interest in preserving the buildings and stories of the region through art.

Buzzell grew up on his family's North Brookfield farm, milking cows, driving tractors and helping with daily chores. Art was his first love, encouraged by a close family friend and artist known as "Uncle Louie." A 1960 graduate of North Brookfield High School, Buzzell graduated from the Art Institute of Boston in 1966.



Courtesy

Among the prints available for purchase will be Buzzell's pen-and-ink drawing of the historic Brookfield Inn, which now serves as the home of Willowbrook Academy.

His professional career included several years illustrating publications for the Massachusetts Audubon Society. His book credits include Ronald Rood's Animals Nobody Loves, the Massachusetts Audubon Society's The Farm Book and William G. Sheldon's The Wilderness Home of Giant Panda. His illustrations have also appeared in Gray's Sporting Journal and Wisconsin Sportsman, and he has freelanced for the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Working in oils, watercolors, pen and ink, and scratchboard, Buzzell has devoted much of his career to commissioned paintings and drawings of New England farms, landscapes and wildlife. His best-known works include Sunday Afternoon on the Buzzell Farm and Wheeler's Surprise, his historical depiction of the 1675 ambush of Capt. Thomas Wheeler's company during King Philip's War.

The Holiday Open House offers an opportunity to meet the artist and author, explore their shared North Brookfield roots and find gifts with a local connection.

Nativities From Around the World exhibit returns to North Brookfield Dec. 3-6



NORTH BROOKFIELD — The Christmas season will be celebrated with an international perspective when the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints hosts its "Nativities From Around the World" exhibit Dec. 3-6.

The four-day event will take place at the church, located at 108 New Braintree Road (Route 67), approximately 2.2 miles north of North Brookfield Town Center. Admission is free, and the public is welcome to attend.

The exhibit will feature Nativity scenes representing Christmas traditions from around the world, offering visitors an opportunity to appreciate different artistic and cultural interpretations of the birth of Jesus Christ.

The event will be open Thursday, Dec. 3, from 4 to 8 p.m.; Friday, Dec. 4, from 4 to 6 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 5, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 6, from 12:30 to 6 p.m.

A special musical performance by the Weir River Concert Band is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 4, at 6 p.m., with refreshments to follow. The concert will provide an additional opportunity for visitors to enjoy the holiday season through music and fellowship.

The exhibit is open to individuals and families throughout the surrounding communities, with no admission charge.

For more information about "Nativities From Around the World," contact 508-246-5887.

New support group offered for people with physical disabilities

LEICESTER — A new support group Dis-Ability, Why Me?, for people living with physical disabilities, is up and running. The group was developed by two women who know the challenges that come with physical impairments. Peg Erickson, from Spencer, and Trish McCormick, from Leicester, are each living with physical disabilities. They have experienced the challenges of completing everyday tasks, difficulty accepting their altered bodies, and the fear of what the future may hold. Believing that others with physical disabilities may face the same issues, they decided to join forces to begin a support group.

Their purpose is to create a place where people with physical disabilities can meet and express their feelings, exchange practical information and resources that will improve their daily lives, and to socialize in a welcoming environment.

Anyone with a physical disability is welcome to attend. Caregivers are also welcome. Meetings will be held at the Leicester Public Library, 1136 Main St., Leicester. The accessible entrance is located at the rear of the building. The November meeting date is Thursday, Nov. 19, at 6 p.m. Contact Peg Erickson at maete1961@gmail.com for additional information.

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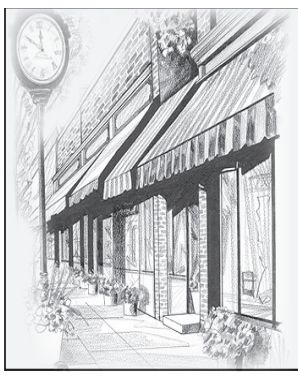

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Quaboag students take first place at Junior Achievement Stock Market Challenge!

WARREN — Five Quaboag Regional High School students from Ms. DiRico's Personal Finance classes brought home First Place at the 21st Annual Junior Achievement Stock Market Challenge held Nov. 17 at Western New England University!

Competing against 66 teams from area high schools, the Quaboag team, The Cha Ching Champs, finished with the highest net worth in the competition! Congratulations to team members Connor Peet, Christian Marshall, Liam Sloan, Leo Paquette, and Reed Waz for their outstanding performance!

Throughout the competition, students worked together under pressure, analyzed breaking market news, made investment decisions, and managed their portfolios in a fast-paced simulated stock market environment. Their teamwork, communication, critical thinking, and financial knowledge helped lead them to victory.



Courtesy

The Cha Ching Champs, alongside Amie Miarecki, President of Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts (far right), and Terrell Joyner, Chair of the Junior Achievement Executive Co

The competition gave students an opportunity to put the concepts they have learned in Personal Finance into action while experiencing the excitement and challenges of real-world investing.

Their achievement is a tremendous accomplishment, and they represented Quaboag with pride!

Congratulations to the Cha Ching Champs! Go Cougars!

Step Into the warmth and wonder of Christmas past at Old Sturbridge Village



Courtesy

An interpreter works in the Cabinetmaking Shop.

STURBRIDGE — This holiday season, Old Sturbridge Village invites families and friends to step away from their screens and shopping lists to experience the simple charms and traditions of a New England Christmas as Christmas by Candlelight returns on select dates from Nov. 27 through Dec. 27.

For more than 20 years, this beloved tradition has brought together historical storytelling, artisan demonstrations and familiar holiday favorites to evoke the spirit of Christmases long ago. As daylight fades, a magical lighting ceremony at 4:30 p.m. transforms the Village into a cozy, firelit winter landscape illuminated by candles, lanterns and twinkling lights. Visitors can enjoy live holiday music, warm mulled cider, horse-drawn carryall rides, baking over crackling wood fires and visits with Santa Claus - all against the backdrop of the Village's historic homes, shops and rural countryside.

As guests explore the candlelit paths and enjoy the crisp winter air, they will encounter a roaring bonfire on the Common, wander along the Christmas Tree Trail and cross the Wish Bridge, where thousands of wishes are left each year. They will also discover how New Englanders prepared for winter many years ago as they watch a tinsmith craft punched-tin lanterns, a blacksmith forge axes for chopping wood and household interpreters mull cider over an open fire. Along the way, freshly baked cookies, hot cocoa and handcrafted gifts like pottery, tinware and souvenirs add to the celebration.

"The holidays can get pretty hectic, and sometimes we forget to slow down and actually enjoy them," said Rhys Simmons, Director of Interpretation at Old Sturbridge Village. "One of my favorite things about Christmas by Candlelight is seeing people put everything else aside for a few hours. They are outside, they are laughing, they are learning and enjoying something together. That's what makes it so special."

Highlights of Christmas by Candlelight

Sparkling Lights & Heartwarming Sights - Beginning at 2 p.m., visitors can explore the Christmas Tree Trail and Wish Bridge, take a horse-drawn carryall ride and watch a special lighting ceremony at 4:30 p.m.

Merry Music - Enjoy live acoustic renditions of holiday favorites performed by local musicians in Upon a Midnight Clear: An Acoustic New England Christmas, presented by ClockJack Productions, along with performances in the Center Meetinghouse and entertaining sing-alongs for children.

Cozy Christmas Traditions - Historians will share the stories behind seasonal favorites like Christmas stockings, nutcrackers and mulled cider. Each year, the Village explores holiday customs from a different country, and this year's spotlight is on Sweden. Visitors will discover Swedish traditions and folklore, including the tomte, a Christmas gnome believed to watch over farms, families and livestock during winter.

Santa & Storytelling - Visit Santa Claus in his cozy cabin and enjoy an illustrated story about his visit to Old Sturbridge Village.

Creative Crafts - Watch costumed historians demonstrate traditional skills, including pottery-making, knitting and crafting wooden toys, throughout the Village›s historic homes and shops.

Delicious Delights - Warm up with hearty soups and stews, hot cocoa, cider and specialty cocktails, and gather around the roaring bonfire on the Common.

Gifts with a Little History - Shop for pottery, tinware, candy, spices and ornaments. *Please note times when the gift shop will be open below.

Gingerbread House Contest - Admire the creative gingerbread house entries and vote for your favorite. Tickets are limited and advance purchase is recommended. Members and non-members alike can save by purchasing tickets online through November 26.

Regular Evenings (2–8 p.m.): Nov. 27-29; Dec. 4-6, 11-13, 18-20, 23 and 26-27.

Candlelight Thursdays (4–8 p.m.): Tickets are $12 per person on Dec. 10 and 17.

Timed Admission: Tickets are sold in arrival blocks of 2, 3, 4 and 5 p.m. on regular evenings, and 4 and 5 p.m. on Candlelight Thursdays. Guests may arrive any time after their ticket›s designated start time.

Activities: Aside from the 4:30 p.m. lighting ceremony, most activities are ongoing or repeated throughout the evening.

The Gift Shop, located in the Village's Visitor Center, will offer special holiday hours. Visitors can also shop online at their convenience.

CLOSED November 15 - 26 as the Village prepares for Christmas by Candlelight.

OPEN Friday - Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., November 27 through December 20, and 2:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. every night of Christmas by Candlelight.

OPEN Candlelight Thursdays - December 10 and 17, from 4:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Miner Grant Store: Open when the Village is open for Christmas by Candlelight, 2:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tickets to Christmas by Candlelight required to access the store.

Christmas by Candlelight 2026 is made possible by generous support from Country Bank, The Overlook, Publick House and Southbridge Credit Union.

Operation Undercover begins a new season!

SPENCER — Now in its 35th year, Operation Undercover is still going strong. Founded by citizens Robert and Carol McPherson Operation Undercover provides donated new men's and women's underwear to the Veterans Shelter, Jeremiah's Inn and Abby's House each year at Christmas time. From Nov. 23 to Dec. 17 unwrapped packages can be dropped off at the hamper left on the porch of 125 Pleasant St, or at the Spencer Town Hall rotunda or the Richard Sugden Library.

Coordinator Beth McPherson thanks all who have donated so generously in the past, and wishes all who do so again a happy and healthy holiday season.

Additionally, Laura Torti reminds residents that the mitten tree is also available in the Town Hall Rotunda to be decorated with donated hats and mittens which will be distributed to the Spencer East Brookfield school children at Wire Village and Knox Trail Schools. Sponsored by the Office of the Town Clerk, the mitten tree has been a tradition since 2012 and has donated hundreds of warm hats and mittens over the years to needy children.



Family Dining & Gift Guide

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LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES

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

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

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

DOUGLAS
St. Denis Food Pantry
23 Manchaug Road
Douglas, MA 01516
Distribution: Saturday 8am to 10am

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

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

North Brookfield Food Collaborative
70 Bates Street,North Brookfield,Ma 01535
Main food distribution day is every Thursday at noon. By calling 774-289-9832 we can make accommodations for anyone unable to make it on Thursdays.
Open 7 days a week by appointment.
We are operational through food rescue and donations. Please consider donating so we can continue the fight against food insecurity. Checks made payable to:NBFC@70 Bates Street,North Brookfield Ma 01535.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



LEGALS

At the Zoning Board of Appeals public meeting to be held on Tuesday, December 08, 2026, in the McCourt Social Hall of Memorial Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Spencer, MA, a public hearing will be held on the following items starting at 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as can be heard:

Notice of Public Hearing – Spencer Zoning Board of Appeals

Public Hearing Special Permits– Applicant: New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC d/b/a AT&T; Owner: Town of Spencer: Location: 17 Lake Street and 42 Highland Street, Spencer, MA, Assessor's Map U15-01. The applicant is seeking Special Permits under section Article 4, Section 4.2 (H)(5) and 4.8.5 (Wireless Data Transfer Facilities) and Article 7, Section 7.2 and 7.4 to install, operate, and maintain a 150' wireless data transfer facility (monopole) on the property. The property is located in the Village Residential (VR) zoning district.

November 20, 2026
November 27, 2026

MORTGAGEE'S NOTICE OF SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain Mortgage given by Shannon M. Toomey to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Security First Mortgage Funding, LLC, its successors and assigns, dated March 6, 2017 and recorded with the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds at Book 56827, Page 189, subsequently assigned to Fifth Third Bank, National Association by Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Security First Mortgage Funding, LLC, beneficiary of the security instrument, its successors and assigns by assignment recorded in said Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds at Book 63701, Page 36, subsequently assigned to Fifth Third Bank, National Association by Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Security First Mortgage Funding, LLC, its successors and assigns by assignment recorded in said Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds at Book 74186, Page 279, subsequently assigned to Select Portfolio Servicing, Inc. by Fifth Third Bank, National Association by assignment recorded in said Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds at Book 71214, Page 234, subsequently assigned to U.S. Bank Trust National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely as Owner Trustee for RCAF Acquisition Trust, its successors, transferees and assigns by Select Portfolio Servicing, Inc. by assignment recorded in said Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds at Book 72286, Page 91 for breach of the conditions of said Mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing same will be sold at Public Auction at 1:00 PM on December 4, 2026 at 21 Roys Drive, Spencer, MA, all and singular the premises described in said Mortgage, to wit:

The land in Spencer, Worcester County, Massachusetts, situated on Roy Drive and being Lot No. 5 on a plan of land owned by Norman U. and June E. Vaudreuil dated April 17, 1976 made by John E. and Francis Dowgielewicz Surveyors, Spencer, Mass. And recorded with Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 427 Plan 103 and to which plan reference can be made for a more particular description.

Said Lot No. 5 containing 26,000 square feet, more or less.

BEING the same premises conveyed to the Grantors by Deed of Norman U. Vaudreuil and June E. Vaudreuil dated August 29, 1977 and recorded in the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Book 6280 Page 195.

The premises are to be sold subject to and with the benefit of all easements, restrictions, encroachments, building and zoning laws, liens, unpaid taxes, tax titles, water bills, municipal liens and assessments, rights of tenants and parties in possession, and attorney's fees and costs.

TERMS OF SALE:

A deposit of TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS AND 00 CENTS ($10,000.00) in the form of a certified check, bank treasurer's check or money order will be required to be delivered at or before the time the bid is offered. The successful bidder will be required to execute a Foreclosure Sale Agreement immediately after the close of the bidding. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid within thirty (30) days from the sale date in the form of a certified check, bank treasurer's check or other check satisfactory to Mortgagee's attorney. The Mortgagee reserves the right to bid at the sale, to reject any and all bids, to continue the sale and to amend the terms of the sale by written or oral announcement made before or during the foreclosure sale. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled only to a return of the deposit paid. The purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney. The description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of an error in this publication. TIME WILL BE OF THE ESSENCE.

FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exemption.

Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale.

U.S. Bank Trust National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely as Owner Trustee for RCAF Acquisition Trust

Present Holder of said Mortgage,
By Its Attorneys,
ORLANS LAW GROUP PLLC
PO Box 540540
Waltham, MA 02454
Phone: (781) 790-7800
24-002790
November 13, 2026
November 20, 2026
November 27, 2026

At the Zoning Board of Appeals public meeting to be held on Tuesday, December 08, 2026, in the McCourt Social Hall of Memorial Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Spencer, MA, a public hearing will be held on the following items starting at 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as can be heard:

Notice of Public Hearing – Spencer Zoning Board of Appeals

Public Hearing Special Permits– Applicant: EQUIPX, LLC; Owner: Edwin Nowak: Location: 15 South Spencer Road, Spencer, MA, Assessor's Map U10-08. The applicant is seeking Special Permits under section 4.3.23 (Automobile repair shop, autobody shop) of the Spencer Zoning Bylaw to operate a vehicle repair shop that provides services and inspections, with mobile capabilities on the property. The property is located in the Industrial (I) zoning district

November 20, 2026
November 27, 2026



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Come to give blood, experience the magic of Trans-Siberian Orchestra

WORCESTER — The American Red Cross and Trans-Siberian Orchestra invite eligible donors to make an appointment to give blood, platelets or plasma and enjoy a special opportunity to experience the magic of the holiday season while helping save lives.

When donors hurry in to give blood, platelets or plasma, they can earn at least 100 points through the Red Cross Donor Rewards program, which can be used to redeem two tickets to select performances of Trans-Siberian Orchestra's The Ghosts of Christmas Eve: The Best of TSO and More, while supplies last. Trans-Siberian Orchestra will perform in Worcester on Nov. 28, for the 7:30 p.m. show at the DCU Center. (To learn more about Donor Rewards, visit RedCrossBlood.org/rewards.)

"The Red Cross is in constant need of blood donations, and it's so important that we all step up," said Trans-Siberian Orchestra's Al Pitrelli. "You give blood to support a wonderful cause and in exchange, you come spend the holidays with us. It's a win-win!"

Quantities are limited! To make an appointment, visit RedCrossBlood.org, call 1-800-RED CROSS or download the Blood Donor App.

The holiday season can be a challenging time to ensure the blood supply remains stable, even as busy schedules may prevent regular donors from giving. "Blood donors make a profound difference in the lives of patients every day," said Darren Irby, executive director of brand partnerships for the Red Cross. "This special Donor Rewards offer is a meaningful way to thank those who come to roll up a sleeve to help others while giving them the chance to enjoy an unforgettable holiday experience, thanks to the generosity of TSO."

How to donate blood

Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass® to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, follow the instructions at RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass or use the Blood Donor App.

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information about our work, please visit redcross.org/MA or CruzRojaAmericana.org, or follow us on social media.

Massachusetts coach and three-time American Ninja Warrior national finalist breaks 24-hour Murph world record

WORCESTER — Jonathan Godbout, founder of online coaching company Adaptation Through Perseverance (ATP) and a three-time American Ninja Warrior national finalist, has set a new unofficial world record for the most Murph workouts completed in 24 hours. Starting at 9 a.m. on Friday, Nov. 13, at CrossFit Worcester, Godbout finished 20.5 Murphs at 8:57 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 14, with three minutes to spare. The previous record of 20.16 was held by Russell Stringer of Australia.

Murph is a CrossFit Hero workout, one of a series named to honor fallen service members. It carries the name of Navy Lt. Michael Murphy, who was killed in Afghanistan in 2005, and is traditionally done each Memorial Day: a 1-mile run, 100 pull-ups, 200 push-ups, 300 air squats and a second mile, all in a 20-lb vest. Godbout wore the vest for every round, and by the finish he had run 41 miles and completed 2,050 pull-ups, 4,100 push-ups and 6,150 squats.

The attempt traces back to the day Godbout and his friend Paul Woods knocked out 10 unweighted Murphs in 10 hours together, at 17 and 15 years old, and walked away agreeing that one of them had to go after the weighted 24-hour record. That mark climbed steadily in the years that followed, and Godbout spent the past eight months preparing for it, with strength and conditioning work five days a week, hundreds of Murph-specific workouts and physical therapy.

"This has been in the back of my mind for five years," Godbout said. "Once I gave it my full focus, I improved even faster than I expected, and I did more than I ever thought I could."



around the clock, keeping him safe and making the attempt as fair as possible. They judged every rep, counted every round and measured the mile to the exact distance, down to the door he ran out of.

The hardest hours came overnight, when the cold set in on top of mounting physical fatigue and mental exhaustion. Woods and Godbout's girlfriend, Abby Saner, who had done three Murphs of her own earlier that day and stayed awake with him all 24 hours, worked as his pit crew: piling on layers for each mile, stripping them off the moment he came back inside, holding cooling towels to his head and picking him up off the floor after push-ups during the last few rounds. His extended family stayed through the night too, covering many of the miles at his side.

"I literally couldn't have done it without my coaches, Abby and Paul, and my whole family," Godbout said.

Godbout dedicated the record to his grandfather, a military veteran, and to all who have served, as a thank-you for their service and sacrifice.

"This challenge was insanely hard, but it's nowhere near as hard as what veterans go through," he said.

The 24 hours were also a test of the idea his coaching company is named for.

"You have to go through something hard in order to come out stronger on the other side," he said. "That's what Adaptation Through Perseverance means to me."

Video of the finish has drawn more than 1.9 million views on Instagram, and a mini documentary of the attempt, told largely through the voices of his clients, friends, family and gym community, will premiere on the ATP Fit Co YouTube channel.

About Jonathan Godbout

Jonathan Godbout is a three-time American Ninja Warrior national finalist, an endurance athlete and a certified personal trainer with a degree in physical education. He has coached for about eight years and now works full-time as an online strength and conditioning coach.

About Adaptation Through Perseverance (ATP)

Adaptation Through Perseverance LLC is a Massachusetts-based online coaching company founded by Jonathan Godbout. ATP offers personalized coaching for ninja, obstacle racing and endurance athletes, as well as everyday athletes who want to train like them. Learn more at atpfitco.com.

SEARCH

continued from page A1

"It's a bit of a heavy lift. There's a lot of processes where you really need to make sure you hit the nail on the head, especially with open meeting laws. I agree if we can cut the cost, but we definitely have to hire a consultant to get us through this process," said Monette.

Interim Superintendent/School Business Administrator Gary Suter explained that the committee's RFPs needed to be uniform, with each potential bidder given the same request, so he urged the committee to specify exactly what they wanted to put in the charge. Committee leadership agreed to let members submit their input until the Nov. 6 deadline, at which time Suter finalized the wording and released the RFPs.

One of the biggest concerns was the timeframe. The goal is to have a new superintendent determined by March. Another question was who would staff the search committee. Suter suggested that the consultant could determine how that committee is built and populated.

RFPs were set to be reviewed in a workshop on Nov. 17. The next regular School Committee meeting is Dec. 8.

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November 2026 interpretive programs at Blackstone River Greenway Visitor Center at Worcester

WORCESTER — All programs are free and open to the public. Registration is not required. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Dress for the weather and wear appropriate footwear. Meet at the Visitor Center unless otherwise stated. Programming is subject to change or cancellation. For the most up to date programming information, call (508) 373-7056. Reasonable accommodations available upon advance notice. To make a request, please contact Moneesha Dasgupta at (617) 645-0358 or moneesha.dasgupta2@mass.gov. The Blackstone River Greenway Visitor Center at Worcester is located at 3 Paul Clancy Way, Worcester MA 01607.

Visitor Center Exhibit Tour
Saturdays, 11 – 11:30 a.m.

Join us on a tour of the Heritage Center's exhibit hall! Learn how the Blackstone Canal helped transform Worcester from a sleepy county seat to a thriving industrial city and hub for immigration and innovation. Appropriate for ages 6 and up.

Mill to Meadow
Saturdays, Nov. 7 & 21, 2 – 3 p.m.

The land on which the Visitor Center stands was once the largest factory complex in Worcester — and now not a single building remains! In this short walk, find out about "brownfield" reclamation on site and how it fits into the Blackstone Valley's environmental renaissance. Appropriate for ages 12 and up. About ¼ mile over paved surfaces.

Woodlands and Waterways
Saturday, Nov. 14, 2 – 3 p.m.

Walk along the banks of the Blackstone River and learn about the life that it supports. We'll look for signs of wildlife as we discuss the ways we can keep our watershed clean! Appropriate for ages 12 and up. The walk is roughly one mile over a paved surface with slight inclines. Meet 205 North Main Street, Millbury. Bathrooms and water are not available at this site.

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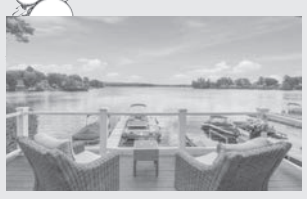
Webster Lake ~ 93 Birch Island Rd



Expansive water views! Beautiful, completely remodeled home on scenic Webster Lake! Combines effortless modern luxury with lakefront living. It boasts a spacious, sunny open-concept layout, designed for both relaxation & entertaining! Swim off your private dock, warm up in your personal sauna, share stories around the firepit on chilly nights ~ everyday feels like a vacation!
MLS# 73589032 **NEW PRICE $1,150,000**

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

Webster - 106 East Main St (Rte 12) Commercial Opportunity!



Corner Lot, 275' +/- Road Frontage, Extremely High Traffic Count, 6,200 SF (75x80) Commercial Building, Currently 2 Units -> Potential for More. Economical, Efficient Natural Gas FHA Heat & Cooling. Its close proximity to Successful National Franchised Businesses generates Significant Commerce at this Location. Convenient Access. **MLS #73512426 $ 615,000**

24 Laurelwood Dr Webster Lake Waterfront



On the shores of prestigious Webster Lake! Experience ultra-luxury lakefront living with direct water access. This young modern craftsman lake home is masterly designed to maximize panoramic Western views through a two-story architectural tower. The home boasts 3,790 +/- square feet of sophisticated, three-story living space, complete with multilevel waterside decks, a radius stone faced patio, and a tiered landscape with its own waterfall. The living room flows seamlessly onto an expansive open deck and into an exquisite sun-drenched sitting room. A magnificent primary bedroom suite offers a private full bath, double sink vanity, walk-in closet and dressing room. The purposely designed lower level delivers effortless, large-volume entertainment, featuring a full second kitchen and a sprawling recreation room that opens to a substantial lakeside patio. With 2 additional bedrooms and bath, this level easily serves as a private guest floor. This Lake property is designed to create long-lasting memories!
MLS#73563787 **$1,750,000**

Webster ~ 33 Slater Street

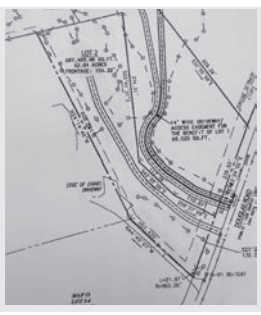


Sprawling fieldstone faced Ranch! Located on a +/- 0.5-acre, 2 car garage. Offers: 1,860 sf main level plus 1,000 sf +/- finished lower level, 3 BRs, 2-1/2 Baths, 2 stone fireplaces-FHW BB heat. Open floor plan kitchen, living rm, dining rm, breezeway w/ sliders to rear deck, and 3 season sunroom
MLS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

Woodstock ~ 500 Route 169



Historic Woodstock Hill! Distinctive 1800 Vintage ~ 2,500+/- sq ft home blends period charm with panoramic views. Features 5 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, multiple living areas, and a scenic sitting porch. It includes two furnished guest suites with strong booking history near Woodstock Academy and Pomfret School. Lush grounds boast established flower gardens and a flower stand, offering potential for a studio or business (subject to approval). Own a rare piece of Woodstock history!
CT MLS# 24209434 **$779,000**



Webster - Douglas Rd (Rt 16) ANR Lot # 2

Building Lot, 2.01 +/- acres, 154' road frontage, Surveyed and portioned out of a larger tract of land, Zoned ASFR (Agricultural Single Family Residential) Located near State Land
~ A Great Value at $69,900.

On the shores of Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg



Webster Lake Waterfront 22 Union Point Snug Harbor Villa Open House UNday 12-2

Most Luxurious & Largest on the Lake!
Presenting a distinguished condo residence that will provide an exceptional waterfront lifestyle! Offers an expansive 4600 sf+/ featuring 4BRs, 4-1/2 baths, 3 frplcs & more, all designed for relaxation & convenience! Nothing quite compares! Priced to Sell.
VIEW REALTOR MLS # 73507605 FOR MORE DETAILS **$948,000**

Webster Lake ~ 60 Wakefield Ave ~ Corner Lot!

Rare Lake Residential Building Opportunity! 1 of 2 build-ready level, landscaped lots ~ each with 1/3 ownership of a private, prime waterfront lot, swimmable & boatable, where you will enjoy a sun drenched sandy shoreline & boat dock ~ just baby steps away from your NEW home! You will have direct lake access, low off-Lake taxes, access to municipal water/sewer services and an established neighborhood. Build now or build later BUT enjoy Webster Lake IMMEDIATELY!
Go To MLS # 73582966 $277,500.

Webster Lake ~0 Wakefield Ave



Rare Lake Residential Building Opportunity! 1 of 2 build-ready level, landscaped lots ~ each with 1/3 ownership of a private, prime waterfront lot, swimmable & boatable, where you will enjoy a sun drenched sandy shoreline & boat dock ~ just baby steps away from your NEW HOME! You will have direct lake access, low off-Lake taxes, access to municipal water/sewer services and an established neighborhood. Build now or build later BUT enjoy Webster Lake IMMEDIATELY!
Go To MLS # 73582967 $247,500



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92 Worcester Road $465,000

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*Cathedral Ceiling in Kitchen/ DR/ Livingroom
*1.5 Acres
*Gas Heat
95 A.F. Putnam Rd $675,000

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*Updated Windows, Electric *Garage
*Near Golf Course, Hiking, Recreational Area
133 Church Street $349,500



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‘Journey to Space’ exhibit opens at EcoTarium

Explore space and life on the International Space Station at Stoddard Exhibition Hall



WORCESTER — On Saturday Nov. 14, the EcoTarium Museum of Science and Nature launched a world-class traveling exhibit, “Journey to Space,” in the new Stoddard Exhibition Hall.

“Journey to Space” explores the challenges faced by astronauts living and conducting research in outer space, and celebrates their outstanding achievements in scientific research and engineering. The public is invited to join the exhibit’s grand opening and ribbon-cutting and to be among the first to experience life on the International Space Station.

“Journey to Space” will be on exhibit at the Stoddard Exhibition Hall through April 25, 2027.

“Space travel is only possible because of the creative and brilliant scientists and engineers who have worked together for decades to overcome the challenges of supporting human life in space, including pioneers from Worcester such as Dr. Robert and Esther Goddard and David Clark,” said Noreen Johnson Smith, President & CEO of the EcoTarium. “This exhibit offers a unique look at life on the International Space Station, where we recently spoke with Astronaut Luke Delaney in mid-flight via HAM radio from the EcoTarium. ‘Journey to Space’ continues the adventure for learners of every age.”

The immersive exhibit “Journey to Space” is an exciting, interactive exhibit that brings space travel closer to home for adults and children to experience the incredible ways that scientists and engineers have designed environments for humans to live and work in outer space. The exhibit explores the real challenges that the Astronauts face every day such as food preparation, sleeping, showering, using the toilet, and recycling water while living in an environment that is in constant motion. The ingenuity, creativity, and perseverance of NASA engineers is on full display in this exciting exhibition as we continue to expand our understanding of what is possible. The exhibit features interactive and multimedia experiences including a full scale, climb-aboard mockup of the Destiny Lab, the primary research facility for U.S. payloads on the International

Space Station (ISS). With its rotating mechanism, the Destiny Lab will give visitors the sensation that they’re floating as they get a virtual tour of the lab from astronauts who have worked there. Visitors can also launch water rockets, interact with a model ion engine, control a robotic arm, and simulate other out-of-this-world activities associated with living and working in space.

“Journey to Space” also showcases relics of space exploration including an Apollo helmet and the Canyon Diablo Meteorite. Visitors can also gaze at the beauty of Earth as astronauts see it on a large projection of images taken from the ISS, 250 miles above the planet we call home.

For more information, visit: https://ecotarium.org/exhibit/journey-to-space/

Journey to Space is locally sponsored by Bank of America.

About the EcoTarium

The EcoTarium is New England’s leading museum of science and nature, an indoor-outdoor experience dedicated to inspiring a passion for science and nature in visitors of all ages.

Founded in 1825 as one of the oldest natural history museums in the country, the EcoTarium has been a leader in informal science and nature education for over 200 years. Highlights of the 55-acre Worcester campus include the science center with three floors of interactive exhibits; the Stoddard Exhibition Hall; Alden Planetarium; Science Discovery programs; extensive outdoor nature trails, wildlife zoo, and habitats; a seasonal railroad featuring the Worcester Railers Explorer Express Train; and an extensive outdoor play exhibit, Nature Explore®. The EcoTarium is located at 222 Harrington Way, Worcester, MA 01604. Parking is free, and Museum admission tickets may be purchased online. The EcoTarium is open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit ecotarium.org.

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So Good! brings the music of Neil Diamond to Mechanics Hall



WORCESTER — Mechanics Hall and Spectacle Live will present So Good! The Neil Diamond Experience starring Robert Neary on Sunday, Feb. 21 at 3 p.m. at Mechanics Hall in Worcester. Tickets are on sale now at mechanicshall.org or by calling 1-800-657-8774.

Broadway, television, and film star, Robert Neary, creates an unforgettable tribute to one of the greatest recording artists in history. Ranked the #1 Neil Diamond Tribute in America, by Pollstar Magazine, this two hour Extravaganza is packed with 28 classic hit songs, nostalgia, stories, multimedia, trivia, and a 30 minute finale that is pure Broadway caliber. This is a true immersion into the life and career of Neil Diamond and sets itself apart from all others. Massive critical praise all across the internet and social media has called this show “The most authentic and professional tribute to Neil Diamond and delivers nothing short of a true Neil Diamond concert experience”. The concert has even been filmed as a documentary feature and is now streaming on Amazon Prime Video, where, it too, continues to draw rave reviews. With over 40 years in the entertainment business, Robert has 3 Broadway leads, and over 60 major guests starring television and film roles to his credit and has amassed a following of over half a million people, worldwide, on social media. He created this incredible show in 2019 and worked tirelessly with NY’s premier band, The Mystic, during the pandemic, to make it the hit that it is today. Now, in its sixth year, “So Good! The Neil Diamond Experience” has played in 38 states and is continuing to sell out venues all over the US.

The Great Hall is on the third floor of Mechanics Hall, located at 321 Main St., Worcester. The Great Hall is accessible by elevator from the Waldo Street entrance, or by stairs from both the Main Street and Waldo Street entrances.

Mechanics Hall

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 meeting place beloved for the central New England location, its architecture, and the legacy of prominent figures engaged. The world’s most renowned orchestras and performers – including the London Philharmonic, Yo-Yo Ma, Ella Fitzerald, and Linda Ronstadt – have taken the Hall’s stage. Among the many luminaries who have spoken at Mechanics Hall are Charles Dickens, Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, and Mark Twain. In addition to serving as a premiere venue and recording site, Mechanics Hall offers inspiring cultural experiences for diverse audiences through a variety of creative initiatives, including free concerts, community events, a youth chorus, and collaborative programs with local colleges and nonprofit organizations.

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

Spectacle Live

Spectacle Live’s mission is to create connections that make exceptional live experiences happen. Founded in 2012 and headquartered in Chelmsford, Massachusetts, Spectacle Live is a live event and venue management company specializing in performing arts centers across the Northeast. The company partners with municipalities and arts organizations throughout New England to provide comprehensive services, including venue operations, marketing and promotion, booking and talent buying, ticketing, food and beverage management, technical production, and consulting. Spectacle Live currently works with more than a dozen venues across Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, presenting a diverse range of events from concerts and comedy to theater and family entertainment. For more information, visit www.spectaclelive.com or contact Pete Lally atplally@spectaclelive.com or 617-531-1257.

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