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Friday, March 27, 2026



Steve Bek, Jr. with 1950 GMC Truck owned by Stephen Bek, Sr.

Courtesy

BVT students earn 81 medals at SkillsUSA District V competition

UPTON — Students from Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) earned 81 medals at the annual SkillsUSA Massachusetts District V Competition held March 11.

A total of 198 students from BVT competed against career and technical education students from six vocational high schools in events designed to test technical knowledge, workplace readiness and safety practices in a variety of trades and leadership categories.

BVT students earned 33 gold, 27 silver, and 21 bronze medals and swept two competition categories. In total, 118 student-competitors from BVT qualified to advance to the SkillsUSA Massachusetts State Leadership and Skills Conference, which will be held May 1 at BVT.

State officer candidate Madison Denise of Upton also advanced and will be joined by 26 leadership competitors and 25 student delegates representing the school at the state competition.

The complete list of medalists is
Turn To SKILLSUSA page A9

Bek's Fuels changes hands after 75 years in business

MANCHAUG — On March 10, after 75 years in business at 32 Main St., Manchaug, Bek's Fuels transferred ownership to Tony Elias of Sam's Gas. This was a bittersweet day for Steve Bek, Jr., who spent 50 years working at and operating this location.

Purchased by Stephen Bek, Sr. (1920-1977) on Jan. 11, 1951, Steve, Jr. took over all operations in 1977 after the death of his father, finishing his senior year of college commuting to classes while working full-time at Bek's.

Looking back, this was not what Steve, Jr. planned, but he commented, "I would not change a thing."

Originally built and owned by Joseph A. Conley in 1925 through 1950, the small wood-sided, hipped roof building with a late 1930s addition of a three-bay brick garage replaced a rented garage across the street operated by Conley which had been the

ignition point for a devastating fire on April 16, 1924. This fire destroyed not only the rented garage, but also 10-acres of the "Manchaug Flats" including the St. Anne's Catholic church complex, homes and businesses, and the multi-family home which

had stood on this parcel. (For a detailed presentation on the fire visit [https://youtu.be/4eWoM-](https://youtu.be/4eWoM-8mcPms)

8mcPms). It is believed that the roof of this brick section was constructed from some of the Manchaug Mill No. 2

structure materials left in the wake of the flooding that destroyed that Mill between 1936-1938.

Steve Bek, Jr. stated, "it is such a solid roof,

you could put a second floor on it."

Bek also noted when he was installing the
Turn To BEK'S page A10

Douglas High alum Gino Bolandrina slurps up success

KURU KURU RAMEN HITS ONE-YEAR MILESTONE

WORCESTER — For many Douglas High School graduates, the path after commencement leads to corporate offices or quiet trades. For Chef Gino Bolandrina, that path led to the high-heat kitchens of the Harvard Faculty Club, the precision of Boston's elite ramen scene, and finally, to the heart of the Worcester Public Market.

This week, Bolandrina and the executive team at Kuru Kuru Ramen celebrates their first anniversary, marking one year since their grand opening on March 29, 2025. Running from Wednesday, March 25, through Sunday, March 29, the celebration honors a milestone year for the local chef, who has served more than 10,000 bowls of authentic ramen to the Central Massachusetts community since the shop's debut.

A culinary pedigree: From Manila to Massachusetts

While Bolandrina is a familiar face to Douglas High alumni, his culinary education began long before his high school days. At just seven years old, he began training at the prestigious Heny Sison Culinary School in the Philippines under the mentorship of the renowned Chef Jill Sandique.

This foundational expertise allowed Bolandrina to navigate a diverse career, including a sophisticated tenure as a pastry chef at the Harvard Faculty Club



Gino Bolandrina

and a transformative period at the acclaimed Pikaichi in Boston. Today, that blend of international training and local roots defines the Kuru Kuru experience: sophisticated craft made accessible for the Worcester crowd.

A team effort While Bolandrina serves as the "Chief Ramen Officer," the shop's rapid success is fueled by a dedicated executive team. Working alongside him are Nick Pietroniro (Chief Executive Officer), Jesi Pietroniro (Chief Marketing Officer), and Julian Umali (Chief Financial Officer).

Together, they have transformed a market stall into a neighborhood fixture.

"We've made so many new friends since our grand opening," the team shared. "To make sure we can serve ramen to everyone who has supported us along the way, we'd love for you to stop by during our anniversary week."

The "Chief Ramen Officer" at work Bolandrina remains hands-on in every sense, everything from complex menu creation to the meticulous daily preparation of broths and noodles. His phi-

losophy is that food should be an immersive experience—a belief reflected in the shop's whimsical decor.

Diners at Kuru Kuru often find themselves surrounded by a curated collection of Pokémon figures, anime characters, and Japanese souvenirs. "Our decorations all have a story and a history," Bolandrina notes. "It's part of the charm of visiting us."

Join the "Year One" celebration

The Worcester community is invited to join the festivities at the Worcester Public Market throughout the week:

Dates: Wednesday, March 25 – Sunday, March 29

What to expect: Special in-person surprises, milestone celebrations, and signature ramen bowls.

Pro-tip: Loyal customers are encouraged to bring their stamp cards to get closer to their next milestone meal.

As Bolandrina looks back on a successful first year, his gratitude centers on the community who raised him and the diners who have supported his dream.

For him, the secret ingredient is simple: "It's even more special when your food is made by people who truly care about the quality of your experience, every single bowl, every single time."

Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild finds success "Creating Comfort"

UPTON — Congratulations to all the members of the Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild for putting on another fine community event earlier this month with this year's theme, "Creating Comfort."

More than 200 artisan quilts, as small as a postcard and as large as a king-sized bed, were displayed with creative names like Honey Bee Lane, Leaf the Week Behind, and Modern Matchmaker. From replicas of historical quilts to whimsical and bold art pieces, all quilts were made by the Upton-based guild members over the past two years and judged by local attendees for best in show and fan favorites.

Vendors set up shop and sold local fudge, blade and knife sharpening services, and of course fabric arts and supplies including sashiko cross stitch kits all the way from Japan. With white-gloved guides available to show the harmonious fabric patterns on the back of each quilt, and a healthy lunch curated by Bellingham Friends of Music, guests were treated to background flute music,

Turn To GUILD page A9

Saint Joseph School's Migration Mass celebrates faith and culture



Courtesy

Students of Saint Joseph School stand with Bishop Robert J. McManus on the altar of Saint Joseph Basilica during the Annual Migration Mass, representing 26 nations through flags and traditional cultural dress in a celebration of faith, culture, and unity.

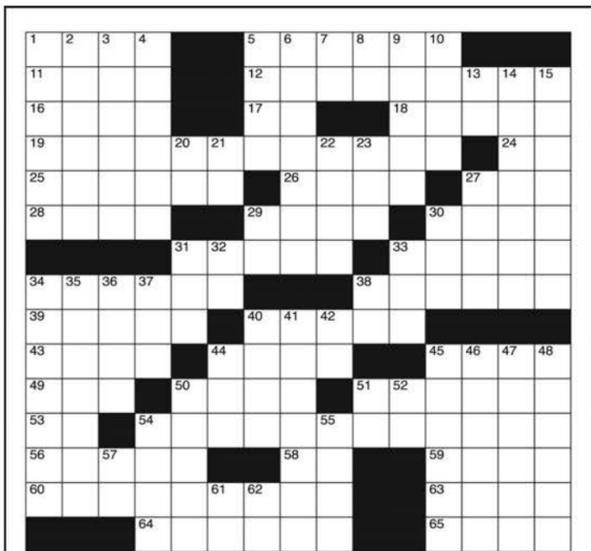
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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. "Bird of Paradise" constellation
- 5. Red Sox WS winner Bronson
- 11. Whirl
- 12. The State Dept. has a notable one
- 16. Energy, style and enthusiasm
- 17. Part of the mind
- 18. Mountainous country
- 19. Type of beverage
- 24. Atomic #109
- 25. Opposite of falsities
- 26. Female sheep
- 27. Rocky peak
- 28. Sensitive information sharing environment
- 29. Ethnic group of Thailand
- 30. Patron saint of Rome Philip
- 31. Psychedelics
- 33. Japanese pine
- 34. Have an impact on
- 38. Violent disorder
- 39. A French river
- 40. Early Mesoamerican civilization
- 43. Messenger ribonucleic acid
- 44. Musician Clapton
- 45. Ancient Greek sophist
- 49. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
- 50. Valley
- 51. A way to unwind
- 53. Atomic #93
- 54. Recommending
- 56. Indigo bush
- 58. Larry and Curly's pal
- 59. Off-Broadway theater award
- 60. Fencers
- 63. Small Eurasian deer (pl.)
- 64. Relating to songbirds
- 65. A way to assign

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Some are "secret"
- 2. Intestinal openings
- 3. Distant planet
- 4. Assembly possessing high legislative powers
- 5. Genus of typical owls
- 6. One with distinctively colored hair
- 7. Red cross
- 8. An alternative
- 9. Abominable snowmen
- 10. About ear
- 13. The opening letters
- 14. Feeling of regret
- 15. Atomic #39
- 20. Luteinizing hormone
- 21. Atomic #55
- 22. Carries a debt
- 23. Albanian monetary unit
- 27. Semitic abjad letter
- 29. Yes
- 30. Negative
- 31. Earn a perfect score
- 32. Connecticut
- 33. Partner to cheese
- 34. Snack nuts
- 35. Quadruped's body part
- 36. Locate
- 37. Pitching statistic
- 38. "... myself and I"
- 40. Utah city northwest of Provo
- 41. Football players in the trenches
- 42. One who runs the show
- 44. Wood
- 45. Performing artists
- 46. Slang for a cut
- 47. More breathable
- 48. Most crafty
- 50. Provokes into action
- 51. University of Dayton
- 52. Sodium
- 54. Large fish of the mackerel family
- 55. Not one
- 57. _ and behold
- 61. Sports highlight show
- 62. "The Great Lakes State"

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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School community gathered at Saint Joseph Basilica to celebrate its beloved Annual Migration Mass, a cherished tradition that had originally been scheduled during Catholic Schools Week in January but was postponed due to winter weather. The celebration brought together students, families, and parishioners in a vibrant expression of faith, culture, and unity.

The Migration Mass is one of the most meaningful traditions at Saint Joseph School. It celebrates the rich cultural diversity of the school community while highlighting the unity that flourishes through a shared Catholic faith.

The day began with a solemn yet joyful Mass, featuring an entrance procession of more than one hundred students proudly carrying flags representing their families' heritage. Twenty-six countries—the largest procession to date—were represented through flags and traditional attire, showcasing the cultural richness of the Saint Joseph School community. Flags from nations including the United States, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Egypt, England, France, Ghana, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Lebanon, Lithuania, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Puerto Rico, Portugal, Scotland, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, and Venezuela filled the basilica with vibrant color, symbolizing the beauty of unity in diversity. Many students proudly wore traditional attire from their heritage, embracing the opportunity to share and celebrate their cultural roots.

The Most Rev. Robert J. McManus, Bishop of Worcester, served as the main celebrant and homilist.

Fourth grade students Olivia Guinto and Nella Copeland participated in the Liturgy of the Word. Following the readings, Grade 8 students Ivonka Wamajty and Tenleigh Dowd led the congregation in the Responsorial Psalm, guiding the assembly in prayerful response to the Word of God.

The Prayer of the Faithful reflected the global spirit of the celebration. Prayers were offered in multiple languages, including Swahili by Michael Kamangu (Grade 5), Polish by Amadeusz Gacek (Grade 6), Gaelic by Mia Reed (Grade 5), Arabic by Ariel Corbin (Grade 5), Spanish by Hayley Benes (Grade 8), Greek by Giorgios Sgouritsas (Grade 6), and English by Cecilia Coan (Grade 5). These multilingual prayers beautifully illustrated the interconnectedness of the school's culturally diverse community and the universality of the Catholic faith.

In his homily, Bishop McManus reflected on the meaning of the Fourth Sunday of Lent and reminded the congregation that the Catholic Church is truly universal—bringing together people of every nation, language, and culture as one family of faith. He noted that the beautiful procession of flags and cultural attire was a powerful sign of the Church's unity in diversity. The bishop encouraged everyone to recognize Christ in one another and to welcome people of all backgrounds with compassion, reminding those present that our differences are gifts that strengthen the Church.

The Saint Joseph School Children's Choir, directed by Fine Arts Director Brigid Campbell and organist Maria Helena Czamecka-Cieslak, elevated the celebration with inspiring Lenten selections. Hymns including "Save Your People, O Lord," "Your Only Son," "One Bread, One Body," "Bread

for the World," and "From a King to a King" resonated throughout the basilica and added to the reverent and joyful atmosphere.

The Mass concluded with a special presentation to Bishop McManus by Student Council President Mychael Jones and Vice President Tenleigh Dowd, a heartfelt moment that reflected the gratitude and leadership of the students.

Following the Mass, students gathered with the bishop for a commemorative photo, capturing the joy and spirit of this meaningful occasion.

The Annual Migration Mass stands as a powerful testament to the Saint Joseph School community's commitment to embracing cultural diversity, fostering unity, and celebrating faith—values that lie at the very heart of the school's mission.

QCC appoints dean with strong computational science background



Dr. Dennis Dean

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College has named Dr. Dennis Dean as the new dean for the School of Computing and Applied Technologies. Dean brings more than two decades of experience in computational science, large-scale research management and collaborative scientific leadership in healthcare and higher education.

"We are thrilled to welcome a leader whose vision and experience align with our mission," said Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Kathy Rentsch. "His ability to unite teams, translate complex ideas, and support learners makes him an outstanding fit for QCC. We look forward to the energy, insight and innovation he will bring to our community."

Dean joins QCC after serving most recently in strategic roles at Velsera (formerly Seven Bridges) where he oversaw large genomics programs and scientific staff serving the biopharmaceutical sector. His work helped accelerate drug discovery by developing tools that reduced the time needed to identify combination therapies for cancer treatment.

"What excites me most at QCC is the opportunity to help students at every level," Dean said. "Our job is to prepare them now with the academic rigor, collaboration skills and hands-on experiences they need to step into the workforce with confidence."

Dean previously spent 15 years at Brigham and Women's Hospital studying the effects of sleep on cardiovascular disease, chronic illness and ADHD. He also contributed to research for NASA on automated astronaut scheduling and circadian alignment.

"The projects that have shaped my career have all come down to helping people move forward," Dean said. "The work is about understanding problems deeply and building tools and teams that make real outcomes possible."

At QCC, Dean will oversee computer science, computer information systems, computer systems engineering technology, automotive, utility, HVAC, manufacturing and electronics engineering programs. He plans to strengthen connections between curriculum, realworld projects, apprenticeships and coops. As a longtime mentor and tutor, Dean said preparing students for collaboration and effective communication, especially in an era of rapid advances in AI and computing, will be a central focus.

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PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER
 FRANK C. CHILINSKI
 FRANK@SALMONPRESS.NEWS

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

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR
 JIM D'NICOLA
 508-764-6102
 jim@stonebridgepress.news

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

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

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DOUGLAS ADULT SOCIAL CENTER

331 Main St.
(508) 476-2283
Hours of operation: Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Friday 9 a.m.-noon

DAILY ACTIVITIES: All our daily activities are free of charge.
Monday: Painting class 9:45am to 11:45am, Balance & Strength Exercise 12pm, Mat yoga 2pm
Tuesday: Walking club 9am, Cribbage 9:00am, Lunch & Bingo 11:30am, Technology class 1pm (call to make an appt.), Line dancing 2pm
Wednesday: Balance & strength 10am, Darts 11:30am, Mahjong 12:45pm, Dominoes 1 to 2:30pm
Thursday: Walking club 9am, Chair Yoga 9:30am, Pitch 9:00am, Hand and Foot card game 12:30pm
Friday: Balance & strength 10am, Zumba 11:30am

Tuesday & Thursday lunch club, please call the Friday before to sign up. Lunch is \$4.00 per person. If you would like to attend we offer free rides to and from the center and are willing to waive the lunch fee if necessary.
April Lunch Menu:
Tuesday 4/7: Scrambled eggs, home fries, sausage, English muffin & fruit
Thursday 4/9: Chicken salad sandwich, pasta salad & cupcakes (sign up by 4/3)
Tuesday 4/14: Meatloaf,

mashed potatoes, green beans & pie
Thursday 4/16: Swedish meatballs, egg noodles, carrots & brownie sundae (sign up by 4/9)
Tuesday 4/21: Chicken w/ cream sauce over pasta, garlic bread & pudding
Thursday 4/23: Grilled cheese sandwich, tomato soup & cake (sign up by 4/16)
Tuesday 4/28: Meatball Panini, salad & fruit
Friday Shopping Schedule: Please call 48 hours in advance to schedule your ride. Grocery shopping pick up starts at 9:30.
Hannaford: 4/24
Walmart: 4/3 & 4/24
Price Chopper: 4/10

APRIL EVENTS:
WELLNESS CLINIC DATES: Monday April 6th & Tuesday April 28th. Clinic is open from 10 am to 12 pm.
Thursday 4/2 @ 11:30: FREE craft day, we will be making sticker art photos. Refreshments will be served. Sign up by 3/31.
Thursday 4/9 @ 12:00: Come and meet the famous Jesse "The Machine" Green. You may have seen his show on National Geographic. American Chainsaw. Jesse will be here talking about his chainsaw carvings, and the journey this has taken him on. Chicken salad sandwich, pasta salad & cupcakes. Lunch is \$4.00 per person. Sign up by 4/3.
Thursday 4/15 @ 1:00:

Woodcarving class with Steve Berard. This is a two hour class and the cost for the class is \$5.00. All supplies will be provided for you to make a wooden candle. Refreshments will be served. Sign up by 4/10.
Thursday 4/16 @ 12:00: Douglas Fire Department will be hear talking about, cooking safety, home escape, & dressing for the season. Swedish meatballs with egg noodles, carrots & brownie sundae. Lunch is \$4.00 per person. Sign up by 4/9.
Wednesday 4/22 @ 12:00: Free craft day, we will be making mosaic picture frames. All the supplies you need for your frame are included in the kit that will be provided for you. Refreshments will be served. Sign up by 4/15.
Thursday 4/23 @ 12:00: Home Modification Occupational Therapy Alliance is here to talk about the changes that may need to be done to keep you safely in your home. Come in and learn about the grant money available to help with these changes and if you qualify for assistance. Grilled cheese, tomato soup & cake, lunch is \$4.00 per person. Sign up by 4/16.
Tuesday 4/28, 9:30 to 10:30: Coffee Hour with the town administrator. Come in and meet the town administrator, if you have not already. Hear what Douglas is doing for the senior community, as well voice your opinion and ask questions. Sign up 4/24.
Thursday 4/29 @ 1:00: Wood carving class with Steve Berard.

This is a two hour class and the cost is \$5.00 per person. All supplies will be supplied for you. Refreshments will be served. Sign up by 4/24.
Thursday 4/30 @ 12:00: Rainforest Reptiles will be here with special guest, Goose. Meet the monitor lizard that caught everyone's attention before he was rescued. We will learn about Goose, and many other reptiles that this organization has rescued and now housed. Refreshments will be served. Sign up by 4/24.

Check our website for events that may not be listed here
<https://www.douglas-ma.gov/202/AdultSocial-Center-Senior-Center>

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March 28th, Saturday 9am-3pm

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Here Today Adopted Tomorrow hosting "Spay"ghetti Supper

PALMER — Here Today Adopted Tomorrow (HTAT) invites all animal lovers to our annual "Spay"ghetti Supper fundraiser at the St. Thomas Parish Center in Palmer on Saturday, March 28.
Enjoy a delicious chef-prepared meal while helping the very cats in our community! Whether you're a true party animal or simply want to make a difference, it's a great way to support a good cause with friends and family. Plus, enjoy raffles, prizes, and plenty of fun throughout the evening!

Each year, HTAT sees more cats pawing at its doors for help. As prices rise, everyone feels the strain—but many people don't realize that rising costs affect pets, too. It's not just veterinary care that has exploded; as food and housing prices rise, many loving pet owners find themselves struggling to keep up. When life becomes overwhelming, cats can be the ones caught in the middle.
That's where HTAT steps in. Events like the "Spay"ghetti Supper make our support possible, helping us provide food, shelter, and care for cats who might otherwise fall through the cracks.

Notre Dame Health Care announces new hires

WORCESTER — Notre Dame Health Care is pleased to announce the promotion of Rafael Jalles as Director of our newly launched Community Care service line offering non-medical in-home assistance. Jalles was most recently the staffing supervisor for our Health Center (Notre Dame Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center) and played a collaborative role in the development of Community Care, a new program offering an array of private-pay, in-home services to patients in need throughout the community. He has years of direct care, administrative and operations experience in health care including service to seniors, as well as home care services.

HTAT Executive Director Rachael Max says the event is a chance for the community to come together while making a real difference. "Spay"ghetti Supper is one of our most popular events of the year," said Max. "It's always a fun night, but it also plays an important role in helping us continue our work with cats who need a little extra care and attention."

Amy Martin, LSW, was recently hired as Director of Admissions and Marketing for our Health Center (Notre Dame Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center). She has nearly 20 years of experience in comparable roles in the local community. In this position, she will bring her strong case management experience, understanding of the clinical assessment process and strong interpersonal skills to build strong, lasting relationships with our residents and their families. In addition, she will serve as a key stakeholder in maintaining and strengthening community partnerships with hospitals, community case management teams, social workers, and community agencies.
Finally, we welcome Tara Joslin-Murphy, RN as Nurse Unit Manager for our Amiens Village/West Unit at our Health Center (Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center). Tara brings several years of health-care experience including similar positions with other local organizations. In this role, she will oversee nursing care and functions within the care unit and will bring her administrative, supervisory, and direct care experience to benefit the residents in our Health Center.

The "Spay"ghetti Supper takes place at the St. Thomas Parish Center in Palmer on Saturday, March 28, 2026, from 5:00-6:30 PM. Advance tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for seniors and kids under 12, while limited door tickets will be available at \$20 for adults and \$15 for seniors and kids. To purchase tickets, visit www.heretoday-sanctuary.org or call 413-324-8224.
If you are local and need assistance feeding or car-

ing for your pet, HTAT can help. Local cat owners can spay or neuter their cats for \$80 or less, and strays and ferals can be fixed for free! Visit www.heretoday-sanctuary.org to learn more about our community assistance programs.

About Here Today Adopted Tomorrow Animal Sanctuary

Here Today Adopted Tomorrow (HTAT) was founded by mother-daughter team Barbara Horn and Rachael Max. HTAT is a volunteer driven group focused on helping cats and the people who love them in our community. In 2012 we opened our no kill, cageless cat adoption center for adult cats and kittens in Brimfield, MA. It is deeply important to us that every resident's stay at HTAT is comfortable and healthy, making for well-adjusted, happy animals. Shortly after opening, we realized there were more homeless cats than we could handle by adoption alone. We believe that pets are cherished members of the family and that every cat deserves care, respect, and the chance to thrive, no matter their circumstances. We have programs to help special needs cats flourish and get adopted, as well as community assistance programs to help pet owners keep their pets, such as our Pet Food Pantry, low-cost spay-neuter program, and free cat behavior program. Each year, HTAT helps over 1,500 animals and their families. For more information, visit heretoday-sanctuary.org.

Visit Here Today Adopted Tomorrow on Facebook at facebook.com/heretoday-sanctuary, and follow us on Instagram at [@heretodayadoptedtomorrow](https://instagram.com/heretodayadoptedtomorrow).

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Hi, I'm Chester — equal parts sweet, silly, and snuggly. I'm the kind of guy who will happily toss a toy around one minute and then roll over for belly rubs the next. I love my people deeply and bond closely with "my" humans. Once you're in my circle, you're in for life.
I'm happiest when I'm playing, relaxing near you, or soaking up affection. I have a big heart, a playful streak, and a soft side that just wants to feel safe and loved. I'm not a cat guy but I've been around other dogs at the rescue and have done fine. I didn't have much socialization before, so when dogs rush up to me, I can feel a little overwhelmed. Because of that, I'd feel most confident being your one-and-only pup while I continue building skills and confidence at my own pace.

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EDITOR

EDITORIAL

A Manchaug landmark changes hands, but not its place in the community

After 75 years under the same family name, Bek's Fuels on Main Street in Manchaug has entered a new chapter. Ownership transferred March 10 from Steve Bek, Jr. to Tony Elias of Sam's Gas, closing one era and opening another in a building that has quietly anchored village life for generations.

Changes like this can feel larger than they appear on paper. A gas station sale might sound like a routine business transaction. In a place like Manchaug, it rarely is.

Bek's Fuels was never only a place to fill a tank. It was part of the daily rhythm of the village. It was a stop on the way to work, a familiar sign of continuity, a place where residents exchanged news and checked in with neighbors. For decades, it provided jobs for local residents and dependable service to drivers across the Blackstone Valley.

That kind of presence cannot be measured only in gallons sold.

The story of the Bek family's connection to the station reflects something older and deeper than business success. Stephen Bek, Sr., a Navy veteran and skilled welder, built the operation into a trusted regional service hub. After his death in 1977, his son stepped in during his final year of college and carried the responsibility forward for nearly half a century.

Many small towns still depend on people willing to do exactly that. Plans change. Careers take unexpected turns. Responsibility arrives earlier than expected. And someone steps forward anyway.

It is worth pausing to recognize what that kind of stewardship means.

For 50 years, Steve Bek, Jr. helped maintain a service tradition that stretches back more than a century at the site. Even earlier owners, including Joseph Conley in the 1920s, played roles in shaping the property into a working cornerstone of Manchaug's commercial life.

Small places remember these things, even if they are not always written down.

Equally important is what comes next. The transfer to Sam's Gas keeps the station operating as a full service fueling location, with expanded hours and continued repair services from local automotive professionals.

That continuity matters.

Across Massachusetts and throughout New England, independent service stations have steadily disappeared. In many communities, they have been replaced by distant chains or left vacant altogether. When a locally known business changes hands but remains active, staffed, and rooted in the same location, it represents something closer to renewal than loss.

The fact that Sam's Gas itself began as a family enterprise adds another layer of reassurance. Businesses built by immigrants, tradespeople, and first generation entrepreneurs have always shaped the economic backbone of towns like Sutton and its villages. Their stories echo the same determination that sustained Bek's for decades.

Transitions are never simple. They bring nostalgia along with uncertainty. Yet they also create opportunities for younger owners to continue traditions rather than replace them.

That is what appears to be happening here.

Residents often talk about supporting local businesses as an abstract goal. Moments like this are when that idea becomes real. Choosing where to fuel up, where to bring a vehicle for repair, and where to spend a few minutes talking with a neighbor can help determine whether a village keeps its working centers alive.

Manchaug has been fortunate to have a full service station on Main Street for more than a century. With this change in ownership, it still does.

That is something worth noticing. And something worth supporting.

OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Blackstone Valley and beyond

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The dumbing down of America

To the Editor:

Did you watch the USA men's hockey team win the Gold at the Olympics in Italy? And watch them sing, full-throated, all the words of the National Anthem?

They had not won since 1980 and the Miracle on Ice. Forty-six years.

This time, we beat Canada at their own game. The women's team also scored over Canada to take the gold, and also sang all the words of our National anthem. "Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's early light..."

The U.S.A. hockey team players got there by hard work, relentless determination, and competing against their excellent peers. Some were more excellent than others.

Did you watch the figure skaters sing? Or not sing? A few knew the words. Others barely moved their lips. I wondered, were they politically motivated? Or did they simply not know the words? On purpose or dumb?

With the successful dumbing down of America by our "equity over equality" education system, everyone does poorly. Thank you, Communist Teachers' Unions. They would have us believe that no one can succeed. Equity.

In the new improved American education system, American History is not taught. It is questioned. The new system employed in schools is called "DBQ". Document Based Questioning. Students are handed a document such as the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution. Without any historical context or reading books on American history, the teachers ask questions, such as the following:

Is the jury system outdated? Is the Electoral College no longer relevant?

You see where this is headed. How can anyone, even a genius, explain the Declaration or the reason for the Electoral College or the jury system, without having studied American history? Impossible.

DBQ was designed in Illinois by people like Boston Mayor Michelle Woo [originally from Illinois when she ran Liz Warren's senate campaign]. When I asked our school system for a copy of the American history book used in high school, I was told there is none. Well, how do students learn American history? "The teacher prepares materials." The administration promised me a sample, but so far, nothing. One can only guess at what the teacher considers American History. Excerpts from the People's [Communist] History of America by the notorious Communist, Howard Zinn? Excerpts from Bernie Sanders' book: "How to engage in Activism to destroy Western Civilization"? The last book is fictional, by me.

When I asked the DBQ center if DBQ was used in math class, I got no answer. She must have suspected where my questions were leading. You cannot teach math by asking

questions such as: is Algebra out-dated? Shall we ban the co-efficient? Does 2 plus 2 really equal 4? Is that equation even relevant any more?

According to national data, only 22 percent of eighth graders are proficient in civics and American history. My guess is that those children attend home school or private Christian schools, the only places in which they teach American history

Many school children in America have no clue what our three branches of government are. Fewer students can explain the Bill of Rights.

Matka Boza! [Holy Mother of God] — as my Grandma used to say.

Did you know that only 42 percent of third graders in Massachusetts "met reading expectations" in 2025? Teachers demand a raise! Did you know the average teacher in our state makes \$92,300 a year, one of the highest in the U.S.?

Recently, the "science of reading" program has spread across the nation with a focus on old fashioned things: phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension. Even our Governor has proposed "science of reading" programs. Who is opposed? Of course, it's the teacher unions. They oppose "evidence based instruction."

In the olden days, we had reading groups: A, B, and C. Then, the Blue birds, the Cardinals, and Sparrows. Now, total inclusion has eliminated separate reading groups. Total inclusion means all work to the slowest pace. Equity at work.

Inclusion means that dysfunctional [I do not know the new "woke" word for this condition] children start the day in the highest functioning classroom, disrupting capable students. This maintains the fantasy of inclusion. The first few hours of the day are ruined for functional students. As the day wears on, teachers slowly "re-assign" dysfunctional students to less challenging classrooms until they reach the "Resource room." Talk to teachers who work in the "resource room." These kids, sadly, are capable of barely functioning or learning. Learning is a fantasy.

Inclusion is a Leftist fantasy. It is the Illusion of Inclusion. It is Equity.

In the interest of Equity, we are becoming a nation of dummies. Meanwhile, in Communist China, students study Science, technology, engineering, and math.

We are in the era of teacher activism, not academics. It is the warm pee bath of Equity. New York City spends \$40 billion on "educashion". No one can read.

How much Progressivism, Socialism, and the warm pee bath of Communism can we as a nation take? Look over the cliff down into the pit and see.

BEV GUDANOWSKI
UXBRIDGE

Are you tired of "Winning!" yet?

To the Editor:

Recently, I was thunderstruck by how different America is today, from what it was a little over a year ago, under Joe Biden. Without realizing it, I'd almost become inured to the daily chaos, the corruption, the cruelty, and the incompetence of our government under Trump. It has furtively become the new 'normal.' I guess it's all that 'winning' we were promised. Now I realize that we probably should have asked for Trump's definition of 'winning'.

The day-one promises — ending the Russia/Ukraine war, and lowering food costs — have long gone by the boards. Inflation is up, the price of gas is through the roof, the stock market has collapsed, we lost 92,000 jobs in February, raising the unemployment rate to 4.4 percent, and as of March, the gross national debt has increased by approximately \$2.78 trillion since President Donald Trump took office in January, 2025. During this same period, Trump's personal fortune has grown between \$1.4 and \$3 billion. As Bev would say — "That's billions with a B!" (Remember the endless Republican investigations into the false - the perpetrators of which went to jail for perjury - allegation that Joe Biden had profited \$35,000 from his son's business connections? Apparently, grift is okay as long as Trump does it out in the open.)

Our Nobel Peace Prize hopeful has also attacked our allies, Greenland, Venezuela, and started a war with Iran. He refuses to help Ukraine defend itself against Russia, and his bestie Putin. The nation is as divided as it was pre-Civil War, and the level of corruption by this administration is unprecedented in the annals of American history. Trump "is willing" to sacrifice American soldiers, won't admit that he attacked Iran because Netanyahu whispered sweet inducements in his ear, and JD says that gas prices are "only temporary", without defining

'temporary'. Hmm...where have I seen this before? We have new outbreaks of polio and measles — both eradicated before RFK Jr. convinced the uninformed to stop giving their children preventative vaccines. Ol' heroin-addict, Brain-Worm Jr. also had advice for people struggling with food costs — "... instead of the more expensive cuts of meat, eat liver." Thanks, pal.

We just had two extremist attacks on our homeland, and can expect more, because Trump installed a 22-year-old with zero experience as head of the DHS Counterterrorism Office. Trump also made Putin Fan Club President, Tulsi Gabbard, the Director of National Intelligence. You can't make this stuff up.

The rest of the free world hates us. They just refused to assist Trump in his illegal attack on Iran, which isn't surprising since Trump bludgeoned them, unprovoked, with his also-illegal tariffs. Which, coincidentally, raised our prices on everything else. This is what happens when you elect, as president, a phony TV reality star, failed businessman, sexual abusing, pathological lying imbecile. Not that any of this would be possible without the complicit acquiescence of the Republican-controlled Congress. These cowards were obviously elected simply to protect their own jobs at the expense of their morality, integrity and conscience. And at the cost of democracy and the well-being of we-the-people.

One final thought — if Trump isn't a pedophile, why wouldn't the Epstein files be released in full, un-redacted form by now? Why would Pam Bondi continue to obfuscate, deny and delay, disregarding a judge's order? What will the next 'distraction' look like - Armageddon?

Are you tired of "Winning!" yet?

RICK BEVILACQUA
WHITINSVILLE

The bulletin board by the door

Just inside the entrance of our town library, there's a bulletin board that most people walk past without really noticing.

I try not to be one of them.

It's not much to look at. A sheet of cork. A scattering of pushpins. A collection of flyers printed on everything from bright neon paper to the back side of what used to be someone's grocery list. But if you stand there long enough and read what's posted, you begin to understand something about the place you live that you might otherwise miss.

I stopped in last week to return a book and found myself lingering there longer than expected.

There was a notice for a spaghetti supper. A handwritten card offering piano lessons. A flyer for a church rummage sale with the date circled three different times in blue marker, as if to make sure nobody over-

looked it. Someone had pinned up a careful request for help finding a lost cat. Another note announced a fundraiser for a neighbor going through a difficult stretch.

None of these things would make big headlines. But together they told a story.

It struck me that the bulletin board might be the most honest page in town.

Nobody is trying to impress anyone there. The paper curls at the corners. The tape never sticks quite right. Some notices are printed neatly at home, others written in block letters with a felt-tip marker. Every one of them represents somebody who decided to reach out instead of keeping quiet.

That still means something.

Years ago, before everything moved onto screens, those bulletin boards were how people found out what was happening. If you wanted to know when the pancake breakfast was scheduled, or who was collecting coats for winter, or whether someone was offering snow shoveling for a few dollars after school, that's where you looked.

I suppose today most of that information can be found online. But I've noticed that the bulletin board still fills up anyway.

I don't think that's an accident.

There's something reassuring about seeing those little pieces of paper pinned up in a real place where real people walk past them. It reminds you that the town is still paying attention to itself. It reminds you that neighbors are still asking for help and still offering it.

One flyer announced a community clean-up day along a stretch of roadside I drive past all the time. I had no idea it was happening. Another advertised a local concert I might otherwise have missed entirely. A third simply said "Volunteers Needed," followed by a phone number and a hopeful-looking smiley face drawn in pen.

Someone clearly believed someone else would call.

What I admire most about that board is how ordinary it is. Nobody gets paid to maintain it. Nobody organizes the colors or straightens the corners. It grows and changes week by week, quietly reflecting whatever the town happens to need at the moment.

In a way, it feels like a conversation that never quite ends.

Sometimes I think those boards are small acts of trust. A person puts something up there believing that someone else will read it and care. That's not a grand gesture. It's not dramatic. But it says a lot about the kind of place we live.

We still expect each other to notice.

On my way out of the library, I stepped back and looked at the board again before heading through the door. I didn't take down any phone numbers. I didn't sign up for anything that day. But I left with the quiet feeling that the town was doing what it has always done best, which is keeping track of its people in simple, steady ways that don't require much explanation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Biden's Frankensteins Volvos

To the Editor:

Oh, geeze. Here we go again with those ridiculously stupid Biden administration Volvo knockoffs that have haunted our region's part of southern New England like the infamous plague they always were.

Are there any real Volvos left here in the Blackstone valley that some fool or genius didn't somehow Frankensteins back together with used parts from some seemingly minor set of out-of-state collisions?

We all do know, do we not, about the Biden administration's notoriously diabolical plans that mandated that "pandemic" hybrids and EV's, such as those produced by Toyota and Volvo, had to have interchangeable parts... right?

You know... the kinds of allegedly superficial body parts and universal-fit bumper connections that could keep those voltage hungry, incompetent designed EV dogs on the road ad infinitum.

Have you heard the "latest" from organizations such as AARP about the duplicate VIN number problem that some people are winding up stuck with... after their cars get into some fender bender or worse?

Any guess as to what administration made that legally and illegally possible at the same time?

Here's the news flash in terms of maintenance for pretty much any allegedly all-electric Volvo that may even remotely trace any of its parts and their ancestry to the years 2022 and 2023 give or take a year or so.

Change the windshield washer fluid pronto, every last drop. Replacing it all, and possibly more, with the required gallons. That's right gallons of the tried and true Volvo brand for those model years. The "Genuine" Volvo washer fluid that is ph certified to remain at the near neutral acidity standard, i.e. within the 6 to 8 ph range.

Why, so your typically ignorant automotive expert of the leftist political persuasion might ask of us all?

Because those specific years, use a high quality ethanol or ethanol-like product to chill their batteries through what amounts to an ethanol "burn" off effect protocol. And not just during your typical rollover, dire emergency protocols as some foolish experts might suggest. Those cars were designed to use ethanol as a coolant on an almost constant basis so that they could then dump their pent-up latent heat reserves into the atmosphere.

The typical harebrained leftist plot to increase global warming at the local level through the misuse and abuse of science. That, by the sheerest coincidence, just happens to fit within the Democratic Party's climate change agenda. Go figure?

Meanwhile, to any of the neighbors where such a "Volvo" might be charging at night. Doing so with the house lights brightly burning within their owner's false sense of a Corbomite-related afterglow.

Try documenting how remarkably inconsistent or consistent such visual markers can be in terms of their ebb and flow. Noting that perhaps, just perhaps, the vagaries of the electric grid might be manifesting themselves quite magically across more than one residence in the vicinity of that slow-charging, dirty dog of an EV.

STEPHEN GAMBONE
NORTHBRIDGE



TRINITY CATHOLIC ACADEMY CHAMPIONS!

It was an exciting weekend for Trinity Catholic Academy, as the Bobcats competed in the I-395 Basketball League Tournament—and came home as champions! Both the JV Girls and JV Boys basketball teams capped off incredible seasons by earning the top seeds in the tournament. After two intense and hard-fought games, both teams battled their way to capture the Championship titles. The excitement didn't stop on the court. Trinity's JV and Varsity Cheer teams also competed and delivered outstanding performances, bringing home first place for JV and second place for Varsity. Trinity Catholic Academy is incredibly proud of all of our athletes for their dedication, teamwork, and outstanding sportsmanship throughout the season. Way to go, Bobcats!

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Uxbridge High School announces 2026 Athletic Hall of Fame inductees

UXBRIDGE — The Uxbridge High School Athletic Hall of Fame will introduce its Class of 2026 in a ceremony scheduled for Nov. 21. This year's class features nine stand-out student-athletes, two coaches and one contributor. While connecting the storied athletic past of UHS to its present, the Hall of Fame strives to recognize and honor deserving athletes, coaches, teams, and contributors for their impact and accomplishments.

The ninth Induction will take place at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 21 at Doubletree Hotel, located at 11 Beaver St. in Milford. More information regarding ticket prices will be forthcoming. Inquiries regarding the event can be directed via email to uhshall-offame@uxbridge.k12.ma.us, or to the Secretary of the Committee, Chuck Paszkewicz, at cpuhs@uxbridge.k12.ma.us.

This year's induction class includes:

Kyle Allaire, Class of 2008

As a three sport captain during his playing days at UHS, Kyle Allaire is considered one of the most outstanding clutch performers as an athlete and school leader for the Spartans. A three-year starter at shortstop, the baseball team captain helped lead Coach Bob McLaughlin's nine to a record of 38-27. On the basketball court, the outstanding point guard led his team to multiple SWCL titles, Clark Tourney appearances and District Tournament wins over his career. He was considered by many as a deadly free throw shooter recording 15 consecutive free throws in a game (ranks 1st all time) against Southbridge in 2008. He also ranks 2nd all time with 137 free throws made in a single season from the charity stripe. Kyle falls just outside the top ten in school records averaging 17 points per game during his senior campaign as he once netted 30 points in a win over Southbridge. As the number 1 player on the golf team, Allaire was a mainstay for Coach Kevin Dunlevy's young squad. Allaire played collegiate baseball at RIC, being inducted into their Hall of Fame in 2018 as the all time leader in hits and career defensive assists.

Sheila Bernard, Coach
Bernard is the first female coach to be inducted into the UHS Athletic Hall of Fame. During her coaching tenure at UHS, Coach Bernard's Girls Field Hockey teams compiled a record of 186-75-36 from 1999-2013. She was named the Division 2 Coach of the Year both in 1999 and again in 2007. Bernard is pres-

ently the winningest girls field hockey coach at UHS dating back to 1963. Her teams captured 8 Southern Worcester County League titles and 1 District Championship (1999 season). Over the course of her 15 year stretch as the Spartan Head Coach, her teams had winning records in 13 of those seasons with a winning percentage of .626. One of the most memorable seasons was her first year as the 1999 Spartans claimed the District Championship with a 15-4-4 record after defeating number one seed Quaboag 2-1 in overtime for the Central sectional title and advancing to the State Div 2 Final Four. The two time Coach of the Year is an Uxbridge High School Alumnus Class of 1990 and is employed at her alma mater as Head of the English Department for over 30 years. The 2022 Educator of the Year at UHS, Bernard is also Student Council Advisor leading her students to earn Gold Medal Recognition at both State and National levels.

Walter Berkowicz, Coach

Berkowicz has amassed over 467 career coaching wins spanning 25 years at Uxbridge High, leading the Spartans Boys and Girls Cross Country teams, Boys and Girls Winter Indoor Track and Field teams and the Boys and Girls Spring Outdoor Track and Field teams. An accomplished runner in his own right, Coach Berkowicz guided several championship squads at UHS, including the 2022 Boys Cross Country Division 3 District Title team, the 2009-2010 Girls Indoor T&F State relay champions and the 2005 Girls Outdoor T&F District Relay and District Class Meet Champions as well as 2017 District Relay Champions. His three season squads captured an astounding cumulative 38 SWCL titles. During his more than 20 years at the helm of the Boys Cross Country squad, his harriers were victorious in 47 consecutive dual meets from 2017-2021. Berkowicz, the 2017 Coach of the Year as named by the Outdoor T&F Mass State Track Coaches Assoc (MSTCA), retired from teaching physical education at UHS in 2022.

Darcie (Beahn) Gauthier, Class of 1994

A force to be reckoned with during her four-year varsity career, Darcie (Beahn) Gauthier amassed 11 varsity letters playing field hockey, cross country, basketball and softball during her illustrious playing days at Uxbridge High. Basketball was her primary sport, having achieved 959 points (ranks fifth all time in UHS record book) as a point guard for Coach Dean Tourangeau. The five foot seven captain of the squad for two years, she

was named a SWCL All Star 4 consecutive years. Her patent 15 foot jump shot off a pick was a factor in the Spartan offensive scheme averaging 18.4 points per game (331 total points in 18 games) during her 1993-94 senior season (ranks fourth all time for points per game average for a season). She also was an adept passer, averaging six assists per game. In softball, the talented centerfielder was the lead off batter for Coach Joe Mahoney's squad as she captained her senior year. She was an integral cog in the Division 3 championship title in 1992 and 1993. Darcie also participated in field hockey for three seasons and ran cross country her senior campaign with an average race time of 19:92. Most admired by teammates for her good sportsmanship and comradery, the talented athlete was an integral part of her teams at Uxbridge High.

Mark DeVries, Class of 2013

Mark DeVries is the last boy's basketball player to attain the 1,000 point scoring milestone having amassed 1,119 career points. He ranks fourth all time in boys scoring at UHS. A versatile sharp shooting guard, he is one of three 1,000 point scorers for Coach Mark Donahue's basketball team spanning three consecutive years. As a sophomore and junior, DeVries helped his Spartans to two straight Clark tournament Small School Championships (capping five titles since 1993). He is tied for third all time in the UHS record books with 13 free throws made in a single game. Not an opposing player would want to foul, Mark once made 27 free throws in a row over the course of a season. DeVries also lettered two years in boys' tennis as he partnered with Brad Couture at 1st doubles for Coach Justin Pominville's netters. He won the SWCL boys double Tournament with Couture in 2013. His UHS tennis squads competed in two successive years of post season play as they captured two straight SWCL boys tennis crowns. During the fall season, DeVries captained the Spartan golf team as he was awarded the 2013 Coach's Award for both Golf and Basketball. In addition, Mark was named the 2013 Spartan of the Year.

Ernest Esposito, Contributor

Esposito is inducted into the 2026 Hall of Fame as its first contributor to be named. The category recognizes pride and dedication to UHS and community through their commitment, sacrifice and dedication to the UHS Athletic program. Esposito certainly defines that as a staunch supporter from 1975 to 2014. Winter basketball games at UHS gymnasium saw Ernie as a fixture at the scorer's table manning the game clock\ scoreboard for varsity and sub varsity games. As a school

committee member and its chairman from 2003-2014, Ernie continued his volunteer work as he recognized the importance of the role of the student athlete along with their desire and effort to balance excellence both in the classroom and on the playing field. He was instrumental in resolving the plaguing space problems of the early 2000's in Uxbridge by supporting the construction of the new high school and playing fields located at 300 Quaker Highway which opened in 2012. Esposito also served as a volunteer on the Uxbridge Recreation Committee for many years as he always preached how important it was to listen to both sides.

Corey Gomes, Class of 2012

Corey Gomes is the ninth basketball player to achieve the 1,000 point milestone at UHS having amassed 1,111 career points. He is ranked fifth all time in boys scoring as he surpassed the 1,000 point milestone in a home victory against Oxford in January 2012. A dominant inside scorer with a keen presence to kick out the ball to wide open guards on the perimeter when he was doubled teamed was a key trademark to Coach Mark Donahue's success during the early part of the 2010 decade. The 6' 5" senior captain helped the Spartans win the 2012 Clark Tournament Small Schools Championship, marking his team's second straight title. Uxbridge defeated Quaboag in the finals both years with Gomes leading the way during his junior and senior seasons. Corey lettered in football during the fall season and Outdoor Track and Field in the spring. As a highly regarded athlete in field events, Gomes personal bests were 36 feet, one inch in the triple jump and 5'8" in the high jump. Corey went on to play collegiately at Clark University in Worcester from 2013-2106 as he was named to the NEWMAC Academic All Conference team for three consecutive years.

Tom Hauge, Class of 1963

Arguably one of the most talented and feared football players ever to play at UHS in its 125 plus year football history, Hauge holds the school record as well as Central MA for scoring 50 points in a game against Grafton on November 12, 1962. He also set marks for scoring 7 touchdowns (1st all time UHS record book) in a single game and 382 combined yards gained in a single game (tied for 1st all time) during the 1962 season. Even more fascinating is that his 18 touchdowns and 124 points scored during the 1962 season was accomplished over the course of an eight-game season. The six-foot-one-inch, 195 pound Hauge was a two way standout football player as the hard running quarterback not only directed the Uxbridge Wing T offense but was

also a tough linebacker on the defensive side of the ball. Longtime UHS coach and historian Tony Donatelli labeled Hauge as a one-man wrecking crew who was unstoppable. The gifted three sport athlete also competed in basketball as a fierce rebounder and a "go to" power forward for scoring points offensively. On the baseball diamond, Tom was a strong armed defensive catcher who could hit with power at the plate. Tom passed away at the age of 47 in December 1992.

Amanda (Hicks) O'Brien, Class of 2003

Considered by many as the most prolific female runner in UHS cross country history, Amanda O'Brien (Hicks) led Coach Mark Donahue's harriers to a 47-1 team record over her four year cross country career. She was the number one runner on four consecutive SWCL championship squads and the Individual League Champion all 4 years as well. She was herald as a course record setter having set three different course records as a freshman. In addition, Amanda qualified for the Junior Olympics in South Carolina as a 15 year old freshman. She was the recipient of the Coaches Award in Cross Country all four years at UHS. Amanda further lettered and led her Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field teams to a 57-1 record under Coach Walter Berkowicz. She was a two time captain and two time state championship qualifier participating in long distance events. Amanda was the 2003 Class President for her graduating class and a member of the National Honor Society. She continued her education at Syracuse University where she competed in cross country and track and was a qualifier for 4 years in The Big East Championships and NCAA Regionals.

Shawn Hudon, Class of 1996

Hudon was a three sport standout in football, basketball and baseball at UHS as he represents the third member of his graduating class of 1996 in the UHS Hall of Fame. A member of the undefeated 1992 Super Bowl Championship team, Shawn also was member of the 1994 state finalist baseball team and 1992-93 state semifinalist basketball team. Hudon captained squads in all three sports during his senior campaign, amassing 11 varsity letters throughout his high school career. He was the 1996 UHS District E Athletic Directors Award recipient as well as the 1996 Spartan of the Year. Hudon was named the starting quarterback for the Spartans his final two seasons on the gridiron under the tutelage of Coach Ernie Richards. As a point guard on the hardwood, the talented playmaker was a key component to legendary Coach Mark Donahue's squad as he averaged 18 points per game his junior season. And on the baseball diamond, Hudon

was the glue that held the infield together as the slick fielding shortstop for Coach John Raymond's nine. At the plate, Hudon batted .357 as a lead off hitter during his senior campaign.

Walter Knapik, Class of 1959

A three sport athlete at UHS during the late 1950's, Knapik demonstrated extraordinary commitment to varsity sports and as an example of perseverance and determination. As a member of the varsity football team, Walter was a force on the gridiron. In his last high school game in 1958, Knapik ran for 189 yards against North Providence in Uxbridge's first Thanksgiving Dave game since 1931. On the basketball hardwood, Knapik played consistently as a starter for three years as he was named captain his senior year demonstrating team leadership. When it came to baseball, that's where "Snoopy" found his greatest passion. The left handed first baseman excelled on defense, but more striking was his prowess at the plate. He averaged .512 batting for the 1958 season and collected 22 hits in 43 at bats, holding the fourth highest batting average in Uxbridge baseball history. Upon his graduation in 1959, Knapik's individual batting average record was number one in the UHS record books, a very impressive achievement that has been attained by only three players since that mark some 67 years ago. His junior campaign saw the Spartans win the SWCL Championship with an 11-2 record. Sadly, Walter passed away on September 17, 2022, at the age of 82.

A four year starter for the UHS girls' basketball team, Katherine was a force inside the paint. The 6' 1" talented center led Coach Dean Tourangeau's squad with size and skill. Kate, as she is affectionately known by close family, was sidelined her senior year with a broken bone in her foot having missed 10 games prohibiting her from reaching the 1,000 point milestone. Her varsity basketball career statistics are impressive, having recorded 795 career points over 64 games with a 12.4 average points per game (ranking in the top 5 of the UHS record book). She was a menace off the boards collecting 688 rebounds (252 of those were offensive rebounds). McCloskey-Esteves managed to collect 77 assists and 109 blocked shots during her UHS playing days. Katherine also lettered in soccer for four years and softball for three years. She went on to play collegiate basketball at Trinity College where she attained the 1,000 point milestone being named 1st team NESCAC All Star and achieving All New England recognition.

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.

ALL WE KNOW IS LOCAL ~ StonebridgePress.com



Ella Rogozenski named to Dean's List at Georgia Tech

ATLANTA, Ga. — Ella Rogozenski of Northbridge made the Dean's List for the Fall 2025 semester at the Georgia Institute of Technology. This designation is awarded to undergraduate students who have earned a 3.0 or higher academic average for the semester.

Read about other accomplished scholars on Gold Letters: A Spotlight on Student Achievement and learn about Georgia Tech's goal to attract, retain, and inspire more students by visiting Transforming Tomorrow: The Campaign for Georgia Tech.

The Georgia Institute of Technology, or Georgia Tech, is one of the top public research universities in the U.S., developing leaders who advance technology and improve the human condition.

The Institute offers business, computing, design, engineering, liberal arts, and sciences degrees, as well as professional development and K-12 programs for fostering success at every stage of life. Its more than 56,000 undergraduate and graduate students represent 54 U.S. states and territories and more than 146 countries. They study at the main campus in Atlanta, at instructional sites around the world, and through distance and online learning.

As a leading technological university, Georgia Tech is an engine of economic development for Georgia, the Southeast, and the nation, conducting more than \$1 billion in research annually for government, industry, and society.

For more information, visit gatech.edu.



Courtesy

Recently, Thanks To Yanks, a local charity, sponsored a free children's magic show. Made possible by a generous donation from Milford Federal. Military families and families of first responders gathered at the Italian Veterans Post for an afternoon of free entertainment with Magician Tommy James, free pizza was provided. Thanks To Yanks wants to thank those who keep us safe and the families that support them. Please "like" Thanks To Yanks on Facebook.

Douglas Democrats to caucus Saturday

DOUGLAS — The Douglas Democrats will hold a caucus on Saturday, March 28 at 10 a.m. at the Douglas Municipal Center to nominate candidates for the May 12 election.

We seek candidates for the following offices: Board of Selectmen (1), Assessor (2), School Committee (1), Agent Moses Wallis Devise (1), Trustee Public Library (1), Cemetery Commission (1) Water/Sewer Commissioner (1), Recreation Commission (2), Planning Board (10) and Housing Authority.

All interested candidates are welcome to appear before the committee on Saturday, or for more information, please call Lisa Mosczyński, Chair, at 508-341-4876.

New England Country Music Club to hold dance April 12

UXBRIDGE — The New England Country Music Club will hold a dance with live, classic country music on Sunday, April 12.

with "The Rhode Island Rednecks" and on April 26 with "Angela West & Showdown" at the Uxbridge Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Doors open at 12:30 p.m., music 1-5 p.m. Admission charge, cash bar, snacks are allowed.

Holy Trinity announces honor roll

SOUTHBRIDGE — Holy Trinity Catholic Academy has released its honor roll for the second trimester of the 2025-2026 school year.

Grade 4
Honors: John Nadeau, Joseph Nellenback, Owen Quigley, Vincent VLK
High Honors: Lucius Batih, Victoria LaBonte, Elizabeth Nellenback

Grade 5
Honors: Vera Abud Fuentes, Jaime Cruz, Mason Gonzalez, Jameson Howard-Donlin, Emma LaBarge, Matthew Olson
High Honors: Charlotte Heckendorf, Connor Kreidemaker, Elinor Matzelle

Grade 6

Honors: Emiliana Boswell, Karieliz Colon-Martinez, Juliana Dintino, Theodore Frazier, Elizabeth Gordon, Sachi Swadia, Jaydin Wales
High Honors: Tesslynn Cahill, Cameron Clifford, Alerix Gonzalez, Kaleigh Haglund, Carson Lazo, Jake Simanski, Benjamin Zuziak

Grade 7
Honors: Jaliany Cruz, Angel Delgado, Ainsley Heckendorf, Evelyn Howard-Donlin, Jayden Zarzycki-Kotarba

Grade 8
Honors: Sophia Gauthier, Celia Ladd, Carilynne Norris, Ayden Rodriguez, Alexio Yacavace
High Honors: Abigail Frazier, Heer Swadia



Courtesy

Women at Plummer Place, Home of the Northbridge Senior Center, enjoyed a very informative discussion on medication management and prescriptions with Karen McCarthy LPN, COTA/L and Education Nurse from Salmon Home Care. McCarthy covered many important things to be aware of, such as understanding prescriptions, keeping track of medications, possible side effects, and the importance of communicating with healthcare providers and pharmacists. It was a great reminder of how helpful it can be to stay organized and informed about the medications we take. It was wonderful to hear everyone's questions, experiences, and helpful tips. For more information on the Northbridge Senior Center or any of its upcoming educational programs, please call (508) 234-2002.

A night of harmony and hope

JAK-L FOUNDATION TO HOST DUELING PIANOS IN AUBURN



Courtesy

The members of the JAK-L Foundation. Front row, from left: David Boucher, Christine Afful, Joy Kochinskas, Devon Renfro, Steve Kochinskas. Second Row, from left: Karen Sisko, Kathy Konkol-Saad, Kim Sterczala, Shirley Shepardson, Kerry Bielicki, Ruth Cahill, Laurie Boucher

AUBURN — Get ready to sing, dance, and make a difference. On Saturday, May 2, the local community will gather at J. Anthony's Italian Grill for a high-energy "Dueling Pianos" event presented by the JAK-L Foundation.

The evening promises a vibrant blend of music and laughter, but the mission behind the melodies is deeply personal. Proceeds from the event will directly support youth mental health and suicide prevention programs within the local community.

Turning pain into purpose
The JAK-L Foundation was established in 2023 by

President Joy Kochinskas. For Kochinskas, a local salon owner and stylist for more than 25 years, the cause is an intimate one. After losing her sister to suicide in 2017, she became a dedicated advocate, participating in the "Out of the Darkness" walks for years before founding the JAK-L Foundation to create a more direct impact on mental health awareness. "I'm hoping to make more of an impact on the mental health society," Kochinskas said regarding the foundation's mission. Alongside an active event committee, the foundation is working to transform how the community dis-

cusses and supports mental wellness.

Event details
The event kicks off at 8:00 PM, though supporters are encouraged to arrive early.

When: Saturday, May 2

Time: 8 – 10 p.m. (doors open at 7:30 p.m.)

Where: J. Anthony's Italian Grill, 917 Southbridge St., Auburn

Admission: \$35 per person (plus fees)
Pro-Tip: Guests who enjoy dinner at J. Anthony's prior to the show will receive priority seating for the performance.

Community support
The success of the

JAK-L Foundation is driven by a dedicated team of volunteers. The event committee includes David Boucher, Christine Afful, Joy Kochinskas, Devon Renfro, and Steve Kochinskas. Supporting the front lines are team members Karen Sisko, Kathy Konkol-Saad, Kim Sterczala, Shirley Shepardson, Kerry Bielicki, Ruth Cahill, and Laurie Boucher.

By attending, guests aren't just buying a ticket to a show—they are helping to "spark meaningful change" for local youth who may be struggling in silence.

OBITUARIES

Jeanette C. Carter, 100



Manchaug - Jeanette C. (O'Brien) Carter, 100, passed away peacefully on March 20, 2026 in Northbridge at Advinia Care. She was the wife of the late Austin L. "Jack" Carter who passed March 18, 2007.

Jeanette was employed for 40 years at the former Schuster Woolen Mills in Douglas and the former Stanley Woolen Mills in Uxbridge.

She was born October 13, 1925 in Milford, the daughter of the late John and Alma (Trudeau) O'Brien and had been a resident of Manchaug most of her life. She was a graduate of Sutton High School, Class of 1943.

Jeanette was a communicant of St. Anne's Parish and member of St. Anne's Sodality in Manchaug. She enjoyed cooking Sunday dinners for her family, gardening, and time spent with her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

She is survived by a son Austin L. "Sonny" Carter Jr. and his wife Aileen "Pat" of Sutton; a daughter Rosemary C. Salem of Sutton; and her grandsons Tim Carter (Emily) and their son Caleb, Michael Salem Jr. (Sarah), and Matthew Salem (Theresa) and their daughter Emily. She was pre-deceased by her siblings Francis O'Brien, John O'Brien, Theresa Orlando, and Virginia Arruda; and her son-in-law Michael Salem Sr.

Visiting hours will be held on Wednesday, March 25 from 5-7pm in the Buma Funeral Home, 101 N. Main St., Uxbridge.

Funeral services will be held on Thursday, March 26 at 11am in St. Mark's Church, 356 Boston Rd., Sutton.

Internment will follow in Prospect Hill Cemetery, Mendon St., Uxbridge.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Friends of Sutton Elders, 19 Hough Rd., Sutton, MA 01590, or online to the Jimmy Fund at www.jimmyfund.org.



Jackman Funeral Home
7 Mechanic St. Douglas, MA
12 Spring St., Whitinsville, MA

Tancress-Jackman Funeral Home
35 Snowling Rd., Uxbridge, MA

(508) 278-2200 - Reaches All Locations

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or by e-mail to
obits@
stonebridgepress.news

LEGALS

In accordance with MGL Ch.71, Sec. 38N, the Douglas School Committee will hold a Public Hearing on the FY2027 Proposed Budget on Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. at the Douglas High School in room C208. All interested parties are invited to attend.
March 27, 2026

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate
and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. WO26P0768EA
INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION NOTICE**

Estate of:

Duwan Q Weibe

Date of Death: January 1, 2026

To All persons interested in the above-captioned estate, by Petition of **Claire F Weibe of East Hartford CT a Will has been admitted to informal probate**

Claire F Weibe of East Hartford CT has been informally appointed as Personal Representative of said estate to serve without surety on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
March 27, 2026

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate
and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. WO26P0692EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR
FORMAL ADJUDICATION**
Estate Of:
Cassandra Phyllis Thompson
Date of Death: 02/20/2025

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Anthony Rivera of Whitinsville MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that:

Anthony Rivera of Whitinsville MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the estate in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to

this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/07/2026.**

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

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

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

WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 06, 2026

Stephanie Fattman,

Register of Probate

March 27, 2026

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate
and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. WO26P0568EA
INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION NOTICE**

Estate of:

William J. Barbosa, Jr.

Date of Death: 12/11/2025

To All persons interested in the above-captioned estate, by Petition of **Karin L Pinheiro of East Hartford CT a Will has been admitted to informal probate**

Karin L Pinheiro of East Hartford CT has been informally appointed as Personal Representative of said estate to serve without surety on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
March 27, 2026

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 403 Pond Street, Uxbridge, MA 01569

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Matthew Webster

to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Salem Five Mortgage Company, LLC, and now held by **Freedom Mortgage Corporation**, said mortgage dated January 17, 2025 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 71547, Page 1, as affected by Scrivener's Affidavit dated February 3, 2026 and recorded in said Registry in Book 73173, Page 255, said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as mortgagee, as nominee for Salem Five Mortgage Company LLC to Freedom Mortgage Corporation by assignment dated September 11, 2025 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 72523, Page 136; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at **Public Auction** on April 20, 2026 at 10:00 AM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

The land with the buildings thereon in the Town of Uxbridge in the southerly portion thereof located on the southerly line of Pond Street and more particularly bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at a point on the South side of Pond Street at a stake on the southerly side of Pond Street at the corner of land now or formerly of Pisaturo and formerly of Josephine Thayer; Thence South 68° 43' 21" East a distance of 110.09 feet to a point at a stake set on the southerly side of Pond Street; Thence South 75° 34' 14" East a distance of 189.91 feet to land now or formerly of Rodney Rondeau et al the last two courses being by and with the southerly side of Pond Street; Thence South 25° 50' 32" West a distance of 343.00 feet more or less to the northerly edge of Emerson Brook so-called; Thence by and with the northerly side of said Emerson Brook in a northwesterly direction for a distance of 404 feet more or less to a point of land now or formerly of Pisaturo formerly of Thayer. Thence North 47° 36' 00" East a distance of 181 feet to a point on the southerly side of said Pond Street being the place of origin.

The above described premises contain 96,097.03 square feet of land more or less (2.21 acres) and are shown as Lot #2 on a plan entitled "Plan of Land in Uxbridge, Massachusetts surveyed for Edward J. and Jane A. Rondeau" dated March 1, 1988, Scale 1"=40', and recorded with the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 602, Plan 41.

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

For Mortgagor's Title see deed dated January 14, 2025 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 71546, Page 386.

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

FIVE THOUSAND (\$5,000.00) Dollars of the purchase price must be paid in cash, certified check,

bank treasurer's or cashier's check at the time and place of the sale by the purchaser. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check within thirty (30) days after the date of sale.

Other terms to be announced at the sale.

Brock & Scott, PLLC
23 Messenger Street
2nd Floor

Plainville, MA 02762

Attorney for Freedom Mortgage Corporation

Present Holder of the Mortgage (401) 217-8701

March 20, 2026

March 27, 2026

April 3, 2026

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate
and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. WO26P0764EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR
FORMAL ADJUDICATION**
Estate Of:
Joseph W Theberge
Date of Death: 12/13/2025

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Cody J Theberge of Northbridge MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that:

Cody J Theberge of Northbridge MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the estate in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/07/2026.**

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

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

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

WITNESS, Hon. Kathryn M. Bailey, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 10, 2026

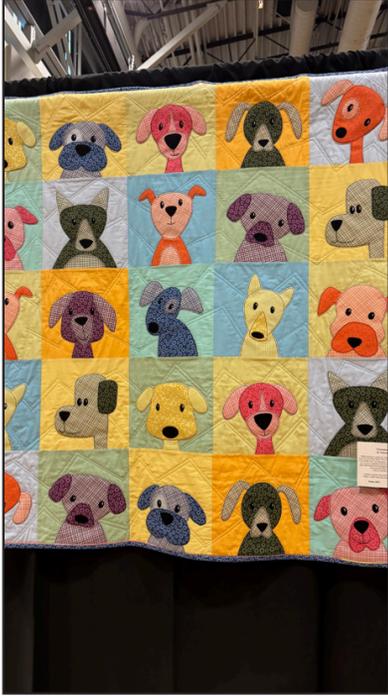
Stephanie Fattman,

Register of Probate

March 27, 2026

GUILD
continued from page A1

and the chance to purchase patriotic home-made swag for the guild's 2026 charity of choice, Home Base, an organization dedicated to healing the invisible wounds of war for veterans of all eras. Eager to see some local quilts up close, or perhaps step into the world of quilting and try a new hobby yourself? Check out sewmanyshows.com for a busy schedule of all upcoming public quilt shows throughout New England, or attend a monthly guild meeting at the Upton Community Center by visiting himblepleasuresquiltguild.blogspot.com.



Jeanette C. Carter, 100

SKILLSUSA
continued from page A1

available at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/skillsusa. Students who earned medals at the SkillsUSA Massachusetts District V Leadership Conference are listed by hometown:
BELLINGHAM
Gold: Raegen McAlister, Health Knowledge Bowl.
Silver: Evan Gerrish, CNC 2 Axis Turning Programmer; and Megan Maloney, Baking & Pastry Arts.
Bronze: Demetrius Burton, Cyber Security; Evan Donlon, Internet of Things; Matthew Welch, Urban Search & Rescue; and Thomas Welch, Web Design.

BLACKSTONE
Gold: Ella Ruth, Welding; Hunter Savard, Additive Manufacturing; and James Thibault, Additive Manufacturing.
Silver: Tyler Connolly, Carpentry.
Bronze: Riley Diefenbach, Telecommunications Cabling.

DOUGLAS
Gold: Joshua Aguiar, Health Knowledge Bowl; Devin Drumheller, Mechatronics; Reese Mathieu, Health Knowledge Bowl; Tia Ouillette, Job Skill Demonstration A; and David Sherman, Mobile Robotics Technology.
Silver: Celina Cutler, Health Knowledge Bowl; Sean King, HVAC/R; Brady Morris,

Additive Manufacturing; and Olivia Price, Welding.
Bronze: Kaden Howard, Job Demonstration Open; and Leah Boudreau, Plumbing.

GRAFTON
Gold: Brooke Grabau, Welding Sculpture; and Robert Lazo, Mechatronics; Karolina Malkowski, Medical Math; and Jacob Mariano, Advertising Design.
Silver: Caroline Brown, Advertising Design; Luke Keenan, Health Knowledge Bowl; Cooper Often, Mechatronics; and Miya Vaillancourt, Nail Care.
Bronze: Steven Lane, Cabinetmaking.

HOPEDALE
Gold: Nicholas Abbruzzese, Internet of Things; Joseph Bache, Television (Video) Production; and Ryan McGovern, Television (Video) Production.

MENDON
Gold: Nathan Lucey, HVAC/R.
Silver: Benjamin Collins, Telecommunications Cabling; and Charles Lozeau, Job Interview.
Bronze: Owen Davis, CNC Axis Milling Programmer; Emmett Kirstein, Electronics Technology; Aiden Quimby, Job Interview; and Ellie Kindl, Mobile Robotics Technology.

MILFORD
Gold: Julien Awuku-Asante, Electronics Technology; Dominic Quintino, Cyber

Security; and Mathew Carr, Power Equipment Technology.
Silver: Gabriella Ferreira, Automated Manufacturing; Connor Healey, Automated Manufacturing; Anthony Pinsonault, Diesel Equipment Technology; and Arianna Turner, Robotics & Automation Tech.
Bronze: Joseph Dias, Cyber Security; Oliva Guido, Painting & Design Technology; and Bryan De Sena, Urban Search & Rescue.

MILLBURY
Gold: Jonathan Tremblay, Diesel Equipment Technology; Gavin Quang, Medical Math; and Robyn Repekta, Telecommunications Cabling.
Bronze: Alana Pagliarulo, First Aid/CPR.

NORTHBRIDGE
Gold: Tarek Bensellam, Cyber Security; Alexia Daou, CNC Programmer; and Autumn Gromelski, Restaurant Service.
Silver: Maddelyn Blome, Culinary Arts; Jessica Calles, Dental Assisting; Liliana Carpenter, Restaurant Service; Aria Domenech, Automated Manufacturing; Olivia Medina, Painting & Design Technology; and Elsa Richards, Health Knowledge Bowl.
Bronze: Piper Strait, Technical Computer Applications.

SUTTON
Silver: Keira Lavine, Robotics & Automation Tech.

UPTON
State Officer Candidate: Madison Denise.
Gold: Alexa Ladd, Photography.
Silver: Justin Fransen, Mechatronics; Jacob Poirier, Additive Manufacturing; and Makenna Walls, Health Knowledge Bowl.
Bronze: Lucia Rae, Dental Assisting.

UXBRIDGE
Gold: Emily Blanding, Basic Health Care; Violet Fratus, Health Knowledge Bowl; Rory Goyette, Baking & Pastry Arts; Julie Lafontaine, Painting & Design; and Daniel Ramos, Job Skill Demonstration Open.
Bronze: Kai Torku, Basic Health Care; Shea Stone, Mobile Robotics Technology; and Audrey Ellis, Web Design.

About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills.

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BEK'S
continued from page A1

current canopy over the gas pumps, bed springs were found nine feet below ground.

Stephen Bek, Sr. was born in Fitchburg in 1920 to Polish immigrant parents Frank and Anna (Kurtyka). The family moved to Douglas after 1930 to work in the local mills. Stephen Sr., became a sheet metal apprentice, and served on the USS Yorktown in WWII as an Aviation Metalsmith 1st Class in the US Navy. His ownership saw the expansion of the auto repair and fueling station to include welding services. Welding was the elder Bek's passion. He was the "go to" guy for people all over the Blackstone Valley. Stephen, Sr. provided portable welding service, traveling around the Valley in a 1950 GMC which his son, Steve, Jr. still owns. The now green GMC was originally red with black fenders. Only one person could travel in this truck as it held a welding unit, miscellaneous steel, oxygen, acetylene, with welding rods, grinders and various tools on the passenger seat.

Frank and Anna were very proud of their only son, Stephen Sr., who was making his way as a local entrepreneur and not toiling away in the local mills. Frank could be found onsite helping with building improvement projects, notably the demolition of the original wood office structure and building of the cinderblock office space. Frank, with only a 6th grade education, marked off the placement of the cinderblocks with the simple tool of a stick with a nail in it. Uncle John Kurtyka was also instrumental in helping his nephew. Another early mentor to Stephen, Sr., was Adelard J. "Chief" Lemay. Why he was called "Chief," Steve, Jr. cannot answer. Chief worked for Whitin Machine Works, and was mechanically talented assisting Stephen, Sr. with the auto repair part of the business. After retirement and a move to Florida, Chief would always stop in on visits to simply walk through and around the building and reminisce. Both Stephen, Sr. and Steve, Jr. learned "on the job" with the assistance of talented mentors. Stephen, Sr. had Steve, Jr. at the work bench in his teenage

years grinding castings, drilling holes, and practicing welding. These skills were not something the Political Science major had anticipated for life's path.

Behind every successful man is a great woman. For Stephen, Sr. that was his wife Adeline, who retained ownership of the business after her husband's death, continuing with the bookkeeping and supporting her son as he continued to grow and develop the business.

Bek's also had a dedicated part-time fueling crew providing employment to local Manchaug residents and keeping the Village current on local events. This crew was always friendly, courteous, with the added benefit of dog treats for the local pups. George "Bunny" Guertin more than 30 years; Mike Senecal and Ed Prior more than 10 years; Joe Smith more than two years; and Douglas residents Cliff Lowell more than 20; and Larry Hill.

Manchaug is fortunate to have had a full-service fueling station for over 100 years. Sam's Gas plans to continue this tradition.

Sam's Gas, with additional stations in Millbury and Duxbury, is a family-owned, full-service fueling business started by Tony's dad who immigrated from Lebanon in 1975. Sam's Gas has extended the hours of operation to Monday-Friday 6:30 a.m. - 7 p.m.;

Saturday 7 am - 5 pm; Sunday 8 am - 4 pm. Not only does this location provide fueling, but also auto repair from two additional local entrepreneurs. Adam Bombara, A B Auto & Transmissions (508-476-3424) occupies one bay, while Jared Malo, Jared's Automotive Repair (508-277-2065) is providing auto repair services out of five bays.

Small business drives America and is the backbone of our country. Residents are encouraged to "shop local" and support these young local entrepreneurs as they follow in the footsteps of Joseph Conley, Stephen Bek, Sr. and Steve Bek, Jr.

A quick side note — Sam's Gas will honor all Bek's Fuel gift certificates. If you purchased or received a gift certificate from Bek's prior to the sale, you can still use it.

**SIMON FAIRFIELD
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Please note that some events do require registration. If you have any questions regarding any events, please do not hesitate to contact the library at 508-476-2695 or email at us at douglas@cwmmars.org.

Address: 290 Main St., Douglas
Phone: 508-476-2695

Hours: Monday-Thursday 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Please note that we will be closed on Monday, April 20th in observance of Patriots' Day.

Children's Book Clubs

Wednesday, April 1 at 4 p.m. - Book Wizards (Grades 5-7), "Heidi" by Johanna Spyri

Wednesday, April 8 at 4 p.m. - Young Reader's Club (Grades K-2), "Boxes for Katje" by Candace Fleming

Wednesday, April 15 at 4 p.m.: Book Bunch (Grades 2-4), "Little Lion Rescue" by Rachel Delahaye

Children's Happenings

Monday, April 6, 13, and 27 at 10 a.m. - Spring Storytime (Registration Required)

Tuesday, April 7 and 21 at 11:30 a.m. - Music & Movement with Deb Hudgins

Tuesday, April 7 at 3:30 p.m. - Lego Club I (Registration Required)

Thursday, April 9, 16, and 30 at 10 a.m. - Spring Storytime (Registration Required)

Tuesday, April 14 at 3:30 p.m. - Lego

Club II (Registration Required)

Wednesday, April 15 at 5:45 p.m. - Reading to Bryce (Registration Required)

Teen Happenings
Tuesday, April 7 and 21 at 4 p.m. - Battletech Club

Tuesday, April 14 and 28 at 4 p.m. - Dungeons & Dragons Club (FULL)

Adult Book Clubs

Thursday, April 2 at 6:30 p.m. - Greatest Book Club Ever, "The Mountain Between Us" by Charles Martin

Tuesday, April 14 at 6:30 p.m. - Intrepid Readers, "River Kings: A New History of the Vikings from Scandinavia to the Silk Roads" by Cat Jarman

Thursday, April 16 at 6 p.m. - Cookbook Collective, Theme TBD

Tuesday, April 21 at 6:30 p.m. - SciFi Book Club, "Dark Eden" by Chris Beckett

Monday, April 27 at 6:30 p.m.: Plot Twisters, "House of Glass" by Sarah Pakkanen

Adult Happenings

Wednesday, April 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29 at 10 a.m. - Fiber Arts Friends

Saturday, April 4 at 10 a.m. - Let's Paint Goose, the Monitor Lizard! (registration required)

Monday, April 6, 13, 20, and 27 at 6:30 p.m. - Writer's Accountability Group

Wednesday, April 8 and 22 at 5:45 p.m. - Fiber Arts Friends at Night

Saturday, April 18 at 10:30 a.m. - SFPL Gardeners

Meghan Cummiskey elected to membership in Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

BATON ROUGE, La. — Meghan Cummiskey of Northbridge was recently elected to membership into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society, at University of Massachusetts.

Cummiskey is among approximately 20,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year. Membership is by invitation only and requires nomination and approval by a chapter. Only the top 10 percent of seniors and 7.5 percent of juniors are eligible for membership. Graduate students in the top 10 percent of the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify, as do faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 under the leadership of undergraduate student Marcus L. Urann who had a desire to create a different kind of honor society: one that recognized excellence in all academic disciplines. Today, the Society has chapters on more than 300 campuses in the United States and its territories. Its mission is to "cultivate a community that celebrates and advances the love of learning."

About Phi Kappa Phi
Founded in 1897, Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines. Phi Kappa Phi inducts approximately 20,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni annually. The Society has chapters on more than 300 select colleges and universities in the United States and its territories. Membership is by invitation only to the top 10 percent of seniors and graduate students and 7.5 percent of juniors. Faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction also qualify. The Society's mission is to "cultivate a community that celebrates and advances the love of learning." For more information, visit www.PhiKappaPhi.org.

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Friday's Child



Layla
Age 8
Registration #9377

Layla is a resilient, energetic, and curious young girl who brings enthusiasm and joy into the spaces she enters. She loves expressing herself through colorful, hands-on arts and crafts, using creativity as a way to explore and share her ideas. Layla is very active and especially enjoys games that involve movement, where she can stay engaged and have fun at the same time. Layla attends elementary school and has built wonderful, positive connections with her teachers. She is an extroverted and outgoing child who truly enjoys being around others. Spending time with her friends at school and participating in activities within her community are among her favorite things to do.

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/44789227065>

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

Featured Listing ~ New To Market!
Webster ~ 33 Slater Street



Sprawling 62'x30' fieldstone faced 1 Level Ranch, located on a +/- 0.5-acre level w/24'x24' 2 car att'd garage. Offers: 1,860 sf main level plus 1,000 sf +/- finished lower level, 3 BRs, 2-1/2 Baths, 2 stone fireplaces w/pellet stove inserts, FHW BB heat by oil. Open floor plan w/15'x13' kitchen, 15'x22' living rm, 13'x11' dining rm, 10'x28' breezeway w/sliders to rear deck, and 3 season sunroom, hardwood & c-tile floors, replacement windows/doors & more, more, more! How do you like it? **Call today to schedule a showing!** \$525,000

Webster - 24 Cooper Rd
New Construction - Craftsman Style home



Tucked away on Cooper Rd. Webster Lake with access at Lakeside beach/boat ramp. 3rd of 4 homes being built at this site. Offers 2,155 sq. ft +/- of living area, 7 rms, 4 brs, 2 1/2 baths, 9ft ceiling, wood flooring throughout with ceramic tile baths. Spacious main BR Suite w/ walk-in closet, and private full bathr, double sink vanity, finished lower level walk-out w/ slider. Central AC, garage \$649,900.00

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Webster Lake Waterfront Listing!!
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Astounding Panoramic Views across mid-section of Webster Lake! Sun drenched from early morning sunrise till sunset! View the lake from all windows. Located on a peninsula providing 2 Shorelines. Fireplaced Living Room! Recent Kitchen & Bath! Primary Bedroom w/walk-in closet. Hardwood Floors. 2 Baths. FHW Oil Heat! Central Air. Garage. \$ 900,000.

Webster Lake - 302 Killdeer Island



Renovated + move-in ready lakefront home w/1,700+/- sq ft. Open kitchen/dining/living w/cathedral ceilings + wall of windows. Primary suite w/private bath! 2 add'l bedrooms, 2nd Full bath. Lower level family room w/walkout to water. Wraparound deck, new vinyl railings, terraced yard, sandy beach, professional landscaping. Many updates \$775,000

Webster Lake Waterfront - 31 Bayview!!



Panoramic View, from this absolutely lovely home. 2600 +/- SF, 3+ Beds, 2 full baths, 2 car detached garage! 63' +/- waterfront. .37 Acres! Sandy Waterfront! \$1,100,000

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Whitinsville Christian School students plant tulips for Day of Hope

WHITINSVILLE — In the coming weeks, yellow tulips will begin blooming throughout the campus on Linwood Ave. These tulips serve as a reminder that even after the darkest winters, beauty and hope can grow. In recognition of April as Mental Health Awareness Month, WCS will be celebrating its annual Day of Hope on April 30.

The Day of Hope is based on connection and mental health. The goal of our Day of Hope is to foster a sense of community by instilling hope and encouraging WCS staff and students to care for their whole selves—mind, body, and spirit—through meaningful connections and practical strategies for personal well-being.

Courtesy

Students planted bulbs in the fall and welcome their appearance this spring!

PLUMMER PLACE

Home of the Northbridge Senior Center

please call the main office.

The following events will take place at Plummer Place, Home of the Northbridge Senior Center. We are located at 20 Highland St. in Whitinsville. Telephone: (508) 234-2002. Northbridge residents have priority for all programming and events.

Medical Drivers

We are in need of medical drivers for out-of-town medical appointments. This is a very important service that we provide for seniors who cannot drive themselves to their medical appointments. If you are interested and can spare any time, it would be most appreciated. Drivers are reimbursed for their mileage. For more information,

Regular Programs:

Mindful Meditation with Kelly
Every Thursday at 9:30am
Bereavement Group
Monday, 1pm April 13th
Women's Collective
Thursday, 10:00am April 9th
Book Club
Wednesday, 10:30am April 15th
Call Kelly to find out what book we are reading!
Dull Men's Club
Tuesday, 9:30am April 28th
Guest: Kevin Barry ~ Marine and State Police Officer
Career Highlights and Discussion

Writing Your Way with Lori
Thursdays, 2pm April 9th and 23rd
Facials with Nancy
Thursday, April 16th

Treat yourself to some pampering! Schedule your appointment directly with Nancy by calling (508) 868-5525. \$40 plus gratuity. Treatments include cleansing, exfoliating, hand and arm massage with heated mitts, extractions, toner and moisturizer!

Special Events and Programs:

Jeopardy/Wheel of Fortune
Wednesday, April 8th 1:00pm-2:00pm
This fun event is back by popular demand! Grab your friends and head over for lots of laughs and chances to win prizes! Refreshments will be provided. Admission is \$5 cash per person on the day of the event. A big thank you to our sponsors: Cornerstone Milford, Advinia Care, and the Friends of Northbridge Elders. Sign up in the main office!

Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia
Tuesday, April 14th
10:00am-11:00am

Please consider attending this very informative program presented by the Alzheimer's Association to learn about the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia, the risk factors, and the current treatments. Light refreshments will be served. Sign up in the main office.

Off the Record: Stories from a Reporter's Interviewing Notebook with Bill Ballou
Tuesday, April 21st
9:00am-10:30am

Plummer Place is thrilled to welcome back Bill Ballou, an established reporter and crowd favorite as he shares unforgettable moments to interviews gone off-script. Please join us for a behind-the-scenes look at a reporter's career through the anecdotes that helped shape it. Hear the good, the bad, and everything in between! Sign up in the main office.

Dynamic Duo Concert with Marty and Dave
Wednesday, April 22nd
1:00pm-2:00pm

Marty and Dave have been playing music together for a combination of 50 years. They specialize in Americana, Pop, and Rock n' Roll music. Come out for the music and have some fun! Sign up in the main office.

Music Concert with Tom and Andy
Wednesday, April 29th
1:00pm-2:00pm

"Tom and Andy" is a guitar and percussion duo who take seniors on an interactive musical journey from 1929 through the 1970s and includes standards, oldies, classics, country and good old American Rock n' Roll. Come on down and enjoy some tunes! Sign up in the main office.

REJOICE!

Join us for Holy Week...All are Welcome

PALM SUNDAY- MARCH 29 AT 10:15 AM
~ Followed by Egg Hunt at the Parsonage!

MAUNDY THURSDAY- APRIL 2 AT 6:30 PM
~ Tenebrae Service

HOLY SATURDAY- APRIL 4 AT 6:30 PM
~ Easter Vigil Taizé

EASTER SUNDAY - APRIL 5 AT 10:15 AM
with Organ, Choir and
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Laughter is the best medicine, so get your dose at the Bradley Playhouse

PUTNAM, Conn. — The Theatre of Northeastern Connecticut at the Bradley Playhouse is excited to present Season 12 of Scott Higgins Comedy All Stars. Four comedy headliners that perform all over the country and have been seen on Comedy Central, Amazon Prime, HBO, and Showtime are ready to take the stage. They have been heard on podcasts and SiriusXM Radio, and now Scott Higgins brings them live to The Bradley for one night of hilarious comedic skits, saying what we all think but wouldn't dare say out loud.

Dan Altano (Whose album "Stand-Up Dad" debuted #1 on iTunes), Emily Ruskowski (Appeared on Laugh TV on Fox and 2 Dope Queens podcast), Chris Monty (Seen on HBO and Amazon Prime), and Howie Mason (A Regular at Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods), with host

Scott Higgins (Behind The Funny Podcast – Boston Comedy Choice Nominee Best Podcast) will bring a night of laughs that will surely leave you wanting more.

Laughter is the best medicine, so come and get your dose. This is a show you don't want to miss.

Scott Higgins Comedy All Stars is one show on March 28 at 7:30 p.m. The suggested audience is 18 and up. Line up is subject to change with notice.

The Bradley Playhouse is located at 30 Front St. (Route 44) in Putnam. All seats are reserved. Reservations may be made with a major credit card online at www.thebradleyplayhouse.org or by calling 860-928-7887. Tickets may be purchased at the theater box office, either before the performance, or at the door if available. Purchasing your tickets ahead of time is always a good idea.

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