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Friday, April 24, 2026

Northbridge Elementary second graders lead the way with “Buddy Bench” initiative

NORTHBRIDGE — On April 16, students in Mrs. Lisa Bristol’s second-grade class at Northbridge Elementary School (NES) proudly unveiled a new addition to their playground: a “Buddy Bench,” created through a student-led civic action project focused on kindness, inclusion, and community.

The idea for the Buddy Bench began as part of a classroom lesson, when students watched a video explaining how such benches help children who may feel lonely or left out find someone to play with. Inspired, students immediately recognized a need within their own school community.

“We need one at NES!” they told Mrs. Bristol.

Turning inspiration into action, Mrs. Bristol guided her students through the civic process of advocacy. Each student wrote a let-



ter to K-2 Principal Mrs. Lorinda Allen, making a case for why the school should install a Buddy Bench. Their heartfelt messages reflected both empathy and insight.

Brayden wrote, “If you see someone on the buddy bench you can ask them to play.” Henrique added, “It will

help kids not be sad.” Gemma shared, “So kids can find a new friend.”

Students also explained their idea directly to Principal Allen, describing the bench as a simple yet powerful way to make sure no one feels left out: “If someone is feeling left out, they sit on the buddy bench and then it will be easier to

notice them.”

Allen approved the project with an important condition: students needed to determine whether one bench or two would best serve the school. Rising to the challenge, students designed and conducted a survey among their peers, then worked collaboratively in small groups to ana-

lyze the data and create graphs representing their findings. The results clearly indicated a need for one bench on each playground.

The project culminated in a dedication ceremony attended by members of the school community, including the adjustment counselors, administrators, and the Superintendent.

During the event, students presented their research, explained the purpose and use of the Buddy Bench, and expressed gratitude to Principal Allen for supporting their initiative.

The class emphasized that the Buddy Bench is more than just a place to sit, it is a symbol of kindness and a tool for building friendships. Their work doesn’t end here; students plan to visit other classrooms at NES to teach their peers how to use the bench and encourage a culture of inclusion.

One student captured the spirit of the project best: “We really can make a difference!”

This initiative highlights the power of student voice and demonstrates how even the youngest learners can create meaningful change in their communities.

Step back in time with Civil War Living History event at Farnum House

UXBRIDGE — The Uxbridge Historical Society invites the community to experience history firsthand at a Civil War Living History event on Sunday, April 26, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the historic Cornet John Farnum House (c. 1710) in Uxbridge.

This engaging program will transport visitors back to the 1860s with a variety of immersive activities. Guests will have the opportunity to meet Civil War reenactors portraying soldiers and civilians, observe period demonstrations, and enjoy historical storytelling that highlights the experiences of those who lived during this pivotal time in American history.

Adding to the authentic atmosphere, the event will feature period music and a suttlery hosted by Big Bear Trading Post, where visitors can browse and purchase historically inspired goods and souvenirs.

A special feature of the event will be a display and interpretive presentation on women’s fashions of the Civil War era, offering insight into the clothing, social

roles, and daily lives of women during the 1860s. This exhibit will highlight how fashion reflected both the cultural norms and the practical realities of life during the war.

Visitors are also encouraged to tour the beautifully restored Cornet John Farnum House (c. 1710), Uxbridge’s oldest home, a town treasure, and the home of the Uxbridge Historical Society.

“This event offers a wonderful opportunity for the community to connect with history in a meaningful and memorable way,” said Jim Beauchamp, President of the Uxbridge Historical Society. “We’re excited to welcome visitors of all ages to experience the sights and sounds of the Civil War era.”

For more information about this and other upcoming programs, please contact the Uxbridge Historical Society at uxbridgehistoricalsociety@gmail.com or Jim Beauchamp (508) 498-0270. This event is free and open to the public. (Donations are always appreciated.)

WCS launches à la carte classes designed for homeschooled students

WHITINSVILLE — Whitinsville Christian School is pleased to announce the launch of WCS Select, a new program offering a la carte classes specifically designed to support homeschool students and families.

WCS Select provides homeschool students with access to high-quality, Christ-centered academic courses, allowing families to customize their child’s educational experience while remaining rooted in their chosen homeschool path. The program offers flexible enrollment options, giving students the opportunity to participate in individual classes,

connect with peers, and benefit from experienced faculty and campus resources.

“Our WCS Select program reflects our commitment to meeting families where they are,” said Sarah Bowler, Head of School. “By supporting homeschooled students with flexible, high-quality resources and community connection, we’re expanding what personalized edu-

cation can look like.”

As it has across the country, homeschooling participation in Massachusetts has risen, with approximately 3.3-3.4 percent of K-12 students learning at home in recent years. This steady growth highlights the increasing demand for flexible, high-quality educational partnerships such as WCS Select.

Through WCS Select, students can engage in a range of academic subjects while experiencing the benefits of a structured classroom environment and a vibrant Christian school community. Offerings include a range of courses from Outdoor Preschool to AP Biology. The program is designed to complement, not replace, the homeschool

experience, offering families added support, enrichment, and connection.

WCS Select reflects Whitinsville Christian School’s broader mission to partner with families in providing an edu-

Turn To WCS page A8

Worcester Courthouse staff visit NHS Law class

NORTHBRIDGE — Justice Melia, of the Probate and Family Court, and three of her colleagues visited the Northbridge High School law class, sharing their experiences and how and why they chose their careers.

Melia held many roles prior to becoming a judge including that of a social worker for DCF (Division of Child and Families), a probation officer, and a private attorney (primarily for probate and family matters.) As always Melia gave the students a realistic case study, involving divorce and child custody, on which to render a simulated legal decision.

The mother, in the provided scenario, was in the military and deployed

overseas regularly and would be moving to California for a major promotion. The question . . . should the two children (ages seven and 15) go with her to California or stay in Massachusetts with the father who has regular but long hours (9 a.m. to 7 p.m.)? The students asked excellent questions to aid in their decision, impressing our guests. They came to a logical and well-founded determination, in line with what Melia would have done.

Next up was Chief Court Officer Luby, who oversees the court officers in three courts within Worcester County. He said most court officers start as door security, checking bags and running

the metal detectors. This requires very little training. However, he told the students that in order to work in the courtrooms, officers need a college degree and to complete a training program. Court Officers handle courtroom security as well as transfers of the accused to the sheriffs who bring the accused back to jail.

Lisa Delgado, Assistant Registrar of Probate, was the next speaker. She is the primary assistant to the elected Registrar. She handles divorce filings, paternity requests, adoptions, requests for restraining orders, etc. She informed the students that there have been 1,500 divorce filings in Worcester County so far this year, and the “file

room” has 400,000 cases right now. Prior to her current role, she worked for many attorneys. Delgado stated that, because she was a teen mom and under-

stood the challenges young families face, she decided to work in the courts and help others through those challenges. Her job entails assisting court clients with

paperwork, de-escalating situations, and aiding people with general legal problems.

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A riveting day at Uxbridge Courthouse for Northbridge High students

UXBRIDGE — On Tuesday, March 24, the Northbridge High School Law Class and Social Science Pathways students visited the Uxbridge Courthouse for the first time under the new leadership of Honorable Janet McGuiggan, First Justice, and Clerk-Magistrate, Padraic Rafferty.

Judge McGuiggan took the reins at the Uxbridge Courthouse in November, bringing in over 30 years

of experience as a licensed attorney and serving the last 16 years as a District Court Judge. Clerk-Magistrate Rafferty is a newer appointment by Governor Healey confirmed by the Governor's Council in November of 2025. He joins the Uxbridge Courthouse with over 10 years of legal experience as a former prosecutor and defense attorney.

Once court was in session, McGuiggan wel-

comed the Northbridge students and jokingly asked the staff to watch their language, for the students' benefit. Before the court session began, Clerk-Magistrate Rafferty addressed the students and reminded them that real people's lives are affected every day by what transpires in court. He wasn't kidding.

The students observed two petitions for extensions on restraining orders.

In one case, the plaintiff made multiple allegations, including: physical and emotional

abuse, the slashing of her car tires, and relentless harassment via inappropriate and salacious texts. The defendant made similar counterclaims. In both cases, McGuiggan found for the plaintiff, granting the extensions.

When the court recessed, the students learned more about the court process from McGuiggan and Rafferty, along with Assistant Chief Court Officer Gregory Gomes, Assistant District Attorney Lisa Wells, Lead Victim Advocate Margaret Rwaramba, and Judicial Secretary

Colleen Foley. Lead Victim Advocate Rwaramba of the District Attorney's office informed the students that her staff is there to guide all victims through the often challenging and scary court process in criminal matters.

Additional advocates exist at the Court, including an advocate from Non-Profit New Hope Inc., who assists victims petitioning for restraining orders. That advocate stood by the side of both women who were petitioning for extensions of their restraining orders. Chief Gomes said, "We treat the clients of the

court with respect. That goes a long way with them. After all, being in court is often the worst day of their lives."

The students listened intently and learned much during their field trip while asking respectful and pertinent questions. They asked their law teacher, Mr. Finkel, follow-up questions on the bus and several more in their class. The students clearly appreciated their time as guests at the Uxbridge Courthouse, and Northbridge High School appreciates their continued hospitality.



ARTHRITIS?

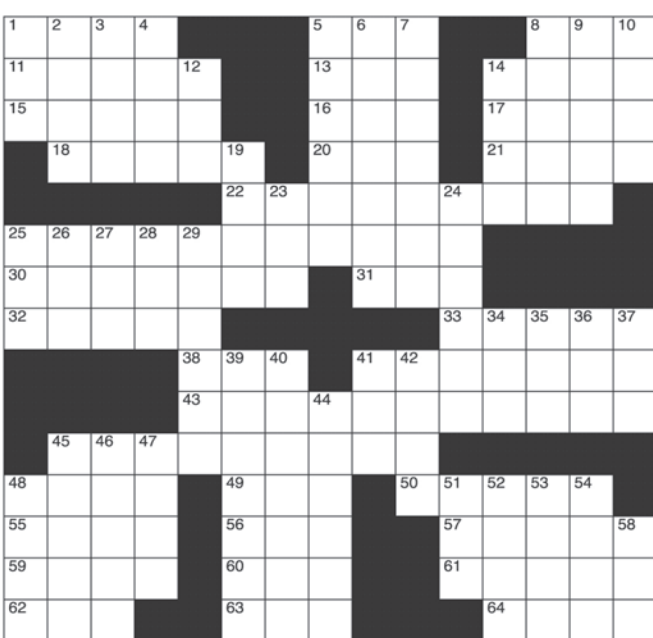
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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Egyptian bull-god
- 5. Romanian monetary unit
- 8. Will Ferrell holiday film
- 11. "It Ain't Half Hot Mum" actor
- 13. Error-related negativity
- 14. Volcanic crater
- 15. Boston Herald columnist Margery
- 16. True market value
- 17. Italian term for exchange rate
- 18. Informal loan clubs
- 20. Men's fashion accessory
- 21. Children's craft supply
- 22. Extra benefits
- 25. In an early way
- 30. A judge has one
- 31. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 32. Tractor unit
- 33. Defunct supercomputer developer
- 38. Promotional materials
- 41. A forgetful state
- 43. One who beheads
- 45. Photographers
- 48. Small, rich sponge cake
- 49. Clergy's vestment
- 50. Expressed pleasure
- 55. Abba __, Israeli politician
- 56. Zero
- 57. Ancient Greek word for "earless"
- 59. Nigerian governmental area
- 60. Mild expression of surprise
- 61. Places to hang things
- 62. Keyboard key
- 63. Make a mistake
- 64. One-time president of Republic of Korea

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Bridge building degree
- 2. Expression of sorrow or pity
- 3. Large, stocky lizard
- 4. Romanian river
- 5. Communication
- 6. Stoats
- 7. Showcases
- 8. Bird of prey
- 9. King of Thebes
- 10. Cleaving tool
- 12. Large African antelope
- 14. Three are particularly notable
- 19. Meet one's needs
- 23. C. European river
- 24. Dictator
- 25. Indicates how much out of 100 (abbr.)
- 26. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet
- 27. Consume food
- 28. Woman (French)
- 29. Scrape a surface
- 34. Green vegetable
- 35. Pacific Standard Time
- 36. Capital of Brazilian city
- 37. Paddle
- 39. Cause to become insane
- 40. Drier and flakier
- 41. Mimic
- 42. ESPN personality Kimes
- 44. One who moves slowly
- 45. Secret political clique
- 46. Behind the stern of a ship
- 47. Supernatural force
- 48. Sanctuary
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Grayish white
- 53. Engrave by coating
- 54. North Carolina university
- 58. Midway between south and southeast

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UMass Memorial-Milford Regional & Whittin Community Center offering "Mental Health Essentials for Coaches" Webinar

MILFORD—During May's Mental Health Awareness Month, UMass Memorial Health—Milford Regional Medical Center's Community Benefits Committee and the Whittin Community Center will be teaming up to offer "Mental Health Essentials for Coaches," a free webinar to help youth sports coaches support their athletes' mental health. The webinar is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13 at 7 p.m.

According to the latest information from the CDC, the number of adolescents reporting poor mental health is increasing. What's more, most youth sports coaches are parent volunteers who have no formal training when it comes to supporting mental health challenges their players may be facing.

"Mental Health Essentials for Coaches" will be presented by experienced clinicians and educators from the Mental Health Collaborative, a local non-profit that provides mental health programs to schools and communities. Attendees will learn strategies on incor-

porating mental health as part of their team culture, how to recognize and respond when athletes need support and how to promote mental health on the field or court. Coaches will also learn about prioritizing their own mental health and be provided with additional local resources. There will also be time for questions.

The Webinar will focus on those who coach elementary and middle school-aged athletes. However, it is open to all who coach youth sports.

"Coaches can be influential role models for so many kids, so we want to provide them the tools to understand, respond to and support their players' mental health," said UMass Memorial Health – Milford Regional Medical Center COO and Community Benefits Chair Bert Thurlo-Walsh, MM, RN, CPHQ.

To register for "Mental Health Essentials for Coaches," visit Milfordregional.org and view "Classes and Events" on the home page and then "Webinars."

For questions, contact Michelle.sanford@umassmemorial.org.

Veterans' Service Officer Position

The Town of Sturbridge is accepting applications to fill the part-time, 10 hours per week, Veteran' Service Officer position. The position will act as a Veterans' Agent and thus requires all appropriate State and Federal certification. Applications are available on-line on the Town of Sturbridge website under job opportunities. <https://www.sturbridge.gov/your-government/pages/job-opportunities>

The position is non-union and reports to the Town Administrator. The Town is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE).

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

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

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

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

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

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Soter supports state funding for municipal road and bridge repairs

BOSTON — State Rep. Michael Soter (R-Bellingham) recently supported a \$1.4 billion transportation infrastructure bond bill that will provide \$300 million in funding to cities and towns under the Chapter 90 program, along with additional funding authorizations for other transportation infrastructure-related programs and projects across the state.

House Bill 5375, An Act financing long-term improvements to municipal roads and bridges, was given preliminary approval by the House of Representatives on April 15, passing on a vote of 155-0. The bill still requires Senate approval and the governor's signature before it can take effect.

Soter noted that the House bill allocates \$200 million in Chapter 90 funding for Fiscal Year 2027 using the program's traditional weighted formula that is based on a community's local road mileage (58.33 percent), population (20.83 percent), and employment levels (20.83 percent). An additional \$100 million is being distributed based strictly on a community's local road mileage to help ensure that rural communities with smaller populations receive their fair share of state funding for maintaining their transportation infrastructure.

Established by the Legislature in 1973, the Chapter 90 program offers state funding assistance to cities and towns on a reimbursable basis to help maintain local transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges and sidewalks. Representative Soter noted that the 8th Worcester District is slated to receive over \$2.9M, with each town's allocations as follows:

Town	Traditional Formula	Road Miles	Total FY27 Ch. 90
Bellingham	\$540,161.06	\$306,407.66	\$846,568.72
Blackstone	\$228,100.93	\$135,947.22	\$364,048.15
Millville	\$108,747.82	\$74,034.01	\$182,781.83
Medway	\$442,033.42	\$268,501.29	\$710,534.71
Uxbridge	\$532,884.93	\$339,301.45	\$872,186.38

Soter noted that in addition to the Chapter 90 appropriation, House Bill 5375 also contains funding for several other statewide transportation infrastructure initiatives, including:

- \$500 million for the bridge and pavement lifecycle asset management program;
- \$200 million for transportation capital projects;
- \$200 million for the Parkway Resilience Improvement and Safety Modernization (PRISM) program, which provides accelerated deferred maintenance, modernization, and safety improvements for multi-modal transportation infrastructure under the control of the Department of Conservation and Recreation; and
- \$200 million for the implementation of rail improvements, including the design and acquisition of commuter rail locomotives.

According to Soter, House Bill 5375 also increases funding authorizations for projects that were previously approved under the 2022 transportation bond bill. Specifically, the House bill will increase funding for:

- interstate and non-interstate federal highway system projects from \$2.81 billion to \$5.11 billion;
- non-federally aided roadway and bridge projects, and the non-participating share of federally aided projects, from \$1.27 billion to \$2.07 billion;
- municipal roadway pavement and surface condition improvements from \$25 million to \$90 million; and
- the public realm improvement program from \$10 million to \$22 million, which supports grants to municipalities for improvements to sidewalks, streets and parking spaces to create additional capacity for pedestrians and cyclists.

House Bill 5375 now moves to the Senate for its consideration.

Valley Chapel to host National Day of Prayer gathering

UXBRIDGE — Valley Chapel invites the community to join in a special time of prayer on Thursday, May 7, from 6–7 p.m. in the church café, as part of the National Day of Prayer.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the National Day of Prayer, an annual observance held on the first Thursday of May, when people across the United States are encouraged to come together in prayer for the nation. Established by Congress in 1952, this day has become a meaningful tradition, uniting individuals, families, churches, and communities in seeking God's guidance, wisdom, and blessing.

The National Day of Prayer has deep roots in American history, dating back to 1775, when the Continental Congress first called for a day of prayer as the nation sought direction and unity. Today, it continues to serve as a reminder of the importance of turning to God in times of both challenge and gratitude.

Valley Chapel's gathering will be a simple and meaningful time set aside to seek God together, lift up our nation, and glorify Him. All are welcome to attend—whether coming individually, with family, or as part of a group.

This local observance is part of a nationwide movement, with prayer events taking place from coast to coast, bringing people from all backgrounds together in a spirit of humility, hope, and faith.

We warmly invite anyone who would like to join us in prayer as we seek God for renewal, guidance, and blessing for our community and our country.

For more information about the National Day of Prayer, visit nationaldayofprayer.org.

For Advertising Information Call 774-200-7308 email: mikaela@stonebridgepress.news

Valley Chapel to hold second annual kid's clothing giveaway and Family Fun Day

UXBRIDGE — Looking for kids' clothing and a fun day out for the family? Come join us—you won't want to miss it!

Valley Chapel is hosting a free Kids' Clothing Giveaway on Saturday, May 23 from 11 a.m.–2 p.m. at our Youth Center (130 Douglas Rd., Uxbridge).

Gently used kids' clothing will be available at no cost, along with popcorn, hot dogs & refreshments, a bouncy house & inflatable obstacle course, games and activities for kids.

This isn't just a giveaway—it's a day full of fun for the whole family! Those who came to our last event absolutely loved it, and we can't wait to do it again.

Bring your kids, invite your friends, and come enjoy a welcoming, joyful atmosphere while finding great clothing for your children. We'll even keep your kids entertained while you shop!

All items and activities are free. Guests are welcome to bring non-perishable food items to support People First, the Uxbridge food pantry. Donations are appreciated but not required to participate.

Everyone is welcome—no registration needed! For more information, contact the church at 508-278-2315, visit valleychapel.us, or find us on Facebook at facebook.com/VcUxbridge.

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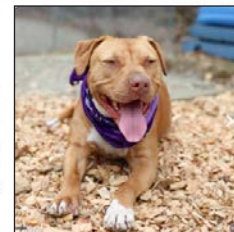


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PET of the WEEK



MEET Benji


Looking for a fun, affectionate adventure buddy? Benji might be your guy! Benji is a young, handsome pup with a big heart and a playful personality. He's social, affectionate, and loves spending time with his people. One of his favorite things in the world is a squeaky toy—he'll proudly carry it around and show it off. Whether he's heading out for a walk, playing with toys, or settling in close for cuddles, Benji is happiest when he's with his people. Benji recently went on a field trip with one of our volunteers and had a great time exploring outside the shelter. He rode calmly in the car (even dozing off during the ride!), handled stairs with ease, and even enjoyed a bath—followed by some adorable post-bath zoomies. He loved strolling through the neighborhood and confidently exploring a home environment. Benji seems happiest when he's out and about taking in the sights and smells around him. He's a strong, enthusiastic walker who sometimes gets excited when he spots other dogs or interesting activity nearby. Benji would thrive in an active home that can give him exercise, enrichment, and continued training. With guidance and lots of love, this sweet, goofy boy is ready to be an amazing companion.

500 Legacy Farms North • Hopkinton, MA 01748




Milford Federal Bank is proud to sponsor Baypath Humane Society's Pet of the Week!


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**BRENDAN
BERUBE**
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

A small bench with a big lesson

It is easy to think of elementary school as a place where the most important work happens quietly, in reading circles and math groups, in spelling lists and science experiments. Yet every so often, something happens in a classroom that reminds us learning is also about how to live together.

The new Buddy Bench at Northbridge Elementary School is one of those moments.

What began as a simple classroom lesson in Mrs. Lisa Bristol's second-grade class quickly turned into something larger. After learning how Buddy Benches help children who feel left out find someone to play with, the students recognized a need in their own school and decided to do something about it. They did not stop at noticing a problem. They took responsibility for solving it.

That distinction matters.

Instead of waiting for adults to act, the students wrote letters to Principal Lorinda Allen explaining why the bench would help their classmates. They presented their idea directly. They conducted a survey. They analyzed results. They made graphs. They reached a conclusion supported by evidence. Then they shared their findings with the school community.

In short, they practiced citizenship.

We often talk about preparing young people for the future, but preparation does not happen all at once in high school civics classes or at graduation ceremonies. It begins much earlier, in moments like this, when students learn that their voices carry weight and their ideas can shape the places where they live and learn.

There is something especially powerful about the purpose behind this project. A Buddy Bench is not complicated. It does not require technology or large budgets or elaborate planning. Its value comes from a shared understanding: if someone is sitting there, they are hoping to be included.

That is a lesson every community can appreciate.

Schools work best when they reflect the values families hope their children will carry forward. Kindness, awareness of others, and the confidence to step forward when something can be improved are not abstract goals. They are habits that grow through practice. By recognizing loneliness as something they could address together, these students demonstrated both empathy and initiative.

It is also worth noting that the adults in the building supported the process without taking it over. Principal Allen's decision to ask the class to determine whether one bench or two would best serve the school turned the idea into a genuine learning experience. The result was not simply a new piece of playground furniture. It was a project shaped by research, collaboration and thoughtful decision-making.

That kind of guidance helps students understand that their efforts are taken seriously.

Equally encouraging is the class's plan to visit other classrooms and explain how the Buddy Bench works. Projects like this succeed when they become part of a shared culture rather than a single event. By teaching their peers how to use the bench, these students are helping ensure the idea continues long after the dedication ceremony ends.

Communities often measure progress through large initiatives and long-term planning. Those efforts are important. But sometimes progress begins with something much smaller and closer to home.

A bench on a playground cannot solve every problem. What it can do is remind students that no one should feel invisible, and that even second graders have the ability to make their school a better place.

That is a lesson worth sitting with.

OPINION

Opinion and commentary from the Blackstone Valley and beyond

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thoughts on Northbridge's Spring Town Meeting

To the Editor:

For those who may remember this saying from the 1960's: "If you are not part of the solution, you must be part of the problem."

I wish to offer some thoughts and comments, on some of the 'twenty-five' Warrant articles that the Northbridge registered voters will Vote on for May 5 at the Spring Town Meeting. I will institutionalize my concerns to three which I and many others may have intense concerns on. Some of you may or may not have similar concerns?

'Article#4 is the '\$3,386,679 Prop #2 1/2 Override for the Northbridge Public Schools System. My 'confidence' is high that it should pass at the Spring Town Meeting. But at the ballot box, that is an 'unknown tangent,' in my opinion. One can only surmise that our town government will have a 'comprehensive financial plan' to quickly address the ever evolving challenging financial situation of the School District if it should not pass at the ballot box?

Northbridge is not alone in these challenges with school district funding, maybe our town government and Town Manager could be at the "tip of the spear" with other municipalities in the Blackstone Valley? To form an active comprehensive coalition with our state representatives, and to make sure the newly adopted 'millionaires tax' goes for roads and school funding? Plus also to seek a waiver on municipalities funding unfunded state school mandates if possible? Thus, an amendment attached to a must pass state supplemental budget appropriation? Plus seeking support from their state Board of Selectmen Association, Town Managers Association, and School Superintendents Association, and all the teachers' unions in the state on this challenging endeavor?

Article #13: If approved by the registered voters, the sum of up to '\$294,000 in 'Community Preservation Funds' to Habitat for Humanity for the construction of a single-family or duplex unit on the property identified as 1833 Quaker Street. If one is not aware community preservation funds are taxpayer funds that Northbridge taxpayers pay in addition to their property tax. It brings in close to almost \$300,000 a year in additional revenue, which also increases moderately as property taxes go up? It is unknown if tenured Northbridge resident's will have "absolute preference" for this housing program. Unknown if you have to be a native born US citizen. Plus, unknown if you have to live in Northbridge for a set length of time. Plus, how long can one own it before they can sell it? Plus, in these ever challenging economic times that have roots back to the President Nixon administration. Thus, where it is Northbridge taxpayers' tax money being used, hopefully it will go to benefit a tenured Northbridge resident family? Some in our town government mention a lottery system, but unknown if those in the lottery system will be Northbridge residents only?

Lastly is Article #22: To see if the town will vote to appropriate and transfer the sum of '\$1,518,877 from the undesignated fund balance (free cash) for the purpose of providing additional funding for the planning, design, and construction of a Senior Center/Community Center on the site of the former Northbridge Elementary School at 44 Cross St.?

This is an interesting article, in my opinion, for those who were at the public information sessions at the Community Classroom at the Fire Station when this project was discussed in 2025. The consultant which Northbridge taxpayers paid a good sum of money for advised us the total cost would be \$12.5 million dollars, but just to add an extra cushion \$13 million should be more than enough. When I voted for this project, I did not see a disclaimer that \$13 million was just a potential down payment, and conjecturally, millions more may be needed in the future to complete it? When the town says it is 'free cash,' it is still taxpayer money, just not new taxpayer generated revenue. Plus, why has the cost of the new Senior Community Center gone up \$1.5 million?

In my opinion, there are other ways to fund this project — Community Preservation Funds. The new facility is for senior recreation, and senior housing information at the Center, for Seniors. And along with making the outside a Senior Park and Pavilion. I believe there will be close to \$350,000 in the CPA Account after the Spring Town Meeting, plus an additional \$300,000, plus added yearly to the CPA account. Plus, there's a rumor of \$600,000 in Planning Board Mitigation Funds from an over 55 development, on Church Street, that was going to be used as sidewalk improvements to walk to the Highland Street Senior Center? Which will no longer be located there, when the new one is built on Cross Street., \$600,000 in added funds? In a nutshell CPA funds would be utilized similar to how we are paying for Castle Hill Land purchase., of \$1.2 million.

Then one may say if the new Senior Center is funded like this, what will the Town do with its '\$1.5 million in 'free cash'? One suggestion may be to help fund the Schools if the Prop 2 1/2 Override Fails at the ballot box? For those who have been following the situation the State may Financially Penalize the Town if certain funding amounts are not realized for the Northbridge School District by the town?

In closing, in these ever very challenging economic times, it may now be time to locate that wonderful potentially misplaced doctrine of caring and thinking about the Northbridge taxpayer, in my opinion. Some say it may have been conjecturally misplaced in an old file cabinet in the cellar of Town Hall, or somewhere over the historic Blackstone River rainbow maybe seven to eight years ago?

Sincerely,

BARRY R. GALLANT
WHITINSVILLE

Downing speaks for many of us

To the Editor:

A huge thank you to Mike Downing for his letter to the Editor on April 3! I know you speak for so many of us! Mr. Bev just loves to read his own thoughts, and he's probably loving the

sound of his own voice as well.

Thank you again, Mike...I agree with every word you wrote.

PHYLLIS KUIK
UXBRIDGE

Are you a Patriot?

To the Editor:

It's the 250th anniversary of the glorious 1776! Let's celebrate the year in which we declared our independence and instituted a federal Constitutional Republic!

Are you a Patriot in the tradition of the Patriots of the Revolutionary War?

When you see the American flag, snapping high on a pole, in all its red, white and blue glory, does your heart thrill? Does it make you glad that you live in America, with unlimited potential and brighter days ahead? Do you appreciate those who sacrificed their lives and their treasure to create this nation? Do you sing the national anthem, full throated, with no hesitation?

Things may sometimes be tough, but we are better off than the rest of the world, and everyone knows it. And the world is jealous. Do you wish more people loved this country and tried to do the best for it, instead of always pointing out its flaws and never acknowledging the good?

"Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." Let's consider what it meant to be a Patriot in 1776.

It meant to rebel against the control and oppression of Britain (similar to our Deep State Swamp in Washington, D.C.). Loyalists were often wealthy merchants whose trade with Britain was most important. Loyalists made up 15- 20 percent of the population. Why, that's the size of the Woke mob today!

Yet, there were wealthy merchants like John Hancock who threw their support into the Patriot cause, risking all, their wealth, their status, and their privilege. They sacrificed. Many like Hancock lost their wealth during the Revolution.

To be a Patriot meant to take a risk. It was treason. Britain wanted to hang John Adams, Sam Adams, John Hancock, and Dr. Joseph Warren.

Have you seen Dr. Warren's portrait at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, painted by John Singleton Copley in 1765? It is magnificent.

Warren, clearly a gentleman, is seated with his hand on anatomical drawings on a tea table covered with rich red velvet. Wearing a black coat with a pearly gray silk waistcoat, he looks confidently at the viewer with a kind expression. Viewing the

painting, you want to know this man. Dr. Warren was a respected physician in Boston. In 1763, when the smallpox epidemic struck the city, Warren inoculated scores of patients, including John Adams. By the mid-1760's, Warren had the largest medical practice in Boston. He had a lot to lose. His career. His children. His life.

Warren was passionately opposed to the British Stamp Act of 1764 and the Sugar Act of 1765. He scolded the British in the newspapers and in speeches at Faneuil Hall. He delivered impassioned speeches on the anniversary of the Boston Massacre in 1772 and 1775. He was a leader of the Boston Tea Party in 1773. How the British hated him!

On April 18, 1775, it was Dr. Warren himself who dispatched Paul Revere and William Dawes to warn Hancock and Adams in Lexington that the British were coming. On April 19, after the shot heard round the world at the North Bridge in Concord, Warren joined the militia and attacked the column of British regulars on their retreat back to Boston.

Warren was commissioned as a major-general in our fledgling army. Nevertheless, on June 17, 1775, he fought as a foot soldier and, at age 34, was brutally killed by the British on Bunker Hill. They stripped him of his clothes and his Bible. Then they pierced him with their bayonets, violating their own rules of engagement.

Abigail Adams was heart-broken. She wrote to John: "Not all the havoc and devastation the British have made has wounded me like the death of Warren. We want him in the Senate; we want him in his profession; we want him in the field! We mourn for the citizen, the Senator, the physician and the warrior."

Are you a Patriot? If so, say a prayer for his soul next time you salute the flag and place your hand upon your heart. As for me, I stand with the glory and the capabilities of this country and its people, its ingenuity, its work ethic, and its "let's get it done" heart. If I cannot be a jet fighter pilot, I am happy to grease the wheels.

Signed, a God-fearing, flag waving, American Patriot,

BEV GUDANOWSKI
UXBRIDGE

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We say...

To the Editor:

Abolish ICE! Free Palestine! U.S out of Iran! Defund the Police!

Like a fascist jukebox stuck in replay mode, Bev spun out debunked right-wing talking points all over last week's Opinion pages. Not once did she mention anything relevant to our lives, like the illegal war in Iran – a country that is no threat to us; the cost of gasoline — best estimates now say these prices will continue through the end of the year, regardless of any on-again-off-again peace deal...(If we 'won' the war, why are we negotiating a peace deal?); the illegal tariffs that raised the cost of everything we consume; the Epstein files - oh, she did insinuate that we shouldn't believe all the accusers, because women really do lie. No mention of the fact that a foreign leader convinced our simpleton president to put American lives in harm's way, so that we could end up with, by all accounts, the same treaty that Obama and John Kerry put together a decade ago, minus the billions in cost. No mention of the insider trading, the Trump family crypto scam, or the whistleblower who just reported that Trump was using the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to enrich himself by charging patrons \$1 million to sit in the box next to his, and \$500,000 for other boxes! No mention of "Jesus" Trump, or TrumpRx, which is just an exact copy of the already existing Good Rx, only like the Kennedy Center, with Trump's name stuck on. And what about the steep rise in drug prices, despite yet another of Trump's unrealized promises. Oh yeah, he "bought off more than he could chew."

Instead, Bev ran out the deflections, a Republican favorite. Colleges and universities accept money from China! So what? This funding supports American institutions via research partnerships, licensing deals, and high tuition from international students. She forgot to mention that over 150 countries, including Israel, have donated to American colleges and universities in just the last five years.

Next, we are supposed to get our panties in a knot over CodePink, a women-led, grassroots activist organization working to end U.S. warfare and imperialism, support peace and human rights, and redirect military spending toward social programs like healthcare and education. Founded in 2002 to oppose the Iraq War, it advocates for diplomacy and justice. I can understand why Bev would be against Code Pink. No fascist could ever live with supporting peace and human rights. Neville Roy Singham does support CodePink, so what? AIPAC supports pro-Israel policies through donations to American politicians, also known as 'buying politicians.' That's what got us into this war with Iran. Miriam Adelson, an Israeli-American billionaire, donated over \$100 million to Trump's 2024 presidential campaign. No problem with that Bev?

I guess if you are a fascist, you would welcome a Gestapo-like armed military force patrolling the streets – a federal force that will remain even after fulfilling Stephen Miller's quest to deport at least 1 million immigrants every year – regardless of their legal status. After all, America without immigrants would be...Navajo Nation? How quickly we forget that we are all descendants of immigrants. Liberals and progressives advocated for "defunding the police" primarily to reimagine public safety by reallocating police budgets toward social services, mental health care, housing, and education. Following the 2020 murder of George Floyd, the movement sought to end police brutality, reduce the militarization of police, and address perceived systemic racism in policing. The objective wasn't to take away the money – "defund the police" was a terrible choice of words - it was to re-allocate some of it to helping people., rather than killing them. Bev knows this, but a good little fascist can always twist something into a negative.

Bev then blames the dreaded and feared 'they' for everything that chafes her thighs. Let's see if I get this right: 'they' "flood the country with violent sexual predators," must be a reference to the 188 Christian & Republican leaders who have been accused of child abuse just this year; 'they' "don't value our constitution" – must be a reference to Trump and the Republicans in Congress who incited the insurrection attempt to overthrow a free and fair election; "they" are "corrupting the court system", must be a reference to the Supreme Court Conservative who created an American king by declaring a president 'above-the-law?'; "they" are 'destroying justice' – must be a reference to the thousands of cases, including potential domestic terrorist threats, dropped by Trump's DOJ so they could focus on MAGA's favorite immigrants, and all the felons Trump pardoned so they didn't have to repay their victims. 'They' must also refer to Trump's erasing the convictions of the most violent of the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys who participated in his insurrection attempt, so they can again own firearms. 'They' must be Trump's DOJ being weaponized to launch frivolous cases against those who tried to hold him accountable for his multitude of crimes, and the same DOJ that is hell bent on protecting the Epstein pedophiles. To quote Bev, "did you know"... that GOP stands for 'Guardians of Pedophiles?'

Finally, Bev says "they" want to destroy "our way of life!" From what I can see,

her 'way of life' is antithetical to everything America was founded on, and every one of Christ's teachings. She hates everyone that is different, or doesn't agree with her parochial, archaic view - they are all 'communists and socialists'. She tries to hide her bigotry and racism under the cloak of religion. The 'freedom' she longs for is the freedom to tell others what they can read, see, hear, believe and how they can live their lives. Seems to me that 'they' is you and your party, Bev. Unfortunately for her, the recent defeat of Orban (more on this later), and the inevitable defeat of Putin will usher in a new dawn of democracy and freedom around the world. She, and the other anachronistic, regressive, fascist bigots will become the detritus of Trump world - no one will ever remember that they existed.

Flying an "Abolish ICE" flag is not antithetical to displaying blue ribbons for a fallen police officer, no matter how hard Bev tries to spin it. We all support the local police. ICE is a federal terrorist group made up of Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, right-wing militias, and people who failed the police exams. We don't want them roaming our communities armed to the teeth.

Bev is all for voter ID, because, as defined, it would disenfranchise large segments of our population. That's the fascist thing to do. Voter fraud was never an issue before thin-skinned infant Trump lost an election. The States control their election processes, with enough safeguards that there has been no measurable voter fraud in our history. After seeing what Trump has done to justice and our elections so far, do you really want this Federal government controlling our votes? By the way, a photo ID may work at a Taylor Swift concert, but is not acceptable as a proposed voter ID. Despite Trump's consistent crybaby refrain - it is illegal for noncitizens – including legal and illegal immigrants - to vote in federal or state elections in the United States. They can't, and they don't.

After the response from Catholics, Trump changed his story about the "Trump is Jesus" meme. It was really "Trump is Doctor Christ!" I know that my doctor always appears out of a cloud, wearing robes and carrying a glowing orb. (I'm sure he can also walk on water, but I've never asked for a demo.) JD Vance, a converted Catholic, just warned the Pope to be careful when talking about theology. Vance told the Pope what he is allowed to say, and tried to school him on his own religious order. All because the Pope had the temerity to stand for peace and humanity...just like CodePink! In response, as of April 16, the Trump administration reportedly canceled an \$11 million contract with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami. This move defunds a program providing care and shelter for homeless migrant children. It's what Jesus would do. Where is bible-thumping, god-fearing, radical Christian Bev on this?

After putting the Pope in his place, JD Vance went to Hungary to ask the Hungarian people to re-elect, as Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, a fascist dictator friend of Trump. Trump even promised the Hungarian people that American would financially support Hungary if Orban were re-elected. I guess all that money we can't afford for health care could be better spent supporting a fellow dictator. Orban's regime was the role model for Project 2025, the writers of which spent time in Hungary, studying their subversion of democracy. Despite Trump's efforts, Orban lost. His defeat is a victory for democracy around the world, and gives us renewed hope as we battle the scourge that is Trump.

Fun facts: While Vance was in Hungary, and Witkoff and Kushner – two real estate apartment renters – were 'negotiating' in Iran, Trump and Rubio were attending a mixed martial arts fight in Florida. It's all about priorities! And, in an attempt to normalize Trump's prodigious soda drinking habit, Dr. Oz claimed that diet soda kills cancer cells. What else would you expect out of RFK Jr.'s Department of Health!

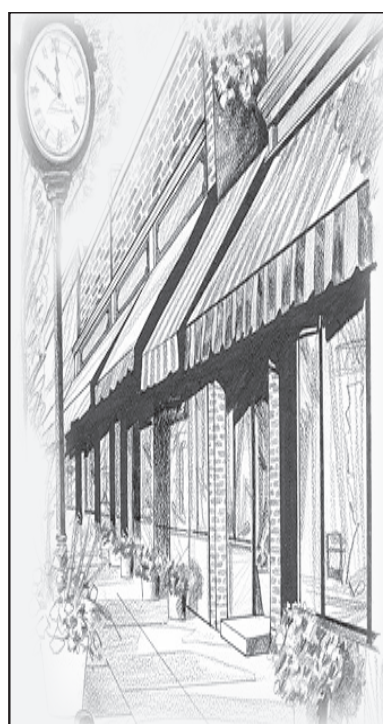
Do you think the Beatles conjured Trump when they wrote "The Fool on the Hill?"

RICK BEVILACQUA
WHITINSVILLE

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.

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ValleyCAST announces winners of 13th Annual Art Palette Contest

WHITINSVILLE — ValleyCAST, the arts and culture arm of Open Sky Community Services, has announced the winners of its 13th Annual Art Palette Contest. Each year, local artists of all ages and abilities transform ordinary wooden art palettes into original works of art. This year's finished palettes, including the nine winners sporting their award ribbons, are on view in the Spaulding R. Aldrich Heritage Gallery at Alternatives' Whitin Mill, 50 Douglas Rd., Whitinsville, until Friday April 17. Gallery hours are Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Cash prizes are awarded for first, second, and third place in three age categories. In the Child category, Kayla Harney took first place for Starry Night,

Eleanor Weldon second for “Gryffindor!” and Donovan Pilakas third for “A Day in the Life of a Cat.” In the Teen category, Michael Reeves-Hall placed first with “The Fall of Icarus,” Caroline Brown second with coo, and Adelle Pilakas third with “Where It Begins.” Adult winners were Brandon Drake, first place for “Franklin’s Journey Through Space and Time,” Bob Liberty second place for “Elf Owl and Friends,” and in third place Stephen Paulson for his untitled palette.

For more information about the contest visit openskycs.org/news-events or to see photos of the winning art palettes, visit [Facebook.com/ValleyCAST](https://www.facebook.com/ValleyCAST). This event is sponsored by ValleyCAST, Jerry’s Artarama, and Open Sky Community Services.

To learn more about ValleyCAST and/or Open Sky Community Services, visit openskycs.org.

About ValleyCAST
ValleyCAST’s mission is to foster a creative and engaged community in the Historic Blackstone Valley that is inclusive and supportive of all people with and without disabilities. ValleyCAST is the arts and culture arm of Open Sky Community Services.

About Open Sky Community Services: Open Sky Community Services has been helping individuals in our community achieve more than they imagined possible for over 50 years. The agency provides a wide range of services throughout Central Massachusetts for children, adults and families with mental health challenges, intellectual and develop-

mental disabilities, substance use disorders, brain injury, homelessness and other complex challenges.

Open Sky is committed to equity and belonging and promotes a trauma-informed, whole-person care

culture. For more information, please visit www.openskycs.org.



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The Nomad's return: A local lesson in community and tenacity

PALMER — In the world of mountain biking, a frame is just metal and rubber until it's seasoned by the trail and the stories of those who ride it. For Joseph Bolandrina of Athol (formerly of Douglas), a veteran (US Army) and former employee at Curaleaf in Oxford, his 2008 Santa Cruz Nomad was more than just a «senior» member of his mountainbike collection; it was a tool for building bridges.

Over the last six years, Bolandrina has mentored more than a dozen coworkers, encouraging them to trade pavement for dirt. When his colleague, Brandan Michon of Three Rivers, expressed interest in riding, Bolandrina didn't hesitate to hand over the handlebars—to his superlative loaner.

However, on Nov. 23, 2025, the gears of that friendship were put to the ultimate test. Michon called Bolandrina with the news every cyclist dread: The Nomad had been stolen from his property.

A 12-day pursuit While the weight of the theft hung heavy on Michon, he refused to let the trail go cold. What fol-



lowed was a 12-day masterclass in local resourcefulness. Michon began a relentless investigation, scouring the neighborhood, interviewing local business owners, and knocking on doors.

The breakthrough came from an unlikely source of

surveillance: a neighbor's school bus. By reviewing the vehicle's motion-sensor footage, Michon was able to piece together the movements of the thief.

"Had it not been for the neighbors both next door and around town, to the local business own-

ers, strangers, and close ones," Michon said, "this may have been 99 percent impossible."

The power of "virtues and grit"

The recovery mission became a true community effort. Armed with footage

and local intel, the Palmer Police Department was able to track down the suspect and retrieve the bike.

The reunion took place Sunday, April 12, in a local parking lot. When Bolandrina arrived in his Jeep, he was met not just by Michon, but by a "wing-

man"—a friend who had stood by Michon through every hour of the search.

"I immediately stopped the Jeep and hopped out for a very hearty and grateful hug," Bolandrina recalled. "It was an unbelievable effort."

More than a bike The Santa Cruz Nomad returned home with a few "scars" from its journey—the thief had added blue zip ties and swapped the hand grips—but the integrity of the mountain bike remained.

For Joe Bolandrina and the Palmer community, the physical return of the bike is secondary to the social fabric it revealed. The "Artemis II journey" of the Nomad proved that a combination of community cooperation and individual tenacity can reverse even the most disheartening circumstances.

As the dust settles on this "moon-and-back" journey, the takeaway for the residents of Palmer is clear: when neighbors look out for one another, the impossible becomes reality. Or, as Joe Bolandrina summarizes the experience: "Good Thoughts. Good Words. Good Deeds."

Local students named to Emerson College Dean's List

BOSTON — The following students are named to Emerson College's Dean's List for the Fall 2025 semester. To make the Dean's List, students must have a grade point average of 3.7 or higher for that semester.

- Bethany Loach of Uxbridge
- Julia Psuik of Uxbridge
- Mckenna Smith of Uxbridge
- Grace Linsley of Uxbridge

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For more information, visit emerson.edu.

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Email Us @

news@stonebridgepress.news

Upton VFW summer flea markets begin May 9

UPTON — The Upton Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post will begin its summer series of annual flea markets on May 9 at Post headquarters, 16 Milford St. (Route 140). They will continue the second Saturday of each month through October. Hours are 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

At this first event, the Upton Garden Club will participate as it does annually with the sale of plants and shrubs for spring planting.

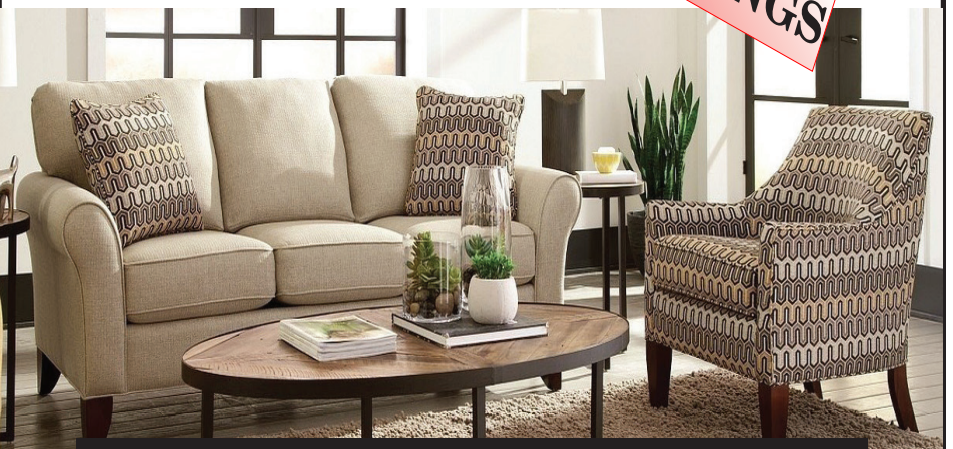
Flea market vendors can rent spaces for \$10 each. For an additional \$5 each, tables can be provided by the Post. Reservations are not needed although Post member David Kennedy can provide further information by contacting the Upton VFW Facebook Page or calling him at 508-529-3314.

Coffee and doughnuts are available through the morning, then hamburgers, chips and cold drinks for lunch.

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43" Smart TV.....\$199.99 Regularly \$249.99	FRIGIDAIRE 18 CU. FT. REFRIGERATOR Reg. \$699.99 \$599.99	FAMOUS MAKER OVER THE STOVE MICROWAVE Reg. \$249.99 \$229.99	LG #3400 WASHER & DRYER Front Load, Reg. \$1599.99 \$1399.99	MAYTAG DELUXE WASHER OR DRYER Reg. \$699.99 \$549.99	WHIRLPOOL SIDE BY SIDE Reg. \$1499.99 \$1199.99	2025 THE OFFICIAL CHOICE AWARDS Best of Central Mass
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OBITUARY

Charles R. "Buzz" Barry Jr., 87



Palm Harbor, Florida- Charles R. "Buzz" Barry Jr., 87, of Palm Harbor, Florida, passed away peacefully at home on April 17, 2026, after a courageous battle with Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma. He is survived by his beloved wife of nearly 65 years, Patricia Jean (DiMarzio) Barry, whom he married on June 3, 1961.

Born on March 10, 1939, in Brockton, Massachusetts, Charles was the son of Charles Raymond Barry Sr. and Winifred (Campbell) Barry. He proudly volunteered to enlist in the United States Army in 1958, serving until 1960, including during the Korean War. He continued his service in the Army Reserves from 1960 to 1964. Following his military service, Charles built a long and successful career with United Parcel Service (UPS), where he served as a Northeast Regional Labor Relations Manager.

Charles was a devoted family man who found his greatest joy in spending time with those he loved. He had a lifelong passion for sports, especially following the Boston Red Sox, and enjoyed watching golf as much as playing it. An avid golfer, he proudly achieved three hole-in-ones over the years. He also loved traveling, dining out, and starting each day with a crossword puzzle.

A man of deep faith, Charles was a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church and St. Patrick's Parish and carried a strong and enduring belief in God. He had a great appreciation for reading, particularly novels by James Patterson and Dan Brown, and enjoyed relaxing with television, including his favorite shows on Netflix and John Wayne movies. Known for his love of memorabilia and his gift for storytelling, Charles will be remembered for his warmth, gener-

osity, humor, and the way he brought people together.

Above all, Charles will be remembered for sincerely loving his family and his country.

In addition to his wife Patricia, he is survived by his children: John J. Barry and his partner Susan J. Achorn; Colleen M. Carse and her husband James; Julie A. Cray and her husband Brian; and Timothy P. Barry and his wife Kimberly. He also leaves behind his cherished grandchildren: Elisabeth N. Carse, Maria C. Cray, and Jonathan B. Cray. Charles is further survived by his siblings, Winifred K. Pelton and her husband William, and Joseph Barry and his wife Sandra, along with many extended family members and dear friends.

His family takes comfort in the many memories they shared with him, whether it was watching a game, sharing a meal, or simply enjoying time together. His strength, love, and steady presence will remain with them always.

Family and friends are invited to attend calling hours on Sunday, April 26, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM at Carr Funeral Home, 24 Hill St, Whitinsville, MA 01588. A funeral Mass will be held on Monday, April 27, at 11:00 AM at St. Patrick's Church, 1 Cross St, Whitinsville, MA 01588, followed by a luncheon at Whitinsville Golf Club, 179 Fletcher St, Whitinsville, MA 01588. A private burial will take place on Tuesday, April 28, at Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne.

The family thanks all who have offered their support and love during this time.

For those who wish, donations in Charles' memory may be made to the American Cancer Society or Empath Suncoast Hospice. To share a memory or condolence with the family, please visit www.carrfuneralhome.com



WCS

continued from page A1

education that nurtures both academic excellence and spiritual growth. By expanding access to its programs, the school contin-

ues to serve a diverse and growing community of learners throughout the region.

For more information about WCS Select, visit whitinsvillechristian.org/wcs-select, or call the office of admissions at 508-372-3278.

VISIT

continued from page A1

Finally, Penny Welch, Assistant Chief Probation Officer, shared her story with the students. She started as a special education teacher and then worked for the Department of Corrections. She enjoyed

both roles, so she essentially took on a role that blended the two. She was a probation officer for six years and was promoted to Assistant Chief thereafter. She explained that in order to be an Associate Probation Officer, no degree or exam is required. She indicated that one starts by getting a foot in

the door in a support role. However, to become an Assistant Probation Officer (working with clients directly), you must take an exam and need at least a Bachelor's degree.

The students thoroughly enjoyed the visit and appreciated all of the information provided.

Latin American Business Expo returns to Worcester April 25, marking 11 years of impact

WORCESTER — The Latin American Business Organization Inc. (LABO) will host its Annual Latin American Business Expo on Saturday, April 25 from noon to 4 p.m. at the DCU Center in Worcester. This dynamic event is free and open to the public, bringing together entrepreneurs, micro, small businesses, and the community for a day of connection, opportunity, and celebration.

This year marks 11 years of impact since the first Latin American Business Expo launched in 2015, continuing a strong tradition of elevating small and minority-owned businesses across Central Massachusetts.

A platform for business growth and visibility

The Latin American Business Expo has become a key space where businesses gain exposure, build connections, and access new opportunities. Attendees can expect:

- A diverse range of local and regional business exhibitors
- Food tastings representing Latin American cultures
- A Venture Pitch Competition supporting small business innovation
- Networking opportunities with entrepreneurs, institutions, and community leaders
- Family-friendly activities, entertainment, raffles, and prizes

Come out. Discover. Support.

This is an opportunity to meet local entrepreneurs, explore their products and services, and buy local. Not only are you

supporting local businesses, you are also supporting the families behind them and strengthening our local economy.

"For 11 years, LABO has been creating opportunities where they didn't exist," said Elizabeth Cruz, President of LABO.

"This Expo is more than an event, it is where businesses are seen, supported, and connected to opportunity," added Cruz. "It represents our commitment to helping entrepreneurs grow, build, and contribute to Worcester's economy."

The Expo advances LABO's mission to elevate underrepresented businesses and drive economic mobility through entrepreneurship and workforce development.

Rooted in impact

Founded in 2015, LABO is a Worcester-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit and an affiliate of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce. The organization is dedicated to increasing economic prosperity for Latino-owned and underserved businesses through training, certification programs, and business development initiatives.

Today, LABO delivers more than 12 active programs and workshops in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, breaking language barriers and creating real access to opportunity for our community. These include youth entrepreneurship and leadership development programs, workforce training, supplier diversity certification, financial readiness, and industry-recognized certifications, including the only Construction Supervisory License (CSL) training in Spanish in Worcester County and ServSafe certification offered in both Spanish and Portuguese.

Get involved

The Latin American Business Expo is free to attend, with limited opportunities still available for vendors, sponsors, and community partners.

To register, become a vendor, or learn more, visit: www.labous.org.

Send all obituary notices to Stonebridge Press, PO Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550, or by e-mail to obits@stonebridgepress.news

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LEGALS

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Worcester Probate and Family Court

225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
Docket No. W026P1135GD
**NOTICE AND ORDER:
Petition for Appointment
of Guardian of a Minor**
In the interests of
Amelia Coco Estes
of Uxbridge, MA
Minor

NOTICE TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

- Hearing Date/Time:** A hearing on a Petition for Appointment of Guardian of a Minor filed by on 04/06/2026 by **Brandi J. Estes** of Uxbridge, MA will be held 05/01/2026 08:30 AM Guardianship of Minor Hearing Located **Worcester Probate & Family Court**
- Response to Petition:** You may respond by filing a written response to the Petition or by appearing in person at the hearing. If you choose to file a written response, you need to: File the original with the Court; and Mail a copy to all interested parties at least five (5) business days before the hearing.
- Counsel for the Minor:** The minor (or an adult on behalf of the minor) has the right to request that counsel be appointed for the minor.
- Counsel for Parents:** If you are a

parent of the minor child who is the subject of this proceeding you have a right to be represented by an attorney. If you want an attorney and cannot afford to pay for one and if you give proof that you are indigent, an attorney will be assigned to you. Your request for an attorney should be made immediately by filling out the Application of Appointment of Counsel form. Submit the application form in person or by mail at the court location where your case is going to be heard.

5. Presence of the Minor at Hearing: A minor over age 14 has the right to be present at any hearing, unless the Court finds that it is not in the minor's best interests.

ORDER TO PETITIONER(S)
IT IS ORDERED THAT copies of this Notice and the Petition for Appointment of Guardian of a Minor be served in hand on the minor, (if 14 or more years of age and not the petitioner), the guardian, the parents of the minor, and any other person if ordered by the Court, at least **fourteen (14)** days prior to the hearing date listed above. **Service must be made by the sheriff, constable, or other person approved by the Court.**

If service in hand cannot be accomplished on any interested party. **IT IS ORDERED** that copies of this Notice and the Petition for Appointment of Guardian of a Minor be served on the interested party by leaving at and mailing by regular first class mail to last and usual place of residence of the

interested party at least **fourteen (14) days** prior to the date of hearing listed above.

If the identity of whereabouts of an interested party is **not known, IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that copies of this Notice and Petition for Appointment of Guardian of a Minor be served on all interested persons at least **fourteen (14)** days prior to the hearing date by mailing first class mail and by publishing a copy of the Order and Notice once in **Webster Times, Webster** publication to be at least **Seven (7)** days prior to the hearing date.

If required, service on the United States Veteran Administration and the Department of Children and Families may be accomplished by regular first class mail at least **Seven (7)** days prior to the hearing.

THIS IS A LEGAL NOTICE: An important court proceeding that may affect your rights has been scheduled. If you do not understand this notice or other court papers, please contact an attorney for legal advice.

Date: April 7, 2026
Stephanie K. Fattman
Register of Probate
April 24, 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. W026P1023EA
**INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION NOTICE**

Estate Of:

Joseph Paul Gulla
Date of Death: 02/24/2026

To All persons interested in the above-captioned estate, by Petition of **Sarah C Tufo of Franklin MA** a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

Sarah C Tufo of Franklin MA 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.

April 24, 2026

P.E.O. Chapters R and AA join forces to revive beloved "Chocolate Sunday" fundraiser

CHARLTON — After a hiatus of several years, a cherished local tradition is making a decadent return. Sheila Ansley of P.E.O. Chapter R recently announced that the organization's signature "Chocolate Sunday" is officially back on the calendar, thanks to a dynamic new partnership with Chapter AA.

The fundraiser—an afternoon dedicated to sampling gourmet chocolate treats, coffee, and tea—was previously sidelined due to the intensive labor required for a single small group to manage. However, after Chapter R reached out to their sisters in Chapter AA, the two groups agreed to a joint venture. By splitting the workload, the chapters have found a sustainable way to bring the sweetness back to Charlton.

Event details
Date: Sunday, May 17

Time: 2 p.m.
Location: The Performing Arts Center at The Overlook, Charlton

Mission: All proceeds support the P.E.O. Sisterhood's mission of providing life-changing educational opportunities and scholarships for women.

Contacts: Sheila Ansley 508-434-2649 or Elizabeth Pacek 508-829-4504

A season of sisterhood: Chapter R's Active Winter

The revival of Chocolate Sunday comes on the heels of a busy winter for Chapter R. Despite a string of "historically biting" temperatures, members remained dedicated to their cultural and social calendar.

In December, members braved one of the coldest nights of the year to tour the "Winter Reimagined" display at Tower Hill Botanic



Garden. While the air was frigid, the spectacular light installations proved well worth the chill.

The momentum continued into January with two standout events:

Musical excellence: Members attended a moving organ concert performed by Amanda Mole,

daughter of Jackie Mole. The performance offered a warm, soaring reprieve from the January frost.

Founders Day: The group honored the P.E.O. Sisterhood's 1869 roots at the Founders Day Program. Members «toughed out» the New England cold to enjoy a commemorative

meal and program honoring the seven women who started the organization over 150 years ago.

Looking ahead to spring As the frost thaws, Chapter R is looking forward to milder weather and continued community engagement.

For over a century and a half, the P.E.O. Sisterhood has focused on the intersection of friendship and philanthropy. Through various grants and STAR scholarships, they continue to help women reach their educational goals, one "Chocolate Sunday" at a time.

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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 is 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 sched-
ule your ride. Grocery
shopping pick up starts at

9:30.
Hannaford: 4/24
Walmart: 4/3 & 4/24
Price Chopper: 4/10

APRIL EVENTS:
Would you be interested in
a Tai Chi class at the center?
Please call the center if you
are interested. We are
thinking of adding a class!
The center will be closed
on Monday April 20th,
in observance of Patriot's
Day.

**WELLNESS CLINIC
DATES:** Monday April
6th & Tuesday April 28th.
Clinic is open from 10 am
to 12 pm.

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. This
event is sponsored by The
Sunshine Club. 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 sup-
plies 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 every-
one's attention before he
was rescued. We will learn
about Goose, and many

other reptiles that this orga-
nization has rescued and
now houses. Refreshments
will be served. Sign up by
4/24.

May 7th Darci will be
back doing hearing aid
cleanings. She is at the center
from 10 to 11, please
call the center to schedule
your appointment with her.

PLEASE CALL (508)
476-2283 TO SIGN UP
FOR PROGRAMS &
CLASSES

Check our website for
events that may not be list-
ed here

<https://www.douglas-ma.gov/202/AdultSocial-Center-Senior-Center>

PLUMMER PLACE

Home of the Northbridge Senior Center

The following events will take place at
Plummer Place, Home of the Northbridge
Senior Center. We are located at 20
Highland Street in Whitinsville. Telephon
e: (508) 234-2002. Northbridge residents
have priority for all programming and
events. Please call the main office to sign
up for special events and programs, so we
can plan accordingly.

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, please call the main office.

Regular Programs:

Meditation with Kelly
Every Thursday morning at 9:30am

Book Club:

3rd Wednesday at 10:30am

Please call Kelly to find out what book
we are reading.

Brew Crew:

First Wednesday at 9:30am

NOTE: NO meeting on May 6th

Dull Men's Club:

4th Tuesday at 9:30am

Tuesday, April 28th

Guest: Kevin Barry: A Career of
Courage and Public Service with the
Marines and the State Police

Scrabble:

Monday, April 27th at 9:30am

Women's Collective:

2nd Thursday at 10:00am

Please call Amy for more information.
Writing Your Way

2nd and 4th Thursdays at 2:00pm

Please call Lori for more information.

Special Events and Programs:

Music Concert with Tom and Andy

Wednesday, April 29th

1:00pm-2:00pm

"Tom and Andy" is a guitar and percus-
sion duo who take seniors on an interac-
tive 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.
Northbridge residents have priority.

Mother's Day Tea

Wednesday, May 6th

1pm - 2pm

Deborah Sampson — A Farm Girl on
the Front Lines!

Janet Parnes is back to teach us the
secrets and strategies of a young woman
who hoodwinked the Continental Army
with her principled deception. A special
thank you to the Massachusetts Cultural
Council, Atria Senior Living, Unibank
and Hawk Hill Orchard for helping to
sponsor this event. Hats and fancy attire
are welcomed, but not necessary. Space
is limited. Sign up in the main office.
Northbridge residents have priority. This
program is sponsored in part by a grant
from the Northbridge Cultural Council,
a local agency which is supported by the
Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state
agency.

Country Music Club to hold dances

UXBRIDGE — The New England Country Music Club will hold a dance with live,
classic country music on Sunday, April 26 with "Angela West & Showdown" and on
May 3 with the "Rhode Island Rednecks" 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,
and snacks are allowed.

Webster Five commits \$390,000 to support Worcester community initiatives

REGION — Webster Five announced that it
committed more than \$390,000 in 2025 to sup-
port Worcester-based orga-
nizations through a range
of community investments,
reinforcing the Bank's
ongoing commitment to
corporate social responsi-
bility and local impact.

The Bank's support
spans organizations
addressing a variety of
community needs, includ-
ing housing stability, youth
development, economic
opportunity and access to
essential resources.

"At Webster Five, we
don't take a one-size-fits-
all approach to communi-
ty investment," said Brian
Westerlind, President and
CEO, Webster Five. "By
supporting a range of
initiatives, we're able to
help these organizations
meet diverse needs across
Worcester and contribute
to stronger outcomes over
time."

Webster Five's multi-
year community invest-
ments include:
Central Massachusetts
Housing Alliance
(CMHA) — \$100,000

over two years to support
construction of the orga-
nization's Day Resource
Center, which will pro-
vide essential services
for unhoused individuals,
including housing naviga-
tion, employment resourc-
es and access to daily
necessities.

YMCA of Central
Massachusetts — \$100,000
over five years to sup-
port development of
the Greendale Family
Branch's Youth Innovation
and Learning Development
Hub, expanding access to
educational tools, recre-
ational activities and social
development programs for
area youth.

Worcester Regional
Strategic Opportunities
Foundation — \$75,000 over
three years to the Linda
Salem Pervier Permanent
Restricted Fund, an initia-
tive advancing long-term
economic development
and workforce initiatives
throughout the region.

Worcester Community
Action Council (WCAC) —
\$30,000 annually to sup-
port the Fuel Assistance
Program, providing heat-
ing assistance for local

families in need during the
winter months.

Worcester Jewish
Community Center
(JCC) — \$50,000 over
four years to fund facil-
ity improvements and
enhance the organization's
ability to serve the growing
Worcester community.

United Way of Central
Massachusetts — \$35,000
in matching funds for
employee donations as
part of Webster Five's
annual employee giving
campaign, supporting a
range of local programs
that advance education,
financial stability and basic
needs across the Central
Massachusetts community.

About Webster Five
Established in 1868,
Webster Five offers con-
sumers, businesses and
nonprofits not only a wide
range of products and ser-
vices but also stability and
community support that
can't be matched by their
larger counterparts. To
learn more about Webster
Five, visit web5.com.

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Friday's Child

Keira and Landon
Age 16, 15
Registration 9050 9019

Landon and Keira are a close-knit brother and sister who very much want to be adopted together. Their bond is strong, and they truly find comfort and confidence in one another. Keira is especially protective of Landon, often stepping into the role of encourager and cheerleader when he needs it most.

Keira is outgoing, social, and comfortable expressing her thoughts and feelings. She has a lively personality, a witty sense of humor, and a slightly sarcastic edge that makes people laugh. Beneath that confidence, she has a genuinely soft and caring side. Keira has a bold, unique sense of fashion and fully embraces her style — from coordinating outfits to accessorizing with a trendy pocketbook and bright lipstick that makes her look pop. She loves shopping for clothes and expressing herself creatively through fashion.

Keira's interests are wide-ranging. She enjoys swimming, playing board games, reading, watching TV shows and movies, and bowling. She is talented in Tae Kwon Do and participates in therapeutic riding lessons. Always full of ideas, Keira hopes to explore music and dance lessons in the future. She attends a technical school and is considering focusing on fashion design or animal science — two areas that reflect both her creativity and her love for animals.

Landon is a kind, loving, and thoughtful child with a big heart and a wonderful sense of humor. He enjoys making others laugh and often surprises people with his clever observations. Landon is naturally curious and loves to figure out how things work — whether it's taking apart a concept in science, solving a tricky problem, or building something new. He is especially interested in science and engineering and thrives when he can work hands-on.

Landon loves building with Legos, where he can spend hours designing detailed structures and experimenting with new ideas. He enjoys video games, particularly those that allow him to strategize, create, and problem-solve. Over the summer, he attended a Robotics Camp and a Minecraft camp, both of which allowed him to combine creativity with technology. He enjoyed collaborating with peers, learning coding basics, and seeing his ideas come to life.

In addition to his technical interests, Landon enjoys spending time outdoors and benefits from opportunities to stay active. He appreciates one-on-one attention and thrives with encouragement and positive reinforcement. Landon does best in environments where his curiosity is nurtured and where he feels supported as he explores new interests.

Together, Landon and Keira are bright, engaging, and full of potential. They bring laughter, creativity, determination, and heart into every space they enter.

<https://www.mareinc.org/recruitment-group/23373776781>
Can I Adopt?

If you're at least 18 years old, have a stable source of income, and room in your heart, you may be a perfect match to adopt a waiting child. Adoptive parents can be single, married, or partnered; experienced or not; renters or homeowners; LGBTQ+ singles and couples. As an adoptive parent, you won't have to pay any fees, adoption from foster care is completely free in Massachusetts.

The process to adopt a child from foster care includes training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you. These steps will help match you with a child or sibling group that your family will fit well with. To learn more about adoption from foster care visit www.mareinc.org. Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) can give you guidance and information on the adoption process. Reach out today to find out all the ways you can help children and teens in foster care.

Massasoit Art Guild announces Spring Small Works show at Leicester Public Library

LEICESTER — The Massasoit Art Guild will present its Spring Small Works Art and Photography Show from April 30 through May 27 at the Leicester Public Library, offering visitors a chance to view a wide range of compact-format artwork created by guild members from across the region.

The members-only exhibition will feature original pieces limited to a maximum size of 12 by 14 inches, measured by outside frame dimensions. Artists may submit up to two entries each. Organizers said the smaller format encourages experimentation and accessibility while allowing a broad range of styles and media to be displayed in a shared community setting.

The show will be judged as a single category rather than divided by medium. Awards will be presented for first, second and third place, along with an honorary mention. A People's Choice selection will also be recognized. Ribbon prizes will be awarded to winners.

Artwork drop-off and check-in is scheduled for Thursday, April 30, from 9:30 to 11 a.m. in the library's ground-floor Community Room. Later that day, the guild will host a public meet-and-greet reception with participating artists from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the same location. Organizers encourage

all participating artists to attend the reception to connect with visitors and fellow exhibitors.

The exhibition will remain on display during regular library hours through May 27. Pick-up for submitted artwork is scheduled for Thursday, May 28, from 9:30 to 11 a.m., again in the Community Room.

Registration for the show opened Feb. 22 and continues through April 15, or until available space is

filled. Advance registration is required, and artists must complete the entry process through the guild's website.

Guild representatives said the annual small works exhibition provides an opportunity for artists to present new material while also introducing local audiences to the range of talent within the organization. The show is designed to be approachable for both established artists and newer members interested in exhibiting their work

publicly. Support for the exhibition is provided in part through a grant from the Spencer Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Mass Cultural Council.

Additional information about show rules and registration is available through the Massasoit Art Guild website. Questions may also be directed to the organization by email at massasoitartguild@gmail.com.

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Additional information about show rules and registration is available through the Massasoit Art Guild website. Questions may also be directed to the organization by email at massasoitartguild@gmail.com.



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

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Webster ~ 33 Slater Street



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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

On the shores of Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg

Webster Lake Waterfront Listing!!
On Indian Point # 10 "Private Rd"



SORRY, SOLD!

ASTONISHING 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



SORRY, SOLD!

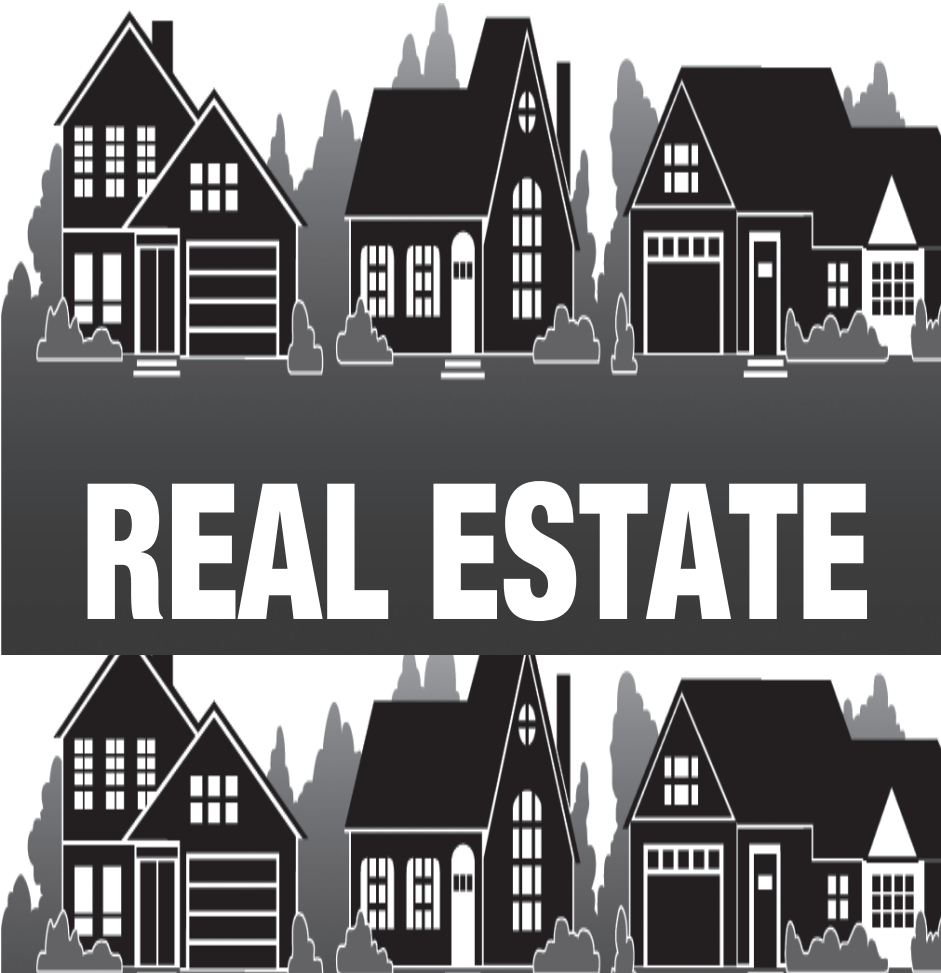
Renovated + move-in ready lakefront home w/1,700+/- sq ft. Open kitchen/dining/living w/cathedral ceilings + wall of windows. Primary suite w/private bath! 2 add'l bedrooms, 2nd Full bath. Lower level family room w/walkout to water. Wraparound deck, new vinyl railings, terraced yard, sandy beach, professional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

Webster Lake Waterfront - 31 Bayview!!



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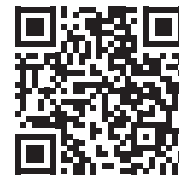


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