

Bay Path opens application process For 2026-2027

CHARLTON — Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School is excited to announce that the application process for the 2026–2027 school year is now open!

As a school dedicated to excellence, Bay Path offers students a wide range of opportunities to explore their passions and prepare for future success. With 23 career pathways, rigorous academics, and a variety of sports, activities, and clubs, there is truly something for every student at Bay Path. With that being said, I wanted to provide as much clarity as possible around our admissions policy.

Admissions policy and lottery overview

Bay Path’s Admissions Policy has been updated and approved by the School Committee to fully align with state guidelines.


To ensure equity and fairness, the admissions lottery sys-

tem—conducted by a third-party organization—gives every eligible student from our ten sending districts an equal opportunity to attend Bay Path.

All applicants who complete the admissions process will be entered into the lottery. Students demonstrating strong attendance and disciplinary records may receive additional lottery entries:

- Students with fewer than 27 unexcused absences and no suspensions or expulsions under M.G.L. c.71, §§ 37H or 37H½ within the past 270 days may receive up to three lottery submissions.
- Students who fall short of these standards will receive one lottery submission.

This process recognizes the importance of commitment and responsibility while maintaining fair access for all applicants.

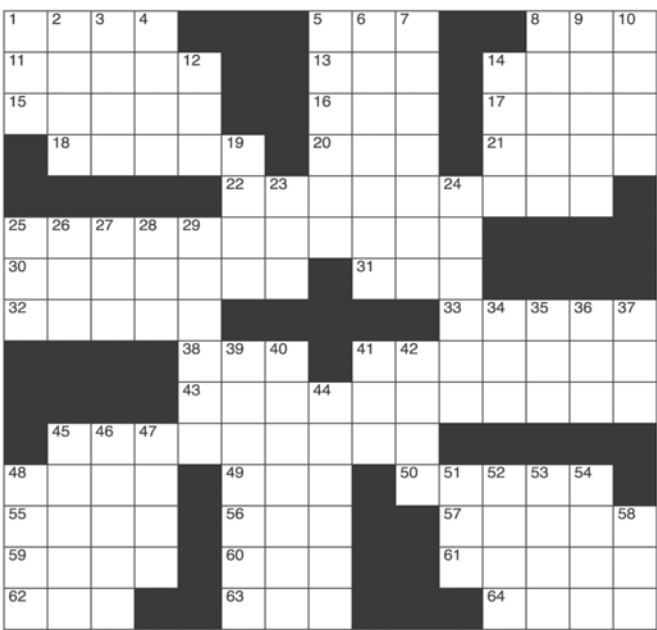


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CLUES ACROSS

1. Paddles

5. Sunscreen rating

8. Very fast airplane

11. Immune responses

13. “Partner” to feather

14. New England river

15. Longest river in New Guinea

16. Midway between east and southeast

17. Israeli politician

18. Back bones

20. Consumed

21. One you can rely on

22. Dressed up gaudily

25. Representatives

30. Dog breed

31. Pitching statistic

32. Manpower

33. S. Korean entertainer
38. Outsourcing firm

41. Viceroy of Egypt under Turkish rule

43. One who removes antlers from a flower

45. Potluck dish

48. Discount

49. Airborne (abbr.)

50. Cavalry sword

55. Basics

56. Hollywood director Howard

57. Afflicted in mind or body

59. Horsley and Majors are two

60. Midway between northeast and east

61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation

62. Malaysian isthmus

63. Fall back

64. Check

CLUES DOWN

1. Former CIA

2. Baseball’s best pitchers

3. ___ Nui, Easter Island

4. Invests in little enterprises

5. Constant

6. Hobby

7. A place to store food

8. Short-tail marten

9. Burn with a hot liquid

10. Left his heart in San Francisco

12. Swedish krona

14. Legendary actor Connery

19. French cleric

23. Former measure of length for textiles

24. Opaque glassy substance

25. Residue of burned item

26. A place to unwind

27. Japanese honorific

28. Terminus
29. Fails to make a shot

34. Journalist Tarbell

35. College hoops tournament

36. Monetary unit of Macao

37. Of she

39. Spoke ill of

40. Elements

41. Kilocalorie (abbr.)

42. Shades

44. Poem of fourteen lines

45. Pole used in Scottish sport

46. Hollyhocks genus

47. Street name for marijuana

48. Polio vaccine developer

51. Swiss river

52. Prejudice

53. Actor Idris

54. Confederate soldiers

58. Criticize

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- **Central Baptist Church**
256 Main St., Southbridge, MA 01550
Tel 508/764-6365; Worship 10:00 A.M.
- **Charlton Federated Church**, 64 Main St., 508- 248-5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. Summer worship is 9:30 a.m. www.fed-church.org
- **Charlton Baptist Church**, 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488, www.charltonbaptist.org, Sunday worship 10 a.m.
- **Charlton City United Methodist**, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org Sunday worship and Children’s church 10am
- **St. Anne St. Patrick Church**, 16 Church St., Fiskdale (508) 347-7338 www.stannestpatparish.com Saturday Vigil Mass at 4 pm, Sunday 8 am, 10 am, 12 noon, Youth Mass (September to May) 5 pm. Daily Mass Mon - Thurs 7:30 and 10 am, Fri and Sat 7:30 am
- **Elm Street Congregational Church**, 61 Elm Street, Southbridge, Ma 01550 Phone: 508-764-8085 • Sunday service 10:00 am Pastor Kathryn Light
- **Faith Baptist Church**, 515 Dennison Drive, Southbridge Phone number 508-764-6132, Worship Service: Sunday 10:00 a.m.
- **St. Joseph’s Church**, 10 H. Putnam Ext, 248-7862, www.stjosephscharlton.com, Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30 p.m., Sunday Mass 8 a.m., Sunday Family Mass 10 a.m., Sunday LifeTEEN Mass 5 p.m., Weekday Mass Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 a.m.
- **Wayside Church**, 6 Haggerty Road, 248-5144
- **Assemblies of God Southern New England District Headquarters**, Route 20, 248-3771, snedag.org, Office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Living Word Church of Charlton**, 10 Main Street - Grange building 1st Floor, Charlton, Ma 01507, Pastor Craig Bellisario, (508) 233-8349 Sunday Service 10:00am. www.livingwordcharlton.com info@livingwordcharlton.com
- **New Life Fellowship A/G, SNED Chapel**, 307 Sturbridge Road, Rt. 20, Charlton, MA, Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.
- **Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale-** 8 Maple St. Sturbridge, 774-304-1021 www.sturfd.org Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.
- **Bethlehem Lutheran Church-** 345 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566 Phone 508-347-7297 Web: www.bethlehemsturbridge.org Services - Sunday 9:00 am Pastor Dan Purtell
- **Holland Congregation Church “Where the Bible is preached.”** 11 Sturbridge Road, Holland, 413-245-9926 Hollandchurch.org Sunday Service @ 10:00 am Pastor Dan Maketansky
- **Holy Trinity Episcopal Church** 446 Hamilton St., Southbridge, MA 01550 Phone: 508-765-9559 Web: www.holytrinitysouthbridge.org Sunday Service 11:00 am Pastor Dan Purtell
- **St. John Paul II Parish** 279 Hamilton St., Southbridge Rev. Carlos Ardila, Pastor Weekend services Saturday 4 p.m., Sunday 8 a.m., 10 a.m., and noon Weekday masses 8:30 & 8:45 a.m., St. Mary’s Church (508) 765-3701

Webster Five Foundation sets new annual giving record with \$286,000 in grants to community nonprofits

AUBURN — Capping off a year of meaningful community support, the Webster Five Foundation is proud to announce it has broken its annual record for charitable giving. In 2025, the Foundation awarded a total of \$286,334 through 82 grants to support nonprofit organizations and community-based initiatives throughout the Central Massachusetts region, surpassing last year's total by more than \$21,000.

The Foundation awards grants on a quarterly basis to nonprofit organizations and programs that expand or improve access to education, culture and the arts, social services, charitable activities and community development.

In the fourth and final grant cycle of 2025, the Webster Five Foundation awarded \$50,500 to the following 17 nonprofit organizations:

- Abby Kelley Foster House, Inc. – \$2,500 for the Shelter Services Program.
- Ascentria Care Alliance – \$2,000 to support its Lighthouse Capital Campaign.
- Auburn Youth and Family Services – \$10,000 for operational support.
- Care Central VNA & Hospice, Inc. – \$5,000 to purchase a communication platform called Storiicare.
- Edward Street – \$10,000 over 4 years to support the Master Teacher Coaching Program.
- Entrepreneurship for All (EforAll) – \$1,500 to support EforAll EparaTodos in Greater Worcester.
- Fresh Start Furniture Bank – \$1,000 and a match of up to \$1,000 toward its Sweet Dreams Mattress Program.
- Horizons for Homeless Children – \$1,000 and a match of up to \$1,000 for the Central Massachusetts Playspace Program.
- NEADS, Inc. – \$1,500 toward its Breeding, Raising, Training, Placing and Supporting Service Dogs with Children with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities programming.
- New England Botanic Garden (Worcester Community Horticultural Society) – \$2,500 for Project Bloom.
- Open Door Arts – \$1,000 to support the Open Door Gallery at the Worcester Art Museum.
- Rachel's Table – \$5,000 for its Children's Milk Fund.
- VNA Care Network – \$1,000 toward its Community Liaison Nurses – Supporting Patients with Accessing Home-based Health Care programming.
- WCDSA Charitable Foundation – \$1,000 toward WCDSA's Annual Winter Coat Drive.
- Worcester Community Housing Resources (WCHR) – \$8,000 for the organization's Resident Services and Support programming.
- Worcester Historical Museum dba Museum of Worcester – \$1,500 to support the organization's 2025 Harvey Ball.
- YOU, Inc. – \$10,000 to support the Dymally John S. Laws Youth Academy.

“Central Massachusetts is home to extraordinary nonprofits doing transformative work every day,” said Brian Westerlind, President/CEO, Webster Five. “The Webster Five Foundation’s record giving in 2025 reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting programs that strengthen our communities and improve quality of life across the region.”

Sawyer Ayotte named to PennWest University dean's list

CALIFORNIA, Pa. — Sawyer Ayotte, of Charlton was named to PennWest University's Fall 2025 Dean's List. Ayotte, a PennWest Clarion student who is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science, was among nearly 3,000 outstanding PennWest students recognized for superior academic performance during the fall semester.

To be eligible for the Dean's List, degree-seeking undergraduates must earn a minimum semester GPA of 3.4 while taking at least 12 graded credits.

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Saint Joseph School announces honor roll

WEBSTER — Saint Joseph School has released its honor roll for the first quarter of the 2025-2026 school year.

Grade 4
High Honors: Patryk Deptula, Kenneth Maruer, Keziah Anobah, Callum Bergman, Maria Berry, Maksymilian Bujala, Logan Derry, Olivia Guinto, Maya Jackson, Nella Copeland, Oliver Delgaudio, Addison Goulet, Olivia Perry, Oliver Smith, Joanna Thurn, Reese Shepard, Kelsey Cormier, Paulina Piascik, Jackson Lovett, Tamara Giteru, Avery Benson, Jamarion Pierre
Honors: Amalina Khozami, Quincy Middleton

Grade 5
High Honors: Stella Andreotta, Julian Gibbons, Rylan Shemansky, Ariel Corbin, Mia Reed, Carson Krajcik, Julia Biela, Cecilia Coan, Christopher Bourgeois, Anna Wozniak, Aaliyah Andersen, Samuel Brunnett, Persefoni Sgouritsas, Michael Kamangu, Sophia Bengston, Charlie Cyr, Cameron Blodgett, Julie-Ann McCracken, Faye Derry, Luke Zegle

Grade 6
High Honors: Giorgios Sgouritsas, Johnny Marcuccio, Allen Oliver Jean-Paul, Charles Smith, Amadeusz Gacek, Charlotte Dollar, Kirolos Ibrahim, Marina Szydlak, Severyn Kuznecki
Honors: Sylvia Cyr, Cameron Tremblay, Jon Belanger, Mathiew Prunier, Armani Cedeno, Claudia Vezeau, Charlotte Rumsay, Maddox Clair
Credit: Andrew Hachigian, Liam Dvoryaninov, Connor Kippax

Grade 7
High Honors: Bella Kicilinski, Abigail Rubin, Sophia Surowanic, Lily Martin, Amelia Potem, Lukas Stock, Quinn Meehan, Sydney Caissie-Desautels, Ariana Benson, Evelyn Macko, Jacob Manzi
Honors: Grayson Dollar
Credit: Nico Meijas, Gabriel Ketnouvong-Ung, James Miranda

Grade 8
High Honors: Axel Kapitulik, Lukas Barbosa, Kalleia Agosto, Neli Kuznecki, Tosin Akindele, Tenleigh Dowd, Mychael Jones, Ivonka Waranajitys, Jacob Marcuccio, Hayley Benes
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Naomi Monney Hori of Guatemala City named to dean's list at Olivet Nazarene University

B O U R B - ONNAIS, Ill. — Naomi Monney Hori of Guatemala City, Guatemala, was named to the dean's list at Olivet Nazarene University during the recently completed fall 2025 semester. To qualify for inclusion on the dean's list, a student must have been enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student and must have attained a semester grade point average of 3.50 or higher on a 4.00 grading scale.

Olivet Nazarene University is an accredited Christian, liberal arts university offering more than 200 areas of undergraduate and graduate study, including the Doctor of Education in ethical leadership. Olivet's 275-acre park-like main campus is in Bourbonnais, Illinois, 45 miles south of Chicago. Additionally, Olivet offers Graduate and Continuing Studies via online education. From Oxford to Tokyo, hundreds of Olivet students also experience the global classroom each year through study abroad opportunities, internships and worldwide mission trips.

Matthew Wilbur named to Dean's Honor List at Cedarville University

CEDARVILLE, Ohio — Matthew Wilbur of Holland was named to the Dean's Honor List at Cedarville University for Fall 2025. This recognition requires the student to obtain a 3.75 GPA or higher for the semester and carry a minimum of 12 credit hours.

Cedarville University, an evangelical Christian institution in southwest Ohio, offers undergraduate and graduate residential and online programs across arts, sciences and professional fields. With 7,265 students, it is among Ohio's largest private universities and is ranked among the nation's top five evangelical universities in the Wall Street Journal's 2026 Best Colleges in the U.S. Cedarville is also known for its vibrant Christian community, challenging academics and high graduation and retention rates. Learn more at cedarville.edu.



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A new year, a few worthwhile resolutions

The arrival of a new year often brings with it a familiar ritual: the making of resolutions. Some are ambitious, some modest, and many quietly fade by February. Still, the act itself endures, not because we always keep our promises to ourselves, but because the turning of the calendar invites reflection.

Resolutions are not really about perfection. They are about pause. About taking a moment to look honestly at how we live, how we treat one another, and how we spend our limited time. In that sense, the most meaningful resolutions are often the simplest ones.

Many people resolve to improve their health, and that is always worthwhile. But health is more than steps counted or pounds lost. It is checking in on a neighbor who lives alone. It is slowing down long enough to rest when rest is needed. It is recognizing that mental and emotional well-being matter just as much as physical fitness.

Others resolve to be more financially disciplined, especially after a season of holiday spending. That might mean cutting back, planning ahead, or finally addressing decisions that have been postponed too long. Those choices are rarely easy, but they are often empowering. Small steps taken steadily tend to matter more than sweeping changes made once and forgotten.

There are also resolutions that never make formal lists but quietly shape the tone of a community. A decision to listen more than speak. To assume good intent, even when opinions differ. To be patient in public places, whether standing in line or navigating a crowded parking lot. These are not grand gestures, but they make daily life more humane.

Perhaps the most valuable resolution any of us can make is to stay engaged. It is tempting, especially during uncertain times, to withdraw or tune out. But communities are sustained by people who show up. Attend meetings. Support local organizations. Encourage young people. Thank volunteers. Pay attention to what is happening close to home.

None of this requires a dramatic transformation. The new year does not demand reinvention. It simply offers a chance to do a few things a little better than before.

As the calendar turns, it may be enough to resolve not to be perfect, but to be present. To notice what matters. To take responsibility where we can, offer grace where we should, and remember that progress, like community, is built gradually.

If we manage that, even imperfectly, the year ahead will already be off to a good start.

Letter submission policy

Letters to the Editor must include the author's name, address, and a daytime phone number for purposes of verification in order to be considered for publication. Only the author's name and the town in which they reside will be published. Letters submitted without all of the required information will not be accepted.

It is the sole prerogative of the Editor to determine whether a submission satisfies our requirements and decency standards, and any submission may be rejected at any time for any reason he or she might deem appropriate.

OPINION
To the Editor

Thanks to all who supported 2025 Winter Coat Closet

To the Editor:
Ecumenical Coat Closet, located at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church was open on Saturday mornings from November to Dec. 20. With the help of many, we were able to provide y 460 free warm winter coats to 240 families and individuals! We also gave out tons of hats, scarves, mittens, and gloves. We would like to thank the area churches, organizations and individuals who donated coats and winter items to our efforts.
Special thanks to all the churches involved, especially St. Joseph's, Charlton Federated, Bethlehem Lutheran, Sturbridge Federated and our host church Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. So many individuals and groups to thank including: Ray & Nancy Fournier, the Nichols Family in memory of Diane Nichols, the

Nelson Family in memory of Bill Nelson, Susan Schwartz, Holice Turnbow, Patty Farr, Nancy McKinstry, Lou-Ellen Corkum, Deb Hollett, Erin Simpson, Nicole Adams, Amy Postale and the Ladies of the Southbridge Italian Club, Moon Magick Cafe and the Southbridge Knights of Columbus Council 199.
I would also like to give a big shout out to our dedicated volunteers: Lynn, Miriam, Pedro, Dave, Rose, Maria & Linda. Without their hours of dedicated work, we would not be able to continue this important mission.
Stay warm and Happy New Year to all!

Chris McTigue
Coordinator
The Winter Coat Closet

Miracle at 89 Brookfield Road

BY KEVIN M. KELLEY
CHARLTON

Grief doesn't arrive politely. It doesn't knock. It doesn't wait until you're ready. It crashes through your life like a storm you never saw coming — and for me, that storm began on April 11, the day my husband, Fred Pappalardo, left this world.

Fred wasn't just my partner. He was my compass, my laughter, my steady hand. For 17 years, we built a life together — a life we finally made official when we married on May 19, 2024. We never got to celebrate our first anniversary. We never got to celebrate his 76th birthday. We never got to celebrate our 18th year together. All those milestones we talked about... gone in an instant.

Fred was brilliant, witty, gentle, and endlessly giving. After more than 30 years as Provincetown's veterinarian, he dreamed of retiring on a farm — a place filled with animals, gardens, and peace. I grew up on a farm in Woodstock, Va., so when he shared that dream with me, it felt like fate. In 2017, we made that dream real at Stonewall Farm in Charlton. He was the gardener. I was the farmer. Together, we were whole.

People used to tell us we were yin and yang — two people who shouldn't fit, but somehow fit perfectly. Losing him didn't just break my heart. It broke my sense of self. Suddenly I was alone on the farm we built together, trying to keep everything running while my world collapsed.

And then, before I could even catch my breath, life hit me again.

Just weeks after losing Fred, my father, Walter Kelley — the man who taught me everything from carpentry to how to stand on my own two feet — declined rapidly and passed away. My family adored Fred, and we were already grieving him. Losing my father so soon after felt like the universe was pulling the ground out from under us.

But the losses kept coming.

A month later, my cousin died suddenly at 52. I was numb. I didn't know a heart could break that many times and still keep beating.

I tried to stay busy. I tended Fred's gardens because it was the closest I could get to him. I fed the animals. I paid the bills. I tried to learn how to run a farm alone. I told myself, "Just keep moving, Kev. One foot in front of the other." But grief has a way of finding you no matter how fast you walk.

One night after a concert — one of the few things that gave me a few hours of peace — I came home expecting to be greeted by my two cats: Frankie, Fred's loyal companion of 16 years, and Bubba, my own shadow for 17 years. Bubba ran to me immediately, yelling at me for being gone. But Frankie didn't come.

I found him in his bed, cold and still. No warning. No signs of illness. Just gone. I believe he died of a broken heart. He knew Fred wasn't coming back.

I told myself, "Okay, Kev. The worst is behind you."

But I was wrong.

On Sept. 30, I noticed Bubba losing weight rapidly. Before I could get him to the vet, he passed away on Oct. 1. Seventeen years of unconditional love — gone. He had been my comfort through every loss, curling up beside me when I cried, refusing to leave my side. Losing him felt like losing the last piece of the life Fred and I built.

By then, I was barely functioning. The farm felt empty. The days were shorter, the nights colder, and I felt myself slipping deeper into a darkness I didn't know how to escape. I thought I had already lived through the hardest part of grief, but I was only at the beginning.

And then came Saturday, Dec. 20 — the night everything changed.

I was outside waiting for a pizza delivery, adjusting the Christmas lights I forced myself to put up this year. It had been so long since I decorated. Halloween had always been our holiday,

but this year I needed light — any light — to break through the darkness.

Suddenly, I saw cars racing up the driveway, horns honking. For a moment, my heart sank. I thought, "Here we go. More bad news."

But then the doors opened.

Out stepped neighbors — people from Charlton and even Sturbridge — wearing Santa hats and elf ears, shouting "Merry Christmas!" They gathered in the cold and began singing Christmas carols right there in my driveway.

The moment they started singing, something inside me cracked open. A warmth I hadn't felt in months washed over me. I wasn't crying from sadness — I was crying because, for the first time in eight months, I felt seen. I felt held. I felt like maybe, just maybe, I wasn't as alone as I thought.

When they finished, one person stepped forward and said:

"On behalf of all of us, thank you for sharing your lights and Christmas spirit with the community. And our sincere condolences for the loss of so many loved ones. We want you to know we're here for you — if you need anything, anything at all."

Those words didn't just touch me. They saved me.

It felt like something out of It's a Wonderful Life — a moment where the world shows you its heart when you need it most. I wish I had recorded it, but maybe it was better that I didn't. The moment was pure. Human. Healing.

To everyone on Fitzgerald Road and all who came that night:

You didn't just make my month.

You didn't just lift my spirits.

You gave me back my hope.

You reminded me that miracles still exist — even for people who feel broken.

A miracle happened at 89 Brookfield Rd. that night.

A miracle I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night.

New Year's financial resolutions: Making them stick



FINANCIAL
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or max out your IRA and/or HSA contributions

- Pay down debt strategically and negotiate lower interest payments
- Build an emergency savings fund of six to 12 months
- Save more consistently

Be specific. Vague resolutions like "save more money" rarely succeed. Instead, it can help to make goals specific and measurable. For example, rather than making a resolution to "start an emergency fund," commit to a specific goal, such as, "I will put \$100 a month into an emergency fund."

This shift from general to specific transforms wishful thinking into actionable steps. When goals are attainable, it's easier to track progress and stay motivated.

Find an accountability partner. Don't go it alone. Having someone to check in with can help you stay on track. This could be a spouse, friend or family member who shares similar goals.


Consider working with a financial advisor who can help you create a realistic plan, monitor your progress and adjust strategies as needed. A professional can provide expertise and accountability, making it easier to stay on track throughout the year.

Start small and build momentum. Rather than overhauling your entire financial life all at once, focus on one or two priority areas. Identify where the largest gap exists between your current situation and where you want to be, then concentrate your energy there.

Breaking larger goals into smaller, manageable actions makes them less overwhelming and more achievable. Each small win builds confidence and momentum for tackling the next challenge.

The new year offers a fresh start and renewed motivation to improve your financial health. With specific goals, a solid action plan and the right support system, this could be the year your financial resolutions finally stick.

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



ANTIQUES,
COLLECTIBLES
& ESTATES
• • • • •
WAYNE TUISKULA

As we enter the new year, let's close out the latest 2025 auction news, beginning with a rare baseball card heading to auction. T206 cards were produced by tobacco companies from 1909 to 1911 and given away as premiums. Honus Wagner played during that time and was a first ballot Hall of Famer who "hit .300-or-better for 15 straight seasons from 1899-1913," according to the Hall of Fame. In that span, Wagner won eight National League batting titles, led the NL in doubles seven times, stolen bases five times and RBI four times," according to the Hall of Fame's website. His baseball card is the rarest in the set and PSA (a card grading company) has graded only 36 Wagner cards, according to Sports Collectors Daily. Some have speculated that Wagner didn't want his likeness associated with tobacco products and that he wanted production of his card halted. However, Hall of Fame research showed that Wagner actively promoted other tobacco products. The card that was recently found came from a collection that had been handed down through a family after a collector passed away in 1974. The collector would have been 11 around the time when the cards were being placed in cigarette packages. Even though the card graded at only a 1 out of 10, it has a \$1,000,000 starting bid. The last PSA Honus Wagner graded 1 card sold for \$3.1 million in 2022 and this most recent card is expected to bring more.

In the rock and roll world, a rare photo went on the auction block recently. David Bowie's "Aladdin Sane" album cover is "one of pop music's most iconic images," according to an Antique Trader article. The photo depicts Bowie with the lightning bolt design on his face that appeared on the album cover. Brian Duffy took the photo. His archive website says his "cutting-edge photography documents the vibrancy of 'the Swinging '60's' London scene when the city was at the height of cool." The photo sold for £381,400 (about \$515,481 USD).



IN GOD WE TRUST
LIBERTY
Ω 2025

As you are probably aware, the government stopped minting pennies in November. The U.S. Mint partnered with the government to auction some of the last pennies minted. The pennies had an "Ω" (Omega)

Closing out 2025

mark designating them as being some of the last that were made. Benjamin Franklin is credited with designing our country's first penny, the Fugio Cent. Fugio means "I flee" in Latin. The reverse had a 13-link chain that symbolized the 13 original colonies. The front had the words "Mind your business" below a sundial. They were struck in different locations in New Haven, Conn. The U.S. Mint produced its first penny in 1793. The coin is called the "Flowing Hair Cent" because of the image of the woman on the front. The reverse has a wreath design with the words "One Cent." The most expensive set in the auction contained the last 3 pennies that were struck. Two pennies were made with the typical zinc and copper composition from the Philadelphia and Denver Mints along with a .9999 fine 24-karat gold penny. It brought \$800,000. Along with the other Omega pennies in the auction, the sale brought in \$16.76 million. Meanwhile, a local grocery store recently offered two cents for every penny with pennies getting harder to find. Hopefully no one turned in an Omega penny.

Our single-collector Civil War auction will be starting soon. Our following sale will include fine jewelry, sterling silver, art, and other antiques and collectibles. We'll be running a major sale with sports cards and memorabilia in the summer. We are accepting consignments for our two next sales. Please visit our Web site, <https://centralmass-auctions.com>, for links to upcoming events.

Contact us to consign items or for auction information at: Wayne Tuiskula Auctioneer/ Appraiser Central Mass Auctions for Antique, Collectibles Auctions and Appraisal Services info@centralmassauctions.com or (508-612-6111).

Lanterns Along Main Street

There was a time when winter felt like something to be endured. You shoveled, you complained, you waited for it to be over. Spring was the reward, and winter was simply the price you paid to get there. Somewhere along the way, that changed for me.

I do not know exactly when it happened, but at some point, I stopped wishing the season away. Maybe it came with age, or maybe it came from realizing how many winters I had already watched pass by. Either way, I have learned that winter is not an obstacle. It is a pause.

And pauses, I have found, are underrated. This part of the year does not demand much from us beyond patience. It asks us to move a little slower, to plan a little better, to pay attention to the small discomforts so they do not become big problems. Put the boots by the door. Keep the flashlight handy. Leave early.

Those habits spill over into other parts of life. Winter teaches you to prepare quietly

instead of reacting loudly. You learn to anticipate rather than rush. You notice things you might otherwise miss because you are not charging ahead at full speed.

I see it in how people interact, too. Conversations tend to be shorter, but often more sincere. There is less time for small talk and more appreciation for getting straight to the point. You ask how someone is doing and actually wait for the answer. You hold the door because you know what cold feels like. You nod to a stranger because it feels wrong not to.

These are not dramatic shifts, just subtle ones. But subtle changes shape the tone of a community more than any big announcement ever could.

I have also noticed that winter has a way of leveling things out. It does not care who you are or what you do. Everyone slips a little. Everyone misjudges the ice at least once. Everyone learns humility the hard way, usually in their own driveway.

There is something oddly comforting about that shared experience.

We talk a lot about resilience these days, usually as something to aspire to. Winter reminds us that resilience is mostly practical. It is checking the weather. It is calling to make sure someone got home safely. It is accepting help without making a production out of it.

It is knowing when to stay put.

I think that is why small towns handle winter as well as they do. Not perfectly, but together. Plows run. Neighbors check in. Life continues, just at a slightly quieter volume.

And when the snow finally melts, we will pretend we did not appreciate any of it. We will complain about the mud and the potholes and the long wait. But deep down, we will know that winter gave us something we did not realize we needed.

A pause. A reset. A reminder that slowing down is not the same as falling behind.

Sometimes, it is exactly how you keep your footing.



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Jacob Edwards and the library that still serves Southbridge

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Jacob Edwards Library stands today as one of Southbridge’s most enduring public institutions, its origins rooted in a 19th-century gift that reflected both civic pride and a belief in public access to knowledge.

The library was established in 1872 through a bequest from Jacob Edwards, a prominent local manufacturer and civic benefactor whose name was already closely tied to the economic development of Southbridge. Edwards specified that funds from his estate be used to create a free public library for the town, at a time when such institutions were still far from universal in small industrial communities.

Construction of the original library building followed soon after, and the Jacob Edwards Library officially opened to the public in 1874. From the outset, the library was intended to be non-sectarian and open to all residents,



Over time, the building itself underwent changes to meet modern needs. A major expansion and renovation project in the late 20th century significantly increased the library’s usable space, adding meeting rooms, expanded collections, and improved accessibility while preserving the historic character of the original structure. These updates allowed the library to continue functioning as both a historical landmark and a modern public service.

Today, the Jacob Edwards Library operates as part of the CWMARS library network, providing access not only to its own collections but also to materials from libraries across Central and Western Massachusetts. While technology has transformed how residents access information, the library’s core mission remains consistent with Jacob Edwards’ original intent: free access to knowledge for the community.

Beyond books, the library has long served as a civic gathering place, hosting public meetings, educational programs, and cultural events. In that role, it continues a tradition that stretches back more than 150 years, linking present-day Southbridge residents with a legacy of public investment and shared resources.

In a town shaped by industry, immigration, and change, the Jacob Edwards Library stands as a reminder that some of Southbridge’s earliest leaders saw education and access to information as essential public goods, worthy of lasting support.

Cornerstone Bank’s annual Toy Drive spreads holiday cheer across community



WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank is proud to announce the success of its annual holiday toy drive, which collected new, unwrapped toys for local children and families this season. Thanks to the generosity of customers, employees and community members, the effort once again brought joy to those who need it most.

Since its founding in 2017, Cornerstone has proudly partnered with local charities to brighten the holidays for families throughout its community. This year, all branches except the Southbridge location donated collected toys to the Planting the Seed Foundation, a Worcester-based nonprofit that supports underprivileged children and families. The Southbridge Branch continued its long-standing tradition of supporting the Cops ‘N’ Kids Toy Drive, a local program that has received donations from Cornerstone Bank for more than five years.

“This year’s toy drive truly shows the power of community,” said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. “Seeing so many people come together to support children and families in need is inspiring, and it reminds us why giving back is such an important part of what we do.”

Cornerstone Bank extends its sincere gratitude to everyone who participated

and helped make this year’s toy drive a success.

About Cornerstone Bank

Cornerstone Bank was formed in 2017, born of a long history of supporting the community, and providing a strong foundation to help people and businesses thrive. Serving Worcester County, Massachusetts, Cornerstone Bank’s local presence and community-based banking model enables a unique ability to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch. Cornerstone, which is a subsidiary of PeoplesBankCorp, MHC, operating independently under its own name and brand, provides the highest level of service and expertise for individuals, businesses, and community organizations with branch locations throughout Central Massachusetts. Cornerstone works to connect customers with opportunities through a broad range of deposit and loan products and services. Built on Trust is not just a tagline, but also one of our guiding corporate values. Whether a business or personal partnership, Cornerstone stands on the foundation that relationships are built on trust. To learn about Cornerstone Bank’s personal and business banking offerings, please visit cornerstonebank.com or call 800-939-9103.

reflecting the broader 19th-century movement toward publicly supported education and self-improvement.

The original structure, built of brick and stone, was designed to be both functional and dignified, signaling the importance of the institution within the growing mill town. As Southbridge expanded through the late 19th and early 20th centuries, so too did the library’s collections and role. Circulating books, reference materials, and reading rooms became part of everyday civic life, serving mill workers, students, and families alike.



Courtesy

Please join the Sturbridge Police Department in congratulating Lt. Larry Bateman on 21 years of dedicated service to the town. Over the course of his career, Bateman has risen through the ranks to his current role as Operations Lieutenant, where his leadership, professionalism, and commitment to excellence are evident every day. Bateman is a dedicated and committed leader, and I am proud to serve alongside him. Photo courtesy of the department’s Facebook page.



All Saints Academy’s Living Nativity concert brings the Christmas story to life

WEBSTER — Students, staff, and families gathered for the annual Christmas concert. The concert retold the Christmas story through music, drama and narration. The eighth grade class brought the Nativity to life. The performance followed the story of Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem, the birth of Jesus, the visit of the shepherds, all presented in a way that was engaging for the audience. Songs formed the heart of the concert, with students in Preschool through Grade 7 and the ASA choir performing a mix of Christmas music. The songs allowed the students of all ages to take part and showcase their talents and class teamwork. Eighth grade narrators helped guide the audience through the story, clearly explaining each scene and its meaning. Mrs. Shanna Keegan, ASA music teacher, worked



closely with students in the weeks leading up to the performance, rehearsing songs, preparing costumes, and encouraging pupils to understand the message behind the Nativity. For many students, it was an opportunity to develop public speaking skills, musical ability, and self-confidence, while also learning about an important part of Catholic tradition. Mrs. Matys, ASA Head of School, praised the effort of everyone involved, saying the concert reflected the school’s strong sense of community and that watching the students work so hard and support one another to share the Nativity story of kindness, hope and togetherness was a wonderful thing to see. Families filled the gym, applauding enthusiastically after each performance. Many commented on the warm and joyful atmosphere, noting how the concert marked the start of the Christmas season. The Nativity Concert proved to be a highlight bringing the ASA community together and reminding everyone of the values at the heart of Christmas.

Tips when traveling with pets

Traveling with pets can be a rewarding experience that enables individuals to share new adventures with their companion animals. Bringing pets along on vacation has become quite popular. According to Top Dog Pet Travel, a central Florida agency specializing in pet-friendly bookings, there has been an uptick in people traveling with their pets since 2024. A report from the American Pet Products Association indicates 22 percent of both cat and dog owners reported taking their animals on at least three flights in 2024. Although traveling with pets can be fun and cuts down on costs for pet boarding or alternative care, it also requires careful planing to keep pets safe, comfortable and free from stress throughout the trip. These practical tips can make traveling with pets a smooth experience, whether one is traveling by car, plane or just off on a weekend getaway. Plan ahead. Research any pet regulations and restrictions prior to traveling. Some hotels, airlines and rental properties have specific rules or fees for pets. Always confirm if companion animals are



allowed, and determine if there are restrictions on size, breed or the number of pets. Every airline has different rules for in-cabin versus cargo travel for pets. International travel may require certain vaccinations or quarantine periods, so it pays to start planning well in advance. Visit the vet. A checkup with the pet's vet is a good step prior to any trip. The vet will make sure the animal is current on vaccinations and well enough to travel. Getting a copy of the pet's medical records and vaccination schedule is helpful, as some airlines or destinations may require it. Also inquire about medication for motion sickness or anxiety, if necessary. Bring familiar items. Animals like consistency and routine. Keeping familiar items nearby can help reduce anxiety in unfamiliar environments. Bring along food, bowls, leashes, and preferred toys or bedding. Stick to routine. Give the pet time

pet may act out a little when in unfamiliar territory. Also, it's possible to encounter individuals who may not be as amenable to sharing surroundings with pets. Pets will take emotional cues from their owners, so projecting calm can be beneficial. Traveling with pets is becoming increasingly popular. Planning ahead and working with pet-friendly venues can ensure that everyone in the family enjoys some time away.

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OBITUARIES

Gloria J. Chartier, 76

CHARLTON – Gloria J. (White) Chartier, 76, of No. 6 Schoolhouse Road, died Saturday, December 20, 2025, at the Life Care Center of Auburn.

She is survived by her husband of 48 years, Richard M. Chartier of Charlton; two brothers, Warren White Jr. and his wife Laurie, and Jeffrey White and his wife Karen, all of Charlton; her niece, Terry R. Moriarty; and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by a sister, Gail White who died in 2021.

She was born in Holden, daughter of the late Warren and Edna (Benson) White, and lived in West Brookfield before moving to Charlton in 1988.

Mrs. Chartier worked at Walmart in North Oxford for over 16 years prior to retirement. Previously, she worked at



David Clark in Worcester, where she proudly assisted in making suits for the astronauts. She also worked at several local knitting mills. In her spare time, she enjoyed playing volleyball.

A funeral service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at Paradis-Givner Funeral Home, 357 Main St., Oxford. Burial will follow at Worcester County Memorial Park in Paxton. Calling hours are Thursday, January 15, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at the funeral home prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Alzheimer's Association, 320 Nevada Street, Suite 201, Newton, MA 02460.

Tips to stay the course with a New Year's resolution

The holiday season is steeped in tradition. Many of those traditions are rooted in celebrants' faith, but one of the last customs people embrace each year is largely secular.

The tradition of making New Year's resolutions is older than many people may realize. According to History.com, the ancient Babylonians are believed to be the first people to make New Year's resolutions when they began doing so roughly 4,000 years ago during a 12-day festival known as Akitu. That festival was religious in nature, but many people now make resolutions with a goal toward self-improvement unrelated to their faith. As people ponder their resolutions for the year ahead, the following strategies might help them stay the course over the next 12 months.

· Give serious thought to a prospective resolution. Statistics regarding New Year's resolutions vary, but a 2024 survey from the Pew Research Center found that 13 percent of adults polled indicated they kept none of their resolutions. Numerous variables can affect whether

or not a person keeps a resolution, but giving a potential resolution little thought ahead of time can make achieving a goal unlikely. Give any potential change ample thought before committing to a resolution. If you aspire to lose weight, identify the ways you're going to go about that. Find a local gym to join, identify ways to eat a more nutritious diet and, perhaps most importantly, study how you can make time to stay the course. A little legwork in advance of declaring a resolution can pay off in the long run.

· Set periodic goals. Small goals along the way to the larger goal can serve as motivation to keep going. If you aspire to watch less television and read more, resolve to read 100 pages per week and then gradually increase that total if you so desire. Small goals can provide a great means to measure incremental progress that will ultimately make achieving a larger goal more likely.

· Be realistic. Realistic goals are more likely to be achieved than ones that seem good on the surface but are too difficult to keep. For

example, if you aspire to exercise for an hour each day but obligations to work and family leave little time for physical activity, then you may need to reduce those expectations in favor of a more realistic, achievable goal. Taking on too much will only discourage you when hurdles inevitably appear, and that is likely to compel you to abandon the resolution entirely. If your initial goal is realistic, then any challenges that arise are less likely to derail your efforts.

· Don't go it alone. Many people employ the buddy system as a means to stay motivated with fitness-related resolutions, and that approach can be applied to any goal you set at the beginning of the year. Having someone there to hold you accountable, and doing the same for a partner, increases the chances you'll stay the course.

New Year's resolutions are an ancient tradition, even if the majority tend to be abandoned rather quickly. But anyone can buck that trend and stay the course by employing a few simple, yet effective strategies.

TOY DRIVE

continued from page A1

Department, Jacob Edwards Library, Harrington Hospital, Southbridge Town Hall, all Southbridge Credit Union branches, and both the Southbridge and Sturbridge Police Departments. Organizers noted that the volume of toy donations received this year was truly remarkable and credited the generosity of the entire community.

In addition to individual donations, several local companies and organizations provided significant toy and monetary contributions, including Southbridge Credit Union, the Marcos Rios Memorial Fund, 508 Forever Young,

EaglePicher Technologies – Southbridge, Sturbridge Metallurgical Services, and Arland Tool. Thank you to the Southbridge School Department for providing essential space to support the event.

Monetary donations from individuals—too numerous to list, including many Lions Club members—allowed volunteers to shop for additional gifts to meet the needs of local families. Organizers expressed deep appreciation for this generosity.

The Steve Ide Memorial Toy Drive traces its roots to the former U.S. Marine Corps toy drive that once served Southbridge. When that program ended locally, longtime Lion Steve Ide stepped forward in

2016 to ensure the tradition continued. Partnering with the Southbridge Cops N Kids program, the toy drive began modestly but has grown steadily each year. The program continues today in Steve Ide's memory, carrying forward his commitment to serving the community.

Southbridge and the surrounding Tri-Community should be proud of its citizens and businesses. Through collective effort and generosity, the Christmas spirit continues to thrive, proving once again that together, the community can make a meaningful difference. The Southbridge Lions Club thanks all who helped make this year's toy drive a success.

LEGALS

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**Docket No. WO25P4361EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR
FORMAL ADJUDICATION**
Estate Of:
Ralph A. Eastman
Date of Death: 09/12/2025

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Ellen Pulawski of Woodstock CT and Ann Proulx of Webster 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:

Ellen Pulawski of Woodstock CT and Ann Proulx of Webster MA

be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 01/13/2026.**

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. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 23, 2025

Stephanie Fattman,

Register of Probate
January 1, 2026

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Raymond J. Henrickson, Cynthia R. Henrickson to Sovereign Bank, dated March 10, 2009 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 43965, Page 358, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing, the same will be sold at Public Auction at 12:00 PM on January 23, 2026, on the mortgaged premises located at 389 Breakneck Road, Southbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, TO WIT:

That certain piece or parcel of land, and the buildings and improvements thereon:

In the Town of: SOUTHBRIDGE
County of: WORCESTER
and State of: MASSACHUSETTS
and being more particularly described in a deed recorded in Book: 11666 Page 141 of the WORCESTER County, City of SOUTHBRIDGE which property is more commonly known as 389 BREAKNECK ROAD, SOUTHBRIDGE, MA 01550 ("Property Address");

For mortgagor's(s') title see deed recorded with Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 11666, Page 141.

These premises will be sold and conveyed subject to and with the benefit of all rights, rights of way, restrictions, easements, covenants, liens or claims in the nature of liens, improvements, public assessments, any and all unpaid taxes, tax titles, tax liens, water and sewer liens and any other municipal assessments or liens or existing encumbrances of record which are in force and are applicable, having priority over said mortgage, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the deed.

TERMS OF SALE:

A deposit of Ten Thousand (\$10,000.00) Dollars by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The balance is to be paid by certified or bank check at Harmon Law Offices, P.C., 150 California St., Newton, Massachusetts 02458, or by mail to

P.O. Box 610389, Newton Highlands, Massachusetts 02461-0389, within thirty (30) days from the date of sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. The description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of an error in this publication.

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

SANTANDER BANK N.A FORMERLY KNOWN AS SOVEREIGN BANK N.A. FORMERLY KNOWN AS SOVEREIGN BANK

Present holder of said mortgage

By its Attorneys,
HARMON LAW OFFICES, P.C.

150 California St.

Newton, MA 02458

(617)558-0500

28564

December 25, 2025

January 1, 2026

January 8, 2026

CHARLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with the Wetland Protection Act of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter 131, Section 40, the Charlton Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on January 14, at 7PM on the application of Gianfranco Ritacco.

The applicant has filed a Notice of Intent for the construction of a single-family home and associated grading within the 100-ft buffer zone to a Bordering Vegetated Wetland. The project location is: 22 McIntyre Road, Charlton, MA 01507. Parcel ID: 67-A-3.4

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting of the Charlton Conservation Commission will be conducted in person and via remote means. Members of the public who wish to participate can access the meeting remotely by request.

Copies of the NOI may be examined at the Conservation Office by appointment during business hours.

Thomas O'Malley
Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission

January 1, 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. WO25P4327EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR
FORMAL ADJUDICATION**

Estate Of:

Russell E. Dupont

Date of Death: 01/19/2025

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **John S. Dorman of Charlton 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:

John S. Dorman of Charlton MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 01/13/2026.**

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. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 18, 2025

Stephanie Fattman,

Register of Probate

January 1, 2026

Tips for those new to skiing

Millions of people across the globe love to ski. Unofficial Networks Ski & Mountain News reports that the 2024-25 season recorded 61.5 million skier visits, the second-highest on record, which suggests the popularity of skiing and snowboarding shows no signs of slowing down.

With so many active participants, those who plan to ski for the first time may be eager to hit the slopes. But it is important for new skiers to heed some beginner tips.

- Get a ski pass. If possible, find a ski resort nearby and purchase a pass in advance. Once you have the pass you can visit the mountain and ski whenever you have available time. Plus, the expense of the pass can be incentive to get out and use it, ensuring you get your money's worth.
- Expect to fall. On a first day out, it is likely you will fall down quite often, and it can be challenging to get up. Knowing this will occur in advance can help you avoid embarrassment. Also, expect people to be more skilled than you, even young children who have been skiing for quite some time.
- Protect your feet. Novices may feel that their feet get too cold, wet or sore. It is important to get boots that are comfortable and fit well. Harvard University suggests boots that enable you to wiggle your toes, but not allow you to turn your foot side-to-side within the boot. Try several boots when renting, and eventually purchase your own boots with a custom fit.
- Take lessons. A private lesson can be very helpful



- for novices, teaching them form and instilling confidence. The instructor also can help you avoid bad habits.
- Wear thick ski pants. Ski pants insulate against the cold and wet snow, and when falls inevitably occur, the thickness of pants can offer padding.
- Layer on top. Wear a waterproof jacket and layers so you can add or remove layers as needed. A zippered

jacket is easier to take on and off or simply loosen when you're hot.

- Rent skis. Bearfoot Theory suggests renting skis at the resort before investing in your own so you get an idea of what you like. Skiing clothing and gear goes on sale at the end of the season, which enables you to save money when it comes time to invest.
- Ski with those better than you. Skiing alongside those who are more advanced than you can help. Find people you trust to be patient and invite you along. Chances are you will learn a little more quickly because you'll be compelled to keep up. It's also perfectly alright to ski solo once you gain some measure of comfort on the slopes.
- Start with groomed runs. As a beginner, focus on getting a strong foundation on groomed runs. Then move on to powder to test out something a little more intense.
- Build up leg strength. Focusing on workouts that involve strengthening your calves and quadriceps can lead to greater endurance when it comes time to hit the slopes.

Skiing is an entertaining recreational activity that draws scores of enthusiasts each year. Beginners are urged to start slowly and develop the skills necessary to become competent and confident skiers.

Toss or keep? How to sort items when organizing

Getting organized routinely tops people's lists of New Year's resolutions. After many months of accumulating an assortment of things, starting fresh in January with goals to organize such acquisitions can be a healthy endeavor.

One of the obstacles of getting organized is sorting through belongings and identifying what to get rid of and what to keep. In fact, uncertainty about what's worthy of donation or trash is a common problem that can create clutter. These organizational tips can help people figure out what to toss and what to keep.

Determine if items are useful
Ask yourself if you have

used the item in the last month to 90 days, or if you see yourself needing it in the next month. If not, this item likely can be put aside. An easy way to identify items that won't be useful is to check for duplicates or if anything is expired. Duplicate items can immediately be moved to the toss pile.

"Why do I want this item?"
Consider each item you come across and ask yourself how it serves a purpose. If it looks great in the home or is a cherished memento, then it likely can be kept. But if you can't say why you want it, it needs to find a new home, particularly if you already own

something else that does the same thing but might also have other uses.

Does it fit?
One of the biggest culprits to clutter and overflowing closets is holding on to clothes with the hope that you'll once again fit into them. Keeping a collection of multi-sized shirts and pants with the intention of dropping or gaining weight so that they fit once more only leads to hangers and bins full of useless items. Although clothes can be expensive, should you fluctuate in weight, it's likely that you'll want to get new clothes instead of wearing outdated styles. When assessing shoes, figure out which ones are uncomfortable or seldom used (a collection of sandals might not be appropriate if you live in a cold climate). Donate items in good condition.

Do you still feel the same about collectibles?
People often collect figurines, shot glasses or other items through the years out of habit. Over time, items that once were popular fall out of favor. If your interest in porcelain pigs has waned, it may be time to clear out collectibles to make room for other things.

Assess your paper files
Major financial records and/or business documents can be kept indefinitely, but other files likely can be shredded. The Internal Revenue Service generally has up to six years to audit a return, so it is helpful to keep tax returns and supporting documents for around seven years. Most people have pivoted to online bank statements and pay stubs, but the general consensus is to keep bank and credit card statements, pay stubs, paid medical bills, and such for a year before discarding them. Going digital by scanning files or documents and storing them securely might be an alternative to bulky files.

Getting organized means figuring out what to keep and what needs to go, a process that differs for each person.



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WINTER TODDLER
TIME - Tuesdays at
10:45am

A play-based story
time where toddlers will
work on valuable skills
with their caregivers
and socialize with kids
their own age. January
6 through February 24.
Sponsored by the Friends
of the JHPL.

WINTER BABY TIME
- Wednesdays at 10:45

Join Ms. Meredith for
songs, rhymes, finger-
plays and stories. For
children 2 years and
younger with an adult
caregiver. Sponsored by
the Friends of the JHPL.
Through February 25,
2026.

FRIDAY WINTER
STORY TIME - Fridays
at 10:45

Stories, songs, rhymes

and a craft. Designed for
children 3-5 years old but
open to kids of all ages
with an adult caregiver.
Through February 20,
2026.

Wednesdays from
5:00pm to 7:00pm

WEEKLY TECH HELP

Free hands-on tech
assistance! Bring your
own device or use our
available computers. We
can assist with: Printing,
E-mailing, Microsoft
Office Suite, Google
Suite, word processing,
digitizing photos and
scanning documents,
setting up eBooks and
audio books through
Libby onto your tablet
or smartphone, device
setup and updates, basic
smartphone and tablet
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databases and resourc-
es, and more. Need help
with something else? Just
ask! Please note: This is
BASIC tech assistance.
We cannot repair bro-
ken devices, recover

lost passwords, or enter
your private information
(such as a bank number)
online. Please have your
passwords ready.

Monday, December 15
through January 31 - All
day

WINTER READING
CHALLENGE FOR
KIDS

Stop by the Children's
Room and pick up a
Winter themed reading
challenge! Complete
each task and earn the
ultimate prize: a coupon
for a FREE COOKIE
from The Bake Shoppe
at The Publick House!
Completed reading chal-
lenges can be turned
into the Children's
Room through Saturday,
January 31st. Limit of
one coupon per child. A
huge thank you to The
Publick House for spon-
soring this fun reading
challenge!

Monday, January 5 -
3:30pm to 4:30pm

FAMILY CRAFT
TIME: STARRY NIGHT
CARDS

Families are invited to
join us as we make starry
sky cards with watercol-
or paints! This program
is intended for children
ages 5-12 with their care-
giver(s). Registration is
required.

Friday, January 9 -
3:30pm to 4:30pm
NEON PAINTING
FOR KIDS

Let's fill our new Little
Free Art Gallery! Kids
ages 5-12 are invited to
join us for some bright
and colorful neon paint-
ing led by Eilee Reed, the
Scout who spearheaded
this project. Participants
will make a painting for
home and a painting for
the gallery. Registration
is required.

Monday, January 12 -
3:30pm to 4:30pm
PICASSO STYLE
SELF PORTRAIT

We are filling our new
Little Free Art Gallery!
Artists ages 8 through
adult are invited to try
their hands at self-port-
raits in the style of
Picasso, led by Eilee
Reed. Registration is
required.

Monday, January 12 -
VIRTUAL - 7:00pm to
8:00pm

AUTHOR HEATHER
B. MOORE: "JULIA"

A discussion with
author Heather B. Moore
about her recent release,
"Julia," the untold story
of Julia Child before
she became a worldwide
cooking sensation! We'll
chat with Heather about
the book, her writing and
research process, and if
she found any surpris-
es when looking into
the iconic Julia! This is
a virtual program and
registration is required.
This program is spon-
sored by the Friends
of the Ashland Public
Library and in partner-
ship with a multitude of
MA Libraries.

Tuesday, January 13 -
6:00pm to 8:00pm

WOODEN SPOON
CARVING

Wood carving is a med-
itative activity that you
can do almost anywhere.
Using simple tools, par-
ticipants will be instruct-
ed on the techniques
of selecting wood, safe
carving techniques, and
how to care for their new
utensil. You will go home
with at least one wood-
en spoon and a whole
new skillset! All mate-
rials and equipment are
provided. Registration is
required. This is a library
sponsored program.

Wednesday, January 14
- VIRTUAL - 2:00pm to
3:00pm

"S U P E R S P Y
SCIENCE: SCIENCE,
DEATH & TECH IN THE
WORLD OF JAMES
BOND" WITH DR.
KATHRYN HARKUP

Dr. Kathryn Harkup,
writer, science commu-
nicator and vampirolog-
ist, will be discussing
her book "Superspy
Science: Science, Death
and Tech in the World of
James Bond." Learn all
about The science behind
James Bond's exploits –
armaments, tactics, plots
and enemy tech. This is
a virtual program and
registration is required.
This program is spon-
sored by the Friends
of the Ashland Public
Library and in partner-
ship with a multitude of
MA Libraries.

Thursday, January 15 -
6:30pm to 7:30pm

Z E N T A N G L E
LANDSCAPE FOR
ADULTS

We're continuing to
fill our new Little Free
Art Gallery. Adults are
invited to join Eilee Reed
for a relaxing hour filled
with doodling and draw-
ing. No prior experience
is needed. Registration is
required.

Saturday, January 17 -
11:00am to 12:00pm

LET'S MEET A...
VETERINARIAN

Leah Guidry, a veteri-
narian, is coming to talk
about what it's like to

work as a vet. Children
will have the chance to
ask questions and are
invited to bring a stuffed
animal friend with them
for some hands-on learn-
ing. Registration is
required.

Thursday, January 22 -
6:00pm to 7:00pm

POKEMON CLUB

Young Pokémon
fans and their caregiv-
ers are invited to join
us for themed activities
and fun! Kids can also
bring their card collec-
tions to play the offi-
cial TCG game or simply
show off their favorites.
Registration is required.

Monday, January 26 -
VIRTUAL - 7:00pm to
8:15pm

"C R E A T I N G
A MODERN
HOMESTEAD" WITH
HOMESTEADER AND
BLOGGER, VICTORIA
PRUETT

Get a broad overview
of simple life changes
you could make to get
closer to nature and less
dependent on large, com-
mercial organizations.
This is a virtual pro-
gram and registration is
required. This program is
sponsored by the Friends
of the Ashland Public
Library and in partner-
ship with a multitude of
MA Libraries.

Saturday, January 31 -
10:30am to 12:30pm

NEEDLE FELTED
BOOKMARKS

Discover the fun of
needle felting in our
Bookmark Workshop! By
the end of the session,
you'll take home your
finished piece, a hand-
made reminder of the joy
of creating something
yourself. Come join us
and see how a simple
needle and wool can turn
into something special!

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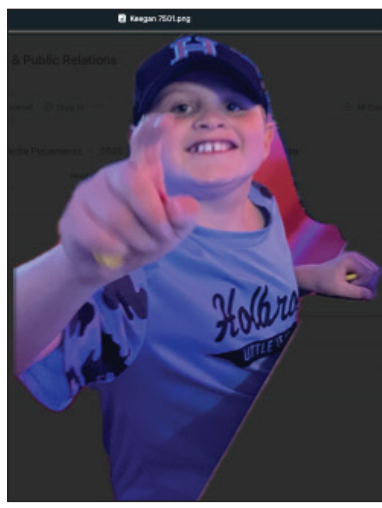
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email:
mikaela@
stonebridge
press.news



Friday's Child






Keegan
Age 10
Registration # 7501

Keegan has a wide variety of hobbies that highlight both his curiosity and his active nature. He loves exploring new places virtually through Google Maps and has a growing passion for automobiles—he enjoys learning about different car makes and models and watching YouTube videos about them. Keegan is also drawn to numbers and enjoys solving math problems for fun. In social settings, he's playful and enjoys spending time with his peers. Physically active and full of energy, Keegan especially looks forward to gym class, where he can run, walk, and participate in a range of physical activities.

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/22533765945>

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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Happy New Year!!
Cheers to 2026!
Wishing all Joy,
Good Health and
Great Success!

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Our United States of America!





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*3 Bedrooms *Formal Dining Room

*Craft Room or 4th Bedroom
*2 Car Garage-Fenced in Yard
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Music, drama, and faith highlight Saint Joseph School Christmas Pageant

WEBSTER — Saint Joseph School celebrated its annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, Dec. 14, with more than 550 parents, grandparents, and guests filling the Daniel & Catherine Ivascyn Performing Arts Center. The program opened with a Tree Lighting Ceremony featuring Student Council President Mychael Jones, who recited Sue Pagnanella’s poem “Christmas,” followed by the Blessing of the Trees by Rev. Richard Polek, Pastor and Headmaster. This reflective opening set the tone for an afternoon filled with music, drama, and community spirit.

The school’s Drama Club brought the stage to life with a vibrant production of “In A Galilee Far, Far Away,” directed by Brighid Campbell with assistance from Susan Gallivan. This interstellar Christmas musical from Little Big Stuff Music took the audience on an imaginative journey across the universe to witness the glory of God, ultimately guiding them back to Bethlehem and the Savior’s birth. Leading the cast were Kalleia Agosto as Captain Magellan, Amadeusz Gacek as Polo, Alexis Archambault as Otto, Amelia Potem as the Robot, Evelyn Macko as Info, Mia Reed as Sparky, and Bella Kicilinski as Zip. They were joined by Samuel Brunnett as Kenny, Sophia Bengtson as Betty, Julia Biela as Sandy, and Mathieu Prunier, who portrayed Abraham Lincoln. The roles of Shepherds were performed by Johnny Marcuccio, Stella Andreotta, and James Miranda, while Michael Kamangu handled the character of Damage Control.

The production was further elevated by an ensemble featuring all students in Grades 5 through 8, whose participation added vocal strength and dynamic stage presence to sev-



The nativity comes to life as Saint Joseph School eighth graders Lukas Barbosa and Tenleigh Dowd portray Joseph and Mary in one of the closing scenes of the Christmas Pageant.

eral musical numbers. Their work, combined with energetic choreography and memorable songs—including “Away We Go,” “Home for Christmas,” “In a Galilee Far, Far Away,” “All in The Book,” “Our Savior Is Born Tonight,” “The Star Will Shine,” and “Seek Him”—brought the story’s cosmic theme to life. The visual impact of the musical was made possible thanks to parent volunteer Antonio Marcuccio and a dedicated team of student set and prop designers.

Following intermission, the pageant transitioned into a showcase of musical performances by students in Pre-K through Grade 8. The second act opened with the middle school’s “A Merry Christmas Dribble – 2025,” a basketball skills exhibition uniquely choreographed to selections from “The Nutcracker Suite.” This creative fusion of athletics and classical music delighted the audience and demonstrated exceptional coordination and teamwork.

A series of musical selections followed, with each grade presenting a traditional or contemporary Christmas piece. Grade 8 performed “The Christmas Song,” followed by: Grade 7’s rendition of “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear,” Grade 6’s “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” and Grade 5’s “It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas.” These selections were followed by: Grade 4 singing “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,” Grade 3 performing “Jingle Bells”

on recorders, Grade 2’s joyful “Children Run Joyfully,” Grade 1’s lively “I’m the Happiest Christmas Tree,” Kindergarten’s spirited “Santa Claus Is Coming to Town,” Pre-K 4’s “Oh, What a Wonderful Day,” and Pre-K 3’s sweet performance of “Baby Jesus (Are You Sleeping, Brother John).” Students in Grades 5 through 8 also added a multicultural element through their performance of “Campana Sobre Campana” as part of the school’s Spanish program.

A particularly notable moment of the afternoon was the debut of the new Saint Joseph School Show Choir under the direction of Ms. Connie Galli. She was joined by Shepherd Hill Regional High School students Tommy Dolan and Zoraiya Burgos, whose mentorship and musical support helped guide the ensemble in a stunning first performance of “O Come All Ye Faithful.” Following this debut, the Saint Joseph Church Choir delivered powerful, profoundly moving performances of “What Child Is This” and “Child of the Poor,” harmonizing the refrains and bringing the audience into a reverent, reflective close to the pageant.

Behind the scenes, the production was supported by the musical direction of Mrs. Brenda Lau Anderson and accompa-

niment by Maria Helena Czarnecka-Cieslak. Physical Education instructor Ms. Lisa Szpila coordinated the basketball exhibition, while Mr. Joey Boudreau and Mr. Mariusz Macko expertly managed sound and lighting.

The annual Christmas Pageant remains one of Saint Joseph School’s most cherished traditions, uniting families, students, and parishioners in a joyful celebration of faith and community. Through drama, music, and prayer, the event reflected the school’s mission of “Religion, Respect, and Responsibility” and invited all present to share in the joyful anticipation of Christmas.

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Courtesy

The Sturbridge Police Department wishes to express sincere appreciation to the Sturbridge Federated Church for their generous monetary contribution. Pictured above is Paul Medeiros from the Federated Church and Sgt. Janson. Photo courtesy of the department’s Facebook page.