

# Holiday Guide

2023

The Yankee *Xpress*  
BLACKSTONE VALLEY *Xpress*

local **town** pages 

FREE  PRESS

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# Craft Fairs

## SATURDAY, NOV. 18

• Our Lady of the Valley Regional School will host its annual Holiday Fair at 75 Mendon St, Uxbridge, behind St. Mary's Parish 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

The Holiday Fair has something for those of all ages. Shop for holiday gifts from a wide range of local vendors. Try your luck at one of the fair's many raffles, including basket raffles, the super raffle, and the grand raffle. And enjoy fresh baked goods, popcorn, soft pretzels, and the ever-popular cookie walk.

Children will love the kid's activities, including crafts, games, inflatables, a scavenger hunt, a kid's raffle, balloon animals, a hot cocoa bar, and pictures with Santa.

Come for lunch and choose from several delicious options, including chicken parmesan subs, meatball subs, hot dogs, pizza, and fries. You can also purchase homemade meat pies to heat up at home.

The Our Lady of the Valley Holiday Fair is so big, that it takes place in three buildings—the main school building, the G.R.A.C.E. Center, and the St. Mary's Parish Hall (Good Shepherd Center). This year's fair includes 3,000 more feet.

The Holiday Fair is one of the school's biggest fundraisers of the year. For more details, visit their website at [www.ourladyofthevalleyregional.com](http://www.ourladyofthevalleyregional.com). Vendors looking for table space can email [olvguild@gmail.com](mailto:olvguild@gmail.com)

• The Women's Auxiliary of the Hoboken Club in Milford will be having their annual Holiday Fair on Saturday, November 18th from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Along with local crafters, the fair will also be selling their homemade cappelletti along with baked goods, homemade food, and they will also be having raffle baskets. The Hoboken Club is located at 252 Central St in Milford.

## FRIDAY - SUNDAY, NOV. 24-26

• Holiday Festival of Crafts Worcester Center for Crafts 25 Sagamore Road, Worcester Once a year, the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday after Thanksgiving, the Worcester Center for Crafts is transformed into a European-style holiday marketplace complete with twinkly lights and the sweet smell of evergreens. This juried marketplace celebrates American handmade craft and is our antidote to the big-box madness of holiday shopping. By bringing together craft artists of the highest caliber all under one roof, the Holiday Festival of Crafts is a one-stop holiday shopping opportunity for unique, handmade gifts in a range of prices for men, women, and children. Craft collectors also will find that this is an opportunity to compare a wide range of work suitable for collecting. Usually featuring over 50 fine craft artists and their work, the Festival is held indoors and includes free lot and street parking.

• The Douglas Scouting Association will host a Hometown Holiday Hall at the Scott Hall Building, 22 Church Street, Douglas on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 24-26.

The hours are 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Sunday. Free admission and free refreshments. All items are homemade. Holiday store atmosphere - one stop check-out. Cash, check major credit cards accepted. All proceeds to benefit the Douglas Scouting Association.

## SATURDAY, DEC. 2

• The First Congregational Church of Dudley, serving members from Dudley, Webster, Charlton, Oxford and surrounding area, will be having our 18th Annual Christmas Fair on December 2nd, 2023 at 135 Center Street in Dudley from 10a - 2p. We will have craft tables, entertainment, a cafe, homemade clamchowder, bbq pulled pork sandwiches and buffalo chicken sandwiches), basket raffles, 50/50 raffle, a Christmas themed throw raffle, sweet treats from cookie corner, a Christmas centerpiece workshop, a live auction and yes, a visit by Santa Claus. We hope you can join us!

• St. Denis Church Holiday Fair, Douglas will be held Saturday, Dec. 2, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Purchase crafts, enjoy baked goods or try our raffles. Have lots of fun at the Kids' Table. Luncheon served from 11 a.m. to

1:30 p.m. Visit [SaintDenisChurch.com](http://SaintDenisChurch.com) for more info and updates

• The Jolly Holly Fair is a Millis tradition of more than 70 years! Join us at Church of Christ in Millis (142 Exchange St.) on Saturday, December 2 from 9:00-2:00 to shop from local vendors, bid in the Silent Auction, enjoy fresh wreaths and greens decorations, and more! Santa will be there for pictures with the kids, plus visit the "kids only" shopping room, and face painting! For more information, call 508-376-5034 or visit [www.millisucc.org](http://www.millisucc.org)

## SATURDAY, DEC. 9

• Auburn Recreation and Culture is hosting its 10th Annual Holiday Craft Fair from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9 (snow date Dec. 10) at Auburn High School, 99 Auburn Street, Auburn. 150+ Craft Vendors will help you get into the spirit of the holiday season. Santa will be making an appearance from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., so bring the kids. There will be activities, food, drawing, face painting and much more. For more information please Contact the Recreation & Culture Division or call 508-832-7736.

**A note to our readers: Due to our early press time, many events have not yet been posted or times/dates have not been confirmed. Watch for more information in our regular issues as well as our upcoming Holiday Guide and Kids Activity Pages coming in December.**

# BLACK FRIDAY

November 24th

Chances to win \$100 memberships in honor of our 100th Anniversary!

**IN PERSON ONLY 8:00am-10:00am**  
**30%, 40%, 50% or 75% OFF!**

Scratch to reveal your discount! 30%, 40%, 50% or 75% OFF Membership, in addition to NO Joining Fee! One lucky winner will win a FREE Membership! Chances to win \$100 memberships in honor of our 100th Anniversary!

**NOTE: Black Friday membership promotion listed above is for NEW or existing paid in full memberships only. Offer valid IN PERSON ONLY on Black Friday, November 24, 2023. One Scratch Card per person. Scratch tickets available from 8:00am-10:00am at the Whitin Community Center, while supplies last. Scratch card must be redeemed upon receipt, or forfeited. Scratch cards can be used towards one membership only, and membership start dates cannot be deferred. Must pay in full at time of purchase. Cannot be used in combination with any other discounts, promotions, gift certificates/cards or insurance discounts. No refunds or cancellations. Non-transferable. Other exclusions & rules may apply.**

**NOTE: Cyber Week membership promotion listed above is for NEW & renewal paid in full or automatic withdrawal memberships. Offer valid ONLINE ONLY during Cyber Week, for NEW memberships from November 27, 2023 to December 1, 2023, IN PERSON receive 30% off for NEW and RENEWAL memberships. Monthly promotional membership price is valid for 12 draft payments (1 year) from initial payment. After the initial 12 month promotional period, membership rates will go back to regular, non-discounted draft payments. Cannot be used in combination with any other discounts, promotions, gift certificates/cards or insurance discounts. No refunds or cancellations. Non-transferable. Other exclusions & rules may apply.**

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# CYBER WEEK!

Nov 27th - Dec 1st

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**IN PERSON ONLY 30% OFF!**

All RENEWAL Memberships will receive 30% OFF the 2023 rates & NO Joining Fee!

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# Spread Joy with the Gift of Books!

Recommended by Debra Horan, Owner of Booklovers' Gourmet in Webster

As the holiday season quickly approaches, remember books always make thoughtful gifts. There are seemingly endless possibilities for inspiration. But don't

worry, here are a few to get you started.

Let's begin with some fiction picks. In celebration of all things bookish, **What You Are Looking for Is in the Library**, by Michiko Aoyama is a great choice for fans of *The Midnight Library* and *Before the Coffee Gets Cold*. It is a charming Japanese novel about

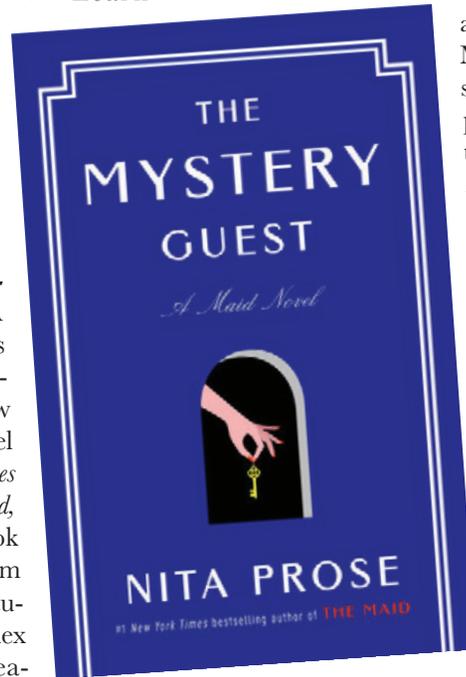
how the perfect book recommendation can change a readers' life. **Julia** is an imaginative, feminist, and brilliantly relevant-to-today retelling of Orwell's *1984*, from the point of view of Winston Smith's lover, Julia, by critically acclaimed novelist Sandra Newman. Another classic retelling worth the read is **Mary and the Birth of Frankenstein** by Anne Eekhout, an intensely gripping reimagining of Mary Shelley's youth, vividly exploring innocence, young love, gothic mystery and the roots of her literary masterpiece, *Frankenstein*. For a worthy mystery, try **The Mystery Guest** by Nita Prose. A new mess. A new mystery. It's up to Molly the maid to uncover the truth, no matter how dirty, in this standalone novel from the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Maid*, a *Good Morning America* Book Club pick. And finally, From *New York Times* bestselling authors Nelson DeMille and Alex DeMille, **Blood Lines** features the return of Army CID Special Agents Brodie and Taylor who are on the hunt for the cold-blooded murderer of one of

their fellow agents.

Bring some color into your life with Johanna Basford's special 10th anniversary edition of **Secret Garden**, the book that started a global craze. Features a brand-new, specially commissioned fold-out poster to celebrate ten years of adult coloring. Learn

creates crystal clear cocktail ice. He also offers easy-to-follow lessons on how to shape ice, freeze objects in it, and even monogram it. Both instructional and inspirational, *The Ice Book* will help you take your beverages to the next level while learning a little science along the way. In her first book in over two decades, actress and country music legend Reba McEntire takes you behind the scenes and shares the stories, recipes, and Oklahoma-style truths that guide her life with **Not That Fancy: Simple Lessons on Living, Loving, Eating and Dusting Off Your Boots**. From James Beard nominee and *Top Chef* contestant Chef Chris Viaud comes **GATHER**, featuring recipes that not only bring friends and family together but keep them at the table. For even more cooking fun, relive the magic of the iconic moments with 75 recipes inspired by the cult-classic holiday movie *Home Alone* with the **Unofficial Home Alone Cookbook**, including "Highly Nutritious" Mac and Cheese and Lovely Cheese Pizza. Though this year was not their year, you can read all about the illustrious history of our beloved Boston Red Sox in **Story of the Red Sox** compiled by Chad Finn and other journalists from The Boston Globe.

Let's not forget our younger readers! From debut author



all about the hidden lives of fungi with Merlin Sheldrake's *New York Times* bestseller, **Entangled Life**, now a lavish visual journey into the hidden lives of fungi. Impress party guests with the unique **The Ice Book** by ice expert Camper English, who reveals how directional freezing

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**FRIDAY**

LIVE BANDS

**SATURDAY**

MUSIC BINGO

8:00pm

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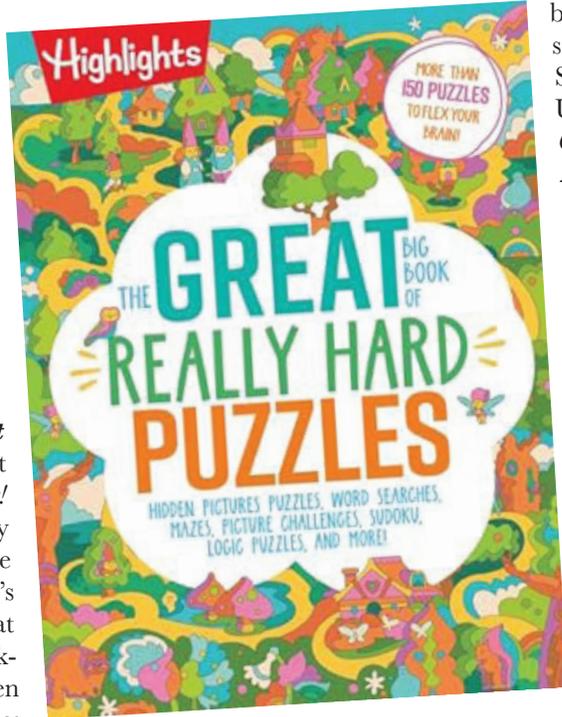
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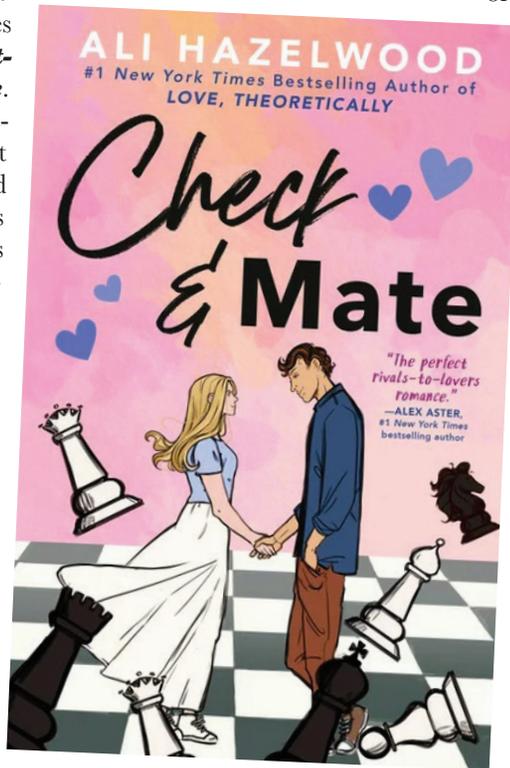
Kelsey Gross and *New York Times* bestselling artist Renata Liwska comes ***Winter: A Solstice Story***, a gentle and lulling picture book celebrating the magic of the Winter Solstice with a group of animal friends in a quiet forest. Celebrate ***Snow, Snow, Snow! A Christmastime Song*** in the latest holiday classic from the one and only Sandra Boynton. The classic story of the night before Christmas gets a humorous twist in ***Red & Green***, an engaging holiday picture book filled with die-cuts from the acclaimed and beloved picture book creator, Lois Ehlert. ***Elves Are the Worst*** is the side-splitting latest installment in *The Worst!* picture book series by Alex Willan. Gilbert the Goblin infiltrates Santa's workshop to prove that goblins are better workers than elves, where even the strangest of creatures can become the best of friends. ***Merry and Hark: A Christmas Story*** is a beauti-

fully illustrated book by April Genevieve Tucholke & Rebecca Santo that is also a heartwarming and whimsical story about the connection between humans and nature, and the magic of Christmas. For slightly older readers, Nikki Maxwell



deals with the trials and triumphs of middle school in the 15th installment of

the #1 *New York Times* bestselling ***Dork Diaries*** series subtitled ***Tales from a Not-So-Posh Paris Adventure***. ***The Lost Library*** is a classic middle-grade novel about a little free library guarded by a cat and a boy who takes on the mystery it keeps by *New York Times*-bestselling authors Rebecca Stead and Wendy Mass. Up for a challenge? ***The Great Big Book of Really Hard Puzzles*** created by Highlights is just that — a huge book of brain-teasing, mind-twisting, difficult puzzles that will challenge any puzzle pro. Filled with head-scratchers, this collection of Hidden Pictures puzzles, mazes, logic puzzles and more is sure to provide hours of fun, perfect for ages 8-12. From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Bad Guys* comes another hilarious illustrated series starring a pampered cat who is way tougher than anyone realizes in ***Cat on***



***the Run*** #1 by Aaron Blabey. ***Working Boats: An Inside Look at Ten Amazing Watercraft*** by Tom Crestodina, is a visually engaging book filled with cross sections and exploded views of working boats perfect for children--and even adults--curious about the mechanics of boats and the lives

of people who work on boats. For young adults, master storyteller and internationally bestselling author Christopher Paolini returns to the World of Eragon in a stunning epic fantasy set a year after the events of the Inheritance Cycle. Join Dragon Rider—and fan favorite—Murtagh: ***The World of Eragon*** and his dragon as they confront a perilous new enemy. ***Check & Mate*** by Ali Hazelwood is a clever and swoonworthy YA debut from the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Love Hypothesis*. Life's moving pieces bring rival chess players together in a match for the heart.

So, as you can see, there is truly something for everyone! There are plenty more fascinating offerings to choose from as you will find out for yourself by exploring the shelves of your local bookstore. Have a cozy holiday season filled with lots of great reads!



# Tree Lightings and Events

Visit us on Sunday, Dec. 3 for  
**Millbury's Chain of Lights**

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Hrs.: Monday-Friday 10am-6pm;  
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## AUBURN

• 2023 Santa Tour, Saturday, December 16  
For over 65 years the Auburn Fire Rescue Department has brought Santa around town in the Fire Truck to visit children and adults throughout the community. It has become a tradition that has been shared in families for generations. Please check out the route below. The route will start at approximately 11:00 am from the Drury Square Fire Station on Auburn Street. Some approximate times are listed next to some places or streets on the route. Please be patient as this is all dependent upon traffic and times are subject to change.

• The Farmer's Daughter Holiday hours and events: Beginning Nov. 25, daily 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Christmas Eve: 9 a.m. – 1p.m.; closed Christmas Day. Visit with Santa, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 26; Sunday, Nov. 27; Saturday, Dec. 3; Sunday, Dec. 4. Delicious apple cider donuts are made daily starting Saturday, Nov. 26.

## GRAFTON

Grafton Celebrates the Holidays Sunday, Dec.3 from 8 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Join us for the 28th year as more than 30 businesses, churches and organizations come up with a host of delightful seasonal activities. Keep an eye out for the "Frosty Stop" snow bear logo that marks fun spots like the Polar Express Trackless Train Ride, photos with Santa and the Craft and Vendor Fair at the Municipal Center Gym. The day starts with a pancake breakfast at North Grafton Elementary School. In other stops, enjoy hot soup, pizza or a grab and go craft for kids. The Baptist Church will display its traditional crèche from 1-5 p.m. Head to the Common at 4 p.m. to join the Grafton Girl Scouts for seasonal songs and a lighting of the community menorah. Santa arrives on the Common at 4:30 p.m., with the lighting of the Common to follow.

## HOPEDALE

• Winter Stroll (sponsored by the Friends of Historic Hopedale) – Saturday, December 2nd, Noon until 6 p.m. Volunteers needed to staff the Little Red Shop Museum.

## MEDWAY

• Medway Holiday Light Fight Thursday, Nov. 23 - 6: p.m. to Wednesday, Dec. 6 - 9 p.m. Do you enjoy decking the Halls? You could be the winner of Medway's Great Holiday Light Fight. To participate in this ALL-OUT-LIGHT-FIGHT contest, register at <https://medwayma.myrec.com/> Light displays should be lit up and ready

for our judges viewing on December 6th from 6 pm-9 pm. Judges will use the following categories when deciding on a winner: holiday spirit, use of lights, and overall design. The winner will be awarded a trophy and, most importantly, bragging rights. Participants will have an option of adding their address to the list of Holiday light displays for December.

• Breakfast With Santa! The breakfast will be December 2nd this year 7:30am to 11:00am at Saint Joseph's Parish Center 145 Holliston Street Medway. As always we will have great food, activities & crafts for the kids, our silent auction, and of course picture with Santa. The cost this year is \$9 for Adults, Senior & kids \$7, kids under 3 are free, max per family \$26. Pictures with Santa are \$15 and each family will receive a thumb drive with 3 to 5 photos on it.

• 31st annual Medway Christmas Parade . The parade kicks off from Medway High School promptly at 5:30p.m. on Nov. 25 and proceeds along Summer Street to Milford Street, down Franklin Street to Village Street to Holliston Street (in Medway Village ) to Main Street and finishing at Choate Park. As in past years, parade will include a large number of Fire apparatus from cities and towns from all over Massachusetts, Floats from commercial businesses and community organizations, along with antique vehicles. The Choate Park and the Thayer House festivities will continue with a presentation of this year's Grand Marshall honoring Lt. Mathew Rardon for his 28 years of dedicated service to the Medway Police Dept. and Town of Medway.

Also features at Choate Park will be the annual Christmas light presentation and culminated with a dazzling Fire Works display. In case of inclement weather the Fire works display will be held on Sunday Nov. 26. Santa Claus will attend these festivities and will be at the Thayer House to have photos taken with children, at no charge.

## Mendon

• 7th Annual Santa Parade and Tree Lighting, Friday, Dec. 1: 6 p.m. Come help the Mendon Brothers of the Brush welcome the Holiday Season. The parade will kickoff from Northbridge Rd at 7PM and end on Main St. We will have fireworks and a tree lighting. Burgers, hot dogs, and other refreshments will be available.

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• Chain of Lights, Sunday, Dec. 3 at 11 a.m. Join the 24th annual, town-wide event to celebrate the holidays with local food, shopping and entertainment! Enjoy nearly 40 stops in town for live music, holiday shopping, holiday figures like Buddy the Elf and the Grinch, raffles and food. Old-fashioned trolleys provide free transportation throughout the day. The event is sponsored by local businesses and concludes with a tree lighting and appearance by Santa Claus at the Millbury bandstand.

#### MILLIS

• The Fright Before Christmas with Jeff Belanger at the Millis Public Library November 14: 7 p.m. LIVE and IN-PERSON! Remember the famous Christmas song which goes, "There'll be scary ghost stories and tales of the glories of Christmases long, long ago...?" So what happened to the scary stories? Jeff Belanger brings the spooky back to the yuletide time of year with Creepy Christmas. From the origins of the holiday to the monsters and ghosts that lurk in its shadows, Jeff will take you on a multi-media journey of this haunting holiday! Based on his "Creepy Christmas" PBS special and his latest book *The Fright Before Christmas*, this night may just save Christmas!

**\*NOTE: This program is NOT for young children.**

The program is free to attend, but please contact the library as reservations may be required. Millis Public Library, 961 Main Street, Millis. 508-376-8282

#### NORFOLK

• Holiday on the Hill. Dec. 3–Jan. 20. "Take a holiday stroll to kick off the season and enjoy the display of decorated trees. Don't forget to cast your vote for your favorite tree on Dec. 3 when Santa comes to town!" On Town Hill behind the library, 2 Liberty Lane. Free.

• Santa Parade. Dec. 3 at 3:30. Starting at Hillcrest Village, traveling down Rockwood Rd. and ending at the library, 2 Liberty Lane. Santa will be available for photos. Tree lighting follows and hot chocolate and cookies will be available.

#### NORWOOD

• Get ready to stroll into the holiday spirit! Join us November 18th & 19th at Salvage Angel Vintage Artisan Market for a festive weekend filled with shopping and outdoor pop market magic. Dozens of FREE raffles to enter, food trucks, holiday music & so much more! Find the perfect gifts and decor for the season at your one stop shop! Salvage Angel Vintage Artisan Market @ The Norwood Space Center

83 Morse Street Norwood, MA  
Store hours for the event weekend are 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. both days  
Pop-Up Market & Food Truck hours are 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. both days  
Parking & Admission is Free  
Car-Pooling is recommended

• The Holiday Extravaganza is held the Sunday after Thanksgiving from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The day includes many fun activities for children as well as the entire family. There are horse-drawn hayrides, local musical choirs, arts and crafts, readings of Christmas stories and a parade from Guild Square to the Town Common. The day concludes with Santa and Mrs. Claus arriving at the Town Common to turn on the Holiday lights.

#### SUTTON

• The Sutton Chain of Lights Saturday December 2nd from 10 am to 4 pm  
Spend a day with your family and friends at the Town of Sutton's Annual Holiday Chain of Lights Event. Free trolleys and buses will transport visitors over rolling countryside to participating locations throughout historic Sutton. Farms, unique specialty stores, church fairs, and area businesses welcome the holidays with musical entertainment, children's activities, food, fun and Holiday characters. Route information, maps, location descriptions and brochures are available at [www.suttonlights.com](http://www.suttonlights.com)

• Manchaug Stroll: Saturday, December 9, 2023 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
Celebrate Sutton's Historic Village of Manchaug with a traditional Christmas stroll bringing together food, history, shopping, and holiday merriment.

• Enjoy Breakfast with Santa!  
Waters Farm, 53 Waters Road, West Sutton  
Saturday, Dec. 2 from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

#### WHITINSVILLE

Light It Up: A Christmas Concert with WCS Alumnus Jay Bragg Basiner  
Saturday, Dec. 9: 7:30 – 9 p.m.  
279 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville Christian School, Nehemiah Center for the Arts and Worship, Northbridge, Tickets \$17  
From Whitinsville Christian School alumnus to Nashville star. Stories, songs and a whole lot of Christmas cheer from a career musician, songwriter and '99 WCS alumnus.

#### WRENTHAM

• Tree Lighting. November 26. Usually at 6 p.m. but can't find confirmation online anywhere. Santa arrives by fire truck and Girl Scouts sing. The award-winning King Philip High School Band plays.

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by Candlelight**

**OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE**

Experience cherished traditions and create new ones as you celebrate the season during Christmas by Candlelight at Old Sturbridge Village!  
Explore the beautifully decorated Village, visit with Santa, taste samples of sweet treats, enjoy live music, and so much more.

**Select Dates November 24 - December 30**  
**Get your tickets at [WWW.OSV.ORG](http://WWW.OSV.ORG)**



# NIGHT LIGHTS

## Starry Skies

**NOVEMBER 24 – DECEMBER 31, 2023**  
**DAILY 4–10 PM**

Celebrate the season at New England Botanic Garden with a light display like no other in the region! Enchanting landscapes, immersive experiences, and thousands of lights await. Tickets go on sale on October 16 for members and October 30 for the general public. Visit [nebg.org/nightlights](http://nebg.org/nightlights) for member discounts and ticket information.

*Images shown are from 2022.*



NEW ENGLAND BOTANIC GARDEN AT TOWER HILL

BOYLSTON, MA

[NEBG.ORG](http://NEBG.ORG)

# Gifts that are Priceless – Time and Donations Benefit the Community Year Round

BY LINDA CHUSS

**T**his time of year, people put effort into selecting the right presents to give. It is also the perfect time of year to offer gifts for the community – time and contributions

thanks to assistance from our volunteer servers. It gives seniors a time to socialize over a meal.

“People can do any of these activities, or something else, including helping with computer needs, making crafts, or leading a walking group. Anyone with

try’s food drive each November. Every town has at least one service organization, like the Lions Club, and school groups, who have programs for which members and others can volunteer. Often workplaces offer opportunities for coworkers to volunteer

might require. “Maybe a person has difficulty taking out their trash bins, or needs a path shoveled to their oil tank,” she said. There are many ways people can help in their own neighborhood, and it’s much appreciated.”

This spotlight article was made possible by a contribution from Imperial Cars of Mendon and Milford. “We’re always looking for ways to support the communities that support us,” said General Manager Mike Penner. “Supporting organizations like the Senior Center that are actively identifying and fulfilling needs in our community allows us to make a positive impact year-round.”

Contact your town’s food

## Community Spotlight

pantry, senior center, school, or a service organization for opportunities to give back. Or use CommunityConnectorMA.com, created by local student Elsie Sutherland that helps people find ways to contribute.

Everyone can do something, whether it’s donating items or funds, volunteering regularly or occasionally, or helping the person next door. Gifts of this type have the added benefit of giving back to the giver, in terms of gratification and fulfillment.

- Community Spotlight brought to you by Imperial Cars -



Volunteers make tremendous contributions to the community, like Karen Rochat (left) and Lynne Lamarre (right) at the Mendon Food Pantry. Photo courtesy of Janet Hubener.

to those in need. In every town in this region, there are families lacking food, seniors who would appreciate conversation or help shoveling snow, students needing school supplies, and much more. All of them benefit from ordinary people in the community providing time, skills, and goods or funds.

In Mendon, the Senior Center and its advisory board, the Council on Aging, rely on volunteers so they can in turn give help. They run the local food pantry and provide other vital services. “The pantry serves residents of all ages who are in need,” said Amy Wilson Kent, the center’s director. “We appreciate people donating unexpired items for the pantry. And we appreciate the seniors, students, and other volunteers who stock the shelves. Our staff distributes the goods, ensuring confidentiality for recipients.”

“We also work with Tri Valley to serve a lunch twice a week,

a skill or experience can share it. One volunteer gives regular talks about Mendon’s history, and another explained how he built his guitar, then played for the group.”

Another way people can contribute is as part of a group, like the Mendon Scouts and their families who conduct the pan-

try together in the community.

Extra help at the holidays is welcomed by most service organizations, and many have opportunities for volunteers and donations throughout the year.

Janet Hubener, Outreach Coordinator at the Mendon Senior Center, recommended being aware of assistance neighbors

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5:30 pm - 6:30 pm Vinyasa Yoga
- Wednesdays**  
9 am - 10 am Barre Sculpt  
5 pm - 6 pm Barre Strength Cardio  
6:30 pm - 7:30 pm Hatha Restorative Yoga
- Thursdays**  
9 am - 10 am Barre Strength Cardio  
6 pm - 7 pm Slow Flow Yoga
- Fridays**  
9:15 am - 10 am Curls & Crunches
- Saturdays**  
8:30 am - 9:30 am Hatha Yoga  
10 am - 11 am Vinyasa Yoga
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# Cook - Bake - Celebrate!

## Recipies for the season

### Irish Stuffing

(aka fancy-for-holidays mashed potatoes)

A family variation of Colcannon (Irish mashed potatoes)  
Contributed by Mary Dalton

**Ingredients**  
6 cups boiled potatoes, peeled and diced

¾ cup butter  
1 medium onion, chopped  
½ teaspoon ground sage  
2 teaspoons salt  
½ teaspoon pepper  
½ cup chopped parsley

**Directions**  
Pass the potatoes through a ricer or food mill then place them in a large bowl

Melt butter in a frying pan and pour over potatoes (leave a little butter in pan for onions)

Blend well  
With butter in frying pan, sauté onions over low heat until translucent

Add onions to the potato mixture  
Add sage, salt, pepper, parsley  
Blend well

**Optional**  
Increase butter to one full stick  
Double the onions  
Add 8 oz sour cream

### Pumpkin Roll

**Cake**  
3 eggs  
1 cup sugar  
¾ cup flour  
2/3 cup canned pumpkin  
1/2 tsp. cinnamon  
1 tsp. baking soda

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.  
Grease, then line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.

Bake approximately 12-15 minutes, or until the top is spongy and not sticky

Turn onto lightly sugared dish towel and roll.  
Cool for 1 hour

**Filling**  
2 tbs. softened butter  
8 oz. cream cheese  
1 cup powdered sugar  
¾ tsp. vanilla  
Combine filling. Unroll pumpkin roll and spread evenly. Roll again, very easily.

Cut off both ends to show clean lines (leaving ends to enjoy now!)

### Christmas Punch

2 cups orange juice  
2 cups cranberry juice  
1 cup pineapple juice  
1 cup Ginger Ale

### Applesauce

Contributed by Theresa Knapp

This is an excellent side dish at the holidays, or any time. Makes about 2 cups of applesauce.

**Ingredients**  
2 pounds cookie apples  
1 cup water  
½ cup sugar  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
½ cup raisins (optional)  
Apple pie spice, to taste OR  
Nutmeg, to taste, and  
Cinnamon, to taste

**Directions**  
Wash, core and peel the apples, cut into quarters

Put apples in large saucepan, add water

Bring to boil, then immediately turn down to simmer

Simmer until apples are soft  
Add sugar, lemon juice, raisins (optional)

Season to taste with apple pie spice (or nutmeg and cinnamon)

Cook another 5 minutes  
Remove from heat  
Let stand 30 minutes

**Serving Suggestions**  
Serve warm or cold  
Eat as a side dish or as a garnish (like vanilla ice cream!)

### Boozy Cherry Bombs

**Ingredients**  
1 jar maraschino cherries with stems  
2 cups bourbon, vodka or any liquor  
1 cup white chocolate chips  
red, white, and green sanding sugar

**Directions**  
Soak cherries in bourbon or liquor of choice for 1 hour in the refrigerator. Remove cherries and pat dry with a paper towel.

Heat chocolate chips in the microwave in 20-second intervals, stirring in between, until fully melted.

Dip each cherry two-thirds of the way into the melted white chocolate, twisting it slightly to help the chocolate stick. Dip the cherry in red, green, or white sanding sugar, coating it halfway up the white chocolate coating.

Chill in fridge 20 minutes before serving.

### Christmas Breakfast Casserole

2-3 Cans of Pillsbury Grands Flaky Layers  
8-10 Eggs  
1 tbsp of butter  
1 bag of Cabot Shredded Extra Sharp Cheddar  
Your choice of Breakfast meat: Sausage, Bacon, Ham, Corned Beef Hash  
2 Large Potatoes, diced

2-3 tbsp of olive oil  
Onion (Optional)  
Peppers (Optional)  
Salt, Pepper  
Chipotle Black Pepper (if you like a kick)

(Serves 4-6 people - 9x13 pan)  
Spray Casserole Pan with baking spray set aside. Open a can of Pillsbury rolls, sprinkle flour on the surface and roll out dough so thin and flat.

Cover Baking Dish with dough so all sides and bottom are covered. Set aside.

In a pan, cook up sausage, bacon, corned beef or ham (use as many meats as you like) cut or break up into bite size pieces. Set aside.

Once the pan is empty, prepare scrambled eggs (8 -10 eggs, with milk whisk until combined). Put 1 tbsp of butter in the pan, melt and add egg mixture and scramble together. Season salt and pepper.

Cook until slightly wet or undercooked.

In a pan, boil diced potatoes so fork tender (about 10 minutes).

Once that is done, set aside potatoes.

Cut up peppers, onions and saute with olive oil until cooked through. Set aside. Fry up potatoes with olive oil, season with salt, and chipotle black pepper (or pepper if you prefer). Then add pepper and onion mixture to peppers and toss together. Drain any excess oil, water etc.



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Take the casserole pan layered with biscuit, add in scrambled eggs, cheese, meat, potato, pepper and onion mixture and layer with cheese and finish with some cheese on top too.  
 Open the other can of Pillsbury biscuits and layer the top the same way you did the bottom. Pinching them together so no holes in dough. Cut a few small slits in dough  
 Bake 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until golden brown on top.  
 Tip: Prepare the day before and leave in the fridge. Take out early to bring to room temp then cook.

**Cranberry-Orange Bread**

2 cups all-purpose flour  
 ¾ cup sugar  
 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder  
 ¾ teaspoon salt  
 ½ teaspoon baking soda  
 ¼ cup butter, softened  
 1 tablespoon grated orange peel  
 ¾ cup orange juice  
 1 egg  
 1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries, chopped  
 ½ cup chopped nuts (optional)

Heat oven to 350. Grease bottom only of loaf pan, 8 ½ x 4 ½ x 2 ½ or 9 x 5 x 3 inches. Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and baking soda; stir in butter until mixture is crumbly. Stir in orange peel, orange juice and egg just until moistened; stir in cranberries and nuts. Spread in pan. Bake until wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean, 8-inch loaf pan 1 ¼ hours, 9-inch loaf pan 55 to 65 minutes; cool 5 minutes. Loosen sides of loaf from pan; remove from pan. Cool completely before slicing.

**Yum Yums**

An annual Christmas treat  
 1 package of dates, chopped

(approx. 1 1/2 - 2 cups)  
 1 cup sugar  
 2 cups crispy rice cereal  
 1 egg  
 1/2 cup glace cherries (candied cherries)  
 1/4 lb. butter  
 1/2-1 cup desiccated coconut  
 1/2 cup chopped nuts

Melt butter and stir in dates and sugar. Beat the egg and stir in. Cook on low heat for 10 minutes - until dates are soft. Add nuts and stir in rice cereal and cherries. Let cool for approximately 15 minutes. Form into balls and roll in coconut. Refrigerate or freeze until served. Makes approximately 4 dozen.

**Prime Rib**

1/4 cup dry red wine  
 2 tbsps. balsamic vinegar  
 1 tbsps. Worcestershire sauce  
 2 garlic cloves, minced  
 1 tsp. salt  
 1/4 tsp. coarse ground black pepper  
 5-5 1/2 lbs. boneless prime rib roast

In large resealable plastic bag, combine all ingredients, except roast, and mix well. Add roast and seal bag, turning to make sure roast is coated on all sides. Refrigerate for 6 to 8 hours, turning occasionally.  
 (Note: this marinade can be done overnight - just turn several times before cooking.)  
 Heat oven to 350. Place roast flat side up, on rack in roasting pan; discard marinade.  
 Bake for 2-2 1/2 hours for a medium roast. Let stand 12-20 minutes before slicing.

**Italian Cookies**

Cookies:  
 3 eggs

¾ cup sugar  
 1 1/2 tsp. anise or lemon extract  
 1/2 cup vegetable oil  
 1/2 tsp. baking soda  
 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder  
 pinch of salt  
 3 1/2 - 4 cups flour  
 ¾ cup milk

Icing:  
 2 cups sifted confectioners' sugar  
 1/2 tsp. of flavoring (anise or

lemon)  
 2 tbs. water

Beat eggs well, add the rest of ingredients and beat well again. Add 3 1/2 - 4 cups of flour, adding the last cup gradually to form a rather still cookie dough. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper and drop dough by tablespoons to form long loaves to a cookie sheet. Bake at 400

for about 15 minutes. Frost with confectioners' sugar icing flavored with lemon or anise. Cut into slices when cool.

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# Holiday Performances & Winter Fun

## Hanover Theatre

2 Southbridge St., Worcester  
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**FRIDAY, NOV. 24: 2 P.M. & 7 P.M.**

**SATURDAY, NOV. 25: 2 P.M. & 7 P.M.**

**SUNDAY, NOV. 26: 1 P.M.**

### THE NUTCRACKER

Experience the dazzling lighting and scenery by Broadway designers! Featuring live music from The Hanover Theatre Nutcracker Orchestra, this production of The Nutcracker will enchant you with its brilliant dancing and vibrant costumes.

**SATURDAY, DEC 2: 8 P.M.**

### THE 2023 BOSTON POPS HOLIDAY TOUR

Join the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra and conductor Keith Lockhart for their sparkling and beloved Holiday Pops concert. Capturing the magic of the Christmas season and the winter charms of New England, the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra will perform holiday

classics and new arrangements of seasonal favorites. They are joined by the Metropolitan Chorale, known as one of Metro

Boston's premier choral ensembles. Santa Claus himself will make a guest appearance during the concert's finale.

**SUNDAY, DEC. 3: 4 P.M.**

### A MAGICAL CIRQUE CHRISTMAS

Embrace the holiday spirit with A Magical Cirque Christmas, a variety show full of nostalgia, charm, and awe-inspiring performances for all ages. Get ready to be dazzled, enchanted, and filled with holiday cheer as you witness the incredible talents of world-class entertainers performing to your favorite

holiday music. Celebrate the magic of the season with the entire family at A Magical Cirque Christmas.

**DEC. 16 - 23**

### A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Adapted by the president and CEO Troy Siebels and featuring the Mighty Wurlitzer Organ, our annual production returns to the main stage with timeless music, colorful costumes and spectacular lighting and scenery. New and returning cast members tell the tale of curmudgeonly miser, Ebenezer Scrooge, who is visited by the Spirits of Christmases Past, Present and Yet To Come. The show is refined and revised each year to feature more magic than ever before, with an array of spectacles from smoke and fog to spectacular flying stunts.

Dec. 16: 2 p.m. & 7 p.m.

Dec. 17: 1 p.m. *Sensory Friendly Performance*

Dec. 17: 6 p.m. *Audio Description and ASL*

Dec. 20: 7 p.m.

Dec. 22: 7 p.m.

Dec. 23: 2 p.m. & 7 p.m.

### Mechanics Hall

321 Main St., Worcester  
mechanicshall.org

**SATURDAY, DEC. 2: 8 P.M.**

### THE WORCESTER CHORUS: HANDEL MESSIAH

Directed by Chris Shepard, The Worcester Chorus is one of America's oldest and longest-running choral ensembles. Attending their annual performance of Handel's Messiah at historic Mechanics Hall on the first weekend of December each year is a holiday tradition for many families and choral music fans in the Greater Worcester community and beyond.

The chorus will be joined on stage by vocal soloists and the Worcester Festival Orchestra.

**SUNDAY, DEC. 3: 7 P.M.**

### BOSTON CONSERVATORY ORCHESTRA 'TIS THE SEASON - ANNUAL TRADITIONS

A symphonic celebration of the December holidays. Just as operas perform Hansel and Gretel, ballets perform The Nutcracker, and New Year's Eve brings Die Fledermaus, so symphony orchestras perform Christmas and Chanukah music for young and old! Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's Christmas Overture and Robert Wendel's arrange-

ment of Chanukah music begin a program that includes selections from traditional holiday repertoire and concludes with a rousing suite of favorites from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker. This performance is suitable for music lovers of all ages.

**SATURDAY, DEC. 9: 8 P.M.**

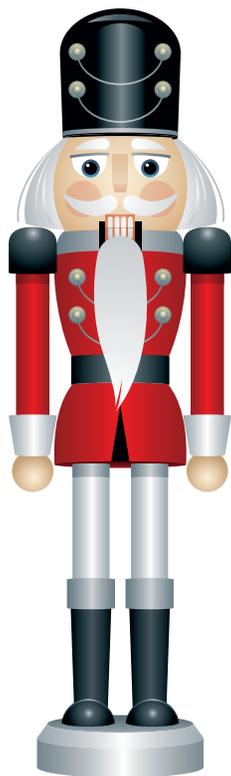
### 43RD ANNUAL MASSACHUSETTS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HOLIDAY POPS CONCERT

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After 42 years of sold out performances, Holiday Pops once again comes to Worcester's Mechanics Hall. As a beloved tradition, this annual holiday extravaganza features the Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra, with conductor Jorge Soto, performing traditional favorites of the season, light classics and holiday gems.

**SUNDAY, DEC. 10: 1 P.M. & 5 P.M.**

### THE NUTCRACKER: PRESENTED BY DANCE PRISM

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follows Clara's magical journey from a warm 19th century Christmas party at which she receives the mysterious gift of wooden Nutcracker, through a fantastic battle of toy soldiers and giant mice and a voyage through the ethereal kingdom of Snow, arriving finally at the Land of the Sugarplum Fairy where sweets from all lands come to life and dance in her honor. In her travels she is enchanted by a growing Christmas tree, a reindeer drawn sleigh amid a swirling snowstorm, and the clash of swords as a menacing Rat King battles the valiant Nutcracker. Young audience members are invited to meet selected principal characters following most performances.

**Old Sturbridge Village**

1 Old Sturbridge Village Road, Sturbridge  
osv.org

**NOV. 24 - DEC. 30: 2-8 P.M.  
CHRISTMAS BY CANDLELIGHT**

Come experience the history of Christmas traditions at Old Sturbridge Village. Relish old traditions and create new ones as you watch demonstrations of classic Christmas projects, stroll through the decorated Village and Christmas Tree Trail, listen to stories and live music, sample sweet treats, ride the horse-drawn carryall, and more. We hope your family will join ours, as we celebrate a very special time of year. Nov. 24, 25, 26, and Dec. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, and 30, 2023

**Southwick's Zoo**

2 Southwick St., Mendon  
southwickszoo.com

**NOV. 18 - DEC. 31  
WINTER WONDERLAND**

Winter Wonderland Holiday Spectacular is back! Experience the holiday lighting amazement of Winter Wonderland, a festive tradition enjoyed by guests of all ages

at Southwick's Zoo. Visit southwickszoo.com for more information

**Vaillancourt Folk Art**

9 Main St., Sutton

**SATURDAY, NOV. 25  
SUNDAY, NOV. 26  
30TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR: A CHRISTMAS CAROL WITH GERALD CHARLES DICKENS**

Experience Dickens' masterpiece, "A Christmas Carol," performed by his great-great grandson, Gerald Charles Dickens, this Thanksgiving Weekend as Gerald celebrates his 30th Anniversary Tour!

Join in the holiday season with the one-man performance of "A Christmas Carol" performed by Gerald Charles Dickens.

The two hour performance, including an intermission, will ignite the wonderment of the season through the immortal words of Dickens' classic ghost story. Gerald Charles Dickens adopts different voices, expressions, and mannerisms to portray each of the story's twenty-six characters in this acclaimed one-man show. Brought to the United States each year by American Christmas company, Byers' Choice, Dickens kicks off his the East Coast leg of his American tour each year since 2009 at Vaillancourt Folk Art's Blaxton Hall theatre. Because of the complexity of a one-man-performance, the show is not recommended for children under the age of 8 years old.

Cash bar will be available before each performance and during intermission. Fourteen VIP bistro tables for two are available directly in front of the stage to allow you to fully enjoy the theatrical experience. Immediately following the performance, Dickens will have a live Q&A from the stage in lieu of a meet and greet. Tickets range from \$35 - \$100 and are in short supply.

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# Last-minute holiday shopping tips

Though devotees of early holiday shopping do not hesitate to point out how convenient it can be to get all their gifts long before the arrival of Chanukah and Christmas, scores of shoppers still wait until the last minute to begin checking names off their lists. It might be beneficial to shop early, but it's easy to procrastinate.

Last-minute holiday shopping might not be as enjoyable a custom as family dinners or office parties, but scrambling to find the right gift in the waning days of the holiday season is a familiar situation for millions of shoppers. Shoppers who find themselves with some last-minute shopping on their to-do list can utilize these tips to make the frantic search for the right gift go smoothly.



- Bag it, don't wrap it. Shoppers who wait until the very last minute likely won't have time to wrap all the gifts they pick up for loved ones. Gift bags conceal gifts just as well as wrapping paper, but it takes a fraction of the time to place a gift in a bag as it does to wrap it in paper. Quality gift bags also are reusable, which can appeal to anyone looking to create less waste this holiday season.

- Don't forget food. If it's truly impossible to find something late in the season and a gift card feels too impersonal, give the gift of food. Adult recipients also can be gifted a bottle of wine or another spirit that can be enjoyed during a holiday meal. Shoppers skilled in the kitchen can whip up a homemade treat, while those without such talents can give a store-bought delicacy or even a subscription to a monthly food club or service.

Last-minute shopping may look different than it used to, but scores of shoppers still wait to buy gifts for their loved ones. A handful of strategies can simplify last-minute shopping.

- Work with store personnel. If a shopping list is lengthy but the time before the holiday arrives is dwindling, speak directly with store personnel, who may offer suggestions but can also help shoppers find what they need. In-person shoppers can speak with a store clerk immediately upon entering a store, while online shoppers can utilize chat functions on retailers' websites for help finding

something that's in stock and deliverable before the big day.

- Expect competition. Though online shopping would seemingly make last-minute shoppers relics of a bygone era, that was not really the case in 2022. A survey of more than 1,000 shoppers conducted by the retail industry publisher Best Black Friday found that just about 16 percent of consumers estimated they would

finish their shopping during the week of Christmas. Last-minute shoppers who want to avoid crowds should consider shopping during off-peak hours, such as on weekday mornings and afternoons when most people are working.

- Shop local. Last-minute shoppers may be flocking to malls and busy downtown shopping districts as they hurry to

get gifts for friends and family members with different interests. Shopping at small, local businesses can help last-minute shoppers avoid such crowds. And with less on their shelves and smaller storage rooms, small business owners and their staff also tend to know their inventories inside and out. That can ensure a shopping trip is not spent wandering numerous aisles in search of the right gift.

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# Community Membership Opportunities



## Fostering Inclusive Opportunities in the Blackstone Valley!

### VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Get involved with Open Sky's Community Membership Department!  
email [Michelle.Benjamin@openskycs.org](mailto:Michelle.Benjamin@openskycs.org)

- Technical Assistance (A/V, lights, photography)
- Stagehands
- Setup/Breakdown
- Concessions
- General Support (hosting, assist with signups, timekeeping, etc.)
- Set Design Crew
- Co-facilitator for set design (a few times per month)

Take Down the Wall Presents:  
**OPEN MIC NIGHTS**

*Learn and collaborate with other musicians!*

#### Upcoming dates:

Friday, November 17, 2023  
Saturday, January 13, 2024  
Saturday, February 10, 2024  
Saturday, March 9, 2024

New themes and featured artists each month!



Learn more at [openskycs.org/openmic](https://openskycs.org/openmic)  
Questions? Contact Michelle Benjamin at [michelle.benjamin@openskycs.org](mailto:michelle.benjamin@openskycs.org)

ALTERNATIVES' WHITIN MILL  
60 DOUGLAS ROAD, WHITINSVILLE, MA

Check out more opportunities at [openskycs.org/CommunityMembership](https://openskycs.org/CommunityMembership)





Kevin Meehan  
Owner

**FACT:**  
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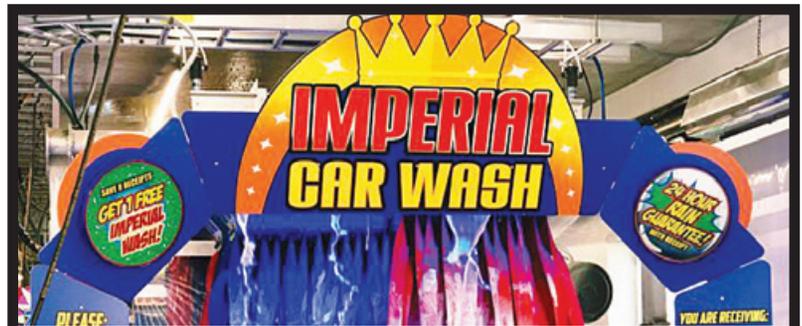
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