

Fireworks explode around Rutland's Fourth of July cancellation

By FAITH MAYER

For the first time in 78 years, the town's beloved Fourth of July celebration will not light up the summer sky after voters rejected a 2 1/2 override at the May 11 election that would also have saved public safety jobs. This vote not only canceled a generations-old tradition but also triggered the loss and/or reduced hours for 19 municipal jobs, leaving residents mourning both a cherished and widely known community event and the livelihoods now caught in the fallout.

A letter was sent to all residents of Rutland from the Fourth of July Committee and the police and fire chiefs explaining that they were canceling due to the lack of available

public safety personnel to staff the event after the July 1 layoffs occur.

Once this letter hit the streets of town, residents took to their keyboards in droves expressing how unhappy they were about the loss of this tradition, but most importantly how unhappy they were that donations will not be returned. That decision was made by the town's legal counsel, based on Massachusetts General Laws, and had nothing to do with the Fourth of July Committee.

So much noise was made over the loss of this event, news of it reached as far away as the UK Daily Mail, making it clear that this is an event that the town prides itself on.

"The extra details for this

event are voluntary," explained Police Chief Nicholas Monaco. "This event is not a public safety emergency, and I cannot force anyone to work. Last year fourteen of our officers worked the event; this year, we won't have that many left."

It was also noted that there had been meetings held in March in which the possibility of losing the Fourth of July celebration was spelled out by the Fourth of July Committee in the event of a failed override.

At the May 27 select board meeting, town officials considered what they called the equivalent of a Hail Mary save: including a temporary one-

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Photo from Facebook.

Path of destruction

By MARTHA AKSTIN

In the early evening of May 19, torrential rains, fierce winds, and thunder and lightning storms assaulted Paxton. On their way home from work, drivers were forced to pull their

cars over to the side of the road, hazard lights flashing, while they waited out the storm.

Residents on Richards Av-

DESTRUCTION

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RUTLAND

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twelfth budget per month for the next two months, coupled with free cash reserves, to preserve municipal jobs and maintain essential services until residents would return to the polls in September 2026, to consider another override vote. If the one-twelfth budget passes at the Special Town Meeting in June, it was discussed, the town could potentially preserve the public safety personnel needed to hold the annual Fourth of July celebration and all municipal positions would be maintained through the summer.

“If the override were to make it onto the ballot [of a June Special Town Meeting], the town would be asking for \$296,404 which is two months of level ser-

vices for all town departments,” explained Town Administrator Heather Butler.

Police Chief Nicholas Monaco asked, “Is this in the hopes of saving personnel or for a party?”

He continued, “Don’t get me wrong, I love the Fourth of July, and I want to save it, but I want to save my employees more.”

“The motivation is to save town employees and services,” responded Sheila Dibbs, chair of the select board. “For me, being able to bring back a piece of the Fourth of July is a bonus, but I want to save the department you have worked a decade to build.”

“My biggest concern with this,” said Selectmen Leah Whiteman, “is that we would use all free cash and we would not have any remaining to cover a snow and ice deficit as well as any other necessary things if an override ballot were to fail. I do not want the public to think we have all this money we are sitting on. As much as I love the Fourth of July, I am really struggling with the fact that there is no budget

if the override fails again.”

Many residents in attendance at the May 27 select board’s meeting were opposed to the use of free cash in the hopes of saving all jobs until September. John Rokicki of 17 Prouty Lane - who had come to the select board’s meeting from the Fourth of July Committee meeting - clearly stated that the committee was not entertaining an option to bring back the parade, band or fireworks. It was later discovered that the committee has chosen to resign - en masse - at the conclusion of their term that ends July 31, 2026.

“By trying to do this, we are extending for the party, not the people,” Michelle Van Reet of Charnock Hill stated. “I think we are going down a wrong path here,” she added.

“I don’t feel confident in an override passing,” said Mike Dvareckas. “People are in a bad financial place and need to pay for food, mortgages, etc...people have been clear in saying no means no,” he added.

Assuming the June 16 warrant does not end up asking for a one-twelfth budget, fireworks

and parade advocates were hoping that Worcester County Sheriff Lewis Evangelidis’ offer to assist would provide a way forward for the Fourth of July.

In his letter to the Town of Rutland dated May 28, Evangelidis stated, “As you know, in previous years we have provided our Mobile Command Unit to help support operations. Additionally, the Sherriff’s Office is prepared to offer sworn deputies, civilian volunteers and any resources necessary to allow the originally planned festivities, or in the alternative, a scaled down celebration to occur.”

However, budget decisions were clarified when the select board and finance committee met on June 1 as WFP was going to press. At that meeting, the select board decided not to move forward with adding the 1/12 budget for two months to the Special Town Meeting warrant. No action was taken on Evangelidis’ offer to assist on the Fourth.

Karen Greenwood, a lifelong resident of Rutland who had organized the Fourth of July festivities for more than 20 years, is a current member of the Fourth of July Committee. She attended the June 1 meeting and made it clear that despite the sheriff’s offer to help, all the vendors and services have already been cancelled, and the grand marshal and parade judges have been notified that the parade will not occur. However, the events planned for the prior weekend on June 27 and 28 will

be held.

In addition, she said, because of the online vitriol that was directed to committee members, this has been the most disheartening experience she has ever undergone living in town.

The Special Town Meeting warrant will address the citizen’s petition initiated by Justin Bassett in an attempt to both call a special town meeting - which has been addressed - and to call for another override vote on the public safety/DPW override which would total \$1,125,145 broken out as follows: \$458,726 for the fire department, \$449,496 for the police department and \$216,923 for the department of public works. Bassett’s financial proposal is nonbinding, however, which will be explained that evening. The school budget will also be addressed at the Special Town Meeting.

The override question returning to the ballot in September remains uncertain. The loss of the Fourth of July has caused a public debate unlike any witnessed in recent years. This is part of a larger debate involving how best to fund schools and towns equally.

The Special Town Meeting will be held at 6 pm, June 16, at Glenwood Elementary School on Glenwood Road. The warrant can be viewed on the town website rutlandma.gov. *

Visit wachusettfreepress.com for developments on this ongoing story.

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Publisher
Jennifer Schofield
508-570-6544
jenschofield@wachusettfreepress.com

Managing Writer
Martha Akstin
martha@localtownpages.com

Advertising Sales
Kate Carr
508-304-3019
katecarr@wachusettfreepress.com

Production & Design
Bess Couture
Kimberly Vasseur
Wendy Watkins

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DESTRUCTION

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eneue looked out of their front windows and could not see the street because of the literal sheets of rain that fell. However, they would not experience destruction like the other side of town.

In the West Street area near Nanigian Road, some residents grabbed children and pets and ran to their cellars, fearing a tornado was going to tear their house apart. One resident felt her home shaking and saw rocking chairs whipped off their front porch and sent flying across the yard.

Frank Nocera is a Warning Coordination Meteorologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/National Weather Service. When contacted after the storm, he said he was working the radar that evening.

“There wasn’t any rotation or tornadic signatures on radar,” said Nocera, “and the atmosphere wasn’t conducive for tornadic storms.

“It was definitely a straight-



Photo by Mitchell Wayze

line damaging wind event,” Nocera continued. “Winds at Worcester Airport peaked at 68 miles per hour at 5:30 pm that day. These wind speeds can certainly pick up rocking chairs and blow them 40-plus feet, shake homes, and knock down trees and power lines.”

Parts of Suomi and South streets, Nanigian and Black Hill roads, and areas off West Street including Moore State Park suffered calamitous tree damage. Paxton town departments responded quickly. Emergency services including police and fire departments, the department of public works, and the Municipal Light Department worked

long hours to clear fallen, twisted trees from roadways and power lines. The towns of West Boylston, Holden, and Boylston came to give mutual aid and help restore power.

At the May 27 Select Board meeting, Paxton Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director Michael Pingitore described the damage as more extensive and costly than the EF1 tornado, verified by the National Weather Service, which set down in Paxton on September 8, 2025. On May 19, 300 homes lost power and six homes either had trees fall on them or sustained significant wind-related structural damage.

Pingitore said the final damage report from town departments will not be ready until mid-June. The likelihood of Paxton receiving state or federal disaster relief funding is unlikely due to financial thresholds that must be met, so costs will have to be borne by the town. Costs associated with the town’s response will not be part of the June 22 Special Town Meeting budget override discussions.

Pingitore emphasized the importance of tree maintenance going forward. “Proactive trimming and removal of hazardous trees from your property can significantly reduce the likelihood of damage to homes, vehicles and infrastructure,” he said.

The devastation along Black

Hill and Nanigian roads can still be seen, and Moore State Park remains closed. “The Department of Conservation and Recreation had already been conducting cleanup efforts to address debris left by a recent storm [May 19] that passed through Moore State Park when strong winds over the weekend [of May 30 and 31] caused new additional tree damage,” said a spokesman for DCR. “DCR is continuing cleanup efforts and is actively surveying the site to determine the extent of the damage and the likely duration of the park’s current closure.”

*Accompanying this article are post-storm photos. **

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Ready to write a new chapter

Honoring Kerry Remington's legacy at the Rutland Public Library

BY RILEY FRANKIAN

Longtime Rutland resident and Rutland Public Library Director Kerry Remington will retire this year after serving the library and community for the past 31 years.

Remington began working at the library in 1994 after what she described as a chance encounter. While visiting the library looking for information, a librarian approached her and mentioned that the library was looking for help.

"She told me I would be a great fit for the job," Remington said. "It was surprising to me because I'm a loud person in general and libraries usually need to be quiet."

Remington initially worked only a few hours at a time before eventually earning a full-time position as assistant director and then becoming the library's director.

When she first started, the Rutland Public Library was located in the smaller building now known as The Annex. In June 2001, the current library building opened with the help of community funding.

Now approaching the 25th anniversary of the building's opening, the library plans to celebrate the milestone on Sunday, June 14 from 1-4 pm. The public is invited and numerous activities are planned.

Over the course of her three decades at the library, Remington has witnessed major technological and cultural changes in how people access media and information.

"A lot has changed since I started working for the library," Remington said. "I've witnessed the change from VHS to DVDs, to Blu-ray, to streaming in more recent years."

Much of the library's content and services have become

digitized over the years, making resources more accessible to a wider audience, including more technology-oriented patrons.

Looking back on her career, Remington said she is especially proud of the work the library staff accomplished during the COVID-19 pandemic. During a time of isolation and uncertainty, the library found creative ways to keep the community engaged. One initiative encouraged residents to support local restaurants by submitting takeout receipts into raffles organized through the library, with prizes awarded to participants.

The library also continued offering book pickup and delivery services during the pandemic. According to Remington, more than 30 people from surrounding communities placed orders through the Rutland library because similar services were unavailable elsewhere at the time. Remington emphasized the



Photo by Mitchell Wayze

"She's the heart and spirit of this library, and she's been like that for 30 years."

— Mary Calkins, library aide

importance of maintaining community involvement during a period when many people felt isolated. To this day, she continues helping to deliver books to residents who struggle with transportation or cannot otherwise access the library on their own.

Another accomplishment Remington highlighted was the implementation of the library's Teen Advisory Board (TAB), which gives local students opportunities to help library staff with various projects and activities.

"It's amazing what those kids are willing to do to help out in return for free pizza, chocolate milk and a space to socialize," Remington said.

Through programs like TAB, Remington hopes younger generations recognize the importance of reading and supporting local libraries.

TAB is helping to create a free Little Library that will be installed outside Naquag Elementary School. The project required approval from the Department of Public Works and other local boards before the structure could be sited where it will provide free books to the public. The box will be registered with the Little Library organization, and a plaque will be added to the box.

Library staff members say Remington's dedication has left a lasting impact. Donna Merhib, a library aide of four years and a library visitor for more than

three decades, described Remington as "very dedicated and thoughtful."

"Not to mention that she's a great boss," Merhib said.

Mary Calkins, who has worked as a library aide for 12 years, said Remington's leadership extended far beyond the walls of the library. "She's responsible for holding the library together as a director, and she has had a major impact on the town government from the outside — not as a member of any of the boards, but just as a concerned citizen," Calkins said.

As Remington prepares to retire after more than three decades at the library, Calkins said her absence will be deeply felt.

"She's the heart and spirit of this library, and she's been like that for 30 years," Calkins said. "There's really no one that will be able to replace her."

Remington said she already knows what her next chapter will be.

"I want to move out to the coast," Remington said. "I want to wake up and be able to look at the ocean every day from here on out."

After 31 years spent serving the Rutland community, helping patrons find books, guiding the library through decades of change and most importantly, keeping people connected during some of the town's most difficult moments, Remington looks forward to a quieter life by the water. ✱

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Four reasons a 529 plan might make sense for your family



Anne-Marie Kelley

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Key takeaways

- Despite their tax advantages, just 14% of adults include a 529 plan in their education savings strategy, according to a 2025 Edward Jones and Morning Consult study.
- 529 funds cover college, vocational programs, registered apprenticeships and can be used towards K-12 education.
- In addition to tuition, 529 funds can pay for students' day-to-day needs like internet,

computers, qualified room and board, and certain K-12 tutoring costs.

A 529 education savings plan might sound like something only families with college-bound kids need. But the versatility of a 529 account may surprise you, whether your child heads to a four-year university, a trade school or elsewhere.

1. What are the tax benefits of a 529 education savings plan?

Earnings in a 529 plan grow free from federal taxes, and withdrawals used for qualified education expenses are also federally tax-free. While 529 contributions are not federally deductible, many states allow a deduction on your state return.

Despite their tax advantages, just 14% of adults include a 529 plan in their education savings strategy, according to a 2025 Edward Jones and Morning Consult study. Instead, most families rely on traditional personal savings accounts.

2. Can a 529 be used if my child doesn't attend a traditional college?

Beyond four-year colleges, you can use 529 funds for community colleges, graduate schools and vocational programs. Apprenticeships in fields like plumbing, electrical work and welding qualify too, provided they are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor.

If your child earns a scholarship, you can withdraw up to that amount from your 529 account without penalty, though earnings may still be taxable.

3. What does a 529 plan cover beyond tuition?

Qualified costs for 529 plan withdrawals include books, supplies, computers, internet access and educational software. For students enrolled at least half time, room and board also qualify, including off-campus housing up to what the school sets as its cost of attendance.

Recent changes in the law expanded 529 plan quali-

fied expenses. Some new eligible expenses include certain testing fees, instructional materials, academic tutoring, and educational therapies for students with disabilities.

For K-12, you can use up to \$20,000 from your 529 account per year for tuition, certain tutoring and curriculum materials.

4. What if I don't use all the money in my 529 account?

If one child doesn't need the 529 funds, you can transfer that account to a sibling, another qualifying family member or even yourself. You can also use 529 funds to pay up to \$10,000 in student loans, roll them into a Roth IRA for the beneficiary up to \$35,000 (subject to certain limits and criteria) or roll them into a disability savings account (ABLE account) for the beneficiary or a family member.

With so many options for investing, withdrawals and redirecting the money, a 529 plan is one of the more flexible tools available for families think-

ing about education costs. A financial advisor can walk you through the details and help you choose a plan that fits your overall financial strategy.

If you're looking for a thoughtful partner to help you bring more clarity to your financial life, contact Anne-Marie today!

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Newsbitz

BY MARTHA AKSTIN

If you want to enjoy fresh food from local farms and support talented area artisans, check out our annual Summer Guide inserted in this issue.

HOLDEN

• Voters of Holden hit the polls on **Monday, May 11**, for the town's annual election, where a **\$5.5 million Proposition 2½ override** and several local races were on the ballot. The ballot's central issue asked whether the town would raise an added \$5.5 million in property taxes to fund municipal services and its assessment to the **Wachusett Regional School District** for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

A "yes" vote approved a permanent increase in the town's tax levy, allowing officials to maintain current service levels and fund key staffing and operational needs. A "no" vote would have rejected the increase, requiring the town to reduce spending. According to **Town Manager Peter Lukes**, the override will help fund the Wachusett Regional School District assessment, restore police, fire and department of public works positions, maintain full hours for the library and senior center, and support capital improvements such as school infrastructure and safety upgrades.

The vote for the override passed by 336 votes: 1,839 to 1,503.

In addition, the ballot had several elections: **Kenneth Vincent Mills** was elected to a three-year term as the **town moderator**. **Thomas P. Curran** was reelected to the **select board**. Two candidates were selected for the two available seats on the Wachusett Regional School District Committee: **Shannon Poole**, an incumbent, and **Meredith C. Pugh**. **Teresa Roxanne MacPhail** and **Abigail Krumbhaar Morgan** were elected as **Trustees of Damon Memorial**. Lastly, there was one seat available for a five-year term with the Holden Housing Authority, which was filled by a write-in candidate, **Jini Henderson**. Congratulations to all who were elected.

PAXTON

*Although the override passed at **Paxton's Annual Town Meeting on May 4**, it failed at the **May 11 Annual Town Election** 320 to 277 votes. A **Special Town Meeting** is scheduled for **June 22**, 7 pm at Paxton Center School to vote on a revised budget. While Rutland voters had approved the override at their Annual Town Meeting on May 9, the override failed at the Annual Town Election on May 11. Since two of the five member towns of the Wachusett Regional School District disapproved the school budget, the regional school district committee has 30 days

to resubmit a revised budget. The revised school budget will need to be voted on at Special Town Meetings in Paxton (June 22) and Rutland (June 16) and at Holden's Annual Town Meeting on June 8. And yes, this can be confusing to grasp.

*Congratulations to the candidates who were elected to office at Paxton's Annual Town Election on May 11: **Steven Rebesco** and **Jeffrey Wentzell** to 3-year terms on the **Select board**; **Glenn Sullivan** as **Assessor**; **Judy Hatstat** to the **Board of Health**; **Gordon Snyder Jr.** to the **Cemetery Commission**; **Bennie Warren Jr.** and **Brian Pellicano** as **Constables**; **Sandra Fields** and **Christina Hall** to the **Library Board of Trustees**; **Roger Brunelle** as **Moderator**; **Michael Benoit** to the **Municipal Light Board**; **Bruno Frongillo** to the **Planning Board**; **David Bloom** to the **Planning Board**; **Heather Burgess** and **Charles Putney** to the **Recreation Commission**; **Jeffrey Wentzell** to the **Southern Worcester County Regional Vocational Technical School District Committee**; **Elise LeBlanc** as **Tree Warden**; **Ann Marie Stoica** to the **Wachusett Regional School District Committee**; and **Deirdre Malone** to the **Water Board**. Putney declined the election to the **Recreation Commission** as he serves on the **Charter Review Committee**, and the bylaw does not allow him to be on two committees. He will remain on the CRC. The Recreation Commission with the Select Board can appoint someone to fill the vacancy on the Recreation Commission until the next election.

RUTLAND

*The town's **21st Annual Fourth of July Pancake Breakfast** will be held on **Saturday, July 4 from 8-11 am** at the **Rutland Senior Center**, 53 Glenwood Rd. This perennial favorite is sponsored by the **Friends of the Council on Aging**. "We're trying to make this into a bigger event than ever before since it's the country's 250th anniversary," said **Craig Fitzgerald**, vice president of the Friends. Because the funding for the breakfast comes from the Friends, it was not impacted by the recent town budget cuts.

Fitzgerald said they have served between 300 and 350 breakfasts in the past and he hopes more people will join them this year. It is the Friends' biggest fundraiser and the cost has not risen in years: \$10 for the breakfast and kids under 3 eat free.

"Come out and see who have volunteered as celebrity servers," said Fitzgerald. He said they could still use three or four volunteers the morning of the breakfast. Sign-up sheets are at the senior center or call 508-886-7945 to add your name to the I'll-be-there-to-help list.

Maybe the breakfast could be an opportunity for people to break bread together, have a friendly conversation, heal some wounds, and move forward.

• Congratulations to those candidates who were elected to office at the May 11 town election: **Sheila Dibbs** and **Paul Mattson** to the **select board**; **Brian Green** as **assessor**; **Elliott Nadeau Jr.** to **board of health**; **Timothy Nahrwald** to the **planning board** (3

years); **Lauren Williams** to the **planning board** (5 years); **Alicia Laurenzi** and **Jordan Michael** as **library trustees**.

• The **100th Anniversary of Finn Park** continues **June 20** with **Los Angeles based Finnish - American comedian Miska**. Food is available 5 p.m. Show begins at 6 p.m., \$5 per person. Dancing follows the show to the music of **Dan Mackowiak**. For advance tickets, contact 508-723-0447 and tickets will be held at the door.

Miska is a Finnish American actor, comedian, musician and filmmaker who has appeared in **Modern Family**, Hulu's **Dollface**, and the Netflix Original Series **Bordertown**. He has also appeared in numerous Finnish films, TV shows and music videos. He hosts a podcast, **With Miska**, found on various platforms as well as **YouTube**. Come and experience a little bit of Finland in Central Massachusetts.

• At the **June 1 Select Board meeting**, **Town Administrator Heather Butler** explained that because the override failed, **19 town employees** are facing **layoffs and/or reduced hours**. In addition, there will be new hours at the town hall starting July 1: The building will be open **Monday and Tuesday 8 am-4:40 pm**; **by appointment on Wednesday and Thursday**; **closed Friday**. The **Community Center** hours will be **Monday through Thursday, 9 am-3 pm**. The **Library Trustees** are meeting later the week of June 1 to discuss library hours in the new fiscal year. A FAQ sheet and updated information will be posted on the website. *

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From left to right:
Peter Conte (3rd gen.),
Jay Conte (2nd gen.),
Kris Henderson
(2nd gen.) and
Sarah Conte (3rd gen.)

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Hometown Harvest

Summer color

By ROGER MCGAUGHEY

Are all you gardeners out there getting excited? Some early varieties are already in full bloom, e.g., Dicentra, creeping phlox, and Geum, but the color bonanza of summer is about to burst forth. Apart from what our perennial varieties are about to produce, the local garden centers are full of inviting annuals with their array of bedding flats, hanging baskets and mixed containers.

All these garden center items have been carefully produced in greenhouses and nurseries where the growers have been meticulously aiming to produce the best quality available for

get minerals from the ground. But container plants, pots, hanging pots and deck planters need supplemental feeding. What if you drank water with no food every day? How would you feel? The limited starter charge in the compost in which they are planted is simply not enough to sustain them.

Container plants absolutely need additional fertilizers. You can use a slow-release type like Osmocote or a J. R. Peters brand of granular fertilizer which is activated with moisture. There are many different types of soluble fertilizers out there. I use Miracle Gro, but it's your choice, as long as you fertilize your plants at least once a



Summer color last year from a bed in my garden.



Osteospermum/Lamium planted one month ago, well fed and happily flowering.

their customers' satisfaction and enjoyment. Good plants don't just happen. They are protected from diseases and pests and, more importantly, provided with a constant source of nutrients to ensure their correct development. It's important for us, as gardeners, to continue some or all these practices in our home environment if we want to continue to enjoy quality material throughout the season.

One of the most important aspects of keeping a plant healthy in the home garden environment, apart from correct watering, is fertilization. How many times do we see our beautiful green plant foliage turn yellow and begin to look past its best? Fertilizer is not optional, it's a must. Plants manufacture food from the sun by the process of photosynthesis. Perennials also

week. That way you can almost guarantee quality and a colorful display throughout the season. A happy plant is one that has a good white root system and shiny green foliage.

Temperatures don't lie, meaning that, generally, the warmer the temperature the faster the plant will develop. You can use this to your advantage. I like to plant the same variety in different areas of my sun/shade garden and thus get a range of flowering times with the same item. Something to think about for next year.

We all have pest and disease issues. My wife's Mother's Day rose from last year, my phlox and my bee balm are currently looking healthy with nice green foliage thanks to the first mildew spray I applied last month (as recommended in my May WFP

column). It's important to repeat this spray now to continue disease protection.

Rabbits and deer can be problematic. Again, there are a lot of different products on the market, but I prefer granular Rabbit & Deer Off. Liquid applications are okay but tend to get washed off quickly with the next rainfall. Then you forget to reapply. For those who have fruit crops, especially raspberries, I have found Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew provides clean fruit and prevents the totally unwanted little grubs/larvae that can appear on the fruit when preventive spray applications (following label instructions) are not carried out.

Hopefully, your gardens are providing you with enjoyment

and associated exercise. In these days of higher gas prices, what better way to spend your time

than staying home and enjoying the peace and quiet in your own haven full of colorful, well-cared for, beautiful plants. "Just one more plant, please," the avid gardener cried! *

Roger McGaughey was educated in Northern Ireland and received a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Horticultural Science from Reading University in England. He has 50 years of experience working in the greenhouse industry in England and America.

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Sports

Celebrating Coach Eric Charbonneau's 24 years of dedication



BY MARTHA AKSTIN

Eric Charbonneau, coach of the Central Tree Middle School softball team, had a surprise in store for him after the team's May 21 home game against Dudley.

Charbonneau calls the last home game of the season the Rose Game to honor the graduating students. The eighth-grade athletes line up apart from their teammates and he says a few words about each player: "I've coached her three years in basketball and three years in softball – she's a fantastic athlete," said Charbonneau about the first athlete.

Then each graduating player was recognized for her unique abilities. "It's been a total pleasure coaching her these past two years and watching her improve year after year."

"She's a hell of a first baseman who has been an amazing addition to this team."

After her recognition, each girl was given a white rose by a younger teammate. Before the ceremony finished, some girls were crying as they realized this was the end of an incredible season and after a summer off, they would begin a new chapter of their lives in high

school.

The coach wasn't finished, however. He had planned this Rose Game in case the final scheduled home game was rained out. Charbonneau invited parents onto the outfield where their daughters' numbers had been painted on the grass to have pictures taken together.

But before those pictures were taken, Charbonneau's three daughters revealed the surprise for him.

"Could we all come over here for a minute," Erica Charbonneau asked the milling players and parents. Erica, along with her sisters Monica Goodnow and Sarah Shure, wanted to celebrate their father's 24-year commitment to coaching and his announced retirement. After she read her

wrapped in blankets or winter coats, had watched the game during the cold afternoon, remembering their own Rose Game at CTMS. They had come to honor the coach who means so much to them.

"I have three daughters who are my amazing family," said Charbonneau, visibly moved by the attention. "And all these players - they're family too."

Jonathan Miller, former president of Rutland Little League, was at the game supporting his daughter who plays on the CTMS team. His older daughter had also been coached by Charbonneau. "I have worked with a lot of parents over the years who are dedicated to Rutland Little League and Rutland Softball, but Eric's commitment - he takes it to a whole other level," Miller said.

"Coach Charbonneau's dedication and commitment to the student-athletes of CTMS over the years has left a lasting impact on our community," wrote David Cornacchioli, Principal of CTMS. "Through his leadership of the girls' softball and basketball programs,

Above: Charbonneau, his family, and current and former players gather around the bench. Left: Poster created by the CTMS softball players to honor Coach Charbonneau.

Below: Charbonneau with his three daughters and granddaughter at the May 21 bench dedication. From left, Monica Goodnow, Charbonneau holding granddaughter Charlotte "Charlie" Goodnow, Sarah Shure, and Erica Charbonneau.
Photos by Martha Akstin



short speech, they unveiled the bench to which parents, his family, friends, and former players had contributed.

"Oh, I wondered why Abby was here," Charbonneau laughed about seeing a former player in the crowd during the game. Many former players,

he consistently demonstrated care, passion, and an unwavering commitment to his players both on and off the court and field. He will be deeply missed,

CHARBONNEAU

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Sports

McKaylah Lent, equestrian

Taking the reins on a national stage

By CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Fifth-grader McKaylah Lent rides for the Wachusett Equestrian team based out of Holiday Acres Equestrian Center in Rutland. The 11-year-old recently competed in the Interscholastic Equestrian Association's national competition in St. Louis, Missouri, where she participated in the Walk, Trot, Canter, Hunt Seat category. Riding a horse that was unfamiliar to her, Lent took home fifth place in her age and riding level. With more than 15,000 members across the United States, the IEC is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving and promoting lifelong involvement in equestrian athletics.

Hunt Seat is an English style riding discipline that emphasizes a rider's secure and balanced position for both flat work and jumping.

Before getting to take the trip to St. Louis, Lent had to qualify at the Regionals, where she took home top honors and advanced into the Zones. There

she finished second and found herself moving onto the Nationals, a first in some time for the



McKaylah Lent, fifth place winner at the Interscholastic Equestrian Association's national competition in St. Louis, Missouri.
Courtesy photo

Wachusett team.

"I am a competitive person who loves to win. There is a lot

of pressure on you, and you have to make sure the horse doesn't break [change out of a walk, trot or canter pace]," Lent said. "When they called my name for second place [in the Zones] I was in non-belief. I love participating, but I wasn't planning on doing so good to be able to get to the Nationals."

According to Lent, her mother, also an equestrian, put her on a horse at a rather young age and she immediately fell in love with horses. She steadily improved her skills and eventually started taking lessons at Red Dunn Farm in Barre. Being in a riding program at Red Dunn Farm enabled her to try out for the Wachusett Equestrian Team, where she would eventually take her talents.

The equestrian team at Holiday Acres was started in 2006 by GERALYN SZCZURKO with just a handful of riders. Today, she instructs 20 to 30 riders a year. While part of the



Wachusett Equestrian team, Lent and other riders practice riding lessons and attend horse show from September through December.

Lent is unsure of what her future in equestrian sports holds, despite achieving such a high level at such a young age. "I love riding horses and being competitive, but I am unsure of what I want to do with this in the future," she said.

Having accomplished so much at such an early age, however, one can

only imagine that Lent will continue riding and competing long into the future. *

CHARBONNEAU

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but the legacy he leaves behind through the relationships he built and the positive influence he had on generations of students will always remain an important part of the CTMS family."

Between the softball and basketball teams, Charbonneau estimates that he has worked with more than 800 girls at CTMS over his coaching career. One highlight was the district win over Mountview this past February before vacation week.

Mountview always has a strong basketball program, explained Charbonneau. "They'll get 60 girls come out

for the team and I'll get 13, 14. They've won I don't know, 20 district titles? This was my 14th attempt, and we had lost the 12 previous years. Their team had won the two previous districts so they were going for their three-peat."

At halftime, CTMS was down four points. "Mountview always has tall girls – they have a 6-foot one-inch sixth grader and my tallest is 5' 10," explained Charbonneau. "So, I made some changes, did the old North Carolina four corners offense, some other strategies and we held them to 12 points in the second half. And we won!"

Charbonneau said the gym was packed for that game. "There were a lot of past players in the gym," the coach

remembered. "An hour after the game I was still getting text messages, emails, and phone calls from them."

Charbonneau said his philosophy is that school comes first before sports. That this is the time to enjoy yourself, build bonds, and possibly move on to play at the high school level. "You're never going to be in this place at this time with these girls again. I try not to add pressure – they have enough of that already," he said.

Charbonneau said there is not a minute that he hasn't loved everything about coaching. "I tell them, 'This is your story, now go write it.'"

Summing up his 24 years of coaching, he simply said, "It's been an amazing ride." *



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If you have a non-profit event you would like included in the Calendar, please email information to Martha@localtownpages.com

Rutland Farmers Market on the Town Common. Every Wednesday 4-7 pm, May through October. They are still looking for vendors: email rutlandmafarmersmarket@gmail.com

If you want to enjoy fresh food from local farms and support talented area artisans, check out our annual Summer Guide inserted in this issue.

Tuesday, June 9

11 am: Discovering the Happy Factor at the Rutland Senior Center. The screening of this 25-minute documentary features stories from Central Mass. older adults about purpose, belonging, volunteerism, and community connections. Over the past year, the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission interviewed more than 50 adults to understand what helps people feel connected to their communities and what barriers may prevent them from getting involved. The project explores how civic engagement, volunteerism, and local leadership can support stronger communities and individual well-being.

2:30 pm: Veterans and American Legion Meeting at the Holden Senior Center. For more info, contact Doug Harvey, Commander of Post 42 at harvey1234@charter.net or call 508-450-9965.

4:20 pm: If the Dinosaurs Came Back for ages 5+. Learn about surrealist art with art educator Mary E. L. Shepherd from Community Creations Art Studio. At the Gale Free Library. Registration required.

Wednesday, June 10

10 am: Veterans Meeting at Paxton Senior Center. All are welcome.

12:30 pm: Father's Day Luncheon catered by Morawski BBQ at Holden Senior Center. You must register in person with \$5 cash.

4-5:30 pm: Wachusett Women's Connection at CharCUTERie Woo, 679 Pleasant St., Paxton, sponsored by Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce. Don't miss this season-ending event. Join us for great networking, new connections and all things charcuterie. Free to attend, optional: make your own cheese board \$35. Pre-registration required

for food count: wachusettareachamber.org.

Thursday, June 11

9 am: Coffee and...: Attorney Elizabeth Newton will discuss "Planning of Blended Families" at Holden Senior Center. Bring your questions. Register in person or call the Center.

10-11 am: Chamber Chat at Sweets & Java, 1059 Main St., Holden. Join them for coffee and conversation. Sponsored by the Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce.

10:30 am: Get the lowdown on protein and its connection to nutrition in this fact-based seminar at the Paxton Senior Center. What are some good high-protein foods? What about protein powder or protein bars? Be informed. Presented by eternalHealth.

1 pm: Butterfly Buffet at Rutland Senior Center. Bemis Nursery will provide instruction and all materials to make a beautiful piece. Cost: \$25 (Friends members \$20). Payment secures your spot.

5:30-7:30 pm: Pastel Seahorse Workshop with artist Greg Maichack. Recommended for adults and teens. Supported in part by the Paxton Cultural Council. Register at Richards Memorial Library.

6 pm: Public reception for "Unsung Heroes of the American Revolution," an art show by the Holden Senior Center's photography club. Guests will enjoy black-and-white photographs that portray American Revolution monuments and location markers from Concord and beyond. A "Minute Man" from the Minute Man National Historical Park will play the flute during the reception. Light refreshments will be served. At the Gale Free Library.

Friday, June 12

Through today, Teen Care Kits for ages 12-18 at Richards Memorial Library. Realizing that this time of year can be stressful for teens with exams and big transitions, drop by the library to pick up a Teen Care Kit filled with calming activities, resource suggestions, and a small snack.

June Drop-in Crafts for Youth at Richards Memorial Library. Summer Reading-themed "Stick Together" poster. Add sticker squares to their community poster to reveal the Summer Reading mascots. Also at Richards Memorial, its Sensory Room, a safe and calming space, is available for adult/child pairings or very small groups who may "check out" the space for one hour with an adult library card after signing a use agreement. Call ahead to reserve or drop by during open hours to check the room out!

1 pm: Felted Elephant: at Holden Senior Center. All materials provided. Each participant must self-register with \$25 cash.

2:30-4:30 pm: Friends of Richards Memorial Library Book Sale and Donation Days Donate books. Shop for books. All on the same day! Proceeds benefit library programs. The Friends accept donations only during scheduled dates and times: gently used books, DVDs, CDs, and video games. They do not accept textbooks, magazines, encyclopedias, VHS tapes, or bootleg CDS/DVDs. Do not leave books when the library is not open. The book sale continues tomorrow, the 13th, at Paxton Days, from 10 am-2 pm. Future dates: July 10 and 11. No book sale in August.

Saturday, June 13

10 am-8 pm: Paxton Days and Summer Slam: It's a full day of fun, food, and music at this annual event taking place at the Center Field and Bandstand. Enter through the Paxton Center School parking lot or park at the senior center and walk over to the field. Enjoy delicious food, shop local artisans, and get to know community agencies, boards, commissions, and businesses.

1-2 pm: The Loyalists of Worcester: Who were they and why did they side with the Crown? At the Museum of Worcester, 30 Elm St. Join Speaker Matthew Lincoln, MOW's library assistant/archivist, as he explores local support for Britain during the American Revolution. Free for members and with museum admission (\$10). Registration required at worcesterhistory.org.

1-3 pm: Off-Limits Tour by Preservation Worcester. Enjoy this rare chance to step inside the Whitcomb House, the striking three-story granite High Victorian mansion at the corner of Harvard and Highland Streets in Worcester. One of the few residences designed by Stephen Earle, it features a picturesque roofline with numerous shingled dormers. Vacant since 2019, the house is

opening its doors for a limited time - don't miss this unique opportunity to experience a long-closed historic property. Tickets \$35 nonmembers; \$30 members. More info at preservationworchester.org.

Sunday June 14

Flag Day: This annual observance (not a federal holiday) commemorates the Continental Congress' adoption of the Stars and Stripes as the official national flag in 1777.

1-4 pm: Rutland Library celebrates its 25th birthday: The public is invited to join patrons, staff, and benefactors to celebrate the library's 25th anniversary, 280 Main St., Rutland. Numerous activities are planned.

Monday, June 15

Summer Reading Sign-ups open today in the Children's Room at the Gale Free Library or online. Summer Reading Check-ins begin Monday, June 22. Each week that you check in, you'll get a prize, and for every 3 hours you read, you'll earn a dinosaur trading card. When you read 12 and 24 hours, you will earn a free book.

9:30 am: Friends of the Rutland COA monthly meeting: This is a great opportunity to see other people, meet new friends, discuss what the Friends are doing, and support your COA.

10 am: Summer Scavenger Hunt for ages 2-5 on the Gale Free Library lawn. Join Community Connections for a fun scavenger hunt that helps increase social, fine, and gross motor and problem-solving skills.

Tuesday, June 16

10 am: Cancer Screenings at Paxton Senior Center. Patty Ellis, MPH, Director of the Saint Vincent Hospital Cancer and Wellness Center, presents a timely program focused on cancer screenings, lifestyle choices to reduce risk, prevention strategies, and warning signs. Get important guidance and facts surrounding this topic.

11 am: Scams Targeting Older Adults: at Rutland Senior Center. Join the office of Worcester County District Attorney Joseph Early for this free presentation. Learn how scammers get your money and personal information, hear about current scams, common tactics, and practical steps to protect yourself.

6 pm: Rutland Special Town Meeting. Location TBD as the WFP was

going to press. To view the warrant, go to the town website rutlandma.gov.

6:30-7:30 pm: Tour the Reservoir Like It's 1901. On June 20, 1901, town and city officials in the Metropolitan District toured the Wachusett Reservoir construction project. Led by chair of the water board Henry Sprague, follow their footsteps through newspaper clippings, sketches, and photographs. This program is provided by the DCR's Division of Water Supply Protection for Wachusett Reservoir. Registration required. Gale Free Library.

Wednesday, June 17

1 pm: Estate Planning for Blended Families at the Rutland Senior Center. Presented by Attorney Liz Newton. Blended families - formed through second marriages, divorces, or later-life partnerships - often face unique challenges when it comes to estate planning. This presentation is an overview of how to protect your loved ones, ensure your wishes are honored, and minimize potential conflicts among family members. RSVP at the Center or by calling them.

Thursday, June 18

10:30 am-12 pm: The Craft of Writing Workshop: "Joy" Online via Zoom. Registration required at Gale Free Library. Some say writing about happiness falls easily into cliché. Let's look at writing that manages not to do so.

11:30 am: Father's Day meal at the Rutland Senior Center: Chicken with broccoli and cheese, gravy, cranberry stuffing, Brussel sprouts, tiramisu cupcakes, dinner roll. Suggested donation is \$3 and payable at time of sign up. RSVP by Monday, June 15 at the Center or by calling them.

12:30 pm: TV Game Shows with Kevin Richman at the Paxton Senior Center. Enjoy his upbeat take on game shows with audience participation. Drop in and play along. Must RSVP by 6/16 for lunch option at 11:45 am.

5:30-7:30 pm: Free Homebuyer Workshop sponsored by RCAP Solutions and Cornerstone Bank. Discussions include searching for a

CALENDAR

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HOLDEN

Gale Free Library, 23 Highland St., Holden. 508.210.5569; galefreelibrary.org; galefreelibrary@gmail.com

Holden Community Garden, Jessica Cosenza, 508.284.6612

Holden Recreation, 1420 Main St., Holden. 508.829.0263; holdenma.gov

Holden Senior Center, 1130 Main St., Holden. 508.210.5570; holdenma.gov

Holden Garden Club, holdengardenclub.org

Holden Woman's Club, HoldenWomansClubMA@gmail.com

PAXTON

Paxton Council on Aging, 17 West St., Paxton. 508.756.2833;

paxtonma.gov; clove@paxtonma.gov

Richards Memorial Library, 44 Richards Ave., Paxton. 508.754.0793; rmlpaxton.org; richards@cwmar.org

Paxton Recreation, townofpaxton.net/recreation-department

Paxton Garden Club, paxtongardenclub.com

Paxton Women's Club, paxtonwomensclub.com

RUTLAND

Rutland Senior Center, 53 Glenwood Road, Rutland; 508.886.7945; rutlandma.gov; nancyn@rutlandma.gov

Rutland Free Public Library, 280 Main St., Rutland; 508.886.4108; rutlandlibrary.org; kerry@rutlandlibrary.org

Rutland Recreation, Community Hall, 250 Main St., Rutland.; 508.886.4100, ext 3011; rutlandma.gov; cfrohock@rutlandma.gov

Rutland Historical Society, 232 Main St.; 508-886.4893; rutlandmahistoricalsociety.org

Rutland Food Pantry, 290 Main Street, Rutland. 774-696-3008.

REGIONAL

Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce, 1174 Main St., Holden, 508-829-9220, info@wachusettareachamber.org

Wachusett Food Pantry, 50 Worcester Rd., Sterling. 978-563-1064. Wachusettfoodpantry.org

CALENDAR

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house, financing, and the closing process. To be held in the Grace Conference Room, Higgins Center, Clark University, 950 Main St., Worcester. Register at: <https://cornerstonebank.com/looking-to-buy-a-home-3/>

Friday, June 19

Juneteenth – This federal and state holiday celebrates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans. According to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History & Culture: Even though President Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and the Confederate Army had surrendered in April 1865, enslaved people in Texas, the westernmost Confederate state, could not exercise their freedom. On June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Granger led 2,000 Union troops, many of whom were Black, into Galveston Bay, where he announced that the more than 250,000 enslaved Black people in the state were free by executive decree. “This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired laborer,” said General Granger.

Saturday, June 20

9 am: The 10th Annual Vanessa T. Marcotte Foundation 5K Run/Walk takes place at Wachusett Mountain in Princeton. This is the Foundation’s major fundraiser that supports safety and violence-prevention initiatives. Fighting for a world where women live boldly and fearlessly. Register and/or donate at the Foundation’s website vtmf.org.

10 am: Historical Tour of the Gale Free. Local History Librarian Nancy Richards guides a historical tour of the Damon Memorial building, home to the Gale Free Library. Meet in the Reference Area. Space is limited, registration required. Rain date 6/27.

1 pm-2 pm: Worcester Revolutionary Walking Tour begins and ends at the Museum of Worcester’s Salisbury Mansion, 40 Highland St. Walk Main Street in the footsteps of Revolutionaries intent on defending their liberty and spreading the revolutionary ideas at taverns and meeting houses. Appropriate for all ages. Wear comfortable shoes. Free for MOW members; \$15 nonmembers. Registration required: worcesterhistory.org

5 pm: The 100th Anniversary of Finn Park with Los Angeles based Finnish American comedian Miska. Food is available at 5 pm. His show begins at 6 pm. Dancing and music by Dan Mackowiak follow the show. \$5 per person. For tickets in advance, call 508-723-0447 and tickets will be held at the door.

Garden and art studio tour, June 20, 10 am-3 pm: free and open to the public, rain or shine. The Wachusett Garden Club and Princeton Arts collaborate to combine the beauty of gardens with some local artists doing plein air (open air) painting. The art studio tours include various genres: water



Artist Lis Murphy, pictured at the Princeton Arts spring show, will open her Princeton studio and garden with its daylily collection for the tour.

colors, oils, pottery, stained glass and jewelry. Art and plants will be available for purchase at many locations. Details of the seven Princeton properties with addresses and a map are available on PrincetonArts.org or WachusettGardenClub.org. There is no fixed order for visiting: choose to stop at all locations or just a few. Please respect the hosts by not arriving before or after the tour hours. Princeton Arts is celebrating its 35th year and the Wachusett Garden Club was started 40 years ago. Both organizations have collaborated for years (garden club members provide floral arrangements for Princeton Arts’ annual spring show). New members, no matter their residence, are always welcome at both organizations. For more information visit the websites or email onlinewgcc@yahoo.com (Wachusett Garden club) or dgfk@msn.com (Princeton Arts).

Sunday, June 21

4:24 am: Sumer Solstice: Astronomical summer begins with the longest day and shortest night of the year – 15 hours of daylight. Hope you can get outside.

Happy Father’s Day! Treat the man who loves you (despite everything).

Monday, June 22

Beginning today, Adult Summer Reading participants can enter a weekly drawing to win gift cards to local businesses and free books. Visit the display table in the Gale Free Library lobby or follow them on Facebook and Instagram for more information.

1 pm: Butterfly Buffet: Bemis Nursery will instruct how to create this beautiful pot at the Holden Senior Center. Self-register with \$25 cash.

7 pm: Paxton’s Special Town Meeting at Paxton Center School cafeteria. See the warrant on the town website paxtonma.gov. The last day to register to vote for this meeting is Friday, June 12, until 5pm. The Town Clerk’s office will be open from 9am-5pm on Friday, June 12th for voter registration. You can also register to vote online at sec.state.ma.us/OVR/. If you are already registered to vote in Paxton, you do not need to re-register to vote for this meeting.

Tuesday, June 23

Today through August 4 Summer Read-

ing for Children, Tweens, and Teens at Richards Memorial Library. Read, earn prizes, take fun programs, and explore weekly drop-in activities at the library this summer. Special Teen Program. To receive a reading log and detailed schedule of summer events, register in-person at the library on or after June 23. Plant a seed, read!

11 am: Johnny Cash Songs and Stories with Matt York at Paxton Senior Center. A return engagement by this popular country artist features the music of Johnny Cash. Noon lunch option is available but must RSVP by 6/18.

11 am: The Fraud Squad in Central Mass is a senior peer-to-peer initiative that educates adults on how to recognize and avoid scams through interactive, dramatized scenarios: Grandparent 2.0 - The AI Voice That Wasn’t Real, Tech Support Refund Scam - A Keystroke Away from Disaster, and The Tax Man Is Calling - But He’s Not Real. Learn how to recognize and avoid these all too-common scams.

1 pm: Paper Quilled Flowers: at the Rutland Senior Center. This 90-minute workshop delves into the intricacies of this beautiful art form, exploring various tools and discovering the incredible variety of forms that can be crafted from simple strips of paper. Participants will practice coiling and shaping that are assembled into unique designs, finishing into a greeting card

or picture. Cost is \$5; signup and payment due by 6/17.

Wednesday, June 24

11:30 am: Women Celebrating Women: A program celebrating the Red, White and Blue at the Paxton Senior Center. Luncheon and Trivia fun. Reserve a seat by 6/18.

1 pm: Strawberry Festival at Holden Senior Center. This annual event features their popular, mouth-watering strawberry shortcake. Self-register with \$2. Doors open and seating begin at 12:45 for this event.

6-7:30 pm: Art Club for ages 16+ and patrons of all abilities at the Gale Free Library. Registration required. Meet on the library’s lawn for this art club (will move inside if raining or too hot.) Bring your own supplies or use our watercolor paints and paper, brushes, pastels, colored pencils, graphite, pens, collage materials. There’s no specific project, but we’ll have a quotation, book or image for inspiration.

Thursday, June 25

10 am-12 pm: Truck Day in the town parking lot across the street from the Gale Free Library. See a fire truck, dump truck, school bus, ambulance, police car, and other giant town vehicles. Climb in the cabs, blow the horns, and bring your cameras. Rain or shine.

1 pm: Lunch with Friends: The Friends of the Paxton Council on Aging are sponsoring lunch at Peppercorns restaurant’s private room. Meal includes choice of chicken, haddock or vegetarian, salad, bread, coffee, and dessert. RSVP by June 10. Send \$5 check made out to FOCOA, along with your meal choice to Dave Wheeler, 8 Brigham Rd., Paxton, MA 01612. Questions call 508-373-2073.

6:30-7:30 pm: Ms. Kim the LEGO Lady for ages 5-11 at Richards Memorial Library. Take your LEGO building to a whole new level. Think outside the box, explore new ideas, and create your own masterpiece in this LEGO workshop led by Ms. Kim the LEGO Lady. All skill levels welcome. Registration required: <https://bit.ly/4x2sqgI>

Friday, June 26

10:30-11:15 am: Musical Storytime with Julie Stepanek Murray for young children and their caregivers at Richards Memorial Library. March, stomp, sing, and stretch in these interactive, musical story times. Thank you to Paxton Cultural Council, a local agency funded by Mass Cultural Council, for funding this program.

Saturday, June 27

Hills of East Quabbin Bike Ride is sponsored by the East Quabbin Land Trust to benefit farmland conservation. Pedal past the beautiful farms and deep woods of Central Mass. Take the 24.2 short loop or the 47.5 long loop, both of which start and finish at Farmer Matt’s, 860 West Brookfield Rd., New Braintree. For more info and to register contact: chenshaw@EQLT.org, or Bikereg.com/hills-of-east-quabbin-ride or 413-477-8229.

8:30 am: Junior Olympics for ages 5-12. Rutland’s July 4th Celebrations begin at Rutland’s Memorial Park (registration at 8:00 am). Sponsored by Cub Scout Pack #141.

9 am-12 pm: Bottle and Can Drive: Paxton Boy Scout Troop 105 holds this fundraiser on the Paxton Common.

11 am: Volleyball Tournament for ages 13+ at Rutland’s Memorial Field sponsored by the Briggs Family. Registration at 10:30 am. Rain date TBD.

3 pm: Chicken BBQ in front of the Rutland Library, sponsored by the Rutland Fire Brigade.

Sunday, June 28

Day 2 of Rutland’s July 4th celebration are tentative as WFP went to press. Check the July 4th Committee’s FB or website for confirmation of events: rutlandma-4thofjuly.org/day2-events

Road Race: 9:30 am Kids; 10:00 am Adults. Kids \$15; Adults \$25. Registration tentatively at 8:30 am. Sponsored by the Rutland Lions Club. Starts on the Rutland Town Common.

12 pm: Bike and Doll Carriage Parade:

CALENDAR

continued on page 13

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VETERAN OWNED

Day Trippin'

WFP will publish easy day trips by car from Holden, Paxton, or Rutland to interesting places. If you would like to contribute a short description with photo of one of your favorite places to visit, please email it to martha@localtownpages.com



Photo by Steve Urbanovitch

BY STEVE URBANOVITCH

This day trip took us to Ninigret Park in Charlestown, Rhode Island, home to a couple of giant trolls – Erik Rock and Greta Granite. They are two of the five trolls situated in that state created with recycled materials by Danish artist Thomas Dambo. The walk to discover them offers a free, whimsical outdoor experience for visitors. Park near the playground and follow the signs/clues to discover them. Ninigret Park is located at 7 Park Lane in Charlestown. Their phone number is 401-255-3747. For those who are curious about the other Dambo giant trolls in Rhode Island: Iver Mudslider is in Ryan Park in North Kingstown, Young Boulder lives by Browning Mill Pond in the Arcadia Management Area on the Exeter/Richmond town lines, and Mrs. Skipper is at the Kettle Point Pier in East Providence. *

Less screen time, more together time: A digital detox challenge

BY RICHARD LOPEZ, PH.D.

Here in Central Massachusetts, the never-ending winter is (finally) over. The days are longer and warmer, with the sounds of summer echoing on our streets and in our backyards. And yet, families can find themselves gathered together but alone, each person absorbed in the quiet glow of a screen.

We have, in many ways, grown accustomed to this. Devices connect us to the wider world, to news, to entertainment, and to one another. But as I've written in previous columns, the same technologies that expand our reach can also pull us away from people and meaningful experiences happening right in front of us.

This summer offers us an opportunity, one that does not require a grand gesture or a complete rejection of technology, but rather a deliberate shift in how we spend our time and attention. I'm talking about an intentional digital detox for families that replaces screen time with time outdoors and digital interactions with real connection.

The goal of such a detox is not some idealized life off the grid or a return to the past. It is intentional, collective use of technology and devices that preserve and enhance our humanity, nurturing habits that sustain our well-being: face-to-face conversation, unstructured and unplanned outdoor play, and the subtle but powerful experience of simply being present with one another.

So, how do we begin?

First, set small, realistic goals. A successful digital detox does not start with a sweeping declaration that all devices will be banned indefinitely. That approach is likely to fail before it begins. Instead, choose specific, achievable targets. For example, designate one hour each evening as device-free time, or commit to screen-free dinners. These are manageable steps that build momentum rather than resistance.

Second, create dedicated, tech-free spaces and moments. As I've suggested before, carving out device-free pockets of time, such as mealtimes, car rides, and weekend mornings, helps families reconnect in simple but meaningful ways. These routines do more than reduce screen time; they create dependable opportunities for conversation, laughter, and shared experience.

Third, replace - not remove. If we take something away, we need to fill that space with something better. Plan a family walk after dinner. Visit a local park or trail. Rediscover low-tech activities like board games, pickup basketball, or even just sitting outside together as the sun goes down. The outdoors offers something screens cannot: unpredictability, movement, and a sense of shared presence that no app can replicate.

Fourth, involve children in the process. Rather than imposing rules from above, invite your kids into the conversation. Ask them what they would like to do if they had more free time. What activities have they been meaning to try? When children help shape the plan, they are far more likely to buy into it.

Fifth, model the behavior you hope to see. This may be the most important step. Children notice not just what we say, but what we do. If we check our phones constantly, what message are we sending them? A digital detox for families must include adults who are willing to set their own boundaries and demonstrate that full attention is a gift worth giving.

Underlying all of this is a deeper point. In an age where artificial intelligence can generate convincing images, voices, and even mimic relationships, our most reliable anchor remains genuine human connection. The conversations we have face-to-face, the trust we build over time, and the shared experiences that unfold away from screens are not just optional or pleasant extras; they are essential to how we understand one another and the world.

A digital detox, then, is not just about reducing screen time. It is about reclaiming these foundational elements of our lives.

To be clear, there is no single blueprint that will work for every family. Some may choose a tech-free Sunday afternoon. Others might aim for daily outdoor time before any screens are turned on. The specifics matter less than the consistency and the spirit behind them.

What matters is that we try.

As summer begins, I would challenge all of us, my family and me included, to take a small but meaningful step in this direction. Choose a few realistic goals. Stick with them. Adjust as needed. And pay close attention to what changes: the quality of your conversations, the rhythm of your days, the way time feels when it is not constantly interrupted.

We often think of human connection as something that technology provides. But more often than not, it is something technology displaces and cheapens. This summer let's take it back. *

Dr. Richard Lopez is an assistant professor of psychology and neuroscience at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. He studies the impacts of digital media use on emotions and mental health. He and his family live in Rutland. If you would like to contact him regarding individual or family consulting services that promote neuroscience-informed digital wellness, contact him at hello@neurotechwellness.com.

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Rooted in Holden

Jennifer Stanovich Honored as Person of the Year 2026

Jennifer Stanovich, Executive Director of the Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce, was recently honored by the Holden Woman's Club as its 2026 Person of the Year. The following remarks were read before the presentation, which was held at the HWC's May 14 annual meeting at Val's Restaurant.

Jen is a true daughter of Holden, having been born and raised here, and choosing to raise her own family here as well. She is a people person who has always enjoyed bringing people together and working toward a common goal.

She honed those skills as an event planner at Thom McAnn Shoes, a job she loved and excelled at. She learned the value

of volunteerism while interning at The United Way as a student.

When she left the workforce to raise her family, she applied her energy and creativity to the Rice School PTA, St. Francis Church and the Holden Newcomers Club where she helped new residents assimilate and become active members of the community.

More than 20 years ago she re-entered the workforce through the then Holden Chamber of Commerce. During her tenure, the Chamber has grown to include the surrounding towns of Boylston, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling and West Boylston and is now the Wachusett Area

Chambre of Commerce and she is its Executive Director.

To provide Chamber members with opportunities for networking and support with their businesses, Jen has instituted the monthly Business After Hours, Chamber Chat, and Business Showcase. She began the Wachusett Women's Connection to address the unique issues of women in the business world. The Golf Scholarship Scramble was initiated and has grown to now provide four \$2,500 scholarships for college bound high school seniors. She started the annual Salute Breakfast to recognize people in our towns for their impactful volunteer work. She has helped the annual Holden Days event

to become the vibrant gathering it is today, allowing local businesses and craftspeople to showcase their work and support our economy.

She continues her volunteer activities through her church and the Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Center. The Chamber provides the public with information and guidance with the Business Directory and, of course, always an open door and a welcoming smile. If that's not enough, Jen has also started a travel group which is available to all and offers another opportunity to gather for fun, education and camaraderie.

We in Holden are the happy recipients of her knowledge and efforts. She is proud of her town, and it shows. We are, in turn, proud of her and her ac-



Ann Kelleher (left) presents the Holden Woman's Club 2026 Person of the Year Award to Jennifer Stanovich.

complishments. Because of all you have done for our town, Jen, the Holden Woman's Club is honored to award you our Person of the Year, 2026. *

CALENDAR

continued from page 11

Online registration begins at 11:30 am. Sponsored by the July 4th Committee. On Sunny Common, in front of the churches.

1-3 pm: Historical Society Open House and Lemonade Social. 232 Main St. Rutland.

Monday, June 29

10 am: Mindfulness Meditation with Marie Clemente at the Holden Senior Center. Fee \$5. Register in person or by calling the Center.

1 pm: Movie Monday with popcorn and beverage at the Holden Senior Center. Please register in person or by calling the Center.

6-7:30 pm: Museum of Worcester Book Club Launch: at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Goddard, 1 Tallawanda Dr., Worcester. The new museum book club, The Novel Historian, discusses "Goddard: Father of the Space Age" by Milton Lehman. Join them at Goddards' childhood home to discuss this book that serves as the definitive biography of the father of modern rocketry. Free and open to the public. Registration strongly encouraged and more details at worcesterhistory.org

Tuesday, June 30

Deadline to apply for 2026 Paxton Garden Club Educator Grant: The Club is pleased to offer an educational grant to organizations with educational, conservation, and beautification projects that use horticulture and gardening to engage our youth. Eligibility: Applicants will be public, (including homeschool), Richards Memorial Library and Other 501(c)(3) organizations serving the town of Paxton. Awards of up to \$500. Grade Levels 1-8.

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4 pm: Dino Academy presented by Bright Star Theatre on the Gale Free Library lawn. Step into the prehistoric world with this unforgettable field trip, led by the quirky and curious Dr. Sara Tops, who will uncover fascinating dino facts in this action-packed adventure. Thank you to the Holden Cultural Council for its sponsorship.

6-7 pm: Plant Slime at Richards Memorial with staff from the New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill. Learn about six carnivorous plants and make slime inspired by the sticky adaptations these plants have to catch prey. Leave with a plant adaptation handout and a printed slime recipe, so the fun can continue at home. For children ages 6-12. Thank you to Paxton Cultural Council, a local agency funded by

Mass Cultural Council, for funding this program.

Friday, July 3

7:45 pm: Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra (MSO) Concert & Fireworks: Taking place at Institute Park, the orchestra will play patriotic pops to celebrate the nation's 250th birthday, culminating with a fireworks display over the park. Rain date is Sunday, July 5.

Saturday, July 4

8-11 am: Celebrity Pancake Breakfast sponsored by the Friends of the Council on Aging, at the Rutland Senior Center, 53 Glenwood Rd. Join the Friends for their long-time pancake tradition.

4 pm: July 4th Family Fest at Polar Park. Despite being on the road on the 4th, the Worcester Red Sox host a party for the 4th that includes a live

performance from the Worcester Symphony Orchestra and a screening of the movie Field of Dreams. Families can enjoy a Sunset Catch on the Field and a host of other activities. A classic patriotic fireworks display, sponsored by UniBank, will cap the day's events. Tickets are \$5 for children and \$10 for adults when purchased in advance and are on sale now at the Park's ticket office or online at polarpark.com/familyfest. Children 2 and under are free. Fans can come and go from the ballpark, provided they exit-scan their tickets when leaving.

Thursday, July 9

3:30-6:30 pm: Paxton Farmers Market: The first of three farmers markets of the season, to be held behind the Paxton Senior Center, 17 West St.

Sponsored by the Paxton Garden Club as a fundraiser to support their plans for a community garden. Enjoy artisan goods, fresh cut flowers and farm foods. Vendor spots are still available. Visit their website paxtongardenclub.com to learn more.

Friday, July 10

6:30-8:30 pm: Army Band music performance and period fashion show on the Rutland Town Common. Optional: come dressed in a period costume for the fashion show and prizes. Change of location due to inclement weather TBD – check rutlandma.gov. Sponsored by the Rutland Events Committee. *

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Real Estate Transfers

April 15, 2026 – May 14, 2026

Wachusett Free Press will publish Recorded Land Transfers in Holden, Paxton, and Rutland from the 15th to the 14th of the preceding months. For instance, this June issue publishes transfers from April 15 to May 14. This information is gathered from the Worcester Registry of Deeds' website. Compiled by Karin Warzybok.

HOLDEN

- 150 Brattle St., 270 Brattle St. 04/15:** Grantor Sousa Properties LLC to Grantee Stott Kirstin Fleischman. \$687,000.
- 25 Pinehaven Dr. 04/16:** Grantor Alexandra Kappos to Grantees Alexandra Kappos Tr and Alexandra Kappos Revocable Trust. \$100.
- 109 North St. 04/16:** Grantor Lena R. Roy to Grantees Lena R. Roy Tr and Roy Family Revocable Trust of 2011. \$100.
- 41 Village Way 04/22:** Grantor Tina A. Lorusso to Grantees Francisco L. Lorusso Tr, Tina A. Lorusso Tr, and Lorusso 2026 Revocable Trust. \$100.
- 82 Highland Ave. 04/22:** Grantor Deborah Maruca Hoak to Grantees Maruca Hoak Family Trust and Deborah Maruca Hoak Tr. \$100.
- 34 Heather Cir. 04/23:** Grantor David L. Geene to Grantees David L. Geene Tr, Laura G. Geene Tr, and Geene 2026 Re-

vocable Trust. \$100.

- 48 John Alden Rd. 04/23:** Grantor Jacqueline A. Mole to Grantees Jacqueline A. Mole Tr and Jacqueline A. Mole Trust. \$100.
- 1 Kris Alan Dr. and 0 Kris Alan Dr. 04/24:** Grantors Bruce H. Blanchard Tr, Irene E. Blanchard Tr, Bruce & Irene Blanchard 2024 Family Living Trust, and BEFI Realty Trust to Grantees Sean Gaffney and Brianna Gaffney. \$677,000.
- 12 Pincroft Ave. 04/24:** Grantors Jared Vona, Nicole Vona, Nicole R. Ekstrom, Nicole R. Vona to Grantees Brendan Randall and Casey Randall. \$700,000.
- 106 Paxton Rd. 04/24:** Grantors Adam Pilichowicz and Anna Pilichowicz to Grantees Eryca McCann, Lisa Fox, and William C. Spang. \$702,500.
- 76 Flagler Dr. 04/27:** Grantor Tracey Guertin to Grantees Tracey L. Guertin Tr and Flagler 76 Realty Trust. \$100.
- 56 Raymond St. 04/27:** Grantors Mark H. Davies and Paula L. Bylaska-Davies to Grantees Zachary Bylaska-Davies Tr, Rebecca Davies-Waterman Tr, and Davies Family 2025 Irrevocable Trust. \$100.
- 39 Village Way 04/28:** Grantor Maxim Nazarchuk to Grantees Maxim Nazarchuk and Irina Nagaeva. \$100.
- 339 Salisbury St. 04/28:** Grantor Don

Stevenson Webster to Grantee Maura Collins. \$540,000.

- 47 Preservation Way and Wagner Ln 04/28:** Grantors Binh T. Phan and Thuy T. Nguyen to Grantees Jared Vona and Nicole Vona. \$845,000.
- 9 Tannery Dr. 04/29:** Grantors Ashley L. Hickman, Ashley Clark, Ashley L. Clark, and Edward Clark to Grantees Joel S. Orlando and Laura A. Loewy. \$615,000.
- 12 Newell Rd. 04/30:** Grantor John R. Morin to Grantees Vangjush Miteziu and Eriselda I. Rrapi. \$602,000.
- 263 Muschopauge Rd. 4/30:** Grantor 263 Muschopauge Road LLC to Grantees Dale E. Perkins and Ann Tripp. \$375,000.
- 1106 Wachusett St. 4/30:** Grantors Rosemarie A. Stowell 2023 Living Revocable Trust and Todd Stowell Tr to Grantee Todd Stowell. \$100.
- No number Chapin Rd. 05/05:** Grantors Erickson Family Trust, Roger D. Eaton Tr, and RD Eaton Tr to Grantees Matthew J. Mattrick and Larissa L. Mattrick. \$300,000.
- 45 Anderson Ave. 05/06:** Grantor Catherine Regnier to Grantees Catherine T. Regnier Tr and Catherine T. Regnier Family 2026 Trust. \$100.
- 49 Brattle St. 05/07:** Grantor Steven H. Crain to Grantees Steven H. Crain Tr, Linda J. Crain Tr, and Steven H. Crain Life Trust. \$100.
- 16 Sycamore Dr. 05/07:** Grantors Anthony R. Drapos, Diane M. Drapos, and Diane Drapos to Grantee Samiul Hoque. \$900,000.
- 180 Highland St. 05/08:** Grantors Lauren K. Ricci, Lauren K. Frazee, Andrew Ricci, and Gail K. Frazee to Grantee Tracy Kiss. \$570,000.
- 64 Anderson Ave. 05/08:** Grantors Stephan Parretti, Lynn Chaput, John Parretti, Shay Parretti, Lorraine Parretti-Crete, James Crete, Dina Parretti, D. Parretti, and Richard Parretti, Est to Grantee Judith Hanna. \$200,000.
- 40 Surrey Ln. 05/08:** Grantor Melinda Montiverdi to Grantees Melinda A. Montiverdi Tr and Melinda A. Montiverdi 2026 Revocable Tr. \$100.
- 164 Wachusett St. 05/11:** Grantors Juan Jose Carazo Cespedes, Juan Jose Carazo, Karla Rojas Carazo, and Karla Rojas Fernandez to Grantees Prasanth Palli and Bhawna Randhi. \$710,000.
- 201 Kendall Rd. 05/13:** Grantors Gerald J. Kersus Tr and Kathleen M. Kersus Living Trust to Grantees Gerald J. Kersus Tr, Credit Shelter Trust, and Kathleen M. Kersus Living Trust. \$1.
- 111 General Hobbs Rd. 05/14:** Grantor Michael J. Foley to Grantees Jonathan D. Roberts and Kelley Kirby. \$667,000.

Grantees Christine A. Dozois Tr and Rachel P. Staiti 2010 Revocable Trust. \$100.

- 25 Holden Rd. 04/22:** Grantors Kim M. Mailloux, Kim Mailloux, Lisa Giddix, Matthew Lucier, Brianna Nieves, Jacob Newsham, Zachary Newsham, Kim M. Newsham, Lisa Hartigan, and Brianna Lucier to Grantee Kim M. Mailloux. \$100.
- 767 Pleasant St. 04/23:** Grantors Samuel J. Staiti Revocable Trust and Christine A. Dozois Tr to Grantee Christine A. Dozois. \$100.
- 551 Pleasant St. 04/23:** Grantor Thomas V. Juneau Sr and Sharon L. Juneau to Grantee Flipping Good Inc. \$305,000.
- 25 Village Rd. 04/24:** Grantor Gloria J. Sullivan to Grantees Gloria J. Sullivan Tr and Gloria J. Sullivan Revocable Trust. \$1.
- 179 West St. 04/29:** Grantors Judy Knoll and Judith P. Knoll to Grantees Judith P. Knoll Revocable Trust - 2026 and Judith P. Knoll Tr. \$100.
- 4 Berkshire Dr. 04/29:** Grantors Joseph McCauley and Diane McCauley to Grantees Erik McCauley and Serena Heard. \$475,000.
- 36 Village Rd. 05/06:** Grantors Gregory Thorsen Tr, Gregory S. Thorsen Tr, and 36 Village Road Irrevocable Trust to Grantee Carol L. Thorsen. \$100.
- 5 Camp St. 05/06:** Grantor White Oak Land Conservation Society Inc to Grantee Greater Worcester Land Trust Inc. \$250,000.
- 7 Baxter Rd. 05/07:** Grantors Patricia Azarone, Daniel Ford, and Farrell Ford to Grantees Farrell Ford and Patricia Azarone. \$100.
- 2 Indian Hill Rd. 05/07:** Grantor Kim B. Melick to Grantees Kim B. Melick and Carter Melick. \$100.
- 8 Hemlock St. 05/07:** Grantors Fady Sherif Sidhom and Tiffany Jillian Sidhom to Grantee Byron A. Morataya. \$600,000.
- 11 Brigham Rd. 05/07:** Grantors Robert J. Fortin, Marie L. Fortin, John Robert Fortin, Nicole Fortin, and John Fortin to Grantees Allyson M. Ostiguy and Garrett S. Ostiguy. \$840,000.
- 324 Marshall St. 05/08:** Grantors Matthew P. DeChiaro and Donna A. DeChiaro to Grantees Mark Tomasino and Valerie Tomasino. \$725,000.
- 17 Briardcliff Ln. 05/14:** Grantors Gerald Kashuk Tr, Shelley B. Kashuk Trust - 2019, and Gerald A. Kashuk Tr to Grantees Gerald A. Kashuk Tr and Gerald A. Kashuk Trust - 2019. \$1.

son and Alexis Economy. \$545,000.

- 562 E. County Rd. 04/21:** Grantor NPH Real Estate LLC to Grantee Waleed Belgou. \$415,000.
- 7 Sunnyside Ave. 04/22:** Grantors Sandra L. Berardi and Sandra L. Raskett to Grantee Sandra L. Berardi. \$1.
- No number Charnock Rd. 04/23:** Grantors Eric Van Reet and Michele Van Reet to Grantees Eric P. Van Reet Tr, Michele E. Van Reet Tr, and Van Reet 2026 Revocable Trust. \$100.
- 11 Valley View Circle 04/24:** Grantors Henry Tibi Martinez Granillo, Karen Benitez, Gilberto Benitez, and Fidelia Gomez to Grantees Henry Tibi Martinez Granillo and Karen Benitez. \$100.
- 17 Arrowhead Way 04/24:** Grantor Grace Adu-Boahemaa to Grantees Bernard Gyapong Tr, Grace Adu-Boahemaa Tr, and G&B Living Trust. \$1.
- 65 Brintnal Dr. 04/27:** Grantor CB. Blair Development Corp to Grantees Emmanuel Mensah and Maranda Lynn Bashaw. \$721,337.
- 33 Maple Spring Dr. 04/27:** Grantors Patricia M. Damon and Patricia M. Melia to Grantees Patricia M. Damon Tr and Patricia Damon Trust. \$100.
- 122 Fidelity Dr. 04/27:** Grantor Harmony Place LLC to Grantees George R. Hussey Jr and Nancy L. Hussey. \$525,000.
- 176 Maple Ave. 04/28:** Grantor Victoria L. Mahoney to Grantees Victoria L. Mahoney 2026 Living Revocable Trust and Victoria L. Mahoney Tr. \$100.
- No street number Wachusett Rd. 04/28:** Grantors William E. Zottoli Tr, Carla Zottoli Tr, Carla Z. DeFosse Tr, Margaret H. Zottoli Marital Trust C, and Margaret H. Zottoli Trust to Jay W. Melick. \$100.
- No street number Wachusett Rd. 04/28:** Grantor Jay W. Melick to Grantees William E. Zottoli Tr, Carla Zottoli Tr, Carla Z. DeFosse Tr, Margaret H. Zottoli Marital Trust C, and Margaret H. Zottoli Trust. \$100.
- 6 Olivia Ln 04/28:** Grantors Jeffrey D. Abare and Melissa A. Abare to Grantees Jeffrey D. Abare Tr, Melissa A. Abare Tr, and Abare Family Revocable Trust-2026. \$100.
- 28 Forest Hill Dr. 04/28:** Grantor Wingspan Properties LLC to Grantees Kristopher Casey and Rachael Casey. \$740,000.
- 18 Autumn Woods Dr. 04/29:** Grantor Pamela J. Smith to Grantees Benjamin P. Smith Tr and Patrick & Pamela Smith Irrevocable Trust. \$100.
- 3 Charnock Cir. 04/30:** Grantor Phoenix Properties LLC to Grantees Steven A. Conaway and Misha C. Conaway. \$570,000.
- 147 East County Rd. 05/01:** Grantors Alexis J. Benander and Dale L. Benander

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- 765 Pleasant St. 04/16:** Grantors Rachel P. Staiti Est and Christine A. Dozois to

RUTLAND

- 15 Soucy Dr. 04/21:** Grantor John E. Boland and Deborah A. Boland to Grantees Caroline A. Capen Tr and Boland Irrevocable Trust 2026. \$100.
- 14 Grizzly Dr. 04/21:** Grantors April E. Paquet, Stewart Paquet, and April E. O'Brien to Grantees Christian McPher-

REAL ESTATE

continued on page 15




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1. The May 23 grand opening and ribbon cutting of Almanac Market, 242 Pleasant St., Paxton. From left, Select board member Jeffrey Wentzell, Almanac Market owner Skye Wellington, and Tony Domineck of the Economic Development Committee. Photo by Julia Pingitore.

2. Hope Lives Here hosted its 5th Annual Walk to Remember on May 17. Walkers and sponsors enjoyed the beautiful weather.

3. The Holden Woman's Club honors a Wachusett student for outstanding contributions to the school and community with its Student of the Year Award. WRHS Principal Pratt and assistant principals oversaw the nomination and selection process. The HWC recognized Joel Homoliski as its 2026 Student of the Year. Joel's character, dedication, and enthusiasm make a lasting impression in academics, school activities, athletics, clubs, and community service. Student of the Year Chairwoman Jean Feterman presented the award to Joel who is the son of Deanna and Geoff Homolicki of Holden.

4. Friends of the Richards Memorial Library hosted an open house on May 16 where patrons celebrated the library's accomplishments, learned what's new at the library, and met the recently appointed director Vicky Biancolo.

5. The Holden Woman's Club awarded three \$2,500 scholarships to graduating seniors who will pursue higher education. Recipients were: L-R Sierra Kelch who will attend UMass Amherst and is the daughter of Brian and Cynthia Fuhrmann-Kelch; Jasmin Bella who will attend the University of Wisconsin and is the daughter of Maria Benson; and Aislyn Smith who will attend James Madison University's Honors Program and is the daughter of Liesl and Frank Smith, and the granddaughter of Rosemary Heinold.

We hope you enjoy Photo Finish, WFP's newest feature.

But we can't do it alone! If you have photos of a public event that you think the Wachusett community should know about, please email photos and a short description to Martha@localtownpages.com. Also include your name, address, and contact information (not for publication) should we have any questions.

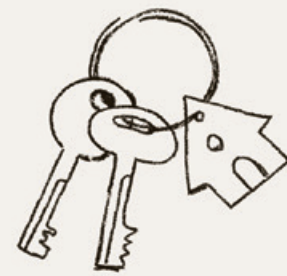
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to Grantee Stella Kelley. \$355,000.
No street number Wachusett Rd., 4 Milo Way, and 40 Ridge Rd. 05/01: Grantors Margaret H. Zottoli Marital Trust C, Margaret H. Zottoli Trust, Carla Z. DeFosse Tr, Carla Zottoli Tr, and William E. Zottoli Tr to Grantees Blue-

berry Ridge Revocable Trust, Amanda Spadazzi Tr and Michael Spadazzi Tr. \$300,000.
21 Wildbrook Dr. 05/04: Grantor Jill M. Chisholm to Grantees Joseph Rinaldo and Maura Rinaldo. \$649,000.
26 Kenwood Dr. 05/12: Grantors Willard M. Daggett III and Willard Manning Daggett III to Willard M. Daggett III Family Trust and Willard Manning Daggett III Tr. \$1.

18 Skyline Dr. 05/13: Grantors Carlos F. Haz, Julie A. Haz, Carlos Haz, and Julie Haz to Grantees Carlos F. Haz Tr, Julie A. Haz Tr, and Carlos F Haz & Julie A Haz Living Trust. \$10.
8 Edith Ln. 05/14: Grantors Devyn Belanger and Joel Bianchi to Grantee Devyn Belanger. \$100.
14 Welch Ave. 05/14: Grantors Emerald Land Holdings Inc. to Grantee Nathaniel Osei. \$510,000. *



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