

A little magic along the rail trail

What's behind Rutland's fairy doors



By RILEY FRANKIAN

For several months on the Massachusetts Central Rail Trail in Rutland, tiny doors, tucked among the trees and greenery, have been catching the attention of walkers and cyclists alike. Their unexpected appearance sparked a simple question among those who discovered them: Who was putting these little doors along the trail – and why?

The answer is Jen Schmohl, who says the idea began thousands of miles away, during a trip to Ireland.

“Last summer, I traveled to Ireland,” Schmohl said. “My



FAIRY DOORS

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Pat Kennedy on stage at Harriet Island. Photo submitted

Holden to Harriet Island

How a hometown spark and Berklee hustle launched Pat Kennedy to the festival main stage

By GRETHELINE BOLANDRINA

Pat Kennedy was just a kid in Holden with a guitar and a

Long before he was commanding festival crowds hundreds of miles from home,

KENNEDY

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FAIRY DOORS

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Ireland experience was filled with stories and folklore about fairies and magic.”

While riding bikes along the Irish coast, Schmohl came across a section of trail that reminded her of the Rail Trail in Rutland. The path suddenly became darker and cooler in temperature.

Drawn in by the scenery, when the group stopped to take pictures, they noticed something unexpected: a tiny fairy door tucked into the wall.

“And then another. And another,” Schmohl said. “It felt magical.”

When she returned home, Schmohl decided she wanted to recreate some of that magic. She began making her own



The Schmohl family cycling in Ireland. Left to right: Pat, Jayna, Jen and Chip. Photo submitted.

fairy doors, hosting fairy-door making parties with friends and family. Together, they decorated the miniature doors with paint, rocks, moss, and other decor.

This summer, Schmohl took the project one step further. She painted and placed approximately 16 fairy doors along her favorite section of the Rail Trail that reminded her most of the trail she explored in Ireland.

The doors, intentionally placed in different spots, soon became something of a scavenger hunt.

Schmohl was thrilled when

she began seeing posts on Facebook from people who had discovered the doors and, in some cases, were deliberately setting out to find them.

She created the Facebook group “MCRT Fairy Door Find on Wachusett Greenways” to give the project a place to grow. MCRT stands for Massachusetts Central Rail Trail, and Schmohl hopes the idea eventually expands to other trails maintained by Wachusett Greenways.

Some people who have posted say that searching for the doors has encouraged them to walk



longer distances while children and adults alike are charmed by the experience.

But for Schmohl, the fairy doors are not so much about fey creatures and magic, but about paying attention and being present in the moment.

“For me, the fairy doors are about more than fairies,” she said. “They are an invitation to slow down.”

Schmohl hopes the search for a tiny door encourages people to look more closely at everything around them, whether it is the moss growing on a stone, the ferns along the trail, the shape of a tree or another small detail that might otherwise go unnoticed.

In that sense, the doors are less about finding something and more about discovering what is already there.

Schmohl believes that connection can also inspire people to become better stewards of the natural world.

“I’ve always believed that

people who protect our natural resources at some point learned to love nature,” she said. “We’re much more likely to care for something when we have a connection to it, and wonder is a powerful way to create that connection.”

A collection of handmade doors may seem like a small thing. But along the Rail Trail, Schmohl hopes they can accomplish something much bigger: encouraging people to put down their phones, slow down and rediscover the sense of curiosity that often gets lost in everyday life.

“So, I suppose the fairy doors are a reason to use our trails, believe in a little magic, and to observe, wonder and appreciate what we have,” Schmohl said.

Perhaps that is the real magic behind the doors. One does not have to believe in fairies to find something extraordinary along the trail.

Sometimes, you just need to stop and look. *



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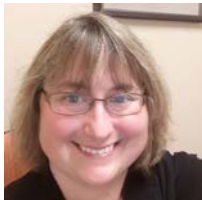
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Dear Readers, Partners, and Community Members:



Jennifer Schofield, Publisher

We did it! The Wachusett Free Press celebrates its one-year anniversary with this September issue. Thank you for making this milestone possible.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our incredible team, especially to Martha Akstin, our amazing editor, and to Kim Vasseur, who has handled production, marketing, and even some

sales! Kim has been instrumental in bringing this endeavor from the initial concept phase to actuality. As a local community member, she recognized the need for a quality newspaper that delivers excellent news content, sports stories, municipal coverage and so much more. We are proud to say we have done just that.

It was my pleasure to serve as a sponsor at Holden Days in August. While at the booth, I loved hearing the wonderful compliments about our writers and the phenomenal job they are doing. Big thanks to all of our writers who continue to dig

deep, write stories that matter, and bring them to life for the communities we serve.

Lastly, thank you to our community for continuing to read our content, and to the advertisers who make it possible to bring this newspaper to your doorstep.

We would love to hear from you. What are we doing well? What could we improve? What content is missing that you would like to see? Please email us your thoughts at martha@localtownpages.com

Additionally, if you are a business owner interested in adver-

tising and supporting our paper, I would love to connect. Please email me at jenschofield@localtownpages.com.

We are proud to bring quality news to your doorstep. Thank you for welcoming us into the community!

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KENNEDY

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dream. In a town not widely known for its music scene, Kennedy found the community that would shape his sound—and ultimately launch his career.

“I really found my love for music in Holden,” Kennedy said. “Whether it was from early guitar lessons, school musicals, or playing with my first bands.”

At the center of that journey was Doug Moore, owner of Walnut Street Music Academy. Through student bands and showcases, Moore exposed Kennedy to artists and genres that continue to influence his songwriting today.

“He introduced me to so much music that has shaped my sound to this day,” Kennedy said. “I’m so grateful for that.”

That foundation carried Kennedy east to Boston, where he immersed himself in the city’s live music scene while studying at Berklee College of Music. Between classes, he released his debut album, Table

42, and spent countless nights playing in the city’s bars and clubs, sharpening the energetic rock sound that has become his signature.

While Berklee surrounded him with talented musicians, Kennedy quickly learned that classroom experience was only part of the equation. The real education came onstage, where every show helped refine his musicianship and stage presence.

The Power of a Team

That relentless work ethic earned Kennedy a spot in the Berklee Popular Music Institute (BPMI), a prestigious three-semester program that pairs select student artists with dedicated student management teams. Together, they tackle every aspect of an artist’s career—from marketing and budgeting to artist development and festival logistics.

For an independent musician accustomed to handling everything himself, the experience was transformative.

“For the first time, being helped to that extent and being people’s priority felt uplifting

and relieving,” Kennedy said. “Everyone had such great ideas.”

Preparing for a major outdoor festival required larger rehearsal spaces and more production planning, but Kennedy says the band’s mindset never changed: “My boys and I play like we’re playing Gillette Stadium no matter the gig.”

Rocking Minnesota

That mentality paid off at the Minnesota Yacht Club Festival on Harriet Island, where Kennedy found himself sharing the lineup with nationally touring acts he had admired for years.

Standing backstage, any nerves quickly gave way to excitement.

Once the band hit the stage, the reaction was immediate. Their high-energy performance drew festivalgoers away from vendor booths and toward the front of the stage. By the time they launched into their closing song, “Eve”—a jam-heavy crowd favorite built for singalongs—the audience was fully engaged.

Behind the scenes, Kenne-

dy’s BPMI team—Matt, Will, Joe, Jon, and Chris—handled production, tour management, and promotion, allowing the band to focus entirely on the performance.

“I’ve never felt more taken care of,” Kennedy said. “The team worked so hard so that my worry could be just on the music and performance.”

Next Stop: Los Angeles

The experience reinforced what Kennedy already knew about pursuing music professionally.

“Nothing comes easy in this industry,” he said. “Seeing how many moving parts and people it takes to make these things work was inspiring. You need

to work hard to get where you want to be.”

With one major festival milestone behind him, Kennedy is already looking ahead. He’s writing his next album, preparing a vinyl release of Table 42, and getting ready to relocate to Los Angeles this fall to continue building his career.

From the quiet streets of Holden to the main stage at Harriet Island, Pat Kennedy’s journey is a testament to hometown roots, relentless determination, and the power of surrounding yourself with the right people. If his trajectory is any indication, this festival appearance is less a destination than the beginning of an even bigger chapter. ★



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NEWSbitz

By MARTHA AKSTIN

The five towns of Wachusett Regional are taking over **Polar Park** on Saturday, September 19, when the **WooSox** play the **Durham Bulls** at 4:05 p.m. “Each Town Takeover shines a spotlight on a different community, bringing local pride, fans, and neighbors together for an unforgettable day at the ballpark.” Every Saturday game includes a post-game Sunset Catch on the field for all fans.

Every ticket purchased through a **Town Takeover** offer gives back—\$5 from each ticket sold is donated directly to a nonprofit organization in the featured town. WFP emailed the WooSox asking which nonprofits would receive these donations, but we haven’t heard back before press time. Go here for ticket information: mlb.com/mlb/worcester

Holden

- Three Holden residents

were recognized in the **Worcester Business Journal’s 40 under 40**, class of 2026. As the WBJ wrote: “Their impact extends beyond their day jobs. Throughout this year’s class, professional achievement is intertwined with community involvement. Winners coach youth sports, serve on non-profit boards, mentor students and younger professionals, advocate for people in need, raise money for charities, and volunteer in the communities where they live and work.

These 40 leaders aren’t preparing to shape the future of Central Massachusetts. They’ve already started.”

WFP extends our congratulations to:

Michael Bollus Jr. is a senior tax advisor and consultant at **Bollus Lynch, LLP**, in Worcester. Bollus oversaw the implementation of an international team, including its onboarding, training, and development, and conducts check-ins designed to eliminate bottle-

necks and improve efficiency. **James Cunningham** is president of **Cunningham Equities**, in Worcester. Cunningham is preserving Central Massachusetts’ industrial history while turning long-vacant properties into places to live and work.

Ashley Riley is a senior wealth advisor at **Bartholomew & Co.**, in Worcester. Riley traded scientific research for wealth management, bringing an analytical approach from the laboratory into clients’ financial planning.

Paxton

• The **Anna Maria College Transition Advisory Committee (AMC-TAC)** met on September 2 to elect officers and define its charge and purpose. Voted in as chair was **Jeff Wentzell** (Paxton Select Board representative); vice chair is **David Bloom** (Finance Committee representative); and as clerk Town Administrator **Robert Birkbeck**. When committee members expressed interest in touring the campus, Wentzell asked Birkbeck to coordinate those visits so members can better understand the condition of the school’s buildings and other assets. Members agreed to hold public information sessions to keep residents informed, but after the auction, which has been scheduled for October 20.

Britt Clark, a member of AMC-TAC who represents the Zoning Board of Appeals, gave a presentation on the current zoning under which the college falls: General Residence B which allows for Agriculture:

farming, nursery, garden or greenhouse, commercial poultry farms, and with special permits Fur Farm and Livestock. It also allows Residential: detached single family dwellings; senior residential development (SP); bed & breakfast inn (SP) and Accessory Dwelling Units. Municipal administrative cultural, recreational, water supply or protective use, operated by the Town of Paxton, historical association or society.

Clark also mentioned that the ZBA has four vacancies and is looking for volunteers to fill those spots. Compared to other boards and commissions that can meet once or twice a month, the ZBA might meet three or four times a year: “It’s a low commitment – but high impact – committee,” said Clark.

Wentzell said that the state Office of Economic Development has reached out to get a sense of the town and its hopes for the campus. He said the state was told “nothing is off the table for discussions.” The AMC-TAC will meet again in early October before the auction.

Rutland

• Rutland received disappointing news from the state **Department of Conservation and Recreation** regarding the **Prison Camps**. Despite attending a meeting where residents refuted the agency’s allegations of hate-filled graffiti and unsafe conditions and requested that the site be repaired and renovated, DCR has

decided the following: Prison Cells – DCR will remove the upper portion of the interior and exterior walls to a height of 3-4 feet. The footprint of the structure will remain, the public will be able to walk through the cells, and the unstable top portions of the walls will be removed. This will substantially reduce (or eliminate) any public safety risk from crumbling walls and should also reduce the overall graffiti. Root Cellar – DCR will seal off the entrance to the root cellar and then fill the structure with sand, rocks, and gravel. The roof of this structure is unsafe so allowing the public access to the inside is not possible. By filling the structure with material, it will remain intact while eliminating any safety hazard. Educational Signs – DCR will explore the possibility of installing new educational signs at the site, but options may be limited given the history of damage to signage at the site. Residents and the Historical Commission have begun a campaign to push back on these plans. Stay tuned for news of next steps.

• In the August issue of its publication **Nature News**, the **Ware River Nature Club** gave a shout out to **Kerry Remington** who recently retired as director of the **Rutland Library**. Organizers wrote, “When Ware River Nature Club was a fledgling organization searching for a suitable location to hold monthly program meetings, Rutland Public Library Director Kerry Remington put out the welcome mat for us.... Without her help and support the club would probably still be looking for a comfortable, accessible, and free meeting space. We are ever grateful to Kerry for facilitating the cooperative arrangement that allows us to offer free nature and wildlife education programs to the community and beyond.” The club will host a free talk on bird banding at 7 pm on September 29. See the Calendar for details. *

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What does financial fulfillment actually feel like?



Anne-Marie Kelley

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Feeling financially fulfilled means so much more than just the number in your bank account. It's about being able to take your family out to dinner without calculating whether you can afford it. It means sleeping soundly on a Sunday night, knowing that if the water heater gives out tomorrow, you can handle it. And it's saying yes to a vacation because you planned ahead and

the money is there.

In short, financial fulfillment is the feeling that your money is supporting the life you want.

Yet true fulfillment is surprisingly rare. Only 16% of Americans are financially fulfilled, according to a 2026 study by Edward Jones and Gallup, "Money and Meaning: Understanding Financial Fulfillment." Those at the other end of the spectrum, the financially stressed (32%), often say that money regularly controls their daily decisions. Most Americans (51%), however, fall in the middle — the financially conflicted. They manage to get by but often carry a persistent undercurrent of worry.

Notably, where you land on this spectrum has less to do with your income than you might expect. More than half of households earning \$175,000 or more are still financially conflicted.

Building the foundation
So, the question becomes, "What do financially fulfilled people do differently?" Simply put, they tend to have foundational planning structures in place. Five behaviors show up consistently among the financially fulfilled, and they're simple steps you can take, too.

- **Build an emergency fund** (98% of fulfilled have this). Aim for saving three to six months of living expenses in a liquid, easily accessible account. When you know you can handle the unexpected, you stop bracing for it, and lower stress gives you a higher quality of life.
- **Create a financial plan for retirement** (91% of financially fulfilled have one). It's hard to feel in control if you don't know where you're going. A retirement plan puts a real number on what you'll need and lays out a clear path to get there, with built-

in protection against life's unexpected curveballs.

- **Save intentionally for major milestones** (87% of financially fulfilled do). A home renovation, a new vehicle or a child's education don't have to feel disruptive. Setting money aside deliberately for the milestones you anticipate means you can say yes without scrambling.
- **Put an estate plan in place** (66% of financially fulfilled have). Estate plans are not just for the wealthy. A will and basic estate plan help ensure what you've worked for still reflects your wishes after you're gone.
- **Work with a financial advisor** (60% of financially fulfilled who sought any guidance have used an advisor in the past year). The internet is great, but real guidance comes from a credentialed person who knows you and your fam-

ily and what you want your money to do for you.

Knowing that your money is working toward the life you want doesn't happen by accident. Feeling financially fulfilled is worth the effort and may be more achievable than you realize.

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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The Paxton Garden Club tackles its most ambitious project

BY MARTHA AKSTIN

The colorful improvements around Paxton are subtle yet eye-catching: bursts of purple and yellow on the Common; reds and oranges around the public safety building; two planters on either side of the little brick public records building; fresh mulch and perennials at the senior center; more planters filled with flowers at Klingele Field.

Who were the magicians who seemingly overnight came and painted Paxton's public spaces with splashes and dots of color?

And who are the many hands who keep up appearances? Who have weeded and watered and coiled hoses back up and left flowers happily and healthily nodding their heads all summer long?

"Many hands make light work," says Robin Tasca, president of the Paxton Garden Club, the organization responsible for the beautification projects around town.

Subcommittees galore plan the club's numerous events: the many talks free to the public, the DIY workshops (nominal fees to cover expenses and

perhaps stipend the instructor), the annual flower sale the first Saturday in June, the three new-this-year farmers markets, the annual Books & Bloom flower show at the Richards Memorial Library, the weekly floral arrangements for sale at Carlos' Paxton Market, the club's Educator Grant opportunity, the watering and weeding crews – and of course the club's professionally designed website.

And while many volunteers are responsible for the hard, sweaty, often back-breaking (or at least back-bending) weeding, watering, transplanting, and lugging, everyone involved with the club acknowledges that Tasca is the glue that binds the organization together.

What began in the spring of 2020 during Covid as a Facebook group by Sara Root-Simone to connect Paxton residents who shared a love of gardening has steadily grown over the years. In June 2022, they held their first plant sale, and the next month held their first club meeting where they approved bylaws and voted on an executive board. In April 2023 they became a member

of Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, and the next month received their nonprofit 501(c) 3 status.

ers, Robin Tasca, and Andrea Thackeray) met with numerous town boards to seek input and approval – and started reaching

the garden's enormous water storage tank.

"Brian Lawler uncovered it while doing excavation work at the McDonough's Worcester home," said Tasca, describing the 12-foot long, 4-foot tall, 3-foot-wide steel cistern. "He's sand-blasting it, will paint it white, and will build a base for it." Then it will be ready for Rauktis and the students to work their magic.

When asked what will happen if the club is unable to fundraise the full amount by Spring 2027, Tasca paused, then said with assurance, "There will be raised garden beds placed by Spring 2027. There will be the stairs, the shed, the sundial patio, and the water tank."

McKone added, "It's important for residents to understand that if they believe in this project, that we greatly appreciate donations of any size." She shared how two people came up to her at the August farmers' market that the club organized and gave her five dollars and 20 dollars to put toward the garden. "Every donation is important," said McKone. "Any amount makes a difference."

To learn more about the Community Garden and Learning Greenhouse, visit paxtongardenclub.com/about-us/join/community-garden *



Sally, junior garden club member, helps install the community garden's Coming Soon sign.

The many hands make light work motto was on display at a recent Zoom meeting where the Community Garden and Learning Greenhouse Subcommittee met to not only celebrate the recent \$10,000 gift from Fidelity Bank to support the project but also plan next steps.

This project is by far the club's most ambitious. With an estimated cost of \$180,000, almost \$110,000 has been raised in monetary and in-kind donations and services.

The garden will be situated on a just-under 10,000 square footprint on a half-acre of land located behind Paxton Center School (PCS) and the senior center. The club received permission to build on this land from the town's Select Board in November 2025. The budget includes land clearing and preparation, a six-foot high black metal fence, a staircase, an ADA ramp from the parking lot, the raised beds, a rain catchment system, a 12x30 greenhouse, a 12x14 shed, pergola, picnic tables, and a brick-lined sundial patio.

The concept of a community garden was first proposed by the executive board at the club's July 2025 business meeting. In the ensuing months, subcommittee members (Julie Dubuque, Karen Gearin, Dustin Hill, Barbara Matheson, Patti McKone, John Pender-Cudlip, Joyce Pow-

out to local businesses for in-kind services and materials.

Gearin and Pender-Cudlip have spent hours researching the best memorial bricks to place on the sundial patio. "The Brickmaster bricks are superb," said Gearin, explaining that they hold the names incised on the brick despite the harsh winter weather and anticipated foot traffic. The sale of bricks will help support the project.

Pender-Cudlip, who serves on the town's Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee, cites the results of a recent town-wide survey that ranked gardening as the second most popular activity after walking and dog walking. "It's important to explain that this garden will be of no cost to the taxpayers," said Pender-Cudlip.

With a location close to the council on aging, the garden will be a place for seniors to gather and socialize even if they don't have a raised bed to cultivate. Critical to the garden is the greenhouse, which will be available to the club for plant propagation and as a location for workshops and talks. It will also be available for PCS students for horticulture and science studies. Artwork is also part of the overall plans: The subcommittee is working with PCS art teacher Liz Rauktis who will design and have students paint a mural on



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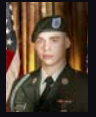
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This Place, These People

Reflections on the people who make this place home

By PAMELA REIDY

Kimberly Ferguson

Kim Ferguson grew up as an only child. Somewhere along the way, she seems to have forgotten how to be one. Her circle simply kept getting wider.

It began in Tatnuck, where Kim grew up with parents who worked, volunteered, and valued community. Summers meant the Cape, boating and extended family.

She stayed close to home for college, earning bachelor's and master's degrees at Worcester State University and later advanced graduate work at Fitchburg State University. She became a speech pathologist, got married, had a son she adores, divorced, and after a long and winding road, married her husband Jay a few years ago. Today, between them, there are five children and 11 grandchildren.

For an only child, Kim has gathered quite a tribe. There are seven close girlfriends whose group texts are always active, who swap book recommendations and travel together. There are friends made at work who became real-life friends, spouses included. There are dear neighbors, like Kitty, who Kim describes simply as "the salt of the earth."

And there is Jen and Hannah. When Kim's mother died after

a long struggle with dementia, Kim wanted a quiet burial at the Cape beside her father, who died when Kim was only 22 years old. No public ceremony. Just immediate family. But when Kim arrived, Jen and Hannah were there.

"They came because they wanted to be there," Kim remembers. Although the service was private, they understood that being family means showing up anyway. Today, Kim recalls this as the kindest thing anyone has ever done for her, and she calls them "my sisters."

When asked what matters most in life, Kim responds without pause or doubt, "How you treat people." She is quick to add, "That means everyone from the person who picks up your trash to the people you love most. I just think being kind and treating people right is something that you carry with you." It is this simple, well-lived philosophy that explains Kim's ever-widening circle.

There are wonderfully ordinary things inside Kim's circle. She loves historical fiction and reads every day. She will not fall asleep without reading at least a few pages. She loves travel, music, the water, and time with family. She adores Hattie, her black Lab, a service-dog-in-training who did not make the cut but landed exactly where she

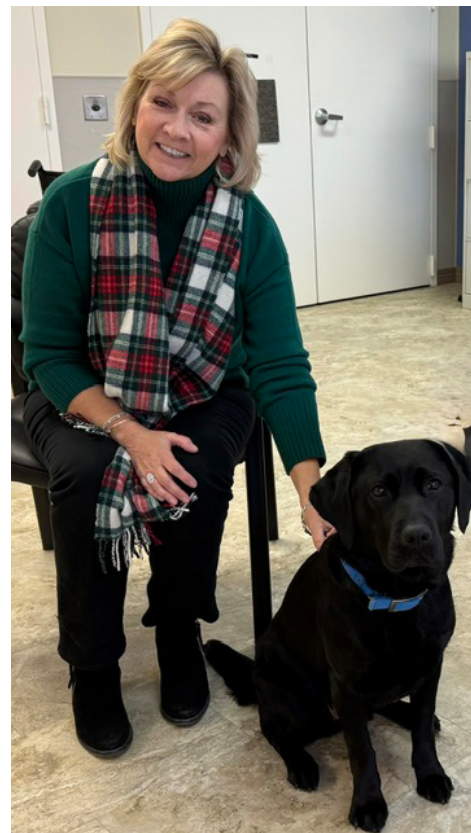
belonged.

Kim is her most authentic self in the quiet: at the beach with a book or simply spending time with Jay and Hattie.

Despite traveling widely, Kim calls herself a homebody. Her life's geography remains remarkably small: Tatnuck, Holden, summers on the Cape and now time in New Hampshire. She has a deep affection for Wachusett Mountain and the Old Mill restaurant that hold precious childhood memories. "I like what I know and what I'm comfortable with," she says. Asked why she loves her hometown of Holden she reflects, "It is simple: when people are in need, people help."

Perhaps that is another way the circle widens, not through grand gestures, but by noticing who needs us and showing up.

Now, at 59, Kim is about to widen the circle once again. For



me," she says. "I really am trying to figure out me."

There is something wonderfully fitting about that. An only child who spent a lifetime expanding her definition of family now has room to discover who else and what else might enter the circle. That is how we also build a community, drawing the circle wider, making room for people who become ours.

This place. These people. All of us within the circle.

*Pam Reidy is a writer, educator, and interfaith minister whose work has long centered on people, community, and the stories that shape our lives. In This Place, These People, Pam turns her attention to the people who make the Wachusett community what it is, sharing stories of their lives, values, hopes, and connections, and reminding us that every ordinary life has a story worth telling. If you have someone you think should be featured in This Place, These People, please send your ideas to the Editor, Martha Akstin, at martha@localtownpages.com **

16 years, the title State Representative has accompanied her everywhere. "It can sometime be difficult," she admits, "to separate the title from the woman carrying it." As she prepares to leave office, she does not have a grand plan for what comes next. "I'm learning more about



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Sports

Golf, a game on the rise

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Last fall, the Wachusett High School golf team put together its third best average (200 per match or a 40 average per player) under Coach Nick Guerin. On the other hand, by going 10-8, it was the team's second worst record. In addition to playing in the very tough Mid Wach-A League, the coach also believes that the popularity of golf has contributed to more competitive players.

"Since Covid hit us, more people have been playing golf and the game has gotten a lot better," Guerin said. "We play in a tough division with some very good competition. Our schedule has the likes of Shrewsbury, Westboro, Algonquin, Nashoba. And Grafton fielded a really good squad last year."

This year's captains Andrew Victor and Ricky Narin came to

this point in their game in very different ways. At the tender age of six, Narin had golf clubs placed in his hands because his father was a big golfer. Victor, at the age of six, was a baseball player and was one of those who didn't begin to hit the links until the pandemic.

"During Covid there was basically nothing to do, but the golf courses were still opened," Victor explained. "I needed something to do and decided to start playing golf. I found that it was a sport that you had to push yourself, but it was rewarding when you made a good shot."

Hitting the links not only gave the then-middle-schooler something to do, but it made Victor determined to become a better golfer. When high school rolled around, he felt that he was ready to attempt to make the team although he was not expecting to make Wachusett's top team. Narin was entering high school

at the same time and while he was very confident in his play, he too was not sure if he would make the varsity squad.

"You play golf basically against yourself and you know when you are improving and when you are not," Narin said. "Entering my freshman year, I knew that I wanted to play varsity golf but was unsure if I would make the team that year. Andrew and myself were the only two freshmen to make the team and although I started out slow, I did end up with the third best average [42] on the team."

As the duo enters their final season with Wachusett as captains, they are both looking to help the team get ready to play their best golf. Victor wants to be a leader that the rest of the team looks up to while teaching the younger players how to accomplish their goals and manage their time wisely. Narin wants to try and improve



Ricky Narin (left) and Andrew Victor, WRHS boys' golf team captains.
Photo submitted.

upon Wachusett's practices as he feels that the team doesn't get enough time due to all the

GOLF

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Pro disc golf tournament returns to Maple Hill in Leicester

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

For the second straight year, Maple Hill Disc Golf in Leicester will host the MVP Open x OTB, a part of the Disc Golf Pro Tour and the final playoff event of the season. The best disc golfers from around the world will assemble in Leicester for four days, September 24-27, to close out the season on the sport's most storied course.

"We've been lucky enough to be the final event," Maple Hill General Manager and event organizer Steve Dodge said. "This is a premier, major event."

According to Dodge, the event is three-fold for the participants. First and foremost is winning the MVP Open x OTB title and grabbing the purse. This year the men's first-place winner will take home \$15,000 while the women's first place winner will take home \$10,000. The top three athletes who accumulated points throughout the year will

be announced, including the crowning of the year's overall champion for the Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA). Finally, the event is the final playoff event of the year that will allow another eight athletes to qualify for the tour championship in October at Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Disc golf — or frisbee golf, as some call it — is a 9- or 18-hole course where athletes throw a disc from the tee pad toward a target, usually a basket equipped with chains to catch the disc. Much like golf, participants continue to throw their discs until they are in the basket. The PDGA recommends that baskets are an average of 200-400 feet away from the tee, with none being closer than 100 feet away.

Modern disc golf started in the 1960s but there is debate over who invented the sport. Ed Headrick, while working for Wham-O, helped redesign the flying disc and soon after left to

focus on his new interest — disc golf. In 1976 he started the Disc Golf Association (DGA).

Today the sport is in 40 countries and as of 2025 there were 317,870 PDGA members, including 112,509 subscribed members. According to the UDisc course directory, there are more than 16,000 disc golf courses, 90 percent of which are accessible for free.

Maple Hill was built in 2003 and opened the following year with its first big tournament. The sport took off and continued growing until Maple Hill was the number one disc golf course in America. The site has added barbecues on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, a weekly farmers' market, and other events.

During the Covid pandemic, Maple Hill grew 50 percent each year over the two-year span.

"It was a fun and affordable outside activity," Dodge said.



Photo submitted

"One that just about everyone could enjoy and understand relatively easily."

Much like golf where a player has numerous types of clubs, there are numerous types of discs, and some players carry 15 to 20 discs with them at all times. The discs are very different than the average frisbee you can buy at a toy store. Because the course is designed for play in open fields as well as wooded areas, some discs are designed for distance while others are designed to go left or right depending on the course layout.

"This game challenges distance, accuracy, different turns,

up and down hills and over water. Maple Hill has everything that will challenge the top players of the game," Dodge said. "In my opinion, the game is much better than golf and watching the best players in the world on the course is nothing short of mind-blowing."

Don't know how to play or want to learn more about the sport? Maple Hill also has a beginner's course. Who knows? In years to come, you could be part of the hottest sport, taking your skills to the best disc golf courses all over the world. To learn more about the tournament, go here: themypopen.com ★

A thank you letter to our Paxton community

August 16
Dear Paxton,
One week ago, our family became uprooted from our home due to a fire caused by a lightning strike. Gratefully, my husband and I were awake when the fire started and were able to get our kids and dog out quickly and we were all unharmed. Sadly, our beloved 19 year old cat did not make it out, and we hope that she has transitioned on to a kitty paradise where she can be at peace.

While we lost all our belongings, including our two cars, we've gained more of what truly matters: new friends and a deeper appreciation for our community amidst this family crisis.

Firstly, we are tremendously grateful to the Paxton Fire Department, the fire departments from nearby towns, Paxton Police, American Red Cross, and other first responders for their incredible service and dedication to caring for our family and the safety of the community. Our kids will grow up knowing and admiring firsthand the heroic work you all do.

And to you, our Paxton community: THANK YOU! Words truly fall short to express our gratitude for all that has been given to us this past week. From the passerby who stopped their cars to help us, to our neighbors across the street who sheltered us and organized donations for our immediate needs, to all the folks who have given donations - you all have been a life raft for us and we wholeheartedly thank you.

Since moving to our house on Holden Road a little less than two years ago, we have loved creating a home there among the pines and we hope to rebuild and return to our lives there soon. The Paxton community is a very special one and once we're back on our feet we look forward to finding ways our family can give back to the community that we have received so much from already.

For now we welcome your continued positive thoughts, prayers, and good energy as we face the long road ahead. We will recover. Gratefully,
The Shimizu-Kelley Family

100th anniversary update at Sovittaja Park

BY GAIL COLE

The summer of 2026 at Sovittaja Park in Rutland has been busy but enjoyable for those who attended our centennial celebratory events.

In June we hosted the 2024 Finlandia Foundation Performer of the Year Miska Kajanus. July brought the 55th annual chicken barbecue that served 287 people and included scholarship presentations to five recipients and a raffle of 175 items. In August the FHSS prepared a traditional coffee with the Finns event that highlighted traditional Finnish treats, coffee, breads, cheese, and Fazer chocolates. Finnish music played as old and new friends enjoyed the afternoon together.

On September 13, a birch



Coffee with the Finns event in August.
Photo from Facebook

tree landscape painting workshop will be held by local artist Jen Swan of Barre who is also a

member. Reservations were required by September 1 and the limit has been filled. However, if you would like to host a painting workshop, contact her by email at jenswan07@gmail.com.

The season at Sovittaja will end with our final Scandinavian dancing event on Saturday September 19 from 7-10 p.m. with Dan Mackowiak on accordion. Admission is \$10 with refreshments provided.

While our facility is closed in the winter, we look forward to providing more events in the summer of 2027. Be sure to follow our Facebook page for updated information. The community support has been greatly appreciated.

GOLF

continued from page 8

leagues at the Bedrock Golf Course in Rutland. Not having the time on the course, he feels that the players didn't take things too seriously. This year he wants them to practice hard and be ready for the matches.

Having lost a handful of talented golfers from last season (five seniors, three who started and two who were big contributors) Guerin is unsure where this team will be, come the end of the season.

"It's really too early, ask me that again in November," the Mountaineer coach said. "Over the years I have seen that when one golfer seems to have a bad day, someone usually steps up to balance things out, despite it being an individual sport."

While the coach is undecided, his captains firmly believe that they know where this team lies.

"I know that I am going to go out and play my best golf, setting the example for the others and hopefully after we've left, they continue to build the team chemistry to where they can be the best team possible," Victor said.

Guerin hopes that his captains will continue to play the golf that they have been capable of,

while guiding this team.

"Ricky and Andrew have been on the team since their freshmen year and while I usually don't have freshmen on the varsity - as seniors rule the roost - these two showed me something," Guerin said. "I am looking forward to see what they can accomplish this year; it's going to be exciting to watch."

Narin will find his average in the mid-30s while Victor will be a few strokes higher in the high 30s. Where they tee off will all depend on what happens each match. In playing stroke play, Guerin likes to mix and match his tandems as they head out onto the golf course. Things all depend on who is hot and who can they be paired with to improve their game.

Other seniors looking to get back onto the golf course for Wachusett are Colin Cross, Cooper McConihay and Luke

Kirton. Cross found his way into some matches last year shooting in the low 40s, McConihay shot 41 and Kirton averaged a 43, although he didn't find his way onto the greens all that much due to a hockey injury. However, as the trio enters their final campaign with the Mountaineers, Guerin believes that they should all be dropping their averages this fall.

Other golfers who saw time on the junior varsity team last fall who have a shot at cracking the varsity lineup are Quinn Cross, Will Sullivan and Aidan Chase.

"It's hard to say where they'll fit this early; we'll let the chips fall where they may," Guerin said. "We have 32 athletes sign up so far looking for a spot on the team - that includes those athletes who are looking to move up from JV and three transfers looking to also make

the team."

Narin, who is hoping that he can decrease his average from 38 to 36 and claim the top spot on the Wachusett average board while also looking to become an All-Star, likes the way the team looks so far.

"Myself, I have been taking part in one or two tournaments weekly to get ready for the season," he said. "As far as the team goes, if we can go out there and play good golf, winning at least nine matches, we'll definitely get

into the District Tournament, which would be a good goal for this team. As for making the States, it's something that probably won't happen."

Having only six home matches, the Mountaineers will spend a lot of time on the road this fall. According to the coach, golf is the ultimate home-field advantage sport. His team is going to have to give it 110 percent to get past the regular season and into the post-season. ★

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Regional Calendar of Events

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

September 1-15

10 am-5 pm: For the Record: LGBTQ+ Histories at the Worcester Public Library, 3 Salem St. The Museum of Worcester partners with PRIDE Worcester, the College of the Holy Cross, and the Worcester Public Library on this special exhibit to kick off PRIDE 2026. Established in 2018, the Worcester LGBTQ+ History Project seeks to understand our past and the possibilities for our future. Kickoff PRIDE Worcester 2026 with a visit to this multimedia exhibit that showcases local queer stories, challenges, creativity, and resilience.

Tuesday, September 8

Circumstantial Light – solo exhibition of paintings by Doug Caves at the East Wing Gallery, Mount Wachusett Community College, 444 Green St., Gardner opens today and runs through Oct. 15. Reception Oct. 15, 5-7 p.m. The exhibit reflects Caves' exploration of natural light and its ability to transform architectural and rural subjects. An MWCC alumnus and Paxton resident, Caves dedicates the exhibit to the late Gene Cauthen, professor of art, whose mentorship shaped generations of students.

Wednesday, September 9

10:30 am: Interdimensional phenomena: UFOs at the Paxton Senior Center. Rethink the boundaries of reality in this thought-provoking presentation by author/historian Ronny LeBlanc. Investigate UFOs, Bigfoot, visitors from other dimensions and high-strangeness events in the U.S. and New England.

1 pm: Black Cat Porch Pot. Bemis Farms will be at the Holden Senior Center to walk you through making a beautiful porch pot. \$25 per person, payable at sign up. Spaces are limited.

7 pm: Lawn alternatives with Dan J. Wilder at the Millers River Environmental Center 100 Main St. Athol or via Zoom. It's time to look at this idea we call lawn. There are other ways to manage yards, from whole lawn replacement to ways to reduce inputs and increase ecological value. From well-known plants to new introductions, we will discuss various options that fit the needs of any lawn space. Wilder is the co-author of Native Plants for New England

Gardens (with Mark Richardson of the New England Wild Flower Society) and Director of Applied Ecology at Norcross Wildlife Foundation. Register for Zoom on the Ware River Nature Club's website: warerivernatureclub.org

Thursday, September 10

10:30 am: Fraud Squad at the Paxton Council on Aging: Enjoy informative skits that tackle scam threats that are embedded in tech support, reverse mortgages, and pleas to grandparents. Learn how to recognize the warning signs so you can avoid the worse.

10:30 am-12 pm: The Craft of Writing Workshop via Zoom hosted by the Gale Free Library. Registration required. We'll look at poems in which the first-person speaker is not the author, but some other (fictional or historical) character, and discuss why and how one might apply this approach.

12-3 pm: Flu shots: Walgreen's will be at the Holden Senior Center to offer flu shots. Bring your insurance card and photo id. Sign up at the office if interested

3:30-6:30 pm: Paxton Farmers Market The final market of the 2026 season, behind the Paxton Council on Aging, 17 West St. Enjoy produce from local farms, freshly baked breads, unique handmade gifts by talented artisans, delicious foods, the club's hand-picked floral arrangements, and representatives from several town departments and services. All proceeds support the club's proposed Community Garden and Learning Greenhouse project.

Friday, September 11

2:30-4:30 pm: Library Book Sale and Donation Days sponsored by Friends of Richards Memorial Library resumes this month. 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 closed. The book sale continues tomorrow, the 12th, from 10 am-2 pm.

4-4:45 pm: Family Yoga presented by Soft Place to Land with Dawn Marie at the Richards Memorial Library.

Join this beginner-friendly family yoga designed to help children and the adults who love them slow down, move together, and have fun. Through gentle yoga, playful movement, breathing exercises, mindfulness, and relaxation, families will build strength, flexibility, balance, and connection Bring: yoga mat or a towel/blanket and water bottle. Donations (optional but welcomed) will go to the library. Dates are Fridays, Sept. 11, 18, 25, and Oct. 16. Attend one or all!

Saturday, September 12

9 am: Hike the Midstate Trail Rutland to Spencer. This is the fifth segment of the Midstate Trail for this group. The six-mile hike will start at Route 122 in Rutland and end at Route 31 in Spencer. It is easy hiking on forest paths with near-zero roadside walking. For info/sign up: TrailaroundprincetonMA@gmail.com

1-2 pm: Worcester Revolutionary Walking Tour hosted by the Museum of Worcester. Walk Main Street in the footsteps of Worcester's Revolutionaries as they walk a gauntlet of common men intent on defending their liberty as they spread their revolutionary ideas between the town's taverns and meeting houses. The tour begins and ends at Salisbury Mansion, 40 Highland St, Worcester. Wear comfortable shoes. Space is limited to 25 people. All are welcome, all ages appropriate. \$15 non-members; MOW members free. If inclement weather, tour will be presented at Museum of Worcester's Fletcher Auditorium. All times are 1-2 pm, additional dates: Saturday, September 26, October 3, October 17. Registration required on MOW's website: worcesterhistory.org/events

Sat. and Sun. Sept. 12-13

9:30 am-3:30 pm: 2nd Annual Autumn Art Sale (yART Sale) today and tomorrow on the lawn at Doug Caves Art Studio, 135 Pleasant St., Paxton. Enjoy a casual outdoor setting with co-hosts contemporary American painter Doug Caves and poly-media artist Dick Taylor. This outdoor sale features original paintings, mixed media works, photo prints, crafts, jewelry, and more, bringing together local artists including Kathy Caves,

Jen Niles, Alyssa Foy, June Allen, and the Paxton Garden Club. Enjoy art, conversation, and community in a welcoming outdoor setting. Free and open to the public. More info: www.dhcaves.com

Thursday, September 15

6:30-8 pm: The Golden Age of Silent Movies at Richards Memorial Library. Share an evening of silent movie performances with live musical accompaniment plus commentary about the films and film stars. This treasure trove brimmed with adventure, drama, romance and comedy. Combined with live "Mood Music" accompaniment, these films provided entertainment for the world.

Wednesday, September 16

12 pm: Tai Chi with Shifu Gary Lachapelle of New England Kung Fu-Tai Chi at the Paxton Senior Center.

Join this new weekly class that combines slow, flowing movements with deep, controlled breathing that promotes relaxation, balance, flexibility and inner calm. \$5 p/p at the door.

4:20 pm: Seed Mosaics with Hands on Nature for ages 4+ at the Gale Free Library. Registration opens 9/9. Join Hands on Nature for a discussion on the life cycle of a plant, then make some seed art to take home.

Thursday, September 17

11 am: The Rockin' Robin Dave Mindell performs the greatest musical hits of the 50s, 60s, and 70s at the Paxton Senior Center. Lunch option: noon but RSVP by 9/14.

Saturday, September 19

9 am: Mushroom walk for beginners with Lindsay Gwyther hosted by the Ware River Nature Club. Meet at the Mass Central Rail Trail parking area, Glenwood Rd, Rutland Conditions for mushroom and fungi growth have been ideal, so let's go for a walk to look for, photograph, and identify these woodland inhabitants. Walking distance will depend on how many specimens we stop to admire and examine. Lindsay has many years of experience and will enlighten us about basic identification features and growth habits. Note: This is not a field trip to learn about or watercivernatureclub@yahoo.com

10 am: Historical tour of the Damon Memorial building, home to the Gale Free Library (rain date Saturday, September 26) led by Local History Librarian Nancy Richards. Space is limited and registration is required.

Monday, September 21

10 am: GUIDE (Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience) Program at the Rutland Senior Center. If you or a loved one have been diagnosed with dementia, you may be eligible for support through the federal government's new program, GUIDE, a program developed for Medicare dementia clients and their caregivers to offer increased support and education to individuals with mild, moderate, or severe dementia. The goal is to provide compassionate, person-centered support for the dementia client and their caregiver that promotes quality of life and reduces stress.

Tuesday, September 22

10 am-1 pm: Oriol Health Fair at the Holden Senior Center. Join them for the 6th Annual Oriol Foundation Health & Wellness Expo. This free community event will feature guest speakers, health and wellness vendors, demonstrations, giveaways, and resources for physical, emotional, financial, and general well-being. Because of the Fair, all regularly scheduled programs and activities are canceled for the day.

10:30-11:30 am: Mornings with Maggie at the Gale Free Library. Maggie and her person Kelly are a therapy team certified through the Alliance of Therapy Dogs, and they return to brighten our day. No registration required.

3:30-5:30 pm: Dungeons and Dragons for grades 6+ at the Gale Free Library. Registration opened 9/1 for this four-session 5th Edition D&D campaign. Signing up commits to attend all four events. Learn more on the website.

Wednesday, September 23

10 am: Hike Mt. Wachusett west side hosted by Princeton's Open Space Committee. This hike will set out from West Wachusett Street (Westminster Road) and go along West Road. We'll cross over on the

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, HoldenWomensClubMA@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, paxtongardencub.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; cfohock@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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Semuhenna Trail and return on North Road. This 3.3-mile moderate hike goes halfway up the mountain from the west side, mostly on gravel roads. For info/sign up: TrailaroundprincetonMA@gmail.com

Thursday, September 24

12:30 pm: Wicked Strange New England author/TV series host Jeff Belanger presents highlights from his own adventures that explore the unexplained. He offers a tour of haunts, monsters, aliens, and weird history from our region. At the Paxton Council on Aging. Lunch option; reserve by 9/21.

6:30 pm: It's All About Chocolate lecture by **John Goodhile**, chocolatier of Stewart's Chocolates in Holden. Learn the many steps that transform those beans into the delicious treats that we all crave. Hosted by the Paxton Garden Club, the lecture, which is free and open to the public, will be held at the Paxton COA. We hear there might be samples, too?

6:30-7:30 pm: The Art of Photography with Don Bullens at the Gale Free Library. Registration required. If you want to learn about the art of photography, join the library's September exhibiting photographer for this program that will help you create better photographs. The program will demonstrate the concept of simplicity, the use of the rule of thirds, implementing angles and leading lines, and the importance of lighting.

Friday, September 25

10 am: Kidding Around Yoga with Miss Nicole for ages 2-5 at the Gale Free Library. To register, email communityconnections@wachusettcfce.com. Not your typical yoga class, little ones learn basic poses with lots of music, movement, and literacy incorporated. Yoga helps children manage anxiety and improve emotional regulation while developing strength and flexibility.

10:30 am: Flapjack Friday at the Rutland Senior Center. Sign up at the center; \$3 p/p.

2:30-4:30 pm: Free Play Friday at the Gale Free Library. No registration required. Board games, Nintendo Switch, Magic: The Gathering, and Pokemon will be available. Teens-only hour is 2:30-3:30. After 3:30 the program will be for all ages. Children aged 6 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

Saturday, September 26

9 am: Hike Princeton Land Trust trails hosted by Princeton's Open Space Committee. Starting at Princeton Center, the group will hike down to the Bullock McElroy trails, continue to the Russell Corner Loop, then return uphill to the town center. This is a moderately-difficult trek of 5 miles. For info/sign up: TrailaroundprincetonMA@gmail.com

10 am-2 pm: The Rutland Historical

Society is calling artisans and artists to join them on the Common to demonstrate your craft. Weavers, spinners, caners, quilters, woodcarvers, blacksmiths, bakers, and coopers have all joined the society over the years. They are looking for new disciplines too, for this year's event. No charge to set up and you can sell your products if you wish. For info/sign up, email the society at rutlandmahistorical@gmail.com.

Sat. and Sun. Sept. 26-27

New England Dahlia Society Show & Sale at the New England Botanic Garden. This event is included with general admission. NEBG recommends purchasing tickets online in advance to secure your preferred date. You can also buy tickets in person at the Garden. September 26 Bouquet Sale: 1-5 pm; Show: 2-5 pm; Award Ceremony: 3-4 pm. Sunday: Show: 10 am-3 pm. Lecture: "Dahlias 2.0: New Varieties, New Science, New Methods" 11 am-12 pm. Bouquet Sale: 11 am-3 pm. Sale of show flowers: 3-3:30 pm. This annual two-day event is coordinated by the New England Dahlia Society. Visit nebg.org for more information.

Sunday September 27

9 am-1 pm: Animal tracks & signs in the Quabbin region sponsored by the Central Mass. Wildlife Tracking Club. Leader: Bryan DiFabio bryan@dfabio.com Exact location TBA. Tracking enthusiasts of all levels welcome. Contact Bryan for info/sign-up.

Tuesday, September 29

10:30 am: Fall flower arrangement with Sam's Stems at the Paxton Senior Center. Fresh flowers and a vase are provided with expert guidance by Samantha. \$8 p/p. Call the center to RSVP.

6:30-7:30 pm: Reiki-Infused Sound Bath with Brandy Lefsyk at the Gale Free Library. Registration required. A sound bath is a therapeutic and meditative experience where you "bathe" in the sounds and vibrations produced by different instruments, such as chimes and crystal bowls. Through them, your mind enters a meditative and relaxed state. Found to relieve anxiety and stress, promote deep meditation, heighten clarity, and improve the ability to concentrate. A sound bath is beneficial for beginners or seasoned meditators. Chairs will be provided, but you can bring a mat or cushion.

7 pm: Bird-banding: its origins, uses, and future in conservation with Christian Fezatte at the Rutland Public Library 280 Main St. Bird banding consists of capturing, measuring, and marking wild birds. While many people have heard of it, few get to experience it. Christian will cover the history of the practice, how it's done today, and what banding tells us about our feathered friends' futures.

Wednesday, September 30

10 am-1 pm: Covid and flu vaccination clinic at the Paxton Senior Center. Open to all, regardless of age and residency. Bring your health insurance card. Refreshments available. The Center thanks CVS for its participation. The clinic will repeat Saturday, October 3, same time.

1 pm: Scrunch-Paint a Silk Scarf at the Rutland Senior Center. Create a stunning tie-dye style silk scarf. This workshop will guide you through the world of colors and how to blend them using permanent, high chroma, highly transparent liquid fabric paint. Made from 100% silk, measuring 8" x 54". Once complete, the scarf will dry at the center for 24 hours. Then you will bring it home, rinse in cold water and iron on cool setting to permanently set the vibrant colors.

6-7:30 pm: Monthly Art Club at the Gale Free Library for ages 16+. Registration required. Bring your own supplies or use theirs: watercolor paints and paper, brushes, pastels, colored pencils, graphite, pens, collage materials, and more. With no specific project, a quotation, book or image will be available to inspire an optional response. Intended for patrons of all abilities.

Thursday October 1

McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center bus tour payment due for the October 15 Friends of Paxton Council on Aging tour of the center named in honor

of New Hampshire's Christa McAuliffe and astronaut Alan Shepard. The Concord NH center is a destination for astronomy, aviation, and space exploration. The \$130/per person cost includes admission to the Discovery Center and planetarium show, lunch at The Common Man Restaurant, and travel aboard a Wilson bus motor coach.

6:45 pm: Composting, sponsored by the Holden Garden Club at the Holden Senior Center. Gretel Anspach will share her encyclopedic knowledge of composting, a unique method of recycling. It uses existing microorganisms to decompose organic matter into usable and highly nutritious soil. It can be done in your backyard, under your sink or even in commercial settings. All you need to know is the composting recipe for success, have an open mind and the desire to help the environment. Gretel established and maintains a 20,000 square foot food production garden that has provided fresh produce to the Marlboro and Maynard Food Pantries for the past 10 years. All are welcome. Refreshments will be provided.

Friday, October 2

7-10 pm: Speakeasy Gala Celebrate Richards Memorial Library's 100 Years of Literacy, History, and Community in Paxton! Step into a golden era of live music from WRHS Jazz Quintet, "Roaring Blooms" floral exhibition by the Paxton Garden Club, a

signature mocktail, hors d'oeuvres - and pure 1920s glamour. 1920s finery is highly encouraged: think flapper fringe, sharp suits, fedoras, and floral elegance. Whisper "Dewey Decimal" at the door for entry. Doors open at 6:30. Tickets are \$35 p/p or \$50 per couple. Space is limited to 70 tickets, advanced signup and purchase is required. Make checks payable to "FRML", and mail or deliver to the library (44 Richards Ave, Paxton, MA 01612) or pay via Venmo @LibraryFriendsPaxtonMA

Saturday, October 3

10 am-1 pm: Covid and flu vaccination clinic at the Paxton Senior Center. Open to all, regardless of age and residency. Bring your health insurance card. Refreshments available. The Center thanks CVS for its participation.

5:30-7 pm: Souper Flannel Supper: The First Congregational Church of Rutland is hosting a community supper. Come dressed in your favorite flannel shirt and enjoy a hearty, homemade fall meal of soup, chowder and chili, bread and sweet treats. Gluten-free options will be available. We will be collecting new or gently used men's and women's flannel shirts to donate to a veteran's organization. There is no charge for the supper and reservations are not required. Donations will be gratefully accepted. 264 Main St Rutland. All are welcome! *

WACHUSETT

PLUMBING

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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



The Heritage floats down the Connecticut River.
Photo by Steve Urbanovitch

Interpretive river cruising on the Connecticut

By Steve Urbanovitch

This day trip takes us to Northfield, MA for a cruise on the Connecticut River. The Heritage Riverboat offers a scenic 1.5-hour tour on its 44-seat boat, which is wheelchair accessible. It heads downstream towards Barton Cove passing through the scenic French King Gorge and beneath the French King Bridge. Located at the Riverview Picnic area at 144 Pine Meadow Road, Northfield, the river boat operates Wednesday through Sunday from July through the second Monday in October, departing at 11 a.m., 1:15 p.m. and 3 p.m. Feel free to bring a snack and drink. While tickets are sold at the dock, there might not be any open seats, so tickets should be purchased online ahead of time. Adults: \$15; Seniors (62 and over): \$14; Children (age 12 and under) \$8; Group 15 or more people: \$14 each. Check availability and make reservations by calling 800-859-2960 or go here: firstlight.energy/stewardship/connecticut-river-cruise/*

The cautious adopter's guide to AI this school year

By RICHARD LOPEZ, Ph.D.

I recently heard an elementary school student say that her math class would be using an AI tutor this year to help her work through practice problems. She said it the way kids announce the school lunch menu for the day: mildly interesting, but already old news. For her, AI in the classroom isn't a novelty or a headline. It's simply part of what school is like now, similar to how calculators or laptops were incorporated into the classroom for older generations.

That moment stuck with me, not because it worried me, but because it clarified something. Our children are not asking us whether they should use AI. They already are, whether it's a built-in tutor, a homework helper, or a chatbot fielding a curious question at the dinner table. The more pressing question for us this fall is not whether to allow these tools, but how we, as the adults in the room, approach and adopt them with our eyes open.

I don't only think about this at my own kitchen table. In my undergraduate course on the psychology of AI at WPI and in a digital media literacy project I'm helping develop at Central Tree Middle School, uncertainties persist and are marked by curiosity mixed with real confusion about what these tools are actually for. We don't need to completely banish AI from our households, and we can't simply wait for the wave to pass. What we can do is become cautious adopters: parents, friends, and neighbors who help our kids navigate this new landscape without losing sight of the parts of childhood, and of ourselves, that no chatbot can replace.

As I've written before in this space, kids learn far more from what we do than from what we say. That principle doesn't disappear when the technology changes; if anything, it matters more. A child who watches a parent ask an AI tool for a quick answer and simply accepts it, no questions asked, learns a very different lesson than a child who watches that same parent read the answer, raise an eyebrow, and go check it against something else. In an age when generative tools can produce a confident, polished answer in seconds, the habit worth passing on isn't suspicion of the technology, and it isn't uncritical enthusiasm either; it's the middle path of cautious adoption.

So, as backpacks come out of the closet and school routines take shape, how can we use these tools together, intentionally, without letting them crowd out the parts of childhood that don't come with a screen? Here are some examples of what cautious adoption can look like in our homes:

First, sit beside your kids when they use AI, don't just hand it to them. Treat a homework helper the way you'd treat a tutor: ask your child to explain the answer back to you in their own words, or to try the problem once more without help before checking the tool. The goal isn't to police every keystroke; it's to keep the thinking with your child, and the tool in a supporting role.

Second, openly share how you use these tools (out loud if it helps), and hold yourself to the same standard you're asking of your kids. When you ask an AI assistant to draft an email, plan a recipe, or summarize an article, let your kids see the whole process, including the part where you double-check it, edit it, or decide it got something wrong. Children rarely see the editing that happens inside an adult's head, and they notice just as quickly when we're distracted by our own phones instead of paying attention to them. Make some of that invisible work visible.

Third, explore new tools together, on purpose, and on a schedule that you set. Rather than letting AI slip into every corner of the day, carve out a specific window, a Saturday afternoon, say, to try something new as a family: an AI art generator, a coding tool, a research project for a school assignment. Ask open-ended questions about how the tool works and how using it makes them feel, and talk openly about its limitations. Putting guardrails on the exploration process keeps it a shared activity rather than a constant, distracting presence. It is also cautious adoption on a small scale: feeding curiosity, but on our terms.

Fourth, protect the parts of the day that stay analog, no matter what. Homework starts at the kitchen table, not on a screen behind closed bedroom doors. Meal times, car rides, and the last 20 minutes before bed remain device-free, AI included. When you can, trade some of that freed-up time for the outdoors; a walk or a bike ride offers a kind of unpredictability and shared presence that no app can replicate. These small, consistent boundaries do more to shape a child's relationship with technology than any single conversation about screen time ever could.

Fifth, let your kids watch you not know something. Look up a word in an actual dictionary once in a while. Puzzle over a recipe that goes sideways. Admit you're unsure and think out loud about how to figure it out. There is real value, for us and for them, in the slower, sometimes frustrating process of finding things out, rather than always reaching for the fastest answer available.

Cautious adoption doesn't mean rejecting AI or pretending it isn't already part of how our kids learn. It simply asks us to implement these tools as cautiously and intentionally as we'd want our kids to. This school year, our children will absorb their first real lessons in how to live alongside AI, not from a syllabus or a permission slip, but from watching how we do it ourselves. Let's give them something worth modeling. *

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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Real Estate Transfers

July 15, 2026 - August 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 September issue publishes transfers from July 15 to August 14. This information is gathered from the Worcester Registry of Deeds' website. Compiled by Karin Warzybok.

HOLDEN

46 Jordan Rd. 7/15: Grantors Thomas G. Hall and Erin R. Hall to Grantees Max John Berger and Ilanna Danielle Tariff. \$837,000.

No Street number Rolling Ridge Rd. 7/15: Grantors Scott B. Sundin Trust, Scott B. Sundin Tr, and Tracy A. Lynch Tr to Grantee Robert E. Dunn. \$25,000.

216 Reservoir St. 7/15: Grantors Bonnie Jean Ross to Grantees Bonnie Jean Ross and Mark A. Giammarino. \$100.

No street number Pinecroft Ave. 7/16: Grantors Brendan Randall, Casey Randall, and Hoey Casey to Grantees Elizabeth Lyn Wills and Audrey Diane Brooks. \$451,325.

133 Fisher Rd. 7/16: Grantors: Athanasios Engonidis and Athanasia Engonidi to Grantees Athanasia Engonidi Tr, Athanasios Engonidis Tr, and 133 Fisher Road Real Estate Trust. \$100.

3 West Fairhill Rd. 7/16: Grantors Athanasia K. Engonidi and Athanasios Engonidis to Grantee Fairhill Realty LLC. \$100.

29 Holly Cir. 7/17: Grantors Mark W. Farrow Jr., Melissa M. Farrow, Mark Farrow Jr., and Melissa Farrow to Grantees Farrow Legacy Wealth Trust, Melissa Farrow Tr, and Mark Farrow Jr. Tr. \$1.

274 Sycamore Dr. 7/20: Grantors Peter J. O'Connor and Kathleen O'Connor to Grantees Meaghan M. O'Connor Tr, Peter J. O'Connor Family Irrevocable Trust, and Kathleen O'Connor Family Irrevocable Trust. \$10.

63 Joel Scott Dr. 7/20: Grantors Wilfrid Deschenes III and Julie B. Deschenes to Grantees Wilfrid Deschenes III Tr, Julie B. Deschenes Tr, and Deschenes Family Revocable Trust. \$1.

987 Wachusett St. 7/20: Grantor Ryan Doyle LLC to Grantees Joshua Coulson and Monique Ann Coulson. \$475,000.

1274 Main St. 7/21: Grantor Natalie E. Hahn to Grantees Christopher Hazelton and Kathryn Shoro. \$511,000.

71 Heather Cir. 7/22: Grantor Roland Peterleitner to Grantees Peterleitner Irrevocable Trust and Elisabeth M. Kublbeck Tr. \$100.

62 Putnam Rd. 7/22: Grantor Kayla E. Thompson to Grantees Norberto Hernandez and Kari Hernandez. \$460,000.

37 Driftwood Dr. 7/22: Grantors Kenneth C. Paharik Jr. and Michael S. Paharik Est to Grantee Seven Hills Community Services Inc. \$730,000.

38 Brentwood Dr. 7/23: Grantors John J. Maroney Jr. and John J. Maroney to Grantee Gina M. Abbott. \$300,00.

321 Bryant Rd. 7/23: Grantors Joseph M. Estes and Michael E. Estes to Grantee Joseph M. Estes. \$100.

30 Cimarron Ln. 7/23: Grantors Robert Fraser Tr, Carla Fraser Tr, and Fraser Family Trust to Grantees Casey Thurston and Maxwell Thurston. \$997,000.

129 Fort Sumter Dr. 7/23: Grantor Robert Gilcrest to Grantees Robert Gilcrest and Ekaterini Giannakis. \$100.

84 Heather Cir. 7/24: Grantors David L. LeBlanc and Diane H. LeBlanc to Grantees David L. LeBlanc Tr, Diane H. LeBlanc Tr, and LeBlanc Family Realty Trust. \$100.

8 Vista Cir. 7/27: Grantors Nancy Ellen Witek and Sandra A. Cove to Grantees Sandra A. Cove Tr and 8 Vista Circle Family Trust. \$100.

370 Main St. 7/27: Grantor Traci Heikinen to Grantors Bruce McCarthy and Andressa Casasanta Defarias. \$495,000.

27 Mark Bradford Dr. 7/28: Grantor Denise M. Morano to Grantees Denise M. Morano Tr and Denise Morano Trust. \$100.

37 Towle Dr. 7/28: Grantors Ermal Toto and Gabriela Toto to Grantees Kevan Sargent Hazelton and Daniela Hazelton. \$338,000.

152 Pilgrim Dr. 7/29: Grantors David S. Ridlon Tr. and Ridlon Living Trust to Grantees Brian D. Ridlon Tr, David S. Ridlon Tr, Family Trust, Survivors Trust, and Ridlon Living Trust. \$1.

107 Winter Hill Rd. 7/29: Grantor Jeanne E. Chaclos to Grantees John Bullard and Amy White. \$535,000.

11 Sheffield Rd. 7/30: Grantor Colleen A. Carrigan to Grantees Colleen A. Carrigan Tr and Colleen A. Carrigan Family Trust. \$100.

95 Mixter Rd. 7/30: Grantors William A. Riga, Jr. Tr, Kimberly M. Riga, and Kimberly Riga to Grantees William A. Riga Jr. Tr, Kimberly M. Riga Tr, and Riga Family Joint Revocable Trust. \$100.

1689 Main St. 7/30: Grantors Paul J. Oslebo and Marie E. Oslebo to Grantees Paul J. Oslebo Tr, Marie E. Oslebo Tr, and Oslebo Family Trust. \$100.

9 Brentwood Dr. 7/30: Grantor Jennie Brummer to Grantees Jennie B. Brummer Tr and Jennie B. Brummer Family Trust. \$100.

15 Tyler Dr. 7/30: Grantors Kelli MacNeil and Gregory A. MacNeil to Grantees Travis Campbell and Taylor Campbell.

\$687,500.

160 General Hobbs Rd. 7/31: Grantors Dennis D. Setterlund and Dennis Setterlund to Grantees Dennis D. Setterlund and Christine M. Setterlund. \$100.

160 General Hobbs Rd. 07/31: Grantors Dennis D. Setterlund and Christine M. Setterlund to Grantees Dennis D. Setterlund Tr, Christine M. Setterlund Tr, and Setterlund Family Trust. \$100.

64 Heather Cir. 7/31: Grantors James A. Maher, Andrea D. Maher, and Andrea D. Simonian to Grantees James A. Maher Tr, Andrea D. Maher Tr, James A. Maher 2010 Revocable Trust, and Andrea D. Maher 2010 Revocable Tr. \$100.

310 Wachusett St. 7/31: Grantor Denise L. Colpas-Driscoll to Grantees Denise L. Colpas-Driscoll Tr and Denise L. Colpas-Driscoll Trust. \$10.

218 Reservoir St. 7/31: Grantors Glenn J. Kane and Patricia Masterson-Kane to Grantees Glenn J. Kane Tr, Patricia Masterson-Kane Tr, and Bayview Revocable Trust 2026. \$1.

78 Tea Party Cir. 7/31: Grantors Margaret P. Daley Tr and Margaret P. Daley Revocable Trust to Grantees Susan Gaudet and Michael Gaudet. \$585,900.

109 Moscow Rd. 7/31: Grantors Christopher Langevin and Lisa Langevin to Grantees Lisa M. Langevin Tr, Christopher A. Langevin Tr, and Lisa M. Langevin Trust. \$1.

272 Lovell Rd. 8/03: Grantors Daniel F. Nason and Melanie L. Nason to Grantees 272 Lovell Road Realty Trust, Daniel F. Nason Tr, and Melanie L. Nason Tr. \$100.

4 King Philip Trail 8/03: Grantors Malcolm R. Ketchum Tr, Cathleen J. Ketchum Tr, Malcolm R. Ketchum Trust, and Cathleen J. Ketchum Trust to Grantee Susan M. Hennigan. \$519,900.

218 Reservoir St. 8/03: Grantors Geraldine M. Villnave Irrevocable Trust, Brian E. Villnave Tr, and Mark S. Villnave Tr to Grantee Brian E. Villnave. \$100.

25 Heather Cir. 8/04: Grantor Nina M. Clapp to Grantees Nina M. Clapp Tr and Nina M. Clapp Revocable Trust of 2026. \$100.

No street number Muschopauge Rd. 8/05: Grantor 263 Muschopauge Road LLC to Grantees James C. Dunn and Jeanne W. Dunn. \$100.

47 Banbury Ln. 8/05: Grantors Michael Lents and Diane Lents to Grantees Michael Lents Tr, Diane Carlson Tr, and Lents Family Trust. \$1.

434 Main St. 8/05: Grantor Robert Jacobsen to Grantee Timberwolf Properties LLC. \$100.

54 High Ridge Rd. 8/07: Grantor George J. Belmore to Grantees Andrea M. Damour Tr, Paul L. Damour II Tr and Damour Family Revocable Trust. \$620,000.

13 Fairchild Dr. 8/07: Grantors Douglas P. Arme y and James M. Cronin Est to Grantees Theresa Perry and Dennis Perry. \$425,000.

235 Main St. 8/10: Grantors Bridget M. Hine and Bridget M. Hine Pechinis to Grantees Bridget M. Hine Pechinis Tr, Thomas E. Pechinis Tr, and Bridget M. Hine Pechinis Life Trust. \$100.

263 Highland St. 8/10: Grantors Bryan A. Coombs Tr, Beth A. Cyr Tr, and Coombs Cyr Family Revocable Trust to Grantees Lucas Gomes Gravina and Larissa Moraes Leme. \$496,000.

443 Quinapoxet St. 8/10: Grantors Peter H. Naroian Tr and Naroian Family Trust to Grantees Meaghan Rose Brendel and Steven Joseph Brendel. \$489,000.

1142 Main St. 8/11: Grantor Wolcott-Marshall Inc to Grantee Dhruvishaa Realty LLC. \$1,300,000.

1051 Princeton St. 8/11: Grantor Justin G. Nardin to Grantees Justin G. Nardin and Brenna E. Nardin. \$100.

47 Bancroft Rd. 8/12: Grantor Carey A. Hartman to Grantees Heather Elliott and Paris Elliott. \$714,000.

14 Wilde Willow Dr. 8/12: Grantors John A. Regele and Dennis A. Regele to Grantee John A. Regele. \$100.

No street number Union St. 8/12:

Grantor Jackson Woods Investments LLC to Grantee William J. Blair Dynasty Trust LLC. \$1,960,000.

No street number Union St. 8/12: Grantor Jackson Woods Investments LLC to Grantee Joel S. Blair Dynasty Trust LLC. \$1,960,000.

No street number Union St. 8/12: Grantor Jackson Woods Investments LLC to Grantee Clealand B. Blair Jr. Dynasty Trust LLC. \$2,100,000.

101 Cimarron Ln. 8/13: Grantors Mark E. Fernandez, Nancy E. Fernandez, Nancy Fernandez, and Mark Fernandez to Grantees Kristen A. Scopelleti Tr, Michael J. Scopelleti Tr, and Scopelleti Family Trust. \$870,000.

26 Avery Heights/Avery Heights Dr. 8/13: Grantors Peter Griffin Sr, Peter E. Griffin Sr., and Colleen Griffin to Grantee Emily A. Stark. \$443,000.

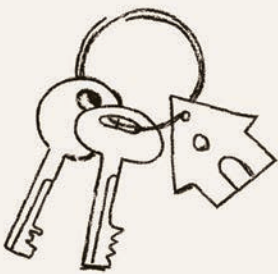
14 Wilde Willow Dr. 8/13: Grantor John A. Regele to Grantees Tomasz Warchol and Erin Warchol. \$582,900.

152 Main St. 8/13: Grantors Carol Leslie, Johanna Leslie, and Diane Siemaszko to Grantee Wendy Ulibarri. \$395,000.

27 Country Hill Rd. 8/14: Grantors William J. McCullough Tr, Leslie G. McCullough Tr, William J. McCullough and Leslie G. McCullough Joint Revocable L to Grantees Barbara A. Day and Robert C. Day. \$474,900.

REAL ESTATE

continued on page 15



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Speakeasy Gala

Celebrate Richards Memorial Library's 100 Years of Literacy, History, and Community in Paxton!

Whispers of a lavish, century-in-the-making affair are making the rounds. You are summoned to our hidden sanctuary to celebrate the library's 100th anniversary. The jazz is hot, the juice is flowing, and the night is yours to enjoy. Step into a golden era of live music from WRHS Jazz Quintet, "Roaring Blooms" floral exhibition by the Paxton Garden Club, a signature mocktail, hors d'oeuvres - and pure 1920s glamour. 1920s finery is highly encouraged: think flapper fringe, sharp suits, fedoras, and floral elegance. Whisper "Dewey Decimal" at the door for entry. Friday, October 2, 7-10 p.m. Doors open at 6:30. Tickets are \$35 p/p or \$50 per couple. Space is limited to, advanced signup and purchase is required. Make checks payable to "FRML", and mail or deliver to the library (44 Richards Ave, Paxton, MA 01612) or pay via Venmo @LibraryFriendsPaxtonMA ✨

Public disclosure of Paxton tax valuation

The Paxton Assessor's office has been conducting the FY 2027 Quinquennial Revaluation as required by Mass. state law. This update of values ensures that all property is assessed at full and fair market value as of January 1, 2026. The Assessor has received preliminary certification by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

The FY27 preliminary assessed value reports by location will be available for public review beginning Monday, September 14 through Friday, September 25 at the Paxton Town Hall, the Senior Center, the Public Library, the Public Safety Complex, and on the Town of Paxton website <https://www.paxtonma.gov/>

The revaluation requires the verification, analysis and use of at arms-length sales from calendar year 2025. Sales from the year 2024 and 2025 were used to value property when the numbers of 2025 sales were insufficient for analysis. Market trends may indicate that different property types may change in value more or less than other property types.

Individual parcel valuations may vary from the average class increase due to typical differences, data updates and corrections, new construction and the effect of market trends for specific characteristics.

Contact the assessors' office during the public disclosure period to ask questions, review, discuss and request changes in proposed values or to schedule an evening appointment. Call 508-799-7231 or email dpeter-son@paxtonma.gov.

The Assessor's Office is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. ✨

Hometown Harvest

Recycling in the garden

By ROGER MCGAUGHEY

It may seem a bit early to prepare for winter in your garden, but it's always good to have a plan. In my last article, we were crying out for rain and thankfully we got it. Our gardens duly responded and plants exploded with more lush foliage and pretty flowers.

Our lawns also got a new lease on life and the grass turned green again. Keeping up with a lawn fertilizer program is important and, especially after the rain, an application of an iron-based fertilizer was needed on my lawn. I use a Scotts 4-step program and do the applications myself. One advantage of this is that the applications can be made when the conditions are right. After the rain it was an ideal time to do the Stage 3 treatment. Don't forget the late fall Stage 4 application also to set the lawn up for winter. With the added rain, growth really increased and the grass really grew quite fast.

Earlier this year we invested in an EGO battery lawnmower, so we really reaped the benefit of no gas expenditure when dealing with the extra cutting needed. The EGO mower has a very good mulching function and gives a good cut, which also seems to aid in the health of the lawn.

What to do with all the increased growth is the question. How can we put it to good use and reap the benefits next year? If you have room somewhere for a compost pile, then any plant material can be incorporated into it to help provide nutrition

for the garden next year. I have been making compost piles annually for some years now and use an organic starter material to aid in the breakdown of all the material added to the pile. (Photo 1)

With normally mulching my grass, I hadn't expected to be able to use any grass clippings on the compost pile this year. Recently, because of all the extra moisture, I've had to use the lawnmower bagging function, so grass clippings were available and provided a few layers of material for the compost pile. (It's important not to use grass clippings that have had a recent application of fertilizer containing a herbicide material).

Some layers of last year's rotting leaves are another useful addition to the compost pile. In addition to lawn clippings and leaves, any cut-back perennial foliage can make up another layer or two. (Photos 2 and 3)

I find that using a layer of soil with earthworms (if available) between different types of foliage material has worked well when making the compost piles. A sprinkling of the organic compost starter between each layer increases the breakdown process. It may take a few years to complete the decomposition process but after that some nice compost material can be added to your garden beds to provide additional nutrition. (Photo 4)

The well decomposed compost material can also be used to plant up material in pots for either over-wintering or spring plantings for use at the Paxton Garden Club plant sale in June,



so it's a win-win situation all around. ✨

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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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BEST OF CENTRAL MASS 2024

REAL ESTATE

continued from page 13

30 Colonial Rd. 8/14: Grantor Sheryl Ficorilli to Grantee Chloe DiMarzio. \$375,000.

PAXTON

2 Hemlock St. 7/20: Grantors Mimoon G. Alwash and Aleksandra Alwash to Grantee Aleksandra Alwash. \$100.

376 Pleasant St. 7/20: Grantors Roberto Torres, Roxanne Vallejo Torres, and Roxanne Torres to Grantee Makayla Woodbury. \$407,000.

8 Oakwood Rd. 7/21: Grantors Robert A. Kusz and Patricia A. Kusz to Grantees Patricia A. Kusz Tr, Robert A. Kusz Tr, and Kusz Realty Trust-2025. \$1.

15 Whitney Dr. 7/21: Grantors Dennis Coache, Theresa Coache, Dennis J. Coache, and Theresa M. Coache to Grantees Theresa M. Coache Tr, Dennis J. Coache Tr, and 15 Whitney Drive Realty Trust. \$100.

60 Richards Ave. 7/23: Grantor Stephanie Whiting to Grantees Stephanie V. Whiting Tr and Stephanie V. Whiting Trust. \$100.

217 Grove St. 7/24: Grantor Helene A. Cancelmo to Grantees Helene A. Cancelmo Tr, Natasha M. H. Colonero Tr., and Helene A. Cancelmo Family Trust. \$1.

No street number Grove St. 7/24: Grantor Helene A. Cancelmo to Grantees Helene A. Cancelmo Tr, Natasha M. H. Colonero Tr., and Helene A. Cancelmo Family Trust. \$1.

230 West St. 7/28: Grantor Planet Home Lending LLC to Grantee USA Veterans Affairs. \$1.

232 Grove St. 7/29: Grantor First Congregational Church of Paxton to Grantees Alison Roy and Cameron Arnold. \$450,000.

226 West St. 7/30: Grantors Timothy M. Buckley and Cheryl O. Buckley to Grantees Cheryl O. Buckley Tr, Timothy M. Buckley Tr, and Cheryl O. Buckley Trust. \$1.

353 Marshall St. 7/30: Grantors Richard Gram and Alicia Gram to Grantees Caitlin Neer, Haley Neer, and Diane Schelp. \$650,000.

72 Holden Rd. 7/31: Grantor Longmeadow Properties LLC to Grantee Gregory MacNeil. \$465,000.

78 Asnebumskit Rd. 7/31: Grantors William R. Mortimer, Emily K. Mortimer, and Emily Mortimer to Grantees Alexander Turner, Danielle Turner, and Alexander Bisson. \$560,000.

13 Shanandoah Dr. 8/04: Grantors Matthew Higgins, Ahnissa Higgins, and Ahnissa R. Higgins to Grantees Matthew J. Higgins Tr, Matthew J. Higgins Revocable Trust, Ahnissa R. Higgins Tr, and Ahnissa R. Higgins Revocable Trust. \$100.

430 Grove St. 8/07: Grantors Casey S. Killam Tr, Ryan L. Killam Tr, and Killiam Family Trust to Grantees Casey S. Killiam and Ryan L. Killiam. \$100.

324 Marshall St. 8/07: Grantors Mark Tomasino and Valerie Tomasino to Grantees Andrew Tomasino Tr and Andrew Tomasino Residence Trust. \$1.

5 Bel Arbor Dr. 8/12: Grantor Neneta Doyah-Tiemo to Grantees Neneta Doyah-Tiemo and Emily Olohije Ojeikere. \$1.

RUTLAND

41 Maple Ave. 7/15: Grantor Madeline M. Wronski to Grantee Jackeline Martinez. \$420,000.

11 Brooke Haven Dr. 7/16: Grantors Jeffrey P. Auger, Maureen J. Auger, Maureen Auger, and Jeffrey Auger to Grantees Julia Fay Kenney and Sean Joseph Kenney. \$630,000.

176 Maple Ave. 7/16: Grantor Yvette I. Verneaux to Grantee Madeline Wronski. \$220,000.

No street number Maple Ave. 7/17: Grantors Betty Ann Muir, Betty Ann Kolofsky, and Mary A. Kolofsky to Grantee Denise Carboneau. \$2,000.

189 Maple Ave. 7/17: Grantor Denise M. Carboneau to Grantees Hala Kokaz and Nasser Nasser. \$340,000.

17 Ware Rd. 7/20: Grantors Rachel M. Dolan and Rachel M. Crutcher to Grantees David W. Dolan and Rachel M. Dolan. \$100.

65 Maple Ave. 7/20: Grantors Brian L. Hunton II, Carrie Hunton, and Carrie A. Hunton to Grantees Brian L. Hunton II Tr, Carrie A. Hunton Tr, and Hunton Family Trust. \$10.

21 Vista Cir. 7/21: Grantors Kenneth P. Payson Est, Roger P. Payson, Kenneth H. Payson Est, and Kenneth Payson Est to Grantees Lori J. Payson Tr, Bank of America NA Tr, and Kenneth H. Payson Trust-2012. \$10.

17 Peters Ave. 7/22: Grantors Anthony L. Walker Tr, Anthony L. Walker Credit Shelter Trust, and Sandra A. Walker to Grantee Herbert F. Seymour III. \$78,060.

26 Brintnal Dr. 7/23: Grantors Debra L. Flanagan and Debra L. Hackler to Grantee Debra L. Flanagan Tr and Deb Flanagan Family Trust. \$100.

237 Glenwood Rd. 7/24: Grantor Make Investments Great Again LLC to Grantees Steven F. Santoro and Patricia M. Santoro. \$107,500.

176 Maple Ave. 7/24: Grantor Brian A. DeSantis to Grantee Fabio Mercurio. \$169,900.

176 Maple Ave. 7/28: Grantor Monisa Kay Boutiette to Grantee David B. Shamlian. \$185,000.

34 Marjorie Ln. 7/28: Grantors Guy D. Shepard and Diana L. Shepard to Grantees Anthony Hassan and Desiree Hassan. \$685,000.

18 Fairview Dr. and 18 Fairview Ave.

7/28: Grantor M&M Capital Group LLC to Grantee Phillip Tai. \$570,000.

16 Kosta Dr. 7/29: Grantors Donald J. Holbrook and Julie A. Holbrook to Grantees Hannah Fiore and Andrew Fiore. \$350,000.

184 Pleasantdale Rd. 7/29: Grantors Phillip Davidson and Sarah Davidson to Grantees Elisabeth Renee Hart and Eric Hart. \$759,900.

15 Briarwood Ln. 7/30: Grantors Janceline Nunes Trancoso and Edson Magno Dearaujo to Grantee Michael M. Fiorelli. \$515,000.

176 Maple Ave. 7/30: Grantor Matthew Rego to Grantee Brenda A. Richard. \$155,000.

22 Haven Hill Rd. 7/31: Grantors Rachel E. Tamba-Uba, Rachel E. Tamba, and Jacob O. Uba to Grantees Randy Spencer and Justiniana Spencer. \$542,500.

139 East County Rd. 7/31: Grantors Dale L. Benander and Alexis J. Benander to Grantees Deborah L. Flynn, Eric Flynn, and Donald Flynn. \$415,000.

139 Turkey Hill Rd. 7/31: Grantors James M. Harrity Jr. and Constance Murphy Cruz to Grantee Justina Mbugua. \$629,900.

70 Main St. 8/03: Grantors Robert Leschke and Carol Leschke to Grantee Lynn Leschke. \$100.

28 Haven Hill Rd. 8/04: Grantors Steven Paul Kilcoyne, Katlyn Ann Kilcoyne, and Katlyn Ann Glenn to Grantees Steven Paul Kilcoyne Tr, Katlyn Ann Kilcoyne Tr, Katlyn Ann Glenn Tr, and Steven Paul Kilcoyne & Katlyn Ann Kilcoyne Living Trust. \$10.

176 Maple Ave. 8/05: Grantor Steve Snyder to Grantees Steve H. Snyder Tr and Snyder Trust. \$1.

3 Briarwood Ln. 8/06: Grantors Miroslaw Cwalinski, Danuta Cwalinski, M. Cwalinski to Grantees Christopher J. Cwalinski and Briana L. Cwalinski. \$587,000.

4 Brintnal Dr. 8/06: Grantors Eric Scharf and Stacy Scharf to Grantee Kim Phuong. \$575,000.

27 Davis St. 8/07: Grantors Cara Tsombakos-Mansfield and David Mansfield to Grantees Needle Family Realty Trust III and Susan E. Needle Tr. \$595,000.

29 Soucy Dr. 8/10: Grantor J.M. Soucy Contracting Inc to Grantees James M. Soucy Tr, Patricia A. Soucy Tr, and Soucy Realty Trust. \$1.

27 Vista Cir. 8/12: Grantors Ryan P. Champlin and Courtney A. Champlin to Grantees Sean McClintock and Erin McClintock. \$715,000.

9 Valley View Cir. 8/13: Grantor Julia S. Brossman to Grantees Julia S. Brossman Tr and Brossman 2026 Revocable Trust. \$100.

26 Emerald Rd. 8/14: Grantor Emerald Land Holdings Inc to Grantees Jessica Merchant and Mark R. Merchant Jr. \$730,000. *

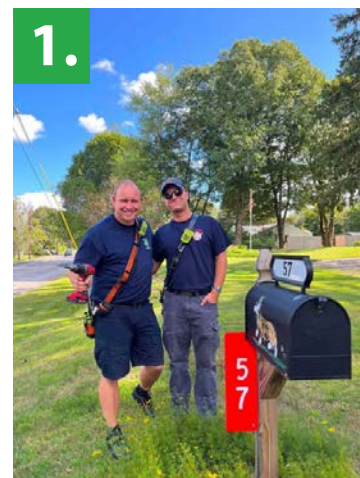


1. The reflective house number signs that you see popping up around Paxton help first responders quickly identify your home during an emergency. Thank you to Paxton Fire Chief Mike Pingitore for this explanation: The program is sponsored by the Paxton Firefighters Association. Anyone interested

in obtaining a sign can contact the PFD's Interim Public Education Coordinator, Firefighter Ryan Plante, at rplante@paxtonma.gov or by calling 508-793-3163. If no one answers, leave a message and someone will get back to you. The signs are available for a \$20 donation to the Paxton Firefighters Association, which covers the cost of the sign and materials. Senior residents may also sign up through the Paxton Senior Center, 508-756-2833, (hours M-F, 9 am-2 pm) which coordinates the program with PFD. Seniors should contact the senior center directly, as they may be eligible to receive a sign at no cost.

2. Before WFP recommends something to our readers, staff try it out of course (think Wirecutter for the New York Times). On Aug.25, we enjoyed the almost two-mile River Walk hike at the Barre Falls Dam led by DCR's Nancy Huntington who included informative botanical and historical narratives along the way. If there was a Yelp review, the hike would have received five stars. Google DCR hikes to learn about upcoming events; DCR also maintains a page for self-guided hikes. L-R: James Potter, Scott Davis, Ginger Aisel, Eric the DCR ranger, Patty Esper and Huntington. Seriously, go take a hike.

3. We couldn't resist this Aug. 23 post and pics from Rutland Recreation: The weather may have started out a little ruff, but everyone had a blast at the Doggy Paddle! Thanks to everyone who helped make it happen...It was a great way to end an amazing summer.



4. And this photo submitted by Kathy Olson from Holden who wrote: This is a great back-to-school sign at the Mayo school. Kudos to the school administrators for having some fun. (I did check other Holden schools, and none had anything except the school name. Boring!)

As a reminder, WFP encourages your submission to Photo Finish. Email martha@localtownpages.com. Thank you, Kathy!



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