

E-bike use draws concerns as local officials stress rules of the road

BY RILEY FRANKIAN

The growing use of electric bicycles among children and teenagers has prompted safety concerns in Holden and Rutland, where local officials say some riders are operating the bikes in ways that create risks for themselves, motorists and pedestrians.

Rutland Police Detective Jacob Deschamps said the department has seen a “significant increase” in e-bike use, particularly among juveniles. The department has received numerous complaints about children operating e-bikes unsafely on public roads, including cutting in front of vehicles, riding along the centerline, weaving through traffic and



E-BIKES

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A group of e-bikes on Wachusett Street in Rutland in June.

Photo courtesy of Amanda Tucker.



Jim Keeven and his mother Carol-Ann at the 2025 Holden CROP Hunger Walk. Photo submitted.

Holden CROP Hunger Walk 2026

BY KARIN WARZYBOK

CROP Hunger Walk. Jim was just 12 years old at his first

Since 1979, long-time Holden residents Jim Keevan and his mother Carol-Ann have participated in Holden’s

CROP WALK

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E-BIKES

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performing wheelies on busy roads.

“I have also responded to several crashes involving e-bikes,” Deschamps said. “Thankfully, we have not had any serious injuries in town yet.”

Deschamps said some of the most common problems involve riders either not understanding or choosing not to follow the rules of the road. Officers have seen riders misjudge the speed or distance of approaching vehicles, travel at excessive speeds and perform wheelies in traffic.

The department has also received reports of juveniles arguing with motorists and groups of riders occupying the roadway and preventing vehicles from passing safely.

Deschamps said Main Street, Maple Avenue and Pommo-gussett Road have generated a particularly high frequency of complaints, although concerns have been reported throughout town.

Another concern is that not every vehicle marketed or used as an “e-bike” meets the legal definition of an electric bicycle in Massachusetts.

According to a Rutland Police public-service announcement (PSA), a legal electric bicycle must be equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of 750 watts or less and meet the requirements of a Class 1 or Class 2 electric bicycle. Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes are permitted on roadways, bike paths and bike lanes and receive the same rights and privileges as other bicyclists, but they are not permitted on sidewalks. Riders under 16 are required to wear helmets.

The PSA also distinguishes e-bikes from electric dirt bikes and similar vehicles. Deschamps said some of the devices that officers encounter are throttle operated, lack operable pedals, and are capable of speeds of approximately 40 to 45 miles per hour.

“That is a very different ve-

Electric Bicycle



Massachusetts defines an electric bicycle as a bicycle or tricycle equipped with fully operable **PEDALS**, and an electric motor of 750 watts or less that meets the requirements of a class 1 electric bicycle or a class 2 electric bicycle.

Legal Requirements to Operate

- MGL 85/11B Under 16 years old required to wear helmet.
- E-bike riders are afforded all the rights and privileges related to all bicycle riders, except that e-bikes are **NOT** allowed to be ridden on sidewalks.
- Class 1 and Class 2 electric bicycles are not considered to be “motorized bicycles” as further defined in MA law, as such, no license is required to ride them and they’re allowed on bikeways, bike paths, roadways and in bike lanes.
- No person shall tamper with or modify an electric bicycle so as to change the motor-powered speed capability or engagement of an electric bicycle.

Electric Dirt Bike



An Electric powered vehicle that **DOES NOT** require pedal assistance and is propelled by **THROTTLE ONLY** can either be classified as a “motorized scooter” or a “dirt bike” (recreation vehicle). **IF NO PEDALS EXIST IT IS NOT AN E-BIKE.**

Legal Requirements to Operate

- MGL 90B/21 Recreation Vehicle Safety Course (**\$500 Citation**)
- MGL 90B/22 Must be registered to operate on roadway. (**\$500 Citation**)
- MGL 90B/25 No person under 16 and one-half years of age shall operate a snow vehicle or a recreation vehicle across or on a public way unless the operator holds a valid license or right to operate a motor vehicle or is directly supervised by a person 18 years of age or older. (**\$250 Citation**)
- MGL 90B/26/P No person under 14 years of age shall operate an all-terrain vehicle or recreation utility vehicle. (**Criminal Application**)
- MGL 90B/26/H No person aged 18 years of age or older shall knowingly permit another, who is under the age of 18, to operate a snow vehicle or recreation vehicle in his custody or under his control in violation of this chapter. Lack of ownership of the vehicle or mistake as to the age of the operator shall not be available defenses to a violation of this section. (**\$250 Citation**)
- MGL 90B/26C Must Wear DOT approved Helmet (**\$250 Citation**)

A PSA released by the Rutland Police Department

hicle from the e-bike that many parents may have in mind when they hear the term,” Deschamps said.

The Rutland Police PSA states that electric bicycles may not be modified in a way that changes their motor-powered speed capability or engagement. Deschamps said parents should understand exactly what they are purchasing for their children, including the vehicle’s speed and capabilities.

Holden Town Manager Peter Lukes said the town has faced a separate challenge when officers attempt to respond to complaints.

“It is nearly impossible for our police officers to be everywhere the e-bikers violate traffic laws or when they ride where they’re not supposed to,” Lukes said. He added that riders can leave the area quickly before officers arrive and that the bikes have no tags or registration, making them difficult to track.

Lukes said Holden officials have asked parents to provide greater oversight of their children’s e-bike use, particularly because of the possibility of serious injuries.

Deschamps said Rutland’s approach has focused on education before enforcement. Officers have spoken with juveniles and their parents about the applicable laws and safety concerns, and he said many have been receptive and corrected the behavior.

“I don’t want to discourage that,” Deschamps said of young people riding bikes. “Ultimately, our goal isn’t to stop kids from riding bikes; it’s

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Wachusett

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

Editor
Martha Akstin
martha@localtownpages.com

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

Production & Design
Bess Couture
Kimberly Vasseur
Wendy Watkins

Office Address
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by Tim Jones

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Tim Jones 2026

CROP WALK

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Walk. Over the years, he and his wife Kelly and their children have made the CROP Walk a Keevan family event. After 47 years, Jim has yet to miss the annual fundraiser that addresses hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster relief through just and sustainable responses, and this year will be no different. “I enjoy the feeling of happiness shared by a group of people,” said Keevan, “some familiar and many unknown to me who are all walking together for a good cause...the fact that churches all over the country are participating in their own CROP Walks adds to that feeling of belonging to a world-wide community with a goal of supporting others in finding ways to live where they are.” The first CROP Project started after World War II in 1947 to help end hunger and food insecurity. U.S. farmers were asked to donate food and

seed crops that were sent to countries in post-war Europe and Asia. Over the years, the initiative grew into CROP Hunger Walks, which are community-based fundraising events held across the U.S. The first walks took place in Bismarck, North Dakota (1969), and York, Pennsylvania (1970). Holden joined the effort in 1979. Congregants from Holden’s First Baptist, First Congregational, St. Francis, Chaffin, and Emmanuel Lutheran, as well as congregants from Worcester’s Unitarian Universalist and St. Spyridon Cathedral Greek Orthodox Church, have joined together in a fund-raising effort to support the global mission of Church World Service, a faith-based organization, to eradicate hunger and poverty. Kathy Mills served as the CROP Walk coordinator in 1988 and then became treasurer in 1994. She currently holds both positions for all the participating congregations. When asked why she is so committed, Mills said,

“I organize our local walk because I have seen firsthand that Church World Service changes lives. I’ve traveled from Central America to Eastern Europe to see the projects they support, where they work with local agencies to help communities help themselves. But what makes it even better is the local impact. Twenty-five percent of everything we raise stays right here in Worcester County to support three of our own food pantries.” Those food pantries are Loaves and Fishes, Mustard Seed, and South Worcester Neighborhood Center. Over the years, millions of dollars have been raised globally. Holden alone has contributed \$440,00. By the year 2028, which will be Holden’s 50th anniversary of CROP Walks, the goal is to reach half a million dollars. According to Keevan, “There is a lot of hunger and poverty out in the world, and these CROP walks let me be a part of a positive solution, just as Jesus commanded.” The event kicks off at 1

p.m. on Sunday, October 18, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 346 Shrewsbury St. in Holden. Walkers will register and begin the 5-mile loop from Emmanuel Lutheran to the First Congregational Church at 1180 Main St. At this halfway point they can take a break, use the facilities, grab a bottle of water, and enjoy light refreshments. Two vans will drive to and from each destination to watch for anyone who needs to bow out and drive them back to Emmanuel Lutheran. After the walk, participants will enjoy musical entertainment from the group Hit the Bus and a light meal consisting of soup and bread.

Walkers do not need to belong to any of the congregations to participate or donate. People of all ages and fitness levels are welcome to join the fun and make new friends. Donations may be made by cash or check on the day of the event at Emmanuel Lutheran or online at events.crophungerwalk.org/chw/home. For more information, go to cwsglobal.org/ or call Emmanuel Lutheran Church at 508.829.4416. *



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Holden Town Hall undergoes renovations

BY RILEY FRANKIAN

The Holden Town Hall has undergone a series of exterior and interior improvements aimed at addressing years of deferred maintenance, improving accessibility and updating portions of the historic building.

According to Town Manager Peter Lukes, the project is expected to cost approximately \$586,000. The work included lead paint removal and hazardous-material disposal, new historically accurate wood shutters and doors, replacement of deteriorated siding, a new fire escape, a new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant concrete ramp and railing, a new first-floor heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system, as well as exterior and interior painting.

The project was initially intended to include both Town Hall and the Damon House at 1174 Main St. At the 2025 Annual Town Meeting, \$600,000 was appropriated through borrowing for the work.

However, initial price quotes

showed the town could not complete both buildings within the appropriation without significantly limiting the scope of the work.

“Because the buildings are so damp [with dirt basements], exterior painting would begin to peel fairly quickly unless we did a thorough job with full scraping and sanding down to mostly wood with significant priming and painting to follow,” Lukes said.

Town Hall also required substantial carpentry work because of deteriorated clapboards throughout the exterior. As a result, town officials decided to concentrate the available funding on Town Hall, leaving work on the Damon House to be addressed at a later date.

The Town Hall’s front doors, which Lukes said were at least 100 years old, were among the improvements. The doors had been patched and repaired several times over the past two decades but had continued to deteriorate.

“We patched and bandaged them several times over the last



Holden Town Hall.

twenty years, but they were very tired and there was not much more we could do before they became dilapidated,” Lukes said.

The building’s former air-conditioning units also contributed to maintenance problems. The box units had protruded from the exterior for at least 40 years, and deteriorated frames allowed snow to enter the building during the winter, as well as pests

and rodents at times. They were replaced with modern interior mini-split units.

The renovation also included the installation of new shutters, which Lukes described as a historically accurate addition, as well as painting of the exterior walls, windowpanes, doors and fire escape.

Accessibility was another component of the project. The ramp at the back of the building

was deteriorating and did not meet current ADA regulations. The new concrete ramp features metal railings and is now fully ADA compliant.

Interior painting was completed in several areas, including the conference room, Veterans Agent’s Office, and elevator vestibule.

The work is part of a broader effort to upgrade Town Hall. Previous improvements included a kitchenette, employee lunchroom and dedicated copy room, funded through a wellness grant from the town’s insurance company.

Further improvements are planned this fall. The Holden Garden Club will re-landscape the Town Hall’s front lawn and remove some shrubbery and small trees. A Gold Star/Blue Star Memorial mini-park will be created with new pavers, stone benches, and additional floral landscaping. According to Lukes, that work will be funded entirely through private donations. ★

Nine ballot questions to appear on November ballots

Published by the Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin’s Election Division office, the official 2026 Information for Voters book (also known as the Red Book) was recently mailed to each voter’s residential address as well as public locations throughout the state.

The Red Book contains information on each of the nine statewide questions that will appear on the November 3, 2026,

State Election ballot. These nine binding questions are the most that voters have ever been asked to consider. Included in the publication is a summary of each proposal, the full text of the proposed/existing law, statements describing the effect of a yes or a no vote, and brief arguments for and against each question.

Limited additional copies of the Red Book may be available at city and town

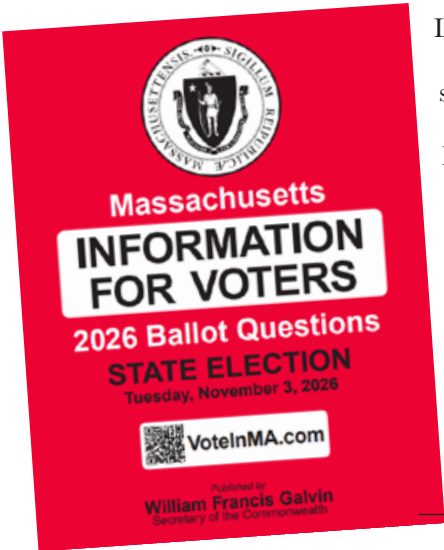
halls, at some libraries, or by calling Galvin’s Elections Division at 800.462.8683 or Citizen Information Service at 800.392.6090.

Question 1: Expanding the Public Records Law

Question 2: Collective Bargaining for CPCS Employees

Question 3: State Primary Elections

Question 4: Election Day Registration



Question 5: State Revenue Limit & Rebate

Question 6: Natural Resource Conservation Fund

Question 7: Single Family Homes

Question 8: Prohibit Retail Sale of Adult Recreational Use Marijuana

Question 9: Firearms Regulation

With so many questions, ballots in most communities are expected to be two to three pages long. The length of each community’s ballot

VOTING

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Local business owners: Don't overlook retirement plans



Tim Howard
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If you're a local business owner, you're juggling many priorities: growing revenue, managing expenses, supporting your team and planning for your own future. What if one tool could help with all these goals?

A workplace retirement plan might be that solution and can, directly or indirectly, offer benefits that extend beyond simple savings.

Double the tax advantages. Starting a retirement plan can deliver immediate tax advantages. For the business, employer contributions are tax-deductible. And as a participant in your company plan, your pretax salary deferrals are excluded from income taxes; your investments within the plan are tax-deferred until distributed. Many plans now offer Roth options that allow tax-free withdrawals in retirement.

Local businesses may also qualify for federal tax credits that help offset startup costs, employee education expenses and plan administration fees. Additional credits may be available for auto-enrollment features and employer contributions made during the plan's first five years.

A competitive edge in hiring. In today's labor market, offering a retirement plan can differentiate your business from competitors and help improve employee retention.

Many plans also provide access to financial education tools and resources, helping your employ-

ees make informed decisions about saving, investing and planning for retirement. This support can lead to greater employee satisfaction and productivity, contributing to a positive work environment for your business.

More flexible than state-sponsored options. If you live in a state requiring an employee retirement program, you might be considering a state-sponsored plan. While these programs can provide a starting point, they typically offer fewer investment options, lower contribution limits and limited design flexibility.

Establishing your own workplace retirement plan lets you customize features for your business needs to control administrative costs, set contribution limits and offer employees a wide range of investment options. This added control in plan design can lead to better outcomes for your business and your employees.

Reducing a hidden risk in your own retirement planning. Business owners often

have as much as 80% of their net worth tied up in their businesses, according to the Exit Planning Institute. While that demonstrates commitment to success, it also creates significant financial risk to the owner.

Relying solely on a future business sale to fund your retirement can be precarious. Market shifts, timing challenges or limited buyer interest could derail those plans. By building personal assets through your employer-sponsored retirement plan, you can gain financial flexibility and reduce the risk of having your retirement lifestyle depend entirely on one event.

Getting started. With various retirement plan options available, determining which one fits your business best can feel overwhelming.

A qualified financial advisor can help you navigate these decisions, explaining the trade-offs between different plan types and identifying which option best suits your unique situation.

They can also help you understand eligibility requirements and ensure the plan you choose aligns with your business goals and personal financial objectives.

Starting a workplace retirement plan represents an investment in your future, your employees and the long-term success of your business.

If you've been meaning to take a closer look at your financial picture, now is a great time to start. A conversation today can help you make more informed decisions for tomorrow.

Tim Howard
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
1161 Main St. Ste. 1
Holden, MA 01520
508-210-3304
Timothy.howard@edwardjones.com

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E-BIKES
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to prevent a serious crash or injury.”

With school back in session, Lukes said Holden expects fewer issues for now. He said the town plans to send remind-

ers to schools and parents in the spring about responsible and safe e-bike use.

The Paxton Police Department was contacted in hopes of getting some sort of statement or information on this matter, but there was no response in time before the paper went to press. *

VOTING
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will depend on the number of offices and candidates running in that community, whether the ballot must be printed in more than one language, and any local questions that may be

added to the ballot by the city or town. Because of the complexity of the questions, Galvin encourages voters to take notes in the Red Book and bring it with them when they go to the polls.

Be informed. Take time to read each question and understand its impact. And then go vote on Tuesday, November 3. *

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NEWSbitz

By MARTHA AKSTIN

All Towns

• The **Local Cultural Councils** in **Holden, Paxton, and Rutland** are accepting proposals from individuals, schools, and organizations for community-based arts, humanities, and science programs for 2027. The deadline to apply for a grant is 11:59 p.m. on October 15.

The FY27 allocation for Holden is \$13,900, Paxton's is \$6,900, and Rutland's is \$9,200. Most awards are in the \$500 to \$750 range, although there are exceptions. Most LLC grants are reimbursement-based, which means the applicant expends their own money and then submits paperwork for reimbursement.

Projects that have been funded include live music, art exhibits, festivals, school field trips, short-term artist residencies, performances, craft workshops, and lectures.

"We are very lucky to live in a state that invests in culture," said **Kristin Steinmetz**, Paxton Cultural Council co-chair. "We have funded local cultural opportunities that build com-

munity, educate, entertain, and support local artists and performers. Last year's awards ranged from \$300 for a musical performance at the senior center to \$1,700 for tickets to a live Dr. Seuss performance at the Hanover Theatre for two full grade levels at Paxton Center School."

All applications must be submitted online through the MCC portal. A description of the program, FAQs, and what each town funded in FY 2026 can be found at masscultural-council.org.

• The **Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce** will host a **Candidates Forum for the State Representative race for the 1st Worcester District** on Thursday, October 22, at 7 p.m. in the Holden Town Hall, located at 1196 Main Street. The candidates are **Krista Ferrante** of Princeton and **Stephanie Mulroy** of Holden. Attorney **Matt Pelouquin** of **Bennett & Forts** will serve as moderator.

"The Chamber is proud to provide this platform for open, respectful dialogue on the issues impacting our local business community and

residents," said **Jen Stanovich**, executive director of the Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce. Questions for the candidates may be submitted to info@wachusettareachamber.org. The deadline for advance submissions is Monday, October 19. Questions will also be accepted from the audience as time permits.

The event is open to the public. Holden Community Television will broadcast the forum live. The event also will be available to stream on holdentv.com. For more info, call the chamber at 508-829-9220 or email info@wachusettareachamber.org.

Holden

• Members of the **Blue and Gold Star Memorials Project** are proud to announce that a dedication ceremony for the memorials will be held in front of Holden Town Hall, 1196 Main St., at 2 p.m. on Sunday, November 1. (Rain date: November 8.)

Holden Garden Club members **Nancy Riggs** and **Helen Culver** as well as **Samantha Armstrong** and **Emily Proulx** have been meeting since April 2025 to create the memorials that honor Blue Star Mothers and Gold Star Families. The American Legion Post 42 became a co-sponsor in June 2025, after it donated \$1,800 to purchase plaques through the **National Garden Club of America**. From a letter-writing campaign to build awareness and raise additional donations, to meeting with Town Manager **Peter Lukes** and the **Historic District Commission** to finalize landscaping plans, the committee has worked tirelessly to finalize plans for the dedication ceremony.

Riggs said that the First Congregational Church will provide space for the Holden Garden Club to host the hospitality reception for veterans, Gold Star Families, Blue Star Mothers, and members of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts. The First Congregational Church and First Baptist Church are providing outdoor seating and a podium

while local Boy Scout troops will assist with parking, crowd control, and flag distribution.

Riggs said the November 1 program is scheduled to include performances by the Wachusett Regional High School chorus and band, a local Honor Guard, and a piper. Guest speakers include State Senator Peter Durant, Worcester County Sheriff Lewis Evangelidis, and Congressman James McGovern. "The actual dedication ceremony will be shared by several speakers and should be quite moving," said Griggs. All are invited to attend and honor those who have served this country.

• Wachusett Regional High School Theater presents

Community Garden, written by Justin Borak. Synopsis: In any big city, newbie Ralph doesn't quite know what to expect during his first volunteer shift at Uptown City Gardens. It's certainly not the vibrant, bustling community that passes through the green space, checking on their plants, composting their food scraps, meeting up with friends, and—surprisingly—often falling in love. After a few hours, Ralph begins to understand seasoned volunteer Donald's claim that the garden is magic. In a series of heartfelt and humorous vignettes, Community Garden digs into the ways taking care of the environment helps people take care of each other. The production team consists of **Alana Stern**, director; **Carol Leschke**, costumer/producer; **Ethan Stern**, technical director; and **Katie Pearson**, stage manager. Performances are at the WRHS Auditorium, 1405 Main St, Holden. Tickets are adults/\$15; students/seniors/\$10; and under 12/\$5. Dates: November 6 and 7 at 7 p.m. and November 8 at 2 p.m. Tickets will be available at the door or online at gofan.com. However, gofan is not available until a few weeks before the show.

• **Building Foundations of Caregiving**, a free educational program hosted by the Oriol Foundation and presented

by the **Alzheimer's Association**, will be held at **Holden Rehabilitation & Skilled Nursing Center**, 32 Mayo Dr., Holden, at 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 22.

The program will offer information and support for caregivers and families, including understanding dementia, caregiving and communication strategies, building a support team, managing caregiver stress and self-care, and connecting with community resources.

While the program includes Alzheimer's and dementia education, you do not need to be caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease to benefit. They welcome those caring for an aging parent, spouse, family member or other loved one who may be navigating changes in health, memory or independence. The program will be held at 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 22. Free and open to the community; advance registration is requested by calling 508-829-1213 or email aharvey@oriolhealth-care.com

• Registration for **Benny's Bunch at Hope Lives Here** is now open. Benny's Bunch is a new 6-week, in-person grief support group for children ages 6-12 who are navigating the loss of someone they love. Through creative activities, play, conversation and age-appropriate coping tools, children will have a safe and supportive place to connect, create, remember and heal alongside other kids who understand what they're going through. While children participate in Benny's Bunch, parents and caregivers will also have their own guided support space at Hope Lives Here. Time and dates: 10-11 a.m. on Sundays, October 18 to November 22 at Hope Lives Here, 1085 Main St., Holden. Space is limited. Register online at hlhgrief.org or call 774-345-9080. *



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This Place, These People

The miles that matter

By PAMELA REIDY

Sometime between one and four in the morning, while Rutland is sleeping, Wayne Auger gets ready for work. Outside, it is dark and quiet. His truck is waiting. But Wayne does not leave without kissing his wife Dawn.

“Goodbye. I love you.” A few times he has made it to the truck before realizing he forgot. He turns around and goes back. “You never know,” Wayne says. If something happens on the road, he wants Dawn to remember that their last words were words of love.

For 42 years, Wayne has made his living behind the wheel of a truck. He started at 19, and in 2000, he and Dawn bought their first truck and went into business. He loves the freedom of the road and the trust placed in him to take a job and get it done.

Somewhere along those miles Wayne developed his own rules of the road. One is simple: if somebody needs help, you stop. Years ago on Route 146, he spotted a woman driving on what remained of a flat tire. Her elderly father was with her, and there was barely a break-down lane. Wayne pulled his truck behind them, creating a shield from traffic, and changed the tire. She offered him \$50. Wayne refused. “Pay it forward,” he told her.

Another time, he patched a

stranded trucker’s radiator hose with duct tape and sent him on his way. No charge. No fuss. Wayne remembers people who helped him when he was in trouble. He carries their kindness, repaying it to the next person stranded along the road.

“I think we all should get along, and we should all help each other when we need it,” he says.

That philosophy shapes his life at home. Wayne and Dawn married 39 years ago and moved to Rutland in 1990, looking for peace, good schools and a place near family. Here they raised Tim and Jess.

Trucking meant Wayne couldn’t be at every game or family event. Often work took him away for four or five nights. But he kept driving because his work allowed Dawn to be there. While Wayne wore Walmart work boots and drove a secondhand vehicle, the kids wore Reeboks and Dawn drove a new car. His family came first. For Wayne, love was never simply words; it was always something he carried.

This family has carried sorrow, too. The death of their son Tim, taught Wayne how quickly things can change. Perhaps that’s why the morning kiss matters so much and why coming home matters, too. He relishes walking through the door, sitting down to dinner

with Dawn and knowing the people he loves are there.

These days, some of Wayne’s happiest hours are spent at the family camper with Dawn, Jess, her husband Andrew, their children Greysen, Lukas, and Benny, and friends. Buying it was a stretch, so Wayne did what Wayne does: he drove extra loads. He enjoys the water, laughter, and time together it gives his family. The extra miles are worth it.

“It’s about family,” he says. “And good friends.” With Wayne, the line between friend and family is thin. Show up, care about his kids and grandkids, help carry the hard things and you become family.

Wayne is thinking about retirement now. He wants to spend the years with Dawn, although giving up trucking will not be easy. After 42 years, the road is part of him.

Ask what he wants from life and the answer is uncomplicated. “I’m a hardworking



Wayne and Dawn Auger (center) with their family: grandson Greysen in front of them, their daughter Jess Doughty with son Lucas on her shoulders, her husband Andrew Doughty with Benjamin on his shoulders. Photo submitted.

American,” he says. “I want to get up in the morning, go to work, come home, sit down with my family and have dinner.”

His life has been measured in miles and loads, early mornings and late homecomings,

worn work boots and tires changed for strangers. It has included tremendous loss and abundant love.

And tomorrow, while most of Rutland sleeps, Wayne will hit the road again. ✨

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Sports

Wachusett football: Gridiron grit

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Over the past two seasons, the Wachusett Regional High School football team has put together a season record that awarded them a seeding in the Division 1 Tournament. Unfortunately, getting to the party is one thing, staying there is another and the Mountaineers have had a tough time extending their stay.

Two years ago, Wachusett was hooked up with Needham, a team that would eventually make it as far as the championship game before they fell to Xaverian Brothers. Needham took it to the Mountaineers and sent them home after the first round with a 49-13 beating. Last fall Wachusett once again found its way into the tournament only to get upset by Andover 29-9 in the first round.

Coach Mike Dubzinski is

hoping that this fall, his Mountaineers can once again make it to the tournament – but win a game or two. To do so, Wachusett will have to have its seniors step up and take control.

The coach noted that Wachusett is a senior-dominant team each year, so they lose contributing players on a regular basis.

“Year after year the athletes on our team have been with the program for years; unfortunately, they lack the game-time experience,” the coach said. “By the time it’s their turn, they have to get up to speed really quick if they want to start.”

Dubzinski went on to say that Wachusett was fortunate enough to have some student athletes with exceptional work ethics - and very supportive parents.

Senior Thomas Anderson will once again return as the team’s quarterback. Anderson has guided the Mountaineers in the last two seasons and is ready to



The Wachusett Regional High School football team. Photo from their Facebook page.

bring his strong throwing abilities to his receivers while providing continuous leadership to the younger players.

Another top-notch athlete looking to guide the Mountaineers back into the playoffs is three-year starter Max Brown. The senior will play tight end as well as defensive end. Following the season, he will be amongst the many Wachusett football players who will take their game to the next level. Brown will play at Trinity College in Hartford.

Over the years, Wachusett has groomed 36 athletes who have gone on to play football on the collegiate level. As of this moment, there are 11 Mountaineers playing college football.

Jack Smith is a running back and outside lineman who hit the weight room with a vengeance over the off season. He is ready to show off his newfound strength and speed. Also returning and looking to help the younger players move up the ranks are captains Ty Mosley (wide receiver), Luke Vechionne (defensive back/wide receiver) and Tanner Gaffney (defensive back/running back).

Along with the three captains, Dubzinski will take things one day at a time. He doesn’t want to confuse who is on the schedule with what is down the road – he wants his team to concentrate on the next game while making improvements from the last contest.

Playing in the Mid Wach A,

the Mountaineers will not have any time off. Every team that is on their schedule, whether a league or non-league game, will require the team’s full focus.

At the time of this writing, the Wachusett coach was unsure of where his team would fit into the Mid Wach A. After a few weeks of playing, he will have a better idea of where his team fits within the league as well as the division.

Wachusett won their season opener against Franklin on Thursday, September 10, 35-28, which perhaps could set the tone for the year. The two teams have opened the season against one another for the past six years. After the Panthers won a few years back with a 36-14 victory, the Mountaineers bounced back last year with a hard fought 23-14 win in the Division 1 opening season game and followed-up with this year’s victory.

The Mountaineers then won their next game against the West Springfield Terriers 50-0, followed by defeating Minechaug Regional 31-0. Not a bad starting record.

“All the teams that we will play are all competitive and masters of their crafts,” Dubzinski said. “We all take football seriously.”. *

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Sports

Above the net: Wachusett girls' volleyball

By Christopher Tremblay,
Staff Sports Writer

For the past four seasons under the guidance of Jennifer Burton, the Wachusett girls' volleyball team has averaged a 12-8 regular season record, which has earned them a 21 seed. During that time, the Mountaineers have compiled a 47-33 record but have not performed to the best of their ability in the Division 1 Tournament. Three of the four years saw Wachusett exiting after the first round with only one win. In 2024, the team was able to defeat Shrewsbury 3-1 and advance into the Round of 16, but then they were shut out and sent home.

This year, Coach Burton hopes her team can put things together during the regular season, string together some post-season wins, and advance further in tournament play.

"You always want to go further than you did the year before, so we are hopeful that we can go deep into this year's tournament," the Wachusett coach said. "Our goals will start with beating our Mid Wach A opponents [Shrewsbury, Algonquin and Westboro]. These are the teams that always bring out the best in us. Unfortunately, we are not always capable of getting the win."

In their attempt to move further into the post-season, Burton will be returning nine seniors after only losing three from last year's squad. One of the seniors looking to guide this team into a deep playoff run will be setter Grace Coppelino. She has been with the team since her sophomore year and will be running the show for the second straight year.

Other seniors who will be contributing in a big way are Ella Darrow, a center middle hitter who was called up her freshman season and began starting as a sophomore; outside hitter Julia Langhill, who was a Mid Wach All-Star last fall; Nalina Lee, a reservist last fall, and Julia Vettese, who will be a full-time libero this year. As a junior, Vettese split time between libero and defensive specialist, but this



Wachusett girls' volleyball team. Photo submitted.

year she will find herself mainly as the team's number one libero.

"She is the quarterback on the floor," the Mountaineer coach said. "She'll run the back row for us and is an aggressive player who I can rely on."

Some other senior athletes to don the Wachusett uniform for Burton will be Marci Siwik who will be returning as a defensive specialist, and two important reserves: Jayne Andros, a right side hitter and Lily Gregorczyk, a back-up setter.

Unfortunately, Leannn Miller will find herself sitting out her

final season at Wachusett as she tore her ACL playing for her club team. According to Burton, Miller is a fan favorite and great locker room individual; it will be a devastating loss to the team.

"I really couldn't ask for a better group of seniors," Burton said. "This team has a bunch of 'littles' as I call them: small in stature but delivering a huge punch and they are so much fun to watch."

In addition to the nine seniors, Burton will also look to junior returning starter and talented right side hitter Grace Brochu

and freshman outside hitter Pia Larsen to supply some entertaining volleyball this fall. Burton doesn't usually have freshmen starting, but she has found Larsen to be a very solid athlete who works hard and has a fantastic technique. She brings a lot of experience and talent to the team and is someone who can make a difference on the court.

"You usually get a good per-

centage of points from your outside hitters and Grace and Pia are two very good outside hitters that are effective," the coach said.

Other juniors rounding out the team as first year varsity athletes are setter Eva Gagnon, defensive specialist/libero Marcie Ingles, and outside hitters Ava Knorring and Emily Barton.

This well-rounded Mountaineer team is one that wants to take its game further than it ever has gone. In looking to do so, Burton has scheduled some tough non-league games with Bishop Feehan and Concord-Carlise in hopes to improve their power rankings. These powerhouse teams will also fine tune the squad so that they are ready to make that push when tourney time rolls around.

Wachusett opened the season with a win over Notre Dame Academy, giving the girls a sense of mental toughness that they can take with them through the season. Unfortunately, following their first win, they were handed their first loss.

"It was a great way to start with a win, but then we took on Shrewsbury, a very tough team that kept us out of sync the whole game," Burton said. "We're a strong team and as the season goes on, we'll start clicking on all cylinders." *

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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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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

October

5th Annual Mini Art Show at Richards Memorial Library. Registration and canvases are available at the circulation desk. All ages are welcome to decorate up to two mini canvases. Return them by 12/11 to have them displayed as part of the art show in Jan. and Feb. 2027.

The Great Pumpkin Reading Program began September 22 at the Rutland Public Library, but you can still jump on board. It is the library’s largest and most popular reading program. The entire family competes against other families for the honor of being named “The Most Sincere Pumpkin Reading Family” – a high honor indeed. Families sign up at the library and receive a reading log and a rules sheet. Every family member contributes to the same reading log. Keep track of the time spent reading, whether alone, out loud together, or listening to an audio book. For every two hours that the family reads, they earn a raffle ticket. All hours must be returned by 10/30 at 1 p.m. to be counted. More info at the circulation desk.

Sunday, Oct. 4-11

Banned Books Week: According to the Richards Memorial Library staff, 4,235 books were banned in the U.S. in 2025. Staff cite the Bill of Rights as giving us the freedom to read, to make our own choices for ourselves and our families. To that end, they suggest some of the most challenged titles from last year: Sold by Patricia McCormick, The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky, Gender Queer by Maia Kobabe, Empire of Storms by Sarah J. Maas, Last Night at the Telegraph Club by Malinda Lo, A Court of Thorns and Roses by Sarah J. Maas (she had two titles banned – piques my interest), and A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess. To learn more, go to the American Library Association at ala.org/bbooks/book-ban-data or Unite Against Book Bans at bookresumes.uniteagainstabookbans.org.

Can’t happen here? A quick

online search revealed: The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners reported that public libraries faced 33 formal challenges and 309 informal challenges across 86 libraries in 2025. Specific titles faced localized challenges such as The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian in Mattapoissett or Tweaked in North Middlesex, though local decisions varied widely on whether materials were restricted or retained.

To counter these rising pressures, Massachusetts enacted the Freedom to Read Law signed by Gov. Maura Healey, which standardizes transparent review policies and prohibits removing books from public or school libraries based on personal, political, or religious views.

Wednesday, October 7

12 pm: Power Lunch sponsored by the Holden Municipal Light Department at the Holden Senior Center. For Holden residents only. Seating is limited. You must sign up at the office or call the center.

4:20-5:20 pm: LEGO Masters for ages 10+ at the Gale Free Library. Registration required and opened 9/30. They want to have the most experienced LEGO builders to help design and build this month’s Halloween display. The first session will be for the older who will help set up the world for the younger builders to fill in the next evening.

6-7:30 pm: Dungeons & Dragons at the Rutland Public Library. Join them for a series of one-shot D&D adventures, a chaotic and fun role-playing game. Open to grades 7 and up. Beginners welcome. Starts on the 10/7, and then every three weeks following.

Wed., Oct. 7 and Oct. 28

6-7:30 pm: Pizza and game night for kids 8+ sponsored by the Teen Advisory Board (TAB) at the Rutland Public Library. Food, fun, games and laughs.

Wed., Oct. 7 - Sat., Oct. 31

Ghost count at the Richards Memorial Library. Friendly ghosts are hidden among the books in the J/Y room. Count them all and win a small prize.

Thursday, October 8

10:30 am-12 pm: The Craft of Writing Workshop with the Gale Free Library online via Zoom. Registration required. This month the writers will explore Color. As the leaves turn, and we look ahead to the more subdued palette of winter, let’s see how putting color into a piece of writing can help carry it.

4:20-5:05 pm: LEGO Jr. for ages 4-5 at the Gale Free Library. Registration required and opened on 10/01. This club is for the youngest LEGO heads. They’re making scary buildings and cars for the Halloween display. Plan to attend with your child - it’s fun to build together.

Friday, October 9

2:30-4:30: Book sale and donation day at the Richards Memorial Library. Donate books and shop for books all on the same day! Proceeds benefit library programs. No book sale/drop off on Saturday, 10/10 due to holiday weekend. 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.

Saturday, October 10

10 am-12 pm: Hope Lives Here is looking for volunteers to help plant fall bulbs and perennials. Go to the nonprofit’s website at hlhgrief.org to sign up for a slot so they can plan accordingly.

Monday, October 12

Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day observed.

Tuesday, October 13

10:30 am: Downsizing with confidence with Jen Baker at the Paxton Senior Center. With a thoughtful plan and the right support, downsizing can be an empowering step toward a simpler, more comfortable life. Join Jen for this practical presentation.

11 am: Pollinator class at the Rutland Senior Center. Learn about planting

for wildlife with Bethany from the Worcester County Conservation District. Review the benefits of native plants and then plant some seeds in the center’s garden.

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

6:30-7:30 pm: Cooking Club at the Gale Free Library. Registration required. “First Recipe” looks back at the first recipe you remember making. You can put a modern spin on it or make it just as you remember it. Bring your recipe along with the dish to share with the group.

Wednesday, October 14

10 a.m.: The Civil War: America in Strife with historian Anne O’Connor at the Paxton Senior Center. O’Connor discusses the events, turning points, and the human devastation of this war. She sorts out the key themes and encounters of the leaders and those who braved the battlefields. History comes alive in this visual presentation.

1:30 The Most Beautiful Woman in the World a play about Hedy Lemarr at the Holden Senior Center. History at Play LLC, offers a chance to experience this immersive living history event. Presented by the Holden Woman’s Club and the Friends of the Holden Senior Center. Sign up at the office or call the center.

4:20-5:20 pm: LEGO Club for ages 6+ at the Gale Free Library. Registration is required and opened on 10/7. This month is all about spookiness as they work on buildings and cemeteries for the Halloween display. Our LEGO Masters will set the stage, and our regular LEGO club kids will add to the scary world of witches, ghosts, skeletons, and more.

Thursday, October 15

6-8 pm: Paranormal Presentation with East Coast Spirit Chasers NE at the Rutland Public Library. They’ll share stories, photos, evidence, and experiences from two investigations—including an investigation right here at the Rutland Public Library and another at the famously haunted S.K. Pierce Mansion. Come hear what they found, what they experienced,

and decide for yourself... Is the library really haunted? Bring your curiosity. Bring your courage. Maybe don’t sit alone in the dark afterward. All are welcome!

6:30-7:30 pm: Adult ukulele class with Julie Stepanek at the Gale Free Library. Registration required. Want to try an instrument that is fun and easy to play? Join Stepanek as she shows the fundamentals of ukulele playing. No experience necessary. Ukuleles provided. This program is for ages 16+.

7-7:45 pm: Creatures of the Night at Richards Memorial Library. Join them for this spooktacular live animal event. Meet four live animals that wake up when we go to bed. Animals from the Reptile Nook will likely include a lizard, a tarantula, and snakes. Best for young scientists ages 4-12, but all are welcome.

11:59 pm: Deadline for online grant applications to the Holden, Paxton and Rutland Local Cultural Councils. See Newsbitz for details on how to apply.

Friday, October 16

10 am: Medicare advisor Joe Best provides private appointments beginning at 10 a.m. at the Paxton Senior Center to review your needs and outline plans. Best will return on October 30. Call 508-756-2833 to schedule an appointment.

10-11 am: Kidding Around Yoga with Miss Nicole for ages 2-5. To register, email communityconnections@wachusettcfce.com. This is 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, all while developing strength and flexibility.

4-4:45 pm: Family yoga with Dawn Marie at Richards Memorial Library. This is a welcoming, beginner-friendly family yoga class designed to help children and adults who love them slow down, move together and have fun. Please bring a yoga mat (or towel or blanket), and water bottle.

4:20-5 pm: Slime Time for ages 4+ at the Gale Free Library. Registration opens 10/9. Release your inner mad scientist or cauldron-stirring

CALENDAR

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HOLDEN
Gale Free Library, 23 Highland St., Holden. 508.210.5569; galefreelibrary.org; galefreelibrary@gmail.com
Holden Community Garden, Jessica Cosenza, 508.284.6612
Holden Recreation, 1420 Main St., Holden. 508.829.0263; holdenma.gov
Holden Senior Center, 1130 Main St., Holden. 508.210.5570; holdenma.gov
Holden Garden Club, holdengardenclub.org
Holden Woman’s Club, HoldenWomansClubMA@gmail.com
PAXTON
Paxton Council on Aging, 17 West St., Paxton. 508.756.2833;

paxtonma.gov; clove@paxtonma.gov
Richards Memorial Library, 44 Richards Ave., Paxton. 508.754.0793; rmlpaxton.org; richards@cwmar.org
Paxton Recreation, townofpaxton.net/recreation-department
Paxton Garden Club, 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; cfrohock@rutlandma.gov
Rutland Historical Society, 232 Main St.; 508-886.4893; rutlandmahistoricalsociety.org
Rutland Food Pantry, 290 Main Street, Rutland. 774-696-3008.
REGIONAL
Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce, 1174 Main St., Holden, 508-829-9220, info@wachusettareachamber.org
Wachusett Food Pantry, 50 Worcester Rd., Sterling. 978-563-1064. Wachusettfoodpantry.org

CALENDAR

continued from page 10

witch by customizing a jar of sticky slime with Miss Rachel. Note: this program is 40 minutes and ends at 5 pm.

Sunday, October 18

4-6 pm: Annual Trunk or Treat at the Paxton Center School parking lot with a friendly pumpkin decorating contest. This PCS PTO fundraiser includes a DJ, games, food trucks, a truck decorating contesting, and town departments and businesses that decorate their vehicles and have LOTS of candy for trick or treating. Admission is \$15 per person, maximum \$50 per family. Pumpkins for the decorating contest need to be dropped off at 2:30 p.m. that day. Rain date is Oct. 25.

Monday, October 19

1 pm: The Roots of American Popular Music by John Waterman at the Holden Senior Center. This is a program of songs and stories about characters and events at the origins of the blues, rock, and country music. Sign up at the office or call the center.

Tuesday, October 20

10:30 am: eternalHealth benefits at the Paxton Senior Center. Get timely information on the benefits of this Medicare Advantage plan. Ask questions on cost and coverage at this presentation.

1 pm: Bemis Nursery will be at the Rutland Senior Center to show you how to create a DIY everlasting pumpkin. Cost is \$25 (\$20 for current Friends of the COA members). RSVP at the center.

2 pm: Pumpkin Craft at the Holden Senior Center. Join them for a pumpkin craft just in time for the fall.

Wednesday, October 21

1 pm: Arbella presentation with Susan Dunshee at the Holden Senior Center. Dunshee, the leasing and marketing specialist at Arbella, will discuss the 55+ community in Holden and cover what senior living means, sorting your options, and increasing longevity through socialization. Sign up at the office or call the center.

4:20-5:50 pm Hollywood Horror: Cuts and bruises with Little Spark Theater for ages 10+ at the Gale Free Library. Registration opens 10/14. Dive into the world of stage makeup with some gruesome wounds for this special Halloween class. Join Little Spark Theater to learn tricks using makeup to create realistic-looking wounds. Participants will be required to sign a waiver before participating.

Thursday, October 22

12:30 pm: Dolly Parton tribute at the Paxton Senior Center. Through music and storytelling, Amanda da Meli recreates the sound and spirit of this unforgettable entertainer. RSVP by 10/19 for the lunch option.

5:30-8 pm: A Masquerade Murder Mystery at the Gale Free Library. Registration required. Adults only, ages 18+. Join them for an evening like no other as the Reading Room is transformed into the scene of a Masquerade Ball Murder Mystery. This special program is presented by Boston's Murder Mystery Company. The "crime" will take place from 6-8pm, however guests are expected to arrive by 5:30 pm to mingle, review the rules, set the scene, and receive suspect roles. Registration is limited, so RSVP asap. Costumes are encouraged.

Friday, October 23

10-11 am: Books & Blankies with Community Connections at Richards Memorial Library. For babies birth to 24 months and their caregivers. Thank you to Community Connections wachusettcfce.com for this program.

4:20-5 pm: Witch's Pillows for ages 4+ at the Gale Free Library. Registration is required and opens 10/16. Decorate a witch's pillow and fill it with a blend of herbs for an enchanting scent. Note: this program is 40 minutes long and ends at 5 pm.

Saturday, October 24

11 am-2 pm: Halloween in Holden: Trick or treat throughout Holden and Jefferson organized by Holden Recreation Department.

5-7 pm: Halloween Spook Walk & Party by the Rutland Youth Group. Come on a walking tour through the Hope Lives Here Garden behind the Rutland Library if you dare! Play games, have your face painted, color trick or treat bags, watch Halloween movies, win prizes, snacks and drinks available - fun for all ages! At the First Congregational Church of Rutland.

Monday, October 26

10 am: The RealtorNurse: Understanding the paralyzing fear of downsizing, a presentation at the Rutland Senior Center. Change can be overwhelm-

ing, especially when it involves leaving a long-time family home. This insightful presentation bridges the worlds of healthcare and real estate to help families move forward with confidence. Speaker is Denise Scotia, a Keller-Williams Realtor.

5-6:30 pm: Personal Safety Workshop presented by the Vanessa T. Marcotte Foundation at Webster First Federal Credit Union in Worcester. Join them for this free personal safety and self-defense workshop for women, ages 15+. During this active participatory workshop, realistic self-defense tactics will be practiced. Learn about situational awareness and how to handle a confrontation both physically and mentally. Prepare to have fun and feel empowered. All fitness levels welcome. Space is limited and pre-registration is required at vtmf.org/event/personal-safety-workshop-worcester-ma-3/

Tuesday, October 27

10:30 am: Fall decoupage led by Michele Thorne at the Paxton Senior Center. Create a beautiful fall flower pot for your home, deck or porch in this DIY workshop. Call the center by Oct. 22 to reserve a spot. Cost is \$8 for all materials.

Wednesday, October 28

1:30 pm: Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out, Psychedelics. In April 1943, Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann accidentally discovered the powerful effects of LSD-25. Within two decades, LSD had shifted from psychiatric research to the counterculture movement. Classified as a Schedule I substance in 1970 brought most research to a halt. Today, psychedelic research has reemerged, with scientists again exploring their potential in clinical trials. Our speaker will discuss research being done at the Center for Translational Imaging at Northeastern University with Craig Ferris, PhD Director. Sign up at the office or call the center.

4:20-5:20 pm: Create your own spellbook for ages 7+ at the Gale Free Library. Registration opens 10/21. Ever learn a new spell and have nowhere to write it down? Decorate your own spellbook with the help of library wizard Mr. McDonough.

6-7:30 pm: Irish harp and vocals with Aine Minogue and "Harvest Celebration" at the Gale Free Library. Registration required. Born and raised in

County Tipperary, Ireland, Minogue is an award-winning harpist, singer, arranger and composer who has entertained presidents and prime ministers while performing across the U.S. and around the world. The Boston Globe wrote: "...this Irish harpist combines a hypnotic Celtic spirituality and contemporary sophistication in her playing and delicately lovely singing."

Wed, Oct. 28 – Wed. Nov. 18

Stuffed animal adoptions at Richards Memorial Library. In honor of Stuffed Animal Day, they're kicking off three weeks of stuffed animal adoptions. Choose and name your stuffy, give it a vet check, and complete the official certificate. One stuff per patron while supplies last.

Thursday, October 29

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. There is no specific project, but each month there is a quotation or book or image for inspiration. This program is intended for patrons of all abilities.

Friday, October 30

Halloween Costume Party: at the Holden Senior Center during the Morning Glory Cafe. Come dressed in your favorite costume, bring your friends, and enjoy some spooky surprises. Also, volunteers are needed during

CALENDAR

continued on page 12

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CALENDAR

continued from page 11

the Cafe on Fridays from 7-10 am to help with setup, kitchen prep, serving, and cleanup. Whether you can help every week or once or twice a month, please reach out to slkeddy@yahoo.com if you are interested.

10-11 am: Halloween Scavenger Hunt with Community Connections for ages 2-5 at the Gale Free Library. No registration required. Join Community Connections for a silly, spooky Halloween scavenger hunt on the library lawn. This program helps increase social, fine and gross motor and problem-solving skills, and is a fun way to build vocabulary.

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

Monday, Nov. 2 - Nov. 7

Call for art for the Gale Free Library's Community Show with the theme, What is "quiet" to you? Maybe it's time spent with watercolors and a cup of tea or curled up with a pet or a cozy book. Whatever it means, if you have interpreted that word in a 2-D art form - such as painting,

photography, or poetry - consider submitting it for this exhibition. Unframed is preferred; matted is okay. Drop off at the reference desk. The exhibit will be displayed in the upstairs lobby from Nov. 5-30.

Tuesday, November 3

7 am-8 pm: Statewide elections are held today. Visit your town's website for voting locations. Get out and vote. But read the Red Book first so you understand the nine ballot questions and their implications.

Wednesday, November 4

10 am: Schoolhouse Café at the Paxton Senior Center. Fall is a great time to visit the Café and sit and enjoy coffee "and" with old and new friends. All are welcome.

Saturday, November 7

10 a.m.-12 pm: Hope Lives Here is looking for volunteers to help build a new shed and winterize the garden. Go to the nonprofit's website at hlhgrief.org to sign up for a slot so they can plan accordingly.

5:30-6:15 pm: Turkey supper at the First Congregational Church of Rutland. Listen to this menu: Turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, squash, rolls, and apple crisp. Cost is \$15 adults, \$7 children age 5-12, and children under 5 free. For reservations, call the church office at 508-886-4453. Take-out dinners are available.

Hometown Harvest

Garden expansion possibilities

By Roger McGaughey

Happy fall to all our readers. There are plenty of fall mums with lots of different shades helping to adorn the landscape. Asters and some other varieties help supply a mixture of colors, too.

As much as I enjoy these combinations, unfortunately their flowering life is limited. However, Heuchera, one of my favorite perennials, can provide garden color throughout the year. The foliage on Heuchera offers an amazing range, from light green to pink, coral, bronze and dark brown or black. In addition to this assortment of foliage, when these varieties mature, they produce many different-colored flowering stems. These feathery stems can be extremely useful in flower arrangements and if some are left on the plants they can provide additional character to the garden landscape in

bearded iris, hardy geraniums and bleeding hearts are examples of varieties that benefit from dividing in the fall.

Irrespective of when perennials are divided, it is im-



Photo 2

portant to use a sharp knife or spade to facilitate a good, clean cut of the parent plant. (Photo 2) Some varieties, for example bearded iris, can be cut then simply pulled apart after digging up the parent plant. Cleaning out any old and/or diseased tissues is important before transplanting



Photo collage 1

winter. (Photo collage 1) Heuchera lasts all the way through the winter and can be quite attractive peeking through a light snow ground cover.

As with many other perennial varieties, Heuchera provides an opportunity for propagation and thus one can increase their plant populations. Some perennials benefit from splitting or dividing in the fall and some can be divided in spring. Peonies,



Photo collage 4

tender roots while completing the transplanting process. (Photo collage 4) Also note in the hardy geranium (Photo 5) there are some nodes on the roots which will produce new growing shoots as the plant develops after transplanting.

When transplanting divided or potted material, it's important to make sure the hole is



Photo 5

large enough and has loose soil around the root ball so the new roots can easily penetrate. Lightly fill in with soil around the roots and make sure the new plant is well watered in afterwards. Transplanting early in the fall allows the new plant to establish a good root system and thus guarantees an early growth take-off next spring when the soil temperatures increase after a cold winter.

There are many opportunities to increase or alter your garden design, and you can look forward to a new and exciting floral display next year.



Photo collage 3

the divided material into a pot or a new garden location. Some examples of divided tissue can be seen in the attached photo collage. (Photo collage 3)

Often there are some young feeder roots on divided material so it's important to be careful not to damage these

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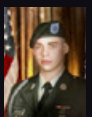
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Real Estate Transfers

August 15, 2026 - September 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 October issue publishes transfers from August 15 to September 14. This information was compiled by Karin Warzybok and gathered from the Worcester Registry of Deeds' website.

HOLDEN

- 102 Torrey Ln. Ext. 08/18:** Grantors Donna M. Burns and Donna M. Colonies to Grantee Eleanor Johnson. \$436,500.
- 90 Wachusett St. 08/18:** Grantor Graeme B. Elliott to Grantees Graeme B. Elliott and Susan E. Elliott. \$100.
- 94 Wachusett St. 08/18:** Grantor Graeme B. Elliott to Grantees Graeme B. Elliott and Susan E. Elliott. \$100.
- 212 Brattle St. 08/18:** Grantors Michael R. Benoit and Lucinda A. Benoit to Grantees M&L Nominee Realty Trust, Michael R. Benoit Tr, and Lucinda A. Benoit Tr. \$1.
- 610 Bullard St. 08/19:** Grantors Susan Jane Cassidy Trust and Susan Jane Cassidy Tr to Grantees Sharyn Gage and James Gage. \$590,000.
- 102 Tea Party Cir. 08/19:** Grantors William A. Dickhaut and Laura K. Dickhaut to Grantees William A. Dickhaut Tr, Laura K. Dickhaut Tr, and Dickhaut Family Revocable Trust. \$100.
- 396 Elmwood Ave. 08/19:** Grantors Todd James Hogue and Andrew J. Duarte to Grantees Benjamin Coy and Ashley Coy. \$895,000.
- 130 Mixter Rd. 08/20:** Grantor John J. McManus to Grantee Benjamin B. Russell. \$615,000.
- 48 Phillips Rd. 08/20:** Grantors Valerie G. Bedard and Valerie Bedard to Grantee Brenda Melissa Eisenlord. \$290,000.
- 1348 Main St. 08/20:** Grantors Laura A. Ward and Laura Ward to Grantee Christa Wilde. \$250,000.
- 81 Highland Ave. 08/20:** Grantors Patrick J. Harrington and Linda L. Harrington to Grantees Christina Case and Brendan Case. \$470,000.
- 50 Twinbrooke Dr. 08/21:** Grantor Ann Kent Gasiorowski to Grantee Mark Kent. \$100.
- 122 Fox Hill Dr. 08/21:** Grantors Susan S. Reynolds Tr and Susan S. Reynolds Revocable Trust to Grantees Malcolm D. Schoenberger and Maureen P. Schoenberger. \$865,000.
- 1279 Main St. 08/21:** Grantors Michael T. Williams, Lauri P. Williams, and M.T. Williams to Grantees Muhammed Asim Ghani Tr, Sabeen Asim Vatao Tr, and MAG & SAV Revocable Trust. \$375,000.

- 36 Woodridge Rd. 08/21:** Grantor Ann M. Dagle to Grantee Ronald J. Dagle. \$1.
- 20 Jordan Rd. 08/24:** Grantors Kory Fitzpatrick, Samantha Fitzpatrick, Amanda E. Fitzpatrick, and Amanda Fitzpatrick to Grantees Amanda Fitzpatrick and Amanda E. Fitzpatrick. \$262,500.
- 46 Bancroft Rd. 08/24:** Grantor Kevin R. Smith to Grantee Bryant A. Jones. \$527,000.
- 48 Fox Hill Dr. 08/25:** Grantors Francis D. Brockway Tr, Linda M. Brockway Tr, and Brockway Realty Trust-2024 to Grantees Jaclyn M. Ryan and Steven R. Ryan. \$845,000.
- 35 Oregon Trail 08/26:** Grantors Allison M. Person and Allison Person to Grantees Sarah E. Murphy Tr and Allison M. Person Irrevocable Trust. \$1.
- 11 Alpha Rd. 08/26:** Grantors Kayla Clark, Kayla Heipt, Haley Clark, Shawnie Clark, and Haley Clark Gatzogiannis to Grantee Home By Holly LLC. \$320,000.
- 515 Shrewsbury St. 08/26:** Grantor Karin Marie Warzybok to Grantees Karin M. Warzybok Tr and Karin M. Warzybok Trust. \$10.
- 89 Boulder Hill Rd. 08/26:** Grantor Ha Thuy Luong to Grantees Xaley Yousey and Morgan Macchiarulo. \$718,000.
- 280 Quinapoxet St. 08/27:** Grantors Keith M. Bates and Jillian W. Bates to Grantees Nicholas Anthony Servati and Brittany Rose Block. \$770,000.
- 40 Village Way 08/27:** Grantors Robert R. Olson and Kristin L. Olson to Grantees Armend Kaciu, Almira Kaciu, and Besnik Thaci. \$395,000.
- 106 Newell Rd. 08/27:** Grantor Michael A. Menard and Joanne M. Menard to Grantees John Flaherty and Heather Jean Vaillette. \$720,000.
- 354 Highland St. 08/28:** Grantors Gregg B. Sculthorpe, Greeg B. Sculthorpe, and Glenn C. Sculthorpe to Grantees Christine A. Rollins and Anthony Rollins. \$465,000.
- 7 Stephanie Dr. 08/28:** Grantors Deven Zachary O'Brien and Jillian Moran O'Brien to Grantees Jennifer Christie and Ryan Frerichs. \$880,000.

- 50 Rolling Ridge Rd. 08/28:** Grantors Bryan G. Klink Tr, Byan G. Klink 2022 Revocable Trust, and Stephanie Lynn Klink to Grantees Richard Normandin Tr, Janice Normandin Tr, and Normandin Family Trust. \$460,000.
- 32 Crestview Dr. 08/31:** Grantor Marie K. Johnson to Grantees Isabella Gitto and Meaghan Jenket. \$610,000.
- 35 Brentwood Dr. 09/01:** Grantors Youcef J. Bellil and Linda M. Long-Bellil to Grantees Linda M. Long-Bellil Tr, Linda M. Long-Bellil Revocable Trust, Youcef J. Bellil Tr, and Youcef J. Bellil Revocable Trust. \$100.
- 8 Cedar Rd. 09/01:** Grantor Claudia Tan-nous to Grantees Kimberly Nicole Pacheco and Felipe Javier Marambio Arancibia. \$520,000.
- 24 Piccadilly Cir. 09/01:** Grantors Christine Baker and Thomas Baker to Grantees Manuel Clavijo Suarez and Jordan Doucette. \$725,000.
- 27 Lowell Ave. 09/02:** Grantors Joanne G. Root, Elton A. Root Est, and Elton A. Root Jr. Tr to Grantees Joanne G. Root Tr, Marshal E. Root Tr, and Elton A. Root Jr Revocable Trust. \$100.
- 27 Lowell Ave. 09/02:** Grantors Joanne G. Root Tr, Marshal E. Root Tr, and Elton A. Root Jr Revocable Trust to Grantee Joanne G. Root. \$100.
- 47 Teresa Dr. 09/03:** Grantor Paul T. Charest to Grantees Paul T. Charest and Kirsten E. Charest. \$100.
- 193 Main St. 09/08:** Grantor Salome M. Grendell to Grantees Salome Mireya Grendell Tr and Salome M. Grendell Trust. \$100.
- 137 Sycamore Dr. 09/08:** Grantors David L. Frye Jr, Jennifer L. Frye and Jennifer Frye to Grantees David L. Frye Jr. Tr, Jennifer L. Frye Tr, and Frye Family Trust. \$100.
- 31 Mixter Rd. 09/08:** Grantors Michael J. Nickolas and Faith E. Nickolas to Grantees Alec J. Tata and Toni Tata. \$455,000.
- 6 Brentwood Dr. 09/10:** Grantors Anthony R. Siciliano and Anthony R. Siciliano Jr to Grantee Victoria Crossin. \$280,000.
- 19 Birch Ave. 09/11:** Grantor M. A. Elbag Building Contractors Inc. to Grantees

- Nicholas Wheeler and Jennifer Wheeler. \$990,000.
- 142 Jamieson Rd. 09/14:** Grantors Steven J. Hammond and Maria L. Berrios to Grantees Timothy Buzzell and Amy Grover Buzzell. \$639,900.
- 281 Lovell Rd. 09/14:** Grantors Christopher A. Hall and Catherine M. Hall to Grantees Christopher A. Hall Tr, Catherine M. Hall Tr, and Hall Irrevocable Trust. \$1.

PAXTON

- 9 Jefferson Dr. 08/18:** Grantors Charles O. Kingsbury and Kathryn L. Kingsbury to Grantees Kathryn L. Kingsbury Tr, Charles O. Kingsbury Tr, and Charles & Kathryn Kingsbury 2026 Trust. \$100.
- 603-609 Pleasant St. 08/18:** Grantor SA Club LLC to Grantee Asylum Sports Complex LLC. \$4,500,000.
- 16 Tanglewood Rd. 08/25:** Grantor Love Olongo-Kanyi to Grantees Love A. Olongo-Kanyi Tr and Olongo-Kanyi Realty Trust-2026. \$1.
- 309 Pleasant St. 09/02:** Grantor Piperhill LLC to Grantees Murat Halilaj and Mirilda Halilaj. \$460,000.
- 444 Marshall St. 09/10:** Grantor Mary Elizabeth Collimore and M. Collimore to Grantee Conor Nicholas Hayward. \$1.

RUTLAND

- 11 Nancy Dr. 08/17:** Grantors Stacey L. Skerry, Erica L. Skerry, and Kendra A.

- Slack to Grantee Rita J. Quist. \$100.
- No number Turkey Hill Rd. 08/17:** Grantors Gary J. Liimatainen and Susan J. Liimatainen to Grantee J&J Legacy Properties LLC. \$40,000.
- 3 Edith Ln. 08/20:** Grantors William P. Starr, Nicolette M. Sacco, Nicolette M. Sacco-Starr, and Nicolette Sacco to Grantees Anthony Vincequere and Megan Geddes. \$457,000.
- 5 Quail Run Dr. 08/20:** Grantor CB Blair Development Corp. to Grantee Daniel H. Agborkey. \$702,982.
- 15 Patriot Ln. 08/21:** Grantor Michelle Blakeney-Couture to Grantee Mo-heuddin Foyсал. \$680,000.
- 155 Turkey Hill Rd. 08/21:** Grantors Kofi Agyeman Jr and Samantha R. Agyeman to Grantee Samuel Acheampong. \$599,000.
- 106 Main St. 08/24:** Grantors Blair Dynasty Realty Trust, Clealand B. Blair Jr. Tr, and William J. Blair Tr to Grantees Nancy J. Blair Tr, Clealand B. Blair Jr. Tr, Steven W. White Tr, and Clealand B. Blair Revocable Trust. \$1.
- 106 Main St. 08/24:** Grantors Blair Dynasty Realty Trust, Clealand B. Blair Jr. Tr, and William J. Blair Tr to Grantees Nancy J. Blair Tr, Clealand B. Blair Jr. Tr, Steven W. White Tr, and Clealand B. Blair Revocable Trust. \$1.
- 28 Emerald Rd. 08/24:** Grantor Emerald Land Holdings Inc. to Grantees

REAL ESTATE

continued on page 15



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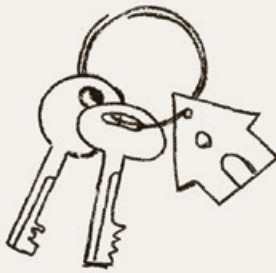
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Day Trippin'

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



Photo by Steve Urbanovitch

Hammond Castle Museum

By STEVE URBANOVITCH

This day trip took us to Gloucester to visit the beautiful Hammond Castle Museum. It is a sprawling medieval-style complex that features a significant collection of architectural artifacts that have been built into the castle itself. It was built in the 1920s by inventor John Hays Hammond Jr. and was his home, laboratory, and museum.

Hammond was a prolific American inventor with over 800 patents covering over 400 distinct inventions. Many of his inventions pioneered the technologies that we use today in radio control, television, robotics, kitchen appliances, toys, and games. You can book a tour, or you can wander the museum and grounds on a self-guided tour.

Hammond Castle Museum is located at 80 Hesperus Ave. Gloucester, MA. Open daily 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.; last entrance is at 2:45 p.m. Call 978-283-2080 or visit hammondcastle.org. Tickets through November 16: Teens and adults: \$20; Seniors age 65+ \$15; children 5-12 \$10. The museum is not handicapped accessible for assistive devices such as wheelchairs and walkers due to the number of stairs. Tickets for visits between November 21, 2026, and January 3, 2027, will be available later in the year. *

Letters to the Editor

On behalf of the Paxton Garden Club, we would like to thank everyone who made our monthly summer Paxton Farmers Markets such a huge success! PMAGC is eternally grateful to our vendors, the community, our volunteers, the Paxton Council on Aging, the Paxton Board of Health and the Paxton Fire Department.

We would also like to thank our market sponsors Conte Insurance and Worcester County Memorial Park, without whose support the markets would not have been possible. We look forward to hosting another successful season in 2027.

Robin Tasca & the Paxton Garden Club

October celebrates White Cane Day

October is known for being the month of Halloween, pumpkin carving, and bobbing for apples. But would you like to know what is really spooky? Not knowing that White Cane Safety Day is celebrated every October 15, a date that was proclaimed to honor the significance of the white cane by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

A white cane is a mobility tool that provides individuals with low vision, vision impairment, and total blindness with safety and independence. For example, the cane allows the user to preview their walking path, detecting bumps, pot-holes, or dropoffs before the individual's foot detects these dangers. Additionally, the white cane allows community members to be aware of their

fellow neighbor's needs when in public spaces. A driver will know a pedestrian may need more time at a crosswalk when they are holding a cane, or a fellow shopper will realize someone may need extra room to navigate a crowded aisle of the grocery store.

So, this October, while you are keeping an eye out for ghosts, goblins, and your favorite candy, be sure to keep an eye out for the white cane, too. Recognizing what it represents is a simple step toward creating safer, more accessible communities where people who are blind or visually impaired can move and travel with greater independence.

Michela Meaney
Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist (COMS)
Oxford

Something We Said: Richard Pryor, a notorious word, and me

Thursday, October 22
6:30-7:30 p.m., The Museum of Worcester
30 Elm Street, Worcester.

Join us for a conversation with author Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor.

Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor, daughter of iconic Black comedian Richard Pryor, discusses her new book, a hybrid memoir and historical exploration of the n-word. *Something We Said: Richard Pryor, a Notorious Word, and Me* peels back the curtain on the private life of her famous father and interrogates the most perplexing word in the American lexicon, a word he helped popularize. The book has been featured on Fresh Air with Tonya Mosley and covered by the New York Times, People, Forbes, CNN, and PBS NewsHour.

Copies of *Something We Said: Richard Pryor, a Notorious Word, and Me* will be available for purchase at the event through Tidepool Booksellers.

This event is presented in collaboration with the Museum of Worcester, Worcester Black History Project, and

Something We Said

Richard Pryor,
a Notorious Word,
and Me

Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor



Worcester Women's History Project. The evening's conversation will be moderated by Deborah Hall.

Space is limited. Registra-

tion is required at the Museum of Worcester's website, worcesterhistory.org



PHOTO FINISH



1. On September 21, Brie's Balloons helped Richards Memorial Library staff celebrate the 23 children who completed the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten Reading Challenge. Celebrants enjoyed Eric Carle stories, songs, and crafts, and everyone took home a balloon animal. Congratulations to all these amazing young readers (and their adults)! The RML staff thanks the Friends of the Library for supporting this program.

2. On Sept. 19, residents from Wachusett's five towns attended Wachusett Towns' Takeover Day at Polar Park. The WooSox won against the Durham Bulls, 16-1 in front of a sellout crowd of 9,508 baseball fans. Nonprofits that benefitted from special ticket sales were Rutland's Glenwood Elementary School's PTO and the Wachusett Food Pantry.

3. Fitness is Heating Up in Holden: SweatWerx Studio recently celebrated its Grand Opening with a ribbon-cutting coordinated by the Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce. Shown are (L-R) Chamber Representatives Jen Stanovich, Jeff Prunier, Alli Oliva, Mike Scott, Zachary Silverman, Stephanie Moreau, Marie Mouradian; Studio Owner Elizabeth Dumas, Chamber Representatives Andrew Jensen, Johnna Carlson, State Senator Peter Durant, Town Manager Peter Lukes, Chamber Representative Laurie Fitzpatrick. SweatWerx is the area's first heated Pilates and yoga studio, owned by Dumas, daughter of Ted Dumas who owned Village Repair for many years. Dumas just moved back to the area after 16 years in Hawaii. Learn about her studio here: sweatwerx.com or email her at edumas0822@gmail.com

4. The Vanessa T. Marcotte Foundation was supported by 26 runners in this year's Falmouth Road Race. Held on August 16, the athletes raised more than \$58,686 to support VTMF's mission. Runners/fundraisers were Denise Andrews, Adam Baldarelli, Victoria Baran, Brian Clancey, Rebecca Collins, Julia Connolly, Peter Connolly, Mia Conte, Corinna DeColibus, Lauren Good, Erica Grinkis, Melissa Hendry, Michele Lederman, Julie Ligon, Rylie Little, Tina Marabello, Amanda Martell, Ashley McNiff, Fred Misilo, Jessica Misilo, Catherine Murphy, Ashley Murtagh, Amanda Nisula, Taryn Reohr, Matt Ryan, and Caroline Tocci. For more information, visit VTMF.org.

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



REAL ESTATE

continued from page 13

Mark Anderson and Cassidy Smith. \$720,000.

350 Main St. 08/25: Grantor John Cayer to Grantee Jennifer A. Lucier. \$1,300,000.

11 Arrowhead Way 08/27: Grantors Christopher Barcheski, C. Barcheski, and Caitlynn Barcheski to Grantee Christopher Barcheski. \$1.

345 Pleasantdale Rd. 08/27: Grantors Ana Clara DeOliveira Borges and Paulo Henrique Santos DeOliveira to Grantees Kathleen Hartnett and Joshua Schaperow. \$635,000.

3 Barre-Paxton Rd. 08/28: Grantors Paul B. Bronnes Tr and Paul Bronnes Living Trust to Grantees Marissa A. Lombardi and Benjamin R. Phaneuf. \$389,000.

27 Cheryl Ann Dr. 08/28: Grantors Elaine M. Marsh Tr and Elaine M. Marsh Revocable Trust to Grantees Bryan Klink and Stephanie Lynn Klink. \$565,000.

25 Edson Ave. 08/31: Grantor NE Home Planning Center Inc. to Grantees Joshua James Mondragon and Rachael Lee Mondragon. \$560,000.

224 Turkey Hill Rd. 08/31: Grantors Achelles Ivan Bellos and Sarah Kathleen Reks to Grantees Kevin J. Ratcliffe and Lisa J. Ratcliffe. \$389,900.

175 Barre-Paxton Rd. 09/01: Grantors Sean McLoughlin and Sean F. McLoughlin to Grantees Braden A. McLoughlin Tr and Sean F. McLoughlin 2026 Irrevocable Trust. \$100.

No number Demond Finn Rd. 09/02: Grantors Roger A. Knipe, Roger A. Knipe Tr, Sandra J. Knipe Tr, and Roger & Sandra Knipe Family Trust to Grantees Seth A. Knipe and Nicole M. Knipe. \$100.

26 Laurelwood Rd. 09/02: Grantor Sandra D. Cook to Grantees Sandra D. Cook Tr and Sandra D. Cook Revocable Trust. \$100.

176 Maple Ave. 09/04: Grantor Arifin Enam to Grantee Nashra T. Upama. \$100.

211 Barre Paxton Rd. 09/09: Grantors Marc Lavoie and Maureen Lavoie to Grantee Maureen Scarpato Lavoie. \$100.

211 Barre Rd. 09/09: Grantor Maureen Scarpato Lavoie to Grantees Maureen Scarpato Lavoie and Marc Robert Lavoie. \$100.

9 Barrack Hill Rd. 09/09: Grantor Amy E. Wilkinson-Sheridan and Amy E. Wilkinson Sheridan to Grantee Emerald Land Holdings Inc. \$153,000.

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