

The Guide to

FREE

North Central Massachusetts

In This Issue...

Time to Hit the Slopes

For the Birds

On Stage

Calendar of Events



Johnny Appleseed Country | Winter 2023-24



Year Round ////// **FARMILY** //////// **FUN**

*Pick Your Own Fruits**
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Famous BBQ

Live Music
Country Store
Family-Friendly Events

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**Seasonal, visit RedAppleFarm.com to see what's available to pick each month July–November.*

Winter Lights start Nov. 24th through Jan 1st! Check our website for updated dates and times.



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Photo by Joyce Dossett

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Photo by Norman Bedard



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The Guide to North Central Massachusetts

Visit North Central Massachusetts

General Information Center & Main Visitor Center
Phone: 978-534-2302

Volunteer & Sponsoring Member Information
Phone: 978-534-2829

The Guide to North Central Massachusetts is published semi-annually to help visitors discover the pleasures of the region. This complimentary publication is distributed through the state tourist information center; AAA offices in CT, MA & RI; and sponsoring member locations serving visitors and newcomers to North Central Massachusetts. Write to us at 1000 Route 2 Westbound, Lancaster, MA 01523.

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Johnny Appleseed Country



**VISIT NORTH CENTRAL
MASSACHUSETTS**
JOHNNY APPLESEED COUNTRY



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Funded, in part, by The Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism.
For statewide planning information, www.visitma.com

Where's Johnny?



So you made the trip from near or far, landing smack in the middle of North Central Massachusetts. You're in Johnny Appleseed Country.

But where's Johnny?

Of course, John Chapman — who gained legendary status as a sower of seeds and planter of apple orchards — has faded into history. Born in Leominster in 1774, Johnny spent his youth here before heading west as the fledgling

nation expanded. But his hometown still honors him in many ways. Drive around the city, and you'll see a host of parks, schools and streets bearing Johnny's name.

Want to meet this legend, up close and personal? A youthful version of Johnny has been welcoming travelers to the Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center on Route 2 for years. Stop by for a selfie!

Want to learn more about Johnny?

The Visitor Center on Route 2 Westbound in

Lancaster has a number of books about his life and times, geared to all ages! §



Visitor Center Events

You can learn about Johnny and the history of the region at the Visitor Center — and more! Stop by the center on any weekend in September or October, and you might find a local artist, entertainer, or even a farmer! Pet a bunny, sample Polar products, enjoy a free cup of coffee... and more!

September 2023

- 2nd** – Bare Bones Sculpture, 10 am-2 pm
- 9th** – Twin City Rail Trail, 11 am-2 pm
- 16th** – Big Dave & The Captain, 11 am-2pm;
Bunnies & Chicks, 10 am -1 pm
- 23rd** – Bunnies & Chicks, 10 am-1 pm;
Johnny's Birthday Cake, 10 am
- 30th** – Barrington Autumn, 10 am-2 pm;
Polar Product Sampling, 10:30 am-1:20 pm

October 2023

- 7th** – Plain View Farm, 10 am-2 pm;
Boy Scouts Coffee & Donuts, 8 am-3 pm
- 8th** – Boy Scouts Coffee & Donuts, 8 am-3 pm
- 9th** – Boy Scouts Coffee & Donuts, 8 am-3 pm
- 14th** – Book Signings, 10 am-2 pm;
Face Escape, 11 am-1 pm
- 21st** – Ukelele J's Music Studio, 10 am-2 pm

These programs are supported by grants from the Athol, Ayer, Gardner, Shirley, Sterling, Leominster, Templeton, Fitchburg, Lancaster local Mass Cultural Councils.


Check Johnny's website, visitnorthcentral.com for more information.



CELEBRATE WITH US!


In addition to the annual events and recreation opportunities, the Centennial Committee is planning numerous events throughout the year to celebrate Gardner's milestone birthday.

Check our website and social media for updates on upcoming events!

 gardner-ma.gov

 [@GardnerCityHall](https://www.facebook.com/GardnerCityHall)

 [facebook.com/100Gardner](https://www.facebook.com/100Gardner)

 [@CityofGardner](https://www.instagram.com/CityofGardner)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

- CENTENNIAL PARADE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

- FABULOUS FALL FESTIVAL
- 17TH ANNUAL OKTOBERFEST
- THE CHAIR LUGE RETURNS!

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27

- DOWNTOWN HALLOWEEN STROLL

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25

- SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

- HOLIDAY STROLL & TREE LIGHTING

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

- CAROLING WITH THE MAYOR

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

- CENTENNIAL GALA

~ Choices, Choices! ~

How Do You Pick the Perfect Apple?

So many apples... so hard to choose a favorite. Shiny red Galas. Pale green Granny Smiths. Yellow Delicious.

Look past the color, to your planned use: Apples for pies. Apples for eating. Apples for sauce. Apples to store away into the winter months.

Everyone seems to know an apple they consider the “best.” With so many choices, autumn is a special time in Johnny Appleseed’s back yard. Fruit hangs heavy on the trees, and families head into the orchards to enjoy the bounty of the season. Consider this: The Red Apple Farm in Phillipston offers 42 different varieties of the fruit that earned Johnny Appleseed his nickname! And a single tree in their orchard sports 100 different varieties of apples on its grafted branches.



the pick-your-own season is past.

The hardest part might be deciding just what to take home! Every orchard or farmstand has its own specialties — and you’ll often find home-baked pies, fresh-pressed cider and other apple delights at these local markets, too.

Recognizing the desire for family

outings, many growers, like Lanni Orchards in Lunenburg, turn apple season into festival season as well — with music, hayrides, pie-baking contests and more.

So fill your basket, tour the fields, savor the flavors, and enjoy your adventure in Johnny Appleseed’s backyard. §

Cream of the Crop

Sholan Farms, a 169-acre orchard operated by a volunteer organization, has more than three dozen varieties ripening from mid-August till late October. But the Friends of Sholan Farms celebrate the “Cream of the Crop” — their Macouns — in late September. It’s a great weekend to visit and see all that Sholan has to offer.

But you don’t have to wait for a special event to visit a “you-pick” spot like Hollis Hills Farm in Fitchburg, Meadowbrook Orchards in Sterling, or Carlson Orchards in Harvard. Apple season begins in July and runs right through October, so there’s always something great to pick. Many orchards and farmstands also have climate-controlled storage, so you can keep coming back for more, even after

An Apple Sampler from Johnny Appleseed Country

VARIETY	HARVEST	BEST USES
Baldwin	October	Eating / Pies
Cortland	September	Eating / Sauce / Pies / Salad / Baking
Delicious, Red	October	Eating / Salad
Delicious, Golden	October	Eating / Sauce / Salad
Empire	October	Eating
Gala	September	Eating
Ginger Gold	August	Eating / Sauce / Salad
Granny Smith	October	Eating
Jersey Mac	August	Eating
Liberty	September	Eating
Macoun	October	Eating / Sauce / Salad
McIntosh	September	Eating / Sauce / Salad
Milton	August	Eating
Mutsu	October	Eating
Northern Spy	October	Sauce / Pies
Paula Red	August	Eating
Red Free	August	Eating
Rome	October	Eating / Pies
Russet	October	Eating / Pies
Spencer	October	Eating / Sauce / Pies
Vista Bella	July	Eating

THE CITY OF FITCHBURG



ONGOING

ARI MONTFORD'S FREEDOM ARROWS
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm Street
fitchburgartmuseum.org

GABRIEL SOSA'S LA BODEGA DE MIS SUEÑOS
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm Street
fitchburgartmuseum.org

SEPTEMBER

**EVERY THURSDAY IN SEPTEMBER
4 PM - 6 PM**
Farmers Market
Upper Common, Main St.

SEPTEMBER 1 - OCTOBER 18
Music - Entertainment
Hollis Hills Farm, 340 Marshall Rd.
Visit: www.hollisfarm.com

SEPTEMBER 9, 2 - 10 PM
River City Rhythm and Rock Fest
Riverfront Park and Mill Street.

SEPTEMBER 16 & 17, 8 AM - 2 PM
City Wide Yard Sale

SEPTEMBER 16, 10 AM
Fitchburg Veterans Council's
9th Annual 5K
Thirsty Robot, 265 Summer St.
Registration starts at 10 AM. Race starts at 11 AM.

SEPTEMBER 20, 6 - 8 PM
Fitchburg Historical Society
Annual Meeting
Presentation on Fitchburg History
Phoenix Bldg., 781 Main St.
Free & Open to the Public

SEPTEMBER 30, 10 AM - 5 PM
20th Annual Blacksmith Art &
Renaissance Festival
Riverfront Park, Boulder Drive

**SEPTEMBER 30 & OCTOBER 1,
11 AM - 5 PM**

Fitchburg Cultural Alliance Open
Studios
FREE self-guided art discovery tour
Visit website for map of studio locations:
Fitchburgopenstudios.com

SEPTEMBER 30, 7 PM
Orleans
Fitchburg State University Center Stage
Add. info can be found at Fitchburgstate.edu/Centerstage

SEPTEMBER 30 - JANUARY 7, 2024
Ella Crowell by Thomas Eakins
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm Street
fitchburgartmuseum.org

SEPTEMBER 30 - JANUARY 7, 2024
*Revisitations: Women's Bodies in
Contemporary Art*
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm Street
fitchburgartmuseum.org

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 19, 4 - 7 PM
Fitchburg Health Dept. "Community
Health Resource Fair"
Fitchburg Senior Center,
14 Wallace Ave.

OCTOBER 20, 7 PM
Mark O'Connor Duo
Fitchburg State University Center Stage
Add. info can be found at Fitchburgstate.edu/Centerstage

OCTOBER 21, 10 AM - 1 PM
The Rollstone Hill "Rock Walk"
Walk will start and end at the Boulder
Art Gallery, 960 Main St.
Free event - Wear comfortable walking shoes, bring
water, a friend, and don't forget your camera!

**OCTOBER 21, 2023 -
FEBRUARY 4, 2024**
*Dialogues, Diasporas and Detours
Through Africa*
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm Street
fitchburgartmuseum.org

OCTOBER 28, 12 PM - 2 PM
Trick Or Treat On Main Street
Main Street

OCTOBER 31, 6 PM - 8 PM
Halloween
City of Fitchburg

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 11, 11 AM
Fitchburg Veterans Day Ceremony
14 Wallace Avenue - Armory

NOVEMBER 16, 5 - 6:30 PM
Fitchburg Public School (FPS)
Turkey Dinner
Memorial Middle School,
615 Rollstone St.

NOVEMBER 25, ALL DAY
Small Business Saturday
Participating businesses
throughout the City

DECEMBER

DECEMBER 2, 5:30 PM
Santa Parade & Holiday Tree Lighting
Monument Park to Upper
Common Main St.

JANUARY

JANUARY 27, 9 - 11 AM
FPS - Winter Wonderland
376 South Street Early Learning Center

*All events are subject to
change or postponement.*

CHECK OUR WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA FOR UPDATES ON UPCOMING EVENTS.

FITCHBURGMA.GOV



@Fitchburg365



@CityofFitchburg



@Fitchburg365

Apple-icious Ideas

So you've visited local orchards and filled baskets or bags of luscious-looking (and tasting) fruits. Now comes the question: What are you going to do with them all?

Of course, the family will be biting right into some — maybe before you even get home. Some will sit in a bowl on the table, providing tasteful autumn décor for your kitchen, a reminder of your country tour.

And then ... what? We have the answer for you! Here are a pair of recipes from local chefs to help you turn those fabulous fruits into tasty tidbits to tempt your palate. Don your apron, get out your favorite mixing bowl, and enjoy! §

APPLE RAISIN NUT BREAD



A moist and delicious quick bread that you can make with fresh apples!

Ingredients:

- 4 eggs
- 1 ¼ cups vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- 3 cups chopped apples
- 2/3 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 2 ½ cups sugar
- 3 cups flour

- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder

Preheat oven to 350.

Grease and flour two loaf pans.

In a large bowl, add chopped apples, sugar, eggs, oil, vanilla, raisins, and nuts. Stir well.

In a separate bowl, mix dry ingredients together well.

Add dry ingredients slowly to wet ingredients. Mix them just until there are no dry ingredients visible. Don't overmix.

Pour batter into two greased loaf pans. Bake until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

Cool in pan for about 10 minutes, remove from pan to finish cooling on a rack.

Enjoy!

Joyce Dossett
The Kitchen Garden
268 Baldwinville Road
Templeton, MA

HOT & CRISPY CINNAMON APPLE EGGROLL WITH APPLE PIE ICE CREAM

Cinnamon Apple Eggrolls

Serves 6-8

Filling:

- Sauté together approximately 10 minutes
- 4 cups diced peeled Honeycrisp Apples
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- Mix all to a paste, add to above while a slow boil until thickened, set aside to cool
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 tablespoons cinnamon
- 1/2 cup cold water

Enjoy!

Chef Denyse Corio, The Bull Run, 215 Great Road, Shirley, MA

Assemble:

8 Nasoya Eggroll Wrappers

- 1 large egg
- Separate wrappers and lay out flat
- Brush with beaten egg.
- Divide apple filling amongst wrappers, fold corners in and roll up tightly.
- Fry Eggrolls till golden, drain on paper towels, then roll in cinnamon sugar.

To Serve:

- Slice Hot Cinnamon Apple Eggroll at a bias, lay over Scoop of Apple Pie Ice Cream, drizzle with Caramel Sauce & Fireball Whiskey.



Celebrate the seasons in **Leominster**

SEPTEMBER

- 2 LEOMINSTER FARMERS MARKET**
Saturday, 11 am – 2 pm, Monument Square
- 8 FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL**
Friday, 5 – 10 pm, Downtown
- 16 CITYWIDE YARD SALE**
Saturday, 8 am – 3 pm
Participating addresses throughout the City

OCTOBER

- 7 TRACTOR PARADE**
Saturday, 10 am, Downtown
- 7 LEOMINSTER FARMERS MARKET**
Saturday, 11 am – 2 pm
Monument Square
- 9 CANNOLI FESTIVAL**
Monday, 5 – 9 pm
Downtown
- 16–31 LEOMINSTER FRIGHTS**
Ongoing, All Day
Participating addresses throughout the City
- 21 HALLOWEEN PARADE**
Saturday, 1 – 3 pm, Downtown
- 31 TRICK OR TREAT**
Monday, 6 – 8 pm, City of Leominster

NOVEMBER

- 16 INDOOR FARMERS MARKET**
Thursday, 4 – 6 pm
Tata Auditorium at Leominster City Hall
 - Nov 20–Dec 18**
FESTIVAL OF TREES
Ongoing till Dec 18, Hours Vary
Tata Auditorium at Leominster City Hall
 - 25 SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY**
Saturday, All Day
Participating businesses throughout the City
- Dates subject to change.

DECEMBER

- 1–31 LEOMINSTER LIGHTS**
Fri / Sat / Sun, 5 – 10 pm
Participating addresses throughout the City
- 2 WINTER STROLL**
Saturday, 3 – 5 pm, Downtown
- 2 PARADE OF LIGHTS & TREE LIGHTING**
Saturday, 5 pm, Downtown
- 21 INDOOR FARMERS MARKET**
Thursday, 4 – 6 pm
Tata Auditorium at Leominster City Hall

JANUARY

- 18 INDOOR FARMERS MARKET**
Thursday, 4 – 6 pm
Tata Auditorium at Leominster City Hall
- 21–27 COFFEE CRAWL**
Sun – Sat, All Day
Participating businesses throughout the City
- 30 GARDENMANIA**
Thursday, 6 – 8 pm
Tata Auditorium at Leominster City Hall

FEBRUARY

- 2 GROUNDHOG DAY WITH FEATHERSTONE**
Thursday, 8 am, Monument Square
- 15 INDOOR FARMERS MARKET**
Thursday, 4 – 6 pm
Tata Auditorium at Leominster City Hall
- 18–24 LEOMINSTER RESTAURANT WEEK**
Sun – Sat, All Day
Participating businesses throughout the City of Leominster
- 20 INDOOR DRIVE-IN MOVIE NIGHT**
Tuesday, 5:30 pm
Tata Auditorium at Leominster City Hall
- 23 ONCE UPON A TIME**
Friday, 10 am – 2 pm
Tata Auditorium at Leominster City Hall

THE NOSE KNOWS

Ah, there's nothing quite like the crisp air of fall in New England — cool, clean, with just a hint of ... garlic?

Yes, folks, it's time to follow your nose to Forster's Farm on Chestnut Hill Road in Orange, where garlic reigns over a weekend of food, fun, art and environmental awareness. The North Quabbin Garlic & Arts Festival, celebrating a quarter century of aromatic enjoyment this year, is a staple of autumn in North Central Massachusetts.

Popularly known as the "Festival that Stinks," Garlic & Arts is a fabulous family-friendly destination held just as fall foliage sets area hillsides ablaze in color. Visitors to the historic farm can wander among 100 exhibitors showcasing captivating creativity, farm-fresh products, and healing arts.

Three stages provide a perfect backdrop, with music, performance, and spoken word throughout the weekend. You can take a world tour of glorious garlic cuisine and chef demonstrations. Want more? There are over 50 workshops and talks on topics ranging from Foraging for Mushrooms to Getting Pumped about Heat Pumps, and Improving Habitats for Honeybees and Pollinators. How about spending time in the free kids' art-making tent, or trying your hand at garlic games — including the famous (or infamous) garlic-eating contest?

Despite its name, this festival isn't just about

fragrant food! "Orange is the new green at the festival," its organizers say, with its local living workshops and a host of electric vehicles on display. Just how "green" is this weekend event? Would you believe that despite all the food, fun, and frivolity, the festival produces only two bags of trash for 8,000 people?

After a brief hiatus due to the Covid pandemic, the festival has come back stronger (and more fragrant) than ever. "Twenty five years ago," the organizers say, "we dreamed up an idea to celebrate the beauty and bounty of our region, so often-overlooked, and ignite the cultural and agricultural economy of the North Quabbin. Today, more than ever, people of all walks of life need places to come together in celebration and gain inspiration for resilient lives and communities, and a saner world." That's just what you'll find at the Festival.

The flavorful event runs from 10 am to 5 pm on September 30 and October 1, offering ample time to enjoy a taste of the region. As a twenty-fifth anniversary special, Garlic & Arts is offering half-price general admission this year — only \$5 for the weekend! Kids 12 and under are admitted free. Card to Culture: EBT, WIC, and ConnectorCare cardholders can also attend free of charge. Visit www.garlicandarts.org for the full array of vendors, performance and workshops, parking and shuttle information. (No pets, service animals only.) Follow the festival on facebook: @North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival and Instagram @nqgarlicandartsfestival.

Or just breathe deeply, and let your senses lead you to Forster's Farm. §



Best prices in Central Mass.
Pick Your Own Apples!

\$25 - 1/2 Bushel Bag
\$15 - Peck Bag
Bags of Pre-picked apples \$25



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**44th Annual
NARRAGANSETT CRAFT FAIR**
Saturday, November 11, 2023 • 9 AM~3PM

Narragansett Middle School
464 Baldwinville Rd., Baldwinville MA

Craftspeople from all around New England!

Wide variety of Crafts and Gift Items * Do all your Holiday Shopping early!

COFFEE CAN AUCTION! * CAFÉ OPEN ALL DAY!

Organized by: Phillipston Youth Supporters

For More Information visit
www.narragansettcraftfair.com



Westminster Historical Society
Attic Treasures Sale
Saturday, September, 23rd.
9 AM — 2 PM
110 Main Street
Vintage, Unique and
Affordable finds or all!!

Westminster Cracker Festival
Saturday, October 21st.
10:00 AM — 5:00 PM
Westminster Center,
Main Street
5k — Music — Arts & Crafts
— Food & Drink —

Find out more at: www.westminster-ma.gov

Visit our website for more upcoming events throughout the season and check out the recreation areas & hiking areas at Hager Park, Crocker Pond, Mid-State Trail, Muddy Pond and Wachusett Mountain.



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Celebrate the Season!



The lazy, hazy days of summer are winding down, and the crisp, invigorating weeks of winter lie ahead. As autumn arrives in all its brilliant glory, the agricultural past and recreational present combine to make Johnny Appleseed Country a daily delight.

As you travel through North Central Massachusetts, you can see scores of active farms and orchards, providing both food and entertainment for today's residents and visitors. You can swing by a farmstand to pick up some fresh veggies for your dinner table, or spend a day picking shiny red, green, even golden apples in a sunny hilltop orchard.

But fall is also a time for folks to gather together to celebrate this

bounty — and the region provides weeks of festivals to make that possible!

Tracing Our Roots

There's no surer place to see the area's agricultural roots than at the Sterling Fair — a two and a half day, family oriented, community, agricultural fair with the emphasis on agriculture and education. The Sterling Fair features rides, horse pulls, oxen pulls, tractor pulls, helicopter rides, antique engine and machinery show, livestock shows, food, entertainment and more!

The fair begins on Friday, September 8, with a fun-packed midway — fun, food, games, thrilling rides (like the iconic Ferris wheel), all designed to get you in a festive mood. But don't let the bright lights, chills, and thrills fool you. This is a weekend packed with everything from a kids' frog jumping contest and women's skillet-tossing contest to an antique tractor and engine show! Horse and oxen pulls. Baked goods and quilting contests. Vegetable and gourd decorating shows. And music, music, music! Learn more about this weekend-long event at sterlingfair.org.

Tons of Pumpkins

If you love pumpkins — and who doesn't, at this time of year! — be sure to swing by the Ashby Pumpkin Festival on the Ashby Town Common on September 30. It's a celebration of that popular fall favorite complete with food, music, and even a tractor parade!

Of course, you can find lots of pumpkins at local farms and fairs — pumpkins to make into pies; tiny pumpkins to decorate your dinner table; orange (and white!), round, and oval pumpkins to carve into Halloween jack-o-lanterns.

But wait! You haven't seen pumpkins until you've visited the Pumpkin Weigh-In on Columbus Day weekend at the Red Apple Farm in Phillipston. These are really, really, really big pumpkins. These babies can tip the scales at over a thousand pounds!

This annual event celebrating these giant gourds, and the region's agricultural history, is planned for Sunday, October 8 this year. It's a sight you won't want to miss!

The Apple of Your Eye

Did you know that the Macoun is considered the "cream of the crop" at Sholan Farms, the last working orchard in Johnny Appleseed's home town? Run by a dedicated group of volunteers, Sholan Farms is a great spot to visit year-round — but it really shines in late summer and early fall, when apple lovers flock to the orchard and farm stand.

Of course, apple picking season is a reason to celebrate everything apple! Plan to visit this hilltop orchard overlooking the city on September 16 and 17, for Honeycrisp Weekend, and September 23 and 24 for Cream of the Crop Weekend, and be sure to come back on October 7 for the Scarecrows in the Orchard Harvest Festival!

Love mountain views? Visit Wachusett Mountain Ski Area's two-weekend long AppleFest, featuring "everything apple," including a



pie-eating contest, along with music, clowns, inflatables, food trucks and more!

And speaking of Johnny Appleseed ... you won't want to miss the Appleseed Country Fair, a three-day extravaganza at the Red Apple Farm in Phillipston on Labor Day weekend! Keep your eyes peeled — you just might spot Johnny himself amid the fair-goers! The weekend is jam-packed with music, crafters, hayrides, farm animals ... and the ever-popular brew barn! Pick your own apples, or buy some at the farm store, bring the family and enjoy a day in the fresh country air!


The region's namesake also lends his moniker to a downtown Leominster bash — the Johnny Appleseed Arts & Cultural Festival, a day filled with food, music, and more right in the city's business district. Visit over 220 Vendors From School Street to Park Street and West Street, and onto Main Street to Merriam Avenue. The world famous

Apple Crisp returns, as does Johnny Appleseed himself!

But Wait! There's More!

Pick a weekend, any weekend, in the fall, and you're likely to find a celebration somewhere in Johnny Appleseed Country. Here's a quick list to get your plans moving: St. Edward's Fall Fair in Westminster; ShirleyFest on the Shirley Common; River City Rhythm & Rock Fest in Fitchburg; Winchendon's Fall Festival, held downtown; the Westminster Cracker Barrel Festival; the 42nd Arts & Crafts Fair on Townsend Common; BBQFest at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area; the Alpaca Farm Fest in Lunenburg; the Garlic & Arts Festival in Orange (see story on page 8); and the Cannoli Festival in Leominster!

There's just no shortage of celebrations this fall — browse through the Calendar section of this Guide and head out for a fun- (and food-) filled day in Johnny's backyard. §



TOWN OF STERLING

HOLIDAY COOKIE SALE AND CRAFT FAIR

Sterling Senior Center
36 Muddy Pond Road
Saturday, December 9th
9 AM - 2 PM

STERLING FARMERS MARKET

1 Park Street, Butterick Municipal Building
Fridays 3 PM – 6 PM
May through October

STERLING STREET MARKET


Town Common in Sterling Center
Saturdays 10 AM – 2 PM
May through October

STERLING FAIR

Sterling Airport
121 Greenland Road
September 8 - 10
sterlingfair.org

DRIVE-THRU COOKIE KICK-OFF

Sterling Senior Center
36 Muddy Pond Road
Friday, December 15th
4:30 PM - 6:30 PM
sterlingrec.com




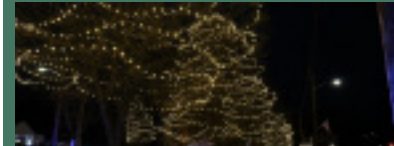

FALL 2023 & WINTER 2024 EVENTS

FRIENDS OF THE CONTANT LIBRARY CRAFT FAIR

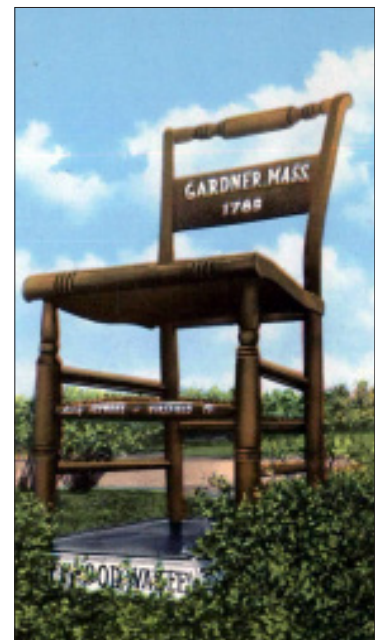
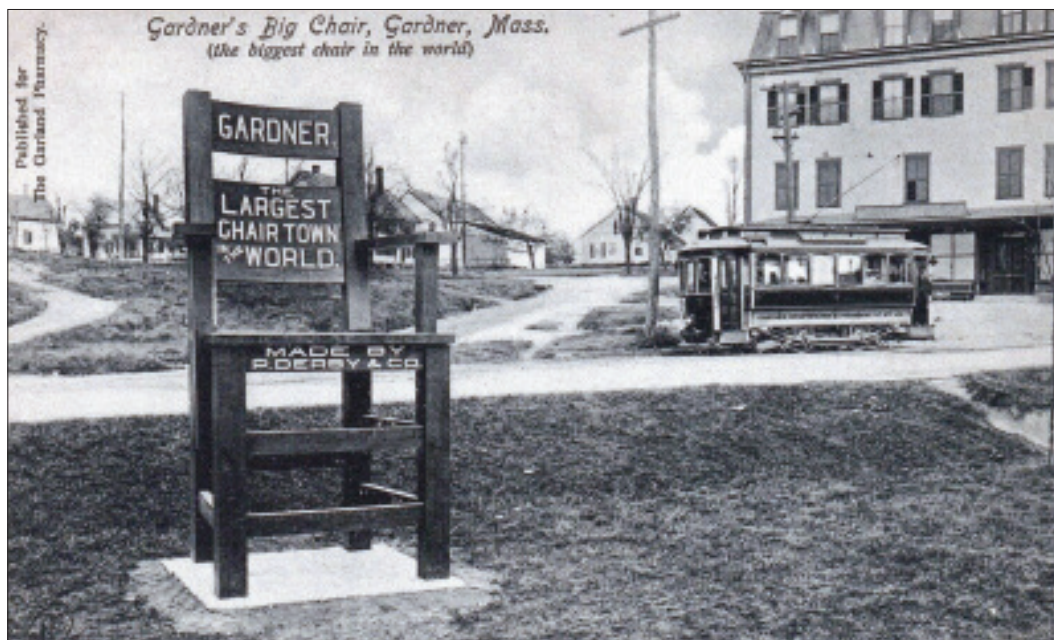
First Church Sterling,
6 Meetinghouse Hill Road, Sterling

Saturday, November 18
9 AM - 2 PM
sterlinglibrary.org



100 YEARS... AND COUNTING



If you love parades, you're in for a treat in September, as the City of Gardner celebrates a major milestone!

Settled in 1764, and designated as a town in 1785, this North Central Massachusetts community grew and blossomed — gaining fame as “The Chair City” in recognition of its manufacturing base — and in 1923 made the leap to incorporation as a city. That transformation is the subject of a year-long celebration, with special events that began in January and will run right through the end of the calendar year.

The festivities have included a flashback dance, essay contests, and a summer gathering that encompassed everything from kids’ activities to food trucks and music. The Gardner Museum hosted a special exhibition through the summer, “Celebrating Gardner’s 100 Years as a City,” showcasing memorable aspects of the City’s first 100 years. Highlighted in that exhibition were long-term businesses

that continue to serve the Chair City today.

The highlight of the party, though, will be on Sunday, September 17 — a two-mile long Centennial Parade through the center of the city. According to the Centennial Committee, even the parade route has meaning: It begins on Elm Street, where Gardner’s Giant Chair is located, and passes by the Gardner Museum on Pearl Street (a repository of Gardner’s history from its earliest settlement in 1764) and continues down Central Street near Monument Park — now known as the venue of popular summer concerts. The route continues through Gardner’s iconic downtown and ends on Waterford Street, where a new community center will open as the city begins its second century.

The year-long Centennial party wraps up in December with a gala ball in City Hall.

Want to know more about this centennial city? Check out its Facebook page, 100Gardner, for a day-by-day look at the community,



spotlighting people, places and events like the 1925 opening of the J.J. Newberry store on Parker Street, the date in 1935 when Gardner regained bragging rights as the home to the largest chair in the world (a 16-foot tall Colonial Hitchcock chair made by the Heywood Wakefield Company for Gardner’s sesquicentennial), the Gardner High School hockey team’s capture of the state championship in 1994, and the 2015 dedication of the new Police Station on Main Street — featuring an entryway that reflects the city’s “Chair City” designation.

Ready for a once-in-a-hundred-years party? Gardner is the place to be in '23! §

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Step Inside



Photo Diane Burnette.

Great Wolf Lodge, Fitchburg.

Hiking trails, festivals, apple orchards, ski slopes — there are so many great outdoor spots to visit in Johnny Appleseed's backyard any time of the year!

But sometimes, you may feel you've had enough of all that sunshine and fresh air ... or maybe the weatherman has put a damper on your plans for the day. Cheer up and head out the door — to one of the great indoor hot spots the region has to offer!

Got Kids?

Whether the family needs to

burn off some energy or is looking for a relaxing tube ride down a lazy "river," you've come to the right place. Consider these options for some fun for all ages:

Great Wolf Lodge in Fitchburg, where it's summertime year-round. Zip down a water slide, float on a quiet stream, climb a rock wall, challenge your skills on a ropes course. Too much activity for you? Check out the MagiQuest adventure game, settle quietly for a story hour, or pan and sift your way to finding beautiful gemstones in a treasure-seeking adventure. This magical place is located just off Route 2 in Fitchburg; you can see all it has to offer at greatwolf.com.

Launch into some fun in Leominster. The newest family attraction in the area, **Launch Leominster** is an indoor trampoline park — and so much more! Kids, teens and adults alike can find activities to enjoy, from a Ninja course to dodge ball, bowling, and even a virtual reality experience. But don't miss the trampolines, where you can bring your fun to new heights! Launch Leominster is located at 118 Commercial Road, at the Mall at Whitney Field. See all the options for a fun-filled day at launchtrampolinepark.com.

FunStuf Party Place in Fitchburg is stuffed with, well, fun stuff to do! The Arcade Center offers everything from classic games and pinball machines to the latest and greatest video games. There are special event days with visits from Barbie to Mario and Super Heroes. And, of course, the playground filled with inflated slides and bouncy activities! FunStuf is at 791 Water St. (Route 12) in Fitchburg. See all the fun on [facebook/funstufpartyplace](https://facebook.com/funstufpartyplace).

Stepping Up

Release your inner Paul Bunyan — and take aim with an axe at **Game On Fitchburg**! Yes, this expansive sports facility has a little bit of everything, from indoor and outdoor lessons, camps, clinics and tournaments. But for some real indoor fun, take a trip to the axe-throwing lanes. Check out the arcade and cornhole court. Take a break at the bar and grille, complete with entertainment. Oh, did we mention the axe-throwing?? Learn more about Game On Fitchburg, located at 100 Game On Way, off Westminster Street in West Fitchburg, with a stop at its Facebook page.

Need to let off a little steam? Had a tough day and want to really unwind? Let it all out at **Letz Rage**, where you can have a smashing good time! Not just for grown-ups, this hot spot on Fitchburg's John Fitch Highway is a great place to let loose, dump all your worries, and enjoy a barrel of laughs. Break some glassware. Smash a TV. Slam appliances that have been driving you crazy at home. Yes, here's a spot where you can destroy everything!



Letz Rage, Fitchburg.



Game On, Fitchburg.

Toss some paint at a wall (or a friend). Let it all out, and walk away feeling oh, so, satisfied! Read all about it at letzrage.com.

On a Roll

There's something so satisfying about the sound of a bowling ball hitting the sweet spot, followed by pins flying. This long-popular sport is alive and well in North Central Massachusetts. Whether you're a

traditional ten-pin bowler, or a true New England candlepin aficionado, there's a lane waiting for you here! Check out **Gardner Ten Pins** on Route 2A in that city; or **Harvard Bowling Lanes** on Ayer Road in Harvard. Never tried candlepin bowling? You absolutely have to check out **Putnam Street Lanes** in Fitchburg, rumored to be the oldest candlepin center in the country!

Have a Seat

Yeah, sometimes you just need to take a load off your feet, lean back and relax. And we've got just the spot for you! Several spots, in fact. One of the most popular indoor activities, of course, is enjoying a movie. Big screens. Comfy seats. Tasty (if not nutritious) snacks. Escape from the world for a while in the luxury recliner seats at **Gardner Cinemas** on Timpany Boulevard (Route 68), Gardner; at **Cinema World** on the John Fitch Highway in Fitchburg; **Entertainment Cinemas** on

Sack Boulevard in Leominster; or **Athol Cinemas 8** on Reservoir Drive, Athol.

Take a World Tour

While visiting here, you've learned a lot about Johnny's Backyard — but did you know you can get a glimpse of world treasures, too? Be sure to spend some time exploring an Egyptian tomb, as well as artifacts from Africa and beyond, at the **Fitchburg Art Museum**, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. Travel halfway around the world to see fascinating treasures at the **Museum of Russian Icons**, 203 Union St., Clinton. See the works of local artists at area galleries and the **Petersham Art Center**, 8 North St., Petersham. Learn about local days gone by at historical society buildings, including the **Gardner Museum**, 28 Pearl St., Gardner.

Whatever your mood, when it's time for a break from the Great Outdoors, there are plenty of great indoor spots to visit as you tour North Central Massachusetts! §

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BOO!

Frightening or funny? Simple or elaborate? Home-made or store-bought? Whatever your costume, and however you approach the season, Halloween is a popular time for characters of all ages — and businesses, civic organizations and communities across the region are set to join in weeks of frightful fun!

Tame for Toddlers

In the waning days of October, the younger set will be welcomed along the business districts in Fitchburg, Leominster and Gardner, with treats at local shops for little ghouls and goblins. Gardner makes the daylight event festive with a Falloween Stroll, and Leominster will set its creepy scene with a Halloween parade through downtown streets on October 21.

And throughout the region, community libraries and popular family spots like Hollis Hills Farm in Fitchburg will be hosting a variety of events, from story hours to craft sessions, all with slightly spooky themes. Love animals? Dress the kids in their costumes and stop by In the Meadow Farm in Lunenburg on October 29 for an afternoon filled with games, prizes, family fun — and alpacas!

Or swing by Wachusett Mountain Ski Area on October 28 for its one-day BooFest. Enjoy

a spookishly fun day, with festive contests, ghoulish treats and eccentric entertainment for the whole family!

Terrifying (or Not) Tours

While you're enjoying some quality time with the family, hop in the car and take a tour of Halloween decorations, from tacky to terrifying, throughout Leominster. "Leominster Frights" runs a full two weeks, from October 16 to 31, with dozens of homes participating. Maps of the scary spots will be available online; check Leominster's Facebook page for details.

Hubbardston residents, too, will be putting their best monster feet forward with fun and frightful displays throughout the town for October evening touring. Visit Hubbardston250 on Facebook.

Or get out of the car, and into a more rustic vehicle, for a Haunted Hayride in Athol! In mid-October, the Athol Lions Club leads its long-popular event. Travel around Silver Lake Park, being treated to scary skits along the way! For the younger set, there are non-scary rides at dusk — and then the frightful fun begins for those with the nerve to take the tour!

Night Time is Fright Time

A highlight of any Leominster visit will be a tour of Tolman Street after dark. The kids will love the lighted, glowing, bobbing display of everything from jack o'lanterns to scarecrows and witches — along with Winnie the Pooh (and Tigger, too!). Get out of the car and stroll

through the dozens of freaky and funny inflatables daily through the entire month. There will also be a pumpkin patch where children can pick a pumpkin to bring home and carve. See ChristmasonTolman on Facebook for details about hours and any weather cautions.

Oooooohhhh...You can almost feel ghostly figures slip past you as you tour Templeton's historic Common and centuries-old graveyard on October 27 and 28. Members of the Narragansett Historical Society will bring the past to life as they lead these evening tours, turning the spotlight — or, more appropriately, candlelight — on the lives of the town's early settlers.

On Halloween night, the Templeton Common turns into a more modern-day frightfest, when the local Lions Club opens the Haunted Gazebo, handing out tricks and treats.

Afraid to face the unknown alone? Gather some friends and head to Winchendon on October 14 for Haunted Toy Town's first-ever Fright Night event at the First Congregational Church in Old Centre — featuring a screening of "The Nun." The creepy cinematic event in a historic church (built in 1850) will be followed by a ghost hunt at Winchendon's two historic haunted properties, the Murdock Whitney Mansion and the Isaac Morse House. Tickets for the ghost hunt are limited; check the website winchendonhistory.com for details.

So... are you ready for some fearful fun? Come on down for a treat — and a trick! §

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For the Birds

Photo by Norman Bedard.

Have you seen any Northern cardinals lately? Red-bellied woodpeckers? Carolina wrens? Purple finches?

If you enjoy bird-watching, you won't want to miss participating in the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count — an event that's been going on for more than a century. During a three-week period from December 14, 2023 to January 5, 2024, tens of thousands of birders will head outside in a cooperative effort to get the best count of birds throughout the country — and beyond.

A Circle of Friends

While bird-watching is often a solitary activity enjoyed in peaceful surroundings, the Christmas Bird Count is truly a group event, with participants counting birds on a single day within defined 15-mile diameter "circles." Locally, active CBC circles are located in Athol, Westminster and the Oxbow area in Harvard. (You can find contact information for each of those circles online at audubon.maps.arcgis.com.) To participate in the CBC, you need to join an existing CBC circle by contacting the compiler (leader) in advance of the count day.

If you live within the boundaries of a CBC circle, you can stay at home

and report the birds that visit your feeder on count day, as long as you have made prior arrangement with the count compiler.

New to the Christmas Bird Count world? Don't worry! Birders of all skill sets are involved in the CBC. If you're a beginning birder, the local circle's compiler will pair you with an expert initially to ensure a proper count.

As you can see, this is a serious, well-controlled study, and CBC data have been used in hundreds of analyses, peer-reviewed publications, and government reports over the decades. A total of 133 Christmas Bird Counts were conducted in New England during the 122nd CBC season last winter. The "work force" participating in this effort included 4,071 counters (not including feeder watchers) who managed to tally 213 species!

Not on Your Calendar?

If you can't make it to an active count circle — but still want to help keep track of local bird populations — you're in luck!

As an alternative, you may be interested in joining in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) organized by Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Birds Canada. It takes place President's Day weekend each February, and you can count the birds each day in your backyard /community and then enter the results online.

And each fall and spring bring additional watchful experiences: The Eastern Mass Hawkwatch, when spotters gather to watch the movement of raptors unfold in the seasonal migrations. In Spring 2023, Eastern Mass Hawk Watch



Photo by Mitchell R. Grosky.

(EMHW) spotters counted over 2,300 migrating raptors (along with numerous local eagles, vultures, and falcons)!

And for sheer pleasure, North Central Massachusetts is a great place to observe our feathered friends—at the abundant local and state parks, conservation areas and reservations throughout the region.

Here's a tip for bird enthusiasts: The Athol Bird and Nature Club, headquartered at the Millers River Environmental Center in Athol, has an active birding division that takes local bird trips in the spring and fall. The club also has an extensive collection of mounted bird specimens, some large such as the Great Gray Owl, and others much smaller such as a Black-capped Chickadee or various warbler species. The collection aids in educating interested bird enthusiasts on bird identification and bird adaptations. You can learn more about the ABNC online at atholbirdclub.org. §

For more information on the Great Backyard Bird Count, visit Audubon's GBBC page.



Photo by Norman Bedard.

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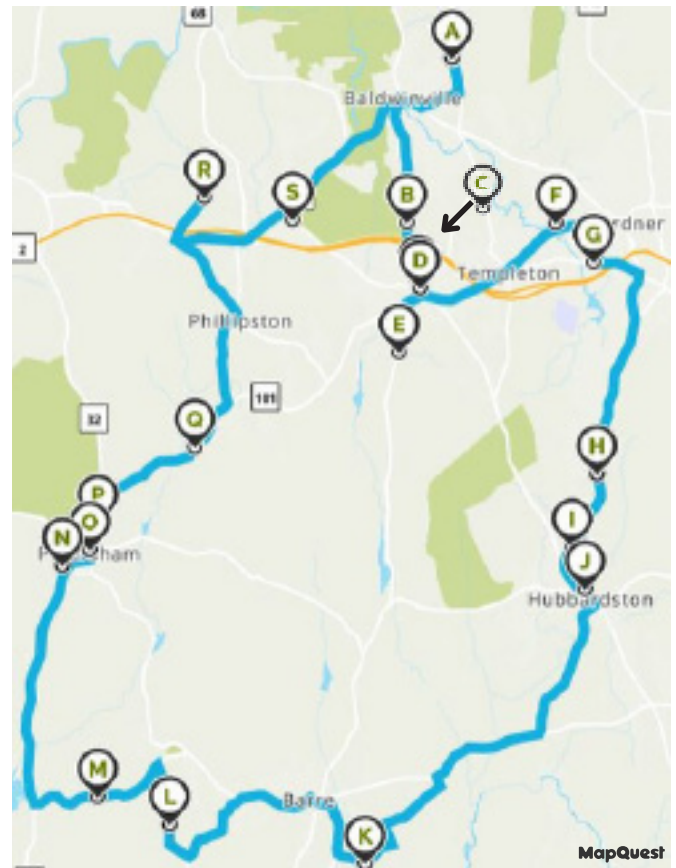
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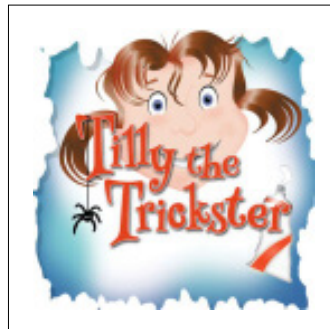
The curtain is going up on another great theater season in North Central Massachusetts!

Highlights of the fall and winter offerings in the region include a family-fun holiday favorite at Gardner's Theatre at the Mount. Based on the hit film of the same name, **ELF**, the Musical follows the story of Buddy, an orphaned infant who accidentally crawls into Santa's sleigh one Christmas Eve and is transported back to the North Pole, where he is adopted by Santa's elves.

Buddy grows up thinking himself to be an elf until his enormous size and less than extraordinary toy-making abilities make him realize he is human. Resolving to find his true identity, Buddy makes his way to New York City and winds up helping its cynical inhabitants discover the true meaning of Christmas. Embrace your inner ELF! The show runs the weekends of November 25 and December 2 at Mount Wachusett Community College.

But before we get to Christmas, Theatre at the Mount will dish up some sure-to-please comedy, **The Odd Couple**. Many in the audience will remember the TV show — and now you can see the antics live on stage!

This classic comedy opens as a group of guys assemble for cards in the apartment of divorced



Oscar Madison. And if the mess is any indication, it's no wonder that his wife left him. Late to arrive is Felix Unger, who has just been separated from his wife. Fastidious, depressed, and none too tense, Felix seems suicidal, but as the action unfolds, Oscar becomes the one with murder on his mind when the clean freak and the slob ultimately decide to room together with hilarious results as **The Odd Couple** is born.

Enjoy a good laugh, or two or three, when the curtain goes up on this comedy on Oct 6-7 and 13-15.

Theatre at the Mount hasn't forgotten the younger set! Kids will enjoy **Tilly The Trickster** on October 21. Tilly is a mischievous girl who loves nothing more than causing a little trouble. From leaking cups to toothpaste-flavored cookies, Tilly has a trick for everyone: her mom, dad, brother, classmates, and even her teacher. But when the tables are turned and her



family does some scheming of its own, will Tilly decide to change her trickster ways? One show only, so get tickets soon!

And who doesn't love a musical? The classic extravaganza, **The Music Man** follows fast-talking traveling salesman, Harold Hill, as he cons the people

of River City, Iowa, into buying instruments and uniforms for a boys' band that he vows to organize — this, despite the fact that he doesn't know a trombone from a treble clef. His plans to skip town with the money are foiled when he falls for Marian, the librarian. By turns wicked, funny, warm, romantic, and touching, **The Music Man** is family entertainment at its best. You can see it at The Mount in Gardner at the end of February and first weekend in March.

Want more music? StageWorks Performing Arts will present **Blockbuster Hits**, an original revue at the theater at St. Bernard's High School, Fitchburg, on Oct 6-8. You'll be tapping your toes with revue of hits you know from movies you love. Visit stageworksarts.org.

And be sure to check out the New Players Theatre Guild in Fitchburg — plans are afoot there to host an improv group, and stage a musical this fall. Visit the troupe on Facebook or at nptg.org to see the plans unfold!

Curtains up! Light the lights! Sit back and enjoy! §

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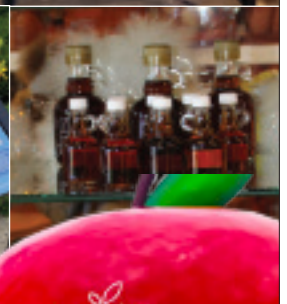


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Eagle Eyes

Our American Icon is a Comeback Story

Photos by Norman Bedard

Look up! That impressive silhouette you see against the bright blue sky just might be an American classic: a majestic Bald Eagle!

Once a rare sight in Massachusetts, bald eagles have made a remarkable comeback — thanks in large part to the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and other conservation

organizations. According to MassWildlife, “from the 1940s until it was banned in 1972, the pesticide DDT caused egg mortality and further decline of the bald eagle.

“Restoration of the bald eagle in Massachusetts began in the 1980s, when MassWildlife and other partners transported young eaglets from wild nests (mostly from Canada) and raised them in cages overlooking the Quabbin Reservoir. Once the birds were ready to fledge, the cage doors were opened and the eagles released,” the state website explains. From the 1990s until 2003, releases of captive-born eagles continued, and now the impressive birds can be spotted throughout the state — including right here in North Central Massachusetts!



Pepperell photographer Norman Bedard has been watching and photographing bald eagles around his hometown for several years, and has come to recognize individual birds (and their mates) as they sail over water bodies like Townsend Harbor and the Nashua River. “There has been a real influx of eagles around this area,” Bedard says, noting that one local farmer reports having seen as many as 20 gathering over the winter.

It may surprise you to hear that winter is a great time to spot bald eagles — but MassWildlife says that winter bird-watchers have a great chance to see the impressive birds. The trick is knowing where to look. “Bald eagles usually live in coastal areas, estuaries, and larger inland

waters. They need a lot of shoreline habitat with forested areas for nesting. They prefer areas where some trees project above the forest canopy for perching with an unimpeded view. Bald eagles typically choose waterbodies with a good supply of moderate- to large-sized fish,” according to the MassWildlife website.

Bedard says one of his favorite spots for eagle photography is around Townsend

Harbor, right off Main Street (Route 119) in Townsend. “I’ve been able to photograph five eagles at one time, two adults and some immatures (eaglets) near the MassWildlife area on the Squannacook River,” and has photographed eagles with their babies in nests in the area, he says. Bring your binoculars, and you might be able to spot some parents soaring high above their learning-to-fly offspring, keeping an eagle eye on the youngsters.

You can stretch your legs and do a little bird-watching at the same time, following a trail in the Marion Stoddard Conservation Area in Pepperell. Prefer a different view? Drop a canoe or kayak at the launch



site in the conservation area named after the local resident who has spent half a century protecting the Nashua River and area environment, and enjoy a leisurely paddle on that waterway.

The best times to spot these huge birds are evening and early morning, Bedard suggests. “They seem to be most active early in the morning, and again toward sundown.”

That is, of course, just one area in which these majestic birds have been spotted. Local residents have also enjoyed watching them, for example, around Lake Shirley in Lunenburg, Wachusett Reservoir in the Clinton/Sterling area, and in the skies over Westminster and Fitchburg.

What are those eagles doing all winter, here in chilly climes? MassWildlife notes that “courtship takes place in mid- to late winter. After courtship, a mated pair builds or adds to a large nest in December–

February. The nest is built with large sticks and lined with sprigs of pine, grasses, and other soft materials. Male eagles collect the nest materials and deliver them to their mates, which are responsible for most of the actual nest construction. Once a nesting site is chosen, mated pairs usually return every year and add to the existing nest. Egg laying usually takes place from early March to early April.”

If you see a bald eagle carrying sticks to a nest this winter, MassWildlife asks that you report your observation to mass.wildlife@mass.gov, including the location and date of the observation and your contact information. These observations help MassWildlife identify new nest locations and monitor the eagle population.

Looking for something different to do this winter? Get out and look to the skies! §

FUN FACTS About Eagles

- The bald eagle is the largest nesting bird of prey in Massachusetts, with a wingspan of at least 6 feet, sometimes more than 7 feet.
- In the wild, bald eagles may live 20 years or more. The oldest wild individual on record lived 38 years.
- The eagle first appeared as an American symbol on one of the first U.S. coins, a copper piece minted in Massachusetts in 1776. The bald eagle became our national bird in 1782.

Exhibitions, events and more!

FALL - WINTER CALENDAR 2023

As this issue of The Guide goes to press, the events listed in this Calendar are scheduled. However, we recommend that you check the organizations on social media or by phone to confirm the event status, masking requirements, and any limits on attendance.

EXHIBITIONS

Through September 10 In the Eye of the Beholder: Gender through the Camera Lens at the Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. In the Eye of the Beholder delves into the Fitchburg Art Museum's permanent collection to explore how photographers have used the "gendered gaze" across the 20th and early 21st centuries. This exhibition highlights some of the museum's iconic favorites and recent acquisitions—including work from Sir Zanele Muholi, Cindy Sherman, and Yasumasa Morimura—to examine how power is embedded in the male and female gazes. In the Eye of the Beholder further explores artists who experiment with or outright reject the gender binary, questioning and complicating methods of perceiving gender and its performance.

Through October 1. Grow, Forage, Eat, a New England Society of Botanical Artists Illustrated Exhibit at the New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill, 11 French Dr., Boylston. Come learn about the wide variety of wild and cultivated plants we eat in an illustrated exhibit featuring stunning artwork created by the New England Society of Botanical Artists (NESBA). The New England Society of Botanical Artists are a society of artist who work to promote public appreciation of the art and science of botanical art and illustration in New England. The Society educates individuals and organizations about botanical art and illustration through exhibits, lectures, workshops, and outreach programs. Through its art, NESBA emphasizes New England plant diversity and its preservation.

Through Oct. 15. CHIAOZZA, a sculpture exhibition at New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill, 11 French Dr., Boylston. Experience CHIAOZZA, an exhibit of imaginative, colorful sculptures and wall works displayed across New England Botanic Garden. Discover the surprising creative parallels between growing plants and making art in a show inspired by the wonders of the plant world. In this lively and playful exhibition, Brooklyn-based artists Adam Frezza and Terri Chiao explore the curious forms found in grafted trees and plants. Strolling through the gardens, visitors will encounter a series of 10 large sculptures called "Gemels" ranging in height from five to ten feet each. The works themselves, painted paper pulp forms set on white pedestals, emerge along walking paths, nestled among plantings, in flower beds, under trees, and even in a fountain. As part of the exhibition, additional sculptures, wall works, and a short film created by the artists are on view inside the Milton Gallery.

September 22 through January 21, 2024. Spirituality in Eastern Christianity: Images of a Living Tradition at the Museum of Russian Icons, 203 Union St., Clinton. An exhibition of photographs of Alain de Lotbiniere. Visit museumofrussianicons.org.

Through March 1, 2024. Rachel Hayes: Transcending Space at Fruitlands Museum, 102 Prospect Hill Rd., Harvard. Rachel Hayes: Transcending Space, presented in Fruitlands Museum's entranceway and main gallery, features



Rocks at the top of The Rock Walk in Fitchburg

recent works by Oklahoma-based artist Rachel Hayes. Blurring the realms of craft, sculpture, architecture, and land art, Hayes creates large-scale textile installations that respond to their natural and manmade environments. Transcending Space features several of her large, color-block fabric hangings alongside a new body of work that combines dried flower bouquets with patches of vibrant fabric. Supplemented by PLATFORM 31: Rachel Hayes, The Edge of Becoming on Fruitland's hillside, opening in June 2023, the exhibition showcases the range and evolution of Hayes's practice, while enlivening and transforming Fruitlands' existing spaces.

September 30 through January 7, 2024. Ella Crowell by Thomas Eakins and Revistations: Women's Bodies in Contemporary Art at the Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg.

Oct 21 through Feb. 4, 2024. Dialogues, Diasporas and Detours through Africa at the Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg.

SEPTEMBER

2 Saturday, 11 am–2 pm. *Back to School Blowout* at the Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Rd. Winchendon. Join us and Teen DJ Kaela Riley for an afternoon of fun. Make your own Back to School outfit out of anything but fabric in the Recycled Fashion Show! Entry is free and winner will get a Gift Card for back to School shopping! Nerf Gun War at 11:30 am, on-site candy bar, more games and food!

2 Saturday, 11 am–2 pm. *Leominster Farmer's Market* in Monument Square, Main Street, Leominster. Plan to fill your table with fresh produce, check out vendors.

2 Saturday, 7:30 pm. *About Sunset Family Owl Prowl* at Tully Lake, 25 Doan Hill Rd., Royalston. Learn about the owls that breed in Massachusetts! We will talk about how to identify owls by call, where to find them, and how owls can successfully hunt at night. We will take our skills to the trail and listen for owls along Long Pond. After the walk, we'll end with

a bedtime story – "Owl Moon" by Jane Yolen. Don't forget a flashlight! Register at tickets.thetrustees.org. Repeats September 9.

2-3 Saturday & Sunday, 10 am–4 pm. *Fruitlands Fairy Forest Walk* at Fruitlands Museum, 102 Prospect Hill Rd., Harvard. Don your wings, grab your crowns, and come play in the Fruitlands woods as Louisa May Alcott and her sisters once played. We encourage all visitors to our grounds and trails to build fairy and gnome houses around the Willard Archeological site along the yellow trail at Fruitlands Museum. Collect natural materials and build a house for the Fruitlands fairies and gnomes, then leave your house for the sprites to enjoy and other guests to see as the fairy forest grows. Register at thetrustees.org.

2-3 Saturday & Sunday, 11 am–4 pm. *Fall Craft Food Festival* at Hardwick Vineyard & Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick. Food trucks, live music, craft vendors and more at this event benefiting the Jubilee Cupboard food pantry.

2-3 Saturday & Sunday, 10 am–4 pm. *Fall Festival* at Plain View Alpaca Farm, 130 Gardner Rd., Hubbardston. Local vendors, food and fun. Visit the alpacas and the grand re-opening of the alpaca store.

2-4 Saturday & Sunday 10 am–6 pm; Monday 10 am–4 pm. *Applesseed Country Fair* at Red Apple Farm, 455 Highland Ave., Phillipston. Three days of music, vendors, food, hayrides, demonstrations, apple picking and more!

2-4 Saturday & Sunday, 10 am–6 pm; Monday, 10 am–4 pm. *Fall Harvest Festival* at Kimball Farm, 1543 Lunenburg Rd., Lancaster. Crafts, food, fun.

5 Tuesday 6:30 pm. *Music of Mexico with Fiesta del Norte* at the Museum of Russian Icons, 203 Union St., Clinton. This free concert highlights Mexican culture through the living tradition of mariachi with Fiesta del Norte, Connecticut's first mariachi band. Visit museumofrussianicons.org.

6 Wednesday, 5–6 pm. *Wednesday Night Casual Cycling*, 5pm at the Upper Common, Fitchburg. The Break Bike Shop & InTown Fitchburg offer a medium difficulty bike ride. Meet at the Upper Common and cycle along Summer Street to the Rail Trail. The event

is weather dependent. Under 18 must be accompanied by a parent. Repeats Wednesdays through Oct. 4. Visit intownnfitchburg.com for updates.

6 Wednesday, 5–7 pm. Opening Reception for the “Bjurling Family” exhibition at the Gardner Museum, 28 Pearl St., Gardner. No reservation needed. The exhibit will feature photos, documents, and other artifacts about Gardner’s prominent Bjurling Family. Learn about their military careers, and community involvement. The exhibit will run until the end of the year during regular museum opening hours. Exhibit and reception are funded in part by a grant from the Bjurling Foundation. Visit gardnermuseuminc.com.

6 Wednesday, 5:30–6:30 pm. Free Outdoor Yoga at Rogers Field, 37 Buena Vista St., Devens. Repeats on Sept. 13, 20 & 27.

7 Thursday, 6:30 pm. A Worcester County Civil War story in letters at the Gardner Museum, 28 Pearl St., Gardner. Jan Drake is a retired librarian and hobby genealogist who lives in Needham. Her great grandfather’s cousin George W. Harwood from North Brookfield enlisted in the MA 36th Regiment of Volunteers which served for three years (1862-1865), travelling with the Ninth Corps primarily under General Ambrose Burnside. The program includes reading from the letters, and maps and photos of people and places mentioned.

7 Thursday, 6:30 pm Taylor Ashton performs at Fruitlands Museum, 102 Prospect Hill Rd., Harvard. Concerts under the event tent are presented at Fruitlands on Thursdays in September and October. Space is limited; pre-registration is required. Visit thetrustees.org for tickets.

8 Friday, 5–10 pm. Food Truck Festival in downtown Leominster. So many choices! From tacos to taters, pierogi to pickles — be sure to come hungry, because you’ll want to try everything in sight! Live music, beer garden ... what more could you ask for? Visit Leominster’s Facebook page for updated list of vendors.

8 Friday, 8 pm. Shawn Colvin performs at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Over the course of three decades, Shawn Colvin has established herself as a captivating performer and a revered storyteller, well-deserving of the commendation of her peers and the devoted audiences who have been inspired by her artistry. Visit grotonhill.org.

8–9 Friday, 5–10 pm; Saturday, 10 am–4 pm. Olde Home Days in Central Park, Clinton. Friday’s events include bed races, cirque de Light performers and a movie; Saturday offers vendors, music, inflatables and games, performances; both days include food trucks. Visit clintonma.gov.

8–10 Friday, 6 pm–Sunday, 6 pm. 2023 Vintage Offroad Nationals at R/C Excitement, Inc, 208 Bemis Rd., Fitchburg. Flipped Schedule: Saturday includes 2wd, 4wd and Stadium Trucks; Sunday includes Classic, 4wd Classic, Heavy Metal, and Wheelie. In an effort to get back to the spirit of the Classic Class, all cars in Classic must be entry level plastic tub type cars.

8–10 Friday, 5 pm–11 pm; Saturday, 9 am–11 pm; Sunday, 9 am–5 pm. The Sterling Fair at the Sterling Airport, 121 Greenland Rd., Sterling. This family oriented, community fair with an emphasis on agriculture and education is back, with visitor favorites like Horse and Oxen Pulls, Farmers Market, Gillette Midway, Exhibit Hall, Livestock Show, Frog Jumping, Tractor Pull, Perkins Belgian Horse Parade, Food and Craft Vendors, Helicopter Rides, Fireworks and Live Entertainment, new additions for 2023 include speed painter Rob Surette and Animal Adventures Live Exotic Zoo. Free parking and admission. Visit sterlingfair.org.

9 Saturday, 8 am–1 pm. 15th Annual Templeton Town Wide Yard Sale. Pick up a map (and shop vendor booths) at the Narragansett Regional High School

parking lot, 464 Baldwinville Rd., Baldwinville, then head throughout town in search of bargains.

9 Saturday, 10 am–6 pm. St. Edward’s Parish Fall Festival at 10 Church St., Westminster. Raffles, theme baskets, kids games, food, attic treasures and more!

9 Saturday, 11 am–5 pm. ShirleyFest on Shirley Common, 41 Brown Rd., Shirley. Music, crafts, kids’ activities, food and more. Rain date Sept. 10.

9 Saturday, 2–10 pm. River City Rhythm & Rock Fest at Riverfront Park, Boulder Drive, Fitchburg. Enjoy an unforgettable day of music, arts and culture in a celebration of the community’s vibrant cultural heritage.

9 Saturday, 5–7 pm. Lecture: The Secret World of Medieval Iconographers at the Museum of Russian Icons, 203 Union St., Clinton. Examine the materials and techniques used by medieval icon painters, learn about their recipes and secrets for painting icons and manuscripts that were handed down through generations. Visit museumofrussianicons.org.

9 Saturday, 6 pm. A Night of Zeppelin Live at Bull Spit Brewery, Bull Spit Brewing Company, 4 Summer Dr., Winchendon.

9 Saturday, 7–10 pm. Reminiscents perform at The WCP Amphitheater, 86 Ingleside Rd., Winchendon. Tickets start at \$20. Bring chairs or blankets; tiered grass seating. Visit the Winchendon Community Park on Facebook for details.

9 Saturday, 7:30 pm. Sunset Family Owl Prowl at Tully Lake, 25 Doan Hill Rd., Royalston. Learn about the owls that breed in Massachusetts! See Sept. 2 listing for details.

9 Saturday, 2 pm & 7:30 pm. Vista Philharmonic Chamber Players performs at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Under the baton of Maestro Bruce Hagen, the Vista Philharmonic Chamber Players open the season with a varied program of large chamber works by Benjamin Britten, Ernest Bloch, and Claude Debussy, featuring amazing pianist Jenny Tang in a concerto by Johann Sebastian Bach. Visit grotonhill.org.

14 Thursday, 5:30–7:30 pm. Cow Yoga at Smith’s Country Cheese, 20 Otter River Rd., Winchendon. The herd at Smith’s farm is happy to share the pasture with you! Visit smithcountrycheese.com.

14 Thursday, 6:30 pm. Mary Gauthier performs at Fruitlands Museum, 102 Prospect Hill Rd., Harvard. Concerts under the event tent are presented at Fruitlands on Thursdays in September and October. Space is limited; pre-registration is required. Visit thetrustees.org for tickets.

14 Thursday, 6:30 pm. Sea Songs & Stories at the Gardner Museum, 28 Pearl St., Gardner. Singer and Storyteller Davis Bates will present shanties and farming songs, ocean ballads, traditional tales, oral history narratives and stories that entertain, educate and create a feeling of community. Get ready to sing along!

15 Friday, 8 pm. Arlen Roth performs at the Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley. Arlen Roth is considered one of the most influential guitarists of all time, having toured the world and recorded with artists such as Simon and Garfunkel, Bob Dylan, John Prine, Phoebe Snow, Levon Helm, Ry Cooder, John Sebastian, Janis Ian, Eric Andersen and The Bee Gees. Visit bullrunrestaurant.com.

16 Saturday, 9 am–3 pm. Hubbardston Field Day, 20 Gardner Rd, Hubbardston. Vendors, food, baby contest, bounce house, cow flop contest, music and more fun for everyone! Rain Date Sunday, September 18. See lionsclubhubbardston.com.

16 Saturday, 10 am. Fitchburg Veterans Council’s Annual 5k starting at the Thirsty Robot, 265 Summer

St., Fitchburg. Registration at 10 am, race at 11 a.m. Visit fitchburgma.gov for details.

16 Saturday, 10 am–3 pm. Northeast Border Terrier Fun Day at the Gardner Fish and Gun Club, 538 Clark St., Gardner. Club members and non-members are all welcome! Scent work demonstration, tips on caring for your terrier, rally course and more. Learn more at the club’s Facebook page.

16 Saturday, 11 am–4 pm. Harvest Jam at Hollis Hills Farm, Marshall Rd., Fitchburg. Food, drink, live music on the farm!

16 Saturday, 8 pm. Julian Lage at Groton Hill Music Center, 215 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Master jazz guitarist in a special solo appearance with original compositions that mark his second release for Blue Note Records. Visit grotonhill.org.

16–17 Saturday & Sunday. City Wide Yard Sale in Leominster. It’s bargain season in North Central Massachusetts! Pick up a map at City Hall, 25 West St., Leominster, and hit the yard sale trail!

16–17 Saturday & Sunday, 8 am–2 pm. City Wide Yard Sale in Fitchburg. Find bargains throughout the city.

16–17 Saturday & Sunday, 10 am–5 pm. Begonia and Gesneriad Show & Sale at New England Botanic Garden, 11 French Dr., Boylston. Begonias are known primarily for their colorful foliage, while gesneriads are known for their brightly colored flowers. Discover the amazing variety and beauty of begonias and gesneriads in this diverse show and learn tips from expert growers for caring for these well-loved houseplants. Many unusual and rare begonias and gesneriads will also be available for sale.



Briezy Jane and The Hurricane.

16–17 Saturday, 9 am–4 pm; Sunday, 10 am–4 pm. Arts and Craft Fair on Townsend Common, Route 119. This historic common is transformed into a marketplace of quality hand-made merchandise, with over sixty vendors, music, raffles, great food, and plenty of fun. The event is free and family-friendly.

16–17 Saturday & Sunday, 11 am–5 pm. BBQFest at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, 499 Mountain Rd., Princeton. Food trucks, entertainment, crafters, vendors and more. Bibs are welcome and big appetites are encouraged! The Skyride will be open. Visit wachusett.com.

16–17 Saturday & Sunday. Honeycrisp Weekend at Sholan Farms, 1125 Pleasant St., Leominster.

16–17 Saturday & Sunday, 10 am–4 pm. Family Weekend at the Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Rd., Winchendon. On Saturday, decorate your bike or any type of “wheels” and be in the Winchendon Wheels bike parade, ending at Grout Park with free lemonade. At dusk enjoy a showing of Parent Trap. Sunday brings the Family Olympics, with teams competing in eight to 12 events. There are fees for

some events. Visit the Winchendon Community Park on Facebook.

17 Sunday, 10 am–2 pm *The Bull Run Speaker Series* presents Emily Sweeney, author of the new book *Dropkick Murphy: A Legendary Life*. Doors open and brunch is available from 10 am. There will be no brunch service once the program begins at noon. Proceeds from this event directly benefit the Ayer Library and the Hazen Memorial Library in Shirley.

17 Sunday, 10 am–2:30 pm. Nordic Outdoor Marketplace/"TORI" & Classic Car Cruise at the Finnish Center at Saima Park, 67 Scott Rd., Fitchburg. Baked goods, books, music, and more! Show off your vehicle and admire others. Live music, food, and fun! Free admission.

17 Sunday, 12–6:30 pm. Briezyjane & the Hurricane perform at Red Apple Farm, 455 Highland Ave., Phillipston. Come hang with Briezyjane & her crazy Hurricane friend, an ever-changing and unpredictable group of musician friends who play lots of originals and some covers: folk, blues, traditional, fiddle tunes, and more until 3 pm, followed by The Cropdusters old-country band until 6:30.

17 Sunday, 1 pm. Whitney Doucet and Randy McGravey perform at Hollis Hills Farm, 340 Marshall Rd., Fitchburg.

17 Sunday, 1 pm. Gardner Centennial Parade in Historic Downtown Gardner. Bring the family for the city's parade of the century, then enjoy a special field show with the UMass Amherst Marching Band! The parade will kick off from the former Elm Street School (now Gardner Academy) and travel down Central Street to Parker Street through downtown and eventually end at Waterford Street School. For updated details, visit Gardner 100 on Facebook.

17 Sunday, 2–4 pm. Strictly Overtime performs a free concert of classic pop, rock and contemporary country sounds on Templeton Common, Routes 2A and 101. Rain date: October 1. This is the last in the 2023 Summer Concert Series presented by the Templeton Cultural Council. Bring the family, a blanket or lawn chair and relax on the beautiful town common.

21 Thursday, 5–7 pm. Opening reception for Spirituality in Eastern Christianity Exhibition at the Museum of Russian Icons, 203 Union St., Clinton. The exhibition of photographs of Alain de Lotbiniere can be visited through January 21.

21 Thursday 6:30 pm. Women in Abolition at the Gardner Museum, 28 Pearl St., Gardner. Published writer, lecturer, historian, and trial lawyer Mark Bodanza, author of a biography of Leominster abolitionist Frances Drake, will speak about this woman who was a conductor on the Underground Railroad and helped in a nationally famous rescue of a slave named Shadrach Minkins. Reception at 6:30, program at 7 pm. Reservation required; info@gardnermuseuminc.com.

21 Thursday, 6:30 pm. John Gorka performs at Fruitlands Museum, 102 Prospect Hill Rd., Harvard. Concerts under the event tent are presented at Fruitlands on Thursdays in September and October. Space is limited; pre-registration is required. Visit thetrustees.org for tickets.

21 Thursday, 7 pm. "WCV Radio for Your Eyes" at the Leominster Public Library, West St., Leominster. A free live radio show comedy in the library! Sally Cragin and Jeff Van Amburgh have created a unique presentation inspired by every form of radio program.

23 Saturday, 9 am–2 pm. Westminster Historical Society Attic Treasures Sale at 110 Main Street, Westminster. Vintage, unique and affordable finds for all!!

23 Saturday, 9 am–5 pm. 30th Annual Johnny Appleseed Festival in downtown Leominster. Monument Park and surrounding streets will be filled with music, food, pony rides, over 230 vendors, and more! Two stages, with Cara Brindisi, on Season 22 of the VOICE, who was on Gwen Stefani's team, will perform at noon on the Main Stage. Parking lot party for children and adolescents. Spectacular food court with reasonable prices. See updated information on Facebook.



Ashburnham Street Fair.

23 Saturday, 10 am–2 pm. Touch A Truck Event sponsored by HOPE of Gardner (House of Peace and Education) at Mount Wachusett Community College, 444 Green St. Gardner. This outdoor event will feature many unusual vehicles to look at and climb on and into. Fun for all ages. Several food trucks, hotdogs and ice cream will be available. A \$5.00 donation will help support the work of HOPE in our local communities. Raffles, demonstrations and exhibits will round out the fun.

23 Saturday, 10 am–2 pm. Craft Fair, Truck-A-Palooza and Toy Sale at Townsend Public Library, 12 Dudley Rd., Townsend. The Townsend Public Library is thrilled to announce Truck-A-Palooza 2023. The Friends of the Library host this event where you have the opportunity to see, touch, climb and learn about vehicles of all types! Come stroll around the craft fair and find some fantastic gifts from local artisans. Explore a huge sale with toys for all ages, food, popcorn, baked goods, petting zoo, horse rides and more to enjoy.

23 Saturday, 10 am. Celebrate Johnny's Birthday at the Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center on Route 2! Enjoy a slice of birthday cake (from 10 am until it's gone).

23 Saturday, 11 am–4 pm. Hey Day Festival Event by Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary, 113 Goodnow Rd., Princeton. Listen to live music, shop local crafters, and enjoy locally made foods and baked goods for sale. Admission includes many free ongoing activities.

23 Saturday, 1 pm. NH AGO Annual Fall Crawl at the Shirley Meeting House, 41 Brown Rd., Shirley. The New Hampshire Guild of Organists will feature the Shirley Meeting House Steven's Tracker Organ as part of their annual Fall Crawl. The public is invited to come and listen to a few pieces that demonstrate the organ and join in singing Oliver Holden's "Coronation Hymn." Visit shirleymeetinghouse.org.

23 Saturday, 2 pm. Country Fest at Templeton Fish and Game, 200 Club Rd, Templeton. Gate opens at 2 pm, Cashwood performs at 3 pm, Whiskey-6 performs at 6 pm. Outdoor beer tent, food truck. \$10 ticket. No outside food, drink or pets.

23 Saturday, 7–10 pm. Whiskey Johnson performs rock n roll at The WCP Amphitheater, 86 Ingleside Rd., Winchendon. Tickets start at \$10. Bring chairs or blankets; tiered grass seating. Visit the Winchendon Community Park on Facebook for details.

23 Saturday, 8 pm. Pam Tillis Trio at the Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley. Pam Tillis is the daughter of Country Music legend Mel Tillis and multi-media artist Doris Tillis. She has sold more than 7 million albums and has six No. 1 radio hits. She has 2 Grammy Awards, 7 ACM Nominations and 11 CMA Nominations. Visit bullrunrestaurant.com for tickets.

23–24 Saturday & Sunday. New England Dahlia Society Show & Sale at New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill, 11 French Dr., Boylston. The charismatic dahlia, a dazzling plant with flowers that bloom in a vast array of colors, forms, and sizes, takes center stage at one of the most highly anticipated plant shows of the year. From dime-sized minion blooms to honeycomb-shaped balls and even giant dinnerplate dahlias, the spectacular variety in this flower family is sure to amaze visitors of all ages. Society growers from across New England will showcase artistic displays of their most unique and beautiful blooms.

23–24 Saturday, 8:30 am–4 pm; Sunday, 10 am–3 pm. Fall profound Market 2023 at Fairgrounds at Lancaster, 318 Seven Bridge Rd., Lancaster. Vintage, vintage inspired, handmade, artisan, and creative vendors will showcase their products in individual tents for a unique collaborative shopping experience. Enjoy local food trucks and live music for a festive weekend for the whole family. Rain or shine. Kids under 12 are free. Parking is Free.

23–24 Saturday & Sunday, 10 am–4 pm. Fruitlands Craft Festival at Fruitlands Museum, 102 Prospect Hill Road, Harvard. The 11th annual Festival is a two-day outdoor show featuring the work of 48 juried artisans. Set on the picturesque grounds at Fruitlands Museum, the show's quality of craft, museum offerings and stunning views have made the Festival a popular September destination.

23–24 Saturday & Sunday, 10 am–5 pm. Cream of the Crop Macoun Weekend at Sholan Farms, 1125 Pleasant St., Leominster. Check out Sholan's favorite apple — and many more! — at the orchard overlooking the city.

23–24 Saturday & Sunday, 11 am–5 pm. Kids Fest at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, Princeton. KidsFest is a celebration of children and young adults that features vendor activities, live shows, contests, walk around talent, athletic activities like climbing walls and a ninja warrior course, food trucks, live animals, contests and more! Two-days full of fun for the whole family. Visit wachusett.com.

24 Sunday, 11 am–4 pm. Motorpalooza on Templeton Common, Routes 2A and 101, Templeton. Anything with a motor, and related vendors, are welcome to show! Live music in the gazebo, featuring Boothill Express. Presented by the Narragansett Historical Society and Templeton Cultural Council.

24 Sunday, 1 pm. Petty Larceny returns to Hollis Hills Farm, Fitchburg. Back for a great autumn afternoon of music, food, brews, and family fun at Hollis Hills Farm. Join us at one of the gems of Central Massachusetts!

28 Thursday, 6:30 pm. MWCC History at the Gardner Museum, 28 Pearl St., Gardner. Program at 7 pm after a museum-hosted reception. For 60 years, years, Mount Wachusett Community College has been an important part of the Greater Gardner Community. Get a quick-moving, visual history of MWCC's origins, development, and contributions as seen from the perspective of Dr. Vin Ialenti,

who worked at MWCC as a faculty member, dean, and administrator during his 49-year tenure at the institution. Reservations required: info@gardnermuseuminc.com.

28 Thursday, 7 pm. *Movie Night* at Hollis Hills Farm, 340 Marshall Rd., Fitchburg.

28 Thursday, 7:30 pm. *BLKBOK* performs at Fruitlands Museum, 102 Prospect Hill Rd., Harvard. Concerts under the event tent are presented at Fruitlands on Thursdays in September and October. Space is limited; pre-registration is required. Visit thetrustees.org for tickets.

29 Friday, 5:30–7 pm. *Full Moon Hike* at Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow, 113 Goodnow Rd., Princeton. Stroll the meadows and explore the woods under the full moon on this gentle, 1.5–2-mile guided hike. We will set the scene with seasonal natural history, meander the sanctuary trails, awaken our senses to the sounds of the night, and become immersed in nature as the night skies gently settle upon the land.

29 Friday, 8:30 pm. *Tony Soul Project* back at Mill City Pub, 19 Airport Rd., Fitchburg.

30 Saturday, 9 am–4 pm. *Fabulous Fall Festival* in downtown Gardner, a fun-filled day of activities for all ages! Gardner Square Two will host their annual festival, with vendors, food, and kids' games and activities. Oktoberfest and the Chair Luge sponsored by the Gardner Ale House will have a beer garden, live music, a stein holding competition, the chair luge race and food. Visit Facebook.com/GardnerSquareTwo and gardnerale.com for details.

30 Saturday, 10 am–4 pm. *Ashby Pumpkin Festival* on the Common, Main Street, Ashby. Family fun, games, delicious food, more than 40 crafters, live music and more! Tractor parade at 2 pm. Visit the Friends of Ashby on Facebook.

30 Saturday, 10 am–4 pm. *Grotonfest 2023* at Legion Hall, Hollis St., Groton. Launched in 1979, Grotonfest was formed to celebrate the town's small businesses, showcase the budding artists and their crafts, as well as introduce non-profit organizations around this community.

30 Saturday, 10 am–5 pm. *20th Annual Blacksmith Art & Renaissance Festival* at Riverfront Park, Boulder Drive, Fitchburg. Watch blacksmiths create intriguing works of art, see jousting knights and their ladies, enjoy food, music and fun.

30 Saturday, 10 am–4 pm. *47th Annual Horseshed Fair* at the First Church Unitarian, 725 Main St., Lancaster. See over 70 artisan and craft booths, live music, amazing food, beer garden and plenty for the kids. Stop in the tea room; grab lunch; take home some baked goods. See firstchurchlanasterma.org.

30 Saturday, 10 am–4 pm. *Celebrate Ashburnham Street Fair* on Main Street Ashburnham. Vendors, live entertainment, activities for the kids, artist demonstrations, food and more!



Quabbin Garlic & Arts Festival.

30 Saturday, 11 am–5 pm. *Oktoberfest* at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, 499 Mountain Rd., Princeton. Celebrate German style: authentic German beer, specialty foods, live music, stein hoisting, crafters and contests. Visit wachusett.com. Continues Oct. 1.

30 Saturday, 10 am–5 pm. *New England Carnivorous Plant Society Show & Sale* at New England Botanic Garden, 11 French Dr., Boylston. The New England Carnivorous Plant Society returns to showcase a fascinating group of plants sure to captivate and amaze. Features include pitcher plants from Malaysia with traps the size of softballs that are capable of eating lizards and mice, and the ever-popular Venus Fly trap. For all native plant lovers, NECPS will also display carnivorous plants that grow locally in Massachusetts and throughout New England. Continues on Sunday, Oct. 1.

Saturday, 10 am–5 pm. *The 25th Annual North Quabbin Garlic & Arts Festival* at Forster's Farm, 60 Chestnut Hill Rd., Orange. The family friendly "festival that stinks" is renowned for exceptional art, local farm products, fabulous food, endless entertainment, and inspiration for a hopeful future. Continues on Sunday, Oct. 1.

30 Saturday, 11 am–5 pm. *Fitchburg Cultural Alliance Open Studios* throughout Fitchburg. Free self-guided art discovery tour. Visit with as many artists and locations as you desire, with each stop offering its own unique and varied experience. Continues Sunday, Oct. 1. See Fitchburgopenstudios.com for a map of locations.

30 Saturday, 11 am–4 pm. *Fall Food Fest* on Townsend Common The Kid's Kountry Playground hosts this kickoff to the Fall Season and the start of fundraising to update/replace our old playground with ADA compliant structures! Food Trucks, Food Vendors, Entertainment, Vendors/crafters, Face Painting, Crafts, Games, Prizes. Fun for the whole family!

30 Saturday, 11:30 am–7 pm. *Davis MegaMaze* season opening, 145 Redstone Hill Rd., Sterling. What will this year's theme be? Come to see the secret revealed! The MegaMaze will be open weekends through the month of October. Continues Sunday, Oct. 1, from 11:30 am–5 pm. Visit davismegamaze.com.

30 Saturday, 2 pm. *Chair Luge* in downtown Gardner. Settle in along Parker Street for an afternoon of wild and wacky racing — all vehicles began their lives as chairs ... but oh, how far they have come! (If you want to race a luge, sign up is open to the day of the event, but don't wait as there are limited spots. Visit gardnerale.com for entry forms.) If all that racing action makes you hungry and thirsty, don't worry — the Gardner Ale House beer garden has just what you need.

30 Saturday, 4–7 pm. *Fox and The Dragon* at Hardwick Winery. Hardwick Vineyard & Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick.

30 Saturday, 7 pm. *Orleans* performs at Fitchburg State University, Pearl Street, Fitchburg. Now in its 51st year, this pop/rock band has produced a body of work spanning 17+ albums and 4 DVDs. Visit fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage for details.

30 Saturday, 7–10 pm. *The Green Sisters* perform at the Winchendon Community Park Amphitheater, 86 Ingleside Rd., Winchendon. Tickets start at \$10. Visit the Winchendon Community Park on Facebook for details.

30 Saturday, 8 pm. *The String Queens* at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Praised for its authentic, soulful, and orchestral sound, The String Queens is a dynamic trio that creates stimulating musical experiences that inspire diverse audiences to love, hope, feel, and imagine! Visit Grotonhill.org.

OCTOBER

1 Sunday, 7:45 am–12 pm. *3D Archery* at Fitchburg Sportmen's Club, 289 Rindge State Rd., Ashburnham. Test your skill at a 3D Archery Shoot. 15 Targets, \$5 Fee. Registration opens at 7:45am, with the last group out at 11am

1 Sunday, 10 am–5 pm. *The 25th Annual North Quabbin Garlic & Arts Festival* at Forster's Farm, 60 Chestnut Hill Rd., Orange. The family friendly "festival that stinks" is renowned for exceptional art, local farm products, fabulous food, endless entertainment, and inspiration for a hopeful future.

1 Sunday, 11 am–3 pm. *Alpaca Farm Fest* at In the Meadow Farm, 40 Page St., Lunenburg. Join us for a celebration of alpaca farming. Meet and learn about our alpaca herd, shop local artisans and farms, try one of our fun family oriented activities.

1 Sunday, 11 am–5 pm. *Fitchburg Cultural Alliance Open Studios* throughout Fitchburg. Free self-guided art discovery tour. Visit with as many artists and locations as you desire, with each stop offering its own unique and varied experience. See Fitchburgopenstudios.com for a map of locations.



String Queens.

1 Sunday, 11 am–5 pm. *Oktoberfest* at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, 499 Mountain Rd., Princeton. Celebrate German style: authentic German beer, specialty foods, live music, stein hoisting, crafters and contests. Visit wachusett.com.

1 Sunday, 11:30 am–5 pm. *Davis MegaMaze* season opening, 145 Redstone Hill Rd., Sterling. What will this year's theme be? Come to see the secret revealed! The MegaMaze will be open weekends through the month of October. Visit davismegamaze.com.

4 Wednesday, 5–7 pm. *Trap Shooting* at Royalston Fish & Game Club 50 Main Rd., Phillipston. This weekly event is open to Club members and non-members alike! Cost is only \$4/round (25 clays)! Whether you're a seasoned trap shooter or new to the sport, we invite you to come shoot with us. It's a great time for all levels of shooter to have some fun! Event is weather-permitting; if questionable, call Don at (978) 430-7822.

5 Thursday, 6:30 pm. *Susan Werner* performs at Fruitlands Museum, 102 Prospect Hill Rd., Harvard. Concerts under the event tent are presented at Fruitlands on Thursdays in September and October. Space is limited; pre-registration is required. Visit thetrustees.org for tickets.

5–9 Thursday–Monday. *Mountainside Sale & Swap* at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, 499 Mountain Rd., Princeton. Craft beer, food truck fare, live music and more. Bring your used equipment to sell for Wachusett credit or buy new.

6-7 Friday & Saturday, 7:30 pm. *The Odd Couple* at Theatre at the Mount, 444 Green St., Gardner. Fastidious Felix Unger and Oscar Madison, the slob, decide to room together with hilarious results as *The Odd Couple* is born. For tickets, visit mwcc.edu/tam.

6-8 Friday-Sunday, 7 pm. *Blockbuster Hits*, an original revue at the theater at St. Bernard's High School, Fitchburg. StageWorks Performing Arts presents this revue of hits you know from movies you love. Visit stageworksarts.org.

7 Saturday, 10 am–5 pm. *Winchendon Fall Festival* on Central Street, Winchendon. Live bands, food trucks, kids' activities, more than 150 vendors, bounce house and more! Rain or shine. Visit townofwinchendon.com for updates.



Winchendon Fall Festival.

7 Saturday, 10 am. *Tractor Parade* in downtown Leominster. Yes, right in the central business district! See a parade of farm vehicles the kids will love!

7 Saturday & Sunday. *Scarecrows in the Orchard* at Sholan Farms, 1125 Pleasant St., Leominster. Friendly, scary, and very creative farm sculptures decorate the orchard overlooking the city. Visit the farm store for just-picked fruit!

7 Saturday, 11 am–2 pm. *Leominster Farmers Market*, Monument Square (Rt. 12), Leominster. The City of Leominster and Growing Places are excited to bring the Leominster Farmers Market outside!

7 Saturday, 1–4 pm. *Rick of The Storytellers* at Hardwick Vineyard & Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Harvard.

7 Saturday, 7:30 pm. *Vista Philharmonic Orchestra* featuring bass-baritone Christopher Humbert at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Celebrate Groton Hill's 49th Season opens as a journey through art as expression, with works from literature and painting as the composers' inspirational backdrop. Visit grotonhill.org.

7-9 Saturday-Monday, 11 am–5 pm. *Fall Fest* at Hollis Hills Farm 340 Marshall Rd., Fitchburg. A long weekend of great food, drinks, live music, henna, vendors, and more!

7-9 Saturday & Sunday, 11:30 am–7 pm; Monday, 11:30 am–5 pm. *COW-lumbus Day Weekend* at Davis MegaMaze, 143 Redstone Hill Rd., Sterling. Corn maze, live music, craft beers, laser tag and more. Visit davismegamaze.com.

8 Sunday, 10 am–1 pm. *Wachusett Dam Day* at Wachusett Reservoir, (Rt. 70, Clinton. No dogs allowed) One of two days each year that you can stroll across the top of the Wachusett Dam, and see the panoramic view of the reservoir. Visit mass.gov/locations/wachusett-reservoir.

8 Sunday, 12–4 pm. *Clinton's Volunteer & Beer* on High Street, Downtown Clinton. Come check out local nonprofit organizations seeking volunteers while

enjoying the offerings of local breweries and food vendors along with music and games on High Street in Downtown Clinton. For more info email downtown@clintonma.gov.

8 Sunday, 1 pm. *Pumpkin Weigh-In* and Festival at Red Apple Farm. The Massachusetts Giant Pumpkin Association is organizing this event that will include live entertainment — and of course, the competition for who has grown the biggest pumpkin! Visit redapplefarm.com.

8 Sunday, 7 pm. *Alison Brown* performs at the Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Alison and her band have toured extensively throughout the U.S. and abroad with stops at some of music's most prestigious venues, including Newport Folk Festival, The Kennedy Center, Telluride Bluegrass Festival, New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. Visit grotonhill.org.

9 Monday, 1 pm. *Whitney Doucet & Moonshine Band* perform at Hollis Hills Farm, 340 Marshall Rd., Fitchburg.

9 Monday, 5–9 pm. *Cannoli Festival* in downtown Leominster. Love cannoli? You've come to the right place! Bring your appetite!

12 Thursday, 6:30 pm. *Roots of Pop* at the Gardner Museum, 28 Pearl St., Gardner. Musician and songwriter Jon Waterman will present an entertaining and informative show titled "A Journey through the Roots of American Popular Music," which combines music history, storytelling, and original songs inspired by his research. Reservations required: info@gardermuseuminc.com.

12 Thursday, 6:30 pm. *Chris Trapper* performs at Fruitlands Museum, 102 Prospect Hill Rd., Harvard. Concerts under the event tent are presented at Fruitlands on Thursdays in September and October. Space is limited; pre-registration is required. Visit thetrustees.org for tickets.

13 Friday, 8 pm. *Celebrity Series of Boston* presents Isata Kanneh-Mason at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. The Groton Hill Music Center is thrilled to welcome Celebrity Series of Boston to Meadow Hall for four shows in their 23/24 season. Visit grotonhill.org.

13-14 Friday & Saturday, dusk to 11 pm. *Haunted Hayrides* at Silver Lake Park, Athol. The Athol Lions Club takes young children on non-scary rides about 6 pm, followed by the regular, spookier rides for the brave, at dark. Refreshments available. Visit the Lions on Facebook for updates.

13-15 Friday-Sunday. *Boston Chapter of Ikebana International Show & Sale* at New England Botanic Garden, 11 French Dr., Boylston. Ikebana, Japanese for "arranged flowers" or "living flowers," considers characteristics of line, color, mass, and space as well as asymmetry to create harmonious natural arrangements. Learn more about the art of Ikebana and experience the beauty of arrangements showcasing various styles. Members of Boston Chapter #17 of Ikebana International will display their work, give demonstrations, and answer questions. Visit nebg.org.

13-15 Friday & Saturday, 7:30 pm; Sunday, 2 pm. *The Odd Couple* at Theatre at the Mount, 444 Green St., Gardner. Fastidious Felix Unger and Oscar Madison, the slob, decide to room together with hilarious results as *The Odd Couple* is born. For tickets, visit mwcc.edu/tam.

14 Saturday, 9 am–9 pm. *3rd Annual First Alarm* at Hardwick Vineyard & Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick. Food Trucks, Music, Bonfire Burnout Competition, Car Show and more!

14 Saturday, 11 am–4 pm. *Fall Fest* at Wildwood Farm, 50 Woods Rd, Westminster. Join us for *the*



Halloween on Tolman.

quintessential autumn day at the third annual Fall Fest! Enjoy an afternoon overlooking Wachusett Mountain while shopping small businesses, enjoying food trucks, sipping beverages from the outdoor bar and listening to live music. Bring the entire family, and the kids can enjoy pumpkin painting, hayrides, lawn games and more! Rain date, Sunday, October 15.

14 Saturday, 2 pm. *Wicked Pissed: New England's Most Famous Feuds* at The Groton (Senior) Center, 163 West Main St., Groton. From sports to politics, food to finance, aviation to engineering, to bitter disputes over simple boundaries themselves, New England's feuds have peppered the region's life for centuries. There are even some that will undoubtedly outlast the region's ancient low stone walls. Ted Reinstein, a native New Englander and local writer, demonstrates what it really means to be Wicked Pissed.

14 Saturday, 4:30–6:30 pm. *Birthday Celebration* at the Museum of Russian Icons, 203 Union St., Clinton. Drop by for a celebration and a presentation of the Museum's exciting plans. Visit museumofrussianicons.org.

14 Saturday, 6–9 pm. *Mr. Strickland* performs at Wachusett Brewery, 175 State Rd. E., Westminster.

14 Saturday, 7 pm. *Wachusett Music Series presents Cheryl Wheeler with special guest Kenny White* at the Harvard Unitarian Universalist Church, 9 Ayer Rd., Harvard.

14 Saturday, 7 pm. *Portrait of a Song—Music & Visual Arts* at the Shirley Meetinghouse, 41 Brown Rd., Shirley. Local musicians, artists and photographers join together to present a multi-media program. Come see and hear the music! Musical selections from cinema, stage, folk, jazz and more. Visit shirleymeetinghouse.org.

14 Saturday, 7 pm. *Fright Night* in Winchendon. Watch the movie 'The Nun' in a Historic Church at Haunted Toy Town's First-Ever Fright Night Event. Watch a scary movie at the First Congregational Church in Winchendon's Old Centre, in 1850, then take a ghost hunt at two historic, haunted properties, the Murdock Whitney Mansion and the Isaac Morse House. Learn more at winchendonhistory.com. This is an age 18+ event.

14 Saturday, 8 pm. *Sutton Foster* performs at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. She has graced the stages of Carnegie Hall, Feinstein's, Lincoln Center's American Songbook series and many others. Visit grotonhill.org.

14-15 Saturday & Sunday, 11 am–5 pm. *Applefest* at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, 499 Mountain Rd., Princeton. Farmers market, live entertainment, food trucks, craft vendors, scenic Skyride and more! Visit wachusett.com for details and tickets. Repeats Oct. 21–22.

15 Sunday, 11 am–3 pm. *Bassetpalooza 2023* at 318 7 Bridge Rd, Lancaster. Bassetpalooza is an annual fundraising event for New England Basset Hound

Rescue. It's a day of great fun for all, bassets (and all other friendly dogs) and people alike! Activities include a Waddle around the pond, games for the bassets, raffle baskets, music, some great vendors and a food truck and a professional photographer. Bring a lawn chair or blanket to relax and take in the beautiful (hopefully) foliage and of course, watch bassets!

16-31 Saturday-Tuesday. Leominster Frights throughout the city. Put on your bravest face and take a self-guided tour of fright-filled settings, as Leominster homeowners and businesses put their scary (and maybe not-so-scary) Halloween decorations on display. Check the city's Facebook page for updates on locations to visit.

19 Thursday, 6:30 pm. Bjurlings' 1947 Cross-Country Adventure at the Gardner Museum, 28 Pearl St., Gardner. 7-8 pm after a museum-hosted reception at 6:30 pm. Bryant LeBlanc will present an account of the 35-day car trip, Philip & Dorothy Bjurling (along with David and Marie St. Germain) took from Gardner to Portland, Oregon in 1947. The trip through 31 states and Canada was documented by Dorothy with a 38-page travelogue and a scrapbook containing pictures, postcards, and mementos of stops and sites visited along the way. Reservations required; info@gardnermuseuminc.com.

19 Thursday, 6:30 pm. Vance Gilbert performs at Fruitlands Museum, 102 Prospect Hill Rd., Harvard. Concerts under the event tent are presented at Fruitlands on Thursdays through October. Space is limited; pre-registration is required. Visit thetrustees.org for tickets.

20 Friday, 7 pm. Mark O'Connor Duo performs at Fitchburg State University's Center Stage, 160 Pearl St., Fitchburg. Visit fitchburgstate.edu/centerstage for tickets.

21 Saturday, 10 am-1 pm. The Rollstone Hill "Rock Walk" in downtown Fitchburg. The walk begins and ends at the Boulder Art Gallery, 960 Main St., Fitchburg. Wear comfortable walking shoes, bring water, a friend and don't forget your camera!

21 Saturday, 10 am-5 pm. Westminster Cracker Festival on Main Street, Westminster. Visit the home of the historic cracker factory for a day filled with arts and crafts, food vendors, live music, kids activities, and a beer garden. Includes a 5k walk/run at 9 am; visit crackerfestival.com for details and registration.

21 Saturday, 1-3 pm. Halloween Parade in downtown Leominster. Kids are invited to don a scary (or not-so-scary) costume and take a tour of the city's business district, starting at the Leominster Credit Union on Adams Street. Visit Leominster-ma.gov.

21 Saturday, 2-5 pm. Fox and The Dragon perform at the Hardwick Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick.

21 Thursday, 5:30-8:30 pm. Third Thursday Artisan Market at Kitchen Sink Candle Company, 66 Boston Rd., Groton. Support an amazingly talented group of local artists, stop by the Candle Bar and grab a drink!!

21 Saturday, 8 pm. Mike Girard's Big Swinging Thing at the Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley. It's a Big Band, but this is not your typical Big Band. It's Rock & Roll with horns... a ton of them! Expect to hear diverse covers by The Stones, AC/DC, The Animals, the Doobie Brothers, Billy Idol, Roy Orbison & Tom Jones... plus some great Fools classics! Visit bullrunrestaurant.com.

21-22 Saturday & Sunday, 11 am-5 pm. Applefest at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, 499 Mountain Rd., Princeton. Farmers market, live entertainment, food trucks, craft vendors, scenic skyride and more! Visit wachusett.com for details and tickets.

26 Thursday, 6:30 pm. Early Worcester Settlements at the Gardner Museum, 28 Pearl St., Gardner. Wendy Essery, Library and Archives Manager at the Worcester

Historical Museum, will give a presentation about the early colonial settlements that existed before Worcester became a town in 1772. Program at 7 pm after a museum-hosted reception. Reservations required; info@gardnermuseuminc.com.

26 Thursday, 6:30 pm. Willy Porter performs at Fruitlands Museum, 102 Prospect Hill Rd., Harvard. Concerts under the event tent are presented at Fruitlands on Thursdays through October. Space is limited; pre-registration is required. Visit thetrustees.org for tickets.



The Boulder and Peter Capodagli the founder of Fitchburg's Rock Walk.

27 Friday. Halloween Downtown Stroll in Gardner. Gardner Square Two, Inc. sponsors this family event, with downtown businesses welcoming local pre-schools to bring the children downtown to "trick or treat" at their establishments. Children must be accompanied by their teachers, parents, or guardians.

27 Friday, 5-8 pm. The Pub Kings perform at Wachusett Brewing Company, 175 State Rd. E., Westminster. Visit Wachusett Brewing Company on Facebook.

27-28 Friday & Saturday, 7 pm. Haunted Walk on Templeton common and the Templeton Common Burial Ground. Members of the Narragansett Historical Society will share stories of days gone by as you stroll from house to house with the final talks in the Cemetery behind the First Church on Wellington Road.

28 Saturday, 9 am-3 pm. Harvest Fair at St. Vincent de Paul Church, 18 Pleasant St., Baldwinville. Theme baskets, Chinese Auction, raffles and more at this fall fair.

28 Saturday, 8-10 am. Pannukakku Breakfast at the Finnish Center at Saima Park, 67 Scott Rd., Fitchburg. Finnish oven pancake, bacon, sausage, fruit, Finnish coffee bread, juice, coffee/tea/cocoa. Loaves of Finnish coffee bread for sale. Vendors of arts, crafts, and bee products. See the Friends of Saima Park on Facebook.

28 Sunday, 11 am-5 pm. BooFest at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, 499 Mountain Rd., Westminster. Enjoy all things spooky and fun, with festive contests, ghoulish treats and entertainment for the whole family. Visit wachusett.com for details.

28 Saturday, 12-2 pm. Trick or Treat on Main Street, Fitchburg. Children are invited to visit downtown businesses for Halloween treats!

28 Saturday, 1-3 pm. Fall Tree Identification Walk at New England Botanic Garden, 11 French Dr., Boylston. As trees lose their green chlorophyll in the fall, we get to see the colors they've been hiding underneath all summer. This is an opportunity to work on some Tree ID in "broad strokes," getting to know forest populations from a distance through their unique mixes of color. For details and to register, visit nebg.org.

29 Sunday, 1-3 pm. Boo at the Barn at In the Meadow Farm, 40 Page St., Lunenburg. The farm's fourth annual community Halloween event. Dress the kids in their costumes and join us for alpacas, games, prizes and family fun.

31 Tuesday, 4-7 pm. Haunted Gazebo on Templeton Common, Routes 2A and 101, Templeton. The Lions Club presents a fright-filled evening (suitable for all ages), complete with treats for the hobgoblins.

NOVEMBER

2 Thursday, 3-6 pm. First Thursdays Indoor Farmers' Market at the Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. Open first Thursday of every month through April.

3 Friday, 8 pm. Black Opry Revue performs at Groton Hill Music, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Black Opry is a showcase for Black artists and fans of country, blues, folk, and Americana music. Visit grotonhill.org.

4 Saturday, 9 am-2 pm. Miller's Ladies Christmas Fair at Miller's Woods/Riverbend, 739 Daniel Shays Highway, Athol. Gift Items, Chinese Auction, baked goods, theme baskets, 50/50 raffle, gift certificate raffle, crafts, High Roller raffle, quilt raffle and more.

4 Saturday, 11 am-5 pm. Fall Food Truck Festival at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, 499 Mountain Rd., Princeton. Enjoy live music, a huge selection of beer and plenty of food to keep you full and happy all day long. Visit Wachusett.com.

4 Saturday, 8 pm. Rust Never Sleeps performs at the Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley. The band presents an evening of inspired music, as well as special musical selections by the likes of The Band, The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, The Stray Gators, Joan Baez, The Rolling Thunder Revue, Crazy Horse, and others! Visit bullrunrestaurant.com.

4 Saturday, 8 pm. Saje performs at Groton Hill Music, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Visit grotonhill.org.

8 Wednesday, 1 pm. Opening of 18th annual Festival of Trees at the Gardner Museum, 28 Pearl St., Gardner. The popular event is open to the public until Saturday, December 3. Opening hours: Wednesdays, Thursdays 1-4 pm; Fridays 1-7 pm; Saturdays, Sundays 10 am - 4 pm. During the Festival, the museum gift shop will also carry seasonal items for purchase. Drawings for trees takes place on Dec. 2.

10 Friday. Opening Day of Country Roads Holiday Tour. Hop in the car and cruise the country roads of local towns, stopping at intriguing shops along the way! Tour runs through December 10; pick up a stamp card, visit all the shops, and get entered into a drawing for some great prizes. Visit countryroadschristmas.com.

10-11 Friday and Saturday, 8 pm. No Static, one of the few Steely Dan tribute bands in the country, performs at the Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley. No Static is made up of 10 musicians from around the Boston area. Visit bullrunrestaurant.com for tickets.

11 Saturday, 9 am-2 pm. Holiday Bazaar at Athol Congregational Church, 1225 Chestnut St. (at the uptown Common), Athol. Crafts, baked goods, gift certificate raffle, Winter Wonderland raffle, theme baskets, jewelry, greens table, holiday tag sale, snack bar.



Trick or Treating

11 Saturday, 9 am–3 pm. Narragansett Craft Fair at the Narragansett Middle School, 464 Baldwinville Rd., Baldwinville. Craftspeople from all around New England offer a wide variety of craft and gift items. Stop in for lunch, do your holiday shopping and support Phillipston youth programs. Visit narragansettcraftfair.com.

16 Thursday, 4–6 pm. Indoor Farmers Market at Leominster City Hall. Pick up some fresh produce for your Thanksgiving table, handcrafts and more!

17 Friday, 8 pm. Tristan McIntosh, American Idol Star, creates a stunning portrayal of Linda Ronstadt in the prime of her career. Supported by a superb backing band, at the Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley. Visit bullrunrestaurant.com.

17 Friday, 8 pm. Damn Tall Buildings, a bluegrass group, performs at Groton Hill Music, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Witty & engaging, Damn Tall Buildings' energizing music finds beauty and glory in the mundane workaday struggle of everyday life. Visit grotonhill.org.

18 Saturday 9 am–2 pm. Friends of the Conant Public Library Arts & Crafts Show at the First Church in Sterling, 6 Meetinghouse Hill Road. Art and crafts, but you won't want to miss the tea breads, cookies, and bars at the bake sale! There will also be a lunch cafe, and wrapped cheese for sale.

18-19 Saturday & Sunday, 10 am–4 pm. Thanksgiving Harvest Festival at Red Apple Farm, 455 Highland Ave., Phillipston. Local family farms and businesses come together to offer all the best fixings for your Thanksgiving table and home — plus features like the Brew Barn, face painting, pony rides & hayrides, Sattva Center for Archery Training (Saturday only!), blacksmith demonstrations, local live music, PYO ornamental corn, guided nature hikes, and more! Local vendors selling fresh crops and unique products from all over New England. Bring



Damn Tall Buildings.

non-perishable food items to support our local food pantries (enter to win great raffle items for every five food donations)! Visit redapplefarm.com.

20 Monday. Opening day for Leominster's Festival of Trees in Leominster City Hall. This display of trees decorated by local organizations runs through December 18. Hours vary, so check the city's Facebook page for dates and times.

24 Friday. Opening Day Christmas Trees Sales and Light Show at Sholan Farms, 1125 Pleasant St., Leominster. Pick out your holiday tree. Stop by after dark, park your car and enjoy the light and sound show on this hill overlooking the city!

24-26 Friday & Saturday, 7:30 pm; Sunday, 2 pm. ELF, the Musical at Theatre at the Mount, 444 Green St., Gardner. Based on the hit film of the same name, ELF, the Musical follows the story of Buddy, an orphaned infant who accidentally crawls into Santa's sleigh one Christmas Eve and is transported back to the North Pole, where he is adopted by Santa's elves. Repeats Dec. 1-3. Special sensory-friendly performance Dec. 2 at 2 pm. For tickets, visit mwcc.edu/tam.

25 Saturday. Opening of Christmas Tree Sales at Hollis Hills Tree Farm, 165 W. Townsend Rd., Lunenburg. Visit hollishillsfarm.com.

25 Saturday, 9 am–2 pm. Christmas Extravaganza craft fair at St. Anthony Church Hall, 12 Phoenix St., Shirley.

25 Saturday, 9 am–5 pm. Small Business Saturday throughout the region. Shop local this holiday season to support small business.

25-Dec 30. Lancaster Celebration of Lights at Lancaster Fair Grounds, 318 Seven Bridge Rd., Lancaster. Drive through a wonderland of holiday lights.

26 Sunday, 4:30 pm. Shirley Town Tree Lighting at Whiteley Park, Front Street, Shirley. Enjoy a Concert by Nashoba Valley Concert Band at 4:30, and concert by Shirley Children's Traveling Christmas Choir at 5 pm. Santa arrives at 5:15 on a fire truck to light the trees.

DECEMBER

1-3 Friday – Sunday 5-10 pm. Leominster Lights throughout the city. Take a self-guided tour of homes and businesses that are lit up for the season! Visit Leominster's Facebook page for updates.

1-3 Friday & Saturday, 7:30 pm; Sunday, 2 pm. ELF, the Musical at Theatre at the Mount, 444 Green St., Gardner. Based on the hit film of the same name. See Nov. 24-26 listing for details. Special sensory-friendly performance Dec. 2 at 2 pm. For tickets, visit mwcc.edu/tam.

2 Saturday, 8–10 am. Pannukakku Breakfast at the Finnish Center at Saima Park, 67 Scott Rd., Fitchburg. Celebrate Finland's 106 years of Independence from

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2 Saturday, 9:30 am & 12:45 pm. Holiday Wreath Making with Bluebird Bouquets at New England Botanic Garden, 1 French Dr., Boylston. Visit nebg.org for details and to register.

2 Saturday, 10 am–5 pm. Holiday Craft Fair at Christ Church, 569 Main St., Fitchburg. Event is sponsored by NoWoCo Pride features crafters, a bake sale, hot cocoa bar and Santa.

2 Saturday, 3–5 pm. Winter Stroll in downtown Leominster, followed by a Parade of Lights and Tree Lighting ceremony at 5 pm. Get in the holiday spirit in the heart of the city! Visit Leominster-ma.gov.

2 Saturday, 5:30 pm. Santa Parade & Holiday Tree Lighting in downtown Fitchburg. The parade route runs from Monument Park to the Upper Common on Main Street. Get in the holiday mood!

2 Saturday, 6 pm. The Ben Cote Band performs at Wachusett Brewery, State Road East, Westminster.

2-3 Saturday, 9 am–3 pm; Sunday, 9 am–1 pm. St. Martin's Holiday Fair at the American Legion Hall, 3 Central St., Baldwinville. Raffles, a "Polish Auction of more than three dozen beautifully packaged theme baskets, hand-crafted ornaments and holiday decorations, baked goods, fresh wreaths made to order, and more! Stop in for lunch or a snack. Visit St. Martin's Church, Otter River, on Facebook.

3 Sunday. Holiday Stroll and Tree Lighting in downtown Gardner. Visit gardner-ma.gov.

3 Sunday, 4:30 pm. Tree Lighting on Templeton Common, Routes 2A & 101, Templeton. Members of the Narragansett Historical Society will be selling wreaths



The Greater Gardner Community Choir (GGCC).

and popcorn around the fire pit. You may even get a chance to see Santa. The Town Select Board will host a parade and visit the other three precincts in town to light each tree, ending in Baldwinville.

3 Sunday, 6:30 pm. Candlelight Vespers – Christmas Reflections at the Shirley Meetinghouse, 41 Brown Rd., Shirley. Join us in the warmth of The Shirley Meeting House for our 20th Annual Candlelight Vespers Program. Our music, stories and poems will give you a moment to pause and reflect on the meaning of season and the peace it offers to all of us. Visit shirleymeetinghouse.org.

9 Saturday, 9 am–2 pm. Holiday Cookie Sale & Craft Fair at the Sterling Senior Center, 9 Muddy Pond Rd., Sterling.

10 Sunday, 2 pm. Leominster Colonial Band annual Holiday in Leominster City Hall auditorium, 25 West St., Leominster. Free and open to the public.

16 Saturday. Annual Winter Bird Count in Athol, organized by the Athol Bird and Nature Club; email Dave@atholbirdclub.org or visit atholbirdclub.org.

16 Saturday. Caroling with the Mayor in downtown Gardner. Visit gardner-ma.gov.

16 Saturday, 10 am–2 pm. Holiday Bazaar & Cookie Sale at Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon, 126 Central Street, Winchendon. Two floors chock full of vendors; stop in and get that special holiday gift and stock up on home-made Christmas cookies!

16 Saturday, 2–5 pm. Fox and The Dragon performs at Hardwick Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick.

17 Sunday, 3 pm. "Light Shining On and On" concert at Bethany Baptist Church, 72 Ryan St., Gardner. The Greater Gardner Community Choir (GGCC) presents its Annual Holiday Concert celebrates the season with glorious music from Handel's Messiah, John Rutter's Magnificat and selections sure to inspire and delight. GGCC is directed by Diane Cushing. Featured pianist is Ted Cushing. Tickets are available at the door. For information, visit the GGCC Facebook page or ggcchoir.com.

21 Thursday, 4–6 pm. Indoor Farmers Market in Leominster City Hall, 25 West St., Leominster. Fill your holiday table with delightful produce, and decorate your home with handcrafted items.

30 Saturday, 8 pm. Gala Centennial Winter Ball at Perry Auditorium, Gardner City Hall. Join Gardner in the final centennial event! Have some fun with a night of dancing and camaraderie. For more information, visit facebook.com/100gardner.

31 Sunday, 6–10:30 pm. Starry, Starry Night New Year's Eve bash in downtown Orange. Revel in more than a dozen shows/entertainers, ice sculptures, and a parade of stars from Town Hall to Veterans Memorial Park and, at the close, fireworks! Check the updated website, starrystarrynight.org.

31 Sunday, 8 pm. The Ben Cote Band New Year's Eve Party at Wachusett Brewery, 175 State Rd. East, Westminster.

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JANUARY

18 Thursday, 4-6 pm. Indoor Farmers Market at Leominster City Hall, 25 West St., Leominster. Repeats on February 15.

21-27 Sunday-Saturday, all day. Coffee Crawl throughout Leominster. Get a java jolt at participating businesses around the city. See Leominster's Facebook page for an updated list of shops.

24 Saturday, 10 am-2 pm. Ski Trail Open House at the Finnish Center at Saima Park, 67 Scott Rd., Fitchburg. Saima Park's trails will be open to the public for skiing and snowshoeing, or hiking. Wish for Snow! Free admission. Donations welcome. A limited supply of equipment is available to borrow. Visit saima-park.org. Repeats on Feb. 10 and 17.

27 Saturday, 8-10 am. Pannukakku Breakfast at the Finnish Center at Saima Park, 67 Scott Rd., Fitchburg. Finnish oven pancake, bacon, sausage, fruit, Finnish coffee bread, juice, coffee/tea/cocoa. Loaves of Finnish coffee bread for sale. Vendors of arts, crafts, and bee products. See the Friends of Saima Park on Facebook.

27 Saturday, 2-4 pm. Challenger: Soaring with Christa McAuliffe at The Groton (Senior) Center, 163 West Main St., Groton. Journey through Christa's life in this multi-media Immersive Living History Experience,

suitable for all ages. Challenger: Soaring with Christa McAuliffe™ pays homage to the United States' Teacher in Space program and the crew of the NASA space shuttle. Discover the true story behind the incredible educator, the American pioneer, and the internationally recognized heroine.

FEBRUARY

1 Thursday, 6-8 pm. Gardenmania at Leominster City Hall, 25 West St., Leominster. We know it's winter, but now is the perfect time to start thinking about your spring garden. Chat with local businesses and organizations, purchase items for your garden, and learn more about resources available in the area.

2 Thursday, 8 am. Groundhog Day with Featherstone at Monument Square, Main Street, Leominster. Forget Puxatawny Phil! Leominster has its own prognosticator: Featherstone the Pink Flamingo! Join Leominster's mayor and a hardy gathering as Featherstone makes his prediction about the remaining days of winter.

10 Saturday, 10 am-2 pm. Ski Trail Open House at the Finnish Center at Saima Park, 67 Scott Rd., Fitchburg. Saima Park's trails will be open to the public for skiing and snowshoeing, or hiking. Wish for Snow! Free

admission. Donations welcome. A limited supply of equipment is available to borrow. Visit saima-park.org. Repeats on Feb. 17.

18-24 Sunday-Saturday, all day. Leominster Restaurant Week. Visit participating businesses throughout the City of Leominster, and enjoy discounted prices. See the city's Facebook page for updates on participating restaurants.

20 Tuesday, 5:30 pm. Indoor Drive-in Movie Night at Leominster City Hall, 25 West St., Leominster. Remember the fun of going to the drive-in theater with your family? Give the youngsters a taste of those good old days, as they create their own cardboard cars and watch a family flick in a comfy indoor setting. Check the city's Facebook page for details.

23 Friday, 10 am-2 pm. Once Upon A Time in Leominster City Hall, 25 West St., Leominster. Bring your little princes and princesses (costumes are welcome, but not required) to City Hall for a day of royal fun, including a hot cocoa bar, cookie decorating, story time and photos. Make a tiara, crown or magic wand —enjoy a flight into fantasy. Visit Leominster's Facebook page for updates.

23-24 Friday & Saturday, 7:30 pm. The Music Man at Theatre at the Mount, 444 Green St., Gardner. The Music Man follows fast-talking traveling salesman, Harold Hill, as he cons the people of River City, Iowa,

into buying instruments and uniforms for a boys' band that he vows to organize — this, despite the fact that he doesn't know a trombone from a treble clef. Repeats March 1-3. Visit mwcc.edu/tam for tickets.

24 Saturday, 8-10 am. Pannukakku Breakfast at the Finnish Center at Saima Park, 67 Scott Rd., Fitchburg. Finnish oven pancake, bacon, sausage, fruit, Finnish coffee bread, juice, coffee/tea/cocoa. Loaves of Finnish coffee bread for sale. Vendors of arts, crafts, and bee products. See the Friends of Saima Park on Facebook.

25 Sunday, 12-5 pm. Cabin Fever Collector Show in Templeton. The Narragansett Historical Society's annual event showcases the collections of local residents. From pocket watches to Pez dispensers, Betty Boop figures to Tonka trucks, you'll get a fascinating peek into the world of collecting. Location to be announced; visit Templeton Museum on Facebook for updates.

Listings are complete and accurate as of August 1, 2023. Because hours and other information may change, we suggest checking online or calling before planning your visit.

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HOT TICKETS

There's no shortage of fun events in North Central Massachusetts — but we've highlighted a few of our faves to enjoy while you're visiting the region. Get out your calendar, and pencil in these special celebrations.



Forging Ahead

It will be a hot time in Fitchburg on September 30, when Fitchburg's **Blacksmith Art & Renaissance Festival** celebrates its 20th anniversary. The Festival is geared toward promoting the craft of blacksmithing and the arts, with a live Forge-In competition in which blacksmiths create preset projects using traditional fire and anvil methods.

But there's more to this festival than smoking hot forges, ringing hammers, and creative designs. Imagine a full day of live music, arts and crafts vendors — and renaissance-themed events! Visitors are invited to wear period costume to bolster the Renaissance atmosphere. The Knights of Lord Talbot, a nonprofit education-based reenactment group, will present unscripted armored combat demos and a historical encampment dating from the end of the Hundred Years War.

Need more enticement to attend? How about belly dancing, whip demonstrations, and vendors selling everything from swords to jewelry! Demonstrations at the event in Fitchburg's Riverfront Park on Boulder Drive, are free to watch. It's fun for the whole family to enjoy. ★



Wholly Cannoli!

Looking for a special treat? How about an evening of snacking devoted entirely to cannoli — those mouth-watering, decadent tubular pastries packed with a luscious ricotta filling incorporating additions ranging from chocolate chips to nuts and candied fruits. And that's just the beginning!

Dozens of vendors will be on hand, tempting visitors to Leominster's Cannoli Festival with these fabulous Italian treats, along with coffee, music and lots of camaraderie. Think that if you've seen one cannoli, you've seen them all? Think again! Consider these variations from last year's event: apple crisp, blueberry cobbler, or peanut butter cup!

If you love cannoli, you've gotta put this one on your calendar: Monday, October 9, 5 to 9 pm on Main Street, Leominster. And be sure to bring your appetite! ★



Sale-ing Away

Don't you just love a bargain? Of course you do! And what better way to find a great deal or a special treasure than at a yard sale.

Now, multiply that by a dozen, a score, a hundred and you've painted a picture of that popular local event, the city- or town-wide yard sale. To be sure, summer seems to be the most popular time for yard sales, especially ones encompassing an entire municipality.

But if you're visiting North Central Massachusetts in the fall, you can still enjoy this time-honored local tradition!

Here are three hot tips for you this fall: September 9 in Templeton.

This annual town-wide event benefits the Narragansett school music program, as participating sellers pay a fee to gain a spot on the map. There are usually a host of sales right at the high school parking lot on Baldwinville Road, too, so be sure to swing by.

September 16 in Leominster. Stop by City Hall at 25 West St., Leominster to grab a map, and follow the trail as you hunt for treasures!



September 16 and 17 in Fitchburg. It's a good bet there will be over 100 sales listed on the city's interactive map! Visit fitchburgyardsale.com to try it out! ★

Recycled Chic

Creativity will be on parade — or, rather, on stage — when Winchendon throws its **Back to School Bash** on September 2 at Winchendon Community Park on Ingleside Road.

Local teens have been invited to wear their talent on their sleeves ... and legs... all over!.. by



designing clothing from recycled materials. Here's the key: "materials" can not include fabric! Paper, cardboard, plastic, tinfoil, duct tape — who knows what recycled items might find their way into this clothing and onto the stage?

The Recycled Fashion Show is a competition, and the winner will go home with a \$100 gift card to use for back to school shopping! How creative will the teens get? Visit the Back to School Bash to see — and to enjoy

a Nerf gun war, music, candy, ice cream and more. It's time to say good-bye to summer and hello to the new school year! Visit Winchendon Community Park on Facebook for more information on this fun-filled event. ★

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It's Time to Hit the Slopes!

W

hen Old Man Winter makes his annual tour of Johnny Appleseed Country, all eyes turn to the region's stately landmark: Wachusett Mountain, where bright trails of sparkling snow streak through the dark shades of evergreen foliage.

Local fields and backyards may still be clear, but when the mercury drops, the staff at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area swings into action, churning out miles and miles of the stuff that skiers' dreams are made of. It's snow season on the mountain, right here in Johnny's backyard!

This national-class ski area has a rabidly loyal ski and snowboarding following from Boston, Worcester, and across southern New England — folks who recognize that you don't have to spend half your weekend driving to get to some great winter fun. Picture it: Three high-speed chairlifts (among a total of eight lifts), 27 trails on 110 acres of varied terrain, a state-of-the-art snowmaking system and snow grooming for a consistently excellent customer experience — along with a ski and snowboard school. Oh, and don't forget the expansive base lodge boasting three restaurants and bars, and a full-service ski shop.

Those amenities, along with a prime location accessible to big urban population centers and affordable lift tickets, make Wachusett one of the busiest ski resorts in the country by volume. Yet it's easy to find uncrowded slopes on early mornings, weekdays and at night.

"The mountain," as it's affectionately known locally, puts the fun in winter for an astoundingly diverse crowd that ranges from novices and families to teenagers performing acrobatic tricks in the terrain park as well as adult night league racers who speed down the Challenger race trail clad in colorful skintight race suits.

And yes, Wachusett really is a mountain, not a hill.

At 2,006 feet, it juts handsomely on the Princeton-Westminster line over the valleys between the Pioneer Valley and Boston, with lovely views of Wachusett Lake and New Hampshire's mighty Mount Monadnock to the north.

Independently owned and operated by the Crowley family — who also own Polar Beverages, the nation's largest independent bottling company — Wachusett is also the largest seasonal employer in the region.

A Complete Experience

The ski area has more than 100 trained instructors recognizable in their red ski school jackets. Inexpensive learn-to-ski and ride programs cater to first-timers and experienced riders seeking to hone their skills. Beginner packages come with gear rentals and even lift passes for those who love sliding on snow right away and want to try on their own. The Polar Kids program is for 4-8-year-olds, who then graduate to



the Arctic Aces for ages 9-12. Customizable group, semi-private, private and group lessons are available.

Beyond the ski and snowboard school, Wachusett provides more specialized programs for school groups, disabled skiers, aspiring adult racers, and youth racers and ski and snowboard freestylers.

For that youthful freestyle community — one of the most vibrant and fun segments of the snow sports industry — Wachusett's terrain park complex is a magnet for ski and snowboarders who push the limits of on-snow creativity in a designated area set aside for them equipped with massive jumps and funky features.

With roots that date to the early 1960s with a couple of T-bar lifts, the modern history of Wachusett began in 1968 when the late Ralph Crowley and an associate won the bidding for the state lease to operate the ski area.

Today, Wachusett Mountain is a modern, professionally run ski resort that promises to stay under family control for many years into the future with the arrival of a third generation of Crowley managers on the scene and a lot more fun to come. §

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hobartvillage.com 
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Jeffrey's Antique Co-op Mall
54 Chase Rd., Lunenburg
978-582-7831

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Galagardner.org 
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newdawnarts.org 
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242 Church St., Clinton
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City of Fitchburg

718 Main St., Fitchburg
978-829-1801
fitchburgma.gov

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City of Gardner

95 Pleasant St., Gardner
978-257-4136

gardner-ma.gov

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City of Leominster

25 West St., Leominster
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leominster-ma.gov

Leominster encompass the very essence of New England, from a hilltop apple orchard to a lively downtown, 26 miles of trails, 12 annual events, with unique shops and restaurants.

Town of Lunenburg

17 Main St., Lunenburg
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lunenburgma.gov

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Nashua River

Watershed Association

592 Main St., Groton
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Town of Pepperell

1 Main Street, Pepperell
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Town of Sterling

1 Park St., Sterling
978-422-8111

sterling-ma.gov

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Town of Townsend

272 Main Street, Townsend
978-597-1700

townsendma.gov

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Town of Westminster

11 South St., Westminster
westminster-ma.gov

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Town of Winchendon

109 Front St., Winchendon
townofwinchendon.com

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978-696-3130

hollishillsfarm.com 

Family owned and operated with their own maple products, local ice cream, pick your own fruits and flowers. Outdoor bar and restaurant open seasonally.

In the Meadow Farm


40 Page St., Lunenburg
978-696-3332  

inthemeadowalpacos.com

Farm offers a complete alpaca experience. Shop for all things alpaca, take a tour, interact with the alpacas, take a felting/ knitting class. Yoga on Saturday mornings April-October.



Lanni Orchards

294 Chase Rd., Lunenburg
978-582-6246

lanniorchards.com 

One stop shop for everything local. Wines, Craft Beers, Hard Ciders, Smith's Cheese, Dom's meats, chocolates, and cut flowers.

Meadowbrook Orchards

209 Chace Hill Rd., Sterling
978-585-7617  

meadowbrookorchards.com

Operated by the Chandler family since 1912. They harvest apples, blueberries, pumpkins, nectarines and raspberries. Farm-store and bakery.

Plain View Farm

130 Gardner Rd., Hubbardston
978-820-1199

plainviewfarmalpacos.com 

Stop by to see and meet the alpacas! Shop for quality alpaca items yarn, socks, hats, gloves, scarves, sweaters and more!

Red Apple Farm

455 Highland Ave., Phillipston
978-249-6763


redapplefarm.com   

Country store has pies, dumplings, cider, donuts, fudge, fresh produce.

Pick apples, peaches, berries, pears, pumpkins, potatoes, sunflowers. Visit the animals and take a hayride. Visit the Brew Barn, Cidery, and BBQ kitchen.


Rota Spring Farm

117 Chace Hill Rd., Sterling
978-365-9710

rotaSpringFarm.com 

Old-fashioned homemade ice cream made on the premises, fresh produce and grass-fed beef. Watch the cows grazing, or come pet the goats.

Wildwood Farm




50 Wood Rd., Westminster
978-340-8347 

Wildwood Farm LLC is a rustic 1700's working farm in the heart of New England offering a unique wedding experience.

FUNCTION FACILITIES

The 228 in Sterling


228 Leominster Rd., Sterling,
978-870-0605

the228insterling.com   

Formal indoor accommodations up to 95; covered patio; BBQ/ picnic area; covered shelter; and a beautiful gazebo for your on-site wedding ceremony and photos.

Devens Common Center

31 Andrews Pkwy., Devens
978-772-0188

devenscommoncenter.com  

A celebrated convention facility and wedding venue located in the heart of historic Devens. Our well-appointed property offers the perfect meeting space for all your needs.

The Marlborough House

9 Ling Street, Marlborough, NH
603-876-0004


themarlbroughhouse.com  

The perfect New England setting to accommodate your wedding, corporate events, concerts, live performances and more.

FURNITURE

Gariepy Furniture


91 Central St., Leominster
978-537-4383

gariepyfurniture.com 

We treat you the way we'd want to be treated!

Winchendon Furniture

13 Railroad St., Winchendon
978-297-0131

winchendonfurniture.com 

A higher end, fine furniture, including cherry bedroom, dining room and occasional furniture manufactured right here in Winchendon.

LaChance Interiors, Inc.

501 W. Broadway (Loft), Gardner
978-630-3299

lachancefurniture.com 

American-made solid wood and finely crafted upholstered furniture. Offering classic traditional styles to the soft-modern designs of today.

GOLF

Gardner Municipal Golf Course

152 Eaton St., Gardner
978-632-9703

Gardnergolfcourse.com  

Four sets of tees await golfers of all abilities from beginners to pros. Call to set up your tee time today and try their 6131-yard tee.

Settlers Crossing Golf Course

994 Northfield Rd., Lunenburg
978-582-6694

settlersgolf.com  

Nine-hole golf course featuring rolling hills, stone walls, tree lined fairways and views of Mt. Wachusett.

Sterling National Country Club

33 Albright Rd., Sterling
978-422-0275

sterlingcc.com  

With an unparalleled natural setting, outstanding course and elegant dining.

HEALTH CARE

Convenient MD

20 Commercial Road,
Ste #2, Leominster
978-798-6896

convenientmd.com   

We bring the best to everything we do, with caring and experienced clinicians, modern clinics, and a patient-first mindset that inspires every step we take

Heywood Hospital

242 Green St., Gardner
978-632-3420

heywood.org   

Community-owned hospital licensed for 134 bed, located in Gardner, MA. The Staff includes courtesy, and consulting physicians in primary care and a multitude of specialties.

UMass Memorial - Health Alliance Clinton

60 Hospital Rd., Leominster
978-466-2000



healthalliance.com   

A full service, acute care hospital with advanced medical technology and specialty services. Member of UMass Memorial Health Care network.

LODGING

Boxborough Regency

242 Adams Place, Boxborough
978-263-8701

boxbororegency.com  

Centrally located in suburban wooded area, the Hotel & Conference Center offers the perfect location for family getaways, romantic weekends, and corporate travelers.

Chocksett Inn


59 Laurelwood Rd., Sterling
978-422-3355

chocksettinn.com   

A 25-room, all-suite hotel, full kitchens. Meeting rooms, function spaces, both indoors and outdoors. Specializing in relocations, long-term stays.

Colonial Hotel

625 Betty Spring Rd., Gardner
978-630-2500

colonial-hotel.com  

One of Central Mass. most romantic hotels & wedding venues. This 112-room hotel, idealizes New England charm & quintessential hospitality.

DoubleTree by Hilton

99 Erdman Way, Leominster
978-534-9000  

Leominster.doubletree.com
Spacious accommodations, modern amenities, indoor pool, fitness center.

Great Wolf Lodge

150 Great Wolf Dr., Fitchburg
978-343-9653   

greatwolf.com/newengland
Massive 84-degree indoor waterpark. Battle a dragon while playing MagiQuest, challenge the climbing wall or play a round of put-put golf.

The Groton Inn


128 Main St., Groton
978-448-6600

thegrotoninn.com 

Situated on the footprint of the original Groton Inn, with professionally designed guest rooms, meeting and banquet rooms and the Forge & Vine restaurant.

Rodeway Inn



183 Main St., Westminster
978-874-5951

choicehotels.com 

Enjoy affordable accommodations near skiing, Boston and nature. Our hotel is located just right off Route 2, tucked in the rolling hills of North Central Mass.

MUSEUMS



Fitchburg Art Museum

185 Elm St., Fitchburg
978-345-4207   

fitchburgartmuseum.org

The Museum is a catalyst for learning, creativity, and community building in the heart of North Central, Mass. Experience our art historical collections, contemporary New England art, education programs. Plan your visit today!

Museum of Russian Icons




203 Union St., Clinton
978-598-5000   

museumofrussianicons.org

Founded in 2006 by industrialist Gordon B. Lankton. The largest private collection of its kind in North America and outside Russia.

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill

11 French Drive, Boylston
508-869-6111

www.nebg.org   

Tower Hill Botanic Garden is proud to be a place where everyone belongs, where wandering is always welcome, and where no two visits will ever be the same.

RB Racing Museum

300 Lunenburg St., (rear), Fitchburg
978-345-7227 




Ronbouchardautostores.com/
rb-racing-museum.html

RB Racing Museum, honoring the local NASCAR legend Ron Bouchard. See Ron's 1981 Talladega winning #47 car.

RECREATION

Cornerstone Ranch

29 Dowds Ln., Princeton

cornerstoneranch.org   

Riding lessons, trail riding, birthday parties, horse-drawn rides, and year-round activities for all ages.

Descent Divers

6 Main St., Leominster

978-230-730

descentdivers.com

All the gear you need for scuba diving or snorkeling.

Freedom's Way

National Heritage Area

94 Jackson Rd., Suite 311, Devens
978-772-3654

freedomsway.org   

We are committed to promoting, preserving, enhancing, and curating the natural, cultural, and historical resources within our 45 communities.

FunStuf Party Place

791 Water St., Fitchburg

978-342-5000

funstufpartyplace.com 

Entertainment center where toddlers, kids, teenagers and adults all can have a blast in the arcade and playground. "It's All About the Party!"

Groton Hill Music Center

122 Old Ayer Road, Groton

978-486-95214

Grotonhill.org



Founded in 1985 as a community resource for all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. For over 35 years, we've been a leader in music education and performance. Sharing the transformative power of music.

Launch Trampoline Park

118 Commercial Rd., Leominster

978-237-5600

Launchtrampolinepark.


com/Leominster  

Facility rentals available, any size group welcome! Check website of info and times.

Letz Rage

49 John Fitch Hwy, Fitchburg

978-868-0999

letzrage.com 

Our Rage, wreck, smash, paint splatter room are ready for you. Doesn't matter what you call it LETZ RAGE!

Mully's Indoor Golf Lounge

44 Old Princeton Rd., Fitchburg

978-696-3152

mullysindoorgolf.com 

We are the new premier indoor golfing facility, experience golfing with Trackman, the best simulators in the industry.

Nashoba Paddler, LLC 398

West Main St., Groton

978-448-8699

nashobapaddler.com 

Canoe, kayak, and stand-up paddleboard rentals, tours, and instruction on the Nashua River. Easy paddling on a beautiful, forested river. Group discounts. Open May - October.

Oak Hill Country Club

840 Oak Hill Rd., Fitchburg

978-342-2717

oakhillcc.org   

A prestigious, member-owned private country club located in Central Mass. Oak Hill is the perfect club to satisfy golfers and families alike.



The Last U-pick Orchard in
Johnny Appleseed's Birthplace
Since 2001



U-Pick Apples, Peaches, Raspberries & Blueberries • July – October Seasonal Produce

OPENING WEEKEND
August 26 & 27, 10am-5pm

OPEN DAILY
10am-5pm, Sept-Oct

HONEYCRISP WEEKEND
September 16 & 17

CREAM OF THE CROP MACOUN WEEKEND
September 23 & 24

SCARECROWS IN THE ORCHARD HARVEST FESTIVAL
October 7

CHRISTMAS TREE SALES & LIGHT SHOW
Beginning November 24

BULL SPIT BREWERY
Weekends

Open to the public for hiking and picnicking throughout the year
Field Trips, Tours & Outings throughout the year. Check our Hours on our Website or Facebook



www.sholanfarms.com • 1125 Pleasant St., Leominster, MA
Farm: 978-840-3276 • Mail: PO Box 632, Leominster, MA 01453

RC Excitement

208 Bemis Rd., Fitchburg
978-342-3374

RCexcitement.com

The premier racing complex in the northeast, home to family racing fun, with indoor/outdoor tracks to challenge all skill levels. Hobby and RC repair shop.

Supernatural All Star LLC 44

Old Princeton Rd., Fitchburg
978-257-580

supernaturalallstar.com

We love fostering the passions of athletes of all ages and skill levels to create a positive environment where everyone feels value.

Ukulele J's Music Studio

675 Main St., Fitchburg
978-869-2685

ukulelej.com

A pre-k music program-Song time fun. 6-week sessions designed for children ages 0-5 years.

Wachusett Meadow

Wildlife Sanctuary

113 Goodnow Rd., Princeton
978-464-2712

massaudubon.org/wachusett

A former farmstead with historic buildings, barns, spectacular scenery, woodlands, wetlands, and meadows. 12 miles of trails; facility rentals, snowshoe/canoe rentals.

Wachusett Mountain Ski Area

499 Mountain Rd., Princeton
978-464-2300

wachusett.com

With a 1,000-foot vertical drop, 2,006-foot elevation, 26 trails, 8 lifts. Big mountain skiing close to home.

Winchendon History

and Cultural Center

151 Front St., Winchendon
978-297-2142

winchendonhistoricalsociety.org

The Center exhibits its large collection at the 22-room Murdock-Whitney House Museum. A new Toy Museum features Converse Toys.

Worcester Railers HC

105 Commercial St., Worcester
508-365-1756

railershc.com

The Railers are a professional ice hockey team based in Worcester. The team is a member in the Northern Division of the Eastern Conference of the ECHL.

Worcester Brave

Hearts Baseball

39 Jolma Road, Worcester
508-438-3773

Worcesterbravehearts.com

If you're looking for affordable family fun, you've come to the right place! We offer exciting, hustle baseball, involving some of the best young talent that New England has to offer.

RESTAURANTS/ FOOD

110 Grill

7 Mill St., Leominster

110grill.com

Modern American cuisine, exceptional service, seasonal menu, a scratch kitchen with the freshest ingredients, and a strong commitment to allergy awareness.

873 Café and Tavern

873 Main St., Ashby

873cafe.com

Serving fresh and locally sourced food, Chef Smith and his team work to create delicious, savory and beautifully plated meals for every visitor.

Aroma Joe's

200 New Lancaster Rd., Leominster
719-649-7190

aromajoes.com

Fueling the modern world by focusing daily on the customer.

Bull Run Restaurant

215 Great Rd., Shirley
978-425-4311

bullrunrestaurant.com

Restaurant and entertainment venue set in an historic 1740 Tavern. Top entertainment, trivia night, Friendly Friday sing-along and Saturday Jazz. Holds up to 300.

Cherry Hill Ice Cream

826 Leominster Rd., Lunenburg
978-582-7955

53 Main St., Rte 119, Townsend

978-597-0011

cherryhill-icecream.com

With locations in Townsend and Lunenburg, our Ice Cream stands focus on Customer Service and a great family experience.

Chopsticks Restaurant of Leominster

21 Commercial Rd., Leominster
978-534-0020

chopsticksoleominsterma.com

Chopsticks Restaurant & Bar offers authentic and delicious tasting Chinese & Japanese cuisine. Come experience our friendly atmosphere and excellent service.

Comeketo Brazilian Steakhouse

23 Sack Blvd., Leominster
978-466-1224

comeketo.com

At Comeketo we are pleased to bring Brazilian-style Rodizio to our friends and family.

Dairy Queen

18 Sack Boulevard, Leominster
978 798-1053

www.dairyqueen.com/en-us/

locations/ma/leominster/18-

sack-boulevard/15819/

Soft-serve ice cream & signature shakes top the menu at this classic burger & fries fast-food chain.

Delicious Dips

94 Franklin Road, Fitchburg
978-516-6124

deliciousdipsbpaige.com

A small woman owned business. We pride ourselves on providing fresh, quality chocolate covered treats and baked goods.

Fromagerie Madeline

43 Main Street, Leominster
978-466-5848

www.fromageriemadeline.com

Our driving purpose is to make world-class, fresh cheese for our community and share our love of cheesemaking with all.

Gardner Ale House

74 Parker St., Gardner
978-669-0122

gardnerale.com

A family-oriented brewpub/restaurant with a bistro style menu, 12+ award-winning beers on tap. Open daily with Sunday brunch buffet, 9am-3pm.

Gold Bowl

22 Ashby State Rd., Fitchburg
978-348-2088 | goldbowl8.com

With years in business, we adhering to the principle "customer is the King." We always are aiming to assure you a remarkable dining experience.

Il Forno Restaurant

494 Electric Ave., Lunenburg
978-345-2511

il-forno.com

Bustling family-run eatery featuring wood-fired pizzas & other classic Italian dishes plus BYOB.

Kimball Farm in Lancaster

1543 Lunenburg Rd.,
(Rte 70), Lancaster

978-534-9800

kimballfarm.com

For over 75 years, Kimball Farm has served its famous, homemade ice cream, and providing some of the freshest seafood around. open (April-Oct.)

Legends Bar & Grille

68 Airport Road, Ste. 10, Fitchburg
978-342-6500

legendsbarandgrille.com

Come and enjoy the great variety of menu items for you!

Main Street Gift and Café

40 Main St., Leominster
978-534-5090

mainstreetgiftandcafe.com

Stop by for a delicious Breakfast or lunch. Sit, relax and chat or look around at our unique selection of cards and gifts.

Melao by Munchies

27 Air Port Rd., Fitchburg
978-345-1629

Come and enjoy the authentic home cooked Puerto Rican food and pleasant atmosphere. Open from 11am to 10 pm daily.

Moe's Southwest Grill

865 Merriam Ave., Leominster
978-401-2657

moes.com/find-a-moes/

massachusetts/leominster
Fresher than fresh burrito, bowl or whatever you're craving made from our 20+ fresh and flavorful ingredients.

Old Mill Restaurant & Country Store

69 State Rd. E, (Rte 2A E), Westminster
978-874-5941

1761oldmill.com

Full-service family restaurant serving delicious meals with old-fashioned hospitality. Lunch and dinner menu daily. (Open Tue.-Sun.)

Rise & Grind Café and Smoothie Bar

805 Main Street, Fitchburg
riseandgrindcafema.com

We offer specialty coffees, tea, smoothies or enjoy one of our breakfast or lunch sandwich/panini/or flatbread.

The Finicky Fork Catering

695 Main Street, Fitchburg
978-660-2314

finickyforkcatering.com

Creating exceptional cuisine with simple, local and fresh ingredients.

Simply Sweet by Christine Inc.

206 Meriam Ave., Leominster
978-235-6634

onesweetcake.com

Simply Sweet by Christine specializes in fresh baked goods and beautiful delicious cakes and for any occasion.

Singapore Restaurant

170 Whalon Street, Fitchburg
978-345-0132

singaporefitchburg.com

The key to our success is simple: providing quality consistent food that taste great every single time.

Slattery's Restaurant

106 Lunenburg St., Fitchburg
978-342-8880

slatterysrestaurant.com

Cozy, long-standing pub with outdoor seating offering a large American menu and numerous draft beers.

Slavin in the Kitchen

313 Longley Road, Groton
508-320-6994

slavininthekitchen.com

Our creativity and attention to detail is what stands us apart from other caterers with extraordinary quality, sensational flavor and spectacular presentation.

Taco John's

536 Main Street, Leominster
978-252-0775

locations.tacojohns.com/ma/leominster/536-n-main

We serve traditional Mexican food with a twist. By fusing bold flavors with south-of-the-border spices for Bigger, Bolder, Better flavors.

Taco Rey Coliman

7 Pleasant St., Gardner

978-632-7400

We have authentic, fresh Mexican food. Restaurant now open in downtown Gardner for eat in and take out.

The Barn Door

51 South St., Pepperell

978-448-3144

ablebarndoor.com

A family-owned business with a passion for our community and the local artisans that call it their home.

The Central Cup, Coffee & Cupcakery

139 Central St., Leominster

thecentralcup.com

We make our orders from scratch, daily, with the finest ingredients. Besides our desserts, we offer fresh quality coffee and espresso drinks.

The Fix Burger Bar

14 Monument Sq., Leominster

978-534-5900

thefixburgerbar.com

Customized fresh beef, and over 40 toppings to choose from, allowing guests to enjoy a signature "Fixed-Up" burger topping it off with a great beer, amazing craft drinks or shake.

The Lazy Bubble

112 Main St., Ste. #5, Pepperell

978-925-9777

thelazybubble.com

Chef Chris' unique style of International Comfort Foods utilizes local, organic ingredients in our scratch recipes.

RETAIL

Alicia's Spice Co.

12 Aitchison St., Worcester

774-303-0354

aliciasspiceco.com

All Natural, Gluten Free, Kosher, Keto, Vegan and low Sodium spices and focus on wholesome ingredients.

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95 Aubuchon Dr., Westminster

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hardwarestore.com

The oldest family owned chain of hardware stores in America throughout New England and Upstate New York.

Barrington's Autumn

Available at The Johnny

Appleseed Visitor Center

978-235-7312

barringtonsautumn.com

We offer 100% pure essential oils & blends, designer interpretations, fragrances for your home, bath and body.

Creative Connections

56 Main St., Ashburnham

978-827-6211

ccgiftgallery.com

Collection of gifts, from soy candles to blown glass, pottery, hand-crafted jewelry, gourmet items, confections, whole bean coffees and teas.

Cutie Patuties Consignment

1021 Central St., Leominster

978-534-6604

cutiepatuties.com

Your Central Mass headquarters for gently loved clothing, shoes, and accessories for kids, teens and ladies. With over 50,000 items available every day.

Diamond Hearts Arts Studio

7 Wall Street #1, Fitchburg

978-516-3040

diamondheartsartstudio.com

We're a wife and husband team of artists creating abstract acrylic painting and crafts in Central Mass.

East Coast Sales

& Liquidations

139 John Fitch Hwy., Fitchburg

978-627-3659

eastcoastsalesliquidation.com

Locally owned small business that purchases pallets, lots, and truckloads of merchandise from major retailers at discounted prices!

Fabric n Things/Nellantiques

843 Central Street, Leominster

978-878-9514

fabricsnthings.com

The most amazing selection of new and discontinued fabrics, notions, sewing supplies, fashion, quilting, crafts, and home decorating fabrics.

Farm at Baptist Common

342 Baldwinville Rd.,

PO Box 157, Templeton

978-939-8146

Forty delicious flavors of homemade fudge. We sell our famous fudge at craft shows, fairs, festivals and at the Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center.

Fromagerie Madeline

43 Main St., Leominster

978-466-5849

fromagerie-madeline.com

A family-owned/operated creamery and cheese shop. Our driving purpose is to make world-class, fresh cheese and share our love of cheesemaking with all.

Golden Girl Granola

2 Shaker Rd., Ste. C205, Shirley

978-425-5058

goldengirlgranola.com

Produces gourmet granola products. Flavors including Forest Maple and Chocolate Decadence, can be found in grocery and specialty stores.

Kringle Candle

31 Kringle Dr., Bernardston

413-648-3077

kringlecandle.com

Shop Kringle's wide variety of candle fragrances, Gourmet Specialties, Christmas Store, LabLove Perfume, home décor, his & her gifts & much more!

Your Fall... Our Collection.



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INN

MOUNTAIN
LAKE COTTAGES
ON LAKE WILLOUGHBY

Breakwater
PROVIDENCE TOWN & WATERFRONT HOTEL

PRINCE OF WHALES

Book Your Fall Today.

THE LEXVEST
GROUP



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Shop online anytime at www.fabricsnthingsma.com
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We carry Moda, Andover and a wide variety of Vintage Fabrics, and Notions.

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Stop by and see - you never know what you'll find!

We offer Sewing Classes,
Quilting Classes, and
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Little Lamb Apothecary

287 Princeton Rd., Sterling
401-787-4464
littlelambapothecary.com
Handmade soy candles, as well as an assortment of local artisan goods that varies from season to season.

Mill No. 3 Farmstand

85 Westminster St., Fitchburg
978-345-1100
millno3.com
A deli, beer & wine, groceries, flowers, coffee, pastries and the list goes on. Stop in and try our specialty oils and vinegars.

Roots Natural Foods

100 Crawford St., Leominster
978-534-7668
facebook.com/rootsnaturalfoods
Organic produce, vitamins & herbs, natural body care, organic & natural grocery, & spices and the Roots Kitchen!

Sage Home Collection

137 Mill Street, Leominster
978-798-1347
www.sagehomecollections.com
A gift shop boutique featuring a curated selection of plants, florals, crystals.

Smith's Country Cheese

20 Otter River Rd., Winchendon
978-939-5738
smithscountrycheese.com
Old fashioned traditions of creamy Gouda, Havarti, and cheddar cheeses. We also carry gourmet local food items, home décor, and more!

Spice & Grain

84 Main St., Ashburnham
978-394-8789
ash-spiceandgrain.com
Spice & Grain is focused on providing high-quality products and customer satisfaction. We are here to be your resource.

The Kitchen Garden

268 Baldwinville Rd., Templeton
978-939-8558
templetonkitchengarden.com
Baked goods, Finnish coffee bread, made daily in our kitchen, gifts, specialty foods, books, and more. Ice cream shop open May-October.

SERVICES

Black Bear

Coatings & Concrete

644 River St., Fitchburg
978-405-0017
blackbearconcrete.com
The leading resinous coatings in the Northeast, specializing in decorative, designer epoxy, urethane mortars, cementitious coatings, and concrete polishing.

Fitchburg Municipal Airport

567 Crawford St., Fitchburg
978-345-9580
fitchburgma.gov/175/Airport/
We are a general aviation airport serving North-Central Massachusetts since 1929.

Fitchburg Public Library

610 Main St., Fitchburg
978-829-1780
fitchburgpubliclibrary.org
Since 1859 the Fitchburg Public Library connects with your world.

Joshua Allen Design

153 Clinton Rd., Sterling
508-901-9919
joshuaalendesign.com
Our goal is to design innovative, functional, and beautiful spaces for each individual client with options that work within any budget.

Michelle Haggstrom

Realtor KWNC
670 Mechanic St., Leominster
978-660-9912
MAHomeConnections.com
Looking to buy, sell or invest in the North Central Region? Your local real estate connection, bringing you home.

Polar Beverages

1001 Southbridge St., Worcester
508-749-2382
polarbev.com
New England's largest independent soft drink bottler, is a fourth-generation, family-owned business.

Raam Mobile Veterinary Care

112 Main Street, Pepperell
978-877-9517
Raamivs.com
We offer both in-office and mobile veterinary care throughout Pepperell and surrounding area. "From large to small we see them all".

Revital MedSpa

130 Lancaster St., Leominster
978-962-3995
Revitalmedspa.com
Revital Medspa offers a wide range of non-surgical anti-aging aesthetic treatments to help you achieve a youthful appearance.

The Break Bike Shop

872 Main St., Fitchburg
978-627-3045 or 978-503-9174
Thebreakbikeshop.com
At the Break we love bikes and fun. Service focused bicycle shop with over 20 years of experience repairing all types of bikes.

Wachusett Paving

60 Sargent Rd., Westminster
978-230-6666
wachusettpaving.com
Family owned company specializing in residential and commercial asphalt paving and maintenance, excavation, drainage and site work. Call for your free estimate!

WPKZ Radio

978-343-3766
sales@kzone1053.com
WPKZ 105.3FM & AM1280 is your local community radio station and Sox affiliate, news, traffic, and more from 6am-9am.

THEATERS

Stratton Players

98 Prospect St., Fitchburg
978-345-6066
Strattonplayers.com
For 96 years Stratton Players has been where friends and family can come and see wonderful theatrical productions.



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ICE CREAM

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OUR ICE CREAM IS MADE ON THE PREMISES!

**FARM STORE- OUR OWN FRUITS & VEGETABLES,
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PREPARED MEALS & DESSERTS, NOVELTY ITEMS & MORE.**

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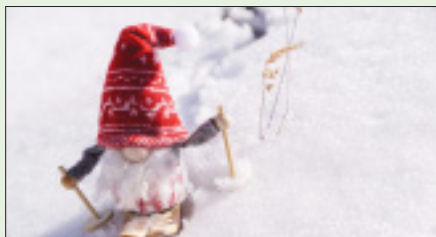
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Short Stops

Of course you love exploring the Great Outdoors... and when you've had enough fresh air, or the weather isn't right for a foray into the forest, there are still lots of great things to enjoy in North Central Massachusetts! Here are a few spots, both indoors and out, to explore — and you can find even more places to visit in the “Members” section at the back of this Guide!



Finding Woodland Fairies and Gnomes

A true gem of the region, Fruitlands Museum in Harvard is always worth a visit, with its diverse collection of art and material culture on 210 acres of land, stunning views, and miles of walking trails.

And how about this for a special family treat? Visit the Fruitlands Fairy Forest on September 2 and 3 for a fantastical woodland adventure.

While living at Fruitlands, 10-year-old Louisa May Alcott wrote in her diary that she “had a lovely time in the woods with Anna and Lizzie. We were fairies, and made gowns and paper wings. I ‘fied’ the highest of all.”

Don your wings, grab your crowns, and come play in the Fruitlands woods as Louisa and her sisters once played. Register online to receive a digital DIY Fruitlands Fairy Forest Activity Kit (including map, fairy wand craft tutorial, story time reading, and more) prior to your visit. Registration includes access to Digital Activity Kit and the museum grounds.

Rev Those Engines!

Don't you just love the sleek lines of classic cars? Do you dream about putt-putting along in an antique vehicle, imagining what it was like a century ago, when horse-drawn surries gave way to horseless carriages? Can you remember the days when car-hops brought your shakes and burgers, clipping the metal trays to the door of your oh, so cool convertible?

Well, you can take a trip down memory lane — or a dream trip to the turn of the last century — just about every week here in Johnny Appleseed Country this fall.

Swing by Kimball Farm in Lancaster, or the Polish American Citizens' Club (PACC) in Gardner, on a Friday night, or Hannaford supermarket parking lot in Athol on a Wednesday evening to chat with car enthusiasts.

And be sure to head to the Templeton Common on September 24 to see to see vintage and antique vehicles and machinery — and enjoy a free concert — at the Narragansett Historical Society's annual Motorpalooza!



Take a Country Tour

This isn't really a “short stop” — it's a whole series of stops you can make as you follow the Country Roads trail! From November 10 through December 10, shops in Winchendon, Templeton, Hubbardston, Gardner, Barre, Petersham, and Phillipston welcome visitors with a Holiday Tour. Tempt your taste buds with local cheeses, meats, beers, and produce; find unique gifts and handcrafts; explore old-timey country shops.

Here's a tip: Pick up a stamp card at any of the shops, complete the tour, and get entered into a drawing for some great prizes! It's a leisurely way to do your holiday shopping, enjoy a country cruise, and explore these locally-owned shops that preserve our New England traditions.

Ring in the New Year!

Are you ready to say goodbye to 2023, and looking forward to 2024? Take a ride to downtown Orange on December 31, where you can party in the street with lots of live entertainment, do a bit of shopping, watch a parade from Town Hall to Veterans Memorial Park, and — if Mother Nature cooperates — view some spectacular ice sculptures! Want more? How about a fireworks display to bid farewell to the old year?

Starry Starry Night is a local tradition — and a great way to ring out the old, and ring in the new!

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









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Lodging

Legend

- * – No pool, but has a babbling brook
- ◇ – Indoor pool
- ◆ – Indoor waterpark

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Chocksett Inn   59 Laurelwood Road, Sterling 978.422.3355 chocksettin.com	26 Suites	•	•	•	• *	•	• (2) Cap. 275	•
Colonial Hotel   625 Betty Spring Road Gardner 978.630.2500 colonial-hotel.com	112 5 Suite		•	•	◇	•	• (7) Cap. 400	•
Days Inn by Wyndham   482 North Main Street Leominster 978.751.3757 daysinn.com	86	•	Nearby					
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Great Wolf Lodge New England Waterpark   150 Great Wolf Drive Fitchburg 800.905.9653 greatwolf.com/newengland	406 96 Suites		•	•	◆	•	• (7) Cap. 500	
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Maguire House   30 Cobb Road, Ashburnham 978.827.5053 maguirehouse.com	3	•	Nearby					
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Gabriel Sosa, La bodega de mis sueños, 2023, mixed-media installation, Gabriel Sosa, La bodega de mis sueños, 2023, instalación de técnica mixta.

La bodega de mis sueños (The bodega of my dreams)

On view now

En esta primera instalación de arte público en una de las paredes exteriores del museo, el artista y educador cubanoamericano Gabriel Sosa considera la historia de los inmigrantes hispanohablantes en la región central de Massachusetts, la cultura visual contemporánea en el centro de Fitchburg y las complejidades de “el sueño americano”.

In this inaugural installation of public art on the museum's façade, Cuban-American artist and educator Gabriel Sosa considers the stories of Spanish-speaking residents in Central Massachusetts, contemporary visual culture in downtown Fitchburg, and the complexities of the American Dream.