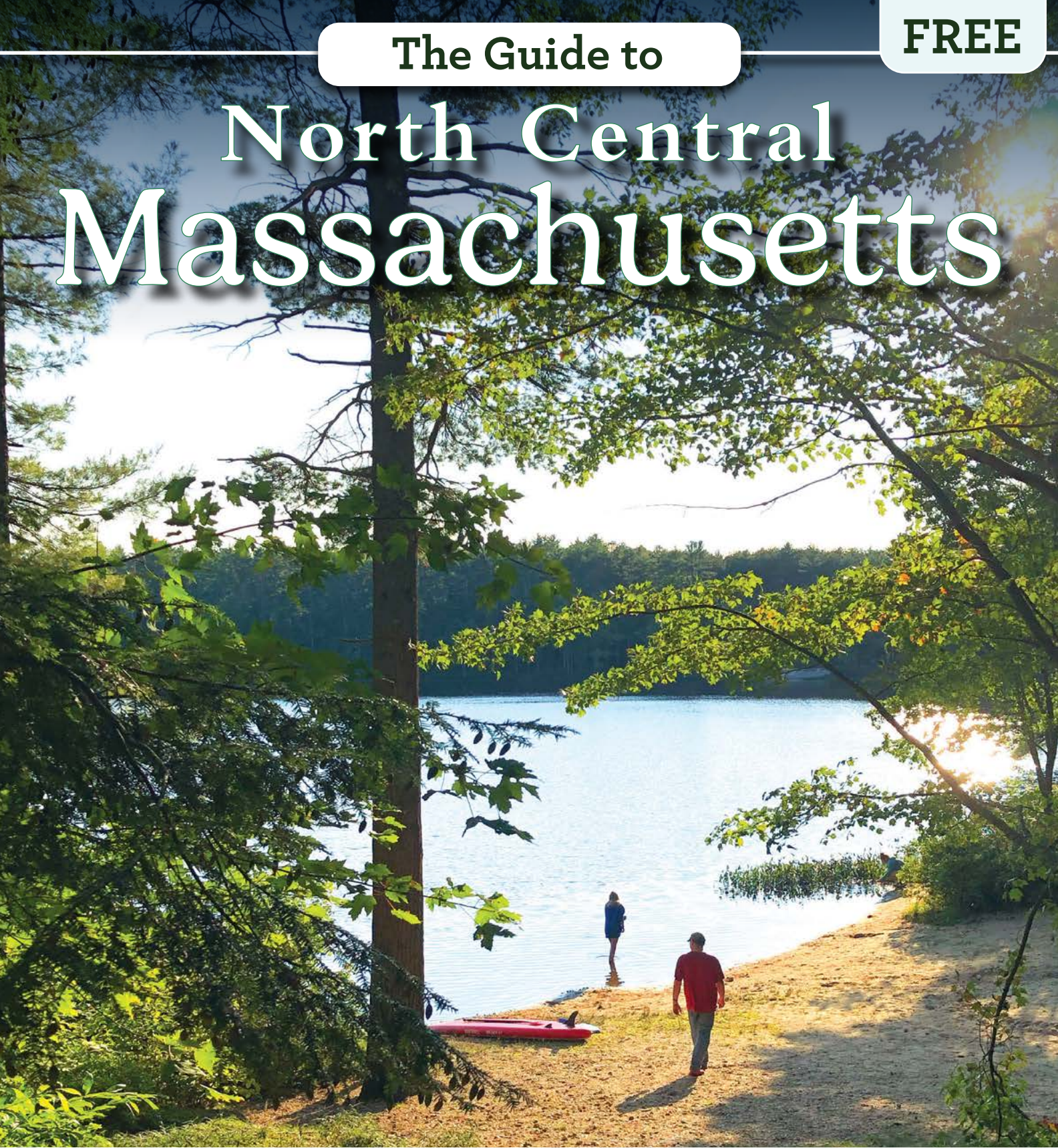


The Guide to

FREE

North Central Massachusetts



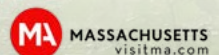
In This Issue...

FAM 100 Year Celebration

Apple Cider Treats

Pickle Ball & Disc Golf

Festival Season



Johnny Appleseed Country | Spring/Summer 2026



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ABOUT THE COVER:

Spring/Summer Cover:

Camping is one of our regions most wonderful summer past times. This image, taken by Lunenburg photographer, Dawn Haley Morton, spotlights her family, husband Dug Morton and daughter Liz Morton, as well as the scenery from a campsite on Lake Dennison in Winchendon. See the article on page 24.

The Guide to North Central Massachusetts

Visit North Central Massachusetts

General Information & 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.

Publisher: Roy Nascimento

Executive Editor: Sitka Creations® LLC

Managing Editor: Marcia Gagliardi

Editorial Production: Sitka Creations® LLC

Contributors to this issue: Ann Gagliardi, Chris Coyle, Sue Cloutier, John Burk, and Amber Robidoux

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Johnny Appleseed Country



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

Johnny Appleseed: Where an American Legend's Story Begins

From apple seeds to spring blossoms to gorgeous apples ready to eat, apple trees throughout North Central Massachusetts anchor communities and tell a legendary story. **Johnny Appleseed**, official Massachusetts Folk Hero and a national legend, made the most of apples as he planted trees wherever he went.

Mention of Johnny's name conjures up images of a rag-tag fellow with a stewpot for a hat and a bag on his back as he casually strews apple seeds while wandering across the countryside. Familiar from childhood books, popular images, and legendary stories, the popular image misleads. Hardly ragtag, Johnny Appleseed—born in Leominster as John Chapman—lived as a successful businessman who helped many pioneers survive and new communities flourish.

John Chapman was born on September 26, 1774 to Nathaniel and Elizabeth Simons Chapman of Leominster. We have little knowledge about his early life other than that his mother died when he was just two years old. His father packed up Johnny and his sister and moved about fifty miles across the state, settling in the Springfield area.

As a young man, Johnny headed west, where he made a name for himself as a businessman as he travelled for nearly fifty years across a growing nation. Along the way, he intentionally planted apple seeds with an eye toward a future market for his crops. He sold and often gave away seeds and



Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center (left) and Johnny Appleseed etching (right).

seedlings to settlers. Historians identify Johnny as a vegetarian, lifelong bachelor, and religious man of peace—a so-called primitive Christian. He died in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on March 18, 1845.

His legend lives on with annual celebrations of National Johnny Appleseed Day on his birthday, September 26.

You can learn more about Johnny Appleseed at the **Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center** on Route 2 Westbound, between Exits 103 & 102. This unique destination showcases the life and legacy of this American folk hero alongside the region's rich agricultural heritage.

Step inside to browse the gift shop for unique keepsakes, view Johnny Appleseed memorabilia, and explore exhibits featuring vintage apple orchard equipment

and regional history. Outside, you'll find a replica colonial-era home that recreates the type of dwelling Johnny would have known as a child—offering a glimpse into 18th-century New England life.

Don't miss the photo opportunities that have made the Visitor Center a popular stop for travelers: snap a selfie with the Big Apple of New England, a massive 10-foot-tall, 1,000-pound red apple sculpture that's the largest of its kind in New England, or pose with the bronze statue of young Johnny standing proudly at the entrance, ready to begin his legendary journey.

The Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center is more than a rest stop—it's a tribute to the man whose ideals of generosity, conservation, and pioneering spirit still take root across the country. ♦

THE CITY OF FITCHBURG



ONGOING

FIRST THURSDAYS DOWNTOWN FITCHBURG

Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.
Free admission 12-7 pm
Farmers Market 3-5:30 pm
through May

THROUGH MAY 24, 2026

Tara Sellios | *Ask Now the Beasts*
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

THROUGH DECEMBER 3, 2026

Festival: *A Celebration of African Art*
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

THROUGH 2026

Kaleidoscope: *100 Years of Collecting for Our Community*
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

WEDNESDAYS & SATURDAYS, 6-9 PM

Live Jazz
Dario's Ristorante, 655 Main St.

FRIDAYS, 6-9 PM

Live Saxophone
Dario's Ristorante, 655 Main St.

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS,

JULY 8 - AUGUST 19, 5:30-7:30 PM
Concerts on the Common
(Hosted by Fitchburg Rec. Dept.)
Upper Common (Gazebo), 857 Main St.

THURSDAY NIGHTS,

JULY 23 - AUGUST 13, 7:30 PM
Movies in the Park
(Hosted by Fitchburg Rec. Dept.)
Lawn behind Fitchburg Legislative Bldg., 700 Main St.

MARCH

FRIDAY 5, 4-6 PM

Free admission Historic Lecture: Fitchburg's Civil War Era Bowie Knives (Lecturer Don Anderson on Whitman & Miles cutting tools)
Fitchburg Historical Society, 781 Main St.

(SATURDAY & SUNDAY) 7, 8

10 AM-2 PM (sugarhouse open) & 9 AM-3 PM (retail store open)
"Massachusetts Maple Weekend"
Hollis Hills Farm, 340 Marshall Rd.

SATURDAY 7, 6-9 PM

"Eleanor's Dream" Centennial Celebration Soiree
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

SUNDAY 22, 2 PM

Theatrical Presentation
Free admission: Women of '76 (Rita Parisi showcases untold stories of 5 courageous women)
Fitchburg Historical Society, 781 Main St.

SUNDAY 22, 2-3 PM

Artist Talk- Daniela Rivera
Kaleidoscope: *100 Years of Collecting for Our Community*
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

TUESDAY 24, 7 PM

Fitchburg State University "Music Mega Mix" (Features: Community Orchestra, Modern Jazz Band, Concert Band, & Concert Choir)
Weston Auditorium, 353 North St.

THURSDAY 26, 7 PM

19th Annual Drag Show presented by Gay Straight Alliance
Fitchburg State University, Athletics & Rec. Center, 130 North St.

FRIDAY 27, 6 PM (Snow date: April 11)

Grand Royal Soiree
Fitchburg State University, Athletics & Rec. Center, 130 North St.

SATURDAY 28, 11 AM-1 PM

Easter Egg Hunt
(Hosted by Fitchburg Rec. Dept.)
Parkhill Park, 27 Franklin Rd.

APRIL

(Fri. & Sat.) 18, 19, 24, 25, 7:30 PM, (Sat. Matinee) 19, 25, 2 PM

"Two Comedies" performed by Stratton Players
Christ Church's Guild Hall, 569 Main St.
Email strattonplayers@gmail.com to reserve tickets

SATURDAY 18, 11 AM-2 PM, (Sat. Matinee) 19, 25, 2 PM

Free admission Drop-In Art Making at Art Place on Elm studio
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

WEDNESDAY 22

"Earth Day" Celebration in Fitchburg
Fitchburg City Hall, 718 Main St.

(Thurs. & Sat.) 23, 26

28th Annual Art in Bloom at FAM (Floral interpretations of artwork)
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.
Champagne Reception: Fri. April 24, 6-8 PM

MAY

TUESDAY 5, 7 PM

Fitchburg State University
"Spring Choral Concert"
Weston Auditorium, 353 North St.

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS & FRIDAYS

9, 15, 23, 29, 5 PM
Mill Street Music Series (Hosted by The Cellar)
Mill Street plaza, 14 Mill St.

SATURDAY 16, 10 AM

"Rock Walk" to Rollstone Hill (Guided tour)
(Hosted by Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority)
Meet at Boulder Art Gallery, 960 Main St.

SUNDAY 24, 6 PM

Memorial Day "White Cross Ceremony"
Monument Park, 597 Main St.

MONDAY 25, 10:30 AM

Memorial Day Ceremony
Fitchburg Armory, 14 Wallace Ave.

JUNE

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS & FRIDAYS

6, 12, 20, 26, 5 PM
Mill Street Music Series (Hosted by The Cellar)
Mill Street plaza, 14 Mill St.

(SATURDAY & SUNDAY) 13, 14, 11 AM-4 PM

"Strawberry Festival" with berry picking, live music & specialty food/drink.
Hollis Hills Farm, 340 Marshall Rd.

WEDNESDAY 17, 2-5 PM

"DPW Day" in Fitchburg
Coolidge Park, 198 Townsend St.

FRIDAY 19, 3 PM

Juneteenth Ceremony
Abolitionist Park, 50 Snow St.

SATURDAY 20, 11 AM-5 PM

Opening Day: 90th Regional Exhibition of Art & Craft
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

JUNE 20 - SEPTEMBER 8

ArtsWorcester: Call & Response at FAM
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

FRIDAY 26, 6-8 PM

Summer Party & Opening Celebration: 90th Regional Exhibition of Art & Craft
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

SATURDAY 27, 1-6 PM

Civic Days: 16th Annual Nashua River Brewers Festival
(Hosted by Beers For Good)
Riverfront Park, 51 Commercial St.

JULY

FRIDAY 3, 4-10 PM

Civic Days: Downtown Block Party
Along Boulder Dr. & Main St.

FRIDAY 3, 9 PM

Civic Days: Fireworks Display
Fireworks at Rollstone Hill

SATURDAY 4, 10 AM

Civic Days: Independence Day Parade
Downtown along Boulder Dr. & Main St.

SUNDAY 5, 11 AM-2 PM

Civic Days: 18th Annual "Amazing Duck Race"
Riverfront Park, 51 Commercial St.

(FRIDAY & SATURDAY) 10, 11, 18, 5 PM

Mill Street Music Series (Hosted by The Cellar)
Mill Street plaza, 14 Mill St.

(SATURDAY & SUNDAY) 18, 19, 11 AM-4 PM

"Berry Festival" with berry picking, live music & specialty food/drink.
Hollis Hills Farm, 340 Marshall Rd.

SUNDAY 19, 2-4 PM

Summer Concert
(Hosted by Friends of Coggs Hall Park)
Coggs Hall Park, 159 Electric Ave.

AUGUST

TUESDAY 4, 5-7 PM

"National Night Out" in Fitchburg
Lowe Park, 174 Elm St.

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS & FRIDAYS

1, 7, 15, 21, 29, 5 PM
Mill Street Music Series (Hosted by The Cellar)
Mill Street plaza, 14 Mill St.

All events are subject to change or postponement.

CHECK OUT FITCHBURGMA.GOV AND SOCIAL MEDIA FOR UPDATES ON UPCOMING EVENTS:



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Bunker Hill Reenactment, Gloucester, MA

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Weekdays 9:00am – 4pm
City Hall, Tata Auditorium
- 15-21** **PIZZA CRAWL**
Sunday – Saturday, All day
Throughout the city
- 19** **INDOOR FARMERS MARKET**
Thursday, 4 – 6pm
City Hall, Tata Auditorium

APRIL

- 3** **EASTER FUNDAY**
Friday, 10am – 2pm
City Hall, Tata Auditorium
- 14** **LEOMINSTER EARTHFEST**
Tuesday, 6 – 8pm
City Hall, Tata Auditorium
- 16** **INDOOR FARMERS MARKET**
Thursday, 4 – 6pm
City Hall, Tata Auditorium
- 22** **CITYWIDE CLEANUP** (Ongoing until May 22)
All day
Throughout the city

MAY

- 7** **LIGHT THE TOWN PURPLE**
Thursday, 6 – 7pm
City Hall, front steps
- 16** **CITYWIDE YARD SALE**
Saturday, 8am – 3pm
Throughout the city
- 21** **INDOOR FARMERS MARKET**
Thursday, 4 – 6pm
City Hall, Tata Auditorium

JUNE

- 13** **LEOMINSTER FARMERS MARKET**
Wednesday, 3 – 7pm
The Common
- 13** **SUMMER STROLL**
Wednesday, 3 – 7pm (rain date June 14)
Downtown Leominster
- 23** **PINK FLAMINGO DAY**
Tuesday, 5 – 7pm
The Common

JULY

- 5** **LEOMINSTER FARMERS MARKET**
Sunday, 10am – 1pm
The Common

AUGUST

- 1** **LEOMINSTER FARMERS MARKET**
Saturday, 10am – 1pm
The Common
- 1** **ITALIAN FESTIVAL**
Saturday, 5 – 9pm (rain date August 2)
Downtown Leominster
- 4** **NATIONAL NIGHT OUT**
Tuesday, 5 – 8pm (rain date August 11)
Downtown Leominster
- 25** **DINING UNDER THE STARS**
Tuesday, 5 – 9pm (rain date August 26)
Downtown Leominster

Events are subject to change or postponement. For the most current event information, head to Leominster Community Development.

facebook.com/leominstercommunitydevelopment or leominster-ma.gov



Brookfield Orchards' apple cider donut ice cream sandwiches from North Brookfield.

Apple cider donuts from Kimball Fruit Farm in Pepperell.

A Sweet Excursion:

Exploring Apple Cider Donuts in North Central Massachusetts

By Ann Gagliardi

Who doesn't love apple cider donuts? The aromatic and flavorful treats with their soft, moist center and slightly crunchy outer layer, number among the many culinary delights of North Central Massachusetts. Johnny Appleseed Country provides one of the best places on earth for apple cider donut excursions.

The fame of the sweet treat has traveled far and wide. Many who grew up in North Central Massachusetts and then moved away associate the flavor with their childhood. But it's not just people who grew up in the area who love the treat. A friend who lives in Vienna, Austria, recently told me, "I love apple cider donuts. They're delicious."

Apple cider donuts belong to a donut subcategory known as cake donuts. They rely on baking powder

and/or baking soda to rise, rather than yeast. Apple cider donut batter contains ample quantities of cinnamon, spices, and—surprise—tart apple cider. In North Central Massachusetts where orchards abound, cider donuts likely owe their distinctive flavor to apples produced by trees growing beside the kitchens where donuts were fried.

Orchards, farm stands, and country stores throughout the region sell apple cider donuts. The tasty sweets always taste delicious, especially when served freshly rolled in cinnamon sugar straight out of the fryer.

For many, apple cider donuts serve as a classic fall treat commonly enjoyed after apple-picking or at Christmas markets. In recent times, regional farms have made them available throughout the year. **Sholan Farms** of Leominster, for example, sells apple cider donuts

made by nearby **Robust Café** at its spring festival and throughout the fall harvest season from August to October.

Some producers sell apple cider donuts at multiple locations. For example, **Hollis Farms** sells them at their farm location from August through the Christmas season, including available fresh-made daily through late October. After that, Hollis Farms makes them available weekends at their Christmas Tree Farm a few miles from the fruit farm.

Red Apple Farm in Phillipston makes donuts every day of the year and sells them at Phillipston and Boston sales points year-round, at Wachusett Mountain during ski season, and by order online.

Purveyors of apple cider donuts value their traditions. David Chandler of **Meadowbrook Orchards** in Sterling said their

baking department has used the same apple cider recipe for twenty-five years.

Kimball Fruit Farm in Pepperell has made their own apple cider donuts, sold at their Pepperell farm stand and nine farmers markets in the Boston area, for ten years, according to Amanda Wadleigh, the owner.

Kerri Green of **Westward Orchards**, a fourth-generation family owned and operated tree fruit and vegetable farm, told me that the donuts her father-in-law Don, an eighty-year-old Vietnam vet, almost always makes the donuts there. He took on the position of donut maker in his retirement, she said.

One important thing to know before setting out on an apple cider excursion: apple cider

donuts do not stay on shelves long. According to Brian Vincent of **Vincent's Country Store** in Westminster, their homemade apple cider donuts “typically sell out very quickly—often in under an hour.”

When setting out on an apple cider donut excursion with intentions to sample donuts on the way, aficionados will find it a good idea to call ahead and ask what time donuts are ready.

A final note: People display ingenuity. The apple cider envelope has broadened to include creative. For example, **Mountainside Bakery & Café** in Princeton sells apple cider muffins year round. Katherine Huck of Mountainside describes them as “generously sized apple cider-spiked muffins then dunked in butter and cinnamon sugar.” Although they're not a

traditional donut shape, they rank as a top seller at the bakery café.

Curious Cravings Bakery in Barre sells apple cider donut bread. At **Brookfield Orchards** in North Brookfield, customers can sample apple cider donut ice cream sandwiches, while at **Quabbin Woods Restaurant** in Petersham, it's possible to try apple cider donut French toast. **Fountain Confections** in Clinton offers apple cider donut whoopie pies made with locally sourced apple cider.

What fun to visit apple cider donut vendors throughout Northern Central Massachusetts. May a wonderful excursion meet all seekers of the unique treat. 🍂

————— **See the next page for the List!** —————

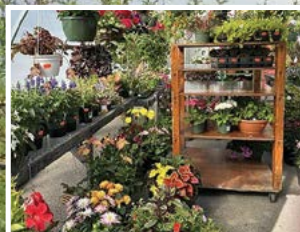
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| 🍏 Deli Sandwiches | 🍏 Cider Donuts Made Daily |
| 🍏 Ice Cream | |

Open Daily, Year-Round, 9-5



List of entities selling apple cider donuts or similar in North Central Massachusetts.

Curious Cravings Bakery

231 Oakham Road, Barre

(508) 353-0185

Website: curiouscravingsbakery.com

Facebook: curiouscravingsbakery

Instagram: curious_cravings_bakery

Spotted Cow Cafe

2291 West Street, Barre

(774) 823-5513

Facebook: thespottedcowcafe

Instagram: thespottedcalfcafe

Bolton Orchards

125 Still River Road, Bolton

(978) 779-2733

Website: boltonorchards.com

Facebook: boltonorchards

Instagram: boltonorchards

Bolton Spring Farm

159 Main Street, Bolton

(978) 779-2898

Website: boltonspringfarm.com

Facebook: boltonspringfarm

Instagram: boltonspringfarm

Brookfield Orchards

12 Lincoln Road, North Brookfield

(508) 867-6858

Website: brookfieldorchards.com

Facebook: brookfieldorchards

Instagram: brookfieldorchards

The Fountain Confections

138 High Street, Clinton

(978) 878-1615

Hollis Hills Farm

340 Marshall Road, Fitchburg

(978) 696-3130

Website: hollishillsfarm.com

Facebook: hollishillsfarmma

Instagram: hollishillsfarm

Carlson Orchards

115 Oak Hill Road, Harvard

(978) 456-3916

Website: carlsonorchards.com

Facebook: carlsonorchards

Instagram: carlsonorchards

Westward Orchards

178 Mass Avenue, Harvard

(978) 456-8363

Website: westwardorchards.com

Facebook: westwardorchards

Instagram: westwardorchards

Sholan Farms

1125 Pleasant Street, Leominster

(978) 840-3276

Website: sholanfarms.com

Facebook: sholanfarms

Instagram: sholanfarms

Main St Gift and Café

40 Main Street, Leominster

(978) 534-5090

Website: mainstreetgiftandcafe.com

Facebook: mainstreetgiftandcafe

Instagram: mainstreetgiftandcafe

Robust Café

1123 Central Street, Leominster

(978) 788-5192

Website: robustcafe.com

Facebook: robustcafeofficial

Instagram: robustcafeofficial

Flat Hill Orchards

321 Elmwood Road, Lunenburg

(978) 582-6756

Website: flathillorchards.com

Lanni Orchard

294 Chase Road, Lunenburg

(978) 582-6246 Ext: 21

Website: lanniorchard.com

Facebook: lanniorchards

Instagram: lanniorchard

Red Apple Farm

455 Highland Avenue, Phillipston

(978) 249-6763

Website: redapplefarm.com

Facebook: redapplefarm

Instagram: redapplefarm

Red Apple Farm

Ski season at Wachusett

Mountain Ski Area

499 Mountain Road, Princeton

(978) 464-2300

The Core in the Base Lodge

Bullock Lodge located slope-side

on the lower 10th trail

Kimball Fruit Farm

184 Hollis Street, Pepperell

(978) 433-9751

Website: kimball.farm

Facebook: kimballfruitfarm

Instagram : kimballfruitfarm

Quabbin Woods Restaurant

8 Barre Road, Route 122, Petersham

(978) 724-3288

Facebook: quabbinwoodsrestaurant

Instagram: quabbinwoods

Mountainside Bakery and Café

213 Mountain Road, Princeton

(978) 464-0300

Website: mountainsideprinceton.com

Facebook: mountainsideprinceton

Meadowbrook Orchards

209 Chace Hill Road, Sterling

(978) 365-7617

Website: meadowbrookorchards.com

Facebook: meadowbrookorchards

Instagram: meadowbrookorchards

Dale's Market

161 Main Street, Townsend

(978) 302-9828

Facebook: dalesmarket

Instagram: dalesmarketco

Vincent's Country Store

109 Main Street, Westminster

(978) 874-1705

Facebook: vincentscountrystore

Instagram: vincent_craftbeers

The Farm Stand Winchendon

244 School Street, Winchendon

(978) 616-9955

Website: thefarmstandwinchendon.com

Facebook: thefarmstandwinchendon

Instagram: thefarmstandwinchendon

Farmer's Market

Every Friday, 3 PM—6:30 PM

May—Oct on Academy Hill
www.westminsterfarmersmarket.com

Historical Society Plant Swap & Sale

Saturday, May 9th 9:00—1:00 PM

Town Wide Yard Sale

**Saturday, June 13th
8:00AM — 3:00PM**

Summer Band Concerts

**Wednesday Nights, July & August
7 PM — 9 PM**

Town Benefit

**Sunday, August 9th
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www.sholanfarms.com • 1125 Pleasant St., Leominster, MA • Email: info@sholanfarms.com
Farm: 978-840-3276 • Mail: PO Box 632, Leominster, MA 01453

Start Your Day in North Central Massachusetts

By Chris Coyle

Breakfast trends continue to evolve, with diners seeking nutrient-rich dishes, savory alternatives to sugar-laden meals, and locally sourced ingredients. North Central Massachusetts restaurants are embracing these changes with creative menus that go beyond traditional breakfast fare.

The Gardner Ale House

serves Sunday Downtown Brunch from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Some interesting dishes on their online menu include breakfast burrito, avocado toast, brewers breakfast, the hangover helper burger and the rather extravagant-sounding chili maple, chicken and waffles.

Kro's on the Common

in Templeton serves breakfast Thursday through Sunday. They are closed Monday–Wednesday. The big burrito, salmon avocado bagel and steak & cheese hash brown stack are among their breakfast offerings. Their menu notes certain entrees are gluten free or may be modified to be vegetarian. A mason jar parfait is one of several items offered for a lighter fare.

Marty's Corner Café & Deli

at Devens offers breakfast Monday through Saturday. A mouth-watering breakfast entrée is the acai bowl with berries, fruit, local granola, shredded coconut, honey and even chocolate. The breakfast panini with its folded egg, bacon, jam, American cheese, red onion and smashed avocado is sure to offer a flavorful combination of ingredients. Other exciting offerings include breakfast tacos, the s'mores sugar waffle and something called Creme Bruleegel– which is described on the menu as a “bagel with cream cheese, topped with sugar and torched to glass-like sugar perfection.”

Cozy Corner Coffee Shoppe

in Fitchburg serves breakfast Tuesday through Saturday. This classic New England diner on Lunenburg Street has earned a loyal following for its generous portions, reasonable prices, and welcoming atmosphere. Reviewers rave about the omelettes and waffles, while daily specials keep the menu fresh for regulars. With a warm, homey vibe and attentive staff, it's the kind of neighborhood spot where, as more than one visitor has noted, you come in as a stranger and leave feeling like family.

North Central Massachusetts' strong agricultural heritage makes it a region where fresh, quality food matters. These four establishments represent just a sampling of the breakfast dining options throughout the area.

For a complete guide to restaurants and dining experiences, explore visitnorthcentral.com. ♦



Corned Beef Hash, Cozy Corner Coffee Shoppe in Fitchburg.

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Enjoy fresh foods. Support local farms. Build sustainable communities.

Explore the bounty of locally produced food in North Central Massachusetts.



By Sue Cloutier

Good news abounds about how to get healthy food to anyone's table. Many farms in North Central Massachusetts participate in Community Supported Agriculture—CSA—that makes it easy to get locally grown foods.

On joining a CSA, an individual or household becomes a member. Each member builds a

connection with an area farm and receives a weekly basket of produce from the farm.

Each farm that offers a CSA program may have different crops, payment methods, and pick-up or delivery options. Some ask for up-front payments while others expect payments over time.

Some farmers may ask you to dig in and help on some of the farm work or to pick your own. Some

**Purchasing food for meals
through CSAs benefits
individuals, families and farm
families, and the community.**



The summer's bounty is on display in these images: regional farm-fresh meals, local apples and summer squash!

farmers grow crops in greenhouses for year-round availability.

Building that farm-to-home relationship is educational and fulfilling for everyone. Prospective members of a CSA program can learn about local farms and their options by getting in touch.

Purchasing food for meals through CSAs benefits individuals,

families and farm families, and the community. It also helps the planet by conserving energy used to transport food and keeping open spaces for farms and wildlife.

A co-op relying on nearby farms and three CSA farms in North Central Massachusetts, number among those providing locally produced veggies, fruits, or meats.

**See the CSA & Resource
list for North Central
Massachusetts
on the next page.**



Summer farm fields.

CSAs & Other Resources in North Central Massachusetts

Quabbin Harvest

Co-op in Orange receives food from multiple farms with some available year-round. The co-op's flexible weekly program provides half shares or full shares of fruits and/or vegetables. Participants can sign up online.

quabbinharvest.coop
(978) 544-6784

Free Living Farm in Petersham grows fruits and vegetables on 1.5 acres and distributes full or half shares every week for twenty-one seasonal weeks. Participants can sign up online.

freelivingfarm.com
(508) 864-9650

Many Hands Organic Farm

in Barre offers organic produce, meat, and eggs with available seasonal

shares. Participants can sign up online or, if receiving SNAP, by email to farm@mhof.net.

mhof.net
(978) 355-2853

Breezy Hill Farm,

a family farm in Ashburnham, sells in-season produce and pasture-raised pork, lamb, and beef. Check online for the listing of shared fruits and vegetables and/or shares of meat and dairy.

breezyhillfarm.
weebly.com
(978) 340-5848

Still looking for the right farm community CSA?

Check out this website for more CSA farms in Massachusetts.

massnrc.org/farmlocator/map.aspx

Recognizing the benefits of keeping local farms, **Worcester Regional Food Hub** supports farm-related businesses as they start or expand their efforts. Food Hub has kitchens in Worcester and Fitchburg where they train bakers, caterers, and cooks developing new recipes and preparing meals.

Growing Places,

a nonprofit based in Leominster, offers weekly produce home delivery and pickup throughout North Central Massachusetts. Working with local farms since 2001, Growing Places makes fresh, locally grown produce accessible through flexible payment options. Participants can sign up online.

Growingplaces.org

Flats Mentor Farm

produces ethnic specialty crops that go to wholesale and retail markets throughout New England.

The World Farmers mission states: just as important as our programming and services is the simple access to a safe space to learn from their neighbors, feed their families, heal, rebuild their cultural foundations, and teach the next generation all that agriculture can provide.

Flats Mentor Farm helps farmers from distant lands share their culture through foods they have farmed in their homelands. Supporters may purchase a CSA share, donate, teach, or learn. Learn more at worldfarmers.org 🌱



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Business Spotlight



Furniture pieces provided by LaChance.

Furnishing a City's History: LaChance Interiors and Gardner's Chair City Roots

By Chris Coyle

Nearly seventy years ago, brothers Luke and Leo LaChance founded LaChance Interiors in Athol. They later opened a second store on Gardner's Main Street.

Gardner Plaza, the city's first shopping center, opened on Pearson Boulevard in 1964. Searstown in Leominster opened the same year. Sears then closed its Gardner department store and opened a catalog store in Gardner Plaza. At that time, LaChance, Inc. renovated the space vacated by Sears and became LaChance Furniture and Appliance as they added furniture to their growing product line.

A Kraft Street branch in Gardner opened as the business expanded. Both the Main Street location and the branch have since closed. LaChance used the former Gardner Universalist Church building on the corner of Cross and Lincoln streets as a warehouse for many years after the church disbanded around 1950 and the steeple removed.

Known today as LaChance Interiors, the business operates at 501 West Broadway in Gardner with a two-story showroom. The Nichols

family and later the George G. Bent Company previously owned the building until LaChance purchased it.

The LaChance family sold the business in 2010 to John Rice who passed away in 2014. William "Bill" Lee currently owns the business and serves as president. He has more than forty years' experience in the retail home furnishings industry.

The company now exclusively offers furniture. Although LaChance never manufactured anything themselves, they have worked with many vendors in the area, in later years becoming an outlet store for many manufacturers. The firm can offer good pricing because it sources many of their products locally, thus reducing shipping. Everything they sell is proudly made in the US.

Gardner, Chair City or Furniture Capital of New England, earned the nicknames from the high concentration of furniture and chair manufacturing in the city. At one time, Gardner firms—including the Nichols family in partnership with the Stone family—produced more than four million chairs annually. LaChance remains as the last retail store from the era of Gardner's chair manufacturing legacy serving Massachusetts and

neighboring states. The company prides itself with a strong commitment to quality and craftsmanship.

LaChance Interiors offers a wide selection of furniture for spaces including bedrooms, dining areas, and offices, all at affordable prices. Their goods feature solid wood and high-quality fabric and leather upholstery. The company asserts its dedication to outstanding customer service and offers delivery.

Visitors to the area can browse the two-story showroom in sight of and a short drive from Route 2. Their well-designed website shows many examples.

LaChance Interiors serves customers daily from all of New England and beyond. Their website proudly proclaims: An American-made Story—Our difference is worth the drive!

**LaChance Interiors is open daily.
Consult the website for hours.**

lanchancefurniture.com

**Sunday
12 P.M.–5 P.M.
Monday through Saturday
9 A.M.–5 P.M. ♦**



GARDNER MASSACHUSETTS

— THE CHAIR CITY —

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Theatre at the Mount Presents - Beginning February 27, 2026
- Gardner Museum Reopening - March 4, 2026
- Food Truck Festival - TBD July 2026



GARDNER FARMERS MARKET

May 16

June 20

July 18

August 15

Location: Waterford Street School - Gardner, MA 01440



Scan our Gardner
City Hall QR Code for
city info, upcoming
events, and more!



Exploring North Central Massachusetts with Your Dog



The dog park at Pine Acres in Oakham.

By Chris Coyle

North Central Massachusetts offers rolling hills and gentle meadows perfect for exploring with canine companions. The region welcomes dogs at many parks and trails, making it an ideal destination for families traveling with their four-legged friends. A stop at **Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center on Route 2** westbound in Lancaster provides area information for anyone interested in regional dog-friendly areas. In addition to coffee and restrooms for dog owners, the center has a nice area for walking dogs.

Not far from the visitor center, **Leominster State Park** welcomes dogs as does Prospect Park, also located in Leominster. Both require leashes six feet in length or shorter for

canine visitors. As in all locations, the parks expect owners to pick up after their dogs.

**"North Central
Massachusetts
provides numerous
opportunities for
outdoor adventures
with dogs."**

Fitchburg's Coolidge Dog Park is the only location in the city allowing off-leash dogs at any time.

Other city parks welcome leashed dogs, though owners should check posted signs for specific regulations.

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, DCR, welcomes dogs on leash at most parks, forests, and reservations. Dogs and their owners can enjoy a nice outing and beautiful views for miles at **Wachusett Mountain State Reservation** in Princeton. The reservation welcomes dogs on leash on most of its seventeen miles of trails excepting O'Brien's area or the base lodge, where only service animals are permitted.

Other than at swimming areas or inside buildings, leashed dogs may roam with their humans at 132-acre **Dunn State Park** in Gardner. Dog owners may also enjoy hiking and

fishing while visiting Dunn Park.

The **Trustees of Reservations** have long welcomed dogs to many of their many properties across the state. Dogs on leash may explore the Trustees **Doane's Falls** property in Royalston.

Many of the ever-growing number of rail trails allow dog-walking, though owners should consult regulations for specific trail policies.

Dog owners must license and vaccinate their pets prior to visiting dog parks. Rules and regulations vary by location, so check destination websites or posted signs for specific policies. **BringFido.com** lists many lists many dog-friendly areas in Massachusetts with essential details.

For more information about parks, trails, and pet-friendly attractions throughout the region, explore visitnorthcentral.com. ✧

Discover more to see, do, and experience throughout North Central Massachusetts

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runsignup.com/sterlingrecruns

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May through October

STERLING FARMERS MARKET

1 Park Street, Butterick Municipal Building
Fridays 3 PM – 6:30 PM
May through October

STERLING DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS OPEN HOUSE & TOUCH A TRUCK

171 Worcester Road
May 2, 2026 at 9 AM – 12 PM
sterling-ma.gov



BACKYARD CHICKENS

Conant Public Library
March 5, 2026 at 6:30 PM
sterlinglibrary.org

PAUL REVERE DISPELLING THE MYTHS

Conant Public Library
March 26, 2026 at 6:30 PM
sterlinglibrary.org

ANNUAL CLASSIC CAR SHOW

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36 Muddy Pond Road
Thursday, August 13, 2026
Rain date August 20
4:30 PM – 6:30 PM
sterling-ma.gov/senior-center

PERENNIAL VEGETABLES OF NEW ENGLAND

Conant Public Library
April 14, 2026 at 6 PM
sterlinglibrary.org

Grab a Racquet:

Where to Play Tennis and Pickleball in Our Region

By Ann Gagliardi

Those in North Central Massachusetts with a hankering for hitting a ball around on a court with friends are in luck. The region has no shortage of tennis and pickleball facilities.

Tennis has a long history here. Princeton, for example, hosts the **Chandler Bullock Memorial Labor Day Tennis Tournament**, started in 1912 and believed to be the longest-running private tennis tournament in the United States. Open to current and former Princeton residents and family members aged fifteen and up, the Bullock doubles tournament takes place over the course of a week on Princeton tennis courts. Officials randomly assign contestants to pairs. A team of volunteers organizes the tournament each year. Spectators and players alike take part in picnics and other social events scheduled around the matches.

According to data published by the United States Tennis Association, USTA, the number of people playing tennis has risen in the US each year for the last five years, jumping from 2023 to 2024 by nearly two million people. While it's not possible to give a precise count of how many of those people play in North Central Massachusetts, the area has many tennis courts.

Typing the name of any North Central Massachusetts town into the court locator feature on the USTA Play Tennis New England website lists



a nearby tennis court for each of the twenty-seven towns of the region. The list includes many well-maintained public tennis courts in parks and at schools, some of them equipped with night lighting to extend play time. Sports clubs and private facilities such as **New England Tennis Center** and **Orchard Hills Athletic Club (OHAC)** in Lancaster, **Pine Hill Club** and **Prince of Peace in Princeton**, and **Oak Hill Country Club** in Fitchburg also host tennis courts.

The popularity of pickleball, a much younger ball sport, is also on the rise.

Some claim a rivalry between the two sports. Pickleball requires

a smaller court than tennis with a smaller racquet and a ball made out of plastic.

Part of its popularity of pickleball owes to the fact of its accessibility to folks of different ages, abilities, and fitness levels.

“You don't have to be as in shape to have fun playing it,” a friend said. It's also a nice way to meet other people. “It has a very welcoming atmosphere on the courts—strangers of different ability levels are welcomed and folded into other games when the courts are packed,” she said. Another friend in her fifties confirmed, “I have bad knees. My very athletic teenage son and I enjoy playing pickleball together because I can navigate the smaller size

Tennis & Pickleball Venues

of a pickleball court, and he can still smash the ball past me.”

Throughout North Central Massachusetts, pickleball players will find facilities including purpose-built courts and tennis courts with pickleball lines on the ground. In some cases, players must bring their own nets. Pickleball nets are lower and narrower than tennis nets.

Indoor and private pickleball courts include **Mount Fitness Center** in Gardner; **YMCA**s in Athol, Winchendon, and Fitchburg; **Regan Family Pickleball** in Leominster; and **Game On Sports and Performance Center** in Fitchburg. The pickleheads app numbers among many such tools that allow users to locate courts and games by typing in the name of a town.

Who knows? It’s possible that in another hundred years, storied North Central Massachusetts pickleball tournaments will take their place alongside Princeton’s long-running tennis tournament as examples of enduring sporting events.

Tournament organizers combine fun and fundraising. Athol, for example, saw its first ever pickleball tournament in September 2025 organized by the recently formed **Athol Pickleball Association**. Forty players ranging in age from fifteen to eighty-five took part in the round-robin style event, which raised funds for upkeep of the courts at the tournament venue, Silver Lake.

This is really just the tip of the iceberg. There is so much going on as far as pickleball and tennis are concerned in our region. And last but not least: if you’re here and looking for pickleball or tennis clothing or gear, try a well-stocked, locally-owned shop such as John’s Sports Shop in Gardner. ♦

1

Oak Hill Country Club

840 Oak Hill Road, Fitchburg

Website: oakhillcc.org

Facebook: oakhillcountryclub

Instagram: ohcc1921

2

Route 12 Pickleball

184 W Boylston Street, West Boylston

Website: rt12pickle.com

Facebook: rt.12pickle

3

The Mount Fitness Center

444 Green Street, Gardner

(978) 630-9212

Website: fitness.mwcc.edu

All ages and skill levels.

4

New England Tennis Center

100 Duval Road, Lancaster

(978) 728-4479

Website: netenniscenter.com

Facebook: netenniscenter

Instagram: netenniscenter

5

Orchard Hills Athletic Club (OHAC)

100 Duval Road, Lancaster

(978) 537-8387

Website: ohaclub.com

Facebook: orchardhillsathleticclub

Instagram: ohaclub

Tennis and pickleball.

6

Pine Hill Club

228 Mirick Road, Princeton

(978) 464-7748

Facebook: pinehillclub

Membership is only available to Princeton residents.

7

Regan Family Pickleball

206 Priest Street, Leominster

(508) 808-4032

Website: reganfamilypickleball.com

A New England Twist on the Fairway:

Disc Golf in the Heart of the State

By Chris Coyle



Barre Falls Recreation Area (left) and Tully Lake Disc Golf Course (right).

Photos by John Burk.

Disc golf, an outdoor sport, resembles regular golf played with a ball except that players instead compete with a flying disc like a smaller frisbee. Opponents throw a disc toward and then into a basket with the goal of having the lowest number of throws to complete each hole.

Disc golf has become quite popular in recent years. North Central Massachusetts hosts several disc golf courses.

Although one can play disc golf alone, groups often enjoy it with up to four or even eight players. It does work better for eight players to play as two groups of four each. Enthusiasts play disc golf year-

round, regardless of cold weather and snow.

Disc golf helps relieve stress and achieve harmony with one's inner self, as well as providing healthy aerobic exercise, according to the blog Disc Golf United. The sport brings people together as friends. Beautiful North Central Massachusetts has several disc golf courses to welcome players.

A short distance from the center of Ayer, Devens hosts two disc golf courses. An old military training course hosts **The Hill**, the original course on a hill amidst huge boulders and towering pines. Hilly, wooded, rocky, and sometimes tight spots characterize the terrain. A

newer course, **The General** built in 2013, also hilly and wooded, has longer holes than the original course.

An eighteen-hole free disc golf course at **Coggs Hall Park** in Fitchburg represents the newest addition to the already beautiful 212-acre wooded park. **Coggs Hall Park Disk Golf Club** maintains the course. The site UDisc says "Coggs Hall brings you on a quintessential New England disc golf experience."

Sterling's Meadowbrook Orchards eighteen-hole course encompasses parts of a scenic hundred-acre apple orchard and farm in surrounding woodland.

Among disc golf courses, Meadowbrook uniquely has a restaurant on the premises. Players can enjoy beautiful vistas of scenic North Central Massachusetts along the course.

The 18-hole public course located at **Barre Falls Dam** offers a challenging public course with significant elevation changes. Players can take advantage of picnic tables, grills, and bathrooms. A collaborative effort between

the Army Corps of Engineers and volunteers from the disc golf community, players golf free of charge on public land.

Farther west located in Athol, **Flat Rock Disc Golf Course** dates from 1999 and offers a challenging, tight, and technical disc golf experience. Flat Rock's website describes the course as "showcasing the natural beauty of the land." Players may purchase an annual membership or pay for the day.

The course sponsors annual tournaments throughout the year. The Flat Rock course has committed itself to environmental stewardship and player respect, according to the website.

Whether playing disc golf competitively in a tournament or just for fun, players can enjoy the great outdoors and get exercise in a terrific North Central Massachusetts activity. ♦

Local Disc Golf Locations

The Hill
80 Antietam Street
Devens

Coggshall Park
159 Electric Avenue
Fitchburg

Barre Falls Dam
Coldbrook Road
Hubbardston

**Meadowbrook
Orchards**
209 Chace Hill Road
Sterling

**Flat Rock Disc
Golf Course**
42 Flat Rock Road
Petersham



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1928 Pleasant Street
Athol, Ma 01331

978-249-7640

 ellinwoodgolf.com 



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Lunenburg, MA



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Lake Dennison, Winchendon (far right) and Pearl Hill, Townsend (top left and right).

Photos by Dawn Morton

PITCH A TENT (OR A YURT!)

By John Burk

From full-service cabin resorts to secluded backcountry tent sites and waterside shelters, North Central Massachusetts offers adventure for every kind of camper.

With direct access to trails, beaches, and prime paddling and fishing spots, public campgrounds offer a great way to explore the region's nature preserves.

Tully Lake Campground in Royalston is an outstanding recreation destination offering thirty-five tent sites as well as canoe and kayak rentals from boat launch that affords access to Tully Lake and Long Pond. Other attractions include a 4.5-mile hiking trail that loops around Tully Lake and Doane's Falls, a 7.5-mile mountain bike route at Long Pond, and a disc golf course and playground near Tully Dam.

Part of an expanse of conservation land in Templeton and Winchendon, **Otter River State Forest** has seventy-six tent and RV

sites, four yurts, and three group sites. Amenities include a swimming beach at Beaman Pond, basketball and volleyball courts, and a nature trail to Lake Dennison.

Lake Dennison Recreation Area is the region's largest public campground featuring 150 tent and RV sites, a beach, picnic areas, and a ramp for cartop boats. An extensive network of trails provides many options for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding.

For a wilderness experience, **Bearsden Conservation Area** in Athol offers camping at Paige Cabin near the main entrance and two Adirondack shelters on Millers River at Duck Pond and Buckman Brook. There is no fee, and campers must make reservations online.

Situated at the intersection of the New England National Scenic Trail and **Tully Trail in Royalston Falls Reservation**, the Falls Brook Shelter has two bunk beds for hikers. Picturesque Royalston Falls lies a short distance downstream.

In Ashby and Townsend, **Willard Brook State Forest's campground** includes twenty-one tent and RV sites and a yurt near Damon Pond. Adjacent Pearl Hill State Park provides fifty tent, RV, and cabin sites, a swimming beach at Pearl Hill Brook Pond, and a universally accessible bathhouse.

For a greater variety of accommodations, amenities, and events, campers may check out one of the region's private campgrounds.



1. Pine Acres Family Camping Resort sits beside picturesque Lake Dean in Oakham and offers a range of options from rustic tent sites to luxurious cabins and spaces for big rigs. The site provides boating, fishing, swimming, sports courts, a gem mine, and other attractions. Numerous events such as live music, crafts, and Independence Day fireworks take place throughout the camping season. Visit www.pineacresresort.com for more details.

2. Encompassing seventy acres in Phillipston, **Lamb City**

Campground features more than 280 tent, cabin, and RV sites. Activities include fishing and hiking at Lamb City Pond, music, karaoke, and wagon rides to nearby Red Apple Farm. Two recreation halls, three pools, an arcade, sports facilities, and a disc golf course provide a multitude of additional entertainment options. Visit www.lambcity.com for more details.

3. The Pines Campground in Ashby offers spacious tent and RV sites near a peaceful forest stream, a recreation hall, pool, playground, and an arcade. Annual events include potluck dinners, summer Halloween

and Christmas celebrations, and a bonfire on Independence Day. Visit www.thepinescampground.com for more details.

4. Set on two hundred acres of wooded land in Hubbardston, **Peaceful Acres** has tent sites, cabins, hiking trails, a pond stocked with trout, an indoor pool, and recreation hall. Visit www.peacefulacres.wixsite.com/peaceful-acres for more details.

North Central Massachusetts has plenty to offer in terms of camping and hiking locations for the whole family! Happy camping! 🌿🌿🌿

Community Theater Brings Audiences Together throughout North Central Massachusetts

By Amber Robidoux



Junie B. Jones, Barre Players Theater (2025).

Community theater offers meaningful benefits for individuals and communities alike. A creative outlet where people of all ages and backgrounds can collaborate, theater builds confidence and develops communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.

Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner: *Willy Wonka, JR.* will take the stage at the Mount for school groups at 10:00 a.m. April 7, 8 and April 9 and 10 at 9:30 a.m. 28. A special sensory-friendly performance at 11 a.m. Saturday, April 4 and a general public performance matinee on the same day at 2 p.m.

About the musical, the Mount says, "Step into a world of pure imagination with Willy Wonka, Jr., the delightful children's musical that brings Roald Dahl's timeless classic to life! Join Charlie Bucket and the quirky, enigmatic Willy Wonka on a magical journey through the most extraordinary chocolate factory ever imagined. With catchy songs, colorful characters, and whimsical sets, this enchanting production is perfect for families and children of all ages. Don't miss out on this sweet adventure that promises to be a treat for the senses and a joy for the heart!"

Find more information at
mwcc.edu/campus-life/tam/shows

The Stratton Players in Fitchburg will present two one-act comedies, with performances Friday, April 17 and 24 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, April

18 and 25 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Tickets available at the door. General Admission \$15. Seniors/Students \$10.

Find more information at
facebook.com/strattonplayers

The **Barre Players Theater** in Barre has the following scheduled productions for their upcoming shows. *The Enchanted Bookshop* a youth theater production by Todd Wallinger in March. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare in June. *Hadestown, Teen Edition* a summer teen production by Anais Mitchell in August.

Find more information at
barreplayerstheater.com

R.C. Mahar Regional School in Orange has scheduled the following production in its Theater Department. The first two weekends in May, the Mahar Theater Department will perform *The Little Mermaid* and their fall production will be *Mamma Mia*.

Find more information at
facebook.com/mahartheater

By bringing together diverse participants—whether onstage, backstage or in the audience—community theater fosters social connection and a sense of belonging. It also enriches local culture, making the arts more accessible while strengthening community pride and engagement. ♦



The Wizard of Oz, The Musical, Mahar Regional School (2025).



The Nerd, The Stratton Players (2025).



Alice in Wonderland, The Stratton Players (2025).

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Sunflowers, Music, and Small-Town Traditions: *Festival Season Is Here!*



ShirleyFest, on the town common in Shirley.

By John Burk

Celebrate spring and summer with a variety of festivals held by the communities, farms, and organizations of North Central Massachusetts. Whether you're looking for live musical performances, a traditional country fair, activities for families, or an opportunity to support local artisans and nonprofits, you'll find a wide choice of events. Here is a sampling of local festivals; see the calendar for a full listing or explore our website at visitnorthcentral.com.

Red Apple Farm in Phillipston hosts several popular seasonal events with music, food, and vendors.

Journey back in time at the **Enchanted Orchard Renaissance Fair**, May 2-3. With a robust schedule of medieval-themed events, the orchard becomes the domain of knights, pirates, witches, fairies, and Vikings. **Summer Strings Music Festival** in late June features two days of outdoor live

string music performances on the stages of Brew Barn and cidery.

Kick off harvest season at the **Blueberry Jamboree**, July 11-12 and 18-19. Pick blueberries and savor doughnuts, jams, ice cream, hard cider, and other treats at the farm store and cidery. During **Sunflower Fest**, August 8-9 and 15-16, find photogenic sunflowers as well as raspberries, blueberries, and early varieties of apples available for picking.

Visit: redapplefarm.com

A popular tradition for more than sixty years, the **River Rat canoe race**, April 11, draws competitors who paddle five miles on Millers River from Alan Rich Environmental Park in Athol to Riverfront Park in Orange. Activities include a carnival, 5K road race, and parade in downtown Athol with a celebration at the finish line in Orange.

Visit: riverrat.com

Part of **GrotonFest's** annual



Groton Revolutionary Muster in Groton.

Photo by Harold Sanford.

seasonal fairs, **Springfest** takes place on the third Sunday in May at Prescott Community Park in Groton. Get inspired for summer by checking out programs, activities, exhibits, outdoor adventures, and fresh food offered by local businesses and organizations

Visit: grotonfest.com

Situated at a historic farmstead in Westminster, **Wildwood Farm** hosts two recently established fairs with artisans, food trucks, live music, and outdoor bars. Take in the seasonal beauty of the farm at **Springfest** in late May and the atmosphere of a summer evening as the sun sets over Wachusett Mountain during **Summerfest** in late July.

The orchard of **Sholan Farms** in Leominster provides a picturesque setting for the **Apple Blossom Festival and Craft Show** in late May, dates to be announced. Attractions include wagon rides, a petting zoo, craft vendors, food

trucks, and the famous Butterfly Release, where attendees may purchase a live butterfly for release in honor of a loved one.

Visit: sholanfarms.com

Held on Shirley's town common in early June, **ShirleyFest** promotes local artists, raises funds for non-profits, and provides family-oriented entertainment. Shirley Historical Society, Shirley Arts, and other community organizations offer food and information booths.

The **city of Gardner** celebrates its birthday and **Small Business Saturday** with a downtown festival in late June. Support local merchants, restaurants, and vendors while enjoying live music, games, and family activities.

Visit: gardner-ma.gov

A popular tradition since 1960, **Fitchburg Civic Days** commemorates Independence Day with a week of fun events.

The **Nashua River Brewer's Fest** at Riverfront Park showcases independent breweries and cider producers from around New England, with live music, law games, and food.

On July 3, a **downtown block party** includes music, a car show, food trucks, and vendors, followed by a spectacular fireworks display from **Rollstone Hill**. Experience an old fashioned parade on Independence Day with floats, marching bands, fire trucks, community groups, and a sensory friendly zone. Activities conclude with the **Amazing Duck Race** at Riverfront Park, with cash prizes for winners. Head over to Riverfront Park or the Upper Common for prime views of fireworks.

Visit: fitchburgma.gov

The **Royalston Music Fest** features performances at Bullock

Park at the town common in mid July, date to be announced, and the gazebo at South Royalston on the second Sunday of August. Enjoy popular local bands, food, and games at both events.

Leominster's popular **Starburst community festival** returns to Doyle Field for another season in 2026, date to be announced. Highlights include fireworks, live music, food trucks, and presentations of the Citizens of the Year awards.

Visit: leominster-ma.gov

A quintessential New England agricultural festival, historic **Bolton Fair** takes place at the Lancaster Fairgrounds August 14-16. Numerous attractions include animal shows, a farmer's market, educational demonstrations, a carnival with midway rides, a crafter's village, monster truck show, demolition derby, tractor pulls, and other activities.

Visit: boltonfair.org ◇

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Fitchburg Art Museum entrance.

All photos courtesy of The Fitchburg Art Museum.

How She Looks at 100

What do you imagine you will look like at 100? Or your home will look like at 100? We all hope it will be as wonderful as FAM, the Fitchburg Art Museum.

This year marks a hundred years for Fitchburg Art Museum, located in the North of Main neighborhood of downtown Fitchburg. This milestone is the story of conviction and class.

Founded in 1925 through the bequest of American artist Eleanor Augusta Norcross, the Fitchburg Art Museum stands today as one of the oldest cultural institutions in North Central Massachusetts. Over the past hundred years, it has grown from a modest art center into a dynamic, community-embedded museum with a collection of more than eight thousand works. Yet its founding impulse remains remarkably intact—a belief in art as

a public good, inseparable from civic life.

That belief belonged to Norcross, a painter, philanthropist, and lifelong advocate for the power of art to enrich everyday experience.

A Female Founder Ahead of Her Time

Born in Fitchburg in 1854, Eleanor Norcross came from a prominent local family. Her father, Amasa Norcross, served as the city's first elected mayor. But Eleanor's ambitions extended far beyond local politics or social standing. She pursued formal artistic training at what is now the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston, later continuing her studies at the Art Students League in New York.

At the encouragement of her teacher, the celebrated American painter William Merritt Chase,

Norcross moved to Paris in 1883.

There, she established herself as a professional artist, painting portraits and interiors in an Impressionist style and assembling an extensive personal art collection. Her tastes reflected a deep engagement with European works on paper and the decorative arts—fields often dismissed as secondary at the time but now recognized as central to art history.

Norcross never married. Instead, she used her life's time to help her hometown. She conceived of her own art collection—and her resources—as tools for public benefit. When she died in 1923, she left behind not only her artworks and paintings but also some financial means to kick off the budding idea of an art museum in her hometown.

Her motivation was explicit and radical for its era: she believed that



FESTIVAL tour.

exposure to the fine arts improved the lives of working people and their families. Like many nineteenth-century arts philanthropists, Norcross viewed cultural access as essential to civic health. But unlike many of her contemporaries, she insisted that such access should exist outside elite urban centers.

Fitchburg, she believed, deserved the same as Boston, Worcester, or Springfield in terms of the arts and humanities.

The Change from Art Center to Art Museum

The institution Norcross imagined took shape slowly. The Fitchburg Art Museum was legally incorporated on December 31, 1925 and opened its first galleries to the public in 1929 in the historic Merriam Parkway Building in downtown Fitchburg.

In its early decades, the institution operated under the name Fitchburg Art Center, mounting exhibitions of international, national, and local artists while steadily growing its collection. It also functioned as an educational hub, offering classes for children and adults and serving as a



Merriam Parkway Entrance.

social gathering place for a growing community of arts supporters.

Leominster artist Luann Hume (b. April 12, 1939, d. January 26, 2026) once noted how she started her love of art at the museum, “From when I was nine, I spent many Saturdays taking the bus to Fitchburg Art Museum to take art classes. I had many joyful hours drawing and painting and beginning to learn my craft. I prayed for more Saturdays in the month,” she said, “so that I could keep learning and creating.”

After successfully navigating the austerities of World War II, the institution formally became the Fitchburg Art Museum in 1951, a change overseen by then-director Zaydee DeJonge Harris. The new name reflected both its expanding ambitions and its increasing regional stature.

Enduring into the Future

Few figures shaped the museum’s physical and institutional growth more than FAM’s ninth director, Peter Timms of Ashburnham, who led the museum for thirty-nine years

from 1973 to 2012—one of the longest tenures of any art museum director in the United States.

Under Timms’s leadership, the museum more than tripled in size to forty thousand square feet through new construction and the acquisition and renovation of adjacent buildings. He also oversaw a successful capital campaign that built a sustaining endowment, ensuring the museum’s long-term stability.

Just as significantly, Timms championed education as central to the museum’s mission. In 1995, FAM partnered with Fitchburg Public Schools to create the Partnership School, an innovative arts-magnet middle school where all academic subjects were taught in museum galleries using an arts-integrated, collection-based curriculum. The program, which ran for more than a decade, taught more than two hundred students annually, reduced dropout rates, and drew national attention. During that period, the museum adopted a tagline that still resonates: “A Museum with a School at its Heart.”



Kaleidoscope Exhibition.

The NOW: A Community Museum

Since 2012 under the leadership of its tenth director, Nick Capasso of Harvard, Fitchburg Art Museum has continued to evolve while remaining deeply rooted in community engagement. The collection has grown to more than eight thousand works with notable strengths in American art, African art, and photography alongside a renewed commitment to contemporary New England artists, the Latinx community surrounding the museum, and a focus on contemporary curation.

The museum maintains close partnerships with Fitchburg Public Schools, Fitchburg State University, Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner, and numerous local organizations. It has also taken an active role in community development, collaborating with NewVue Communities to help create the Fitchburg Arts Community—sixty-eight units of artist-preference affordable housing located directly across the street from the museum.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, FAM extended its civic role even

further, working with Fitchburg Public Schools to launch Fitchburg Families First, a program designed to address basic human needs for families in the school system during the city's most difficult months.

The museum is also one of the country's first—and almost only—to operate fully and be completely committed to bilingual English/Spanish programming, reflecting and welcoming Fitchburg's substantial Latinx population.

A Centennial Grounded in Founding Values

As Fitchburg Art Museum enters its second century, it does so in a way that echoes Eleanor Norcross's original vision. To mark its four-year centennial period from 2026 to 2029, the museum has made admission free for all visitors, thus removing financial barriers between the public and its collections. If the program proves sustainable, free admission will become a permanent policy.

Centennial exhibitions draw directly from the Permanent Collection Norcross helped make possible. **FESTIVAL: A Celebration of African Art** at FAM

brings together traditional and contemporary works from across the African continent and diaspora, while **Kaleidoscope: 100 Years of Collecting for Our Community** offers a sweeping, floor-to-ceiling presentation of paintings, sculptures, drawings, photographs, textiles, and multimedia works that reveal the collection's depth and breadth.

Together, those exhibitions reaffirm the museum's founding purpose: to hold art in trust for the people.

The Enduring Vision of Eleanor Norcross

A century after its founding, the Fitchburg Art Museum remains what Eleanor Norcross imagined—a civic institution, not a cloistered one. Its history testifies to the power of individual vision translated into public good and to the enduring impact of a woman who believed that art belongs not only to cities of wealth and prestige but to the daily lives of working communities.

In honoring its centennial, the museum ultimately honors her. Long live Ms. Norcross's memory—we would say at a hundred, she is still looking good! ♦

Opens

Saturday, February 21, 2026



Eleanor Norcross, *My Studio*, 1891, oil on canvas. Fitchburg Art Museum, Norcross Collection, 1942.1

Kaleidoscope:

100 Years of Collecting for Our Community

**FITCHBURG
ART MUSEUM**

185 Elm St., Fitchburg, MA
fitchburgartmuseum.org
978.345.4207

SPRING—SUMMER 2026 Calendar

In this issue of The Guide to North Central Massachusetts, we introduce you to lots of great places and special events. But new concerts, new fairs, and new adventures pop up every day in the vibrant communities across this region.

The following Calendar pages offer a sampling of the great events you can enjoy here; to keep up to date on all the fun, use the QR code on this page, or visit our constantly-expanding website calendar at visitnorthcentral.com.

There's so much to see and do here—we don't want you to miss a thing!



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WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Saturdays 10am-12pm. Brunch & Bowl at Winchendon CAC Community Hub, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon. Bring the kids down for some good ole fashioned Saturday morning cartoons while they enjoy some breakfast and bowling. Fun for the whole family. Pajamas welcome! Tickets available.

Every 3rd Saturday (May-Nov). Gardner Farmers Market at 62 Waterford St School, Gardner.

Every 1st Sunday 10am-4pm. Free First Sunday: History of a Collection at Icon Museum and Study Center, 203 Union St, Clinton.

Friday Nights. Live Music at Brew Barn, 455 Highland Ave, Phillipston.

Mondays 1-3pm. Knitting Group at Athol Public Library, 568 Main St, Athol.

Mondays 3:30-4:30pm. LEGO Club at Athol Public Library, 568 Main St, Athol. Kids ages 5-11 and their families.

Every 1st Tuesday 6-7:45pm. North Quabbin Tree Climbers Genealogy Group at Athol Public Library, 568 Main St, Athol. Take turns sharing what we're working on and to help one another with our genealogy quests. We'll also do "Show and Tell" - Feel free to bring photos, documents, family trees, and resource books, etc.

Every other Tuesday 5-6pm. Photography Workshop at Ashby Free Public Library, 812 Main St, Ashby.

Every 3rd Tuesday 12-1pm. Bereavement Support Group at Ashby Free Public Library, 812 Main St, Ashby.

Wednesdays 10:30-11:30am. Right Start Play Group at Ashby Free Public Library, 812 Main St, Ashby.

Thursdays 5:30-7:30pm. Teen/Adult Art Club at Ashby Free Public Library, 812 Main St, Ashby. Join our group of artists as they all work on individual projects but share each other's laughter and company!

Thursdays 6:30-7:30pm. Video Game Club at Ashby Free Public Library, 812 Main St, Ashby. Join us in the YA Room to play video games together, it can be MarioKart, Minecraft, Smashbrothers, or more. Feel free to make a suggestion!

Every 1st Thursday 4-5pm. Cooking Club at Ashby Free Public Library, 812 Main St, Ashby.

Every 1st Friday 4-9pm. Free Family Movie Night at Ashby Free Public Library, 812 Main St, Ashby. At 4pm the taco truck from our friends Tacos Y Burritos Panchitas will arrive. The first film will start at 5pm and the second film will start at 7pm.

Every 3rd Thursday through May 4-6pm. Indoor Farmers' Market at Leominster City Hall, 25 West St, Leominster.

Thursdays 7:30pm. Soul Nights at Boulder Café, 880 Main St, Fitchburg.

Every 1st Thursday 12-7pm. FAM at Night at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St, Fitchburg. Including an indoor farmer's market 3-5:30pm.

Thursday to Sunday nights. Concert Series at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd, Shirley. Registration required.

Wednesdays 6pm. Lose Your Blues at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd, Shirley. Live, local blues.

Thursday & Friday nights. Live Music at The Groton Inn, 128 Main St, Groton.

Every Friday, Saturday, Sunday night. Concert Series at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd, Groton. A wide variety of concerts, featuring classical, jazz, bluegrass, and more! Tickets available.

MARCH

1 Sunday, 11:30am-3pm. Winter Fest at Carlson Orchards Cider Barn, 115 Oak Hill Rd, Harvard. Free admission.

1 Sunday, 7pm. Celtic Ensemble Solas at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd, Groton. Solas is lighting up stages across the globe as they celebrate three decades of pushing boundaries and honoring traditions in Irish music. Tickets available.

2 Monday, 6-9pm. Pint Night: Harpoon & Greater Good at Wachusett Mountain, 499 Mountain Rd, Princeton.

3 Tuesday, 1-3pm. Community Social Art Circle with GALA at Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon. A group with different skill levels who wish to learn, explore, laugh,

share, connect, and be inspired. A safe, low key, non-intimidating space. Bring your portable works in progress or try and pick from the shared community art supplies we have on hand. Non-makers are also welcomed. Registration required.

3 Tuesday, 5:30-6:30pm. Full Moon Hike at Fruitlands Museum, 102 Prospect Hill Rd, Harvard. The hike begins at the gift shop. Walk along the trail system and visit the Pergolas Foundation and Willard Farm. Registration required.

3 Tuesday & April 7, 6-7pm. Genealogy Series at Athol Public Library, 568 Main St, Athol. What to do with old photos and documents, and more! Registration required.



The Great Race at Wachusett Mountain.

6-8 Friday-Sunday. Ski Race Weekend at Wachusett Mountain, 499 Mountain Rd, Princeton. Ralph Crowley Classic/NE Masters Race on Friday 9am-12pm. The Great Race on Saturday 9:30am-2pm. The Good Race on Sunday 9:30am-2pm. The culminating race for the top race league teams! Registration required.

7 Saturday, 12-1:30pm. How To Make Your Own Sushi Rolls at Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St, Clinton. Materials provided. Registration required.

7 Saturday, 4pm. Cheese Pairing with Hannah Morrow at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd, Shirley. Registration required.

7 Saturday, 6-9pm. Eleanor's Dream: A 100th Birthday Soirée at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St, Fitchburg. Join us in celebrating 100 years of the Fitchburg Art Museum and the opening of Kaleidoscope: 100 Years of Collecting for Our Community. Tickets available.

7 Saturday, 6:30-9:30pm. Five Dollar Dance Party at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd, Shirley. Registration required.



The dance after the husking, Homer, Winslow.

7 Saturday, 7-10 pm. Lamplight Ball at Ayer Town Hall, 1 Main St, Ayer. Presented by The Footwork and Frolick Society. Historical costumes of the "crinoline era" (1830s-50s) will be admired but are not required. Guests are encouraged to wear whatever makes them feel elegant. Tickets available.

7 Saturday, 7:30pm. Ravel Revealed at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd, Groton. Presented by Vista Philharmonic Orchestra. Let's revel for Ravel on his 150th birthday year! We'll celebrate this French composer and fabulous orchestrator, Maurice Ravel, with fan favorites and pieces that are new to our orchestra repertoire. Tickets available.

8 Sunday, 2-4pm. High West Après Ski at Wachusett Mountain, 499 Mountain Rd, Princeton. Featuring DJ music, signature cocktails, sampling, and High West Whiskey giveaways.

11 Wednesday, 10am-2pm. MA Senior Games – Ski & Snowboard Races at Wachusett Mountain, 499 Mountain Rd, Princeton.

14 Saturday, 9:30am-2pm. Annual David Crowley Race to Cure PSP at Wachusett Mountain, 499 Mountain Rd, Princeton. This fall, David Crowley passed away from FTD/PSP, a degenerative neurological disease. PSP is a rare, physically debilitating disease and affects all aspects of daily function. There is no known cure. Wachusett works in partnership with the MGH Frontotemporal Disorders Unit in David's memory. Ski with David for PSP will benefit the clinical care and research programs at the MGH FTD Unit, bringing the cure of tomorrow closer to the care of today. Registration required.

14 Saturday, 6-8pm. Toy Town Swing at Winchendon CAC Community Hub, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon, MA 01475, USA. First timers and long timers... all are welcome to join us at the HUB for a night of dancing and fun! Tickets available.

15 Sunday, 3pm. Groton Hill's St. Patrick's Day Celebration at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd, Groton. A celebration of Celtic music, song, and dance! Tickets available.

15 Sunday, 7:30pm. ISHNA: A St. Patrick's Day Celebration at The Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd, Shirley. Fronted by husband-and-wife duo Ciaran Nagle and Tara Novak (both of Riverdance and The Three Irish Tenors), Ishna is a Contemporary Irish Folk Band. Members hail from around the world, bringing their different backgrounds to their musical explorations. Tickets available.

17 Tuesday. St. Patrick's Day at Wachusett Mountain, 499 Mountain Rd, Princeton. Everyone's Irish on St. Patrick's Day! There will be green savings and special menu items.

17 Tuesday, 6-9pm. Pint Night: Wachusett Brewery at Wachusett Mountain, 499 Mountain Rd, Princeton.

18 Wednesday, 12pm. Bebe Wood with Pianist Gaurav Mishra at 122 Old Ayer Rd, Groton. Tickets available March 11, 10am.

18 Wednesday, 5:30-7pm. Frances Perkins: A Woman's Work at Athol Public Library, 568 Main St, Athol. Who was Frances Perkins? Find out in this one-woman play looking at the life of the first woman Secretary of Labor.

20 Friday, 5:30 pm. Bourbon Tastings from Budget to Bougie at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd, Shirley. Guiding this journey is local bourbon aficionado Phil Hicks. Registration required.

20 Friday, 7pm. The Wake of Timothy O'Toole at The Old Mill Restaurant, 69 State Rd E, Westminster. Murder mystery dinner theater. Tickets available.

22 Sunday, 11:3-3:30pm. Victorian Afternoon Tea at Gov. George S. Boutwell House, 172 Main St, Groton. Enjoy a traditional 3-course tea menu at the historic Boutwell House in Groton, MA. Members of Footwork & Frolick will serve in a variety of Victorian daywear, and guests can try a selection of teas to accompany the menu. A perfect opportunity to pull out a favorite historical or modern ensemble! Tickets available.

22 Sunday, 2-3pm. Artist Talk: Daniela Rivera at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St, Fitchburg. Artist Daniela Rivera views the works of art in Kaleidoscope: 100 Years of Collecting for our Community as amplifying one another in a lively dialogue. Registration required.



Afternoon Tea at the historic Boutwell House.

22 Sunday, 2pm. Tea and Readings Celebrating Shirley's Revolutionary Women at Shirley Historical Society Museum, 182 Center Rd, Shirley. Celebrating Women's Month, learn about women such as Sarah Edgerton Mayo, Helen Winslow, Ethel Bolton, Hazel MacKaye, Shirley Lawton Houde, and Sandy Farnsworth.

26 Thursday, 6-7pm. Forestry Talk with Derek Beard at Athol Public Library, 568 Main St, Athol. Lecture with slides, followed by conversation.

27-28 Friday-Saturday, 10am-12pm, 1-3pm. Pysanky Egg Decorating Workshop PM Session at The Icon Museum and Study Center, 203 Union St, Clinton. Registration required.

APRIL

April Exhibit. Renaissance Science: Magic and Medicine in Harry Potter's World at Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St, Clinton. In partnership with the National Library of Medicine.

1 Wednesday. Teen Poetry Contest Begins at Leominster Public Library, 30 West St, Leominster. In honor of Poetry Month, the Teen Room is having a Poetry contest. Must be 7th-12th grade to participate.

4 Saturday, 11am. Cardboard Box Race at Wachusett Mountain, 499 Mountain Rd, Princeton. Registration required.

5 Sunday, 12pm. Pond Skim at Wachusett Mountain, 499 Mountain Rd, Princeton. Registration required.

5 Sunday. Easter Brunch at The Fay Club, 658 Main St, Fitchburg.



Rietta Flea Market.

5 Sunday. Rietta Flea Market Opening Day at 183 Gardner Rd, Hubbardston. Free admission & parking.



Building the Wachusett Dam.

9 Thursday, 6-7pm. History of the Construction of the Wachusett Reservoir at Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St, Clinton. Join the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation for a deep dive into the history of the Wachusett Reservoir! Includes a look at historical photographs, annual reports and archived scrapbooks showing the engineering marvel of the reservoir system. Registration required.

11 Saturday. Athol-Orange River Rat Race Start Line: Alan E. Rich Environmental Park, Athol. Finish Line: Riverfront Park, Orange. This race is conducted by the Athol Lions Club in conjunction with the Orange Lions Club and is an annual event that draws large crowds of spectators to watch the often 200+ canoes race (some in crazy outfits) to the finish line.

11 Saturday, 10am-2pm. Artisan Fair: Spring Fling at the Fitz at Discover Pepperell, 45 Main St, Pepperell. Over 25 talented artisans, bakers, and small businesses will fill the Fitz with handmade treasures and community spirit! Free admission.

11 Saturday, 11am-12pm. King Kong: 90 Years and Still Top Banana at Forbush Memorial Library, 118 Main St, Westminster. Registration required.

11 Saturday, 7pm. Creeque Alley at Shirley Meeting House, 41 Brown Rd, Shirley. An acoustic duo featuring local musicians Sean Fullerton and Dan Kirouac, pay tribute to traditional American folk music, the early 1960's folk revival, and the folk rock hits from the mid to late 1960's.

25 Saturday, 7-10pm. *Laugh Your Tail Off* at Polish American Citizens Club, 171 Kendall Pond Rd W, Gardner. Comedy event featuring Lenny Clarke & Jason Merrill. Tickets available.

30 Thursday-May 3. *Spring Fling Weekend* at Great Wolf Lodge, 150 Great Wolf Dr, Fitchburg. Presented by Ready Set Crop. Registration required.

MAY

1 Friday, 4-5:30pm. *Bon Voyage, Forever A Murder Mystery* at Athol Public Library, 568 Main St, Athol. Presented by Delvena Theatre Company. An exciting live, comedy murder mystery performance set on a cruise of a lifetime featuring three actors in multiple roles. Complete with costumes, props, and token prizes. There will be much audience interaction allowing the audience members to become super sleuths searching for the murderer aboard the cruise ship. Ages 18+. Registration required.



Bulfinch Bee 5k at the Bulfinch Meetinghouse

2 Saturday, 11am. *Bulfinch Bee Run* at Bulfinch Meetinghouse, 725 Main St, Lancaster. This will be a 5k community fun run/walk/roll (costumes highly encouraged!) in the neighborhood of Lancaster's historic Bulfinch Meetinghouse. Registration required to enter.



Enchanted Orchard Renaissance Faire at Red Apple Farm

2-3 Saturday-Sunday, 11am-7pm. *Enchanted Orchard Renaissance Faire* at Red Apple Farm, 455 Highland Ave, Phillipston. A family-friendly and inclusive event, Enchanted Orchard welcomes all who delight in history, fantasy, and the timeless magic of storytelling. Tickets available.

7 Thursday, 5:30-7pm. *Golden Age of Silent Films with Richard Hughes* at Athol Public Library, 568 Main St, Athol. Program includes film clips of newsreels, cartoons, horror movies, and footage of what it was like going into the Nickelodeon movies back then all put together with live "mood music" piano accompaniment from Mr. Hughes.

9 Saturday, 7:30pm. *An "Almost" Summer's Middy Dream* at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd, Groton. Presented by Vista Philharmonic Orchestra. We're finishing the season strong and looking toward summer, with the work Gustav Mahler. One of the most acclaimed symphonies of all time, this epic masterwork showcases our full orchestra plus two choruses and Boston's acclaimed mezzo-soprano Alexis Peart as featured soloist. Tickets available.

16 Saturday, 1pm. *Program and Open House* at Parker Mansion, 109 Center Rd, Shirley. Learn about Parker's diary entries throughout the Revolutionary War.

16 Saturday, 7pm. *The Story of America's Song* at Shirley Meeting House, 41 Brown Rd, Shirley. The songs of America are a living chronicle of struggle, joy, innovation, and identity.

17 Sunday, 11am-4pm. *GrotonFest Spring* at Prescott Community Center, 145 Main St, Groton. This festival is all about discovering exciting summer camps, kid-friendly activities, outdoor adventures, and everything you need to embrace the warmer months. And what's a festival without delicious food and great entertainment? We'll have that too!

17 Sunday, 11am-4pm. *GrotonFest Kids* at Groton Herald, 161 Main St, Groton. Kidpreneurs will showcase their creativity, talent, and business skills through a wide variety of handmade products, creative services, and unique experiences!

19 Tuesday, 5-6:30pm. *Susan Pepper Aisenberg Art Show* at Athol Public Library, 568 Main St, Athol. Scenes Inspired by the North Quabbin Region showcases recent work, older work, and new pieces in progress by local painter Susan Pepper Aisenberg. Included will be paintings of different scenes and landscapes informed by nature's sounds and rhythms.

28 Thursday, 6-7:30pm. *Mel Allen* at Athol Public Library, 568 Main St, Athol. Fifty years of life in New England as lived by the longtime editor of Yankee magazine. Allen will share slides and stories about his most memorable experiences in nearly 50 years writing about New England. Registration required.

30 Saturday, 2-4pm. *Open House* at Schoolhouse #8, 8 Church St, Shirley. Sit at an antique desk and attempt some old school assignments.

JUNE

6 Saturday, 11am-5pm. *ShirleyFest* at Center Common, Shirley. Enjoy the entertainment, shop the sales booths, pick up grilled chicken and salads for lunch at the Historical Society's table. Many other food booths will be sponsored by other local organizations.

11-14 Thursday-Sunday. *Pepperell "Schools Out" Carnival* at Town Field, 4 Hollis St, Pepperell.

27 Saturday, 3-8pm. *Leominster French Canadian Festival* at Leominster Eagles Club, 15 Wisteria Dr, Leominster. 2025 was the first festival and it was a huge hit with the community! Prepare for an even better event organized in 2026 with more vendors, F.A. books, foods, and musical acts!

27 Saturday, 6-10pm. *Fireworks Celebration* at Varnum Brook, 14 Tucker Ave, Pepperell.

27 Saturday, 7pm. *Shirley's Vote for Independence* at Shirley Meeting House, 41 Brown Rd, Shirley. The Shirley Historical Society will present a reenactment of Shirley's Vote for Independence in the Shirley Meeting House – the building where our ancestors met on June 27, 1776.

JULY

3-5 Friday-Sunday. *Fitchburg Civic Days*. Downtown Fitchburg. Three days of celebration featuring a block party on July 3, a parade and fireworks on July 4, and the famous duck race on July 5.

11 Saturday, 10am-3pm. *The Tri-Wilderness Tournament* at Owl Eyes Wilderness, 12 Dudley Rd, Townsend. A survival skills contest for ages 7-13. Shelter building, fire making, and fishing! Have fun, win prizes, learn new skills! Tickets available.

18-19 Saturday-Sunday, 7pm-9am. *Step into the Shadows* at SK Haunted Victorian Mansion, 4 West Broadway, Gardner. An evening of seance and investigation. Join us for a spooky night filled with mystery and ghostly encounters. Tickets available.

19 Sunday, 9am-5pm. *Ancient Living* at Owl Eyes Wilderness, 12 Dudley Rd, Townsend. Step back in time to learn and practice ancient survival skills. Tickets available.

AUGUST

15 Saturday, 10am-12pm. *4th Annual I Love Romance Book & Author Fest* at Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St, Clinton. Free event. No registration required.

22 Saturday, 10am-4pm. *Plastic City Comic Con* at DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, 99 Erdman Way, Leominster. Dive into epic cosplay, awesome panels, and tons of fun at Plastic City Comic Con—your ultimate geek hangout! Tickets available.

SEPTEMBER

10-13 Thursday-Sunday. *Back to School Weekend* at Great Wolf Lodge, 150 Great Wolf Dr, Fitchburg. Presented by Ready Set Crop. Registration required.

10-13 Thursday-Sunday. *Sterling Fair* at 121 Greenland Rd, Sterling. The Sterling Fair is a two and a half day, family oriented, community, and agricultural fair with the emphasis on agriculture and education. It features rides, horse pulls, oxen pulls, tractor pulls, helicopter rides, antique engine and machinery show, livestock shows, food, entertainment and more! As has been our tradition, there are no parking or admission fees.

19 Saturday. *Johnny Appleseed Arts & Cultural Festival* at Leominster City Hall, 25 West St, Leominster. Free admission.

20 Sunday, 2pm. *Shirley Barns* at Shirley Historical Society Museum, 182 Center Rd, Shirley. See a model of a barn, barn-building tools, and photos of early Shirley barns. Learn how Shirley builders constructed colonial era English style barns.

26 Saturday, 10am-4pm. *GrotonFest Fall* at Legion Field Common (intersection of School St & Hollis St, Groton). GrotonFest Fall is a celebration for the senses—shop handmade crafts, cozy home décor, aromatic candles, and unique artisanal goods while indulging in delicious baked treats, sweet confections, and savory bites from local food vendors.

26 Saturday, 10am-5pm. *23rd Annual Blacksmith Art & Music Festival* at Riverfront Park, 51 Commercial St, Fitchburg.



EVENINGS AT

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MEMBER'S Directory

Places to visit, people
to see, things to do!

ANTIQUES

Hobart Village Antique Mall

445 Main St., West Townsend
978-597-0332 | hobartvillage.com 
An antique mall featuring 80 dealers;
new country furniture, farm tables,
Amish-made oak furniture and
collectibles from local estates.

Jeffrey's Antique Co-op Mall

54 Chase Rd., Lunenburg
978-582-7831
jeffreysantiquecoopmall.com 
Multi-dealer antique shop with eclectic
and ever-changing stock of antiques
and collectibles, furniture, country
décor, vintage toys, and more.

ART GALLERIES

Diamond Heart Art Studio

112 Main St., Gardner
978-516-3040 
diamondheartstudio.com
A husband and wife team of artists
creating abstract art and crafts,
and classes.

Gallery At 759 Main

759 Main St., Fitchburg
978-235-3691 
gallery759.com
Gallery At 759 Main showcases local
and regional artists through rotating
exhibitions and creative events,
fostering artistic expression and
strengthening the growing arts scene
in downtown Fitchburg.

Gardner Area League of Artists (GALA)

52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon
Galagardner.org 
Visit GALA's unique Art Gallery and
immerse yourself in artwork in
various mediums and affordable
prices. Rotating art shows,
workshops and gift shop.

New Dawn Arts Center

84 Main St., Ashburnham
978-235-3691 
newdawnarts.org
We work to unite the community
around the arts, through programming
that makes arts education,
appreciation, and presentation
available to our greater region.

ATTRACTIONS

Davis Farmland

145 Redstone Hill Rd., Sterling
978-422-6666
davisfarmland.com 
The largest sanctuary of endangered
farm animals in North America.
U-Pick apples and pumpkins in the
fall. Opening mid-April – October.

Funstuf Party Place

791 Water St., Fitchburg
978-342-5000
funstufpartyplace.com 
Let us help you bring more FUN to
your event. Remember, at Funstuf
Party Place "It's All About the Party!"

Great Wolf Lodge

50 Great Wolf Drive, Fitchburg
978-343-9653 
greatwolf.com/newengland
Weatherproof family fun, with a
massive 84-degree indoor waterpark,
exclusive to resort guests; MagiQuest;
indoor ropes course and more.

BANKING

All One Credit Union

20 Adams St., Leominster
978-537-8021
leominstercu.com 
LCU is a member-owned, not-
for-profit financial cooperative
with seven branches in Clinton,
Leominster, Sterling and Worcester.

Avidia Bank

470 Lancaster St., Leominster
800-508-2265
avidiaabank.com 
A \$1 Billion mutual community
bank, with branch offices in
Hudson, Clinton, and Leominster.

BankHometown

9 Sack Blvd., Leominster
888-307-5887
bankhometown.com 
For over 125 years, we have
believed in always doing the
right thing. For us, that's our
customers and communities.

Fidelity Bank

9 Leominster Conn., Leominster
800-581-5363
fidelitybankonline.com 
We are experts in Personal Finance.
Fidelity Bank provides financial
services to help our customers
get where they want to be.

GFA Credit Union

229 Parker St., Gardner
978-632-2542
gfafcu.com 
As a member of GFA, you are an
owner. Your deposits help the first-
time home owner buy their home
or support a small local business.

IC Credit Union

300 Bemis Rd., Fitchburg
800-262-1001
iccreditunion.org 
We strive to go beyond products
and services and help our members
achieve financial wellness.

Rockland Trust

420 John Fitch Hwy., Fitchburg
508-732-7078
rocklandtrust.com 
Personalized, comprehensive
banking solutions.

Rollstone Bank & Trust

780 Main St., Fitchburg 
978-345-1061 | rollstonebank.com
RBT is a full-service community bank
specializing in commercial banking
and wealth management since 1846.

TD Bank

470 Main St., Worcester
800-322-3264
tdbank.com 
TD Bank Massachusetts, has
160 branches in Mass. and
Southern New Hampshire,
including Fitchburg, Leominster,
Gardner, Athol and Orange.

Workers Credit Union

815 Main St., Fitchburg
978-345-1021 | wcu.com 
We are a full-service financial
institution offering competitive
deposit and loan products. Founded
in 1914 with 16 branches.

BEAUTY

Hey Good Look'n Salon and Spa

370 Summer St., Fitchburg
978-345-2308
hglsalon.com 
Hair, Nails, Waxing. Cosmetics,
Pedicures and Massage Therapy.

Keith Kartanos

Hair Studio
130 Lancaster St., Leominster
978-580-7944
Hair specialist.

BREWERIES, WINERIES & CIDERIES

Carlson Orchards, Inc.

115 Oak Hill Rd., Harvard
978-456-3916
carlsonorchards.com 
Open July to November. Pick your
own fruit in season from apples,
peaches, cherries, nectarines,
blueberries, and raspberries. Over
100 acres of fruit orchards.

Hardwick Vineyard & Winery

3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick
413-967-7763
hardwickwinery.com 
This Winery is home to a Federal
style mansion and a timber frame
barn. Six varieties of French
hybrid grapes are used to make
our award-winning wines.

Moon Hill Brewing and Gardner Ale House

74 Parker St., Gardner
978-669-0122
gardnerale.com 
Gardner Ale House is a
family-oriented brewpub and
restaurant, with a casual, bistro
style menu, 12+ award-winning
beers on tap and live music.

Mountainside

213 Mountain Rd., Princeton
978-464-0300 
www.mountainsideprinceton.com
Enjoy afternoon tea, lunch, or the
beer garden on the weekends.
They offer catering and have space
for private events and parties.

Red Apple Farm Cidery

455 Highland Ave., Phillipston
978-249-6763 
redapplefarm.com
Dry & semi-sweet flagship hard
ciders, special blends & heritage
varieties available. Outdoor
cider garden, country store
and Moon Hill beer on tap.

Wachusett Brewing Company, Inc.

175 State Rd. E, Westminster
978-874-9965 
wachusettbrewingcompany.com
Open 7 days a week for you to enjoy
our great food, live music, and our
award-winning beers. Visit us online.

CAMPING

Lamb City Campground

85 Royalston Rd., Phillipston
978-249-2049
lambcity.com 
Family owned/operated for over
30 years. With 280 sites, full
hookups, 17 pull thru, tenting, RV
rentals, cabins, sewage disposal,
store, 2 rec halls, 3 pools, more.

Pine Acres Family Camping Resort

203 Bechan Rd., Oakham
508-882-9509

fb.com/pineacres

Twice voted Park of the Year nationally! We offer tenting to waterfront sites, rustic cabins, RV rentals. Boating, fishing, pool, kids splash pad.

The Pines Campground

39 Davis Rd., Ashby
978-386-7702

thepinescampground.com
A four-season family campground with a pool, showers, weekend activities, store, heated bathroom, firewood, ice, picnic areas, and recreation hall.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Town of Ashburnham

32 Main St., Ashburnham
978-827-4100

ashburnham-ma.gov

The "Town of Many Lakes" is home to Mount Watatic and the multi-state Midstate Trail. Enjoy vibrant arts, shops and dining.

City of Fitchburg

718 Main St., Fitchburg
978-829-1801

fitchburgma.gov

Enjoy attractions from Fitchburg State University to historic downtown architecture and the Fitchburg Art Museum.

City of Gardner

95 Pleasant St., Gardner
978-257-4136

gardner-ma.gov

The Chair City is evolving, manufacturing is growing, technology companies are expanding, and new businesses are opening, in the heart of Massachusetts.

City of Leominster

25 West St., Leominster
978-534-7500

leominster-ma.gov

Leominster encompasses 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.

Nashua River Watershed Association

592 Main St., Groton
978-448-0299

nashuariverwatershed.org

Conserve open spaces for water quality, wildlife habitat, farms, forests, and recreation.

Town of Lancaster

701 Main St., Lancaster
978-365-3326

ci.lancaster.ma.us

Their mission is to preserve, revitalize and sustain the Lancaster agricultural industry through Arts, Humanities, and Interpretive Sciences.

Town of Lunenburg

17 Main St., Lunenburg
978-582-4130

lunenburgma.gov

The Town maintains a rural flavor, with farms and orchards.

Town of Pepperell

1 Main St., Pepperell
978-433-0333

Town.pepperell.ma.us

Known for its community spirit and quaint New England charm, Pepperell provides numerous opportunities to explore nature as well as a variety of attractions for visitors to enjoy.

Town of Sterling

1 Park St., Sterling
978-422-8111

Sterling-ma.gov

The town retains much of its small-town atmosphere. Famous residents include Ebenezer Butterick developed dress patterns and Mary Sawyer's pet lamb who inspired the poem, "Mary Had a Little Lamb".

Town of Townsend

272 Main St., Townsend
978-597-1700

Townsendma.gov

Outdoor life abounds in Townsend and country life is how to best describe living and visiting the town.

Town of Westminster

11 South St., Westminster
westminster-ma.gov

With Wachusett Mountain, Leominster State Forest and the Midstate Trail, Westminster is a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts.

Town of Winchendon

109 Front St., Winchendon
townofwinchendon.com

Routes 202, 12, 140, pass through the quiet Town of Winchendon.

A town rich in history, culture and the Winchendon Rail Trail and New Amphitheater.

EDUCATION

Applewild School

120 Prospect St., Fitchburg
978-342-6053

applewild.org

Applewild School provides excellent, affordable education to families in North Central Massachusetts.

Fitchburg Public School

376 South St., Fitchburg
978-345-3200

fitchburg.k12.ma.us

One district where all means ALL, every student, every day, no exceptions.

Fitchburg State University

160 Pearl St., Fitchburg
978-345-2151

fitchburgstate.edu

FSU offers undergraduate and graduate programs with an emphasis on career-orientated learning. With liberal arts, and selected majors in traditional arts and sciences.

Montachusett Regional Vocational Tech School

1050 Westminster St., Fitchburg
978-345-9200

montytech.net

"Monty Tech" name has become synonymous with innovative career, technical training programs and exceptional academic programming.

Mount Wachusett

Community College

444 Green St., Gardner
978-632-6600

mwcc.edu

Offering quality education at affordable prices, MWCC offers several degree and certificate program options to fit your life goals.

Sizer School

500 Rindge Rd., Fitchburg
978-345-2701

sizerschool.org

Commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, Sizer seeks to send graduates into the world who THINK for themselves, CARE about others, ACT creatively and responsibly.

St. Bernard's Central Catholic High School

45 Harvard St., Fitchburg
978-342-3212

stbernardscchs.org

It's been 100 years and St. Bernard's continues to graduate some of the region's best and brightest young men and women.

FARMS

Bolton Orchards

125 Still River Rd., Bolton
978-779-2733

boltonorchards.co

Specialty food store, deli, produce, bakery, flowers, gift baskets, local apples and cider available year-round. Old-fashioned ice cream and coffee café.

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See our website or Facebook pages for special events

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978-235-7312
24 Church St., Leominster, MA 01453
BarringtonsAutumn@gmail.com | BarringtonsAutumn.com
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Brookfield Orchards

12 Lincoln Rd., North Brookfield
508-867-6858
brookfieldorchardsonline.com  
A family friendly country store supplying locally grown delicious apples for over 100 years! The 5th generation farm is the quintessential New England experience

Carlson Orchards, Inc

115 Oak Hill Rd., Harvard
978-456-3916
carlsonorchards.com   
Open July to November. Pick your own fruit in season from apples, peaches, cherries, nectarines, blueberries, and raspberries. Over 100 acres of fruit orchards.

Sholan Farms

1125 Pleasant St., Leominster
978-840-3276 | sholanfarms.com 
The last working apple orchard in Johnny Appleseed's birthplace, offers walking-hiking trails, picnic area, cross-country skiing, U-Pick fruits and Christmas trees.

Hollis Hills Farm

340 Marshall Rd., Fitchburg
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  
inthemeadowalpacas.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
978-365-7617   
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
774-258-1194
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.

The Farm Stand Winchendon

244 School St., Winchendon
978-616-9955  
thefarmstandwinchendon.com
The Farm Stand Winchendon offers fresh, locally sourced produce and seasonal products, supporting local agriculture while giving the community convenient access to high-quality, wholesome food.

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.

FURNITURE

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

Ellinwood Country Club

1928 Pleasant St., Athol
978-249-7460
ellinwoodgolf.com 
Ellinwood Country Club in Athol boasts a unique 18-hole layout with nine holes designed by Donald Ross and another nine designed by Geoffrey Cornish.

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.

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.

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.co  
Established in 1991 this eighteen-hole golf course covers over 238 acres.

Templewood Golf Course

160 Brooks Rd., Templeton
978-939-5031
templewoodgolfcourse.com 
Nestled in the heart of Central Massachusetts, Templewood offers a serene retreat for golfers of all skill levels. With lush fairways, challenging greens, and panoramic views of the surrounding landscape, our course provides an unforgettable golfing experience. Whether you're a seasoned pro or a beginner, you'll find our course welcoming and beautifully maintained, offering a perfect blend of nature and sport.

HEALTH CARE

Convenient MD

20 Commercial Rd., 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
978-463-3420
heywood.org    
A non-profit, community funded hospital with over 200 staff.

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

Boxboro Regency

242 Adams Pl, Boxborough
978-263-8701
boxbororegency.com  
Indoor pool, Minuteman Grille & Bar, indoor tropical atrium along with meeting and wedding venues.

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.

Courtyard by Marriott Boston Littleton

102 Constitution Ave., Littleton
978-440-5040
marriott.com/en-us/hotels/boslt-courtyard-boston-littleton    
Located at exit 80 off I-495, just minutes from Route 2 in The Point complex with restaurants, shops & entertainment.

DoubleTree by Hilton

183 Main St., Westminster
978-874-5951   
leominster.doubletree.com
Spacious accommodations, modern amenities, indoor pool, fitness center.

Econo Lodge Westminster

99 Erdman Way, Leominster
978-534-9000
choicehotels.com  
Renovated hotel in historic Westminster near Mount Wachusett with free WiFi, parking, and nearby recreation.

Great Wolf Lodge

150 Great Wolf Drive, 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 putt-putt golf.

The Groton Inn

128 Main St., Groton
978-448-6600
thegrotoninn.com  
Situating on the footprint of the original Groton Inn, with professionally designed guest rooms, meeting and banquet rooms and the Forge & Vine restaurant.

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!

Fort Devens Museum

94 Jackson Rd., Devens
978-772-1286   
fortdevensmuseum.org
Museum is a private non-profit that collects, preserves, and shares artifacts and stories that tell the history of Camp Devens and Fort Devens from 1917 to the present.

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill

11 French Drive, Boylston
508-869-6111
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    
ronbouchard.com/rb-racing-museum/
RB Racing Museum, honoring the local NASCAR legend Ron Bouchard. See Ron's 1981 Talladega winning #47 car.

RECREATION

City on a Hill Arts, Inc.

268 Washington St., Leominster
cityonahillarts.org  
City on a Hill Arts, Inc. is a community-focused arts organization providing inclusive performances, workshops, classes, and collaborative programming that make creativity accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds.

Cornerstone Ranch

29 Dowds Ln., Princeton
cornerstoneranch.org    
Riding lessons, trail riding, birthday parties, horse-drawn rides, and year-round activities for all ages.

CoFF33 Corp.

326 Main St., Fitchburg
coff33corp.org  
CoFF33 Corp. supports local economic growth through business and professional services that strengthen entrepreneurs and organizations while building pathways for development, collaboration, and long-term community impact.

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 Rd., Groton
978-486-9524
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.

Hanover Theatre & Conservatory

2 Southbridge St., Worcester
877-571-7469
thehanovertheatre.org    
The Hanover Theatre & Conservatory is a premier performing arts destination presenting Broadway tours, concerts, comedy, dance, and educational programming that enriches the community through world-class performances and arts education.

Mulligan's Miniature Golf

124 Leominster Rd., Sterling
978-422-5022
mulligansminigolf.com 
Outdoor, 18-hole mini-golf course with glow-in-the-dark nights & a snack cart; open April-October.

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.

RC Excitement

208 Bemis Rd., Fitchburg
774-261-8121
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.

Rt. 12 Pickle

184 W Boylston St., West Boylston
978-342-3374
rt12pickle.com  
Rt. 12 Pickle is a dedicated pickleball facility offering leagues, lessons, and open play in an energetic environment designed for fun, fitness, and friendly competition for players of all skill levels.

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.

RESTAURANTS/FOOD

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
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masschopsticks.com  
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hollishillsfarm.com   
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gardnerale.com    
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mountainsideprinceton.com
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slatterysrestaurant.com  
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Quick Picks

By John Burk

Two acclaimed museums showcase the diverse landscape history of North Central Massachusetts.

Encompassing more than two hundred acres on a picturesque hilltop in Harvard, **Fruitlands Museum** at 102 Prospect Hill Road offers a variety of collections related to art, nature, and history. Originally established in 1843 as a Transcendentalist community, Fruitlands opened to the public in 1914.

Visitors can tour the original farmhouse, explore the nation's first Shaker museum, and view nineteenth-century landscape paintings and works by Native Americans at the Four Seasons and Seasonal galleries. Other amenities include a visitor center, restaurant, shop, educational facilities, and more than two miles of walking trails. Fruitlands has outstanding views of the Nashua River Valley, Wachusett Mountain, Mount Monadnock, and Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge.

Open April to November 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday to Sunday; trails open year-round.

Visit: thetrustees.org/fruitlands-museum

Fisher Museum at Harvard Forest at 324 North Main Street (Route 32) in Petersham features twenty-three intricately crafted dioramas that depict landscape history, forest management

practices, and conservation issues. Seven historical models show the remarkable changes that occurred after early settlers cleared the region's forests. Recent additions include displays about Indigenous peoples developed in partnership with the Nipmuc tribe, and Harvard Forest research sites.

Two interpretive trails offer insights into ecology, forest history, natural communities, and Native American perspectives.

Open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays year round; 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. on weekends from May to November; trails open year-round. (978) 724-3302

Visit: harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/visit/fisher-museum.

For spectacular spring color, it's hard to beat the **New England Botanic Garden** at Tower Hill in Boylston. Beautifully landscaped gardens come alive with blooms of tulips, irises, bluebells, and other perennials and annuals as well as striking cherry, magnolia, and apple trees. One of the most popular attractions, the stunning Field of Daffodils showcases more than twenty-five thousand daffodils on a sunlit slope.

Native wildflowers such as trilliums and pink lady's slippers thrive in surrounding woodland habitats. During summer, enjoy displays of hydrangeas, peonies,

roses, lilies, and sunflowers.

Explore trails and paths to a hilltop with views of Wachusett Mountain and Wachusett Reservoir, a wildlife pond, and a shade garden.

Stoddard Education and Visitors Center houses two indoor conservancies with plants from subtropical regions, a cafe, gift shop, and spaces for plant shows, exhibitions, workshops, and events to inspire your garden plans.

A visit at a **local sugarhouse** offers the experience of maple syrup season, an iconic tradition of New England. When winter transitions to spring in late February and March, producers begin their annual harvest of sap from sugar maples. Each taphole in a tree yields roughly ten gallons during the season, which usually lasts from four to six weeks. Healthy sugar maples can provide sap for more than a hundred years.

Utilizing evaporators, sugarhouses produce thick maple syrup from raw sap. It takes forty gallons of sap to make just one gallon of syrup, but the result is a delectable treat used as a topping for pancakes and waffles and an ingredient for a variety of dishes. The region's largest operation, Hollis Hill Farm in Fitchburg makes approximately seventy thousand gallons of syrup processed from five thousand taps annually. ♦

Here's a list of maple producers in the region. Call in advance or check websites and Facebook pages to confirm hours.

See the Massachusetts Maple Producers Association website, massmaple.org, for more information.

Hollis Hill Farm
340 Marshall Road
Fitchburg
(978) 696-3130

Baile an Chotaigh Farm
10 Harrington Road
Westminster

Big Head Fred's
417 Flat Hill Road
Lunenburg
(508) 331-9589

Boggastowe Farm
20 Shattuck Street
Pepperell
(978) 433-5191

Dave's Sugar House
1033 Jones Hill Road
Ashby
(978) 386-7235

Lone Larch Farm
16 Old County Road
Ashburnham
(774) 345-0525

Maxwell's Maple
370 Goss Lane
Lancaster
(978) 870-3583

Salmi's Sugarhouse
41B Bacon Street
Westminster
(617) 823-9407

Sunset View Farm
156 Gardner Road
Winchendon

Sweet Water Sugarhouse
56 Brown Road
Royalston
(978) 249-3464

Wildwood Farm Sugar Shack
50 Woods Road
Westminster
(978) 340-8347



New England Botanic Garden (top) and Fruitlands Museum (bottom).

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Legend

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

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Colonial Hotel 625 Betty Spring Road Gardner 978-630-2500 colonial-hotel.com	📶 f	112 5 Suite		•	•	◇	• (7) Cap. 400	•	
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