

The Guide to

FREE

North Central Massachusetts



In This Issue...

Outings with Pets

North Central Waterfalls

Good Eating

Horses & Riders



Johnny Appleseed Country | Spring & Summer 2025



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- ✔ **Live Music:** Enjoy local bands in a picturesque setting.
- ✔ Visit our **Cidery** for exclusive seasonal flavors and tastings.
- ✔ Stop by the **Brew Barn** year-round for brews and tasty eats.
- ✔ **Pick Your Own Fruit** for the ultimate farm experience.
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redapplefarm.com

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Enchanted Orchard Renaissance Faire

Blueberry Jamboree

Sunflower Festival

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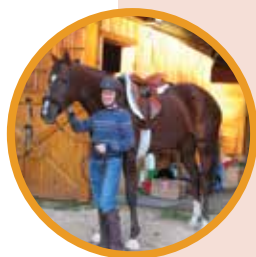
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The Guide to North Central Massachusetts

Visit North Central Massachusetts

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

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

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

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Johnny Appleseed Country



VISIT NORTH CENTRAL
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ABOUT THE COVER:

Forge & Vine Yappy Hour in Groton, Mountain Biking at Leominster State Forest, Town Beach at Bare Hill Pond in Harvard (photo by Kate Wool), and Strawberry Field at Hollis Hills Farm in Fitchburg.

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

Johnny Appleseed Country

Does the name “Johnny Appleseed” conjure up images of a rag-tag fellow with a stewpot for a hat and a bag of apples on his back?

This caricature, familiar to anyone who has read childhood books, is both popular and misleading. Popular, because it gives instant recognition to Johnny and his travels across the country. But misleading because John Chapman — also known as Johnny Appleseed — was actually a successful businessman who helped many pioneers survive and new communities flourish.

Born right here in Leominster on September 26, 1774, John Chapman made a name for himself across a growing nation. Along the way, he planted apple seeds — not simply scattering them carelessly, but with an eye toward a future market for his crops. He sold, and often gave away, seeds and seedlings to settlers in communities along the way. His nearly 50 years of travels took him far and wide across a young nation.

To learn more about Johnny Appleseed, begin at a spot that bears his name: The Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center on Route 2 Westbound, between Exits 35 and 34. The center is stocked with a variety of books suitable for all ages — from coloring books for kids to more serious historical volumes. A display case serves as home to an assortment of Johnny memorabilia, and visitors can purchase first-day stamped postcards bearing the official Johnny Appleseed postage stamp.

Kids might enjoy having their pictures taken with the bronze statue of a youthful Johnny, standing at the entrance to the center! §





The City of GARDNER

CHAIR CITY

Events

***Youth Commission Movies
in Monument Park
Summer Concerts in Monument Park
Square Two's Gardner Birthday
Celebration Downtown
Food Truck Festival
Farmers Market***

Recreation

***Greenwood Memorial Pool
Gardner Municipal Golf Course
Dunn State Park
Pulaski Playground & Dog Park
Jackson Playground & Skate Park
Crystal Lake Park
North Central Pathway
Perley Brook Trails
Bailey Brook Park***

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



www.gardner-ma.gov



@GardnerCityHall



@CityofGardner



North Central Massachusetts Offers Many Opportunities for Outings with Pets

by Christopher Coyle

Pets — domesticated animals kept by humans for companionship, friendship, and pleasure — become part of the family. It makes sense that they should come along on family outings. North Central Massachusetts, a beautiful area of the Bay State, offers many locations and opportunities for pets to join their families for activities enjoyable to all.

Many public spaces — parks, rail trails, and reservations — allow and encourage companion animals, especially dogs, to visit along with their owners. Families arriving in the North Central Massachusetts area might stop at Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center on Route 2 westbound in Lancaster. In addition to restrooms for two-legged folks, the center has a nice dog-walk area. Nearby Leominster State Park welcomes dogs as does Prospect Park, also located in Leominster.

Check out Fitchburg's Coolidge Park for dogs and their owners at 198 Townsend Street. Not far away, Wachusett Mountain State Reservation in Princeton provides

space where everyone, including dogs, can enjoy a nice outing and beautiful vistas for many miles in all directions.

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill serves as a pet-friendly attraction in Boylston. Farther west, Dunn State Park in Gardner is friendly to dogs with their keepers. Doane's Falls in Royalston welcomes dogs along pet-friendly trails.

Many area farms and apple orchards welcome dogs and other pets. Sholan Farms in Leominster, Red Apple Farm in Phillipston, Hollis Hills Farm in Fitchburg, Bolton Spring Farm and Nashoba Valley Winery Orchard, both in Bolton, Clearview Farm in Sterling, and Doe Orchard in Harvard encourage pets to visit with their owners.

The Trustees of Reservations have long welcomed dogs to many, although not all, of their properties. Many rail trails take in dog-walkers — consult regulations for specific trails as to their policies. Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, DCR, welcomes dogs on leash in most parks, forests, and reservations. Most areas

surrounding watersheds are off limits to pets due to concerns about contamination of drinking water. Most websites for public areas list policies on pet visits. Posted signs may spell out pet policies.

Massachusetts restaurants do not allow dogs except for service animals. Individual towns and cities have their own regulations about allowing dogs inside businesses other than restaurants. Tractor Supply, for example, welcomes leashed dogs at their stores.

Bring Fido is a great website listing many dog-friendly areas in Massachusetts. See bringfido.com/attraction/state/Massachusetts.

Companion animals comprise an important part of many households — families with children, couples, and even those living alone. Enjoying good times with pets is important not only to their owners but to the pets, too. North Central Massachusetts offers good times not only to those with two legs but to those with four legs.

Rail enthusiast, historian, and retired UMass research technician, Christopher Coyle lives in Athol. §



Forge & Vine Yappy Hour in Groton (left) and Roger's Field in Devens (right).

THE CITY OF FITCHBURG



ONGOING

FIRST THURSDAYS DOWNTOWN FITCHBURG

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

THROUGH JANUARY 18, 2026

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

THROUGH JUNE 1, 2025

Stephen DiRado, *Better Together:
Four Decades of Photographs*
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

WEDNESDAYS & SATURDAYS, 6-9 PM

Live Jazz
Dario's Restaurant, 655 Main St.

SUNDAYS, 9 AM-2 PM

Jazz Brunch
The Pauper's Pantry, 695 Main St.

MARCH

SATURDAY 22, 2-3:30 PM

Artist Talk: Stephen DiRado:
*Better Together: Four
Decades of Photographs*
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

SATURDAY 22, 6-9 PM

Broadway Ball: Creative Hall
of Fame Celebration
Fitchburg Cultural Alliance, 569 Main St.

TUESDAY 25, 7:30 PM

Fitchburg State University
"Music Mega Mix"
Weston Auditorium, 353 North St.

SATURDAY 29, 11 AM-5 PM

A Celebration of African Art
at FAM (Opening Day)
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

APRIL

FRIDAY 4, 7 PM

18th Annual Drag Show presented
by Gay Straight Alliance
FSU Recreation Center, 130 North St.

SATURDAY 5, 6 PM

The Grand Royal Soiree of Cultural
Excellence, *presented by FSU*
FSU Recreation Center, 130 North St.

4, 5, 11, 12 (Fri. & Sat.) @ 7:30 PM, 5, 12 (Sat. Matinee) @ 2 PM

"Alice in Wonderland" performed
by *The Stratton Players*
Christ Church's Guild Hall, 569 Main St.
Email strattonplayers@gmail.com to reserve tickets

SATURDAY 5, 2-3:30 PM

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

FRIDAY 11, 6:30 PM & SATURDAY 12, 1 PM

Spring Dance Club Showcase
presented by FSU
FSU Weston Auditorium, 353 North St.

SATURDAY 12, 11 AM-1 PM

Egg Hunt & Meet the Easter Bunny
Parkhill Park, 27 Franklin Rd.

SUNDAY 20, 12-3 PM

Earth Day Celebration in Fitchburg
Riverfront Park, 51 Commercial St.

THURSDAY 24 & FRIDAY 25, 12-4 PM, SATURDAY 26 & SUNDAY 27, 11 AM-5 PM

27th Annual Art in Bloom
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.
Champagne Reception: Fri. April 25, 6-8 pm

FRIDAY, SATURDAY 25 & 26, 7 PM & SUNDAY 17, 2 PM

"Spelling Bee" *performed by FSU
Musical Theater Club*
Weston Auditorium, 353 North St.

MAY

ALTERNATE THURSDAYS & FRIDAYS, 5 PM, MAY-AUGUST

Mill Street Music Series hosted
by *The Cellar*
Mill Street Plaza, 14 Mill St.

TUESDAY 6, 7:30 PM

Fitchburg State University
Choirs Concert
Weston Auditorium, 353 North St.

SATURDAY 17, 12-5 PM

Annual Food Truck Festival
166 Boulder Dr.

SATURDAY 24, 10 AM

Rock Walk to Rollstone Hill
Boulder Art Gallery, 960 Main St.

SUNDAY 25, 6 PM

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

MONDAY 26, 10:30 AM

Memorial Day Ceremony
Fitchburg Armory, 14 Wallace Ave.

JUNE

WEDNESDAY 18, 2-5 PM

DPW Day
Coolidge Park, 198 Townsend Ave.

THURSDAY 19, 11 AM-1 PM

Juneteenth Ceremony & Celebration
Abolitionist Park, 50 Snow St.

SATURDAY 21, 11 AM-5 PM

Opening Day: 89th Regional
Exhibition of Art & Craft
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

FRIDAY 27, 6-8 PM

Summer Party & Opening
Celebration: 89th Regional
Exhibition of Art & Craft
Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.

SATURDAY 28, 1-6 PM

Civic Days: 15th Annual Nashua
River Brewers Festival
Riverfront Park, 51 Commercial St.

JULY

THURSDAY 3, 4-10 PM

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

THURSDAY 3, 9:30 PM

Civic Days: Fireworks Display
Fireworks at Rollstone Hill

FRIDAY 4, 10 AM

Civic Days: 4th of July Parade
Downtown along Boulder Dr. & Main St.

SUNDAY 6, 11 AM-2 PM

17th Annual Amazing Duck Race
Riverfront Park, 51 Commercial St.

WEDNESDAYS JULY 9- AUGUST 20, 5:30-7:30 PM

Concerts on the Common
Upper Common (Gazebo), 857 Main St.

SUNDAY 20, 2-4 PM

Friends of Coggshall Park
- Summer Concert
Coggshall Park, 159 Electric Ave.
featuring "The Long Run" (Eagles tribute band)

THURSDAYS JULY 24 & 31, AUGUST 7 & 14, 7:45-9:45 PM

Movies in the Park @ City Hall
Lawn behind 700 Main St.

AUGUST

TUESDAY 5, 5-7 PM

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

SUNDAY 17, 2-4 PM

Friends of Coggshall Park
- Summer Concert
Coggshall Park, 159 Electric Ave.
featuring "Neurotic Gumbo"

All events are subject to change or postponement.

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



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@FitchburgMassachusetts



@FitchburgMass



Photo by Colleen Blair.

Diversification at Red Apple Farm

by Marcia Gagliardi

“Diversification. That’s the key to this operation,” said Al Rose, fourth generation owner of Red Apple Farm in Phillipston with his wife and business partner, Nancy.

“We don’t run the business,” Nancy commented. “It runs us.”

With its vast orchards plus restaurant/tap room and brew barn, cidery, store, events, and more at 455 Highland Avenue in Phillipston, Red Apple Farm “transforms into a lively marketplace with a rich tapestry of experiences,” according to the website, redapplefarm.com. This multi-faceted farm stays open daily all year with an array of on-site offerings plus inventive experiences nearly every month for families and other visitors.

With ninety-eight acres in cultivation, Red Apple Farm also sells its wares in Boston Public Market at 100 Hanover Street and at Wachusett Mountain in Princeton.

After an Easter Great Gathering on Saturday, April 19, to benefit Phillipston Congregational Church, the Roses have planned Enchanted Orchard Renaissance Faire on Saturday and Sunday, May 3 and 4. “Merchants from distant realms and folk from near and far will gather in celebration of May Day and the planting

season,” according to the website.

Al and Nancy made Red Apple Farm their business and home in 2001 when they came from Chicago to work with Al’s father, Bill Rose, third-generation overseer of the business.

With a 1997 master’s degree in agricultural economics from Cornell University in New York state, Al had other experiences that made him well-suited to oversee the apple business. As potato buyer for Frito Lay when he and Nancy lived in Chicago, Al had contacts with seventeen farms, including some on the East Coast and as near as Framingham.

In 1929, the Rose family acquired the orchard at the heart of Red Apple Farm when Al’s grandfather, A. Spaulding Rose, and his wife, Carolyn, bought the apple-rich land from Warren Tyler, then president of Athol Savings Bank. Spaulding had studied pomology, the science of apples.

Mr. Tyler began the orchard in 1912 when he bought the property and planted, among other trees, one bearing MacIntosh apples and still producing as the oldest MacIntosh tree in the state.

Harry Chester Rose and Cora Spaulding Rose, Spaulding Rose’s parents, financed the 1929 acquisition of the orchard, thus establishing themselves as the first generation of Roses involved with Red Apple Farm.

Spaulding cultivated the land with a one-horsepower tractor, according to Al. “That is,” clarified Nancy, “a tractor pulled by one actual horse. Today we use a seventy-five horsepower mechanized tractor.”

When the farm and orchard passed to him from Spaulding, Bill Rose ran a diverse business that included considerable wholesale selling to US food chains. In the 1980s, Bill stopped wholesaling. His grandmother Carolyn said, “WHAT???”

From the beginning in 1929, the orchard had an on-site retail store, and Bill expanded retail business with an eye toward agritourism. Red Apple Farm hosted barbecues in the 1980s and hayrides in the 1990s with a petting zoo including goats, pigs, and rabbits.

Bill cultivated from sixty to eighty acres of apples at the height of apple production, Al said. Then, he converted some land to grow blueberries, raspberries, peaches, pumpkins, and sunflowers.

“For his ninetieth birthday,” offered Nancy, “Bill got a chainsaw to help with farm maintenance.”

Al and Nancy expanded the retail business as they took over day-to-day operation. “You know,” said Al, “agriculture



Nancy and Al Rose of Red Apple Farm (left) and Red Apple Farm sign (right).

is inherently risky. If you're doing pick-your-own apples, people have to want to pick. We want our business to be sustainable, viable, and relevant. We have geothermal solar panels and wind turbines. Our employees live locally."

Al credited the late Pat Spaulding — "No relation," said Nancy — of Spaulding Graphics in Athol with creating the Red Apple Farm logo. Also, he noted, Red Apple Farm had a website before IBM launched its corporate website in 1994.

In the earlier 2000s, diversification included weddings and a harvest fest. Although the farm no longer serves as a wedding venue, the harvest fest became the prototype for many events. Along with Easter's Great Gathering, and Enchanted Orchard Renaissance Faire, Red Apple farm will host Barkin' Summer Bash dates TBA in early June for dog lovers and their pets.

Writer Marcia Gagliardi lives in Athol. §

**Summer Strings
Music Festival**
*Saturday & Sunday
June 21 & 22*

Blueberry Jamboree
*Saturday and Sunday
July 12 and 13
Saturday & Sunday
July 19 & 20*

Sunflower Festival
*Saturday & Sunday
August 9 & 10
Saturday & Sunday
August 16 and 17*

**Appleseed
Country Fair**
*Saturday, Sunday &
Monday, August 30 &
31, September 1*

Cider Cross
dates TBA in October

**Thanksgiving
Harvest Festival**
*Saturday & Sunday
November 22 & 23*

Winter Lights
*dates TBA in November
& December*



Mid 20th century of Red Apple Farm (above) and farm truck (below).



From Apples to Aces: Reinventing Sterling's Meadowbrook Orchards

by Christopher Coyle

Founded in 1912, Meadowbrook Orchards in Sterling operates in the third generation of ownership. Dairying helped support the fledgling orchard for several years from 1912 until a devastating fire destroyed the animal herd and laying hens in 1927. The orchard then became the sole enterprise of the farm. Despite hardships and lean times, Meadowbrook has continued

successfully through the years, even after the tragic hurricane of 1938.

Meadowbrook Orchards consists of a hundred acres with eighty acres in apples and berry crops. The orchard offers a pick-your-own option for those looking for outdoor, country fun.

Established in recent years, a bakery, restaurant, and farm store offer retail variety. An on-site restaurant features homemade breakfasts and lunches made with a variety of foods, including some grown

on the farm. The restaurant serves numerous daily specials year-round, Wednesday through Sunday, according to its website meadowbrookorchards.com.

Thursday evenings feature BBQ dinners in the summer months. Additionally, the orchard offers a fruit community-supported agriculture program, CSA, featuring their own apples, raspberries, and blueberries.

Faced with the increasing challenges of operating an orchard, Meadowbrook constructed a disc golf course in

Apple trees at Meadowbrook Orchards in Sterling.





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The disc golf course at Meadowbrook Orchards in Sterling.

2021. It integrates well with the orchard operation and provides a stable income to supplement production of apple and other crops. The course encompasses not only part of the orchard but also surrounding woodland. Beautiful vistas of the scenic North Central Massachusetts area highlight the course.

An outdoor sport with similarities to regular golf, disc golf uses a flying disc similar to a frisbee, although a little smaller, instead of a ball and clubs. Players throw a disc toward and eventually into a basket, if they score. The object of the game involves having the lowest number of throws to complete each hole.

Disc golf has developed quite a following over the past few years. The sport even experienced growth through the Covid era, since disc golf lends itself well to social distancing.

An aficionado can play disc golf alone, but usually in groups up to four or even to eight compete, although it works better for eight players to take part as two groups

of four each. The hardest of players pay little attention to cold weather and snow while taking part in the year-round sport.

Disc golf offers an opportunity for de-stressing, achieving harmony with the inner self, and aerobic exercise. The sport brings people together as friends regardless of diverse backgrounds or differing views of the world. In addition, disc golfers have tournaments that benefit cancer programs and other causes.

The website discgolfscore.com describes Meadowbrook as a “good mix of open and wooded holes in and around a scenic apple orchard.” Meadowbrook offers glow golf, likely with glow-in-the-dark discs, on Friday evenings in warm months.

Meadowbrook, an 18-hole, par 3 course, ranks second among Massachusetts disc golf courses by the UDisc app and 62 of more than 15,000 courses worldwide. A second course under construction at Meadowbrook will serve players of all levels but especially those less skilled or otherwise challenged.

Meadowbrook has hosted players from all fifty states, most of the Canadian provinces, and thirteen countries around the globe. Many players enjoy the proximity of other disc golf courses in central Massachusetts.

At Meadowbrook, disc golfers may partake of meals in the restaurant or foods from the bakery. They can shop at the farm store offering a wide variety of disc golf supplies including clothing.

Owner David Chandler said that Meadowbrook is unique as the only disc golf course in the area with a restaurant. Disc golf has greatly helped Meadowbrook Orchards become a stable enterprise at a time when many other orchards have become housing lots or plazas or have taken on other non-agricultural uses. His employees take pride in the establishment and warmly welcome visitors, he said.

Rail enthusiast, historian, and retired UMass research technician, Christopher Coyle lives in Athol. §

Diverse North Central Massachusetts Waterfalls

Make Inviting Day Hike Destinations

Story and photos by Amber Robidoux

Waterfalls in North Central Massachusetts flow with diversity and run deep in history. The area offers mountain peaks, hiking trails, paddling waterways, and, of course, scenic waterfalls. As a born-and-raised member of North Central Massachusetts and an explorer by nature, I enjoy the beauty of the region where we can immerse in nature right outside the door and a few steps down the trail.

Some favorite day hikes in North Central Massachusetts feature accessible waterfalls and perfect opportunities for families and other hikers to connect — with nature and with each other.

We have experienced droughts and unusually soggy weather at times resulting in high water levels and plentiful rapids due to all the rain. Explorers must always practice good judgment and take safety seriously near water sources.

Trap Falls Ashby

Set in the Willard Brook State Forest, hikers can reach the falls with a short stroll from the road over a wooden bridge in front of the falls. While some falls

require a hike, the Trap Falls stop is quaint and extremely accessible.

The short and sweet journey to Trap Falls makes it ideal for small children and families. Picnic tables and a few charcoal grills on site draw crowds in the summer.

Length: 0.2 miles/Elevation

Gain: 19 feet

Route Type: out and back

Falls Height: 10 to 12-foot drop

Family Friendly Rating: 5/5

Royalston Falls Royalston

The last stretch of the New England Trail, northbound, overlaps with Tully Trail, and that's where to find Falls Brook Shelter. Approximately a quarter mile from the shelter while venturing southbound on Tully Trail, hikers will come on to the falls almost from behind them. Don't expect to be greeted head-on with a stunning view. Follow the trail along the stream to get a good look that's worth it.

With some moderate hills, the simple trail has a lot of rocks and some quite steep places.

Length: 2.7 miles

Elevation Gain: 554 feet

Route Type: out and back

Falls Height: 45-foot drop

Family Friendly Rating: 4/5

Spirit Falls Royalston

Hikers can access Spirit Falls by way of Jacobs Hill Reservation, also part of the Tully Trail. Hiking down to the falls is easier, but heading up the trail makes a good workout, eventually emerging through the canoe launch across from Tully Lake Campground.

Nearby, Jacob's Hill Overlook and the Ledges offer some beautiful sights as well. It might be challenging for little legs, but it's a great spot!

Length: 1.5 miles/Elevation

Gain: 465 feet

Route Type: out and back

Falls Height: 150-foot drop

Family Friendly Rating: 3/5

Doane's Falls Royalston

Doane's Falls qualifies as superb for ease of hiking and accessibility. A short walk from the parking area brings visitors to a view of the falls. It's handicap accessible, and it's so accessible that the visually impaired can enjoy sounds of rushing water right from the parking lot.

Length: 0.4 miles/Elevation

Gain: 104 feet

Route Type: out and back

Falls Height: Approx. 175-foot drop

Family Friendly

Rating: 5/5

Cont. on page 12

Celebrate the seasons in **Leominster**

MARCH

13-26 **LEOMINSTER YOUTH ART SHOW**
8:30am – 4pm

City Hall, Tata Auditorium

16-21 **PIZZA CRAWL**

Sunday – Saturday, All day
Throughout the city

20 **INDOOR FARMERS MARKET**

Thursday, 4 – 6pm
City Hall, Tata Auditorium

APRIL

15 **LEOMINSTER EARTHFEST**

Tuesday, 6 – 8pm
City Hall, Tata Auditorium

17 **INDOOR FARMERS MARKET**

Thursday, 4 – 6pm
City Hall, Tata Auditorium

18 **EASTER FUNDAY**

Friday, 10am – 2pm
City Hall, Tata Auditorium

22 **CITYWIDE CLEANUP** (Ongoing until May 22)

All day
Throughout the city

MAY

8 **LIGHT THE TOWN PURPLE**

Thursday, 4 – 5pm
City Hall, front steps

15 **INDOOR FARMERS MARKET**

Thursday, 4 – 6pm
City Hall, Tata Auditorium

17 **CITYWIDE YARD SALE**

Saturday, 8am – 3pm
Throughout the city

JUNE

7 **LEOMINSTER FARMERS MARKET**

Saturday, 11am – 2pm
The Common

7 **SUMMER STROLL**

Saturday, 3 – 7pm (rain date June 8)
Downtown Leominster

23 **PINK FLAMINGO DAY**

Monday, 5 – 7pm
The Common

28-29 **LEOMINSTER BARGAIN DAYS**

Saturday & Sunday, all day
Throughout the city

JULY

5 **LEOMINSTER FARMERS MARKET**

Saturday, 11am – 2pm
The Common

AUGUST

2 **LEOMINSTER FARMERS MARKET**

Saturday, 11am – 2pm
The Common

2 **ITALIAN FESTIVAL**

Saturday, 5 – 9pm
Downtown Leominster

5 **NATIONAL NIGHT OUT**

Tuesday, 5 – 8pm (rain date August 12)
Downtown Leominster

26 **DINING UNDER THE STARS**

Tuesday, 6 – 10pm (rain date August 27)
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



Spirit Falls in Royalston.

Cont. from page 10

Barrett Park Waterfall Leominster

The little gem is short and sweet — perfect for little feet. Taking in the beautiful scenery should not be rushed, and hikers

should enjoy walking over small bridges and navigating the well-marked trails.

It's a short walk and an easy hike. Falling water, moss-covered rocks, and a small waterfall make for a perfect outdoor adventure. Barrett Park Waterfall: perfect for families

looking to explore nature without the hassle of gear.

Length: 0.9 miles

Elevation Gain: 98 feet

Route Type: loop

Family Friendly

Rating: 5/5

Cook's Canyon Barre

For an easy stroll without much gear or fuss, Cook's Canyon offers an extremely well-marked and level trail. Hikers have the option of doing a full loop or taking shorter trails in the middle to lessen the distance. With lots of greenery and places to explore, it makes the perfect trail for beginners, those with disabilities, or small children.

Length: 1.7 miles

Elevation Gain: 65 feet

Route Type: loop

Family Friendly

Rating: 5/5

Scott Brook Falls Fitchburg

While not large in size, Scott Brook offers a sweet little hike out to the falls. Across from the parking area, hikers follow the dirt trail to the left and come to a footbridge providing excellent views along the Fitchburg Reservoir. The short hike appeals to birders and runners. Though other people may not interrupt a visit, bugs may! Hikers should be sure to bring repellent as it is buggy!

Length: 1.3 miles

Elevation Gain: 187 feet

Route Type: out and back

Falls Height: 7-foot drop upper falls; lower falls is 3-foot

Family Friendly

Rating: 4/5

Freelance writer Amber Robidoux lives in Orange. §



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Giftshop, Alpaca clothing and yarn.
Open Sundays, 10am - 4pm
or by appointment


plain view Farm
Alpacas & Llamas

www.plainviewfarmalpacas.com
See our website or Facebook pages for special events



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 10th 8:00—1:00 PM

Town Wide Yard Sale

Saturday, June 14th

8:00AM — 2:00PM

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

Summer Band Concerts

Wednesday Nights, July & August

7 PM — 9 PM

Town Benefit

Sunday, August 10th

Starts at 11 AM on Academy Hill

Looking for great places to hike?

Westminster offers many beautiful and picturesque hiking trails,



Stop in and visit the Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center

- 🍏 Alpaca socks, mittens, & adorable fluffy alpaca products
- 🍏 Artifacts from our region's history
- 🍏 Books about the region and Massachusetts
- 🍏 Covered picnic tables
- 🍏 Dog park for Fido
- 🍏 Gourmet cookies & Maple Kettle Corn
- 🍏 Interpretive signs
- 🍏 Jams, jellies, honey, hand dipped chocolate Oreos
- 🍏 Lots of brochures for local attractions
- 🍏 Maple syrup, candy & freshly-made fudge
- 🍏 Water bottle filling station

Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center
Open 8:30 AM - 5 PM Daily
1,000 Rt. 2 West Bound in Lancaster, MA 01523
Between Exits 103 & 102
visitnorthcentral.com | (978) 534-2302





A Photographer's Dream Day – Or Season!

by **Lawrence Libby**

North Central Massachusetts offers many wonderful spots for photographers. Townsend photographer Lawrence Libby provided a list of hot spots for his camera. In his travels, he also compiled a comprehensive list that can keep any photographer busy all season!

*View from the Nashua River Rail Trail in Groton (top).
Farandnear Reservation in Shirley (bottom).*

Picturesque Places

Bancroft Castle, Groton

Boulder Art Park, Ashburnham

Farandnear Reservation, Shirley

Heywood-Wakefield Historic Site, Groton

Leominster State Forest, Leominster

Mount Wachusett, Princeton

Nashua River Rail Trail, Fitchburg

Quabbin Reservoir, Petersham

Sholan Farms, Leominster

The Common, Fitchburg

Tully Lake, Winchendon

Twin Cities Rail Trail, Leominster

Wachusett Reservoir and Dam, Clinton





View from Bancroft Castle in Groton: photo by Colleen Blair (left), Town of Harvard (top right), City of Fitchburg (bottom right).

Bolton Orchards

125 Still River Rd., Bolton, MA 978-779-2733 www.BoltonOrchards.co

Quality at the Crossroads

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🍏 Local Apples Available Year-Round 🍏 Just Pressed Cider 🍏 Market Fresh Fruits & Vegetables 🍏 Homemade Entrees & Soups 🍏 Deli Sandwiches 🍏 Ice Cream | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🍏 Gourmet & Specialty Items 🍏 Fruit Baskets 🍏 Homemade Bakery Items & Pies 🍏 Coffee Cafe Open at 8 am 🍏 Cider Donuts Made Daily |
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Keep Guests (and Yourself!) Entertained

As locals, we often have out-of-town guests and family who come to our region. What sites would you love to show them? What spots are best for kids? Where do you like to take them to eat? If you don't have enough room, where do you suggest they stay?

To make the coming summer's guest list a bit easier to manage, we have organized a couple of options for the perfect day in the region.



The Bull Run Restaurant in Shirley.

1

The Eastern Side of the Region

1. Start with a tasting and tour at Nashoba Valley Winery in Bolton. The winery is open year-round, doors open at 11 a.m. daily.
2. Pop-in at Harvard General Store in Harvard Center for lunch and sit in the outdoor picnic table area.
3. Follow up with a visit to Fruitlands Museum in Harvard and take in views of the region.
4. Then drive into Ayer/Shirley for dinner at Bull Run in Shirley
- or, both in downtown Ayer, Markoh's on Main or Lucia's Tavola. In Pepperell, find the Lazy Bubble.
5. Finally, catch a game of pool at The Billiards Café, also in downtown Ayer.
6. For a place to stay in the evening, Devens is convenient to the North Central Massachusetts eastern regional border with two hotels: Spring Hill Suites and Hilton Garden Inn.

2

The Central Part of the Region

1. Start with breakfast! Find several eateries in the Leominster/Fitchburg/Princeton area. Identity Coffee in Downtown Fitchburg and Main Street Gift and Café in Downtown Leominster offer excellent coffee, as does Mountainside Bakery & Café in Princeton.
2. After breakfast, visit the Fitchburg Art Museum, also in downtown Fitchburg.
3. Then, to keep everyone moving, visit Hollis Hills Farm for pick-your-own fruits and a fun farm vibe.
4. Ready for lunch or an early dinner? Downtown Fitchburg has the Pauper's Pantry, Zapata, Slatery's, Mamajuana, Tacos and Tequila, and Dario's, to name a few, all in the same area, so no need to travel too far.
5. Then, it is a great time to take a ride out of town to Sholan Farms in Leominster to give kids some time to run around, pick some fruit, and see the views.
6. For dinner, the Old Mill in Westminster — classy with a traditional American menu — provides a great spot for the whole family. And there's fun family dining at Il Forno in Lunenburg. Filled with other options, Leominster has eateries from Asian to Latin food. Options in-town are plentiful.
7. Stay at Great Wolf Lodge right in Fitchburg, conveniently located just off Route 2 about ten minutes from Leominster/Fitchburg exits heading west. Great Wolf has rides and pools for the whole family and lets children get remaining energy out before bedtime.



Main Street Gift and Café in Leominster.

3

The Western Side of the Region

1. Start with breakfast in Petersham center at Petersham Country Store. The Country Store offers a nice local selection of foods and great breakfast sandwiches. Shop there, too, for antiques, kids' toys, notecards, wine, beer, and other items for gifts, perhaps for your overnight host or hostess. Petersham Country Store is located across the street from the common and library for those who may want to stay awhile on the quaint common.

2. From there, take a ride to Tully Lake in Royalston to get some time in the lake or on a trail on a nice summer days when it's great to be outside. Under care of the Trustees of the Reservations, Tully Lake offers classic tent camping, canoe and kayak rental for paddling up Tully River, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, disc golf, volleyball, or cornhole.

3. When getting hungry after outside activity, head to Red Apple Farm for some blueberry picking, a beer, room for kids to run, and lunch or snacks. The farm features a store, brewery, cidery, and more!

4. In the evening, head to downtown Gardner for dinner at Moon Hill Brewing and Gardner Ale House.

5. A great spot to wind down for the night (unless camping at Lake Tully) is Colonial Hotel, also in Gardner.

Diverse in landscape and options for spring and summer fun, travelers and sightseers will find plenty to keep them busy whether they prefer to stay in town or want to spend all time out of doors. For locals and guests, we wish an incredible season with all our wonderful region has to offer! §



Kayaking at Tully Lake.



The Billiards Café in downtown Ayer.

THE 142ND BOLTON FAIR

An Old Fashioned Agricultural Fair

Friday Aug. 8th – Sunday, Aug. 10th

Midway • Food • Entertainment • Working Craftsmen
Low Admission Price

- Monster Truck Shows
- Animal Shows & Contests
- Kids' Country • Demo Derby
- Clydesdale Horses
- Exhibit Hall • Farmers Market
- Commercial Vendors

Free Parking • No Pets Please

See Website for schedule of events,
entertainment, prices & hours

2025 boltonfair.org

The Fairgrounds at Lancaster, Rt. 117, Exit 27 off Rt. 495

Farm Fun — Experiences for Your Family

by **Carla Charter and
Marcia Gaglardi**

A number of farms in North Central Massachusetts offer experiences and products focusing on visitors' lifestyles. Among them are:

Bolton Orchards
125 Still River Road
Bolton

Boltonorchards.co

With an extensive online store at boltonorchards.company.site, Bolton Orchards grows apples, peaches, plums, and pumpkins and offers cold-press cider from blended apple types. The Red Barn Coffee Café on site offers baked goods, sandwiches, doughnuts, and a range of New England products. The orchard and café are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.



Carlson Orchards in Harvard.

Carlson Orchards
115 Oak Hill Road
Harvard
carlsonorchards.com

Founded in 1935, the farm diversified in the thirties and forties with crops of chickens, cows, potatoes, and apples. By the late 1960s, the farm specialized in fruits with apples as the main crop. The farm grows cherries, peaches, blueberries, and pumpkins. The cider

barn is open Friday through Sunday and the store is open daily.

Davis Farmland
145 Redstone Hill Road
Sterling
Davisfarmland.com

Visitors can buy tickets on site or at a discount online for activities including Animal Showcase and rides. Children and adults can experience a variety of rides and animals including reptiles, goats, rabbits, chickens, and more. Davis Farmland opens daily, weather permitting. The Herd Rock Restaurant, open all season, features a varied menu. Open daily, weather permitting.



Hollis Hills Farm in Fitchburg.

Hollis Hills Farm
340 Marshall Road
Fitchburg

Hollis Hills Farm has apple picking, ice cream, flower picking, and music on weekends all summer. The retail store is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays all year. In season, Hollis Hills Farm features apples and pick-your-own options as well as a bar, restaurant, and sugar house.

In the Meadow Farm
40 Page Street
Lunenburg
inthemeadowalpacas.com

Accidental farmers at In the Meadow Farm tend alpacas and invite visitors with a farm store including an array of yarns, craft items, and clothing.

Kimball Farm
1543 Lunenburg Road
Lancaster
kimballfarm.com

Kimball farm offers over 50 flavors of delicious ice cream at their locations in Westford, Lancaster, Carlisle and Jaffrey, NH. Their grill & seafood shack serves up New England classics like fried clams, scallops, and lobster rolls all summer long. Check out their country store and café on the way out for fresh pastries, coffee, and farm merchandise!

Lanni Orchards
294 Chase Road
Lunenburg
lanniorchard.com

Lanni Orchards starts off the year with its annual Easter Egg Hunt, then a Blossom Event! June brings in strawberry picking, then raspberries, blueberries, peaches, nectarines, pears, plums, seedless grapes as the season develops plus veggies lettuces, cucumbers, tomatoes, squash, greens, melons, and flowers. The sunflower festival is at the end of August or beginning of September. Apple picking starts at the beginning of September before pumpkin picking! Open daily.

Maplebrook Farmstead
155 Tuttle Road
Sterling
maplebrookfarmstead.com

Maplebrook Farmstead features cows, goats, and chickens as Hannah Miller strives to restore the family farm. Buildings are being repainted,

Cont. on page 20

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\$3.5 Million	Restaurant Group
\$4.5 Million	Commercial Retail Development
\$1 Million	Shipping/Distribution
\$500,000	General Dentistry

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Contact Michael Mahlert, EVP Senior Commercial Lending Officer, at **508.499.1887**.

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STERLING SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

Sponsored by the Mass Cultural Council, Local Businesses, and Sterling Recreation Department

Memorial Park
Cross Street
Monday & Wednesdays
June 30 – August 13, 2025
6 PM – 8 PM
sterlingrec.com

STERLING RECREATION ROAD RACE

Sponsored by the Sterling Recreation Department

Griffin Road Athletic Complex
April 5, 2025 at 8 AM
runsignup.com/sterlingrecruns

STERLING STREET MARKET

Town Common in Sterling Center
Saturdays 10 AM – 2 PM
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

171 Worcester Road
May 3, 2025 at 9 AM – 12 PM
sterling-ma.gov



PICKLING PROGRAM

Conant Public Library
March 6, 2025 at 6 PM
sterlinglibrary.org

BUSTER KEATON in "SHERLOCK JR"

Silent movie with live piano accompaniment

Conant Public Library
April 10, 2025 at 6 PM
sterlinglibrary.org

ANNUAL CLASSIC CAR SHOW

Sponsored by the Sterling Senior Center

36 Muddy Pond Road
Thursday, August 14, 2025
Rain date August 21
4:30 PM – 6:30 PM
sterling-ma.gov/senior-center



Cont. from page 18

Red Apple Farm in Phillipston, photos by Colleen Blair.

old machinery gets pulled out of the weeds, and a field of flowers now grows near the farm stand (thanks to my talented mother). Open daily, the retail shop Maplebrook Farmstead offers an array of clothing. Visitors may make arrangements to hike with goats.

Meadowbrook Orchards
209 Chace Hill Road
Sterling

With a gift shop and restaurant, 100-acre Meadowbrook Orchards has a disc golf course ranked 62nd of 15,000 disc golf courses worldwide.

Plain View Farm
130 Gardner Road
Hubbardston

Plainviewfarmalpacas.com
 Plain View Farm features alpacas and alpaca products, including yarn and clothing. Visitors can enjoy seasonal activities for all ages. Open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays.

Red Apple Farm
455 Highland Avenue
Phillipston
redapplefarm.com

Red Apple Farm, centered on a 98-acre orchard, hosts visitors year round with a store and cidery. Monthly events include a Renaissance fair and holiday lights.

Rota Spring Farm
117 Chace Hill Road
Sterling
Rotaspringfarm.com

Open annually from March 1, Rota Spring Farm features an ice cream stand and restaurant open daily

throughout the season. Goats roam for petting and feeding. The Rota Spring Farm Store offers a variety of food and gift products. They are known for their ice cream stand!

Sholan Farms
1125 Pleasant Street
Leominster
sholanfarms.com

Sholan Farms is a historic 169-acre farm operated by Friends of Sholan Farms and owned by the city of Leominster. When in season, visitors can pick their own apples, walk the beautiful trails, and participate in their community garden program.



Smith's Country Cheese in Winchendon.

Smith's Country Cheese
20 Otter River Road
Winchendon

smithscountrycheese.com
 Smith's Dairy Farm offers a variety of cheeses and other farm-produced products including soil, wood chips, and composted cow manure. Smith's Farm Store offers clothing, food, and other farm-related products. Open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Smith's Country Cheese makes their cheese on-site and has a country store.

Stone Harvest Farm
60 Hardwick Road
Petersham

stoneharvestfarm.com
 Owners Maryanne Reynolds and Jana Dengler are restoring a 1700s farm to on the eastern edge of Quabbin Reservoir. Their 110 acres provide home for yaks and cashmere goats. The on-premises store sells cashmere yarn and yak fiber. The farm exhibits cashmere goats at Cashmere Goat Association shows.



Stone Harvest Farm in Petersham.

Wildwood Farm
50 Woods Road
Westminster
wildwoodfarmllc.com

Third-generation family-run Wildwood Farm hosts a unique environment for weddings, festivals, and private events. They also have a farm stand and equestrian horse stables.

Writer Carla Charter lives in Phillipston.
 Writer Marcia Gagliardi lives in Athol.



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Horses and Riders

An Emotional Gift for Your Family

While North Central Massachusetts may not be the first on anyone's list of horseback riding options, the radar reveals spots for horses and rider. Also, families who want to get started with horse life can find a few regional spots to keep top of mind.

Where to Get Started

Some factors to consider when getting started are: What age group will ride? What discipline interests riders? How far will aspiring riders be willing to drive? Does the town of residence have a local 4-H or pony club to help with education on basic horse care and horsemanship?

Davis Farmland in Sterling makes a great regional place to start. At that farm, riders may start with a pony, which will help them or family members see if riding is something for them.

Davis Farmland
145 Redstone Hill
Sterling
info@davisfarmland.com
(978) 422-6666

Cornerstone Ranch in Princeton offers classes, trail riding, riding tours, workshops, and more.

Cornerstone Ranch
29 Dowds Lane
Princeton
Support@CornerstoneRanch.org

Where to Get Supplies:

Low Places Ranch makes a good place to start for supplies. The ranch offers high quality hay, feed, and other tack. Low Places also offers hay testing and, recently, riding courses.

Low Places Ranch
281 Leominster-Shirley Road
Lunenburg
(978) 660-6244

When a barn needs support, a great place to begin is with the folks at Barn Depot in Lancaster. Horse people operate Barn Depot, and they know all about what makes a good barn, stable, and stall for a horse family. Barn Depot offers doors, handles, hay racks, mats, chew guards, and more. Reach Barn Depot by phone or visit online, since the office is not a retail spot. And, for those needing a barn built, the sister company, Circle B Barns, can provide support in the construction work.

Barn Depot
489 Neck Road
Lancaster
info@barndepot.com
(978) 368-9100

Where to Ride

Anywhere along Nashua River makes for lovely riding, and so does Groton Town Forest. Check the state's website to make sure a particular route is open to the public for horseback riding.
mass.gov/horseback-riding-trails-in-state-parks



Photos courtesy of Circle B in Lancaster.

Squannacook River Rail Trail offers 3.7 miles of crushed stone and horseback riding is allowed. Trail end points are at the intersection of Depot and Center streets in Townsend and in the Bertozzi Wildlife Management Area in Groton.

trailink.com/trail/squannacook-river-rail-trail.

The Lake Denison Recreation area in Baldwinville also has trails for horseback riding.

mass.gov/locations/lake-dennison-recreation-area.

On the Topic of Therapy

Long known to have a therapeutic effect on humans, horses have large hearts and, it is said, feel very intensely what their riders feel. For that reason, among others, horses often equate to healing and relief from anxiety.

Rein in a Dream, RIAD, in Lancaster offers therapeutic horsemanship and animal-assisted therapy. RIAD specializes in services for children and adults with a wide range of mental health, cognitive, and developmental challenges.

Rein in a Dream

868 Main Street

Lancaster

rfkcommunity.org/our-services/rein-in-a-dream

(978) 368-4804

Another farm offering therapy, non-profit High Ridge Harmony Farm in Westminster focuses on animal-assisted healing. Retired and rescued animals stable here.

High Ridge Harmony Farm

83 Overlook Road

Westminster

Harmonyfarm01473@gmail.com

(978) 874-1261

In the age of too many individuals spending too much time on screens, giving the gift of outside time riding makes a real gift, indeed.

North Central Massachusetts offers a variety of riding options for individuals and families.

Happy Trails! §



A Lovely day *in the Region*

by **Christopher Coyle**

One can travel across the North Central region of Massachusetts along forty miles of Route 2 in less than an hour going from, say, Ayer to Athol. But, unless it's important to reach a specific destination in as short a time as possible, why do it? North Central Massachusetts itself provides the destination for travelers seeking a relaxing, unhurried trip off the beaten path. The region lends itself well to the new slow-travel trend.

Here's a possible trip with some engaging stops. The traveler will likely find additional places to visit along the way, perhaps saving some for next time. Arriving in the area by Route 2 from the east, stop at the Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center on Route 2 westbound in Lancaster for some ideas of places to see.

Taking the Fitchburg exit from Route 2, a slow traveler and

companions may drive to Fitchburg to tour Fitchburg Art Museum. It makes a good visit for those less inclined to hiking or perhaps on a rainy day. Founded in 1925, FAM has set a goal of becoming the first area fully bilingual, English/Spanish, art museum. FAM has a section on ancient Egyptian art, standing exhibits of American photography and African art, as well as special shows dedicated to individual artists or techniques.

From Fitchburg, drive west on Route 2A with a possible meal stop at the Old Mill right off the highway on Route 140 south in Westminster. Driving further south on 140 and then west on Mile Hill Road brings the slow traveling traveler to Wachusett Mountain State Reservation in Princeton.

The reservation comprises the three-thousand-acre crown jewel of the area where travelers can look

out in all directions. On a clear day, the visitor may see Boston to the east, Worcester to the south, Mount Greylock way out in the Berkshires to the west, and Mount Monadnock in Jaffrey, New Hampshire, to the north.

The Wachusett summit road is open from Memorial Day weekend until the end of October. Seventeen miles of walking trails include a section of the Midstate Trail. Wachusett Mountain Ski Area operates on part of the mountain, accessible by car.

Also in Princeton, find Redemption Rock, a Trustees of Reservations property. In 1676 during King Philip's War, Native American captors released Mary Rowlandson, wife of the first minister of Lancaster, from atop the notable granite ledge later named Redemption Rock. The adventurous person could reach Wachusett

Fitchburg Art Museum in downtown Fitchburg.



Mountain from the Midstate Trail starting at the Redemption Rock parking area.

Back on 2A, travelers may continue west while keeping an eye out for area antique and specialty shops as well as numerous greenhouses and nurseries that dot the region. Arriving in Athol, Route 32 south leads to Fisher Museum at Harvard Forest in Petersham. Home to well-known beautiful dioramas, Fisher Museum includes seven that depict the changing landscape of central Massachusetts starting at the time of European colonization. Outside, a

network of trails from short to lengthy beckon visitors into the research forest where they can explore and learn about the native habitat.

Returning to Athol, Route 32 north brings the slow traveler to Royalston, home to three Trustees of Reservations properties. A hike along a challenging trail down into a deep, ancient gorge reveals a 45-foot spectacular waterfall, Spirit Falls. Hiking through the 173-acre Jacobs Hill reservation through mixed species of forest in relative wilderness brings the hiker to Spirit Falls and also connects with 22-mile Tully Trail.

Also in Royalston, travelers find Doane's Falls, a short walk from Athol Road. The striking series of waterfalls captivate with photographic opportunities in all seasons. At the foot of Doane's Hill, travelers may decide to stay at Tully Lake Campground, operated by the Trustees as a tent-only camping adventure in a scenic and peaceful part of North Central Massachusetts.

Rail enthusiast, historian, and retired UMass research technician, Christopher Coyle lives in Athol. §



The Old Mill Restaurant in Westminster (left), Wachusett Mountain Summit Lookout (right).

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Exhibitions, events and more!

SPRING - SUMMER CALENDAR 2025

In this issue of The Guide to North Central Massachusetts, we introduce you to lots of great places and special events. 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, 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!

MARCH

Through 23, Sunday. *Pixels + Petals: An Orchid Exhibition* at New England Botanic Garden, 11 French Dr., Boylston. Visit nebg.org.

1 Saturday, 9:30 am. *The Annual David Crowley Race to Cure PSP* at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, 41 Mile Hill Rd., Westminster. Learn more at wachusett.com.



Ralph Crowley Classic/NE Masters Race.

1 Saturday, 10 am. *Winchendon Farmers Market Winter Markets* at Old Murdock Senior Center, 105 Park St., Winchendon, MA 01475. Visit winchendonfarmersmarket.org.

1 Saturday, 11 am. *FAMILY Program: Stephen Dirado, Better Together: Four Decades of Photographs* at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. Visit fitchburgartmuseum.org.

1 Saturday, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm. *Needle Felting 101: Felted Fox* at Community Room, Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St., Clinton. Learn more at bigelowlibrary.org.

1 Saturday, 8 pm. *Solas* at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

1 Saturday, 8 pm. *Vanilla Fudge* at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

2 Sunday, 10 am - 4 pm. *Free First Sunday* at The Icon Museum and Study Center, 203 Union St., Clinton. Visit iconmuseum.org.

2 Sunday, 3 pm. *Ken Cowan* at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

2 Sunday, 7:30 pm. *POPA CHUBBY & The Beast Band* at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

4 Tuesday, 6:30 pm. *Interactive Paranormal Investigation at the Fitz* at The Fitzpatrick Collaborative, 45 Main St., Pepperell. Purchase tickets online at discoverpepperell.com.

6 Thursday. *Beer Dinner*, at Moon Hill Brewing & Gardner Ale House, 74 Parker St., Gardner.

6 Thursday, 12 - 7 pm. *FAM Free First Thursday*, at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. Visit fitchburgartmuseum.org.

6 Thursday, 8 pm. *Celebrity Series of Boston presents Midori, violin & Özgür Aydın, piano*, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton.

7 Friday, 10 am. *Ralph Crowley Classic/NE Masters Race*, at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, 41 Mile Hill Rd., Westminster. Visit wachusett.com. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

7 Friday, 8 pm. *New Dangerfield*, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton.

8 Saturday, 2 - 3 pm. *Macramé Keychains*, at Community Room, Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St., Clinton. Visit bigelowlibrary.org.

8 Saturday, 7:30 pm. *Vista Philharmonic Orchestra - Remarkable Origins*, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

8 Saturday, 8 pm. *Don White's Annual Birthday Show*, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

12 Wednesday, 10 am. *MA Senior Games - Ski & Snowboard Races*, at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, 41 Mile Hill Rd., Westminster. Learn more at maseniorgames.org

12 Wednesday, 1 - 2:30 pm. *Adult Coloring*, at Baker Room, Conant Public Library, 4 Meetinghouse Hill Rd., Sterling. Visit sterling-ma.gov for more.

13 Thursday - 17 Monday. *St. Patrick's Celebration*, at Moon Hill Brewing & Gardner Ale House, 74 Parker St., Gardner. See moonhillbrewing.com.

13 Thursday, 6 - 7 pm. *Spot a Scam*, at Community Room, Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St., Clinton. Visit bigelowlibrary.org.

14 Friday, 1 - 2 pm. *Common Threads: Crochet & Knit Circle*, at Reading Room, Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St., Clinton. Visit bigelowlibrary.org.

14 Friday, 6 pm. *Resin Dried Flower Board Workshop*, at Hardwick Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick. See more at hardwickwinery.com.

14 Friday, 8 pm. *Patti LuPone in Concert*, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

14 Friday, 8 pm. *The Linda Ronstadt Experience*, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

15 Saturday, 3 & 8 pm. *Groton Hill's St. Patrick's Day Celebration*, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

15 Saturday, 6 pm. *St. Patrick's Day Dinner*, at The Fay Club, 658 Main St., Fitchburg. Call 978.345.4537 to reserve your spot.

15 Saturday, 7 - 10 pm. *Bruce Jacques - The One Man Comedic Rock Show*, at Pepperell VFW, 55 Leighton St., Pepperell. Purchase tickets online at discoverpepperell.com.

15 Saturday, 8 pm. *Ronnie Earl & the Broadcasters*, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

16 Sunday, 1 pm. *March Crafternoon: Create Your Own Wood Slice Floral Coasters*, at 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon. Visit townofwinchendon.com to register.

16 Sunday, 7:30 pm. *Ishna: A St. Patrick's Day Celebration*, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

20 Thursday, 4 - 6 pm. *Indoor Farmers Market*, at Leominster City Hall, 25 West St., Leominster. Visit leominster-ma.gov.

20 Thursday, 6:30 - 7:30 pm. *Women Conductors of the Underground Railroad*, at Community Room, Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St., Clinton. Visit bigelowlibrary.org.

20 Thursday, 7:30 pm. *Selwyn Birchwood*, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.



Selwyn Birchwood at Groton Hill Music Center.

20 Thursday, 8 pm. *Sierra Hull*, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd, Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

22 Saturday, 1 - 3 pm. *Scholarly Double Feature: Print and Icons*, at The Icon Museum and Study Center, 203 Union St., Clinton. Visit iconmuseum.org.

22 Saturday, 2 pm. *Artist Talk: Stephen DiRado*, at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. Register at fitchburgartmuseum.org.

22 Saturday, 6 - 9 pm. *Broadway Ball: Creative Hall of Fame Celebration*, at Fitchburg Cultural Alliance, 569 Main St. Fitchburg. fitchburgculturalalliance.org.

22 Saturday, 8 pm. *Jason Ricci & the Bad Kind*, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

22 Saturday, 8 pm. *Meshell Ndegeocello*, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

23 Sunday, 2 pm. *Tapping Maple Trees*, at Shirley Historical Society Museum, 182 Center Rd., Shirley. Visit shirleyhistory.org.

25 Tuesday, 7:30 pm. *Fitchburg State University "Music Mega Mix"*, at Weston Auditorium, 353 North St., Fitchburg. See fitchburgstate.edu.

28 Friday, 8 pm. *A Far Cry: "For" Seasons*, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

29 Saturday. *Festival: A Celebration of African Art at FAM (Opening Day)*, at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg.

29 Saturday, 2 - 3 pm. *I Was Amelia Earhart's Sister: Meet Muriel Morrissey*, at Community Room, Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St., Clinton. Visit bigelowlibrary.org.

29 Saturday. *Wines Around the World hosted by Bog's*, at The Fay Club, 658 Main St., Fitchburg. Check thefayclub.com for updates.



A Far Cry at Groton Hill Music Center.

29 Saturday, 8 pm. Retro Floyd: Experience Pink Floyd, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

APRIL

3 Thursday, 12 - 7 pm. Free First Thursday, at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. Learn more at fitchburgartmuseum.org.

3 Thursday, 6:30 - 7:30 pm. Live Music - Purple Rain: The Music of Prince, at Community Room, Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St., Clinton. Visit bigelowlibrary.org.

4 Friday - 12 Saturday. "Alice in Wonderland" performed by The Stratton Players, at Christ Church's Guild Hall, 569 Main St. Email strattonplayers@gmail.com to reserve tickets.

4 Friday, 7 pm. 18th Annual Drag Show presented by Gay Straight Alliance, at Fitchburg State University, Athletics & Rec. Center, 130 North St.

4 Friday, 8 pm. Beck-Ola: Celebrating the Music of Jeff Beck, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

4 Friday, 8 pm. Mike Block Trio, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

4 Friday, 10 am - 12 pm & 5 Saturday, 1 - 3 pm. Pysanky Egg Decorating Workshop Sessions, at The Icon Museum and Study Center, 203 Union St., Clinton. Purchase tickets online at iconmuseum.org.

5 Saturday, 10 am - 1 pm. Winchendon Farmers Market Winter Markets, at Old Murdock Senior Center, 105 Park St., Winchendon, MA 01475. Visit winchendonfarmersmarket.org.

5 Saturday, 11 am - 12:30 pm. FAMily Program: Tara Sellios: Ask Now the Beasts, at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. Presented in English and Spanish. Visit fitchburgartmuseum.org to register.

5 Saturday, 2 pm. Artist Talk: Tara Sellios, at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. Visit fitchburgartmuseum.org to register.

5 Saturday, 6 pm. The Grand Royal Soiree of Cultural Excellence, presented by Fitchburg State University, at Fitchburg State University, Athletics & Rec. Center, 130 North St. See fitchburgstate.edu.

5 Saturday. Murder Mystery, at The Fay Club, 658 Main St., Fitchburg. Visit thefayclub.com for details.

5 Saturday, 7:30 pm. Vista Philharmonic Orchestra - Still Holding On, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

5 Saturday, 8 pm. Claudia Schmidt & Jane Miller (Ballroom), at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

5 Saturday, 8 pm. Claudia Schmidt & Jane Miller (Ballroom), at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley.

6 Sunday, 10 am - 4 pm. Free First Sunday, at The Icon Museum and Study Center, 203 Union St., Clinton.

6 Sunday, 6:30 - 9 pm. Interactive Paranormal Investigation at the Fitz, at The Fitzpatrick Collaborative, 45 Main St., Pepperell. Purchase tickets online at discoverpepperell.com.

6 Sunday, 7 pm. The String Queens, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

6 Sunday, 7:30 pm. The Nick Moss Band with Dennis Gruenling, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

8 Tuesday, 6 - 7 pm. Intro to Financial Literacy with All One Credit Union, at Community Room, Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St., Clinton. Register online at bigelowlibrary.org.

8 Tuesday & 9 Wednesday, 10 am; 10 Thursday & 11 Friday, 9:30 am, 12 pm. Curious George, the Golden Meatball, at Mount Wachusett Community College, 444 Green St., Gardner. Purchase tickets online at mwcc.edu.

9 Wednesday, 1 - 2:30 pm. Adult Coloring, at Baker Room, Conant Public Library, 4 Meetinghouse Hill Rd., Sterling. See sterling-ma.gov.

11 Friday, 6:30 pm; 12 Saturday, 1 pm. Spring Dance Club Showcase presented by Fitchburg State University, at FSU Weston Auditorium, 353 North St.

11 Friday, 8 pm. Eliza Neals, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

11 Friday, 8 pm. The Robert Cray Band, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

12 Saturday, 11 am - 1 pm. Egg Hunt & Meet the Easter Bunny, at Parkhill Park, 27 Franklin Rd.

12 Saturday, 1 pm. Athol Lions Club River Rat Race, at Main Street Bridge, Athol. For more details: riverratrace.com.



Athol Lions Club River Rat Race.

12 Saturday, 12 - 2 pm. Pepperell 250th Time Capsule Sealing, at Lawrence Library, 15 Main St., Pepperell. See discoverpepperell.com.

12 Saturday, 8 pm. Nershi Hann Trio, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

12 Saturday, 8 pm. Becca Stevens, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

13 Sunday, 2 - 4 pm. Remembering our Minutemen, at Shirley Center Common and inside the Meeting House, 41 Brown Rd., Shirley. See shirleyhistory.org.

17 Thursday, 4 - 6 pm. Indoor Farmers Market, at Leominster City Hall, 25 West St., Leominster.

17 Thursday, 8 pm. Celebrity Series of Boston presents Zlatomir Fung, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

18 Friday, 8 pm. Brad Mehldau, Christian McBride, Marcus Gilmore, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

18 Friday & 19 Saturday, 8 pm. Dark Desert Eagles: #1 Eagles Tribute Band, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Road, Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

19 Saturday. Easter Egg Hunt, at Hardwick Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick. See more at hardwickwinery.com.

19 Saturday. Spring Fling Five Course Wine Pairing Dinner, at Hardwick Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick. See more at hardwickwinery.com.

19 Saturday, 8 am - 1 pm. Easter's Great Gathering, at Red Apple Farm, 455 Highland Ave., Phillipston.

20 Sunday. Easter Brunch, at The Fay Club, 658 Main St., Fitchburg. Details at thefayclub.com.

20 Sunday, 9 am - 3 pm. Easter Sunday Brunch, at Moon Hill Brewing & Gardner Ale House, 74 Parker St., Gardner. See moonhillbrewing.com.

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

22 Tuesday, 6 - 7 pm. Intro to Budgeting presented by All One Credit Union, at Community Room, Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St., Clinton. See bigelowlibrary.org.

24 Thursday - 27 Sunday. Art in Bloom, at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. See more at fitchburgartmuseum.org.

25 Friday, 8 pm. Masters of the Telecaster: GE Smith, Larry Campbell, Jim Weider, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

25 Friday, 9 am - 4:30 pm; 26 Saturday, 9 am - 4 pm. Friends of the Levi Heywood Memorial Library Used Book Sale, at 55 West Lynde St., Gardner, MA.

25 Friday & 26 Saturday, 7 pm; 27 Sunday, 2 pm. "Spelling Bee" performed by FSU Musical Theater Club, at FSU Weston Auditorium, 353 North St.

26 Saturday. Healthy Kids Day, at YMCA locations. Visit ymcaofcm.org for more.

26 Saturday, 8 pm. Invisible Sun - Police Tribute Band, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA.

27 Sunday, 11 am - 3 pm. Earth Day Fest, at In the Meadow Farm, 40 Page St., Lunenburg.

27 Sunday, 3 pm. Musicians from Marlboro, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton.

MAY

1 Thursday, 12 - 7 pm. Free First Thursday, at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. fitchburgartmuseum.org.

1 Thursday, 6 pm. Wine Glass Paint & Sip, at Hardwick Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick. See hardwickwinery.com.

1 Thursday, 8 pm. Mark Erelli + His String Quintet, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton.

3 Saturday, 8 am - 2 pm. Shirley All Town Spring Yard Sale, in Shirley. shirleyhistory.org.

3 Saturday (every Saturday), 9:30 - 10:30 am. Alpaca Yoga, at In the Meadow Farm, 40 Page St., Lunenburg.

3 Saturday & 4 Sunday, 10 am - 6 pm. Enchanted Orchard Renaissance Faire, at Red Apple Farm, 455 Highland Ave., Phillipston.

3 Saturday, 12 - 1 pm. Prudence Wright Re-enactment, at Prudence Wright Overlook, 24 Groton St., Pepperell. See discoverpepperell.com.

3 Saturday, 4 - 10 pm. Cinco de Mayo Season Opener Party, at Wildwood Farm, 50 Woods Rd., Westminster.

3 Saturday. The Six French Mother Sauces-French Wine Dinner, at The Fay Club, 658 Main St., Fitchburg. See thefayclub.com for details.

4 Sunday, 10 am - 4 pm. Free First Sunday, at The Icon Museum and Study Center, 203 Union St., Clinton.

4 Sunday, 6 - 10 pm. Party Like it's 1945, at War Memorial Building, Shirley. Reservations through Fort Devens Museum. See shirleyhistory.org.

6 Tuesday, 7:30 pm. Fitchburg State University "Choirs Concert", at FSU Weston Auditorium, 353 North St., Fitchburg.

10 Saturday, 8 pm. Kris Delmhorst with special guest Rose Cousins at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

11 Sunday. Mother's Day Brunch, at The Fay Club, 658 Main St., Fitchburg. Details at thefayclub.com.

11 Sunday, 9 am - 3 pm. Mother's Day Brunch, at Moon Hill Brewing & Gardner Ale House, 74 Parker St., Gardner. See moonhillbrewing.com.

15 Thursday, 4 - 6 pm. Indoor Farmers Market, at Leominster City Hall, 25 West St., Leominster. See leominster-ma.gov.

15 Thursday, 7:30 pm. Ally Venable, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA. Purchase tickets online at bullrunrestaurant.com.

16 Friday, 17 Saturday, 18 Sunday. Art & Music Festival by Gardner Area League of Artists, at the Red Apple Farm, Brew Barn in Phillipston. More information can be found on galagardner.org or on Facebook.

17 Saturday, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm. May is for Murder - Book & Author Festival, at Community Room, Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St., Clinton.

17 Saturday, 11 am - 12:30 pm (English), 2 - 3:30 pm (Spanish). FAMily Program: Festival: A Celebration of African Art at FAM, at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. Register at fitchburgartmuseum.org.

17 Saturday, 12 - 5 pm. Annual Food Truck Festival, at 166 Boulder Dr., Fitchburg.

17 Saturday, 4 - 10 pm. Nashville comes to Wildwood Farm!, at Wildwood Farm, 50 Woods Rd., Westminster.

17 Saturday, 8 pm. Madeleine Peyroux: "Let's Walk Tour", at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton.



Madeleine Peyroux at Groton Hill Music Center.

17 Saturday, 8 pm. Mike Girard's Big Swinging Thing, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Road, Shirley, MA.

24 Saturday & 25 Sunday, 11 am - 4 pm. Spring Fling Craft Fair & Food Festival, at Hardwick Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick.

25 Sunday, 2 - 4 pm. Open House at School #8, at Church Street in Shirley Village. shirleyhistory.org.

25 Sunday, 6 pm. Memorial Day "White Cross Ceremony", at Monument Park, 597 Main St., Fitchburg.

26 Monday, 10:30 am. Memorial Day Ceremony, Fitchburg Upper Common, 857 Main St., Fitchburg.

29 Thursday, 6:30 - 7:30 pm. The Songs of Willie Nelson, at Community Room, Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St., Clinton. bigelowlibrary.org.

31 Saturday, 11 am - 5 pm. SpringFest, at Wildwood Farm, 50 Woods Rd., Westminster. Rain date June 1.

31 Saturday, 8 pm. An Evening with Leslie Odom, Jr., at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd, Groton.

JUNE

1 Sunday, 10 am - 4 pm. Free First Sunday, at The Icon Museum and Study Center, 203 Union St., Clinton.

5 Thursday, 12 - 7 pm. Free First Thursday, at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. fitchburgartmuseum.org.

7 Saturday, 11 am - 5 pm. ShirleyFest, at Shirley Center Common. See shirleyhistory.org.

7 Saturday, 2 pm. Artist Talk: Ari Montford: Freedom Arrows, at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. Register at fitchburgartmuseum.org.

14 Saturday. Dinner with Dad, at The Fay Club, 658 Main St., Fitchburg. See thefayclub.com for details.

14 Saturday, 8 am - 2 pm. Westminster Town Wide Yard Sale, Stop by the Historical Society building, 110 Main St., For a map of sale locations in Westminster.

15 Sunday, 9 am - 3 pm. Father's Day Brunch, at Moon Hill Brewing & Gardner Ale House, 74 Parker St., Gardner. See moonhillbrewing.com.

18 Wednesday, 2 - 5 pm. "DPW Day" in Fitchburg, Coolidge Park, 198 Townsend St., Fitchburg.

19, Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm. Juneteenth Celebration and Ceremony, at Abolitionist Park, 50 Snow St., Fitchburg.

21 Saturday. "Opening Day: 89th Regional Exhibition of Art & Craft", at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg.

21 Saturday & 22 Sunday. Summer Strings Music Festival, at Red Apple Farm, 455 Highland Ave., Phillipston.

23 Monday, 9 am - 28 Saturday, 4 pm. "Rhythm and Light" Icon Workshop with Master Iconographer Dr. George Kordis, at The Icon Museum and Study Center, 203 Union St., Clinton. Tickets: iconmuseum.org.

27 Friday, 6 - 8 pm. FAM Summer Party, at Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg. Tickets available at fitchburgartmuseum.org.

27 Friday. Lobster Bake, at The Fay Club, 658 Main St., Fitchburg. See thefayclub.com for details.

28 Saturday, 10 am - 12 pm. Pepperell's 250th Parade Celebration, at Main St., Pepperell. Get involved by contacting pepperellfourth@yahoo.com.

28 Saturday, 11 am - 4 pm. Summer Bash Craft Fair, at Hardwick Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick. See more at hardwickwinery.com.

28 Saturday, 1 - 6 pm. Civic Days: 15th Annual Nashua River Brewers Festival, at Riverfront Park, 51 Commercial St., Fitchburg.

28 Saturday, 6 - 10 pm. Fireworks: Small Town. Big Bang! Celebration, at Varnum Brook Elementary School, 10 Hollis St., Pepperell. See discoverpepperell.com.

28 Saturday, 8 pm. Best of the 70s w/ DizzyFish & The Uptown Horns, at Bull Run Restaurant, 215 Great Rd., Shirley, MA.

JULY

3 Thursday, 4 - 10 pm. Civic Days: Downtown Block Party, along Boulder Dr. & Main St, Fitchburg.

3 Thursday, 9 pm. Civic Days: Fireworks Display, Fireworks shoot off from Rollstone Hill, downtown Fitchburg.

4 Friday, 10 am. Civic Days: Independence Day Parade, Downtown Fitchburg (along Boulder Dr. & Main St.)

5 Saturday. Red, White, & Berry: A Celebration of Summer Wines, at Hardwick Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick.

6 Sunday, 10 am - 4 pm. Free First Sunday, at The Icon Museum and Study Center, 203 Union St., Clinton.

6 Sunday, 11 am - 2 pm. Civic Days: 17th Annual "Amazing Duck Race", at Riverfront Park, 51 Commercial St., Fitchburg.

9, 16, 23 & 30 (Wednesdays), 5:30 - 7:30 pm. Concerts on the Common, at Fitchburg Upper Common (Gazebo), 857 Main St.

12, 19 Saturday & 22, 29 Sunday. Blueberry Jamboree, at Red Apple Farm, 455 Highland Ave., Phillipston.

20 Sunday, 2 - 4 pm. Friends of Coggs Hall Park - Summer Concert: featuring "The Long Run" (Eagles tribute band), at Coggs Hall Park, 159 Electric Ave., Fitchburg.

20 Sunday, 7 pm. Peabo Bryson, at Groton Hill Music Center, 122 Old Ayer Rd., Groton. Purchase tickets online at grotonhill.org.

24 Thursday, 31 Thursday, 7:45 - 9:45 pm. Movies in the Park, at Fitchburg City Hall (lawn behind 700 Main St.)

26 Saturday, 4 - 8 pm. SummerFest, at Wildwood Farm, 50 Woods Rd., Westminster. Rain date August 2.

AUGUST

3 Sunday, 10 am - 4 pm. Free First Sunday, at The Icon Museum and Study Center, 203 Union St., Clinton.

5 Tuesday, 5 - 7 pm. National Night Out in Fitchburg, at Lowe Park, 174 Elm St.

6, 13 & 20 (Wednesdays), 5:30 - 7:30 pm. Concerts on the Common in Fitchburg, at Fitchburg Upper Common (Gazebo), 857 Main St.

7 Thursday, Thursday 14, 7:45 - 9:45 pm. Movies in the Park, at Fitchburg City Hall (lawn behind 700 Main St.)

7 Thursday - 10 Sunday. Huntstock Festival, at Wildwood Farm, 50 Woods Rd., Westminster.

8 Friday - 10 Sunday. The 142nd Bolton Fair, at 318 Seven Bridge Rd., Lancaster. See boltonfair.org.

9, 16 Saturday & 10, 17 Sunday. Sunflower Festival, at Red Apple Farm, 455 Highland Ave., Phillipston.

17 Sunday, 2 - 4 pm. Friends of Coggs Hall Park - Summer Concert: featuring "Neurotic Gumbo", at Coggs Hall Park, 159 Electric Ave., Fitchburg.

Saturday 23, 8 - 9:30 pm. Laser Show at the Pepperell 250th Celebration, at Pepperell Town Field, 4 Hollis St., Pepperell. See discoverpepperell.com.

30 Saturday - 1 Monday. Appleseed Country Fair, at Red Apple Farm, 455 Highland Ave., Phillipston.

31 Saturday & 31 Sunday, 11 am - 4 pm. Fall Craft Fair & Food Festival, at Hardwick Winery, 3305 Greenwich Rd., Hardwick.

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Visiting North Central Massachusetts Goes Hand in Hand with *Good Eating*



Roots Natural Foods in Leominster.

by Christopher Coyle

Visiting scenic North Central Massachusetts goes hand in hand with good eating. Great restaurants in the area promise and deliver fine dining experiences. Many are quite close to some of the region's most interesting places to visit. Some of them even offer a farm-to-table meal featuring area foods.

The state's agricultural producers have long encouraged North Central Massachusetts restaurants to serve locally produced foods. Although Massachusetts does not lead nationwide agricultural production, Massachusetts agriculture produces well over a hundred million dollars annually in direct sales. The farm-to-table concept features use of

locally sourced fresh ingredients, often through direct acquisition from the producer. The result — fresher, more nutritious produce — supports local farm production. Restaurants proudly offer local foods and proclaim their use on menus and in advertising.

The Lazy Bubble in Pepperell offers an intimate dining experience centered around its scratch kitchen philosophy. This chef-owned establishment crafts international cuisine using locally sourced ingredients whenever possible. The ever-changing weekly menu reflects both seasonal availability and culinary creativity. Open primarily for dinner service with the addition of Saturday

lunch, the restaurant welcomes both dine-in guests and those preferring takeout. Its location makes it an ideal stop after exploring nearby conservation areas or enjoying outdoor activities along the Nashua River.

The Bull Run Restaurant in Shirley began serving food and drink in 1740 as a stop on the Boston to Albany stagecoach route. The restaurant offers seasonally available ingredients, many from area farms. Diners enjoy not only a well-prepared meal in a cozy atmosphere but top quality foods harvested nearby.

Kimball Farm in Lancaster not only serves meals but sports a terrific gift shop. After stopping at

Cont. on page 32

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Cont. from page 30

Kimball Farm, nearby Trustees of Reservations properties are just asking to be visited, including Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, Farandnear Reservation in Shirley, and Doyle Community Park in Leominster.

Roots Natural Foods in Leominster combines a natural food store with a welcoming café that specializes in organic, sustainable fare. The locally owned establishment's kitchen creates fresh smoothies, homemade soups, crisp salads, and hearty sandwiches for lunch. Their commitment to serving and selling responsibly farmed, organic, non-GMO, and local products makes it an ideal stop for health-conscious diners. The café's takeout options are perfect for those planning a picnic at nearby conservation areas or community parks.

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill in Boylston not only offers a wonderful collection of outdoor gardens,

walking trails, and indoor conservatories but also dining at Farmer and the Fork, the onsite café offering locally sourced dishes.

Headed west for further sightseeing and exploring, travelers might stop to dine at **The Old Mill Restaurant in Westminster**, located in a former sawmill that began serving meals in a quaint, cozy atmosphere to the public in 1946. Visits to nearby state parks such as Wachusett Mountain State Reservation combine nicely with a meal before or after.

The Moon Hill Brewing and Gardner Ale House offers foods sourced from local producers and also offers up to fourteen of their own beers. Certain nights feature live music. A short distance west of Gardner are Doane's Falls, Jacobs Hill, and Tully Lake Campground, all in Royalston.

Museums and other indoor places to visit in North Central Massachusetts offer easy



Forge & Vine in Groton (left), The Lazy Bubble in Pepperell (right).



The Old Mill Restaurant in Westminster.

alternatives to outdoor activities during days of inclement weather. Many are located near fine restaurants, and some offer their own cafés as well.

When planning a trip to the region, visitors should consider sightseeing activities that include a

meal at one of the area's eating establishments. Additionally, many area restaurants and stores offer takeout food which might be enjoyed at a scenic vista.

Rail enthusiast, historian, and retired UMass research technician, Christopher Coyle lives in Athol. §



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hobartvillage.com

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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 Street, Gardner

978-516-3040

diamondheartartstudio.com

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Gardner Area League of Artists (GALA)

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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

all-onecu.com

All In One Credit Union 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

avidiabank.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.

Berkshire Bank

368 Main Street, Worcester

508-797-6844

berkshirebank.com

Berkshire Bank offers a range of personal and business banking services, including loans and financial solutions to meet the needs of the community.

Clinton Savings Bank

200 Church Street, Clinton

978-365-3700

clintonsavings.com

Clinton Savings Bank specializes in personal and business banking, offering loans and account options to meet your needs.

Enterprise Bank and Trust Company

420 John Fitch Hwy., Fitchburg

978-656-5689

enterprisebanking.com

Personalized, comprehensive banking solutions.

Fidelity Bank

9 Leominster Conn., Leominster

800-581-5363

fidelitybankonline.com

We are experts of 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.

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

Angel Salon & Spa

875 Merriam Ave., Leominster

978-537-4126

angelsalonandspa.com

We offer a variety of salon and spa services.

Elegante Hair and Nails

1298 Main Street, Leominster

978-400-6155

Elegante Hair and Nails specializes in professional hair and nail services, providing clients with top-quality beauty treatments in a relaxing environment.

Hey Good Look'n Salon and Spa

370 Summer Street, Fitchburg

978-345-2308

hglsalon.com

Hair, Nails, Waxing. Cosmetics, Pedicures and Massage Therapy.

House of Beauty Supply

653 N. Main Street, Leominster

978-840-3070

Newly opened, we sell all kinds of hair extensions, wigs and hair care products.

Keith Kartanos Hair Studio

130 Lancaster Street, Leominster

978-580-7944

Hair specialist.

LG Moda Salon & Boutique

1009 Central Street, Leominster

978-401-0289

lgmoda.com

Professional Hair Color Stylist, Nail Techs, Waxing, and specializes in anti-aging products & Women's Clothing.

Lush Rx Aesthetics

646 Central Street, Suite 3,

Leominster

978-212-9333

lushrx-aes.com

Providing safe and effective solutions curated to your individual beauty and wellness needs.

My Salon Suite

94 Watertown Plaza, Leominster

508-500-9000

mysalonsuite.com/leominster

Offering private, fully equipped suites for beauty professionals, providing a luxurious and independent space for hairstylists, estheticians, and other beauty experts to serve their clients.

Soul Serenity/Powerful Crystals

67 Main Street, Leominster

978-518-2128

soulserenitybeautyinc.com

We focus on customized, result-driven, non-invasive skin care treatments.

BREWERIES, WINERIES & CIDERIES

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 varietals 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.


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.

Thirsty Robot Brewing

265 Summer St., (Rear), Fitchburg
978-895-5931  

thirstyrobotbrewing.com

A ragtag collection of misfits who find solace in working hard to produce beer that you will enjoy. Specializing in New England IPAs.

Wachusett Brewing Company, Inc.

175 State Rd. E, Westminster
978-874-9965

wachusettbrew.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

facebook.com/pineacres 

Twice voted Park of the Year nationally! We offer tenting to waterfront sites, rustic cabins, RV rentals. Big rig friendly! 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.

Town of Clinton


242 Church Street, Clinton
978-356-4113

clintonma.gov

Offering local resources and attractions for visitors, including community events, historical sites, and outdoor activities.

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

Nashua River

Watershed Association


592 Main St., Groton
978-448-0299

nashuariverwatershed.org 

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

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 Street, 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 who developed dress patterns and Mary Sawyer's pet lamb who inspired the poem, "Mary Had a Little Lamb".

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


Sholan Farms ^{Since 2001} ©

24TH ANNUAL APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL & CRAFT SHOW
MAY 17, 10AM-4PM

U-PICK APPLES, BLUEBERRIES, RASPBERRIES, PEACHES

Seasonal Fruit & Produce • Check our website for hours.

TOURS AND HIKING

Great place for family and company outings.

FARMSTAND OPENS LATE AUGUST

Check our Facebook or webpage for hours.




Sholan Farms is owned by the City and operated by the Friends, a 501(c)3 volunteer organization.
Volunteer Opportunities – Throughout the year; pruning, planting, general farm work, office work and more.



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

Town of Townsend

272 Main Street, 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.

The Winchendon School



12 Ash Street, Winchendon
978-297-1223   

winchendon.org

A great educational High School experience awaits you with campuses in MA and NYC.

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.

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.

High Ridge Harmony Farm

83 Overlook Road, Westminster
978-874-1261

highridgeharmonyfarm.com 

High Ridge Harmony Farm provides animal-assisted healing and wellness services, offering a peaceful environment for personal growth and well-being.



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  

inthemeadowalpacos.com

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

Lanni Orchards

294 Chase Rd., Lunenburg
978-582-6246

lanniorchards.com 

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

Meadowbrook Orchards


209 Chase 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.


Sholan Farms

1125 Pleasant St., Leominster
978-840-3276

sholanfarms.com 

The last working apple orchard in Johnny Appleseed birthplace, offers walking-hiking trails, picnic area, cross-country skiing, U-Pick fruits and Christmas trees.




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

lanchancefurniture.com 

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

GOLF**Gardner Municipal Golf Course**

152 Eaton St., Gardner
978-632-9703

Gardnergolfcourse.com  

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

Settlers Crossing Golf Course




994 Northfield Rd., Lunenburg
978-582-6694

settlersgolf.com  

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

HEALTH CARE**Convenient MD**

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

convenientmd.com   

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

UMass Memorial - Health Alliance Clinton

60 Hospital Rd., Leominster
978-466-2000

healthalliance.com   

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

LODGING**Boxborough Regency**

242 Adams Place, Boxborough
978-263-8701

boxbororegency.com  

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

Chocksett Inn

59 Laurelwood Rd., Sterling
978-422-3355

chocksettinn.com   

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

Colonial Hotel




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

colonial-hotel.com  

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

Courtyard by Marriott Boston Littleton

102 Constitution Avenue, Littleton
978-440-5040

marriott.com/en-us/hotels/bosl-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

99 Erdman Way, Leominster
978-534-9000  

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

Great Wolf Lodge

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

greatwolf.com/newengland

Massive 84-degree indoor waterpark. Battle a dragon while playing MagiQuest, challenge the climbing wall or play a round of putt-putt golf.

Howarth House Bed & Breakfast

81 Ross Street, Fitchburg
978-342-2851  

howarthhouse.com

Howarth House Bed and Breakfast provides a serene escape with 5-star accommodations nestled on three acres of scenic beauty.

The Groton Inn


128 Main St., Groton
978-448-6600

thegrotoninn.com 

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

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.



Fort Devens Museum

94 Jackson Road, 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.

The Icon Museum and Study Center

203 Union St., Clinton
978-598-5000  

iconmuseum.org

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

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill

11 French Drive, Boylston
508-869-6111

www.nebg.org   

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

RB Racing Museum

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

Ronbouchardautostores.com/
rb-racing-museum.html

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

RECREATION

Cornerstone Ranch

29 Dowds Ln., Princeton

cornerstoneranch.org   

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

Fitchburg Heroes Pro Football




Fitchburg

702-265-9842 | fitchburgheroes.com

Fitchburg Heroes Pro Football is committed to delivering high-energy games that ignite the passion of football fans.

Freedom's Way National Heritage Area

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


freedomsway.org   

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

FunStuf Party Place

791 Water St., Fitchburg

978-342-5000

funstufpartyplace.com 

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

Your next quaint New England cottage is in Truro



TRURO BEACH cottages



INFINITY



PROPERTY RESTORATION

Emergency Services | Water Damage Restoration
Fire Damage Restoration | Mold Remediation
Board Up Services | Biohazard Cleanup

25+ years of experience with disaster recovery

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www.InfinityPropertyRestoration.com

80 Dealers • Reproductions West Village Antiques

445 Main Street
West Townsend, MA
(Entrance in rear)
Corner of Rt. 119 & Canal Street (NH Rt. 124)
Phone (978) 597-0332
Fax (978) 523-7107
E-mail: hobartvillage@gmail.com
Open 6 days 10 - 5 pm,
Closed Tuesday

hobartvillage.com



USED FURNITURE

NEW FURNITURE

- OAK FURNITURE
- COUNTRY FURNITURE
- LAMPS • GIFTS
- ACCESSORIES



Groton Hill Music Center

122 Old Ayer Road, Groton
978-486-95214

grotonhill.org

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

Launch Trampoline Park

118 Commercial Rd., Leominster
978-237-5600

Launchtrampolinepark.com/Leominster

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

MEM Dance Theatre

50 Leominster Road, Suite 8, Sterling
978-422-6989

memdancetheatre.com

Offering dance classes and performances, fostering artistic expression and cultural appreciation through a variety of dance styles.

Nashoba Paddler, LLC

398 West Main St., Groton
978-448-8699

nashobapaddler.com

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

Oak Hill Country Club

840 Oak Hill Rd., Fitchburg
978-342-2717

oakhillcc.org

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

Pickle-It

471 Lancaster Street, Leominster
978-514-3177

pickleitclub.com

Pickle-It Pickleball Club features 9 indoor courts and a golf simulator, providing opportunities for open play, leagues, lessons, and more.

RC Excitement

208 Bemis Rd., Fitchburg
978-342-3374

RCexcitement.com

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

Vitality Kickboxing

41 Main Street, Ashburnham
978-883-4059

vitalitykickboxing.com

Vitality Kickboxing offers high-energy kickboxing classes designed to boost fitness, confidence, and overall wellness.

Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary

113 Goodnow Rd., Princeton
978-464-2712

massaudubon.org/wachusett

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

Wachusett Mountain Ski Area

499 Mountain Rd., Princeton
978-464-2300

wachusett.com

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

Winchendon History and Cultural Center

151 Front St., Winchendon
978-297-2142

winchendonhistoricalsociety.org

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

Worcester Railers HC

105 Commercial St., Worcester
508-365-1756

railershc.com

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

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

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

Cherry Hill Ice Cream

826 Leominster Rd., Lunenburg
978-582-7955

53 Main St., Rte 119, Townsend

978-597-0011

cherryhill-icecream.com

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

Dairy Queen

18 Sack Boulevard, Leominster
978 798-1053

www.dairyqueen.com/en-us/locations/ma/leominster/18-sack-boulevard/15819/

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

Delicious Dips

94 Franklin Road, Fitchburg
978-516-6124

deliciousdipsbpaige.com

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

Dutch Kitchen Bake Shop & Deli

12 John Fitch Hwy, Fitchburg
978-345-1393

www.dutchkitchenbakeshop.com

Everything served is always fresh-made and traditional, with only the highest quality ingredients.

Gold Bowl

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

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

Identity Coffee Lab

35 Main Street, Fitchburg
identitycoffee.com

Explore our collection of rare coffee blends and awaken your senses with coffees from around the globe.

Ikiaremy Sweets

314 Central Street, Winchendon
978-660-8091

ikiaremysweets.com

We serve authentic Puerto Rican cuisine with takeout favorites like pork and rice, empanadillas, and alcapurrias, alongside a variety of desserts and custom cupcakes.

Il Forno Restaurant

494 Electric Ave., Lunenburg
978-345-2511

il-forno.com

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

Kimball Farm in Lancaster

1543 Lunenburg Rd., (Rte 70), Lancaster
978-534-9800

kimballfarm.com

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

Legends Bar & Grille

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

legendsbarandgrille.com

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

Main Street Gift and Café

40 Main St., Leominster
978-534-5090

mainstreetgiftandcafe.com

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

Mamajuana Restaurant

423 Main Street, Fitchburg
978-343-5719

Freshly made Dominican cuisine located in downtown Fitchburg. Come and sample a taste of the islands.

Moon Hill Brewing and Gardner Ale House

74 Parker St., Gardner
978-669-0122

gardnerale.com

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

Mountainside Bakery & Café

213 Mountain Road, Princeton
978-464-0300

We specialize in locally sourced ingredients, handmade pastries, hearty lunches and dinners, all complemented by a full-service cocktail bar.

Old Mill Restaurant & Country Store

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

1761oldmill.com

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

The Pauper's Pantry

695 Main Street, Fitchburg
978-660-2314

finickyforkcatering.com

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As Massachusetts prepares to commemorate the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution in 2025-2026, North Central Massachusetts stands as a testament to revolutionary spirit that extends far beyond the battlefields of independence. From our thriving agricultural heritage and vibrant cultural scene to our pioneering manufacturing legacy and booming business innovation, our region continues to revolutionize and reimagine what's possible. Here, the spirit of independence that sparked a nation lives on in every orchard, factory floor, and cultural center across our communities.

Massachusetts 250 will commemorate the many battles across the state that led to America's independence. Experience the birthplace of American Liberty, where history was made, and the future was forged. In Massachusetts, we are embracing our history, the untold and little-known stories; we are celebrating our independence and innovations from the past 250 years. Join communities statewide as the state commemorates big events and untold stories and

celebrate the revolutions still to come

Today, that revolutionary spirit burns brighter than ever in North Central Massachusetts, where we're writing new chapters in our region's remarkable story.

A “Tourism Revolution” has erupted in North Central Massachusetts

Many of the state's most popular tourist attractions and towns are right here in North Central Massachusetts, a region known for its natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities. Wachusett Mountain Ski Area has grown into one of New England's premier ski resorts. Newer attractions like Great Wolf New England, Davis Farmland & Mega Maze and Groton Hill Music Center attract thousands of visitors to the region each year. Tourism has become a major economic engine for the region. The Johnny Appleseed Visitors Center on Route 2 in Lancaster welcomes more than 165,000 visitors to the region each year. It opened in 1997 in partnership with Mass Highway. Its opening was a product of

Cont. on page 44

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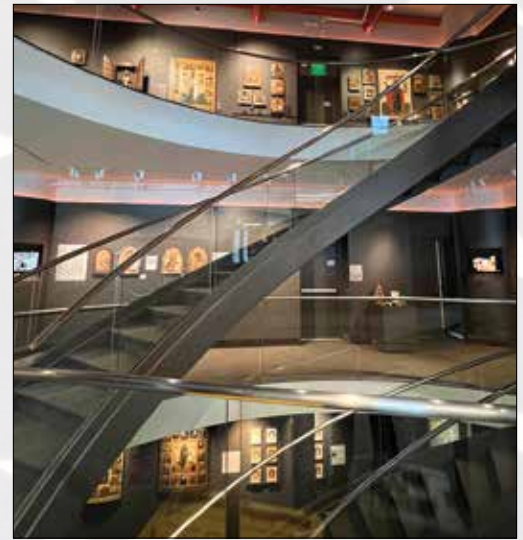
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the Chamber's economic development master plan launched in 1991 and has become a model for visitor information centers across the Commonwealth. The region's numerous walking, hiking, and bike trails offer amazing views of the leaves in fall as well as all year long. More recently North Central Mass has also become home to some of the state's most popular amateur sports venues. Since its founding in 1994, Visit North Central Massachusetts has successfully branded the region and grown tourism's economic impact. The industry expanded dramatically from 2004 to 2023: jobs increased from 286 to over 4,300, while wages grew from \$2 million to \$117.3 million. Tourism's economic footprint also surged — from \$14.3 million in visitor spending in 2004 to over \$496.9 million in direct visitor spending and \$8.2 million in local tax revenues by 2023.

The "Agricultural Revolution" was born in North Central Massachusetts!

North Central Massachusetts is home to the highest concentration of farms and orchards in the state. Nearly 20 active farms and orchards dot the landscape offering a wide variety of home grown, farm-to-table and pick-your-own products. North Central Mass, probably best known for its apples, has seen tremendous growth in agritourism



Hollis Hills Farm (left), Icon Museum and Study Center in Clinton (right).

"The business revolution in North Central Massachusetts has been driven by innovation, strategic investments and an ability to adapt to shifting economic landscapes."

and agricultural events like the Johnny Appleseed Festival in Leominster and Applefest at Wachusett Mountain. It is the birthplace of Johnny Appleseed! In fact, Johnny's 250th birthday coincides with the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. Born in Leominster, Johnny was an early conservationist who planted numerous orchards as settlers moved west helping to establish communities and a rugged crop for cider.

A "Cultural Revolution" is growing in North Central Massachusetts

North Central Massachusetts is home to some of the state's most

iconic cultural attractions and is rich with historic and cultural assets. The region features cultural gems like Fitchburg Art Museum, the Icon Museum, Fort Devens Museum, Fruitland Museum and the NE Botanical Garden at Tower Hill and other small specialty museums and galleries which anchor the area's Cultural Revolution. More than a half dozen performing arts centers enrich the North Central Mass landscape — led by the world-class Groton Hill Music Center. Numerous town historical societies and robust libraries are also located through our region's 27 towns and communities. A culinary renaissance is also occurring with a variety of restaurants

featuring international cuisines and scores of food festivals and farmer's markets.

The "Manufacturing Revolution" had its roots in North Central Massachusetts

From the "Plastics Capital of the World" to "Toy Town" to "Chair City", North Central Massachusetts has a huge heritage as a manufacturing and industrial hub.

The region has a rich history in manufacturing, including the birthplace of the American plastics industry in Leominster. The area is home to more than 430 manufacturers, including dozens of multinational corporations. Companies range from the world class plastics industry cluster of more than 140 companies — the largest in the Northeast — to pharmaceuticals to photonics and paper, as well as biomedical devices. North Central Massachusetts is unique



Gardner's Big Chair in Gardner (left), Devens Regional Enterprise Zone is leading business development in North Central MA (right).

among workforce areas in the state in that it has double the number of manufacturing jobs as a percentage of the private labor force. Fully one-third of all private wages paid in the region are from manufacturing jobs. From a flourishing comb industry to the invention of Tupperware and the creation of the Plastic Lawn Flamingo, Leominster molded itself into the Pioneer Plastics City. Gardner earned its seat in history as Chair City producing in excess 1.2 million chairs annually at its manufacturing peak. In addition to its reputation as Toy Town, Winchendon was home to the first successful wood thickness planer, invented by Baxter Whitney. Fitchburg's

manufacturing history spans a variety of industries over the years including steam engines, world class bicycles, firearms, and paper. Clinton's rich history as a mill town starting with the invention of the Bigelow Loom for carpets and heavy textiles. This is why we say that North Central Massachusetts is "Where Manufacturing Matters."

A "Business Revolution" is Booming in North Central Massachusetts!

A strong and stable business base exists here in North Central Massachusetts, as well as rapidly growing industrial/commercial areas such as Devens

Business Park. As home to the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone – our region features one of the only business development communities in the state. The Zone is a world-class destination for companies in leading industries like technology, advanced manufacturing and life sciences. The business revolution in North Central Massachusetts has been driven by innovation, strategic investments and an ability to adapt to shifting economic landscapes. Affordable real estate in the region makes it attractive for startups and entrepreneurs looking to establish roots. Institutions like Fitchburg State University and Mount Wachusett

Community College are collaborating with local businesses to provide workforce training. Infrastructure projects such as improvements to Route 2 and easy access to the MBTA Commuter Rail from Boston make the region more appealing for logistics and transportation.

North Central Massachusetts exemplifies what it means to blend history and progress. Its revolutionary nature lies in its ability to adapt modern challenges while preserving its rich traditions and identity. It continues to inspire growth, creativity and unity, making it a model for other regions throughout the state. §



GrotonFest Fall crowd enjoying live music and dance performances throughout the event.

Celebrating Community: The Evolution of GrotonFest

by **Logan McFadden**

Showing the town's vibrant local artisans, businesses, and community spirit, the GrotonFest family of events has become a cherished tradition. Over the past decade, the festivals have expanded from a single autumn gathering to three seasonal celebrations — fall, winter, and spring — bringing together thousands of residents and visitors.

A Brief History

GrotonFest began in 1979 as a fall festival and has recently celebrated its forty-fifth anniversary. The Groton Business Association, GBA, acquired the festival from

Jane Bouvier in 2017, retaining the original coordinating team to maintain the festival's community-focused mission. GrotonFest expanded in 2022 to include a winter event and further broadened its offerings in 2024 with a spring festival.

In 2024 alone, more than twenty thousand people attended GrotonFest, thus underscoring the importance of the gatherings in fostering community connections, particularly in the wake of the pandemic.

Notable Locations and Sponsors: GrotonFest Fall

With sponsor banners prominently displayed, the

Laurence W. Gay American Legion Post 55 Hall anchors GrotonFest Fall. The red building, featured in many promotional photos, serves as a focal point for the festival. The event takes place in Legion Common and transforms the field into a lively marketplace of local vendors, artisans, and entertainers.

GrotonFest Winter

The winter festival takes place on the first Saturday of December at multiple locations, including the Groton Inn's Forge and Vine restaurant and the Prescott Community Center. Groton Public Library joined the lineup to offer additional vendor space and



The Groton Fire Department Sparky the fire dog high-fiving all his fans during GrotonFest Fall (left), crowds walk through the vendor booths at GrotonFest Spring (right).

performances. Inclusion of Glorie Dayz provides attendees with a fantastic photo opportunity, enhancing the festive atmosphere.

GrotonFest Spring-Into-Summer

The spring event occurs on the back lawn of Prescott Community Center and marks a celebratory transition into the warmer months. This festival, too, draws a significant crowd, contributing to the overall growth of GrotonFest.

Sponsorship Support

Dedicated sponsors bolster the success of GrotonFest.

Groton Inn stands out as a vital partner, particularly for GrotonFest Winter.

Longtime supporters such as Middlesex Savings Bank, Rollstone Bank & Trust, Commissioners of the Trust Fund, and EXIT Assurance Realty have played crucial roles in sustaining the festivals through financial backing and community engagement.

Voices from the Community

Several key figures in the Groton Business Association have shared their insights on the evolution of GrotonFest:

On History

Jeff Gordon, GBA president, reflected, I actually grew up right on School Street, where GrotonFest Fall has been

hosted for the majority of its forty-five years. I loved that every fall our whole community came together to showcase the businesses and artisans. I am honored to have been a part of it on a larger scale for almost ten years now.

On Growth

Lynne Burnmeister, event coordinator for GrotonFest Winter and Spring, noted the need for community connection postpandemic. "After COVID," she said, we felt the world was yearning for more opportunities to gather and celebrate. We saw a chance to enhance our businesses and fill the desire for family-friendly activities with two additional festivals. Dominique Henderson, entertainment

and marketing coordinator, echoed the sentiment. "After COVID," he said we saw the desire from our community to support as many organizations as possible. With GrotonFest Winter expanding throughout downtown Groton, we encourage all Main Street businesses to have vendors, live music, food, and performances."

Looking Ahead

As GrotonFest enters its forty-fifth year, it remains a testament to the power of community and the joy of celebration, promising many more years of growth and connection for the town of Groton.

To attend this year's GrotonFest, visit grotonfest.com for details. §

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Tara Sellios, *Ascendo* (detail), ink jet print, 2023. Courtesy of the Artist.

Tara Sellios | Ask Now the Beasts

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