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Friday, January 21, 2022

Bay Path nursing students bring light on year's longest night

Photo Courtesy

The PN Class of 2022 at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy observed the winter solstice and brought some honor to the year's longest night with the in-person Luminary Walk of Hope, Dec. 21.

CHARLTON — The PN Class of 2022 at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy observed the winter solstice and brought some honor to the year's longest night with the in-person Luminary Walk of Hope, Dec. 21. Traditionally, the winter solstice has been an important moment for ancient cultures related to their dependence on the sun for their survival. To everyone across the Southern Hemisphere, the North Pole shifts almost directly facing the sun bringing the longest day of the year.

Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN Academy Director received the luminary kits from Meghan O'Neil, manager, The Longest Day, Alzheimer's Association Massachusetts/New Hampshire. Bolandrina said, "We are excited to participate and be a part of the journey from The Longest Night to The Longest Day. The grounds at Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School served as a beautiful setting for our luminary walk of hope."

The PN Class of 2022 was joined by PN faculty, Dr. Ana Olivar, Sarah Watson, MSN, RN and Silvia Medina, MSN, RN. Classmates and now friends, Melanie Pariseau of Ware, Darcey Howe of Palmer, and Rebecca Lorre of Oxford helped diminish the darkness and illuminate a path towards a world without Alzheimer's and other dementia.

The Luminary Walk of Hope included other PN students verbalizing who they are honoring as they light their candle. Photos and a video were taken and have been shared on social media via Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy's Facebook Page, https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.2820886974870205&type=3

About Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy

Bay Path Practical Nursing

Please Read ***HOPE,*** *page* ***A2***

Charlton reinstates mask mandate for town buildings

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

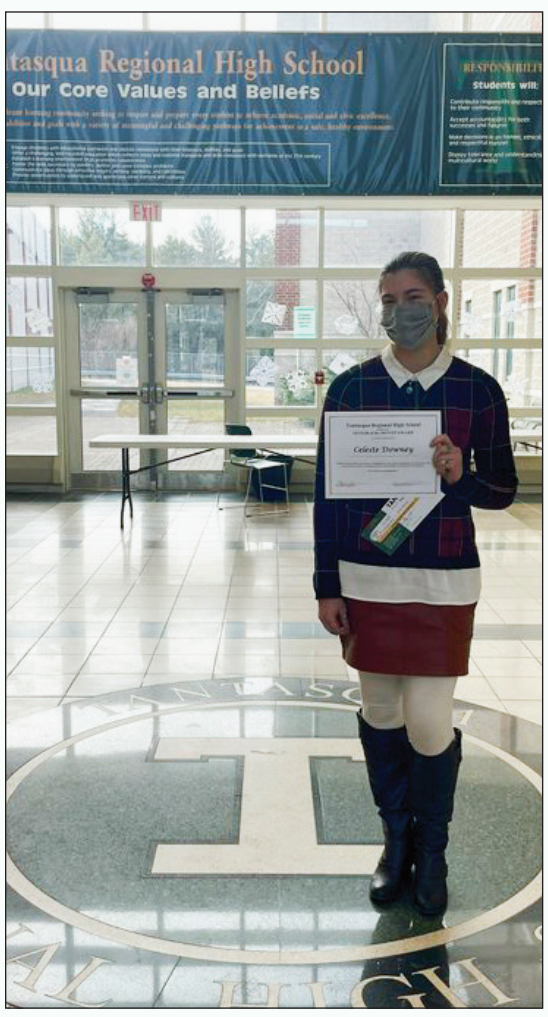
CHARLTON – With Charlton recently setting record highs for new COVID cases, town officials have reissued protocols requiring masks to be worn in town buildings but stopped short of requiring masks elsewhere in town.

As the Omicron variant continues to surge nationwide and the flu season in full swing Charlton's Board of Health and Town Administrator jointly agreed to once again require that both citizens and employees wear masks while inside town facilities including the town hall and library. Charlton Health Director James Philbrook said that the move was to ensure the safety and health of town employees as many town workers have been forced into quarantine due to illness or exposure and the CDC's recently revised guidelines allowing decreased quarantine length of only five days. While those returning to work after that time are required to be masked, Philbrook said this still provides greater potential risk for exposure that could make that situation even worse.

"What that did was certainly shorten the time frame, but also present the fact that you could end up losing whole departments because you could still be contagious up to a certain number of days. A lot of towns decided to go with a mask mandate for the entire town. Charlton's approach was we're just trying to keep staffing and we have half our staff at the town hall either out sick or having issues. It is flu season, so we understand there are other things going on as well," said Philbrook. "The Board of Health, along with Town Administrator Andrew Golas, voted that we felt it wasn't too much to ask that people who

Please Read ***MANDATE,*** *page* ***A3***

STANDOUT SENIORS



Photos Courtesy

Celeste Downey and Shea Coleman have been recognized as the Seniors of the Month for January at Tantasqua Regional High School. Photos courtesy of Principal Leigh Joseph's Twitter feed.

Companies targeting summer opening for retail cannabis shop

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – Things are starting to take shape, literally and figuratively, at the soon-to-be cannabis facility on Sturbridge Road. Officials close to the project met with selectmen at a Jan. 11 meeting confirming that work on the retail portion of the facility is expected to be completed this year with a potential opening this summer.

Four Score Holding, LLC has been hard at work the past few years establishing a cannabis cultivation, production and retail facility at 144 Sturbridge Rd. In mid-2021, the company shifted ownership of the business to Aspen Blue, LLC but remains involved in the process as work continues to prepare the different parts of the facility for their respective uses. Representatives of both Four Score and Aspen Blue attended a Zoom meeting with selectmen where Daniel Glissman, the representing attorney on the project for both groups, provided an update on the project's status.

"The construction is moving along quite well. There's a lot of work going on there right now both interior and exterior. Really the whole team is very excited to be making all of this progress and working towards getting the facility open and operational," Glissman said. "There's work going on building-wide, but obviously the focus is on the retail component with the intention still to get the retail storefront open and operational first following with the cultivation and production components."

The retail component of the project is expected to be completed by the end of February or March depending on order backups for the material, but there will still be an extensive process before the store can officially open. Once the retail component in complete they will move for a certificate of occupancy before approaching the state's Cannabis Control Commission who will perform a series of site reviews to ensure the facility meets their expectations before opening. After those processes are complete and Four Score and Aspen Blue receive a commence operations letter, they will go before the Board of Selectmen to finalize and opening day.

"We also have a requirement in the Planning Board special permits to come to (the selectmen) to put some no parking signs across the street from the facility so we don't have parking issues, but we don't anticipate as much traffic as we saw in the earlier years of cannabis in Massachusetts. There are approximately 50 parking spaces on site, so I feel we'll be able to accommodate even the opening day rush. We're really excited to be moving forward anticipating May or June in a perfect scenario," said Glissman.

Please Read ***CANNABIS,*** *page* ***A4***

Sturbridge Historical Society meets Jan. 27

STURBRIDGE — The Sturbridge Historical Society meeting will be held on Thursday, Jan. 27 at The Publick House Historical Inn on Sturbridge Common. Our speaker will be Stan Komor.

Komor is the Commanding Officer of USS Constitution's 1812 Marine Guard, and will be speaking about the history of The USS Constitution "Old Ironsides." His unit represents US Marine Corps of the early 19th century for the USS Constitution and educates the active duty navy crew and public about marines of the period, and are volunteer members of the USS Constitution's crew.

Komor is a former active duty US Marine which is where he gained his love of sea service history. Through his work with historic Marine Education Inc, the parent organization of the 1812 Marine Guard, he has become an expert on the USS Constitution and The Marine Corps of The War of 1812ar of 1812 era.

Historical Society meetings are free of charge with dessert and meeting room provided by Michael Glick, Publick House Innkeeper. Our sincere thanks go out to Mr. Glick.

Meetings are held September through May on the fourth Thursday of the month except November and December. November meeting is held the first Thursday in December.

All meetings start at 7 p.m. Public is welcome.

Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts kicks off 2022 Girl Scout Cookie season

WORCESTER—Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts kicks off the 2022 Girl Scout Cookie Season Friday, Jan. 14, when consumers can support local Girl Scout entrepreneurs by purchasing their favorite cookies. Girl Scouts are now selling all of your favorites including Thin Mints®, Samoas®, Tagalongs®and the new Adventurefuls – a brownie and caramel taste adventure.

This season, Girl Scouts are again selling cookies in creative, socially distant, and contact-free ways to keep themselves and their customers safe during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Many Girl Scouts will run outdoor cookie booths that follow local, state, and CDC guidelines while still getting everyone's favorite cookies to their customers. If you know a Girl Scout, ask how she's selling cookies via the Digital Cookie online platform for direct shipment or local delivery. And beginning February 18, consumers can enter their zip code to purchase cookies online from a local troop for direct shipment or donation to local causes.

Every Girl Scout Cookie purchase fuels local Girl Scouts' adventures throughout the year: exploring what interests them, discovering their passions, and taking action on issues they care about. Whether they're using their STEM skills to solve a problem on their robotics team, learning how to safely navigate the world of social media, having a courageous outdoor experience, or creating Little Free Libraries and food pantries, Girl Scouts build a better future for themselves and the world. And through the Girl Scout Cookie Program, including by earning new Cookie Business badges, girls get a taste of being entrepreneurs and learn important online and offline business skills that set them up for success in life.

To purchase Girl Scout Cookies this season:

· If you know a registered Girl Scout, reach out to her to find out how she's selling cookies in ways that meet local, state, and CDC safety protocols, including via the Digital Cookie online platform.

· If you don't know a Girl Scout, visit www.girlscoutcookies.org, text COOKIES to 59618*, or use the official Girl Scout Cookie Finder app for free on iOS or Android devices to find socially distant or contact-free cookie booths if they are available in your area.

· Beginning Feb. 18, enter your zip code into the Girl Scout Cookie Finder at www.girlscoutcookies.org to purchase from a local Girl Scout troop online for shipment to your door or to donate cookies to local causes.

*message frequency varies. See Privacy Policy

About Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts

Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts serves over 4,500 girls in grades K through 12 with the strong support of 3,000 adult volunteers in 186 towns and cities in central and western Massachusetts. Girl Scouts' mission is to build girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place. Since 1912, girls have explored new fields of knowledge, learned valuable skills, and developed strong core values through Girl Scouts. Today, Girl Scouts is, as it always has been, the organization best positioned to help girls develop important leadership skills they need to become successful adults.

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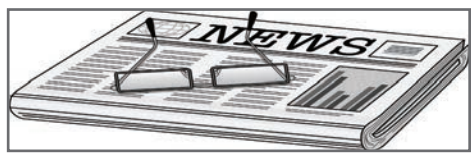

HOPE

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Academy offers a 40-week, (10-month), full-time, Monday through Friday, evening program. The program begins mid-August and is completed in late June. Graduates receive a Practical Nursing Certificate and are eligible to take the NCLEX-PN licensure exam. The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy is fully approved by the: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Human Services of Public Health Board of Registration in Nursing 239 Causeway Street Boston, MA 02114 617-973-0800 www.mass.gov/dph/boards/rn The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy is accredited by the: Council on Occupational Education 840 Roswell Road Building 300, Suite 325 Atlanta, GA 30350 Telephone: 800-917-2081 www.council.org Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School is fully accredited by the: New England Association of Schools and Colleges 209 Burlington Rd, Suite 201 Bedford, MA, 01730-1433 781-271-0022 www.neasc.org

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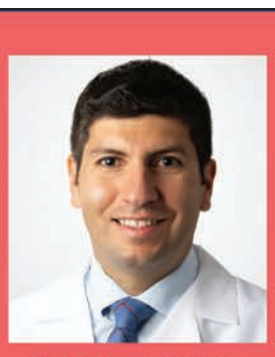
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Practical Nursing students receive training grant from MassHire Worcester Career Center

Photo Courtesy

MassHire Worcester Career Center announced the awarding of $8,000 in training grants for each Bay Path RVTHS Practical Nursing Academy students Sarah Garcia of Charlton and Rebecca Lorre of Oxford.

CHARLTON — MassHire Worcester Career Center announced the awarding of $8,000 in training grants for each Bay Path RVTHS Practical Nursing Academy students Sarah Garcia of Charlton and Rebecca Lorre of Oxford.

Garcia is an energetic and compassionate Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) whose knowledge is based on the accumulation of close to ten years of hands-on experience as a personal care attendant, home health aide, and CNA. She obtained her nursing assistant certification through the American Red Cross in 2011. Most recently she completed a course on domestic violence. Garcia is a member of the UNICEF Club, helping raise funds and spread awareness for children's advocacy. She participated in the recent Walk to end Alzheimer's in Worcester and the Out of the Darkness Walk in Natick for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP).

Lorre is an experienced school bus driver and holds a current CDL. She was with Durham School Services of Oxford. She holds an associate degree in communications from Becker College. Lorre is an officer of the UNICEF Club, spearheading fundraising activities and spreading awareness for children's advocacy. Recently, Lorre joined the PN Class of 2022 Mock Code Team (MCT). The MCT is a simulation-based interprofessional team training to ensure high quality, safe patient care during code scenarios. Initiated in 2017, the Mock Code Day Program is a collaborative effort between faculty and communities of interest (volunteer nurses, alumni, EMTs, and Paramedics) to enhance communication and care in emergencies by practical nurses. The Mock Code Day Program consists of small-group simulation-based sessions organized by faculty and engages practical nursing students in a variety of roles. The program is unique because of its interprofessional nature and scheduled sessions.

As practical nursing students at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, both Garcia and Lorre have completed their Mental Health First Aid certification and Dementia Care certification. Both have also completed COVID-19 Contact Tracing through Coursera and Johns Hopkins University.

"We're grateful for the continued support of the MassHire Worcester Career Center," said Bay Path RVTHS Practical Nursing Academy Director, Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN. "MassHire helps many of our practical nursing students consistently. The grant will help them through the ten months of rigorous training and ensure that they stay motivated and inspired to give their best."

Training grant funds encourage economic growth in the state and allows for additional training for workforce. The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, and Commonwealth Corporation encourage businesses to address workforce training needs. Interested parties are encouraged to visit www.commcorp.org/wtfp to learn more.

About Bay Path RVTHS Practical Nursing Academy

Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy offers a 40-week, (10-month), full-time, Monday through Friday, evening program. The program begins mid-August and is completed in late June. Graduates receive a Practical Nursing Certificate and are eligible to take the NCLEX-PN licensure exam. The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy is fully approved by the: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Human Services of Public Health Board of Registration in Nursing 239 Causeway Street Boston, MA 02114 617-973-0800 www.mass.gov/dph/boards/rn The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy is accredited by the: Council on Occupational Education 840 Roswell Road Building 300, Suite 325 Atlanta, GA 30350 Telephone: 800-917-2081 www.council.org Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School is fully accredited by the: New England Association of Schools and Colleges 209 Burlington Rd, Suite 201, Bedford, MA, 01730-1433 781-271-0022 www.neasc.org.

DA's office offers mini grants for safe post-prom and post-graduation celebrations

REGION – Worcester County District Attorney Joseph Early, Jr., invites local schools and parent groups to apply for mini grants to support post-prom and post-graduation safety.

The grants will fund various events designed to keep local students safe and prevent drunken driving crashes following celebratory events. The spring months are often the most dangerous time on the roads for high school students, and DA Early is committed to promoting safe functions.

"This time of year is supposed to be a celebration for students and their families, but too often we see tragedies," Early said. "We're hoping these grants will assist more schools in offering safe options for students."

Safe post-prom events, organized and overseen by adults, offer drug-free and alcohol-free alternatives to high-risk activities that often follow end of the year celebrations for high school students.

COVID-19 has made planning difficult for proms and other celebrations this spring, but the DA's office is proceeding with grant opportunities.

"While none of us know what the status of school activities will be in the spring of 2022 due to the COVID pandemic, we are cautiously optimistic and accepting applications for funding requests," Early said. "Some celebrations looked different in 2021, but we were proud to continue supporting these efforts and providing students with the fun and safe events they deserve."

This is the fourth year the DA's office has offered grants thanks to the support of the Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance Drunk Driving Trust Fund. Prior to that, Early supported local post-prom and post-graduation events at high schools across the county through his drug forfeiture funding.

Schools and parent groups can apply for these grants to either support existing events or to assist in establishing new events. Applications for funding requests are due by Feb. 17.

To request a grant application, contact Ellen Miller at ellen.miller@mass.gov.

MANDATE

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enter the town hall wear a mask, especially just until the end of January. That will at least help us keep people safe and at work."

Philbrook noted that there have been issues with the availability and speed of PCR tests, the most dependable tests in determining a positive COVID diagnosis, and that sometimes people don't receive their results until after the shortened quarantine time is over. Charlton reached record numbers of COVID cases in January according to Philbrook which doesn't count the number of people who haven't reported their positive home tests or facilities like daycares and the Overlook. With that in mind officials felt it was proper to at least issue the mask mandates in town buildings.

"We always do recommend that you get vaccinated for your safety and choose wisely when you go to parties and large settings. That's what we're looking at and Charlton doesn't have as overly aggressive of a mask mandate outside of the town hall buildings, but the Board of Health has mandated that all town buildings will require all visitors and staff to wear a mask," said Philbrook.

Charlton was also one of many towns who participated in a recent call with Harrington HealthCare where President and CEO Ed Moore recommended towns initiate universal mask mandates. Charlton was one of numerous communities that decided not to issue new town-wide mask requirements. Philbrook said that Harrington has proven to be a great partner for them during the pandemic and while they decided not to follow Moore's recommendation to the letter, they understand the reasoning behind it.

"I think Ed Moore's picture on the whole thing was they appreciate people helping them, but they can't do all the testing and vaccinations. The facility is too small. What they're trying to do is keep people out of the hospital that don't need to be there. He felt that masking should be mandated. A lot of the residents when they arrive at Harrington wait a long time because they triage down. If you're there for COVID-like symptoms it becomes very cumbersome for them to put you in a negative pressure room, tie up that room and then they have no beds," said Philbrook. "Ed Moore has the public's health and safety in mind as do we. They're in a crisis situation with beds and I think he was just asking for local Boards of Health to try and keep people out of the hospital who may be safer if they wore a mask."

Charlton's town building mask mandate will be in effect at least through January. The Board of Health will reassess the situation at this first meeting in February.

Villager Newspapers

Accuracy Watch

The Villager is committed to accuracy in all its news reports. Although numerous safeguards are in place to ensure accurate reporting, mistakes can occur.

Confirmed fact errors will be corrected at the top right hand corner of page 3 in a timely manner.

If you find a mistake, email news@stonebridgepress.news or call (508) 909-4106 during normal business hours. During non-business hours, leave a message in the editor's voice mailbox. The editor will return your phone call.

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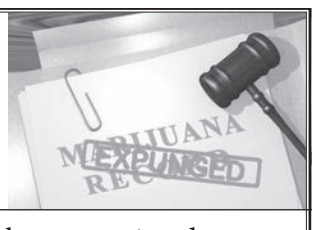

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Baker administration launches new tool for accessing digital vaccination record

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION – The Baker-Polito Administration recently unveiled a new way for residents to access their digital COVID-19 vaccine card and vaccination history.

Known as My Vax Records, the resource allows individuals who received their vaccinations in Massachusetts to access their own vaccination history and generate a digital COVID-19 vaccine card. This card will contain similar vaccination information to a paper CDC card.

Utilizing the SMART Health Card platform, digital vaccine cards generate a QR code that can be used to verify vaccination. State officials remind residents that they are not required to show proof of vaccination to enter public venues, but this tool will help residents who would like to access and produce a digital copy of their record.

To use the new tool, enter your name, date of birth, and mobile phone number or email address associated with your vaccine record. After creating a four-digit PIN, you will receive a link to your vaccine record that will open upon re-entry of the PIN.

"The electronic record shows the same information as a paper CDC vaccine card: name, date of birth, date of vaccinations, and vaccine manufacturer," read a statement released by Gov. Charlie Baker's office. "It also includes a QR code that makes these same details readable by a QR scanner, including smartphone apps."

Once the SMART Health Card is received, users are able to save the QR code to their phones or devices, such as the Apple Wallet. Users can then screenshot the information and save it to their phone's photos, or print out a copy for a paper record. The system follows national standards for security and privacy, officials said.

"This system provides an optional way that residents can access their vaccination information and a COVID-19 digital vaccine card," read the statement released by Baker's office. "This will provide residents with another tool to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination, should it be requested by businesses, local governments, or other entities."

The system leverages the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS), the official database used by healthcare providers across the state to record vaccination information. The system relies on hundreds of providers inputting demographic and health information.

"Some users may not be able to immediately find their record, or may find an incomplete record," the Governor's statement read. "Residents whose record cannot be found or is incomplete can either contact their healthcare provider or contact the MIIS team to update their records."

Massachusetts has worked on the technology with VCI, a voluntary coalition of public and private organizations which developed the open-source SMART Health Card framework in use by other states. The VCI coalition is dedicated to improving privacy and security of patient information, officials said.

My Vax Records is one of many options residents have to obtain their COVID-19 vaccination records. Pharmacies that administered the vaccine, as well as many healthcare providers, are also making SMART Health Cards available.

To access the new resource, visit www.MyVaxRecords.Mass.gov.

Local Assumption students named to University's Fall 2021 Dean's List

WORCESTER — Assumption University has announced those students who have been named to the Dean's List for the fall 2021 semester. Students named to the University's Dean's List must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 for a five-class, 15-credit semester to be included on the prestigious list, which is announced at the completion of the fall and spring semesters. Local students include:

Kyle Belmonte of Charlton, Class of 2022

Emily Gay of Uxbridge, Class of 2022

Sierra Grybowski of Charlton, Class of 2024

Nora Ilacqua of Charlton, Class of 2022

Breanna LaHair of Charlton, Class of 2022

Sean Morrissey of Uxbridge, Class of 2023

Emily Snay of Charlton, Class of 2022

Julianne Sutherland of Uxbridge, Class of 2023

Madison Baril of Fiskdale, Class of 2022

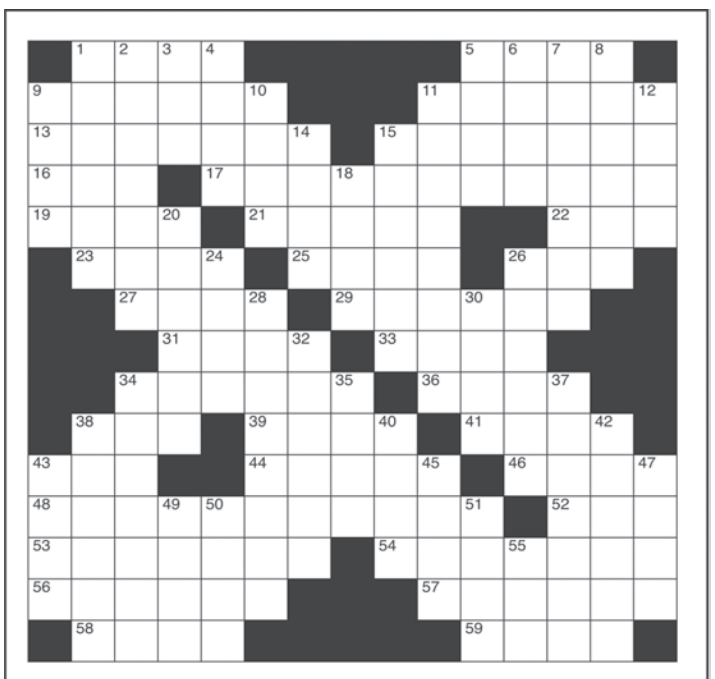
Liam Gore of Sturbridge, Class of 2024

"The University is proud of those students named to the Dean's List for the academic excellence they demonstrated in the classroom in their pursuit of a Catholic liberal education," said Assumption University President Francesco C. Cesareo, Ph.D. "Through their commitment to their studies during the fall semester, students named to the Dean's List have immersed themselves in their academic program as they are formed as individuals who will use the knowledge they have gained to live meaningful and purposeful lives and careers."

Assumption University provides students with a comprehensive, Catholic liberal arts experience through curricular and co-curricular programs, including internship opportunities, recreational activities, and more than 60 on-campus clubs and organizations. An Assumption education forms graduates both intellectually and spiritually, inspiring wonder and purpose as they discover their vocation.

For more information, visit assumption.edu.

Assumption University, founded in 1904 by the Augustinians of the Assumption, is New England's premier university for high-quality education, integrating career preparation and education of the whole person, drawing upon the best in the rich and centuries-long tradition of Catholic higher education. Assumption, located in Worcester, Massachusetts, seeks to provide students with a transformative education that forms graduates who possess critical intelligence, thoughtful citizenship, and compassionate service. The University offers 34 majors and 49 minors in the liberal arts, sciences, business, nursing and professional studies; as well as master's and continuing education degrees and professional certificate programs. For more information about Assumption University, please visit www.assumption.edu.



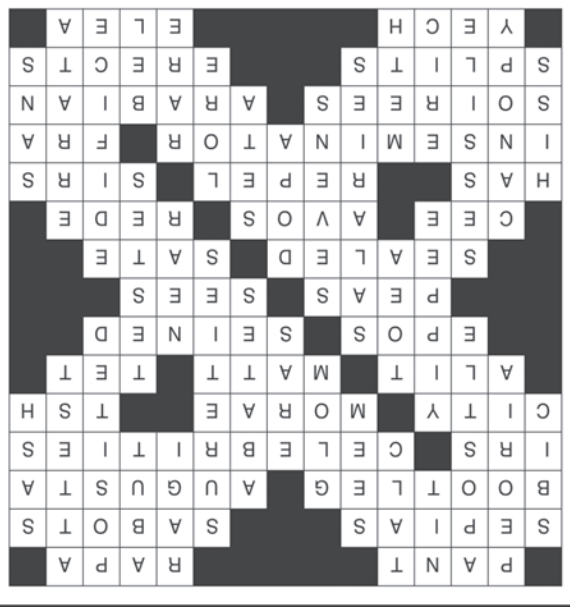
CLUES ACROSS

1. Breathe noisily
5. __ Nui, Easter Island
9. Reddish browns
11. Simple shoes
13. Produce alcohol illegally
15. Home to famed golf tournament
16. Tax collector
17. Famous people
19. Urban area
21. Units of syllable weight
22. Pituitary hormone (abbr.)
23. Dismounted
25. Actor Damon
26. Vietnamese offensive
27. Retail term
29. Netted
31. Partner to carrots
33. Witnesses
34. Caulked
36. Satisfy
38. R&B performer __ Lo
39. Monetary units of Macao
41. Give advice, explain
43. Possesses
44. Turn back
46. Gentlemen
48. One who fertilizes
52. Italian monk title (prefix)
53. Parties
54. Type of horse
56. Cuts in half
57. Raises
58. Expresses contempt or disgust
59. Ancient Italian-Greek colony

CLUES DOWN

1. Illinois city
2. One of the original disciples chosen by Christ
3. Young form of a louse
4. Type of powder
5. Finger millet
6. Share a common boundary
7. Assumed as a fact
8. Provide clear evidence of
9. Invests in little enterprises
10. A way to be
11. Monies given in support
12. Fashion accessory
14. Steal
15. Becomes less intense
18. Geological times
20. Hooray!
24. Monetary unit
26. Male reproductive organs
28. Earnings
30. Close by
32. Small integers
34. Fixed in place
35. Used to treat Parkinson's disease
37. Large, imposing building
38. A rooflike shelter
40. Stiff, hairlike structure
42. Print errors
43. To show disapproval
45. Body of traditions
47. Without
49. __ Clapton, musician
50. Dangerous illegal drug
51. Infrequent
55. Sound unit

PUZZLE SOLUTION



Real Estate Transactions

BRIMFIELD

$862,000, 116 Paige Hill Rd, Howlett Oliver L Est, and Barry, Richard C, to Xu, Weisheng, and Chou, Hongsong.

$667,000, 28 E Hill Rd, Escolas, Nicole, to Mormile, Jennifer E, and Biszko, Ted W.

$460,000, 80 Lyman Barnes Rd, Kifer, Mark E, and Kifer, Sandra J, to Mccabe, Daniel, and Mccabe, Barbara.

$217,000, 146 Wales Rd, Rubel, Everett C, to Patraw, Joshua A.

$140,000, 9 Crestwood Rd, Squires Richard L Jr Est, and Squires, Samantha A, to Dibaro, Paul, and Dibaro, Karen.

CHARLTON

$455,000, 13 A Vinton Rd, Paul, Steven R, to Dossantos, Shaina M, and Dossantos, Leandro M.

$434,900, 35 Hycrest Rd, Hycrest Road RT, and Shamsuddin, Khaja, to Walsh, Ryan M, and Walsh, Sadie E.

$390,600, 38 Hill Rd, Prop Soln RE& Contracting, to Andino, Jose.

$345,000, 185 Stafford St, Gaskill, Rodney A, and Gaskill, Sharon Y, to Thrush, Rebecca.

$290,000, 91 Southbridge Rd, Stone, Jennifer K, to Cummings, Noah.

$115,000, Muggett Hill Rd, Peterson FT, and Peterson, Robert F, to Albano, Anthony, and Klein, Catherine E.

STURBRIDGE

$634,238, 566 Route 15, Silver Tree Realty LLC, to Thamer, Thomas, and Thamer, Amanda.

$369,000, 12 Stoneybrook Dr, Curran, Katherine A, and Dimilia, Michael S, to Schnitzler, Eric, and Schnitzler, Irene.

CANNABIS

continued from page A1

With 20,000 square feet of space, about 4,000 will be utilized for retail and the other 16,000 being used for the phase-two cultivation and production operations.

Selectmen said they expect to hear an update from Four Score and Aspen Blue in June regardless of whether or not the retail was able to open as planned. Selectmen also moved to extend a termination deadline to allow time for the process to play out.

Villager Almanac

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Church Listings

- **Charlton Federated Church**, 64 Main St., 248-5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. www.fedchurchcharlton.org
- **Charlton Baptist Church,** 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488,www.charltonbaptist.org, Sunday worship 10 a.m.
- **Charlton City United Methodist,** 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org Sunday worship and Children's church 10am
- **St. Joseph's Church**, 10 H. Putnam Ext, 248-7862, www.stjosephscharlton.com, Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30 p.m., Sunday Mass 8 a.m., Sunday Family Mass 10 a.m., Sunday LifeTEEN Mass 5 p.m., Weekday Mass Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 a.m.
- **Hope Christian Fellowship,** 6 Haggerty Road, 248-5144
- **Assemblies of God Southern New England District Headquarters,** Route 20, 248-3771, snedag.org, Office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Living Word Church of Charlton,** 10 Main Street - Grange building 1st Floor, Charlton, Ma 01507, Pastor Craig Bellisario, (508) 233-8349 Sunday Service 10:00am. www.livingwordhcarlton.com info@livingwordcharlton.com
- **New Life Fellowship A/G, SNED Chapel,** 307 Sturbridge Road, Rt. 20, Charlton, MA, Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.
- **Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale-** 8 Maple St. Sturbridge, 774-304-1021 www.sturfed.org Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.

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Advocates seek bottle bill expansion

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

STURBRIDGE — A few dozen people took a half-hour online Thursday to explore a current proposal to expand the bottle bill.

As presenter Kirstie Pecci noted, two identical bills – S.2149 and H.3289 – call for increasing the deposit to 10 cents and widening the number of products it covers to include most commercially-available beverages except milk and those selling under 100,000 units per year. It adds "nip" bottles, juices, water, and beverages such as "a new kombucha or some nonsense kids are drinking that doesn't exist now," she said.

Pecci is senior attorney and zero waste project director for the Conservation Law Foundation, one of the bill's primary backers. Similar bills have been proposed since about 2009, and the Senate has passed two versions as amendments to other bills, but the House has never voted on one.

Co-sponsor Sen. Michelle Ciccolo credited CLF's "dogged perseverance" for getting the bill through a legislative joint subcommitee recently, but said it'd take a push from interested voters to "make it a priority" for House and Senate leadership. But she also noted "the closer that bill gets [to passage] as it moves through [the Legislature], the more the public tunes in and people get upset."

Ciccolo warned some will object to paying more for products upfront. She and Pecci only mentioned Section 3 of the short bill in passing. It states "A redemption center or reverse vending machine is not obligated to count containers or to pay a cash refund at the time the beverage container is returned as long as the amount of the refund value due is placed into an account to be held for the benefit of the consumer and is funded in a manner that allows the consumer to obtain deposits due within two business days of the time of return."

Afterward, Pecci said by email that section was added by a company called Clynk. According to its website, the firm runs a bagged container collection program at certain Hannaford markets in which participants sign up online for card-based accounts. Its map did not show any Massachusetts sites; most of them are in Maine.

Pecci said one key impetus behind the bill is that a 10-cent refund can make it "practical and economic for beverage companies to do a refill system" for glass bottles, hopefully getting away from "nasty and polluting" plastic. Many of them are now just hauled with curbside trash or recycling, adding tonnage and cost to municipal budgets. Often, they end up ground into road base or similar uses, not truly recycled, she noted.

As with the current system, the refund money includes a handling fee (2.25 cents for retailers and 3.25 cents for redemption centers). Any money that's not refunded goes to the state's General Fund (it used to go to environmental uses). Pecci estimated the proposed expansion would send an extra $80-90 million to state coffers annually. But she said she doesn't think it'll have an impact on prices, noting products are typically the same price in states without bottle bills.

CLF's Lauren Fernandez said she recently contacted 150 communities and got responses from 60 regarding curbside recycling costs. About half have seen "a drastic increase" in recent years and "were using it to haul off things that aren't even being recycled anymore," she said.

Pecci said that's in part because haulers benefit more from landfilling and incineration than recycling. They're likely to oppose bottle bill expansion because they "don't want that tonnage to decrease." Similarly, she noted retailers tend to see it as "a pain in the neck" but are coming along, and the beverage companies dislike it but have "softened a lot" in recent years.

Gus Steeves can be reached at gus.steeves2@gmail.com.

Fire Departments receive grants for safety equipment

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

REGION – Several local communities were recently awarded funding through the Department of Fire Services Fiscal Year 2022 Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant program.

Gov. Charlie Baker and Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito announced the grant winners during a press conference on Jan. 12 revealing 306 Massachusetts Fire Departments would receive a share of $5 million in grant funding to help purchase safety gear. The funding is part of a $25 million bond the Baker-Polito Administration filed to support firefighter safety and health. Charlton, Dudley, Oxford, Southbridge, and Webster were just a few of the towns included on the list.

"Our communities and families depend on firefighters in difficult and dangerous moments," said Baker. "This program is an opportunity to show our deep appreciation for their work by ensuring they have the tools they need to stay safe and healthy."

"While the last two years have been so difficult for all of us, firefighters and first responders throughout the Commonwealth have courageously continued to serve the public," added Polito. "We are grateful for their efforts and proud to be able to provide them with critical equipment and support."

The grants cover 118 different kinds of equipment purchases including protective gear, washers and dryers to maintain gear, thermal imaging cameras, extrication tools, communication resources, hazardous gas meters, fitness equipment and more all with the goal of helping firefighters be prepared either prior to or during an emergency situation. The grants will also help departments comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration or National Fire Protection Association safety standards. The Governor's office listed boots and gloves as the most popular clothing purchase with the grants while hosses and assorted fixtures is the most popular equipment purchase overall with 1,033 hoses, nozzles, fittings and other associated equipment expected to be bought among all grants combined.

The program is providing the Charlton Fire Department with $11,700.61, Dudley Fire Department $10,213, Oxford Fire Department $16,738.79, Southbridge Fire Department $10,422.78, and Webster Fire Department $16,059.73. Other local towns included in the list of grantees were Brookfield, Douglas, Leicester, North Brookfield, Northbridge, Spencer, Uxbridge, and West Brookfield.

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QCC bids fond farewell to dynamic group of women

WORCESTER — As Quinsigamond Community College rang in 2022, it did so without its Board of Trustees Chair Susan Coghlin Mailman, who resigned at the end of 2021 after six years in the role, due to her recent election to the Worcester School Committee. Ms. Mailman's commitment to QCC is far-reaching. In addition to her time as Board Chair, she was a QCC Foundation Director for over nine years, and chaired the RISE (Regional Investment in Service and Education) Campaign, the College's most recent capital campaign.

The Board also bid farewell to Trustees Tammy Murray and Kimberly Roy, who both departed due to new work positions. Dr. Murray is the Director of Special Education and Itinerant Services at the Central MA Collaborative and Ms. Roy was appointed by Governor Charlie Baker to serve as a Commissioner on the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission.

"These inspirational, powerful and impactful women have made an indelible impression on our College and its students," said QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D. "It is with a heavy heart that we see them go but they are continuing to motivate and impact our student body by their successes, and we wish them the very best in their endeavors."

Each departing trustee has their own personal ties to QCC, and each has brought their own unique story and expertise to the Board. Ms. Mailman is the Owner, Executive Chair and Treasurer of Coghlin Electrical Contractors, Inc. and Coghlin Network Services, Inc. in Worcester, Massachusetts. She and her family are strong advocates for public education. Ms. Mailman began her higher education at QCC and today holds an MBA from Northeastern University.

"As a former QCC student in my younger years, attending at night after work, I have always appreciated the College as a resource for working people to help jumpstart or further their careers. Many years later, it has been an honor to Chair the Board of Trustees and also to work on a capital campaign for the QCC Foundation Board," Ms. Mailman said. "Working with former President Gail Carberry and now current President Luis Pedraja, as well as getting to know so many talented education and workforce professionals in our region has been energizing and impactful."

Dr. Murray is also a QCC alumna who served as the alumni representative to the College's Board of Trustees for seven years. She is also a first generation college student, similar to many QCC students.

"It's easy to talk the talk, but it's different to walk the walk of a community college student. Students come to QCC from all different backgrounds and experiences and they require different levels of guidance and support. It's important to look at the whole person and get to know the students to determine how to help them succeed in college and in life," she said.

Commissioner Roy, the former director of External Affairs for Sheriff Lewis Evangelidis and the Worcester County Sheriff's Department, served in a trustee capacity for four years.

"It is often said, education is the ultimate equalizer and I know many lives have been changed for the better after receiving an extraordinary education as well as vocational training here at QCC. For me as a QCC trustee, one of the most special moments was a graduation ceremony that happened off campus. Having worked at the Worcester County Sheriff's Office at the time, it was an extraordinary day to witness inmates from the Worcester County House of Correction graduate from the QCC Culinary Program. Now culinary-trained while earning college credits and four certifications, these individuals are on their way to a successful path to reentry, gainful employment and breaking the cycle of recidivism," she said. "Even behind the walls of a correctional facility, QCC touches so many lives for the better in so many ways. I am so proud of all we have accomplished in the past few years, and I have no doubt the Board will continue to expand upon these successes in the future. It has been an honor to have served with Chairman Mailman, Trustee Murray, and all of my colleagues at QCC."

Dr. Murray said her most memorable experience from her time on the Board was the opening of the QCC's downtown Worcester location.

"As someone with a background in healthcare, I found this to be a pivotal point of growth for the College. As downtown Worcester has transformed, it's exciting to see QCC students have an opportunity to learn in such a beautiful building. In 1990, my occupational therapy classes were held in the basement of the gymnasium. I guess you could say we have come a long way since 1990," she said, adding, "QCC is important to the region as it educates and empowers its students to meet the needs of the central mass economy."

President Pedraja said he is excited to see what the future holds for QCC, thanks in no small part to the dedication of these women in making higher education accessible to everyone.

"Our college, our community, and our students are forever changed by the tireless work they have done to evangelize access to higher education," President Pedraja said.

For more information on QCC, contact Karen Hutner, Interim Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-2842 or khutner@qcc.mass.edu.

Open Door Arts receives Grants for Arts Project Award from National Endowment for the Arts

WORCESTER — Open Door Arts, an affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation, has been approved for a $30,000 Grants for Arts Projects award to support the SPEAC (Supporting the Processing of Experience through the Arts during Crises) Professional Development Program for Arts Educators. This project, which is a collaborative effort with the Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts and Wheelock Family Theatre at Boston University, will address an unmet need for arts educators to explore how the artistic process intersects with students' social, emotional, and cultural needs. The project is among 1,248 projects across America totaling $28,840,000 that were selected to receive this first round of fiscal year 2022 funding in the Grants for Arts Projects category.

"The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support arts projects like this one from Open Door Arts that help support the community's creative economy," said NEA Acting Chair Ann Eilers. "Open Door Arts in Massachusetts is among the arts organizations nationwide that are using the arts as a source of strength, a path to well-being, and providing access and opportunity for people to connect and find joy through the arts."

"The SPEAC Professional Development Program provides arts educators and teaching artists with comprehensive training and supports aimed at building inclusive, anti-racist and trauma-informed teaching practices," said Nicole Agois, Managing Director for ODA. "SPEAC 2022 responds to the complex and evolving needs of students resulting from ongoing crises and highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are proud and excited to partner with the Eliot School and Wheelock Family Theatre to provide this much needed opportunity to arts educators."

Two years ago, as the COVID-19 pandemic was adversely affecting communities, many students of color and students with disabilities were disproportionately impacted, experiencing exclusion, learning loss and trauma. Educators were held responsible for addressing the impact of these crises on students, often without adequate training and support. In response, the Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts, Open Door Arts, and Wheelock Family Theatre piloted the SPEAC Professional Development Program. Designed collaboratively with practitioners and experts in the field, SPEAC supported 70 arts educators to deepen their anti-racist, inclusive and trauma-informed arts teaching practice and utilize the arts as tools to help students process and cope with these experiences.

SPEAC 2 22 will continue to build on the initial program and incorporate evaluation results to develop a sustained and in-depth course of study with arts-integrated activities, facilitated group work and individualized, ongoing support to make teaching practices and curricula more equitable, culturally responsive and accessible, therefore improving arts learning outcomes and wellbeing for students. SPEAC will expand to engage arts educators and teaching artists in Boston, Worcester, and Springfield through multi-session virtual training that includes expert-led workshops, facilitated peer discussion and homework assignments.

Open Door Arts works annually with more than 3,000 students, teaching artists, educators and leaders of cultural organizations through innovative and inclusive programming, training, events, and exhibits designed to improve access, expand participation, challenge the status quo, and share practices to ensure equitable representation by people with disabilities in the arts. Additionally, ODA has galleries in Worcester (Worcester Art Museum) and Boston (NonProfit Center -near South Station) that showcase the work of emerging and established artists with disabilities to advance career opportunities, increase visibility and representation, and serve as platforms for the community to have important conversations about disability, identity, and culture.

For more information on other projects included in the Arts Endowment grant announcement, visit arts.gov/news.

For more information on Open Door Arts, please contact Nicole Agois, Managing Director at Nicole@OpenDoorArtsMA.org.

New exhibit examines American identity through contemporary art

WORCESTER — In February 2022, the Worcester Art Museum (WAM) will present its new exhibition "Us Them We | Race Ethnicity Identity," an in-depth look at how contemporary artists since the mid-1970s have used formal artistic devices in their work —such as text, juxtaposition, pattern, and seriality—to explore socio-political concepts. "Us Them We" will include works from 47 artists drawn from the Museum's collection along with several significant loans. The exhibition features photography, prints, painting, and sculpture, including major works by Edgar Heap of Birds / Hock E Aye Vi, Byron Kim, Roberto Lugo, Shirin Neshat, and Lorna Simpson, among many others. "Us Them We" is co-curated by Nancy Kathryn Burns, Stoddard Associate Curator of Prints, Drawings and Photographs at WAM, and Toby Sisson, Associate Professor and Program Director of Studio Art at Clark University. The exhibition opens Feb. 19 and runs through Juneteenth (June 19, 2022).

"With this exhibition we hope to generate a new conversation about how identity can be revealed through form itself. An artist's decision to use certain visual motifs like repetition, movement, language, and contrast can serve to emphasize larger concepts about race and ethnicity," said Burns. "There's truth to the idea that 'The medium is the message'. Art allows us to receive certain messages. However, too often, big ideas like those of political protest allow viewers to bypass a rigorous critique of a work's individual elements."

Added Sisson, "As an artist and a professor, a thorough and thoughtful approach to media is essential. Teaching studio art is an opportunity to reveal the importance of formal concepts, which are important to artists, and ultimately to audiences, as is self-expression around issues of identity."

In tandem with "Us Them We" WAM will also present a second exhibition featuring eleven Clark University students whose work addresses themes of identity, often in very personal ways. Comprised of drawings, photographs, paintings, and collages, the students created responses to objects in Us Them We. These works are the outcome of Clark's studio course "Contemporary Directions," which was co-taught by Sisson and Burns in spring 2021, and provided opportunities for students to speak with artists about their practice, use of different media, and their approach to creating visual expressions of complex ideas.

About the Worcester Art Museum

The Worcester Art Museum creates transformative programs and exhibitions, drawing on its exceptional collection of art. Dating from 3,000 BC to the present, these works provide the foundation for a focus on audience engagement, connecting visitors of all ages and abilities with inspiring art and demonstrating its enduring relevance to daily life. Creative initiatives— including pioneering collaborative programs with local schools, fresh approaches to exhibition design and in-gallery teaching, and a long history of studio class instruction—offer opportunities for diverse audiences to experience art and learn both from and with artists.

Since its founding in 1896, the Worcester Art Museum has assembled a collection of 38,000 objects: from the ancient Near East and Asia, to European and American paintings and sculptures, and continuing with works by contemporary artists from around the world. WAM has a history of making large scale acquisitions, such as its Medieval Chapter House, the Worcester Hunt Mosaic, its 15th-century Spanish ceiling, and the Flemish Last Judgment tapestry. In 2013, the Museum acquired the John Woodman Higgins Armory Collection, comprising two thousand arms and armor objects. It continues to commission and present new works, such as 2019's exhibition, With Child: Otto Dix/Carmen Winant. For more information about the Worcester Art Museum, visit worcesterart.org.

The Worcester Art Museum, located at 55 Salisbury Street in Worcester, MA, is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is $18 for adults, $14 for seniors 65+ and for college students with ID. Admission is free for Museum Members and children ages 0-17. On the first Sunday of each month, admission is free for everyone. Museum parking is free. Tickets may be purchased in advance at worcesterart.org.

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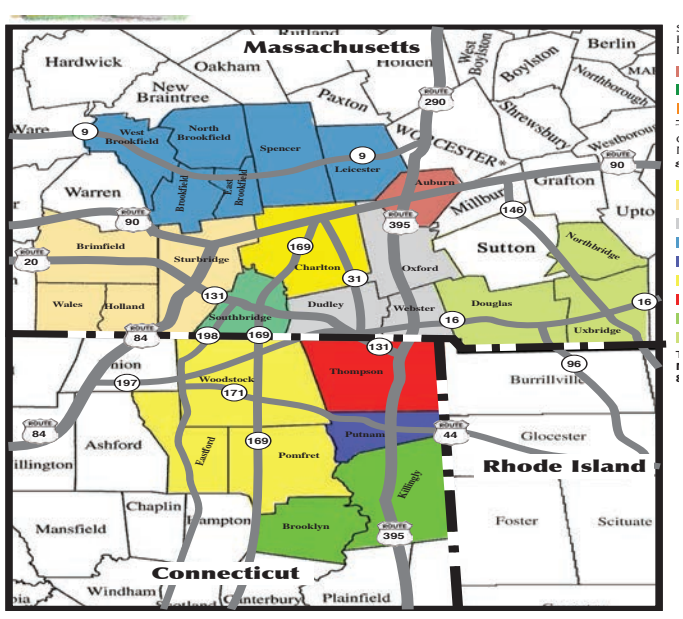

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OPINION

Remembering the man behind the holiday

Offices were closed nationwide this past Monday in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. King was the chief spokesperson for nonviolent activism in the Civil Rights Movement from 1954 until his assassination in 1968. The federal holiday falls around the birthday of King on Jan. 15.

Republican President Ronald Reagan made the holiday official in 1983. In 1986, the first observation of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day took place. In the year 2000 the holiday was observed by all 50 states for the first time since 1986.

Labor unions in contract negotiations brought the idea of celebrating King via national holiday. Republican Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts and Democrat John Conyers of Michigan brought forth the legislation in 1979 where it was five votes shy of passing in the house.

Those in opposition of the day cited costs in that paying federal employees would be too expensive. Others stated that honoring a private citizen would go against tradition in that King never held a public office.

In 1980, Stevie Wonder released the single "Happy Birthday" to shed light on the campaign. The largest petition in favor of an issue in the history of the United States gathered six million signatures.

Two Republican senators from North Carolina (Jesse Helms and John Porter) opposed the bill because of King's opposition to the Vietnam War, and also accused King of being a Communist. An FBI investigation dating back to 1963 turned up no evidence that King had been influenced by communists.

The bill passed the House of Representatives 338-90. Within the bill was language establishing the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission. King's wife, Coretta Scott King was made a life long member of this commission by President George H.W. Bush in May of 1989.

Martin Luther King Day is seen as a day to promote equal rights for all Americans. While there are few traditions surrounding the holiday, many educators use the day to teach their students about the struggle against racial segregation and racism. In New Hampshire and Arizona, the day is combined with Civil Rights Day. In Idaho the day is referred to as Human Rights Day, and in Wyoming, Equality Day.

King, who was born in 1929, was an American Baptist minister from Atlanta, Ga. In 1963, during the March on Washington, he delivered his famous 'I have a Dream' speech. In 1964, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in promoting nonviolent resistance and for advocating for Civil Rights.

King was assassinated at the age of 39 in Memphis, Tenn. by James Earl Ray. Ray, 41, was sentenced to 99 years in prison. The assassin died in prison in 1998 from hepatitis.

An excerpt from King's famous speech:

"So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire; let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York; let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania; let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado; let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that. Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia; let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee; let freedom ring from every hill and mole hill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

"And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: 'Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last.'

An Array of Assorted Tips and Tricks

Take the Hint

Karen Trainor

As we gear up for a new year, this week's column will highlight a medley of ideas to make everyday life just a little bit easier. And remember readers, your tips can win you a great three course dinner for two at the historic Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge!

Simply send in a hint to be entered into the random drawing.

**

Practice Power Naps: Here's a quick lesson in Napology! A "power nap", which can clear your brain and increase productivity, is typically only fifteen to 20 minutes long. And, if you're catching 40 winks on a lunch break, set your cell alarm. A nap longer than a half hour can make you sluggish and defeat the power nap's purpose!

**

Candle Capers: Winter is the season for candles! The next time you light floating candles, place them in cold water and they'll burn longer! Here's a candle FYI: Candles don't just cover up odors? They eliminate them by burning off the tiny odor particles that permeate the air!

**

Bye Sniffles: Stuffy nose this season? Whip up this Vicks Stick clone to clear your sinuses fast! Place one quarter teaspoon of coarse salt in a small glass vial with a tight lid. Add five drops of eucalyptus oil. When the salt absorbs the oil, shake to activate, then open vial and inhale to clear nasal passages.

**

Kitchen Helps: Here are a couple of culinary shortcuts to cook up a storm in record time: If a recipe calls for clarified broth, simply pour regular broth through a coffee filter to clarify it quickly and easily! And here's the easiest way to degrease cooled meat soups and stews: Just put a sheet of waxed paper directly on top of the liquid before refrigerating.

**

Tips to Reduce Cholesterol: Want to reduce your cholesterol? Try topping soups and stews with ground flaxseed to reduce heart attack risk. In a study, forty grams of ground flaxseed every day for three months reduced cholesterol by six percent.

**

Attention Do it Yourselfers: Did you know nonstick vegetable spray such as Pam can be used to lubricate sticky locks, metal gears, and even bicycle chains in a pinch? And never use oil for squeaky door hinges, use a dab of Vaseline - for a dripless job well done!

**

Wax Nostalgic: Remember wax paper? Try these creative uses: Rub a sheet on your counter tops after you clean. They'll not only have a nice gloss, but the finish will repel dust and dirt. And if you rub wax paper along your closet rod, even your metal your hangers will glide smoothly!

**

Hop to it: Can't sleep? An ancient insomnia tip calls for putting dried hops in a pillowcase . And if you have trouble sleeping on a regular basis, the answer may be as simple as a multivitamin. Make sure you have enough iron, calcium and potassium, all which encourage a healthy sleep.

**

Shoo Flu: Want another weapon in the fight against colds and flu? According to several Japanese studies, gargling with black tea twice a day from October to March, significantly improved participants abilities to fend off the common flu.

**

Win Dinner for Two at the Publick House – Contest has resumed!

Your tips can win you a great three course dinner for two at the historic Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge! Simply send in a hint to be entered into a random drawing. One winner per month will win a fabulous three course dinner for two at the renowned restaurant, located on Route 131 across the town common in historic Sturbridge. Because I'm in the business of dispensing tips, not inventing them (although I can take credit for some), I'm counting on you readers out there to share your best helpful hints!

Do you have a helpful hint or handy tip that has worked for you? Do you have a question regarding household or garden matters? If so, why not share them with readers of Stonebridge Press newspapers? Send questions and/or hints to: Take the Hint!, C/o the Southbridge Evening News, PO Box 90; Southbridge, MA 01550. Or email KDRR@aol.com. Hints are entered into a drawing for dinner for two at the historic Publick House Inn.

Watch out for tax scammers

Financial Focus

Trevor Nielson

Sadly, identity theft happens throughout the year – but some identity thieves are particularly active during tax-filing season. How can you protect yourself?

One of the most important moves you can make is to be suspicious of requests by people or entities claiming to be from the Internal Revenue Service. You may receive phone calls, texts and emails, but these types of communication are often just "phishing" scams with one goal in mind: to capture your personal information. These phishers can be quite clever, sending emails that appear to contain the IRS logo or making calls that may even seem to be coming from the IRS. Don't open any links or attachments to the emails and don't answer the calls – and don't be alarmed if the caller leaves a vaguely threatening voicemail, either asking for personal information, such as your Social Security number, or informing you of some debts you supposedly owe to the IRS that must be taken care of "immediately."

In reality, the IRS will not initiate contact with you by phone, email, text message or social media to request personal or financial information, or to inquire about issues pertaining to your tax returns. Instead, the agency will first send you a letter. And if you're unsure of the legitimacy of such a letter, contact the IRS directly at 800-829-1040.

Of course, not all scam artists are fake IRS representatives – some will pass themselves off as tax preparers. Fortunately, most tax preparers are honest, but it's not too hard to find the dishonest ones who might ask you to sign a blank return, promise you a big refund before looking at your records or try to charge a fee based on the percentage of your return. Legitimate tax preparers will make no grand promises and will explain their fees upfront. Before hiring someone to do your taxes, find out their qualifications. The IRS provides some valuable tips for choosing a reputable tax preparer, but you can also ask your friends and relatives for referrals.

Another tax scam to watch out for is the fraudulent tax return – that is, someone filing a return in your name. To do so, a scammer would need your name, birthdate and Social Security number. If you're already providing two of these pieces of information – your name and birthdate on social media, and you also include your birthplace – you could be making it easier for scam artists to somehow get the third. It's a good idea to check your privacy settings and limit what you're sharing publicly. You might also want to use a nickname and omit your last name, birthday and birthplace.

Here's one more defensive measure: File your taxes as soon as you can. Identity thieves often strike early in the tax season, so they can file their bogus returns before their victims.

To learn more about tax scams, visit the IRS Web site (irs.gov) and search for the "Taxpayer Guide to Identity Theft." This document describes some signs of identity theft and provides tips for what to do if you are victimized.

It's unfortunate that identity theft exists, but by taking the proper precautions, you can help insulate yourself from this threat, even when tax season is over.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Trevor Nielsen, your local Edward Jones Advisor in Sturbridge at 508-347-1420 or trevor.nielsen@edwardjones.com.

The Gateway Process Part 1

Positively Speaking

Toby Moore

How powerful is human consciousness? Can we influence matter and reality with our thoughts?

A couple of years ago, I read a document from the US Army and released by the CIA. It's a very complex document steeped in scientific language.

It delves deep into the powers of the human mind in a way that most books about positive thinking never do.

In 2003, this document was declassified by the CIA. It's named Analysis and Assessment of Gateway Process. The paper attempts to break down the nature of the reality that we live in. The PDF can be found at CIA.gov by googling, "The Gateway Process PDF."

It was written in 1983 by Lt. Col. Wayne M. Mcdonnel, whom we will refer to as Wayne. He was tasked with reporting back to the Commander of the US Army Operational Group at Fort Meade, Maryland, with all of his experiences learning the techniques of The Gateway Process.

During this period in time, the Military was interested in all sorts of psychic research in an attempt to keep pace and outdo the arch-enemy of the day, The Soviet Union.

A little history on The Gateway Process reveals that In the 1950s, a radio executive named Robert Monroe began to produce evidence that specific sound patterns affect the mind, including alertness, sleepiness, and expanded states of consciousness.

Robert Monroe formed a division inside his company to further study this phenomenon. The research continued for many years until, in 1962, he renamed his company to The Monroe Institute. The Gateway Process is a technique developed by The Monroe Institute, which recorded a series of audiotapes on practicing this technique.

According to this document, "The Gateway Experience is a training system designed to bring enhanced strength, focus, and coherence to … brainwave output between the right and left hemispheres, moving it outside the physical sphere… to ultimately escape even the restrictions of time and space."

Wayne partnered with several different people to produce the report, including Itzhak Bentov, an American-Israeli scientist who helped pioneer the biomedical engineering industry.

From the outset, Wayne felt it was important to tell his Commander that it is his opinion that after having completed the analysis to point out that his conclusions "do not do violence to the fundamental eastern or western belief systems."

The document describes, in detail, matter and energy. Most of us think that everything around us is composed of energy and matter and that energy and matter are two different things. We think of matter as a physical substance like a rock or a piece of wood, and energy as some force, like electricity or fire.

Wayne writes, "matter and energy tend to be misleading if taken to indicate two distinctly different states of existence in the physical world… solid matter … simply does not exist. Rather, atomic structure is composed of oscillating energy grids surrounded by other oscillating energy grids..."

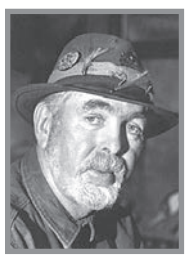
Again, it says, "Solid matter... simply does not exist." Starting to sound a little like the hit film The Matrix?

The scientific genius Nikola Tesla said, "If you wish to understand the universe, think of energy, frequency, and vibration."

Matter is just energy vibrating at

Turn To MOORE page A9

Ice conditions improve



The Great Outdoors

RALPH TRUE

This past weekend saw a stampede of ice fishing anglers on many ponds and lakes, as the ice conditions improved dramatically. This past Saturday was extremely cold, and only die-hard anglers were fishing, but Sunday, although cold, had light winds and sunny skies. Reports of fast action on jig sticks and ice tilts was good news for fishermen. Many local bait shops also reported brisk sales, with some shops selling out of live bait early Sunday morning.

A report of a large 40-plus-inch Northern pike was made at a local tackle shop with the angler producing a picture of the huge fish. He claimed he caught the monster fish at the Arcade Pond in Whitinsville & releasing the fish after a photo shoot. I have no reason to question the angler, as to where he caught the huge fish, as they have been caught in many small ponds in the valley. Although it is illegal to take fish from one area, and restock them in another lake or pond, anglers continue to do it. It is unfortunate that Mass. Fish & Wildlife has chosen to stop stocking ponds like Manchaug with juvenile fish that had produced a good amount of adult Northerns after they were stocked back in the '80s or so.

A lot of big fish were reported this past weekend by ice fishermen that braved the cold. Large pickerel and bass were caught by numerous anglers fishing with live shiners and jig sticks. The smell of a fire and venison cooking at many gatherings was noted. The heavy rain this past Monday should freeze, and make the ice even thicker, if the weathermen were correct in their forecast. This writer was shown a video of a car in truck falling through the ice in Maine last week. Driving vehicles on the ice can be dangerous, as these ice fishing anglers found out.

They decided to put all of their efforts into stocking areas like Brookfield, and even then, the Pike program was brought back by a single female angler whose name was Terry, an active member of the Brookfield Rod & Gun Club. Mass. Fish & Wildlife still stocks Lake Quinsigamond in Worcester & Shrewsbury with juvenile pike, but is considered by many to have low water quality, especially in the spring when waste water is released into the lake after heavy rain. Her and her friends raised the money to purchase a few thousand juvenile pike, and had the MFW assist in the stocking. It was at a time that MFW was not buying or trading fish because of fish being infected with disease in other states.

Now that the deer season in Massachusetts is over, many sportsmen are in search of antler droppings from deer. The deer shed their antlers every year, and grow new ones starting in the spring. Antler hunting can become a family affair, and can reveal how big some of the bucks are that remain in their favorite hunting spots. Antlers are also considered a prize when one is located, and they are used to make knife handles, lamps, and many other things including jewelry. If the antlers are not found before spring, many are chewed on by mice, squirrels and other ground feeing animals.

The Uxbridge Rod & Gun Club stocked their pond with some impressive trout this past Friday, and is now open to club members to fish. A fishing derby is being planned for this Saturday, but plans were not complete in time for this column's deadline!

Cottontail rabbits are still fare game in Massachusetts, and sportsmen that own a good beagle, could find themselves enjoying an old fashion rabbit hunt. The increase in the cottontail rabbit population in the last couple of years was good to see, and hopes are high for another great year. Of course, local gardeners were not too happy with the increase in the rabbit populations, as many vegetables were eaten by these munchers before they could be harvested.

Photo Courtesy

This weeks picture shows Eleanor and Dexter Briggs fishing with their dad at the Uxbridge Rod & Gun Club this past Saturday.

It is doubtful if any sportsmen's shows will actually take place this year because of Covid fears. Covid has sure changed our lives dramatically!

Take A Kid Fishing & Keep Them Rods Bending!

Grow herbs indoors for year-round enjoyment

Garden Moments

MELINDA MYERS

Add garden fresh flavor to your meals year-round. Grow a few of your favorite herbs indoors, harvest and enjoy.

Select a variety of herbs you and your family enjoy and use for cooking, decoration, or fragrance. Basil, chives, cilantro, oregano, marjoram, mint, parsley, sage and thyme are some of the easier herbs to grow indoors. Purchase plants or seeds from your local garden center, favorite garden catalog or produce section of the grocery store.

Most herbs need six to eight hours of bright light each day. A south-facing window in winter is best but an east- or west-facing window may be sufficient. Increase success with artificial lights. Set the timer for 14 to 16 hours a day and keep lights six to 12 inches above the plants.

You will find lots of energy efficient and stylish options for just about any space. Sleeker designs like Gardener's Supply Micro Grow Light Garden can be placed on the kitchen counter or a small table. Furniture grade options like Bamboo LED Grow Light Garden (gardeners.com) make it easy to grow herbs in just about any room in the house.

Use a variety of plants to create an attractive display in a large windowsill planter. Combine plants that have the same growing requirements to ensure success.

Or place each herb plant in its own container. A four- to seven-inch pot is a good size when starting with smaller plants. Growing individual plants in their own container allows you to provide the specific watering, care and transplanting they need.

Select containers with drainage holes or reduce maintenance and increase success with self-watering containers like Viva self-watering planters. Just fill the water reservoir that gradually releases water into the soil for the plants to use. You will need to water less often.

Fill the container with a well-drained quality potting mix. Many contain a slow-release fertilizer, providing weeks or even several months of nutrients for your plants. Just check the label for details and adjust fertilization as needed.

Water the containers thoroughly whenever the top inch of soil is dry. Pour off excess water so the plant does not sit in the excess and succumb to root rot. Or place pebbles in the tray to elevate the pot above any water that collects in the saucer or tray. This means less work for you and better growing conditions for the plant.

Incorporate a slow-release fertilizer or use a dilute solution of any indoor houseplant fertilizer once the nutrients in the potting mix are spent. Follow label directions and do not overdo as too much fertilizer can harm your plants.

Begin harvesting most herbs when they reach six to eight inches in height and as needed. Use a sharp pair of garden scissors, snips, or hand pruners. Make cuts above a set of healthy leaves so the remaining plant is neater and tidier in appearance. As the plant grows, you will be able to harvest larger quantities and more often.

Photo Courtesy — Gardener's Supply Company

Artificial lights ensure herbs receive enough bright light to successfully grow indoors.

Start with a few of your favorite herbs and expand your collection as you gain experience. Soon you will be confident and eager to try more challenging favorites.

Melinda Myers is the author of more than 20 gardening books, including Small Space Gardening. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series and the Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and was commissioned by Gardener's Supply for her expertise to write this article. Her Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

MOORE

continued from page A8

incredibly high speeds. What we call matter is just variances in states of energy. Our body, and everything around us, in the entire physical universe, is an incredibly complex system of energy fields. Everything down to the smallest molecule is vibrational energy.

Albert Einstein said, "Everything in life is vibration."

Wayne goes on to describe that the entire universe is "one gigantic hologram of unbelievable complexity."

If that doesn't make your head spin, then read further. In extreme scientific language, Wayne describes that the only thing in the universe that isn't made of energy... is human consciousness.

He quotes psychologist Keith Floyd, "it may not be the brain that produces consciousness—but rather, consciousness that creates the appearance of the brain…"

If consciousness is the only thing in our universe that is not energy, what is consciousness? Can we use our consciousness to change our reality and manifest our dreams? Find out next week in Part 2 of The Gateway Process.

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OBITUARIES

Rev. James E. Chase, 62

Charlton- Rev. James E. Chase, 62, longtime Pastor of the Federated Church of Charlton, passed away on Tuesday, Jan. 11th, in his home from complications of colon cancer.

He leaves his wife of 35 years, Diane (Cantara) Chase and his daughter, Valerie Chase and her husband David Pinsonneault of Providence, RI., along with extended family, the congregation of the Federated Church of Charlton, and many close friends. He was predeceased by his sister, Nancy (Chase) Cunningham. He was born in Brockton, the son of Everett W. and Janet (Robb) Chase, Jr. Jim received his Bachelor's degree in Geophysics from Boston College and his Master of Divinity degree from Andover Newton Theological School.

Rev. Chase was the longest tenured pastor of the Federated Church of Charlton, serving 33 years. He was Chaplain for the Charlton Fire Department, beginning in 2000. As a member of the Mass. Corps of Fire Chaplains, he served in New York City during the 9/11 aftermath; in Sandy Hook, CT; and in Boston after the marathon bombing. He had the honor to teach at a seminary in Johannesburg, South Africa, during a sabbatical in 2015.

He enjoyed running, playing cards, especially whist and cribbage, and walks and lessons with his dog. Jim loved playing and listening to the banjo. All his life, he sought to serve Jesus faithfully and with love.

Rev. Chase also preached at St. Joseph's Church in Charlton on occasion, including each year during the Week of Christian Unity. The family would like to thank St. Joseph's Church for their hospitality in granting the use of the church for Jim's service, so that we may be safely spaced.

His funeral service was held on Saturday, Jan. 15th, at 10:00am in St. Joseph's Church, 10 H. Putnam Rd. Ext., Charlton. Burial folloedw in West Ridge Cemetery, Charlton. Calling hours in the Daniel T. Morrill Funeral Home, 130 Hamilton St., Southbridge, were on Friday, Jan. 14th, from 4:00 to 7:00pm.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Federated Church of Charlton, P.O. Box 70, Charlton, MA 01507.

www.morrillfuneralhome.com

Anna R. Pecore, 79

CHARLTON – Anna R. (Langlois) Pecore, 79, of Dresser Hill Road, died peacefully on Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at UMass Memorial Medical Center – University Campus in Worcester. She is survived by her husband of 61 years, Louis K. Pecore of Charlton; seven children, Louis J. Pecore and his wife Debra of Charlton, Timothy J. Pecore and his wife Marie of Brookfield, Michael J. Pecore and his wife Renee of Brimfield, Jonathan J. Pecore and his wife Barbara of Charlton, Deborah A. Pecore of Worcester, Kenneth J. Pecore and his wife Nancy of Charlton, and Brian J. Pecore and his wife Tracy of Charlton; a brother, Ernest Langlois of Oxford; two sisters, Theresa Motyka of Tewksbury, and Rosemary Disley of Monson; her grandchildren, Kimberly Pecore, Zachary Pecore, Joshua Pecore, Mayce Smith, Timothy Pecore, Catherine McCreevan, Gabrielle Pecore, Joseph Pecore, Michael Pecore Jr., Ashley Pecore, Kristina Pecore, Jennifer Pecore, Melissa Pecore, Courtney Pecore, Mathew Pecore, Kelsey Pecore, Mikayla St. Germain, Nicholas Pecore, Sabrina Nickerson, Brian Pecore II, Dillon Pecore, and Kolby Pecore; and 13 great grandchildren (with 4 on the way). She was born in Southbridge, daughter of the late Ernest J. and Anna C. (Gouin) Langlois, and was a lifelong resident of Charlton.

Mrs. Pecore worked at American Optical in Southbridge, S&M Plastics in Southbridge, and the travel plaza on the Mass Pike in Charlton for many years, before retiring in 2005. She was a member of St. Joseph's Church in Charlton, where she also attended the Monday night prayer meeting and served on the altar. Her family meant everything to her and she dedicated her life to raising her children and caring for her grandchildren and great grandchildren. She enjoyed participating in any activity her grandchildren were part of and would sled with the grandchildren well into her 70's.

A funeral was held on Wednesday, January 19, 2022, from Paradis-Givner Funeral Home, 357 Main St., Oxford, followed by a Mass at 11 a.m. at St. Joseph's Church, 10 H. Putnam Rd. Ext., Charlton. Burial followed at New Notre Dame Cemetery in Southbridge. Calling hours were Tuesday, January 18, 2022, from 3-6 p.m. at the funeral home. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Joseph's Church, P.O. Box 338, Charlton City, MA 01508.

Statewide school mask mandate extended

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION – With the surge of COVID-19 cases over the last month, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has extended its mask mandate in public schools.

The extended mandate runs through at least Feb. 28, DESE officials announced last week. State leaders will closely monitor health data and confer with experts over the next month-plus. Depending on COVID-19 metrics at the end of February, the mask mandate could be lifted or continued even further into March or beyond.

The mandate applies to all K-12 public schools in Massachusetts.

"The mask requirement remains an important measure to keep students, teachers, and staff in school safely at this time," read a statement released by DESE Commissioner Jeffrey Riley. "The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in consultation with medical experts and state health officials, will continue to evaluate public health data."

The decision to extend the mask mandate arrived as thousands of educators and parents across the state are calling for a return to remote learning during the surge of Omicron cases this winter. Other parents, teachers, and officials—including Governor Charlie Baker and Commissioner Riley—believe in-person instruction should not be disrupted again.

School officials across the state continue to have permission from DESE to lift the mask requirement if at least 80 percent of all students and staff members in a school building are vaccinated.

"Lifting the mask requirement through DESE's vaccination threshold policy is a local decision made by school and community leaders in consultation with local health officials," added Commissioner Riley.

For public schools that haven't yet reached the 80-percent vaccination threshold, all students ages 5 and older are required to wear masks while inside school buildings, except when eating or during mask breaks. All school staff members are also required to be masked while indoors.

Additionally, all visitors to school buildings must continue to wear a mask indoors, regardless of vaccination status.

Masks are not required outdoors while on school grounds.

"It is strongly recommended that students younger than 5 also wear a mask in school, which is consistent with the Department of Early Education and Care's mask policy for childcare providers," Commissioner Riley's statement read.

Exemptions from the state mask mandate are available for students and staff members who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons, as well as students who are unable to wear a mask for behavioral reasons.

Masks are required at all indoor sporting events and other extracurricular activities held at schools, in alignment with guidance provided by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA).

Masks should be provided by families each day for their children, DESE guidance recommends, but disposable masks should be made available by schools for students who need them.

By federal public health order, all students and staff members are required to wear a mask while riding on school buses.

For more information about state mandates, visit www.mass.gov.

Friday's Child

Photo by Lisa Anderson

Ashlynn
Age 13

I love to draw!

Ashlynn is a shy girl of Caucasian descent who likes to draw and color. She can start off quiet with new people but warms up if given the time to develop a relationship. Ashlynn enjoys music, drawing, spending time with her friends, and swimming. She loves to spend time with her siblings and is very protective of them. Ashlynn is in the 5th grade and has friends at school. She can do well in class with extra supports.

Legally freed for adoption, Ashlynn will thrive in a home that can provide her with her own space and individualized attention. She does best with limitations and a structured routine. Her social worker is open to exploring homes with a mother and a father or two mothers. Ashlynn will do best as the youngest or only child in a family. Ashlynn has four brothers and two sisters in Massachusetts, and it is extremely important that she maintains a relationship with them.

Who Can Adopt?

Can you provide the guidance, love and stability that a child needs? If you're at least 18 years old, have a stable source of income, and room in your heart, you may be a perfect match to adopt a waiting child. Adoptive parents can be single, married, or partnered; experienced or not; renters or homeowners; LGBTQ singles and couples.

The process to adopt a child from foster care requires training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you, and if so, to help connect you with a child or sibling group that your family will be a good match for.

To learn more about adoption from foster care, call the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) at 617-964-6273 or visit www.mareinc.org. The sooner you call, the sooner a waiting child will have a permanent place to call home.

New England Symphony Orchestra to feature music director, Roderick MacDonald, as trumpet soloist

Roderick MacDonald

WORCESTER — Tickets are now available for a concert by the New England Symphony Orchestra in Worcester's Mechanics Hall at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 12. Tickets are available through the orchestra's Web site (newenglandsymphony.org) or from the Mechanics Hall box office at 508-752-0888.

NESO Music Director Roderick MacDonald will be the featured soloist in Haydn's trumpet concerto in E-flat major. Equally comfortable on the podium or in the principal trumpet seat, MacDonald began his career as Principal Trumpet of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, appointed by Music Director Kurt Masur upon completion of his Masters of Music at New England Conservatory. His career as a concert soloist began shortly after this appointment and he has since appeared worldwide as a trumpet soloist with highly regarded ensembles including: Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Japan Philharmonic, Virtuosi Saxonia, Bach Collegium Munich, Leipzig Bach Orchestra, Leipzig Chamber Orchestra, Concerto Leipzig, Kammerphilharmonie Leipzig, and the Super World Orchestra (Tokyo). With a discography of over 25 recordings with the Gewandhaus Orchestra, he can also be heard on recordings with the Leipzig Baroque Soloists, solo recordings, and numerous other chamber and orchestral albums. One of his solo albums was named "CD of the Month" by Naxos.

The program will also include perennial favorite Antonin Dvorak's Symphony number 9, "From the New World."

NESO President Ed Cyrus stated "Rod MacDonald brings a special kind of joy to his performances. The orchestra is excited to share his artistry with the audience."

New England Symphony Orchestra continues to operate as a volunteer-led, non-profit professional symphony orchestra serving the people of New England. This season's strategic plan includes a 3-concert series at Mechanics Hall, streaming performances as part of the NESO At Home series, and more. For information about volunteering or sponsorship, call 603-438-8920.

Our vision is "Connecting New England with Great Music."

For more information about the orchestra please visit:

NewEnglandSymphony.org

NESO general information: 603-438-8920.

Trinity Catholic Academy announces Open House

SOUTHBRIDGE — Trinity Catholic Academy is now accepting registrations for students in grades Pre-K through grade 8 for the 2022-23 school year. The Open House on Jan. 30 will be by appointment only.

Trinity Catholic Academy has a long history of providing students with a strong foundation that they take with them long after they graduate. Trinity takes pride in educating the whole child which includes strong academics, Christian values, and community service. Students are taught compassion and respect among a diverse school family. Although Trinity is a Christian based school, all faiths are welcomed.

Trinity offers two full day Pre-K programs, three days, or five days a week. Pre-K students must be age four by Aug. 31. Trinity also offers a 5 full day Kindergarten program. Kindergarten students must be age five by Aug. 31. The after-school program is available until 5:30 p.m. for all TCA students.

Trinity Catholic Academy has exciting plans for the upcoming school year which includes the building of a new state of the art Science Lab. The current classroom is the same lab that St. Mary's HS students used back in the early 1960s. Feel free to visit the school's website at https://trinitycatholicacademy.org/ to learn more about the project. Trinity is very proud of their school and looks forward to an amazing future as they continue to expand their academics and extracurricular programs. The future is bright at TCA!

Open House appointments and inquiries can be made by calling the school at 508-765-5991 or by emailing Mrs. Symock, principal, at angela.symock@tca11.com.

Nichols College students named to Fall 2021 Honors List

DUDLEY — Many hard-working students at Nichols College in Dudley, Mass., have achieved Dean's List or President's List honors during the fall 2021 semester.

The Dean's List and President's List give recognition to those students who achieve high grades during a single semester. In order to be included on the Dean's List, a student must have a minimum grade point average of 3.5 for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and must have received no grades below B- during the semester. Students whose semester grade point average is 3.85 or higher for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and no grades below B- will receive President's List honors.

The following students have received academic honors.

Anthony Detarando of Charlton received President's List honors.

Amber Grybowski of Charlton received President's List honors.

Conor Leonard of Charlton received Dean's List honors.

Andrew McCarthy of Uxbridge received Dean's List honors.

Jason O'Regan of Charlton received President's List honors.

Alaina Plourde of Charlton received Dean's List honors.

Jenna Savoie of Charlton received President's List honors.

Thomas Steiger of Charlton received Dean's List honors.

Dylan Brown of Charlton received Dean's List honors.

John Jakubowski of Charlton received Dean's List honors.

Benjamin Wiersma of Uxbridge received Dean's List honors.

Abigail Zahr of Fiskdale received Dean's List honors.

Michael Peloza of Brimfield received Dean's List honors.

About Nichols College

The mission of Nichols College is to educate and enlighten students to capitalize on their ambitions and to become impactful, forward looking global leaders.

News Briefs

Open Sky Race Equity Leader receives scholarship from Providers' Council

WORCESTER — Stephen Osei-Bonsu, Manager of Race Equity for Open Sky Community Services, was one of four human services employees who recently received scholarships during the Providers' Council's 46th Annual Convention & Expo. The Providers' Council is an association of community-based human services providers in Massachusetts with more than 220 member organizations.

Osei-Bonsu was selected as the first recipient of the Council's Foreign-Born Leader Scholarship, given in partnership with the African Bridge Network. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at William James College.

Open Sky's President & CEO Ken Bates was delighted with Osei-Bonsu's selection, commenting "Stephen is an incredible role model for other staff in our organization. We are fortunate that the human services industry has an extraordinarily diverse workforce. As we work towards achieving race equity for both our employees and the people we serve, we need to support the career paths of leaders like Stephen who bring a unique perspective to their work."

Charlton's Joseph Dumas achieves Eagle Scout rank

CHARLTON — Joseph Dumas, 18, of Charlton has earned the Eagle Scout Award. Eagle Scout is the highest achievement or rank attainable in the Scouts BSA program of the Boy Scouts of America. Joseph is a member of Troop 338 in Charlton.

In addition to planning, developing and leading a service project – the Eagle Project - an Eagle Scout applicant must earn 21 or more badges, write several essays, request five recommendation letters, compile an application binder, and undergo a rigorous Eagle board of review before their application is approved at the national level.

Dumas is a local artist, and his project was designing and directing the completion of a 20 x12 foot mural at Heritage School in Charlton. The mural depicts former Heritage School Principal Kathleen Pastore's favorite children's literature characters. Mrs. Pastore retired at the end of the 2020 - 2021 school year and Dumas worked closely with her on the mural design to assure it would be a legacy of her love of reading for students to enjoy for years to come.

Dumas will receive the Eagle Award at a Court of Honor to be held at a later date.

Dumas is the child of Michael and Dayna Dumas, and is a senior at Shepherd Hill Regional High School in Dudley.

Eastern students make Dean's List in fall 2021

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. — Eastern Connecticut State University recently released its Dean's List for the fall 2021 semester, in which nearly 1,300 students were recognized for maintaining high GPAs.

Among them are full-time students Ella Yaroshefski of Uxbridge, who majors in Biochemistry, and Eva Glaser of Sturbridge, who majors in Pre-Secondary Education and English.

To qualify for Dean's List, full-time students must complete a minimum of 12 credits in letter-graded courses with an average GPA of 3.5 or higher in the semester. Part-time students are eligible if they've accumulated 15 or more credits of letter-graded course work with an average GPA of 3.5 or higher.

To watch a video of highlights from the fall 2021 semester, visit https://vimeo.com/665228420

Eastern Connecticut State University is the state of Connecticut's public liberal arts university, serving more than 4,300 students annually on its Willimantic campus. In addition to attracting students from 163 of Connecticut's 169 towns, Eastern also draws students from 32 other states and 10 countries. A residential campus offering 41 majors and 65 minors, Eastern offers students a strong liberal art foundation grounded in a variety of applied learning opportunities. Ranked as the #1 public regional university in New England by U.S. News & World Report in its 2020, 2021 and 2022 Best Colleges ratings, Eastern has also been awarded "Green Campus" status by the Princeton Review 11 years in a row. For more information, visit www.easternct.edu.

SNHU announces Fall 2021 President's List

MANCHESTER, New Hampshire — It is with great pleasure that Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) congratulates the following students on being named to the Fall 2021 President's List.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above are named to the President's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits; undergraduate day students must earn 12 credits in the fall or spring semester, and online students must earn 12 credits in either EW1 & EW2, EW3 & EW4, or EW5 & EW6.

Ryan Paul of Uxbridge
Emily Roberts of Uxbridge
Sal Ante of Uxbridge
Melanie Emerick of Uxbridge
Makenzie Woods of Charlton
Sarah Caplette of Charlton
Amanda Geer of Uxbridge
Samantha Frawley of Charlton
Allison Colella of Uxbridge
Samantha Applin of Charlton
Lucas Lanier of Charlton
Alex Lord of Holland
Raymond Morehouse of Holland

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is a private, nonprofit institution with an 89-year history of educating traditional-aged students and working adults. Now serving more than 160,000 learners worldwide, SNHU offers approximately 200 accredited undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs, available online and on its 300-acre campus in Manchester, NH. Recognized as the "Most Innovative" regional university by U.S. News & World Report and one of the fastest-growing universities in the country, SNHU is committed to expanding access to high quality, affordable pathways that meet the needs of each learner. Learn more at www.snhu.edu.

SNHU announces Fall 2021 Dean's List

MANCHESTER, New Hampshire — It is with great pleasure that Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) congratulates the following students on being named to the Fall 2021 Dean›s List.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.500 to 3.699 are named to the Dean's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits; undergraduate day students must earn 12 credits in the fall or spring semester, and online students must earn 12 credits in either EW1 & EW2, EW3 & EW4, or EW5 & EW6.

Cayla Faubert of Charlton
Jennifer Burgess of Uxbridge
Chelsea Krasnecky of Charlton
Mercedes Anderson of Charlton

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is a private, nonprofit institution with an 89-year history of educating traditional-aged students and working adults. Now serving more than 160,000 learners worldwide, SNHU offers approximately 200 accredited undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs, available online and on its 300-acre campus in Manchester, NH. Recognized as the «Most Innovative» regional university by U.S. News & World Report and one of the fastest-growing universities in the country, SNHU is committed to expanding access to high quality, affordable pathways that meet the needs of each learner. Learn more at www.snhu.edu.

Local students named to Holy Cross' Fall 2021 Dean's List

WORCESTER — A total of 1,375 students were named to College of the Holy Cross' Dean's List for outstanding academic achievement during the fall semester of the 2021-22 academic year. The following local students made the list:

Abel Lidonde of Holland, member of the Class of 2025, majoring in Undeclared

Matthew Sexton of Wales, member of the Class of 2022, majoring in Political Science & Economics

Katherine Vanasse of Sturbridge, member of the Class of 2022, majoring in Biology

About Holy Cross

The College of the Holy Cross, in Worcester, Mass., is among the nation's leading liberal arts institutions. A highly selective, four-year, exclusively undergraduate college of 3,100 students, Holy Cross is renowned for offering a rigorous, personalized education in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition. Since its founding in 1843, Holy Cross has made a positive impact in society by graduating students who distinguish themselves as thoughtful leaders in business, professional and civic life.

University of New Hampshire announces December 2021 graduates

DURHAM, New Hampshire — The following students graduated from the University of New Hampshire in December 2021. Students who received the honor of summa cum laude graduated with a GPA of 3.85-4.0; students who received the honor of magna cum laude graduated with a GPA of 3.65-3.84; and students who received the honor of cum laude graduated with a GPA of 3.50-3.64. Students are only graduated after the Registrar's Office has certified that all degree requirements have been successfully completed. Participating in the commencement ceremony is the act of honoring and celebrating academic achievement.

Brittany Glass of Uxbridge
Hope Anderson of Uxbridge

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 13,000 undergraduate and 2,500 graduate students.

Wheaton College students named to Fall 2021 Dean's List

WHEATON, Ill. — Dean's List honors are earned by undergraduate students who carry 12 or more credit hours and achieve a 3.5 grade point average or higher on the 4.0 scale. Local students who have earned Dean's List honors:

Andrew Burkhart of Uxbridge
Peter Johnson of Uxbridge

Wheaton College (Wheaton, Ill.) is a coeducational Christian liberal arts college noted for its rigorous academics, integration of faith and learning, and consistent ranking among the top liberal arts colleges in the country. For more information, visit wheaton.edu.

Southbridge Lions cancel cartoon character breakfast

SOUTHBRIDGE – The Southbridge Lions Club annual cartoon character breakfast, scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 13 has been canceled.

The decision to cancel this year's event has been a difficult one, but we believe it to be in the best interest for promoting the health and safety of the hundreds of children, parents, grandparents and friends that normally attend the breakfast each year. Be assured that the cartoon character breakfast will return next year, better than ever!

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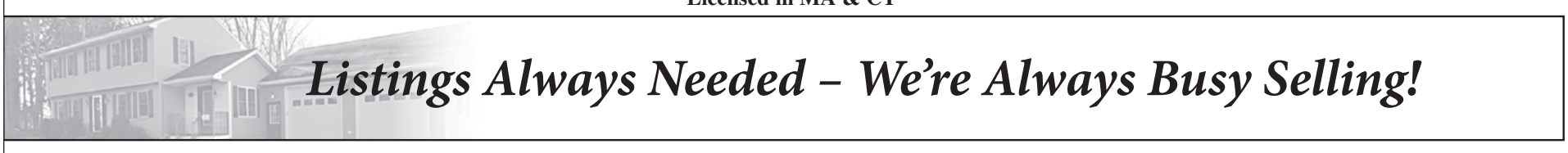

WEBSTER LAKE - 11 Bay View Rd! One of the Lake's Premier Properties! 9,822' of Real Nice Set on .68 Acres of Park Like Grounds with 297' Waterfront! Over $4 Million Spent! Nothing was Spared! 18 Spacious Rooms! 5 Water View Bedrooms, 4 with their Own Bathrooms! 5.5 Bathrooms Total! Brazilian Cherry Hardwood Floors, Grand & Spiral Stairways! Elevator from the Ground Floor up 3 to the Master Suite! In-door Resistance Swimming Pool, Hot Tub & Bathroom with Steam Shower just off the Mirrored Exercise Room! Billiard Room! Media Room with Custom Cabinetry & Wet Bar! Fantastic Center Island Granite Kitchen with Viking Gas Range, Sub-Zero Refrigerator, 16' Butler's Pantry & Breakfast Bar! Open Floor Plan! Dining Area, Family Room with Cherry Entertainment Center & Wet Bar! Open Formal Dining Room, Fireplace Living Room & Atrium! Library with Private Deck! Waterfront Master Suite with Private Office, Bedroom with Triple Glass Door to its Private Deck with Panoramic Lake Views, 3 Walk-in Closets, Lake View Bathroom with Huge Multi-Head Shower, Whirlpool Tub, Double Vanity Sinks & Separate Commode/Bidet/Pedestal Sink Area! 16 Zones of Updated Geothermal Heat & Air Conditioning - 30 Tons! Recessed Lighting & Sprinkler System Through Out! 3 Car Heated Garage! Full House Generator! Slate Roof! All Decks & Railings Brazilian Ipe Hardwood! Copper Gutters & Downspouts! It's Time to Reward Yourself! **$1,749,900.00**

WEBSTER – 20 Scenic Ave! Views of Webster Lake! 7 Rm Colonial! Work-in Applianced Kit! Dining Area w/Cathedral Ceiling! Living Rm w/ Pine Flooring, Hearth & Woodstove! 1st Flr Bedrm, 3 Bdrms Total! 2 Full Baths! Expandable Walk-out Lower Level! Buderus Oil Heat! Recent Roof & Siding! **$299,900.00**

WEBSTER – 8 Riverside Dr! Super Convenient 9 Rm Colonial! Work-in Applianced Kit w/Granite Island & Dining Area! 24' Living Rm w/Laminate Wood Flooring, Slider to Composite Deck! 3-5 Bdrms Total! Master Bath! 2.5 Baths Total! Finished Lower Level! Oil Heat! Roof 2019! **$399,900.00**

WEBSTER – 6 Slater Street! Professionals Take Notice! Ideal Office Setup! 1St Floor w/Waiting Rm, Reception Area, 4 Offices w/Sinks, 3 Alcove/Prep Areas, Handicap Accessible 1/2 Bath, and Hrdwd Flrs! 2nd Floor Currently w/Employee Breakroom w/ Full Kitchen, Cabinets & Closet Storage, 3/4 Bath and additional office/bedroom! C/Air! CVac! Security System! **$349,900.00**

DUDLEY – 50 Brandon Rd! 3 Family! 5/5/4 Rms! 2/2/1 Bedrms! 2/2/1 Bathrms! Investors take Notice! Fully Rented! Solid Rental History, Long Term Tenants! Conveniently Located! Washer & Dryer Hookups in the Basement for Each Unit! Efficient Natural Gas Heating! Two Driveways provide Off Street Parking for up to 5 Vehicles! Dudley's Low Taxes & Desirable School System! **$349,900.00**

DUDLEY HAYDEN POND WATERFRONT – 48 Hayden Pond Rd! Recently Renovated, beautifully appointed, 5 Rm Waterfront Ranch! Enjoy sunsets, fishing & all water sports! Vinyl Composite decking & vinyl railings! Open floor plan! Cathedral ceilings w/ skylights! Din Rm w/slider to covered deck! Kit w/quartz counters & SS appliances! Liv Rm w/stunning views of the Pond! Comfortable Master w/generous closet & half bath! 2nd bedroom or office! Full bath w/washer/dryer hook ups! Full basement for storage or additional living space! Floating Dock! Shed! **$439,900.00**

WEBSTER LAKE – 701 Beacon Park! 5 Rm End Corner Garden Unit - One Level Living - No Stairs! 10 Beautiful Acres of Park Like Grounds w/Fantastic Panoramic Lake Views! 1,100' of Living Space! Ample Room for Year Round Living or as 2nd Home - Summers on the Lake - Winters in Florida! Well Maintained! 2 Bedrms! Master Bath, 2 Baths Total! Beautiful Lakeside Pool, Spectacular Beach, Best on the Lake! Detached Garage! **$299,000.00!**

WEBSTER LAKE - 65 Bates Point Rd – Eastern Exposure – Beautiful Sunrises! Year Round – Principle Residence - Second Home – Remodel – Tear it Down and Start Anew! The Choice is Yours! Set on a 12,449' Lot, 50X249', 50.7' Waterfront! Plenty of Area for Expansion! Surrounded by Million Dollar Homes the Pallet is Yours to Create! 5+ Room Ranch with Full Walk-out Expandable Lower Level! Open Floor Plan! Applianced Kitchen, Dining Area and Living Room with Panoramic Water Views! 3 Bedrooms! Full Tile Bath! Oil Heat! Screened Porch! Detached Garage! Dock! Quick Closing! Summer is Just Around the Corner – Don't Delay! **$699,900.00**

WEBSTER LAKE – 33 Loveland Rd! South Pond - Fantastic 19,243' Waterfront Lot with 125' of Prime South Facing Natural Shoreline which Highlights this 5 Room, 2 Bedroom, 3 Season Cottage! Start Your Lake Memories Here! Cute & Cozy, the Way the Lake Use to Be! Open Floor Plan with Lots of Glass and Panoramic Lake Views! Just Enjoy it as it is, or Add on to it, or Take it Down and Build Your Dream Home Here! Don't Need the Entire Lot, Subdivide it and Bring the Cost Down! Perfect Gentle Slope to the Water! Town Services! **$949,900.00**

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RARE FIND – SPRAWLING 2,200 SQFT+ RANCH HOME! GARAGE. Situated on a Level 1/2 Acre Lot! FOUNDATION IS IN, CONTRACTOR IS READY TO GO! Very private backyard. GREAT LAYOUT! Grand Formal Entry Foyer. OPEN FLOOR PLAN. Living room w/Cathedral Ceiling. SOLID HARDWOOD FLOORS THROUGHOUT! IF YOU NEED ONE LEVEL LIVING & ALWAYS WANTED A NEW HOME. THIS COULD BE THE HOME YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR! PERFECT TIME TO MAKE IT YOUR OWN!
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DUDLEY - 10 MILL ROAD

Beautiful family home! 3 bedrooms, 2 full baths, newer widows & heating system. Mini split system. Hardwoods. Lg eat-in kitchen /Corian counters & Island! Warming fireplace with handsome mantel. Generous dinning room, spacious enough for your family gatherings. lower level fireplace family room, Harmon pellet insert! 2 car garage. Reduced **$340,000.**

WEBSTER - 23 EMERALD AVE.

Extraordinary Find! Beautiful 2 Family! Owner occupied with pride and it shows. Grand Front Entry! 3,012 Sf+/- living area. 12 rooms, 6 bedrooms, 2 updated Baths. 2nd Flr - Granite Countertops! High ceilings & Hardwood Floors, Modern Kitchens. Manicured 13,525 SF Lot with a Hip roof 3 car garage! **$439,900**

WEBSTER - 10 THOMPSON RD

2 FAMILY! LOCATION, LOCATION! OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS! SERIOUSLY CONSIDER THIS A SOLID INVESTMENT. A GENERAL BUSINESS ZONED! PRIME WEBSTER BUSINESS DISTRICT! A LARGE, DEEP LOT, 14,875 SF/0.34 ACRE. 9 Rooms, 4 Bedrooms, 2 Baths, FHW/OIL. Garage! Lot is currently private with a mature tree line in the rear. Property serviced by Municipal Water & Sewer, Natural Gas line in Basement. A QUICK CLOSE IS POSSIBLE. **$195,000.**

WEBSTER • 22 EASTERN AVE

LOOKING FOR AN AFFORDABLE, HUMBLE ABODE, THAT WONT BREAK THE BANK? Convenient Location, corner lot! 1288 SF+- , 4 BRS w/1st Flr Mstr BR, Half Bath! Eat-In Kitchen, Dining/Living Room Combination! 3-Season Porch. 2nd Flr - 3 BRs. Reshingled Roof, Replacement Windows, Updated Electric, Buderus Boiler. Part finished walk-out bsmnt! Garage! **$215,000**

THOMPSON CT - 15 WAGER RD

Cape with3 bedrooms, gleaming hardwoods, stone fireplace. Septic (2019), replacement windows, family and dining room, fresh paint throughout! Generator hook up, and updated Buderus boiler with holding tank. Garage under. This one maybe for you! assisted sale **$279,900.**

Featured Island Listing! Webster Lake - 22 Long Island

Once in a lifetime opportunity to own a Webster Lake Waterfront Cottage on Long Island! Properly named the "Grand View". Sandy beach, boat house! Antique Cottage w/5 Rms, 3 BRs, a stone fireplaced w/pellet stove, eat-in kitchen w/modern appliances, full bath! washer/dryer. Screened porches. Included, 25% ownership share in a main land waterfront lot at 38 Point Pleasant Rd, in sheltered Mumford Cove! land provides boat slip & winter storage. A FAR AWAY PLACE NEAR BY! **$389,900.**

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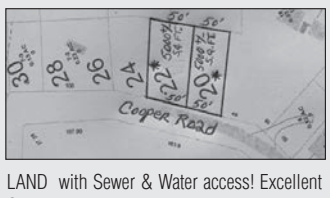

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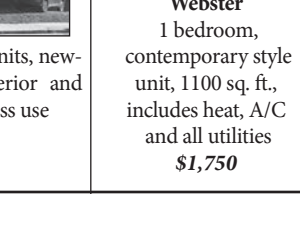

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SPORTS

Mullen's monster game helps Rams rally past Nashoba

BY NICK ETHIER
SPORTS EDITOR

DUDLEY — A tough week was in store for the Shepherd Hill Regional girls' varsity basketball team when they hosted a pair of tough Midland Wachusett League foes in Westborough High and Nashoba Regional on Tuesday, Jan. 11 and Thursday, Jan. 13, respectively. And after losing a 55-33 decision to the Rangers, the matchup with the Wolves became even more important.

Things didn't look all that well for the Rams in the early going, as they trailed by a 16-5 count after one quarter and 26-17 at the half. But The Hill rallied and eventually emerged victorious, 53-50.

"We have a very determined group of girls, that's for sure," said head coach Maura Hackenson. "We were coming off a tough loss to Westborough the other night. We came in with a little bit of a chip on our shoulder tonight. They needed to redeem themselves. Playing that hard tonight after a disappointing loss the other night speaks volumes of these girls."

Shepherd Hill junior Emery Mullen, the team's point guard, was the catalyst. After being held scoreless in the first quarter, she rattled off six, five and then a staggering 14 points in the next three periods to finish with a game-high 25 points. She also pulled down 12 rebounds for the double-double.

"She is extremely fast. That girl is lightning," Hackenson said of Mullen, a cross-country and outdoor track star when she isn't playing basketball. "She's extremely hard to defend, she runs the floor, she has endurance, she can last the whole game — I rarely sub her. She has matured a lot this year, basketball wise. She's really in a groove here."

With the Rams trailing after three quarters, 37-31, Mullen helped her team win the final frame, 22-13. She opened the period with a 3-pointer from the top of the arc, her first trey of the game.

"I hit one 3 and I felt good, so I kept going and it was working," said Mullen.

Mullen hit her next 3-pointer with 5:17 to play, this one from the right wing, to give Shepherd Hill its first lead at 41-40. Moments later, another triple from Mullen, this one a mirror image but from the left wing, regained the Rams' lead at 44-42.

Nashoba grabbed the lead back, 47-46, but Rams' sophomore Heidi Jarosz (9 points, 10 rebounds) finished off a layup to put her team ahead once again, 48-47. Mullen then hit five of six free throws in the final minute to keep The Hill ahead, and they were able to breathe a sigh of relief and savor the victory when Nashoba's Davita Honig's 3-pointer at the buzzer rimmed out.

"We definitely started off not as strong, but we pull through," Mullen said of trailing for much of the contest but rallying for the win. "We bring it together as a team, and that's what we did out there.

"It's Nashoba. They've always been great. The fact that we just did that, it's uplifting in our season," Mullen added.

Hackenson noted that a total team effort was needed to squeak by the Wolves.

"Our seniors really stepped up well for us. We needed that to win," Hackenson said of Sydney FitzGerald (6 points), Amanda Adamuska (6 rebounds) and Raegan Peck (8 points).

After a few lackluster seasons in years past, order seems to have been restored for the perennially powerful Rams, who improved to 5-2.

"We are back on track up here at Shepherd Hill, I think. Our feeder programs are doing well and everyone has bought in," Hackenson said.

Nick Ethier photos

Shepherd Hill's Raegan Peck steps into a jump shot versus Nashoba.

Rockets lose to tough Needham team, but expectations remain high

BY NICK ETHIER
SPORTS EDITOR

AUBURN — Sure, playing Needham High in the battle of the Rockets at Horgan Arena on Monday, Jan. 17 and losing by a 5-0 final may not look the best on paper, but Auburn High's girls' varsity ice hockey team battled hard as they continue to compete at a high level game in and game out.

"They're probably our strongest opponent so far," Auburn head coach Peter LaPrad said of Needham. "They're a little deeper than us. They had three solid lines that kept coming at us. But I loved the grit of my girls out there, just going at it for three strong periods. We didn't have the legs to keep up with them for the whole game, but I'm very pleased. It's good for us because that's a team up for us and we were competitive with them."

Auburn — a co-op that also includes student-athletes from Blackstone-Millville Regional, Burncoat High, Doherty High, Douglas High, Grafton High, Notre Dame Academy and Tantasqua Regional — is now an impressive 5-3 to start the season.

"I love my team right now. The girls are great," said LaPrad. "They're a true team with good chemistry."

Auburn and Needham were deadlocked in a scoreless battle for much of the first period, and the game remained tied with seven minutes to play in the opening frame when starting goalie Victoria Horne made an

Turn To ROCKETS page A14

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SPORTS

Panthers complete important three-game sweep over Northbridge, Bartlett and Tantasqua

BY NICK ETHIER
SPORTS EDITOR

SPENCER — After defeating the likes of Pathfinder Regional and West Boylston High to close out 2021 an even 3-3, the David Prouty Regional boys' varsity basketball team had a tough stretch within Southern Worcester County League (SWCL) play to open the calendar year. And, in an impressive display that will likely put the league on notice, the Panthers prevailed in each situation.

Prouty defeated Northbridge High (56-41), then Bartlett High (83-70) and finally Tantasqua Regional (56-48), that game taking place Friday, Jan. 14 as the Panthers improved to 6-3.

"I'm proud of our guys because for David Prouty to say we just won at Northbridge, at Bartlett and beat Tantasqua, I'm really happy for the boys," said head coach Pat O'Connor after the win over the Warriors.

Prouty's recent 5-0 stretch says more about the team than the 1-3 start to open the season, O'Connor noted.

"We had a player who wasn't able to play for personal reasons. He's back, and ever since he's been back we haven't lost," he said of Alec Fournier. "He's a huge piece. We really struggled without him. We have a good, solid group, but we're a small school so we don't have a lot of depth."

That group includes both Alec (5 of 6 free throws in second half) and Evan Fournier (9 points), Byron Tippins (12 points), Chris Murzycki (9 points) and team leader Braeden White (17 points).

"He just loves basketball and works at his game the right way more than any player I've ever been around," O'Connor said of White, the team's floor general at the point guard position. "He makes life easy as a coach. He puts other players in positions that makes it easy for everybody else."

The Panthers held leads of 19-12 after one quarter, 32-21 at halftime and 45-35 through three periods. But Tantasqua regularly chipped away at the deficit, including the start to the fourth quarter.

There, the Warriors scored the first five points as Liam Hubacz netted all of his points in a one-minute stretch. But Tantasqua (led in scoring by Hunter Hill and Dylan Thompson, both with 10 points) could get no closer, as head coach Scott Dion explained a crucial sequence following his team's rally.

"I think we had the game down to [five] points and we gave up a rebound on a free throw, they hit a 3," Dion said of a trey from the corner by Murzycki. "We came down and made a shot, and then they come down and [Murzycki] made another 3. That brought their lead up to 10 and we just couldn't overcome that."

Bryce Tessier of Tantasqua catches a pass down low on the block.

Nick Ethier photos

Tantasqua's Hunter Hill has his eyes on the basket while driving through the lane.

The Warriors could not inch the deficit closer than the five they had to open the quarter, as they dropped to 2-6.

Dion had kind words for O'Connor and the Prouty program, a program he coached at before taking the job at Tantasqua four seasons ago.

"Obviously, I know Prouty very well. Coach O'Connor and I are very close. I was coach here for 11 years, [including] his senior year," Dion said of the 2007-2008 season. "Both of his assistants on the bench played for me, Kyle Driscoll and Matt Pillsbury. You get a relationship with kids and you know they're going to play their tails have. He has really good pieces and he has a phenomenal point guard. Our team right now is still trying to find itself."

O'Connor, who cut his teeth coaching at North Brookfield High originally, has been the Panthers' coach since Dion departed.

"I graduated from here, live in Spencer and now I teach eighth grade math here. I always wanted to be part of Spencer-East Brookfield," O'Connor said before stating how big it was to defeat Dion — "one of my best friends," according to O'Connor — and the Warriors.

"We're now the smallest school in the SWCL by a lot and beating the biggest school in the SWCL is a huge deal. What it does for the kids is unbelievable," he said.

High School Notebook

Monday, Jan. 10

David Prouty 52, Bartlett 28 — Olivia Pepin led the way for the Panthers' girls' basketball team with 24 points, while Gabby Soter chipped in 14. David Prouty led, 22-0, after the first quarter on their way to defeating the Indians.

Tantasqua 102, Worcester 67 — In a coed swim meet, the Warriors defeated Worcerster. The medley relay team of Kira Dambly, Ethan Korenda, Zoey Zhu and Max Sullivan got Tantasqua started with a win. Other winners included Dambly (200 IM), Sullivan (50 freestyle, 100 backstroke), Korenda (100 butterfly), Jonah Scherer (500 freestyle), and the 400 freestyle relay team of Dambly, Zach Hilborn, Scherer and Sullivan ended the day with a victory.

Wednesday, Jan. 12

Shrewsbury 72, Tantasqua 54 — Ethan Korenda (50 freestyle, 500 freestyle), Max Pitcher (diving) and Jonah Scherer (100 butterfly) were all winners for the Warriors in a boys' swim meet, but it wasn't enough against the Colonials. Tantasqua is now 3-3.

Shrewsbury 101, Tantasqua 62 — Similar to the boys' meet, the Warriors also lost in girls' swimming. The winners for Tantasqua (3-3) included Kira Dambly (200 freestyle), Zoey Zhu (500 freestyle) and Katie Wade (100 breaststroke).

Thursday, Jan. 13

Tantasqua 48, David Prouty 37 — The Panthers played a hard-fought girls' basketball game versus the Warriors, but they fell 11 points short. Prouty's Gabby Soter led the way with 25 points, including a 12 of 14 performance from the free throw line.

Friday, Jan. 14

Tantasqua 100, Gardner 43 — A great meet was turned in by the Warriors as the girls' team triumphed and improved to 4-3. The 200 medley relay team (Kira Dambly, Tori Stendrup, Zoey Zhu, Makenna Pentoney), Katie Wade (200 freestyle, 100 butterfly), Stendrup (200 IM, 100 breaststroke), Zhu (50 freestyle, 100 backstroke), Pentoney (100 freestyle), Dambly (500 freestyle), the 200 freestyle relay team (Stendrup, Marana Gentile, Molly Bilodeau, Wade) and the 400 freestyle relay team (Zhu, Gentile, Dambly, Wade) all turned in winning performances.

Gardner 69, Tantasqua 48 — Despite winnings swims turned in by Ethan Korenda (200 freestyle, 100 breaststroke), Jonah Scherer (500 freestyle) and the 200 freestyle relay team (Zachary Hilborn, Max Pitcher, Cameron Giroux, Korenda), the Warriors lost their boys' meet and are now 3-4.

ROCKETS

continued from page A13

aggressive poke-check save on a streaking Lily Schmalz of Needham.

But Needham took a 1-0 lead into the first intermission when they scored with 2:55 remaining. Maeve Hymovitz fed a pass to Maddie Ledbury, whose shot got past Horne.

Needham then grabbed a 3-0 lead early in the second period with two quick goals off the sticks of Sofia Berejik and Jill Peabody. Shortly thereafter, Horne (18 saves) gave way to Rachel Proulx (13 saves), who played the second half of the game in net for Auburn.

"My goaltenders are fantastic," LaPrad said of Horne and Proulx. "They're both playing great."

LaPrad noted that Haley Vadenais, Avery Knott and Madison Leonard help out the goalies as part of "a really deep and solid defensive core."

Needham (6-1-2) finished off its 5-0 victory with a pair of third period strikes. Hymovitz and Ellie Keenan (Erika Stanton assist) had the goals.

Auburn had its chances, but Needham goalie Mina Brown finished with 16 saves for the shutout. Auburn's best opportunity came very late in the first period when freshman Olivia Viens hustled down the right wing. She then fed a centering pass onto the stick of freshman Izzy Spencer, who shot back toward the right side of the net. Her laser missed the top corner by mere inches.

"We have a couple of freshmen out there that are really doing well, putting points up," LaPrad said of both Spencer and Viens.

Auburn also had three power play chances and generated five shots during those six minutes, but to no avail.

Despite the loss, LaPrad likes the way his team is progressing and noted that the Rockets are 3-1 in Central Mass. Conference games against the likes of Woodstock Academy (2-0), Leominster High (1-0) and Oakmont Regional (0-1).

"The program is really getting stronger," LaPrad said of what is now his 12th year coaching at the varsity level, which he has done since Day 1. "It has taken many, many years to get to the point where we've got the depth that we have. We can go out and compete with anybody right now. The future looks bright."

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