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Friday, June 25, 2021

Tantasqua grad Emma O’Coin awarded CMS Chamber Scholarship

STURBRIDGE — The Chamber of Central Mass South is excited to announce the winner of the Chamber Scholarship for 2021. This year, a scholarship in the amount of \$1,000 will be awarded to one deserving, local student upon successful completion of their first semester of college with a 3.0 GPA or higher.

This year’s \$1000 CMS Chamber scholarship recipient is Emma O’Coin, a Class of 2021 graduate of Tantasqua Regional Senior High School.

O’Coin, an exceptional student with a truly stellar school transcript, is also an outstanding young citizen in our community. Organized and dependable, she has been described as a true



Courtesy

Emma O’Coin

leader, ambitious and determined, possessing an enthusiastic spirit and personality that truly brighten a room. Emma participated in many school activities and clubs including show choir, drama club, swim team, track and field, marching band and concert band where she was first chair.

An active member of National Honor Society, she took part in many of the society’s fundraisers and community outreach programs. Emma is also an active volunteer with the United Way and has freely given her time to support events like the Annual Harvest Festival on the Sturbridge Town Common. She also has been a volunteer and employee at Harrington Hospital where she has already become a valued member of the healthcare team.

O’Coin will take her passion for science and helping others and pursue her goal to become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. With her ability to balance her studies, extracurricular activities and community service, we feel confident Emma can achieve any goal on which she sets her sights.

“As usual, we had a talented field of applicants this year, but Emma really did stand out among them,” says Alexandra McNitt, Executive Director. “I, personally, was thrilled with the committee’s choice as I’ve had the pleasure of working with Emma a few times when she volunteered at the Harvest Festival and our Info booth at the Brimfield Shows. She is a big personality with an even bigger heart. I have no doubt she will succeed in any pursuit she sets her mind to.”

The Chamber of Central Mass. South and its members are deeply gratified to be able to contribute to the ongoing education and success of this exceptional young woman and offer her well-earned congratulations as she embarks on her journey into higher education. The Chamber of Central Mass South typically offers \$1000 scholarships to local students each year. Monies are allocated from the Chamber’s Charities and Scholarship Fund which is supported by the annual ‘Your Chance to Be a Millionaire’ lottery scratch tickets raffle, the Chamber’s Annual Golf Classic and individual contributions from Chamber Members. Scholarship applications can be obtained at local high school guidance offices or online at the Chamber website. The annual deadline to apply is April 1.

“We’re seeing some diversification”
Sturbridge economy slowly becoming broader

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

STURBRIDGE – The long-awaited town Economic Assessment and Strategy report got its first public showing last week, exploring how Sturbridge’s economy has weathered Covid and where it can go from here.

“We’re seeing some diversification” in business types, said consultant Kathleen McCabe of McCabe Enterprises. “It’s happening slowly, [but] more quickly than your [population] growth rate.”

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TCA holds Pre-K graduation ceremony

SOUTHBIDGE — Earlier this month, Trinity Catholic Academy’s Pre-K graduation was held at St. Mary’s Church in Southbridge.

After last year’s traveling graduation, St. Mary’s Church offered a spacious opportunity for families to gather to celebrate the 10 deserving Pre-K Graduates of Trinity Catholic Academy. Pre-K teacher, Melissa Hilli and asst. Sandra Lomme presented these inspired and animated children with their graduation cap & certificate of completion for the 2020-2021 in-person school year. Family members and grandparents alike were entertained with music, movement and song performed by the little graduates that were led by Music & Movement teacher, Nicole Ladd. They were so excited to perform for all.

As challenging as it may have been through the pandemic, these scholars followed protocol for a successful healthy school year. The 2020-21 school year allowed for enrollment of 10 Pre-K students. Hopefully, future months reveal the ability to include more four-year-olds who are requesting to attend the fun innovative group for fall 2021. TCA offers full-day preschool, three-day or five-day for children aged 4 by

Turn To **GRADS**, page **A13**



Sturbridge police place second in regional award competition

STURBRIDGE – The Sturbridge Police Department recently took second place for the New England Association of Chiefs of Police (NEACOP) Community Policing Award.

Reserved for communities with populations under 15,000, the award is available to police departments throughout New England.

“The NEACOP is aware of how important community policing is, especially in the New England states, and continue to recognize the best agencies in the region,” read a statement released by the organization. “The award is not given for a program, but rather the entire agency’s efforts in achieving a successful community policing program. The agency and its members have embraced a community policing policy that is present in its work and interaction with the community.”

The NEACOP has a committee of recognized police chiefs in community policing who review each applicant before deciding the top departments. The committee is limited to three awards each year.

For SPD officials, it means a lot to take home a second-place finish for an award spanning all of New England.

“The Sturbridge Police Department remains committed to working with community residents to identify problems and collaborate on implementing solutions that produce meaningful results for our community,” read a statement released by the department.

The Sturbridge Police Department took part in several community policing initiatives this past year, including programs with senior citizens, car seat installs, Operation Yellow Blitz, Toys for Tots, and a drive-up Christmas dinner for seniors, among others. And these were all able to take place despite the pandemic.

“Some of the community policing initiatives were unconventional due to COVID, and others involved safety protocols,” read a statement released by SPD Chief Earl Dessert. “I am proud of the men and women in our agency for their continued dedication to community policing. I am just as proud to serve a community that continuously supports their police department. We often have people stop by and drop off snacks for the members, or they drop an email thanking us, or they see us on the streets and thank us.”

Baker administration begins closing down mass vaccination sites

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION – Recognizing that most residents interested in receiving a COVID-19 vaccination have already scheduled both shots, the Baker-Polito Administration recently announced plans to ramp down operations at mass vaccine sites.

Over the next month, mass vaccine sites across the Commonwealth will begin to close. With nearly 3.7 million residents fully vaccinated and over 4.3 million people receiving at least a first dose, Gov. Charlie Baker is focused on increasing targeted community-based vaccine efforts to reach remaining populations.

“All mass vaccination vendors will continue to work closely with the Commonwealth as they ramp down operations at mass vaccination sites over the next several weeks,” Baker said.

Gillette Stadium, the Hynes Convention Center, the Reggie Lewis Center, Natick Mall, and the Doubletree in Danvers will finish operations by the end of June.

The Eastfield Mall in Springfield and the former Circuit City in Dartmouth will remain open into

July. Vaccine vendors CIC Health and Curative will continue to support community mobile sites, including on-site employer clinics and school-based clinics.

Despite a shaky start that saw long lines and problems with online registrations, the Commonwealth’s mass vaccination organizers rebounded to lead a successful program. The effort has led to major decreases in new COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, even after the state fully reopened and mask mandates were lifted.

“Today, Massachusetts is a nationwide leader in vaccination, with 79 percent of all adult residents and two-thirds of all residents having received at least one dose,” Baker added.

If you haven’t gotten your vaccine yet, there is still time to register at a mass vaccination site or a regional venue. In total, there are more than 900 vaccine locations available across Massachusetts. The COVID-19 vaccine is free, and individuals do not need insurance or an ID to get the vaccine.

Currently planned closing dates for mass vaccination sites are as

follows: Gillette Stadium (June 14); Hynes Convention Center (June 22); Natick Mall (June 23); Reggie Lewis Center (June 27); Doubletree in Danvers (June 30); Eastfield Mall in Springfield (July 6); the former Circuit City in Dartmouth (July 13).

For more information about scheduling and hours of operation at various vaccine sites, visit www.vaxfinder.mass.gov.

Additionally, state officials will continue sending targeted text and phone messages to residents in disproportionately impacted commu-

nities.

“These messages remind people of the importance of getting a vaccine, and they share locations in their community where they can get vaccinated,” Baker said.

To date, targeted messages have been sent to over 1.1 million residents in specific communities. This past week, messages were sent to residents of Brockton, Malden, Methuen, Revere, and Worcester.

To learn more about the state’s vaccination program, visit www.mass.gov.

Area students named to President’s List at Western New England University

SPRINGFIELD — A model for the "New Traditional University," Western New England University (WNE) is among just 13% of private (5,000 students or less) institutions ranked among US News and World Report "National Universities" and a "Top 100 Engineering Program." WNE enrolls 3,690 students, including 2,552 full-time undergraduate, in bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees at its Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Business, Engineering, Pharmacy & Health Sciences, and School of Law.

Western New England University is pleased to announce that the following area students are among more than 460 named to the WNE Spring Semester 2021 President's List for achieving a semester grade point average of 3.80 or higher.

Joshua David Bolte--BSE in Electrical Engineering from Brimfield

Adam A. Jensen--BS in Information Technology from Brimfield

John Joseph Reilly--BS in Information Technology from Brimfield

Kevin M P Riel--BS in Health Sciences from Brimfield

Alison Aimee Fortier--BSE in Biomedical Engineering from Wales
Matthew J. Dumas--BSE in Mechanical Engineering/ Mechatronics Concentration from Holland

Joseph Joshua Gonzalez--BSE in Electrical Engineering from Holland

A model for the "New Traditional University," Western New England University (WNE) is among just 13% of private (5,000 students or less) institutions ranked among US News and World Report "National Universities" and a "Top 100 Engineering Program." Known for its supportive environment and picturesque campus in Springfield, MA, WNE enrolls 3,690 students, including 2,552 full-time undergraduate, in bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees at its Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Business, Engineering, Pharmacy & Health Sciences, and School of Law. A WNE education provides career-span agility through a curriculum grounded in professional/experiential studies, enhanced by the liberal arts, and enriched by mentored research that equips graduates to adapt and succeed in the workplace of tomorrow.

Area students named to Dean’s List at Western New England University

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Western New England University is pleased to announce that the following area students are among more than 750 named to the WNE Spring Semester 2021 Dean's List for achieving a semester grade point average of 3.30 or higher.

Carly Mari Phaneuf--BA in English from Brimfield

Maxfield Wyatt Phaneuf--BSE in Civil Engineering/Environmental Engineering Concentration from Brimfield

Shauna M. Rowley--BS in Forensic Biology from Fiskdale

Payton Jo Barry--BA in Elementary

Education/English from Fiskdale

Spencer McKinley Adam Cook--BSBA in Accounting from Fiskdale

Jacob John Jolin--BSBA in Pharmaceutical Business from Sturbridge

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Springfield College recognizes Dean’s List students

SPRINGFIELD — Springfield College Recognizes Dean's List Students for the 2021 Spring Semester.

Julia Scioletti from Sturbridge. Scioletti has a primary major of Health Science/Occupational Therapy.

Heather Fontaine from Brimfield. Fontaine has a primary major of Health Science and Pre-Physical Therapy.

Caitlyn Mills from Sturbridge. Mills has a primary major of Health Science and Pre-Physical Therapy.

Emma Jacque from Brimfield. Jacque has a primary major of Marketing.

The criteria for selection to the Dean's List are as follows: The student must have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours of graded coursework for the term, exclusive of "P" grades. The student must not have any incompletes or missing grades in the designated term. The student must have a minimum semester grade average of 3.500 for the term.

Springfield College is an independent, nonprofit, coeducational institution founded in 1885. Approximately 4,100 students, including 2,500 full-time undergraduate students, study at its main campus in Springfield, Mass., and at its regional campuses across the country. Springfield College inspires students through the guiding principles of its Humanics philosophy - educating in spirit, mind, and body for leadership in service to others.

Area residents named to Bridgewater dean’s list

BRIDGEWATER – The following area residents were named to the dean’s list for the spring semester at Bridgewater State University:

Brimfield
Jim W. Damon and Joshua Watts
Charlton
Shaelyn K. Donovan, Jake J. Fortin, Abby T. Holden and Carlos A. Sousa.

Fiskdale
Nate H. Eliason and Allie J. Morin
Sturbridge
Emily E. Macey, Cooper Novelline and Alice C. Van Wickler.

Southbridge
Nathan Pruitt and Amelia L. Tieri



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Harrington HealthCare reports 50,000th vaccination, 60,000th COVID test

SOUTHBIDGE — Harrington HealthCare System reached two significant milestones in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic today: the healthcare system administered its 50,000th dose of COVID-19 vaccine this morning and also administered its 60,000th COVID-19 test.

Eighteen year ol, Haven Hubacz received the 50,000th dose of the COVID-19 vaccination from Harrington HealthCare. As a recent graduate of Tantasqua High School in Fiskdale, she says she got vac-

nated in order to keep herself and her fellow students safe when she begins her first semester of college this fall.

“This really is a significant milestone in the 16-month ordeal of this pandemic for our region,” said Harrington HealthCare President and CEO Ed Moore. “We are thrilled to have provided 50,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to our community so that we can all begin to move past the pandemic and safely return to working, gathering, and living life the way we all want to once again.”

“However it seems fitting that at the same time, we’ve also reached a milestone marker for COVID tests administered as well – 60,000 tests as of today,” Moore continued. “That serves as an important reminder that although we’ve made incredible progress in beating back the pandemic, we are not out of the woods yet, particularly as variants of the virus continue to emerge. I would urge anyone who is eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine but has not done so yet to get vaccinated as soon as possible so we can keep

this positive momentum moving forward.”

Harrington HealthCare offers COVID-19 vaccination by appointment as well as during designated walk-in hours. The healthcare system also offers COVID-19 testing by appointment only. For the most up-to-date information on vaccination and testing appointments, hours and locations, visit harringtonhospital.org/coronavirus.

Harrington HealthCare System is a comprehensive regional healthcare system serving more than 25 communities across south central Massachusetts and northeastern Connecticut. The system includes Harrington Hospital in Southbridge, Harrington HealthCare at Webster and three additional major medical office buildings: Harrington HealthCare at Charlton, Harrington HealthCare at 169, also in Charlton, and Harrington HealthCare at Spencer; Harrington Physician Services, our primary care and multi-specialty physician group; UrgentCare Express at Harrington in Charlton and Oxford; The Cancer Center at Harrington in Southbridge, and the region’s largest Behavioral Health programs for mental health and substance use.

University of Rhode Island names local students to Dean’s List

KINGSTON, R.I. — The University of Rhode Island is pleased to announce the Spring 2021 Dean’s List. More than 7,000 students were named to the Spring 2021 Dean’s List, representing nearly all of Rhode Island’s cities and towns, all six New England states, New York and New Jersey, and many other states and countries.

The following local students were named to the list:

Jonathan Cherry of Sturbridge
Sydney Davey of Sturbridge
Vanessa Ricci of Brimfield
Gwenevier Riendeau of Brimfield
Katlyn Shonak of Sturbridge

To be included on the Dean’s List, full-time students must have completed 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable during a semester and achieved at least a 3.30 quality point average. Part-time students qualify with the accumulation of 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable earning at least a 3.30 quality point average.

To view the entire Dean’s List, visit: uri.edu/academics/deans-list/

About the University of Rhode Island

Founded in 1892, the University of Rhode Island is the principal

public flagship research and graduate institution in Rhode Island. Competitive and highly regarded, its 14,300 undergraduate students and more than 2,700 graduate students represent 48 states and 76 countries across the globe. With 203 academic programs, URI offers its undergraduate, graduate, and professional students distinctive educational opportunities designed to meet the global challenges of today’s world and the rapidly evolving needs of tomorrow. At URI, you will find some of today’s leading innovators, discoverers, and creative problem solvers. To learn more, visit: uri.edu.

Roger Williams University announces Dean’s List

BRISTOL, R.I. — Select students have been named to the Spring 2021 Dean’s List at Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I. Full-time students who complete 12 or more credits per semester and earn a GPA of 3.4 or higher are placed on the Dean’s List that semester.

Natalie Main of Fiskdale
Cassidy Pilate of Sturbridge
About RWU

With campuses on the coast of Bristol and in the heart of Providence,

R.I., Roger Williams University is a forward-thinking private university committed to strengthening society through engaged teaching and learning. At RWU, small classes, direct access to faculty and guaranteed opportunity for real-world projects ensure that its nearly 4,000 undergraduates - along with hundreds of law students, graduate students and adult learners - graduate with the ability to think critically along with the practical skills that today’s

employers demand. Roger Williams is leading the way in American higher education, confronting the most pressing issues facing students and families - increasing costs, rising debt and job readiness.



ACCURACY WATCH

The Sturbridge 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, call (508) 909-4106 or email news@stonebridgepress.com. During normal business hours. During non-business hours, leave a message in the editor’s voice mailbox. The editor will return your phone call.

Dean College announces Dean’s List

FRANKLIN — Dean College is pleased to announce the local students that have earned a place on the Dean’s List for the Spring 2021 semester. These students have demonstrated a serious commitment to their studies while at Dean College.

Rachael Hooker of Sturbridge
Alicia Nascembeni of Wales
Founded in 1865, Dean College is a

private, residential college located in Franklin Massachusetts, 45 minutes from Boston, Massachusetts, and Providence, Rhode Island. Dean College offers baccalaureate degrees, associate degree programs, as well as a robust schedule of part-time continuing and professional education credit and certificate programs throughout the calendar year.



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Trinity Catholic Academy honor roll

SOUTHBIDGE — Trinity Catholic Academy has released its honor roll for the third trimester of the 2020-2021 school year.

Grade 4

High Honors: Layla Beu, David Gil
Honors: Chloe Cahill, Sarah Clark, Lucas Cournoyer, Sofia Henao, Fernandez Kinuthia, Lily Nellis, Kylar Norris, Anthony Postale, Kerstin Smaltz

Grade 5

High Honors: Alivia Gauvin, Oliver MacDonald
Honors: Jamison Durocher, Matthew Ehrhard, Aedyn Esser, Issayris Gonzalez-Rivera, Heather Kennedy, Isabella Lamica, Olivia Neuenschwander, Nolan Smeltzer

Grade 6

High Honors: Apollo Logan
Honors: Elliot Gaspar, Michael Gasperini, Melany Ngo, Iban Pelaez, Isabel Raczkowski, Yashvi Swadia, Nico Yacavace

Grade 7

High Honors: Anika Ferrantino
Honors: Charles Congdon, Colin Ladd, Amari Pereira, Nicholas Sargent

Grade 8

High Honors: Luisa Henao, Elena Jerez, Casey Renaud, Ava Simon, Havish Swadia, Manaali Vaidya
Honors: Summer Hudson, Jennalee Rousseau

✿ ✿ ✿ Friday’s Child ✿ ✿ ✿



Hi! My name is Thomas and I love Italian food and hamburgers!

Thomas is a quiet young man of Caucasian descent who loves Harry Potter and Pokémon. He likes to be active and spend time outside. However, when he is indoors, his favorite thing to do is play Nintendo. Thomas would like to go hiking and fishing but so far, he has not had the opportunity to do so. His favorite foods include anything Italian and hamburgers. However, he is not a fan of hot dogs.

Thomas’ favorite subject is science, and he receives extra supports in school to help him complete his assignments on time.

Thomas is legally freed for adoption and is seeking a patient and caring family that is open to him making a slow transition to their home. He will do well in a family of any constellation, where he can be the only or significantly youngest child in the home.

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.mare-inc.org. The sooner you call, the sooner a waiting child will have a permanent place to call home.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. College group
5. Small morsels of food
11. Actress Dunham
12. Puts a limit on
16. Used for baking or drying
17. Commercial
18. Zookeeper Bindi
19. Walk in one’s sleep
24. The Great Lakes State
25. Winter sport
26. A thin layer on something
27. Peacock network
28. Give birth to a lamb or kid
29. “Too Scared to Cry” author
30. Nose
31. Friend
33. Country music legend Haggard
34. Curved
38. More deformed
39. Bleated
40. Set on its end
43. An aspect of Ra
44. Releasing hormone (abbr.)
45. Harsh, grating noise
49. __ Francisco
50. Common Japanese surname
51. Punish with an arbitrary penalty
53. Football position (abbr.)
54. Not in the know
56. African antelope
58. Popular tech (abbr.)
59. Baseball teams get three of them
60. Make up one’s mind
63. __ Spumante (Italian wine)
64. Martens
65. Susan and Tom are two

CLUES DOWN

1. Excessively showy
2. Put an end to
3. Blood disorder
4. Ingredient in wine
5. Shellfish
6. Made smaller
7. We
8. The Treasure State
9. __ Ekland, actress
10. Male parent
13. One hundredth of a watt (abbr.)
14. Dish of minced meat
15. Smothered laugh
20. Article
21. Atomic #12
22. Small parrot
23. Fictional “Star Wars” planet
27. French wine grape
29. Football stat (abbr.)
30. Sound unit
31. Where you sleep
32. University of Dayton
33. Miller beer offering
34. Feel embarrassed
35. Able to be estimated
36. Commune in NW France
37. Adult female chicken
38. Intergovernmental organization
40. Archaic term for until
41. That which is not sacred
42. Sound made in speech
44. Handgun (slang)
45. Fill up again
46. Evoke or awaken
47. Beam Me Up, __!
48. Spider wasp genus
50. Headress
51. Exclamation of surprise
52. Of I
54. Figures
55. Men’s fashion accessories
57. Indicates position
61. Megabyte
62. The Prairie State

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Northeastern University
announces Dean’s List

BOSTON — Northeastern University is pleased to recognize those students who distinguish themselves academically during the course of the school year. The following residents were recently named to the University's dean's list for the Spring semester, which ended in May 2021. To achieve the dean's list distinction, students must carry a full program of at least four courses, have a quality point average of 3.5 or greater out of a possible 4.0 and carry no single grade lower than a C- during the course of their college career. Each student receives a letter of commendation and congratulation from their college dean.

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Kid-friendly staycation ideas

Adults may see staycations as great opportunities to catch up on summer reading and finish projects around the house. Children, however, may not always approach time off at home with that same enthusiasm.

Parents confronted with the challenge of keeping kids happy and engaged during staycations can try these kid-friendly ideas to ensure everyone enjoys their time off, even if the bulk of it is spent at home.

• Hit the carnival circuit. Traveling carnivals are a staple of summer in many small communities. These special events feature rides, games and, of course, food. Families can make a night of it at a nearby carnival (one is no doubt within driving distance on just about any night in July and August). Budget-conscious staycationers can attend carnivals on bracelet nights, when both adults



and kids can typically enjoy endless rides for one set price as opposed to having to purchase tickets for each individual ride.

• Find a place to swim. Whether it's a nearby lake or a day at the ocean, a weekday afternoon spent

swimming is a great way to remind the family that a staycation is still a vacation. If swimming in a lake or in the ocean is not possible and you don't have the luxury of a backyard pool, purchase an inflatable pool (or two) that the whole family can enjoy.

• Embrace your inner artists. Parents can visit a local arts and crafts store and spend a day painting or making projects with their children. Choose a theme, like making jewelry or painting a family portrait, and then exchange your masterpieces or create a family art exhibit when the session is over.

• Go fishing. Fishing can be a fun activity for the whole family and a great way to get out of the house without breaking the bank. Create a competition to see who can catch the most and/or the biggest fish. If you catch fish that you're allowed to take home, involve the whole family in making a delicious fish dinner that night.

Staycations can be fun for the whole family, especially when parents take time to organize a host of kid-friendly activities.

Union College celebrates 227th Commencement

SCHENECTADY, N.Y. — More than 470 students in the Class of 2021 filled Union's Hull Plaza Sunday to celebrate Union's 227th Commencement.

Those earning degrees were: Camier Hall of Fiskdale. Hall earned a Bachelor of Science majoring in Psychology, cum laude

Sarah Vanasse of Sturbridge. Vanasse earned a Bachelor of Science majoring in Biology and Anthropology, cum laude

Union College, founded in 1795 as the first college chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, offers programs in the liberal arts and engineering to 2,100 undergraduates of high academic promise and strong personal motivation. Union, with its long history of blending disciplines, is a leader in educating students to be engaged, innovative and ethical contributors to an increasingly diverse, global and technologically complex society.

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Historical Society kicks off season Sept. 23

STURBRIDGE — The Sturbridge Historical Society will be starting up again on Thursday, Sept. 23 to begin our 2021-2022 programs. We hope everything has gone well with all of you during the last year and a half with the Covid 19 Pandemic. It has been such a difficult time for all of us.

It will be great to see everyone again.

I will do my best to have the programs on Thursdays. However, the

Public House has said that because of lost revenue that has happened, some of the programs might have to be on another night. I will give you plenty of notice if that happens.

The dates have been confirmed for Thursday, Sept. 23 and Oct. 28 to start the year. I will send out information about our first programs later but just happy to let you know that programs will be starting up again.

Have a great summer.

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What to know about outdoor living spaces



Home trends come and go. What was popular as recently as a decade ago may have lost some luster in the eyes of today's home buyers. Though that's historically been the case in regard to real estate, outdoor living rooms are one relatively recent home trend that figures to have a longer shelf life, especially in the aftermath of a global pandemic during which people were encouraged to stay home as much as possible.

Real estate professionals and organizations like the National Association of Home Builders note the popularity of outdoor living spaces among prospective home buyers, and how that popularity has grown in recent years. Outdoor living rooms not only appeal to potential buyers, they also serve as a means for current homeowners to get more out of their properties. Homeowners mulling outdoor living space projects should consider various factors before deciding to go ahead with a project.

- **Cost:** The home renovation resource HomeAdvisor estimates that the average cost of an outdoor living space is around \$7,600. That cost can easily go up depending on where homeowners live and the features they want to have in their outdoor living spaces. For example, including a built-in fire pit in an outdoor living space will cost more than purchasing a stand-alone fire pit that can be picked up and moved. But many homeowners feel a built-in fire pit makes an outdoor living

space even more special.

- **Return on investment:** Return on investment is another factor for homeowners to consider as they

try to decide if they should install outdoor living spaces and how to design those areas. Much conflicting data about the ROI on outdoor

kitchens can be found online, but many trusted real estate organizations report that such additions do not mesmerize prospective buyers. Data from the American Institute of Architects indicates that outdoor kitchens are routinely ranked among the least desirable home features, which means homeowners should not expect substantial ROI when selling their homes. But that built-in fire pit? Estimates from the National Association of Realtors suggest fire features recover around 67 percent of homeowners' initial investment. In addition, 83 percent of homeowners surveyed by the NAR who had installed fire features said they had a greater desire to be home after completing the project.

- **Space:** An outdoor living space may only be as relaxing as the space allows. The proximity of neighbors may affect privacy levels, which can make it hard to enjoy movie night outdoors or curl up to quietly read a good book. In addition, landscaping also may need to be addressed if drainage is an issue in the backyard. That can add to the cost, and drainage concerns may limit the materials homeowners can work with.

Outdoor living spaces are popular. Homeowners must consider various factors before deciding if such spaces are for them.

How to master grilling a thick cut of meat

A thick cut of meat grilled over an open flame can make for a mouth watering meal. While such an endeavor likely won't lead to any complaints around the dinner table, many people still shy away from grilling especially thick cuts of meat.

A thick cut of uncooked meat can intimidate even the most devoted grilling enthusiast. Such cuts tend to take a long time to cook, and many a grilling devotee has put in that time only to end up with a dried out piece of meat. So what do? The following are some ways to master the art of grilling thick cuts of meat.

- **Reverse sear the steak.** According to Omaha Steaks, reverse searing involves bringing the steak up to temperature via indirect heat first, then searing the outside second. Reverse searing ensures the outside of the steak does not become charred while the inside takes its time cooking. This requires using both direct and indirect heat. When using a gas grill with multiple burners, it's easy to create direct and indirect heating zones by only turning one set of burners on. When using a charcoal grill, move the hot coals



to one side of the grill and leave the other side empty. Omaha Steaks recommends maintaining a grill temperature between 250 and 300 F and placing the meat over indirect heat first, keeping the steak there until a digital thermometer reads roughly 10 to 15 degrees below the desired temperature of the meat. The steak can then be moved over direct heat so all sides can be seared.

- **Salt the meat overnight.** People hesitant to salt their meat out of fear of overconsumption of sodium should know that it's not necessary

to use a lot of salt to create a flavorful piece of meat. A sprinkling of kosher salt over the surface of the meat is all that's necessary. Once the meat has been salted, store it in the refrigerator, uncovered, overnight, which allows ample time for the cut to fully absorb the salt, ultimately contributing to a juicy cut of meat.

- **Be patient.** Once the meat has been taken off the grill, let it sit for awhile before slicing into it. The goal is to allow the juice inside the meat to redistribute so each bite is as mouth watering as possible. This is the same principle that leads Thanksgiving cooks to let turkeys sit for awhile when they first come out of the oven. While turkeys may require roughly 30 minutes of sitting, meat typically only needs between 10 and 20 minutes, with thick cuts requiring more time than thin cuts.

Grilling aficionados need not be intimidated by thick cuts of meat. A few tricks of the trade can make it easy to serve up a thick piece of meat where each bite is juicy and full of flavor.

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EDITORIAL

A celebration of freedom

Last week, President Biden signed legislation making Juneteenth a federal holiday. The house approved the legislation with a bi-partisan vote of 415-14.

This day commemorates the actual end of slavery in our country, a day that should be celebrated by all. An entire race of people was now free, two years after Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, what's not to celebrate? If that bothers anyone, we have to wonder why. Adding a federal holiday does not negate, nor take away from any other holiday. It just doesn't.

In 1776, just under 100 years earlier, Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

However, not all Americans were 'free' until June 19, 1865, when Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger in Galveston, Texas, issued General Order No. 3, which stated that in accordance with the Emancipation Proclamation, "all slaves are free." Several months later, the 13th Amendment was ratified, abolishing slavery in the final four border states that had not been subjected to President Abraham Lincoln's order.

During that time, Union presence was weak in Texas; therefore, enforcement wasn't strong, allowing white plantation owners to continue to use slave labor. Anytime evil is undone, as it was on that day in 1865, it should be celebrated.

In current times, the goal is for all law abiding Americans to enjoy the same opportunities and rights as one another. Such a simple concept yet so many continue to feel threatened by our differences. How great would it be if everyone was just kind to each other, despite our differences, why is that so hard? The fact is, it's not hard to try to understand each other. Maybe we may never understand each other but that's ok. We can guarantee that anyone you meet, has something in common with you, even if it's something as simple as preferring Pepsi over Coke. Start there.

Make it a point this week to seek someone out who lives and feels completely different than you and just be kind to them. It is possible to have different views on different topics yet still possible to treat each other with respect and dignity. We all deserve that, no matter who you vote for, what you look like, what you do for work or who you love.

Addressing the country after signing the Juneteenth bill, the President said, "The promise of equality is not going to be fulfilled until we become real; it becomes real in our schools and on our Main Streets and in our neighborhoods."

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OPINION

VIEWS AND COMMENTARY FROM STURBRIDGE, BRIMFIELD, HOLLAND AND WALES

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks to all who made Teddy G's reopening possible

To the Editor:
We are pleased to announce that Teddy G's Pub & Grille has reopened for business following our kitchen fire on Friday, May 28.

We can't begin to express our gratitude to everyone who helped to make our reopening possible. Having a fire was our worst nightmare and we could never have succeeded in putting it all back together without the help and support of our many suppliers and vendors.

First and foremost, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to the Sturbridge Fire Department for responding so quickly and extinguishing the fire. Thanks to our dedicated staff, our fathers, Bob and Jim, and our landlords, Brian Galonek and Ben Tully for all of your help and support.

We would also like to thank all of the local businesses, loyal customers and members of our community who reached out and offered their encouragement and support over the past couple of weeks.

Last, but not least, a giant thank you to the following individuals and companies. We wouldn't be opening our doors to once again serve the community today without them!

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Sincerely,
*Ted and Jenna Gidopoulos
Teddy G's Pub & Grille
Sturbridge*

Tips for Terrific Tomatoes

The taste of a garden tomato, warmed from the sun and plucked fresh from the vine, is a simple pleasure worth waiting all year for. While tasty tomatoes are undoubtedly the highlight of most backyard gardens, their sweet success can often be ensured with a few "tricks of the trade."

Prep Plants: Harden off tomato plants for a week to ten days before transplanting outside. Veteran farmers advise to transplant tomatoes in late afternoon for best results.

Deep Seated: Growing deep, extensive roots and full leaves will help establish newly transplanted tomatoes. Many experienced tomato growers pull off the first flowers, so the plant does not devote energy to forming fruit before its roots and foliage have filled out.

Rotation Inoculation: Expert growers claim insect infestation and plant disease is reduced if you never plant tomatoes in the same spot more than three years in a row.

Mulching Mix: Mulching is an important garden task and natural mulches such as straw, leaves, pine needles and dried grass all are beneficial to tomato plants.

Warm Up To Cool Down: Since mulch keeps the ground cool, it's important to wait until the ground soil warms to 65 degrees before laying the mulch.

Companion Crops: The plants in which tomatoes keep company with can affect their growth. Tomatoes like to grow near onions, parsley, chives, garlic, and carrots.

Early Irrigation: Water tomato plants early in the day to be sure leaves will be dry by nightfall

Think Ahead: Pound in stakes for future support at the same time you plant tomatoes. Waiting until later could the roots.

Tie it Up: Stake ties made of strips of old pantyhose or lightweight fabric won't cut into plants

Faded Flavor: If your tomatoes are large, but lack flavor, over watering might be the culprit.

Fun Fact: According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the world's largest tomato was grown by Gordon Graham of Edmund, Oklahoma and weighed 7 pounds 12 ounces.

Freezing Tomatoes: If you're lucky enough to have too many tomatoes to use or give away, you might want to consider freezing them. Here's how:

Freezing Raw Tomatoes: It is possible to quickly freeze raw tomatoes without blanching them first. They may be frozen without their skins or frozen whole with their skins. Frozen tomatoes are best used in cooked foods such as soups, sauces and stews as they become mushy when they're thawed.

Tomatoes should be washed before cutting. To wash, wet each tomato with water, rub its surface, rinse it with running water, and dry it with a paper towel. After washing, cut away the stem scar

and surrounding area and discard it before slicing or chopping the tomato.

Washing tomatoes in a sink filled with water is not recommended since contaminated water can be absorbed through the fruit's stem scar. The use of soap or detergent is neither recommended nor approved for washing fruits and vegetables because they can absorb detergent residues.

Tomatoes may be frozen whole, sliced, chopped, or pureed. Additionally, you can freeze them raw or cooked, as juice or sauce, or prepared in the recipe of your choice. Thawed raw tomatoes may be used in any cooked-tomato recipe. Do not try to substitute them for fresh tomatoes, however, since freezing causes their texture to become mushy. Tomatoes should be seasoned just before serving rather than before freezing; freezing may either strengthen or weaken seasonings such as garlic, onion, and herbs.

Preparation. Select firm, ripe tomatoes for freezing. Sort the tomatoes, discarding any that are spoiled. Wash them in clean water as recommended above. Dry them by blotting with a clean cloth or paper towels.

Freezing Whole Tomatoes with Peels: Prepare tomatoes as described above. Cut away the stem scar. Place the tomatoes on cookie sheets and freeze. Tomatoes do not need to be blanched before freezing. Once frozen, transfer the tomatoes from the cookie sheets into freezer bags or other containers. Seal tightly. To use the frozen tomatoes, remove them from the freezer a few at a time or all at once. To peel, just run a frozen tomato under warm water in the kitchen sink. Its skin will slip off easily.

Freezing Peeled Tomatoes: If you prefer to freeze peeled tomatoes, you can wash the tomatoes and then dip them in boiling water for about 1 minute or until the skins split. Peel and then freeze as noted above.


Lifespan: To extend the lifetime of frozen foods maintain good quality, package foods in material intended for freezing and keep the temperature of the freezer at 0 degrees F or below. It is generally recommended frozen vegetables be eaten within about 8 months for best quality.

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

Your tips can win you a great 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.

Declare your financial freedom



FINANCIAL FOCUS

JEFF BURDICK

Independence Day is almost here. And as we make progress in moving past the COVID-19 pandemic, more of us will be able to enjoy Fourth of July activities. However, you observe the holiday, it's important to recognize all the liberties we enjoy in this country. But you may still need to work at one particular type of freedom – and that's financial freedom. How can you achieve it?

There's no one instant solution. But you can work toward financial independence by addressing these areas:

- Retirement savings – Approximately 45% of Americans think the ideal retirement involves "enjoying my well-earned freedom," according to the March 2021 Edward Jones/Age Wave Four Pillars of the New Retirement study. But when you're retired, the risk to this freedom is obvious – the paychecks have stopped but the bills haven't. Furthermore, you could spend two or three decades in retirement. That's why it's so important to contribute as much as you can afford to your tax-advantaged retirement accounts, such as your IRA and your 401(k) or another employer-sponsored plan. At a minimum, put in enough to earn your employer's matching contribution, if one is offered. Whenever your salary goes up, try to increase the annual amount you put in your 401(k) or similar plan. And if appropriate, make sure you have a reasonable percentage of growth-oriented investments within your 401(k) and IRA. Most people don't "max out" on their IRA and 401(k) each year, but, if you can consistently afford to do so, and you still have money you could invest, you may want to explore other retirement savings vehicles.
- Illness or injury – If you were to become seriously ill or sustain a significant injury and you couldn't work for an extended period, the loss of income could jeopardize your ability to achieve financial independence. Your employer may offer disability insurance as an employee benefit, but this coverage is typically quite limited, both in duration and in the amount of income being replaced. Consequently, you may want to consider purchasing private disability insurance. Keep in mind that this coverage, also, will have an end date and it probably won't replace all the income lost while you're out of work, but it will likely be more expansive and generous than the plan provided by your employer.
- Long-term care – Individuals turning 65 have about a 70% chance of eventually needing some type of long-term care, such as a nursing home stay or the assistance of a home health aide, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. And these services are quite expensive – the average annual cost for a private room in a nursing home is more than \$100,000, according to Genworth, an insurance company. Medicare typically covers only a small part of these expenses, so, to avoid depleting your savings and investments (and possibly subjecting your grown children to a financial burden), you may want to consider long-term care insurance or life insurance with a long-term care component. A financial advisor can help you choose a plan that's appropriate for your needs.

By addressing these areas, you can go a long way toward attaining your financial independence. It will be a long-term pursuit, but the end goal is worth it.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Jeff Burdick, your local Edward Jones Advisor in Sturbridge at 508-347-1420 or jeff.burdick@edwardjones.com

The heat is on — and so is the fog



THE GREAT
OUTDOORS
.....
RALPH
TRUE

The summer heat is on for the next two months, and boaters need to be aware of the thick fog at this time of year. Although I do not like fishing in the fog, I rely on my GPS to keep me safe, and navigate the ocean waters that I enjoy fishing. For years I navigated the ocean using a compass and was not comfortable when the fog rolled in. None of my fishing buddies were much help, and relied on me to keep them safe.

There was one time when we were fishing in the five cottages area of Rhode Island, fishing for fluke. My two fishing buddies each had two lines out while I had one. We had two drift socks out to slow down our drift. The thick fog rolled in right after we got set up to start adrift, and I mean thick fog. We could hear the fog horn at the Galilee break wall, but we could also hear a strange sound coming closer to our boat. I started blowing my horn to alert the captain of the other vessel. I finally realized it was a large boat heading in our direction. I told the guys to be ready for a possible collision. "Thug Thug Thug" from the engine of the other boat, got closer every second, and I quickly started my motor.

Like a ghost ship, we suddenly spotted the hull of a large sailboat headed right at us. We all started yelling as loud as we could. I quickly threw my 175 hp motor into forward gear, but we did not move to fast because we still had two drift socks out. The hull of the massive sail boat barely cleared the stern of our boat as we all kept yelling at the top of our voices. Suddenly a voice from the other vessel wanted to know what all the yelling was about. "Are you Nuts?" I replied. "You darn near ran us over." Obviously, he was navigating on auto pilot, with no one at the helm. He sure ruined our day! We decided to call it a day!

A couple of times, we near got run over by the Block Island speed ferry and had to make fast adjustments to our course. Both times, it was extremely foggy. Just because I had a good GPS to navigate with, it did not keep us safe from other boats that take little care in their navigation. One buddy of mine that often fished with me would not go out if it was foggy. If the fog rolled in while we were out fishing, he would demand that we head in. I did not comply one day and he never went fishing with me again. Big Baby!

Captain Mel True of "Fish Net Charters" sent along this week's picture of a large striper which was released after a fast photo shoot. All the stripers his clients caught were released because of the slot limit. I do not know who dreams up all of these crazy regulations, but it is not done by responsible biologists. Politics!

Another local angler and his brother had to cancel their planned striper fishing trip to the Cape last week. They both enjoy surf fishing for stripers on the cape, but the beaches were shut down because of the shore bird called the "Piping Plover." It is nesting season, and these endangered birds' nest along the sandy beaches. It seems like a bit of overkill, when they shut down a lot of the coastline to fishing.

My brother Ken and his wife Debby made another trip to the Quabbin Reservoir last week and caught numerous lake trout on their fishing trip, that has become an annual event.

They rent a boat at gate 8 for around \$25, which is equipped with a four-stroke motor and six gallons of gas. It is the price for the rental on weekdays, and it also has the reduced price for seniors. Sometimes, it pays to be old. The lake trout were averaging 21 inches plus. Bass fishing is also great this time of year at the Quabbin Reservoir!

Unfortunately, you need to have your boat washed prior to launching because of fear that you may have an invasive weed stuck to the bottom of your boat. The outrageous price of \$80 to wash your boat prior to fishing needs to be done every time you plan to fish the Quabbin, if you use your boat in another body of water prior to your trip.

Drivers need to be aware of the high population of deer in local covers. Deer are just about done having their young at this time of year, and their fawns are out exploring their surroundings. This past week, I was in the area of the Nelmore Co. in North Uxbridge when I spotted a young fawn in the road. The young deer had extremely wobbly legs, and near fell down twice before it wandered off into a small patch of woods. It sure was not very old. I am sure the mother was not far away. Numerous reports of small deer in backyards have also been reported in the last few weeks. It is best to leave them alone, and they will have



Courtesy

This week's picture shows Byron Crampton with a nice size striper last week while fishing aboard Fishnet Charters, with Captain Mel True, Jr.!

a better chance of survival. Local freshwater bass fishing has been nothing but fantastic in the

valley area, and freshwater anglers are still catching some nice trout. Deep trolling lakes and ponds, are

producing the most trout. Take A Kid Fishing & Keep Them Rods Bending!

Managing insects on vegetables and herbs



GARDEN
MOMENTS
.....
MELINDA
MYERS

Homegrown fresh vegetables not only taste better; they are more nutritious. Plus, you can control what products are applied to the plants to control insect pests and disease.

The first steps to growing a productive vegetable garden and protecting your harvest begin with proper planning and care.

Select the most disease-resistant varieties available when planning your garden.

Then plant them in properly prepared soil with the amount of sunlight they require. Provide the necessary ongoing care and your plants will be healthier and better able to tolerate pest problems.

Even when you do everything right; problems can still arise. It's just a part of gardening.

Further reduce the risk with regular visits to the garden. Check along the stems and under the leaves for any clues that insect pests have moved into your garden. It is much easier to manage small populations of harmful pests than after they have had time to rapidly reproduce.

At the same time, look for lady beetles, green lace wings and other good guys that eat a variety of garden pests. Leaving a few pests to attract these good guys is often an easy, yet effective way to manage the harmful ones.

Enlist the help of songbirds by attracting them with birdbaths and feeders. Many birds supplement their diets with insect protein. Just protect young seedlings as many birds also like fresh greens.

If you need to lend nature a hand, remove small populations of insects by hand or use a strong blast of water to knock aphids and mites off plants. This is often enough to manage the damage



Melinda Myers

Lady beetles are one of the good guys, helping to control populations of aphids and other harmful insect pests in the garden.

and minimize their impact on your garden harvest.

Barriers of floating row covers can keep cabbage worms, onion maggots, Japanese beetles, and some other insects from laying eggs on their favorite plants. Cover the plants with the fabric at planting, anchor the edges and leave enough slack for plants to grow. Uncover flowering plants as soon as blossoms appear if bees are needed for pollination.

Set out yellow bowls filled with soapy water. The yellow attracts aphids and some other harmful pests. The insects gravitate toward the yellow, then crash into the soapy water and die.

If the problem insects are winning the battle, you may be tempted to reach for chemical controls. Instead, look for the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) certification on product labels. This independent non-profit organization reviews products for use in organic gardens, production, and processing.

Summit Year-Round Spray Oil (SummitResponsibleSolutions.com) is

an OMRI-certified product labeled for use on fruits and vegetables as well as ornamentals. It controls mites, aphids, thrips, and other insects and can be applied right up to the day of harvest.

As always, read and follow label directions for any organic, natural, or synthetic chemical used. Heeding label directions ensures safe application and effective control.

By working with nature and investing some time and creativity you can safely minimize insect problems and maximize your garden's harvest.

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

I'm still here!



POSITIVELY
SPEAKING

GARY W.
MOORE

I understand the cold-hard truth that we are all going to die. Some sooner than others, and I suppose I'm on that sooner list. I cope because I know I can rely on God's promises. If not, I'm sure I'd be a mess. I can cope because I've known this day was coming for over a year and I'm ready. I'd rather not go, but Cancer is a killer and we've exhausted all our possibilities that we are aware of today. Tomorrow may be a different story. I have hope that before I die, there will be a breakthrough that gives me more time. If not, that's okay too. I've lived a big happy life. I have a beautiful and independent family that will carry on.

Last night a tornado passed my daughter's home within a few blocks and cut a devastating path

leaving 34,000 without power. The damage and death toll are still not known. The difficult reality with this life is that it's never if hardship or tragedy will come, but when. These moments are never easy, and these moments bring about grief, pain, trauma, and heartache. When these moments come, we all reach a crossroad - how will we respond?

To be hope-filled, positive, and optimistic is not to ignore the hardship, but it's to face it head on. It's a decision to take the bull by the horns (or the cancer!) and give the best fight we've got all the while choosing to cling to hope and embrace the everyday joys of life.

It isn't if... but when hardship comes. How will you respond?

Since it truly is a choice we make. Why would we choose otherwise?

Today I choose hope, joy, and gratitude.

Gary W. Moore is a freelance columnist, speaker, and author of three books including the award-winning, critically acclaimed, *"Playing with the Enemy."* Follow Gary on Twitter @GaryWMoore721 and at www.gary-umoore.com.

I'm sitting here surrounded by love. Noah is on my left and Caleb on my right, sitting on the sofa. The doorbell just rang and Noah leaps to his feet... pizza!

If circumstances were different, it would be a typical Friday night, but tonight everyone is feeling a bit subdued. Last week I shared with you my health news. The outpouring of love has been overwhelming. I will not possibly be able to respond to all the email and social media messages. Just know I'm grateful for each and everyone.

I'm not a fatalist. Yes, I'm in hospice, and yes, I'm told that I'm dying, but I struggle to believe that it's the final word. I'm fighting to stay alive. I will forever be a "prisoner of hope," and I'll never stop hoping for life here on earth, and my ultimate hope is in the promise of Heaven.

So many of you ask, "How do you cope with knowing you are going to die?"

A dear old friend, Roger Roussell sent me this quote...

"Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood."

Marie Curie



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This section reaches 47,000 households in 7 Massachusetts newspapers.



What’s the Difference?

There are four differences between Picture A and Picture B. Can you find them all?

A



B



Answers: 1. Birds in sky 2. Polka dots on girl's swimsuit 3. Missing items in background 4. Woman has straps on swimsuit

THIS DAY IN...



HISTORY

- 1870: THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE IS CREATED.
- 1911: GEORGE V AND MARY OF TECK ARE CROWNED KING AND QUEEN OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.
- 1969: THE CUYAHOGA RIVER CATCHES FIRE IN CLEVELAND, OHIO.



MARINE

found in or produced by the sea

ANIMAL FACT:



WHICH MARINE ANIMALS ARE THE LARGEST IN THE OCEANS?

ANSWER: GIANT SQUID AND BLUE WHALE

How they SAY that in...

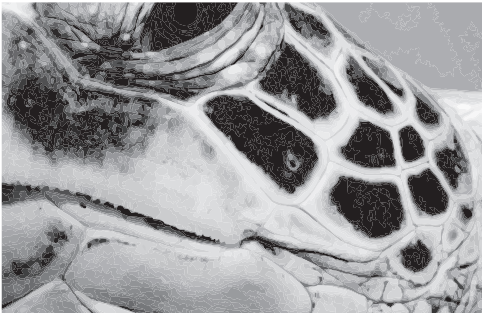
- ENGLISH: Ocean
- SPANISH: Océano
- ITALIAN: Oceano
- FRENCH: Océan
- GERMAN: Meer

Did you know?

SMALL TUBE FEET ON THE UNDERSIDE OF SEA STARS HELP THEM TO MOVE ACROSS THE OCEAN FLOOR.



GET THE PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

ANSWER: SEA TURTLE

CRYPTO FUN

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to safety. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 12 = T)

A. 8 1 13 12 10 23 25

Clue: Care taken

B. 14 24 23 12 21 8 12

Clue: Prevent harm

C. 10 25 2 13 24 9

Clue: Damage or hurt

D. 6 1 26 21

Clue: Protected

Answers: A. caution B. protect C. injury D. safe

SUDOKU

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 5 | 6 | | | | 9 |
| | | 1 | 3 | 2 | | | | 7 |
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| | 8 | | 1 | | 2 | | | |
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| | | | | 3 | | | | 2 |
| | | 4 | | | | 6 | | |

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 7 |
| 6 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 4 |
| 9 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 1 |
| 4 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 5 |
| 5 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 4 |
| 3 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 5 |
| 6 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| 7 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 1 |

ANSWER:

REAL ESTATE



Jules Lusignan



T.A. King



Maureen Cimoch



Ellen Therrien



John Kokocinski



Adrienne James



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ON DEPOSIT



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DUDLEY WATERFRONT! 14 Elizabeth St! Sought After Merino Pond, AKA High Pond! Full Recreational - All Water Sports and Activities! Your Kids will Love the Sandy Beach! 7 Rm Colonial! First Floor Features a Spacious Eat-in Country Kitchen w/Tons of Cabinet Space, Plenty of Room for a Huge Dining Table, Island w/Lunch Counter, Laundry Closet, Pantry Closet & Entry Closet! Comfortable 13 X 26' Living Rm! Possible Office or Bedroom off the Kitchen! Full Tile Bathroom! Second Floor w/4 Possible Bedrooms, 2 w/Water Views! Convenient Second Full Bathroom! Full Storage Basement! 2 Zone Oil Baseboard Heat! Town Services! **\$379,900.00**

SUTTON - 30 Jones Rd! 9 Room 2,156' Colonial! 5.31 Acres of Privacy! Long Circular Drive! New Granite Kitchen! Dining, Living & Fireplaced Family Rooms w/Hardwood Floors! Year Round Sunroom w/2 Skylights! 3 Bedrooms! 24' Master w/ Master Bath! 2.5 Bathrooms Total! 12x24 3 Season Porch w/3 Skylights! Expandable Attic! Wraparound Deck! 2 Car Garage! Central Air! Super Easy Access to Rte 146! **\$549,900.00**



SOLD



ON DEPOSIT



ON DEPOSIT

DUDLEY - 12 Susan Drive! Ideal 7 Rm Split! Beautifully Landscaped 18,615' Lot including a Heated In-Ground Pool w/Pool House! Fully Appliance Kitchen w/Corian Counters, Island, Hrdwd Floor & Door to the Deck! Dining Rm w/Hrdwds & Slider to Deck overlooking the Pool! Living Rm w/Bay Window, Brick Fireplace w/Wood Pellet Insert & Fujitsu Wall Mount A/C Split Unit! 3 Comfortable Bdrms all w/ Double Closets, Spacious 12x16' Master! Hallway Full Bathrm w/Skylight & Door to the Master! Lower Level 13x24' Family Rm w/Recessed Lighting! Convenient Half Bath! 2 Car Heated Garage! Many 2018 Updates - Roof, Siding, Windows, Buderus Furnace, Hot Water Super Store, Oil Tank & Pool Liner! Out Back a Garden Area & Storage Shed! Town Services! Won't Last! **\$377,000.00**

WEBSTER LAKE - 62 Bates Point Rd! Middle Pond! Absolute Prime 51' Level Waterfront Lot w/Western Expo! Beautiful Sunsets! Fantastic Panoramic Lake Views! 11 Rooms, 6 Bedrooms, 4 Bathrooms, 3,269' A/C'd Colonial! Custom SS Appliance Granite Kitchen! Formal Dining Rm w/ Cherry Hardwoods! Lake Facing Living Rm w/Cathedrals, Cherry Hardwoods! Slider to Waterfront Deck! Spacious 1st Flr Master Bedroom w/Full Bath, Cherry Hardwoods & Walk-in Closet! Fireplaced Lower Level Family Rm! 1st & 2nd Floor Laundries! 2 Car Garage! **\$979,900.00**

WEBSTER LAKE - 504 Treasure Island! 6 Room Townhouse Overlooking the Pool! 1,874 Sq Ft! Stainless Steel Appliance Granite Kitchen! Open Floor Plan! Dining Room - Full Mirrored Wall - Sliders to the Trex Deck! 2 Bedrooms! Master Bath! 2.5 Baths! Fireplaced Family Room! Garage! Central Air! Gas Heat! CVac! 2 BOAT SLIPS! Sandy Beach! Complex Recent Siding & Roof! **\$389,900.00**



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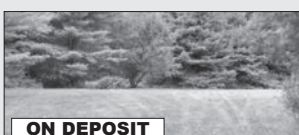


OPEN HOUSE • 6/27 1-2:30

Putnam Ct - 89 Perry Street Unit 250 Heritage Pines Condo Town House - Everything one would expect and then more! 4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, all Hardwood floors, granite, stainless steel appliances, central air, 2 decks, 2800 sq ft +/- of finished living area., and so much more!
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ON DEPOSIT

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FEATURED NEW LISTING - WEBSTER - 22 ELAINE STREET



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FEATURED NEW LISTING - WEBSTER - 135 LAKE STREET



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Webster- Douglas Rd (Rte. 16) 26 ACRES on Sugarloaf Hill. 1000+- ft of road frontage

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Oxford - 4 Leicester St - Approx. 8.47 ACRES! River Frontage Possible to be Subdivided!
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Webster - Upper Gore w/View of the Lake! 1+ Acre! Artesian Well, Septic Design & Conservation - DONE.
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Webster - Cooper Road 2 Buildable Lots! Water & Sewer Access. Zoned Lake Res! **ON DEPOSIT! Each \$24,500.**

WEBSTER - 99 UPPER GORE ROAD



SORRY, SOLD!

Location! Scenic, Upper Gore! "BIRDS EYE VIEW" of Webster Lake! Spacious Tr-Level. 2,279 sq. ft., 4 BRS, 1 full Bath, 2 half baths. Inground pool. 2 Car Garage
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WEBSTER - 155 THOMPSON ROAD



SORRY, SOLD!

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assisted sale **\$695,000.**

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SORRY, SOLD!

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WORCESTER - 28-L BOSTON AVE



SORRY, SOLD!

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assisted sale **\$230,000.**

WEBSTER • 233 - 235 NORTH MAIN STREET



SORRY, SOLD!

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Webster Lake - 100 Lakeside Ave



SORRY, SOLD!

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Webster - 401 Treasure Island Condo

WEBSTER LAKE! Treasure Island Townhouse! UNIT# 401 end unit. Year round enjoyment! Quiet summers on big & beautiful Webster Lake! 6 Rooms Appliance Kitchen. Open Floor Plan! Dining Area. Hardwood Floor & Carpet. Master Bedroom, W/2 Closets, Master Bath! 2-1/2 Baths Total! Slider to Deck & Slider to the Patio! Central Air! Central Vac! Very efficient natural gas heat & hot Water! 2 Boat Slips D10 & D11 in the Private Marina. Heated Pool! Natural Sandy Beach!
\$439,000.



Open House Directory

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| (C) Condo | (X) Condo | (M) Multi-Family | (T) Townhouse |
| (B) Business | (U) Duplex | (S) Single Family | (D) Adult Community |
| (P) Land | (L) Mobile Home | (A) Apartment | (W) Waterfront |

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Alton Dr - \$149,900



SOLD

Holland: 3 Bedrooms, 2.5 Baths, Fireplace, Deed beach rights
23 Bernice Rd - \$300's



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815 Beacon Park- Unit 203

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Please contact June Simakauskas 508-909-4062

ECONOMY

continued from page A1

While Sturbridge is still heavily dependent on retail and hospitality jobs (both of which took a serious hit with Covid layoffs, especially the latter), she noted the town has a much higher than average number of self-employed residents (11.2 percent), several newly formed construction firms, and various other new companies. What many of them need is small-business services to succeed.

"There's a strong level of self-employment and entrepreneurialism in Sturbridge that needs to be tapped," she said.

Also important is bringing together the town's diverse and often "very strongly held" views on what the future should look like by working on areas of agreement. Among the most notable in recent surveys of the public and local businesses is that both groups agree it'd be nice to see development of arts and culture, Route 20 traffic is a mess, and the tourist district should be supported.

"You need to enable traffic that goes through Sturbridge to stop in Sturbridge," McCabe said, but noted "there's no silver bullet [for that], it needs continuous work. "That's in large part because Route 20 is a state highway, and the Department of Transportation tends to be very restrictive on making changes." (One attendee said the agency even rejected a sign by claiming "it could become a projectile.")

An oft-recognized asset is the town's extensive open space and trail network, which she described as "one of your best-kept secrets." Those could easily provide day trips for tourists coming for other events, and she said they would "benefit from interpretation, both from a historical and a natural systems perspective."

Town Planner Jean Bubon used that as a jumping-off point to wonder, "Is there a way to use our trail system to cultivate the arts? ... How do you get that synergy going?"

McCabe said her town tries to do that every fall, but it's challenging to get participation. She suggested planting sculptures in places "people have to walk to and discover," while noting the potential issues of light and animals.

Within the audience, there was a little debate on the best avenues for publicizing what Sturbridge offers.

One man noted the importance of social media, but one woman responded that only certain people pay attention to that.

"The town doesn't spend any money on print advertising in its own backyard," she observed. "People still look for print."

To her, the "biggest challenge for business owners" is the lack of affordable housing in town. It also needs "a creative economy" that can provide graphic artists and similar services to small businesses.

Regarding retail, McCabe noted that "sector is not what it once was." Most recently, Covid's acceleration of e-commerce has prompted people to get many of their commodities – including commonplace clothing – online. But people seeking unique gifts often don't go online.

"That impulse shopping, discretionary shopping – that's what ... business district retail is all about," McCabe said. When local businesses can create "an experience, a happening" by mixing things that draw people, they succeed, but that's not happening in Sturbridge as much as it should, she added.

Part of the problem is lack of transit, whether it's public or Uber-like. Chamber of Commerce President Alix McNitt agreed, saying she's had to drive people to their hotels from Brimfield Fair "because they were from New York and just thought they could get Uber here."

McCabe also observed that Sturbridge became "a meeting destination," but Covid's promotion of virtual meetings has been "a challenge particularly to your smaller [establishments]." In her experience, many more people think of Worcester for conferences and the like than Sturbridge.

Tourism Director Terry Masterson agreed, but noted the Host Hotel is "one of the bigger cruise ships in the port for us," so Sturbridge has been working with them. He also agreed with her observations about smaller businesses and said he plans to reach out to them, including the Millyard complex, to help with promotion.

There may still be copies of the draft report and McCabe's PowerPoint presentation at Town Hall, but the final version incorporating comments from last week's forum will soon be available on the town Web site.

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

GRADS

continued from page A1

Aug. 31.

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Tips to grill a juicier burger



The exact origins of the hamburger are unknown, but historians believe this beloved staple of American barbecues can be traced to mid-nineteenth century Germany. According to History.com, political revolutions in Germany in the 1840s spurred many Germans to emigrate to the United States. Germans brought many of their cultural traditions with them, including their cuisine. One such dish was the chopped steak, which can be traced to Hamburg, a city renowned for its high-quality beef. Though few might now see ground beef as a remedy for digestive issues, that was a common belief in the 1860s, when a New York-based doctor named James Salisbury suggested that cooked beef patties could benefit the digestive system as much as chopped, chipped or ground beef. Buns were not yet in the picture at that time, but they were by 1904, when beef patties on buns were available at the St. Louis World's Fair. In 1921, the first White Castle restaurant opened in Kansas, and hamburgers have been a staple of American cuisine ever since.

Though it's been a century since White Castle opened its first restaurant, people are still perfecting the art of making the perfect hamburger. Exactly what defines the perfect hamburger may be open to debate, but there's no denying the desirability of juicy burgers. As grillmasters prepare for another season of backyard barbecues, the following are some ways they can make their burgers more juicy.

- Avoid extra-lean meat. Extra-lean meat might be healthier than the alterna-

tives, but 93 percent lean ground beef is unlikely to produce juicy burgers. When making burgers from scratch, opt for 80 percent lean. WebMD notes that fat helps to hold burgers together while searing and cooking the meat. The result is a more juicy interior than cooks are likely to get when using lean meats.

- Swap beef for lamb. Cookbook author John Holl notes in his book, "The American Craft Beer Cookbook" (Storey), that substituting ground beef with ground lamb makes for a juicier burger. Lamb is moist, so unlike lean beef, it can be grilled as well-done without drying out. Lamb also offers a different taste than beef, adding a little variety to a backyard barbecue.

- Saddle your spatula. Flipping the burgers too much or pressing them against the grill as they cook can dry them out.

- Be conscious of carryover cooking time. Carryover cooking time refers to the length of time temperature in a food continues to rise even after it's been removed from a cooking area. Beef is among the many foods that continue to cook after being removed from a heat source, so beef burgers can be removed from the grill before they reach the desired cooking temperature. This prevents drying out and ensures that once they're served, the burgers will be juicy and safe to eat.

Grilling a juicy burger is easily accomplished with a few simple and time-tested strategies.



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Green Gold Group is seeking
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The Spencer Housing Authority is seeking candidates for the position of Executive Director.

The Spencer Housing Authority is seeking an experienced administrator for leadership and management of its programs, properties, and contracts.

The Authority manages 177 state aided elderly/handicapped units, 8 family units, and an 8-unit Department of Developmental Services home. The agency also administers 51 AHVP (Alternative Housing Voucher Program) vouchers and 5 MRVP (Massachusetts Housing Voucher Program) vouchers.

Minimum requirements: A minimum of five years' experience in housing management, community development, public administration, or a closely related field. Knowledge of the principles and practices of housing management, finances, and maintenance systems in public and private housing. Excellent written and verbal communication skills required. Knowledge of laws regulating State housing programs. Experience working with people of various socio-economic backgrounds. Certification as a Public Housing Manager is desired or to be obtained within one year of employment.

The salary range is from \$76,887.60 to \$90,456.00 depending on experience and certifications and in accordance with the DHCD Executive Director Salary Schedule/Calculation worksheet. The work week is 37.5 hrs. per week with full benefits.

To apply please submit cover letter and resume to charlene.kaiser@spencerhousing.org, addressed to the Spencer Housing Board of Directors. A full job description is available upon request. at this email address.

The deadline for resumes is July 9th by close of business day. Late applications will not be accepted.

The Spencer Housing Authority is an *Equal Opportunity Employer*.

FOR ADVERTISING INFORMATION

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LPN alumna to speak at Bay Path graduation and pinning ceremonies

WEBSTER – This year's graduation and pinning ceremonies for the Practical Nursing Class of 2021 will take place at the Lakeside Pavilion by the shores of Lake Chargoggagoggmanchaugga-gogggchaubunagungamaugg in Webster. The live event to honor and recognize the Practical Nursing Class of 2021 scheduled on Friday, June 25, 2021, will be streamed live via video and audio feeds with no need to sign up in advance.

Alumna Donna Pope, LPN, of Southbridge from PN Class of 2017 will deliver this year's commencement address. Her message will be one of hope in the journey of becoming an LPN and the many challenges in the rapidly changing COVID-19 world. She encourages the soon to be LPNs to be alert to opportunities – something at which she has excelled. Pope is the STDH Program Nurse at Center of Hope Foundation in Southbridge. She briefly worked as a Flu Clinic Nurse at Maxim Healthcare in Worcester. While a student at Bay Path, Pope was inducted to the National Technical Honor Society. She represented Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy at SkillsUSA District competition earning a Gold Medal and at State competition earning a Bronze Medal both for Health Knowledge Bowl. Pope is Mental Health First Aid Certified and volunteered for multiple events at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy such as the Admissions Panel Interview, Blood Pressure Clinics, and mentorship. She also volunteers for the Baptist Haiti Mission. Donna Pope, LPN follows in the footsteps of nursing colleagues in delivering Bay Path



(Left) Donna Pope

students' hard work and dedication towards their coursework and clinicals.

The PN Class of 2021 graduates are as follows:

Auburn- Angela Letourneau,
Meghan Reidy
Brookfield- Brianna Pincince-
McLeish
Charlton- Brianna Cloutier
Cherry Valley- Carolyn Jenkins
Manchester, Conn.- Isabella
Boateng
Oxford- Tianna Welcome
Southbridge- Khamphan
Houtchanthara, Angeley Santa, Sonya
Ugrinow
Spencer- Julia Martinez, Ashley
Winters
Webster- Brianna Laforest,
Elizabeth Larson, Stefanie Lauretano,
Risper Wanjiru, Amanda Wonderlie
Worcester- Monique Bull, Loise
Kamero, Beatrice Kamunyu, Luz
Mercado, Grace Mwangi, Digmery
Sanchez

How to stay safe while enjoying the sun, surf and sand

Beaches beckon billions of people across the globe each summer. Nothing evokes the spirit of summer quite like a lazy day at the beach. Relaxation is foremost on the mind of beach-goers, but it's important that sun worshippers take some time to reacquaint themselves with some simple safety measures as they get ready to enjoy the surf and sand.

• Swim only at beaches manned by lifeguards. It might be tempting to go for a quick swim in waters that are not being monitored by lifeguards. Such waters might not be overcrowded, which can tempt summer revelers who simply want to get away. But the United States Lifesaving Association reminds beach-goers that statistics are not on their side when swimming at beaches that are not being manned by lifeguards. According to the USLA, swimmers are five times more likely to drown when swimming at beaches that aren't being manned by lifeguards compared to swimming at beaches where lifeguards are on duty. In fact, the USLA estimates that the chances of drowning at a beach manned by a lifeguard is roughly one in 18 million.

- Discuss conditions with lifeguards before swimming. Lifeguards can share valuable information about potential hazards that people who just arrived at the beach may be unaware of. They may direct swimmers to certain areas of the water that are safer than others and alert beach-goers if there are any storms on the horizon or threats in the water, like jellyfish.

- Read signs at the beach. Signs at the beach are posted specifically to keep beach-goers safe. Signs may inform visitors about current water conditions, including information about rip tides, rip currents or contaminated water. Many beaches employ a flag system to



inform visitors about water conditions. Cities and counties may have their own systems in place, so it's always best to consult local officials, especially if you're visiting an out-of-town beach on vacation, to learn about what the flags mean. But the following colors may signify:

- Double red: water closed to the public
- Single red: High hazard, indicating the surf is high and/or strong currents are present
- Yellow: Medium hazard, indicating the surf and/or currents are moderate
- Green: Low hazard, implying water conditions are calm
- Purple: The presence of dangerous marine life

- Apply an appropriate sunscreen. The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends different sunscreens depending on how people will spend their time in the sun. Going to the beach is considered an active way to be in the sun, and the SCF recommends that people apply broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreens with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 when going to the beach. Apply products as directed. The SCF recommends applying sunscreen 30 minutes prior to going outdoors and then reapplying every two hours and immediately after swimming or excessive sweating.

Beach days should be all about sun and fun. Beach-goers must ensure their R&R leaves room for safety as they soak up some sun and dip their toes in the water.

Creating your own backyard oasis



Our backyards are some of the best places to spend the summer months, especially if you're practicing social distancing and are tired of being cooped up indoors. Fortunately, it's possible to transform your outdoor living space into a secluded, open-air retreat.

Bring the indoors out. We often hear about bringing the outdoors inside, but the reverse is also true when designing a luxurious extension of your home. Homey, lived-in touches can take your outdoor space from sterile and unfinished to cozy and inviting. Think patterned throw pillows, fluffy blankets for chilly evenings, outdoor rugs, colorful lanterns, and decorative accessories like painted terracotta pots or metal tins.

Invest in comfy furniture. What's the best part of your living or family room? Chances are it's your comfortable couch or recliner. To recreate the same feeling, splurge on some soft furniture that will make you want to stay outside for hours reading a book or working remotely. It doesn't have to break the bank either — you can DIY a cozy lounging bench with reclaimed wood and hand-sewn cushions with outdoor stuffing and fabric.

Add a relaxing pool or spa. Water has a calming effect and is often linked to our favorite memories at the cottage or on vacation. A pool or spa can help transport you somewhere far away without leaving your home. A pool can help you and the kids get some exercise while swimming laps, while a spa can soothe tired muscles after a long day hunched over your laptop. To reduce energy costs and increase longevity, consider using Nudura insulated concrete forms, which provide superior insulation. ICF pools also can be custom-made to accommodate any design, making them a very versatile and efficient way to build pools.

Go wild with greenery. Live plants can help you feel connected with nature, and tending to them can help you feel relaxed yet productive during isolation. A vertical garden can add visual interest, while trees and shrubs can provide shade and character. Aromatic herbs like lavender or rosemary offer pleasant scents and can spice up your cooking. And don't be afraid to cut some flowers from your garden to place in vases or pots for beautiful finishing touches.

Find more information at nudura.com.



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Cornerstone Bank donates \$25,000 to YMCA of Central Massachusetts

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank, a community bank with 12 locations throughout Central Massachusetts, has donated \$25,000 to the YMCA of Central Massachusetts to support youth development programs and services as well as the LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA initiative, a fitness program for cancer survivors.

“The core values of the YMCA align with those of our own organization,” said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. “Their commitment to the community, especially children and teenagers, is inspiring. We hope this donation will allow them to continue their youth programs as well as the



YMCA of Central Massachusetts President and CEO David Connell (left) and Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd M. Tallman (right).

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4 easily forgotten road trip safety tips

Getaways come in many forms. A getaway can be restful and relaxing whether it involves a journey to a small island thousands of miles from home or a favorite campsite that's just a few hours away by car.

As the world gradually emerges from a pandemic that put travel on the back burner for billions of people across the globe, people anxious to get away from home may finally feel comfortable seeking getaways that don't involve air travel. If the open road beckons you in the months ahead, the excitement ahead can make it easy to overlook certain safety measures. The following are four easily forgotten safety measures to keep in mind as you head off for parts unknown.

1. Have your vehicle serviced before hitting the road. The pandemic significantly affected people's driving habits. Millions of people spent the pandemic working remotely, and many have continued to do so even after being vaccinated. Total driving

distances fluctuated throughout the pandemic. For example, the Federal Highway Administration reported that the total distances driven in July 2020 had declined by 11 percent compared to the same month a year earlier. That decline was more drastic according to figures examining total distances driven in April 2019 and April 2020, when driving had decreased by 40 percent compared to a year earlier. Though driving may have increased as the pandemic wore on, it's still a good idea for drivers to have their vehicles serviced before a road trip. Request a full tune-up that includes an oil change, a battery check and a tire rotation. These services and other maintenance tasks like fluid refills can reduce the likelihood of breakdowns and reveal any issues that might make driving less safe.

2. Determine if your vehicle is the subject of a recall. Recalls are issued if a safety issue has been uncovered since a car hit the market. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has a list of recalls available on its website at NHTSA.gov/Recalls. Recalls are fixed free of charge, and it's best to look well in advance of a trip to ensure you have time to take the vehicle in for its update.
3. Get used to driving with accessories on the vehicle. Summer road trips are typically taken with bicycle racks attached to rear windows or the top of the vehicle. Drivers unaccustomed to having bicycles or storage units attached to their vehicles should make a few trial runs so they can get acclimated. Backing up with bike racks on the back of the car can be tricky for novices, so a little practice with the bikes on the back may be helpful. Drivers who intend to tow campers also may benefit from a little pre-trip practice.
4. Pack a map. Though maps have long since fallen out of favor due to the availability of GPS, people traveling to remote areas may find their smartphone signals fading in and out as they get closer to their destinations. A map can help road trippers overcome service interruptions and arrive at their destinations on time.

Road trips may be especially popular this summer. Some simple safety measures can ensure drivers and their passengers stay safe.