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Friday, April 17, 2020

Country Bank supports frontline workers diagnosed with COVID-19



BRIMFIELD — To help the Hampden County Sheriff's Department successfully operate the First Responder Recovery Home for COVID-19 diagnosed first responders, Country Bank has generously announced they will contribute \$50,000 to the efforts.

The contribution from the Warebased financial institution, with offices in Brimfield, comes with the aim of inspiring other similar

organizations to do what they can to assist the department's effort to help the people who typically help others.

'These are challenging and ever-evolving times as we face the continued uncertainty regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and how it will impact our region. As a community partner, we care deeply about our communities, and wanted to show our appreciation and support for first responders, healthcare workers and their families throughout the region when they need it the most. The First Responder Recovery Home will allow first responders to rest a little easier knowing they have an alternative place to recover should they become infected

by the virus. It's our hope that Country

Bank's donation will be one of many that will support this tremendous initiative and we welcome other community businesses and financial institutions to express their appreciation of all first responders by supporting the First Reponder Recovery Home," stated Paul Scully, President and CEO of Country Bank.

The donation, which brings the overall community contributions upwards of \$87,000, will help ensure that every COVID-19 positive first responder who comes to stay at our facility has noth-

Please Read COUNTRY BANK, page A15

Southbridge sees jump in COVID cases

BY GUS STEEVES CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHBRIDGE — Over the last week or so, Southbridge has seen several subtle changes from the Covid-19 pandemic. Most notably, local health officials identified a jump in the number of cases to 23 by last Thursday and 30 by this

Monday, including one death. 'Our numbers are not ridiculously out of control as they could have been," Health Director Andy Pelletier told last Wednesday's special Town Council meeting, when there were 18 cases. ... One case could end up with four, five, six, seven contacts depending on what their career was.'

Pelletier said the town is trying to track all such contacts, but noted it can be "traumatic" for someone to learn they were potentially exposed.

On Thursday, Police Chief Shane Woodson added he's "working on reporting all recoveries that have happened in our community" as well. The plan at that time

was to start posting those numbers on the daily update page at the town's Web site when they can, but it had not yet been compiled as of Monday.

Pelletier said he hopes to start contacting every known case weekly to help identify such status, but as of last Wednesday, even the town's first case was still showing symptoms.

Last weekend, Newsweek reported that around 40,000 US citizens have recovered. The Mass Department of Public Health also reports 5402 state residents have "completed monitoring (no longer in quarantine)," but that figure doesn't specify whether they actually had the virus or were just potentially exposed to it.

Pelletier said one ongoing issue is the fact that "there's a lot of lack of guidance on the things we run into." Among those concerns, he said, were how to respond to businesses asking whether they're exempt from the state's man-

Please Read CASES, page A10

Community rallies around grieving family

BY JASON BLEAU

CHARLTON COVID-19 crisis has resulted in the loss or temporary stoppage to many aspects of life. Recreational activities, sports and entertainment have all been affected by the outbreak but for those grieving at this time it can be even more difficult time with the ban on social gatherings effecting funerals and celebra-

tions of life. One such case was Charlton resident Brian Finnegan and his family, who suffered the passing of his father, Paul Finnigan, Jr. of Douglas, on March 24.

former Navv mechanic and Grand Knight in the Knights of Columbus during his time in Pennsylvania, Paul Finnegan, Jr. left behind his wife of 55-year Lorraine Finnigan as well as four children including Brian. In the wake

of his passing, the family were forced to resort to a private service putting off a memorial Catholic mass until a later date due to limits on social gatherings.

In an interview the Villager, Brian Finnegan said the funeral was a dif-

Please Read FINNEGAN, page A14



memory of Paul Finnegan, Jr.



Neighbors left single roses at the home of Charlton's Brian Finnegan to honor his late father, veteran and cancer survivor Paul Finnigan, Jr.

NOTE TO READERS

This week's edition of the paper might seem a bit smaller than you are accustomed to, but rest assured, this is only temporary. Due to the unique circumstances we are all living under at the present time, local sporting events and community activities have wisely been canceled as we all try to stay closer to home and practice social distancing.

As we ride out this temporary interruption of life as usual together, we urge you to continue supporting the local businesses that advertise in your newspaper. They have always been here for you through good times and bad, and now, more than ever, they need you to be there for

them in any way you can.

Amid this temporary absence of local events and municipal meetings, we are also looking to celebrate the many quiet heroes in our communities who have gone above and beyond to make this situation easier for those most affected by it. Let us know if there is someone in your community who you think should be recognized by e-mailing news@stonebridgepress.news.

Above all, know that we have been your trusted source for local news for generations, and we plan to be here for you to generations to come, in print and online at www.stonebridgepress.com.

Baker announces new regulations on supermarkets

BY KEVIN FLANDERS

REGION — Gov. Charlie Baker announced several new measures last week to combat the coronavirus, including the reduction of supermarket capacity.

Established Department of Public Health, one of the new regulations requires grocery stores to limit occupancy to 40 percent of their maximum permitted occupancy levels. This does not include stores with a maximum occupancy of less than 25 people.

The regulations also provide guidance that store staff members can use to monitor

occupancy levels. Several local stores have already added specific hours for seniors to shop, while others have announced that they will close for one to two days weekly to allow workers to rest.

The new statewide regulations are meant to ensure social distancing while customers shop for groceries.

"The guidance builds on a previous March 23 order for grocery stores, which set out policies for ensuring access to handwashing facilities and protecting employees in higher-risk populations, among other requirements," read a statement released by the Baker Administration.

Baker also announced an expansion of COVID-19 testing sites for public safety personnel. The sites were opened last week, doubling the number of free, drive-through tests available for first responders and other emergency management workers. A mobile testing site at the Big E fairgrounds in West Springfield also began operations last week, supplementing a site at Foxborough's

Gillette Stadium. Each site will serve police officers, firefighters, EMS personnel, correction officers, mortuary service providers, and state active duty National Guard personnel who perform

Please Read MARKETS, page A7

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How to support local businesses during mandatory restrictions

(Editor's Note: Please consult your local laws and regulations before publishing this story to confirm its content aligns with mandates currently in place in your city.)

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 throughout the United States in March 2020 transformed American lives in ways many might never have imagined possible. Social distancing recommendations and restrictions on gatherings of more than a handful of people had a ripple effect on the economy that adversely affected many small businesses.

Small businesses are the backbones of local communities. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses make up 99.9 percent of all businesses in the $\bar{\mbox{U}}\mbox{nited}$ States and employ 59.9 million employees. The SBA notes that the accommodation and food services sector is the second largest small business industry. Many of these businesses have been hit especially hard as more and more of their regular customers stay at home in the wake of government advisories promoting social distancing.

But small businesses are vital to local communities, and there are ways to support them and help them stay afloat as they confront the challenges posed by the COVID-19 outbreak.

· Order delivery. It's still possible to enjoy foods from your favorite local restaurants. Many restaurants had not previously done so have begun to offer delivery services, offer be it curbside or at-home, and this can provide a great respite for families who have had to cook three meals a

day at home for their entire families for extended periods of time. Curbside delivery has made it possible to get takeout meals without compromising social distancing recommendations.

· Recognize that more than food is available for takeout. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York announced relaxations on laws governing what can and cannot be obtained via takeout, allowing takeout on goods that were previously restricted in regard to takeout. For example, Cuomo announced that the New York State Liquor Authority intended to temporarily relax regulations regarding the takeout and delivery of alcohol. Utilizing such services can be a great way to support local businesses while still adhering to recommendations designed to slow the spread

• Purchase a gift card. Gift cards can help small businesses generate revenue at a time when their doors are largely closed to the public. This can be vital to these businesses' survival, and it gives consumers something to look forward when life returns to normal.

• Help market local businesses. Spread the word when local businesses deliver in the wake of the restrictions put on them due to COVID-19. Share these experiences via social media or online reviews, and urge your neighbors to patronize these businesses.

Local businesses are suffering during the COVID-19 outbreak. But communities can come together to support business owners and their employees to help these vital businesses stem the tide. TF205946

SOCIAL MEDIA TEXT: Small businesses are vital to local communities, and there are ways to support them and help them stay afloat as they confront the challenges posed by the COVID-19



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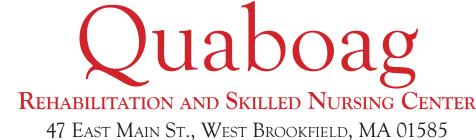
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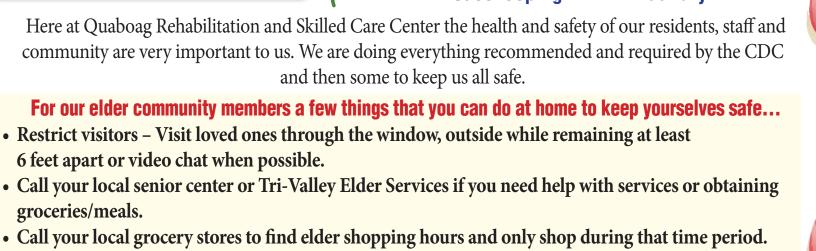


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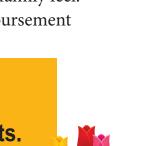
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AdCare outpatient now provides telehealth treatment for those struggling with substance abuse

WORCESTER — In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, AdCare Hospital has taken additional steps tosafeguard patients accessing outpatient treatment. Starting April 6, AdCare began providing telehealth treatment for substance usecare offered at locations in Worcester, West Springfield, Boston, Quincy and North Dartmouth, MA, as well as in Warwick, RI. Patients can now access Intensive Services (IOP), Early Recovery Groups (ERGs), Individual and Family Treatment virtually with a licensed counselor. AdCare's outpatient offices remain open to provide services

For more information, visit https:// adcare.com/programs/telehealth-reha-

"We are doing everything we can to protect the physical health and safety of our patients and staff," said David Hillis, Jr., vice president of outpatient

"Telehealth services are the safest way for our patients to stay connected to treatment and recovery," said Jane Jolly, director of outpatient operations. "Bringing telehealth services to our patients -- many of whom also struggle with anxiety, stress and isolation -- helps break down the latest barrier to treatment erected by the pandemic."

AdCare's parent company, American Addiction Centers, is also offering free virtual support meetings for the public a supportive community.

About AdCare Outpatient Services Experience matters. For nearly 45 years, AdCare Hospital, New England's only level-4 SUD hospital centrally located in Worcester, Massachusetts, with outpatient locations throughout Massachusetts and Rhode Island, has provided individuals and families with life-changing alcohol and drug treatment. In March of 2018, AdCare joined AAC (OTC: AACH), a national treatment provider, operating facilities across the United States. To learn more, please visit americanaddictioncenters.

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. news during normal business hours. During non-business hours, leave a message in the editor's voice mailbox. The editor will return your phone call.

Earth Day celebration online

SOUTHBRIDGE — Even though people are social distancing, Mother Earth goes on as usual. That means Earth Day still matters, and this year is the 50th anniversary of that celebration of our connection to everything else alive.

How could we not commemorate a momentous anniversary like that?

So, we will ... just at a distance and

On Saturday, April 25 from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m., Grassroots Central Mass. is hosting "Can't Live Without It," a showcase of music, visual art, poetry and other spoken word, kids' stories and local videos of people planting trees to celebrate the only home world we share.

Among the featured musicians, we are delighted to have Carlos Odria, an extremely popular and talented guitarist who fuses forms from jazz, Latin and many influences. A native of Peru and music scholar, Carlos is in demand for in venues across Central Mass, and in these live music-restricted times offers us a rare at-home opportunity.

We also invite your participation, as we give away 100 tree seedlings for planting during the event. For more information, go to https://grassrootscentralmass.com/earth-day/.

Residents urged to take Earth Day cleanup into their own hands

BY JASON BLEAU

CHARLTON - While Charlton's annual Earth Day cleanup efforts may be put on pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, that doesn't mean local residents can't take the time to help celebrate the annual celebration of environmental protection in their own way.

With Earth Day falling on April 22, the commonwealth will still be under quarantine and social distancing restriction which has led to the temporary halt of social gatherings. Linda Davis, the co-chair of the Charlton Earth Day Committee, confirmed that the 2020 town-wide cleanup effort has been postponed due to the global health crisis, and is expected to be rescheduled to later in the year.

"We don't have a new date yet because we are waiting, as everyone else is, to see what happens with the virus. There are a lot of unknowns right now. It would be nice if we could get it in this

spring, and if we can't, I think we're looking more towards the summer or early fall to get it in before the leaves come down," Davis said.

While the vearly organized cleanup effort won't happen as scheduled, that doesn't mean that citizens can't take Earth Day into their own hands. Davis said April and early spring are "prime time" for cleanup efforts with no snow on the ground and less foliage and plant life to invade areas that need heavy cleaning. So, if citizens choose to, Davis said it's perfectly fine for residents to take up their own Earth Day cleaning efforts as long as they adhere to social distancing practices. Even in small groups, every little bit helps make a difference.

"There's a benefit to the planet, to us and to wildlife and it just looks nicer. It instills pride in the community to have it looking nice. We also want to get the younger kids to appreciate the significance of proper disposal and understand that it's not acceptable to dispose of trash on the side of the road or see trash there. We have the power to make this better. Lots of small actions by individuals combined make a big difference," said Davis.

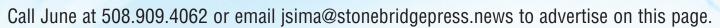
Those who choose to take to the streets on their own time and clean up the town are urged to use double-bagged trash bags and to wear durable gloves when handling trash. Never handle syringes or any other bio-waste and report any such finding to local police for proper disposal. Trash can be dropped off by Charlton residents every Saturday morning at the North Oxford transfer station free of charge from 8 a.m. until

Davis also noted that those looking to make the biggest difference should venture beyond highly traveled neighborhoods. Called "hit spots" due to their isolation and lack of residents, these roadways are often areas where commuters feel more comfortable disposing trash improperly and thus need the most attention during the annual Earth Day cleanup.



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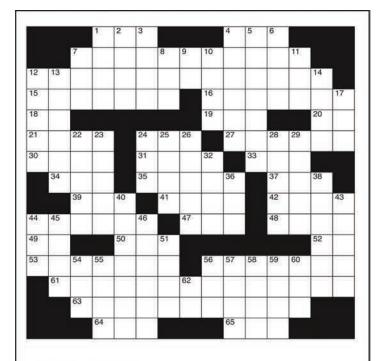


Donation is part of \$38 million contribution to global coronavirus relief

SOUTHBRIDGE Fundación MAPFRE, a global nonprofit foundation created by MAPFRE, has donated \$200,000 to Harrington HealthCare System to support the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE) for HHS staff during the coronavirus pandemic, including medical masks, gloves, gowns, face shields and other personal protective equipment.

The donation is part of \$38 million in contributions made by the foundation to coronavirus relief efforts worldwide, including \$2.3 million to support urgent medical and community needs across Massachusetts, which is the U.S. headquarters for the foun-

'We are overwhelmed at the



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Germanic mythological god
- 4. Cash machine
- 7. Improvement
- 12. What voters want
- 15. Sheepish
- 16. Placed at powerful level
- 18. Measure of illumination 19. Trent Reznor's band
- 20. Commercial
- 21. Amounts of time
- 24. English broadcaster 27. Rolls of tobacco
- 30. Position
- 31. Expresses pleasure
- 33. Corporate exec (abbr.)
- 34. Body part
- 35. Bleated 37. Businessman

- 39. Beats per minute
- 41. Defunct Italian monetary unit
- 42. Broken branch 44. Put in advance
- 47. Arrest
- 48. Prefix indicating adjacent to
- 49. Artificial intelligence 50. Disfigure
- 52. The Fighting Irish (abbr.)
- 53. Not in any place 56. Predict
- 61. A system of getting stuff from one place to another 63. Philosophy of the principles
- of things
- 64. US gov't office (abbr.)
- 65. Seaborgium's former name (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Network connector
- 2. Primordial matter 3. Get up
- 4. Uncoordinated 5. Ill-fated cruise ship

6. Work hard

- 7. Drivers' speed 8. Largest English dictionary
- (abbr.)
- 9. Healthcare pro 10. Egyptian Sun god
- 11. Expresses the negative
- Some are three-legged
- 13. Clothing manufacturer
- 14. Close by
- 17. Tooth caregiver 22. Housing material
- 23. Flows through 24. Founder of Babism
- 25. Honorific title

- A type of letter 28. Seize and hold firmly
- 29. Artery
- 32. Body fluids
- 36. Press against lightly 38. An island in the Pacific
- 40. A reminder of past events
- 43. Austrian spa town
- 44. Peter's last name
- 45. Something a mob might do 46. Of the bones of the feet
- 51. "Amazing Stories" writer
- Nazi-resistant youth group (abbr.)
- 55. Used to have (Scottish)
- 56. A way to cook
- 57. Japanese port city
- 58. Type of precipitation
- 59. Engrave
- 60. Female sibling
- 62. Expresses emotion

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generosity of this donation, which will help to protect our patients, staff and community from the spread of COVID-19," said Harrington HealthCare System President and CEO Edward Moore.

amount of PPE "The required to safely care for patients has greatly increased as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. This donation will make a significant impact in offsetting the additional cost to purchase such a large volume of PPE, especially at a time when these items are in such short supply. On behalf of our entire staff, our patients and the communities we serve, I'd like to express our deep gratitude to Fundación MAPFRE for their donation, not only to us but to healthcare organizations and communities across Massachusetts and around the world." Moore said.

Other Massachusetts organizations that have received a donation from the foundation include: Boston Medical Center; UMass Memorial Health Care; the City of Boston; and Massachusetts General Hospital.

"We are extremely concerned about the impact coronavirus continues to have on our communities and medical facilities," said Alfredo Castelo, chief representative of Fundación MAPFRE in the U.S. "We hope this contribution will help individuals and families in need and provide critical supplies for our health care professionals and first responders on the front line during the outbreak.'

Fundación MAPFRE's global aid package will benefit coronavirus relief efforts in 27 countries.

"The fight against the coronavirus encompasses all sectors of society. Institutions, such as Fundación MAPFRE, are called more than ever, to take action, with solidarity measures that promote social cohesion and equal opportunities," said Antonio Huertas, president of MAPFRE and Fundación MAPFRE.

Harrington About HealthCare System

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, the region's largest Behavioral Health programs for mental health and substance use. www.harringtonhospital.org

About Fundación MAPFRE Fundación MAPFRE is a nonprofit organization created by MAPFRE in 1975 to promote the well-being of society and citizens across the company's footprint. Active in 30 countries, Fundación MAPFRE focuses on five areas: Road Safety and Injury Prevention, including fires, mishaps at home and drownings; Insurance and Social Protection; Culture; Social Action; and Health Promotion. Please visit https://www.fundacionmapfre.org/fundacion/ en for more information about Fundación MAPFRE.

Board of Health recognizes PPE donors

BY JASON BLEAU VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON - The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many towns to stretch their resources thin over the past few weeks, but in Charlton, resources have become relatively abundant for the Board of Health, thanks in no small part to local businesses and donors.

In fact, the outpouring of donations and support has been so great that the board has already begun thanking companies and individuals for their contributions even as the fight against the pandemic continues into

Board of Health Chair Matthew Gagner said that as a token of appreciation the board is wasting no time in recognizing those businesses and individuals that are going above and beyond to make sure Charlton has the resources necessary to see the pandemic through to the end with the safety and health of first responders and essential individuals in mind.

We were running short, as everybody was, and several local businesses stepped up and donated much needed supplies to the Board of Health. Masks, gowns, gloves and other personal protection items all came in from different businesses and donors. The Board of Health decided to recognize those companies with certificates of recognition and we also wrote them 'thank you' letters. I've always believed that a simple 'thank you' goes a long way," Gagner said.

Through these unsure times, Gagner said he is continuously inspired by the outpouring of support and neighborly gestures being shown by those in Charlton. From donations to the Board of Health to individuals offering to shop for those in need Gagner pointed out that there are people making a difference all over town.

"We have businesses stepping up. We have individuals stepping up. We had students offering to babysit children before this got as bad as it did. Now we have adults who are offering to pick up groceries for people and run errands. People are just trying to help where they can. It's unbelievable the support that the general public has given and how well people are treating each other right now," Gagner said. "If anyone wants to physically do something to help, they can reach out to the Board of Health to see exactly what we need. Right now, the board is in good shape. We have funding, we have supplies, we just received a MEMA shipment with mask and other PEE items. While we were running low people stepped up and that was an important part to getting us where we are right now.

Among the donors recognized for contributing cleaning supplies or personal protection equipment to the Charlton Board of Health as of April 12 were Safety Source North East, Joslin Camp and Barton Center, Sue Butler, Karl Storz, the NEDT Inc. of Sutton, the Warren, MA Board of Health, the town of Brimfield, Flexcon, the Central Massachusetts Emergency Medical Corporation, Charlton Fire Chief Ed Knopf, Gentex, MEMA, the Southbridge Fire Department, the Charlton Sewing Center, and LFB USA

A family of athletes

CHALRTON — Paul and Charlotte McKeon are the proud parents of three outstanding athletes — Sean, Brendan, and Erin. All three siblings attended Dudley/Charlton schools and participated in both towns' youth athletic programs and Shepherd Hill's sports, specifically football, baseball and cheer. Each of their children have gone on to Division I schools, and continue to be strong student athletes. Sean McKeon, a 2016 graduate

of Shepherd Hill, was recruited

by the University of Michigan to play football for them as a tight end. He played for all four years, starting for the past three. Sean's reliable blocking and downfield receiving ability made him an important part of the Michigan offense. He is a two-time nominee to the John Mackey Award Watch List. He entered the NFL draft this winter. Brendan McKeon attend-

ed Shepherd Hill High School through his junior year, playing football and baseball for them.

Following a severe injury that prevented him from participating in the 2018 football season, he transferred to St. Thomas Moore School in Connecticut and graduated in 2019. He was recruited by Central Connecticut State University to play football as a Safety or Running Back. He is completing his freshman year, and looking forward to the 2020

Erin McKeon, a 2019 graduate of Shepherd Hill, has been involved in competitive cheer from the age of four. She participated in Charlton's youth football cheer programs, became a Shepherd Hill cheerleader while also participating in several private competitive cheer teams in central Massachusetts. In the spring of 2019, her cheer team, the Bombshells from East Coast Celebrity Cheer, were World Champions. Her talents and hard work earned her a place on the University of Louisville's cheer team as a freshman, where she will continue to compete with other college cheer teams at the national level.

The McKeon family thanks the towns of Charlton and Dudley for the many opportunities provided to the youth to explore and develop athletic skills in a supervised and safe environment.

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Reliant Medical Group to open temporary COVID-19 observation unit

WORCESTER — Reliant Medical Group is opening observation temporary unit to reduce pressure on overcrowded Emergency Departments and to mitigate risk for patients not suspected of having Covid-19 who require a higher level of care. The unit is located at Reliant's ReadyMED Plus urgent care facility on Shrewsbury Street in Worcester. Reliant's medical staff will care for adult patients for 12-36 hour stays at this facility.

Patients appropriate for this level of care will have conditions such as cellulitis, abdominal pain, kidney stones, urinary tract complaints, or need for hydration, antibiotic therapy, or anaphylaxis manage-

To start, the unit will have the capacity to provide observation-level care for 9 patients, but is designed to expand to accommodate more patients as needed. Referrals to the unit will be accepted from Reliant providers and other area providers, including those referring from an emergency room. Ambulatory services will continue to be available at ReadyMED Plus.

Reliant briefed officials at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the City of Worcester about its plans for ReadyMED Plus, and both

indicated their support for this expanded scope of services during the pandemic.

These are unprecedented times and all of us in healthcare need to work together, adapt and innovate to serve the needs of our patients and our communities," says Tarek Elsawy, MD, president & CEO of Reliant. "We have the medical expertise to care for patients with certain acute conditions, so it made sense for us to convert our ReadyMED Plus facility to provide a higher-level of care. Our Emergency Departments are challenged to care for the increasing number of patients with serious respiratory illness, and Reliant is prepared to help relieve some of the pressure our hospital partners are facing.'

Once the prevalence models began to anticipate a spike in Massachusetts in the number of people with COVID-19 illness, we quickly mobilized to rapidly stand up an observation unit," says Leon Josephs, MD, chief of specialty care at Reliant. "In less than two weeks, our incredible team of healthcare and administrative professionals have procured the necessary equipment, secured a food service partner, and developed a 24/7 staffing capacity within the Reliant workforce."

About Reliant Medical Group

Reliant Medical Group, part of OptumCare, was founded in 1929 and is one of the largest ambulatory health systems in the Central Massachusetts and Metro West Regions. With more than 500 providers and 2,500 employees across more than 19 locations, Reliant Medical Group offers a unique teambased approach to care. Reliant opened ReadyMED Plus, a physician-staffed urgent care facility, in 2016. Reliant and ReadyMED Plus accepts most major forms of health insurance. For more information on Reliant Medical Group, please visit: reliantmedicalgroup.org

Registry announces additional licensure deadline extensions

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) continues to thoroughly review its licensing protocols and credential requirements to identify additional measures that can be implemented to reduce non-essential travel, reduce the need for customers to visit RMV Service Centers, and ensure proper "social-distancing" can take place under Gov. Charlie Baker's declaration of a State of Emergency the week of March 9.

The following new changes to service delivery and organizational protocols are now or are about to be in place as follows:

Professional credentials for School Bus Certificates, School Pupil Transport Licenses (7D), Inspector Licenses, Driving Instructor Licenses and Driving School Licenses that have expired or are expiring, between March 10 and April 30, will be extended for 90 days after the State of Emergency is lifted. These credentials should all be considered "active" as the RMV implements the system changes to reflect that status in the near future.

Commercial Driver's License (CDL) holders are now able to renew their licenses online if they are self-certified in the Non-Excepted Interstate (NI) category for medical certification.

All passenger and motorcycle road tests (Class D and Class M) have been cancelled through Monday, May 4, 2020. Reminders About Other Previously Announced Changes:

Driver's licenses, ID cards, and Learner's Permits, including Commercial Driver's Licenses & and April 30, 2020, have had a 60-day April have been extended until June

extension applied to the current expiration date and do not need to be renewed at this time. Customers holding a license or ID marked "Limited-Term" that expired between March 1 to April 30 should visit Mass.gov/RMV for more information and to check the validity of their credential. CDL Medical Certificates that expire on or after March 1 until April 30 will be extended until June 30 to prevent license downgrades and elective medical visits, as well as alleviate demand on medical

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the RMV has implemented a strict no walk-in policy at a limited number of Service Centers that remain open to the general public. Service for necessary in-person transactions are available by appointment only. Customers should visit Mass.Gov/RMV to make a reservation at an open Service Center or find information on over 40 transactions that can be conducted online, by phone, or by mail.

Non-Classroom Drivers Education through a temporary policy, the RMV is allowing driving schools to offer online driver education training and written testing during this emergency period only. The RMV will continuously monitor the current emergency and will keep you informed about the timeframe in which driving schools can offer alternative training.

Effective April 1, 2020, all of the passenger plate registrations that have expired in March or will be expiring in April have been extended for 60 days. Registrations that expired in Permits (CDL/CLP), that have expired March have been extended until May or are expiring between March 1, 2020, 31 and registrations that expire in 30. Registration renewals can continue to be performed online at Mass.Gov/ RMV during this time. Customers seeking to do so in-person will not be able to make an appointment and should delay their visit to a Service Center at

The annual motor vehicle safety and emissions inspection stickers that expire on March 31 and April 30 have been extended 60 days and all motorcycles with inspection stickers originally set to expire on May 31 must be inspected by June 30. The RMV is also extending the time during which newly registered vehicles must be inspected based on the purchase date.

Class D and M Learner's Permits knowledge exams have been suspended through May 4. Commercial Learner's Permit tests are available to be taken at the Milford and Wilmington RMV Service Centers during normal business hours and commercial road tests continue to be conducted by the Massachusetts State Police.

Massachusetts State Police are still conducting road tests for Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDLs), but require anyone taking these road tests to bring

Kevin Meehan

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and wear a mask or face covering for the entirety of the test.

The National Safety Council (NSC) and the RMV have previously announced the cancellation, through May 4, of the following Massachusetts in-person classroom driver safety classes: eight-hour Driver Retraining Program, 4-hour Driver Attitudinal Retraining Program and the fourhour State Courts Against Road Rage (SCARR) Program. The RMV has temporarily approved an alternative way to deliver the statutorily required content in the form of an online course. For a limited time, participation in the online course will fulfill the in-person class requirement. Additional information is available at http://drive.nsc. org and impacted customers can expect to receive specific instructions directly from NSC.

For details on all of these extensions and additional information on RMV services and the RMV's response to COVID-19, visithttps://www.mass.gov/ info-details/rmv-covid-19-information.

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Open Sky Community Services releases clinical video series, "Coping during COVID"

WORCESTER Open Community Services has released a multi-part clinical video series entitled "Coping during COVID," to offer evidence-based recommendations and tips to support the community through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Open Sky clinical leaders Suzy Langevin, Director of Dual Diagnosis Services, Stefanie Gregware, Vice President of Clinical Services, Barent Walsh, Ph.D, Senior Clinical Consultant, Andrea Wolloff, Director of Evidence-Based Practices and Kerrin Westerlind, Assistant Director of Evidence Based Practices are amongst those offering evidence-based recommendations to

assist others in this time of need. 'Social distancing is essential from a public health standpoint but it's wreaking havoc on us emotionally," explains Dr. Oliver Joseph, psychiatrist and Chief Medical Officer at Open Sky. "It's increasing isolation, anxiety, depression and other negative emotions.'

The series is intended to offer guidance and assistance for those looking to manage such emotions. The videos will be available on the Open Sky YouTube Channel as well as on the organization's website.

While many of Open Sky's direct care staff cannot work from home and are continuing to show up for shifts in residential programs, supporting individuals living in their own homes, delivering medication and needed supplies, others are rising to the challenge presented by the pandemic using non-traditional remote ways to support individuals and families, such as Telehealth counseling services, Zoom meetings, and telephone outreach. The videos in the series were created by clinicians working remotely in an effort to provide a helpful resource both for individuals served by the organization and the larger community.

More virtual and digital programming is upcoming from Open Sky Community Services as the organization adapts to the challenges of continuing to serve its communities through non-traditional means during this time.

For more information about Open Sky Community Services, please contact Lorie Martiska, lorie.martiska@ openskycs.org.



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Lady Wildcats celebrate successful season



The 2020 8th Grade Lady Wildcats

BY JASON BLEAU VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON - While the COVID-19 pandemic put an unfortunate damper on many sports seasons across the state, that's not stopping local coaches and athletes from celebrating the accomplishments their teams in 2020. The Charlton Lady Wildcats Youth Basketball program for example are celebrating a successful season all around.

Leading the way were the fifth grade Lady Wildcats, who became division champions, the first team in Charlton to accomplish that feat in some time. While the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the ladies from going to the state championship Head Coach Jean Murphy said the athletes should be proud of what they were able to accomplish and walk away with plenty of pride.

tremendous 'The amount of effort these girls gave us was impressive. They would show up ready to give 110 percent, no matter if it was a practice, scrimmage, or game. One of my favorite takeaways from the season was to see the remarkable growth and development each girl showed from our first practice to the last game,' Coach Murphy said in a release from the Charlton Wildcats. "Our girls always came to play no matter what. I look for-

ward to the further development into the coming years. I also want to commend the girl's parents for their dedication and support they gave to the girls, getting them to practice, tournaments, and scrimmages. There were a lot of sacrifices made by parents and coaches alike and that's what makes this such a special team. I would also like to thank assistant coaches Shawn Murphy and Mike Gormley, without their help we couldn't have accomplished what we did."

The sixth-grade girls finished second for the second year in a row under coach Scot Neri, who said he continued to be amazed by the effort put in by all the ladies on the team and how well balanced the sixth grade crew turned out to be.

"This is my second season coaching these girls and the one thing I am most proud of is that we don't rely on just one player. For the second year in a row, five different girls led the team in scoring for a game. Another trait that this team has is toughness. They fight hard all game long and never gave up for a second the entire season. I'll take that in my team every day of the week. I'd really like to thank my assistants Glenn Lotter and Derek Hast," Neri said. "I could write a paragraph on each girl from this year - each of these girls is tough as nails and they deserve all the credit for their success.'

The seventh-grade girls, coached by Dan Welton, finished second for their third straight year. These ladies competed in a North/South combined division defeating several prominent teams and while their efforts didn't end in a championship Coach Welton said they made a lot of great and important memories along the way.

"This group of girls

plays great team basketball, which is the secret to their success. Someone different steps up every week, making us hard to beat. This also makes team superlatives a challenge. Our team defense was clearly the MVP. All eight girls made their opponents earn every basket. Every girl improved over the course of the season and made contributions to the team's success. If there is one thing I can say that the team could use more of, it's confidence. Amazing that a team that has been to the finals for 3 straight seasons can be short on confidence," said Coach Welton. "They definitely improved this season, but this is where they have the most room to grow. If they believed in themselves as much as the coaches do, they would never lose a game. And we'll continue to work on that next season."



The 2020 division champion 5th Grade Lady Wildcats

Finally, the eighthgrade girls, led by Coach Elizabeth Kowalski, faced a new level of competition after merging with the North Division in 2019 where they only one two games. This season though the Lady Wildcats earned a winning record of 7-3, which Coach Kowalski said is evident of how much they've grown.

"They didn't give up, and this year, they gave their best effort. They showed their love of the sport, the team and wanting to try their best. Hopefully, the girls will take this as a life lesson to keep trying and working hard," Coach Kowalski said. "They've all come such a long way since 5th grade and hopefully will remember these years as fondly as I know I will."

As the curtain falls on the 2020 season prematurely, the Lady Wildcats walk away with plenty of memories and hopes for even more success in the 2021 season. With a division title in the books and consistency and player growth abundant, the future of girls' basketball really is alive and well here in Charlton.

The 2020 7th Grade Lady



The 2020 6th Grade Lady Wildcats



Legislature authorizes waiver of MCAS requirementsa

-The House Representatives and the Senate have approved legislation authorizing the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to waive MCAS testing requirements for the 2019-2020 academic year due to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic and the ongoing State of Emergency in Massachusetts.

State Rep. Todd Smola (R-Warren) said that in addition to the proposed MCAS changes, House Bill 4616, An Act to further address challenges faced by municipalities, school districts and state authorities resulting from COVID-19, would also allow regional school districts to delay finalizing a Fiscal Year 2021 budget beyond June 30, and extend the deadline for school districts to file progress reports mandated by the 2019 Student Opportunity Act. The bill was enacted in both legislative branches on April 9, and is now on Governor Charlie Baker's desk awaiting his signature.

Under the bill, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education would be empowered to waive the requirements of the competency determination for high school graduation, with the recommendation of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. High school seniors who are unable to take or complete a competency determination assessment administered in the spring of 2020 would be given the opportunity to take or retake the assessment at a later date.

The bill also mandates that the requirement for a comprehensive diagnostic assessment of individual students be waived for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

Because some participating cities and towns may not be able to finalize a budget on time this year, House Bill 4616 would also permit regional school districts to suspend the statutorily-required vote on the approval of their Fiscal Year 2021 budget until after June 30. To provide for the continued operation of the regional school district in the absence of a completed budget, the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education would be authorized to certify one or more 1/12th interim budgets until a new budget is finalized.

Representative Smola noted that House Bill 4616 also moves the reporting date for schools to submit their first three-year plan to close student

achievement gaps, as mandated by the Student Opportunity Act passed last year. The bill sets the new reporting deadline for May 15, but allows the Commissioner to extend the date even further, if needed.

Additional provisions contained in House Bill 4616 include language:

allowing for the in-person verification requirements to be suspended, waived, delayed or simplified for both the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program and the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program for the duration of the State of Emergency:

moving the date by which the MBTA board must approve a preliminary budget from March 15 to May 15; and

moving the date by which the MBTA must submit a final budget to the advisory board from April 15 to June 15.

House Bill 4616 includes an emergency preamble, which means it will take effect as soon as Governor Baker signs the bill. For additional information please contact Rep. Smola at Todd. Smola@mahouse.gov or (617) 722-2100.

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To the Editor:

Turn To POSTAL page A15

Garden your way to better health



GARDEN MOMENTS MELINDA

MYERS

Break out the tools and garden your way to a healthier mind, body and spirit. Gardeners know and research proves that getting outdoors, digging in the soil and gardening help strengthen muscles, increase flexibility, reduce stress and elevate our mood.

Include gardening as a major component of your workout schedule. You'll stretch and strengthen muscles while promoting cardiovascular health and maintaining bone mass. A University of Arkansas study found that yard work as well as weight training significantly maintained bone density in women over 50.

And for those trying to lose weight, add 30 minutes of gardening to your daily or weekly routine to help shed some extra pounds. A half hour of raking burns 162 calories, weeding 182, and turning the compost pile a whopping 250. Gardening several times per week will help keep you and your landscape looking top notch.

Don't let a lack of time, space or painful joints stop you from growing nutritious vegetables, beautiful flowers or an attractive landscape. Staying active through gardening not only increases flexibility and strengthens muscles, it helps fight anxiety and depression that arthritis sufferers and others often experience.

Those struggling with limited time, space or mobility may want to try container and elevated gardening. Both can be placed on patios, decks or balconies. Select a size and style you can easily reach and one that matches your garden design. Those on a tight budget can add drainage holes and paint 5-gallon food grade containers or nursery pots to create attractive planters.

Protect and support your hands with gloves that fit and provide support like Foxgloves' Works gloves (foxglovesinc.com). Padding and reinforced fingertips protect your hands and knuckles from scrapes and bruises. Gloves with long cuffs or those that extend to the elbow provide added protection when working in the garden.

Select gloves that are machine washable, so you always have a clean pair ready when you venture out to the garden. Keep a pair of gloves, pruner and your favorite weeding tool in a bucket near the front or back door. You won't waste time looking for your favorite tools plus you can take advantage of those small blocks of time to weed, deadhead or pick a bouquet of flowers to

Enlist the help of ergonomic tools that allow you to garden longer with less pain and fatigue. Look for designs that keep your back and wrist straight when digging, pruning and raking. Select tools with soft wide grips to further reduce hand fatigue. Wrap the handles of existing tools with foam pipe insulation for added padding.

Protect your joints and muscles while gardening. Warm up, just as you would for any workout, with a few simple stretches. Protect your knees by using a stool, kneeling pad or one-legged kneel instead of squatting.

Take regular breaks. Gardening in twenty-minute intervals and resting in between to enjoy your handiwork and hydrate will pay off with less muscle strain and fatigue. You'll then be ready for your next workout session in the garden that will invigorate

your mind, body and spirit.

Melinda Myers has written numerous 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 Foxgloves for her expertise to write this article. Her Web site is www. MelindaMyers.com.



Photo Courtoev

Gardening helps fight anxiety and depression while providing plenty of fresh-from-the-garden produce.

MARKETS

continued from page A1

critical public safety functions. The mobile testing sites in Foxborough and West Springfield will each perform up to 200 tests per day, seven days per week, with appointments scheduled in advance by agencies and departments through a call center at the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security.

Testing is performed at no charge. The sites reflect a partnership among the Baker-Polito Administration, the Big E, Brewster Ambulance Service, the Department of Correction, the Department of Fire Services, the New England Patriots, the New England Revolution, Wellpath, and Quest Diagnostics.

The Baker Administration also released updated crisis standards of care guidelines for the state's health-care facilities. Upon the request of leaders in the healthcare system, the Department of Public Health convened an advisory committee that includes

medical experts and ethicists from across the Commonwealth, representing both large academic medical centers and community hospitals. Their recommendations helped inform ethical, equitable and transparent guidelines for providing acute care during a crisis.

The guidelines, which are not manda-

tory, are designed to do the following: Help healthcare institutions and providers make consistent decisions about the use and allocation of scarce medical resources.

Ensure that critical resources are

conserved and distributed efficiently across the healthcare system.

Promote transparent decision-making and public trust in the fairness and equity of the system.

Protect those who might otherwise face barriers to accessing care.

Assure patients and their families that they will receive fair access to care, regardless of where they live.

Additional information and updates can be obtained by visiting www.mass. gov. Officials have also created specific pages related to the crisis.

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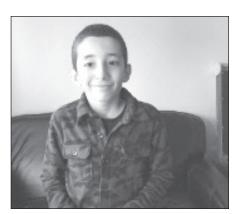


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Angel Age 11 Hi! My name is Angel and I love to laugh!

Angel is a boy of Hispanic descent with a contagious smile. He is very inquisitive and loves to laugh. Some of Angel's favorite activities are reading, playing video games, playing outside on his scooter and going to the playground. He also loves Disney and Pixar movies, especially the Cars movie. Angel is a very bright child, with an excellent memory.

Angel attends a specialized classroom for children on the Autism spectrum. The school has a focus on language and literacy development, and Angel is also able to receive Applied Behavior Analysis during school time. According to his foster mother,

plied Behavior Analysis during school time. According to his foster mother, Angel loves to learn and does well in class. Both his teachers and foster mother have noted that Angel responds well to structure and that he can be very active.

Angel is legally freed for adoption and will do best with a family that is nurturing and patient. Angel has a lot of energy and an active family would be ideal for him. His social worker prefers Angel to be placed in a two parent home either with no other children or with children who are older than him.

Who Can Adopt?

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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.

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."





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EDITORIAL

Lessons from another pandemic

A recent conversation with someone who experienced the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918 prompted a bit of research into that era on our part, and what we found was that things back then were, in many ways, not so different.

The Spanish Flu infected one third of the world's population, and roughly 675,000 people died in the U.S. as a result. Interesting to note is that this particular strain of the flu virus did not, in fact, begin in Spain, but most likely somewhere in the farm belt of the United States. The name was born from the fact that infection reports in the Iberian Peninsula were particularly high, and Spanish King Alfonso XIII fell ill from it.

In 1918, Washington, D.C. public health officials tried to warn citizens of the symptoms and how the disease was spread via posters. One poster read, 'INFLUENZA' Spread by droplets sprayed from nose and throat. Cover each cough and sneeze with handkerchief, spread by contact, avoid crowds, if possible, walk to work, do not spit on floor or sidewalk, do not use common drinking cups and common towels, avoid excessive fatigue, if taken ill, go to bed and send for a doctor. The above applies also to colds, bronchitis, pneumonia and tuberculosis' The virus began to spread rapidly due to the close proximity in military encampments during the First World War. The disease was a very contagious H1N1 strain

What we know from our 1918 counterparts is that social distancing does work. Newspapers downplayed the flu, his own family and staff were infected. During that time, Wilson didn't pay much attention to the pandemic. In fact, no public statement from him was ever made in regards to it. His focus was on the war.

We've heard that over the next few weeks, we will see a dramatic surge in confirmed COVID-19 cases. We've also read reports that the curve is flattening in some places. This does not mean that folks should think the pandemic is over. Everyone should, of course, still be practicing social distancing among the many other precautions we've heard

In 1918, schools were shut down and public gatherings were banned. By the summer of 1919, the flu pandemic came to an end. Individuals either passed away or developed an immunity to it. In 2008, researchers discovered a group of three genes that caused a person's bronchial tubes and lungs to weaken which paved the way for bacterial pneumonia. This is what made the Spanish flu so deadly.

Back in 1918, the first outbreak dwindled into spring, however it re-emerged during the fall. The Spanish flu came in three waves. The first was in the spring of 1918 that included mild symptoms. That fall the flu mutated into a more deadlier version, that hit those between the ages of 20-40 the most.

During the winter, the third wave hit and by the spring time the illness was

An October newspaper excerpt com 1918 reporting the cancellation of Halloween read, "Because of the "flu" epidemic, there is to be no Hallowe'ening this year. The Board of Health has strongly urged against any demonstrations and the Burgess today, issued orders that there be no observance of the Hallowe'een season. Howard Heinz, of the Federal Food Administration has issued an appeal to the people against the waste of foodstuffs, during this season. Corn, beans, peas, apples, pumpkins, etc should not be used. Every year thousands of pumpkins are cut up and wasted in making Jack-O-Lanterns. The same wasteful practice has applied to apples in the time honored Hallowe'en sport of bobbing for apples. It is not the purpose of the food administrator to discourage harmless little celebrations in the home, but this year it is imperative that

every scrap of food be saved."

Views and commentary from Sturbridge, Brimfield, Holland and Wales

Thank you from a grateful nation

It's easy to take some occupations and services for granted until something causes us to take notice and appreciate what they do. 9/11 developed a deep and sincere appreciation for police officers and the men and women of the fire department. I think superficially before we watched them in action on 9/11, we knew they put their lives in harm's way to protect us, but as the twin towers fell, it burned

into our collective memories the risks they took and sacrificed they made on that fateful day.

It's commonplace now to run across a man or woman in military uniform and thank them for their service, as we

should. They are both the first line and last line of our defense. They earn and deserve our eternal gratitude.

There is a new kind of war raging across the globe. It's not against an armed enemy threatening to send missiles into our cities and there's not an invasion force staging to take away our freedoms. Instead, it's a microscopic virus with a technical name that a few short months ago we'd never heard, but today, it's upon everyone's lips across the globe.

COVID-19 has created a pandemic the likes of which have not been seen since 1918. It's global in nature. It harms and kills not because of political or racial differences. It infects us because it can

Our troops in uniform may be called into a support mission as this virus continues to expand. The men and women of the police and traditional fire department may also be called into support, but the front line of this war is being fought buy a different uniformed group and the risks are as great as if they were armed and facing a foreign invader.

An army in scrubs ...

Their uniforms are referred to as scrubs and the risks they are taking to protect us are as deadly as bullets and bombs. Today, this battle is being fought and will ultimately be won by medical tech's, nurses, doctors and all those in the health care system that support them.

I'm fortunate to have as my family doctor, a man who is also head of internal medicine at my local hospital. He hasn't had a day off in a long time. I'm currently having a health issue unrelated to COVID-19 and he answers my emails and returns phone calls late at night, after he's spent twelve or more

hours at the hospital. My Doctor, like many others, is a leader and a hero in this war.

A good friend of mine is CEO of our local medical center. He's working around the clock in a community that is suddenly exploding with new cases. I sent Phil a text a few days ago to express my gratitude and encourage him. He's a great CEO and is providing the leadership we need in this battle, as

are many others. Positively

The infantry in this fight, and those who are at most SPEAKING risk are the techs and nurses. They are in close contact with the enemy trying to take over our bodies. While GARY W. MOORE we are all trying to self-quarantine and social distance

ourselves from each other, our nurses and techs are rushing in to take our blood pressures and temperatures. They are purposefully and willingly coming in direct contact with patients who are infected, not because it is their job but because it is their calling. I think it takes a special type of bravery and dedication to put on those scrubs and walk into the healthcare facility armed only with a stethoscope and a mask. I'm afraid that once this crisis has come to an end, the sacrifice made by our healthcare workers may potentially be shocking. We already owe them a debt we can never repay.

I spoke with Maddie, a local RN at my cancer center. I asked her if she

She responded, "I listen to the news and come to work fearful that we will not have the supplies we need or not enough beds. So far, we do. My greatest fear is of course becoming infected. I cannot treat and serve you if I am in the bed next to you.'

I was struck by the dedication of this married RN with two little girls at home. Her fear is that she may not be able to take care of her patients. I'm humbled and touched by her dedica-

So once social distancing is a distant memory, please give your doctor, nurse, tech and support staff a hug and a hearty thank you. Their dedication and bravery are inspirational.

They deserve no less.

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.garyw-

Put tax-smart investing moves to work



FINANCIAL Focus

BURDICK

The tax return deadline has been extended until mid-July, but you may have already filed your taxes. If you were not entirely happy with the results, you might start seeking ways to change the outcome for next year. And one area to look at may be your investment-relat-

To help control these taxes, consider these moves:

Take full advantage of tax-deferred investments. As an investor, one of the best moves you can make is to contribute as much as you can afford to your tax-deferred accounts - your traditional IRA and 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan – every year. If you don't touch these accounts until you retire, you can defer taxes on them for decades, and when you do start taking money out, presumably during retirement, you may be in a lower tax bracket.

Look for tax-free opportunities. Interest from municipal bonds typically is exempt from federal income tax, and, in some cases, from state and local income tax, too. (Some municipal bonds, however, may be subject to the alternative minimum tax.) And if you qualify to contribute to a Roth IRA eligibility is generally based on income - your earnings can be withdrawn taxfree, provided you've had your account for at least five years and you don't start taking withdrawals until you're at least 59 and a half. Your employer may also offer a Roth 401(k), which can provide tax-free withdrawals. Keep in mind, though, that you contribute after-tax dollars to a Roth IRA and 401(k),unlike a traditional IRA and 401(k), in which your contributions are made with pre-

Be a "buy and hold" investor. Your 401(k) and IRA are designed to be longterm investments, and you will face disincentives in the form of taxes and penalties if you tap into them before you reach retirement age. So, just by investing in these retirement accounts you are essentially pursuing a "buy and hold" strategy. But you can follow this same strategy for investments held outside your IRA and 401(k). You can own some investments – stocks in particular - for decades without paying taxes on them. And when you do sell them, you'll only be taxed at the long-term capital gains rate, which may well be less than your ordinary income tax rate. But if you're frequently buying and selling investments you've held for less than a year, you could rack up some pretty big tax bills, because you'll likely be taxed at your ordinary income tax rate.

prepared for unexpected taxes. Mutual fund managers are generally free to make whatever trades they choose. And when they do sell some investments, they can incur capital gains, which will be passed along to you. If this is a concern, you might look for funds that do less trading and bill themselves as tax efficient.

While taxes are certainly one factor to consider when you invest, they should probably not be the driving force. You need to build a diversified portfolio that's appropriate for your risk tolerance and time horizon. Not all the investments you select, and the moves you make with them, will necessarily be the most tax efficient, but by working with your financial and tax professionals, you can make choices that can help you move toward your long-term goals.

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.

A Roundup of Reader Tips and Tricks

As social distancing is keeping us close to home, many people are discovering new and

easier ways to get things done and "make life a little easier." Read on for the newest round of Reader Tip submissions. And remember read-

ers, send in your favorite hints and you could win a fabulous three course dinner for two at the Publick House in Sturbridge!

This reader has found an ingenious way to "track the trek."

This tip could help if people alternate and really social distance! Did you know the standard distance for above ground telephone poles in the U.S. is 100 feet apart? If you hike past 24 poles, turn around and walk home, you have walked a mile plus!

Viola Bramel Northbridge, MA

This moneysaving tip is something worth getting fired up for!

Use pine cones for a great fire starter. They burn quick and hot, due to the sticky sap on them, and they are all over the ground where you have native pines. Collect them and save for use and keep them dry.

Paul Davignon

Uxbridge, MA

A reader shares her timely recycling

I do a lot of gardening and my age is catching up to me. Yesterday I went outside to do some clean up in my beds. This past winter our flannel



TRAINOR

sheet had a rip and I kept it for a purpose. I laid it down on the ground as it is large enough to kneel or sit. It is better than a small kneeler that has a limited area. The sheet is a good choice for meeasy to move around and a large surface area.

Rita Lemieux North Brookfield, MA

You know cinnamon as a tasty spice; this reader knows it's a great garden

Here are some uses for cinnamon in the garden

1) Cinnamon is a proven fungus fighter. Dampening off covers an array of diseases that attack seeds and kills them. It is caused by fungi and soil conditions.

2) Mushrooms don't like cinnamon, a little dusting of cinnamon and watch them disappear from your garden.

3) Rooting hormone - just apply cinnamon to the stem when you plant the cutting.

4) Ant deterrent - we love cinnamon, ants do not. Sprinkle around your garden beds to kill ants and keep them

5) Plant wounds - dust some cinnamon on the wound to encourage healing and prevent infection.

6) House plants - cinnamon helps get rid of mold and mildew in your plants. Sprinkle on soil and watch plants flour-

7) Gnat problem? Cinnamon gets rid of gnats in seedlings + plants and keeps them away.

Turn To TRAINOR page A10





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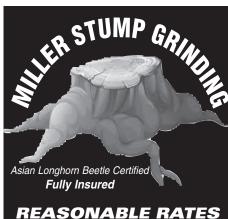
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OBITUARIES

Edward "Clutch" J. Cloutier, 76

STURBRIDGE- Edward "Clutch" J. Cloutier, 76, of Wallace Rd., passed away on Sunday, April 5th, in the Harrington Memorial Hospital, Southbridge, after sudden illness.



wife of 55 years, Nancy J. (Jesky) Cloutier; his two sons, Mark Cloutier and his wife Zandra of Sturbridge and Michael Cloutier Southbridge; two daugh-Debra Julian ters, her husband Richard of Warren and Tammy Cloutier of Southbridge; his brother. Norman Cloutier of Sturbridge;

and his three grand-

He leaves his loving

Mark Cloutier and his wife Katrina, Rebecca Lee Cloutier and Kylee Rose Julian. He was predeceased by his two brothers, Armand "Roger" Cloutier and Roland Cloutier and his sister, Lorraine Martel. He was born

children,

in Sturbridge the son of Hormidas and Emma (Gendron) Cloutier. Edward was a US Army Veteran, serving in the 82nd Airborne Division.

Edward worked for CRC Line in Spencer for 20 years, retiring 14 years ago. He was very proud of his Native American heritage with the Montagnais tribe. He had a green thumb and was known for his huge gardens. He had a knack for reviving old engines and equipment and was known throughout New England as an expert on hit & miss engines and Model A Fords. Edward loved spending time with his grandchildren and one of his greatest pastimes was watching nature on his farmland in Sturbridge.

A celebration of life for Edward on his farm will be held at a later date. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Shriner's Hospital for Children, 516 Carew St, Springfield, MA 01104.

The Daniel T. Morrill Funeral Home, 130 Hamilton St., Southbridge, is directing arrangements.

www.morrillfuneralhome.com

JoAnna Maynard, 81

SPENCER - JoAnna Maynard, 81, of Maple Street, died Sunday, April 5, 2020, at Harrington Memorial Hospital in Southbridge. She is survived by a brother, Rene Maynard of Georgia, two sisters, Deloris Jastrzebski of Dudlev and Robin Yates of Sturbridge; and many nephews and nieces. She was predeceased by a brother, Joseph Maynard who died in 1993; and three sisters, Elaine Triplett who died in 2003, Lois Leduc who died in 1993, and Jane Ray-Berger of Southbridge who died in 2015. She was born in Oxford,

daughter of the late Albert and Annie (Ray) Maynard, and lived in Oxford for many years prior to moving to Spencer.

Due to the gathering restrictions in Massachusetts, a Mass at St. Roch's Church and burial at St. Roch's Cemetery will both be held privately. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Roch's Church, 334 Main St., Oxford, MA 01540. Paradis-Givner Funeral Home in Oxford is directing the arrangements.

paradisfuneralhome.com

Send all obituary notices to Stonebridge Press, PO Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550, or by e-mail to Obits@stonebridgepress.news



TRAINOR

continued from page A8

Bob Bourdeau Fiskdale MA

This smart sewer is (literally) making her mark:

As a quilter/sewer, I have found my heat erasable pen most useful when sewing "in the ditch" or close to the seam line with two like fabrics. Just run the pen down the seam and it marks where to sew or not. Also when I want to stop sewing before a point I can mark that too. A quick touch with a hot iron and the markings are gone. Pen should be an alternate color to fabric.

Joanna Gallant Whitinsville, MA

Forget about freezer burnt food -this simple tip helps prevents waste!

I keep a list of freezer contents on the side of the refrigerator. When we've eaten something I delete it from the list.

Terry Maiorana Ashford, CT

Prize Winner Congratulations Rita Lemieux of North Brookfield, whose name was drawn for Dinner For Two at

the Publick House. She submitted the timely recycling

Joshua

Win Dinner for Two at the Publick House

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 renown 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

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? questions and/or hints to: Take the Hint!, C/o the Southbridge Evening News, PO Box 90: Southbridge, MA 01550. Or E-mail KDRR@aol. com. Hints are entered into a drawing for dinner for two at the historic Publick House Inn.

CASES

continued from page A1

datory closure rules, as well as concerns from those who are closed. As a rule of thumb, places not clearly listed in the governor's March order should be closed "if you're receiving customers," including those working from home, but employees of some "banned companies" can work from home if they don't serve people directly, he added.

Regarding food services, he said his department is conducting "very brief" inspections, specifically looking at employee health, hygiene, food handling and facility cleanliness. By last Wednesday, they had shut down three places, but "They've quickly corrected those conditions" and reopened. Some sites have closed long-term, but he said they were voluntary, not ordered by his department.

On April 7, the state ordered grocery stores to start limiting the number of people (including both customers and staff) who can be inside at any one time to 40 percent of their official capacity based on floor area. That did not seem to be an issue at Big Bunny last Sunday around 5:30 p.m., when the store did not seem overly crowded, nor were people waiting outside to get in. Inside, around half of the customers and almost all employees were wearing masks.

The order itself calls for store staff to monitor any outdoor lines that do form "to ensure customers are maintaining appropriate distance from each other" and to call police if problems arise. It also encourages use of one-way aisles, identfied by signs and/or aisle markings, "to maximize spacing between customers.

On April 9, Gov. Baker also ordered all insurance providers to cover Covid-19 medical care "at both in-network and out-ofnetwork providers ... without any requirement of cost sharing by the insured, whether by copayments, deductibles, coinsurance or similar charges."

Those are to include all "medically necessary emergency department and inpatient services" and the hospitals cannot "balance bill the insured for any amount above the reimbursement paid by the Carrier." That reimbursement rate is set at 135 percent of what Medicare pays for out of network services, and whatever the contracted rate is for in-network, the order states.

The state is recommending all citizens wear masks when in public places, but it has not formally required that.

Unlike some states (most notably Michigan) that have closed seed-supply businesses, the state DPH specifically declared "nurseries, greenhouses, garden supply centers and agriculture supply stores" to be essential services that can stay open provided they meet certain safety requirements and sell "food-producing plants for human consumption."

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



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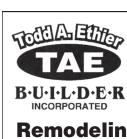






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— Heather S., Renewal by Andersen customer, Holliston, MA



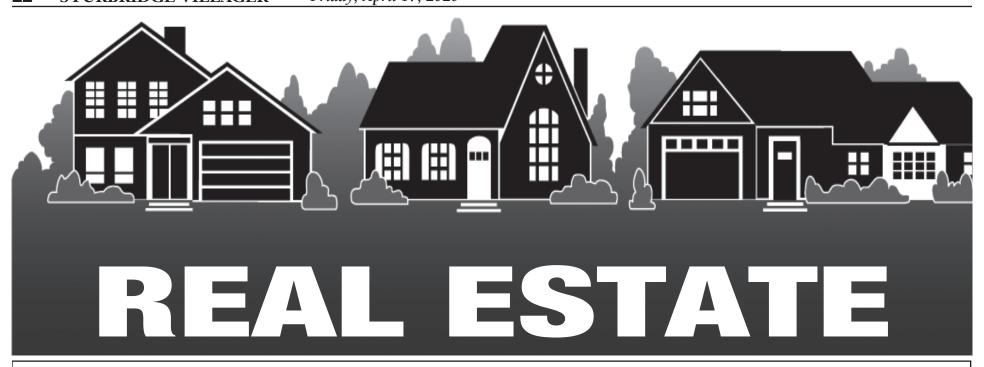




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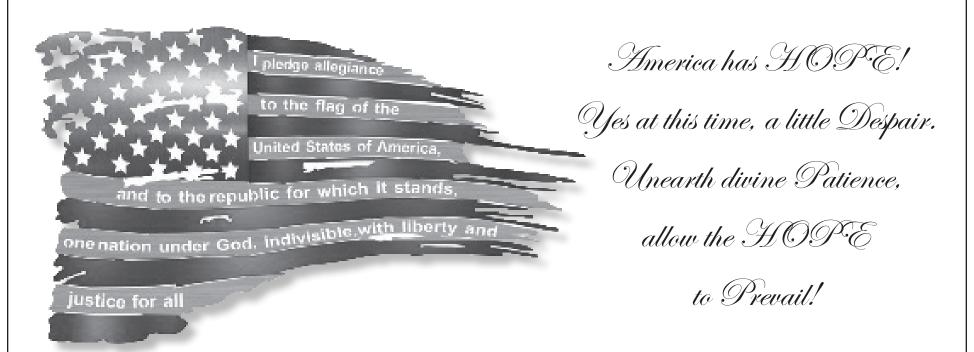
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tion has provided major funding for all the Second Chance programs that help pets in need," said Second Chance CEO Sheryl Blancato. "Right now, the need is great. All three of our vet hospitals are seeing a dramatic increase in pets needing urgent medical care. We need to be here for all these pets.'

To conserve surgical supplies, all non-essential surgeries have been rescheduled and they are directing all emergency surgeries to the North Brookfield vet hospital, which has an increased surgical capacity and an advanced care unit for critical patients. Additional safeguards have been put in place to protect the staff and pet owners so they can remain open and caring for those in need.

According to the nonprofit's Facebook page, on a recent day two very sick dogs arrived at Second Chance's Springfield hospital within an hour of each other, both requiring emergency surgery. Both patients' care was transferred to the North Brookfield hospital where medical staff worked well into

the night, saving both their lives. "We are touched by the support of pet owners who are grateful we've been able to stay open with precautions in place." Second Chance hospital staff bring pets into the hospital and while pet owners talk to the doctors from the safety of their cars. "At our Worcester hospital, one pet owner stashed homemade masks and a gift card inside their



Photo Courtesy

Second Chance Worcester Community Veterinary patient Izzy visiting for an appoint-

cat's carrier, along with a note thanking Second Chance for 'staying open to care for everyone's babies."

Blancato added that she knows times are challenging right now for everyone. For those who are able to help. donations can be made online at secondchanceanimals.org/donate, on the Second Chance Facebook page or via mail to 111 Young Rd., East Brookfield, MA 01515.



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QCC students work remotely to continue income tax assistance

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College students and their instructor Eduardo Rivas are offering free remote tax preparation until the end of April. This free income tax preparation service is available to individuals who meet any one of the following requirements: household income is \$56,000 or less, the elderly, those with disabilities, and limited English speakers who need assistance in preparing their tax returns.

Mr. Rivas is the volunteer coordinator for the City of Worcester's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, in addition to being a QCC adjunct faculty member and Admissions Enrollment Counselor. Until the recent state closure of all non-essential businesses, Mr. Rivas and his 50 volunteers (both QCC students and trained volunteers from the community) had prepared over 300 tax returns. The returns were prepared at both the Main South Community Development Corporation and at QCC's Community Learning Hub, located at Great Brook Valley. The need was so great that there were times when 14 preparers were working at the two sites. Mr. Rivas wanted to continue to help those in the community, who might still need to get their taxes prepared, which is why he decided to continue preparing tax returns remotely.

A total of 10 QCC students will be working on any tax returns received through the end of April. The students are part of Mr. Riva's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance course, which introduces students to concepts and languages of the IRS and taxation. Students in the course all become certified tax preparers before they are allowed to volunteer to prepare federal and state taxes. The course also requires students to complete 12, three-hour volunteer sessions. This is the second year the course has been offered and nine former students from last year's class came back to volunteer again this year.

"This class is truly rewarding. I also enjoy doing the necessary work and enjoy working with the clients as well as the volunteers. I see such a diverse group of people who come and have been through so much. I am glad that we can help, and in the same way help ourselves by gaining experience and skills," said current QCC student Joe Ramos, an accounting certificate major.

According to Mr. Rivas, the students are working on returns for their own family and friends and waiting to pitch in with preparing other returns as needed.

"I have received emails from a lot of my volunteers expressing their willingness to help me in preparing returns remotely, or with any other projects related to the VITA project during this time," Mr. Rivas said. "I have divided all the work among the QCC students, but I also have other volunteers who are willing to help me if needed. The plan is that if we start getting a lot of clients

who contact us by email and the QCC students cannot handle the work, I will ask the other volunteers to support us."

Anyone who meets the income requirements and is still interested in getting their tax returns prepared can email vita@qcc.mass.edu. For more information, visit Volunteer Income Tax Assistance.

For more information on QCC, contact Josh Martin, Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-7513 or jmartin@qcc.mass.edu.



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A promising start to spring fishing



THE GREAT **RALPH** TRUE

Spring fishing in some local ponds has been great for numerous trout fishing anglers this year, as pictures in this column have shown. I received a call from Daryl Carter this past week, and he told me about he and his wife catching 5 & 6 lb. trout from Webster lake in March. A sixpound brook trout and brown trout along with a huge tiger trout sure made for a few great days of fishing. It seems as though Massachusetts Fish & Wildlife decided to stock many of their brood stock trout this year, along with the full spring stocking of trout, to ensure the fish were available to licensed fishermen & women.

Daryl fished Wallum lake this past weekend and could not catch a single fish, and he was not alone. Numerous other anglers that fished Wallum Lake this past week came up empty handed, but that is Wallum Lake. Some nice rainbow trout were caught by other anglers using power bait last week, but then they to found fishing slow during the past few days. A couple of anglers fished fly's and lures from a boat last week and also came up empty handed. They claimed that fish were rising all over the lake, but they would not



take a single thing that they

Wallum Lake opened on March 5 this year, unknown to many anglers. One minute, it was closed to all fishing, and the next, it was open. Rhode Island decided to use the odd even schedule for fishing because of the virus outbreak, after pressure from the fishing public. Fishing was allowed for anglers' names that began with A - M on odd days and N-Z on

A number of years ago, a good friend, the late Bob Trombi of Worcester, taught this writer a good method of catching trout when they are surface feeding. Using a couple of ultra light rods loaded with six-pound test monofilament line, with 20 feet of two-pound test leader material were trolled with a number 18 dry fly extremely slow in



back of the boat. It was not long before we were reeling in one trout after another. A small electric motor was used to keep the 16 foot boat speed extremely slow. Early morning fishing with light winds are necessary to fish this method, but it worked.

Beavers continue to destroy many trees throughout the state, as this week's picture shows a fallen tree at a local club. They chew the tree until there is only a small amount holding the tree up. Eventually, a strong gust of wind comes along and blows it over.

Massachusetts needs a trapping season soon before the beaver cause more destruction to public & private property. The band aid approach the state now has is ridiculous.

Take A Kid Fishing & Keep Them Rods Bending! Stay Safe!

READING **NEWSPAPERS IS A QUEST** LIKE NO OTHER

FINNEGAN

continued from page A1

ficult day as the limitations imposed due to the pandemic kept his family and loved ones from celebrating his late-father's life to the fullest through a wake and mass. However, when he returned home on the day of the funeral what he found filled his heart with love as the local community gathered in small groups to respect a veteran and loving

"When we were coming back, the neighborhood started a precession.

Every house had people outside. Kids had roses that they brought to our driveway and put in a bucket. We ended up with four dozen roses in there," Brian Finnegan said. "It was hard to grieve on that day, but it just goes to show that people are still there for you.'

Finnegan said he struggled to find peace on the day of the funeral, but those who turned out to pay their respects in their own way helped him achieve it. Those who wanted to pay respects but couldn't due to the lack of a wake or large social gathering went out of their way to be a part of something truly special for just one family who, in

these unsure times, sought closure in a time of sorrow.

"It meant the world to my mom and my family," Finnegan said holding back tears while recalling the day's events. "I completely lost it. It was so emotional to see people out there and coming together at a time like this.'

In Paul's obituary, the family asked that in lieu of flowers donations be made in Paul's name to the Wounded Warrior Foundation, the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society as Paul was a two-time cancer survivor.

COUNTRY BANK

continued from page A1

ing but the best food and comforts that we all appreciate when recovering from any illness.

"I can't thank Country Bank enough for stepping forward and making this donation to help our first responders in this time of unprecedented need," said Hampden County Sheriff Nick Cocchi. "Their donation will help us provide topnotch care for the people who usually care for us, and a comfortable environment for the people who come running when we are in need in our daily lives. This is our time to help the helpers. It's the least we can do.'

The Hampden County Sheriff's Department opened the First Responder Recovery Home this week to fill an unmet need in the Commonwealth of providing a safe haven for our doctors, nurses, EMTs, police, firefighters and corrections professionals who are diagnosed with COVID-19, but can't safely go

POSTAL

continued from page A1

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Honors

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May 8, 2020

Deadline date:

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home to recover without jeopardizing the health of a vulnerable family mem-

Located at the department's Pre-Release Center on its campus in Ludlow, the refuge is provided free of

charge, thanks to the department's generous community supporters and partners.

Sheriff Cocchi and staff started accepting guests this with 84 single-occupancy rooms available. Two rooms are currently occupied as of Friday morning. Anyone coming to stay must be healthy enough to care for themselves, however a pool of voluntary medical professionals from the community led by Dr. Shaukat Matin will be making rounds and if someone needs more comprehensive medical care, the Sheriff's Department will help coordinate transportation.

Any doctor, nurse, police, firefighter, EMT, correctional professional or military member can call 413-858-0801 or 413-858-0819 to request a room or ask questions. We will need to have the

place for retrieval.

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person's full name, gender and expected length of stay, among other information, and all correspondence will be kept confidential.

"This is not just a Hampden County Sheriff's Department effort. This is thanks to the good people in our

community who care, and step up when things are tough," Sheriff Cocchi said. "As I've said before, these are stressful and uncertain times, and the only way we're going to get through this is by working together. I'm just thankful we have so many strong community partners that put people over profits and go above and beyond when we pick up the phone."

Community partners include Country Bank, Anthony Ravosa and the 91 Supper Club, Charlie D'Amour and Guy McFarlane of Big Y Foods, Bob Bolduc and Pride Stores, Cesar Ruiz Jr. and Golden Years Home Care, Jim Brennan on behalf of the Edward J. Brennan Jr. Family Foundation, Anthony Cignoli of A.L. Cignoli Company, Jeff Polep of J.

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Anyone wishing to contribute to the First Responder Recovery Home initiative can send tax-deductible

donations to: Criminal Justice Organization, 627 Randall Rd., Ludlow, MA 01056. Check memo: "First

Responder Recovery Home.' Photos, video of Country Bank CEO & President Paul Scully announcing the donation, and a video package on the First Responder Recovery Home initiative are available for download and your use here via DropBox: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ j5rk4hh8cm2k9ne/AABPvymmGp-VNXoMRdgnmbuEa?dl=0.



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and Grandmothers in the May 8th issue. The deadline for honors is Friday, May 4 at 5 pm. Cost is just \$20 per 2.4"x 2" B&W block.

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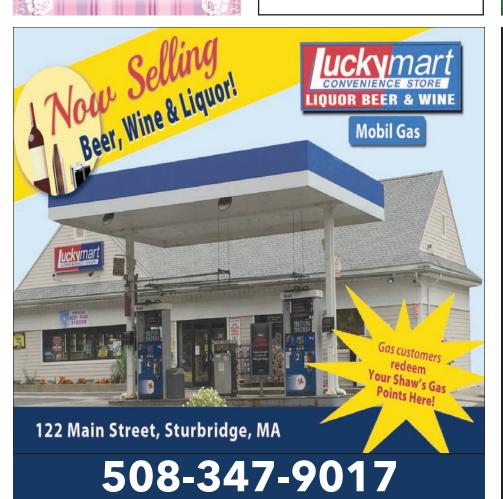
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