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Friday, December 11, 2020

# Oxford officials discuss future capital projects

BY GUS STEEVES  
CORRESPONDENT

OXFORD – Although the town just set its tax rate for this year, it has already begun the budget process for next year.

Last week, Town Manager Jen Callahan presented about \$400,000 in proposed capital spending for the Finance Committee’s consideration. That board had already heard from the schools and fire/EMS departments, and received the police proposals earlier this week. Several other departments are still upcoming.

Several of Callahan’s wishes will address disability access to various town facilities. The biggest for the coming year is to design and engineer a new enclosed back entrance and handicapped ramp for Town Hall, at about \$75,000. That entryway, now outdoors, dates to the 1980s, is cracked and does not meet ADA grade requirements. Construction would be in a future year at a cost of about \$352,000, but she said she’s applying for a state grant to cover \$250,000 of it.

“I’ve seen many people struggling in wheelchairs” with that, she said.

The Senior/Social Center needs similar work; its ramp “has been patched, repatched and more patched” and needs rebuilding, she said. That’s priced around \$21,500. For fiscal 2023, Callahan hopes to build a ramp, walkways and handicapped parking spaces at Joslin Park, with a tab of about \$146,800.

Even more extensive are energy efficiency needs. Last year, Oxford got its first \$166,000 grant under the Green Communities Act, which went for LED lights at the library, fire headquarters and social center, plus a few smaller projects. The state approved those projects in March, but Covid delayed them until fall, so they’re still in process.

She said she plans to apply in February for just under \$250,000 for LED lights and boiler replacement at Clara Barton school, for which she estimated an annual cost savings of \$21,800. In future years, most other buildings will get LEDs, a couple get boilers, Town Hall gets new HVAC system, and the community center will get a new steam trap, among other things. The five-year total cost is around \$1.4 million, with the town’s share of about \$400,000, and they combine for more than \$250,000 a year in energy savings, she estimated.

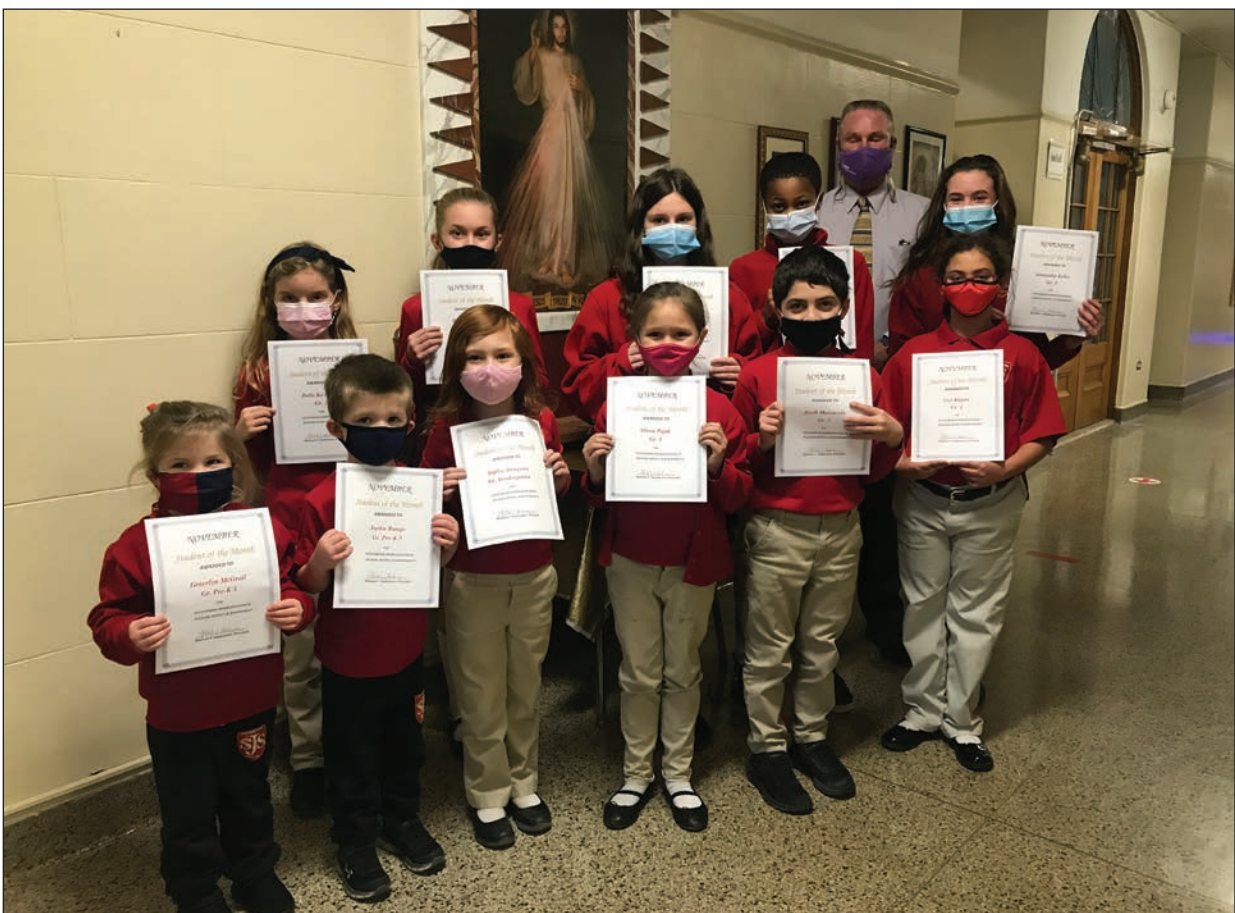
FinCom Chair John Euls noted the school district had already proposed \$855,000 in maintenance projects. He was a little skeptical of spending large sums upgrading school buildings when enrollment is falling, noting the buildings’ capacity is about 3200, but Oxford now has just 1300 students.

“Are we spending good money in the right areas?” he asked, noting the town and schools need to consider consolidating buildings and/or using school sites for town uses. He said he doesn’t want to spend \$2 million on buildings “we’re not going to need in three to four years.”

Callahan said she thinks Oxford might have 10 years before really needing to consider that, so spending the money “may make sense.” She plans to look into possible changes in how Oxford provides services and education, including discussing the Project Coffee building’s future with the district soon. That site is in “pretty severe” condition, although not as bad as the Joslin annex, for which Town Meeting approved demolition.

Less costly, but arguably more critical is a proposal to replace two 911 dispatch consoles (one of which

Turn To **PROJECTS** page **A14**



Courtesy

## STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

**Congratulations to the following students who were selected as November Students of the Month: Pre-K 3-year-old – 3 Day Program: Kamila Biela; Pre-K 3-year-old – 2 Day Program: Gracelyn McGrail; Pre-K 4-year-old: Austin Runge; Kindergarten: Sophia Bengtson; Grade 1: Olivia Pajak; Grade 2: Bella Kicilinski; Grade 3: Jacob Marcuccio; Grade 4: Lisa Kippaxp; Grade 5: Alvin Montreuil; Grade 6: Bella Calnan; Grade 7: Maeve Sullivan; Grade 8: Samantha Keller. Students are awarded Student of the Month for their outstanding exemplification of Religion, Respect, and Responsibility. Keep up the great work!**

# Dudley keeps single tax rate

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY – The Dudley Board of Selectmen held their annual tax classification hearing on Nov. 23, where they unanimously agreed to stick with a single tax rate applying an equal share of the tax burden to both residents and businesses.

Principal Assessor for the town Lisa Berg gave a presentation to selectmen detailing the breakdown of the town’s taxpayers including industrial, commercial, and personal property. She said the hearing is held every year to determine if Dudley will fairly distribute the tax levy among these parties based on valuation or if the town wants to embrace a split rate putting more pressure on business to offset the tax burden.

# Festival of Crafts perseveres in 2020

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY - The Shepherd Hill Music Parents Association didn’t let the COVID-19 pandemic stop them from continuing their annual fundraiser the Festival of Crafts in 2020, shifting the event to an online experience.

The annual showcase of crafters has been a longstanding tradition at Shepherd Hill Regional High School as a staple of the holiday season drawing hundreds to purchase hand made holiday gifts with the proceeds to the entry fees helping support band, chorus and show choir programs at Shepherd Hill. In order to continue their largest fundraiser Shepherd Hill Music Parents Association took advice from one of the

high school’s teachers Kristin Griffiths to move to event to a digital setting through Dec. 11 to allow consumers to connect with sellers online.

Jeff Cloutier, President of the SHMPA, said the process was smooth in working with crafters to embrace a format that is much different from past years. They also leaned heavily on webmaster Scott Szretter to help set up the online marketplace where participants could shop. The shift to virtual also required a more openminded approach to who could participate as a seller.

“In a normal year, we evaluate the crafters to make sure everything is hand made. We do not allow vendors, but for the virtual fair, we allowed anyone. It’s been a tough year for everyone and

Turn To **FESTIVAL** page **A14**



Courtesy

## DOUBLE BIRTHDAY

Arthur and Theresa Graves of Dudley (seated) jointly celebrated their 90th birthdays with a small gathering of family.

# Dudley town facilities to receive green upgrades

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY – Work has begun on a series of small projects in Dudley continuing the town’s push towards becoming a greener community.

Using funding from a Green Communities Grant, several facilities in Dudley will see lighting and HVAC work done to help make them more energy efficient. Town Administrator Jonathan Ruda pointed out during a Board of Selectmen meeting on Nov. 23 that lights in the town hall were already brighter than before thanks to the changes and that more alterations were soon to come.

“All of the florescent lighting in the building and in the highway building will be replaced with energy efficient, low

maintenance LED lighting fixtures. Additionally, work will begin on weather-proofing the entire town hall including the police station and then finally an evaluation of the buildings HVAC system will be conducted and based on the findings we will replace, upgrade and improve the components as required to improve the energy efficiency of the HVAC system,” Ruda told selectmen.

The work is being completed at no cost to the town thanks to the state-operated Green Communities Grant Program which provides guidelines and funding to communities in the Commonwealth to assist them with cutting down their energy use and embracing more efficient resources. As part of the current planned improvement three of the

four schools in Dudley will also have similar upgrades take place in the near future.

“The value of this is right around a quarter of a million dollars worth of work between the schools, the town hall, the HVAC systems and the highway barn. This kind of fell off the radar screen for a while, but we’re back on track,” said Ruda.

In August of 2020, Dudley was named one of 103 communities awarded a share of \$13 million in Green Communities Grants by the Baker-Polito Administration. Dudley earned \$191,170 from the most recent grant award. Dudley is one of 271 towns designated as a “green community” in the state of Massachusetts after meeting five criteria required to earn the distinction.





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# Holiday Gift Guide

## Must-haves to achieve a holiday wonderland

The end of the year marks a period of heightened festivity. Come the holiday season, homes and businesses are decorated and everyone seems to have an extra spring in their step.

The sight of snowflakes, candy canes, evergreen wreaths, and Christmas trees can elicit nostalgia for happy holidays of the past, as well as excitement for what is yet to come. When it comes to decorating for the holidays, there are certain items that set the scene.

- Christmas trees: Germany is credited with starting the modern Christmas tree tradition. It dates back to the 16th century when devout Christians brought trees into their homes and decorated them.

German settlers brought Christmas tree traditions to America upon their arrival in Pennsylvania in the 19th century.

- Mistletoe: Mistletoe is known as the “kissing plant” and it is customary for couples to kiss while standing beneath the plant, typically hung in doorways and arches. Mistletoe was once hung to drive off evil spirits and ensure fertility. Kissing under the mistletoe was first found associated with the Greek festival of Saturnalia and later with primitive marriage rites.
- Lights: Lights are commonly seen during the holiday season. The custom of having holiday lights dates back to when Christmas trees were decorated with

candles, which symbolized Christ being the light of the world. These traditions evolved from pagan rituals that would celebrate the return of light of the sun as the days grow longer after the winter solstice.

- Yule log: Many families burn a yule log in the fireplace and watch it burn while listening to Christmas carols. The familiar custom of burning the log dates back to solstice celebrations and the tradition of bonfires. The Christmas tradition called for burning a portion of the log each evening until Twelfth Night, also known as the Epiphany, which takes place on January 6.
- Poinsettias: Poinsettias are a tropical plant that originated in Mexico. Joel Roberts



Poinsett was the first Ambassador from the United States to Mexico. He became enamored with the plants, and brought them back to his native South Carolina. An old Mexican legend suggests a poor girl had nothing to offer baby

Jesus at Christmas Eve services, so she picked a handful of weeds and put them at the bottom of the nativity scene. These weeds burst into bright red flowers and became known as “Flores de Noche Buena,” or “Flowers of the Holy Night.”

Holiday decorations borrow traditions from all over the world to help establish a festive wonderland.

## Gifts that can make social distancing more enjoyable

Exchanging gifts with loved ones is a holiday season tradition. That tradition figures to continue this year, though families will almost certainly have to adjust the ways they exchange gifts.

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 in the winter of 2019-20 changed how people across the globe live their lives. Social distancing guidelines encouraged people to limit get-togethers, particularly indoor gatherings. Experts anticipate restrictions on indoor gatherings will continue in the early part of the winter of 2020-21, which could force families to rethink how they get together during the holiday season.



Families also may want to think outside the box when buying gifts for their loved ones, targeting items that can make social distancing easier. The following gift ideas can make a socially distant holiday season that much more special for a loved one.

Streaming subscription  
Movie theaters have been closed for months in many areas. But movie lovers still want to see their favorite flicks, so a streaming sub-

scription to a service such as Netflix or Amazon Prime can be just what they need to stay entertained while social distancing this winter. For fans of classic films, including indie movies, foreign films and big studio productions, a subscription to the Criterion Channel might make the perfect gift. Curated by the Criterion Collection, this streaming service provides access to a library of more than 1,000 classic and contemporary films, making it an ideal gift for the family film buff.

Cooking classes  
Many people have spent the last several months honing their culinary skills. Gift givers can help them take those skills to the next level by enrolling them in online cooking classes. The options are endless and some even include access to legendary celebrity chefs like Gordon Ramsay. Many online cooking classes feature monthly memberships or single classes, making them ideal for loved ones of all skill and interest levels.

Technology  
Technology has helped many people stay connected with friends and

family while social distancing, so a new tablet, laptop or desktop computer can be just what people need to fully engage in family Zoom sessions or weekly virtual happy hours with co-workers and friends. If a new tablet or laptop stretches your budget, consider a pair of noise-canceling headphones, which can make it easier to concentrate while working remotely in a crowded house.

Crafting kit  
Hobbyists may have had their passions for crafting reinvigorated while social distancing, making a crafting kit an ideal gift to help them fill their downtime. Beginner's kits also can make an ideal gift for novices looking for an engaging, time-consuming hobby.

Certain gifts can be a perfect fit during a socially distant holiday season.



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# 2019 Bay Path male grads achieve 100 percent pass rate for NCLEX-PN



Courtesy

The male graduates of the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy Class of 2019 recently earned a 100 percent pass rate for the National Council Licensure Examination, a comprehensive adaptive exam that allows students to become licensed and practice as licensed practical nurses (LPNs).

CHARLTON — The male graduates of the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy Class of 2019 recently earned a 100 percent pass rate for the National Council Licensure Examination, a comprehensive adaptive exam that allows students to become licensed and practice as licensed practical nurses (LPNs).

This comes after Timothy Nikopoulos, LPN of Charlton notified Gretheline Bolandrina, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN Academy Director of passing the NCLEX-PN on his first attempt.

“It as a bit of a wait, about four moths since I signed up, and a bit of a drive to South Burlington, Vermont to take one of the only four available test dates in New England” wrote Nikopoulos. He added, “I have begun working as an LPN, with my second shift of training.”

Nikopoulos completed his last two weeks in the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst with his final practicum night shift in the medical ICU. He plans to secure a position in a nurse residency program in critical care/ICU in a hospital setting. The Accelerated BS in Nursing is a full-time undergraduate program that allows students to earn a BS in Nursing in 17 months. This option is open to students who have completed bachelor’s degrees in other disciplines.

Nikopoulos enjoyed the ABSN program at UMass, despite the transition to online learning in April 2020. He was named on the Dean’s List for the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 semesters. Nikopoulos stated “the rigorous nature of the practical nursing program at Bay Path provided a great framework of knowledge for me to excel in the ABSN program.” His anticipated graduation date is February 2021.

“This accomplishment of the graduates from the PN Class of 2019 warms an educator’s heart,” said Academy Director Bolandrina. “The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy prides itself on producing real world ready nurses, outstanding outcomes, and passing on the first try. Male or female graduates, the Academy celebrates NLCEX success.”

The other male members of the PN Class of 2019 are as follows:

- James Karuri, LPN of Worcester
- Onesmus Katua, LPN of Worcester
- David Macharia, LPN of Worcester
- Gideon Mendza, LPN of Cherry Valley
- Timothy Nikopoulos, LPN of Charlton
- Isaac Njoroge, LPN of Worcester
- Erik Olson, LPN of Sturbridge
- James Wachira, LPN of Worcester

At Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, the program is a 40-week, (10-month), full-time, Monday through Friday, evening program. The program begins mid-August and is completed in late June. Graduates receive a Practical Nursing Certificate and are eligible to take the NCLEX-PN licensure exam. The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy is fully approved by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services Department of Public Health Board of Registration in Nursing ([www.mass.gov/dph/boards/rn](http://www.mass.gov/dph/boards/rn)) and is accredited by the Commission on Occupational Education ([www.council.org](http://www.council.org)). For more information, visit [www.baypath.net](http://www.baypath.net)

## REAL ESTATE

### Dudley

\$386,000, 239 Dresser Hill Rd, Vitkus, Ruby, to Jewell, Craig P, and Jewell, Dawn E.

\$349,000, 31 June St, M Vent T Series 2019-2, and Kondaur Capital Corp Tr, to Schafer, Emily.

### Oxford

\$528,000, 18 Monument Dr, Gonzalez-Blosser, Jose E, and Gonzalez-Blosser, Alan J, to Diaz, Efrain, and Maldonado, Elizabeth.

\$325,000, 72 Hudson Rd, Racicot, Robert M, to Vera, Marco, and Vera, Idalida.

\$307,500, 15 Linden St, Fortier, Richard F, and Fortier, Dolores G, to Liberis, John M.

\$266,000, 10 Anthony Dr, Richard, Adam P, to Urella, Mark, and Urella, Alyssa.

\$150,000, 89 Main St, US Bank NA Tr, to Builtright Realty LLC.

### Webster

\$580,000, 118 Upper Gore Rd, K J& Cynthia A Doyle NT, and Doyle, Keith J, to Prachniak, Corey, and Rincon-Gonzalez, C C.

\$337,000, 612 Beacon Park #612, Beacon Park, Paul& Danene Jafee RET, and Jaffe, Paul, to Lufkin, Emily, and Lufkin, Gregory.

\$330,000, 220 Lower Gore Rd, Wentworth, Douglas, to Gain, Andrew, and Slocumb, Nicole.

\$275,000, 38 Hillside Ave, Heroux, Ronald G, and Heroux, Georgette J, to Moura, Juliana P, and Marinho-Moura, Divaldo.



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Back Row: Andrew MacKenzie, MD; Julie Van Saun, PA-C; Devon Jacobson, MD; Erica Kesselman, MD

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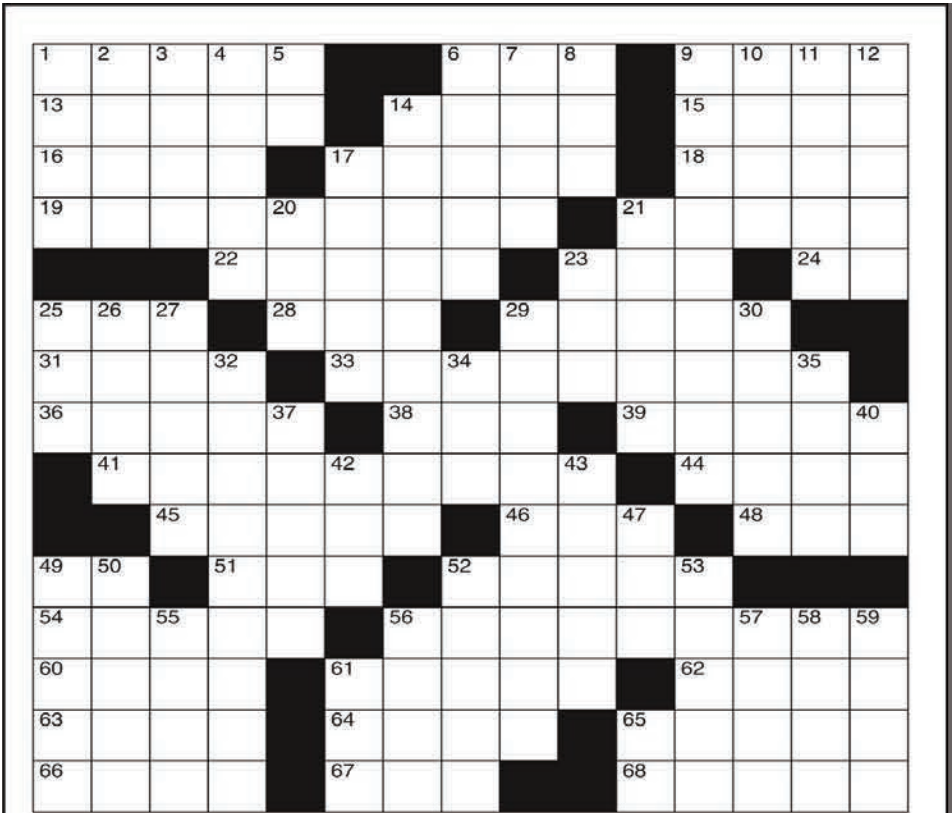
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CLUES ACROSS

1. Skateboarders love them  
6. Popular sports podcast (abbr.)  
9. Former Ohio State great Michael  
13. Not dirty  
14. Earth goddess (Greek myth.)  
15. A Spanish river  
16. Pig meat (French)  
17. Famed astronomer  
18. Floating ice  
19. Broadcast  
21. Aquatic mammals  
22. Some are bath  
23. Hip hop trio  
24. NY Giants' #56  
25. Small European viper  
28. Neither  
29. Multiple Tony-winner Rivera  
31. Loud noise  
33. Second year high schooler  
36. "\_\_\_ in comparison"
38. Golf score  
39. Raise  
41. Pastas  
44. Easily manageable  
45. Fathered  
46. Pouch  
48. Institute legal proceedings against  
49. News organization  
51. Unruly group of people  
52. Fasten or secure  
54. Sheets of glass  
56. Doubled  
60. Foolish person  
61. Rooney and Kate are two  
62. Small, rich sponge cake  
63. Advice or counsel  
64. Large wading bird  
65. Famed British physicist  
66. Narrow ridges (Swedish)  
67. Field force unit  
68. Lying face downward

CLUES DOWN

1. Proof of purchase (abbr.)  
2. Soap ingredient  
3. Blackbird  
4. Single steps  
5. Tin  
6. Books have lots of them  
7. Made of fermented honey and water  
8. You can get it in a bed  
9. Room for communal meals  
10. Early Syrian kingdom  
11. Provokes dry amusement  
12. Use with "thou"  
14. Mollusk  
17. Grain storage units  
20. Not a car, not a truck  
21. Ooze  
23. N. Vietnamese ethnic group  
25. Tennis pros group  
26. Something that's not what it's purported to be  
27. E. Indian trees
29. Beloved December holiday  
30. Regions  
32. Metric unit of length  
34. Peter's last name  
35. Beige  
37. 18-year period in astronomy  
40. Where golfers begin  
42. Basketball stat (abbr.)  
43. Frocks  
47. Soda comes in it  
49. On approval  
50. Trims by cutting  
52. Small finch  
53. Language Bura-\_\_\_  
55. Nothing  
56. Imbecile (British)  
57. Tropical Asian plant  
58. Abba \_\_, Israeli politician  
59. Small freshwater fish  
61. Indicates position  
65. Data processing

PUZZLE SOLUTION

R	A	M	P	S		P	M	T		R	E	D	D			
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Courtesy

This holiday season, the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy UNICEF Club pounced on the opportunity to help support UNICEF USA to raise awareness and funds to children's nutrition worldwide by holding a bake sale.

Bay Path UNICEF Club holds fundraiser for children's nutrition

CHARLTON — This holiday season, the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy UNICEF Club pounced on the opportunity to help support UNICEF USA to raise awareness and funds to children's nutrition worldwide by holding a bake sale.

The UNICEF club raised and donated \$113.23.

UNICEF Club PR Officer, Isabella Boateng of Manchester, Conn. stated, "Malnutrition has resulted in almost 50 percent of all childhood deaths. UNICEF keeps increasing its efforts to reach the most remote villages and communities all over the world, to ensure that all children have the adequate nutrition necessary for growth, learning and development. UNICEF has been treating malnutrition in the first 1,000 days

of a child's life, UNICEF has assisted in cutting down the number of children badly affected by stunting by nearly 100 million since 1990."

The Officers of the UNICEF Club, member, and Club Advisor, Professor Cheryl Cahill, MSN, RN were filled with enthusiasm and drive to make a difference in the lives of children.

"In spite of the pandemic and hardship in these present times, we organized a Bake sale to raise for funds" said Boateng.

She added, "Volunteers baked delicious homemade pastries which were served with coffee, tea, or hot chocolate for a donation. The event was successful with safety protocols observed."

Local churches offer joint Blue Christmas Service

WEBSTER — As we approach Christmas 2020, the turmoil of the year and the pandemic with its human and economic consequences dampens our joy. In reality, every year there are those who suffer losses and enter this season grieving and concerned. Over the last decade or so, many churches have presented a contemplative service called Blue Christmas to offer God's hope and love.

This year, Zion Lutheran Church in Oxford and the Episcopal Church of the Reconciliation (COR) in Webster will offer a Blue Christmas service jointly and in a sign of the times online. Blue Christmas services usually take place on Dec. 21, the longest night of the year. However, these these two churches will offer the service initially on December 10th and post it on their websites so that it is available to all who need it throughout the Christmas season.

Recently, COR and Zion entered a new partnership, calling the Reverend Michael Bastian, a Lutheran Pastor to minister to them jointly, both in their own worship traditions and often together in common worship.

Rev. Bastian noted that this year's joint Zion/COR Blue Christmas Worship service highlights the evolving partnership between the two churches in ministry, worship, outreach, and fellowship.

"The celebration together of this very meaningful service is an example of our shared witness. Each one of us and the people in our communities have experienced difficult months of challenge,

hardship, isolation, and depression as the pandemic continues to disrupt our lives. We are longing for connection while having to stay distant. Blue Christmas offers us a safe space to listen, to pray, to sing, to grieve, to hope, to be still before God, in short, for us to be 'Church Better Together,'" Bastian said.

You are invited to join the Blue Christmas service as often as you would like during the Christmas season by clicking on the link found on any of the following sites: [www.zionlutheranoxford.org](http://www.zionlutheranoxford.org), [www.reconciliationweb.org](http://www.reconciliationweb.org), and [www.facebook.com/zionlutheran-church](http://www.facebook.com/zionlutheran-church).

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# MARIANAPOLIS PREP SCHOOL ANNOUNCES TRIMESTER 1 HONOR ROLL

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## Putting people, place and plants in play for waste cleanup

BY GUS STEEVES  
CORRESPONDENT

REGION — Southbridge and Webster are old mill towns with many areas of potentially contaminated soil. According to DEP's Web site, Southbridge has seen 168 reportable releases of various kinds of pollutants over many years, with three new ones this year. Webster has had 136 overall, also with three this year. Most were cleaned up quickly (including Southbridge's three, but Webster's are still in process), but some have required complex and lengthy cleanups. Some sites have not been discovered, and may never be.

Typically, if a site requires extensive cleanup, that means removal of the soil and trucking it to some hazardous waste landfill or entombing it on site. The latter is likely to be the result at the Southbridge DPW barn on Guelphwood Road, where the town has been going back and forth with the state and federal government for years about PCB contamination.

But the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and Northeast Organic Farming Association are piloting a three-year project in Springfield that could be useful – and far less costly – in these towns and similar locations. Termed “bioremediation of urban soils,” it uses plants, fungi, bacteria and community effort to clean up toxins, with the goal being to rebuild a diverse small ecosystem on the property.

“The people, the place and the way we feel are all part of the remediation process,” Andrew Lorion of Springfield's Gardening in the Community told an online NOFA forum last week.

He said the project's goal is to test “the effectiveness of different remediation strategies and educate the public.”

GTC's test site is a vacant house lot on Franklin Street, Springfield, where they do various tests to determine soil quality, then spread compost, seeds from a mixture of plants and fungi, and bacteria “from the most hard places to live around the world. We hope that will help us with the pollutants,” he said.

One of their most common assistants in the process is the oyster mushroom, an easy-to-grow species that likes contaminated sites. But they also use some edible plants for what they do; for example, radish roots work deep into the soil while peas add nitrogen. GTC's Ibrahim Ali said the ultimate goal is to grow edible blueberries and other fruit, but nobody expects the early stages to be safe for consumption, and those plants will be composted for use on ornamental plants.

Often, Nature has already started the process with weeds.

“Weeds are doing a great job with really bad soil [preparing it] for the next plants to come” by restructuring the soil, said soil ecologist Nancy Klehm. “Weeds are our friends ... with terrible soil conditions.”

Among other things, she noted the “spontaneous vegetation” that takes root on sites can say a lot about the conditions, as can some fairly basic observations of soil texture, color and smell, and what animal life the site has. Those simpler tests come first, before lab and microscope analyses actually identify what the chemistry is.

They also use what's called an indigenous microbe trap (boiled rice wrapped in burlap and buried for a week) to see what bacteria already live there and how that community changes over time. Klehm noted it's a good idea to

get samples from various parts of the property and from nearby wild sites that show what the microbe mix should look like.

The whole thing is not necessarily a short process. Although they expect to see some definite improvement over the three-year study, “a lot of remediation projects take decades. It depends on what it's contaminated with,” she noted.

Whenever possible, she avoids the traditional hazardous waste disposal method.

“I kind of have a problem with that, because life should not be bagged up and considered toxic,” she said.

## LEGALS

**LEGAL NOTICE  
TOWN OF DUDLEY  
DUDLEY ANNUAL TOWN MEETING  
JUNE 22, 2020  
WARRANT ARTICLES  
#10, 11, 13, 14, 15, AND 20  
(GENERAL)**

Warrant Articles #10, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 20 of the Annual Town Meeting held on June 22, 2020 has received approval from the Attorney General's Office on October 27, 2020. The entire text of this by-law is posted in the following four places in accordance with G.L.c. 40 § 32: Dudley Municipal Complex, Pearle Crawford Memorial Library, Town of Dudley website and Cable Access Channel.

Attest:  
Lori A. Smith,  
Dudley Town Clerk  
December 4, 2020

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Worcester Probate  
and Family Court  
225 Main Street  
Worcester, MA 01608  
Docket No. WO20D1528DR  
DIVORCE SUMMONS BY  
PUBLICATION AND MAILING  
Widliene Calixte-Janvier  
vs.  
Jacques Janvier**

To the Defendant:  
The Plaintiff has filed a Complaint for Divorce requesting that the Court grant a divorce for Irretrievable Breakdown. The Complaint is on file at the Court. An Automatic Restraining Order has been entered in this matter preventing you from taking any action which would negatively impact the current financial status of either party. **SEE Supplemental Probate Court Rule 411.**

You are hereby summoned and required to serve upon:

**Widliene Calixte-Janvier  
12 West Avenue Unit B  
Wester, MA 01570**

your answer, if any, on or before **01/05/2021**. If you fail to do so, the court will proceed to the hearing and adjudication of this action. You are also required to file a copy of your answer, if any, in the office of the Register of this Court.

WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.  
Date: October 2, 2020

Stephanie K. Fattman  
Register of Probate  
December 11, 2020

PLACE MOTORS IS PROUD TO SPONSOR

## Friday's Child



**Kelsi  
Age 15**

**Hi! My name is Kelsi  
and I am a talented singer!**

Kelsi is an outgoing girl of Caucasian descent with a strong personality. She loves being the center of attention and she has a great sense of humor. Some of Kelsi's favorite activities include playing outside, swimming, doing arts and crafts, and playing video games. Kelsi is also a talented singer! When she grows up, Kelsi wants to attend cosmetology school. In school, she is known to be bright and resourceful.

Kelsi is legally freed for adoption and would benefit from a permanent family who could build a relationship with her slowly over time. Kelsi is very active and it would be best if her future resource can spend time with her engaging in activities she enjoys. The family should also be able to offer Kelsi patience, flexibility, and consistency.

### Who Can Adopt?

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

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

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



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**FRANK G. CHILINSKI**  
STONEBRIDGE PRESS PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

**BRENDAN BERUBE**  
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

# The struggle against Old Man Winter

The first big nor' easter of the season has come and gone, leaving us with anywhere from three to nine inches of snow (or more in some cases), depending on where you live. As with most things, we like to think about how our ancestors handled certain situations. It was during a snowy drive last winter that we became more grateful for studied snow tires and heat, after thinking about how those before us dealt with travel during snowstorms.

During the winter of 1717, a storm dumped four feet of snow, creating snowdrifts of up to 25 feet. Passing through the snow covered roads was too much for a postman who traded his horse for a pair of snowshoes. Objects similar to skis were attached to carriages as a means of winter transportation.

Streets had to be passable for wood and food deliveries. When the roads were not passable townspeople would gather together in large groups and dig out a path. The snow was placed into the back of a horse-drawn cart by gangs of men and driven to the closest river to be dumped. Salt was also used on streets, but many people complained because it ruined their shoes and clothes.

Fast forward to 1840, when the first snow plow patent came to be. It wasn't until 1862 that the first snowplow was put into use. The plow was attached to a cart and pulled by a team of horses. Soon after, many cities began to use the horse-drawn snowplow.

Typically the use of the horse-drawn plow was only used to clear main streets, leaving side streets and sidewalks snowed in by large piles often blocking entrances to businesses. Many business owners actually brought lawsuits against the plowing companies as a result because their customers could not gain access to the storefronts.

The solution to that conundrum, was the hiring of snow shovelers to accompany the plow. The blizzard of 1888, however, was too much for the "modernized" plow, leaving many people trapped inside their homes. This emergency was the catalyst cities needed to begin coming up with a better plan for snow removal. One idea was to stay on top of the storm as it started, instead of waiting for it to end. Different men driving the plows were assigned to certain neighborhoods as well.

The invention of the automobile brought with it a crutch and a new possibility as far as snow removal went. The crutch being that an entirely new method needed to be engineered and put into use. In New York in 1913, a dump truck could be seen on city streets. Seven years later the first snow loader, came on to the scene. It had a big scoop with a conveyor belt. The snow would go into the scoop via the belt, then dumped into the back of the truck. From there, off to the river it went.

It wasn't until 1959 when the weather was able to be predicted more accurately, allowing towns and cities to better prepare for any incoming storms.

Reading old diaries of our New England ancestors gives the perfect window as to what it was like to experience a bitter cold winter, prior to modern practices.

As literary critic Van Wyck Brooks wrote in "The Flowering of New England, 1815-1865," "All praise to winter, then, was Henry's feeling. Let others have their sultry luxuries. How full of creative genius was the air in which these snow-crystals were generated. He could hardly have marveled more if real stars had fallen and lodged on his coat. What a world to live in, where myriads of these little discs, so beautiful to the most prying eye, were whirled down on every traveler's coat, on the restless squirrel's fur and on the far-stretching fields and forests, the wooded dells and mountain-tops,--these glorious span-gles, the sweepings of heaven's floor."

# VIEWPOINT

## The gifts of Christmas

How many of us have already finished our Christmas shopping? So much of our Christmas preparation surrounds around the concern of buying gifts. The time we devote, and the anxiety and stress we experience, from all the shopping is immense. For many people, Christmas means "gifts."

Even one of the most popular saints of the Christian church has been turned into a fat, jolly "gift-giver." Saint Nicholas, the Bishop of Myra, defended the poor, helped the abandoned, comforted the afflicted, and was one of the greatest defenders of the Orthodox Christianity against heresies and errors. Yet for all his virtues, the world knows him mostly for his generosity in almsgiving. The famous story of Saint Nicholas saving three young maidens is legendary. He secretly threw bags of gold into their home, giving their father the opportunity to offer a dowry and have his daughters married, instead of poverty driving them into prostitution.

Such stories of love and generosity led to the tradition of Saint Nicholas, or "Sinter Klaus" as the Dutch called him (transliterated to "Santa Claus" for us), being the gift bearer during the season of Christmas.

Well, should gifts be the central focus of the Advent Season and our main preparation for Christmas? I think yes! That is yes, if we understand what the greatest gift of Christmas truly is.

I read a beautiful story about a man who came to understand the true meaning of gift-giving at Christmas. He related what happened one Christmas eve when he was a young boy. After his family read the Christmas story together, and he and his siblings opened all their presents, his father asked for quiet. "Of all the presents you received tonight," the father told his children, "I want you to decide which one you like the very best and set it in front of you."

Each of the children carefully examined their pile of gifts and placed their most precious present in front. "Now," the father continued, "I want each of you to think of someone you know who is less fortunate than yourself, someone who might not receive presents as you have. Tomorrow we will have the joy of delivering to this person the presents you have chosen as your very best."

Silence filled the room as each child began to reflect on why they would be asked to give their most precious gift away. The person who shared this story admitted that he never forgot that experience for the rest of his life, although it was quite hard for him to accept it as a child. Through this action he discovered the true meaning of Christmas gifts.

## Are you still planning to retire early?

Have your retirement plans changed because of COVID-19? If so, you have plenty of company. Nearly 40 percent of those planning to retire say the pandemic has disrupted their intentions, according to the Edward Jones/Age Wave Four Pillars of the New Retirement study. You might have been thinking about retiring early – can you still do so?

Even without a crisis, it's not a bad idea to review your important life goals from time to time. So, in thinking about the possibility of early retirement, consider these factors:

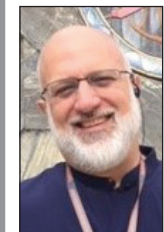
Your retirement lifestyle – Your ability to retire early depends somewhat on what sort of lifestyle you're anticipating during your retirement years. If you think you'll be traveling extensively or pursuing expensive activities, you might not be able to afford to retire as early as someone with more modest ambitions. Of course, there's no "right" or "wrong" way of living in retirement – we all have our own dreams and preferences. But be aware that different lifestyles do carry different price tags – and have different effects on when you can retire securely.

Sources of retirement income – Obviously, a key factor in knowing whether you can retire early is the amount of retirement income you can rely on. So, you'll have to assess all your sources: Social Security, any other pensions you might receive, and your investment portfolio, including your 401(k) and IRA. The amounts you receive from these sources will depend on a variety of factors.

For Social Security, the longer you wait until collecting, the larger your monthly payments (although they will "top out" when you reach 70, excluding cost-of-living adjustments). In regard to your investments and retirement accounts, you'll need to establish a withdrawal rate that's appropriate for the

### BEYOND THE PEWS

By FR. LUKE A. VERONIS  
SAINTS CONSTANTINE AND HELEN GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, WEBSTER



meditating on God's most precious gift to us – the gift of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ. What exactly is this gift?

First of all, it's a gift of salvation. Don't think of salvation solely in terms of going to heaven. Salvation is a way of life here and now, a life that begins with an intimate relationship with Jesus which radically changes every aspect of our lives. Salvation means we no longer give in to various temptations and evil habits that used to control our lives. Salvation means that sin no longer has power over us. Salvation means we no longer live under the shadow and fear of death. In other words, the gift of salvation means experiencing the power of God every day here and now.

The gift of God is also joy and love. It is one thing to say, "I love you," but quite another to show love in a concrete way. God says to each one of us at Christmas, "Let me show you the epitome of love by giving you the gift of my son. Receive Jesus Christ in your heart and experience unconditional love like never before." By accepting this love, we will discover a joy that never diminishes regardless of any situation or difficulty in life.

God's gift to the world includes an unconquerable hope in our lives. Look around at the world and we see chaos, darkness, violence, anarchy, and uncertainty. Yet, the name of Jesus at Christmas time is Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." We don't have a God who stands at a distance, uninvolved in our daily lives. To the contrary, we know that God is with us when we suffer or struggle in our lives. God is with us when we feel lonely or abandoned. God is with us when we face trials and difficulties. God promises his presence in our lives, which offers us strength and courage no matter how bleak the outlook. Our God is a God of hope, so never despair!

Finally, God's gift at Christmas offers meaning and purpose in the lives of believers. Without Christ, we are on a meaningless journey of superficial and temporary pursuits. With Christ, everything takes on a new and eternal significance!

Yes, Christmas and Santa Claus are about gifts, but not the ones we buy in stores. Christmas is about the greatest gift which God gave the world - the gift of His Son Jesus Christ who offers the gifts of salvation, love, joy, peace, hope, and meaning.

### FINANCIAL FOCUS

DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS



length of time you expect to be retired. So, by adjusting these variables – taking Social Security earlier or later, taking more or less money from your retirement accounts – you can help determine if the retirement date you had in mind is viable.

Your feelings about work – Your goals are not static – they can change in response to any number of reasons, both external and personal. When you first decided you wanted to retire early, you might have been motivated by, among other things, a weariness of your current job. But has that changed over time? Have you found new challenges that interest you at work? Or, if you were forced by the pandemic to work remotely, did you actually enjoy the arrangement and want to continue it?

After all, many employers have found that their workers can be just as productive working at home, so, even when we've gotten past COVID-19, we might see a sizable shift in the geography of the workplace. In any case, if your feelings about work have changed in some way, leading you to think you could work longer than originally planned, you'd likely gain some financial advantages. You'd make more money, for starters, but you'd also keep building your 401(k) and IRA, and you could even possibly delay taking Social Security.

The pandemic may lead to a reevaluation of many financial goals – and taking early retirement might be one of them. By thinking carefully about your situation and your options, you can come up with a course of action that's right for you.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Dennis Antonopoulos, your local Edward Jones Advisor at 5 Albert St., Auburn, MA 01501 Tel: 508-832-5385 or dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com.*

## Protecting your packages



CHIEF'S CORNER  
STEVE WOJNAR

Christmas is fast approaching. Even though the pandemic will make this day, and everything else, different, everyone should take time to enjoy season. Holiday shopping on-line has dramatically increased. This style of business has further magnified, since the pandemic began. All this

activity results in increased home deliveries. I had addressed this earlier in the fall; however, I was asked to remind residents once again to protect your deliveries during the holiday season.

The number one goal of on-line purchasing is to receive your items in a timely manner. Packages should be delivered to your residence if someone is there or to a trusted family member, friend, or neighbor. Leaving items unattended outside your home can be risky. If the package is taken, you may not be aware of this until long after the incident. It is certainly best to arrange in advance to have these packages delivered when someone is home or to have them left with a person you know whenever possible. If that cannot occur, communicate with your neighbors to secure these items in some way until you arrive home. This is challenging; however, it is the best way to ensure your purchases are received.

It is always important to track your packages while they are in transit. Most companies provide tracking numbers and have up to date information on where your package is located. Check this process early and often. This can be done on-line or over the phone. The presence of cameras, including the doorbell style, can be of assistance in deterring and identifying package thieves. If you experience any problems or have questions, contact the company or person who is responsible for shipping your package. Safeguarding your investment is important to make sure your holiday season is as happy as can be, and not extra frustrating.

We are collecting Christmas gift donations for local families in need. This pandemic has been particularly difficult on people, and our current donations are down over previous years. New, unwrapped toys and clothing can be brought to the Dudley Police Department at 71 West Main St. Our lobby is open for public business and a donation box is there. Of need in the past were gifts for children ages of 10 and up. Monetary donations and gift cards are also accepted. Checks should be made payable to the "Dudley Police Association" with a special note for the Holiday Drive. We thank everyone in advance for their outstanding support in the past and the continued generosity. Numerous local families have benefited from this program. Anything given will help bring some happiness to those who would otherwise go without during this season.

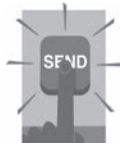
The Coronavirus Pandemic continues, and cases are once again on the rise. We ask everyone to stay safe and continue to take the necessary precautions to protect yourselves. We continue to serve the people of Dudley and work with the community to improve the quality of life for everyone. I continue to thank the men and women from my department for their continued dedicated service to the Town of Dudley during these trying times. Thanks also go out to the many Police Officers, Fire and Emergency Services members, public works, health care, government and all other "essential" personnel for their continued hard work and service. We greatly appreciate the support we receive from our community.

Thanks again for your questions and comments. Please send them to me at the Dudley Police Department 71 West Main St., Dudley, MA 01571 or email at swojnar@dudleypolice.com. Opinions expressed in this weekly column are those of Chief Wojnar only and unless clearly noted, do not reflect the ideas or opinions of any other organization or citizen.

## SEND US YOUR NEWS!!!



news@stonebridgepress.news





# On the hunt

Deer hunting in Massachusetts has been great for some, and others not so good. It depends on who you ask. With all check stations closed and deer being registered online this year because of Covid, it will be a while before we can get some of the harvest figures. It seems the younger generation is doing extremely well harvesting some real impressive bucks locally.

A Milford group of hunters harvested a good number of big bucks last week, while others struggled to bring home a couple of small does. Some hunters were blaming the high harvest of deer to archers prior to the shotgun season. Archers did harvest the highest number of deer in the last few years, as stated in a previous column.

The shotgun deer season will end this Saturday, followed by Black powder season, which opens this coming Monday, Dec. 14 and runs through the end of the month. The ice crusted woods made it a bit noisy for hunters trying to sneak up on deer during the start of the second week of deer hunting, but warmer temperatures for the last three days should help shotgunners finish up their season on a high note. Hunters that worked the woods with a couple of buddies, did the best, as deer were pushed to waiting gunners on well-traveled runs.

Primitive arms season is a favorite method to hunt deer for many hunters.



THE GREAT  
OUTDOORS  
\*\*\*\*\*  
RALPH  
TRUE

The accuracy of the rifled barrels is amazing, and are capable of hitting their target at 100 yards or more in the right hands. Loading the gun is also extremely easy with the new Power Belt Bullets, and the 50 grain pellets, that are simply dropped down the barrel, prior to ram rodding the bullet down the barrel. Some hunters can reload as fast as 15 seconds.

A lot better than the old ball and patch, which for years allowed for a smoothbore gun only in Massachusetts! Changing hunting laws in Mass. is like pulling teeth with legislators! The Sunday hunting bill and the Crossbow bill needs to be passed. Now that elections are just about over, sportsmen will again try to convince Massachusetts Fish & Wildlife that these bills need to be addressed and passed this year.

Trout fishing anglers are still fishing numerous bodies of water from their boats, but they are hopeful that some cold weather is on the horizon. It has been a few years now that many lakes and ponds in the area, have provided very little ice fishing, because of unsafe ice. With the darn pandemic giving anglers a touch of cabin fever, a little bit of ice fishing could be just what the doctor ordered. Watching TV every day makes it hard to concentrate on everyday life that we are accustomed to. When the vaccine is available, I will be in line.

This coming spring may not see



Courtesy

This week's picture shows this writer's two dogs, Molly & Twig.

sportsmen's shows open if we do not get the pandemic under control. That would be a shame! Thousands of sportsmen attend the shows annually, pumping thousands of dollars into the economy, not to mention seeing old friends and telling lies about their fishing and hunting experiences in 2020.

Shopping for Christmas gifts this year is being done mostly online, which is a good idea. Purchasing a hunting or

fishing license is now available online, and is one of the best things you can give any sportsmen. Gift certificates are also a great gift, when purchased at a sportsmen or sportswoman's favorite store.

Be sure to social distance and wear a mask.

Take A Kid Fishing & Keep Them Rods Bending!

## Readers Share Timely Tips!

As we countdown to the festive holidays, readers took time from the hustle and bustle of the season to share their favorite tips and tricks. From creative COVID related strategies to sparking sentimental memories, the following hints from area readers are sure to please!

\*\*

Bringing extended family to the holiday table without literally having them at the table this year can be a reality, thanks to this reader's present project:

It looks like the Covid virus is going to be here for the holidays. Many families will have to skip the traditional get together where everyone looks forward to homemade food. I am trying something different this year. Because we won't be able to share a favorite recipe at the table, I am creating a family cook book. I have emailed family and extended family members requesting that they send me one or more of their favorite recipes. I will then put together a family favorite cook book. They will then receive a copy at Christmas.

Stay safe, and Happy Holidays.  
Chris Griffin  
Whitinsville, MA  
\*\*

Feeding baby his first finger foods can be a challenge – here's an easy way to up the odds your little one can easily "pick up" the healthy foods:

My 10 month old grandson is loving finger foods, and banana is a favorite. Picking up chunks of banana can be slippery business, though. My daughter found that sprinkling the banana pieces with powdered peanut butter makes the task simple, and my grandson LOVES the combination!!! Also gets more protein into the little guy at the same time.

Janine Cortesa  
Uxbridge MA  
\*\*

This clever reader discovered a way to stretch the budget by increasing the lifespan of disposable face masks:

Disposable facial masks are expensive. Cloth are great but here are some tips for safely extending the life of the disposable types. I experimented,



TAKE  
THE  
HINT  
\*\*\*\*\*  
KAREN  
TRAINOR

and mine did hold up to at least one wash in the washer and being dried in the dryer. I figured it was worth a try, and the worst thing would be that there would be lint all over that load of clothes and I would need to re-do the laundry. However, mostly I soak both the disposables and cloth masks in a stainless steel bowl with boiling or very hot water to which some drops of essential oils such as tea tree or lavender as well as a capful of rubbing alcohol has been added. Those particular oils hold some anti-bacterial properties. After an hours soak thoroughly rinse, wring out and hang indoors or outside preferably in a sunny spot to air dry. Hope this helps stretch the budget!

Annie Wuelfing  
East Brookfield MA  
\*\*

This reader has long promoted the virtues of gifting nostalgic presents! Here are two ideas she shares:

I started coin collections for my niece and nephew, which I continue to add to at holiday time. I began by giving them Lincoln Pennies at age 1 with books, and each year at Christmas I give them another few coins of years of birthdates of both sets of grandparents, aunts, uncles and more as keepsakes. Hopeful they will collect coins like their grandpa or at least they have a second book with the genealogy recorded and real coins from their biological grandfather, aunt and uncle.

I am trying to get cousins together again after Covid, and last year I paid to get old 8mm family movies on disc and had four reunions across the U.S. with cousins, copies for all.

My point is, to share stories now, take phone photos of old 35mm, 110, 126 and historic photos and share with family on Facebook etc. so they can keep them for their gene-

alogy folders and suggest to them to do so. "Seize the moment," in the words of Robin Williams!

\*\*

Who knew? This reader's slow cooker method eliminates the hassle of peeling and cutting hard-as-a-rock butternut squash!

Here is my tip. Put the whole butternut squash right in the crockpot, add just a little water and cook it until soft. It comes out so good, I can even eat the skin. I wish my father knew this on all those holidays! Just scoop out the seeds in the middle, no peeling needed.

Cathy Patchen  
North Brookfield, MA  
\*\*

Prize Winner  
Congratulations to Chris Griffin of Whitinsville, MA, whose name was drawn for Dinner for Two at the Publick House in Sturbridge.

Chris submitted the family recipe book idea above.

\*\*

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 renowned restaurant, located on Route 131 across the town common in historic Sturbridge. Because I'm in the business of dispensing tips, not inventing them (although I can take credit for some), I'm counting on you readers out there to share your best helpful hints!

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

# Life in balance

I'm not a very athletic guy. I've mentioned this before, but we used to be a skiing family. We'd head north to the slopes several times a year and occasionally out west to the Rockies. I never really enjoyed skiing, but Arlene and the kids did, so off we'd go.

I think much about life can be learned staring down a hill from eight-thousand feet while standing on two skis. The first thing that comes to mind is that it was unnatural. I don't think we were meant to slide down a hill with two planks strapped to our feet.

The next and most prominent thought was that it was dangerous. On Vail Mountain one afternoon, I counted eleven skiers being towed down on sleds by the ski patrol. Later in the same day, I watched a teenager fall off a ski lift.

Why would I submit my family to such risk? I guess the answer is that they loved it ... and you can't live life in a protective bubble. Other than damage to my self-esteem and confidence, we never suffered a major ski injury.

I did learn a valuable life lesson while on skis. As I said, I never felt comfortable. I could be skiing perfectly down the slopes, then get a sudden sense of fear, believing I was going to fall and inflict serious injury. When that happened, and it always did, I'd purposefully fall. I realized I was doing it. My oldest son asked, why are you falling so much? I shrugged it off, but his question stuck in my head and I pondered it the rest of the day. Then in the dark of night, I realized what I was doing.



POSITIVELY  
SPEAKING  
\*\*\*\*\*  
GARY W.  
MOORE

As I said, I could be coming perfectly down the hill, get a sudden stroke of fear and purposefully fall. I believe my lack of comfortability and confidence told me I was going to fall and harm myself, so instead, I decided to plan my fall because it was something I could control. I was sabotaging my own success on skis. Rather than planning to succeed, I did the opposite.

I'm preparing to speak to my local chamber of commerce this month. In my thoughts about why businesses and individuals succeed and fail, I think about my purposeful failure on the slopes. I didn't envision mak-

ing it to the bottom of the hill without falling. Unconsciously, I planned, executed, and succeeded at my own failure.

I wonder how many people, organizations and businesses do the same thing. How many marriages begin and end the same way? Or how many students flunk out of college because they can't picture themselves graduating? I think the true numbers would shock us all. I believe most failure is subconsciously planned and executed.

The question then is, why don't we picture ourselves making it to the bottom of the slope unharmed and still upright on our skis?

I think the answer is obvious, and it's because we haven't planned to do so. We push off the top of the mountain with a hope and prayer of mak-

ing it. We don't have a plan to make it to the bottom while still upright because our fear causes us to protect ourselves against the inevitable failure. No success plan, no positive image of succeeding ... is maybe why so many skiers end up on sleds and why so many businesses, marriages and life plans fail.

If I had spent more time planning to stay upright rather than planning to hit the ground, I bet I may have found the success and enjoyment that others do on the slopes. I may have learned to enjoy skiing!

Is this a story about a winter sport? Certainly, skiing is the example, but it's more about our balance in life. Does your lack of an optimistic belief in your success sabotage your plans in any or every activity?

Before we begin any endeavor, do you plan your success, envision your accomplishment, and believe you'll make it to your goal on your feet?

In short, get your ducks in a row, have a positive plan, have fun, live more, and worry less.

Believe in and imagine your success before it happens. Create a plan with a successful ending. Execute your plan and make it to the bottom of the slope on your feet.

Believe you can and will.

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 @ GaryW Moore721 and at www.garywmoore.com.

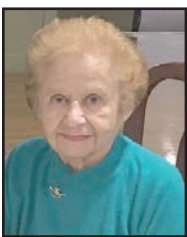
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# OBITUARIES

## Alice Pepka, 91



Alice (Lajeunesse) Pepka, 91, passed away on Wednesday, December 2, at the Overlook Masonic Health Center, Charlton, where she had lived for the past year.

Her husband William “Spanky” Pepka died in 2003. Her brothers, Hector, Wilfred and Nelson Lajeunesse and two sisters, Lorraine Ditomasso and Doris Plaga predeceased her.

She leaves her daughter and son-in-law, Diane and Jack Anderson of Woodstock Vermont, a granddaughter, Bethanie Danko of Indianapolis, Indiana and many nieces and nephews.

Alice was a native of Southbridge. She worked for decades as a quality con-

trol specialist at the American Optical Company, retiring in 1992. She enjoyed her retirement at Sutton Road in Webster before moving to Joshua Place in Dudley in 2007, where she leaves many cherished friends.

Following Covid 19 protocols, funeral services will be private.

Heartfelt thanks go out to all the Overlook team members who cared so compassionately for Alice, not only during her last days but for the entire time she resided there.

Robert J. Miller Home and Lake Chapel, 366 School Street, Webster, is assisting the family with arrangements.

In remembrance of Alice, in these times of need please consider a donation to your local food pantry,

To leave a message of condolence, please visit [RJMillerfunerals.net](http://RJMillerfunerals.net).

## Elizabeth M. Parent, 83



W E B S T E R - Elizabeth M. (McKenzie) Parent passed away Nov. 26, 2020 after celebrating her 83rd birthday surrounded by family.

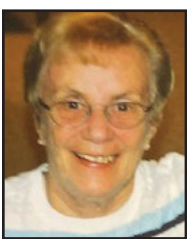
Elizabeth is survived by her 5 children; George E. Sullivan III and his wife Claire of Fort Smith, AR, Jeanne Hunter of Springfield, VT, Karen Turoczy and her husband Paul of Springfield, MA, David Sullivan and his wife Lillian of Huntersville, NC, Kathleen Chenette of Wakefield, RI along with several grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Elizabeth was predeceased by her parents Joseph and Elsie Mckenzie,

her siblings, Beverly Cholewa, Everett McKenzie, Dorene McKenzie, also she was predeceased by her first husband George (Jim) Sullivan Jr. and second husband Robert Parent.

The family wishes to express their sincerest gratitude to Notre Dame Hospice and Baystate Wesson during this difficult Time. A prayer service will be held Saturday, Dec. 12, 2020 at 1 PM in the Shaw-Majercik Funeral Home, 48 School St., Webster. A private service will be held in the spring of 2021. In lieu of flowers donations may be to the Notre Dame Hospice, Worcester, MA or the Cat Connection, Webster, MA A guest book is available at [www.shaw-majercik.com](http://www.shaw-majercik.com) where you may post a condolence or light a candle

## Rita Leduc Dalimonte, 92



Rita Leduc Dalimonte, 92, of Webster passed away in the comfort of her home on Saturday, November 28.

Her husband of 48 years, August “Gus” Dalimonte passed away in 2002.

“Mimi” was happiest when she was with all of her family cooking homemade pasta and spoiling her grandchildren. Her yearly trips to the Cape gave her great pleasure as she was with those she loved most. Rita loved a “good deal”, soaking up the sun with a good book, and waitressing at the Sturbridge Host in Banquets for many years. She will long be remembered as a hard working and loyal wife, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt and friend.

Rita leaves her son Bruce and his wife Margo of Tennessee; her daughter and caregiver Karen Tetreault and her husband Albert “Chic” Tetreault of Webster; her son-in-law Paul

Mastrangelo of Rhode Island; her sister Paulette Plante and her husband Marshall of Southbridge; her granddaughters Maggie McLemore, Mallory Sliger, Abby and Karly Tetreault and Ally Mastrangelo; her grandsons Brett Tetreault and Marc Mastrangelo; 5 great granddaughters as well as many nieces and nephews.

Rita was preceded in death by her daughter Kim Dalimonte Mastrangelo and her brothers Edward Leduc and Paul Ethier.

Due to Covid 19 restrictions, burial will be at the convenience of the family. ROBERT J. MILLER FUNERAL HOME and LAKE CHAPEL, 366 School St. is assisting the family with the arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Rita Catholic School, The Kim Dalimonte Mastrangelo Scholarship Fund, 1008 Maple Drive, Webster, NY 14580.

To leave a message of condolence, please visit [RJMillerfunerals.net](http://RJMillerfunerals.net)



DUDLEY – Rose M. (Lemieux) Bernier, 80, passed away Monday, December 1, 2020 in UMass/ Memorial University Campus after a short illness. Her husband of 61 years, Joseph P. Bernier, died in 2018.

She leaves 2 daughters, Donna M. Gevry and her companion Lee Farrows of Putnam, CT, and Debra A. Girardin and her companion Jim Butt of Webster; a son-in-law, James M. Gevry, Sr. of Oxford; 5 grandchildren, Jennifer R. Sargent and her husband Joseph, James M. Gevry, Jr. and his wife Cassie, Jessica A. Collette and her companion Tyler E. Ereksen, Derek R. Girardin and Jarred P. Girardin; 4 great-grandchildren, Cody, Lee, Astrid and Wesley; 2 brothers, David Lemieux of Dudley and John Lemieux of Buford, SC; a sister, Jacqueline Wallen of Wilsonville, CT; and many nieces and nephews. She also leaves her beloved cat Pupu.

She was born in Dudley on July 9,

1940, the youngest of the 13 children of Philip and Suzanne (St.Cyr) Lemieux and lived in Webster and Dudley all her life.

Mrs. Bernier was a homemaker with a positive energy and a kind heart. She was a social butterfly who was well known in the community due to her charismatic personality. Her laughter was infectious and brightened every room. She belonged to Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Webster. Her life was devoted to her family and her many cats throughout the years.

Her funeral was held at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, December 9, in Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 16 East Main Street, Webster (please meet at the church). Burial will be in Sacred Heart Cemetery, Webster. Visitation will be held privately. Current health guidelines will be in place and everyone is required to wear a mask. Donations in her name may be made to the Community Cat Connection, 289 Thompson Road, Webster, MA 01570

[www.scanlonfs.com](http://www.scanlonfs.com)

Send all obituary notices to  
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Sliced Baked Ham with Pineapple sauce

Roast Stuffed Pork Loin with cranberry- apple stuffing and gravy

Baked Lobster Stuffed Haddock Casserole (add \$20.00)

~ AND ~

SIDES (choice of one)

Fresh Mashed Potatoes

Rice Pilaf

Oven Roasted Potatoes

~ AND ~

SIDES (choice of one)

Fresh Butternut Squash

Baked Broccoli & Cauliflower Au Gratin,

Roasted Candied Carrots,

Seasoned Green Beans

Buttered Corn

~ AND ~

DESERTS (choice of one)

Pumpkin Cream Pie

Mixed Fruit Pie

Chocolate Cream Pie

Pumpkin Pie

Pecan Pie

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\* All dinners include:

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Baked Broccoli & Cauliflower Au Gratin 24.95 each

Pumpkin Cream~Pumpkin Mixed Fruit Pecan~Apple

Chocolate Cream 13.95

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All Dinners can be picked up on Thursday, December 24 from 10:00 am. to 4:00 pm.

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Thank You

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# Grow your own herbal centerpiece for the holidays

Dress up the table and your holiday meals with a centerpiece of fresh herbs. You and your family will enjoy snipping a few fresh sprigs to season your meal to your own taste.

Purchase plants so they will be ready to harvest for the holidays. Many garden centers now carry herb plants year-round and some grocery stores sell herb plants in their produce department.

Include herbs your family likes and those that complement your menu. Grow plants in individual containers or plant several in one larger decorative pot. Select a container with drainage holes and one that complements your table setting.

Double pot plants when using a decorative container that lacks drainage holes. Plant herbs in a smaller pot with drainage holes. You can set several individual pots in a larger container. Place pebbles in the bottom of the decorative pot. These elevate the inner pots above any excess water that collects in the bottom of the decorative pot. Better for the plants and less work for you.

Use a quality, well-drained potting mix when moving herbs into another container. Be sure to place a saucer or tray under the pot to protect your furniture. Set on a decorative placemat for added protection and add a few seasonal items to complete your display.

Include some basil to dress up a pizza, salad, or soup with just a few leaves. Add some oregano for seasoning any tomato-based dishes such as pizza and pasta. Use fresh thyme to add flavor to cheeses, eggs, tomatoes, and lentil. Lemon thyme makes a nice tea.

Chives' mild onion flavor is great on potatoes, but consider adding it to soups, dips, seafood dishes, and omelets. Just snip a few leaves and cut them into smaller pieces before adding them to your dish.

Parsley is high in vitamin C and often added to soups, pasta, salads, and dressings. Harvest a sprig at the end of the meal to freshen your breath.

Always water plants thoroughly when the top inch of soil is starting to dry. Basil likes slightly moist soil but not soggy wet. Pour off excess water that collects in the saucer or elevate the pot on pebbles above any water that lingers in the saucer or tray.

And don't forget the snips. Let everyone add their own favorite herbal seasonings to their meal. Encourage everyone to make the cut above a set of leaves. This keeps the plant looking good and the wound will close quickly. And don't be timid; regular harvesting encourages new growth for future harvests.

When the herbal centerpiece is not dressing up the table, move the plants to a sunny window or under artificial lights. Avoid drafts of hot and cold air. Continue watering it thoroughly as needed.

Everyone will appreciate the fresh flavor and fun of flavoring their own meals right at the table during your holiday meal.

Melinda Myers is the author of more than 20 gardening books, including *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything"* DVD series and the nationally-syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program*. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and her Web site is [www.MelindaMyers.com](http://www.MelindaMyers.com).



Courtesy — Gardener's Supply Company

An edible herbal centerpiece allows guests to snip herbs to season their meal.

## WEBSTER POLICE LOG

WEBSTER — The Webster Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Nov. 29 to Dec. 5.

John Joseph Renaud, age 50, of Webster was arrested on Nov. 29 for Assault (Domestic), Assault & Battery on a Police Officer, and two counts of simple Assault.

Gabriel A. Arias, age 21, of Dorchester was arrested on Nov. 29 for Assault & Battery.

Kathyrria Marie Ledee, age 21, of Worcester was arrested on Dec. 2 in connection with a warrant.

Michelle L. Derez, age 52, of Webster was arrested on Dec. 3 for Disturbing the Peace, Violation of a Harassment Prevention Order, and Intimidation of a Witness, Juror, Police Officer, or Court Official.

Gilberto Cruz, age 55, of Webster was arrested on Dec. 3 in connection with a warrant.

Michael V. Williams, age 47, of Indian Orchard was arrested on Dec. 4 for Disorderly Conduct, Felony Breaking & Entering a Vehicle or Boat at Nighttime, Identity Fraud, Forgery of a Document, Resisting Arrest, Destruction of Property valued at less than \$1,200, Uttering a False Document, Disturbing the Peace, and Furnishing a False ID to Law Enforcement.

A 32-year-old female whose name has been withheld from publication was arrested on Dec. 5 for Domestic Assault & Battery.

## DUDLEY POLICE LOG

DUDLEY — The Dudley Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Nov. 27 to Dec. 4.

Cody J. Amico, age 27, of Webster was arrested on Nov. 29 in connection with a warrant.

An adult female whose name has been withheld from publication was arrested on Nov. 29 for Assault & Battery.

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**WEBSTER** – 6 Nicholas Circle! 8+ Rm Center Hall Colonial! 1.22 Acres! Sought After Neighborhood! Great Commuter Location Accessible to Many Major Routes! Spacious Stainless Steel Appliance Cabinet Packed Eat-in Kitchen & Formal Dining Rm! 23 x 24 Plrce Family Rm w/Cathedral Ceiling & Slider to the Huge Deck! Front to Back Living Rm! 1/2 Bath w/Laundry Closet! The 2nd Floor You'll Find the Comfortable 12X17 Master w/Walk-in Closet & Full Bath w/Linen Closet! 2 Additional Bedrooms plus an Office/Nursery/Bedroom all w/ Ample Closets! 2nd Floor Bath off the Hall w/Linen Closet! 2.5 Total Baths! Lower Level Ideal for Storage or Future Expansion! 2 Car Garage w/Electric Openers w/Dble Door Entry to the Basement for Moving Larger Items aka Boys Toys! 2 Z Oil Heat, 2 AC, Separate Oil Water Heater! Irrigation! Don't Delay! **\$418,900.00**

**DOUGLAS** – 102 SE Main St! Start Packing! Spacious 9 Rm Colonial! 2.23 Acres! Center Island Granite Kit w/Soft Close Cabs, SS Appliances! Slider to 24' Deck! Open Floor Plan! Hickory Wood Floors throughout the Kit, Din & Liv Rms, all w/Recessed Lighting! 1st Flr Office or Possible 4th Bdrm w/Oak Hrdwd Flr! Full Bath in the Hall! 2nd Flr w/Full Dble Vanity Bthrm & 3 Comfortable Bdrms, all w/Beautiful Wood Laminate First! Master w/Cathedral Ceiling, Skylight, Ceiling Fan, Bay Window overlooking the Back Yard and a Master Bath! Lower Level w/2 Finished Rms, Utility Rm w/Laundry and Half Bath! 3.5 Baths Total! Recent C/Air, Heat & Roof! 24x26 2 Car Detached Garage! Huge Shed! Nearby Nature Trails & Wallum Lake Beach! **\$379,900.00**

**WEBSTER LAKE** – 112 Gore Rd! NORTH POND! Sucker Brook Cove! 8 Rm, 3 Bdrm, 1.5 Bath Ranch is Ready for You! Southwestern Exposure! Gorgeous Sunsets! Unique Waterfront! An Open Floor Plan! Lake Views from Nearly All Rooms! 2x6 Construction! Energy Efficient Blinds in Every Room! 4 Oil Tanks - Fill Up Once a Year! C/Air! Gas Fireplace! Whole House Fan! Meticulously Cared For! Large workshop! 3 Car Garage! Carpet! 2 Sheds w/Electric! Back Yard is Perfect for Family Gatherings! Plenty of Off Street Parking! Summer is Here! **\$539,900.00**

**WEBSTER** – 55 Hillside Ave! 7 Rm, 4 Bedroom Cape! Great Highway Access! Walk to Memorial Beach! View July 4th Fireworks from Your Backyard! Liv Rm w/ Hrdwds, Ceiling Fan & Pellet Stove! Eat-in Kit! Fam Rm! Full Bath! 1st Flr Master w/Hrdwds & Ceiling Fan! Oil Heat! Vinyl Sided! Younger Roof! Replacement Windows! Town Services! Fenced Yard! 1 Car Garage! **\$239,900.00**

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**GRAFTON** – 168 Brigham Hill Rd! 8 Rm Garrison Colonial set on 1.3Acre! 4 Comfortable Bdrms & 2 Full Bthrms! Freshly Painted, Floors Recently Refinished! Spacious Kit w/Lunch Counter! SS Appliances w/Gas Cook-Top! Grand Dining Rm for Family Gatherings! 19x26 Living Rm w/Pellet Stove! Master Bdrm w/Dble Closets & Hot Tub! Bright & Airy Mudroom out to the 2 Car Garage! Furnace & Hot Water Tank 5 Years Young! Radon tested at 2.5! Newer Roof on Grafton & Breezeway! New Well Water Tank Installed! Title V in-hand! Property Abuts Grafton Land Trust - Hiking Trails Right Out Your Back Door! Convenient to Routes 90, 9 & 20! Immediate Occupancy! **\$449,900.00**



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ON DEPOSIT

**DUDLEY - 22 ROBERTS ROAD**



Lovely 3 bedroom Ranch! Single door 2 car garage with storage! Eat-in kitchen, Fieldstone Fireplaced Living Room! 3 bedrooms, hardwood floors, Remodeled bathroom! Lower Level fieldstone walls/fireplace! In-ground pool! - 3.58 ACRES includes extra lot. **\$312,000.**

ON DEPOSIT

June Cazeault \* Laurie Sullivan \* Matthew Ross \* Lori Johnson-Chausse \* William Gilmore II \* Brian Bohenko

**WOODSTOCK CT - 110 JOY RD**



ON DEPOSIT

Quisential Woodstock Farmhouse w/Spectacular views of Pond. Detached Studio Building! 2.5 Acres. Prof. Landscaped. 5 Bedrooms. Fireplaced Dining, library/Music room. Master Bedroom, 2 Full Baths! Renovated Kitchen. Upstairs, 4 Bedrooms w/Full Bath. **New Price \$399,900.**

**WEBSTER - 21 3RD STREET UNIT: B**



SORRY, SOLD!

Condominium - Living leisurely! 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath (including master suite) home. Freshly painted! Recessed lighting, gas fireplace, and sliding doors, to beautiful balcony. Walkout basement! built-in outdoor grilling spot. Easy access to 1395. **\$224,900**

**N. ATTLEBORO - 523 KELLY BLVD.**



SORRY, SOLD!

Farmhouse style home! Sun-drenched interior! Spacious floor plan! living room, eat-in kitchen. 6 rooms total, 4 bedrooms, 2 baths! Heated by gas / hot water baseboard! Outdoor kitchen, pool! Jacuzzi tub/shower. Located just minutes from Rt 95 & 495! assisted sale **\$408,500.**

**WEBSTER - 103 UPPER GORE RD**



ON DEPOSIT

Estate Sale! LOCATION! Scenic Upper Gore Rd! Amazing View of Beautiful Webster Lake! Main level has 3 Bedrooms, Kitchen, Dining Rm, Common Bathroom, Master Bedroom & Master Bath - Fireplaced Living Room! Finished Lower Level, 1/2 Bath, Laundry, Large room w/Pellet Stove & Direct Garage Access! Tiered deck, w/Screened porch, leads directly to your "Salt water" Inground Pool! **\$319,900.**

**LAND WEBSTER/OXFORD/DUDLEY/DOUGLAS**

Oxford - 4 Leicester St - Approx. 8.47 ACRES! River Frontage Possible to be Subdivided! **\$89,900**

Webster - Upper Gore w/View of the Lake! 1+ Acre! Artesian Well, Septic Design & Conservation - DONE. **NEW PRICE \$115,000.**

Webster - Cooper Road 2 Buildable Lots! Water & Sewer Access. Zoned Lake Res! Each **\$24,500.**

Douglas-Mount Daniels 2.5 Acres abuts Douglas State Forest! **ON DEPOSIT! \$132,900**

Dudley - Marshall Terrace 12,000+/- Sq Ft Lot! Potential for a 2 Family! **SORRY SOLD! \$70,000.**

Dudley - Packard Dr. 2 Lots! Very Private! off Ridge Dr. Will not last! **SORRY SOLD! \$50,000**

**OXFORD - 4 SPICEBUSH LANE**



SORRY, SOLD!

One level living with added 35 x 18 finished walk-out lower level. Cathedral ceilings, skylight dining, hard-wood flooring and central air. Stainless appliances! Large double oven. Over-sized 30 x 14 deck. quiet cul-de-sac! **New Price \$314,900.**

**SOUTHBRIDGE - 14 SERVANT WAY**



SORRY, SOLD!

Young ranch with heated 2 car garage, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Efficient Propane heat, central air! Open floor plan! gas fireplace! Master Suite w/bathroom, Master California Closet! assisted sale **\$279,900.**

**OXFORD - 115 CHARLTON ROAD**



SORRY, SOLD!

Beautiful home set back off road providing privacy and oversized yard. Kitchen w/granite counters & abundance of cabinets. Cathedral ceilings kitchen, dining and living room. Open floor plan! large deck with large backyard through sliders in dining room. Hardwood floors! Tile baths. Master bedroom/master bath! Finished walkout lower level w/bat 2 car garage. Extras: above ground pool! **\$369,900.**

**WEBSTER - 20 KINGSBURY**



SORRY, SOLD!

NEW TO THE MARKET! Custom Sprawling Split 2800+ SF! Central Air! Kitchen, Dining Room, Cathedral Ceiling Living Room, 3 Bedrooms! Granite Counters & New Flooring! New Boiler - Hot Water Tank - Oil Tank! FULL finished Lower Level w/ Full Bath & Laundry! THERE'S MORE! 2 Car Garage, renovated to include Hydro Heat, AC & 1/2 Bath! Great for Fitness Studio, Game Room or Home School! Over 1.4 Acres! **\$360,000.**

**WEBSTER - 52 CUDWORTH ROAD**



SORRY, SOLD!

1.99 ACRE INDUSTRIAL ZONED LOT! GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE & WORK FROM HOME! Amazing 1790 Antique Colonial! Undergone major updates & renovations, maintaining Antique Charm! Great Room graced by an Open Hearth Stone Fireplace! Soaring Cathedral Ceilings! **\$499,900.**

On the shores of Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg

Webster Lake - 100 Lakeside Ave



SORRY, SOLD!

**WEBSTER LAKE! PANORAMIC VIEWS! BEAUTIFUL SUNSETS! Extraordinary Waterfront Contemporary!** Architect designed with Lake Living in mind. Custom Built with Attention to High Quality & Detail. Outstanding open concept, water view from almost every room. Nicely situated on a .25 acre level peninsula, 180' +/- prime lake frontage! Enhanced by a all natural shoreline! All you need to live is located on the 1st floor. Grand 2 story foyer, cozy fireplaced living room, gourmet kitchen, lake facing dining / formal dining room, media room & spacious 1st floor guest BR Suite w/ private bath. Incredible 2nd floor fireplaced lake-facing corner master suite w/luxurious private bath, 3 more 2nd floor BRs & full bath! Something Special! Remember, Timing is Everything! **\$1,075,000.**

Lake Shirley - 647 Reservoir Rd



SORRY, SOLD!

Lakefront! Lake Shirley! Modern Flare on a Lakefront Colonial! 1st level Formal large entry foyer, living room, gas fireplace, chef kitchen, Impala black granite, center island, 3 season porch, overlooking the lake. 1st FL bedroom suite w/ shower and jacuzzi tub. 2nd floor Master Suite! Lower level Summer kitchen, full bath, game room. Crown moulding & hardwood floors throughout, wired sound system, radiant floors. oversize 2 car garage. Additional Guest House! assisted sale **\$1,040,000.**



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# Legislators offer help in securing unemployment benefits

**BY KEVIN FLANDERS  
STAFF WRITER**

REGION – As residents continue to grapple with an overwhelmed unemployment assistance system, local legislators are working hard to help with navigation.

Area state representatives and senators have seen a recent increase in calls and emails from residents who haven't received an unemployment check in months. Others have gotten notices from the Mass. Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) demanding repayment of monies previously approved during the pandemic.

Even in normal times, local officials receive a steady flow of calls related to unemployment issues. But since September, an influx of desperate res-

idents have called with complaints that their benefits were either suspended or retracted as part of a DUA crackdown on fraudulent claims.

"They have had a big issue with fraud," said State Rep. Peter Durant, of Spencer. "Several people have had their identities stolen, and the DUA had to take precautions to investigate. Of course, that hurts a lot of the people with legitimate claims."

Comprehensive DUA investigations of fraud have led to a significant backlog of unemployment claims that need to be processed. Additionally, many residents' claims have had missing information or errors, which caused DUA adjudicators to flag them as potentially fraudulent. These residents will need to resubmit their claims with the

proper documentation in order to receive benefits.

Moreover, confusion has surrounded the difference between "pandemic unemployment assistance" and general unemployment benefits. Thousands of residents have erroneously filed under the wrong category, officials said. To be eligible for pandemic unemployment assistance, residents must demonstrate that they lost their jobs as a direct result of the COVID-19 crisis.

Meanwhile, scammers continue to flood the system in search of ways to take advantage of the confusion.

"There have been a considerable number of fraudulent applications to unemployment, which has resulted in a delay due to increased scrutiny of all applicants,"

said Sen. Anne Gobi, of Spencer. "I receive a number of requests daily from people who are having trouble opening a claim or getting their funds from an already open and approved case."

Many of the fraudulent claims are the result of autonomous software programs. During the weekend of Nov. 14-15, approximately 31,000 unemployment claims were filed statewide, officials said. DUA staffers will need to pore over every claim to ensure its legitimacy, as well as the thousands of claims that were submitted in the ensuing weeks.

Over the last several months, local officials have helped serve as intermediaries between desperate residents and overwhelmed DUA officials. With Christmas and the winter season

fast approaching, many residents can't wait much longer for their claims to be processed. Some families are already struggling to figure out how they'll provide food and heat their homes this winter.

Area leaders continue to work long hours to help secure relief as quickly as possible.

"We have some good contacts at the DUA, and we have helped advocate and get things moved along for people," Durant said. "The entire process can be very confusing for people. It's especially difficult when a person's business closed and there is no one to verify that an employee worked there."

Officials and residents alike are eager for the distribution of vaccines over the next several months. This will allow residents to feel safe about restart-

ing their businesses, interviewing for new jobs, or moving on to the next chapters in their careers.

"Once these vaccines get rolled out, we will start getting more people back to work," Durant said.

For now, residents are urged to have all of their documents organized when filing claims or appealing DUA repayment orders. It is important to save all communications from employers related to COVID-19 layoffs or closures.

Local legislators are also assisting residents who have been scammed or had their identities stolen.

"Anyone who is the victim of a fraudulent claim – please let me know so we can notify unemployment," Gobi said.

## DA's office assists in combating opioid crisis

**BY KEVIN FLANDERS  
STAFF WRITER**

REGION – The Worcester County District Attorney's Office will use federal grant funding to assist police departments in combating the opioid crisis.

The federal Department of Justice recently awarded the Worcester County District Attorney's Office a \$1.2 million grant to help facilitate outreach and recovery efforts. District Attorney Joseph Early, Jr., will team up with local police departments to support several grant-funded programs.

Among other projects, the federal grant monies will fund recovery coaches who will respond with police personnel and offer services after an overdose. These critical measures can help start victims down the path to treatment and recovery, police said, rather than allow them to be cycled back through the same destructive process.

Police in all 60 of Worcester County's cities and towns began using the Critical Incident Management System (CIMS) earlier this year to track overdose incidents. The goal of the system isn't to track data for the purpose of arresting people, but rather to maximize assistance opportunities, police said.

Law enforcement officials discovered at the start of the opioid crisis that it is impossible to solve the problem simply through the criminal justice system. A broader support system of counselors, clinicians, recovery groups, and family advocates is necessary, officials said.

Federal and state grant funding will continue to pave the way to recovery for many desperate residents and families.

"We're glad to have been awarded this grant so we can help support our police partners in their response to the opioid epidemic," District Attorney Early said. "When we implemented CIMS, our

goal was to respond to every overdose incident and help people get access to services. This grant will ensure that overdose victims in every community receive help getting into treatment and on the path to recovery."

While many area police departments already have overdose follow-up protocols in place, the latest grant funding will allow recovery coaches to work on a regional basis and assist police departments that may not have the budget to employ coaches on a full-time basis.

"This is the piece of the puzzle that has been missing," said Spencer Police Chief David Darrin. "I have trained

nearly sixty percent of our officers and dispatchers in crisis intervention techniques. We also have CIMS thanks to DA Early to track overdose incidents. The final piece is the outreach, and thanks to this new grant the puzzle will be complete."

The three-year federal grant, which will begin administering funds in early 2021, was awarded through the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Site-Based Program (COSSAP). Local police officials are thrilled to have additional tools in their arsenal to help combat the opioid crisis.

"When the grant is in full swing, we will have access to recovery coaches who we can link up with individuals that need assistance," said Leicester Police Chief Ken Antanavica.

The LPD currently has a sergeant responsible for monitoring all overdose incidents and entering them into the CIMS database. The sergeant also monitors and orders Narcan as needed.

Chief Antanavica said his officers are looking forward to working with the recovery coaches as another layer of community assistance.

## Central Massachusetts see surge in COVID cases

**BY KEVIN FLANDERS  
STAFF WRITER**

REGION – With COVID-19 conditions rapidly worsening statewide, central Mass. officials continue their scramble to convince residents to follow health protocols.

Last week, multiple communities throughout the region were listed in the state's "red zone" for COVID-19 transmission. Positive cases have soared over the last two weeks, both locally and across the state.

North Brookfield (27 positive cases over the last 14 days); Spencer (63); Leicester (63); Charlton (102); Sturbridge (40); and Southbridge (157) have all seen alarming spikes in new cases.

With winter approaching and the holiday season in full swing, officials fear those numbers will continue to rise.

"As COVID infections are on the rise throughout the region, I want to remind the public just how important following the CDC guidelines are to staying safe and reducing transmission," said Spencer Town Administrator Thomas Gregory. "All persons over the age of five must wear a face covering whenever in public – indoors and outdoors. The Governor's stay-at-home advisory advises all residents to stay home from 10 p.m. until 5 a.m. While this is not a requirement, residents are strongly encouraged to comply."

Additionally, indoor gatherings at private residences are limited to ten people, including family household members.

Outdoor gatherings are limited to 25 people.

Officials urge residents to adhere to protocols at private residences. State leaders have blamed several outbreaks on large private gatherings without masks or social distancing.

"Face coverings are also strongly encouraged in a private residence when non-household members are present," Gregory added. "Spencer has now been categorized by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health as a high-risk community. Now that winter is here – and with the holidays approaching – please follow the guidelines that are in place."

Leicester officials are offering similar insistences. The town has spent much of the last two months in the state's red zone, leading to the cancellation of trick-or-treating and several other events.

"The Leicester Board of Health and the Town Administration are working closely with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and regional health officials in response to COVID-19," read a statement released by town officials. "The Leicester Board of Health guides the town response to COVID-19, implementing the recommendations of both the MDPH and the CDC as appropriate, as well as working with the public schools."

The most current guidance and recommendations being implemented in Leicester will be listed on the town Web site: [www.leicesterma.org](http://www.leicesterma.org).




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PROJECTS

continued from page A1

died and had no available replacement parts). The consoles themselves cost \$131,500, but Callahan is also looking at combining it with laptops for the emergency operations center (total, \$146,900). She said the police and fire chiefs “have been looking at the frailties we have for a number of years and are addressing that piece by piece.”

Euls noted there was also an estimated need of \$800,000 “to correct the deadspot issues” around town. He urged them to look into ensuring however that’s solved is compatible with 5G technology.

Callahan agreed the town should plan for that “if we have to contend with it,” but noted many state and federal laws cover that issue.

“If we don’t have a plan and our own standards in place, we might get fleeced,” she added, noting Oxford could use it to seek to meet various needs, including free Wifi and communication upgrades.

Communications also drove another capital item: replacing the big letterboard in front of Town Hall with a digital wireless board (cost: \$51,400). She said that board’s age (vintage 1950s or so) limits the town’s ability to communicate with residents who don’t use Facebook, the website or cable TV.

Her last request was \$57,000 for a project to scan and destroy roughly 1.49 million pages of documents now being kept in paper form by the Land Management Department. State law requires many such documents to be available for many years, and doing this will enable Oxford to catalog them and users to access them in various ways, but it’s “not a cheap process and not an easy process,” she said.

Euls agreed, saying he did two similar projects involving the retention laws of four states; one took six months, the other a year. To him, doing this has “huge payback.”

“We had 150 file cabinets and got it down to about 20,” he recalled. “... there are people out there who are very competent [at this]. ... I think it’s going to free up a lot of space” and time for town employees.

He also praised Callahan’s ongoing effort to get grants for various projects.

“We can’t do it by taxation alone or [just] by state aid. The needs are just too many,” he said.*Gus Steeves can be reached at gus.steeves2@gmail.com.*

DWC hosting January Calendar Raffle

DUDLEY — For the entire month of January 2021, the Dudley Woman’s Club is sponsoring a fundraising calendar raffle in support of our scholarships and charitable programs!

Tickets are \$10 for 31 chances to win! Every ticket is eligible for all prizes. Daily drawings will be held and winners announced at 7 p.m. on our Web site and our Facebook page. Winners will also be contacted directly. Tickets can be purchased online on our Web site, [www.dudleywomansclub.org](http://www.dudleywomansclub.org) or by contacting any member of the DWC. For more information, contact us at [dudleywomansclub@gmail.com](mailto:dudleywomansclub@gmail.com). Tickets will be sold through December 30th. Check out our daily prizes in our prize gallery at [www.dudleywomansclub.org!!](http://www.dudleywomansclub.org!!) Your support of our scholarships and charitable giving in this difficult time is greatly appreciated!

FESTIVAL

continued from page A1

most of our crafters are from New England, so we wanted to give everyone an opportunity. It is restricted to crafters who have some form of online presence, unfortunately we were not able to serve everyone this year,” Cloutier said.

Unfortunately, the fundraiser efforts of the SHMPA

have taken quite a hit in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The association’s second largest fundraising effort involved working volunteer programs at Gillette Stadium which has been unable to host fans or groups since April due to the outbreak. Cloutier acknowledged that the virtual fair has not produced the same income as the live event but at least it brought something to help the association continue to

support the high school’s music programs. “The virtual fair only generated about 3 percent of what we make from the in-person fair. In a normal year, we make money on the crafter registration, customer admission and food sales. This year, we only have a small registration fee. We wanted to keep the fee low because this was more about doing something for both our crafters and our community.

We also didn’t know what to expect in terms of traffic,” said Cloutier. “We want to thank all of our crafters and customers both past and present. Our fair works so well because we have loyal following with both our crafters and our customer. I also want to thank our volunteers who got the fair up and running. Our organization is 100 percent made up of volunteers who selflessly dedicate their time.”

St. Joseph eighth graders receive class jackets

WEBSTER — Congratulations to the St. Joseph School Class of 2021. Recently, they were awarded their 8th Grade Jackets. The jackets are a significant milestone that the 8th Grade students look forward to each year.

In addition to the students’ names, year of graduation, and St. Joseph School logo, the left sleeve of each jacket is embroidered with a symbol representing the sports that they participated in during their time at St. Joseph School. Sports include soccer, basketball, cheerleading, and for the first time, cross country.

In addition to acknowledging the students’ participation in athletics, the right arm of each jacket lists academic clubs and achievements, including altar serving, band, Children of Mary, choir, Drama Club, Food Share, LEGO Robotics, Math Club, National Junior Honor Society, AAA Safety Patrol, and Student Council. The jackets are a unique and incredible memory of the students’ time at St. Joseph School.



Courtesy

St. Joseph School students pose for a group photo after receiving their 8th Grade jackets. Front (L to R) Principal Michael Hackenson, Krystian Kowalczyk, Rylee Conlon, Nicholas Janeczek, Maya Podskarbi, Samantha Keller, Elizabeth Mahler, 8th Grade Instructor Mary Ann Weaver. Rear (L to R) Zane Ferri, Dale Boudreau, Dominic Lilley, Alexandra Bergeron, Lauren Gingo, and Headmaster, Rev. Grzegorz Chodkowski (absent) Domik Duby & Justin Dooner.

Baker administration pushes awareness of COVID precautions

BY KEVIN FLANDERS

STAFF WRITER

REGION – With mask fatigue and other frustrations continuing to build statewide, the Baker-Polito Administration is scrambling to find creative outreach options.

Last week, Gov. Charlie Baker announced a new public awareness effort encouraging residents to continue heeding health guidance. Dubbed “Get Back Mass,” the campaign highlights the importance of wearing a mask, practicing good hygiene, keeping a safe distance, and avoiding large gatherings.

“The campaign features residents from across the Commonwealth who, in their own words, draw the connection between taking precautions and getting back to the activities, people, and experiences they enjoy,” read a statement released

by Baker. “The campaign underscores the importance of taking precautions so the Commonwealth can slow the spread of the virus and keep our communities safe.”

The multilingual campaign will run on several platforms this winter, including television and digital ads. The Get Back Mass program will also utilize social media messages, and informational posters will be displayed in several public locations.

The program will run through at least February, officials said. Depending on COVID-19 conditions toward the end of the winter, the campaign could be expanded to March and beyond.

The Get Back Mass campaign is the latest in a series of public awareness efforts the Governor has launched to help slow the spread of COVID-19. The state has seen sharp increases in new cases and hospitalizations over

the last month. State leaders blame the surge mostly on large private gatherings and complacency with health measures, as well as travelers returning to the state without adhering to quarantine regulations.

Looking ahead, officials are particularly concerned about a steeper spike emerging from Thanksgiving travel and gatherings.

In addition to the Get Back Mass campaign, the Baker-Polito Administration made several other COVID-19 announcements last week. These include an award of \$650,000 in grant funding to community-based and faith-based organizations to help reduce the spread of the virus.

“The COVID-19 Community Grant Program supports nonprofit, community-based, and faith-based organizations in raising awareness of COVID best

practices,” the Governor’s statement read.

Twenty organizations statewide will receive grant awards ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000. Awardees will engage in peer leadership activities, advanced COVID-19 health communications, educational programs, and community outreach efforts, among others.

Also, the Governor announced last week the expansion of the Abbott BinaxNOW testing program to include Massachusetts long-term care facilities. This will increase COVID-19 testing availability throughout the winter for some of the state’s most vulnerable residents.

For more information on statewide efforts to combat COVID-19, visit [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov).

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# Winter storm leaves thousands in the dark

REGION – A powerful winter storm overspread the region last weekend, causing several accidents and widespread power outages.

At the height of the Dec. 5 storm, nearly 50,000 customers statewide were without power, with multiple communities picking up over a foot of snow. The speed limit was reduced on the Mass. Pike, which saw several accidents.

Surface streets were equally treacherous, with accidents reported in Charlton, Leicester, and Spencer. Police in those communities also received multiple reports of downed power lines.

In Sturbridge, Route 148 was closed in the area of Warren Road due to fallen trees and power lines. Meanwhile, the Warren Fire Department helped provide assistance during multiple accident responses on the Mass Pike.

The storm also caused several local events to be postponed. The fifth annual Stuff the Bus campaign, which had been slated for Dec. 5 in three towns, had to be postponed to Saturday, Dec. 12.

Run each year by AA Transportation, the Stuff the Bus program enables the community to donate toys for local youngsters. On Dec. 12, AA Transportation will bring buses to Spencer, North Brookfield, and Leicester. From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., AA employees at each site will collect new, unwrapped toys.

AA Transportation officials thank all donors for their continued support and patience through the postponement.

Accidents were reported throughout the area during last weekend’s snowstorm, including this wreck in Charlton.



## PRO AUTOMOTIVE SUPPORTS DUDLEY PTO CONTEST

Jason Rousseau, owner of Pro Automotive in Webster, recently donated \$2,000 to the Dudley PTO for the Holiday Card Contest. Aaron Desautels, a fifth grade student, drew the winning card. Pictured here are Diana Hrzyan PTO Secretary, Aaron Desautels, and owner Jason Rousseau.

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