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Friday, December 11, 2020

Christmas comes to Hitchcock Academy

BRIMFIELD — The Dec. 12 and 13 weekend kicks off Hitchcock Academy's long list of Christmas festivities featuring lights, decorated trees, Christmas carols, crafts, photo opportunities, cookies, and cocoa. From 3 to 7 p.m. on Saturday the 12th, and from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday the 13th, thanks to the sponsorship of Pool Water by R.D. Hitchcock of Charlton (a long lost relative of founder Samuel Austin Hitchcock?) patrons can enjoy Santa reading Twas The Night Before Christmas

and musical performances outdoors from Hitchcock's second floor balcony.

According to Executive Director, Cindy Skowrya the goal of all the activities is to spread cheer while following COVID guidelines.

"The idea," she said, "was to come up with ways to share the season; to make memories, and still keep with-in protocols."

To that end, Skowrya and her staff of elves plan to take full advantage of

Turn To **HITCHCOCK**, page **A14**



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 pub-

lic - 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-treat-

Turn To **COVID SURGE**, page **A14**

Winter Tree Scavenger Hunt underway

STURBRIDGE — The 11th Annual Winter Tree Scavenger Hunt sponsored by the Sturbridge Conservation Commission is currently underway at Heins Farm.

Walk the beautiful Heins Farm trails any time during the month

Turn To **SCAVENGER HUNT**, page **A14**

Courtesy

(Right) The 11th Annual Winter Tree Scavenger Hunt sponsored by the Sturbridge Conservation Commission is currently underway at Heins Farm.



Courtesy

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

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.

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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 tradi-

tion. 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.

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Country Bank announces sponsorship agreement with Worcester Red Sox

WORCESTER — Country Bank, a full-service financial institution serving the region with assets of \$1.8B, today announced that it entered into an elite-level corporate sponsorship arrangement as a Founding Partner of the Worcester Red Sox. Country Bank's multi-tiered sponsorship includes an iconic sign in right field atop the stands known as the "Worcester Wall" along with the Country Bank Guests Services located on the first base concourse.

The partnership between the WooSox and Country Bank also underscores their mutual commitment to the community through the WooSox Foundation and Country Bank's Charitable Giving Program by supporting local non-profits in the region through a combined charitable giving campaign throughout the baseball season.

In addition, both organizations will be working together to launch a Teacher of the Month Program that recognizes the outstanding



Pictured: Dr. Charles Steinberg, President of Worcester Red Sox, Paul Scully, President and CEO of Country Bank, Mary McGovern, EVP and CFO of Country Bank, Tom Wolcott, SVP, Commercial Lending of Country Bank, Shelley Regis, SVP of Marketing of Country Bank and Jack Verducci, VP, Corporate Partnerships of the WooSox.

work teachers do every day to educate and support students.

"We have been impressed and inspired by Country Bank's sense of community involvement," said WooSox President Dr. Charles A. Steinberg. "We see how helpful they are to various institutions and thousands of people in our region, and we welcome them to Polar Park with open arms as we work together to enhance the quality of life in our community even more."

"In an era where spectator sports continue to be redefined

by new norms of social distancing, sports sponsorships are taking on new forms. With that in mind, we couldn't be more excited to be a part of the WooSox, and the Worcester community. The addition of year-round entertainment, including ball games, concerts, and various family activities at Polar Park, is exciting for the people and businesses in the region. We all look forward to the day when we can come together again at the ballpark enjoying activities with our families and friends. We also

look forward to seeing our businesses thrive once again after being heavily impacted by the pandemic," said Paul Scully, President and CEO of Country Bank.

To kick off their partnership, last week a team from Country Bank and the WooSox Mascot, Smiley Ball, delivered 500 Thanksgiving meals prepared by Old Sturbridge Village along with iconic apple pies from Worcester based Table Talk Pies to the St. John's Food Pantry for the Poor.

"The align-

ment of our organizational values with the WooSox solidifies our commitment to service and teamwork as we continually strive for excellence in all we do," shared Scully.

About Country Bank

Country Bank is a full-service mutual community bank serving central and western Massachusetts with 14 offices in Ware, Palmer, West Brookfield, Brimfield, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Ludlow, Leicester, Paxton, Charlton, and Worcester.

Country Bank is a member of FDIC, DIF, and the SUM network. Country Bank can be reached at 800-322-8233 or online at countrybank.com.



ACCURACY WATCH

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

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

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

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 residents 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 unem-

ployment 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 week 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...
Turn To **UNEMPLOYMENT**, page A14

Festival of Crafts perseveres in 2020

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER 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 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."

Notice of Vacancy Sturbridge Board of Assessors

The Town of Sturbridge is seeking to fill a vacancy on the Board of Assessors. This is an elected, unpaid position. The person appointed must be a register voter of the Town of Sturbridge. A special election for the seat on the Board will be held in April of 2021.

The Board of Assessors is responsible for determining the fair and equitable valuation of all real and personal property in the Town, in accordance with Mass General Laws. The Board of Assessors duties include acting upon abatement requests for real estate, personal property, motor vehicle excise and boat excise taxes. The Board is also responsible for acting upon personal exemption requests for real estate (Elderly, Veterans, Blind Persons, Surviving Spouses, etc.) as well as acting upon applications for classification of real estate as agricultural/horticultural, forestry or recreational land. The Board meets once a month.

If you are interested a position on the Board, please send a letter of interest to Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator at JBridges@Sturbridge.Gov.

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Marianapolis Prep School announces Trimester 1 honor roll

THOMPSON, Conn. — Below are the students who have earned their place on the Trimester 1 Honor Roll.

Head of School List

Olivia-Mae Acquaah-Harrison, Charlton; Abigail Alicandro, North Oxford; James Alves, Uxbridge; Kaitlin Baca, Webster; Greyson Baldaro, Oxford; John Barnwell, Danielson, Conn.; Morgan Beaudreault, Dayville, Conn.; Lillian Belsito, Millbury; Maya Benway, Acton; Abigail Boria, Charlton; Benjamin Bouchard, Douglas; Celia Bouchard, Douglas; Samuel Bouchard, Douglas; Vincent Bourgeois, Thompson, Conn.; Campbell Braun, South Grafton; Jessie Calkins, Charlton; Stephen Canavan, Ashford, Conn.; Hansen Cao, Shenzhen, China; Dominika Chmielewski, Webster; Lauren Conde, Danielson, Conn.; Sidney Corriveau, Brimfield; Spencer Courville, Charlton; Anna Czechowski, Webster; Giana DeCesare, Chepachet, R.I.; Alexandra Delano, Charlton; Joseph DiPietro, Worcester; Danielle Doiron, Charlton; Fiona Doiron, Charlton; Ava Fabiano, Killingly, Conn.; Chiara Faiola, Auburn; Courtney Fleming, Douglas; Felicia Fongemie, Ashford, Conn.; Barbara Forgues, Shrewsbury; Fabian Gabriel, Zlin, Czech Republic; Alexandra Giorgio, Millbury; Ashley Giorgio, Millbury; Xiayuan Gong, Wuxi, China; Madelyn Grundstrom, Moosup, Conn.; Emily Hammond, Sutton; Angelina Hargrave, Charlton; Sofia Hargrave, Charlton; Donovan Hendrick, Willimantic, Conn.; Sophie Hendrick, Willimantic, Conn.; Philip Heney, Douglas; Thu Hoang, Hai Phong, Vietnam; James Hoban, Millbury; Maura Hoban, Millbury; Patrick Hoban, Millbury; Kaylynn Horan, Putnam, Conn.; Nghi Huynh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Mackenzie Jutras, Greenville, R.I.; Ethan Kalmin, Dudley; Claire Kelleher, Auburn; Zachary King, Plainfield, Conn.; Avery Kurzontkowski, Shrewsbury; Kate Landis, Brooklyn, Conn.; Abigail Leahy, Leicester; Juhyoung Lee, Seoul, South Korea; Lauren Lemire, Southbridge; Qianhui Lin, Beijing, China; Zachary Litke, Brooklyn, Conn.; Sydney Lundt, Woodstock, Conn.; Bridget MacDonough, Grafton; Ian MacKenzie, Woodstock, Conn.; Kiera MacKenzie, Woodstock, Conn.; Szymon Mamro, Webster; Claire Marchand, Holden; Delia Marchand, Holden; Wednesday Maskova, Sestajovice, Czech Republic; Tessa McCabe, Douglas; Benjamin McGarry, Thompson, Conn.; Conner McLeod, Foster, R.I.; Keegan McLeod, Foster, R.I.; Emma McQuiston, Webster; Katherine Melnick, North Grosvenordale, Conn.; Sara Michailides, Chepachet, R.I.; Ayame Mizuno, Nagoya, Japan; Zaire Moore, Thompson, Conn.; Luciana Najjar, Northborough; Abbie O'Brien, Plainfield, Conn.; Declan O'Connor, West Boylston; Riley O'Connor, Dudley; Jenna Olivieri, Douglas; John Perverle, Oxford; Long Pham, Hanoi, Vietnam; Katrina Piekielniak, Dudley; Morgan Polinski, Webster; Wiktorina Potem, Webster; Jill Reardon, Fiskdale; Brianne Rett, Uxbridge; Lucas Rhoads, Stafford Springs, Conn.; Olivia Richardson, Lincoln, R.I.; Emma Russell, Brooklyn, Conn.; Anthony Russo, Brooklyn, Conn.; Thomas Santos Soares, Porto Alegre, Brazil; William Savoie, Northbridge; Cassidy Semo, Dudley; Trinity Semo, Dudley; Emily Shamback, Sterling, Conn.; Andrew Shultz, Oxford; Zachary Stoddard, Pomfret Center, Conn.; Maya Summiel, Dayville, Conn.; Matthew Tomasino, Leicester; Violeta Torres, Plainfield, Conn.; Thang Tran, Da Nang, Vietnam; Daniel Twohig-Mann, Douglas; Rachel Ullstrom,

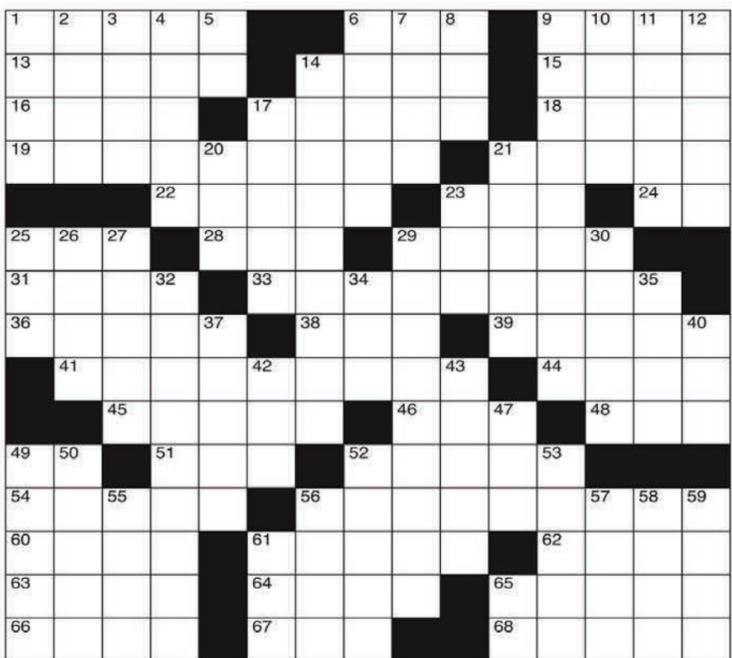
Auburn; John Vigliotti, Worcester; Caroline Vigneault, Southbridge; Caroline Villa, Auburn; Tram Vo, Phan Thiet, Vietnam; Aurora Voas, Oxford; Emily Walsh, Thompson, Conn.; Yunpeng Wang, Shenzhen, China; Kyle Woodruff, Southbridge; Wenyang Yuan, Beijing, China; Anthony Zurowski, Plainfield, Conn.

Dean's List

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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

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

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

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 months 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



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).

working as an LPN, with my second shift of training.”

Nikopoulos completed his last two weeks in the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSBN) 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

Turn To **BAY PATH**, page **A14**

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, includ-

ing 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 announce-

ments 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.

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Edward Street Child Services announces name change

WORCESTER — Edward Street Child Services, a Central Massachusetts leader in early childhood investment and advocacy since 1883, has announced that it will begin operating under a new name.

The organization will be known as Edward Street, effective immediately, and has also unveiled a new logo and redesigned homepage.

The name "Edward Street" reflects the organization's evolution from The Day Nursery, a childcare center, to Edward Street Child Services, a supporter of childcare providers, to its current mission of broad invest-

ment in early childhood. Today, Edward Street promotes early childhood success through strategic partnerships, funding, advocacy, education and training, and its leadership in response to COVID-19.

"Now more than ever, early childhood leaders, providers and communities need to collaborate on behalf of children and families," said Executive Director Eve Gilmore. "Edward Street is committed to investing in early childhood by building relationships and advocating for policies that advance the learning, development, health, safe-

ty and care of our youngest children, today and for generations to come."

Edward Street initiatives include the Alignment Partnership Council, a coalition of providers and programs that seeks to align and strengthen services from birth to third grade; the Master Teacher Project; the Book Buddies Early Literacy Program; earlychildhood-central.org, a resource center for constituents; and the annual Day of Play Family Festival.

In response to COVID-19, Edward Street has curated trusted health and safety information; collaborat-

ed to provide emergency funding via the Commonwealth Children's Fund Massachusetts Family Child Care Emergency Fund; helped establish virtual learning programming through training and support; and advocated for policies that promote early childhood education and care on the local and state levels.

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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 studded 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 spangles, the sweepings of heaven's floor."

OPINION

VIEWS AND COMMENTARY FROM STURBRIDGE, BRIMFIELD, HOLLAND AND WALES

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!



TAKE THE HINT
KAREN TRAINOR

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, 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 genealogy 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.

Turn to MOORE, page A14

Consider these year-end financial moves



FINANCIAL FOCUS

JEFF BURDICK

We're nearing the end of 2020 - and for many of us, it will be a relief to turn the calendar page on this challenging year. However, we've still got a few weeks left, which means you have time to make some year-end financial moves that may work in your favor.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Add to your IRA. For the 2020 tax year, you can put in up to \$6,000 to your traditional or Roth IRA, or \$7,000 if you're 50 or older. If you haven't reached this limit, consider adding some money. You actually have until April 15, 2021, to contribute to your IRA for 2020, but the sooner you put the money in, the quicker it can go to work for you. Plus, if you have to pay taxes in April, you'll be less likely to contribute to your IRA then.

- Make an extra 401(k) payment. If it's allowed by your employer, put in a little extra to your 401(k) or similar retirement plan. And if your salary goes up next year, increase your regular contributions.

- See your tax advisor. It's possible that you could improve your tax situation by making some investment-related moves. For example, if you sold some investments whose value has increased, you could incur capital gains taxes. To offset these gains, you could sell other investments that have lost value, assuming these investments are no longer essential to your financial strategy. Your tax advisor can evaluate this type of move, along with others, to determine those that may be appropriate for your situation.

- Review your investment mix. As you consider your portfolio, think about the events of these past 12 months and how you responded to them. When COVID-19 hit early in the year, and the financial markets plunged, did you find yourself worrying constantly about the losses you were taking, even though they were just on "paper" at that point? Did you even sell investments to "cut your losses" without waiting for a market recovery? If so, you might want to consult with a financial professional to determine if your investment mix is still appropriate for your goals and risk tolerance, or if you need to make some changes.

- Evaluate your need for retirement plan withdrawals. If you are 72 or older, you must start taking withdrawals - technically called required minimum distributions, or RMDs - from your traditional IRA and your 401(k) or similar retirement plan. Typically, you must take these RMDs by December 31 every year. However, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Stimulus (CARES) Act suspended, or waived, all RMDs due in 2020. If you're in this age group, but you don't need the money, you can let your retirement accounts continue growing on a tax-deferred basis.

- Think about the future. Are you saving enough for your children's college education? Are you still on track toward the retirement lifestyle you've envisioned? Or have your retirement plans changed as a result of the pandemic? All of these issues can affect your investment strategies, so you'll want to think carefully about what decisions you may need to make.

- Looking back - and ahead - can help you make the moves to end 2020 on a positive note and start 2021 on the right foot.

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

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.



POSITIVELY SPEAKING
GARY W. MOORE

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 purposely 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.

Turn to MOORE, page A14

On the hunt



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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



Courtesy

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

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 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 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!

Grow your own herbal centerpiece for the holidays



GARDEN
MOMENTS
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MELINDA
MYERS

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



Courtesy — Gardener's Supply Company

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

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

Turn To **GARDENING**, page **A14**

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“The Kimono in Print: 300 Years of Japanese Design” opens at Worcester Art Museum in February

WORCESTER—This winter, the Worcester Art Museum will present “The Kimono in Print: 300 Years of Japanese Design,” the first show devoted to examining the kimono as a major source of inspiration and experimentation in Japanese print culture, from the Edo period (1603-1868) to the Meiji period (1868-1912). Drawing primarily on the Museum’s extensive collection of Japanese prints, the exhibition explores the complementary influence of design ideas between kimono and print artists—and the consumers interested in both kimonos and prints. The exhibition will be accompanied by the presentation of a one-of-a-kind, contemporary wedding kimono specially commissioned by WAM from Chiso, the prestigious 465-year-old Kyoto-based garment maker known for their remarkable couture designs, which exemplify their centuries-long commitment to innovation, beauty, and versatility. The Kimono in Print: 300 Years of Japanese Design opens at WAM on Feb. 6, 2021 and runs through May 2, 2021. The Kimono in Print will be accompanied by a virtual exhibition on the Museum’s website, Kimono Couture: The Beauty of Chiso, exploring the hidden world of traditional kimono design and artistry still practiced by Chiso.

“At a time when segments of the fashion world are very focused on being ‘fast,’ it is gratifying to see an exhibition that tracks the slow but steady evolution of kimono design,” said Matthias Waschek, the Jean and Myles McDonough Director of the Worcester Art Museum. “Prints have been an essential Japanese art form since the 17th century, valued by audiences at many different levels of wealth and education. Our exhibition will help audiences understand more of the rich material and design culture of Japan, through a special look at the kimono, a distinctive form of Japanese clothing and an emblem of artistry and design in its own right. We are especially grateful to Chiso for the opportunity to commission a unique wedding kimono for our collection, an enduring work of art.”

Over the course of 300 years, Japanese print artists documented ever-evolving trends in fashion, popularized certain styles of dress, and even designed kimonos. The Kimono in Print presents the dialogue between print and kimono design through approximately 70 Japanese prints, as well as a selection of illustrated woodblock printed books and paintings. The exhibition begins with early prints from the late 17th century, when a more complex and sophisticated attitude towards clothing first appeared, as seen in the elaborate kimono worn by celebrity kabuki actors and courtesans of the Edo (present-day Tokyo) pleasure quarters. Modern design books and prints from the early 20th century, inspired by or made for kimonos,

will demonstrate how the boundaries between print and textile fashion and design became more fluid.

As an article of clothing, the overall shape and form of the kimono has changed little since the 14th century. While European and American clothing styles have transformed dramatically over the centuries in form, color, and style, the evolution of the kimono has been driven instead by the dynamic and innovative expression of surface design and technique. For example, kimono pattern books dating to the 17th century show how consistent the kimono form has been through to the present moment—while also revealing the evolving history of how each garment was decorated through often dramatic compositions, whether painted, dyed, or embroidered. These bold designs, along with fashionable wearers’ skillful layering of contrasting patterns and colors, appealed to print designers. Large areas of an image in illustrated books and prints were often given over to the print artist’s opulent designs of the kimono’s intricate patterns. As full-color prints were popularized, the artistry expanded, with the works being called nishiki-e, or “brocade pictures,” after the celebrated brocade fabrics of Kyoto.

Among the earliest works in the exhibition are a number of different textile pattern books by or attributed to Hishikawa Moronobu (1618-94), dating to the 1680s. These woodblock-printed books, such as Kimono in a Looking Glass (Kosode no sugatami) from 1682, were popular for their imaginative depictions of people and designs, but also served as the illustrated catalogs for potential buyers to select fabrics, patterns, and adornments in vogue for their own kimonos. The sumptuous kimono designs that appear on the left-hand pages of Kimono in a Looking Glass follow the diagonal sweeping Kanbun style popular at the time the book was published, while figures of women and young men on the right-side pages serve as models to help the reader visualize themselves in the latest fashions. Similarly, Moronobu’s Mirror of Patterns of the Four Seasons for Various Activities (Shiki moyo shorei e-kagami), from the early 1680s, shows kimonos appropriate for each season. In one page spread, two kimono designs on facing pages represent winter and spring—in the kimono on the right-hand a sinuous arare (“hail”) character along the hem of the kimono contrasts with the two large snowflakes on the shoulder. In the kimono on the left-hand wisteria appears behind the Noda character referring to Noda in Osaka, which is famous for viewing wisteria in the late spring.

Two centuries later, these motifs began to be part of Japan’s modernization. The Collection of Weaving Designs (Shokumon ruisan) (1892-93)

by an unknown artist includes more than one thousand woven textile patterns grouped according to subject type, such as celestial, animal, floral, and plant. Assembled by the Imperial Museum in Tokyo (today the Tokyo National Museum), the often brightly colored prints reflect related interests in this period both to codify a national visual identity and to create an archive to inspire modern art and design. Similarly, Tsuda Seifu’s (1880-1978) Spirals (Kamonfu) (1900), was the debut work of the then-twenty-year old artist. It reflects the enormously inventive milieu of Kyoto in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as traditional approaches to kimono-making confronted industrialization and modernization. Seifu’s bold, saturated palette, as well as the striking use of repetition, organic and flowing lines, and rich patterning, references Art Nouveau, which influenced Japanese arts and crafts at this time.

Displayed at the center of the exhibition will be the wedding kimono created by Chiso, bringing into vivid reality the design sensibility so evident in the surrounding prints. For this commissioned work, Chiso’s head senior designer Imai Atsuhiko drew upon the landscapes of both Japan and New England, specifically the “Seven Hills of Worcester”—which is reflected in the seven advanced textile techniques, as well as the seven gradations of color used in the kimono. Inspired by the lyrical fall Japanese and New England foliage that are both dominated by brilliant maple leaves, the design incorporates a maple leaf motif rendered as an octagon—a reference also to Chiso’s octagonal company trademark—which creates a rich pattern that covers the entire kimono surface. Seven large concentric octagons also superimpose over the pattern, one of which is only apparent when the kimono is closed in the front. When the kimono is worn, the two halves of this concentric octagon come together in the front to form one complete octagon, visually and poetically uniting Chiso and Worcester in a marriage of friendship between the two institutions. The presentation of this commissioned work will be supplemented with videos and photography—in an accompanying virtual exhibition on the Museum’s website—demonstrating the seven advanced textile techniques used in the kimono by Chiso, both endangered techniques as well as those newly invented, including: paste-resist dyeing, colored flour paste-resist dyeing (iro utsushi itchin yuzen), gold leaf, embroidery, and wax-resist dyeing.

Curated by Vivian Li, “The Kimono in Print: 300 Years of Japanese Design” is generously supported by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. Early research for this project was made possible by the Japan Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library

Services. Media partner is WGBH.

About the virtual exhibition “Kimono Couture: The Beauty of Chiso”

The Worcester Wedding Kimono was commissioned as part of the exhibition Kimono Couture: The Beauty of Chiso, co-curated by Vivian Li and Christine Starkman in partnership with Chiso, the revered 465-year-old kimono design and production house based in Kyoto, Japan. Due to travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Kimono Couture will now be presented virtually atkimonocouture.worcesterart.org. The virtual exhibition will be launched on the Museum’s website in ten weekly installments from November 28, 2020 through February 6, 2021 and then will run concurrently with The Kimono in Print. Research for this project was made possible by the Japan-United States Friendship Commission and the Northeast Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies. The exhibition presentation and kimono commission are supported by the Fletcher Foundation and Michie Family Curatorial Fund. Additional support is provided by Sandy Hubbard and Thomas J. Logan and Emily and James Holdstein. Corporate sponsors are Cornerstone Bank and Imperial Distributors.

Related programming

As part of its monthly Master Series Third Thursday program, the Museum will present a talk, “Kimono Fashion in Kyoto,” by Monika Bincsik, the Diane and Arthur Abbey Assistant Curator for Japanese Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. Registration information for the virtual event will be available on the Museum’s website, worcesterart.org.

Master Series Third Thursday programs are hosted by the WAM Members’ Council and sponsored by AbbVie. Additional support is provided by the Michie Family Curatorial Fund, the Amelia and Robert H. Haley Memorial Lecture Fund, the Bernard and Louise Palitz Fund, and the Spear Fund for Public Programs.

About the Worcester Art Museum

The Worcester Art Museum creates transformative programs and exhibitions, drawing on its exceptional collection of art. Dating from 3,000 BCE to the present, these works provide the foundation for a focus on audience engagement, connecting visitors of all ages and abilities with inspiring art and demonstrating its enduring relevance to daily life. Creative initiatives—including pioneering collaborative programs

Turn To DESIGN, page A14

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~ AND ~

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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.



Courtesy

(Right) 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.

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."

Nearly \$2 million awarded in annual community grants

WORCESTER — When the pandemic hit, and adult learners were forced to leave the classroom and seek nurturing study space elsewhere, Lisa Brennan knew there was a challenge in store for some of her members.

As executive director of the Genesis Club in Worcester, Brennan oversees the nonprofit's Supported Education Program which assists members with severe mental illness in navigating the hurdles of attending classes — be they in a college curriculum, certificate program, or vocational training — while balancing doctor and therapy appointments, medications, and recovery.

"Social connections are key to recovery" said Brennan. "COVID-19 struck right at the heart of what we are — a community of people trying to achieve a common goal of recovery."

She estimates, each year, 80 members are reliant on the organization's educational services and focus on greater workforce development.

The Greater Worcester Community Foundation is proud to offer Genesis Club an award to sustain its Supported Education Program and return members to their studies.

"It's increasingly important for young people to have a solid educational foundation in order to succeed in their careers, personal lives, and feel accomplished," said Barbara G. Fields, president and CEO of the Foundation.

Genesis Club's grant is one of 123 awarded to 114 organizations — totaling \$1.935 million — by the Foundation in its 2020 Community Grant Program cycle. The Community Grant Program is the largest GWCF competitive grantmaking program and is made possible by the generosity of donors.

"We knew the needs of local non-

profits would be different in light of the pandemic," added Fields. "It is essential for these organizations to receive the funding and support they need to sustain themselves. In this time of uncertainty, the Foundation stepped up to strengthen this sector and meet the needs of our most vulnerable populations."

In this year's Community Grant Program, a wide range of projects — everything from food insecurity and cultural engagement to entrepreneurship training, health care delivery, basic needs, and youth opportunities — were awarded funding.

"We are excited and inspired by this year's grant recipients," said Jonathan Cohen, GWCF vice president for programs and strategy. "Each of the funded projects speaks to the uniqueness, creativity, and community spirit that is alive and well in Central Massachusetts."

A list of the 2020 GWCF Community Grant Program recipients — including a short description of the funded projects and the amounts awarded — is available on the Foundation's Web site.

The Greater Worcester Community Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of life for Central Massachusetts residents by connecting donors to high-impact nonprofit organizations and community partners. Since 1975, GWCF has worked in partnership with donors to build a nearly \$160 million endowment and award more than \$142 million in grants to help transform communities and build a strong and vibrant region. We apply our knowledge, relationships, and resources to our work every day therein combining passion and discipline to pursue a vision of Worcester's success that works for everyone. For more information, please visit www.greater-worcester.org.

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Friday's Child



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.

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



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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 Frplce 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 Full 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 Picking! 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/Dak Hrdwd Flr! Full Bath in the Hall! 2nd Flr w/Full Dble Vanity Bthrm & 3 Comfortable Bthrms, all w/Beautiful Wood Laminate Flrs! 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! 2x26 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! Carport! 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/Hrdws, Ceiling Fan & Pellet Stove! Eat-in Kit! Fam Rm! Full Bath! 1st Flr Master w/Hrdws & Ceiling Fan! Oil Heat! Vinyl Sided! Younger Roof! Replacement Windows! Town Services! Fenced Yard! 1 Car Garage! **\$239,900.00**



SHREWSBURY – Waterfront – Flint Pond w/Direct Boating Access to Lake Quinsigamond! The Quiet of Flint, All the Action of Quinsig! Privacy Galore on Sargents Island – 4.27 Acres – 2,000' Waterfront! Beautiful Sunrises & Sunsets! Looking for a Getaway, Principal Residence or Second Home, Winters in Florida, Summers on the Island! Tons of Potential, Do a Little or Do a Lot! 4+ Rm, 1 Bdrm, 1.5 Bath "A" Frame with the Ability to Finish the Walk-out Lower Level, add a Family Rm, Bdrm, Bathrm! Nature Abounds, Visited by Deer, Fox, Eagles & More! In Time for Summer! **\$579,900.00**



GRAFTON – 168 Brigham Hill Rd! 8 Rm Garrison Colonial set on 1.34 Acres! 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 Garage & 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. **\$12,000.**
ON DEPOSIT

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

WOODSTOCK CT - 110 JOY RD
ON DEPOSIT
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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 Bathrm, 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 w/large double oven. Over-sized 30 x 14 deck. quiet cul-de-sac! **New Price \$314,900.**

SOUTHBRIDGE - 14 SERVANT WAY
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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
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Webster Lake - 100 Lakeside Ave



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



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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Pets perish in Charlton fire

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – A two-alarm fire in Charlton resulted in the loss of several pets after a two-family home was caught fire in the late morning hours of Dec. 3.

Emergency responders dispatched the Charlton Fire Department to 19 South Sturbridge Rd. at around 11:09 a.m., where first responders discovered smoke coming from a doorway on the first floor. According to a press release, a passerby had been attempting to rescue family pets that were known to be inside the home. A second alarm was requested by Fire Chief Ed Knopf bringing mutual aid to the scene. Fire department members made entry in an attempt to determine if any residents were inside. In the process the firefighters extinguished more of the blaze on the first floor. It took around 30 minutes for the fire to be deemed under control. The scene was cleared by 5:05 p.m. that evening.

No residents were home during the fire, however emergency responders did locate four deceased pets inside the home allegedly perishing due to smoke inhalation. A fifth animal, a dog, was located alive and rescued from the home. Firefighters provided oxygen for the dog who as of this report is recovering at the Tufts Animal Hospital in Grafton. Five residents were displaced due to damage



Firefighters inspect the damage from a fire in a two-family home on South Sturbridge Road in Charlton.

Courtesy — Bud Harris Photography

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.

resulting from the fire.

The Charlton Police Department received mutual aid from Southbridge, Sturbridge, Auburn, Dudley and Leicester. The department is working with the District 7 Fire Investigation Unit and Fire Marshalls Office to investigate the cause of the fire.

Holland Library hosting pastel paint workshop

HOLLAND — The Holland Public Library will be hosting a Pastel Paint Workshop Tuesday, Jan. 12 from 6-8 p.m.

Maichack Arts is back to present this hands-on workshop via Zoom where you will create a beautiful work of art featuring dandelions.

All materials will be provided, and can be picked up at the library prior to the class. Registration is limited to 10 participants (teens and adults only, please). Please call the library to register at (413) 245-3607. You may leave a message on the answering machine.

This program is presented by the Holland Public Library with a grant from the Holland Cultural Council and the Mass. Cultural Council.

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REAL ESTATE

HITCHCOCK
continued from page A1

trees and greens donated by Weston Tree Farm and Lacombe Family Tree Farm to “spruce up” Hitchcock inside and out with an invitation for community members to come and use Hitchcock Academy as a backdrop for their holiday photos.

Throughout the season, Hitchcock Academy’s front porch will feature a Community Tree.

Skowrya says, “this tree is special. Other than lights, this tree will be decorated with personalized ornaments, which will celebrate the present while honoring special people who have passed.”

For \$5, patrons can purchase one type of ornament in memory of a loved one. Or they can become a Hitchcock Star by purchasing a star ornament.

“The hope,” Skowrya says, “is to have a Community Tree every year; adding new ornaments to the old and turning it into a Memory Tree as well as a Community Tree.”

This year, Hitchcock Academy is proud to be a Toys for Tots drop off location. Anyone can drop off an unwrapped toy in the box in

Hitchcock’s lobby until December 15. Hitchcock will also have supplies on hand to craft your own ornament and to make a card to send to our troops.

“We want to show our gratitude to those who serve,” Skowrya said.

Crafting and cardmaking begin on Dec. 9 and continue Tuesday through Thursday from noon to 8 p.m. and Friday from noon to 6 p.m. until Dec. 23.

On Dec. 16 at 6:30 p.m., artist Anna Ozolins will host a Make Your Own Centerpiece class. Cost of the class is \$15. Interested participants should bring their own container but HFA will provide an assortment of seasonal greens. Skowrya also mentioned that people are free to bring any decorative accent(s) they wish to include in their centerpiece.

“There is no question that COVID has effected how we celebrate the holidays this year,” Skowrya said, “but COVID does not mean that we stop celebrating.”

She reminds people to wear a mask and notes that activities will be set up to accommodate social distancing. She invites people to visit hitchcockacademy.org for schedule information and a complete list of activities.

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.

BAY PATH
continued from page A6

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) and is accredited by the Commission on Occupational Education (www.council.org). For more information, visit www.bay-path.net

DESIGN
continued from page A10

with local schools, fresh approaches to exhibition design and in-gallery teaching, and a long history of studio class instruction—offer opportunities for diverse audiences to experience art and learn both from and with artists.

Since its founding in 1896, the Worcester Art Museum has assembled a collection of 38,000 objects: from the ancient Near East and Asia, to European and American paintings and sculptures, and continuing with works by contemporary artists from around the world. WAM has a history of making large scale acquisitions, such as its Medieval Chapter House, the Worcester Hunt Mosaic, its 15th-century Spanish ceiling, and the Flemish Last Judgment tapestry. In 2013, the Museum acquired the John Woodman Higgins Armory Collection,

comprising two thousand arms and armor objects. It continues to commission and present new works, such as 2017’s installation of the immersive Reusable Universes sculptural series and Organic Concept environment by Shih Chieh Huang.

The Worcester Art Museum, located at 55 Salisbury Street in Worcester, MA, is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and the third Thursday of every month from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is \$18 for adults, \$14 for seniors 65 and older and for college students with ID. Admission is free for Museum Members and children ages 17 and under. On the first Sunday of each month, admission is free for everyone. Museum parking is free. Admission is by timed ticket only, which must be purchased in advance at worcesterart.org.

COVID SURGE
continued from page A1

ing 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,”

SCAVENGER HUNT
continued from page A1

of December while discovering your favorite decorated winter tree! When you find your favorite, take a selfie and post it on the town Recreation Department’s Facebook page or e-mail it to ecarson@sturbridge.gov. Submit your photo no

MOORE
continued from page A8

As I said, I could be coming perfectly down the hill, get a sudden stroke of fear and purposely 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 making 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-

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.

later than Thursday, Jan. 7 to be included in our Grand Prize drawing. Winners will be drawn at the January Conservation Commission meeting.

Families or other small groups can submit entries as a “team.” We encourage family participation, but primary participants should be under the age of 13.

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 @GaryWMoore721 and at www.garywmoore.com.

UNEMPLOYMENT
continued from page A3

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 restarting 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.

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Applications are available online at <https://townofcharlton.net/158/Human-Resources>.

All applications can be emailed to Lynn.Dyer@townofcharlton.net or mailed to Town of Charlton, Human Resources, 37 Main St, Charlton, MA 01507.

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Charlton police continue annual Toy Drive

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – Ringing in the 2020 holiday season, the Charlton Police Department continued its annual tradition collecting toys to benefit Toys for Tots.

On Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 5 and 6, the Charlton Police Department welcomed donation to help families in need provide a fun Christmas for their children in a year that has been particularly challenging. Each year the Charlton Police team with the Worcester County Toys for Tots effort to collect toys throughout November culminating in a two-day final collection. According to Officer Derek Gaylord, who manned the drive on Dec. 6, this was a particularly successful year even in spite of the economic hardships being faced by many in the middle class.

“We’ve all been very impressed with the number of toys and the quality of the donations. We didn’t expect that this year, but it’s a good sign and something we’re very happy to see,” Gaylord said. “This shows us that the commu-



Jason Bleau

Donations filled a cruiser on Dec. 6 during day two of the final weekend of the 2020 Charlton Police Toys for Tots Toy Drive.

nity really does care. There are a lot of people hurting and I think people are stepping up and doing the right thing. It’s much appreciated.”

The toy collection is always a great undertaking for the department and with 2020 having increased limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as a heightened need for the holidays the department and Toys for Tots had to evolve with the times. However, both parties remained committed to providing an opportunity for families to ensure their kids had a Christmas to remember.

“We do this every year and it’s ongoing for about six weeks or so then we really try to do a big push for this final weekend. The Marines run the Toys for Tots in Worcester County. This year it’s a little different. We’re taking them to Worcester a few times and have already donated a carload. After today we’ll probably have at least one more. They’re the ones who distribute the toys through Worcester County,” Gaylord said.

In 2019 Toys for Tots of Worcester County donated nearly 42,300 toys to 14,385 children. To donate or apply for toys, visit www.toysfortots.org.

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