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Friday, April 24, 2020

Photo Courtesy

Selectman David Singer addresses his fellow selectmen during a live-streamed meeting on April 7 discussing recording of at-home town employee hours.

## Selectmen discuss tracking of employee hours

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – A nearly 50-minute live-streamed meeting resulted in heated exchanges between Charlton selectmen on April 7 as members of the town’s leading board discussed inconsistencies in reporting of town hall employee work during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In March, the Board of Selectmen unanimously decided to close the town hall while allowing numerous employees to work from home. Selectmen charged department heads to work with their teams on daily or weekly goals and to report back the work being done. After the first couple of weeks, some of the data had yet to be logged which led selectmen to hold a meeting discussing the situation.

Selectman David Singer led the conversation noting that it’s illegal for the town to pay employees for work not being done. While he didn’t insinuate that any employee was taking advantage of the situation to get paid for doing nothing, he did note that a failure to keep a record of what’s being done not only effects the Board of Selectmen’s ability to answer questions but also could lead to legal ramifications if they were to be audited.

“We did get some reports back, unfortunately there were a lot of reports that were missing,” Singer said. “What we’re hoping going forward is that the department heads will work with their teams to generate and provide the

Turn To **BOS** page **A5**

# Charlton sets new date for town elections

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – As previously reported, the town of Charlton has decided to reschedule its elections in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic to respect the need for social distancing. Originally slated for May 2, town officials have confirmed the election will take place on Saturday, June 13 instead with the Annual Spring Town Meeting to be held a few days later on Monday, June 15.

In addition to a new date, the official slate of candidates has also been released with three contested seats to be decided and two new selectmen to be named to serve three-year terms. Selectmen John McGrath and Deborah Noble, both with terms expiring this year, are not on the ballot to retain their seats opening the door for new faces to join the town’s highest elected board.

The two selectmen seats will act as their own items on the ballot; however, only one will be a true contest. Stephen George Koronis will seek one of the two seats with no competition save for potential write in candidates. He sits alone on the ballot for Seat 4 on the board and has previous dedicated his time to the town as a past President of the Charlton Lions Club and as a local coach for both soccer and little league. The second seat for the board, Seat 5, will see Patricia Rydlak attempt to move from her seat as Chair of the Planning Board to the Board of Selectmen while Joshua Saper, an entrepreneur who has lived in Charlton for eight years and has volunteered as a coach and with multiple nonprofits, will also contend for the seat.

While it appears outgoing Selectman John McGrath is taking a step back from town politics for the time being, his fellow exiting Selectman Deborah Noble is seeking election for a different post. Noble will be seeking a three-year stint as Town Moderator and will have competition from Noreen Smith. Both bring experience and knowledge of the town to the table as they seek to earn a spot leading the procedures for town meetings over the next three years. The third truly contested seat on the ballot will be a two-year vacancy for the Housing Authority. Cathleen Kuehl and Jeanmarie Vincent will each seek the single available two-year term in June.

Numerous incumbents will likely maintain their seats through uncontested elections while several new names are also slated to join town boards and commissions. Town Clerk Karen LaCroix faces no competition to maintain her seat for another three years. Assessor Richard Vaughan, Cemetery Commissioner Donna Neylon, Board of Health Chair Matthew Gagner, Tree Warden Seth Lamansky, Housing Authority member Michael Sullivan and Library Trustees Fiona Bycroft-Ryder and Kathleen Therrien are also uncontested to retain their positions pending any write-in campaigns. Michael Tiberii is also uncontested as an incumbent for the Southern Worcester County Regional Vocational School District while Jamie Terry looks to return to the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee. John Smith seeks to rejoin the Planning Board for five years. New names on the ballot include

Turn To **ELECTION** page **A3**

## Tri-Valley’s Front Steps project supports home delivered meals

REGION — Friends and families in Webster, Dudley, Oxford, Charlton and Sturbridge hopped on Tri-Valley’s Front Steps Project to show their support and raise money for home delivered meals. It was the perfect chance to pose on the ‘Front Steps’ while a professional photo was taken in exchange for a donation to Meals on Wheels.

Restrictions stemming from COVID-19 have caused a dramatic increase in the critical need for meals and with the average cost per meal at \$10, program expenses have sky-rocketed. According to Executive Director Lisa Prince, “We were so pleased when professional photographer Brian Stone reached out to us with his idea of a ‘Front Steps’ project. This helped to replace some of the much-needed fundraising lost from canceled March for Meals events due to the pandemic.”

Tri-Valley is grateful to the following professional photographers who donated their time to the Front Steps Project: Brian Stone of Charlton, Bruce Bishop of Douglas, Melissa Borgeson of Charlton and Susan Bray of Oxford.

As an ‘essential’ service, Tri-Valley continues to provide services to seniors and younger disabled individuals. We are delivering Meals on Wheels, providing Care Management, In-home Services, Protective Services, and our Information & Resource team is fielding calls during this pandemic. If you need assistance, please give us a call at 508-949-6640; if you would like to make a donation, please mail to Tri-Valley, Inc., 10 Mill Street, Dudley, MA 01571 or donate online at [www.trivalleyinc.org](http://www.trivalleyinc.org).

Tri-Valley, Inc. is a private, non-profit agency providing in-home and community services.

Turn To **FRONT STEPS** page **A3**



The 4th Grade Charlton Boy Wildcats

Courtesy Photos

## Wildcat Boys teams show growth in 2020

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – Although the season was cut short, the young male athletes of the Charlton Wildcats are celebrating a successful 2020 season which saw two teams challenged with new divisions and several competing in playoff action. Despite difficult competition all four teams persevered providing valuable learning and growth opportunities for the young male athletes of the town.

The youngest team of the group, the 4th grade boys, were coached by Dave Miller who complimented his team for embracing a challenging but fun year. The year saw the team shift from town play to division travel competition with a 0-11 travel season that Coach Miller said contained some “good” and “bad” losses, but every game saw the boys compete to their full potential.

“We entered the Douglas tournament, and I believed this showed us who we were this past season. Of the seven teams in our pool we finished as the top seed but could not get past the semi-final game. We had a very strong showing in this tournament,” Coach Miller said. “Overall, these boys experienced a lot of learning, improvement and most of all fun. We won and lost as a team every time. Really looking forward to next season to continue building.”

The 5th grade boys were led by Coach Kelly Morin who said the team started off strong on route to a 7-4 season putting them in second place starting the playoffs. Unfortunately,

Turn To **BOYS** page **A5**



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# How to wear cloth face coverings

In an effort to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where it can be difficult to maintain social distancing measures. That means people are advised to wear cloth face coverings while shopping for groceries or in any other settings where it might be difficult to stay at least six feet away from other people.

In recognition that the notion of wearing face coverings while in public is foreign to many people, the CDC issued instructions on how to wear such coverings to ensure they provide as much protection as possible.

How to wear cloth face coverings

The CDC notes that cloth face coverings should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction

Additional guidelines

The CDC says face coverings should be avoided by certain people. Such coverings should not be placed on children under age two. In addition,

people who have trouble breathing, those who are incapacitated and people who cannot remove coverings without assistance should not wear them.

The CDC also notes that cloth face coverings does not refer to surgical masks or N-95 respirators. The CDC urges everyone to reserve such supplies for health care workers and other medical first responders.

Cloth face coverings should be routinely washed. A washing machine should be enough to clean these coverings.

When removing cloth face coverings, do so carefully. The CDC urges people to avoid touching



their eyes, nose and/or mouth when removing their face coverings. Once the coverings are removed, people should wash their hands immediately.

Cloth face coverings can help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. While wearing such coverings is a simple gesture, it's also one that can save lives. More information is available at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

## Safeguard against COVID-10 when grocery shopping

Safeguard against (447 Supermarkets and other food merchants are allowed to stay open as “essential” retailers amid the mass shutdowns prompted by the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Along with banks, gas stations and takeout



pesticides.

- Avoid direct contact. Whether items are delivered or purchased in-store, avoid personal contact with cashiers or other store employees. Pick up and pack your own groceries. Opt to pay with a credit card or another digital pay option like Apple Pay instead of handing over cash. Use your own pen to sign receipts. Scan your own frequent shopper card or have the cashier use a scan gun, rather than taking your key ring to hold. Delivery services can place the bags outside of your front door. Tips also can be exchanged electronically for delivery services through an app or online or over the phone.

Some simple shopping strategies can help people prevent the spread of COVID-19.

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VILLAGER STAFF DIRECTORY

EDITOR  
BRENDAN BERUBE  
(508) 909-4106  
news@stonebridgepress.news

SPORTS EDITOR  
NICK ETHIER  
(508) 909-4133  
nick@stonebridgepress.news

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PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER  
FRANK G. CHILINSKI  
(508) 909-4101  
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BUSINESS MANAGER  
RYAN CORNEAU  
(603) 677-9082  
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OPERATIONS DIRECTOR  
JIM DINICOLA  
(508) 764-4325  
EDITOR  
BRENDAN BERUBE  
(508) 909-4106  
news@stonebridgepress.news

PRODUCTION MANAGER  
JULIE CLARKE  
(508) 909-4105  
production@stonebridgepress.news

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CHURCH LISTINGS

- Charlton Federated Church, 64 Main St., Pastor James Chase, 248-5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. [www.fedchurchcharlton.org](http://www.fedchurchcharlton.org)
- Charlton Baptist Church, 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488, [www.charltonbaptist.org](http://www.charltonbaptist.org), Sunday worship 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.
- Charlton City United Methodist, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: [CharltonCityUMC.com](http://CharltonCityUMC.com), Sunday worship 10:30 am, Sunday School 9 am.
- St. Joseph's Church, 10 H. Putnam Ext, 248-7862, [www.stjosephscharlton.com](http://www.stjosephscharlton.com), Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30 p.m., Sunday Mass 8 a.m., Sunday Family Mass 10 a.m., Sunday Life/TEEN Mass 5 p.m., Weekday Mass Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 a.m.
- Hope Christian Fellowship, 6 Haggerty Road, 248-5144
- Assemblies of God Southern New England District Headquarters, Route 20, 248-3771, [snedag.org](http://snedag.org), Office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Jehovah's Witnesses, Route 169, 765-9519
- Lamblight Christian Church, 37 Main Street - Grange building 1st Floor, Charlton, Ma 01507, Rev. Stephen Wade, (774) 452-2393 - Pastor's Cell. Sunday Service 10:30am. [www.visitlamblight.com](http://www.visitlamblight.com)
- New Life Fellowship A/G, SNED Chapel, 307 Sturbridge Road, Rt. 20, Charlton, MA, Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.



# Local company goes above and beyond for people with disabilities

BY KEVIN FLANDERS  
STAFF WRITER

STURBRIDGE – Even at the height of a pandemic, staff members from one local agency are going the extra mile to care for people with developmental disabilities. Sturbridge-based Venture Community Services runs 44 homes and three offices throughout central and southeast Massachusetts. The company serves adults with developmental disabilities, in addition to providing community-based supports for people living independently. Moreover, Venture offers several free community programs to children with autism and their families.

For Venture Community Services President and CEO Mike Hyland, it has always been important to hire staff members who are prepared for an array of challenges. Although no one could have predicted a pandemic, Venture employees have stepped up to the challenge and continued to provide vital care.

“The people our employees support need that help to remain safe, particularly now,” Hyland said. “Without agencies like Venture and our dedicated staff, the people in our homes would require institutionalization or hospital care. That is not only a significantly less desirable lifestyle, but one that puts them at far greater risk during any public health crisis.”

Hyland thanks his team for rallying together and embracing the challenge. The tight-knit staffs at each location have developed strong rapport with those they care for.

“Our employees are the lifeline that keeps the individuals safe while also con-



The Venture Community Services staff has been working hard to overcome challenges and provide vital services.

stantly engaging them and supporting their emotional needs every day,” Hyland added.

Long before the coronavirus paralyzed the nation, it was a challenge for agencies across the country to secure experienced, dedicated employees eager to care for people with developmental disabilities. Venture is grateful for the experience and commitment of its team.

Like medical professionals nationwide, several members of the Venture team have made significant sacrifices over the last month to care for those they serve.

“This industry has, for a very long time, faced a critical staffing shortage, and the people we have are truly amazing,” Hyland said. “In the vast majority of our homes, we currently have a shelter-in-place model where staff have opted to remain in the home around the clock for 14 days to eliminate the risk of people coming and

going.” Additionally, the agency built a quarantine center in one of its temporarily closed day program locations. The center is designed to house people who have tested positive for the virus in a comfortable isolated space, but thus far it has not been needed. Employees have already expressed willingness to staff the center if the need arises.

In addition to the logistical challenges presented by the outbreak, Venture has also dealt with financial implications.

“The financial challenges are daunting, as is the difficulty we face in finding personal protective equipment,” Hyland said. “Perhaps the greatest challenge lies in getting the world in general to understand just how essential this industry is and how critical it is to support it – and that includes our politicians in Washington.”

Added Hyland, “Venture is fortunate to employ an

incredibly dedicated team of professionals in each of our homes, and what they are doing throughout this crisis is truly heroic. I very much hope that when this is over, they all get the recognition that they have always deserved.”

For more information about the agency, visit [www.venturecs.org](http://www.venturecs.org).



### ACCURACY WATCH

The Charlton Villager is committed to accuracy in all its news reports. Although numerous safeguards are in place to ensure accurate reporting, mistakes can occur. Confirmed fact errors will be corrected at the top right hand corner of page 3 in a timely manner. If you find a mistake, email [news@stonebridgepress.news](mailto:news@stonebridgepress.news) or call (508) 909-4106 during normal business hours. During non-business hours, leave a message in the editor's voice mailbox. The editor will return your phone call.

### ELECTION

continued from page A1

Jordan Evans for a one-year term on the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, Sheri Lee Zanca for the Recreation Commission, and Willis Bond for a single-year term on the Cemetery Commission. A full list of candidates and election schedule can be found on the Town of Charlton Web site.

### FRONT STEPS

continued from page A1

ty-based services in 25 towns located in south central Massachusetts. The Agency receives funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and from the Federal government, under the Older American's Act, processed through the Central Mass Agency on Aging.

## News, really close to home

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### CHARLTON NATIVE COMPLETES BASIC TRAINING

Photo Courtesy

U.S. Air Force Airman Bradley M. Szolusha, son of Michael and Donna Szolusha of Charlton, has graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio.

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# Bay Path Practical Nursing students nominated for Kindness Awards

CHARLTON — Sure, the COVID-19 virus put a lot of activities on hold but for some Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy students the pandemic does not mean stopping acts of kindness. With the practical nursing curriculum transferred to remote learning, kindness for the three practical nursing students goes a long way!

Rachel Hitchcock of Shrewsbury, Laurent Pellett of Norwich, Connecticut, and Fjolla Shehu of Worcester were recently named nominees for two Kindness Awards giveaway, the FEED project Kindness Giveaway (www.feed-projects.com) and the Yasso Game on Hero (www.yasso.com). The premise for both projects is to honor the thousands of people across the country who are putting the wellbeing of others in front of their own. Hitchcock donated masks; assisted a COVID-19 positive individual with care packages (food, blankets, & bath soaps), and pick-up/delivery of prescription medications from the local pharmacy.

Pellett cares for an 83-year-old client, assists with her grandmother, and together with her mother made fabric masks for a local hospital.



Rachel Hitchcock



Laurent Pellett



Fjolla Shehu

Shehu purchased four liters of hand sanitizer and distributed to those in need. She also volunteered to pick up and deliver groceries for her elderly neighbors on weekends. All acts of kindness are performed while still maintain-

ing employment (full-time or part-time), attending clinicals (face-to-face or digital) and completing all the requirements for progression into the final term of practical nursing studies to be ready for NCLEX-PN. In cultivating

kindness, the practical nursing student nominees are recognized as do-gooders, nice neighbors, and kind citizens who are well on their way to a successful nursing career.

## TRIPS OFFERED

The “Trips Offered” section is for non-profit organizations and will run as space allows. Mail your information to Trips Offered, c/o Brendan Berube, PO Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550; fax to (508) 764-8015 or e-mail to [news@stonebridgepress.news](mailto:news@stonebridgepress.news).

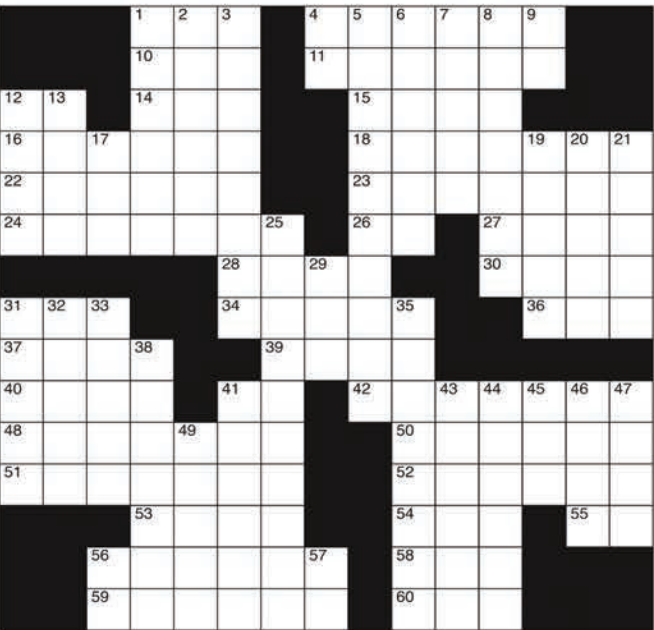
### BAY PATH ADULT EVENING SCHOOL

The Boston Red Sox vs The Baltimore Orioles  
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What’s Included: Roundtrip motor coach, 2 nights hotel lodging, breakfast at hotel, lower reserved seating to 2 ball-games, The United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Guinness

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For a brochure and complete itinerary please contact  
Lori Douthwright 508-248-5971  
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September 11th Museum & Memorial in NY City and West Point Academy  
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For a brochure and complete itinerary please contact  
Lori Douthwright 508-248-5971

X1715  
Penn Dutch Country with the New Hit Show Queen Esther  
3 Days/2 Nights September 23-25, 2020  
What’s Included: Roundtrip motor coach, 2 nights lodging, 5 meals, ticket to “Queen Ester”, touring and More!  
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For a brochure and complete itinerary please contact  
Lori Douthwright 508-248-5971  
X1715  
Nova Scotia w/Tattoo Fest featuring The Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo Bay of Fundy, Halifax,  
Saint John, Annapolis Valley  
5 Days/4 Nights June 29-July 3, 2020

Turn To **TRIPS** page **A6**



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Revolutions per minute

4. Hymns

10. Brew

11. Did not acknowledge

12. Atomic #77

14. Partly digested food

15. Not one

16. Lesotho capital

18. Copyreading

22. Living organism that feeds on organic matter

23. One’s biological father

24. An aggregate of molecules

26. Equally

27. Khoikhoi people

28. Jump in figure skating

30. Lantern

31. TV network
34. Georges \_\_, French philosopher

36. Sharp, shrill bark

37. Albanian monetary units

39. Launched Apollo

40. One who graduated

41. Exist

42. Passed by

48. Very unpleasant smell

50. Graduates

51. Seedless raisin

52. Self-protection

53. Clue

54. Life-savers

55. Ingest too much

56. Misrepresented

58. Small Eurasian deer

59. Most mocking

60. Soviet Socialist Republic

### CLUES DOWN

1. Flower cluster

2. A form

3. Inner organ regions

4. Local law enforcement

5. A citizen of Senegal

6. Positively charged electrodes

7. Connects granules

8. Business practice

9. The Mount Rushmore State

12. Leader

13. Hindu queen

17. Proofreading mark

19. European country

20. Greek mythological nymph

21. Grandfather

25. Clears
29. Amount of time

31. Mollusks

32. German municipality

33. Body part

35. City of Angels hoopsters

38. Suffocate

41. Pleasing to the eye

43. Poplar trees (Spanish)

44. Ship officer

45. Individual investment account (abbr.)

46. Prefix meaning within

47. Ceased to live

49. Day by day

56. Not color

57. Condition of withdrawal (abbr.)



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## Friday’s Child



Daniel  
Age 10

Hi! My name is Daniel  
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Daniel is a sweet and friendly ten-year-old boy of Caucasian descent. Daniel can be shy at first, however, he opens up as he gets more comfortable. Daniel enjoys being active and thrives in sports. One of his favorite sports to play is basketball. Daniel enjoys wrestling and karate. Daniel is also in a drawing club! During quiet time, Daniel enjoys building things using Legos. He likes dogs

but loves cats. Daniel is in the third grade. He is an inquisitive child who loves school and learning. He does well with the additional support he receives.

Daniel is legally freed for adoption. Daniel will benefit from a home that has at least one male father figure. He reports that he would like a 2 parent household, ideally with some children older than he is. He responds well when he has a male to connect with. Daniel will thrive in a home that can keep him active and maintaining a full schedule of extra-curricular activities.

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

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



To sponsor Friday’s Child call Mikaela at 508-909-4126  
or email [Mikaela@stonebridgepress.news](mailto:Mikaela@stonebridgepress.news)

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The 5th Grade Charlton Boy Wildcats



The 6th Grade Charlton Boy Wildcats

BOYS

continued from page A1

they lost in the first round to Northbridge, matching their success from last season. Coach Morin said that while the team wasn't able to progress past the first round the entire squad showed tremendous growth throughout the season.

"All the players made improvements during the season. We had two games where every player contributed points for wins. Our best game this season was when we faced Sutton for the second time in our home gym, Bay Path. We won this with defense, teamwork and distributing our point contribution," Coach Morin said.

The 6th grade boys moved on from an undefeated Division II CMBYL Championship in 2019 to join Division I in 2020. Coach Brett Kustigian said the team entered the near season with four goals in mind: to seek a championship, maintain attitude, show great teamwork and embrace sportsmanship. Sadly, the team was unable to repeat their undefeated season or make the playoffs in their first Division I season,

but Coach Kustigian still say the year as a great opportunity for growth and learning for his athletes.

"Each time the boys took to the court they consistently showed positive attitudes, promoted the team concept and they displayed sportsmanship and respect for all," Coach Kustigian said. "I could not be prouder of this team and it has been an honor to work with them for the past three years. A special thanks to all the parents, assistant coaches and our wildcat family."

Finally, the 7th grade boys, coached by Rich Lucht, had a successful year reaching the playoffs for the first time. Finishing third overall in the regular season with an 8-3 record, Coach Lucht said the boys worked hard in practice to improve and up their game with the highlight win being a victory against Northbridge which was 7-0 at the time.

"There are teams in our league who I'd be embarrassed to coach. I never felt that way about our boys, even for a moment. They handled both big wins and bad losses with class," said Coach Lucht. "I would like to thank all the parents for sticking with us and never, ever complaining about practice, playing time or coaching decisions - It's



The 7th Grade Charlton Boy Wildcats

hard to believe there is only one more year left, we will try and make it a mem-

orable one."

BOS

continued from page A1

missing reporting going back to day one of working remotely and continue to do this. Obviously, our goal is to protect the employees as best we can, but we want to do that within state ethics and legally."

Singer also mentioned the risks for the potential to furlough or lay off employees if the town can't validate what employees are doing. He said that would be a "difficult conversation" but later stressed that nobody is talking about layoffs or furloughs at this time, only how to avoid them. Selectman John McGrath questioned Singer's statements asking where this was all coming from.

"I think the way the state is approaching it is the way that we should approach it," said McGrath. "We have department heads - They are tasked with making sure the public is getting the services that they need to get from the departments and also that we are doing the people's work by processing all of the paperwork that we need to process."

Selectman Singer commented that the town had previously come under fire for paying a town employee to do work they weren't doing which led to a court case that the town won. From Singer's perspective he wants to avoid a similar issue in the aftermath of the pandemic. However Selectman McGrath called comparing that case to the COVID-19 situation is like comparing "apples to oranges." While Singer indicated that a simple public records request would be enough to hold the town accountable McGrath called that a "line of crap."

"What we want to do is if we think that the reporting is not being done correctly, we tell the department heads who we've already charged to take care of this to take care of it. Threatening to furlough the employees is way beyond the realm," McGrath said.

Singer proceeded to correct McGrath that nobody is threatening furloughs, and that the board wants to protect its employees, not punish them.

The conversation eventually included the other three selectmen, who each had their own take on the matter. Selectman Deborah Noble said she understood both sides of the debate and felt there was a happy medium to understand.

"I don't like holding the threat of furlough over anyone's head," Noble said. "I don't think it's unreasonable to ask people once a day at the end of the day to send an email to your department head or supervisor saying 'this is what I did today.' The department head summarizes that, sends it to the (Town Administrator), who sends it to this board."

Selectman Karen Spiewak argued that she wanted to avoid the practice of micromanaging town employees and department heads. Selectman Bill Borowski said he doesn't believe that employees are not doing their work, but agrees that the town would only benefit from having something on hand to answer citizen questions when it comes to accountability under these unusual times.

As the debate progressed, Town

Administrator Andrew Golas stepped up to take the blame for the inconsistent reporting. He acknowledged that the first two weeks of at-home work have been an adjustment period and said he would work harder to communicate with department heads and ensure those records were being sent.

"Obviously, these are unprecedented times, and obviously, we're trying to do everything we can to keep the wheels moving really in a way that we've never operated before," Golas said. "Word to the departments of how to officially log (work hours) went to them last week so the fact that those haven't been done up until this point falls on myself. We're working together to try to find a happy medium that isn't a micromanaging system but also keeps track of the work that's being done."

The Town Administrator said he would be following a template provided by the Massachusetts Municipal Association which is based on the successful work of other communities to adjust to the times. The debate didn't stop there however as Selectman Singer added another layer to the conversation revealing that he had heard from two citizens who inquired about whether or not at-home employees were getting the job done. Singer didn't deny work was being done, he acknowledged had no way of corroborating that information which concerned him.

"To look a taxpayer in the eyes and say 'I don't know', that's not a good place to be," Singer said. "In both cases, they were flat out asking if we were paying people to stay home or to actually work."

The Town Administrator offered a quick response with and emphatic "yes" that employees are working, including

those at home. His comments were followed by one such employee, Assistant Treasurer Nichole Neill, who said she was concerned about the questions Singer had received.

"We are without a doubt providing the same services that we provide when we're working in the town offices from home. We are answering phone calls, we are answering emails, we are answering questions from lenders and taxpayers. It is constant," Neill said. "I'm a little confused as to who it is that are asking the questions and what it is specifically that they want to know and what it is they think that we're not accomplishing."

Selectman Singer clarified that selectmen are simply asking the department heads to "help us help you" and that nobody is asking for step-by-step explanations of what was done. They want summaries that the town can turn to in order to verify the work being done and justify the hours spent at home to the public if need be. Selectman Karen Spiewak added that selectmen need to guide the Town Administrator and to avoid micromanaging while still embracing best practices.

"We all need to be in agreement and if (Town Administrator Golas) believes these reports are deficient then he needs to reach out to the department heads and if we get questioned we send them over to the Town Administrator and if people really want to look at the reports it's all public records. None of us asked to be put in this position, right? We have an obligation to the employees. We have an obligation to the taxpayers. I get it. We just all need to be on the same page on how we move forward," said Spiewak.

Selectman Borowski said he has faith in the Town Administrator and the

department heads, and he believes the situation resulted in "lessons learned."

"It's a very unusual time. We don't know how long it's going to go on for either," Selectman Borowski said. "Let's just do our best as a collective town hall team, Town Hall Strong, and let's just make sure that we are all rowing the boat in the same direction."

Selectman Noble concluded that she wants town employees to feel comfortable to go to their department heads to make sure they have the tools to get their job done. "In the end I want everybody to have confidence that they can do their job well and if they don't have those tools then we need to do something about that, and we need to know about it. I don't want this to be an 'us versus them' situation. Nobody wants that," Noble said.

Selectman Singer brought the debate to a close saying that employees do have a lot of options available to them to make sure they are able to get the job done and he implores them to take advantage of those resources. However, he doubled down on the need for documentation while stating micromanaging is not the goal.

"Nobody is saying 'prove to me every minute of your day'. Nobody is asking for that. If someone feels they just can't do their jobs from home, but they would like something else to do then they can go to their department head for that too. The town has the power to give them other work outside their job description to keep them employed," said Singer. "The goal here is to keep them all employed - The bottom line is the board wants to do everything we can ethically and legally to keep everyone working."

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TRIPS  
continued from page A4

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TRIPS w/Charlton Senior Center 2020

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Trips are open to the public

Flyers available at the center or online at [www.townofcharlton.net](http://www.townofcharlton.net). Click on Government, then Council on Aging/Senior Center

Mail payments to: Charlton Senior Center Trips, 37 Main St., Charlton, MA 01507 or bring into center and give to Elaine or Katherine. Please be sure to make checks payable to the company stated below.

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Bus pick up will usually be at St. Joseph's Church 10 H Putnam Rd. Ext. in Charlton

May 19 — CAROLE KING TRIBUTE \$94 includes transportation, Luncheon, meal tax w/gratuity and Show ticket. Driver gratuity not included. Make checks payable to: Best of Times (payment due 4/17)

July 28 — GLOUCESTER HARBOR CRUISE LOBSTERBAKE \$135 includes transportation, Beauport Princess Cruise, Lobsterbake buffet, Entertainment & Dancing. Driver gratuity not included. Make checks payable to: Best of Times (payment due 7/30)

September 2 — LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE CRUISE & CASTLE IN THE CLOUDS \$129 includes transportation, Lake Cruise, Luncheon, Visit to Castle in the Clouds. Driver gratuity not included. Make checks payable to: Best of Times (payment due 7/30)

November 17 — YESTERDAY ONCE MORE w/The Carpenters, ABBA, 5th Dimension, The Mamas & The Papas

all in one show! \$92 includes transportation, Luncheon, meal tax w/gratuity and Show ticket. Driver gratuity not included. Make checks payable to: Best of Times (payment due 10/15)

Dec 4-7 — A COUNTRY CHRISTMAS IN NASHVILLE, TN. Gaylord Oprey Hotel! 4 days/3 nights. Call for more info

DAUGHTERS OF ISABELLA

For reservations contact Jan Caouette at (508) 887-2215. Make checks payable to Bernadette Circle #709 and mail to Bernadette Circle #709, PO Box 201, Webster MA 01570. The Daughters of Isabella is a nonprofit and charitable Catholic women's organization

DUDLEY SENIORS

Dudley Seniors present a Pigeon Forge and the Smoky Mountains Show Trip. It will be 7 days and 6 nights from Sept. 20, 2020 through Sept. 26, 2020. The price per person/ double occupancy is \$689 and will include motorcoach transportation from Dudley, 6 nights lodging, 10 meals, admission to Titanic: the world's largest museum attraction, 2 dinner shows, 2 evening shows, one morning show, free time in downtown Gatlinburg and a guided tour of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. For more information, please call Evelyn at (508) 764-8254.

FRIENDS OF THE STURBRIDGE SENIORS

The Friends of the Sturbridge Seniors are happy to offer the following 2020 Trips to the General Public. Beginning on Thursday March 12th, join us as we travel by Deluxe Motorcoach on an approximately 60 minute ride to the Fabulous Venus DeMilo in Swansea, Ma. To see Ireland's Most Exciting Young Tenor, Emmet Cahill. Emmet is the Star of PBS Phenomenon Celtic Thunder. Hear Emmet perform many of the Irish Classics as well as some of your Favorite Broadway Hits. He will be joined by the Emerald String Quartet, who are four young Ladies creating the Sweetest Sounds from their String Instruments. And let's add the All Male Dublin City Dancers who will shake up the Audience with their high stepping dance numbers. For 92.00 everyone will have a Plated Lunch of Corned Beef and Cabbage or Baked Haddock, Venus DeMilo's Famous Minstrone Soup, Vegetables, Breads, Dessert, Coffee and Tea, Bus Transportation and this Fabulous Show.

On Thursday, July 16, come with us for a Lobster Bake at Foster's Clambake in York, Me. For 99.00 enjoy a 1 1/4 Boiled Lobster, Clam Chowder, Steamed Mussels, Fresh Steamed Maine Clams, Corn on the Cob, Potatoes and Onions, Blueberry Cake and a Beverage. Also available is 1/2 Barbecued Chicken in place of the Lobster. Now let us add the Ultimate Jimmy Buffett Tribute Show featuring Jimmy and the Parrots. They are the most requested Jimmy Buffett Tribute Band in the Country and they were also nominated as Band of the

Year by Trop Rock Entertainer. Hear them play the favorite songs of Jimmy Buffett as well as songs by The Beach Boys, Paul Simon, Harry Belafonte, Bob Marley and many others. Included is Deluxe Motorcoach Transportation, Lunch and the Show.

On Tuesday August 18 to Friday August 21st, have your Passport ready for a Spectacular 4 Day/3 Night Motor Coach Roundtrip visit to Beautiful Montreal and Quebec Canada. For 849.00 pp Double or 1159.00 pp Single Occupancy. Included are 3 Nights Hotel Lodgings, 4 Meals, touring as described in your travel Brochure, Best of Times Travel Tour Director and all gratuities except Motorcoach Driver. gratuity are included. In Montreal take in a guided visit of Notre-Dame Basilica, the Botanical Gardens, the Biodome, enjoy time at Montreal Casino plus even more. In Quebec, visit the Basilica of Saint-Anne de Beaupre, Montgomery Falls, guided Tour of the beautiful Citadelle featuring the Changing of the Guard, the Royal Regimemnt Museum plus some Free Time to enjoy Quebec on your own.

On Thursday August 20th, get ready for the 10th Anniversary Tour of The Texas Tenors. These 3 very Handsome, Classically Trained Men have performed over 1300 Concerts with Headliner Shows in Las Vegas, China, the United Kingdom and accumulated 3 EMMY AWARDS. The Texas Tenors will sing many of the Broadway Show Classics as well as many of your favorite Pop Songs. They were honored to be included among the Top 50 Acts in the World. This could be the Best Concert that you will see this year. We are traveling approximately 60 minutes to the Venus DeMilo in Swansea, Ma.. For 99.00 included is Deluxe Motorcoach Transportation, Plated Lunch of either Chicken Parmesan or Baked Scrod, Venus DeMilo's Famous Minnestrone Soup, Vegetables, Breads, Dessert, Coffee and Tea.

Join us on Wednesday, September 2nd on our day trip to Lake Winnepesaukee for a scenic cruise out of Weirs Beach taking in the remarkable scenery of the Western end of this magnificent lake. We will also visit the spectacular Castle in The Clouds a turn-of-the-century sixteen room mansion with its breathtaking mountaintop views overlooking Lake Winnepesaukee. Enjoy a delicious full course luncheon at Harts Turkey Farm in Meredith, NH. Famous and renowned for their turkey dinners you are sure to delight in this bountiful luncheon. All for just \$129.

We had 34 people travel to the Pennsylvania Dutch Country 3 Day/2Night Trip this past December and they had such a Great Time that many of them asked to go back again this September 23-25th. We will see the New Show "Queen Esther". One of the very most riveting Bible Stories of the Old Testament that comes to life in the Magnificent Sight and Sound Theater which incorporates Live Animals, Social Effects and Jaw Opening Stage Sets. Ask anyone who

has seen a Show at the Millenium Sight and Sound Theater and they will tell you this is a Must See. in your lifetime. Now let's add a 2nd Show called "Saturday Nigh Fever" at the Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre, a Backcountry Tour of the Dutch County Farmlands, enjoy your luck at the Sands Casino and more. Prices are 499.00 pp Double and 599.00 Single Occupancy and include 2 Nights Lodging, 4 Meals, Tickets to the 2 Shows,

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Contact Sturbridge Recreation Department 508-347-2041, email recreation@sturbridge.gov for more information

For additional information on these Wonderful Trips, please contact Linda Fortier at 508 347 1452 or by email at bestoftimes2020@aol.com

LEICESTER SENIOR CENTER.

For trip information and reservations, please call Joan Wall at (508) 892-3967.

Thursday, May 14: Twin River Casino & Wright's Chicken Farm. \$10 slot cash and \$7 food credit at the Casino. Then we depart for Wright's Farm for a family style dinner. Cost is \$64. We leave at 9 a.m.

Wednesday, June 17: The Gloucester Lobster Cruise with lobster clam bake and chicken buffet. On the way home, we stop at Kimball's Farm for their famous ice cream. We leave at 9 a.m. Cost is \$109.

Thursday, July 16: The Lakes Region Summer Music Theatre's "The King and I" and Hart's Turkey Farm luncheon. We leave at 9 a.m. Cost is \$99.

Wednesday, Aug. 12: Casablanca By the Sea in Portland, Maine. Lunch at the Bull & Claw, then a cruise in Portland Harbor. Viewing war forts, seals, lighthouses. We leave at 8:30 a.m. The cost is \$99.

Sept. 1-3: Trip to Bar Harbor, Maine. Many sights to see. Cost is in the low \$400's. More information coming.

Wednesday, Oct. 14: New Hampshire Turkey Train. Scenic foliage train traveling around beautiful Lake Winnepesaukee. Hart's Turkey Farm

Turn To **TRIPS** page **A14**



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EDITOR

# OPINION

Views and commentary from Charlton, Charlton City, Charlton Depot and beyond

## The lost class of 2020

When schools across the country moved to remote learning, we weren't sure how long it would last, but many of us suspected that eventually it would last for the remainder of the year.

Many students use school as a respite and several thrive on having a consistent schedule. Younger students are facing many losses, but our hearts truly break for the seniors, particularly athletes who are missing out on their final sports season.

In our own experience, it was track season that would have had the most impact. As a senior, records needed to be broken, goals needed to be reached and rivals needed to be beat. To have that season abruptly "taken" would have been devastating. Thinking back, time spent on a Saturday at a sunny track meet with talented athletes, encouraging coaches and parents with coolers loaded with food are some of, if not the best, memories from high school.

Then there are softball and baseball players. Baseball, in all its various incarnations, is called the 'American pastime' for a very good reason. The adrenaline rush that comes after managing to hit an expertly thrown pitch and sprinting to first base is unforgettable. Making a catch in the outfield, or making the play for that all important out that could decide the game, is gold. Fortunately, many athletes are going on to play ball or run track in college. For those that are not, know that we sympathize with you, and hope that you can continue doing what you love in some sort of league that will hopefully be available to you. No, it won't be the same, but this is when they say you need to "adjust your sails" and remember that what is happening is in order to keep you and your families safe.

Again, we know that all of our students, parents, faculty, healthcare workers, business owners and all community members are going through a loss, all to varying degrees but all just as important. For students, whether it's the last school theatre production or JROTC competition, we feel for you. Have faith that your administration will make up for all of this, as best they can, given the circumstances.

Certainly, our students understand the gravity of the situation. Lives are being lost, families are losing loved ones and people are heart broken. We are in the midst of a global pandemic, but that doesn't mean that the devastation those students are feeling shouldn't matter. We acknowledge your pain. Reading a recent Facebook post by a friend's daughter brought the situation home to us. In an emotional letter to her fellow members of the Class of 2020, she wrote that if she had one wish, it would be to go back to the last day of classes before the governor's office made the decision to close schools, with the knowledge this time that those eight precious hours would be the end of her senior year, and give all of her classmates — many of whom she might never have an opportunity to see together in one place again — one last hug or high-five before saying good bye.

Her words speak for all students across our region, and across the country, who have been denied the opportunity to experience one of the most memorable times in a young person's life, and we invite our readers to join us in recognizing the pain, comforting the sorrow, and above all, saluting the achievements and incredible fortitude of the Class of 2020.

## LETTERS

Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

We think you're important enough to tell all our readers to turn to the Opinion pages and read your Letters to the Editor.

But first, you have to write us!

Mail your letters to the Charlton Villager, P.O. Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550.

Or e-mail your letters to the editor at [news@stonebridgepress.news](mailto:news@stonebridgepress.news)

You'll need to provide your name and place of residence, along with a phone number, so we can verify the letter is yours.

We don't have a set limit, but if you keep it around 600 words or so, you're going to have a better chance at seeing all your words in print.

If you want to write a bit longer about a particular issue, maybe a guest Your Turn column is your cup of tea. If you do that, try to keep it between 700-800 words.

Remember, libelous remarks and/or personal attacks are a no-no and could lead to your letter not being published.

So, what are you waiting for? Start writing!

## To the Editor

### Confinement of the elderly population due to Coronavirus

To the Editor:

When society was blooming like spring flowers, my Nana and her friends at the assisted living facility were able to do all the joyous things life consists of. My dad and I would make our way to see her every Sunday, but we would never know what her location was because of the social butterfly she is. She would either be playing a game of bingo with her friends or waiting for the arrival of her ice cream in her comfortable red armchair. We would love to chat about things we did in the past, such as going to the movies, but sometimes the conversation is halted in this scenario if she loses the keys to her room.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic is occurring, all the doors in the facility are closed. There is nothing my family and I can do to resolve the issue at this moment. She is confined to the walls of her room, sitting in her thoughts and crying for a new beginning.

The geriatric community are birds trapped in cages. As the cases of COVID-19 are on the rise, the rooms of those who call an assisted living facility their home have been converted to their personal cage. Moreover, there is no time left for these residents to spread their wings to be with their families. Locked up. They are confined to their own boundaries where it seems like

there are only the necessities to survive. A bed, bathroom, television, and food. The bird is no longer able to leave to get their own food; however, they must wait for the feeder to deliver the food so that they can continue to survive.

Furthermore, life in a cage is stale, as they are in solitary confinement with themselves. The birds are waiting for the moment when they will be set free into society again, but because the rate of the disease keeps growing, the birds will be banging on the cage pleading for help. The cage is the protection the birds need from the outside world. Until the storm passes, the birds will be in isolation from the storm that is brewing and taking over society.

Nana, this torrential storm will pass soon, and until then I ensure that you are in good hands. A bird is never in captivity forever. The caregivers that protect the cages are working to keep you and the other residents safe from the outside world. That is their job. As the cage is shaking in the wind currently because of all of the tension in the world, just know that the key to unlock the door will come soon. Until we find the special key, let your mind be set free with hope that all the birds will return to their natural habitats again.

JULIA CIEPRICH  
CHARLTON

## Earth Day - Time to "Go Green" with your investments?

Over the past several weeks, many of us have been working from home in response to the "social distancing" necessitated by the coronavirus. Nonetheless, we still have opportunities to get outside and enjoy Mother Nature. And now, with the 50th anniversary of Earth Day being celebrated on April 22, it's important to appreciate the need to protect our environment. Of course, you can do so in many ways – including the way you invest. Some investors are supporting the environment through "sustainable" investing, which is often called ESG (environmental, social and corporate governance) investing. In general, it refers to investments in businesses whose products and services are considered favorable to the physical environment (such as companies that produce renewable energy or that act to reduce their own carbon footprints) or the social environment (such as firms that follow ethical business practices or pursue important societal goals, such as inclusion and pay equity). ESG investing may also screen out investments in companies that produce products some people find objectionable.



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## In Appreciation of Trees!

Spring has officially sprung and trees, both big and small, are coming alive with long anticipated buds of color. But the promise of lush, green foliage is just one benefit of planting trees. Hot on the cusp of Earth Day and Arbor Day, this column will celebrate the many virtues of trees - from showy shrubs to towering timbers!



TAKE  
THE  
HINT  
KAREN  
TRAINOR

\*\*\*

Tree Rx: Did you know just looking at trees can reap health benefits? According to medical studies, recovery rates among hospitalized patients are often quicker when their rooms view a landscaped area compared to patients with non-landscaped views.

\*\*\*

Breathe easier: Trees absorb harmful pollutants and small particles from the air which could irritate sensitive lungs. Plus, trees give off oxygen. A mature leafy tree can produce as much oxygen in one season as ten people inhale in a year!

\*\*\*

Tree planting tip: It can be difficult to successfully take cuttings from trees or shrubs to root and plant. Here is an option that ups your chances the cutting will take: Take a small potato, make a small hole, and place your shrub cutting inside. Immediately plant, potato and all, either in the ground or in a pot.

\*\*\*

Planting pointers: Waiting until the fall to plant encourages good root development. Nurseries often slash prices on perennials and shrubs at the end of the summer, so planting then will reward you with healthy plants on the cheap!

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

Hedge against fuel costs: The Center for Urban Forest Research proclaimed planting a tree can have a significant impact on lowering energy use. It claims: «If you plant a tree today on the west side of your home, in five years your energy bills should be 3% less. In 15 years the savings will be nearly 12%.”

\*\*\*

Plant and pocket savings: Want trees to trim more of your fuel fees? According to expert landscapers, just three trees, properly placed around a house, can save between \$100 and \$250 annually in cooling and heating costs! That's because shading that blocks summertime sun on the east, south and west sides of a house, but not cool breezes, is an effective way to keep your house cooler For quickest results, opt for fast growing varieties.

\*\*\*

Proper placement: If you use an air conditioner, plant trees or shrubs specifically to shade air conditioning units, but be sure not to block the airflow. It's common sense that an air conditioning unit operating in the shade uses less electricity than one in the sun.

\*\*\*

Chill out: Need more convincing? Consider this fact: Daytime air temperatures can be three to nine degrees cooler in tree-shaded neighborhoods. In fact, the U.S. Dept of Agriculture estimates the net cooling effect of a young, healthy tree is equivalent to ten room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day!

\*\*\*

Tree Timing: Did you know trees can be used to time crop planting? The American Indians passed this reliable tip on to European colonists, and many farmers still rely on it today: Tender crops should not be planted until the leaves on an oak tree are as big as a squirrels ear (about an inch or so long).

\*\*\*

Hike house value: “In one eye opening study from the Arbor National Mortgage & American Forests, 83% of realtors believe that mature trees have a “strong or moderate impact” on the salability of homes listed for under \$150,000; on homes over \$250,000, this perception increases to 98%!

\*\*\*

Recovery Rates: According to Money Magazine, landscaping can bring a recovery value of 100% to 200% at selling time. As a comparison a kitchen remodeling brings a 75% - 125% recovery rate, bathroom remodeling a 20% - 120% recovery rate, and addition of a swimming pool a 20% - 50% recovery rate.

ESG investing has become popular in recent years, and not just with individuals; major institutional investors now pursue sustainability because they think it's profitable – and plenty of facts bear that out. A growing body of academic research has found a positive relationship between corporate financial performance – that is, a company's profitability – and ESG criteria. So, although you might initially be attracted to sustainable investments because they align with your personal values, or because you want to hold companies to higher standards of corporate citizenship, it turns out that you can do well by doing good. Keep in mind, though, that sustainability, like any other criteria, can't guarantee success or prevent losses. In any case, be aware that sustainable investing approaches can vary significantly, so you need to determine how a particular sustainable investment, or class of investments, can align with your values and fit into your overall portfolio. Specifically, how will a sustainable investment meet your needs for diversification? For example, if you desire total control over how your money is invested, you might want to invest in a basket of individual stocks from the companies you wish to support. But if you want to achieve greater diversification, plus receive the benefits of professional management, you might want to invest in sustainable mutual funds. Be aware, though, that even though they may not market themselves as “sustainable,” many more mutual funds do incorporate sustainability criteria into their investment processes. You also might consider exchange-traded funds (ETFs), which own a variety of investments, similar to regular mutual funds, but trade like stocks. ETFs often track particular indexes, so an ETF with a sustainable focus might track an index including companies that have been screened for social responsibility. Make sure you understand the fundamentals of any sustainable investment you're considering, as well as whether it can help you work toward your long-term goals. But by “going green” with some of your investments, you can help keep the spirit of Earth Day alive every day of the year.

*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](mailto:jeff.burdick@edward-jones.com).*



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TRUE

What crazy weather! Last week’s snowstorm was no big surprise for New Englanders. Thankfully, it did not stick around long, and melted quickly the next day. It did give turkey hunters the opportunity to check out their favorite turkey hunting spot by following tracks in the snow, before it melted. Wild turkey hunting opens in Massachusetts this coming Monday, April 27, in zones 1-13. This year, turkey hunters can harvest two bearded turkeys in the spring and one of either sex in the fall. A hunter can harvest two birds on the same day this year during the spring hunt.

Hunting wild turkey can provide some great days in the field during the Corona virus outbreak. No problem doing social distancing while engaging in this sport. Although local hunters were not reporting on a lot of turkey’s being spotted in local woodlots prior to the season, there are a lot of birds, as tracks in the snow last Saturday revealed.

The Wild Turkey youth hunt is scheduled for this Saturday, April 25, and can provide some great time with your son or daughter.

As mentioned in a previous column, hunting from a ground blind allows a hunter to conceal himself from the sharp eye of the wild turkey, and makes hunting a lot easier as you wait for the turkey to approach your set of decoys. Calling in a



wild turkey for a good shot is extremely exciting. If you do not get that rush of excitement as the bird slowly advances into your set up strutting and gobbling, you probably should find another sport.

Turkey hunters often do very well hunting in pairs. One hunter is set up a short distance from the setup of decoys, and another hunter is back at least fifty to one hundred feet, doing most of the calling. Turkeys can often calculate the distance of were the call of the hen turkey is coming from, and often stop short of the decoys. Hung - up are the word’s that turkey hunters often use to describe the situation. Too much calling can often keep a bird from coming into shooting distance. If the bird’s spot your set of decoys, they will often

go around and come into view from another direction. They often come in silent, surprising the hunter.

Turkey decoys are a bit expensive, but will last for many years to come. Each year that I harvest a tom turkey, I save the beard and wings of the bird. The wings are given to some local fly tiers, and the tail is spread out to dry on a piece of cardboard. Apply small amount of Twenty Mule Team Borax to the fleshy part of the tail, and store in a cool part of your garage or shed. The tail is attached to a stake and used during the next years hunt, which I use in back of an old turkey decoy. It sure works for me. This week’s picture shows my brother Ken with a wild turkey he harvested a few years ago.



Tautog fishing is picking up fast in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island waters. Green crabs are the number one bait using a number three circle hook for these hard fighting fish. They make excellent table fare when poached in a pot of boiling water and two table-spoons of white vinegar. It is unlikely that you will find this delicious eating fish in local markets, but you can find it at fish markets along the coast. This week’s picture shows the late Steve Mercure with a monster tautog taken a few years ago while fishing with this writer on the Westport River. Steve is missed by his family and friends. He was my fishing partner for many years, and we had a lot of great times fishing together.

Massachusetts has had the recreational bluefish limit cut to three fish daily from the regular 10 fish per angler daily limit. There has been a dramatic decrease in bluefish popula-

tions over the last 10 years. I have not received any notification on reduced bluefish limits from Rhode Island Marine Fisheries but would suspect that they too will have their limits cut.

A bright spot from this pandemic is the adoption of many dogs and cats from animal shelters. Some shelters have had every dog and cat adopted. Hopefully, they are all in good homes, and that they will keep their newly adopted family member long after the country gets back to some form of normality.

Trout fishing should improve when the waters start to warm. Hopefully, it will be soon. Water temperatures are still cold.

Until next week, stay safe and healthy. God Bless!

*Take a Kid Fishing & Keep Them Rods Bending!*

# Online auctions remain strong during the pandemic

Although auction houses are not able to run live auctions due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the demand to buy and sell at auctions remains high. Many auction houses have turned to online only auctions to meet this demand. Some items have brought strong prices recently and others will soon be sold that are also expected to sell very well.

A hockey stick dating between 1850 and 1870 is currently being auctioned online, according to Bleacher Report. The “Morse stick” was found by Anthony Bean when he purchased his grandmother’s Northfield, Vt. house in 1980. The stick was later gifted to Gary and Germaine Morse. The first recorded hockey game took place in 1875. “Hawkey” is reported to have been played in New England as early as 1845. Another hockey stick from the 1850’s known as the “Rutherford stick” sold for \$2.2 million in 2018. The Morse Stick has a starting bid of \$100,000 and may set a record. It has a \$3.5 million auction estimate.

Many people have been watching shows on live streaming platforms during the pandemic. One of the most popular is “Tiger King” on Netflix. TMZ reported that a pink sequined



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shirt worn by the main Tiger King character, Joe Exotic, was recently auctioned online with a \$650 starting bid. The owner told TMZ that the Greater Wynnewood (G.W. Zoo) Exotic Animal Park had previously sold clothes worn by staff members. He purchased the shirt from the zoo for \$100. The owner had also seen some of Joe Exotic’s hats being offered online for \$800. The auction for the shirt ended on April 17. It received 43 bids and sold for \$10,400.

ABC News reports that a “very special” Porsche 911 Speedster that was recently delivered to a California dealership will soon be auctioned. “Typically, we would not auction a car that has historic relevance to us – it would go [to] a special customer or in our museum,” according to Klaus Zellmer, president and CEO of Porsche Cars North America. The Speedster is the “last 991 generation 911 that rolled off the Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen production line in December.” The two-seater convertible is one of only 1,948 produced. Porsche will donate all proceeds to the United Way Worldwide’s COVID-19 Community Response and Recovery Fund. The car has an estimated value of \$312,000.



Movie stars, sports figures, and other celebrities are also helping raise funds for those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. Opportunities to meet celebrities, buy memorabilia, and for other fan experiences can be found at allinchallenge.com. You can also buy raffle tickets for some of the events for only \$10. As of Sunday, April 19, \$11,646,495 had already been raised.

We have been contacted by several individuals who want to auction their collections online to help them with their financial needs during the pandemic. We can auction larger collections of coins, gold jewelry, diamonds, Sterling silver, 1960’s baseball cards, comic books or other valuable items

that are easy to ship. If you have items you’d like to auction, please reach out to us for no-contact options for receiving your items. When the current restrictions are lifted, we will be rescheduling many events. Keep checking [www.centralmassauctions.com](http://www.centralmassauctions.com) for details as things progress. In the meantime, I hope everyone is staying healthy and safe.

Contact us at: Wayne Tuiskula Auctioneer/Appraiser Central Mass Auctions for Antique Auctions, Estate Sales and Appraisal Services [www.centralmassauctions.com](http://www.centralmassauctions.com) (508-612- 6111) [info@centralmassauctions.com](mailto:info@centralmassauctions.com)

# Two Lasell field hockey student-athletes named NFHCA Scholars of Distinction

NEWTON — Two members of the Lasell University field hockey team were honored by the National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA) on Wednesday for their outstanding work in the classroom as the organization announced the 2019 Zag Field Hockey/NFHCA Division III Scholars of Distinction.

Lasell’s Scholars of Distinction are senior Mindy Esposito (Sunderland/Frontier Regional) and freshman Kaylie Gonya (Uxbridge/Uxbridge).

This year, 321 student-athletes nationally have been recognized as Zag Field Hockey/NFHCA Division III Scholars of Distinction. The Division III Scholars of Distinction program recognizes student-athletes who have achieved a cumulative grade-point average of 3.9

or higher through the first semester of the 2019-20 academic year.

For more information contact: Samantha Mocle, assistant director of communications at [smocle@lasell.edu](mailto:smocle@lasell.edu) or at 617-243-2386.



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**OXFORD** – 377 Main St! 9 Rm Center Hall Colonial! .59 Acre Corner Lot! Charm of Yesteryear! Eat-In Frpld Granite Kit w/Updated Cabinets, Frpld Din Rm w/Built-in China Cabinet & Butler Closet! Gracious Foyer! Spacious Frpld Liv Rm! Breezeway to a Home Office or an Unfinished Cathedral Ceiling Fam Rm or Craft Rm! Sit on the Front Porch and Enjoy Morning Coffee or Evening Tea! Huge 2-Car Garage w/Loft-Storage Area! Mature Tree Studded Yard! **\$349,000.00**

**WEBSTER LAKE** – 9 Pebble Beach Rd! Middle Pond – Winter Cove! Private Peninsula Protected from the Storm – Safe Harbor! Custom 3,179' 8 Rm Contemp Ready for Your Immediate Enjoyment! Grand Entry Foyer! Ideal Open Flr Plan w/Sky Lighted Cathedral Ceilings, Tall Windows & Hrdwd Flrs! Beautiful Applianced Custom Granite Kit w/Center Isl! Formal Din, Fireplace Liv Rm w/Water/Estuary Views! 1st Flr Laundry! Second Floor Master Suite, Ideal Full Bath, Huge Walk-in Closet! 3 Bdrms Total! 2 Full & 2 Half Baths! Walk-out Lower Level Fireplace Fam Rm! Buderus Oil Heat! C/Air! Oversized 2 Car Garage! **\$779,900.00**



**OXFORD** – 10 Huguenot Rd! 8 Rm Colonial! 1.36 Acres! Country Setting! Country Kitchen w/Bay Window Overlooking Back Yard, Front to Back Living/Dining Rm w/French Doors to Deck! Office! Side Entry Breezeway! 3 Bdrms Plus a Study/Craft Rm on the 2nd Floor! 1 Car Detached Garage w/Workshop! Easy Access to Shopping and Highways! **\$179,000.00**

**DUDLEY** – 38 Pine St! 5 Rm Ranch! Original Owner! Quaint Eat-In Kit! Formal Din Rm! Spacious Liv Rm w/New Picture Window! Fam Rm w/Views to Private Back Yard! Mudrm! Huge Deck! Buderus Oil Heat! 2 Car Garage! New Septic! Vinyl Sided! Newer Windows! Solar Panels! **\$239,000.00**

**DUDLEY** – 9 Nellies Way! TOBIN FARM ESTATES! 10 Rm Colonial Set on 1.2 Acres! Applianced Dine-in Granite Kit! 3 Season Sun Rm off Kit! Din Rm, 2 Story Fam Rm w/Pellet Stove, Bdrm, Full Bath w/Laundry & Gleaming Hrdws Round Out 1st Flr! 2nd Flr Features an Open Balcony to the Liv Rm! Plenty of Space for an Office, Playroom or Reading Area, Use Your Imagination! Master w/Tray Ceiling & 3 Closets! Master Bath w/Dual Sinks, Shower, Whirlpool Tub & Makeup Counter! 2 Additional Bdrms & Full Bath! Huge Finished Walk-out Lower Level Perfect for Entertaining! Wet Bar w/Wine Cooler & Fridge! Half Bath w/Tile Flr! Irrigation! Shed! JD Riding Mower! Don't Miss Out! **\$469,900.00**

**DUDLEY** – 7 – 9 West Street! Brick 4 Family plus a 2 Family! Side by Side! All with 5 Rooms and 2 Bedrooms! Gas Heat! All Separate Utilities! 2 Car Detached Garage! The 4 Family with Beautiful Natural Woodwork! All Apartments are Empty and Work is Needed in Several Apartments! Excellent Potential! Will be a Good Investment for the Right One! **\$399,900.00**

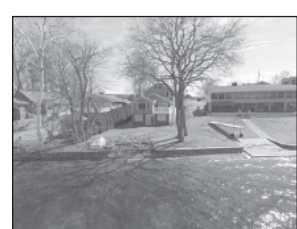
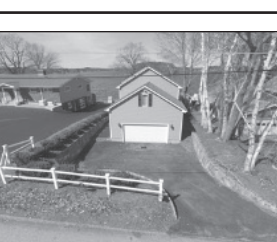
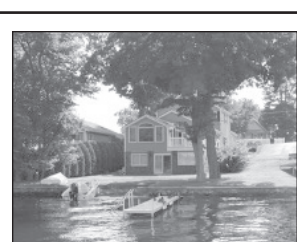


**WEBSTER** – 9 Lake Parkway! Extremely Conveniently Located just off Exit 1 of 395! Loads of Potential! 6 Rm Cape! Applianced Kit! Din & Liv Rms w/Wall to Wall over Hrdws! 3 Bdrms w/Hrdws! 1st Flr Bdrm w/Commode Closet! Recent Furnace! Recent Roof! **\$169,900.00**

**WOODSTOCK** – 9 Fawn Ridge! Renovated 4 Rm Townhouse! New Granite Kit w/SS Appliances! Kit & Liv Rm w/Hrdws! 2 Comfortable Bdrms w/New Wall to Wall! New Full Bath! Freshly Painted Throughout! Lower Level w/Laundry & Storage, Able to Finish Additional Living Space! 2 Parking Spaces! **\$129,900.00**



**DUDLEY** – 132 Southbridge Rd! 5 Rm Bungalow! 2.21 Acres! Enjoy Nature and Kayak right from your Backyard! Eat-in Kit w/Pantry! Frpld Liv Rm w/Hrdws & Bay Window! Din Rm or Fam Rm w/Hrdws & Ceiling Fan! Full Tile Bath w/Tub/Shower Combo! Master Bdrm w/Walk to Wall Carpet! Second Bdrm w/Wall to Wall & Ceiling Fan! Walk-up Attic w/Potential for Additional Living Space! 3 Season Porch w/Natural Woodwork! Recent Roof! Recent Oil Steam Heat! New Septic & being Well Installed! Plenty of Parking! **\$179,900.00**



**WEBSTER LAKE** – 62 Bates Point Rd! Middle Pond! Absolute Prime 51' Level Waterfront Lot w/Western Expo! Beautiful Sunsets! Fantastic Panoramic Lake Views! 11 Rms, 6 Bdrms, 4 Bathrooms, 3,269' A/C'd Colonial! Custom SS Applianced Granite Kit! Formal Din Rm w/Cherry Hrdws! Lake Facing Liv Rm w/Cathedrals, Cherry Hrdws! Slider to Waterfront Deck! Spacious 1st Flr Master Bdrm w/Full Bath, Cherry Hrdws & Walk-in Closet! Frpld Lower Level Fam Rm! 1st & 2nd Flr Laundries! 2 Car Garage! **\$1,199,900.00**



**WEBSTER** – 60 East Main St! Established Local Bakery & Delicatessen Specializing in Polish Foods being Sold with Building! Turn Key Business! Equipment to be Included with Sale! High Traffic Count! Ample Parking! Easy Access to Rear for Deliveries! Building also consists of a One and Two Bedroom Apartment! The Owner presently uses two rooms for his office and storage which could easily be added to the One bedroom Apartment! Building was Totally Renovated in 2010! **\$599,900.00**



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#### WEBSTER/OXFORD/DUDLEY/DOUGLAS

**Dudley** - Marshall Terrace 12,000 +/- Sq. Ft. Possible potential for a 2 family to be built! Town Water, Sewer, City Gas! Nice level lot. **\$70,000**  
**Douglas-Mount Daniels Lot #2** 2.5 Acres of flat land that abuts Douglas State Forest **\$132,900**  
**Webster - Potential 6 Buildable Lots!** Water/Sewer Access **\$129,400.**  
**Webster** - 85 Upper Gore! View of the Lake. 1+ acre, artesian well, Septic Design, Etc. **\$130,000**  
**Oxford** - 4 Leicester St. approx. 8.47 acres! River frontage! Highly possible to be subdivided. **\$99,900**

#### WOODSTOCK, CT - 64 LYON HILL RD



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Estate like long paved driveway! 3158 Sq Ft. Colonial! Geothermal built. Open floor plan, ash flooring throughout! Granite and s/s applianced kitchen! Large master bedroom, coffered ceiling, master bath, W/Jetted tub! Walk in closets. Two car garage. Radiused catwalk on upper level! A walk up attic. Walk out lower level! The third garage is accessed from the lower level. Generator hookup. One beautiful property! assisted sale **\$499,900.**

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# OBITUARIES

## Doryann Garnett, 60

Doryann Garnett, 60, of Brimfield died suddenly Saturday April 11 at her home. She was born in Palmer to the late Richard+Marlene (Gurski) Garnett. She leaves behind her husband Paul Skomro of 30 yrs, her daughter Jennifer Tenczar and spouse Jonathan Checka of Charlton, her 2 brothers John Garnett and Richard Garnett both of Palmer, her grandson Dylan Checka, and her beloved dogs Gumber and Frankie. Doryann had a huge and warm heart.



She loved nothing more than her family. She enjoyed a good cup of coffee and sitting around the kitchen table sharing a good story. One of her favorite past-times was tagsaling, she always loved a bargain. She enjoyed taking care of “her” lake and planting and replanting her shrubs. Funeral services will be private and held at a later date with family. The Shaw-Majercik Funeral Home, 48 School St., Webster, MA has been entrusted with her arrangements. A guest book is available at [www.shaw-majercik.com](http://www.shaw-majercik.com) where you can post a condolence or light a candle.

## William Steibel, 95

CHARLTON - William Steibel, 95, passed away away the Overlook Masonic Home on Tuesday April 14, 2020. Born in New York City on July of 1924 to Phoebe and George Steibel. Bill loved growing up in NYC and for the rest of his life he remained connected to “The City” as he called it. At the start of the Second World War Bill enlisted in the Navy and rose to the rank of Lieutenant. After the war, Bill married Mae Lucille Bodiford of Columbus Georgia. He then attended and graduated from the NYU School of Dentistry. He opened a private dental practice in Babylon, NY. After 20 years building his practice, he became interested in public health. Bill then earned a Masters in Public Health degree from Columbia University. He worked in public health the rest of his professional life.



Bill had a wide range of interests. He was a ham radio enthusiast (W2EJQ), a private pilot, rode various motorcycles even up into his seventies. In his later years he and his wife, became regular attendees of the Metropolitan Opera House in his beloved New York City. During his retirement, he volunteered at the Museum of Natural History in NYC and at the summer home of Theodore Roosevelt at Sagamore Hill. Bill and Lucille remained happily married for 76 years. Bill leaves his two wonderful children, Melanie and Scott, 6 grandchildren, and 10 great grandchildren. Bill passed on April 14, 2020, a mere 2 weeks after his wife’s death. Private funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Shaw-Majercik Funeral Home, 48 School Street Webster, MA. A guest book is available at [www.shaw-majercik.com](http://www.shaw-majercik.com) where you may post a message of comfort, share a fond memory, or light a candle in remembrance of William.

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

# Quarantine is what we make of it

For years to come, pundits and historians will write about the wisdom, impact and results of this quarantine. Was it necessary? Was the result worth the devastation to the economy? Did it save lives? Of course, for the next few years, the discussion will be strictly partisan. If you support the President or your governor, you’ll praise him/her. If you are not a fan, none of the decisions were correct. However, as time passes, a clarity of events will set in, and the true impact of quarantine will be measured. A television journalist I deeply respect (and there’s not many left) said last week, “When the decision is made to end quarantine and how the economy is restarted, will determine if the President is re-elected or not.” He didn’t say so, but I think the same decisions will apply to our governors. If they end quarantine too soon, the virus could explode again. As we lead up to the election, the death rate will climb. If quarantine remains too long, irreparable damage can be done to the world economy. We are truly in uncharted territory and the decisions made by our government leaders will impact our nation and world

POSITIVELY  
SPEAKING  
  
GARY W.  
MOORE

for decades to come. For those of us who believe in the power of prayer, we should all be praying for wisdom to be granted to our governmental leaders as well as their advisors and influencers. For those who are not, positive thoughts and statements are always helpful. What is totally useless, and damaging is negative partisanship. I’ve heard more than one political pundit wishing a recession or worse, only to damage the Presidents chances for re-election. Think about the negative impact of a recession or depression. Really? There are people who hate the President enough to wish damage to the world economy, unemployment, loss of homes and even suicide? Regardless of your political leanings, there is something deeply wrong in that type of hatred that some would wish this kind of damage and destruction. I’m still old school. I pray for and support the President and governmental leaders whether I voted for them or not. To pray for the success of our President, whether he’s your choice or not, is to pray for the success of the nation. To pray that he fails, is to pray for our failure. How about praying for the health, happiness and prosperity of all regardless of political leanings? As for quarantine ... how’s it going? I’m an extrovert, so I am deeply missing my friends and basic social connections. I can

whine about it, but what will that accomplish? Giving into it and complaining solves nothing and can potentially move me from missing other people into depression. Don’t give in! Count your quarantine blessings! I work full-time as a writer. I love what I do and feel blessed to have a career that I truly love and adore. Quarantine, in many ways has been perfect for me. A major publisher is looking at my new book, “Fragrance of Lilacs,” and claims to love it, but asked for a rewrite of an antagonist’s storyline. If not for quarantine, it may have taken months to accomplish, and in the process, given the publisher time to move on. Instead, quarantine has given me the time to complete the rewrite in ten days. Quarantine has caused my family to be more deliberate in contact and communication. We are talking and Facetiming daily. I am loving the connection and I’m determined to continue the deliberateness of talking and expressing our love daily, face to face. Quarantine has helped me be of service. I truly cannot keep up with the positive email I’m receiving from readers wishing to talk about a column and express their opinion. I think positive content in this, and all newspapers, has never been more important than now. To remain optimistic during a pandemic will help us all weather the storm, survive and once again thrive as it passes.

And believe me, this too shall pass. My prayer for us all is that we remain positive and optimistic during the worst of times. In doing so we’ll usher back into our world, and our lives, the best of times. I hope and pray that we all use this time to accomplish the things we previously wished we’d have had the time to accomplish and enjoy. Do not squander this precious opportunity with partisan bickering and complaining. Never in my lifetime of over six decades, has it been more important to reach across the political aisle and work in unison to save lives and recover quickly from the impact of this terrible disease. Partisanship in this time of turmoil only guarantees prolonged misery and suffering. Optimism is a powerful choice in times when being optimistic is most difficult.

Purposefully looking for positive ways to be encouraging during times of mass discouragement is not just helpful but is an honorable calling. Choose optimism. Act positively in thought, word and deed. Make the best of a bad situation and we may look back at this time in history and say we virtually held hands and together, we positively weathered the storm. And when the dark clouds break and the sun once again rushes in, our attitude in the worst of times will make us better people. 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](http://www.garywmoore.com).

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Information as of April 2020 by:  
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# Take the hassle out of watering container gardens



Growing flowers and vegetables in containers will allow you to expand planting space, grow plants right outside your door and elevate them for easier access and maintenance. Unlike growing in the ground, the smaller volume of soil in containers is exposed to heat and wind, so requires frequent, often daily, watering.

Don't let this watering schedule discourage you from growing in pots. Enlist one or more of these strategies to eliminate the daily burden of watering while still maintaining beautiful and productive gardens.

Grow plants in large plastic, glazed or other less breathable material to extend the time between watering. The larger the pot and less breathable the container

material, the longer the soil stays moist. Small pots made of breathable materials, like unglazed terra cotta, dry out more quickly.

No matter the size and type container used, monitor and adjust your watering schedule based on weather, number of plants in the pot and size of the plants. The more plants used and the larger the plants grow the more water needed; so, frequency will increase over time.

Use self-watering pots to extend the time between watering. Fill the reservoir in these containers as needed. The water moves from the reservoir to the soil where it is needed. This extends the time between watering. As your new plantings grow, you will need to fill the reservoir more frequently.

Use a quality potting mix that holds moisture and is well draining to avoid water-logged soils that can



Photo Melinda Myers

Grow plants in large plastic, glazed or other less breathable material to extend the time between watering.

lead to root rot. Most potting mixes contain peat moss, compost or bark to hold moisture. Vermiculite, perlite or rice hulls are used to provide drainage.

Add a long-lasting sustainable, water saving product, like wool

pellets (wildvalleyfarms.com), to your potting mix. This organic product is made from belly wool and tags that cannot be used for clothing. The pellets promote healthier growth, increase soil aeration and reduce watering frequency by as much

as 25 percent.

Mulch the soil surface in newly planted container gardens. This common garden practice is often overlooked when growing in containers. Cover the soil surface with shredded leaves, evergreen needles or other organic material. This helps conserve moisture until plants grow and shade the soil.

Automate watering with one of the many commercial or DIY container irrigation systems. These are designed to provide water to each individual pot with the turn of the faucet. Attach the irrigation system to the faucet, attach a timer and watering becomes a breeze. Regularly check the system to make sure the lines that deliver water to the pot are intact and the watering frequency is adjusted throughout the growing

season as needed.

Enlist one or more of these strategies to make container gardening a manageable growing system. Once you eliminate the inconvenience of daily watering you may just find yourself planting more container gardens each season.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including Small Space Gardening. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series and the Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio segments. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and was commissioned by Wild Valley Farms for her expertise to write this article. Her Web site is [www.MelindaMyers.com](http://www.MelindaMyers.com).


## Mother's Day Honors

**Publish Date:**  
May 8, 2020  
**Deadline date:**  
Friday, May 1 @ 5 pm

We would like to honor all Mothers and Grandmothers in the May 8th issue. The deadline for honors is Friday, May 4 at 5 pm.

Cost is just \$20 per 2.4"x 2" B&W block.  
In the Spencer New Leader,  
Auburn News or Sturbridge/Charlton Villager

**SAMPLE: EXACT SIZE**



Mom, Of all the moms in all the world, nothing brings me more happiness than to know you're ours.

*With love from  
John, Mary, and  
Jennifer*

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OR mail or drop off to  
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## WHITCO

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Sunday Noon-7pm  
140 Main St., Spencer, MA  
**508-885-9343**



## Family Dining & Gift Guide

Please continue to frequent your local restaurants by ordering take-out or purchasing gift cards. Together we will get through this.

Call June at 508.909.4062 or email [jsima@stonebridgepress.news](mailto:jsima@stonebridgepress.news) to advertise on this page.

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To advertise on this page  
call Mikaela at  
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[mikaela@stonebridgepress.news](mailto:mikaela@stonebridgepress.news)  
by Friday Noon

### You don't need to miss out on our delicious food...

**SPECIALS THIS WEEK INCLUDE:**  
Salisbury Steaks & BBQ Chicken Dinner

We are offering a limited menu for take-out. Family Meals too!

Call 508-867-6643 or check out our Facebook page for updates.  
Thank you for your business.

**E.B. Flatts**  
Rte 9 E. Brookfield • 508-867-6643  
Breakfast & Lunch Daily • Dinners - Thurs, Fri, Sat

We are temporarily closed. In the meantime, we would like to wish all of our customers and friends well, and hope you'll stay in touch and follow us on Facebook and Instagram where we will post updates, or you can text us at 508-885-3385.

Thank you.

**Cormier Jewelers & ART GALLERY**  
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## continued from page A14

## UXBRIDGE SENIOR CENTER

April 27-29 Penn Dutch w/  
the new show Queen Esther at  
Sight and Sound -- (trip is full,  
sign up for the waiting list)- \$459.  
May 4 -- Granite State Chocolate and  
Wine Tour with lunch at Warren's  
Lobster House - Fox Tours - \$91.  
May 9 - Albany Tulip Festival

Please call Sue at 508-476-5820 for more information or to be put on the emailing list.



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