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Friday, December 24, 2021

Local schools receive threats connected to TikTok challenge

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

REGION — A new social media trend has caught the attention of local school districts and law enforcement as schools nationwide have experienced a disturbing series of school shooting and/or bomb threats seemingly attached to a challenge on TikTok.

In recent weeks, schools across the country have experienced threats through phone calls or social media posts of violence at schools seemingly in an attempt to have classes canceled or to disrupt the daily activities of students. While such threats are serious, the knowledge of the TikTok challenge

has forced law enforcement and school officials to approach the situation in a unique manner.

The Dudley-Charlton Regional School District, for example, was the victim of several of these threats, including ones at Dudley Middle School and Charlton Middle School, prompting both police and the district superintendent to respond.

“Social media is a powerful tool often used to influence others, and not always for the good. It is always important to remain vigilant when it involves these types of threats. Please take time to talk to your children about the influence of social media, and that we take

every threat seriously,” Superintendent Steven Lamarche said in a statement on Dec. 16, acknowledging that the district was made aware late the night prior of a Snap Chat targeting the Dudley and Charlton Middle Schools.

“We want to say thank you to the students, parents and community members who made us aware of the social media posts last evening. We all have a role in keeping our students and community safe,” he added.

Later that same day, Lamarche released an updated statement saying that police from both district communities were working to investigate what was considered a “non-credible threat”

to students.

“We understand the uneasiness that occurred. Our incredible staff will continue to monitor their student’s health, safety and well-being. We are very lucky to have a staff that cares so much about your children,” said Lamarche. “What was very difficult today was the sheer number of rumors, speculations, and untruths spread across social media throughout the school day. Administration has tried to stay in front and answer all communications that occurred today.”

Both the Dudley and Charlton Police

Please Read **TIKTOK**, page **A6**

Keep Charlton Beautiful Committee brings litter bylaw to selectmen

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — The Keep Charlton Beautiful Committee brought their proposal for a litter bylaw to the Board of Selectmen on Dec. 14, after the Board of Health respectfully voted down the proposal at their own meeting weeks prior.

Joe Mahaney of the Keep Charlton Beautiful Committee, formerly the Charlton Recycling Committee, continued to push for consideration of a bylaw telling selectmen that the committee has noticed the disturbing amount of litter buildup and is hoping that, at the very least, a bylaw and a town-imposed fine would discourage people from continuing such acts.

“We’re trying to heighten awareness of things we can do to help make the town look more beautiful, be prouder of the town, and basically clean it up,” said Mahaney. “There’s no magic potion. Littering is a very difficult thing to prosecute; to catch somebody littering and to make a fine stick is

next to impossible to do — I’m not suggesting that this litter bylaw is going to result in a lot of arrests or a lot of administrative action for anybody. All we really want to do, and we’re grasping at straws here, is to frighten some people by having a bylaw and having some signage that says this is going to hurt if you get caught littering.”

Mahaney reiterated his proposal for a \$500 fine that was previously recommended to the Board of Health and detailed the committee’s image of helping beautify Charlton in ways similar to other surrounding communities like Oxford. This also brought funding into the discussion, where Mahaney said it might be an option to seek support from businesses to help fund initiatives to keep the town clean.

“There’s probably 12 or 15 businesses where an unintended byproduct is litter,” said Mahaney. “We should be thinking about when we let those (businesses) in what are they going to do about the lit-

Please Read **BYLAW**, page **A6**



Photo Courtesy

Visitors gather around a bonfire during Christmas by Candlelight at Old Sturbridge Village.

Mask debate continues in Dudley Charlton School District

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY/CHARLTON — Members of the Dudley Charlton Regional School Committee continued to receive backlash from members of the public during their Dec. 8 meeting, their final gather of 2021, continuing what has been a standard for their meetings since the start of the new school year.

Prior to the citizens forum segment of the meeting Superintendent Steven

Lamarche commented the continued concern for COVID outbreaks in the district, especially in the wake of the holidays. The week prior to the meeting Lamarche had released correspondence to parents and the public warning of the increased numbers of COVID cases in the district and on Dec. 8 urged everyone to remain diligent as the pandemic continues.

“I still feel that the day will come when we collectively understand how COVID becomes part of our lives mov-

ing forward without complicated protocols, anxiety provoking unknowns, ambiguous guidelines, and problematic dialogue. Unfortunately, we are still not there yet. We need to continue to work together, which we will,” said Lamarche.

He further added that as the district continues to try and return to a sense of normalcy, this may result in increased protocols to help prevent COVID exposure without cancelling pre-COVID experiences in schools.

Please Read **DEBATE**, page **A6**

P.E.O. Sisterhood helps Bay Path students reach for the stars



Photo Courtesy

Chapter R members at a recent social.

CHARLTON — Sarah Garcia of Charlton was presented with a \$2,000 grant on Oct. 23 by members of an organization that’s helping women reach for the stars.

Garcia was one of three

women (and the most recent) from Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy who received a grant from the Philanthropic Education

Please Read **P.E.O.**, page **A6**

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SERVPRO set to kick off fourth First Responder Bowl

SOUTHBRIDGE — The fourth annual SERVPRO First Responder Bowl is set for Tuesday, Dec. 28, at SMU's Gerald J. Ford Stadium in Dallas, Texas, where the Air Force Falcons will face off against the Louisville Cardinals. Kickoff is set for 2:15 p.m. central on ESPN.

SERVPRO hosts this event each year to recognize the service and sacrifice of thousands of first responders nationwide.

"This game shines a spotlight on hometown heroes across the country," said Rick Isaacson, CEO of Servpro Industries, LLC. "Servpro is proud to honor all first responders for willingly putting the welfare of others ahead of their own personal safety."

Each SERVPRO franchise is an integral part of its local community, so SERVPRO asked their franchisees nationwide to submit the name of a first responder in their hometown to be considered for special recognition at the game. This year, SERVPRO teammates selected Sgt. Steven Austin of the Montgomery County (Maryland) Sheriff's Office, who was nominated by SERVPRO of Silver Spring North, Maryland.

While Sgt. Austin and his K-9 partner Harley were engaged with other detectives in the attempted arrest of a suspected homicide subject, the subject fired his weapon. The bullet struck a nearby detective in the chest, exiting out his back. Sgt. Austin secured Harley and responded to his fallen comrade immediately. He placed his open palms over the wounds and called for a chest seal, a specialized first aid item that prevents air from entering the lungs through a hole in the chest. Sgt. Austin and an assisting officer used the chest seals to cover both penetrating wounds and turned the injured officer over to EMS staff for transport to a local trauma hospital via helicopter.

After multiple surgeries, the wounded detective fully recovered and returned to active duty a few months later. For his dedication and service, Sgt. Austin will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the game, national recognition during the game, and a donation in his honor to the Warrior Canine Connection.

This year's game will also feature multiple activities before and during the game to bring attention and support to SERVPRO's new partners at the First Responders Children's Foundation, a

nonprofit organization that provides financial support to the children and families of first responders killed or injured in the line of duty.

"We are proud to recognize Sgt. Austin this year, and we are humbled when we think about the countless other 'hometown heroes' who train diligently and stand ready to respond at a moment's notice to emergency situations," said Isaacson. "If we are talking about firefighters, police officers, or emergency medical personnel, we call them 'first responders' because they are our first line of defense, dealing with the unexpected as it is happening. They, and their families, deserve our thanks and our support every day."

Tickets for the SERVPRO First Responder Bowl are available now at <https://www.firstresponderbowl.com/ticket-op>. First responders are eligible for up to four complimentary tickets to the game.

SERVPRO specializes in disaster cleaning, restoration, and construction services, helping to remediate damage, making it "Like it never even happened," for both commercial and residential customers. For more information about SERVPRO, please visit <https://www.servpro.com/>.

For more information on SERVPRO in the area, please contact one of the local business owners below.

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* For SERVPRO of Southern Worcester County, please contact Don McKendall who can be reached at Don@servpromckendall.com or (508) 234-3399.

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Baker fast-tracks recovery funding

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION — Gov. Charlie Baker recently signed a \$4 billion funding plan aimed at fast-tracking recovery efforts across multiple sectors.

Priority areas for the latest round of COVID-19 recovery funding include housing; healthcare; workforce development; and infrastructure. The majority of the funding represents federal aid from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

"The pandemic has had a significant impact on Massachusetts workers, families, communities, and businesses for nearly two years, and today's signing directs billions of dollars in relief," Governor Baker said. "While this package falls far short of the invest-

ment I called for to address the housing shortage, the important investments included in this bill will help to accelerate Massachusetts's economic recovery and provide long-lasting benefits to infrastructure, healthcare, education systems, and small businesses."

Among other goals, the latest federal aid package is intended to support urgent COVID-19 response efforts, replace lost revenue, support immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses, and address public health and economic challenges in Massachusetts cities and towns.

"The funding allocated in this bill addresses critical areas of need across the Commonwealth, from addiction services to housing availability to environmental

infrastructure," said Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito. "This relief will play a crucial role in the ongoing recovery of our residents and communities, especially those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, and we are eager to put it to work."

Highlights of the latest funding package include \$150 million to finance the statewide production of housing for various populations, including seniors and veterans; \$115 million for rental housing production; \$400 million for addiction treatment and related behavioral health services; \$260 million for fiscally stressed hospitals; \$200 million for local and regional public health systems; \$50 million for workforce retention and capital improvements at nursing facilities; \$500 million to support the Unemployment Compensation

Trust Fund; \$500 million for premium pay for low-income essential workers; and \$107.5 million for workforce and career technical skills training.

The package also includes \$135 million to support cultural facilities and tourism assets throughout Massachusetts.

For infrastructure improvements, \$100 million will fund grants for water and sewer system upgrades. Another \$100 million will be allocated for the improvement of culverts, dams, and other environmental infrastructure.

Additional relief funds include \$50 million to help close the digital divide and increase broadband internet access; \$44.8 million to combat food insecurity; and \$105 million for a variety of educational supports, including recovery grants for state universities and community colleges.

"The Commonwealth has worked diligently over the past two years to deploy billions worth of federal support to strengthen our economic recovery, support those in disproportionately impacted communities, and get people back to work," said Secretary of Administration and Finance Michael Heffernan. "We appreciate the collaboration of our colleagues in the Legislature on this bill to invest in healthcare, housing, and the Massachusetts workforce, and we look forward to even more critical investments in 2022 with the remaining ARPA funds."

To learn more about the latest funding package, visit www.mass.gov.

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MIAA keeps mask mandate in place for winter sports

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION – With COVID-19 conditions worsening again – and a new variant making headlines – high school winter sports athletes will once again have to mask up this season.

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) board of directors recently decided to keep the mask mandate in place for winter athletes. The decision reflects the indoor mask mandate still in effect statewide at public schools, per order of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

“It makes no sense to do something that contradicts what goes on during the school day,” said MIAA Executive Director Robert Baldwin during a recent meeting.

All coaches and guests must also be masked while attending winter sports venues.

For many local athletes and coaches, the mask mandate is a source of frustration. The mandate even applies to fully vaccinated students, and there

are no exemptions for schools that have reached an 80-percent vaccination threshold, as the state allows in schools.

Since Thanksgiving, COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations have increased sharply across the state and nation. Several days during the last week-plus have topped 120,000 new cases nationwide, and MIAA officials aren’t taking any chances with winter sports, especially with the emergence of the omicron variant.

Over the last three weeks, local athletic directors have met with coaches and team leaders to emphasize the importance of following the rules and maximizing safety. The ultimate goal is to ensure that every sport completes its schedule without postponed or canceled games due to COVID-19.

“Given that we didn’t play basketball at all last year, we support anything that will allow us to get this season in safely,” said Quaboag Regional Middle High School Athletic Director David Bouchard. “We wanted to convey to our athletes that they all have an important role to play in making sure we are able

to have a full season.”

The DESE indoor mask mandate for public schools remains in effect through at least Jan. 15. MIAA officials said a new decision on masks for winter sports athletes could come then, depending on COVID-19 conditions. First, athletic officials will wait for DESE leaders to make their evaluation and then consult with them.

“The department will continue to work with medical experts and state health officials to evaluate the mask requirement beyond January 15,” read a statement released by DESE Commissioner Jeffrey Riley.

For now, local athletic directors and coaches are following the regulations and focusing on safety this winter.

“If the guidance changes, we would act accordingly. Right now, we are wearing masks inside the building and making sure we are doing the right thing,” Bouchard told the New Leader.

Added David Prouty High School Athletic Director Charles Fahey, “We are just following DESE regulations heading into the winter.”

Villager Newspapers

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The 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.

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Cornerstone Bank makes donation to Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank, a community bank with 12 locations throughout Central Massachusetts, has donated \$2,500 to Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester to support their mission to provide adults with the English language skills they need to thrive. For 48 years, Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester has been providing one-to-one and small group English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) tutoring as well as literacy tutoring, and in recent years, adding online tutoring and independent learning.

“In the greater Worcester area, 34 percent of households speak a language other than English at home,” said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. “Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester

are doing amazing things by providing free ESOL education to adults within our community. The leadership, vision, and dedication of the Board of Directors is key to the organization’s success in serving constituents in the Worcester area. We are proud that members of our team volunteer their time for this organization and we support their goals any way we can.”

In just the past year, more than 100 volunteers and 12 part-time specialized ESOL teachers dedicated their time to help 382 literacy students and more than 100 tutoring students learn to read, write, and speak the English language. These students are immigrants and refugees representing 52 different countries and speaking 38 different languages.

“The free, flexible, and indi-

vidualized support students get leads them in the right direction to achieve goals beyond English language proficiency including citizenship, employment, and further education,” continued Tallman. “We look forward to seeing Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester continue to create opportunities for people looking to succeed on our community.”

To learn more about Cornerstone Bank and their charitable work, please visit cornerstonebank.com.

About Cornerstone Bank

Cornerstone Bank was formed in 2017, born of a long history of supporting the community, and providing a strong foundation to help people and businesses thrive. Serving Worcester County, Massachusetts, Cornerstone Bank’s local presence and commu-

nity based banking model enables a unique ability to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch. Cornerstone provides the highest level of service and expertise for individuals, businesses, and community organizations with branch locations throughout Central Massachusetts. Cornerstone works to connect customers with opportunities, through a broad range of deposit and loan products, and services. Built on Trust is not just a tagline, but also one of our guiding corporate values. Whether a business or personal partnership, Cornerstone stands on the foundation that relationships are built on trust. To learn about Cornerstone Bank’s personal and business banking offerings, please visit cornerstonebank.com or call 800-939-9103.



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School District considering committee to address library catalogue complaints

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY/CHARLTON – Following recent complaints about certain books included in the Shepherd Hill Regional High School library catalogue, Superintendent Steven Lamarche said he wouldn’t mind seeing the district form a committee to review such content and make recommendations to school officials.

After hearing complaints during the November meeting of the School Committee about the inclusion of such books as “All Boys Aren’t Blue” by George M. Johnson and “Gender Queer” by Maia Kobabe, both known to have sexually explicit content, in

the high school library, Lamarche commented during the December school committee gathering that he believes a District Level Review Committee would be a positive move forward. The books mentioned have stirred controversy in many states and school districts nationwide, including bans, due to their inclusion of sex scenes and, in some cases, their portrayal of sexual orientations.

Lamarche strayed away from expressing any opinions, of his own or the district’s, concerning the specific books that have been the topic of recent citizen complaints. Instead acknowledged that as times change the acceptance of certain books also changes and those shifts should be heard and respected.

“Library collections and concerns of books that may be in the collection may seem to be new to us in Dudley and Charlton, but it has a longstanding history. Libraries are filled with a broad spectrum of works and it is common for individuals and groups to identify works that they believe are offensive or inappropriate. There’s nothing wrong with that. What is new as far as I understand is that the Shepherd Hill Regional High School Library and the Dudley Charlton Regional School District has not had a policy in place that addresses library media center material selection, adoption or reconsideration and isolation,” Lamarche said.

Currently, the policy for issuing complaints directed at mate-

rial from the high school library follows the same policy as voicing concerns about curriculum instructional materials. The District Level Review Committee would act as an official entity to review such complaints specific to inclusions in the library. The proposed committee would include the high school principal or building administrator designee, the high school librarian, two high school teachers, three parents, and one school committee member. The Assistant Superintendent would also serve as a non-voting member. The School Committee did not name an appointee from their group, nor was it made clear whether or not the committee would be officially adopted or when they would begin meeting.

Harrington Physician Services Cardiology welcomes Dr. Mary Frisella

SOUTHBIDGE — We are pleased to announce that Mary Frisella, M.D. has joined Harrington Physician Services’ Cardiology practice in Southbridge, providing preventative and diagnostic cardiology care including stress testing, lipid and hypertension management, permanent pacemaker therapy and more.

Dr. Frisella received her medical degree from Albany Medical College in Albany, New York and completed her residency in Internal Medicine at Tufts (New England) Medical Center in Boston. She then went on to UMass Medical Center in Worcester to complete her fellowship in Cardiology.

Dr. Mary Frisella is board-certified in Cardiology by the American Board of Internal Medicine and a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology. She is also associated with the American Society of Echocardiography and the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology.

With 15 years as a practicing

Cardiologist, Dr. Frisella brings her expertise, knowledge and professionalism to the practice. In addition to being a full time Cardiologist, Dr. Frisella currently serves as a Lieutenant Colonel for the Massachusetts Air National Guard in an emergency response unit. She was deployed during the COVID-19 pandemic and provided urgent care to nursing home patients throughout the Commonwealth.

Dr. Mary Frisella joins Dr. Paul Santolucito and Paula Shonak, NP at the Cardiology specialty practice located at 79 Sayles St. in Southbridge. To learn more about cardi-

ology services at Harrington and to request an appointment, visit harringtonhospital.org or call 508-764-6041.

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DA's community outreach talks reach audience of 600,000



WORCESTER — Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr.'s office has officially reached more than 600,000 people with his crime prevention and community safety programming.

"We are at schools, senior

centers and community events across Worcester County nearly every day, presenting on topics such as bullying and cyber bullying, scams and fraud, drugs and alcohol, and texting and driving," Mr. Early said. "I've always said I'd rather pre-

vent a crime than have to solve one. I'm proud to say we've officially reached 600,000 residents with this programming, many of them youth."

The District Attorney's Community Outreach Team, made up of 10 staff mem-

bers, presents programming to schools and groups of all sizes by request. These presentations are always free and can be tailored to the specific age range or audience. Our Outreach Team also runs our intern program and manages grant implementations.

The most popular program is bullying and cyber bullying prevention. This program also helps kids understand the importance of protecting their digital footprint and imparts the knowledge that nothing on the internet is ever deleted.

There are two specific programs addressing drugs and alcohol, including "This Is (Not) About Drugs" and "If They Had Known." The office also has a display called "Hidden In Plain Sight" that shows parents potential warning signs of substance use by their children.

"Early substance use can lead to a lifetime struggle with addiction for our youth," Mr. Early said. "These evidence-based programs help kids understand the risks associated with all substance use,

including prescription medications."

Scam and fraud education is regularly provided to seniors. New this year, the Outreach Team is also presenting a program called "Creating A Caring Community" to senior housing facilities.

"Our seniors, who have contributed so much to our society, deserve to live without fear of losing their hard-earned money or being bullied or excluded in their social life," Mr. Early said.

These presentations are coordinated with schools and community partners who share a commitment to protecting residents and preventing crime.

"This level of widespread outreach would not be possible without our dedicated staff," Mr. Early said. "Thank you to our Outreach Team: Nelson Colon, Kevin Donahue, Elisabeth Haddad, Michael Jennette, Eileen Kneeland, Kevin Lefrancois, Julie Lesure, Ellen Miller, Julie Nonni, Jill Wooldridge and, until recently, Abigail Westerlind."

Water & Sewer Commission examining rate increases

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – The Charlton Water & Sewer Commission is considering increasing rates or adopting a new rate system to help stay ahead of potential rising costs and maintain their existing status quo.

The committee met on Dec. 7, where Water & Sewer Superintendent Peter Boria revealed he had received a quote from a contractor to perform a sewer rate study for \$16,000, which would be the first such study and potential increase in Charlton since 2017. Boria said the purpose of the study would be to examine multiple different aspects of the current rate system including determining whether or not the current metered billing rate or a tiered rate would be better for the town.

"I believe we have enough to cover our operating expenses for this fiscal year," said Boria. "Our current revenues are probably 40 percent based on surcharges, so if any of those users were to be able to do something like a pre-treatment or do anything to curtail their usage and those surcharges were to go down that means our revenues will decrease, the flow might stay the same and the cost to operate would stay the same so we would have a shortfall. The goal is to have our revenues fund

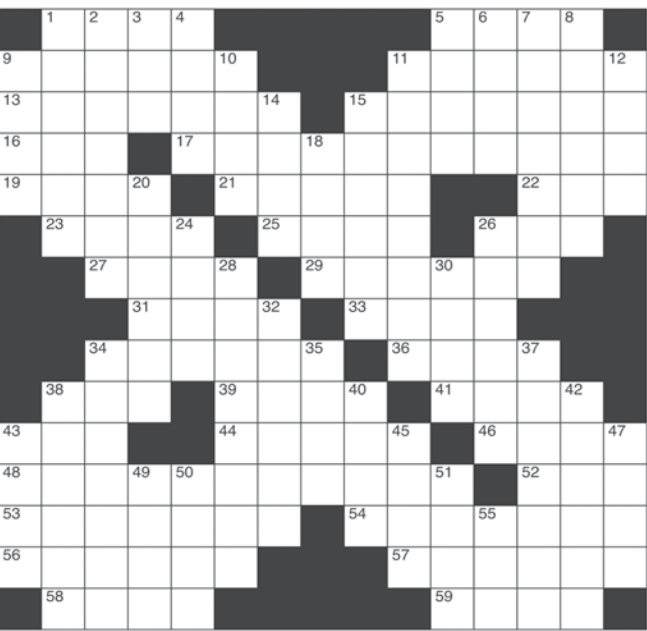
our annual operating budget so we're self-sufficient."

"Water & Sewer Commissioner Russ Jennings seemed to agree that an increase was inevitable seeing the move as a potential way to get ahead of rising costs. We know that the cost of goods and services have gone up across the board for everything and if we don't protect ourselves in some fashion or our infrastructure for the people who use it then we're going to have big problems down the road, being that we don't have the money to fix it or maintain it," said Jennings.

However, he wasn't sold on paying for a rate study. Jennings asked Boria to provide some figures on the spot about how much a certain percentage increase would provide in new revenue. He and other board members felt Boria could calculate figures himself that the committee could consider.

While Boria indicated that the rate study would likely provide much more specifics and accurate numbers than he would, he accepted the challenge to put together figures for a future meeting of the commission while also

noting that a representative of the contractor in discussion to perform the study would also meet with the commission soon.

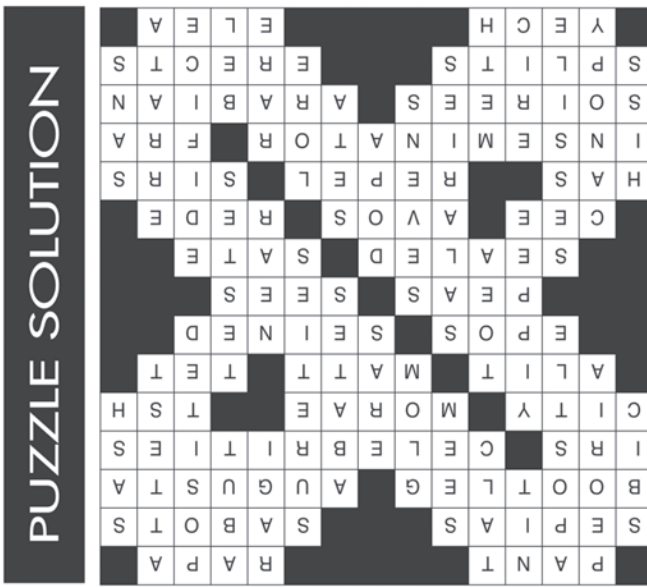


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- 9. Reddish browns
- 11. Simple shoes
- 13. Produce alcohol illegally
- 15. Home to famed golf tournament
- 16. Tax collector
- 17. Famous people
- 19. Urban area
- 21. Units of syllable weight
- 22. Pituitary hormone (abbr.)
- 23. Dismounted
- 25. Actor Damon
- 26. Vietnamese offensive
- 27. Retail term
- 29. Netted
- 31. Partner to carrots
- 33. Witnesses
- 34. Caulked
- 36. Satisfy
- 38. R&B performer ___ Lo
- 39. Monetary units of Macao
- 41. Give advice, explain
- 43. Possesses
- 44. Turn back
- 46. Gentlemen
- 48. One who fertilizes
- 52. Italian monk title (prefix)
- 53. Parties
- 54. Type of horse
- 56. Cuts in half
- 57. Raises
- 58. Expresses contempt or disgust
- 59. Ancient Italian-Greek colony

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Illinois city
- 2. One of the original disciples chosen by Christ
- 3. Young form of a louse
- 4. Type of powder
- 5. Finger millet
- 6. Share a common boundary
- 7. Assumed as a fact
- 8. Provide clear evidence of
- 9. Invests in little enterprises
- 10. A way to be
- 11. Monies given in support
- 12. Fashion accessory
- 14. Steal
- 15. Becomes less intense
- 18. Geological times
- 20. Hooray!
- 24. Monetary unit
- 26. Male reproductive organs
- 28. Earnings
- 30. Close by
- 32. Small integers
- 34. Fixed in place
- 35. Used to treat Parkinson's disease
- 37. Large, imposing building
- 38. A rooflike shelter
- 40. Stiff, hairlike structure
- 42. Print errors
- 43. To show disapproval
- 45. Body of traditions
- 47. Without
- 49. ___ Clapton, musician
- 50. Dangerous illegal drug
- 51. Infrequent
- 55. Sound unit



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SPORTS

Warriors find offensive form, dispatch Uxbridge

STURBRIDGE — Points were at a premium for the Tantasqua Regional girls' varsity basketball team in their season-opener at Northbridge High back on Monday, Dec. 13, when the Warriors scored just enough in a 35-30 victory. A little home cooking then did the trick in Tantasqua's next contest. Hosting Uxbridge High on Thursday, Dec. 16, the Warriors were sharpshooters as they won a 69-22 decision.

Tantasqua jumped out to a 10-0 lead and never looked back. Seven Warriors scored in the first quarter and by halftime they had accumulat-

ed more points (38) than they did in the entire Northbridge game.

Tantasqua led 38-10 at the half and 52-19 through three quarters.

The now 2-0 Warriors — who knocked down 11 3-pointers — were led by Kelsie Wotten (16 points, 8 rebounds), Maya Gidopolous (15 points), Gabby Scanlon (13 points) and Maggie Johnson (11 rebounds).

Uxbridge, who dropped to 2-1, saw contributions from Morgan Ouellette (10 points), Natalie Orr (8 points) and Kathryn Cahill (10 rebounds).



Uxbridge's Chloe Kaeller, left, and Tantasqua's Kelsie Wotten both hit the floor while trying to grab possession of the ball.



Uxbridge's Kathryn Cahill soars to the hoop.



Nick Ethier photos

Nicole Vejack of Tantasqua gets ahead of Uxbridge's defense and finishes off a layup.



Shepherd Hill athletes named Midland-Wachusett League All-Stars

- The following Shepherd Hill Regional student-athletes were named Midland-Wachusett League fall season All-Stars:
- Football, Offensive — Charles Karp, Alexander Siwik

Football, Defensive — JonCarlos Estrada, Romeo Holland

Football, Academic — Zach Christenson

Boys' Soccer — Ryan Davis, Dan Gronek, Cal Hopkins, Jack Levesque, Jake Luke, Gabe Roach (Academic)
- Girls' Soccer — Katherine Alicea, Colleen Cummings (Academic)

Volleyball — Elise Biron, Ashley Wojcicki (Academic)

Golf — Will Reece, Nicholas Veronis (Academic)


Boys' Cross-Country — Bronson Dubey, Conor Fitzgerald, Andrew Trudel


Girls' Cross-Country — Emery Mullen, Anna Thomas, Karlee White, Grace Bateman (Academic)





Natalie Orr of Uxbridge releases a midrange jump shot.


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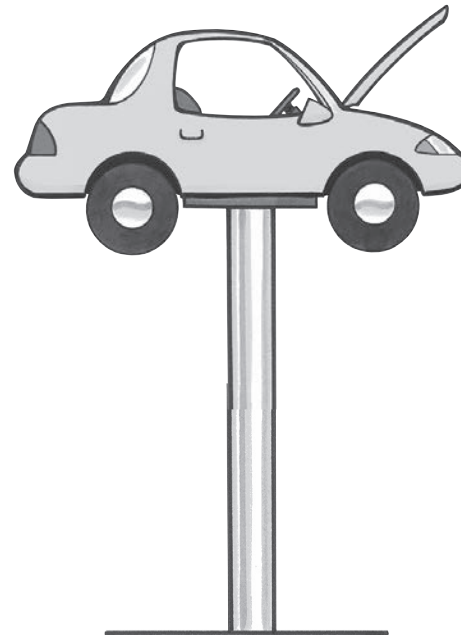
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Popular toys through the years

“Being there for a child is the most noble thing a toy can do.” — Woody

Santa is preparing for his big night, which is just three days away. His elves are always busy working in the toy shop, year after year, and have created memorable toys, that always leave children wide eyed every Christmas morning. Some toys that children found under the tree more than 100 years ago are still popular today.

In 1920, just a mere 101 years ago, the hot toy for Christmas was the Raggedy Ann doll, that sold for \$1. Raggedy Ann and her brother Andy were created by a political cartoonist named Johnny Gruelle. In 1921, Lincoln Logs were the hot ticket. Lincoln Logs originally cost 50 cents.

Tinker Toys were first created in 1922, a toy that was a big hit in the 1980's as well. In 1924, the Erector Set was a favorite. In 1925, the classic Teddy bear was a popular, and cost 79 cents.

Crayola Crayons date all the way back to 1926. Crayola means ‘chalk and oily’ in French. Noted is that the original crayons were created in 1903, and the box contained just eight colors. The Radio Flyer wagon came out in 1927 and cost \$2.99.

Yo-yo's were all the rave in 1928, and cost just five cents. This toy dates back to 500 BC. In 1929, pop-up books became popular. In 1930 the Mickey Mouse doll hit stores. Mickey was discovered in the cartoon ‘Steamboat Willie’ that first aired in 1928. During Christmas in 1930, demand was so high for Mickey dolls that crafty mothers ended up creating their own.

Finger pain and sock monkeys came out in 1931 and 1932, respectively. In 1933, tin Marx wind-up toys were the new thing.

In 1935, it was the Shirley Temple doll that had little girls everywhere smiling on Christmas day. Monopoly first hit stores in 1937, inspiring decades of family meltdowns...excuse us, family fun. Some people still get excited if they land on Baltic Avenue.

The original view master that became popular in the 80's, first came out in 1939.

In 1940, the Red Ryder BB gun cost \$5.00. Everyone loves a good Golden Book and in 1942, they cost just .25. In 1943, green army men became popular. The slinky (who didn't have one?) first appeared under trees in 1945. In 1946, Lionel Trains cost \$30. Tonka trucks came out in 1947. The original Clue board game first appeared in 1949.

In 1951, Colorforms cost 25 cents. Colorforms were the invention of art students who liked to be artistic, sans the high cost of paint. In 1952, Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head hit shelves for just 98 cents. Model cars became popular in 1953. In 1954, Scrabble hit stands and in 1955, Silly Putty could be found in stockings everywhere.

Play-Dough (can you ever forget that smell?) first came out in 1956. Barbie appeared in 1959. Anyone who could keep two Barbie shoes in one place for more than 24 hours was/is a special kind of person.

In 1960, the Etch A Sketch was created. A great toy if you had the patience for it. In 1961, even though it was winter, children everywhere wanted a Slip n Slide.

The Easy Bake Oven first appeared in 1963 for \$15. In 1964, G.I. Joe appeared for \$1.95. Twister appeared in 1966. The Lite-Brite and all its pieces first came out in 1967 for \$10. Hot Wheels came out in 1968 and LEGOs in 1969.

In 1970, Nerf balls were being thrown about in homes everywhere. Weebles were a hoot in 1971. In 1973, Shrinky Dinks were a blast. Stretch Armstrong was popular in 1976 and a year later, in 1977, the Atari hit stores. Skiing is by far the best Atari game invented, and Pitfall.

In 1982, He-Man was a hit, followed by My Little Pony in 1982. In 1983, the infamous Cabbage Patch Doll appeared, complete with all of their bizarre names. Even our Editor had one named ‘Merci Rhonda.’ The original Nintendo Entertainment System appeared in 1986.

In 1995, Beanie Babies took over toy stores everywhere. Some rare Beanie Babies sell for thousands of dollars today. Pokemon cards appeared in 1999. In the early 2000's, it was Bratz dolls, Xbox 360's and Playstations. In 2006, the Nintendo Wii almost seemed futuristic. In 2010, the first iPad appeared, and interestingly enough, in 2021, kids old and young have the new version on their Christmas lists.

We hope you all remember this holiday season, that we're all just a bunch of big kids.

OPINION



Photo Melinda Myers

A container with drainage holes, potting mix, and a few spring flowering bulbs planted pointed side up is all you need to create a colorful indoor garden.

Bring a bit of spring color indoors

Pot them up, give them a chill and enjoy spring flowering bulbs indoors or outside on a patio, deck or porch. This is a great way to enjoy any bulbs that didn't make it into the ground this season or take advantage of late season discounts on bulbs.

Larger flowering bulbs like tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, and alliums put on quite a display in your home or in a window box or container. Add some smaller bulbs like crocus, squills, and grape hyacinths to the mix for added beauty.

All you need is a container with drainage holes, potting mix, and a few bulbs. Shorter varieties work well or give taller varieties a bit of support with twigs or decorative stakes when displaying indoors.

Cover the bottom of the container with soil. Set several bulbs, pointed side up, on top of the potting mix. Set the tallest bulbs in the center surrounded by shorter varieties when creating a mixed garden. Place tulips with the flat side of the bulb facing out for a better display. Cover the bulbs and fill the container with potting mix.

Enjoy weeks of colorful flowers by selecting a variety of bulbs that bloom from early through late spring. Layer the bulbs to maximize your planting space. Place larger bulbs on top of the soil layer at the bottom of the container. The tallest of these will go in the center skirted by shorter varieties to maximize the display.

Cover this first layer of bulbs with potting mix, leaving just the tip of the bulbs exposed. Add smaller bulbs like squills, crocus and grape hyacinth bulbs to the next level. Plant them close together between the tips of the larger bulbs. Cover this layer with soil, leaving enough space for watering.

Water the freshly planted container thoroughly, then move it to a cool location, about 35 to 45 degrees for at least 12 to 15 weeks. This cold period is needed to initiate flowering in these bulbs. A spare refrigerator or in colder regions, an unheated garage works well. Or if the ground hasn't frozen, sink the pot into a vacant space in the garden. This works for those gardening in areas where winter temperatures are cold enough to provide the needed chill. Mulch the soil once the ground starts to freeze with evergreen boughs. This will make it easier to remove the pot in early spring.

Eliminate this step by purchasing pre-chilled bulbs. These have received the needed cold treatment and are ready to pot up and grow indoors or outdoors in warmer regions.

Check stored bulbs regularly for early sprouting and move to a colder location if needed. Water the bulbs in storage whenever the soil is thawed and dry.

Once the cold treatment is complete, you can move the forced bulbs to their final location where you can enjoy the spring flow-

ers. Place the container in a cool location with bright indirect light indoors. Water thoroughly as needed and watch for flowers to appear in about four weeks. Remove one pot a week from cold storage to extend your enjoyment.

Monitor spring growing conditions before moving forced bulbs into outdoor planters. Once the weather is suitable for bulbs to sprout and grow outdoors, it is safe to move forced bulbs into the landscape.

When they are done flowering, you can compost the bulbs or for those suited to your growing conditions add them to the garden. Remove the faded flowers and water the plants like your houseplants or other container gardens. Fertilize with a dilute solution of flowering plant fertilizer or apply a low nitrogen, slow-release fertilizer. This helps replenish the nutrients used in flowering.

Move indoor forced bulbs outdoors as soon as the danger of frost has passed. Those in containers outdoors can remain in the pots until the foliage fades or the garden is ready for planting. Or store the bulbs in a cool dark place for summer and plant in fall with other hardy bulbs. Then be patient as it can take two years for these to flower.

Forcing spring flowering bulbs is a great way to add beauty to your indoor décor, patio, balcony, or deck. They also make a great gift for gardeners of all experience levels.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including *The Midwest Gardener's Handbook and 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. Her Web site is www.melindamyers.com.

Don't avoid 'taboo' topics with older parents



FINANCIAL FOCUS

JEFF BURDICK

If your parents are getting close to retirement age, or are already retired, it may be time to talk with them about financial and aging issues, some of which may involve difficult conversations. For the sake of everyone in your family, don't avoid these "taboo" topics.

You'll need to be careful about approaching these subjects with your parents. Mention ahead of time that you'd like to talk to them about their future plans and reassure them that you want to understand their wishes, so their affairs will be taken care of as they would like.

If your parents are agreeable, choose a location comfortable for them and ask whom they might like to invite (or not invite). Then, think about how to open the conversation, preferably not with what they want to do with their money – this could be interpreted as your seeking information about your inheritance or being skeptical about their financial decisions. Instead, build a broad-based discussion about their vision for their aging years. A series of shorter conversations may allow you to cover topics more comfortably, one by one, rather than trying to solve everything at once.

Try to address these areas:
Health care – You'll want to learn if your parents have established the appropriate health-related legal documents – a health care power of attorney, which gives someone the authority to make important decisions about their medical care if they become unable to do so themselves, and a living will, which spells out the extraordinary medical treatments they may or may not want.

Independence – As people age, they may begin to lose their independence. Have your parents considered any options for long-term care, such as a nursing home stay, or the services of a home health aide? And do they have plans in place? If they plan to receive support from family members, do their expectations match yours?

Financial goals – Focusing on the personal and financial aspects of the legacy your parents want to leave can be a valuable conversation. Have your parents updated their will or other arrangements, such as a living trust? Have they named a financial power of attorney to make decisions on their behalf if they become incapacitated? Do they have the proper beneficiary designations on their insurance policies and retirement plan accounts? If you can position these issues as being more about your parents' control over their financial destiny, rather than "who will get what," you'll more likely have a productive conversation.

Last wishes – You'll want to find out if your parents have left instructions in their will about their funerals and last wishes. Express to them that you, or another close family member, should know who is responsible for making sure their wishes are met.

Money, independence and aging can be sensitive topics. Don't think you have to go it alone – you can enlist help from another close family member. Or, if you know your parents are working with a trusted advisor, such as an attorney or financial professional, you could see if they'd be willing to have this person participate in your talks. You might even be able to introduce them to one of your advisors.

In any case, keep talking. These conversations can be challenging, but, if handled correctly, can be of great benefit to your parents and your entire family.

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

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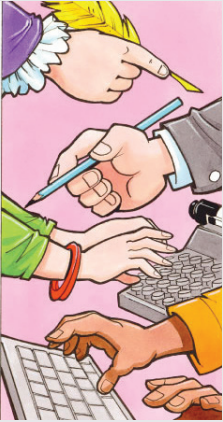
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Remember, libelous remarks and/or personal attacks are a no-no and could lead to your letter not being published.

So, what are you waiting for? Start writing!



OBITUARIES

Scott W. Butler, 63

Princeton/Southbridge: Scott W. Butler, 65, formerly of Southbridge, passed away peacefully at home on Thursday, Dec. 16th, after a long illness.

He leaves his beloved wife of 35 years, R. Evelyn (Gonzalez) Rodriguez-Butler; his two sons, Anthony S. Butler of Charlton and Carlos



Rodriguez and his wife Magela of Leominster; a daughter, Taiz M. Butler of Princeton; two brothers, Daniel Butler of California and Mark Butler of Rhode Island; and two grandchildren, Nikolias Cruz and Lucia Silva.

He was born in Southbridge the son of Raymond W. and Helen A. (Dinovelli) Butler.

Scott obtained his Bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He worked for 26 years as a social worker for the Department of

Transitional Assistance. Scott also loved landscaping and owned and operated his own landscaping business as well as worked as a grounds keeper at Cohasse Country Club in Southbridge. He was an outdoorsman who enjoyed camping, hiking, fishing, basketball and scuba diving. Scott was an active member of St. Mary's Church of St. John Paul II Parish in Southbridge. He will be remembered as the most kind-hearted, fun-loving man. An exceptional father and grand-

father.

A funeral Mass for Scott was held on Tuesday, Dec. 21st, at 11:00 AM, in St. Mary's Church of St. John Paul II Parish, 247 Hamilton St., Southbridge. Burial followed in St. Mary's Cemetery, Southbridge.

There are no calling hours.

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

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More bad news for cod fishermen



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More bad news for the fishermen that do a little cod fishing, or a lot of cod fishing. The regulatory New England Fishery Management Council is recommending a reduction of the Georges Bank cod limits catch at their Dec. 10 meeting. The 2.4 million pounds allowed this year will be reduced to 540,000 pounds at the Georges Banks next year if it is approved. Georges Banks is one of the richest areas for cod & haddock to live and spawn. The Gulf of Maine is also being targeted, but will remain at their 590,000-quota next year, for now if passed. A statement from U.S.FISH & Wildlife that fishermen caught more than 100 million pounds of cod in the '80's is now down to two million pounds this year.

There are fewer adult fish that are spawning every year, and concerns of the cod stocks crashing have been echoed for years. This writer was fishing aboard a charter vessel 10 or 12 years ago, and was fishing on the cod spawning grounds. We were among a fleet of charter boats that were hauling in huge

50- to 60-pound cod. They were loaded with eggs and never had the chance to spawn. A fish biologist was on board that day, and stated that we would not be fishing in the cods spawning grounds again for some time. He was right, as the area was off limits to any fishing the following years, and still is today. It was wrong for us to be there. Sportsmen have been restricted to one fish daily for the last few months ,but were also not allowed to catch and retain a single cod while fishing in the above two mentioned areas. Haddock stocks were in the same predicament not that long ago, but their stocks have rebounded. Over fishing by commercial draggers will soon deplete the haddock fish stocks again, if action is not taken.

The problem with draggers is that most fish that are brought aboard a large vessel are often thrown back, but rarely survive. It is a disgrace that the same thing continues every year, not only in the gulf of Maine but, also along the Massachusetts & Rhode Island coastline. They should be keeping their bycatch which is often allowed, but many discard them and drag for a more lucrative fish. Every year, I watch draggers on the Rhode Island coast discarding fish on their way to port. One year, they were throwing half dead stripers over the side of their boat , obviously because they had to many pounds of

fish. We motored over to the area that they were discarding the fish and was outraged at the waste of such a valuable resource.

This year, we observed draggers in Rhode Island discarding seabass, and we were soon surrounded by a floating mass of sea bass and stripers. Recreational anglers are annually suffering more cuts in their daily bag limit or size. The new law regarding a slot limit for stripers is outrageous, and when you see the waste by the commercial draggers it seems like a losing battle to help the species rebound. Most reports by fish biologist admit that many fish that are caught by recreational anglers and released will not survive. If they were allowed to retain one striped, they would stop fishing and head out to fish for other species. On & On it goes, but it is all about the money and politics!

The Primitive arms season seems to have started out slow this year at least in the valley area. Many hunters are waiting for a little bit of snow to do some tracking, as they have been hunted for weeks now and are a bit skittish.

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy New Year and a Merry Christmas.

Be sure to get your vaccine to keep you safe from Covid.

Take A Kid Fishing & Keep Them Rods Bending.



Photo Courtesy

This week's picture shows some of the cod that never were able to spawn again after being caught by rod and reel anglers. It did not seem wrong at the time!

Omicron Delta Kappa celebrates new members

LEXINGTON, Va. — Omicron Delta Kappa, the National Leadership Honor Society, welcomed more than 1,100 new initiates from 41 universities during November 2021.

Students initiated into the Society must be sophomores, juniors, seniors, or graduate/professional students in the top 35 percent of their class, demonstrate leadership experience in at least one of the five pillars, and embrace the ODK ideals. Fewer than five percent of students on a campus are invited to join each year.

Emma Whitehead of Charlton (Johns Hopkins University)

Amanda Brodeur of Uxbridge (Worcester State University)

Omicron Delta Kappa Society, the National Leadership Honor Society, was founded in Lexington, Va., on Dec. 3, 1914. A group of 15 students and faculty members established the Society to recognize and encourage leadership at the collegiate level. The founders established the ODK Idea-the concept that individuals representing all phases of collegiate life should collaborate with faculty and others to support the campus and community. ODK's mission is to honor and develop leaders; encourage collaboration among students, faculty, staff, and alumni; and promote ODK's leadership values of collaboration, inclusivity, integrity, scholarship, and service on college and university campuses throughout North America. The Society's national headquarters are located in Lexington, Va.

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Christmas in Heaven Memorials

May God Bless You and Your Loved Ones
on this Christmas Day.

In Loving Memory at Christmas

Paul Brunell
June 9, 1946 –
January 5, 2021

Merry Christmas Dad!
We miss you!
Love, Greg, Eric, Virginia,
and all your grandkids



My First Christmas in Heaven

I see the countless Christmas trees around the world below,
With tiny lights like Heaven's stars reflecting the snow.
The sight is so spectacular- please wipe away the tear,
For I'm spending Christmas with Jesus this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear,
But the sound of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here.

I have no words to tell you the joys their voices bring,
For it's beyond description to hear the angels sing.

I know how much you miss me, I see the pain inside your heart,
But I am not so far away, we really aren't apart.

So be happy for me dear ones you know I hold you dear,
And be glad I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I sent you each a special gift for my heavenly home above,
I sent you each a memory of my undying love.

After all love is a gift more precious than pure gold,
It was always most important in the stories Jesus told.

Please love and keep each other
as my Father said to do,
For I can't count the blessing of love
he has for each of you.


So have a Merry Christmas
and wipe away that tear,
Remember I am spending Christmas
with Jesus Christ this year.


Author unknown.


Merry Christmas





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Jeff Burdick, an Edward Jones financial advisor in Sturbridge, is supporting both a Thanksgiving can drive and Toys for Tots by using his office as a drop-off location for a canned goods and unwrapped toys drive. Canned items in need are stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, gravy, pickles, canned vegetables, canned fruit, and instant potatoes. Residents may help support this effort by bringing in items to the Edward Jones branch office during the hours of 9am-4pm from November 8th to December 9th. The branch address 419 Main St, Sturbridge Mass.

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Classic Holiday Traditions

The Yuletide brings with it a host of traditions, many of which have been carried on for generations. From simple holiday symbols to familiar family rituals, ushering in the annual festivities is a joy of the season. This week's column highlights a few classic holiday traditions that continue to promote glad tidings each year.

The Wassail Bowl

Modern holiday parties that include a Wassail bowl toast are practicing a centuries old English tradition to celebrate the promise of health, wealth and good fortune.

Like many old rituals, the Wassail bowl boasts several origins, but the tradition traces its roots to old England, where the toast "Wes Hal," meaning "good health," was a common holiday toast.

The practice expanded to include a Christmas Eve door to door caroling or "a wassailing" to visit friends and neighbors. Today, the tradition of Wassail continues at holiday get-togethers, where a punch bowl or wassail bowl of refreshment typically precedes a round of neighborhood caroling.

Wassail Punch

This modern recipe is easy and delicious, yet retains the essence of the traditional Wassail bowl.

Ingredients: 3 cups pineapple juice; 3 cups apple juice; 1 1/2 cups water; 3/4 cup brown sugar; 1 cinnamon stick; 1 tablespoon whole cloves; 1 tablespoon whole allspice

Directions: Mix pineapple and apple juice, water and brown sugar into the bottom of a perculator. Place all the spices into the top. Perculate according to the directions of your pot.
Stovetop or Crockpot method:

Simmer juices and spices over low heat. Strain and serve hot.

Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer

In these modern times, Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer plays a novel role in our Christmas culture. But it was in post war 1949, when cowboy crooner Gene Autry's title hit topped the music charts, and soon after merchandising of the endearing deer was in full swing with books, toys, clothing, holiday décor and more.

Perhaps it's fitting Rudolph's catapult to commercial success began as the brainstorm of an ambitious Montgomery Ward ad man. In 1939, Advertising copywriter Robert May wrote the holiday story as a promotional campaign for Montgomery Ward stores. The marketing strategy was a huge success as booklets of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer were distributed to happy little shoppers throughout several holiday seasons.

The popular story was transformed to song after World War II, when May's songwriter brother-in-law Johnny Marks penned the catchy tune and set it to music. First sung by Gene Autry, the classic song has enjoyed over six decades of popularity, recorded by such musical masters as Burl Ives, Perry Como, Ray Charles, Guy Lombardo, The Supremes and many more.

Holiday Plants: Traditional Greenery Sets Stage for the Season

Greenery has long been used to "deck the halls" for the yuletide season, and plants associated with the holidays such as Christmas Cactus, Mistletoe,



TAKE THE HINT

KAREN TRAINOR

and Poinsettias traditionally adorn homes at holiday time. Some plants become festive favorites because they bloom during the Christmas season; others have histories steeped in religious roots. Christmas Cactus: The hardy plant is a favorite potted houseplant for its endurance and annual winter blooms. The delicate flowers on the upright weeping cacti typically make their appearance in December; just in time for the holiday season.

Legend has it long ago a boy from the Amazon jungle had asked God for a sign of his faith. He awoke on Christmas morning to find the cacti that surrounded him had come to bloom, transforming the green jungle into a floral flourish.

Poinsettia: The striking rich, red leaves of the plant serve as mock "flowers", filling pots and centerpieces with a lush holiday hue of bright red and green leaves, making Poinsettias the hallmark plant of the holidays.

The plant, a native of Mexico was named after Joel R. Poinsett, U.S. ambassador to Mexico who brought the plant to America in 1828. But legend dates its history back to Christ's time. According to folklore, a Mexican child on his way to visit the Christ child, lamented he had no gift for the newborn king. Picking branches along the road, he presented a bouquet of green leaves at the holy manger. The leaves turned into beautiful red flowers, adorning each branch with the star shaped blooms.

Mistletoe: It's ironic the waxy white berries and dark evergreen leaves of Mistletoe, considered toxic in quantities, has become a holiday symbol of

affection. Kissing under the mistletoe likely originated from the belief the plant bestows fertility. In some parts of the world mistletoe was considered a "peace plant," under which truces were made by enemies or fighting friends. In the 1700s, the English adapted the mistletoe to adorn a kissing ball. During the Christmas season a single lady who stood under the embellished ball of greens could be kissed without hesitation. Today, the ritual continues as Mistletoe is suspended in doorways and entrances and "kissing under the Mistletoe" remains a popular holiday tradition.

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

Your tips can win you a great three course 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.

St. Jude's Novena

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved, throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us. St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us. Say this prayer 9 times a day. By the 8th day your prayer will be answered. Say it for 9 days. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. Thank you St. Jude.

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