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Friday, April 8, 2022

Dennis McCurdy leads, inspires with Village Toastmasters

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
NEWS STAFF WRITER

STURBRIDGE — Having spent decades making a positive impact on his community, Dennis McCurdy continues to find ways to lead and inspire. A longtime local businessman and volunteer, McCurdy founded the Village Toastmasters in Sturbridge in 2005. To do so, he had to meet the requirement of finding 20 members interested in joining, which wasn't as easy as it might have seemed. "In the beginning, we sometimes had meetings with only six people and we each had three roles to perform, but we always had fun," McCurdy recalled. Over 16 years, the group has seen hundreds of local residents

participate, each gaining confidence and new public speaking skills. "I would have to say, besides speaking skills in general, confidence is one of the biggest things people get from Toastmasters," McCurdy said. "I think I'm the only original member left in the club, but many of them have been there five or 10 years. Toastmasters is a fun, safe place to overcome fears about public speaking. You can acquire amazing skills, with practice, and everyone gets a mentor." McCurdy pointed to an old Toastmasters' saying: "We won't completely eliminate your butterflies, but we will help you teach them to fly in formation." These words have perfect-

ly encapsulated many residents' journeys with the group, including Oxford's Robert Bouchard. "I've been a member for two years, and Dennis is the reason I have improved my public speaking skills," Bouchard said. "He continues to be a dedicated member and, most of all, a mentor for numerous people in the Sturbridge area that have improved their leadership and public speaking skills. Truly a remarkable man." In addition to his work with the Village Toastmasters, McCurdy also runs his businesses — the Dennis McCurdy Insurance Agency, as well as an investment company, McCurdy Investments, LLC. He has written two books and will publish a

third this summer. Moreover, McCurdy has written and delivered a six-week personal development workshop to help people realize their goals. As a member of the local Chamber of Commerce, he helps mentor several young businesspeople. "Helping people develop confidence and improve their lives is something that I enjoy and realize is much needed," added McCurdy, a Vietnam Veteran who grew up in Brimfield and attended Tantasqua Regional High School. Looking ahead, McCurdy will finish his current book, titled "Suck It Up, Cupcake: Stop



Courtesy photo

Dennis McCurdy founded the Village Toastmasters in 2005 and continues to make a positive impact on Sturbridge and the surrounding communities.

Please Read **MCURDY**, page **A2**



Courtesy photos

Local realtor Diane Dabrowski recently scored a perfect cribbage hand.

Charlton area realtor deals up perfect cribbage hand

Local Realtor Diane Dabrowski scored a perfect "29" cribbage hand this past Wednesday. Her hand, consisting of three 5's and the Jack-of-Clubs was matched with the cut-card the 5 of clubs. According to the American Cribbage Congress, the odds of being dealt a perfect cribbage hand are 1 in 216,580.

"I could not believe it! I didn't even play the hand out, I just had to show Pete Rotondo, who dealt the cards!" said Ms Dabrowski. Ms Dabrowski has been playing cribbage for over 45 years. "It took us over 24 hours to finish the game, we just kept staring in disbelief," Eventually Ms. Dabrowski completed the match with a 'skunk' to top of

the singular event. Cribbage players strive for this hand and realize the scarcity. Ms. Dabrowski has received congratulations from many fellow cribbage players and online. She was even presented with a cribbage board and deck of cards commemorating the event.

Please Read **CRIBBAGE**, page **A4**

Board of Health praises Director Philbrook in assisting citizens

BY JASON BLEAU
NEWS STAFF WRITER

CHARLTON — The Charlton Board of Health has praised Health Director James Philbrook for helping a citizen in need following a report of an unsightly home in town. Philbrook detailed the situation during a Board of Health meeting in March without identifying the address or name of the citizen to preserve his privacy. The man's home

was found to have a collapsed roof and was condemned while his family was unaware of the situation. Philbrook reached out to the man's daughter who paid for three nights at a hotel while a local church paid for three additional nights. Philbrook himself however paid for another single night while putting the individual in touch with resources in the

Please Read **PHILBROOK**, page **A2**

Dudley Charlton RSD approves 'restraint' rules, ponders donation and attendance policies

BY JASON BLEAU
NEWS STAFF WRITER

DUDLEY/CHARLTON — The Dudley Charlton Regional School District discussed three policy items during their monthly meeting on March 23 approving one policy and introducing the other two for further review. The first policy discussed concerned "Restraint of Students in Public Schools"

which Policy Subcommittee Chair Catherine Kabala said garnered a few questions and concerns from citizens. The first concern was the wording in one part of the policy regarding safely restraining students in medical situations. Kabala said she felt the policy addressed that as every teacher and worker is required to go through train-

Please Read **RSD**, page **A6**

School Committee sets search team for new Shepherd Hill principal

BY JASON BLEAU
NEWS STAFF WRITER

DUDLEY/CHARLTON — The Dudley Charlton Regional School District has finalized the team that will assess the candidates for the soon-to-be vacant principal position at Shepherd Hill Regional High School. It was announced in early 2022 that Principal William Chaplin would not seek a new contract with the district resulting in the School Committee launching a search for a new leader of the

regional high school. District Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Dr. Brian Ackerman has been tasked with leading the search group. After collecting notices of interest and conducting a survey of the community, district staff, and students he revealed the final list of committee members and focus points for the candidates during the School Committee's monthly meeting in March. "We received almost 300 total responses seeking stakeholder feedback which I think

is a testament to the engagement of our community," Dr. Ackerman said. "We've established a representative team to identify the next principal of Shepherd Hill Regional High School. We do know from looking at the data of the survey that the most important dispositions were strong communication skills, knowledge of students social and emotional needs, and a purposefully collaborative style to ensure that all Shepherd Hill Students have access to the highest level of curriculum and instruction."

The Shepherd Hill Regional High School Principal Search Committee consists of 12 members, some voting and some non-voting, and includes representatives of the public, student body, administration, School Committee and the general public. Filling out the committee are Shepherd Hill Regional High School student Abigail Boggio, School Committee members Jeanne Costello and Jamie Terry, Charlton Elementary School Principal Jennifer Lilly, Charlton Middle School Principal Dean Packard,

Shepherd Hill teachers Cyndi Piehl, Matthew Morway and Lida Fitton, parents Deborah Saper and Sara Rocheford, Director of Pupil Services Robert Bergeron, and finally Dr. Ackerman. The committee anticipated meeting in the first week of April to identify candidates for initial interviews with finalists potentially named after community forums and site visits throughout the month. A final candidate it expected to be presented to the School Committee in early May.

PHILBROOK
continued from page A1

town to have his car inspected and assist him in the process of selling his home eventually setting things up so that he could drive to Tennessee to live with his son.

"I wish he would have noticed that the roof was leaking earlier. I could have gotten the Lion's Club or Knights of Columbus or someone to quickly help him fix his roof but it's past that point so it's going out for a quick sale," Philbrook

told the Board of Health. He further commented that this isn't the first time this kind of situation has occurred in Charlton and that while women and mothers have resources to assist them in their times of need Philbrook believes there need to be more resources for men as well.

"I took quick action on it and helped him out right away. I just wish I had more of an arm to have an option, but if you're a single male and you need help, they don't help you - I had no options. We tried and tried to get him housing and we

finally got in touch with his family and he's going to be leaving for Tennessee," said Philbrook.

The Health Director's actions garnered praise from the Board of Health, especially member Matt Gagner who said this wasn't the first time Philbrook had gone the extra mile to help a citizen in need. "Once again money out of your pocket to help someone you never met before. I've seen you do it time and time again over the years and I get choked up," Gagner said the Philbrook directly. Later he offered more compliments towards

the Director. "He does it time and time again over the years. I can't count it on all my fingers, he's always digging into his own pocket and giving. This board is lucky to have him. This town is lucky to have him."

Philbrook humbly stated that he did what he felt was right and wouldn't have been able to sleep at night knowing he didn't make the effort to help someone in need.

"It's only money. I'm not a rich man, but I certainly wanted to help him out and I think that's one thing municipalities in the state need to do, add more options," said Philbrook. "When you see something like this you don't have any options because we don't have any funding available. I can't use our municipal money like that, so we had to use different options and we called everybody. We were on the phone nonstop trying to get housing. There are literally hundreds and hundreds of people waiting for housing."

Philbrook added that other town employees were involved in assisting the citizens including setting him up with a \$300 gas card and providing him with physical directions and programming them into his phone to allow for a safe, easy trip to Tennessee.

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MCCURDY
continued from page A1

Screwing Yourself and Get the Life You Want."

McCurdy is also a major supporter of local after-school programs and Hitchcock Free Academy in Brimfield.

To learn more about the Village Toastmasters and how you can contact club leaders, visit www.villagetoastmasters.org.

Toastmasters International is a non-profit educational organization that runs clubs worldwide to promote communications, public speaking, and leadership.



Celebrate Easter

Sunday, April 17th



Interactive Family Event
at
Wayside Church
6 Haggerty Rd., Charlton, MA
Non-traditional service including six walk through stations representing Jesus' journey to the cross and His resurrection!

Easter Sunday, April 17 at 9:30am

Casual outdoor egg hunt to follow service

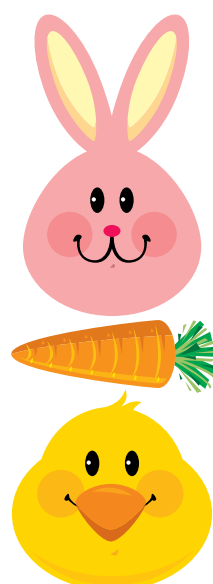
Our church has been a part of the Charlton community since the mid 1800s. The first pastor named the chapel, Wayside Church. Over the decades, the church has gone through seasons of hardship and seasons of growth. Through it all the church has stayed true to its evangelical roots and continues to be an open and active part of the Charlton and surrounding communities. The church is now pastored by Chase Mendoza and has recently reverted back to its original name Wayside Church. Our focus is on seeking the truths found in Bible. We work through biblical texts as a family with dialogue often encouraged and personal workbooks provided. Come join us - we are excited to meet you!



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Popular regional art enrichment program comes to Hitchcock this April Vacation



BRIMFIELD — Robots, superheroes, cupcakes, spies, and pizza will all have their place at the table at Hitchcock this April as Art-Ventures, the area’s leading art enrichment provider, takes over the community center for April Vacation week. There’s also a place at the table for any art (or science) loving kid age 5 and up.

Art-Ventures made its debut at Hitchcock this past summer and after receiving rave reviews from kids and parents alike, Executive Director Cindy Skowrya has been eager to bring them back.

“I was so impressed with the quality

of the projects being made, and how effortlessly the instructor kept the kids fully engaged and enthralled,” says Skowrya. “I can’t wait to have more kids experience this program.”

A Connecticut parent echoes this praise: “Ethan really enjoyed Art-Ventures more than anything. They have been really great for him not only with letting his imagination soar but also by setting strong/consistent standards for behavior that has helped him grow socially/emotionally. He’s so happy. I can’t thank them enough!”

Programs are offered Tuesday, April 19 through Friday, April 22 with a 9 a.m. to noon option each day for 5-12 year olds, and a 1 to 4 p.m. option each day for 5-12 year olds and also for ages 12 & up. Parents can opt for registering a la carte, selecting single three-hour programs for \$50, or they can register for a time block for the full week (Tuesday–Friday) for \$160. Most programs fall under the Art-Ventures moniker, while two of the programs offered for ages 12

& up are Mad Science offerings.

What will the kids be doing? Participants ages 5-12 in “Robots Eat Ice Cream” will paint ceramic robot banks with shiny metallic colors, learn about textures and printmaking by using a surprising array of everyday objects to create colorful ice cream collages, and build their own robots using miscellaneous metal hardware. Older participants (12 & up) in “Detective Science + Spy Academy” will use edible messages and other ways of secretly communicating as they decode clues to journey into the world of espionage. They’ll learn science techniques used to investigate and analyze crime scene evidence such as mystery powder analysis, fingerprint examination, ink separation investigation, and teeth impression match-up, creating a composite of a perpetrator from memory and then analyzing all the evidence to determine which suspect committed the crime!

Each offering is uniquely imaginative and right on track with what kids

like. Other themes are “Fun Times with Famous Artists,” “Superhero Art Blast Off,” “Wicked Wild and Wonderful Art,” “Mirror Mirror on the Wall: Art About Me,” and “Colorful Creatures Come Alive”.

For more information or to register, visit www.hitchcockacademy.org. Hitchcock Academy is a community center located at 2 Brookfield Road in Brimfield offering educational, recreational, and cultural programs.

Missing Sturbridge man found dead at Quabbin Reservoir

STURBRIDGE — A Sturbridge man who had been missing for two weeks was found dead late last month at Quabbin Reservoir.

On March 25, police confirmed the death of George Guttler, 71, who was reported missing by his family on March 11.

Two weeks later, at approximately 8:30 a.m. on March 25, a DCR ranger at Quabbin Reservoir observed a body in the lower section of the reservoir’s spillway, approximately 20 feet from the shore.

Divers from the Massachusetts State Police responded and recovered the decedent’s body. Investigators from the Sturbridge Police Department and the State Police subsequently

confirmed the victim’s identity.

In the days after Guttler was reported missing, state and local police agencies, along with DCR employees, conducted numerous searches by land, air, and water.

“The investigation into Mr. Guttler’s death is ongoing and is being led by the Northwestern District Attorney’s Office and the State Police Detective Unit for Hampshire/Franklin Counties,” read a statement released by the State Police. “Law enforcement officials extend our condolences to the Guttler family.”

No further information is being released at this time, police said.



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Sturbridge Historical Society meeting set for April 21

The Sturbridge Historical Society meeting will be held on Thursday April 21 at The Publick House Historical Inn on The Sturbridge Common. Our guest speakers will be Dick Lisi and Peter Hastings on the history of United States coins.

Dick will take us on an enlightening and educational journey, highlighting some of the history of our United States coinage. He will tell us the different denominations of coins produced by the United States and focus on key historical events which impacted the decisions as to which coins were minted. Peter will discuss coin collecting, this fascinating hobby that has been enjoyed by so many over the history of US coinage. Peter will have many items from his collection as he and Dick share tips on how what and why people collect coins.

Dick and Peter bring many years of collecting experience and knowledge as members of a number of coin clubs. They are members of the prestigious American Numismatic Association as well as The New England Numismatic Association.

Historical Society meetings are free of charge with dessert and meeting room provided by Michael Glick, Publick House Innkeeper. Our sincere thanks go out to Mr. Glick.

Meetings are held September through May on the fourth Thursday of the month except November and December. November meeting is held the first Thursday in December.

All meetings start at 7 p.m. and the public is welcome.

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Easter Sunrise Service at Old Sturbridge Village

The Easter Sunrise Service will be held at the Meetinghouse in Old Sturbridge Village on Sunday, April 17 at 6 a.m. After pausing for two years during the pandemic, this beautiful setting and joyous service is a wonderful way to celebrate the Risen Christ!

A free will offering will be taken to benefit a charity. The Easter Sunrise Service is an ecumenical service, this year sponsored by the Federated Church of Fiskdale & Sturbridge, celebrating their 100-year anniversary. Please enter through the main gate and proceed to the rear of the parking lot near the security office. All are welcome!

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See Facebook @EB100th or

tinyurl.com/EB100th for details on all events!

Join us in April!

Charlton Garden Club’s next meeting scheduled for April 11

Come and join us! The Charlton Garden Club’s Monday, April 11 meeting will feature Kathi Gariepy, a Master Gardener and owner of Pleasant Vistas garden design. She will be speaking on Shade Gardening. Charlton Garden Club meetings are open to all interest-

ed in gardening and related themes. Whether you’re a novice or accomplished gardener, the Charlton Garden Club is a great place to meet other gardening enthusiasts, learn about plants and planting, and to share your gardening tips and experiences. This meeting

will be held at 7 p.m. at the Charlton Public Library. A \$5 donation is suggested for non-members. If interested in joining the Garden Club, please contact Co-Presidents, Virginia Charette at (508) 248-7300 or Marcia Liedigk at (508) 434-0506.

Girl Scouts offer free “Launch into Girl Scouts” event for Sturbridge youth

Girl Scouts of Central & Western Massachusetts (GSCWM) invites Sturbridge girls and their guardian to a free “Launch Into Girl Scouts” event on Wednesday, April 27, from 6 to 7 p.m. This event is for girls currently in Pre-K and Kindergarten who are not yet Girl Scout members. Girls will earn their first Girl Scout patch while learning about rockets and building

and launching their own rocket. The event will take place at the Joshua Hyde Public Library 306 Main St, Sturbridge. RSVP and register for the event by April 23 at <https://bit.ly/gssturbridge>. For more information contact Hannah at HLaprade@gscwm.org or 413-584-2602 x3604.

BAY PATH CULINARY STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT MEAT BASICS



Courtesy photo

At Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School, Chef Armata’s culinary students recently learned about Meat Basics through a class Powerpoint presentation. The lesson covered the different grades of meat, where various cuts come from, as well as the current market prices. Mr. Armata stated that, “My main approach is to have the class be able to go to a supermarket, see a piece of meat, and tell where on the animal that cut is from. Then they know what type of cooking process will make the meat tasty and tender.” Students enrolled in the class are Arriana Cabana, Evenise Calo Resto, Makayla Collins, Lillian Cortis, Samantha DeCell, Tori Fontaine, Olivia James, Xavier Marquez, Kylie Novia, Kendrick Quinones Pagan, Naomi Soriano, Iva Ta, Taylor Tremblay, Kayla Vandyke, Yahil Vega-Cortes and Nevada Zamis.

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continued from page A1

at (508) 456-7383 or Diane Dabrowski at (508) 479-2340.

For additional details, please contact Pete Rotondo



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www.fedchurchcharlton.org

• Charlton Baptist Church, 50 Hammond

Hill Road, 248-4488, www.charltonbaptist.org,

Sunday worship 10 a.m.

• Charlton City United Methodist, 74 Stafford

St. 248-7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org

Sunday worship and Children’s church 10am

• St. Joseph’s Church, 10 H. Putnam Ext. 248-

7862, www.stjosephscharlton.com, Saturday

Vigil Mass 4:30 p.m., Sunday Mass 8 a.m.,

Sunday Family Mass 10 a.m., Sunday LifeTEEN

Mass 5 p.m., Weekday Mass Monday, Tuesday,

Thursday, Friday 8:30 a.m.

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Road, 248-5144

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District Headquarters, Route 20, 248-3771,

sneedag.org, Office hours Monday-Friday 8:30

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• Living Word Church of Charlton, 10 Main

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Niford, Michael R, and Niford,

Lauren E, to Asenso, Emmanuel K,

and Asenso, Ophelia M.

\$265,000, 23 Highfield Rd #B, 23b

Highfield Road RT, and Iuliano,

Vincent P, to Houston, Anne L.

\$175,000, Stafford St, Lemansky,

Robert F, to Bonnie Be RT, and

Berthiaume, Bonnie B.

\$100,000, Jennings Rd #21, Gair

LLC, to Bousquet, Caryn M.

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\$330,000, 11 Whittemore Rd, Earls,

Thomas P, to Basti, David, and

Grignon, Hansie.

\$10,000, 6 Hall Rd, Earls Helen A

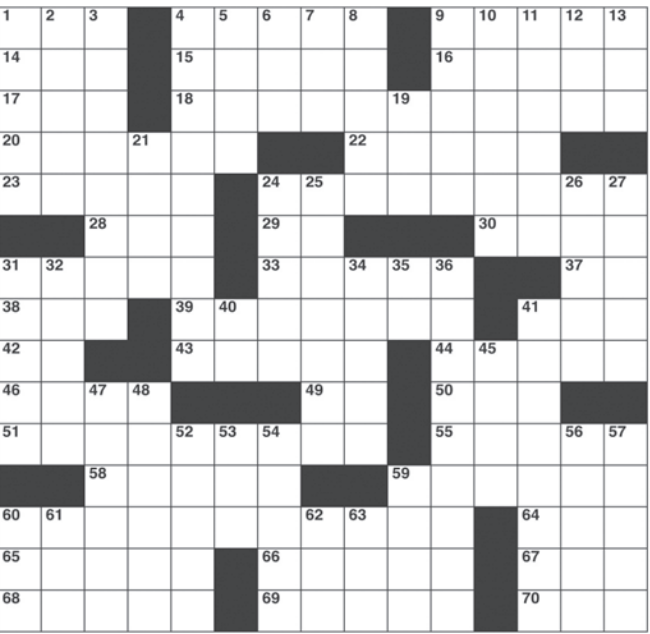
Est, and Earls, William J, to Basti,

David, and Grignon, Hansie.

\$10,000, 9 Whittemore Rd, Earls

Helen A Est, and Earls, William J, to

Basti, David, and Grignon, Hansie.



CLUES ACROSS

- Midway between south and southeast
- Celebrations
- Pulpits
- Pin
- Rare laughing
- Parts of the circulatory system
- Financial term
- Pearl Jam frontman
- Cores of vascular plants
- Strong sharp smell or taste
- City in S. Korea
- One from Damascus
- Short message at the end of an email
- It cools your home
- Towards the mouth or oral region
- Intestinal pouches
- Boys and men
- The 12th letter of the Greek alphabet
- Former CIA
- A way to arrange
- Body cavity
- The Great Lake State
- A type of seal
- Stop for a moment
- Ancient kingdom
- Of I
- White clerical vestment
- Songs to a lover
- Prices
- Sun-dried brick
- Where to park a boat
- One who values reason and knowledge
- Partner to feather
- Sailboats
- Actress Zellweger
- Type of screen
- Country singer Haggard
- Puts together in time
- When you hope to arrive

CLUES DOWN

- An involuntary muscular contraction
- PA transit system
- Leaves a place
- Sweet greenish fruit
- Lends support to
- Chap
- Singer Di Franco
- Water at boiling temperature diffused in the atmosphere
- Asserts to be the case
- Doctor (Spanish)
- Auction attendee
- Characterized by unity
- Soviet Socialist Republic
- Way to analyze video (abbr.)
- Nonclerical
- Tree resin
- The academic world
- Khoikhoi peoples
- Infer from data
- Arrives
- Apart
- Takes on cargo
- Beloved Hollywood alien
- Takes apart
- Dorm official
- Secondary or explanatory descriptor
- Relating to wings
- Speaker
- Situated in the middle
- Loop with a running knot
- Alaska nursing group (abbr.)
- Beloveds
- Establish by law or with authority
- Border river between India and Nepal
- Millisecond
- Revolutions per minute
- They ____
- ESPN broadcaster Bob
- A place to stay



PUZZLE SOLUTION

Bay Path nursing students offer screening assistance

Sturbridge Democratic Town Committee Unity Brunch and Fundraiser

DUDLEY — A group of six grateful Bay Path Practical Nursing students volunteered for a two-day vision and hearing screening to assist the school nurses at the Shepherd Hill Regional High School in screening 222 grade 10 students. The team led by Dr. Adelina Healy of Dudley includes Regina Asieduwaah, Moreen Barber, Francis Sozaa, all of Worcester, Maryanne Cann of Danielson, Conn., Darcey Howe of Palmer, and Gearlyn Wetherbee of Charlton.

In an email to Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN Academy Director the school nurse Kareen Powaza, BSN, RN thanked the volunteers and stated, “the Practical Nursing students were professional, knowledgeable, and a pleasure to work with! they are welcome back anytime!”

Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy faculty Adelina Healy, DNP, RN supervised the PN volunteers and stated, “the Practical Nursing students did a great job with vision and hearing testing, their interaction with the 10th grade students are wonderful.”

The experience at the Vision and Hearing Screening gives the nursing students the opportunity to work hand in hand with the school nurses. “This is the first year that our Practical Nursing students volunteered with the Shepherd Hill Regional High School for the Vision and Hearing Screening. Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy prides itself in being a part of the



Bay Path community outside of the Charlton campus so having the practical nursing students assist the school nurses and be invited back has tremendous impact in service learning,” said Bolandrina. “We recognize service-learning and emphasize its importance, to get involved outside the classroom to better prepare themselves for their healthcare careers, and this is something they will definitely remember their whole career,” added Bolandrina.

The practical nursing students assist the healthcare team, assess, give out COVID-19 vaccines, monitor for untoward reactions, and complete tasks

efficiently. The training for the future nursing workforce in the Bay Path community and across the region allows practical nursing students to respond to emergencies and assist in community events.

About Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy: Bay Path Practical Nursing is a 40-week, (10-month), full-time, Monday through Friday, evening program. The program begins mid-August and is completed in late June. Graduates receive a Practical Nursing Certificate and are eligible to take the NCLEX-PN licensure exam. Visit www.baypath.net.

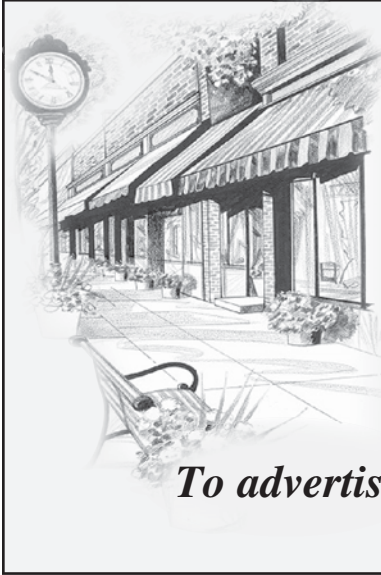
The Sturbridge Democratic Town Committee (SDTC) is pleased to invite Central Massachusetts democrats and the general public to our 2022 Democratic Unity Brunch and Fundraiser. It will be held on Sunday, April 10 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Barn at Wight Farm in Sturbridge. This event is hosted by the SDTC to promote and support Democratic candidates and elected officials and to raise funds for our annual scholarship award. Our confirmed speakers’ list includes Anne Gobi, Paul Depalo, Joseph Early, candidates for statewide office including: for Gov. -

Sonia Chang-Diaz; Lt. Gov. - Adam Hinds, Tami Gouveia, Kim Driscoll, Eric Lesser, and Bret Bero; for Att. Gen. - Quentin Palfrey, Shannon Liss-Riordan and Andrea Campbell; for State Auditor - Diana DiZoglio; and others. It will be a unique opportunity for interested voters to see so many of the candidates in Central Mass. This event will be held as an in-person gathering and vaccination will be required to attend the event. Masks are recommended. Tickets can be purchased at <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/2022sdtebrunch> or at the door.

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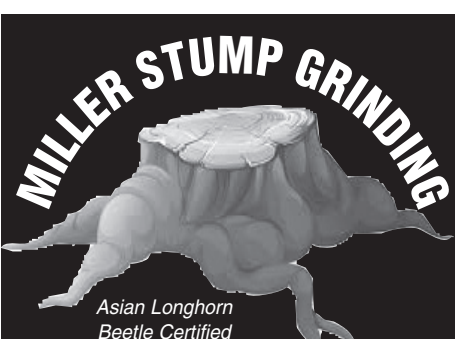
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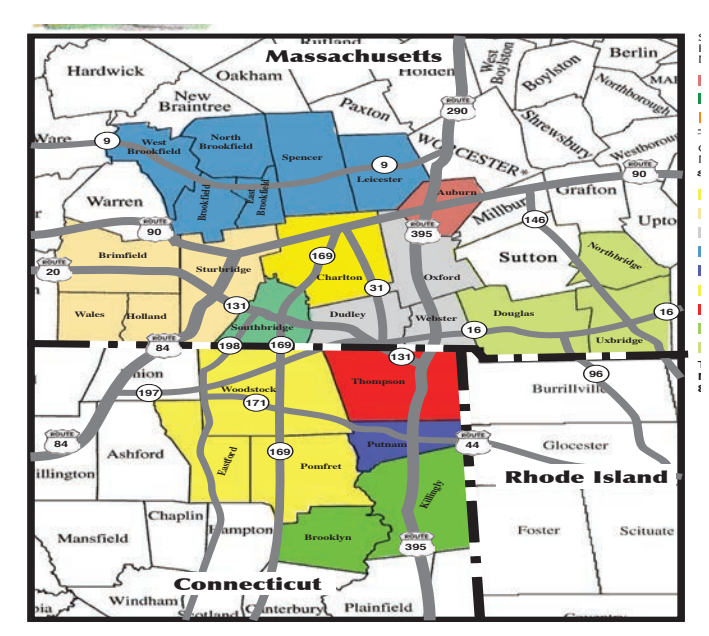
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The power of positive thinking

Every day, we wake up with the best intentions, or we like to think that most of us do. With each new day brings with it specific challenges. Many times, those challenges come by way of a misunderstanding or a shifted perspective. We have come to realize, long ago, that often, there is more to a story than we can see at its surface. Just being aware of that one simple fact, can change the way a situation is viewed. Oftentimes, it's easier said than done; however, the more we choose to remain optimistic, the better. What might seem catastrophic in the moment is usually nothing more than a small frustration that has an easy fix and will pass. A wise man once said, "Don't sweat the small stuff, and it's all small stuff."

This isn't to negate the fact that larger issues do surface and take some time to sort out; however, we need to remind ourselves that we are all surrounded by well intentioned, intelligent people. People who are willing to be helpful, generous, rational and kind through productive conversations will always find the pot of gold in any situation.

Remembering to check a kneejerk reaction before gathering all of the facts is crucial to your ability to remain optimistic. Again, this is not always easy, but once mastered can change everything.

Believe it or not, optimism is a choice, and offers surprising benefits. Choosing to look on the bright side of life (Monty Python fans, we know what you're singing) can lower your risk of heart disease and stroke while also extending your life.

One study revealed that individuals who spent five minutes a day thinking positive thoughts about their future, increased their ability to be optimistic in just two weeks. Before turning in at night, list five things that you are grateful for and five things that you are looking forward to. Every time you stop at a traffic light, tell yourself something that you like about yourself. This works especially well if you are in the middle of a sing along to your favorite tune, concert of one. Keeping pessimists in your life, at a distance is always a good idea.

When a negative thought does creep through your mind, that's OK. Recognize it and decide how realistic it actually is. To offset those thoughts, try spreading positivity yourself. While at work, offer a co-worker an 'atta boy' or 'atta girl' for a job well done. If your child has been hard at work on a school project, tell them how proud you are. Send a letter to someone who has had a positive impact on your life. When you bestow positivity on others, it has a lasting effect on your own life.

One way to practice being more optimistic is to flip every negative thought with a positive one despite how creative you need to get. For example, if you're thinking 'I'm going to be late for dinner and I don't feel like cooking,' you can flip that by reminding yourself about the wonders of the microwave and take-out. If a rainy day has you feeling groggy, remind yourself that those are the best days to read all day, catch up on "Bridgerton" season 2, and not feel guilty about missing all of that sunshine.

Here are five things we are grateful for and looking forward to. A solid group of co-workers who work hard every day, summer hikes with trail mix that includes M&M's, a community who works together, outside barbecues with ice cold lemonade and shrimp cocktail and road trips to the ocean on a sunny day.

As Rodolfo Costa said, "Learn to adapt. Things change, circumstances change. Adjust yourself and your efforts to what it is presented to you so you can respond accordingly. Never see change as a threat, because it can be an opportunity to learn, to grow, evolve and become a better person."



OPINION



Tips for selling personal property for estate personal representatives

Today's article features suggestions and tips for estate personal representatives (formerly called executors) as well as heirs to an estate.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, "If you're responsible for the estate of someone who died, you may need to file an estate tax return. If the estate is worth less than \$1 million, you don't need to file a return or pay an estate tax." According to Connecticut's ct.gov website, "Connecticut's \$5.1 million tax threshold ranks 9th for 2020 and its 12 percent top rate ties with Maine as the lowest." With the spike in housing prices and the Massachusetts threshold of \$1 million, we are often contacted by estate personal representatives and attorneys for estate appraisals for IRS and probate purposes.

Whether you need a written appraisal or not, being an estate personal representative means that the person who asked that you be appointed trusted you to handle their estate. Of course, there is a lot of responsibility that comes with that. Here are my suggestions for handling the personal property in an estate.

Secure the home as soon as possible. I've seen estates where neighbors and friends had keys. I've also seen instances where family members and others have taken things that didn't belong to them.

Only throw away items that you are certain are trash. Some things like old postcards and costume jewelry may be more valuable than you think. It's best to have an auctioneer or estate sale company look through your items before you throw things away.

You may have sentimental attachment to items that are part of an estate, but the personal property value is typically a small fraction of the value of the home itself.

You should distribute items according to the will or any court decisions.

With the other items, many families are able to discuss which things meant the most to them and decide how things should be divided among themselves. If the items have been appraised, others divide items based on the appraised value. If there are things that multiple people want or that no one wants, they may be consigned to auction.

Here are some thoughts for items that aren't distributed.



ANTIQUES, COLLECTIBLES & ESTATES
.....
WAYNE TUISKULA

Moving everything out and storing items may seem like a good option at the time. However, I am often contacted by people who decided to do this and they are often paying storage fees of over \$200 a month for items they ultimately decided they actually don't want to keep.

It's much easier for an auctioneer or estate sale company to view and market pieces while they are inside a home. People can walk through and see the personal property instead of it being tightly packed inside of a storage unit.

Regular readers of this column know that "brown furniture" (traditional mahogany, cherry, oak, and mahogany furniture), china and glassware haven't been selling well. It makes sense to sell or donate these pieces as soon as possible instead of paying thousands of dollars for storage costs and doing it later.

Keep the things that have special meaning to you but consider selling the rest. I'm often contacted by clients who inherited things from family members that have been stored in their attics for decades.

Consider whether you would rather have the collection you inherited or the money you'd receive by selling it. For example, a family member may have collected coins that you inherit. Coin values can appreciate or depreciate over time. Values were trending downward for several years. You may need to pay to store them in a bank safe deposit box. It may make more sense to sell the coins and invest in the stock market, pay for a child's education or take a family trip.

Hopefully these suggestions can help if you are handling an estate now or have to in the future.

Our multi-estate auction with gold estate jewelry, coins, sports cards, historical memorabilia and other antiques and collectibles will begin soon. Please see our Web site, <https://centralmassauctions.com>, for this and other upcoming events.

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

When someone does you wrong, take the high road



POSITIVELY SPEAKING
.....
TOBY MOORE

How often have you wanted to give someone a piece of your mind? If you're like me, very often. The opportunity to tell someone off can present itself several times a day. Someone cuts you off in traffic, a family member did something wrong, or a co-worker gave you an attitude. Maybe your boss is being irrational. Someone said good morning rudely.

Boy, it feels great to tell someone off, doesn't it? There's nothing better than putting someone in their place, "I'll show them a thing or two. Next time they come around, they'll think twice about disrespecting me!"

Let me ask you a question. Did it make you feel good when you chewed out the person who insulted you? Did you feel satisfied, like you accomplished something great? Or did you feel bad afterward and regret it? Did you end up apologizing later? Did it have unintended consequences like losing a relationship or a job?

I almost always regretted losing my temper and telling someone off. Often, I would apologize, but sometimes, it's too late. The other person isn't always so forgiving; some words you can't take back.

One thing to remember is that we don't know what the other person is going through. We aren't walking in their shoes. One time, I wanted to lash out at someone I thought had slighted me, but later, I learned he wasn't being rude; it was just my perception. He was dealing with the loss of a family member who died the day before. When I learned what happened, I felt terrible for being upset with him.

I had a great job working at a hotel once. It paid the bills and more. It also left me plenty of time to pursue my dreams outside of work. Soon after I started, they had to lay off many other employees because they weren't getting enough business. That meant that the employees still there had to pick up the slack.

When it was slow, there was a lot of work to be done, and it wasn't easy to keep up. When it was busy, it was impossible to keep up. There were too many jobs to be done and too little time. My new manager didn't hesitate to pull me aside and give me a tongue lashing when I couldn't get everything done.

I was very offended when she did this. In my mind, she didn't know what I was dealing with and was being illogical. I managed to keep my cool the first few times, but one time after a strenuous morning, she brought me into her office, and I didn't hold back. It felt good at the moment; I showed her. A few minutes later, I wished I could take it all back. I knew that I had crossed the line. I apologized, but it was too late; I was out of a job.

I felt like she didn't understand and asked me to do something that wasn't possible. What if I had tried harder to be respectful and understand what she was going through? Maybe her manager was stressing her out and being unreasonable, and she was under pressure to perform. If I had calmed myself, realizing that perhaps she was suffering through something I didn't understand, I would have kept the job.

The problem with giving someone a piece of your mind is that it's almost always with a negative, critical, or angry attitude. Negative interactions with people are inevitable, but we can control our response to them. When somebody is mean, short-tempered, or rubs you the wrong way, it's not about you and rarely is. When we remember that, it's much easier to control our response, helping us respond with kindness and respect rather than blind anger. Responding with rage is unfocused, unwise, short-sighted, and destructive.

The next time someone does you wrong, take the high road. It's a much more respectable response, and will often make things better for you. It may not feel like the best response in the short term, but it will always work to your advantage in the long run.



LETTERS

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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!

Local anglers report excellent fishing

Fishing has been awesome for anglers fishing in some of the trout stocked ponds and at Wachusett Reservoir that opened this past Friday. Mention of one nice salmon was received by this writer, which was taken at Wachusett Res. and numerous lake trout were caught their also. One angler reported catching six lakera in very short time. The one hot lure was a large Kastmaster spoon. Webster Lake continued to provide plenty of action with one angler fishing fly's from his boat just outside of the Norm Ryan boat ramp. Unfortunately, one guy put a hook through his finger and had to get medical treatment. It happens every year.

I failed to mention that trolling fly's from a boat using a flyrod with a level or sinking line and 15 feet or more monofilament, also works fine and is a lot easier to use than wire. Getting a kink in wire can cause an easy breaking point, resulting in a lost fish. Spinning rods are also adaptable for fly fishing with bobbers that can hold water and a 12-foot leader and a fly at the end. The fly can be cast a long distance , and can be allowed to sink or stay on the surface, depending on how much water is inserted into the bobber. An ear syringe is a great way to fill the bobber with water.

Wallum Lake opens this Saturday, and is governed by Rhode Island regulations. The daily limit is five trout of any kind. Unfortunately, to the best of



THE GREAT
OUTDOORS
.....
RALPH
TRUE

my knowledge, there are no brood stock salmon available to date, but that could change. Wallum Lake can be fished with a Massachusetts Fishing license or a Rhode Island fishing license. The hey-days of fishing Wallum Lake has quieted down a lot, especially on opening day, but is still enjoyed by many anglers. I fondly remember sleeping overnight in my van, and cooking breakfast in the van prior to first light. This year, I will bring a light lunch. Hope to see you there.

Report of some large brown trout in the five-pound-plus size at Comet Pond in Hubbardston was exciting news for angler's that fished their last week. One angler caught three "whoppers" in a very short time. Some anglers also caught numerous impressive brook trout and rainbow trout. Comet pond is getting special treatment from someone in the area. Every year, the pond is stocked with large fish, and plenty of them. When brood stock salmon were available, the pond got a lot of them. Maybe this year will be different.

Dandelions are a great food source if you cook them right. They need to be harvested prior to them showing flowers, and in fact can be picked right now. Taking a long sharp knife and inserting it just under the plant, you can cut in off very easily. Shake off the dirt and wash them very good at home before cooking. The best place to harvest a few dandelions is at a farmer's field, but be sure to ask permis-

sion first. They cook up rather quickly, somewhat like spinach, but need to have a good piece of salt pork, and salt & pepper added when cooking them. After cooking they can be eaten as a side dish to any fish or meat. Placing a small amount of vinegar prior to eating can add to the flavor. Give them a try and take the family along to help harvest a few of these tasty greens.

Dandelions are also a good way to determine when tautog fishing starts. When the dandelions start to flower, it is time to pack up the rods, and go catch a few for the dinner table, and they go very good with some poached tautog fillets.

The Uxbridge Rod & Gun Club will hold their annual trout fishing derby for members, this Saturday starting at 8 a.m. Breakfast will be available. The pond was recently stocked with some very large trout. The Whitinsville fish & Game Club will hold their annual fishing derby on April 30, and will also serve a full breakfast.

Many people that had been working at home during the pandemic, and are now returning back to their office and have found that caring for their pets that they had purchased or adopted, are undecided what to do with them. Hopefully, they will do the right thing and find them a new home, or take them to an animal shelter. Abandoning them on the street, as many have done in the past, is cruel and dangerous for them. Do the right thing!

This is the time of year to harvest a good supply of nightcrawlers for the seasons fishing. Take along the family after dark, and visit some areas that



Photo Courtesy
Ice fishing ended on the bright side for Jerry Gareri last week, taking this big bass at a lake near his cabin in Maine.

have a good lawn. Be sure to ask for permission prior to picking the night-crawlers. Using a flashlight carefully scan the lawn with the light, and you will find the crawlers laying on top of the ground for easy picking. It is best to do this after a good rain. Store them in a good dark cool place in some grass sods. A wooden box is preferred! Cover them with a damp rag bag, and check them weekly to ensure that they are keeping well.

Take A Kid Fishing And Keep Them Rods Bending.

Don't be surprised by Social Security taxes



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When you reach the appropriate age, it's easy to apply for Social Security retirement benefits – just go to Social Security's website, fill out the online form and you're essentially done. But many people overlook the next step – completing Form W-4V, which asks you how much federal income tax you want withheld from your benefits. And if you skip this step, you could face an unpleasant surprise when it's tax-filing time, because Social Security benefits can indeed add to your taxable income.

Here are the details:
If you're a single filer...If your "combined" income is between \$25,000 and \$34,000, you may have to pay income tax on up to 50 percent of your Social Security benefits. ("Combined" income includes your adjusted gross income, non-taxable interest, and one-half of your annual Social Security benefits.) If your combined income is more than \$34,000, up to 85 percent of your benefits may be taxable.

If you're married and file jointly...If you and your spouse have a combined income between \$32,000 and \$44,000, you may be taxed on up to 50 percent of your benefits. If your combined income is more than \$44,000, up to 85 percent of your benefits may be taxable.

These numbers might seem high, but they don't mean

you'll lose 50 percent, or 85 percent, of your benefits – they are just the percentages of benefits you may be taxed on, at your personal income tax rate.

To help avoid a big tax bill or an underpayment penalty, you can file Form W-4V with the Social Security Administration and request to have 7, 10, 12 or 22 percent of your monthly benefit withheld. Your tax advisor can help you choose the withholding percentage that's appropriate for your situation.

The amount of taxes you may need to pay will also depend on when you start taking Social Security. The earlier you take benefits, the smaller your monthly checks, and the smaller the taxes. But taxes should not be a key issue in deciding when you need to begin collecting your payments. Rather,

you should consider other factors, such as your anticipated life expectancy, your employment situation, your spending needs and the benefits for your spouse.

Here's something else to keep in mind: Because Social Security taxes are based on your overall income, as described above, the amount of money you withdraw during retirement, and where that money comes from, can also affect your tax situation. For example, withdrawals from a traditional IRA are taxable and will increase your adjusted gross income, but withdrawals from a Roth IRA will be tax-free, provided you've had your account at least five years and you're over 59 and a half, so this money won't enter into your taxable income calculations and it won't increase the

tax you owe on your Social Security benefits. Similarly, withdrawals from health savings accounts (HSAs) used for qualified health expenses also won't count toward your taxable income.

By knowing exactly what to expect from Social Security, including the tax effects, you can more effectively incorporate your benefits into your overall retirement income planning – and the better your plans, the more you'll be able to enjoy your life as a retiree.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Trevor Nielsen, your local Edward Jones Advisor in Sturbridge at 508-347-1420 or trevor.nielson@edwardjones.com.



TAKE
THE
HINT
KAREN
TRAINOR

Easter is one of the most beloved annual holidays. Coloring eggs, early morning candy hunts, Easter lilies, and family tables heaped with festive fare, all make this spring celebration one of the most enjoyable holidays ever. Few family traditions are more enjoyable than those that happen at Easter time. Read on for some fun and easy Easter related tips - from a new twist on tinting eggs to preserving potted lilies.

Chalk it Up: Wondering what to do with all those eggshells left over from Easter? Why not be creative and teach the kids how to make side-

walk chalk? While you're at it, you can throw in a little recycling lesson! Eggshell chalk: four to five eggshells, one teaspoon flour, one teaspoon very hot tap water, food coloring (optional). Directions: Wash and dry eggshells. Put the shells into bowl or grinder and pulverize into a powder. Toss away any large pieces. Place flour and hot water in another bowl and add one tablespoon eggshell powder and mix until a paste forms. Add food coloring if desired. Shape and press mixture very firmly into the shape of a chalk stick, and roll up tightly in a strip of strong paper towel. Allow to dry approximately three days until hard. Remove paper towel and you've got homemade chalk! (Eggshell chalk is for sidewalks only.) Recipe can be doubled or tripled, depending upon how many eggshells you have.

Chocolate Redo : Do you have leftover solid chocolate bunnies? Here are some ideas to put them to good use:

***Chop up chocolate and store in zip lock bags to use as chocolate chips in cookie batter, muffins, pancakes or to top cupcakes.**

*** Make candy coated popcorn:** Melt chocolate and toss in freshly popped corn to coat. Allow to cool and harden before serving.

***Whip up an old fashioned mug of rich and yummy hot chocolate.** For every cup of whole milk add four ounces chopped chocolate. Add a few drops of vanilla extract and a dash of sugar if desired. Melt on the stove on medium/high heat, stirring constantly. When mixture simmers, turn to low and cover for three minutes. Stir before serving.

Prolong Potted Plant: Easter lilies

are gorgeous plants, and with a few tricks you can prolong their life as a potted plant way past the Easter holiday.

If you are purchasing the plant yourself, choose a healthy looking plant with a few flowers in full bloom but with most unopened. Keep potted soil moist and place in a cool 60 to 65 degree room where it can get some indirect sunlight. Avoid direct heat and direct sunlight. Be sure the pot is on a saucer, and if it is wrapped in foil be sure the foil doesn't trap any water in the bottom of the pot. Help your lily last even longer by snipping off the pollen laden anthers from the center of the blooms.

Longer Lilies: When your Easter lily has seen better days, don't toss it out! Your potted lilies can last for years to come if you plant them outside. To

Turn To **TRAINOR** page **A11**

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Thaxter, Tudor ‘passionate about nature’

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

STURBRIDGE — The weather’s been too erratic to safely plant outside, but several dozen people got an introduction to two of the more famous gardeners of the last century last week.

Outside the gardening community, Celia Thaxter and Tasha Tudor might not be that well known ... unless you’re also into Victorian era poetry or read a lot of children’s books. Thaxter wrote the former; Tudor illustrated the latter.

Both women were poets and artists who were “passionate about nature” but spent significant parts of their lives being “very lonely,” according to Ellen Duzak, who spoke at the Sturbridge Senior Center to an audience that was overwhelmingly women. She said they were “two women that have inspired me forever.”

For Thaxter, the creativity was an expression of what a good family life should be, as an escape from one that wasn’t like that. As a young teen, she lived on “a spit of rock” 10 miles off the coast of New Hampshire and Maine, but saw it as “this earthly paradise” because of how close her family was, Duzak said. Her father was a lighthouse keeper, but built it into a resort hotel — “All other resort hotels are based on this hotel,” Duzak said.

“Her life is totally immersed in nature,” Duzak added. “... This is the

definition of home [for Celia] and it never changes for her life. ... It’s a tiny complete kingdom, but her mother makes it wonderful.”

That changed starting at age 16, when she married Levi Thaxter. “He’s ridiculously older than her [28], and even then, she’s probably more mature than he is,” she noted. That particularly showed after the birth of their first son, Karl, who had behavioral issues expressing themselves violently. They had two other sons as well, but Levi “won’t have anything to do with [Karl]” and holds over Celia’s head threats to institutionalize him.

For a while, they float between homes, including her father’s hotel, until his father buys them a home in Newtonville, MA. Celia “never talks about Newtonville as home,” just the islands, although she established herself in Boston’s “salon” scene interacting with such luminaries as Whittier, Hawthorne, Childe Hassan and others. While Levi spends his time hunting birds (which later become exhibits at Harvard) and takes the younger sons to Florida for the winters, Celia ends up publishing her work in The Atlantic and other places, funding the family. At the same time, though, Levi enforces the era’s “cult of domesticity” on her, leaving all the chores and care for her ailing parents in her hands.

Eventually, they split and sell the Newtonville home. Levi, ironically,

briefly becomes famous for his own poetry readings for two years before his death liberates Celia. Duzak said her last 10 years were “her golden day, with her grand salon [on Appledore Island, Maine, and] she creates her beautiful garden.” There, she paints her own poetry book covers and sells them to the hundreds of salon/hotel visitors, decorates with daily garden cuttings, and writes her last book about that garden (Island Garden) in 1894, a few months before her death.

“Flowers are like dear friends to me,” Duzak quoted her as writing, then added, “Some of [the book] is very practical [such as] use horse manure and stuff, and some is poetic and glowing.”

Despite being born decades later, Tasha Tudor had a similar mindset and created her life in the image of the farm life of the 1830s. They had overlapping friends in the arts community.

“We all know her a lot better than we know Celia,” Duzak said. “...Her life and her art are one strand. She has that capacity we only see in the last 10 years of Celia’s life.”

In Tudor’s case, her father is the vagabond-type with five wives and multiple children, but he’s also talented as a boat, plane and car designer. They divorce when Tasha’s 9, and the Tudors live in Redding, CT, where Tasha takes her mother’s last name. One of her uncles is locally famous – Frederick Tudor, “crazy Frederick the ice king,”

who made his wealth by selling ice and owned Leadmine in Sturbridge.

“Everyone’s acting out, reading stories, writing stories, living a bohemian life,” Duzak said of those years.

In 1938, Tasha marries a man who’s not like that at all, but they end up buying a 17-room derelict house on 450 acres in New Hampshire. Tasha funds her own labor to repair it with her art, becoming famous by the 1950s. They divorce in 1961 and she moves to her “Corgi Cottage,” built to her specifications in Vermont in 1971, living there until her death in 2008.

“Her gardens are her pride and joy, but she says there’s no rhyme or reason [to them],” Duzak said.

Tudor was also quirky – she “taught her parrot to say naughty and terrible things,” and was known for bringing him out on a platter as if he was to be served for dinner. She also kept dead animals in her freezer so she could thaw them and position them for her drawings.

“I like animals to look like animals, not like cartoons,” Tudor said in the section of a DVD on her life Duzak played.

“The 20th century gave her the freedom to be who she was, without the hassle Celia had,” she added.

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

New England Symphony Orchestra introduces Dine and Show Promotion



The New England Symphony Orchestra will offer a special “Dine and Show” promotion in connection with its April 9 concert at Worcester’s Mechanics Hall, in partnership with the Worcester Restaurant Group. Diners who present a ticket stub from

the concert at a participating restaurant on that date will receive a 10 percent discount on an appetizer or dessert with purchase of a dinner entrée. Participating restaurants include 111 Chop House, Via Italian Table, and The Sole Proprietor.

According to symphony president Edgar Cyrus, “we were looking for ways to contribute to the local economy. We are excited to work with Worcester Restaurant Group and hope many of our patrons will take advantage of this opportunity.”

Tickets for the NESO concert are now available through the orchestra’s Web site (newenglandsymphony.org) or from the Mechanics Hall box office at 508-752-0888.

NESO Music Director Roderick MacDonald will be the featured soloist in Haydn’s trumpet concerto in E-flat major. Equally comfortable on the podium or in the principal trumpet seat, MacDonald began his career as Principal Trumpet of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, appointed by Music Director Kurt Masur upon completion of his Masters of Music at New England Conservatory. His career as a concert soloist began shortly after this appointment and he has since appeared worldwide as a trumpet soloist with highly regarded ensembles including: Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Japan Philharmonic, Virtuosi Saxonica, Bach Collegium Munich, Leipzig Bach Orchestra, Leipzig

Chamber Orchestra, Concerto Leipzig, Kammerphilharmonie Leipzig, and the Super World Orchestra (Tokyo). With a discography of over 25 recordings with the Gewandhaus Orchestra, he can also be heard on recordings with the Leipzig Baroque Soloists, solo recordings, and numerous other chamber and orchestral albums. One of his solo albums was named “CD of the Month” by Naxos.

The program will also include perennial favorite Antonin Dvorak’s Symphony number 9, “From the New World.”

New England Symphony Orchestra continues to operate as a volunteer-led, non-profit professional symphony orchestra serving the people of New England. This season’s strategic plan includes a 3-concert series at Mechanics Hall, streaming performances as part of the NESO At Home series, and more. For information about volunteering or sponsorship, call 603-438-8920.

Our vision is “Connecting New England with Great Music.”

For more information about the orchestra please visit:

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Start this year’s garden preparation with a soil test



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Growing a beautiful landscape starts with the soil under your feet. The best place to start building a healthy soil foundation is with a soil test. The results will tell you what type and how much, if any, fertilizer is needed for the plants you are growing. Using the right type and amount of fertilizer is also good for your budget and the environment.

Test the soil when starting a new garden or one that is struggling. Since soil and fertilization practices vary greatly, collect and submit separate samples for each garden bed or landscape area to be tested. Repeat every four or five years to check on your garden maintenance.

You can take a soil test anytime the ground is not frozen and you have not recently fertilized. Early spring and fall are good times since you can make needed changes when preparing your garden.

Contact your local Extension service for details on submitting a sample. If they don't

have a soil testing lab, they will likely recommend a state certified lab that tests home lawn and garden soils, or you can search the internet for a certified lab near you.

Taking a soil test sample is simple. Use a clean trowel and bucket to gather a soil sample. Slide away any mulch or debris on the soil surface. Use a trowel and remove a slice of soil that is four to six inches deep and right where the plant roots grow.

Take several samples throughout the garden you want to test. Collect samples from each edge and several throughout the middle of the bed. Mix them together and place about a cup of the soil in a plastic bag or the one provided by the lab. Be sure to complete and include the submission form. This includes a place to list the types of plants that will be grown in the area being sampled. The lab uses this and test results to make the fertilization recommendations. Send the sample and form together to the soil testing lab.

Allow several weeks for the test to be completed and the results to be returned. Most basic soil tests report the amount of phosphorus and potassium in the soil. Phosphorus promotes flowering, fruiting, and root development. Potassium promotes drought tolerance, disease resistance and hardiness. Many soils are high to excessive in these plant nutrients. You cannot remove the excess but should avoid adding to the problem. Soil test reports can help you do just that.

Most labs do not measure the amount of nitrogen in the soil since the levels change quickly and are not easy to test accurately. Instead, they make nitrogen recommendations based on the plants you are or will grow in the area being tested.

Soil pH is also measured in most soil tests. Acidic soils with pH below neutral (7.0) are often referred to as sour, while alkaline soils with a pH above 7.0 are called sweet. Soil pH influences which nutrients in the soil are available for the plants to absorb and utilize for growth. Blueberries, azaleas, and red maples are examples of acid-loving plants. Clematis, crabapples and spireas are a few of the alkaline tolerant plants.

Always use soil test results when trying to change the pH. Lime is used to sweeten soils while sulfur is often used to lower pH. Using too much or the wrong amendment can negatively impact the health and productivity of your garden. Undoing misapplications can



Photo Melinda Myers

Before starting a new garden or planting one that has been struggling, take a soil test to know what, if any, fertilizer is needed to build a healthy soil foundation.

take years to correct. Growing plants suited to the soil pH may be the best solution for those with acceptable, although not ideal, soil pH.

Include soil testing when planning new gardens or helping those that are struggling. Understanding your soil can help you create a strong foundation important to the health, longevity and beauty of your gardens and landscapes.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including *The Midwest*

Gardener’s Handbook, 2nd Edition 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 and was commissioned by Summit for her expertise to write this article. Her Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Locals accomplish top marks at Pomfret School

POMFRET, Conn. — Ella Andersen of Sturbridge from the Class of 2023 was named to the Winter 2021-2022 High Honors list at Pomfret School. To achieve this level of distinction, Ella earned a grade point average of at least 3.670 and received no grade lower than a B+.

Ivy Dowdle of Charlton from the Class of 2024 was named to the Winter 2021-2022 Head of School Scholar Honors list at Pomfret School. To achieve this level of distinction, Ivy earned a grade point average of at least 4.00 and received no grade lower

than an A-.

Founded in 1894, Pomfret is an independent, coed, college prep, boarding and day school, located in Pomfret, Conn. Set on a stunning 500-acre hilltop in Northeastern Connecticut, our campus is less than an hour from Boston, Hartford, and Providence, and only three hours from New York City. Today we serve 350 students, in grades 9 through 12, who hail from 25 states and 21 countries. We also offer a post graduate year.

Our mission is to empower students to pursue lives of meaning and purpose, and our vision is to inspire the next generation of change makers and problem solvers. Brought to life by an exceptional faculty, we are both bold and practical in our approach - intensely focused on the interests and needs of our students, and pragmatic in our efforts to prepare them for the joys and rigors of college, work, and life. In doing so, we are deeply committed to fostering an atmosphere of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging for all of our students, faculty, and staff.

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!

TRAINOR

continued from page A9

do: When leaves and stems turn yellow and or brown, trim them back and plant the bulb directly into the garden after the threat of frost has passed. For best results, plant the bulb in about three inches of good soil in a sunny or partial shade area. Top with another three inches of mulch, peat moss, compost, etc. (bulb is six inches underground). Water as needed.

Keep in mind transplanted lilies won't bloom until next summer. Keep well mulched during the winter and next spring remove extra mulch to help lilies sprout up.

Everlasting Easter Blossoms

Want to preserve your Easter bouquet or corsage? It's easy to make them last almost indefinitely!

Ingredients: 1 pint powdered Borax (in laundry aisle); two pints cornmeal; covered cardboard box (a shoebox is ideal); fresh flowers.

Instructions: 1. Thoroughly mix borax and cornmeal. 2. Cover the bottom of the box with 3/4 of an inch of this mixture. 3. Cut flower stems about 1 inch long. Lay the flowers face down in this mixture. Spread the petals and leaves so that they lie as flat as possible. Do not place flowers too close together. 4. Cover the flowers with 3/4 of an inch of the mixture. 5. Place the lid on the box and keep at room temperature for 3 to 4 weeks. The flowers will stay summer fresh indefinitely.

Mystery Dots

This simple egg coloring method clearly illustrates a simple science experiment. Kids love it!

To do: Add about two teaspoons of cooking oil to each dye cup. (You might want to do this after you have finished dipping your eggs the traditional way.) When you dip in your egg, the dye won't adhere to the oil, creating mysterious spots on the egg!

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

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.

BAY PATH ENGINEERING STUDENTS TACKLE EMERGENCY SHELTER CHALLENGE



Courtesy photo

At Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School, students in Mr. Estabrooks' engineering class recently participated in an Emergency Shelter Challenge. For the challenge, students had to build a shelter that was six feet long but that could also collapse into a 1' x 1' space. Mr. Estabrooks stated that "Design challenges like these allow students to practice going through the engineering design process and critically think of ways to solve real world problems." The two students at center are Kendal Griffin of Spencer (L) and Kayla Brown of Webster (R). Other students in the photo are Deana Davis, Makena Conti, Hannah Luukko, Riley Heenan, Gabriella Cabrera, Eva Jerez and Adriana Stanley.

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WEBSTER - 9 Park Rd! Spacious 2 Family! 44 Rm! 22 Bdrms! 14 Baths! Easy Access! Walk to Webster Lake's Memorial Beach! Same Floor Plan, 13x15 Eat-in Kits, 13x22 Liv Rm w/Hrds, Spacious Bdrms w/Hrds, Full Baths w/Linen Closets! 3 Season Porches, 1st Flr w/Composite Deck! "Budens" Oil Heat! Replacement Windows! 2 Car Garage! Lots of Potential! **\$309,900.00**

DUDLEY - 67 Southbridge Road! 6 Rm Ranch Set on 16,875' Lot! Appliance! Eat-in Kitchen! Dining Area and Fireplace Living Room w/Hardwood Floors! 3 Bedrooms w/Hardwood Floors and ample Closet Space! Spacious 11x14.5 Master! Full Tile Bath! Oil Heat! Garage! **\$279,900.00**

WEBSTER - 6 Slater Street! Professionals Take Notice! Ideal Office Setup! 1st Floor w/Waiting Rm, Reception Area, 4 Offices w/Sinks, 3 Alcove/Prep Areas, Handicap Accessible 1/2 Bath, and Hrdwd Flrs! 2nd Floor Currently w/Employee Breakroom w/Full Kitchen, Cabinets & Closet Storage, 3/4 Bath and additional office/bedroom! C/Air! CVA! Security System! **\$349,900.00**

DUDLEY - 50 Brandon Rd! 3 Family! 55/4 Rm! 22/1 Bdrms! 22/1 Bathrms! Investors take Notice! Fully Rented! Solid Rental History, Long Term Tenants! Conveniently Located! Washer & Dryer Hookups in the Basement for Each Unit! Efficient Natural Gas Heating! Two Driveways provide Off Street Parking for up to 5 Vehicles! Dudley's Low Taxes & Desirable School System! **\$336,900.00**



DUDLEY HAYDEN POND WATERFRONT - 48 Hayden Pond Rd! Recently Renovated, beautifully appointed, 5 Rm Waterfront Ranch! Enjoy sunsets, fishing & all water sports! Vinyl Composite decking & vinyl railings! Open floor plan! Cathedral ceilings w/skylights! Din Rm w/slider to covered deck! Kit w/quartz counters & SS appliances! Liv Rm w/stunning views of the Pond! Comfortable Master w/generous closet & half bath! 2nd bedroom or office! Full bath w/washer/dryer hook ups! Full basement for storage or additional living space! Floating Dock! Shed! **\$525,000.00**

WEBSTER LAKE - 301 Beacon Park! 5 Rm End Corner Garden Unit - One Level Living - No Stairs! 10 Beautiful Acres of Park Lake Grounds w/Fantastic Panoramic Lake Views! 1,100' of Living Space! Ample Room for Year Round Living or as 2nd Home - Summers on the Lake - Winters in Florida! Well Maintained! 2 Bdrms! Master Bath, 2 Baths Total! Beautiful Lakeside Pool, Spectacular Beach, Best on the Lake! Detached Garage! **\$299,000.00!**

WEBSTER LAKE - 65 Bates Point Rd - Eastern Exposure - Beautiful Sunrises! Year Round - Principle Residence - Second Home - Remodel - Tear it Down and Start Anew! The Choice is Yours! Set on a 12,449' Lot, 50x249', 50.7' Waterfront! Plenty of Area for Expansion! Surrounded by Million Dollar Homes the Pallet is Yours to Create! 5+ Room Ranch with Full Walk-out Expandable Lower Level! Open Floor Plan! Appliance Kitchen, Dining Area and Living Room with Panoramic Water Views! 3 Bedrooms! Full Tile Bath! Oil Heat! Screened Porch! Detached Garage! Dock! Quick Closing! Summer is Just Around the Corner - Don't Delay! **\$710,950.00**

WEBSTER LAKE - 33 Loveland Rd! South Pond - Fantastic 19,243' Waterfront Lot with 125' of Prime South Facing Natural Shoreline which Highlights this 5 Room, 2 Bedroom, 3 Season Cottage! Start Your Lake Memories Here! Cute & Cozy, the Way the Lake Use to Be! Open Floor Plan with Lots of Glass and Panoramic Lake Views! Just Enjoy it as is, or Add on to it, or Take it Down and Build Your Dream Home Here! Don't Need the Entire Lot, Subdivide it and Bring the Cost Down! Perfect Gentle Slope to the Water! Town Services! **\$949,900.00**



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DUDLEY - 7 SHINE AVENUE

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New Listing!



WEBSTER - 98 MINEBROOK RD

CAR/BOAT ENTHUSIASTS TAKE NOTE! 1.67 Acre Property Features 3 Buildings & 6 Garage Bays - 8', 10' & 12' Doors! Ample Space for all your TOYS! Close to I-395 & Webster Lake! A MUST SEE! - TOO MANY FEATURES TO LIST! *Cash or Special Financing due to its "Unfinished" status. **\$565,000.**

WEBSTER - 7 BRODEUR AVENUE



RARE FIND ~ TO BE BUILT - SPRAWLING 2,200 SQFT+ RANCH HOME! GARAGE Level 1/2 Acre Lot! FOUNDATION IS IN. Private backyard. GREAT LAYOUT! SOLID HARDWOOD FLOORS THROUGHOUT!

WEBSTER - 10 GRANITE STREET



CONTRACTORS TAKE NOTICE! Single Family, need of Repair, 1,900 SF, 3 BRs, 1-1/2 Baths, 6,200 SF Lot, Oil Heat, City Gas avail. Architectural Character! SOLD "AS IS" - Submit Offers, Cash or Rehab Financing. **\$199,900.**

WEBSTER - 32 MAPLE STREET



Two Family, 2,113 SF, 9 Rms, 2 BRs, 2-1/2 Baths, 16,917 SF Lot. Det'd Garages for 3 Cars Great Opportunity for Owner Occupant! assisted sale **\$297,000.**

LAND: WEBSTER/OXFORD

Oxford - GENERAL BUSINESS ZONED! LAND - 124 - Southbridge Road "ROUTE 20" VACANT LEVEL LOT - To be Subdivided from 124 Southbridge Rd LOT# 3 on a Preliminary Survey Plan will be 39,549 SF (0.905 ACRES) with 96.92' of Road Frontage. High Traffic, High Exposure Location. **\$419,000**
Oxford - 2 Merriam Rd 80+/- Wooded Acres in Oxford & Charlton. **ON DEPOSIT \$329,000.**
Webster - COOPER RD - 3 BUILDABLE LOTS! Water & Sewer Access! **SORRY, SOLD! \$79,900.**

On the shores of Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg

WEBSTER LAKE - 300 KILLDEER ISL.



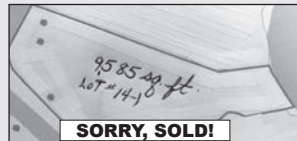
Killdeer Circle! Gently sloping landscape to waters edge. Crystal clear shoreline. Ranch with 5 rooms, 2 bedrooms, 2 baths! Walkout lower level to patio! Garage! **\$650,000.**

TREASURE ISLAND - CONDO



Unit 1404 Marina side! of the Complex - with 2 Boat Slips! 6 rooms, 2-1/2 baths, 2 bedrooms, fireplace, garage, Sandy Beach, Heated Salt Water Pool! **\$549,000.**

WEBSTER LAKE - BLACK POINT ROAD



Buildable Waterfront Corner Lot, 9500 +/- sq ft. Sandy Beach. Town Water & Sewer Connections on the lot. **\$325,000.**

WEBSTER LAKE - 1301 TREASURE ISL.



Quiet Summers & Fall Seasons on Big & Beautiful Webster Lake. Completely updated Hardwood & Ceramic. Center Island Kitchen. 6 Rooms. 2-1/2 Baths. a must see. Overlooking the Marina. 2 Deeded boat slips. assisted sale **\$600,000.**



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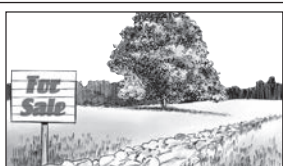
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DUDLEY: Contemporary 27'x54' split, 4 bedrooms, Hardwoods, 2.5 Baths, Family room. Cathedral ceiling, Brady room, 3 season room **2 Lerner Dr ~ \$449,900**



DUDLEY: 9.3 acres, Privacy, 4 room workshop, 2 car garage with man cave, Title 5 completed **126 Old Southbridge Rd ~\$469,900**



AUBURN: 6+ acre lot, Convenient to highways, Private wooded location, Seller will supply perc. **320 South St ~ \$179,900**



WEBSTER: An elegant Victorian designed for entertaining...formal dining room with built in display cases...hardwood flooring French doors leading to a den overlooking the grounds. Guests gathered in the 20'x20' living room for conversation and socializing. Throughout the years the kitchen had been updated with custom cabinets and a Viking gas stove for those for those who enjoyed cooking and informal gathering. A grand stairway leads to the second level and offers 5 bedrooms and two baths. A third level may have been servants quarters at one time or craft rooms. An opportunity exists to do some renovations to the property and restore additional living area. The house is nestled behind landscaping which affords an owner privacy and a potential pool in need of restoration. This location has great highway access to Rtes. 290, 395, 146, Ma. Pike and 12 **38 Klebart Ave ~ \$599,900**

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SPORTS

Warriors win season opener over Shepherd Hill

STURBRIDGE — With the turn of the calendar to April came with it the opening of the high school spring sports season for Tantasqua Regional and Shepherd Hill Regional when the two schools clashed in a girls' varsity lacrosse contest last Friday.

The Warriors raced to a big lead early and never looked back, winning an 18-2 decision.

Tantasqua's goal scorers were as follows:

Kylie McDermott (4), Grace St. Laurent (4), Kaydie O'Neil (4), Kelsie Lucas, Fiona Diemand, Sophia Parker, Stella Buday, Abby Racine, Bridget Bellezza

Shepherd Hill's goal scorers were as follows:

Ashley Dickhaut, Hannah Phillion



Nick Ethier photos

Kelsie Lucas of Tantasqua prepares to launch a deep pass down the field.



Tantasqua's Megan Knox plays a tight defense on Shepherd Hill's Ashley Dickhaut.



Shepherd Hill's Shaylan Cashman (5) and goalie Patrysia Rivera Kwiatkowski attempt to block a shot from Tantasqua's Kelsie Lucas.



Shepherd Hill's Hannah Phillion releases a pass over to her right.



Tantasqua's Grace St. Laurent scoops up a loose ball and begins her sprint down the field.



Alyse Biron of Shepherd Hill fights for positioning against a pair of Tantasqua defenders.



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