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Friday, December 25, 2020



Old Sturbridge Village keeps tradition alive with virtual Gingerbread House Contest

STURBRIDGE — Old Sturbridge Village's (OSV) annual Gingerbread House Contest is a popular feature of the holiday season at Old Sturbridge Village during their Christmas by Candlelight

program. Due to spatial and safety concerns, it is not possible to have the 2020 contest in the same format as previous years. Instead, the Village invited visitors, friends and fans, near and far, to enter virtually.

"Our annual holiday event is still a very festive recreation of the past, and we've kept as many of the popular elements as possible and added new ones" said Director of Public Events, Jim O'Brien. "With innovation and creative thinking we were able to keep the beloved tradition of the Gingerbread House Contest alive."

All are welcome to vote on their favorite entry at www.osv.org through Dec. 30. The winners will be announced at the conclusion of Christmas by Candlelight 2020. Tickets are still available for Christmas by Candlelight but limited due to capacity limits and can be purchased on Old Sturbridge Village's website.

Old Sturbridge Village has received several dozen spectacular entries from all over the country. Contestants were asked to submit photos of their entries in one of four categories, including adult non-professional, adult professional, youth and family. Prizes will be awarded in each category to the top entry. Visitors are able to view the entries on a monitor in the Village's Visitor Center as well as on their website and vote for "Best in Show."

United Way announces MAPFRE Foundation donation

SOUTHBRIDGE — The United Way of South Central Massachusetts (UWSCM) celebrated the holidays and the midway point of the 2020 Annual Campaign with a virtual event on Dec. 17.

Campaign Chairman Jim Croteau announced that the campaign has reached 46 percent of the \$525,000 ambitious goal so far. With some workplace campaigns not completed yet and the hope of end of year personal donations to still come in.

"It's not too late to donate for 2020. With the increase of the \$300 tax deduction for charitable giving, it is our hope that those who haven't donated yet will still do so. This is a tough year for many and donations are needed more than ever so we can support the health, education and financial stability of those in need in the South Worcester County community," Croteau said.

Mr. Croteau also announced the \$80,000 Fundación MAPFRE grant to UWSCM. Fundación MAPFRE, a global nonprofit organization founded by MAPFRE in 1975, awarded the

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Vaccine distribution underway throughout state

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION — Gov. Charlie Baker recently announced updates on the state's distribution efforts of the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Last week, the first doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine arrived in the Commonwealth. By Dec. 15, about 53,620 doses had arrived at 17 hospitals statewide.

Medical personnel are among the first to receive the vaccine this month. In addition to Pfizer's vaccine, the Moderna vaccine will soon be joining

the mix.

"Pending the approval of Moderna's emergency use authorization, the Commonwealth, based on federal guidance, has been told to anticipate 180,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine and 120,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine," read a statement released by Baker's office. "In all, the administration expects the Commonwealth to receive 300,000 doses by the end of December."

The state's Department of Public Health (DPH) will place all vaccine orders on behalf of individ-

Turn To **VACCINE**, page **A9**

Sheriff's Coat Drive brings warmth to Southbridge

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Sheriff was in town for his Annual Winter Coat Drive. On Thursday, Dec. 3, Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis made a special visit to Southbridge to donate and deliver over one hundred brand new winter jackets, protective masks and warm socks to Tradewinds Clubhouse and House of Destiny Church to help those in need stay warm during the winter season.

"Especially during the holiday season, it is vitally important to remember those who may be struggling during this challenging time. Instead of cancelling our annual winter coat drive due to the constraints and concerns of COVID, our department doubled down on our commitment to help those in need during the cold winter months. After months of hard work securing community grants and donations, we are able to donate, deliver and distribute almost three thousand brand new winter jackets to the elderly, veterans and underserved communities throughout Worcester County. I would like to take this time to thank our tremendous coat drive co-sponsors, Central Mass Agency on Aging and all of our community sponsors for their overwhelming kindness and generosity to help make this year's Winter Coat Drive possible. Our goal is for everyone to have a safe, healthy and warm holiday season," said Evangelidis.

Both of the Southbridge non-profit organizations were grateful for the Sheriff's donation.

"I cannot thank Sheriff Evangelidis enough for thinking of us during this challenging time. These beautiful winter coats will go a long way to help our members, many who are outside all day working as kettle bell ringers, stay warm this holiday



Courtesy

Sheriff Evangelidis recently paid a special visit to Tradewinds Clubhouse in Southbridge for the Sheriff's Annual Winter Coat Drive. There to receive the donation of brand new winter jackets, warm socks and protective masks are Tradewinds Program Director Samantha Aikey, Program Coordinator Ashley Lester, Member Jay Malone, Sheriff Lew Evangelidis, Member Shirley Blanchette, Unit Coordinator Deb Aikey, Member Gayle Frowein & Member Ross Flowers. Many of the Tradewinds Clubhouse Members work all day outside as kettle bell ringers for the Salvation Army during the holiday season and were grateful for the winter coat donation.

season," said Tradewinds Clubhouse Program Director Samantha Aikey.

"Thank you so much to Sheriff Evangelidis for bringing us these coats to bless our community.

We appreciate the Sheriff taking his time to deliver them and entrusting us with the task to hand them out," said House of Destiny Church Pastor

Turn To **COAT DRIVE**, page **A9**

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\$336,000, 19 Brookfield Rd, Cheney, Robert C, to Samuel, Anthony C, and Samuel, Dawn S.

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\$550,000, 19 Island Rd, Les, Paul J, and Les, Theresa A, to Ernest M Riley T, and Riley, Ernest M.

\$531,500, 53 Mashapaug Rd, Digeronimo, Steven M, and Digeronimo, Jeffrey W, to Kogan, Howard, and Goldberg, Annette.

\$280,000, 112 Wales Rd, Ledger, Casey A, to Marino, Patrick.

\$267,000, 19 Forest Dr, Ortega, Mandi L, to O'Brien, Sean J.

\$235,000, 10 Hisgen Rd, Johnson, Theresa, to Tavernier, Joseph, and Tavernier, Kelli.

\$229,900, 168 Stafford Rd, Wilson, Joel, to Grimes, Adam D.

\$201,000, 5 Birch Dr, Brown, Betty A, and Lynn, Barbara H, to Coolins, Joseph T.

STURBRIDGE

\$537,000, 73 Whittemore Rd, Countryside Hm Bldrs Inc, to Brown, Joseph.

\$525,000, 22 Preserve Way, Ogle, Stephen J, and Ogle, Marissa A, to Durkee, John W, and Durkee, Elizabeth A.

\$500,000, 90 Fairview Park Rd, Lemay, David C, and Lemay, Jennifer M, to Vanasse, Kerri A, and Vanasse, Dennis J.

\$369,900, 371 New Boston Rd, Diverdi Builders Inc, to Chamberlain, Andrea J, and Chamberlain, William H.

\$310,000, 6 Fairground Rd, Property 1 LLC, to Nichols, Sarah J, and Nichols, Bonnie L.

\$240,000, 28 Camp Rd, Jiuding USA Inc, to VanGerven, Virgilus B, and VanGerven, Kim A.

\$240,000, 704 Main St, Jiuding USA Inc, to VanGerven, Virgilus B, and VanGerven, Kim A.

\$196,000, 15 Bates Hl, Goodrow, Michael, to Folkes, Matthew, and Malizia, Julia.

First vaccine distribution expected to begin this week at Harrington

SOUTHBRIDGE — Harrington HealthCare System (HHC) is set to open a central facility to provide COVID-19 vaccinations at the Southbridge Community Center located at 153 Chestnut St. HHC received its first shipment of the FDA-approved vaccine produced by Pfizer today and will begin providing those vaccinations exclusively to all Harrington HealthCare System staff beginning as early as tomorrow.

HHC will begin making the vaccine available to others in the community over the weeks and months ahead in keeping with a phased distribution plan set out by Gov. Baker, the Massachusetts Department of Health and the Massachusetts Vaccine Advisory Group, which is made up of local government and healthcare leaders, the faith community, community organizations and others from across the state.

“Receiving this first shipment of vaccines here at Harrington HealthCare is a huge step towards easing and eventually ending the

effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in our community,” said HHC President and CEO Ed Moore. “Vaccinating our staff first will help to ensure a healthy work-force as we work to then provide the vaccine to the rest of the community over the coming months. As additional shipments of the vaccine are received at Harrington, our next step will be to coordinate with the leadership of local first responders, local nursing home facilities and other healthcare organizations to provide vaccinations to the staff and residents of those facilities in the next month or so.”

Massachusetts’ phased vaccine distribution plan calls for healthcare employees, first responders and staff and residents of long-term care and congregate living facilities to receive the vaccine first. The second phase is expected to occur from February to April, when other essential employees, high-risk individuals and all adults ages 65 and over can receive the vaccine. The third and final phase, when all

members of the public can receive the vaccine, is expected to begin in April.

“We’re working closely with the state to implement the phased distribution of the COVID vaccine in the communities we serve over the next several months, and we will continue to communicate to the public about when, where and how they can receive the vaccine as we move through each phase,” Moore said. “In the meantime, we cannot stress enough how important it is for everyone to continue to wear masks, stay at least 6 feet away from others outside your household, and wash your hands often. No one tool alone is going to stop this pandemic. We all need to remain vigilant in continuing to follow all of the proper precautions in order to protect ourselves and others.”

For further information on the COVID-19 vaccine, the Massachusetts COVID vaccine distribution plan, and other COVID-19 updates, visit mass.gov/COVID.

QCC to offer free healthcare training in the New Year

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College’s Workforce Development and Continuing Education Center (WDC) is offering free, grant-funded Nurse Assistant/Home Health Aide and Administrative Medical Professional programs in 2021.

The free 120-hour Nurse Assistant / Home Health Aide Training program provides students with the necessary theory and entry-level skills to safely provide basic nursing assistant care in a long-term care facility, acute care facility or home health care agency. Upon successful completion of the program, students will be eligible to take the Massachusetts Certified Nurse Assistant Competency Exam. A free virtual information session will be

held Jan. 5, 2021 via Zoom to learn more. Space is limited. For eligibility requirements or to reserve a seat in the information session, email QCC instructor Jo Sundin at jsundin@qcc.mass.edu. This program is funded through the Executive Office of Health and Human Services Nursing and Allied Health Initiative, SNAP Path to Work.

The Administrative Medical Professional program will prepare students for a career as a Medical Administrative Assistant in a variety of healthcare settings. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the projected employment growth rate for Medical Administrative Assistants from 2019 to 2029 is 19 percent more than the 4 percent average growth

rate for all occupations. In QCC’s program, students will learn the roles and responsibilities of a healthcare team, interpersonal communication, medical records management and compliance with HIPAA, as well as diagnostic and procedural coding. The course will also include lessons in how to handle medical emergencies. After successfully completing the course, students are eligible to sit for the National Health Career Association’s (NHA) Certified Medical Administrative Assistant Certification Exam. To learn more, email Ms. Sundin at jsundin@qcc.mass.edu.

For more information about QCC, contact Josh Martin, Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-7513 or jmartin@qcc.mass.edu



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Bay State Savings Bank appoints Rachel G. Hall Assistant VP, Human Resources

WORCESTER — Bay State Savings Bank is proud to announce Rachel G. Hall has been appointed Assistant Vice President, Human Resources at the Bank's 28 Franklin St. location in Worcester. In this role, Ms. Hall will be responsible for the oversight of the Bank's human resource function including salary and benefits administration, employee development, recruitment and training.

Prior to joining Bay State Savings Bank, Ms. Hall was employed by the New England Center for Children where she served as a Human Resources Specialist. She holds an MBA from Assumption University and is certified SHRM-SCP from the Society of Human Resource Management.

"Rachel joins Bay State Savings Bank with valuable experience in the Human Resources field, particularly in employee benefits, that will help the Bank further meet the needs of our employees," said Bay State Savings Bank Senior Vice President, Diane Giampa. "The experience she has will also help us in repositioning our staff so that customer expectations can continue to not only be met, but exceeded. We are so happy to welcome Rachel to our team!"



Rachel Hall

Courtesy

Ms. Hall volunteers at various events in the community geared towards children and looks forward to continuing her volunteer work as soon as the pandemic is behind us. She currently lives in Whitinsville.



ACCURACY WATCH

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

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

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

Police seek identities of suspects in recent thefts

STURBRIDGE – Police are asking for the community's help in identifying a pair of larceny suspects.

The Dec. 11 incident occurred at Sephora in JCPenney at approximately 2:30 p.m. A witness was able

to take a photo of the vehicle the suspects left in, which was waiting outside the store with an unknown operator.

Police said the vehicle is possibly a Ford or Lincoln SUV with a

Connecticut license plate. Security camera images of the suspects are available on the SPD's Facebook page.

If you have any information on the incident, please contact the Sturbridge Police Department at 508-347-2525.

Pamala Holt joins Goodrich Insurance Agency

We are excited to welcome Pamala Holt from Dudley MA to our team of insurance professionals at Goodrich Insurance Agency in Milton MA.

Pam has over 20 years of insurance expertise and will be our Personal Lines Account Manager. Pam joined our office family on November 23, 2020 and will be working remotely from Dudley and in our main office in Milton. Help us to give Pam a warm welcome! We look forward to providing our current client and new clients with professional, personal, knowledgeable valued client services you expect from Goodrich Insurance Agency!



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Friday's Child



Aleeeanna and Savannah
Age 14 and 17

Hi! Our names are Aleeeanna and Savannah and we would like to be adopted together!

Aleeeanna, who likes to go by Alee, is a fourteen year old girl of Caucasian and Hispanic descent. Alee speaks both Spanish and English. Alee is a funny, sassy and outgoing teenager. She enjoys watching television, being outdoors, and running. Alee also spending time with her sister and friends. She is an engaging girl and does well in school with support from school staff.

Savannah is a seventeen year old girl of Caucasian and Hispanic descent. Savannah, similar to her sister, speaks English and Spanish. Savannah is a kind, easygoing, and creative teenager. She likes to help out around the home, spend time with her friends, and watch television. In school, Savannah does best with the academic support she receives.

Savannah and Alee are legally freed for adoption. The siblings will thrive with a family that is patient, understanding, and supportive and have the ability to meet them where they are at. Savannah and Alee would do best in a home with older or younger children as long as they are placed together and in separate rooms. They would prefer a family that will help them maintain contact with biological dad.

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The process to adopt a child from foster care requires training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you, and if so, to help connect you with a child or sibling group that your family will be a good match for. To learn more about adoption from foster care, call the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) at 617-6273 or visit www.mareinc.org. The sooner you call, the sooner a waiting child will have a permanent place to call home.



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EDITORIAL

Making SMART resolutions

With New Year's Day just around the corner, we, like many, are thinking about resolutions. We could debate that September is actually the start of a new year given the clean slate of grades to start a new school year, but a new year is a new year, and not all of us are still in school.

More than half of all resolutions end in failure, but we like the fact that generally, we, as people, seek to improve ourselves and our lives. One reason resolutions fail is that a person just hasn't chosen the right one, something that has meaning. Many people fail before the end of January.

A resolution isn't the right one for you if it's too vague, if it's someone else's expectations for you, or if you have no plan.

The acronym SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound) can be used to help facilitate your success. If you make a specific goal of losing a certain amount of weight, your goal will be easier to obtain. If you set a time limit, (baby steps) by saying I will lose one pound each week, your plan becomes more effective. As a side note if you haven't seen 'What About Bob' starring Bill Murray, you must.

We all like to see progress and to see it fast. One way is to make something measurable. If you want to scale back on something, say using social media, you can use the 'see how much time you've spent on Facebook' setting to watch your usage go down. Or if you've set out to watch as many old classic movies or read as many John Grisham novels as you can this year, you can make a check list, and as you finish each one, check it off the list. Or bring an empty bookcase into your house, and as you finish a book, pop it on the shelf.

Pick a goal that is achievable. By taking a leap that is too big, you might find yourself in over your head and likely frustrated. Having a goal of saving more money than you can will leave you hopeless; however, if you can put away \$50 per month, then you're on to something.

Choose a resolution that is relevant. Doing something for the right reasons is key. A relevant goal is a lasting goal. If you want to do more research on your family's ancestry, so that your family will have the information for years to come, then what you're doing has meaning to not only you but to the people you care about. Choosing to bring others in on your goal is never a bad idea either. We all need a coach at times.

Using a timeline for your goals should be realistic. Knocking off small goals along the way will lead you to your larger goals and will also give you a chance to create your new habit.

Learning something new is one of the most refreshing things about being alive. Being able to continually grow and morph into the best versions of ourselves is what life is all about. The more you enjoy, the more meaning you get out of life.

As the poet T.S. Eliot said, "For last year's words belong to last year's language, and next year's words await another voice."

OPINION

IEWS AND COMMENTARY FROM STURBRIDGE, BRIMFIELD, HOLLAND AND WALES

De-Stressing Strategies Promote Good Cheer



TAKE THE HINT
KAREN TRAINOR

The holidays are around the corner, and despite the usual merriment of the season, this year is (not surprisingly) different. The CDC reports that symptoms of anxiety and depression have increased considerably due to COVID fears and since social restrictions have been in place. In fact, a recent study revealed that 27.8 percent of U.S. adults had depression symptoms compared to 8.5 percent before the pandemic.

With these figures in mind, the following strategies to combat stress and depression are offered. Some ideas have been previously published in this column, but bear repeating.

Read on for a variety of natural ways to halt high anxiety and greet the holidays with good cheer!

Note: Consult with your health care professional before taking any herbs, as they could have dangerous side effects.

Massage therapy: Did you know when you are anxious, your body produces an abundance of cortisol, a stress hormone? Massage has been proven to lowers cortisol levels. In addition, it relieves muscle tension caused by anxiety. In fact, according to a research study by the Touch Research Institute, experiencing a 15 minute massage for just twice a week can lower both anxiety and depression levels.

Carbs are calming: Complex carbohydrates such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and starchy foods increase the amount of serotonin in your brain, a powerful neurotransmitter that boosts your mood, calms you down and is beneficial in reducing overall feelings of anxiety/depression related disorders. Studies also show pasta, which is rich in complex carbohydrates can help relieve anxiety and help fight depression.

Meditation mode: Meditation can be a powerful weapon in the fight against stress, and can work to ward off a panic attacks. Meditation and proper breathing can help slow the heart rate and calm nerves. In fact, medical studies reveal meditation may also ease anxiety for those who not only suffer from anxiety disorders, but for those who have obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) as well. A quick calming trick is to close your eyes and breathe slowly and deeply, focusing on the breaths.

Writer Carol Krucoff of the Seattle Times offered this advice on breathing to relieve stress and panic: "Slow, deep breathing is a powerful anti-stress technique. When you bring air down into the lower portion of the lungs, where the oxygen exchange is most efficient, heart rate slows, blood pressure decreases, muscles relax, anxiety eases and the mind calms."

Chew away stress: Can chewing gum reduce stress? According

to a NASA research it can! In a NASA-funded study, scientists from Wheeling Jesuit University monitored the responses of 25 college students during simulated driving scenarios. The volunteers reported that peppermint lowered their feelings of fatigue or anxiety by 20%. Peppermint and cinnamon each decreased frustration by 25%, increased alertness by 30%, and made the ride seem 30% shorter. Don't like candy or gum? Buy peppermint or cinnamon air fresheners or car diffusers for the same effect.

Paint RX for panic: The color yellow is not only bright, it's a mood booster too! Just be aware yellow a little goes a long way, and too much bright yellow can over stimulate the nervous system. Or try painting your walls orange, or at least a workable shade of orange, such as peach or terra cotta. Orange is the top mood booster and can dispel anxiety, according to experts. Painting a room a light green is therapeutic for tired, stressed nerves. And studies show bubble gum pink and cool blue are proven stress relievers.

Herbal Help: Ylang ylang has been touted as an anti panic treatment. When Ylang ylang essential oil is added to a warm bath, feelings of depression can literally be washed away!

Lemon balm: Lemon balm is a relaxing herb that reduces restlessness, anxiety and irritability. It is also used to treat anxiety that causes digestive problems.

Note: Do not use if you have thyroid problems.

Passionflower: Passionflower is an effective depressant of the central nervous system which translates into a relaxing anti-anxiety effect. It not only helps general anxiety, but is especially touted as a remedy for nightmares and nocturnal anxiety.

Note: Those taking a MAO inhibitor should not take passionflower.

Skullcap: An herb with fewer side effects, Skullcap helps calm the "worrier" who has racing thoughts and constant fret. This herb is useful for all types of anxiety but has also been hailed as an aid for stress caused by hormonal imbalances in women.

German Chamomile: A common garden herb, Chamomile is a muscle relaxer that has mild sedating properties. Chamomile tea has long been used to relieve stress and promote sleep. It is also used to treat anxiety in sufferers young and old.

Note: Those who have allergies to ragweed, chrysanthemums or asters, should not use Chamomile.

Valerian: Valerian is one of the most popular anti-stress herbs. The herb contains valepotriates, which work to calm anxiety, much the way

Turn To TRAINOR, page A9

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reach out to someone who's quit smoking

To the Editor:
This holiday season, I'd like to remind readers to thank a co-worker, friend or family member who has quit vaping, smoking, or using other tobacco products. 2020 has been a year full of stresses for many of us, and staying tobacco free may have been hard for people you know. This is especially significant now since smoking and vaping may harm the lung's ability to fight off infections, including COVID-19. Nicotine is the very addictive substance in tobacco, and many vape products. It takes most people with a nicotine addiction several tries to quit for good. So reach out to those who have conquered this addiction. Let them know you are proud of how hard they're working to better their wellbeing. Thank them for improving their health and the health of the people around them. The holidays are also a great time to support your friends and loved ones who are trying to quit vaping, smoking or other tobacco products. Even if they have tried quitting in the past, encourage them to keep trying - they

learn something new every time they try to quit.

Smokers and vapers can call 1-800-QUT NOW (1-800-784-8669) for FREE coaching from the Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline through phone and web, 24 hours each day, seven days a week (except Christmas) or enroll online through makesmokinghistory.org. Adults who work with a coach can receive up to eight weeks of free nicotine patches, gum or lozenges (with medical eligibility). And, this year, the Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline is also offering up to \$50 in gift cards to Massachusetts residents who use menthol tobacco products and participate in coaching services!

Quitting is hard—give thanks to someone in your life for quitting or for trying to quit. Every email, text message, phone call, or encouraging word makes a difference.

Sincerely,
Tina Grosowsky
Central MA Tobacco Free Community Partnership

Investment lessons from 2020



FINANCIAL FOCUS
JEFF BURDICK

As the year draws to a close, it's fair to say that we've all learned something about the social, political, physical and environmental forces that have affected everyone. And, in some ways, our lives will be changed, perhaps permanently. But as an investor, what lessons can you learn from 2020?

Here are some to consider:

- The markets look ahead. Here's something many investors discovered in 2020: Investment prices don't always move in the same direction as the overall economy. This might not have seemed apparent right after the COVID-19 pandemic struck in mid-February, as the overall economy and the stock market took big hits. But just about five weeks later, the markets began a rally that lasted several months. During this time, the economy also recovered somewhat, but still remains on weak footing.

- What can explain this discrepancy between the markets and economic activity? Essentially, economic numbers, such as the unemployment rate and gross domestic product (GDP), reflect what's happening today, but the markets are always looking toward tomorrow, which means they are anticipating a stronger economic recovery and the results that come with it, such as greater corporate earnings in 2021. No one can say for sure what the future holds, but you can usually know the market's opinion by its performance.

- Opportunities will always exist for investors. Although the coronavirus seems unprecedented, the equity markets have rebounded from many crises before it. From war to global financial meltdowns, the market has seen it all. But even at the height of these events, when the markets might be most affected, individual segments or industries can do well.

- For example, in the current environment, when many people have been forced to work and shop from home, and get their entertainment online, it's probably not surprising that some parts of the technology sector have seen their economic activity grow, along with their stock prices. Here's the key point: Investment opportunities always exist, especially in times of market stress - and smart investors will find them and incorporate them into their portfolios in a way that's appropriate for their goals and risk tolerance.

- Patience and discipline can pay dividends. As mentioned above, the stock market dropped sharply in the weeks immediately following the pandemic, but then gained steadily for months afterward. Investors who tried to "cut losses" and exited the market likely did so at the wrong time and missed out on the beginning of the upturn. Unfortunately, this is not uncommon - investors who overreact to market declines often find themselves on the investment sidelines just when a new rally begins. Rather than being reactive in this way, you may be better off sticking with a long-term investment strategy, and buying and selling investments only when it makes sense for your situation, such as when you need to diversify your portfolio.

- For many reasons, it's unlikely that we'll see anything exactly like 2020 again. But some of the investment lessons we learned are applicable in every year - so keep them in mind for 2021 and beyond.

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

Do-it-yourself holiday centerpiece



Melinda Myers

It is possible to create a festive holiday centerpiece crafted from materials found in winter gardens.



GARDEN MOMENTS

MELINDA MYERS

Dress up your holiday meals with a centerpiece crafted from greens, colorful stems and seed heads collected from your garden. Or purchase fresh materials you need from your favorite garden center or florist.

Most gardeners spend some time gathering a few blossoms and creating a bouquet or arrangement for their summer gatherings. Don't let winter stop you from crafting a festive centerpiece from materials collected from your gardens this time of year.

Start by gathering some greens. The fan-like sprays of arborvitae, blue-green sprigs of juniper as well

as branches of yews, boxwood, pines and spruces can provide all the greenery you need.

Now look for items with interesting color or shape. Red and yellow twig dogwoods and paper bark birch add festive color to any arrangement. The interesting shapes of curly willow, contorted filbert and fantail willow provide intriguing form.

Next gather cones, berries, and fruits. Look for orange and red rose hips, blue berry-like cones of junipers, sweet gum seedpods, and alder's cone-like fruit. Gather a few evergreen cones to include in or around your arrangement.

Look for potential adornments that are lingering in the perennial garden. Coneflower, rudbeckia, and allium seed heads can add a bit of structure to your arrangement. Gather a few milkweed, balloon plant and lotus pods. And don't worry, your milkweed plants will return for next year's visiting monarchs. Honor their natural color or add a

bit of bling with some gold, silver, or red paint.

Include a few shiny ornaments as needed. Glittered stems, ribbons and candles can add festive color to nature's beauty in your centerpiece.

Visit your favorite florist or craft store for needed supplies. Pick up some floral foam to secure the stems. Cut it to shape to fit the size and shape of the container.

Moisten the foam before inserting fresh greens and cut flowers. Set the block of foam on top of a basin of water and let it sink. This allows all the air spaces to fill with water, ensuring your flowers and greens have the water they need. Use high density foam when working with evergreen boughs and branches.

No need to moisten the foam when using dried and artificial material. This material makes it easier to create your arrangement.

Consider purchasing a few seasonal flowers for added color for your special event. These can be placed

directly in the floral foam or water filled florist tubes set in the arrangement. Simply remove faded flowers and replace as needed.

Or use miniature poinsettias, kalanchoes and cyclamen for longer lasting living color. Tuck them in the bed of greens or use them to decorate each place setting. Check the soil moisture frequently as the small pots dry out quickly.

The possibilities are endless, and the results are sure to brighten your spirits no matter how you are safely celebrating this holiday season.

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

Southbridge starts vaccine rollout

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHBRIDGE – Last week, Southbridge joined the currently short list of communities who began using a local emergency dispensing site for the Covid-19 vaccine. It started giving the first of two doses to Harrington Hospital staff and town first responders at the Community Center.

According to Fire Chief Paul Normandin, the town got a little less than 1000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine, an amount that won't cover all of the people in that group. But he noted there is no mandate to take it, so about a third of Harrington's staff have so far opted out.

Under the state Department of Public Health's online guidelines, the actual list for Phase 1 is longer. It specifies the priority order as being: healthcare workers directly working with or exposed to Covid patients; police, fire and EMS crews; long-term care facilities, rest homes and assisted living facilities; congregate care settings (including corrections and shelters); home-based healthcare workers and healthcare workers doing non-Covid care. This phase is estimated to run through February.

In Phase 2, the priority order is: people with "2+ comorbidities (high risk for Covid-19 complications);" education, transit, grocery, utility, food and agriculture, sanitation, public works and public health workers; Adults 65+; and "individuals with one comorbidity." In medical-speak, "comorbidity" simply means any chronic illness or physical condition. That phase is slated to run through April.

In Phase 3, the vaccine becomes available to the general public, sometime after April. But Normandin

noted "nothing is set in stone yet."

In all cases, the vaccine requires two doses given 21 days apart, and recipients will be "monitored for 10-15 minutes to be sure there's no adverse effects," Normandin said. People who get the first dose are automatically registered and scheduled for the second dose. All of them will be given at the Community Center, but the town does "have a back-up plan, a couple of them actually" in case something forces that site to close, he added.

"We're in a good spot right now," he told the Council Dec 14. "Let's keep moving forward."

Town Manager Michael McCall agreed, saying Southbridge seems to be "way ahead" of most towns and might even be "the first one to have a site like this." He urged citizens, however, to be patient, noting this round of vaccination is not for the public.

The state's plan projects at least one other vaccine will soon be available. Pfizer's received FDA emergency use approval Dec 11, and Moderna's version was endorsed Dec 14, but due to go before the review panel Dec 17, after our holiday deadline. Usually, vaccines and other drugs go through a four-stage testing process in which they're tested on an increasingly large and diverse pool of people, but FDA authorization enables these vaccines to skip the fourth stage and go straight to public distribution.

According to the "exclusion" list at <https://www.pfizer.com/science/find-a-trial/nct04368728-0> – that means it hasn't yet been tested on certain groups of people. The most notable of them are pregnant or breastfeeding women; people who have severe allergic reactions (an

issue that came up in Britain among the first recipients, when two medicines went into anaphylactic shock but survived); immunocompromised people and those receiving immunosuppressant therapy; those who experience prolonged bleeding; and those with a vaguely defined "other medical or psychiatric condition including recent (within the past year) or active suicidal ideation/behavior or laboratory abnormality that may increase the risk of study participation or, in the investigator's judgment, make the participant inappropriate for the study."

The Pfizer Phase 2 and 3 results were published Dec 10 in the New England Journal of Medicine by a team led by Dr Fernando Polack, most of whom are Pfizer employees and/or stockholders, according to their disclosure forms. His team wrote they were reporting on "safety and efficacy," but not "vaccine immunogenicity and the durability of the immune response to immunization" because that data is still being collected.

In plain English, they looked at side effects reported during the testing and what the data shows about the difference in how many people contracted symptomatic and severe Covid cases between the placebo and vaccine groups in the study.

Slightly more than 21,700 people received injections in each group, with eight Covid cases in the vaccine group and 162 in the placebo group after the second dose, plus 1 in the vaccine group and 9 in the placebo group after the first dose. They define that as "95 percent effective in preventing Covid-19," and note the same rate was seen among the various ethnic, gender, age and body mass groups.

Their charts show the most com-

mon vaccination side effects were injection site pain (66-83 percent depending on age and dose), fatigue (34-59 percent), headache (25-52 percent), muscle pain (14-37 percent), plus lower frequencies of chills, muscle and/or joint pain, diarrhea and vomiting.

"Systemic events including fever and chills were observed with the first 1 to 2 days after vaccination and resolved shortly thereafter," they write. One of the rarer ones, swollen lymph nodes, occurred in a few dozen people but "generally resolved within 10 days, [and] is likely to have resulted from a robust vaccine-elicited immune response." Although they cite a handful of still-rarer events, including four cases of fevers of 104 degrees or more, they note the sample size "is not large enough to detect less common adverse events reliably." Additionally, although it had a small number of age 12-16 participants, it couldn't determine effectiveness for them or younger children.

"These data do not address whether vaccination prevents asymptomatic infection; a serologic end point that can detect a history of infection regardless of whether symptoms were present (SARS-CoV-2 N-binding antibody) will be reported later," they write. "Furthermore, given the high vaccine efficacy and the low number of vaccine breakthrough cases, potential establishment of a correlate of protection has not been feasible at the time of this report."

The full text is available at <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2034577>.

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

OBITUARY

Walter R. Snyder, Jr., 89



CHARLTON - Robert H. Paulhus, 93, of Masonic Home Rd., formerly of Fiskdale, passed away on Monday, Dec. 14th, in the Overlook Masonic Health Center, Charlton, after an illness.

His beloved wife of 43 years, Shirley J. (Julian) Paulhus died in March of this year. His first wife Annett (Murphy) Paulhus died in 1973. He leaves a son, Donald R. Paulhus and his wife Cindy of Brimfield; a step-son, Bernard E. Tetreault and his wife Sandy of Sturbridge; his step-daughter, Becky-Lynn Soules and her husband Michael of Dalton; and seven grandchildren, eight great grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. Robert was predeceased by his brother, Lionel Paulhus of Reims, France. He was born in Worcester the son of Leo and Adrienne (Desrosiers) Paulhus. He honorably served in the US Navy during WWII.

Robert worked for 38 years as a setup man for the American Optical Company in Southbridge and as a school custo-

dian for 10 years before retiring in 1992. He was a member of the Quarter Century Club at the American Optical Company. Robert was a life time member of the Franco American War Veterans. He enjoyed trips to Florida, Hampton Beach and Cape Cod. Robert loved golf and was an avid Yankees fan.

The family would like to thank the staff of the Overlook for the wonderful care and compassion they gave to Robert.

His funeral Mass will be held Saturday, Dec. 19th, at 10:00 am in St. Anne's Church, 16 Church St., Sturbridge. A Calling hour will be held on Saturday, Dec 19th, in the Daniel T. Morrill Funeral Home, 130 Hamilton St., Southbridge, from 8:30 to 9:30 am prior to the Mass. Burial in Oak Ridge Cemetery will be private and held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Overlook Masonic Home, 88 Masonic Home Rd., Charlton, MA 01507. www.morrillfuneralhom.com



QCC offers hands-on learning experience to students from the safety of their homes

WORCESTER — At Quinsigamond Community College, hands-on learning is an integral part of student success. Students who have the skill sets that enable them to hit the ground running in a new job are more valued when they enter the workforce. Thus, when QCC transitioned to remote instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the College's programs developed in-home, hands-on learning modules for students to continue this important educational training.

"QCC is dedicated to providing quality education and this in-home learning module approach is a method that allows students hands-on experiences they would otherwise not be able to have in a remote environment," said Betty Lauer, dean for the School of Business, Engineering & Technology.

Students in courses that ranged from electronics engineering technology to computer systems engineering technology, and food service, have been able to experience hands-on learning from the safety of their homes, mimicking activities they would have normally performed in an on-campus lab setting.

"We have been reviewing our laboratory work to determine what projects can be done remotely, then modifying those projects so that students can do them at home. This is an iterative process to identify the best combinations of tasks and interaction levels for different students," said Jacob Longacre, professor of Electronics Engineering Technology.

In some of QCC's electronics courses, students received a learning module that included both instruments and components. The components enabled students to build simple circuits and the instruments enabled them to make various electrical measurements. Students in the embedded microcontrollers course received components that included an Arduino programmable microcontroller, small electric motors, LEDs (single color and red-green-blue), pushbuttons, switches, a joystick, temperature sensors, and light sensors.

"With these components students can unleash their creativity and build program projects that involve controlling light (blinking, flashing, fading, multicolor), sound, motion and temperature," said James Heffernan, professor of Electronics Engineering Technology.

Other electronics students received "breadboard" devices used to make up temporary circuits, as well as myDAQ, a Student Data Acquisition Device. The myDAQ is an interface that includes a comprehensive set of plug-and-play, computer-based lab instruments for hands-on student learning outside the lab.

"The myDAQ is a bit like a Swiss army knife and allows students

to do a variety of problem solving and experimentation at home," Mr. Longacre said.

In the food services programs, faculty and staff reviewed curriculum requirements and selected recipes for take-home learning modules, which demonstrated specific learning concepts and provided key academic knowledge and skills development. The modules contained non-perishable food items, small kitchen tools and miscellaneous items to enable students to work from their homes. They were mailed to students, or students were able to pick them up at QCC at the Senior Center, where the College's Hospitality Restaurant Management programs are housed. Students either obtained their own perishable food items or picked them up from QCC.

An example of a key learning concept in food service is the importance of cleaning protocols, required under ServSafe requirements. In the food service module, students received a "glow" powder that they sprinkled on a food prep surface they had cleaned. Then, using a mini black light also provided in the take home packet, they could see any particles that remained on the surface.

Additionally, during the upcoming Spring semester, manufacturing students will be taking certificate exams for Precision Measurement in Associate Professor Lee Duerden's quality manufacturing course. The students will practice on measuring equipment they will receive in their "Metrology Tool Chest" that contains tools such as:

- Tape measure
- Rulers
- Steel rules
- Calipers
- Micrometers
- Combination sets
- Dial Gages
- Bore Gages

"QCC has been lucky to expand its capability and equipment in this area. Just packaging all this equipment up has proved challenging, but providing hands-on training is essential for the successful completion of this manufacturing course. It has been an incredible achievement from QCC and its faculty to provide this equipment that is so necessary to continue hands-on learning during this pandemic," Mr. Duerden said, adding that the tool chests will be returned upon completion of the course.

"We expect to continue using this method of learning in the future. Students have really embraced the idea of learning in their own space and many students have excelled in this learning style environment," Ms. Lauer said.

For more information about QCC, contact Josh Martin, Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-7513 or jmartin@qcc.mass.edu.

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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DONATION

continued from page A1

grant to support children and family programs in the region.

"MAPFRE Insurance has been partnering with the United Way since the 1990's. We are proud to collaborate with the United Way South Central MA to support them in helping those at risk," said MAPFRE Assistant Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility Linda Johnson, who spoke at the event.

"Having this wonderful collaboration with MAPFRE Fundación is new for me personally, as they have previously worked with the United Way of Webster and Dudley," said UWSCM Executive Director Mary O'Coin. "We are so grateful to have merged and thankful now to experience the support of MAPFRE for our entire region. I look forward to continuing our relationship for both the volunteerism of MAPFRE employees and receiving the financial support from such a global corporation."

Another guest speaker was Liz Hamilton, Executive Director of the

Boys & Girls Clubs of Worcester and Webster-Dudley. The B&G Club of Webster-Dudley's Remote Learning and Afterschool program is supported by the United Way and is one of the programs MAPFRE's grant will directly impact.

Ms. Hamilton stated, "If it were not for the support of the United Way, we would not have been able to open our doors when our kids and community needed us most. We are grateful for the United Way grant which helped us stay open throughout the pandemic and provide vital services such as food, emergency childcare and learning hub programming while schools are remote. The United Way has stood by us every step of this unprecedented year."

The United Way of South Central Massachusetts serves the communities of Charlton, Dudley, Southbridge, Sturbridge and Charlton and is located at 176 Main St., Suite 400, Southbridge, MA 01550. To learn more about programs and donate, visit www.uwscm.org, follow on Facebook @UWSCM or call (508) 765-5491.

COAT DRIVE

continued from page A1

Esteban Carrasco.

In addition to the Southbridge stops, the Sheriff also made a special delivery of warm winter jackets, socks and protective masks to

Webster-Dudley Food Share that day.

"It has been a challenging year for so many. With the donation of these beautiful winter jackets and warm socks we are happy to help the Southbridge community in this way," said Evangelidis.

TRAINOR

continued from page A6

the drug Valium does, but without the addictive qualities.

Note: You should not take Valerian if you have thyroid problems, adrenal fatigue, chronic exhaustion or depression.

Did you know?

- Calcium, magnesium, and B vitamins are hailed for relieving anxiety symptoms.

- Fresh peaches contain a natural sedative that aids in reducing stress and anxiety.

- Keeping your body in balance by eating a well rounded diet and taking a daily multivitamin helps ward off stress.

- Laughter provides both a physical and emotional release. It relieves tension, stress, anxiety, anger and depression.

- If you're trying to reduce stress, be sure to avoid extremely low fat diets because some fat is needed to fight depression and anxiety.

- To keep stress at bay avoid (or reduce) consumption of alcohol, sugar and caffeine.

- Just 20 minutes of relaxation or doing something you enjoy each day

has shown to restore your mental health and lower overall anxiety level.

- Aromatherapy can soothe frazzled nerves. Add some essential oils to a warm bath to induce calmness. Sandalwood, Lavender and Rose are a few "stress busting" scents to try.

**

Win Dinner for Two at the Publick House

Your tips can win you a great dinner for two at the historic Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge! Simply send in a hint to be entered into a random drawing. One winner per month will win a fabulous three course dinner for two at the renowned restaurant, located on Route 131 across the town common in historic Sturbridge. Because I'm in the business of dispensing tips, not inventing them (although I can take credit for some), I'm counting on you readers out there to share your best helpful hints!

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

DOT renumbering highway exits

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION - If you find yourself lost on familiar highways over the next few months, there's no need to get a new GPS program or consult a map. As part of a statewide project, highway exits across the Commonwealth are in the process of being renumbered.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is converting all exit numbers on freeways to a mile-based numbering system. The project is a requirement of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Currently, interstates and freeways in Massachusetts utilize a sequential exit numbering method. Under the new mile-based system, exits will now be marked based on the number of miles from the origin of the route. For example, the Sturbridge exit on the Mass. Turnpike - formerly Exit 9 - will now be Exit 78 (there are roughly 78 miles from the New York border to Sturbridge).

Exit numbers for Route 213, I-291, I-391, and the Lowell Connector will not be changing. Meanwhile, MassDOT is continuing the I-395 numbering along I-290 to replicate the present exit numbering, which is continuous from Webster to Marlborough. As part of this project,

the existing mileposts on I-290 will be replaced with dual mile markers showing mileage for both I-395 and I-290.

The \$2.8 million project is being funded through the Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program. Over the next year, MassDOT crews will update all highway signage to reflect the exit numbering changes. Local businesses and organizations are encouraged to make updates as well, especially on websites featuring travel information and other materials.

"Businesses that reference existing numbers in their advertising or marketing materials will need to revise these materials," read a statement released by the MassDOT. "Old exit signs will remain in place for a minimum of two years, giving businesses time to adjust to the new exit numbers during this transition period."

Several public meetings and virtual events were held throughout the state over the past year to provide residents with additional information on the project. The MassDOT will continue the renumbering project throughout the winter and spring.

For more information on the new exit numbering system, as well as a list of local highways and exit numbers, visit www.NewMassExits.com.

VACCINE

continued from page A1

ual providers. Vaccines will then be shipped to the hospital or facility directly from the manufacturer.

Hospitals will be responsible for reporting all vaccination data to the DPH, which has launched a command center and dashboard to keep track of immunizations.

Over the next few months, staggered groups of individuals and personnel will be allowed access to the vaccines. Priority groups will include nursing home residents and employees, first responders, front-line workers, and seniors. The general public will then be able to access the vaccine by the spring, officials said.

Certain groups of residents like pregnant women, children, and individuals with a history of severe allergic reactions are not advised to receive a vaccine until further testing is completed.

Individuals with questions about vaccination phases should send an email to COVID-19-Vaccine-Plan-MA@mass.gov.

Additionally, CVS and Walgreens will begin vaccinating in nursing homes during the week of Dec. 28. Doses will come from the state's Pfizer allocation; between 40,000 and 60,000 doses will be shipped to CVS and Walgreens for Massachusetts skilled nursing facilities.

Meanwhile, COVID-19 hospitaliza-

tions and deaths are continuing at an alarming rate across the state. Last week, the Department of Public Health released guidance to help residents celebrate the holidays safely.

The following recommendations are in place through the New Year's holiday:

- Limit in-person celebrations to household members only.

- Postpone or cancel travel this holiday season. If you do choose to travel, you must comply with Massachusetts travel order requirements.

- Follow the current state gathering size limits and sector-specific workplace safety standards.

The DPH guidance also provided tips for engaging in lower-risk celebrations and traditions this holiday season, while discouraging high-risk activities.

"Any time you gather with others outside of your household, you increase the risk of contracting or spreading illness," read a DPH statement. "You are risking your health and others' health if you host or participate in any large in-person festivities."

All residents are reminded to continue wearing masks in public and practicing social distancing. You must be masked in all public venues, even outdoor spaces.

For a full list of the state's holiday guidance and regulations, visit www.mass.gov/holidays.

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 North East

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Novembers' Single Family Homes Real Estate Market

OXFORD			
	November 2019	November 2020	Trend
Median Price	\$260,00	\$2,311,250	▲
Market Volume	\$3,747,900	\$6,097,800	▲
# of Homes Sold	14	20	▲
Avg Days on Market	33	29	▼

WEBSTER			
	November 2019	November 2020	Trend
Median Price	\$246,250	\$350,000	▲
Market Volume	\$5,746,900	\$4,055,100	▲
# of Homes Sold	20	11	▼
Avg Days on Market	52	51	▼

Contact us to find more about your neighborhood market & what your home is worth!
 Happy Holidays from our family to yours!

Eve Patterson 508-341-4434
 Nana Frimpongmaah 508-615-6149
 Jeremiah Oltchere-Nyarko 774-253-2082
 Ava Fantasia 508-523-8337
 Johnny Warlebi (508) 335-5076
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103 Beacon Park - \$324,900

Southbridge: 14 Acres, 4 bedroom, in-law unit, gas fireplace, cathedral ceilings, wine tasting room, family room, private pond and cabin on grounds, 1300 sq. ft. building for hobby or business
268 Dresser Hill Road - \$729,900

ON DEPOSIT
Dudley: Ranch, 2 bedroom, 5 acres, garage
11 Paglione Dr \$49,900

ON DEPOSIT
Oxford: Split, 3 bdrm, 1.5 Ba, 2 car garage, Family Rm
22 Whiting Rd \$38,900

ON DEPOSIT
Dudley: Cape, 3-4 bdrm, Country kitch, inground pool, garage
11A Paglione Dr \$239,900

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