

Auburn News

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Auburn High Holiday Craft Fair draws a crowd



Nichole Carter, left, spends the day with her mother, Pam Carter.

AUBURN – A massive crowd attended Auburn High School earlier this month for the eighth annual Holiday Craft Fair. The Dec. 11 event featured dozens of local crafters, plus activ-

ities for youngsters and even a visit from Santa for photos. The event was presented by the Auburn Recreation and Culture Department.



Photos Kevin Flanders

Alison Cabral, of Uxbridge, welcomes guests to her table.



Lisa Marie Berthel, of West Brookfield, with her son, Eli Berthel.

Auburn resident named VP of Quality Assurance at Thrive Support & Advocacy

MARLBOROUGH—Thrive Support & Advocacy, a nonprofit empowering youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), today announced that Ellen Murphy has been appointed vice president of quality assurance.



Ellen Murphy

Murphy brings nearly two decades of leadership in a human services setting to Thrive. As vice president of quality assurance, she ensures that the agency is meeting strict internal and regulatory qual-

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

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Garcia was one of three women (and the most recent) from Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy who received a grant from the Philanthropic Education Organization. P.E.O. has 6,000 chapters across the United States and Canada.

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Turn To **P.E.O.**, page **A5**



Photo Courtesy

Chapter R members at a recent social.

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Department of Ed to conduct review of Auburn schools

AUBURN — During the week of Jan. 31, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office of Public School Monitoring (PSM) will conduct a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review of Auburn Public Schools.

The Office of Public School Monitoring visits each

district and charter school every three years to monitor compliance with federal and state special education and civil rights regulations. Areas of review related to special education include student assessments, determination of eligibility, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team process, and IEP development and implementation. Areas of review related to civil rights include bullying, student discipline, physical restraint, and equal access to school programs for all students.

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Local schools receive threats connected to TikTok challenge

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

to students.

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

Both the Dudley and Charlton Police

Worcester Children’s Chorus to perform with NESO in “Festive Baroque and Beyond” concert at Mechanics Hall

WORCESTER — The Worcester Children’s Chorus will appear with the New England Symphony Orchestra in a “Festive Baroque and Beyond” concert, taking place in Worcester’s Mechanics Hall at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 18. Tickets are available through the orchestra’s Web site (newenglandsymphony.org) or from the Mechanics Hall box office at 508-752-0888.

The Worcester Children’s Chorus is led by its Artistic Director, Pamela Mindell, along with Associate Director Philip Montgomery. The mission of the Worcester Children’s Chorus is to enrich the lives of children ages eight to 18 by providing a quality musical experience through training in choral singing. WCC’s ensembles enhance young people’s lives, helping them to develop qualities of self-reliance, personal integrity, compassion, and confidence in their abilities. The Worcester Children’s Chorus has performed at Carnegie Hall (2015 and 2017) and has toured to New Orleans, La. (2016) and

Canada (2018). Recent highlights include Bach’s Saint Matthew Passion with the Worcester Chorus, Benjamin Britten’s War Requiem with several choruses in Central Massachusetts, a 10th Anniversary tour to Canada, James MacMillan’s “Passion According to Saint Luke” with WPI and Trinity Lutheran Church, and collaborations with several other area choruses and orchestras.

Also appearing with the orchestra will be soprano soloist Elaine Daiber. Mechanics Hall composer in residence Leonard Ciampa has composed a new piece especially for this concert by the NESO, Worcester Children’s Chorus, and Elaine Daiber. NESO Music Director Roderick MacDonald will give a free pre-concert talk for ticket holders at 6:30 p.m.

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 three-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.

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

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

“We are at schools, senior centers and community events across Worcester County nearly every day, presenting on topics such as bullying and cyber

bullying, scams and fraud, drugs and alcohol, and texting and driving,” Mr. Early said. “I’ve always said I’d rather prevent a crime than have to solve one. I’m proud to say we’ve officially reached 600,000 residents with this programming, many of them youth.”

The District Attorney’s Community Outreach Team, made up of 10 staff members, presents programming

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

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

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

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

stance use, including prescription medications.”

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

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

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

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

Friday’s Child



Nathan
Age 11

Hi! My name is Nathan and I like to give high fives!

Nathan is a curious boy who loves to smile and give high fives! He loves to draw and color and he is a very talented artist. He also loves when adult draws with him. Nathan likes playing with play-doh or putty, and gets excited when adults interact with him with these materials. He plays independently on the playground and with yoga balls in school. Nathan is the type of child that does not need much teaching to enjoy play or toys;

he is independent with most leisure activities!

Nathan is legally free for adoption and will require a family with lots of energy and some experience with children on the spectrum. A two parent family would be preferred due to the level of supervision Nathan requires. If there is a single parent with a large engaged support system and experience with children with special needs, they would be considered as well. As part of the Open Adoption Agreement, Nathan needs to maintain regular sibling visitation therefore a family in Massachusetts or the New England area will be considered.

Who Can Adopt?

Can you provide the guidance, love and stability that a child needs? If you’re at least 18 years old, have a stable source of income, and room in your heart, you may be a perfect match to adopt a waiting child. Adoptive parents can be single, married, or partnered; experienced or not; renters or homeowners; LGBTQ singles and couples.

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

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



PSM

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In addition to the onsite visit, parent outreach is an important part of the review process. The review chairperson from the Office of Public School Monitoring will send all parents of students with disabilities an online survey that focuses on key areas of their child’s special education program. Survey results will contribute to the development of a report. During the onsite review, the Office of Public School Monitoring will interview the chair-

person(s) of the district’s Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC). Other onsite activities may include interviews of district staff and administrators, reviews of student records, and onsite observations.

Parents and other individuals may call Henry Ndakalu, Public School Monitoring Chairperson, at (781) 338-3706 to request a telephone interview. If an individual requires an accommodation, such as translation, to participate in an interview, the Department will make the necessary arrange-

ments. Within approximately 60 business days after the onsite visit, the review chairperson will provide the (district or charter school) with a report with information about areas in which the (district or charter school) meets or exceeds regulatory requirements and areas in which the (district or charter school) requires assistance to correct or improve practices. The public will be able to access the report at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/reports/>.

Mask debate continues in Dudley Charlton School District

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

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

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

“I still feel that the day will come when we collectively understand how COVID becomes part of our lives moving forward without complicated protocols, anxiety provoking unknowns, ambiguous guidelines, and problematic dialogue. Unfortunately, we are still not there yet. We need to continue to work together, which we will,” said Lamarche.

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

Following Lamarche’s comments, citizens were able to share their thoughts during the citizens comments portion of the meeting, where several familiar voices were heard asking for their children to be unmasked.

Timothy Paquette of Dudley has been a notable staple of school committee meetings since the return to school in August, often displaying the number of days children have been masked while he is at the table. As he has done for numerous meetings in 2021, Paquette denounced the continued masking of Dudley and Charlton students.

“Study after study shows masks are ineffective against viruses, especially the custom-made masks people make out of cloth. In fact, even the ones you buy at the store even say ‘not for medical use,’ and at best only help stop bacteria. I would even say they create a false sense of safety. So, when residents suggest to me that if I want my kids to not have to wear a mask on their face all day that I should get them injected with experimental chemicals, people like that only remind me how powerful the mockingbird media is, so where’s the line,” said Paquette.

Shannon Dunigan, a parent from Charlton, spoke about how her kindergartener was treated after being exposed to a fellow student who was COVID positive. She felt the protocols were wrong and victimized her child, forcing her to isolate from her fellow students in school or miss class time at home despite wearing her mask. While she made a point to compliment the school nurses, she eventually accused the school committee of being “liberal” and said she was “terrified” that they were in charge of the district’s children.

“What is the end game for all this? How long will you be limiting our children’s freedoms? You’re asking too much of the least vulnerable in the population. You’ve crossed the line. The fact is, you’re masking children because you can get away with it, because they’re

children. They have no idea they’re freedoms are being trampled,” said Dunigan. “If the math is right, I believe it’s only about seven percent of the students in the district have gotten COVID all year. Let’s stop with the fear. We don’t need a COVID coordinator. What we need is to get back to normal.”

Another speaker, David Smolsky of Charlton, wasn’t as aggressive as many others with his statements, but was just as passionate when it came to not only masking children, but requiring adults to wear masks as school committee meetings as well. Seeing that the subject was another item on the agenda, he asked the committee to consider allowing masks to be optional during their meetings.

“I’m not afraid to say it — I don’t believe in wearing masks in terms of a norm in a public setting or a private setting. It’s just something I don’t subscribe to,” Smolsky said. “This is a public meeting, and other public meetings that have taken place in school facilities don’t require the public to wear masks. My hope is there is support to break away from what I consider to be political science.”

The mask debate was concluded with a discussion on whether or not to change the protocol for school committee meetings. Some members believed that the mask mandate should remain while others felt that participants in the meetings should be able to demask if they chose. Committee Chair Pauline Aucoin felt it wasn’t proper for the committee to change its policies to contrast to the standards held in the schools themselves.

“We’re part of the school department, and I feel we should go along with what the school has been mandating, and it’s

been mandated to wear masks,” she said.

Committee member Jamie Terry felt differently, noting her support for masking but also believing that those at the meeting should have the right to choose whether they want to wear a mask.

“I’m going to continue to wear my mask until my children no longer have to wear them in school because it’s a personal way that I’m going to stand by my children, but I don’t believe I need to tell other adults how to behave in a public setting. I believe this is a public meeting, and so I am open to the idea of allowing folks to come in if they don’t feel like wearing a mask. I will respectfully request that if we have students in here that people put masks on while the students are here. We’re trying to keep our students in school,” said Terry.

The board voted on a motion to change the policy which resulted in a 2-2 tie result meaning there will be no changes to the mask requirements at school committee meetings until at least January of 2022.



ACCURACY WATCH

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

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

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

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ship among seven young women in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, and is now one of the oldest women’s organizations in North America. According to the P.E.O. website, “since its inception in 1869, the nonprofit has helped more than 105,000 women pursue educational goals by providing more than \$321 million in grants, scholarships, awards, and loans.”

“I came across information on P.E.O. back in 2018 when I was researching scholarships for my nursing students,” said Bolandrina.

The P.E.O. sisterhood has brought together women in the United States and Canada who are passionate change-makers helping women’s advancement through education, support, and motivation.

“There are meetings and socials,” said Bolandrina, who has now been newly inducted to Chapter R. “I am very excited to participate, and there are special interest groups!” she exclaimed.

Chapters hold fundraisers throughout the year to support the organization’s scholarship programs, as well as the stewardship of Cottey College, a nationally ranked, fully accredited, independent, liberal arts and sciences college in Nevada, Mo. The women’s college has been owned and supported by the P.E.O. since 1927. The fundraisers are as varied as the chapters that hold them.

“I saw the beautiful dishcloths of Chapter R,” said Bolandrina.

Chapter R also holds a Chocolate Sunday fundraiser. The fundraisers help support the national organization and help local women like Garcia.

Membership is by invitation only. Philanthropy is the goal of P.E.O. however, friendship is its cornerstone. The P.E.O. has a long legacy of sisterhood.

“The friendship and sisterhood brought me in,” concludes Bolandrina.



Chapter R members at a recent social.

Photo Courtesy

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Keep Charlton Beautiful Committee brings litter bylaw to selectmen

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

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

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

“We’re trying to heighten awareness of things we can do to help make the town look more beautiful, be prouder of the town, and basically clean it up,” said Mahaney. “There’s no magic

potion. Littering is a very difficult thing to prosecute; to catch somebody littering and to make a fine stick is next to impossible to do – I’m not suggesting that this litter bylaw is going to result in a lot of arrests or a lot of administrative action for anybody. All we really want to do, and we’re grasping at straws here, is to frighten some people by having a bylaw and having some signage that says this is going to hurt if you get caught littering.”

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

“There’s probably 12 or 15 businesses where an unintended byproduct is litter,” said Manahey. “We should be thinking about when we let those (businesses) in what are they going to do about the litter? How could they help? They could help by providing some funds. The DPW could hire somebody, and all that person does is go around and pick up litter all day long. Something like that.”

While the idea of passing such burden on businesses, now or old, didn’t sit well with several selectmen, the general concept of a bylaw did earn some support. Selectman Stephen Koronis said the littering problem has concerned him, especially when it comes to larger items being left either on the side of the road or near donation bins.

“I definitely agree it’s a big problem,” Koronis said. “I’d be for some type of bylaw if we include the fact that we only allow those clothing containers

in public places where there’s a lot of traffic. They can’t be on a side road where someone can just toss a mattress. I think it’s a big problem.”

Selectwoman Patsy Rydlak also saw the bylaw as a promising idea.

“I don’t know anyone who would actually throw something out the window, so it’s weird to see so much trash. I like the bylaw idea. I think there’s no reason why we shouldn’t have one as long as it’s all legal,” she said.

Board Chair Bill Borowski noted the Board of Health vote against the bylaw in November and recommended that the Keep Charlton Beautiful Committee work with the Board of Health to refine the bylaw to obtain their blessing. Selectmen agreed the committee has good ideas that simply need to be “more concrete.” No firm action was taken on the bylaw or any other proposals from the committee during the meeting.

Baker fast-tracks recovery funding

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

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

Priority areas for the latest round of COVID-19 recovery funding include housing; healthcare; workforce development; and infrastructure. The majority of the funding

represents federal aid from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

“The pandemic has had a significant impact on Massachusetts workers, families, communities, and businesses for nearly two years, and today’s signing directs billions of dollars in relief,” Governor Baker said. “While this package falls far short of the investment I called for to address the

housing shortage, the important investments included in this bill will help to accelerate Massachusetts’s economic recovery and provide long-lasting benefits to infrastructure, healthcare, education systems, and small businesses.”

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

“The funding allocated in this bill addresses critical areas of need across the Commonwealth, from addiction services to housing availability to environmental infrastructure,” said Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito. “This relief will play a crucial role in the ongoing recovery of our residents and communities, especially those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, and we are eager to put it to work.”

Highlights of the latest fund-

ing package include \$150 million to finance the statewide production of housing for various populations, including seniors and veterans; \$115 million for rental housing production; \$400 million for addiction treatment and related behavioral health services; \$260 million for fiscally stressed hospitals; \$200 million for local and regional public health systems; \$50 million for workforce retention and capital improvements at nursing facilities; \$500 million to support the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund; \$500 million for premium pay for low-income essential workers; and \$107.5 million for workforce and career technical skills training.

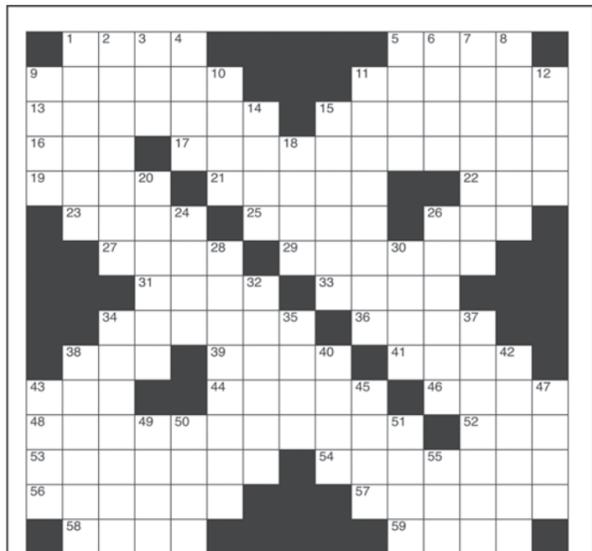
The package also includes \$135 million to support cultural facilities and tourism assets throughout Massachusetts.

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

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

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

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

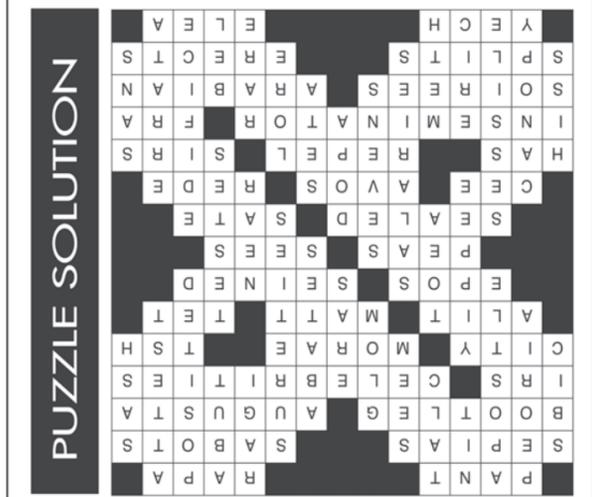


CLUES ACROSS

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

CLUES DOWN

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



Water & Sewer Commission examining rate increases

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – The Charlton Water & Sewer Commission is considering increasing rates or adopting a new rate system to help stay ahead of potential

rising costs and maintain their existing status quo.

The committee met on Dec. 7, where Water & Sewer Superintendent Peter Boria revealed he had received a quote from a contractor to perform a sewer rate study for \$16,000,

which would be the first such study and potential increase in Charlton since 2017. Boria said the purpose of the study would be to examine multiple different aspects of the current rate system including determining whether or not the current metered billing rate or a tiered rate would be better for the town.

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

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



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Cornerstone Bank makes donation to Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester

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

"In the greater Worcester area, 34 percent of households speak a language other than English at home," said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. "Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester are doing amazing things by providing free ESOL educa-

tion to adults within our community. The leadership, vision, and dedication of the Board of Directors is key to the organization's success in serving constituents in the Worcester area. We are proud that members of our team volunteer their time for this organization and we support their goals any way we can."

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

"The free, flexible, and individualized support students get leads them in the right direction to achieve goals

beyond English language proficiency including citizenship, employment, and further education," continued Tallman. "We look forward to seeing Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester continue to create opportunities for people looking to succeed on our community."

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

About Cornerstone Bank
Cornerstone Bank was formed in 2017, born of a long history of supporting the community, and providing a strong foundation to help people and businesses thrive. Serving Worcester County, Massachusetts, Cornerstone Bank's local presence and community based banking model enables a unique ability to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch.

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School District considering committee to address library catalogue complaints

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

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

After hearing complaints during the November meeting of the School Committee about the inclusion of such books as "All Boys Aren't Blue" by George M. Johnson and "Gender Queer" by Maia Kobabe, both known to have sexually explicit content, in the high school library, Lamarche commented during the December school committee gathering that he believes a District Level Review Committee would be a positive move forward. The books mentioned have stirred controver-

sy in many states and school districts nationwide, including bans, due to their inclusion of sex scenes and, in some cases, their portrayal of sexual orientations.

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

"Library collections and concerns of books that may be in the collection may seem to be new to us in Dudley and Charlton, but it has a longstanding history. Libraries are filled with a broad spectrum of works and it is common for individuals and groups to identify works that they believe are offensive or inappropriate. There's nothing wrong with that. What is new as far as I understand is that the Shepherd Hill Regional High School Library and the Dudley

Charlton Regional School District has not had a policy in place that addresses library media center material selection, adoption or reconsideration and isolation," Lamarche said.

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

P.E.O.

continued from page A1

nonprofit has helped more than 105,000 women pursue educational goals by providing more than \$321 million in grants, scholarships, awards, and loans."

"I came across information on P.E.O. back in 2018 when I was researching scholarships for my nursing students," said Bolandrina.

The P.E.O. sisterhood has brought together women in the United States and Canada who are passionate change-makers helping women's advancement through education, support, and motivation.

"There are meetings and socials," said Bolandrina, who has now been newly inducted to Chapter R. "I am very excited to participate, and there are special interest groups!" she exclaimed.

Chapters hold fundraisers throughout the year to

support the organization's scholarship programs, as well as the stewardship of Cottey College, a nationally ranked, fully accredited, independent, liberal arts and sciences college in Nevada, Mo. The women's college has been owned and supported by the P.E.O. since 1927. The fundraisers are as varied as the chapters that hold them.

"I saw the beautiful dishcloths of Chapter R," said Bolandrina.

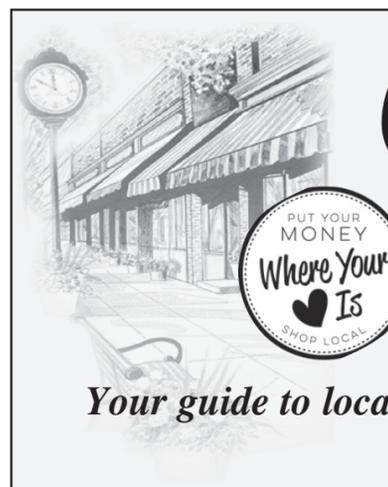
Chapter R also holds a Chocolate Sunday fundraiser. The fundraisers help support the national organization and help local women like Garcia.

Membership is by invitation only. Philanthropy is the goal of P.E.O. however, friendship is its cornerstone. The P.E.O. has a long legacy of sisterhood.

"The friendship and sisterhood brought me in," concludes Bolandrina.

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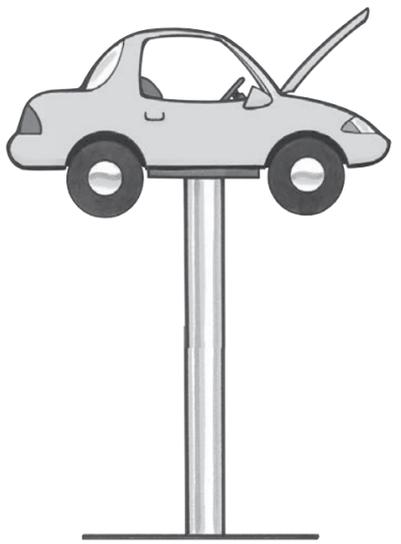
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OPINION/COMMENTARY

Bring a bit of spring color indoors



Photo Melinda Myers

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



GARDEN MOMENTS

MELINDA MYERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Water the freshly planted container thoroughly, then move it to a cool location, about 35 to 45 degrees for at least 12 to 15 weeks. This cold period is needed to initiate flowering in these bulbs. A spare refrigerator or in colder regions, an unheated garage works well. Or if the ground hasn't frozen, sink the pot into a vacant space in the

garden. This works for those gardening in areas where winter temperatures are cold enough to provide the needed chill. Mulch the soil once the ground starts to freeze with evergreen boughs. This will make it easier to remove the pot in early spring.

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

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

Once the cold treatment is complete, you can move the forced bulbs to their final location where you can enjoy the spring flowers. Place the container in a cool location with bright indirect light indoors. Water thoroughly as needed and watch for flowers to appear in about four weeks. Remove one pot a week from cold storage to extend your enjoyment.

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

When they are done flowering, you can compost the bulbs or for those suited to your growing conditions add

them to the garden. Remove the faded flowers and water the plants like your houseplants or other container gardens. Fertilize with a dilute solution of flowering plant fertilizer or apply a low nitrogen, slow-release fertilizer. This helps replenish the nutrients used in flowering.

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

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

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

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BRENDAN BERUBE
 EDITOR

Popular toys through the years

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Classic Holiday Traditions

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

The Wassail Bowl

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

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

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

Wassail Punch

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

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



TAKE THE HINT
 KAREN TRAINOR

whole allspice

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

Stovetop or Crockpot method: Simmer juices and spices over low heat. Strain and serve hot.

**

Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer

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

Perhaps it's fitting Rudolph's catapult to commercial success began as the brainstorm of an ambitious Montgomery Ward ad man. In 1939, Advertising copywriter Robert May wrote the holiday story as a promotional campaign for Montgomery Ward stores. The marketing strategy was a

huge success as booklets of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer were distributed to happy little shoppers throughout several holiday seasons.

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

**

Holiday Plants: Traditional Greenery Sets Stage for the Season

Greenery has long been used to "deck the halls" for the yuletide season, and plants associated with the holidays such as Christmas Cactus, Mistletoe, and Poinsettias traditionally adorn homes at holiday time. Some plants become festive favorites because they bloom during the Christmas season; others have histories steeped in religious roots.

Christmas Cactus: The hardy plant is a favorite potted houseplant for its endurance and annual winter blooms. The delicate flowers on the upright weeping cacti typically make their appearance in December, just in time for the holiday season.

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

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

Turn To TRAINOR page A14

LETTERS

Extra! Extra! Read All About It!
 We think you're important enough to tell all our readers to turn to the Opinion pages and read your Letters to the Editor.
 But first, you have to write us!
 Mail your letters to the Auburn News, P.O. Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550.
 Or e-mail your letters to the editor at news@stonebridgepress.news.
 You'll need to provide your name and place of residence, along with a phone number, so we can verify the

letter is yours.
 We don't have a set limit, but if you keep it around 600 words or so, you're going to have a better chance at seeing all your words in print.
 If you want to write a bit longer about a particular issue, maybe a guest Your Turn column is your cup of tea. If you do that, try to keep it between 700-800 words.
 Remember, libelous remarks and/or personal attacks are a no-no and could lead to your letter not being published.
 So, what are you waiting for? Start writing!



READING NEWSPAPERS IS A QUEST LIKE NO OTHER

More bad news for cod fishermen



THE GREAT
OUTDOORS
.....
RALPH
TRUE

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

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

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

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

year, they were throwing half dead stripers over the side of their boat, obviously because they had too many pounds of fish. We motored over to the area that they were discarding the fish and was outraged at the waste of such a valuable resource.

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

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

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy New Year and a



Photo Courtesy

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

Merry Christmas. Take A Kid Fishing & Keep Them Rods Bending.
Be sure to get your vaccine to keep you safe from Covid.

LEGALS

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 29 Carroll Street, Auburn, Massachusetts

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Ronald H. Bushee and Patricia Bushee a/k/a Patricia E. St. George Bushee to Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. and now held by LoanCare, LLC, said mortgage dated November 6, 2007, and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds, in Book 42057 at Page 372, as affected by an Assignment of Mortgage dated June 22, 2017, and recorded with said Deeds in Book 57385 at Page 340, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at Public Auction on January 7, 2022 at 10:00 AM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

A certain parcel of land, with the buildings thereon, and all privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging, situated in said Auburn, on the westerly side of Carroll Street, bounded and described as follows:

BEGINNING at a point in the westerly line of Carroll Street three hundred seventy-five (375) feet northerly of the intersection of the northerly line of Lincoln Street with the westerly line of Carroll Street;

THENCE: northwesterly by Lot 13 on plan of House Lots in Auburn, owned by Mary J. L. Pond-Snyder by Arthur N. Pond dated November 2, 1947 and not of record, as revised, for a distance of one hundred sixty-seven and seventy-five hundredths (167.75) feet, more or less, to a point at land now or formerly of Pinehurst Development;

THENCE: northerly by said Pinehurst Development one hundred thirteen and eleven hundredths (113.11) feet, more or less, to an iron pipe;

THENCE: easterly on a line parallel to the northerly line of Lot 14 on said plan one hundred eighty-two and eight tenths (182.8) feet, more or less, to the westerly line of Carroll Street;

THENCE: southerly by the westerly line of Carroll Street one hundred twelve and five tenths (112.5) feet, more or less, to the point of beginning. Being Lot 14 and the southerly half of Lot 15 on said plan. This conveyance is made subject to and together with rights over Carroll Street; Subject to the following restrictions: All buildings are to be set back at least thirty (30) feet from street line excepting steps, bay windows, porticoes, etc. may be within restricted area. No house to be built to accommodate more than one family and said house is to cost not less than \$5,000.00. No garage for more than two (2) cars shall be erected on the premises. No mercantile or manufacturing business shall be carried on said premises.

Being all and the same premises conveyed in Book 17506 and Page 58.

Subject to any conditions, covenants, easements and restrictions of record insofar as the same are in force and applicable.

The description of the property contained in the mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

For Mortgagor's Title see deed dated November 21, 1995, and recorded in

Book 17506 at Page 58 with the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds.

TERMS OF SALE: Said premises will be sold and conveyed subject to all liens, encumbrances, unpaid taxes, tax titles, municipal liens and assessments, if any, which take precedence over the said mortgage above described.

TEN THOUSAND (\$10,000.00) Dollars of the purchase price must be paid by a certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check at the time and place of the sale by the purchaser. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid by a certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check within forty-five (45) days after the date of sale.

Other terms to be announced at the sale.
Marinosci Law Group, P.C.
275 West Natick Road, Suite 500
Warwick, RI 02886
Attorney for LoanCare, LLC
Present Holder of the Mortgage
Telephone: (401) 234-9200
MLG File No.: 19-02824

December 17, 2021

December 24, 2021

December 31, 2021

TOWN OF AUBURN PUBLIC NOTICE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Town of Auburn, acting by and through its Town Manager, is seeking proposals to purchase a parcel of land for the siting of a new Police/Fire and Ambulance Public Safety Complex ("Public Safety Complex") in the Town of Auburn. Owners of real property within the Town of Auburn, which meets the minimum and mandatory criteria of this Request For Proposal ("RFP") are invited to respond.

A Highly Advantageous offer of real estate will include a parcel of property that: (1) contains 4.5 acres or more of usable acreage; (2) is located between 366 and 676 Southbridge Street; (3) is 100% vacant with no structures; (4) is free and clear of exposed ledge; (5) does not contain a significant change in grade; (6) is free of utility and/or other easements; (7) is not situated in a FEMA floodway, flood zone or in a flood plain with an impediment or encroachment; (8) and is free of vernal pools, excessive wetlands, intermittent streams, or similar environmental conditions. Property that meets the minimum and mandatory criteria, but which is not classified as "Highly Advantageous" will also be considered and proposals for such property are welcome.

Any proposal found to be of interest to the Town is conditional on two (2) specific and independent actions being approved: 1) debt exclusion vote by the voters of the Town and 2) vote by the Auburn Town Meeting appropriating any monies necessary to complete the purchase as set forth in the proposal accepted by the Town. A property owner who submits a proposal is not precluded from continuing to market their property and take secondary offers in the event the two conditions above are not satisfied.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) is available in the Town Manager's Office, 102 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501 or by calling the Town Manager's Office at 508-832-7720.

Sealed proposals will be received at the office of the Town Manager, Town Hall, 102 Central Street, Auburn, Massachusetts until **12:00 p.m., on Monday, Jan-**

uary 31, 2022 and at that time non-price proposals will be publicly opened and read.

A pre-proposal briefing session will be held on **Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 10:00 AM** in the Board of Selectmen's Room, 2nd Floor, Town Hall, 104 Central Street, Auburn, Massachusetts, for all parties interested in submitting a proposal.

This will be an opportunity for the Town to answer questions or make clarifications to the RFP. Any questions after the pre-proposal briefing must be made in writing to Julie A. Jacobson, Town Manager.

This procurement is subject to the requirements of G.L. c.30B, the Uniform Procurement Act. The Town of Auburn reserves the right to waive any informality, reject any and all proposals, negotiate with any and all proposers, or to accept a proposal deemed to be in the best interest of the Town of Auburn. Proposals are encouraged from women and minority businesses.

Julie A. Jacobson
Auburn Town Manager
December 17, 2021
December 24, 2021

(SEAL) THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT 21 SM 001599 ORDER OF NOTICE

To: Mary J. Amaral

and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. c. 50 §3901 (et seq)

Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A. as Trustee for Mortgage Assets Management Series I Trust

claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Auburn, numbered 6 George Street, given by Mary J. Amaral to Financial Freedom Senior Funding Corporation, a subsidiary of IndyMac Bank, F.S.B., dated March 28, 2007, and registered at the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry District of the Land Court as document number 92126, and noted on certificate of title number 15549 and now held by the Plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant's/Defendants' Servicemembers status.

If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108 on or before January 17, 2022 or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the ground of noncompliance with the Act. Witness, Gordon H. Piper, Chief Justice of this Court on December 2, 2021.

Attest: Deborah J. Patterson
Recorder
10946
December 24, 2021

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





REAL ESTATE



Jules Lusignan



T.A. King



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Seasons Greetings - Happy Holidays



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WEBSTER - 8 Riverside Dr! Super Convenient 9 Rm Colonial! Work-in Appliance Kit w/Granite Island & Dining Area! 24' Living Rm w/Laminate Wood Flooring, Slider to Composite Deck! 3-5 Bdrms Total! Master Bath! 2.5 Baths Total! Finished Lower Level! Oil Heat! Roof 2019! **\$399,900.00**

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 C/Vac! Security System! **\$349,900.00**

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Merry Christmas to all from all of us at the

Lori Johnson-Khousse
William Hilmon
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SPORTS

Bartlett's Minarik heats up, torches Rockets in season-opening victory

BY KEN POWERS
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

WEBSTER — Sharpshooter Ethan Minarik had an opening-night performance for the ages.

In Bartlett High's first game of the 2021-2022 season, the junior poured in a game-high 29 points — 21 scored from behind the 3-point arc — to lead the Indians to a 55-42 victory over Auburn High in front of a frenzied and boisterous home crowd on Tuesday, Dec. 14.

"Ethan got hot for us real quick; he had a great game," Bartlett coach Tony Paranto said. "He's a pure shooter and, I believe, one of the prolific scorers in Central Mass. A lot of our offense revolves around him."

"As nice as it was to see Ethan get off to a good start, we're going to need other guys to step up because teams are going to start taking him away," Paranto continued. "We need to have the other kids to step up and take some shots from the outside for us."

Minarik showed he was going to be a force to be reckoned with right from the start of the game, draining his first 3-pointer 15 seconds into the contest and following that basket with two more, pushing the Indians out to a 9-2 lead, less than two minutes in.

"Everybody knows Bartlett likes to shoot the 3, but we didn't expect them to open up the way they did," Auburn coach Dan Koen said. "Bartlett's first play of the game was a one-touch pass, bang, 3-pointer. The second time they had the ball it was two passes and another 3. I blinked and they were ahead, 9-2. I don't know if we were quite ready for that."

"It was a great Central Mass. game; it was a great way to kick off the [local] season," Koen added. "[Minarik] came out and was just on fire, from all over the place. We tried to put a box-and-one on him with our best defender [Zeb-Alexander Baffour] on him and he still hit a pretty deep step-back 3. It's tough to win games when kids are shooting like that."

Minarik scored Bartlett's first 14 points (four treys and a foul-line jumper), leading the Indians to a 14-2 lead with 5:05 remaining in the period. The Rockets



Auburn's Luis Roman slices through Bartlett's defense and drives in for a layup.

responded to the haymaker Bartlett threw in those first three minutes by finishing the quarter on a 13-4 run to trail by just three, 18-15, as play moved into the second frame.

Senior captain JB Whittemore (a team-high 19 points) led the Auburn comeback, scoring 11 of his team's 13 points on two 3-pointers, an old-fashioned three-point play and a drive to the basket.

The Rockets (1-1) tied the game, 18-18, with 6:29 left in the first half on a left-side 3-pointer by freshman Jordan McFadden (six points on a pair of treys).

"JB played well," said Koen, who confirmed that Whittemore is his only player who has played significant varsity minutes in the past. "I'm proud of my team. We fought back, we tied it up, and we kept it close. The kids played their hearts out."

After a quick timeout following the McFadden trey, Bartlett began regaining control of the game, working its way out to a 28-22 lead with four minutes left in the quarter. Minarik had six

points in the 10-4 run (another 3-pointer and three free throws after he was fouled attempting another shot from distance) and finished the first half with 23 points. The Indians led, 35-28, at halftime.

The third quarter was Auburn's undoing; the Rockets scored only four points in the quarter, after which they trailed, 43-32.

"In the third quarter it looked like there was a lid on the basket for us for a little bit. We missed a couple of easy shots around the basket and we missed some free throws," said Koen, whose team was 0-6 from the foul line in the third quarter and failed to convert on six field goal attempts from in close, including a pair of layups. "I think we just ran out of steam. This is a tough gym to play at, Bartlett's a basketball town, and they had a great crowd here. In the end, we just couldn't figure out those Bartlett rims."

Also scoring in double figures for Bartlett was senior Zack Dejesus, with 12 points. Senior Colin Minarik and sophomore Ayden Carlson chipped into the



Zeb-Alexander Baffour of Auburn fires off a 3-point attempt.



Auburn's Elan Johnson works his way closer to Bartlett's basket.

winning effort with seven points each.

"We saw Auburn play against Gardner [a 63-32 win for the Rockets on Friday, Dec. 10]. We knew they had some special players. The McFadden kid had a nice

game against Gardner [a game-high 16 points]," Paranto said. "Our philosophy coming into this game was that we wanted to take their guards away and let our big guys control their big guys. I think we did that."

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Get kids on a healthy track

Childhood obesity is a serious medical issue affecting children around the world, but notably in North America. While the issue has been around for decades, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says American children and teenagers have witnessed a significant increase in weight gain since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Younger school-aged children have been among the hardest hit during the pandemic. A study published in September 2021 found the percentage of obese children and teens increased to 22 percent compared with 19 percent before the pandemic. The CDC looked at the BMI of study subjects between March 1, 2020 and November 30, 2020. One of the study's authors, Dr. Alyson Goodman of the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, described the results as "substantial and alarming."

Being less physically active, overweight and eating the wrong foods can start children on a path toward problems that once were only considered conditions of adulthood, namely hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol, offers the Mayo Clinic. To reverse course, parents, guardians and educators can focus on helping children become more physically fit. The following are a few ways to do so.

- Encourage participation in sports or other physical activities. Sports practices, games, competitions, and other activities may keep children moving for an hour or more several days per week. However, the American Academy of Pediatrics states that only 25 percent of children get the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day. Emphasize a fun activity with a focus on

movement that produces shortness of breath, body warmth and sweat. These are indicators that the heart rate is really pumping.

- Use exercise as a reward and not a punishment. Make exercise something kids can look forward to. Reward a job well done on a test with extra time biking with friends or a hiking trip to a scenic national park. Kids will begin to associate exercise with fun.

- Offer a variety of foods. Kids who eat a variety of foods are more likely to get the nutrients the body needs, according to Kids Health® by Nemours. These healthy foods should include at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, with an emphasis on vegetables.

- Limit screen time. Children may be inclined to entertain themselves by heading for the television, mobile phone or tablet first, especially after a year-plus of being stuck indoors. But parents can make a concerted effort to limit kids' screen time in favor of more physically challenging pursuits.

- Teach healthy eating habits. A Harris Poll survey conducted on behalf of the American Psychological Association found that 61 percent of respondents age 18 and older reported a median weight gain of 15 pounds during the pandemic. Teach children that weight loss is accomplished when more calories are burned than consumed. Pay attention to portion sizes and explain how beverages like fruit juices can be sneaky sources of extra calories.

Children may need a little extra help getting fit, especially if they gained weight during the pandemic. Teaching healthy habits now can help kids enjoy healthy futures.



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TRAINOR

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green leaves, making Poinsettias the hallmark plant of the holidays.

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

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

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

**
Win Dinner for Two at the Publick House - Contest has resumed!
Your tips can win you a great three course dinner for two at the historic Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge! Simply send in a hint to be entered into a random

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

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

MURPHY

continued from page A1

ity standards, and is establishing agency-wide performance improvement strategies to monitor the success and satisfaction of individuals served by Thrive. Additionally, she oversees data collection and management, accreditation and licensing, employee wellness initiatives, and serves as compliance officer.

"We take quality at Thrive very seriously - it's central to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all our clients, residents and staff," said Sean M. Rose, President & CEO of Thrive Support & Advocacy. "Ellen bring years of human services experience to Thrive, and will help us continue to offer MetroWest and Greater Worcester high-quality, life-changing services and programs."

Before joining Thrive, Murphy served as assistant director of JRI's Susan Wayne Center of Excellence, a residen-

tial treatment center in Connecticut for adolescents living with behavioral, mental health and medical issues, and River Run Academy, the center's clinical day school. Previously she held leadership and programmatic roles at other JRI facilities.

Murphy, an Auburn resident, earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Worcester State University and a master's degree in developmental psychology from Bay Path University in Longmeadow.

About Thrive Support & Advocacy
Thrive Support & Advocacy has been empowering youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to lead active and self-directed lives since 1973. The Marlborough-based nonprofit supports over 1,000 individuals and families living in 47 eastern and central Massachusetts communities through recreational and social initiatives for youth and adults, community residences, and individual and family supports. For more information, visit www.icanthrive.org.

RATES

continued from page A4

big problems down the road, being that we don't have the money to fix it or maintain it," said Jennings.

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

felt Boria could calculate figures himself that the committee could consider.

While Boria indicated that the rate study would likely provide much more specifics and accurate numbers than he would, he accepted the challenge to put together figures for a future meeting of the commission while also noting that a representative of the contractor in discussion to perform the study would also meet with the commission soon.



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