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# Schools look at third budget plan

BY GUS STEEVES  
CORRESPONDENT

WEBSTER — The School Committee got its third look at this year’s budget proposal Feb 13, with the administration noting it had cut its request to a 5.35 percent increase over last year (rather than 7 percent).

The grand total is still \$27.32 million, and the district is planning about \$1 million more in capital requests.

Business Manager Lisa Kontoes said they cut several jobs from it, namely, a special ed teacher and two paraprofessionals at Park Ave, a nurse assistant and academic interventionalist at the middle school, and a high school art teacher. In fact, some of those posts are already vacant anyway.

Superintendent Monique Pierangeli said they looked at adding long-term substitutes, but opted against that in favor of having more paraprofessionals. The former costs more, while the latter can cover more classes, she noted.

“It was clear we were not going to see the level of Chapter 70 funding that we hoped [for and] saw in prior years,” she noted.

Kontoes said Webster is getting more aid this year – an increase of \$928,191 – based on the state’s Chap 70 formula, but the town’s minimum contribution is also rising by \$725,391. She noted the district’s student population is growing very slightly, so that means Webster gets slightly more than the minimum annual increase of \$30 per student that stable or shrinking districts get. Likewise, that Chap 70 total won’t all go to the schools; Webster’s standard practice is to split it 70/30 to cover services the town government provides the schools.

Other factors in the formula include poverty, housing costs, special ed and other “high needs” kids and other local demographic statistics. The total means Webster’s per pupil school spending (including state aid) is \$19,191, or \$3,900 above the state average. The district has 1,313 students now.

One form of aid ends in September. Pierangeli said Webster will be using the remaining federal ESSER funds to buy technology, freeing up some budget money for the Bartlett building project. She has already noted her staff has been working to shift several ESSER-funded positions into the budget itself or cut them.

That issue prompted Principal Amy Puliafico to say of her school’s 10 ESSER jobs, “to absorb those [all] into the budget is a lot to ask,” but the administration’s proposal was “pretty reasonable.”

Chair Kelly Seddiki agreed, describing the end of ESSER as “a reckoning” that requires a “laser focus on what our students really need.” She also



Courtesy

## ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL CONGRATULATES JANUARY STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to the following students who were selected as January Students of the Month at St. Joseph School: Pre-K 3-year-old (2-Day Program): Mikhelena Salome-Negron; Pre-K 3-year-old (5-Day Program): Marcus DiTullio-Cedeno; Pre-K 4-year-old: Pheobe Anobah; Kindergarten: Liam Buschle; Grade 1: Emmanuela Brunnett; Grade 2: Patryk Deptula; Grade 3: Mia Reed; Grade 4: Severyn Kuznecki; Grade 5: Sophia Surowaniec; Grade 6: Alexis Archambault; Grade 7: Kyle Muchiru; Grade 8: Tristan Pico. Students are awarded Student of the Month for their outstanding exemplification of Religion, Respect, and Responsibility. Keep up the great work!

# Dudley implements new flag policy

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY — The Dudley Board of Selectmen have solidified a policy limiting what types of flags will be allowed on town property, including political or otherwise.

Town Administrator Jonathan Ruda introduced the policy to selectmen earlier this year and presented the finalized document for a vote on Feb. 5. The policy had also been examined and recommended by town counsel. Ruda explained that the new rules were designed to prevent Dudley as a town from representing any specific political ideology by limiting flags to only those representing the town, the state, or the country.

“What it does is solidify that the only flags

that are allowed to be flown on the town property are the flag of the United States, the flag of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the flag of the Town of Dudley, the POW/MIA flag and any town departmental specific flag. The problem this solves is multiple requests to display flags of different political agendas. By limiting this to the flags mentioned here we’ve eliminated the need to get into that. One political ideology or another, we represent all constituents,” said Ruda.

The policy is in line with those passed by many other communities in the Commonwealth seeking to avoid having competing flags of different political parties especially as the 2024 presidential election nears. Ruda said he believes the policy “makes sense”

to prevent issues in the present or future and ensure that town property is not being used to further one specific agenda.

The Board of Selectmen unanimously approved the policy with no comment. However, after the vote was taken Selectman Steve Sullivan asked about a policy for town vehicles. Ruda acknowledged that in the past some employees were asked to remove stickers representing their individual ideologies from vehicles owned by the town. He believes there is a policy in place that pre-dates the new flag rules that now prevents those issues. Regardless, he reiterated that the only stickers that should be on town-owned vehicles are those related to town business or the department those vehicles represent.

## Gladys E. Kelly Library welcomes Geraldine Brooks for grant funded program

WEBSTER — The Friends of the Gladys E. Kelly Public Library have been awarded several grants in support of the One Book One Community program. The grant funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Webster Cultural Council and the Janet Malser Humanities Trust will allow the Friends to bring Pulitzer Prize winning author Geraldine Brooks to Webster.

Now in its third year, the One Book One Community event brings nationally-acclaimed authors to the Gladys E. Kelly library to talk about their work and to share their insights about writing and the value of literature. In addition to the in-person presentation by the author, the Library will sponsor programs in support of the author and their themes.

This year, the library will bring international award winner, Geraldine Brooks (winner of the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for “March,” a historical novel) to the Gladys E. Kelly library to share her most recent work, “Horse.” Brooks weaves together themes of historical and contemporary ownership, power, and racism through the story of Lexington, the greatest racehorse in American history. Horse is a piece of historical fiction that resonates in our current environment.

Brooks’ presentation is for anyone who loves horses, history and good literature.

Geraldine Brooks, author of “Horse,” will appear at the Gladys E. Kelly library, 2 Lake St., Webster, Thursday, June 6 from 6:30 until 7:30 p.m. Free and open to the public.

# School Committee provides early look at budget

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY/CHARLTON — Budget season has begun, with town and school district officials from Dudley and Charlton coming together for their annual roundtable meeting on Feb. 14 where the Dudley Charlton Regional School Committee provided a look at their initial budget requests for Fiscal Year 2025. The meeting was much anticipated following a tumultuous budget season last year that saw Dudley voters participate in several overrides to balance expenditures between the school district and the town’s needs. The Valentine’s Day presentation was the first look at the initial numbers being considered for the next fiscal year.

Right from the start District Superintendent Steven Lamarche warned that 2025 would be another tough year financially but noted that the new budget was not as extreme as last year’s.

“I’d like to be able to tell you from the get-go that this year will be very easy, but I’m going to tell you it’s not. It’s not the same as last year from the word go, which is great for all of us, but there are still some things that we have to plan on and we have to look at fiscally,” said Lamarche.

The Superintendent proceeded to present an initial proposed budget with a \$2.4 million increase, or 4.36 percent, that includes level services and bringing back the Assistant Superintendent position. While this increase is lower than the state average, it exceeds the \$2 million threshold that the district had discussed with the towns in December and January. With that in mind, Lamarche provided two more proposals that would keep the district below the \$2 million increase. Option 2 proposed possible cuts of educators and paraprofessionals and compromises in technology and late



Courtesy

## DMS ANNOUNCES STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Dudley Middle School congratulates its Students of the Month. Pictured: 5th grade - Andreas Niforos-Ortiz, Connor Ares, Grayson Belley, & McKenna Devine; 6th grade - London Ellis, Lucas White, & Oltinna Bektashi; 7th grade - Julian Brockway, Marina Morgan, & Maria Morse; 8th grade - Alana Marigliano, Madison FitzGerald, & Riley West.







# WEBSTER SENIOR CENTER

5 Church St.  
(508) 949-3845  
Open Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
Email: SeniorCenter@Webster-MA.gov

Like the Webster Senior Center Facebook page to view our photographs, news and announcements. Please stop by to pick up our monthly newsletter for a complete list of activities, upcoming events and our monthly lunch menu. You do not have to be a resident of Webster to participate in our activities and programs. ALL Seniors are welcome!

The Webster Senior Center will be closed on Tuesday, March 5th for the Election. Tri-Valley Lunches are served Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 11:30 am. Please call (508) 949-3845 at least 48-hours in advance to reserve or cancel your meal. A \$3.00 donation is appreciated. All meals include milk, bread and fruit or dessert. This week's menu: Tuesday 2/27 Greek Chicken, white rice, brussels sprouts. Wednesday 2/28 Burger with chili & cheese, herbed potatoes, green beans. Thursday 2/29 Ham Salad, potato salad, tomato & cuke salad. 3/1 Lemon Pepper Fish, rice pilaf, roasted brussels sprouts.

News from SHINE Medicare Counseling Program: March 2024. Question: What if I missed the Medicare Open Enrollment Period in the fall? Can I still make a change to my coverage for 2024? People who are currently enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan have until March 31st to make changes to their plan during the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period (MA OEP). The MA OEP occurs each year from January 1st to March 31st and is available to people who are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan. You are allowed to make one change during this period, and it takes effect the first day of the month after you enroll. For example, if you submit an enrollment request in March, your new coverage begins April 1st. People who have Extra Help to pay for their Part D prescription coverage are allowed to make a change to their coverage during the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd quarters of the year. If you have Extra Help and you are unsure if you have the best coverage to meet your needs, please make an appointment to speak with a SHINE counselor! SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) has certified counselors available to assist you with questions about Medicare. Our services are free and unbiased: we are available to discuss all options related to Medicare and additional coverage, and we do not sell any plans. SHINE is federally funded and administered through the State. To make an appointment, call your local senior center or call the Central Mass Regional SHINE Office at 508-422-9931.

Need help with your MassHealth application? Tri-Valley has Certified Application Counselors available to assist you. Appointments are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and Wednesdays from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the Tri-Valley office in Dudley. Please call Tri-Valley at (508) 949-6640. Appointments are also available on Fridays from 9:00 am to 11:00 am at the Webster Senior Center. Please call (508) 949-3845 to schedule Friday appointments at the Senior Center.

Come on down to the Bomba Beauty Salon at the Webster Senior Center! March 8 is International Women's Day. In honor of all women Bomba Beauty Salon will be offering 20% off on all services for the month of March. Call 508-341-8724 for an appointment. Bomba Beauty Salon is open for walk in appointments on Wednesdays from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays by appointment only from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Call (508) 341-8724 to schedule an appointment.

New series starting in March! Koffee Klatch - get together and chat with us as we watch mini-series on Thursday mornings at 10:00 am. Coffee, tea, and refreshments will be served – come join us!

The REC Farmer's Market is now setting up in the Webster Senior Center on Thursdays from 1:00 – 2:30 pm.

Coloring Workshops with Stacey will be offered on Friday, February 23rd at 10:00 am. Cost: \$5.00 per class, sign up at the front desk. Coloring workshops will be held on the 15th and 22nd in March.

Aging Gracefully, a Fall Prevention and Wellness Workshop will be presented by the Injury Prevention Dept. of UMass Memorial on Thursday, February 22nd at 9:30 am. Please sign up at the Senior Center front desk or by calling (508) 949-3845.

Webster Manor Ice Cream Social will be held on Thursday, February 22nd at 12:00 pm. Please sign up at the Senior Center front desk.

February Movie Matinee will be a showing of NYAD, the true story of athlete Diana Nyad on Monday, February 26th at 1:00 pm. Refreshments will be served.

Christopher Heights' Soup Social will be held on Monday, March 4th at 11:30 am. Please sign up at the Senior Center front desk.

Mondays and Wednesdays: Exercise Classes with Forty Arroyo – Chair Dancing – the perfect workout for any fitness ability! Cost: \$3.00 per class.

Mondays: Knitting/Crochet Social 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Bingo: Every Tuesday, starts promptly at 1:00 pm. Please plan to arrive by 12:30 pm to allow time to buy your bingo sheets. Bingo sheets are not sold after 12:45 pm.

Do you like to play cribbage? Our weekly cribbage group meets every Thursday at 1:00 pm – feel free to join us!

Calling card players or interested persons to the Webster Senior Center – come join us for 6-card or 13-card pitch! Six card pitch meets on Wednesdays at 1:00 pm. Thirteen-card pitch meets on Thursdays at 1:00 pm.

Mahjongg group meets every Friday at 1:00 pm – beginners welcome!

The Worcester County Sheriff's Office House Numbering Program will create a custom wooden sign with your house number free of charge. One sign per senior household. Please contact the Webster Senior Center if you are interested in having a house number sign made for you. (508) 949-3845.

Senior SAFE is a program that supports fire and life safety education for seniors. The Webster Fire Dept. will do a home visit to ensure that you have the correct smoke and CO2 alarms and that they are working properly, at no cost to you! All you have to do is give them a call at (508) 949-3875.

Please call the Senior Center at (508) 949-3845 or stop in to pick up our monthly newsletter for a complete list of additional activities and upcoming events.

## Local residents named to Clark University Dean's List

WORCESTER — The following local residents were named to Clark University's Fall 2023 Dean's List:

Derek A. Fino, of Oxford was named to first honors.

Sarah A. Kersting-Mumm, of Oxford was named to first honors.

Dillon Taylor Palmer, of Oxford was named to first honors.

Sydney M. Lyons, of Auburn was named to first honors.

Founded in 1887, Clark University is a liberal arts-based research university that prepares its students to meet tomorrow's most daunting challenges and embrace its greatest opportunities. With more than 45 undergraduate majors and major tracks, more than 30 advanced degree programs, a growing number of professional certificate programs and nationally recognized community partnerships, Clark University fuses rigorous scholarship with authentic world and workplace experiences that empower our students to pursue lives and careers of meaning and consequence.

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# Gladys E. Kelly Library exhibits art by Jeanne Purcell



WEBSTER — Join the Gladys E. Kelly Public Library in welcoming Jeanne Purcell Vautor our newest artist in our exhibit space.

Jeanne Purcell Vautor loved art as a child and began her postsecondary education in a visual arts MFA program before transferring to the Education Department at the University of Harvard. After 45 years as an educator of K-22, she retired in 2008 and returned to her passion for the fine arts, specifically watercolor.

“I have always been captivated by the infinite allure of watercolor. One never becomes a master; rather, it is the master. As a medium, it silently offers limitless lessons about each of its elements,” she says of her artwork.

This art exhibit will be up until March 23. Stop in and see the wonderful art!



Courtesy

## ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL NAMES DECEMBER STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

**Congratulations to the following students who were selected as December Students of the Month at St. Joseph School: Pre-K 3-year-old (2-Day Program): Isabella Valenti; Pre-K 3-year-old (5-Day Program): Giovanni Laramée; Pre-K 4-year-old: Juliette Prendergast; Kindergarten: Maya Denert; Grade 1: Klaudia Obrycki; Grade 2: Maya Jackson; Grade 3: Julia Biela; Grade 4: Allen Oliver Jean-Paul; Grade 5: Grayson Dollar; Grade 6: Tosin Akindele; Grade 7: Lisa Kippax; Grade 8: Ryan Gruposso. Students are awarded Student of the Month for their outstanding exemplification of Religion, Respect, and Responsibility. Keep up the great work!**

## Holy Cross announces Dean’s List

WORCESTER — More than 1,600 students were named to the College of the Holy Cross’ Dean’s List for outstanding academic achievement during the Fall semester of the 2023-24 academic year. The following local students made the list:

Nora Foley of Auburn, Class of 2027  
Keating Oliver of Auburn, Class of 2027  
Sabrina Tang of Auburn, Class of 2025  
Caroline Villa of Auburn, Class of 2027  
Maxine Adu-Boahen Jones of Webster, Class of 2027  
Kelsey Connor of Webster, Class of 2024  
Samual Lavallee of Oxford, Class of 2026  
Cameron Nolan of Oxford, Class of 2026

To qualify for the Dean’s List, students must pass four or more letter-graded courses with no failing grades during the semester and earn a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

About Holy Cross

The College of the Holy Cross, in Worcester, Mass., is among the nation’s leading liberal arts institutions. A highly selective, four-year, exclusively undergraduate college of 3,100 students, Holy Cross is renowned for offering a rigorous, personalized education in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition. Since its founding in 1843, Holy Cross has made a positive impact in society by graduating students who distinguish themselves as thoughtful leaders in business, professional and civic life.

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PET of the WEEK



Meet Daphne: 2 years

If you’re looking for a girl with a big heart and little legs, then you’ve found her! Introducing Daphne! This girl has the most adorable black and white coat and cute black freckles. Daphne loves to play and gets the cutest zoomies! Her favorite toys are plushies that squeak. But she has the most fun when her human companions are around to play with her! Daphne would be a great pal to go on hikes with and trek through the snow! Don’t let her little legs fool you; she can keep up perfectly. Daphne also loves to cuddle up with you and get all the scratches. We think Daphne would do well with older kids and may enjoy a canine sibling who loves to play! We’re unsure about cats at this time. If you think Daphne could be the one to make you smile and light up your winter, please reach out today!

Apply for Daphne at baypathhumane.org



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Friday’s Child



Jordan

Age 9

engaged in the classroom and makes friends quickly.

Jordan also has a brother with whom he has a strong relationship with that he wants to continue when he is adopted. Jordan will do well in either a one or two parent household where he can be the only child or the youngest child. Jordan will need some individual one on one time with an adoptive placement, so that love and trust can be built with his new family.

https://adopt.mareinc.org/waiting-child-profiles#gallery/child/7551

Hi! My name is Jordan and I love snuggles!

Jordan is an active boy that is looking to be cared for and snuggled. He likes one on one attention and benefits from both structured and unstructured time with the adults in his life. He loves to climb ladders, poles, and any playground jungle gym. He loves building forts outside, playing video games, and swimming. Jordan is hoping to continue swimming lessons, gymnastics, and karate when he moves to his new home. Socially, he does very well in his afterschool program and in his current placement.

Jordan is in elementary school and is doing well. He thrives in structured, consistent environments with routines. He is supported by staff in school and is working on further developing his social and academic skills. Teachers say he is actively

Can I Adopt?

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. As an adoptive parent, you won’t have to pay any fees, adoption from foster care is completely free in Massachusetts.

The process to adopt a child from foster care includes training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you. These steps will help match you with a child or sibling group that your family will fit well with.

To learn more about adoption from foster care visit [www.mareinc.org](http://www.mareinc.org). Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) can give you guidance and information on the adoption process. Reach out today to find out all the ways you can help children and teens in foster care.





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FRANK G. CHILINSKI  
STONEBRIDGE PRESS PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE  
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

Longer,  
lighter  
days have  
returned!

At last, we are on the cusp of a seasonal change which brings with it a shift in weather, more light and more health benefits! The arrival of longer, lighter days indicates a time of renewal and rejuvenation, offering a wealth of opportunities to enhance our physical and mental well-being.

One of the most notable advantages of longer, lighter days is the increased exposure to natural sunlight. As the sun lingers in the sky for more extended periods, our bodies have greater opportunities to soak in its healthful rays. Sunlight is a vital source of Vitamin D, which plays a crucial role in bone health, immune function, and mood regulation. By spending time outdoors during daylight hours, whether it be through walks, outdoor activities, or simply enjoying a cup of tea on the porch, we can replenish our Vitamin D stores and bolster our overall well-being.

The arrival of springtime brings with it a palpable sense of renewal and optimism. Research has shown that exposure to natural light can have profound effects on mood and mental health, helping to alleviate symptoms of depression, anxiety, and seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

As the days grow longer and temperatures begin to rise, we find ourselves naturally drawn outdoors. Whether it's going for a jog in the park, cycling along scenic trails, or practicing yoga in the backyard, the extended daylight hours of late winter and early spring provide ample opportunities for physical activity and exercise.

Our bodies are finely attuned to the rhythms of the natural world, and exposure to natural light plays a crucial role in regulating our internal clocks. The increased daylight hours of late winter and early spring help to synchronize our circadian rhythms, promoting healthy sleep patterns and enhancing overall sleep quality. By exposing ourselves to natural light during the day and limiting exposure to artificial light at night, we can optimize our sleep-wake cycles and enjoy more restful and rejuvenating sleep.

VIEWPOINT

THE DEADLINE to submit letters to the editor and commentaries for next week's newspaper is Friday at noon. **SEND ALL ITEMS** to Editor  
Brendan Berube at The WEBSTER TIMES — news@stonebridgepress.news

Do not accept the grace of God in vain

Do not to accept the grace of God in vain.

What do these words of Saint Paul mean? How can someone accept the grace of God in vain?

Well, right before Saint Paul warns us of this in his letter to the Christians in Corinth, he highlights what Christ did for the world. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

In Christ Jesus, we become new! Old things pass away; our sinful mistakes and old habits that turn us away from God; our past regrets and fallen, distorted worldview. In Christ we become a new creation, a new reality! We have a new beginning! Imagine what a gift this is when we truly understand it and embrace it!

The Apostle Paul goes on to explain how we are reconciled with God. The separation that existed between humanity and God is now repaired. We have direct access to the Lord Almighty as His beloved children. And in our divine reconciliation, He now invites us to become His ambassador in helping others find the same reconciliation and discover their own new life in Christ!

Wow! How exciting is this understanding of our Faith – to realize that the old passes away and we have become a new creation. To appreciate that we have been reconciled with the Lord and have direct access to Him. To fathom that He invites us to act as His ambassador in the world sharing this Good News and helping others enter into this righteous relationship with God.

What a gift we have received! Yet, here is where Saint Paul goes on to warn us – "Do not accept the grace of God in vain." In other words, don't become a new creation, be reconciled with God, and act as an ambassador of Christ, receiving all these gifts only to turn away from Him in the end. When we don't respect the precious gift that God has given us, and we don't strive to fulfill our potential in Him, then we have turned our backs on the Lord Jesus and "we accepted the grace of God in vain."

This is a scary and sobering warning. Yet, we can relate this to the Gospel story about the man who gave different talents to his three servants. In Jesus' time, a talent was a weight of about 75 pounds of a particular metal, typically gold or silver. Thus, it was equivalent to a great sum of money. The Master gave each servant a special gift, whether five talents, two talents, or one talent, according to their ability. And he expected each to use his talents accordingly.

These servants needed to heed the words of Saint Paul to be careful not to accept the grace of God in vain. In other words, don't accept the talents from the Master if you aren't going to use them and increase them. The first two servants took their talents and doubled them. The one given five increased them by five. The one with two increased them by two. The lazy servant took his one talent and returned it to his master with no increase, only excuses why he didn't do anything with the talent he received.

Do not to accept the grace of God in vain.

Of course, when we hear this Gospel story of the talents, we understand how



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THE  
PEWS

BY FR. LUKE  
A. VERONIS  
SAINTS  
CONSTANTINE  
AND HELEN  
GREEK  
ORTHODOX  
CHURCH,  
WEBSTER

God's blessings and increase them is by sharing His blessings with others. The paradox of our Faith is that the more we give away, the more blessings we receive. This is why Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." As we give and share, we enter deeper into the blessings of God!

Think about the most precious gifts of life – the virtues of love, joy, peace, hope, faithfulness, goodness, and humility. These virtues are what fill our lives with God's Presence and help us discover the meaning of life. Yet with each of these virtues, the more we want to receive them and have them grow in our lives, we discover that we increase them by sharing them, by giving them freely to others.

The more we love others, the more we will feel the love of God and others. The more we express gratitude for everything in life, the more we cultivate eyes to see God's blessings everywhere and we become grateful for even the smallest things. The more we enter into the joy of the Lord and radiate this divine joy to others, the more this divine joy increases in the depths of our soul. The more mercy we shower upon others, the more we experience mercy in our own lives.

We don't accept the grace of God in vain when we share that grace with everyone we encounter. God's divine grace only increases.

This is what Jesus meant when he said, "To the one who has, more will be given." The servant who was faithful with the five talents he received, and increased them with five more talents, not only entered into the joy of His Lord, but was entrusted with even more talents.

We have received the most incredible blessings from God. Our old fallen nature has passed away and we have become a new creation. We have been reconciled with the Lord and have direct access to Him. We have been called to act as His ambassador in the world sharing His Good News with everyone and inviting them to also enter into a right relationship with God.

May we be good and faithful stewards with these gifts and increase the talents given to us by freely sharing them with others.

Let us not accept the grace of God in vain!

Avoid tapping  
into  
retirement  
savings early



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DENNIS  
ANTONOPOULOS

If you want to make a big purchase, such as a new car or a piece of property, or you were faced with a large, unexpected expense, such as a major home or auto repair, would you have the funds readily available? If not, you might look at what may be your biggest pool of money — your 401(k) or IRA. But should you tap into these accounts well before you retire?

Maybe not — and here's why:

Less money in retirement – The more money you invest in your retirement accounts, and the longer you keep it invested, the more you'll probably have when you need it most — when you're retired. Consequently, taking out sizable amounts from these accounts before you retire could be costly, as it would disrupt the benefits of compounding that can be achieved by holding investments for the long term.

Possible bump into higher tax bracket – The money you take out from your traditional IRA and 401(k) is taxable in the year of withdrawal. So, if you withdraw a significant amount of money at once from your traditional IRA or 401(k), you could be pushed into a higher tax bracket, at least for one year.

Tax penalties – If you take money out of a 401(k) or traditional IRA before you turn 59 and a half, you could face a 10 percent tax penalty, although some exceptions exist. Penalty-free withdrawals can be made for several reasons, including for education and medical expenses, first-time purchase of a home (up to \$10,000), after the birth or adoption of a child (up to \$5,000) and more (see [irs.gov/taxtopics/tc557](https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc557)). With a Roth IRA, which is funded with after-tax dollars, you can withdraw contributions — but not earnings — at any time, for any purpose, without incurring penalties.

Given these issues, how can you avoid dipping into your retirement accounts when you're faced with a financial need?

One possibility is to take out a loan from your 401(k). Unlike a 401(k) withdrawal, a loan is neither taxable nor subject to tax penalties. Also, the interest you pay on a 401(k) loan goes back into your account. Still, a 401(k) loan has its drawbacks. If you leave your job, you'll likely have to repay the loan in a short period of time and if you don't have all the money to repay it, the loan will be considered in default, so you'll owe taxes and the 10 percent penalty if you're younger than 59 and a half. But even if you don't leave your job and you do repay the loan, you'll still have taken away money that could have potentially kept growing within your tax-deferred account. As mentioned above, as your money compounds, you'll want to minimize disruptions.

Building an emergency fund is another way to gain access to cash. Such a fund should contain at least six months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account. It can take time to build a fund of this size, so it's never too soon to start putting away money for it. To avoid the temptation of dipping into your emergency fund, you'd ideally keep this fund separate from your daily spending accounts.

Explore all your options before tapping into your IRA or 401(k) early. Keeping these accounts intact as long as possible is one of the best moves you can make to help build your future retirement income.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Dennis Antonopoulos, your local Edward Jones Advisor at 5 Albert St., Auburn, MA 01501 Tel: 508-832-5385 or [dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com](mailto:dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com).*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A life sentence?

To the Editor:

There was a bit of good news from Beacon Hill earlier this month. Lawmakers have "... filed legislation that proposes to keep young adults through age 20 who have been charged with crimes in the juvenile system." (Worcester Telegram, Feb. 2)

The rational for this, according to Rep. James O'Day (D-West Boylston), is "...a matter of brain development, advances in brain science." He goes on to note that "... the brain doesn't develop fully until age 25."

If we don't want juveniles, as the

article notes, to receive a "life sentence," why don't we stop parents, schools, and some in the medical community from advocating for middle schoolers and teens to transition from one sex to another, chemically and/or surgically?

If the brain is not fully developed and a young person is not able to make a legal distinction between right and wrong until age 25, how can a teen or preteen fully comprehend the implications of changing his or her sex? The teenage felon can always change the course of his or her life's trajectory. Every kid that steals a car at 16 doesn't become a career criminal. Can a teen or preteen who has surgery or takes puberty blockers reverse the process? What is the point of no return? Why would anyone encourage or allow a teen or preteen much younger than 25 with an undeveloped brain to take a risk she

or he cannot fully comprehend?

Several legislators filing the bill state they are "reluctant to saddle young adults with criminal records for the rest of their lives, long after brain development has caught up with their physical development." Why then do so many adults want to entice kids into being "saddled" with a truly irreversible change(sentence) well short of their 25th birthday?

One can only hope that the now enlightened members of the General Court, armed with the knowledge of advances in brain science, will legislate a stop to gender transitioning for children whose brains have yet to fully develop.

Thank you,

RICHARD CLARK  
DUDLEY

I hope to earn your vote

To the Editor:

I am immensely grateful for the overwhelming support and trust of the voters of the 6th Worcester District in Dudley, Charlton, Spencer, and Southbridge in the Feb. 6 Special Election Primary. I am eager for the opportunity to engage with even more constituents, as I seek to comprehend the concerns and needs of all those across the 6th Worcester District.

As your State Representative, I will be a tireless advocate for the people of our district. I pledge to prioritize critical issues such as public safety, bolstering local aid, and fortifying educational initiatives, recognizing that these pillars

are critical in fostering a community where all residents can truly thrive and enjoy a better quality of life.

As we approach the pivotal March 5 general election, I am determined to spread my vision with more voters from across the 6th Worcester District. If you have any questions about my candidacy, I encourage you to read out to me at [John@MarsiForStateRep.com](mailto:John@MarsiForStateRep.com) or visit my Web site at [MarsiForStateRep.com](http://MarsiForStateRep.com).

I hope to earn your vote for State Representative on Tuesday, March 5. Thank you!

JOHN MARS  
DUDLEY

Letter submission  
policy

Letters to the Editor must include the author's name, address, and a daytime phone number for purposes of verification in order to be considered for publication. Only the author's name and the town in which they reside will be published. Letters submitted without all of the required information will not be accepted.

It is the sole prerogative of the Editor to determine whether a submission satisfies our requirements and decency standards, and any submission may be rejected at any time for any reason he or she might deem appropriate.



# Fish & Wildlife prepares for spring trout stocking

There was limited ice fishing on dangerous ice conditions throughout the valley this past weekend, but conditions were much better north and west of the valley! A couple of members fishing the Uxbridge Rod & Gun Club this past weekend, had a great time catching and releasing some impressive rainbow and brook trout.

Mass. Fish & Wildlife is busy repairing trucks for the upcoming stocking of trout this spring, as anglers are already fishing open water in the valley and on the Cape. This week's picture shows the success some are having on open water using spinning gear. This week's picture shows a big brown trout caught locally last



THE GREAT  
OUTDOORS  
.....  
RALPH  
TRUE

The Bald Eagle population is rapidly growing in Mass., with new nests being built annually. Their breeding season is only a month away! Sightings of this majestic bird are almost a weekly occurrence, in the valley area.

Public hearings on the saltwater recreational fishing regulations are being held soon. Unfortunately, most anglers were disappointed after leaving the hearings in the past, with no changes to their recommendations. It is a waste of time! More cuts to

week and weighed in at Jerry's Bait & Tackle. Black bear dens are being visited by Mass Fish & Wildlife personnel to check on the bears' winter survival, and successful newborns.

recreational saltwater fishing limits and sizes are expected again this year, in both Mass. & Rhode Island. The public hearings have become just a formality.

The Springfield Sportsmen's show is scheduled to open this week, Feb. 23-25. It is a great way to enjoy a day with friends, before the spring fishing begins on both fresh & saltwater.

The New England Saltwater Fishing Show will open their doors at the Rhode Island Convention Center on March 8-10. If you fish saltwater, you need to attend this great show.

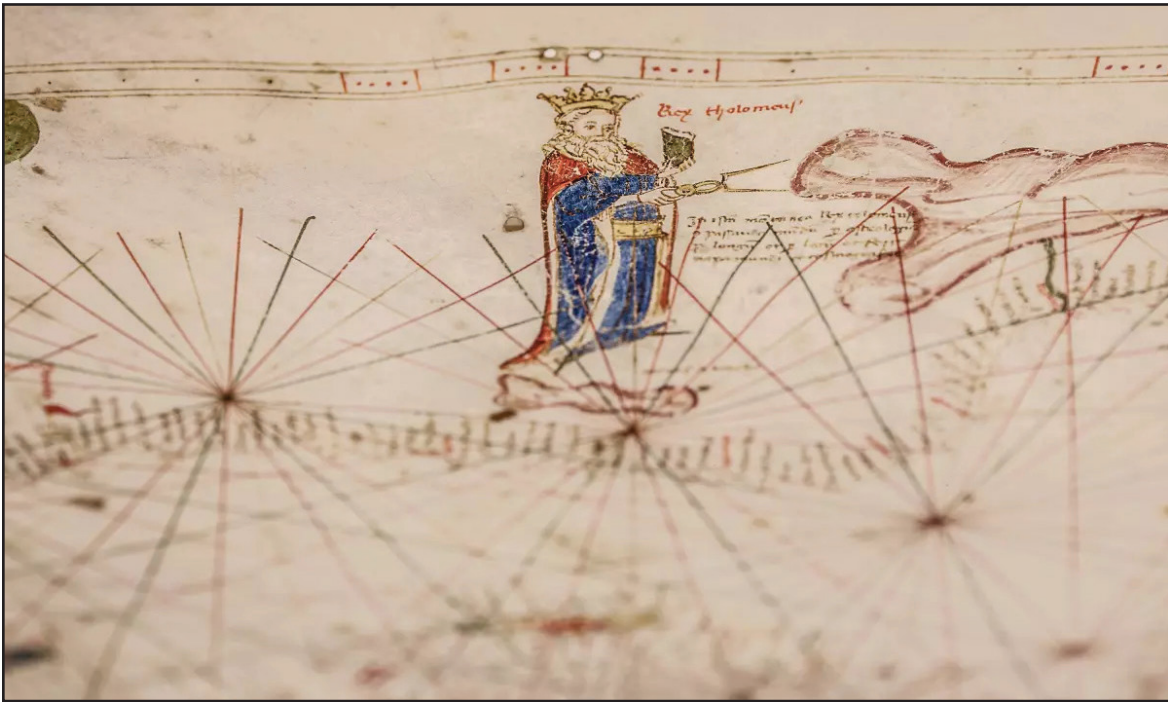
Rod & Gun Club renewals at many local clubs are now being held! Don't lose your membership. There is a deadline for renewing your membership at most clubs in the valley.

Take A Kid Fishing & Keep Them Rods Bending!



A four-and-three-quarter-pound Brown Trout caught last week at a local pond in Mass. by Justin, on rod & reel.

## Latest antiques and collectibles news



It's been close to three months since my last update on antique and collectibles news. As you might expect, a lot has taken place since then. I'll focus on some major estate sale finds today.

In 2023, Jeanette Davies saw two antique teddy bears at a yard sale in South Wales. Teddy bears got their name when Teddy Roosevelt was hunting with (American bear hunter and sportsman) Holt Collier. Collier stunned and cornered a bear and Roosevelt wouldn't shoot it, believing it to be unsportsmanlike. Davies paid £130, or around \$155 for both yard sale bears. One turned out to be a World War II era teddy worth between \$92 and \$142 USD. Davies correctly believed the other bear to be a Steiff bear. Steiff began producing high quality teddy bears three years after the incident with Roosevelt. The 1905 Steiff bear was auctioned with a \$5,100 minimum bid.

Across the country, a California man recently found an old tin box of baseball cards that his dad collected. The man identified only as John said his



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

father Ed began collecting cards in the 1920s, according to Newsweek. Ed had shown John some cards occasionally, but John only saw the tin box with all the cards after Ed's passing. The collection includes 20 Babe Ruth cards, a Shoeless Joe Jackson, and many other Hall of Famers. The sale of the cards is expected to bring in the high six figures.

Also in California, a map dealer's keen eye and knowledge may have netted him millions. Alex Clausen was taking a virtual tour of oil heir Gordon Getty's estate sale and became focused on an old map, according to the Los Angeles Times. He spotted a map listed as a portolan chart and as being from 1500 to 1525. Portolan maps were hand drawn maps on animal skin created by navigators. According to the LA Times, they "often feature drawings of compass roses, flags, sea monsters and ships; unlike modern maps, interior details of land are not the key focus." The \$100,000 to \$150,000

the 15th century before they would have adopted a new flag. After hundreds of hours of research, researchers dated the map to 1360. The chart is the only 14th century portolan known to exist outside of Europe. The map is being sold in a gallery where it is on course to bring \$7.5 million.

We are currently cataloging our comic books, sports cards, and collectibles auction. We are still accepting consignments of gold jewelry, sterling silver serving ware, art, coins, and other antiques, and collectibles for our early summer auction. I'll be teaching my antiques and collectibles night class again on March 5 at the

estimate seemed reasonable for a 16th century map, but some clues led Clausen to believe it could be older. Granada in Southwestern Spain had a different flag than other kingdoms in the Iberian Peninsula, making him think the map was at least from

Bay Path Evening School in Charlton. I'll also be presenting at Learning in Retirement event in Danielson, Connecticut on May 6. Please visit our Web site, <https://centralmassauctions.com>, for links to other upcoming events.

Contact us to consign items or for auction information at: Wayne Tuiskula Auctioneer/Appraiser Central Mass Auctions for Antique, Collectibles Auctions and Appraisal Services [info@centralmassauctions.com](mailto:info@centralmassauctions.com) or (508-612-6111).

### WEBSTER-DUDLEY VETERANS SERVICE

#### PART TIME CLERK POSITION 19 HOURS

The Town of Dudley is seeking a qualified professional to serve as the Veterans' Services Clerk. This position falls under the direction of the Director of Veteran Services.

Candidate must have excellent organizational skills with the ability to manage time effectively, computer proficiency is required along with writing ability. Knowledge of departmental operations and exercise judgment in responding to the needs of our veterans. Attend veterans-oriented trainings and educational courses as required, assists with community events such as Memorial Day and Veteran Day parades, and helps veterans in completing applications for State and Federal Veteran benefits.

A high school education or GED is required with one year of office experience. Salary is \$20.28/hour.

Please send a cover letter and resume to [townadmin2@dudleyma.gov](mailto:townadmin2@dudleyma.gov).

Resumes will be accepted until the position is filled.



### ARTHRITIS?

Is your arthritis care all that you would hope it to be?  
If not we may be able to help.

Osteoarthritis  
of Hands - Knees- Hips.  
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Associate Professor of Medicine, UMass-Chan Medical School  
25 Oak Ave., Worcester, MA 01605 508-799-2674  
"Committed to Advancing appropriate care to people with arthritis"

### Executive Director - Webster Housing Authority

**Description:** The Webster Housing Authority (WHA) is seeking a qualified and experienced housing administrator for the position of Executive Director. The Authority's portfolio includes 72 units of Ch. 667 Elderly/Handicapped, 30 units of Ch.200 family, 16 units of Ch. 689, 7 MRVP Vouchers, 47 Federal Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers and 61 Federal Public Housing units. The candidate should be familiar with both the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program requirements.

**Minimum Requirements:** A minimum of 4 years' experience in public or private housing management, community development, public administration, non-profit administration, or a related field that demonstrates strong management and organization skills. Knowledge of the principles, practices of state and federal public housing management programs, capital improvement planning, technology systems, maintenance, and finances desired. Strong organizational and personnel management skills desired. One year of experience overseeing at least three staff persons or as a significant project team leader or program administrator required.

Possess excellent written and verbal skills for an ability to communicate effectively with local officials, boards, residents, service providers and funding agencies. Experience working with the public, as well as individuals of various socio-economic backgrounds. Must be bondable. Certification as a Massachusetts Public Housing Administrator (MPHA) desired or obtained within one year.

Must be proficient in Word, Excel and Outlook. Familiarity with centralized public housing wait lists (CHAMP), housing software, HUD and EOHLC databases and reporting systems desired. Other preferred credentials include graduation from an accredited four-year college or university and a passion for the mission of affordable housing.

The maximum salary is \$102,456. and is dependent upon experience, education, and certifications in accordance with EOHLC Executive Director Salary Schedule. The required work hours are 37.5 hours per week and the position includes excellent benefits. The candidate will be subject to qualification verification prior to employment.

To apply in confidence please submit a cover letter and resume to Kenneth R. Martin, Consultant, at [kenmartin1208@gmail.com](mailto:kenmartin1208@gmail.com) with "Webster ED position" in the subject line.

The deadline is no later than the close of business on March 6, 2024. Late applications shall not be considered. More detailed information will be required of applicants that advance to the next level of consideration.

Diverse applicants are encouraged to apply.

The Webster Housing Authority is an Equal Opportunity Employer

### Executive Director

Dudley Housing Authority  
Dudley, MA

TheDudleyHousingAuthorityseeksanexperiencedhousingadministratorormanageragent to lead and manage its programs, properties, and contracts. The Dudley Housing Authorityownsandoperates80units ofstate-aidedelderly/handicappedpublichousing and 8 units of congregate housing for adults with special needs.

**Required Minimum Qualifications:** Two years' experience in public or private housing, community development, public administration, non-profit administration, or a related field that demonstrates strong management and organizational skills. Knowledge of the principles and practices of housing management, finances, and maintenance systems in public or private housing is desired. Knowledge of PHA & CHAMP a plus. Excellent written and verbal communication skills required. Willingness to work with people of various socio-economic backgrounds. Willingness and interest in working with tenants on a personal level. While not required for hiring, certification as a property manager or similar classification by a nationally recognized housing or real estate organization or by certification as a MPHA of a DHCD-approved Massachusetts Public Housing Administrator Certification Program is desirable or must be obtained within the first year of employment. Diverse applicants are encouraged to apply.

Theannualsalaryrangeisfrom\$51,295toamaximumsalaryof\$60,347dependingupon experience, certifications, and in accordance with the EOHLC Executive Director Salary Schedule/Calculation worksheet. The work week is 26 hours per week and includes a generous benefit portfolio.

Candidates should apply in confidence by submitting cover letter and resume to G. Matthew Pike, MassNAHRO, 990 Washington Street, Suite 209, Dedham, MA 02026, ATTN: Dudley E.D. Search – or, using that same subject header, email those application materials to [info@massnahro.org](mailto:info@massnahro.org).

For more information, please visit the MassNAHRO online Career Center at <https://massnahro.org/networking/default.asp>

Managing agent respondents should submit a proposal to that same address.

Application closing date is close of business on Monday, March 4, 2024. Late submissions will not be accepted.

The Dudley Housing Authority is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Minorities, women, veterans, and people with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.



# A Peek into Flowering Signs of Spring

Nothing brightens up the cold, white, winter landscape like the annual arrival of early spring buds. From crocuses to lilacs, nostalgic perennials are the staple of New England gardens. Plentiful and easy to grow, this week's column will spotlight a few common flowers that usher in the arrival of spring each year;

Crocus (The little princess of the garden): Crocus has a long heritage in New England, as the favored flower is among the first to be brought to North America by settlers. Popping up in gardens in mid-March, the sight of crocus bulbs are cause for celebration by winter weary Easterners. In fact, the crocus has been known to bloom while snow is still on the ground, offering a visual promise of the upcoming season.

The humble flowers, boasting an array of hues from pale yellow to deep purple, open their cup shaped blooms fully only on sunny days. Perhaps the popularity of the humble flower is attributed to its easy going nature. Requiring only a light alkaline soil and plenty of sunlight, and it will reward the eye with many colorful, low growing flowers that multiply each spring.

Crocus in Mythology: The crocus famously appears in a legendary Greek tragedy of Crocus (Krocus) and Smilax. According to



TAKE  
THE  
HINT  
**KAREN  
TRAINOR**

the legend a young mortal named Crocus headed into the Athens forest in pursuit of the nymph Smilax. Catching her attention, Smilax is smitten but only briefly, by the handsome Crocus. Soon she becomes bored and spawns his amorous advances. When crocus persists in pursuing the beauty against her wishes, the gods transforms him into a saffron Crocus flower; its orange stigmas symbolizing his undying passion for her.

Planting Crocus: Spring crocus bulbs are best planted in the fall when the soil is below 60 degrees, but well before the first hard frost. Plant pointy side up about four inches apart. For the best visual affect plant in clumps of about a dozen bulbs. Water well and cover with a few inches of mulch for cold weather insulation. Since moles and mice are also attracted to crocus, those who have such pests in the garden are advised to plant in buried wire cages or other devices designed to repel the hungry critters.

Daffodil Delights: Daffodils' sunny yellow flowers make this perennial a delightful and most welcoming sign

of spring. The hearty bulbs have been known to survive in the ground for well over a century, offering decades of flowing blooms. There are more than 27,000 cultivated varieties of daffodils, so it's no wonder the daffodil is one of the most popular spring flowers!

Mythology and History: The botanical name for the daffodil is "Narcissus," which is named after the youth in Greek mythology who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water. The bending flowers represent Narcissus looking into the water; it is said that when he died in that position, a daffodil grew.

Daffodils have a rich history beyond the mythology. The Romans were known to have planted narcissus in memory of those fallen in battle. Daffodils were eventually transported to England by the Romans who hailed the flowers' healing properties. Early settlers brought the precious daffodil bulbs with them to America as a reminder of their homeland.

Today, Daffodils represent new beginnings, a rebirth and joy. In China, the daffodil symbolizes good fortune.

Planting Daffodils: Plant bulbs in the fall two to three weeks before the ground freezes for spring blooms. Bulbs need proper drainage; therefore, the bulbs require a large hole and loosened soil; plant

pointy side up about six inches deep. Bulbs should be thoroughly watered at the time of planting and again in the spring when they begin to grow. Most gardeners agree planting daffodils in clumps of five or more creates a most pleasing garden landscape.

Note: Nothing adds a ray of sunshine to your indoor space better than a pot of miniature daffodils. The bright, yellow blooms are perfect for the desktop, whether you're in a spacious home office or a crowded cubicle. At just a few dollars per pot, they are an inexpensive pick me up that keeps on giving. After the blossoms wilt, the bulbs can be replanted in the ground to rebloom outside for years to come!

Lovely Lilacs Fragrant clusters of lilacs adorned colonial yards and gardens of early America. Lilacs were grown both for their beauty and their medicinal properties. In fact, in the late 18th century, both Thomas Jefferson and George Washington wrote about their lilac plants. The species is so hardy that early lilac bushes, in a testament of survival, have continued to thrive in colonial homesteads, long after the homes were abandoned or destroyed. Lilacs have been known to survive hundreds of years, making them a true heirloom flower. The Governor Wentworth Estate in Portsmouth, NH boasts the oldest surviving lilac bushes,

said to have been planted circa 1750. While there are many strains of the flower, the most nostalgic is the common lavender hued lilac (Syringa Vulgaris), which was brought to America in the mid 1700s from eastern Europe.

Lilac Legends: Legend has it lilac drives away evil wherever it is planted or strewn. It is said that lilac bushes were planted on the homestead by colonists in an effort to protect the inhabitants from bad forces.

Immigrants from Europe brought tales of lilac folklore from the "old country" to America, including the belief that finding a white lilac blossom with five petals is a sign good fortune would follow. Meanwhile, in certain sections of England it was considered bad luck to bring blooming Lilacs into the house and all white Lilacs were especially banned from display inside the home.

Growing Lilacs New England is the perfect climate to grow lilacs, as it is very cold hardy, requiring a frost to prompt bud blooming. For optimum blooms, a lilac bush should be planted in areas that receive full sun (at least six hours per day). Lilacs like a slightly alkaline soil. Spread roots out vertically and cover with topsoil. A newly planted lilac bush should be kept well watered. Add a loose mulch above the roots to help with water absorption. Keep in mind different varieties of lilacs

bloom at different times. When lilac flowers have finished blooming, prune the dead flowers back to just above where new buds are forming. Be prudent with pruning, as over cutting can result in a decrease of blooms next year.

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 renown 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 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.

## Starting over

Starting all over again often feels like carrying the weight of an ending. It's challenging to move forward when your thoughts are tethered to the past, making each step into the unknown feel heavier with the memories and efforts that once defined your path.

These moments, usually fraught with dread and disbelief, carry the essence of beginning from square one and feeling like less than zero. It's hard to see that the seeds required to embrace a new start are sown within these moments of defeat.

Consider the story of a love that once felt like destiny. Two souls intertwined, embarking on a journey that seemed certain to withstand the test of time. But as the chapters unfolded, the narra-

POSITIVELY  
SPEAKING

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MOORE

tive shifted, leaving one in despair and forced to enter the dating world again.

It reminds me of a quote by J.K. Rowling: "Rock bottom became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life."

Picture the entrepreneur who charted a path from a local franchisee to a high-flying executive at the national headquarters. This journey, marked by first-class travels and the trappings of success, comes to an abrupt halt with a dismissal that cuts deep. The aftermath was a maelstrom of emotions—anger, sadness, anxiety—confronting the harsh reality of sustaining a lifestyle without the security of a steady income and facing an unwelcome choice between giving up or reinvention.

C.S. Lewis: "You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."

Imagine the diligent student whose academic endeavors were fueled by the promise of a fulfilling career. Years of sacrifice and sleepless nights culminate in achieving a coveted degree, only to discover the chosen path is filled with dissatisfaction and the realization that one's true calling lies elsewhere. It is a terrifying dilemma.

F. Scott Fitzgerald said, "It's never too late to become who you want to be. I hope you live a life that you're proud of, and if you find that you're not, I hope you have the strength to start over."

Consider the journey of an artist whose every performance was a testament to a life dedicated

to the craft. Creating art that resonated with audiences far and wide. Yet, the unpredictability of the business, the constant rejection, and the fleeting nature of fame began to erode the joy once found in the spotlight.

The emotional toll of years spent chasing the next opportunity left our artist feeling disillusioned. The passion that once fueled late-night rehearsals had dimmed, leaving behind a yearning for something more, something different. The decision to stay where it feels comfortable or to start all over doing something new is paralyzing.

"Fall forward. Every failed experiment is one step closer to success. You've got to take risks." — Denzel Washington.

Life, in all its uncertainty, shows us that the comfort of security isn't

truly secure. The tales of love lost, career dissatisfaction, and the quest for reinvention are chapters in a story familiar to many of us. These narratives underscore the universal journey of starting anew.

No doubt you've been in similar situations, with no other option than to choose a relentless pursuit of a new beginning. Trudging forward after a significant setback. It's an awful feeling, but what's the alternative? Become bitter and resentful? No thanks.

Human beings may crave security, yet the truth is that everything carries a risk.

As Jim Rohn eloquently said, "Everything in life is risky; I'll tell you how risky life is... you're not going to get out of life alive."

This acknowledgment can help us to face the unknown with an open mind. Your mindset can significantly influence whether the journey ahead leads to a positive transformation or becomes a hurdle too challenging to overcome.

Starting over again presents a unique chance to reevaluate our mental patterns and expectations, setting the stage for a shift that can either uplift or challenge us, depending on our perspective.

Within the realm of uncertainty, we uncover something truly extraordinary: the power to reshape our destiny. Here lies the potential for reinvention, for altering our paths, and for reconstructing our lives from the ground up. Learn to embrace your new beginnings and unlock the promise of tomorrow.

## Starting plants from seeds indoors

Keep your green thumb in shape this winter while getting a jump on the growing season by starting your favorite or hard-to-find plants indoors. It's fun, simpler than you think, and can help stretch your plant budget.

Start with some clean containers that you purchase, recycle, or make from newspapers. Be sure to add drainage holes to any repurposed yogurt or similar containers you are using for starting seeds to avoid waterlogged soil. Always clean used pots by soaking them in a one-part bleach and nine-part water solution for ten minutes then rinse with clear water. This helps reduce the risk of disease.

Fill the containers with a moist well-drained potting mix or a sterile seed starting mix. Once the containers are filled, check the back of your seed packets for planting directions. Most contain

all the information you need for when and how to plant the seeds. Some seed companies now provide this information on their website instead of the seed packets.

Most seeds are planted about twice the seed diameter deep while smaller seeds are often set on the soil surface and gently watered in place. Once again, check the seed packet for the seeds you are growing. Plant two seeds per container just in case one of the seeds fails to sprout.

Once planted, move the containers to a warm location. Many gardeners use heating pads designed for germinating seeds to help speed sprouting. Covering the containers with a sheet of plastic or one of the prefab domes will help conserve moisture so you will need to water less often.

Check the soil moisture daily and water



GARDEN  
MOMENTS  
.....  
**MELINDA  
MYERS**

often enough to keep the soil evenly moist but not soggy wet. Remove the plastic and move the containers to a sunny window or better yet, under artificial lights as soon as any green appears.

Regularly rotate plants that are growing in sunny windows to promote more even growth. Adjust artificial lights as plants grow. Most seedlings benefit from keeping the lights four to six inches above the top of the seedlings. Leave the lights on for 14 but no more than 16 hours a day. Using a timer is an easy way to make sure the plants receive the right amount of light each day.

Once the seedlings develop two sets of true leaves (these will look like the leaves of the plants you are growing), it is time to do some thinning. Remove the weakest seedling in each pot so only one strong seedling remains. Trimming the weaker seedlings back to ground level instead of pulling avoids damage to the remaining seedling.

Once seedlings have been thinned and are actively growing, use a fertilizer labeled for this use. Continue to water thoroughly and often enough to keep the planting mix slightly moist but not soggy wet.

Check the weather and seed packet to determine when it is safe to move your plants outdoors. You'll need to prepare them for their new home outdoors with a technique called hardening

off. Start by moving the plants to a sheltered and shaded location after the danger of frost has passed. Stop fertilizing, and check soil moisture daily but allow it to dry just slightly before watering thoroughly.

Gradually increase the amount of sunlight the plants receive each day. Cover or move them indoors when frost is in the forecast. Your transplants are ready to move to their permanent location after a week or two.

Start gathering your supplies and seeds now. And before you know it, you will be enjoying the beautiful blooms and tasty vegetables you started from seed yourself.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition and Small Space Gardening. She hosts The



Melinda Myers

Seedlings should be moved to a sunny window or placed under artificial lights as soon as any green appears.

Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" instant video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine. Myers' Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.



# Country Bank supports communities with 2023 donations exceeding \$1.2 million



REGION — Country Bank, a full-service financial institution serving Central and Western Massachusetts, proudly reported more than \$1.2 million in donations for 2023. The bank’s philanthropic efforts supported local non-profits throughout its communities, with 463 organizations receiving grants in 2023.

In addition to financial support, Country Bank’s team members dedicated their time and expertise to make a difference. They volunteered 1,255 hours of community service, demonstrating their commitment to giving back. Furthermore, 37 team members served on 65 non-profit boards and committees, actively contributing to the success of these organizations.

As a community bank, it recognizes the importance of supporting financial literacy; Country Bank held four Credit for Life Fairs for 1,500 High School Seniors to educate them on credit, budgeting, and how their decisions impact their financial wellness. Classes were also held at Christina’s House and within various schools throughout the community. In partnership with Greenlight, the bank launched a debit card for kids to support parents in teaching children early on how to spend, share, and save. The bank also introduced a new program to support financial literacy, Money School, to support local schools with educational opportunities for in-classroom teachings for all ages, and an online financial educational program on the bank’s website.

One of the highlights of Country Bank’s philanthropic efforts in 2023 was its partnership with the Wonder Fund during the “Season of Difference” Campaign. This collaboration aimed to support kids and families in Central and Western Massachusetts’ Department of Children and Families (DCF) system. By joining forces with the Wonder Fund, Country Bank demonstrated its commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable children and families in the community with over \$30,000 in support.

Some of the organizations receiving donations were The Ronald McDonald House, Christina’s House, The YWCA, The Boys and Girls Clubs, Behavioral Health Network, The United Way, Salvation Army, The Food Bank of Western Mass, The Worcester County Food Bank, Be Like Brit, Juniper Outreach, Springfield Revitalize CDC, Friends of the Homeless, and 21 Senior Centers and 19 Food Pantries across the region.

Paul Scully, President and CEO of Country Bank, emphasized the bank’s dedication to its communities.

He stated, “As a community partner, we care deeply about the sustainability of our communities. We are honored to support many organizations through donations and volunteerism to help them with their work. Supporting and enriching our communities is not only a part of our mission; it’s who we are as an organization, and we know that it makes a difference for so many.”



Courtesy

## OXFORD THIRD GRADERS TAKE VISITORS ON “SAFARI”

The third grade students at Clara Barton Elementary in Oxford conducted a great animal research project which culminated in a “safari” visit with families on Feb. 15. Students did a great job with their projects which included posters, a model and trivia questions. There were some very creative designs and exotic animal choices.



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LEGALS

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**The Trial Court**  
**Probate and Family Court**  
**Worcester Probate**  
**and Family Court**  
**225 Main Street**  
**Worcester, MA 01608**  
**(508) 831-2200**  
**Docket No. WO24P0415EA**  
**CITATION ON PETITION FOR**  
**FORMAL ADJUDICATION**  
**Estate of:**  
Cynthia L Bathgate  
**Date of Death: 01/24/2024**

To all interested persons:  
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Charles F Proctor of Oxford MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that: **Charles F Proctor of Oxford MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration** .

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/05/2024.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

**UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)**  
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal

Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.  
**WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.**  
Date: February 09, 2024  
Stephanie K. Fattman,  
Register of Probate  
February 23, 2024

**Webster Legal Posting**  
Articles 6, 7, 8, and 10 from the October 16, 2023 Annual Town Meeting each received a positive vote at the October 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Town Meeting and an approval from the Attorney General’s Office.  
Article 6 – To amend Chapter 448 of the General Bylaws as it pertains to the use of the facilities at Memorial Beach.  
Article 7 - To amend Chapter 302 Alarm Systems as it pertains to the fee structure for false alarms.  
Article 8 - To amend Chapter 260 as it pertains to the fee structure to Section 260-2 Noncriminal Disposition.  
Article 10 - To amend Chapter 329 by adding 320-2 the Preservation of Historically Significant Buildings and Structures.  
Complete copies of the articles are available in the Town Clerk’s Office.  
February 16, 2024  
February 23, 2024

**NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE’S SALE OF REAL ESTATE**  
By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage dated June 8, 2022 given by Nisachan Realty, LLC to Steven A. Ross, Trustee of QS Lending Two Trust u/d/t dated May 2, 2022 (recorded in Book 67529, Page 292), said mortgage recorded with the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 67729, Page 243, and which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at Public Auction at **1:00 p.m. on the 11th day of March, 2024** at 72 Huguenot Road, Oxford, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage.  
To wit:  
Property Address: **72 Huguenot Road, Oxford, Massachusetts 01540**  
A certain parcel of land on Huguenot Road, Oxford, Worcester County, Massachusetts, shown as Lot 1 on a plan entitled “Plan of Land in Oxford, Massachusetts, owned by James P. LaMountain Nominee Trust” dated January 23, 2004, surveyed by B.C. Engineering & Survey, Inc., Civil Engineering-Land Surveying recorded in the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 806, Plan 47, bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at the northeast corner of Lot 1 and running along Parcel “A”, N. 12° 11’ 42” E., one hundred thirty-one and thirteen hundredths (131.13) feet to a stone wall; THENCE running N. 12° 11’ 42” E., one hundred forty-eight and eighty-seven hundredths (148.87) feet to a point; THENCE running N. 72° 56’ 51” W., two hundred six and eighty-two hundredths (206.82) feet to a point; THENCE N. 12° 11’ 42” E., two hundred five (205) feet to a point; THENCE running on a curve to the right having a radius of thirty (30) feet and a length of forty-one and eighty-nine hundredths (41.89) feet to a point on Huguenot Road; THENCE N. 87° 47’ 35” E., one hundred sixteen and sixty-three hundredths (116.63) feet to a point; THENCE running on a curve to the right a length of sixty-six and ninety hundredths (66.90) feet and a radius of five hundred seventy (570) feet to the point of beginning. CONTAINING 52,758 square feet more or less.  
Subject to a twenty foot wide temporary grading easement as shown on a survey entitled “Plan of Land in Oxford, Massachusetts” dated January 23, 2004 and recorded with Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 806, Plan 47.  
For title see deed recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 65792, Page 87.

Premises to be sold and conveyed subject to and with the benefit of all rights, rights of way, restrictions, easements, covenants, liens or claims in the nature of liens, improvements, public assessments, any and all unpaid taxes, tax titles, tax liens, water and sewer liens and any other municipal assessments or liens and rights of any tenants and parties in possession, if there be any, or existing encumbrances of record which are in force and are applicable, having priority over said mortgage, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the deed. The successful bidder will pay all costs of recording the foreclosure deed and any other foreclosure documents including, without limitation, all state and county excise stamp fees, and shall also be responsible for any Title V inspection and repair requirements.

Terms of sale: A deposit of Twenty Five Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$25,000.00) by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The balance is to be paid by certified or bank check to Baker, Braverman & Barbadoro, P.C., 1200 Crown Colony Drive, Suite 610, Quincy, MA 02169 within thirty (30) days from the date of sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. In the event of an error in this publication, the description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control.  
Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale.  
Steven A. Ross, Trustee of QS Lending Two Trust  
u/d/t dated January 27, 2020  
Present holder of said mortgage  
By his Attorneys,  
Baker, Braverman & Barbadoro, P.C.  
1200 Crown Colony Drive, Suite 610  
Quincy, MA 02169  
February 16, 2024  
February 23, 2024  
March 1, 2024



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**WEBSTER - 40 LINCOLN ST**



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**THOMPSON - 47 FAYBYAN RD**

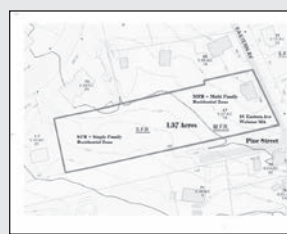
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A Unique Opportunity to Own a Rural Farmhouse on 2.52 Acres! Home has 1,978 Sqft +/-, 4 BRs, 2-1/2 Baths. Total 8 Rms. Farm is in full operation with Goats, Sheep, Pony, Donkey, Duck, Chickens, soo much More!  
**\$450,000**

**WEBSTER - 18 EASTERN AVE.**

*Featured New Listing*



TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THIS ONE! This property offers a whole lot more than meets the eye! 2 Family that served the same family for over 65 Years. 2 BRs & 1 Bath, 1st flr. 1 -2 Brs & 1 Bath 2nd flr. Offers a shared front entry porch & a separate finished side entry porch for the 1st floor apt only. A rear open porch provides a private space & scenic views for the 2nd floor. It's situated on an acre plus++ (1.37 Acre) of land on the corner of Eastern Ave. and Pine St. 480' on Pine St. which has DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL.  
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**WEBSTER - 17 BRODEUR AVENUE**



BEING BUILT!! SPRAWLING 2000 SF ONE LEVEL RANCH HOME! Situated on a level 1/2 acre Lot! OPEN FLOOR PLAN. Living room, dining room, upscaled kitchen with 8' island, 3 bedroom, 2 baths, Beautiful Hardwood Floors! central air. 2 car garage, & shed.  
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**WEBSTER - NEW ENGLAND COMMONS**

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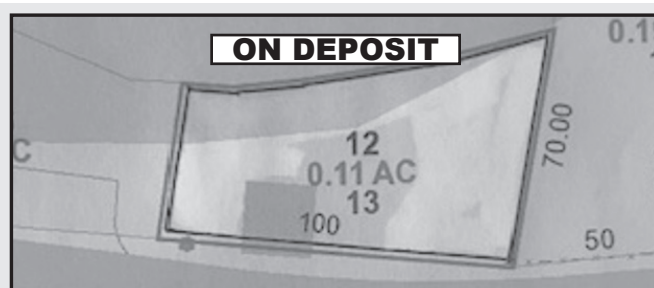


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# OBITUARIES

## Marcia A. Behrens, 67



ST. HELENA ISLAND, SC – Marcia A. (Gromelski) Behrens, 67, formerly of Dudley, MA, passed away Friday, February 9 at Beaufort Memorial Hospital. She leaves her significant other, Mark A. Sweeney with whom she lived; a son, Kevin G. Behrens of Dudley, MA; a daughter, Kara L. Behrens of Worcester, MA and her fiancé Scott Bryan; a brother, Joe Gromelski of Herndon, VA; seven cousins, Paul Brodeur, Nancy Sedor, Carolyn Sidor and her hus-

band Mat Finch, Susan Sedor and her husband Peter Antonellis, Joe Sedor, Francis Gromelski and Gary Whitney; and many colleagues and friends. She was born on March 17, 1956 in Worcester MA and raised in Dudley, the daughter of George A. and Mary (Sedor) Gromelski. She graduated from Putnam (CT) Catholic Academy in 1974, and earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree from Nichols College in Dudley in 1978. She received a master's degree in business administration, also from Nichols, in 1989. A certified public accountant, she first worked at the Arthur Young accounting firm in Worcester from 1978 to

1982, and then at Bose Corporation in Framingham from 1982 to 1987. She was an assistant and later associate professor of accounting, GPS MBA program chair and general business program chair at Nichols College, where she worked for over 30 years. She served on many committees at the college, notably with the Athletics Hall of Fame. Ms. Behrens served on the finance committee of the Town of Dudley for several years and was a past president of the philanthropic Quo Vadis Club. She enjoyed golfing at the Cohasse Country Club in Southbridge, MA. She loved her New England and Nichols sports teams, especially Nichols hockey. Cherished by all who knew her, she

will be remembered not only for her remarkable achievements but also for her unwavering dedication and love as a mother, leaving behind a legacy of warmth and compassion. Her funeral was held Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024 from the Sitkowski, Malboeuf & Hickey Funeral Home, 340 School Street, Webster, MA, with a Mass at 10 a.m. in Saint Andrew Bobola Church, 54 West Main Street, Dudley. Burial was in Saint Joseph Garden of Peace, Webster. Donations in her name may be made to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, PO Box 22324, New York, NY 10018-2470, phone 1-888-557-7177 (www.lls.org/give).



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# SPORTS

## Warriors take down Oakmont, while Rams fall short against Millbury



Shepherd Hill's Zachary Wennerberg floats past Millbury defender Kenny Donnelly and toward the basket.

BY NICK ETHIER  
SPORTS EDITOR

WORCESTER — A packed Kneller Center was rocking on Sunday evening, Feb. 18, as a pair of Clark Tournament Large Schools semifinals took place. Local teams from Tantasqua and Shepherd Hill took part, as the Warriors and Rams won a day before at Shepherd Hill in the quarterfinal round. In those first round games Tantasqua, seeded sixth, upset No. 3 Westborough (80-47), while the top ranked Rams got past No. 8 Groton-Dunstable (59-45). At Clark, the Warriors played No. 7 Oakmont in the opener, while Shepherd Hill took on No. 4 Millbury in the nightcap.

Tantasqua 52, Oakmont 30 — The Warriors weren't able to score at such a high rate like they did against Westborough, but the team's pressuring defense — which they say is their calling card — stood out again against the Spartans. "Yesterday, we were playing on a little bit more of a traditional high school

basketball court, so our pressure was able to generate some offense for us. Today, our pressure didn't generate offense, but it kept them on their heels," explained Tantasqua head coach Scott Dion. "They play with a lot of guards and spread the floor; they're really good at drive-and-kick, and I thought our pressure slowed them down, even on a larger floor. So, it was pretty impressive for our kids." The Warriors grabbed a 9-0 lead at the end of the first quarter, with Bryce Tessier being the biggest beneficiary of the start. Tessier scored the game's first seven points and pulled down three quick rebounds. Tessier ultimately finished with a game-high 15 points. "I came in pretty fired up today. We wanted to get a big win today, and I kind of felt like today was my day. I knew that they were a little undersized and it was kind of my spot to get in there," said Tessier before weighing in on the defense. "Our strong point is our defense and just being able to hold a team



Reid Szela of Shepherd Hill looks to the interior to bounce a pass into Alex Lanpher.

low, especially scoreless in the first quarter like that, raises energy to the offensive side. It just revs the motor and gets us going on both ends of the floor." Tantasqua took a 21-12 lead into the halftime break and then won second half scoring by a 31-18 count to win by 22 points. The Warriors' rebounding advantage was also monumental. The taller Tantasqua side won the battle of the boards, 41-10. "Bryce Tessier was awesome. Elijah Webb is a good shooter, but he's also tall and they were trying to take away his outside shot and he got down there and really did well around the basket, as did Sam Pieczynski coming off the bench, and Jack Rapose," said Dion. "We made it a conscious effort to try to score around the basket, and it paid off." In addition to Tessier's 15 points, Pieczynski added 13 points, and Webb

(10 rebounds) and Rapose both finished with 9 points. Millbury 51, Shepherd Hill 48 — Whenever the Rams and Woolies have met in the recent past — last year's Clark Tournament title game and this winter's regular season matchup — it has gone down to the wire. The same can be said this time around, except the end result was different. Shepherd Hill won each of the first two games, but Millbury exacted its revenge. "You know going into it that it's going to come down to the last possession," said Mike Rapoza, head coach of the Rams. Aside from a 4-3 lead, Shepherd Hill was playing catch up during the game. The Hill trailed after the first quarter, 11-4, at the half, 19-14, and through three periods, 32-25. "I give our guys cred-

it because we could have folded. We didn't. We played hard," Rapoza said. "Starting slow in the first half definitely cost us. Obviously you want a different result, we'd love to get a win, but I'm proud of our guys." The Rams' fourth quarter rally was nearly enough to win, as they trimmed the deficit down to a single point (42-41) following one free throw from Alex Lanpher, an offensive rebound from Reid Szela and a 3-pointer from Lucas Miglionico. "Our guys battle every single game. That's all we ask," said Rapoza. Miglionico led Shepherd Hill with 24 points, including 12 in the fourth quarter. "He gets up for these moments," Rapoza said of Miglionico. "He makes big plays when the team needs him to." Zachary Wennerberg (10 points) and Lanpher

(9 points) were the other high scorers following Miglionico's output. Now in the game's final seconds, Millbury's Kenny Donnelly hit one free throw and, following his missed second attempt, Miglionico grabbed the ball. After a few dribbles, he passed down the court to Luke Poirier. As Poirier was about to shoot a 3-pointer, the final buzzer sounded as the Woolies celebrated their victory. "You've got to regroup. You've got to take lessons from tonight because hopefully we're playing games like this the rest of the way and we've got to find a way to come out on the other side," Rapoza said of the Rams' next endeavor in the Division 2 State Tournament, as Millbury will tangle with Tantasqua for the Clark Tournament Large Schools championship back at the Kneller Center on Friday, Feb. 23 at 7:45 p.m.

## Tantasqua tops Rams before both sides head to impressive tournaments

STURBRIDGE — Positive regular season schedules closed for the Tantasqua and Shepherd Hill girls' varsity basketball teams on Thursday, Feb. 15, as the 13-4 Warriors, the Southern Worcester County League A Division champions, hosted the 11-6 Rams, the Midland-Wachusett B Division winners. Shepherd Hill Head Coach Maura Hackenson said before the game, "We have always had strong games with (Tantasqua) and assuming this will be the same this year. Both teams have winning records and we are looking to move up the State Power Rankings." Hackenson recognized that their opponents have some tough, physical, experienced players, adding, "We are playing well together as a team. We have an even balance of guard and forward play and they do as well. We will hope to continue our style of play this game. Our team is focused late in the season and everyone is improving. I couldn't ask for much more." Andrew Haley, head coach of Tantasqua, was looking forward to the matchup with the Rams. He said before the game, "Shepherd Hill are a good, well coached team who play a tough schedule. This should be a fun game for both teams. I expect both teams to play their best." Halfway through the first quarter, this evenly paced game had Tantasqua ahead 9-7. Both teams traded baskets while feeling



Ashley Dickhaut completes the follow through as she takes a free throw for Shepherd Hill.

out what their opponents were going to bring to the court. Tantasqua showed their intentions first, doubling their score, holding Shepherd Hill to just 2 additional points through the quarter. Tantasqua led 18-9 at the end of the frame. The Rams were not going quietly, they settled into the game, coming within one point, 20-19, after 4

minutes of second quarter play. The Warriors held their lead with aggressive defense, gaining control of some miss-timed Ram passes. The Hill kept with in striking distance, but the Warriors held the lead going into halftime, 29-25. The Rams put pressure on the Warriors with their full-court press, but Tantasqua found outlet



Shepherd Hill's Heidi Jarosz goes up strong to collect the defensive rebound.

passes quickly and capitalized on many fast breaks. Coming out of the third quarter, the Warriors extended their lead, 39-27. Tantasqua pulled ahead and never looked back, out-scoring Shepherd Hill 16-12 in the final 8 minutes of play. Tantasqua took the regular season finale win, 55-39. Shepherd Hill went on to play in the Westborough

Invitational Tournament, which Coach Hackenson and the Lady Rams were looking forward to taking part in. "As for a tournament, this one has great competition, it is well run and respected," said Hackenson, adding, "It is our home away from home (as we have played there so much.) They have successful teams from all divi-

sions in the state and we have to mentally prepare for competition we know and competition we don't face normally. This tournament prepares each team for the postseason, and we will face Westborough again in the first game." Playing the Rangers for the third time this season, the fourth seeded Rams defeated No. 5 Westborough in the rubber match, 57-55. Shepherd Hill was then slated to play No. 1 Medway in the semifinals, after press time. Once the Rams finish up play in the Westborough Tournament, the Division 2 State Tournament is up next. Tantasqua went on to play in the Clark Tournament Large Schools bracket before participating in the Division 3 State Tournament. Haley believes that the Clark Tournament is a good test for his team before going into States. "Don't worry about the seeding and just look forward to the experience," Haley told his players. The top seeded Warriors defeated No. 8 Oakmont in the first round of the Clark on Saturday, Feb. 17, by a final of 33-17 at Grafton High. Tantasqua then played No. 4 Millbury in the semifinals at Clark University on Monday, Feb. 19. The Warriors were able to defeat the Woolies for the third time this season, this time by a final of 30-26. Tantasqua will take on No. 2 Northbridge in the Clark final on Saturday, Feb. 24 at 7:45 p.m.



# SPORTS

## Minutemen rain down 3-pointers to defeat Narragansett, qualify for State Tournament



Bay Path's Corey Scovil elevates to win the game-opening jump ball versus Narragansett.



Peter Barbale of Bay Path, left, tries to block a shot from the interior taken by Narragansett's Maxim Kauffman.

**BY NICK ETHIER**  
SPORTS EDITOR

CHARLTON — Just eight seconds into their contest with Narragansett, Peter Barbale of the Bay Path boys' varsity basketball team drained a 3-pointer. And, after Joseph Denis hit a triple for the Warriors, Zack Moody and Dale Nussey followed Barbale's lead with back-to-back 3-pointers in a Central Mass. Athletic Directors Association (CMADA) non-playoff game played Friday, Feb. 16.

The Minutemen never lost their lead from there, and they combined for 12 made 3-pointers as they surged past Narragansett, 66-38.

"That has been a focus of ours because we have struggled to score this year," Bay Path head coach Al Greenough said of the successful shots from beyond the arc. "We spent a lot of time

at practice doing a lot of shooting drills and they seem to be responding to that."

The Minutemen have now gone 8-2 following a 2-7 start to the season. As a result, Bay Path has automatically qualified for the upcoming Division 2 State Tournament with its 10th victory.

"We knew that we were going to grow as the year went on, it's kind of what we've been building for. We just went from 2-7 and now we're in the Tournament, which is great," explained Greenough. "They earned it, so we're excited about that."

Greenough noted that losing Trent Szela before the season started was a huge blow to the team.

"We lost one of our best players due to a season-long injury, Trent Szela, our senior captain," said Greenough, as Szela was injured during the final soccer



Bay Path defenders Dale Nussey (1) and Matteo Mastrototaro (5) tightly defend Narragansett's Maxim Kauffman (2) and Brayden Richards, respectively.

## MOHEGAN BOWL WINTER LEAGUES, WEEK ENDING FEB. 18

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Series – PJ Janton 345, Jason Mahan 335, Sandor Bosci 330  
Series over average – Craig Gonzales +39
- Women's Ten Pin City  
Single – Division 1 – Joanne LaBonte 224, Claudia Allen 169  
Division 2 – Jessica Jacques 158  
Series – Division 1 – Natalie Wood 568, Nicole Shepard 456  
Division 2 – Charlene Hebert 403, Diane Julian 336
- Wednesday Women's Industrial  
Single – Lynne Smith & Monique Pierangeli 113, Marie McNally 105, Roberta Zacek 100  
Series – Monique Pierangeli 301, Marie McNally 300, Lynne Smith 292  
Series over average – Deb Bauce +35
- Summit Tenpin  
Single – Division 1 – Nat Wood 225  
Division 2 – Lee Standrowicz 212  
Series – Division 1 – Derek Reynolds 608  
Division 2 – Max Gullekson 515

- Thursday Morning Coffee  
Single – Pat Blake & Pat Fafard 105, Flo Jedrzynski & Lorraine Biadasz 101, Kirsten Nicholas 100  
Series – Lorraine Biadasz & Pat Kaczor 269, Flo Jedrzynski 268, Donna Lewandowski 260  
Series over average – Pat Kaczor +47
- Thursday Men's Industrial  
Single – Rick Gauvin 134, Bill Whitney Jr. 130, Tom Smith 129  
Series – Rick Gauvin 348, Tom Smith 345, Angel Claudio 332  
Series over average – Rick Gauvin +45
- Thursday Mixed Tenpin  
Single – Derek Marcelonis 216, Chris Wong Kam & John Caskey 187  
Series – Derek Marcelonis 538, Chris Wong Kam 507, Frank Bosma 488

game in the fall. "He was our defensive stopper, probably one of the best defenders in Central Mass., actually. When you lose a player like that, I think we kind of lost a little bit of our identity at the beginning of the year because he was one of our only seniors."

Losing a great defensive player, plus about 10-14 points per game, put more emphasis on Barbale to score, and opposing teams did what they could to lock him down.

"I think the kids took a little time to adjust. I also think with Peter Barbale on the team, he's one of the better players in Central Mass., and teams all year long have been double-teaming him, triple-teaming him, box-and-ones, and it took our team a little bit of time to find their identity with that and to have other guys step up and have confidence to make their shots," Greenough explained.

The Minutemen have certainly found their confidence, as all 11 players who played versus Narragansett scored at least one basket.

"I'm glad we're playing our best basketball right now, which is great. We're a young team — we're a junior laden team — so next year is what we've been building for. In the meantime, we want to win this year," said Greenough. "In my

30 years here, this is the most difficult schedule we've had top to bottom, and front heavy. I knew that if we could weather that storm, we could come on strong."

Against the Warriors, Bay Path led after the first quarter, 19-12, at halftime, 39-18, and through three quarters, 55-33, before winning by 28 points. Barbale hit five 3-pointers and finished with a game-high 23 points. And although no other member of the Minutemen reached double figures, Moody, Nussey, Luke Smolski and Colin Plante all hit treys. And, on the glass, Bay Path outrebounded Narragansett by a sizable margin of 40-23, with 10 of 11 players pulling down at least one board.

"They know me as a coach and I'm a defensive coach, and I want every loose ball and every rebound," said Greenough. "If they're doing that and the little things in the game, they're going to give themselves a better chance to win."

And the Minutemen — who concluded their regular season schedule with a 51-46 victory versus Quaboag in another CMADA non-playoff matchup on Monday, Feb. 19 — have certainly done their fair share of winning recently as they now prepare to tangle in the Division 2 State Tournament.

## Webster Little League Baseball Registration now open

Webster Little League 2024 Spring Baseball Registration is now open online at WebsterLittleLeague.com for boys and girls ages 5-16 (age on Aug. 31). Multiplayer discounts offered as well. Final day to register is Feb. 24. Find us on Facebook at Webster Little League and online at www.WebsterLittleLeague.com. Don't forget to sign up for coaching and volunteer opportunities when registering — Especially Tee-Ball and Coach-Pitch parents!

Webster Little League Baseball is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Any questions, please email websterlittleleague@gmail.com.

**PLAN**  
continued from page A1

agreed with the superintendent's decision on substitutes as being "not in the cards right now."

"I don't think we've put in anything we could say 'we don't really need that,'" Pierangeli said. "... We're really seeing a difference [from those ESSER jobs] and you don't want to lose that momentum."

Regarding the capital work, Kontoes said they eliminated everything for

Bartlett, hoping to include it in the ongoing project. But that still left several items they want to parcel out over the next three years, most of them in 2025. The middle school, as the oldest facility, gets the most — upgrades to HVAC controls and glycol replacement, continued LED light conversion, paving behind the school, window replacement, a gym sound system, and creating some "breakout space" for 1:1 student privacy. Park Avenue's getting internal and exter-

nal security cameras and additional gym bleachers.

The board opted to wait for a final vote until Feb. 27, a day before the charter requires them to submit it to the selectmen for review.

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# SPORTS

## ‘True team effort’ helps Rams get by ‘tough’ Bay Path

NORTHBRIDGE AGAIN TOPS MINUTEMEN IN CLARK TOURNAMENT REMATCH



Bay Path's Hannah Cavan hoists a long pass down the court.

**BY NICK ETHIER**  
SPORTS EDITOR

**NORTHBRIDGE** — It was Senior Night at Veterans Memorial Field House on Thursday, Feb. 15, as the Northbridge girls' varsity basketball team hosted Bay Path. The Rams' five seniors — Delaney Mahoney, Macie Allen, Natalie Zborowski, Rachel Sawyer and Erika Dresch (10 points) — all started, all contributed, and junior Molly Gahan chipped in with a double-double (14 points, 14 rebounds), as Northbridge topped the Minutemen, 36-25.

“On Senior Night, it was a true team effort,” said Jeff Kozik, head coach of the Rams.

Northbridge improved to 13-5 on the season, while Bay Path slipped to 14-4.

“Bay Path is a very tough team. They keep coming at you. I thought a couple times we were going to put some distance between us, and they just crawled back. There's absolutely no quit in that team,” Kozik said of the Minutemen. “That's only their fourth loss of the season, so that's a very good team that doesn't get the respect it deserves in the State ranking.

“For our girls, being able to mentally stick with it — it's tough when you're trying to put a team away and they keep coming back — so to be able to make timely baskets and big defensive

stops was huge,” Kozik continued.

Bay Path head coach Randy Schulman mentioned that it wasn't the type of game his team has been accustomed to playing as of late.

“I just think we didn't come out and play our game. We didn't play as aggressive as we had all season. We had more turnovers than we usually do, and our defense usually leads to offense,” said Schulman. “We've been shooting well the last three or four games, but not tonight. I think we only made one 3 tonight.”

The Minutemen — who were paced by Annika Ferrantino's 9-point, 9-rebound effort — had little time to worry about the loss to the Rams, as Bay Path and Northbridge met again on Saturday, Feb. 17 in the first round of the Clark Tournament Large Schools bracket at Grafton High before the tourney moved to Clark University for the semifinal and final rounds.

“It will be a tough game on a neutral floor,” Kozik said of the upcoming rematch. “We'll watch the tape, I'll cut it up and we'll watch it as a team, and I don't think either team will drastically change much, you just try to fine-tune, see where your mistakes were.”

“There's a fine line of what you want to show and what you don't want to show,” Schulman added of the two games in three days situation.

“I know we lost, but I'm encouraged with what we saw here tonight. It was a seven- to eight-point game for most of the game. We closed it to 25-20 and then we had one defensive lapse.”

With the score at the aforementioned 25-20 just seconds before the third quarter concluded, Gahan gathered two offensive rebounds and made a post move for a bucket at the buzzer. Then, in the final period, Gahan again had a situation play out where she had two offensive boards and then made a basket. That time it made the score 32-25 in the Rams' favor.

“We know that they're a good team and they work around Molly,” Schulman said of Gahan. “She got a lot of put-backs and when she got the ball in the paint, she made us pay for it.”

Both coaches had positive thoughts about the Clark Tournament, which Northbridge took part in last season.

“That's the goal, play at the Kneller Center,” Kozik said of trying to defeat Bay Path and then make it to the Clark floor for the later rounds. “(Our girls) got to play two games there (last year), so I think it could be in our advantage.”

The Clark is a new experience for the Minutemen, as it is the girls' debut in the tournament, while the boys haven't taken part in over

30 years.

“Bay Path hasn't been in the Clark since 1992, so we're excited,” said Schulman. “The goal is hopefully to win one game so we can actually play at Clark.”

In their second match-up, No. 2 Northbridge again defeated seventh seeded Bay Path, this time by a final score of 44-39. The Rams then took on No. 3 Hudson at the Kneller Center on Monday, Feb. 19. There, Northbridge topped the Hawks, 36-28. The Rams will now play No. 1 Tantasqua for the Clark title on Saturday, Feb. 24 at 7:45 p.m.

The Minutemen then played Lunenburg in a consolation game on



Annika Ferrantino of Bay Path focuses on the rim ahead before shooting a free throw.



catches a pass and looks to shoot a midrange jumper.

Monday, Feb. 19. They lost that contest, 49-45. Before the Division 2 State Tournament, Bay Path will host Lynn Voke in the State Vocational Large Schools Tournament on Friday, Feb. 23 at 5:30 p.m.

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### BUDGET

continued from page A1

bus operations. Any combination of these cuts would be made to create up to \$563,000 in savings. Option 3 contains the most extreme cuts, eliminating four teaching positions, three paraprofessionals, and cuts to technology and late bus operations that would bring the budget to a low of \$1.9 million. All options include bringing back the Assistant Superintendent position and take into consideration contractual obligations including a higher-than-expected increase in health insurance. Lamarche did not specify what the cost sharing split would be between Dudley and Charlton due to some unknown figures, but said those specifics should be available in March.

“If you look at some of our planned reductions, if our starting mark was \$2 million it would be even better with some of the reductions that we offered as other options in there. It's not Fiscal Year 2024 over again, thank goodness,” Lamarche said.

Several school committee members cautioned against making further program and staff cuts especially considering how those compromises could impact enrollment and the student experience. The School Committee made no official motions during the meeting as it was simply an informational session with the district towns.

A budget workshop has been scheduled for Feb. 28 with a budget hearing on March 13 where the committee is likely to present its recommended budget option including cost sharing figures for the two towns. Another workshop has been tentatively scheduled for later in March as needed. Both Dudley and Charlton voters will address the education and municipal spending plans at their respective annual spring town meetings which are both scheduled for May 20.

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# Southbridge Doric Chapter of Royal Arch of Masons still thriving



**BY BRO. JIMMY FALZONE**  
QUINEBUAG MASONIC LODGE

WORCESTER — On Saturday, Feb. 17, the Worcester Masonic Center parking lot located at 1 Ionic Ave. in Worcester was packed. Master Masons from throughout the state who wanted to continue their Freemasonry knowledge and growth within this organization, participated in the Royal Arch of Masons one day class.

Three local men past through the Royal Arch of Masons degrees, It was originally started at the Webster Masonic Lodge and was called the First Webster Chapter of Royal Arch of Masons. In 1871, the Webster Chapter voted to move the meeting place from Webster to the Southbridge Quinebuag Masonic Lodge and Doric Chapter of Royal Arch of Masons continues to thrive to this day.

If you would like more information about Freemasonry and to find a lodge nearest you, visit our Web site at [www.massfreemasonry.org](http://www.massfreemasonry.org).

Courtesy  
Left to right: Brother Eric Willard, Bro. Clay Tull and Bro. Joshua Kirkwood standing tall and proud after completing the one-day class at the Masonic Center in Worcester, with their Royal Arch of Masons aprons on.

## Emerson College student Samantha Zannotti earns Dean's List honors

BOSTON — Emerson College student Samantha Zannotti from Dudley is named to the College's Dean's List for the Fall 2023 semester. The requirement to make Dean's List is a grade point average of 3.7 or higher for that semester. Zannotti is majoring in Sports Communication and is a member of the Class of 2025.

## Local students named to Curry College Dean's List

MILTON — Curry College congratulates roughly 800 students who were named to the Fall 2023 Dean's List. Trevor Swanbeck of Dudley Jakia Wilson of Webster Michaela Sampson of Auburn About Curry College Curry College, founded in 1879, is a private, co-educational, liberal arts-based institution located on 131 acres in Milton, Massachusetts. The College extends its educational programs to a continuing education branch campus in Plymouth. The College offers 90+ Majors, Minors, and Concentrations in specialized and liberal arts programs, as well as graduate degrees in accounting, business, education, criminal justice, and nursing to a combined enrollment of nearly 2,050 students. The student body consists of 1,830 traditional students and nearly 220 continuing education and graduate students. The College offers a wide array of co-curricular activities ranging from 17 NCAA Division III athletic teams to an outstanding theatre and visual arts program. Visit us on the web at [www.curry.edu](http://www.curry.edu)

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