

STURBRIDGE VILLAGER

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Thursday-Friday, November 28-29, 2024



Kathy Rodriguez — Courtesy

CONGRATULATIONS TO 6TH CHARLTON-DUDLEY RAMS FOOTBALL TEAM!

The sixth-grade Charlton-Dudley Rams claimed an impressive victory in the CMYFC 6th Grade D2 Super Bowl on Saturday, Nov. 9, at Millford High School. Facing off against the Oxford Pirates, the Rams triumphed with a 14-6 win, showcasing skill, determination, and teamwork to secure the championship. The Rams' roster, full of talent and grit, played their hearts out under the leadership of Head Coach AJ Colon and his dedicated coaching staff, including Coach Matt Rowden, Coach Evan Remillard, Coach Layne Bates, Coach Caedon Cristo, Coach Mike Carriere, and Coach Kevin Brewster. Their guidance and the players' passion were the keys to this unforgettable season. Congratulations to the players, coaches, and families who supported the Rams throughout the season! Front Row: Michael Hicks, Levi Bates, Anthony Zacek, Roman Field, Brody Colon, Carter Lavole. Middle Row: Dylan Anderson, Declan McCarthy, Brody Kmon, Brady Carriere, Liam Gordon, Tavaughn Garcia Jr. Standing: Jaxen DeJesus, Dante Rowden, Lorenzo Trifone, Aiden Walker, Christopher Antkowiak Jr., Bryson Coleman. Back Row: Coach Matt Rowden, Coach Evan Remillard, Coach Layne Bates, Coach Caedon Cristo, Coach Mike Carriere, Coach Kevin Brewster, Coach AJ Colon.

MBI project targets digital equity gaps

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHBRIDGE — Even though many of us take the internet, cellphones and related technology almost for granted, some people still don't have good access to it. That can be for geographic, economic or cultural reasons.

Last week, the library hosted a public charette aimed at bridging such gaps in Southbridge under the auspices of the Mass Broadband Institute (MBI).

"There's a who lot of data out there, but we want to hear what's really happening in Southbridge," details they can get only "from a conversation with a human being," said Kodi Berger. She represents MBI consultant Kimley Horn Associates, which is doing this in several Bay State towns.

Berger said MBI's goal is to improve the usability and affordability of the internet, availability of computer technology, training on how to use it well, and related issues. By "giving people different resoruces, that will help them get to the same point" or usability, she said.

She compared it to an common image: that of three people of different height trying to look over a fence. One can do it naturally, but the others need things of different heights to stand on, or some other assistance.

When applied to digital tech, that could mean adequate devices, affordable broadband or wi-fi, and/or

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Proposed change to appointed town clerk heading to town meeting

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — The Charlton Board of Selectmen continued discussions regarding a potential change to the Town Clerk position in mid-November with the debate concerning whether to shift the job to an appointed position versus its current status as an elected post. The concept has been brought forward several times throughout the year with town officials torn on how Charlton should move forward.

The idea was spawned from the Government Study Review Committee who examined Charlton's Government Study White Paper Report from 2016 and recommended that Charlton change its Town Clark to a hired position. However, that change would be a lengthy one and would require several steps to complete any change before the next election cycle. The Board of Selectmen invited current Town Clerk Karen La-Croix and members of the Government Study Committee to the table on Nov. 12 to discuss how the town should move

Turn To CHARLTON page 14

Community chorus to perform next month

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

STURBRIDGE — Members of a local community chorus, Wings of Song, are sharing messages of peace and joy this holiday season with a special concert program.

The first performance of the "Peace and Joy" program is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 14, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Joachim Chapel in Fiskdale (16 Church Street). A second performance will take place on Sunday, Dec. 15, at 3 p.m. at Evangelical Covenant Church in Woodstock, Conn. (24 Child Hill Rd.).

Both concerts are free of charge, but audience members are invited to help the chorus meet its expenses by participating in a freewill offering during intermission.

Rehearsals for the concerts took place at St. Anne-St. Patrick Parish in Sturbridge. The 45-member chorus is eager to share messages of hope and inspiration with guests.

The concerts will be split into two halves, one focusing on the theme of peace, the other segment dedicated to the theme of joy.

"These are some of my very favorite pieces," said Wings of Song Music Director Nym Cooke, who has led the chorus for two decades. "The 'Peace' half starts and finishes with music by the marvelous Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, who will turn 90 next year. This pair of Mass movements comes from Pärt's Berlin Mass of 1990. I don't think it would be possible to find more peaceful, deeply spiritual music."

The 'Joy' part of the program starts and ends with inspira-

tions from the "Midnight Mass for Christmas" (1690), written by French Baroque composer Marc-Antoine Charpentier.

"The particular delight of this piece is that each of its movements is based on one or more French noëls—French folksongs for Christmas, among the pop tunes of their day," Cooke added. "There is a charmingly innocent and accessible quality to the piece."

The concerts will also include the original 1818 version of "Silent Night," followed by the modern version sung by chorus members and guests together.

Additionally, old favorites like "In the Bleak Mid-Winter" and "Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella" will be performed.

"This will be a very special concert, I think—on the one hand, meditative, centering, and relaxing; on the other hand, uplifting, inspiring, and energizing. Just the right medicine for these times," Cooke said.

Musical genres presented at the concerts will range from classical compositions to folk-based carols and concert pieces, along with early American seasonal tunes.

"Everything from the familiar to the utterly unfamiliar will be present," Cooke added. "We'll be doing Handel's 'Hallelujah' chorus with dynamics changes and shadings that will have you on the edge of your seat."

Free refreshments will be served during the social hour following each concert. Both locations are fully ADA-accessible, with plenty of parking available.

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Food Share unveils new home at Holy Trinity

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHBRIDGE — This week, many families are gathering for the feast that is Thanksgiving.

But some people don't have much food, or lack the funds to get it.

That's where Food Share and the other nearby food pantries come in.

Last week, Food Share formally inaugurated its new home in the basement of Trinity Lutheran Church with tours and awards for long-time supporters.

To past president, now treasurer, Bill Bouvier, the new site is "a much cleaner, much brighter environment" than the agency's prior home at Catholic Charities, which it had to leave in May. But he noted they "had a great relationship with Catholic Charities,

and thank them for their support over the years."

To Holy Trinity's Lynn Garland, "It's totally been a blessing. They're well-organized, efficient and provide great service. It's a pleasure to have them here, and a natural partnership. Most important, they'll be able to continue. They're dedicated to making sure people have adequate food."

Food Share was born around 1970 in Brimfield, and soon had branches in Southbridge, Webster and Palmer. It headquartered at Catholic Charities starting about 1980, and spun off the Webster and Palmer branches about 10 years ago, Bouvier said.

In recent years, it has seen the need rise notably. Today, it's open only four hours a week on Monday, Wednesday

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Gus Steeves

Bill Bouvier, right, passes Alan Peppel a plaque to say thanks for Dexter-Russell's years of supporting Food Share.

DECEMBER EVENTS AT CHARLTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

For further details and to register for programs, please visit our website (charltonlibrary.org)
 Additional parking is available across the street at Town Hall and at the Elementary School.

PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

Movies @ The Library

All showings are on Tuesdays at 1:00 ONLY - No registration required.

December 3 : YOU'VE GOT MAIL. 1998. Rated PG. Runtime 116 minutes.

December 10 : LAST CHRISTMAS. 2019. Rated PG-13. Runtime 103 minutes.

December 17 : HOLIDAY INN. 1942. 101 minutes.

Threaded Together Fiber Arts Group (formerly Silver Needles Knit & Crochet Group)

Thursdays from 1:00-3:00 - Upstairs Reading Room - No registration required

Bring your current project and relax with friends. All are welcome regardless of skill level.

Gnome Ornament Craft

Tuesdays, December 3 & 10, 6:00-7:30 & Wednesday, December 11, 10:30-12:00

Community Meeting Room

We're making gnome ornaments! Perfect for hanging up for decoration or tying on a package. This program is for adults and teens ages 13 and up. Registration is required.

Better Read Than Dead Book Club - THE FAMILY NEXT DOOR by John Glatt

Wednesday, December 4, 11:00-12:00 - Sibley Reading Area - No registration required

A monthly meetup to discuss fascinating true crime books. Books available from circulation prior to discussion.

Genealogy Group Meeting

Thursday, December 5, 6:00-7:30 - Community Meeting Room - No registration required

Tonight's meeting is general discussion and storytelling. The meetings are free and open to the public.

Holiday Centerpiece Workshop with Bemis Farm

Saturday, December 7, 10:00-11:00 - Registration and \$10 copay required (in person at Circ. Desk)

Tina Bemis returns to guide participants in creating a beautiful holiday centerpiece. Registration is required in person along with a \$10.00 non-refundable co-pay (cash or check made out to Charlton Public Library). Please visit the adult circulation desk to register. Attendance limited to 16.

Friends of the Library Meeting

Tuesday, December 10, 3:30-4:30 - Community Meeting Room

Monthly meeting of Friends of Charlton Public Library. All are welcome.

CPL Book Discussion - PERESTROIKA IN PARIS by Jane Smiley

Thursday, December 12, 6:00-7:00 - Community Meeting Room - No registration

Books are available for checkout at the adult circulation desk one month prior to discussion.

Check library event calendar listing for Zoom link.

A Christmas Carol - Live Performance by Stephen Collins & Poornima Kirby

Saturday, December 14, 1:00-2:00 - Dexter Hall - Registration requested

Join us for a funny, heartfelt journey through Charles' Dickens classic, A Christmas Carol. This 1-hour adaptation shows Ebenezer Scrooge's transformation from a grumpy, selfish misanthrope to a generous, wise and kindly man, full of the spirit of Christmas. This fast-paced, playful adaptation keeps the beauty and humor of Dickens' original text, interspersed with melodious Christmas carols, and even a lively English folk dance. Come warm your heart and ring in the holiday season with this refreshing take on a familiar tale!

Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group

Thursday, December 19, 6:00-7:30 - Community Meeting Room - No registration required

Led by experienced caregivers and offers information, resources, and strategies specific to caring for someone with Alzheimer's and other Dementias along with support for transition-

ing to different care settings. No registration
 Co-sponsored by Tri-Valley and Charlton Public Library.

Death Cafe

Thursday, December 19, 6:00-7:30 - Dexter Hall - No registration required

A group-directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives or course of action, no set conclusions and no judgment. Death Cafés provide a safe environment to gather, eat cake, drink tea or coffee, and enjoy open-minded conversation about dying and death. It is an opportunity to share, explore and question our own perceptions of death. It's not a bereavement session. Questions? Email kwalker4@mac.com.

A CULE Yule ~ 3rd Annual Holiday Ukulele Concert

Thursday, December 19, 6:30-7:30 - Sibley Reading Area

Join us for our 3rd Annual CULE Yule Holiday Recital featuring our own Charlton Ukulele League Ensemble. Come and sing along or just listen. No registration. All are welcome! Light refreshments provided by Friends of the Charlton Public Library.

Saturday Acoustic Roots Jam

Saturday, December 21, 12:00-1:30 - Community Meeting Room

An acoustic only music jam. Open to all 18+. From September through May the group meets at Charlton Public Library, and from June through August the group meets at an off-site location. Email Rich at Cule5632@gmail.com for more information.

Critical Thinking Discussion Group - THE PAIDEIA PROPOSAL by Mortimer J. Adler

Friday, December 27, 1:00-2:00 - Sibley Reading Area (Main Floor) - No registration required

No experience with critical thinking discussion groups is necessary. Books/materials are available for checkout one month prior to discussion. Questions? Email saga3@charter.net.

Charlton Seniors 2nd Annual New Year's Eve Celebration

Friday, December 27, 6:00-8:00 - Dexter Hall

The Charlton Public Library and Charlton Senior Center are teaming up to host our Second Annual New Year's Eve Celebration for our Seniors! Join us for some light refreshments and good conversation, and shake a leg to the sounds of the Mason Tyler Band! Seating is limited so advanced registration is required. Please register online (see our event calendar) OR by calling the Senior Center at 508-248-2231. For Charlton residents ages 60+. Please register by Dec. 13. After Dec. 13 available space will be opened to non-residents.

PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH

Me and My Mini with Sunflower Movement Therapy

Mondays, December 2, 9, & 16 from 10:30-11:15 - Community Meeting Room - Registration required

A 45-minute creative movement group for ages birth through 2.5 with a grown-up. Focused on adult and baby spending quality time together,

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Separate with an instrument
- 5. State clearly
- 11. One-time MLB speedster Gordon
- 14. Broad in scope
- 15. Lacking social polish
- 16. Amount of time
- 17. Frame
- 19. Automobile
- 20. Caps
- 21. High school dances
- 22. Utilize
- 23. Checked
- 25. One-sided
- 27. Having an extreme greed for wealth
- 31. Potted plants
- 34. We all have one
- 35. Lake north of the Kalahari
- 38. Unidentified flying object
- 39. Aging persons
- 41. Small amount
- 42. Mother of Perseus
- 44. Ornamental waist box
- 45. Officials
- 46. Uncertain
- 49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
- 51. Extensive, treeless plains
- 55. Your consciousness of your own identity
- 56. Consumer advocate Ralph
- 60. Notable Spanish sports club
- 61. Body part
- 62. One's responsiveness
- 64. Woman (French)
- 65. Ready and willing to be taught
- 66. Muslim ruler title
- 67. Unhappy
- 68. Gradually disappeared
- 69. Able to think clearly

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Brushed
- 2. Water sprite
- 3. Ones to look up to
- 4. Monetary units
- 5. We all have one
- 6. Marine invertebrate
- 7. One who institutes a legal proceeding
- 8. Outer
- 9. Parallelograms
- 10. Uncomfortable feelings
- 11. Cross to form an X
- 12. Remove
- 13. Some pages are dog-__
- 18. Capital of Ukraine
- 24. A citizen of Denmark
- 26. Eighth month (abbr.)
- 28. Hindu queens
- 29. Acids structurally related to amino acids
- 30. Rider of Rohan in Tolkien
- 31. Wet dirt
- 32. Russian city
- 33. Observed
- 36. Irate
- 37. Travelers need them
- 39. Musical composition
- 40. Auction
- 43. Form of "to be"
- 45. Women
- 47. Inspire with love
- 48. Think Japanese ankle sock
- 49. Appears
- 50. Old World lizard
- 52. The lead dancer: __ ballerina
- 53. Protein involved in motion
- 54. Rosalind Franklin biographer
- 57. Popular 1920s style art __
- 58. __ Blyton, children's author
- 59. Abnormal breathing
- 63. A place to rest

PUZZLE SOLUTION

Э	Н	У	С	Д	Э	О	Р	Э	Д	У	С		
Р	И	У	Э	Э	Г	О	О	Д	Э	У	У		
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У	О	Р	В	Р	Э	Д	В	Н	О	Э	Э		
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Recent rain may help “critical” statewide drought

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

REGION — Last Friday, state and local officials started a series of online conferences to address the current drought conditions. Although our region saw some rain straddling that meeting, the amount received hasn't done much more than dent the drought in place since August.

According to mass.gov's Drought Management page, all of Massachusetts but the Cape and Islands was in a Level 3 “critical” drought as of Nov. 19.

“Over the past 30 days, most of the state received less than an inch of rain, which is three to four and a half inches below normal,” it states. “Many areas recorded their lowest rainfall ever for this time of the year. Since August, when dry conditions began, all regions except the Cape and the Islands have seen an eight- to 11-inch rainfall deficit.”

On federal drought maps, that situation has made the northeast one of the driest parts of the US despite not being hot.

“The onset has been fast, it has moved fast, and it has intensified fast,” Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' Vandana Rao told the more than 400 people who attended Friday's meeting. She said this drought's “particularly unprecedented” progression “has reshaped our thinking” of how droughts develop and affect the state.

Its most notable impact has been in brush and forest fires. According to Department of Conservation and Recreation Fire Marshal Dave Celino, the total number of 1,226 fires for 2024 is about average, but the 4202 acres burned is “historical,” as is November's total of 2,800-plus acres. He noted November's average for number of fires is 20-21, but we've seen 433 this year.

“The numbers are very impressive for us. We've never been here in decades,” he said.

Later, he added, “these fires are going to burn deep, they're going to burn long” because of how dry the conditions are. That makes them hard to fight, because “we've had fires break out of containment. ... Every ember can cause a fire to blow out on us.”

On average, Celino said, the state is tracking

“10 priority fires a day” and had 21 active fires on Thursday. But he noted some of them were receiving rain and/or snow that would help the effort to control them.

The largest fire was the Butternut Fire in Great Barrington, which had burned 1388 acres and had a two mile perimeter. Its geography was partly responsible – it started on a ridge, burned to the top and then started burning down both sides. But Celino noted Thursday's precipitation included snow in that area, helping to control it.

Besides fire, the drought has had serious effects on water, both in terms of water bodies and drinking supply in some areas. Department of Environmental Protection's Kathleen Baskin said DEP's water withdrawal permits normally just limit “non-essential” water uses from May to September, but in light of this drought, the agency is going to look at making that last all year.

The mass.gov drought page has a fairly long list of “recommendations for communities and individuals living and working within Level 3 – Critical Drought Regions, including those utilizing a private well.” For households, those include checking for water leaks frequently, limiting showers to five minutes or less, stopping “all non-essential water use,” and only running dishwashers and washing machines full. For communities, it encourages keeping people informed about drought conditions, using “increasingly stringent penalties” to enforce restrictions, and “strongly discourage or prohibit” such washing such things as driveways.

Among other things, the list also warns people to “refrain from outdoor cooking and heating” and “use caution with lawnmowers, leaf blowers, all-terrain vehicles, and other power equipment.”

Regarding conservation issues, Baskin said certain parts of the Wetlands Protection Act and Rivers Act change in declared droughts. Specifically, land developers cannot use current low- or no-flow conditions in rivers and streams to define them as “intermittent,” nor can they base buffer zone delineations on them, among other things. She urged commissions and others with questions to contact DEP.

Generally, surface water supplies are still good, with the MWRA-run reservoirs holding at least five years' worth, Rao said.

However, some areas are seeing groundwater concerns. The most recent state hydrological report (for October) listed central Mass as having the lowest median streamflow value of any region statewide at just 4 percent, lake levels of about 21 percent, three of the region's eight monitoring wells with water levels below 30 percent of normal, and just 17 percent of average precipitation. By then, our region was already in Level 3 drought, and those levels got worse in November, although the monthly data wasn't yet online by deadline. October's report is here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2024-october-hydrologic-conditions/download>.

Out in the woods, those issue manifest as trails so dry as to be dust or sand, most smaller streams and many wetlands being completely waterless, major brooks being very low, lakes and ponds having notably low shorelines, and all of the leaf litter, dead plants and other ground material being extremely dry.

Regarding health issues, the Department of Public Health is tracking air quality from smoke, both due to local fires and that drifting from elsewhere in North America. Meg Blanchett said those most at risk are people under age five or over 65, pregnant people, those who may not speak English and don't get messages in their languages, those who work and exercise outdoors, and those with various health concerns. Among the ways to reduce risk are to create a filtered “clean air room” in the house or to use N95 masks.

Dr Marissa Hauptman said the agency has not yet issued any health alerts for the drought itself, but did have “a lot of extreme heat alerts” this summer and a “wildfire smoke alert” on Oct. 29. Those went to about 43,000 recipients, including hospitals and Boards of Health.

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

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Benefits Local Outreach

Cops N Kids N Lions Steve Ide Memorial Toy Drive underway

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Southbridge Lions Club and the Southbridge Police Department are pleased to announce our annual holiday toy

drive, The Steve Ide Memorial Toy Drive, sponsored by Cops and Kids and the Southbridge Lions Club. Steve Ide, a long-standing member of the Southbridge Lions club, was instrumental in the creation of the Cops N Kids N Lions project back in 2016 and his perseverance helped make it the huge success it has become.

Please help us bring Christmas to deserving children in our area by donating new, unwrapped, non-violent toys starting Nov. 22 through Dec. 15. All toys will benefit local families. Of particular need are toys for adolescents ages 10 through 16.

Toy Drop-Off Locations are the Southbridge and Sturbridge Police Departments, the Southbridge Fire Department, Harrington Hospital, Southbridge Town Hall, Cornerstone Bank, Big Bunny Market, K & K Thermo Forming, Dave's Pest Control, Savers Bank-Southbridge, Savers Bank-Sturbridge and all Southbridge Credit Union locations.

Also, monetary donations can be made at any Southbridge Credit Union location or with any Southbridge Lions member. Checks should be made out to Southbridge Lions Toys Program.

Contact us for sponsorship or donation opportunities at copsnkids@southbridgemass.org

Please help us bring Christmas joy to deserving children in our area.

Strega Mama Storytime presents “The Mitten” at Charlton Public Library

CHARLTON — Join Strega Mama for a special storytime with songs, games, and activities featuring the book “The Mitten” by Jan Brett. Strega Mama Storytime is a fun-filled experience, including lively readings, interactive games, singalongs, and more! This event is happening at the Charlton Public Library, 40 Main St., Charlton, on Wednesday, Dec. 4, at 10:30 a.m. All ages are welcome! Registration is required. To register, please visit the Kids Event Calendar on the Library Web site at www.charltonlibrary.org.

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The Town of Sturbridge, a vibrant community in South Central Mass., seeks to fill the position of **Permit Technician** in the busy, fast paced office of the Building Inspector. Reporting to the Building Inspector, this position supports the day to day activities of the Building Department, and serves as the first point of contact with the public. The Permit Technician will coordinate the day to day activities of the Building Department. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to customer service, office administration, permit processing, correspondence and report preparation, bookkeeping and record keeping, inspection scheduling for all inspectors, and providing guidance to homeowners and applicants. The qualified candidate will be an organized and detail-oriented individual with the ability to interact well with the public and a variety of departments and to multi-task in an often fast paced busy department. An Associate's degree or two years of related experience and/or training; or equivalent combination of education and experience required. Experience with Microsoft Office Suite required. Willingness to learn various permit processing software and GIS mapping applications required. Prior Building Department or relevant municipal experience preferred but not required. The ability and willingness to become conversant with building and zoning requirements as needed to guide applicants through the permitting process is required. Position range is \$22.62 to \$30.56 per hour DOQ. Complete job description and application are available online. Apply online with cover letter and resume by email to mgarman@sturbridge.gov with subject line Permit Technician. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. Applications received by December 2, 2024 will receive preference. EOE



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DCRSD reassessing three-year District Plan

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY/CHARLTON — The Dudley-Charlton Regional School District (DCRSD) is beginning to reassess its three-year plan to build off the success of the last three years while also establishing goals to help the district continue to progress.

During a School Committee meeting in November DCRSD Assistant Superintendent Kelly True provided insight into how the district has embraced the existing District Plan while also examining how the new plan may continue those efforts or introduce new ones into the district's long-term goals for success. The existing plan was approved in 2022, and contained three main goals: strengthening the continuum of learning by providing access and opportunities to all students, strengthening systematic practices and processes improving student achievement and outcomes, and strengthening family and community engagement, partnerships, and communication. True said she feels the district has made great strides towards accomplishing all three of those goals.

"We're going to be developing a new district plan based on where we are with these three goals. This will kind of feed into what our new district plan is, and we'll look at aligning our new district plan with DESI's (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) new vision that they came out with and what DESI's plan and vision is so that we're aligned from DESI's vision to the district's vision to the school improvement plans all the way down so that we're in alignment and we're all kind of rowing in the same direction, which is the important part," said True.

Looking at each of the existing goals in the plan, True said their mission to strengthen the continuum of learning has included the embrace of universal design learning, reduced reliance on academic support classes, development of therapeutic learning classrooms, increased staffing and improved

specialized support, and added support for academic and behavioral needs among other enhancements. The district hopes the new plan will continue to build a framework to support teacher development and increase family engagements. The second goal, strengthening systematic practices and processes improving student achievement and outcomes, has been supported by added instructional supports and interventions attendance, recovery initiatives, data-driven instruction and benchmarking, creating academic and behavioral consistency across the schools in the district, and creating structured support blocks and enrichment programs and professional collaborations and continuous improvement. Future plans will include ways to refine the district's practices for instructional support teams to help provide interventions to students and enhance numerous systems. The third goal of strengthening family and community engagement has seen the district prioritize fostering meaningful connections between schools, families and the broader community by developing new partnerships and engagement opportunities, increasing student internships and transitional job placements, and building on community participation workshops and programs like High Five Fridays to bridge the gap between the school district and the communities at large. They district hopes to expand on its internship programs to include more outside opportunities and maintain a districtwide community calendar for parents and other community members to stay in the know on what's happening.

While all three goals have shown great success over the years, True said there's always room for continued improvement which will be the focus of the new plan.

"Our goal remains to strengthen the continuum of learning by providing all students access to the many opportunities we provide, improving achievement outcomes for all learners and fostering deeper community engagement. These priorities will remain central to our

collective efforts as we evolve and refine our approach to learning and teaching ensuring that each student is supported and empowered to succeed in the Dudley Charlton Schools and beyond," said True.

As the district begins to form its new plan, True wants the focus to

REAL ESTATE

CHARLTON

\$860,000, Bay Path Rd, Old Bay Path Rt, and Glickman, Melvyn, to Charlton Town Of.

\$840,000, 85 Jennings Rd, Kendall Homes Inc, to Bruce, Andrew J, and Mazzei, Matthew.

\$751,290, 83 Jennings Rd, Property Soln Re & Cont, to Lask, Arielle.

\$665,000, 8 Denfield Rd, Roland, William B, and Roland, Robin A, to Yeawolo, Yatta K, and Romey, Hansen.

\$570,000, 70 Glen Echo Shore Rd, Regis, David, and Regis, Karen, to Haley, Chelsea L, and Zeparzewski, Zakaria R.

\$500,000, 51 Cranberry Meadow Shore Rd, Expert Renvations LLC, to Bourget, Tracy.

\$400,000, 105 Smith Rd, Lahair Irt, and Lahair, Brian P, to Barton, Michael W, and Barton, Tracy L.

\$351,000, 60 Park Rd, Fay Lois S Est, and Fay, Jennifer L, to Camoreyt Jr, Anthony A.

\$322,000, 19 King Rd, Heintz, Christine M, to Tranquil Homes LLC.

\$302,000, 77 Freeman Rd, Albright, David J, to Albright, Kristen M.

HOLLAND

\$350,000, 208 Mashapaug Rd, Kennedy Susan M Est, and Read, Megan, to Kennedy, Christopher D.

\$332,000, 8 Hamilton Dr, Monteiro, Jason, and Monteiro, Morgan, to Cornell, Seth, and Cornell, Julia.

\$150,000, 23 Collette Dr, Swanson, Michael J, to Dahl, Hillary.

SOUTHBRIDGE

\$562,000, 619 Lebanon Hill Rd, Weber, Nicholas J, and Weber, Robin P, to Smith 2nd, Timothy S.

\$500,000, 201 Hamilton St, Tremblay, Zachary, and Tremblay, Shauna L, to Lopez, Kenneth T.

\$455,000, 63 Briarwood Ave, Danna, Cassidy, and Danna, Joseph, to Yvon, Norman P, and Noone-Yvon, Karen.

\$432,500, 841 Lebanon Hill Rd, Murphy, Lisa, to Lorange, Brady.

\$378,493, 27 Henry St, Vaughan, Eric, and Nationster Mortgage LLC, to Nationstar Mortgage LLC.

\$370,000, 750 Charlton St, Dipilla, Jillian L, to Samer-Shanoer.

\$350,000, 55 Columbus Ave, Baez, Barney, and Rosario, Digna, to Espitia, Miguel A, and Perez-Suarez, Joseline.

\$330,000, 4 Violet Ave, Giroux, Karen R, to Rodriguez, Juan L, and Soto Cruz, Sheilah N.

\$289,900, 24 Marcy St, Borey, Wilfred J, and GITSIT SOLUTIONS LLC, to Gitsit Real Property LLC.

\$250,000, Worcester St #B, Re Properties LLC, to B & C Worcester St LLC.

\$250,000, Worcester St #C, Re Properties LLC, to B & C Worcester St LLC.

\$170,000, 40 Maria Ave #A, Elinor M Lefebvre Irt, and Foisey, Loretta, to Tourtellotte, Yvonne.

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\$8,795,000, 489 Main St, Srec Propco Sturbridge LL, to Sunway Properties LLC.

\$840,000, 41 Bennetts Rd, Ruberto, Antonio R, and Ruberto, Marilyn A, to Briggs, Elizabeth.

\$755,000, 57 Caron Rd, Casaubon, Jennifer E, and Casaubon, Jesse T, to Weaver, Jonathan, and Weaver, Kathleen.

\$685,024, 14 Tannery Rd, Covino, L D, and Covino, Cheryl M, to Mahajan, Sanuj, and Mahajan, Preeti.

\$530,000, 11 Old Village Rd, Koch, Tobin S, and Koch, Endsley L, to Bara, Berhanu.

\$499,900, 66 New Boston Rd, Manbeck Jeanne E Est, and Becton, Lois M, to Rysinski, James, and Scully, Iiona.

\$425,000, 84 Clark Rd, Wahr, Sandra L, to Walter, Kyle, and Walter, Rachel.

\$390,000, 98 Colonial Dr #98, Prior, Katherine M, to Caouette, Donald A.

\$255,800, 12 Main St, Silvestri, Ronald, to Mello, Lucas, and Mello, Rachel.

\$185,000, 40 South Rd, 34 South Rt, and Cournoyer, Ken, to Scheffler, Cole.

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CHURCH LISTINGS

- **Central Baptist Church**
256 Main St., Southbridge, MA 01550
Tel 508/764-6365; Worship 10:00 A.M.
- **Charlton Federated Church**, 64 Main St., 508-248-5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. Summer worship is 9:30 a.m.
www.charltonfedchurch.org
- **Charlton Baptist Church**, 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488, www.charltonbaptist.org, Sunday worship 10 a.m.
- **Charlton City United Methodist**, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org
Sunday worship and Children's church 10am
- **St. Anne St. Patrick Church**, 16 Church St., Fiskdale (508) 347-7338
www.stannestpatparish.com
Saturday Vigil Mass at 4 pm, Sunday 8 am, 10 am, 12 noon, Youth Mass (September to May) 5 pm. Daily Mass Mon - Thurs 7:30 and 10 am, Fri and Sat 7:30 am
- **St. Joseph's Church**, 10 H. Putnam Ext, 248-7862, www.stjosephscharlton.com, Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30 p.m., Sunday Mass 8 a.m., Sunday Family Mass 10 a.m., Sunday Life/TEEN Mass 5 p.m., Weekday Mass Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 a.m.
- **Wayside Church**, 6 Haggerty Road, 248-5144
- **Assemblies of God Southern New England District Headquarters**, Route 20, 248-3771, snedag.org, Office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Living Word Church of Charlton**, 10 Main Street - Grange building 1st Floor, Charlton, MA 01507, Pastor Craig Bellisario, (508) 233-8349
Sunday Service 10:00am.
www.livingwordcharlton.com
info@livingwordcharlton.com
- **New Life Fellowship A/G, SNED Chapel**, 307 Sturbridge Road, Rt. 20, Charlton, MA, Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.
- **Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale** - 8 Maple St. Sturbridge, 774-304-1021
www.sturfed.org
Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.
- **Bethlehem Lutheran Church** - 345 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566
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Web: www.bethlehemsturbridge.org
Services - Sunday 9:00 am
Pastor Dan Purtell
- **Holland Congregation Church**
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Hollandchurch.org
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Pastor Dan Maketansky
- **Holy Trinity Episcopal Church**
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Phone: 508-765-9559
Web: www.holytrinitysouthbridge.org
Sunday Service 11:00 am
Pastor Dan Purtell

Friday's Child



Tommy
Age 2
Registration # 9060

Hi! My name is Tommy

Tommy is a very active and curious toddler. His beautiful smile is a magnet that draws in meaningful connections. He loves engaging with others and is described as a "ray of sunshine". Tommy has a tracheal tube, but it does not prevent him from walking, running, and playing with the aid of his yellow backpack which supports his G-tube feedings. He has a fraternal twin sister who he looks forward to spending time with.

<https://adopt.mareinc.org/waiting-child-profiles#gallery/child/9060>

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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. 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.



Turtles bring wisdom from 280 million years ago

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

STURBRIDGE — Turtles are among the oldest surviving animals on Earth, almost identical to fossils traced back before the age of Dinosaurs. Although they're everywhere except Antarctica, most of their species are here in North America, hence the Native name "Turtle Island."

Many of them are endangered, in part by the speed of human life.

Back in 2008, injured turtles on our roadways gave Natasha Nowick and Alexxia Bell their "calling." From a start ferrying them to Tufts in Grafton, they came to realize they could tap their own experience fixing things to be turtle doctors, and turned their Southbridge home into a rehab hospital. In the process, they've built a still-growing network of turtle rescuers across multiple states and have come to imbibe the lessons turtles can teach about time and life.

"Life isn't about racing from point to point. It's a cycle that repeats itself," Nowick said.

To her, adopting that view will make humans "healthier, happier and in most ways more harmonious creatures."

Many of those ideas were distilled into Sy Montgomery's book "Of Time and Turtles,"

which profiles their Turtle Rescue League journey. The book inaugurated Joshua Hyde Library's new Opacum nature book group last week.

"This book has changed people's perspective on who a turtle is, not what a turtle is," TRL's secretary Michaela Conder observed.

Having it in print "does a lot of good across the country, and in other countries as well."

"We all look at turtles as mindless functions," but they have personalities, book group leader Tim Loftus said.

Nowick agreed wholeheartedly, adding "We are talking about a wisdom built generation to generation that goes back 280 million years. ... they don't need anybody to teach them how to smell water," swim, find food, find brumation or egg-laying spots, or any of the other things they need to live.

"They have their grandparents whispering to them in a very literal sense," she added.

Later, she noted one of their goals is to "take the snapping turtle and remove the monster from it," since too many people think they'll attack children and the like. (Bell said there's "no incidents of a snapping turtle biting a person in



Natasha Nowick introduces Velcro the snapping turtle to Opacum's Amy Adams.

the water.")

Actually, they don't just do turtles, but also their kin, tortoises. Bell noted turtles have to have access to water, but tortoises may never even see it.

The two of them and Conder brought a few such friends who became stars of the book with them — Mr. Swimmy, an Eastern painted turtle, Velcro, a snapping turtle, and Pizza Man, a red-footed tortoise. All three are permanent residents of their home now, since they can't be released to the wild. Mostly, that's because they were originally raised in captivity for the illegal pet trade (Pizza Man's species is from the Amazon). In Velcro's case, his brain injury also makes survival in the wild very

unlikely. (She also noted captive turtles often have bacteria that can kill wild ones.)

Loftus cited an article from October in which a woman was caught smuggling 24 box turtles into Canada. "People believe wood turtles make great pets ... but you can't tell a turtle's sick until they're pretty much dead," he said.

Bell agreed, saying if people want a pet turtle, they should foster one instead of buying it. They've had people break in to steal their animals.

Conder said they do not post images on social media or elsewhere (except a few on their website) and don't indicate where they release them. Bell later added that if people find endangered turtles, they

should not post about it online, but should contact the state.

Bell said they're able to return about 65 percent of their patients to the wild; Conder noted their license allows them to keep some they can't return for educational purposes.

But sometimes they don't get that choice. When Bell goes down into their basement in the morning to check on her patients and finds one dead, the hardest part is "having to say goodbye so many times." She later noted "Some of the turtles we get are just about literally pancakes."

Nowick agreed, but said, "You don't count the defeats. You count the victories."

She said turtles see the world very differently from humans. "They can't literally fathom what's coming," and do not see people (or other hazards) until right in front of them.

Likewise, they're very slow breeders — a female snapper, for example, takes 20 years to reach breeding age and 20-40 years thereafter to reproduce herself because each egg has just a one in 1,440 chance of surviving to adulthood, she said. "All of them count because none of them breed fast enough to replace [themselves in] their fragmented

habitat."

Opacum Director Laney Wilder said she worked in the Mojave Desert with tortoises and was struck by the fact "you're watching me."

She also noted, "I have a soft spot for snappers because they're ancient and primordial-looking."

Loftus has also been in the field with turtles, and observed that saving them also helps save other lifeforms, including some plants.

Nowick said turtle rescue "is always about continuing education." Neither of them studied turtles in school but have read a lot of science and medical articles. Nowick went to WPI for mechanical engineering, while Bell's background is as a general fix-it person, running a repair business.

"I've been taking some of my techniques of fixing other things and applying them to turtles," Bell said, noting they were her first biological repair project.

Later, she added, "... I've worked with turtles who were over a century old, and with turtles who were seconds old, born in my hand."

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

Federated Church announces holiday service schedule

STURBRIDGE — The Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale has announced its 2024 Christmas service schedule, according to Rev. David Cote, pastor.

The Church will conduct Sunday morning Advent services at 9:30 a.m. on Dec. 1 (Light of Hope), Dec. 8 (Light of Peace), Dec. 15 (Light of Joy), and Dec. 22 (Light of Love).

On Dec. 24, Christmas Eve, the Church will hold its annual Christmas Eve candlelight service at 9 p.m. The Christmas Day service will be held at 9:30 a.m. in the Church sanctuary.

The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale joyfully celebrates Christ's presence and God's grace in our lives. For additional information, please visit the Church Web site at sturfed.org or contact the Church office at (774) 304-1021 or churchoffice@sturfed.org.

Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale announces Holly Berry Fair vendors

STURBRIDGE — The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale will hold its annual Holly Berry Fair on Saturday, Dec. 7, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the church's Fellowship Hall at 8 Maple St., Sturbridge.

Holly Berry Fair co-chairs, Nancy Castendyk and Janet-Rae Sinanian say this year's fair promises to deliver something for everyone on your holiday shopping list.

"We've assembled quite an assortment of really unique and interesting artists this year," says Castendyk. "This popular fair will offer something for everyone, from hand-crafted pottery to folk art and hand-knitted items, and Koinonia, the Federated Church women's group will also be offering a variety of baked goods and other items for sale."

Featured local artisans include Penny Adams (Violet Hummingbird), Charles Battered (Sunset Leatherworks), Benjamin Brigham (Brigham Crafting), Nancy Castendyk (The Penny Wooden Doll), Bonnie Fancy (Fancy Knits), Collette Gage (Emma's Acres

Alpacas), and Kimberly Hachey (Simply Soaps).

The fair will also feature Roger Hall (My Shop), Gary Jesz (G&J Woodworking), Koinonia (Handicrafts), Nartarsha Lester (Beads by Tea), Barbara L'heureux (Pen & Ink Drawings), Janet Rae-Sinianian (T & Roses), Debra Rooney (Making Memories), Shree Weaver (Shree's Handmade Pottery), and Dee Wilson (Handmade by Dee).

For additional information about the Holly Berry Fair or other upcoming events, please visit the Church website at sturfed.org, visit the Church's Facebook page @FederatedChurchSturbridgeFiskdale, or contact the Church office at (774) 304-1021 or churchoffice@sturfed.org.

The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale joyfully celebrates Christ's presence and God's grace in our lives. Members of the community are welcome and invited to join in worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Services are also livestreamed on the church's Facebook page.

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PRESIDENT/PUBLISHERBRENDAN BERUBE
EDITORRediscovering
the lost art of
handwritten
recipes

In an era of digital convenience and instant gratification, some of life's most cherished traditions are quietly slipping away. Among these, the art of handwritten recipes. These are a tangible connection to the flavors of our past, the love of our grandmothers, and the warmth of family gatherings. In a world dominated by cooking apps and online recipe repositories, the simple act of putting pen to paper to share culinary secrets seems almost archaic. Yet, it's precisely this nostalgia and intimacy that make handwritten recipes a lost art worth preserving.

Handwritten recipes are more than just a list of ingredients and instructions; they are pieces of culinary history, infused with the personality and heritage of those who penned them. Each smudged, stained, and dog-eared card or piece of paper tells a story, a tale of generations passing down family traditions, the evolution of tastes and preferences, and the love and care that goes into creating a homemade meal.

The act of writing out a recipe by hand is an act of devotion. It's a moment where the cook imparts their wisdom, tips, and variations to the next in line. The penmanship, the flourishes, and the personal notes ("This one's always a hit at family gatherings!") add a layer of character that cannot be replicated by sterile digital text.

One of the most remarkable aspects of handwritten recipes is their adaptability. They are not bound by the limitations of standardized formats and measurements. Instead, they encourage creativity and experimentation. A pinch of this, a handful of that, and a dash of love, these imprecise yet heartfelt instructions allow each generation to put their own spin on the family classics, ensuring that the recipes remain dynamic and relevant.

In an age where convenience often trumps sentimentality, it's easy to overlook the value of preserving handwritten recipes. But as we flip through fading recipe cards and rediscover the treasures hidden in old recipe boxes, we are reminded that these handwritten culinary heirlooms are more than just instructions; they are a link to our past, a source of inspiration, and hold tradition.

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.

OPINION

ANTIQUES,
COLLECTIBLES
& ESTATES
•••••
WAYNE TUISKULA

Greece back in 500 BC. Thankfully, that practice ended, and auctions have evolved into a tried-and-true method for selling everything from diamond rings to factory buildings. I'll focus on antiques, collectibles, and estate auctions in today's column.

There are many reasons why people sell items at auction. One of the top reasons is that

Buying and selling at auction

Auctions had an inauspicious start when brides were first auctioned in competitive bidding is an effective way to get fair market value for items. Auctions help a consignor do their due diligence if they have a financial obligation to an estate or trust.

For the types of auctions that we run, we're typically contacted by estate personal representatives or attorneys. The representative may request that we appraise an estate for IRS or Probate. However, we're typically contacted to see which estate items may be a good fit for our auctions. We handle higher valued items of all types



ranging from smaller antiques and collectibles like gold jewelry to larger items like vintage automobiles. Of course, not everything in a home is antique, collectible, or valuable. There are other auction companies that sell pretty much everything in a home from a sofa to pots and pans. Sometimes we handle the more valuable items and offer suggestions to the seller for the rest.

There are of course
Turn To **ANTIQUES** page 11

Which IRA is right for
you?FINANCIAL
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The individual retirement account (IRA) is celebrating its golden anniversary. Created in 1974, this savings vehicle has helped millions of people build resources for retirement. And in 1997, the Roth IRA was introduced. But which IRA is right for you?

Let's look at the basic differences between the two IRAs. With a traditional IRA, you generally invest pretax dollars, so the more you put in, the lower your taxable income. Your earnings grow tax deferred, meaning you pay no taxes on them until you start taking withdrawals. (If you take withdrawals before you reach 59 and a half, you'll be subject to ordinary income tax and a 10 percent IRA penalty.)

When you invest in a Roth IRA, your contributions aren't deductible, but they can be withdrawn at any time, tax- and penalty-free. And you can typically withdraw your earnings on these contributions tax free once you're 59 and a half and you've had your account at least five years. (If you don't meet these conditions, withdrawals of earnings are subject to income taxes and the 10 percent penalty.)

So, are you better off by taking the immediate tax break offered by a traditional IRA or the long-term benefits of tax-free withdrawals available with a Roth IRA?

If you think you'll be in a higher tax bracket when you retire, you might want to consider a Roth IRA, especially if you have a long time until retirement. This will give you more opportunities to put away funds that can be withdrawn tax free. Conversely, if you think you might be in a lower tax bracket upon retirement, you might lean toward a traditional IRA, as you'd get the tax benefits now, when you're in a higher bracket, and can eventually make your taxable withdrawals when you're in a lower one.

Here's something else to keep in mind: Once you turn 73 (or 75 if you were born in 1960 or later), you must start taking taxable withdrawals — technically called required minimum distributions, or RMDs — from your traditional IRA. But if you have a Roth IRA, you won't face RMDs and can essentially keep the money in your account indefinitely. If you don't need all the funds in your Roth IRA for your retirement, you can pass them on to your heirs.

Ultimately, though, your income may determine which IRA is right for you. You can earn any amount and contribute to a traditional IRA, though if you exceed certain income limits, your contributions may no longer be tax deductible. If you and your spouse don't have a 401(k) or other retirement plan through your employers, you can make a full, deductible contribution to a traditional IRA regardless of your income.

But you may not be able to contribute to a Roth IRA, or at least not make the full maximum annual contributions, if your income is above certain levels. Your tax advisor can explain these levels, which often increase from year to year. (In 2024, the most you can contribute to either IRA, depending on your income, is \$7,000 per year, or \$8,000 if you're 50 or older.)

Under some circumstances, you can convert a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA, though you'll need to pay taxes on the conversion. In any case, think carefully about your options and make the choices that are appropriate for your needs.

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

Pat Stockwell
Charlton

TO THE EDITOR

I admit, I'm a commoner

To the Editor:

I am a firm believer in common courtesy, common decency and common sense. Though these values are in short supply at the national level these days, it seems more important for us to practice them at the local level.

So why do I bring this up now? Because we have an issue in Charlton that needs our attention.

A couple of years ago, some residents who care about our town joined a Government Study Committee, volunteered countless hours researching where our town government could use improvement, presented their key findings and recommendations to the Selectboard and were ignored for a year. The top recommendation was that the Town Clerk should no longer be an elected official, but appointed. The person who runs all of our elections, not just the town elections or the primaries or the state elections or the mid-terms, or even the Presidential election, is chosen via a popularity contest of a few hundred voters out of over 10,000. Common sense tells us that the decision to act upon this crucial position should have been addressed in a timely manner.

There are many reasons why it is important for the Town Clerk to be made an appointed position.

The Study Group recommended that due to the technicalities of the job and the requirements to meet state law, the Clerk must be a professional manager. The Town Clerk is the only remaining full time department head that must be elected. No other department head can hold their position without being interviewed and vetted to be sure they hold the proper qualifications. The current Town Clerk has expressed the difficulty someone would encounter running an election with today's requirements and no experience and she is firmly in favor of making it an appointed position. Also, an election requirement brings the threat of job loss to the clerk every three years, and would likely deter good, qualified candidates from running. It should strike fear in all of us as voters that if someone unqualified were to win, it would bring the potential for chaos and legal ramifications to the town. In addition an Assistant Town Clerk is not elected and has no path for promotion and if he/she is not a town resident cannot run for Town Clerk. This added impact to the town is the inability to potentially hire the most likely qualified successor should the Town Clerk's position open up. The risks to the town during an election are both legal and financial and the liabilities are real. The public tends to vote for people they like, not who is actually qualified and the Town Clerk is the one person who is solely responsible for what goes on in that office. Just because we have been lucky up to this point does not mean we should ignore common sense. The most qualified person should always hold this position.

Our Select Board seems to be more interested in being the "deciders" than doing what is best for our town. They ignored this recom-

mendation for a year, until finally the scutlebutt was "Who wants to waste their time on committees when they just ignore you?" Finally, this got the issue back on the agenda of the Nov. 12 Select Board meeting. I highly recommend watching it, and not just the second half when the Clerk's position was discussed on youtube.com/c/TVCharltonMass. The discussion regarding replacing the Fire Chief was also eye opening and a glaring contradistinction to the Clerk discussion.

During the exchange about the Clerk one of the most egregious statements ever made by a Charlton Select Board member, the Chair no less, was uttered. The Chair made an outrageous threat to suspend the meeting due to another board member being unable to quickly and clearly express himself. That was a personal attack due to some clear animus between them. However putting aside the tenets of common courtesy and common decency, his attack on us as voters was much more insidious.

It was determined that at this point, the fastest way to get this resolved "by the people," before the present Clerk retires or must run again, is to have a Special Town Meeting in the Spring, 60 days before the Town Election. The Chair made it clear he is against the recommendation regarding the Clerk, which is irrelevant for it should be up to "we the people". But he is also against allowing the people of Charlton the opportunity to decide in a timely manner, if at all. He said he does not want a Special Town Meeting because they get "minimal participation." In addition to this also being irrelevant, his duty is to bring the question before us to decide, not to continually push off the issue because he does not want to do it. Shall we eliminate Annual Town Meeting or Fall Special Town Meeting as well because participation is often below 100 voters?

Ultimately the two choices are a Spring Special Town Meeting 60 days before the election in May 2025, or another year's delay. This means our current Town Clerk, who does an outstanding job and has 14 years of experience, could literally be on the same ballot for re-election in 2026 as the question of whether to make it an appointed position. If she were to not run or to lose and the vote is to appoint, do they appoint the winner of the election, qualified or not, or do they ignore the election and appoint someone else? Is this common sense? This must be resolved in Spring 2025 and it should be "we the people" who decide.

This board should not be making the decision for us by delaying indefinitely or possibly worse, voting to not even put it before us! If you truly believe in democracy, please contact our Selectboard and make it clear that you want your right to exercise a vote on this matter; and in the most timely manner, via a Spring Special Town Meeting. Go to townofcharlton.net/233/Board-of-Selectmen to find contact information.



GARDEN
MOMENTS
.....
MELINDA
MYERS

Growing moth orchids for months of beauty

Add exotic long-lasting orchid blossoms to your indoor garden. These living bouquets provide months of beauty with minimal care. Just provide the proper growing conditions and success is sure to follow.

The moth or phalaenopsis orchid is the one best adapted to your home environment, making it the easiest to grow. It thrives in the same temperatures as people with night temperatures in the 60s and 70 to 80 degrees during the day. However, avoid hot and cold air drafts that can stress the plants and cause bud and flower drop.

Moth orchids are epiphytes, growing on but not parasitizing trees and other plants. They obtain water and nutrients from the air, rainwa-

ter, and plant debris that accumulate in their environment. They can be mounted on a board but usually are grown in an orchid mix made of peat, fir bark, and perlite. This or a similar combination retains water while providing needed drainage.

Place your plant in a bright location near an east, west- or slightly shaded south-facing window. Your orchid will do best when it receives 12 to 14 hours of sunlight daily. Enlist the help of artificial lights if your orchids are struggling when natural light, especially during winter, is insufficient. Newer full-spectrum LED lights are more affordable, require less energy, and are longer lasting than the grow lights of the past.

Give your orchid a good watering about once a week with room temperature water just as the planting mix starts to dry. Pour off any excess water that



Melinda Myers

The moth orchid also known as phalaenopsis orchid provides months of exotic blossoms with minimal care.

collects in the saucer. Don't allow orchids to sit in water and don't water too often as this can lead to root rot and death of your plant.

Fertilize actively growing and flowering plants every third or fourth watering. Use an orchid plant fertilizer according to label directions. Skip winter fertilization if temperatures are cooler, sunlight is limited, and the plants are not putting on new growth.

Improve the environ-

ment even more by increasing the humidity around the plant. Group them with other orchids and indoor plants. As one plant loses moisture, or "transpires," the others will benefit from the increase in humidity. Plus, you'll create a beautiful display while improving the growing conditions.

Or increase the humidity around your plants with humidity or gravel trays. Place pebbles in the saucer and set the pot on top of the peb-

bles. Allow excess water to collect in the pebbles below the pot. As the water evaporates it increases the humidity around your plant. It also eliminates the need to pour off the excess water that collects in the saucer.

You won't need to repot your orchid for quite a while. Wait to repot it until it is done blooming, the potting mix has broken down or the plant becomes pot bound. This is usually about every 18 to 24 months.

Enjoy a second flush of flowers with cool nights and proper post-flowering care. Leave the flower stem intact and the plant may produce a second flush of smaller blooms at the tip of the stem. Or you can cut the flower stem back between the second and third node from the bottom. For the best rebloom and to allow the plant to replenish energy spent on flowering, prune the flower stem

back to about one-half inch above the leaves and enjoy a second flush of flowers in about a year.

And if reblooming your orchid is too much work, treat it like a long-lasting bouquet. And if you can't stand to toss or compost it, give it to an avid gardener. There's always someone willing to adopt and try to rebloom your plant.

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

Choosing a Holiday Tree

Now that Thanksgiving is in the rear mirror, many people are getting a head start on Christmas this year, and that means putting up the holiday tree. When it comes to choosing a trim worthy tree, for many the choice is steeped in tradition, for others, the question becomes whether to pick a fresh or artificial one. When determining which Christmas tree to choose, many factors come into play. Read on for some interesting information, as well as our annual guide to choosing a fresh tree.

**

Undecided on a real or artificial tree this year? The American Christmas Tree Association offers the following facts that could help you decide:

Allergies: If allergies are preventing you from going with a fresh tree, you should know the burst of warm weather in April and May triggers the reproduction cycle in many plant species, including tree species commonly used as Christmas trees. But by late November and early December, when such trees



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are harvested, pollen production has long since ceased. This means that most people with pollen allergies will not be bothered by real trees, except for those are sensitive enough to be bothered by trace amounts.

However, if you find yourself sneezing, or with an itchy nose or asthma symptoms when you bring in a fresh tree, According to the American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology, you are likely allergic to mold spores in the tree, not the tree itself. The AAAAI advises to let it dry for a week in your garage or enclosed porch and then shake it thoroughly before bringing it inside. Try using a leaf blower on the tree outside to help rid it of unwelcome particles. A high-performance air purifier in the same room as the Christmas tree can also help keep mold spores in check.

Or, if you're more ambitious, the best way to deal with any dust, molds and fungi lingering in a fresh tree is by cleaning the tree before you bring it into your home. Use your garden hose to spray down the tree, and then leave the tree somewhere warm to dry

for about 24 hours. Once it's dry, then you can bring it into your home. Again, as an added precaution, you can try running an air purifier in the room where the tree is located.

Additionally, there is a very small percentage of the population that is allergic to tree sap. In this case, the only real solution is to only purchase artificial trees for your home, and avoid close proximity to real Christmas trees.

**

Environmental Impact: If you're leaning toward an artificial tree, but concerned about the environmental impact of artificial trees, note this: Several years ago, PE International, a consulting company that studies environmental sustainability in numerous industries, did an analysis of the environmental impact of artificial Christmas trees, versus real trees. The study found that, depending on how a real tree is disposed of, an artificial tree would only have to be used for 3.6 to 4 years before there was a net benefit with regard to contribution to global warming. This means that if a household uses an artificial tree

Turn To **HINT** page 13



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CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

WINTER STORYTIMES - Tuesdays and Fridays at 10:45am. Join us for stories, songs, rhymes and a craft. All children must be accompanied by an adult caregiver. No registration required. There will be no story times on December 20, 24, 27 and 31.

STORY TIME WITH SANTA - Saturday, December 7 at 11:00am. Come and listen as Santa Claus reads his story "If Mice Pulled the Sleigh", then stay for a quick craft and a photo opportunity with Santa. Copies of his book "If Mice Pulled the Sleigh" will be available for purchase. For children of all ages with an adult caregiver. Space is limited and registration is required.

LEGO CLUB - Thursday, December 19 at 6:00pm. Love Legos? Come build with us. For ages 6 to 12 with an adult caregiver. Registration is required.

CCUMC adding Bear Den to Dec. 7 'Season of Joy' Fair

CHARLTON — The Bear Den is a new addition to this year's Season of Joy Fair at the Charlton City United Methodist Church, 74 Stafford St., Charlton. It is stocked with collectible stuffed bears, most with a year sewn into a paw and many with their original tags. Our other booths will be returning also.



Look for gifting ideas, or new to you Christmas decorations in Gramma's attic, and handmade pillows and hot pads at the Craft Table. The Jewelry Table has some great finds for your holiday and everyday wardrobe accents. The Silent Auction will include gift cards and items ranging from essential oils to outdoor adventure. And of course, the fair would not be complete without our Baked Goods Table and by-the-pound Cookie Corner. There will be a few outside vendors as well. A soup and sandwich luncheon will also be available.

A tithing portion of the proceeds will support heating fuel assistance for local seniors, the United Methodist Committee on disaster relief agency (UMCOR), and Abby's House in Worcester. Join in the Joy of the Season from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. The church has plenty of parking and is fully handicapped accessible.

COMEDY MAGIC SHOW with Ed Popielarczyk - Friday, December 27 at 11:00am. Magician, Balloon Twister, and Flea Circus. For children ages 3+ with an adult caregiver. Registration is required.

MOOMAW 4 KIDS - STORYSONGS - Monday, December 30 at 11:00am. For children of all ages with an adult caregiver. Registration is required.

TEEN & ADULT PROGRAMS

VIRTUAL - MORE HOLIDAY ROMANCE BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS WITH BOOKLIST REVIEWER JOHN CHARLES - Monday, December 2 at 7:00pm. Registration is required.

IN-PERSON - AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP - Tuesday, December 10 at 1:00pm. This month's book is "Wait Till Next Year" by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

IN-PERSON - PLANTS OF THE QUR'AN WITH CHRISTEL WHALEN, PH.D. - Thursday, December 12 at 6:30pm. Approximately 22 plants are specifically named in the Qur'an with most of them having either a culinary or medicinal value. In this program we will examine a handful of key plants, from garlic to pomegranate. This program is supported in part by the Sturbridge Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. Registration is required.

VIRTUAL: Q&A WITH AUTHOR KRISTIE FREDERICK DAUGHERTY: "INVISIBLE STRINGS: 113 POETS RESPOND TO THE SONGS OF TAYLOR SWIFT." Thursday, December 12 at 7:00pm. Swifties will experience the profundity and nuance of Swift's lyrics through this anthology of brand-new poems inspired by Taylor Swift songs! For poetry lovers, this one-of-a-kind anthology is an unparalleled collection of new work from today's most lauded and revered poets. Registration is required.

IN-PERSON - WORLD BUILDING BOOK GROUP - Tuesday, December 17 at 6:30pm. This month's book is "The Ocean at the End of the Lane" by Neil Gaiman.

IN-PERSON - ARMCHAIR TRAVELERS BOOK GROUP - Wednesday, December 18 at 6:30pm. This month's book is "Fresh Water for Flowers" by Valerie Perrin.

IN-PERSON - THAT'S A WRAP. Friday, December 20 from 2:00pm to 4:30pm. It's a wrapping party. Come to the library to wrap your holiday presents. There will be free gift-wrapping supplies for Christmas and Hanukkah. There will be cider and cookies too!

Programs are sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL unless otherwise indicated.

For more information, contact the Joshua Hyde Public Library at 508-347-2512.

Assumption students inducted into Psi Chi, the International Honors Society in Psychology

WORCESTER — Assumption's Department of Psychology has announced that 11 students have become members of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology, including

Mariam Ayoub and Lillian Dolan of Charlton.

Assumption University, founded in 1904 by the Augustinians of the Assumption, is a premier New England University for high-quality education, integrating career

preparation and education of the whole person, drawing upon the best in the rich and centuries-long tradition of Catholic higher education. Assumption's graduates are known for their intellectual seriousness, thoughtful citizenship, and dedication to the common good. Located in Worcester, Massachusetts, Assumption has undergone a series of major advancements since transitioning to a university, including new

academic buildings, degree programs, and athletic facilities for our NCAA Division II student athlete population. The University offers 38 majors and 50 minors in the liberal arts, sciences, business, nursing, and professional studies, and other areas, as well as graduate degrees and professional credentials. For more information about Assumption University, please visit www.assumption.edu.

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tion Inc. the following motor vehicle/s
will be sold at private sale to satisfy our
garage keeper's lien thereon for stor-
age, towing charges, care and expens-
es of notices and sale of said vehicle:

Vehicle Description:
2008 Mercedes-Benz E-Class
VIN:
WDBUF87X98B244911
Last Registered owner:
Mariacalis Ramos Muniz
PO BOX 4332,
WORCESTER, MA 01605

Vehicle Description:
2008 Toyota Sienna (Gold)
VIN:
5TDZK23C18S207704
Last Registered owner:
Noorul Baqi Naseemi
500 TOMPKINS AVE,
AKRON, OH 44305

Vehicle Description:
2005 Mitsubishi Galant
VIN:
4A3AB46F25E014104
Last Registered owner:
Alex Conley
173 BULLARD HOLLOW RD
HARRIMAN TN 37748

Claire Brown
173 BULLARD HOLLOW RD
HARRIMAN TN 37748

Vehicle Description:
2012 Nissan Altima
VIN:
1N4AL2AP5CN436696
Last Registered Owner:
William Darrell Ingram,
2574 WOOD PARK BLVD,
CONROE, TX 77304

Vehicle Description:
2014 Chevrolet Equinox
VIN:
2GNALBEK6E6384101
Last Registered owner:
Yontan Del Rosario Medrano
75 RIVER CHASE BLVD
BEAUFORD SC 29906

Vehicle Description
2010 Ford Focus (White)
VIN:
1FAHP3EN2AW285079
Last Registered owner:
Nahromi Jade Alcantara
1566 MAIN ST
EAST HARTFORD CT 06108

Vehicle Description:
2010 Nissan Altima (White)
VIN:
1N4BL2AP5AN524830
Last Registered Owner:
Carlos Geraldo Dos Reis
39 CATHERINE ST APT1
WORCESTER MA 01605

Vehicle Description
2004 Toyota RAV4
VIN:
JTEGD20V540024290
Last Registered Owner:
Moran Jesus Adonay Ventura,
69 EMPIRE ST, APT 2,
ALLSTON MA 02134

Vehicle Description
2005 Mazda MPV (Silver)
VIN:
JM3LW28J950550946
Last Registered Owner:
Luis A Verges
55 GODDARD ST APT 3
SOUTHBRIDGE MA 01550
November 29,2024
December 6,2024
December 13,2024

ADVERTISEMENT INVITATION FOR BIDS CHARLTON #2 SCHOOLHOUSE STRUCTURAL AND EXTERIOR REPAIRS

The Town of Charlton is soliciting sealed bids from qualified bidders for the #2 Schoolhouse Structural and Exterior Repair project until 1:00 PM on Tuesday, January 7, 2025 for General Bid. The Work includes selective framing reinforcement, wood siding and trim repair, slate roof replacement, exterior painting and foundation repointing matching historic construction as described in the following specifications, appendices, and drawing set prepared by Cirrus Structural Engineering. The site is listed in the State Register of Historic Places and work is funded by a Massachusetts Historical Commission Preservation Projects Fund grant. Contractors shall have minimum of three years' experi-

ence working on historical structures and familiarity with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Rehabilitation.

Bidding procedures shall be in accordance with M.G.L. c. 149, Sections 44A-J as most recently amended, and all other applicable laws. Bids are subject to prevailing wage rates as required by M.G.L. c. 149, Sections 26 to 27H inclusive. A pre-Bid Conference and Site Visit will be held at the main entrance of the #2 Schoolhouse, 145 Northside Road, Charlton, MA 01507 on Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 10:00 AM. The Site Visit is strongly encouraged for General Bidders. The Invitation for bid is available in person from the Office of the Town Administrator or for an electronic copy, by emailing mary.devlin@townofcharlton.net. To be considered, proposals must be submitted and received in the Office of the Town Administrator, 37 Main Street, Charlton, MA 01507 no later than 1:00 PM, Tuesday, January 7, 2025.

General bids shall be accompanied by a bid deposit that is not less than five (5%) of the greatest possible bid amount (considering all alternates) and made payable to the Town of Charlton. The successful bidder will be required to furnish a Performance Bond and Payment Bond each in the amount of one-hundred percent (100%) of the contract sum. Bonds shall be obtained from a surety licensed to do business in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, on a form provided by the Town. The Town of Charlton reserves the right to waive any informality, to cancel this IFB, and to reject any or all bids if it is in the public interest to do so.
November 28, 2024

TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE PUBLIC HEARING TAX CLASSIFICATION

A public hearing will be held by the Town Council on Monday, December 9, 2024, at 6:30 p.m., in Council Chambers, Town Hall.

This public hearing will be held pursuant to Chapter 40, Section 56 on the adoption of a residential factor for tax purposes and the adoption of percentages of the local tax levy to be borne by each class of real and personal property.

Any person wishing to speak will be given the opportunity to be heard.
TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE
John D. Jovan Jr.
Town Manager
November 21, 2024
November 28, 2024

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate
and Family Court
225 Main Street
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Docket No. WO16P2484EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR
FORMAL ADJUDICATION**
Estate Of:

Esther Anny Folman
Also known as: **Esther A Folman**
Date of Death: 05/06/2014

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **S/A - Formal Appointment of Successor PR**

has been filed by **Rina Z. Folman of Leominster 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:
Rina Z. Folman of Leominster 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 12/17/2024**

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: November 15, 2024
Stephanie K. Fattman,
Register of Probate
November 28, 2024

CHARLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with the Wetland Protection Act of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter 131, Section 40, the Charlton Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on December 11, 2024, at 7PM on the application of Thomas and Edith Martocci.

The applicant has filed for a Notice of Intent for the replacement of a septic system within the 100-ft Buffer Zone of a Bordering Vegetated Wetland. The project location is: 59 & 0 Cranberry Meadow Shore Road, Charlton MA 01507. Parcel ID: 1A-B-4 & 1A-B-5.

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting of the Charlton Conservation Commission will be conducted in person and via remote means. Members of the public who wish to participate can access the meeting remotely by request.

Copies of the NOI may be examined at the Conservation Office by appointment during business hours.

Thomas O'Malley
Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission
November 28, 2024

Town of Sturbridge Zoning Board of Appeals Public Hearing Notice Special Permit Cynthia Fugere

In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 40A, §11, the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, December 18, 2024 at 6:35 PM** at the **Center Office Building located at 301 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566 and/or by virtual means** if circumstances warrant, in accordance with applicable law; on the application of Cynthia Fugere.

The applicant is requesting a Special Permit pursuant to Article XVIII §300-15.2 of the Zoning Bylaw to allow the construction of a 13'x19' detached garage to replace an existing non-conforming shed, to be set 5' off of the property line on the property owned by Cynthia Fugere located at **10 Birch Street**, in accordance with the plans and application submitted.

The proposed request can be viewed at <https://www.sturbridge.gov/zoning-board-appeals/pages/recent-filings> or arrangements can be made to view the application packet by contacting the Sturbridge Planning Department at (508)347-2508 or by email at jlacy@sturbridge.gov.

Any person interested or wishing to be heard on this proposal should appear at the time and place designated. Members of the public may watch the meeting online via the Town's on demand video broadcast or via cable television on Channel 191. It is the intent to have this Public Hearing in person. However, if circumstances warrant, the Board may choose to hold this Hearing via virtual or hybrid (in person and virtual) means. In the event of a virtual or hybrid meeting, notice and a link shall be posted on the ZBA website. Please note that the meeting/hearing will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law.

Diane Trapasso, Chair
Sturbridge Zoning Board of Appeals
November 28, 2024
December 5, 2024

CHARLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
In accordance with the Wetland Protection Act of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter 131, Section 40, the Charlton Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on December 11, 2024, at 7PM on the application of Pat Gallagher.

The applicant has filed for a Notice of Intent for the continuation of an Aquatic Management Program at Cranberry Meadow Lake to control the growth of nuisance aquatic plant species. The project location is: Cranberry Meadow Lake, Charlton MA 01507. Parcel ID: 1-B-2.

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts

of 2021, this meeting of the Charlton Conservation Commission will be conducted in person and via remote means. Members of the public who wish to participate can access the meeting remotely by request.

Copies of the NOI may be examined at the Conservation Office by appointment during business hours.

Thomas O'Malley
Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission
November 28, 2024

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 173 Pleasant Street, Southbridge, MA 01550

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Ronald J Benvenuti Jr and Ronald J Benvenuti to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Guild Mortgage Company LLC, and now held by Guild Mortgage Company LLC, said mortgage dated October 7, 2022 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 68328, Page 320, said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as nominee for Guild Mortgage Company LLC to Guild Mortgage Company LLC by assignment dated February 8, 2024 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 70191, Page 304; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at Public Auction on December 19, 2024 at 02:00 PM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

Closing Date: October 7, 2022
Borrower(s): Ronald J. Benvenuti and Ronald J. Benvenuti, Jr.
Property Address: 173 Pleasant Street, Southbridge, MA 01550

The land, together with the buildings thereon, in Southbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts, property now known as Parcel B-1 of 173 Pleasant Street, Southbridge, MA, and is more formerly described as follows:

Beginning at a point at the northeast corner of tract herein described on the westerly sideline of Pleasant Street at the southeast corner of Parcel B-2; Thence S. 37° 37'40"W .. along the westerly sideline of said Pleasant Street, a distance of one hundred twenty and sixty-one hundredths (120.61) feet to a point;

Thence N. 61° 29'20" W .. along land of Marc A. and Janet M. Cournoyer, a distance of one hundred thirty-three and sixty-one hundredths (133.61) feet to a point;

Thence N. 27° 15'00" E. along land of Felix Burda, now or formerly, a distance of sixty-eight and eighty-one hundredths (68.81) feet to a point; Thence N. 57° 57'00" W. along said Burda land, a distance of four and ten hundredths (4.10) feet to a point; Thence N. 24° 40'00" E. along land of Leo Desmarair, now or formerly, a distance of seventy- seven and forty-four hundredths (77.44) feet to a point;

Thence S. 52° 02'00" E along said Parcel B-2, a distance of one hundred sixty-five and eighty- hundredths (165.80) feet to the point of beginning.

The above tract contains an area of 19,670 square feet.

For title, see deed recorded herewith. The description of the property contained in the mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

For Mortgagor's Title see deed dated October 6, 2022 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 68328, Page 317.

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

FIVE THOUSAND (\$5,000.00) Dollars of the purchase price must be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check at the time and place of the sale by the purchaser. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check within thirty (30) days after the date of sale.

Other terms to be announced at the sale.

Brock & Scott, PLLC
23 Messenger Street
2nd Floor
Plainville, MA 02762
Attorney for Guild Mortgage Company LLC
Present Holder of the Mortgage
(401) 217-8701
November 21, 2024.
November 28, 2024.
December 5, 2024

**For Legal Advertising Information, Call 508-909-4127
email: legals@stonebridgepress.news**

Antiques

continued from page 6

many other reasons why people might decide to auction their items. They may be downsizing. They may have inherited things that they don't collect and would like to convert those items into cash. Consignors often have items of value like gold jewelry, sterling silver, or coins that they don't want anymore. Peoples' tastes change and they

may no longer want the old painting that hung in their living room. People often tell me that they are getting older and their families have no interest in their belongings, therefore leading them to auctions.

Auctions can be online or live. We were unable to run live auctions during the pandemic and switched to all online auctions. This has expanded our reach to bidders across the world, but other auc-

tioneers are still finding success running live auctions.

Bidders can search multiple websites including liveauctioneers.com, invaluable.com, auctionninja.com, hibid.com, bidsquare.com, and others to find items that they collect.

There are tools available for online bidders. Many online auction sites offer bidders the ability to create a want list. They can enter search terms for what-

ever they collect. For example, you could enter "Waltham gold pocket watches" and get an email when watches meeting your criteria are being sold. If you see something that you like, many sites will allow you to follow that item and receive an email or text when your auction item is about to be sold. If it is something that you really want, you can place a proxy bid. You enter the maximum amount that

you are willing to pay such as \$500. The bidding is competitive so you may get outbid, but you might also win it for less than your \$500 bid. Whether you're a consignor or a bidder, hopefully you'll be a winner at auction.

We are currently cataloging a large collection of Civil War memorabilia from a local estate as well as running an antique auction in a Beacon Hill Boston estate. We are accept-

ing consignments of all types for future auctions. Please visit our Web site, <https://centralmassauctions.com>, for links to 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 or (508-612-6111).



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OBITUARIES

Shirley A. Washburn, 87

Shirley A. Washburn, 87, of Coldwater passed away on November 18, 2024, at Maple Lawn of Coldwater.

Cremation has taken place, there will be no services held at this time. Arrangements are being cared for by Dutcher Funeral Home.

Shirley was born September 25, 1937, to Leo E. and Claire M. (McGrath) Savage in South Bridge, Massachusetts.

Shirley spent many years working as a waitress in many restaurants. One of her favorites was a bed and breakfast in Massachusetts where she worked for nearly 10 years.

Shirley enjoyed many things including reading and crocheting. She was very passionate as a practicing Catholic. In most of her free time Shirley looked forward to being able to spend time with her family, especially her many grandchildren and



great-grandchildren.

Shirley is survived by her children Frank Washburn of Florida; Sharon (Paul) Hakkarainen of Union City; Deborah (Gene) Ruth of Union City; Pamela Washburn of Ware, Massachusetts; her brother Leo Savage of Coldwater; her grandchildren Jaqueline Smith; Jessica Washburn; Nicole Chandler; Justin Wagoner; Hector Peterson; 11 great grandchildren; 1 great great grandchild and many loving nieces and nephews.

Shirley was preceded in death by Frank Washburn; Roger Savage; and Richard Savage.

Memorials may be directed to the Disabled Veterans Association. www.dutcherfh.com.

Craig D. Laliberte, 54



Sturbridge: Craig D. Laliberte, 54, passed away on Wednesday, Oct. 30th, from injuries sustained in an automobile accident in Woodstock, CT.

He leaves his wife, Janine A. (Adamo) Laliberte and her two daughters, Madeline Lancour and Riley Lancour, all of Sturbridge; his parents, David and Diane (Rondeau) Laliberte of Manheim, PA; his two sisters, Sara Laliberte of LaPlace, LA and Karen Santilli and her husband James of Woodstock, CT; his nephew, Anthony Santilli; his niece, Rachel Santilli; and his great nephew, Jayden Santilli. He was born in Southbridge and was a graduate of the former Marianhill High School in Southbridge. Craig was a US Army Veteran of the Desert Storm War.

Craig owned and operated the Marine Service Center in Southbridge for 15 years. He previously worked for USA Marine in Worcester and for his father's company, Southbridge Steel and Machine Sales.

A funeral Mass for Craig will be held on Friday, Dec. 6th, at 11:00am in St. Mary's Church of the St. John Paul II Parish, 263 Hamilton St., Southbridge. Burial will follow in New Notre Dame Cemetery, Southbridge. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Warriors Heart Healing, which supports Active Military, Veterans, and First responders. Donations in Craig's name may be sent online at <https://frontlinehealingfoundation.org>

The Daniel T. Morrill Funeral Home, 130 Hamilton St., Southbridge, is directing arrangements. www.morrillfuneralhome.com

Stephen Francis Bennett Sr. 87



Indianapolis, IN/Southbridge: Stephen Francis Bennett Sr. 87, passed away on November 13, 2024, in Indianapolis, IN. Born on August 28, 1937 in Worcester Massachusetts, Stephen lived a life marked by devotion to his family.

He is survived by his devoted wife and caregiver, Kathleen M. Bennett of Indianapolis, IN; his beloved children; Stephen F. Bennett Jr. and his wife Donna of Myrtle Beach, SC, Julie C. Carmel and her husband Cliff of Sturbridge, Deborah J. Boiteau and her husband Wayne of Southbridge, his stepchildren, Michelle M. and Carolyn A. Carnes, his sister-in-law Carol A and the late Robert F. Carter of Bethel Park, PA, Brother-in-Law Gary L. and his wife Rhonda A. Hurbanek of Poolesville, MD. Steve also leaves his grandchildren Kevin, Renee, Ashley, Gabrielle, Luc, Lauren, Jamie, Christen, Nicolas, Benjamin, Aidan and Dylan, and great grandchildren Logan, Noah, Lyle, Rylee, Oscar, Grace, Bennett, Samuel and Lucy. He also leaves several nieces and nephews.

Steve was predeceased by his parents, Leon and Agnes Bennett, his three sisters; Mary, Muriel and Marilyn, his Irish twin brother Leon Jr., his parents-in-law Louis J. and Florence M. Hurbanek of Pittsburgh PA.

Steve attended Auburn, MA schools where he was an outstanding student athlete. He was recruited by many Ivy League Universities, and was appointed to West Point. He decided to attend Boston College with his brother Leon on full football scholarships where he obtained his Bachelor's degree



in Accounting. While at Boston College he was a member of the ROTC program, becoming a Second Lieutenant in the US Army. He then received his Master's Degree in Education from Worcester State College and taught and coached football for the town of Auburn. After working in the family business, B&B Electric, he dedicated over 30 years to American Optical, Cabot/Aearo Safety. Steve volunteered for many years for Pop Warner Football and created a love for the game in any young man that played for him. His Red/White/Blue offense is cemented in their memories.

Steve had a love for travel and used a motor home to cross the country; he was one of few that can say they visited all 50 US States. Steve completed the Boston Marathon twice in his 50's and was an avid fan of New England Sports teams, especially the Patriots. He attended many Indy 500 races and excelled at playing golf. He was always up for a spirited conversation about sports or politics and his family-famous phrases will never be forgotten.

The family would also like to thank Dr. Caitlyn Baxter and the ICU team at IU Methodist Hospital for the care and support during Steve's final days. Calling hours for Stephen will be held on Saturday, November 30th, from 10:00am to 1:00pm in the Daniel T. Morrill Funeral Home, 130 Hamilton St., Southbridge, with a funeral service to follow at 1:00pm in the funeral home. Burial in Pine Grove Cemetery will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Tunnel to Towers Foundation, 2361 Hylan Boulevard, Staten Island, NY 10306. www.morrillfuneralhome.com

Mary Margaret Mailhot, 86

WEBSTER - Mary Margaret (Wehan) Mailhot, 86, of Webster, died peacefully in her sleep on Friday, November 15, 2024. She was predeceased by her husband of 66 years, Raymond John Mailhot who died on October 1, 2024; and her sisters, Elva Wehan and Rosann Bojarski of Erie, PA. She is survived by three daughters, Brenda Jeffries of Auburn, Kathryn DiGiandomenico and her husband Paul of Mansfield, and Patricia Barry and her husband Thomas of Oxford; a brother, Albert Wehan of Erie, PA, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

She was born in Erie, PA, daughter of the late Albert and Anna (Rutkowski) Wehan. She was a graduate of Academy Catholic High School in Erie. One of her proudest moments was traveling to California with her high school marching band to perform in the Rose Bowl Parade.

Mary was an U.S. Air Force veteran. She met her husband Ray while stationed in Charleston, SC, at the same time he was serving in the U.S. Navy. They were married in Charleston, and it remained one of their favorite destinations.

Mary was very social and remained active throughout her life, going to the gym daily and attending Tai-Chi classes. She had a spirited personality and was always the life of the party. Together with her husband they would often "steal the show" with their humorous antics and contagious laughter.

Mary was an exceptionally thoughtful and creative woman remembering every holiday and special event with lovely homemade gifts and heartfelt cards.



Her favorite places included Ocean Beach in New London, CT, Charleston, SC, and Lake Manchaug in Sutton where she spent summers for 43 years. Her world centered around her beloved family and her Catholic faith.

The family would like to express their sincere gratitude to the caretakers at Lanessa Extended Care in Webster who adored Mary and cared for her with love and compassion.

Services will be held privately. Burial will be in West Sutton Cemetery in Sutton.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Catholic Charities Worcester County, 10 Hammond Street, Worcester, MA 01610.

Paradis-Givner Funeral Home in Oxford is directing the arrangements.



FOOD

continued from page 1

and Friday from 10-11:15 a.m., but serves 600-700 people from about 170 families - sometimes 25 families in one hour.

"People think it's the homeless, but it's working couples who have three or four children and can't make ends meet," volunteer Louise Majewski said.

Indeed, according to Project Bread's Web site, hunger has been increasing statewide lately. "Prior to the pandemic, household food insecurity in Massachusetts was at 8.2 percent," it states. "The coronavirus pandemic fueled a hunger crisis unlike any other in our lifetime, at its peak rendering 19.5 percent of households food insecure. While the current rate of food insecurity is lower than at the height of the pandemic, too many households are still struggling with food access, and a return to pre-pandemic rates is not an option."

Later, that page notes, "Approximately, 17.9 percent of all households in Massachusetts reported



Karen Engell and Kathy Van Camp, center, lead a tour of the new storerooms that included Southbridge's CDBG Coordinator Katie Yoder and Manager Jack Jovan.

food insecurity in February 2024," but that rate is 22.9 percent of all families with kids and 34.5 percent of Latino households with kids.

"There's been a big uptick in the number of people we're serving," Kathy Van Camp said.

Sometimes, that requires the volunteers to visit the Worcester

County Food Bank (its primary food source) twice a month. Most of that food is supplied by the USDA at a fairly low cost, but they also get some from area groceries, other stores, the Sturbridge Community Garden, some local organizations, and Pilot Truck Stop in Sturbridge, among other

places. Some is donated, but they buy \$30,000-\$35,000 in food a year and distribute 5,000-6,000 pounds of it every month.

Getting food to the pantry requires help, and Bouvier noted they "couldn't do it without the volunteers and the transport community."

They regularly get a donated truck for the day, plus several volunteers to fill it, roll the supplies down their conveyor belt to the door, and transfer them to storage. None of it sticks around very long; as longtime volunteer Catalino Alicea noted, "it all goes out the door."

Regarding Pilot, he added supplies can be quite random, often featuring lots of cookies. "If the truck stop calls at midnight, you go at midnight."

Lately, Food Share has been getting a lot of produce, but sometimes they don't have any, and that can be said for many specific foods. Sometimes, they get things recipients don't know what to do with; those people can return them or share them with others, Karen Engell said, citing lentils as an example.

At this point, they provide food based on family size, with Food Share staff selecting it, not the seekers.

"We'd love to have a shop, but don't really have the space," Engell

said.

But they're trying to make things "more personal" and expand their ability to help people of various ethnicities. Recently, she noted, a woman speaking Arabic came in seeking help.

To address that, Town Manager Jack Jovan noted the town's health department recently started using portable translators and would hook Food Share up with their supplier.

Garland said Food Share's hours overlap those of the town's other pantry, St Vincent de Paul at St Mary's, so that people can get food four days a week. That pantry's open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Holy Trinity also hosts the ecumenical free coat closet, which gives away coats on Saturdays from the last Saturday of October through Dec. 14 from 9:30-11:30 a.m.

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

Friends of Jacob Edwards Library raffling off handmade quilt

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Friends of Jacob Edwards Library are holding a handmade quilt raffle. Tickets are on sale at the Library, 236 Main St. in Southbridge. Tickets are \$5 for one, \$10 for three tickets.

Made by Kathy Vancamp, the drawing is scheduled for Dec. 5, just in time for holiday giving- or to keep! The raffle proceeds will support programs funded by the Friends- museum passes, gingerbread house making program, beverage service, summer reading activities and other library needs. Support the Friends- buy a raffle ticket. The Friends have also been seen at Savers Bank and Stop and Shop selling tickets, and will also be at the Hazelwood Market Holiday Fair on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 at 12 Crane St. Plan to stop by and support the raffle.

CPL

continued from page 2

fostering attachment, and baby interacting with others their age. 3-week session - Mondays on November 4, 18, 25. Register for each week you can attend.

Storytime with Strega Mama: The Mitten
Wednesday, December 4 from 10:30-11:30 - Community Meeting Room

Join Strega Mama for a fun-filled storytime with songs, games, and activities featuring The Mitten by Jan Brett. All ages are welcome! Registration is required.

Wiggles & Giggles for Littles (YFCP)
Thursdays, December 5 & 12, 9:45-10:15 - Community Meeting Room

Join the YMCA Family & Community Partnership for a free music and movement series created and facilitated by music teacher Laine Hanlon! Children, ages 6-23 months, with a parent/caregiver, will sing, move, play musical instruments, learn rhythm, and listen to stories. "Wiggles and Giggles" fosters physical, cognitive, social, and emotional learning through music and motion. Siblings are welcome. Space is limited, and registration is required each week.

Wiggles & Giggles (YFCP)
Thursdays, December 5 & 12, 10:30 - 11:30 - Community Meeting Room

Children, ages 2-5, with a parent/caregiver, will sing, move, play musical instruments, learn rhythm, and listen to stories in this FREE series facilitated

Bay Path nurse educator completes SIM workshop

WORCESTER — Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy full-time faculty Shannen Sherman, BSN, RN of Woodstock Valley, Conn. recently completed the workshop, Simulation Facilitation Training for Health Educators presented by the Massachusetts Rhode Island League for Nursing (MARILN) on Friday, Nov. 8 at the UMass Chan Medical School Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing.

The goal of the Simulation Facilitation Training for Health Educators workshop is "to provide faculty and educators with succinct yet high quality training for faculty and educators before facilitating simulation."

From the MARILN Web site, the presenter, "Dr. Rose Kronziah-Seme PhD, MSN, RN, CHSE is an Assistant Professor of Nursing and the director of the Simulation and Lab of the Graduate Entry Pathway (GEP) Program at the Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing. Dr. Kronziah-Seme received a B.S. in Nursing from Howard University and an M.S.N

and a Ph.D. in Nursing Education from Walden University. She has been involved in Nursing education and simulation since 2009 as a clinical instructor. She trained by the Train the Trainer program series called Maryland Faculty for Simulation Teaching (NSP11) in 2013. She was the simulation coordinator from 2012 to 2018 at Montgomery College and the co-chair of the Simulation Committee. Her dissertation topic is 'Faculty Competence in Facilitating Clinical Simulation,' a quantitative study that she undertook in Maryland. She also served as a Simulation Lab Support Facilitator, for the Maryland Clinical Simulation Resource Consortium. She is a Certified Healthcare Simulation Educator. She was a participant of the National League of Nursing Leadership Development for Simulation Educators cohort of 2017. She was an Assistant professor of nursing at Fitchburg State University where she led simulation integration, and faculty development during the COVID 19 period. She helped faculty find clinical simulation to replace clin-

ical. She also led the conversion of the Fitchburg State Student Health Center to a Sim Center in the Spring 2021. As a director of the lab, she has collaborated with faculty and staff to meet student learning needs. She has presented on Simulation locally and internationally."

Professor Sherman is an accomplished RN leader experienced in complex medical care management, staff education and development, and collaborating with multidisciplinary teams. She completed her associate of science degree in nursing at Central Maine Medical Center College of Nursing and Health Professions in 2013 and her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at the University of Texas at Arlington College of Nursing in 2018. She is expected to complete her Master of Science in Nursing degree in 2026 at the Southern New Hampshire University. Professor Sherman is a Board-Certified Holistic Health Counselor and a Reiki Master/Teacher. She is committed to promoting optimal health and improving quality of life.

by music teacher Laine Hanlon! "Wiggles & Giggles" fosters physical, cognitive, social, and emotional learning through music and motion. Registration is required. Space is limited.

Lego Club
Friday, December 6, 3:30-4:30 - Story Time Room - No registration; drop-in

LEGO Club encourages children to learn while having fun! Creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork are some of the skills that "playing" with LEGOS can teach children. LEGO's provided. For ages 5-10.

Fiber Arts Club for Tweens & Teens
Fridays, December 13 & 27, 3:45 - 4:30 - Story Time Room

Are you interested in knitting, crocheting, needle felting, or other fiber art? Join us every other Friday afternoon to practice your craft, learn from more experienced friends, or teach others! We may have some special guests stopping by to give some pointers! Don't forget to bring your current projects!

This group is best for tweens and teens ages 9 -18. Registration is not required!

Pokemon Club
Wednesday, December 18, 4:00-4:30 - Story Time Room

Enjoy a variety of fun Pokemon activities, trade cards, plus try your hand at playing the game on our new play mats! For ages 6-12. Registration is required.

Crafternoon for Kids
Friday, December 27, 1:30-2:30 - Story Time Room
Drop by the Storytime Room and make a fun craft!
Best for ages 5-10.

Author Storytime: Dragonfly Magic
Saturday, December 28, 10:30-11:15 - Story Time Room

Join us for a special Storytime with local teen author Clara Dowdle! Clara will read her picture book Dragonfly Magic: A Story About Helping Others and the PMC. All ages are welcome! Registration is not required. About the Book: Dragonfly Magic introduces children to philanthropy. Drawing on her childhood experiences with the Pan Mass Challenge (PMC) cycling event, 16-year-old Clara Dowdle teaches children that kindness matters. Based on a true story, Dragonfly Magic enchants and helps children appreciate the continuity of life. 100% of book sales go to the PMC, which is the largest fundraiser for the Dana Farber Cancer Institute and the Jimmy Fund. Signed books will be available to purchase at this event. Registration is not required.

Paint & Sip (hot cocoa!) for Teens & Tweens!
Monday, December 30, 2:00-3:30 - Story Time Room
Learn how to paint a Snowman at Night with step-by-step instructions while sipping hot cocoa!

This program is for teens and tweens ages 9 to 18. Registration is required, and space is limited.

Please register the tween or teen attending the program only, not the parent/caregiver. Registration for this event opens Sunday, December 1 at 9:00 AM.

Hint

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for at least 4 years, its carbon footprint (with regard to Christmas trees) will be smaller than that of a household that purchases a real tree every year.

In addition, the study found that with both real and artificial trees, no matter how they were ultimately disposed of, Christmas trees accounted for less than 0.1% of the average person's annual carbon footprint. This means that the environmental impact is negligible, and can easily be offset by other lifestyle changes, such as driving less, recycling more regularly, purchasing items that use less packaging, etc.

If a fresh cut tree is impractical, an artificial tree can be a good investment - if you choose wisely. Did you know a well made artificial tree can last a decade or more? Choose trees with many branch tips and multiple needles, thus creating a "fullness" that rivals the real deal. Look for easy to set up models with hinged branches for quick and easy set up. High end trees often come equipped with an abundance of lights. Make sure the tree stand is sturdy enough to hold a tree laden with heavy ornament and garlands. Lastly, consider a tree that can easily refold into a box or bag, for hassle free storage.

Read on for our annual guide to choosing a real tree:

Selecting a Christmas tree is a fun family tradition, but getting caught up in the festivities, one can overlook the requirements of a successful pick. The

first thing to remember is in a lot or on a farm, a tree can look much smaller than it will in your home. Rule number one is to always bring a tape measure to ensure a proper fit.

When choosing a freshly cut evergreen, look for nice, even coloring throughout the tree with no signs of browning. Also, beware of brittle branches, which are another sign of an old tree that may not last the season in a heated home. Look for flexibility in a bough.

To test freshness, pick a needle and bend it. A fresh fir needle will snap; a fresh pine needle will bend, but not break. The old "shake tip" really reveals a tree's freshness. Simply shake from the trunk, or wave a bough and observe how many needles fall off. If it is more than several, keep looking.

Live trees balled with the root and wrapped in burlap or containers (a.k.a. balled and bagged trees) are a great choice if you plan on planting the tree after the holidays. The most important consideration with a balled and bagged tree is to make sure the tree species can thrive in your climate zone.

Once you've chosen a holiday tree, it's necessary to prep it for inside enjoyment. If you're using a cut tree, when you get home make a fresh cut at the base. This will help the tree better take up water. It pays to keep in mind that a properly watered tree will keep about a month inside. Be sure the water level above the base of the tree. To prevent fallen needles, add one of these to the base: three tablespoons

glycerin; three tablespoons sugar, or a few crushed aspirin.

And after Christmas is over, the holiday tree will need to be properly disposed of. Check your city or town transfer stations for recycling options. Many municipalities recycle trees and grind them into mulch that is repurposed back into the community as such. Visit RecycleYourChristmas-Tree.com for more recycling options.

Tree preservatives are pricey. Mix up this homemade potion for pennies: Combine one quart of fresh warm water, a half cup of light corn syrup, and a teaspoon of liquid chlorine bleach in a two-gallon bucket. Fill the water reservoir with this solution.

How does it work? This mixture helps keep trees moist because fresh-cut trees, which absorb and digest corn syrup as an energy source, don't have to waste as much energy converting stored sugar. Therefore, they can focus on staying green and beautiful!

*Want your fresh tree to last longer? The lower the temperature and the higher the humidity, the longer your tree will last.

*Placement is also important. Avoid setting up a tree near a heat source or in front of a window that gets direct sun.

*Did you know? A freshly-cut tree can consume a gallon of water in 24 hours!

*Want to avoid a trail of fallen needles to the back door? Before you set up your tree, place a tree disposal bag around the base of the trunk prior to placing it in the stand. At the end of the

season, simply pull the bag up over the entire tree.

*Check with your local transfer station or recycling center to find out if they offer a tree pick up.

*Going artificial this year? You can still mimic the fresh scent of balsam, simply by sprinkling your carpets with a pine scented carpet freshener before vacuuming. Since smell is the most potent of our senses, visitors to a house that smells like the holidays will feel doubly welcomed!

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

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

Bay Path Academy Director attends Books for Pinoy Foundation Gala

WARWICK, R.I. — Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN of Athol (formerly of Dudley and Douglas), Academy Director at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy in Charlton was joined by her husband, Joseph Bolandrina in the second annual Books for Pinoy Foundation (BFP) Nov. 9 Foundation Gala at University Ballroom of the Double Tree by Hilton. The mission of Books for Pinoy Foundation (<https://www.booksforpinoy.com/index.php>) is to build a library which will serve as a hub to different provinces in the Philippines. BFP is a 501c nonprofit organization 87-



1616616 designed to help educate children in the Philippines. BFP have been sending books to less fortunate children, schools, and libraries across the Philippines. BFP opened eight (8) libraries and have started taking applications to help other schools, libraries across the islands. BFP connects and works with different institutions in the USA including Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy to help facilitate collection of books, eBooks, and computers. BFP continues helping build libraries and explore the wonderful world of books.

Photo shows Joseph and

Gretheline Bolandrina with the BFP backdrop. Joseph was the volunteer emcee for the event while Gretheline previously helped with the Authors Alley.

Gretheline stated, "The mission of BFP aligns with my belief in literacy advocacy and I fully support their efforts."

Funds raised at the Nov. 9 Foundation Gala help support BFP's literacy advocacy. Live music, dancing, photo booth, and fabulous prizes from raffles and silent auctions along with delicious food made for a memorable evening.

MBI

continued from page 1

digital literacy, among other things.

"We're learning from you all where these 'pain points' are," she added.

By MBI's definition, broadband needs to be fixed or mobile, high speed and reliable for people needing to work or meet various personal needs, she said. That became particularly an issue during Covid-19, when many people were forced to work from home; some had to sit outside their local library or other location because their homes didn't have access.

"Here in Southbridge, we don't have a fence. We have the Great Wall," said Mike Marketti, the only councilor to attend.

He noted many people here don't have high-speed web, or they can't afford it due to lack of competition between providers. Specifically, he argued that people often "can't get it because Verizon won't come to this town," and he's spoken to several in public housing who can't get it at all.

The town has a contract with Spectrum (as most nearby do; it's a de facto regional monopoly), although Verizon does reportedly serve the AO complex and offer Wifi in town. Some people

can also get satellite internet, and many do have iPhones.

Berger's colleague Bill Scully said that monopoly issue is something "we've seen in almost all towns," with prices often exceeding \$100 a month for just "decent" service.

Berger noted many towns are seeing geographic and topographical coverage issues, which several participants cited in Southbridge. Among other things, some noted the Westville area has spotty service, as do other outlying neighborhoods. That can particularly be a concern for people worried about personal safety.

MBI representative Arianna Feeley said her agency some programs to help broaden access. One, the Wifi Access Initiative, provides "free, in-unit, broadband use" for public housing and units subsidized by state or federal money (<https://broadband.masstech.org/wifi-access-initiative>). Another, the Residential Retrofit Program, handles the hardware side of that effort by "addressing deficient wiring and infrastructure through grants for the deployment of fiberoptic cabling," according to the MBI website (<https://broadband.masstech.org/retrofit>).

Feeley said the ability for private-

ly-owned one- and multi-family homes to meet those same goals is "one of the big gaps we have." She speculated about whether there might be "a single payer solution where the town could enter a contract" to do that, but that doesn't currently exist.

"People want high-speed Internet, and want it for free," Marketti said. "And they should be able to get it."

Indeed, that concept sparked some conversation over the idea of municipally-owned internet service and/or having the state treat the Web as a public utility. To Margaret Morrissey, the public realized the need to do that with water and sewer and found a way to fund it.

Peg Dean said the town is now working to put in a wide-area network for municipal buildings, and noted her hometown, Charlemont, built its own municipal fiber network. She suggested the town might be able to do that in certain sections, even if not town-wide.

Regarding devices, she said she sometimes sees people having issues with web service coming into her Town Hall office, but wasn't sure if the primary issue was cost or digital literacy. In some cases, it means bridging language, cultural and/or age con-

cerns.

Katie Yoder noted digital literacy "often comes from your profession." Younger people typically learned it in school, but many elders didn't unless they had jobs requiring it. She said she often sees that with local contractors who need help to use the town's permitting software.

Morrissey said the library often does one on one training with people, something Berger said is quite common for libraries.

"How do we capture those who haven't grown up with it?" Berger asked.

She said her team has seen that in many towns, and expects to miss some people who lack devices or speak English as a second language.

To help address that and get more input, the MBI survey is still open. They are also seeking individual stakeholders in town to talk to about this issue. The survey's at https://mbicx.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bxTIMG-FVF8KjigC.

Scully said his firm aims to write its first draft of Southbridge's plan in January and complete the plan by late February.

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

CHARLTON

continued from page 1

forward with the proposal.

LaCroix, who has spent 14 years as an elected Town Clerk and is preparing for retirement, said she wants to see the town shift to an appointed position, rather than risking an election bringing someone less qualified to the job.

"It is the only full-time department head that has to be elected to their position. Fifteen years ago the Treasurer and Collector were separate positions, and they were also elected and that has changed. The Town Clerk is the only one left," said LaCroix. "I can't imagine it being acceptable that any other department head can have the position without being interviewed to be sure they have the proper experience and qualifications. Why should the Town Clerk be any different? It is a very important position and entails much more than just handing out a dog license. I believe most voters understand this, especially after the last four years of elections."

LaCroix added that keeping the position elected creates uncertainty around job security

which could keep the most qualified candidates from seeking a position.

Members of the Government Study Committee also stated their case for making the change including Committee Chair Joseph Haebler.

"I think it's time to get into the professional era and have a Town Clerk that knows and continues to grow in the job, not only that knows the laws, but knows how to keep records. Besides the voting records, it's the town changes in bylaws and a lot of other material that she has to be in charge of," he said.

The proposal has received mixed reactions from Selectmen with some opposed to taking an election power away from the voters. Board of Selectman Chair Peter Lancette said the change would insinuate that the Board of Selectmen as the five-member hiring authority would know better than the town at large who is best to serve in the position.

"I think the public should be the one making the decision of who we want in the position. That's just me," said Lancette. "You could elect somebody for the Board of Selectmen that has no responsibility for that position. It's a liability out there with democracy in an open election."

Selectman David Singer also acknowledged that there is inherent risk regardless of how the Town Clerk it decided. "There's liability whether the Clerk is appointed or elected. I've personally witnessed mistakes made in the Clerk's office in this town and other towns. Whether we elect or appoint, there's no guarantee mistakes won't happen, I don't care who you put in there," said Singer. "For me, I'm not going to make my decision based on a worst-case scenario."

The proposal, or at least the idea of bringing it to the voters, also received support from several selectmen. Selectman Steven Koronis felt it was a change worth exploring. In support of his perspective, he noted how elections have evolved, the experience and expertise of the Government Study Committee who have recommended the change, and that bringing the matter to the public would actually support their power to vote.

"The debate against it is you want the ability of the voters to decide at a ballot who becomes Town Clerk. The will of the voters. Why don't you just put the will of the voters to a Town Meeting to take that away?" Koronis said.

Selectman Bill Borowski agreed with bringing the matter to the voters and letting them be the deciding factor on whether the Town Clerk should proceed as elected or appointed.

"I can't imagine us hiring a Finance Director by having an elected position. I would not feel comfortable in the least. The idea of someone not necessarily being qualified to run finances or the books, I don't see how that's very much different than the Town Clerk's position," he said.

There were also questions of how the process would play out to ensure that any change to the Town Clerk would take place before the position is up for reelection in 2026. Charlton essentially has one calendar year to complete any changes. Town Counsel clarified that full approval and implementation of a bylaw change will require a town meeting vote, ballot vote, and approval by the state in that order. At this time the earliest vote would take place during the May annual town meeting after the 2025 elections. Selectmen showed little interest in holding a special town meeting earlier to discuss the matter.

Selectman Borowski motioned to at least start the process of making a proposal for the 2025 annual town meeting that would consider a bylaw change for the Town Clerk position. The motion was approved by the majority of the board. Selectmen expect to discuss a roadmap for the proposal in upcoming meetings.

CHORUS

continued from page 1

Please arrive early to your show to ensure your seating.

For more information about the concerts, please send an email to Wings of Song President Carol Curtin (carolcurtin77@gmail.com) or Music Director Cooke (nymcooke@gmail.com).

The chorus, which draws its members from central Massachusetts and northeast Connecticut, dates back to the early 1990s, when it was known as the Interfaith Chorale. It later became Quinebaug Valley Singers, and its current name was adopted a few years ago.

To learn more about the chorus, visit www.wingsofsong.us.

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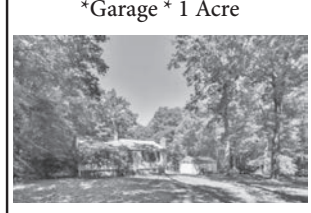
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On Saturday, Dec 14, the Ruth Wells Center for the Arts, located at 111 Main St. in Southbridge, will be holding an ornament making workshop from 10 a.m. to noon. This is free to members- new members are welcome and all ages are included. Membership is \$20 for an individual, \$30 for a family. Please join us- and make something memorable for your holiday decor. Registration form may be found on the website, ruthwellscenter.com. You may also send a check to QVCAH, 111 Main St., Southbridge, MA 01550. This is a great time for families to take a break from the hectic holidays, make something as a family- and be creative! For more information or to learn of other membership benefits- just call 508-764-3341. Don't miss this fun time. Sign up now! The Ruth Wells Center for the Arts, also known as Quinebaug Valley Council for Arts and Humanities, started in 1976 and has served the community over the years, bringing art, music, exhibits, festivals and workshops to all ages. This workshop is for everyone — don't miss it. Register now!

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DELUXE WHIRLPOOL WASHER \$499⁹⁹ WAS \$699.95	AMANA GAS RANGE #AGR1533CBAS • Stainless Steel \$599⁹⁹ WAS \$699.99	GE FRONT LOAD WASHER #GFWSOSNNWW \$699⁹⁹ WAS \$999.99
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