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Saint Joseph School honors Leah Belanger with Partners in Education Award

WEBSTER — Since 2003, Saint Joseph School has celebrated Catholic Schools Week by presenting the Partners in Education Award to individuals who have made a profound and lasting impact on the school community. This year, Saint Joseph School proudly recognizes Leah Belanger for her exceptional contributions and unwavering dedication.

Leah Belanger, a native of Webster, graduated from Bartlett High School and pursued her passion for nursing at Becker College, where she earned her degree with High Honors, graduating third in her class. She continues to reside in Webster with her two children, Dominic and Gianna, both of whom share her deep connection to Saint Joseph School. Dominic, a graduate of Saint Joseph School, earned honors throughout his education and graduated from Bay Path with distinction.



Leah Belanger, recipient of the 2025 Partners in Education Award, stands with Rev. Grzegorz Chodkowski, pastor and headmaster of Saint Joseph School; the Most Rev. Robert J. McManus, Bishop of Worcester; and Saint Joseph School Principal Beth Boudreau. This prestigious award is presented annually during Catholic Schools Week to individuals who have made a significant and lasting impact on the Saint Joseph School community.

He is now a freshman at Worcester State University, majoring in Computer Science with a minor in Psychology. Gianna, currently an 8th grader at Saint Joseph School, is an active and vibrant student excelling in basketball, cross country, and drama club activities.

Belanger has been a vital member of the Saint Joseph School community for more than 12 years. Initially serving as a volunteer school nurse, she also coached soccer for two seasons and dedicated her time to various school functions and the annual festival. In 2021, she officially joined the staff as the full-time school nurse, assuming the critical role of managing the Health Office during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With 18 years of nursing experience, Belanger's career has spanned both high-pres-

School Committee looks at \$29 million budget

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

WEBSTER — The School Committee got its first look at this year's \$29 million budget plan on Jan. 14. Its annual process calls for a least two more update meetings before their approval vote Feb 25, after which it goes to the town manager for addition to the town's overall budget. A public hearing's slated for April 8, and town meeting will decide on it and other items May 12.

This year's plan calls for a total of 5.75 new "full time equivalents" (five actual people), curriculum updates in math and science, step changes for some staff, money for contract negotiations and obligations, various compliance requirements, and increased special education tuition costs. The budget also includes nine special ed staff that are now funded by grant money but being put into the regular budget next year and a half-time nurse for the middle and high schools.

Of the seven new jobs (some of which are grant funded), the plan includes half of an ELL teacher, quarter of a Bryt coordinator, a middle school language teacher, a nurse assistant and three building substitutes that were also proposed but cut during the budget process last year.

Superintendent Monique Pierangeli and Business Manager Lisa Kontoes basically alternated presenting various sections of the plan and background information. They noted enrollment has seen a "slow and steady increase" since Covid, and is now 1,750 district-wide (but only 1,708 are counted toward the state aid; the rest came in after the state's Oct. 1 counting deadline). Webster's students are 70 percent low-income and 80 percent high-needs, both significantly about state average, as is its 25 percent disability count and its 251 ELL students getting services.

Regarding special ed, their presentation showed Webster serves 534 kids with IEPs, has seen 17 move in since 2020, and funds 51 who get out of district services. Total special ed spending has gone up a lot in the last decade, especially since 2020, and they expect at least three new out of district students this year. The total is now about \$4.5 million, and was about \$3 million last year. They noted a lot of that hike has "a direct correlation" with out of district transportation, where Webster's paying for twice as many bus monitors and a 55 percent increase in trips.

They noted this year's budget will be 89 percent funded by local taxes, 10 percent by grants and circuit breaker funds, and about 1 percent by school choice-in money.

In other business, Middle School teacher Kate Berti was recognized as Project Lead the Way "Rookie of the Year" for her first year running Webster's program.

She said she's wanted to bring it here since arriving in town, but PLTW is normally in wealthier districts. Among other things, it "gives us access to so many things," including professionals in STEM fields, colleges, and a spring statewide event. The program is normally a 45-day curriculum, but she shoeorns it into 25 days

"We have awesome, awesome kids," Berti said. "The only reason I'm here accepting this is really on their

Turn To **BUDGET** page **A14**

320-unit subdivision goes before Oxford boards

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

OXFORD — The Conservation Commission began its public hearing over the sprawling Ashworth Hills subdivision project Jan. 15, although several of the issues residents raised about it will have to be addressed by the Planning Board. That board's hearing opened Jan. 27, after this paper's deadline.

Ashworth Hills is a plan to build 320 duplex-style townhouses and a collection of intertwined roads on 151 acres connecting Route 20 and Ashworth Drive, next to the existing Thayer Pond subdivision. It's being



A screenshot of the Ashworth Hills subdivision phasing plan.

Local 4 Life presents "Powerful Pollinators"



Volunteers from Local 4 Life were on hand to present "Powerful Pollinators" and The Pearl L. Crawford Library on Jan. 25, the first in a series of monthly educational programs that will run through April of 2025.

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY — The Pearl L. Crawford Memorial

Library hosted a special presentation focusing on native plant life and pollination on Jan. 25, the first in a series of programs led by Local 4 Life, a nonprofit focusing on education, conservation and community.

The organization was founded in 2019 by a pair of teachers looking to provide hands-on learning experiences

Turn To **POLLINATORS** page **A14**

Bay Path Academy Director at Institute for the Musical Arts

GOSHEN — Gretheline Bolandrina, DMA, 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 at the Institute for the Musical Arts www.ima.org. The Institute for the Musical Arts (I.M.A.) was founded by Ann Hackler and June Millington in Northern California in 1986 and received its non-profit status in 1987.

In 2001, the property was purchased in Western Massachusetts for a permanent facility. From IMA Web site, “The institute’s nonprofit mission is to support women and girls in music and music-related businesses. Rooted in the legacy of progressive equal rights movements, I.M.A.’s development is guided by the visions, needs, and concerns of women from a diversity of backgrounds and has grown from the need to nourish ourselves and each other.”

The Bolandrinass met with June Millington a Filipina American guitarist, songwriter, producer, educator, and actor: Millington’s career spanned from hard-rocking early days to the folkier sound she turned to in the mid-’70s (as a key part of the wom-

en’s music movement, a queer-friendly alternative to the male-dominated mainstream music industry.) As the co-founder of the I.M.A. Millington runs rock camps for teen girls in Western Massachusetts and the invitation to attend the rock camps was extended to the practical nursing students, alumni, staff, and the friends and families of the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy community.

Millington released “Snapshots,” her first solo album since 1988. “Snapshots” has twelve tunes and a lot of color: She recorded some of the tunes with teens from the rock camps, while singer Evelyn Harris, formerly of Sweet Honey in the Rock, and Millington’s brother, Scott, a drummer, contributed to “Un-Knowable.” “The Ballad of Fanny” is a vibrant acoustic demo that Millington recorded in 1971 and “Make Me Happy” dates from 1977 or ’78, when she was living in Woodstock, N.Y. According to Millington, the bulk of the work on the album, took place in the fall of 2020 and early winter of 2021 when she was riding out the pandemic at the I.M.A. Millington played all the instruments herself on a few songs, and recorded many of the vocal parts. Her work as a musician is influential with a message to keep pushing ahead. She is persistent and is still making a difference.



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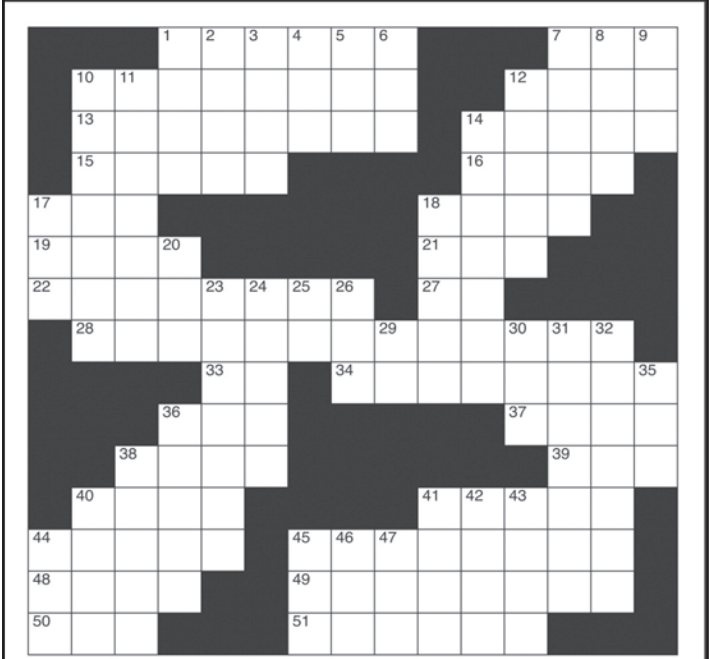
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- CLUES ACROSS
1. Where entertainers perform

7. Miller beer variety

10. Ageless

12. River in SE Europe

13. Able to be repaired

14. Type of wrap

15. Atomic #54

16. Type of tent

17. U.S. Treasury position

18. Opposed to

19. Protective covering

21. Bridge building degree

22. Clouding of the lens

27. Priestess of Hera loved by Zeus

28. Unacceptable

33. Mr. T's "The A-Team" character

34. American national park

36. One point south of due east

37. Assist in a crime

38. Greek mythological personification of Earth

39. A major division of geological time

40. German courtesy title

41. English family dating back to Norman times

44. Discounts

45. South American nation

48. Former Milwaukee Buck Michael

49. Hostile

50. Passports and drivers licenses are two

51. Discourages from doing

- CLUES DOWN
1. Supreme god of ancient Egyptians

2. Nevada city

3. Energy, style and enthusiasm

4. Bird's beak

5. Language

6. Midway between south and southeast

7. Punjab village

8. Small biting flies

9. Sportscaster Patrick

10. A way to get around

11. Repeat

12. A way to cook with fat

14. Temporary loss of consciousness

17. Reciprocal of a sine

18. Fir tree genus

20. "Transformers" director Michael

23. Criminals who steal

24. Genus of leaf-footed bug

25. Music product

26. "Talk to you"

29. Santa says it three times

30. Doctors' group

31. African nation

32. Ageless

35. When you hope to get somewhere

36. Worn

38. Deprives of vigor

40. Used to have (Scottish)

41. Where you live

42. Muslim ruler title

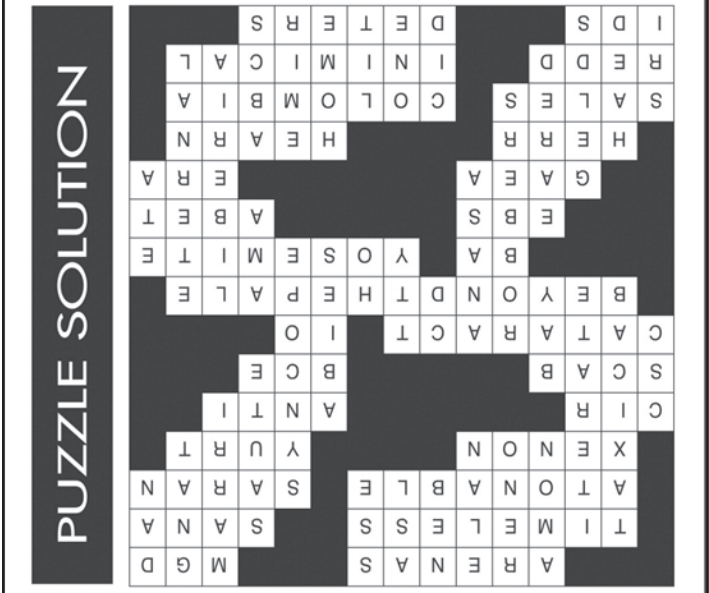
43. Basics

44. Type of drug (abbr.)

45. Spanish soldier

46. It precedes two

47. Illuminated



Courtesy
From left: Joseph Bolandrina, June Millington and Gretheline Bolandrina.

QCC’s Dental Clinic offers free preventative dental services for seniors and veterans

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College’s Dental Hygiene Clinic is continuing to offer free preventative dental services to anyone aged 55 or older, as well as active military members and veterans. The clinic, located at QCC’s West Boylston Street campus, offers dental assessments, teeth cleaning, X-rays and fluoride treatments. For patients who are not in the aforementioned categories, rates are \$25 for adults and \$20 for children.

“We currently have a relationship with Senior Connection (formerly Central Mass. Agency on Aging) through a grant that gives our senior patients free services in the dental clinic,” said Dental Clinic Operations and Facilities Manager Sheryl Ficorilli.

The grant, which began in January of 2022, has supported over 750 senior patients. The program also provides transportation to and from the dental hygiene clinic.

QCC’s dental hygiene students are required to spend a certain number of hours in direct patient care and the patients from this program provide that valuable interaction.

“This helps our students gain the necessary skills to graduate and become active in the area dental community,” Ficorilli added.

To make an appointment or for more information, call 508-854-4306 or visit www.QCC.edu/dental-hygiene-clinic.

Webster resident named to Anna Maria Dean’s List

PAXTON, Maine — Kayla Rose Berthiaume of Webster, a senior majoring in Business, has been named to the Dean’s List for the fall semester of 2024 at Anna Maria College.

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REAL ESTATE

AUBURN
\$435,000, 5 Eddy St, Valentine, John F. and Valentine, Susan E, to Loando-Hernandez, Sabrina.

DUDLEY
\$2,600,000, 245 W Main St, 245 West Main Prop LLC, to Venture Cmnty Svcs Inc.
\$182,500, 17 Southbridge Rd #4, Sweeney, Russell L, and Sweeney, Anne M, to Holmes, Tabatha, and Holmes, Cory.
\$60,000, W Main St, Umass Mem Health Care Inc, to Santos, Ewerton.

OXFORD
\$450,000, 1172 Stafford St, Hydro Cutter Inc, to Pype-Wrench Corp.
\$430,000, 32 Sunset Ave, George, Daniel M, to Fischer, Monica, and Archambault, Jacob.
\$215,000, 4 Thayer Pond Dr #24, Morrison, Thomas, to Cadenhead, Cody.

WEBSTER
\$642,395, 23 Oakwood Dr, Almik Construction Inc, to Bui, Richard, and Ty, Christina.
\$589,000, 4 Boyden St Ext, Gonzalez, Jose M, to Yupangui, Manuel I.
\$405,000, 1 Oak Ln, Bay Flow LLC, to Figueroa, Kevin S.
\$385,000, 8 Emerald Ave, Emerald Ave LLC, to Berrones, Henry P, and Cazorla, Jessica M.
\$375,000, 42 Park Ave, Manzi, Frederick T, and Manzi, Carol D, to Garcia, Maria I.
\$350,000, 38 Colonial Rd, Kulpan, Charlotte M, to West View Properties LLC.
\$315,000, 108 Lower Gore Rd, Arpin, Lisa, and Ward, Brian, to Minitti, Wagner.
\$200,000, 114 Worcester Rd, Laplante Lt, and Laplante, Gail H, to Lomuscio Holdings LLC.
\$193,500, 20 Park Ave, Kender, Tina M, to Bertnell Realty Inc.
\$110,000, 120 Worcester Rd, Laplante Lt, and Laplante, Gail H, to Lomuscio Holdings ll LLC.

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Mock Code team prepares for Scenario 2

CHARLTON — The Practical Nursing Class of 2025 Mock Code Team (MCT) under the guidance and leadership of Professors Cheryl Cahill, Jennifer DeFilippo, and Angela McGrath, are set to prepare and execute the Term 2 Mock Code Scenario.

Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy's MCT and Simulation Training improves response to code events. During cardiac arrests, the quick response of a code team requires cohesiveness, timely defibrillation, and clearly defined roles. It is important for members of the healthcare team to intuitively know their role as part of the response team especially during code situations when seconds count.

"We continue to believe in using simulation training to improve performance," said Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN Academy Director.

"We are blessed to have the continued guidance, experience, and expertise of our PN faculty!" Bolandrina added.

The timely use of defibrillation and empowered, confident nurses result in a posi-



Courtesy
Members of the 2025 MCT, from left: Delene Sarsfield of Charlton, Loise Ngigi of South Grafton, Jason Houatchanthara of Fiskdale, Grant Peterson of Millbury, Maria De Amorim Hentschke of Worcester, Chalinant Desrosiers of Oxford, Emily Bamberger of Wales, and Gorret Rusoke of Springfield.

itive response to code events. According to the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines (GWTG) resuscitation program, time to first shock is one of four achievement metrics. The guidelines state that hospitalized patients exhibiting ventricular fibrillation or pulseless ventricular tachycardia should receive defibril-

lation within two minutes to improve outcomes.

In 2017, the Bay Path Practical

Nursing Academy MCT was formed to improve resuscitation skills and comfort levels for practical nursing students. The MCT meets for a full day of preparation, with members practicing as much as possible. On Mock Code Day, the MCT runs the code scenarios multiple times. The formation of the MCT increased mock code opportunities and participation three times in an academic year. Participation in mock codes increases the comfort level of practical nursing students. An effective code team is one that acts safely, and efficiently, and saves lives. The MCT aims to be proficient with skills and knowledge, effective with communication, and highly organized.

The history of the Auburn Library- Part 1

BY HELEN POIRIER
AUBURN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AUBURN — The history of most town libraries, including Auburn, had their start with private collections owned by prominent people of the town who were willing to let others borrow books.

According to town records in 1830, when Auburn was known as Ward, Joseph Stone, town clerk for many years, had an extensive personal library. He created a system so that his neighbors could borrow books to read. There were other men in town who joined to create a circulating or "social" library and became shareholders in this new library system. Men like Abijah & his son, William, who was a great reader and lover of books, and Oliver Baker, helped to maintain this system of book lending for many years. In 1838, the church library bought Mr. Miner G. Pratt's collection and had Monday borrowing hours. By 1860 several school districts had libraries.

In January 1871, William Craig died, and his will bequeath \$1,000 to be used to create and maintain a public library on the

condition that the town would chip in an equal amount. The April 1871 town meeting accepted the proposal and \$2,000 was placed in the town treasury. Later, it was discovered that the entire amount went to pay town expenses, being done without proper authority. The issue eventually got resolved and the money was restored.

In 1872, a committee of five residents was appointed to establish a town library. The first place was in Hannah Green's home on Leicester Street. Hannah became an early trustee of the library. Soon the number of books donated and purchased made the "house library" very cramped, and by 1885 the library trustees began to ask for additional space. In 1887, the library was established in the basement of the First Congregational Church, which was also serving as the Town Hall. By 1894, the library had been moved to the Mellish House not far from the Town Hall. It wasn't long until these quarters were too small and in 1897 the library got two rooms in the new town hall, which replaced the old town hall that burned down. During these times the librarians were:

Miss Maria Bunce, Miss Lucy P. Merriam, Mrs. Nettie Allen and Miss Josie E. Prouty.

In 1886, the town received \$200 from the estate of Mr. William H. Emerson, whose great grandfather owned property that was incorporated, from what is now North Oxford, to help form Worcester South Parish, the original name for Auburn. This money was to go for the purchase of books. Also, donations came from Miss Hannah Green and Mr. George Herbert Mellish after his death. Besides money, the Mellish estate was the land for the first standalone library building. Many townspeople, whose ancestry goes back to the early settlers of the town, contributed books as well as money to help support the town library.

In the next installment, the library in the 20th century will be the point of interest. This article is made possible by the Auburn Historical Society & Museum, 41 South St. The museum is open Tuesday and Saturday mornings 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., and may be reached at auburnmuseum@verizon.net or 508-832-6856.

WEBSTER POLICE LOG

WEBSTER — The Webster Police Department reported the following arrests from Jan. 5-18.

Adam Wierbik, age 50, of Dudley was arrested on Jan. 5 for Trespassing, operating under the influence (alcohol, second offense), refusal by the operator of a motor vehicle to identify themselves, and Assault.

Michael Olivera, age 63, of Webster was arrested on Jan. 5 for Assault & Battery.

A 35-year-old male from Webster whose identity has been withheld from publication was arrested on Jan. 9 for Assault & Battery.

Christopher P. Lienczewski, age 37, of Webster was arrested on Jan. 10 for Possession of a Class D Drug with Intent to Distribute and in connection with a warrant.

A 24-year-old male from Oxford whose identity has been withheld from publication was arrested on Jan. 10 for Assault & Battery on a Family or Household Member, Disorderly Conduct, and Disturbing the Peace.

A 35-year-old male from Webster whose identity has been withheld from publication was arrested on Jan. 10 for Violation of an Abuse Prevention Order.

Jacob Andrew Swiatlowski, age 37, of Webster was arrested on Jan. 12 in connection with a warrant.

Habeeb Faris Habeeb, age 24, of Webster was arrested on Jan. 13 in connection with a warrant.

Kevin Michael Andrews, age 38, of Webster was arrested on Jan. 13 in connection with a warrant.

Pablo J. Chaclan, age 30, of Webster was arrested on

Jan. 13 in connection with a warrant.

Matthew Zachary Franzen, age 28, of Webster was arrested on Jan. 14 on probable cause from another agency and in connection with a warrant.

Jaemiesha Johnson, age 25, of Boston was arrested on Jan. 14 in connection with multiple warrants.

Sycue D. Reid-Oliver, age 34, of Webster was arrested on Jan. 15 in connection with a warrant.

A 29-year-old male from Webster whose identity has been withheld from publication was arrested on Jan. 16 for Assault & Battery and a separate count of Assault & Battery on a person over the age of 60 and/or Disabled.

Jamaica T. Wilson, age 31, of Webster was arrested on Jan. 16 in connection with a warrant.

Samantha Marie Tinsley, age 24, of Webster was arrested on Jan. 18 on probable cause from another agency.

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PAW of the WEEK BLUE

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Meet Blue! 1 yr/64lb/Male/Shepherd/Husky Mix
Meet Blue! He's a handsome, smart, lovable dog who is good with kids and dogs. Blue is super social and enjoys being the "mayor". That said, he isn't a fan of crating. Blue would do well in a home with a family who is looking for a well tempered, social, dog. They would want to be home more often than not and be open to using a sturdy crate. Blue is also a dog who would thrive going to doggie daycare. Like many huskies, Blue can jump fences. That said, he wants to be where the party is. So, if people and dogs are involved.....Blue will be front and center! This special dog is always the first to hand out hugs & kisses, he will show you his skills sitting & laying down - he just wants you to think he's great. And, we do! Apply at PawfectLifeRescue.org

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p.m., Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.,
Saturday 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
The Library will open
at 10 a.m. on Friday, Jan.
31 due to a staff meeting.

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST!
Want to receive updates about our upcoming events? Sign up for email alerts by visiting our website or contacting our Adult Services Librarian Jessica Fontaine at jfontaine@cwmars.org

Adult Programming
TAKE AND MAKE CRAFT – All Month Long
Stop by the table by the entrance to the library to pick up everything you need to make a wintery tree craft.

YOGA – Saturdays at 9:30 AM
Join Julie or Lauren at the Gladys E. Kelly Library for a vinyasa yoga class for all levels. In Sanskrit, Vinyasa yoga translates to the “uniting of movement with breath.” A typical class involves centering the mind with the breath, aromatherapy, movement of the body to release energetic blockages, and, finally, rest and relaxation. Classes are free. Funded by the Friends of the Gladys E. Kelly Public Library.

COOKBOOK CLUB – Thursday, February 6th 6:00-7:30PM
February’s book is What to Cook When You Don’t Feel Like Cooking by Caroline Chambers. Choose any of the recipes in the book to make and bring to our gathering. We will eat together and discuss our notes from the cookbook experience.

MIGHTY APHRODITE CLASS – Tuesday, February 11th 6:00-8:00PM
A playful program celebrating love, friendship and fun romantic duos throughout history, and of course, the love of chocolate! Fun cultural history of foods that inspire love. Aphrodite’s mocktail spritzer will be served along with chocolate treats. Fun poetry, a large, colorful display, and interactive trivia

make this a class to love. Registration required.

ADULT PUZZLE NIGHT – Thursday, February 13th 6:00-7:30PM
NEW GENRE BOOK CLUB – Tuesday, February 18th 6:00-7:30PM
Starting in February, join us for a genre book club. February’s book is a romance: Before I Let Go by Kennedy Ryan. Email Jess to add your name to the list: jfontaine@cwmars. March will be a sci-fi book!

Children’s and Young Adult Programming

Scavenger Hunt--- All Month Long
What’s more exciting than a scavenger hunt? Come upstairs to the Children’s room to pick up a list of things to find all around the library. Once you’ve completed the scavenger hunt, check in with the Children’s Librarian to redeem a prize.

TAKE AND MAKE CRAFT--- All month long
Take and Make craft kids are available for pick up upstairs in the Children’s Room. Each month will feature a different craft to create and instructions will be provided with the supplies. New Take and Make kits will be available for pick up on the 1st of every month, while supplies last, and are limited to one per patron.

PLAY-DOH PLAYTIME – MONDAYS at 10:00AM
Drop-in to our Children’s Program Room every Monday morning to play, make, and build with our collection of colorful Play-Doh, sculpting tools, and various sets. This is a fun, sensory playtime to foster creativity and exploration. Perfect for ages 2-6. Siblings are welcome.

MAKER MONDAYS – MONDAYS from 3:30-4:30 PM
Feeling artistic? We will have a variety of craft materials available to put your creativity to the test! In January we’re using Perler Beads!

T O D D L E R PLAYTIME--- TUESDAYS at 10:00 AM
Kids 0 to 6 are

invited to get their wiggles out with weekly obstacle course and fun.

STUFFED ANIMAL STORYTIME – WEDNESDAYS at 10:00AM
Join Youth Services Librarian Andrew for stories, songs, and fun with our plush pals! This storytime is geared toward ages birth to 3, but siblings are welcome.

STEM BEGINNINGS: YOUNG SCIENTISTS – WEDNESDAYS at 10:00AM
Children, ages 3-6, with a parent/caregiver will learn STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) concepts through hands-on activities, story time, challenges and simple experiments in this weekly STEM series. Registration through the YFCP website.

ME AND MY MINI – THURSDAYS at 10:00AM
A creative movement group for ages 0 through 2.5. Get groovy to upbeat music with fun props and a story.

TEEN VIDEO GAME – THURSDAYS at 3:00PM
Teens are invited to play games on our Nintendo Switch!

BEGINNER ORIGAMI – FRIDAYS at 3:45PM
Come explore the art of origami making! A creative and meditative craft. Open to kids of all ages.

SENSORY BIN STORYTIME – FRIDAYS at 10:00AM
Come join us for a fun filled Storytime as we read together and then let our imaginations fly through different sensory bin activities. Each week will offer a different theme exploration related to the books and bins provided. The 31st is Ocean-themed. Perfect for ages 2-5. Siblings are welcome to join.

SNOW MUCH FUN – SATURDAYS at 11:30AM
We’ll be featuring several fun activities on Saturdays this winter. Saturday, February 1st is Teddy Bear’s Picnic. Saturday, February 8th is Dragons Love Tacos Storytime, with make your own tacos!

WEBSTER SENIOR CENTER

5 Church St.
(508) 949-3845
Email: SeniorCenter@Webster-MA.gov
Senior Center hours are Monday- Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., with every first Thursday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

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

Tri-Valley Lunches are served Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 11:30 am. Please call (508) 949-3845 at least forty-eight hours in advance to reserve or cancel your meal. A \$3.00 donation for 65 and up, and \$5 for 55- 64 is appreciated. All meals include milk, bread, and fruit or dessert. This week’s menu: Tuesday, 2/4, Chicken Pesto, Delmonico potatoes, peas and carrots. Wednesday, 2/5, Turkey Supreme, mashed potatoes, Roman blend vegetables. Thursday, 2/6, American Chop Suey, roasted broccoli, corn. Friday, 1/7, Soup du Jour, ranch chicken salad sandwich, pasta salad.

Need Transportation? Contact SCM Elderbus at 1-800-321-0243 at least two business days in advance to schedule transportation. Elderbus is available Mondays- Fridays 8:30 am- 3:00 pm. FUEL ASSISTANCE has returned to the Senior Center. WCAC will be here every other Thursday from 9:30 am- 2:30 pm. Please call WCAC for an appointment 508-754-1176.

Come on down to the Bomba Beauty Salon at the Webster Senior Center! Call 508-341-8724 for an appointment. Bomba Beauty Salon is open for walk in appointments on Wednesdays from 10:00 am- 1:00 pm, and Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays by appointment only from 10:00 am-3:00 pm. Please call (508) 341-8724 to schedule an appointment.

We are now offering MOVIE MATINEES every Wednesday at 1:00 pm! Popcorn is provided. No registration needed. The movie for February 5th is The Karate Kid, February 12th is You’ve got Mail, February 19th is Judy, and February 26th is The Six Triple Eight.

The first Thursday of every month we will be open until 7:00 pm with entertainment starting at 5:45 pm. For February we will be playing Pass the Trash. There will be a \$6.00 fee to play.

Chair Dancing Exercise classes with Forty Arroyo are the perfect workout for any fitness ability! The cost is a recommended \$3.00 donation per class. Classes are on Mondays, and Wednesdays at 9:30 am.

Mondays: Knitting/ Crochet Social 10:00 am-12:00 pm.

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

Do you like to play Cribbage? Our weekly Cribbage group meets every Thursday at 1:00 pm. Feel free to join us!

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

Mahjongg group meets every Friday at 1:00 pm. Beginners welcome!
The Worcester County Sheriff’s Office House Numbering Program will create a custom wooden sign with your house number free of charge. One sign per senior household. Please contact the Webster Senior Center at (508) 949-3845. if you are interested in having a house number sign made for you.

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

We are partnering up with the Charlton and Southbridge Senior Centers and the Overlook to offer a Day in Maine with a Clambake on Sunday, July 20, 2025. This trip includes a stop for freshly baked breads at When Pigs Fly, and a visit to Nubble Lighthouse. Your bake includes New England clam chowder, freshly dug Maine clams, mussels, Maine lobster, corn on the cob, red bliss potatoes, and blueberry crumb cake with your choice of coffee, iced tea, or lemonade. In place of lobster, there is BBQ chicken, or a vegetarian option. After your clambake, if time allows, you will stop at Stonewall Kitchen for jams and jellies, and Yummie’s candy store. The price for this trip is \$109.00 per person and includes transportation, clambake, driver, and escort gratuities. There is a \$25 registration fee, and the last day to sign up is June 20, 2025. If you have questions please contact Webster Senior Center 508-949-3845.



Community Connection

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*prices subject to change



OXFORD SENIOR CENTER

323 Main St.
(508)987-6000
Laura Wilson, Director

Open Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Email: seniorcenter@oxfordma.us
Website: www.oxfordma.us
Facebook: Oxford, MA Senior Center

The Oxford Senior Center will be closed on Monday, Feb. 17 in observance of President’s Day.

Lunches are served on Tuesdays and Fridays, prepared by our own in-house cook! Please call at least 48 hours in advance to reserve a lunch or come in and sign up.DINE IN for \$5.00 and TAKEOUT for \$6.00. (suggested donation) All meals come with a beverage and dessert.

February Lunches:
Tuesday, Feb. 4: Eggplant parm on a roll
Friday, Feb. 7: Cheeseburger Deluxe (LTO)
Tuesday, Feb. 11: Tuna noodle casserole
Friday, Feb. 14: Lasagna
Tuesday, Feb. 18: Loaded Mac & Cheese
Friday, Feb. 21: Pilgrim Sandwich
Tuesday, Feb. 25: Clam Chowder
Friday, Feb. 28: Baked Fish

Weekly Activities:
Mondays and Fridays @ 10:00 am – Cribbage
Tuesdays @ 9:15am – Strength & Balance w/ Donna Freeland – Cost \$3.00 per class
Wednesdays @ 9:15am – Chair Yoga

w/ Heidi Gambaccini – Cost \$3.00 per class
Tuesdays and Wednesdays @ 10:00am - Needleworkers (Knitting, Crocheting, Needlepoint)
Bring your favorite project and come join the group for conversation and laughs.
Wednesdays @ 1:00 pm – Chair Volleyball – Lots of laughs and only two rules (1) stay seated (2) have fun!
Thursdays @ 10:00 am – Dominoes

Monthly Activities:
Let’s Talk Oxford History – 2nd Tuesday of each month @ 1pm - Sponsored by the Oxford Historical Commission
Blood Pressure Clinic – 2nd Tuesday of each month @ 11:00am
Men’s Coffee Group – 2nd Wednesday of each month @ 10:30am – coffee and pastry are served.
Tri-Valley Inc. Options Counseling - 3rd Tuesday of each month from 12:30pm – 2:30pm. By appointment.
SHINE(Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) – 3rd Wednesday of each month. By appointment.
Book Club – 1st Friday of each month @ 12:45pm – reserve your book from the Oxford Public Library
Movie Matinee – 2nd Friday of each month @12:45
BEANO – 4th Friday of each month @ 12:45pm – arrive by 12:30pm to purchase your BEANO sheets.

Need help completing paperwork? Fuel Assistance, MassHealth applications or re-certifications, SNAP etc., we can help. Call us @ 508-987-6000 to make an appointment.



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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
STONEBRIDGE PRESS PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

Keeping it local —why our community matters most

Big stories from far away dominate our feeds, leaving little room for the stories that directly impact our daily lives. But here in New England, we have something special, a culture of pragmatism, resilience, and a commitment to our neighbors that deserves more of our attention than any distant drama.

When you know what’s happening in your town, you can make better decisions, participate in meaningful ways, and strengthen your community. From town meetings and school board decisions to the opening of a new business or a neighbor organizing a food drive, these are the stories that impact our daily lives.

Local news reminds us that what happens right outside our door often affects us far more than what’s unfolding hundreds of miles away. Sure, keeping an eye on national or global events is important, but the real opportunities for change and impact start right here.

Living in New England is a badge of honor. This isn’t an easy place to call home, and we like it that way. The winters are brutal, the terrain is rugged, and the people. We’re straightforward, skeptical of nonsense, and fiercely independent. But beneath that no-nonsense exterior is a deep sense of loyalty and community.

We might argue about who makes the best chowder or complain about tourists clogging the roads in leaf-peeping season, but when someone in our community needs help, we show up.

Social media and national headlines are filled with division and negativity, but we know better. We’ve built a culture where actions matter more than words and where we measure people not by their politics, but by how they treat others.

Ask yourself, how can I make an impact here? Can you volunteer at a local food pantry? Mentor a student? Organize a block party to bring people together? These small, tangible actions might not make national news, but they’ll make a world of difference to the people around you.

At the end of the day, we’re New Englanders. We don’t fall for the fluff or the fearmongering. We know life is about the relationships we build and the community we create. It’s about showing up, speaking truth, and taking care of the people around us.

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.

VIEWPOINT

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



Melissa Zeien

Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy welcomes new full time faculty

CHARLTON — The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy is pleased to welcome newly appointed full-time faculty member. Melissa Zeien, BSN, RN, WCC of Charlton had been named full-time faculty. Professor Zeien assumed her role on Jan. 13.

Professor Zeine is an experienced RN with a specialty in Wound Care. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (2016) at the Empire State College, State University of New York, and her Associate of Science in Nursing (2010) at Suffolk County Community College in Selden, N.Y. She became Wound Care Certified (2022) through the Wound Care Education Institute.

Self-described as “calm, responsible, reliable, caring, hard-working, and physically fit individual with strong leadership skills and ethics,” Professor Zeien works well in a group setting or one on one. She is well versed in theory and in practice. She enjoys collaborating with individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

“We are excited to have Professor Zeien join the Practical Nursing Academy,” stated Getheline Bolandrina DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN Academy Director. “She came to the Academy in opportune time and brings with her expertise and experience that would greatly benefit the practical nursing students and our Bay Path community.”

Tips for Painting Perfection!

Are the winter doldrums setting in? Why not perk up your space with a paint project? Since nothing transforms a space quicker or cheaper than paint, it’s a natural choice for a mini makeover. Whether you’re painting an entire room or a piece of furniture, the following ideas and techniques can help ensure paint perfection!



TAKE THE HINT
KAREN TRAINOR

The figure you end up with is a pretty close estimate of the actual wall area. Keep in mind, you can expect one gallon of paint to cover approximately 350 square feet.

Want to know the most efficient order of painting a room? Experts advise painting ceiling, walls, trim, cabinets, and doors.

Quick Tips

For a quick patch job on walls, simply use items on hand: Mix equal parts of starch and salt, with just enough water to make a thick paste. Apply and smooth over cracks or small holes.

When mixing up commercial plaster, you’ll reduce lumps if you add the powdered plaster to the water instead of adding water to the plaster.

Sanding is a tedious chore. To reduce sanding on plastered walls, simply go over freshly applied joint compound with a wet paint brush for a smooth finish.

Ensure a smooth surface: Before painting over an old bureau or other piece of furniture, you can easily clean the finish by wiping it down with a lintfree cloth dampened with straight turpentine. This method picks up any stray dust and helps smooth out the surface to prepare it for painting.

When painting new plaster, or other porous surface, paint on a solution of water mixed with PVA glue first. This seals the surface and stops the paint from soaking into the plaster, giving a better finish and making the paint go further!

When painting with a brush, always keep a wet edge as you paint, and work away from that wet edge. If you paint over a dry edge, you will get overlap marks.

Aerosol paint is a popular choice for revamping furniture and small accessories, but it can be frustrating when the paint does not dispel evenly. Here’s a trick to ensure a finer and more even coat of paint: Simply place the can in warm water several minutes prior to spraying. The higher temperature helps the paint to flow out more easily, and smoothly.

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.

Walt Disney

Many people feel they can’t have the life they want because of their past limitations or failures.

Maybe your family wasn’t there for you, you didn’t get the proper education, or you’ve been fired from multiple jobs or mistreated in relationships.

Many things aren’t fair and can cause a chain reaction of events that can take us far off course. Sometimes, we make bad choices and miss out on the life we want, but that doesn’t mean it has to stay that way

“All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.” – Walt Disney.

But what gives a person the courage to pursue their dreams? One factor is a positive vision of what’s possible.

The problem isn’t that people lack vision—it’s that their vision of the future is often shaped by the failures and limitations of their past. In other words, they do have a vision—but it’s a negative one.

One trait of a successful person is they don’t allow themselves to be defined by their failures or their present unfavorable circumstances.

Instead, they define themselves by a positive vision of their future.

That seems odd when you think about it. They define themselves by something that hasn’t even happened yet.

It’s easy to look at a great person and assume they had everything handed to them or that somehow life was much easier on them than it was on you.

I have many fond memories of my parents taking me to Disney World. I’ve been on the rides, seen the movies, and heard about the man who built it all, Walt Disney. I’ve driven past the Disney skyscraper in Burbank, Calif., hundreds of times; I’ve auditioned at Walt Disney Studios dozens of times.

When surrounded by all that accomplishment, it’s hard to imagine that Walt ever faced any hardship.

Most don’t know that Walt Disney was fired from his job at the Kansas City Star after his newspaper editor told him that he didn’t have enough imagination or creativity!

What if Walt Disney allowed himself to be defined by that moment, and for the next 20 years, he wandered from job to job, telling himself, “I’m not creative, I don’t have a good enough imagination....”

Instead, imagine Walt in Kansas City after Laugh-O-Gram failed, sitting alone in his office, staring at empty walls. He had no money, no plan, and no clear way forward. Perhaps he wondered if his editor had been right all along—maybe he didn’t have what it takes. It would’ve been so easy to give up then, to let the weight of failure convince him to settle for less.

But he didn’t.

He sold his camera, scraped together enough for a one-way train ticket to Hollywood, and took a leap of faith. That train ride wasn’t just a change of scenery—it was a statement of hope.

Walt was choosing to believe in a future that hadn’t been written yet, even when his circumstances told him otherwise. The rest is history.

I often wonder how many potentially great people never accomplish their vision because they believe in their failures more than in their dreams. They accept what their present circumstances are telling them instead of what their future vision could create.

If Walt Disney had been one of those people, we’d have missed out on one of the most creative minds of the 20th century.

He wouldn’t have created Mickey Mouse, one of the most beloved characters of all time. There’d be no Snow White, no Cinderella, no Fantasia—classics that redefined animation forever.

He wouldn’t have built Disneyland, the first-ever theme park of its kind, or Epcot, a visionary concept of a utopian community.

The Disney legacy wouldn’t have touched billions of lives through films, theme parks, and innovations that continue to inspire the generations.

Walt Disney refused to let his failures or limitations define his future, so he became one of the most influential people of all time.

Like all great people, he focused on what could be instead of what had been.

We have the same choice—focus on what could be and take the first step toward your vision.

Kid- and pet-friendly indoor gardening

Creating an indoor oasis of greenery can help lift your spirits, reduce stress and improve your overall wellbeing. Challenges arise when growing indoor plants with kids and pets in the house. Keep them safe by selecting pet- and kid-safe plants and pest management strategies.

Increase your indoor gardening success by selecting plants suited to your home's growing conditions and gardening style. If you tend to overwater your plants, grow moisture-loving plants or opt for more drought-tolerant plants if you practice benign neglect. Once you have your list, double-check their people and pet toxicity. Consult with your veterinarian and visit the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) website for a list of pet-safe and toxic plants. Consult with your pediatrician, local botanical garden, and children's hospital for a list of kid-friendly indoor plants.

Keep an ongoing list of all the plants you are growing. Include both common and botanical names for accurate identification. Research the care they need and their toxicity to your pets and youngsters in the home. If you suspect your pet or child has ingested a toxic plant, you'll have the proper plant name when contacting your veterinarian or poison control center.

Display any toxic plants out of the reach of curious kids and pets. This can be challenging if your cat or child is skilled at jumping and climbing. With so many beautiful houseplants, play it safe and avoid those that are toxic or too tempting.

Secure plants against accidental tipping by inquisitive pets and kids with mounting putty. A couple of pieces on the bottom of the pot will help reduce the risk of spilled plants and soil. Invest in pots with wider bases for floor plants or secure several pots together to reduce the risk of tipping.

Cover the soil surface to prevent children and pets from digging. Fiber mulch and plant pot grid covers create a barrier between the soil and those who like



GARDEN
MOMENTS
.....
MELINDA
MYERS

to dig.

Once you narrow down the list, place your kid- and pet-friendly plants where they will receive the necessary amount of sunlight. An east- or west-facing window provides enough light for most indoor plants. Keep those that need brighter light within two feet of the window. Those that prefer lower light can be grown near a north-facing window or up to six feet back or off to the side of an east- or west-facing window.

Regularly groom and wipe dust off the leaves of your indoor plants to help reduce the risk of insect damage. Remove spotted leaves when they appear and adjust your watering. This is often enough to correct fungal disease problems. Enlist children in the ongoing care of your indoor plants. This will help them gain respect for the plants and may instill a love of gardening.

Give kids a hand lens and go on an indoor pest hunt. Children often find bugs more interesting than plants. Have them place yellow sticky traps like Summitá Sticky Traps in various pots to help monitor and trap insect pests.

Always look for kid- and pet-friendly options when intervention is needed. Start with a strong blast of water to dislodge pests like aphids and mites. Follow with an application of a lightweight horticulture oil like Summitá Year-Roundá Spray Oil. This organic spray controls aphids, mites, immature whiteflies, and all stages of scale and mealybugs.

And if those tiny fruit-fly-like gnats are too annoying to tolerate, consider managing them with a *Bacillus thuringiensis*



Melinda Myers

Prayer plant (*Maranta leuconeura*) is a tropical plant with beautiful, unique foliage that's non-toxic to pets and people.

israelensis product like Summitá Mosquito Bitsá(SummitResponsibleSolutions.com).

It's labeled for controlling fungus gnat larvae and is non-toxic for people, pets, and plants. Always read and follow label directions when using any product. You'll have better results and prevent problems caused by misapplication.

Proper plant selection and ongoing care will help keep your indoor plants healthy and children and pets safe from harm.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition and Small Space Gardening. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" instant video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and was commissioned by Summit for her expertise to write this article. Myers' website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Legislators seek support for those dealing with crumbling foundations

**BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER**

REGION — For area residents who have grappled with the crumbling foundations crisis since 2017, disappointment and setbacks have become all too familiar. But in spite of the latest hitch endured when the State House of Representatives failed to take up a bill meant to support affected homeowners, the new year is bringing fresh waves of hope.

During the final legislative session of 2024, House members took no action on the bill that was approved by State Senate members. Had the bill been greenlighted, it would have provided desperately needed support to homeowners.

"It's frustrating that the House failed to take up the crumbling foundations bill in the previous legislative session, but we're not giving up and will refile legislation this month," said State Sen. Peter Durant (R—Spencer). "I am hopeful that we can garner support from our colleagues in the House, many of whom have constituents struggling with this issue."

The crisis began in 2017 with the discovery of multiple deteriorating foundations in northern Connecticut and west-central Massachusetts, all of which were constructed with concrete produced from stone aggregate that was supplied by the same

quarry in Willington, Conn.

A 2018 investigation confirmed that the presence of a naturally occurring iron sulfide mineral—pyrrhotite—tainted the stone aggregate produced from one vein of the quarry. Because the mineral causes a slow deterioration of concrete foundations when exposed to oxygen and water, problems didn't start surfacing at homes until many years after they were built.

Homes constructed between 1983 and 2015 could be impacted by the crisis, officials said. The majority of the tainted concrete was supplied by the now defunct J.J. Mottes Concrete and

Septic Supply Company in Stafford, Conn.

Cracking, flaking, bowing, and separation of concrete are all indicators of a problem that could jeopardize the entire house if not addressed, officials warn.

The cost to replace a foundation ranges between \$150,000 and \$250,000 per house. Most home insurance policies do not cover costs associated with the crisis.

In recent years, many homeowners whose foundations are showing signs of deterioration have been afraid to get testing done and risk being unable to sell their properties. Other residents have passed up opportunities to buy homes because

they weren't able to get extensive testing done in finished basements.

Having spent several years advocating for affected homeowners, local legislators explained that it's critical to continue putting pressure on their colleagues and conveying the direness of the situation.

"We often hear about affordable housing and ways the legislature can work to provide that, yet we have people who can afford their homes until their foundations crumble from a naturally occurring element, and we are not working quickly enough to help them retain their homes," Durant said.

This year's refiled bill

would establish a commission to study the best ways to deal with the growing problem of crumbling concrete. Bay State legislators are hoping to catch up to their counterparts in Connecticut, who have already taken several significant actions to assist homeowners.

"Connecticut has established a workable program, and we certainly could use that as a model, or find a method more suitable for Massachusetts," Durant said.

Last year, the proposed legislation was passed in the Senate at a formal summer session, then again at an informal December session.

Dudley sets warrant for Feb. 10 Special Town Meeting

DUDLEY — The Board of Selectmen has called the Feb. 10 Special Town Meeting to seek voter approval on a revised version of the failed Article 8 from the Oct. 21 town meeting. At that meeting, selectmen sought approval to borrow \$926,000 to design a water line that would permanently provide clean drinking water to homes affected by PFAS contamination in the Eagle Drive area of town, plus cover costs for the state-mandated temporary mitigation of well contamination and testing during this fiscal year.

Since the October meeting, the town has received a \$600,000 grant for the water line design

portion of the \$926,000, and therefore Articles 2 and 3 at the Feb. 10 Special Town Meeting seek approval to borrow the reduced amount needed for Dudley's portion of the state-mandated mitigation and testing.

The town has entered into a cost-sharing agreement with Gentex Optics, who was also named a responsible party by the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Dudley's portion of the total estimated cost for mitigation and testing services through Dec. 31 is \$544,015. Town meeting voters will see this total split into two articles on the warrant:

Article 2 seeks to borrow \$312,750, to purchase and maintain filtration equipment and other remedial measures to mitigate contaminated private wells within the Eagle Drive/Fairview Avenue and surrounding neighborhood, including capped landfill testing and monitoring costs required by DEP regulations from Oct. 1, 2024, through the end of this fiscal year, June 30.

Article 3 seeks to borrow \$231,265, which is the estimated cost to continue those services named in Article 2 from July 1, through the end of this calendar year, Dec. 31.

Weston & Sampson

Engineers, Inc., is the town's Licensed Site Provider (LSP), who oversees the landfill monitoring, private well testing and contaminant mitigation. This consultant works directly with the DEP to ensure the town meets the requirements ordered by the state. Of the \$544,015 total costs, Weston & Sampson's estimated fees through Dec. 31 are \$344,120.

SafeWell works under the guidance of Weston & Sampson and performs the water testing and maintenance of water filtration systems installed in the Eagle Drive neighborhood. Safewell's estimated fees through Dec.

31 are \$209,895.

At a recent joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Advisory Committee, it was noted that the town is required by the DEP to pay for these services whether town meeting authorizes a borrowing to fund it or not.

For background and information from Town Counsel regarding this topic, please see this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2n4owpskNg>.

Also before voters on Feb. 10, the Board of Health is seeking approval to increase the number of its elected members from three to five. If approved, the two new additions will be placed on the 2025 Annual Town Election ballot: one for a two-year term, and one for a three-year term.

A copy of the warrant is available at www.dudleyma.gov.

Knights of Columbus to hold free throw competition

WEBSTER — Webster/Dudley Knights of Columbus Council 228 will hold its annual free throw competition on Saturday, Feb. 15 at St Joseph's Gym, 47 Whitcomb St., Webster.

The competition is open to local boys and girls ages nine to 14 with age determined as of Jan. 1. Proof of age is required at registration. Registration is at 8:30 a.m., and competition will begin promptly for all ages at 9 a.m. First place finishers will receive a trophy and those finishers will compete in the District 10 competition immediately following the local contest on this same day at St Joseph's Gym. The first place finishers of the District 10 competition will then compete in the Massachusetts Central Region contest to be held in March.

Please contact PGK, Paul Perry for any questions at 508-943-9345 or pjpknights@yahoo.com.

Webster Lions accepting scholarship applications

WEBSTER — The Webster Lions Club is currently accepting applications for the George Sellig Memorial Scholarship. The recipient will be selected based on the student's academic performance, community service and financial need.

The \$1,000 award is presented each year to a graduating high school senior who is a resident of Webster and will be continuing his or her education in an accredited college program.

The scholarship is named in honor of former Webster Lions Club president George Sellig, who was once a teacher at Tourtellotte Memorial High School, a Webster selectman, and a superintendent of the former Webster-Dudley School Union.

Applications are available at the Bartlett High School and Bay Path Regional Technical High School Guidance departments, or by contacting Dr. John Kalinowski at (508) 943-y434 or jkalinowski100@aol.com. Applications must be received by May 1.

As temperatures drop, Cornerstone Bank is helping families stay safe and warm

WORCESTER — Temperatures are dropping and Cornerstone Bank, a community bank with locations throughout Central Massachusetts, wants to help make sure residents have the tools they need to get through the coldest months. Cornerstone is donating \$25,000 toward the Worcester Community Action Council's Emergency Fuel Fund.

"We know the high price of fuel is making it difficult for families to stay warm as winter sets in," said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. "That's why we appreciate the Worcester Community Action Council's work to make sure our neighbors are taken care of."

The Emergency Fuel Fund helps homeowners and renters pay home heating bills and past due balances on utility bills incurred from November through April of each year. Income-eligible residents can apply for aid through the agency's federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

"As a community bank, we are committed to supporting causes that improve the quality of life for those around us," said Tallman. "We hope this donation helps offer some relief to residents facing challenges trying to safely get through the winter."

NAI Glickman Kovago & Jacobs

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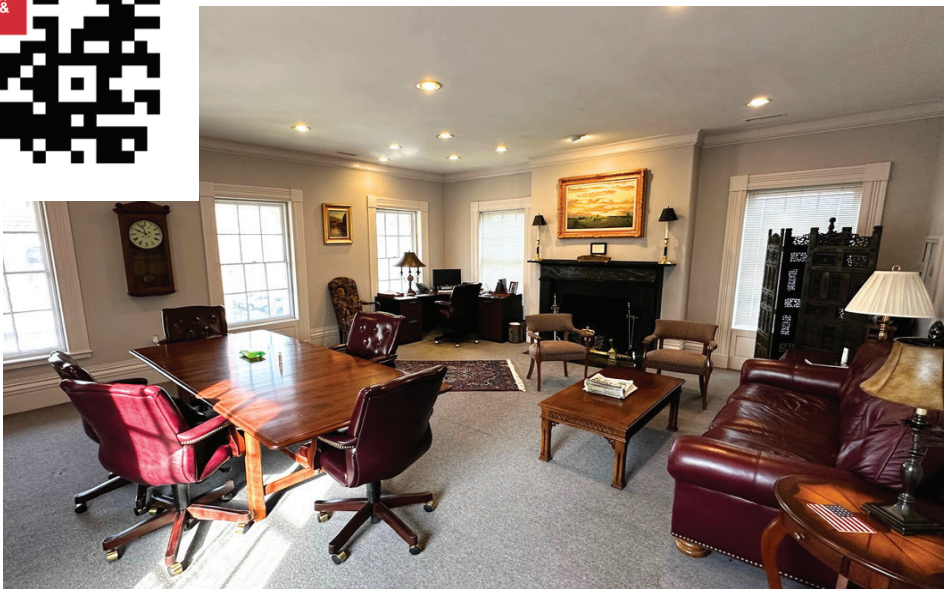
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- Large Open Concept Cubicle Areas



- Listing price: \$550,000
- Building size: 9,536 SF
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- Basement: partial | Unfinished



JAMES GLICKMAN
Principal

508-769-5007
jglickman@glickmankovago.com



JONAH D. GLICKMAN
Vice President

508-868-3765
jdglickman@glickmankovago.com

Saint Joseph School kicks off Catholic Schools Week with annual Migration Mass



The Most Rev. Robert J. McManus, Bishop of Worcester, stands with Saint Joseph School students dressed in traditional attire, each proudly representing their cultural heritage, following the Annual Migration Mass. The flags of the 24 nations represented in the school community are prominently displayed on either side of the altar in Saint Joseph Basilica, symbolizing the cultural diversity and unity celebrated during this cherished Catholic Schools Week tradition.

WEBSTER — On Sunday, Jan. 26, the Saint Joseph School community gathered to celebrate the beginning of Catholic Schools Week with their beloved Annual Migration Mass. This cherished tradition, coinciding with National Migration Week, is a highlight of the year for students and families alike. It is a vibrant celebration of the school's growing cultural diversity and the unity that flourishes within its community.

The day began with a solemn yet joyous Mass, featuring an entrance procession that included over one hundred students. Twenty-four countries were represented through flags and traditional attire, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the school's families. Flags from nations such as the United States, Brazil, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Lithuania, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Puerto Rico, Slovakia, Spain, Saint Croix – U.S. Virgin Islands, Syria, Uganda, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Vietnam filled the

church with vibrant colors, symbolizing the unity in diversity that Saint Joseph School embodies. Students proudly dressed in their native costumes, embracing the opportunity to share and celebrate their heritage with pride.

Bishop Robert J. McManus, the Main Celebrant and Homilist, underscored the significance of the Jubilee Year of Hope, inspiring the congregation with his words. Eighth Grade student Jada Jackson and Sixth Grade student Bella Kicilinski took part in the Liturgy of the Word, while the Prayer of the Faithful reflected the global spirit of the day. Prayers were read in multiple languages, including Swahili by Kyle Muchiru (Grade 8), Polish by Julia Biela (Grade 4), Portuguese by Lukas Barbosa (Grade 7), Arabic by Rosemary Basha (Grade 8), Spanish by Hayley Benes (Grade 7), Greek by Samuel Brunnett (Grade 4), and English by Faith Muga (Grade 8). These multilingual prayers emphasized the interconnectedness of the school's culturally diverse community and the universality of faith.

The Saint Joseph School Children's Choir, directed by Brenda Lau and Maria Helena Czarnecka-Cieslak, elevated the celebration with their inspiring musical selections. Hymns including "They'll Know We Are Christians," "Companions on the Journey," "Bread for the World," and "Bless the Lord, O My Soul" resonated deeply with all in attendance. The Mass culminated with a special presentation to Bishop McManus by Student Council President Oluwatosin Akindele and Vice President Ayla Reed, a heartfelt moment reflecting the students' gratitude and leadership.

After the choir's uplifting closing hymn, "Trading My Sorrows," students gathered for a commemorative photo with the bishop, capturing the joy and spirit of this meaningful occasion. The Annual Migration Mass stands as a testament to the Saint Joseph School community's commitment to embracing diversity, fostering unity, and celebrating faith—values that are at the heart of its mission.

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2022 BEST OF CENTRAL MASS

Check out the new Fall/Winter menu

Sherriff promotes Jason Dickhaut of Dudley to Assistant Deputy Superintendent at County Jail



Sheriff Lewis Evangelidis (right) and Assistant Deputy Superintendent Jason Dickhaut (left).

WEST BOYLSTON — Worcester County Sheriff Lewis Evangelidis announces the promotion of Dudley's Jason Dickhaut to Assistant Deputy Superintendent (ADS) at the Worcester County Sheriff's Office (WCSO).

Dickhaut, a 31-year WCSO veteran, began his career in 1993. He was promoted to Lieutenant in 2001 and then to Captain in 2003. Assistant Deputy Superintendent Dickhaut previously served as the scheduling captain for many years and played a crucial role in implementing more efficient scheduling practices throughout the entire Jail and House of Corrections.

In his new role as Assistant Deputy Superintendent, Dickhaut will oversee operations within the Main Jail of the Worcester County Jail and House of Corrections. ADS Dickhaut will be responsible for monitoring the care, custody, and control of the inmate population to ensure the safety of both staff and inmates.

"At the Worcester County Sheriff's Office, promotions are awarded to those who have earned them through excep-

tional merit, unwavering work ethic, and steadfast dedication to duty," commented Evangelidis. "ADS Dickhaut has proven himself as a leader during his tenure with the sheriff's office. I am confident that he will continue to demonstrate his skills and work to elevate our operations."

The Worcester County Jail and House of Correction is responsible for pre-trial detainees and inmates sentenced to two and a half years or less. The facility can house more than 1,000 inmates. The sheriff's office also operates community centers in Fitchburg, Worcester, and Webster.

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Local students earn Dean’s List honors at Nichols College

DUDLEY — Nichols College is proud to recognize the academic accomplishments of students on the fall 2024 Dean’s List.

Dean’s List recognizes those students who achieve high grades during a single semester. In order to be included on the Dean’s List, a student must have a minimum grade point average of 3.5 for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and must have received no grades below B- during the semester.

The following local students have achieved Dean’s List honors for the fall 2024 semester:

Kyle Banfill of Auburn
Anthony Casillo of Auburn
Tyler Kohler of Auburn
Trystan St. Pierre of Auburn
Ryan Bray of Oxford
Alexander Card of Dudley
Zachary Finizza of Oxford
Abigail Graham of Webster
Kaiden Keddy of Webster

www.StonebridgePress.com

The Attorney General’s deadline for a decision on Warrant Articles 14 & 15 (General) of the Special Town Meeting held on October 21, 2024, is extended for an additional 90 days under the authority conferred by G.L. c 40, § 32. A decision on Articles 14 & 15 will be issued on or before April 27, 2025. Warrant Articles #11, #12, and #13 (General) of the Special Town Meeting held on October 21, 2024, have received approval from the Attorney General’s Office on January 23,2025. The entire text of these by-laws is posted in the following five places in accordance with G.L. c. 40 § 32: Dudley Municipal Complex, Pearle Crawford Memorial Library, Mason Road School, Dudley District Court House and Shepherd Hill High School. Attest: Lori A. Smith, Dudley Town Clerk January 31, 2024 February 7 , 2025

(SEAL)
THE COMMONWEALTH
OF MASSACHUSETTS
LAND COURT
DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL
COURT
Docket Number: 25 SM 000204
ODER OF NOTICE
To:
Nicole Magnusson;
Thomas Magnusson
and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. c. 50 §3901 (et seq):
U.S. Bank Trust National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely as owner trustee for GS Mortgage-Backed Securities Trust 2022-RPL2 claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Oxford, numbered 371 Main Street, given by Nicole Magnusson, Thomas Magnusson to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for American Mortgage Network, Inc., DBA American Mortgage Network of MA, a DE Corp., dated December 29, 2006, and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 40439, Page 224, as modified by a certain modification agreement recorded on September 19, 2019, and recorded with said Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 61080, Page 106, and now held by the Plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant’s/Defendants’ Servicemembers status.
If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108 on or before March 10, 2025, or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the ground of noncompliance with the Act. Witness, Gordon H. Piper, Chief Justice of this Court on January 24, 2025.
Attest:
Deborah J. Patterson
Recorder
26749
January 31, 2024

CITATION ON PETITION FOR SALE OF REAL ESTATE BY A PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
Docket No. WO24P4021 EA
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family

Jason Mayotte of Dudley
Natasha McClay of Dudley
Nicolas Micciche of Oxford
Leah Monti of Webster
Alexandro Montreuil of Oxford
Pancham Patel of Dudley
Anthony Pellegrine of Dudley
Nevaeh Pepper of Webster
Alymarie Rodriguez of Webster
Samantha Tremblay of Webster
Matvey Zhuk of Dudley

About Nichols College
Nichols College has earned business accreditation from the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the longest serving global accrediting body for business schools and the largest business education network connecting learners, educators, and businesses worldwide. Founded in 1815, Nichols transforms today’s students into tomorrow’s leaders through a dynamic, career-focused business and professional education. Nichols offers real-world learning focused on professional depth - combined with vibrant living, competitive athletics, and an unmatched alumni advantage - equipping students to exceed their own expectations. www.nichols.edu

**Court 225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508)831-2200**
Estate of: Lorna N Chaput
Date of Death: 09/04/2024
To all interested persons:
A Petition for Sale of Real Estate has been filed by:
Nancy L White of OxfordMA
requesting that the court authorize the Personal Representative to sell the decedent’s real estate at a private sale.

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 02/18/2025.
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.
WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A Kearny, First Justice of this Court.
January 17, 2025 Stephanie K. Fattman,
Register of Probate
January 31, 2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. WO24P4405EA
INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE
Estate Of:
Roberta Susan Bartel
Also Known As:
Roberta S. Bartel
Date of Death: September 18, 2024
To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of :
Petitioner
Mark R. Bartel of Dudley MA
Will has been admitted to informal probate.
Mark R. Bartel of Dudley MA
has been informally appointed as Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without** Surety on the bond.
The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
January 31, 2024

Citation in the matter of the Adoption of
Mary-Jane Jennifer Hall
To Matthew Lewis Hall and any unnamed or unknown parent or persons interested in a petition for the adoption of Mary-Jane Jennifer Hall: a petition to adopt Mary-Jane Jennifer Hall and to change her name to Mary-Jane Jennifer Carey, has been filed in the Worces-

Local students earn President’s List honors at Nichols College

DUDLEY — Nichols College is proud to recognize the academic accomplishments of students on the fall 2024 President’s List.

President’s List recognizes those students who achieve high grades during a single semester. Students whose semester grade point average is 3.85 or higher for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and no grades below B- will receive President’s List honors.

The following local students have achieved President’s List honors:

Tommy Burny of Auburn
Alex Leblanc of Auburn
Alex Mercadante of Auburn
Tyler Poshkus of Auburn
Daniel Adamuska of Dudley
Anthony Awad of Dudley
Kaitlin Baca of Webster
Felicia Benoit of Webster
Abigail Boggio of Dudley
Erin Bouffard of Dudley
Samantha Buchanan of Dudley
Izabella Coughlin of Dudley

ter Probate and Family Court. If you desire to object to the adoption, you or your attorney must file a written appearance in said court, located at 225 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608, on our before 10:00 am on the morning of April 8, 2025.
January 24, 2025
January 31, 2025
February 7, 2025

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE’S SALE OF REAL ESTATE
Premises: 60 Mason Road, Dudley, MA 01571
By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Shaun Blanchard and Lisa Blanchard to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Quicken Loans Inc., and now held by **PennyMac Loan Services, LLC**, said mortgage dated December 21, 2007 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 42299, Page 97, said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. to Bank of America, N.A. successor by merger to BAC Home Loans Servicing, LP fka Countrywide Home Loans Servicing, LP by assignment dated October 4, 2011 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 47994, Page 266; said mortgage was assigned from Bank of America, N.A. successor by merger to BAC Home Loans Servicing, LP fka Countrywide Home Loans Servicing, LP to PennyMac Loan Services, LLC by assignment dated December 11, 2013 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 51885, Page 135; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at **Public Auction** on February 14, 2025 at 10:00 AM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:
A certain parcel of land with the buildings thereon of every nature and descriptions, and all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging, situated in the said Dudley on the Easterly side of Mason Rd, bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at a stake in the Easterly line of said Mason Road 300 feet Southerly of the intersection of the Southerly line of Sawmill Rd with the Easterly line of said Mason Rd, and measured along said Easterly line of Mason Rd; Thence Easterly, a distance of 161.15 feet to a stake; Thence Southerly, with an included angle of 82 degrees 27 minutes a distance of 97.75 feet to a stake; Thence Westerly with an included angle of 96 degrees 54 minutes a distance of 180 feet to a stake in the Easterly line of said Mason Road; Thence Northeasterly by a curve bearing to the left and having a radius of 480 feet, more or less, a distance of 100 feet to the point of BEGINNING. Being Lot No. 4 on “Plan of property Konkell Bros., Inc. Mason Rd, Dudley, Mass.”, dated September 13, 1960, by A.R. Klebart, Engineer”, recorded with Worcester District Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 252, Plan 10. Being the same property conveyed to SHAUN BLANCHARD and LISA BLANCHARD, husband and wife as tenants by the entirety, by deed dated April 11, 2000 of record in Deed Book 22491, Page 17, in the Worcester County Clerk’s Office. Commonly known as: 60 Mason Road, Dudley, MA 01571
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

Cy Ducharme of Dudley
Evan Healy of Dudley
Zachary Hebert of Dudley
Lukas Janusz of Dudley
Benjamin Kallgren of Dudley
Liam Keegan of Dudley
Alexander Laws of Dudley
Julia Lech of Dudley
Matthew Livsey of Webster
Nicole Machado of Dudley
Ethan Minarik of Webster
Katrina Mrzyglod of Webster
Tomasz Pater of Dudley

About Nichols College
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dated April 11, 2000 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 22491, Page 17.
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 PennyMac Loan Services, LLC
Present Holder of the Mortgage (401) 217-8701
January 17, 2025
January 24, 2025
January 31, 2025

Annual Bid opening for Town of Dudley – Construction Materials and Services. The Town of Dudley is requesting bids for the following construction materials and services for various departments for the period of January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025.
ITEM #1 All grades of medium curing asphalt and emulsion type asphalt
ITEM #2 Bituminous concrete, at plant
ITEM #2A Bituminous concrete, in place
ITEM #3 Gravel and Washed screened sand at owners’ pit and delivered.
ITEM #4 Screened stone at owners’ pit and delivered.
ITEM #5 Tree Trimming and Removal
ITEM #6 Corrugated pipe, steel, and aluminum, delivered to highway garage.
ITEM #7 Corrugated pipe, polyethylene delivered to highway garage.
ITEM #8 Cold Plaining
ITEM #9 Asphalt Rubber SAM
ITEM #10 Pavement Stripping
Bidders of items # 2A & # 9 must be pre-qualified and have a Certificate of Approval from Mass Highway.
All materials must conform to Mass Highway Specifications.
Bids will be received by the Chief Procurement Officer in the Dudley Town Hall, 71 West Main St. MA 01571 until 11:00AM on February 14, 2025 at which time they will be opened and read. All envelopes must be sealed and marked “BID” and appropriate “ITEM #” indicated.
The Town of Dudley brings to the attention of bidders Chapter 149, sections 26D & 27D of the Mass. General Laws concerning minimum wage rates where applicable. All bidding must follow all Mass. General Laws.
Specifications available at the Selectmen’s Office, 71 West Main St, Dudley MA 01571, Monday – Thursday between 9:00a.m. and 4:00p.m., Friday from 9:00a.m. – noon. Specific questions may be addressed to MJ Gatzke, Highway Superintendent at (508) 949-8020.
The Town reserves the right to reject any bid or proposal if deemed in the best interest of the Town.
Town of Dudley
Jonathan Ruda
Town Administrator
Chief Procurement Officer
January 31, 2024

Funds proposed for infrastructure statewide

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER
REGION — Gov. Maura Healey recently announced major upgrades planned for the state’s roads, bridges, and regional transportation systems.

During an announcement earlier this month, the Governor outlined \$8 billion in infrastructure projects targeted over the next decade. The investments will be made without raising taxes, officials pledged.

The plan will be filed as legislation in the coming weeks as part of the Governor’s Fiscal Year 2026 budget proposal and an accompanying supplemental budget.

“This historic transportation proposal represents smart, forward-thinking fiscal management, and it will have an impact on people in all regions of our state,” said Healey. “We’re going to invest billions of dollars to deliver better roads, less traffic, safer bridges, and a transit system that works in every region.”

Massachusetts, officials have long called upon state leaders to make significant investments in road and bridge improvements. The Governor’s new plan is expected to bring relief to drivers whose daily commutes not only cause traffic headaches, but also damage to vehicles due to banged-up roads.

“This plan will accelerate our efforts to repair crumbling bridges, fix our culverts, and advance important projects throughout the state,” said Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll. “Our administration knows the role a safe, reliable, and efficient transportation system plays in the future of Massachusetts, and this plan represents a gigantic step forward.”

If approved, the proposal would direct \$857 million in surplus Fair Share revenue from FY24 to public transportation. Additionally, the proposal would dedicate \$765 million in Fair Share resources from FY26 to the Commonwealth Transportation Fund.

As part of the capital expansion effort, Governor Healey intends to file a multi-year Chapter 90 bill later this month that would grow the funding pool directed to cities and towns to \$300 million per year for five years.

The transportation proposal includes \$2.5 billion for road and bridge repairs across the state through MassDOT, with money set aside for culverts, small bridge repairs, and safety and congestion hotspots.

The funding would also allow for projects advancing east-west rail operations. These include proposed capacity improvements near Pittsfield, track work and accessibility upgrades in Springfield, and station planning in Palmer. The ultimate goal is to reduce traffic congestion by offering fast, reliable rail service linking the Berkshires to Boston.

“Gov. Healey and Lt. Gov. Driscoll have stressed that transportation systems must work if we want our communities to thrive,”

said Massachusetts Transportation Secretary and CEO Monica Tibbitts-Nutt. “With the Governor’s plan, we are taking very actionable steps to increase the use of Fair Share revenue and offer municipalities more money through the Chapter 90 program.”

Additional proposed funding includes \$400 million to address workforce and safety initiatives identified as necessary

by the Federal Transit Authority; \$25 million for a Winter Resilience Assistance Program for municipalities; and \$25 million for RTA workforce recruitment and retention.

The Governor also plans to use \$1.2 billion in Grant Anticipation Notes (GANs) to borrow against future federal highway grants to finance priority projects statewide.

The financing plan

was heavily informed by the work of the Transportation Funding Task Force, which was created by Governor Healey through executive order last January. The task force spent the past year reviewing current and projected revenue sources.

To learn more about the Governor’s transportation and infrastructure proposals, visit www.mass.gov.

Oxford Woman’s Club offers scholarships

OXFORD — The Woman’s Club is offering three Scholarships in the amount of \$750 each. The candidates are residents of Oxford and are Seniors in their graduating classes. The schools will have the applications the week of Feb. 3, they are due to be returned to our Scholarship Committee no later than April 19.

Our next meeting will be held on Feb. 4 at the Oxford Senior Center, behind the town hall, starting at 7 p.m. Our program will be History of Quilting presented by Cindy Nagle. It will be interesting to see the changes of quilting through the ages from utilitarian to an art form and even clothing.

Come and enjoy the fun and entertaining evening and meet our members. We welcome all from our town and surrounding towns and welcoming new members at any time.

Contacts, President: Paula at phparker1951@gmail.com. Scholarships: Anne Marie at simplyannie14@gmail.com



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University of Rhode Island names area students to Dean's List

KINGSTON, R.I. — The University of Rhode Island is pleased to announce that several area students have been named to its Fall 2024 Dean's List. Among them are:

Brendan Anish of Auburn
Jacques Durocher of Auburn
Jasmyn Gates of Auburn
Meredith Lynch of Auburn
Ali McKiernan of Auburn
Colin Brush of Dudley
Danielle Frasco of Oxford
Austin Giarnese of Dudley
Aaron Iwanski of Dudley

Alexander Jankowski of Webster
Nicholas Karalus of Dudley
Owen Kondek of Dudley
Mikayla Landers of Webster
Tori Masiello of Oxford
Alexandria O'Brien of Dudley

To be included on the Dean's List, full-time students must have completed 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable during a semester and achieved at least a 3.30 quality point average. Part-time students qualify with the accumulation of 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA

applicable earning at least a 3.30 quality point average.

Students named to the Dean's List represent nearly all of Rhode Island's cities and towns, all six New England states, New York and New Jersey, and many other states and countries.

About the University of Rhode Island
The University of Rhode Island is a diverse and dynamic community whose members are connected by a common quest for knowledge. As a global education leader and the state of Rhode

Island's flagship public research institution, URI offers distinctive opportunities designed to meet the global challenges of today's world and the rapidly evolving needs of tomorrow. Founded in 1892, URI now enrolls more than 18,000 students and offers more than 200 degree programs across nine schools and colleges. As a land- and sea-grant institution, URI is a key driver of economic development in Rhode Island and contributes significantly to the health and vitality of the state, the New England region, and the nation. To learn more, visit: uri.edu.

Regis announces fall Dean's List

WESTON — Regis announces the students that met academic requirements to be named to the university's fall 2024 Dean's List, in recognition of their outstanding academic achievements. To earn a spot on the Dean's List, Regis students must earn a grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or higher; first-year students must have a GPA of 3.25 or higher.

This year's Dean's List includes:

Ezekiel Kimani of Auburn
Samantha Stokes of Auburn
Samantha Gevry of Dudley
Jadyn Katz of Dudley
Diana Pickett of Oxford
Caitlin Young of Webster

"Being named to the Dean's List is an honor earned by students who show a persistent commitment to their academic journey throughout the semester," said Dr. Mary Erina Driscoll, PhD, the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. "At Regis, we prioritize the development of students' character and confidence, equipping them with the skills they need for a successful career and life of meaning. Recognition on the Dean's List reflects a student's continuous dedication to academic excellence and we congratulate them on this well-earned recognition."

Founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph nearly a century ago, Regis challenges, inspires, and supports students who are driven by passion, purpose, and a pursuit to positively impact the world within a learning community that embraces inclusivity and innovation and builds strong character, confidence, and careers.

Regis College is a coed university 12 miles west of Boston, in Weston, founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston nearly a century ago. With over 3,200 undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students enrolled on campus and in fully online graduate programs, Regis provides an academically rigorous education within the schools of nursing, arts and sciences, business and communication, and health sciences. In line with Regis' mission of providing innovative, industry-focused learning opportunities, the university offers academic partnerships with hospitals and local employers, a clinical dental center in Waltham, Mass., and bachelor's completion and accelerated nursing programs at its campus in Lawrence, Mass. The university's 20 NCAA Division III athletic teams compete within the Great Northeast Athletic Conference (GNAC). Regis challenges, inspires, and supports students who are driven by passion, purpose, and a pursuit to positively impact the world within a learning community that embraces inclusivity and innovation and builds strong character, confidence, and careers. Visit regiscollege.edu to learn more.



Book
FACT:

Having sold more than 600 million copies worldwide, this book series is the best-selling in history.

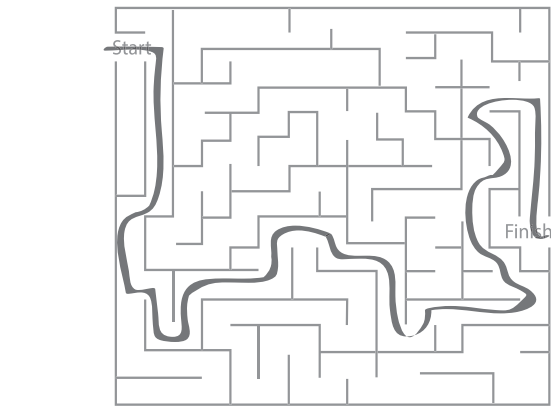
Answer: Harry Potter

Maze Craze

Find the way through the maze to the finish line.

Start

Finish



THIS
DAY IN
HISTORY

JANUARY
27

1785: The University of Georgia is founded, becoming the first state-chartered public university in the United States.

1880: Thomas Edison receives a patent for his incandescent lamp.

2010: Apple announces the iPad.

NEW
WORD

APTITUDE

a natural ability to do something

How they say that in...

English: Page
Spanish: Página
Italian: Pagina
French: Page
German: Seite

Did You Know?

Reading a book in bed before going to sleep can promote a better night's rest.

Get the PICTURE?

Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: library card catalog

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to slow cooking. Each number corresponds to slow cooking. (Hint: 22 = E)

A. 24 26 11 9 26 20
Clue: Not quickly

B. 14 10 11 14 6
Clue: Ceramic vessel

C. 15 18 17 10 22 23 15 22 18 16 24
Clue: Parts of a recipe

D. 14 11 5 22 10 22 23
Clue: With the top on

Answers: A. slowly B. crock C. ingredients D. covered

SUDOKU

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

2 9
8
1 4
9
3
3 6

4
7
9
8
5
6

7
1
8
2
7
4

5
1
5
6
3
2

6
4
3
9
7
8

5
7
8
2
6
1

ANSWER:

OBITUARIES

Barbara J. Piechocki, 82



AUBURN – Barbara J. (Bergner) Piechocki, 82, formerly of Webster, died quietly in her sleep at home on Friday, January 24, 2025. Her husband of 38 years, Richard M. Piechocki, passed away in 2000.

She leaves 4 children, Katherine Browning and her husband Robert Browning III with whom she lived, Theresa Mailloux and her husband Joseph Mailloux, Jr., Maryjane Moran and her husband Steven, and Michael Piechocki and his wife Jean; 10 grandchildren, Jennifer Piechocki, Joseph Piechocki and his wife Michelle, Nathan Piechocki, Robert Piechocki, Jr., Jacob Mailloux and his fiancée Madison Fancher, Zachary Mailloux and his wife Alexandra, Evan Moran, Caitlin Moran, Garrett Moran, and Isabella Hingley and her husband Hunter; 5 great-grandchildren, Jaelynn, Willow, Archer, Warren and Marcelene; a sister, Suzanne Broga and her husband Douglas; a brother, Henry Bergner, Jr. and his wife Barbara; a brother-in-law, Richard Tremblay; a sister-in-law, Reverend Sister Pauline Piechocki; 3 nephews, Raymond and his wife Katiana, James and his wife Shari, and Steven and his wife Kellie; 3 nieces, Rose, Betsy and Donna; and many cousins and friends. She was predeceased by 2 sons, Joseph Piechocki in 1975 and Robert Piechocki, Sr. in 2013, and by her

sister Janice Tremblay in 2022.

She was born on July 11, 1942 in Webster, a daughter of Henry W. and Veronica D. (McAvoy) Bergner and graduated from Bartlett High School in 1960. She was a former member of Beta Epsilon Sorority. She was raised in Webster and Dudley.

Mrs. Piechocki was a customer service representative at the former Cranston Print Works Company in Webster for 28 years before retiring in 2000. The highlight of her career there was the 4 years she spent on the Quality Council as the first female and non-union member; an appointment of which she was quite proud.

Barbara was a member of Saint Joseph Basilica. She was an avid reader and was never seen without a book in hand. She loved and took pride in her gardens. She enjoyed photography and had thousands of photos to prove it. Her greatest joy was spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren who will miss her tremendously.

Her funeral will be held on Thursday, January 30 at 11:00 AM in Saint Joseph Basilica, 53 Whitcomb Street, Webster (please meet at the church). Burial in Saint Joseph Garden of Peace. Donations in her memory may be made to Saint Joseph School Fund, 47 Whitcomb Street, Webster, MA 01570. Arrangements are under the direction of Scanlon Funeral Service, 38 East Main Street, Webster. www.webster-funerals.com

Judith A. “Judy” Majka, 75



Judith A. “Judy” Majka, age 75, of Dudley died Friday, January 17, 2025 at her home in Dudley after a long battle with cancer, her devoted Husband of 54 years at her side.

Judith was born October 12, 1949 in Webster, MA. She is the daughter of the late Norman F. and the late June (Burns) Perry. She lived in Dudley all her life.

She is survived by her husband of 54 and a half years Thomas Majka one brother: Dennis Perry and his wife Judith Dudley, MA Several nieces and nephews. Judy was godmother to Tammy Perry Ferland.

She graduated from Bartlett High School class of 1967 and worked in the office of Dr. Emil M. Dupont in Webster. A secretary at Boston Gas in Webster Office. Christopher Heights in Webster

in the office.

A memorial service will be held 11:00 am on Saturday, February 1 at First Congregational Church Of Dudley, 135 Center Rd., Dudley, MA with Rev. John White officiating a calling hour is prior to services from 10 to 11 AM

Family is thankful for the care from the oncology team at UMass Hospital and

Dr. Jan Cerny and Lindsey Shanihan NP For judy s care with years of Multiple Myeloma

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to giving@umassmed.edu or Office of Advancement 333 south St. Shrewsbury ,Ma 01545 or St. Judes Childrens Research Hospital 501 St. Jude place Memphis, TN 38105 1-800-805-5856 , stjude.org/donate

Bartel Funeral Home 33 Schofield Ave. Dudley is directing arrangements. www.bartelfuneralhome.com

Donald J. Wolak



Donald J. Wolak, a dedicated husband, father, grandfather, and veteran, passed away peacefully at home in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, on January 19, 2025. Born January 1948 in Massachusetts, Donald was the beloved son of the late John and Rita (Lemire) Wolak. His life was marked by remarkable achievements and unwavering commitment to his country and family.

While in high school, Donald earned his pilot's license, showcasing his adventurous spirit early on. He joined the Marine Corps, where he earned the prestigious title of “Outstanding Marine of Platoon 175” during boot camp. His service continued as Sergeant in Vietnam, where he controlled planes behind enemy lines, fulfilling a crucial role during a challenging time for the nation. After his tour overseas, he continued to serve as a controller in Beaufort, South Carolina, until his honorable discharge.

Donald transitioned to a successful career with General Motors, starting at the Framingham assembly plant and later transferring to the GM tech center in Michigan as a Reliability Engineer. After 30 years of dedicated service, he

retired due to cancer but defied the odds and lived an additional 20 years, enjoying life surrounded by his family, including cherished time spent in Northern Michigan and New England.

He enjoyed a loving marriage with Rose (Battista), whom he married in November 1969. Together, they raised two daughters, Laura and Mary, and welcomed his son-in-law, Tyler, into the family. He took great pride in being a grandfather to five grandchildren: Tomaso, Logan, Kalen, Brody, and Valentina, and an uncle to many nieces and nephews.

The family extends special thanks to the many friends who provided support during his difficult times. Semper Fi Don, your journey on earth has ended, and you will be greatly missed by all who knew and love you.

Services in Michigan have been held. Interment at Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, Michigan.

The family asks that, in lieu of flowers, a donation be made to Veteran's Mid-Michigan Honor Flight (<https://www.midmichiganhonorflight.org/donate-options>).

Louis R. Guenther, Jr., 93



WEBSTER – Louis R. Guenther, Jr., 93, died Tuesday, January 21, 2025 at home after a brief illness. His wife of 55 years, Marlene P. (Miller) Guenther died in 2021.

He leaves a daughter, Lu Ellen Guenther-Smith and her husband Kevin Smith of Sturbridge; a sister, Patricia Przybylek of Webster; a sister-in-law, Theresa Guenther of Dudley; his cousin, Robert Guenther of Webster; nephews and nieces. He was preceded in death by his brother, Charles W. Guenther.

He was born on October 5, 1931 in Webster; a son of Louis R. Guenther, Sr. and Sally (Suss) Guenther. He was a 1949 graduate of Worcester Trade School. He served for four years in the U.S. Navy aboard the destroyer Fred T. Berry during the Korean conflict. He held a life membership in the Webster-Dudley Legion Post # 184, the Polish American Veterans, the Tin Can Sailors and the Booster Athletic Club. Mr. Guenther was a self-employed building contractor for 45 years. He

served as president of Guenther & Sabaj Builders, Inc. His company developed and built the Cardinal Heights neighborhood in Dudley. He served for many years as the Town of Webster's first building inspector and zoning agent. He was a member of Saint Joseph Basilica.

The family would like to give special thanks to his neighbor Pam Houle, for all of her acts of kindness over the years. A memorial Mass will be held on Tuesday, February 4, at 11:00 AM in Saint Joseph Basilica, 53 Whitcomb Street (please meet at church). Burial will be in Saint Joseph Garden of Peace. The family requests that flowers be omitted and donations in his memory made to Saint Joseph Basilica, 53 Whitcomb Street, Webster, MA 01570. Funeral arrangements are under the direction of Sitkowski, Malboeuf & Hickey Funeral Home, 340 School Street, Webster. www.websterfunerals.com

Local students named to Dean’s List at American International College

SPRINGFIELD — American International College (AIC) in Springfield is proud to announce that 473 students have earned a place on the Dean's List for the Fall 2024 semester. These full-time students have attained GPAs ranging from 3.3 to 4.0. AIC applauds the dedication and achievements of these enterprising students.

Myah Guivas of Oxford, majoring in Nursing
Reese Reynolds of Oxford, majoring in Health Science

Founded in 1885, American International College (AIC) is a private, co-educational, doctoral granting institution located in Springfield, Massachusetts, comprising the School of Business, Arts and Sciences, the School of Education, and the School of Health Sciences. AIC supports and advances education, diversity, and opportunity for its students and the community.

Local students named to President’s List at Plymouth State University

PLYMOUTH, New Hampshire — 922 students have been named to the Plymouth State University President's List for the Fall 2024 semester. To be named to the President's List, a student must achieve a grade point average of 3.70 or better for the Fall 2024 semester and must have completed at least 12 credit hours during the semester; at least nine of which must confer grade points, at the time the lists are finalized.

Raegan Peck, Allied Health Sciences major of Dudley
Emma Chabot, Business Administration major of Dudley

About Plymouth State University
Established in 1871, Plymouth State University serves the state of New Hampshire and the world beyond by transforming our students through advanced practices where engaged learning produces well-educated undergraduates, and by providing graduate education that deepens and advances knowledge and enhances professional development. The Plymouth State Cluster Learning Model emphasizes open, integrative, and project-based experiences. With distinction, we connect with community and business partners for economic development, technological advances, healthier living, and cultural enrichment with a special commitment of service to the North Country and Lakes Region of New Hampshire. To learn more about Plymouth State University, visit www.plymouth.edu.

Nalin H. Koo graduates from University of New Haven

WEST HAVEN, Conn. — Nalin H. Koo of Oxford has received a Bachelor of Science degree in Dental Hygiene from the School of Health Sciences at the University of New Haven.

The University of New Haven, founded on the Yale University campus in 1920, is a private, coeducational university situated on the coast of southern New England. It is a comprehensive, diverse, and vibrant community of more than 6,800 undergraduate and graduate students on campuses in West Haven and Orange, Connecticut, and Tuscany, Italy.

Within our colleges and schools, students immerse themselves in a transformative, career-focused education across the liberal arts and sciences, fine arts, business, engineering, healthcare, public safety, and public service. We offer more than 100 academic programs, all grounded in a long-standing commitment to collaborative, interdisciplinary, project-based learning.

Stonehill announces Fall 2024 Dean’s List

EASTON — Stonehill College proudly recognizes the students named to the Fall 2024 Dean's List. To qualify for this recognition, students must achieve a semester grade point average of 3.50 or better. They must also have successfully completed all courses for which they were registered during the term.

Isabella Therrien of Auburn
Briana Reidy of Auburn
Samantha Katz of Dudley
Remonda Mankarios of Dudley
Matthew Anderson of Webster

About Stonehill College
Stonehill College, a Catholic institution of higher learning, was founded by the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1948. Located on the beautiful 387-acre campus and former estate of Frederick Lothrop Ames in North Easton, Massachusetts, it is a community of scholarship and faith, anchored by a belief in the inherent dignity of each person.

Through more than 100 academic programs in the liberal arts, sciences, business and pre-professional field, Stonehill College provides an education of the highest caliber that fosters critical thinking, free inquiry and the interchange of ideas for more than 2,500 students.

Stonehill College educates the whole person so that each Stonehill graduate thinks, acts and leads with courage toward the creation of a more just and compassionate world.

Local student earns Dean’s List recognition at Norwich University

NORTHFIELD, Vt. — Patrick Murphy of Dudley has been recognized on the Dean's List at Norwich University for the Fall 2024 semester.

Full-time undergraduate students, who earned a semester grade point average of at least 3.40 are awarded Dean's List honors.

About Norwich University
Norwich University is a diversified academic institution that educates traditional-age students and adults in a Corps of Cadets and as civilians. Norwich offers a broad selection of traditional and distance-learning programs culminating in baccalaureate and graduate degrees. Norwich University was founded in 1819 by Captain Alden Partridge of the U.S. Army and is the oldest private military college in the United States of America. Norwich is one of our nation's six senior military colleges and the birthplace of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). www.norwich.edu

Local students named to Dean’s List at University of New England

BIDDEFORD and PORTLAND, Maine — The following students have been named to the Dean's List for the 2024 fall semester at the University of New England.

Auburn
Kyle Kennedy, Brooke Sullivan
Dudley
Taya Lawrence

Webster
Tori Granato, Maryn LaPlante

Dean's List students have attained a grade point average of 3.3 or better out of a possible 4.0 at the end of the semester.

The University of New England is Maine's largest independent university, with two beautiful coastal campuses in Maine, a one-of-a-kind study-abroad campus in Tangier, Morocco, and an array of flexible online offerings. In an uncommonly welcoming and supportive community, we offer hands-on learning, empowering students to make a positive impact in a world full of challenges. We are the state's top provider of health professionals and home to Maine's only medical and dental colleges, a variety of other interprofessionally aligned health care programs, and nationally recognized programs in the marine sciences, the natural and social sciences, business, the humanities, and the arts. Visit www.une.edu.

BELANGER

continued from page A1

sure clinical environments and leadership roles. She spent much of her career in the Emergency Room before transitioning to administrative positions, including serving as Director of Health at a boarding school in Connecticut. Currently, she is the Nurse Manager at UMass Memorial Health Care, where she oversees three departments. Her professional excellence has been recognized through numerous accolades, including the Central Massachusetts EMS Nurse of the Year award in 2017 and a nomination for the prestigious Daisy Award in 2024.

Despite her demanding professional responsibilities, Belanger remains steadfastly committed to Saint Joseph School. Her compassionate care, accessibility to families, and dedication to the health and well-being of the community have earned her the respect and gratitude of students, parents, and staff alike. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Leah was instrumental in ensuring the school met all Department of Public Health requirements and in developing health protocols that contributed to the school's successful NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) accreditation. Her expertise and guidance provided stability during a time of uncertainty, often responding to medical needs and parent inquiries at all hours.

During the award presentation, Saint Joseph School Principal, Mrs. Beth Boudreau, reflected on Leah's invaluable contributions.

"Leah's expertise, calm demeanor, and unwavering commitment to the safety of our students and staff were invaluable," said Mrs. Boudreau. "During the COVID-19 pandemic, Leah faced some of the toughest moments with grace, even when confronted with frustration and hostility. Whether she was caring for sick students or guiding worried parents, Leah handled every situation with strength, compassion, and unwavering dedication."

Mrs. Boudreau concluded by expressing heartfelt gratitude: "Thank you, Leah, for your years of service, countless contributions, and for always putting the well-being of our students first. Your dedication exemplifies the very spirit of this award."

The Saint Joseph School community extends its deepest appreciation to Leah Belanger for her selfless service and congratulates her on receiving the 2025 Partners in Education Award. Her commitment and compassion are an inspiration to all.

BUDGET

continued from page A1

behalf." Pierangeli said it takes "a lot of work being trained in this course," and "what makes it fun [for students] is that she's invested in it." "Thank you for your energy, hard work and willingness to do something different," she added. "...Our kids certainly appreciate it." Additionally, Kontoes summarized ongoing renovation work at Bartlett,

describing the changes she's recently seen on all three floors and in the auditorium. She also noted investigating five odor complaints in December; talked about the fact the project has so far seen about \$1.2 million in change orders but is still well within the money set aside for contingency. She noted they expected most change orders to happen in the first phase, since that's half of the work, and expects the number to drop over time. Kontoes briefly mentioned a few

other maintenance issues around the district (including an elevator that trapped two teachers at Park Ave) and a cybersecurity breach reported by one of the district's contractors, PowerSchool. She said the district is still awaiting the data for what was stolen, but has been told it includes personally identifiable information. According to a Jan 23 story at ArsTechnica.com by Dan Goodin, the company "provides cloud-based software

to some 16,000 K-12 schools worldwide." He wrote another source called Bleeping Computer stated, but PowerSchool had not confirmed, "an extortion note the attacker sent to PowerSchool claimed that the personal data of 62.4 million students and 9.5 million teachers was swept up in the breach. PowerSchool said it's offering two years of free credit monitoring to all those affected." "Information stolen included individuals' names, contact information, dates of

birth, medical alert information, Social Security Numbers, and unspecified 'other related information,'" Goodin wrote. He listed 16 specific kinds of data the thieves stole from Toronto's school district, which included discipline and health records. His story is here: <https://arstechnica.com/security/2025/01/students-parents-and-teachers-still-smarting-from-breach-exposing-their-info/>. Gus Steeves can be reached at gus.steeves2@gmail.com.

SUBDIVISION

continued from page A1

proposed by Eastland Partners, which is building a similar project in Millbury. The project plans and other documents are at the Planning Board's webpage. According to Travis Brown of Turning Point Engineering, the intent is to split the work into five phases, with the main road, water and sewer line and homes along it being the first one. Side streets will be done later, and about 50 acres will be left as open space; the whole project's likely to take about six years. He said a previous developer "did a lot of work" on that land before giving up a similar project, but the wetlands flags have been lost and were not yet replaced as of Jan 15. The property has about nine acres of wetland buffer zone, he said. For the Conservation Commission, one key concern was making sure that any storm-water features are

functioning before the town grants occupancy permits for homes in each phase, and that each phase's erosion controls and infiltration basins are not being used for sediment in later phases. For a couple residents, existing erosion is an issue. Gary Katz noted there's a one-way exit from Thayer Pond proposed as part of the project, but "there's a huge hill up there." He and others were concerned runoff from that area would follow the road to Texas Pond, with Richard Flynt saying dirt is already running into the pond. "I don't think it can be contained on their property," Flynt said. Chair Paul Cunningham noted residents "need to call us" when they see that and the commission will go take a look. Brown's partner, James Bernardino, said they'll have full drainage along that road intended to capture and treat any runoff before discharging it to Texas Pond. They did have to do some clearing for soil test-

ing there last year and he promised to look for erosion issues and remedy them. Elsewhere, he said most of the wetlands will not be accessible from the roads because homes and "at least 30-40 feet of a backyard" will be between them. A few "pinch points" will be only 10-15 feet wide, though. In response to a question about handling oil and other spills, he said each home will have four parking spaces - two in a garage and two in the driveway - with catch basins for small-quantity spills. State and federal law require spills greater than eight gallons to involve the fire department and hazmat cleanup teams. That prompted a Flynt question regarding electric vehicles, where he noted battery leaks and fires can release acid. In general, the commission noted that's a planning board and fire department issue, but Cunningham said the catch basins

and/or soil should trap such releases. (Bernardino agreed.) Bernardino said the state MEPA and greenhouse gas analyses are nearly done, but they need no formal wildlife study because it's not in a natural heritage zone. "From a very large land area standpoint, we're altering a very small percentage of the buffer zone" and offsetting it with open space that's connected to open space in Auburn, he said. "We're not planning on touching that ever." One woman said she already hears blasting from her home, and is particularly concerned because "we have underground propane tanks." She said more than 40 residents signed a joint letter to the selectmen and town manager protesting that, but got no response. "I don't have any illusion about the answers we're going to get. Seems to me the most important thing here in this town and many others is the almighty buck," she said, but thanked the commission for being "a place we're being heard." Bernardino said they're still waiting for the town's peer reviewer to finish its work, predicting that will take more than two weeks. The hearing was continued to Feb. 19.

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

POLLINATORS

continued from page A1

for children and their families. It has since evolved and expanded to include community programs involving local businesses and community leaders providing activities based around four core concepts: agricultural & local partnerships, youth education, conservation of resources, and community outreach. Their 2025 educational series at The Pearle, titled "Lessons at the Library" and supported by the Dudley Cultural Council through the Mass Cultural Council, focuses on a variety of topics of the natural world, the first bring called "Powerful Pollinators" and teaching kids the importance of pollinating animals like bees and the naturally growing plants that help contribute to the ecosystem. Local 4 Life co-founder and president Erin Anderson explained that introducing these subjects to kids at an early age helps them gain a new understanding for the world they live in and all the systems that make it work. It also creates discussions within the family that can lead to memorable outdoor experiences.

"If you start with educating the kids about going outside and being observant and caring about the ecosystem around them, they will usually share that with their parents and it's a snowball effect where the families get more involved with local ecosystems and maintaining them. As a science teacher, anything to get kids to be more aware of the natural world and going outside and not being on a device is good and that's what we try to encourage with our sessions and lessons," said Anderson. The event featured presentations by local beekeeper Scott Herbert and Local 4 Life volunteer Lisa McIntosh, who is the owner of Swamp Dog Farm where she supports a native plant nursery. McIntosh explained that finding a connection to the natural world has become a lost art for some and she hopes to encourage people young and old to form a new appreciation for nature and the systems that keep the area beautiful.

"Some animals and insects survive only on certain types of plants. Garden plants we can buy at local nurseries are lovely and have an aesthetic value, but my focus is to reintroduce the concept of planting native plants adapted to our environment and encourage more food sources and habitats for wildlife," McIntosh said. "It seems to me there's a disconnect now between kids and adults and the natural world. Everybody is so focused on devices and phones and stuff like that versus a hundred years ago where you'd be working the land and be immersed in it. It's about getting people more aware of what's around them." The "Powerful Pollinators" program also included two hands-on activities that allowed kids to understand how pollination works. The first activity saw the kids design their own pollinator and using a substitute powder to pollinate flowers. The second activity had them produce bee hotels to take home and act as secondary shelters for bees who can't make it back to their hives in time. Local 4 Life will continue providing programs monthly at The Pearle through April of 2025. The remaining programs will focus on animals, composting, and plant anatomy and growth. Preregistration is highly recommended as each program only has fifteen available seats. Registration is available on the Pearle L. Crawford Library Web site or the Local 4 Life Web site.

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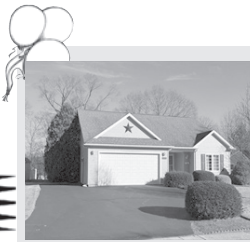
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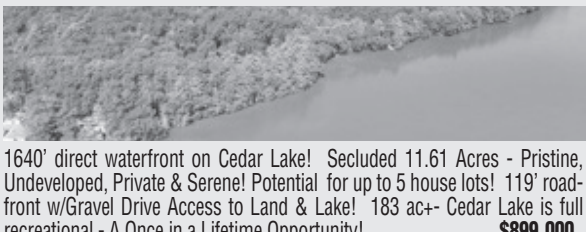
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Bay Path UNICEF Club supports Philippine athlete

CHARLTON—The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy UNICEF Club 2025 through their elected officers supports Philippine Athlete, Cyrusjet Tedi Bueno of Quezon City, Philippines. Harnessing the uniting power of sports to bring focus to global citizenship, the practical nursing students and UNICEF Club officers believe in sports as a critical tool in teaching kids about teamwork and inclusion, creating safe spaces, overall childhood development, and fostering community engagement.

The UNICEF Club elected officers are Elizabeth Achayo of Worcester as chair, Tamara Lidonde of Spencer as co-chair, Delene Sarsfield of Charlton as secretary, Loise Ngigi of South Grafton as treasurer, and Rachel Anane of Worcester as press relations officer. Achayo holds a college diploma in Human Services (career guiding and counseling, from Kenya). She is a support specialist with the Justice Resource Institute (Framingham, MA). Lidonde is a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) with experience working at Venture Community Services and CareOne Concord. She completed her secondary education at Worcester Technical High School. Sarsfield is a CNA at CareOne at Millbury. She graduated from Holy Name Central Catholic Jr./Sr. High School in Worcester. Ngigi currently works for Venture Community Services (Sturbridge) as a direct support professional. She graduated from Moi Girls Kamangu High School in Kenya. She obtained her CNA training at 3Dimensions Health Services in 2017. Anane works as staff at Arbor (Southborough). Prior to coming to Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, she has taken courses at Framingham State University. The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy UNICEF Club was founded in 2016 and each year club officers



Oxford Community Center hosts Fourth Annual Fun, Frost & Family Winter Festival



OXFORD — Once again, volunteers, vendors, and Oxford town employees created some winter magic as the Oxford Community Center hosted the town's Fourth Annual Fun, Frost & Family Winter Festival this past Saturday, Jan. 25.

The day started with a Polar Plunge into Caruncle Pond, in support of Special Olympics of Massachusetts. After the fire department cut through 9 inches of ice, more than 70 community members braved the frigid water and raised close to \$6,000 to benefit Special Olympics athletes.

Bellies were filled at the First Congregational Church's Pancake Breakfast. The fun continued onto Joslin Park and the Town Common where visitors could enjoy music, Minute-to-Win-it Games, s'mores making over the fire pits, free hot chocolate, and get some information about local recreational sports.

Adam Webster and 104-5 XLO joined us on the bandstand playing music, holding dance contests, and awarding prizes. Glitter tattoos and magic shows were provided by Clowning with LeeLee. Inside the Community Center, people could shop from our vendor fair while enjoying live music and cookie decorating. The Library hosted an art exhibit and a craft table for children. The Senior Center hosted an afternoon of Bingo.

This community event was made possible through the hard work of OCC staff, a strong and dedicated group of volunteers, funding provided by the Smolenski Millette Charitable Trust, the Mass Cultural Council, the Oxford Cultural Council, Janet Malser Humanities Trust, the support of Oxford Fire Department, Police, DPW, Library and Senior Center, and the generosity of several local businesses – The Congregational Church, P&D Oxford House of Pizza, N&J Donuts, Oxford McDonalds, Oxford Dunkin, BK Tree Service, Polar Beverages, XLO 104-5, Worcester Railers, and the Worcester Brave Hearts. Be sure to watch for next winter's festival and join the fun!

lead members through various fundraising methods that serve to educate and raise awareness of relevant issues happening locally and globally. The UNICEF Club meets after school hours. Plans are underway for educational fundraising activities.

Philippine swimmer Cyrusjet Tedi Bueno will be competing on the upcoming FOBISIA Swimming 2025 (<https://www.teemsglobal.com/fobisia-swimming-2025>), which will take place on Feb. 20 to 23 at Thanyapura, Phuket, Thailand. The 2025 FOBISIA swimming is hosted at the world-class Thanyapura Sports and Health Resort. This event will bring together talented swimmers from across Asia to compete, build camaraderie, and inspire the next generation of athletes. The event is all about the exciting opportunities to embrace the moment, form new friendships, and striving for personal bests. As a key part of the process, Bueno's participation is through generous supporters to help cover the costs of travel, accommodation, training, equipment, and cost of participation.

DA's office receives \$50,000 to implement Juvenile Diversion program

WORCESTER — The Worcester County District Attorney's Office has received a \$50,000 grant to expand its youth diversion program to the residents of Southbridge and Fitchburg, according to Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr.

The grant from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) will allow the office, in collaboration with Choices, Inc., to expand the Early Diversion Worcester (EDW) program, which diverts vulnerable adolescents between the ages of 12 to 18 who might otherwise enter the criminal justice system due to the impact of school suspensions.

"By reaching kids early, we can work to adapt and modify behavior, while hopefully preventing a lifetime of involvement with the criminal justice system," Early said. "This is crime prevention at its best."

The current Early Diversion Program has successfully enrolled and screened 60 youth since its full implementation in February 2024. One parent of a participant shared, "The Choices program is a supportive, accepting environment that has had a huge impact on my son and our family. In just a couple of months, he has made new friends and has found the motivation to strive for his dreams again. We are forever grateful."

Research by Citizens For Juvenile Justice (CFJJ) has shown that youth are twice as likely to be arrested during periods of school suspension or expulsion. In response to this issue, the Healey-Driscoll Administration allocated nearly \$200,000 through the Title II Formula Grant Program to support nonprofit organizations, local police, and state agencies working to prevent at-risk youth from entering the juvenile justice system. The funding is designed to improve outcomes for adolescents through community-based organizations that offer essential services and support.

The program offers a pre-arrest diversion model that provides comprehensive, trauma-informed, recovery-oriented, and equity-based behavioral health services to youth and their families. These services will be provided at the Choices program center in Worcester, where participants will receive individualized care.

Voluntary participants in the program will undergo a comprehensive intake and assessment, which will guide the development of a person-centered care plan. This plan will consider the child's current risk status, history, available resources, and the needs of both the child and their family. In addition, participants will have access to daily programming and free transportation to the Choices center in Worcester. It is anticipated that the program will assist 20 to 25 youth through the duration of the grant.



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