

Auburn News

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March 7, 2025

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School Committee approves 'placeholder' budget, expects more cuts

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

WEBSTER — The School Committee sent a “placeholder” \$28.26 million budget to the town to meet its late-February charter deadline on Feb. 25, but expects to still have to do a lot of work on it.

Among other things, the town has asked to see a budget option that has only a 4 percent increase over last year, but the placeholder is still 5.6 percent higher. The district originally proposed one that was \$29 million.

As Superintendent Monique Pierangeli said, “There will be significant reductions” going forward, and she scheduled a budget workshop with the committee for March 13.

Business Manager Lisa Kontoes said this version of the budget was reduced slightly from the previous iteration by a “refinement of our utilities” and shifting the cost of the school resource officer to the police department’s budget. Previously, it had been partly paid by the schools.

Kontoes said they’re particularly concerned about the potential impact of federal cuts, but it’s “unknown at this point whether or not that will result in changes of funding to our title grants or special education grants.” Webster receives \$1.3 million for Title I and special ed alone, never mind Title II, IV and early childhood and other funding, Pierangeli added.

At the Feb. 11 meeting, Pierangeli said hitting the town’s 4 percent request “is not going to be easy,” since that’ll mean about \$500,000 in further cuts.

“We don’t have a lot of fluff or extra stuff built into our budget ... It’s very difficult to cut that big a number without getting into personnel,” she added.

As it is, the schools have already proposed and eliminated some posts they’ve wanted to fill for years, including permanent substitutes and a language teacher. Back in January, the original proposal included seven new jobs (some of which are partly grant funded) — half of an ELL teacher, quarter of a Bryt coordinator, a middle school language teacher, a nurse assistant and three building substitutes. It also put nine special ed staff that are now funded by grant money into the regular budget next year, plus a half-time nurse for the middle and high schools.

Pierangeli said they’re “trying to be creative” and find ways “to reduce a position (in the budget) without reducing a body.”

In January, Pierangeli and Kontoes said 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 above state average, as is its 25 percent disability count and its 251 ELL students getting services. Webster also serves 534 students 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, with much of the extra cost coming from transportation to out-of-district services.

A public hearing’s slated for April 8, and town meeting will decide on it and other items May 12.

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



Courtesy

ZION LUTHERAN, CHURCH OF THE RECONCILIATION SCORE FOR SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Souper Bowl of Caring is a nationwide effort to tackle hunger in our local communities. Using the energy of the Super Bowl to spark generosity and commitment, cans of soup are collected before and on the big game day for our neighbors experiencing food insecurity. Again this year, Zion Lutheran Church, Oxford, and Church of the Reconciliation, Webster, teamed up to amass 517 cans to be donated to the Oxford Ecumenical Food Shelf and the Webster-Dudley Food Share. Our children were very excited to share the grand total with our parishioners!

Oxford School Committee hears proposals to slash budget

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

OXFORD — The School Committee looked last week at its options to meet Town Manager Jen Callahan’s request they

both level fund their budget and cut an extra \$380,000.

According to Superintendent Mike Lucas, the issue is that the town is finding itself in a \$760,000 deficit.

With the schools making up half of the budget, they’re getting half of that deficit to deal with, so he proposed several items for them to consider cutting to get there. To get to level funded from what they’d already been considering would mean a \$660,000 reduction, he said.

In total, he said, the change reduce the district’s budget proposal by \$1.04 million.

Many changes for the first part were actually not cuts, though. Instead, Lucas and Business Manager Matt Bobola were proposing shifting many expenses from their regular budget into revolving funds, as follows: four teachers to be funded by school choice (\$260,000); one teacher by the ACE (formerly Project Coffee) fund (\$65,000); adding \$20,000 to the amount they already use from the athletic fund; add \$30,000 between the food service and Educare funds; and using \$30,000 more from the finance contingency.

They later noted using those revolving funds that way is not sustainable.

Other items would require actual cuts: cutting two teachers

(\$130,980); eliminating the school resource officer (\$30,000); cutting a half-time person whose “already ready to retire soon” (\$31,000); halving the year’s Chromebook purchase (eliminating the 6th grade and just buying for 9th); eliminating the year’s planned curriculum upgrade (languages, \$30,000), skipping this year’s audit (\$10,000); and cutting \$12,500 from kindergarten assistant hours.

“This is going to affect every school,” Lucas said, but noted he’s not ready to specify which staff might be cut, in part because it’s still too early and because nobody’s been notified. “I will have a conversation with those people directly. In fairness to them, they have to have a heads-up” to find new jobs.

He later noted using revolving funds this way is essentially the same as using the stabilization fund, leaving no money for other uses or emergencies.

Those changes just get to level funding, Lucas added before listing two major options to cover the district’s share of the additional deficit. The simple one would cut a minimum of six more

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Hazard Mitigation Plan to be sent to MEMA

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY — Dudley’s updated Hazard Mitigation Plan is being made available for public review before it is presented to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) next month.

The Board of selectmen held the second public hearing to review the updates on Feb. 24 which were presented by Jamie Caplan, Project Manager of Jamie Caplan Consulting LLC, who broke down some of the focus points of the plan which is designed to help Dudley prepare for potential disasters and events rather than react to them. Caplan explained that statistics show every dollar spent on hazard mitigation saves the town six dollars in recovery making preparation for any potential situation more cost effective than responding after the fact.

“Mitigation is what you do when you’re not having a disaster,” said Caplan. “You know that it’s possible, but there are things that we could do to lessen the impact of a disaster and we’re thinking only about natural hazards so, for instance, we can’t stop extreme temperatures, but we can do things to make sure that our power doesn’t go out and we’re not getting too cold, or our pipes aren’t freezing, that kind of thing is what mitigation is all about.”

The plan focuses on Dudley’s vulnerabilities and how the town can utilize both new and existing resources to resolve them. It’s also essential to Dudley qualifying for pre-disaster mitigation grants including fund-

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Dudley FD’s Lt. Kevin Holstrom honored for saving a life



—DUDLEY — The Dudley Fire Department commends Lt. Kevin Holstrom for his quick response and life-saving expertise during a recent cardiac emergency at the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy.

While serving in a support role at the fire academy on Jan. 29, Holstrom stepped into action helping save the life of a fellow firefighter.

Holstrom’s actions were essential to the successful resuscitation of a recruit who had suffered a cardiac event. His efforts, in conjunction with other mem-

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Dudley Rec Commission approves playground design

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

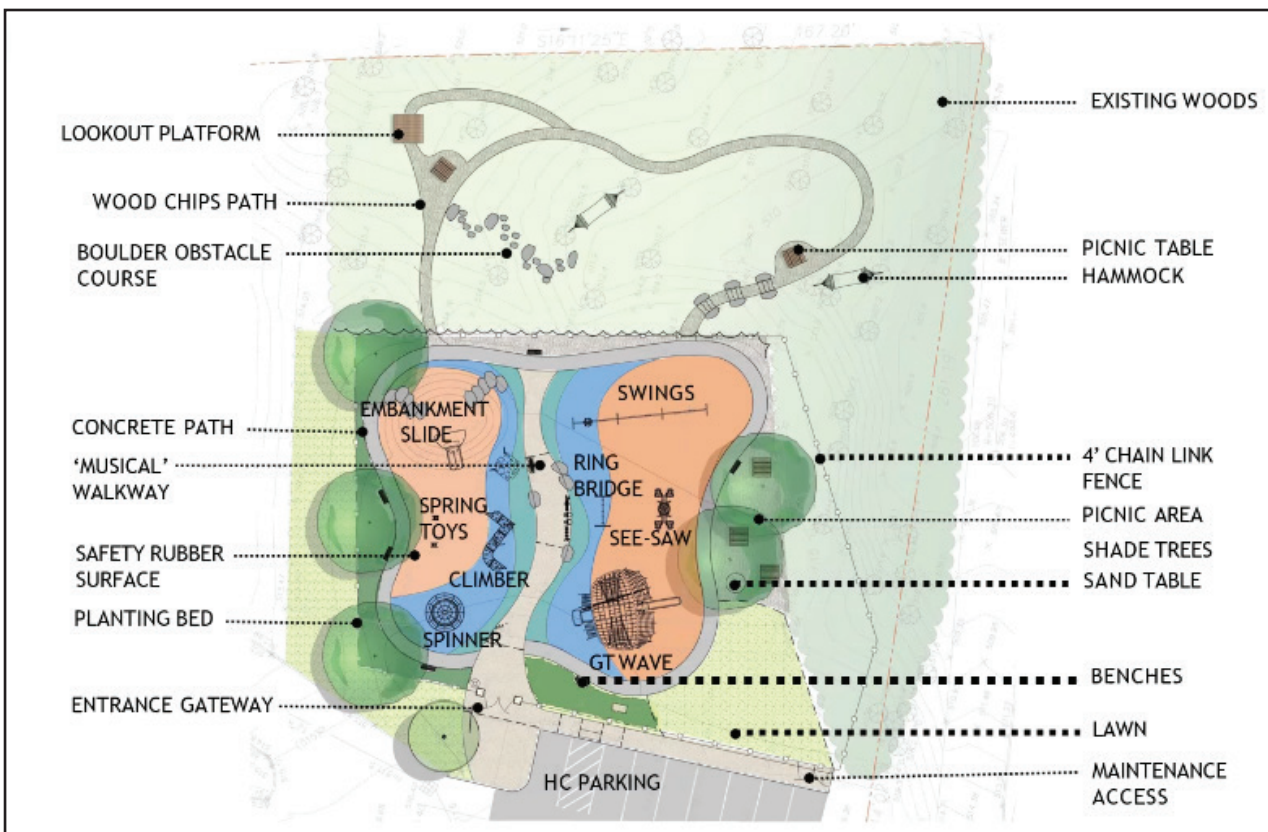
DUDLEY—The Dudley Recreation Commission has approved the design for the new Richard Carmignani, Sr. Playground, also known as the Fun Zone, at the Dudley Municipal Complex, and will be seeking new bids for the equipment.

The motions, made on Feb. 25, established a planned layout for the new park which was approved at a special town meeting in October albeit with a water park element removed at the request of voters. The design presented by Michael Radner of Radner Design Associates, a consultant on the project, includes a variety of playground staples including spring toys, a spinner, swings, and a see saw to name

a few in an area split in half by a center walkway with a path into the wooded area behind the grounds. The new playground will be built adjacent to the upper parking lot of the town municipal complex.

The project was selected by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to received up to \$496,650 in Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grant assistance funding. Voters approved borrowing \$704,410 for the project in October with the PARC grant set to reimburse up to 70 percent of the final cost.

The discussion on Feb. 25 mostly focused on the playground equipment with bids presented from three vendors: Gametime, Kompan, and Landscape Structures. Landscape



provided two bids for the project. Its primary bid, which fell in line with the bid of the other two competitors, was the most expensive option on the list at \$214,447 while its second bid, which was a more stripped-down option with less equipment, was the cheapest bid at \$169,361. Gametime provided the cheapest option of the primary bids. The committee heavily

considered Landscape's alternate, cheaper option, with Radner recommending that if the commission chose that option they also give Gametime and Kompan and opportunity to provide their own competitive prices.

"I think it's worth it. If this is what you want, let's go with this," said Radner. "I don't know about the legality of it, but to be fair to the other bidders, I would want to go back to them."

The committee eventually decided to put the equipment purchases back out to bid to allow all three companies to offer

their own less expensive option.

Other elements of the project discussed at the meeting included the furniture for the park, a musical path proposed for the walkway, and the material that would be used for the playground surfacing. The surfacing was possibly the most significant issue secondary to the equipment with Radner discussing the options of pour-in-place versus a wood fiber surface and the possibility of using both. The commission directed Radner to seek bids for either option. They also

instructed Radner to leave the musical path off of the project bid for later discussion.

While many elements of the project remain in flux, the approval of the design at the Feb. 25 meeting will allow Radner Design Associates to proceed with writing up the bid documents for the project installation. Those bids would help finalize the construction cost of the playground proper while the Recreation Commission continues to finalize the cost of all the different pieces.

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Cut a little bit off
- 5. State with confidence
- 11. River in NE Scotland
- 14. Not narrow
- 15. Lacking social polish
- 16. Amount of time
- 17. Frame
- 19. Automobile
- 20. Toadstools
- 21. High school dances
- 22. Utilize
- 23. Challenged
- 25. One-sided
- 27. Showing extreme greed
- 31. Potted plants
- 34. Everyone has one
- 35. Lake in Botswana
- 38. E.T. rode in one
- 39. Juniors' parents
- 41. Small amount
- 42. Mother of Perseus
- 44. Ornamental box
- 45. Gov't investigators
- 46. Uncertain
- 49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
- 51. The vast grassy plains in S. America
- 55. Your consciousness of your own identity
- 56. Noted consumer advocate
- 60. Spanish sports club
- 61. Body part
- 62. Tractability
- 64. Woman (French)
- 65. Ready and willing to be taught
- 66. Muslim rite title
- 67. Depressed
- 68. Gradually gave way
- 69. Clear-thinking

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Brushed aside
- 2. Water sprite
- 3. Ones to look up to
- 4. Monetary units
- 5. A number everyone has
- 6. Marine invertebrate
- 7. One who takes you to court
- 8. Indicates outer
- 9. Parallelograms
- 10. Strains
- 11. Cross
- 12. A way to remove
- 13. Some pages are dog-__
- 18. Ukraine city
- 24. A citizen of Denmark
- 26. Summer month (abbr.)
- 28. Hindu queens
- 29. Jewelry brand
- 30. Fictional rider of Rohan
- 31. Wet dirt
- 32. Russian city
- 33. Observed
- 36. Furious
- 37. Drivers' licenses
- 39. Musical composition
- 40. Auction
- 43. They __
- 45. Women
- 47. Inspire with love
- 48. Japanese ankle sock
- 49. Appears
- 50. Old World lizard
- 52. The leading performer
- 53. Type of protein
- 54. Pennsylvania town
- 57. Art __: around 1920
- 58. __ Blyton, children's author
- 59. Abnormal breathing
- 63. A place to sleep

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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Dudley seeking individuals to serve on Government Study Committee

DUDLEY — The Town of Dudley is seeking individuals to serve on the newly formed Government Study Committee, a key initiative recommended in a recent state financial management review.

This committee will evaluate the town's government structure and recommend solutions to improve coordination, communication, and efficiency. The Board of Selectmen will appoint members who must approach this study with an open, fact-finding mindset, free from any predetermined agendas.

The development of this committee follows a financial management audit conducted by the state Division of Local Services (DLS) at the request of the Board of Selectmen, after repeated calls from residents. The audit covered concerns over budget shortfalls, Proposition 2 1/2 override elections in the summer 2023, and ongoing fiscal challenges, including staff turnover due to better-paying opportunities elsewhere.

A key finding of the report emphasized that Dudley's decentralized government structure lacks essential coordination and communication, hindering its ability to function effectively and efficiently. Addressing this issue will be the primary focus of the committee's work.

Committee responsibilities will include reviewing the town's organizational structure, identifying inefficiencies, researching best practices in peer communities, and gathering input from town officials and residents. The study will begin in May 2025 and conclude by May 2026, when the committee will present its findings and recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. These recommendations may lead to further action at the May 2026 Annual Town Meeting.

The town seeks individuals with relevant experience in local government, finance, management, public administration, or related fields who can contribute a fresh, objective perspective. To ensure impartiality, appointments will be made at the discretion of the Board of Selectmen based on qualifications, experience, and the ability to engage in an unbiased, fact-driven approach.

Interested individuals should submit a letter of interest, including a brief background of qualifications, to the Dudley Board of Selectmen at townadmin2@dudleyma.gov by March 31.

For more details, including the full DLS audit report, responding action plan, and related information, visit www.dudleyma.gov/town-administrators-office/pages/state-financial-management-audit.

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Local schools receive grant funding for mental health services

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION — Local school districts will receive grant funding as part of a state effort to expand student access to behavioral and mental health services.

The Healey-Driscoll Administration will award \$5,540,875 in grants to 60 school districts, educational collaboratives, and charter schools across Massachusetts.

Funds can be used to create or expand student support programs and services. Funds can also assist with building school partnerships with community-based mental health agencies or providers.

In addition, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will provide related professional development opportunities for school staff members.

“We have a mental health crisis that was only made worse by the pandemic, particularly for students. That’s why improving students’ access to behavioral and mental healthcare is a priority for our administration,” said Gov. Maura Healey. “These grants will help districts connect students with the services they need to be safe, healthy, and successful today and into the future.”

Local grant recipients include Southbridge Public Schools (\$63,125); Uxbridge Public Schools (\$50,864); Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School (\$37,150); and Belchertown Public Schools (\$25,080).

“We are grateful to the educators and community-based providers who are partnering and innovating to improve supports for students,” said Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll. “These services are essential for helping students be successful academically and to build healthy relationships with their peers and teachers.”

Grant funding will provide students with a range of services and

resources to help them address mental health and behavioral health challenges. Additionally, funds will help school districts establish cross-system coordination to improve integration of behavioral and mental health supports, ensuring seamless transitions between schools and communities while improving data systems to track efforts and results.

“The Healey-Driscoll Administration is focused on healing, stabilizing, and transforming our education system that is still recovering from the lasting impacts of the pandemic. These grants are providing our schools, from North

Adams to Dennis, with the funding they need to foster environments that support healthy social and emotional development in their classrooms and beyond,” said Massachusetts Education Secretary Patrick Tutwiler, who recently visited the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District and has been active across central and western Massachusetts.

Addressing the youth mental health crisis remains a top priority for the Healey-Driscoll Administration. Healey’s Fiscal Year 2026 budget includes more than \$21

million to support student behavioral and mental health services.

“Our educators are working to create safe and healthy learning environments that are joyful, engaging, and equitable for every child,” said Massachusetts Elementary and Secondary Education Acting Commissioner Russell Johnston. “These grants will help provide student supports that advance that important work.”

To learn more about grant opportunities and recipients, visit www.mass.gov.

Dudley seeking citizens’ comments on draft Hazard Mitigation Plan

DUDLEY — The natural hazards that pose the greatest risks to Dudley include the potential for flooding, tornadoes, earthquakes, and more.

At a Dudley Board of Selectmen public hearing on Feb. 24, hazard mitigation expert and town consultant Jamie Caplan presented a draft plan that covers disaster preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery.

Caplan’s work, funded by the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program, began in July. Mitigation Plan

The updated Hazard identifies these risks and outlines actionable steps to mitigate them. With a FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan, the town becomes eligible for critical pre- and post-disaster mitigation grant funding from FEMA.

The town now seeks input from residents to help our emergency management officials in their work to prioritize risks, identify vulnerable areas, and craft effective solutions. While we can’t prevent natural events like winter storms, heavy rains, or earthquakes, we can mitigate their risk with proper planning and community engagement. Your participation will help make Dudley more resilient to natural hazards and climate change.

Please see the plan and downloadable comment form at <https://www.dudleyma.gov/home/news/dudley-hazard-mitigation-plan-public-review-and-feedback-form>.

The deadline for citizens’ comments is March 10.

For questions regarding this plan, please contact Fire Chief Dean Kochanowski at 508-949-8040 or dudleyfirechief@dudleyma.gov.

REAL ESTATE

AUBURN

\$2,200,000, 482 Southbridge St, Jaf Rt, and Szeto, Julie, to Jerusalem LLC.

\$1,200,000, 11 Bridge St, C & L Rt, and Victor, Lynn E, to Jack Soltys D 4 A T, and Soltys, Michael.

\$580,000, 126 Rochdale St, Johnson, Ellen A, to Lanotte, Nicholas J.

\$425,000, 24 Curtis St, Palmaccio, Anita, and Allard, Marvel, to Anderson, Carolynn.

\$345,000, 6 Prospect Pkwy, Baril Maureen Est, and Sargent, Rhonda, to Weydt, Achara, and Weydt, Brian N.

DUDLEY

\$385,000, 12 Lynn Ln, Rvz Investments Inc, to Morin, David, and Morin, Julie.

OXFORD

\$1,200,000, Leicester St #1, C & L Rt, and Victor, Lynn E, to Jack Soltys D 4 A T, and Soltys, Michael.

\$520,000, 51 Howarth Rd, Franklin Plow Co LLC, to Monette, Emily, and Monette, Matthew.

\$375,000, 20 Pine St, Holmes David S Est, and Holmes, David R, to Clover, Cassandra, and Clover, Ryan.

\$319,000, 32 Plantation Rd #32, Sussenguth, Peter, and Schatz, Julie, to Heffron, Gabrielle, and Duellberg 2nd, Stephan.

\$180,000, 128 Main St, Benway, Shawn E, and Bk Of Ny Mellon Tr, to Structured Ass Ii T 2006-, and Bk Of Ny Mellon Tr.

WEBSTER

\$1,700,000, 56 E Main St, Webster Apartments LLC, to Wps Cm 27 LLC.

\$1,700,000, 58 Negus St, Webster Apartments LLC, to Wps Cm 27 LLC.

\$1,700,000, 60 Negus St, Webster Apartments LLC, to Wps Cm 27 LLC.

\$620,000, 1005 Treasure Island Rd #1005, Boothe Ft, and Boothe, Alan J, to Rungta, Sonalika.

\$192,000, 14 Crosby St, Wylie, Dianne, and Palmaccio, Anita, to Aps Res & Const Inc.

Mary Goodney

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Friday’s Child



Kolton
Age 14
Registration # 8558

Kolton is energetic, funny, insightful, and thoughtful! He loves listening to NPR, and is good at the “Wait, Wait Don’t Tell Me” game show that is hosted on the channel. Kolton is also super creative. He can build any type of car or airplane with LEGO, and any toy he wants to play with by using paper and tape. He is also creative through other mediums, such as Mine Craft, and would play this all day if he were allowed. Kolton is not one for competitive team sports, however, he enjoys kicking a soccer ball, throwing a football,

and bouncing a basketball.

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/21175660317>

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

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



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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.

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS: ESL Classes – TUESDAYS at 6:00PM

The Literacy Cafe is a free weekly English conversation class offered by Literacy Volunteers of South Central Massachusetts (LVSCM). This class is free to attend and is open to all adults. No pre-registration is required.

REC Farmers Market – TUESDAYS 4:00-5:30PM

Pop-up Farmers Market located in our Community Room. The REC is running the market and the accept SNAP, cash, and credit.

COOKBOOK CLUB – Tuesday, March 4th 6:00PM

February’s book is Eat Better, Feel Better by Giada De Laurentiis. 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.

LIBRARY FOR ALL: Chair Yoga – Friday, March 7th 10:00-11:00AM

Join Jess for a one hour Chair Yoga class as part of our Library for All Program. Leave class feeling refreshed and calm. No experience necessary. This class is for teens and adults of all abilities and their caregivers. Please call ahead if special accommodations or requirements are needed. We are happy to accommodate!

SBA Resource & Lender Expo – Wednesday, March 12th 9:00-1:00PM

Join the SBA’s Connecticut and Massachusetts District Offices for an in-person Access to Capital and Small Business Resources Expo. This is a dynamic opportunity to network and learn about the resources available for small businesses to start, grow, and expand. Learn more about access to capital and opportunities to grow your business from guest speakers and industry experts. You will be able to connect with lending institutions, small business organizations, and government agencies in attendance.

FRIENDS’ SPRING CONCERT SERIES: Claudia Schmidt and Jane Miller Thursday, March 13th 6:30-7:30PM

Claudia and Jane met by chance last summer at the Bull Run in Shirley MA. They have been getting together to build a repertoire incorporating standards, blues, some originals as well as a little spoken word here and there. Come and hear this fresh and delightful collaboration!

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 February we’re doing Origami.

TODDLER 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 GAMES – 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.

MESSY ART STORYTIME– FRIDAY March 7th and FRIDAY March 14th at 10:00AM

Come explore different art mediums through stories and fun creations! This program is perfect for ages 2-5 and will have your little one creating messy art weekly. Please wear art-appropriate clothing.

WIGGLES & GIGGLES – Friday, March 7th 3:00-4:00PM

This session is open to the public and no registration is required! Children ages 2-5, with a parent/caregiver, will sing, move, play musical instruments, learn rhythm and listen to stories with music teacher, Laine Hanlon.

FAMILY COOKING NIGHT – Tuesday, March 11th 6:00PM and 7:00PM

Join us for a Family pizza making event! We will have all the ingredients you need to make a delicious savory meal. This program requires registration.

SNOW MUCH FUN – SATURDAYS at 11:30AM

We’ll be featuring several fun activities on Saturdays this winter. Owl Always Love You: Family Paint Event is on March 8th from 11:30-12:30. This paint program requires registration. Pop-Up Art: Felt Froggy Hoop is on March 15th from 11:30-1:00 and requires registration.

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 two business days 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, 3/11, Beef Stew, rice, corn niblets. Wednesday, 3/12, Hot Dog, baked beans, coleslaw. Thursday, 3/13, Meatloaf w/ Gravy, garlic mashed potatoes, peas and onions. Friday, 3/14, Soup du Jour, cranberry chicken salad, 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.

Fraud Seminar- Webster Five Cents Savings Bank, and the Webster Police Department will be presenting a two-part seminar on recognizing scams and combatting fraud in 2025 and beyond. Both parts will be held at the Webster Senior Center on Thursday, March 20th and Thursday, March 27th from 12:15PM- 1:00PM. No registration required.

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 March 12th is Rambo, March 19th is The Legend of Longwood, and March 26th is Walk the Line.

The first Thursday of every month we will be open until 7:00pm for a night of entertainment. Join us on Thursday, April 3rd at 4:30PM. Michele Thorne will be teaching you how to decoupage your own mason jar tissue holder. Registration is required, with a maximum of 20 people, and a fee of \$6. Please sign up at the front desk during normal operating hours.

COA Meetings are the first Monday of the month, and are open to the public. The Next meet-

ing will be Monday, April 7th @ 10:00 am.

Friend’s Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month, and are open to the public. The Next meeting will be Wednesday, March 12th @ 10:00 am.

St. Patrick’s Day Celebration- Join us on March 10th at 1:00 PM for some Irish Music, and light refreshments. Sponsored by the Friends of the Senior Center.

Forget Me Not Café- Join us on March 28th at 1:00 PM for music by Bill Riedy, and light refreshments. Sponsored by the Friends of the Senior Center

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.

Knitting/Crochet group meets on Mondays from 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!

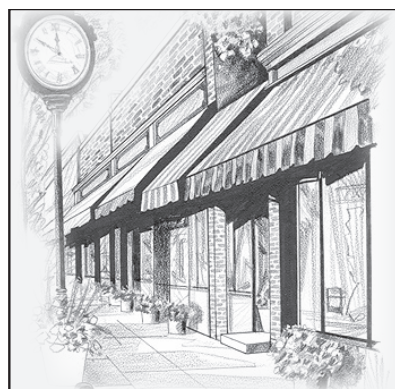
Calling card players or interested persons to the Webster Senior Center! Come join us for six-card or thirteen-card pitch! Six-card pitch meets on Wednesdays at 1:00 pm. Thirteen-card pitch meets on Thursdays at 1:00 pm.

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.



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SENIORS NAMED TO BAY PATH'S QUARTER 2 HONOR ROLL

CHARLTON — Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical School congratulates the following students in grade 12 on being named to the honor roll for the second quarter of the 2024-2025 school year.

High Honors
Kaelen James Anderson, Minos Anifantis, Yheraldine Mercedes Baez, Claire Elizabeth Baudreau, Amberlyn Avon Brindle,

Kendra Nicole Brooks, Jameson Patrick Burke, Mikayla Lynn Crocker, Ryan Charles Dawson, Madison Rose Dolan, Conor Fergal Gadbois, Erin Elizabeth Gallant, Keegan Gary Pike Hall, Lexie Rose Harris, McKayla Rose Hoel, Ava Lillie Iozzo, Nathan William Lashua, Eva Noel Lombardi, Miranda Rose Magalhaes, Lillian Virginia Maglich, Joseph Charles Mancini, Ayla Milagros McGrail, Isabel

Constance McLam, Calle Jean Merchant, Ava Patricia Millette, Cheyenne Elizabeth Monsen, Zachary Lee Moody, Jacob John Joseph Morello, Ava Reese Murray, Maya Selena Ortiz, Willis James Perreault, Naomi Rose Peterson, Dylan Michael Polinski, Gabriel Souza Prado, Kaylie Anna Richard, Lilianna Cassandra Rockwood, Savannah Rose Steiner, Cassandra Alyson Tinsley, Brady Logan Tremblay, Vincent William Van Dam, Angelica Vega, Alison Elyse Welton, Amelia Claire White

Honors
Anna Marie Aboe, Kortnie Frances Adams, Nicholas Raymond Adler, Rima Ahmed Qays Al-Dulaimi, Wrique Gabriel Da Silva Alves, Connor Michael Belanger, Hope Elizabeth Belford, Jessica Claire Benoit, Joshua William Ricardo Blackwell, Bria Annmarie Bogar, Kendall Lynn Bond, Lake Sayge Boucher, Kaiden Conner Bouchu, Brea Adriane Brunelle-Jacoby, Gianna Mary Burbank, Julia Loralee Burgos, Jonathan Riley Burke, Robert Edward Casati, Matthew Robert Chatterton, Joshua Michael Chumsae, Makayla Therese Collazo, Olivia Rose Collins, Catherine Anne Comeau, Noah Jonathon Cournoyer, Adison Lenna Daoust, Philipe Monte Santiago Dasilva, Hunter Kevin Davis, Jenna Marie

Defosse, Rori Jean Rockwell Donohoe, Carly James Donohue, Jared Peter Dubovick, Emma Faith Marie Dwyer, Logan Shawn Edwards, Sophia Anna Falconer, Jaden James Fall, Claire Patricia Farrar, Midrose Davilena Freeman, Corey Michael Gaulin, Hailee Lynne Gelinas, Reyna Dianelys Gonzalez, Noah Zachary Goulet, Alicia Marie Graveson, Devan Ryan Grensavitch, Matthew David Guerin, Savannah Lee Harrison, Joshua Drew Hemingway, Valerie Ana Hilner, Molly Ruth Isaacs, Kayah Jadczyk, Elena Gabriela Jerez, Jacob Matthew Johnson, Jacob Jaiden Jurado, Emma Rose Knott, Enzo Arnaldo Lagares, Samuel Keith Lamont, Katherine Ruth Landgren, Samantha Marlene Landgren, Emma Olivia Leclair, Benjamin Ryan Lombardi, James Danlan MacConnell, Brady Francis Marcoux, Corbin James Marcustre, Kyle Francis Mazur, Emma Grace McLaughlin, Paul Joseph McManus, Jersey Alecea Mejias, Sullivan Joseph Brave Bear Morse, Elyce Chamberlyn Mort, Camron John Mortell, Julian Ryan Mucci, Yahir Jose Negrón Claudio, Kayleigh Elizabeth Norris, Matthew Christopher Nowak, Dale William Nussey, Ashlyn Joy Olejniczak, Morgan Elizabeth O'Malley, Alaina

Maria Pafume, Dominic Antonio Paldino, Jack Anthony Papagni, Jocelyn Amylia Patterson, Bruna Fagundes Freitas Paula, Raegan Lydia Perreault, Isabella Britni Pettinelli, Brad Francis Guy Piekarczyk, Wojciech Alexander Plewa, Eva Amara Powers, Vince Jordan Randall-Ortiz, Nicholas Scott Reardon, Aidan Troy Roberts, Luzmarianna Jacsél Rodriguez Cirino, Jennalee Karielis Ruibal-Rios, John Cameron Rutter, Corey Justin Scovil, Nash Brennan Sica ri-Swinimer, Raymond David St. Francis, Zaydyn John Streeter-Wornham, Zoeybeth Jane Streeter-Wornham, John Gustavo Sullivan, Aaliyah Brooklyn Szkutak, Madison Riley Teal, John Phillip Tighe, Hallie Calais Sampson Tod, Matthew Lee Twombly, Manaali Durgesh Vaidya, Nayelix Marie Vega, Adrian Joseph Vitkos, Mackenzie Marie Widen, Dayzyah Jahmay Wintzel Neely, Cayden James Young

Connor Paul Allain, Dominic Michael Balducci, Zachary Kenneth Bogar, Camden Christian Bousquet, Noah Troy Brown, Jason Robert Brum, Adrianna Marie Burdick, Aidan Patrick Carpenter, Hannah Mae Cavan, Mikayla Renee Clyne, Travis Kinsley Cronin, Isabelle Ann Crump, Mariah Lynne Cutroni, Ari Joseph Erkoc, Arianna Lynn Figueroa, Anthony Alexander Gonzalez, John Waring Gordon, Charlotte Elizabeth Hast, Skylar Jeannette Johnson-Mello, Austin Devin Kravitz, Jack Christopher Mahoney, Aiden Michael McCarthy, Kailyn Elizabeth McHugh, Jed Dean McManus, Blayke James Morse, Andy Manuel Nieves, William Emmanuel Pacheco, Emerson Rose Pitz, Melany Rose Rebeiro, Lizmarie Taiz Rodriguez-Soto, Brayden Roland Ryan, Jeisery Santiago Martinez, Benjamin Lucas Scobie, Aysel Silva Nieves, Anthony John Sullivan, Kathryn Alayna Szretter, Kaeden Anthony Zajkowski-Gonzalez

Principal's List

Local residents make Dean's List at Wentworth Institute of Technology

BOSTON — The following local students have made the dean's list at Wentworth Institute of Technology for the Fall 2024 semester.

Morelia Estefania Mercadante of Auburn
Caner Derenas of Auburn

Kristin Wennerberg of Dudley

Jason Mahlert of Oxford

Logan Vieira of Oxford

Zackary Valentine of Oxford

Wentworth Institute of Technology Founded in 1904, Wentworth Institute of Technology provides a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, project-based education in architecture and design, computing and data science, engineering, management, and sciences and humanities that integrates classroom, laboratory, studio, cooperative and experiential learning to develop career-ready, skilled professionals, and engaged citizens. The University of Opportunity, Wentworth aims to be a student-centered institution that offers high-quality undergraduate, graduate, and life-long learning programs, and embraces a culture of innovation and creativity. Hands-on. Future-Ready. Education that's worth it. Wentworth.

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

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.

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 Wednesday @ 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 – March movie is "Fever Pitch"
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.



Courtesy

Photo shows members of Team Fairlawn from left front row Giselle Rosario of Southbridge, Flory Muleka of Worcester, Katelyn Smith of Charlton, and Donita Bytqi of Rutland. Standing from left, Nadeige Octavius of Millbury, Ferdinand Lukadi of Framingham, Anakeesha Gray of Worcester, Ashley Rincon of Southbridge, and Professor McGrath.

Bay Path Nursing students celebrate 100 days of school

CHARLTON — "Thank you for celebrating 100 days in nursing school!" shared Getheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN, Academy Director to the PN Class of 2025.

The Nursing Students who are members of Team Fairlawn were on campus with Professor Angela McGrath and celebrated the 100th day of nursing school in their own unique way.

To commemorate the event, Professor McGrath brought healthy snacks, distributed flowers, and all posed with a 100th day sign.

"Celebrating the 100th day is celebrating the learning and growing and incorporating some fun," said Bolandrina. "Nursing school is busy, life is busy, but our nursing students enjoy the build up to this day, and it is amazing to see their progress over the preceding months."

Originally, the academic premise behind the 100th day is to integrate learning to count with fun activities that encourage young children to explore their environment while applying what they've learned in the classroom. This is the first time that the Practical Nursing Academy celebrated the 100th day with the adult learners.

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- Roll the account over to an individual retirement account (IRA).
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We can talk through your financial goals and find the option that works best for you.



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IRT-1948M-A AECSPAD 24871029

PET of the WEEK



Radar

Radar is a shy, sensitive pup who needs a patient, understanding adopter to help him come out of his shell. He may take time to warm up, but once he trusts you, he's a devoted companion who just wants to be close. If you're looking for a project pup who will reward your patience with unwavering loyalty, Radar could be your perfect match! Radar is still learning how to navigate the world. He's fearful of new people, places, and experiences, but he's also curious and wants to be a good boy. Right now, he prefers to observe from a safe distance rather than engage, but he's started showing his sweet and cuddly side with his foster. He loves having a cozy spot to retreat to—his crate is his happy place—and he enjoys quiet companionship rather than constant attention. Radar is looking for a calm, adult-only home where he can take things at his own pace. He's looking for a confident canine companion to help show him the ropes, may do well as a solo dog, and is ok with cats. He's still working on house training, leash walking, and trusting new people, so he'll need someone willing to provide the patience, space, and positive reinforcement he needs to gain confidence.

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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
STONEBRIDGE PRESS PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

Neighbors helping neighbors — why sticking local matters more than ever

The world feels overwhelming right now. Between national headlines, global crises, and a constant stream of bad news, it's easy to feel powerless. But the truth is, the biggest impact we can make is right in our own backyard. When times are tough, neighbors helping neighbors is what keeps communities strong, and nothing embodies that better than mutual aid.

Mutual aid isn't charity. It's not about "helping the less fortunate" from a place of pity or obligation. It's about people looking out for one another as equals, sharing resources, skills, and support in a way that builds real relationships and resilience. It's knowing that today you might have something to offer, and tomorrow, you might be the one who needs a hand. It's the reminder that none of us are in this alone.

When we stick local, we see real change in ways that big systems and distant politicians never seem to deliver. A neighbor plows another neighbor's driveway without being asked. A small business donates food to families who need it. A community pulls together to keep the heat on for someone who's struggling. This isn't a feel-good fantasy; it's how people survive and thrive when they realize the best safety net is each other.

Relying on each other isn't weakness it's power. Mutual aid cuts through red tape, bureaucracy, and the "not my problem" mentality that can leave people falling through the cracks. It's fast, direct, and built on trust. While big institutions debate solutions, neighbors are already making them happen.

And the best part? It's contagious. When people see their community stepping up, they want to be part of it too. They realize that helping doesn't have to be complicated. It can be as simple as sharing a meal, giving someone a ride, or just checking in.

So, while the world feels like it's spinning out of control, the best thing we can do is turn toward one another. Forget waiting on the big guys to fix things. Stick local, help your neighbors, and build the kind of community where people know they can count on each other.

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

Can we receive the forgiveness of God?

Imagine pouring a pitcher of water into a small glass. Then, imagine pouring a pitcher of water into a large container. Finally, imagine pouring a pitcher of water into a large basin.

The pitcher of water is the same; yet each container receives the water differently. How much each container can hold does not depend on the water being poured, but on the way the container receives the water!

I use this example and relate it to receiving God's amazing grace and mercy. We call God the All-Merciful One. His forgiveness is unlimited. His love is boundless and unconditional. His grace is unfathomable and amazing.

Yet, if God is so loving and forgiving, how can we hear Jesus say, "If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Does this mean that God's love and mercy is transactional. He forgives us only IF we forgive others? Absolutely not. God's love and mercy and grace are never transactional; they are relationship. God loves us so dearly, He freely offers His divine love, mercy, grace and forgiveness to us and to everyone.

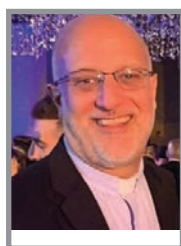
Of course, His forgiveness is not like a tiny pitcher of water being poured into our hearts, but it is like the immense ocean of love being poured into our hearts. God's love and mercy, His desire to forgive us of all our sins and debts is boundless. It has no limits!

Jesus dying on the cross reveals His extreme love, taking upon Himself the sins of the entire world throughout history. And for whom did Jesus die on the Cross? He died on the Cross and took the sins of the world upon Himself when this very world was rejecting him, betraying Him, denying Him, slandering Him, ridiculing Him, and then torturing and killing Him. He died for sinful and fallen humanity.

Yet, it didn't matter what the world was doing to Him. That couldn't change God's love for the world. Jesus still loved the world so much that He voluntarily accepted to die on the Cross to become the sacrificial lamb who takes away the sins of the world! This means He has taken upon Himself our sins also, no matter how many and how terrible.

Thus, the question isn't about God's forgiveness and mercy and whether He forgives us. He does! The bigger question is how open are we to receive His forgiveness and mercy?

In the Lord's Prayer, we pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." This is not a transaction with God. We're not say-



BEYOND THE PEWS

By FR. LUKE A. VERONIS, SACS, CONSTANTINE AND HELEN GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, WEBSTER

ing, "Lord, if we forgive others what they've done to us, then you have to forgive us whatever we've done. No! It's not "if we don't forgive others, you won't forgive us." That is not correct!

Through the Cross, God has forgiven the world. He has forgiven us. Nothing can take that forgiveness away. The question, however, is whether we are open to receive the forgiveness and mercy of God. Are we a vessel that can humbly receive God's mercy and grace?

Is God offering His mercy to us and we choose to close our hearts and not accept His mercy? That is what happens when we don't forgive others. When we allow resentment and bitterness to remain in our hearts. We close our hearts to God's love. We can't receive His love.

Are our hearts like that tiny glass that can't receive much of God's mercy and grace? Or are our hearts like this middle container, that may be able to receive a little more of God's mercy? Or will we open our hearts to its fullest, ready to be overwhelmed with God's mercy and grace in abundance?

Well, we know how big and open our heart is to receive God's love by the way we see how big and open our heart is to forgive one another. Think of the person who has most hurt you in your life. Think of someone who has done something to you and you are tempted to hold on to resentment and bitterness. Is there someone who you struggle to forgive?

As Christians around the world enter into the season of Great Lent, the Church reminds us that our journey toward Easter begins with a sober and careful self-evaluation on whether we are willing to forgive one another, and thus, ready to receive the forgiveness of God.

Forgiving someone who has hurt us is not easy. Forgiving someone who is not sorry for what they did to us is quite difficult. Yet, always remember — we forgive others because God has first forgiven us. It all starts with God and His mercy and love. Not us! And when we have difficulty forgiving another, that is when we need to turn toward God all the more and allow His mercy and grace to overwhelm us. We need to allow His love to empower us so that we simply pass on His mercy and forgiveness to the other.

Great Lent is a time of self-discovery as well as a time to truly understand and encounter the divine love of God. May we all open up our hearts to receive the grace of God in abundance!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A return response

To the Editor:

I will try to keep it short for anyone reading this, as I had two responses I enjoyed reading, one which was in some disagreement on things, but in some agreement on others, and one which was in total disagreement on just about everything. I can provide a copy of my original letter upon request because nowhere in there did I refer to everyone as criminals. I did refer to the worst of the worst, and have no empathy for them due to the crimes they have committed. So that bit of disinformation is on you.

Anyone who may read this, please do not take my word for it; assume what I write is mis/disinformation and check things out for yourselves. The information is easy enough to find.

In 2021, former President Biden signed an executive order stating that EVs make up 50 percent of all new cars by 2030. The E.P.A., in which the president has direct oversight of such, also created new rules which would make emission standards nearly impossible to reach for gas powered cars. States such as ours took that further, and copied the new rules set by California which was granted a waiver to ban i.e.e. cars by 2035. Any new cars in Massachusetts would have to meet low emission standards, and anyone thinking of skirting those rules and buying a new car in a state without the same would not be able to register that car in Massachusetts. This is not decades away, but one decade at the most. Doesn't sound like much of a choice to me.

Vaccines. If I misrepresented my point last time, that one is on me; I will own up to it. Again, do not take my word for it. Watch the video, read what was said. During a July of 2021 town hall event televised by CNN, Joe Biden made

several false claims about the vaccines, which at the time were only in emergency use, one of them being if you get the vaccines, you will not get Covid. CNN itself had to fact check him on his claims. He later went on to issue mandates that covered millions of people, based on misinformation he himself was giving. Test subjects, guinea pigs as one put it; I will stick with that.

Another video to watch is from his U.S. conference of mayors held Jan. 17, his last couple days in office, when he singlehandedly tried to add the 28th Amendment. Don't take my word for it; watch the video.

Mark Zuckerberg — not someone I myself would not particularly trust, but I use his name because everyone knows who he is and seemed to be loved when he was contributing millions to the Biden campaign, along with others, have since come out and given sworn statements about how Joe's Justice Department, along with other agencies, used coercion, harassment, intimidation, and even threatening tactics to censor, erase, cancel, delete, deplatform anyone who disagreed with Joe Biden's views. If that is not suspending someone's First Amendment rights, I'm not sure what else would need to be done before it becomes fully believable.

Numbers I was presented with by one reader: I myself worked for the federal government for 37 years. I've dealt with numbers, and know how to twist and turn them to make a point; I've done it myself, so I will skip that.

I am also aware of the F.A.R.R.A. of 1998. It was signed into law by Bill Clinton, and made USAID, an organization that was created by executive order, and keeps it as a separate entity.

Turn To **LETTER** page **A7**

Watch out for tax scams



FINANCIAL FOCUS
DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

It's tax season again — which also means, unfortunately, that it's time for the annual array of scams aimed at taxpayers. Fortunately, by being alert, you can protect yourself from these attempts to defraud you.

Your first line of defense is to recognize the warning signs of potential tax scams. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) cites these common red flags:

Promises of big payments — If you've filed taxes for many years, either by yourself or with the help of a tax professional, you probably have a pretty good idea of whether you're getting a refund, and how much it will be. But scammers, often using social media, may promise huge refunds by essentially encouraging you to claim tax credits to which you're not entitled and then charging large, upfront fees or a fee based on your refund amount.

Suspicious websites — Watch out for strange-sounding or misspelled web links — these can take you to harmful sites, rather than the official site of the IRS (IRS.gov).

Solicitations from charity imposters — The many natural disasters we've experienced in recent years has brought out great support from people wanting to help friends, neighbors and even total strangers. However, these catastrophes have also encouraged scammers who solicit contributions to bogus charitable groups. To determine whether an organization is a qualified charity that can receive tax-deductible contributions, visit the Tax Exempt Organization Search tool on IRS.gov.

Threats or demands — IRS impersonators may threaten you with large fines, or even arrest, if you don't make immediate payments of what they claim you owe.

You can protect yourself from many tax-related scams by knowing how the IRS will or won't communicate with you. Typically, the IRS will initiate contact with you through regular mail delivered by the U.S. Postal Service. You can verify the legitimacy of any letter by visiting your secure IRS online account, under the "Notices and Letters" section.

Other ways the IRS will contact you:
Email — Only with your permission, with a few exceptions, such as criminal investigations
Text — Only with your permission
Phone — Only to discuss your case, verify information or set up a meeting
Fax — Only to verify or request employment information
In-person visit — Rarely done, and typically only following a letter

The IRS will not:
Contact you or take payment on social media.
Accept gift cards or prepaid debit cards as payment.
Threaten to call law enforcement or immigration officials.
Take your citizenship status, driver's license or business license.
Leave pre-recorded voicemails (robocalls).
Mail tax debt resolution advertisements.

If you have doubts about any offers or communications, whether supposedly from the IRS or not, you may want to contact a trusted, qualified tax professional.

Also, be on guard for your elderly family members, as senior citizens are frequent targets of scammers. If you talk to these family members regularly, see if you can find out about any unusual offers or solicitations they may have received.

Finally, if you believe you are a victim of monetary or identity theft, you can report these issues using the IRS Web site at IdentityTheft.gov. You can also refer to IRS Publication 5027 — Identity Theft Information for Taxpayers.

Tax scams and identity theft are serious threats — so do whatever you can to defend yourself.

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

Roundup of Meatless Menu Ideas

Every year at this time, this column features meatless meal ideas in recognition of both Lent and the shift in dietary changes that promote less meat. While it can be a challenge to whip up exciting meat-free meals, there are a few tried and true recipes that find their way to my family's table not only during Lent, but all year round. Thus, this week's column will offer a roundup of some favorites previously featured in this column. And remembers readers, share your meat free menu ideas and you could win Dinner for Two at the Publick House!

First offered by the historic Toll House restaurant generations ago, this mock "chicken" pie that replaces chicken with tuna fish is the epitome of comfort food!

"California Chicken" Pie (as served by Ruth Wakefield at The Toll House, Whitman, MA in the 1930s)

I cheated and used a premade refrigerator pie crust; if you are really pressed for time, you can also substitute canned potatoes and carrots.

Ingredients: one medium sized onion, chopped; one cup peas: two diced carrots; two diced pota-



TAKE
THE
HINT

KAREN
TRAINOR

toes; one large can tuna fish (ounces vary in today's cans, so use enough to equal one cup); 2 T flour; one T butter; one cup milk; 1 tsp. salt; 1/8 tsp. pepper; 1/4 tsp. paprika.

Preparation: Boil the carrots and potatoes. Add peas to chopped onion. Make a white sauce by melting butter, add flour and stir until smooth. Add milk, salt, pepper, and paprika. Cook until thick and smooth. Add one cup tuna, broken into small pieces.

Fill a baking dish with mixture in layers. Cover with an upper crust or buttered crumbs and bake until brown in a 450 degree oven. Serves 6.

Superb Spinach Quiche Seasoned feta cheese hikes the taste quotient of this classic Lenten dish. If you're watching carbs, just omit the crust!

Ingredients: 1/2 cup butter; 3 cloves garlic, chopped; 1 small onion, chopped; 1 (10 ounce)

package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained; 1 (4.5 ounce) can mushrooms, drained, or use fresh, uncooked; 1 (6 ounce) package herb and garlic feta cheese, crumbled; 8 ounces shredded Cheddar cheese; 1 (9 inch) deep dish pie crust, unbaked; 4 eggs, beaten; 1 cup milk; salt and pepper to taste

Directions: Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a medium skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Saute garlic and onion in butter until lightly browned. Stir in spinach, mushrooms, feta and 1/2 cup Cheddar cheese. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon mixture into pie crust. In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs and milk. Season with salt and pepper. Pour into the pastry shell, allowing egg mixture to thoroughly combine with spinach mixture. Bake in preheated oven for 15 minutes. Sprinkle top with remaining Cheddar cheese, and bake an additional 35 to 40 minutes, until set in center. Allow to stand 10 minutes before serving.

I haven't tried this interesting vegetarian loaf, but it sounds delicious. This is from "The American Women's Cookbook," Culinary

Arts Institute, 1947. Readers who try it are encouraged to send in feedback!

Baked Bean Roast

Ingredients: 4 cups mashed baked beans; 2 eggs, slightly beaten; 2 cups bread crumbs; one cup tomatoes; 2T minced peppers; 2T minced onion; 4 T olive oil; 1/2 tsp. paprika, salt and pepper.

Preparation: Cook pepper and onions in olive oil. Add other ingredients in the order given. Bake (350 degrees) in greased baking dish for 30 minutes. Serve with brown sauce or tomato sauce.

Shrimp & Alfredo Sauce a la Olive Garden

Here it is again, the clone of the popular sauce served at the Olive Garden. This is the dish that my husband jokingly accused me of killing him with. Yes it is very delicious, but it is also very rich and high in calories. However, after one bite, you might agree it's worth the risk!

Ingredients: one eight ounce package cream cheese, cut into pieces; 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese; eight tablespoons butter; a half cup milk; one half to one pound fresh peeled and deveined shrimp.

Directions: Place first four ingredients in large saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly until thickened and remove from heat as soon as it gets hot. Add fresh shrimp and stir until warmed. Serve over eight ounces of cooked fettuccini. Recipe can be doubled.

Retro Recipe: Tuna Fish Casserole Peas and potato chips are a requisite for this Babyboomer classic that's as good as you remember it!

Ingredients: 12 oz bag broad egg noodles or elbow macaroni; one can of cream of mushroom soup; 3/4 cup milk; two cans tuna fish; 10 oz package frozen peas; potato chips. Directions: Cook egg noodles/macaroni as directed on package. In a bowl, mix together cream of mushroom soup and milk. Add cooked noodles. Drain tuna and crumble it in mixture. Fold in peas. Season with salt and pepper. Pour into a buttered casserole dish. Top with crushed potato chips. Bake at 350 degrees for about 35 minutes.

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 email KDRR@aol.com. Hints are entered into a drawing for dinner for two at the historic Publick House Inn.



Today, we'll discuss number 8 on my top 10 antiques and collectibles list: vintage and antique posters and advertising signs. With eye appeal and a connection to products that collectors enjoy, advertising memorabilia has always been popular.

Several online sources, including esigns.com, state that advertising dates back to 18,000 BC, when cave drawings were used to promote bartering during the Paleolithic Era. The advertising memorabilia I'll discuss begins in the 1800s and has progressed signifi-

Vintage and antique posters and advertising signs

cantly since the days of cave drawings.

In a column last year, I shared results for brewery, soda, and automobile related advertising memorabilia. Here are some top auction results for those types of signs. An enamel and neon double-sided "Drink Coca Cola in Bottles" sign sold for \$37,000 in 2022. A 1950s era large Pearl Lager Beer of Texas porcelain lighted motion sign brought \$150,000 in 2023. A circa 1929 Porcelain Musgo Gasoline Service Station Sign depicting a Native American went for \$350,000 in 2022.

You can also find advertising on items other than conventional signs. A stoneware figurial pig marked "J.O. Sanders Dealer in Wines, Liquors & Cigars Elberton GA 1883" sold for \$8,500 last year. "Cigar Store Indians" were placed in front of tobacco shops and are said to symbolize Native Americans introducing tobacco to the

colonists. A Samuel Robb (American, 1851-1928) Cigar Store Indian maiden figure brought \$37,500 in 2022. A hand-painted canvas Louis Vuitton advertising panel with images of Louis Vuitton trunks went for \$4,750 last year. A late 19th century "Ice Cream & Fancy Cake" tin trade sign picturing a scoop of ice cream in a dish reached \$50,000 in 2016.

There are some recognizable characters you might immediately associate with certain brands, and items featuring those characters are always in demand. An early paper mache Michelin Man fig-

ure sold for over \$12,000 in 2023. A 1906 cast iron peanut roaster with Mr. Peanut sitting atop the roaster brought \$132,000 last year.

More recent character advertising pieces can also bring strong results. A Styrofoam Pillsbury Doughboy figure that was approximately 4 1/2 feet tall and said to be one of fifty produced for company executives brought \$1,500 in 2021. A 7 1/2 foot Bob's Big Boy statue in his red and white overalls, holding up a hamburger went for \$4,300 earlier this year. A plastic Tony the Tiger Kellogg's Frosted Flakes

cookie jar sold for over \$7,000 online last year. I'm sure the seller thought that price was more than good... grrreat!

We are still cataloging for the large one consignator Civil War memorabilia auction, Beacon Hill estate auction, and a comic book, sports memorabilia, and collectibles auction that will be taking place over the spring and summer. We are always accepting quality consignments for

future auctions. Please visit our website <https://centralmassauctions.com> for links to upcoming events.

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



ANTIQUES,
COLLECTIBLES
& ESTATES
WAYNE TUISKULA

LETTER

continued from page A6

It did, however, place it under the authority of the Secretary of State, whomever that may be, who of course is under the authority of the president, whomever that may be. The Secretary can present spending to Congress, who approve or disapprove, who then pass it on to the president for approval or veto. If the Secretary presents no spending plans, there is nothing for Congress to decide, and nothing goes to the president, thereby rendering USAID, a mute agency, serving no purpose. Complete dismantling would take an act of Congress, but closing the doors and sending people home is within their authority. Two of the chief architects of this law — Jesse Helms, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman at the time, and none other than ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, Joe Biden. So it was Joe himself that quite possibly gave Donald Trump the ability to do what he's doing. I'm sure it will ultimately end up at the Supreme Court, and whatever they decide is what it is. Getting rid of USAID is not just some wild MAGA, idea by the

way; it was first proposed by then Secretary of State Warren Christopher under the Clinton administration, a Democratic president.

In closing, Mr. Magiera, although I may disagree with you on a lot of things, I do, in some weird way, have a little respect for you. You're not afraid to put your opinions out there for everyone to see. And if you really do drive a dump truck, I hope it's electric; you should practice what you preach. You could still come by with some cash and take a look at the solar panels covering the front and back roofs of my house; we were the first in our neighborhood to have them, some 11 years ago, when they were still rather new technology, and our new heating, cooling, and hot water system — all electric, using the very reusable energy of the outside air. We did also become guinea pigs ourselves, and received our vaccines, and just hoped for the best at the time. So I'm not anti-everything. These all seemed to be good choices, but that's what they were, was choices, not forced upon us by government mandates.

JOHN GIAQUINTO
DUDLEY

We've all been there. You're just minding your business, maybe running errands or sipping coffee, when — BAM — someone snaps at you like you personally ruined their day. A rude cashier, a cranky coworker, or a stranger in traffic acting like you committed a federal offense just by existing.

Bestselling author Robert Greene famously says, "What people do to you is not personal."

Wait, hold on—what? People's bad attitudes aren't personal? It sure feels personal!

Greene breaks it down like this: When someone says something cruel or mean, they aren't aiming it at you. They're aiming it at people from their past who left emotional scars. You happen to be standing in the crossfire.

Lisa was working as a flight attendant when a man on her flight exploded over something trivial—his overhead bin space. "This is unacceptable!" he yelled, his face turning red.

Lisa, who had simply asked him to place his bag in a different compartment, was caught off guard. She felt embarrassed, even attacked. But later, as the man calmed down, he apologized. "I just got off a stressful business call," he admitted. "And my divorce was finalized yesterday."

Lisa then realized that the man's outburst had nothing to do with her. So she let it go.

I'm not excusing his behavior. Snapping at

someone who's just doing their job is rude and unnecessary. But the point here isn't to justify it—it's to recognize that it's not about you. Understanding that doesn't mean

you have to tolerate disrespect, but it does mean you don't have to internalize it. And that can be incredibly freeing.

But let's be honest, that's easier said than done. It's one thing to brush off a stranger's bad attitude, but what about when it's someone you actually know—someone whose opinion does matter?

Like, say, your boss, who suddenly decides that your hard work is garbage?

Jake had always respected his boss, but one morning, she stormed into the office and called his recent project "a disaster." The criticism stung. He had spent weeks on that report, triple-checking every detail. That night, frustrated, he told his friend what happened. "I don't get it," Jake said. "She's never been this harsh before."

A week later, he found out why. His boss's father had passed away, and

she had barely slept in days. She wasn't angry at Jake—she was grieving, overwhelmed, and exhausted.

Let's be real—sometimes, the criticism is about you. If you're consistently missing deadlines, turning in sloppy work, or replying to emails with just "k," then yeah, your boss's frustration might be earned.

But more often than not, when someone's reaction feels way out of proportion, there's something else going on beneath the surface. People carry stress, grief, and frustrations that have nothing to do with you, yet you become the unsuspecting target.

Recognizing the difference can save you a lot of unnecessary stress—and maybe even keep you from rage-quitting a perfectly good job.

Emma loved her morning routine—stopping by her local café, ordering her usual, and exchanging smiles with the barista. But one day, the barista, usually friendly, barely acknowledged her, handing over her coffee without a word. Emma felt a flash of insecurity. Did I do something wrong? she wondered.

That afternoon, she saw the same barista sitting outside on her break, eyes red from crying. It turned out she had just gone through a breakup and was struggling to keep it together at work. "I'm so sorry if I was off this morning," she said when Emma approached. "I was just in my head about some things." Emma realized that the barista's mood had nothing to do with her—it was simply a reflection of her own pain.

How much easier would life be if we stopped taking things personally?

As Robert Greene says, "If you take the angle that, 'I'm not going to get emotionally involved with this,' it's incredibly liberating."

When you stop internalizing their negativity, you free yourself from unnecessary suffering.

So the next time someone gives you attitude, remember: it's probably not about you. It's about them—their stress, their history, their bad morning.

Protect your peace, take a deep breath, and move on with your day like the emotionally untouchable legend you are.

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- Loading docks: (1) tailgate height
- Basement: partial | Unfinished



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Saint Joseph School celebrates a milestone with fun and learning!



Saint Joseph School Kindergarten students, led by Mrs. Alicia Maurer, celebrate being '100 Days Smarter' with creative activities, and a fun look into the future!

Courtesy

WEBSTER — During February, Saint Joseph School students celebrated the much anticipated 100th Day of School! This milestone is always a special event, providing a unique opportunity for students to explore the number "100" through engaging and creative activities across multiple subjects. It's a joyful occasion filled with learning, laughter, and a sense of accomplishment.

Our Kindergarten students, led by Mrs. Alicia Maurer, embraced the celebration with enthusiasm, starting the day by dressing up as if they were 100 years old. Sporting grey wigs, glasses, and canes, they had fun imagining what life might be like a century from now. They also colored their "100 Days Smarter" crowns, showcasing their hard work and achievements.

One of their favorite activities involved a guessing game. Each student filled a brown paper bag with 100 of the same items—ranging from Legos and pom-poms to elastics, candy, and cereal. They then wrote three clues to help their classmates guess what was inside. This interactive exercise encouraged critical thinking, counting, and communication skills.

In writing, students completed a sentence starter: "When I am 100 years old, ___" by sounding out words and expressing their ideas about the future. For math, they counted and identified 100 shapes, reinforcing their number recognition and counting skills in a hands-on way.

Meanwhile, in First Grade, students, under the guidance of Ms. Kerri Lavelle, also dressed up as if they were 100 years old! Their creative costumes, featuring grey wigs, glasses, and canes, added a fun and imaginative touch to the celebration. Like their younger peers, the First Graders also filled a brown paper bag with 100 items and shared three clues for their classmates to guess what was inside. They read "The 100th Day Disaster," a fun and engaging book that tied into the day's theme, and incorporated movement by exercising and counting to 100 by ones and tens.

Math activities played a significant role in their celebration as well. Students counted, tallied, and added 100 different items, strengthening their number sense while enjoying the challenge. The day ended on a sweet note with delicious cupcakes, making the milestone even more memorable. Both classes certainly proved they are "100 Days Smarter!" The best part? Knowing that there are only 80 days left in the school year, with warm weather just around the corner. Hurrah for reaching 100 days!

AT LEFT: Saint Joseph School First Grade students, guided by Ms. Kerri Lavelle, dress up as their 100-year-old selves and enjoy a day filled with counting, creativity, and cupcakes!



Indie bookstore, café & gift shop in Webster marks 30 years in business



WEBSTER — Booklovers' Gourmet is pleased to announce the landmark celebration of 30 years in business. The independent bookstore, gift shop and coffeehouse is located at 72 East Main St. in Webster. Plans to mark the occasion throughout the month of April include: Customer Appreciation Days on

April 4 & 5, where patrons can spin-the-wheel for raffle prizes, contribute a leaf to a Memory Tree and enjoy complimentary cupcakes and cookies from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. both days.

A book release party for local poet Robert Eugene Perry and his newest release, "I Dreamt I Was Water," will take place on

Saturday, April 5 at 1 p.m. followed by an Open Mic. Throughout the month of April, "The Promise of Spring," photographs by Don McCallister of Oxford, will be featured in the café art gallery.

The store will co-host an After Hours Networking Event with The Webster Dudley Business Alliance on

Tuesday, April 8 from 5-7 p.m., with state & town officials and members of the local business community in attendance. An author appearance by Brad Timm, wildlife biologist passionate about education and conservation, will take place on Saturday, April 12 from 2-4 p.m. Brad will talk about his new book "Wildlife Out Your Window." For more information about any of these events or to sign up for the Open Mic, email deb@bookloversgourmet.com or call 508-949-6232.

Since the beginning, events like these have been an important part of bringing the community together for varied cultural experiences. Monthly book clubs and writers' groups, along with performances by local musicians, creative workshops and other special events are also offered and can be found on the Web site events calendar; <https://bookloversgourmet.com/events/list/>.

Collaborations with local schools, libraries and other organizations

have been mutually rewarding experiences and are an integral part of the business model, according to owner Debra Horan, a Webster native. The shop is run with help from family and part-time employees.

"I am grateful and fortunate to have such a wonderful, dedicated support team keeping the store in top shape and serving our customers in the best possible way," said Horan. "Whether you are a 'regular' or coming in for the first time, you will always be greeted with a smile and friendly 'Hello!'"

Patrons may sit and relax in the café while enjoying a homemade pastry and organic, Fair-Trade coffee beverage, chai latte, or other specialty drink or leisurely browse around the bookshelves.

Booklovers' Gourmet offers a curated selection of new and used books, greeting cards and other unique, hand-picked gift items-many from local makers and vendors. The shop also has a strong online and

social media presence. Through Bookshop.org, new books and e-books are offered. Alibris.com features used & collectible books and Libro.fm offers digital audio downloads. All of these platforms support independent booksellers across the country.

Future plans are to continue developing and enhancing the vision of the store as a welcoming place for all, where people can connect in meaningful ways and enjoy various cultural happenings in a local, community space.

Booklovers' Gourmet is a member of The American Booksellers Association and The New England Booksellers Association. Debra serves as a Board Director of The Webster Dudley Business Alliance and committee member of One Book One Community at the Gladys E. Kelly Library in Webster. Current store hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Wednesday 10 a.m.-6 p.m. For more information, visit bookloversgourmet.com.

Assumption students tour Sheriff's Office

REGION — The Worcester County Sheriff's Office recently hosted Assumption University students interested in pursuing careers in sociology, criminology, or criminal justice.

Students participated in a tour of the WCSO Jail and House of Correction, learning about several facets as they work toward launching their own careers in law enforcement or related fields.

"The group visited multiple parts of our facility, heard from staff, and learned about day-to-day operations," read a statement released by the Sheriff's Office. "It is always a pleasure to educate groups on what the Sheriff's Department does and the different career paths in the law enforcement field."

Courtesy

AT RIGHT: Assumption University students recently took part in a tour of the Worcester County Sheriff's Office.



OBITUARIES

Earle C. Durkee 1934-2025



Earle Durkee, 91, passed away peacefully at UMass Memorial-Harrington Hospital in Southbridge. Thank you to the compassionate caring attendants there for keeping him comfortable. He was Dad, Papa, Uncle Earle, Earle the Pearl, Yankee Peddler on the CB radio and everyone's Milkman. He always displayed a great attitude, and positive outlook in life. He liked to say, "if I had known I was gonna live this long, I would've taken better care of myself." and "keep the pedal to the metal and the rubber on the road and the wind in your hair".

He worked hard and played hard. He worked the family farm, welded and repaired equipment and vehicles, built his log home, and helped out

anyone that needed it. He served in the Navy assigned to the Airship Development Squadron Eleven, USNAS, Key West, FL. Later, delivered milk for Deary Bros., drove a tanker truck for Guida's Dairy, also operated his backhoe, dump-truck, and other equipment. He lived life on the edge, from ATV's to snowmobiles, from breaking-in horses to breaking records on motorcycles. Even into his 80's he was racing at Daytona Speedway. He leaves his loving family and lifelong friends.

A memorial guestbook is available at www.shaw-majercik.com. Shaw-Majercik Funeral Home, 48 School Street, Webster has been entrusted with arrangements.



Carolyn D. Gatto, 86



WEBSTER – Carolyn D. (Ledoux) "Carol" Gatto, 86, passed away on Monday, February 24, 2025 after an illness.

She is survived by her husband of 65 years, Ernest F. Gatto, Jr.; her 2 daughters, Cheryl A. Nowlan and her husband Donald; Rhonda Podell and her two sons, Jeffrey Gatto and his wife Yvonne and Robert Gatto; she also leaves behind her four grandchildren, Brian, Shawn, Matthew, and Kayla. She was preceded in death by her brother Ronald Ledoux.

She was born in Dudley, the daughter of Joseph A. and Flossie (Allen) Ledoux, and moved to Worcester in 1952. She graduated from South High School in 1957.

Carol and Ernie met and married in 1960. They moved to Webster in 1965 where they raised their family.

Mrs. Gatto worked for the public

school system in Webster before starting the craft store "Mrs. G's" in Webster for a short period. She retired in 2020.

She loved to paint ceramics and tend her yard and garden. She loved to sit in her in her garden and enjoyed watching her Japanese maple tree change with the seasons.

The family would like to extend their gratitude and appreciation to the medical staff at UMass/Memorial Medical Center for their compassionate care of Carol during her hospital stay. They would also like to thank the staff at Rose Monahan Hospice in Worcester for their thoughtfulness and compassion.

A time of visitation will take place on Sunday, March 9 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM in Scanlon Funeral Service, 38 East Main Street, Webster. The burial will be private. The family requests that flowers be omitted and instead donations in her memory be made to the Rose Monahan Hospice, 10 Judith Road, Worcester, MA 01602. www.websterfunerals.com

Elaine Gould, 84



Webster-Elaine (Carlson) Gould, 84, passed away unexpectedly in Benicassim Spain.

Elaine was born in Fitchburg on March 21, 1940 to Norman and Elna (Muhonen) Carlson. She grew up in Gardner Mass.

She leaves her husband of 63 years, David Gould of Webster, her sister Karen Carlson and her children, son Michael and his wife Carmina of Benicassim Spain, and daughter Christine Gould Lavoie and her husband Daniel Lavoie of Dudley. Elaine had four grandchildren: Andrea Gould and her husband Pratik Doshi, Alejandra Gould and her husband Antonio Solsona, Brendan Lavoie and Sarah Lavoie. She had one great granddaughter, Siena Gould Doshi, as well as cousins, nieces and nephews.

Elaine graduated from Gardner High School in 1958. She played basketball, volleyball and was an active member of her drama club. After high school she graduated from Ward Business school in 1959. She was a keypunch operator until marrying and raising a family. Elaine and David married in 1961 and settled in Oxford to raise their family. They later moved to Dudley and then Webster.

Throughout her life, Elaine worked

mostly in the education and service fields. She was a dedicated community member in each town that she resided in. She attended the First Congregational Church of both Oxford then Dudley. She was active in town government, church committees, and she was a lifetime Girl Scout. In the late 1970's she became a member of the Oxford Woman's Club and was a past President. After moving to Dudley, she was the founder of the Dudley Woman's Club. Elaine was active in her community, enjoying her many events at the Webster and Dudley Senior Centers.

Elaine loved to travel with her family and saw many beautiful sights around the world. She had a love of music, watching the Red Sox, Celtics and Patriots. But above all, she was a 60-year super fan of the Days Of Our Lives Soap Opera, rarely missing any episode. She loved flowers, gardening and watching HGTV.

Elaine dedicated her life to her family and serving her community. We love her and will miss her dearly. We invite all who knew and loved her to join us for a service of Life and Remembrance on Saturday March 29, 2025 at Bartel Funeral Home in Dudley Mass. Calling hours from 9:00-11:00 and 11:00 for the service of Remembrance.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Webster Dudley Food Share and the Webster Senior Center. www.bartelfuneralhome.com

Gayle Frowein, 52



Gayle Frowein, age 52, of Southbridge, MA, died Friday, February 21, 2025 at Brookside Rehabilitation and Nursing Center of Webster, MA due to complications of a long term illness. Gayle was born April 17, 1972 in Fayetteville, NC. She is the daughter of William Frowein and the late Suzanne (Donais) Frowein.

She is survived by one son, Jonathan Sarro and his partner, Amber of Southbridge, MA; two sisters: Wendy Ceppetelli and her fiancé, Mark along with her children, Kaylee Sue and Anthony of Dudley, MA; Mandy Gordon and her husband, Matthew, along with their children, Robert and Jocelynn, as well as a great nephew, Maverick, of Webster, MA; a brother, Shane Frowein and his wife, Caitlyn, and their two sons, of West Boylston, MA. She also leaves an aunt, Rachel Piette, who she lived with on and off throughout her life, and her husband James of Webster, MA and their 3 daughters, Sarah, Jamie, and Molly. She also leaves several aunts, uncles, and cousins. Gayle leaves her partner Sean Nolan and her very good friend Pete Nolan of Southbridge, MA.

Gayle is predeceased by her mother, Suzanne Frowein, and an uncle, Kenneth Donais; as well as her maternal grandparents, Rudy and Priscillia Donais, who raised her for many years. Gayle graduated from St. Anne's

School in Webster, MA and attended Marianapolis High School in Thompson, CT. She continued her education in the field of psychology included courses taken at Boston College. She worked at several local businesses in Webster and Dudley over the years. Gayle was very involved with the First United Methodist Church in Southbridge, MA, under the direction of Pastor Sabina Terrades as well as Tradewinds.

Gayle was an intelligent, creative, and big-hearted person who would help anyone in need. She enjoyed coming to family functions and seeing all of her extended family. She enjoyed reading novels, heavy metal music, crafting (specializing in dreamcatchers), painting, drawing, and various types of writing including several beautiful pieces of poetry. Gayle was a unique and free spirited person who lived her life on her own terms. She often said that giving birth to Jonathan was her greatest accomplishment. Gayle is deeply loved by many and will be missed forever.

A memorial service will be held on March 13, 2025 at 10:00 am with an hour of visitation with the family at 9:00 am at the United Church of Christ, 4 Church St. in Webster, MA with Rev. Sabina Terrades officiating. Burial will be in the Spring at the family plot in Sacred Heart Cemetery, Webster.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Gayle's name to United Church of Christ, 4 Church St. Webster, MA 01570. Bartel Funeral Home 33 Schofield Avenue is assisting the family www.bartelfuneralhome.com

Robert H Caouette, 68



WEBSTER-Robert H Caouette, age 68, of Webster died Friday, February 28, 2025 at UMass Memorial Medical Center after a long illness. Robert was born May 29, 1956 in South Grafton. He is the son of the late

Raymond and the late Adele (Langlois) Caouette. He was a 1974 graduate of Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School in Charlton. Bob worked as a manager of several area restaurants and had so many stints handling lottery sales that to most of his friends he was affectionately known as Keno Bob. He served on the board of directors at the Booster Athletic Club for several years, held the treasurer's position when necessary and was also a member of Club Jigger in Dudley He had a lifelong passion for golf, making several group trips to Myrtle Beach with his friends and also organized several golf tournaments and golf leagues in the local area. Bob enjoyed living on Webster Lake and taking friends on

lake tours. He was an avid fisherman and a lifelong member of the Killdeer Island Club where for the last several years he ran the annual pancake breakfast. With a lifetime of health issues, he still managed to put everyone else's needs ahead of his own. He is survived by his brother, George, and sister-in-law, Janet (Rusack) of Wildwood, Florida, and his sister, Elaine Casaubon and her husband, Thomas of Webster as well as numerous nephews and nieces and was predeceased by his longtime sweetheart and companion, Rose Brote. As a lifetime communicant of Sacred Heart of Jesus church, 16 East Main Street, Webster, he held many overnight vigils at their Emmaus Center.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at the church at Friday March 7th at 10 AM followed by burial in Sacred Heart Cemetery, Webster. Calling hours will be Thursday March 6th for 6 to 8 PM at Bartel Funeral Home, 33 Schofield Ave, Dudley, MA In Lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the American Lung Association www.bartelfuneralhome.com

Sheryl J. Niemiec, 66



WEBSTER-Sheryl J. (Sobeck) Niemiec, 66, passed away Tuesday, February 25 at Harrington Healthcare at Webster.

She leaves her husband of 42 years, Mark A. Niemiec; two daughters, Heather J. Niemiec of Fredericksburg, VA, and Ashley I. Niemiec of Boston; a granddaughter, Carly; and a brother, Steven Sobeck of Webster. She was born in Cambridge, daughter of Stephen and Irene (Kanis) Sobeck and graduated from Lexington High School and

received her B.S. in Education from Norwich University, class of '80'.

Sheryl was a schoolteacher at various schools in the Town of Webster for 39 years. She loved spending time at the beach and on the boat at her home on the lake. But most of all she was known as a selfless person who would take care of everyone and was everyone's Mom.

Funeral Services are private. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Manatee Rehabilitation center at the Clearwater Aquarium at www.cmaqarium.org/manatee-rehabilitation-center/

Send all obituary notices to
Stonebridge Press, PO Box 90,
Southbridge, MA 01550, or by e-mail
to obits@stonebridgepress.news



Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy names SkillsUSA district competitors

CHARLTON — The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy named the 2025 SkillsUSA district competitors for First Aid/CPR, Loise Ngigi of South Grafton, and Grant Peterson of Millbury and for Medical Terminology Natasha Rovano of Worcester and Ashley Rincon of Southbridge.

Dr. Adelina Healy, adjunct faculty at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy who served as the Team Lead for the Volunteer judges in the skills competition for secondary students is delighted. Dr. Healy was the team lead for the past four years. She wishes the practical nursing competitors the absolute best.

Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy Director Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN, stated, "I am excited for our 2025 district competitors! My own mother highly supported healthy competition and emphasized winning builds confidence and not winning builds character. The SkillsUSA experience is beneficial for both the student competitors and faculty."

SkillsUSA's mission is geared to empower members to become world-class workers, leaders, and responsible American citizens and serves as the blueprint for workplace readiness.

www.StonebridgePress.com

Celebrate the Year of the Asclepias by planting milkweed



Melinda Myers
Milkweed (Asclepias) supports monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

Grow milkweed (Asclepias) to support monarch butterflies, hummingbirds,

and bees while adding color, fragrance, and beauty to your landscape. You'll find native milkweeds throughout North and South America. In recognition of this garden star's attributes, 2025 has been deemed the Year of the Asclepias by the National Garden Bureau.

With so many to choose from, select the milkweed that is best suited to the growing conditions, your landscape design, and garden maintenance. Some milkweeds are very aggressive and can quickly take over garden beds and large areas in the landscape, requiring time and effort to maintain their spread.

Butterfly milkweed (Asclepias tuberosa) is one of the tamer milkweeds with lots of ornamental appeal. This adaptable milkweed is hardy in zones three to ten and was named the 2017 Perennial Plant of the Year.

Grow butterfly milkweed in full sun with well-drained soil. You'll appreciate its drought tolerance once it's established. If you are gardening in clay soil, consider growing Asclepias tuberosa var. clay, a natural variant found growing on clay soil. Mark the location of any butterfly milkweed in the garden or plant some spring flowering



GARDEN MOMENTS

MELINDA MYERS

bulbs nearby to avoid accidentally digging up this late-to-emerge perennial.

You'll enjoy the orange blossoms in meadow, prairie, and even semi-formal gardens. Combine this beauty with yellow, purple, and blue flowers. Deadhead faded flowers to extend bloom time and prevent reseeding if this is a concern.

When looking for a bit larger plant that tolerates moist to wet and occasionally dry soils, check out red milkweed (Syriaca incarnata), also known as pink and swamp milkweed. You'll enjoy the fragrant reddish-pink flowers and the butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds that visit the flowers.

It's hardy in zones three to nine plus red milkweed grows three to five feet tall in upright clumps. The flowers are followed by narrow pods that release silky-haired seeds like other milkweeds. It grows best in full sun with moist soil and is less aggressive than common milkweed. Grow this milkweed in sunny mixed borders, natural gardens, rain gardens, and alongside ponds. And best of all, the deer and rabbits tend to leave it, and other milkweeds, be.

Common milkweed Asclepias syriaca is a favorite of monarchs, hardy in

zones three to eight, but very aggressive, spreading by deep rhizomes and seeds. The purple-pink flowers are fragrant at night, and you will find a variety of butterflies stopping by for a visit. Keep it contained by persistently removing unwanted suckers and seedpods before they open to prevent reseeding.

Sullivan's milkweed Asclepias sullivantii is similar but a bit less aggressive. It has the same great butterfly appeal and is hardy in zones four to seven.

These are just a few of the more than 100 native milkweed species, many of which you may want to add to your gardens. You can find out more about the species native to your region in the Milkweed Regional Guides located on the Xerces Society website. You are sure to find one or more to add to your garden beds.

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

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LEGALS

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed Bids for Contract No. 2024-1, DWSRF No. 16699, CONSTRUCTION OF ARSENIC AND PFAS TREATMENT PLANT FOR SOUTH STREET WELLS will be received by the Auburn Water District, Auburn, Massachusetts at 75 Church Street, Auburn, MA 01501, on or before April 10th at 2:00 p.m. at which time and place all Bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. Sealed envelopes containing bids must be clearly marked "Sealed Bid – Construction of Arsenic and PFAS Treatment Plant for South Street Wells".

The work for this project consists of constructing a new 400 gpm water treatment facility located at the property of 9A Pine Valley Drive. The treatment building consists of an approximately 5,000 square foot masonry structure housing three 10-ft diameter Greensand Plus (GSP) media pressure filters and two 10-ft diameter Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) filters along with associated piping and appurtenances, controls, plumbing, HVAC and electrical work. The building will include a concrete basement level backwash residuals storage basin with pumps and force main to the gravity sewer system for GSP and GAC filter backwashing. The work also includes some ancillary work at the nearby pump station and installation of several chemical feed systems including chlorine gas, sodium bisulfite, ferric chloride, and potassium hydroxide.

Sealed Filed Subbids for Masonry Work, Miscellaneous Metals, Waterproofing/Dampproofing/Caulking, Roofing and Flashing, Painting, Fire Protection, Plumbing, HVAC, and Electrical Work to be performed under this Contract will be received until 2:00 p.m. local time on March 31st at the Auburn Water District office at 75 Church Street, Auburn, MA 01501, at which time and place all Subbids will be publicly opened and read aloud.

A non-mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on March 20th at 10:00 a.m. at the Project Site. Contract Documents may be examined or obtained on or after March 5th at Comprehensive Environmental Inc. 41 Main Street, Bolton, MA 01740

Contract Documents may be obtained for a nonrefundable fee of \$100.00 by check or money order made payable to Comprehensive Environmental Inc. Contract Documents will be mailed to prospective bidders upon receipt of a separate check or money order for \$50.00 (non-refundable) made payable to Comprehensive Environmental Inc. Upon request, an electronic copy of the Contract Documents will be emailed to prospective bidders (no charge).

Bids/Subbids must be accompanied by a copy of the Certificate of Eligibility issued by the Commissioner of the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance. The Certificate of Eligibility shall be for the category of Sewage and Water Treatment Plants or the appropriate subbid category, respectively for Bidders and Subbidders.

Bidding is restricted to pre-qualified contractors only. A list of the pre-qualification results may be obtained upon request from Comprehensive Environmental Inc. A five (5%) percent bid bond is required with bid submission. This Contract is being Bid on under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 149, Sections 44A through 44J. No Bidder may withdraw its Bid within 30 days (Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays excluded) after the actual date of the Bid Opening. This Project is subject to the requirements of the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program as administered by the MassDEP.

The total time period for completion of all Work required under this Contract is 540 consecutive calendar days. Work performed beyond the 540 consecutive calendar day period will be subject to liquidated damages in the amount specified herein.

March 7, 2025

**CITATION ON PETITION
FOR SALE OF REAL ESATE BY A
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court**

**Probate and Family Court
Worcester Division
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. W024P4355EA
Estate of:**

**Raymond R Froment
Date of Death: 03/01/2023**

To all interested persons:

A Petition for Sale of Real Estate has been filed by:

Darlene A Froment of Webster MA 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 **03/18/2025**. 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 Keamy, First Justice of this Court
February 24, 2025
Stephanie K. Fattman, Register of Probate
March 7, 2025

Dudley Conservation Commission, Public Hearing Notice; A Public Hearing will be held at the Dudley Municipal Complex, 71 West Main Street in Dudley, Ma at 6:15 Pm on Wednesday, March 12, 2025 to consider a Notice of Intent of Edward and Joanne Skowron for the property located at 6 Pondview Terrace for an addition. This is a Public Hearing under the requirements of G.L. C.H. 131 §40, as amended. Plans are available at the Conservation Commission's office at the Dudley Municipal Complex on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00-3:00 PM. For more information, call 508-949-8011
March 7, 2025

Town of Dudley Notice to Bidders

Posting of re-bid for Item #5 Tree Trimming and Removal 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 #5 Tree Trimming and Removal** 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 10:00AM on March 10, 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.
March 7, 2025

LEGAL NOTICE:

Notice is hereby given that a Community Outreach Meeting for a proposed Marijuana Established is Scheduled for Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 5:30 PM at 30 Worcester Road, Webster, MA 01570. The proposed Marijuana Established will be a Research and Development establishment to be located at 30 Worcester Road, Webster, MA 01570. There will be an opportunity for the public to ask questions.
March 7, 2025

**Docket No. W025E0018
A.C. 92A**

Petition to Partition

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Worcester Probate & Family Court**
To Arthur S Winship, Deborah L Coonan & Arthur S Winship PR of Estate of Arthur L Winship 3 and to all other interested persons.

A petition has been presented to said Court by Jennifer Winship & Jennifer Windship PR of Estate of Arthur L Winship 3 of Athol in the County of Worcester representing that he hold as tenant in common undivided part or share of certain land lying in Webster in said County Worcester and briefly described as follows:

See Attached

setting forth that he/she desire that all the aforesaid described part of said land may be sold at private sale for not less than four hundred thousand (\$400,000) dollars, and praying that partition may be made of all the land aforesaid according to law, and to that end that a commissioner be appointed to make such partition and be ordered to make sale and conveyance of all, or any part of said land which the Court finds cannot be advantageously divided either at private sale or public auction, and be ordered to distribute the net proceeds thereof.

If you desire to object thereto you or your attorney should file a written appearance in said Court at Worcester before ten o'clock in the forenoon on the Twenty-Fifth day of March 2025 the return date of this citation.

Witness, LEILAH A. KEAMY, Esquire, First Judge of said Court, this Twenty-First day of February 2025.
Stephanie K. Fattman
Register of Probate
March 7, 2025

(SEAL)

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Land Court Department
Trial Court
WORCESTER, SS.
CASE NO. 24 MISC 000603 (GHP)
Janice E. Morin
v.**

**Unknown and Unascertained Heirs
of Robert Walsh Moore, et al.**

TO: Ian Fleming, of parts unknown, formerly of Norfolk, Virginia; Robert Fleming, of parts unknown, formerly of Brooklyn, New York; Krista Fleming, of parts unknown, formerly of Charlotte, North Carolina; Robert Walsh Moore, deceased, formerly of Webster, Worcester County, and said Commonwealth; James J. Moore, deceased, formerly of Douglas, Worcester County, and said Commonwealth; Kristina M. Fleming, deceased, formerly of Webster, Worcester County, and said Commonwealth or their known and unknown heirs, assigns, devisees or legal representatives and all other persons interested

You are hereby notified that a complaint has been filed by the above-named plaintiff in which you are named as an interested party. This complaint concerns a parcel of land in Webster, Worcester County, and said Commonwealth being known as and numbered 6 Englewood Street owned as of record by plaintiff Janice E. Morin by deed ("Deed") from James H. Moore as Personal Representative of the estate of Robert Walsh Moore, and recorded with the Worcester Registry of Deeds ("Registry") on August 28, 2013 in Book 51415, Page 71. Plaintiff alleges that the Deed, in its description of the land conveyed, erroneously omits reference to Lot 33 on a plan of land ("Plan") entitled "Plan of [L]akeside Park, Webster, Massachusetts" dated August 14, 1946 and recorded with the Registry in Plan Book 158, Plan 76 naming solely Lot 34 in its land description. Plaintiff seeks a judgment reforming the Deed, nunc pro tunc, to include Lot 33 and for such other relief deemed just and proper. This complaint may be examined at the Land Court, Boston, Massachusetts, or online at www.masscourts.org. Information on how to search Land Court dockets is available on the Land Court website: www.mass.gov/how-to/find-a-land-court-case-docket. A copy of said complaint may also be obtained from plaintiff's attorney.

If you intend to make any defense, you are hereby required to serve upon the plaintiff's attorney, Kiel H. Becker, Esq., whose address is Lake Shore Legal, LLC, 154 Thompson Road, Webster, MA, 01570, an answer to the complaint on or before the thirty-first day of March, 2025, next, the return day, hereof, and a copy thereof must be filed in this court on or before said day. If you fail to do so, judgment by default will be taken against you for relief demanded in the complaint. Unless otherwise provided by Rule 13(a), your answer must state as a counterclaim any claim which you may have against the plaintiff which arise out of the transaction or occurrence that is the subject matter of the plaintiffs' claim, or you will thereafter be barred from making such claim in any other action.

CASE NO. 24 MISC 000603 (GHP)
It is ORDERED that notice be giv-

en by publishing a copy of this notice once in the Webster Times, a newspaper of general circulation in Southern Worcester County, in said Commonwealth, at least thirty days before the thirty-first day of March, 2025.

Witness, Gordon H. Piper, Chief Justice of the Land Court, the twenty-first day of February, 2025.

Attest:

/s/ Deborah J. Patterson
Deborah J. Patterson
Recorder

March 7, 2025

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 6 Wall Street, Webster, MA 01570

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Michael Bhatti to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Guild Mortgage Company LLC, and now held by **Guild Mortgage Company LLC**, said mortgage dated June 15, 2022 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 67753, Page 241, said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Guild Mortgage Company LLC to Guild Mortgage Company LLC by assignment dated July 23, 2024 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 70831, Page 257; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at **Public Auction on** April 10, 2025 at 10:00 AM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

*Closing Date: June 15, 2022
Borrower(s): Michael Bhatti
Property Address: 6 Wall Street, Webster, MA 01570*

A certain parcel of land with the buildings thereon, on the south side of Wall Street, in Webster, bounded and described as follows: Beginning at an iron pin driven into the ground on the south line of the said Wall Street distant thirty-nine and one hundredth (39.01) feet east of the intersection of the south line of said Wall Street and the east line of Pearl Street so-called, and being the northwest corner of land herein conveyed; Thence South 73° 30' East by the southerly line of said Wall Street, a distance of forty-six and seven tenths (46.7) feet to an iron pin driven into the ground at land of Olivia Courteau and Dorothy Courteau; Thence South 14° 42' West by the land of said Courteaus, a distance of sixty seven and sixty-two (67.62) feet, to an iron pin driven into the ground at a point in a line parallel and thirty-three (33) feet distant from the base line of the former location of the Southbridge Branch of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad Co: Thence westerly along a curve to he left and by a line parallel and thirty-three (33) feet distant from the former base line of said Railroad location, a distance of sixty-one (61) feet, more or less. to an iron pin driven into the ground at land of Norrey Robert Hislop and Christina R. Hislop; Thence North 18° 30' East by the land of said Hislops, a distance of one hundred one and thirty-four hundredths (101.34) feet to the point of beginning. For title reference see deed recorded herewith.

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

For Mortgagor's Title see deed dated June 13, 2022 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 67753, Page 238.

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

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

Other terms to be announced at the sale.
Brock & Scott, PLLC
23 Messenger Street
2nd Floor
Plainville, MA 02762
Attorney for Guild Mortgage Company LLC
Present Holder of the Mortgage
(401) 217-8701
March 7, 2025
March 14, 2025
March 21, 2025

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Information
Call 508-909-4127
email:legals@
stonebridgepress.news**



Math Blocks

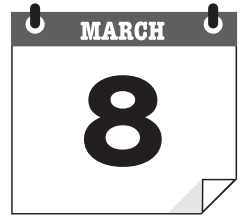
Fill in the missing blocks with numbers between 0-20.
The numbers in each row add up to the totals on the right.
The numbers in each column add up to the totals on the bottom.

10	8		33
	11	9	22
6		5	15
18	23	29	

5	4	9
6	11	2
15	8	10

Solution

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

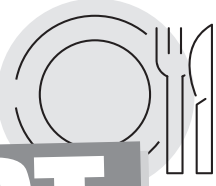


1910: French aviator Raymonde de Laroche becomes the first woman to receive a pilot's license.

1936: Daytona Beach and Road Course holds its first oval stock car race.

1979: The compact disc is demonstrated for the first time.

Food FACT:



True or false?
There is no perfect diet for everyone.

Answer: True; experimentation may be needed

Get Scrambled

Unscramble the words to determine the phrase.

E H L T Y H A L M S A E

Answer: Healthy meals

NEW WORD

REFINED

with unwanted elements removed by processing

How they say that in...

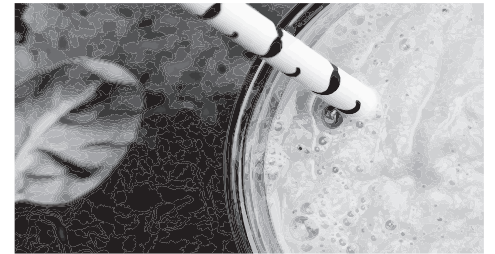
- English:** Protein
- Spanish:** Proteína
- Italian:** Proteine
- French:** Protéine
- German:** Eiweiß

Did You Know?

A combination of various foods, with a good deal of vegetables and fruits, is part of a healthy and balanced diet.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Smoothie

LEGALS

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200

Docket No. WO25P0534EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

Estate Of:

James E Adams

Date of Death: 01/11/2023

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Diane Adams of Auburn MA**

requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that:

Diane Adams of Auburn MA

be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/18/2025**.

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.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.

Date: February 14, 2025

Stephanie K. Fattman,

Register of Probate

March 7, 2025

Docket No. WO24E0014PP

A.C. 92A

Petition to Partition

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Worcester Probate & Family Court

To John P. Stuczynski and to all other interested persons.

A petition has been presented to said Court by Kimberley Earley of Webster in the County of Worcester representing that he hold as tenant in common undivided part or share of certain land lying in Webster in said County Worcester and briefly described as follows:

See Attached

setting forth that he/she desire that all the aforesaid described part of said land may be sold at private sale for not less than four hundred and fifty thousand (\$450,000) dollars, and praying that partition may be made of all the land aforesaid according to law, and to that end that a commissioner be ap-

pointed to make such partition and be ordered to make sale and conveyance of all, or any part of said land which the Court finds cannot be advantageously divided either at private sale or public auction, and be ordered to distribute the net proceeds thereof.

If you desire to object thereto you or your attorney should file a written appearance in said Court at Worcester before ten o'clock in the forenoon on the eighteenth day of March 2025 the return date of this citation.

Witness, **LEILAH A. KEAMY, Esquire, First Judge of said Court, this eleventh day of February 2025.**

Stephanie K. Fattman

Register of Probate

February 21, 2025

February 28, 2025

March 7, 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. WO25P0226EA

INFORMAL PROBATE

PUBLICATION NOTICE

Estate Of:

Kathleen Ellen Czechowski

Also Known As:

Kathleen E. Czechowski

Date of Death: 07/24/2024

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of: Petitioner **Frank A. Czechowski, Jr. of Webster MA**

a Will has been admitted to informal probate

Frank A. Czechowski, Jr. of Webster

MA has been informally appointed as Personal Representative of said 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.

March 7, 2025

DUDLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Public Hearing Notice

A **Public Hearing** will be held at the Dudley Municipal Complex, 71 West Main Street in Dudley, MA at 6:00PM on March 12, 2025. To consider a **Notice of Intent** of Town of Dudley for the property located at: Carpenter Pond (New Boston Road) for Dam removal and ecological restoration. This is a Public Hearing under the requirements of G.L. CH> 131 40, as amended. Plans are available at the Dudley Conservation office on Mondays and Tuesdays from 11:30 AM – 4:30 PM. For more information, call 508-949-8011.

March 7, 2025

OXFORD

continued from page A1

teachers. The more complex one cuts \$240,000 from athletics (meaning essentially all of them), all afterschool programs at the middle and high schools (\$58,000), and 1.5 teachers (\$84,000).

Palmina Griffin observed such cuts are "not in the best interest of our students" and would put "a detrimental spin on their future." Regarding athletics, she said some students hope

to get college scholarships by playing them.

Todd Proctor agreed, noting it would also hurt the town's public sports program, where kids often graduate into high school sports.

Regarding academics, he added, "Our test scores are struggling at times, and taking teachers away won't help that."

Lucas said most sports already have user fees, and about 400 kids play them. They're \$100 for the first sport, \$50 for the second and free thereafter.

But many lower-income kids don't pay them anyway.

That prompted Griffin to ask what percentage actually do pay, a figure Lucas said he could get. She said the district once considered having an athletics transport fee, but opted against it. Regarding both, she said it'd be "really, really hard for a community like us to do what other districts would do to get money from particular students" because many in Oxford can't afford it.

Chair Corey Burke agreed, saying making up \$240,000 in fees would be "an exorbitant amount" and would make the costs "not even close to realistic for a family wanting to play high school sports." He and others noted such hikes could easily encourage students to choice-out to other districts.

Dave Cornacchioli asked how the town ended up in "such a hole" - a \$760,000 deficit.

During citizen's forum, Matt Pearson answered that by saying most of it came from a huge hike in health insurance cost, of which the town pays 70 percent.

"Nobody's trying to [hurt] the schools. The money just isn't there," he said, noting the manager had sent a memo back in November (not just the recent one) warning departments predicting Oxford would have budget issues.

Conacchioli read that recent memo from

Callahan urging departments not to use "one-time funding to solve this problem, as it will further destabilize available funds and inevitably bankrupt the Town of Oxford." If it can't, she wrote, "the School Committee will have to convince the broader community that the needs of the Oxford school Department outweigh the maximum the town can tax residents" and seek a Proposition 2 1/2 override.

He contradicted Callahan's "bankruptcy" claim by saying Stabilization has about \$2 million in it, and could easily cover the \$760,000 shortfall.

Burke said he did request a placeholder warrant article for an override, but doesn't yet know what the deadline is to provide actual language for it or if they'll seek one. Since it was not on the agenda to vote on such an idea, he allowed discussion, but said any vote will be at the next meeting.

Later, Griffin said, "It looks like we need an operational override. It's not in the best interests of th students of Oxford Public Schools to make these drastic cuts to the marrow. We know they'll affect everybody."

But, she also noted that the funds raised by overrides only have to go to the designated recipient for the first year. After that, they become part of the town's general fund

and can theoretically be used anywhere.

"It's a one-time fix, but it can't be a one-time fix," she said

From the citizens' forum, former member September Forbes later said that's why she's "always against overrides." She said she doubts the voters will support one because it's "getting to the point it's unaffordable."

Other citizens forum comments were mixed. Former School Committee member Jennifer Pearson said she's "angry at a lot of the rhetoric" she hears from the school committee, and sees it as divisive. To her, the board often presents the numbers in ways she sees as "grossly misleading," and she argued the cuts are needed now "because you refused to make them in the past."

"This is a mistake you need to learn from," she added. "... The schools are part of the town, and it's really hurtful to see the rhetoric fly back and forth."

By contrast, one man said he feels "it's up to you guys to tell the Town Manager to stick it" and fight for "the money you're entitled to." But he said he dislikes and wouldn't support an override because "taxes are out of control" and he already "can't afford to live here."

Katie Proctor said she feels "now it's time to rally around the schools

... and show that education isn't an expense we can cut. It's an investment in the community."

Cornacchioli said he'll support a level funded budget, but not the additional cuts. He argued those jobs had been cut before Covid, and were restored by ESSER grants which have since expired, so they're trying to work them into the budget.

"Now we're back in the same position - we have to cut positions again and it has to stop," he said.

But he also said he wouldn't support an override "if we're the only department doing it."

"Nobody on this committee wants to attack anybody," Griffin said. "... We're just here doing our best to advocate for the students of Oxford" and fight for "the resources our kids so desperately need."

She said she sees the school budget as being "a budget of need," but there are things it doesn't fund yet that could help Oxford "do better."

"When you don't have the money, you slide backward," Griffin added.

"This is tough for everybody" and will be "a very difficult decision," Burke said. "There are real people attached to some of these cuts."

The committee is planning to present its actual budget and vote at its March 17 meeting.

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

PLAN

continued from page A1

ing through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) who also need to approve the plan after it passes the state review.

The natural hazards they looked at in Dudley include extreme temperatures, drought, earthquakes, flooding from precipitation and dam overtopping, hurricanes and tropical storms, invasive species, winter storms, tornadoes, wildfires and brush fire, and other severe weather events. Each hazard was scored to determine the highest risks and probability for impact with winter storms, flooding from precipitation, and other unategorized weather events being deemed the highest priority. The

plan also examines critical assets including emergency departments, sewer pump and water treatment facilities, the town hall, transfer station, the housing authority, schools and other facilities. The document includes 31 recommended mitigations in total and serves as a baseline to help prioritize these projects and secure funding to reduce the impact on town finances.

Dudley Fire Chief Dean Kochanowski, who has been heavily involved in helping develop the updated plan, said the document is an important part of making sure Dudley is prepared for any scenario.

"We have to update it every five years, and a lot of these hazards are mitigated through federal grants. As of right now they're still there, but it's a requirement to be eligible for the grants. We're probably eligible for more dam funding because of our situation, it's kind of unique. A lot of the money is out there as long as we keep this plan updated every five years," said the Chief.

Following the public hearing the plan was made available to the public until March 10. After March 10, the document will be presented to MEMA and, if it is approved, will then be reviewed by FEMA. Once finalized, the mitigation plan is good for five years before it needs to be reviewed and is considered "living documents" that can evolve over time as new data helps Dudley further focus its attention on the areas most at risk and the changing relevance of different hazards in town.

HOLMSTROM

continued from page A1

bers of the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, ensured the recruit received the critical care needed, including CPR and defibrillation. The recruit regained consciousness and was able to speak with the crew prior to being transported to the hospital.

Holstrom was recognized for his professionalism and dedication to saving lives at the Feb. 24 Dudley Board of Selectmen's meeting.

"I'm very proud of Kevin. More often than not even when we do CPR rapidly the outcomes aren't good, so this is a real positive feel-good moment," Fire Chief Dean C. Kochanowski said, noting the patient is doing well today because of his efforts.

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to pet sitting. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 10 = R)

- A. 26 22 10 4 12 2 9 4 10 Clue: Babysitter
B. 6 21 6 6 8 Clue: Young dog
C. 16 14 22 10 13 2 7 12 Clue: Overnight animal care
D. 1 10 22 9 4 24 Clue: Vacationing

SUDOKU

9x9 grid with numbers and empty cells for a Sudoku puzzle.

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!

TOWN OF POMFRET PART-TIME ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK The Town of Pomfret seeks to hire a pt (up to 25 hrs/wk) Assistant Town Clerk responsible to assist the Town Clerk in the administration and management of the municipal records of the Town, its minutes, agendas, licenses, and permits as required by CT General Statutes and to perform all duties for elections, primaries and referenda. Must assist the general public and work in cooperation with municipal officials. Must be able to work independently. A minimum of a high school diploma required. Efficient knowledge of Microsoft Office including Excel and Word. One or two years of office or secretarial experience, or one year of office administration. Bookkeeping experience and previous CCMC certification or experience helpful but not necessary. CCMC certification would be required within 4 years of employment if not currently certified. Salary commensurate with experience. Full job description available on the Town website: www.pomfretct.gov. Submit letter of interest, application and 3 letters of reference to: Selectman's office, 5 Haven Road, Pomfret Center, Ct 06259. Application deadline March 24, 2025. EOE/AA

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FOSTER PARENTS WANTED: Seeking Quality Homes Throughout Central MA To Provide Foster Care To Children In Need. 24/7 Support Generous Reimbursement, \$1000 Sign-On Bonus. Call For Details. Devereux Therapeutic Foster Care. (508)829-6769

North Brookfield highway-driver Town of North Brookfield Highway Department is looking for a Full-time Driver, Laborer, Operator position CDL required with HEO required within 6 months of hire. Must be available for emergency calls days, nights, weekends & holidays. Applications are available at the Highway Garage, 58 School St, No. Brookfield (508) 867-0213 Equal Opportunity Employer

The Spencer Housing Authority has an opening for a Full-Time Administrative Assistant The Spencer Housing Authority is seeking a qualified full-time Administrative Assistant to assist with a variety of tasks including, but not limited to, processing applications, maintaining waitlists, calculating rent determinations, and general reception duties including answering phones, entering work orders, filing and assisting the public. This is a full time (40 hours) benefited position. Retirement is through the Worcester County Retirement Office. Successful candidates must have excellent written and verbal communication skills and be proficient in computer skills. Working knowledge of EOHLC, CHAMP, or PHA-Net software. The selected applicant must be able to pass a criminal background check (CORI). The full job description can be found on the SHA website. Pay: \$20.00 per hour Applicants should submit a cover letter and resume to: Spencer Housing Authority 13 McDonald Street Spencer, MA 01562 Attn: Kimberly Hurlbrink You may also email cover letter and resumes to Kimberly Hurlbrink: kim.hurlbrink@spencerhousing.org Resumes will be accepted until 2:00PM on March 21, 2025 Spencer Housing Authority is an equal Opportunity Employer.

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Featured New Listing!!

WEBSTER - 25 SLATER ST



ON DEPOSIT
Location! Location! This Oversized & Well Maintained 2 Family offers 2,472 sq ft Total! Apt 1 >1st Floor Unit >has 1,052 sq. ft, 3 BRs & 1 Bath! Apt 2 >2nd & 3rd Floor Unit has 2 levels >1,420 sq. ft, 5 BRs, 2 Baths, Corner lot w/ .30 acre, 22x22' Two Car Garage! 12x16' Concrete Patio. Apartments fully occupied. PLEASE DO NOT TRESPASS onto the Property. **\$559,900**



**WEBSTER -
22 COOPER RD.**

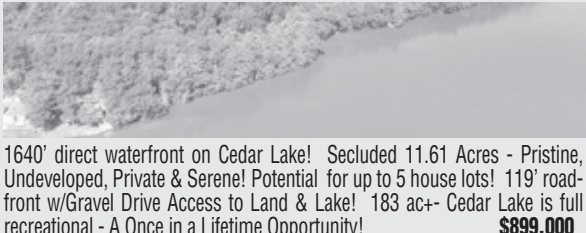
New Construction! 2nd of 4 Homes to be built! Imagine Yourself in a New Craftsman Style home - Tucked away on Cooper Rd. Near Lakeside Beach/Boat Ramp. Access to Lakeside Beach/Boat Ramp. 4 BRs., 2-1/2 Baths! Walkout slider from Basement. 2 Car Garage! **\$649,900**

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ON DEPOSIT
Location ~ Location! Move-in ready Commercial Office &/or Retail Space! Ideal for >>> Small Businesses, Companies looking to expand, Banks, Medical facilities etc...2 Level Free Standing Building on a Corner Lot - Located in an Active area of Restaurants & Retail 1 Minute to Rt 395 & Rt 20...Zoned GB 10 units - .71 Acre - 26 Parking Spots **\$1,150,000**

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1640' direct waterfront on Cedar Lake! Secluded 11.61 Acres - Pristine, Undeveloped, Private & Serene! Potential for up to 5 house lots! 119' road-front w/Gravel Drive Access to Land & Lake! 183 ac+ Cedar Lake is full recreational - A Once in a Lifetime Opportunity! **\$899,000**



**WEBSTER -
38 COLONIAL RD.
LAKE RESIDENTIAL**

Webster Lake Area! Investors take notice! Charming Ranch with possible extra buildable lot! Home has 2 bedrooms, 1 Bath, 1 Car Garage, Recent Furnace and Ductless Mini-Split System. Vinyl Siding, Replacement Windows. 100CB. Interior needs updating* **\$399,900**

On the shores of Lake Chargoggagogmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg




Featured New Listing!!

Webster Lake Waterfront- 88 Union Point
Excellent opportunity! Unaltered Natural Western Facing Shoreline- Beautiful Sunsets - Panoramic Views of Middle to North Pond! 7,000 +/- Sq. Ft. Waterfront Lot! Utilize this one Bedroom Winterized cottage while making plans to construct your dream home! Or just live in, as is! Fireplaced living room! 12 X 30 one car garage. Beautiful Pine trees at the water's edge! - Here is your chance! Showings by Appointment, with Listing Broker **\$660,000**



**Webster Lake Waterfront
44 West Point Rd**

1st Time Offered!! On Killdeer Island! Beautiful Waterfront Property. 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, custom kitchen, Indoor/Outdoor Fireplace! Entertainers Dream! Beautiful Sunsets! Large Garage **SORRY, SOLD** **\$1,270,000**



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93 Haggerty Rd \$654,900

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* 1700 sq. ft.
* 2 Car Garage

130 South Rd. \$575,000

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* New Electrical * New Windows

36 Old Southbridge Rd \$447,500



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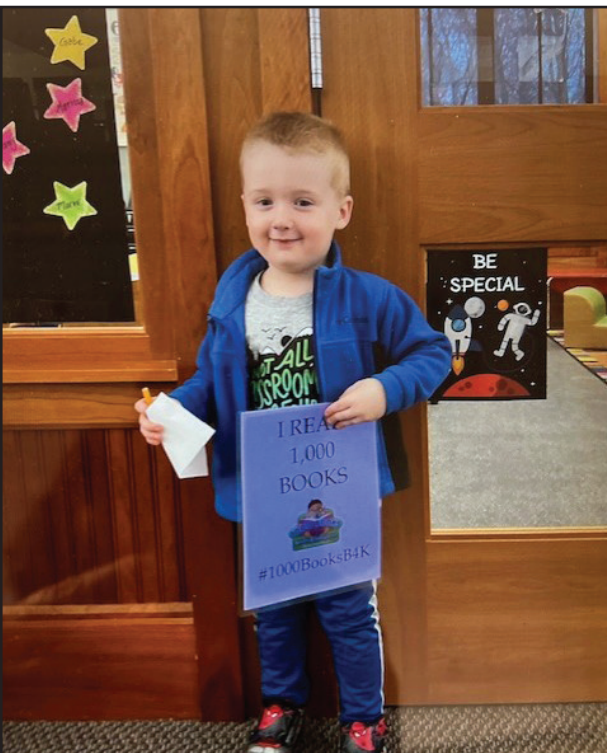
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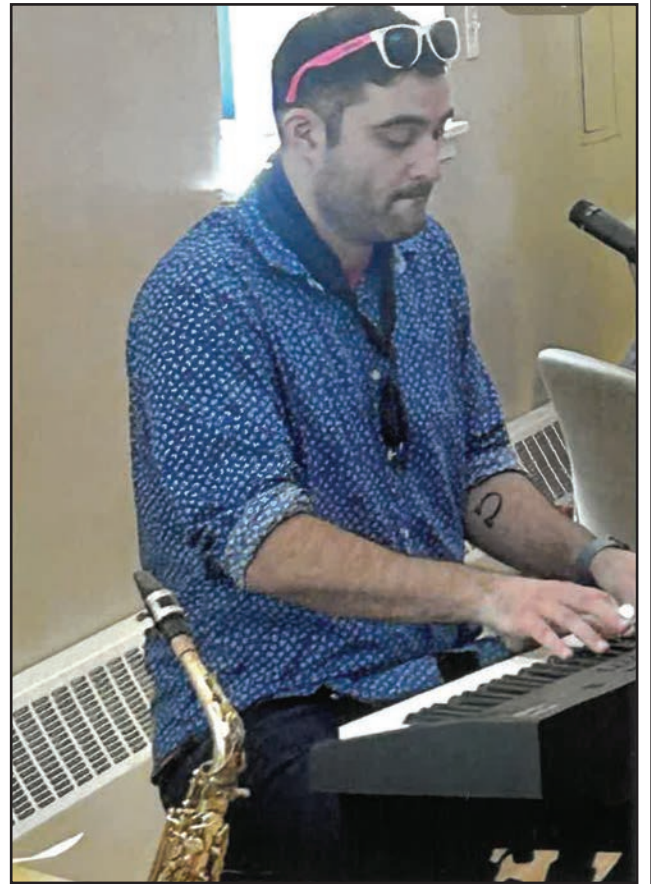
YOUNG READERS REACH MILESTONE AT PEARLE L. CRAWFORD LIBRARY

Congratulations are in order for Thea T., Adelyn M., and Liam M. for reaching their goal of completing the “1,000 Books Before Kindergarten” program at the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library! Thea worked hard to finish in August just before she started kindergarten. Adelyn was next, finishing up in November, while Liam reached his goal this February! Way to go, everyone! The 1,000 Books Foundation’s mission is to promote reading to newborns, infants, and toddlers, and to encourage parent and child bonding through reading. The 1,000 BBK challenge at the Crawford Library is funded by the Friends of the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library.



Courtesy

Love was in the air at the Webster Senior Center’s Valentine’s Forget Me Not Café, with goodies, conversation, and wonderful musical entertainment by “MAX” with his piano and saxophone on Valentine’s Day. The Friends of the Webster Senior Center, with support from the Cultural Council, welcome volunteers to bake, set up, take down, prepare coffee, tea, etc., and help to support our seniors at our memory café events. Adults of all ages are welcomed. Our next Friends meeting is March 5 at 10 a.m. at the Webster Senior Center, 5 Church St. We always welcome new members and their new ideas.



Clara Barton Elementary hosts Community Reader Day for Read Across America

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OXFORD — Clara Barton Elementary School celebrated Read Across America with a heartwarming Community Reader Day, bringing together volunteers from the community to share the joy of reading with students. This year’s featured book, “Maddi’s Fridge” by Lois Brandt, sparked meaningful discussions about kindness, friendship, and supporting those in need. Community members generously volunteered their time to read “Maddi’s Fridge” to all of the students, encouraging them to think about ways they

can help ensure that no one in their community goes hungry. The book’s powerful message resonated with students, who brainstormed ways to support friends and neighbors who may need extra help filling their fridges. Adding a special touch to the event, the owner of local restaurant El Patron volunteered to read the story in Spanish, ensuring that native Spanish-speaking students could fully engage with the book’s important themes. The event was a huge success, with students, teachers, and volunteers all enjoying the shared

experience of storytelling and community engagement. A special thank you goes to Kelly Delgado, who played a key role in organizing the event and reaching out to community members to participate. An additional thank you also goes out to all 17 community readers who took the time out of their day to spend it reading to the third, fourth and fifth graders. Clara Barton Elementary’s Community Reader Day was a wonderful reminder that books have the power to bring people together and inspire positive change.