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# Masonic lodge outfits Auburn police cruisers with Throw Bags

AUBURN — Joel H. Prouty Lodge A.F. & A.M., fraternal organization of freemasons, requested a project for this masonic year that we could respond to, by the membership, as a community project for the lodge to fund.

We approached the Auburn Police Department and were told that they had a need for each one of their cruisers to have a first responder device known as a 75-foot Throw Bags utilized for Ice & Water Rescue so that an

on-scene officer responding can start the process of rescue until additional help arrives. The device was researched and addressed with the supplier, and funded through the lodge. The 25 bags arrived at Auburn Police Headquarters, with a training video, and officers were trained and bags distributed after roll call.

The masonic fraternity is chartered to be a member of the community and to extend a hand to help, aid, and assist our fellow man. We are glad that we

were able to take on this task during these trying times.

Joel H. Prouty Lodge A.F. & A.M. has been in this community since March 27, 1927, and over the years, has been instrumental in granting scholarships to Auburn High School students, running food drives through all kinds of weather to resupply Auburn Youth & Family Services pantry, and members are always ready to step up for taking on community projects. The fraternity has many current and retired First Responders, EMS, Fire, and Police, and respect their service.

Please also remember these individuals on this upcoming 20th Anniversary of 911, that they are the ones running towards the danger, when everyone else is running away from it.



*Courtesy*  
**Pictured: Kevin O'Donnell, Master of Joel H. Prouty Lodge, with Auburn Police Officers Daniel Dyson, Brian Kennedy, & Matthew Rodwill. Picture taken by Sgt. Fred LaFlash.**

## Vaccine hopefuls experience issues with state Web site

BY KEVIN FLANDERS  
 STAFF WRITER

REGION – State officials approved new priority groups for vaccine eligibility last month, but residents encountered immediate problems.

Within hours of the state announcing COVID-19 vaccine eligibility for residents 65 and over, as well as individuals with two or more health conditions, the state's vaccine scheduling website crashed.

"Vaccine appointments are being added throughout the morning on vaxfinder.mass.gov," read a Feb. 16 statement posted by state officials on the Web site. "Due to very high website traffic, you may experience a delay in booking."

Local officials were worried about an unmanageable swell in vaccine registration attempts, after Governor Charlie Baker announced an honor system policy for comorbidities. As of Feb. 26, anyone in the state could schedule a vaccination and claim to have two or more health conditions, with no medical documentation required for proof.

State officials also saw problems with the newly created COVID-19 phone hotline for priority groups. The hotline was quickly inundated with calls from throughout the state, and many residents were unable to reach a service agent.

Over the last two weeks, frustrated residents from across the region have reached out to their legislators for assistance.

"People have had a lot of difficulties with trying to schedule their vaccines. It's a tall order to ramp up something like this so quickly," said State Representative Peter Durant, of Spencer. "I understand the frustration everyone is feeling. People have been very patient with this process, and we have pushed the state to fix these problems as quickly as possible."

Local legislators have also helped navigate seniors who do not have access to computers or technologies. Additionally, family members and neighbors have been forced to step up and assist seniors with the scheduling process. Legislators wish the state's rollout plan could have been better organized to prevent the many issues that have arisen.

"It has been very frustrating not to hear of the Governor's plans in a timely manner, or to have more input on the decisions that not only change daily, but have a disproportionate effect on our rural areas," said Sen. Anne Gobi.

Officials and seniors are also upset with the widespread abuse that has occurred with the vaccine scheduling system. Last month, state officials were pressured by legislators to do away with a policy enabling caregivers of seniors to receive the vaccine alongside them. This led to extensive fraud, officials said.

Local leaders also believe the honor system policy might need to be evaluated as more priority groups are approved. Officials are committed to ensuring that there are enough available slots on the schedule for seniors wishing to get vaccinated.

"Unfortunately, there are always going to be people who will abuse any system that comes along," Rep. Durant said.

Local legislators commend the work of the Harrington Healthcare System staff, which continues to run a vaccination site at the Southbridge Community Center.

To learn more about the Harrington vaccination site, or to schedule a vaccination appointment, visit [www.harringtonhospital.org](http://www.harringtonhospital.org). You must register your appointment through the Harrington Healthcare System's online portal.

## Charlton disbands Traffic Commission

BY JASON BLEAU  
 VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – The town of Charlton has officially disbanded its Civilian Traffic Commission, but that does not mean the end for the civilian group which was formed in 2017 to help brainstorm and gather information on traffic concerns in the town.

In early 2020, before the pandemic hit, members of the commission approached the Board of Selectmen discussing the limited power of the commission as a think tank. There were further discussions about restructuring the commission to involve more town officials. Since then, the topic was set aside to handle

the pressing matters of the pandemic, but a little over a year later, during a Feb. 23 meeting of the Board of Selectmen, the fate of the commission in its current form was decided.

Selectman Bill Borowski requested that the commission be put on the agenda for the meeting sparking a brief discussion where Borowski noted that a decision on the commission was left mostly unresolved last year.

"We've been kind of talking about this for a little bit now. I think there's been some either misunderstanding or miscommunication along the way. I don't believe everyone is certain around where things currently stand,"

Borowski told selectmen citing the early 2020 meetings where the commission sought direction on its future. "I think we just need to make a decision of do we disband it for now and think about it later – or do we say we want to reconstitute it with this type of charge."

Selectmen turned to Town Administrator Andrew Golas for his input on the matter. Golas recommended that the board disband the commission and leave the door open to reconstruct it if they so choose.

"I'd say it might be a good move now because it's been so long that they haven't met to really just close out the commission and review the charge and reissue, then try to gain a new membership,"

said Golas.

Selectmen unanimously voted to disband the commission but agreed that they will revisit it in the "not-too-distant future" as Charlton still has traffic issues that need to be resolved. It was also recommended that Golas work with the incoming police chief to make sure the work done by the commission is put to use. Selectmen also asked Golas to reach out to the outgoing members and thank them for their work on the commission. The topic of the commission will remain on forthcoming Board of Selectmen meeting warrants to allow for continued discussion should the need arise.

## Frost announces start new legislative session



*Courtesy*  
**State Rep. Paul K. Frost (R-Auburn) was sworn into office on Jan. 6 along with other members of the State Legislature, marking the start of the next two year session over 2021-2022. This begins Frost's 13th term in office.**

BOSTON — State Rep. Paul K. Frost (R-Auburn) was sworn into office on Jan. 6 along with other members of the State Legislature, marking the start of the next two year session over 2021-2022. This begins Frost's 13th term in office.

Frost enters the new term having never missed a recorded roll call vote in the Massachusetts House of Representatives after first taking office in January of 1997. At the conclusion of the 2019-2020 session, Frost's voting streak has extended to a total of 6,861 consecutive votes cast over the past 24 years.

For the new session, Frost was reappointed as a member of House Republican Floor Leadership as the Assistant House Minority Whip. Frost was appointed the ranking Republican member to the newly formed Joint Committee on COVID-

19 & Emergency Preparedness & Management. He will also serve as the ranking Republican member to the Special Committee on Redistricting and Reapportionment, as well as the Joint Committee on Cannabis Policy.

Frost said, "I'm once again honored to return as the State Representative for Auburn, Charlton, Millbury and Oxford. I'm also honored to be serving as a member of leadership again, as well as serve on committees for significant matters facing our Commonwealth over the next few years. I look forward to the challenges each of these tasks present on behalf of the communities and people I serve in my district."

Representative Paul Frost serves the 7th Worcester District, comprised of the Towns of Auburn, Charlton (precinct 4), Millbury and Oxford (precincts 2 & 3).



# Bay Path nursing students help give COVID-19 vaccinations

SOUTHBIDGE — Health departments and hospitals around the state are continuing to work to vaccinate as many people as possible, and for Harrington Hospital, that means the inclusion of help from Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy students.

Harrington Hospital and Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy have partnered to help administer more vaccines to the community. The practical nursing students who are on term 2 and on

their medical-surgical nursing clinical rotation have been asked to help at the vaccine clinic at the Armory.

For clinical facilitators like Professor Cheryl Cahill, MSN Ed, RN, this is a wonderful opportunity for her students.

“The students are doing a wonderful job providing pre-vaccination teaching, obtaining informed consent for vaccines, administering COVID vaccines, and monitoring patients after the vaccines are given. They really feel part

of the team at Harrington. We are so happy to be of service during this pandemic,” said Cahill.

The sentiment is echoed by Gretheline Bolandrina, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN, Academy Director, who said “This is an unbelievable opportunity for our practical nursing students to participate in a history making event like this.”

Clearly in line with service learning. “The opportunity allows our students to fine tune their skills in some-

thing that we don’t always get a lot of opportunity to do IM injections,” said Bolandrina.

Over the past weeks, students under the supervision of their clinical facilitator worked alongside other healthcare workers at the Armory.

“We are grateful for the opportunity to assist at the Armory! On top of being able to practice giving vaccines, I enjoy being able to see all of the details to ensure that the clinic is able to run smoothly. It is a very informative learning environment!” stated Carolyn Jenkins of Cherry Valley.

“I am really grateful for the opportunity to be able to learn, help, and make change. The people’s appreciation makes me feel good too,” shared Tianna Welcome of Oxford.



## Proposed bylaw change sparks debate

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — A potential bylaw change concerning the Building Commissioner position in Charlton sparked some debate among selectmen during a livestreamed meeting on Feb. 23.

In December of 2020, Town Administrator Andrew Golas provided a proposed version of an amended Building Commissioner Bylaw meant to define the Building Commissioner as the authority that inspectors in the town will answer to on a regular basis. Golas stressed the bylaw amendments don’t add, remove or regrade any positions in the town and that the salary would remain the same.

“The biggest change is that the wiring, gas and plumbing inspectors would essentially all answer to the Building Commissioner in a formal process,” Golas said of the amendments. “The way the bylaw is currently laid out is that they all act as independent inspectors under their own jurisdictions. While they do currently seek the commissioner’s guidance on things there’s no formal hierarchy. This would essentially establish the hierarchy of that position.”

The potential ripple effect of the changes caused some selectmen to pause feeling that they were effectively creating a new management position which would inevitably change the paygrade of the job. Selectman Patsy Rydlak said that she wasn’t convinced the job wouldn’t change beyond the authority in the future.

“When you’re giving new formal responsibility, it just seems odd that there wouldn’t be any pay change with now having people officially reporting to you,” Rydlak said. “We’re formally changing who people are reporting to and that’s pretty significant when you’re talking about changes to human resources process.”

Selectman Stephen Koronis later agreed feeling that the amendments change the overall status of the commissioner job.

“It sounds a lot like a new department head, just in my opinion. I’m not for or against it at this point but just so people understand. This is going to be a town meeting vote anyway,” Koronis said.

Selectman David Singer sought to clarify the intent of the amendments saying that the inspectors already work with the commissioner’s office and thus this is not an addition of positions or adding new authority but more solidifying the status of the commissioner in relationship to the inspectors.

“This is not addressing any change actually in roll or responsibility. All we have done is make some changes to address process,” said Singer. “We’re not adding new authority over additional partners for the town or employees. It’s the status quo.”

The debate continued into the appointment length included in the bylaw which was presented as three years. Some selectmen felt that three years was too long and that a single-year appointment was more appropriate. Selectmen agreed to hold off on adding the bylaw amendment to the May town meeting warrant until concluding discussing the topic during their meeting in early March where Town Administrator Golas is also expected to bring recommendations from town counsel.

## Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale announces annual Irish Dinner

STURBRIDGE — This year’s traditional Irish Feast, part of the Publick House Historic Inn & Country Lodge community supper program to benefit the Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale, will be a wee bit different from prior years.

In a break from tradition, the annual St. Patrick’s Day feast, slated for Wednesday, March 17, is being promoted as a pre-packaged, hot corned beef dinner for two, and the entire meal is being prepared “to go” by the Publick House staff, with convenient curbside pickup in the restaurant’s main parking lot.

Dinner for Two includes one and a half pounds of corned beef, boiled potatoes, carrots, turnips, and cabbage, two dinner rolls, two pieces of Irish soda bread and two cupcakes. Tickets are \$30 and may be purchased for one of two pickup times, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. or 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Tickets may be purchased in person at the Church office, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to noon. They are also available on PayPal for either of the two pickup times by visiting the church website at sturfed.org. The deadline for purchasing tickets is March 11.

For additional ticket information, please call the church office at 774-304-1021.

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# Country Bank welcomes new commercial lender

WARE — Country Bank, a full-service financial institution serving central and western Massachusetts, is pleased to announce that Seth Arvanites has joined their Commercial Lending Division.

Arvanites, who resides in Belchertown, has been in the commercial lending industry for 22 years. He came to Country Bank from Peoples United and earned a Bachelor's Degree in both Political Science and Geography from Syracuse University.

"The best part of this role is getting to meet, learn about, and serve the people and businesses in the community. The great people I've worked with over the years instilled in me the value of kindness, responsiveness, flexibility and teamwork," stated Arvanites. "I'm excited for the opportunity and I look forward to getting to know my clients and teammates."

"We are excited to welcome Seth to the Commercial Banking Team at Country Bank. Seth's commitment to a high



Seth Arvanites

level of customer service is evident, and we are excited for him to begin working

as a partner with our business customers to enhance their businesses and the communities they serve. Seth's trusted approach to Commercial Banking aligns with the Bank's STEP Corporate Values of Integrity, Service, Teamwork, Excellence and Prosperity, and we are pleased that he has chosen Country Bank to be his Employer of Choice," stated Miriam Siegel, First Senior Vice President, Human Resources.

Arvanites can be reached at sarvanites@countrybank.com or at 413-277-2106.

### About Country Bank

Country Bank is a full-service mutual community bank serving central and western Massachusetts with 14 offices in Ware, Palmer, West Brookfield, Brimfield, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Ludlow, Leicester, Paxton, Charlton and Worcester. Country Bank is a member of FDIC, DIF and the SUM network. Country Bank can be reached at 800-322-8233 or online at countrybank.com.



## ACCURACY WATCH

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

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

If you find a mistake, call (508) 909-4106 or email news@stonebridgepress.news during normal business hours. During non-business hours, leave a message in the editor's voice mailbox. The editor will return your phone call.

# Ecological forum urges treatment of Earth "as a relationship"

BY GUS STEEVES  
CORRESPONDENT

What would an ecological civilization look like?

Last Thursday's hour-long online forum could only touch the surface, but its Yes! Magazine-recruited panelists did hone in on one crucial thing: a change of attitude in how we treat Earth.

"If you respect Mother Earth" it's possible, Winona LaDuke said. But today's system practices "Windigo economics" — a reference to the cannibal monster seen in several Native legends, which often drives people mad before eating them. To her, that's what capitalism does to people and Earth, while Native peoples "hung out here 10,000 years and didn't make a mess of things."

LaDuke, an Anishinabe activist and Green Party vice presidential candidate in 1996 and 2000, joined food sovereignty activist Leah Penniman (a former central Mass resident) and author Jeremy Lent to talk for an audience of about 3000. They were moderated by Yes! Publisher Zenobia Warfield and Institute of Ecological Civilization cofounder Andrew Schwartz.

"Our entire food system and our entire economy is based on the exploitation of land and labor," with indigenous and other minorities often the workers while the few, often white, profit, Penniman said. In the past, that often manifested as overt slavery; today, it's a little more subtle, with people routinely being jailed and "rented back" to corporations to labor for far-below-minimum wage.

"To corporations, people and land are resources to be gobbled up for the few," she said.

Citing an elder from her Yoruba/Dahomey heritage, she added, "Clearly, you are all sick because you treat Earth as a commodity, not as a relationship." Change that, "and everything flows from there."

A big part of it, she added, is that we'd normally ask another person's consent to do something to them, but our culture never asks Earth. To indigenous peoples the world over, "we are the younger siblings of Creation," with other species, mountains, rivers and other parts of Nature being our elders, with experience they're willing to impart if we listen and ask.

Traditionally, tribes asked using countless forms of divination, dance and prayer, which exist in all cultures if you delve into the history far enough. That point led to something the participants all saw as important: the need to find roots in one's own heritage without

stealing from others. Even in European ancestry, there were cultures who honored the human-Earth relationship, and threads of those ideas were picked up by the mainstream culture and religions.

Indigenous peoples, Penniman added, "have been survivors of apocalypse" and can therefore teach how to move on. By that, she's referring to colonial conquest and, especially in the Americas, the massive death-toll from European diseases over the last several centuries.

To Schwartz, such a mentality change is part of "reclaiming the commons." While that has typically meant reclaiming the right of communities to use the land for sustenance in the face of privatization for commodity agriculture and other development, he said he also means it in the sense of taking the Internet and other aspects of society from corporate control.

Lent agreed, saying technology, language, the Web and other things are "part of untold generations of our ancestors creating something that's everyone's heritage." It's "the common wealth," so "every human being who's born has a right to share that," he said.

"We've got to stand up as a global community and bring back the commons," he added.

In some ways, that's slowly happening. Lent cited fairly recent changes in European law to "declare ecocide a crime" and confront corporate polluters.

Elsewhere, there are efforts to enshrine Earth rights into law — for example, Toledo OH voters approved doing so for Lake Erie, and Orange County FL did so for rivers last year. In a few places, such as Bolivia and Ecuador, such rights are in the national constitution.

LaDuke noted such relocalization is critical. Everywhere has seen similar "conflict between the cannibals and Mother Earth," so there are many ways to get involved. Often, that can take the form of being "a water protector," but in general it means first getting to know "the land to which we belong" — an idea that's polar opposite to Western practices.

Overall, her goal is "to end the slavery of Mother Earth," she said.

"We don't have to solve all the problems ourselves," Lent observed, noting we just need to "be a small part ... and connect to [the larger effort] like a mycorrhizal fungal network underground."

In forests, such networks allow trees and other plants over a wide area to share nutrients and communicate biochemically as an interdependent community. Penniman compared it to tradi-

tional susu economics in Ghana, where everyone contributes something and gets back what they need.

Comparing it to a butterfly's winglets, she noted there are four main ways people can get involved: resist further abuses of Earth, work to reform the laws, help build alternative institutions, and be healers of both land and people because "there's a whole lot of trauma out there."

"If you care about life, ...it's going to happen because all of us move together ... toward a life-affirming future," Lent added. "It's possible to transform it when enough of us work together."

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

## Friday's Child

**Angel**  
Age 7

**Hi! My name is Angel and I love to be helpful!**

Angel is a very polite and active young boy of Hispanic descent. He loves doing arts and crafts and playing with trucks! The foster family he is currently placed with describes him as being very helpful, intelligent, and a good listener. Angel does well with structure, routine, and guidance and would like a family who is able to provide him with that.

Legally freed for adoption, Angel would benefit being part of a two-parent family with or without older children in the home. A family for Angel must ensure he thrives by continuing the services that are currently in place to address his intellectual and emotional needs. He would do best in a patient, nurturing, and consistent environment. Angel shares relationships with his birth parents, who he currently visits with individually on a bi-weekly basis, as well as two siblings he would need to have contact with after placement.

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

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# Area fairs, festivals anxious but hopeful

BY KEVIN FLANDERS  
STAFF WRITER

REGION – The state continues to recover from the pandemic, but not nearly fast enough to salvage major spring fairs and festivals.

Last month, West Brookfield's Asparagus and Flower Heritage Festival became the latest local event to be scrapped for 2021. It joins several other canceled festivals and craft fairs, with others in jeopardy throughout the region.

For residents, it was disappointing to receive news that the Asparagus Festival tradition would be lost for the second straight year due to COVID-19.

But for local crafters, vendors, and artists, the loss of festivals has devastated their businesses. While residents can always look forward to their favorite traditions returning in 2022, several crafters hope their businesses survive that long.

Meanwhile, multiple vendors who attend the Brimfield Antique Show are desperate for the event to take place this year after all three shows were canceled in 2020.

"We are keeping our fingers crossed and hoping we can have the show in May," said Pam Moriarty, a co-owner of the Heart O' The Mart showgrounds in Brimfield. "The dealers and vendors can't wait to get back. Everything is up

in the air right now."

Added Lori Faxon, who owns Dealer's Choice Antique Shows in Brimfield, "This has been a very hard year, not just for dealers but also for all the local hotels, restaurants, and shops that rely on income from guests every year. This has impacted everyone's business in one way or another."

Lost parking revenue has also taken a toll on local residents and businesses. On a single day at the antique show, thousands of guests are paying for parking throughout the day, then dining and shopping at local establishments afterward.

The 2021 antique show slate in Brimfield is scheduled for May 11-16, July 13-18, and Sept. 7-12. Owners and dealers were informed that a final decision on the May event will be made on or before March 31.

"Even if we can't have the May show, we are confident that we will have the July and September shows," added Moriarty, who has owned her business for 40 years.

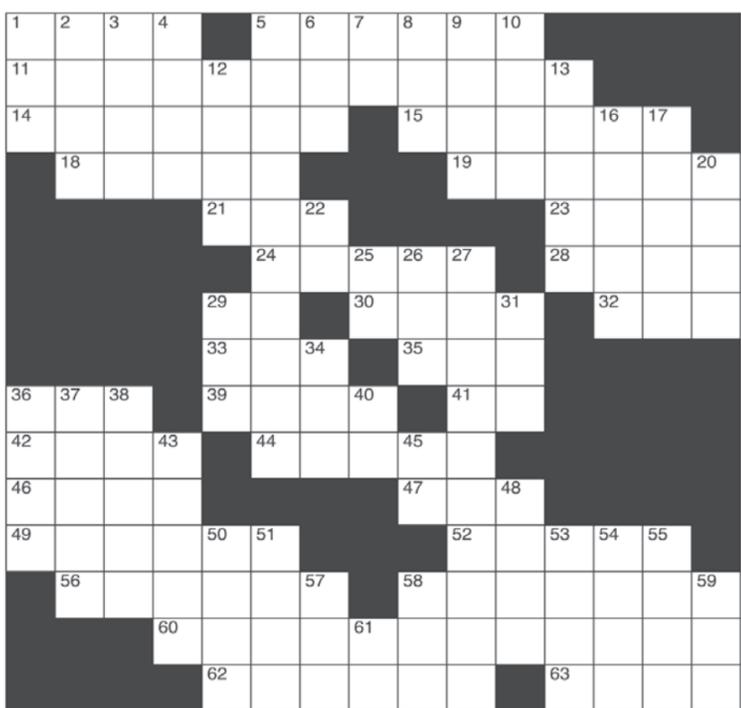
Because festivals and craft fairs draw guests from throughout the state and the country, local officials and health boards are using caution about recom-

mendations. They also must consider whether state restrictions on gatherings will be lifted in time for the events. Gov. Charlie Baker's administration has repeatedly promoted a phased, careful return of public events statewide to avoid outbreaks.

"We totally understand that everyone is trying to keep the event as safe as possible. A lot of this depends on state health officials," Moriarty said of the May antique show in Brimfield.

Local officials recognize that even after the majority of residents get vaccinated, masks, social distancing, and other precautions may still be needed at spring and summer festivals to protect those who haven't been vaccinated yet. This may change how local traditions look in 2021, but residents are prepared to make the sacrifices if they are able to salvage their favorite events.

To learn more about whether fairs and festivals will take place in your town this year, check the community website in the coming weeks. Plans have not yet been announced for the Leicester Harvest Fair, Christmas in July, the Spencer Fair, and several others.



## CLUES ACROSS

- 1. One of Noah's sons
- 5. Openings
- 11. Rising from the dead
- 14. Expressions for humorous effect
- 15. North American country
- 18. Flowed over
- 19. Tags
- 21. Long-lasting light bulb
- 23. Off-Broadway theater award
- 24. Khoikhoi peoples
- 28. Beloved movie pig
- 29. South Dakota
- 30. Tai language
- 32. Get free of
- 33. Afflict
- 35. Transmits genetic information from DNA
- 36. Commercials
- 39. Digits
- 41. Expression of sympathy
- 42. Bleats
- 44. Swiss Nobel Peace Prize winner
- 46. Vegetable
- 47. Turf
- 49. Disorganized in character
- 52. Takes
- 56. Rules over
- 58. More fervid
- 60. Sweet drink
- 62. Cry loudly
- 63. A friendly nation

## CLUES DOWN

- 1. A title of respect in India
- 2. His and \_\_\_
- 3. Employee stock ownership plan
- 4. A type of bond (abbr.)
- 5. Acting as if you are
- 6. Affirmative
- 7. Not caps
- 8. Type of medication
- 9. Monetary unit
- 10. Private school in New York
- 12. Small stream
- 13. A person of wealth
- 16. Exclude
- 17. Someone who vouches for you
- 20. Vegetable part
- 22. Gov't lawyer
- 25. Term to address a woman
- 26. Swiss river
- 27. About senato
- 29. \_\_\_ Paulo, cityr
- 31. Native American tribe
- 34. "Titanic" actor
- 36. Campaign for students' rights (abbr.)
- 37. Capital of Senegal
- 38. Slang for military leader
- 40. Football's big game
- 43. Women who threw themselves on funeral pyres
- 45. Equally
- 48. Forest animal
- 50. Heavy stoves
- 51. Releasing hormone (abbr.)
- 53. Song
- 54. Type of pickle
- 55. Offer in return for money
- 57. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 58. Burns wood (abbr.)
- 59. Beloved singer Charles
- 61. Three-toed sloth



A decision is expected by March 31 as to whether the Brimfield Antique Show scheduled for May 11-16 will be held as planned.

# Charlton seeking local agreement with NEC

BY GUS STEEVES  
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – Charlton is seeking to negotiate a host community agreement to ensure local interests are protected as part of the plan to build a natural gas storage site on Route 169 between Incom and Millennium Power.

"Without an individual agreement, the town is at the mercy of EFSB" and would lose all control," said Town Administrator Andrew Golas, referring to the state's Energy Facilities Siting Board.

The goal is to draft a document that will address public safety, decommissioning costs, penalties for violations and what information developer Northeast Energy Center needs to provide.

Additionally, he intends to seek a separate agreement ensuring NEC pays payments in lieu of taxes (as Millennium now does); that would have to go to Town Meeting for ultimate approval. Selectman Bill Borowski said utilities often seek various tax breaks, so towns need to create such agreements to get any money from them.

"This is not a discretionary decision" for Charlton, Borowski observed. "The state is going to decide whether or not it's going to go there."

Last week, selectmen convened an online public forum to start that process by asking the community what concerns they wished to have considered. Not many were raised, but Fire Chief Ed Knopf did say he had already pointed out the 13-percent slope of the access road could be an issue for emergency vehicles. While the plans have since been revised, he said he has not seen the changes.

NEC is proposing to build a single 2-million-gallon storage tank with its associated on- and off-loading equip-

ment, various safety features, and pipeline interconnections to the north-south Tennessee Gas line on the other side of Route 169 and Cady Brook. That last point is a recent change, as is building a related monitoring station. Originally, it sought to connect to the east-west Kinder Morgan pipeline farther north, without crossing route 169, by crossing Millennium Power property, but spokesman Boris Brevnov said Kinder Morgan wanted to avoid "commingling" its sources of gas.

Brevnov tried to allay concerns by citing some of the same things he said in previous public events on the 15-acre project. Namely, he noted Massachusetts has already hosted three similar, larger facilities "for 50-60 years" without major problems. This project would be quite a bit smaller than NEC's Philadelphia site, which is right in an urban area.

He claimed the state has "a very, very methodical approach" to siting such facilities that's "assessed through multiple dimensions" and lots of science. Among other areas, the state is looking at air emissions (that's the DEP permit specifically), noise, vibrations, wetlands issues, traffic impact and will even require replacement planting of trees they remove, he said.

"We're trying to minimize the environmental impact and footprint of the project," Brevnov said, adding that he sees its location next to Incom as a plus, because the company "needs an energy backup" for its solar array.

Under state law, energy facilities do not have to go through the local planning and zoning permitting process, unlike almost any other business. Instead, they're subject to hearings through the EFSB, Department of Public Utilities, and Department

of Environmental Protection which have been wading through nearly two years of changes, delays and other issues. DEP plans on publishing its draft air quality permit soon, with a 30-day public comment period after that.

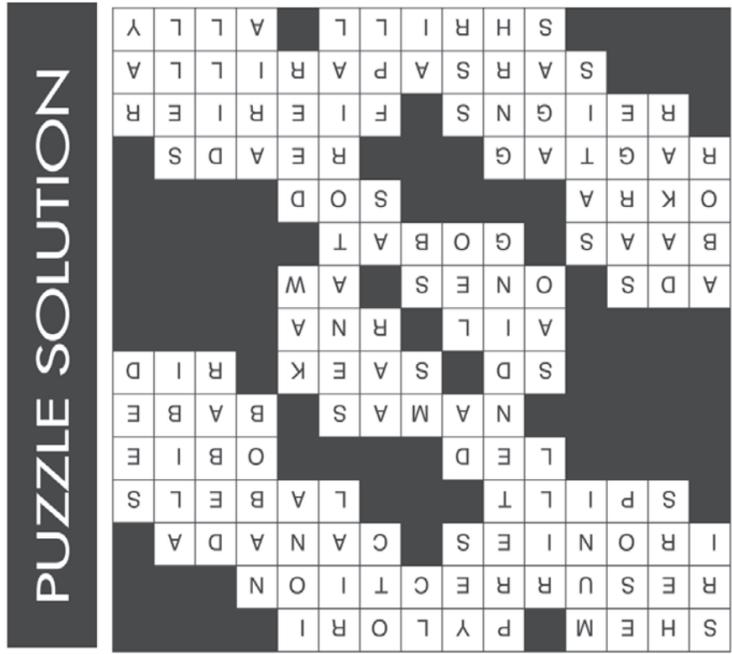
DEP's recently released project fact sheet notes the site is considered to be in an "environmental justice" community because more than a quarter of the people living within one mile are minorities. NEC plans to liquefy about 168,240 gallons per day for truck transport to regional National Grid natural gas storage facilities. In the process, it will release various kinds of pollutants: carbon monoxide, variously-sized particulates, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and the unspecified "hazardous air pollutants." NEC's own models claim such pollutants will be "below the applicable requirements," it states.

The attached map makes it clear the minority area is the Southbridge part of that mile radius. At the most recent Town Council meeting, Southbridge Town Manager Michael McCall said he plans to organize a public forum to address Southbridge's interests due to the site's proximity to town. In previous hearings on this project, Southbridge officials have noted that emergencies up there would be very likely to require a mutual aid response from Southbridge.

The lack of public comments didn't really surprise the selectmen, with Bill Borowski saying "it's neither side's first rodeo." The board has already compiled a list of issues from various town departments.

That said, residents who do have concerns can send them directly to Golas at Andrew.Golas@townofcharlton.net.

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





# Community Connection

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# OPINION/COMMENTARY



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**BRENDAN BERUBE**  
EDITOR

## Reserve your judgment

We see it on Facebook, and other social media accounts — seemingly happy people carrying on about their lives without a care in the world. As we scroll, we tend to pass judgements on what is in reality, a blip in the lives of those who's photos we are currently looking at. A mere moment that perhaps lasted less than a second is captured, and in that moment, we feel that we are free to make a distinction on what that individual is going through in the moments and days prior, or what they may be feeling like in the moments just after. Don't do that.

The best way to find out how a friend, co-worker or family member is, is to simply ask them. With the past year being what it was, mental health issues and rates of suicide are sky rocketing. Is this really a time to pass judgement? Or is this an opportunity to lift those up around us and to make sure that we're all hanging in there?

As humans, some of us can handle any given situation with more grit than others. Some can carry on for just so long until it just becomes too much. Those that have that grit, are those who have the ability to extend their hand, tell someone that they will be ok and that they are not alone. Support for a person overwhelmed, depressed or anxious is paramount to their well being. Sure, it feels good to act tough, and announce that X, Y, or Z doesn't bother you, but the world is not all about you and it never will be. Be kind, it just feels better.

When a person breaks their leg and can no longer work for a time, they are sent flowers, offered encouraging words of support, given sick time and sent home with casseroles. If a person with a mental health condition takes time off to regroup and to seek the help and therapy that they need to ya know...live... it becomes an issue. Because you can't SEE the injury. What you might see is a smile that lasted a split second, and you pass judgement — "Oh they aren't really sick." Guess what — you are wrong. Make no mistake, we all go through challenging times, but that doesn't mean that we all handle them in the same way.

Discrimination against a person with any health issue, whether it be physical or mental, is illegal. Furthermore, it is morally wrong. Do we really want to be a society that has stopped supporting one another? We vote no. When we see a neighbor plow the driveway of the house down the street, or three neighbors pulling a strangers car out of a ditch, we are reminded of how at our cores, we are all kind.

Take note — mental illness is not a character defect. There are many reasons a person may develop an issue, whether it's temporary, brought on by stress, illness or whether it's genetic. Some anxiety may resurface as an adult, due to childhood trauma. Either way, we don't know, unless we know.

When people do not understand mental illness, they tend to exhibit prejudice against those who admit they have an issue. Those people are often treated as though they don't have a real health issue and are then discriminated against. This leads to shame in the person who openly admits that they need help, and so the stigma surrounding mental health is born.

Many workplaces have excellent support systems in place for employees who need help, these to include police and fire departments. These places are to be commended for looking out for one another.

Here are ways to decrease the stigma, be in the know and help your neighbors. Educate yourself, be aware of your attitude towards those who confide in you, pay attention to your judgements and choose your words carefully. When you do educate yourself, spread the word. Treat those around you with respect and offer encouragement, or a slice of pizza; anything goes. We say it often — take care of each other, now more than ever. You will find that it's easy to be kind.

## March is National Noodle Month

Whether you call it pasta or macaroni, the noodles that deliciously bulk up almost any soup or dish are the ultimate comfort food. After all, who can resist homemade macaroni and cheese? How about cheese laden layered lasagna? Or thick forkfuls of Fettuccine Alfredo? If recent meals haven't made your macaroni quota, here's an excuse to pile on the penne: March has been deemed National Noodle Month! Retailers reveal sales of noodles typically rise as the temperature drops. As we look to the comfort of home during cold weather, hot noodle soups, stews and casseroles serve as yummy "feel good" foods. But how much do you really know about macaroni and pasta beyond its taste factor? Read on for pointers (and more) on perfect pasta!

**Macaroni Mood:** Want an excuse to say "pass the pasta" more often? Nutritional scientists have proved certain foods are fixes for less than perfect moods. Studies show pasta, which is rich in complex carbohydrates can help relieve anxiety and help fight depression.

**No Fail Noodles:** There are a few "tricks of the trade" to perfecting pasta. Some cooks prefer to use a lightweight pot for boiling pasta. The light pot allows the water to come to its initial boil quicker and to also return to the boiling faster. This efficiency not only saves time, it prevents the pasta from clumping at the bottom of the pot.

**Culinary Coverup:** Want to prevent macaroni from sticking together? After adding the pasta and stirring, put a cover on the pot to keep it flowing freely. There's no need to add oil to the pasta water to prevent sticking. Just remember to stir the pot every now and then.

**To Salt or not to Salt:** That is the question. The answer is usually yes. Salt flavors the pasta. But don't add the salt until the water boils because adding salt first will actually delay the boil. On a restricted sodium diet? Add a squeeze of lemon or a shot of vinegar to the cooking water instead.

**Think Outside the Box:** While dry, boxed pasta is still the traditional choice for sauces that have an

olive oil or tomato base, butter and cream based sauces call for a step up. If you don't have the time or patience to make homemade macaroni, try using fresh refrigerated pasta for dishes that call for cream sauces and gravies.

**Use your Noodle:** Think pasta can't be a part of a weight loss plan? Think again. Studies in the New England Journal of Medicine and the Journal of the American Medical Association report there are no significant differences in weight loss between low-carbohydrate diets and conventional weight loss plans. The studies attribute weight-loss to a reduction in calories, not carbohydrates.

Here are some pasta pointers from the National Pasta Association:

**When pairing pasta with a sauce, remember that:** Thin, delicate pastas, like angel hair or thin spaghetti, are better served with light, thin sauces. Thicker pasta shapes, like fettuccine, work well with heavier sauces. Pasta shapes with holes or ridges, like mostaccioli or radiatore, are perfect for chunkier sauces.

**To reheat cooked pasta,** portion out the amount you need and place in boiling water. For extra easy draining, you can place the pasta in a stainless steel colander or strainer and then submerge in boiling water. Count 40 to 60 seconds of reheating time for a four ounce serving. Drain the pasta well, toss with sauce and serve immediately. Pasta can also be reheated in the microwave oven. Reheat single servings on high for 45 seconds at a time, checking between intervals for doneness.

**Refrigerate cooked pasta** in an airtight container for three to five days. You may add a little oil (one to two teaspoons for each pound of cooked pasta) to help keep it from sticking. Because cooked pasta will continue to absorb flavors and oils from sauces, store cooked pasta separately from sauce.

**The best pasta shapes for freezing** are those that are used in baked recipes, such as lasagne, jumbo shells, ziti and manicotti. You'll have better results if you prepare the recipe

and freeze it before baking. To bake, thaw the dish to room temperature and bake as the recipe directs.

Did you know?

\*In 18th century England, macaroni was a synonym for perfection and excellence. That's why, for example, the feather in Yankee Doodle's cap was called "macaroni."

\*Thomas Jefferson is credited with introducing macaroni to the United States. It seems that he fell in love with a certain dish he sampled in Naples while serving as the U.S. Ambassador to France.

\*The first American pasta factory was opened in Brooklyn, New York, in 1848, by a Frenchman named Antoine Zerega. Mr. Zerega operated with one horse in his basement to power the machinery. To dry his spaghetti, he placed strands of the pasta on the roof to dry in the sun.

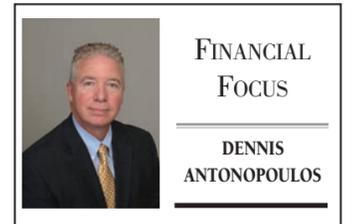
\*Tripolini or "little bows" were named to honor the Italian conquest of Tripoli in Libya.

**Win Dinner for Two at the Publick House**

Your tips can win you a great dinner for two at the historic Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge! Simply send in a hint to be entered into a random drawing. One winner per month will win a fabulous three course dinner for two at the 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.

## Resilience is key to meeting financial goals



You can demonstrate this resilience by answering these questions: What is your specific goal? What obstacle do you face in achieving this goal? How can you overcome this obstacle?

Here are some examples of how this resiliency process works:

**Goal:** Building sufficient retirement funds  
To build sufficient retirement income, you need to invest in the financial markets through your 401(k), IRA and other accounts. But how should you respond when these markets go through periods of volatility? Your best defense is to remain invested. If you were to jump out of the market every time it dropped, you'd probably miss out on the rebounds that followed. Also, over a period of decades, the effects of short-term market fluctuations tend to diminish, so while the results of any particular day or week may not look good on your investment statement, the importance of these results may diminish in 10 or 20 years.

**Goal:** Maintaining steady cash flow  
Keeping a steady cash flow is essential to meeting your daily and monthly expenses. So, it's obviously important that you maintain sufficient earned income. But what happens if you encounter a serious illness or injury that keeps you from work for an extended period? Depending on the length of time you're not working, you could feel a real financial pinch, so you may want to consider some type of disability insurance. Your employer may offer a short-term policy as an employee benefit, but it might not be sufficient, so you may need to look at private coverage.

**Goal:** Keeping retirement accounts intact  
Ideally, you'd like to leave your IRA, 401(k) and other accounts intact until you need to start tapping into them when you retire. But what if you face an unexpectedly large medical bill or you need to replace your furnace or get a new car? If you don't have the money readily available, you might be forced to dip into your IRA and 401(k), incurring taxes and potential penalties and leaving yourself fewer resources for retirement. You can help avoid this setback by creating an emergency fund containing three to six months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account.

**Goal:** Having confidence in your strategy  
To achieve your important financial goals, you need a strategy — and you need to believe in it strongly enough to keep following it during all types of stress on the financial markets. It's not always easy to maintain this conviction — less than half of Americans are confident in their abilities to recover quickly from difficult financial situations, according to a new survey from Edward Jones. One way to help gain this confidence is by working with a financial advisor.

In fact, 36 percent of those surveyed began working with a financial advisor in 2020 for help navigating the past year. The importance of receiving good advice became apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought about a variety of financial worries, such as job loss, retirement considerations, caregiving for elderly parents or providing financial support to adult children.

You will face some challenges on your journey toward achieving your financial objectives. But by being resilient, you can stay on the right road.

*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.*

## OXFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL HONOR ROLL

OXFORD — Oxford Middle School has released its honor roll for the second quarter of the 2020-2021 school year.

### High Honors

Grade 7: Justine Anderson, Jonathan Ardon, Sadie Bond, Cassidy Burke, Delaney Burke, Jaelyne Caracciolo, Keeegan Comeau, Nathan Dube, Mya Federico, Ethan Ford, Chloe Gabis, Lily Gosselin, Veronica Griffin, Gwen Gustafson, Jeffrey Guzman, Kolton Hemenway, Matthew Hilman, Abigail Hoyt, Jack Johnson, Rosy Krantz, Kyra Krasinskas, Lucas Lyons, Emily McDonald, Addison Monson, Alexis Nolin, Samuel Paradise, Noah Proctor, Ava Vincent, Vanessa Walker, Ethan White, Abigail Worster

Grade 6: Shayla Boliver, Ariana Byrnes, Catherine Cloutier, Marie Cosentino, Abigail Davis, Cameron Davis, Emily Dupuis, Randy Flynn, Finnian Keefe, Damon Libby, Daymyin Lopez, Jared Magnuson, Kate Mayo, Colin McIlvaine, Ava Rennie, Zachary Sirard, Lillian Vaillancourt

Grade 5: Khloe Anderson, Laura Grenier, Olivia Hammond, Colin Joyce, Brooke Nitti, Victoria Sullivan

### Honors

Grade 7: Rachel Arndt, Sarah Arndt, Logan Barriere, Milo Biedron, Elizabeth Byfield, Maddix Castle, Savanna Cioppa, Andrew Cloutier, Dylan Cordova Del Cid, Lorelie

Curboy, Cameron DeAdder, Anastasia Ford, Tyler Forgione, Craig Grenier, Alexander Hamilton, Nathan Hutchins, Joshua Irons, Abigail Kimbal, Madison Labay, Dominic Latuga, Kaius Monson, Kamryn Nourse, Daniel Palmer, Leonardo Peterson, Jacob Pratt, Samuel Prefontaine, Paige Reynolds, Camden Stone

Grade 6: Michelle Annancy, Teegan Borowy, William Brambilla, Emma Brindisi, Audri Chalifoux, Grace Crouch, Eric Day, Lillian Demicco, Ariana Dolan, Nathan Donnelly, Turner Goyette, Jordyn Grazulis, Keegan Grieco, Abbie Lambert, Darrian Lambert, Henry LaMountain, James Mack, Collin McAuliffe, Leighya McDowell, Nicholas Meneguzzo, Jayden Minardi, Riley Moody, Chase Paul, Philip Rouillard, Benjamin Rucho, Shayne Ryder, Jordyn Sabotka, Hailey Sprague, Kyle Twombly, Alorah Yanis, Alyssa Yanis

Grade 5: Travis Beaudette, Samantha Boyley, Jaelyn Bronzo, Sydney Chisholm, Ayva Coffey, Andrew Collins, Kaeli Cordova Del Cid, Nathan DeAdder, Rylie Dwyer, Liam Fahey, Michael Faust, Benjamin Francis, Chloe Hosley, Ella Kasprzycski, Sophia Keefe, Kaiden Labay, Lacye Leverone, John McMahon, Kyleigh Minardi, Jacob Rondeau, Isabella Roskowski, McKaelyn Shine, Adam Sliwoski, Torin Stone, Jackson Stuart, Keagan VanArsdalen, Abby Vignali, Christina Vitale, Larry Wade

# Time to check your fishing rods

March 20 signals the start of spring, but it could actually start earlier. Signs of spring are all around us if we look hard enough. In my travels around the valley this past weekend, I spotted a pair of wood duck flying into a small stream in the valley area. Three deer were observed feeding on grass where the snow had melted, and a few turkeys were feeding not far away. Although I have not spotted any robins locally, I am sure they will be here by the time you read this column.

This writer also brought my boat out of mothballs this past week. I always try to get it ready early in case I have a problem. Finding a mechanic at this time of year to repair outboard motors is easy, but in another few weeks it will be a lot harder. If you have a small outboard motor that needs a tune-up, now is the time to drop it off at a marina. Using an impact wrench to remove the lug nuts from your wheel is very important if you fish saltwater. I use a good penetrating oil like Blast before removing them. While the trailer is off of the ground it is a good idea to spin the wheel, listening for

any noise. If you hear a growling noise, it is a good time to replace the wheel bearings. If your trailer wheels have bearing buddies, they should get a good dose of grease. Do not overfill them, as you can blow out the back seal.

This is a good time to check all of your fishing rods, both salt & freshwater. Often, the rod windings need a new coat of lacquer, worn guides should be replaced, and the reel seat needs to have a bit of oil applied to the threads. All reels need to be inspected for wear. Place a light coat of oil on the level wind and on all other moving parts including the reel handle. Checking the fishing line on all reels for wear is very important. Fortunately, the braided lines do not need to be replaced as often as the monofilament lines, but they do wear out.

The next job is to check all of your fishing lures. That can be a long process if you do a



THE GREAT  
OUTDOORS  
.....  
RALPH  
TRUE

lot of fishing and have numerous fishing tackle boxes loaded with many lures and plugs. Fresh water lures do not need as much attention, but saltwater lures and sharpener and or replaced. The hooks often become rusty if you used them in saltwater, and did not wash them off with freshwater before putting them away. Replace the bucktail on some of the plugs is easy, and requires very little time if you have a fly-tying vice. I often save a couple of deer tails from my deer, or someone else's, and dye them a few different colors. You can also buy them from Bait & Tackle shops.

Fishing lures and saltwater plugs are very expensive. This writer often finds old fishing lures at yard sales and flea markets. They do not have much value, but sometimes you can find a very expensive lure or plug in the bunch that I put in my collection. Most of the plugs only need a coating

of paint and new hooks. They are a lot cheaper, and many times, are a lot better to use than a new one. New saltwater fishing plugs can cost over \$15, and often go as high as \$30 or more. These are just a few jobs that can be done before the fishing season arrive.

Massachusetts saltwater recreational fishing regulations could be the same as last year, and will keep the slot size limit on stripers. Circle hook requirements are still pending for both recreational and commercial anglers when fishing for stripers, in both Mass. & Rhode Island. A one fish daily limit on Cod in The Gulf of Maine is also pending, along with haddock regulations. Be sure to read the regulations on final season dates.

The Massachusetts hunting and fishing license fee increase for 2022 will be hosted on three online information sessions in March by Mass Fish & Wildlife. The dates are March 9, 17, and 25 from 6:30 to 9 p.m.! Instructions for joining the sessions are posted on the Massachusetts Wildlife Web site. There will be a question-and-answer period after



Courtesy

This week's picture shows a figure of a happy fisherman that was awarded to a lucky angler at the Singletary Rod & Gun Club back in 1982, during one of their fishing derbies. I found the trophy at a yard sale back a number of years ago!

the presentation, explaining the need for license and permit increases for 2022.

Take a Kid fishing & Keep Them Rods Bending!



POSITIVELY  
SPEAKING

GARY W.  
MOORE

I've written about this several times and in different ways. If I comment on "the beauty of God's creation," most will see visions of stunning landscapes and the beauty of the oceans. When I ponder the beauty of God's creation, my mind goes to my fellow human beings and their kindness.

I understand if you have difficulty going there. All you must do is go to the political opinion columns and talk shows. They're full of hatred for others whether you are on the left or right. "If you disagree, your spreading hate!" Both sides make the same claim. How

sadly absurd.

Most of you know that I'm battling Stage 4 Stomach Cancer, and wow ... it's been a roller coaster of a journey. I'm writing you today from my local hospital where I spiked a fever after my recent surgery and was admitted last night.

When I was rushed into the ER, I was surrounded by caring nurses. Because I didn't get permission, I'll not use real names. Bill, the triage nurse didn't ask me who I voted for but instead showed genuine concern. He saw me, my value, and my worth - not by my political party - but because I am simply human. And I saw him - a human. I asked his name and about his family. He

seemed grateful.

Bill passed me into a treatment room in the ER where I was quickly met by a Dr. He also saw me not by my political party, but as a human who needed care and attention. He showed genuine concern and compassion. The subject of climate change never came up, but instead we were two humans who saw value and worth in one another.

I was taken care of by a nurse's aid named Sam. I found out he's finishing up his RN certificate and said, "I'm excited to make a difference." I assured him that he already is ... he paused, smiled, and said thank you. I'm guessing he may be twenty. The last thing I said

to him was, "Sam, your parents must be so proud of you." His face lit up and he said, "I'll tell them you said so."

I was then moved to a room on the fifth floor. I make it a point to get everyone's name, ask them where they were from, and compliment them on something. In return, the care I've received has been amazing ... and through it all there was not a single political discussion, and everyone smiled. Here, we are humans who have value and worth, not predicated by our political affiliation, but simply because we are humans who are created in the image of God.

I've really enjoyed my time here being kind and

receiving kindness in return. I've tried to get them to open as I opened myself to them. I've experienced the beauty of God's creation, up close and personal.

In today's polarized environment, and often behind computer screens, we demonize one another by spewing hateful words simply because someone else voted differently than I did. As one Pastor Andy Stanley once remarked, "You're scaring the kids!" And for what?

The deeper we dive into God's creation, the more we realize, there's so much we don't know. And yet, so many act as though they are experts, and the rest of the world is foolish. But what if it

isn't our job to know? What if our purpose is much more significant and even simpler than knowing everything? What if we are fighting over the wrong thing? What if we are missing the mark entirely? Maybe it's just this simple: we are here to love and be loved. Perhaps one of the greatest reminders comes from Jesus himself, "Love your neighbor as yourself." I think he was onto something.

Gary W. Moore is a freelance columnist, speaker, and author of three books including the award-winning, critically acclaimed, "Playing with the Enemy." Follow Gary on Twitter @GaryW Moore721 and at www.garywmoore.com.

## The kindness of us

## Grow an earlier and more abundant tomato harvest



All-America Selections— Courtesy

All-America Selections winner Patio Choice Yellow Sweet is a compact tomato variety perfect for containers, patios or balconies

Be the first in your neighborhood to enjoy a garden-ripe tomato. Then continue harvesting an abundance of flavorful tomatoes throughout the growing season. A little planning and strategic planting can help you get an earlier and bigger tomato harvest.

Jumpstart the season by warming the soil for an earlier start. Cover the planting space with a floating row cover, clear plastic or a cloche. Once the soil is warm, you are ready to plant your tomatoes. Use the row cover or cloche to protect your plants when cold temperatures or frost is in the forecast. You will get a two- to four-week jump start to the season.

Further shorten the time to harvest by planting an early ripening tomato like Early Girl, Fourth of July, and Quick Pick. Check the catalog description or plant tags for the number of days the tomato variety needs to reach maturity. Growing these or others that require fewer days between planting and harvesting means you'll be enjoying fresh tomatoes sooner.

Train at least one of your tomato plants onto a stake for an earlier harvest. Loosely tie one or two stems to a tall stake. Continue securing the stems throughout the season as the plant grows. Remove the suckers, the small branches that form between the main



GARDEN  
MOMENTS  
.....  
MELINDA  
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stem and leaf, as they appear. You'll have fewer fruit, but they will be ready to harvest sooner than those caged or grown sprawled on the ground.

Staking also saves space and helps reduce the risk of disease. If staking seems like too much effort, grow your tomatoes in cages. Use tall, sturdy cages for larger indeterminate tomatoes that grow, flower, and produce fruit until frost. Caging tomatoes also increases airflow and light penetration for greater yields and fewer pest problems.

Save even more space while bringing the harvest to your kitchen door, balcony, or window box with compact tomato varieties, like Patio Choice Yellow Sweet and Neat or Tumbling Tom. Plant one in a 10-inch pot or grow several in a larger container. You'll have a large crop of bite-sized tomatoes in about two months.

To improve the quality of your harvest, choose disease- and crack-resisting varieties. Cooks and canners will love Early Resilience Roma-type tomato. It is resistant to late blight, blossom end

rot and several other common tomato diseases. This determinate tomato plant only grows two feet tall, so will not need staking. It is great for containers, small spaces, and traditional vegetable gardens. Reducing the risk of disease means a bigger harvest with less effort on your part.

Further reduce your workload and increase your success with mulch. Spread a two-inch layer of shredded leaves, weed-free straw, or evergreen needles over the soil surface around your plants. You will conserve water, suppress weeds, and improve the soil as the mulch decomposes.

With a little planning you will be ready to enjoy an early and bountiful harvest of tasty tomatoes from this season's garden.

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

## LEGALS

### NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 1 Westwood Drive, Auburn, Massachusetts  
By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by William J. Richinick, a/k/a William James Richinick, to Sovereign Bank, said mortgage dated September 28, 2011, and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds, in Book 47972 at Page 164 and now held by Santander Bank, N.A., f/k/a Sovereign Bank, for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same, will be sold at Public Auction on **March 22, 2021 at 12:00 PM Local Time** upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:  
THE LAND IN AUBURN, WORCESTER COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS, BEING LOT #3 ON PLAN OF WESTWOOD ACRES, RECORDED IN WORCESTER DISTRICT REGISTRY OF DEEDS, PLAN BOOK 270, PLAN 106, BOUNDED AND DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:  
BEGINNING AT THE NORTHWESTERLY CORNER OF THE LOT HEREIN DESCRIBED AT

LAND OF OWNERS UNKNOWN ON THE EASTERLY SIDE OF BURNETT STREET;  
THENCE S. 2 DEGREES 18 MINUTES E. BY SAID BURNETT STREET, EIGHTY-NINE AND FORTY HUNDREDTHS (89.40) FEET TO A POINT;  
THENCE BY A CURVE TO THE LEFT HAVING A RADIUS OF 10 FEET, CONNECTING BURNETT STREET AND WESTWOOD DRIVE, FIFTEEN AND SEVENTY-ONE HUNDREDTHS (15.71) FEET TO A POINT ON WESTWOOD DRIVE;  
THENCE N. 87 DEGREES 42 MINUTES E. BY WESTWOOD DRIVE, NINETY-FIVE (95) FEET TO LOT #4 ON SAID PLAN;  
THENCE N. 2 DEGREES 18 MINUTES W. BY SAID LOT #4, NINETY-TWO AND EIGHTY-ONE HUNDREDTHS (92.81) FEET TO A POINT;  
THENCE N. 88 DEGREES 42 MINUTES 20 SECONDS W. BY LAND OF OWNERS UNKNOWN, ONE HUNDRED FIVE AND TWENTY-ONE HUNDREDTHS (105.21) FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.  
BEING THE SAME PREMISES CONVEYED TO THE GRANTOR

BY DEED OF J.E. MURRAY ET UX DATED OCTOBER 18, 1963 AND RECORDED AT WORCESTER DISTRICT REGISTRY OF DEEDS, BOOK 4414, PAGE 1.  
SUBJECT TO RESTRICTIONS, RESERVATIONS, EASEMENTS, COVENANTS, OIL, GAS OR MINERAL RIGHTS OF RECORD, IF ANY.  
BEING THE SAME PREMISES CONVEYED TO WILLIAM JAMES RICHINICK FROM WILLIAM J. RICHINICK BY DEED (SUBJECT TO A LIFE ESTATE OF WILLIAM J. RICHINICK) DATED 1/8/2003, AND RECORDED ON 9/3/2003, AT BOOK 31498, PAGE 18, IN WORCESTER COUNTY, MA.  
ASSESSORS PARCEL NUMBER: MAP: 3 BLK: 32  
ATI ORDER NUMBER: 201109210604  
Sources of Title: Book 31497 Page: 18  
The description of the property that appears in the mortgage to be foreclosed shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.  
For Mortgagor's Title, see deed dated January 8, 2003, and recorded in Book 31498 at Page 18 with the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds.

TERMS OF SALE: Said premises will be sold and conveyed subject to all liens, encumbrances, unpaid taxes, tax titles, municipal liens and assessments, if any, which take precedence over the said mortgage above described.  
FIVE THOUSAND (\$5,000.00) Dollars of the purchase price must be paid by a certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check at the time and place of the sale by the purchaser. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check within sixty (60) days after the date of sale.  
Other terms to be announced at the sale.  
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Attorney for Santander Bank, N.A. f/k/a Sovereign Bank  
Present Holder of the Mortgage  
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February 26, 2021  
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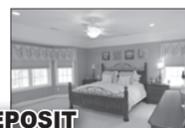


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# Proposed bylaw change sparks debate

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — A potential bylaw change concerning the Building Commissioner position in Charlton sparked some debate among selectmen during a livestreamed meeting on Feb. 23.

In December of 2020, Town Administrator Andrew Golas provided a proposed version of an amended Building Commissioner Bylaw meant to define the Building Commissioner as the authority that inspectors in the town will answer to on a regular basis. Golas stressed the bylaw amendments don't add, remove or regrade any positions in the town and that the salary would remain the same.

"The biggest change is that the wiring, gas and plumbing inspectors would essentially all answer to the Building Commissioner in a formal process," Golas said of the amendments. "The way the bylaw is currently laid out is that they all act as independent inspectors under their own jurisdictions. While they do currently seek the commissioner's guid-

ance on things there's no formal hierarchy. This would essentially establish the hierarchy of that position."

The potential ripple effect of the changes caused some selectmen to pause feeling that they were effectively creating a new management position which would inevitably change the paygrade of the job. Selectman Patsy Rydlak said that she wasn't convinced the job wouldn't change beyond the authority in the future.

"When you're giving new formal responsibility, it just seems odd that there wouldn't be any pay change with now having people officially reporting to you," Rydlak said. "We're formally changing who people are reporting to and that's pretty significant when you're talking about changes to human resources process."

Selectman Stephen Koronis later agreed feeling that the amendments change the overall status of the commissioner job.

"It sounds a lot like a new department head, just in my opinion. I'm not for or against it at this point but just so people understand. This is going

to be a town meeting vote anyway," Koronis said.

Selectman David Singer sought to clarify the intent of the amendments saying that the inspectors already work with the commissioner's office and thus this is not an addition of positions or adding new authority but more solidifying the

status of the commissioner in relationship to the inspectors.

"This is not addressing any change actually in roll or responsibility. All we have done is make some changes to address process," said Singer. "We're not adding new authority over additional partners for the town or

employees. It's the status quo."

The debate continued into the appointment length included in the bylaw which was presented as three years. Some selectmen felt that three years was too long and that a single-year appointment was more appropriate. Selectmen

agreed to hold off on adding the bylaw amendment to the May town meeting warrant until concluding discussing the topic during their meeting in early March where Town Administrator Golas is also expected to bring recommendations from town counsel.

## Old Sturbridge Village appoints new Director of Collections and Research

STURBRIDGE — Old Sturbridge Village (OSV) has announced a new Director of Collections and Research, Derek Heidemann to oversee their Collections and Research Division. Old Sturbridge Village has more than 40,000 pieces in their collection and a large research library on site.

Derek Heidemann first started at Old Sturbridge Village as a volunteer in the junior intern program in the year 2000. Heidemann went on to join the Village's interpretation part time team working in the Blacksmith Shop and other trade shops. After receiving a Bachelors of

Arts degree in History in 2009 and Masters of Arts in History with a focus in Public History in 2010 from Clark University, Heidemann joined the Village's full-time interpretation team. In 2014, he was made the Coordinator of Historic Trades and then Interim Assistant Director of Interpretation in 2020. In 2017, Heidemann curated a new firearms exhibit which is now known as the Armed and Equipped: Firearms and the Militia in New England 1790-1840.

"Derek Heidemann is the perfect choice to lead the Collections and Research division as we head into our 75th year," said Jim Donahue,

President and CEO. "His commitment to research and development, love of the Village's collection and experience in interpretation positions him well to expand the use of the collection to engage and educate the public."

While a lot of organizations have been forced to downsize over the past year, Old Sturbridge Village has continued to grow and expand on their programs and educational resources. This has given the Village the opportunity to bring in new talent and promote already existing talent within the organization. The divisions of program and interpretation, museum education, collections

and research have all added staff to support the mission of the Village. With the growth of those divisions, the Village is implementing new strategies for promoting their wide variety of offerings, both in-person and online. As a result, additional talent has also been brought in to support the marketing division and will continue to be transformed over the next year as the Village revolutionizes their digital content. As Old Sturbridge Village begins its 75th anniversary year, they have much to look forward to and share with their visitors and neighboring communities.



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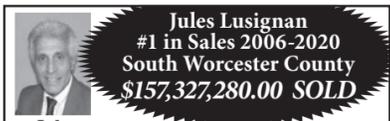
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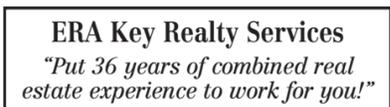
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# Spencer's newest business owner pursues dream despite pandemic

BY KEVIN FLANDERS  
STAFF WRITER

SPENCER – Dr. Grant Pattee had plenty of reasons to scrap plans for starting his business – the pandemic chief among them – but he hasn't let any obstacle deny his dream.

Even with businesses throughout the region downsizing or closing altogether, Pattee decided to take a risk and launch his physical therapy business in December. Located at 133 West Main

St., Choice Physical Therapy offers a range of services to residents. These include post-surgical services and chronic pain therapies.

For Pattee, who has worked in physical therapy for nearly 20 years, the process of opening his own business has seen its share of anxious moments – but also excitement and hope for a bright future.

“Who opens a business during a pandemic? I asked myself that ques-

tion several times, but the answer was always the same: people will eventually need therapy again,” Pattee told the New Leader. “A pandemic can really change a person's perspective. I had time to reflect and think about life goals, family goals, and eventually my career goals. I feel fortunate to have this opportunity and am truly humbled by the support I received from family, friends, and colleagues along the way.”

Pattee's opportunity in Spencer arrived at the perfect intersection of family interests and career goals. He knows the Route 9 corridor well, and he can't wait to meet more residents and business owners.

“I have always loved the small-town rural feel. I grew up in Auburn and my wife grew up in Oxford. When my own family began to grow, we wanted to take root in that same type of community,” Pattee said. “The Spencer-East Brookfield area was a perfect fit. The people in town have been friendly and welcoming, and the local school systems have been wonderful for our kids.”

Pattee began his career as a rehabilitation aide before applying to graduate school. He went on to pursue a doctorate degree in physical therapy, graduating from the University of Massachusetts-Lowell in 2007.

Over the last decade-plus, Pattee has worked predominantly in the outpatient orthopedic setting. He brings to Spencer a wealth of experience gained from working with multiple experts.

“Over the years, I was fortunate enough to work with so many great therapists that really helped shape my therapy skills and treatment philosophies,” Pattee said. “I eventually managed a small and successful clinic in Charlton before a brief stay in home care.”

In his new business, Pattee enjoys working with residents dealing with all kinds of challenges. These include patients recovering from surgeries or injuries, as well as those facing chronic back



Courtesy

Dr. Grant Pattee recently opened a new physical therapy business in Spencer.

pain, neck pain, or joint pain. Whether you're a senior recovering from a fall at home, or a high school athlete sidelined with a nagging injury, you'll want to check out Pattee's offerings.

“I look forward to continuing this partnership with the Spencer community as a local and trusted therapy provider for many years to come,” Pattee said. “Quality care will now be that much closer to home.”

Since arriving in Spencer, Pattee and his family have kept plenty busy. Pattee serves as a coach for the Spencer

Soccer Club, and his wife is a member of the Parents Interested in Education committee.

“Spencer just seemed to make sense for my family and my practice. I could not be happier with our location on Route 9, set in the heart of the community between two great local businesses, Klem's and Timberyard Brewing,” Pattee said.

To learn more about the business, call 774-449-8058. You can also visit [www.ChoicePhysicalTherapy.net](http://www.ChoicePhysicalTherapy.net).

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## Southbridge to welcome Green Meadows cannabis dispensary

SOUTHBRIDGE — Green Meadows Farm (Green Meadows), a cannabis company based in the heart of Southbridge, Mass., will open the doors of its first cannabis dispensary Sunday, Feb. 28, serving adult use cannabis customers. The dispensary is located at 64 Mill St., Southbridge.

Owned and operated by descendants of WWII General George S. Patton, Green Meadows is founded on the Patton family's heritage of veteran advocacy, community service and organic agriculture. The company mission is simple: to bring exceptional cannabis products to Southbridge and surrounding communities, while engaging with consumers, particularly veterans, on ways these products may enhance personal health and well-being.

“Our values are rooted in positive social engagement,” says Bob Patton, Manager and Chief Executive Officer. “Southbridge is an historic commercial center undergoing major revitalization with both public and private sponsors.

We at Green Meadows couldn't be prouder to participate in this resurgence and to call this diverse and vibrant community home.”

Green Meadows is currently approved to serve adult use customers. Medical licensing will follow early this spring with the addition of cultivation and processing to organic standards to its operation. In a rarity for Massachusetts, the company has taken “locally grown” to a whole new level by locating its cannabis production alongside its dispensary in a restored 19th century mill building in downtown Southbridge. Ultimately Green Meadows will feature its own products grown to the highest organic standards along with a curated selection of quality products from other sources.

Old Traditions made new - Family, veterans and cannabis

The Patton family's support for military veterans dates back generations. It grew stronger in light of the difficult experiences and related burdens of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) endured by many veterans of the recent Iraq-Afghanistan era. Bob Patton's father, George S. Patton IV, founded Green Meadows Farm as an organic fruit and vegetable farm after retiring as an army major-general in 1980. Combining his devotion to organic, sustainable agriculture with the medical potential of cannabis for veterans and others was the original inspiration behind the family's cannabis venture.

Where to visit Green Meadows in Southbridge

Southbridge is located at the intersection of I-90 and I-84 just north of the Connecticut border. Green Meadows' dispensary, in the town's “Globe Village” neighborhood, sits across the street from its own newly built parking lot; a sheltered courtyard leads visitors into the brick mill building whose ongoing renovation mirrors projects occurring throughout town. Green Meadows' cultivation and processing facility is in the same building. The industrial space has been completely remodeled to deploy organic and “green” horticultural principles across the entirety of the Green Meadows operation.

Regular hours for the dispensary will be Monday - Thursday 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.  
Friday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.;  
Sunday 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.

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