



Auburn native completes Tour Divide mountain bike race

DEL NORTE, Colo. — Steve Brigham from Del Norte, a 1977 graduate of Auburn High School, finished the annual Tour Divide Mountain Bike Race on July 9, 2019 in 25 days, four hours, 52 minutes, averaging 108 miles per day on a single speed mountain bike. The unsupported race began in Banff, Canada on June 14, 2019 and follows primarily dirt roads for 2,732 miles, finishing at the US/Mexican border at Antelope Wells, N.M.

The race is considered by many endurance cyclists to be one of the toughest mountain bike races in the world. Racers must stock up on food and water at towns along the route and are not allowed to cache food or have friends or family provide support along the route. The race clock starts in Banff, Canada and stops when the GPS “SPOT” tracker carried by the racer reaches the Mexican border. Racers carry their own sleeping gear and sleep only 3 to 5 hours on average per night to cover as many miles as possible each day.. Riding from daylight to 11 p.m. or later, racers often sleep in the ditch on the side of the road in a sleeping bag and bivy sack or small tent.

The race route goes through Del Norte, Colo., which is the start of one of the race’s toughest climbs and also reaches the highest point on the route near Grayback Mtn. at 11,910 feet.

When asked about the race, Brigham responded, “Overall, the race was fun, but grueling. Each day is an adventure and a race in itself to get more food and water at the next town. The hardest part of the race was getting enough calories in the body and not losing too much weight. Bacon cheeseburgers and pizza kept me going!”

“The best part of the race was meeting all of the incredibly nice people along the route and having my kids run with me the last few hundred yards to the Mexican border.”

“I would like to thank Kristi Mtn. Sports and Absolute Bike for getting my bike ready for the race! The bike set-up was flawless. I only had to adjust the rear brake once and replace one tire on the entire route.”

Only 79 of the 162 racers that started in Banff completed the grueling race. Brigham finished 45th overall and was the first rider to finish in the 60 and over age-class.



Steve Brigham at Brush Mtn. Lodge, northern Colorado.

Courtesy

Bay Path holds graduation ceremony

CHARLTON — Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School in Charlton held its 2020 Graduation on July 25 with three separate ceremonies.

When parents entered the Bay Path grounds, the driveway was lined with all graduating student pictures. The Sturbridge Minuteman Society was represented by three members who discharged their muskets after the National Anthem in memory of all those who have suffered from Covid-19 virus.

The graduation ceremony was held in the front of the school with parents and students in cars. Students walked across the red carpet to receive their diploma. Their families could take pictures and were socially distanced. Students continued to walk to receive their gift from the class as well as their yearbook. They returned to their cars, and at the end of the ceremony all senior class officers stood in front of the class to present the Class of 2020 and perform the turning of the tassels. Live speeches were held at all three ceremonies. Graduates and their families were met with a banner that said, “Victory Lane – Bay Path 2020 – We are proud of you!” Upon exiting, the banner message was “Congratulations Bay Path 2020! Go create your future!”

All student images throughout the ceremonies were projected onto a 30 foot screen for all to see including a power point with individual pictures and careers listed for each student. Multiple comments from students were received as they were happy to receive their diploma in hand

Bay Path’s message to graduates --- This is your year, Bay Path 2020!

Isaias lashes central Massachusetts



Several roads were shut down in Sturbridge due to storm damage.

Courtesy

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION – Central Massachusetts felt the wrath of Tropical Storm Isaias last week, with widespread property damage and power outages reported in several towns.

At the height of the Aug. 4 storm, local police departments were inundated with reports of downed power lines and impassable roads between 3 and 7 p.m. Wind gusts topped 60 miles per hour, toppling trees and strewing branches across yards and roads.

Leicester was one of the hardest hit communities, beginning when a fallen tree crushed two parked vehicles on Mulberry Street. A tree then fell in Pine Grove Cemetery and struck the chapel, and multiple power lines came down in other locations. Five streets were still closed the next day, Aug. 5, as cleanup work continued.

“We got hit right out of the gate with the tree

across two parked vehicles at 77 Mulberry St.,” said Leicester Police Chief Kenneth Antanavica. “During the course of the storm, police, fire, and DPW worked to keep streets open, in total answering over 20 calls for trees down. Fire also responded to Spencer for mutual aid, answering their calls for service.”

Leicester officials were thrilled with how their municipal departments and residents came together to weather the storm and quickly recover.

“No injuries were reported, so all in all we did well,” Chief Antanavica said. “All municipal services worked together like a well-oiled machine.”

Multiple roads were closed in Spencer, Warren, and the Brookfields. Two houses were clipped by falling trees in West Brookfield, and National

Turn To **ISAIAS** page **A6**

Flamingo fundraiser benefits Chip-In Food Pantry

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – During the entirety of the entirety of the COVID-19 pandemic the Chip-In Food Pantry has been hard at work providing food assistance and other resources to those in need throughout the community. The pantry got a little assistance from a local neighborhood in July after neighbors came together for a popular fundraiser called flocking.

The fundraiser involves the use of pink plastic flamingos which are passed from proper-

ty to property encouraging those who have been “flocked” to make a donation to a cause to have them removed. While the donation is not required the activity is often seen as a fun way to unite individuals for a cause and has been used to benefit school programs and other causes in the past.

Melissa Finnegan of Hyde Road in Charlton saw the event as a way to not only embrace the unity in her close-knit neighborhood but also help out an organization they felt was playing a significant role in helping those in need during COVID-19 and beyond.

“I presented it to the neighborhood and put in on our Facebook page, asking if people were interested in participating. The idea was that each time a family got flocked they would make a donation monetarily or

with food to the Chip-In pantry,” Finnegan said. “Nobody knew what anyone else donated. Some families just bought items. Some families donated \$20, some donated \$100. Collectively, at the end, we had \$1,050 and 102 food items for the pantry.”

Finnegan contacted Chip-In Pantry Director Darlene Emco-Rollins prior to announcing the fundraiser to get approval for the event. Emco-Rollins thought it was a fun idea and said the outcome will provide a huge leg up for the organization in its endeavors.

“It was amazing. Everyone in the neighborhood knows each other and when I heard the idea I was told it would also be an opportunity to teach the children to give back to their community. The kids were so excited about doing it and it was

a fun way to teach them and get the community involved,” Emco-Rollins said.

She added that the pantry has seen an influx of donations and volunteer interest over the past few months as countless individuals and groups have sought to help Chip-In any way they can.

“In four months out, donations of every kind have tripled or more. Usually, we get a lot of donation in the holiday season, but this has been unbelievable. It’s brought the community so close. We’ve never had so many people ask to help out or give back to Chip-In. It’s humbling. We’re so lucky as a food pantry,” she noted.

Melissa Finnegan said she was proud of the support the event earned from her neighborhood.

Turn To **FUNDRAISER** page **A6**



Courtesy

A few youngsters show off flamingos that “flocked” their house.



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Help kids feel comfortable at the dentist

Routine dental examinations and cleanings are an important component of oral healthcare for both children and adults. However, many children do not visit the dentist until well



after the time recommended by medical and dental professionals. Parents may be unaware of the dental health timeline, or they could be reluctant to bring their children for fear of how their kids will behave — especially if parents are harboring their own apprehensions about the dentist.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that a child go to the dentist by age 1, or within six months of the eruption of his or her first tooth. Yet, according to a survey commissioned by Delta Dental Plans, the average age of a child's first dental visit is 2.6 years.

Parents worried about how their kids will respond to the dentist can take the following steps to acclimate kids to dental visits to make them more comfortable during their appointments now and down the road.

- Be a positive role model. Children frequently learn by example. If they see their parents being diligent about den-

tal care, they're more likely to embrace proper oral hygiene. Bring children to your own dental appointments so they understand the process and become familiar with the type of equipment used.

- Stick to the first-tooth milestone. Take your child to the dentist on or about when his or her first tooth erupts. Early dental visits will get kids used to going to the dentist and prevent minor problems that may lead to more complex dental issues.

- Read books about the dentist and role play. Information can allay kids' fears about the dentist. Read books together about dental visits and act out possible scenarios with your kids. Give kids toy dental health tools and have them practice exams on you and vice-versa.

- Be supportive and instill trust. Avoid telling your child that everything will be okay. If a procedure is needed, this could affect his or her trust in you and make the dental office

an even greater source of anxiety. Simply be supportive and offer a hand to squeeze or a hug if your child needs you.

- Consider using your dentist. Some parents like to take their children to a pediatric dentist, but it may not always be necessary. Many family practices cater to patients of all ages, and the familiarity of the office may help make children feel more comfortable. Speak with your dentist about the ages they see.

- Steer clear of negative words. Michael J. Hanna, DMD, a national spokesperson for the AAPD, suggests using positive phrases like "clean, strong, healthy teeth" to make the visit seem fun and positive rather than scary and alarming. Let the office staff come up with their own words to describe processes that won't seem too frightening.

By employing these techniques, kids' dental visits can be more pleasant for all involved, paving the way for a lifetime of healthy teeth.

How parents can get kids excited about brushing their teeth

Dental hygiene is an important component of a healthy lifestyle, but it's an element youngsters rarely embrace with open arms. Parents know that getting kids, especially young children, to brush their teeth is not always so easy. In recognition of that, the American Dental Association suggests the following strategies to make brushing teeth something kids will look forward to.

- Make it fun. Brushing teeth may not be considered a fun activity, but who's to say it can't benefit from a little levity? The ADA recommends turning tooth brushing sessions into dance parties and/or sing-alongs. Youngsters might be so busy cutting a rug or listening to mom and dad belt out a few hits that they don't even realize they're cleaning their teeth at the same time. If singing and dancing aren't cutting it, then incorporate another fun activity, like reading a child his or her favorite story, into daily brushing sessions. The ADA advises adults and children to brush their teeth for two minutes twice a day, so activities need not be too advanced.



But a fun activity that allows kids to do something other than brush their teeth can be a great way to help them meet the "two minutes, two times" guideline.

- Reward good behavior. Parents can

reward youngsters who brush their teeth without incident by offering praise or allowing them to pick a bedtime book when brushing at night.

- Put kids' favorite characters to work.

The ADA notes that many popular children's television shows and books have stories about brushing teeth. Watch these stories with your children, then reference the stories and characters if kids are reluctant to brush their teeth. Parents also can find toothbrushes and/or toothpaste that feature kids' favorite characters to get youngsters more excited to brush.

- Become a storyteller. Parents also can make up their own stories, explaining to kids how they can be superheroes who brush away the bad guys that cause cavities.

- Brush alongside your children. Kids love to mimic their parents, so moms and dads can brush alongside their youngsters in the hopes they'll follow suit.

Many children may never jump at the chance to brush their teeth. But parents can employ a few savvy strategies to make daily brushing sessions more fun for youngsters.

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Fundraising efforts roll on despite cancellation of Pan-Mass Challenge

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION – The Pan-Mass Challenge was canceled for the first time ever this year, but the fundraising mission for cancer research rolled on.

Despite their disappointment over the PMC cancellation due to COVID-19, local teams embraced the opportunity to reimagine their rides. Teams were encouraged by PMC leaders to take part in their own abbreviated rides this year – or participate in virtual experiences – to help celebrate their fundraising accomplishments.

For West Brookfield-based Team De-Feet Cancer, members set out from the Sturbridge Host Hotel early on the morning of Aug. 1. But unlike previous years, when they were surrounded by hundreds of other PMC cyclists from throughout the nation, the five members of Team De-Feet Cancer forged their own path to Whitinsville and back.

During their journey, team members were thrilled to come across a handful of other PMC participants carving separate routes across the state.

“We started and finished at the Sturbridge Host Hotel. We cheered on every PMCer we saw along the way, and carried as much of the joy and magic of PMC with us that we could,” said longtime Team De-Feet Cancer member Jessica Piwowarski.

Supported by a driver and rest stop volunteers, the team pushed through several challenges and completed its journey back to Sturbridge. Although the ride hardly compared to the normal event, it helped accentuate the most important part of the entire experience. Regardless of how many miles team members logged, their critical fundraising for cancer research is unchanged.

“It was a hot day and a hilly course, but we all made it despite each of our



Courtesy

Members of Team De-Feet Cancer once again raised money for cancer research as part of the Pan-Mass Challenge. In no particular order, team members include Jessica Piwowarski, Bill Piwowarski, Dennis Martin, and Seana Cummins.

aches along the way,” Piwowarski added. “While it was not the same, our mission remains unchanged. We ride to defeat cancer.”

Additional members of Team De-Feet Cancer include Bill Piwowarski, Dennis Martin, and Seana Cummins.

For more than 40 years, the Pan-Mass Challenge has brought riders together for a common goal of raising funds to support the pursuit of a cure. All funds assist the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in its pioneering research and treatments.

For PMC leaders, canceling this year’s event due to COVID-19 concerns was a difficult but necessary decision. Several virtual programs were organized to help riders celebrate their accomplishments and connect with other participants statewide.

Members of Team De-Feet Cancer submitted photos for inclusion in the virtual program. They also watched the virtual PMC opening ceremony on WBZTV before setting out on their ride.

Team members thank their dedicated volunteers for supporting the ride. Volunteers include Theresa, Amy, Xavier, Spencer, Sandy, and Norma.

Currently, the PMC raises more money than any other athletic fundraising event in the country. It also generates more than 55 percent of the Jimmy Fund’s annual revenue. In 2019, the PMC donated a record-breaking \$63 million to Dana-Farber, bringing the PMC’s 40-year fundraising total to \$717 million.

For more information about next year’s PMC and how you can get involved, visit www.pmc.org.

Auburn News

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.

Federated Church announces date for yard sale and craft fair

STURBRIDGE — The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale has announced that its men’s and women’s groups, Crossroads and Koinonia, will be conducting their annual yard sale and craft sale on the back lawn of the Church at 8 Maple St., Sturbridge, on Saturday, Aug. 22, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Yard sale coordinator Tim Bardsley said, “Due to the cancellation of the 2020 antique auction on the Sturbridge Common, this year’s yard sale will be even bigger and better than in prior years, with lots of good vintage and craft items.”

In the interest of public safety, all auction volunteers will be wearing masks and maintaining a safe distance, and we respectfully ask that the general public attending the sale do the same.

In case of rain, the yard sale and craft sale will be held on Saturday, Aug. 29. For additional information, please call the Church Office at its new telephone number, 774-304-1201.

Rapscallion Brewery, Brimfield Winery pair up for Drive-In Night

BRIMFIELD — Brimfield Winery and Rapscallion Brewery are partnering to host the first-ever drive-in movie night at the Brimfield Winery. This family-friendly event is set to take place Saturday, Aug. 22 on the Winery’s 50-acre parcel, home to the famous Brimfield Antique Show.

Attendees are invited to enjoy a 1980s classic family film in a safe setting. With the necessary precautions in place, the event hosts are thrilled to offer this event to the community.

“Our goal is to provide a safe and responsible way for families to gather for a relaxing and entertaining night together,” says Rusty and Katy Corriveau, owners of Brimfield Winery.

Cedric Daniel, coproprietor of Rapscallion Brewery, emphasized the Brewery’s commitment to their local community and to partnering with other local operations. “We’re excited to partner with Brimfield Winery in an effort to provide the community with a fun evening to share with family and friends, in a safe outdoor environment.”

Both Rapscallion Brewery and

Brimfield Winery will be offering libations, with a cash bar. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages will be sold. Food will also be available for purchase. Local vendors include JB’s Mobile Cafe, Westview Creamery, and Faddy’s Donuts & Popcorn.

Tickets are only \$30 per carload. Gates will open at 6 p.m., and the movie will begin after dusk. In the event of rain, an alternative rain date will be determined.

For more information, and to purchase tickets, visit brimfieldwinery.com or drinkrapscallion.com.

About Rapscallion

With current brewing headquarters and taproom in Sturbridge and two restaurants located in Acton and Concord, Rapscallion is a Massachusetts-only microbrewery that puts freshness, quality, and consistency above all else, honoring the craft, the Rapscallion customer and their local communities.

About Brimfield Winery & Cidery
Local outdoor winery located in the quaint town of Brimfield, the birthplace of the Brimfield Antique Show.

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Friday's Child



Gabriella
Age 14

Hi! My name is Gabriella and I love cosmetology!

Gabriella, also known as Gabby, is a smart and creative young woman of Caucasian descent. She is very talented and enjoys painting, drawing, and baking, which are just a few of her creative outlets. Gabby enjoys spending time with friends and family watching television. A typical teenager, she often connects with friends via social media and loves animals. Gabby appreciates her alone time and can be quiet, but at times is very talkative with friends and familiar adults. She has a witty sense of humor and is easy to get along with.

Gabby aspires to attend college in the future and is currently in the cosmetology program at her vocational high school. Gabby is able to build strong relationships with teachers and adults, which helps her accomplish her goals. She thrives when she has a routine with clear expectations.

Legally freed for adoption, Gabby is looking for her forever home. She is self-sufficient and able to take care of her own needs, but hopes to find the love and support of a forever family. Gabby will do well in a family consisting of a single female, two females, or a male/female couple. She would benefit from being the only child or having older siblings in the home. Gabby looks forward to having a support network that is stable and able to stick by her side through all that life has to offer.

Who Can Adopt?

Can you provide the guidance, love and stability that a child needs? If you’re at least 18 years old, have a stable source of income, and room in your heart, you may be a perfect match to adopt a waiting child. Adoptive parents can be single, married, or partnered; experienced or not; renters or homeowners; LGBTQ singles and couples.

The process to adopt a child from foster care requires training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you, and if so, to help connect you with a child or sibling group that your family will be a good match for.

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



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SOUTHBRIDGE — Green Gold Group will be having a Job Fair on Wednesday, Aug. 19 from 4-8 p.m. at the Southbridge Hotel and Conference Center, 14 Mechanic St. in Southbridge.

Green Gold Group is seeking hard-working, dedicated team members for exciting new roles in the regulated cannabis industry. Available roles include cultivation, harvest and trim team members, lab technician/extraction artist, packaging machine operators, licensed HVAC technician, budtender/retail team, security/transport team and kitchen team. All positions subject to background check/CORI.

All social distancing guidelines will be enforced; therefore, pre-registration is required. Please email HR@green-gold.group or call 774-251-9888 to obtain your appointment window. Masks must be worn and hand sanitizer will be provided.

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Public Safety Building to appear on November ballot

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – Charlton voters will once again make their voices heard on the proposed Public Safety Building project, this time during the Nov. 3 presidential election where town officials hope to get a larger sample of voters to decide on the funding mechanism for the project.

The initiative has been one

of the hottest topics of discussion for over a year after voters approved \$28.5 million for the project in May of 2019 before voting against a debt exclusion question in a special election later in the year. The Public Safety Building Committee went to work trying to adjust the project to make the cost and layout more palatable for voters while also doing justice to the project's purpose of replacing the aged

police and fire departments. In December a capital campaign committee was founded to help gain financial backing to offset at least \$200,000 of the cost associated with the proposed 40,300-square-foot facility which would be erected on Masonic Home Road.

Despite some pushback from opponents and the misconception that voting down the Proposition 2½ debt exclusion killed the project, the Public Safety Building Committee spend the later part of 2019 and the first half of 2020 working with selectmen to finalize a new plan to bring before voters once more in what is expected to be a busy Election Day in November that they feel will provide a larger and more accurate sampling of the voters' opinions.

Captain Rob Barton of the Charlton Fire Department told the Stonebridge Press that after an extensive public meeting in July the Board of Selectmen voted to put an article on the ballot for November asking voters for a debt exclusion of \$26.9 million, the remaining amount allocated from the project after design costs and taking into account the \$200,000 donation goal. The tax impact to the average single-family home would be around \$255 per year. Captain Barton said the cost of the project cannot exceed the budgeted number being requested before voters and that a debt exclusion would make the cost of borrowing only a temporary burden on taxpayers that will be removed once the debt is fully paid off.

Captain Barton further explained that the Building Committee did explore numerous options, including remov-

ing the police department from the plans, but it was decided with input from selectmen and the designers that it would be most cost effective to build the facility with both the police and fire department in mind from the start.

"The committee went back to the Board of Selectmen and recommended we do a fire station only. It was determined that it wasn't really a viable option because of the way the building needed to be positioned and situated and the uncertainty that the police station would ever be added on. It effects the inner workings of the building, the electrical system, the HVAC system, the plumbing system and all that. The Board of Selectmen felt the most financially sound decision was that it should still be a public safety building and we should still move forward trying to define the building more specifically," Captain Barton said.

A Web site has been set up to provide Charlton residents with as much information as possible about the project including a financial breakdown, the current plans for the building, details on the existing conditions of both departments justifying the investment and other resources. This website was put together and paid for out of pocket by Charlton's Town Administrator Andrew Golas who in an interview said he wanted to make sure there was a resource online providing accurate information to make sure citizens made an educated decision for or against the debt exclusion.

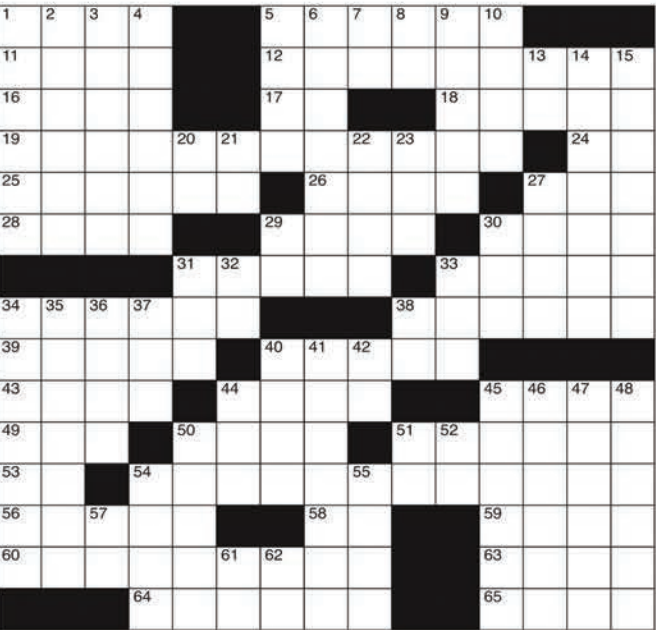
"From what I heard from the Board of Selectmen and the Building Committee from the last vote is that there was a lot

of misinformation that was out there. When I kind of tried to look for stuff about the project there really wasn't a lot online other than the public forums. I figured that leading up to this vote in order for the residents to make the most knowledgeable decision it made sense to put all of the information about the project in one place where they could look and try to be as unbiased as possible to get all the facts," Golas said.

He added that the feeling of the Board of Selectmen is that the Building Committee "did their due diligence" in looking at options to help make this project cost efficient while properly considering the needs of the town. Captain Barton said he hopes voters will examine all the information provided before they make their decision in November and encouraged everyone to embrace the facts and to make an educated decision.

"Everybody, whether you're completely for it or if you're against it, should still become educated on the project. It is their building. It's the largest project the town of Charlton has ever undertaken. It's a \$28.5 million building at 40,300 square feet, that's a very large building. I really encourage all the taxpayers to do your due diligence and truly get an understanding of the need and the project," said the Captain.

Details about the Charlton Public Safety Building project can be located at www.charltonpublicsafetybuilding.com where voters can also access a tax impact projection tool and other resources to assist them in deciding whether or not to support the debt exclusion question this November.

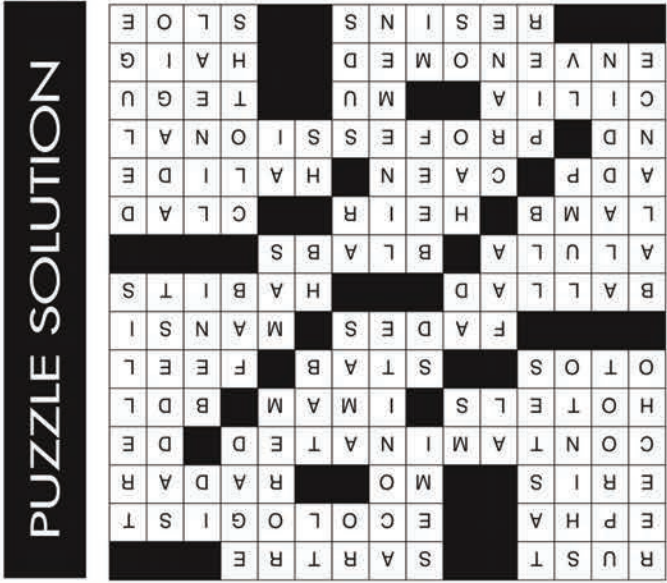


CLUES ACROSS

1. Corrode
5. Jean Paul __, author
11. Hebrew unit of dry measure
12. A type of scientist
16. Greek goddess of discord
17. For Red Sox MVP
18. It checks your speed
19. Made dirty
24. The First State
25. Lodgings
26. Spiritual leader
27. Bradley Int'l Airport code
28. Native American people
29. Sharp pain
30. Touch
31. Slowly disappears
33. Indigenous Russian people
34. Narrative poem
38. Some are bad
39. Small quill feathers
40. Tattles
43. Popular Easter entree
44. Beneficiary
45. Clothed
49. Payroll firm
50. Lower Normandy's largest city
51. Binary compound of halogen
53. The Fighting Irish
54. Skilled, paid worker
56. Eyelashes
58. The 12th letter of the Greek alphabet
59. Large, stocky lizard
60. Made poisonous
63. Former US Secretary of State
64. Sticky substances
65. A type of gin

CLUES DOWN

1. To return an echo
2. Displace
3. Japanese religion
4. Predilections
5. Partial
6. Poisonous plant
7. Road open
8. Atomic #81
9. Accomplished American composer
10. Oh, God!
13. Potato state
14. Most melancholic
15. Supportive framework
20. Hollywood's Pacino
21. A title for women
22. Popular Grammys alternative
23. Check
27. Bolivian river
29. South Dakota
30. Wonderful
31. Supervises flying
32. Commercial
33. More (Spanish)
34. Even distribution of weight
35. "Arabian Nights" hero
36. Compact mass of a substance
37. Bachelor of Laws
38. Halfback
40. Some of it is ground
41. They play in the trenches
42. Atomic #18
44. Chinese Prefecture
45. Fabrics
46. Being in a direct line of descent from an ancestor
47. In slow tempo
48. Flood
50. Long-necked bird
51. Secondary school
52. Artificial intelligence
54. Structure by the water
55. Lather
57. What happens there stays there
61. A bone
62. The Great Lakes State



An artist's rendering of the proposed Charlton Public Safety Building.

Courtesy

University of Maine announces spring 2020 Dean's List

ORONO, Maine — The University of Maine recognized 4,210 students for achieving Dean's List honors in the Spring 2020 semester, including Ryan Nurse and Niamh Toomey of Auburn.

Of the students who made the Dean's List, 2,769 are from Maine, 1,333 are from 41 other states and 108 are from 43 countries other than the U.S.

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\$400,000, 8 Shirley St, Hall, David C, to Rothmel, Ethel H.
\$340,000, 6 Robert Ave, Bowes, William J, and Bowes, Jennifer A, to Stoppiello, Christopher H, and Mcdermott, Caitlin R.
\$316,000, 29 Davis Rd, Johnson, William H, to Porencio, Welison O.
\$300,000, 8 Lancaster St, Randall, Thomas J, and Randall, Andrea M, to Leary, Kevin.
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ISAIAS
continued from page A1

Grid crews worked throughout the night to restore power.

“There were lots of power outages, trees and lines down,” said Spencer Police Chief David Darrin.

No injuries were reported in the Route 9 corridor, but power in some neighborhoods was out for multiple days. Statewide, over 220,000 customers were in the dark.

The Auburn Police Department dealt with 11 separate incidents of downed live wires. Further west in Sturbridge, Mashapaug Road and additional streets were closed due to downed branches and power lines.

Brimfield, meanwhile, saw trees and limbs down throughout town, including several trees on Route 19. Monson residents received an automated call from the town administrator warning them to avoid travel until roads could be cleared.

In preparation of the storm, National Grid activated its emergency operation centers in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Still, some residences were without power for as long as three days.

Nationally, the storm was responsible for six fatalities. A New York City man was killed when a tree fell on his van, and two North Carolina residents lost their lives during a tornado. Storm-related fatalities were also reported in Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania after excessive flooding.

The storm is blamed for more than three million power outages nationwide.

FUNDRAISER
continued from page A1

She feels it accomplished the purpose of giving back and inspiring both children and adults to continue to have a strong sense of community even when the COVID-19 pandemic ends.

“The kids thought it was neat and it taught them that when you get together there’s strength in numbers,” Finnegan said. “We are lucky that we live in a great neighborhood and people get excited about things like this. I didn’t realize until the end how much we actually had collected. In our minds we just knew whatever we could donate was great, but the end result, to actually make that much money and collect that much food, I was blown away. In our own little neighborhood of 20 to 30 houses, we collected all of that and people were excited.”

Finnegan hopes the fundraiser will help inspire other neighborhoods to come together to benefit their communities in their own way, whether that’s through another flocking event or something new and unique.

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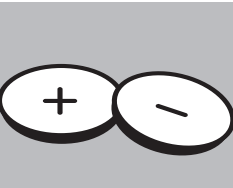
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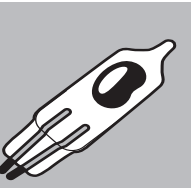
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BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

A challenge... and an opportunity

School this fall will be an unprecedented experience for students from pre-school all the way through graduate school. With districts ironing out re-opening plans, it's important to remain patient and to withhold judgement. Administrators are working with their respective state guidelines, communities and experts in every aspect of education, and health to keep staff, students and families safe. Now is not the time to be a know-it-all because the fact will always remain, that we don't know it all, and never will.

At this time, it's best to leave things up to the experts and remember that this is only temporary. The powers that be as far as re-opening goes, are doing the best they can, given the unfortunate and unpredictable circumstances they've been put in. The only thing left to do is to be supportive. Anything apart from that is simply counter-productive.

Students of all ages are experiencing all sorts of feelings, and not necessarily in a negative way; however, we do know that some are. Children and teens need each other now more than ever. Parents, extended family members, older siblings and community members need to set the example of what resiliency looks like. Yes, this fall will be difficult, especially for single working parents whose option to home school is null. In those cases, we can only hope there will be some sort of respite offered in each community for those in need.

What we need to remember is that children are resilient, to varying degrees. Most children are capable of working through tough times and managing stress in their own way. We just need to pay attention and keep an eye out. Resilience is something that we all develop as we grow, each time we face a challenge, adversity or any sort of trauma or failure.

As parents, we wish we could protect our children from harm's way or from facing any sort of adversity. There will always be bullies, grief, heartbreak and all sorts of obstacles. Global pandemic is new on the list, but alas here we are. How we react matters. Our children are watching and listening to all of us. Remember that what seems small to us, seems much larger to a child.

Experts tell us to arm your children with confidence to face their problems, so that they know, they have the tools to confront tough things. When they can self soothe and bounce back independently, they grow and become stronger and more resilient.

Oftentimes when parents jump in too much to solve their children's issues (albeit with good intentions), it can weaken their resilience and ability to problem solve on their own. Without the ability to problem solve, children may encounter more anxiety in the future. Of course, age plays a role with guidance and we have faith that most parents know what is best for their children.

One tip from experts is to make sure to spend plenty of one on one time with your child so they know they are loved and supported unconditionally. These positive connections give parents and adults a chance to model resiliency.

Having your child take what's called a 'healthy risk' is important. This simply means, letting them step outside of their comfort zones, knowing that if they fail, little harm will occur. When children avoid taking risks, they are teaching themselves that they aren't capable to tackle challenges.

If your child comes to you with an issue, respond by asking them questions on how their specific problem should be solved. We like this one, and had one reader tell us that she has been having her children watch episodes of the television show "MacGyver," whose main character's defining trait is his ability to think on his feet and improvise his way out of challenging situations. We're not suggesting letting kids figure everything out for themselves, we all need help at times.

Make sure your children know what kind of emotion they are having, and let them know those feelings are normal and will pass. Lead by example. Teach your children that exercise is important and any other activities that promote calm.

While we wish there was a quick fix, there just isn't one. During this pandemic, we need to stay positive and teach our children the power of optimism. There's a quote that explains this perfectly: "The way you perceive a specific situation is determined by your frame of mind. If your frame of mind and thoughts are positive, you will always be in a position to seize the opportunities that are before you."

OPINION/COMMENTARY

Giving up is easy. Anyone can do it!

As you read this, I'm checked in at the Holden Cancer Center at the University of Iowa. I came here with a positive plan to improve my health. I was full of optimism and my spirits were high. The plan was to have my stomach removed, but things do not always go according to plan. When they went in, they found that my cancer was spread and inoperable.

As I've mentioned before, I have Stage 4 Stomach Cancer. There is no cure and I didn't want to lay around waiting for the inevitable end, so I found a Doctor who's a fighter and we are working to defy the odds and extend my life.

In February, I was given nine to 12 months to live by a Doctor that was convinced I was dying. So, I fired that Negative Doctor and began searching for an optimist and found him.

Dr. Kasi walked into the exam room with his entire team and said, "I hear you want to fight this diagnosis?" I said that I did, and he said with enthusiasm, "We are your team!"

I had undergone eight rounds of chemo and on Friday, my stomach was supposed to be removed. Yeah, it's not a cure but our hopes were that it can extend my life up to five years and in that extra time, we'd find a way to extend it five more. That was the plan, but plans change when presented with new information. Now we have a new plan we are optimistically pursuing.

Why am I sharing this personal health info?

Because there is no such thing as darkness. What we call darkness is absence of light. As such, there is no such thing as an insurmountable problem, but only the absence of an idea that creates a solution.

I refuse to give up on my life. I want you to also, not give up on your goals, dreams, and yes, life. Life's short. Go for it. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't achieve your goals and dreams. I have goals. I plan on seeing my eight and ten-year-old grandsons graduate from high school. I suspect I have grandchildren that are not



POSITIVELY
SPEAKING
GARY W.
MOORE

yet conceived or born that I want to meet and hold in my arms.

My books, "Playing with the Enemy" and "The Final Service" are both now in negotiation to become major motion pictures. I plan on living to see their premier. My book, "Fragrance of Lilacs" is sitting with a publisher now. I plan on seeing it in print and on shelves. I can go on and on ... the point is that I have plans, dreams, and goals that I'm not willing to give up on. I'm stubborn this way. I plan on writing this column ten years from today,

I'm not going to let anyone, other than my creator tell me when it's time to go.

Being optimistic doesn't mean that everything turns out magically perfect. It never does, but being an optimist means you look beyond your problems in search of the solution that makes your dreams come true. In my case, I'm looking beyond a negative diagnosis to find the solution that gives me more life. Without optimism, I'd have given up already ... and I'm just not willing to quit.

What about you? What about your dreams? What was your passion before you gave up and said it was just too hard to achieve?

In the movie, "League of their Own," there is a scene where the star catcher, Dottie Hinson, played by Geena Davis, decides she is quitting and going home before the championship game. The manager, Jimmy Dugan, played by Tom Hanks stops her and has a discussion. "(Baseball) It just got too hard," Dottie says.

Hinson responds, "It's supposed to be hard. If it wasn't hard everyone would do it. It's the hard that makes it great."

Achieving your goals and dreams isn't easy. Not giving up on your life when someone says its over is ridiculously hard. Not everyone succeeds. Most people are not optimistic.

It's hard being an optimist ... but it's the hard that makes it great.

Never give up. Never give in. Always look beyond the problem and find the solution.

Debunking hot pepper myths

Enjoy the spicy heat hot peppers add to your meals without concern for the many myths surrounding these garden vegetables. Here are a few you may have heard but are not true.

Growing both hot and sweet peppers in the garden will not add spicy heat to the sweet varieties. Peppers are normally self-pollinated. If an insect happens to move the pollen from a hot to sweet pepper, it will not affect the flavor or heat of this year's harvest. If you save the seeds from a cross-pollinated pepper for next year's garden there is no guarantee on the results. The offspring from this cross may be hot or sweet, only time will tell.

Label hot peppers when growing, harvesting, and storing to avoid any mix-ups. The sweet banana pepper, for example, can easily be confused with hot banana. This makes for an unwelcome surprise when preparing, serving, and eating.

Consider wearing rubber gloves and avoid touching your face and eyes when working with hot peppers as they can burn. Wash your hands, utensils and cutting boards when finished to avoid any future issues.

Never assume all green peppers are sweet or you will be in for a surprise. Jalapenos are typically harvested when green and others like habanero and Anaheim are hot, whether harvested when green or red. You will also find that hot peppers can be yellow, orange, brown and of course red.

You can turn down the heat when preparing your favorite recipes. Contrary to popular belief, all the heat in hot peppers does not come from the seeds. While partially true, the majority of the capsaicin that gives hot peppers their heat is in the white membrane that houses the seeds. When the seeds are growing, they may also be coated with extra capsaicin. Remove



GARDEN
MOMENTS
MELINDA
MYERS

the white membrane and the seeds, just to be safe, if you want to turn down the heat.

The spicy heat of hot peppers is measured in Scoville Heat Units. The ratings are based on the amount of sugar water needed to neutralize the spicy heat in the extracted capsaicin that has been diluted in alcohol. A panel of five taste testers decides when the spicy heat has been neutralized and then assigns the rating. Today many companies use a chemical process (liquid chromatography) but translate their results into the popular Scoville Heat Units.

The Scoville Heat Unit rankings vary from one type of hot pepper to another with Poblano-Ancho rating between 1,000 to 2,000, jalapenos 2,500 to 6,000, habaneros

at 100,000 to 300,000 and one of the hottest, the ghost pepper, at 1,000,000 to 2,200,000 Scoville Heat Units. Ratings may also vary from individual plants within a specific type based on individual plant differences and the growing conditions.

Finally, do not worry if you had a bad day when planting your hot peppers. Contrary to some old adages, planting hot peppers when angry will not make the peppers hotter, but unknowingly taking a bite of a hot pepper may very well change your mood.

Melinda Myers is the author of 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 a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and her Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.



Red Ember F1 cayenne pepper is an All-America Selections (AAS) winner. Judges described this early maturing pepper as spice but tastier than traditional cayenne pepper varieties.

What does an unplanned career transition mean for you?



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The COVID-19 pandemic has unsettled the country's employment picture for months, and will likely continue to do so for a while. However, the nature and terminology of this disruption varies greatly among individuals – some have seen their jobs disappear, others have been "furloughed," and still others have been offered an early retirement. If you're in this final group – those either offered, or feeling forced to accept, an early retirement, how should you respond?

Try to look at your situation holistically, rather than strictly in a short-term manner. Consider these four areas:

Retirement – What does retirement really look like to you? Are you ready to fully retire or would you like to work part time? Are you confident that you can work somewhere else for a few years before retiring on your own terms? If you're not certain you can work elsewhere, how can you adjust your desired retirement lifestyle – what you planned to do, where you hoped to live, etc. – to meet your new reality?

Income – Just how financially affected you'll be from an early retirement depends on several factors: how much you've already saved and invested, whether you're married and have a working spouse, whether you've paid off your mortgage, and so on. In any case, though, you'll need to answer several questions, including these: Do I need to start taking withdrawals from my IRA and 401(k)? If so, how much can I afford to take out each year without running the risk of outliving my resources? Should I adjust my current investment mix? If I haven't yet started collecting Social Security, should I do so now, or can I afford to wait until my monthly payments will be bigger? Are there any other sources of income I can leverage? You may want to work with a financial professional to address these and other key income-related issues.

Insurance – If you received health insurance through your employer, an early retirement could present you with a dilemma, especially if you're not quite old enough for Medicare. You might be eligible for COBRA, which provides ex-employees and their dependents the option of continued health insurance for potentially up to 36 months, but this coverage can be expensive. As an alternative, you might be able to negotiate an extended severance package, which could provide you with health insurance for several months. Or, you might be able to get on the health insurance plan of your working spouse.

Legacy –Many people want to take care of their family while they're alive – and leave something behind when they're gone. If you take an early retirement, you might lose your employer's group life insurance. Of course, if this plan was not sufficient, you may have already supplemented it with your own policy, but, if you haven't, you may need to shop around for some coverage, particularly if you have children still at home. You also may want to take this opportunity to review your key financial accounts to make sure your beneficiary designations still accurately reflect your wishes.

Going through an unplanned career transition is certainly challenging. But looking closely at the four areas describe above, and making the appropriate moves, may help you reduce some of the stress and can put you in a better position to start the next phase of your life.

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 Street, Auburn, MA 01501 Tel: 508-832-5385 or dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com.

Keep an eye out for rocks when boating

Due to the lack of rain this year, many fresh water lakes and ponds are extremely low. Boaters need to be aware of structures like rocks and stumps that are normally submerged in some of their favorite waters which can cause serious damage to their motor or boat. Numerous reports by boaters in the last few weeks about hitting some of these submerged structures should be taken seriously. Fortunately, no injuries were reported from the anglers and family's that were involved.

The water quality is also a major concern to boaters and the swimming public. This past week, a local resident called me to report the smell of raw sewage at the Lacky Dam Pond area. I visited the area last week and found the pond to be extremely low with very little water flow over the dam. Unfortunately, when the water becomes low the bottom residue at Lacky Pond is exposed, and is still polluted from years of dumping by mills upstream years ago.

Rotting weeds and algae are a common problem with low water conditions. Massachusetts Fish & Wildlife has control of the dam and could raise the water level by using the control arm at the dam. This writer was in charge of the dam's water flow for many years after the completion of the dam, but MFW now has taken responsibility. Residents should call MF&W Central District or at

the Boston office to get the water level raised.

If we do not get some relief by beneficial rain soon, we could see some fish kill at a few pond's in the coming days and weeks due to lack of oxygen. Eating fresh water fish at this time of year is not recommended by the Department of Public Health, from numerous bodies of water in the state. Bottom eating fish are likely to have worms in their meat, and also carry other forms of dangerous chemicals like mercury, which are found in most freshwater fish in local ponds and lakes. Bottom sediment in both the Blackstone River and Mumford River is still highly polluted, and will take many more generations before they are clean enough to swim in.

The Quabbin Reservoir is still open to fishing; however, the boat rentals are still not available to anglers that enjoy fishing on one the cleanest bodies of water in the state, not to forget to mention the great fishing it offers. Calling ahead to check on availability of boat rentals is recommended! Taking your own boat to the Quabbin can become very expensive, if you follow all of the rules in respect to boat washing.

If you are planning to take your



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invasive weeds from getting into the Quabbin are a bit overblown, and have become very expensive for the boater and anglers to visit.

You need to make an appointment and pay a substantial amount of monies to have it done. After washing, you are cleared to take your boat to the Quabbin until you decide to use your boat in another lake pond or saltwater. When your boat is washed, it will have a tag affixed to the bow and wench. If it is broken or damaged, you will need to have it washed again. Concerns of invasive weeds being brought into the lake from other ponds on the bottom of boats, are the reasons for the strict regulations. You really need to have two boats, one for the Quabbin and one for the ocean and fresh water lakes and ponds.

The invasive weed problem in the state is becoming worse every year. Local lakes and ponds are covered with aggressive weeds that are mainly brought in

by waterfowl, carrying seeds on their feathers and also from there feces. Some ponds have become totally covered by invasive species of weeds. Very little is being done to eradicate the weed problem. Purple loosestrife invasive weed is a big problem at Rice City Pond in Uxbridge. It has driven most waterfowl from the area, and provides very little feed for waterfowl from other plants that were once abundant, like wild rice.

Technical difficulties prevented us from showing a photo sent in this week of Matt Fontain with a nice doormat fluke he caught last week in Rhode Island. The fish weighed five and a half pounds! The fish provided a few good meals for his family to enjoy. He is now hooked on fishing!

Hopefully, the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak is brought under control soon! Numerous outdoor Field Days by local Fish & Game Clubs are starting to plan their annual events, but only if the Covid situation improves dramatically. Life needs to get back to some form of normality! The Whitinsville Fish & Game Club is planning their annual Field Day for September, and others are doing the same. Stay tuned.

Take A Kid Fishing & Keep Them Rods Bending!

Advertising thermometers



Regular readers of this column know that old advertising signs are popular and can be quite valuable. Companies also used other methods besides signs to promote their brands. Gas station pumps featured brand names on their pumps. Soda companies displayed their names on coolers full of their soda. Manufacturers gave clocks and thermometers to country stores and corner markets to help promote their products. Many advertising thermometers are very valuable, but some can be affordable for novice collectors, too.

A 1991 Chicago Tribune article reported that Galileo “produced a thermometer, which consisted of a large glass bulb with a long narrow open-mouthed neck inverted over a container of colored water, alcohol or mercury.” Gabriel D. Fahrenheit invented a mercury thermometer in 1714 that was similar to those that we are familiar with today.

Most American advertising thermometers were produced between 1875 and 1940, according to the Chicago Tribune. Advertising thermometers were intended to be hung outside of



ANTIQUES,
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buildings. Some were wood, but they were more typically made of all metal or enamel over metal. Most of the thermometers were vertical with rounded corners. Collectors Weekly's website says that thermometers became popular in the 1920's when “they were made by beverage, food, tobacco, automotive, and agricultural firms, as well as the health-care industry. These were hugely popular in rural areas, because knowing the temperature, as well as the wind direction, was key to predicting the weather.”

The usual antique assessment factors also apply to thermometers. Age, condition, and rarity all matter. Some advertising thermometers can be affordable to average collectors. Five 1960's thermometers including one for Royal Crown soda and one for Camels cigarettes sold for \$70 each at auction last month. A Sealtest Milk round thermometer recently went for \$120.

However, plenty of advertising thermometers are worth much more. A Champion Spark Plugs metal thermometer had two wheels that could be rotated to show different options for “weather forecast” and “check service.” It sold

for \$7,000 in 2015. A 1950 rare turquoise colored Coca Cola thermometer that was believed to be one of a few in existence brought \$9,500 in 2016. A round thermometer for Red Hat Moto Oil reached \$11,500 in 2016. A rare Ace High Motor Oil thermometer fetched \$12,000 in 2010. A porcelain Campbell's soup can with a thermometer in the spot where the gold medal symbol appears heated up the auction floor when it sold for \$16,000 in 2014.

Our Warren, R.I. online estate auction includes some vintage advertising thermometers. The preview will be held on Sept. 12, with bidding ending on Sept. 16. We will also be running an estate sale at a Southborough, Mass. mansion on Aug. 22 and 23. The video of the webinar I presented on getting the most for your estate items is now available on our website. More information will also soon be available on the online auction and estate sale on www.central-massauctions.com.

Contact us at: Wayne Tuiskula Auctioneer/Appraiser Central Mass Auctions for Antique Auctions, Estate Sales and Appraisal Services www.centralmassauctions.com (508-612-6111) info@centralmassauctions.com

Tips to Pick the Fruits (and Vegetables) of Your Labor

The pleasures of the New England harvest season are truly bountiful. Ripe, red tomatoes heavy on the vine, stately rows of corn stalks, and pots of leafy herbs promise home grown goodness for the family table.

It's harvest time and backyard gardeners everywhere are anticipating the well earned fruits of their labor. From plucking peppers to cutting cauliflower, proper harvesting ensures optimum flavor and nutrients from your home garden. Read on for the ways to up the odds of culling “the cream of the crop” from common vegetable and fruit plants.

Experts say the most important rule at harvest time is to pick vegetables daily. Plucking them as soon as they ripen not only offers superior taste, but this practice encourages plant production. Simply stated, harvesting on the day that the produce ripens can help you yield more from your seasonal crop. Furthermore, gardeners should be aware that some vegetables are best harvested when they appear premature. Examples include summer squash, zucchini and green beans, all vegetables can become tough and lose flavor when they are allowed to sit on the vine too long. Seed company Burpee offers expert advice on harvesting common fruits and vegetables:

Herbs. Pinch or cut back herbs frequently to keep them producing more stems and leaves (the parts we eat) and to keep them from blooming, which changes the flavor. If that means you have surplus thyme or oregano, dry it in a brown paper bag. Basil, especially, needs frequent pinching back to keep it bushy and productive. At some point in July or August everybody has too much basil, which is why the Italians invented pesto (find many recipes on the internet).

Tomatoes. There is a huge range of tomato varieties. Many kinds are red when ripe, but some are orange, yellow, striped or even green. Learn what to expect from your variety and monitor the plant closely as its due date nears. Generally, a tomato is fully ripe when it releases easily from the stem. If you misjudge a bit it's no tragedy, because tomatoes will ripen somewhat after picking. But they develop the fullest sweet flavor if they ripen in the sun on the vine. Once



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which will keep flowering and setting fruit until killed by frost, although colder weather will slow production. It's a good idea to pick your green tomatoes a week or so before your area's average first frost date. The more mature ones will ripen indoors if they are stored at room temperature, wrapped in newspaper so they don't touch. Or make fried green tomatoes.

Peppers. Peppers are mature and ready to eat when full-sized but still green. If left on the vine longer, they will change color to red, orange, yellow or brown, depending on the variety, and will deepen in flavor and become less crisp in texture. Hot peppers left to change color will get hotter. So whether you pick at the green stage or later will depend on the variety and what you plan to use the pepper for. As with tomatoes, the first few you pick will teach you to gauge ripeness.

Lettuce. It's important to pick lettuce before hot weather encourages the plant to “bolt,” or develop a flower stalk, which makes the leaves taste bitter. With leaf lettuce and many other greens, you can “cut and come again” while the leaves are young and tender, no more than five inches long. Use scissors to cut the largest leaves individually from the plants. When the smaller leaves get big enough, harvest those. You may be able to come back to a plant two, three or four times, a few days apart, before it gives up in the summer heat. To prolong the lettuce harvest, look for bolt-resistant varieties and sow seeds several times at two-week intervals. A tent of shade cloth or translucent row cover – or a site in part shade – also may delay bolting in hot climates. In late summer, sow green seeds again for a fall crop.

Green beans. Green beans are an easy vegetable to harvest. Pick the pods when they are a little shy of their maximum size, to be sure that they are tender, with immature seeds. If you delay, the seeds

will mature and harden and the pod will become tough. Don't pick green beans in the morning when the dew is still on the vines; wait until they are fully dry to avoid spreading disease. Be sure to keep up with regular picking to encourage the vine to keep flowering and producing pods.

Peas. For garden peas, pick a test pod and open it when the seeds have begun to swell inside. You're looking for peas that are round but still tender. Pick peas just before you are ready to shell and cook them. For snow peas and sugar snaps, taste a pod when it nears full size. You want a crisp, crunchy, fresh-tasting pod, in which the seeds have started developing but are nowhere near round. Pods left too long on the vine get tough and stringy.

Cantaloupes, muskmelons and honeydews: Harvesting melons can be tricky, even for melon farmers. You can thump the melon and listen for a dull, hollow sound or sniff it to see if it smells sweet. A ripe cantaloupe or muskmelon will begin to have a tan or yellowish color beneath the corky «netting» on its skin. A honeydew will feel smooth, not hairy. Cut the stem rather than breaking the fruit off, which creates a wound that invites the fruit to rot. Let the fruit ripen for another day or two at room temperature before cutting into it.

Watermelons. When the spot beneath the melon, where it sits on the ground, turns yellowish, rather than white or green, the melon is close to ripe. The rind also gets tougher, so test it with your thumbnail to how easily it dents. For old-fashioned full-sized watermelons, the traditional ripeness test is to thump and listen for a dull, hollow sound, but this may not work as well with the smaller «icebox» varieties. Ultimately, you'll have to cut one open and decide if it's ripe, and use that as a standard for the rest of the crop.

Cucumbers. Check the seed packet to see how large your variety of cucumber will get and how long that is expected to take. But bear in mind that you can pick cucumbers at any stage, depending on what you want to use them for. Smaller ones will be more tender, with thinner skins and few or immature seeds. Too-old cucumbers get dry and woody. Like melons, cucumbers should be cut from the vine, not pulled.

Sweet corn. Timing is everything with sweet corn. The kernels begin to lose sweetness and flavor the instant the ear is picked, so the great advantage of growing your own is so you can wait until the last minute. The traditional rule was to get the pot of water boiling to cook the corn and then go out and pick it. Sweet corn is ready to eat when you can feel full, rounded kernels beneath the husk; the silk at the top of the ear is drying out; and a squished kernel produces a milky sap.

Root vegetables. Read the seed packet to see how long it should take before you start checking to see if your variety of carrots, beets, turnips, radishes or parsnips is ready for harvest. When it's about time, loosen the soil gently and pull one up to see how big it is. Root vegetables are more tender and delicate in flavor if eaten younger and smaller; as they get older and larger, they get tougher, woodier and more pungent. If that's okay with you, you can store some root crops right in the cold ground after the tops die. Spread a thick layer of leaves, straw or other mulch to keep the ground from freezing so you can still dig them up, and you may be able to harvest carrots, turnips or parsnips.

Win Dinner for Two at the Publick House

Your tips can win you a great dinner for two at the historic Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge! Simply send in a hint to be entered into a random drawing. One winner per month will win a fabulous three course dinner for two at the renown restaurant, located on Route 131 across the town common in historic Sturbridge. Because I'm in the business of dispensing tips, not inventing them (although I can take credit for some), I'm counting on you readers out there to share your best helpful hints!

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



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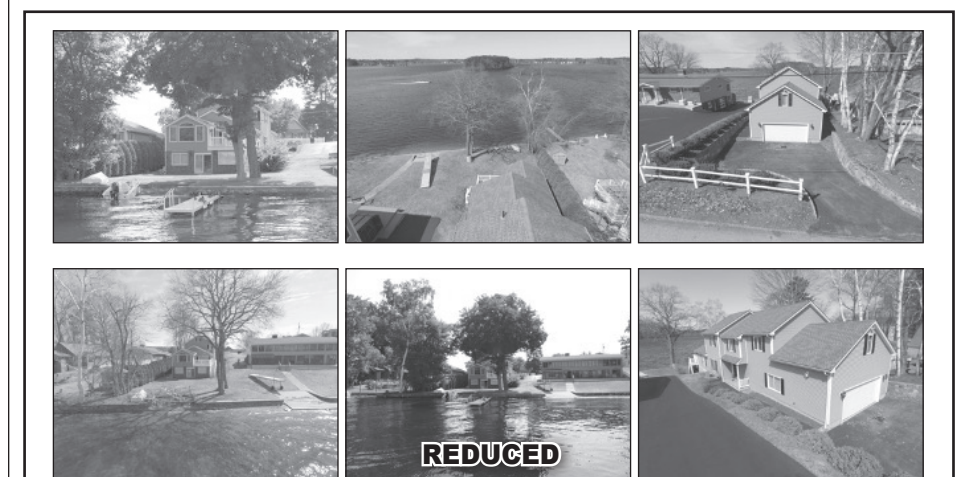


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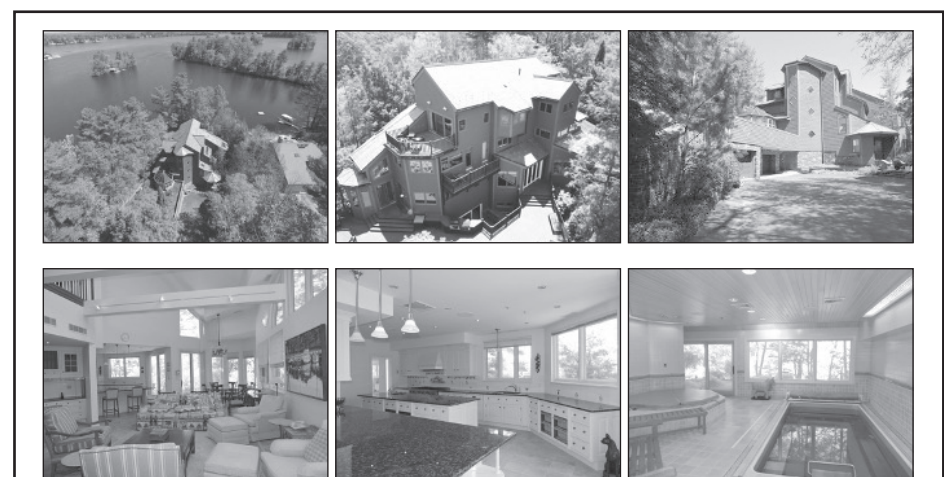
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GRAFTON – 168 Brigham Hill Rd! 8 Rm Garrison Colonial set on 1.3 Acres! 4 Comfortable Bdrms & 2 Full Bthrms! Freshly Painted, Floors Recently Refinished! Spacious Kit w/Lunch Counter! SS Appliances w/Gas Cook-Top! Grand Dining Rm for Family Gatherings! 19x26 Living Rm w/Pellet Stove! Master Bdrm w/Dble Closets & Hot Tub! Bright & Airy Mudroom out to the 2 Car Garage! Furnace & Hot Water Tank 5 Years Young! Radon tested at 2.5! Newer Roof on garage & breezeway! New Well Water Tank Installed! Title V in-hand! Property Abuts Grafton Land Trust - Hiking Trails Right Out Your Back Door! Convenient to Routes 90, 9 & 20! Immediate Occupancy! **\$449,900.00**



WEBSTER LAKE – 62 Bates Point Rd! Middle Pond! Absolute Prime 51' Level Waterfront Lot w/Western Expo! Beautiful Sunsets! Fantastic Panoramic Lake Views! 11 Rms, 6 Bdrms, 4 Bathrooms, 3,269' AC'd Colonial! Custom SS Appliance Granite Kit! Formal Din Rm w/ Cherry Hrdwds! Lake Facing Liv Rm w/Cathedrals, Cherry Hrdwds! Slider to Waterfront Deck! Spacious 1st Flr Master Bdrm w/Full Bath, Cherry Hrdwds & Walk-in Closet! Frplcd Lower Level Fam Rm! 1st & 2nd Flr Laundries! 2 Car Garage! **\$949,900.00**



WEBSTER LAKE - 11 Bay View Rd! One of the Lake's Premier Properties! 9,822' of Nice! .68 Acres of Park Like Grounds! 297' Waterfront! \$4 Million Spent, Nothing Spared! 17 Rms! 5 Water View Bdrms, 5.5 Bathrooms! Brazilian Cherry Hrdwd Flrs, Grand & Spiral Stairways! Elevator, Ground Flr to Master Suite! In-door Resistance Swimming Pool, Hot Tub & Bthrm w/Steam Shower off Exercise Rm! Billiard Rm! Media Rm! Center Isl Granite Kit w/Viking Gas Range, Sub-Zero Frig, Pantry & Breakfast Bar! Open Flr Plan! Din Area, Fam Rm w/Entertainment Center w/Wet Bar! Formal Din Rm, Frplcd Liv Rm & Atrium! Library w/Deck! Waterfront Master Suite w/Office, Bdrm w/Triple Glass Dr to Private Deck w/Lake Views, 3 Walk-in Closets, Bathrm w/Multi-Head Shower, Whirlpool, Dble Vanity, Separate Commode/Bidet/Sink Area! 16 Z's of Updated Geothermal Heat/A/C! Recessed Lights & Fire Sprinklers Through Out! 3 Car Garage! Generator! Slate Roof! Reward Yourself! **\$2,499,900.00**



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SORRY, SOLD!

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WEBSTER - 36 PARK AVENUE



SORRY, SOLD!

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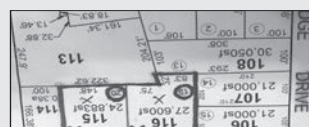
DUDLEY - G & S DRIVE



SORRY, SOLD!

Great location! Painted and ready to move in! Hardwood floors! Brick fireplace & cathedral ceiling! Open floor plan! rear covered porch. 2 large bedrooms. 1 & 1/2 baths! Recent roof in Yr. 2019. assisted sale **\$260,000.**

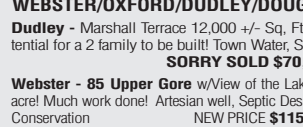
DUDLEY - LAND ON PACKARD DRIVE



ON DEPOSIT

Privacy!! Off Ridge Drive - 2 abutting Lots offered as a package. Each has there own Deed description. Lot# 19 Contains 27,699 SF of land area, Lot# 20, Contains 24,883 SF of land area. Total 52,582 SF. / 1.2 acre. **\$50,000.**

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Dudley - Marshall Terrace 12,000 +/- Sq. Ft. Potential for a 2 family to be built! Town Water, Sewer. **SORRY SOLD \$70,000**
Webster - 85 Upper Gore w/View of the Lake. 1+ acre! Much work done! Artesian well, Septic Design, Conservation. **NEW PRICE \$115,000**
Webster - Cooper Rd 2 Buildable Lots! Water/Sewer Access, Zoned Lake Residential! **\$49,000. ON DEPOSIT**
Douglas-Mount Daniels Lot #2-25 Acres of flat land that abuts Douglas State Forest **\$132,900**
Oxford - 4 Leicester St. approx. 8.47 acres! River frontage! Possible to be subdivided. **NEW PRICE \$89,900**

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WEBSTER LAKE - 28 BLACK POINT RD



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WEBSTER LAKE - 100 LAKESIDE AVE



ON DEPOSIT
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LAKE SHIRLEY - 647 RESERVOIR RD



SORRY, SOLD!

Lakefront! Lake Shirley! Modern Flare on a Lakefront Colonial! 1st level Formal large entry foyer, living room, gas fireplace, chef kitchen, Impala black granite, center island, 3 season porch, overlooking the lake. 1st FL bedroom suite w/ shower and jacuzzi tub. 2nd floor Master Suite! Lower level Summer kitchen, full bath, game room. Crown moulding & hardwood floors throughout, wired sound system, radiant floors, oversize 2 car garage. Additional Guest House! assisted sale **\$859,000.**

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Selectmen get '500-foot view' of schooling during COVID

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

OXFORD – Selectmen got a “500-foot view of what schooling may look like this coming fall” from Superintendent Kristine Nash last week.

In short, everything will change.

Citing the previous School Committee meeting (see last week's paper), Nash said she and the board had agreed that they did not want to bring all students and staff back to school using just the three-foot minimum distances between desks the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is recommending, although the schools do have the physical space to do so. Instead, the plan is to have school start Sept 16 to give staff time to prepare lessons so that they can teach some kids in class and others at home simultaneously.

At first, though, classes will be entirely online until October, when the administration will take stock to see if a “hybrid” system would work. If that happens, it will center on each student alternating weeks at home and at school, so that about half of the student body

is on campus at once. (Special needs, integrated preschool and English Language Learners will all go to school in person both weeks, and some parents can elect to have their kids be 100-percent remote students.)

Before Sept 16, the district will bring groups of students in to show them how things have changed in a long list of areas. One of the most notable will be the schedule itself. The elementary school will start an hour later, high school will switch from a seven-period day to four class blocks to minimize movement, and the middle school will go from seven classes to six. The year as a whole is also shorter; Nash noted DESE agreed to cut it to 170 days and reduce the number of in-class hours.

Nash said students won't have access to lockers and will eat lunch in class. Buses will be limited to 32-percent capacity and a “zig-zag” seating plan, with all kids in masks and monitors to check it. Chorus, band and similar performance-based classes and groups (if they happen) will meet outdoors. Athletics, recess, and after-school clubs are still in limbo, awaiting state guidelines. Other changes

might also come from union negotiations.

Making all this possible will require quite a few new hires – four custodians, four remote learning supervisors, 10-11 bus monitors, and up to 20 “safety and health monitors” inside the buildings. Nash said the money is coming from about \$720,000 in Covid funds Oxford has already received, but that won't cover the costs to change district transportation. That's still in the works; among other things it will require more bus runs and planning to ensure that “cohort groups” stay together, she said.

Nash noted the district is surveying parents to see who will use buses and who will self-transport. Additionally, the draft plan is being sent to all parents and is up on the district website, but some aspects of it could change as new DESE guidelines come in. The district is planning two online Q&A sessions for parents to explain the changes, but they were not yet listed on the Web site as of Monday.

“There isn't an area of education that won't look different,” Nash said. “... Reality may very well be that we have to flip the

switch in 48 hours and all of us have to go remote.”

To facilitate remote classes, the district will now provide all students with Chromebooks to ensure they all have the same capabilities. It had originally offered the laptops to students who needed them.

Selectman Cheryll Leblanc praised Nash's work and thanked her for being here “to help us through this.” She noted the school system hasn't changed in years, so people base their work and childcare around it. To her, the critical thing is to “convey to as many people as we can” that the changes are aimed at promoting safety.

Nash agreed, describing safety as “the balancing act for me.” While all educators agree the kids should be in school, that can't happen now. She noted “no model” will appeal to everyone, and each district is designing their own, to some degree. That's likely to be difficult for staff who have kids in other districts.

Far less directly visible are changes the selectmen heard about from Aquarion's Steve Olson before Nash arrived. He summarized the water company's work for the

current fiscal year, particularly ongoing capital projects.

To address manganese in the water (which is harmless, but causes discoloration and some odor), Olson said Aquarion is seeking sites for two new wells in North Oxford and a “satellite” well at its Nelson Street site. The latter won't increase system capacity, but is intended as a “safety factor” in case the existing well there has issues, he said.

Additional, he said, they're upgrading the Nelson Street pump, replacing the Church Street line this fall, and rehabbing the Prospect Hill tank next year. Aquarion is also working with the fire department to replace some hydrants.

Olson repeatedly urged conservation in light of the ongoing drought, noting that the system is seeing increased use because so many people are staying home due to Covid. To help that along, he cited the company's conservation program, by which customers can sign up to replace toilets, showerheads and faucets on the company website. The 28 households that did so this past year reduced overall water consumption by 1,000 gallons a day, and

25 are now on the waiting list, Olson said.

In other business, selectmen voted to grant a Forest Street resident a 60-day permit to access his home via town land after learning “someone” had been doing so for years. Town Attorney Jon Eichman said the man (who was not named) is trying to fix “problems with his title” and may not actually have deeded access.

They also granted two liquor license modification requests, and praised Town Clerk Lori Kelley on her pending retirement and a local resident for saving a woman having a seizure while driving. But they opted to take no action on another resident's request to sponsor a Town Meeting article that would allow ownership of chickens and ducks without a special permit. Instead, they urged Rachel Perez to attempt it by way of the citizen petition route.

They did, however, set the Fall Town Meeting date for Oct. 7 and opened the warrant, which will close Sept. 1.

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



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