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Thursday-Friday, May 8-9, 2025

Spiewak returned to Charlton Select Board

TOWN CLERK TO BECOME APPOINTED POSITION

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — The Town of Charlton held its annual town election on May 3, deciding competitive races for selectman, board of health, and school committee while voting overwhelmingly to change the town clerk to an appointed position.

The race for selectman was the most watched contest with a guaranteed new addition to the town's highest elected board after Bill Borowski announced his retirement from town office with the conclusion of his term. The election saw newcomer Michael Joseph Kavorkian and former selectman Karen Spiewak seeking the one open seat, with Spiewak claiming victory rejoining the board after last serving from 2018 through 2021. Spiewak's previous election bid in 2024 saw



Karen Spiewak

her lose by only a single vote and she claimed her latest victory by only a slightly more comfortable margin of 528 to 515.

The other two contested races were for Board of Health and School Committee which selected a familiar and new face respectively. The Board of Health saw incumbent Jonathan Sanborn elected for another term over challenger Lori Fontaine in a vote of 501 to 404. For the Dudley Charlton Regional School Committee challenger Anthony Aube claimed victory over incumbent Nicole Enberg in a 519 to 472 decision to earn a one-year term. Incumbent Kelly Szela also earned another three-year term on the school committee in an unopposed re-election bid.

The rest of the races on the ballot were all uncontested. Nancy Landry was re-elected as town assessor; Kristen Russell-May earned another term

Turn To **SPEIWAK** page **A14**

Council approves fire station construction bid

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHBRIDGE — After many years of delays and reversals, Southbridge will finally get a new fire station. On April 28, the Council unanimously accepted a \$20 million construction bid from PDS Engineering & Construction Inc.

A few years ago, voters approved a debt exclusion for \$25.7 million, but a previous round of bidding came in about \$4 million over that.

This time, Deputy Chief Joe Hulyk said he was "proud to stand here with a much better scenario." Even with the fact the town has already spent a little over \$5 million on the project (mostly on land acquisition), he said "we have enough funds to secure that construction contract."

Of course, that \$20 million total does not account for some things. One is the "soft costs" including furniture, equipment, architecture and management. Some of those are in the \$5 million already spent, some are being covered by a \$913,000 USDA grant and some of the land costs are being reimbursed by a \$1 million congressional earmark at the end of the project. There's also \$1 million from Free Cash being applied to contingency that may or may not be needed.

But the largest unincorporated cost is the interest over the 20 years it will be paid back. That will be calculated when the town actually goes out to bond the project long-term after its complete; Town Manager Jack Jovan noted the plan is to include this work in a bond with various road projects.

Councilor George Chenier, a retired firefighter, said he looks forward to "walk(ing) into that building to compare what I had when I worked there to what the future guys are going to have. It's not loaded with bells and

Turn To **LIONS** page **A14**

Turn To **COUNCIL** page **A14**

Capital spending sparks debate at Sturbridge Town Meeting

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

STURBRIDGE — Besides a contentious hour debating Article 8's trail bridge project (see the other story elsewhere in this week's edition), this year's Town Meeting saw very little debate.

The vast majority of its items passed without any at all, including the \$44.2 mil-

lion budget, which prompted just one question (a woman asking what the town's revenue is). Town Administrator Robin Grimm said that's not something Town Meeting votes on, but they'd include that for future warrants. Finance Chair Kevin Smith added that the "amount of money we're spending is absolutely

equal to the amount we're getting in."

He noted, however, the future might be an issue, saying, "Our five-year projection shows our revenue being well under our projected expenses."

The only other item that actually sparked debate was the \$1 million capital plan. There,

Jeff Burdick objected to rising property taxes in recent years. He said households had seen 10-35 percent hikes in 2025, with single-family home values rising 46 percent in the last four years. That's given Sturbridge the fifth highest taxes in Worcester County,

Turn To **DEBATE** page **A14**

Charlton Lions really clean up



Courtesy

Pictured: Robin and Jim Stoddard, Shelley Yeager-Doucette, Dana Gould, Rhonda Tetrault, Gerry Wolfe and Kathy Gallant. (Behind the camera: Cynthia Young)

CHARLTON — You could say the Charlton Lions Club, like Lions Clubs International, is working on its environmental "merit badge." For the recent Earth Day weekend, they took part in two of Charlton's Earth Day activities – the festival on Saturday, April 26, and the roadside clean-up, which the Club carried out on Sunday, the 27th.

The Festival, which was driven indoors due to heavy rain, was held in Dexter Hall at Charlton Public Library instead of on the town common as planned. The Charlton Lions' table focused on trees. There was information about how trees improve our environment and our lives, free Earth Day bookmarks, and activity pages for children about trees, with a maze, word search and picture to color. Because the Club meets at The Overlook, the table also offered a hand-out from The Overlook Tree Advisory Committee,

which endeavors to promote and protect trees on The Overlook senior living campus and in the surrounding Charlton community.

On Sunday, eight Lions spent a few hours picking up enough trash along Bond Road to fill the back of a pickup truck. A few others picked up a bag's worth on route 31 between The Overlook and Trolley Crossing Road. The next day, incoming Club President Dana Gould spent more time single-handedly filling three trash bags with litter found on Masonic Home Road between The Overlook and North Main Street.

The most common items picked up on both days were cigarette butts, "nip" bottles – the small, capped plastic bottles that liquor samples come in – and beer cans. Given that drinking and driving is against the

law, that's not what you want to see on the roadside. The next common items are plastic soda tumblers, lids and straws. All manner of other items from diapers to chair cushions, old tires, vape cartridges, paper towels, clothing, shoes, etc. are tossed out of cars and left for someone else to pick up and dispose of. Thank goodness for volunteers like the Lions who do this – otherwise more of our tax dollars would be (and are) spent to clean up other people's messes.

The Charlton Lions are businesspeople, homemakers, professionals, retirees

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Arbor Day tree seedling giveaway at Southbridge elementary schools

SOUTHBRIDGE — For the celebration of Arbor Day, the Southbridge Urban and Community Urban Forestry Advisory Board distributed tree seedlings to all the first through fifth grade students at the Southbridge Public Elementary Schools.

The seedlings consisted of five varieties of ornamental trees perfectly suited for Southbridge: Eastern Redbud, River Birch, Paperbark Maple, Carolina Silverbell, and Tupelo.

Members of the Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Board along with Ryan Aho of the Bartlett Tree Experts company visited West Street School on Monday, April 28, and East-


ford Road School and Charlton Street School on April 30. The board members visited each class for a brief presentation of the benefits of trees, how trees grow and how to plant the seedlings given to the students. Students were encouraged to ask questions.

The Southbridge Urban and Community Forestry Board members who participated in the Seedling giveaway were Bianca Andrianopoulos,

Steve Brady, and John Moore.

The board thanks the Southbridge School District for giving us the opportunity to visit the schools. We also would like to thank former Southbridge Urban Forester Bianca Andri-

anopoulos for organizing the event. And lastly a special thanks to Ryan Aho of the Bartlett Tree Expert Company for providing the 800 seedlings presented to the students.



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Southbridge Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Board members Steve Brady, Bianca Andrianopoulos, and John Moore at West Street Elementary School.

Wings of Song presents “Here is My Home” concert May 17 & 18

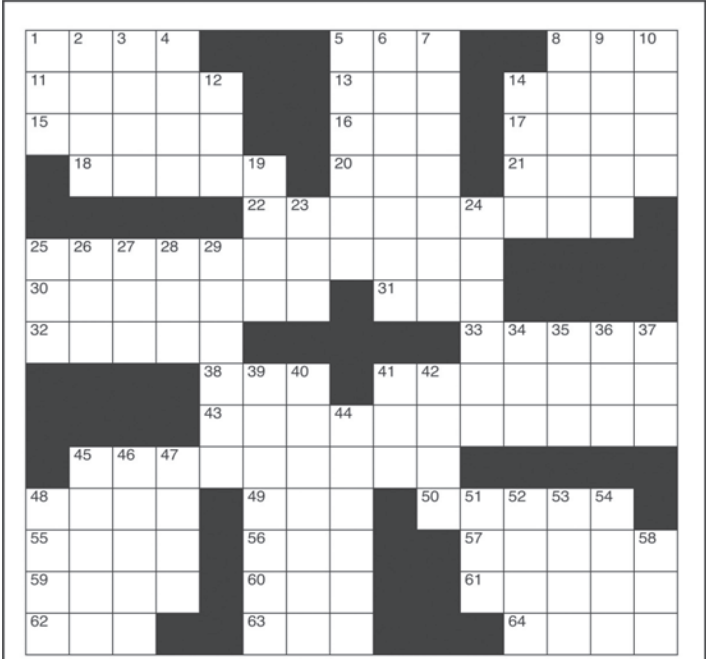
STURBRIDGE — Wings of Song, a community chorus drawing its 50 singers from southern Massachusetts and northeastern Connecticut, with Music Director Nym Cooke, offers two free concerts next month.

On Saturday, May 17 at 7:30 p.m., the chorus will perform in St. Joachim Chapel, part of St. Anne – St. Patrick Parish, 16 Church Street, Fiskdale (Sturbridge). The next afternoon at 3 p.m., the singers present their program at Elm Street Congregational Church, 61 Elm St. in Southbridge. Both concerts are free to the public, with a free-will offering collected at intermission. Both venues are handicapped accessible.

This Spring’s concerts are titled “Here Is My Home,” and offer a bouquet of musical offerings that explore the many varied meanings and feelings of home. From the rich trove of Black spirituals, to 19th century “shape note” tunes, to more classical popular songs from Paul Simon, John Denver and others. Audience singalongs and a moving tribute to the valiant people of Ukraine, whose homeland has been under brutal assault for over three years are among the repertoire.

Guest conductor Edward Bradley will lead the chorus in three pieces: his own arrangement of “Misty Mountains” from the popular movie “The Hobbit,” his original “Open the Doors / Welcome Home!” and “A Ukrainian Prayer,” by John Rutter.

In reference to another kind of assault on a people’s home—the destruction and removal of four towns and numerous villages in central Massachusetts’s Swift River Valley to create the Quabbin Reservoir will be two of the concert’s pieces. The variety continues with the Scottish “Mingulay Boat Song”, the South African freedom song “Singababambayo,” Albert E. Brumley’s stirring gospel march-song “I’ll Fly Away” and one of the great home-coming stories of the Bible, “Prodigal’s Return.” A memorable event, so arrive early to be sure of seats.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Herring-like fish

5. Perform on stage

8. Soda

11. Small growth

13. In support of

14. Step taken when walking

15. Hollyhocks

16. Returned material authorization (abbr.)

17. Feel pain

18. San Diego ballplayer

20. Inches per minute (abbr.)

21. Fat from a pig’s abdomen

22. Create again

25. Honors once more

30. Thin coating of gold

31. Welsh river

32. Japanese novelist Mizumura
33. Husks of corn

38. Green vegetable

41. Showing guilt

43. Soldier

45. Photographers

48. Language spoken in Nigeria

49. Mimic

50. Expressed pleasure

55. Ancient Greek sophist

56. Beverage container

57. Night monkey genus

59. Lace bugs

60. Hoghead (abbr.)

61. Frameworks

62. Keyboard key

63. Greek goddess of the dawn

64. Influential Korean independence figure

CLUES DOWN

1. A place to unwind

2. Helped (archaic)

3. Razorbill genus

4. Bleached

5. Continent

6. Fruit preserved in syrup

7. Impediment to one’s freedom

8. Nocturnal rodents

9. Earthy pigment

10. Relieved oneself

12. Golf score

14. Tech hub __ Alto

19. Sportscaster Andrews

23. Records electric currents

24. Popular Hitchcock film

25. Revolutions per minute

26. NY Giants legend

27. Sports radio host Patrick

28. When you hope to get somewhere
29. French seaport

34. Thai river

35. Rocker’s accessory

36. Extra charge

37. Influential American president

39. Pain in the head

40. Great Plains people

41. Consumed

42. Soluble ribonucleic acid

44. Improves

45. Secret clique

46. Behind the stern of a ship

47. Dough made from corn flour

48. Fallow deer

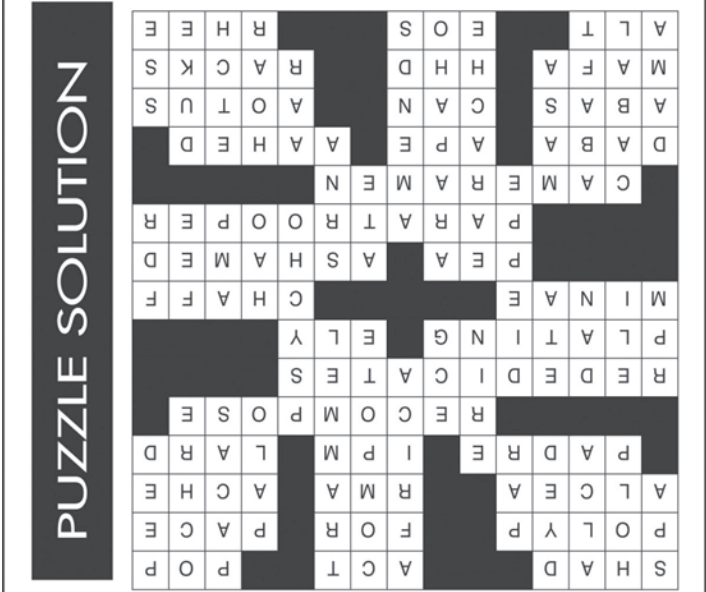
51. Swiss river

52. Grayish white

53. Engrave

54. College’s Blue Devils

58. Midway between south and southeast



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- **Charlton Federated Church**, 64 Main St., 508-248-5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. Summer worship is 9:30 a.m.
www.charltonfedchurch.org
- **Charlton Baptist Church**, 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488, www.charltonbaptist.org, Sunday worship 10 a.m.
- **Charlton City United Methodist**, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org
Sunday worship and Children’s church 10am
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- **Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale**- 8 Maple St. Sturbridge, 774-304-1021
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Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.
- **Bethlehem Lutheran Church**- 345 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566
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Pastor Dan Purtell

Budget to take center stage at Charlton Town Meeting

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — Charlton’s annual town meeting is fast approaching, with several items of interest set to be discussed on the May 19 warrant, including the purchase of a new fire engine and bylaw changes, but the new town budget will take center stage as the focus for many.

The proposed spending plan for Fiscal Year 2026 comes in at \$44,039,388, an increase

of 6.3 percent over the current year. This represents increases in every major category and includes \$22.8 million for education and \$3.8 million for the general government expenditures. Aside from debt service, education was the biggest jump which Town Administrator Andrew Golas said has been a constant in recent years.

“Educational spending continues to be the most impactful spending increase for the upcoming fiscal year. Total

educational spending increased by \$1,742,485 between both the Dudley Charlton Regional School District and Bay Path Assessments (8.27 percent). This accounts for 66.7 percent of all new proposed spending for the upcoming fiscal year. There are a few staffing increases included in the operational budget, specifically targeted to public safety. These included the addition of a sergeant position in the police department, an additional dispatcher

and EMS officer position for the fire department,” said Golas.

The Town Administrator added that one of the biggest struggles of the new budget was increases to health insurance costs. Charlton is looking at a 19 percent increase in that line item over the current fiscal year. He did confirm that federal cuts have not had a direct impact on budget projections although they are watching how those cuts might impact state appropriations.

While the spending plan does impose an increase, Golas said growth in the town’s industrial base has shifted more of the tax burden away from residential. Overall residential taxpayers now pay 71.4 percent in the current fiscal year, as opposed to 77.9 percent in 2023 and Golas expects that decrease to continue into the new year.

Full documents including budget breakdowns have been made available on the Town of

Charlton Web site.

Aside from the budget, the annual town meeting will also address several housekeeping items, the results of the May 3 town election, the proposed borrowing of \$1.1 million for a new fire engine, and close out with nine different zoning bylaw articles. The annual town meeting will take place at Charlton Middle School starting at 7 p.m. on May 19.

QCC’s Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society shines at international convention



WORCESTER — At this year’s PTK Catalyst 2025 convention, QCC’s Alpha Zeta Theta Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society received multiple awards in recognition of the organization’s dedication, research and community service.

QCC’s PTK chapter received the nationwide First Place in Honors in Action Research Project - Distinguished Theme Award for their

project titled “Threads of Dignity,” which analyzed systemic factors contributing to the unhoused population in Worcester, Massachusetts.

“We have a very strong officer team that worked really hard,” said Program Coordinator of PTK Lizette Reid, who traveled with the team to Kansas City for the convention.

The group was also named a Distinguished Chapter, placing it in

the top 10 percent of PTK chapters worldwide. This designation is awarded only to chapters that submit outstanding entries for both the Honors in Action Project and College Project Awards. Additionally, the chapter was recognized as a Top 100 Chapter among nearly 1,300 PTK chapters globally, a distinction reserved for chapters that have earned 5-star status.

The chapter’s success

extended to the regional level as well, where they were named the Most Distinguished Chapter in New England. They also won Second Place in the 2024 College Project for the Alpha Zeta Theta Community Closet initiative, which collected clothing and hygiene products for unhoused individuals.

“Winning five awards this year, including the Most Distinguished Chapter in New England, was an incredible affirmation of the commitment, resilience and heart that drove everything we accomplished as a team,” said 2024/2025 PTK President Talissa

Goncalves. “This experience taught me that strong leadership isn’t about being the loudest voice; it’s about listening deeply, uplifting others,

and leading with authenticity. That’s the kind of leader I’ve become, and the kind I will continue striving to be.”

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\$442,400, 17 Bay Path Rd, Darling, Todd R, and Darling, Pamela A, to Carito, Lauren M, and Carito, Steven M.

HOLLAND

\$459,000, 5 Inlet Dr, James M Votzakis RET, and Votzakis, James M, to Kali Holdings LLC.

\$397,500, 33 Brimfield Rd, Dreambig-homes LLC, to Lefevre, Elizabeth, and Lefevre, Jay.

SOUTHBRIDGE

\$1,250,000, 140 Hamilton St, Daggett, Christopher, to Brynes Inv Group LLC.

\$1,250,000, 148 Hamilton St, Daggett,

Christopher, to Brynes Inv Group LLC.

\$505,000, Park St, Edma, Daryl, to Lcr Ma Properties LLC.

\$392,000, 104 Dresser St, Mccarthy, Jordan, and White, Danielle, to Yildirim, Hasan, and Yildirim, Derya.

\$390,000, 153 Everett St, Dos Santos, Renato F, to Lebron, Nelvin P.

\$325,000, 35 Ellis Rd, Arsenault, Donald R, to Zenon, Valerie.

STURBRIDGE

\$650,000, 25 Woodside Cir, Champagne, Hayden, and Champagne, Emily, to Nguyen, Huyen T, and Nguyen, Nhat-Anh B.

\$460,000, 107 Cedar St, Baldracchi, Scott P, to Peter F Stansky T-2023, and Stansky, Peter F.

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Trinity Catholic Academy hosts Social Studies Fair



SOUTHBRIDGE — Trinity Catholic Academy hosted its bi-annual Social Studies Fair on April 30. Students in grades 1 & 2 and 5-8 wowed the school community with their individual projects. A special thank you to Mrs. Ladd, Junior High Social Studies teacher, for organizing the event and to all the judges who volunteered their time. We were especially honored to welcome State Senator Ryan Fattman. Our students never fail to impress us with their dedication and commitment to their education.

Grade 5: 1st place-Ted Frazier, Franklin Delano Roosevelt

2nd place-Kaleigh Haglund, John F. Kennedy

3rd place-Alerix Gonzalez, Abraham Lincoln

Grade 6: 1st place-Evelyn Howard-Donlin, New Zealand

2nd place-Sydney Fitzgibbons, Kenya

3rd place-Michael Poulin, Cambodia

Grade 7: 1st place-Alexio Yacavace, Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

2nd place-Sophia Gauthier, Vampires of New England in 1788

3rd place-Abigail Frazier, Salem Witch Trials

Grade 8: 1st place-Lidia Yanez Velasquez, The Great Depression

2nd place-Lucas Cournoyer, A Twist of Fate: The Rubiks Cube

3rd place-Logan Petinelli, Apollo 11



John Schlichte

Charlton Heritage Preservation Trust hosting nature photography program

CHARLTON — You are invited to attend “Zoom in Your Focus on Nature,” an overview of nature photography and videography, covering landscapes to birds and animals. It will be presented in Dexter Hall of the Charlton Public Library on May 21 at 7 p.m. This is a free, one hour event that is designed to entertain and educate anyone; from those who prefer cell phone cameras to diehards who keep up with the latest mirrorless technology. The goal of the event is to help show how time in nature with a camera can change and enhance your focus in the woods.

The Charlton Heritage Preservation Trust (CHPT) is pleased to feature John Schlichte, who is a professional nature photographer based in Central Massachusetts. Photography became Schlichte’s vocation after retiring from teaching special education in the Worcester Public School System. John’s love of nature came early with the encouragement of family members.

According to Schlichte, “Growing up in Quincy, my aunt would point out things that most people would overlook, while adding how lucky I was to live in an area that supported plant and animal diversity.”

Those early experiences expanded as he, “spent time paddling canoes on the Charles River with his dad.” Photography and videography are John’s preferred ways to stay connected to nature and he freely admits to being somewhat obsessed with turtles, owls and oddly pigmented birds and animals. He is often called on to give presentations, including at Mass Audubon.

The program will feature some of John’s favorite photographs and the stories behind them, as well as tips and tricks for composition and camera settings. The technology might change but the strategies for taking advantage of perspective, light and shadows carries over whether you have a pocket camera (phone, Go-Pro, Point and Shoot) or a DSLR/Mirrorless camera. Basic post processing techniques like cropping and adjusting contrast and exposure will be touched on.

William Blasius, president of the CHPT Board of Trustees had the opportunity to spend some time with John photographing nature in John’s home town.

“John’s character comes through in his Instagram and YouTube posts. In person, it is obvious that he wants to share his knowledge, inspiration, and sense of humor with all,” says Blasius.

Charlton Heritage Preservation Trust is a 501(c) 3 non-profit land trust which owns 19 conservation properties in town, totaling over 200 acres of natural land open to the public. CHPT works with landowners, developers, and the town to balance healthy economic growth with conservation of important natural resources and historically significant places. They rely on donations of land and funds to make new conservation projects possible. CHPT depends on the volunteer help of their members and friends to preserve their conservation areas for the public benefit.

You can find out more about the work of Charlton Heritage Preservation Trust including information about all of their properties and the May 21 nature photography program at the Charlton Public Library on their Web site at <https://www.charlton-trust.org/index.htm> or our Facebook page.

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“We’re thrilled to be a part of this effort to arm families with knowledge that will ensure a healthy financial future for their kids,” said Cornerstone CEO Todd Tallman. “Greenlight has come up with a very



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CHARLTON — Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical School congratulates the following grade 9 students honor roll for the third quarter of the 2024-2025 school year:

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A recent survey of families commissioned by Greenlight shows a critical need for accessible and effective financial education. Only 35 states require a personal finance course for students, and teens nationwide scored an average of 64 percent on the National Financial Literacy Test.

Here are some of the survey’s findings:

- 91 percent of kids and teens say they need financial knowledge and skills to reach their goals
- 94 percent of parents agree
- Parents rank personal finance as the #1 most difficult life skill to teach their children
- 81 percent of parents say they need more financial education resources

Cornerstone customers can find a link to a free* Greenlight subscription on the bank’s website, adding their Cornerstone account as a funding source.

Disclaimers: Greenlight is a financial technology company, not a bank. The Greenlight app facilitates banking services through Community Federal Savings Bank (CFSB), Member FDIC. The Greenlight card is issued by Community Federal Savings Bank, member FDIC, pursuant to license by Mastercard International.

*Cornerstone Bank customers are eligible for the Greenlight SELECT plan at no cost when they connect their Cornerstone Bank account as the Greenlight funding source for the entirety of the promotion. Subject to minimum load requirements and identity verification. Upgrades will result in additional fees. Upon termination of promotion or removal of Cornerstone Bank funding source, customers will be responsible for associated monthly fees. See terms for details. Offer ends March 10, 2028. Offer subject to change or renewal.

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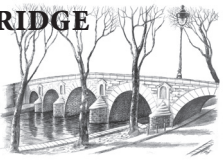
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EDITOR

Health screenings are an investment in your future self

It’s easy to put off routine health check-ups. Life gets busy. We feel fine. We assume we’re too young to worry. But catching a problem early, when it’s most treatable can make all the difference. Preventive health screenings aren’t about fearing the worst; they’re about giving ourselves the best shot at living well. From your 20s through your 60s and beyond, here’s a decade-by-decade breakdown of essential screenings that everyone should prioritize.

In your 20s, the focus is on building a health baseline. This is when your long-term habits start taking shape. Even if you feel great, it’s important to get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked. These simple screenings can reveal early signs of heart disease risks. If you’re sexually active, regular STI screenings and, for women, a Pap smear starting at 21 are critical. A mental health check-in should be part of the routine too, especially in a decade filled with transitions. It’s also smart to begin annual skin checks, particularly if you’ve had a lot of sun exposure.

By your 30s, it’s time to pay closer attention to subtle shifts in your health. Continue monitoring your blood pressure, cholesterol, and STI status. Add in screenings for diabetes risk especially if you have a family history or carry extra weight. If you’re trying to conceive or just want to know where things stand, a fertility check can offer insight. Watch for signs of thyroid issues like fatigue or weight changes, and keep up with dental and eye exams every year or two.

Your 40s are when chronic conditions often start creeping in, sometimes without symptoms. This is the decade to stay vigilant. Women should begin mammograms at 40 or earlier if there’s a family history of breast cancer. Everyone should consider a baseline colonoscopy by age 45. Diabetes, cholesterol, and heart screenings are more important than ever, and it’s a good idea to test for glaucoma during your eye exam. This is also a smart time to check in on your mental health, as burnout and midlife stress can take a toll.

By your 50s, screenings shift from preventive to potentially lifesaving. Colonoscopies should continue every 10 years or as your doctor advises. Women should consider bone density tests, and men should discuss prostate screenings with their doctor. Hearing loss becomes more common, so a hearing test is worth scheduling. This is also the age for a shingles vaccine, and if you’ve had ongoing risk factors, a cardiac stress test might be wise.

In your 60s, staying ahead of health issues becomes even more important. Annual flu and pneumonia vaccines are recommended, and if you’ve ever smoked or been around second-hand smoke regularly, you may qualify for a lung cancer screening. Continue yearly vision and hearing checks, and consider cognitive screenings if memory issues arise. Osteoporosis becomes more common in both women and men, and regular skin checks should continue to catch early signs of skin cancer.

No matter your age, health screenings are a way to invest in your future self. They help you catch issues early, manage risks, and stay in control of your well-being. Ask questions, track your numbers, and make time for the care you deserve. After all, staying healthy isn’t something that just happens it’s something we have to work for. When was your last check-up?

Letter submission policy

Letters to the Editor must include the author’s name, address, and a daytime phone number for purposes of verification in order to be considered for publication. Only the author’s name and the town in which they reside will be published. Letters submitted without all of the required information will not be accepted.

It is the sole prerogative of the Editor to determine whether a submission satisfies our requirements and decency standards, and any submission may be rejected at any time for any reason he or she might deem appropriate.

OPINION

Creative churching

“Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.”
— 1 Thessalonians 2:8



BEYOND
THE PEWS
BY
DR. RB MCFEE

We tend to think about church as a Sabbath experience. In and of itself, that’s not a bad thing if you are availing yourself of this time of worship, contemplation, fellowship, and spiritual renewal.

But as the weather warms up and we start taking to the great outdoors, I think about the worship services I’ve experienced on the beach, in chapels of the woods, in amphitheaters at state parks, at outdoor cafes, and well you get the idea – what I think of as “Creative Churching©!”

In Judaism, even the dining room can be, and are places of worship.

Consider the weekly observance of Shabbat – the Jewish Sabbath which is Friday sun-

down to Saturday sundown when many Jews celebrate worldwide the prayers, the lighting of the candle, the breaking of bread and sharing the wine. By all accounts it is considered one of the holiest days in Judaism.

“The Sabbath is the presence of God in the world, open to the soul of man.”

— Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

Rabbit Heschel was correct. The sharing of our faith in God, and commitment to serve as His ambassadors on earth is something we all can do on the Sabbath, whether it is Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, at Shabbat, in temple, church or other sacred spaces.

Throughout Christianity, Judaism and other faith traditions, sacred worshipful moments occur whenever and wherever we congregate mindful of our God, and those who are among us who want to share a journey of faith. Consider Methodists held faith based events outdoors in tents.

Sometimes the theme, the setting can be creative as well. Consider...

When we get together and prepare meals for the homeless are we worshipping? When we help others at Habitat for Humanity, are we worshipping? When we clear trash from hiking trails are we worshipping?

Any place God’s Goodness is shared with others – even thrift shops like those at Charlton City UMC - focusing on relationship with God as we serve Him by serving others, I would suggest “yes” these are Creative

Turn To **BEYOND** page **A14**

Questions to ask your financial advisor



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You should always be able to ask as many questions as you’d like when working with your financial advisor. So, before you have your annual review, think carefully about what you’d like to ask.

Here are a few suggestions:

Are my goals still realistic? When you first began working with your financial advisor, you may well have articulated several financial goals. For example, you might have said that you wanted to pay for most of your children’s college education, or that you’d like to retire at age 55, or that you hope to travel internationally every year during retirement. In fact, you could have many different goals for which you’re saving and investing. When you meet with your financial advisor, you’ll certainly want to ask whether you’re still on track toward meeting these goals. If you are, you can continue with the financial strategies you’ve been following; but if you aren’t, you may need to adjust them. The same is true if your goals have changed. You and your financial advisor will want to build a strategy to address any new or different goals such as emergency cash needs, having adequate insurance protection or estate planning.

Am I taking on too much — or too little — risk? Put market declines in perspective. The financial markets always fluctuate, and these movements will affect the value of your investment portfolio. Suppose you watch the markets closely every day and track their impact on your investments. You may find yourself fretting over their value and wondering whether you’re taking on too much investment risk for your comfort level. Conversely, if during an extended period of market gains your own portfolio appears to be lagging, you might feel that you should be investing more aggressively, which entails greater risk. In any case, it’s important to consult with your financial advisor to determine your risk tolerance and use it as a guideline for making investment choices.

How will changes in my life affect my investment strategy? Your life is not static. Over the years, you may experience any number of major events, such as marriage, remarriage, loss of a spouse, birth of children or grandchildren, changing jobs or illness leading to early retirement. When you meet with your financial advisor, you will want to discuss these types of changes, because they can affect your long-term goals and your investment decisions.

How are external forces affecting my investment portfolio? Generally speaking, you will want to create an investment strategy based on your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon. And, as mentioned, you may need to adjust your strategy based on changes in your life. But should you also make changes based on outside forces, such as interest rate movements, political events, inflation, new tax legislation or news affecting industries in which you have invested substantially? Try not to make long-term investment decisions based on short-term news. Yet, talk with your financial advisor to make sure your investment portfolio and spending strategy are not out of alignment with relevant external factors.

By making these and other inquiries, you can help yourself stay informed about your overall investment picture and what moves, if any, you should make to keep advancing toward your goals. A financial advisor is there to provide you with valuable guidance — so take full advantage of it.

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

TO THE EDITOR

Black history is American history – the truth is vital for our humanity

To the Editor:

On March 27, the President of the United States signed an Executive Order titled “Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History” with a goal of targeting many important museums, libraries and specifically the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) for promoting an alleged “improper ideology.” This order threatens not only the ability of institutions to engage with the honest and truthful telling of Black history, but also our shared ability as a nation to understand Black history as a fundamental component of American history.

As Americans, we must stand to-

gether and collectively resist the erasure and silencing of the truth of our country and the amazing stories of resilience and brilliance that has created the country we love.

These museums in D.C., Boston and across the country, have impacted my life profoundly and helped me to better understand America, myself and my community and that’s why we must work together to resist the calls for defunding, altering exhibits and censorship. Let’s show our children that fighting to uphold the truth is always the right thing to do.

Sincerely,
Michelle Chalmers
Charlton

Historic vote looms for deteriorating Brimfield Town Hall

To the Editor:

The town of Brimfield stands at a pivotal moment as residents prepare to vote on a crucial initiative to renovate the historic town hall. Years of neglect and deferred maintenance have left the building in desperate need of repair; impacting accessibility for elderly and disabled residents, hindering the efficiency of town services, and threatening the structural integrity of a cherished community landmark.

As Director of Historic Brimfield, I have witnessed firsthand the pride our town holds for its rich history and the deep connections we share. That’s why the current state of our town hall is so concerning. It’s not just a building; it’s a symbol of our community, and right now, it’s a symbol in disrepair. We urgently need to renovate and update vital systems and ensure proper access for our elderly and disabled residents, who are currently facing significant barriers.

Past votes have turned a blind eye to its decay, but this time, we cannot afford inaction. This is our chance to save a vital piece of Brimfield’s history, to transform it into a space where everyone, regardless of age or ability, can access essential services with dignity. It’s about providing our dedicated town employees with safe and functional workspaces. And ultimately, it’s about preserving the pride we all

share in calling Brimfield home. It’s time to choose progress, accessibility, and a future worthy of our heritage.

The proposed renovations aim to address critical issues such as leaky roofs, outdated and failing vital systems (including HVAC and technology), insufficient space, and significant accessibility barriers that prevent many residents from easily accessing town services and participating in civic life.

The current state of our town hall is demonstrably inadequate. Years of deferred maintenance have created significant challenges, and it’s our responsibility to ensure a functional and welcoming space for all residents. This isn’t just about fixing an old building; it’s about investing in the very heart of our community.

The upcoming vote presents an opportunity to rectify these longstanding problems and create a revitalized town hall that serves as a point of pride and accessibility for all generations. A “Yes” vote is a vote for progress, for inclusivity, and for preserving Brimfield’s heritage for the future.

Residents are urged to participate in this historic vote and choose to invest in Brimfield’s future.

Roseann Bergdoll
Director, Friends of
Historic Brimfield
Brimfield Historical Commission

Always room for tomatoes



GARDEN
MOMENTS
.....
MELINDA
MYERS

Nothing beats the flavor of fresh-from-the-garden tomatoes. Keep them close at hand by growing one or more in containers on your patio, balcony, or front steps.

Any tomato can be grown in a pot, but determinate varieties are shorter and more compact, making them a bit easier to manage in a container. They produce fruit in a relatively short period of time, making them great choices for preserving as well as using fresh. Look for a D or determinate on the plant tag, seed packet or in the catalog description.

Indeterminate tomatoes, often designated with an I, are usually much taller and continue to grow, flower, and produce fruit until frost kills the plant or you pinch out the growing tip. These are usually staked or grown in wire cages to save space, reduce pest problems and make harvesting easier. Many new containers have built-in trellises or creative gardeners craft their own, making it easier and more attractive to grow these bigger plants in pots.

Semi-determinate varieties are in between these two. They are compact like determinates, often trailing but produce fruit throughout the growing season like indeterminate varieties.

You can now find compact varieties often sold as miniature and dwarf



Melinda Myers

If gardening space is limited, grow tomatoes in hanging baskets or containers.

plants that grow well in small four-to-eight-inch pots. They are a great option for those with limited space, gardening on balconies, indoors in a sunny window or just about anywhere. Kitchen Mini tomatoes, Heartbreakers, Red Velvet and Micro Tom Thumb are just a few.

Grow one tomato per container for maximum productivity. Use a five-gallon or bigger container for large varieties and at least a two to three gallon or similar size pot for smaller varieties. Some research suggests growing tomatoes in a pot that is at least 14 inches but preferably 20 inches wide will yield greater results. Adding flowers and herbs to the container boosts the beauty and diversity of your container garden but will reduce the number of tomatoes produced.

Growing tomatoes in containers also allows you to start the season earlier. Just move the planter inside when the weather is harsh and back outside when the weather is warm and sunny. As the weather turns cold at the end of the growing season, cover the planter or move it

into a frost-free location as needed. Some gardeners even move a pot or two inside to finish off the tomato season.

Plant tomatoes in a container with drainage holes and fill it with a quality potting mix. Reduce the time spent watering with a self-watering pot that has a reservoir to hold water and extend the time between watering. Further reduce the need to water by adding an organic, sustainable soil amendment like certified organic Wild Valley Farms' wool pellets (wildvalleyfarms.com) to the potting mix. Made from wool waste, this product reduces watering by up to 25 percent.

Water thoroughly when the top few inches begin to dry. Mulch the soil with evergreen needles, shredded leaves, or other organic mulch to keep the soil consistently moist and suppress weeds. Consistent soil moisture encourages more flowering and fruiting, while reducing the risk of blossom end rot, cracking, and misshapen fruit.

Harvest tomatoes Turn To **GARDENING** page **A11**

An ode to teachers

Professor Fowler sat in his home, recently retired, alone with his thoughts—and none of them were kind.

A teacher who had dedicated his entire life to shaping young minds, he now sat convinced he had failed.

Looking back over decades in the classroom, all he could see was the void—the faces forgotten, the lessons lost to time.

He spoke the words aloud, his voice thick with regret:

"I walked from class to class...teaching unhearing ears...unwilling heads...I moved nobody, I motivated nobody, I left no direct imprint on anybody."

His retirement had not come by choice. It had been forced upon him by an institution eager to make room for the next generation. And now, with his life's work behind him, he sat in the darkness of his own doubt, convinced his efforts had vanished like chalk dust after the final bell.

This story, by the way, is from an old episode of "The Twilight Zone," titled "Changing of the Guard."

And yet, as I think about Professor Fowler; my mind drifts to teachers today—living in the modern world, dealing with pressures he could scarcely have imagined.

The teacher today faces crowded classrooms, shrinking budgets, endless paperwork, shifting standards, the strain of technology, and the silent burden of wondering if any of it is making a difference.

I wonder if, after long and weary days, teachers ever question whether the hours spent planning lessons, listening to struggling students, breaking up conflicts, inspiring curiosity—if any of it will truly matter.

I wonder if they ask themselves whether their voice will linger, whether their encouragement will echo, whether their belief in a student who didn't yet believe in themselves will survive the tests of time.

It's easy in the haze of exhaustion and bureaucracy, to feel invisible.

To feel, like Fowler once did, that no imprint has been left behind.

But here's the part of Fowler's story that every teacher today needs to hear.

That night, sitting in his despair, something remarkable happened. One by one, the faces of his former students

appeared—visitors not of the body, but of the heart.

They came to tell him what he could not see: that he had changed lives.

That a word of encouragement had saved one from despair. That a lesson on courage had inspired another to give their life to

a cause greater than themselves. That a belief in decency and kindness had taken root and flourished long after the final grades were given.

They stood before him—not as students he once taught, but as proof that his life had mattered far more than he ever realized.

It's more than just an old television episode—it's a truth lived out in classrooms daily.

Some days it feels like you're shouting into the wind, wondering if you are reaching anyone, if any of it matters.

It does.

Somewhere right now, there is a student who carries a seed you planted—something you said and taught when they needed it most.

And that seed will grow, often quietly, invisibly, sometimes over decades.

You may never see it bloom. But it blooms nonetheless. Every encouraging word. Every ounce of patience. Every lesson, even the ones you think fell flat. Every moment you chose to believe in someone who didn't yet believe in themselves—these things matter more than you will ever know.

You are building lives. You are shaping futures. You are winning victories for humanity that no history book will ever fully record.

So, in this week where we celebrate teachers, I want you to know:

You are not invisible. You are not forgotten. You are not wasting your time.

You are changing the world, one student at a time. And for that—for everything—you have my deepest thanks.

I, like so many others, am grateful—forever grateful.

Each of us carries something you gave us: a word, a hope, a strength, a belief.

I want to thank you—for believing in us, for guiding us, for helping to shape who we became.

In the end, teachers have lived a very good life, a very full life, a very rich life.

And I hope, like Professor Fowler came to realize, you wouldn't have it any other way.

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Life-saving on the sea

SOUTHBRIDGE — Did you know the Coast Guard had a prior existence as the US Life Saving Service? Whether you do or don't, come to Southbridge Historical Society on Wednesday, May 14 at 7 p.m., when Dennis Picard will talk about “Daily Life in the US Life Saving Service Along the Coast of New England in the 19th Century.” He'll tell some tales of life and dangers on the sea, and how crews of small vessels found ways to rescue shipwrecked sailors in our region.

Picard is retired from OSV and has presented various programs over the years on many fascinating subjects. He's a member of the editorial board of “The Country Schoolhouse Journal” and on the board of directors of the Pioneer Valley History Network.

The talk is at the Ruth Wells Center for the Arts, 111 Main St. The public is invited to this free event, and there will be snacks afterward.


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Register
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CHARLTON — Charlton Dudley Youth Football and Cheer will be holding an in person registration for the fall season, this Saturday, May 10.

We'll be at the Grange (Upper Hall), 10 Main St. in Charlton, and at the Dudley Town Hall from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Cheer and Football athletes who live in or attend school in Charlton, Dudley, Woodstock or Thompson are invited to register. You can also visit our Web site for additional details at cdrams.com or email questions to CDY-FCRAMS@GMAIL.COM.

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Sheriff's Office launches new therapy dog program

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION — The dog days have arrived early this year, thanks to a new therapy dog program launched by the Worcester County Sheriff's Office (WCSO).

Made possible by an English Labrador Retriever named Milo, the WCSO's Therapy Dog Unit was created to enhance staff wellbeing, reduce workplace stress, and foster an even more supportive environment for employees.

Officer Lindsay McNamara, a 10-year veteran of the Sheriff's Office, serves as Milo's handler. McNamara previously served in various WCSO units, including receiving, classifications, and line operations.

In her new role, McNamara oversees Milo's daily training and responsibilities around the facilities. This will ensure the Therapy Dog Unit provides emotional and mental health support to employees around the clock, officials said.

"We've been looking into this type of program for years," said Sheriff Lew Evangelidis. "After speaking with partners in corrections across the state who have existing therapy dog programs, we determined this program would bring tremendous value to our daily operations."

Currently employing roughly 600 staff mem-



Courtesy

WCSO Officer Lindsay McNamara is teaming up with English Labrador Retriever Milo to lead a new program.

bers, the WCSO is dedicated to maintaining a supportive and positive work environment. Officer McNamara looks forward to taking part in several programs with Milo that assist the staff. These include working alongside teams providing critical incident stress management, military peer support, and other offerings focused on employee wellbeing.

"I'm honored to step into this role alongside Milo, supporting the team I've worked with for over a decade," McNamara said. "Stressful situations are a daily

occurrence in any jail or house of corrections, but we have systems in place to help employees manage stress. By combining my experience in corrections with the skills that Milo will develop through hundreds of hours of training, we'll be able to respond to various situations to connect with staff and help reduce anxiety and stress."

Studies show that therapy dogs help decrease stress for individuals exposed to high-stress environments or traumatic situations. Nationwide, employees with regular access to

these support programs have reported improvements in workplace comfort and overall mental health.

"Just like police, fire, and other first responders, corrections officers have demanding and challenging jobs," Evangelidis said. "Access to mental health resources is crucial for ensuring our employees remain safe, happy, and healthy. Milo has made an immediate impact on the WCSO staff, who work diligently to keep the residents

of Worcester County safe."

In addition to various internal K9 programs, the WCSO partners with Animal Assisted Therapy Services of Massachusetts. Through a contract with the orga-

nization, therapy dog handlers visit certain populations within the facility to help lower stress levels and reduce tensions among inmates in the housing blocks.

Evangelidis emphasized that prioritizing the mental health and wellbeing of staff leads to better outcomes for inmates.

"When employees are supported and maintain mental resilience, they can engage with inmates constructively and professionally," read a statement released by the WCSO. "This approach fosters a more rehabilitative environment within the facility. With the establishment of the Therapy K9 Unit, the Sheriff's Office reaffirms its commitment to the wellness of both its staff and the overall mission of rehabilitation."

To learn more about programs run by the WCSO, visit www.WorcesterCountySheriff.com.

Bay Path faculty, staff, LPN, & student volunteers take part in SkillsUSA state competition



Courtesy

From left: J. Peloquin, Dr. A. Healy, H. Bedard D. Bytyqi. S. Celestin, J.Goyer, and K. Hernandez.

UPTON — The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy volunteer faculty, staff, alumni, and nursing students participated as members of the panel of judges for the secondary competition, Basic Healthcare Conference, during the recent Skill-

USA state competition held at the Blackstone Valley Tech.

Dr. Adelina Healy, adjunct faculty at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy served as the Team Lead along with staff, Heidi Bedard, LPN, Financial Aid Administrator for the Volunteer judges. They supervised several stations and prepared presentations. Both were grateful for the continued opportunity and glad at how well everything went at the SkillsUSA State competition. This is the fifth year that Dr. Healy and Bedard worked with Erin Roy, RN Health Careers Instructor at J. P. Keefe Technical High School in Framingham who coordinated the participation of the volunteer judges.

This year's volunteers included Julie Peloquin, Donita Bytyqi, Sandra Celestin, Jessica Goyer, and Kalie Hernandez, LPN.

The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy volunteer judges were thankful for the opportunity to serve. The skills competition included measuring height and weight, labeling human anatomy, and the proper application and removal of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). SkillsUSA's mission is geared to empower members to become world-class workers, leaders, and responsible American citizens and serves as the blueprint for workplace readiness.



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OBITUARIES

Carole J. Tanionos, 91

Charlton/Southbridge: Carole J. (Daniel) Tanionos, 91, of the Overlook in Charlton, formerly of Southbridge, passed away on Sunday, May 4th, in the UMass Memorial Medical Center, University Campus, Worcester, after an illness.

Her husband, Sterrgios J. “Steve” Tanionos, passed away in 1985. She leaves her two nephews, John L. Daniel and his wife Linda of Southbridge and Mark A. Daniel and his wife Sandra of Southbridge; her grand-nephews, Nicholas Daniel of Dudley and Nathan Daniel of Shrewsbury. She also leaves behind many cousins, great grandnieces and nephews. She also leaves her good friend, Renate Kendal of Southbridge. Carole was predeceased by her brother, George L. Daniel in 1992. Carole was born in Salem, MA the daughter of Daniel and Marie Clare (Fontaine) Daniel. She received her certificate in business from the Worcester School of Business.

Carole was an Assistant Vice President and Mortgage Underwriter for the Bank of Boston and later for the Cape Cod 5 Bank for 30 years. After retiring she moved back to Southbridge from Cape Cod and worked for several years at the former Rom’s Restaurant in Sturbridge and she also worked at the Old Sturbridge Village Museum Bookstore. She was a longtime



member of the St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Southbridge. Carole served on the Southbridge Council on Aging. She was also an active member of the Southbridge Casaubon Senior Center and enjoyed following local politics.

The family would like to thank the staff at the Overlook Masonic Healthcare Center, Charlton, especially Prima, Abby and Christina for all of the outstanding care Carole received. The would also like to thank the UMass Emergency Department and the staff of the 7th floor ICU for the care given to Carole during her illness.

A funeral service for Carole will be held on Friday, May 9th, at 11:00am in St. George Greek Orthodox Church, 55 North St., Southbridge. Burial in the Ancient Cemetery, Yarmouth, MA, will be held at the convenience of the family. A calling hour in will be held on Friday, May 9th from 10:00 to 11:00am in the church, prior to the service. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the St. George Greek Orthodox Church, P.O. Box 25, Southbridge, MA 01550.

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

Putnam- John Albani Jr, 74

Putnam- John Albani Jr, 74, passed away suddenly from natural causes on Friday, April 18th, in his home, Little River Acres, Putnam CT. John leaves his brother David and his wife Aimee Albani of Holden, MA, his nephew Justin Albani of Branford, CT, and his niece, Emily Bostock and her husband Nicholas of Rutland, MA and their two children. John also leaves many close cousins and long-time friends. John was born in Southbridge MA, son of John Sr. and Bernadette Albani.

John worked as an independent contractor and cabinet maker for many years. The best years of his career was when he worked in the Building and Carpentry Facilities at the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp in Ashford Ct, founded by Paul Newman in 1988 for chil-



dren with serious illnesses. John enjoyed fishing, crossword puzzles, listening to country and folk music and was an avid antique collector throughout his life. He enjoyed spending time with his family, close friends and neighbors. John valued his friends and the good times they had together. He was great at telling stories and he loved listening to one just as much. John had a passion for the past and made sure the next generation was aware of it and ready to carry it forward.

It was his wish that services and funeral be limited to the immediate family. In order to honor his life, please make any donations to the Hole in the Wall Gang Fund, 555 Long Wharf Drive, New Haven, CT, 06511. Share a memory at Smithandwalkerfh.com

Theresa Marguerite Leire

It is with deep sorrow to announce, Theresa Marguerite Leire (Bouthillier) of Dayville, CT passed away peacefully on Saturday, August 21, 2021 in Texas with her son Bradley and daughter in law Lindsey by her side. She was born in Putnam, CT on July 18th 1941 to the late Adrian and Marie Ann (Lafleur) Bouthillier. She graduated from Killingly High School. She held many jobs, but her most beloved was being a mother.

She is survived by her companion, Burt Avery of Bozrah, CT; sister Olive Warinsky (John) sister in law Barbara



Bouthillier, and sons Bradley, Michael, and Wilfred; nieces, nephews, grandchildren and great grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband Robert Leire, daughter Robyn Leire; siblings Lorraine Lafleur, Rachel LaBelle, and Adrian Bouthillier; and daughter in law Melanie Harwood.

A graveside service will be held Thursday, May 22, 2025 in Holy Cross Cemetery Danielson, CT. Memorial donations can be made to the charity of donor’s choice. Share a memory at Gagnonandcostellofh.com

Celebrate Spring with Old Fashioned Lemonade Recipes



TAKE THE HINT
KAREN TRAINOR

ing pitcher: Pour hot tea, lemon and orange juice over tea. Stir briskly several seconds until mixture is cold. Stir in chilled lemon-lime carbonated beverage. Pour into glasses and serve at once. Makes two quarts

Lemon Sparkler: Here’s a quick and easy version of a classic lemon sparkler:

Ingredients: Two cups tea, brewed; one half cup lemon juice; one half cup sugar (or conversion measurement of Stevia or other non-sugar sweetener); juice cubes (ice cubes made with lemon juice and a little water); two quarts of ginger ale, chilled.

Directions: In a pitcher, combine the tea, lemon juice, and sugar stirring until sugar is dissolved. Just before serving, add the ginger ale and pour over juice cubes.

Lemonade and sunny days have gone together forever. Many a summer-time memory is sparked by sipping a chilled tumbler of sweet lemonade.

Citrus Tea Cooler: The carbonation and orange juice add sparkle and zest to this alternative to traditional iced tea. Perfect for a punchbowl at an outside get-together.

Ingredients: Three bags or one tbsps loose black tea; one and a half cup boiling water; one half cup fresh lemon juice; one bottle (28 oz) lemon-lime -carbonated beverage or ginger ale, chilled; three quarters to one cup sugar (or conversion measurement of Stevia or other non-sugar sweetener); one tray ice cubes ;one half cup fresh orange juice.

Directions: Place tea bags or loose tea in bowl. Pour boiling water over tea. Let stand five minutes. Remove bags or strain to remove leaves. Add sugar and stir until all is dissolved. Place ice cubes in two-quart serving pitcher.

Ingredients: Two cups granulated sugar; two and one half cups water; juice of six lemons; juice of two oranges; grated peel of one orange; one cup fresh mint leaves

Directions: In a medium saucepan, combine sugar and water. Bring to a boil; cook over medium high heat five minutes. Let cool.

Add lemon juice, orange juice and orange peel to syrup. Add in mint leaves. Cover and let stand one hour. Strain lemon syrup into a jar or

pitcher. Store in refrigerator until ready to use. For each serving: Put one third cup lemon syrup into an eight ounce glass filled with crushed ice and cold water. Mix or shake well.

Quick Old Fashioned Lemonade

No time for the recipe above? Try this easy version:

Ingredients: Two or three ice cubes; two tablespoons lemon juice; one and one half tablespoons lime juice; two tablespoons superfine sugar (or conversion measurement of Stevia or other non-sugar sweetener); six to eight ice cubes; two cups cold water.

Directions: Pour lemon and lime juice into a pitcher; add sugar and stir until dissolved. Add ice cubes and water and stir. Serve in tumblers.

Serves two.

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.

Sturbridge voters reject trail bridge project

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

STURBRIDGE — Although it got a notable majority (164-107), a long-promoted project to use Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to build a trail-access bridge at 501 Main St. failed to hit the 2/3 vote it need to past at Town Meeting April 28.

The deciding factor may have been Jeff Burdick’s appeal to put the funds toward other recreational needs (playing fields) and “pay off our existing debt first ... before we entertain new projects.” Specifically, he urged the town to ask itself “Do we have the appropriate recreational facilities for our kids and grand-kids? The answer to that is absolutely no.”

Burdick came with data, saying CPA costs average homeowners \$192 a year. Over the years, Sturbridge has dedicated \$14.1 million to open space, \$4.1 million to historic preservation (including \$1.78 million for the senior center), but just \$589,000 for affordable housing and \$556,000 for other forms of recreation, he said.

Another participant noted Sturbridge adopted CPA in 2001 as a 3 percent surcharge on the tax bill (not on the assessed value of the homes, which is already reduced by \$100,000 before that calculation). At that time, the town was getting a 1-to-1 match from the state, but that has since fallen as more towns join the program. By law, 10 percent of funding has to be allocated to each of the first three areas Burdick cited above, but the remaining 70 percent can be spent on any of them.

The project had several people speaking in its favor, with Trail Committee Chair Brandon Goodwin being the main one. He summarized it as aiming to provide

access for “a whole section of town that doesn’t have access to the trail system easily.” Specifically, the bridge, which would look much like the Calcutt bridge near Westville, would link parking lots on Route 20 to the Riverlands property, and he said he thought it, and other trail expansion, would draw people to town. About half of those attending a trail biking event last year came from more than an hour away, and those who stayed in town spent an average of \$426 in hotel and food costs, he said.

Goodwin said his committee was hoping to get two \$500,000 trail grants to fund parts of the \$2.1 million project. To a couple voters, that was an issue – after Goodwin said the town would be “on the hook” for that money, they wanted to see the grants in hand before approving the project.

It also prompted one woman to ask if they could vote approval contingent on getting such grants. The town attorney said they could not, but they could make spending it contingent on that.

Another person sided with Burdick, saying the town needs significant money for playing fields and would like to see Sturbridge hold off on spending for a few years to accumulate some for that use. A couple hours after it failed, a woman moved to reconsider that article. Moderator Leigh Darren decided not to accept it after some of its proponents argued against reconsideration on the grounds that around 160 people had left by that time.

As it was, Town Meeting approved several much smaller CPA-funded projects by huge majorities without any discussion at all after rejecting that one.

Among them were a \$38,000 Grand Trunk Trail extension and \$14,700 to survey another new part of that trail; \$361,150 for affordable housing; \$60,000 to continue the historical survey project; and projects to restore historical gravestones and the Hyde family Bible.

After reconsideration was rejected, the voters made short work of several Special Town Meeting items. The only ones that saw any notable debate were Articles 46 and 47, to buy a 10-wheel dump truck (\$480,000) and a 6-wheel dump truck (\$383,000), which were basically discussed together. Some voters objected to the costs, with one saying he’d seen the state’s bid list for both citing much lower costs.

DPW Director Heather Blakeley said those were without various items the town needs, and doing it now is necessary because it takes two years to actually get them. DPW has a few trucks it’s already ordered that have not yet arrived.

At issue is that the state was requiring DPWs to buy electric trucks, however that law has been delayed by two more years, she said. She plans to keep the current fleet as long as possible and will seek other prices because earlier there was only one vendor quoting them.

Both trucks are being funded by Free Cash, and thus only needed a simple majority to pass. Both votes were much closer than any others that night – 65-47 and 61-51, respectively.

See other story for the rest of Town Meeting.

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

Grassroots Central Mass. hosting immigration program

STURBRIDGE — Grassroots Central Mass. presents a free program, “Immigration: Facts and Fiction,” Saturday, May 10 from 3 to 5 p.m. on the lower level of the Joshua Hyde Library, Sturbridge lower level of the library

There is no doubt that immigration is complex and an issue of concern for many of us. This presentation will focus on some of the reasons why people immigrate to the US and many of the myths and misconceptions that surround this process. We

hope to foster a fuller understanding of some of the struggles that prompt people to move from their home countries and also to make connections to the journey to the U.S. that many of our own family members made either recently or in the past. We plan to tell this story through music, poetry, and the voices of people who have made the long journey here along with the presentation of some historical facts. We hope to change the narrative that too often portrays newcomers to our nation as somehow

a drain upon our resources or a threat to our safety by sharing research on how incorrect these myths are. We welcome you to join us for this interactive presentation.

This event is being sponsored by Grassroots Central Mass. For more information on Grassroots Central Mass, please visit our Web site, <https://grassrootscentralmass.org> or email us at info@grassrootscentralmass.org.

GARDENING

continued from page A5

when fully colored or leave them on the plant a few more days for an even sweeter flavor. You'll enjoy the convenience of harvesting fresh tomatoes right outside your door for use in salads, sauces, and other favorite recipes.

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

Arianna Lester recognized for academic excellence at Stonehill's 2025 Scholars Celebration

EASTON — Arianna Lester, a member of Stonehill College's Class of 2025 from Sturbridge was recently honored with a certificate of achievement at the 2025 Scholars Celebration, held Tuesday, April 29. Visit Stonehill College's Web site for more about this year's program.

About Stonehill College

Stonehill College, a Catholic institution of higher learning, was founded by the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1948. Located on the beautiful 384-acre campus and former estate of Frederick Lothrop Ames in North Easton, it is a community of scholarship and faith, anchored by a belief in the inherent dignity of each person.

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- Webster Times
- Auburn News
- Blackstone Valley Tribune

LEGALS

**NOTICE OF SALE
Lein Sale**
Request a Notice of Lein Sale be Published on the following listed Units
Household & Misc, Items
Unit No 060 & 689
Ryan Brosnihan
159 Depot Road
Charlton, MA 01507
Household & Misc, Items
Unit No 090 Mathew Soper
126 Hartwell Street
Southbridge, MA 01550
Household & Misc, Items
Unit No 367 Daniel J. Halley
117 Stafford Street, Unit 61
Charlton, MA 01507
Household & Misc, Items
Unit No 289 Mark Corey
150 Main Street
Southbridge, MA 01550
LEIN SALE WILL BE HELD:
Date: 5/28/25
Time: 12 Noon
Location: 94 Brookfield Rd., Charlton
MA 01507
May 9, 2025
May 16, 2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Division
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. W017P3955PM
Estate of:
Alice Lahair
CITATION ON PETITION
FOR ORDER OF
COMPLETE SETTLEMENT
Estate Of:
Alice Lahair**

A Petition for **Order of Complete Settlement** has been filed by **Jonathan J Davey of Quincy MA** requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account , 1st and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court before: **10:00 a.m.** on the return day of **06/03/2025**. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
Witness, Hon. Leilah A Keamy,
First Justice of this Court
April 28, 2025
Stephanie K. Fattman, Register of Probate
May 8, 2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate
and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. W025P1574EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR
FORMAL ADJUDICATION
Estate Of:
Mark A Boniface
Also known as: Mark Boniface
Date of Death: 03/14/2022**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Late and Limited Formal Testacy and/or Appointment** has been filed by **Kerstin Comtois of Stafford Springs CT** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that:
Kerstin Comtois of Stafford Springs CT be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 05/27/2025**. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written ap-

pearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.
Date: April 30, 2025
Stephanie K. Fattman,
Register of Probate
May 8, 2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate
and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. 25P1481
INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION NOTICE
Estate Of:
Leah Stefanie Forrester
Also Known As:
Leah Stefanie Watkins Date of
Death: September 21, 2024**

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of :
Petitioner
John Forrester of Southbridge MA
John Forrester of Southbridge MA has been informally appointed as Personal Representative of said estate to serve **without** Surety on the bond. The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
May 9, 2025

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

Premises: 82 Prince Road, Southbridge, MA 01550
By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Seth Parenteau and Jennifer C Parenteau to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Guild Mortgage Company LLC, and now held by **Guild Mortgage Company LLC**, said mortgage dated August 15, 2022 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 68070, Page 1, said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Guild Mortgage Company LLC to Guild Mortgage Company, LLC by assignment dated March 21, 2024 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 70324, Page 340; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at **Public Auction on** May 22, 2025 at 3:00 PM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:
A certain parcel of land with buildings thereon situated in the Town of Southbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts, shown as Lot 5 on a plan entitled "Plan of Lots in Southbridge, Mass Owned by Clarence Soper & Joseph Jolin", dated April 1, 1980 as drawn by Robert F. Para, Registered Land Surveyor, Southbridge Massachusetts recorded with the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 486, Plan 21.

Containing 1.19 acres of land more or less according to said Plan. The Deed is recorded herewith.
The description of the property contained in the mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.
For Mortgagor's Title see deed dated August 15, 2022 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 68069, Page 386.
TERMS OF SALE: Said premises will be sold and conveyed subject to all liens, encumbrances, unpaid taxes, tax titles, municipal liens and assessments, if any, which take precedence over the said mortgage above described.
FIVE THOUSAND (\$5,000.00) Dollars of the purchase price must be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check at the time and place of the sale by the purchaser. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check within thirty (30) days after the date of sale.
Other terms to be announced at the sale.
Brock & Scott, PLLC
23 Messenger Street
2nd Floor
Plainville, MA 02762
Attorney for Guild Mortgage Company LLC
Present Holder of the Mortgage
(401) 217-8701
April 24,2025
May 1, 2025
May 8, 2025

**TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE
COUNCIL CHAMBERS -
TOWN COUNCIL
THURSDAY MAY 29, 2025 – 6:00 PM
PUBLIC HEARING**

Pursuant to the Town of Southbridge Home Rule Charter Chapter 10 Financial Provisions and Procedures Section 5 Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Budget and Section 8 Notice of Public Hearing on Capital Programs. The Town Manager will be holding a Public Hearing on the following:
1. **FISCAL YEAR 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET**
General Government \$19,825,990
Public Safety \$9,018,485
Public Works \$2,647,767
Human Services \$1,149,842
Bay Path \$1,318,115
School Department \$38,697,027
Sewer Enterprise Fund \$5,467,343
Water Enterprise Fund \$4,509,791
Solid Waste and Recycling Enterprise Fund \$2,993,082
TOTAL \$85,627,442
2. **FISCAL YEAR 2026 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**
Town Manager's recommended Five Year Capital Improvement Program and proposed funding of programs for FY26.
Copies of FY 2026 Budget and Capital Improvement Program will be available for inspection at the Southbridge Town Hall Town Manager's office or on the Town of Southbridge website, www.ci.southbridge.ma.us , beginning on May 15, 2025.
May 8, 2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Division
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. W018P2668PM
Estate of:
Ronald Owens
CITATION ON PETITION
FOR ORDER OF
COMPLETE SETTLEMENT
Estate Of:
Lorraine Erickson**

A Petition for **Order of Complete Settlement** has been filed by **Jonathan J Davey of Quincy MA** requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account , 1st and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court before: **10:00 a.m.** on the return day of **06/03/2025**. This is NOT a hearing date, but a dead-

line by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
Witness, Hon. Leilah A Keamy,
First Justice of this Court
April 29, 2025
Stephanie K. Fattman, Register of Probate
May 8, 2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family
Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
Docket No. W024P3752GD
CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF
PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF
GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED
PERSON PURSUANT TO
G.L. c. 190B, §5-304
In the matter of:
Peter Dean
Of: Southbridge, MA
RESPONDENT
Alleged Incapacitated Person**

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by
Department of Developmental Serv of Worcester, MA
in the above captioned matter alleging that Peter Dean is in need of a Guardian and requesting that
Gayle Greene/TLC Trust Inc of Fitchburg, MA
(or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.
The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.
You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **05/27/2025**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.
WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.
Date: April 29, 2025
Stephanie K. Fattman
Register of Probate
May 8, 2025

**CHARLTON CONSERVATION
COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**
In accordance with the Town of Charlton Stormwater Management Rules & Regulations, the Charlton Conservation Commission will be accepting comments on the following application:
The applicant, Kendall Homes Inc., has submitted a Land Disturbance/Stormwater Management Permit on April 16, 2025, for stormwater infrastructure associated with the construction of a single-family home, well, and septic.
The project site is located at Lot 3 Sandersdale Road, Charlton, MA 01507, and is also known as: Parcel ID 76-A-7.4.
Copies of the Land Disturbance Application are available at the Charlton Conservation Commission office during business hours.
Thomas O'Malley
Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission
May 8, 2025

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



Courtesy
From left: Ashley Rincon, Natasha Rován, and Loise Ngigi.

Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy student medalists at SkillsUSA States Conference

MARLBOROUGH — Three Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy students were awarded gold and silver medals at the recent SkillsUSA States Conference. Gold medal winners will be advancing to the SkillsUSA National Conference to be held June 23-28 in Atlanta, Ga.

The Practical Nursing student medalists are as follows: Loise Ngigi of South Grafton, Gold Medal First Aid/CPR; Ashley Rincon of Southbridge, Gold Medal, and Natasha Rován of Worcester, Silver Medal Medical Terminology.

“We are grateful to both SkillsUSA Advisors for Bay Path, Mrs. Pam Staney and Mr. Christopher Staney, and the Superintendent, Mr. Kyle Brenner for his support,” said Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN Academy Director. “We are proud of our Practical Nursing students and are grateful to our PN faculty and staff who have also shown tremendous support.”

This year’s success continues to increase the number of Bay Path Practical Nursing students who have advanced to national competition over the years; many of whom placed medals nationally.

According to the SkillsUSA Web site, “SkillsUSA’s National Leadership & Skills Conference (NLSC) is the largest gathering of America’s future skilled workforce and the ultimate recognition of excellence in career and technical education. Held in Atlanta each June, the NLSC is a week-long celebration of the skilled trades and the accomplishments of career-ready leaders from across the United States. The event brings together more than 16,000 attendees, including students, instructors, industry partners, government officials, administrators and more. The highlight of the NLSC is the SkillsUSA Championships, where more than 6,000 state champions compete for national gold, silver and bronze medals in 115 skilled and leadership competitions.”

SOUTHBRIDGE POLICE LOG

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Southbridge Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of April 21-28.

Travis S. Perry, age 34, of Dudley was arrested on April 21 for Speeding, operating a motor vehicle with No Inspection Sticker, Operating a Motor Vehicle after suspension of license, Failure to Stop for Police, Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle, a Marked Lanes Violation, and Possession of a Class A Drug.

Michael Aviles, age 38, of Southbridge was arrested on April 21 for Violation of an Abuse Prevention Order.

Henry L. Alicea, age 24, of Southbridge was arrested on April 22 in connection with a warrant for Operating Under the Influence (Liquor).

A juvenile, age 14, received a summons in lieu of arrest on April 23 for Shoplifting By Asportation.

A 29-year-old male from Worcester received a summons in lieu of arrest on April 24 for Operating a Motor Vehicle after suspension of license (subsequent offense).

Christine Brenda Lamontagne, age 64, of Southbridge was arrested on April 25 for Assault With a Dangerous Weapon

on against a victim over the age of 60, Disorderly Conduct, Disturbing the Peace, Misdemeanor Breaking & Entering, and Assault with a Dangerous Weapon.

A 53-year-old male from Southbridge received a summons in lieu of arrest on April 25 for Shoplifting By Concealing Merchandise.

Rodrick O’Dell Campbell, age 23, of Southbridge was arrested on April 25 for Possession of a Class A Drug, Possession of a Class B Drug, Possession of a Large Capacity Firearm, Carrying a Loaded Firearm Without a License, Carrying a Firearm Without a License, Possession of Ammunition Without an FID Card, multiple counts of Possession of a Large Capacity Feeding Device, and in connection with a warrant for Carrying a Firearm Without a License. Jalexus Javiel Morales, age 25, of Southbridge was arrested during the same incident for Possession of a Class B Drug with Intent to Distribute, Carrying a Loaded Firearm Without a License, Possession of Ammunition Without FID Card, Possession of a Firearm Used in a Felony, and Carrying a Firearm Without a License. Also arrested during this incident

was Nayrelis Jinnette Fernandez, age 19, of Southbridge for Carrying a Firearm (stun gun) Without a License.

A 40-year-old male from Southbridge was taken into protective custody on April 25.

A 33-year-old male from Southbridge received a summons in lieu of arrest on April 27 for Operating a Motor Vehicle after suspension of license and a Marked Lanes Violation.

Mateo Manuel Paredes Vincent, age 21, of Southbridge was arrested on April 27 in connection with multiple warrants, for Assault & Battery on a Person over the age of 60 and/or Disabled and Carjacking.

David Delgado, age 33, of Southbridge was arrested on April 27 for Misdemeanor Breaking & Entering and multiple counts of Violation of an Abuse Prevention Order.

Juan Rivera-Santos, age 37, of Worcester was arrested on April 27 for a Marked Lanes Violation, Leaving the Scene of Property Damage, and Operating Under the Influence (liquor).

A 40-year-old female received a summons in lieu of arrest on April 27 for Assault & Battery on Healthcare Personnel.

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank, a community bank with locations throughout Central Massachusetts, has opened its 12th branch at 1125 Pleasant St. in Worcester.

“This is one of Worcester’s most vibrant neighborhoods with a bustling shopping district near Worcester State University and the Worcester Airport,” said Todd Tallman, CEO of Cornerstone Bank. “We’re so excited to join and serve this community.”

Cornerstone is inviting the public to a ribbon-cutting and family-friendly grand opening celebration from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. There will be a bouncy house, ice cream truck, giveaways and games. The ribbon-cutting with Tim Murray, the President

Rahni Bussiere inducted into Stonehill College Honor Society

EASTON — Rahni Bussiere, a member of Stonehill College’s Class of 2025 from Charlton, was recently inducted into Lambda Epsilon Sigma, Stonehill College’s honor society. The organization recognizes outstanding juniors and seniors who have demonstrated an excitement for both learning and sharing their knowledge. Visit Stonehill College’s website for more about this year’s Scholars Celebration.

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

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

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

Cornerstone Bank expands with new branch in Worcester’s Tatnuck Square



and CEO of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, will be there.

Complimenting the essence of Tatnuck Square, the exterior of the new branch features an exciting sculpture by popular local artist Jose Criollo. His work has been featured throughout Worcester and is created from locally recycled metals and wood.

Cornerstone Bank has been renovating the property since purchasing it last year. The full-service branch includes two drive-up lanes with ATM capabilities and state-of-the-art drive-up live video tellers available during banking hours. Inside, there will be specialists dedicated to lending and investment consultation,

available by appointment only, and even a coffee bar.

The new Tatnuck Square Branch is open Monday- Wednesday from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Thursday from 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m., Friday from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., and Saturday from 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. The branch is closed on Sundays.

Grassroots Central Mass. celebrates nature with “Trees Are Treasures” event

STURBRIDGE — Grassroots Central Mass (GCM) will continue its tradition of celebrating nature with its sixth “Trees Are Treasures” tree giveaway and nature events on Sunday, May 18 at Wells State Park in Sturbridge from 10 a.m.- 3 p.m.

GCM, a local affiliate of Indivisible Mass Coalition (IMC), is again co-sponsoring this year’s events with Brookfields Fight Fear (BFF). Both GCM and BFF are local groups dedicated to serving the communities we live in through finding and supporting solutions to issues in our communities, our state, and our nation.

Our event includes a short, level walk along the Mill Pond Trail at Wells State Park, where costumed interpreters are stationed to discuss the importance of wetlands, stone wall history and forest ecosystems, at both child and adult levels. This is a family friendly stroll.

This free event will also include children’s crafts under the pavilion, storytelling, and a free tree seedling giveaway. Join us to celebrate and appreciate the beauty of our native forest. For more information about this event, please contact Nancy Tame, above. For more information about GCM, please visit our Web site, <https://grassrootscentralmass.org/>.

Friday’s Child



Jaillianne
Age 14
Registration #7402

Jaillianne—known as “Jai”—is a bubbly, joyful girl whose bright spirit lights up every room. She has a deep love for animals and the outdoors, especially cats, dogs, and any little critters she finds. Jai’s caring nature shines through in the creative “homes” she builds for frogs and other small creatures, using sticks, leaves, and stones to make them feel safe and at home. Beyond her nurturing side, Jai is a natural performer. She loves singing, dancing, and putting on shows for family and friends. Her creativity and confidence on stage suggest she’d flourish in a chorus or acting

class, where she can share her talents and connect with other young artists. With her combination of compassion, imagination, and charisma, Jai is sure to thrive wherever she goes.

<https://www.mareinc.org/child/22533922820>

Can I Adopt?

If you’re at least 18 years old, have a stable source of income, and room in your heart, you may be a perfect match to adopt a waiting child. Adoptive parents can be single, married, or partnered; experienced or not; renters or homeowners; LGBTQ+ singles and couples. As an adoptive parent, you won’t have to pay any fees, adoption from foster care is completely free in Massachusetts.

The process to adopt a child from foster care includes training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you. These steps will help match you with a child or sibling group that your family will fit well with. To learn more about adoption from foster care visit www.mareinc.org . Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) can give you guidance and information on the adoption process. Reach out today to find out all the ways you can help children and teens in foster care.



COUNCIL
continued from page A1

whistles like everybody thinks it is. It's a working building for working people.”

Mike Marketti raised the most detailed questions of the meeting, all

SPEIWAK
continued from page A1

as cemetery commissioner, Robert and Thomas Coleman each earned positions on the Water & Sewer Commission as well as Erik Grotton who was elected to fill a vacancy, Robert Beringer was elected to fill a vacancy on the Planning Board, Cheryl Meskus and Lance Russell Morin each retained their seats on the Library Board of Trustees, Michael Baniukiewicz and Bradford Charles Howard were both reelected as constables, and Michael Sullivan and Bonnie Seifert were elected to the Housing Authority.

The ballot also included a single question to determine if the Town Clerk should remain an elected position or be converted to an appointed one. The proposal was placed on the election ballot following a citizen petition earlier this year. Proponents argued that the move would bring the clerk position in line with other formerly elected posts in the town hall that have since been changed to appointed and allow Charlton to have a more qualified and competitive hiring pool. Opponents were cautious about removing electing power from the voters for a town hall position.

In the end voters overwhelming chose to support the question in a 586-386 decision, the largest margin of victory on the ballot by far, which will allow the town to proceed with implementing the change before the expiration of LaCroix's current term.

regarding budget. He compared previous versions of the cost plan to the current one, saying he thought the “numbers start to get a little fuzzy for me” because “soft costs have all gone up” and various things that had been taken out when the original bid came in too high have been restored to the project. Specifically, he noted architecture fees have risen \$175,000 and owner's project management (OPM) costs about \$180,000.

Hulyk agreed, saying that was partly “because things have gone so far beyond the (original) timeline.” The archi-

tect (Kaestle Boos) has completed most of its work, but will monitor the construction in process, while the OPM's work has mostly not yet begun. But the internal equipment costs “have not been adjusted in any manner.”

Marketti was particularly concerned about the potential for change orders jacking up the total cost, and asked if there was a way to prohibit them in the contract. Hulyk said they can't do that, but agreed “we need to make sure that doesn't become an issue.” The committee is willing to meet frequently to keep an eye on costs,

as advised by Ware and Monson, where PDS did recent projects, Hulyk noted.

Hulyk and a couple councilors expressed some concern about the impact of federal tariffs on the cost of building materials. Steve Kelly described that as his “only hesitation,” since it “could be a significant cost increase as this project moves forward.”

That said, the council praised Hulyk and the building committee for its work over such a long period of time. The first talk of a new station began around 20 years ago, but it was sidelined for other major projects a

few times. This version of the committee has been active since 2015. Jovan noted only Hulyk and John Szudga have continued as committee members that whole time, a period in which Southbridge saw several town managers.

John Daniel praised Hulyk and the committee for their “remarkable work.”

“You've got to be eating and sleeping this project ... and you've got another 18 or 19 months of no sleep,” Daniel said. “It's remarkable the work that's been done here.”

Mike Montigny agreed, praising Hulyk

for his “fluency” on the various issues surrounding it.

Jovan dubbed this “a very proud moment, a happy moment” for the town that's “desperately needed by the community and the firefighters.”

Hulyk said this bidding process received five bids; the last one, only two. He expects a groundbreaking ceremony to happen in early June, followed by about 15 months of actual construction work.

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

DEBATE
continued from page A1

averaging \$7700 (a figure that's 37 percent above neighboring Southbridge), he said. Those hikes are hardest on the quarter of the population that's over 65 and the 42 percent that make less than \$100,000 a year, he added.

“If we continue at the rate we are right now, many ... can no longer afford to live in Sturbridge,” he said.

Afterward, another man proposed a substitute motion that would have cut a cruiser (\$110,000), the library outdoor program space (\$110,000) and a \$61,500 utility vehicle and apply the \$281,500 in savings to reduce the tax rate.

The resulting discussion included the town attorney saying that money can't go to tax reduction. Finance Chair Kevin Smith added the town normally buys two cruisers in the budget,

but was only seeking one this year and funding it through Capital. (To the proponent, today's cruisers are “too big” and “too nice for Sturbridge.”) Another person noted the library project is actually required work to bring its HVAC system up to code.

When the substitute motion came to a vote, it was soundly defeated, 39-151. Immediately after that, the original capital proposal was approved with no further debate,

148-36.

Voters approved a significant amount of other budgeting that night, including \$100,000 for roads (atop what it's receiving in Chapter 90 funding); \$167,160 for cable access; \$210,691 for Sturbridge Tourist Association; \$210,646 for the Betterment Committee; \$500,000 for a new library elevator; \$222,000 for the Capital Stabilization Fund; \$100,000 for OPEB; \$1.82 million for the water department;

and \$3.69 million for the sewer department.

In non-fiscal items, they approved several bylaw changes regarding accessory dwelling units, acceptance of a new veterans' tax exemption, and a variety of mostly housekeeping items.

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

LIONS
continued from page A1

and community leaders. The Club meets twice a month at The Overlook. For more information about Lions service programs or about becoming a Lion, visit www.thecharltonlions.com or email thecharltonlions@gmail.com.

BEYOND
continued from page A4

Church and forms of worship.

In the book The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence, who said “The time of work does not with me differ from the time of worship; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, even while several people are at the same time calling out for different things, I commune with God in as great a tranquility as if I were upon my knees in prayer in the holiest cathedral.”

If our spiritual lives are to thrive, and with it our physical, mental and emotional health,

our relationship with God, through worship, prayer, service, joyful living – must be regularly renewed.

Being mindful of God and our fellow travelers on the faith journey requires commitment and consistency regardless of the setting – private prayer time at home, formal Sabbath services, and Creative Churching.

It's not a zero sum game, either! Each offers fundamental blessings and benefits.

Weekly worship services are a good place to start, especially for nurturing, guidance and support on the journey.

But just like people of faith aren't one size fits all, if we want to offer a

broad range of worship, fellowship and service opportunities, other sacred but different experiences such as café Bible services, sports and faith activities, community service events, faith walks – alone or with members of your congregation, or ecumenical activities are worth considering.

Consider the Prayer Trail at Charlton City United Methodist Church, or the activities available at St. Josephs Parish, or Federated Congregational all in Charlton, or the churches from Putnam, Ct to Sturbridge, Ma. Regardless of religious tradition, there's creative churching to be found.

And, there are so many opportunities to have fun, do some good, and share moments of faith yet to be created, shared, in addition to Sabbath worship.

What are your thoughts? Feel free to share them with me and maybe we can share them in a follow up article (robinccumcmmedia@gmail.com). I've also got some ideas brewing that will be shared in a future article.

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Schmidt's art inspired by sun and forest

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT



Christina Cirillo Schmidt.

SOUTHBRIDGE — To Christina Cirillo Schmidt, pretty much anything can be inspiration for art. But if one thing stands out in her current Jacob Edwards Library show, it's the sun. As a woman. Like many people, she got into mythology reading Edith Hamilton's classic book on the sub-

ject. There, and in many cultures, the sun is portrayed as and/or associated with male energy. But Schmidt noted some places see it as female, and that resonated more for her. As she noted in describing a couple smaller pieces about mushrooms, what matters to her is "the relationship



Christina Cirillo Schmidt talks about one of her pressed-leaf pieces as Margaret Morrissey records for Facebook Live.



Christina Cirillo Schmidt, second from left, and her husband Rob, far right, gather with their family and a few friends.

(of) the sun giving the nurturing life for the forest floor." That's a feminine force, and in some fairy tales, the heroine goes into the forest and transforms, she added. Various forms of mythology pop up in her art. Some are pretty obvious – several female figures crowned in the sun and/or ferns, or the Russian Baba Yaga witch's hut on chicken legs – others are more symbolic. A lot of her pieces focus on a single animal or plant. There are a few salmon – a sacred species among several Native American peoples, especially in the Pacific Northwest, and a transformation symbol in Irish legends of Taliesin. There are edible and toxic mushrooms, which ecologically transform dead things into new life. There are also several ferns, her favorite plant; she noted they represent "a place I want to be, the green of the woods and green of the forest floor." She has several pieces in which ferns, various flowers, and other plant material have been pressed and preserved.

Like many artists, her foray into art began as a child. She doesn't quite know when, but she'd see her grandfather working in watercolors, charcoal and other things, making murals, and told herself "I want to do that. ... It's so cool to create a world." But Schmidt said she didn't have a typical art studio background. Instead, her training is in architectural drafting, with some summer art classes that have since included creating her own woodblock prints. At University of Connecticut, she combined drafting and visual arts into creating theater settings, literally "building a world," and met her husband Rob, with whom she now has two daughters. One of them is already following in her artistic footsteps. "As an artist, you're always transforming something, and I get interested in so many things," Schmidt said, admitting she's had to sometimes rein herself in to finish projects. One of her favorite art styles is woodblock

printing. She carves it herself – sometimes with a plan, sometimes just on inspiration. An example of the former is "Medusa," which she described as "extremely challenging to get the details in the wood." One of the latter is a much simpler sun image. She prints both, and various other images, on all kinds of surfaces. "You can pretty much transfer that image on to anything with a steady hand," but she notes she favors paper for its "crisp, clean look." By contrast, she sees fabric as "finicky." Inspired by nature, she said she "appreciates the tiny details of things." But she also notes the medium is a little tricky – "Some of the finer details, you're not always sure they'll show up" in the final print. Some of those are available for sale at the library, and more are at her website, marigoldrose.art on Instagram.

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

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