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Friday, February 5, 2021

# Charlton Elementary moves to remote learning



BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – In late January, the Charlton Elementary School was forced to revert to online learning after it was confirmed that transmission of COVID-19 had taken place between adults within the school.

Superintendent Steven Lamarche confirmed the situation in a letter to families on Jan. 20 where he revealed that after working with the Dudley Health Agent and Charlton Health Director they discovered evidence that transmission between adults had taken place within the building however no students were believed to have been exposed. The district also consulted with the Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at the Department of Public Health and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to review the findings and receive guidance on their next step.

The district decided to move Charlton Elementary School to remote learning on both Jan. 21 and Jan. 22 and continue

consulting local and state officials for further recommendations. On Jan. 24, Superintendent Lamarche announced the school would remain remote until Jan. 26 as they had been awaiting tests results from individuals from within the school and evaluating potential quarantines for staff members. After a meeting with health officials on Jan. 25, Lamarche released a final statement confirming a return to in-person learning for Jan. 26.

“We reviewed the results of voluntary staff testing from last week’s identified transmission in the school. It was determined that it is safe to reopen as we only had one new positive and contact tracing is complete. The remaining tests came back negative. Please note, this does not lessen the importance and seriousness of any positive cases in our educational community. We will continue to employ all of the mitigating strategies that prevent transmission. We do expect and appreciate everyone’s effort to

Please Read **REMOTE LEARNING**, page **A3**

# Selectmen debate schedule for Fire Department project

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – The upcoming schedule for the newly rebranded fire station building project in Charlton caused contention among selection during a Jan. 26 meeting, as the town’s leading elected party debated whether or not to push the project through as fast as possible or delay the proceedings to account for higher voter turnout in the 2022 midterm elections.

The fire station project is being planned and organized by the Fire Station Building Committee, who met twice in January with Tecton Architects to discuss the future of the downsized project which serves as the successor to the previously proposed and much larger Public Safety Building initiative. The Public Safety Building proposal failed at two ballot votes seeking a debt exclusion for the cost leading to the police station being removed from the concept and the exploration or a more cost-effective fire station only project to replace the numerous aging fire department facilities currently in use.

Captain Rob Barton represented the committee before the Board of Selectmen during the Jan. 26 online meeting where he revealed one item being discussed is whether or not the utilize the same Mason Road land that was proposed for the Public Safety Building and, if

they do use that lot, where on the land would the department go. Barton further noted that a lot of the smaller details were in flux until the committee got guidance on how to move forward from the Board of Selectmen.

“Unfortunately, a lot of our discussion is kind of a moot point until we understand the feeling of (the Board of Selectmen) to say when they want the shovel in the ground. There are a couple options that we have and different schedules that we have,” Barton said.

Those options include fast-tracking the project for the May 2022 town meeting and town election or delaying the projects to the October 2022 town meeting and putting a debt exclusion on the November mid-term election ballot.

As far as cost, Barton said they don’t have solid figures, but they expect it to be less than \$22 million but more than the low point of \$11 million.

“We’re going to work with Tecton and everyone else to understand that the number has got to be a low as it can be, but the dollar amount is based off of square footage. If we built the facility for \$10 million, hypothetically, then we have to substantially reduce the square footage of this building to the point probably where it doesn’t actually fit all of the apparatus that we currently have in our

Please Read **FD DEBATE**, page **A15**

# Board of Health considers well testing for property sales

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – The Charlton Board of Health is examining potentially having well testing be done during house sales in Charlton to allow new homeowners more understanding of any potential contaminations that may be present on a property.

Board of Health member Jon Sanborn provided an update to the Board of Health on Jan. 12

where he revealed he had been researching what tests should or shouldn’t be required and what the cost might be to sellers if it were to be mandated.

“I’m not able to come up with super specific testing and especially the cost. I don’t want this to be some sort of a cost burden for anybody who’s selling a house or trying to pass the cost along to the buyer or whoever,” Sanborn said. “I think it exists out there. I would hope that we could come up with

something that would be relatively inexpensive.”

The idea behind the test is in response to recent years where property contamination from situations like the ExxonMobile water contamination dealt with over the last decade. Water quality tests or other well testing could make buyers aware of any contamination issues present or previously unknown on private properties.

Board of Health member

Matthew Gagner felt it was a good idea and that it would not provide too harsh a burden on any sellers or buyers in Charlton.

“No one is going to like it, but at the end of the day I think our hearts are in the right spot,” Gagner said. “I do think if we’re going to go forward with that we would have to do the entire town. If not, we’d have to create a zone of where you would and where you wouldn’t. I just think it

would be a lot of work - if we were going to do this, I would just personally say let’s just do the whole town and not try and zone it out in any particular area.”

While there have been no major sites of new contamination identified, there are other smaller issues that could lead to contamination of properties on a case by case basis such as an unknown gasoline from

Please Read **TESTING**, page **A3**

# Student nurses use art to heal

REGION — As the number of new infections with the new COVID-19 variants and hospitalizations continue to rise, frontline workers and healthcare workers across the globe are being pushed to a further breaking point. While coping with the stress and anxiety of working during the pandemic is a struggle, the struggle is also real for nursing students who are just getting their first-hand experience and barely getting their feet wet.

**Brianna Cloutier of Charlton**

A practical nursing student at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, Brianna Cloutier is experienced in healthcare. Her resume boasts of previously working as a Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (Reliant Medical Group General Vascular Surgery), Developmental Specialist (Venture Community Specialist), and as a Certified Nursing Assistant (Beaumont Rehabilitation and Skilled



Brianna Cloutier



Cayla Jill Bueno



Isabelle Boateng



Brianna Laforest

Nursing). Since starting her nursing journey she has been learning about COVID 19, preventing the spread, and staying safe and healthy. She completed the COVID-19 Contact Tracing through Coursera at the Johns Hopkins University. Working on term 2 courses, which includes the challenging medical-surgical nursing, she has been channeling her experiences on the front line

into the magic of scrapbooking and crafts. She is also actively participating in projects such as the diversity and inclusion for PN Class of 2021 having been picked as the liaison for Walmart’s giving grant. She recently completed two days of clinical observation at the Wound Clinic and is in awe at the nurses involved with hyperbaric wound therapy.

**Cayla Jill Bueno of Quezon City, Philippines**

Thousands of miles away, Cayla Jill Bueno is going through a similar situation. As a first-year nursing student at the Far Eastern University Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation, Cayla Jill Bueno has seen her share of pain and suffering but mainly through the news and social media. When hospitals were running

out of capacity and healthcare workers were running out of personal protective equipment, Bueno felt helpless. Across the globe she witnessed her grandmother, Estrella Ramos in New York make fabric masks for the community, Bueno was inspired. Her grandmother’s act of kindness impacted her. Her aunts and uncles in the

Please Read **HEAL**, page **A15**

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# Environmental issues crucial to trail projects

BY GUS STEEVES  
CORRESPONDENT

REGION — As many know, rail trails have become extremely popular community projects across the country. In many places, they cross – or are themselves – “brownfields,” urban areas contaminated by various forms of pollution that make building trails a long, complex and often expensive prospect.

Last week, American Trails took a look at the issues surrounding how to start and fund such projects as part of a series of online events with participants across the US and Canada by looking specifically at projects in Peabody, Mass., and Chattanooga, Tenn.

As George Naslas of engineering firm Weston & Sampson noted, “perceived or real environmental issues” are crucial to redeveloping trails and parks.

“It’s very important to do your due diligence and think of the what-ifs,” he observed. “... No two projects are the same,” because, even if they have the same kinds of contamination, the best way of addressing it may differ.

His colleague Sarah DeStefano agreed, noting, “what you currently see isn’t necessarily what you’re getting.” For example, she said removing obvious debris may leave invisible toxins behind.

Not long ago, Southbridge found that out while considering whether to extend the Quinebaug Valley Rail Trail into downtown from the Golden Greek. That proposal stalled largely due to uncertainty about liability for contamination along the rail route, concern about how to cross Main Street at the Rotary, and how to address the decaying condition of a site near Crane Street.

Sturbridge recently approved work on its section of the same trail, and is close to starting construction on an extension from Westville’s Calcutt Bridge to Farquhar Road. Meanwhile, Webster has been slowly adding sections to its Riverwalk along the French River downtown.

To DeStefano, the variations show why projects should start with what’s termed a Phase 1 environmental site assessment – a deep review of the documents regarding that property’s historical uses with site visits to identify potential liability issues. Among other things, having one of those can help protect municipalities and landowners who hope to use the land for recreation, but it can also indicate what kind of training and/or protection workers will need, how to protect neighbors during construction, and how to use the proposed changes to reduce cleanup costs.

“It’s not our goal just to dig and send material to a landfill,” Naslas said. Sometimes, lower-concentration contaminants can simply be buried and capped with pavement (maybe the trail itself), while also designing the property to suit various uses and make it “more resilient” environmentally.

He later added, in response to a ques-



Photo Gus Steeves

Creosote-treated railroad ties like these, seen piled along the Quinebaug Valley Rail Trail between Southbridge and Dudley, are one of the more visible kinds of ecological concerns planners of rail trails need to address.

tion, that what’s allowed varies by state. Some situations will allow stable, no-risk, no-exposure contaminants to just stay there, although they may require monitoring. One option in some cases is to build a “reactive cap” that breaks down some contaminants; others include grading or sloping the land, using rip-rap gravel, or even phytoremediation with plants, he said.

In Chattanooga, a riverside trail that began in 1987 is now 11 miles long. The last three miles had to deal with three brownfields, several active industrial sites, seven railroad crossings, and multiple landowners, some of whom were reluctant to cooperate at first, project designer John Brown said. That stretch cost about \$15 million, most of it for construction and cleanup.

“Our marching orders at the time ... were to work with the landowners up and down the river,” Rick Wood of the Trust for Public Land added. Doing so required negotiating many approaches to show that participation would have public relations, tax, land-value and other benefits for themselves and the community. In some cases, proponents bought the land outright; in others, the owners kept it but gave the trail an easement. In some places, the relics of old uses required demolition; in others, they were renovated and incorporated into the trail to highlight the area’s history.

In Peabody, a two-mile trail along the North River is in a much earlier stage of development despite being 34 years old. When done it will extend a trail that now exists in Salem and connect to the MBTA rail network, DeStefano said.

That route passes numerous old tanneries and related firms that were large-

ly active in the early 20th century, but were falling apart by the 1960s. The trail project faces similar issues to that in Chattanooga: many landowners, lots of pollution (including PCBs, petroleum and metals), a crumbling canal wall and risks of flooding. Five of the six brownfields are recorded as contaminated sites, and research found the sixth is unlisted but contaminated, she said.

Brown noted brownfield cleanups often get public support because they turn derelict places “into spaces that can be reused and enjoyed” while assisting parts of town that have largely been ignored.

“Having a project champion or champion team, ... someone carrying that flag from beginning to end,” is often critical to success, Dan Biggs said. So is having lots of participants; major funding agencies usually want to see multiple sources involved (either with funds, supplies or volunteer labor) – “Think of all the different ways a project can be supported,” he said.

Brown noted later that federal grants usually require full-time construction oversight and other things that “can cost a project a whole lot more than using other sorts of funding.”

Most of his projects have involved working with railroads, who often say no at first because they’re focused on safety and liability.

“They’re in business to be railroads, not greenways,” Brown said. “... Sometimes, dealing with railroads feels like you’re dealing with another country.”

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



## ACCURACY WATCH

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

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

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

## REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

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\$415,000, 54 Turner Rd, Goulas, George P, and Goulas, Jennifer J, to Fields, Amy L, and Fields, Nicholas A.

\$218,000, 13 Old Town Rd, Reem Property LLC, to Rodriguez, Alberto, and Rodriguez, Arlene.

## REMOTE LEARNING

continued from page A1

self-monitor and complete the daily self-certification, district pre-screening form as this action greatly improves our efforts to keep everyone safe and healthy,” Lamarche said in a release.

The superintendent also addressed the situation during a meeting of the District School Committee on Jan. 27 commending the health officials and everyone else involved in the decision making for helping the district through yet another situation full of unknowns during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“As with many operational items during the pandemic we are learning as we go. What cannot be overstated is the collaboration, deliberation and action planning that comes from working with the Health Director and Health Agent, our school nurses, and principals. We held a tabletop exercise with all principals and school nurses to learn and share our processes regarding the situation at Charlton Elementary School,” Lamarche said.

As of the School Committee meeting three new cases had been reported in the district, two requiring contact tracing but not directly connected to the situation at Charlton Elementary School.

## TESTING

continued from page A1

one property leak effecting a neighboring property. Jon Sanborn called it “cheep insurance” to increase confidence and awareness for both the buyer and seller while Board of Health Chair Kathleen Walker called it a “proactive” measure to benefit all parties involved. As of now, the idea is simply conceptual and more research has to be completed before implementation is considered.

# Open Sky Community Services achieves highest accreditation level

WORCESTER — CARF International, an independent organization that provides accreditation services worldwide to health and human service providers, has granted Open Sky Community Services’ Behavioral Health programs a three-year accreditation. This accreditation is the highest level awarded by CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) and was given after a rigorous evaluation process focused on quality and results.

In the report notifying Open Sky of the award, one of the areas of strength noted was the array of supports it provided to frontline workers through the COVID-19 crisis. The organization’s staff was described as experienced and dedicated and persons served echoed that assessment with comments like “I didn’t know how to trust, but now I trust staff” and “For the first time in my life, I feel safe.”

Funders who were interviewed for the accreditation praised the quality of care provided by Open Sky, while peers at other Central Mass agencies recognized Open Sky for its success at building collaborative relationships to broaden the safety net of human services in the region. President and CEO Ken Bates was delighted by the accreditation team’s findings.

“I was particularly struck by the fact that a number of staff members mentioned how well we handle conflict and differing opinions,” said

Bates. “This willingness to entertain different viewpoints is, as CARF noted, an important indication of Open Sky’s commitment to continuous improvement.”

Open Sky was formed through the 2018 affiliation of Alternatives Unlimited and The Bridge of Central Massachusetts. With more than 100 programs throughout Central Massachusetts, the organization provides services and supports to more than 4,900 adults, young adults and youth with mental health challenges, developmental disabilities, brain injury, substance use disorders, homelessness or other complex challenges. Open Sky also provides services and supports for LGBTQIA+ youth through its Safe Homes program, as well as expert training for human service professionals and school personnel on evidence-based practices and best practice treatment models through the Bridge Training

Institute.

For more information about Open Sky Community Services, please contact Lorie Martiska, lorie.martiska@openskycs.org.

About Open Sky Community Services  
Open Sky Community Services is dba for Alternatives Unlimited, Inc. and The Bridge of Central MA. Open Sky offers a wide range of services for adults, adolescents, and children with mental health challenges, developmental and intellectual disabilities, substance use disorders, brain injury, homelessness and other challenges throughout Central Massachusetts. Open Sky Community Services has more than 1,300 dedicated employees and an annual budget of \$83M with more than 100 programs throughout the region. For more information, please visit www.openskycs.org.

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# QCC professor honored with Yankee Congress Dental Assistant Award

WORCESTER — Jennifer McKeon, professor of dental assisting and hygiene at Quinsigamond Community College, has been awarded the 2021 Elizabeth A. Baer Award, by the Yankee Dental Congress.

This annual award is presented to a dental assistant who has made significant contributions to the Massachusetts Dental Assistants Association

and the Massachusetts Dental Society. Award winners must have at least 10 years of cumulative membership in the Massachusetts Dental Assistants Association and 10 years cumulative years of practice as a dental assistant in the dental profession.

“I am very honored and excited to receive this award.

Betty Anne, who this award is named after, was a certified dental assistant and a dental hygienist, as am I. She put education on the top of her priority list, just as I do,” McKeon said.

McKeon has been a part of the dental assisting landscape for many years, beginning her career as an “on-the-job” trained dental assistant before becoming a certified dental assistant in 1998. She has called QCC “home” for some time, first attending as a student then part-time instructor, before becoming a full-time faculty member.

“I have a long history with the College that started when I was in high school and took an English class at QCC. This enabled me to earn college credit and graduate high school early,” she said.

Fast forward to 2001 when she received her Associate’s degree in Dental Hygiene from QCC. In 2002, she began a career educating students part-time at the College where she earned her degree; becoming a full-time faculty member in 2010.

“There were so many professors who molded my life at QCC that I felt honored to

become full-time faculty,” she added. “The two things that I was passionate about came together. I wanted to give back all that was given to me at QCC, and I could do that by teaching and coordinating the dental assisting program. I could never have asked for a more perfect position at the perfect college.”

Amy Booth, professor of Dental Hygiene was one of McKeon’s former professors and today is her colleague and friend.

“I am so proud of my ‘student.’ Jenn has been a great support and we work very well together. In addition to her knowledge of dental assisting, she is humorous and genuine,” Booth said.

McKeon is the co-director of the Kid Seal program and works with QCC and the Worcester Public Schools to help promote dental health in area youths. When she is not working with students, Ms. McKeon is the presiding chair and room coordinator at Yankee Dental Congress, as well as the president elect. This year she will also be appointed president of the Massachusetts Dental Assistants Association

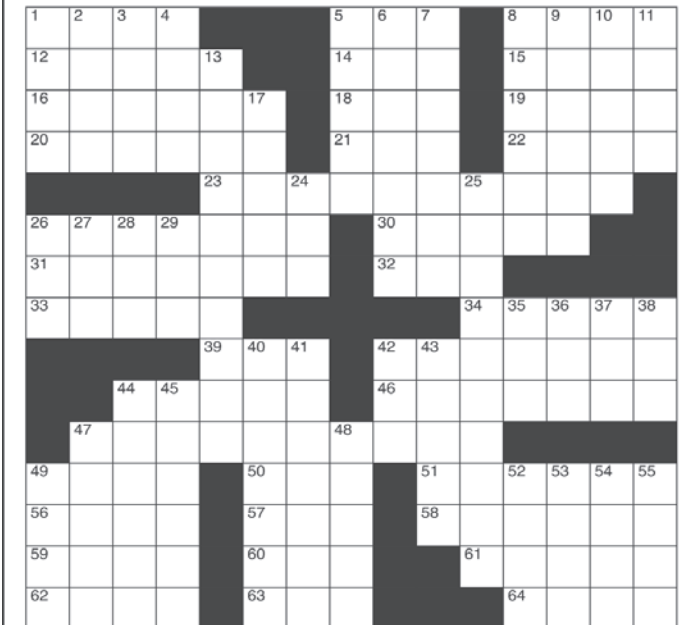


Jennifer McKeon

(MDAA).

“Jenn embodies our dental program and is an amazing role model for our students,” said Pat Schmohl, dean of the School of Healthcare. “She is so deserving of this award.”

For more information about QCC, contact Josh Martin, Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-7513 or jmartin@qcc.mass.edu.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Nuclear near reach weapon
5. Of she
8. Hyperbolic function
12. Rice dish
14. A team’s best pitcher
15. Strong and healthy
16. Induces
18. Popular manga series
19. From a distance
20. Split
21. Consumed
22. Cushions
23. All over
26. One who provides food
30. St. \_\_\_ Girl, brand of beer
31. Walking slowly
32. Wood
33. Semitic gods
34. Bugle
39. 60-minute periods (abbr.)
42. Congressman
44. Plant of the heath family
46. Subdivision of an army
47. Having many different forms
49. Shellfish
50. Latin for hail
51. Between sixth and seventh
56. Maori war dance
57. Precious or semiprecious stone
58. Teeter totter
59. Deity
60. A major division of geological time
61. Fishing net
62. Small Caribbean bird
63. Field force unit
64. Japanese beverage

CLUES DOWN

1. Prevents oil spills
2. Monetary unit
3. The color of the sky
4. Dough used to make tortillas
5. Popular comic strip character
6. Distinct form of a plant
7. Replenishment
8. Has its own altar
9. Expedition to see animals
10. Group of related organisms
11. His and \_\_\_
13. Frenetically
17. Small integer
24. Unit of energy
25. Studies of culture
26. Taxi
27. Doctors’ group
28. Don’t know when yet
29. Former measure of length
35. Popular CBS series
36. Skin condition
37. Christian creator and ruler of the universe
38. They \_\_\_
40. Caused severe damage
41. Work done under harsh conditions for no pay
42. One point east of due south
43. Sea eagles
44. Drenched
45. State capital
47. Italian city
48. Sweetheart (archaic)
49. Brief talk
52. Popular disco group: Bee \_\_\_
53. First Chinese dynasty
54. Military vehicle
55. Chinese Moslem

## New registration system in place for COVID vaccine information

BY JASON BLEAU  
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – The town of Charlton has followed suit with other communities across the Commonwealth by providing an online resource providing information about the COVID-19 vaccine rollout that will take place over the next several months.

The Board of Health has launched a new form on the Town of Charlton Web site that allows resident to register their email to receive instructions on how to receive a vaccine when they are allowed. The link is not a registration form for the vaccine, but rather a way for citizens to be given notice of updates on the vaccine efforts and which groups are being

treated at a given time.

Phase One of vaccine distribution started in December and lasted until the beginning of February serving priority groups including first responders, health care personnel and related professionals. Average citizens are to begin receiving the vaccine this month with Phase Two targeting individuals aged 75 and over. Following phases will serve individuals aged 65 and older before focusing on early education worked and essential employees and those with comorbidity. The general public is not expected to receive access to vaccines until April of this year.

The town of Charlton is also currently recruiting licensed staff to man

vaccination sites and administer the vaccines. Those looking to be a part of the local vaccine rollout efforts are asked to contact the Board of Health at 508-248-2210 or Health Director Jim Philbrook at James.Phibrook@townofcharlton.net.

Those seeking information on vaccinations or wanting to register for email updates can visit the Town of Charlton website where links for the statewide vaccination information and Harrington Hospital vaccination appointment sign-ups are available on the home page.

## St. Joseph Church hosting prayer service for unity

CHARLTON — You are warmly welcome to attend “A Country Divided — Peace Begins with Me,” an inter-faith prayer service for unity and peace, on Saturday, Feb. 6 from 6 to 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Church in Charlton.

Our guest speaker will be John Breckinridge, a former Manchester police officer who witnessed the murder of his police partner. His story is ultimately about restoration, healing, forgiveness,

and the dignity of life, and he will take questions from the congregation.

The order of our service will include special prayers and songs for World Peace.

The program will be broadcast over 89.5 FM for those who would prefer listening in their cars. As always, mask wearing and social distancing will be observed.

St. Joseph Church is located at 10 H. Putnam Extension in Charlton.

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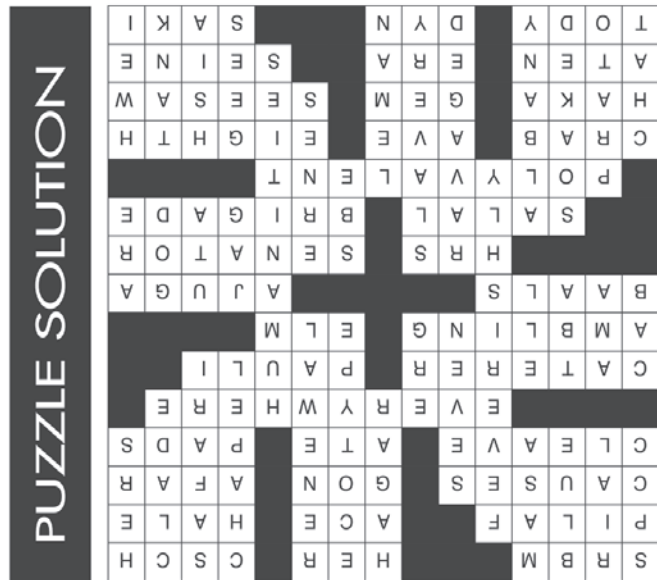
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### CHURCH LISTINGS

- **Charlton Federated Church**, 64 Main St., 248-5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. [www.fedchurchcharlton.org](http://www.fedchurchcharlton.org)
- **Charlton Baptist Church**, 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488, [www.charltonbaptist.org](http://www.charltonbaptist.org), Sunday worship 10 a.m.
- **Charlton City United Methodist**, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: [CharltonCityUMC.org](http://CharltonCityUMC.org) Sunday worship and Children’s church 10am
- **St. Joseph’s Church**, 10 H. Putnam Ext, 248-7862, [www.stjosephscharlton.com](http://www.stjosephscharlton.com), Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30 p.m., Sunday Mass 8 a.m., Sunday Family Mass 10 a.m., Sunday Life/TEEN Mass 5 p.m., Weekday Mass Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 a.m.
- **Hope Christian Fellowship**, 6 Haggerty Road, 248-5144
- **Assemblies of God Southern New England District Headquarters**, Route 20, 248-3771, [snedag.org](http://snedag.org), Office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Living Word Church of Charlton**, 10 Main Street - Grange building 1st Floor, Charlton, Ma 01507, Pastor Craig Bellisario, (508) 233-8349 Sunday Service 10:00am. [www.livingwordcharlton.com](http://www.livingwordcharlton.com) [info@livingwordcharlton.com](mailto:info@livingwordcharlton.com)
- **New Life Fellowship A/G, SNED Chapel**, 307 Sturbridge Road, Rt. 20, Charlton, MA, Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.



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The *Charlton Villager* (USPS#024-954) is published weekly by Stonebridge Press, Inc., 25 Elm St., Southbridge, MA 01550. Periodical postage paid at Southbridge, MA 01550. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Charlton Villager, P. O. Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550.

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# Seven Hills Family Services awarded contract for DDS Family Support Center

STURBRIDGE — Seven Hills Family Services (SHFS), an affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation, has been awarded a contract to continue operating the Family Support Center for the South Valley/West region by the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS). The South Valley Family Support Center will be remain located at 208 Charlton Road in Sturbridge.

The Center will serve approximately 450-550 families annually and act as a hub of information, resources, supportive services and activities for people of all ages who have an intellectual disability (ID) or developmental disability, including Autism with and without ID, living with their family, and

their family members. With over 10 years of experience hosting FSC's in Worcester, Sturbridge, and Fitchburg, SHFS is well positioned to provide Family Support Center services to people living in this region. The Family Support Center located in Sturbridge provides services and supports to all cities and towns served by the South Valley/West Area Office. These include Brookfield, Brimfield, Charlton, Dudley, East Brookfield, Holland, North Brookfield, Oxford, Southbridge, Spencer, Sturbridge, Wales, Warren, Webster, and West Brookfield.

Seven Hills Family Services has extensive experience in operating these centers and has been the go-to source for families supporting someone with a

disability. DDS recently awarded Seven Hills Family Services four such centers throughout Massachusetts. With an emphasis on providing person-centered and culturally and linguistically competent support services across the lifespan, the Family Support staff will provide a wide array of options to individuals with disabilities and their families that enable them to stay together and live in a nurturing environment, maintain relationships with families and loved ones, and be welcomed, contributing members in their home communities. The Fitchburg Family Support Center is committed to providing both short term and long-term service navigation to families who need more than Information and Referral to access sup-

ports or solve a particular issue.

About Seven Hills Foundation

Headquartered in Worcester, the Seven Hills Foundation currently offers program sites at 160 locations throughout Massachusetts and Rhode Island employing more than 4,500 professionals. Through its affiliates, Seven Hills Foundation offers a continuum of support and services to 45,000 children, adults and seniors with disabilities and other life challenges. Seven Hills Foundation stands as one of the most dynamic and comprehensive health and human services agencies in the country and is widely recognized as a premier provider of comprehensive supports. For more information, visit [www.sevenhills.org](http://www.sevenhills.org).

## Local Stores Support the United Way!

Southbridge: During the month of December customers at Big Bunny Market in Southbridge and Micknuck's Fresh Marketplace in Sturbridge, were asked to either purchase a holiday tag or round up for the United Way of South Central Massachusetts (UWSCM) to support the programs run by 22 member agencies. UWSCM 2020 Campaign Chairman Jim Croteau stated "We appreciate Big Bunny's and Micknuck's customers and the generosity they showed during the holiday season. Over \$2,750 was raised during the two week event and all money raised is used to fund programs that support the health, education and financial stability of those in need in South Central Massachusetts."

The United Way of South Central Massachusetts serves the communities of Charlton, Dudley, Southbridge,



Micknuck's cashiers Elise Mazeika and Debra Pulsifer

Sturbridge and Charlton and is located at 176 Main St., Suite 400, Southbridge, MA 01550. To learn more about programs and donate, visit [www.uwscm.org](http://www.uwscm.org), follow on Facebook @UWSCM or call (508) 765-5491.



Photos Courtesy

Store Manager, Jonathan Courmoyer presented United Way of South Central MA 2020 Campaign Chairman Jim Croteau with a check in the amount of \$2,760.01. Top salesperson, Maeleanna Pellot-Powers received a \$50 gift card for her great efforts.

## University of New Hampshire announces Dean's List for Fall 2020 Semester

DURHAM, New Hampshire — The following students have been named to the Dean's List at the University of New Hampshire for the fall 2020 semester.

Gabrielle Eberhart of Charlton, earning Honors

Francesca DeLuca of Uxbridge, earning High Honors

Students named to the Dean's List at the University of New Hampshire are students who have earned recognition through their superior scholastic performance during a semester enrolled in a full-time course load (12 or more graded credits). Highest honors are awarded to students who earn a semester grade point average of 3.85 or better out of a possible 4.0. Students with a 3.65 to 3.84 average are awarded high honors and students whose grade point average is

3.5 through 3.64 are awarded honors.

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH's research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

To learn more about the opportunities at the University of New Hampshire visit: [www.unh.edu](http://www.unh.edu).

## Becker College announces Dean's List for Fall 2020

WORCESTER — Becker College is proud to announce the Dean's List for the fall 2020 semester. The Dean's List recognizes all full-time students (24 or more credit hours earned for the academic year; 12 minimum each semester (September through May) whose term grade point average is 3.50 or higher with no grade below a B- and no incomplete (I) or withdrawal/failing (WF) grades.

Daniel Hogan of Charlton is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Integrated Graphic Design and Media.

Max Zielinski of Charlton is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Interactive Media Design, Game Audio.

Jacob Ledoux of Charlton is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Interactive Media Design, Game Development and Programming.

Jennifer Kindl of Uxbridge is

pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Interactive Media, Game Arts.

Tabitha Young of Uxbridge is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Interactive Media, Game Arts.

Jenna Savoie of Charlton is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Marketing.

Sierra Grybowski of Charlton is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science, Pre-PT/Health Science.

Abigail Leahy of Charlton is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science, Pre-PT/Health Science.

Callie Buccino of Uxbridge is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science, Criminalistics.

Kyrstan Lamphere of Uxbridge is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Evelyn Sheehan of Charlton is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Rylee Trinquet of Charlton is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Emily Girouard of Charlton is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Science, Veterinary Technology.

Founded in 1784, Becker College is an undergraduate and graduate, career-focused private college, providing a supportive and inclusive learning community that prepares graduates for their first to last careers. Nearly 1,700 students from the United States and around the world attend Becker College, which has campuses both in Worcester and Leicester, Massachusetts. With nationally recognized programs in nursing, game design and animal studies, Becker has been consistently ranked as a "Best College" for undergraduate education by The Princeton Review.

## Andrew Dunlap of Uxbridge named to Dean's List for Fall 2020

CEDARVILLE, Ohio — Andrew Dunlap of Uxbridge was named to the Cedarville University Dean's List for fall 2020.

This recognition required Dunlap to maintain a 3.5 minimum GPA while carrying a minimum of 12 credit hours during fall semester 2020.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,550 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than

150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and high student engagement ranking. For more information about Cedarville University, visit [www.cedarville.edu](http://www.cedarville.edu).

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February 14th

**Don't Forget Valentine's Day!**

# Area residents on Bridgewater dean's list

She uses her previous experience in

From simple acts of care, assessing patients to communicating test results, and on every phone call she answers, Elcier is confident in her nursing skills. She finds ways to help her patients be at ease in situations that may be stressful and overwhelming. She has mastered the art of prioritizing and triage. She aims to help and guide patients as she hopes someone would help her if she were in the same situation. Care during COVID-19 is challenging but Elcier does not shy away from challenges. Each day, she strives to be the best LPN she can and provide the best nursing care she can, one telephone call at a time.



Southbridge  
Kolby Lamoureux, Nathan Pruitt and  
Amelia Tieri.

Answers: A. leaves B. brew C. cup D. boiled

Level: Advanced



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**FRANK G. CHILINSKI**  
PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

**BRENDAN BERUBE**  
EDITOR

We can bridge  
the divide  
between us

It has been one of the most tumultuous times in recent history in regard to politics, and the divide taking place across the country is very real. This Editor has noticed plenty of disagreements take place between individuals with opposing viewpoints. Being privy to all sorts of news stories and situations where politics are discussed puts us right in the heart of it.

This may not be the case in every situation; however, we have noticed that residents in small towns do not let politics divide them. Sure, you have members of various select boards going head to head about an issue, you have citizens up in arms over certain topics, but people out about the town have remained quite hospitable to each other.

During one event we recently covered, we witnessed two long-term residents from the same town who could not be further apart in viewpoints have a refreshingly peaceful and genuine discussion. Imagine a long haired ‘hippie’ woman holding protest signs and a die-hard Republican, former Marine and hunter dressed in steel toe boots, joking around with each other and having a genuine laugh, then wishing each other well with sincerity, you wouldn’t have believed it. But it happened.

Since that moment, we have noticed more and more situations like this unfold. Hands are being shaken and smiles are being exchanged despite the so called political ‘divide’ that has ripped through the country. We think citizens in small towns, no matter who or what they are about can genuinely appreciate each other’s differences. A person may not agree with hunting or wouldn’t head out into the woods themselves, however they could see a neighbor who shot an eight-point buck and offer a friendly congratulations. We have seen conservatives with a snow-bank of over a foot covering their driveways be plowed out by someone with a ‘Bernie’ sticker on their plow truck. We have seen posts on social media that have nothing to do with politics invoke laughter from both sides.

In a small town everyone knows everyone, and if they don’t they are only separated by one person. In such small towns, that allows for communities to rally around each other and to make sure at the end of the day, that we all had a good one. It’s cold up here, the winters are long and brutal. That camaraderie of wanting to protect our small town niche has benefits that have always stood the test of time. You may be a Republican, Independent or a Democrat but you all root for the New England Patriots. Perhaps now maybe Tampa, but having that home town pride is something that connects us all.

Jan. 19-25 of this year marked the annual week of prayer for Christian unity. The events of the past few months and years, and the events of Jan. 6 particularly, made celebrating Christian unity challenging. Many who stormed the Capitol clearly tied the attempt to “stop the steal” with the will of God, with true faith in Jesus Christ. Prior to those symbolic displays was another one: a Jericho march around the Supreme Court building, praying that the “walls of Jericho” would collapse and finally the Supreme Court would do the faithful thing, as in, stop the steal. How are Christians supposed to genuinely celebrate or desire for unity when there are some whose public actions seem to unwillingly pigeonhole the rest of us?

The same question applies to members of the various political parties. Many have concluded that all Republicans are racist, corrupt, and greedy. Many others have concluded that all Democrats are lying sycophants bent on destroying our country. Is there room for unity in our predicament, to

OPINION

VIEWS AND COMMENTARY FROM CHARLTON, CHARLTON CITY, CHARLTON DEPOT AND BEYOND

Strategies to  
Drive Safely in the Snow

Hot on the heels of a classic Nor’easter, it’s time once again to review our annual winter driving tips to keep safe while navigating icy, snowy roadways. When the wintry weather finds you slip sliding away this season, keep in mind these common sense strategies to up your odds of a safe trip.



**TAKE THE HINT**

**KAREN TRAINOR**

vehicle while the engine is running.

Did you know tires are your most important weapon against slipping and sliding? Take into account these top tire tips:

- Accelerate slowly to reduce wheel spin. If starting from a standstill on slick snow or ice, start in second gear so the vehicle is less likely to spin the tires. The transmissions on some vehicles have a winter mode that automatically starts in a higher gear.
- On snowy or slippery roads, decelerate slowly too. It helps to increase your following distance to five to six seconds.
- Reduce your speed and drive smoothly. In slippery conditions, tires lose their grip more easily, affecting all aspects of your driving: braking, turning, and accelerating. The key is to drive as smoothly as possible, avoiding sudden actions or rapid movements of any kind. Drive as if you have a bowl of water in your lap and don’t want to spill any.
- Don’t lock your wheels when braking. Locked wheels can make the vehicle slide or skid. If you have a vehicle without an antilock braking system (ABS), you may need to gently apply the brakes repeatedly to avoid having them lock up the wheels.
- Know your brakes: Whether you have antilock brakes or not, keep the heel of your foot on the floor and use the ball of your foot to apply firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal
- Perform one action at a time when accelerating, braking, and turning. Asking a vehicle to do two things at once—such as braking and turning, or accelerating and turning—can reduce your control. When taking a turn, for instance, slowly apply the brakes while the vehicle is going straight. When it’s at the right speed to take the turn, let up on the brakes and smoothly turn the steering wheel. After you’re through the turn, slowly depress the accelerator to regain your speed.
- Tackling the Hills: Don’t power up hills. Applying extra gas on snow-covered roads will just make your wheels spin. Try to get a little inertia going before you reach the hill and let that inertia carry you to the top. As you reach the crest of the hill, reduce your speed and proceed downhill slowly
- Clear Clogs: Make sure the exhaust pipe is not clogged with snow, ice or mud. A blocked exhaust pipe can cause deadly carbon monoxide gas to leak into the passenger compartment of the

- Cold temperatures decrease the air pressure in tires, which adds to the rolling resistance caused by snow and slush. So be sure to check tire pressure regularly, especially after there has been a sharp drop in temperature.
- When buying allweather or snow tires have them installed on all four wheels. This provides even traction all the way around and gives you top notch steering and stopping.
- Can’t replace all four? If you can only afford two snow tires, some tire experts suggest you get them mounted in the rear. Here’s why: If your front tires skid, you can still maintain some control over the car by steering those wheels. But if your rear tires lose contact with the road, it’s much harder to control where the car goes. For that reason, the tires with the greatest amount of traction are supposed to go on the back
- Make sure you have enough tread on your tires. The drive tires must provide traction to push your vehicle over wet pavement and through snow. The steering tires must have traction to steer the vehicle. Experts say you should have at least one eighth inch of tread to plow through snow effectively.

Note: The driving advice above was culled from various sources including AAA; State Farm Insurance Agency; Consumer Reports; and Michelin Tires.

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.*

With ultra-low  
rates, should  
you still invest  
in bonds?



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If you’ve been investing for many years and you’ve owned bonds, you’ve seen some pretty big changes on your financial statements. In 2000, the average yield on a 10-year U.S. Treasury security was about 6 percent; in 2010, it had dropped to slightly over 3 percent, and for most of 2020, it was less than 1 percent. That’s an enormous difference, and it may lead you to this question: With yields so low on bonds, why should you even consider them?

Of course, while the 10-year Treasury note is an important benchmark, it doesn’t represent the returns on any bonds you could purchase. Typically, longer-term bonds, such as those that mature in 20 or 30 years, pay higher rates to account for inflation and to reward you for locking up your money for many years. But the same downward trend can be seen in these longer-term bonds, too – in 2020, the average 30-year Treasury bond yield was only slightly above 1.5 percent.

Among other things, these numbers mean that investors of 10 or 20 years ago could have gotten some reasonably good income from investment-grade bonds. But today, the picture is different. (Higher-yield bonds, sometimes known as “junk” bonds, can offer more income but carry a higher risk of default.)

Nonetheless, while rates are low now, you may be able to employ a strategy that can help you in any interest-rate environment. You can build a bond “ladder” of individual bonds that mature on different dates. When market interest rates are low, you’ll still have your longer-term bonds earning higher yields (and long-term yields, while fluctuating, are expected to rise in the future). When interest rates rise, your maturing bonds can be reinvested at these new, higher levels. Be sure you evaluate whether a bond ladder and the securities held within it are consistent with your investment objectives, risk tolerance and financial circumstances.

Furthermore, bonds can provide you with other benefits. For one thing, they can help diversify your portfolio, especially if it’s heavily weighted toward stocks. Also, stock and bond prices often (although not always) move in opposite directions, so if the stock market goes through a down period, the value of your bonds may rise. And bonds are usually less volatile than stocks, so they can have a “calming” effect on your portfolio. Plus, if you hold your bonds until maturity, you will get your entire principal back (providing the bond issuer doesn’t default, which is generally unlikely if you own investment-grade bonds), so bond ownership gives you a chance to preserve capital while still investing.

But if the primary reason you have owned bonds is because of the income they offer, you may have to look elsewhere during periods of ultra-low interest rates. For example, you could invest in dividend-paying stocks. Some stocks have long track records of increasing dividends, year after year, giving you a potential source of rising income. (Keep in mind, though, that dividends can be increased, decreased or eliminated at any time.) Be aware, though, that stocks are subject to greater risks and market movements than bonds.

Ultimately, while bonds may not provide the income they did a few years ago, they can have a place in a long-term investment strategy. Consider how they might fit into yours.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Jeff Burdick, your local Edward Jones Advisor in Sturbridge at 508-347-1420 or jeff.burdick@edwardjones.com.*

Be an instrument of peace

BEYOND  
THE PEWS

.....

REV. JOHN H.D. LUCY  
CHARLTON CITY UMC

call us to remember we are Americans first? Biden called us to unity in his inauguration speech, but so did Trump in 2016. Calls for unity fall on deaf ears when a large percentage of us perceive words and actions of “the other side” to be disingenuous.

As I reflected on the widely disparate responses to Biden’s call for unity (and Trump’s in 2016), I thought of something that I often say: when it comes to matters of peace, love, unity, or related subjects, if Christians can’t do it, then how can we expect anyone else to? Of course, the same can be asked of other faiths, too. If we proclaim faith and unity in the God of love, whose very Trinity is the model of unity, and then sow and reap discord and disuni-

ty, then surely we can understand the travails of our country. Indeed, we perhaps have no one else to blame for the travails of our country’s divisions than ourselves, as a broken family of Christians. We have showed our fellow citizens and the world that it’s okay to trash one another’s character for the sake of our desired outcome.

St. Joseph’s Catholic Church and Charlton City United Methodist Church, which I serve, did a pulpit swap to mark the week of Christian unity. We hope and pray it was one of those “small step for man, large step for mankind” type of moments. Regardless, what I said on that Sunday I say again to all of you: we have grown too accustomed to demanding that our voice be heard and understood. Instead, if we are to chart a path forward, Christian or not, we must take the prayer of St. Francis to heart: to seek to console, rather than be consoled; to understand, rather than be understood; to love, rather than be loved. Our way is not the only way. The way of God is to be an instrument of peace.

LETTERS

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So, what are you waiting for? Start writing!

# The fishing is great...for some



THE GREAT  
OUTDOORS  
.....  
RALPH  
TRUE

This past week’s bitter cold weather sure had local lakes and ponds making ice for fishermen to get out and enjoy the outdoors. Unfortunately, the fish were not cooperating for some, with very few anglers catching fish, but they were just happy to be enjoying fishing with friends and family. Many anglers had a good fire going to keep them warm, as the temperature, driven by wind, had the wind chill factor at minus 10 degrees on Friday and Saturday. There was the smell of good food in the air as I stopped to visit some of the fishing parties at local ponds. A fishing party at the Uxbridge Rod & Gun Club, for Cub Scout Pack 2 from the Uxbridge VFW had a good number in attendance, but the fishing success was very slow. The group still had a great time slipping and sliding on the ice, and were treated to some great food by Steve Bedard and his crew.

As of this past Saturday local lakes and ponds that had safe ice included: Wallum Lake, Manchaug Pond, Whitin Reservoir, Meadow Pond, Bad Luck in Douglas, and Webster Lake in Webster, to mention a few. This past Sunday, fishing picked up for numerous anglers I spoke to, with largemouth bass, perch and pickerel keeping anglers busy tending the ice fishing gear! As this column was being written, the weather forecast for Tuesday was predicting a foot of snow. It is sure going to hamper fishing for some ice fishing anglers, especially the elderly and handicapped. It sure makes me think about moving to Florida, or some other warmer place, at least for a few months.

This writer received a fishing report from my brother Ken and his son Mark this past Sunday. The pair fished Webster Lake this past Sunday and had an extremely slow day of fishing. Ice tilts baited with shiners were mostly quiet, with only a couple of yellow perch being caught. Jig fishing was not much better with only a couple of yellow perch caught. They were the only fishermen on the lake at the state boat ramp. Normally, they catch a few trout and pickerel, but not this past Sunday. They still had a



This large yellow perch was caught by John Schreiber this past week in local waters.

good time fishing. Any time a father and son can spend time together fishing, it is a good day!

This writer received a notice from Massachusetts Fish & Wildlife’s Marion Larson, Chief information & Education Officer last week, in reference to the proposed hunting and fishing license increase for 2022. It sure is a bad time to think about increasing the licenses in the wake of a pandemic. For those that have a computer, they should take advantage of the three Zoom platforms being held on Feb. 4 and 9, at 6:30 p.m. & the Feb. 6 meeting being held at 10 a.m.! Instructions for joining the online sessions, or by phone can be found on [mass.gov/mass-wildlife-funding](https://mass.gov/mass-wildlife-funding). Massachusetts Fish & wildlife will also release a list of their proposed increases in the spring, and will hold formal publichearings at that time? This writer would urge all hunting and fishing license holders in the state, to take the time to make their voices heard at the times mentioned. The public may also provide public input using an online form on [mass.gov/masswildlife-funding](https://mass.gov/masswildlife-funding) or by mail to Mass. Wildlife, License Fee, 1 Rabbit Hill Rd., Westborough MA 01581.

*Take a Kid Fishing & Keep Them Rods Bending!*



Photos Courtesy

Cub Scout Pack 2 fishing at the Uxbridge Rod & Gun Club Last Saturday.



This week’s picture shows, left to right, Kevin Gray, Jared Negro, and Kyle Smith, enjoying some ice fishing in local waters. Fishing was very good, with numerous species of fish being caught.

## Joy! It’s an inside job

A long-time friend, Brenda Badger Bonser posted a meme this week. For those unaware, a “meme” is a picture that someone has added a message to make a point. Brenda posted a picture of a joyful child. It read, “Don’t wait for things to get easier, simpler, better. Life will always be complicated. Learn to be happy right now. Otherwise, you’ll run out of time.”

It doesn’t surprise me that Brenda felt it important to post this. Brenda was always a person with a kind word upon her lips and a smile for everyone. Brenda radiated joy and still does.

Thank you, Brenda, for your beautiful posting. We all needed to hear this. We know it to be true. We all recognize our lives aren’t infinite, yet we often live as though we have forever to do the things we want to do.

Brenda’s meme conveys a short and concise message accompanied by a matching picture. In a way, it’s like a much shorter version of my weekly column. My mission with this column is to provide enough information to influence mindsets from negative to positive, hopefully turning readers from pessimists to optimists. I want to help others understand that we have far more control over our lives than they believe.

Most people travel through life looking for others to blame and others to resolve their issues. Too often, they are looking for the government to solve their problems. The government has never been good at solv-



POSITIVELY  
SPEAKING  
.....  
GARY W.  
MOORE

ing the problems of citizens. Optimistic people tend to be more self-reliant. Instead of looking for solutions from the government, optimists just want the government to get out of the way. I don’t look for my doctor to solve all my medical problems. I want help and support from my doctor, but I have taken control of my healthcare. No one will be a better advocate for my health than me.

Optimists look for a better outcome and believe it will happen. Not through wishful thinking, but because they believe something better is coming. That belief motivates them to act to make it so. Optimists believe by working in concert with others, positive things can happen ... but if they sit and wait for someone to take them by the hand and make things better, they will always be disappointed. The commonly heard phrase, “If it is to be, it’s up to me” is true.

Joy is something grander than happiness. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, and when we find joy it’s infused with comfort and wrapped in peace. It’s an attitude of the heart and spirit, but we won’t find it unless we seek it and understand it is within us, waiting to be felt and expressed.

So, back to Brenda’s meme ... happiness comes from external events and

forces. My family makes me happy. Joy is different. It’s an inside job. It comes from our decision to live our lives with joy. And you know what? I’ve never once met a joyful pessimist. I’ve never even met a happy pessimist.

Choose to be joyful and happy. Choose to believe the best in others and believe the best is yet to come. It’s a beautiful thing to see when others realize we expect them to be good, their inner self tries not to disappoint us.

Here’s my challenge. Find your joy today. Find it in this moment ... at home or at work ... in a quiet time or a busy situation. Find joy with your spouse, your kids or with a person you are meeting for the very first time ... or find it in a quiet moment, alone. You will only find it within you.

Optimism makes our lives and the world a better place. Last week I spoke of the pandemic of pessimism and how pessimism can spread like a virus. It’s also true of optimism.

So how and where do you look for happiness and joy? For happiness, look around you and seek it in every circumstance. For joy, look within your heart and mind.

I have found joy this morning in writing to you. Will you join me?

*Gary W. Moore is a freelance columnist, speaker, and author of three books including the award-winning, critically acclaimed, “Playing with the Enemy.” Follow Gary on Twitter @ GaryWMoore721 and at [www.garywmoore.com](http://www.garywmoore.com).*

## Friday’s Child



Deniol  
Age 14

Hi! My name is Deniol and I love basketball and soccer!

Deniol is a sweet and social boy of Hispanic descent. Those who know him best describe him as polite, eager to please and very kind. Deniol makes friends easily and gets along well with other children and with adults. Deniol’s favorite activity is playing sports, especially basketball and soccer, as well as playing video games. He hopes to be a police officer when he grows up and likes to watch television shows that feature police officers.

At school, Deniol’s teachers report that he puts a lot of effort into his work and wants to do well in class. Deniol receives extra support in school, and participates in social-skills and life-skills groups. He

gets along well with his classmates and teachers.

Legally freed for adoption, Deniol is looking for a loving family that can provide him with support, structure and consistency. An ideal family will also be able to advocate for his needs, and help him utilize appropriate community services. Although his social worker believes that he will do well in a family of any constellation, with or without children, she believes that he will do particularly well in a family where he can have siblings. A family who enjoys being active would also be a good match for Deniol.

### Who Can Adopt?

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

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

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

# OBITUARIES

## Robert (Bob) Dugas, 89

CHARLTON – Robert ( Bob) Dugas, 89, of Charlton passed away at home on January 27, 2021. He was born July 4, 1931 in Worcester, MA to Alphonse Dugas and Bertha (Johndro) Dugas.

He leaves behind his sister-in-laws Nancy Dugas and Edna Dugas, his nephew Brian Dugas and wife Lisa, nieces Amy Dugas and husband Jeff Robbins, Rochelle Howe and her husband R.J. and companion Lorraine (Laurie) Lamereaux. He was predeceased by his parents, his brother Arthur Dugas, sister Rhea Barton, brother Norman Dugas and nephew Stephen Dugas.

Robert graduated from Charlton High School in 1950, and entered the Air Force soon after. He had a strong interest in aviation and continued his education in Tulsa at the Spartan School of Aviation before finishing training at the Embry-Riddle School of Aviation in Miami, Florida. His background in aircraft mechanics, flight engineering and airframe and power-plant mechanics led to a long, success-

ful career at Sikorsky Aircraft as a helicopter inspector. His job gave him the opportunity to travel to Singapore and Germany and throughout the U.S.

After retirement, Bob returned to his family home in Charlton where he happily embraced life’s simple pleasures. He enjoyed traveling to Florida and Pennsylvania Dutch country, working in his yard, eating out, playing golf, and spending time with his family, Laurie and friends.

Bob was proud to be a Mason and member of the Oxford Post American Legion. He was an enthusiastic New England sports fan. Bob was a dedicated parishioner at St. Joseph’s Church in Charlton and never missed an 8:00 a.m. mass if he could help it. Bob was loved very much and will be greatly missed for his ever-present smile, easy laugh and sweet disposition. He will always be remembered by his nieces and nephews as the “fun uncle”.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in his honor to St. Joseph’s Church, 10 H. Putnam Rd. Ext., Charlton, MA 01507. A celebratory mass will be held at a later date and burial will be private. Arrangements are under the care of Robert J. Miller-Charlton Funeral Services, Charlton, MA

To leave a message of condolence, please visit: [RJMillerfunerals.net](http://RJMillerfunerals.net)

## Margaret LaFleche, 97

CHARLTON-Margaret(MacQuarrie) LaFleche, 97, passed away peacefully at the Overlook Masonic Health Center in Charlton.



Beloved mother, sister, aunt, and friend, Margaret was pre-deceased by her husband, Real N. LaFleche, and her sisters, Neilena “Tootsie”, Mary Louise, Joeanna, Evangeline “Vangie” and Augusta “Gussie”. She is survived by her adoring daughter, Heidi LaFleche, and her husband, Gregory Passler of Watertown, MA; her brother, Charles “Mac” MacQuarrie of Lawndale, CA; and many nieces and nephews.

Margaret was born in Framingham to Charles and Margaret MacQuarrie, who then moved to Charlton. She loved to share stories of growing up in the country in a big family and attending a one-room schoolhouse. Margaret was voted Most Popular in her Charlton High School class, and with good reason. Her smile, kindness, and upbeat personality would light up rooms and warm hearts for a lifetime. Margaret also had a flair for drama, playing the lead role in Anne of Green Gables, which she fondly remembered and retold. She always wanted to be an actress and she made the world her stage.

After graduating high school, Margaret worked at the American Optical, where she met her husband, Real LaFleche, and eventually moved to Southbridge. Through the decades, she held several part-time jobs, including as a cashier at the Mary E. Wells Junior High School cafeteria, a bank teller, and, her favorite—as a clerk in period costume in the general store at Old Sturbridge Village.

She enjoyed travel, including summer vacations with her husband and daughter in Maine, trips with her sister and family to Scotland to explore the Isles, as well as visits to family in

California and Florida. She relished any adventure, whether a birthday cruise to the Bahamas, road trips to Niagara Falls or Montreal, or a simple drive up Dresser Hill to the ice cream stand.

Margaret expressed her joy for life in many ways. She painted beautiful portraits and still life paintings on canvas and did tole painting on wood, tin, and slate, often gifting her creations to friends. She sang in the Interfaith Choir, belonged to the Southbridge Women’s Club, and volunteered at the original Masonic Home reading to elders. She was also an avid antiques buff, yard sale and thrift store queen, and surrounded herself with her whimsical “treasures.”

Margaret loved all animals, big and small. She became “grandma” to her daughter and son-in-law’s dogs, cherishing their tail-wagging visits. Margaret always kept a youthful, positive outlook, along with her wry (and often sassy) sense of humor. She was always willing to share her 90+ years of wisdom and offer comfort to others. Her spirit is eternal. Though she will be missed enormously, her heart with always be with those who love her dearly.

The family would like to express their heartfelt thanks to the staff of the Overlook Masonic Health Center for their dedication and compassionate care, and for treating Margaret like family.

A celebration of Margaret’s life will be held at a later date, at the family’s discretion.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Friends of Charlton Animal Shelter - Nutritional Assistance for Pets Program, helping local families in need feed their pets. Donations may be mailed to FOCAS - NAPP, P.O. Box 322, Charlton, MA 01507 or made online at [focascharlton.org](http://focascharlton.org).

The Daniel T. Morrill Funeral Home, 130 Hamilton St., is directing arrangements.

[www.morrillfuneralhome.com](http://www.morrillfuneralhome.com)

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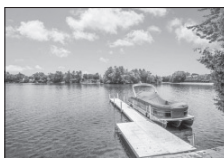


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### WEBSTER - 103 UPPER GORE RD



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### LAND

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**Oxford** - 4 Leicester St - Approx. 8.47 ACRES! River Frontage Possible to be Subdivided! **\$89,900**  
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### DUDLEY - 22 ROBERTS ROAD



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### Lake Shirley - 647 Reservoir Rd



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Lakefront! Lake Shirley! Modern Flare on a Lakefront Colonial! 1st level Formal large entry foyer, living room, gas fireplace, chef kitchen, Impala black granite, center island, 3 season porch, overlooking the lake. 1st FL bedroom suite w/ shower and jacuzzi tub. 2nd floor Master Suite! Lower level Summer kitchen, full bath, game room. Crown moulding & hardwood floors throughout, wired sound system, radiant floors. oversize 2 car garage. Additional Guest House! assisted sale **\$1,040,000.**



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**Sunshine Terrace - \$49,900**

**Thompson CT:** 1 bedroom mobile home. Eat-in kitchen, modern bath recently remodelled, Open living room and office are, 2 parking spaces, 55+ Community.



**10 Vecchia St - \$143,500**

**Webster:** Condo - 1st floor. Totally renovated, Walls, electrical, plumbing, kitchen bath, 2 Bedrooms, Garage

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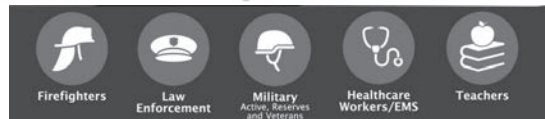
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The Town of Douglas seeks qualified applicants for the part time position of Economic Development Project Facilitator to work under the supervision of the Town Administrator. Complete job description and application via web site [www.douglas-ma.gov](http://www.douglas-ma.gov).

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Send cover letter with resume and Town of Douglas employment application to Matthew Wojcik, Town Administrator, Town of Douglas, Municipal Center, 29 Depot St., Douglas, MA 01516. Position will remain open until filled.

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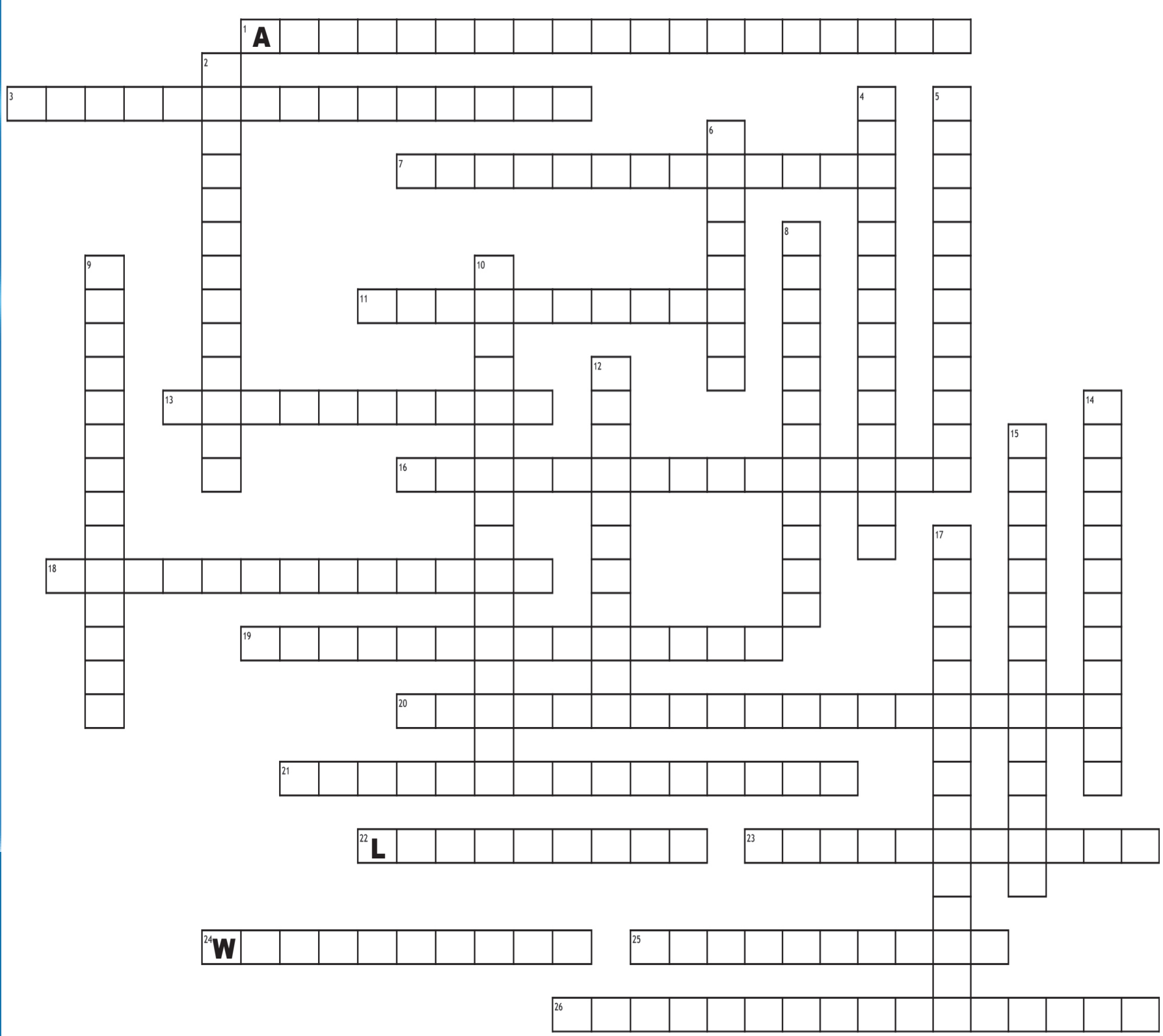
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# 3rd Annual ABC's of the Seasons WINTER EDITION



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- 11. Auto, Boat & RV Loans
- 13. MDPU# 31690
- 16. Winter clothing to cover you from head to foot
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- 19. Since 1978. All Makes & Models.
- 20. We treat chronic bad breath
- 21. Color matching specialists
- 22. 15 years Real Estate Experience
- 23. Foggy, cracked, or broken glass
- 24. ASE Certified Technicians
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- 8. Warm up to a new career
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Please find the answers to this crossword puzzle on page 2 of this section. Enter to win a \$25 gift card to one of these local businesses by mailing in your completed crossword to **ABC Crossword Puzzle, Stonebridge Press, P. O. Box 90, 25 Elm Street, Southbridge, MA 01550**  
OR scan & email or take a picture and email it to [jsima@stonebridgepress.news](mailto:jsima@stonebridgepress.news) by Thursday, February 18.  
Random-drawing for winner of all correct entries to be announced in the February 26th issue of the Express. One entry per person.  
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# Grow quick, easy and nutritious microgreens

Add fresh flavor to your meals year-round with microgreens. These easy-to-grow greens need minimal space and no special equipment for a flavorful and nutritious harvest in little more than a week.

Use microgreens on salads, soups, pizzas, omelets, in stir fries or as a snack. These tiny seedlings are packed with more nutrition than their mature counterparts.

Add a bit of spice to soups and sandwiches with radish and mustard microgreens. Try red cabbage, chard, beets and amaranth for some added color. Sunflower's somewhat nutty flavor makes it perfect for snacking. Let some of your pea microgreens grow a bit taller to use in stir fries.

Fill a shallow container with a two-inch layer of moist potting or seed starting mix. Sprinkle seeds over the soil surface and lightly cover with potting or seed starting mix. Water gently to ensure good seed-to-soil contact.

Continue to water often enough to keep the soil slightly moist. Reduce your workload and keep the planting mix consistently moist by covering freshly planted containers with plastic. Once the greens break



GARDEN  
MOMENTS  
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MELINDA  
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through the soil, remove the cover and move the container to a sunny location or under artificial lights.

Increase the fun and success with a microgreen growing kit like the Organic Herb and Microgreens Grow Kit from Gardener's Supply ([www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com)). This set up is the perfect size for your countertop or other small space. The full spectrum light is adjustable so you can raise or lower it as needed whether growing short microgreens or taller herbs.

Or skip the growing mix and mess with a Jute Microgreens Starter Kit. Set the jute mat in the shallow tray, add seeds, and water. Then compost the jute mat after harvesting your greens.

Follow the planting directions on the seed packet. You typically need two to three tablespoons of seeds for an 11-by-21-inch tray. Buy enough seeds to make additional plantings every week or two to ensure a constant supply. Microgreens like most vegetables taste best and are most nutritious when eaten fresh. And these tasty bundles do not last long in storage.

The microgreens are ready to harvest once the plant forms the first

set of true leaves. These are the leaves that resemble those of the mature plant. This takes anywhere from 7 to 14 days, depending on the room temperature and type of microgreens you are growing.

Use scissors to clip the greens off at ground level. If you prefer to use the whole seedling, roots and all, you will need to wash off any of the seed starting mix clinging to the roots.

Once you harvest all the greens, it is time to replant. Save money and be kind to the environment by composting the used planting mix and reusing containers. Convert shallow fast-food containers into planting trays. Disinfect these or other planting trays before using them for subsequent plantings. Just soak the containers in a 10% bleach and water solution for ten minutes. Then rinse in clear water before planting.

Gardening doesn't get much easier than this. You will enjoy the fresh flavor all winter long as you wait for the outdoor growing season to begin.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything"* DVD series and the nationally-syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* TV & radio pro-



Photo Courtesy — Gardener's Supply Company  
Small grow light kits make growing herbs and microgreens indoors easy and convenient for harvesting and cooking.

gram. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and was commissioned by Gardener's Supply for her expertise to write this article. Myers' Web site is [www.melindamyers.com](http://www.melindamyers.com).

## FD DEBATE

continued from page A1

department," Barton said.

Selectmen were split on how to approach this process with some feeling the project needs to be prioritized while others, drawing from experience with the public safety building, felt the project would have a better chance of passing if the voters had more time to assess and understand what is being asked of them. Selectman Bill Borowski was one who thought the voters needed some "time to breath" after the past few years of debating the public safety building.

"My initial lean based upon prior discussions would be to have the debt exclusion vote in November. We talked midterms yes, but we also have to remember that's the gubernatorial election so who knows what's going to happen there," Borowski said. "I would assume we're going to have a higher

turnout and based upon the discussion that we've had the better representation we have of the voters I think the better off we'll be - I for one would like to see a formal estimate as we go into that ballot vote."

Selectman David Singer sided with Borowski's perspective saying he felt that another failure would kill the project entirely for the foreseeable future.

"My belief is if it fails, we're not coming back even for fire, so I'd rather be very conservative," said Singer. "I'd rather have (late) 2022 and have it pass the debt exclusion and see it go through than see it be pushed sooner and fail because I don't think there's a second shot."

Selectman Karen Spiewak offered a rebuttal noting that renovations at the current fire department facilities would only cost the town more money and that voters already have an invested interest in the project with many voicing support for a fire station only initiative during public forums.

## Conn.

Isabella Boateng is a practical nursing student at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy. As a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), she spends her days caring for her patients and maintaining their safety from COVID-19 and its complications. Working at All Ways There Home Care, which is at Vernon, Conn., she has been channeling her experiences on the front line into the culinary arts. She proudly states that her medium is cooking.

Her dishes have brought love, hope and faith to her family and close friends. As one of the student representatives for the PN Class of 2021, she helps spread the message for prevention: mask, physical distancing, and handwashing. As a UNICEF Club officer, she helps plan and hold food related fundraising activities to support projects for children's advocacy. Boateng has been called an "angel on earth"

"I don't think we should be worried about voter turnout. The need hasn't gone away. We should address it as soon as possible. This is a public safety issue. This is a workplace safety issue," Spiewak said. "I'm concerned about kicking this down the road. I know we need to proceed with caution, but there are needs and we're going to need band aids put on things and that would be a cost - I think we also need to let the public know, as we said from day one when we were promoting the public safety building and why we needed it, that if this fails at a ballot vote then internally we're going to have to get the money from somewhere because the need has to be addressed and that impacts public services."

Selectman Patsy Rydlak also felt the project needed to be prioritized sooner rather than later.

"I get the fall turnout, but that just seems like such a long way away to get this thing started. We need a fire station. We've all seen it. Are we sure that

by a former patient. For her, honoring her heritage with the dishes she cooks and being at the bedside, caring for her patients is sacred.

## Brianna Laforest of Webster

Creating art is a way for healthcare providers to remember and capture their experiences on the front line. Being creative and making art helps Brianna Laforest cope. She does so one flower at a time by making gorgeous flower arrangements and spreading cheer along the way. Blooms have always had uplifting effects. The pandemic, chronic stress, and depression can contribute to negative health outcomes such as poor cardiovascular health. Laforest has young children, and she hopes they can look back and say their mom worked during the pandemic and she did a great job. Work is exciting for Laforest as the nursing administrative coordinator at UMass Memorial Medical Center. As a practical nursing student,

we want that fall vote? Are we doing it just so we can make our residents more comfortable and balance that with the possible costs? What if we have a couple hundred thousand dollars in costs with the old fire station? That's what I'm balancing. I would like to get this moving and send this money up front," Rydlak said.

The discussion eventually culminated in three votes, one unanimous one asking the Fire Station Building Committee to establish concrete numbers, not an estimate, this year. Another vote saw a 3-2 split with selectmen Borowski, Singer and Stephen Koronis voting in favor of placing the debt exclusion on the 2022 November ballot. However, Koronis later called the vote back to the table after reassessing the information at hand and joined Selectmen Spiewak and Rydlak in rescinding the prior vote tentatively setting the ballot question for May of 2022 instead.

she reports to Harrington Hospital for her medical-surgical nursing rotation. She maintains a busy household, a challenging job, and a full plate as a practical nursing student. She can manage it all. Future generations can look back and learn more about how she balanced it all and what it was like to live through the pandemic.

Evidence shows that art can help ease stress and anxiety. Taking part in creative activities can help alleviate the burden of chronic diseases. It is also noted that creative activities help individuals express emotions and experiences that are too difficult to put into words, such as experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These student nurses are on track to be LPNs and RNs upon graduation, albeit they are already healthcare heroes officially.

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