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Thursday-Friday, April 25-26, 2024

Sturbridge looks at fiscal issues

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

STURBRIDGE – The town got its first general look at the \$42 million fiscal 2025 budget April 9, with Town Administrator Robin Grimm's presentation to both selectmen and Finance Committee. Instead of a breakdown of the plan itself, it was more of a look at issues the town faces financially.

One of them, which Grimm noted is somewhat unusual, is "how much this town relies on its hotel and meal taxes." That comprises about 18 percent of Sturbridge's revenue, and makes it

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Courtesy photo

The Tantasqua Regional High School Drama Club invites community members to its productions of "Little Shop of Horrors" May 3-4 in the TRHS auditorium.

Zero-based budget to go before Charlton voters

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — The Town of Charlton has finalized a proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2025 which will go before the voters next month during the Annual Town Meeting. The spending plan falls within the limits of Proposition 2 ½ and will not require an override, but that doesn't mean the spending plan lacks increases in both general government and education spending.

Town Administrator Andrew Golas presented the proposed budget to Selectmen on April 9 which comes in 8.2 percent higher than Fiscal Year 2024, equivalent to \$3,086,978. Over \$1.9 million, or 10 percent, of the increase is the result of educational costs after the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee sent a level funding spending plan to both Dudley and Charlton. Golas noted that even with the substantial increase the education spending plan is still affordable for Charlton and that the spending plan is a "zero-based budget" that will not require an override above the limitations of Proposition 2 ½.

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STURBRIDGE – The Tantasqua Regional High School Drama Club invites community members to its productions of "Little Shop of Horrors."

Performances will take place on Friday, May 3, at 7 p.m., as well as on Saturday, May 4, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. All performances will take place at the TRHS auditorium.

"Little Shop of Horrors" follows the meek, well-meaning Seymour Krelborn as he works at a struggling flower shop on Skid Row. One day, Seymour's luck begins to

change when a mysterious, smooth-talking plant appears out of nowhere during a total eclipse of the sun. The plant promises the young botanist fame and fortune...as long as Seymour promises to feed it blood in exchange.

As Seymour struggles to keep the plant fed and happy, the plant's insatiable appetite grows, leading to a series of darkly comedic and increasingly outrageous events.

"The best way to end my senior year is to be in

an amazing production with my favorite people to perform with," said Emma Lord.

Added fellow senior

Layne Holcomb, "I love getting together to review music and practice lines. Everyone is always

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TRHS presents "Little Shop of Horrors" May 3-4

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
NEWS STAFF WRITER

Citizen input sought for hazard plan

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHBRIDGE – The town and FEMA want your input to update Southbridge's Hazard Mitigation Plan for the next five years.

The process actually began earlier this year, but it's now reaching the public comment stage. The draft plan and survey are available under "Supporting Documents" at <https://southbridge.civilspace.io/en/projects/update-to-southbridge-s-hazard-mitigation-plan>. The latter will be open until May 10. At some point after that, they're planning a public hearing as well, but it has not yet been scheduled.

According to FEMA's James Mannion, this project is one of many the agency is doing as part of its shift from "reactive disaster spending" to making "stronger infrastructure and current plans" to promote community resilience. Doing it makes Southbridge eligible for federal grants that "prioritize projects to protect a community from disaster," he said, noting the goal is to build "a very strong foundation for what's going to be built in the future."

The project lead is Sarah Baryluk, who said the process to date has involved discussions with some town entities, but not all. She said interviews so far have revealed key concerns which were "not a huge 180 from the previous plan," but revealed many participants "feel Southbridge isn't prepared for a natural disaster."

The foci still include heavy snow, thunderstorms, and flooding, but she said two of the 10 hazards they look at have notably risen in priority – extreme temperatures and flooding. With climate change, losing forest cover, and stormwater drainage issues, she said Southbridge needs to look at how it (re)develops in certain parts of town that might expose people to such hazards. To the Planning Board, she also noted the plan looks at how climate change will affect each hazard.

"A lot of people don't really know how serious those hazards can be, or how to prepare for them," Baryluk told the Conservation Commission last week. FEMA's goal is to "prioritize projects that not only mitigate natural hazards, but...also can provide benefits all year round."

Like the state's Municipal Vulnerability Program, the HMP focuses on "nature-based solutions," which she said, "align well with Southbridge's priorities." Southbridge undertook that planning process about two years ago, and this plan is being drafted to work with that one. The draft plan has a list of key projects and potential funding sources.

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Magical mischief at the Senior Center

SOUTHBRIDGE – Many kids of all ages have at least toyed with the idea of magic, wishing they could do the things fantasy heroes or dreams depict.

Years ago, Ed Cope was one of them. Saying he was "inspired by Dumbledore" of the Harry Potter series, "I wanted to make things disappear at my fingertips." In school 25 years ago, he became "the kid who knew some magic," but turned it into a full-time occupation in 2006 after trying his hand at a dozen other things that simply didn't hold his interest very long.

Last week he brought his "Ed the Wizard" show to the Senior Center, focusing his sleight of hand mostly on the kids but with punny jokes that mostly appealed to the adults in the audience. (He was also recently at the library's children's room.)



Gus Steeves

With the help of Vera (left) and Savannah (right), Ed prepares to cut Maeve in half with a rope.



Gus Steeves

Vera correctly guesses that grandmother Darlene Marcucci was thinking about the Golden Egg card.



Enhanced WPI transfer programs open new vistas for QCC students

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College and Worcester Polytechnic Institute have signed an institutional articulation agreement for QCC students transferring into WPI, guaranteeing them admission to WPI when they meet program requirements.

Since 1989, over 400 QCC students have transferred into WPI after completing their associate degree. Now, with the signing of this new agreement, there will be expanded pathways for transfer students, ensuring more individuals have access to the education and training needed to meet workforce demands in STEM fields.

“WPI has always been a strategic partner with QCC and through this new agreement, our two institutions stand in commitment that higher education for all can be a reality. Furthermore, this agreement demonstrates that there can be access for talented community college students, particularly those from first-generation and minority backgrounds to selective institutions like WPI,” said QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D. “This is an important day for QCC and WPI, as well as our region.”

“Deepening our ties with community colleges is vital as they serve as the gateway to

higher education for numerous students,” said WPI President Grace Wang. “By establishing pathways that reduce barriers and offer built-in support, we make obtaining a four-year degree more accessible for QCC students. Moreover, the strategic partnership between QCC and WPI will help meet today’s workforce demands and foster regional economic growth.”

Under the new articulation agreement, QCC students with an associate degree who have successfully completed a college-level precalculus or Calculus I course, a college-level laboratory science course and have earned a 3.3 or higher GPA will be guaranteed admission to WPI. QCC students who have not yet completed their associate degree but have a minimum 3.0 GPA and have successfully completed a college-level precalculus or Calculus I course and successfully completed a college-level laboratory science course may be offered admission to transfer to a bachelor’s degree program at WPI.

Upon admission, students are eligible for certain transfer-student support programs and opportunities at WPI, including a designated advisor in the Academic Advising Office and a staff liaison in the Office of Undergraduate Studies.



QCC transfer students will also have immediate access to WPI’s Career Development Center and summer research opportunities. In

addition, admitted students will be required to take a semester-long transfer transition program and receive a summer undergraduate

Courtesy
 (Left) Back row: QCC Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs Kevin Li, QCC Dean of the School of Business, Engineering & Technology Shunda Ware, QCC Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs Kathy Rentsch, WPI Interim Dean of Undergraduate Studies Arne Gericke, WPI Dean of the Business School Debora Jackson, QCC Vice President for Strategic Enrollment & Student Engagement Michelle Tufau Afriye, WPI Interim Senior Vice President and Provost Art Heinricher. Front row: QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja and WPI President Dr. Grace Wang.

course tuition waiver for one course taken in each of two summers, during their enrollment at WPI. Additional opportunities are available for qualified students to pursue graduate programming upon enroll-

ment at WPI. Information about admissions and application requirements for transfer students as well as transfer agreements can be found at www.wpi.edu/+transfer.

Student nurse shares reflections on Wound Care Center Harrington

SOUTHBRIDGE — Practical nursing student, Ashley Breault of Brookfield, recently shared her reflections at the Wound Care Center Harrington.

Breault is a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at Quaboag Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center (since 2021). She was previously honored as Employee of the month at Quaboag and has been active with mentorship since 2022. She completed her CNA and Home Health Aide Certification at the Fieldstone School in 2021. Breault is an alumna of Quaboag Regional Middle High School (2019). She is certified

in Mental Health First Aid, Dementia Care, Stop the Bleed, HCP/BLS Provider CPR and first aid. She participated in her clinical team’s Luminary lighting project for the Alzheimer’s Association’s the Longest Night to shine a light to diminish the darkness and illuminate a path towards a world where Alzheimer’s and dementia are nothing but a memory. Recently, Breault took the leadership of restocking the PN food pantry at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy.

“Our nursing students continue to be blessed to have the opportunity to observe at the Wound Care Center at Harrington,” stated Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN Academy Director at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy. Under the guidance of Adrianna Rothera, BSN, RN, WCC Clinical Program Director at



Courtesy photo
 Ashley Breault

the Wound Care Center, UMass Memorial Health Harrington at 10 North Main Street in Charlton, who stated that “the students were great so far!”

Bay Path Practical Nursing students are assigned a two-day clinical observation at the Wound Care Center at Harrington. Bolandrina added, “Having a certified hyperbaric therapist, an LPN and an alumna at that, (Paige Wood, LPN, CHT, PN Class of 2014) makes a positive difference for patient care.”

Breault reflected, “Before this experience, I had not imagined being interested in this specific nursing field. However, while I observed the wound nurse for two days, it gave me a better understanding of what this fascinating role of a wound nurse entails. The nurse uncovered the dressing, examined, and cleaned the wound with normal saline, and measured the length, width, and depth. The nurse would then take a picture with a ruler in front of the wound and document the new measurements into the client’s chart. After the provider examined the client’s wound, the nurse would reapply the new dressing and set up their next appointment.”

Breault continued, “It was incredible to see the wound nurse’s relationship with her clients and the smile
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PROPERTIES FOR RENT
 Prince Edward Island, Canada
Summer/Fall Weekly Cottage Rental
 2-bedroom newly constructed oceanfront cottage that sleeps 8. Sweeping views of the pond, ocean and lighthouse. Enjoy kayaking, bicycling and beach walking. \$900/wk. Contact Scott at 603-254-5032 or scottm@plymouth.edu
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Shop Local!

Friday's Child

Dakodan
 Age 10

Hi! My name is Dakodan and I would someday like to go to a professional sporting event.

Dakodan is an energetic young boy who loves sports especially basketball, football and soccer. He also enjoys listening to music. Dakodan does very well academically in all subjects and is at or above grade level in all his subjects. His favorite subject is math. Having a great memory Dakodan can remember most events in his life and likes to talk to others about them. He is also a strong advocate for himself. Favorite foods for Dakodan are hamburgers and donuts but he is usually not fussy about what he eats. Helping around his home Dakodan likes to make his bed, keep his room clean and organized and help with chores.

Dakodan would like a mom and dad family. He especially wants a dad in his life and would benefit from having one who could be a role model for him. An active and sports involved family would be a good match for Dakodan as they would be able to get him out socializing with his peers and funneling his energy into healthy activities. He will also need his new family’s help to maintain regular contact with his 2 siblings who lives in western MA.

<https://adopt.mareinc.org/waiting-child-profiles#gallery/child/8897>

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.

CCUMC holds its first Dynamic Collectibles, Cards, and Craft Show

CHARLTON - Charlton City United Methodist Church is excited to announce a new Dynamic Collectibles, Cards, and Craft Show. The first show will be May 4 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at 74 Stafford Street, Charlton. The show will be jam-packed with vendors and will feature baked goods and beverages.

The May 4 show will feature rare Pokémon cards from Dynamic Card Collectors, comics and toys from Remember that Collectibles; a variety of trading card game cards from Wicked East Coasters and Toyland Treasures; Epicure products for food service from Barbara’s Epic Eats; Bee Jewelry and Scarves; essential oils and natural wellness products and tips; handmade greeting cards; fly fishing resources; Sweet Leilani Crafts & SassiePastries; anime/gaming/kawaii merchandise from Tokkishi; and many, many more.

Champagne Originals led by the married team of Jac and Cat Champagne will offer pet bandanas and much more. Look how cute!

Hope to see you there!

Any interested vendors of collectibles, cards, or crafts can contact Joe Dupont at joedupont@dynamiccardcollectors.com for this or future shows.

70th Annual Windham County 4-H Auction & Tag Sale

326 Taft Pond Rd., Pomfret, CT
 Fri and Sat May 3rd and May 4th

Auction: 5 PM Preview, 6 PM Auction
Both Nights Admission Free
Sat – Outside Tent Auction 5:30 – 6:00 PM

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and Sat 9 am – 5 pm
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Friday Night:
 Cape Escape, a pre-Mattel American Girl Doll and a Player Piano
Saturday Night:
2 VIP Red Sox Tickets
 for July 14
 behind home plate and an autographed Derek Jeter 16x20 framed photo and a new snowblower

Exploring the state's stormy past and future

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

REGION — Farmers and farm-friendly folks from across the Bay State converged on Holy Cross College last weekend for the first Mass Agriculture in Action Expo, exploring topics ranging from bees to soil to climate to seed starting.

There was no keynote speaker per se, but the person with probably the best-known name was CBS meteorologist Eric Fisher, who noted it's actually easier to predict climate than weather. He noted that's mostly be-



Courtesy photo

Eric Fisher

cause "you kind of know the inputs" for climate, including pollution, greenhouse gases, eruptions, El Nino/

La Nina cycles and solar trends, while daily weather is far more variable.

In general, he noted "the globe should be cooling right now based on natural forcing," but is not, and that's due to human-driven greenhouse gases.

Warming is most notable in the ocean, where temperature has been slowly rising since the 1970s and causing coral bleaching and growing numbers of oxygen-free dead zones. (Pollution is also a factor.) As the water warms, he said, it's been driving species out of

their original habitats. One slide showed the northward flee of lobsters, which used to be common around Cape Cod, but are now up in the Gulf of Maine, "one of the fastest warming water bodies on the planet." While we might barely notice a couple degrees, that's "a significant change for plants and animals."

The tropical Atlantic has seen temperatures "way above where it's been in the historical record," and tropical species are moving north. Bay State fishermen, for example, have been

catching bonito (a tropical fish).

As water heat rises, the water itself expands, making high tides and storm surges higher. He showed photos from Truro, where the coastline is being consumed by the ocean and homes have "disappeared" in the last 10 years.

It also fuels stronger storms, but Fisher noted there's no evidence yet of more storms. Typically, Massachusetts gets hit by them in batches with years between them; the most

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Ruth Wells Center Tag Sale May 11

SOUTHBRIDGE - The Ruth Wells Center for the Arts is holding a tag sale on the spacious front lawn at 111 Main Street in Southbridge on Saturday, May 11 (rain date May 18) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Vendors are welcome to reserve a space to sell their collectibles, vintage items or all the "stuff" currently sitting in your attic, cellar or closets. The space is 10'x10' for \$30. The sign-up button may be found on the website ruthwellscenter.com. The annual tag sale offers the opportunity to downsize, while making a profit. Food Trucks have been invited to join the festivities.

At the same time, there will be a photo exhibit in the Center galleries featuring the works of Helen Boyle and Art Furtado. The exhibit is free and open to the public. The opening reception will be noon to 4 p.m. on May 11.

Reserve your space NOW before the lawn is filled. For more information, call the Center at 508 764 3341.

The Ruth Wells Center for the Arts was established in 1977 on the grounds donated by the Wells family of American Optical Company fame. The Center offers opportunities for youth and adults to encourage art, music and culture. We host art and music sessions, as well as exhibits by local artists. The tag sale offers an opportunity to visit the center, wander the galleries- all while selling treasures to the community. Please join us.



The Ruth Wells Center for the Arts is holding a tag sale on the spacious front lawn at 111 Main Street in Southbridge on Saturday, May 11.

Saint Joseph School honor roll

WEBSTER — The following students have been named to the honor roll at St. Joseph School for the third term of the 2023-2024 academic year.

Grade 4

High Honors: Jon Belanger, Charlotte Dollar, Amadeusz Gacek, Kirillos Ibrahim, Allen Jean-Paul, Severyn Kuznecki, Mileydi Loja, Johnny Marcuccio, Mathieu Prunier, Elixander Salome-Negron, Charles Smith, Marina Szydlik

Honors: Armani Cedeno, Andrew Hachigian, Connor Kippax

Grade 5

High Honors: Bella Kicilinski, Evelyn Macko, Jacob Manzi, Lily Martin, Amelia Potem, Abby Rubin, Sophia Surowaniec

Honors: Ari Benson, Grayson Dollar, Lukas Stock, James Miranda, Gabriel Ketnouvong-Ung

Grade 6

High Honors: Kalleia Agosto, Hayley Benes

Honors: Tosin Akindele, Alexis Archambault, Avery Archambault, Lukas Barbosa, Jason Bianchi, Tenleigh Dowd, Mychael Jones, Neli Kuznecki, Jacob Marcuccio

Credit: Ivonka Waranjtyts

Grade 7

High Honors: Tobi Akindele, Rosemary Basha, Jada Jackson, Simon Kowalczyk, Kyle Muchiru, Faith Muga, Jacob Parafinowicz, Ayla Reed, Alan Rubin, Luke Surowaniec, Liana Worth

Honors: Ryan Amaral, Gianna Pigeon, Zosia Pawlikowska, Arianna Rivers

Credit: Lisa Kippax, Jake Martin, Adam Wozniak

Grade 8

High Honors: Claire Calnan, Molly Hachigian, Jack Keller, Laura Ibrahim, Emily Macko, Ella Parslow, Max Podgorny

Honors: KateLyn Bailergeon, Nevaeh Bourgeois, Gabriel Gallant, Ryan Gruposo, Alan Kulpa, Violet Johnson, Alvin Montreuil

Credit: Renielys Garcia, Tristan Pico, Mya Medina

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, April 27th
from 8AM to 12 PM

Friends of St. Louis Yard Sale

Located in the Church parking lot
Cleaning out? Save you item that are clean & in working order to donate to our yard sale.

Rent a space - \$10 Need a table - Additional \$20

We are accepting donations which can be dropped off at the church hall.

Saturday, April 20, from 8AM to Noon

Thursday, April 25 from 4 to 6PM

Friday, April 26 from 4 to 6PM

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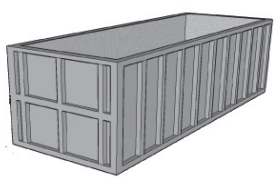


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KIDS PROGRAMS
SPRING STORY-TIMES - Tuesdays and Fridays at 10:45 a.m. April 2 through June 14 (except for April 16, 19, and May 7). Drop in for stories, songs, rhymes, and a craft! Children must be accompanied by an adult caregiver. Registration is not required. Sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL.

Friday, May 10, at 2 p.m. - **DIY GARDEN MOSAICS**. For ages 8-12 with an adult caregiver. Registration is required. Sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL.

Thursday, May 23, at 6 p.m. - **LEGO CLUB**. Ages 5-12 with an adult caregiver. Registration is required. Sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL.

BOOK GROUPS
 Tuesday, May 7 at 1 p.m. - **Afternoon Book Group** ~ Exploring the Importance of Place - This month's book is "Maine" by J. Courtney Sullivan. Sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL. Registration is not required.

Wednesday, May 15 at 6:30 p.m. - **Armchair Travelers Book Group** ~ Challenging Boundaries

- This month's book is "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus. Registration is not required. Sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL.

Tuesday, May 28 at 6:30pm - **World Building Book Group** ~ a book group for lovers of science fiction and fantasy - This month's book is "Light from Uncommon Stars" by Ryka Aoki. Registration is not required. Sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL.

OTHER PROGRAMS
 Saturday, May 4 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. - for ages 5+. **EXPLORE WOOL**

PROCESSING - Join OSV AmeriCorps members to explore wool processing! Spring is the time when people began the process of shearing their sheep and turning that wool into something useful. Come explore different steps of the process and dye some yarn to take home.

Monday, May 20 at 7

p.m. - **VIRTUAL - CELEBRATING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH** with romance author Camilla Eversgreen. We are thrilled to be chatting with Ms. Eversgreen whose book "How to Find Love When You're Weird" makes it clear that people on the spectrum, (in fact, ALL people) are worthy of

love and an HEA (happily ever after). In fact, we would posit that it's the very neurodiverse characteristics that make someone even more attractive to the right person. This program is in conjunction with the Ashland Public Library. Registration is required.

QCC designated as Early College site for Southbridge Public Schools

WORCESTER - Quinsigamond Community College was recently given designation as an Early College site for Southbridge Public Schools by the Joint Committee of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Board of Higher Education. The program will start in the fall of 2024 and include approximately 100 juniors and seniors from Southbridge High School.

"This is an important designation that will have positive, far-reaching implications for Southbridge High School students and the Southbridge community as a whole," said QCC President Dr. Luis G. Pedraja. "Early College offers students an attainable pathway to higher education."

Through funding from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, there is no cost for students in the Early College program. The college-level credits students earn in the program are part of the MassTransfer program, which guarantees students can earn transferrable credits toward a certificate, an associate degree or a bachelor's degree at a Massachusetts community college or state university.

"The whole idea is to give opportunity to students who may not have thought that college could be something in their life. Early College prepares them to be successful in college and the workplace while saving them time and money," said Christina Hebert, QCC's director of Educational Partnership and Early College Initiatives.

Quinsigamond Community College has partnered with Southbridge High School for many years including its current satellite location at the high school and previous English for Speakers of Other Languages and General Education Development programs. Along with Worcester State University, QCC is also part of Early College Worcester, which includes all seven Worcester public high schools. QCC is also a designated Early College site for Marlborough High School.

Southbridge High School is adapting its course schedule for junior and senior-level students, which will allow Early College students to take QCC courses twice a week, while also receiving support programming three days a week. Topics such as career readiness, growth mindset and learning strategies will be covered. Early College students will also be able to access QCC's support services such as tutoring and library services.

Quinsigamond Community College provides high quality, affordable higher education in Worcester County. As a regional leader in education and workforce development, QCC serves the diverse educational needs of Central Massachusetts by providing affordable, accessible and high quality programming leading to transfer, career and lifelong learning. Visit www.QCC.edu to learn more.



Courtesy photo

With spring in full swing and April vacation upon us, families and friends are encouraged to connect with history and nature alike at Old Sturbridge Village during the final weeks of the Kids Free Standard Daytime Admission Promotion, running until April 28.

Explore the Outdoors and Save: Kids Free April Promotion at Old Sturbridge Village

STURBRIDGE - With spring in full swing and April vacation upon us, families and friends are encouraged to connect with history and nature alike at Old Sturbridge Village during the final weeks of the Kids Free Standard Daytime Admission Promotion, running until April 28.

Throughout April, up to two children, aged 17 years or younger, will be admitted for free with each adult standard full-price daytime admission ticket. Families can embark on a journey through time discovering the rich past of 19th century New England and immersing themselves in hands-on

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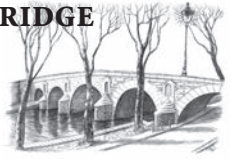
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PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

There is no “One size fits all”

In a world filled with variety and complexity, it's essential to recognize and appreciate the wide spectrum of human capabilities and nuances. Yet, there are those among us who, due to various factors such as limited education or closed-mindedness, struggle to grasp the richness and depth of human nature. These individuals often cling to traditional beliefs and narrow perspectives, unable or unwilling to acknowledge the scientific discoveries and advancements that shed light on the intricacies of human behavior.

It's time to address the misconception that intelligence is solely determined by academic achievement or adherence to conventional wisdom. In reality, true intelligence encompasses the ability to understand and appreciate the complexity of the human experience, including its many facets and dimensions. This requires an open mind and a willingness to explore new ideas, even if they challenge long-held beliefs or societal norms.

It's important to emphasize that intelligence is not a fixed trait but rather a dynamic and multifaceted quality that can be cultivated and expanded over time. Those with so-called “simple minds” or limited education should not be dismissed or marginalized. Instead, they should be encouraged to broaden their horizons.

Scientific research has revealed countless fascinating insights into human behavior, from the intricacies of our cognitive processes to the complexities of our emotions and social interactions. These discoveries have expanded our understanding of what it means to be human and have challenged many preconceived notions about human nature.

For example, studies in psychology have shown that human behavior is influenced by a multitude of factors, including genetics, environment, and personal experiences. This means that there is no one-size-fits-all explanation for why people think, feel, or act the way they do. Each individual is unique, shaped by a complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social forces.

Furthermore, advances in neuroscience have revealed the remarkable plasticity of the human brain, demonstrating its capacity for growth and change throughout life. This highlights the potential for individuals to learn, adapt, and evolve, regardless of their starting point or background.

In light of these scientific findings, it's clear that a narrow-minded and simplistic view of human nature is not only outdated but also detrimental to our collective progress and understanding. We must look to cultivate a culture of intellectual curiosity.

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

TO THE EDITOR

Singer for Selectman

To the Editor:

In my time serving as State Senator for the town of Charlton, Dave Singer has been an active and conscientious leader who personally reached out to help me understand how our state government and the Town of Charlton can constructively collaborate together to make improvements to our economy and community that are sustainable and fiscally prudent while

maintaining Charlton's historic and beautiful character. Dave's earned my trust and it's my great hope we will be able to work together to continue this progress for Charlton in the years ahead. Please vote for Dave Singer for Selectman on May 4.

Ryan Fattman
State Senator

Let residents speak

To the Editor:

I would like to respond to the article that was in the April 18-19, 2024, Southbridge News entitled “Council debates comment and recording rules,” by Gus Steeves.

At the Board of Health meeting of April 4, 2024, several residents were in attendance after being told to come to the meeting to ask questions about the new curbside collection regulations being discussed and voted on. Unfortunately, before the meeting started, the Board of Health Chairman announced that he was NOT going to allow residents to speak.

Consequently, I drafted a bylaw allowing residents to speak at committee meetings, with an exception for workshop meetings for members to discuss an issue without residents' participation. Those meetings must be posted in advance so residents are aware ahead of time.

It never occurred to me that I would have to take this action. It has been a

long tradition in Southbridge that residents are allowed to speak at public meetings.

I wouldn't call this a “knee-jerk” reaction. This isn't the first time this has happened at Board of Health meetings. I've spoken to the Chair about this in the past. When it happened again at the April 4 meeting, I decided it was time to take action.

I don't feel the Bylaw needs more work. It's pretty simple; either you want to let residents speak, or you want to shut them up. As Councilor Chenier said at the meeting, if it happens once, it will happen again. I'm just trying to nip this in the bud.

I also found it interesting that when the issue of recording rules was discussed, the belief was that broadcasting committee meetings might encourage people to get involved. Why would anyone want to get involved if they're not allowed to speak at meetings?

Mike Marketti
Southbridge

Vote Spiewak for Charlton selectman

To the Editor:

Greetings! My name is Karen Spiewak and I'm running for Selectman in Charlton, seat 2. My opponent is David Singer. (Note: Incumbent Basia Zurawski is running for Selectman, seat 1; she is unopposed).

I equate seeking a public office to applying for a job, therefore I present to you my “resume” of sorts. I am hopeful after reviewing my qualifications and checking references by researching public records, social media, speaking with friends/neighbors..., you will vote to “hire” me on May 4, election day.

I've lived in Charlton with my family for about 40 years. During most of that time I've been immersed in the community, working alongside many of you on various boards and committees (*see list below). I've gained a tremendous amount of knowledge and forged strong relationships with folks in Charlton, the surrounding communities, and on Beacon Hill. I am very proud of what we were able to accomplish together and I'm ready, willing, and able to do more!

As a selectman, I will do as I have done in the past - commit to serving the public with drive, determination, and dedication throughout my term. I will research, study, and understand issues that come before the BoS prior to casting a vote, work cooperatively with other boards/departments, regularly engage with our legislators, be a fierce advocate for our needs locally and on Beacon Hill, and focus on fixing the problem rather than assigning blame. I will do this all while being transparent, fiscally responsible, accessible, efficient, compassionate, and honest.

*Community Involvement Experience - Charlton and Beyond:

Charlton Board of Selectmen
Charlton Solar By-law Committee

Charlton Public Safety Building
Capital Campaign Steering Committee
President, Woman In Business, Inc.
Charlton Government Study Committee (2014)

Charlton Public Library Trustee
Charlton Master Plan Committee (2008)

Dudley-Charlton Education Foundation, Inc. Board Member; (STEM Grant Subcommittee Member)

Central Massachusetts Regional Library System Executive Board; Revenue Enhancement Subcommittee Member

Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee; Policy & Strategic Action Planning Committees

Charlton Elementary/Middle School Councils/PTO President

Charlton Public Library Capital Campaign Steering Committee

Board of Directors, Harrington Healthcare System; Quality/Patient Safety Committee; Community/Government Relations Committee

Harrington Hospital Auxiliary
Southbridge Rotary

Old Sturbridge Village Council of Ambassadors

Education: B.S. Health Studies/Counseling; M.S. Health Education, Worcester State University

Questions? Email: spiewakconsultants@gmail.com

I have the time, energy, experience, and knowledge needed to excel in this position - now all I need is your vote!

On May 4 Please Vote: Karen Spiewak for Selectman and please join me in supporting public safety by voting

YES for the FIRE DEPARTMENT SUBSTATION funding (visit the town's website for more details about his project)

Thank you!

Karen Spiewak
Charlton

Be careful when naming beneficiaries



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You might not have thought much about beneficiary designations — but they can play a big role in your estate planning.

When you purchase insurance policies and open investment accounts, such as your IRA, you'll be asked to name a beneficiary, and, in some cases, more than one. This might seem easy, especially if you have a spouse and children, but if you experience a major life event, such as a divorce or a death in the family, you may need to make some changes — because beneficiary designations carry a lot of weight under the law.

In fact, these designations can supersede the instructions you may have written in your will or living trust, so everyone in your family should know who is expected to get which assets. One significant benefit of having proper beneficiary designations in place is that they may enable beneficiaries to avoid the time-consuming — and possibly expensive — probate process.

The beneficiary issue can become complex because not everyone reacts the same way to events such as divorce — some people want their ex-spouses to still receive assets while others don't. Furthermore, not all the states have the same rules about how beneficiary designations are treated after a divorce. And some financial assets are treated differently than others.

Here's the big picture: If you've named your spouse as a beneficiary of an IRA, bank or brokerage account, insurance policy, will or trust, this beneficiary designation will automatically be revoked upon divorce in about half the states. So, if you still want your ex-spouse to get these assets, you will need to name them as a non-spouse beneficiary after the divorce. But if you've named your spouse as beneficiary for a 401(k) plan or pension, the designation will remain intact until and unless you change it, regardless of where you live.

However, in community property states, couples are generally required to split equally all assets they acquired during their marriage. When couples divorce, the community property laws require they split their assets 50/50, but only those assets they obtained while they lived in that state. If you were to stay in the same community property state throughout your marriage and divorce, the ownership issue is generally straightforward, but if you were to move to or from one of these states, it might change the joint ownership picture.

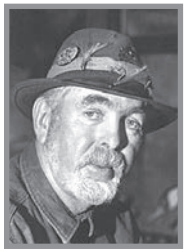
Thus far, we've only talked about beneficiary designation issues surrounding divorce. But if an ex-spouse — or any beneficiary — passes away, the assets will generally pass to a contingent beneficiary — which is why it's important that you name one at the same time you designate the primary beneficiary. Also, it may be appropriate to name a special needs trust as beneficiary for a family member who has special needs or becomes disabled. If this individual were to be the direct beneficiary, any assets passing directly into their hands could affect their eligibility for certain programs.

You may need to work with a legal professional to sort out beneficiary designation issues and the rules that apply in your state. But you may also want to do a beneficiary review with your financial advisor whenever you experience a major life event, such as a marriage, divorce, or the addition of a new child. Your investments, retirement accounts and life insurance proceeds are valuable assets — and you want them to go where you intended.

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 trevornielson@edwardjones.com.

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It's turkey hunting time



THE GREAT
OUTDOORS
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TRUE

It is turkey hunting time in Mass., and for those hunters that enjoy hunting wild turkeys, the excitement of harvesting a bird is here. The season opens this coming Monday, April 29, in Mass.! You need to be an outdoorsman or woman to appreciate the sport. This writer enjoyed many morning wild turkey hunts in Mass. and Rhode Island.

It required doing some scouting prior to opening day, which paid off big time when the season

opened. Locating a few turkeys put me in the right place when the season opened. Setting up my camouflage blind prior to the season had me sitting comfortably in my chair sipping on coffee and waiting for first light. Waiting for shooting time and listening to the woods come alive, was often the best part of the hunt. During hunting I once watched a lone coyote sneaking up on my turkey decoys at first light. He had no idea I was watching him, and when I opened my blind door, he quickly hightailed it across the field.

It was now legal shooting time and it was not long before I heard a couple of tom turkeys

Turn To **OUTDOORS** page **A12**



Jerry's Bait & Tackle sponsored his annual trout derby at Louisia Lake last weekend in Milford. All in attendance had a great time catching trout and claiming their prizes for the largest trout caught.

Courtesy

Are you willing to pay the price?

We've all been there before, standing at a crossroads, faced with a major decision that could shape our future. Pacing back and forth, you ask yourself, "Should I? Shouldn't I? What if it doesn't work out? Do I really believe in this? What should I do?" Each question adds weight to the decision, making the moment feel monumental.

POSITIVELY
SPEAKING

TOBY
MOORE

It all boils down to this: Are you willing to pay the price?

Everything has a cost, and each decision requires something from us—be it time, money, effort, or even a piece of our peace of mind. We're asking ourselves whether we can handle the potential losses and whether the potential gains are worth that sacrifice.

Consider the decision to propose or accept a marriage proposal. It's not just about the romantic moment or the excitement of starting a life together. It's about considering whether you're ready to intertwine your life with another's, accepting all their strengths and flaws, supporting each other through every challenge, and celebrating every triumph. It's a lifelong commitment that demands emotional investment and the readiness to grow together, even when the path gets rocky.

Or think about starting a business meant to revolutionize an industry. It's about the grueling hours of planning, the financial risk, and the personal strain it can place on your relationships. It means stepping into a competitive arena, ready to persist through setbacks and failures, with the vision of creating something transformative.

Then there's the choice of a career path, especially one that's demanding or high-stakes, like becoming a surgeon or a human rights lawyer. These professions require years of intense education and training, immense dedication, and, often, personal sacrifices. The costs are high—not just in time and money but also in the emotional toll of high-pressure environments. Yet, the rewards can be substantial: the ability to profoundly save lives, influence positive change or contribute to justice.

Imagine the historical decision faced by George Washington when he chose to stand up against the British Empire. Here was a man, a farmer, and a soldier weighing the immense risk of leading a fledgling group of colonies in rebellion against one of the world's mightiest powers. The personal stakes were enormous: the potential loss of his life, his family's safety, and his property. The cost of failure was not just personal ruin but the collapse of an unprecedented aspiration for democratic governance. Yet, the potential gain of a free and independent nation guided his decision, marking a pivotal turn in history.

In the middle of the night, he must have muttered to himself, "It's a high cost to pay."

Turn To **POSITIVE** page **A12**

Dig, divide, and boost your garden's beauty

Overcrowded, poor flowering, and floppy perennials can be invigorated with a shovel

and a bit of your time and energy. Dividing perennials is an excellent way to improve their appearance and create new plants to use in other spaces in your landscape.

As the old garden adage states "divide spring



GARDEN
MOMENTS
.....
MELINDA
MYERS

spring, and summer blooming perennials in either spring or fall." Some gardeners prefer to enjoy the spring blooms and divide soon after the flowers fade. Most gardeners have found the best time to divide is

flowering perennials in late summer or early fall, divide fall bloomers in



Courtesy — Corona Tools

When dividing perennial plants use a sharp spade or Hori Hori garden knife to easily cut plants into smaller sections.

when they have the time and can provide proper post-transplanting care.

Reduce the stress on plants by dividing perennials on a cloudy, overcast day when the plants won't dry out so quickly. Make sure the plants are well-watered a day or two in advance of dividing.

Dig up the whole plant using a garden fork or sharp spade, like Corona Tools' DigMaster Nursery Shovel (coronatools.com), with its narrow, hardened steel blade. A shovel with a long handle and narrow blade makes it easier to access plants in small and hard-to-reach spots in the flower garden.

Carefully lift the plant out of the soil. Depending on the plant and the tenacity of its roots, you may be able to gently pull the roots apart with your hands. Otherwise, use a sharp spade or knife, such as a Hori Hori garden knife, or a reciprocating saw to cut the plant into smaller sections. Some gardeners place two garden forks back-to-back in the center of the clump and pull the forks apart to

Turn To **HINT** page **A14**

Turn To **GARDENING** page **A12**

Celebrate the Planet: April Hosts Earth Day & Arbor Day

The 1970s, dubbed the "turning point" decade, introduced many new ideas and cultural changes, including an environmental revolution that launched the first Earth Day, now celebrated each year on April 22. The decade also honored "earth friendly" Arbor Day with the birth of the Arbor Day Foundation, which was started in April 1972, and is celebrated this year on April 26.



TAKE
THE
HINT
.....
KAREN
TRAINOR

Dogwoods, White Furs, Colorado Blue Spruces, Redbuds, and more.

New members also re-

Turn To **HINT** page **A14**

Turn To **GARDENING** page **A12**

In recognition of Earth Day and Arbor Day, both celebrated in April, this week's column offers the following information to support environmentally friendly actions.

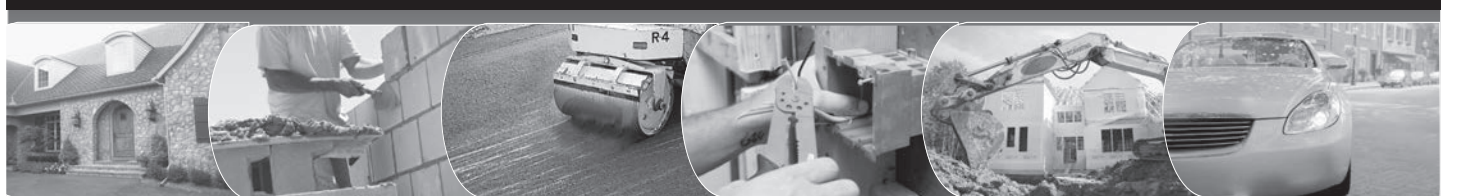
Arbor Day: The first Arbor Day was held on April 10, 1872, and marked with the planting of one million trees. This year's Arbor Day will be recognized on April 26. Each state celebrates its own state holiday and the customary observance on this historic day is to plant a tree.

The Arbor Day Foundation, founded in 1972 on the 100th anniversary of the first Arbor Day, serves as a non-profit conservation and education organization of nearly one million members, with a mission to inspire people to plant, celebrate and nurture trees. In fact, the organization is the largest nonprofit conservation organizations dedicated to planting trees as it plants and distributes more than 10 million trees each year. The foundation also works with the U.S. Forest Service to plant trees in America's national forests and the National Association of State Foresters to plant trees in state forests.

Currently, the Foundation is scaling efforts to plant 500 million trees by 2027 in areas where they're needed most.

Free Trees: The Arbor Day Foundation gifts members with ten free trees for as little as a \$12 dollar membership. Members can choose ten trees that grow well in your growing zone. Or you can choose to send the trees directly to someone else. Members may

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Opacum Land Trust Tree Planting Program enters final year:

REGION - Opacum Land Trust wants to Green your Neighborhood with free trees! Heading into their final year of planting, Opacum Land Trust and their partner, East Quabbin Land Trust, have planted over 700 trees in Ware and Southbridge with a goal of planting 1,300 trees by the end of Fall 2024. This program, funded by the U.S. Forest Service and the Massa-

chusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, provides free trees to homeowners, renters, businesses, and organizations in urban areas of Southbridge and Ware, Mass.

Modeled on Massachusetts' Greening the Gateway Cities Program of urban tree planting, the goal of this project is to improve community health and provide economic benefits

to residents by improving air quality and reducing temperatures through increased tree cover. Opacum Land Trust and East Quabbin Land Trust have been planting trees in Southbridge and Ware since 2019 and have been lucky to work with hundreds of residents and businesses to bring the benefits of trees to their community.

Trees provide many direct benefits to your health and wellbeing and can help you save money! Trees clean the air we breathe by removing dust and pollutants while also fighting climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide. Trees also absorb rainwater, helping to prevent flooding and erosion in your yard and streets. In the summer, shade trees can keep you comfortable and save you money by cutting your cooling costs by 30-40 percent. In addition, trees and landscaping can raise property values up to 20 percent. The benefits are endless!

How it works: Opacum Land Trust provides the trees, along with the labor and expertise of an



Courtesy photo

Lynn and Leo Cook and grandchildren with one of their new trees planted in Southbridge.



Courtesy photo

Trees planted in the Central Street Parking lot in downtown Southbridge.

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LEGALS

CHARLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with the Wetland Protection Act of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter 131, Section 40, the Charlton Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on May 8, 2024, at 7PM on the application of Sarah Aquafresca. The applicant has submitted a Request for Determination of Applicability for the Replacement of a failed septic system. The project location is: 73 Blood

Road, Charlton, MA. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting of the Charlton Conservation Commission will be conducted in person and via remote means. Members of the public who wish to participate can access the meeting remotely, via Zoom Conferencing by calling 1-646 558 8656 and using meeting ID # 892 9898 0343 Passcode 458971 or using the link below <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89298980343?pwd=VjIMZGIhUGRnYzRkR1c2eT-JTL3lWZ09> Copies of the RDA may be examined

at the Conservation Office by appointment during business hours. Thomas O'Malley Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission April 26, 2024

TOWN OF STURBRIDGE BOARD OF HEALTH PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

May 14, 2024 at 2:30pm Center Office Building Meeting Room, 301 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA In accordance with provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 40. the Board of Health will hold

a Public Hearing on May 14, 2024, at 2:30pm on the application of Stephen and Marcy Reed. The applicant is requesting a Variance of the Local Well Regulations for the property located at 88 South Shore Dr, Sturbridge, MA. The Plan may be reviewed by contacting the Sturbridge Health Department at (508) 347-2504 or Matthew Jalbert of Jalbert Engineering, 508-347-5136. April 25, 2024 May 2, 2024



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Outdoors

continued from page 7

gobbling in trees not far from my blind. Suddenly, I spotted a couple of hen turkeys coming my way. As they slowly walked towards me, I could also hear their putting sounds which was also picked up by the two toms nearby. The toms gobbled excitedly and soon came into my sight. I normally give a couple of calls on my turkey call, but with the two hens heading my way, I decided to keep quiet. It was not long before the two toms were in range for a shot, but I decided to wait and watch the show that was about to start. One tom decided to

attack one of my decoys, and when he was done with him he knocked the other decoy off of his stake, which was stuck in the ground.

The two live hens were slowly walking away from the decoys and the two toms in total display were about to follow. It was time to harvest a bird. As I slowly poked the gun barrel out the window of the blind, I took aim at the largest bird and squeezed the trigger. The No. 6 three-inch shell discharged, sending a roar through the valley. The huge turkey laid still on the ground, as all of the other turkeys scattered. I quickly rushed out of



Big lake trout from Wachusett Res. last week. They are still catching numerous lakers at Wachusett!

the blind to retrieve my bird. I took a deep breath as my heart was still racing from the excitement of the hunt. How fortunate are we to still hunt this magnificent bird which was absent from our woods for so many years and reintroduced back into our open space only 20 years or so ago from Vermont and New York.

Local streams and rivers were stocked with trout last week which included the West River. Local lakes and ponds continue to produce some nice trout and Wachusett Res. also is giving up some nice Lakers as this week's picture shows. Jerry's Bait &

Tackle sponsored his annual trout derby at Louisa Lake last weekend in Milford. All in attendance had a great time catching trout and claiming their prizes for the largest trout caught.

The Whitinsville Fish & Game Club held their annual kids' fishing derby last weekend also and had a good number of youngsters participating in the event.

Haddock fishing was red hot last week and should stay good until the waters warm and the fish head out to deeper water. The Weather also needs to cooperate!

Take A Kid Fishing and Keep Them Rods Bending.

Gardening

continued from page 7

make the divisions.

Discard the dead center, if needed, in the compost pile. Make sure each division has at least three to five healthy shoots and adequate roots. The larger the division, the quick-

er it will fill in the space and possibly need dividing sooner than smaller divisions.

Replant the divisions as soon as possible. In the meantime, store them in a cool, shaded location and keep the roots covered and moist.

Prepare the soil before

planting. You can plant one of the divisions in the original spot once the soil is amended. Use the others to fill in bare areas or start new garden beds. Dig a hole large enough to accommodate the roots. Plant the division at the same depth it was growing. Some garden-

ers set it slightly higher so it can settle in place. Either way, make sure the roots are not exposed and the crown, the part where the roots meet the stems, is not buried.

Gently firm the soil around the plant and water thoroughly. Check

the soil moisture every few days and water deeply and often enough to keep the roots slightly moist. Reduce your watering frequency as the plant begins to develop a more robust root system.

Start by dividing just one or two overgrown plants. As you master the technique, you will find it easier to divide perennials when needed to keep your gardens looking their best.

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 series and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and was commissioned by Corona Tools for her expertise in writing this article. Myers' Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Positive

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Taking on any of these ventures could mean investing significant resources. It might disrupt your current routine, pushing you to work tirelessly into the foreseeable future.

Imagine this: after a long day at your day job, you come home only to begin another shift, painstakingly laying the groundwork for your dreams.

Are you ready to commit to such an extent? It's in moments like these that careful deliberation becomes crucial. Starting with a burst of motivation is one thing, but can you maintain that drive until the end, or is this enthusiasm merely a fleeting interest?

Will the late nights and early mornings chip away at your well-being, or will they be the stepping stones to fulfillment and success? Each decision, with its in-

herent risks and rewards, is a step towards defining who we are and what we can achieve.

Reflecting on these questions helps us gauge our readiness and prepare our hearts and minds for the journey ahead. Are you able to pay the price? Can you afford the cost?

As you stand at your crossroads, pondering whether to advance or divert your path, weigh the cost meticulously—each decision carries profound consequences. Consider not only what might be lost but also the potential gains.

Is this path true to your heart? The decision is yours alone. Counting the cost can bring substantial worry, but worry not. Take a moment, breathe deeply, and step forward with courage. After careful deliberation, you'll find that your choice will align with your deepest convictions, for you have fully counted the cost.

Southbridge

continued from page 1

es; they seek comment on priorities the town wants.

Baryluk said HMPs aim at a few major goals – “generally improving mitigation capabilities;” reinforcing and protecting utilities, public buildings and other critical infrastructure “so we're not investing in emergency response infrastructure that doesn't have adequate backup power, for example;” improving communication with the public on self-protection; ensuring “there's not a lot of investment going into high-risk places;” and specifically addressing and preparing for climate change impacts.

This round of planning will “accept feedback in any form,” but it'll focus on the survey as “the best opportunity.” Specifically, they seek comments on how well the plan captures natural hazard risk

and vulnerabilities in Southbridge, what projects and activities the Plan should prioritize, and “anything else you feel might be missing,” they noted.

The plan will go to Town Council for approval (probably “sometime this fall”) after it goes to the state and FEMA for approval and edits, she added.

To ConCom member Kevin Buxton, the focus on “improvements made for sustainable long-term infrastructure” is a big step from the past ideology of “keep it cheap.”

“This town has been very proactive about mitigating stormwater into the sewage system,” Planning Board's Mike Loin said later.

Baryluk said they have not yet seen those plans, but sewer plants in many towns “are starting to see issues where the flow is reaching max capacity or even exceeding it.”

The goal is to prevent streams from exceeding capacity if possible.

Pam Paquin said she's “very interested in any ability to bury [power] lines,” noting she lived in Copenhagen, Denmark, when that city did it. Buried lines are safer, and it “makes sense strategically to bury lines and protect them,” she said.

She also noted it'd be helpful to have “a list of things that don't cost money,” including bylaw changes and “ecosystem services stuff we could put in place.” Baryluk noted they do include such things, but try to make the mitigation concepts slightly vague so they don't have trouble when they take it to FEMA in five years for review.

Referring to “the seven perennial streams that come into the Quinebaug,” Paquin noted she visited Montpelier, VT, for the recent eclipse. There, flooding

saw streams create new courses, even though the floods themselves were lower than in previous years.

“I'd love to hear best-case practices and best-case examples. If there was a place to go see that, that'd be great and we could piggyback off that,” Paquin added.

Noting he got the grant to start this process, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director Paul Normandin praised FEMA for doing “yeoman's work” to update the plan and how it works with the town's existing emergency plan. They've talked to various groups about 2005 flooding and culvert cleaning, among other things, and FEMA will help the town write grants to handle these issues, he said.

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

TRHS

continued from page 1

open to helping each other—it's just an awesome environment.”

The TRHS production of “Little Shop of Horrors” features a cast of 27 students and a crew of 30 students.

One of the show's standout features is its captivating visuals, including the puppetry work that brings the plant to menacing life on stage. There are four differently sized phases of the fiendish plant's growth that are operated by two student puppeteers throughout the show.

“This is our first time ever using puppets on stage, so this has been a huge challenge. The puppeteers and the voice of the plant must work closely together as a team to bring this character to life,” read a statement released by production director Tyler Edmonds.

Students were thrilled to team up and master a challenging production, with plenty of lighter moments enjoyed along the way.

“It's so fun for my friends and I to develop our ensemble characters. Those of us that act as Skid Row Derelicts have come up with super creative and hilarious backstories for ourselves, and it's so fun to see that come to life,” said sophomore Avery Adams. “I want to thank Mr. Edmonds for always working so hard to put on these productions. We are so lucky to have him as a director, and he deserves a major shout out for everything he does.”

Added senior Angelina Cassella, “My favorite scene is probably the finale (‘Don't Feed the Plants' and ‘Ya Never Know'). The songs really bring great energy to the stage.”

The rehearsal process has also been a great way for younger students to continue their development.

“I've always wanted to be part of Drama Club, no matter what show we are doing or what role I get. It's always fun to perform on stage,” said sophomore Michael Tamburri.

Tickets can be purchased at the door on the days of the show, or online through the Tantasqua Performing Arts' UniPay page. Admission is \$12 for students/seniors and \$15 for adults.

OSV

continued from page 5

learning, participatory demonstrations, and engaging conversation around the recreated historical village. From witnessing the gardeners' preparing the fields to observing the potters and blacksmiths in action, to meeting the beloved heritage breed animals, every corner of the village is alive with history.

Old Sturbridge Vil-

lage is open Wednesday–Sunday from 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

From Friday, April 19, through Sunday, April 21, Old Sturbridge Village celebrated Village Earth Days. There were discussions on the changing climate, the history of New England's environment, sustainability, and more. Visitors could enjoy a walk through the woods, watch the pollinators hard at work, and see the gardeners and farmers preparing

for the growing season ahead. Highlights included:

See special craft demonstrations like making watering cans in the Tin Shop, flower pots in the Pottery Shop, and garden tools in the Blacksmith Shop

Meet visiting teams of oxen and try your hand at plowing.

Watch demonstrations of seasonal cooking and preservation

Enjoy special talks and tours on native

plants, bees, renewing the soil and more. For details visit <https://www.osv.org/event/village-earth-days/>.

Adult visitors are encouraged to purchase tickets online in advance to save even more! In addition to Kids Free April, tickets purchased online include a \$3 savings compared to tickets purchased at the door. For full details, restrictions, and to purchase tickets visit: <https://www.osv.org/event/kids-free-march-april/>.

org/event/kids-free-march-april/.

The Kids Free promotion for April is applicable only to standard full price adult daytime admission only. Please note that this promotion does not apply to field trips.

Old Sturbridge Village is open Wednesday–Sunday from 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m. For a full list of events, visit: <https://www.osv.org/spring/>.



OBITUARIES

Barbara J. Vadnais, 91

Barbara J. Vadnais (Bonneville) age 91, died on August 23, 2023 at Schuyler Ridge Residential Health Care in Clifton Park, NY surrounded by loved ones. Born January 13, 1932 in Putnam, CT, she was the youngest daughter of the late Eugene A. Bonneville from Putnam, CT and Georgina MacIvor Bonneville, originally from Baddeck, Nova Scotia. Barbara was predeceased by brothers Norman Bonneville and Robert Bonneville; sisters Pauline Snelgrove and Viola Cerreto.



ents to sew, quilt and knit for her family.

She is survived by 4 children. John A. Vadnais Jr. and his wife Donna of Poughkeepsie, NY. Susan Vadnais Bolde and her husband Lannie of Ulster Park, NY. Janet Vadnais Olson and her husband David of LaGrangeville, NY. Judy

Vadnais Keute and her husband Robert of Schroon Lake, NY. 6 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

Memorial services will be held on April 27, 2024 at 11:30 am at St. Mary's Church, 218 Providence Street, Putnam, CT. Burial will follow at St. Mary Cemetery.

For memorial guestbook please visit: www.gordoncemerickfuneral-home.com.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Bright Focus Foundation, www.brightfocus.org, supporting macular degeneration research.

After graduating from Putnam High School as Salutatorian, Barbara attended nursing school before marrying John A. Vadnais, also from Putnam, on March 31, 1951.

After her husband's service in the Navy they settled in Southbridge, Mass. to raise their young family. John began a career with IBM Corporation which led to subsequent moves to Wappingers Falls, NY, Granby, Quebec Canada and back to Poughkeepsie, NY.

Along with being an avid reader and a wonderful cook, Barbara was a loving mother who used her tal-

John A. Vadnais, 93

John A. Vadnais, age 93, died peacefully at home in Glenmont, NY on October 11, 2023, surrounded by loved ones. Born June 8, 1930 in Putnam, CT, he was the youngest son of the late Francois X. Vadnais and Yvonne DeLisle. He was predeceased by brother Francis Vadnais and sister Loretta Langlois.



Barbara, on August 23, 2023. He is survived by 4 children. John A. Vadnais, Jr. and his wife Donna of Poughkeepsie, NY. Susan Vadnais Bolde and her husband Lannie of Ulster Park, NY. Janet Vadnais Olson and her husband David of LaGrangeville, NY. Judy Vadnais Keute and her husband Robert of Schroon Lake, NY. 6 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

Memorial services will be held on April 27, 2024 at 11:30 am, St. Mary's Church, 218 Providence Street., Putnam, CT. Burial will follow at St. Mary Cemetery.

For memorial guestbook please visit www.gordoncemerickfuneral-home.com

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Alzheimer's Association at www.alz.org

On March 31, 1951 he married Barbara J. Bonneville, also from Putnam. John served in the Navy during the Korean War before settling in Southbridge, Mass. as a Tool and Die maker. He later moved his family to Poughkeepsie, NY to join IBM Corporation in 1964. His career eventually led him to help establish the IBM Bromont site in Canada as Materials Manager. After his assignment in Quebec, John returned to New York as GTD Site Procurement Manager in East Fishkill, NY.

In retirement he enjoyed wood working, making furniture for his family and gardening.

He was predeceased by his wife,

Sturbridge

continued from page 1

important to balance the interest in maintaining a small town feel with its business community, which tends to be heavily tourist oriented.

Overall, she said, "The budget appears to go up a lot," but the bulk of the change (\$1.1 million) is going to the senior center renovation project's first payment of principal and interest. Including that, the budget's rising 6.3 percent, but without it, just 3.6 percent.

Other notable changes include the cyclical bounce in election funding (since this is a presidential year); betterment finding for equipment including a mower, little league scoreboard, and a trailer for trails; and the separate capital plan. The latter includes a \$1.1 million fire truck, utility vehicle, police command vehicle (regular cruisers are in the budget), brush mower and a couple dump trucks of various sizes.

Those will come from free cash because she's aiming to avoid interest payments. This year, Sturbridge has \$7.7 million and plans to use \$3.1 million of it, keeping the rest for unexpected later needs. Grimm said free cash usually comes from funds being turned back to the general fund at year's end due to staff

turnover, typically when somebody leaves, but hiring a replacement gets delayed.

Later, Mary Dowling noted the town used to use \$200-\$350,000 from free cash to offset tax rates, but hasn't done so in a few years. Although that amounts to only about \$50 per median tax bill "it just shows the taxpayer we're trying to give something back."

Chair Jamie Goodwin deferred that to a "comprehensive policy discussion" he intends to have in the fall.

Vehicles were a notable concern for participants, with several noting that the industry's lead time is now two years or longer. Grimm said it's become "almost impossible" to get big truck bodies, so the administration will be looking at a new vehicle purchase policy and five year plan. She later noted this issue pushed DPW to replace a motor in a vehicle they would rather replace entirely, but can't do without it for two years.

"Nobody's seeing anything get better," she added. "...[We face] a whole host of things, especially on the heavier equipment."

Equally concerning is the uncertainty in state aid. With reports that Boston has been making cuts, "we would not be comfortable based on

what we hear," she said. "...We're not going to see any dramatic increases."

As usual, the budget's based on the governor's initial budget proposal. In good years, the House typically adds to it, and the town can add to theirs, but Finance Director Barbara Barry said, "I don't think we can do that this year." She expects "the governor's numbers to hold," but might even see the Legislature cut them.

Also unclear are where gas prices will go due to war in the Middle East and other factors. The town typically pays lower than everyday citizens because it doesn't pay the taxes. Oil's price was running in the mid \$80 range as of last Sunday, but there have been recent predictions it could jump to \$130 a barrel.

The various uncertainties prompted one participant to ask "how do we do more with less?" Grimm said, "we're pretty lean now," and are trying to get more Munis licenses to make various departments' work more efficient and potentially avoid hiring more people. That might not result in "a cost reduction, but we'll probably see better service for the money."

"We can't really reduce much more," she said. "If someone's out, there's nobody in an office in most cases."

Goodwin agreed, saying, "With the exception of the senior center, it's a

relatively status quo ante budget. ...We're holding course as best we can."

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

Budget

continued from page 1

"The (school) assessment increases are attributed to two major factors. Due to continually declining enrollment, the district has only received the minimum aid contribution from the state (\$30 per student) in Chapter 70 since 2007. Reduced enrollment does not directly equate to lower operational costs for the schools, so the towns have had to fill the gap year-over-year left by the state. Additionally, the formula which determines the minimum contribution of the Town of Charlton to education increased by over 9 percent from last year. This is an additional burden added to the town to fund its educational obligations," said Golas. "Providing a high-quality education is a major factor in making Charlton a desirable place to live. The Board of Selectmen supports maintaining and improving the educational offerings for the schools to keep Charlton a great place to live. As the State's funding gap continues to increase, we will need to keep an eye on the affordability of the assessment versus our available revenues. In FY25, what is being proposed by the School Committee is affordable to the Town of Charlton."

Aside from education spending, Golas broke down some of the major factors driving the increase on the general government side of the budget as well.

"The major increase is attributed to increases in retirement and insurance costs. This year, insurance costs are projected to increase by nine percent and retirement by 10 percent. In total, this is an increase of \$628,676. The operational budget includes the addition of two firefighter positions to bring all

shift groups to six members per shift and the addition of a Facilities Director position with necessary support staff. The total General Government increase is proposed to be \$1.1 million," said Golas.

The Town Administrator also confirmed that assuming the proposed Fire Department Substation funding debt exclusion passes during the May 4 municipal election, that cost will not apply to the town's tax levy until Fiscal Year 2027.

While increases to the budget are never welcome news, Golas did share some positive updates on the town's revenue growth. Increased business along Route 20, especially the addition of the Amazon warehouse, has helped alleviate some of the tax burden on residents, but the town remained conservative in its approach to the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. Golas revealed that once their new growth was certified, it outpaced projections and helped offset some of the added cost in the newly proposed spending plan. Town officials are optimistic that the continued growth will ensure the long-term stability of the budget.

Charlton's new budget will be put to a vote during the annual town meeting on May 20. Golas indicated that there are no proposed changes if the spending plan were to fail.

"The budget proposed meets the projected municipal revenues in FY25. We know that Town Meeting is able to propose changes, but we feel that the increases proposed are impactful and allow us to provide better overall services to the community. I don't believe there are any areas ripe or recommended to be cut from what is being proposed," said Golas.

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Storms

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recent hurricane to make landfall here was still Bob in the 1990s.

That said, though, tropical storms have often had more impact. Irene in 2011 caused major flooding in Vermont in part because of the state's "complex terrain," and the fact they'd had very wet conditions before then, he said.

Bay Staters are more likely to know of or remember the double-whammy of 1955, when Connie and Diane hit back-to-back and a third storm skirted the south coast without making landfall. Combined, they dumped more than 25 inches of rain in many places, hitting Western Massachusetts particularly hard (as Southbridge residents alive them know all too well). Those floods prompted major investments in dams, levees and other flood control methods.

The last major hurricanes were Category 3 Carol and Edna in 1954, with the storm between them just missing us; he noted "they happen every 100 years or so." Hurricanes usually "come in clumps," and concern about the next round "keeps us awake at night," he added.

It probably should, since tropical areas are starting to see hurricanes so strong scientists have begun advocating adding a Cat 6 to the Saffir-Simpson Scale. Cat 5, now the highest, covers storms with sustained wind over 157 mph; Cat 6 would start at 193 mph. So far five storms have crossed that threshold, all of them in the Pacific. The strongest Atlantic storms have been Allen in 1980 (wind speed 190 mph) and Wilma in 2015 (lowest pressure, 882 mb; 185 mph; three other storms also hit that speed).

Hurricane Carol

prompted the formation of the National Hurricane Center, Fisher said. Before that, none of the hurricanes had much warning since there were no satellites. The unnamed hurricane of 1938 rolled across the region at 45-50 mph, killed about 700 people, "crashed the lumber industry" and devastated our forests. A storm in 1888 caused so much road flooding in Boston it sparked construction of the subway. The "Great Colonial Hurricane of 1635," estimated at Cat 3, is mostly known from sediment cores and "very detailed diaries," including those of governors Bradford and Winthrop.

The strongest storms our region gets, however, tend not to be in summer. They're more often cold-season Nor-easters. Most of us remember the Blizzard of '78, which is "still the gold standard" because of how

it changed forecasting. Before that, he said, forecasts were "very poor" and "more generalized" than today. "Only about two forecasters in Boston predicted a big storm for this," Fisher noted.

The blizzard actually began hours after it was predicted to, so many people were caught on the roads and stranded in 40 inches of snow and huge drifts.

New England saw more snow in February 1969, when the Mt Washington area got 100 inches in 100 hours, while 2015's "Snow Blitz" saw 94 inches over the course of 30 days. Fisher showed photos from that year of a woman digging her car out of snow over her head; there were "drifts up to 20 feet high," he recalled.

On the other end of the spectrum, heat has also been a major concern, and is likely to be more serious with climate change. Fish-

er cited the Summer Swelter of 1911, when people routinely wore wool, layers and hats even in summer. Cities "opened their parks to sleep in," but more than 2000 died. That year's 104-degree peak is still Boston's record.

It will probably get broken in time. Climate projections say our region is heading toward being like southern Georgia by 2100. Fisher said right now our climate is "like New York City 100 years ago." He recommended farmers look at New Jersey and Pennsylvania for similar crops, but said we will likely see "no particular tipping point." Instead, it will "just be harder to adapt."

One audience member noted that's already happening. She said she's seen "this little thing and that little thing" making it more difficult for people to grow food to support themselves. Others cited spring frosts wiping

out peaches across the region last year and a combination of weather and disease killing trees.

Climate change will emphasize the extremes in precipitation and temperature, even as the average rises. Fisher noted that effect has sometimes surprised even him. At one point, he calculated the number of top 10 warmest months vs coldest and found we've seen 52 of the former versus just one of the latter.

"I never imagined it'd be that lopsided," he said.

On the other hand, he added, "the peak climate projections for temperature have come down because countries are making changes. ... There has been progress. It's not all gloom and doom."

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

Wound Care

continued from page 2

she put on their faces by doing small tasks such as hanging up their coats and helping them put them back on before leaving. Something that caught my eye was the 'healing bell' that was on the

wall between rooms three and four. Many of the clients' wounds take a couple of weeks to months to heal, and this bell gives them hope that one day they will complete their treatment and their wounds will finally be healed."

Breault concluded, "During this observation, I saw all types of wounds on different body locations, a wound vac, and the hyperbaric oxygen therapy chamber, which I found incredible. The nurse that I was

observing, along with the rest of the staff at the clinic, were so friendly, caring, and organized and provided thorough and extraordinary care to every client that walked through their doors. Overall, I loved having this fantastic op-

portunity! I learned so much about the wound care process!"

According to Bolandrina, "At Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, we believe that student engagement and patient advocacy are contributory to a well-rounded, pru-

dent nurse. Success is intentional. Ashley's reflections and active engagement in empowering, she is an impressive young lady who is bound to make wonderful contributions in the nursing field."

Trees

continued from page 8

Green your Neighborhood with free trees! Heading into their final year of planting, Opacum Land Trust and their partner, East Quabbin Land Trust, have planted over 700 trees in Ware and Southbridge with a goal of planting 1,300 trees by the end of Fall 2024. This program, funded by the U.S. Forest Service and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, provides free trees to homeowners, renters, businesses, and organizations in urban areas of Southbridge and Ware, Mass.

Modeled on Massachusetts' Greening the Gateway Cities Program of urban tree planting, the goal of this project is to improve community health and provide economic benefits to residents by improving air quality and reducing temperatures through increased tree cover. Opacum Land Trust and East Quabbin Land Trust have been planting trees in Southbridge and Ware since 2019 and have been lucky to work with hundreds of residents and businesses to bring the benefits of trees to their community.

REGION - Opacum Land Trust wants to

Trees provide many direct benefits to your health and wellbeing and can help you save money! Trees clean the air we breathe by removing dust and pollutants while also fighting climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide. Trees also absorb rainwater, helping to prevent flooding and erosion in your yard and streets. In the summer, shade trees can keep you comfortable and save you money by cutting your cooling costs by 30-40 percent. In addition, trees and landscaping can raise property values up to 20 percent. The benefits are endless!

How it works: Opacum Land Trust provides the trees, along with the labor and expertise of an arborist and planting crew to plant the trees. The trees are custom picked for your location by an arborist to ensure that the tree thrives and that you love them! Tree recipients only need to agree to water and care for the tree after planting. There's no cost to the recipient. With a total value of \$650 per tree, this is an exciting opportunity for the communities of Southbridge and Ware.

Want to Get Free Trees? Hurry and sign up now to get on the planting list before time runs out! This

program is open to renters, homeowners, business, organizations and public properties in Ware and Southbridge. Southbridge residents can sign up at OpacumLT.org/trees or contact Steve Brady, Southbridge Tree Planting Coordinator, at SBrady@opacumlt.org, (508) 347-9144. Ware residents can sign up at EQLT.org/about-the-project or call East Quabbin Land Trust at (413) 477-8229.

About Opacum Land Trust

Opacum Land Trust is a regional, non-profit land conservation organization that protects land for wildlife, forestry, farming, water, and outdoor recreation. We work in a 13-town region stretching from eastern Hampden County and southwestern Worcester County in the towns between Monson and Charlton. Founded in 2000, Opacum currently protects over 3,852 acres of land and is actively working to protect more land across the service area.

Reach out to us at Opacum Land Trust, PO Box 233, Sturbridge, MA 01566; info@opacumlt.org, (508) 347-9144 and check out our website for events, properties you can visit, and ways to get involved at www.OpacumLT.org

Hint

continued from page 7

ceive a free subscription to the foundation's bimonthly newsletter as well as an Arbor Day gardener's handbook and tree information guide. In addition, members enjoy up to a 50 percent discount on over 100 trees and shrubs. For more information, visit arboraday.org.

Earth Day: This year marks the 54th anniversary of Earth Day. Begun as a grass roots movement, the day to recognize and respect Mother Earth, has grown to global proportions. Each year environmental issues are tackled as rallies, programs and protests are planned across the world. Organized efforts promote environmental responsibility through such earth friendly actions as recycling, conserving and preserving.

EARTHDAY.ORG is unwavering in its commitment to end plastics for the sake of human and planetary health, demanding a 60 percent reduction in the production of all plastics by 2040.

To join the Earth Day 2024 Campaign, log onto earthday.com for coordinating worldwide events for Earth Day 2024 and beyond.

Save Water and Save the

World

Saving our natural resources is an important effort in which all ages can participate. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) promotes water efficiency year round and offers these "water waster" solutions in time for Earth Day.

Challenge: Leaky faucets that drip at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons of water each year.

Solution: If you're unsure whether you have a leak, read your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, you probably have a leak.

Challenge: A leaky toilet can waste about 200 gallons of water every day.

Solution: To tell if your toilet has a leak, place a drop of food coloring in the tank; if the color shows in the bowl without flushing, you have a leak.

Challenge: A full bathtub requires about 70 gallons of water, while taking a five-minute shower uses 10 to 25 gallons.

Solution: If you take a bath, stop the drain immedi-

ately and adjust the temperature as you fill the tub.

Challenge: The average bathroom faucet flows at a rate of two gallons per minute.

Solution: Turning off the tap while brushing your teeth in the morning and at bedtime can save up to eight gallons of water per day, which equals 240 gallons a month!

Challenge: The typical single-family suburban household uses at least 30 percent of their water outdoors for irrigation. Some experts estimate that more than 50 percent of landscape water use goes to waste due to evaporation or runoff caused by overwatering.

Solution: Drip irrigation systems use between 20 to 50 percent less water than conventional in-ground sprinkler systems. They are also much more efficient than conventional sprinklers because no water is lost to wind, runoff, and evaporation. If your in-ground system uses 100,000 gallons annually, you could potentially save more than 200,000 gallons over the lifetime of a drip irrigation should you choose to install it. That adds up to savings of at least \$1,150!

Virtues of Trees:

Trees play a crucial role in reducing energy costs for homeowners. Planted strategically, they can provide shade, which helps keep buildings cooler during hot weather. According to the Arbor Day Foundation, homeowners can save up to 20% on energy bills by having the right trees in the right places.

Trees lower surface and air temperatures by providing shade. Shaded surfaces may be 20-45°F cooler than the peak temperatures of unshaded materials.

The Center for Urban Forest Research proclaimed planting a tree can have a significant impact on lowering energy use. It claims: "If you plant a tree today on the west side of your home, in five years your energy bills should be three percent less. In 15 years, the savings will be nearly 12 percent."

Trees remove pollution from the atmosphere, improving air quality and human health.

According to the USDA, one large tree can provide a day's supply of oxygen for up to four people.

Roadside trees reduce nearby indoor air pollution by more than 50%.

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 (or whenever enough entries are received) 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 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.



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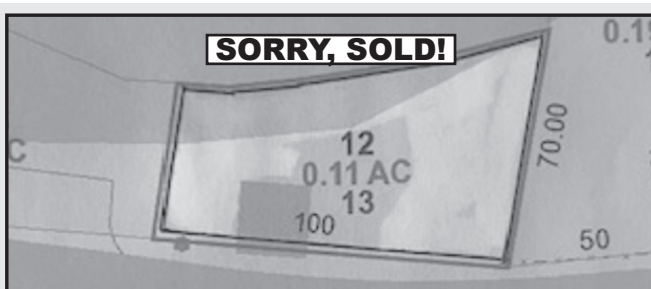
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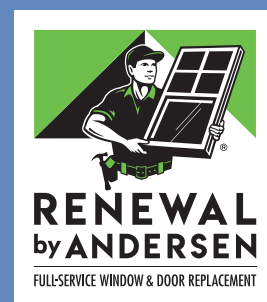
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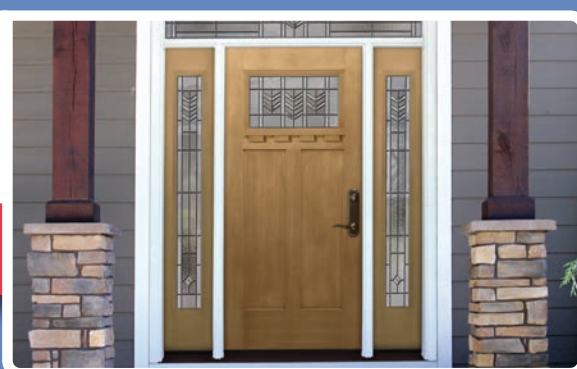
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