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Thursday-Friday, January 30-31, 2025

# Barton sworn in as Charlton Fire Chief



Charlton Fire Chief Rob Barton is sworn in before a large audience of family and department members.

## Southbridge receives \$8 million for Hamilton Street

BY GUS STEEVES  
CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHBRIDGE — The third time's the charm for Southbridge.

Earlier this month, the town got notice that its third attempt to seek federal RAISE grant funding to repair Hamilton Street was approved, to the tune of \$8 million.

"We sent pleading emails in the eleventh hour and kept our expectations low, but to our amazement, were notified two weeks ago," Economic Development Director Peg Dean said.

This would have been the town's last chance to apply, and Southbridge was "automatically brought in" to this application round on the basis of previously nearly reaching the goal.

But Hamilton Street isn't going to happen immediately. It's one project among several that will reshape downtown over the next few years.

Dean said the first one to be done will be North Street and the side streets along it this summer. Phase one of the River/Crane project (from Hamilton to Dexter-Russell) and the Quinebaug Valley Rail Trail also start this year. (Phase two of River/Crane, from Dexter to Pleasant, is being designed this year for construction next year.)

The massive Transportation Improvement Project (TIP) will start this fall; that entails rearranging Central, Larochelle, Foster and Hook streets and has been in planning for nearly a decade. That project's slated to take 30 months and begin with water/sewer lines and drainage work. But the work actually stops just south of Larochelle, so the town is also looking into how to complete Central and Foster to Main.

Dean said starting Hamilton has to wait until River/Crane is complete next year because of the drainage work that will affect both streets.

"Hamilton Street will probably finish last of all the projects," with work probably beginning in three years, she said.

That's partly because a different TIP project is replacing the two Mill Street bridges, and the town doesn't want to block off the alternate routes through town at the same time. That work will wait until River/Crane is done, too.

"We're trying to maintain access to all our businesses during construction," she added, noting the town also hopes this work — especially the rail trail — inspires people to start new businesses in town. Regarding the rail trail, when that work's done, it will not include a bridge over the rotary, but "we'll certainly be keeping our eyes out" for ways to fund one. Once people start using it, she said she expects a stronger public push to add one, but cost

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — The Charlton Board of Selectmen addressed several personnel matters relating to emergency services during a meeting on Jan. 14, including the official pinning of the new fire chief and the announcement of an impending retirement in the police department.

The big moment of the night was the pinning of new Fire Chief Rob Barton who was promoted following the retirement of Ed Knopf at the end of 2024. Barton was joined by a room full of fam-

ily, friends, and department employees as he was sworn in to lead as chief for the foreseeable future.

"I want to thank the Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen for this opportunity. I have an incredible support network with my family — the members of the Charlton Fire Department, and the countless friends that have come to support me. It's been an incredible transition so far, but if it wasn't for the team that I have an absolute honor and privilege to lead it would be so much more difficult, but Chief Knopf has done an incredible job with

the department and I'm fortunate enough to take over and just continue the phenomenal work that he has done," said Barton.

The meeting also announced from the Charlton Police Department with Lt. Keith Cloutier submitting his intention to retire in July after 30 years of service to the town. The selectmen accepted the notice with regret. Although Lt. Cloutier has plenty of time left with the department, Selectman David Singer made sure to compliment his service and commitment to the community.

"A sincere thank you for

lieutenant's service to the town. Thirty years is a significant achievement and he's given a lot, and I just hope he knows that everything he gave is very much appreciated," said Singer.

Selectmen did not announce how they plan to approach filling the vacancy.

The Board of Selectmen also approved new contracts for both Chief Barton and Police Chief Daniel Dowd. The meeting also confirmed the hiring of two new positions for the police department adding a new dispatcher and a traffic controller.

## Sturbridge Planning Board OK's ADU bylaw changes

BY GUS STEEVES  
CORRESPONDENT

STURBRIDGE — The Planning Board is sending revised zoning bylaws implementing a new state law expanding by-right use of "accessory dwelling units" (ADUs) to the April Town Meeting after unanimously approving them Jan. 13.

According to Planner Jean Bubon, the changes will allow ADUs — commonly termed in-law apartments — in "every district that allows single-family homes." To qualify, they need to be less than

900 square feet or half of the home's gross square footage (not just living space), which ever is smaller. They can be within the home if they have a separate entrance or access via a shared hallway, or be built in an accessory structure on the property that is not currently being used for human habitation. Either way, they need their own utilities.

Although state law says they do not have to be occupied by relatives, their use as short-term rentals is "specifically prohibited," she added.

Additionally, the law still allows towns to require they meet certain other things, such as parking, setback, lot coverage and building code, and to require people seeking them on existing nonconforming lots to get approval from the Zoning Board.

Larger ADUs will still need special permits.

"Nothing we've seen or KP Law [the town's attorney] has seen gives us any indication that what we've written won't be consistent with how [the law] comes out," Bubon said.

She noted the state doesn't

like bylaws using the phrase "consistent with the character of the neighborhood," but argued having that "makes a lot of sense for a lot of reasons."

Regarding the issue of short-term rentals, Bubon said the town has already seen people buying homes for that purpose, and she routinely tracks the web seeking such ads. Also, she noted the revised bylaw shifts enforcement from the selectboard to the building inspector.

That public hearing came

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## Bay Path UNICEF Club supports Philippine athlete



CHARLTON — The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy UNICEF Club 2025 through their elected officers supports Philippine Athlete, Cyrusjet Tedi Bueno of Quezon City, Philippines. Harnessing the uniting power of sports to bring focus to global citizenship, the practical nursing students and UNICEF Club officers believe in sports as a critical tool in teaching kids about teamwork and inclusion, creating safe spaces, overall childhood development, and fostering community engagement.

The UNICEF Club elected officers are Elizabeth Achayo of Worcester as chair, Tamara Lidonde of Spencer as co-chair, Delene Sarsfield of Charlton as secretary, Loise Ngigi of South Grafton as treasurer, and Ra-

chel Anane of Worcester as press relations officer. Achayo holds a college diploma in Human Services (career guiding and counseling, from Kenya). She is a support specialist with the Justice Resource Institute (Framingham, MA). Lidonde is a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) with experience working at Venture Community Services and CareOne Concord. She completed her secondary education at Worcester Technical High School. Sarsfield is a CNA at CareOne at Millbury. She graduated from Holy Name Central Catholic Jr./Sr. High School in Worcester. Ngigi currently works for Venture Community Services (Sturbridge) as a direct support professional. She graduated from Moi Girls Ka-

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# Legislators seek support for those dealing with crumbling foundations

BY KEVIN FLANDERS  
STAFF WRITER

REGION — For area residents who have grappled with the crumbling foundations crisis since 2017, disappointment and setbacks have become all too familiar. But in spite of the latest hitch endured when the State House of Representatives failed to take up a bill meant to support affected homeowners, the new year is bringing fresh waves of hope.

During the final legislative session of 2024, House members took no action on the bill that was approved by State Senate members. Had the bill been greenlighted, it would have provided desperately needed support to homeowners.

“It’s frustrating that the House failed to take up the crumbling foundations bill in the previous legislative session, but we’re not giving up and will refile legislation this month,” said State Sen. Peter Durant (R—Spencer). “I am hopeful that we can garner support from our colleagues in the House, many of whom have constituents struggling with this issue.”

The crisis began in 2017 with the discovery of multiple deteriorating foundations in northern Connecticut and west-central Massachusetts, all of which were constructed with concrete produced from stone aggregate that was supplied by the same

quarry in Willington, Conn.

A 2018 investigation confirmed that the presence of a naturally occurring iron sulfide mineral—pyrrhotite—tainted the stone aggregate produced from one vein of the quarry. Because the mineral causes a slow deterioration of concrete foundations when exposed to oxygen and water, problems didn’t start surfacing at homes until many years after they were built.

Homes constructed between 1983 and 2015 could be impacted by the crisis, officials said. The majority of the tainted concrete was supplied by the now defunct J.J. Mottes Concrete and Septic Supply Company

in Stafford, Conn.

Cracking, flaking, bowing, and separation of concrete are all indicators of a problem that could jeopardize the entire house if not addressed, officials warn.

The cost to replace a foundation ranges between \$150,000 and \$250,000 per house. Most home insurance policies do not cover costs associated with the crisis.

In recent years, many homeowners whose foundations are showing signs of deterioration have been afraid to get testing done and risk being unable to sell their properties. Other residents have passed up opportunities to buy homes because they weren’t able to get exten-

sive testing done in finished basements.

Having spent several years advocating for affected homeowners, local legislators explained that it’s critical to continue putting pressure on their colleagues and conveying the direness of the situation.

“We often hear about affordable housing and ways the legislature can work to provide that, yet we have people who can afford their homes until their foundations crumble from a naturally occurring element, and we are not working quickly enough to help them retain their homes,” Durant said.

This year’s refiled bill would establish a commission to study the

best ways to deal with the growing problem of crumbling concrete. Bay State legislators are hoping to catch up to their counterparts in Connecticut, who have already taken several significant actions to assist homeowners.

“Connecticut has established a workable program, and we certainly could use that as a model, or find a method more suitable for Massachusetts,” Durant said.

Last year, the proposed legislation was passed in the Senate at a formal summer session, then again at an informal December session.

# Funds proposed for infrastructure statewide

BY KEVIN FLANDERS  
STAFF WRITER

REGION — Gov. Mau-

ra Healey recently announced major upgrades planned for the state’s

roads, bridges, and regional transportation systems.

During an announcement earlier this month, the Governor outlined \$8 billion in infrastructure projects targeted over the next decade. The investments will be made without raising taxes, officials pledged.

The plan will be filed as legislation in the coming weeks as part of the Governor’s Fiscal Year 2026 budget proposal and an accompanying supplemental budget.

“This historic transportation proposal represents smart, forward-thinking fiscal management, and it will have an impact on people in all regions of our state,” said Healey. “We’re going to invest billions of dollars to deliver better roads, less traffic, safer bridges, and a transit system that works in every region.”

Across central Massachusetts, officials have long called upon state leaders to make significant investments in road and

bridge improvements. The Governor’s new plan is expected to bring relief to drivers whose daily commutes not only cause traffic headaches, but also damage to vehicles due to banged-up roads.

“This plan will accelerate our efforts to repair crumbling bridges, fix our culverts, and advance important projects throughout the state,” said Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll. “Our administration knows the role a safe, reliable, and efficient transportation system plays in the future of Massachusetts, and this plan represents a gigantic step forward.”

If approved, the proposal would direct \$857 million in surplus Fair Share revenue from FY24 to public transportation. Additionally, the proposal would dedicate \$765 million in Fair Share resources from FY26 to the Commonwealth Transportation Fund.

As part of the capital expansion effort, Governor Healey intends to file a multi-year Chapter 90 bill later this month that would grow the funding pool directed to cities and towns to \$300 million per year for five years.

The transportation proposal includes \$2.5 billion for road and bridge repairs across the state through MassDOT, with money set aside for

culverts, small bridge repairs, and safety and congestion hotspots.

The funding would also allow for projects advancing east-west rail operations. These include proposed capacity improvements near Pittsfield, track work and accessibility upgrades in Springfield, and station planning in Palmer. The ultimate goal is to reduce traffic congestion by offering fast, reliable rail service linking the Berkshires to Boston.

“Gov. Healey and Lt. Gov. Driscoll have stressed that transportation systems must work if we want our communities to thrive,” said Massachusetts Transportation Secretary and CEO Monica Tibbitts-Nutt. “With the Governor’s plan, we are taking very actionable steps to increase the use of Fair Share revenue and offer municipalities more money through the Chapter 90 program.”

Additional proposed funding includes \$400 million to address workforce and safety initiatives identified

as necessary by the Federal Transit Authority; \$25 million for a Winter Resilience Assistance Program for municipalities; and \$25 million for RTA workforce recruitment and retention.

The Governor also plans to use \$1.2 billion in Grant Anticipation Notes (GANs) to borrow against future federal highway grants to finance priority projects statewide.

The financing plan was heavily informed by the work of the Transportation Funding Task Force, which was created by Governor Healey through executive order last January. The task force spent the past year reviewing current and projected revenue sources.

To learn more about the Governor’s transportation and infrastructure proposals, visit [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov).

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Where entertainers perform

7. Miller beer variety

10. Ageless

12. River in SE Europe

13. Able to be repaired

14. Type of wrap

15. Atomic #54

16. Type of tent

17. U.S. Treasury position

18. Opposed to

19. Protective covering

21. Bridge building degree

22. Clouding of the lens

27. Priestess of Hera loved by Zeus

28. Unacceptable

33. Mr. T's "The A-Team" character

34. American national park

36. One point south of due east

37. Assist in a crime

38. Greek mythological personification of Earth

39. A major division of geological time

40. German courtesy title

41. English family dating back to Norman times

44. Discounts

45. South American nation

48. Former Milwaukee Buck Michael

49. Hostile

50. Passports and drivers licenses are two

51. Discourages from doing

CLUES DOWN

1. Supreme god of ancient Egyptians

2. Nevada city

3. Energy, style and enthusiasm

4. Bird's beak

5. Language

6. Midway between south and southeast

7. Punjab village

8. Small biting flies

9. Sportscaster Patrick

10. A way to get around

11. Repeat

12. A way to cook with fat

14. Temporary loss of consciousness

17. Reciprocal of a sine

18. Fir tree genus

20. "Transformers" director Michael

23. Criminals who steal

24. Genus of leaf-footed bug

25. Music product

26. "Talk to you"

29. Santa says it three times

30. Doctors' group

31. African nation

32. Ageless

35. When you hope to get somewhere

36. Worn

38. Deprives of vigor

40. Used to have (Scottish)

41. Where you live

42. Muslim ruler title

43. Basics

44. Type of drug (abbr.)

45. Spanish soldier

46. It precedes two

47. Illuminated

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## REAL ESTATE CHARLTON

\$770,000, 61 Hollywood Dr, Pelletier, Michael E, to Bertuzzi, Jared, and Bertuzzi, Elyza.  
\$325,000, 15 Highfield Rd #A2, Doolin, Robert F, to George, Meghan.

## HOLLAND

None

## SOUTHBRIDGE

\$11,100,000, 479 E Main St, Laurel Ridge Realty LLC, to Southbridge Market Pl LLC.  
\$515,000, 176 Harwood Farm Rd, A&c Home Renovations LLC, to Billis, Nicholas S, and Billis, Deborah A.  
\$365,000, 37 Crystal St, Alsina, William, and Alsina, Griselle, to Anim-Amofa, Frederick J.  
\$230,000, 115 Dresser St, Snow, Brian J, to Royal House Invs LLC.

## STURBRIDGE

\$2,625,000, 441 Main St, Jel Associates Lp, to Ea Associates LLC.  
\$455,000, 16 Gedeon Ave, Brodeur, Jeffrey T, and Brodeur, Jacelyn A, to Baldwin, Jeanne L, and Buchanan, Jill A.  
\$455,000, 18 Gedeon Ave, Brodeur, Jeffrey T, and Brodeur, Jacelyn A, to Baldwin, Jeanne L, and Buchanan, Jill A.  
\$330,000, 62 Arnold Rd, Gomes, Felipe B, and Gomes, Emily A, to Peliquin-Cooke, Deborah A, and Cooke 3rd, Bronson F.  
\$234,500, 7 Crescent Way #305, Paulhus, Philip W, to Shahnarian, Albert, and Shahnarian, Sandra.



# Old Sturbridge Village announces new Vice Presidents of External Affairs and Development

STURBRIDGE — Old Sturbridge Village (OSV), New England's largest living history museum, has appointed Kate McEvoy as Vice President of External Affairs and Bridget Baratta as Vice President of Development, the organization announced today. These senior leadership roles further strengthen the museum's efforts to enhance public engagement and expand its philanthropic initiatives.

"As Old Sturbridge Village grows its reach and impact, we are thrilled to expand our leadership to include these new positions to engage more people with the good work of the Village. We are proud to welcome talented leaders like Kate and Bridget to our team," said Jim Donahue, President and CEO of Old Sturbridge Village. "Their leadership will help carry forward the Village's mission to engage, educate, and inspire through history."

As Vice President of External Affairs, McEvoy will play a pivotal role in advancing the museum's mission by leading efforts to build and strengthen relationships with key external stakeholders, including local, regional, and national organizations, governmental agencies, legislators and community leaders. She will spearhead the development of strategic partnerships that support the museum's educational initiatives, broaden its community engagement and amplify its presence in both the public and philanthropic sectors. In addition, McEvoy will oversee the development of comprehensive external communications strategies that will promote the museum's initiatives and programs.

McEvoy brings more than 25 years of expertise in strategic relationship building, market development, and civic engagement. Before joining OSV, McEvoy served as Vice President of Corporate Relations at UMass Memorial Health, where she worked with key stakeholders in the commercially insured healthcare market to increase market share and enhance the organization's visibility. During her tenure, McEvoy led initiatives such as creating direct employer engagement programs, facilitating community partnerships and advancing anchor mission activities.

She also served as Vice President for Central and Western Massachusetts at Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, where she was responsible for the organization's profit-and-loss performance for the regions of Massachusetts outside of metro Boston. This work included strategic planning, market growth and civic engagement. Earlier in her career, she held leadership roles at Fallon Community Health Plan, where she oversaw external affairs including government relations and philanthropic activities. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Worcester State University.

"Old Sturbridge Village is one of the most celebrated institutions in our nation, both as an academic resource and a revered living history experience," McEvoy said. "I'm thrilled to be joining the team at such an exciting time and look forward to working with our communities to help even more people enjoy all that OSV has to offer."

Bridget Baratta will serve as Vice President of Development, where she will oversee the museum's fundraising and membership efforts, including annual giving, major and capital gifts, and planned giving. Baratta will be responsible for developing and implementing strategies to grow and diversify the museum's donor base, ensuring continued financial support for Old Sturbridge Village's programs and initiatives.

Baratta, a native of South Dartmouth, brings over two decades of nonprofit development experience to Old Sturbridge Village. Most recently, she served as Vice President of Development at the Rhode Island Foundation, where she was responsible for leading the Foundation's development strategy, team and operations, as well as managing a comprehensive portfolio of donors comprising \$1.5 billion of charitable assets.

Baratta also held leadership roles at the Society of Four Arts in Palm Beach, Fla. where she spearheaded a \$100 million capital campaign, as well as at the Martin County Community Foundation, Palm Beach Zoo & Conversation Society and Oxbridge Academy. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Business from George Washington University and a Master of Science in Education Policy & Administration from the University of Pennsylvania.

"I have fond memories of visiting Old Sturbridge Village as a child and I am excited to partner with such an incredible team, devoted members and generous supporters to expand the Village's impact and bring its invaluable programs to even more people," Baratta said.

In their respective roles, McEvoy and Baratta will work closely with President and CEO Jim Donahue, the Executive Leadership team, and Board of Trustees to drive forward Old Sturbridge Village's strategic vision. Their combined expertise in external affairs and development will be instrumental in evolving Old Sturbridge Village's programs and ensuring long-term sustainability.

"Kate and Bridget's appointments reflect our commitment to bringing exceptional leadership to Old Sturbridge Village," said Donahue. "Their talent and experience will help us move forward with continuing our mission as a significant regional educational resource and national leader in living history."

## DA's office receives \$50,000 to implement Juvenile Diversion program

WORCESTER — The Worcester County District Attorney's Office has received a \$50,000 grant to expand its youth diversion program to the residents of Southbridge and Fitchburg, according to Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr.

The grant from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) will allow the office, in collaboration with Choices, Inc., to expand the Early Diversion Worcester (EDW) program, which diverts vulnerable adolescents between the ages of 12 to 18 who might otherwise enter the criminal justice system due to the impact of school suspensions.

"By reaching kids early, we can work to adapt and modify behavior, while hopefully preventing a lifetime of involvement with the criminal justice system," Early said. "This is crime prevention at its best."

The current Early Diversion Program has successfully enrolled and screened 60 youth since its full implementation in February 2024. One parent of a participant shared, "The Choices program is a supportive, accepting environment that has had a huge impact on my son and our family. In just a couple of months, he has made new friends and has found the motivation to strive for his dreams again. We are forever grateful."

Research by Citizens For Juvenile Justice (CFJJ) has shown that youth are twice as likely to be arrested during periods of school suspension or expulsion. In response to this issue, the Healey-Driscoll Administration allocated nearly \$200,000 through the Title II Formula Grant Program to support nonprofit organizations, local police, and state agencies working to prevent at-risk youth from entering the juvenile justice system. The funding is designed to improve outcomes for adolescents through community-based organizations that offer essential services and support.

The program offers a pre-arrest diversion model that provides comprehensive, trauma-informed, recovery-oriented, and equity-based behavioral health services to youth and their families. These services will be provided at the Choices program center in Worcester, where participants will receive individualized care.

Voluntary participants in the program will undergo a comprehensive intake and assessment, which will guide the development of a person-centered care plan. This plan will consider the child's current risk status, history, available resources, and the needs of both the child and their family. In addition, participants will have access to daily programming and free transportation to the Choices center in Worcester. It is anticipated that the program will assist 20 to 25 youth through the duration of the grant.

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## SOUTHBRIDGE POLICE LOG

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Southbridge Police Department reported the following arrests from Jan. 13-27.

A 25-year-old male from Somers, Conn. received a summons in lieu of arrest on Jan. 13 for operating an uninsured and unregistered motor vehicle.

Javier Reyes Otero, age 41, of Southbridge was arrested on Jan. 13 for multiple counts of drug possession.

William J. Blouin, age 50, of Southbridge was arrested on Jan. 14 in connection with a warrant for Assault & Battery on a Person with Intellectual Disabilities.

A 33-year-old male from Southbridge received a summons in lieu of arrest on Jan. 14 for operating an unregistered motor vehicle.

Matthew Zachary Franzen, age 28, of Webster was arrested on Jan. 14 for Criminal Harassment, Violation of an Abuse Prevention Order, and in connection with a warrant.

Angel D. Pitre, age 54, of Southbridge was arrested on Jan. 15 for a Marked Lanes Violation and Operating a motor vehicle after suspension of license.

Alvaro Isaia Poyo, age 42, of Southbridge was arrested on Jan. 16 for Failure to Stop for Police, Operating Under the Influence (liquor), Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle, and driving at a rate of speed greater than was reasonable or proper.

A 36-year-old male from Southbridge was taken into protective custody on Jan. 17 in connection with multiple warrants.

Jennifer Corso, age 54, of Coventry, Conn. was arrested on Jan. 17 for Speeding, Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle, Failure to Stop for Police, operating an uninsured and unregistered motor vehicle, and Operating Under the Influence (liquor).

A 46-year-old male from Southbridge received a summons in lieu of arrest on Jan. 17 for Misdemeanor Breaking & Entering.

A 26-year-old male from Woodstock, Conn. was taken into protective custody on Jan. 18.

A 36-year-old female and 40-year-old male from Southbridge received summonses in lieu of arrest on Jan. 19 for Assault with a Dangerous Weapon.

Ciro Jesus Gonzalez Padilla, age 54, of Southbridge was arrested on Jan. 22 for Use of an Electronic Device while Operating a Motor Vehicle (first offense) and operating a motor vehicle after suspension of license.

A 28-year-old male from Charlton received a summons in lieu of arrest on Jan. 26 for Possession of a Class B Drug.

A 22-year-old female from Southbridge was taken into protective custody on Jan. 26.

A 39-year-old male from Worcester was taken into protective custody on Jan. 27.

A 38-year-old male from Webster received a summons in lieu of arrest on Jan. 27 for Assault & Battery on a Family or Household Member (second offense), Violation of an Abuse Prevention Order, and multiple counts of Assault & Battery with a Dangerous Weapon in violation of a Protection Order.

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## FEBRUARY EVENTS AT CHARLTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Additional parking is available across the street at Town Hall and at the Elementary School.

**Movies @ The Library**  
All showings are on Tuesdays at 1:00 ONLY unless noted - Community Meeting Room - No registration required.

February 4 : THE KILLER'S GAME. 2024. Rated R. Runtime 104 minutes. Featuring Sofia Boutella, Dave Bautista, Lucy Cork, Pom Klementieff, and Scott Adkins.

February 11 : CONCLAVE. 2024. Rated PG. Runtime 104 minutes. Starring Ralph Fiennes, Jacek Koman, Lucian Msamati, Stanley Tucci, and John Lithgow.

February 18 : WICKED. 1:00 & 4:30 (2 showings!) 2024. Rated PG. Runtime 160 minutes. Featuring Cynthia Erivo, Ariana Grande, Jonathan Bailey, and Jeff Goldblum.

February 25 : THE CRITIC. 2024. Rated R. Runtime 101 minutes. Starring Ian McKellen, Gemma Arterton, Mark Strong, and Lesley Manville.

**Threaded Together Fiber Arts Group** (formerly Silver Needles Knit & Crochet Group)  
Thursdays from 1:00-3:00 - Upstairs Reading Room - No registration required  
Bring your current project and relax with friends. All are welcome regardless of skill level.

**Lifecycle of Seeds**  
Tuesday, February 4, 6:00-7:00 - Community Meeting Room - Registration requested  
The knowledgeable folks from Blackstone Valley Veggie Gardens will be here to teach us all about sowing, harvesting and storing seeds. This presen-

tation deals with all types of seed starting as well as which seeds to harvest and how to store them to add to your sustainable life. Registration is appreciated but not required.

**Better Read Than Dead Book Club - THE GOOD MOTHERS** by Alex Perry  
Wednesday, February 5, 11:00-12:00 - Sibley Reading Area - No registration required  
A monthly meetup to discuss fascinating true crime books. Books available from circulation prior to discussion.

**10 Steps to Researching the History of Your House in Charlton**  
Thursday, February 6, 6:00 - 7:30 - Community Meeting Room - Registration requested  
Have you ever wondered about the history of your house? In this presentation by house historian and genealogist Marian Pierre-Louis you will learn where to find existing information about your house. Then we will talk about the rewarding experience of researching the history of your house. Steps will be provided to get you started on your journey to discover the people and stories that make up the fascinating and unique history of your house. Marian has been researching house histories for over 25 years. She has researched hundreds of houses across Massachusetts and New England.

**Chocolate 101: A Tasting and Talk**  
Saturday, February 8, 11:00 - 12:00 - Dexter Hall - Registration is required  
Join the always popular Victoria from Cocoa Beantown and try samples of high-quality chocolate totally unlike the chocolate you've had before. She will also bring plenty of props for review, along with the latest information on local and global chocolate. Great for all you chocoholics out there, just in time for Valentine's Day!

**Friends of the Library Meeting**  
Tuesday, February 11, 3:30-4:30 - Com-

munity Meeting Room  
Monthly meeting of Friends of Charlton Public Library. All are welcome.

**Learn to Make a Valentine's Charcuterie Board**  
Tuesday, February 11, 6:00-7:30 - Dexter Hall  
Cherise (from Charcuterie by Cherise) will teach us tips and tricks for creating personal sized boards just in time for Valentine's Day. For adults and teens ages 13 and up. Class limited to 30 participants and requires a non-refundable copay of \$15.00. Please visit the adult circulation desk to register and pay.

**CPL Book Discussion - MEMORIAL DRIVE: A Daughter's Memoir** by Natasha Threthewey  
Thursday, February 9, 6:00-7:00 - Community Meeting Room - No registration  
Books are available for checkout at the adult circulation desk one month prior to discussion.  
Check library event calendar listing for Zoom link.

**Take Great Videos with your Smartphone**  
Saturday, February 15, 11:00-2:00 - Community Meeting Room - Registration required  
Professional Photographer Peter Glass returns to help us unlock the full potential of our smartphones and transform ideas into captivating videos for personal projects, social media, documenting events, or even small business marketing. This hands-on course is designed for those eager to learn the essentials of shooting high-quality videos using just their smartphone. Whether you're a beginner or looking to sharpen your skills, this class will guide you through the entire process – from learning the basics of your smartphone's video camera to working with a high quality (and free!) editing program to produce your final, polished video. Bring your fully charged smartphone, the smartphone's charger, and any accessories you have.

**Saturday Acoustic Roots Jam**  
Saturday, February 15, 12:00-1:30 - Community Meeting Room  
An acoustic only music jam. Open to all 18+. From September through May the group meets at Charlton Public Library, and from June through August the group meets at an off-site location. Email Rich at [Cule5632@gmail.com](mailto:Cule5632@gmail.com) for more information.

**Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group**  
Thursday, February 20, 6:00-7:30 - Community Meeting Room - No registration required  
Led by experienced caregivers and offers information, resources, and strategies specific to caring for someone with Alzheimer's and other Dementias along with support for transitioning to different care settings. No registration  
Co-sponsored by Tri-Valley and Charlton Public Library.

**Death Cafe**  
Thursday, February 20, 6:00-7:30 - Dexter Hall - No registration required  
A group-directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives or course of action, no set conclusions and no judgment. Death Cafés provide a safe environment to gather, eat cake, drink tea or coffee, and enjoy open-minded conversation about dying and death. It is an opportunity to share, explore and question our own perceptions of death. It's not a bereavement session. Questions? Email [kwalker4@mac.com](mailto:kwalker4@mac.com).

**Learn Ukulele with Julie**  
Saturday, February 22, 12:30 - 1:30 - Community Meeting Room - Registration required  
Want to try an instrument that is fun and easy to play? Join Julie Stepanek as she shows the fundamentals of ukulele playing. No experience necessary. Some ukuleles will be provided, or bring your own! Recommended for ages 14+. Julie Stepanek lives in a pine forest in western Massachusetts where she raised a son and taught herself how to play the ukulele. She has been teaching and making music at libraries, preschools and senior centers throughout New England for the last twelve years. Registration required as space is limited!

**Needle Felted Cottage**  
Wednesday, February 12, 10:30-12:00 - Community Meeting Room - Registration required  
Tuesday, February 25, 6:00-7:30 - Community Meeting Room - Registration required  
This month we're learning how to needle felt tiny cottages! This craft is for adults and teens ages 13 and up.

**Charlton Ukulele League & Ensemble**  
Thursday, February 27, 6:00-7:30 - Community Meeting Room - No registration required  
Experienced musicians and newbies all welcome. Questions? Email [Cule5632@gmail.com](mailto:Cule5632@gmail.com)

**Critical Thinking Discussion Group - THE CHERRY ORCHARD** by Anton Chekhov  
Friday, February 28, 1:00-2:00 - Sibley Reading Area (Main Floor) - No registration required  
No experience with critical thinking discussion groups is necessary. Books/materials are available for checkout one month prior to discussion. Questions? Email [saga3@charter.net](mailto:saga3@charter.net).

## VILLAGER ALMANAC

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Thursday: 8 a.m.-8 p.m.  
Friday: 8 a.m.-12 p.m.

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Tuesday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Wednesday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Thursday: 9 a.m.-8 p.m.  
Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Saturday: 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (May 25 will be our last open Saturday until Labor Day) Sunday: Closed

**CHARLTON TOWN HALL (508) 248-2200**  
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Tuesdays..... 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
Friday..... Closed  
visit [www.townofcharlton.net](http://www.townofcharlton.net) or more information.  
Individual offices may vary  
**PUBLIC LIBRARY (248-0452)**  
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**POLICE DEPARTMENT (248-2250)**  
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Heritage School ..... (508) 248-4884  
Charlton Middle School..... (508) 248-1423  
Shepherd Hill Regional High School  
..... (508) 943-6700  
Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School (508) 248-5971 or (508) 987-0326

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Mon – Thurs 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**FISKDALE:** 508-347-6486  
Weekdays 9:00-4:30 and Sat. 9:00 -12:00

**STURBRIDGE** 508-347-6463  
Weekdays 8:30 – 5:00 and Sat. 9:00 -12:00

**BRIMFIELD:** 413-245-3451  
Weekdays: 9:00 – 4:30 and Sat. 9:00 -12:00

**WALES:** 413-245-9808  
Weekdays 8:30 – 12:30 and 2:00 – 4:30 and Sat. 9:00 – 12:00

### CHURCH LISTINGS

- **Central Baptist Church**  
256 Main St., Southbridge, MA 01550  
Tel 508/764-6365; Worship 10:00 A.M.
- **Charlton Federated Church**, 64 Main St., 508- 248-5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. Summer worship is 9:30 a.m.  
[www.charltonfedchurch.org](http://www.charltonfedchurch.org)
- **Charlton Baptist Church**, 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488, [www.charltonbaptist.org](http://www.charltonbaptist.org), Sunday worship 10 a.m.
- **Charlton City United Methodist**, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: [CharltonCityUMC.org](http://CharltonCityUMC.org)  
Sunday worship and Children's church 10am
- **St. Anne St. Patrick Church**, 16 Church St., Fiskdale (508) 347-7338  
[www.stannestpatparish.com](http://www.stannestpatparish.com)  
Saturday Vigil Mass at 4 pm, Sunday 8 am, 10 am, 12 noon, Youth Mass (September to May) 5 pm. Daily Mass Mon - Thurs 7:30 and 10 am, Fri and Sat 7:30 am
- **St. Joseph's Church**, 10 H. Putnam Ext, 248-7862, [www.stjosephscharlton.com](http://www.stjosephscharlton.com), Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30 p.m., Sunday Mass 8 a.m., Sunday Family Mass 10 a.m., Sunday LifeTEEN Mass 5 p.m., Weekday Mass Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 a.m.
- **Wayside Church**, 6 Haggerty Road, 248-5144
- **Assemblies of God Southern New England District Headquarters**, Route 20, 248-3771, [snedag.org](http://snedag.org), Office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Living Word Church of Charlton**, 10 Main Street - Grange building 1st Floor, Charlton, MA 01507, Pastor Craig Bellisario, (508) 233-8349  
Sunday Service 10:00am.  
[www.livingwordhcharlton.com](http://www.livingwordhcharlton.com)  
[info@livingwordcharlton.com](mailto:info@livingwordcharlton.com)
- **New Life Fellowship A/G, SNED Chapel**, 307 Sturbridge Road, Rt. 20, Charlton, MA, Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.
- **Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale**- 8 Maple St. Sturbridge, 774-304-1021  
[www.sturfed.org](http://www.sturfed.org)  
Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.
- **Bethlehem Lutheran Church**- 345 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566  
Phone 508-347-7297  
Web: [www.bethlehemsturbridge.org](http://www.bethlehemsturbridge.org)  
Services - Sunday 9:00 am  
Pastor Dan Purtell
- **Holland Congregation Church**  
"Where the Bible is preached."  
11 Sturbridge Road, Holland, 413-245-9926  
[Hollandchurch.org](http://Hollandchurch.org)  
Sunday Service @ 10:00 am  
Pastor Dan Maketansky
- **Holy Trinity Episcopal Church**  
446 Hamilton St., Southbridge, MA 01550  
Phone: 508-765-9559  
Web: [www.holytrinitysouthbridge.org](http://www.holytrinitysouthbridge.org)  
Sunday Service 11:00 am  
Pastor Dan Purtell

## Nomination papers available for Southbridge town election

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Annual Town Election will be held in Southbridge on Tuesday, June 10, and nomination papers will be available to persons who wish to run for local office in the Town Election beginning on Tuesday, Jan. 21.

The offices needing to be filled are:

Councilor At Large	(Three Years)	Three
School Committee	Three Years)	Two
School Committee	(One Year)	One
Board of Assessors	(Three Years)	One
So. Worc. Cnty. Regional Vocational School Comm	(Three Years)	One
Southbridge Housing Authority	(Five Years)	One
Southbridge Redevelopment Authority	(Five Years)	One

Nomination papers require 43 signatures for all town-wide offices. Nomination papers must be returned to the Town Clerk's Office for certification of signatures by Tuesday, April 22 at 5 p.m. For more information regarding the Town Election for Southbridge and how to obtain nomination papers, call the Office of the Town Clerk at 508-764-5408.

## Friday's Child



**Mikel**  
**Age 17**  
**Registration # 7138**

likes playing video games such as Mario and NBA 2K.  
<https://adopt.mareinc.org/waiting-child-profiles#gallery/child/7138>

### Can I Adopt?

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

The process to adopt a child from foster care includes training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you. These steps will help match you with a child or sibling group that your family will fit well with.

To learn more about adoption from foster care visit [www.mareinc.org](http://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.





## JOSHUA HYDE PUBLIC LIBRARY

306 Main St., Sturbridge  
508-347-2512  
mayent@cwmmars.org

### TEEN & ADULT PROGRAMS

Wednesday, February 5 at 6:30pm. **THE HISTORY OF CHOCOLATE IN MASSACHUSETTS WITH TASTINGS.** Did you know that when the colonists stopped drinking tea, they turned to drinking chocolate? Massachusetts has many historical connections to chocolate, including being the home of the very first chocolate factory in North America, the first roadside retail confectionary operations, and the first forays into commercial white chocolate production. Join Victoria from Therapy Gardens and learn more about our sweet history with this fascinating program - and indulge in a sweet sample as well. Registration is required.

Tuesday, February 11 at 7:30pm. **VIRTUAL THRILLER/HORROR BOOK RECS WITH BOOKSTAGRAMMAR JODY BLANCHETTER AKS @REDREADREVIEWS.** Registration is required. This program occurs monthly on the 2nd Tuesday of every month during 2025.

Thursday, February 13 at 6:30pm at the Public House. **STEWING**

**OVER MYSTERIES.** Get ready for an unforgettable evening of thrilling mysteries and hearty comfort food as USA Today bestselling author Hank Phillippi Ryan comes to Sturbridge for an exclusive author event. Sponsored by the Friends of the Joshua Hyde Public Library. Tickets are very limited.

### FOR TEENS

Thursday, February 20 at 2:00pm. **DECORATING CUPCAKES FOR TEENS.** Sue from Let's Cake Decorate will be here to teach skills and techniques for decorating 2 different cupcake designs step-by-step! All materials will be provided. For teens ages 13 to 18. Registration is required.

### BOOK GROUPS

Tuesday, February 11 at 1:00pm. **AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP.** This month's book is "The Hazelbourne Ladies Motorcycle and Flying Club" by Helen Simonson.

Wednesday, February 20 at 6:30pm. **ARMCHAIR TRAVELERS BOOK GROUP.** This month's book is "The Violin Conspiracy" by Brendan Slocumb.

Tuesday, February 25 at 6:30pm. **WORLD BUILDING BOOK GROUP.** This month's book is "Iron Widow" by

Xiran Jay Zhao.

### FOR KIDS

Story Time - Tuesday & Friday at 10:45am. Join us for stories, songs, rhymes, and a take-and-make craft! No registration is required. Children must be accompanied by an adult caregiver. Sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL. There will be no story time on February 18th and 21st.

Thursday, February 13 at 6:00pm. **LEGO CLUB.** Love Legos? Come build with us. For children ages 5 to 12 with an adult caregiver. Registration is required.

Tuesday, February 18 at 11:00am. **BENANNA BAND.** The BenAnna Band is a nationally touring children's duo that focuses on music and inclusion for kids of all ages, abilities and identities. Children must be accompanied by an adult caregiver. Registration is required.

Wednesday, February 19 at 11:00am. **THROUGH ME TO YOU PUPPETRY.** Come join Newton and the gang for Puppet Story Time! For children of all ages with an adult caregiver. Registration is required.

Hudgins for a musical story time where there will be a lot of movement and audience participation! For children ages infant to 6 years with an adult caregiver. Registration is required.

Thursday, February 20 at 6:00pm. **STUFFIE SLEEPOVER.** Join the library for a PJ story time perfect for little ones and a plush friend of their choosing. We'll make name tags for our stuffies, decorate blankets to keep them cozy, and enjoy a couple of books before families kiss their plushies goodnight and leave them in the library's capable hands. Families can pick up their stuffed animals on Friday 2/21 and Saturday 2/22 and learn about all the fun the stuffies had during their library sleepover.

### FOR EVERYONE

Saturday, February 8 from 11:00am - 2:00pm - **Friends of the JHPL Book & Food Drive.** The Friends of the JHPL will be collecting books for their book sale, in addition to unexpired non-perishable food for the Pages and Packs Pantry.

For more information, go to sturbridgeli-brary.org or contact the Joshua Hyde Public Library at 508-347-2512.

## Shepherd Hill grad prepares to release new song



**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** — Since moving to Nashville, Tenn. in January 2022, Liam Coleman has been carving his own path in Music City.

Coleman, a 2021 graduate of Shepherd Hill High School, had a busy 2024 performing and writing original music and has a new song titled "Drown You Out" releasing on Friday, Jan. 31.

Coleman, who is a regular performer at Garth Brooks Friends in Low Places Bar & Honky-Tonk was also tearing up the south and Midwest

last year as a touring musician on the largest college tour in the country with Six Pack Coverage. Coleman and his band played ten states and some of the biggest colleges in the U.S. such as Ole Miss, University of Oklahoma, Auburn Alabama and the University of Michigan just to name of few.

As a songwriter, Coleman has contributed to five releases as a co-writer for other artists. On top of his next release on Jan. 31, he has three other song releases with his own projects in the first half of this year releasing in March, May and July.

You can find Coleman on all social media platforms at Liam Coleman Music and you can stream his new music anywhere you get your music online. For more information and to keep up with his tour schedule, visit liamcoleman-music.com.

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FRANK G. CHILINSKI  
PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE  
EDITOR

# Keeping it local —why our community matters most

Big stories from far away dominate our feeds, leaving little room for the stories that directly impact our daily lives. But here in New England, we have something special, a culture of pragmatism, resilience, and a commitment to our neighbors that deserves more of our attention than any distant drama.

When you know what’s happening in your town, you can make better decisions, participate in meaningful ways, and strengthen your community. From town meetings and school board decisions to the opening of a new business or a neighbor organizing a food drive, these are the stories that impact our daily lives.

Local news reminds us that what happens right outside our door often affects us far more than what’s unfolding hundreds of miles away. Sure, keeping an eye on national or global events is important, but the real opportunities for change and impact start right here.

Living in New England is a badge of honor. This isn’t an easy place to call home, and we like it that way. The winters are brutal, the terrain is rugged, and the people. We’re straightforward, skeptical of nonsense, and fiercely independent. But beneath that no-nonsense exterior is a deep sense of loyalty and community.

We might argue about who makes the best chowder or complain about tourists clogging the roads in leaf-peeping season, but when someone in our community needs help, we show up.

Social media and national headlines are filled with division and negativity, but we know better. We’ve built a culture where actions matter more than words and where we measure people not by their politics, but by how they treat others.

Ask yourself, how can I make an impact here? Can you volunteer at a local food pantry? Mentor a student? Organize a block party to bring people together? These small, tangible actions might not make national news, but they’ll make a world of difference to the people around you.

At the end of the day, we’re New Englanders. We don’t fall for the fluff or the fearmongering. We know life is about the relationships we build and the community we create. It’s about showing up, speaking truth, and taking care of the people around us.

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

## Purchases with a purpose

The other day, I was watching television when a commercial for Bombas’ socks came on the air. The voice over said for every pair purchased, a pair will be donated to the homeless, and that some incredibly high number had already been given. Wow, talk about purchase with a purpose!

Now technically, every time we buy something, there is a purpose of one sort or another behind the purchase. Often it is as simple as we’re hungry and find a café to refuel ourselves.

But the “purchases with a purpose” I’m talking about have far broader reach than merely satisfying our immediate desire or need.

Consider more and more organizations – whether large scale enterprises like Bombas Fashions, or small event hosts are devoting a portion of their proceeds to a greater good when customers purchase their products.

Speaking of which, I recently learned about the generous program sponsored by the Stop & Shop at 100 Charlton Road in Sturbridge, Mass. They have a novel way of helping charitable endeavors. Their flower department puts together specially marked flower arrangements, with a portion of the proceeds going to a different outreach program selected each month from within the community.

Stop & Stop calls their floral arrangements “Bloomin’ 4 Good Bouquets.”

For the month of February the “Manna Food Pantry” (open each Saturday 10 a.m. – noon) at Charlton City United Methodist Church (CCUMC) – your ‘good neighbor church’ on 74 Stafford St., will receive a portion of the proceeds from purchases of those Bloomin’ 4 Good Bouquets. Think of it as flowers for food, or flowers to help feed someone hungry.

In February your purchase of a “Bloomin’4 Good Bouquet” will help the CCUMC food pantry feed others.

This is especially timely since February can be a challenging month for some members in our communities who may have to choose between food and heat. So let’s make someone happy for Valentine’s Day with flowers and help feed our vulnerable neighbors in the process. What could be better?!

Also in February, there’s another opportunity to make your dollars count.

Charlton City United Methodist Church is hosting an exciting event on Saturday, Feb. 1 – the Dynamic Cards, Collectibles and Craft Show. Meeting the needs of a growing group of Pokémon and other enthusiasts, this quarterly event which started at CCUMC is a community activity for young and old alike to come together, make new friends, and learn some fun things, too.

And fun it is! Attendance has nearly doubled from the initial event, and there will be about 50 vendors, as well as food, refreshments, and of course



BEYOND THE PEWS . . . . . BY DR. RB McFEE

the hospitality that CCUMC is noted for. There will also be some awesome give a ways throughout the event.

There is a \$3 admission fee, a portion of which will go to ALS Research, and several outreach ministries of the church (Veterans, Inc. of Worcester; St. Luke’s Guesthouse, and Manna Food Pantry of CCUMC).. The event will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 74 Stafford St., Charlton City. And, there’s plenty of free parking.

If we look around, we can find lots of opportunities to help others – indirectly through our purchases, and directly through our own giving and volunteerism. And Heaven knows there are lots of needs in the community – truly something for everyone!

We can support enterprises focusing on charitable outreach, purchasing products that twice bless us – filling our need, and helping fill the needs of others.

Consider the New York bakery (Greyston Bakery) that Ben and Jerry’s hired to supply the ice cream giant with brownies. Selected due to two important factors – the brownies are amazing, and the bakery hires anyone who needs a job, no questions asked. The owner has often stated he started the business to help end homelessness. I’ve heard him say (paraphrasing) they don’t hire homeless to make brownies; they make brownies to hire the homeless.

Paul Newman was a leader in this practice when he created the brand Newman’s Own, with the singular purpose of generating revenues that could go to charity.

If we’re going to buy something anyway, why not see who is using their profits for the public good?

But it doesn’t have to be a major corporation to do good works and remind us of the joy in helping others.

Most of us can remember the TV news showcasing a youngster who hosted a lemonade stand trying to raise money for her sick sibling or similar heartwarming stories over the years. And they are worthwhile endeavors we can encourage children and adolescents to attempt or participate in.

According to the book “The Paradox of Generosity,” the authors share compelling study data which reveal how a regular practice of generosity enhances quality of life and provides health benefits.

In an earlier article, I wrote about the Thrift Trail (anyone working on that map yet?) and how through supporting church and other charity sponsored thrift shops we bless lots of folks, including ourselves far more than just obtaining a good product at a reasonable cost.

Whether purchasing flowers for a food pantry this February at Stop & Stop Southbridge, or Newman’s lemonade for charity, or Bombas’ socks for the homeless, or attending the CCUMC collectibles show Feb. 1, we all can try to make purchases for a purpose, as well as keeping an eye out for the needs around us, and helping others in our community.

## You can put more into your 401(k) this year



FINANCIAL FOCUS  
TREVOR NIELSEN

Once you retire, you’ll likely need to draw on a variety of financial sources — and one of the most important ones may be your 401(k). And for 2025, you can put even more money into your plan than ever.

You can invest in your 401(k) in one of two ways, depending on your employer’s plan. With a traditional 401(k), you contribute pre-tax dollars, which can lower your taxable income, and your money can grow tax deferred. If you have a Roth 401(k) option, you can contribute after-tax dollars, which aren’t deductible, but your eventual withdrawals will be tax-free if you’ve had your account at least five years and you’re at least 59 and a half.

For either a traditional or Roth 401(k), as well as similar plans such as a 457(b) (for government employees) or a 403(b) (for educators and employees of some nonprofit groups), the contribution limit has increased by \$500 for 2025, to \$23,500. If you’re 50 or older, you can contribute an additional \$7,500, for a total of \$31,000. And under the SECURE 2.0 legislation, if you are between 60 and 63, you have a higher catch-up contribution — \$11,250, instead of \$7,500, for a total of \$34,750.

If you can afford to contribute the full amount to your 401(k) or similar plan, consider doing so. Of course, not everyone is in that position. If you’re a younger worker, you may well have other financial obligations, such as paying off student loans. And even if you’ve been in the workforce for a while, you may be putting away money for other things — such as your children’s education — as well as your own retirement. But even if you can’t “max out” on your 401(k), try to contribute at least enough to earn your employer’s matching contribution, if one is offered.

Regardless of how much you contribute to your 401(k), consider these suggestions on managing the money within your plan:

Create a portfolio that fits your risk tolerance. Most 401(k) plans offer up to a dozen investment options, while some plans offer many more. You obviously want to increase your 401(k) balance as much as possible, but that doesn’t necessarily mean putting all your 401(k) dollars into the most aggressive funds available. Instead, consider spreading your 401(k) contributions among a range of investments, which can help you lower your risk level while still giving you opportunities for long-term growth. Everyone’s risk tolerance is different, though, so you’ll want to evaluate yours when constructing your 401(k) portfolio.

Adjust your portfolio as needed. It’s a good idea to review your 401(k)’s investment mix at least once a year to see if it’s performing as you’d hoped. But be patient — one “down” year doesn’t necessarily mean you must make changes. However, as you approach retirement, you may want to lower the risk level of your 401(k) by moving some of your dollars into more conservative vehicles. Still, even when you’re retired and have started drawing money from your 401(k), you might want to keep some growth potential in it to help you stay ahead of inflation.

By contributing what you can afford to your 401(k), and by carefully managing the investments within your plan, you can help maximize the value of this powerful retirement savings vehicle — and give yourself a key asset to help you enjoy your retirement years.

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

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# Tips for Painting Perfection!

Are the winter dol-drums setting in? Why not perk up your space with a paint project? Since nothing transforms a space quicker or cheaper than paint, it's a natural choice for a mini makeover. Whether you're painting an entire room or a piece of furniture, the following ideas and techniques can help ensure paint perfection!



TAKE  
THE  
HINT  
  
KAREN  
TRAINOR

walls. A long hallway can be shortened by painting the wall at the end a dark color to bring it closer. And rectangular rooms can instantly appear more symmetric by painting the two short end walls a darker shade.

Paint is one the easiest, cost effective ways to alter and enhance the spaces you live in. The golden rule to painting walls is that dark colors absorb light, making a room appear smaller, and whites and pastels reflect the light, creating a spacious feel. To expand a small room, paint the walls a color from the cool end of the color wheel. In fact, paint company Sherwin-Williams recommends choosing blue, green or violet hues to make walls appear to recede.

Paint can also be used to visually correct architectural flaws. To widen a long narrow room, use a slightly darker color on the shorter walls and a lighter color on the longer walls. To make a low ceiling appear higher, be sure the ceiling is a lighter color than the

more reflective than flat paint so it doesn't show every scuff and can tolerate light cleaning. Satin finish paint is more durable than matte or eggshell finishes. It has a light sheen, and resists moisture, which makes it a popular option for kitchens and bathrooms.

Semi-gloss finishes reflect light and offer a bright, glossy finish which can really add to a room's appeal. Surfaces are easily cleaned, however the shiny finish shows surface imperfections, making it impractical for many applications. Newer trims and moldings are ideal candidates for semi-gloss paint.

A glossy finish provides a high gloss shine, is very durable and easy to clean. The brilliant shine is typically used for small accent areas, as the finish is very reflective and too distracting for most area applications.

Not sure how much paint to buy? Most major paint companies and home centers offer easy to use paint calculators on their websites for precise measuring. Or, to estimate the amount of paint you need in order to cover the walls of a room, multiply the perimeter of the room

by the ceiling height to get square feet. Subtract 20 square feet for each door and 15 square feet for each average-sized window in the room. The figure you end up with is a pretty close estimate of the actual wall area. Keep in mind, you can expect one gallon of paint to cover approximately 350 square feet.

Want to know the most efficient order of painting a room? Experts advise painting ceiling, walls, trim, cabinets, and doors.

Quick Tips  
For a quick patch job on walls, simply use items on hand: Mix equal parts of starch and salt, with just enough water to make a thick paste. Apply and smooth over cracks or small holes.

When mixing up commercial plaster, you'll reduce lumps if you add the powdered plaster to the water instead of adding water to the plaster.

Sanding is a tedious chore. To reduce sanding on plastered walls, simply go over freshly applied joint compound with a wet paint brush for a smooth finish.

Ensure a smooth surface: Before painting over an old bureau or other piece of furniture,

you can easily clean the finish by wiping it down with a lintfree cloth dampened with straight turpentine. This method picks up any stray dust and helps smooth out the surface to prepare it for painting.

When painting new plaster, or other porous surface, paint on a solution of water mixed with PVA glue first. This seals the surface and stops the paint from soaking into the plaster, giving a better finish and making the paint go further!

When painting with a brush, always keep a wet edge as you paint, and work away from that wet edge. If you paint over a dry edge, you will get overlap marks.

Aerosol paint is a popular choice for re-vamping furniture and small accessories, but it can be frustrating when the paint does not dispel evenly. Here's a trick to ensure a finer and more even coat of paint: Simply place the can in warm water several minutes prior to spraying. The higher temperature helps the paint to flow out more easily, and smoothly.

Win a Three Course 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 I receive enough tips for a column) will win a fabulous three course dinner for two at the renowned restaurant, located on Route 131 across the town common in historic Sturbridge. Because I'm in the business of dispensing tips, not inventing them (although I can take credit for some), I'm counting on you readers out there to share your best helpful hints!

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

# Kid- and pet-friendly indoor gardening

Creating an indoor oasis of greenery can help lift your spirits, reduce stress and improve your overall wellbeing. Challenges arise when growing indoor plants with kids and pets in the house. Keep them safe by selecting pet- and kid-safe plants and pest management strategies.

Increase your indoor gardening success by selecting plants suited to your home's growing conditions and gardening style. If you tend to over-water your plants, grow moisture-loving plants or opt for more drought-tolerant plants if you practice benign neglect. Once you have your list, double-check their people and pet toxicity. Consult with your veterinarian and visit the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) website for a list of pet-safe and toxic plants. Consult with your pediatrician, local botanical garden, and children's hospital for a list of kid-friendly indoor plants.

Keep an ongoing list of all the plants you are growing. Include both common and botanical names for accurate identification. Research the care they need and their toxicity to your pets and youngsters in the home. If you suspect your pet or child has ingested a toxic plant, you'll have the proper plant name when contacting your veterinarian or poison control center.

Display any toxic plants out of the reach of curious kids and pets. This can be challenging if your cat or child is skilled at jumping and climbing. With so many beautiful houseplants, play it safe and avoid those that are toxic or too tempting.

Secure plants against accidental tipping by inquisitive pets and kids with mounting putty. A couple of pieces on the bottom of the pot will help reduce the risk of spilled plants and soil. Invest in pots with wider bases for floor plants or secure several pots together to reduce the risk of tipping.

Cover the soil surface to prevent children and pets from digging. Fiber mulch and plant pot grid covers create a barrier between the soil and those who like to dig.



GARDEN  
MOMENTS  
.....  
MELINDA  
MYERS

Keep those that need brighter light within two feet of the window. Those that prefer lower light can be grown near a north-facing window or up to six feet back or off to the side of an east- or west-facing window.

Regularly groom and wipe dust off the leaves of your indoor plants to help reduce the risk of insect damage. Remove spotted leaves when they appear and adjust your watering. This is often enough to correct fungal disease problems. Enlist children in the ongoing care of your indoor plants. This will help them gain respect for the plants and may instill a love of gardening.

Give kids a hand lens and go on an indoor pest hunt. Children often find bugs more interesting than plants. Have them place yellow sticky traps like Summitâ Sticky Traps in various pots to help monitor and trap insect pests.

Always look for kid- and pet-friendly options when intervention is needed. Start with a strong blast of water to dislodge pests like aphids and mites. Follow with an application of a lightweight horticulture oil like Summitâ Year-Roundâ Spray Oil. This organic spray controls aphids, mites, immature whiteflies, and all stages of scale and mealybugs.

And if those tiny fruit-fly-like gnats are too annoying to tolerate, consider managing them with a Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis product like Summitâ Mosquito

Once you narrow down the list, place your kid- and pet-friendly plants where they will receive the necessary amount of sunlight. An east- or west-facing window provides enough light for most indoor plants.



Melinda Myers

Prayer plant (Maranta leuconeura) is a tropical plant with beautiful, unique foliage that's non-toxic to pets and people.

Bitsâ(SummitResponsibleSolutions.com). It's labeled for controlling fungus gnat larvae and is non-toxic for people, pets, and plants. Always read and follow label directions when using any product. You'll have better results and prevent problems caused by misapplication.

Proper plant selection and ongoing care will help keep your indoor plants healthy and children and pets safe from harm.

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



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Southbridge church to close

Friends of Charlton Library holding coffee sale

SOUTHBRIDGE — It is with a heavy heart that First United Methodist Church, located at 449 Main St. in Southbridge, announces that it will close on Jan. 31 after the community meal.

Founded in 1834, the very first preacher was Hezekiah Davis of Dudley who preached every two weeks. In 1835, Frederick P. Tracy was the first pastor appointed to The Circuit of Dudley, Charlton and Southbridge. The church was able to construct in 1843 the main building that you see today and was known as the Methodist Episcopal Church Society. It is the oldest church in Southbridge.

During its heyday, this church was a pillar in the community with a very active women’s group, men’s group, youth groups, Sunday School and a fantastic congregation with many talents supporting the church over the years. The kitchen crew offered amazing dinners in Memorial Hall, serving up to 150 people in multiple seatings. There were rummage sales, Thanksgiving baskets and Christmas gifts for those in need – the church was always buzzing with activity.

Over the last six years, we focused on providing as much help as we could to the underserved in the Southbridge community. Our free community meals cooked in Rosilda’s Kitchen, Carol’s Closet providing free clothing, and opening as a warming station during the cold were the central focus. There were community parties for Halloween, Christmas and Easter; donations of gift baskets, movie night, game night, and so many other activities. A leap forward occurred for inclusivity when we became a Reconciling and Affirming Church in 2023, openly declaring that all are welcome in our church and that our Pastor would perform marriages and baptisms for gay couples. Jesus came for all, not just for some, and he loves ALL no matter how broken, not just some.

The closing service occurred on Jan. 26th at 1:30 p.m. We are grateful to everyone who supported our efforts, and special thanks go to Pastor Sabina Terrades and Reverend Ken Mantler for their leadership in recent years.

CHARLTON — These cold winter days call for a nice hot beverage. Fortunately, the Friends of Charlton Public Library, a 501(c)3 organization, is currently holding a coffee sale, featuring seven different blends from Sturbridge Coffee Roasters. Flavors include a special Library Friends Blend, Black Gold Blend, Mexican Organic Swiss Water Process Decaf, Colombian Supremo Medium, Sumatra Mandheling Organic Dark, Winter Wonderland, and Chocolate Raspberry; all flavors are available in ground and whole bean form. The cost is \$14 per 12-ounce bag. Proceeds enable the Friends to support the mission of the Charlton Public Library.

Order forms are available at the circulation desk at the Charlton Public Library, 40 Main St., Charlton, and also on the Friends’ Facebook page. Completed forms and payment must be returned to the Library’s Circulation Desk by February 14, 2025. Cash, check, and payment through Venmo (@FriendsOfCharltonLib) accepted. Coffee orders will be filled by March 14, and available for pick-up at the library.

In other news, the Friends of Charlton Public Library is currently accepting donations of clean, unwanted yarn, knitting needles, crochet hooks, and knitting/crochet books in preparation The Friends support the Library by sponsoring a variety of programs, projects, and events, including museum passes, movies, author talks, music concerts and performances, and other cultural and educational experiences.

for its upcoming Yarn Sale, which will take place on March 28 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and March 29 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Charlton Public Library, 40 Main St., Charlton. Donations can be placed in

the designated bin behind the Circulation Desk.

For questions or more information, please email [charltonfriends@gmail.com](mailto:charltonfriends@gmail.com).

Proceeds from these fundraisers enable the non-profit Friends to support the mission of the Library by sponsoring a variety of programs, projects, and events, including museum passes, movies, author talks, music concerts and performances, and other cultural and educational experiences. The Friends of Charlton Public Library appreciate your continued support.

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Dudley-Charlton Education Foundation to host “Heroes Among Us” event honoring outstanding school community members

CHARLTON — The Dudley-Charlton Education Foundation (DCEF), which awards thousands of dollars in grants annually, will host their second annual “Heroes Among Us” event on Saturday, March 22 to recognize and honor the exemplary individuals in our DCRSD community.

This event will be an opportunity to thank the many educators and support services staff who have gone above and beyond to make a difference in the lives of the students of our community. The event will be held at the Wellsworth Hotel (formerly Southbridge Hotel & Conference Center) and includes a dinner and dancing, awards ceremony, and silent auction.

Honorees are:

Ray Ayotte, wrestling coach, Shepherd Hill Regional High School

Cindy Boyd, former mathematics teacher and department coordinator of the mathematics department, Shepherd Hill Regional High School (posthumously)

Dayna Dumas, administrative assistant, Heritage School in Charlton

Frank Damelio, a business educator; Shepherd Hill Regional High School

Claudette Eagleton, health educator; Dudley Middle School

Toni Fredette, cafeteria manager, Heritage School in Charlton

Connie Galli, retired music educator, Shepherd Hill Regional High School

Karl Storz Organization, Outstanding Business Partner Award

Amy Kirouac, reading specialist, Charlton Elementary School and Heritage School

Christine Savoie, paraprofessional, Mason Road School, Dudley

Carl Strazulo, retired school adjustment counselor, Dudley Middle School

The event is also an opportunity to raise money for the foundation, which has provided more than \$400,000 worth of grants to the Dudley Charlton School District since its inception.

“As we honor this year’s exceptional ‘Heroes,’ I am inspired by the remarkable dedication and profound impact they have on our community,” shares DCEF President Sabrina Webb. “Their commitment to our students continues to exceed expectations, reaching far beyond the classroom. My deepest gratitude goes out to each honoree for their tireless contributions and to everyone who champions the mission of the DCEF.”

Tickets for the dinner are \$75 per person and can be purchased online; sponsorship opportunities are available at <https://dcedfoundation.org/event/3rd-annual-heroes-among-us-awards-night/>.

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# OBITUARIES

## Loretta J. DiFederico, 93



Southbridge: Loretta J. (Veroneau) DiFederico, 93, passed away peacefully on January 7, 2025, at Life Care Center in Auburn after a short illness.

She was a beacon of beauty, both inside and out, and her kind spirit was a source of joy and inspiration to all who knew her.

She is survived by her two daughters, Diane M. Sheehan of Southbridge and Susan J. D'Angelo and her husband, Kenneth G. D'Angelo of Southbridge; her two granddaughters, Jennifer Sheehan of Fiskdale and Julie (D'Angelo) Roderick and her husband, Matthew, of Brookfield; her grandson, Matthew D'Angelo of Southbridge; her great grandson, Joseph Roderick; her great granddaughter, Leah Roderick of Brookfield; her sister, Jeanne Tretheway of Southbridge; and many nieces and nephews, who will forever carry her memory in their hearts.

She was predeceased by her former husband, Joseph DiFederico in 2001, her brother Edward Veroneau, and her two sisters, Dorothy Dimitry and Joan Veroneau. She was born in Worcester on September 27, 1931, daughter of late Albert Veroneau and Helen (Alishauskas) Veroneau-Pren-di.

Loretta started her career as a telephone operator with the New England Telephone Company in Southbridge. She worked as a Travel Consultant for Sturbridge Travel for 46 years and part-time at Colonial Travel for 6 years before retiring in 2014. She loved her work and formed relationships and friendships she cherished and held dear to her heart. She had wonderful memories of her travels all over the world. She had a great passion for music, playing her piano, electric keyboard and listening to her CD's every day. She was an excellent cook and hosted many gatherings for friends and family. She had a knack for home décor. Her home reflected her impeccable taste and decorating skills.

Loretta was known for her unwavering kindness. She had a special way of making everyone feel valued and cherished, and her warm smile could light up any room. She was a devoted mother, grandmother, great grandmother and friend, always putting the needs of others before her own and offering unconditional love.

In accordance with Loretta's wishes her funeral services and burial will be private.

There are no calling hours.

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

www.morrillfuneralhome.com

## Timothy J. George, 53



Southbridge: Timothy J. "TJ" George, 53, of Wall St. passed away on January 22nd surrounded by the love of his family.

TJ leaves his parents, Beverly and Patrick Loconto of Southbridge; his two brothers, Reed George and his wife Carrie of Hingham, MA and David George and his wife Cheryl of Southbridge; his nephews, Jack George of Brooklyn, NY, Austin George of Southbridge, Alex George and Joey George both of Hingham; his niece, Stephanie Chapman and husband Mark of South Hadley; several aunts, uncles, cousins, extended family members and his long-time close friends, Randy Lamica, Bob Dougherty and Kyriakos "KK" Konstantakis.

All were touched by his kind spirit and unwavering love.

TJ earned his degree in Turf and Soil Science from the University of Massachusetts and worked for several years in the golf course industry, a profession that allowed him to blend his expertise with his appreciation for the outdoors.

TJ was a lifelong fan of New England sports teams and rarely missed a chance to cheer on his favorite players. He also had a knack for finding hidden treasures at yard sales and flea markets with his friend, Randy, a pas-

time he enjoyed immensely. An occasional visit to Foxwoods added some extra excitement to his life!

Above all, TJ cherished his family. He found great joy in family gatherings, where laughter and love filled the room. His warmth and devotion to his loved ones will be deeply missed, but fondly remembered.

TJ's family would like to thank all the doctors and nurses at Harrington Hospital, ER and ICU as well as the doctors and nursing staff at St. Vincent Hospital in Bridgeport, CT for their wonderful and compassionate care.

A celebration of TJ's life will take place in the spring or summer of this year.

His funeral will be held on Friday, Jan. 31st, from the Daniel T. Morrill Funeral Home, 130 Hamilton St., Southbridge, with a Mass at 11:00am in St. Mary's Church of the St. John Paul II Parish, 263 Hamilton St., Southbridge. Burial to follow in St. Hedwig's Cemetery, Southbridge.

Calling hours in the funeral home will be held on Thursday, Jan. 30th, from 4:00 to 7:00pm.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made in TJ's name to the Diabetes Association P.O. Box 7023 Merrifield, VA 22116-7023 or St. John Paul II Food Pantry, 279 Hamilton St., Southbridge, MA 01550

www.morrillfuneralhome.com

# Walt Disney

Many people feel they can't have the life they want because of their past limitations or failures.

Maybe your family wasn't there for you, you didn't get the proper education, or you've been fired from multiple jobs or mistreated in relationships.

Many things aren't fair and can cause a chain reaction of events that can take us far off course. Sometimes, we make bad choices and miss out on the life we want, but that doesn't mean it has to stay that way

"All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them." – Walt Disney.

But what gives a person the courage to pursue their dreams? One factor is a positive vision of what's possible.

The problem isn't that people lack vision—it's that their vision of

the future is often shaped by the failures and limitations of their past. In other words, they do have a vision—but it's a negative one.

One trait of a successful person is they don't allow themselves to be defined by their failures or their present unfavorable circumstances.

Instead, they define themselves by a positive vision of their future.

That seems odd when you think about it. They define themselves by something that hasn't even happened yet.

It's easy to look at a great person and assume they had everything handed to them or that somehow life was much easier on them than it was on you.

I have many fond memories of my parents taking me to Disney World. I've been on the rides,

POSITIVELY  
SPEAKING

TOBY  
MOORE

seen the movies, and heard about the man who built it all, Walt Disney. I've driven past the Disney skyscraper in Burbank, Calif., hundreds of times; I've auditioned at Walt Disney Studios dozens of times.

When surrounded by all that accomplishment, it's hard to imagine that Walt ever faced any hardship.

Most don't know that Walt Disney was fired from his job at the Kansas City Star after his newspaper editor told him that he didn't have enough imagination or creativity!

What if Walt Disney allowed himself to be defined by that moment, and for the next 20 years, he wandered from job to job, telling himself, "I'm not creative, I don't have a good enough imagination...."

Instead, imagine Walt

in Kansas City after Laugh-O-Gram failed, sitting alone in his office, staring at empty walls. He had no money, no plan, and no clear way forward. Perhaps he wondered if his editor had been right all along—maybe he didn't have what it takes. It would've been so easy to give up then, to let the weight of failure convince him to settle for less.

But he didn't.

He sold his camera, scraped together enough for a one-way train ticket to Hollywood, and took a leap of faith. That train ride wasn't just a change of scenery—it was a statement of hope.

Walt was choosing to believe in a future that hadn't been written yet, even when his circum-

stances told him otherwise. The rest is history.

I often wonder how many potentially great people never accomplish their vision because they believe in their failures more than in their dreams. They accept what their present circumstances are telling them instead of what their future vision could create.

If Walt Disney had been one of those people, we'd have missed out on one of the most creative minds of the 20th century.

He wouldn't have created Mickey Mouse, one of the most beloved characters of all time. There'd be no Snow White, no Cinderella, no Fantasia—classics that redefined animation forever.

He wouldn't have built Disneyland, the first-ever theme park of its kind, or Epcot, a visionary concept of a utopian community.

The Disney legacy wouldn't have touched billions of lives through films, theme parks, and innovations that continue to inspire the generations.

Walt Disney refused to let his failures or limitations define his future, so he became one of the most influential people of all time.

Like all great people, he focused on what could be instead of what had been.

We have the same choice—focus on what could be and take the first step toward your vision.

## CCUMC to hold Dynamic Cards, Collectibles and Craft Show Feb. 1

CHARLTON — Charlton City United Methodist Church is excited to host its first Dynamic Cards, Collectibles, and Craft Show, show of 2025 on Saturday, Feb. 1, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at 74 Stafford St. in Charlton. Each show will be jam-packed with vendors and will also feature lunch, baked goods, and other goodies.

Looking to make your favorite sports fan or collector feel good? Two floors are filled with vendors offering sport cards, trading game cards like Pokémon The Magic and

Yu-Gi-Oh, homemade jewelry, body lotions and oils, action and mini-figures, and sports memorabilia. You can't go wrong giving Dynamic Cards, Collectibles & Craft Show a try!

Admission is \$3, and we are taking donations for Target ALS, an organization helping research and providing resources for individuals to fight and navigate ALS. Partial proceeds from the event also support local ministries. You win with all the vendors, and the world wins when

you come to support the show.

Plus, the more successful the shows, the more likely we are to set up weekly or monthly trading card and game nights, or craft workshops, in between the quarterly shows to build these shows into an ongoing community and family of peace. If that's something you're interested in, come and show your support for such groups by attending the show and chatting with us.

## As temperatures drop, Cornerstone Bank is helping families stay safe and warm

WORCESTER — Temperatures are dropping and Cornerstone Bank, a community bank with locations throughout Central Massachusetts, wants to help make sure residents have the tools they need to get through the coldest months. Cornerstone is donating \$25,000 toward the Worcester Community Action Council's Emergency Fuel Fund.

"We know the high price of fuel is making it difficult for families to stay warm as winter sets in," said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. "That's why we appreciate the Worcester Community Action Council's work to make sure our neighbors are taken care of."

The Emergency Fuel Fund helps homeowners and renters pay home heating bills and past due balances on utility bills incurred from November through April of each year. Income-eligible residents can apply for aid through the agency's federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

"As a community bank, we are committed to supporting causes that improve the quality of life for those around us," said Tallman. "We hope this donation helps offer some relief to residents facing challenges trying to safely get through the winter."

# Charlton to hold town meeting to consider Town Clerk changes

BY JASON BLEAU  
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — A much-discussed possible change to the Charlton Town Clerk position will go before the public next month thanks to a citizen petition calling for a special town meeting.

The Board of Selectmen considered the option of changing the Town Clerk from an elected to an appointed position in early 2024, but conversations stalling for a time before continuing during several meetings in the fall. The change was recommended by the town's Government Study Review Committee after they examined the town's White Paper Report, which was authored in 2016. The move would make the Town Clerk a hired position rather than an elected post, and officials are hoping that any change would be approved before the clerk's next election cycle. Current Town Clerk Karen LaCroix is expected to retire at the end of her existing term.

In November, LaCroix herself voiced support for the change arguing that many other previously elected positions and department heads have been changed to hired posts with the Town Clerk the only department leader currently decided by an election. She also

argued that keeping it an elected post creates uncertainties around job security and qualifications. The proposal has received mixed reactions from the Board of Selectmen with some wanting to explore the change further while others wanted to avoid removing more electing power from the town's voters.

The Board of Selectmen's discussion in November remained inconclusive as to how they would proceed, although they did table the matter until at least the annual town meeting in May of 2025 with the intent of finalizing the finer details of a proposal. The citizens have stepped forward and demanded a meeting sooner.

A petition to hold a special town meeting to consider the change of the Town Clerk's position was submitted with the appropriate number of signatures on Jan. 8. The Board of Selectmen confirmed the document at a meeting on Jan. 14 which requires a special town meeting to be held within 45 of receipt. That meeting has been set for Feb. 18, a time and place still to be determined. The process will require a bylaw change that would need to be approved at a town meeting, ballot vote, and by the state before the 2026 municipal election.



# Build a house, build a garage, build an addition

FISKDALE — The Tantasqua Regional School Committee will be accepting applications for projects to be built during the 2025-2026 school year. The purpose of these projects is to provide practical work experiences for the carpentry students of Tantasqua’s Technical Division. Since there is no charge for student labor, qualified applicants realize substantial savings. Additional savings can result if Tantasqua’s electrical students install any necessary wiring.

Applications and design plans will be accepted for the construction of a single story house, garage, addition, or similar project. One or more projects may be selected. Applicant must reside in the Tantasqua School District.

All applications should be submitted directly to the Superintendent’s Office by June 1.

For further information please call the Technical Division at 508-347-3045, ext. 0915 or access our Web site at <http://www.tantasqua.org/technical/forms.htm>.

# QCC’s Dental Clinic offers free preventative dental services for seniors and veterans

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College’s Dental Hygiene Clinic is continuing to offer free preventative dental services to anyone aged 55 or older, as well as active military members and veterans. The clinic, located at QCC’s West Boylston Street campus, offers dental assessments, teeth cleaning, X-rays and fluoride treatments. For patients who are not in the aforementioned categories, rates are \$25 for adults and \$20 for children.

“We currently have a relationship with Senior Connection (formerly Central Mass. Agency on Aging) through a grant that gives our senior patients free services in the dental clinic,” said Dental Clinic Operations and Facilities Manager Sheryl Ficorilli.

The grant, which began in January of 2022, has supported over 750 senior patients. The program also provides transportation to and from the dental hygiene clinic.

QCC’s dental hygiene students are required to spend a certain number of hours in direct patient care and the patients from this program provide that valuable interaction.

“This helps our students gain the necessary skills to graduate and become active in the area dental community,” Ficorilli added.

To make an appointment or for more information, call 508-854-4306 or visit [www.QCC.edu/dental-hygiene-clinic](http://www.QCC.edu/dental-hygiene-clinic).

# LEGALS

(SEAL)  
**COMMONWEALTH  
OF MASSACHUSETTS  
LAND COURT  
DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL  
COURT  
Docket Number: 25 SM 000146  
ORDER OF NOTICE**

TO:  
Fatoumata Kaba; Youssouf Kaba  
And to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act: 50 U.S.C. c. 50 § 3901 (*et seq*):  
New American Funding, LLC f/k/a Broker Solutions, Inc. d/b/a New American Funding  
claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Southbridge, numbered 46 Tillyer Avenue, given by Youssouf Kaba and Fatoumata Kaba to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Broker Solutions, Inc., dba New American Funding, dated October 28, 2022, recorded at Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 68420, Page 161, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant’s/Defendants’ Servicemembers status. If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at **Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108** on or before March 10, 2025 or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the grounds of noncompliance with the Act.  
Witness, GORDON H. PIPER, Chief Justice of said Court on January 24, 2025.  
Attest:  
Deborah J. Patterson  
Recorder  
January 30, 2024

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Worcester Probate  
and Family Court  
225 Main Street  
Worcester, MA 01608  
(508) 831-2200  
Docket No. WO24P4184EA  
INFORMAL PROBATE  
PUBLICATION NOTICE**  
Estate Of:  
**Ronald Zandy  
Date of Death: 10/19/2024**

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of :  
Petitioner  
**Robin Zandy Sturbridge MA**  
Will has been admitted to informal probate.  
**Robin Zandy of Sturbridge MA**  
has been informally appointed as Personal Representative of the estate to serve **With** Surety on the bond. The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.  
January 30, 2024

**Sturbridge Planning Board and  
Sturbridge Tree Warden  
Notice of Public Hearing for Scenic  
Road Application for Tree Removal  
Monday, February 10, 2025**

**Town Hall, Veteran’s Memorial Hall –  
308 Main Street  
Sturbridge, MA 01566  
National Grid  
Podunk Road**

In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 87 and Ch. 40, § 15C and the Sturbridge General Bylaws, Chapter 230 – Scenic Roads, and Chapter 270 - Trees, the Sturbridge Planning Board and Sturbridge Tree Warden will hold a joint public hearing at the Center Office Building, 301 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA on **Monday, February 10, 2025 at 6:35 p.m in the Town Hall, Veteran’s Memorial Hall and/or by virtual means** if circumstances warrant, in accordance with applicable law; on the Scenic Road Application of National Grid of 939 Southbridge Street, Worcester, MA for property located along Podunk Road in Sturbridge. The applicant requests a Scenic Roads Special Permit for the removal of approximately 110 town owned trees, and 9 trees that are town and privately owned (trees are located on the property line). National Grid wants to conduct the tree removal to accommodate the upgrade of overhead electrical equipment by installing taller poles and spacer cable.

The trees are located on Podunk Road and Walker Pond Road (One 21” Ash tree near 2 Walker Pond Road). The following trees between 2 Walker Pond Road and Putnam Road marked for removal include 8 Ash (4”-22” DBH), 2 Birch (8”-10” DBH), 4 Cherry (5”-13” DBH), 1 Elm (9” DBH), 1 Hemlock (20” DBH), 9 Maple (9”-40” DBH), 1 Norway Maple (15” DBH) and 21 Oak (6”-40” DBH).

Additionally, the following trees which are located between Pole 76.5 and 79 on Podunk Road marked for removal include 14 Ash (4”-21” DBH), 2 Cherry (6”-7” DBH), 1 Elm (17” DBH), 12 Maple (3”-20” DBH), 10 Oak (4”-14” DBH), 28 Pine (4”-19” DBH), 2 Poplar (11”-16” DBH), and 1 Spruce (11” DBH). Each tree is posted. A complete list of the proposed tree removal locations, species, size and photographs can be found on the Sturbridge Town Website <https://www.sturbridge.gov/planning-board/pages/recent-filings> or arrangements can be made to view the application packet by contacting the Sturbridge Planning Department at (508) 347-2508 or by email at [jlacy@sturbridge.gov](mailto:jlacy@sturbridge.gov).

Any person wishing to be heard should appear at the time and place designated.

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted in person and may be conducted via remote means if circumstance warrant, in accordance with applicable law. This means that members of the public body as well as members of the public may access this meeting in person, or via virtual means.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/472675877>

In the event the meeting is also held via remote means, every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post of the Town’s website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of the proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

Charles Blanchard  
Chairperson  
January 23, 2025  
January 30, 2025

(SEAL)  
**THE COMMONWEALTH OF  
MASSACHUSETTS  
LAND COURT  
DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL  
COURT  
Docket Number: 25 SM 000203  
ORDER OF NOTICE**  
To:  
Michael F. Jandreau  
and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. c. 50 §3901 (*et seq*):  
Santander Bank, N.A.

claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Southbridge, numbered 691 Guelphwood Road, given by Michael F. Jandreau to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Santander Bank, N.A., dated December 21, 2017, and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 58225, Page 36, as modified by a certain modification agreement recorded on October 25, 2023, and recorded with said Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 69800, Page 275, and now held by the Plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant’s/Defendants’ Servicemembers status.

If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108 on or before March 10, 2025, or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the ground of noncompliance with the Act.

Witness, Gordon H. Piper, Chief Justice of this Court on January 24, 2025.

Attest:  
Deborah J. Patterson  
Recorder  
27012  
January 30, 2024

## MORTGAGEE’S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Joseph M. Sena and Rebecca J. Racine to First Franklin A Division of Nat. City Bank of IN dated September 23, 2005 and recorded with the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds, in Book 37385, Page 365, as assigned by Assignment of Mortgage dated November 7, 2005; recorded in Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds, Book 37850, Page 87, and by Assignment dated June 1, 2008; recorded in Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds, Book 43128, Page 139, and by Assignment dated August 18, 2017; recorded in Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds, Book 57770, Page 79, and by Corrective Assignment dated October 6, 2017; recorded in Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds, Book 57875, Page 375, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at **Public Auction at 12:00 PM, on February 6, 2025**, on the premises known as **345 New Boston Road, Sturbridge, Massachusetts**, the premises described in said mortgage, together with all the rights, easements, and appurtenances thereto, to wit:

The land with the buildings thereon, situated on New Boston Road, Sturbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts as \*Lot 101 on a Plan entitled “Plan of Lots in Sturbridge, Massachusetts surveyed for Frederick E. LaVergne and Gail P. LaVergne dated March 3, 2004, and recorded in the Worcester Registry of deeds in Plan Book 807, Plan 98, more particularly bounded and described as follows:

Lot #101  
Beginning at an iron pin in a corner of walls at the southeast corner of tract herein described on the northerly side of New Boston Road at the southwest corner of land, now or formerly of Susan J. Hawkins;  
Thence South 47 degrees 42’ 51” along a stone wall on the northerly side of said New Boston Road a distance of 150.00 feet to a re-rod in said stone wall;  
Thence North 57 degrees 08’ 26” West along Lot 102 a distance of 32.52 feet to re-rod;

Thence North 44 degrees 29; 27” West along said Lot 102 a distance of 359.86 feet to a re-rod at Lot 345R;  
Thence North 23 degrees 16’ 06” East, along 345 R a distance of 60.63 feet to a re-rod at said Hawkins land;  
Thence South 57 degrees 59’ 18” East along said Hawkins land a distance of 432.25 feet to the point of beginning. The above described lot 101 contains 1.0000 acres.

This conveyance is subject to and with the benefit of easements, restrictions, rights of way and other matters of record insofar as now in force and applicable.

\*Due to typographical error, the Lot was inadvertently referred as being Lot 103 in one line of the description attached to the mortgage.

Terms of Sale: These premises are being sold subject to any and all unpaid real estate taxes, water rates, municipal charges and assessments, condominium charges, expenses, costs, and assessments, if applicable, federal tax liens, partition wall rights, statutes, regulations, zoning, subdivision control, or other municipal ordinances or bylaws respecting land use, configuration, building or approval, or bylaws, statutes or ordinances regarding the presence of lead paint, asbestos or other toxic substances, sanitary codes, housing codes, tenancy, and , to the extent that they are recorded prior to the above mortgage, any easements, rights of way, restrictions, confirmation or other matters of record.

Purchaser shall also bear all state and county deeds excise tax. The deposit of \$10,000.00 is to be paid in cash or bank or certified check at the time and place of the sale, with the balance of the purchase price to be paid by bank or certified check within forty-five (45) days after the date of the sale, to be deposited in escrow with Guaetta and Benson, LLC, at 73 Princeton Street, Suite 208, North Chelmsford, Massachusetts.

In the event that the successful bidder at the foreclosure sale shall default in purchasing the within described property according to the terms of this Notice of Sale and/or the terms of the Memorandum of Sale executed at the time of the foreclosure, the Mortgagee reserves the right to sell the property by foreclosure deed to the second highest bidder or, thereafter, to the next highest bidders, providing that said bidder shall deposit with said attorney, the amount of the required deposit as set forth herein within five (5) business days after written notice of the default of the previous highest bidder.

Other terms, if any, are to be announced at the sale.

Dated: January 9th, 2025  
Present holder of said mortgage, Wilmington Trust, National Association, as Successor Trustee to Citibank, N.A., as Trustee for First Franklin Mortgage Loan Trust, Mortgage Loan Asset-Backed Certificates, Series 2005-FF12 by its Attorneys, Guaetta and Benson, LLC, Peter V. Guaetta, Esquire, P.O. Box 519, Chelmsford, MA 01824  
January 16, 2025  
January 23, 2025  
January 30, 2025

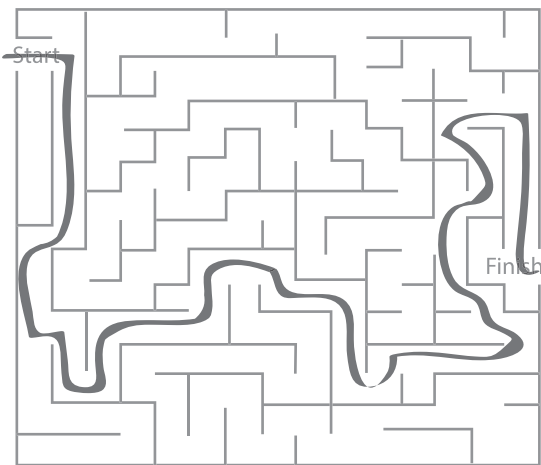
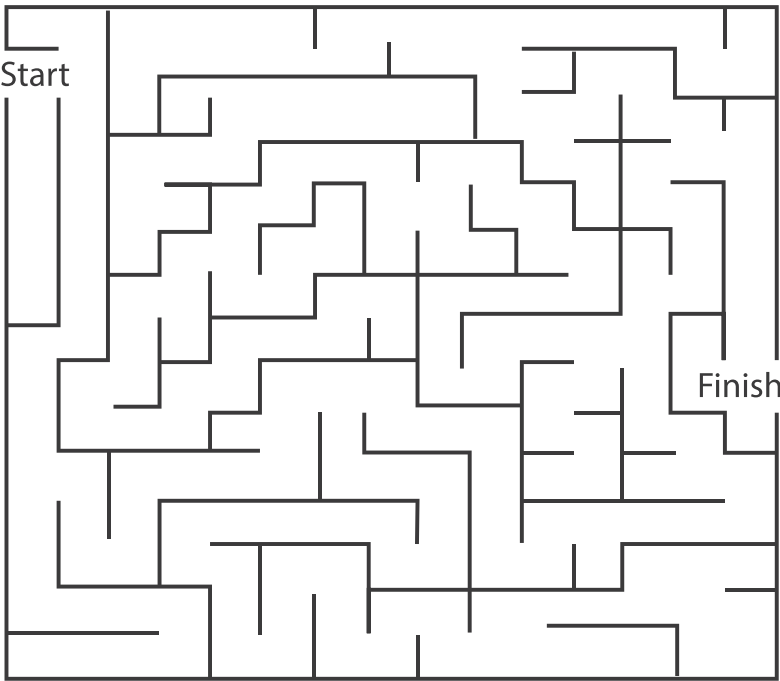
Pursuant to Mass General Laws Chapter 105A, the contents of the following spaces:  
H109 (Crystal L Wimbish) & H155 (Michael J Johnson) & H167 (Isabel G Mazzone) located at 25 Brimfield Road, Holland, MA will be sold to satisfy the owners lien of Storage Plus. Sale date is February 12, 2025 @1:00 PM. Inspection between 12:30 PM and 1:00 PM on February 12, 2025. Sealed bids must be hand delivered by 1 :00 PM on February 12, 2025. All goods must be purchased with cash as is, and must be removed within 48 hours of sale. Owner has the right to bid to protect his lien and to withdraw any unit upon settlement by the obligated party up for sale. For further information call (413)245-4388.  
January 23, 2025  
January 30, 2025



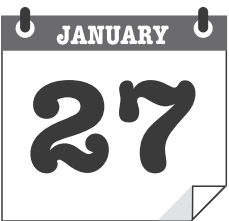


Maze Craze

Find the way through the maze to the finish line.



THIS DAY IN HISTORY



**1785:** The University of Georgia is founded, becoming the first state-chartered public university in the United States.

**1880:** Thomas Edison receives a patent for his incandescent lamp.

**2010:** Apple announces the iPad.

Book FACT:



Having sold more than 600 million copies worldwide, this book series is the best-selling in history.

Answer: Harry Potter

NEW WORD

APTITUDE

a natural ability to do something

How they say that in...

**English:** Page  
**Spanish:** Página  
**Italian:** Pagina  
**French:** Page  
**German:** Seite

Did You Know?

Reading a book in bed before going to sleep can promote a better night's rest.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Library card catalog

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to slow cooking.  
Each number corresponds to slow cooking.  
(Hint: 22 = E)

A. 24 26 11 9 26 20

Clue: Not quickly

B. 14 10 11 14 6

Clue: Ceramic vessel

C. 15 18 17 10 22 23 15 22 18 16 24

Clue: Parts of a recipe

D. 14 11 5 22 10 22 23

Clue: With the top on

Answers: A. slowly B. crock C. ingredients D. covered

SUDOKU

					5			
2	9		4		7		8	
	8				1			
1	4		7					
		9			8			
		3		5	6			
			8					1
	3	6						
						4		7

Level: Advanced

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

7	9	4	3	2	6	8	1	5
5	2	8	4	9	6	3	7	1
1	6	3	5	8	4	2	9	7
4	1	6	9	5	2	3	7	8
2	3	7	8	4	1	9	5	6
8	5	6	9	3	7	2	4	1
6	4	2	7	3	9	5	8	1
3	6	1	2	9	5	7	8	4
9	7	3	4	6	8	1	5	2

ANSWER:



## Local students earn Dean’s List honors at Nichols College

DUDLEY — Nichols College is proud to recognize the academic accomplishments of students on the fall 2024 Dean’s List.

Dean’s List recognizes those students who achieve high grades during a single semester. In order to be included on the Dean’s List, a student must have a minimum grade point average of 3.5 for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and must have received no grades below B- during the semester.

The following local students have achieved Dean’s List honors for the fall 2024 semester:

Julia Fearing of Brimfield

Muhammad Abdul Wasay of Charlton

Fajr Ahmad of Charlton

John Guerin of Charlton

Matthew Smolski of Charlton

Yaneliz Henriquez of Southbridge

About Nichols College Nichols College has earned business accreditation from the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the longest serving global accrediting body for business schools and the largest business education network connecting learners, educators, and businesses worldwide. Founded in 1815, Nichols transforms today’s students into tomorrow’s leaders through a dynamic, career-focused business and professional education. Nichols offers real-world learning focused on professional depth - combined with vibrant living, competitive athletics, and an unmatched alumni advantage - equipping students to exceed their own expectations. [www.nichols.edu](http://www.nichols.edu)

## Local students earn President’s List honors at Nichols College

DUDLEY — Nichols College is proud to recognize the academic accomplishments of students on the fall 2024 President’s List.

President’s List recognizes those students who achieve high grades during a single semester. Students whose semester grade point average is 3.85 or higher for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and no grades below B- will receive President’s List honors.

The following local students have achieved President’s List honors:

Matthew Lach of Charlton

Maggie Mullaly of Charlton

Jaelin Rheame of Charlton

Chris Rogalski of Charlton

Dylan Smaltz of Charlton

Emma White of Charlton

Robert Cleary of Fiskdale

Lydia Julian of Holland

Cameron Murphy of Fiskdale

Michael Pelozo of Brimfield

Benjamin Yarter of Sturbridge

Olivia Carrier of Southbridge

Lindsey Houghton of Southbridge

Ryan Leary of Southbridge

Donney Stapleton of Southbridge

Emily Westwell of Southbridge

About Nichols College Nichols College has earned business accreditation from the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), the longest serving global accrediting body for business schools and the largest business education network connecting learners, educators, and businesses worldwide. Founded in 1815, Nichols transforms today’s students into tomorrow’s leaders through a dynamic, career-focused business and professional education. Nichols offers real-world learning focused on professional depth - combined with vibrant living, competitive athletics, and an unmatched alumni advantage - equipping students to exceed their own expectations. [www.nichols.edu](http://www.nichols.edu)

## Davone Keovongmanysar of Southbridge graduates from Clarkson University

POTSDAM, N.Y. — Davone Dj Keovongmanysar of Southbridge received a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from Clarkson University on Dec. 14.

Clarkson University is a proven leader in technological education, research, innovation and sustainable economic development. With its main campus in Potsdam, N.Y., and additional graduate program and research facilities in the Capital Region and Hudson Valley, Clarkson faculty have a direct impact on more than 7,800 students annually through nationally recognized undergraduate and graduate STEM designated degrees in engineering, business, science and health professions; executive education, industry-relevant credentials and K-12 STEM programs. Alumni earn salaries among the top 2% in the nation: one in five already leads in the c-suite. To learn more, go to [www.clarkson.edu](http://www.clarkson.edu).



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HAMILTON

continued from page A1

has been estimated at \$1.8 million.

Regarding the RAISE grant (an acronym meaning Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity), Dean said the project will not require a town match because it’s “located in a historically disadvantaged area” as defined by the US Department of Transportation. The funds will allow Southbridge to “install lighting and crosswalks, improve traffic flow, repair and replace sidewalks and improve drainage during this paving project,” she added.

According to the US DOT award letter, it will widen the sidewalks, add a bike lane, install “traffic calming measures,” and remove one side of the on-street parking. It states the funds must be obligated by Sept. 30, 2029 and spent by Sept. 30, 2034.

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

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CHANGES

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after the board handled one seeking to convert two existing houses on Rte 20 into a for-profit urgent care facility called Convenient MD. Bubon said the board saw a proposal to create such a facility in a Starbucks about two years ago, but the developer pulled out.

Mike D’Hemecourt of Harborlight Advisors LLC said this will be the

firm’s sixth facility, with others in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine.

Most of the hearing heard from Chappell Engineering’s Shaun Kelly, who spoke about his traffic study for the project. It determined that stretch of highway saw about 24,500 cars per day when they tested it in August 2024, with peak flow of about 1,200 in the mornings and 1,800 in the evenings and both

directions being “fairly even.”

Under national guidelines, they looked at sight distance needed, finding the minimum is 510-540 feet and “desirable” is 540-640 at 58 mph. The site has 600-650 in both directions, but will need to eliminate some vegetation in front, he said.

Kelly said they’re predicting about 194 trips per day over 24 hours, with peak being 17-19 per hour, or “a car coming

every eight minutes.” For safety, they plan to seek Mass DOT approval for an inbound designated left-turn lane that’s about 300 feet long.

When Wally Hersee asked about restricting left-turn departures, Kelly said they didn’t plan to do that, noting the gas station nearby now has 60-95 of them a day. Hersee was concerned about that, saying the nearby New Boston Road intersection has a history of

accidents and this site is “not the best place in the world to have that.”

Bubon said DOT currently supports allowing left turns there, but still has to review it in what “can be a lengthy process.” She later predicted the state will erect a median barrier the whole length of that stretch of Route 20, however.

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

ATHLETE

continued from page A1

mangu High School in Kenya. She obtained her CNA training at 3Dimensions Health Services in 2017. Anane works as staff at Arbor (Southborough). Prior to coming to Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, she has taken courses at

Framingham State University. The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy UNICEF Club was founded in 2016 and each year club officers lead members through various fundraising methods that serve to educate and raise awareness of relevant issues happening locally and globally. The UNICEF Club meets

after school hours. Plans are underway for educational fundraising activities.

Philippine swimmer Cyrusjet Tedi Bueno will be competing on the upcoming FOBISIA Swimming 2025 (https://www.teemsglobal.com/fobisia-swimming-2025), which will take place on Feb. 20 to 23 at Tha-

nyapura, Phuket, Thailand. The 2025 FOBISIA swimming is hosted at the world-class Thanyapura Sports and Health Resort. This event will bring together talented swimmers from across Asia to compete, build camaraderie, and inspire the next generation of athletes. The event is all about the

exciting opportunities to embrace the moment, form new friendships, and striving for personal bests. As a key part of the process, Bueno’s participation is through generous supporters to help cover the costs of travel, accommodation, training, equipment, and cost of participation.

University of Rhode Island names area students to Dean’s List

KINGSTON, R.I. — The University of Rhode Island is pleased to announce that several area students have been named to its Fall 2024 Dean’s List. Among them are:

Kyle Norberg of Charlton  
Cristina Sage of Charlton  
Erin Farrell of Sturbridge  
Mary Godek of Wales  
Lizzy Maxfield of Brimfield  
Elise Mazeika of Sturbridge  
Makena Pentoney of Holland  
Tyler Powell of Fiskdale  
Vanessa Ricci of Brimfield  
Yetzabeth Beltre Colon of Southbridge

To be included on the Dean’s List, full-time students must have completed 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable during a semester and achieved at least a 3.30 quality point average. Part-time students qualify with the accumulation of 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable earning at least a 3.30 quality point average.

Students named to the Dean’s List represent nearly all of Rhode Island’s cities and towns, all six New England states, New York and New Jersey, and many other states and countries.

About the University of Rhode Island

The University of Rhode Island is a diverse and dynamic community whose members are connected by a common quest for knowledge. As a global education leader and the state of Rhode Island’s flagship public research institution, URI offers distinctive opportunities designed to meet the global challenges of today’s world and the rapidly evolving needs of tomorrow. Founded in 1892, URI now enrolls more than 18,000 students and offers more than 200 degree programs across nine schools and colleges. As a land- and sea-grant institution, URI is a key driver of economic development in Rhode Island and contributes significantly to the health and vitality of the state, the New England region, and the nation. To learn more, visit: uri.edu.

Local students named to Dean’s List at University of New England

BIDDEFORD and PORTLAND, Maine — The following students have been named to the Dean’s List for the 2024 fall semester at the University of New England.

Charlton  
Bridget Hast, Emily LeBrun

Southbridge  
Kyle Woodruff

Dean’s List students have attained a grade point average of 3.3 or better out of a possible 4.0 at the end of the semester.

The University of New England is Maine’s largest independent university, with two beautiful coastal campuses in Maine, a one-of-a-kind study-abroad campus in Tangier, Morocco, and an array of flexible online offerings. In an uncommonly welcoming and supportive community, we offer hands-on learning, empowering students to make a positive impact in a world full of challenges. We are the state’s top provider of health professionals and home to Maine’s only medical and dental colleges, a variety of other interprofessionally aligned health care programs, and nationally recognized programs in the marine sciences, the natural and social sciences, business, the humanities, and the arts. Visit www.une.edu.

Stonehill announces Fall 2024 Dean’s List

EASTON — Stonehill College proudly recognizes the students named to the Fall 2024 Dean’s List. To qualify for this recognition, students must achieve a semester grade point average of 3.50 or better. They must also have successfully completed all courses for which they were registered during the term.

Rahni Bussiere of Charlton  
Arianna Lester of Sturbridge  
Allison Moloney of Brimfield

About Stonehill College

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

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

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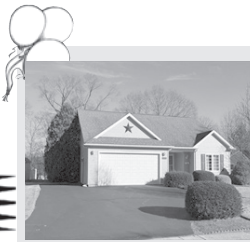
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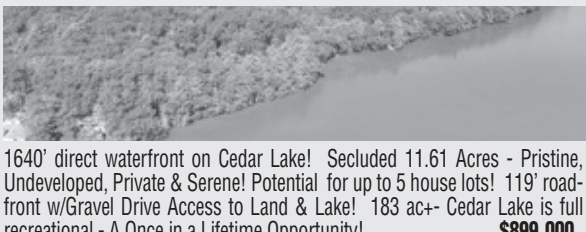
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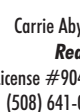
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# Mock Code team prepares for Scenario 2

CHARLTON — The Practical Nursing Class of 2025 Mock Code Team (MCT) under the guidance and leadership of Professors Cheryl Cahill, Jennifer DeFilippo, and Angela McGrath, are set to prepare and execute the Term 2 Mock Code Scenario.

Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy's MCT and Simulation Training improves response to code events. During cardiac arrests, the quick response of a code team requires cohesiveness, timely defibrillation, and clearly defined roles. It is important for members of the healthcare team to intuitively know their role as part of the response team especially during code situations when seconds count.

"We continue to believe in using simulation training to improve performance," said Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN Academy Director.

"We are blessed to have the continued guidance, experience, and expertise of our PN faculty!"



Courtesy  
Members of the 2025 MCT, from left: Delene Sarsfield of Charlton, Loise Ngigi of South Grafton, Jason Houatchanthara of Fiskdale, Grant Peterson of Millbury, Maria De Amorim Hentschke of Worcester, Chalinant Desrosiers of Oxford, Emily Bamberger of Wales, and Gorret Rusoke of Springfield.

Bolandrina added. The timely use of defibrillation and empowered, confident nurses result in a positive response to code events. According to the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines (GWTG) resuscitation program, time to first shock is one

of four achievement metrics. The guidelines state that hospitalized patients exhibiting ventricular fibrillation or pulseless ventricular tachycardia should receive defibrillation within two minutes to improve outcomes.

In 2017, the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy MCT was formed to improve resuscitation skills and comfort levels for practical nursing students. The MCT meets for a full day of preparation, with members practicing as much as possible. On Mock Code Day, the MCT runs the code scenarios multiple times. The formation of the MCT increased mock code opportunities and participation three times in an academic year. Participation in mock codes increases the comfort level of practical nursing students. An effective code team is one that acts safely, and efficiently, and saves lives. The MCT aims to be proficient with skills and knowledge, effective with communication, and highly organized.

# Amanda Misilo joins Savers Bank as Vice President, Head of Retail Banking & Sales



Amanda Misilo

SOUTHBRIDGE — Savers Bank is pleased to announce Amanda Misilo as their new Vice President, Head of Retail Banking & Sales. Misilo began her role on Jan. 6, bringing more than 20 years of experience and a proven track record in Retail Banking leadership.

Misilo succeeds Alan Melidossian, who served as Senior Vice President

of Retail Banking before relocating in August 2024.

Misilo's career includes time at Commerce Bank & Trust (later Berkshire Bank), where she held various roles in Retail Banking, including Branch Manager, and AVP, Customer Care Manager. Most recently, she served as First Vice President, Director of Contact Center Operations at Berkshire Bank.

She is recognized for her focus on simplifying banking processes, fostering strong teams, and creating a culture of clear, honest communication. She has a talent for delivering solutions that make banking easier for customers while driving meaningful growth.

Keri Gonzalez, EVP and Chief Operating Officer of Savers Bank, commented on Misilo's arrival, saying, "Amanda is a dedicated leader with a practical approach and a strong commitment to delivering great customer experiences. We're confident her expertise and energy will help guide our Retail Banking division forward."

In her new role, Misilo will oversee retail banking operations and sales, ensuring that Savers Bank continues to deliver accessible, customer-focused solutions while supporting the bank's growth goals.



Melissa Zeien

## Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy welcomes new full time faculty

CHARLTON — The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy is pleased

to welcome newly appointed full-time faculty member. Melissa Zeien, BSN, RN, WCC of Charlton had been named full-time faculty. Professor Zeien assumed her role on Jan. 13.

Professor Zeine is an experienced RN with a specialty in Wound Care. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (2016) at the Empire State College, State University of New York, and her Associate of Science in Nursing (2010) at Suffolk County Community College in Selden, N.Y. She became Wound Care Certified (2022) through the Wound Care Education Institute.

Self-described as "calm, responsible, reliable, caring, hard-working, and physically fit individual with strong leadership skills and ethics," Professor Zeien works well in a group setting or one on one. She is well versed in theory and in practice. She enjoys collaborating with individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

"We are excited to have Professor Zeien join the Practical Nursing Academy," stated Gretheline Bolandrina DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN Academy Director. "She came to the Academy in opportune time and brings with her expertise and experience that would greatly benefit the practical nursing students and our Bay Path community."

## Local students earn Dean's List honors at American International College

SPRINGFIELD — American International College (AIC) students Benjamin Lazo of Southbridge and Kaitlyn Boone of Sturbridge have earned Dean's List honors for the Fall 2024 semester.

Lazo is majoring in Athletic Administration and Leadership. Boone is majoring in Health Science.

Dean's List honors are awarded to full-time students who have achieved a 3.3 to 4.0 GPA. AIC commends Lazo and all of those on the Dean's List for their hard work and dedication.

Founded in 1885, American International College (AIC) is a private, co-educational, doctoral granting institution located in Springfield, Massachusetts, comprising the School of Business, Arts and Sciences, the School of Education, and the School of Health Sciences. AIC supports and advances education, diversity, and opportunity for its students and the community.

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