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Friday, December 6, 2024

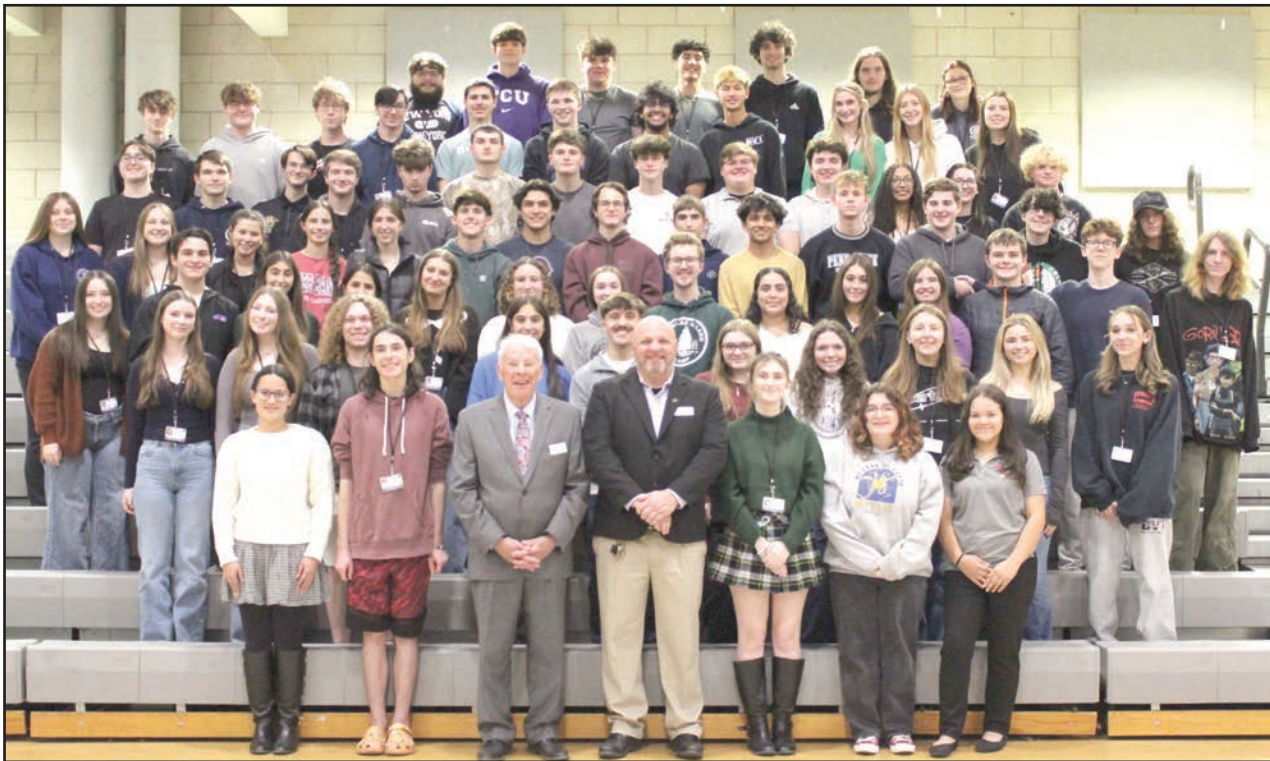
BVT Class of 2025 boasts 78 Adams Scholar recipients

UPTON — The John and Abigail Adams Scholarship is a merit-based program that provides tuition at a Massachusetts state college or university. Seventy-eight Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School seniors are the proud recipients of an Adams Scholarship. The award allows these students an option to further their vocational and career training with additional education, advanced training, and credentials.

The first-time score on a high school MCAS exam determines eligibility for an Adams Scholarship. Adams Scholars receive free tuition for up to eight semesters of undergraduate education at a Massachusetts public college or university, renewable for eight consecutive semesters or four years. Recipients must use the tuition credit in the first fall semester following their high school graduation and maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better.

The following members of the Class of 2025 have earned a John and Abigail Adams Scholarship (students are listed alphabetically by town):

- Bellingham**
Kiele Sarnie, Construction Technology.
- Blackstone**



Braedon Ando, Culinary Arts; **Nathaniel Cook**, Biotechnology; and **Keira Kelliher**, Health Services.

Douglas
Michaela Boulette, Biotechnology; **Haley Chamberlain**, Cosmetology; **Conner Champagne**, Information Technology; **Justin Dooner**, Engineering; **Tyler Grybowski**, Information Technology; **Emily Muniz**, Engineering; **Om Patel**, Engineering; **Liam Peach**, Multimedia Communications; **Samantha Pinto**, Health Services; and **Willow Windoloski**, Engineering.

Grafton
Audrey Bell, Engineering; **Raghav Dave**, Electronics; **Nora Iadarola**, Multimedia Communications; **Christopher Joiner**, Biotechnology; **Keyara Jones**, Health Services; **Ella McCann**, Advanced Manufacturing; **Owen O'Packi**, Multimedia Communications; **Brodie Remillard**, Electronics; **Joshua Siefert**, Engineering; **Carly Simpson**, Health Services; and **Daniel Warfield**, Electronics.

Hopedale
Kallie Allen, Biotechnology; **Nathaniel Allen**, Information Technology;

Anthony Bucchino, Engineering; **Eric Deppe**, Engineering; **Connor Griffin**, Electrical; **Gabriella Griffin**, Health Services; **Riley Jackson**, Information Technology; **Jacob Noble**, Engineering; **Declan Reilly**, Information Technology; and **Christopher Russell**, Biotechnology.

Milford
Nicolas Alvarez, Benincasa, Construction Technology; **Lacey Coffman**, Multimedia Communications; **Gregory D'Orazio**, Advanced Manufacturing; **Adriana Hawkins**, Culinary Arts; **Matthew Hunter**, Biotechnology; **Charbel Jebara**, Electronics; **Ryan McGuire**, HVAC/R; **Jack Nevens**, Information Technology; and **Joel Puri**, Engineering.

Millbury
Wyatt Darrell, Engineering; **Mason Diosomito**, Engineering; **Joshua Gould**, Information Technology; **Jayden Quang**, Engineering; and **Luke Rutkiewicz**, Engineering.

Millville
Julia Trujillo, Health Services.

Northbridge
Ava Bates, Cosmetology; **Steven Caya**, Engineering; **Sosie DerKosroffian**, Health Services; **Zabel DerKosroffian**, Information Technology; **Conner Gomez**, Engineering; **Mara Keane**, Electronics; **Dylan Leeds**, Engineering; **Haley Marston**, Dental Assisting; **Markas Petone**, Health Services; and **Alexa Seward**, Engineering.

Sutton
Jeffrey Brooks, Electronics; **Emma Cliadakis**, Culinary Arts; **Colton Corash**, Electronics; **Morgan Gervais**, Advanced Manufacturing; **Benjamin Hicks**, Electronics; **William Kelly**, Construction Technology; **Caroline Martin**, Engineering; and **Jacob Rajotte**, Information Technology.

Upton
Samantha Carroll, Information Technology; **Kylie French**, Painting & Design; **Cassidy Lyon**, Health Services; **Harmony Melendez-Torres**, Biotechnology; **Ryan Poirier**, Advanced Manufacturing; and **John Simas**, Electronics.

Uxbridge
Alexi Cox, Electronics; **Samantha Fairhurst**, Health Services; **Dylan Ryan**, Engineering; and **Mikaela Swanson**, Biotechnology.

About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT)
 Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills.

Blackstone Valley Educators celebrate Promising Practices Award recipients

UPTON — On Friday, Nov. 17, educators from across the Blackstone Valley gathered at the Three Seasons Restaurant at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School to celebrate the 2024 Promising Practices Award recipients.

Selected through nominations by curriculum directors and endorsements from building principals, these recipients are recognized for their ability to motivate and inspire students. Their lessons reflect excellence in engaging instruction, foster collaboration among students and staff, and exemplify best practices in addressing both academic and social-emotional needs. Most importantly, their work serves as a model for cultivating higher-order thinking skills across various content areas.

During the event, award recipients shared overviews of their innovative lessons, aiming to "plant seeds" of fresh teaching practices in the minds of fellow educators attending the celebration.

Northbridge proudly honored Mr. Robert McLaughlin, a dedicated 5th-grade teacher at Northbridge Elementary School, as its Promising Practices Award recipient. With 27 years of teaching experience, including 20 years devoted to 5th-grade Language Arts and Social Studies in Northbridge, Mr. McLaughlin has had a lasting impact on



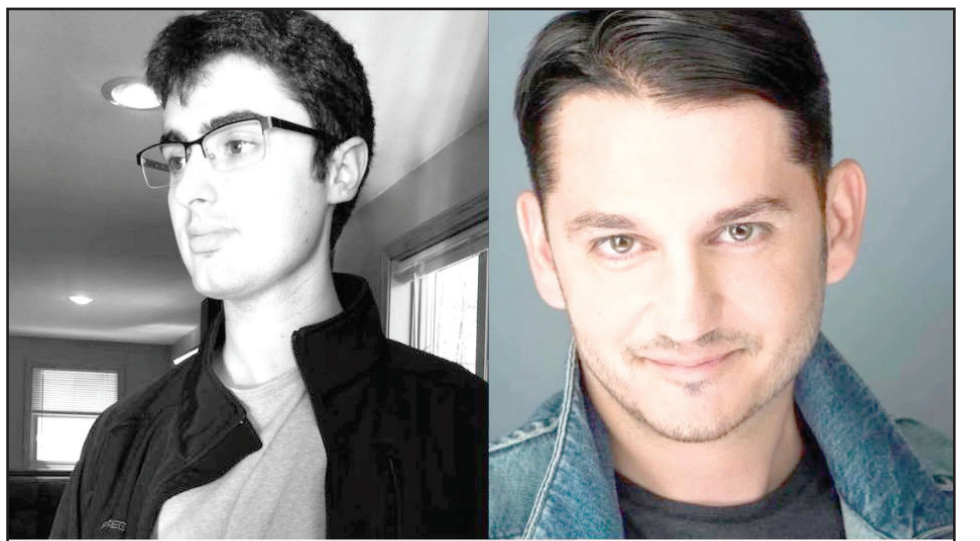
his students and colleagues. Beyond the classroom, he is passionate about teaching, baseball, and his family. He holds an undergraduate degree from Northeastern University, where he also played baseball, and a master's degree in Literacy from Worcester State University.

At the celebration, Mr. McLaughlin showcased his work with The Energy Bus program, an initiative focused on strengthening community and building relationships. The program has already made a profound impact on both student and staff culture at Northbridge Elementary School. With aspirations to become a certified Energy Bus School and Community, Mr. McLaughlin hopes to expand the program to

reach more students at NES and extend its benefits to Northbridge Middle School. Research supports the program's effectiveness in enhancing teacher morale, attitudes, and professional development when implemented with proper resources and support (Van Allen, 2017).

Congratulations to Mr. McLaughlin on this well-deserved recognition for his dedication and innovation in education!

Douglas Public Library presents local filmmakers



Matthew Gorman of Douglas

Samson Zilic of Dudley

DOUGLAS—The world of cinema is full of great works, but often missed are the wonders of short films! The Douglas Public Library has been highlighting these films with our monthly "Short Cuts Film Club." This month, on Dec. 11, Short Cuts will be highlighting the accomplishments of two local filmmakers, Matt Gorman and Samson Zilic!

"Hope Ryder" is a 2024 film by Douglas resident Matt Gorman, who always enjoyed going to the movies as a kid, and now has just as much fun making them. Gorman focuses on writing and directing, while working with local actors and crew

members on his films. His favorite genre is science fiction and supports other local filmmakers by attending local film festivals. Fun fact: Gorman played air guitar in the 2020 Hollywood film "Bill and Ted Face the Music."

"Miles of Summer" is a 2022 film by Dudley's Samson Zilic, who was originally raised in Warren, and is a filmmaker, actor and director. Zilic has been in many New England indie short films, including "Thursday's Special," which is currently in the film festival run. Samson is a SAG union member and has been in many Hollywood productions such as "Challengers"

starring Zendaya, and the Oscar nominated film "American Fiction." When he's not in front of a camera, Zilic likes to watch movies. Fun fact: Zilic had a role in Gorman's film, "Hope Ryder."

The Simon Fairfield Public Library is really excited to present these two local filmmakers and their films. Once again, the program is on Wednesday, Dec. 11 at 6:30 p.m. (please arrive early to settle in). Feel free to bring your own drinks/snacks. Should you have any questions, please contact Marco at mcarneiro@cwmar.org or call 508-476-2695. Can't wait to see you there!

Holidays bring early deadlines

Along with merriment and good cheer, the holiday season brings with it an accelerated press schedule for our next few editions.

The submission deadline for any press releases and letters to the Editor intended for publica-

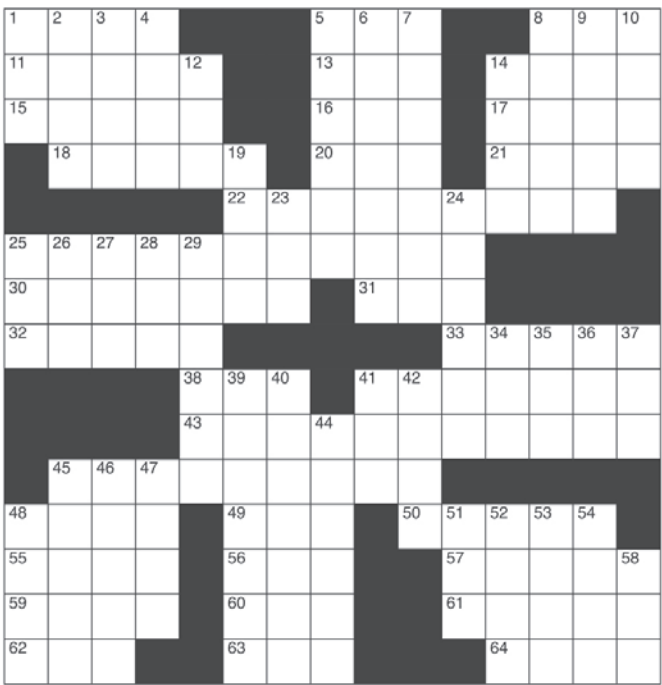
tion in our Dec. 13 edition will be Monday, Dec. 9 at 4 p.m., as usual.

For the following week (Dec. 20), the submission deadline will be Wednesday, Dec. 11 at 4 p.m.

For the Dec. 27 edition, the deadline will be Tuesday, Dec. 17 at 4 p.m.

For the Jan. 3 edition, the deadline will be Friday, Dec. 20 at 4 p.m.

Please note that our offices will be closed Dec. 23-25 in observance of Christmas and Dec. 30-Jan. 1 in observance of New Year's.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Bar bills
- 5. Recipe measurement (abbr.)
- 8. Swiss river
- 11. Czech Republic capital
- 13. "Officially known as"
- 14. A French abbot
- 15. Having a strong sharp smell or taste
- 16. Local area network
- 17. Data transmission speed measure
- 18. Embarrass
- 20. When you hope to get there
- 21. This (Spanish)
- 22. Gives up
- 25. Churchgoer
- 30. Current
- 31. Slang for gun
- 32. Small drum
- 33. Vanished union bigwig
- 38. Rocker's tool of the trade
- 41. Dearth
- 43. 2024 Olympics host
- 45. Excess blood in the vessels
- 48. Afrikaans
- 49. Agreement between provider and customer
- 50. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- 55. Ancient Syrian city
- 56. Witch
- 57. Celebrations
- 59. Long period of time
- 60. A team's best pitcher
- 61. Current unit
- 62. One-time aerospace company
- 63. French/Belgian river
- 64. Swedish rock group

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
- 2. Genus of clams
- 3. Remark
- 4. Actor LaBeouf
- 5. Ohio town
- 6. Olympic sport
- 7. Cure
- 8. Behave in a way that belittles
- 9. Shares a boundary with
- 10. Give advice
- 12. Promotional materials
- 14. Assist or encourage, usually in some wrongdoing
- 19. "Agatha All Along" actress Kathryn
- 23. Small piece
- 24. King of Camelot
- 25. Parts per thousand (abbr.)
- 26. Small Milky Way constellation
- 27. One who challenges authority (abbr.)
- 28. Equal (prefix)
- 29. Shawl
- 34. S. American wood sorrel relative
- 35. The end
- 36. Supervises interstate commerce
- 37. Yes vote
- 39. Officer of high rank
- 40. Church office
- 41. Tire pressure measurement
- 42. From a distance
- 44. Photographs
- 45. Industrial process
- 46. Nobel Prize-winning physicist
- 47. Map out
- 48. Mammary gland part of female mammal
- 51. Honorable title (Turkish)
- 52. Sponglike cake leavened with yeast
- 53. Speak incessantly
- 54. Poetry term
- 58. Relaxing space



Douglas Adult Social Center

(508) 476-2283
Hours of operation: Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Friday 9 a.m.-noon

DAILY ACTIVITIES: All our daily activities are free of charge.

Monday: Painting class 9:45 to 11:45, Balance & Strength Exercise 12pm, Mat Yoga 2pm

Tuesday: Walking club 9 am, Cribbage 9:30 am, Zumba 9:30 am, Lunch & Bingo 11:30am, Technology Class 1pm (call to make an appt.), Line Dancing 2 to 2:45pm (starting Jan. 7)

Wednesday: Balance & Strength 10am, Darts 10am, MahJong 1pm, Dominoes 1 to 2:30pm

Thursday: Walking club 9am, Chair Yoga 9:30am, Pitch 9:30am, Hand and Foot card game 12:30pm

Friday: Balance & Strength 10am

DECEMBER EVENTS:

The center will be closed on Tuesday December 24th & Wednesday December 25th. Happy Holidays!

Bemis Nursery: Thursday December 5th @ 11am. We will be making a beautiful holiday centerpiece. The cost for this craft is \$20.00 and MUST be paid when you sign up. Please sign up by November 29th.

Free Holiday Craft: Wednesday December 11th @ 11:30am. We will be making small tabletop Holiday Trees. We will provide the tree, lights, & decorations. After our craft we will be joined by a local 4-H group for a sing along and cookies & cocoa. Please sign up before

December 6th.

Veterans Breakfast: Thursday December 12th @ 9:00am. All Veterans and their spouses are welcome to sign up for breakfast. Please sign up before Dec. 6th.

Hearing Aid Cleanings: Thursday December 12th from 10am to 11am. Please call the center to schedule an appointment.

Musical Bingo & Lunch: Thursday December 12th @ 11:30am. Lasagna, salad & dessert will be served for \$4.00 per person. Musical Bingo to follow! Please sign up before Dec. 9th.

Annual Holiday Party: Thursday December 19th @ 12pm, join us for a wonderful lunch with friends. The cost for lunch will be \$5.00 per person. Musical entertainment is provided by our Douglas Cultural Council. Please sign up before Dec. 12th.

SUNSHINE CLUB EVENTS:

Meetings are held at the center on the first Tuesday of the month at 2:00pm.

Holiday Social: Saturday December 14th from 5pm to 6:30pm. The Sunshine Club will be at the Douglas Town Common serving cookies, & hot chocolate while caroling. Please call the center to sign up before Dec. 10th.

PLEASE CALL (508) 476-2283 TO SIGN UP FOR PROGRAMS & CLASSES

Check our website for events that may not be listed here

<https://www.douglas-ma.gov/202/AdultSocial-Center-Senior-Center>

Saige Frazier of Uxbridge appointed to Nichols College Senior Advisory Council

DUDLEY — Senior Advisory Council (NSAC). Saige Frazier of Uxbridge is one of 16 students appointed by Nichols College President Bill Pieczynski to the 2024-2025 Nichols

Counsel monthly and act as an advisory group as the College plans for the future.

"Congratulations to the students selected for this year's NSAC cohort. These are exemplary students, citizens and leaders who have distinguished themselves among a strong senior class," said Pieczynski. "Their insights will be invaluable to the leadership team, and we look forward to hearing their perspectives and learning more about these outstanding students."

Upcoming NSAC meetings will include discussions on the College's new

initiatives as well as broader trends and issues in higher education. In addition to helping Nichols enhance the overall experience for all members of its community, the meetings are also intended as an opportunity for students to further strengthen their communication and presentation skills, which are critical to career advancement.

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

REAL ESTATE

BLACKSTONE

\$790,000, 96 Milk St, Lima, Marco C, to Robinson, Sara L, and Anderson, Eric.

\$390,000, 32 Goddard St, Moniz, David J, to Lima, Marco C.

\$280,000, 45 Carter Ave, Mom, Neang, to De Lima, Davison P, and Lima, Kailey E.

\$135,000, 66 Main St #C, Hullar Paul H Est, and Harrington, Margery A, to St Realty LLC.

DOUGLAS

None

NORTHBRIDGE

\$640,000, 8 Rachel Ln, Obrien, Jack, and Ober, Jennifer, to Crilley, Peter, and Flanagan, Shelley.

\$610,000, 72 Kerry Ln, Robinson, Sara, and Anderson, Eric A, to Glod, Daniel C, and Glod, Katarina.

\$490,000, 314 Sutton St, Alvarenga, George N, to Arsenault, Samuel, and Arsenault, Jessica.

\$420,000, 262 Benson Rd, John E Berkowitz Sr T, and Berkowitz, Gary, to Berkowitz, Thomas P, and Berkowitz, Jeanne E.

\$410,000, 35 Plantation St, Bliss, Deborah J, to Grinell, Byron G.

\$380,000, 8 Hudson St, Anderson, Eric H, to Rea, Justin A.

\$300,000, 71 High St, Olson Jr, Bruce G, and Olson, Kristin, to Tsimogiannis, Odisefs.

UXBRIDGE

\$589,990, 181 Crownshield Ave #D, Woodlands Uxbridge Rlty L, to Revanuru, Pavan K, and Nandyala, Akhila.

\$75,000, 196 Chestnut St, Grant, Amy L, and Grant, Jason T, to Burns, Sean P.

\$475,000, 125 Blackstone St, Heath, David B, and Heath, Gail M, to Cardin, Nicholas A.

\$365,000, 23 Elm St #23, Castagno, Donna J, to Ferreira, Rodrigo L, and Ferreira, Katia I.

Free Christmas Day Dinner at BVUMC

WHITINSVILLE — Parishioners and volunteers from the Blackstone Valley United Methodist Church would like to cordially invite the community to a traditional turkey dinner, including the usual holiday meal favorites; potatoes, vege-

tables, squash, stuffing, and cranberry sauce. This year's meal will be served on Wednesday, Dec. 25, from noon to 2 p.m. in the Blackstone Valley United Methodist Faith Hall at 61 Linwood Ave., Whitinsville. Parking is available behind the church accessible from Church

Street. The dinner is open to everyone free of charge. Please come join us for a joyous Christmas celebration that will include holiday fun, food, and fellowship with many from the community. For more information, call the church office at 508-234-2275.

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Whitinsville Social Library

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Museum passes: northbridge-mass.assabetinteractive.com/museum-passes

Catalog: whitinsville.cwmars.org
Website: northbridgemass.org/WSL

Hours:
Monday-Thursday: 10 AM-8 PM
Friday 10 AM-5 PM
Saturday 10 AM-2 PM
Closed 12/24 and 12/25
Closing at 3 PM 12/31

The Friends of Whitinsville Social Library are seeking book donations on the following dates: Thursday 12/12 from 5-7 and Saturday 12/14 from 10-12. Come to the library's back entrance to donate items to the Friends during the designated times. Do not donate materials that are damaged or outdated including cassettes, magazines and encyclopedias. Items are resold at the Friends of WSL's biannual book sales to raise funds for the library. Do not dump items at the library outside these hours. Contact friendsWSL2019@gmail.com for any questions.

Local History Help

Wednesdays from 2-3 PM
Drop-in between 2-3 on Wednesdays to get in-person assistance with your local history research from Northbridge Historical Society member Carol Brouwer.

Music & Movement with Miss Deb

Wednesdays at 10:30 AM
Join Miss Deb for singing, dancing, games, stories, and lots of fun. Ages 1-5. Registration required.

Storytime with Miss Isabel

Thursdays at 10:30 AM
Register for storytime with Miss Isabel to read books, sing songs, and do some coloring or a craft. Ages 1-5.

Knits & Knots

Wednesday 12/11 at 6:30
Calling all fiber artists! Bring whatever craft project you're working on and join us at the library on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month for crafting and conversation. Light refreshments provided. Register.

Get Help with Jenna Gouin

Thursday 12/12 from 10-12 and Monday 12/30 from 11-1
Patrons are invited to sign up for a 30 minute session with Jenna Gouin, MBA/MSOL from Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health. She can help you with: application assistance including MassHealth, SNAP, WIC, Fuel Assistance, Medicare, Social Security, Veteran's benefits; referrals to community organizations, mental health, and substance abuse providers; assistance obtaining financial resources to address past due rents and utilities; and guidance on solving some of life's challenging situations. Register.

Teen Creative Writing Club

Monday 12/2 & 12/16 from 4-5PM
This is the perfect program for teens (grades 7-12) who are seeking a place to write and share ideas. We will discuss different genres of writing, complete writing prompts, and use time at the end to journal

and/or work on our own writing pieces. Please bring your own notebook! Registration required.

Fiction Book of the Month

Monday 12/2 at 6PM
Read "The Midnight Feast" by Lucy Foley. Books are available for pick up at the library. Ebooks are available via Overdrive/Libby. Meetings take place at the library on the first Monday of each month. Refreshments provided. Registration required.

The Meet Cutes

Tuesday 12/3 at 4 PM
Discuss "Duke, Actually" by Jenny Holiday. Copies of the book are available at the circulation desk or via Libby. Refreshments provided. This book club for readers of romance meets the first Tuesday of each month at 4 PM. Registration required.

Pajama Storytime

Tuesday 12/3 & 12/17 from 6:30-7PM
Grab your coziest PJs and favorite small stuffed animal and join Miss Isabel for Pajama Storytime! Every other Tuesday we'll read bedtime stories and sing songs. Ages 1-6. Registration required.

Lego Club

Wednesday 12/4 from 3:30-4:30PM
Join Miss Isabel on the first Wednesday of each month for Lego Club! Your masterpiece can be inspired by our chosen theme of the month or you can make up your own design! Ages 5-12. Please register. Legos will be provided.

Craft Hour for Children, Tweens, and Teens

Saturday 12/7 from 12-1PM
On the first Saturday of every month, drop in to enjoy a craft hour in the Tween & Teen room. This Saturday we'll be decorating paper snowflakes that you can choose to take home or display in the children's room on the winter tree wall.

The Whodunnits

Tuesday 12/10 at 11 AM
Discuss "Dead and Gondola" by Ann Claire. Copies of the book are available at the circulation desk or via Libby. Refreshments provided. This book club for readers of mystery and suspense meets the second Tuesday of each month. Registration required.

Winter Craft Night for Children and Teens

Tuesday 12/10 from 5:30-7PM
Drop in to the Tween & Teen Room to decorate paper snowflakes and winter hats with various crafting supplies. Snowflake projects will be hung up after the event in the children's room for all to admire this winter.

Gingerbread House Decorating Workshop

Thursday 12/12 at 6 PM
Learn how to upgrade your gingerbread house decorating skills just in time for the holiday season with instructor Mandy Roberge. This program is for adults. Registration required.

Puzzle & Board Game Swap

Saturday 12/14 from 10-2
Bring your great condition puzzles and board games to the library.

Either swap for another, or just grab what you like! No pressure and you can get some free holiday shopping done.

Chapter Chats YA Book Club

Tuesday 12/17 at 4PM
Join Miss Isabel to discuss the December young adult book club pick, "Blame it on the Mistletoe" by Beth Garrod. Snacks will be provided. Ages 13-17. Registration required. Copies of the book will be available at the children's and teens monthly book club display. *Please note: Chapter Chats Book Club meetings are usually held on the last Wednesday of the month, but this month is changed due to the holidays.

Tween & Teen Graphic Novel Club

Wednesday 12/18 at 4PM
On Wednesday, December 18th from 4-4:45PM we are discussing December's Book Club pick, "The Night Librarian" by Christopher Lincoln. Along with discussion, we will also complete an activity related to the book. Snacks will be provided. Ages 10-17. Registration required. This book will be available about a month prior to the book club meeting and can be found at the children's and teens monthly book club display. Please read the book before attending the meeting.

Memoir Book Club

Wednesday 12/18 at 6 PM
Join us in a discussion of "Threading My Prayer Rug: One Woman's Journey from Pakistani Muslim to American Muslim" by Sabeeha Rehman. Books are available for pick up at the library. Ebooks are available

via Overdrive/Libby. Refreshments related to the book will be provided. Please register.

Gift Wrap Party

Friday 12/20 from 10-2
Need to wrap holiday gifts away from the prying eyes of your family and friends? Stop by the library with the unwrapped gifts to use our gift wrapping supplies. Hot chocolate and festive cheer is also provided. While supplies last!

Noon Years Eve Party

Tuesday 12/31 from 11:45AM-12:15PM
Help us countdown to noon and celebrate the New Year at our Noon Years Eve Party! We will have a music and dance party, make NYE crowns, and complete our 2025 Wishing Wall. For ages 1-12. Please register.

Fiction Book of the Month

Monday 1/6 at 6PM
Read "Gingerbread" by Helen Oyeyemi. Books are available for pick up at the library. Ebooks are available via Overdrive/Libby. Meetings take place at the library on the first Monday of each month. Refreshments provided. Registration required.

The Meet Cutes

Tuesday 1/7 at 4 PM
Discuss "You, With A View" by Jessica Joyce. Copies of the book are available at the circulation desk or via Libby after the December meeting. Refreshments provided. This book club for readers of romance meets the first Tuesday of each month at 4 PM. Registration required.



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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

Finding your holiday spirit

It happens every year. November fades into December, and suddenly, the world expects you to transform into a holiday fanatic overnight. The lights go up, the carols start playing, and every ad you see insists it's "the most wonderful time of the year." But what if you're just not feeling it yet? Or, worse, you're feeling the pressure to feel it?

Here's a little secret: the holiday spirit isn't something you have to force. It sneaks up on you when you least expect it—like when you hear a kid giggling in a Santa hat, or when the smell of cookies baking fills the house. It's in those little moments, not in the perfectly decorated tree or the over-the-top gift list.

So, how do you find it? Start small. Pour yourself a mug of hot cocoa (marshmallows optional but highly recommended) and sit by the window for five minutes. Listen to your favorite holiday song—the silly ones count too. Drive around to check out the lights in your neighborhood. You don't have to deck the halls in a single day; sometimes, just hanging one strand of twinkle lights can do the trick.

And if the holidays feel like more of a chore this year, that's okay too. Give yourself permission to celebrate in your own way. Skip the big party if it stresses you out and invite a few close friends for a movie night instead. Or spend a quiet evening wrapping gifts (even if they're just for yourself). It's about finding joy where you are, not where you think you're supposed to be.

Remember, holiday spirit isn't one-size-fits-all. It's not about how much you spend or how perfectly you decorate; it's about making the season your own. So whether you're going full Buddy the Elf or keeping it low-key, let the magic find you. It always does.

To the Editor:

Did you catch on to all the lies in that election analysis silliness that came out of the Whitinsville asylum of left-wing extremism last week? Such as the often repeated lie that Donald Trump "lied" about the severity of CoV2 virus?

We all recall, do we not, that it was Donald Trump and his administration's Operation Warp Speed that fast-tracked the approval of the CoV2 vaccines? While the Democrats did everything they could to distract America from the threat of COVID during its initial few months. Do you recall how the Democrats and their media were all focused on their failed 2019 holiday season attempt to impeach President Trump during

To the Editor:

Can Biden and his corrupt deep state ever tell the truth?

"Mr. President, will you pardon your corrupt criminal son, Hunter, who is charged with drug possession, illegal gun possession, and failure to

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

Opinion and commentary from the Blackstone Valley and beyond

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Not obvious

To the Editor:

Project 2025 architect Voight supports a Trump presidency based on the Unitary Executive Theory, and he is the new OMB director. Voight believes in 'circumventing the US Senate's confirmation process.' You read Project 2025 before voting, right? Trump's first power move was a coordinated move with Musk telling the Senate to pick Scott for the Senate Majority Leader and Trump demanding that any leader elected must approve his recess appointments – avoiding senate confirmation. This was the first indication that Trump was trying to dilute constitutional checks and balances. But Republican leadership voted for Thune. Recess appointments are still out there, but the Senate checked Trump as they said no to Gaetz's nomination. Though not even inaugurated yet, Trump is already testing the waters to see how far this Unitary Executive theory may take him. For the moment, "constitutional checks and balances are not yet gone, media watchdogs prevailed, public opinion mattered, and Trump/Vance's power was blocked."(Slate) So, pronouncements about Trump's threat level to our democracy are very premature.

Recent letters were puzzling. Instead of glorying in all that Trump was about to do for the country, most of the content revolved around the flaws of a fallen candidate's campaign while including some obvious disinformation. Curious. Harris never called Trump Hitler. However, Vance and RFK Jr. are another story. Concerned about 'real' vitriol -remember the Trump Madison Square Garden rally? Check out YouTube if you want to see actual violent hate and anger by experts.

And Trump's own team members called him a fascist – imagine that.

'Grandma' had no business in the Capital on Jan. 6. She could have just as easily prayed outside. Why was she even there? The statement, "No charges. No Trials. No Jail." for pro-Hamas or BLM protesters, was

To the Editor:

As a "strong, intelligent, independent woman," I disagree with "The inmates are running the asylum." When a Presidential candidate survives two assassination attempts, bombs threaten his Cabinet nominees and families (to me) despicable descriptions of those who do not share the writer's views have no place on Tribune Letters-to-Editor page. It is not 'censorship' to reject outright or order writer-edits. Printed on Nov. 29, such a rabid letter may even prompt other "rational human beings" to write or register private protest with management.

If missed or unread due to length,

disinformation. (AP) reported that over 10,000 arrests were made in the first 10 days after Floyd's death alone, etc. There is a difference between Grandma and the protesters. She was there to stop a national election from being certified. The BLM/Pro-Hamas protesters were not.

"There was never a threat to take away women's rights to abortion." Disinformation. Due to a lack of abortion medical care, the following women have died: Wilkinson-Sobieski, Barnica, Alvarez-Estrada Glick, Crain, Thurman, and Miller.

"Currently, 13 states are enforcing bans at all stages of pregnancy, with some exceptions." (PBS) How many more women have to die to prove the 'truth'? "Project 2025 advocates for a national ban on medication abortion by urging the FDA to reverse its approval of mifepristone and misoprostol." "Milano is bragging" about her reproductive history.

Disinformation. She explained her reproductive history in her own words on her recent podcast. It certainly does not include five abortions and a sixth to come. This is obvious disinformation, so why was it referenced? And the point was?

"There is a sense of ease in the air." There is no sense of ease for women dying from a lack of abortion medical care.

"The federal government is the single largest employer of veterans in this country. There are currently 2.278 million civilian federal employees, and nearly 30 percent of them are veterans. If DOGE follows through on proposed threats and lays off 75 percent of the federal workforce, an estimated 481,950 veterans will be laid off." Bet they don't have a sense of ease. The veterans' who may lose their healthcare are not at ease. Realize that veterans' health care is the largest portion of the potential Doge cut list at 119 billion. Bet women in the military who have been serving in combat for 30 years have a great deal of unease based on Hegseth's comments that "women

When is enough really enough?

make a trip to the recycle bin to read 34 inches, two columns wide, of 'trash talk' and judge accordingly. Otherwise, this hints at its message: divisive adjectives used for those who did not vote a certain way—"dunce," "dim wit," "tree stump," "lazy-ass American" (plus more pejoratives). Lastly, (Trump) voters were told "to enjoy the fruits of being selfish, uninformed and intelligence-impaired"; "suffer... being dumb will be an advantage." The Dale Carnegie approach to "win friends and influence people" is more effective and, as one of 76 million, I beg to differ with these descriptors!

It's OK to be disappointed by the

election, but again, in this super-charged political climate, this is my final appeal to cease name-calling. At this juncture, any 'rational' person would rightly ask: when is enough really enough, and who is truly "disconnected from reality?" The Northbridge writer was sarcastic about sending 'good wishes' to We, the People, but my sincere thanks anyway as we "look on the bright side" for the next four years. The President-elect intends "success as the best revenge". Enough said, except Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Linda Lacki
Northbridge

Jane F. Keegan
Uxbridge

Where does the fault truly lie?

those first months of COVID?

So why the continued denial of the truth in that "sour grapes of liberal wrath" letter?

Then, oh my gosh, came the alleged horror that right-wing Christian Nationalists in Texas are preparing to build upon the longstanding practices of the left-wing Christian Nationalists here in Massachusetts in our ignoring of the separation of church and state.

We all know that Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. was a Christian Nationalist don't we? His religious teachings have been a part of our public school curriculums for decades, isn't that true?

So will the critical thinker of Whitinsville demand that all the

statues of MLK, Jr. be removed from public property for separation of church and state reasons so that we can show Texas how wrong we were?

Then, of course, came that thug-like nastiness regarding Donald Trump being correctly perceived as a brave man. As has been the longstanding tradition here in America as well as in many other western societies.

We know there was a deadly Trump rally where a volunteer firefighter was shot dead while candidate Trump and others were wounded. And we know that it takes a brave man, as well as some equally brave rally attendees to continue to hold such public gatherings after such brushes with death.

The British had a similarly brave man in Winston Churchill, as did the French with Charles De Gaulle. With many other such notably brave individuals throughout history. And yet the local leader of the left-wing sour grapes club chose to ruthlessly mock the bravery with his "bone spurs" nonsense.

So, are we the ones who are missing the reality of it all with our reasoned and rational responses?

Or does the fault lie with the left-wing extremists with their passionately irrational hatred of Donald Trump and America's traditions?

Stephen Gambone
Northbridge

More lies from the left

pay millions of dollars in taxes to the U.S. government?"

"No, I believe in the justice system."

"No, no, and no. I will not pardon Hunter."

"No, Hunter is a good boy. I admire him more than anyone on earth [because he made me rich with foreign money from Ukraine and China]. Hunter is the smartest [and most corrupt] person I know."

Biden lied. He has always lied. He lied again. What simpleton has believed anything that this corrupt Deep State useless excuse for a politician has said? Name anything he did in the Senate in his 45 years - other than humiliate Anita Hill during the Clarence Thomas U.S. Supreme Court hearing.

No, you can name nothing. But as President, Biden has done a lot:

Turned the southern border into an open sewer with 10 million illegal immigrants flooding into every state to be supported by decent working, tax-paying [unlike Hunter Biden] American citizens.

Allowed the illegal immigrants, unvetted with no background checks, to commit crime after deadly crime on American citizens and to commit sexual crimes of unheard of proportions and depravity.

Spend trillions on the Green New Fake. \$8 billion on just seven electric vehicle charging stations. Billions on wind farms, like the one off Nantucket, that fail and crumble into the sea. I hope Biden saw some of the debris on Nantucket beaches while he "vacationed" there for Thanksgiving.

He vacationed during his entire Presidency. Ukraine blew up into war. Israel and Gaza blew up into war. Where was Biden? On the beach, at his new million dollar beach house, bought with ill-gotten gains.

This guy has never earned a decent dollar in his life. He never set up a small business or invented a widget or was a short order cook or a businessman. Nada. Nothing. And his son Hunter? Same thing: useless criminal grifter. But then, the whole Biden Crime Family will have to be pardoned because they all are grifters.

No real business. No real skills. Never ever work for a living when you can grift on your grifter relative, Sen. Biden. I feel dirty just describing these lowlives.

One of the few Dems who ever worked for a living is Sen. Malarkey of Massachusetts, who once briefly drove an H.P. Hood ice cream truck. Eddie the Ice Cream Man. He went to

college and law school and promptly ran for office so he would not have to work for a living.

He is 78 years old and still not working for a living, but the money and benefits are so good that he cannot give up being a Senator because he can still do a lot of damage.

He has vowed to stop Robert F. Kennedy Jr. from becoming Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Why? Jealousy.

Kennedy wants to end drug advertisement on TV just like they ended cigarette ads. Are you being made sick just from watching all the drug ads? Ask your doctor for this drug! Ask your doctor for this treatment! Why?

Money, money, and more money for big pharma. Big Pharma is Anthony Fauci. He has become rich on all the stock he owns in all the Big Vaccine Pharmaceuticals. He should be indicted, not celebrated.

Biden and Fauci, swamp creatures of the most nightmarish kind who suck the living blood of taxpayers. Biden lied and lies. Fauci lied and lied. Read Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s book, "The Real Anthony Fauci." Ay caramba!

Bev Gudanowski
Uxbridge

Repurposing Everyday Items

In today's economy it's important to get the most use out of the products you buy. Thanks to some creative repurposing, many ordinary items can do double duty all around the house. Read on for some unusual uses for everyday things.

And remember readers, send in your best tips and you'll be in the running to win Dinner for Two at the Publick House!

Bamboo Skewers: Not just for shish kabob or fruit arrangements, a package of inexpensive wooden skewers come in handy! Use them to test the doneness of cakes; to easily turn doughnuts and other foods when deep frying

Insert wooden skewers into cake layers to invisibly stabilize a crooked confection. (Just be sure to remove them when cutting the cake!)

Wooden skewers are also in the workshop. To camouflage a narrow nail hole, dip the end of a skewer in white glue, push it into the wall, break it off and paint over.

Aluminum Foil: Hate to iron? Here's a generations old tip that stands the test of time: Place a sheet of tinfoil under the ironing board cover (above the foam but below the cloth) to boost the heat of the iron and get the job done more efficiently and quickly!

Run out of steel wool pads? Crumple up a ball of tinfoil and use to clean non stick pans and even the barbecue grates, just toss when done - no mess!

If you are struggling to move heavy

furniture over a rug, place pieces of aluminum foil under the legs and it the furniture will glide much easier.

Vodka: Is your potpourri losing its scent? Toss in a capful of vodka and mix it up to renew fragrance in the dried flower mix.

Want your fresh flowers to last a bit longer? Simply add a few drops of vodka along with a teaspoon of sugar to the water in the vase. The vodka kills bacteria, extending the life of the blooms.

And you can whip up an effective air freshener with vodka. To do: In a spray bottle, mix together six ounces water (distilled if possible), one ounce of vodka, and your choice of essential oil (about 20-30 drops). Shake up and spray!

Dental Floss: Hanging a picture and don't have any wire? Doubled up dental floss is strong enough to substitute on lightweight pictures.

Are photos stuck together? Instead of pulling apart, lessen the risk of damage by gently shimmying the floss between the photos to pry them off.

Swaging holiday greenery? Green mint dental floss serves as a strong (and invisible) tie to wind around garlands to hang down stairways or along a mantle.

And unflavored dental floss can also be used to truss a turkey.

Dental floss even works as a quick fix to restring beaded jewelry.



TAKE THE HINT

KAREN TRAINOR

*** Here are some additional multipurpose ideas:

- Have extra roof shingles? Stow a few in your trunk during winter weather. If you get stuck, wedge the shingle under the tire for traction.
- Need to clean a grout stain? Saturate a cotton ball in bleach and place it on the stain until it fades out.

- Save plastic newspaper sleeves. The long bags protect shoes from other clothing when packing a suitcase.
- Wet boots from winter weather? Stuff newspaper inside your shoes and they'll dry out faster.

- Newspaper also works to prevent odors in thermos bottles between uses. Just pack crumpled newspaper into the bottle before closing to store.
- Stuff Styrofoam packing peanuts into a bean bag chair to puff it back up without spending a dime!

- Spray some no stick cooking spray on your snow shovel to help heavy, wet snow from sticking to it.

snow from sticking to it.

*** Win Dinner for Two at the Publick House

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

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

Padre Pio

POSITIVELY SPEAKING

TOBY MOORE

In the small Italian village of Pietrelcina, on May 25, 1887, Francesco Forgione was born into a humble family of farmers. No one could have predicted that this boy, who would later take the name Padre Pio, would become one of the most enigmatic and revered figures in modern Catholicism.

Padre Pio's journey to the priesthood began early. As a child, he claimed to have mystical experiences, including visions of Jesus and Mary. At 15, he entered the Capuchin Order; and by 23, he was ordained a priest. But it wasn't his sermons or pastoral care that would make him famous—it was the miraculous and inexplicable phenomena that surrounded him.

Perhaps the most famous aspect of Padre Pio's life was his stigmata—wounds resembling those of Christ on the cross. In 1918, while praying, Padre Pio reportedly received these marks, which he bore for 50 years until his death.

The stigmata were examined multiple times by medical professionals, with opinions ranging from supernatural to psychological or physical causes. The Vatican conducted thorough investigations into these claims over decades, reflecting both skepticism and respect.

Ultimately, the Church ruled the stigmata as genuine and beyond natural explanation, contributing to his canonization in 2002.

His mystical gifts didn't stop there. Padre Pio was said to possess the ability to bilocate—appearing in two places at once—and to read souls, revealing private details during confessions that penitents hadn't disclosed.

These accounts, while widely believed by his devotees, are based on anecdotal evidence and lack independent verification, leading skeptics to question their authenticity. Padre Pio humbly attributed all his gifts to God, famously saying, "I only want to be a poor friar who prays."

For all the awe he inspired, skepticism followed him, too. Was the stigmata self-inflicted? Were the stories exaggerated by adoring followers? In the 1920s, the Church temporarily restricted Padre Pio's public ministry, citing concerns about the authenticity of his wounds and the intensity of his following. These questions persist but don't diminish the enduring allure of his legacy.

Of all the mysteries tied to Padre Pio, none are as dramatic—or as spine-tin-

gling—as the stories from World War II. San Giovanni Rotondo, where Padre Pio lived, was under threat from Allied bombing campaigns. Intelligence reports indicated German munitions near the town, making it a likely target.

But according to eyewitness accounts, strange things happened whenever Allied planes flew near the area. Pilots reported seeing a figure in the sky—a monk with outstretched arms—forcing them to veer off course. Bombs either dropped harmlessly into nearby fields, or missions were abandoned altogether due to unexplained mechanical failures. These stories, while captivating, lack corroboration in wartime records and are primarily based on post-war testimonies.

One American pilot, shaken by what he described as a vision of a monk in the air, visited San Giovanni Rotondo after the war. When he saw Padre Pio, he recognized him immediately as the figure who had appeared before his plane.

This account and others like it were popularized by author Frank Rega in "Padre Pio and America."

While these stories border on the unbelievable, they come from multiple sources. Even skeptics wonder: How was the town spared when so many others weren't? Could these be tales of coincidence and wartime imagination, or were they miraculous interventions?

Stories like these invite both awe and doubt. How much of what we hear is faith-driven embellishment, and how much points to something beyond human understanding?

He once remarked: "In books we seek God; in prayer we find him..."

Perhaps it is that unwavering belief in prayer and divine intervention that makes stories of Padre Pio so compelling.

Whether or not Padre Pio truly appeared as a "flying monk" to Allied pilots, the fact remains: his life continues to captivate millions.

As we consider these extraordinary tales, we don't have to decide whether they are fact or fiction. Instead, we can marvel at their ability to inspire and remind us of the mysteries that surround the human experience.

During our time of division and uncertainty, perhaps the most valuable takeaway from Padre Pio's life is his simple yet profound message: "Pray, hope, and don't worry."

Country Bank partners with Wonderfund with \$10,000 donation during Season of Difference campaign

REGION — Country Bank, a full-service financial institution serving Central and Western Massachusetts, partnered with the Wonderfund of Massachusetts, with a \$10,000 donation. This collaboration will make a difference in the lives of kids and teens served by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), allowing them to experience the magic of childhood during the holiday season. The Wonderfund, an extraordinary group of people on a mission, is dedicated to bringing the joy and meaning of childhood to children who have been impacted by trauma, abuse, and neglect.

You, too, can be a part of this magical initiative. Join the Wonderfund and Country Bank in making this holiday season special for kids in foster care by donating a new, unwrapped gift at any of its banking centers until Dec. 14. Your contribution, no matter how small, will make a difference. Country Bank's team will shop

for gifts to join in the efforts, and donations will be delivered to DCF Offices in Springfield and Worcester to be distributed throughout western and central Massachusetts.

"We are excited to partner with the Wonderfund again this year and the opportunity for our team and the communities we serve help us make a difference for children by putting a smile on so many faces this holiday season," said Shelley Regin, Chief Marketing and Community Relations Officer at Country Bank. "Last year, we had such overwhelming support and collectively, we donated over a thousand toys to local DCF offices who shared with us, without your donations most children would have only received one toy."

If you're ready to help make some magic this holiday season, please visit <https://wonderfundma.org>. Your support is invaluable and will bring joy to children in foster care.

Northbridge High School inducts 12 new members into National Honor Society

NORTHBIDGE — On Nov. 25, Northbridge High School inducted 12 new junior and senior students into the Bernice T. Plante Chapter of the National Honor Society. This was the 57th induction ceremony at NHS.

Four community members were also recognized for their outstanding service and commitment to the society's four pillars; scholarship, service, leadership, and character. One of these members was

Northbridge school resource police officer, Thomas Dejordy.

Congratulations to the following students who were inducted: Olivia Choumanivong, Danielle Chrabaszcz, Lorelai Drapeau, Molly Gahan, Kaia Gibson, Gisel Morrissette, Rowan Phillips, Brendan Riche, Lily Simoneau, Sofia Smith, Kallie Tevepugh, and Madison Thibeault.



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Selection and care of living holiday trees



Melinda Myers

Dress up a potted dwarf spruce, Norfolk Island pine, lemon cypress or topiary Rosemary or lavender plant for the holidays and enjoy its beauty all year. Add a bit of garland and a few small ornaments for a festive effect.

Norfolk Island pines have long been decked out and displayed for the holidays. Smaller specimens can be placed on a tabletop, and larger ones can be used as indoor floor plants when space allows. Grow Norfolk Island pines in a cool well-lit location free of hot and cold drafts. Occasionally, turn plants growing in front of windows to ensure even growth.

Avoid low humidity and dry soil, often resulting in dry brown needles and branches. Use a gravel tray to reduce your workload and increase your growing success. Place pebbles in the plant saucer and set the container on the pebbles so it rests above any excess water that collects in the saucer. Water thoroughly and often enough to keep the soil slightly moist. The excess water that collects in the saucer increases humidity around the plant.

Tabletop lemon cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa* 'Goldcrest Wilma') trees have filled the benches at garden centers and florists for the past few holiday seasons. Their fragrant chartreuse needles and upright conical shape make them a cheery addition to your winter décor. Grow them in a brightly lit location near a draft-free window and water thoroughly when the top few inches are dry to the touch. Those who garden in zones seven to ten can move them into their landscape or add them to their

Lemon cypress trees add interest and texture to this poinsettia display.

outdoor containers after the danger of frost has passed. This dwarf variety can eventually reach six feet tall and three to four feet wide.

Enjoy the beauty, fragrance, and flavor of a topiary Rosemary tree. Grow it in a brightly lit location and water thoroughly when the top few inches of soil begin to dry. Regularly trim the branches to maintain the upright tree shape. Use clippings to season your favorite holiday dishes.

Consider growing a tree-shaped lavender plant this holiday season for its attractive foliage and calming fragrance. Grow your lavender in a south-facing or other sunny window. Find a cool spot in your home away from hot and cold air drafts. The cooler air helps increase your indoor growing success. Water it thoroughly when the top inch of soil is dry to the touch. Pour off any excess water that collects in the saucer.

If you want a tree that can be moved outdoors

Bay Path Academy Director attends 60th Anniversary Civil Rights Celebration

BOSTON — Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN of Athol (formerly of Dudley and Douglas), Academy Director at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy in Charlton, was joined by her husband, Joseph Bolandrina, at the “We Still CARE-60th Anniversary Civil Rights Celebration at the Embrace Monument, Boston Common. The mission of the Embrace Boston is “to dismantle structural racism through our work at the intersection of arts and culture, community, and research and policy” and the vision is “a radically inclusive and equitable Boston where everyone belongs and Black people prosper, grounded in joy, love, and well-being.” <https://www.embraceboston.org/>

At the 60th Anniversary Civil Rights Celebration members of the academic community came together to honor the legacy of the



Courtesy

Joseph and Gretheline Bolandrina at The Embrace Boston.

Civil Rights Movement and celebrate the progress made. The in-person event featured inspiring speakers, live music, and community activities such as mural painting. Attendees brought pairs of slightly used shoes for the symbolic Civil Rights march. The event allowed for opportunity to reflect on history and continue the fight for equality and justice.

The Coalition for Anti-Racism and Equity (CARE) hosted the 60th

Anniversary Civil Rights Celebration.

According to Bolandrina, “It was inspiring and an honor to attend and reflect.”

It is worth acknowledging the work that still lies ahead.

She adds, “I am grateful to have met State Representative Tara Hong and Jasmin Rivas, CARE Program Director in person. She invited us to CARE.”

CARE - the Coalition for

Anti-racism and Equity is a 501(c)(3) state member-driven nonprofit in the state of Massachusetts <https://www.care4equity.org/>. CARE is committed to fostering social justice and equity in education. CARE works to empower students, educators, and communities by advocating for systemic change, promoting diversity, and creating opportunities for underrepresented voices to lead and thrive. CARE supports “educators of all forms—teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators—in uniting across the commonwealth to share experiences that will inform the legislative process around anti-racism in the education system.” CARE values the voice of education professionals and believes engaging in statewide conversations are vital in decision-making.

Massachusetts State Representative Tara Thorn Hong of the 18th Middlesex District who spoke at the event shared that he is “grateful for the uplifting speakers especially from all of the young people that are part of team who put all of this together!”

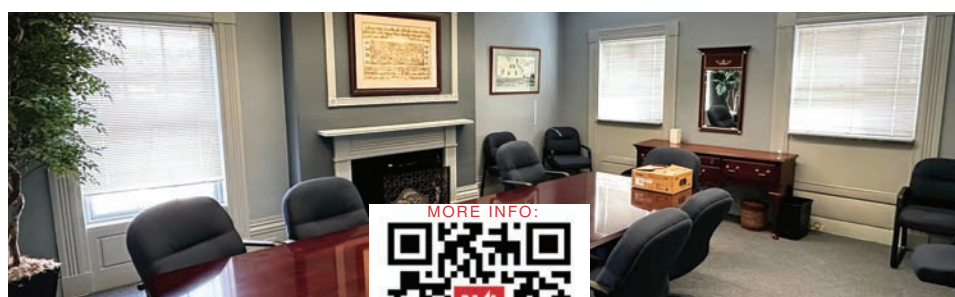
He added, “Let us keep the work going to build better and safer future for all!”

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jglickman@glickmankovago.com



JONAH D. GLICKMAN
Vice President

508-868-3765

jdglickman@glickmankovago.com

Friday's Child

Hi! Our names are Jalen and Jaren and we want to be adopted together!

Jaren and Jalen are twin boys, they have similar interests, and they both enjoy moon sand and other sensory items. Jalen and Jaren love playing Temple Run and watching sports on their iPad. The twins also enjoy spending time outside and playing on the swings.

Jaren and Jalen are currently enrolled in a special school where they are doing well with the services and support put in place for their overall development. Their social worker stated that Jaren and Jalen can bond very well with staff and caretakers who have been consistent in their lives. They have great smiles and get along with people they encounter!

<https://adopt.mareinc.org/waiting-child-profiles#gallery/children/8657-8659>

Can I Adopt?

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

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

To learn more about adoption from foster care visit www.mareinc.org. Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) can give you guidance and information on the adoption process. Reach out today to find out all the ways you can help children and teens in foster care.



Bay Path Nursing students show gratitude

CHARLTON — General education focuses on academic success measures such as grade point average and graduation rates. For nursing education this includes licensure examination first time pass rate. Indeed, these outcomes are important, but they are the traditional measures of success. The outcomes fail to capture the complexities of nursing student success, the integration of psychological and cognitive aspects of the learning experience, the nursing students' grit and grace, the tenacity of spirit, the joys, appreciation, and gratitude.

As nursing students, it is nice to show appreciation and gratitude towards the faculty and staff who supports and guides your training and education. Eight members of the Practical Nursing Class of 2025 did just that. Not with a simple thank you note, but with an impromptu and yet thoughtful way to express their appreciation for the faculty and staff's hard work and dedication, a group photo holding signs that reads, "Thank you for all that you do!"

Collectively known as "Team Webster," the eight nursing students are Elizabeth Achayo of Worcester, Cynthia Agyeman of Worcester, Celestine Akagbo of Worcester, Rachel Anane of Worcester, Tamara Lidonde of Spencer, Ashley Rincon of Southbridge, Giselle Rosario of Southbridge, and Katelyn Smith of Charlton. All are under the leadership and guidance of Dr. Adelina Healy of Dudley and attend their fundamental of practical nursing clinical rotation at the Webster Manor Rehabilitation



& Health Care Center <https://webstermanor-rehab.com/> in Webster. The Webster Manor offers skilled nursing and rehabilitative care. They are devoted to providing residents with quality care with an individualized touch, designed to improve residents' quality of life. As part of Athena Health Care Systems' continuum of care, residents can "age in place" knowing that they do not have to move as their care needs change.

According to Dr. Healy, Team Webster is great, "they are all attentive, they enjoy clinicals, and I love them all." Dr. Healy joined Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy as adjunct faculty in 2017. She positively praised the education and training the nursing students received. "As faculty, I see firsthand how the staff and faculty interacted with nursing students and the true concern for their suc-

cess," she said. Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy has a small clinical faculty to student ratio of 1:8, less than the maximum ratio established by the Board of Registration in Nursing of 1:10.

Both faculty and staff at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy create a positive learning experience and help in understanding how theory related directly to patient care at specially selected clinical sites such as the Webster Manor. Hands on education and the ability to practice in a safe learning environment allows students to become confident. With only three weeks remaining before the end of Term one and progression to Term two, Team Webster is mastering their clinical skills. As the demand for qualified nurses increases, their training, education, preparation, expression of appreciation and gratitude is surely leading them to a great path to success.

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OBITUARIES

Edward J. DeHaan, 82



SUTTON- Edward J. DeHaan, 82, beloved husband, father and local business owner, passed away peacefully at home on Wednesday, November 27, 2024. At the time of his passing Ed was surrounded by the supportive love of his family.

Ed was born in Whitinsville and raised in Sutton, the son of John and Grace (Foppema) DeHaan. He attended Whitinsville Christian School, was a 1960 graduate of Sutton High School and studied at Dean Junior College. During this time, Ed worked as a service mechanic at his father's new car dealership Indian Pontiac, in Whitinsville. In 1962, Ed enlisted into the U.S. Army where he honorably served his country. Upon his return home, Ed resumed working in the sales and service departments of Indian Pontiac, alongside his father and brother, Ken. During this time, Ed would also marry his high school sweetheart, Genevieve (née Vaundell).

After his father's decision to retire in 1973, Ed and his brother dissolved Indian Pontiac and reopened on the same property as DeHaan Motors, Inc. Together, they offered honest quality automotive sales and service to hundreds of customers in the Blackstone Valley over the next thirty years. Upon his retirement, Ed would remain active in the automotive business, working first with Rick's Tire and Auto Sales in No. Smithfield, RI, then Meineke Car Care of Shrewsbury, and Bump 'n Touch, Inc. where he always maintained his reputation for honesty and integrity. He enjoyed most working at the Mendon Greenhouse.

When not working, Ed looked forward to a round of golf with his childhood friend Craig Wallace. He enjoyed visiting the Sutton, Douglas and Northbridge Senior Centers where a challenge of Pitch or Cribbage was always welcomed. He missed few opportunities to share Army stories - most especially his adventures in Turkey. In earlier years Ed enjoyed being outside while deer hunting and together with Ginny, enjoyed camping adventures and vacations with their children. Hardly a weekend would pass without breakfast

plans with his beloved family.

In addition to his devoted wife, Ginny, Ed is survived by their two children, Lisa M. DeHaan and Michael E. DeHaan, both who reside in Sutton; two nephews, Brian and Craig DeHaan; two nieces, Jody Myers-Fierz and Jamie Blair; a brother-in-law, David (wife Becky) Vaundell and a sister-in-law, Susan DeHaan. Ed was preceded in death by his brother, Ken DeHaan and a sister-in-law, Judy Myers.

A graveside committal service with Military Honors will be held Monday, December 9th, at 12:30pm, in south Cemetery, 29 Hough Rd, Sutton.

Ed's family wishes to thank the VNA Hospice Team for the kindness and compassion provided to Ed during his final days. In lieu of flowers Ed's family respectfully request contributions be made in Ed's memory to the Friends of the Sutton Elders, 19 Hough Rd, Sutton, MA 01590. Arrangements are under the care of Hays Funeral Home, 56 Main Street, Northborough, MA 01532. To leave an online condolence, please visit www.HaysFuneralHome.com.



Shirley M. Heney, 87



Northbridge- Shirley M. Heney, 87, of Elston Ave. passed away on Sat. Nov. 23, 2024 at UMass University Campus after a period of declining health.

She is survived by 2 sisters; Ida M. Haley and Elva M. Heney both of Northbridge; a sister-in-law Dorothy A. Heney; nephews, nieces, and dear friends. She was predeceased by her brother Henry J. "Sonny" Heney Jr. and brother-in-law William E. Haley. Born in Northbridge on March 27, 1937 she was daughter of the late Henry J. Sr. and Blanche (Trottier) Heney and lived in town all her life.

Shirley found great fulfillment in her career as a Nurse Practitioner, retiring from Employee Health at UMass Memorial Medical Center at the age of 63. She was educated in St. Peter's School, Northbridge High School, Class of 1955 and Hahnemann School of Nursing. A lifelong member of St. Peter's Parish in Rockdale, she enjoyed the annual Bazaar and loved attending

the monthly dinners with her friends. She was an avid New England sports fan, watching the Celtics, Patriots, Bruins, and Red Sox, often toggling the TV between games so as not to miss anything! There was nothing she loved more than having family and friends visit, whether in person or on the phone! Family, friend or stranger, you could not be in Shirley's presence without feeling her love.

Her Memorial Funeral Mass will be held Sat. Dec. 7 at 9am in St. Peter's Church, 39 Church Ave. Northbridge. A brunch will be served from 10-11:30 at St. Peter's Parish Hall, followed by burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery. There are no calling hours. Memorial donations may be made to St. Peter's Church, 39 Church Ave. Box 446 Northbridge, MA 01534. To leave a condolence message for her family please visit <http://www.jackmanfuneralhome.com>

Theona J. Taylor



for Theona.

Theona's heart found its match in Robert J. Taylor. He was on leave from the U.S. Navy docked in Newport, RI and he and a friend drove to Whitinsville to visit. The only guidelines for a weekend stay with complimentary lodging and food, was that they had to go to church on Sunday. Theona and Bob met at church.

The two were united in marriage, building a life filled with love and mutual respect. Although Robert preceded her in death, their shared memories continued to be a source of joy and solace for Theona. Together, they raised three children—Bryan J. Taylor and his

wife Lori of Florida, Neal Taylor and his wife Christine of Douglas, and the late Karyn J. Taylor beloved daughter, sister and friend to Kathy and Jan whom Theona appreciated, loved and enjoyed their continued visits and care.

Her role as grandmother to Addison and Cole, was one she cherished most deeply. Theona's extended family included 7 nieces and nephews, Gina, Scott, Amy, Derrick, Holly, Darren and Candice. Professionally, Theona dedicated many years of service as a nurse's aide at Beaumont Nursing Home, where she earned admiration and gratitude of countless families for her compassionate care.

Theona found joy in the simplicity of life. She took camping trips to the ocean with her family and lifelong friends from her church community. After retiring she took pleasure and comfort in wintering in Florida, where she basked in the winter sunshine with friends and family. Theona also had a fondness for puzzles and word finds a hobby that reflected her patient and thoughtful nature.

A woman of strong faith, Theona lived her beliefs through her actions including fellowship, kindness, charity, and love in her daily life. She was a lifelong member of Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church where she formed long lasting friendships and found spiritual fulfillment throughout her 84 years of life.

Funeral services and interment private.



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LEGALS

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Division
Docket No. WO24P4016EA
INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION NOTICE
Estate Of:
Micahel R Feeney
Date of Death: August 07, 2024

To all persons who have or may have some interest in the above-captioned estate and, if interested, to the Office of the Attorney General and the Department of Veterans Affairs, notice is hereby given on September 30 2024 that the Petitioner

Zeb Z.T. Feeney of Uxbridge, MA
Petition for Informal Appointment of Personal Representative, to serve without surety on the bond

Zeb Z.T. Feeney of Uxbridge, MA
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.
December 6, 2024

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Division
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 831-2200
Docket No. WO20P1433EA
Estate of:
Edwin Matuzek
Date of Death: 03/28/2020
CITATION ON PETITION
FOR ORDER OF
COMPLETE SETTLEMENT

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

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court before: **10:00 a.m.** on the return day of **12/24/2024**. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

Witness, Hon. Leilah A Keamy, First Justice of this Court
November 25, 2024
Stephanie K. Fattman, Register of Probate
December 6, 2024

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
Docket No. WO24P4009PM
CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF
PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT
OF CONSERVATOR OR OTHER
PROTECTIVE ORDER PURSUANT
TO G.L.c. 190B, § 5-304 & § 5-405
In the matter of:
Northbridge, MA
Of: RESPONDENT
(Person to be Protected/Minor)

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Advinia Care at Northbridge of Northbridge, MA, in the above captioned matter alleging that **Gloria Comastra** is in need of a Conservator or other protective order and requesting that Lisa Judkins of Auburn, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Conservator

to serve **Without Surety** on the bond. The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is disabled, that a protective order or appointment of a Conservator is necessary, and that the proposed conservator is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **12/17/2024**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the abovenamed person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.
WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.
November 22, 2024

Stephanie K. Fattman
Register of Probate
December 6, 2024

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Worcester Probate and Family Court
225 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
Docket No. WO24P4010GD
CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF
PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT
OF GUARDIAN FOR
INCAPACITATED PERSON
PURSUANT TO G.L.c. 190B, §
5-304
In the matter of: Gloria Comastra

Of: Northbridge, MA
RESPONDENT

Alleged Incapacitated Person
To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Advinia Care at Northbridge of Northbridge, MA, in the above captioned matter alleging that **Gloria Comastra** is in need of a Guardian and requesting that Spooner Guardianship Services of Auburn, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Conservator to serve **Without Surety** on the bond. The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is disabled, that a protective order or appointment of a Conservator is necessary, and that the proposed conservator is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **12/17/2024**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the abovenamed person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.
WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.
November 22, 2024

Stephanie K. Fattman
Register of Probate
December 6, 2024

Plummer Place

Home of the Northbridge Senior Center

(508) 234-2002
 We are accepting donations for our Plummer Place Café. Heavy duty plasticware utensils, heavy duty plates large and small, bowls, napkins, plastic cups, crystal lite packs, bottled water either large or small, creamers, decaf coffee and regular coffee, Shaw's gift cards. We appreciate all donations to help our café run successfully!

Plummer Place Shuffleboard League has openings for a few more

players. They meet every Tuesday at 9:00am. Call the Center to join this fun league or for more information.

Plummer Place Singers has changed its day and time. They will now meet on Wednesdays at 1:00pm. Raianne Richards will lead you as a group, to develop your skills, to enjoy the camaraderie, and to perhaps sing for others. If you would like to join this group, please call the Center to sign up. The cost is \$5

per week.

"Writing Your Way" will meet Thursdays from 2:00-3:30pm. They will meet every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. All writers are welcome to share their writing with others, get motivated to write their story, and get feedback from fellow writers! Lori Gannon is the instructor for this class, call the Center for more information. \$5/class.

"Understanding Grief", Mondays, November 18th and 25th, December 2nd and 9th at 2:00pm. Join us for this 4-week class to explore and understand our grief together in a safe environment. Come ready to learn and begin healing. Please bring a journal to write in. At the end of the four-week class, we will continue as a Grief Support Group, meeting the second Monday of the month at 2:00pm, beginning January 13th. Sign up in the main office.



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How some popular holiday traditions got their start

Will you be baking gingerbread or hanging stockings by the fireplace this holiday season? Perhaps you'll be lighting the menorah or playing a game of dreidel? The holidays are steeped in tradition, some of which are older than celebrants may realize.

Individuals gather during the holidays and participate in various traditions that have withstood the test of time. Most people engage in these traditions or recognize symbols automatically, but it can be interesting to learn how these traditions came to be.

Christmas caroling
The British traditions of wassailing and mumming and the Slavic tradition of koliada were some of the precursors to

more modern caroling. People would go door-to-door and recite poetry or sing with the hope of bringing about good fortune or influencing a future harvest, according to Rutgers University. Carolers spread hope and good tidings through song during a time of year when sunlight was limited.

Christmas trees
Pagans once displayed evergreen branches as a reminder that spring would come again, while Romans placed them around temples to honor Saturn, the god of agriculture. Eventually the evergreen was used in conjunction with Christian Christmas celebrations. In the sixteenth century, German Christians put trees inside their homes as

symbols of everlasting life.

Santa Claus
Children who celebrate Christmas eagerly await the arrival of a jolly sort who goes by the name of Santa Claus. His origin story stretches back to the third century, when Saint Nicholas became the patron saint of children. Saint Nicholas was a monk in what is modern-day Turkey. It is said that he traveled helping the poor and the sick. History.com says he is believed to have saved three impoverished sisters from slavery by providing them with a dowry so they could be married, and he also provided gifts to children.

Menorah
The menorah is a multibranched cande-

labra used in Jewish religious rituals. The menorah is first mentioned in the book of Exodus when the design of the lamp was revealed to Moses by God on Mount Sinai. Many menorahs are seven-branched, but during Chanukah, an eight-branched menorah is used. The Chanukah menorah is modeled after the Tabernacle menorah that corresponds to the eight-day festival. It was used to celebrate the rededication of the Second Temple. The available oil supply was supposed to light the menorah for just one day, but the candles actually burned for eight.

Mistletoe
Kissing under the mistletoe is a holiday season tradition that

can lead to some red faces when couples are caught beneath the plant. Norse mythology paved the way for kissing under the mistletoe. Legend has it the gods used mistletoe to resurrect Odin's son, Baldur, from the dead. Baldur's mother, Frigg, the goddess of love, made the plant a symbol of love and vowed to kiss anyone who passed under it. Mistletoe blooms under cold conditions, which is how it became associated with the holiday season.

Yule log
Yule logs were once part of winter solstice celebrations to bring good luck and fortune, but America is where

a yule log really caught on as a holiday tradition. In 1966, the WPIX television station in New York City aired a continuous loop of a fireplace burning for three hours with holiday songs playing. It became an annual tradition, says History.com. Some people even serve a cake that looks like a yule log. The Bûche de Noël is a traditional Christmas cake that is especially popular in France.

Holiday traditions continue in full force. Traditions are an endearing component of celebrations and help to unite people from all backgrounds during this special time of year.

5 fun gift exchange ideas

Gift-giving is a significant component of the holiday season. Families can embrace traditional gift-giving, but those who want to add a touch of whimsy to gatherings with loved ones can consider these five creative and fun ways to exchange gifts.

1. Play the plastic wrap game. To exchange small stocking stuffer gifts, compile gift cards, cash, small toys, candy, and even some larger gifts (all participants can chip in and one person shops for the gifts). The designated person in charge begins rolling up the gifts in the plastic, adding one every few rolls. Turning the ball 90 degrees while wrapping helps make a more round, finished gift ball. To play, the person with the ball puts on oven mitts and tries to unwrap as much as they can to access the gifts, while the person to the left is attempting to roll doubles on dice. When doubles are made, that person passes the dice to the left and starts his or her own attempts to get at the gifts in the plastic ball. The game ends when all the gifts are revealed, whether everyone has had a chance to unwrap or not.

2. Plan a white elephant gift exchange. A white elephant exchange is like a secret grab bag. Everyone brings a wrapped gift, and then takes turns choosing a gift based on the number they've been given. When the gift is chosen, the person opens it. The next player can select a fresh gift or steal one of the presents that's already been opened.

3. Host a make-and-take craft party. With this type of exchange, participants will engage in some form of crafting for the duration of the event, whether it's pottery, painting, epoxy resin pouring, or even knit crafts. At the end of the night everyone can swap their creations with another or keep their own crafts as gifts.

4. Give the gift of a group outing. Instead of exchanging material gifts, focus on sharing experiences with friends and family. A trip to watch a sports game or a theater performance can be an excellent way to spend time together, and something a person may not be inclined to do on his or her own. Certain venues will offer discounts on group tickets, so everyone can pool their resources.

5. Host a DIY cookie and cocoa exchange. Cookies, cocoa and the holidays are a perfect combination. A gift exchange where participants supply ingredients for these sweet treats, share their favorite recipes and then put together the finished products can make for an entertaining and festive afternoon. Each person can fill a cookie tin with baked cookies to take home and mason jars filled with homemade hot cocoa mix and marshmallows can be an additional gift to enjoy later on a chilly evening.

There are plenty of fun ways to exchange gifts during the holiday season.

8 guidelines for safe gifts

Everyone wants their gifts to be well-received. For those giving presents to children, they want to see kids' faces light up with excitement when they find a spectacular present underneath all that wrapping paper. In order to elicit that joy, some people may sacrifice safety in order to buy the "coolest" or the "hottest" gifts around. But that could be a recipe for injury. It is essential to consider safety anytime one is buying gifts for children.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission says an estimated 200,000 toy-related injuries were treated in United States hospital emergency departments in 2020, with most patients four or younger. The Public Health Agency of Canada notes that, between April 1, 2011 and November 9, 2022, there were 29,268 cases of toy-related injuries, and children between the ages of one and four were the most affected.

When buying gifts for children, shoppers can consider these safety strategies.

1. Check the recommendations. Toys and games come with age recommendations for a reason. Note ages listed on boxes, never choos-



ing above the child's age even if the youngster seems mature for his or her age.

2. Be mindful of small parts. Small toys can present a choking hazard. Also, check to see if parts are secure or can break off.

3. Check breakability. Avoid gifts that seem flimsy or delicate. Stay away from toys made from glass or thin plastic, as they could shatter if dropped or thrown.

4. Be mindful of antiques. Although older or antique toys and games can be interesting and readily found at garage sales and flea markets, some older toys could

be unsafe. They may contain lead or toxic paints. Others may not have been made in adherence to modern toy safety standards.

5. Look for the ASTM label. ASTM International is a standards organization that publishes technical international standards for a range of materials. Games and toys that meet ASTM safety standards are better choices.

6. Check battery sizes. Selecting powered gifts that utilize larger batteries could be safer for children. Size D, C, and even double A are better than items that use very small, button-like batteries, which can

be easily swallowed, potentially causing injuries to the digestive tract. Also, confirm that batteries are hard to access.

7. Include protective gear with the gift. If you purchase a gift like a skateboard or bicycle, include helmets and additional safety gear to ensure they are safer to use.

8. Learn how gifts work. Read the instructions and familiarize yourself with the operation of the gift so you can help the child use it correctly.

When buying gifts for children, well-meaning individuals must take the safety of an item into consideration.

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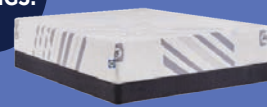
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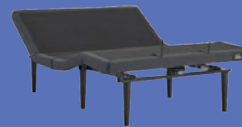
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