

STURBRIDGE VILLAGER

©2024, Issue #49

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Thursday-Friday, December 5-6, 2024

Charlton Dudley Rams cheer teams advance to nationals in Orlando!



CHARLTON — The Charlton Dudley Rams Cheer Teams are making waves across the cheer-leading world as three of their teams—the U10, U12, and U16 squads—have secured top-three placements in the New England Region at the 16th. This remarkable achievement propels nearly 70 hardworking cheerleaders to the pinnacle of youth cheerleading.

Turn To RAMS page 12

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 publication 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.



ARPA, chloramines come up at Council meeting

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHBRIDGE — Most of the Nov. 18 council meeting dealt with rearranging some of the town's remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for new uses as the deadline to commit funds comes at the end of this year.

Southbridge received more than \$3 million from ARPA several years ago, and has spent most of it. This time around, the board voted to buy a new table, chairs and smartboard for the George Parent Room (\$4,575), to lease a planner-size printer for the Building Department (\$5,652 for the first two years of five).

Turn To ARPA page 12

Opacum Land Trust launches year-end campaign, prepares to celebrate 25 years of conservation

STURBRIDGE — Opacum Land Trust, a leading conservation organization in South-central Massachusetts, is launching its year-end fundraising campaign with an ambitious goal of raising \$60,000 to protect critical land, wa-

ter, and wildlife habitat. This campaign comes as the organization approaches its 25th anniversary in 2025, marking a quarter-century of dedicated environmental stewardship.

The organization's recent suc-

cessful conservation of the 165-acre Robert F. and Jeanne R. Para Family Preserve in Southbridge exemplifies Opacum's strategic approach to land conservation. This newly protected area not

Turn To OPACUM page 14

Charlton maintains single tax rate

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — The Town of Charlton is staying with a single tax rate for another year following the Board of Selectmen's brief annual tax classification hearing on Nov. 12. The meeting is held every fall to determine how the town will split its tax burden for the next year with a single rate creating an equal tax burden while a split rate would have allowed the town to assess more of the burden on its businesses and commercial properties.

Like many communities of its size, Charlton has long stuck with a single tax rate to avoid imposing added stresses on its businesses. It was noted during the hearing that despite significant growth Charlton is still more than 70 percent residential property.

Town Assessor Kathleen Stanley discussed a breakdown of Charlton's tax categories during the hearing, noting "We're a little unique in that we have a pretty high CIP (commercial, industrial, and personal property) so it's 28.64 percent, a combination of commercial industrial and personal property. That's pretty high, but we don't have a lot of commercial. That's a really small piece of that pie. It really is our industrial and personal property base that's driving that."

Selectmen universally agreed that a single tax rate was the right path. Selectman Bill Borowski, a long-time proponent of the single tax rate, said Charlton

Turn To CHARLTON page 14



Courtesy

SOUTHBRIDGE GARDEN CLUB BRINGS HOLIDAY CHEER TO SENIOR CENTER

The Community Outreach Committee of the Southbridge Garden Club brought some holiday cheer to the Southbridge Senior Center on Nov. 18. The committee members provided an array of supplies and led a workshop to create holiday decorations. Senior center attendees worked with committee members to select either a pre-made wooden tree or a cone shape made of card stock as the base for a holiday tree. Using an assortment

of fabrics, decorative papers, glittering yarn, fancy ribbon, lace, jewels, and other unique items, they fashioned one-of-a-kind tabletop decorations. These holiday decorations were donated to Illyrian Gardens, an apartment complex on Salisbury Street in Worcester. The Southbridge Garden Club has been serving the greater Tri-Community area since 1953 and became a member of the Garden Club Federation in Massachusetts in 2003. The Club's mission is to "share an interest in horticulture and to expand our knowledge of gardening for our mutual benefit and that of our local communities." In addition to relevant programs and field trips, the Club features two annual fundraising events: a Plant Sale in May and a Holiday Greens Sale the first weekend in December.

SOUTHBRIDGE POLICE LOG

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Southbridge Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of Nov. 18-25.

A 33-year-old male from Southbridge was issued a summons in lieu of arrest on Nov. 18 for a Number Plate Violation to Conceal ID and operating an Uninsured and Unregistered Motor Vehicle.

Willie R. Briggs, Jr., age 50, of Southbridge was arrested on Nov. 18 for Possession of a Class B Drug (subsequent offense).

Reuel Z. Colon Cartagena, age 24, of Southbridge was arrested on Nov. 19 in connection with multiple warrants.

Maya Rosario, age 23, of Southbridge was arrested on Nov. 19 for Assault & Battery with a Dangerous Weapon (to wit, a blender).

A 62-year-old male from Worcester was issued a summons in lieu of arrest on Nov. 20 for operating an Unregistered and Uninsured Motor Vehicle and a Number Plate Violation to Conceal ID.

A 43-year-old male from Dudley was issued a summons in lieu of arrest on Nov. 22 for Violation of an Abuse Prevention Order.

A 37-year-old male from Webster was issued a summons in lieu of arrest on Nov. 23 for operating an Uninsured and Unregistered Motor Vehicle.

A 33-year-old female from Willington, Conn. was issued a summons in lieu of arrest on Nov. 23 for Unlicensed Operation of a Motor Vehicle.

A 52-year-old female from Worcester was issued a summons in lieu of arrest on Nov. 24 for Leaving the scene of Property Damage.

A 24-year-old male from Southbridge was issued a summons in lieu of arrest on Nov. 24 on multiple counts of Domestic Assault and Battery.

Celebrating community and tradition at annual football banquet

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Southbridge Lions Club Annual Football Banquet, which is held to honor the student athletes and coaches prior to the big Thanksgiving game with Bartlett, took place on Tuesday, Nov. 26. It proved to be another memorable evening with preparations beginning early in the afternoon, as the Lions' kitchen crew got to work crafting a meal to remember. This year's banquet was held at Maqui's Bar and Function Hall, which provided a spacious room well suited for the occasion attended by members of the football team, cheerleading squad and parents.

Focusing on character and support The program featured an impressive lineup of speakers, including members of the coaching staff and school administrators. Master of Ceremonies Mike Caplette guided the event, setting the stage for an evening centered on values. Both the school principal and the athletic director addressed the players, focusing on the importance of character and how it extends beyond the game.

The keynote speaker, Vinnie Marino, brought a deep connection to the event. A graduate of SHS's class of '87 and a former UCONN football player, Vinnie has spent 32 years coaching at all levels, from high school to professional football. In his address, Vinnie reminded the players of the significance of this week's game, emphasizing that it will create memories they'll carry for a lifetime. He spoke about the game's rich history and its unique place in the community, inspiring everyone with a simple yet powerful message: "The game is bigger than yourself."

The cheerleaders added their trademark enthusiasm to the evening, energizing the room with their lively performance. Later, the Lions cheer brought everyone together.

A memorable evening From the delicious meal and heartfelt speeches to the camaraderie and shared traditions, the Football Banquet was a true celebration of what makes our community special. The new venue added an extra layer of enjoyment, provid-

ing a setting that matched the spirit of the evening. Thank you to everyone who made the evening possible. Here's to another season filled with growth, teamwork, and unforgettable moments!

VILLAGER ALMANAC OPEN TO CLOSE

SOUTHBRIDGE TOWN HALL
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Thursday: 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
Friday: 8 a.m.-12 p.m.

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Monday: 9 a.m.-8 p.m.
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
Office Hours:
Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays
..... 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Tuesdays..... 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Friday..... Closed
visit www.townofcharlton.net or more information.

Individual offices may vary
PUBLIC LIBRARY (248-0452)
For library hours please check www.charltonlibrary.org

POLICE DEPARTMENT (248-2250)
Monday to Friday..... 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
For emergencies, dial 911

FIRE DEPARTMENT (248-2299)
Monday to Friday..... 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

POST OFFICES
Charlton Center Post Office... (800) 275-8777
Charlton City (01508) (800) 275-8777

SCHOOLS
Dudley-Charlton Regional School District
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Charlton Elementary School
..... (508) 248-7774 or (508) 248-7435
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

HOLLAND: 413-245-7108
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

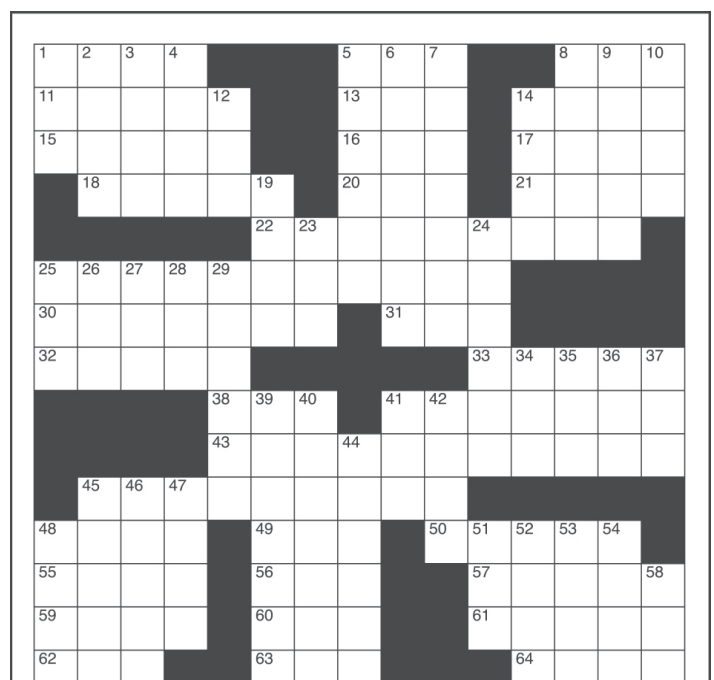
STURBRIDGE 508-347-6463
Weekdays 8:30 - 5:00 and Sat. 9:00-12:00

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
- **Charlton Baptist Church**, 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488, www.charltonbaptist.org, Sunday worship 10 a.m.
- **Charlton City United Methodist**, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org
Sunday worship and Children's church 10am
- **St. Anne St. Patrick Church**, 16 Church St., Fiskdale (508) 347-7338
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, 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, Office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Living Word Church of Charlton**, 10 Main Street - Grange building 1st Floor, Charlton, MA 01507, Pastor Craig Bellisario, (508) 233-8349
Sunday Service 10:00am.
www.livingwordcharlton.com
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
Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.
- **Bethlehem Lutheran Church** - 345 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566
Phone 508-347-7297
Web: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
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
Sunday Service 11:00 am
Pastor Dan Purtell

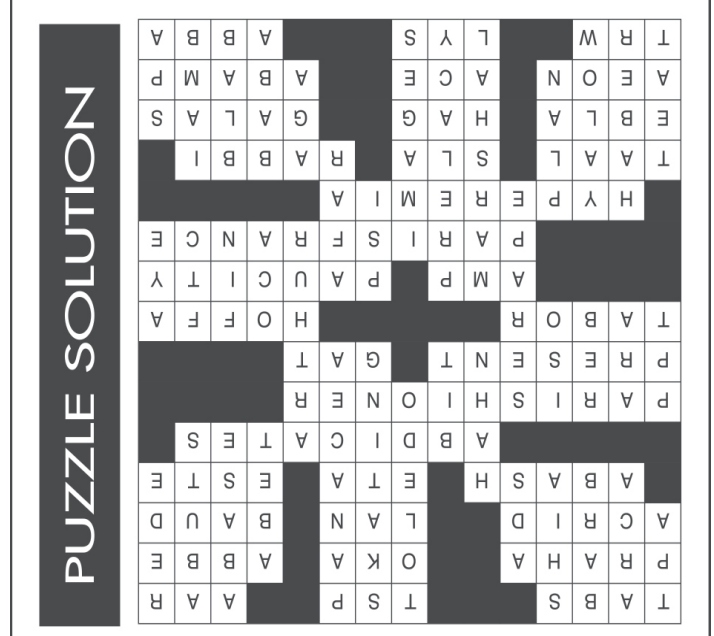


CLUES ACROSS

- 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. Spongelike cake leavened with yeast
- 53. Speak incessantly
- 54. Poetry term
- 58. Relaxing space



Fattman, Smola announce \$55,000 Cultural Council grant to Old Sturbridge Village

STURBRIDGE — State Sen. Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) and State Rep. Todd Smola (R-Warren) have announced that Mass Cultural Council has awarded a Cultural Investment Portfolio grant in the amount of \$55,000 to Old Sturbridge Village.

"Old Sturbridge Village encompasses what it means to preserve and promote culture, especially that of New England," said Fattman. "I'm glad to see OSV receive these funds and acknowledgement of the incredible and important work they do for my district, the Commonwealth, and beyond."

"Old Sturbridge Village is a cornerstone of our community's rich cultural heritage, and I am glad to see it receive \$55,000 through the FY25 operating support grants for cultural organizations. This funding will help sustain their incredible work in preserving and sharing our history with future generations," Smola continues. "Supporting institutions like Old Sturbridge Village is vital to maintaining the vibrant

cultural fabric of Massachusetts."

Jim Donohue, President and CEO of Old Sturbridge Village, expressed, "We are deeply grateful for the Massachusetts Cultural Council's unwavering support through the Cultural Investment Portfolio and Universal Participation Initiatives. Their funding has allowed Old Sturbridge Village to enhance accessibility, preserve our facilities, and provide meaningful programs for our community. Thanks to their partnership, we are better equipped to ensure that all visitors, regardless of ability, can experience the richness of history in an inclusive and welcoming environment."

Mass Cultural Council unrestricted organizational support grants help cultural organizations innovate, take on new challenges, and expand access to previously underserved audiences. They invest in ambition and imagination, with returns that improve our quality of life, create economic opportunity, and engage more people in cultural participation.



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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 the 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 com-

munities 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.

Local lake residents hold Thanksgiving Turkey Drive

REGION — For the 15th consecutive year, the Quaboag Quaquasit Lake Association (QQLA) has run a community wide Thanksgiving Turkey Drive to collect frozen turkeys and grocery store gift cards to help some of the residents who live in the communities surrounding the lakes that need some assistance to putting food on their Thanksgiving tables. With the high price of food this year the need was greater than ever.

Through the donations made by 29 friends and neighbors, the QQLA 2024 Thanksgiving Turkey Drive managed to collect and deliver a total of 27 turkeys and over \$1,835 in gift cards to local grocery stores including: Big Bunny, Big Y, Hannaford's, Shaw's, and Stop and Shop. All donations went to help the food pantries in Brookfield and East Brookfield, the Burgess Elementary School in Sturbridge, the East Brookfield Elementary School, the Sturbridge Senior Center and the West Brookfield Senior Center.



Courtesy

Pictured on the right is QQLA President Bill Seabourne making turkey and local grocery store gift card donations to East Brookfield Food Pantry, accepting is Allison Hansgate Administrator at the East Baptist Church on the left is Don Taft the QQLA Turkey Drive coordinator.

Tantasqua Show Choirs invite community to holiday show

FISKDALE — Happy holiday season! The Tantasqua Show Choirs would like to formally invite you to join us for a weekend of winter wonder, community, and music at our eighth annual holiday show!

This year, we are excited to present The Tantasqua Show Choir Winter Festival, a celebration hosted by performers grades 4-12 from the Tantasqua and Union 61 community. Our performances will take place on Friday, Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 7 at 2 & 7 p.m. in the Tantasqua High School Auditorium. On Saturday, our cast

members will also be hosting a Winter Wonderland experience for families to enjoy, which will consist of a variety of fun interactive activities for children. Our Winter Wonderland will open its doors on Saturday at 12:30 p.m.

Tickets are available at the door and will be available for purchase through the Tantasqua UniPay link: <https://unipaygold.unibank.com/Customer-Info.aspx>. You'll need to search Tantasqua RSD, click the "Performing Arts" dropdown, then click "Winter Festival."

Brimfield Scout troop hosting Festival of Wreaths

BRIMFIELD — Local residents are encouraged to support Scouting by participating in the "Festival of Wreaths."

Scouts BSA Troop 7 is hosting the first annual Festival of Wreaths. This event will be held on Sunday, Dec. 8, on the Brimfield Town Common.

The entry fee is a \$20 donation per wreath.

Please keep all decorations family-friendly.

If you have questions about the program, please reach out to Scoutmaster Tara Sheffield at tgilman10@comcast.net, or by phone at 413-478-3218.

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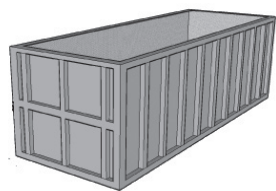


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The Town of Sturbridge, a vibrant community in South Central Mass., seeks to fill the position of **Permit Technician** in the busy, fast paced office of the Building Inspector. Reporting to the Building Inspector, this position supports the day to day activities of the Building Department, and serves as the first point of contact with the public.

The Permit Technician will coordinate the day to day activities of the Building Department. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to customer service, office administration, permit processing, correspondence and report preparation, bookkeeping and record keeping, inspection scheduling for all inspectors, and providing guidance to homeowners and applicants. The qualified candidate will be an organized and detail-oriented individual with the ability to interact well with the public and a variety of departments and to multi-task in an often fast paced busy department. An Associate's degree or two years of related experience and/or training; or equivalent combination of education and experience required. Experience with Microsoft Office Suite required. Willingness to learn various permit processing software and GIS mapping applications required. Prior Building Department or relevant municipal experience preferred but not required. The ability and willingness to become conversant with building and zoning requirements as needed to guide applicants through the permitting process is required.

Position range is \$22.62 to \$30.56 per hour DOQ. Complete job description and application are available online.

Apply online with cover letter and resume by email to mgarman@sturbridge.gov with subject line Permit Technician.

Applications will be accepted until position is filled. Applications received by December 2, 2024 will receive preference. EOE

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Santa comes to town



Gus Steeves

Even the Grinch let his heart grow two sizes to join the crowd. (Right) A couple friends in identical outfits hang out on the benches.



Gus Steeves

A couple kids try their hand at crafts.



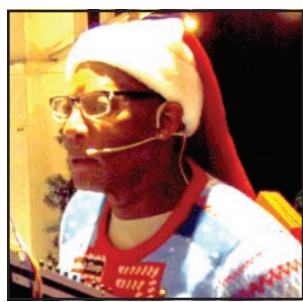
Gus Steeves

Mr. and Mrs. Claus with a couple of local kids.



Gus Steeves

Two of Santa's elves in full regalia.



Gus Steeves

Ellis the Elf handled DJ duties for the evening.



Gus Steeves

The Christmas llamas came all the way from the Andes (well, actually Orchid Patch Farm on Torrey Road).



Gus Steeves

The Christmas llamas came all the way from the Andes (well, actually Orchid Patch Farm on Torrey Road).

SOUTHBRIDGE — The community came together Saturday evening, as it usually does this time of year, to celebrate the arrival of the holiday season.

Entertained by hot cocoa and cookies, crafts and music, a parade presaging the arrival of Santa and his elves, and even the Christmas llamas, hundreds of people thronged the Common to mingle with old friends and make some new ones.



Gus Steeves

Some of the elves tasked with serving cocoa and cookies take a selfie while awaiting their arrival.



Gus Steeves

The official tree, left, outshines its less-festooned twin just after Santa's command to light it.

Friday's Child

Jalen and Jaren
Age 13 and 13
Registration
8657 and 8659

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.

Charlton City United Methodist Church hosting Season of Joy Fair this weekend

CHARLTON — The Methodist Church will host a "Season of Joy" Fair from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.



ton. and intimate fair will find crafts, jewelry, white election, bear den with teddy's met delights and much, Auction will include gift from essential oils to out-course, the fair would not Baked Goods Table and ner. There will be a few

Visitors to this warm items for everyone. Hand-phant table, a silent auc-from over the years, gour-much more! The Silent cards and items ranging door adventure. And of be complete without our by-the-pound Cookie Cor- outside vendors as well.

Coffee and donuts will be served from 9 – 11 a.m., followed by a lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Partial proceeds support heat fuel assistance for local seniors, the United Methodist disaster relief agency (UMCOR), and Abby's House in Worcester. The church has plenty of parking and is fully handicapped accessible.

Charlton library presents theatrical performance of "A Christmas Carol"

CHARLTON — Join us on Saturday, Dec. 14, from 1-2 p.m. as we welcome actors Stephen Collins and Poornima Kirby of New Muse Productions for a performance of "A Christmas Carol."

This one-hour adaptation shows Ebenezer Scrooge's transformation from a grumpy, selfish misanthrope to a generous, wise and kindly man, full of the spirit of Christmas. With Collins playing Scrooge and Poornima swiftly changing between the other characters, this fast-paced, playful adaptation keeps the beauty and humor of Dickens' original text, interspersed with melodious Christmas carols, and even a lively English folk dance. Come warm your heart and ring in the holiday season with this refreshing take on a familiar tale!

New Muse Productions is a two-person theatre troupe bringing artistic, accessible, joyful live performances to senior centers, libraries and schools across Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Connecticut. They adapt classic works of theatre and literature into high-quality, memorized productions complete with simple costumes and set-pieces. Their aim is to delight and engage our audiences through the power of literature and live performance!

Stephen Collins is an accomplished actor and literature professor, with more than 20 years experience performing solo theatre pieces and literature lectures across New England. Originally from Cambridge, Poornima Kirby is a classically trained actress, writer and director, based in Boston, specializing in classical and poetic texts, as well as co-created theater.

Registration is requested but not required. Visit our Web site/event calendar at www.charltonlibrary.org for more information and to register.

Charlton Public Library is located at 40 Main St.

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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.embrace-boston.org/>

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



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!”

Courtesy Joseph and Gretheline Bolandrina

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

“Duck Soup,” and we will start 2025 UnderGround Thursday with another Marx Brothers’ classic “The Cocoanuts” on Jan. 2, 7 p.m. And still free!

During the Florida land boom, the Marx Brothers run a hotel, auction off some land and thwart a jewel robbery. A thinly veiled plot surrounded by the absurd chaos created by The Marx Brothers.

“The Cocoanuts” is the second film featuring The Marx Brothers. The first being “Human Risk” (1921) which was screened once and never released.

When the Marx Brothers were shown the final cut of “The Cocoanuts” they were so horrified they tried to buy the negative back and prevent its release. Paramount wisely resisted — the movie turned out to be a big box office hit, with a \$1.8 million gross, making it one of the most successful early talking films.

The UnderGround Wednesday Free screenings is made possible by grants from the Southbridge Cultural Council and the Mass Cultural Council.

Shawna Foundation nods to the holidays with screening of “Scrooge”

SOUTHBRIDGE — Because of the Christmas Holiday, our next UnderGround Wednesday Screening will take place on Thursday, Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at starlite gallery, 39 Hamilton St. in Southbridge, with a free screening of “Scrooge” (1935), directed by Henry Edwards.

It is the first feature length film of Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol” with sound. Starring Sir Seymour Hicks as Ebenezer Scrooge, it is a faithful interpretation of the beloved classic. Hicks, who had played the same role repeatedly on stage and in an earlier silent film version, inhabits old Scrooge thoroughly and brilliantly. Donald Calthrop co-stars as the perfect Bob Cratchit.

Director Henry Edwards was honored for his wonderful work in this film with a prize at the 1935 Venice Film Festival. Though many versions of Dickens classic have been released in years since, this is one that shouldn’t be missed.

And then, in 2025, our program will be called UnderGround Thursday as we move to the first Thursday of every month. We began UnderGround Wednesday with The Marx Brothers’



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PRESIDENT/PUBLISHERBRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

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.

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

Churches, Christmas and community

Pretty much anyone who is a person of faith or grew up in a Christian religious tradition, associates the Christmas season with decorating the church – what some denominations refer to as “greening the sanctuary,” lighting the candles at the start of Advent Services, happy memories participating in, or watching children performing in Christmas Eve pageants, and attending with friends and family Christmas mass or worship.

But churches provide other opportunities to celebrate Christmas, and share in a sense of community beyond what occurs in the sanctuary.

Look around most towns from November to Christmas, from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, and you will find churches from a wide range of denominations hosting Christmas fairs, Christmas plays – some professionally produced, Christmas musicals, Christmas concerts – again often by amazing choral groups such as Assabet Valley Mastersingers, and special services, and more.

Some Christmas or Holiday fairs will greet you with the captivating aroma of freshly baking pies, or cookies, perhaps coffee and hot chocolate, too. And once you enter you are often greeted by a wide array of new items often still shrink wrapped, usually at great prices, or nearly new (what the Good Neighbor church – CCUMC – Thrift Shop refers to as “twice blessed”), and all proceeds to benefit the community – whether supporting church food bank, outreach meals, or other worthy activities.

Charlton City United Methodist Church (CCUMC) on Dec. 7 is hosting a Christmas Fair – including a silent auction. I know for a fact there are some pretty cool items on the list, some landscape architect designed decorations, and lots of fun things to look through, too! And here's an interesting twist on where the proceeds go. Not only do they support outreach ministries, but the church tithes 10 percent back to a community organization in Charlton. The fair is 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., located 74 Stafford St., Charlton.

Other churches in the area are hosting their own form of Christmas Fairs. A great way to support organizations focused on helping the least among us in our communities, and

BEYOND THE PEWS

DR. RB MCFEE

after all, isn't that what Christmas is all about?

Speaking of which – ever read “A Christmas Carol?” If ever a book helped change the sensibilities of a society and remind people what matters – goodness, charity, friendliness, gratitude, compassion, joy – all of which are the essence of Christmas, well Charles Dickens captured it through this beloved novel.

Here's again where church serves the community outside of Sabbath services. On Dec. 8, from 2 to 4 p.m., First Congregational Church in Holden (corner of 31 and Main Street) is hosting a one woman performance of “A Christmas Carol.” Sponsored by PEO Int'l – Massachusetts Chapter AA, with proceeds going to support scholarships. Free refreshments at a Victorian Tea during intermission will be provided. Tickets are available at the door - \$20 for adults, \$15 for ages eight to 12.

To be sure, year round many churches are a resource for the community – hosting free hot meals or food pantries, visiting shut ins, supporting other outreach programs, and providing manpower for projects as varied as helping clear up walking paths, volunteer at shelters, sponsor health related programs and so much more.

But at Christmas, as needs grow, houses of worship really dig deep and try to meet those needs. The added resources to ensure we can be there for those in need is through fairs and fundraisers. This allows us to also provide Blue Christmas services for those grieving at this time of year and other ways to provide a sense of fellowship, community, compassion and caring.

So this Christmas, take a look at what's going on at churches, you might just be surprised how many different ways the joy shared celebrations, the love of God, and the merriment of the Season can be found. Supporting the many events such as Dec. 7 or Dec. 8 mentioned above, besides being fun times to experience, are good ways to support worthwhile endeavors that benefit the community.

Safe travels and see you at CCUMC Christmas Fair in Charlton, Dec. 7 and Dec. 8, “A Christmas Carol” at FCC Holden, Mass. And wishing you a most blessed, happy and Merry Christmas Season.

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



TAKE
THE
HINT
KAREN
TRAINOR

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

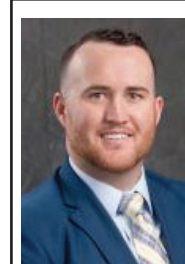
that stands the test of time: Place a sheet of tinfoil under the ironing board cover (above the foam but below the cloth) to boost the heat of the iron and get the job done more efficiently and quickly!

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

Consider tax-smart charitable gifts

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As we enter the annual season of giving, you might be thinking of charities you wish to support. But you also might be wondering how to gain some tax benefits from your gifts.

It used to be pretty straightforward: You wrote a check to a charity and then deducted the amount of the gift, within limits, from your taxes. But a few years ago, as part of tax law changes, the standard deduction was raised significantly, so fewer people were able to itemize deductions. Consequently, there was less financial incentive to make charitable gifts.

Of course, this didn't entirely stop people from making them. And it's still possible to gain some tax advantages, too.

Here are a few tax-smart charitable giving strategies:

Bunch your charitable gifts into one year. If you combine a few years' worth of charitable gifts in a single year, you could surpass the standard deduction amount and then itemize deductions for that year. In the years following, you could revert to taking the standard deduction.

Make qualified charitable distributions. Once you turn 73 (or 75 if you were born in 1960 or later), you must start taking withdrawals from your traditional or inherited IRA. These withdrawals – technically called required minimum distributions, or RMDs – are taxable at your personal income tax rate, so, if the amounts are large enough, they could push you into a higher tax bracket or cause you to pay larger Medicare premiums.

But if you donate these RMDs directly to a qualified charity, you can avoid the taxes. And because these donations, known as qualified charitable distributions (QCDs), will reduce the balance on your IRA, you may have lower RMDs in the future.

Of course, if you need some or all your RMDs to help sustain yourself in retirement, the use of QCDs may not be of interest to you. Keep in mind, though, that you can start making QCDs at 70 and a half, even before you must start taking RMDs. QCDs up to \$105,000 can be taken in 2024.

Consider a donor-advised fund. If you're interested in a long-term charitable giving arrangement, you might want to consider establishing a donor-advised fund. You can put many types of assets into this fund, and then direct it to make grants periodically to the charities you've chosen. You get an immediate tax deduction for your contribution, and, if you donate appreciated assets, such as stocks, you'll avoid the capital gains taxes you would have incurred if you simply sold the stocks and then gave the money to the charities. One note of caution, though – your contributions to a donor-advised fund are irrevocable, and once the assets are in the fund, you can't use them for anything except charitable giving.

These strategies – QCDs and donor-advised funds in particular – can be complex and involve several issues of which you should be aware. So, you should consult your tax advisor before taking action. But if any of these techniques are appropriate for your situation, give them some thought – because helping a charitable group and getting tax benefits for doing so is a “win” for everyone.

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 trevorn@edwardjones.com.

Selection and care of living holiday trees

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



GARDEN
MOMENTS
.....
MELINDA
MYERS

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 thor-

oughly 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 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 clip-pings 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



Melinda Myers

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

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 into the landscape or a container in hardiness zones two to six, consider growing a tabletop dwarf Alber-

ta spruce tree (*Picea glauca* 'Conica'). Grow it in a very cool bright location indoors. Water thoroughly as needed pouring off any excess water that collects in the saucer.

If the buds break and new growth appears, wait until the danger of frost has passed to move it outdoors. Just change out the seasonal decorations and enjoy it on Valentine's Day, Easter, and any spring holiday celebrations. Grow

it outside in a sunny location protected from winter wind and sun to prevent the needles from drying. Watch for spider mites which are a common pest on this landscape plant.

These plants also make great gifts for the holidays and for the host or hostess. You and your gift recipients will enjoy the beauty of these plants throughout the holidays and beyond.

Melinda Myers has written over 20 gardening books, including *Midwest Gardener's Handbook*, 2nd Edition and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses* "How to Grow Anything" instant video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine. Myers' Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Padre Pio

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 made 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 thor-

POSITIVELY SPEAKING TOBY MOORE

ough 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-tingling—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."

HINT

continued from page 6

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.

Here are some additional multi-purpose 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.

**

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.



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Shepherd Hill announces honor roll

DUDLEY — Shepherd Hill Regional High School has released its honor roll for the first term of the 2024-2025 school year.

Grade 12

First Honors: Ryan Choinski, Izabella Lorente, Lily Durda, Nolan McGonagle, Brendan Moran, Caroline Freeman, Anthony Avoglia, Rosalie Knowlton, Jonathan

Vitkus, Hannah Roberts, Jacob Reed, Trinity Gosselin, Timothy Krysinski, Hannah Pillion, Donovan Ennis, Kam Iwanski, Amber Quadarella, Sadie Mae Nobert, Alexis Warren, Ashley Dickhaut, Fiona Duke, Liam Burke, Sophia Sparhawk, Ava Pederson, Mara Weber, Dakota Dancause, Jackson Checkosky, Collin Moody, Aidan Hachey,

Robert Jadczyk, Jillian Terlizzi, Nicholas Ramsey, Michael Doktor, John Shields, Rachael Ciani, Maggie Montville, Thomas Hennessey, Isabella Kalmin, Colin Resener, Connor Fox, Alexis Leoni, Sarah Jalbert, Julianna Croteau, Jeffrey Popsui, Kaitlyn Maklary, Owen Reece, Brady Holden, Piotr Namera, Nathaniel Nocchi, Shawn

Sulkoski, Olivia Cronauer, Scott Lehmann, Nathan Karalus, Ryan Jaworski, Madison Rizzo, Jaiden Brooks, Jonathan Hutchinson, Sophina Zacek, Jacob Wojcicki, Marye Gaffney, Madison Bergeron, Lucas Soto, Isabel Poplawski, Evan Beaudette, Damian Burgos, Rose Bell, Sean Tyrrell, Isabella Piasta, Ella Doering, Maya Podskarbi, Sabrina Krementsov, Jacob Godoy, Ava Simon, Mekhi Blanc, Isaiah Giblin

Second Honors: Christopher Boyd, Grace Deslisle, Chase Bourasa, Alanna Kelly, Domadius Tawadrous, Jacob Shook, Anthony Desto, Lily Falke, Sarah Gelardi, Aiden Casamassa, Maximous Tawadrous, Harrison Jordanoglou, Delaney Rose, Emma Gasco, David Breault, Sawyer Ayotte, Prince Dorbor, Bishroy Ibrahim, Jaden Ingraham, Ashtyn Bennett, Harrison Balko, Dominik Duby, Elizabeth Mahler, Meghan Stevens

Recognition: Phyll Hardy, Alexa Erickson, Courtney Lolax, Brody Barsalou, Jessica Marsi, Brianna Hicks, Charli Easton, Nathan Nguyen, Colleen Thomas, Christian Paquin, Kasey Blanchette, Brooklyn Page, Nicholas Fry, Kellen Chumsantivut, Michael Wassef, Jeffrey Martel, Adam Houle, Hazel Rucci, Madison McNamara, Gianna Cariglia, Edward Ermlick, Aidan Dean, Brianna Duffy, McKenzie Duffy, Merolla Khalil, Adriana Guoda, Isabelle Walker-Baldwin, Christopher Harding, Tamiyah Christian, Julian Rivera, Dominik Gielarowicz, Jordan Rousey

Sarah Starzewski, Emily Staruk, Kaitlyn Sullivan, Madison Tessier, Meghan Traverso, Lucilla Tryba, Chase Vangel, Emily Walker, Adrienne Warner, Max Waron, Alexa Zannotti, Matthew Zdrok

Second Honors: Emma Garceau, Gabriel Beauregard, Ashley Heath, Aleksandra Kurosawa, Tyler Burdick, Kayla Fortin, Andrew Fasolo, Noah Ceppetelli, Charlotte White, Connor Sanchez Small, Jacoby Lorente, Erin Boggio, Kason LeBlanc, Marcelina Sikorski, Abishi JeanLouis, Andrew Henault, Jacob Lambert, Adam LaFortune, Matthew Edmiston, Thomas Dolan, Bryce Andre, Jarrod Borey, Lauren Hughes, Madison Blake, Mercedes Angell, Nathaniel Grant, Hunter McGrath, Elizabeth McCloud, Cali Burke, Liam McCarthy, Anthony Trovato, Arielle Cooper, Avery Montigny, Christian Joubert, Cameron Simpson, Gabriel Ferreira, Wyatt Zalneraitis, Evan Fitzgerald, Kimverlin Ortiz Quijada, Beyonce Bremang, Haylie Cleary, Stephanie Rosario Tirado, Bendu Yawson

Recognition: Daniel Sarkodee, Kelsey Breen, Riley Bowes, Olivia Audet, Matthew Crowley, Katie Hogan, Cameron Kelley, Travis Pytko, Alex MacDonald, Sonia Ganski, Robert Green, Jordan Taiste, Lex Garcia, Logan Sinclair, Michael Eisnor, Ashley Reilly, Michael Woodson, Megan Flynn, Gabrielle Fontaine, Jaimon Baillargeon, Fox Finlay, Macey Carlson, Archer McGrath, Paige Warner, Lyllian Brazeau, Molly Fitton, Lolita Barbare, Elijah Pollock, Meadow Amoroso, Anthony Villanueva, Olivia McGinty, Juliana Rudnicki, Benjamin Robert, Caelynn Harty, Julius Matias Santiago, Karyna Class

Ethan Steriti, Lillian Terry, Julia Williams, Olivia Williams, June Young

Second Honors: Preston Enberg, Jordan Warren, Alex Zurawski, Emma Kokocinski, Raine LaVoie, Dylan McCormack, Thomas Ide, Abigail LaFleche, Layla Macharia, Lyla Harrison, Marcelle Wall, Madelyn Carpenter, Cadence Duval, Nathan Dion, Travis Breault, Shayley Szela, Jayden Miglionico, Greibel Arboleda, Liliana Latino, Emma Comforti, George Khalif, Mia Ferris, Finn Santora, Aiden Muchiru

Recognition: Elijah Emond, Elijah Garcia, Avianna Gauvin, Emerson Bernard, Benjamin Vitkus, Celia Ares, Alianna Johnston, Olivier Pecyna, Olivia Fournier, Lilly Kavorkian, Skyler Poole, Matthew Gale, Burrell Sturtze, Tyler Bushman, Noah Stevens, Cameron Brockway, Ethan Straw, Kaylin Marsh, Christopher Snow, Evan Remillared, Liam O'Shea, Rangeley St. John, Jonathan Barrows, Bryce Hannagan, Kennedy Davis, Kyle Goodspeed, Jaelyn Mason, Andrew Khalil, Alexander Croteau, Isabella Falzone Juarez, Marissa Boutiette, Khloey Fongellaz, Madelynn Doucette, Chloe Tuttle, Jaylee Ortiz

Grade 9

First Honors: Madison Boggio, Zoey Boland, Britney Carvalho, Lily Faucher, Alyssa Grammer, Chopper Hills, Laura Ibrahim, Amal Joudi, Ariana Jurski, Olivia Kac, Stephanie Krysinski, Brayden Kulchy, Matthew Miller, Jariel Morales-Diaz, Mikhail Namera, Truiness Onyekwere, Maebh Pinto, Ava Rheau, Ella Robbins, Philopater Salib, Magdalena Wood

Second Honors: Christopher Crowley, Avery Walker, Ryan Westbury, Kyrrillos Ayoub, Sophia Lindberg, Jackson Duval, Graham Zimmer, Paige Walker, Ryan Mason, Brayden O'Neill, Dylan Rowden, Rydyr Finlay, Troy Gardner, Brayden Berube, Agia Guoda, Adiran Ramos-Gonzalez


Recognition: Eloise Thomas, Aiden Wilk, Madelyn Lotter, Mayah Pillion, Brayden Dancause, Shannon Kelly, Zynata Twumasi Ankrach, Lilliana Diaz, Khristian Plymouthe, Nolan Lajoie, Brody Rose, Jonathan Gauvin, Tyler Koszewski, Colt Moroz, Damian Torres, Felix Wierbik, Braedon Hirtz, Joshua Legier, Keagan Fricchione, Lily Arsenaault, John Arsenaault, Collin Brazeau, Aleksa Kruszewski, Aiden Young, Kyn Phommachanh, Alexys Rodriguez, Augusto Medola, Muriel Amponzah, Jeiralisse Almanzar, Lily Gastogiannis, Maria Clara Anjos Cabidelli

Grade 11

First Honors: Christina Arthanayake, Lucio Astrella, Florah Awinja Kombo, Kaleigh Bauks, Brendan Burns, Paige Cameron, Chloe Chickering, Nicole Christian, Lily Connole, Aiden Dzik, Hallie Dzivasen, Kendall Ey, Madison Fenner, Alyssa Forbes, Lucien Garry, Maya Girasuolo, Anthony Graves, Caden Green, Natallie Habib, Ava Hanson, Annie Hast, Tyler Heath, Gavin Hennessey, Andrew Heywood, Michael Hogan, Nicolina Holland, Emily Hultgren, Brianna Jankowski, Nina Julian, Liam Kay, William King, Brenna Kinnes, Joseph Kustigian, Andrew Lancette, Sadie Landrum, Paige Leone, Riley Lepage, Paul Manarikos, Danika Marcotte, Sierra McCloud, Natalie Megas, Isabella Mello, Sarah Miller, Xavier Mojica, Kate Moran, Sophia Nassar, Brianna Ndegwa, Jayden Njoroge, Samantha Norberg, Jack Orrell, Logan Pecore, Hayley Phommala, Ella Pinto, Jacob Ramsey, Valentine Reddick, Jake Rousseau, Devin Rowden, Adam Rydlak, Maxwell Sanchez,

Grade 10


First Honors: Joya Adib, Jean Sebastian Bardier, Colden Blackwell, Hannah Boudreau, Daniel Burgos, Jillian Clarke, Cailyn Daniel, Samara Doane, Addison Dono, Sinead Ennis, Addison Foster, Julia Gard, Carter Gendron, Erin Gormley, Sophia Grammer, Sara Hennigan, Lilian Heybeck, Aubrey Iozzo, Olivia Jankowski, Sebastian Janusz, Ashley Jerome, Brandon Jerome, Nazih Joudi, Isaac Kaminski, Thomas Kennan, Evan LePage, Trenten Lorenzen, Samantha Mahan, Garrett McLaughlin, Jillian Moran, Marcus Muchiru, Elaina Nelson, Owen Obara, Steadfastness Onyekwere, Korina Paliyannis, Kayla Paquette, Ruby Paradis, Jamison Paradise, Elyse Peculis, Gabriela Pianka, Elyse Resener, Violet Romanelli, Ike Rudnicki, Jean Paul Salem, Natalie Smith, Dylan Snow,




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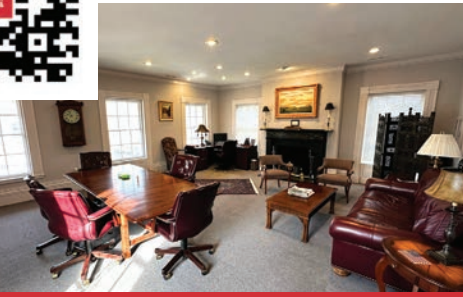
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Shepherd Hill hosts 32nd Festival of Crafts



Jason Bleau
(Left) Vendors at the Festival of Crafts each donated a good to be raffled off as part of the event.



(Right) The Worcester Children's Chorus set up a booth where visitors could spin a wheel for a chance at fun prizes.



(Below) The Shepherd Hill gym is always a huge draw for the event, filled with a good port



Potential buyers examine some cloths at one of the booths during the Festival of Crafts.

DUDLEY — More than 200 vendors participated in Shepherd Hill Regional High Schools annual holiday kickoff event on Nov. 23, the Festival of Crafts. For the 32nd year the event served to help start the holiday shopping season with crafters spread throughout the halls and gym of the high school continuing a tradition for many of supporting local businesses and raising money for a great cause. All the proceeds benefit the Shepherd Hill music program with parents, supporters, and students from the program staffing the event to serve food, sell raffle tickets, assist the vendors, and even provide some fun holiday music and spirit throughout the day. The 33rd edition of the event has already been scheduled for Nov. 22, 2025.

Turn To **FESTIVAL** page 12 for more photos



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Historical Society discusses hidden Holland potter's work

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

STURBRIDGE — Sometimes, history is made in plain sight. Sometimes, it's hidden deep in the woods.

The latter was the subject of most recent Sturbridge Historical Society presentation, where Doug Lyons and Mike Forand discussed their excavation of 18th century potter John Hines's kiln site found by chance in the forest off Stafford Road, Holland. The duo excavated the site for three seasons in the 1980s, sending most of their materials to Old Sturbridge Village.

Unlike many people of that era, Hines was actually listed in deeds and other documents as a potter. In most cases, they said, potters and other side jobs weren't mentioned that way; almost everyone was listed as "farmer."

Lyons said they'd researched Hines' background, finding that he was probably born in 1714 in Cambridge, but lived in South Woodstock before going to Holland. He served in the French and Indian War (1754-63), married and had a child, but there's no clear death record — either 1793 or "as late as 1815," probably because he was a pauper.

At some point, he might have learned the pottery trade from potters in Charlestown, which was "a large source of pottery" in those days. Citing Justin Thomas's book on Charlestown potters, Lyons noted reports of their "ceramics ending up in Maine and other places."

Lyons said they also found contemporary references to "an unknown potter in Yale Forest in Woodstock" that might have been Hines shortly before his arrival in Holland.

Lyons said they found the site "while looking for bottles in the woods,"

when they found shards of pottery while digging around a cellarhole. Forand added they collected at least three boxes of such shards, all of them now at OSV.

"I don't know pottery from biscuits," Lyons admitted.

So they collected flat, fired pieces that "were a mystery" to them. When they presented the pieces to a friend at OSV, he identified them as being "kiln furniture" — various fragments used in the clay-baking process and/or parts of the kiln itself.

Forand later noted most of the kiln's bricks are still out there, which is somewhat unusual, since bricks were typically reused. They revisited the site, now owned by Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary, shortly before their presentation and partly cleared it of 40 years of overgrowth.

The 1980s dig — two weeks a year for the three years — was led by OSV archaeologist John Worell. It actually found two foundations, a well, and a corncrib, plus a nearly-circular kiln (very similar to the design of the Yale Forest site) on one side of a wall that probably separated it from Hinds's living space. The project didn't explore the domestic side, and didn't find anything intact, collecting mostly from the kiln's waste pile.

In fact, Lyons later added, "The site has not been fully excavated There's a lot more there to be explored and a lot of questions to be answered," possibly by a university archaeology school project.

Most of the artifacts were kiln furniture, kitchen pottery and tableware, mostly of the "redware" style, but "it's interesting what we didn't find" — flowerpots, pipes, tiles or bedpans, which were also often redware in those days, they said. That pottery style was

cheap, easily broken, easily discarded and replaced, and Hines mostly made stuff with a "simple and modest" design.

"Redware pottery is more like Tupperware," Lyons said. "Who pays attention to Tupperware? ... If it got damaged, you go out and buy more. ... the stuff that was more colorful and designed, that's not John Hines."

However, they also found some evidence Hines worked on something else, too — a "thin, black incised ware" of about "teacup size" in which he carved curly designs. "It may be experimental. We only found a few pieces and haven't found it anywhere else other than John Hines," Forand said.

One audience member wondered where his clay came from.

Forand said they didn't know. "We never saw any clay deposits [in that area] and don't know of any reference to any." But there was a brick factory elsewhere in Holland, so Hines might have used the same clay deposit and hauled it home from there. It's also possible he found some in nearby lowlying wetland sites, but there's no record of such things.

When Lyons listed several books and online resources (including a Facebook page for the site itself), another audience member noted there are often transcription errors online. "The old style script gets really messed up when you're asking a computer to transcribe it," she said. But you can often compare the original image with the transcription to see them.

"If John Hines were here, he'd wonder what the big deal is" of a roomful of people talking about his work, Lyons added.

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

OBITUARIES

William J. 'Bill' Julian, 78



Sturbridge: William J. 'Bill' Julian, 78, of Park Circle, formerly of Southbridge, passed away on Friday, Nov. 29th, in the St. Francis Rehab and Nursing Center, Worcester, after a long illness.

He leaves his beloved wife of 54 years, Deborah A. (Sullivan) Julian; his son, Neil J. Julian and his wife Kelly of Barre, VT; his three brothers, Robert Julian and his husband Rui Gomes of Portugal, Michael Julian and his wife Trish of North Carolina and Kenneth Julian and his wife Tammy of North Carolina; his sister, Susan Julian and her wife Ellen Allen of Pinch, WV; his two grandchildren, Trent Julian of Barre, VT and Taylor Cordeiro and her husband Michael of Manchester, NH; and nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his sister, Gail Splaine Belanger. Bill was born in Southbridge the son of the late Clarence 'Curley' and Gabrielle (Plouffe) Julian. He was a 1964 graduate of the former Cole Trade High School in Southbridge. He was a proud Vietnam War Veteran, serving in the US Army as member of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Bill was a metal fabricator and welder at Southbridge Sheet Metal for over 30 years, retiring many years ago. He was also a dedicated volunteer firefighter with the Southbridge Fire Department, retiring as Lieutenant.

Bill enjoyed playing softball and bowling and was a member of local teams and leagues. He served on committees for the Boy Scout Troop 160 in Southbridge. Bill was an avid snow skier and enjoyed years of Skiing in New England and in Utah with his son. He was also an avid hiker and cyclist. He also enjoyed going to the shooting range.

The family would like to thank the staff at the VA Hospital in West Roxbury, the Overlook in Charlton and St. Francis Rehab in Worcester for the care and compassion that was given to Bill.

Calling hours for Bill will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 10th, from 4:00 to 6:00pm in the Daniel T. Morrill Funeral Home, 130 Hamilton St., Southbridge, with a funeral service to follow at 6:00pm. Burial will be at a later date.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Wounded Warrior Project at www.woundedwarriorproject.org or to the Disabled American Veterans at www.dav.org.

www.morrillfuneralhome.com

Mary Lou Lepko, 76

CHARLTON — Mary Lou (Rossi) Lepko, 76, died Tuesday, November 26, 2024, at St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester. She is survived by her husband of 49 years, Rich Lepko of Charlton; three children, Philip Geiger and his wife Sheena of Davidson, NC, Robert Geiger of Plattsburgh, NY, and Alyson Romanelli and her husband Michael of Charlton; her sister, Vicki Molnar of Charlton; eight grandchildren, Kylee, Brea, Andrew, Annemarie, Emilee, Violet, Adeline, and Julianne; and one nephew, Joseph.

She was born in New Brunswick, NJ, daughter of the late Michael and Violet Rossi, and lived most of her life in New Jersey before moving to Charlton in 2017.

Mary Lou was an executive administrative assistant at Johnson & Johnson in New Brunswick, NJ, prior to retirement. She was a very active member of the community, especially



at the church and senior center. She was president of the Mary Martha Guild and played in the bell choir at St. Joseph's Church. She was very active with the Senior Center in Charlton, where she was a member of the Golden Age Group and organized travel for the members. Mary Lou will be remembered as a generous woman who contributed to many organizations. Most important in her life were her children and grandchil-

dren. A funeral Mass will be held at 12 noon on Thursday, December 5, 2024, at St. Joseph's Church, 10 H. Putnam Rd. Ext., Charlton. Burial will follow at West Ridge Cemetery in Charlton. A calling hour will be held on Thursday from 11:00 a.m. — 12:00 noon at the church prior to the Mass.

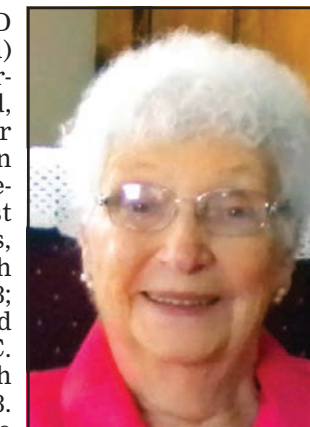
In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Joseph's Church, P.O. Box 338, Charlton City, MA 01508.

Paradis-Givner Funeral Home in Oxford is directing the arrangements.

Anna M. Starkus-Peltier, 101

NORTH OXFORD — Anna M. (Laugaud) Starkus-Peltier, 101, formerly of McIntyre Road, died Tuesday, November 26, 2024, at CareOne in Millbury. She was predeceased by her first husband of 25 years, Daniel Starkus of North Oxford who died in 1968; and her second husband of 25 years, Frieland C. "Hank" Peltier of North Oxford who died in 1998. She is survived by two children, George J. Starkus and his wife Dorothy of North Oxford, and Pauline A. Starkus of Auburn; two stepchildren, Edward J. Peltier and his wife Carol of West Hartford, CT, and Catherine M. Engle and her husband Gordon of Dudley; two grandchildren, Michelle Bernier and her husband Christopher of Auburn, and Timothy Belliveau and his wife Lindsey Gardell of Auburn; two great-grandchildren, Christopher Bernier of Tewksbury, and Tara Moir of Auburn; many step-grandchildren; and her dear friend, Patricia Donnelly of North Oxford. She was predeceased by a stepdaughter, Frances Roy; and a brother, Joseph Laugaud.

She was born in Bloomfield, CT, daughter of the late Justin and Kazimara (Zetratis) Laugaud, and lived in Worcester and Auburn before



moving to North Oxford in 1943. She graduated from Auburn High School in 1941.

Mrs. Starkus-Peltier was a secretary at Memorial Hospital in Worcester for 10 years, retiring in 1976. She was a member of St. Ann's Church in North Oxford. She was a member and past president of the Friends of the Oxford Senior Center, and a member of the Friends of the Oxford Public Library.

She was also a volunteer at the Oxford Senior Center. She was an avid bowler and bowled regularly at the Mohegan Bowling Alley in Webster. Most of all, she enjoyed spending time with her family.

A funeral will be held on Friday, December 6, 2024, from Paradis-Givner Funeral Home, 357 Main St., Oxford, followed by a Mass at 11 a.m. at St. Roch's Church, 332 Main St., Oxford. Burial will follow at St. Roch's Cemetery in Oxford. Calling hours are Thursday, December 5, 2024, from 5-7 p.m. at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to CareOne at Millbury, c/o Activities Dept., 312 Millbury Ave., Millbury, MA 01527, or to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105-1942.

Sage to retire as library trustee

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — It's not uncommon for public servants to give many years to their community. Many spend over a decade on elected boards and commissions to be a bigger part of the public process for the betterment of their town. In Charlton, one of the community's most vocal members has spent over 20 years helping its library flourish and grow and is now preparing to retire once his current term is over.

Stefan Sage is a well-known name in Charlton especially if anyone has attended town meetings where he often serves as a non-antagonistic voice to spark discussion on many town issues. However, many may also know him as a longtime member of the Library Board of Trustees serving over two decades on the elected body. Sage made the official announcement on Nov. 19 in a joint meeting of all the town's elected boards and commissions that his current three-year term will be his last putting him as 25 years of service once his tenure is complete.

"I think it's just time for other people in the community to join in on that process," Sage said in his announcement. "I've been very pleased and proud of what we've accomplished from an 18th century library to a 21st century library, and hopefully into the 22nd century as well. I've been proud to serve in this ca-

capacity."

The Board of Trustees serves as the local government authority of the town's library overseeing decisions that impact library operations. Sage currently serves as the Board's chair. Sage's love of libraries was sparked at an early age when he became an assistant at his school library in sixth grade. That early exposure helped cultivate his love of everything the library represents as a source of information and literacy and an important place for the community to bond. While town officials expressed their sadness as Sage's pending retirement, he said he is at peace with the decision and hopes to encourage younger members of the community to serve on the board.

"I feel that it's time for new blood to come in and be as passionate. I'd love to somebody in their 20's come on to the (board). Thirties is good too, 40's are good," said Sage. "I have chosen that this is my time."

Those wishing to learn more about the Trustees or get involved can call the Charlton Public Library at 508-248-0452 and leave a message with a staff member for a Board member to call back. The Trustees can also be reached by mail through the address Charlton Public Library Board of Trustees, c/o Charlton Public Library, 40 Main St., Charlton, MA 01507.



Master Masons don't disappoint community!

BY BRO. JIMMY FALZONE
QUINEBAUG MASONIC LODGE

SOUTHBRIDGE — On Saturday, Nov. 30, it was a cold blistering night at the Christmas Tree Lighting festivities on Southbridge common. This annual event that Quinebaug Masonic Lodge participates in is part of their Community Outreach Program.

Volunteers from Webster Masonic Lodge

wanted in on the action and fun and participated at this annual tradition event. Both Lodges put smiles on many, many people and children's faces with the selling of kettle corn, hot dogs, fried Oreo cookies and fried dough. There were vendors selling Christmas ornaments that light up that you could wear around your neck or on your hats. A DJ played



Courtesy People waiting in long lines to get those tasty treats the Master Masons were selling.

Christmas music in the gazebo and a vendor selling hot coffee and coco and much, much more. There were very long lines at the Quinebaug Lodge's booth to get those tasty treats the lodge was selling. When the parade started and Santa came by, the lines were still long while many adults and children watched the parade go by.

The common was

lit up with Christmas lights and decorations of all kinds. No one at this event seemed to mind the wind and cold because there was so much to see and do. If you are interested about Freemasonry and what we do in your local community, for more information and to find a lodge nearest you, visit our website at www.massfreemasonry.org

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ARPA

continued from page 1

and to install interactive “smart technology” (\$7,500).

Regarding the smart-board, Town Manager Jack Jovan noted it can allow meetings in that room to be recorded; unlike most meeting spaces, it doesn't have cameras in part because it's often used for executive sessions.

Regarding the printer, he said it'd enable the town to allow contractors to buy copies the town now has to go out of Town Hall to get. The department will have to build the payment into its budget after the first two years.

Regarding the “smart” tech, he said the town's getting it at half price because he's taking advantage of a deal offered for attending a recent conference. Mike Marketti noted the paperwork says it uses Windows 10, which is no longer supported, urging upgrade to Windows 11. Jovan agreed, saying “that conversation was part of our presentation when they came.”

Part of the cost for those items came from reallocating small remaining amounts from

older projects. (One was just eight cents.)

At the night's other extreme, the council also approved a \$3.15 million contract to Amorello Paving to do the long-awaited River/Crane Street project. As mentioned in prior meetings, that work is being largely done with grant money, and its design was completed back in July. For a while, the plan called only for doing the stretch east of the bridge, but it has since been expanded all the way to Pleasant Street.

As usual, most items were approved unanimously, except two.

Marketti was the sole no vote on buying ammonium nitrate as part of the town's water treatment system because it's used to make chloramines. He argued “there's a lot of controversy about putting chloramines in the water. It can cause health issues. It's documented; I'm not making this up.”

Indeed, ScienceDaily.com recently reported on US/Swiss research identifying “a previously unknown compound in chlorinated drinking water” called chloronitramide anion. The report observed, “While its toxicity is not presently

known, its prevalence and similarity to other toxic compounds is concerning and warrants further study to assess its public health risk.”

One of that paper's researchers, Julian Fairey of the University of Arkansas, is quoted as saying that water disinfection creates “chronic toxicity, really. A certain number of people may get cancer from drinking water over several decades. But we haven't identified what chemicals are driving that toxicity.”

The story is at <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2024/11/241121141048.htm>, and several chloramine-related stories are on the same website. Southbridge has been using chloramines to decontaminate water for years, in part because of concerns about how long water sits in the pipes between the reservoirs and the most distant users, some of them in Charlton. (Marketti cited that, arguing he didn't mind if Charlton wanted to chlorinate, but didn't want it in Southbridge.)

The other split vote – also with a single no (Joe Daou)– was over a revised contract with Uni- first for DPW uniforms.

A couple weeks ago, the council approved it as a 5 percent increase, but Jovan said that was an error and it should have been 10 percent “right off the bat.”

Such a hike riled Daou, who noted, “I own three companies. They charge me 3 percent, not five. Why are we going to give them 10?” He and Marketti asked if the town priced such service elsewhere.

Jovan noted this is a renewal with an existing provider, and DPW Director Rich Benoit said he'd be willing to price check elsewhere. Benoit said this is “a very limited contract” providing full uniforms (11 pants, 11 shirts and two jackets) for the three mechanics plus pants for about half of the staff, who get t-shirts and other items from the town itself. Normally, such contracts

cover the entire DPW staff, he said.

The council also approved \$36,000 for water department gatehouse roof repairs and an agreement to allow Central Mass Lightning softball league to use Morris Street Field alongside other users.

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

Rams

continued from page 1

ing: the AYC Nationals in Orlando, Fla., where they will compete next week against the best teams in the country.

The road to Nationals has been no small feat for these talented athletes. At each level of competition—Central Massachusetts, State, and Regional—the teams had only two minutes and 30 seconds to pull off a flawless routine, combining advanced stunts, tumbling, and synchronized choreography, all while facing some of the toughest teams in the region. Their ability to excel under such pressure showcases the skill, precision, and commitment of these young athletes.

“Our cheerleaders have poured their hearts into this journey,” said Melissa Lotter, Cheer Director for the Charlton Dudley Rams. “From hours of practice to their unforgettable performances, these athletes have demonstrated incredible resilience, teamwork, and determination. We are so proud of what they've accomplished and can't wait to see them shine on the national stage.”

In addition to their rigorous preparations for Nationals, the Rams Cheer Teams are rallying the community to help make their dream trip a reality. The cheerleaders have launched several fundraising efforts, including community events and giveaways, and have set up a GoFundMe campaign to offset the costs of travel, accommodations, and competition fees.

“We're so grateful for the support we've received from the community thus far,” continued Melissa Lotter. “It's this kind of encouragement that fuels our teams to achieve greatness both on and off the mat. We're asking for everyone to rally behind these amazing kids and help them bring home a win!”

The Charlton Dudley Rams invite the community to join their efforts to support these young athletes. Donations can be made via their GoFundMe page Fundraiser by Melissa Lotter : Help Charlton Dudley Cheerleaders Shine in Florida!, and updates on their journey can be found on their social media channels.

LEGALS

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Under G.L. c.255 Sec.39A Notice is hereby given by Cruise Control Transportation Inc. Pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, Section 39A, that on or after Dec 14,2024 at Cruise Control Transportation Inc. the following motor vehicle/s will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicle:

Vehicle Description: 2008 Mercedes-Benz E-Class
VIN: WDBUF87X98B244911
Last Registered owner: Mariacalis Ramos Muniz
PO BOX 4332, WORCESTER, MA 01605

Vehicle Description: 2008 Toyota Sienna (Gold)
VIN: 5TDZK23C18S207704
Last Registered owner: Noorul Baqi Naseemi
500 TOMPKINS AVE, AKRON, OH 44305

Vehicle Description: 2005 Mitsubishi Galant
VIN: 4A3AB46F25E014104
Last Registered owner: Alex Conley
173 BULLARD HOLLOW RD HARRIMAN TN 37748

Claire Brown
173 BULLARD HOLLOW RD HARRIMAN TN 37748

Vehicle Description: 2012 Nissan Altima
VIN: 1N4AL2AP5CN436696
Last Registered Owner: William Darrell Ingram,
2574 WOOD PARK BLVD, CONROE, TX 77304

Vehicle Description: 2014 Chevrolet Equinox
VIN: 2GNALBEK6E6384101
Last Registered owner: Yontan Del Rosario Medrano
75 RIVER CHASE BLVD BEAUFORD SC 29906

Vehicle Description 2010 Ford Focus (White)
VIN: 1FAHP3EN2AW285079
Last Registered owner: Nahromi Jade Alcantara
1566 MAIN ST EAST HARTFORD CT 06108

Vehicle Description: 2010 Nissan Altima (White)
VIN: 1N4BL2AP5AN524830
Last Registered Owner: Carlos Geraldo Dos Reis
39 CATHERINE ST APT1

WORCESTER MA 01605

Vehicle Description 2004 Toyota RAV4
VIN: JTEGD20V540024290
Last Registered Owner: Moran Jesus Adonay Ventura,
69 EMPIRE ST, APT 2, ALLSTON MA 02134

Vehicle Description 2005 Mazda MPV (Silver)
VIN: JM3LW28J950550946
Last Registered Owner: Luis A Verges
55 GODDARD ST APT 3 SOUTHBRIDGE MA 01550
November 29,2024
December 6,2024
December 13,2024

Southbridge MA - SLC IO Upgrade LEGAL NOTICE

Town of Southbridge, MA (Owner) invites sealed Bids for SLC IO Upgrade for replacement of PLC and associated I/O modules inside the existing plant's main control panel and relocation of network switches from the main control panel to the communications panel; and all materials and equipment, construction, and services inherent to the Work. Substantial Completion: within 180 days. Final Completion: within 210 days. Bidding is per MGL Chapter 30 s39M. Prevailing wage rates per MGL c149 s26 to 27D inclusive issued by Dept. of Labor Standards. Request electronic Bidding Documents (no cost): 12:00 p.m. October 30, 2024 by email to MunicipalBids@woodardcurran.com with complete contact information & subject line Southbridge MA - SLC IO Upgrade. Official Bidding Documents will be available once registered. Documents from third parties are not considered official Bidding Documents. A non-mandatory pre-Bid conference: 10:00 a.m. on December 5, 2024 at the Water Treatment Plant, 511 Breakneck Road, Southbridge MA. Receipt of Bids: 12:00 p.m. on December 19, 2024. Submit to: Town Hall, 41 Elm St., Southbridge, MA 01550, Attn: John D. Jovan, Jr, Town Manager with Bid security at 5% of total Bid. Also published on www.commbuys.com & on the MNPA website at <http://masspublicnotices.org>. December 5, 2024

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Marc A. Rivera, John J. Schnorf, Amanda Schnorf Rivera to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Paramount Residential Mortgage Group, Inc., dated March 2, 2023 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds

in Book 68881, Page 298, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, by assignment from: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Paramount Residential Mortgage Group, Inc., its successors and assigns to Planet Home Lending, LLC, recorded on October 18, 2023, in Book No. 69770, at Page 378 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 January 3, 2025, on the mortgaged premises located at 50 Clarke Street a/k/a 50 Clark Street, Southbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, TO WIT:

The land situated in Southbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts, with the buildings thereon and all privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging, situated on Clark Street, being Lots numbered 20 and 21 as shown on plan of lots known as “Clark Heights” made by John A. Whittaker, C.E., for Hormidas Bedard, May 30, 1900, bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at the northwesterly corner of land to be conveyed at the southwesterly corner of Lot 19 on the easterly side of Clark Street; THENCE southerly along Clark Street, 105 feet to the northwesterly corner of Lot 22; THENCE easterly along Lot 22, 106 feet to land now or formerly of Hormidas L. Bedard; THENCE along said Bedard land, 97.6 feet to the southeasterly corner of Lot 19; THENCE westerly along Lot 19, 100 feet to Clark Street to the point of beginning.

For mortgagor's(s') title see deed recorded with Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 68881, Page 295.

These premises will be sold and conveyed subject to and with the benefit of all rights, rights of way, restrictions, easements, covenants, liens or claims in the nature of liens, improvements, public assessments, any and all unpaid taxes, tax titles, tax liens, water and sewer liens and any other municipal assessments or liens or existing encumbrances of record which are in force and are applicable, having priority over said mortgage, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the deed. TERMS OF SALE:

A deposit of Ten Thousand (\$10,000.00) Dollars by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The balance is to be paid by certified or bank check at Harmon Law Offices, P.C., 150 California St., Newton, Massachusetts 02458, or by mail to P.O. Box 610389, Newton Highlands, Massachusetts 02461-0389, within

thirty (30) days from the date of sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. The description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of an error in this publication.

Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale. PLANET HOME LENDING, LLC Present holder of said mortgage By its Attorneys, HARMON LAW OFFICES, P.C. 150 California St. Newton, MA 02458 (617)558-0500 25377 December 5, 2024 December 12, 2024 December 19, 2024

Town of Sturbridge Zoning Board of Appeals Public Hearing Notice Special Permit

Cynthia Fugere

In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 40A, §11, the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, December 18, 2024 at 6:35 PM** at the **Center Office Building located at 301 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566 and/or by virtual means** if circumstances warrant, in accordance with applicable law; on the application of Cynthia Fugere. The applicant is requesting a Special Permit pursuant to Article XVIII §300-15.2 of the Zoning Bylaw to allow the construction of a 13'x19' detached garage to replace an existing non-conforming shed, to be set 5' off of the property line on the property owned by Cynthia Fugere located at **10 Birch Street**, in accordance with the plans and application submitted.

The proposed request can be viewed at <https://www.sturbridge.gov/zoning-board-appeals/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.

Any person interested or wishing to be heard on this proposal should appear at the time and place designated. Members of the public may watch the meeting online via the Town's on demand video broadcast or via cable television on Channel 191. It is the intent to have this Public Hearing in person. However, if circumstances warrant, the Board may choose to hold this Hearing via virtual or hybrid (in person and virtual) means. In the event of a virtual or hybrid meeting, notice and a link shall be posted on the ZBA website. Please note that the meeting/hearing will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law. Diane Trapasso, Chair Sturbridge Zoning Board of Appeals November 28, 2024 December 5, 2024

LEGALS

**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. WO23P2456EA
CITATION ON PETITION FOR
FORMAL ADJUDICATION**
Estate Of:
Esther Abby Folman
Also Known As:
Esther A. Folman
Date of Death: 05/04/2014

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **S/A Formal Appointment of Successor** has been filed by **Rita Z. Folman of Leominster MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that:
Rita Z. Folman of Leominster MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 12/17/2024**. 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.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.

Date: November 15, 2024

Stephanie K. Fattman,

Register of Probate

December 5, 2024

MORTGAGEE'S NOTICE OF SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain Mortgage given by Ben Wright and Heather Wright to Champion Mortgage, a Division of Keybank National Association, dated November 25, 2005 and recorded with the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds at Book 37952, Page 128, subsequently assigned to Household Finance Corp II by Champion Mortgage, a division of Keybank, NA, A National Bank by assignment recorded in said Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds at Book 40970, Page 240, subsequently assigned to DLJ Mortgage Capital, Inc. by Household Finance Corporation II by assignment recorded in said Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds at Book 55824, Page 293, subsequently assigned to U.S. Bank National Association, as indenture trustee, for the CIM Trust 2016-1, Mortgage-Backed Notes, Series 2016-1 by DLJ Mortgage Capital, Inc. by assignment recorded in said Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds at Book 60063, Page 29, subsequently assigned to U.S. Bank National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely in its capacity as indenture trustee of CIM Trust 2021-NR1 by U.S. Bank National Association, as indenture trustee, for the CIM Trust 2016-1, Mortgage-Backed Notes, Series 2016-1 by assignment recorded in said Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds at Book 66663, Page 144, subsequently assigned to U.S. Bank Trust Company, National Association, as Trustee, as successor-in-interest to U.S. Bank National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely in its capacity as Indenture Trustee of CIM Trust 2021-NR1 by U.S. Bank National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely in its capacity as Indenture Trustee of CIM Trust 2021-NR1 by assignment recorded in said Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds at Book 70920, Page 1 for breach of the conditions of said Mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing same will be sold at Public Auction at 11:00 AM on December 26, 2024 at 8 Simpson Street, Sturbridge, MA, all and singular the premises described in said Mortgage, to wit:

ALL THAT PARCEL OF LAND IN TOWNSHIP OF STURBRIDGE, WORCESTER COUNTY,

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, AS MORE FULLY DESCRIBED IN DEED BOOK 34734, PAGE 297, ID# 588-35E43-008, BEING KNOWN AND DESIGNATED AS LOTS NUMBERED 175, 176, 177, 178 AND 179 AS NUMBERED AND SHOWN UPON A PLAN OF LOTS OF BELLEVUE PLAT MADE FOR EAGLE REALTY COMPANY BY MITCHELL AND GENEREUX, ENGINEERS, DATED MAY 1919 AND RECORDED WITH THE WORCESTER DISTRICT REGISTRY OF DEEDS PLAN BOOK 33, PAGE 15. LOTS NO. 175, 176, 177, 178 AND 179.

BY FEE SIMPLE DEED FROM JOHN W. GILES AS SET FORTH IN BOOK 34734 PACE 297 DATED 09/09/2004 AND RECORDED 09/30/2004, WORCESTER COUNTY RECORDS, COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

The premises are to be sold subject to and with the benefit of all easements, restrictions, encroachments, building and zoning laws, liens, unpaid taxes, tax titles, water bills, municipal liens and assessments, rights of tenants and parties in possession, and attorney's fees and costs.

TERMS OF SALE:

A deposit of FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS AND 00 CENTS (\$5,000.00) in the form of a certified check, bank treasurer's check or money order will be required to be delivered at or before the time the bid is offered. The successful bidder will be required to execute a Foreclosure Sale Agreement immediately after the close of the bidding. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid within thirty (30) days from the sale date in the form of a certified check, bank treasurer's check or other check satisfactory to Mortgagee's attorney. The Mortgagee reserves the right to bid at the sale, to reject any and all bids, to continue the sale and to amend the terms of the sale by written or oral announcement made before or during the foreclosure sale. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled only to a return of the deposit paid. The purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney. The description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of an error in this publication. TIME WILL BE OF THE ESSENCE.

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

U.S. Bank Trust Company, National Association, as Trustee, as successor-in-interest to U.S. Bank National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely in its capacity as Indenture Trustee of CIM Trust 2021-NR1 Present Holder of said Mortgage, By Its Attorneys, ORLANS PC PO Box 540540 Waltham, MA 02454 Phone: (781) 790-7800 20-006878 December 5, 2024 December 12, 2024 December 19, 2024

Town of Charlton Charlton Fire Sub Station ADVERTISEMENT

THIS PROJECT IS BEING ELECTRONICALLY BID AND HARD COPY BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. All bids shall be submitted online at bid-docs.com. Hard copy bids will not be accepted the Awarding Authority. Tutorials and Instructions are available online at www.biddocs.com. For assistance, contact BidDocs at 978-888-3350 or admin@biddocsonline.com, Project code BDO D24-KGV7, Project Name: Charlton Fire Sub Station

The TOWN OF CHARLTON, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed bids from Prequalified General Contractors and Filed Sub Bid Contractors for the Charlton Fire Sub Station at 4 Oxford Road, Charlton, MA 01507 in Charlton, Massachusetts, in accordance with the documents prepared by CONTEXT ARCHITECTURE. The project includes construction of a new 2 story fire substation approximately 13,000 SF, located at 4 Oxford Road, Chalton, MA. The new substation contains four (4) bays, administration offices and living quarters. The structure will consist of steel and wood framing structure with wood trusses for roof support **This bid is open to Prequalified General Contractors and Filed Sub-Bid Contractors only, except Elevators Filed Sub Bid Category which is open to all the Bidders.** Please see the list of Prequalified General Contractors and Filed Sub-Bid Contractors attached as part of the Project Manual.

The work is estimated to cost **\$15,000,000** with five alternates. Bids are subject to M.G.L. c.149 §44A-J & to minimum wage rates as required by M.G.L. c.149 §26 to 27H inclusive. General bidders must be certified by the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) in the following category of work -- Gen-

eral Building Construction and must submit a current DCAMM Certificate of Eligibility and signed DCAMM Prime Update Statement (Form CQ 3). General Bids will be received until **January 17th, 2025, at 04:00 PM** and publicly opened, forthwith online. Questions from General Contractors are due by **January 8th, 2025, at 04:00 PM**. Filed Sub-bids for the trades listed below will be received until **December 20th, 2024, at 04:00 PM** and publicly opened, forthwith online. Questions from the Sub-bidders are due **December 12th, 2024, at 04:00 PM**.

Filed sub-bidders must be DCAMM certified for the trades listed below and bidders must include a current DCAMM Sub-Bidder Certificate of Eligibility and a signed DCAMM Sub-Bidder's Update Statement.

SUBTRADES

Masonry
Miscellaneous and Ornamental Iron
Waterproofing, Dampproofing & Caulking
Roofing and Flashing
Glass and Glazing
Tile
Acoustical Tile
Resilient Floors
Painting
Elevators
Fire Protection
Plumbing
Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning
Electrical

All Bids should be submitted electronically online at <http://www.biddocs.com/> and received no later than the date and time specified above.

General bids and sub-bids shall be accompanied by a bid deposit that is not less than five (5%) of the greatest possible bid amount and made payable to the **Town of Charlton**.

Bid Forms and Contract Documents shall be available online at www.bid-docs.com beginning on **December 04, 2024, at 12:00 PM**.

There will be an optional site visit/walk-through scheduled for **December 11th, 2024, at 10 AM** at 4 Oxford Road, Charlton, MA 01507.

The contract will be awarded to the bidder deemed by the awarding authority to be the lowest responsible and eligible bidder, as further set forth in the Instructions to Bidders and Electronic Bidding Instructions.

The Awarding Authority reserves the right to waive any informalities, to accept or reject, in whole or in part any or all bids, or take whatever other action that may be deemed by the Town to be in the best interest of the Town.

The Town of Charlton

Andrew Golas, Town Administrator

December 5, 2024

CHARLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with the Wetland Protection Act of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter 131, Section 40, the Charlton Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on December 11, 2024, at 7PM on the application of Tranquil Homes, LLC.

The applicant has submitted a Request for Determination of Applicability for the replacement of an existing failed septic system and for the paving of a driveway within 100ft of a Bordering Vegetated Wetland. The project location is: 19 King Road, Charlton, MA, 01507.

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting of the Charlton Conservation Commission will be conducted in person and via remote means. Members of the public who wish to participate can access the meeting remotely by request.

Copies of the RDA may be examined at the Conservation Office by appointment during business hours.

Thomas O'Malley

Chair, Charlton Conservation

Commission
December 5, 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. WO24P1774EA INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

Estate Of:

Theresa M. Anctil

Date of Death: 11/21/2023

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of :
Petitioner **Pamela M Dusza of Stafford Springs, CT**

a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

Pamela M Dusza of Stafford Springs, CT

has been informally appointed as Personal Representative of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered un-

der 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 5, 2024

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 173 Pleasant Street, Southbridge, MA 01550

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Ronald J Benvenuti Jr and Ronald J Benvenuti to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for Guild Mortgage Company LLC, and now held by Guild Mortgage Company LLC, said mortgage dated October 7, 2022 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 68328, Page 320, said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as nominee for Guild Mortgage Company LLC to Guild Mortgage Company LLC by assignment dated February 8, 2024 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 70191, Page 304; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at Public Auction on December 19, 2024 at 02:00 PM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit: Closing Date: October 7, 2022

Borrower(s): Ronald J. Benvenuti and Ronald J. Benvenuti, Jr.

Property Address: 173 Pleasant Street, Southbridge, MA 01550

The land, together with the buildings thereon, in Southbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts, property now known as Parcel B-1 of 173 Pleasant Street, Southbridge, MA, and is more formerly described as follows:

Beginning at a point at the northeast corner of tract herein described on the westerly sideline of Pleasant Street at the southeast corner of Parcel B-2;

Thence S. 37° 37'40"W ., along the westerly sideline of said Pleasant Street, a distance of one hundred twenty and sixty-one hundredths (120.61) feet to a point;

Thence N. 61° 29'20" W ., along land of Marc A. and Janet M. Cournoyer, a distance of one hundred thirty-three and sixty-one hundredths (133.61) feet to a point;

Thence N. 27° 15'00" E. along land of Felix Burda, now or formerly, a distance of sixty-eight and eighty-one hundredths (68.81) feet to a point;

Thence N. 57° 57'00" W. along said Burda land, a distance of four and ten hundredths (4.10) feet to a point;

Thence N. 24° 40'00" E. along land of Leo Desmarair, now or formerly, a distance of seventy- seven and forty-four hundredths (77.44) feet to a point;

Thence S. 52° 02'00" E along said Parcel B-2, a distance of one hundred sixty-five and eighty- hundredths (165.80) feet to the point of beginning.

The above tract contains an area of 19,670 square feet.

For title, see deed recorded herewith.

The description of the property contained in the mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

For Mortgagor's Title see deed dated October 6, 2022 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 68328, Page 317.

TERMS OF SALE: Said premises will be sold and conveyed subject to all liens, encumbrances, unpaid taxes, tax titles, municipal liens and assessments, if any, which take precedence over the said mortgage above described.

FIVE THOUSAND (\$5,000.00) Dollars of the purchase price must be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check at the time and place of the sale by the purchaser. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash, certified check, bank treasurer's or cashier's check within thirty (30) days after the date of sale.

Other terms to be announced at the sale.

Brock & Scott, PLLC
23 Messenger Street
2nd Floor
Plainville, MA 02762

Attorney for Guild Mortgage Company LLC

Present Holder of the Mortgage

(401) 217-8701

November 21, 2024.

December 28, 2024.

December 5, 2024

Festival
continued from page 9



Jason Bleau

Potential buyers examine the goods at Emmerly Lane, one of the crafters at the 32nd annual Festival of Crafts.



Jason Bleau

Brees Sweet Treats of Worcester brought a mix of their delicious snacks for tasting and purchasing to the Festival of Crafts.



Jason Bleau

Members of the Shepherd Hill Class of 2026 hosted a booth to help raise money for their class programs.



Jason Bleau

Parents and adult supporters of the Shepherd Hill music program volunteered their time to help sell tickets and check people in throughout the day.



Jason Bleau

(Left) Student volunteers pose for a photo between shifts, complete with holiday spirit.



(Right) Carmen and her mother Juliana traveled from Stafford Springs, Conn. to enjoy the Festival of Crafts, an annual tradition for the pair.

REAL ESTATE

CHARLTON

\$539,000, 51 Baker Pond Rd, Brush, Alina R, and Brush, Jeffrey S, to Ford, Joshua, and Ford, Rhiannon.

HOLLAND

\$380,000, 35 N Wales Rd, Germain, Mark A, and Germain, Robert, to Scanlon, Chandler D, and Comtois, Stephen D.

SOUTHBRIDGE

\$12,760,000, 39 Therese Ave, Lebanon HI Apartments LLC, to Lebanon Hill Ap 1 LLC.

\$430,000, 78 Oliver St, Ngugi, Benjamin, to Diaz, Maurelin.

\$150,000, 1 Brentwood Dr, Pontbriand Leon R Est, and Prince, Carol A, to Adams, David, and Adams, Natalie.

STURBRIDGE

\$599,900, 622 Main St, Comerford, Andrew, to Mathurin, Stanley O, and Perez-Winspeare, Sasha M.

\$485,000, 21 Vinton Rd, Shonak, Paula M, to Stebbins, William.

CHARLTON

continued from page 1

has grown immensely and shifting more burden on businesses would slow that growth.

"Towns who have split historically have always tried to find a way to get them back because by its very nature you are

discouraging businesses from coming in because they'll be paying higher taxes," said Borowski. "There's a reason larger industries, for good or bad, are coming in right now, but it is helping our overall taxpayer relief for our residents. To move against that in

my opinion would be, for all intents and purposes, saying that we are against economic development and I'm never going to pursue that path."

Selectmen approved staying with the single tax rate for another year. Stanley's presentation

set the single tax rate estimate at \$11.13, or \$5,022 for the average household. Looking at comparable surrounding towns that puts Charlton second to Dudley for lowest tax rate in the area.

The Board of Selectmen also considered a Small Commercial Ex-

emption which would apply to owner occupied businesses of ten employees or less and valued at less than a million dollars. This was not recommended nor was it approved for implementation. A residential exemption, typical implemented in communities

for non-owner-occupied facilities like apartment buildings, was also not recommended or approved. Finally, the Board of Selectmen, on the recommendation of the assessor, also voted down the option to implement an Open Space Discount.

OPACUM

continued from page 1

only preserves critical wildlife habitat but also safeguards the eastern edge of the Cohasse Brook Reservoir, protecting the drinking water supply for Southbridge residents.

"As our communities grow and change, it is important to plan carefully to protect the important land and water that is essential for healthy communities," said Laney Wilder, Executive Director

of Opacum Land Trust. "We're not just protecting land; we're ensuring the long-term health and vitality of our region."

Matching gift challenge doubles donor impact

In an exciting development, the first \$23,000 in donations will be matched, effectively doubling the impact of each contribution. First time donors who give before Dec. 31 will also receive a special New Member Welcome Kit,

adding an extra incentive to support the organization's critical work.

A legacy of conservation

As Opacum Land Trust approaches its 25th anniversary in 2025, the organization reflects on the protection of more than 4,000 acres of land in our communities, many of which are open to the public for hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, and more. From its founding to today, Opacum has been instrumental in pre-

serving the natural landscapes that define Central Massachusetts.

"We've seen countless families like the Para's who want to protect their land but need support," Wilder added. "Our upcoming 25th anniversary is not just a milestone, but a recommitment to our core mission: to engage communities in the protection of land, water, and wildlife for the benefit of current and future generations."

How you can help Community mem-

bers can support Opacum Land Trust's year-end campaign by:

Donating online at OpacumLT.org

Mailing a contribution to P.O. Box 233, Sturbridge, MA 01566

Calling (508) 347-9144 for more information

Opacum Land Trust is a regional, non-profit land conservation organization that protects land, water, and wildlife for current and future generations. We work in a 13-town region stretching from eastern Hampden Country and

southwestern Worcester County in the towns between Monson and Charlton. Founded in 2000, Opacum currently protects over 4,050 acres of land and is actively working to protect more land across the service area.

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

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