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Thursday-Friday, February 22-23, 2024

Student advocates push council for change at high school

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHBRIDGE — Student advocates dominated the last Town Council meeting, using Citizens' Forum to publicize their ongoing concerns about events at the high school.

For the most part, they said similar things to those at the public forum this paper wrote about last week, and several of the speakers were the same people. But this time the group as a whole was trying to get the Council to step in.

"I beg you all to listen," said recently-dismissed teacher Bethany Linton, who argued this is "about



Gus Steeves

A small group of protestors stood out in front of Town Hall before the council meeting.

the community taking the school back to serve them not the two Jeffs" and ultimately making change "so [the kids] can learn in a safe and healthy environment."

That has become the protestors' reference to Receiver Jeff Villar and Assistant Principal Jeff House. Some added a third, state Education Commissioner Jeff Riley, who resigned last week. Most of those who cited either of them pointed their complaints at House, who was shifted to the high school from the middle school some time ago and had previously worked at a charter

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TERPS Cannabis Dispensary changing ownership

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — The Charlton Board of Selectmen approved a unique change of ownership request on Feb. 13 shifting control of the TERPS Cannabis Dispensary which became the first adult-use dispensary approved by the town back in 2019.

The change is a first for Charlton, as changing ownership of a retail cannabis shop involves unique regulations on the state and local level. The proposal sought to turn ownership over from Four Score Holdings, LLC, doing business as TERPS, to Charlton Investments, LLC. The transition requires a change of ownership approval document from the town to be sent to the state's Cannabis Control Commission and a revision to the host community agreement to include the new ownership party. Town Administrator Andrew Golas said he had consulted town counsel about any further requirements in the wake of recent changes to state cannabis regulations in October.

A public hearing on the matter included appearances from Matthew Wilkes of Four Score Holdings, LLC as well as David Malkin and Domenic Suppa, the controlling partners of Charlton Investments, LLC. Gustav Stickley, an attorney with Burns & Levinson LLP representing Charlton Investments, LLC, spoke on behalf of his client confirming the group pur-

chased the cannabis license for TERPs and will assume control of the business in full.

"We have the change of control approval at the Cannabis Control Commission level," Stickley said.

"Charlton Investments is comprised of experienced business-

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Sturbridge selectmen look at history, docks and AirBNB issues

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

SUTRBRIDGE — On Feb. 5, selectmen revisited a couple of issues that have been in limbo for a while now – the new Historical Commission preservation report and Conservation Commission concerns regarding docks.

Regarding the latter, ConCom Chair Ed Goodwin noted the selectmen are legally the town's "harbor masters" and he

feels that has generally worked well. But current law doesn't address something that's becoming more common – cantilever docks. Instead of floating on the water, those are permanently dug into the land itself, anchored with "tons of cement."

"Because they don't touch the water, we don't have any authority over them" in the state's eyes, Goodwin said. But he wanted clarity on how

to use a town bylaw designating a 25-foot "no touch" zone and a 50-foot "no build" zone around all lakes, particularly because this kind of dock is permanently fixed in place.

He later said his board will be seeking comments from the citizens, especially the various lake associations. Conservation Agent Becky Gendreau (who is also

resigning shortly) said they're looking at a bylaw from Lanesborough as a model.

Mary Blanchard said she thought the current bylaws "worked well" except for the fact they call for annual inspections, which would require a boat. The others present agreed.

ConCom's Ted Winglass said his board has

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Courtesy

WALES COMMUNITY PANTRY NEEDS \$15,000 BOOST

In January, the Wales Community Pantry served 105 households / 225 individuals in Brimfield, Holland, and Wales. Every week we are adding new households to our distribution list. Please share our information with any residents of Brimfield, Holland, or Wales, in need. The Pioneer Valley Block grant, to support the Pantry, was supposed to be awarded last July, but it looks like with delays in the state legislature, we may not receive funding for 3 or 4 more months. Because of the delay, we need your help. Donations of any amount can bring healthy food to those in need in our three towns. Checks may be mailed to: Wales Community Pantry P.O. Box 185 Wales, MA 01081 To pay online, visit: www.walescommunitypantry.com. Here, volunteer Carol Garner boosts our efforts by volunteering at the pantry every week to make boxes for distribution for those in need.

School Committee provides early look at budget

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY/CHARLTON — Budget season has begun, with town and school district officials from Dudley and Charlton coming together for their annual roundtable meeting on Feb. 14 where the Dudley Charlton Regional School Committee provided a look at their initial budget requests for Fiscal Year 2025. The meeting was much anticipated following a tumultuous budget season last year that saw Dudley voters participate in several overrides to balance expenditures between the school district and the town's needs. The Valentine's Day presentation was the first look at the initial numbers being considered for the next fiscal year.

Right from the start District Superintendent Steven Lamarche warned that 2025 would be another tough year financially but noted that the new budget was not as extreme as last year's.

"I'd like to be able to tell you from the get-go that this year will be very easy, but I'm going to tell you it's not. It's not the same as last year from the word go, which is great for all of us, but there are still some things that we have to plan on and we have to look at fiscally," said Lamarche.

The Superintendent proceeded to present an initial proposed budget with a \$2.4 million increase, or 4.36 percent, that includes level services and bringing back the Assistant Superintendent position. While this increase is lower than the state average, it exceeds the \$2 million threshold that the district had

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Kids enjoy free entry for two months at Old Sturbridge Village

STURBRIDGE — Old Sturbridge Village invites families and friends to step back in time and celebrate the changing seasons with the exciting announcement of their Kids Free Standard Daytime Admission Promotion, beginning March 1 through April 28.

During this springtime offer, up to two children, aged 17 years or younger, will be admitted for free with each adult full price standard daytime admission ticket. Families can spend the day discovering the rich past of 19th century New England and immersing themselves in hands-on learning, participatory demonstrations, and engaging conversation around the recreated historical village.

From witnessing the gardeners’ preparing the fields to observing the potters and blacksmiths in action to meeting the beloved heritage breed animals, every corner of the village is alive with history. Throughout March and April, there will also be special events and programming, including Maple Days, and celebrations of St. Patrick’s Day, Women’s History Days, Patriots’ Day Weekend, and Village Earth Day.

“At Old Sturbridge Village, we believe that history is not only something to learn, but also something to experience,” said Chief Marketing Officer, Chris Tieri. “We invite children and their families to get out of the house and join us this spring for an immersive journey into the past during our Kids Free March and April promotion.”

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

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

Old Sturbridge Village is open in March Wednesday – Sunday from 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. Beginning April 1, the Village is open Wednesday – Sunday from 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. For a full list of events, visit: <https://www.osv.org/events-experiences/>.



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“Always do what feels safe for you” Bike safety program comes to Jacob Edwards Library

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

S O U T H - BRIDGE — Although February isn't usually a month when people think much about bicycling, Alex Salcedo does.

The Worcester resident pretty much does it daily, having largely mothballed her car for various reasons. She's a grant manager for the Mass Bicycle Coalition, which teamed up with Central Mass Regional Planning Commission to promote bike safety last week at Jacob Edwards Library.

“When I started, people thought I was crazy. Now, after two years, I almost never drive my car anymore,” she said.

If fact, when she was leaving later, Salcedo said she intended to ride home, despite the fact it was dark, February and 20 miles to Worcester. All of those things can be addressed by some of the things she and CMRPC's Kimora Scott, Nate Lewis and Yahaira Graxirena brought with them: lights, reflective vests and other items, extra layers, and Salcedo's own electric bike.

Scott handled most of the presentation, noting she rides her bike “whatever the weather is,” so she knows to dress well. Among other things, that includes a ski mask and scarf, good gloves (Salcedo recommended doubling them), and multiple layers.

“You can wear all the cute nice things you want to wear, just cater it to the weather,” Scott noted.

Drivers, for the most part, pay little attention to bikers, pedestrians or motorcyclists under regular conditions, never mind with cell phones and other distractions. Therefore, Scott said, “You want to make sure you're protecting yourself on the road” in multiple ways.

One of the most obvious ways – and one that's all too often forgotten – is a helmet. It's legally required for minors, and should be worn with the pointed end forward, “snug to your face” with only enough space between the straps to slip two fingers in on the sides, she noted. Since last April, the state also requires bike lights – white in front, red in back – and various reflectors. MassBike has a group that specifically distributes them called the Light Brigade.

“Next time you see [kids riding without them], give them a pair of lights,” Salcedo said. “You might be saving their lives.”

Equally important is knowing how to signal turns and to look in all directions before doing them.

Scott and Salcedo noted riding on sidewalks is technically illegal and some police will give riders tickets for it, “but for safety reasons people often prefer to ride on sidewalks.” By law, bikes are vehicles and therefore have to follow the same rules as cars, but on sidewalks the rule of thumb is to ride at walking speed (and walk it if there's significant pedestrian traffic) because walkers have the right of way.



Gus Steeves
Jeff Jennings looks over Alex Salcedo's electric bike.

Salcedo noted her group trains riders to “always do what feels safe for you.” She notes walkers are always “the most vulnerable users.”

“I never go assuming they're seeing me, only after I make eye contact,” she added, referring to intersections, turns and other potentially dangerous spots. “... We become invisible in the winter, especially then, because people don't expect to see riders.”

Despite that, Salcedo said “for me, biking is freedom.” that's not just a personal thing, but historical; “Thanks to the bike, women were able to vote. I keep that in mind. It wasn't just a thing that takes us places.”

When bikes first became popular in the late 1800s, women took to them with a passion in many places. Among other things, it was social exercise, and it helped change popular fashion from big skirts to women wearing pants and shorts today, she noted.

“A bike is an instrument of social change,” she later added. “We can influence lives on a bike one bike at a time or one ride at a time.”

Margaret Morrissey agreed, noting bikes helped build a sense of community that crossed racial boundaries in Worcester then. Audience members associated bikes with all kinds of things. Many saw it as a chance to feel nature outside a car; to see the scenery at a much slower pace than usual, to go places cars can't and/or faster than traffic jams allow. As one, Jeff Jennings recalled, testing his son's bike after 30 years not riding one felt “a little like flying close to the ground.”

“Bikes make us feel connected, even with a stranger,” Salcedo said, noting that when she asked the audience for their personal experiences, people smiled. In her case, she often needs to just take off for a short ride; “When I come back, it can be 10 minutes, five minutes, an hour, I feel like a different person.”

For one attendee, a notable memory was that “the big kids could ride all the way to the top [of her childhood hill]. The little kids had to get off and walk,” so being able to make it was a rite of passage for her.

Today, many people see electric bikes nearly the same way. Because some have difficulty with the physicality of a regular bike, or they need to transport things like groceries, e-bikes are “the great leveler” and a “game-changer” that makes bikes accessible to people of all ages, Salcedo said.

But e-bikes can be finicky, and the technology is still pretty variable. She strongly urged people to get them only from reputable bike dealers, not from special deals at more generic stores, and get warranties. Sometimes, e-bike companies have gone out of business rapidly, leaving their customers without ability to fix problems because there's not much interchangeability between brands.

Of course, there are several kinds of non-electric bikes. Scott said standard road bikes are “very popular with people who attend universities” and live in places that have little space. Mountain bikes are “versatile” for “any kind of terrain,” and BMX bikes are great for kids, plus adults who like “tricks and all kinds of crazy things,” she added.

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

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Southbridge Doric Chapter of Royal Arch of Masons still thriving

BY BRO. JIMMY FALZONE
QUINEBUAG MASONIC LODGE

WORCESTER — On Saturday, Feb. 17, the Worcester Masonic Center parking lot located at 1 Ionic Ave. in Worcester was packed. Master

Masons from throughout the state who wanted to continue their Freemasonry knowledge and growth within this organization, participated in the Royal Arch of Masons one day class.

Three local men past through the Royal Arch of Masons degrees, Brother Eric Willard of Dudley, Bro. Clay Tull of Southbridge, and Bro. Joshua Kirkwood of Charlton. The men wanted to continue their education

and knowledge of Freemasonry and took the next steps to fulfill their thirst for the knowledge and experience of the Southbridge Doric Chapter of Royal Arch of Masons. The Southbridge Doric Chapter of Roy-

al Arch of Masons was formed in 1867 and has a rich history in the community.

It was originally started at the Webster Masonic Lodge and was called the First Webster Chapter of Royal Arch of



Courtesy

Left to right: Brother Eric Willard, Bro. Clay Tull and Bro. Joshua Kirkwood standing tall and proud after completing the one-day class at the Masonic Center in Worcester, with their Royal Arch of Masons aprons on.

Masons. In 1871, the Webster Chapter voted to move the meeting place from Webster to the Southbridge Quinebuag Masonic Lodge and Doric Chapter of Royal Arch of Masons continues to thrive to this day.

If you would like more information about Freemasonry and to find a lodge nearest you, visit our Web site at www.massfreemasonry.org.

Charlton Cultural Council announces grant recipients

CHARLTON — The Charlton Cultural Council is excited to announce our 2024 grant recipients. The following people and organizations have been allocated funding to promote cultural programming in our community. We are pleased to be able to support such talented local artists and creatives. Please watch for these events as they become available.

All the Possibilities Inc.
All the Possibilities Inc Drama Program
Davis R. Bates III
Celebrating the Season: Celtic Songs & Stories
Zachary Benton
Melodious Zach Presents Music of the 1960s
Blackstone Council on Aging
Celebration of Age Luncheon
Louise Chadborne
Book reading, Granite the Bullmastiff Story
Charlton Arts and

Activities Center
Concert at the CAAC
Charlton Council on Aging
Charlie Chaplin, The Circus
Charlton Historical Commission
Replacement of Local History Information Signs
Charlton Historical Commission
Restoration of Salem Towne Russell Portrait
Charlton Public Library
Theatrical Literary Production
Charlton Public Library
Quilt Program: Before and After - Repeating Patterns
Olwen Dowling
Hilltown Arts Alliance Studio Tour 2024
Francis Hart
The "Beat Generation" - A Cultural Review of the 1950s Through Music
Valery Joseph
Haitian Cuisine Tour
Susan M. Kirchhausen
MAS Musica String

Ensemble Performance
Le Note Diverse
Stories of Fortitude: Women Composers of the Baroque II
Gregory Maichack
The Jellyfish: How to Pastel Paint
Mass Capoeira Culture Center
Capoeira movement workshop and paint party
MUSIC Dance.edu
I am Autistic I am Fantastic - The Musical
MUSIC Dance.edu
Hip Hop Chair Dance for Seniors! a dance series
NV Creations LLC
Paint Workshops for Charlton
Pasture Prime Players, Inc.
The Polar Express
Pasture Prime Players, Inc.
TBD
PlantGuyEric Consulting, LLC, Lisa & Eric
Let's Get Growing with PlantGuyEric!
John P. Porcino
To Life!: Celebrations in Story, Song and Music

Karl Rausch
New England Swing Orchestra
Shepherd Hill Regional High School
Mama Mia (the musical)
Lynda Shoup
Using Historical Images in Mixed Media
Elizabeth Silvia
The BaNannies Live!
Patrick Smith
Afternoon of Brass #3
Mike Spencer
HOFBRAUHAUS BAVARIANS concert/dance
Ed the Wizard
Aerodynamic STEM Workshop
Vic Thomas
Blues Brothers Briefcase
Roger L. Tincknell
Island Vacation
Edward Wirt
O A K L A N D STROKE Concert/Dance
Matt York
Johnny Cash - Songs and Stories

Charlton Scout Troop to hold clothing & textile drive

CHARLTON — Scout Troop 338 In Charlton is holding a clothing/textile drive on Saturday, March 23 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Saint Joseph's Church parking lot. They are collecting men's, women's, and children's clothing including coats, shoes, scarves, handbags, backpacks. Also all clean serviceable household textiles are needed, such as towels, bedding, comforters, sheets, pillows, tablecloths, curtains, etc.

Simply place your items in 13 gallon kitchen bags for the collection. If you need assistance in getting them to the drive, pickup is available. See your Troop 338 scout for details, or contact Karen at thenorrman3@gmail.com.

Your contribution helps keep serviceable items out of landfills, helps your local scout troop attend their historic camping trip in Washington, D.C., and gives your spring cleaning a quick boost!

Nursing student obtains Be There certificate

CHARLTON — Tracy Nakyagaba of Charlton, a practical nursing student at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy recently completed training and obtained her Be There Certificate.

The Be There Certificate is a self-paced learning experience designed to increase mental health literacy. The training provides knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to safely support anyone who may be struggling with their mental health. From <https://www.betherecertificate.org/>, "It provides a deep understanding of Be There's 5 Golden Rules — a simple but actionable framework on how to recognize when someone might be struggling with their mental health, your role in supporting that person, and how to connect them to the help they deserve."

Nakyagaba is passionate about nursing, cooking, photography, reading, and music. She



Tracy Nakyagaba

is certified in Mental Health First Aid, Dementia Care, Stop the Bleed, HCP/BLS Provider CPR and first aid. She recently participated in her clinical team's Luminary lighting project for the Alzheimer's Association's the Longest Night to shine a light to diminish the darkness and illuminate a path towards a

world where Alzheimer's and dementia are nothing but a memory. She was previously participated in the National Pie Day Celebration.

As a member of the 2024 cohort who progressed to term 2 of the rigorous 10-month practical nursing program at Bay Path, she joins 31 other students who are expected to graduate in June 2024. Photo shows Nakyagaba with her Be There Certificate.

According to Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN, Academy Director, "At Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy we believe that student engagement and patient advocacy are contributory to a well-rounded, prudent nurse. Success is intentional. We ensure that our PN students are relevant and actively engaged in empowering themselves, especially when it comes to mental health."

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Harrington Auxiliary celebrates annual Irish Night

STURBRIDGE — The Harrington Auxiliary, in conjunction with the Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale, invites the general public to enjoy a traditional Irish Night feast on Monday, March 18 at the Publick House in Sturbridge.

Tickets for the traditional Irish corned beef and cabbage buffet are \$17 for adults and \$7 for children ages four to 12. The buffet will be available to ticket holders only; no walk-ins.

There will be two seatings: first seating is 4:30 to 6 p.m., and second seating is from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Please specify your desired seating time when purchasing tickets.

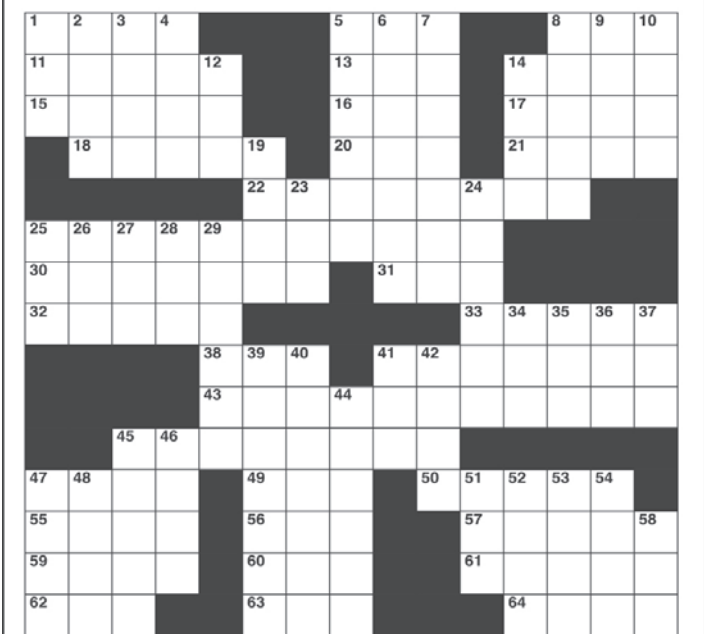
Tickets are available in the Volunteer Services office at UMass Memorial Health Harrington in Southbridge or in the Gift Shop. Credit/debit cards will be accepted. Call 508-765-9771, ext. 6472f or more information. Tickets are limited so purchase early.

The Harrington Auxiliary, established in 1932, is a non-profit organization of dedicated and impassioned volunteers whose mission is to support and enhance the excellent services provided by UMass Memorial Health Harrington. Proceeds from the event enable the Auxiliary to continue to provide equipment and programs that benefit the health and well being of the members in the communities it serves.

Emerson College student Julia Psuik earns Dean's List for Fall 2023 Semester

BOSTON — Emerson College student Julia Psuik from Uxbridge is named to the College's Dean's List for the Fall 2023 semester. The requirement to make Dean's List is a grade point average of 3.7 or higher for that semester.

Psuik is majoring in Undeclared and is a member of the Class of 2026.



- CLUES ACROSS
1. Golf scores

5. Shock therapy

8. Ballplayer's tool

11. Quench one's thirst

13. Female relatives of American war vets (abbr.)

14. Every one of two or more things

15. Member of Muslim people

16. Play

17. Type of cheese

18. Type of lounge chair

20. __ King Cole, musician

21. Fellows

22. North, Central and South

25. In an early way

30. Foes

31. Georgia rockers

32. Cryptocurrency

33. Narrow path along a slope

38. Disallow

41. Joyousness

43. Inaccessible

45. Evoke emotions

47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea

49. Boston Celtic punk rockers (abbr.)

50. Sword

55. Actor Idris

56. Affirmative (slang)

57. Afflicted

59. One point north of northeast

60. Born of

61. Arabic name

62. Traumatic brain injury (abbr.)

63. Extremity

64. Post

- CLUES DOWN
1. Pacific Standard Time

2. Protruding ridge on nematodes

3. Indian king

4. Type of milk

5. One who brings home the bacon

6. More comprehensible

7. Connected with sense of touch

8. Red mineral

9. Breezed through

10. Therefore

12. Supplement with difficulty

14. Early kingdom of Syria

19. Satisfy

23. They confuse doctors (abbr.)

24. Brass instrument

25. Domesticated animal

26. Ribonucleic acid

27. Snakelike fish

28. Woman (French)

29. Economically-minded aircraft

34. When you hope to get somewhere

35. Tease

36. Actress Gretchen

37. Midway between northeast and east

39. Inoffensive

40. Yellowish cotton cloth

41. Consume

42. Does not tell the truth

44. Improved something

45. Spiritual leader

46. Abba __, Israeli politician

47. Fix

48. Evergreen tree genus

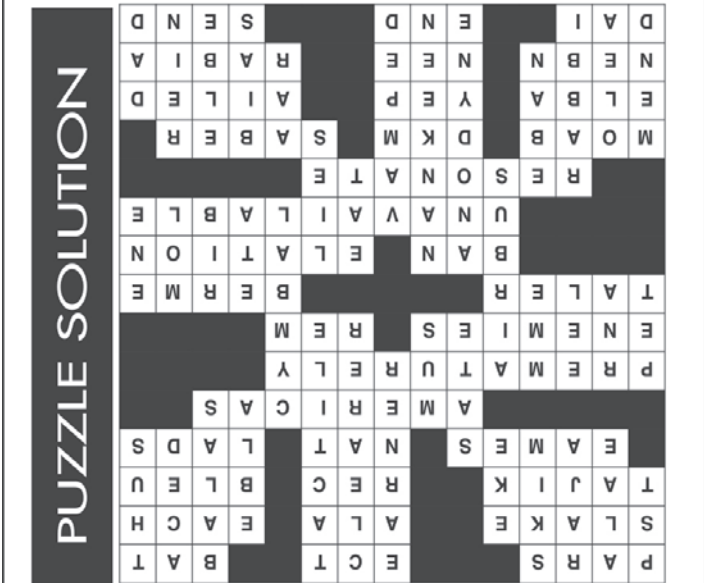
51. Swiss river

52. Prejudice

53. Major C. European river

54. Long, narrow strap

58. Male parent



Charlton Public Library presents “Before and After: Repeating Patterns” with quilter Timna Tarr

CHARLTON — Celebrate National Quilting Month with us! On Saturday, March 2, from 10:30 a.m.-noon, Charlton Public Library will host a presentation and trunk show by award-winning modern quilter Timna Tarr.

Tarr is known for her use of strong visuals and vibrant colors. Her quilts have been seen in exhibits and magazines, as well as on The Quilt Show and Quilting Arts TV. She will talk about her design



and color choices and the personal stories behind her quilts. Much of her work is inspired by antique and family quilts. In this lecture she will show the utilitarian quilts from her life, and how they planted the seeds that became the contemporary works that she now creates.

Tarr comes from a long line of quilters but did not begin quilting until after studying art history in college. She bought her first longarm in 2001 and began quilting clients' quilts shortly thereafter. Her own nationally award-winning quilts are in private and corporate collections and have been seen in exhibits, publications, and on The Quilt Show and Quilting Arts TV. Timna is a designer for Studio e Fabrics, the author of *Stitched* Photo Mosaic

Quilting, and is an in-demand teacher and speaker. She lives in South Hadley.

This program is free and open to everyone. Please visit our event calendar at charltonlibrary.org to register.

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Charlton Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Emerson Cherry makes Curry College Dean's List

MILTON — Curry College congratulates Emerson Cherry of Sturbridge, who was named to the Fall 2023 Dean's List. About Curry College

Curry College, founded in Boston in 1879, is a private, co-educational, liberal arts-based institution located on 131 acres in Milton, Massachusetts. The College extends its educational programs to a continuing education branch campus in Plymouth. The College offers 90+ Majors, Minors, and Concentrations in specialized and liberal arts programs, as well as graduate degrees in accounting, business, education, criminal justice, and nursing to a combined enrollment of nearly 2,050 students. The student body consists of 1,830 traditional students and nearly 220 continuing education and graduate students. The College offers a wide array of co-curricular activities ranging from 17 NCAA Division III athletic teams to an outstanding theatre and visual arts program. Visit us on the Web at www.curry.edu

REAL ESTATE

BRIMFIELD

\$362,500, 101 Paige Hill Rd, Boudriault Jacqueline Est, and Phifer, Suzanne A, to Kurtz, Lauren E, and Cooke, Christopher D.

\$358,000, 205 Dunhamtown Palmer Rd, R J & Joan N Demers Irt, and Demers, Brian J, to Gilbert, Jesse E, and Gilbert, Norman.

CHARLTON

\$375,000, 79 Baker Pond Rd, Colvir Rt, and Coletti, James D, to Decelles, James, and Decelles, Mia.

\$360,000, 39 Number 10 Schoolhouse Rd, Begg, Melissa A, and Padovano, Linda C, to Starratt, Sean B.

\$77,500, Jennings Rd #52, Gair LLC, to Prop Soln Re & Contractin.

HOLLAND

None

SOUTHBRIDGE

\$375,000, 79 Baker Pond Rd, Colvir Rt, and Coletti, James D, to Decelles, James, and Decelles, Mia.

\$360,000, 39 Number 10 Schoolhouse Rd, Begg, Melissa A, and Padovano, Linda C, to Starratt, Sean B.

\$77,500, Jennings Rd #52, Gair LLC, to Prop Soln Re & Contractin.

STURBRIDGE

\$525,000, 368 New Boston Rd, Darcy, Samuel, and Darcy, Jennifer, to Holbriter, Evan J, and Holbriter, Sage V.

\$349,900, 13 Village Grn #13, Burdick, Jeffrey L, and Burdick, Patricia, to Wood, Mary A.

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VILLAGER ALMANAC

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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

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

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

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

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

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

CHURCH LISTINGS

- **Central Baptist Church**
256 Main St., Southbridge, MA 01550
Tel 508/764-6365; Worship 10:00 A.M.
- **Charlton Federated Church**, 64 Main St., 248-5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. www.fedchurchcharlton.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.
- **Hope Christian Fellowship**, 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 9:30 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

Brimfield Fire Department equips truck with Stop the Bleed kit

BRIMFIELD — Brimfield Fire Chief Don Contois has announced an innovative plan to equip local firefighters with life-saving bleeding control kits, which have special blood-clotting gauze and other gear designed to quickly stop traumatic bleeding.

The Brimfield Fire Department has recently purchased a complete stop the bleed kit for its first out fire engine. The special kit is intended to treat multiple victims simultaneously with major injuries and was placed in service at the beginning of last month.

“Traumatic injuries that cause significant bleeding can cause the loss of life within minutes,” said Contois. “Having a kit like this on our truck enables us to bring life-saving gear to the scene of an accident and start to provide care right away.”

Contois notes that beside several major roadways, the town has many large

in conjunction with a larger national campaign called Stop the Bleed, the result of a collaborative effort led by the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma (ACS COT) to bring knowledge of bleeding control to first responders and the public.

“Brimfield is a unique town in that we don’t have a lot of medical resources, and it can take a while before outside help arrives,” said Jonathan Hall, a Firefighter with Brimfield Fire. “I feel like this kit and the training we received helps us bring a higher-level of care right to the patients.”

The Brimfield Fire Department is an all-hazards department that responds to fire calls and medical incidents with the local EMS provider Action Ambulance who provide advanced level care to area towns.

Contois hopes that the program that now includes the fire department will expand to other departments in town. Already the fire department placed tourniquets in trucks used by town highway department personnel. The stop-the-bleed program also includes the placement of life-saving equipment available to the public in places like schools, libraries and businesses. The Chief will be looking to connect with other venues in town who may be interested in participating in the program soon. Meanwhile, residents can be assured that this lifesaving equipment is available should the need arise.



Courtesy Firefighter/EMT's William Dorian and Roman Carlisle review Brimfield Fire Department's Stop the Bleed kit.

Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale announces new adult study groups

STURBRIDGE — The Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale will host a five-week study group focused on spiritual practices, led by the Rev. David Cote. Based on Adam Hamilton’s book, “The Walk. Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life,” the sessions are open to adults interested in learning more about Christian living.

The morning study group will meet from 10 to 11:15 a.m. on Thursdays from February 22 to March 21. An evening

group will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays from Feb. 21 to March 20. Both groups will gather in the Rainbow Room on the 2nd floor of the church at 8 Maple St., Sturbridge.

Details are as follows:

Morning Study Group:
Dates: Thursdays, Feb. 22 - March 21
Time: 10 - 11:15 a.m.

Evening Study Group:
Dates: Wednesdays, Feb. 21 - March 20
Time: 6:30 - 8 p.m.


The book may be purchased for \$14 at the church. The study groups are open to the public. For more information, contact the church office at 774-304-1021 or churchoffice@sturfed.org.

The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale joyfully celebrates Christ’s presence and God’s grace in our lives. Community members are welcome and invited to join in worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Services are also livestreamed on the church’s Facebook page.

Southbridge Lions Club Poker Tournament set for March 9

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Southbridge Lions Club is sponsoring its annual Texas Hold ‘Em Poker Tournament on Saturday, March 9 at Maqui’s located at 61 Chestnut St. in Southbridge.

Registration is open to the first 150 players, and advanced registration is highly recommended. Doors open at 4 p.m. for same day registrations and the tournament begins at 5 p.m., with appetizers served. A \$100 donation provides \$8,000 worth of chips with players vying for a guaranteed first place jackpot of \$2,500. For every 10 players after the first 30 players, an additional place is paid. Prizes will be paid with money orders, and you must be at least 18 years of age to participate. For more information, regarding playing or being a volunteer, call Russ Labarge at 774-230-1624 or Wayne Boiteau at 774-230-1982. The proceeds go to benefit those in need in our community.



ARTHRITIS?

Is your arthritis care all that you would hope it to be?
If not we may be able to help.

**Osteoarthritis
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"Committed to Advancing appropriate care to people with arthritis"

Sophomores named to Bay Path honor roll

CHARLTON — Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical School congratulates the following grade 10 students on being named to the honor roll for the second quarter of the 2023-2024 school year.

High Honors
Logan Barriere, Vincent Bedard, Emma Berry, David Betancur, Dominic Boyd, Aleah Brink, Brianna Brink, Samuel Ceppetelli, Lily Chartier, Charles Congdon, Hunter Coombs, Emily Corey, Valentina Culberson, Anika Ferrantino, Lillian Horner, Joshua Irons, Nicholas Jalbert, Cullen MacLeod, Ava Mastrototaro, Felix Menard, Tyson Moriarty, Benjamin Nocchi, Sawyer Schultz, Luke Smolski, Esmerelda Velez, Haylee Zurowski

Honors
Addison Aho, Adriana Alicea, Sarah Appiah Kubi, Jacob

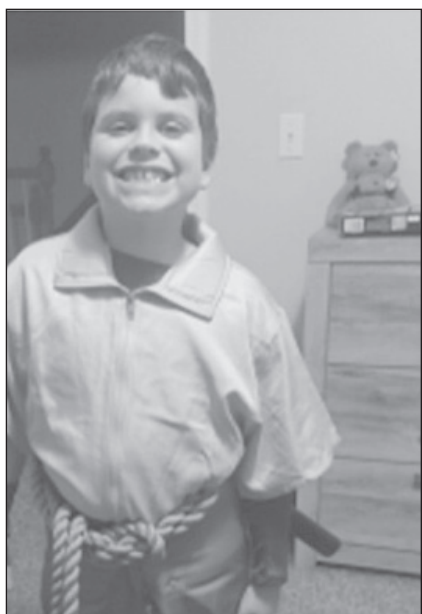
Archambault, Violet Aucella, Alexander Audunsson, Victoria Bachand, Arianna Belanger, Isabella Bitar, Edward Blash, Dominic Brodeur, Lucien Brodeur, Dimitri Burt, Liam Carlson, Nathan Chenevert, Frederick Cierpich II, Maxton Cournoyer, Jacob Creeron, Brody Cunningham, Joseph Daige, Abigail Dejong, Myiah DeLaRosa, Treyton Dery, Cody Dombroski, Nathan Dube, Savannah Dubois, Aedan Ellis-Morris, Jocelyn Evans, Matthew Falcigno, Mya Federico, Jayla Fowler, Zarriyah Frechette, Rylee Fulmine, Aidan Giroux-Provencher, Aliyah Gonyea, Arianna Gonzalez, Sadie Hawley, Luke Heller, Kolton Hemenway, Liam Hesselton, Deirdra Holton, Grace Huehls, Hannah Ingalls, Natalie Ingles, Christian Johnson, Tabian Keegan, Zackery

Kelleher, Ayden Kennedy, Samuel Kittredge, Marshall Lafond, Nia Laforest, Joel Landor, Zachary Landry, Elyse Laramie, Phoebe Lawendowski, Miranda Linde, Michael Lulu, Mia Lussier, Philipos Makordimitras, Emily McDonald, Madeline McDonald-Trimby, Alexis Messina, Kyle Mondor, Sebastian Moniz, Alexis Moody, Gianna Morelli, Liam Nicoll, Sebastian Nieuwenhoff, Cole Paradis, Niti Patel, Amari Pereira, Mariah Pereira, Adam Phaneuf, Jacob Pratt, Kayleigh Ramm, Grace Retallic, Marian Rodriguez Rivera, Nathan Rouille Montoya, Jordan Russell, Nathan Steen, Gaike Thompson, Ashley Tingle, Gabriel Turcotte, Thadaeus Tweneboa, Ellie Vanvleck, Sebastian Vargas, Gabriella Vazquez Hernandez, Natalie Vigeant, Ava Wall, Hunt-

er White, Trey Wilkin, Madison Williamson

Principal's List
Emma Baldyga, Rhianna Balliet, Riley Boucher, Alissa Burlingame, Emily Casault, Thomas Choquet, Marianelys Cintron Perez, Hailey Costa, Connor Czechowski, Max Domineck, Christopher Dufresne, Yandel Feliciano, Ethan Ford, Leia Foster, Hailey Giguere, Anthony Gonya, Anna Guay, Jacoby Henderson, Allison Klar, Gabrielle Lapan, Nicolas Londono, Avery McLaughlin, Chase Newman, Oskaryna Nunez, Connor O'Brien, Kelsey Olson, Angelica Padilla, Maddox Parente, Aiden Perzanoski, Leah Raymond, Taylor Richard, Yasminette Santana, Jorge Santiago, Jared Senosk, Jaxon Sitko, Ethan Wall, Marcanthony Weld, Nash Zimmer

Friday's Child



Jordan
Age 9

Hi! My name is Jordan and I love snuggles!

Jordan is an active boy that is looking to be cared for and snuggled. He likes one on one attention and benefits from both structured and unstructured time with the adults in his life. He loves to climb ladders, poles, and any playground jungle gym. He loves building forts outside, playing video games, and swimming. Jordan is hoping to continue swimming lessons, gymnastics, and karate when he moves to his new home. Socially, he does very well in his afterschool program and in his current placement.

Jordan is in elementary school and is doing well. He thrives in structured, consistent environments with routines. He is supported by staff in school and is working on further developing his social and academic skills. Teachers say he is actively engaged in the classroom and makes friends quickly.

Jordan also has a brother with whom he has a strong relationship with that he wants to continue when he is adopted. Jordan will do well in either a one or two parent household where he can be the only child or the youngest child. Jordan will need some individual one on one time with an adoptive placement, so that love and trust can be built with his new family.

<https://adopt.mareinc.org/waiting-child-profiles#gallery/child/7551>


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.

STONEBRIDGE
PRESS



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www.StonebridgePress.com

FRANK G. CHILINSKI
PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

EDITORIAL

Longer,
lighter
days have
returned!

At last, we are on the cusp of a seasonal change which brings with it a shift in weather, more light and more health benefits! The arrival of longer, lighter days indicates a time of renewal and rejuvenation, offering a wealth of opportunities to enhance our physical and mental well-being.

One of the most notable advantages of longer, lighter days is the increased exposure to natural sunlight. As the sun lingers in the sky for more extended periods, our bodies have greater opportunities to soak in its healthful rays. Sunlight is a vital source of Vitamin D, which plays a crucial role in bone health, immune function, and mood regulation. By spending time outdoors during daylight hours, whether it be through walks, outdoor activities, or simply enjoying a cup of tea on the porch, we can replenish our Vitamin D stores and bolster our overall well-being.

The arrival of springtime brings with it a palpable sense of renewal and optimism. Research has shown that exposure to natural light can have profound effects on mood and mental health, helping to alleviate symptoms of depression, anxiety, and seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

As the days grow longer and temperatures begin to rise, we find ourselves naturally drawn outdoors. Whether it's going for a jog in the park, cycling along scenic trails, or practicing yoga in the backyard, the extended daylight hours of late winter and early spring provide ample opportunities for physical activity and exercise.

Our bodies are finely attuned to the rhythms of the natural world, and exposure to natural light plays a crucial role in regulating our internal clocks. The increased daylight hours of late winter and early spring help to synchronize our circadian rhythms, promoting healthy sleep patterns and enhancing overall sleep quality. By exposing ourselves to natural light during the day and limiting exposure to artificial light at night, we can optimize our sleep-wake cycles and enjoy more restful and rejuvenating sleep.

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

Walking together in wilderness

We have again entered the season of Lent, a 40-day journey (not including the mini-Easters of Sundays) mimicking a number of forty day or forty year journeys throughout the Bible, especially Jesus's 40 days of temptation in the wilderness.

Indeed, when you're in a wilderness, literally or figuratively, for forty days or more and you're alone, you're likely to be tempted. Or, like Elijah's 40-day journey alone in the wilderness, you may feel like giving up on life. Whatever our wilderness, whether it be giving up screens or sweets during Lent, or feeling miserable at one's job, or worried that your spouse doesn't love you any more, whatever our wilderness, if we walk it alone we will struggle.

Which is why I'm happy that some of the Charlton churches are again walking together throughout Lent. St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Charlton Federated Church, and my own Charlton City United Methodist Church, are again joining together for an ecumenical cross walk on Good Friday at noon (beginning at the Federated Church) and Easter sunrise at 7 a.m. in the back parking lot of Overlook, and some of us are also joining together for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday evening services. These same churches recently swapped and shared pulpits for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

BEYOND THE
PEWS

By
REV. JOHN H.D. LUCY
CHARLTON CITY UMC

in January. We do not walk alone.

Oftentimes when I counsel people and I ask, "Have you talked with anyone about this?" the answer is, 'no.' Which is a shame. I know it's hard to open up. We fear being perceived as "too emotional," we fear that our own friends might judge us and lose respect for us, and the list of fears could go on. We also might prefer avoiding our problems, trusting that one day we'll find the exit to our wilderness on our own. Sometimes we might think that God alone can solve our issues.

It's probably true that God alone can solve our issues. But then I'm reminded of that man who drowned to death, got to heaven and yelled at God, "Why didn't you save me?" and then God replies, "I tried. I kept sending you life boats and you turned them all away."

If nothing else, then during this Lent I invite us to be lifeboats for one another, to walk our wildernesses with one another. Have compassion on the people you see. The angry customer, the slow bank teller, the frustrated co-worker, the family member that just won't listen, even your pastor. We all have a wilderness. Let's not isolate one another. Instead let us pick one another up, show up for one another, and invite in companions on our journey.

EARTHBORN

Track of the Trickster

BY GUS STEEVES

Over the last few days, I've been spending time in the woods along trails no other human has walked since our recent snowstorm.

But we are not alone on this Earth. Countless other beings have used them. Just today, I saw tracks of deer, birds, squirrels, porcupine and a bobcat or two, and even a randomly wind-blown pine cone.

But the ones that stand out were those of coyotes. Often alone, but not always, the canines know to use our trails as the easy route for as long as they go where they're going ... and no farther. When it matters – to go home, to nab a delicious squirrel, or whatever – they know to step off someone else's path into the trees and underbrush.

In Native American legend, Coyote is a trickster, a devious spirit who does all kinds of strange things.

For most modern

folks, the most we see of that is Wile E. Coyote of cartoon fame. But he is not a trickster. He is a fool, and maybe even insane by Einstein's definition of doing the same thing over and over expecting a different result.

Real trickster energy throws curveballs at us, challenging us to always look in multiple directions for danger, inspiration and solutions. Those directions are far more varied than most of us may be comfortable with. Not only can they be the physical six – up, down, north, east, south and west – they can be spiritual – inside and outside – and temporal – past, present and future.

All of them matter. Wile E Coyote gets repeatedly squished by falling anvils because he ignores all of them.

If we take them into account, as difficult as that sometimes is, we approach a problem prepared with understanding of the risks, consequences and op-

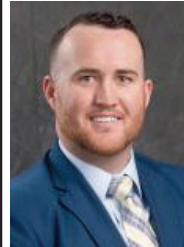
portunities of our options. That will not make things entirely predictable, for sure – random things always happen – but we'll get far clearer vision than any cartoon coyote and most of the people who claim to lead us.

For far too long, our culture has been Wile E Coyote, doing things that hurt us and failing to learn from them. But the real Coyote, and Nature in general, can show us the way out of that trap of our own devising. She reminds us to only follow old tracks when useful, while diverting to get what we really need.

The well-trod path capitalism gives us doesn't lead anywhere sane, healthy or life-enhancing, yet too many people have set their mental GPS to follow it off a cliff in pursuit of the fantasy Roadrunner. Today, that issue manifests in what's actually a major fork in the road. One side is well-paved, the route of consumption

Turn To **EARTHBORN** page **A19**

What should you do with
your tax refund?



FINANCIAL
FOCUS

TREVOR
NIELSEN

It's almost that time of year when many people start receiving their tax refunds. If you get one, what will you do with it?

Of course, the answer will depend somewhat on how big your refund is. Last year, the average refund amount was about \$2,750, according to the Internal Revenue Service's Filing Season Statistics report.

Whatever the size of your refund, you'll want to maximize its benefit. Here are a few suggestions:

Contribute to your IRA. If you were to receive about \$2,750, it would go a long way toward funding your IRA for the year — but any amount would help. You still have until April 15 to contribute to your IRA for the 2023 tax year, but if you've already "maxed out" on it, you could use your refund for 2024, when the annual contribution limit for a traditional and Roth IRA is \$7,000, or \$8,000 if you're 50 or older. And by getting an early start toward fully funding your IRA for the year, you can reduce the pressure of having to come up with large amounts later.

Build an emergency fund. Your tax refund could help you start or expand an emergency fund. It's a good idea to keep up to six months' worth of living expenses in such a fund, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account, separate from the funds you use for your daily expenses. You might need to draw on this fund for unexpected expenses, such as a major home or car repair or a medical bill that's not fully covered by your insurance. Without such an emergency fund in place, you might be forced to dip into your IRA or other retirement accounts to pay for these types of costs, and such a move could be expensive, resulting in taxes, penalties and lost opportunities for growth.

Contribute to a 529 plan. If you have children or grandchildren and you'd like to help them further their education someday, you might consider investing in a 529 education savings plan. With a 529 plan, earnings and withdrawals are federally tax free, provided the money is used for qualified education expenses. Based on where you live, your 529 plan may provide state tax benefits, too. (It is possible, though, that 529 withdrawals could affect financial aid packages, depending on who owns the account.) A 529 plan can be used to help pay for college, accredited trade school programs, some K-12 expenses and even to help repay some student loans.

Pay down debts. Most of us probably wish we could reduce our debt loads. Your tax refund may give you a chance to do just that. But which debts should you tackle first? You could follow the "snowball" method by paying off the smallest of your loans or debts as quickly as possible. Or you could choose the "avalanche" route by making minimum payments on all debts and using extra funds — such as your tax refund — to pay off the debts that carry the highest interest rates. Either method could help you save money in the long term.

Your tax refund can be a valuable asset — so use it wisely.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I hope to earn your vote

To the Editor:

I am immensely grateful for the overwhelming support and trust of the voters of the 6th Worcester District in Dudley, Charlton, Spencer, and Southbridge in the Feb. 6 Special Election Primary. I am eager for the opportunity to engage with even more constituents, as I seek to comprehend the concerns and needs of all those across the 6th Worcester District.

As your State Representative, I will be a tireless advocate for the people of our district. I pledge to prioritize critical issues such as public safety, bolstering local aid, and fortifying educational initiatives, recognizing that

these pillars are critical in fostering a community where all residents can truly thrive and enjoy a better quality of life.

As we approach the pivotal March 5 general election, I am determined to spread my vision with more voters from across the 6th Worcester District. If you have any questions about my candidacy, I encourage you to read out to me at John@MarsiForStateRep.com or visit my Web site at MarsiForStateRep.com.

I hope to earn your vote for State Representative on Tuesday, March 5. Thank you!

John Marsi
Dudley

Fish & Wildlife prepares for spring trout stocking

There was limited ice fishing on dangerous ice conditions throughout the valley this past weekend, but conditions were much better north and west of the valley! A couple of members fishing the Uxbridge Rod & Gun Club this past weekend, had a great time catching and releasing some impressive rainbow and brook trout.

Mass. Fish & Wildlife is busy repairing trucks for the upcoming stocking of trout this spring, as anglers are already fishing open water in the valley and on the Cape. This week's picture shows the success some are having on open water using spinning gear. This week's picture shows a big brown trout caught locally last



THE GREAT
OUTDOORS
.....
RALPH
TRUE

week and weighed in at Jerry's Bait & Tackle. Black bear dens are being visited by Mass Fish & Wildlife personnel to check on the bears' winter survival, and successful newborns.

The Bald Eagle population is rapidly growing in Mass., with new nests being built annually. Their breeding season is only a month away! Sightings of this majestic bird are almost a weekly occurrence, in the valley area.

Public hearings on the saltwater recreational fishing regulations are being held soon. Unfortunately, most anglers were disappointed after leaving the hearings in the past, with no changes to their recommendations. It is a waste of time! More cuts to

recreational saltwater fishing limits and sizes are expected again this year, in both Mass. & Rhode Island. The public hearings have become just a formality.

The Springfield Sportsmen's show is scheduled to open this week, Feb. 23-25. It is a great way to enjoy a day with friends, before the spring fishing begins on both fresh & saltwater.

The New England Saltwater Fishing Show will open their doors at the Rhode Island Convention Center on March 8-10. If you fish saltwater, you need to attend this great show.

Rod & Gun Club renewals at many local clubs are now being held! Don't lose your membership. There is a deadline for renewing your membership at most clubs in the valley.

Take A Kid Fishing & Keep Them Rods Bending!



A four-and-three-quarter-pound Brown Trout caught last week at a local pond in Mass. by Justin, on rod & reel.

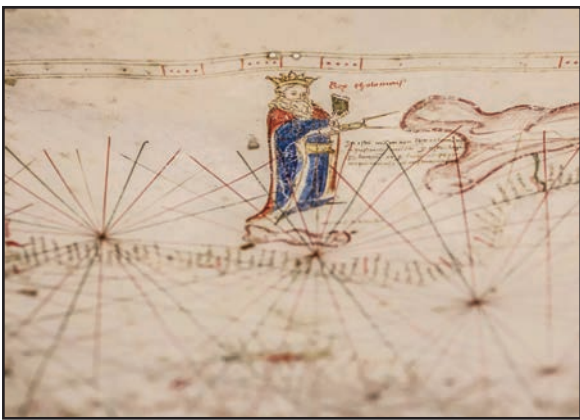
Latest antiques and collectibles news

It's been close to three months since my last update on antique and collectibles news. As you might expect, a lot has taken place since then. I'll focus on some major estate sale finds today.

In 2023, Jeanette Davies saw two antique teddy bears at a yard sale in South Wales. Teddy bears got their name when Teddy Roosevelt was hunting with (American bear hunter and sportsman) Holt Collier. Collier stunned and cornered a bear and Roosevelt wouldn't shoot it, believing it to be unsportsmanlike. Davies paid £130, or around \$155 for both yard sale bears. One turned out to be a World War II era teddy worth between \$92 and \$142 USD. Davies correctly believed the other bear to be a Steiff bear. Steiff began producing high quality teddy bears three years after the incident with Roosevelt. The 1905 Steiff bear was auctioned with a \$5,100 minimum bid.

Across the country, a California man recently found an old tin box of baseball cards that his dad collected. The man identified only as John said his father Ed began collecting cards in the 1920s, according to Newsweek. Ed had shown John some cards occasionally, but John only saw the tin box with all the cards after Ed's passing. The collection includes 20 Babe Ruth cards, a Shoeless Joe Jackson, and many other Hall of Famers. The sale of the cards is expected to bring in the high six figures.

Also in California, a map dealer's keen eye and knowledge may have netted him millions. Alex Clausen was taking a virtual tour of oil heir Gordon Getty's estate sale and became focused on an old map, according to the Los Angeles Times. He spotted a map listed as a portolan chart and as being from 1500 to 1525. Portolan maps were hand drawn maps on animal skin created by navigators. According to the LA Times, they "often feature drawings of compass roses, flags, sea monsters and ships; unlike modern maps, interior details of land are not the key focus." The \$100,000 to \$150,000 estimate seemed reasonable for a 16th century map, but some clues led Clausen to believe it could be older. Granada in Southwestern Spain had a different flag than other



kingdoms in the Iberian Peninsula, making him think the map was at least from the 15th century before they would have adopted a new flag. After hundreds of hours of research, researchers dated the map to 1360. The chart is the only 14th century portolan known to exist outside of Europe. The map is being sold in a gallery where it is on course to bring \$7.5 million.



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We are currently cataloging our comic books, sports cards, and collectibles auction. We are still accepting consignments of gold jewelry, sterling silver serving ware, art, coins, and other antiques, and collectibles for our early summer auction. I'll be teaching my antiques and collectibles night class again on March 5 at the Bay Path Evening School in Charlton. I'll also be presenting at Learning in Retirement event in Danielson, Connecticut on May 6. Please visit our Web site, <https://centralmassauctions.com>, for links to other upcoming events.

Contact us to consign items or for auction information at: Wayne Tuiskula Auctioneer/Appraiser Central Mass Auctions for Antique, Collectibles Auctions and Appraisal Services info@centralmassauctions.com or (508-612-6111).



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A Peek into Flowering Signs of Spring

Nothing brightens up the cold, white, winter landscape like the annual arrival of early spring buds. From crocuses to lilacs, nostalgic perennials are the staple of New England gardens. Plentiful and easy to grow, this week’s column will spotlight a few common flowers that usher in the arrival of spring each year;

Crocus (The little princess of the garden): Crocus has a long heritage in New England, as the favored flower is among the first to be brought to North America by settlers. Popping up in gardens in mid-March, the sight of crocus bulbs are cause for celebration by winter weary Easterners. In fact, the crocus has been known to bloom while snow is still on the ground, offering a visual promise of the upcoming season.

The humble flowers, boasting an array of hues from pale yellow to deep purple, open their cup shaped blooms fully only on sunny days. Perhaps the popularity of the humble flower is attributed to its easy going nature. Requiring only a light alkaline soil and plenty of sunlight, and it will reward the eye with many colorful, low growing flowers that multiply each spring.

Crocus in Mythology: The crocus famously appears in a legendary Greek tragedy of Crocus (Krocus) and Smilax. According to



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the legend a young mortal named Crocus headed into the Athens forest in pursuit of the nymph Smilax. Catching her attention, Smilax is smitten but only briefly, by the handsome Crocus. Soon she becomes bored and spawns his amorous advances. When crocus persists in pursuing the beauty against her wishes, the gods transforms him into a saffron Crocus flower; its orange stigmas symbolizing his undying passion for her.

Planting Crocus: Spring crocus bulbs are best planted in the fall when the soil is below 60 degrees, but well before the first hard frost. Plant pointy side up about four inches apart. For the best visual affect plant in clumps of about a dozen bulbs. Water well and cover with a few inches of mulch for cold weather insulation. Since moles and mice are also attracted to crocus, those who have such pests in the garden are advised to plant in buried wire cages or other devices designed to repel the hungry critters.

Daffodil Delights: Daffodils’ sunny yellow flowers make this perennial a delightful and most welcoming sign

of spring. The hearty bulbs have been known to survive in the ground for well over a century, offering decades of flowing blooms. There are more than 27,000 cultivated varieties of daffodils, so it’s no wonder the daffodil is one of the most popular spring flowers!

Mythology and History: The botanical name for the daffodil is “Narcissus,” which is named after the youth in Greek mythology who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water. The bending flowers represent Narcissus looking into the water; it is said that when he died in that position, a daffodil grew.

Daffodils have a rich history beyond the mythology. The Romans were known to have planted narcissus in memory of those fallen in battle. Daffodils were eventually transported to England by the Romans who hailed the flowers’ healing properties. Early settlers brought the precious daffodil bulbs with them to America as a reminder of their homeland.

Today, Daffodils represent new beginnings, a rebirth and joy. In China, the daffodil symbolizes good fortune.

Planting Daffodils: Plant bulbs in the fall two to three weeks before the ground freezes for spring blooms. Bulbs need proper drainage; therefore, the bulbs require a large hole and loosened soil; plant

pointy side up about six inches deep. Bulbs should be thoroughly watered at the time of planting and again in the spring when they begin to grow. Most gardeners agree planting daffodils in clumps of five or more creates a most pleasing garden landscape.

Note: Nothing adds a ray of sunshine to your indoor space better than a pot of miniature daffodils. The bright, yellow blooms are perfect for the desktop, whether you’re in a spacious home office or a crowded cubicle. At just a few dollars per pot, they are an inexpensive pick me up that keeps on giving. After the blossoms wilt, the bulbs can be replanted in the ground to rebloom outside for years to come!

Lovely Lilacs Fragrant clusters of lilacs adorned colonial yards and gardens of early America. Lilacs were grown both for their beauty and their medicinal properties. In fact, in the late 18th century, both Thomas Jefferson and George Washington wrote about their lilac plants. The species is so hardy that early lilac bushes, in a testament of survival, have continued to thrive in colonial homesteads, long after the homes were abandoned or destroyed. Lilacs have been known to survive hundreds of years, making them a true heirloom flower. The Governor Wentworth Estate in Portsmouth, NH boasts the oldest surviving lilac bushes,

said to have been planted circa 1750. While there are many strains of the flower, the most nostalgic is the common lavender hued lilac (Syringa Vulgaris), which was brought to America in the mid 1700s from eastern Europe.

Lilac Legends: Legend has it lilac drives away evil wherever it is planted or strewn. It is said that lilac bushes were planted on the homestead by colonists in an effort to protect the inhabitants from bad forces.

Immigrants from Europe brought tales of lilac folklore from the “old country” to America, including the belief that finding a white lilac blossom with five petals is a sign good fortune would follow. Meanwhile, in certain sections of England it was considered bad luck to bring blooming Lilacs into the house and all white Lilacs were especially banned from display inside the home.

Growing Lilacs New England is the perfect climate to grow lilacs, as it is very cold hardy, requiring a frost to prompt bud blooming. For optimum blooms, a lilac bush should be planted in areas that receive full sun (at least six hours per day). Lilacs like a slightly alkaline soil. Spread roots out vertically and cover with topsoil. A newly planted lilac bush should be kept well watered. Add a loose mulch above the roots to help with water absorption. Keep in mind different varieties of lilacs

bloom at different times. When lilac flowers have finished blooming, prune the dead flowers back to just above where new buds are forming. Be prudent with pruning, as over cutting can result in a decrease of blooms next year.

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

Starting over

Starting all over again often feels like carrying the weight of an ending. It’s challenging to move forward when your thoughts are tethered to the past, making each step into the unknown feel heavier with the memories and efforts that once defined your path.

These moments, usually fraught with dread and disbelief, carry the essence of beginning from square one and feeling like less than zero. It’s hard to see that the seeds required to embrace a new start are sown within these moments of defeat.

Consider the story of a love that once felt like destiny. Two souls intertwined, embarking on a journey that seemed certain to withstand the test of time. But as the chapters unfolded, the narra-

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tive shifted, leaving one in despair and forced to enter the dating world again.

It reminds me of a quote by J.K. Rowling: “Rock bottom became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life.”

Picture the entrepreneur who charted a path from a local franchisee to a high-flying executive at the national headquarters. This journey, marked by first-class travels and the trappings of success, comes to an abrupt halt with a dismissal that cuts deep. The aftermath was a maelstrom of emotions—anger, sadness, anxiety—confronting the harsh reality of sustaining a lifestyle without the security of a steady income and facing an unwelcome choice between giving up or reinvention.

C.S. Lewis: “You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.”

Imagine the diligent student whose academic endeavors were fueled by the promise of a fulfilling career. Years of sacrifice and sleepless nights culminate in achieving a coveted degree, only to discover the chosen path is filled with dissatisfaction and the realization that one’s true calling lies elsewhere. It is a terrifying dilemma.

F. Scott Fitzgerald said, “It’s never too late to become who you want to be. I hope you live a life that you’re proud of, and if you find that you’re not, I hope you have the strength to start over.”

Consider the journey of an artist whose every performance was a testament to a life dedicated

to the craft. Creating art that resonated with audiences far and wide. Yet, the unpredictability of the business, the constant rejection, and the fleeting nature of fame began to erode the joy once found in the spotlight.

The emotional toll of years spent chasing the next opportunity left our artist feeling disillusioned. The passion that once fueled late-night rehearsals had dimmed, leaving behind a yearning for something more, something different. The decision to stay where it feels comfortable or to start all over doing something new is paralyzing.

“Fall forward. Every failed experiment is one step closer to success. You’ve got to take risks.” — Denzel Washington.

Life, in all its uncertainty, shows us that the comfort of security isn’t

truly secure. The tales of love lost, career dissatisfaction, and the quest for reinvention are chapters in a story familiar to many of us. These narratives underscore the universal journey of starting anew.

No doubt you’ve been in similar situations, with no other option than to choose a relentless pursuit of a new beginning. Trudging forward after a significant setback. It’s an awful feeling, but what’s the alternative? Become bitter and resentful? No thanks.

Human beings may crave security, yet the truth is that everything carries a risk.

As Jim Rohn eloquently said, “Everything in life is risky; I’ll tell you how risky life is... you’re not going to get out of life alive.”

This acknowledgment can help us to face the unknown with an open mind. Your mindset can significantly influence whether the journey ahead leads to a positive transformation or becomes a hurdle too challenging to overcome.

Starting over again presents a unique chance to reevaluate our mental patterns and expectations, setting the stage for a shift that can either uplift or challenge us, depending on our perspective.

Within the realm of uncertainty, we uncover something truly extraordinary: the power to reshape our destiny. Here lies the potential for reinvention, for altering our paths, and for reconstructing our lives from the ground up. Learn to embrace your new beginnings and unlock the promise of tomorrow.

Starting plants from seeds indoors

Keep your green thumb in shape this winter while getting a jump on the growing season by starting your favorite or hard-to-find plants indoors. It’s fun, simpler than you think, and can help stretch your plant budget.

Start with some clean containers that you purchase, recycle, or make from newspapers. Be sure to add drainage holes to any repurposed yogurt or similar containers you are using for starting seeds to avoid waterlogged soil. Always clean used pots by soaking them in a one-part bleach and nine-part water solution for ten minutes then rinse with clear water. This helps reduce the risk of disease.

Fill the containers with a moist well-drained potting mix or a sterile seed starting mix. Once the containers are filled, check the back of your seed packets for planting directions. Most contain all the information you



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with a sheet of plastic or one of the pre-fab domes will help conserve moisture so you will need to water less often.

Check the soil moisture daily and water often enough to keep the soil evenly moist but not soggy wet. Remove the plastic and move the containers to a sunny window or better yet, under artificial lights as soon as any green appears.

Regularly rotate plants that are growing in sunny windows to promote more even growth. Adjust artificial lights as plants grow. Most seedlings benefit from keeping the lights four to six inches above the top of the seedlings. Leave the lights on for 14 but no more than 16 hours a day. Using a timer is an easy way to make sure the plants receive the right amount of light each day.

Once the seedlings develop two sets of true

leaves (these will look like the leaves of the plants you are growing), it is time to do some thinning. Remove the weakest seedling in each pot so only one strong seedling remains. Trimming the weaker seedlings back to ground level instead of pulling avoids damage to the remaining seedling.

Once seedlings have been thinned and are actively growing, use a fertilizer labeled for this use. Continue to water thoroughly and often enough to keep the planting mix slightly moist but not soggy wet.

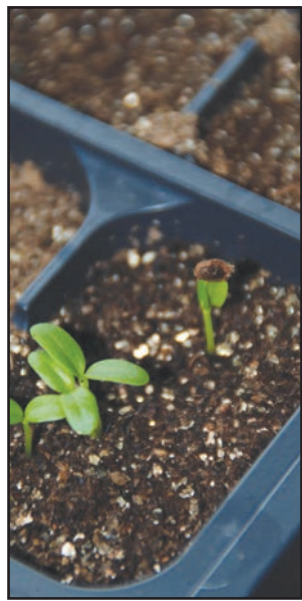
Check the weather and seed packet to determine when it is safe to move your plants outdoors. You’ll need to prepare them for their new home outdoors with a technique called hardening off. Start by moving the plants to a sheltered and shaded location after the danger of frost has passed. Stop fertilizing,

and check soil moisture daily but allow it to dry just slightly before watering thoroughly.

Gradually increase the amount of sunlight the plants receive each day. Cover or move them indoors when frost is in the forecast. Your transplants are ready to move to their permanent location after a week or two.

Start gathering your supplies and seeds now. And before you know it, you will be enjoying the beautiful blooms and tasty vegetables you started from seed yourself.

Melinda Myers has written more than 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.



Melinda Myers

Seedlings should be moved to a sunny window or placed under artificial lights as soon as any green appears.

Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine. Myers’ Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Cornerstone Bank’s 2023 donations exceeded \$506,000

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank, a community bank with locations throughout Central Massachusetts, announced its donations in 2023 totaled \$506,475, benefitting 169 organizations, events and services in Central Massachusetts.

“We have long supported initiatives important to our community, our team, and our customers,” said Cornerstone Bank CEO Todd Tallman. “In 2023, we had another successful and meaningful year of giving back to the communities we serve, both in terms of financial support and time.”

A sampling of the donations Cornerstone made in 2023 includes:

- \$50,000 for the Worcester Community Action Council home heating assistance program
- \$36,483.60 (Cornerstone’s match of employee donations) for the United Way of South Central Massachusetts, supporting its vital community programs
- \$25,000 to the Center of Hope Foundation in Southbridge—the first year of Cornerstone’s five-year total pledge of \$125,000 to upgrade and expand the facilities
- \$25,000 to support programs and services at the YMCA of Central Massachusetts, including The Achievers, Numbers in the Sun, LIVESTRONG and What’s for Dinner.
- \$25,000 to Our Bright Future Inc. in Southbridge, committed to empowering children and developing future leaders through science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) initiatives.
- \$15,000 to UMass Memorial Health for its nutrition-focused “Food is Medicine” program, which aims to provide higher-risk patients with access to healthy food options.
- \$15,000 to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Mass & Metrowest to support the organization’s 60th Anniversary Big Celebration and its Golf Fore Kids event.
- \$12,500 to the EcoTarium in Worcester. This was the first of Cornerstone’s two-year pledge of \$25,000 for construction of a traveling exhibit and redevelopment of its early learning play area.
- \$12,500 to the Bridge of Faith Youth Center in Southbridge. This was the first of Cornerstone’s two-year pledge of \$25,000 to support the organization’s mission.

Cornerstone also provided \$40,000 in scholarships to 16 local high school seniors with plans to pursue studies in business and finance, and held community-engagement events such as its “Stuff the Bus” school supply drive benefitting the Planting the Seed Foundation of Worcester.

Throughout 2023, Cornerstone held 204 financial literacy programs, up from 114 in 2022, for children, teens, adults and seniors throughout the area, donating a total of 568 hours. Cornerstone Bank also offers employees a “volunteer day” benefit through which they can spend a paid workday volunteering for a local non-profit. In 2023, 73 employees participated for a total of 498 hours, working with groups such as the United Way, Relay for Life, Community Harvest Project, Jacob Edwards Library and Habitat for Humanity.

In September, Cornerstone Bank received the Corporate Citizen Award and was honored among the most charitable companies in Massachusetts by the Boston Business Journal. In April, the bank received the Community Award from the Planting the Seed Foundation, which recognized Cornerstone’s commitment to homeless children and their families.

To learn more about Cornerstone Bank’s charitable giving, visit cornerstonebank.com/community/charitable-donations/donation-policy.

About Cornerstone Bank

Cornerstone Bank was formed in 2017, born of a long history of supporting the community, and providing a strong foundation to help people and businesses thrive. Serving Worcester County, Massachusetts, Cornerstone Bank’s local presence and community-based banking model enables a unique ability to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch. Cornerstone provides the highest level of service and expertise for individuals, businesses, and community organizations with branch locations throughout Central Massachusetts. Cornerstone works to connect customers with opportunities, through a broad range of deposit and loan products, and services. Built on Trust is not just a tag line, but also one of our guiding corporate values. Whether a business or personal partnership, Cornerstone stands on the foundation that relationships are built on trust. To learn about Cornerstone Bank’s personal and business banking offerings, please visit CornerstoneBank.com or call 800-939-9103.



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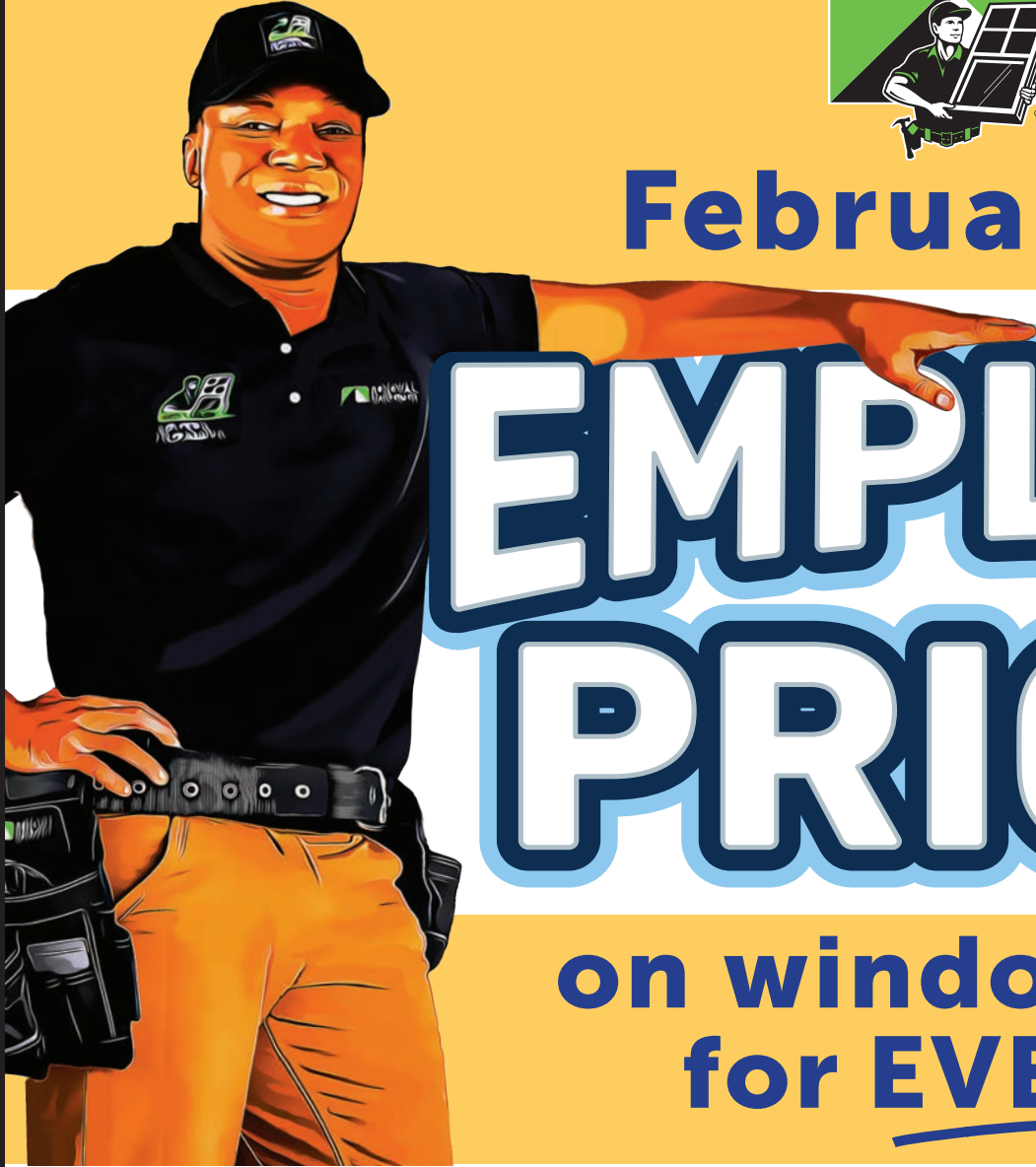
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Carnivale Southbridge style



Gus Steeves

Carnivale participants climb the stairs, the green background light giving them a rather spectral appearance.



Addie and Bill Healey hang out with Ann Marie Safae.



Gus Steeves

Gary Fontaine's grand nose seems a little upstaged by his friends' attire.



Gus Steeves

One of the night's more ornate masks.

SOUTHBRIDGE — In what its members hope will become a grand annual gala, the Italian American Club celebrated Carnivale earlier this month in style.

It featured the smells, tastes, sounds and looks of Renaissance Italy (well, the good ones, anyway), as members in costume and ornate masks danced, socialized, ate and drank while being serenaded by Brian Kiersley and Paul Courchaine. One member said the “moving force” behind it was Steve Kelly, who “has been to Italy several times and loved the idea of Carnivale.”



Gus Steeves

Lynda Garieri



Gus Steeves

The Italian American Club's board: Judy Flannery, Helen Lenti, Steve Kelly, Chris Cooke, Joanne Gruber and Josie Citta.



Gus Steeves

A couple graces the dance floor before visiting the dinner buffet.



Gus Steeves

Brian Kiersley and Paul Courchaine



Gus Steeves

Lynne Peterson

Southbridge Garden Club creates Valentine gnomes

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Southbridge Garden Club's Community Outreach Committee recently assembled to create special Valentine gnomes for the Sturbridge Council on Aging – Senior Center. These handmade gnomes were delivered to the Senior Center in time for Valentine's Day.

The Community Outreach Committee conducts several similar programs throughout the year with the intention of serving the wider community. Faith St. Pierre and Amy LeClair serve as co-chairs of the Committee.

The Southbridge Garden Club is an organization that welcomes gardeners of all abilities and has been serving the area since 1953. The organization 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.”

Visit our Facebook page for updates at <https://www.facebook.com/SouthbridgeGardenClub>.





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Sturbridge resident joins Health Foundation of Central Mass. board

WORCESTER — The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts today announced the election of two new members to its Board of Directors: Paula A. Aiello, CPA, a consultant and former CEO of the behavioral health agency YOU Inc., and Soloe M. Dennis, MS, MEP, Director of the Worcester Division of Public Health and the Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance.

The Health Foundation Board is led by a new chair; Dennis M. Dimitri, MD, FAAFP, Professor Emeritus of Family Medicine and Community Health at University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School. In addition, Sejal M. Daga, MD, was re-elected to a third term on the Board.

The Health Foundation also elected eight new Community Members to support the organization:

Eric Cole, Chief Financial Officer at the Seven Hills Foundation, and John Mannila, Senior Vice President and Team Leader at Webster Five, were elected to the Audit Committee.

Jose Castro, Executive Director of Entrepreneurship for All Greater Worcester and EparaTodos Greater Worcester, and Mary Giannetti, Director of Resource Development at Heywood Hospital, were elected to the Community Outreach Committee.

Peter S. Balesano, MBA, Senior Vice President and Private Bank Market Leader at Bank of America Private Bank, Daniel F. Shimkus, Jr., MBA, Regional Executive and Head of Commercial Lending – Education, Not for Profit and Government Lending, New England and Upstate New York at TD Bank, and Kristina Spillane, MFin, Vice President and Regional Manager of Enterprise Account Management at Fidelity National Information Services Inc., were elected to the Investment Committee.

Dolores Thibault-Muñoz, Deputy Director at NewVue Communities, was elected to the Nominating Committee.

“The Health Foundation is thrilled to expand our Board and Committees with the addition of these experienced and committed professionals from across the region,” said Dr. Amie Shei, President and CEO of The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts. “They will all play vital roles in supporting our mission of improving the health and well-being of those living or working in the region.”



Soloe Dennis

Board member background

Aiello utilized her years of financial expertise to start her consulting firm in 2020 assisting clients in achieving their business goals by providing skilled advice on all things finance, accounting, banking and insurance.

Previously, Aiello held various executive roles at YOU Inc., a multi-service behavioral health and educational organization serving at-risk populations across Central Massachusetts. The Shrewsbury resident graduated magna cum laude from Bryant University with a bachelor’s degree in business administration. She became a certified public accountant in 1987 and has held various credible licenses and affiliations since then.

Dennis is a senior public health executive with over 18 years of governmental administrative experience. As Worcester’s Director of Public Health, he has created regional public health infrastructures that detect and provide sustainable solutions to related populations.

Dennis, who resides in Sturbridge, holds a bachelor’s degree in environmental science and a master’s degree in environmental health science from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His ability to drive innovative change and foster diverse public engagement in reducing health disparities in the community will add an invaluable lens to the Board.

Dimitri, who joined The Health Foundation’s Board in 2017, has practiced family medicine in Worcester for over 40 years. He contributed to landmark healthcare legislation in Massachusetts that has been used in national healthcare reform.

Dr. Dimitri is a Worcester native who received his bachelor’s degree from Clark University. He attended medical school at George Washington University and completed his residency at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center.

About The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts

Now in its 25th year, The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts is dedicated to improving the health of those who live or work in Central Massachusetts, with particular emphasis on vulnerable populations and unmet needs. Through its unique and impactful approach to grantmaking, the Foundation supports community-identified health issues, with health defined

Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale announces Lenten service schedule

STURBRIDGE — The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale has announced its 2024 schedule of Lenten services. Services will be held at the church located at 8 Maple St. and the community is welcome to attend, according to the Rev. David W. Cote who will officiate the services.

From Feb. 25 through March 10, services will be held at 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall, which is currently doubling as the Sturbridge Senior Center. Starting March 17, the church will move services back to the newly refurbished Sanctuary. On Good Friday, at noon, March 29, the congregation will join the community in an ecumenical Stations of the Cross at St. Anne’s Shrine, 16 Church St., Fiskdale.

“On Easter Sunday, the community is invited to join us at 6 a.m. as we celebrate with a special sunrise service at the church’s original Meeting House at Old Sturbridge Village,” says Cote. “Following the sunrise service, we

broadly to include social determinants of health and with a focus on promoting health equity. As a health conversion foundation launched in 1999 following the sale of the not-for-profit HMO Central Massachusetts Health Care Inc., The Health Foundation’s grants have totaled over \$56 million to more than 230 unique organizations over its history. For more information, visit www.thfcm.org.

will return to the current Federated Church Meeting House sanctuary for our 9:30 a.m. Easter morning service.”

The Sunrise Service at Old Sturbridge Village will begin promptly at 6:00 a.m. Area residents who wish to attend are advised to enter the Meeting House by way of the security gate at the top of the parking lot, dress appropriately for the weather and wear sturdy walking shoes. Food and drink are not permitted, except for bottled water. The village will not be open for touring during this event and restrooms will not be available.

The Federated Church of Sturbridge & Fiskdale joyfully celebrates Christ’s presence and God’s grace in our lives. Community members are welcome and invited to join in worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Services are also live-streamed on the church’s Facebook page. For more information, call 774-304-1021 or visit sturfed.org.

Local students make Dean's List at CCU

CONWAY, S.C. — More than 3,000 undergraduate students at Coastal Carolina University were named to the Dean's List for the Fall 2023 semester. Students who make the Dean's List have achieved a grade point average of 3.5 or higher (3.25 for freshmen) for the semester.

Isabella Huckins of Wales
Lauren Scioletti of Sturbridge
Nicholas Laflamme of Uxbridge
Kira Sullivan of Uxbridge
Caleb Visbeek of Uxbridge

of internship, research and international opportunities for students, as well as numerous online programs through Coastal Online.

More than 10,800 students from across the country and around the world interact with a world-class faculty, and enjoy a nationally competitive NCAA I athletic program, an inspiring cultural calendar, and a tradition of community interaction that is fueled by more than 180 student clubs and organizations.

Visit coastal.edu for more information.

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 MARCH 9,2024 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
2007 TOYOTA CAMRY
VIN: 4T1BK46K67U011649
LAST REGISTERED OWNER :
Aquiles P Dossantos,
19 SOUTH ST
MARLBOROUGH MA 01752
2004 GMC ENVOY
Vin: 1GKET16SX46100383
LAST REGISTERED OWNER:
Nicole M Fullen
99 WAYLAND ST,APT 2
DORCHESTER MA 02125
2007 SCION TC
VIN: JTKDE177570152385
LAST REGISTERED OWNER:
Donald B Harmon,
20 SPRUCE ST
KINGSTON MA 02364
2022 Mercedes-Benz A-Class (Gray
VIN: W1K3G4FBXNJ373174
LAST REGISTERED OWNER:
Marsha Stein
1235 VFW PKWY,APT 408
WEST ROXBURY, MA 02132
2007 PONTIAC TORRENT
VIN :2CKDL63F076028046
LAST REGISTERED OWNER :
Williams Antonio Ynoa-Garcia
122 North 4th St, Apt 2
Allentown PA 01802
2008 CHEVROLET TAHOE
VIN:1GNFK13028J191598
LAST REGISTERED OWNER :
George Abernathy
8 YOUNG ST
NEW HAVEN CT 06511
2012 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE
VIN: 1C4RJFBT4CC250150
LAST KNOWN REGISTERED OWNER :

Ribeiro Daniela Rodrigues,
16 W BOWERS ST
LOWELL MA 01854
2004 ACURA TSX
VIN: JH4CL96984C043826
Josefina M Rodriguez
17 MAIN ST
SOUTHBRIDGE MA 01550
2017 NISSAN ALTIMA
VIN:1N4AL3AP4HC145907
LAST KNOWN REGISTERED OWNER:
Frey Luis Mota-Campusano
70 North 6th St
Patterson NJ 07522
2012 Chevrolet Sonic
VIN:1G1JC6SH9C4173409
LAST KNOWN REGISTERED OWNER :
Farra Joan Carmichael
115 DANIELS RD,
Charlton MA 01507
2014 FORD ESCAPE
VIN:1FMCU9GX9EUC72096
LAST KNOWN REGISTERED OWNER :
Breno Luiz Torres Mendes
17 KENDALL ST
WORCESTER MA 01601
1996 HONDA ACCORD
VIN:1HGCD5638TA299866
LAST KNOWN REGISTERED OWNER :
Daniel Satterwhite Jr
509 Burnside Ave
East Hartford CT 06108
2008 AUDI A4
VIN: WAUDF78E48A023728
LAST KNOWN REGISTERED OWNER:
Mason W Sales
186 MASSASOIT RD, APT 1,
WORCESTER, MA 01604
FEBRUARY 23,2024
MARCH 1, 2024
MARCH 8, 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. W024C0045CA
CITATION ON PETITION PETITION
TO CHANGE NAME
In the matter of: Natalie Nicole Szabo
A Petition for **Change Name of Adult** has been filed by Natalie Nicole Szabo of **Charlton MA** requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:
Nico Nicole Szabo
IMPORTANT NOTICE
Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at:
Worcester Probate and Family court before **10:00 a.m.** on the return day of **03/05/2024**. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.
WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.
Date: January 30, 2024
Stephanie K. Fattman,
Register of Probate
February 22, 2024

Town of Holland Zoning Board of Appeals
Notice of Public Hearing
In accordance with M.G. L Chapter 40A the Holland Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing,
Wednesday, February 28 at 7:15 P.M. at the Holland Town Hall, 27 Sturbridge Rd, Holland MA 01521 **or** remotely for more information please refer to the town website at <https://town.holland.ma.us>
Zoning Board of Appeals, agendas for the date specified above. The purpose of the hearing is to consider a request from **Richard Asselin** for a variance according to Holland Bylaw section 8.05.
Relief requested: 5.0-Dimensional Density Regulations easement on setbacks for building a platform deck. The property located at: **15**

Craig Rd., Holland, MA Parcel ID # **R21/C/211.**
Don Beal, Chairperson
Zoning Board of Appeals
Date: 2/1/2024
February 15, 2024
February 22, 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 February 28, 2024, at 7PM on the application of Kendall Homes, Inc.
The applicant has submitted a Request for Determination of Applicability for the proposed installation of a sewage disposal system, house, and well for a new home. A small portion of breakout fill is within the 100-foot buffer zone, no work is proposed in the 50-foot buffer zone. The project location is: Lot 52 Jennings 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, via Zoom Conferencing by calling 1-646 558 8656 and using meeting ID # 892 9898 0343 Passcode 458971 or using the link below <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89298980343?pwd=VjIMZG9hUGRnYzRkR1c2eT-JTL3lWZz09>
Copies of the RDA may be examined at the Conservation Office by appointment during business hours.
Thomas O'Malley
Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission
February 22, 2024

LEGALS

Town of Brimfield Conservation Commission Public Hearing Notice

In accordance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, Chapter 131, Section 40, the Brimfield Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting on Wednesday March 13, 2024, at 6:00 PM to review a Notice of Intent submitted by Mark Morisi. The Notice of Intent is requesting to remove an existing house and construction of a new single-family home and garage.
Project Location: 78 First Street, Brimfield, MA (Assessor’s Map 5C-A-53)

Meeting Location: Public Participation will be In-Person at Hitchcock Academy at 2 Brookfield Road, Brimfield, MA 01010 on March 13, 2024, at 6:00 PM. Any person(s) interested or wishing to be heard on this request should appear at the time and place designated. A copy of the permit application and plan may be inspected at the Brimfield Town Annex in the Conservation Commission Office, Salisbury Annex Building, 2nd Floor, 23 Main Street, Brimfield, MA 01010 or contact the office at 413-245-4100 ext. 1101.
Roger deBruyn & Joseph Venezia Co-Chairs
02/12/2024
CC: Board of Health
Planning Board
February 22, 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. W024C0046CA CITATION ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME

In the matter of: Alexander Joseph Dickson
A Petition for **Change Name of Minor** has been filed by **Alexander Joseph Dickson of Southbridge, MA** requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:
Alexander Joseph Morales
IMPORTANT NOTICE
Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at:
Worcester Probate and Family court before **10:00 a.m.** on the return day of **03/05/2024**. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.
WITNESS, Hon. Leilah A. Keamy, First Justice of this Court.
Date: January 31, 2023
Stephanie K. Fattman,
Register of Probate
February 22, 2024

Town of Brimfield Legal Notice – Invitation to Bid Trolley Trail East Pedestrian Bridge Project IFB2024BTC01

Sealed proposals for furnishing the following will be received at the Office of the Select Board, Town Hall Annex, 23 Main Street, Brimfield, MA 01010 until the time specified below at which time the bids will be publicly opened and read.
Specifications and bid forms may be obtained at the Office of the Select Board, beginning February 15, 2024 Monday through Thursday between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. or can be requested by emailing selectboard@brimfieldma.org.
A mandatory pre-bid site visit will begin at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, March 4, 2024, located at the Trail Gate between 34 and 40 East Brimfield Holland Road, Brimfield, MA.
Bids will be opened in the Select Board Office located at 23 Main Street, Brimfield, MA on the 11th day of March 2024 at 10:00 a.m. Each Bid must be accompanied by a bid security consisting of a BID BOND, CASH, or CERTIFIED CHECK issued by a responsible bank or trust company in the amount of 5% of the bid price.
A 50 percent payment bond of the total amount of the contract price with a surety company qualified to do business in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will be required.
All bids for this project are subject to applicable public bidding laws of Massachusetts, including, but not limited to G.L. c.30, §39M.
Attention is directed to the minimum wage rates to be paid as determined by the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development and the weekly payroll record submittal requirements under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 149, Section 26 through 27D inclusive.
Selection of the contractor will be based upon bidder qualifications, including evidence of past performance in similar projects, and bid price. The contract will be awarded to the bidder deemed by the awarding authority to be the lowest responsible and eligible bidder. The bidder agrees that its bid shall be

good and may not be withdrawn for a period of 30 days, Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays excluded, after the opening of the bids.
The Town 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 may be deemed to be in the best interest of the Town.
Respectfully Submitted:
Martin J. Kelly, Select Board,
Chairperson
Town of Brimfield
February 15, 2024
February 22, 2024

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENTS
In accordance with the provisions of MGL Chapter 40A, Section 5, the Sturbridge Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing in the second floor meeting room at the Center Office Building – 301 Main Street, Sturbridge on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 6:50 PM to consider amendments to the Town’s Zoning Bylaw.
The proposed amendments will clean up inconsistent terms, typographical errors, missing text and improper footnotes that were noticed after using the bylaw as revised during the Codification Project in 2021. Simple language amendments will be made to Article XI – Accessory Dwelling Units, §300-11.4 Accessory dwelling unit standards, Article XIV – Intensity Regulations, §300-14.1 A to correct typographical errors and missing text. Article XIV – Intensity Regulations §300-14.2 Table of Standards will be amended by cleaning up the numbering of the footnotes, and §300-2.2 Terms Defined, §300-15.8 Trailer coaches, and §300-3.4 Floodplain District G. G will be amended to clean up inconsistent terms (manufactured home, trailer coach, trailer coach park, campground, dwelling and manufactured housing community).
A copy of the zoning bylaw proposal can be inspected on the Sturbridge Town Website at <https://www.sturbridge.gov/planning-board/webforms/proposed-zoning-bylaw-amendments> or arrangements can be made to view the zoning bylaw proposal by contacting the Sturbridge Planning Department at (508) 347-2508 or by email at jlacy@sturbridge.gov.
Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted in person and may be conducted via remote means if circumstance warrant, in accordance with applicable law. This means that members of the public body as well as members of the public may access this meeting in person, or via virtual means.
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/472675877>
Every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post of the Town’s website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of the proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.
Charles Blanchard
Chairperson
February 22, 2024
February 29, 2024

LEGAL NOTICE

A public hearing on the proposed Holland Elementary School budget for **2024-2025** will be held on **Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. at the Holland Elementary School**, in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 71, S. 38N. Copies of the proposed budget are available from the office of the Principal at Holland Elementary School.
NOTE: The regular school committee meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m.
Laura Alden
School Committee Chair
February 22, 2024

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE
Mortgagee’s Sale of Real Estate
By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Realty Funding Advisors LLC to DCB Realty LLC dated December 15, 2022 and recorded with the Worcester County Registry of Deeds, Book 68611, page 317, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing, the same will be sold at Public Auction at 12:00 o’clock, p.m. on the **1st day of March 2024**, at Alpine Drive, Southbridge, Massachusetts, Worcester County, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage,
To wit:
The land in Southbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts and all privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging situated on the easterly side of Alpine Drive, formerly called Brick Yard Road, bounded and described as follows:
BEGINNING at the Northwest corner of said parcel, at an iron pipe located on

the easterly side of Alpine Drive
THENCE S 80° 31’ 51” E, along land now or formerly of Roland W. Julian and Gloria I. Julian for a distance of 103.88 feet to an iron pipe;
THENCE S 21° 34’ 54” W, along land now or formerly of Roland W. Julian and Gloria I. Julian for a distance of 188.40 feet to an iron pipe;
THENCE S 24° 38’ 54” W, along land now or formerly of Roland W. Julian and Gloria I. Julian for a distance of 137.70 feet to an iron pipe;
THENCE S 25° 46’ 54” W, along land now or formerly of Roland W. Julian and Gloria I. Julian for a distance of 175.90 feet to an iron pipe;
THENCE S 19° 24’ 54” W, along land now or formerly of Roland W. Julian and Gloria I. Julian for a distance of 146.30 feet to an iron pipe;
THENCE N 86° 6’ 02” W, along a stone wall now or formerly of Stanley Dudek for a distance of 21.73 feet to an iron pipe;
THENCE N 74° 40’ 00” W, along land now or formerly of Edward J. Paquette for a distance of 105.48 feet to an iron pipe;
THENCE N 59° 13’ 00” W, along land now or formerly of Carmen Paquette for a distance of 98.33 feet to an iron pipe located on the easterly side of Alpine Drive;
THENCE N 33° 15’ 00” E, along the easterly side of Alpine Drive for a distance of 65.83 feet;
THENCE N 34° 08’ 15” E, along the easterly side of Alpine Drive for a distance of 336.27 feet;
THENCE N 33° 25’ 27” E, along the easterly side of Alpine Drive for a distance of 240.50 feet to the point of beginning.
SAID parcel contains 2.38 acres.
Premises to 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.
The premises are also sold subject to the right of redemption of the United States of America.
Terms of Sale:
1. Successful bidder must furnish a deposit in the amount of TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$10,000.00) in cash or certified bank check at the time and place of sale;
2. Remaining balance to be paid at closing;
3. Closing to occur on or before the 30th day after sale;
4. Minimum successful bid in an amount no less than \$55,000.00;
5. Subject to all encumbrances, prior liens and such matters which may constitute valid liens or encumbrances after sale;
6. Foreclosure deed to be delivered to purchaser for recording upon full receipt of the purchase price;
7. Description of the premises set forth in the mortgage controls in the event of any error in the Notice of Sale;
8. Purchaser responsible for all closing costs, recording costs, deed stamps, accrued or pastdue property taxes, etc.;
9. In the event of default by highest bidder, second highest bidder may purchase provided deposit is paid within five (5) days of notice, otherwise a new auction sale will be conducted;
10. All information pertaining to the sale and any potential postponements will be posted at the property, and all other inquiries can be directed to Joseph P. Carnevale, Esq. via telephone (401) 314-0733 or email jcarnevale@savagelawpartners.com
Any other applicable terms to be announced at time of sale.
DCB Realty LLC
By its attorneys:
Joseph P. Carnevale, Esq.
Savage Law Partners, LLP
564 South Water Street
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 314-0733
jcarnevale@savagelawpartners.com
February 8, 2024
February 15, 2024
February 22, 2024

In accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act, Chapter 131, Sec 40, a public hearing by the Conservation Commission will be held on Tuesday 2/27/2024 in the Conservation Commission Room, second floor, in the Holland Town Hall, 27 Sturbridge Rd, Holland, MA. This meeting is to review a Notice of Intent (NOI) filed by Gerard Rocchi to add a new deck at 7 Waterfront Way, Holland, MA. To comply with the Open Meeting Law, all public hearings are scheduled for 7:00 PM and, barring unforeseen circumstances, will be taken in the order in which they appear on the agenda. This meeting will be held

in person and virtual; for virtual meeting login information contact Holland Conservation at conservation@hollandma.org or call (413) 245-7108 x114.
Conservation Commission
Town of Holland
October 11, 2023
February 22, 2024

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Leominster District Court 25 School Street Leominster, MA 01453 (978) 537-3722

Lori Hurley, PLAINTIFF(S),
CIVIL NO. 2361-CV-311
v. SUMMONS Tracy Atwater a/k/a Tracy D. Atwater, Neverbuilt, LLC
DEFENDANT(S)
THIS SUMMONS IS DIRECTED TO Tracy Atwater a/k/a Tracy D. Atwater (Defendant’s name)
1. **This Notice is to inform you that you are being sued.** The person or business suing you is known as the Plaintiff. A copy of the Plaintiffs Complaint against you is attached and the original has been filed in the Leominster Division of the District Court Department. You must respond to this lawsuit in writing. If you do not respond, the Plaintiff may obtain a court order requiring you to pay money or provide other relief.
2. **You must respond within 20 days to protect your rights.** In order to protect your right to defend yourself in this lawsuit, you must deliver or mail a written response called an “Answer” to both the “Clerk’s Office for Civil Business, Leominster District Court, 23 School Street, Leominster, MA 01453” and to the individual below: David Appleyard, Esq., at Reynolds Law Offices, PO Box 357South Lancaster, Mass. 01561
Your Answer must be delivered or mailed within 20 days from the date the Summons was delivered to you. If you need more time to respond, you may request an extension of time in writing from the Court.
3. **Your Answer must respond to each claim made by the Plaintiff.**- Your Answer is your written response to the statements made by the Plaintiff in the Complaint. In your Answer you must state whether you agree or disagree with each paragraph of the Complaint. You may agree with some of the things the Plaintiff says and disagree with other things. You may also say that you do not know whether one (or more) of the statements made in the Plaintiffs.Complaint is true. If you want to have your case heard by a jury, you must specifically request a jury trial in your Answer.· Even if you agree that you owe what is claimed, sending an Answer will provide you with an opportunity to participate and explain your circumstances.
4. **You must list any reason why you should not have to pay the Plaintiff what the Plaintiff asks for.** If you have any reason(s) why the Plaintiff should not get what the Plaintiff asks for in the Complaint, you must write those reasons (or “defenses”) in your Answer.
5. **You may lose this case if you do not send an Answer to the Court and the Plaintiff.** If you do not mail or deliver the Answer within 20 days, yciu may lose this case. You . will have no opportunity to tell your side of the story and the Court may order that the Plaintiff receive everything requested in the Complaint. The Court may allow a motion permitting the Plaintiff take your property and/or wages. If you respond to the Complaint and appear at the hearing, you will get an impartial hearing by a judge. Even if you choose to discuss this matter with the Plaintiff (or the Plaintiffs lawyer), you should still send your Answer within 20 days. Even if you file an Answer, you can still reach an agreement with the Plaintiff.
6. **Legal Assistance.** You may wish to get legal help from a lawyer. If you cannot get legal help, you must still provide a written Answer to protect your rights or you may lose the case. You may also obtain information at www.mass.gov/courts/selfhelp.
7. **You can also sue the Plaintiff.** If you believe the Plaintiff owes you money or has harmed you in some way related to the lawsuit, you must describe that in your Answer. If you do not include these claims (called “Counterclaims”) in your written response, you may lose your ability to sue the Plaintiff about anything related to this lawsuit.
8. You or your attorney must attend all court hearings. If you send your Answer to the Court and the Plaintiff, you will protect your rights. The Court will send you a notice telling you the date, time, and place of an impartial hearing before a judge. The judge will hear both sides of any arguments and schedule any additional hearings.
9. The civil number appearing on the front of this notice is the case docket number and must appear on the front of your Answer.
Witness Hon. Mark E. Noonan, First Justice December 4, 3023
February 22, 2024

SPORTS

Tantasqua tops Rams before both sides head to impressive tournaments

STURBRIDGE — Positive regular season schedules closed for the Tantasqua and Shepherd Hill girls' varsity basketball teams on Thursday, Feb. 15, as the 13-4 Warriors, the Southern Worcester County League A Division champions, hosted the 11-6 Rams, the Midland-Wachusett B Division winners.

Shepherd Hill Head Coach Maura Hackenson said before the game, "We have always had strong games with (Tantasqua) and assuming this will be the same this year. Both teams have winning records and we are looking to move up the State Power Rankings."

Hackenson recognized that their opponents have some tough, physical, experienced players, adding, "We are playing well together as a team. We have an even balance of guard and forward play and they do as well. We will hope to continue our style of play this game. Our team is focused late in the season and everyone is improving. I couldn't ask for much more."

Andrew Haley, head coach of Tantasqua, was looking forward to the matchup with the Rams. He said before the game, "Shepherd Hill are a good, well coached team who play a tough schedule. This should be a fun game for both teams. I expect both teams to play their best."

Halfway through the first quarter, this evenly paced game had Tantasqua ahead 9-7. Both teams traded bas-



Courtesy Dawn Pepka-Jones
Ashley Dickhaut completes the follow through as she takes a free throw for Shepherd Hill.



Courtesy Dawn Pepka-Jones
Shepherd Hill's Heidi Jarosz goes up strong to collect the defensive rebound.



Courtesy Dawn Pepka-Jones
Shepherd Hill's Shayley Szela makes a move around a defender on her way to the hoop.

kets while feeling out what their opponents were going to bring to the court. Tantasqua showed their intentions first, doubling their score, holding Shepherd Hill to just 2 additional points through the quarter. Tantasqua led 18-9 at the end of the frame.

The Rams were not going quietly, they settled into the game, coming within one point, 20-19, after 4 minutes of second quarter play. The Warriors held their lead with aggressive defense, gaining control of some miss-timed Ram passes. The Hill kept within striking distance, but the Warriors held the lead going into halftime, 29-25.

The Rams put pressure on the Warriors with their full-court press, but Tantasqua

found outlet passes quickly and capitalized on many fast breaks. Coming out of the third quarter, the Warriors extended their lead, 39-27.

Tantasqua pulled ahead and never looked back, out-scoring Shepherd Hill 16-12 in the final 8 minutes of play. Tantasqua took the regular season finale win, 55-39.

Shepherd Hill went on to play in the Westborough Invitational Tournament, which Coach Hackenson and the Lady Rams were looking forward to taking part in.

"As for a tournament, this one has great competition, it is well run and respected," said Hackenson, adding, "It is our home away from home (as we have played there so much.) They have successful

teams from all divisions in the state and we have to mentally prepare for competition we know and competition we don't face normally. This tournament prepares each team for the postseason, and we will face Westborough again in the first game."

Playing the Rangers for the third time this season, the fourth seeded Rams defeated No. 5 Westborough in the rubber match, 57-55. Shepherd Hill was then slated to play No. 1 Medway in the semifinals, after press time. Once the Rams finish up play in the Westborough Tournament, the Division 2 State Tournament is up next.

Tantasqua went on to play in the Clark Tournament Large Schools bracket before

participating in the Division 3 State Tournament. Haley believes that the Clark Tournament is a good test for his team before going into States.

"Don't worry about the seeding and just look forward to the experience," Haley told his players.

The top seeded Warriors defeated No. 8 Oakmont in the first round of the Clark on Saturday, Feb. 17, by a final of 33-17 at Grafton High. Tantasqua then played No. 4 Millbury in the semifinals at Clark University on Monday, Feb. 19. The Warriors were able to defeat the Woolies for the third time this season, this time by a final of 30-26. Tantasqua will take on No. 2 Northbridge in the Clark final on Saturday, Feb. 24 at 7:45 p.m.

Pioneers fall to David Prouty in Clark Tournament action

OXFORD — Making their 28th appearance in the Clark Tournament and first since 2009, the Southbridge boys' varsity basketball team has had an impressive turnaround season.

The problem for the Pioneers, though, was that they ran into the defending Clark Small Schools champion in David Prouty in first round play on Saturday, Feb. 17 at Oxford High. The second seeded Panthers doubled up No. 7 Southbridge, 72-36.

The Pioneers, who dropped to 10-9 on the season, were paced by Elden Tucker's 11 points, while Dylan Szczypien and Jan Rodriguez-Lopez each pulled down 7 rebounds. Southbridge next took on Sutton in a Clark consolation game after press time before embarking on the Division 5 State Tournament.



Nick Ethier photos
Southbridge's Justyn Ramos looks ahead while contemplating his next move with the ball.



Nick Ethier photos
Jan Rodriguez-Lopez of Southbridge catches a pass inside the paint.



Nick Ethier photos
Southbridge's Michael Cook-Ramos dribbles the ball ahead.

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SPORTS

Tantasqua, Shepherd Hill headline late slate of Clark Tournament

Warriors take down Oakmont, while Rams fall short against Millbury

By Nick Ethier
Sports Editor
WORCESTER — A packed Kneller Center was rocking on Sunday evening, Feb. 18, as a pair of Clark Tournament Large Schools semifinals took place. Local teams from Tantasqua and Shepherd Hill took part, as the Warriors and Rams won a day before at Shepherd Hill in the quarterfinal round. In those first round games Tantasqua, seeded sixth, upset No. 3 Westborough (80-47), while the top ranked Rams got past No. 8 Groton-Dunstable (59-45).

At Clark, the Warriors played No. 7 Oakmont in the opener, while Shepherd Hill took on No. 4 Millbury in the nightcap.

Tantasqua 52, Oakmont 30 — The Warriors weren't able to score at such a high rate like they did against Westborough, but the team's pressuring defense — which they say is their calling card — stood out again against the Spartans.

"Yesterday, we were playing on a little bit more of a traditional high school basketball court, so our pressure was able to generate some offense for us. Today, our pressure didn't generate offense, but it kept them on their heels," explained Tantasqua head coach Scott Dion. "They play with a lot of guards and spread the floor; they're really good at drive-and-kick, and I thought our pressure slowed them down, even on a larger floor. So, it was pretty impressive for our



Tantasqua's Bryce Tessier works the ball into the paint on an Oakmont defender.



James Sciaraffa of Tantasqua keeps his eyes glued on Oakmont ball handler Sam Curtis.



Shepherd Hill's Zachary Wennerberg floats past Millbury defender Kenny Donnelly and toward the basket.



Shepherd Hill's Alex Lanpher finishes off a layup versus Millbury.

kids."

The Warriors grabbed a 9-0 lead at the end of the first quarter, with Bryce Tessier being the biggest beneficiary of the start. Tessier scored the game's first seven points and pulled down three quick rebounds. Tessier ultimately finished with a game-high 15 points.

"I came in pretty fired up today. We wanted to get a big win today, and I kind of felt like today was my day. I knew that they were a little undersized and it was kind of my spot to get in there," said Tessier before weighing in on the defense. "Our strong point is our defense and just being able to hold a team low, especially scoreless in the first quarter like that, raises energy to the offensive side. It just

revs the motor and gets us going on both ends of the floor."

Tantasqua took a 21-12 lead into the halftime break and then won second half scoring by a 31-18 count to win by 22 points. The Warriors' rebounding advantage was also monumental. The taller Tantasqua side won the battle of the boards, 41-10.

"Bryce Tessier was awesome. Elijah Webb is a good shooter, but he's also tall and they were trying to take away his outside shot and he got down there and really did well around the basket, as did Sam Pieczynski coming off

the bench, and Jack Rapose," said Dion. "We made it a conscious effort to try to score around the basket, and it paid off."

In addition to Tessier's 15 points, Pieczynski added 13 points, and Webb (10 rebounds) and Rapose both finished with 9 points.

Millbury 51, Shepherd Hill 48 — Whenever the Rams and Woolies have met in the recent past — last year's Clark Tournament title game and this winter's regular season matchup — it has gone down to the wire. The same can be said this time around, except the end re-

sult was different. Shepherd Hill won each of the first two games, but Millbury exacted its revenge.

"You know going into it that it's going to come down to the last possession," said Mike Rapoza, head coach of the Rams.

Aside from a 4-3 lead, Shepherd Hill was playing catch up during the game. The Hill trailed after the first quarter, 11-4, at the half, 19-14, and through three periods, 32-25.

"I give our guys credit because we could have folded. We didn't. We played hard," Rapoza said. "Starting slow in the first half defi-



Tantasqua's Colm McGrath heads down the floor dribbling the ball while on the fast break.



Reid Szela of Shepherd Hill looks to the interior to bounce a pass into Alex Lanpher.

nately cost us. Obviously you want a different result, we'd love to get a win, but I'm proud of our guys."

The Rams' fourth quarter rally was nearly enough to win, as they trimmed the deficit down to a single point (42-41) following one free throw from Alex Lanpher, an offensive rebound from Reid Szela and a 3-pointer from Lucas Miglionico.

"Our guys battle every single game. That's all we ask," said Rapoza.

Miglionico led Shepherd Hill with 24 points, including 12 in the fourth quarter.

"He gets up for these moments," Rapoza said of Miglionico. "He makes big plays when the team needs him to."

Zachary Wennerberg (10 points) and Lanpher (9 points) were the other high scorers following Miglionico's output.

Now in the game's final seconds, Millbury's Kenny Donnelly hit one free throw and, following his missed second attempt, Miglionico grabbed the ball. After a few dribbles, he passed down the court to Luke Poirier. As Poirier was about to shoot a 3-pointer, the final buzz-

er sounded as the Woolies celebrated their victory.

"You've got to regroup. You've got to take lessons from tonight because hopefully we're playing games like this the rest of the way and we've got to find a way to come out on the other side," Rapoza said of the Rams' next endeavor in the Division 2 State Tournament, as Millbury will tangle with Tantasqua for the Clark Tournament Large Schools championship back at the Kneller Center on Friday, Feb. 23 at 7:45 p.m.

Emma Earls named to Hamilton College Dean's List

CLINTON, N.Y. — Emma Earls, of Sturbridge, has been named to the Dean's List at Hamilton College for the 2023 fall semester.

To be named to the Dean's List, a student must have carried a course load of four or more graded credits throughout the semester and earned an average of 3.5 or above on a 4.0 scale.

Earls, a senior majoring in creative writing, is a graduate of Deerfield Academy.

Hamilton College, a leading liberal arts institution located in Clinton, New York, is where exceptional students explore passions through an open curriculum and robust research, internship, and off-campus study opportunities. Students graduate ready to lead purposeful lives thanks to highly regarded faculty mentors, generous resources that support each student's interests, and a loyal alumni network. The College's need-blind admission policy ensures access for talented students with limited financial means. Learn more at www.hamilton.edu.

WORCESTER — More than 1,600 students were named to the College of the Holy Cross' Dean's List for outstanding academic achievement during the Fall semester of the 2023-24 academic year. The following local students made the list:

Matthew Jolie of Sturbridge, Class of 2025
Madeline Kay of Uxbridge, Class of 2027

A hole in one is twice the fun at Joshua Hyde Library

STURBRIDGE — Feeling stir crazy? Looking for a fun way to get the kids off the couch? Come to the Joshua Hyde Public Library in Sturbridge March 2 or 3 for a round of Mini-Golf!

That weekend, the library will be transformed into a multi-hole mini-golf course that wends its way through the entire library. Holes will take you through mystery, travel, science fiction...up, down and all around. Don't miss this chance to have a "hole" lot of fun and support

your library at the same time! This year we are also combining our fundraising efforts with our annual PJ Drive, so please consider bringing in a new pair of kid jammies as well.

The course will be open Saturday, March 2 from 10:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 3 from 12:30 – 4 p.m. The price is \$5 per person with a \$20 maximum per family. One \$5 fee will be waived for each pair of new pajamas you bring in for the Bruins/Cradles to Crayons PJ Drive.



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SPORTS

Minutemen rain down 3-pointers to defeat Narragansett, qualify for State Tournament

BY NICK ETHIER
SPORTS EDITOR

CHARLTON — Just eight seconds into their contest with Narragansett, Peter Barbale of the Bay Path boys’ varsity basketball team drained a 3-pointer. And, after Joseph Denis hit a triple for the Warriors, Zack Moody and Dale Nussey followed Barbale’s lead with back-to-back 3-pointers in a Central Mass. Athletic Directors Association (CMADA) non-playoff game played Friday, Feb. 16.

The Minutemen never lost their lead from there, and they combined for 12 made 3-pointers as they surged past Narragansett, 66-38.

“That has been a focus of ours because we have struggled to score this year,” Bay Path head coach Al Greenough said of the successful shots from beyond the arc. “We spent a lot of time at practice doing a lot of shooting drills and they seem to be responding to that.”

The Minutemen have now gone 8-2 following a 2-7 start to the season. As a result, Bay Path has automatically qualified for the upcoming Division 2 State Tournament with its 10th victory.

“We knew that we were going to grow as the year went on, it’s kind of what we’ve been building for. We just went from 2-7 and now we’re in the Tournament, which is great,” explained Greenough. “They earned it, so we’re excited about that.”

Greenough noted that losing Trent Szela before the season started was a huge blow to the team.

“We lost one of our best players due to a season-long injury, Trent Szela, our senior captain,” said Greenough,



Nick Ethier

Bay Path's Corey Scovil elevates to win the game-opening jump ball versus Narragansett.



Nick Ethier

Peter Barbale of Bay Path, left, tries to block a shot from the interior taken by Narragansett's Maxim Kauffman.



Nick Ethier

Bay Path defenders Dale Nussey (1) and Matteo Mastrototaro (5) tightly defend Narragansett's Maxim Kauffman (2) and Brayden Richards, respectively.

as Szela was injured during the final soccer game in the fall. “He was our defensive stopper, probably one of the best defenders in Central Mass., actually. When you lose a player like that, I think we kind of lost a little bit of our identity at the beginning of the year because he was one of our only seniors.”

Losing a great defensive player, plus about 10-14 points per game, put more emphasis on Barbale to score, and opposing teams did what they could to lock him down.

“I think the kids took a little time to adjust. I also think with Peter Barbale on the team, he’s one of the better players in Central Mass., and teams all year long have been double-teaming him, triple-teaming him, box-and-ones, and it took our team a little bit of time to find their identity with that and to have other guys step up and have confi-

dence to make their shots,” Greenough explained.

The Minutemen have certainly found their confidence, as all 11 players who played versus Narragansett scored at least one basket.

“I’m glad we’re playing our best basketball right now, which is great. We’re a young team — we’re a junior laden team — so next year is what we’ve been building for. In the meantime, we want to win this year,” said Greenough. “In my 30 years here, this is the most difficult schedule we’ve had top to bottom, and front heavy. I knew that if we could weather that storm, we could come on strong.”

Against the Warriors, Bay Path led after the first quarter, 19-12, at halftime, 39-18, and through three quarters, 55-33, before winning by 28 points. Barbale hit five 3-pointers and finished with a game-high 23 points. And al-

though no other member of the Minutemen reached double figures, Moody, Nussey, Luke Smolski and Colin Plan- te all hit treys. And, on the glass, Bay Path outrebounded Narragansett by a sizable margin of 40-23, with 10 of 11 players pulling down at least one board.

“They know me as a coach and I’m a defensive coach, and I want every loose ball and every rebound,” said Greenough. “If they’re doing that and the little things in the game, they’re going to give themselves a better chance to win.”

And the Minutemen — who concluded their regular season schedule with a 51-46 victory versus Quaboag in another CMADA non-playoff matchup on Monday, Feb. 19 — have certainly done their fair share of winning recently as they now prepare to tangle in the Division 2 State Tournament.

‘True team effort’ helps Rams get by ‘tough’ Bay Path Northbridge again tops Minutemen in Clark Tournament rematch

BY NICK ETHIER
SPORTS EDITOR

NORTHBRIDGE — It was Senior Night at Veterans Memorial Field House on Thursday, Feb. 15, as the Northbridge girls’ varsity basketball team hosted Bay Path. The Rams’ five seniors — Delaney Mahoney, Macie Allen, Natalie Zborowski, Rachel Sawyer and Erika Dresp (10 points) — all started, all contributed, and junior Molly Gahan chipped in with a double-double (14 points, 14 rebounds), as Northbridge topped the Minutemen, 36-25.

“On Senior Night, it was a true team effort,” said Jeff Kozik, head coach of the Rams.

Northbridge improved to 13-5 on the season, while Bay Path slipped to 14-4.

“Bay Path is a very tough team. They keep coming at you. I thought a couple times we were going to put some distance between us, and they just crawled back. There’s absolutely no quit in that team,” Kozik said of the Minutemen. “That’s only their fourth loss of the season, so



Nick Ethier

Bay Path's Hannah Cavan hoists a long pass down the court.

that’s a very good team that doesn’t get the respect it deserves in the State ranking.

“For our girls, being able to mentally stick with it — it’s tough when you’re trying to put a team away and they keep coming back — so to be able to make timely baskets and big defensive stops was huge,” Kozik continued.

Bay Path head coach Randy Schulman mentioned that it wasn’t the type of game his team has been accustomed to playing as of late.

“I just think we didn’t come out and play our game. We didn’t play as aggressive as we had all season. We had more turnovers than we usually do, and our defense usually leads to offense,” said Schulman. “We’ve been shooting well the

last three or four games, but not tonight. I think we only made one 3 tonight.”

The Minutemen — who were paced by Annika Ferrantino’s 9-point, 9-rebound effort — had little time to worry about the loss to the Rams, as Bay Path and Northbridge met again on Saturday, Feb. 17 in the first round of the Clark Tournament Large Schools bracket at Grafton High before the tour-

ney moved to Clark University for the semifinal and final rounds.

“It will be a tough game on a neutral floor,” Kozik said of the upcoming rematch. “We’ll watch the tape, I’ll cut it up and we’ll watch it as a team, and I don’t think either team will drastically change much, you just try to fine-tune, see where your mistakes were.”

“There’s a fine line of what you want to show and



Nick Ethier

Annika Ferrantino of Bay Path focuses on the rim ahead before shooting a free throw.

what you don’t want to show,” Schulman added of the two games in three days situation. “I know we lost, but I’m encouraged with what we saw here tonight. It was a seven- to eight-point game for most of the game. We closed it to 25-20 and then we had one defensive lapse.”

With the score at the aforementioned 25-20 just seconds before the third quarter concluded,

Gahan gathered two offensive rebounds and made a post move for a bucket at the buzzer. Then, in the final period, Gahan again had a situation play out where she had two offensive boards and then made a basket. That time it made the score 32-25 in the Rams’ favor.

“We know that they’re a good team and they work around Molly,” Schulman said of Gahan. “She got a lot



Nick Ethier

Bay Path's Allison Welton catches a pass and looks to shoot a midrange jumper.

of put-backs and when she got the ball in the paint, she made us pay for it.”

Both coaches had positive thoughts about the Clark Tournament, which Northbridge took part in last season.

“That’s the goal, play at the Kneller Center,” Kozik said of trying to defeat Bay Path and then

make it to the Clark floor for the later rounds. “(Our girls) got to play two games there (last year), so I think it could be in our advantage.”

The Clark is a new experience for the Minutemen, as it is the girls’ debut in the tournament, while the boys haven’t taken part in over 30 years.

Input needed on Southbridge Hazard Mitigation Plan

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Town of Southbridge has launched a community survey to collect feedback on the community’s vulnerability to natural disasters and priorities for projects to address impacts of disasters. The town will use this information to update the Hazard Mitigation Plan, a requirement for Federal Emergency Management Agency

(FEMA) grant funding.

Community members can share information on storms and weather events that affected them or their property in the past. Concerns about future events and input on potential projects are also welcome. The Town will use the survey responses to write a draft plan, which will be available for public review and com-

ment later this spring.

Community members can provide feedback via the survey available here: <https://southbridge.civilspace.io/en/projects/update-to-southbridge-s-hazard-mitigation-plan/engagements/hmp-community-survey>. The survey will remain open until Feb. 25.

Local students named to UMass Amherst Dean’s List

AMHERST — Below is a list of local students who were named to the dean’s list at the University of Massachusetts Amherst for the fall 2023 semester.

In order to qualify, an undergraduate student must receive a 3.5 grade-point average or better on a four-point scale.

BRIMFIELD

Lydia Maeve Boland

Michael Reese Crosby

Ethan Charles Eroh

Jordan Reese Guillette

Erika Elizabeth Madden

Jonathan A Rubio

Libby Higgins Sheldon

Abigail Kathryn Stattenfield

FISKDALE

Olivia Sara George

Julia Howard

Lila Elinor Ives

Kristian Evan Klages

Fallon Elizabeth Matte

Brandon Goncalves Rodrigues

HOLLAND

Alexis Carson

Andrew James Radoc

STURBRIDGE

Maeve Margaret Brennan

Nadine Aliya Chidester

Zachary R Christenson

Carol Laura DeRose

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Jillian Andrea Gore

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Claire Theresa Godek

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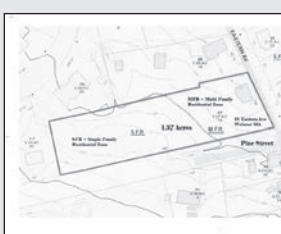
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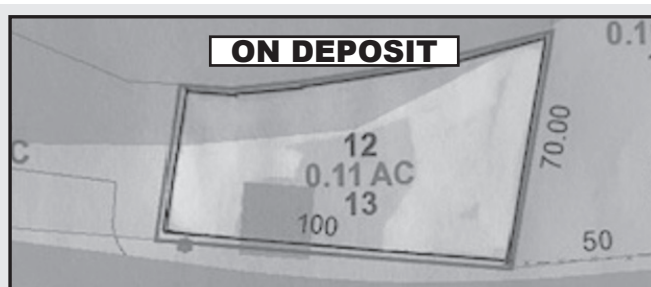


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PROTEST

continued from page 1

school in Connecticut.

Nobody from the district leadership attended the council meeting, however.

Linton said seven teachers have left this school year and others refused to come back after last year due to “mis-treatment.” Over time, she said, teachers have repeatedly filed complaints and grievances alleging mistreatment of various kinds, but they went nowhere. Her “emotional, physical and mental health began to decline” to the point where she felt she had to resign due to the conditions there.

After leaving, she said she spoke to a student who expressed the fol-

lowing concern: “What if we tell our stories and nothing changes? ... Her biggest fear is that everybody will see, everybody will hear and nothing will change.”

“It's high time this council act because we can't,” said School Committee member Andrew Murch, whose board has no authority under the receivership. “... We gave you the mandate, and you've done nothing.”

Specifically, Murch was referring to last year's advisory ballot question, where roughly 85 percent of the voters supported taking the schools back into town control. But the state has ignored that result. Nothing in the law lays out a process to end receiverships, and little has recently been done to train the

School Committee on how to run the district if it does eventually end.

That might change if the Thrive Act passes. The bill calls for major MCAS reforms and ending all current receiverships in one year after passage. Earlier this month, the Legislature's Joint Education Committee chose to continue deliberating it until the end of June rather than formally voting on it. Normally, bills have a Feb. 7 deadline to be sent to the full Legislature or “die in committee” and have to be refiled next cycle, so what that means for this bill is unclear.

Murch said he'd like to see the council demand the state investigate the issues here and, if they refuse, go to the federal Department of Education for one.

Chair Scott Lazo said Town Manager Jack Jovan did call the state trying to get them to come here, and last year the council tried to host a forum with them. Lazo said he would be willing to pay for buses to take a large group of Southbridgians to Boston.

Jovan said he's asked for a path to end the receivership, but the state has “no urgency.” Noting the School Committee has no power but does have a voice, he encouraged Murch to “lead that charge,” noting “we'll be your advocates.”

During Councilors' Forum later, Jasmin Rivas said she sent the state copies of teachers' union surveys citing various complaints, including that the school is “run like a prison,” administration “calls you out in front of students,” and staff not being able to take sick/personal days, but got no response. She urged people to “continue to send complaints, letters and document, document, document.”

John Daniel said he was glad to see people are willing to say “we have a problem” and asking to “work together to fix it.” He noted that it's “not just one or two people,” and “the frustration I sensed tonight is overwhelming.”

“The stories I'm hearing tonight absolutely horrify me,” he said, particularly pointing to allegations of sexual assault, Title IX violations, 504 Plans and IEPs being violated. When he was principal at Bartlett in Webster, he had to run several such investigations and noted all school staff are mandated reporters, so some of these issues should be going to the police.

“The camel's back is broken, and it's time,” Daniel added. “We need a bigger stick.”

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

TERPS

continued from page 1

people who are eager and ready to take over the operation.”

While the nuances of the change of ownership request were still new to the Board of Selectmen, they gave unanimous approval and welcomed the Charlton Investment Group with open arms.

Selectman Bill Borowski summed up his thoughts, saying he feels the transition is a simple business transaction.

“I look at it as this is nothing more to me than a change of ownership for a restaurant, a liquor store, et cetera,” Borowski said.

Officials did not indicate any anticipated changes in the com-

munity compact agreement resulting from the change of ownership. Representatives of Four Score Holding, LLC and Charlton Investments, LLC did not specify how the change of ownership would affect the other TERPs dispensaries in Attleboro and Wellfleet or if the Charlton dispensary would maintain the TERPs name.

STURBRIDGE

continued from page 1

received several applications for various kinds of cantilever docks. They approved them, but didn't quite know what to do with this issue going forward.

“What do you guys and the rest of the town want those lakes to look like over the next 10 years?” he asked. He noted ConCom can't tell people “they're too close or too far” from other docks, because the by-laws don't mention cantilevers at all.

BOS Chair Jamie Goodwin said his board does patrol the lakes. “If

any of this is unsafe, we will be a bit more aggressive, I suspect. We are operating boats and need to get to places safely.”

He noted, however, that “water is always public,” and the state and federal governments “always take the position [they] don't care what the local government wants.” (Technically, that only applies to designated “great ponds,” natural bodies over 10 acres in size, but all of the lakes in question are.)

Regarding historical preservation, the presentation largely mirrored one recently given to the Planning Board.

HistCom chair Richard Volpe said they commissioned this study hoping to use it to help “get a percentage of what goes to OSV to hang around another day or two to see what we have, from an economic point of view, it's a great deal.” The study found several issues needing work, including finding volunteers to do things, communication between boards and departments, adding to the townwide inventory and documentation of sites, clarifying how sites can be reused, and storage of historical materials. Among other things, he noted most of the commission's

own documents are “hand-written from 1969 or 1970.”

Volpe said he liked the fact the report set out goals as “near” and “long-term” projects over several years. In his experience, boards often try “to do everything you can at one time, and you end up getting nothing done that way.”

Planner Jean Bubon said about 500 people responded to the townwide survey for this project. Volpe said some weren't at all interested, some very much so. But a common concern was that many owners didn't want their homes to be included in a historic

district out of fear they wouldn't be able to renovate if needed.

Board members noted that's no longer true and will be considering new regulations going forward.

Bubon later added that her department is also working on a Housing Plan, updating several chapters of the Master Plan, and sent out a survey with the recent charter update that received about 10 percent response.

Bubon is also looking into bylaws regarding AirBNB-type short-term rentals after getting calls from people seeking to do that and those con-

cerned about it. She specifically cited two calls that day – from someone seeking land to build “tiny homes” for that use and one wanting to do mobile homes – and said West Brookfield has had traffic and parking issues around their lakes from such uses.

Town Administrator Robin Grimm agreed, noting, “You'll hear more about this AirBNB. We need to do something fairly quickly, if only for safety reasons. ... We're one of many communities battling this.”

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

BUDGET

continued from page 1

discussed with the towns in December and January. With that in mind, Lamarche provided two more proposals that would keep the district below the \$2 million increase. Option 2 proposed possible cuts of educators and paraprofessionals and compromises in technology and late bus operations. Any combination of these cuts would be made to create up to \$563,000 in savings. Option 3 contains the most extreme cuts, eliminating four teaching positions, three paraprofessionals, and cuts to technology and late bus operations that would bring the budget to a low of \$1.9 million. All options

include bringing back the Assistant Superintendent position and take into consideration contractual obligations including a higher-than-expected increase in health insurance. Lamarche did not specify what the cost sharing split would be between Dudley and Charlton due to some unknown figures, but said those specifics should be available in March.

“If you look at some of our planned reductions, if our starting mark was \$2 million it would be even better with some of the reductions that we offered as other options in there. It's not Fiscal Year 2024 over again, thank goodness,” Lamarche said.

Several school committee members

cautioned against making further program and staff cuts especially considering how those compromises could impact enrollment and the student experience. The School Committee made no official motions during the meeting as it was simply an informational session with the district towns.

A budget workshop has been scheduled for Feb. 28 with a budget hearing

EARTHBORN
continued from page 6

tion, control and competition that leads to nuclear war. The other side is a dirt road, that of dogma, ignorance and suspicion that leads to civil war

on March 13 where the committee is likely to present its recommended budget option including cost sharing figures for the two towns. Another workshop has been tentatively scheduled for later in March as needed. Both Dudley and Charlton voters will address the education and municipal spending plans at their respective annual spring town meetings which are both scheduled for May 20.

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Country Bank supports communities with 2023 donations exceeding \$1.2 million

REGION — Country Bank, a full-service financial institution serving Central and Western Massachusetts, proudly reported more than \$1.2 million in donations for 2023. The bank's philanthropic efforts supported local non-profits throughout its communities, with 463 organizations receiving grants in 2023.



Bank's philanthropic efforts in 2023 was its partnership with the Wonder Fund during the "Season of Difference" Campaign. This collaboration aimed to support kids and families in Central and Western Massachusetts' Department of Children and Families (DCF) system. By joining forces with the Wonder Fund,

In addition to financial support, Country Bank's team members dedicated their time and expertise to make a difference. They volunteered 1,255 hours of community service, demonstrating their commitment to giving back. Furthermore, 37 team members served on 65 non-profit boards and committees, actively contributing to the success of these organizations.

As a community bank, it recognizes the importance of supporting financial literacy; Country Bank held four Credit for Life Fairs for 1,500 High School Seniors to educate them on credit, budgeting, and how their decisions impact their financial wellness. Classes were also held at Christina's House and within various schools throughout the community. In partnership with Greenlight, the bank launched a debit card for kids to support parents in teaching children early on how to spend, share, and save. The bank also introduced a new program to support financial literacy, Money School, to support local schools with educational opportunities for in-classroom teachings for all ages, and an online financial educational program on the bank's website.

One of the highlights of Country

Country Bank demonstrated its commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable children and families in the community with over \$30,000 in support.

Some of the organizations receiving donations were The Ronald McDonald House, Christina's House, The YWCA, The Boys and Girls Clubs, Behavioral Health Network, The United Way, Salvation Army, The Food Bank of Western Mass, The Worcester County Food Bank, Be Like Brit, Juniper Outreach, Springfield Revitalize CDC, Friends of the Homeless, and 21 Senior Centers and 19 Food Pantries across the region.

Paul Scully, President and CEO of Country Bank, emphasized the bank's dedication to its communities.

He stated, "As a community partner, we care deeply about the sustainability of our communities. We are honored to support many organizations through donations and volunteerism to help them with their work. Supporting and enriching our communities is not only a part of our mission; it's who we are as an organization, and we know that it makes a difference for so many."

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Southbridge Woman's Club meets today

SOUTHBRIDGE — The first meeting of 2024 of the Southbridge Woman's Club will be Feb. 23 at the Wellworth Hotel. Lunch will be at noon, and our guest speaker is Dr. Gregory Tsongalis, and the topic will be DNA!

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