

MassIndie2025 Film Festival showcases Oscar-nominated “Porcelain War,” bold local & regional indie talent

SOUTHBRIDGE — The annual 2025 Massachusetts Independent Film Festival (MassIndie2025) will be packed with indie features, shorts, documentaries, experimental, horror films and more,all made both locally and from around the country and the world including the Oscar Nominated Documentary “Porcelain War” by Brendan Bellomo and Slava Leontyev.

The festival takes place on April 24 through 26 at the Wellsworth Hotel & Conference Center, 14 Mechanic St., Southbridge, and a special screening of student films at Razzo Hall, Clark University, on Friday the 25th.

(Special note: Important Venue Update for MassIndie. Due to unforeseen circumstances, our previously announced venue, starlite in Southbridge, has closed. All three days of MassIndie—April 24 to 26—will now take place at the Wellsworth Hotel in Southbridge.)

The festival is presented by the Shawna Foundation which also runs the Shawna Shea Film Festival (SSFF) which will return to Southbridge in July. The Foundation also runs the Scandriglia Film Festival in Italy every other year in October. Our next date there is October 2026.

This year’s MassIndie Film Fest includes the feature length movies “Mountain Lion” by Brooklyn Demme, film director Jonathan Demme’s son, “Fakes” by John Hayeck

shot entirely in Worcester; and "The Dirty Gerund Poetry Show Documentary" by Manny Alvarado about the iconic Worcester poetry reading series that has taken place at Ralph's Diner for the last 15 years.

“We also offer screenings online exclusively to the Shawna Foundation Patreon subscribers which include the feature length films “Atrabilious” by William Atticus Parker, son of Billy Crudup and Mary-Louise Parker, starring Jeffrey Wright and Leon Addison Brown and the Canadian Feature “Home Free” by Avi Ronn Federgreen starring Michelle Nolden and Art Hindle. Allowing our Patreon members this opportunity helps people who live in rural areas or who don’t have the ability to travel to take part in experiencing truly independent art.” said festival director Skip Shea.

The festival also has blocks full of short experimental, horror, international and documentaries made by filmmakers who chose to lean more towards art then commerce with their work showing their true independent spirit.

“In keeping with the mission of the Shawna Foundation roughly 60 percent of the movies we will screen were made by people in the underrepresented communities. But that also reflects roughly the average amount of films submitted by the same community. The Shawna Foundation has become known that we are the home for all voices. We truly believe that showing the stories of a diverse population only shows how much we have in common. We all experience sadness, joy, loss and survival. And we can all relate to that,” said Shea.

Shea is an acclaimed Uxbridge-based filmmaker, writer, director and producer who founded the Shawna E. Shea Memorial Foundation Inc. in memory of his daughter Shawna E. Shea, an Uxbridge High School student and a creative and artistic young woman who died at 16 in a 1999 automobile crash.

The nonprofit organization runs a number of arts and film programs, all with the Shawna Foundation’s mission to equitably promote and support students through scholarship and showcase artists in filmmaking, performance arts, poetry and other creative endeavors with a focus on underrepresented communities. The Foundation’s vision

is the belief that the arts and education are essential to creating a vibrant, healthy community and world.

Tickets for program blocks are \$10. For the full schedule and to buy tickets, visit shawnafoundation.org.

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www.charltonfedchurch.org
• **Charlton Baptist Church**, 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488, www.charltonbaptist.org, Sunday worship 10 a.m.
• **Charlton City United Methodist**, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org
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• **St. Anne St. Patrick Church**, 16 Church St., Fiskdale (508) 347-7338
www.stannestpatparish.com
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• **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.
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• **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
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• **Bethlehem Lutheran Church**- 345 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566
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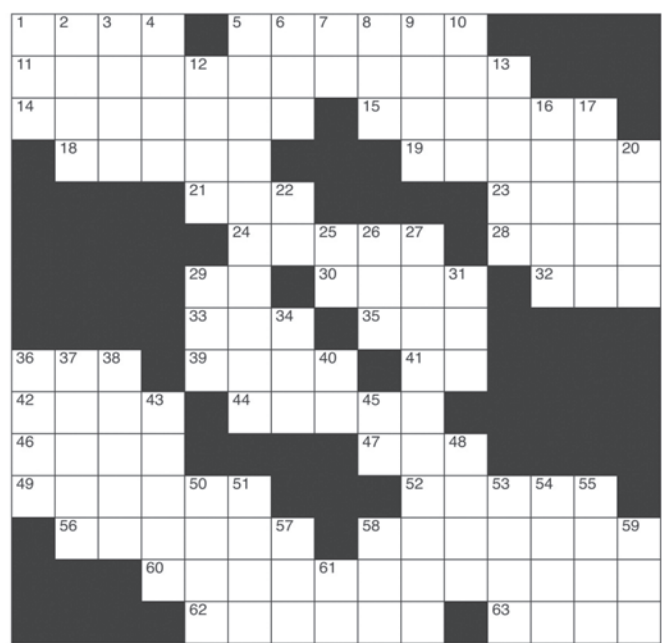


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1. Garden tool

5. A way to preserve

11. Gratitude

14. Domestic sheep

15. Simpler

18. Cavities containing liquid

19. Large fish-eating bird

21. Ocular protection index

23. Phil __, former CIA

24. Icelandic poems

28. Pop

29. Device

30. Actor Rudd

32. A pituitary hormone

33. Focus on an object
35. Corpuscle count (abbr.)

36. Young women’s association

39. Not shallow

41. Doctor

42. Furniture

44. Hindu male religious teacher

46. Highly spiced stew

47. A way to communicate

49. Almost last

52. Astronomer Carl

56. Small horses

58. A slender tower with balconies

60. A disrespectful quality

62. Fully shaded inner regions

63. Short convulsive intake of breath

CLUES DOWN

1. Popular Sunday dinner option

2. Oil cartel

3. Agile

4. Greek goddess of discord

5. Genetically distinct variety

6. Indicates badly

7. Popular Mr. T character

8. Consumed

9. Chinese dynasty

10. NFL great Randy

12. Within

13. Palm trees

16. Fungal disease

17. Tall, slender-leaved plants

20. Affirmative! (slang)

22. A passport is one

25. Two outs in baseball (abbr.)

26. Swiss river

27. Deferential
29. Where a bachelor lives

31. Portable computer screen material

34. A crying noise of a bird

36. Sticky, amorphous substance

37. Starchy dish of dried tubers

38. Type of acid

40. Partner to “Ma”

43. 16 ounces

45. The Bay State

48. A well-defined track or path

50. Substitution

51. Defined period

53. Group of toughs

54. Region

55. Famed Scottish Loch

57. Blood relation

58. Not around

59. Recipe measurement

61. Father to Junior



Charlton-Dudley Youth Football to hold registration Tuesday

CHARLTON — Charlton Dudley Youth Football and Cheer will be holding an in person registration for the fall season.

We'll be at Charlton Middle School on Tuesday, April 15 from 6 to 8 p.m. Cheer and Football athletes who live in or attend school in Charlton, Dudley, Woodstock or Thompson are invited to register. You can also visit our Web site for additional details at cdrams.com or email questions to CDYFCRAMS@GMAIL.COM.

Elm St. Congregational Church hosting monthly community lunch

SOUTHBRIDGE — Elm St. Congregational Church is pleased to invite everyone to attend the free monthly lunch on Wednesday, April 16, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The menu will include homemade soup, sandwich, desert and beverages. The meal is served in Fellowship Hall and the church entrance is on 61 Park St. Parking is available on Park and Elm Streets, as well as behind the Southbridge Town Hall.

Please come and join us for a delicious meal and friendship.

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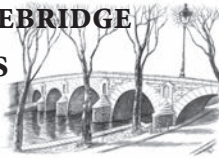
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NE art colonies inspired generations of creation

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — If you haven't thought of your summer plans yet, Martha Chiarchiaro brought one idea to Charlton Library you might consider – visiting New England's art colonies.

She was speaking last Saturday in the second of three Mass Cultural Council-funded talks on art history, turning it into a picture tour of 10 colonies within a day's drive of here. Some you'll probably know, some you might not, and both are true of many of the names associated with them.

“Many of the colonies were primarily summer art colonies,” she said, noting the same faces spent time in most of them. A few places no longer exist as colonies (but typically still have museums), but some are still thriving scenes of their own.

Two of the latter are in the Bay State – Gloucester and Provincetown – and both took advantage of their coastal locations. She said P'town, as many people call it, “inspired a variety of different artists” and has been home to an art association since 1914. By 1916, the Boston Globe called it “the biggest art colony in the world” and it's “still incredibly busy with young artists now,” she said.

That colony is famous in part for possibly introducing America to the some of the first ab-



Library Director Karen Wall, left, with art historian Martha Chiarchiaro.

stract expressionism with Hans Hofmann, who'd come from Germany. Like many summer artists then, he lived year-round in New York, but taught 30 years in P'town and “inspired a number of artists.”

Some of them are probably better-known than him, including Jackson Pollack and Franz Kline, who also spent time here. They would have known

E Ambrose Webster, who was more of an impressionist. Webster started a summer art school in 1900 and the first annual summer art show in 1915. On the more abstract side.

Up the coast in Gloucester and Rockport, the Rocky Neck colony is still very much alive and “one of the oldest working art colonies in the country,” she said. It's a small peninsula outside Gloucester center, very densely populated with art cottages practically built atop each other. Some are occupied year-round, but most are summer places.

The area was stomping grounds for Fitz Henry Lane, who was born here in 1804. Although paralyzed, he had “a cart contraption that helped him get around,” and his art highlights Gloucester's watery scenery with “images in contrast to the Hudson River School.” His work was famous for its “quiet quality” vs those painters’ “drama,” despite the fact both mostly painted nature scenes, she added.

Many watercolor works of Edward Hopper and his wife Josephine Nivison are also set here.

“It was not the most harmonious marriage, but

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Joshua Hyde Library hosting program on history of veterans and music

STURBRIDGE — On Wednesday, May 14, Jon and Li Waterman will perform "Popular Music and Veterans" at Joshua Hyde Public Library, 306 Main St., Sturbridge, at 6:30 p.m.

The program consists of original and traditional songs along with an accompanying slideshow about the history of veterans in America and some related music history.

Jon and Li have performed their music and history programs in venues throughout New England as part of a series called Live Music Making History Live. The series was designed to encourage the celebration and exploration of history through music. Jon and Li perform regularly as the duo Sultana.

Jon is a lifetime musician and songwriter and licensed history teacher in Massachusetts. Li is also a lifetime musician and a visual artist. The program is supported in part by a grant from the Sturbridge Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

CCUMC welcomes all to join us for Holy Week

CHARLTON — Holy Week is right around the corner: Charlton City UMC invites you to join us for worship on Palm Sunday, April 13, at 10 a.m., and then again for Maundy Thursday, April 17 at 7 p.m.

The Good Friday Crosswalk begins at 11 a.m. from the Federated Church to Overlook and we'll be joining the Federated Church again that evening, at 7 p.m., for Good Friday worship. Back here at 74 Stafford St. on April 19, for a Holy Saturday prayer vigil at 7 p.m. Easter Sunrise worship is at 7am at Overlook (where the Crosswalk ends) and then our normal worship time 10am in the sanctuary for Easter:

Like always, we join with one or both of our ecumenical partners, the Charlton Federated Church and St. Joseph's Catholic Church, for most of our Holy Week worship services: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday Crosswalk and evening service, and Easter sunrise. We're happy and pleased to do so because Christ lived, died, and rose for all of us, didn't he? So we Christians should worship together whenever we can to celebrate what God has done for all.

We hope you'll join us! Invite your friends!

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Charlton Garden Club meets Monday

CHARLTON — The Charlton Garden Club's Monday, April 14 meeting welcomes all to a free program on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in the Garden.

Speaker Dawn Pettinelli recently retired after 27 years as a University of Connecticut Extension Educator and Soil Testing Lab Manager. A gardener for more than half a century, she has been a MA Master Gardener since 1986.

Whether you're a novice or accomplished gardener, the Charlton Garden Club is a great place to meet other gardening enthusiasts, learn about plants and planting, and to share your gardening tips and experiences.

This meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. at the Charlton Public Library. For more information, please email charltongardenclub@gmail.com.

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SOUTHBRIDGE POLICE LOG

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Southbridge Police Department reported the following arrests during the week of March 31 to April 7.

David G. Wentworth, age 58, of Southbridge was arrested on April 2 for Indecent Assault & Battery on a Person with an Intellectual Disability.

Monica Marie Wardle, age 27, of Southbridge was arrested on April 2 in connection with multiple warrants. Destiny Marie Rosario Lopez, age 20, also of Southbridge, was arrested during the same incident for Unlicensed Operation of a Motor Vehicle and in connection with a warrant.

A 62-year-old male from Southbridge was taken into protective custody on April 4.

Christopher Nelson Cedeno, age 38, of Putnam, Conn. was arrested on April 6 in for Unsafe Operation of a Motor Vehicle, Unlicensed Operation of a Motor Vehicle, a Number Plate Violation to Conceal ID, and operating an Uninsured and Unregistered Motor Vehicle.

Central Mass. Grown celebrates 10 years of supporting local farmers

STURBRIDGE — This May, Central Massachusetts Grown will celebrate ten years of helping farmers thrive and educating consumers on the importance of supporting local farms.

Central Mass Grown is a non-profit organization and one of several Buy Local organizations across Massachusetts tasked with encouraging consumers to support local agricultural businesses, especially farms and restaurants. Across Worcester County every year, more than fifteen hundred farms produce more than \$87 million in agricultural products. These farms are a vital part of our economy and our community. They protect open space from development, protect wildlife habitats and water supplies, and support local businesses in their community, contributing to a strong local economy. Our local farms produce food more sustainably than what you typically find in a supermarket, grow our economy, support our neighbors, and make Central Massachusetts a better place to live.

Since it was founded in late 2014, Central Mass Grown’s network has grown to cover the entire region, tirelessly promoting the importance of protecting our farmers and farmland. CMG regularly hosts workshops to help farmers improve their business and use environmentally sustainable practices. It is also active in promoting local farmers markets, helping ensure more people in Worcester County have more access to the best, highest quality food and other products. It has advocated for our farmers, especially during the COVID pandemic and in the wake of the devastating weather of 2023.

As CMG looks toward the next ten years, the need for strong small farms and local businesses is clearer and more important than ever. As we’ve all seen, national and international supply chains can be disrupted by political events and natural disasters. By protecting our local food system, local agriculture is creating local food security and food sovereignty. We must continue to find more sustainable ways to protect our land, increase food access, and make access to land and food equitable to all. The mission of Central Mass Grown continues to be to support local farmers and local agriculture to create a healthier community and a better, more sustainable environment.

Central Mass Grown will hold their Annual Meeting celebrating their tenth year on Friday, May 2 at Deep Roots Distillery in Sturbridge. More information can be found on their Web site at centralmass-grown.org.

Safe boating certificate courses scheduled at Milford and Webster locations

REGION — The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Tri-State Flotilla, Massachusetts will be instructing three upcoming boating safety classes that meet current state mandated educational requirements.

The Boat America course is offered in a one-day format developed to provide the skills and confidence needed to explore the coast and inland waters by boat. Basic knowledge and skills are needed to have safe and enjoyable boating experiences. This course is perfect for families that have just purchased any type of boat or are planning to in the future, and for the boater keeping up with changes to boating regulations and laws. Basic marline-spike seamanship (knots etc.) will also be included. Successful completion of the course will certify any minor, from 12 to 16 years of age, to operate a powerboat, including a Personal Water Craft/Jet Ski (for 16 & 17-year-old operators), on all Massachusetts waters; in conjunction with the Mass. Environmental Police. Approved by National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) it will also cover the requirements to operate a vessel in most other states & many countries where boating safety education is mandatory, including Rhode Island and Connecticut.

The Hanson-Milone Boater Safety Act, signed into Mass. Law January 8, will now require all Mass. motorboat operators to complete an approved Safe Boating Certificate course before April 1, 2026 for anyone born after Jan. 1, 1998, and by April 1, 2028 for boaters born before Jan. 1, 1998. Enforcement of the new law will begin on September 1, 2026. This course meets the future Mass. requirement. Most boating insurance companies offer a discount on premiums for successful completion of this course.

Participants 16 years old and under must be accompanied, in person, by a registered parent/guardian. Space is limited, so register soon:

Milford High School – Saturdays – May 3 and June 7 - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Milford High School courses offered at 31 West Fountain St., Milford.

Registration is managed through the Milford Community School Use Program, https://milfordcommunityprogram.activityreg.com/ss_t2.wcs

A d u l t - W i n t e r 2024/2025 and Spring 2025 – Educational - Boat America Certificate Class

or call Laura Farrell (508) 478-1119, email lfarrell@milfordma.com;

The registration deadline is six days prior to course,

For additional USCGAux. information: phil.uscgaux@verizon.net or (508) 478-3778.

Webster Fire Department – Saturday, May 17 – 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Webster Fire Department Classroom, 55 Thompson Rd., Webster.

Contact our Public Education Officer Phil Kubat for registration or additional information: email phil.uscgaux@verizon.net or call (508) 478-3778.

To locate these and other USCG Auxiliary courses (BA and BS&S) that will meet certification requirements go to: https://www.cgaux.org/boatinged/class_finder/index.php.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed civilian component of the U.S. Coast Guard and supports the Coast Guard in nearly all mission areas. The Auxiliary was created by Congress in 1939. For more information, please visit www.cgaux.org

QCC’s Auxilium Center for Entrepreneurship announced

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College kicked off Start-Up Week Worcester earlier today with the announcement of the Auxilium Center for Entrepreneurship, a new initiative made possible through the support of the Cliff and Susan Rucker Foundation.

The Auxilium Center for Entrepreneurship will serve as an innovation hub for QCC students of any discipline, offering workshops, mentoring, consultation services and entrepreneurship-focused curriculum.

“This has been an amazing partnership. The Center will help our students get the social capital and the guidance that they need. The generous gift of the Cliff and Susan Rucker Foundation will help empower QCC students to be catalysts for economic growth. Our students are rooted here, and they will invest in our community,” said QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja.

The Cliff and Susan Rucker Foundation has committed \$100,000 per year for a minimum of three years to support staffing and programming at the Center.

“No aspiring entrepreneur should ever feel like they’re doing it alone. In partnership with QCC we’re laying the groundwork for a vibrant entrepreneurial hub...in the broader Worcester community,” said Jacob Rucker, private equity analyst at Rucker Investments and co-founder of Auxilium. “This will be a space where bold ideas are welcome, risk is encouraged and support is real. Auxilium will be this program’s partner, mentor and constant source of encouragement.”

Also speaking at the announcement was Noah MacDonald, who is studying business administration at QCC and started a group for students called Coalition of Rising Entrepreneurs (CORE) to help students such as himself who want to start their own ventures.

“I just started getting into entrepreneurship and I can see how important it is. I have very big goals for my life so I’m grasping opportunities. A place like this could give me the mentorship that I need and show me the paths I can take,” MacDonald commented.

QCC Board of Trustees President Dr. Linda Maykel reflected on starting a dental practice without knowing where to turn for advice on simple business practices such as signing a commercial lease.

“To have a center now where students can come and have people to mentor them through is absolutely one of the most exciting things I’ve seen since I’ve been here,” said Maykel. “The Center will also maximize QCC’s existing wraparound services like counseling and the HomePlate Food Pantry & Resource Center.”

The Center is set to open on QCC’s main campus in Fall 2025.

Food Truck Festival returns May 10

SPENCER — The Throwdown! 2025 Food Truck Festival will be held Saturday, May 10 from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. at the Spencer Fairgrounds, 49 Smithville Rd. Admission \$5 at the gate (children under 12 free).

Throwdown! 2025 is Worcester County’s longest running and largest annual Food Truck Festival and Craft Fair. A panel of judges and event attendees cast votes for their favorite food truck to be honored with the prestigious “Best of Worcester County Food Trucks” and the ever coveted “People’s Choice” awards. Along with great food from dozens of food trucks, customers may browse among the more than 50 artisanal craft vendors, enjoy carnival style games, listen to music or participate in an array of yard games such as corn hole, giant blocks, ladder toss and other fun activities just for the kids. Enjoy craft beer and wines at this year’s event from “The Stein & Vine,” Central Massachusetts’ favorite mobile bar service. It’s a fantastic way to spend a Spring afternoon with family and friends in a beautiful outdoor setting.

WooTrucks has been the most trusted name in reliable food truck booking for over a decade. Our commissary, commercial kitchen, and base of operations for food trucks, caterers, bakers, and food entrepreneurs is located at 67 Main St., Boylston. Our fully permitted and approved facility to prepare food was established to foster a transparent, self-policing community of food trucks and food entrepreneurs practicing only the highest standards of customer service while maintaining strict adherence to health, sanitation and food codes. WooTrucks operates food truck festivals throughout the region and supplies food trucks to corporate clients, private businesses, breweries, academic institutions, and local municipalities.



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Book lovers browse the fiction, history, religion and other offerings at the Friends of the Jacob Edwards Library’s semi-annual book sale last weekend.

Gus Steeves

Schools brace for loss of federal funds

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION — State officials announced last week that schools across the Commonwealth will be impacted by the Trump Administration’s decision to terminate education grant funding.

Gov. Maura Healey joined officials statewide in condemning the Trump Administration’s decision to terminate \$106 million in grant funding meant to support K-12 education in Massachusetts.

“At a time when students are still struggling to recover from the pandemic, we need to be doing everything we can to address learning loss and the youth mental health crisis. Instead, President Trump suddenly ripped away more than \$100 million in funding that is supposed to go right to Massachusetts students and schools,” Healey said. “This action is jeopardizing mental health care and math tutoring for our students, as well as projects that are already underway to enhance school security and ensure that the air in our school buildings is clean.”

In the years since pandemic shutdowns and hybrid learning severely disrupted education systems from 2020-‘21,

school officials nationwide have seen a rise in behavioral and mental health struggles for students at all levels.

Looking ahead, state officials warn that the loss of federal funding could have lasting negative effects on students.

“Massachusetts has been making important progress helping students recover from the pandemic, but President Trump is trying to take us backwards,” Healey said.

Although the state is scrambling to find stopgaps, officials said the loss of federal funds will prevent students from accessing several planned programs and mental health supports.

“The federal government and states should be working together to invest in capital projects that improve the learning environments for our students and support their education and well-being,” said Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll. “Massachusetts does not have the resources to replace all of the funding that President Trump is terminating. These are more devastating terminations that impact our students and schools today and well into the future.”

Federal funding was intended to support a host of statewide efforts

to address the impacts of the pandemic on learning, with a focus on literacy, math, and science.

“We are not back yet from the pandemic. We know that many students in Massachusetts and across the country are still experiencing pandemic-related learning loss and mental health challenges,” said Secretary of Education Dr. Patrick Tutwiler, who visited several local schools this past fall, including East Brookfield Elementary School. “The federal government had repeatedly reaffirmed these extensions in acknowledgement of continued supply chain issues, labor shortages, and to ensure continuity in learning acceleration efforts. Projects funded by these grants are underway. The Trump Administration’s outrageous and cruel decision, in which we received notice of a new arbitrary deadline, will have real harm to our students and their learning and wellbeing.”

Officials said the funding was slated to address critical gaps by supporting mental health services; math tutoring; and the purchases of instructional materials with a focus on science.

Additionally, funds would have supported building upgrades across

20 school districts to improve air quality through HVAC installations. Moreover, some projects were planned to enhance security in schools, including the purchasing of cameras, door alarms, and emergency response technologies.

Further funds were committed to supporting professional development programs for educators. These include the state’s Learning

Acceleration Network, as well as five regional licensure centers that help emergency teacher license holders obtain provisional or initial licensure to stay employed in Massachusetts public schools.

“Trump’s decision to cut off money already promised to school districts will have drastic negative effects on Massachusetts communities,” said Senate Presi-

dent Karen Spilka. “This administration clearly does not care about damaging our education system or hurting our children, leaving local officials scrambling to pick up the pieces when they should be fully focused on supporting our schools. It’s all part of the federal administration’s unconscionable hacksaw approach to governing.”

Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service at Old Sturbridge Village

STURBRIDGE — The annual Ecumenical Easter sunrise service will be held at Old Sturbridge Village on April 20 starting at 6 a.m. According to The Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale’s pastor, the Rev. David W. Cote, seven local faith communities will join together at the original Baptist Meetinghouse that is now located at the end of the Common at Old Sturbridge Village.

Participating in this year’s sunrise service, in addition to Rev. Cote, are The Rev. Dan Purtell (Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Sturbridge and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Southbridge), Father Luc Martel, A.A. (St. Anne/St. Patrick Parish, Fiskdale), The Rev. Brian Oxman (Brookfield Congregational Church, Brookfield), The Rev. Kathryn Light (Elm Street Congregational Church, Southbridge), and Ms. Christine McTigue (St. Joseph Church, Charlton).

“Together, we will welcome the dawn with prayer, song, and messages of hope and renewal as the sun rises,” says Cote. “The service is open to all and will offer a peaceful, reflective start to Easter Sunday.”

Those who wish to attend are advised to enter the Village and make their way to the Meetinghouse by way of the security gate at the top of the parking lot, and dress appropriately for the weather. Please note that 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. Attendees are requested to leave the Village directly following the service.

Easter morning services will follow the sunrise service at each of the respective churches.



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FRANK G. CHILINSKI
PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

Identity politics is exhausting, and misses the point

Somewhere along the way, we were convinced that being politically aware means picking a side and sticking to it no matter what. Red team, blue team. Us vs. them. You’re either all in or you’re out. Here’s the thing no one wants to admit unless you’re an elected official, no one actually cares what “side” you’re on.

Your neighbor doesn’t care if you vote left or right — they care if you help them dig out after a snowstorm. Your community doesn’t benefit from your party loyalty, it benefits when you show up, vote on the issues that matter, and take action that improves real lives.

This performative, party-first mindset we’ve fallen into is exhausting. Frankly, it’s childish. Political parties were never supposed to be tribal identities, they were supposed to be tools. Temporary alliances to move policies forward. Instead, we’ve turned them into something resembling sports teams, where people root for their side no matter how bad the playbook gets.

What if we stripped away the party labels altogether? What if we voted on the issues themselves instead of accepting whatever bundle of policies a party wraps in its packaging? Most people don’t fit neatly into one ideological box and pretending we do has only divided us more.

We should be holding elected officials accountable, not treating them like mascots. We should be debating ideas, not defending party lines like we’re in some playground argument. And we should stop letting political branding override personal thinking.

Want to be a true patriot? Read up, show up and stop picking sides as though we’re all choosing a dodgeball team. Vote like it’s about the issues. Because it is. And like your own future, and that of the generations that will follow you, depends on it. Because it does.

OPINION

Springtime Journeys

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”
— Isaiah 43:19

Journeys – just the word conjures up the notion of adventure, challenging oneself, a time of reflection, or even transformation. Sometimes all of these can be experienced along the way. And there are fewer times of the year that invite us on one than springtime and Lent.

A number of years ago, a few of us chartered a sailboat and headed off from the East Coast of Florida to explore various places from the Atlantic to the Keys. For those who sail, it can be physically demanding, as well as a beautiful mental, spiritual endeavor.

Talk about Gilligan’s Island! A few hours out we got slammed by a storm. It felt like the one mentioned in Matthew 14 when the Disciples were pounded by wind and waves on the Sea of Galilee. But the old saying “smooth waters and calm seas do not make great sailors,” is



BEYOND
THE PEWS

BY
DR. RB MCFEE

truer than not.

But that journey, that week on the water gave us time to grow as people, sailors, friends. There was a spiritual component as our faith in God grew, with greater appreciation for all the beauty around us (dolphins greeted us during an amazing sunrise) and so many more blessings. All because we chose to step out, look around, and inwards, and take a journey.

Journeys – chances are you’ve been a journey of one type or another in your life, or maybe need to take one, too. And they don’t have to exotic, just meaningful and fun.

We become greater than our former selves when we face challenges, and sometimes the ultimate one is an internal journey – exploring who we are, facing where our faith life is taking us, our relationship with God and others.

As a physician I think journeys in good health are a great idea.

This is a lovely time to get outdoors and start a walking or hiking journey.

Turn To **JOURNEYS** page 14

How to cope with market volatility



FINANCIAL
FOCUS

TREVOR
NIELSEN

The financial markets always go through periods of instability. And we may see more of that now, given concerns about tariffs, inflation and the economy. As an investor, how can you deal with this volatility?

Some investors try to take advantage of market ups and downs by attempting to follow the age-old advice to “buy low and sell high” — that is, they seek to buy stocks when they feel prices have bottomed out and they sell stocks when they think the market has reached a high point. In theory, this is a great idea, but in practice, it’s essentially impossible, because no one can really predict market highs and lows.

Rather than trying to anticipate highs and lows, your best strategy for coping with the price fluctuations of the financial markets is to diversify your investment portfolio by owning a mix of stocks, bonds and other types of securities. Different types of financial assets can move in different directions at any given time — so, for example, stocks may be up while bonds are down, or vice versa. If you only owned one of these types of assets, and the market for that asset class was down, your portfolio could take a bigger hit than if you owned a variety of asset types.

And you can further diversify within individual asset categories. Stocks can be domestic or international, large-company or small-company — and these groupings can also move in different directions at the same time, depending on various market forces. As for bonds, they too don’t always move in a uniform direction, or at least with the same intensity — for instance, when interest rates rise, bond prices tend to fall, but longer-term bonds may fall more than shorter-term ones, which are closer to maturity with fewer interest payments remaining. Conversely, when rates are falling, longer-term bonds may be more attractive because they lock in higher yields for a longer time. Consequently, one diversification technique for bonds is to build a “ladder” containing bonds of varying maturities.

Some investments, by their nature, are already somewhat diversified. A mutual fund can contain dozens, or even hundreds, of stocks, or a mixture of stocks and bonds. And different mutual funds may have different investment objectives — some focus more on growth, while others are more income-oriented — so, further diversification can be achieved by owning a mix of funds.

Furthermore, some investors achieve even greater diversification by owning alternative investments, such as real estate, commodities and cryptocurrencies, although these vehicles themselves are often more volatile than those in more traditional investment categories.

While a diversified portfolio is important for every investor, your exact level of diversification — the percentages of your portfolio devoted to stocks, bonds and other securities — will depend on your individual risk tolerance, time horizon and financial goals. You may want to consult with a financial professional about creating the diversified investment mix that’s right for your needs.

Ultimately, while diversification can’t guarantee profits or protect against all losses, it can help you reduce some of the risks associated with investing and better prepare you to deal with the inevitable volatility of the financial markets — two key benefits that can help you over the many years you’ll spend as an investor.

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.

To the Editor Anthony Aube does his homework

To the Editor:

My name is Bruce Menin, and I have recently returned to central Massachusetts to live. I writing to express my strong support for Anthony Aube in the upcoming School Committee election.

I am keenly interested in public education, having served on the Newburyport School Committee for 22 years before relocating back to Central Massachusetts. I have spent time meeting with Mr. Aube, and through the lens of that experience, I find him to be a thoughtful, strong candidate for the Committee.

He is bright and energetic, and has a great deal of relevant experience, from serving as a parent representative on School Councils to his regular attendance at School Committee meetings. Anthony is highly informed and very familiar with the issues facing public education today. He listens

deeply, I and have found him to be both creative and collaborative. His professional experience has given him a terrific understanding of budgeting and how institutional systems work, and how to solve problems collaboratively. He will work diligently to level up our district and chart a path to the future.

If I can paraphrase something that a voter shared with me when I first ran for re-election in Newburyport, I support Mr. Aube because he clearly does his homework and asks the tough questions. Public education is facing a lot of challenges, and having an informed, engaged School Committee is how we will support our students, our staff and our community going forward. Please join me in supporting Anthony Aube for School Committee.

Bruce Menin
Charlton

Coloring Easter Eggs Naturally

Easter is right around the corner, and for many, the annual ritual of coloring eggs is an anticipated yearly tradition. But there’s no need to run out and buy a fancy egg coloring kit, as you likely have the ingredients to make up a rainbow of colorful eggs right in your kitchen cupboard!

The following ideas are fun and easy to do family egg coloring projects.

Note: Eggs that are to be eaten should always be refrigerated after coloring.

Quick and Easy Classic Food Coloring Dye

This homemade mixture rivals the basic egg coloring kits. Use empty egg



TAKE
THE
HINT

KAREN
TRAINOR

cartons to dry the eggs.

Mix three quarters of a cup warm water with one tablespoon white vinegar. Add one quarter teaspoon of (no artificial dye) food coloring. Note: gel food coloring works best.

Make individual batches of color in wide mouth mugs or small bowls. Dip and soak hard boiled eggs in mixture to color:

Natural Egg Dyes

Note: Patience is the key to bright colors as it could take a while to achieve.

Red: Save the skins from onions and boil for one half to one hour. The more skins you use and longer you soak, the darker color will be. A small amount of skins will produce a light lavender color.

Pink: Soak hard boiled eggs in a mug or cup of cranberry juice or pickled beet juice with ½ tsp of vinegar until desired hue is reached.

Lavender: Soak hard boiled eggs in a mug or cup of grape juice and ½ tsp of vinegar until color is to your liking.

Blue: Soak hard boiled eggs in a mug or cup of grape juice and ½ tsp of vinegar. Soak overnight in the refrigerator if you want a dark, rich color.

Yellow: To a cup of hot water, add one and a half teaspoons of tumeric and one half teaspoon vinegar.

Golden Tan: Save skins from yellow onions. Add to water when hard boiling eggs.

Brown: Add one tablespoon of instant coffee and one half tsp. vinegar to a cup of water. Drop in hard boiled egg and allow to sit until desired color is reached.

Pastel Hues: Rub blueberries and cranberries directly on the shells for soft blues and pinks.

Waxed eggs

Here is a super idea for creating waxed eggs that are truly impressive!

Ingredients: Wax crayons; paper towels; egg dyes in different colors; cooking oil.

Instructions: Draw a heavy crayon pattern on hard boiled egg. Dip egg in egg dye, preferably a dark color. Leave in dye until desired color is reached. Remove with slotted spoon and place in 200 degree F oven for a few minutes until wax is melted. Wipe with paper towel and dip again in lighter dye to fill in pattern where wax was. Polish finished eggs with cooking oil and soft cloth.

Reader Hint: This hint from reader Donna Lewandowski was received after last week’s reader hint column was submitted– but it is timely for making Easter dishes with eggs:

To remove eggshell fragments from your bowl, use a piece of eggshell. The sharp edge of an eggshell helps to remove the fragment.

Turn To **EGGS** page 14

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.

Be a waterwise gardener

A time-machine and a litany of disasters



GARDEN
MOMENTS
.....
MELINDA
MYERS

Too much or not enough water, and never when your garden needs it. This is a common complaint of gardeners no matter where they live. Make a few changes in your plant selection and garden care to help manage water use while growing healthy plants.

All plants need sufficient moisture after planting and for several months to a year or two to develop a robust root system. Those labeled as drought tolerant are better able to tolerate periods of drought once established. Always water the area surrounding new plantings thoroughly when the top few inches of soil are crumbly and moist. Gradually reduce the frequency, and once the plants are established, you'll need to water less often.

Moisture-loving plants are good choices for areas receiving sufficient and consistent moisture throughout the growing season to meet their needs. In locations where this is not the case, consider grouping moisture-loving plants together so you use less water and can concentrate watering efforts to just one or two locations in your landscape.

Fluctuating periods of excessive and in-

sufficient rainfall add to the challenge. Many native plants, once established, tolerate periods of wet and dry soil and can be found on lists of rain garden plants suited to your area.

Keep water in the garden, out of the storm sewers, and reduce the risk of flooding while improving your garden. Adding several inches of compost to the top 8 to 12 inches of soil increases the soil's ability to absorb and retain water. It also improves drainage in heavy soils.

Top dress existing gardens by spreading an inch of compost over the soil surface. Soil organisms will help move it into the soil to improve plant growth. Lend nature a hand by using an auger bit on a drill to aerate compacted soil. This pushes some compost into the top four to six inches of soil.

Mulching the soil with leaves, evergreen needles, or other organic matter also helps. This task has many benefits, including conserving moisture, reducing the risk of erosion and compaction, suppressing weeds, and as the mulch decomposes, improving the soil. A one-to-three-inch layer over the soil surface is all you need. The finer the mulch material, the thinner the layer of mulch that is needed.

Collect rainwater in rain barrels or cisterns when it is plentiful and store it until needed.



Melinda Myers

Leaf mulch conserves moisture, reduces the risk of erosion and compaction, suppresses weeds, and improves the soil as it decomposes.

Use this to water ornamental containers and plantings. Always check with your municipality first, since some restrict this practice while others offer rebates or rain barrels at a discounted price.

You won't need to worry about mosquitoes breeding inside your rain barrel if you place an organic mosquito control product like Mosquito Dunks® (SummitResponsibleSolutions.com) in rain barrels and other water features. Mosquito Dunks provide 30 days of control, are natural and organic, and won't harm pets, fish, wildlife, or children.

Periods of heavy rainfall create another challenge. Covering the soil with plants and mulch helps protect your soil from compaction and erosion that often happens during these events. Planting trees, shrubs, and groundcovers will slow the flow of rainwater, increase the amount of

Turn To **GARDENING** page 16

The secret of Socrates

Picture this: a man in a suit, contracts in hand, marching down a hallway like he's heading into battle.

He swings open the office door, eyes locked on his business partner. He's angry. He's certain. He's ready to set the record straight.

"This is outrageous," he says, slamming the folder on the desk. "You agreed to these terms. You're backing out now?"

The partner, calm but resolute, folds his hands. "No, I didn't agree to that."

"Yes, you did," the man in the suit snapped.

"No, I didn't," his partner replied, calm as ever.

The conversation spirals. The angrier the businessman gets, the firmer his partner digs in. No progress. No compromise. A Stalemate; nowhere to go. And that was it—just one word, over and over: No.

When the man walks out, nothing changes except his blood pressure.

Now pause here. Let's talk about what just happened.

The problem wasn't the disagreement. The problem was the approach. He came in swinging—accusation first, challenge second. He backed the other person into a corner. And people don't make deals when they feel cornered. They defend themselves. They harden.

The second someone says "no," it's like concrete drying. Fast. Solid. Tough to crack.

Dale Carnegie called this The Secret of Socrates in "How to Win Friends and Influence People."

He wrote: "In talking with people, don't begin by discussing the things on which you differ. Begin by emphasizing—and keep on emphasizing—the things on which you agree... Get the other person saying 'yes, yes' at the outset. Keep your opponent, if possible, from saying 'no.'"

Socrates mastered this. He didn't argue. He asked questions. Obvi-

POSITIVELY
SPEAKING

TOBY MOORE

ous ones. Undeniable ones. Questions that showed both sides were aligned. Only differing in the method. One yes, then another. And slowly, the tension faded. The resistance dropped. The conversation shifted. They weren't on opposite sides anymore. They were on the same page.

Let's come back to our world.

Instead of walking into a room with fire and a point to prove, try starting with this: "You want what's best for the team, right?" "You care about this project like I do, right?" "You want this to work."

Get agreement on the big picture before diving into the details. Because once someone's in "yes mode," they're far more likely to stay there.

The truth is, "no" is more than a word—it's a wall. And once it's up good luck getting through. But "yes"

Turn To **POSITIVE** page 16

BY CHRISTOPHER MALLON
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAM MANAGER
LPL REGISTERED PRINCIPAL, THE CAPSTONE PLANNING GROUP
LOCATED AT CORNERSTONE BANK

In light of current market volatility and uncertainty around tariffs, many investors are naturally worried about their portfolio and questioning the outlook for stocks. We are, after all, emotional creatures, and this is especially true when it comes to investing.

Imagine, for a moment, we build a time machine and decide to go back in time to study investor behavior throughout a litany of disasters.

First, we travel back to May 9, 1940. Sadly, we see that Germany just defeated France and WWII is ramping up. Global tension and fear is rampant. The stock market drops over 18 percent in less than a month. It won't be long before the Attack on Pearl Harbor takes place, effectively pulling the United States into WWII. The stock market drops another 7 percent over a five-day period. It justifiably feels like the world is ending.

We decide it's time to move on, so we hop back in our time machine and enter June 23, 1950. It's the outbreak of Korean War. Within a month, the first U.S. ground troops arrive in South Korea. The stock market is down over 11 percent. With war fresh in their minds, American's are naturally scared. Investing money is the last thing anyone wants to do.

Enough with the wars. Let's check out Oct. 16, 1987. We now witness the historic "Black Monday Crash," when the stock market plunges over 22 percent in just one day. We watch panicked investors pull their money from the market and run for the proverbial safety of cash. Given the circumstances, we understand their reaction.

Intrigued by the crash of '87, we decide to revisit an even worse financial crash... the Financial Crisis of 2008. We watch as the subprime dominos begin to fall. Lehman Brothers collapses, AIG is nearing bankruptcy, Wall Street firms and even some banks are begging to be rescued. The housing market is crashing. The stock market? Down a massive 38 percent for the year. We ask a few folks how they're feeling. One gentleman responds, "I'll never go back into the stock market... ever." We try to tell him, "Wait! Don't panic! The market will actually recover and go on to make new highs!". He tells us we're wrong and walks away.

We have just one more stop to complete our study, and so we travel to Feb. 19 of 2020. It's the start of Covid-19, and the entire global economy is being shut down. The fear, uncertainty, and panic are palatable. The stock market drops a whopping -33% in roughly one month. People are fighting over toilet paper and question if the economy and markets will ever be the same again. We've seen enough.

Now that we're done with our research let's analyze a few numbers. Let's look at how the stock market performed DURING AND AFTER these events.

The average 1YR return? +31 percent. The average 5YR return? +16 percent. Our conclusion: history has proven the United States and corporate America are incredibly resilient and persevere. Markets do indeed bounce back and go

on to make new highs. Staying invested can help investors benefit from market rebounds. People who gave up investing (or tried to "time" the market) missed out on significant long-term wealth creation. Our study is complete.

The next time you're watching talking heads on CNBC try to predict the near-term future, remember no one has a crystal ball. And that is precisely why being a "day trader" is so difficult. But if you're an investor, it becomes easier to deal with short term volatility because you're focused on the long-term results. Remember: history may not always repeat itself, but it often rhymes.

Yes, today's markets hate the uncertainty over tariff implications, and so we should expect continued price volatility. But don't panic. Volatility is normal. It's like a "toll" investors must pay on the road to attractive long-term returns. On average, the stock market corrects once per year (a drop of 10-19 percent) and has still achieved a 13 percent annualized return including dividends since 1980.

If you indeed have lingering concerns about your portfolio, its best to check in with a qualified Financial Advisor to discuss how your portfolio is positioned.

About The Capstone Planning Group

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Tull, Croteau share Art Center's walls



Gus Steeves

Clay Tull with a piece nature helped him create. While starting it outdoors, it began to rain and he decide to “embrace the suck” by “dancing in the rain” and letting the drops be part of the work.



Gus Steeves

These two of Tull's pieces were digitally created.



Gus Steeves

Heather Croteau, left, talks with Larry and Barbara Day.



Gus Steeves

A few gallery visitors explore some of Croteau's works.

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

SOUTHBRIDGE — Although outdoors was damp and grey Saturday, things were quite colorful inside the Ruth Wells Art Center as Heather Croteau and Clay Tull opened their joint art show.

The two have very different art styles, with Croteau doing pointillist and watercolor images that are mostly nature-themed, while Tull's work is distinctly abstract. Some of his work was at the Library a couple months ago, but this show includes several that weren't there. Croteau has shown in Charlton but not here.

“You're getting four paintings in the light and four paintings in the dark,” Tull said of each work.

That's because while he's displaying them a certain way now, there is no “right” orientation for any of them, and some include blacklight-sensitive paint. He wants people to experiment and reorient them as they see fit, just as he wants people who buy one to name it themselves.

That doesn't mean they're not personal for him. Each of them comes from his exploration of inner darkness and discovering a way out of that, with phantasmagoric and other images hidden in the abstraction.

“Darkness comes in waves, but as long as you keep focusing on the horizon and the light, you can get out of it,” he said.

For Croteau, one of her favorite themes is, ironically, rooted in fear, although it doesn't show. That's her fondness for birds, which she said she's afraid of because of their unpredictability. Making art of them, though, “is helping me appreciate them.”

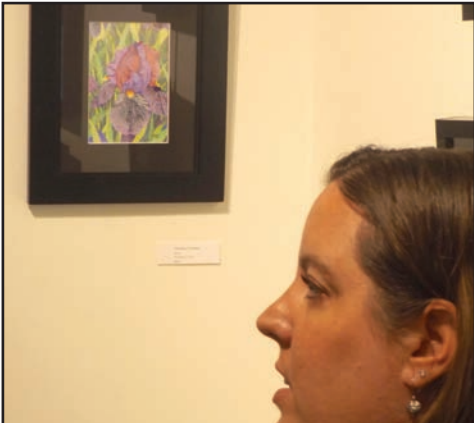
Her art style is very time-consuming, yet meditative. Although she starts with a very general sketch, she doesn't really plan a piece out and lets the colors guide her as



Gus Steeves

Croteau talks about her very first piece, “Good Morning,” the largest one on that wall. She said that's still her favorite and won't sell it.

A closeup of “Hudson River Valley Bridge,” based on a photo she took in New York. She said she started watercoloring in high school in 2017, but recently resumed the medium.



Gus Steeves

One of Croteau's main themes, flowers, comes from her experience as a florist.



Gus Steeves

Art Center President Kevin Proctor with some of Croteau's work.

she inks the thousands of tiny dots each one requires.

“I love the fact there are so many colors in each color,” she said.

Among other things, she had to really think about how to get a blue heron's color right, and

learned that a crow looks black, but its feathers are rainbow.

Croteau said her first pointillist piece, “Good Morning,” took nearly a year of extremely detailed focus. In the early days, she said her eyes would tire first, but now

her hand does.

Some of her pieces are watercolors, and her process of creating them is “exactly opposite” to the pointillist ones. That's because watercolors can flow, mix and become chaotic, and the goal is to control that, she said.

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QCC offers free tax prep through VITA program

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College is participating in the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program for the current tax season. Individuals who make \$67,000 or less per year can receive free tax preparation services from VITA volunteers, who have been certified by the IRS.

“It's a great experience for the students and builds a sense of community,” said Associate Professor of Accounting Eduardo Rivas, who coordinates QCC's involvement with VITA, explaining that volunteers get to work with people from a wide variety of ages, abilities and cultures.

Students from any discipline can join the VITA program, but many are in the Business Administration and Accounting programs.

QCC student Joshua Roman has worked in finance for years at his family's business, but with the owner's retirement approaching, he wanted to show his clients that he can offer the most current knowledge and experience through his credentials. In addition to bolstering his career, he has enjoyed the volunteer aspect of VITA.

“It's really rewarding. We were able to help an elderly couple acquire a specific credit, which got them a bit more of a refund than they were expecting,” Roman recalled. “To them, it felt life changing.”

Many students participating in the VITA program also commented on the soft skills they have gained from hands-on experience with actual clients. More than just telling clients how much they will receive or owe, volunteers educate them on how the process works and ways to improve their tax situations for the future.

Wanda Morales had never volun-

teered before but has been excited to help people with their tax preparation. She said she improved her communication skills through the interactions she's had in the program.

“Sometimes, it's a difficult situation, so you need patience to explain to people why they owe because they don't have enough withholdings,” Wanda commented.

According to Arielle Bento, who wants to pursue a career in accounting, she's learning about confidentiality and real-world financial situations.

“Taking calls for the program has really helped me build my confidence,” Bento commented.


Bento was recently selected for the Local Finance Commonwealth Fellowship, a paid internship program that will focus on municipal finance practices.

Melvin Minaya noted that the hands-on experience in the program is not only helping his self-assurance, but also building trust in the Spanish speakers who he assists with translation.

“I'm getting all this experience at a young age. I know how to treat people, what the questions are going to be and how I'm going to answer. I have the confidence to do it and the mentality to focus,” Minaya said.

QCC's VITA program operates out of the Main South CDC in Worcester, but also offers tax preparation services remotely for qualifying participants. The VITA program runs through April 11.

To make an appointment with the VITA program visit getyourefund.org/mscdc, call 508-752-6181 or email vita@qcc.mass.edu. More information is available at QCC.edu/vita.



Courtesy

Unlock the secrets of ancient craftsmanship with the masterful guidance of an expert blacksmith as part of Bay Path Regional Vocational School's evening program. With more than 30 years of experience, the blacksmithing classes offer a rare chance to immerse yourself in the age-old art of forging. The highly sought-after course, "Forging a Full Tang Knife," has drawn so much interest that additional sessions have been added, only to fill up rapidly. Rooted in his extensive work at the Dancing Hammer Forge in Spencer, where he has dedicated more than 25 years to crafting everything from railings and gates to intricate jewelry and artful sculptures, this blacksmith's expertise is unparalleled. For those seeking a tailored experience, private lessons are available, offering an opportunity to learn directly from a seasoned professional. To explore more about his impressive work and distinctive approach, visit dancinghammer.com.

Expert warns against financial scams

BY GUS STEEVES
CORRESPONDENT

STURBRIDGE — As Kevin Donohue knows all too well, scammers are everywhere, especially online.

Sometimes, they even pretend they want to help you against scammers, or are the police, or want to give you free stuff — if you pay “taxes” beforehand. They also change all the time.

“A scam you learn about today may not be the same tomorrow,” Donohue told about 20 people recently at the Senior Center. Donohue is a presenter for the District Attorney's office.

But their pattern's usually the same. The scammer will use any information they have about you – there's a lot of it available online for most of us, and even more that's been stolen in various hacks – to make you feel at ease, seeking to pry crucial details they don't have from you, such as account and Social Security numbers, passwords, and other details that'll let them rob you.

“They know not everybody will fall for it, but only need a certain percentage,” he said, later adding, “People always think it's targeted to me, but it's not. It's sent to thousands of people.”

The crooks use what he termed “social engineering” to build trust with the information they already have. For example, they might have hacked your health record to pretend to be the hospital following up on a recent appointment or procedure. When you answer, they ask to verify what they have, then for details they don't have.

“Never verify something for someone who calls you,” Donohue said.

George Chenier admitted he fell for a hospital scam, saying he knew he should've hung up when the crooks identified themselves as “Harrington Memorial Hospital” rather than UMass-Harrington. A woman said she's concerned that Harrington (and other places) have gone paperless, wanting payments on credit cards or by phone. She said she won't pay that way “and had to fight to get a paper bill.”

Regarding that point, one man noted, “I thought cash was legal tender for all debts, public or private.” (He's right; our currency states that in print. In Massachusetts, a Constitutional amendment from the late 1970s specifically says all retailers must accept cash.)

Sometimes, the victims are those who believe themselves immune to scamming – even to the point of recognizing it's probably crooked, but ignoring their own alarm bells as Chenier did. They're far from alone. The Federal Trade Commission logs about 2.6 million fraud reports every year, and “whatever the number is, it's under-reported,” Donohue said. Often, the victims are embarrassed and want to hide it, but he strongly urged them to speak up, tell friends and their community this happened. Invariably, they'll find others who have been scammed, too.

Their tactics are various. Some will pretend to be the police saying they can void an arrest warrant for a payment. Others claim your account has been hacked, sometimes with a “spoofed” phone number from a legitimate bank, and offer a chance to protect your money by transferring it to another account (often Bitcoin) they control, and then steal.

Occasionally, the scam call or letter is real. But Donohue advised everyone to assume its fake and never give personal information to someone who calls you. Instead, look up the com-



Kevin Donohue with the DA's office logo behind him.

pany's real number and call them to check. (Don't call the caller ID number or the one on the letter.)

When he started with the DA's office, scams were mostly by phone, but they're mostly online now, particularly using links in email (“phishing”) and text (“smishing”) that go to sites that upload malware to your computer or phone. Such malware often aims to collect anything on the computer and send it to the criminals, hoping to collect passwords and account information.

When it comes to user names and passwords, Donohue warns, “Don't autosave them on your computer.” (Many websites offer that as an option for “convenience,” but that's vulnerable. One way to keep them safe is to write them down; online crooks can't hack paper. It's also generally recommended not to use the same password for multiple places and to change them periodically.)

Donohue discussed several other scam types. Those include the EZ Pass Scam, where people get a text claiming they have “overdue toll charges” (The state won't text you for that.) Another type is the “brushing scam,” where people receive unsolicited packages that have no sender or return information, but a QR code with a note “scan this to see who sent it.” That will load malware on your phone. Under state law, people can keep unsolicited packages, although they're usually not very valuable. Scam QR codes also appear in all kinds of public places – he cited parking meters as an example – and scammers can easily alter a legit one or print a scam one to stick over it.

“If the QR code is anywhere other

Turn To **SCAMS** page 12

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School District showcases Curriculum Review Plan

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY/CHARLTON — The Dudley Charlton Regional School Committee hosted a presentation examining the future of curriculum at the end of March as the schools enter a new five-year plan.

Assistant Superintendent Kelly True revealed the district’s new Curriculum Review Plan for 2025 through 2030 during a meeting of the school committee on March 26 which was broken into four phases: planning, articulating and developing, implementing and monitoring, and evaluation. The process will help determine enhancements to materials and teaching approaches that True said should help close deficits in different grade levels.

True described the five-year plan as a long-term investment in enhancing learning at all of Dudley and Charlton’s schools.

“Once you have a new curriculum it takes about five years before you start looking at if there are tweaks

that need to be made, if there’s something new that needs to come out. The curriculum frameworks are updated every five years so it kind of goes along a similar rotation,” True told the School Committee.

The plan presents the curriculum changes in a phased approach with no two course curriculums being changed at the same time within each individual level of education. For example, the elementary school plan proposes the implementation of new curriculum for pre-school in the 2025-2026, mathematics in 2027-2028, science in 2028-2029, and English/language arts in 2029-2030. Each school level has its own focus for each individual year with no two courses expected to be in the same stage of development at the same time. True explained that there are different priorities at different grade levels and that the plan is subject to change and evolve over time.

“It’s not etched in stone. Things definitely can be moved around in it. This is what makes the most sense for right now with where we

are and as things develop and we see, we might not be ready for new curriculum at a time where it says that we’re going into the phases of looking at a curriculum, it might just be that we need some supplements or need some tweaks and don’t need a whole new curriculum. That would be amazing. It’s hard to say what will happen for each of these as they go along, but at least there’s a plan for how we’re going to look at it,” said True.

Superintendent Steven Lamarche added that the plan is a tool to help the district progress towards its future. As the plan takes full shape that will include input from both the school committee and the public at large.

“We’re trying to develop these long-range plans that can be incorporated. We are working on a draft district improvement plan that we

want to bring the school committee and then after the school committee gives feedback on that we want to send it out to the masses and get more feedback on it, but these things have to be incorporated in that so we’re really trying to get organized,” said Lamarche.

Among other goals expressed during the presentation were intentions to bring fifth grade curriculum in line with the rest of the middle school. True is also working with Director of Pupil Personnel Services Heather Harriman on enhancements to the preschool curriculum and incorporating that process into professional development sessions and workshops. A copy of the current proposed Curriculum Review Plan is available as part of the packet for the March 26 School Committee meeting.

SCAMS

continued from page 9

than behind their desk, it’s not safe,” Donohue said. “As new tech comes out, scammers use it.”

Even Alexa has become a scam avenue. Donohue said a few years ago, there were reports of a scammer hacking Alexa and convincing children he was Santa.

Technology has led to a split in scam success. While younger people fall victim to more of them (usually online), seniors get taken for larger sums of money, simply because they’ve saved and invested it for years.

“Anyone can fall for a scam,” Donohue said.

“If you do, don’t keep it locked inside. Share it. ... When you do, it’s potentially helping others to block them from coming through.”

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

REAL ESTATE

CHARLTON

\$645,000, 103 Carroll Hill Rd, Doherty, Kelan P, to Granger, Angela, and Granger, Nicholas.

HOLLAND

\$250,000, 70 Sturbridge Rd, Hamilton Reservoir Cabin, and Brothers, Hope M, to Martel, Tyler S.

SOUTHBRIDGE

\$1,500,000, 187 Everett St, Jones, William S, and Jones, Maureen A, to Wps 444 Main LLC, and Three Bees LLC.

\$1,500,000, 85 Worcester St, Jones, William S, and Jones, Maureen A, to Wps 444 Main LLC, and Three Bees LLC.

\$644,000, 383 Eastford Rd, Cohasse Country Club, to Cohasse Properties LLC.

\$450,000, 9 Henry St, Sutton, Tyrone M, to Henry Street Holdings LLC.

\$365,000, 75 Crystal St, Cepeeda 3rd, Carlos, to Castasus, Nolvía V, and Castasus, Christopher P.

\$355,000, 167 Hill Top Dr, Gk Hudzik T, and Hudzik, Gregory A, to Stivers, Isabel R, and Stivers, Zachary O.

STURBRIDGE

\$515,500, 9 Lauren Ln, Vowles, Janie L, and Menard, Kathryn L, to Gaylord, Evan K, and Gaylord, Nicole L.

\$381,000, 212 Arnold Rd, Gaylord, Evan K, and Gaylord, Nicole L, to Leduc, Peter.

\$360,000, 109 Colonial Dr #109, Fontaine Ft, and Walsh, Timothy J, to Robidoux, Scott.



LEGALS

TOWN OF CHARLTON DPW INVITATION TO BID MATERIALS & SERVICES

Sealed bids appropriately marked will be publicly opened and read in Meeting Room 1, Charlton Town Hall, 37 Main Street, Charlton, MA 01507 on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. for the following DPW materials which will be used on approximately 30,000 linear feet of road surface.

1. **Bituminous Concrete, Type I, in place (Must be pre-qual) MassDOT prequalification’s of contractors with the class of work as, Pavement Surfacing, for the project with an estimated value of \$646,730.00 will be required.**

2. **Full Depth Pavement Reclamation (Calcium Chloride) (Must be pre-qual) all grading included. MassDOT prequalification’s of contractors with the class of work as, Pavement Reclamation, for the project with an estimated value of \$100,174.20 will be required.**

3. **10% & 20% Asphalt Rubber Surface Treatment (Must be pre-qual). MassDOT prequalification’s of contractors with the class of work as, Pavement Surfacing, for the project with an estimated value of \$291,334.50 will be required.**

4. **Asphalt Milling and Removal “all sweeping included” (Must be pre-qual). MassDOT prequalification’s of contractors with the class of work as, Pavement – Milling and Cold Planing, for the project with an estimated value of \$109,600.00 will be required.**

This is a state funded project that exceeds \$50,000.00, therefore, all contractors intending to bid *must be pre-qualified* by the Contract Engineer, Room 7373, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116. With submission of the properly executed “Approval for Proposal Form” to the office of the Town Administrator, Charlton Town Hall, 37 Main Street, Charlton, MA 01507, the prospective bidder will be entitled to a non-transferrable proposal package or by emailing mary.devlin@townofcharlton.net

Prospective bidders must obtain and utilize the bid package which shall be requested from the Town Administrator’s Office, 37 Main Street, Charlton, MA 01507 or by emailing mary.devlin@townofcharlton.net. The Town Administrator must receive sealed bids, no later than **Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. Each item shall be clearly marked in a separate envelope as to which category the bidder has chosen**, i.e. “Item 1 – Bituminous Concrete (Type

I) in place, Item 2 – Full Depth Pavement Reclamation (Calcium Chloride) **all grading included**, Item 3 – 10% & 20% Asphalt Rubber Surface Treatment, and Item 4 – Asphalt Milling and Removal - all sweeping included.” Any deviations from Massachusetts General Laws, Massachusetts Highway Department requirements and proposal stipulations will result in an automatic disqualification from the bidding process.

This bid advertised under Chapter 30; Section 39M, Chapter 149, Section 26 – 27F of the M.G.L., in reference to the prevailing wage rates. All road material work and materials shall conform to the requirements of the Massachusetts Highway Department Standard Specifications for Highways, Bridges, and Waterways. **All bids must be submitted under Chapter 30, Section 39M, which requires a bid deposit in the form of a bid bond. The amount of such bid deposit shall be five (5) percent % of the value of the bid.** Within ten days of the notification of the award, the contractor is required to provide a security bond under section twenty-nine of Chapter One Hundred and Forty-Nine, for 50% of the contract award.

All bids awarded will be effective for one year from the date of the Board of Selectmen approval.

Any questions should be directed to Harold Piehl, DPW Superintendent at (508) 248-2212.

The Town Administrator reserves the right to waive any minor informality in the bids and reject any and all bids and to make awards in the manner deemed to be in the best interest of the Town.

April 11, 2025
April 18, 2025

Pursuant to Mass General Laws Chapter 105A, the contents of the following spaces:

H136 (Timothy Fortuna), H41 (Joseph Lemay) & H12, H1 72 (Vanessa Suarez) located at 25 Brimfield Road, Holland, MA will be sold to satisfy the owners lien of Storage Plus. Sale date is April 23, 2025 @ 1 :00 PM. Inspection between 12:30 PM and 1 :00 PM on April 23, 2025. Sealed bids must be hand delivered by 1:00 PM on April 23, 2025. All goods 1 must be purchased with cash as is, and must be removed within 48 hours of sale. Owner has the right to bid to protect his lien and to withdraw any unit upon settlement by the obligated party up for sale. For further information call (413)245-4388.

April 10, 2025
April 17, 2025

LEGALS

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE’S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Michael F. Jandreau to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Santander Bank, N.A., dated December 21, 2017 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 58225, Page 36, as modified by a certain modification agreement recorded on October 25, 2023, and recorded with said Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 69800, Page 275, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, by assignment from:

Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Santander Bank, N.A., its successors and assigns to Santander Bank, N.A., recorded on January 10, 2025, in Book No. 71518, at Page 391 for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing, the same will be sold at Public Auction at 11:00 AM on April 18, 2025, on the mortgaged premises located at 691 Guelphwood Road, Southbridge, Worcester County, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage,

TO WIT:

The land and any buildings thereon located on the northerly side of Guelphwood Road in said Southbridge and designated as Parcel A on “Plan of Land in Southbridge, MA. Surveyed for Haywood Farms, Inc. Scale 1 “=100’, March 14, 1983, Robert F. Para, Land Surveyor” recorded with Worcester District Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 528, Plan 118.

Together with a right of way sixteen (16) feet in width over Parcel B as shown on said Plan 011/001/8 00001: 011/001/B 00001

Title to the above described property conveyed to Christine A. Southhall from Daniel A. Southhall and Christine A. Southhall by Quit Claim Deed dated July 22, 2005 and recorded July 29, 2005 in Book 36932, Page 292 or Instrument No. 200500123544.

And also being the same premises conveyed to Michael F. Jandreau by deed from Christine A. Southhall to be recorded herewith.

For mortgagor’s(s’) title see deed recorded with Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 58225, Page 34.

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

TERMS OF SALE:

A deposit of Ten Thousand (\$10,000.00) Dollars by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The balance is to be paid by certified or bank check at Harmon Law Offices, P.C., 150 California St., Newton, Massachusetts 02458, or by mail to P.O. Box 610389, Newton Highlands, Massachusetts 02461-0389, within thirty (30) days from the date of sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. The description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of an error in this publication.

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

SANTANDER BANK, N.A.

Present holder of said mortgage

By its Attorneys,

HARMON LAW OFFICES, P.C.

150 California St.

Newton, MA 02458

(617)558-0500

27012

March 27, 2025

April 3, 2025

April 10, 2025

Notice of Public Hearing

Notification is hereby given that an application has been filed by Rapsallion at Pine Lake for New On-Premises Seasonal Liquor License at Pine Lake RV Resort for a Common Victualler License – Beer & Wine at the premises currently located at 30 River Road MA with the Sturbridge Select Board. In accordance with MGL Ch. 138, a public hearing will be held Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at 6:45 p.m. This hearing will be held at Veteran’s Memorial Hall, Sturbridge Town Hall, 308 Main Street, Sturbridge MA 01566

April 10, 2025

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 April 23, 2025, at 7PM on the application of Sleepy Hollow Realty Trust.

The applicant has submitted a Request for Determination of Applicability for proposed grading within the 100-foot Buffer Zone to a Bordering Vegetated Wetland. Address: Lot 6 A Young Road, Charlton, MA, 01507. Parcel ID: 22-A-24.6

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

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

Thomas O’Malley

Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission

April 10, 2025

CHARLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with the Town of Charlton Stormwater Management Rules & Regulations, the Charlton Conservation Commission will be accepting comments on the following application: The applicant, Sleepy Hollow Realty Trust, has submitted a Land Disturbance/Stormwater Management Permit on March 31, 2025, for stormwater infrastructure associated with the construction of a single-family home.

The project site is located at Lot 6 A Young Road Charlton, MA 01507, and is also known as: Parcel ID 22-A-24.6. Copies of the Land Disturbance Application are available at the Charlton Conservation Commission office during business hours.

Thomas O’Malley

Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission

April 10, 2025

CHARLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with the Town of Charlton Stormwater Management Rules & Regulations, the Charlton Conservation Commission will be accepting comments on the following application: The applicant, Sleepy Hollow Realty Trust, has submitted a Land Disturbance/Stormwater Management Permit on March 31, 2025, for stormwater infrastructure associated with the construction of a single-family home.

The project site is located at Lot 7 A Young Road Charlton, MA 01507, and is also known as: Parcel ID 22-A-24.7. Copies of the Land Disturbance Application are available at the Charlton Conservation Commission office during business hours.

Thomas O’Malley

Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission

April 10, 2025

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. W025C0188CA CITATION ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME

In the matter of:

Jennasey Rose Cardona

A Petition to Change Name of Minor

has been filed by

Jennasey Rose Cardona of Southbridge MA requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:

Jennasey Rose Cardona-Zayas

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: Worcester Probate and Family Court before 05/06/2025 at 10 a.m. 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: April 03, 2024

Stephanie Fattman,

Register of Probate

April 10, 2025

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, April 23, 2025, at 6:00 PM to review a Request for Determination (RDA) submitted by

CSX Transportation, Inc. The RDA requests confirmation of the boundaries of wetland resource areas within the CSX railroad right-of-way in Brimfield, as part of the railroad’s five-year Vegetation Management Plan.

Project Location: 49 East Brimfield Holland Road (Map

Meeting Location: Public Participation will be In-Person at Hitchcock Academy at 2 Brookfield Road, Brimfield, MA 01010 on April 23, 2025, 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

April 02, 2025

April 10, 2025

NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE’S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 50 Randolph Street, Southbridge, MA 01550

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Jonathan Gonzalez to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as nominee for OCMBC, Inc., and now held by **Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC**, said mortgage dated October 21, 2021 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 66352, Page 303, said mortgage was assigned from Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as Mortgagee, as Nominee for OCMBC, Inc. to Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC by assignment dated August 25, 2023 and recorded with said Registry of Deeds in Book 69564, Page 202; for breach of the conditions in said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold at **Public Auction** on May 8, 2025 at 2:00 PM Local Time upon the premises, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:

The land with the buildings thereon, and all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging situated in said Southbridge, on the southerly side of Randolph Street, bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at an iron pin in the ground on the southerly line of Randolph Street at the northeasterly corner thereof and the northwest corner of land of David Calcagni, said pin being situated 50 feet westerly from the westerly line of Lyons Street; THENCE westerly along the southerly line of Randolph Street 50 feet to an iron pin at land formerly of Antaya; THENCE southerly along land formerly of Antaya 85 feet, more or less, to the northwest corner of land now or formerly of Joseph Marinelli et ux; THENCE in an easterly direction along the northerly line of land now or formerly of Joseph Marinelli et ux, 50 feet to an iron pin at land of Calcagni; THENCE northerly by land of Calcagni 85 feet, more or less, to the point of beginning. BEING Lot No. 103 as numbered and shown on plan entitled “Plan of Lots for Mrs. A. P. Olney, Southbridge, Mass., made by John A. Whittaker, C.E. dated, August 15, 1901, recorded with Worcester District Registry of Deeds, Book of Plans 24, Plan 62. Property Address: (for reference only) 50 Randolph Street Southbridge, MA AP 25, Lot 1

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

For Mortgagor’s Title see deed dated October 12, 2021 and recorded in the Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 66352, Page 299.

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

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

Other terms to be announced at the sale.

Brock & Scott, PLLC

23 Messenger Street

2nd Floor

Plainville, MA 02762

Attorney for Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC

Present Holder of the Mortgage (401) 217-8701

April 10, 2025

April 17, 2025

April 24, 2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Worcester Division 225 Main Street Worcester, MA 01608 (508) 831-2200 Docket No. W023P3475PM Estate of: Juan Rivera CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT

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

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court before: **10:00 a.m.** on the return day of **04/22/2025**. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

Witness, Hon. Leilah A Keamy,

First Justice of this Court

March 25, 2025

Stephanie K. Fattman, Register of Probate

April 10, 2025

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 on **Wednesday, April 23, 2025 at 7:15 p.m.** at the Holland Town Hall, 27 Sturbridge Rd, 1st Floor Community Room, Holland, MA 01521.

If dial in access is needed, please contact the Town Hall at 413-245-7108 x101.

The purpose of the hearing is to consider a request from **Joseph C. Maudsley** for a **Special Permit** according to Holland Bylaw section 7.

Relief requested: Bedroom Addition

The property located at: **1 Roberts Park Rd.** Parcel ID # R31/D/11/1.

Don Beal, Chairperson

Zoning Board of Appeals

Date: 4/01/2025

April 10, 2025

April 17, 2025

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 April 23, 2025, at 7PM on the application of Robert Mills.

The applicant has submitted a Request for Determination of Applicability for the proposed installation of a 12’ x 8’ shed. Address: 93 Leland Drive, Charlton, MA, 01507. Parcel ID: 73A-A-45

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

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

Thomas O’Malley

Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission

April 10, 2025

For Legal
Advertising
Information
Call
508-909-4127
email:
legals@
stonebridge
press.news

TREES
continued from page 1

vince the federal government to restore funding.

“We’ve already had multiple trees fall on public roads” because of years of neglect allowing trees to die of invasive insect pests and various other causes, “and now we have to do something,” he said.

The town has done some hazard tree removal in recent years, but with a limited bud-

get that's mostly in the DPW. Back when Heather Blakeley was DPW director, for example, crews cut several trees along Main Street and second Lebanon Hill for the same reasons. The latter section of town wasn't included in the canceled grant's coverage area.

Of the ones the committee's considering for its updated hazard tree inventory, “the worst one by far was the one on Union Street,” which

Brady said “had limbs (falling) everywhere, just laying around.” Kevin Buxton pointed out another – a shattered tree along the Heritage Trail that's “dangling between two others.”

Several trees they mentioned aren't quite as visible as those two. Often, trees may look fine, but are in fact hollow. While that can provide habitat for bird and other species, it can also weaken the tree.

Despite being without

staff, his committee has been marking right-of-way trees that need care, starting in the Pleasant Street area, but those marks will fade over time if not addressed. Doing so requires professional equipment and skills the grant was funding as part of a five-year plan that aimed at seeking Tree City USA designation, among other things.

“There was some good work being done,” Heyman said. “It'd be a

shame if it's for naught.”

Brady agreed, adding the volunteer work is “not anywhere as fast as having the pros do it,” particularly in terms of data entry.

The group is still planning to help distribute trees to students for Arbor Day, April 29 & 30 at Eastford Road School and Trinity Catholic. They did so last year, and Brady recalled “Some of the kids were really excited.”

they're also still work-

ing on two new bylaws. One's a tree bylaw that would cover maintenance of dying trees, “private trees that could be invasive,” and various related issues, based largely on MGL Chap 87, sec. 5. The other would create a Shade Tree Commission to oversee that, replacing their current advisory board.

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

ACF
continued from page 1

hensive look at the town finances and qualifies the town for potential recognition through the Government Finance Officers Association, or GFOA, a nonprofit that promotes a mission of advancing excellence in public finance. The ACF report replaces the pre-

vious practice of simply submitting audited financial statements and will give selectmen and citizens a more in-depth assessment of the town's annual financial data.

“While our previous financial statements met GAAP (Generally Acceptable Accounting Principles) standards, the ACF report provides

more detailed financial information and clear pictures of the town's financial health. It offers an opportunity to provide the public and readers with a more comprehensive insight into our finances,” said Obrzut.

The report was submitted in January and starting this year will be submitted annually

by the end of December. The town's finances will be reviewed by the GFOA in hopes of earning the organization's certificate of achievement, an honor that Obrzut said will put the town ahead when they go out to the market for project bonding. She also touted the report's ability to provide more transparency

for the community.

“The GFOA strongly recommends all local and state government offices prepare and public and ACF report as opposed to regular GAAP financial statements, and I'm excited to say that we're now part of that group,” said Obrzut. “The ACF report is designed to give readers

a much broader range of important financial information which will help them better understand the town's finances.”

Obrzut credited her dedicated team for helping develop the report, which will be made available on the town's website for public viewing.

KOVALESKI
continued from page 1

Operations Division at U.S. Army Human Resources Command, Fort Knox, Kentucky, plays a key role in the process of locating Family members of missing Soldiers from World War II, the Korean and Vietnam wars.

The process begins with locating the Family member most closely related to the missing Soldier, known as the primary next of kin, followed by a request for Family reference samples or DNA, which are used as a main source in identifying remains.

Once a Soldier has been identified by the Armed Forces Medical Examiner, the PCRb notifies and briefs the Family about the results of historical, forensic and DNA reports, benefits and the mortuary process including burial with full military honors.

For additional information about Sgt. Kovalski, go to: <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/ID-Announcements/Article/3986626/airman-accounted-for-from-world-war-ii-kovalski-e/>

Media interested in covering the funeral/interment, and/or obtaining more information,

should contact the Army Casualty Office at 800-892-2490 or Everly-Wheat-

ley Funerals and Cremation, 703-998-9200.

OPACUM
continued from page 1

Reach out to us at Opacum Land Trust, PO Box 233, Sturbridge, MA 01566; info@opacumlt.org, (508) 347-9144 and

check out our website for events, properties you can visit, and ways to get involved at www.OpacumLT.org.

EGGS
continued from page 6

Reminders to extend the life of Easter lilies long beyond this season:

Prolong Potted Plant: Easter lilies are gorgeous plants, and with a few tricks you can prolong their life as a potted plant way past the Easter holiday.

If you are purchasing the plant yourself, choose a healthy looking plant with a few flowers in full bloom but with most unopened. Keep

potted soil moist and place in a cool 60 to 65 degree room where it can get some indirect sunlight. Avoid direct heat and direct sunlight. Be sure the pot is on a saucer, and if it is wrapped in foil be sure the foil doesn't trap any water in the bottom of the pot. Help your lily last even longer by snipping off the pollen laden anthers from the center of the blooms.

**

Longer Lilies: When your Easter lily has seen better days, don't

toss it out! Your potted lilies can last for years to come if you plant them outside. To do: When leaves and stems turn yellow and or brown, trim them back and plant the bulb directly into the garden after the threat of frost has passed. For best results, plant the bulb in about three inches of good soil in a sunny or partial shade area. Top with another three inches of mulch, peat moss, compost, etc. (bulb is six inches underground). Water as

needed.

Keep in mind transplanted lilies won't bloom until next summer. Keep well mulched during the winter and next spring remove extra mulch to help lilies sprout up.

**

Win a Three Course Dinner for Two at the Publick House

Your tips can win you a great dinner for two at the historic Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge! Simply send in a hint to be entered

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

**

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

JOURNEYS
continued from page 6

have to walk long distances to get any benefit. While walking 20 – 30 minutes most days a week is in fact valuable for our health, if the couch has been your exercise buddy most of the winter, even starting outside with a 5-minute walk is a good thing. Just build up the more you do it.

In addition to our physical health, what are we doing for our spiritual and mental health?

Perhaps as Isaiah suggests, you are facing a wilderness of spirit or life in general. Perhaps because of health, financial, personal or spiritual chal-

Too often patients think they

lenges life feels like a desert. Maybe God feels distant in spite of all the scriptures and sermons suggesting He is closer than you think.

Yet how do you perceive the new streams in the wasteland, or feel the Presence of our Creator? Lent is the time of year when we face these questions.

Maybe it is time to take a journey of faith?

And you don't have to do it alone.

There are lots of houses of worship in the area with lay leaders, clergy, and friendly folks who will meet you where you are on your journey – no cost, no obligation. These are places to ask the tough questions, and feel the support,

discernment and encouragement for your journey in faith. Because truth be told, all of us have had questions, even moments of doubt in our faith life.

Sometimes getting comfort, fellowship, even clues if not answers doesn't always come in formal religious settings.

Even the Thrift Shop at Charlton City United Methodist Church (CCUMC 74 Stafford Street) which opens Friday, April 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday & Saturday until late October/early November; is staffed with some of the kindest people you'd want to meet. As leaders in our various ministries, they can be great resources on the journey.

And sometimes we just need to take time to walk a solitary journey in faith – setting regular, protected time to pray, and to read scriptures is a good place to start.

Given I think some fresh air is good for body, mind as well as spirit, consider the Prayer Trail at CCUMC Carved out near our chapel in the woods, it is a quiet place to walk, reflect, and enjoy some peace.

I know other houses of worship, including St. Josephs in Charlton, have lovely grounds with places to sit and reflect. Marianapolis Academy has a lovely Stations of the Cross trail.

Speaking of journeys – in health and friendship, grab a pal and head out to one of the many walking trails in the area... the trails near Old Sturbridge Village, and the ones that go through it are lovely, and tranquil. As are the various Rail Trails throughout the region.

Lent invites us to take a journey in faith – to reflect upon our lives and that includes all aspects of our health – mind, body and spirit. It is a good time of year for transformation, for challenges and for growing.

But like all great journeys, it starts with the first step. See you on the trail!

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WEBSTER - 25 SLATER ST

ON DEPOSIT



Location! Location! This oversized & Well Maintained 2 Family offers 2,472 sf Total! Apt 1 >1st Floor Unit >has 1,052 sf, 3 BRs & 1 Bath! Apt 2 >2nd & 3rd Floor Unit has 2 levels >1,420 sf, 5 BRs, 2 Baths. Corner lot w/.30 acre, 22'x22' Two Car Garage! 12'x16'Concrete Patio. Apartments fully occupied. PLEASE DO NOT TRESPASS onto the Property. **\$559,900**

OXFORD - 25 SUTTON AVENUE

ON DEPOSIT



Location ~ Location! Move-in ready Commercial Office &/or Retail Space ! Ideal for >>> Small Businesses, Companies looking to expand, Banks, Medical facilities etc...2 Level Free Standing Building on a Corner Lot - Located in an Active area of Restaurants & Retail 1 Minute to Rt 395 & Rt 20...Zoned GB 10 units - .71 Acre - 26 Parking Spots **\$1,150,000**

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Snug Harbor Villa!



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WEBSTER - 22 COOPER RD.

New Construction! 2nd of 4 Homes to be built! Imagine Yourself in a New Craftsman Style home - Tucked away on Cooper Rd. Near Webster Lake w/Access to Lakeside Beach/Boat Ramp. 4 BRs., 2-1/2 Baths! Walkout slider from Basement. 2 Car Garage! **\$649,900**

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ON DEPOSIT



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On the shores of Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg

Featured Listing!!

ON DEPOSIT



Webster Lake Waterfront
88 Union Point
Excellent opportunity! Natural Western Facing Shoreline-Beautiful Sunsets - Views of Middle to North Pond! 7,000 +/- Sq. Ft. Waterfront Lot! Winterized cottage Fireplaced living room ! 12 X 30 one car garage. Beautiful Pine trees at the water's edge! - **\$660,000**

Featured New Listing!

Webster Lake Waterfront Lots
Bates Point Rd

In Beautiful, Calm, *Winter Cove*
Lot# 1004R Natural Level Shore Line 5000+/- Sq Ft **\$350,000 ON DEPOSIT**
Lot# 1005R Natural Level Shore line 7800 +/- Sq Ft **\$380,000 ON DEPOSIT**

Webster Lake Waterfront
44 West Point Rd
1st Time Offered!! On Killdeer Island! Beautiful Waterfront Property. 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, custom kitchen, Indoor/Outdoor Fireplace! Entertainers Dream! Beautiful Sunsets! Large Garage **SORRY, SOLD \$1,270,000**





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DUDLEY



AVAILABLE

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* 6 Rooms
* Updated Kitchen, Windows, Heating
*Level Lot * 2 Car Garage
36 Center Rd \$515,000

HOPEDALE-Condo Alternative



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ON DEPOSIT

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Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service at Old Sturbridge Village

STURBRIDGE — The annual Ecumenical Easter sunrise service will be held at Old Sturbridge Village on April 20 starting at 6 a.m. According to The Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale’s pastor, the Rev. David W. Cote, seven local faith communities will join together at the original Baptist Meetinghouse that is now located at the end of the Common at Old Sturbridge Village.

Participating in this year’s sunrise service, in addition to Rev. Cote, are The Rev. Dan Purtell (Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Sturbridge and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Southbridge), Father Luc Martel, A.A. (St. Anne/St. Patrick Parish, Fiskdale), The Rev. Brian Oxman (Brookfield Congregational Church, Brookfield), The Rev. Kathryn Light (Elm Street Congregational Church, Southbridge), and Ms. Christine McTigue (St. Joseph Church, Charlton).

“Together, we will welcome the dawn with prayer, song, and messages of hope and renewal as the sun rises,” says Cote. “The service is open to all and will offer a peaceful, reflective start to Easter Sunday.”

Those who wish to attend are advised to enter the Village and make their way to the Meetinghouse by way of the security gate at the top of the parking lot, and dress appropriately for the weather. Please note that 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. Attendees are requested to leave the Village directly following the service.

Easter morning services will follow

ART
continued from page 3

it lasted for decades,” Chiarchiaro said. “If it hadn’t been for Jo, we’d have never known about Edward. ... She was already well-established in New York,” and promoted his work there.

One of the few other female artists in the Gloucester scene was Cecilia Beaux, mostly known for her portraits, especially that of French president Clemenceau after World War I. She hailed from Philadelphia, but came here from 1906-42.

Others spending time here included Winslow Homer, Willard Metcalf and John Twachtman.

Homer and Metcalf also frequented Chiarchiaro’s first discussed colony – North Conway, NH, which was “the impetus for many beautiful works of art and some of the earliest US landscapes.” The work from there often has “a lot of European influence,” as American art was just beginning “to shine, because nowhere in Europe could compete” in terms of scenery.

Conway’s famous for Thomas Cole, who founded the Hudson River School, which wasn’t actually a school, but a “somewhat derogatory term” coined in the 1870s. He did his work about four decades earlier, mostly trying to catch the “dramatic landscapes” of fall, with its sky, leaves and mountains.

Many others tried to do similar works, with Jasper Cropsey wanting “to see what’s happening to the wilderness” and “making us aware this is a finite resource.” (Coincidentally, this was around the time that Harvard became home to the first nature conservancy.)

Homer had “a little bit of a sarcastic approach to it,” Chiarchiaro said; she focused on one of his paintings of other painters doing their work on a hillside, all dressed up pretty formally.

A much later colony, from the 1880s, was in Cornish, New Hampshire, where Charles Beaman bought hundreds of acres for it.

That was most famously home to Augustus Saint-Gaudens, whose home is now one of the only two art-based national parks in the country. “one of the most important sculptors of the time,” he created the Lincoln statue in Chicago, “The Puritan” and “The Peace of God,” among many others. After his death, his wife was able to bring many of his works back to their home, where they’re on display.

Cornish was also an inspiration for Thomas Dewing, an impressionist who was “enamored of the environment.” Chiarchiaro said he was “a tonalist artist,” meaning he used color to give his scenes “a sense of mood.” He visited Cornish from 1898-1905, when he “decided Cornish had become too socially-minded” and left.

Several of those artists, and many others, also found their way to the art colonies at Cos Cob and Old Lyme, Conn., and Ogunquit and Monhegan Island, Maine.

Cos Cob was largely centered on one house – the Bush-Holley House 1890-1920. That was also true at Lyme, where the Florence Griswold House was a spinster’s home opened to artists so she could support herself. To pay their rent, they painted her walls, doors, and more in far more than just solid colors. It became “one of the most extensive colonies of this period,” lasting from 1900-’35, and now features a lot of Connecticut work from one company’s collection (the Hartford Steam Boiler Co).

Unlike some of the other places, Ogunquit and Monhegan were largely colonies of Boston artists, including Hopper, Nivison, their teacher Robert Henri, Rockwell Kent, and George Bellows.

To Chiarchiaro, going to any of them is “just a fabulous experience. All these places, you go for the art, but also the relaxation.”

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

POSITIVE
continued from page 7

is a bridge. It connects people. It opens doors.

Now, picture a good salesman talking to a potential customer—not the pushy kind, but the thoughtful, sharp kind.

He doesn’t start with, “So, are you ready to buy?” He starts with questions so obvious they’re effortless to answer: “You’re looking for something reliable, right?” “Yes.” “You want to make sure you’re getting the best value for your money?” “Yes.” “And I’m guessing you don’t want to waste time shopping around forever.” “Exactly.”

Three yeses, right out of the gate! What just happened? The customer started nodding—not just physically, but mentally. They felt understood. They felt like the salesperson was on their side. And now, the next sentence—“Let me show you what I think is a great fit”—doesn’t feel like a pitch. It feels like teamwork.

The beauty of this isn’t that it tricks people. It’s that it meets them where they are. We don’t move forward when we feel forced. We move forward when we feel seen.

And this isn’t just for sales or business.

A parent asks a teenager, “You want your room to feel peaceful, right?” A coach saying to their team, “You want to win just as badly as I do.” A teacher calming a classroom: “You want to enjoy this time together, don’t you?”

Shared goals, voiced early, dissolve resistance before it ever shows up. They create alignment, and alignment creates momentum.

So next time you need to persuade someone—whether in a boardroom, a negotiation, a relationship, or just a conversation—remember the Secret of Socrates.

Lead with agreement. Start with what’s obvious. Find common ground. Get the nods early.

Because anyone who leads, teaches, builds, or negotiates will tell you—once they’re nodding, you’re already halfway home.

GARDENING
continued from page 7

water that stays in your landscape for plants to use, and help filter dust and pollutants out of rainwater before it enters groundwater.

Rain gardens are another strategy for managing water in your yard. These are designed to capture excessive rainfall, drain within 24 to 36 hours, tolerate dry and wet periods, and filter pollutants from the rainwater before it enters the groundwater.

Start by incorporating one or more of these strategies to help manage rainwater in your landscape. Continue to monitor success, adapt as needed, and include more options to help you successfully garden even during periods of excessive or limited rainfall.

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



Courtesy

The Ruth Wells Center for the Arts, located at 111 Main St. in Southbridge, is pleased to announce gallery hours for the current exhibit. Heather Croteau and Clay Tull will have their works available throughout the month. Gallery hours are Sat and Sun, noon to 4 p.m. Admission is free, and all are welcome to view their talents. The Ruth Wells Center was founded in 1976 as the Quinebaug Valley Council for the Arts and Humanities. Fulfilling the mission to promote art and culture on the community, we are excited to highlight local artists. We also offer workshops for adults and youth, Open Studio for artists to work on their projects in harmony and peace. The website features ongoing activities: ruthwellscenter.com and check the Facebook page. For more information, call 508-764-3341.



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