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Free by request to residents of Charlton, Charlton City and Charlton Depot

SEND YOUR NEWS AND PICS TO News@StoneBridgePress.news

Thursday-Friday, October 30-31, 2025

Masonic Annual Food Drive and Trunk or Treat is back

BY BRO. JIMMY FALZONE
MAJOR GENERAL SALEM TOWNE LODGE
SOUTHBRIDGE

SOUTHBRIDGE — The Major General Salem Towne Lodge in Southbridge is kicking off its Annual Community Outreach Service Projects.

This year's projects so far are a food drive to help support the Southbridge Food Share and the annual community Trunk or Treat for the children in the community. The Southbridge Food Share is located at 446 Hamilton St. in Southbridge, and has been



Last year's food donation from the community, left to right Bro. Eric Willard, Bro. Clay Tull, center with arms spread Bro. Larry Burbridge, Bro. Will Proper and Kodie Tull, who is a volunteer and member of the Worcester Chapter of DeMolay. We Master Masons hope to fill three pickup trucks this year for the food drive.

around for many years. It serves Southbridge, Sturbridge, Wales, Brimfield, and Charlton. Times have been very hard for many people in this community and keeping children and families fed has been the top priority for this local food share.

Turn To **MASONS** page **A8**

Charlton Town Meeting approves funding for Senior Center study

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON — The voters of Charlton turned out for the annual fall town meeting on Oct. 20 to have their say on several items, including capital expenditures that effectively green-lit a review of the old Charlton Furniture as a potential senior center site and voting down a pair of articles that would have exempt town property from gun limitations.

The senior center expenditure was included in a larger list of miscellaneous capital items which included technology upgrades, municipal building improvements, traffic enforcement and emergency response equipment, HVAC improvements at the local fire stations and replacement of fire vehicles, and a new Department of Public Works truck and sander to name a few. However, the most prominent item for many was the Council on Aging's request of \$50,000 from free cash for a senior center feasibility study for the old Charlton Furniture site. All items, including the feasibility study funding, were approved.

The Council on Aging's request was significant as just last month the Charlton Select Board chose to cast no vote on a request to support \$50,000 for the feasibility study. The proposal had been approved by the Finance Committee prior to the Select Board's non-vote on the matter allowing it to proceed to the special town meeting with a note of no support from the Select Board included on the warrant.

The other significant discussion of the night involved two separate articles each seeking to exempt municipal buildings from being classified as "prohibited areas" for the possession of firearms. One version of the article was sponsored by the Select Board, and the other was a citizen petition, both seeking to opt out of Mass General Law standards set in 2024. Those in favor of the articles felt that the state's limitations impeded on Second Amendment rights while opponents wanted to keep guns away from public gathering areas.

The Select Board article specifically proved to be the tightest vote of the night with only four votes being the difference as the article failed to earn support. The citizen petition also failed by a wider, but still close, margin of 25 votes.

The only other article that failed was a request for transfer of stabilization funds. All other articles passed including the amendment of bylaws that allow the town to finalize the transition of the Town Clerk from an elected to an appointed position, the repeal and replacement of the town's historic districts bylaw, the acceptance of Hyde Road and Downey Lane as public ways, and accepting Mass General Law provisions that will allow permanent, intermittent, or call firefighters to be credited with full-time service for the purpose of calculating retirement benefits.

Tantasqua School District enhances municipal safety measures with MIIA grant

Funds will support district's risk management efforts

FISKDALE — The Tantasqua Regional School District (RSD) was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA), the district's property and casualty insurance provider, to support multiple safety and facility improvements across its schools.

The grant funded several key initiatives, including the acquisition of anti-slip and fatigue mats for school kitchens to improve workplace safety and comfort for food service staff. It also supported a thermographic roof condition survey, giving the district critical data to inform long-term repair planning. Playground safety improvements were another priority, with funding covering Certified Playground Safety Inspector training, materials, and a CPSI tool kit to enhance playground auditing processes.

In addition, the district implemented online asynchronous training modules for facilities and custodial staff covering essential safety topics, including hazard communication, ladder safety, and bloodborne pathogens. The pilot program has been successful and will be expanded districtwide to strengthen the district's safety culture.

"This grant has allowed us to make meaningful, lasting safety improvements that will benefit students and staff across our schools," said Kristen Leo, Finance Director. "We're grateful to MIIA for their support and partnership in helping us create safer, more efficient learning environments."

For the 2025 fiscal year, MIIA awarded \$1 million to fund more than 150 grant requests from members for public safety activities and equipment. Municipalities were able to conduct HVAC evaluations, purchase confined space safety equipment and conduct boiler and water loss prevention measures, among many other initiatives.

"This grant is about real-world impact — helping municipalities reduce claims, safeguard municipal assets, and protect workers," said Stan Corcoran, MIIA Executive Vice President. "Helping our members build safer communities is central to MIIA's mission, and we're pleased to support Tantasqua RSD as it strengthens efforts to prevent losses and protect both employees and residents."

MIIA is a membership service of the Massachusetts Municipal Association. As a mission-driven, member-led nonprofit, MIIA focuses on providing Massachusetts municipalities and other governmental entities with insurance coverage alternatives, quality risk management, and wellness programs.

For over four decades, MIIA has proudly supported its members in their efforts to build stronger communities, foster safer work environments, and implement programs that promote the health and well-being of their employees. For more information, visit www.emiia.org and www.mma.org.

Behind the scenes of local public safety planning with Tri-EPIC's REPC

SOUTHBRIDGE — There's a saying that goes, "Hope for the best, plan for the worst." Poet Maya Angelou adapted this sentiment beautifully: "Hoping for the best, prepared for the worst, and unsurprised by anything in between."

Across Central Massachusetts, there's a dedicated and courageous group of individuals who spend countless hours doing exactly that — planning for the worst so that "hoping for the best" isn't left to chance. These groups, known as Emergency Planning Committees, consist of professionals



and community volunteers who meet regularly to discuss, coordinate, and prepare for potential disasters that could impact their communities.

One such group is the Tri-EPIC Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REPC), which has served the region for more than two decades. Tri-EPIC was first organized in the early 2000s in response to national and local concerns surrounding terrorism and large-scale emergencies following the events of Sept. 11, 2001. Early leadership

Turn To **REPC** page **A7**

Cornerstone Bank honored as 2025 Best of Central Massachusetts finalist

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank is proud to announce that it has been voted a 2025 Community Choice “Best of Central Massachusetts” top 3 finalist for Best Bank, an honor made possible by the votes and support of our community. This recognition is a testament to the trust, connection and loyalty Cornerstone has built with the people and businesses it serves throughout Central Massachusetts. Each year, the Best of Central Mass

Community’s Choice Awards celebrate local organizations that make a meaningful difference in their communities. Being named among the top three in the region reflects Cornerstone’s continued dedication to providing dependable, compassionate and personalized banking solutions. “We’re truly honored to be recognized by our community,” said Todd Tallman, CEO of Cornerstone Bank. “At Cornerstone, we strive to make a positive impact in the lives of our customers every day, whether that’s helping them achieve their financial goals, supporting local causes or being a trusted partner through life’s milestones. This recognition means so much because it comes directly from the people we serve.” Cornerstone Bank is one of several stand-out institutions selected as final-

ists in the finance category, representing the very best of Central Massachusetts. The 2025 Best of Central Massachusetts Community’s Choice Awards Gala will be held on Nov. 6 at 6 p.m. at the DCU Center in Worcester. The exclusive event celebrates finalists and winners across a range of industries. Cornerstone Bank extends heartfelt thanks to all who voted and continues to uphold its mission to be a supportive and trusted banking partner that truly sees, hears and stands with its community.

A b o u t Cornerstone Bank
Cornerstone Bank was formed in 2017, born of a long history of supporting the community, and providing a strong foundation to help people and businesses thrive. Serving Worcester County, Massachusetts, Cornerstone Bank’s local pres-

ence and community-based banking model enables a unique ability to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch. Cornerstone, which is a subsidiary of PeoplesBankCorp, MHC, operating independently under its own name and brand, provides the highest level of service and expertise for individuals, businesses, and community organizations with branch locations throughout Central Massachusetts. Cornerstone works to connect customers with opportunities through a broad range of deposit and loan products and services. Built on Trust is not just a tagline, but also one of our guiding corporate values. Whether a business or personal partnership, Cornerstone stands on the foundation that relationships are built on trust. To learn about Cornerstone Bank’s personal and business banking offerings,

please visit cornerstonebank.com or call 800-939-9103.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. El __, Texas town

5. Rocker's tool

8. A lot

12. Traveling by ground

14. Spelling competition

15. Two-toed sloth

16. Small perfumed bag

18. "Much __ about nothing"

19. Tough-skinned mollusk

20. Removes from record

21. It warms the planet

22. Leafy green

23. Quality of arriving favorably

26. Living thing

30. "Six of Crows" author Bardugo

31. Got around a rule

32. Resin from burned substance

33. Iraq seaport

34. Religious leaders

39. Fugitives are on it

42. Samson's influencer

44. Italian city

46. A quality of lacking interest

47. Predatory tropical fishes

49. Nobel physician Isodor

50. Luck

51. Stationary part of a motor or generator

56. Orthopedic professional group (abbr.)

57. One point south of due east

58. It follows 79

59. Paper currency

60. Anger

61. Spanish seaport

62. Sleep in a rough place

63. Famous museum

64. Selfs

CLUES DOWN

1. Bullfighting maneuver

2. From a distance

3. Soul and calypso song

4. Expressions of delight

5. Lower in esteem

6. Inner region of an organ

7. Flowers

8. A bog

9. Remove a fastening

10. Membranes

11. Enormous

13. One who abstains from drink

17. Malayan wild ox

24. Type of student

25. Rejecting all moral principles

26. Sino-Soviet block

27. Egyptian unit of weight

28. Wrong

29. Make a mistake

35. Indicates location

36. Boxing's "GOAT"

37. Where wrestlers compete

38. Timid

40. Disney town

41. Suggesting the horror of death and decay

42. Male parent

43. Remove for good

44. Simple shoes

45. Flowers

47. Hindi courtesy title for a man

48. Not pleased

49. "Atlas Shrugged" author

52. CIA officer and writer

53. Hoodlum

54. __ Von Bismarck, Iron Chancellor

55. Woolen rugs

REAL ESTATE

Charlton \$520,000, 643 Charlton St, Garcia, Cayetano, and Garcia, Elba, to Medina, Celsa, and Marin, Sandra A. \$490,000, 50 Fairlawn Ave, Carrera-Arcos, Elvia, to Victor, Amerlin. \$460,000, 254 Cournoyer Blvd, Sckd Rt, and Cournoyer Jr, Donald, to Giron, Carmen M, and Giron, Byron J. \$440,000, 788 Worcester St, Dejesus, Ursina, and Cabrera, Dimas, to Poline, Jonathan. \$375,000, 19 Girouard Ave, Labonte, Dennis A, and Labonte, Wendy A, to Dubey, Tracy L. \$245,900, 45 South St, Lavallee, Phyllis E, to Gentry, Steven N, and Dwyer, Barbara L. \$240,000, 155 Dennison Hill Rd, Walker, Jeffrey G, to Walker, Jacob M. \$175,000, 37 Oakes Ave, Umass Mem Health-Harringt, to Mrdeeds LLC.

STURBRIDGE \$620,000, 101 Colonial Dr #101, Cournoyer, Rose M, and Ciukaj, Richard S, to Henry, Amanda, and Henry, Paul. \$525,000, 64 Stallion Hill Rd, Cabrera, Jacob R, to Aweke, Dawit.

SOUTHBRIDGE \$4,000,000, 560 Worcester St, Cormier, Gregory S, to Ermani Properties LLC. \$4,000,000, 576 Worcester St, Cormier, Gregory S, to Ermani Properties LLC.

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visit www.townofcharlton.net
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Individual offices may vary

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www.charltonlibrary.org

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Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical
High School (508) 248-5971 or (508) 987-0326

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WALES: 413-245-9808

Weekdays 8:30 – 12:30 and 2:00 – 4:30 and
Sat. 9:00 – 12:00

CHURCH LISTINGS

• **Central Baptist Church**
256 Main St., Southbridge, MA 01550
Tel 508/764-6365; Worship 10:00 A.M.

• **Charlton Federated Church**, 64 Main St., 508- 248- 5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. Summer worship is 9:30 a.m. www.fed-church.org

• **Charlton Baptist Church**, 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488, www.charltonbaptist.org, Sunday worship 10 a.m.

• **Charlton City United Methodist**, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org
Sunday worship and Children's church 10am

• **St. Anne St. Patrick Church**, 16 Church St., Fiskdale (508) 347-7338
www.stannestpatparish.com
Saturday Vigil Mass at 4 pm, Sunday 8 am, 10 am, 12 noon, Youth Mass (September to May) 5 pm. Daily Mass Mon - Thurs 7:30 and 10 am, Fri and Sat 7:30 am

• **Elm Street Congregational Church**, 61 Elm Street, Southbridge, Ma 01550
Phone: 508-764-8085 • Sunday service 10:00 am
Pastor Kathryn Light

• **St. Joseph's Church**, 10 H. Putnam Ext, 248-7862, www.stjosephscharlton.com, Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30 p.m., Sunday Mass 8 a.m., Sunday Family Mass 10 a.m., Sunday LifeTEEN Mass 5 p.m., Weekday Mass Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 a.m.

• **Wayside Church**, 6 Haggerty Road, 248-5144

• **Assemblies of God Southern New England District Headquarters**, Route 20, 248-3771, snedag.org, Office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

• **Living Word Church of Charlton**, 10 Main Street - Grange building 1st Floor, Charlton, Ma 01507, Pastor Craig Bellisario, (508) 233-8349 Sunday Service 10:00am.
www.livingwordcharlton.com
info@livingwordcharlton.com

• **New Life Fellowship A/G, SNED Chapel**, 307 Sturbridge Road, Rt. 20, Charlton, MA, Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.

• **Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale**- 8 Maple St. Sturbridge, 774-304-1021
www.sturfed.org
Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.

• **Bethlehem Lutheran Church**- 345 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566
Phone 508-347-7297
Web: www.bethlehemsturbridge.org
Services - Sunday 9:00 am
Pastor Dan Purtell

• **Holland Congregation Church**
“Where the Bible is preached”
11 Sturbridge Road, Holland, 413-245-9926
Hollandchurch.org
Sunday Service @ 10:00 am
Pastor Dan Maketansky

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
446 Hamilton St., Southbridge, MA 01550
Phone: 508-765-9559
Web: www.holytrinitysouthbridge.org
Sunday Service 11:00 am
Pastor Dan Purtell

Worcester County Juvenile Court to host National Adoption Day celebration

WORCESTER —The Worcester County Juvenile Court will host its annual National Adoption Day celebration on Friday, Nov. 21 from 8:30-10:30 a.m., finalizing adoptions for 26 children joining 20 families from across Worcester County.

Five judges will preside over adoptions in separate courtrooms throughout the morning. The event is supported by community partners and friends of the court who will provide food, activities, gifts, professional photos, and more to help families mark this milestone occasion.

Festivities will include breakfast, arts and crafts, visits from local sports mascots, princess and superhero characters, and service and comfort dogs, creating a joyful and memorable experience for participants.

National Adoption Day is observed nationwide each November on the Friday before Thanksgiving to raise awareness of the thousands of children in foster care who are waiting for permanent, loving families. In Worcester County alone, approximately 2,000 children are currently in child protective custody awaiting permanency — and more than 9,000 statewide. Since its inception in 2000, National Adoption Day has celebrated the adoptions of more than 85,000 children across the United States.

Please use the main/front entrance and be prepared to go through security screening. Media must check in at the CASA Project Worcester County table, which will be prominently marked with signage and media badges.

The Worcester County Juvenile Court, under the direction of First Justice Mary Beth Keating, currently holds sessions in four locations: Worcester, Fitchburg, Milford, and Dudley. It is the mission of the Massachusetts Juvenile Court to protect children from abuse and neglect and promote opportunities for children to reside in safe, stable, permanent family environments whenever possible, to strengthen families when their children are in need of services, to rehabilitate juveniles, to protect the public from delinquent and criminal activity while holding offenders accountable and addressing the harm suffered by the community and the victim, and to decide all cases fairly and impartially with dedication, integrity, and professionalism.

CASA Project Worcester County, a partner in National Adoption Day efforts, is a nonprofit organization appointed by Juvenile Court judges to the most complex cases. CASA's mission is to advocate for the best interests of abused, neglected, and vulnerable children, amplify their voices in court, and support them on their paths toward a permanent home. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) are carefully screened and trained community volunteers. CASA Project Worcester County is a member of the National CASA Association and the oldest and largest of six programs of its kind in the state.

Housing survey now open

CHARLTON — The Town of Charlton is preparing a housing plan to better understand housing challenges faced by the community. This plan will help guide the Town as it pursues opportunities to provide more affordable and diverse housing opportunities.

Your input is an essential part of the housing plan.

Please take 10 minutes to complete this community survey before Dec. 31 at www.surveymonkey.com/r/charlton-housing.

For more information on the housing plan or survey, please contact Emily Glaubitz at eglaubitz@cmrpc.org.



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TOWN OF AUBURN

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

SNOW REMOVAL APPLICATIONS

The Town of Auburn Department of Public Works is accepting applications for snow plowing for the 2025 - 2026 winter season. Applications may be obtained at the Department of Public Works — Highway Division, 5 Millbury Street, Auburn, MA 01501, Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. — 3:00 p.m.. Applications are also available on the Town of Auburn website www.auburnguide.com. Applications must be returned to the Department of Public Works.

The Town of Auburn reserves the right to waive any informalities and accept or reject any or all applications, or portions of such, if thought to be in the best interest of the Town.

Kenneth Fairbanks
Highway Superintendent

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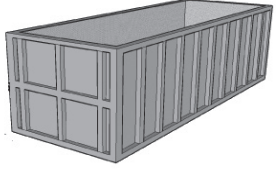


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WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

Joshua Hyde Public Library

306 Main St., Sturbridge
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mayent@cwmmars.org

FALL STORY TIMES
Join the Library for stories, songs, rhymes, and a craft on Tuesdays and Fridays at 10:45am. For babies, toddlers and children with an adult caregiver. Sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL. There will be no story times the week of Thanksgiving.

FALL BABY TIME
Join the Library Wednesday mornings in the fall for a story time designed specifically for children 2 years and under. We'll sing songs, learn rhymes and fingerplays, read baby friendly board books, and bond with other little ones and their guardians in a nurturing and safe environment. Children must be accompanied by a caregiver. Sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL. There will be no Baby Time the week of Thanksgiving.

Wednesdays from 5:00pm to 7:00pm
WEEKLY TECH HELP
Free hands-on tech assistance! Bring your own device or use our available computers. We can assist with: Printing, E-mailing, Microsoft Office Suite, Google Suite, word processing, digitizing photos and scanning documents, setting up eBooks and audio books through Libby onto your tablet or smartphone, device setup and updates, basic smartphone and tablet use, accessing Library databases and resources, and more. Need help with something else? Just ask! Please note: This is BASIC tech assistance. We cannot repair broken devices, recover lost passwords, or enter your private information (such as a bank number) online. Please have your passwords on hand.

Monday, November 3 - 3:30pm to 4:30pm
FAMILY CRAFT TIME - Beaded Pipe Cleaner Corn
Autumn fun keeps on rolling at the JHPL! Families are invited to join us as we make beaded pipe cleaner corn. This program is intended for children ages 5-12 and their caregivers. Registration is required. Sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL.

Saturday, November 8 - 11:00am to 11:45am
TALKING WITH TURTLES - TURTLE RESCUE LEAGUE
Turtles are magical! Among the oldest creatures walking the earth, they are unlike any other animal, and yet they are so important to the interconnected environment. And they need us now more than ever! This program is your chance to meet --IN PERSON!--some of the reptile ambassadors of the Turtle Rescue League, one of the major turtle rehabilitation and education organizations on the east coast; they're even headquartered right here in The Last Green Valley. During this program, we will learn all about turtles, how to help care for them, and come face to face with a few turtle friends. For children ages 12 and under. Registration is required. Sponsored by The Last Green Valley & The Turtle Rescue League. Children must be accompanied by a caregiver.

Monday, November 10 - 5:00pm to 6:30pm
AT THE SENIOR CENTER
THE GREATEST GENERATION: A TRIBUTE TO THE HEROES OF WWII
This 90-minute program commemorates the history of the war through dance routines set to Big Band music, performed in authentic military and 1940s dress, and

familiar songs of the era are sung. Included are readings about the Tuskegee Airmen, the Navajo Code Talkers and the 442nd Infantry. Presented by the Sturbridge Senior Center and the Joshua Hyde Public Library. Sponsored by a grant from the Sturbridge Cultural Council, a local agency funded by Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Tuesday, November 11 - VIRTUAL - 7:30pm to 8:00pm
THRILLER AND HORROR BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS
Not sure what to read next? Join Bookstagrammer Jody Blanchette aka @redreadreviews each month for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations - the best of horror and thrillers out there! Registration is required.

Thursday, November 13 - 5:00pm to 7:00pm
PUZZLE SWAP
Bring puzzles to swap, or come and take puzzles that people have already donated. We are accepting donated puzzles of all shapes and sizes for all age groups! Bring complete (no missing pieces) donated puzzles starting October 27, or on the day of the swap. There will be a puzzle set up for people to work on cooperatively during the 2 hours.

Saturday, November 15 - 1:00pm to 3:00pm
LEATHER TOOLING FOR TEENS
Have you ever wanted to learn how to tool your own leather project? Leather tooling is the art of stamping, carving, and embossing pliable leather with unique designs. During this 2 hour workshop, you'll recycle scraps from custom projects and turn them into key fobs, bookmarks,

or even earrings! This event is for those ages 13 to 18. Registration is required. Sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL.

Monday, November 17 - 3:30pm to 4:30pm
FAMILY CRAFT TIME - Brown Bag Leaves
Families are welcome to join us as we make brown paper bag leaves using oil pastels and watercolor paints! This program is intended for children ages 5-12 and their caregivers. Registration is required. Sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL.

Tuesday, November 18 - 1:00pm
AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP
This month's book is The First Ladies by Heather Terrell.

Tuesday, November 18 - 6:30pm
WORLD BUILDING BOOK GROUP
This month's book is The Stardust Grail by Yume Kitasei.

Wednesday, November 19 - 6:30pm
ARMCHAIR TRAVELERS BOOK GROUP
This month's book is We Were the Lucky Ones by Georgia Hunter

Thursday, November 20 - 6:00pm to 7:00pm
LEGO CLUB
Come build with Legos. Suitable for children ages 5 to 12 with an adult caregiver. Registration is required. Sponsored by the Friends of the JHPL.
To register for programs go to strubridgelibrary.org.

To register for programs go to strubridgelibrary.org.



Math Blocks
Fill in the missing blocks with numbers between 0-20.
The numbers in each row add up to the totals on the right.
The numbers in each column add up to the totals on the bottom.

4		3	18
10			30
	1	9	16
20	20	24	

6	1	9
12	8	10
3	11	4

Solution

Get Scrambled
Unscramble the words to determine the phrase.
GRITSEDREE SUERN

Answer: Registered nurse

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1834: The Free University of Brussels is founded by Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen.

1872: Susan B. Anthony votes for the first time in defiance of the law.

1996: Bill Clinton is reelected President of the United States.

NEW WORD

TRIAGE
sorting and enabling treatment for patients

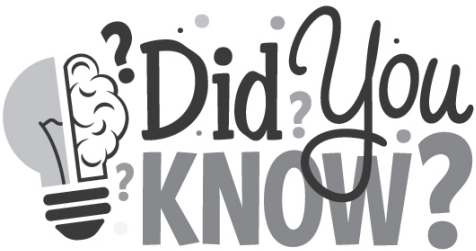
Health FACT:

This is one of the first medical professionals who assists patients.

Answer: Nurse

How they say that in...

English: Nurse
Spanish: Enfermera
Italian: Infermiera
French: Infirmière
German: Krankenschwester



Nurses work in many different settings, including in hospital emergency rooms and in doctors' offices.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Nurse near ambulance

Community Play N Trade Night at CCUMC



Pastor John Lucy and his two sons

Courtesy

CHARLTON — Charlton City United Methodist Church is hosting the Community Play N Trade Night Thursday, Nov. 6, from 6-8 p.m. and will host it the first Thursday of each month. Playing and trading cards is one of the few things all generations can enjoy together. We are passionate about and committed to providing a safe, fun space, with plenty of snacks, to foster communal growth.

When Pastor John Lucy of CCUMC plays Pokemon or looks through Pokemon cards with his kids, he feels that they are engaging in an activity they all genuinely enjoy.

“I’m not just trying to be a good dad and like what my kids like, nor am I trying to fit a square peg through a round hole,” Lucy says. “I grew up with Pokemon, and I love it, as well as other trading card games. My kids also love it. Usually, my kids don’t like listening to me but, when it’s about Pokemon, they are willing to learn from me, and I’m willing to learn from them. True, joyful bonding happens.”

Come join us and have a blast.

Central MA’s biggest and best cards & collectibles show returns this weekend

CHARLTON — The Dynamic Card Collectors show has the entire family in mind. By designing a show with a truly unique variety of vendors, we feel we succeeded in bringing a unique family-friendly event close to home.

The excitement kicks off Nov. 1 at 10 a.m. at St. Joseph’s Church, located at 10 H Putnam Rd. Ext., Charlton, and runs until 4 p.m. Each event will feature fantastic door prizes for both Sports and TCG enthusiasts! Door prize tickets will be drawn at 3 p.m., and winners do not need to be present to claim their prizes!

Now with nearly 90 tables featuring Sports Cards & Memorabilia, Trading Card Games like Pokémon and One Piece, Anime Collectibles, Funkos, and so much more, this event is a must-attend! You’ll find some of the top vendors in the state, exciting door prizes, and food and beverages available for purchase. It’s an event you won’t want to miss! The cost is \$5 at the door, kids 12 and under are free.

A big thank you to the volunteers from Charlton City UMC—for making this event possible, as well as for providing delicious breakfast and lunch options!

Local students to honor Revolutionary War veterans

STURBRIDGE — On Thursday, Nov. 6, a program honoring the veterans interred in the Old Burial Ground will take place at 10 a.m. with the placement of new American Flags on their graves.

Honoring these men started in a 1939 program with first and second graders at the Center School placing geraniums on these graves. In 2019, a new tradition was started with students from

the Burgess Elementary School doing the honors. On the Thursday before Memorial Day, geraniums were placed. The Thursday before Veterans Day (this year), these students will place the new American flags on the same graves.

Our invited guests will include the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) will be the Honor

Guard playing taps and firing muskets to end the program.

The public is invited and welcome to attend this program. It is a heartwarming experience seeing these children honoring the veterans of the war that took place 250 years ago which gave America its freedom from British Rule and which we celebrate these 250 years this year across our country.

Community Calendar

October 31 to November 7

Friday, Oct. 31 – Halloween Night! The moon will grin and goblins creep, Through Charlton lanes where shadows leap! From 5 to 8, the trick-or-treat train, Brings laughter, candy, and maybe rain. So light your porch and mind your fright, It’s Southbridge’s sweetest, spookiest night!	(and tea for you). Bring a friend, or make one new, A gentle hour ‘neath skies so blue.
Saturday, Nov. 1 – Spirits & Stories At Jacob Edwards Library’s hall, (236 Main St., Southbridge’s call) At 11 a.m., the tales arise, Of haunted mills beneath our skies. Free to attend—bring courage near, For history’s ghosts may just appear!	Tuesday, Nov. 4 – Art for All Ages The Ruth Wells Center, 111 Main, Welcomes painters who don’t abstain. From 6 to 8, the brushes sway, Autumn colors steal the day.
Sunday, Nov. 2 – Autumn Market Day At the Sturbridge Common, 10 to three, Vendors line up for all to see— Cider, candles, crafts, and pie, Warm smiles as golden leaves drift by. Sip, stroll, and stay a while— November begins with hometown style.	Wednesday, Nov. 5 – Helping Hands Meet Southbridge Senior Center, noon to one, Volunteers gather ‘fore Thanksgiving’s run. Pack up baskets, share goodwill, Good hearts and canned goods fit the bill.
Monday, Nov. 3 – Cozy Reads & Tea Charlton Public Library, half past two, Hosts “Stories for Seniors”	Thursday, Nov. 6 – Music at the Mill Sturbridge Town Hall, 7 at night, Local choirs lift hearts in flight. Folk and gospel, songs of cheer, Welcoming November here.
	Friday, Nov. 7 – Bonfire at Brimfield Park At dusk near the green, where stars ignite, Families gather for the autumn night. Hot cocoa, hayrides, laughter’s glow— A farewell wave to fall’s warm show.

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BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

A Halloween night for the ages

When the pumpkins begin to grin and the air smells faintly of woodsmoke, Southbridge, Sturbridge, and Charlton come alive in their own particular kind of magic. Porch lights flicker like watchful eyes, scarecrows guard front lawns with uneven smiles, and even the shyest neighbors seem to find excuses to step outside. Halloween may be rooted in ancient superstition, but around here it's less about spirits and more about spirit—the kind that makes a community feel like a living thing.

In Southbridge, side streets will soon fill with the slow shuffle of costume-clad children, bags in hand, their parents chatting in the chill. Sturbridge's neighborhoods will glow with jack-o'-lanterns carved with precision or chaos, depending on the age of the artist. And in Charlton, where old farmhouses seem to hold a secret or two, you can almost believe the wind carries a whisper from generations past.

It's easy to see Halloween as a holiday for kids, but it's really an annual reminder of how close-knit small towns still are. Behind every lit porch is someone choosing to participate—to buy candy, to carve a pumpkin, to greet the next generation at the door. Behind every costumed child is a parent, teacher, or neighbor who helped them imagine who they might be for one night. It's community theater without a stage, and everyone gets a part.

Of course, amid the excitement, safety matters. Drivers should slow to a crawl, especially along our narrow side roads where shadows can hide little ghosts and superheroes alike. Parents and grandparents can keep an extra eye on crosswalks, flashlights, and those little glow sticks that make children visible in the dark. And for older teens celebrating with friends, a reminder: the best kind of fright is the kind everyone laughs about later.

So as darkness falls this Friday evening, step outside for a while. Admire the decorations, share a smile, hand out a treat or two. Halloween in our towns isn't about what hides in the dark—it's about what shines through it: laughter, kindness, and a shared understanding that community isn't built in meetings or budgets alone. Sometimes, it's built one candy bar at a time.

Happy Halloween to all—may your pumpkins glow bright, your costumes stay dry, and your candy bowl never run empty.

Letter submission policy

Letters to the Editor must include the author's name, address, and a daytime phone number for purposes of verification in order to be considered for publication. Only the author's name and the town in which they reside will be published. Letters submitted without all of the required information will not be accepted.

It is the sole prerogative of the Editor to determine whether a submission satisfies our requirements and decency standards, and any submission may be rejected at any time for any reason he or she might deem appropriate.

OPINION

Seasons of life

There are a lot of things in my life that have changed since I was eighteen. I'm sure (and I hope) the same is true for you, too. As the sunlight fades and we approach the holidays, it's hard for me not to reflect on life changes I don't like.

Mainly, the loss of friends over time due to increasing work and family responsibility, and the fact that as a Methodist pastor, I have had to move a bunch. My friends are far away, and I am a terrible long-distance friend.

My family used to have Thanksgiving with a set of cousins I was close to, but now those cousins have families of their own, and since I'm married with my own family we need to alternate with my wife's side. That's cool and all but, you know, it's not the same. Speaking of family, having kids is a huge change that I'm not sure, even ten years in, I was or am fully prepared for. As

a bona fide introvert, I'm still adjusting to the changes marriage and kids bring—and when in a sarcastic mood will wonder aloud whether the changes are worth it.

These are merely a few examples of the fact that life heaps changes upon us. As life changes, we, too, change. Our natural instinct in the midst of these seasons of life is to think of and long for a time in our life when we felt we had it all together. And, thus, our instinct is to decry any changes in our life or within ourselves opposed to the "me" we loved "back there."

So I think of one of the most famous passages of the Bible, from Ecclesiastes 3: "To every



BEYOND THE PEWS

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

thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die..." and etc. What many don't know is that Ecclesiastes, generally, proclaims the message that "all is vanity." Success, reputation, ambition, wealth, all vanity. We should instead enjoy our life when we can. Not in the sense of doing whatever we want no matter what, but in the sense of finding the joy and blessings of God in each moment. Which means that in some seasons of life, we'll enjoy life in one way; and in another season of life, we'll enjoy life differently. For everything, there is a season,

and we need to find the blessings in each.

Until a couple of years ago, I only liked spring and summer. I'm a cyclist and warm-blooded as well, so I had zero time for the cold winter months or the winter harbinger autumnal months. I wanted to sweat in the sun for miles on end. Now, though, I find there to be something special about going for walks in autumn, admiring the changing landscape, and feeling the chill on my cheeks. It makes me feel alive the same way flying down Muggett Hill Road at 40 miles per hour on my bike does.

No one likes change, least of when our own precious lives change. Yet, as the seasons of weather are inevitable, so are the seasons of life. I invite you to join me, then, in reflecting on the words of Ecclesiastes and find ways to enjoy the blessings of each season of life. Things change. Life can still be good.

A financial roadmap for veterans entering civilian life

The transition from military to civilian life brings countless adjustments. It also marks a good time to review how you're taking charge of your financial future. Veteran Saves Week is Nov. 4-7 and an opportunity to focus on building financial confidence and creating a solid foundation for your new chapter.

Now in its second year, Veteran Saves Week centers around one core message: No matter where you are on your financial journey, small steps can lead to lasting change. Here are a few tips to help:

Understand the financial shift. If you've recently re-entered civilian life, it's important to identify any gaps between your income and expenses. A key part of this gap often comes from the loss of military allowances, such as the Basic Allowance for Housing and Basic Allowance for Subsistence. You may also lose commissary and exchange privileges where groceries and goods were purchased tax-free.

Health benefits represent another shift. While you

received health care through TRICARE on active duty, you might be eligible for TRICARE for Life and Veterans

Administration benefits, but you may still need to supplement this coverage with a group health care plan from your employer or purchase it independently.

Build a budget. Getting a clear picture of your finances helps you make informed decisions. Look at your monthly income, expenses and savings to understand your starting point.

One strategy you may find useful is the 50/30/20 rule. With this, you divide your monthly take-home pay into three parts: 50 percent for needs like housing, utilities, food and insurance, 30 percent for wants and 20 percent for savings and debt repayment.

Take essential financial steps.



FINANCIAL FOCUS

TREVOR
NIELSEN

Your monthly budget should include building an emergency fund, paying down high-rate debt and saving for retirement.

It may help to use budgeting apps that categorize expenses and identify areas where you can cut back when necessary.

Building an emergency fund becomes even more critical during transition. Aim for three to six months of cash savings to provide a safety net for living expenses while you establish your civilian career.

Don't overlook the available retirement planning tools. Even if you will have a pension, you might consider putting money into an IRA, or a 401k if one is available to you through a new employer, or into stocks and bonds to keep building toward your long-term goals. It's also important to obtain a current Social Security statement since active-duty military pay FICA

taxes.

Leverage available resources. There are transition support programs through the military and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which also offer debt relief programs and financial counseling services.

Consider connecting with a financial advisor who understands the unique challenges veterans face during and after transition. They can help you create a strategy that maximizes your benefits and helps position you for long-term success.

Move forward with confidence. As Veteran Saves Week reminds us, small steps lead to lasting change. Your service has prepared you to overcome challenges – financial planning is just another mission you're equipped to complete successfully.

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.

Sobriety

POSITIVELY SPEAKING

TOBY
MOORE

We all go through hard times. It begins quietly—a few rough days that turn into a few wrong turns. Then come the years of drifting, when comfort becomes craving and craving becomes chains. Maybe addiction shadowed those years, taking your peace, your people, your time—until you wondered if you'd ever climb out.

Whatever the case, you only have two options: Let the past define you, or let the past refine you.

The truth is, the hardest seasons often build the strongest souls — if we let them.

I was always a Robert Downey, Jr. fan, and not just because of his incredible talent as an actor, but because he's one of those people who chose to let his past refine him rather than define him.

He was one of Hollywood's brightest young stars—until years of chaos chipped away at his reputation, his finances, and his hope.

For a time, Downey's life read like a cautionary tale. In 1996, he was arrested for drug possession; he missed required court-ordered drug tests, his house in Malibu was lost, and his career stalled. Studios labeled him unreliable. For many years, he struggled to find meaning-

ful work, his public image tarnished, his potential derailed. Years of drift: opportunities lost, trust broken, momentum vanished. Friends, fans, and insiders began to write him off. Those years defined him—for a while, at least. He was behind, and it showed.

Maybe you see some of yourself in that spiral — the regret, the exhaustion, the wondering if you'll ever get another shot.

In an interview with Oprah Winfrey, he said, "It's hard to get out of the barrel, it's slippery around the edges, and people like to see you fall back in."

Behind the headlines was a man fighting himself—haunted by his addictions, uncertain if he'd ever climb back.

Something inside of him must have shifted. Downey embraced treatment and sobriety. He began returning to the industry with more minor roles, rebuilding trust. Soon, he became the face of the Marvel Studios universe as Tony Stark in Iron Man, launching a blockbuster run.

After a few years of focused effort, he effectively erased the drag of the previous decade. He locked into a mission: sobriety, discipline, and proving his value. From near-ruin to "one of the most bankable stars in the world," he flipped the narrative.

In a New York Times article titled "The Fall and Rise of Robert Downey, Jr.," he admitted, "I understand reversal of fortune; that usually comes from my own hand."

The years of chaos didn't vanish—they taught him—but the next few years of focus reset his life. He quieted the chaos. He said no to what destroyed him and yes to what healed him—recovery, the twelve steps, yoga, meditation, and a renewed sense of purpose.

He aligned with a new vision, determined to shift his trajectory—with a laser focus. By 2008, his new career arc was in place. The decade of hurt became the foundation for his resurgence. The past refined him—not defined him.

Now, what about you? Maybe you're looking at a

past decade of "if onlys," of being stuck, of things going sideways, and you're ready to say: not anymore.

Eliminate distractions—screens that snatch your attention, gossip that drains your energy, addictions that drain your soul, doubts that whisper "you can't."

It's time to focus. It's time to concentrate. The hole may be deep, carved by doubt or addiction, but you can still climb out. The light isn't gone—it's waiting for you to remember it's there.

It's faint at first—but it burns brighter each time you take a step upward.

You don't need to be perfect. You need to be present. You need to refocus. Focus is a superpower—and it doesn't cost money or status. It just asks for attention.

Your past? As hard as it is to believe, it doesn't get to decide your tomorrow.

Just a couple of years of concentrated, consistent action can rewrite your next chapter. And when you decide to live like that, you begin to become unstoppable.

Focus, determination, and sobriety cut through confusion, clear your vision, and remind you who you really are.

Fight the winter blues with double amaryllis



GARDEN
MOMENTS
.....
MELINDA
MYERS



Courtesy — Longfield-Gardens.com

The artistic blooms of Double Aphrodite amaryllis have ruffled white petals with a narrow red edge and lime green center.

Add unique flare to this winter’s indoor garden and décor with double amaryllis. The several layers of colorful petals are sure to make a statement wherever they are displayed.

Start the amaryllis season with early blooming varieties grown in the southern hemisphere. Double Alaska features frilly, fully double white flowers with a lime green center. Order bulbs early, store them in a cool, dry, dark location and plant these early blooming bulbs by Nov. 1 if you want flowers for the holiday.

Keep the color coming throughout the winter by growing a variety of other double amaryllis grown in the Northern hemisphere that begin blooming in January. Plant a few bulbs every three weeks to extend your enjoyment for several months.

Watch the colors change on Double Giant Amadeus amaryllis. The petals start as mostly white with a fine red outline. As the flowers mature, the color intensifies to a blushing pink, coral and salmon.

Grow Double Sweet Nymph (longfield-gardens.com) for a bit of a romantic charm. The layers of creamy white petals are covered with coral pink stripes.

If you like the traditional red amaryllis, you will enjoy the giant red flowers of Double King. Each bulb produces three stems with four or more blooms that open at different times to extend your enjoyment.

The candy cane striped narrow petals of Double Doublet are sure to catch your attention. Each flower is a bit different, adding to its uniqueness. Watch as the three stems grow, producing as many as a dozen flowers from each bulb.

sprouts appear. Enjoy the transformation as the bulb turns into a flowering plant over the next few weeks.

Growing amaryllis indoors will keep you gardening all year long, providing mood-boosting benefits and stress relief. Plus, the colorful blossoms are sure to brighten your winter days.

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 series and the nationally syndicated *Melinda’s Garden Moment* radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and was commissioned by *Longfield Gardens* for her expertise to write this article. Her Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Should you sell or auction gold or silver?



At the time of writing today's column, silver is selling for over \$50 an ounce, while gold has sailed past the \$4,000 per ounce mark. You've probably seen television and newspaper ads telling you to trade your gold for cash. You may be asking yourself if you are better off selling your gold so it can be scrapped or if you should consign it with an auction house. The answer is: it depends.

If you have broken gold bracelets or damaged sterling silver serving pieces, it may be fine to sell them to a dealer who will scrap them. Whether you sell or auction the damaged and broken pieces, you will receive less than the scrap value. Pieces may need to be melted, and the buyer needs to make a profit. Some choose to auction broken pieces as well.

There are many silver pieces that should not be scrapped. Having a complete set of sterling silver flatware or hollowware serving pieces will appeal to collectors or buyers who plan to use them, and these sets should be sold at auction. Some sterling items are considered pieces of art and could command a premium. Georg Jensen, Tiffany, and patterns by famous makers like Gorham and Towle typically sell well above scrap prices. Antique pieces of sterling and coin silver by well-known silversmiths can also bring high prices. Coin silver is 90% silver (the same percentage as a U.S. silver coin) while sterling is 92.5% silver.

Many of the reasons silver should head to auction also apply to gold. Tiffany & Co., Harry Winston, Cartier, and Van Cleef & Arpels are some of the makers that command a premium. Scrap dealers may not factor in the value of gemstones when buying jewelry. The gemstones and design of a piece can greatly increase its value. Gold comes in different purities with 10 karat being 42 percent pure, 14 karat 58.5 percent, and 18 karat being 75 percent pure. The purity will of course impact the value. Auctioning your gold will ensure it reaches a wide audience. Instead of selling to one person, people

from across the country or even across the world can compete to buy your items. Another plus is that the process is transparent. You can see exactly what your pieces sold for and won't be left wondering whether or not you were paid a fair amount for your valuables.

U.S. coins cannot legally be scrapped and melted. Some gold and silver coins may be worth just their value for the precious metals. Dimes, quarters, half dollars, and dollar coins from 1964 are made with 90 percent silver. However, there are many factors that can make a coin more valuable. The condition, the date, the mintmark (the letter that indicates the city where it was made), and different variations can turn a \$10 coin into a \$1,000 coin. I'd recommend having your coins checked before you accept their gold or silver value.

Knowing when to sell gold and silver can be a difficult decision, especially with fluctuations in value. Given the current prices, many people are finding there's a silver lining when they go for the gold and auction their pieces.

We are always accepting gold and silver for our auctions. Our single-collector Civil War memorabilia auction will be online next month. We are still accepting consignments of paintings, statues, vintage comic books, baseball cards, and other valuable antiques and collectibles. Please visit our website <https://centralmassauctions.com> for links to upcoming events.

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

REPC
continued from page A1
from Harrington Hospital — notably John J. Hart and Carl Ekman — helped formalize the coalition’s efforts. In 2007, Ekman successfully gained state recognition of the group as an official Regional Emergency Planning Committee. By 2010, state records listed Tri-EPIC as the REPC serving multiple Southern Worcester County communities, including Charlton, Dudley, Oxford, Southbridge, Sturbridge, and Webster.
Today, Tri-EPIC’s membership reflects the broad scope of modern emergency preparedness. Representatives include fire departments, emergency management, public health, animal control and animal welfare agencies, senior advocacy groups, local and state police, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), the American Red Cross, and private sector partners. Many are citizen volunteers motivated simply by a desire to strengthen community safety and resilience.
On Saturday, Oct. 25, Tri-EPIC, in partnership with UMass Memorial Health – Harrington Hospital, conducted a multi-agency Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) exercise. The event will simulate a large-scale hazardous materials incident to test regional response coordination, communication, and hospital

mass casualty procedures.
Participants from multiple agencies responded to a realistic scenario under the direction of a professional emergency management facilitator. The goal is to strengthen interagency collaboration and enhance readiness for real-world emergencies involving chemical or hazardous materials.
Hospital operations remained fully functional during the exercise. The event was conducted in a controlled and safe environment with no impact on patient care.
Following the live drill, participants conducted a structured After Action Review, evaluating lessons learned and identifying opportunities for improvement. There was a special module dedicated to reviewing the role of animal control and animal welfare personnel in the broader scope of emergency management. Local animal medical, animal control and animal welfare organizations participated.
About Tri-EPIC REPC
The Tri-EPIC Regional Emergency Planning Committee brings together emergency professionals and citizen volunteers to coordinate planning, response, and recovery efforts across Southern Worcester County. Its mission is to enhance the region’s preparedness for all hazards through collaboration, education, and community engagement. For more information, contact Jason, Tri-Epic Chairman at triepicrepc@gmail.com

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From setback to strength: A Bay Path LPN’s journey of resilience and redemption

CHARLTON — For Jamal Kimani, nursing isn’t just a career—it’s a calling built on perseverance, purpose, and personal transformation.

Today, Kimani is a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) with hands-on experience in complex clinical care and a future that points toward advanced practice nursing. But his journey to this point was anything but easy.

“Failing nursing school the first time was one of the most humbling and defining moments of my life,” Kimani reflected. “It tested not only my academic ability but also my resilience and sense of purpose.”

Instead of allowing that setback to define him, Jamal chose to rise. He returned to nursing school with renewed focus and determination, ultimately earning his Certificate in Practical Nursing from Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy (Class of 2024) and passing the NCLEX-PN on his first attempt—an achievement he proudly calls his redemption.

While at Bay Path, Jamal deepened his professional development by earning certifications in Mental Health First Aid, Stop the Bleed, and Dementia Care, demonstrating his commitment to providing holistic, compassionate care.

Professional growth and compassionate care

Since becoming licensed, Kimani has gained invaluable experience working at both Lutheran Rehabilitation and Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, where he honed his expertise in Wound VAC therapy, G-tube management, tracheostomy care, and ostomy support.

He continues to strengthen his clinical foundation through ongoing education, maintaining his HCP/BLS provider CPR certification and completing IV Therapy training. These achievements reflect his dedication to lifelong learn-



Courtesy Photo

Behind Kimani’s journey stands a profound source of inspiration—his mother, Dr. Jacque Kimani, DNP, MSN, APRN, PMHNP-BC, a Psychiatric Doctor of Nursing Practice.

“As a psychiatric DNP and as Jamal’s mother, watching his growth has been one of the greatest joys of my life,” Dr. Kimani shared. “He fell, got back up, and transformed that setback into strength. He’s becoming not just a skilled nurse, but a compassionate leader whose purpose is rooted in empathy and perseverance.”

Remarkably, the professional journeys of mother and son share a meaningful connection through one mentor—Dr. Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN. Dr. Bolandrina taught Dr. Jacque Kimani during her practical nursing studies at Massachusetts Bay Community College, and years later, served as Academy Director at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, guiding Jamal through his own nursing education.

Reflecting on this rare generational link, Dr. Kimani expressed her gratitude: “You’ve done an amazing job! I am so glad my son was able to learn nursing from you. You’ve made a great impact in the nursing field as your former students have relocated all around the country. Please let Jamal and I know when your retirement party is—we would love to come and honor you, Professor.”

Looking ahead

Now, Jamal is preparing to take the next step in his academic and professional journey—enrolling in the RN program at Quinsigamond Community College this spring, with his long-term goal of earning his own Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree.

“I’ve learned that nursing isn’t just about medical skill—it’s about empathy, consistency, and the drive to keep improving no matter how far you’ve come,” Jamal said.

From personal adversity to professional achievement, Jamal Kimani’s story serves as a powerful reminder that failure is not the end—it’s often the beginning of something greater.

Jamal Kimani
ing and to providing safe, skilled, and empathetic patient care.
A legacy of inspiration and mentorship

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Courtesy

Children walking from car to car to collect the candy and see all the cars decorated and adults handing out candy in their Halloween costumes.

MASONS
continued from page A1
Major General Salem Towne Masonic Lodge will be holding a food drive at BIG BUNNY MARKET, located at 942 Main St., Southbridge, on Saturday,

Nov. 1 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. In addition to food donations, they accept personal items such as toothpaste, deodorant, etc. Last year we were able to collect two pickup trucks full of food thanks to the generosity of the community. The Master Masons challenge the community to surpass last year’s generosity and would like to donate 3 pickup trucks full of food if possible. A famous known Master Mason, Benjamin Franklin, once asked “Is There Greatness in You” if so please come out and support this food drive to support the community.

Also, we will be having our annual Trunk or Treat at the Major General Salem Towne Masonic Lodge parking lot this same day located at 339 Ashland Ave. in Southbridge from 2-4 p.m. Children and adults alike dress up in their costumes to retrieve candy and treats from rows of cars all decorated for Halloween in the parking lot of the Major General Salem Towne Lodge in Southbridge. Come experience the excitement of the kids running to each vehicle and the passing cars beeping their horns as they drive by. Many lodge members and volunteers offer their time and resources to put on this event for the kids in the surrounding communities. So come one comes all to this event sponsored by the Freemasons of Southbridge. If you would like additional information about Freemasonry, go to www.massfreemasonry.org and read about this great fraternity and find a lodge nearest you.

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Sheriff’s Organic Farm continues long legacy of feeding Worcester County



Sheriff Evangelidis and WCSO Lt. Travaglio pose with a mid-summer harvest of fresh organic produce.

WEST BOYLSTON — More than a decade ago, a newly elected Sheriff in Worcester County aimed to revive a program at the Worcester County Jail and House of Correction. That program not only honored the rich farming history of Massachusetts but also focused on modern methods of rehabilitating inmate populations.

Today, Sheriff Lew Evangelidis is proud of the program his staff has diligently worked to revive. The Worcester County Sheriff’s Office Inmate Run Organic Farm program is thriving, and those in need throughout Worcester County have benefited from the program for years.

As part of the House of Corrections’ Work Release Program, qualified inmates are permitted to tend to the grounds of the facility, including the various farming fields. The produce harvested by inmate work crews benefits numerous organizations, such as local food banks, senior centers, soup kitchens, veteran groups, and other charitable organizations in Worcester County.

In addition to their contribution to the community, inmates benefit by gaining valuable work experience,

learning agricultural skills, and having the opportunity to participate in meaningful daily activities that promote responsibility and discipline. Additionally, the harvested food is also provided to the inmate population within the facility.

“We are fortunate to have the land and the resources to support the Organic Farm program,” said Evangelidis. “We have put in a lot of effort to develop this program to its current state. While we are always subject to the challenges posed by Mother Nature, we have addressed the obstacles to optimize the work of the farm team and the inmates in the Work Release program. Through this work, inmates gain job skills, confidence, and the dignity that comes from engaging in a full day’s work for the benefit of others.”

Inmates eligible to join the work-release program are classified as low-risk and non-violent. Those who qualify and opt to participate earn “good time” credits each month for their positive behavior and active involvement in programming. The time commitment varies depending on the workload and time of year, but typically, inmates work between 10 to 25 hours a week.

On the 18 acres of actively farmed land, zucchini, summer squash, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, corn, watermelon, and pumpkins were bountiful through the first frost in October. It was estimated that approxi-

mately 35,000 pounds of fresh organic produce were harvested and distributed to community partners this year.

Since taking office in 2011, Evangelidis has remained committed to developing the Organic Farm and being dedicated to the communities he represents. After multiple expansions of the farm under Evangelidis’ leadership, the Worcester County Jail boasts the largest organic farm on a correctional facility in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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It’s almost time for the Holiday Fair!



SOUTHBRIDGE — The Ruth Wells Center, located at 111 Main St. in Southbridge, is holding the annual Holiday Fair on Saturday, Nov. 1, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free, and all are welcome to browse the crafters displays for sale. There is ample parking behind the Ruth Wells Center, and the building is handicapped accessible.

What can you expect?

Just in time for holiday gift giving,

we will have art, jewelry, baked goods, ceramics, crystals and much more. All unique and special- filling the galleries just for you.

There will be basket raffles- featuring gift cards from Cormier’s jewelers, Fins and Tales, Metro Bistrot, Moon Magick Cafe, Publick House, Teddy G’s and Wellsworth Hotel.

Mike Kae will be performing from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.





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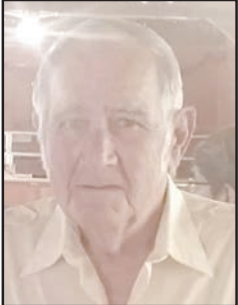
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OBITUARIES

Edgar “Sonny” C. Smick, Jr, 88

Southbridge- Edgar “Sonny” C. Smick, Jr, 88, died Thursday, September 25, 2025, after a long illness. His wife of 58 years was the late Vivian (Lamothe) Smick who died September 28, 2015. He is survived by his 3 daughters: Brenda and her husband Jerry Bellizzi of Brookfield, Rhonda and her husband Jimmie Vilandre of Southbridge, and Cathy and her husband Steve Renaud of Southbridge, and 5 grandchildren, Steven Renaud, Brandon Renaud, Alyssa Renaud, RJ Vilandre and Darren Vilandre, and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his son Russell Smick who died in June 2020, and his grand-



son Mark Fitts in 2024. Sonny was born in Southbridge, son of the late Edgar C. Smick, Sr. and Yvonne E. (Labelle) Smick, and has lived here all his life. He enjoyed camping for many years especially at Oak Haven Campground in Wales. He also enjoyed golfing, bowling on the senior bowling league, and playing quirts at the campground. A graveside service at 11AM was held on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at OakRidge Cemetery, Southbridge. There are no calling hours. Sansoucy Funeral Home, 40 Marcy Street, Southbridge assisted with the arrangements.

Susan (Sandy) Curtis, 88

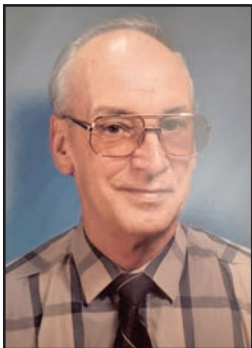
Brimfield-Susan (Sandy) Curtis, 88, passed away at her home on October 21, 2025. Born September 23, 1937 in Minneapolis, MN, she was the daughter of Alan and Evelyn (Martin) Sandy. As a teenage equestrian she did provoke her parents ire on one occasion when she rode her horse through the front door and into the family house. Susan grew up in Minneapolis and graduated from Colby College in Maine with a degree in drama. While at Colby, she met her future husband, John. After their marriage on March 29, 1961, Susan and John settled in Sturbridge, where they lived for a number of years. In 1966, they relocated to Brimfield. As a home health aide, Susan worked under the direction of Harrington Hospital for a number of years. She shared her husband’s love of antiques and old houses. In her leisure, Susan enjoyed keeping her mind sharp while doing crossword puzzles and reading. Susan’s musical taste included appreciation for Johnny Cash and the Rolling Stones. April 3, 2024, Susan was predeceased by her husband, John. Her love will forever remain with her two sons, John and partner Susan of Hadley, and Ben Curtis of Brimfield; grandsons, Ben and Joe Lawton-Curtis and their mother Heather Lawton. Besides her parents, Susan was predeceased by her two brothers, Alan and Stephen. A period of visitation will be held on Thursday, October 30, 2025 at Brimfield Congregational Church from 10:00am-11:00am with a funer-

al service to begin at 11:00am. Burial will immediately follow in Brimfield Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations in Susan’s memory can be made to the Salvation Army.

Southbridge: Stephanie (Domijan) Lapierre, 85, of Southbridge, Massachusetts, passed away on Saturday, Oct. 11th, in the Rose Monahan Hospice Home in Worcester after a long illness. Her husband of 59 years, Roger H. Lapierre, passed away in 2017. Her son, Michael A. Lapierre, passed away in 2015. She leaves her son, Kenneth J. Lapierre and his wife, Deborah, of Phoenix, AZ; her brother, Richard Domijan of Mechanicsburg, PA; her four grandchildren, Robert Lapierre and Nicholas Lapierre, both of Bowling Green, KY, Cheryl Lapierre and her longtime companion, Brock Lowery, of Paducah, KY, and Lindsay Breckenridge of Stoughton, MA; and her six great grandchildren, Cole Kubilis, Blake Breckenridge, Delylah Breckenridge, Jayla Lowery, Jaylee Lapierre and Leslie Lapierre. Stephanie was born and raised in Southbridge, the daughter of the late Stephen S. and Catherine M. (Liro) Domijan. She was a proud graduate of Mary E. Wells High School where she excelled academically as a member of the National Honor

Raymond L. Renaud, 89

Raymond L. Renaud, 89, passed away peacefully on October 12, 2025, in Scottsdale, Arizona, surrounded in love, with his wife, son, and daughter-in-law by his side. Born in Southbridge, MA, to Joseph “Omer” and Jeannette (Girard) Renaud, Raymond was a proud graduate of Mount St. Charles Academy and Worcester State Teachers College, where he earned his master’s degree. He was the first in his family to attend college. Raymond dedicated 38 years to teaching in the Southbridge Public Schools and also taught night classes for adults earning their GED. He served on numerous city boards and councils and was an active member of Sacred Heart Church in Southbridge. His lifelong commitment to helping others included volunteering with CASA- court appointed advocates for children, the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the American



Red Cross. Ray was deployed by the Red Cross to Alabama in the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan and New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, where he brought compassion and comfort to residents in need. Raymond is survived by his loving wife of 66 years, Jeanne (Freniere) Renaud; his son, Mike, and daughter-in-law, Michelle; his granddaughter, Lillian; brother-in-law, Ray Freniere; nieces Sue, Karen, Donna and Melissa; nephew Eric; and many great nieces and nephews, cousins, godchildren, and dear friends who cherished him. Ray was so thankful for his friendship with coffee buddy Rick. Ray had a generous heart, a sharp mind, and a deep love for his family, faith, and community. He touched countless lives through his kindness and dedication to service. Ray believed in the best of this country- service, equality, truth and justice.

Stephanie Lapierre, 85



Society, was active in various clubs, as well as having had a talent for playing tennis and musically as a pianist and organist. Stephanie was the office manager of Yankee Spirits in Sturbridge, MA for over 20 years, retiring many years ago. She previously worked as a bookkeeper for her uncle, Stephen Liro’s, accounting office, as well as having worked at the American Optical in Southbridge. Stephanie was very fond of animals of all kinds and had a special love for her cats. She was an avid golfer and enjoyed spending time at the Jacob Edward’s Library in Southbridge. She enjoyed playing Cribbage

and a good competitive game of Scrabble. She also enjoyed quilting and was a great cook. Stephanie also loved floral and vegetable gardening. She enjoyed many years with her family at their summer camp on Stiles Reservoir in Leicester. Stephanie was a fiercely independent and strong woman whose family was of most importance. She loved her family reunions and had a deep connection and appreciation for her Polish heritage. She was loved by many and will be missed dearly. Her funeral will be held on Saturday, Nov. 15th, from the Daniel T. Morrill Funeral Home, 130 Hamilton St., Southbridge, with a Mass at 11:00am in St. Mary’s Church of the St. John Paul II Parish, 263 Hamilton St., Southbridge. Burial will follow in St. Hedwig’s Cemetery, Southbridge. A calling hour in the funeral home will be held on Saturday, Nov. 15th, from 9:30 to 10:30am, prior to the Mass. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the St. John Paul II Food Pantry, 279 Hamilton St., Southbridge, MA 01550. www.morrillfuneralhome.com

LEGALS

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 November 19, 2025, at 7PM on the application of Christopher and Krystal Hansen. The applicant has requested an Amendment to the Order of Conditions DEP # 128-1980 for the reduced disturbance within Riverfront Area associated with the construction of a single-family home. The project location is: 0 N Main Street, Charlton, MA 01507. Parcel ID: 35-D-2.2 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 NOI may be examined at the Conservation Office by appointment during business hours. Thomas O'Malley Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission October 30, 2025

Notice is hereby given, by Sunfusions Inc., that a Community Outreach Meeting for a proposed Marijuana Establishment is scheduled for Monday, 11/24/25 at 7:00pm at 41 Elm St, Southbridge, MA 01550. The proposed product manufacturing Marijuana Establishment is anticipated to be located at 79 North Street, Southbridge, MA 01550. There will be an opportunity for the public to ask questions. October 30, 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 November 19, 2025, at 7PM on the application of Thad Gumula. The applicant has submitted a Request for Determination of Applicability for the construction of an addition to the existing home within the 100-ft buffer zone of a Resource Area. Address: 96 Old Spencer Road, Charlton, MA, 01507. Parcel ID: 4-A-1.3 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 October 30, 2025

PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 166, §22F notice is hereby given of a public hearing to be held by the Town Manager on December 4, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in the George Parent Meeting Room, second floor of the Town Hall, 41 Elm Street, in regards to a petition filed by National Grid for the following Order for JO Pole relocation: Chapin St. Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid and Verizon New England, Inc requests permission to locate poles, wires, and fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures, along and across the following public way: Chapin St. – National Grid to install 1 JO pole on Chapin St. beginning at a point approximately 280 feet Northeast of the centerline of the intersection of Dresser St. and Chapin St. Installing pole 4-50 for residential service request. Chapin St., Southbridge, MA Anyone wishing to be heard regarding this petition will be given the opportunity to speak TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE Jack Jovan, Town Manager October 30, 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 November 19, 2025, at 7PM on the application of Glen Echo Improvement Association. The applicant has requested an Amendment to the Order of Conditions DEP # 128-1881 for improvements to an existing drainage swale. The project location is: 22 Glen Echo Shore Drive, Charlton, MA 01507. Parcel ID: 12-B-16 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 NOI may be examined at the Conservation Office by appointment during business hours. Thomas O'Malley Chair, Charlton Conservation Commission October 30, 2025

(SEAL) COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT Docket 25 SM 003152 ORDER OF NOTICE To: Jodi E. Bernard AKA Jodi Elizabeth Osterman and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. c. 50 §3901 (et seq): Freedom Mortgage Corporation, claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage covering real property in Southbridge, numbered 32 Roosevelt Drive, given by Jodi E. Bernard to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Equity Prime Mortgage LLC, dated March 26, 2021, and recorded in Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 64784, Page 128, as affected by a Loan Modification dated March 12, 2025, and recorded in Said Registry of Deeds in Book 71771, Page 41, and now held by plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant's/Defendants' Servicemembers status. If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above-mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108 on or before December 1, 2025, or you may lose the opportunity to challenge the foreclosure on the ground of non-compliance with the Act. Witness, GORDON H. PIPER, Chief Justice of this Court on October 16, 2025. Attest: Deborah J. Patterson Recorder 25-013019 October 30, 2025

Sturbridge Planning Board Public Hearing Application for Site Plan Review STL8, LLC

In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 40A, §11, the Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Monday, November 10, 2025 at 6:30 PM** in the **Center Office Building 2nd Floor, located at 301 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566 and/or by virtual means** if circumstances warrant, in accordance with applicable law; on the application of STL8, LLC for the property located at 8 School Street. The applicant requests Site Plan Approval as required by the Sturbridge Zoning Bylaws Article XIX, Site Plan Review to construct a 1,152 square foot artist studio residential building containing two (2) units, with associated site improvements as shown in the plans and application submitted. The new building will be constructed on the South West of the property, the existing eight (8) unit residential apartment building will remain. A copy of the site plan and application can be inspected on the Sturbridge Town Website at <https://www.sturbridge.gov/planning-board/pages/recent-filings-or-arrangements> can be made to view the application packet by contacting the Sturbridge Planning Department at (508) 347-2508 or by email at jlacy@sturbridge.gov. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted in person and may be conducted via remote means if circumstance warrant, in accordance with applicable law. This means that members of the public body as well as members of the public may access this meeting in person, or via virtual means. <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/472675877> Every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post of the Town's website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of the proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting. Charles Blanchard Chairperson October 23, 2025 October 30, 2025

For Legal Advertising Information, Call 508-909-4127 email: legals@stonebridgepress.news

OBITUARIES

Richard Leo Ginga

CHARLTON – Richard Leo Ginga, fondly known as Dick or Dickie, passed peacefully in his home on October 21, 2025, surrounded by his loving family.

Born on March 29, 1958, to Dolores LeClaire and Leo Ginga, Dick grew up in Worcester alongside his three sisters. After graduating from the University of Bridgeport with a bachelor’s degree in computer engineering, he began a lifelong career that reflected his curiosity, humor, and knack for problem-solving.

Outside of work, Dick’s greatest joy came from the simple things—spending time with his wife Etta, grandchildren and friends, camping at Sebago, bowling a few frames, golfing on summer mornings, and fishing in the backyard. He had a signature laugh, a large and welcoming heart, and a gift for making everyone feel loved.

Dick is survived by his son, Jake Ginga, and his wife, Annika Wynne; his stepdaughter, Mandy Griffin; his stepson, Dennis Griffin; and his



cherished grandchildren, Micaela Anderson and her husband, Tyler, Seth Christenson, Brielle Christenson, and Lucas Christenson. He also leaves behind his beloved sisters, Marie Ginga, Elizabeth Ginga, and Donna Ginga and her wife, Alicia Stewart; his nieces, Maya and Corin; an incredible group of friends; and his cantankerous cat, Angel.

He was predeceased by his loving wife, Etta Ginga, as well as his parents, Dolores and Leo.

Family and friends were invited to gather for calling hours on Monday, October 27, 2025, from 5–8 p.m. at Paradis-Givner Funeral Home, 357 Main St., Oxford. A funeral service was held at the same location on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 11 a.m. Burial followed at North Cemetery in Oxford.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Oxford Ecumenical Food Shelf, 4 Maple Rd., Oxford, MA 01540, a cause close to Dick and Etta’s hearts.

Madelaine Annette Latini, 68

Southbridge - Madelaine Annette (Foisy) Latini, 68, passed away Saturday, October 25, 2025, after a period of declining health.

She was born in Southbridge, the youngest daughter of the late Irene C. (Leduc) and Edmond J. Foisy, and was a lifelong resident of Southbridge. She was predeceased by her oldest sister, Susan G. Foisy, age 10, in 1959, from leukemia, and by her middle sister Claudette Foisy-Ethier in 2008 from ovarian cancer.

Maddy attended Notre Dame School, and was a graduate of the former Marianhill C.C.H.S. class of 1974, and also a graduate of the former Salter Secretarial School of Worcester in 1976. She was the first employee hired for the Elderly Home Care Corp (now Tri-Valley) in 1976 for several years, and later worked for Dr. Fleischer, Luxtec Corp., and Central Mass Healthcare. From 1991-2023, she worked in the office of Dr. William F. Dunn, and later for Primary Focused Care.

She was a lifelong member of Notre Dame and St. John Paul II parish of Southbridge. Her activities there included being a CCD aide, lector, choir member, St. Vincent de Paul member, active for several years in the Chez Ginette Cabaret, Booster



Club captain, bingo volunteer, Fall Festival finance committee, couple-to-couple minister, Ladies of St Anne, and Bishop’s Fund. She was also a member of the Southbridge Italian Club.

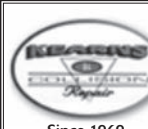
She is survived by her husband, Albert P. Latini, whom she married on October 17, 1981 at Notre Dame Church, and their daughter, Diana C. Latini, both of Southbridge. She is also survived by several nieces and nephews, and grandnieces and nephews.

Calling hours will be at Sansoucy Funeral Home, 40 Marcy Street, Southbridge, from 5-7PM on Wednesday, October 29, 2025. The funeral Mass will be Thursday, October 30, 2025 from Sansoucy Funeral Home with a Mass at 10AM in Notre Dame Church, 446 Main Street, Southbridge. Burial will immediately follow in New Notre Dame Cemetery, N. Woodstock Road, Southbridge. The family asks that in lieu of flowers, you to kindly consider making memorial donations to St. John Paul II, 263 Hamilton Street, Southbridge, MA 01550, the Center of Hope Foundation, PO Box 66, Southbridge, MA 01550, or Operation Smile, 3641 Faculty Blvd., Virginia Beach, VA 23453. sansoucyfuneral.com



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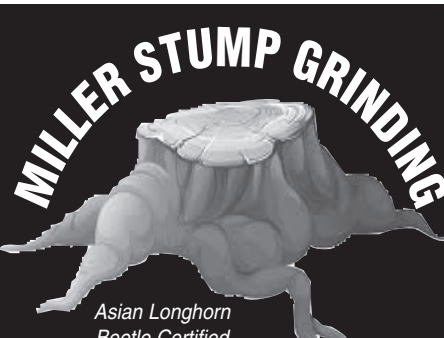
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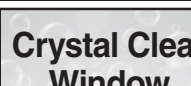
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QCC hires director for new Auxilium Center for Entrepreneurship

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College has hired Rocky Knight as the director of its newly launched Auxilium Center for Entrepreneurship, a resource hub created to support and inspire students, staff and alumni in launching and scaling their entrepreneurial ventures.

Funded by the Cliff & Susan Rucker Foundation and supported through a strategic partnership with Auxilium Worcester, the center will offer one-on-one consulting, mentorship, workshops and training to help aspiring entrepreneurs navigate the complexities of starting and growing a business.

“By the time students graduate, they’ll not only have a degree, they’ll be ready to launch a business,” said Knight, who emphasized the importance of connecting the QCC community

Courtesy Photo

(Right) Rocky Knight



to Worcester’s thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Knight brings a wealth of experience to the role. She holds an MBA from Johnson & Wales University and a BA in global citizenship with a specialization in management from Becker College. Her leadership background includes serving as Director of the CWE-Central MA Women’s Business Center and Founder/CEO of Own Your Legacy Ventures LLC, an organization that helps entrepreneurs reach the critical two-year milestone through branding, consulting and strategic planning.

“Rocky brings robust experience as an entrepreneur and an educator, and she is well-connected within the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. We are thrilled she’ll be working with QCC students and alumni to bring their ideas forward,” said Vice President of Academic Affairs Kathy Rentsch.

Knight also founded the For One Child Foundation, a nonprofit that has impacted over 1,500 students across Massachusetts and rural Jamaica through educational resources, digital access, and infrastructure development. Her commitment to community empowerment has earned her numerous accolades, including the Worcester Business Journal’s 40 Under 40 Award (2024), Worcester Magazine’s Woman to Watch (2025) and recognition as a Massachusetts Commonwealth Heroine (2025).

“Entrepreneurship is a new type of job security,” said Knight. “I’m happy to be in a space where we can help people move forward and ensure entrepreneurs have access to the right resources.”

For more information on the Auxilium Center for Entrepreneurship at QCC, visit [QCC.edu/auxilium](https://qcc.edu/auxilium).

Tips to simplify big-batch baking

Baking can be a hobby or an occupation. Baking experienced an increase in popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic, as many people took to their kitchens as a way to engage in a productive activity during their time at home. Some of that interest may have waned since the pandemic ended, but there are still quite a number of home bakers elbow deep in flour and sugar.

Although a lot of baking for pleasure involves producing smaller amounts, in some instances, people may be called on to create baked goods in larger quantities. Participation in a school bake sale, for example, or when crafting cookies for holiday giving, are times when knowing how to bake in bulk can come in handy. The following tips can assist with large-batch baking.

- Use reliable, vetted recipes. When it comes time to bake in bulk, stick to recipes that have been tried before and are successful. Choosing recipes that you know well and can replicate time and again with ease means it may be simpler to multiply that recipe on a larger scale.
- Pick short-baking recipes. If you must bake in bulk, choose recipes that don't have long bake times. For example, one cheesecake can take two hours to bake, while you can make scores of cupcakes or cookies in that same amount of time.
- Prep as much in advance as possible. If you have more complicated recipes or designs, spread out the work over

several days. For cupcakes adorned with chocolate candies, for example, melt and mold the chocolate beforehand so each candy is ready to go when the cupcakes are done. Batters and doughs also can be made in advance and then refrigerated until needed. The French phrase "mise en place" means "everything in its place." In cooking and baking, it refers to the practice of preparing and organizing all ingredients and equipment before cooking begins. This also is a worthwhile strategy when baking in bulk.

- Save on ingredients. Shopping sales or at a warehouse center can help you save on large quantities of butter, flour, sugar, and other items when baking in bulk.
- Create a schedule. Figure out how long each step for baking will take and then block out a schedule. This will help you determine how long each bake will take, and you can sort tasks according to need and freshness. Build in buffer time for things that may go awry.
- Have extra gear. Doubles or triples of certain gear can keep stopping and cleaning up between batches to a minimum. For example, while you may not have room for multiple stand mixers, you can invest in two or three bowls so you can have batter ingredients ready to go and then simply run through the machine.

Large-batch baking takes preparation, time management and the right equipment.

Affordable family-friendly activities

Parents know that the cost of living has risen dramatically in recent years. There are numerous metrics to determine just how much more people must spend to get by, but one that families can readily identify with is the cost of groceries, which the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated would increase by more than 2 percent in 2025.

Increased costs across the board underscore the need for families to find affordable ways to have fun together. Thankfully, there are many ways for families to get out of the house and have fun without breaking the bank.

- Visit the local library. Libraries are home to hundreds of books that all can be borrowed free of charge, but these local institutions also offer much more at no cost. Many libraries host numerous arts and crafts programs for kids, weekly board game gatherings for adults, free movie rentals ideal for family movie nights, and educational series and programs for adults and children alike.
- Take in some scholastic sports. Families that love their sports can get some affordable live action that's closer to home than the local professional teams. Friday night high school football games under the lights can be a fun way to satisfy a love of live sports and provides a great opportunity to engage with the larger community. Once the temperatures dip, let indoor sports seasons provide a great way to get out of the house during a time of year when it can be easy to go a little stir crazy.
- Enjoy the great outdoors. Regardless of which season it might be, the great outdoors pro-



vides endless opportunities for family-friendly fun. Community swimming pools can be a great place to cool off in summer, while local, state or national parks offer ample activities families can enjoy together. Hiking, fishing, kayaking, cycling, and other activities are affordable and fun, making them ideal options on weekend afternoons regardless of what the weather is like.

- See a show at a community theater. If it's culture families are looking for, community theater programs are wonderful options to consider. Local community theaters perform classic or even original productions at minimal cost. Families also can consider local high school productions, where they might just come across tomorrow's A-list stars before they make a name for themselves.

A rising cost of living can make it hard for modern families to make ends meet. When looking for ways to have fun together, families have a wealth of free or low-cost options to consider.

Food drive aims to brighten the holidays for families in need

STURBRIDGE — Help make a difference for local families this Thanksgiving by contributing to the annual food drive Sunday, Nov. 9 from 9-11 a.m. at Saw Dust Coffee House & Desert Bar, 371 Main St., Sturbridge.

This event is generously hosted by Tina Leblanc of MSA, and Heather Blais of RE/MAX, Kristin Dean of Berlin Insurance, along with the Mercury Wire Charitable Foundation and Sawdust. Over the past five years, the community’s support has helped to brighten the holidays for countless local families in need.

Grief Support Group at CCUMC

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Kamren loves spending time outside, especially swinging and playing active games with others. He also enjoys building with Legos and exploring activities that engage his senses, such as sand, water, and playdough. These experiences allow him to be creative and adventurous in his own way.

When it comes to food, Kamren's favorites include waffles, pasta, and ice cream—and he'll never turn down a Sprite!

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The process to adopt a child from foster care includes training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you. These steps will help match you with a child or sibling group that your family will fit well with. To learn more about adoption from foster care visit www.mareinc.org. Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) can give you guidance and information on the adoption process. Reach out today to find out all the ways you can help children and teens in foster care.



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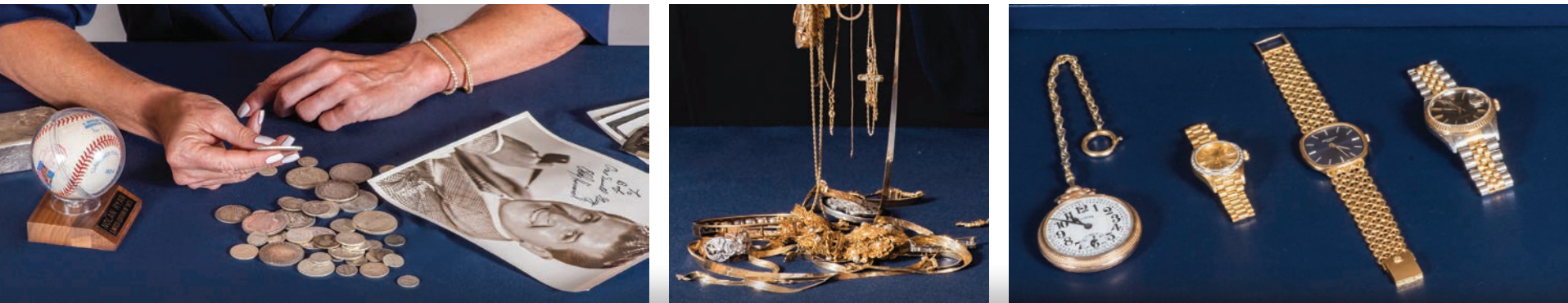
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