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Friday, March 18, 2022

TCA SHOWS SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE OF UKRAINE



Photo Courtesy

The students of Trinity Catholic Academy came together on March 9 to show their support for the people of Ukraine. Students were invited to dress in blue and yellow with a donation. The day started with a schoolwide prayer read by four first graders. Students also participated in a variety of activities all centered around learning more about the country and people of Ukraine. So far, the students raised \$1700 and aren't stopping there. On Friday Student Council sold popcorn for a \$1, these funds will also be donated to the crisis. Together we can make a difference!

School District seeking new Principal for Shepherd Hill

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

DUDLEY/CHARTON — Shepherd Hill Regional High School will be under new leadership this fall following the announcement that Principal William Chaplin will not be returning to his position after the conclusion of the school year.

Superintendent Steven Lamarche made the announcement official on March 2 during a budget roundtable with the School Committee acknowledging Chaplin's years of service to the district and his decision not to seek a new contract.

"I want to thank Principal Chaplin for his six years of service in the Dudley Charlton Regional School District and at Shepherd Hill Regional High School. He has moved mountains and has certainly been dedicated to the children, students and staff as well as the communities of Dudley and Charlton. We certainly wish him well in his next endeavor," Lamarche said.

A week later during the School Committee's March 9 regular meeting the hiring process for a new principal was officially put in motion with Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Dr. Brian Ackerman facilitating the search. Dr. Ackerman presented a proposal for a search committee comprised of one or two School Committee representatives, two representatives from the district offices, one middle school and one elementary school principal, the high school assistant principal, two or three teachers including at least one from Shepherd Hill,

and two to three parents as well as a student from Shepherd Hill.

Dr. Ackerman also revealed that a survey would be released to the community and stakeholders allowing citizens to express their thoughts on the requirements for a candidate for the position as well as submit their interest in serving on the committee.

"Obviously we want folks to be able to offer wide ranging and expansive feedback and that would, of course, be shared with our committee," said Dr. Ackerman.

Members of the School Committee felt that the search group should be more focused on the staff from Shepherd Hill, including requiring that the teachers on the committee be from only the high school. They also wanted the committee to be on the smaller end of the projected member numbers. Dr. Ackerman noted that the membership laid out was an attempt to capture all different angles of student needs in the Dudley Charlton Regional School District and apply them to the search for Shepherd Hill's new principal. Cathleen Carmignani and Jeanne Costello were appointed to represent the School Committee in the principal search.

The current timeline would see the job posting remain open until March 22 with applications reviewed on March 23 and 24. Eight candidates would be interviewed on the first week of April before cutting the pool to two or three candidates and picking a top candidate to be presented to the School Committee on April 27.

Meet your candidates March 29

STURBRIDGE — The Sturbridge Republican Town Committee will be hosting a "Meet the Candidate" social on Tuesday evening, March 29 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the Sturbridge Senior Center. Each candidate running in the local election has been invited to attend this event.

The first half hour, guests may mingle until the speak-

ing program begins at approximately 6:30 p.m. Each candidate with opposition will be allowed seven minutes to speak. Guests will then have the opportunity to ask the candidate questions for a limited time. Unopposed candidates will have a few minutes to introduce themselves and provide brief a comment on past accomplishments and future

goals.

Upon completion of the speaking program there will be time for candidates to speak one on one with guests. The event will be shown live on local access TV.

Light refreshments will be served. Janet Garon, the event coordinator, may be reached at 774-230-7372 by phone or text should you have any questions.

EDC seeks to expand presence on town Web site

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

CHARTON — The town of Charlton's Economic Development Committee is stepping up its outreach and examining ways to increase their presence on the town's Web site, according to Town Administrator Andrew Golas, who provided a brief update to

selectmen on March 8.

Golas referenced a recent post on the Town of Charlton Facebook page showing a variety of statistics focusing on economic development and noted that this is just the start of bigger plans the Economic Development Committee has in store for increasing outreach to existing and potential busi-

ness owners in the community.

"(The EDC) came up with a one-page white paper for the economic development opportunities that are available in town as kind of a handout to give to people who may be interested in developing in Charlton," said Golas. "We're working on trying to come up with a separate dedicated page

solely for economic development outside of just being a regular town page. It would be a little more robust."

This new page could be a larger section of the town's site or a separate site altogether. It all depends on what the town is able to do technologically. The move could put Charlton's EDC in line with

many others throughout the Commonwealth that have their own websites separate from but linked to their town's Web page.

"What I think we'll have to try to do is find a way to link to an active database. Trying to keep that list updated may

Please Read EDC, page A2

Teddy G's Pub & Grille welcomes international food influencers

STURBRIDGE — It's the rare individual who notices the *Mac Attack Burger Challenge* on Teddy G's menu and decides to give it a go. The challenge is not for amateurs.

The over-sized portion includes two pounds of signature burgers layered with homemade Mac and Cheese, Applewood smoked bacon served on a bulky roll with a heaping side of French fries and pickles. To take the challenge, a customer must be 18 years or older and sign a waiver. If they consume the entire meal within a 30-minute time limit, it is free.

On Friday, March 18, a team of three international food influencers and competitive eaters will take Teddy G's Mac Attack Burger Challenge, the first time it has been taken by more than one diner at a time.

Canada's #1 food influencer and

competitive eater, Joel Hansen, is a former fitness model who holds the Guinness World Record for most ice cream eaten in 30 seconds. So far, he has won 239 food challenges. Joel has 400,000 YouTube followers and 169,000 Facebook followers.

Competing with Joel are JOE BURGERCHALLENGE, a food influencer and competitive eater from Spain who has 719,000 followers on YouTube and 153,000 Instagram followers, and a third competitor, named Ricardo.

The group will be posting videos of their visit and Mac Attack Burger Challenge attempt on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram.

Teddy G's is a casual American Pub & Grille located at 179 Main St., Sturbridge, that is open for dining and take-out Tuesday through Sunday (closed Mondays).



Photo Courtesy

Canada's #1 food influencer and competitive eater, JOEL HANSEN is a former fitness model who holds the Guinness World Record for most ice cream eaten in 30 seconds. So far, he has won 239 food challenges. Joel has 400,000 YouTube followers and 169,000 Facebook followers.

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Boating safety courses offered in March

MILFORD — The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Tri-State Flotilla, Massachusetts will be instructing two upcoming boating safety classes at Milford High School. They are scheduled as “in-person” unless further Covid restrictions move them to the Zoom video conference platform. Registration is managed through the Milford Community School Use Program, Adult-Boating, at <http://mcs.milford.ma.us> or (508) 478-1119 keeping in mind that availability is limited and you will receive course materials prior, covered by the registration fee if given on Zoom. Participants under the age of 16 must be accompanied in person, or online by a registered parent/guardian. Both courses will be offered again in April at this location as “in-person” or on Zoom platform.

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

Boat America March 12 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Register by March 4 (\$75 fee-\$65 Milford residents) An in-person proctored exam is required for completion and will be given to students, in their vehicles, at the MHS parking lot on Sunday March 13 at 10 a.m. if the class is done over Zoom platform.

This is a one-day course developed to provide the skills and confidence needed to explore the coast and inland waters by boat. Basic knowledge and skills are needed to have safe and enjoyable boating experiences. This course is perfect for families that have just purchased any type of boat or are planning to in the future, and also for the boater keeping up with changes to boating regulations and laws. Successful completion of the course will certify any minor, from 12 to 16 years of age, to operate a powerboat, including a Personal Water Craft / Jet Ski (for 16 & 17-year-

old operators), on all Massachusetts waters; in conjunction with the Mass. Environmental Police. Approved by NASBLA it will also cover the requirements to operate a vessel in most other states & many countries where boating safety education is mandatory. Most boating insurance companies offer a discount on premiums for successful completion of this course.

The Boat America course is limited to 20 students.

Suddenly in Command March 16 Wednesday evening: 6:30 – 9 p.m.

Register by March 14 (\$5 course fee, No exam)

Imagine you are out on the water when the boat’s captain somehow is incapacitated or falls overboard and can’t swim back to the boat. Are you prepared to take basic actions to get help, stop or start the engine and take the helm? A little knowledge could save lives and make you feel more comfortable boating when you’re not generally at the helm.

Misfortunes can and do happen while on that fishing, diving, adventure, or party charter. Being out on your own boat with that significant other at the helm, or going out on a friends’ pontoon boat can also turn to horror if the skipper is suddenly out of commission. This is a boating safety primer for those not generally at the helm but would like to know what to do, to be better prepared.

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

The EDC is also in discussion with developers who are interested in making zone changes for properties, especially along Route 20. Golas said there is also an urge from both businesses and the EDC itself to make the commission an even more supportive force for business growth in the future.

EDC

continued from page A1

be a bit time consuming and would go stale pretty quickly,” said Golas, noting the work it would take to maintain the page. “It’ll be on the town’s website, but it may link over to a different cache. We’re trying to find the best way to do it. We have to move things around and see how they work best.”



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School Committee signs off on proposed 4 percent budget increase

BY JASON BLEAU
NEWS STAFF WRITER

DUDLEY/CHARLTON – The Dudley Charlton Regional School District has finalized its budget proposal for the 2023 fiscal year after weeks of discussion, presentations, and debate.

Following a final workshop on March 2, the committee took a vote on March 9 to put forth a \$53.7 million spending plan increasing the budget by 4.03 percent over the current year.

“This is in essence what you would call a level service budget,” Superintendent Steven Lamarche said during the March 9 meeting. “It’s trying to take everything we have, as much as we can possibly capture with the adjustments that we make from year to year and try to move that forward. There are other budgetary constraints within this proposed budget at 4.03 percent - We did lower the fixed cost with the (employee) insurance rate. That did help us with this particular budget. We do have contractual obligations as well moving forward. In essence, those are combined close to \$2 million for a budget increase. In trying to make that work and balance the budget at 4.03 percent we are targeting class sizes of 22 and we’re being more thorough in that process.”

The 4.03 percent option was one of three proposals under consideration, each with decreasing bumps in the budget complimented by sacrifices in staff and services to illustrate how the district would get to those numbers. The 4.03 percent was the largest increase brought to the table and included the loss of six full-time positions: one for-

eign language and one science teacher from Shepherd Hill Regional High School as well as an elementary school teacher who are all retiring and won’t be replaced, and the loss of three other full time teachers in the middle schools. The Out of District Coordinator will also be cut. The other two proposals of 3.23 and 1.7 percent, respectively, would have resulted in even more cuts including losing another foreign language position, a librarian, a data specialist, custodian and more depending on the plan. These potential cuts received backlash from several citizens and educators who spoke up at the March 9 meeting urging the district to maintain as many positions as possible.

District Director of Finance and Operations Richard Mathieu warned the school committee that the higher increase may be a tough sell to the community at large. However, he supported and recommended the 4.03 percent as the best option and felt the outspoken audience at the meeting showed there is support.

“We’ve heard, certainly in my seven years here but even prior to that, how difficult it is for the towns to support us at the levels that the schools would like to be supported. Yet, we’ve seen evidence tonight of what this district can do and will do with appropriate resources,” said Mathieu. “We have to have support from our towns, and I think after the last couple of years during the years of obviously COVID and major uncertainty with everything we’ve met their requests and we’re hoping they can meet our request.”

Several members of the school committee made their voices heard before the vote supporting the larger increase and expressing the need for continued public support.

“I think we need to continue to have the conversations and really meet with our towns,” committee member Kenneth Laferriere said. “We can find a way. We just need to continue to collaborate with the towns and build relationships and have those conversations.”

Committee member Jamie Terry added her own emotional plea.

“We have amazing educators in this district. Each year this budget will cost an increase of roughly \$1 million simply because of the contract obligations of the salaries. Put another way, if the district doesn’t put forth an increase in the budget each year, then personnel will need to be cut in order to meet the contractual requirements alone,” said Terry. “The time has come for these communities to decide if we are going to support our school district and continue to attract families because of the phenomenal educators that we have or if we are not.”

The School Committee voted unanimously to put forth the 4.03% budget option which would result in \$15.2 million assessed to Charlton and \$10.2 million assessed to Dudley. The difference would be funded through Chapter 70 (state) monies for a total budget of \$53,779,262. A full presentation of the proposed Fiscal Year 2023 spending plan has been made available on the Dudley Charlton School Committee page of the district Web site.

CORRECTION

In the March 10 edition of this paper, our correspondent misunderstood two points in Larry Spotted Crow Mann’s presentation. The cultural center’s name, Ohketeau, means “a place to plant and grow” according to its website and is not based on his son’s name, Kehteau. It’s in Ashfield, not Belchertown; the Belchertown land is property the tribe is still trying to obtain from the state.

We deeply regret any confusion that may have resulted from these unintentional errors.



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Sturbridge Historical Society meets March 24

STURBRIDGE — The Sturbridge Historical Society meeting will be held on Thursday, March 24 at The Publick House Historical Inn on Sturbridge Common.

Our guest speaker will be Dennis Picard, retired director of The Storrowtown Village Museum in West Springfield on The History of The Eastern States Exposition (BIG E)

Long before The Giant Turkey Legs and iconic Cream Puff, The Big E was just a dream of its founder, Joshua Brooks. Incorporated as The Eastern States Agricultural and Industrial Exposition, this fall tradition has been held since

1916. Picard, one of eight senior staff members of The Big E management team will tell us about some of the people that made the fair happen, and how the exposition evolved from those early years.

Dennis Picard has been a museum professional in the living history field for forty two years. He began his career at the Old Sturbridge Village in Sturbridge in 1978, where he eventually spent 12 years filling various positions including lead interpreter, researching and designing many public programs which are still offered today.

He teaches the for credit 200

level museum studies and historic site interpretation at Westfield State University and also has authored many articles on the lifestyles and folkways of New England along with being a consultant for many historical societies and museums.

Historical meetings are free of charge with dessert and meeting room provided by Michael Glick, Publick House Innkeeper.

Meetings are held September through May on the fourth Thursday of the month except November and December. November’s meeting is held the first Thursday in December.



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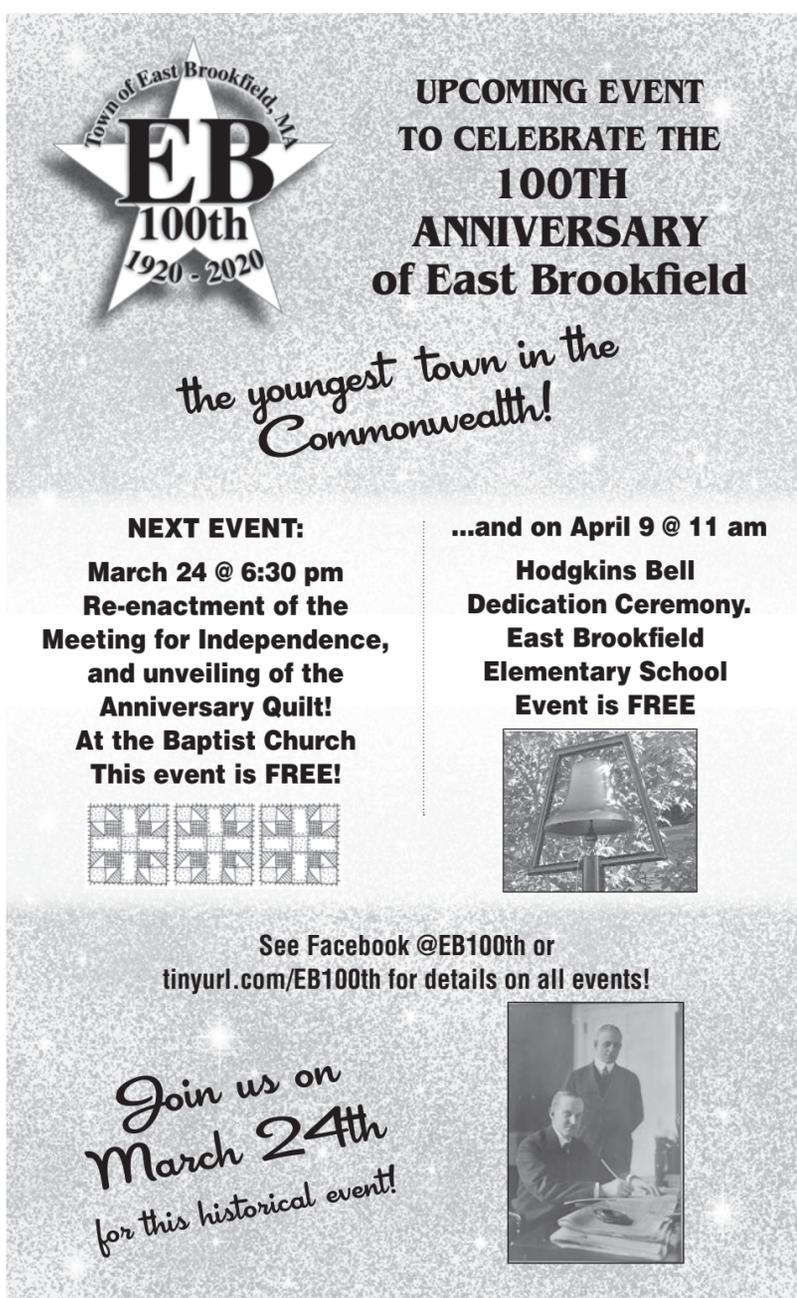
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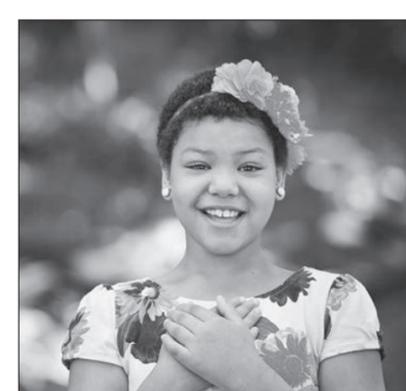
NEXT EVENT:
March 24 @ 6:30 pm
Re-enactment of the Meeting for Independence, and unveiling of the Anniversary Quilt!
At the Baptist Church
This event is FREE!

...and on April 9 @ 11 am
Hodgkins Bell Dedication Ceremony.
East Brookfield Elementary School
Event is FREE

See Facebook @EB100th or tinyurl.com/EB100th for details on all events!

Join us on **March 24th** for this historical event!

Friday's Child



I love dogs!

<https://www.mareinc.org/waiting-child-profiles#gallery/child/4949>

Syriana is a caring 15 year old girl of Dominican/Puerto Rican descent. Syriana describes herself as pretty, awesome, and a talented artist. Those that know Syriana would describe her as a nice girl who is a little silly and imaginative. Syriana enjoys being creative and working on art projects. She has a love for all animals, especially horses; in fact, Syriana is a great horseback rider!

Syriana (03/20)
Age 15

Syriana’s favorite subjects in school are math, language arts, science, and social studies. She especially enjoys learning about different ways to solve math problems. Currently, Syriana’s least favorite subjects are gym and music. Syriana has shared that when she grows up, she wants to be a role model for others and raise money for those in poverty.

Syriana is legally freed for adoption and is looking forward to becoming part of an adoptive family! Syriana would like a dog, the opportunity to take gymnastic and art classes, and to be able to go to Disney Land and Lego Land someday. Syriana shared that she would like a potential adoptive family to know that she is brave but afraid of insects, spiders, and worms. Syriana would like a mom, mom and dad or a two mom family. Syriana’s three wishes for a family are to respect her, to be nice, and to let her choose a name for the family dog. An ideal family for Syriana would be a family that has had parenting experience.

Can I Adopt?

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

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

To learn more about adoption from foster care, call the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) at (617) 964-6273 or visit www.mareinc.org. Start the process today and give a waiting child a permanent place to call home.

Clinical experiences lead LPN to a career in mental health nursing



Laurie Dennett

CHARLTON — Laurie Dennett, LPN of Southbridge was introduced to nursing as a Homecare patient care assistant (PCA) in Oxford back in 2010. For five years she assisted with activities of daily living (ADLs), meal preparation, medication administration, lifting, positioning, range of motion (ROM), blood sugar monitoring, vital signs, end of life care, and comfort measures. She then worked as a nurse's aide at St. Joseph's of Abbey in Spencer for a year. She provided direct patient care, positive patient interactions, safely used Hoyer/Sara

lift, monitored confused residents, maintained infection control, and mastered time management. In 2015, she was accepted to Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy. She graduated in 2016 and passed the NCLEX-PN and became a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) on her first try!

It was at Bay Path, she recalled, at her various clinical rotations: The Overlook Masonic Home (Charlton), Vibra, The Meadows (Rochdale), Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital (Worcester), Southbridge Rehabilitation Center (Southbridge), and Brookside Nursing & Rehab (Webster) that her love of the field and working with clients with mental health challenges emerged. Her passion for psych nursing became evident from the start of her clinical courses. Her first job as an LPN was with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts DDS. She provided exceptional direct patient care to the developmentally challenged and psychiatric population while continuing to improve and master her skills in G-tube care/reinsertion, tracheostomy care/suctioning, bladder catheterizations, administering injections, transcription of Doctor's orders, maintenance of Medication Administration Records (MARs), and communication with Health Care Providers, family members, and guardians regarding client care. She was there to update them on the client's conditions and to lend a supportive ear when they vented their emotions.

When Dennett was hired at Behavioral Health Center, she shared with Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN Academy Director, "I started my new position in Psych nursing!" She exclaimed, "I absolutely love it. Never thought my journey would take me there. It's a great hospital. I'm very impressed." Several months into her job and she stated, "I'm fantastic! I'm loving it, psychiatric nursing."

Bolandrina stated, "Every day, Dennett would not only give prudent care to her clients but would also care for their significant others and families. It is clear that she is caring, professional, and inspiring."

Dennett's success and experiences would motivate practical nursing (PN) students at Bay Path. There, thanks to the faculty, staff, and the supportive learning environment, PN students get a solid foundation in nursing and as student leaders.

Dennett is building on that foundation, combining her love of nursing and interest in psychiatry, and living her dream of working as a mental healthcare provider.

Dennett shared, "The first thing I would tell someone who wanted to become a nurse would be to research nursing. Make sure it is something you are truly passionate about. There are so many nurses out there who are not happy with what they are doing, and it shows. It's not fair to the individuals we are caring for. Our patients deserve the best version of ourselves

to give them the best care possible. It's not always about the money in the end. It's the reward of a smile, a thank you, or a difference you may have made in someone's life."

While her love of nursing and passion for mental healthcare keep her smiling, Dennett frequently checks in with Dr. Bolandrina, finding herself fascinated by mentorship.

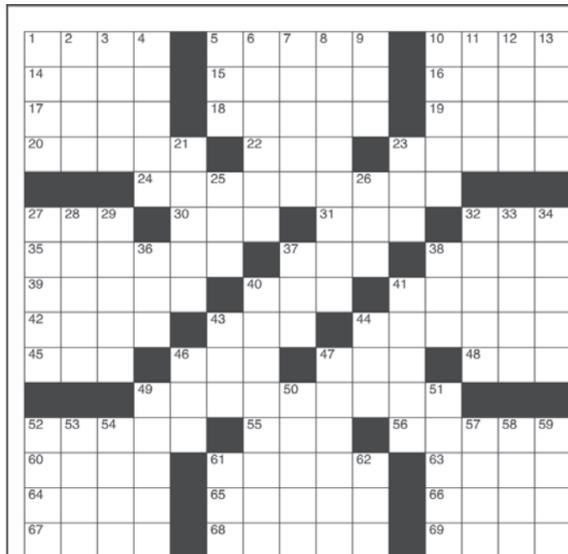
Dennett stated, "The most organized part of my nurse life would be working smarter not harder: Setting goals, planning for emergencies, communication, and working as a team. Team shift huddles are great to keep everyone on the same page."

Like most nurses, Dennett always wants to give back.

For PN students, she shares that, "The simplest part of being a nurse is the satisfaction of knowing you touched or changed someone's life by your own actions. And the most complex part of nursing is feeling like I need to know everything. I've been a nurse for six years and I continue to learn something new every day."

"Laurie has been a great inspiration for our PN students," Bolandrina said. "Her experience as an LPN makes her very capable and valuable."

Both agree that every nurse must have something outside of the profession that you truly love and care about. A nurse cannot be there for others if he/she doesn't have something for his/herself. Dennett's bucket list check-offs include skydiving, mountain climbing, and beating cancer!

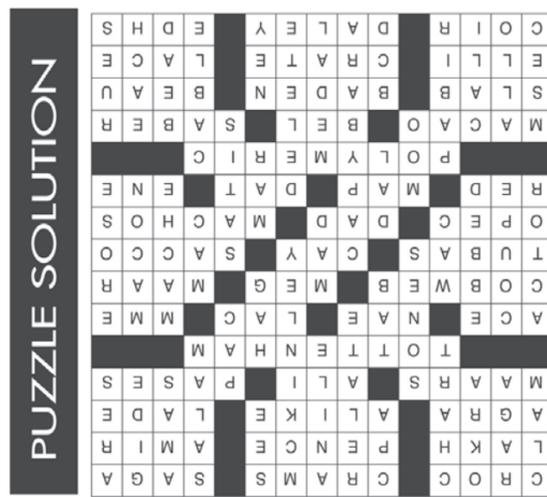


CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Type of footwear
- 5. Studies a lot all at once
- 10. Adventure story
- 14. Hundred thousand
- 15. Former U.S. Vice President
- 16. Ruler
- 17. Indian city
- 18. Similar
- 19. Ship as cargo
- 20. Volcanic craters
- 22. Boxing's "GOAT"
- 23. Bullfighting maneuvers
- 24. London soccer team
- 27. Score perfectly
- 30. No (Scottish)
- 31. SoCal hoops team (abbr.)
- 32. Woman (French)
- 35. Unwanted attic "decor"
- 37. Peter Griffin's daughter
- 38. Broad, shallow crater
- 39. Large instruments
- 40. Low bank or reef
- 41. ___ and Venzetti
- 42. Oil group
- 43. Father
- 44. Aggressive men
- 45. Pairs well with green
- 46. Travelers need it
- 47. Digital audiotape
- 48. Midway between northeast and east
- 49. Chemistry descriptor
- 52. S. China seaport
- 55. Sound unit
- 56. Heavy cavalry sword
- 60. Thick piece of something
- 61. Spa town in Austria
- 63. Boyfriend
- 64. Norse personification of old age
- 65. Type of box
- 66. Tie together
- 67. Fiber from the coconut
- 68. Chicago mayor
- 69. Old English letters

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Type of sauce
- 2. Pattern of notes
- 3. Plant with long seedpods
- 4. Map out
- 5. Numbers cruncher
- 6. Make a mental connection
- 7. Italian tenor
- 8. N. America's highest mountain peak
- 9. Witness
- 10. Arabic given name
- 11. Music awards
- 12. "The Immoralist" author
- 13. Area units
- 21. Units of loudness
- 23. Political action committee
- 25. Bar bill
- 26. Witch
- 27. A theatrical performer
- 28. 2-door car
- 29. ___ and flowed
- 32. Papier-___, art medium
- 33. City in Georgia
- 34. Irregular
- 36. College sports conference
- 37. Angry
- 38. Partner to cheese
- 40. S. American mammal
- 41. Self-immolation by fire rituals
- 43. Split pulses
- 44. Disfigure
- 46. Cow noise
- 47. Erase
- 49. Chadic language
- 50. Reward for doing well
- 51. Paid TV
- 52. Millisecond
- 53. Other
- 54. Colombian city
- 57. Necklace part
- 58. Every one of two or more people
- 59. Regrets
- 61. They come after "A"
- 62. Horse noise



Jovani Santo joins EXIT Beacon Pointe Realty in Worcester

WORCESTER — EXIT Beacon Pointe Realty is pleased to announce that Jovani Santo has joined its growing team of dedicated real estate sales professionals.

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www.fedchurchcharlton.org

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

• **Charlton City United Methodist**, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org

Sunday worship and Children's church 10am

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• **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

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• **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.

Cornerstone Bank donates \$25,000 to Our Bright Future, Inc.

WORCESTER — Cornerstone Bank, a community bank with 12 locations throughout Central Massachusetts, has donated \$25,000 to Our Bright Future, Inc. This donation will be used to purchase a van to help children and teens get to and from the organization's summer camp and after-school programs.

"We are honored to continue to support Our Bright Future in their goal of providing enriching extracurricular activities to our community's youth," said Todd Tallman, CEO of Cornerstone Bank. "We hope their new van expands the availability of their services, as transportation is a huge hurdle for many families."

Our Bright Future was started in 2016 and provides educational and enriching after-school and summer programs to low-in-

come youth from elementary to high school in Worcester County. Their programs currently serve about 170 children each year, and with the onset of the pandemic, they added food pantries in Webster and Southbridge to assist families. The after-school program offers homework help, STEM activities like 3D printing and robotics, arts and crafts, sports, and life skills, including financial literacy.

"When we found out Our Bright Future was looking for funding for a van, we were already very familiar with them as some of our staff volunteer their time every month to teach students about finances," continued Tallman. "We hope our donation allows them to continue to expand their services to more children."

To learn more about Cornerstone Bank, please visit cornerstonebank.com.

About Cornerstone Bank
Cornerstone Bank was formed in 2017, born of a long history of supporting the community, and providing a strong foundation to help people and businesses thrive. Serving Worcester County, Massachusetts, Cornerstone Bank's local presence and community-based banking model enables a unique ability to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch. Cornerstone provides the highest level of service and expertise for individuals, businesses, and community organizations with branch locations throughout Central Massachusetts. Cornerstone works to connect customers with opportunities,



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Forest and Park Friends urges state legislature to adequately fund DCR properties



WORCESTER — Understanding that DCR properties are facing a billion-dollar maintenance backlog, the Massachusetts Forest and Park Friends Network—an organization comprised mainly of Friends groups who support state parks and recreation sites—asked the public for their list of park priority projects.

Not wanting to focus on the negative though, the Friends' survey also included a request to recall, in specific terms, any especially enjoyable moments they had enjoyed in a Massachusetts State Park.

The response was amazing. "I enjoy many parks around central and eastern MA with my dogs, husband, siblings, nieces and nephews," one response began. "The outdoors are crucial to our well-being. We frequent the Blue Hills, the Fells, Callahan State Park, Mt Pisgah in Berlin, Hale, Noanet, the Midstate Trail, and Mt Wachusett among others."

It was clear that many residents use the parks in multiple ways, like hiking, biking, riding, swimming, kayaking and more.

"I have loved riding my horses with friends in the Blue Hills," one survey respondent wrote. "Taking my kids out onto the DCR property is a great way to spend time outside."

"Kayaking on Williamsville pond,

Burnshirt Rd, Hubbardston, paddling and observing the wildlife, cranes, red-winged blackbirds and sometimes, river otters.

In times of personal crises, or national emergencies, DCR properties are restorative.

"Going through cancer treatment was tough," one woman recounted simply. "My husband would take me for rides to different places. Often I sat in the car or did short walks. But enough to clear my head."

One visit is never enough: many of those who use the parks develop a relationship with their favorite spots.

"Hiking, cross-country skiing, bike riding on the trails in the Douglas State Park and Wallum Lake State Park is great," a respondent commented. "The improvements made to the trails over the past few years by DCR and volunteer groups have made for an enjoyable experience, especially during covid."

It is said over and over but deserves repeating: DCR properties are one of those rare places that have appeal for the whole family.

"Family swim time," one person noted simply. Another elaborated.

"Fishing expeditions with my grandsons, year-round. I enjoy watching the neighborhood kids ice skating I. Winter and canoeing or kayaking in summer."

The maintenance needs are obvious: but so are those sites where, somehow, staff and volunteers do a remarkable job.

"I discovered Lake Dennison three years ago. I'm in love! Clean and just a beautiful spot."

"Hiking, wildlife watching, bird watching, wildflowers at Upton State Forest. I have also enjoyed seeing and learning about the historic resources including the CCC Camp and the evidence of early settlement throughout the forest. At River Bend Farm I have enjoyed hiking along the canal and visiting the museum in the Visitors Center. "There are many recreational and entertainment venues that promise remarkable experiences. But parks and forest areas more often deliver!"

"We saw a beautiful bobcat in Petersham Forest," one respondent noted. Another found family history..

"Brimfield State Forest. During 1933-1935, my father and uncle served in CCC. It was awesome to find the exact

spot they help build from the photo albums they created."

"Seeing a praying mantis!" "I closely observed a mockingbird choosing a nest site last week in North Point Park."

Some were dedicated to one park, or part of the state.

"Cape Cod, any beach," one swimmer noted.

"I particularly enjoy the historic displays, videos and programming that is shared at Heritage State Park in Fall River - I also love the interpreters who are on site to answer questions! I enjoy hiking in the Freetown-Fall River State Forest- I really like seeing the historical areas like stone lined springs, and Profile Rock, etc."

"I make a few trips each year to Horseneck Beach and I appreciate the bike path the most, as well as the outdoor showers and bathroom facilities."

"I love camping at Scusset Beach to fish Cape Cod Canal for Bluefish and Striped Bass," a fishermen said.

"Hiking with my dog and riding my horse with friends in the Douglas State Forest and on the Southern New England Trunkline Trails. So nice to enjoy the serenity of nature and the natural setting of woodland trails meandering alongside ponds and streams. It's a way to get away from the busy roads and lifestyles and let go of stress," a nearby resident exclaimed breathlessly. "I'm there daily for recreation and fitness - these parks are an important reason I chose Douglas for my residence."

Others range far and wide across the Bay State.

"I enjoy the Alewife Reservation which is very near my house. It's great for birdwatching, biking, walking. I also love the Harbor Islands, The Fells. Last summer I visited Halibut Point which was beautiful."

"Sunrise runs at Borderland SP are a highlight of my life. Camping at Myles Standish, Otter River, Massasoit, Lake Dennison, Mohawk Trail, etc. are always a highlight of every summer."

"I walk most days at the Eel River Preserve," a Plymouthean noted. "Just xc skied at Myles Standish SF. Go there as much as I can when there is snow. Biked there this year too. Biked at Burrage in Hanson recently. Have visited...Borderland, Massasoit, the one

in Abington, Wampatuck, Bay Farm, Crane WMA, Rocky Gutter, Worlds End Forefathers, Pilgrim Memorial, Frazier Memorial, Freetown, Bay Farm... probably more."

Some have specific goals in mind. Other seek a specific state of mind.

"I have camped at a DCR property 2 times a year for 3 weeks in the summer every year for the past 42 years," a real friend of the forest noted. "I am a life-long visitor and lover of my state forest."

"Peace and solitude," another simply stated. "I love going to Ellisville Harbor State Park and seeing the seals."

"Hiking the numerous foot trails, getting exercise, natural stimulation and staying young."

Reading their comments, it is obvious that there is a kind of "word of foot" that happens between hikers and bikers and frequenters of these properties. One visitor tells another, who brings another along, who posts a picture and so - good news or bad - the word gets out.

What is perhaps most remarkable is that, despite their neglect by the state people keep going, keep volunteering, keep hoping that their representatives will realize that funds allocated to parks and recreation is smart investment in our future well-being.

The Massachusetts Forest and Park Friends Network is submitting their full survey to the state legislature, urging them to allocate \$100 million of ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) funds—the amount that the Governor originally requested for the DCR before our legislators reduced it to a paltry \$15 million.

Projects eligible for ARPA funding include \$12 million for construction/reconstruction of critical links to the Blackstone River Greenway, a partially completed 48-mile trail system that would connect Worcester, MA, to Providence, RI. DCR has made completing the Blackstone River Greenway a high priority since 1980, and now we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to use the ARPA funds to make it happen.

For more information visit WWW.DCRFriendsNetwork.org. To take the survey yourself, visit: <https://bit.ly/3vJvVLE>.

Durant proposes pause to gas tax

BY JASON BLEAU
CORRESPONDENT

BOSTON — With the price of gas reaching well over \$4 a gallon in some parts of the state over the last month, state lawmakers have begun examining ways they can ease the pain at the pump for their constituents.

State Rep. Peter Durant, whose district includes Dudley, Southbridge, Spencer and parts of Charlton, is one such lawmaker who proposed an amendment to the state's supplemental budget to suspend the gas tax to a certain point. The move would have eliminated the tax once unleaded gas goes above \$4 a gallon and then reinstated it when the price fell below \$3.70. Rep. Durant said the move was intended to help alleviate the growing financial impact of increased gas prices on commuters throughout the state.

"The price of gas is going through the roof. We have decided as a country to stop buying oil from Russia, which I support. That's a good thing, but it's going to drive the gas of price up more," Durant said in an interview. "We in Massachusetts are looking at divesting ourselves from Russia and that's going drive up the cost of goods. All of these things have cumulative effects so we're trying to provide at least some relief to the taxpayers."

The State House on Representatives took up the amendment on March 9 where it was defeated effectively keeping the tax in place for now. However, Durant promised this wouldn't be the end of the road. He said lawmakers have already begun examining other options to help provide relief wherever possible.

"We're still going to push for something along these lines,"

said Durant. "At this point, the Republican caucus is looking at filing a separate bill that would provide taxpayers with relief from the gas tax. We're not quite sure what that's going to look like. It could incorporate some of what I put forward or it could create a timeframe or a tax holiday kind of thing. We have a budget coming up and additional supplemental budgets and ARPA funds that need to be spent so we're looking at different ways we might be able to still progress with this."

Rep. Durant acknowledged that the situation is difficult for state lawmakers as the implications of the situation in Ukraine are handled more on an international scale or by the federal government leaving state governments waiting for answers. He said this was just one way that state lawmakers could try to make a difference, but it won't be last.

Worcester Academy announces Honor Roll And Headmaster's List

WORCESTER — Worcester Academy proudly announces its Honor Roll and Headmaster's List for Semester 1 of the 2021-2022 School Year. The honors represent the achievements that each of these Worcester Academy students has earned through academic excellence, challenge, and personal growth. Among the students are:

- Colin Hughes of Charlton, Class of 2022, Headmaster's List.
- Avery List of Charlton, Class of 2022, First Honors.
- Lauren Potvin of Charlton, Class of 2022, First Honors.
- Camden Blum of Charlton, Class of 2023, Headmaster's List.
- Jefferson Upton of Charlton, Class of 2024, Headmaster's List.
- Kate Gagnon of Fiskdale, Class of 2023, Headmaster's List.
- Mavrick Rzy of Fiskdale, Class of 2023, Headmaster's List.
- Lauren Wood of Sturbridge, Class of 2023, Headmaster's List.
- Michael Detarando of Fiskdale, Class of 2024, First Honors.
- Ava Detarando of Fiskdale,

Class of 2025, Headmaster's List. Nicole Pelski of Sturbridge, Class of 2025, Headmaster's List.

About Worcester Academy
Founded in 1834, Worcester Academy is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls in grades 6 to 12 (and postgraduates). Located in the thriving city of Worcester, the Academy provides an exceptional and time-befitting educational experience that fosters personal growth, nurtures a sense of belonging and well-being, and develops intellect and understanding through authentic community engagement and real-world experiences. Students, who are joyful and curious, define what it means to "Achieve the Honorable" and are equipped to honorably impact the world wherever they go.

For information about the Worcester Academy, contact Neil Isakson, director of external communications, at 508-459-6918 or e-mail him at neil.isakson@worcesteracademy.org.

LEGALS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING Charlton Water & Sewer Commission

The Charlton Water and Sewer Commission will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at 7:00 pm. The meeting will be held via Zoom Meeting ID: 653 855 9812 to discuss and consider increasing the Sewer Rates. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen/watch the meeting may do so in the following manner
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Phone Access: 1-646-558-8656
Anyone wishing to be heard on this matter should participate via remote at the time and date designated or submit concerns in writing to Sue Guerin at Sewer Plant Office located at 8A Worcester Rd., Charlton or email at susan.guerin@townofcharlton.net.
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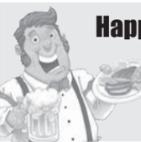
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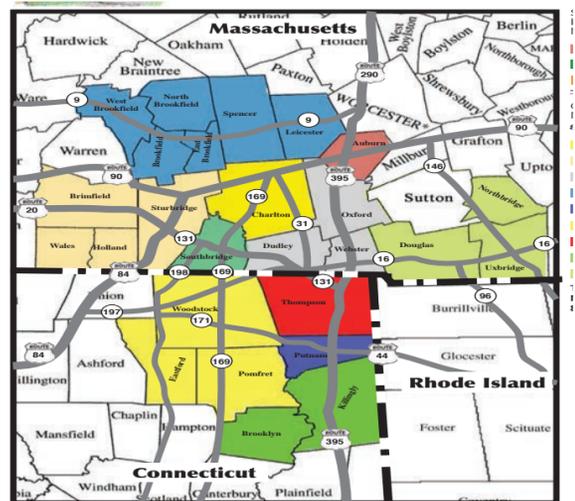
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 EDITOR

OPINION

Strong women make history

International Women's Day may seem like a new progressive holiday however it stems back to 1909 when planners organized a day for Women on Feb. 28 in New York. One year later, the International Socialist Woman's Conference announced that a day for women be held each year.

Fast forward to 1917 in Russia, where, on March 8, women were given the right to vote. In 1975, the holiday was adopted by the United Nations.

The long and the short is that this day is a day to celebrate women past, present and future. With that said our staff chose to highlight the women that we feel have had a standout role in influencing how our world operates today. The list was endless, therefore naturally hard to choose, so in order to prevent a 200-page editorial we narrowed the list down to our favorites.

Social reformer Emmeline Pankhurst founded the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903 to campaign for the parliamentary vote for women in Edwardian Britain, 'Deeds, not words' being its motto. Pankhurst is described as a charismatic leader and powerful orator; Pankhurst rallied thousands of women to demand, rather than ask politely, for their democratic right in a mass movement that has been unparalleled in British history. The battle did not come without consequences, she endured 13 imprisonments, leading her name and cause becoming known throughout the globe.

At the age of 15, Claudette Colvin was arrested at the age of 15 in Montgomery, Alabama when she refused to give up her bus seat to a white woman. This event gave the famous Rosa Parks the courage to do the same. Colvin was one of five plaintiffs involved in the federal court case filed by civil rights attorney Fred Gray in 1956, in which they challenged bus segregation. The outcome was that a judge ordered that the local laws in regards to bus segregation were unconstitutional. To find Colvin's name in a history book is rare. This in part because she was an unmarried teenager who apparently was with child. Colvin went on to become a nurse's aid. In an interview in 2005, Colvin said, "I feel very, very proud of what I did. I do feel like what I did was a spark and it caught on."

As for recognition, Colvin said, "I'm not disappointed. Let the people know Rosa Parks was the right person for the boycott. But also let them know that the attorneys took four other women to the Supreme Court to challenge the law that led to the end of segregation."

Colvin's family has been trying since 2016 to have her recognized and honored in the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Colvin was not invited officially to the opening of the museum in 2016.

Marie Curie is the next on our short list. Curie was a Polish and naturalized-French physicist and chemist who was the first to delve into radioactivity. Curie who was born in 1867, was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, and the only person to win it two times. Collecting several firsts, Curie was the first woman to become a professor at the University of Paris. In a time when most women spent their days in the home taking care of their children and husbands, Curie had to smash several ceilings for her own advancement. Curie was known for her honesty and moderate lifestyle. All of her prize money, she donated to scientific research and refused to copyright the radium-isolation process so that her fellow scientists could continue research unhindered. In 2011, Poland and France declared the year would be 'The Year of Marie Curie.' She became the first woman to be entombed on her own merits in the Pantheon in Paris in 1995.

In 1933, Eleanor Roosevelt turned the position of First Lady from benign symbol to an active and intellectually vigorous power center. Roosevelt served as the United States Delegate to the UN General Assembly from 1945 to 1952. Roosevelt was the topic of much controversy for her outspoken nature, especially in regard to civil rights for African-Americans. She was the first, First Lady to hold regular press conferences, host a weekly radio show and to speak at a national party convention. She was so bold to even disagree with her husband on certain policies. After her husband's death, Roosevelt

Turn To **EDITORIAL** page **A10**



Photo Courtesy

Under the direction of Dr. Stella Richard, Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School now has a state-of-the art animal science program that it offers to its students, based off site of its main Charlton campus. Pictured (L-R) leaving the school and headed to their program are students Alysha Szaferowicz, Adriana Stanley, Hailey Benoit, Miranda Lincoln, Madisyn Kozlowski, Abigail Linde, Meredith Clark, Macaylah Miller, Miranda Lincoln, instructor Stella Richard, Cody Savary, and Gabriela Rivera Burgos.

TO THE EDITOR

Stay involved and vote

To the Editor:
 With election season soon upon Charlton, it is with a heavy heart that I will not be returning my nomination papers and seeking reelection to the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, the Board of Trustees of the Charlton Public Library, or the office of Constable.

Public service has been deeply important to me since I was a student in the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District, where I found my start at 17 as one of our local election officials. From there, I became involved with the Cultural Council, the Government Study Committee, and other local boards and organizations filled with people who all shared one thing in common—a genuine interest in serving and improving our shared community.

As I prepare to move out of town, I cannot help but reflect on all the ways

that Charlton has shaped me as a person. The many wonderful and supportive people who I've come to know and the life experiences that I've had will always stay with me. Doing my best to give back to a community that has influenced me so deeply has been nothing short of an honor, and I hope that I'm able to impart a small amount of Charlton everywhere I go.

With so much happening in our greater society, it can be incredibly easy to feel small and as though you are powerless to make an impact. That couldn't be further from the truth, as there is always a place for you in municipal government. Please reach out, please get involved, and please don't forget to vote on May 7.

JORDAN WILLOW EVANS
 CHARLTON

Maple Syrup Part II

As noted in last week's column, for many New Englanders, the silver lining of a long, cold winter is the promise of the season's first sweet maple syrup. The centuries old-ritual of tapping sugar maple trees remains a familiar sight on country roads. Thus, in recognition of the state's longtime annual tradition of tapping trees, March has been designated Maple Month by the Massachusetts Maple Producers Association.

I thought it fitting that this week we continue the celebration of marvelous maple! Read on for more virtues of the sweet stuff as well as some recipes and fun facts about maple:

Virtues of Maple: While most people favor the thick, sweet syrup as the crowning glory of a stack of pancakes or plate of waffles, the virtues of maple are many, and the syrup is being rediscovered as a natural and diverse sweetener:

Pure maple syrup, with its rich, unique flavor is quickly being appreciated by those who prefer a natural, unprocessed sweetener. The natural syrup contains the same calories as sugar, and offers a higher concentration of minerals than honey.

In addition to the extraordinary taste, there are many more virtues of maple. The zinc supplied by maple syrup acts as an antioxidant and has other functions that can decrease the progression of atherosclerosis.

Moreover, research reveals manganese, the other trace mineral amply supplied in maple syrup, can help raise the level of HDL (the "good" cholesterol). Maple syrup also includes small and trace amounts of calcium, B2, B5, B6, riboflavin, potassium, pantothenic acid, pyridine, phosphorous, niacin, iron, biotin, and folic acid.

In fact, according to Maine Maple Producers Association, the medical journal Pharmaceutical Biology revealed that pure maple syrup contains up to 24 different antioxidants. These antioxidants, in the form of

TAKE
 THE
 HINT
 KAREN
 TRAINOR



phenolic compounds, are beneficial for reducing free radical damage that can cause inflammation and contribute to the formation of various chronic diseases.

Note: Whenever possible, select darker, grade B maple syrups since these contain more beneficial antioxidants than the lighter syrups do.

Making the Grade: The first maple syrup, produced in the beginning of the season is usually light amber. As the season continues, medium, dark and finally Grade B syrup is produced.

*Grade A Light is very light, which has a delicate taste, is used to make maple sugar candy and is also a favorite for crepes or waffles.

*Grade A Medium Amber, is a bit darker, and has more maple flavor. It is the most popular grade of table syrup, and is usually made after the sugaring season begins to warm, about mid-season.

*Grade A Dark Amber, is darker yet, with a stronger maple flavor. It is usually made later in the season as the days get longer and warmer.

*Grade B is made late in the season, and is very dark, with a heavy maple flavor. It's often used for cooking and extracts.

Maple Syrup Facts:
 It takes approximately 40 gallons of sap to make 1 gallon of maple syrup.

It takes one gallon of syrup to produce eight pounds of candy or sugar. The sugar content of sap averages 2.5%, of syrup 66.5%.

A maple tree is usually at least 45 years old and 12 inches in diameter before it is tapped.

As a tree increases in diameter, more taps can be added: up to a maximum of four.

Tapping does no permanent damage to the tree and only about 10% of the sap is collected each year.

Each tap yields an average of 10 gallons of sap per season: that yields about one quart of syrup.

Warm sunny days (above 40 degrees F) and frosty nights are ideal for sap flow.

The Maple season may last 4 to 6

Unexpected joy



BEYOND
 THE PEWS
 REV. JOHN H.D.
 LUCY

Easter is around the corner. I'll never forget my shock when a priest at my undergraduate school said that Easter is the center of Christian faith. "Why, then," I thought, "does everyone spend so much time, energy, and money celebrating Christmas?"

The priest was right, though. Even if our families and traditions seem to place more emphasis on Christmas, Easter is the center. We can argue endlessly about whether Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God, Messiah, but as St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians, no one who believes in the resurrection can deny Jesus's divinity and role. What it comes down to is whether we believe in the unexpected joy of Jesus's resurrection because that proves everything else.

Indeed, despite Jesus's proclamations about rising again, most if not all of the disciples seemed unprepared. Easter, and all of its hopeful consequences of new life, mercy, and God's love, is an unexpected joy.

It's important to recognize Easter as unexpected joy because, again, we can argue endlessly about spiritual truth. What I know, however, is that each and every one of us has experienced some kind of unexpected happiness and joy.

How many, on a wedding day, have looked across the aisle wondering how we could be so lucky? Or had a child or student give us the thumbs up and our hearts well up? Or hear, "happy birthday" from a coworker we were sure would forget? Or had a young, rebel-looking kid hold the door open for us and say, "Have a good day"? Your unexpected joy may have been fleeting or a constant and pleasant companion in life. I know you've experienced it, though.

Easter is a time to celebrate with family and friends, if not our church, the unexpected joys of life. And hope for the next one. And reflect on how we might create unexpected joy for others. Whether we believe in Jesus Christ, God, or not, we have all been blessed in some unexpected, miraculous way, and we'll do ourselves and the world a lot of good by counting and celebrating those blessings.

weeks, but sap flow is heaviest for 10 to 20 days.

Sap flowing in high volumes is called a "run."

The harvest season ends with the arrival of warm spring nights and early bud development in the trees.

Maple Syrup Recipes
 The following recipes are easy and delicious ways to add a taste of pure maple syrup to your meals.

New England Maple Marinade
 This marinade combines maple and spices that flavors meat perfectly.

Ingredients: ½ cup maple syrup, 1/4 cup soy sauce; 1/4 cup sherry; 1/4 cup ginger; 3/4 tsp dry mustard; 1/8 tsp nutmeg; 1/4 tsp cloves; ½ tsp salt
 Directions: Mix together all ingredients well. Marinate the meat overnight. Grill, basting frequently.

Old Fashioned Maple Syrup Cold Cure
 Old New Englanders tout this concoction as a remedy for the common cold.

Ingredients: 1 part maple syrup; 1 part lemon juice; 2 parts whiskey; 4 parts ice
 Directions: Combine all ingredients and shake or stir. Sip and sleep well.

Maple Beef Stew
 A perfect cold weather comfort food, this tasty beef stew can also be cooked in a crockpot.

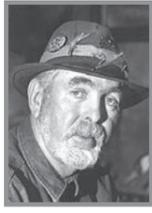
Ingredients: 1/4 cup flour; ½ cup dry red wine; 1 clove of garlic - crushed; 1/4 tsp celery salt; 1 ½ lb stewing beef in cut in 1 inch cubes; 19 oz can of chopped tomatoes; ½ cup dry red wine; 1/4 cup maple syrup; 4 potatoes - peeled and diced; 2 carrots - peeled and sliced

Directions: Combine flour, salt and pepper, garlic and celery salt. Add beef. Pour into a casserole dish or crock pot. Add remaining ingredients and ½ cup water. Cover and simmer over low heat for 2 ½ to 3 hours. (Or cook for longer in the crock pot on medium)

Turn To **TRAINOR** page **A9**

The terrors of tuna fishing

An early turnout at the Providence Saltwater fishing show last week was great, but the late turnout of anglers on opening day was a bit disappointing to show exhibitors and promoters of the event. Saturday and Sunday, however, the turnout was very good, with a lot of sales of fishing equipment, and charter boats picking up numerous bookings for the upcoming 2022 season. We live in a whole new world today, and the effects of the Covid outbreak and the war in Ukraine are going to have a log lasting effect in everyone's daily lives for years to come. After speaking with numerous anglers that did attend the show, they reported that had a great time.



THE GREAT
OUTDOORS
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RALPH
TRUE

My brother Ken & I arrived at the show early on Friday, and got to speak with numerous show exhibitors that were hopeful this year would be back to the years past, but were not too optimistic. We were surprised to bump into former police chief Jack Creighton of Uxbridge on Friday at the show. He is an active saltwater fisherman that enjoys all kinds of fishing activities, more so after his retirement. He now resides on the Cape, and does not have far to go to go fishing! He mentioned that he had made a booking for a bottom fishing trip with Captain Mel True this year. I am sure he will have a great time, if the weather cooperates.

Numerous boat captains were also concerned about this year's fishing season regulations, that were still not finalized. With the rising fuel prices, new concerns about increasing their fares for anglers, was something they were reluctant to do, but may have no other way to stay in business.

I spoke with numerous charter boat captains that take out anglers to catch tuna. The last few seasons have been great according to their reports, and they are hopeful that this season will be as good. The only tuna fishing this writer did was by accident, and it nearly got my brother Mel and I killed back in our early days of saltwater fishing. Fishing out of one of my early fishing boats, which was a twenty-one MFG vessel, we were at the end of a day's fishing out at Block Island, R.I. The weather was perfect, with light winds and sunny skies. We had caught numerous fish species and were headed back to the mainland, happy with the great day of fishing.

I decided to attach a large point Judith plug to my 20-pound test line, and after letting it out a few hundred feet in back of the boat, we sat back to enjoy the day. We trolled the single plug hoping to catch a big striper. As we got back to the area of old harbor, we observed a huge fish roll in back of the boat. The rod quickly started to bend, and the reel was screaming as the line peeled from the spool. I quickly grabbed the rod, and I was extremely excited. I told my brother to grab the steering wheel and turn us around, as there was not much line left on the spool. We started to chase the huge fish to retrieve some of the line. We worked the boat around numerous lobster pots and soon found ourselves back to the other end of the island.

"Break it off, Ralph," my brother yelled. «You are not going to land that tuna, and you do not have a permit to keep it anyway.»

Not listening to his recommendation,

I told him to keep steering the boat, and be quiet. I just want to get him in and take a picture. Suddenly, we found ourselves in a thick fog bank that had rolled in. The wind started to pick up and we had lost all sense of direction. I started to put a bit of pressure on the huge fish and the line snapped.

After realizing the predicament we were in, I quickly took control of the steering, and tried to gain some sense of where we were. Only using a compass heading we were fortunate enough to hear some waves breaking off of the shoreline, and I was relieved that we ended up at the far end of the island. I told my brother to check our gas supply, as I knew we were running low. He reported that we were lucky to have a gallon of gas left.

"We are in trouble," I stated.
"I told you to break the fish off a long time ago," my brother stated numerous times.

I was ready to throw him overboard! We soon found ourselves at the entrance to Old Harbor on the island. I do not know how the motor was still running. As we slowly maneuvered the boat alongside a boat dock, the engine stalled! We were out of gas! I tied the boat up, and grabbed the empty tank hoping to get some gas. No gas here! I had to take a taxi to the other side of the island to get some gas. After spending a large sum of money for the taxi fare and six gallons of gas, we were on our way to the mainland. It was an extra-long ride back to the mainland as the seas were a bit rough, and I had to listen to my brother whining. It sure was a fishing trip to remember! My brother Mel passed away a few years go & is sadly missed, but our memories of our fishing will never fade!

Freshwater fishing on lakes and ponds should see numerous anglers



Photo Courtesy

This week's picture shows some big cod taken on the Clipper fleet boat only a few years ago. It is unlikely this type of fishing will ever return for charter boat anglers. The Clipper fleet has ceased operation!

breaking out their boats to do some early fishing in the coming days and weeks, but anglers are reminded that Wallum Lake in Douglas is closed to all fishing, as the lake is governed by Rhode Island regulations, and will not reopen to fishing until the second Saturday in April. Fishing Cape ponds should be providing some great freshwater fishing if you can afford the gas to get there. Taking along another angler to share the expenses, could help alleviate the pain at the pump.

Take a Kid Fishing & Keep Them Rods Bending!

Boost your garden's harvest while reducing pest problems

Boost this year's harvest and reduce pest problems with less effort, while being kind to the environment. Employ row covers, chicken wire cloches and crop cages to prevent damage without the aid of chemicals.



GARDEN
MOMENTS
.....
MELINDA
MYERS

ing and since they do not need pollination to enjoy the harvest, leave the fabric in place throughout the season. Just lift to harvest and replace.

Cover squash at planting to prevent birds from dining on newly planted seeds

Floating row covers of spun-bonded or woven materials let air, light, and water through to the covered plantings. The warm air that is captured protects the plantings from frosty temperatures. The coverings also prevent birds from dining on newly planted seeds and eliminate damage by certain insects like flea beetles, onion maggots, seed corn maggots, and leafhoppers that may infect lettuce, celery, and carrots with aster yellows disease.

Cover susceptible seeds and transplants at planting to prevent the insects from reaching the plants. Insects like flea beetles and onion and seed corn maggots overwinter as adults in the soil near the previous season's planting. Move susceptible plants to a different part of the garden to avoid trapping the insects under the row cover with their favorite food source.

Double the benefit with less effort by planting short season radishes with long season cole crops such as cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower. Harvest the radishes as the larger vegetable plants need the space. This will provide two harvests from one row. The row cover eliminates problems with root maggots on radishes, cabbage worms on cole crops, and rabbits from dining on them all.

Basil and beans are favorites of Japanese beetles. Cover these at plant-

and to reduce the risk of squash vine borer and squash bugs. The fabric prevents these insects from accessing the plants. Remove the covers when flowering begins to allow pollinators access to the blossoms. Don't use row covers when planting squash in the same location as the previous year. Since squash vine borer insects will overwinter in the soil near the squash plants, the row cover will trap the insects and provide easy access to the plants. Continue to monitor for these pests throughout the remainder of the season.

Loosely drape the row cover fabric over the planting and secure the edges with boards, pipes, stones, or landscape pins. Commercial setups like the 3-Season Plant Protection Tent include a framework and fabric covers, making it easy for gardeners to cover and access the plantings. Systems like this include two covers; one to protect plants from cold and a second lighter weight fabric for preventing insect damage during the warmer growing season. Reuse the fabrics as long as they remain intact.

Self-supporting mesh enclosures like Pest Control Pop-Ups (gardeners.com) are another option for protecting plantings from insects, birds, and animals. Look for products like this that are simple to install and fold flat for easy storage when not in use. Finer mesh



Photo Courtesy — Gardener's Supply Co.

Plant protection tents protect plants from cold and wind, animals, and insect pests.

products keep out insect pests while larger mesh wire covers protect plantings from birds and animals, including hungry squirrels dining on greens and ripe tomatoes. Various sizes and designs provide coverage for individual plants, raised beds and berry bushes.

Make this the year to be proactive at preventing and minimizing pest damage throughout season without the use of chemicals. Your efforts will be rewarded with a bountiful harvest.

Melinda Myers is the author of more than 20 gardening books, including *Small Space Gardening* and *Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition*. She hosts *The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series* and the *Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program*. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and was commissioned by *Gardener's Supply* for her expertise to write this article. Her Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

TRAINOR

continued from page A8

Win Dinner for Two at the Publick House – Contest has resumed!

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

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

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OBITUARIES

Barbara J. Vosburg, 88



WEBSTER – Barbara J. Vosburg, 88, died Monday, March 7, 2022 in UMass/Memorial University Campus after an illness.

She leaves a brother, Russell L. Vosburg and his wife Aline; her niece Debra Bair; her nephews George Bair, Jimmy Vosburg and Eric Vosburg; 4 great-nephews, 2 great-nieces and 3 great great-nieces. She was

preceded in death by her brother Vernon Vosburg and by her sister Beverly Bair.

She was born in Worcester on March 14, 1933, a daughter of Alden and Jennie (Rothenburg) Vosburg and lived in Webster for the majority of her life. She graduated from Bartlett High School in 1951 and was the lead singer in the musicals there. She moved to Sturbridge in 2000 and then took up residence at Christopher Heights in Webster recently.

Barbara worked as an office clerk

for Massachusetts Electric for 33 years before retiring in 1993. In her retirement, she was a packer at Shaw's Market in Sturbridge.

She was a lifelong member of the Church of the Reconciliation and sang soprano in the church choir for many years. An avid lover of cats, she brought many rescues into her home where they thrived under her loving care.

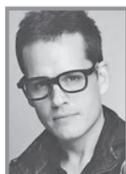
A memorial service will be held at 10:30 AM on Wednesday, April 6 in the Church of the Reconciliation, 21 North

Main Street. Burial will be in Mount Zion Cemetery, Webster. Donations in her name may be made to either the Church of the Reconciliation, 21 North Main Street, Webster, MA 01570 or to Second Chance Animal Services Adoption Center, 111 Young Road, East Brookfield, MA 01515. Arrangements are under the direction of Sitkowski, Malboeuf & Hickey Funeral Home, 340 School Street.

www.websterfunerals.com

There's a right time for everything

It's not an easy lesson to learn, but I've realized that there's a right time for everything. As long as you keep believing, the time for realizing your dreams will come to pass. We don't always know why things happen the way they do, and it's sometimes hard to see the big picture.



POSITIVELY SPEAKING
TOBY MOORE

scouted shooting locations in Vancouver. Suddenly, after we had almost finished pre-production, they decided to stop. What happened? It wasn't the right time.

Shortly after that, I met with a six-time Oscar-nominated Irish director. He agreed to direct the film and re-write the screenplay. When he finished the script, the project didn't move forward. What happened? It wasn't the right time.

Oddly enough, we found another Academy award-winning producer to write, produce and direct another of my father's books. After writing the screenplay and making much headway, the project came to a halt. What happened? It wasn't the right time.

Five years ago, I excitedly called my dad and Ted. I explained a new plan to get the books made into movies and simultaneously start what I thought would be a revolutionary business. We spent over a year developing and fine-tuning the concept.

We found an investor that believed in

our idea and gave us the money to make it happen. We hired what we thought was an innovative and forward-thinking web developer to bring our concept to fruition.

He contractually agreed to build it within six months. During the six months, I worked tirelessly to do everything necessary to help him finish the job.

I promoted the platform heavily as we moved closer to launch based on his word. Towards the end of the six months, the platform seemed to work, but something wasn't right. To my horror, I discovered he only built a shell of what he was supposed to make, and it was only about 15 percent complete. I looked like a fool. Here I was promoting the platform to hundreds of people, and I was being lied to the whole time. He ran off with the money, and some said my dream, but I didn't see it like that; if you believe in you genuinely believe in your dream, nobody can steal it from you.

For three long days, I prayed hard for a miracle, and on the fourth day, my brother-in-law, a military contractor

whose job has always been top secret, told me he heard what happened and that he could help finish the platform. I had no idea he knew how to code.

It turned out to be a blessing in disguise that our previous developer was so deceitful. My brother-in-law explained that the way he built the platform was so shoddy it would have broken down as soon as a dozen people logged in. It wasn't the right time, and he wasn't the right developer.

Determined never to let that happen again, I learned to write code by enrolling in UCLA Coding Boot Camp. Since graduation, my brother-in-law and I have put on some final touches before launching the next phase. I'll say this; It's starting to look like the right time.

This story is almost a little too personal for me to write about, but I decided to do it in the hopes of helping you overcome the hurdles in your own life and encouraging you to carry on. Things won't always happen the way you want. Believe strongly in your dreams but be relaxed about how they occur. Things will happen when and how they should, and it's not always what you expect.

Avoid tax filing errors

It's tax season



FINANCIAL FOCUS
TREVOR NIELSON

once again. You've got until April 18 to file your taxes for the 2021 tax year, but if you think you'll get a refund, you'll probably want to get going as soon as possible. However, it's important not to rush so much that you make errors, which, at the least, could delay your refund. So, take the time you need to prepare your taxes – and be sure to avoid these common filing mistakes:

Failing to include all W-2 forms – You need to include official copies of all your W-2 forms from your employer (or

employers). The wages and withholdings listed on these forms must be combined and reported on your tax return.

Forgetting necessary paperwork – Make sure you have all the documents you need before filing, such as forms from investment companies, including Form 1099-INT for interest income and Form 1099-DIV for dividend income.

Entering an incorrect Social Security number – An incorrect Social Security number can cause the IRS to reject your return. So, double-check your SSN, and that of your spouse, if filing jointly, before submitting your return.

Using the wrong column from Tax Tables – If you do your own taxes, you will probably have to refer to the 1040 Tax Tables page to make the correct calculations. But if you look at the wrong column, you could

miscalculate – a mistake that's not uncommon, according to the IRS.

Making math errors – If you file a paper tax return, be sure to check your math to make sure the figures add up. Of course, if you use a software program, or work with a tax professional, you won't have to do the math on your own, but you should still double check it. It's always important to review your return.

Entering the wrong routing or account number – If you want your tax refund to be deposited directly into your bank account, which is the fastest way to receive it, you need to provide the correct routing and account numbers. A simple mistake can result in the IRS sending you a paper check or, even worse, someone else receiving your refund.

Failure to sign and date your

return – Signing your return is an easy task – but it's also easy to overlook. If you file your taxes electronically, as most people do, you may be able to use a Self-Select PIN as your digital signature. If you're filing a joint return, you and your spouse must use your respective PINs.

Missing the filing deadline – If you don't think you can finish your taxes on time, file for an extension before the April 18 deadline. You'll still need to pay the taxes you owe (though you may have to estimate the amount) by April 18, and if you owe more, you'll likely accrue interest, but you can avoid failure-to-file penalties, which can be hefty.

Keep in mind that, when you submit your return electronically, the e-file system can detect typical errors, allowing you to correct them immediate-

ly, according to the IRS.

And, of course, working with a tax professional can greatly reduce the likelihood of mistakes. But even if you're entrusting your tax returns to someone else, you still should be quite familiar with all your documentation – and everything else that goes into your taxes, too, because how you manage your taxes will always be part of your overall financial strategy.

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.nielson@edwardjones.com.

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EDITORIAL

continued from page A8

spent her remaining years in active politics. She was the first chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights and chaired John F. Kennedy's administration's Presidential Commission on the Status of Women. Roosevelt was nicknamed the 'First Lady of the World.'

Last but not least is Agent 355, who was instrumental to the Patriot cause during the Revolutionary War. Agent 355 was a part George Washington's Culper Spy Ring. With the fear of a trip to the gallows in the back of her mind every day, Agent 355 managed to continue to help get crucial information to the General. Unlike the women we mentioned before, Agent 355 used her role as a quiet unassuming woman to make monumental gains that led to our freedom today. The identify of '355' is not yet known, however she is referred to as 'lady' 355 in Washington's code book. The only direct reference to '355' was from ringleader Abraham Woodhull (known as Samuel Culper Sr.) to Washington in which Woodhull described her as 'one who hath been ever serviceable to this correspondence.' We hope that one day her true identity will be discovered.

While we pay homage to strong women who have done incredible things, this does not negate the influential women we come into contact with in our everyday lives. As women we don't have to smash ceilings or gain notoriety to make a difference. We can be positive, powerful and influential in our everyday lives which in turn creates a domino effect that can last years after we're gone.



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SPORTS

Rams nearly pull off upset in State Tournament, but No. 2 Mansfield prevails



Nick Ethier photos

Zachary Wennerberg of Shepherd Hill surveys the court while looking for a teammate to pass the ball to.

BY NICK ETHIER
SPORTS EDITOR

MANSFIELD — Mike Rapoza said that Mansfield High is “one of the best teams in the state for a reason,” so the Shepherd Hill Regional boys’ varsity basketball head coach knew that his Rams would need to play a strong game in order to pull off the upset.

And when No. 15 Shepherd Hill took on the second-ranked Hornets in a Division 2 State Tournament Round of 16 game on Tuesday, March 8, the Rams nearly stunned the home crowd. In a game that was close throughout, Mansfield found a way to survive the scare and win a 47-44 decision.

“I could not be any more proud of them, of that effort. We came in understanding how hard we knew we were going to need to fight...it was all there,” said Rapoza. “To our credit, down by five, six, seven a couple times and we clawed our way back one way or another.”

The Hill trailed by seven points, 38-31, as play moved to the fourth quarter after a back-and-forth first half that had the teams tied at 12’s after one quarter and with the Rams leading by one point (21-20) at the break. With under three minutes remaining, the Rams’ Ryan Brooks got inside for a basket to cut the deficit down to 43-41. Then, a minute later, Shepherd Hill tied the score when senior Iverson Ramirez-Ruggles batted up a Brooks miss and the put-back found the bottom of the net.

But Mansfield’s Matt Hyland — who Rapoza called “a super talented player,” — got to the basket for two points and the lead with 1:30 remaining.

Ramirez-Ruggles connected on a free throw a couple of Rams’ possessions later, and following the Hornets missing free throws down the stretch, Shepherd Hill had the chance to take the lead. Brooks, a junior, collected a pass at the top of the arc, drove to his right and took a contested shot from about 10 feet. Unfortunately for The Hill, the attempt



Shepherd Hill's Nicholas Veronis takes and makes a free throw versus Mansfield.

did not go in.

“There’s no other person that I trust more than Ryan Brooks on this team,” Rapoza said. “We run a lot of our stuff through him. He’s an incredible playmaker, an incredible scorer and we’re very fortunate to get him for one more year after this.”

“They did a good job defending,”



Shepherd Hill's Iverson Ramirez-Ruggles drives into the lane versus Mansfield in first half action.



Lucas Miglionico of Shepherd Hill dishes a pass off while being defended tightly.

Rapoza continued when speaking of Brooks’ shot. “They forced him to take a tough shot — still a shot I like — and it just didn’t fall.”

Mansfield’s Caden Colby scored his only points with a second to play on a pair of free throws, upping the lead to 47-44. The Rams called a timeout and drew up a play where newly inserted Matthew Kustigian, a pitcher on the baseball team, heaved a deep pass down the length of the court. The ball was batted away, though, and bounced out of bounds as time expired.

“It’s tough with a second to go,” Rapoza said of the last-ditch effort. “You’ll take whatever you can get.”

Mansfield was led by the play of

Hyland (22 points, 7 rebounds) and Trevor Foley (14 points, 7 rebounds).

“Hyland is going to have his no matter what we do, and he made some plays down the stretch. And Foley made some big blocks, three or four blocks on layups,” Rapoza said of the Hornets’ impressive tandem.

Brooks led The Hill with 14 points and seven rebounds.

“I am just so incredibly proud of these guys,” said Rapoza. “To go from the last three seasons combined for 13 wins and now to 19-4 and win the league and everything else, I’m so happy for the seniors. They played unbelievably well all year. There’s a ton to build on here.”

Sturbridge man in the driver’s seat with help from local nonprofit

STURBRIDGE — Fueled by the pandemic and a lack of microchips, a national car shortage is making it difficult to find affordable and reliable used cars. For many, car ownership is financially out of reach at this time. Thankfully, a New England nonprofit is helping Massachusetts residents obtain vehicles, and a Sturbridge man is one of the latest recipients.

Joshua Seils was awarded a life-changing car from the vehicle donation charity Good News Garage. Good News Garage is a member of the Worcester-based nonprofit human-services agency Ascentria Care Alliance. Seils received the keys to a bright blue Fiat 500. The car was donated by a generous New Englander to Good News Garage.

Seils is one of more than 5,500 recipients of vehicles from Good News Garage since it began providing refurbished donated cars to neighbors in need in 1996. The organization remains one of the few car-donation programs in the nation with the goal of repairing and awarding donors’ old or unused cars to local low-income individuals and families.

Good News Garage says the need for donated vehicles is at a critical level. Donations are down and being far outpaced by the demand and need for reliable used cars.

“While we can’t solve the car and chip shortage, we can certainly help some of those who are being hit the hardest,” said Cash Cranson, director of operations at Good News Garage.

“But we can’t do it alone. Our ability to help is limited by the number of car donations we receive. During this difficult time, choosing to donate your car is an act of kindness and compassion that makes a huge, immediate impact.”

Good News Garage awards cars to Massachusetts residents through a partnership with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). Car recipients must be employed or have a written plan for employment and meet other qualifying criteria. This program is administered out of Good News Garage’s Manchester, New Hampshire office.

For more information or to donate, visit www.GoodNewsGarage.org.



SPORTS

End of the road for Warriors in State Tournament Round of 16 at Dover-Sherborn



Angelina Reno of Tantasqua gets inside the defensive presence of Dover-Sherborn's Elliana Scalabrino and takes a

BY NICK ETHIER
SPORTS EDITOR

DOVER — Sometimes, a team may play well — and do everything it can within its own power — but it simply isn't enough to come away with a victory. That may have been the case for the Tantasqua Regional girls' varsity basketball team, who competed against Dover-Sherborn High in the Round of 16 inside the Division 3 State Tournament on Tuesday, March 8. The Warriors, seeded 12th in the bracket, fell at the hands of the fifth ranked Raiders, 63-39.

"We played great. I thought we played as a team, we played hard, we played smart," said Tantasqua head coach Tony Giuggio. "They're a good team, a really good team. If you make a mistake, they make you pay."

The two players from Dover-Sherborn that particularly made the Warriors pay were sophomore Erica Hills and freshman Elliana Scalabrino. The two near six-footers combed for 46 of the Raiders' 63 points.

"They are hard matchups for us," said Giuggio. "We tried to go to a zone to take that advantage away from them, [but] they hit shots."

Hills scored a game-high 30 points, including five made 3-pointers and an 11-of-12 per-



Tantasqua's Sophie Law competes for the opening tip versus Dover-Sherborn.

formance from the free throw line. And Scalabrino — if that name sounds familiar, it's because her father Brian (who was in attendance) is a former NBA player and a current TV analyst for the Boston Celtics — posted double-double figures of 16 points and 13 rebounds.

The first quarter of play was a back-and-forth display equipped with multiple lead changes and the two sides being deadlocked at the end of the eight-minute period, 13-13. The Raiders then won second quarter scoring 17-7, though, to take a 30-20 lead into the half-time break.

Tantasqua made its run in the third quarter and got the score down to 36-30 following a free throw from sophomore Gabby Scanlon. But Hills finished the frame with a 3-point-er and two free throws to give Dover-Sherborn a 41-30 lead heading into the fourth.

"We had a chance in the third quarter to cut it to three and make a game of it and we just couldn't get the ball to go down and it took the air out of us,"

explained Giuggio. "And then they hit a 3, which was huge."

The Raiders then won fourth-quarter scoring by a 22-9 margin to account for the 63-39 victory.

For Tantasqua, the players competed extremely hard when their number was called. All nine players that received significant minutes — seniors Sophie Law and Dayna Lorenz, juniors Hannah Johnson and Kelsie Wotten, sophomores Angelina Reno, Nicole Vejack and Scanlon, and freshmen Maya Gidopolous and Maggie Johnson — all scored. Scanlon led the charge with 11 points, followed by Lorenz's eight and Law's seven.

"Whenever someone is called upon, they step on the floor and they do what they need to do," Giuggio said of his large rotation of players all contributing. That's a testament to them."

Although starters Law and Lorenz will be lost to graduation, the future remains bright for Tantasqua.

"We have a good young group, and a good eighth grade



Dayna Lorenz of Tantasqua slices through two Dover-Sherborn defenders en route to the basket.



Tantasqua's Gabby Scanlon maintains her focus on the basket while a Dover-Sherborn defender makes contact with her.

group coming up," explained Giuggio.

But the playoff loss still stings for Giuggio and the Warriors, who finished their campaign with a record of 16-6.

"We had loftier goals. Obviously our goal every year is to win the State Tournament," said Giuggio. "I'm proud of them. They worked hard. They had a lot of adversity."

Quinsigamond Community College student honored as Newman Civic Fellow



Thiago Zakaitis

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (PTK) student Thiago Zakaitis was named one of 173 student civic leaders nationwide who will make up the 2022-2023 group of Newman Civic Fellows. Mr. Zakaitis will

join students from 38 states, Washington, D.C., and Mexico to form this elite student group.

The Newman Civic Fellowship recognizes students who stand out for their commitment to creating positive change in communities locally and around the world. The fellowship is named for the late Frank Newman, one of Campus Compact's founders, a national coalition of colleges and universities working to advance the public purposes of higher education. Dr. Newman was a tireless advocate for civic engagement in higher education. In the spirit of Dr. Newman's leadership, each year Campus Compact member presidents and chancellors are invited to select one outstanding student for nomination from their college campuses.

Mr. Zakaitis will soon earn

his Associate Degree in Liberal Arts-History at QCC, and plans to transfer to Framingham State University and continue his education in history, in addition to minoring in secondary education. As a member of QCC's PTK Honor Society, he has taken part in a variety of community service projects that include helping neighbors remove snow from their houses; assisting in church events such as a Brazilian June celebration, taking part in the Fourth Marlborough St. Vincent de Paul Friends of the Poor Walk, and helping build a college scarecrow to bring awareness to food insecurity.

"When I am not studying or helping the community, I am working on my internship with FSU, where I am a teaching assistant for professors that teach dual-enrollment classes to high school students across

Massachusetts," Mr. Zakaitis said.

Through the fellowship, Campus Compact will provide students with a year of learning and networking opportunities that emphasize personal, professional, and civic growth. Each year, fellows participate in numerous virtual training and networking opportunities to help provide them with the skills and connections they need to create large-scale positive change. The cornerstone of the fellowship is the Annual Convening of Fellows, which offers intensive skill building and networking over the course of two days. The fellowship also provides fellows with pathways to apply for exclusive scholarship and post-graduate opportunities.

"I congratulate Thiago for earning this prestigious honor. His commitment to his

community and helping others is an exemplary example of QCC's student body," said QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D.

"We are proud to name such an outstanding and diverse group of students Newman Civic Fellows," said Campus Compact President Bobbie Laur. "Their passion and resolve to take action on the wide range of issues challenging our neighborhoods and communities is inspiring and deeply needed. We cannot wait to engage with them through this transformative experience."

For more information about QCC, contact Karen Hutner, Interim Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-2842 or khutner@qcc.mass.edu.



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WEBSTER LAKE - 1301 TREASURE ISL.



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State Senate pursues increase oversight at veterans' homes

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION – The State Senate recently unveiled legislation aimed at increasing oversight at the state-operated veterans' homes in Holyoke and Chelsea.

On March 3, the Senate introduced the legislation in an effort to improve safety and transparency at the veterans' homes. The announcement of the bill capped off several months of investigations and special oversight committee hearings seeking to unravel a series of administrative failures at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home in the spring of 2020. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a combination of flawed decisions, poor communications and preparedness, building deficiencies, and leadership collapses at the western Massachusetts facility led to the deaths of 77 veterans from the virus.

State Rep. Donald Berthiaume and Senator Anne Gobi, both of Spencer, served on the special oversight committee tasked with getting answers for the families of victims.

Now, more than a year later, the new Senate bill would restructure the chain of command at veterans' homes to more closely match those used in hospitals and other large organizations. Legislators said the goal of the bill is to ensure that the failures in the earliest

days of the pandemic are never repeated at veterans' homes.

"I find it difficult to adequately express my feelings about the tragic events that took place at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke during the COVID-19 outbreak," said Sen. Michael Moore, of Millbury. "This bill is a critical step toward ensuring proper oversight and accountability over those that care for veterans here in the Commonwealth."

The director of the Holyoke Soldiers' Home from 2011-16, Paul Barabani, repeatedly warned state leaders about the facility's deficiencies and vulnerabilities. He resigned in early 2016 after voicing concerns over limited staffing and long overdue renovations.

At the time of the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, the facility was run by Superintendent Bennett Walsh. He resigned from his position in October 2020 and later faced criminal neglect charges for his actions before and during the outbreak. The facility's former medical director, Dr. David Clinton, also faced charges.

In Nov. 2021, a judge dismissed the charges against both Walsh and Clinton.

Meanwhile, a scathing June 2020 report from an independent investigator suggested that Walsh was unqualified to lead the facility. The management team's decisions in response to the worsening COVID-19 outbreak were

described as "utterly baffling" by investigator Mark Pearlstein in his 174-page report. Several additional investigations revealed that infected residents at the facility were not properly isolated after testing positive. Other residents displaying symptoms of COVID-19 were allowed to remain in the general resident population while awaiting their test results, investigators said. Later, after even more residents contracted the virus, COVID-19 patients were still allegedly mixed with healthy residents in a scrambled response.

Shortly before the release of the independent report in June 2020, then Massachusetts Secretary of Veterans' Services Francisco Urena resigned from his position.

Now, with the proposed Senate legislation, officials are hopeful that a dark chapter can lead to meaningful reform.

"This bill will help make sure the tragedy that occurred at Holyoke Soldiers' Home never happens again by prioritizing accountability and oversight—and establishing clear chains of command at our state's long-term care facilities for veterans," said Sen. Michael Rodrigues, of Westport.

Added Sen. Michael Rush, of Boston, "The Soldiers' Homes have long suffered from gaps in accountability and a confused chain of command."

The reform bill calls for a new, full-

time ombudsperson to receive, investigate, and assist in resolving complaints related to the health, wellbeing, and rights of residents at veterans' homes. To effectively aid these efforts, a public hotline would be created for residents and staff members to direct concerns.

The bill would also task the Department of Public Health with regularly inspecting the homes, with all inspection reports to be made public.

Also under the legislation, superintendents of veterans' homes would be required to fulfill certain criteria, including being a licensed nursing home administrator with experience running a long-term care facility. Priority would be given to superintendent candidates who are veterans, officials said.

In addition to altering the command structure responsible for managing veterans' homes, the bill would also create a statewide Massachusetts Veterans' Homes Advisory Council, tasked with recommending policies to the Secretary of Veterans Services.

Moreover, the bill would require each facility to have a full-time specialist in infection control and emergency preparedness. Additionally, the homes would be required to maintain organizational plans, updated annually, for both normal operations and emergency operations.

Guest speaker has Master Masons asking Questions

SOUTHBRIDGE – On Monday, March 7, the Quinebaug Masonic Lodge in Southbridge welcomed one of Boston's Best local authors, guest speaker David Brody. He is an Amazon bestselling fiction writer and author of 16 novels. The Lodge was open to the public and was packed with Master Masons and people from the community who came to listen to what he had to say about "Exploration of America before Columbus."

His children call him a "rock nerd" because of the time he spends studying ancient stone structures. He believes there is evidence of exploration of America prior to Columbus. He is a graduate of Tufts University and Georgetown Law School. He has served

as a Director of the New England Antiquities Research Association (NEARA) and is an avid researcher in the subject of pre-Columbus exploration of America. In his first 12 books, he writes about the Knights Templars American series. This series is an Amazon Kindle top 10 bestsellers. Eight titles have become the #1 best-seller in their category. Due to his extensive knowledge in this area, he has frequently appeared as a guest speaker on documentaries airing on the History Channel, Travel Channel, PBS, and Discovery Channel.

During his presentation, David showed numerous slide shows of artifacts and sites from around New England which offer evidence of explo-

ration of North America before Columbus in 1492. In Westford, Medieval stone of a blade punch-marked into the bedrock stone which looks like a Knights Templar sword. Also, a big rock called the Westford boat stone, is a ship carving into the stone, possible is related to a Scottish Earl Prince Henry Sinclair in 1398. Newport Tower in Rhode Island, carbon-dating was done on the mortar stone indicates 1400 construction. Also, the Rune Stone in Narragansett Bay, you can only see the inscriptions engraved on the stone at low tide. In Maine a medieval stone carving on a rock called the Spirit Pond Rune Stone near Popham beach. Also, up in Nova Scotia, Oak Island, he talks about the Knights Templar who visited



Author and one of Boston's bestselling fiction writers David Brody answering questions with all his books on the screen in the background that he has written. It was a very interesting and educational evening for all those who attended.

that Island. His list goes on and on about all the discoveries made and all the stones, carbon-dating tested back prior to 1492 before Christopher Columbus. If you are a history buff and want to read additional interesting information about this pre-discover of artifacts prior to Columbus, go to westfordknight.blogspot.com.

This was a very educational evening for the Master Masons

and the public who attended and listen to quest speaker David Brody. Many questions were asked after the presentation and many of his books were up for sale for those interested in his writing. If you would like more information about Freemasonry, go to www.massfreemasonry.org to find a lodge nearest you.



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Gino Bolandrina

CHARLTON — Bay Path Adult Evening School is hosting Japanese cooking classes beginning Tuesday, May 10 at 57 Old Muggett Hill Road.

Bay Path Adult Evening School offers new cooking classes

Leading the classes in the Adult Evening School is Gino Bolandrina, chef and owner/Chief Ramen Chef for KuruKuru Ramen, who worked for many years in Japanese restaurants in and around the Boston area.

In his class, the fundamentals of ramen, you will learn what makes ramen such a delicious Japanese comfort food. He will cover the history of the dish and provide a breakdown of the 5 main components of a traditional bowl of ramen. After, you'll learn some quick and simple tips on how to upgrade an Instant Ramen bowl into a more elevated meal! The Japanese ramen though created from Chinese influence comes in a wide variety of flavors and is an amazing dish to learn how to make.

Bolandrina stated, "I am excited to be back at Bay Path!"

The fundamentals of ramen classes are part of several hands-on cooking classes that run through the Bay Path Night School. All the dishes will be prepared in class. The class consists of both demonstration and hands-on participation. The classes are held from 6 PM to 9 PM. The course fee is \$109. Class size is limited. All cooking classes include supplies/food unless stated otherwise. Register through baypath.augustsoft.net or call 508-248-5971 ext. 1715.

Chef Gino is a Douglas High School alumnus (2012). He had been passionate about food since his childhood. At age seven, he trained at the Heny Sison Culinary School (Manila, Philippines) under Chef Jill Sandique (International ICE alumni and a graduate of the Institute of Culinary Education Pastry & Baking Arts program). Gino's culinary experiences range from apprenticeship (The Ivy Restaurant, Boston),

to Cooking Shows (Chef Heny Sison), to employments (Harvard Faculty Club, Cambridge; Pikaichi Ramen, Boston; Ganko Ittetsu Ramen, Boston; Gen Sou En Tea House, Boston; and Love Art Udon, Boston). He has traveled to Japan extensively and had enjoyed Ramen in Chiba, Kanagawa, Osaka, Kamikatsu, and Tokyo. It was at Pikaichi Ramen where he worked as a waiter then kitchen chef that he honed in his passion for Ramen. He now has over 10 years of experience running and managing Ramen restaurants in the Greater Boston Area. Chef Gino leads menu creation, daily food prep, and all other cooking-related responsibilities at KuruKuru. He works with suppliers, ensures food quality in every meal, and assists with all back-of-house tasks and duties.

Important ways music education benefits students

Researchers increasingly are finding that "do-re-mi" may be just as essential to children's development as "A-B-C." Music education, which was once required in the classroom, is increasingly absent from school curriculums. However, proponents feel there should be a greater push for musical education as part of school curricula because of the many benefits students reap from music education.

Taps into multiple skill sets

Music participation goes beyond playing an instrument or singing notes from a page. Experts at Music Together, an early childhood music development program, say that participating in music education involves many different skills, including listening, vision, fine motor skills, problem solving, and utilizing large and small muscle groups.

Transformative effects

A growing body of research points to music for its transformative effects on youngsters. Participation in music education may help improve communication skills, foster better memory and help children focus their attention more effectively, according to the instrument retailer Zing Instruments. Music may provide the common ground to unite children in pursuit of a common goal.

Improves language skills

Neurobiologist Dr. Nina Kraus participated in "The Harmony Project," which involved a series of experiments among second and third graders. Dr. Kraus discovered conclusively that music enhanced sound processing and cognitive skills (memory and attention). Music helps students develop the left side of the brain, which is known for processing language. A 2014 study by Arete Music Academy found children who study music tend to have larger vocabularies and more advanced reading skills than those who do not participate in music education.

More consistent attendance rates

The National Association for Music Education determined that schools that offer music education have better attendance rates (93.3 percent) than those that don't (84.9 percent).

Higher grades

A study in The Journal for Research in Music Education found that students who participated in excellent music programs scored higher on tests in mathematics and English/language than students enrolled in lower-quality music programs or none at all. Researchers concluded there is a correlation between

music education and better retention of material.

Support from parents and teachers

Both educators and parents strongly believe that music education has a positive impact on overall academic performance, indicates NAMM Foundation and Grunwald Associates LLC. They also feel that budget cuts in music education or deficits in supplies and insufficient allocation of resources is detrimental to students.

Increased IQ scores

An experiment published in a 2004 issue of Psychological Science conducted by E. Glenn Schellenberg at The University of Toronto at Mississauga found that, over the course of nine months, six-year-old participants who were given piano and voice lessons tested on average three IQ points higher than those who had drama lessons only or no lessons at all.

Music education plays an important role in the lives of students, paying dividends that might surprise even those devoted to ensuring school curriculums include it. TF223812

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