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Friday, December 25, 2020

Chip-In praises generosity through pandemic



A crew of volunteers stand with premade boxes for clients who utilize the Charlton Chip-In Food Pantry.

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – The COVID-19 pandemic has defined the year 2020 and left many families reeling over the loss of jobs and income forcing them to seek help from social service agencies and nonprofits to get by. Since the pandemic began the Charlton Chip-In Food Pantry has seen its clientele double but through it all they have persevered and continued their mission to provide for those in need thanks in no small part to the support of the local community.

Pantry Director Darlene Emco-Rollins said 2020 has been a difficult year for many

leading more and more people to turn to the pantry for help with food and other necessities. As a result, the pantry has reached 150 clients on average per month, twice as many as before the pandemic.

“I’m getting new calls every day. It’s not just Charlton. People have called from surrounding towns too. I connect them to their own town pantries because it’s closer, but if they don’t get anything or they can’t reach them and it’s an emergency, we’ll absolutely give them food. We don’t turn anybody away,” Emco-Rollins said.

Despite the increased need in the community, Chip-In has managed to keep up

with the demand and Emco-Rollins said this is in large part due to the volunteers that put the boxes together and the outpouring of donations and public support for the pantry that has continued nonstop since March.

“The community has turned out in a big way to help since COVID-19 began. They’ve always been a big supporter of what we do, but people have come out of the woodwork and it’s unbelievable. We’re amazed by the support,” Emco-Rollins said. “The outpouring of the community and even from outside the town and outside the state has been unbelievable. This pandemic, even

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Selectmen approve new Fire Station Building Committee members

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – After agreeing to disband the Charlton Public Safety Building Committee in November and reform it as a Fire Station Building Committee, the Charlton Board of Selectmen have approved the new lineup of members that will make up the nine-member group as they explore options for a new fire department in town.

Town Administrator Andrew Golas brought the names forward for consideration after seven individuals submitted letters of interest to sit on the committee. Among the names were Derek Gaylord, Ralph Fiske, Kathleen Walker, Christopher Sentence, Joseph Fantini, Edmund Kochling, and Daniel Prouty. With both Fire Chief Ed Knopf and Captain Rob Barton on hand for the Dec. 15 virtual meeting, selectmen asked about the possibility of adding all the applicants to the committee which, at the time, would have brought the number of members to eleven including the seven applicants, three members of the fire department and a Board of Selectmen representative.

Chief Knopf and Captain Barton both agreed that eleven members would be too many, especially since the project was being downsized and the Public Safety Building Committee only had nine members.

“A committee of eleven has a quorum of six in order to have a meeting. We had a quorum of five before and we met that quota about 90 percent of the time,” Captain Barton said. “The bigger challenge is that you have eleven people on a committee and there’s just the delay in getting some of these votes to

happen.”

Captain Barton recommended staying with the nine-member limit and offered the possibility of accepting six of the applicants and having one act as an alternate non-voting member while the Board of Selectmen representative act as a non-voting liaison. Selectmen liked the idea as it would comprise the board of three fire department representatives and seven citizens with an alternate on hand to fill any vacancy as needed. During the meeting Captain Barton received correspondence from Derek Gaylord who offered to serve as the alternate for the committee. The final say on voting members and alternates won’t be decided until January when the committee meets for the first time.

After receiving input from the Board of Selectmen, Student Representative Henry Weiland asked Captain Barton if they had taken into consideration the adverse opinions of the public when choosing who would make up the committee. Captain Barton said he felt those who applied made up a qualified group who will bring multiple perspective and opinions to the table. Selectmen also noted that the public at large were all invited to apply if they wanted to be a part of the committee.

“Looking at the list of individuals I can tell you that we have a builder, we have a police officer and a former call firefighter, we have a long time volunteer in the town on multiple boards currently serving on the board of health, we have a Massachusetts State dispatch supervisor, we have a city of Worcester project engineer, we have a long time resident of the town that has

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Cub Scouts holding annual tree pick-up

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – The Christmas season is just starting to wind down, which means it’s almost time to do away with Christmas trees for the season. For those dealing with live trees disposal can be a bit complicated, but the Charlton Cub Scout Pack 165 is offering to remove those trees for you.

As they do each year, Pack 165 will remove live trees for free disposing them safely and even using them as part of team building and bonding exercises. Anne-Marie Caron, a spokesperson for the Pack 165 Christmas Tree Pick Up project, said the annual service allows scouts to volunteer their time with fellow scouts and their families which, given the limits the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed in 2020, is more important now than ever before.

“Cub Scout volunteers and their families and leaders will be going around and picking up live trees people are done with after the holiday. Some of the older scouts will be attempting to do a bonfire and the leftovers will be donated to local residents who have some goats that eat them. They

will be trying to do activities are a troop but also help their neighbors,” Caron said. “This not only helps them form a larger connection with their community but it also it goes along with the scout law, to be kind, be courteous and be helpful. We’re trying to teach them to follow those laws and to have bonding experiences like this even in a year where we can’t really get together in

big groups.”

Those wishing to register their tree for removal can contact Anne-Marie Caron at amcaron1981@gmail.com. The tree pick up will take place on Sunday, Jan. 10. Although the service is free of charge the Pack will also be accepting donations to help support their programs.

BayCoast Mortgage Company opens office in Auburn



Daniel Kirschner and Amy Dufresne



Photos Courtesy

AUBURN — BayCoast Mortgage Company, LLC (www.BayCoastMortgage.com) announces the recent opening of its Auburn, Massachusetts, Loan Production Office at 489 Washington St., Suite 208.

The Auburn office will focus solely on loan requests, primarily handling residential mortgages in addition to other types of loans.

The office, BayCoast Mortgage’s first in Worcester County, will be helmed by Mortgage Loan Officer Daniel Kirschner and Loan Origination Assistant Amy Dufresne.

Kirschner, a resident of Sturbridge, has more than 18 years in the mortgage lending industry. His honesty and integrity combined with a deep understanding of the mortgage industry has gained him a reputation as a market leader in loan volume for several years running. Kirschner, who joined BayCoast Mortgage Company in June, is a graduate of Liberty University with a Bachelor’s degree in Business.

Dufresne makes her home in Dudley. She joins BayCoast Mortgage Company with 21 years of experience in the financial industry, most recently with Savers Bank in Southbridge. She

is a graduate of Worcester Vocational High School where she received her Certificate in Financial Services and Retail Marketing. Dufresne recently completed several industry-related courses at Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester.

Daniel J. Briand, President and CEO of BayCoast Mortgage Company, said, “We’re excited to enter the Worcester County market area with Dan and Amy, both highly-recognized mortgage lending professionals, taking the lead. We look forward to servicing the lending needs of new clientele throughout the region.”

About BayCoast Mortgage Company, LLC

BayCoast Mortgage Company, LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of BayCoast Bank, serving Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Florida, offering a wide variety of home mortgage products including FHA, VA, Conforming Loans and Jumbo Loans. Visit www.BayCoastMortgage.com or call 877-466-2678.

Vaccine distribution underway throughout state

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION – Gov. Charlie Baker recently announced updates on the state's distribution efforts of the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Last week, the first doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine arrived in the Commonwealth. By Dec. 15, about 53,620 doses had arrived at 17 hospitals statewide.

Medical personnel are among the first to receive the vaccine this month. In addition to Pfizer's vaccine, the Moderna vaccine will soon be joining the mix.

"Pending the approval of Moderna's emergency use authorization, the Commonwealth, based on federal guidance, has been told to anticipate 180,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine and 120,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine," read a statement released by Baker's office. "In all, the administration expects the Commonwealth to receive 300,000 doses by the end of December."

The state's Department of Public Health (DPH) will place all vaccine orders on behalf of individual providers. Vaccines will then be shipped to the hospital or facility directly from the manufacturer.

Hospitals will be responsible for reporting all vaccination data to the DPH, which has launched a command center and dashboard to keep track of immunizations.

Over the next few months, staggered groups of individuals and personnel will be allowed access to the vaccines. Priority groups will include nursing home residents and employees, first responders, front-line workers, and seniors. The general public will then be able to access the vaccine by the spring, officials said.

Certain groups of residents like pregnant women, children, and individuals with a history of severe allergic reactions are not advised to receive a vaccine until further testing is completed. Individuals with questions about vac-

cination phases should send an email to COVID-19-Vaccine-Plan-MA@mass.gov.

Additionally, CVS and Walgreens will begin vaccinating in nursing homes during the week of Dec. 28. Doses will come from the state's Pfizer allocation; between 40,000 and 60,000 doses will be shipped to CVS and Walgreens for Massachusetts skilled nursing facilities.

Meanwhile, COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths are continuing at an alarming rate across the state. Last week, the Department of Public Health released guidance to help residents celebrate the holidays safely.

The following recommendations are in place through the New Year's holiday:

Limit in-person celebrations to household members only.

Postpone or cancel travel this holiday season. If you do choose to travel, you must comply with Massachusetts travel order requirements.

Follow the current state gathering size limits and sector-specific workplace safety standards.

The DPH guidance also provided tips for engaging in lower-risk celebrations and traditions this holiday season, while discouraging high-risk activities.

"Any time you gather with others outside of your household, you increase the risk of contracting or spreading illness," read a DPH statement. "You are risking your health and others' health if you host or participate in any large in-person festivities."

All residents are reminded to continue wearing masks in public and practicing social distancing. You must be masked in all public venues, even outdoor spaces.

For a full list of the state's holiday guidance and regulations, visit www.mass.gov/holidays.

CHIP-IN

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with how horrendous it is, has brought the best out of people. We're all so humbled by what they've been giving to us this year. We even had some people donate their stimulus checks to help us continue what we do."

Emco-Rollins does not expect the need to decrease going into 2021 as new COVID-19 spikes threaten to create another shut down as soon as the beginning of the new year. She said that is people want to make a difference they can always make cash donations to Chip-In or follow them on social media to see what physical donations are in the highest demand.

"We just ask them to keep doing what they're doing. We ask for our needs for the month, things that we can't pick up from the Worcester County Food Bank, things so

simple that people will eat but we might not be able to get. Every month our President Mike McGrath puts those needs on our Facebook for people who are asking about it. It's not only our food pantry that needs this. It's every pantry who are trying to help people through these times. We're just so lucky in Charlton. We're blessed with the support," Emco-Rollins said.

For those who want to donate or who find themselves in need of the Chip-In Pantry's services the path is the same. They can call 508-248-3292 or email chipinfoodpantry@gmail.com. The Charlton Chip-In Food Pantry serves the third Saturday of every month, but exceptions can be made for those with tight schedules or who have disabilities or an inability to leave their home.

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United Way announces MAPFRE Foundation donation

SOUTHBRIDGE — The United Way of South Central Massachusetts (UWSCM) celebrated the holidays and the midway point of the 2020 Annual Campaign with a virtual event on Dec. 17.

Campaign Chairman Jim Croteau announced that the campaign has reached 46 percent of the \$525,000 ambitious goal so far. With some workplace campaigns not completed yet and the hope of end of year personal donations to still come in.

"It's not too late to donate for 2020. With the increase of the \$300 tax deduction for charitable giving, it is our hope that those who haven't donated yet will still do so. This is a tough year for many and donations are needed more than ever so we can support the health, education and financial stability of those in need in the South Worcester County community," Croteau said.

Mr. Croteau also announced the \$80,000 Fundación MAPFRE grant to UWSCM. Fundación MAPFRE, a global nonprofit organization founded by

MAPFRE in 1975, awarded the grant to support children and family programs in the region.

"MAPFRE Insurance has been partnering with the United Way since the 1990's. We are proud to collaborate with the United Way South Central MA to support them in helping those at risk," said MAPFRE Assistant Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility Linda Johnson, who spoke at the event.

"Having this wonderful collaboration with MAPFRE Fundación is new for me personally, as they have previously worked with the United Way of Webster and Dudley," said UWSCM Executive Director Mary O'Coin. "We are so grateful to have merged and thankful now to experience the support of MAPFRE for our entire region. I look forward to continuing our relationship for both the volunteerism of MAPFRE employees and receiving the financial support from such a global corporation."

Another guest speaker was Liz Hamilton, Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of

Worcester and Webster-Dudley. The B&G Club of Webster-Dudley's Remote Learning and Afterschool program is supported by the United Way and is one of the programs MAPFRE's grant will directly impact.

Ms. Hamilton stated, "If it were not for the support of the United Way, we would not have been able to open our doors when our kids and community needed us most. We are grateful for the United Way grant which helped us stay open throughout the pandemic and provide vital services such as food, emergency childcare and learning hub programming while schools are remote. The United Way has stood by us every step of this unprecedented year."

The United Way of South Central Massachusetts serves the communities of Charlton, Dudley, Southbridge, Sturbridge and Charlton and is located at 176 Main St., Suite 400, Southbridge, MA 01550. To learn more about programs and donate, visit www.uwscm.org, follow on Facebook @UWSCM or call (508) 765-5491.



FAMILY DINING & GIFT GUIDE

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VILLAGER STAFF DIRECTORY

EDITOR
BRENDAN BERUBE
(508) 909-4106
news@stonebridgepress.news

SPORTS EDITOR
NICK ETHIER
(508) 909-4133
nick@stonebridgepress.news

A STONEBRIDGE PRESS PUBLICATION
PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER
FRANK G. CHILINSKI
(508) 909-4101
frank@stonebridgepress.news
BUSINESS MANAGER
RYAN CORNEAU
(603) 677-9082
ryan@salmonpress.news
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR
JIM DiNICOLA
(508) 764-4325
EDITOR
BRENDAN BERUBE
(508) 909-4106
news@stonebridgepress.news
PRODUCTION MANAGER
JULIE CLARKE
(508) 909-4105
production@stonebridgepress.news

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QCC offers hands-on learning experience to students from the safety of their homes

WORCESTER — At Quinsigamond Community College, hands-on learning is an integral part of student success. Students who have the skill sets that enable them to hit the ground running in a new job are more valued when they enter the workforce. Thus, when QCC transitioned to remote instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the College's programs developed in-home, hands-on learning modules for students to continue this important educational training.

"QCC is dedicated to providing quality education and this in-home learning module approach is a method that allows students hands-on experiences they would otherwise not be able to have in a remote environment," said Betty Lauer, dean for the School of Business, Engineering & Technology.

Students in courses that ranged from electronics engineering technology to computer systems engineering technology, and food service, have been able to experience hands-on learning from the safety of their homes, mimicking activities they would have normally performed in an on-campus lab setting.

"We have been reviewing our laboratory work to determine what projects can be done remotely, then modifying those projects so that students can do them at home. This is an iterative process to identify the best combinations of tasks and interaction levels for different students," said Jacob Longacre, professor of Electronics Engineering Technology.

In some of QCC's electronics courses, students received a learning module that included both instruments and components. The components enabled students to build simple circuits and the instruments enabled them to make various electrical measurements. Students in the embedded microcontrollers course received components that

included an Arduino programmable microcontroller, small electric motors, LEDs (single color and red-green-blue), pushbuttons, switches, a joystick, temperature sensors, and light sensors.

"With these components students can unleash their creativity and build program projects that involve controlling light (blinking, flashing, fading, multicolor), sound, motion and temperature," said James Heffernan, professor of Electronics Engineering Technology.

Other electronics students received "breadboard" devices used to make up temporary circuits, as well as myDAQ, a Student Data Acquisition Device. The myDAQ is an interface that includes a comprehensive set of plug-and-play, computer-based lab instruments for hands-on student learning outside the lab.

"The myDAQ is a bit like a Swiss army knife and allows students to do a variety of problem solving and experimentation at home," Mr. Longacre said.

In the food services programs, faculty and staff reviewed curriculum requirements and selected recipes for take-home learning modules, which demonstrated specific learning concepts and provided key academic knowledge and skills development. The modules contained non-perishable food items, small kitchen tools and miscellaneous items to enable students to work from their homes. They were mailed to students, or students were able to pick them up at QCC at the Senior Center, where the College's Hospitality Restaurant Management programs are housed. Students either obtained their own perishable food items or picked them up from QCC.

An example of a key learning concept in food service is the importance of cleaning protocols, required under ServSafe requirements. In the food ser-

vice module, students received a "glow" powder that they sprinkled on a food prep surface they had cleaned. Then, using a mini black light also provided in the take home packet, they could see any particles that remained on the surface.

Additionally, during the upcoming Spring semester, manufacturing students will be taking certificate exams for Precision Measurement in Associate Professor Lee Duerden's quality manufacturing course. The students will practice on measuring equipment they will receive in their "Metrology Tool Chest" that contains tools such as:

- Tape measure
- Rulers
- Steel rules
- Calipers
- Micrometers
- Combination sets
- Dial Gages
- Bore Gages

"QCC has been lucky to expand its capability and equipment in this area. Just packaging all this equipment up has proved challenging, but providing hands-on training is essential for the successful completion of this manufacturing course. It has been an incredible achievement from QCC and its faculty to provide this equipment that is so necessary to continue hands-on learning during this pandemic," Mr. Duerden said, adding that the tool chests will be returned upon completion of the course.

"We expect to continue using this method of learning in the future. Students have really embraced the idea of learning in their own space and many students have excelled in this learning style environment," Ms. Lauer said.

For more information about QCC, contact Josh Martin, Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-7513 or jmartin@qcc.mass.edu.

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CHURCH LISTINGS

- **Charlton Federated Church**, 64 Main St., 248-5550, Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. www.fedchurchcharlton.org
- **Charlton Baptist Church**, 50 Hammond Hill Road, 248-4488, www.charltonbaptist.org, Sunday worship 10 a.m.
- **Charlton City United Methodist**, 74 Stafford St. 248-7379, web site: CharltonCityUMC.org Sunday worship and Children's church 10am
- **St. Joseph's Church**, 10 H. Putnam Ext, 248-7862, www.stjosephscharlton.com, Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30 p.m., Sunday Mass 8 a.m., Sunday Family Mass 10 a.m., Sunday Life/TEEN Mass 5 p.m., Weekday Mass Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 a.m.
- **Hope Christian Fellowship**, 6 Haggerty Road, 248-5144
- **Assemblies of God Southern New England District Headquarters**, Route 20, 248-3771, snedag.org, Office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Lamblight Christian Church**, 37 Main Street - Grange building 1st Floor, Charlton, Ma 01507, Rev. Stephen Wade, (774) 452-2393 - Pastor's Cell. Sunday Service 10:00am. www.visitlamblight.com
- **New Life Fellowship A/G, SNED Chapel**, 307 Sturbridge Road, Rt. 20, Charlton, MA, Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.

STATION

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built multiple building and has been involved in the construction of multiple commercial properties, and then we have the three fire department members that come with varying backgrounds as well. So, we do look for the diverse group of individuals to sit on this and give their feedback and get a better understanding. This is the town's building – As the townspeople come forward and give us ideas in what they're looking to see it is important," Captain Barton said.

The Fire Station Building Committee is set to have its first meeting in the coming weeks to finalize its membership. The committee is also planning to bring forth an updated look at potential timelines and projects options for the Board of Selectmen's Jan. 12 meeting.



ACCURACY WATCH

The Charlton Villager is committed to accuracy in all its news reports. Although numerous safeguards are in place to ensure accurate reporting, mistakes can occur.

Confirmed fact errors will be corrected at the top right hand corner of page 3 in a timely manner.

If you find a mistake, email news@stonebridgepress.news or call (508) 909-4106 during normal business hours. During non-business hours, leave a message in the editor's voice mailbox. The editor will return your phone call.



All We Know Is Local

StonebridgePress.com

Pamala Holt joins Goodrich Insurance Agency

We are excited to welcome Pamala Holt from Dudley MA to our team of insurance professionals at Goodrich Insurance Agency in Milton MA.

Pam has over 20 years of insurance expertise and will be our Personal lines Account Manager. Pam joined our office family on November 23, 2020 and will be working remotely from Dudley and in our main office in Milton. Help us to give Pam a warm welcome! We look forward to providing our current client and new clients with professional, personal, knowledgeable valued client services you expect from Goodrich Insurance Agency!

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Friday's Child

Aleeanna and Savannah Age 14 and 17

Hi! Our names are Aleeeanna and Savannah and we would like to be adopted together!

Aleeanna, who likes to go by Aleee, is a fourteen year old girl of Caucasian and Hispanic descent. Aleee speaks both Spanish and English. Aleee is a funny, sassy and outgoing teenager. She enjoys watching television, being outdoors, and running. Aleee also spending time with her sister and friends. She is an engaging girl and does well in school with support from school staff.

Savannah is a seventeen year old girl of Caucasian and Hispanic descent. Savannah, similar to her sister, speaks English and Spanish. Savannah is a kind, easygoing, and creative teenager. She likes to help out around the home, spend time with her friends, and watch television. In school, Savannah does best with the academic support she receives.

Savannah and Aleee are legally freed for adoption. The siblings will thrive with a family that is patient, understanding, and supportive and have the ability to meet them where they are at. Savannah and Aleee would do best in a home with older or younger children as long as they are placed together and in separate rooms. They would prefer a family that will help them maintain contact with biological dad.

Who Can Adopt?

Can you provide the guidance, love and stability that a child needs? 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.

The process to adopt a child from foster care requires training, interviews, and home visits to determine if adoption is right for you, and if so, to help connect you with a child or sibling group that your family will be a good match for.

To learn more about adoption from foster care, call the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) at 617-6273 or visit www.mareinc.org. The sooner you call, the sooner a waiting child will have a permanent place to call home.

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QCC’s credit for prior learning program makes college more attainable

WORCESTER — At Quinsigamond Community College, students are attaining their dreams for a higher education in less time through Credits for Prior Learning. By earning credit for life experience, students save time earning their degrees, as well as realize substantial tuition savings. In 2020, 1,472 credits were awarded to 310 students.

QCC’s Career Services and Credit for Prior Learning Office works with students to assist them in translating their life experiences into college credits. Students may earn college credit for acquired life experience in a variety of ways that include taking a challenge exam, having portfolio assessments, or through credentialing of prior certificates and trainings such as military service, firefighting academy and emergency medical technician training. Credit for Prior Learning offers a significant savings over QCC’s already affordable tuition rates. The program offers a savings of between \$130-\$205 per credit.

President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D. noted that these types of savings are extremely beneficial, particularly during a pandemic when many students are struggling to make ends meet.

“While financial concerns may be exacerbated by the pandemic, credit for prior learning not only offers a way for students to save money, but also enables them to graduate earlier and enter the workforce sooner with less debt,” he said.

Student veteran Javier Viera spent 30 years serving in the Army before coming to QCC. During his first 12 years in the Army, he worked as a combat engineer and the last 18 years as an Army recruiter. Mr. Viera was awarded 69 credits for prior learning, of which he used 35 credits for a human services degree.

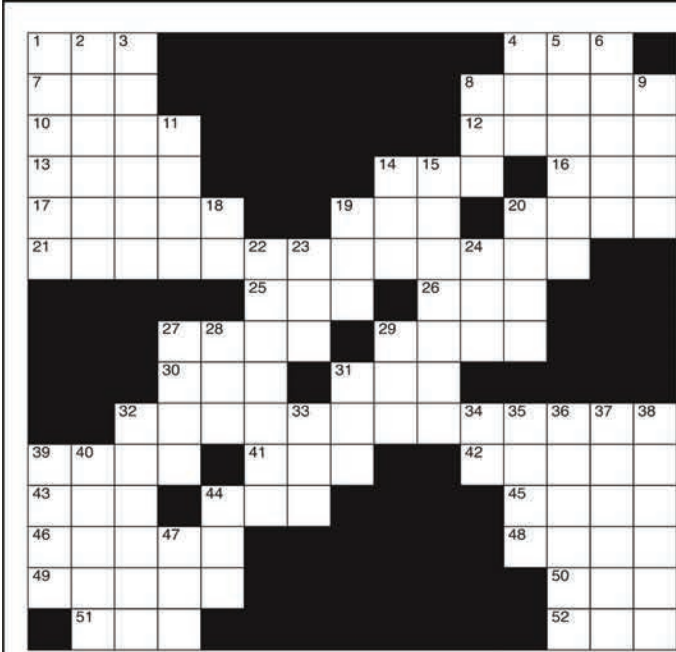
As a former Army recruiter, Mr. Viera said he has always promoted and was aware of credit for prior learning, however, “... seeing it applied when I came to QCC was a great surprise,” he said.

Mr. Viera said that while he could have used the majority of his awarded credits for a general studies degree, he chose instead to use all applicable credits toward the human service degree he really wanted. His plan is to graduate from QCC in Fall 2021 and then work with veterans.

“I can’t say I wasn’t tempted to go for a general studies degrees,” he said. “The applicability of my military time for credits blew me out of the water.”

“The Credit for Prior Learning program is a great way for students to take advantage of the knowledge they’ve gained over the years and have it pay off in a lucrative way,” Dr. Pedraja added.

To learn more, visit Credit for Prior Learning <<https://www.qcc.edu/services/career-services-credit-prior-learning>>. For more information about QCC, contact Josh Martin, Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-7513 or jmartin@qcc.mass.edu.



- CLUES ACROSS
1. Crow species

4. Partner to flow

7. Male offspring

8. Sedate

10. Orange beverage

12. Pair of small hand drums

13. 12th month of Jewish civil year

14. Former Pirates star Jason

16. Computer company

17. Made angry

19. Beverage container

20. Charlize Theron film “___ Flux”

21. Localities

25. Consume

26. Don’t know when yet

27. Bed style

29. Make a low, continuous sound

30. Wrath

31. Pollinates flowers

32. Association

39. Prejudice

41. Unhealthy

42. Hasidic religious leader

43. Distinctive philosophy

44. Short-term memory

45. In a good way

46. Emperors of Ethiopia

48. Imaginary line

49. Of barium

50. One’s sense of self-esteem

51. Man who behaves dishonorably

52. Monetary unit

- CLUES DOWN
1. Rear of (nautical)

2. He minds the net

3. Ring-shaped objects

4. When you hope to get there

5. Young children

6. Beloved hobbit

8. Pigpen

9. Wish harm upon

11. Quick-eyed (Scottish)

14. Scrooge’s phrase “___ Humbug”

15. One more

18. A ballplayer who only hits

19. Once vital TV part

20. Sixth month of Jewish civil year

22. Advantage

23. Type of tree

24. Luke’s mentor ___-Wan

27. Life stories

28. Vase

29. Tiny

31. Package (abbr.)

32. A photog’s tool

33. Wood

34. One of the six noble gases (abbr.)

35. Pueblo people of New Mexico

36. Wild goats

37. A way to comply

38. Horatio ___, British admiral

39. Actress Leslie

40. Sir ___ Newton

44. Pouch

47. Have already done



QCC to offer free healthcare training in the New Year

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College’s Workforce Development and Continuing Education Center (WDCC) is offering free, grant-funded Nurse Assistant/Home Health Aide and Administrative Medical Professional programs in 2021.

The free 120-hour Nurse Assistant /Home Health Aide Training program provides students with the necessary theory and entry-level skills to safely provide basic nursing assistant care in a long-term care facility, acute care facility or home health care agency. Upon successful completion of the program, students will be eligible to take the Massachusetts Certified Nurse Assistant Competency Exam. A free virtual information session will be held Jan. 5, 2021 via Zoom to learn more. Space is limited. For eligibility requirements or to reserve a seat in the information session, email QCC instructor Jo Sundin at jsundin@qcc.mass.edu. This program is funded through the Executive Office of Health and Human Services Nursing and Allied Health Initiative, SNAP Path to Work.

The Administrative Medical Professional program will prepare students for a career as a Medical Administrative Assistant in a variety of healthcare settings. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the projected employment growth rate for Medical Administrative Assistants from 2019 to 2029 is 19 percent more than the 4 percent average growth rate for all occupations. In QCC’s program, students will learn the roles and responsibilities of a healthcare team, interpersonal communication, medical records management and compliance with HIPAA, as well as diagnostic and procedural coding. The course will also include lessons in how to handle medical emergencies. After successfully completing the course, students are eligible to sit for the National Health Career Association’s (NHA) Certified Medical Administrative Assistant Certification Exam. To learn more, email Ms. Sundin at jsundin@qcc.mass.edu.

For more information about QCC, contact Josh Martin, Director of Institutional Communications at 508-854-7513 or jmartin@qcc.mass.edu.

DOT renumbering highway exits

BY KEVIN FLANDERS STAFF WRITER

REGION – If you find yourself lost on familiar highways over the next few months, there’s no need to get a new GPS program or consult a map. As part of a statewide project, highway exits across the Commonwealth are in the process of being renumbered.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is converting all exit numbers on freeways to a mile-based numbering system. The project is a requirement of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Currently, interstates and freeways in Massachusetts utilize a sequential exit numbering method. Under the new mile-based system, exits will now be marked based on the number of miles from the origin of the route. For example, the Sturbridge exit on the Mass. Turnpike – formerly Exit 9 – will now be Exit 78 (there are roughly 78 miles from the New York border to Sturbridge). Exit numbers for Route 213, I-291, I-391, and the Lowell Connector will not be changing. Meanwhile, MassDOT is continuing the I-395 numbering along I-290 to replicate the present exit numbering, which is continuous from Webster to Marlborough. As part of this project, the existing mileposts on I-290 will be replaced with dual mile markers showing mileage for both I-395 and I-290.

The \$2.8 million project is being funded through the Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program. Over the next year, MassDOT crews will update all highway signage to reflect the exit numbering changes. Local businesses and organizations are encouraged to make updates as well, especially on websites featuring travel information and other materials.

“Businesses that reference existing numbers in their advertising or marketing materials will need to revise these materials,” read a statement released by the MassDOT. “Old exit signs will remain in place for a minimum of two years, giving businesses time to adjust to the new exit numbers during this transition period.”

Several public meetings and virtual events were held throughout the state over the past year to provide residents with additional information on the project. The MassDOT will continue the renumbering project throughout the winter and spring.

For more information on the new exit numbering system, as well as a list of local highways and exit numbers, visit www.NewMassExits.com.

Eagle Scout hopeful creating flag disposal box

Wales
Zoning Board of Appeals Public Hearing

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – A local Boy Scout is planning to bring a new addition to the Charlton Town Hall that will provide residents with a location to properly dispose of American flags to be retired properly.

Local Scout Matthew Arndt of Troop 165 has decided to erect a flag disposal box at the town hall as his Eagle Scout project to be placed in summer of 2021. Arndt joined a virtual meeting of the Charlton Board of Selectmen on Dec. 15, where he proposed his project saying he felt there was a need for a new location to complement the drop box at the local grange.

“The current flag box outside of the grange is hard to find and falling apart. I think it would be nice to have one more visible to the public so more people know where to retire their worn out and unserviceable flags,” Arndt said.

Selectmen loved the idea with Selectman Patsy Rydlak calling it “a great project” that was much needed. Several selectmen echoed her appreciation for the concept. Some questions presented were how often the box would be emptied and who would be in charge of properly retiring the flags. Arndt couldn’t say for sure when the flags would be removed but did note that both the scout and the American Legion would properly retire the flags at least once a year.

Selectmen have their fully support to the project. Once completed the new flag disposal box will be placed by the stairway on the north end of the Charlton Town Hall by the selectmen’s office.



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PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

BRENDAN BERUBE
EDITOR

Making SMART resolutions

With New Year’s Day just around the corner, we, like many, are thinking about resolutions. We could debate that September is actually the start of a new year given the clean slate of grades to start a new school year, but a new year is a new year, and not all of us are still in school.

More than half of all resolutions end in failure, but we like the fact that generally, we, as people, seek to improve ourselves and our lives. One reason resolutions fail is that a person just hasn’t chosen the right one, something that has meaning. Many people fail before the end of January.

A resolution isn’t the right one for you if it’s too vague, if it’s someone else’s expectations for you, or if you have no plan.

The acronym SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound) can be used to help facilitate your success. If you make a specific goal of losing a certain amount of weight, your goal will be easier to obtain. If you set a time limit, (baby steps) by saying I will lose one pound each week, your plan becomes more effective. As a side note if you haven’t seen ‘What About Bob’ starring Bill Murray, you must.

We all like to see progress and to see it fast. One way is to make something measurable. If you want to scale back on something, say using social media, you can use the ‘see how much time you’ve spent on Facebook’ setting to watch your usage go down. Or if you’ve set out to watch as many old classic movies or read as many John Grisham novels as you can this year, you can make a check list, and as you finish each one, check it off the list. Or bring an empty bookcase into your house, and as you finish a book, pop it on the shelf.

Pick a goal that is achievable. By taking a leap that is too big, you might find yourself in over your head and likely frustrated. Having a goal of saving more money than you can will leave you hopeless; however, if you can put away \$50 per month, then you’re on to something.

Choose a resolution that is relevant. Doing something for the right reasons is key. A relevant goal is a lasting goal. If you want to do more research on your family’s ancestry, so that your family will have the information for years to come, then what you’re doing has meaning to not only you but to the people you care about. Choosing to bring others in on your goal is never a bad idea either. We all need a coach at times.

Using a timeline for your goals should be realistic. Knocking off small goals along the way will lead you to your larger goals and will also give you a chance to create your new habit.

Learning something new is one of the most refreshing things about being alive. Being able to continually grow and morph into the best versions of ourselves is what life is all about. The more you enjoy, the more meaning you get out of life.

As the poet T.S. Eliot said, “For last year’s words belong to last year’s language, and next year’s words await another voice.”

LETTERS

Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

We think you’re important enough to tell all our readers to turn to the Opinion pages and read your Letters to the Editor.

But first, you have to write us!

Mail your letters to the Charlton Villager, P.O. Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550.

Or e-mail your letters to the editor at news@stonebridgepress.news

You’ll need to provide your name and place of residence, along with a phone number, so we can verify the letter is yours.

We don’t have a set limit, but if you keep it around 600 words or so, you’re going to have a better chance at seeing all your words in print.

If you want to write a bit longer about a particular issue, maybe a guest Your Turn column is your cup of tea. If you do that, try to keep it between 700-800 words.

Remember, libelous remarks and/or personal attacks are a no-no and could lead to your letter not being published.

So, what are you waiting for? Start writing!

OPINION

VIEWS AND COMMENTARY FROM CHARLTON, CHARLTON CITY, CHARLTON DEPOT AND BEYOND

To the Editor

Reach out to someone who’s quit smoking

To the Editor:

This holiday season, I’d like to remind readers to thank a co-worker, friend or family member who has quit vaping, smoking, or using other tobacco products. 2020 has been a year full of stresses for many of us, and staying tobacco free may have been hard for people you know. This is especially significant now since smoking and vaping may harm the lung’s ability to fight off infections, including COVID-19.

Nicotine is the very addictive substance in tobacco, and many vape products. It takes most people with a nicotine addiction several tries to quit for good. So reach out to those who have conquered this addiction. Let them know you are proud of how hard they’re working to better their wellbeing. Thank them for improving their health and the health of the people around them.

The holidays are also a great time to support your friends and loved ones who are trying to quit vaping, smoking or other tobacco products. Even if they have tried quitting in the past, encourage them to keep trying – they learn

something new every time they try to quit.


Smokers and vapers can call 1-800-QUT NOW (1-800-784-8669) for FREE coaching from the Massachusetts Smokers’ Helpline through phone and web, 24 hours each day, seven days a week (except Christmas) or enroll online through makesmokinghistory.org. Adults who work with a coach can receive up to eight weeks of free nicotine patches, gum or lozenges (with medical eligibility). And, this year, the Massachusetts Smokers’ Helpline is also offering up to \$50 in gift cards to Massachusetts residents who use menthol tobacco products and participate in coaching services!

Quitting is hard—give thanks to someone in your life for quitting or for trying to quit. Every email, text message, phone call, or encouraging word makes a difference.

Sincerely,

TINA GROSOWSKY
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Investment lessons from 2020



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As the year draws to a close, it’s fair to say that we’ve all learned something about the social, political, physical and environmental forces that have affected everyone. And, in some ways, our lives will be changed, perhaps permanently. But as an investor, what lessons can you learn from 2020?

Here are some to consider:

The markets look ahead. Here’s something many investors discovered in 2020: Investment prices don’t always move in the same direction as the overall economy. This might not have seemed apparent right after the COVID-19 pandemic struck in mid-February, as the overall economy and the stock market took big hits. But just about five weeks later, the markets began a rally that lasted several months. During this time, the economy also recovered somewhat, but still remains on weak footing.

What can explain this discrepancy between the markets and economic activity? Essentially, economic numbers, such as the unemployment rate and gross domestic product (GDP), reflect what’s happening today, but the markets are always looking toward tomorrow, which means they are anticipating a stronger economic recovery and the results that come with it, such as greater corporate earnings in 2021. No one can say for sure what the future holds, but you can usually know the market’s opinion by its performance.

Opportunities will always exist for investors. Although the coronavirus seems unprecedented, the equity markets have rebounded from many crises before it. From war to global financial meltdowns, the market has seen it all. But even at the height of these events, when the markets might be most affected, individual segments or industries can do well.

For example, in the current environment, when many people have been forced to work and shop from home, and get their entertainment online, it’s probably not surprising that some parts of the technology sector have seen their economic activity grow, along with their stock prices. Here’s the key point: Investment opportunities always exist, especially in times of market stress – and smart investors will find them and incorporate them into their portfolios in a way that’s appropriate for their goals and risk tolerance.

Patience and discipline can pay dividends. As mentioned above, the stock market dropped sharply in the weeks immediately following the pandemic, but then gained steadily for months afterward. Investors who tried to “cut losses” and exited the market likely did so at the wrong time and missed out on the beginning of the upturn. Unfortunately, this is not uncommon – investors who overreact to market declines often find themselves on the investment sidelines just when a new rally begins. Rather than being reactive in this way, you may be better off sticking with a long-term investment strategy, and buying and selling investments only when it makes sense for your situation, such as when you need to diversify your portfolio.

For many reasons, it’s unlikely that we’ll see anything exactly like 2020 again. But some of the investment lessons we learned are applicable in every year – so keep them in mind for 2021 and beyond.

De-Stressing Strategies Promote Good Cheer

The holidays are around the corner, and despite the usual merriment of the season, this year is (not surprisingly) different. The CDC reports that symptoms of anxiety and depression have increased considerably due to COVID fears and since social restrictions have been in place. In fact, a recent study revealed that 27.8 percent of U.S. adults had depression symptoms compared to 8.5 percent before the pandemic.

With these figures in mind, the following strategies to combat stress and depression are offered. Some ideas have been previously published in this column, but bear repeating.

Read on for a variety of natural ways to halt high anxiety and greet the holidays with good cheer!

Note: Consult with your health care professional before taking any herbs, as they could have dangerous side effects.

**

Massage therapy: Did you know when you are anxious, your body produces an abundance of cortisol, a stress hormone? Massage has been proven to lowers cortisol levels. In addition, it relieves muscle tension caused by anxiety. In fact, according to a research study by the Touch Research Institute, experiencing a 15 minute massage for just twice a week can lower both anxiety and depression levels.

**

Carbs are calming: Complex carbohydrates such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and starchy foods increase the amount of serotonin in your brain, a powerful neurotransmitter that boosts your mood, calms you down and is beneficial in reducing overall feelings of anxiety/depression related disorders. Studies also show pasta, which is rich in complex carbohydrates can help relieve anxiety and help fight depression.

**

Meditation mode: Meditation can be a powerful weapon in the fight against stress, and can work to ward off a panic attacks. Meditation and proper breathing can helps slow the heart rate and calm nerves. In fact, medical studies reveal meditation may also ease anxiety for those who not only suffer from anxiety disorders, but for those who have obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) as well. A quick calming trick is to close your eyes and breathe slowly and deeply, focusing on the breaths.

Writer Carol Krucoff of the Seattle Times offered this advice on breathing to relieve stress and panic: “Slow, deep breathing is a powerful anti-stress technique. When you bring air down into the lower portion of the lungs, where the oxygen exchange is most efficient, heart rate slows, blood pressure decreases, muscles relax, anxiety eases and the mind calms.”

**

Chew away stress: Can chewing gum reduce stress? According to a NASA research it can! In a NASA-funded study, scientists from Wheeling Jesuit University monitored the responses of 25 college students during simulated driving scenarios. The volunteers reported that peppermint lowered their feelings of fatigue or anxiety by



TAKE THE HINT
KAREN TRAINOR

20%. Peppermint and cinnamon each decreased frustration by 25%, increased alertness by 30%, and made the ride seem 30% shorter. Don’t like candy or gum? Buy peppermint or cinnamon air fresheners or car diffusers for the same effect.

**

Paint RX for panic: The color yellow is not only bright, it’s a mood booster too! Just be aware yellow a little goes a long way, and too much bright yellow can over stimulate the nervous system. Or try painting your walls orange, or at least a workable shade of orange, such as peach or terra cotta. Orange is the top mood booster and can dispel anxiety, according to experts. Painting a room a light green is therapeutic for tired, stressed nerves. And studies show bubble gum pink and cool blue are proven stress relievers.

**

Herbal Help:

Ylang ylang: Ylang ylang has been touted as an anti panic treatment. When Ylang ylang essential oil is added to a warm bath, feelings of depression can literally be washed away!

Lemon balm: Lemon balm is a relaxing herb that reduces restlessness, anxiety and irritability. It is also used to treat anxiety that causes digestive problems.

Note: Do not use if you have thyroid problems.

Passionflower: Passionflower is an effective depressant of the central nervous system which translates into a relaxing anti-anxiety effect. It not only helps general anxiety, but is especially touted as a remedy for nightmares and nocturnal anxiety.

Note: Those taking an MAO inhibitor should not take passionflower.

Skullcap: An herb with fewer side effects, Skullcap helps calm the “worrier” who has racing thoughts and constant fret. This herb is useful for all types of anxiety but has also been hailed as an aid for stress caused by hormonal imbalances in women.

German Chamomile: A common garden herb, Chamomile is a muscle relaxer that has mild sedating properties. Chamomile tea has long been used to relieve stress and promote sleep. It is also used to treat anxiety in sufferers young and old.

Note: Those who have allergies to ragweed, chrysanthemums or asters, should not use Chamomile.

Valerian: Valerian is one of the most popular anti-stress herbs. The herb contains valepotriates, which work to calm anxiety, much the way the drug Valium does, but without the addictive qualities.

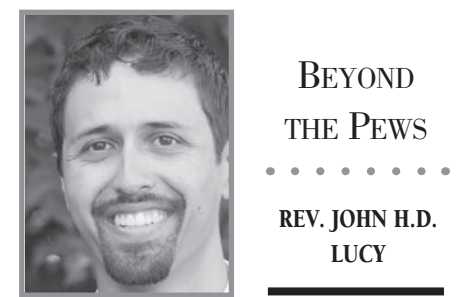
Note: You should not take Valerian if you have thyroid problems, adrenal fatigue, chronic exhaustion or depression.

- Did you know?**
- Calcium, magnesium, and B vitamins are hailed for relieving anxiety symptoms.
 - Fresh peaches contain a natural sedative that aids in reducing stress and anxiety.
 - Keeping your body in balance by eating a well rounded diet and taking a daily multivitamin helps ward off

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Jeff Burdick, your local Edward Jones Advisor in Sturbridge at 508-347-1420 or jeff.burdick@edwardjones.com



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BEYOND
THE PEWS

REV. JOHN H.D.
LUCY

Have you had the experience of working hard for a while—say, three weeks straight or more—and then you have some time to rest, and your body decides to give up? Just when you thought you were going to enjoy some time to yourself, you get sick.

I used to have that experience a lot in school. Whenever it was time to write those midterm or final papers and take the exams, I dreaded it. The papers and exams themselves weren't the problem.

My body's inevitable sickness at the end always hung over me like a shadow. Then, when my body gave out, my mind often did, too. I'd start asking why I bothered working so hard for so long if the only reward is feeling like dirt.

While I'm thankful to be done with school to avoid the every-three-month illness, I do still occasionally have those months when I work my brains out, take a break, get sick, and then wonder what I did it all for. I bet you do, too. We don't want our vacation time spent resting in bed.

The solution? Sabbath. Imagine how hard God worked in creating the universe. That deserves a break. Jesus apparently took breaks all the time, too, where he did nothing but pray alone.

Sabbath

Sloth and laziness are certainly to be avoided, but God gave us the example of Sabbath rest for a reason: it is good and right to take regular breaks. If we take regular breaks, we won't work ourselves to the point of no return and then waste away our off-time. Instead, our off-time can be full of activity as well as rest.

As Jesus said, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. God wants us to take time off to go on that hike we've been thinking about, gather with friends and family and play Monopoly or Risk all the way through, work on a challenging puzzle, sit and chat about life's meaning, and, of course, go to God in worship and prayer.

Oftentimes we need this reminder at

the end of the calendar year. Preparing for the holidays can be rough. Simply surviving another year, especially 2020, can feel like a drag race. We may have nothing left and need a few days just to recover. So as we celebrate the twelve days of Christmas, let us take stock of how we're doing. Do we work ourselves too thin and turn our Sabbath days into nightmares? If so, let us do what Jesus did and go aside by ourselves to pray and work out how we can balance our lives better so that we are not only taking Sabbath days but also making the most out of them, to use our Sabbath days for joyful and rejuvenating activity.

Do-it-yourself holiday centerpiece

Dress up your holiday meals with a centerpiece crafted from greens, colorful stems and seed heads collected from your garden. Or purchase fresh materials you need from your favorite garden center or florist.



GARDEN
MOMENTS
MELINDA
MYERS

weed, balloon plant and lotus pods. And don't worry, your milkweed plants will return for next year's visiting monarchs. Honor their natural color or add a bit of bling with some gold, silver, or red paint.

Include a few shiny ornaments as needed. Glittered stems, ribbons and candles can add festive color to nature's beauty in your centerpiece.

Visit your favorite florist or craft store for needed supplies. Pick up some floral foam to secure the stems. Cut it to shape to fit the size and shape of the container.

Moisten the foam before inserting fresh greens and cut flowers. Set the block of foam on top of a basin of water and let it sink. This allows all the air spaces to fill with water, ensuring your flowers and greens have the water they need. Use high density foam when working with evergreen boughs and branches.

No need to moisten the foam when using dried and artificial material. This material makes it easier to create your arrangement.

Consider purchasing a few seasonal flowers for added color for your special event. These can be placed directly in the floral foam or water filled florist tubes set in the arrangement. Simply remove faded flowers and replace as needed.

Or use miniature poinsettias, kalan-



Photo Melinda Myers

It is possible to create a festive holiday centerpiece crafted from materials found in winter gardens.

choes and cyclamen for longer lasting living color. Tuck them in the bed of greens or use them to decorate each place setting. Check the soil moisture frequently as the small pots dry out quickly.

The possibilities are endless, and the results are sure to brighten your spirits no matter how you are safely celebrating this holiday season.

Melinda Myers is the author of more

than 20 gardening books, including *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything"* DVD series and the nationally-syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* TV & radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and her Web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Old Sturbridge Village keeps tradition alive with virtual Gingerbread House Contest

STURBRIDGE — Old Sturbridge Village's (OSV) annual Gingerbread House Contest is a popular feature of the holiday season at Old Sturbridge Village during their Christmas by Candlelight program. Due to spatial and safety concerns, it is not possible to have the 2020 contest in the same format as previous years. Instead, the Village invited visitors, friends and fans, near and far, to enter virtually.

Old Sturbridge Village has received several dozen spectacular entries from all over the country. Contestants were asked to submit photos of their entries in one of four categories, including adult non-professional, adult professional, youth and family. Prizes will be awarded in each category to the top entry. Visitors are able to view the entries on a monitor in the Village's Visitor Center as well as on their website and vote for "Best in Show."



"Our annual holiday event is still a very festive recreation of the past, and we've kept as many of the popular elements as possible and added new ones," said Director of Public Events, Jim O'Brien. "With innovation and cre-



ative thinking we were able to keep the beloved tradition of the Gingerbread House Contest alive."

All are welcome to vote on their favorite entry at www.osv.org through Dec. 30. The winners will be announced at the



conclusion of Christmas by Candlelight 2020. Tickets are still available for Christmas by Candlelight but limited due to capacity limits and can be purchased on Old Sturbridge Village's website.

TRAINOR
continued from page A6

stress.

- Laughter provides both a physical and emotional release. It relieves tension, stress, anxiety, anger and depression.
- If you're trying to reduce stress, be sure to avoid extremely low fat diets because some fat is needed to fight depression and anxiety.
- To keep stress at bay avoid (or reduce) consumption of alcohol, sugar and caffeine.
- Just 20 minutes of relaxation or doing something you enjoy each day has shown to restore your mental health and lower overall anxiety level.
- Aromatherapy can soothe frazzled nerves. Add some essential oils to a warm bath to induce calmness. Sandalwood, Lavender and Rose are a few "stress busting" scents to try.

**

Win Dinner for Two at the Publick House
Your tips can win you a

great dinner for two at the historic Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge! Simply send in a hint to be entered into a random drawing. One winner per month will win a fabulous three course dinner for two at the 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.

Charlton exploring concept for public feedback system

BY JASON BLEAU
VILLAGER CORRESPONDENT

CHARLTON – The Charlton Board of Selectmen is giving serious consideration to adding a new public feedback tool to allow citizens a chance to voice their opinions and concerns about how the town hall his operating outside of the traditional public meeting setting. However, there's still a long way to go before the new feature sees the light of day.

At a previous meeting, selectmen had discussed the idea of bringing something new to the town to allow citizens to provide feedback on town services. Town Administrator Andrew Golas ran with the idea and provided

selectmen with a draft concept at a Board of Selectmen meeting on Dec. 15.

"It's a request from the Board to have the ability for residents to provide feedback on the services that we provide them. I did get a draft over (to selectmen) and I think we're looking for a little bit of feedback as to how the initial draft can be improved and better ways of doing it," Golas said.

Not much discussion came from the proposal at the meeting as most selectmen wanted to review the draft more thoroughly. However, Selectman Patricia Rydlak did take a moment to provide her input saying she wanted to make sure there was a system of check and balances in place for whatever they decide to do.

"I don't want to create something that doesn't have a very specific policy and a procedure attached to it. Sometimes surveys can be dangerous if they're not well defined as to their use and how they are done," Rydlak said. "I think that maybe we need to put a little more thought to make sure that when we come to the board, we know we like the survey but this is how we're going to manage it."

Selectman Karen Spiewak called the idea a "win-win" for the town and the people that would be good for residents and employees. Other selectmen seemed to agree but it was ultimately decided to hold off on further exploring the draft concept until a future meeting in 2021.

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Bay State Savings Bank appoints Rachel G. Hall Assistant VP, Human Resources

WORCESTER — Bay State Savings Bank is proud to announce Rachel G. Hall has been appointed Assistant Vice President, Human Resources at the Bank's 28 Franklin St. location in Worcester. In this role, Ms. Hall will be responsible for the oversight of the Bank's human resource function including salary and benefits administration, employee development, recruitment and training.

Prior to joining Bay State Savings Bank, Ms. Hall was employed by the New England Center for Children where she served as a Human Resources

Specialist. She holds an MBA from Assumption University and is certified SHRM-SCP from the Society of Human Resource Management.

"Rachel joins Bay State Savings Bank with valuable experience in the Human Resources field, particularly in employee benefits, that will help the Bank further meet the needs of our employees," said Bay State Savings Bank Senior Vice President, Diane Giampa. "The experience she has will also help us in repositioning our staff so that customer expectations can continue to not only be met, but exceeded. We are so happy to



Rachel Hall

welcome Rachel to our team!"

Ms. Hall volunteers at various events in the community geared towards children and looks forward to continuing

her volunteer work as soon as the pandemic is behind us. She currently lives in Whitinsville.

Shovel snow safely this winter

The beauty of freshly fallen snow is undeniable. Such beauty compels millions of people across the globe to ski and snowboard each winter, while millions more enjoy simply looking out their windows at snow-covered landscapes.

If it was as convenient as it is beautiful, snow would likely be welcomed with open arms whenever the local weatherperson includes it in his or her forecast. But heavy snowfall can be inconvenient, making it difficult to travel and even creating more work for individuals responsible for shoveling their driveways and walkways.

Shoveling snow can increase a person's risk for injury, and some may be surprised to learn just how frequently such injuries happen. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission notes that, in 2018, more than 137,000 people needed medical assistance for injuries that happened while shoveling snow or using snowblowers.

Sprains and strains in the back and shoulders are the most common injuries when shoveling snow. But people also can suffer lacerations and injuries related to below-freezing temperatures when shoveling snow. The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons recommends people keep these

safety precautions in mind when shoveling snow this winter:

- Stretch before shoveling. Just like you would do before exercising in a gym, stretch prior to picking up your snow shovel. Warm up your muscles with some light exercise for 10 minutes to reduce your risk of sprains, strains and muscle tears.

- Stay hydrated and take frequent breaks. The AAOS notes that snow shoveling and snow blowing are aerobic activities. Such activities require participants to be hydrated. In addition, taking frequent breaks can help prevent injuries.

- Avoid shoveling snow if you're at risk for heart attack. Some people should avoid shoveling snow entirely. According to the Harvard Medical School, researchers correlated hospital admissions and deaths due to heart attack the day after it snowed in Canada between 1981 and 2014. Researchers found that the deeper the snow, the more men died of heart attacks. In fact, researchers found that there was a 34 percent increase in heart attack deaths the day after an eight-inch snowfall, and those rates increased when snowfall increased. Most deaths were men, but both men and women who are at risk of heart attack

should avoid shoveling snow, particularly after heavy snowfall. Adults who are unsure of their heart health should consult with their physicians prior to shoveling snow.

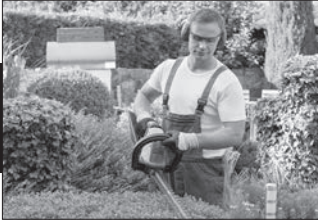
- Use the right equipment. Ergonomic snow shovels can make shoveling less taxing, reducing your risk for sprains and strains. Spacing hands on the tool grip can increase leverage, making shoveling easier and less likely to lead to injury.

- Pushing snow instead of lifting it. The AAOS recommends pushing rather than lifting snow when possible. If snow must be lifted, squat with your legs, knees bent and back straight. When lifting, lift with your legs and do not bend at the waist. Scoop small amounts of snow at a time and walk to where you want to dump. The AAOS warns against holding shovels full of snow with arms outstretched, as doing so puts too much weight on the spine. Snow should not be thrown over the shoulder, as such a technique requires a twisting motion that puts stress on the back. In addition, the AAOS notes that heavy wet snow should be removed in pieces and not all at once.

Anyone can get injured while shoveling snow. Such injuries are preventable when certain safety measures are taken.



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Identify winter birds in backyards

Birds flittering around the neighborhood are a common sight during spring and summer, and these welcome guests can be enjoyable to observe as they nest, feed and interact. When the weather cools in fall and winter, many birds seek out warmer climates, but a good number of these feathered friends stick around.

Certain birds can be found all winter long across regions of North America. The Great American Bird Count is a program that is run by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. Its purpose is to seek the help of volunteer bird-watchers across North America to observe and count all the birds seen in a 15-minute interval during a four-day data collection period. This program helps identify birds that are most com-

monly seen in cold temperatures and study the composition and distribution of the winter bird populations across North America. Birds seen during this time may change from year to year, though certain species are more likely to be around in the winter months.

- Northern cardinals: One of the more iconic winter birds, the bright red cardinals are around much of the year but perhaps most noticeable against the snowy, stark landscape of a winter's day. Cardinals use their bright, powerful bills to crack open seeds and cut through sugary fruits to help them survive the winter.
- Tree sparrows: Tree sparrows are large-bodied and long-tailed sparrows with gray and reddish-brown streaking along the edges of their feathers. They also wear a bright chestnut colored

cap. Despite their name, tree sparrows spend much of their time on the ground feeding. The bird count has unveiled a greater number of tree swallows in recent years. These birds are insectivorous, so milder winters may be contributing to their increased presence.

- Tufted titmice: Tufted titmice resemble cardinals in body and head shape, albeit on a smaller scale, but they are pale gray in coloring. These are bold birds who defend territory with scolding calls.
- Blue jays: These common, vibrant birds are well known to many people. They are large-crested songbirds with broad, round tails. They have white or light gray feathering on the underside of their bodies with various shades of blue, black and white on the top. A favorite food is acorns, and these birds are often found on forest edges. Their calls are loud and carry long distances.
- Mourning doves: Many people hear

mourning doves before they actually see them, as their soft cooing often comes from roof rafters and tree branches. These birds have plump bodies and long, tapered necks, with a head that looks particularly small in comparison. They tend to be brown to buff color. When the birds take off for flight, their wings make sharp whistling or whinnying sounds.

- American goldfinches: These birds are sometimes called the "wild canary" of the Americas. They have distinctive yellow plumage that fades in winter to a palette of buff, brown and gray. They're small seed-eating birds that often travel in flocks.

Birds may need a little help surviving in the winter. Keep fresh, unfrozen water around and supplement food scavenged with peanut butter, suet and nuts. Brush piles, roost boxes or birdhouses can provide needed shelter.



Birds seen during winter may change from year to year, though certain species are more likely to be around in the winter months.

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For I'm spending Christmas with Jesus this year.
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But the sound of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here.
I have no words to tell you the joys their voices bring,
For it's beyond description to hear the angels sing.
I know how much you miss me, I see the pain inside your heart,
But I am not so far away, we really aren't apart.
So be happy for me dear ones you know I hold you dear,
And be glad I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.
I sent you each a special gift for my heavenly home above,
I sent you each a memory of my undying love.
After all love is a gift more precious than pure gold,
It was always most important in the stories Jesus told.
Please love and keep each other
as my Father said to do,
For I can't count the blessing of love
he has for each of you.
So have a Merry Christmas
and wipe away that tear,
Remember I am spending Christmas
with Jesus Christ this year.

Author unknown.

Merry Christmas



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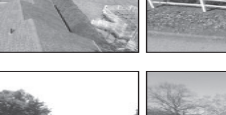
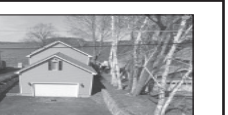


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WEBSTER LAKE – 11 Bay View Rd! One of the Lake's Premier Properties! 9,822' of Nice! .68 Acres of Park Like Grounds! 297' Waterfront! \$4 Million Spent, Nothing Spared! 17 Rms! 5 Water View Bdrms, 5.5 Bathrms! Brazilian Cherry Hrdwd Flrs, Grand & Spiral Stairways! Elevator, Ground Flr to Master Suite! In-door Resistance Swimming Pool, Hot Tub & Bthrm w/Steam Shower off Exercise Rm! Billiard Rm! Media Rm! Center Isl Granite Kit w/Wking Gas Range, Sub-Zero Frig, Pantry & Breakfast Bar! Open Flr Plan! Din Area, Fam Rm w/Entertainment Center w/Wet Bar! Formal Din Rm, Frpl Liv Rm & Atrium! Library w/Deck! Waterfront Master Suite w/Office, Bdrm w/Triple Glass Dr to Private Deck w/Lake Views, 3 Walk-in Closets, Bathrm w/Multi-Head Shower, Whirlpool, Dble Vanity, Separate Commode/Bidet/Sink Area! 16 2's of Updated Geothermal Heat/A/C! Recessed Lights & Fire Sprinklers Through Out! 3 Car Garage! Generator! Slate Roof! Reward Yourself! **\$2,499,900.00**

WEBSTER LAKE – 11 Bay View Rd! One of the Lake's Premier Properties! 9,822' of Nice! .68 Acres of Park Like Grounds! 297' Waterfront! \$4 Million Spent, Nothing Spared! 17 Rms! 5 Water View Bdrms, 5.5 Bathrms! Brazilian Cherry Hrdwd Flrs, Grand & Spiral Stairways! Elevator, Ground Flr to Master Suite! In-door Resistance Swimming Pool, Hot Tub & Bthrm w/Steam Shower off Exercise Rm! Billiard Rm! Media Rm! Center Isl Granite Kit w/Wking Gas Range, Sub-Zero Frig, Pantry & Breakfast Bar! Open Flr Plan! Din Area, Fam Rm w/Entertainment Center w/Wet Bar! Formal Din Rm, Frpl Liv Rm & Atrium! Library w/Deck! Waterfront Master Suite w/Office, Bdrm w/Triple Glass Dr to Private Deck w/Lake Views, 3 Walk-in Closets, Bathrm w/Multi-Head Shower, Whirlpool, Dble Vanity, Separate Commode/Bidet/Sink Area! 16 2's of Updated Geothermal Heat/A/C! Recessed Lights & Fire Sprinklers Through Out! 3 Car Garage! Generator! Slate Roof! Reward Yourself! **\$2,499,900.00**



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Featured Property!



SORRY, SOLD!

OXFORD - 12 WINTER STREET

Home "Sweet" Home! TOTALLY Renovated! New Roof ~ Updated Electrical ~ New Heating System! 3 Bedrooms, 1.5 Bath ~ 2 Story Conventional Home in Nice Neighborhood! Dead-End St. w/ only 4 other Properties! Rare find, Large Lot .77 Acre - Inside -Neutral Palette of Complimentary Paint Colors throughout the Entire House! Loads of Character! **\$281,000.**

WOODSTOCK CT - 110 JOY RD

ON DEPOSIT

Quisential Woodstock Farmhouse w/Spectacular views of Pond. Detached Studio Building! 2.5 Acres. Prof. Landscaped. 5 Bedrooms. Fireplace Dining, library/Music room. Master Bedroom, 2 Full Baths! Renovated Kitchen. Upstairs, 4 Bedrooms w/Full Bath. **New Price \$399,900.**

WEBSTER - 21 3RD STREET UNIT: B

SORRY, SOLD!

Condominium - Living leisurely! 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath (including master suite) home. Freshly painted! Recessed lighting, gas fireplace, and sliding doors, to beautiful balcony. Walkout basement! built-in outdoor grilling spot. Easy access to 1395. **\$224,900**

N. ATTLEBORO - 523 KELLY BLVD.

SORRY, SOLD!

Farmhouse style home! Sun-drenched interior! Spacious floor plan! living room, eat-in kitchen. 6 rooms total, 4 bedrooms, 2 baths! Heated by gas / hot water baseboard! Outdoor kitchen, pool! Jacuzzi tub/shower. Located just minutes from Rt 95 & 495! assisted sale **\$408,500.**

WEBSTER - 103 UPPER GORE RD

ON DEPOSIT

Estate Sale! LOCATION! Scenic Upper Gore Rd! Amazing View of Beautiful Webster Lake! Main level has 3 Bedrooms, Kitchen, Dining Rm, Common Bathrm, Master Bedroom & Master Bath ~ Fireplace Living Room! Finished Lower Level, 1/2 Bath, Laundry, Large room w/Pellet Stove & Direct Garage Access! Tiered deck, w/Screened porch, leads directly to your "Salt water" Inground Pool! **\$319,900.**

LAND WEBSTER/OXFORD/DUDLEY/DOUGLAS

Oxford - 4 Leicester St - Approx. 8.47 ACRES! River Frontage Possible to be Subdivided! **\$99,900**

Webster - Upper Gore w/View of the Lake! 1+ Acre! Artisan Well, Septic Design & Conservation - DONE. **NEW PRICE \$115,000.**

Webster - Cooper Road 2 Buildable Lots! Water & Sewer Access. Zoned Lake Res! **Each \$24,500.**

Douglas-Mount Daniels 2.5 Acres abuts Douglas State Forest! **\$132,900**

Dudley - Marshall Terrace 12,000+/- Sq Ft Lot Potential for a 2 Family! **POTENTIAL \$70,000.**

Dudley - Packard Dr. 2 Lots! Very Private! off Ridge Dr. Will not last! **SORRY SOLD! \$50,000**

OXFORD - 4 SPICEBUSH LANE

SORRY, SOLD!

One level living with added 35 x 18 finished walk-out lower level. Cathedral ceilings, skylight dining, hard-wood flooring and central air. Stainless appliances w/large double oven. Over-sized 30 x 14 deck. quiet cul-de-sac! **New Price \$314,900.**

SOUTHBIDGE - 14 SERVANT WAY

SORRY, SOLD!

Young ranch with heated 2 car garage, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Efficient Propane heat, central air! Open floor plan! gas fireplace! Master suite w/bathroom, Master California Closet! assisted sale **\$279,900.**

OXFORD - 115 CHARLTON ROAD

SORRY, SOLD!

Beautiful home set back off road providing privacy and oversized yard. Kitchen w/granite counters & abundance of cabinets. Cathedral ceilings kitchen, dining and living room. Open floor plan! large deck with large backyard through sliders in dining room. Hardwood floors! Tile baths. Master bedroom/master bath! Finished walkout lower level w/bat 2 car garage. Extras: above ground pool! **\$369,900.**

WEBSTER - 20 KINGSBURY

SORRY, SOLD!

NEW TO THE MARKET! Custom Sprawling Split 2800+ SF! Central Air Kitchen, Dining Room, Cathedral Ceiling Living Room, 3 Bedrooms! Granite Counters & New Flooring! New Boiler - Hot Water Tank - Oil Tank! FULL finished Lower Level w/ Full Bath & Laundry! THERE'S MORE! 2 Car Garage, renovated to include Hydro Heat, AC & 1/2 Bath! Great for Fitness Studio, Game Room or Home School! Over 1.4 Acres! **\$360,000.**

WEBSTER - 52 CUOWORTH ROAD

SORRY, SOLD!

1.99 ACRE INDUSTRIAL ZONED LOT! GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE & WORK FROM HOME! Amazing 1790 Antique Colonial! Undergone major updates & renovations, maintaining Antique Charm! Great Room graced by an Open Hearth Stone Fireplace! Soaring Cathedral Ceilings! **\$499,900.**

On the shores of Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg

Webster Lake - 100 Lakeside Ave



SORRY, SOLD!

WEBSTER LAKE! PANORAMIC VIEWS! BEAUTIFUL SUNSETS! Extraordinary Waterfront Contemporary! Architect designed with Lake Living in mind, Custom Built with Attention to High Quality & Detail. Outstanding open concept, water view from almost every room. Nicely situated on a .25 acre level peninsula, 180' +/- prime lake frontage! Enhanced by a all natural shoreline! All you need to live is located on the 1st floor. Grand 2 story foyer, cozy fireplace living room, gourmet kitchen, lake facing dining, formal dining room, media room & spacious 1st floor guest BR Suite w/ private bath. Incredible 2nd floor fireplace lake-facing corner master suite w/luxurious private bath, 3 more 2nd floor BRs & full bath! Something Special! Remember, Timing Is Everything! **\$1,075,000.**

Lake Shirley - 647 Reservoir Rd



SORRY, SOLD!

Lakefront! Lake Shirley! Modern Flare on a Lakefront Colonial! 1st level Formal large entry foyer, living room, gas fireplace, chef kitchen, Impala black granite, center island, 3 season porch, overlooking the lake. 1st FL bedroom suite w/ shower and jacuzzi tub. 2nd floor Master Suite! Lower level Summer kitchen, full bath, game room. Crown moulding & hardwood floors throughout, wired sound system, radiant floors. oversize 2 car garage. Additional Guest House! assisted sale **\$1,040,000.**

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Gavitt Wire is looking to hire a machinist/millwright.
Person must be trained in running a manual lathe, Bridgeport milling machine, interpret blueprints, and have mechanical ability. You would be responsible for making tools and other machined parts to support production. Monday thru Friday, 7:00am - 3:30pm.
Any questions, please ask for Tom or Ray. **508-867-6476.**

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Town of Douglas Meeting Minute Recorder

The Town of Douglas is seeking an individual to provide part-time (30 - 50 hrs/mo) assistance to the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Building Facilities Construction Committee, Board of Health and the Capital Improvements Committee by recording meeting minutes. Organizational, interpersonal skills, and proficiency in computers is essential. Ability to take shorthand is preferable. Availability to view remotely, online, up to 10 meetings per month is required. Upon demonstrated ability of efficiency, accuracy and reliability the possibility of transcribing some meetings from recordings may be possible. Compensation will be in the range of \$14.56 – \$15.22/hour, depending on qualifications.

Send resume to Matthew J. Wojcik, Town Administrator, 29 Depot Street, Douglas, MA 01516. Position will be open until filled.
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Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year from all of us at



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Novembers' Single Family Homes Real Estate Market

	November 2019	November 2020	Trend
OXFORD			
Median Price	\$260,00	\$2,311,250	▲
Market Volume	\$3,747,900	\$6,097,800	▲
# of Homes Sold	14	20	▲
Avg Days on Market	33	29	▼
WEBSTER			
Median Price	\$246,250	\$350,000	▲
Market Volume	\$5,746,900	\$4,055,100	▲
# of Homes Sold	20	11	▼
Avg Days on Market	52	51	▼

Contact us to find more about your neighborhood market & what your home is worth!
Happy Holidays from our family to yours!



Eve Patterson
508-341-4434



Nana Frimpongmaah
508-615-6149



Jeremiah Olchere-Nyarko
774-253-2082



Ava Fantasia
508-523-8337



Johnny Wariebi
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103 Beacon Park - \$324,900



Southbridge: 14 Acres, 4 bedroom, in-law unit, gas fire-place, cathedral ceilings, wine tasting room, family room, private pond and cabin on grounds, 1300 sq. ft. building for hobby or business
268 Dresser Hill Road - \$729,900



ON DEPOSIT
Dudley: Ranch, 2 bedroom, 5 acres, garage
11 Paglione Dr \$49,900




ON DEPOSIT
Oxford: Split, 3 bdrm, 1.5 Ba, 2 car garage, Family Rm
22 Whiting Rd \$38,900



ON DEPOSIT
Dudley: Cape, 3-4 bdrm, Country kitch, inground pool, garage
11A Paglione Dr \$239,900

Real Estate Market is still HOT!
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What’s the Difference?

There are four things different between Picture A and Picture B. Can you find them all?

A



B



Answers: 1. Extra allspice 2. Pine bough is larger 3. Missing cranberry 4. Extra chocolate block

THIS DAY IN...



HISTORY

- **1803:** THE UNITED STATES PURCHASES THE LOUISIANA TERRITORY FROM FRANCE FOR \$ 15 MILLION.
- **1860:** SOUTH CAROLINA BECOMES THE FIRST STATE TO ATTEMPT TO SECEDE FROM THE UNION.
- **1989:** THE UNITED STATES INVADES PANAMA.



FESTIVE

cheerful and jovially celebratory

How they SAY that in...

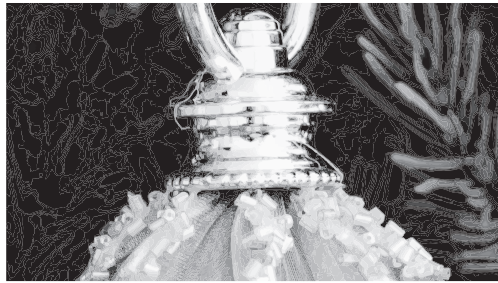
- ENGLISH:** Wreath
- SPANISH:** Corona de flores
- ITALIAN:** Ghirlanda
- FRENCH:** Couronne
- GERMAN:** Kranz

Did you know?

TINSEL WAS INVENTED IN 1610 IN GERMANY AND WAS ONCE MADE OF REAL SILVER. MANY PEOPLE PUT TINSEL ON CHRISTMAS TREES AS EXTRA DECORATION.



GET THE PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

ANSWER: CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to poinsettias. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 11 = O)

A. 16 11 14 11 1 23 19 14
Clue: Vibrant

B. 16 3 1 4 20 17 5 16 20
Clue: December holiday

C. 14 13 15 18 13 20
Clue: Parts of plants

D. 21 13 16 11 1 15 17 4 11 25 20
Clue: Home adornments

Answers: A. colorful B. Christmas C. leaves D. decorations

SUDOKU

			7		8			
		8	5	9		2		
5				1		6	9	
6			2		9	8		
		1						
				8		3		
7					1			6
1		3			5	7		
			8		4			2

Level: Advanced

Here’s How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

9	6	5	8	7	4	1	3	2
1	4	3	6	2	5	7	8	9
7	8	2	9	3	1	4	5	6
4	2	6	1	8	7	3	9	5
8	5	1	4	6	3	9	2	7
6	3	7	2	5	9	8	4	1
5	7	4	3	1	2	6	9	8
3	1	8	5	9	6	2	7	4
2	9	6	7	4	8	5	1	3

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75" LG Reg. \$999.99	\$799.99																		
65" LG Reg. \$369.99	\$299.99																		
65" LG Reg. \$649.99	\$549.99																		
43" LG Reg. \$349.99	\$299.99																		
32" Smart TV	\$159.99																		
60" LG Reg. \$399.99	\$349.99																		
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