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Food for the Belly, and the Soul

Lasagna Mamas (and Papas) Keep Neighbors Fed during Covid

By J.D. O'GARA

You might have heard something about the Lasagna Mamas. The idea of making some extra one-pan meals during the Covid-19 shutdown and bringing them to other families, not only those who are food insecure, but also those who are simply too stressed to cook for the night, has made national news. And now, they're in your neighborhood!

Rhiannon Menn, founder of Good to Mama, started the effort one day with her toddler. She was looking to be helpful



First-time Lasagna Mama Nancy Drinkwater, of Franklin, gets ready to deliver a home-cooked meal to a family in her town.

FOOD FOR BELLY
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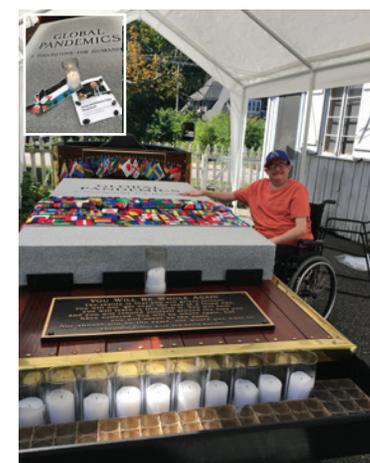
Peace Abbey Creates a Symbol of Unity in Sorrow

Global Pandemics Stone Will Offer Healing Message

By J.D. O'GARA

In an upside-down world where human beings can't touch each other, The Peace Abbey Foundation, located now in Millis, Massachusetts, has created a palpable symbol of global unity, with a one-ton stone that acknowledges the weight of a shared grief. The stone, carved by Ackerman Monument Company in Holliston, reads "Global Pandemics: A Touchstone for Humanity. It currently rests at The Peace Abbey's birthplace, The Life Experience School on Lavender Street in Millis, where Mother Theresa visited in 1987.

"This stone everyone can relate to, whether they lost someone, a job, a business. It's a touchstone for bereavement," says Lewis Randa, who, co-founder of The Peace Abbey. He hopes the stone will serve as a prayer for health and healing, a way to acknowledge the united and difficult experience



Shown is Phil Lussier, a member of The Life Experience School in Millis, with the Global Pandemics stone, created by The Peace Abbey for the world to share and express their grief at the losses due to pandemics.

Photo by Lewis Randa

of loss felt by pandemics such as COVID-19.

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FOOD FOR BELLY

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with some small acts of kindness, and she made a few extra lasagnas and offered them up on social media. Not only did people come forth to claim the meals, but many others loved the idea and wanted to join in. Thus, the effort, which started in May of 2020, spread into a nation-wide movement, active in 47 states, including 1,000 cities and now supported by over 2,300 volunteers.

One of those volunteers is Johanna Georgilas, of Holliston, who learned of the initiative on Facebook. The idea of organizing and delivering meals to families in need, she says, “struck a chord with me; I’m a nurse by background, and I love cooking. It seemed like just a perfect thing, to make a meal for a family that’s struggling. We’ve all been there, whether it’s financial or psychosocial. There’s a lot of families struggling.”

Georgilas signed up on the Lasagna Love website, www.lasagnalove.org, in September.

She explains how the organization works.

“There’s Rhiannon at the top and regional directors for different parts of the country,” explains Johanna. The Regional Director, and locally this would be for New England, directs Re-

gional Leaders, who then direct “mamas” and “papas,” the folks doing the cooking and delivering, in a certain number of cities and towns in their region.

“Essentially, a family goes on the website and requests a meal,” says Georgilas, “and they get matched every Monday evening to a lasagna mama or papa.” People in need of meals can note any allergies and dietary restrictions, and mamas and papas, who follow safe food preparation guidelines, have full control over how many meals they will make and deliver in a week or a month, and how far they will travel. Although most deliver meals cooked, some opt not to cook the dinners, assembling them to allow families to cook them in their own time.

After her first week, Georgilas shifted into a position of regional leader for the communities of Holliston, Hopkinton, Marlborough, Southborough, Grafton, Upton and Northborough. “I’m really trying to grow this area,” she says. At the time of *Local Town Pages*’ interview, Georgilas was the first participant from Holliston, and she had just signed one other volunteer from town.

Nearby, Bryanna Dall, a 5-year Franklin resident, is the regional coordinator for her area, which includes Bellingham, Blackstone/Millville, Braggville, Franklin, Hopedale, Medfield,

Medway, Mendon, Milford, Millis, Norfolk, Uxbridge and Whitinsville.

Dall signed up in August, after she saw a social media post by another Franklin resident.

“I’m so happy that Rhiannon started this whole movement, just by wanting to take care of a couple neighbors,” says Dall, who, raised by a single mom, understand that sometimes a nice hot meal is hard to come by. “I love to cook, and I love to give back, especially when it comes to a topic of food insecurity,” says Dall, “I’ve always found there is such a healing power, being able to sit down for a family meal that’s totally stress-free.”

Dall says she sees a diverse range of recipients.

“Most are families, but last week I brought food to an elderly couple that never had kids,” says Dall, who has delivered to families struggling with the financial hardship of Covid as well as with the struggle to cook while managing remote learning and working from home.

Dall enjoys getting creative with meals, which need not only consist of lasagna.

“I’ve delivered trays of chicken broccoli alfredo, and other people do enchiladas and casserole bakes,” she says. “It’s whatever meets the needs of the family that’s nutritionally diverse. I personally like to throw



Shown is a photo from Lasagna Love’s “Mission New Bedford,” in which regional leaders brought a convoy of meals to needy families. Photo by Stephanie Bergonzi

in bread, salad and a treat, especially if there are kids. Other people have done goody bags, cards and flowers.”

In fact, those touches, flowers, salad, bread and a treat, are what Franklin volunteer Nancy Drinkwater, added to her first delivery in mid-November. Drinkwater loved the idea of giving back to the community, without asking any questions.

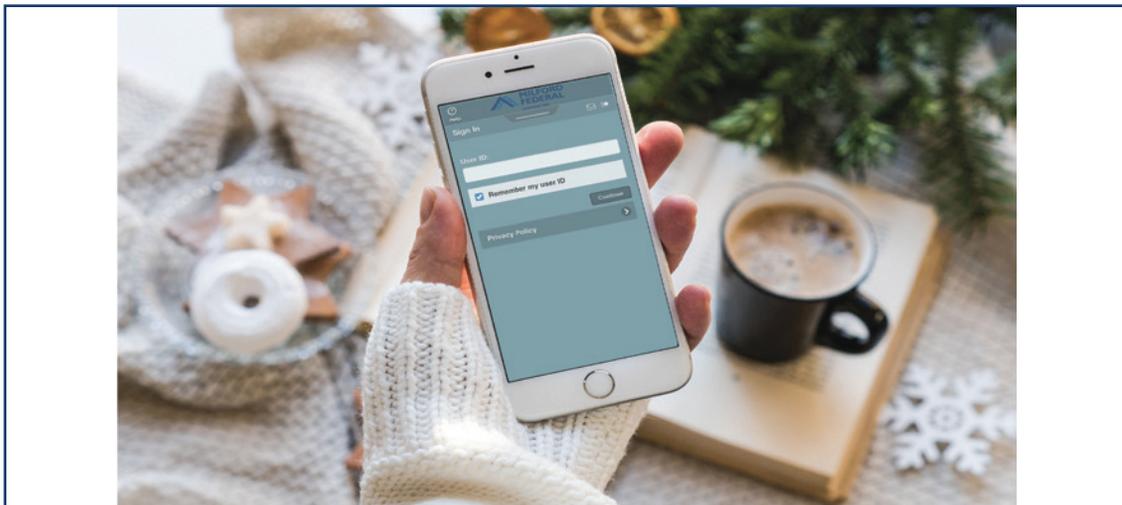
“I love to cook, but most importantly, people needed food. Lasagna mamas are not about why you need it; it’s just – you need it,” says Drinkwater. “We don’t judge.”

Participating in Lasagna Love provides its own benefit, say these volunteers.

“It’s just overwhelming, the feelings that the mamas and the papas get from delivering a home cooked meal; it’s very rewarding,” says Johanna.

You can visit www.lasagnalove.org, to volunteer, request a meal for yourself or a neighbor, or even to make a monetary donation to support the effort.

“I feel like Covid has almost made people open to the realization it is ok to reach out for help when you feel like the weight of the world is crushing you,” says Dall.



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Closing Time for 2020

Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end. Yeah, 2020 was challenging but plenty of opportunities were available and some still to consider before year end.

Reverse required minimum distributions (RMDs). Congress suspended RMD rules this year. Per IRS, individuals who took RMDs in 2020, including those who turned 70 ½ during 2019, have the option of returning the distribution to their account or other qualified plan. RMDs taken in 2020 are considered eligible for rollover.

For 2021, RMDs return and recall the SECURE Act changed

the age requirement to 72. That said, be aware of bipartisan supported SECURE Act 2.0 which has proposals increasing the age requirement (age 75), limiting distributions based on account balance and other nuances.

Lastly, if you inherited an IRA from a non-spouse (i.e. parent, grandparent, sibling) you need to be proactive in taking your RMD and impact your tax planning.

Roth Conversion. Have sizable Traditional IRAs? Think taxes are going up? With a strong handle on your sources of income and capital gains for 2020, consider modeling tax liability of different amounts converted to a

Roth IRA. Remember, unlike a few years ago, you can no longer undo a conversion via "recharacterization", so what's done is done.

Rebalance portfolios and lower taxable income. Sell investments at a loss earlier in the year? Realized gains? Sitting on sizable unrealized gains? Portfolios need review and rebalancing. Depending on activity in taxable accounts, you may be able to offset taxes owed, reduce unrealized gains as well as write off up to \$3,000 against ordinary income.

Last minute 401(k), 403(b) and 457 plan contributions. Ideally, you'd be at \$19,500 maximum contributions limits (\$25,000 if 50 or older). If not, many plans allow online changes up to 50% of wages. Have a year-end

bonus? Can forgo a paycheck or two? Act quickly as plans require a pay cycle for updates to take effect.

Use your Flex Spending Accounts (FSA). Unlike Health Savings Accounts (HSA) that rollover each year to accumulate, FSA is a "use it or lose it" benefit program. Most allow just \$500 carried the following year, others \$0. If you have qualified medical expenses or bills, pay with your FSA funds before year end. If not, your New Year's Eve may be spent panic shopping in Walgreens.

Financial resolutions look the same? No one wants to see 2020 repeated, same with financial resolutions. If they look familiar, maybe it is time for a change with professional support and an accountability partner.

May you and those closest to you enjoy a happy and safe holiday season.



Glenn Brown

The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual.

Glenn Brown is a Holliston resident and owner of PlanDynamic, LLC, www.PlanDynamic.com. Glenn is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ helping motivated people take control of their planning and investing, so they can balance kids, aging parents and financial independence.

Fatima Shrine Grounds Open for Socially-Distant Visits, but Holiday Lights Cancelled for 2020

"We would if we could, but we can't," says Fr. Rocco Puopolo, of Our Lady of Fatima Shrine in Holliston, at 101 Summer Street, regarding the much anticipated annual Festival of Lights. "We can't have crowds; that's the problem," says Fr. Puopolo, noting that some Christmas services will be held, (according to Covid regulations as of mid-November) at a very restricted number of 75 people maximum.



In addition to the cancellation of the Festival of Lights due to the pandemic, the shrine will not host a concert in mid-December, either.

Fatima Shrine will hold indoor Services on Sundays during Advent at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., but space is limited, and participants would have to call to secure a place ((508) 429 2144). On December 24th, there will be an 8 p.m. Mass, and on Christmas Day, there will be an 11 a.m. Mass. For both, reservations must be called in.

"We are saddened that this has to be the case, but we are committed to everyone's safety," says Fr. Puopolo.



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Bereaved families and friends of those who died from COVID-19 or AIDS are invited to share their grief and loss by placing flowers, a photo or a small stone on the memorial, or to help pull the heavy tablet, via a caisson built for this purpose, to its next public viewing location.

As part of the National Week of Mourning, the stone was recently pulled to the Salvation Army in Central Square, Cambridge, where Cambridge Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui read a proclamation welcoming the stone to the city. Calling it “a touchstone for humanity that will make its way throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and beyond,” the Cambridge mayor’s proclamation asserted her city’s “solidarity with a global community and the profound impact, including the physical and mental toll COVID-19 has taken on the community, some of whom lost loved ones to the pandemic and who have been unable to gather to mourn their losses.”



Peace Abbey Chaplain Dot Walsh, explains that this stone, like others The Peace Abbey has created, was made to travel. On its journey, it may find a home.

The Peace Abbey’s other stones have had impact all over the world.

In 1994, The Peace Abbey created the Unknown Civilians Killed in War stone, which was unveiled by Muhammed Ali. Since that time, that stone has traveled in the United States, to Ireland, England and Japan.

“The stone makes its way through the world, and then, if a site or a religious organization wants to keep it, we give it to them and make another,” says Randa. The original Unknown Civilians Killed in War stone, for example, is kept at the Coventry

Cathedral in England.

Walsh explains that another Unknown Civilians Killed in War stone found its way to Japan after its presence at Ground Zero in 2004 in New York. People who’d lost others to the violence of 9/11 touched the stone and shared their stories. A non-violence group from Japan happened to be visiting Ground Zero, among them a “hibakusha,” or survivor of the atomic bombing in Hiroshima during WWII. They expressed interest to Peace Abbey members to bring the stone to Japan. And so, that stone went overseas, to Asia, where the American peace activists participated in a ceremony expressing sorrow at the loss of life and injury caused by the bomb.

“Governments don’t apologize, but individuals can,” says Walsh. Participants in Japan, she says, were so touched, they asked to keep and care for the stone. They even created their own replica to present to Korea as a peace offering.

Walsh says the world needs this Global Pandemics stone in the same way, to heal. “Even the people who work in the hospitals,” she says, “it’s just so overwhelming that at the end of the day, they cry, and they go home exhausted. They need something like this stone. This stone has meaning for people all over the world.”

Although The Peace Abbey had had plans to create another stone honoring innocent victims of war, “When the pandemic happened, it was clear there was another message being fully expressed with the current struggle of humanity,” says Randa.

Pulling the stone with others, says Randa, is an effort that requires one “to dig deep within yourself to muster the strength, with others. It could have been lighter, but we chose to have the weight of the stone reflect the weight of its message.”

Randa notes that, as long as social distancing and mask protocols are followed, “anyone who might find solace in visiting the



The Peace Abbey’s Global Pandemics stone was created by the same company that created its Unknown Civilians Killed in War and Victims of Violence stones, Ackerman Monument Company in Holliston.

stone” is welcome at its Millis location.

“We’d like the public to know that, upon request, much as with families who lost loved ones on 9/11, we will organize short bereavement Stonewalks, if those who wish to participate are within safe, family units,” says Randa.

Find out more about The Peace Abbey at www.peaceabbey.org.

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Holliston Lions Club Gives Thanks



The Holliston Lions Club would like to thank everyone who helped to make our 2020 14th Annual Big Raffle a success. That includes everyone who purchased tickets for the Big Raffle event, everyone who participated in the 11th Ticket Raffle, and everyone who participated in our Silent Auction. 100% of proceeds from the Big Raffle and all Lions Clubs fundraisers go back to the community in the form of service projects and donations. We would particularly like to thank

all the businesses and organizations whose generous donations have made this year's event possible:

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We would also like to extend a sincere thank you to Holliston Cable Access TV for their help in bringing the virtual drawings to all of you. In case you missed it – the \$10,000 grand prize was split between two winners: Nancy Winiker of Holliston and Gino Angelone of East Bridgewater.

Like every charitable and service organization, the Holliston Lions Club depends on the volunteers who provide their time to support both service projects and fundraising activities. If you would like to become a member of the Holliston Lions Club you can fill out a membership application on our website (www.hollistonlions.org) or talk to any member of the Club.



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To find out more about the Holliston Lions, visit www.hollistonmalions.org.

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Santa Foundation Working through Pandemic

By J.D. O'GARA

2020 will be The Santa Foundation's 35th year, and what a year it's been.

"Covid-19 has put a damper on some of the Santa Foundations' efforts, but we're still going to continue to do what we've done in the past and persevere through it," says Richard "Dick" Timmons, who for decades worked alongside his parents in law, The Santa Foundation's founders Robert F. Sullivan, and his wife, Elaine. Timmons, his family, and a handful of volunteers continue the long-term mission since Robert passed and Elaine retired.

"Bob, started this tradition 35 years ago," says Dick Timmons. "He taught us all it's better to give than to receive. It's grown so much in Franklin and surrounding communities. We

don't want to let him down and intend to continue the tradition in his honor." Sullivan began the tradition by buying gifts for two children from the Franklin Food Pantry. Now, community members help their needy neighbors by purchasing and donating gifts.

This month is the busiest one for The Santa Foundation, which this year anticipates handing out gifts to about approximately 5,000 people. That constitutes 800+ families, says Timmons. Due to the pandemic, a few changes have been made.

"We're limiting staffing in the workshop," says Pat Timmons, Dick's son, who has revamped The Santa Foundation's website and manages its social media operations along with volunteer Karina Thomas. "We've had to do contactless pickup for Covid-19 and make sure it's safe for our



Richard Timmons and Patricia Toney stand outside Santa's Workshop at The Santa Foundation in Franklin. Not only does the organization help provide 800 needy families in several communities with Christmas gifts, it also lends a hand for emergency needs.

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volunteers and families getting gifts."

"A lot of families are still traditionally buying (gifts) for whole families and dropping it off to us," says Timmons. This year, much of that is being done through Amazon, with shipments going directly to the Santa Foundation. For those who want to drop off gifts, the Foundation has installed a bell and speaker at the back entrance, so that packages may be dropped off with limited face-to-face interaction.

In addition, The Santa Foundation has an Amazon wish list, which can be

found at https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/HQFXZRL3X7MH?ref_=wl_share&fbclid=IwAR2r9Ftg-85z6AkwmEDw1-7GQoRQ23dh_IVzhuRyQhti-Wu9Iz1bvoC2OQcwQ.

The Santa Foundation, in cooperation with local sponsors, also has a number of "giving trees" in various locations. Folks may take a tag that lists a gift wish from a family in need from one of these trees, purchase the gift, and return it to the tree location. This year, giving trees are located at:

- Postal Center, 279 E Central Street, Franklin

- Postal Center, 9 Medway Rd., Ste. C, Milford
- Postal Center, 14 Milliston Rd., Millis
- King Street Deli, 390 King St., Franklin
- Norfolk Credit Union, 194 Main St., Norfolk
- Middlesex Bank, 1000 Franklin Village Drive, Franklin
- James Roadside Café, 850 Franklin St., Wrentham

SANTA FOUNDATION
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SANTA FOUNDATION

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- Dry Cleaning Pros., 474 King Street, Franklin
- Walmart, 250 Hartford Ave., Bellingham
- Franklin Police Department, 911 Panther Way, Franklin
- Medway Police Department, 315 Village St., Franklin
- Norfolk Fire Department, 117 Main St, Norfolk

The Covid shutdown canceled The Santa Foundation's biggest fundraiser, its annual golf tournament, as well as Breakfast with Santa. Despite the cancellation, however, many of the sponsors chose to donate anyway, which has helped sustain operations. (For a complete list of sponsors, visit The Santa Foundation's website.)

In addition, sales of The Santa Foundation's fundraising calendar, available online this year in addition to being presented in local stores and restaurants, have been robust.

"We sold over 50% online," says Pat. "We created a very easy form for people to fill out if they wanted more than one, and that worked very well. (This was) shared across the Franklin town website, and remote teams at work. (This sale) was a big driver for raising funds this year."



Individuals can visit various community locations to take a tag to purchase a gift from The Santa Foundation's giving trees.

Covid-19 has limited the number of people The Santa Foundation can help, says Pat Timmons, with only two people of the 12-person volunteer team able to work at a time in the space. The backbone that team, stresses Timmons, are volunteers Jan Printice, Lia Thomas, Patricia Toney and Richard Tomaino, who keep the operation going.

Still, he says, "We're staying steadily at the 800 number. Hopefully, next year, we'll have a vaccine."

Since it began, the Santa Foundation has delivered gifts to over 105,000 people. What began in Franklin expanded to include needy families in Medway Nor-

folk, Wrentham and Millis, as well as families in Bellingham, Blackstone, Millville, Sheldonville, Plainville, Holliston, Medfield, and Hopedale.

In addition to gifts during the holiday season, The Santa Foundation also uses financial donations "to help people with heat, rent and utilities," says Dick Timmons, "Especially as we get to the colder months, and with the current unemployment situation."

The easiest way to provide a financial donation to the organization is through its website, sfjoy.org.

Timmons adds that \$25 gift cards to stores such as Walmart, Target, Stop & Shop and Big Y also always come in handy. "We're also experiencing a great need for Pampers, diapers, and children's clothes for boys and girls under 5," says Timmons. "We're seeing people need coats and hats and things like that. Some years, kids want toys, but I think people are getting down to basic needs; they want gift cards to food and clothing stores more than prior years."

In the spirit of it's better to give than receive, Timmons adds that a donation made on another person's behalf, in their name, may be a perfect gift this holiday season.

"Looking for a gift for a friend or loved one? Just look around, and if they have one too many wineglasses, coffee mugs or

Research Study of Autism Spectrum Disorder Seeks Participants

SPARK for Autism and Boston Children's Hospital are two of 31 research partners launching a new research study that will examine DNA and its role in Autism Spectrum Disorder. About 50,000 families are needed for the largest genetic study of autism, ever, which will study genetic, behavior and medical informa-

tion. If you are the parent of a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder or a person with an ASD diagnosis, these researchers need you. There is no cost to participate in the study, and all data is kept private.

To find out more, email SPARK@childrens.harvard.edu, or enroll directly at <https://sparkforautism.org/?code=bch>.

scarves, then make a donation to the Santa Foundation in their name. You both will feel better, because Christmas is all about giving," says Timmons.

To reach the Santa Founda-

tion, located at 1 Joy Street in Franklin, visit www.sfjoy.org, or find them on Facebook. You can also call (508) 528-1767, or email mrclaus@thesantafoundation-inc.org.

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Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors Thanks YOU!

The Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors Thanksgiving Committees could not have done it without YOU! Even through these challenging times - YOU CAME THROUGH! HNN was not only able to contribute to the Thanksgiving efforts of the Holliston Pantry Shelf's gift cards to patrons and the Holliston Senior Center's meal delivery to seniors - but we were also able to contribute to helping other organizations that support the Holliston Community such as Head Start and Wayside Youth.

HNN's efforts would not have been possible without the support from our local community

organizations, religious groups, and businesses. Thanks to these groups for spreading the word and making so many Thanksgiving cards including Holliston Girl Scouts, National Honor Society from Holliston and Medway, St Mary's Church, Christ the King Lutheran Church, First Congregational Church of Holliston, HMKO (Holliston Kids Helping Others), and Jensen Sheehan Insurance Agency. We also owe a special thanks to Table Talk Pies who donated the individual pies that were distributed with the Senior meals from the Senior Center.

Our biggest thanks goes to all

the individuals and businesses that donated to this effort including the generous donations from Applewood Survey Co, Stucchi Landscape & Design, Lazzaro Holliston Trust, Holliston Sewer Service Abbess Instruments & Systems as well as donations from Cadwell Products Company, AnyFence, Century-

TyWood Manufacturing, BDR Automotive, Meridian Financial Advisors, Jensen Sheehan Insurance, Yoga Garden, Nick's Central Garage, The Alcohol Enthusiast, Farrell Pool Service (an HNN sponsor), Little Beehive Farm, and Brayhill Country Store.

Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors and the HNN Thanksgiving Committee hope that Thanksgiving Day was enjoyed by all with family, food and fun. With the help of everyone mentioned above, we know that so many deserving families had a great Thanksgiving Day as well.

Celebrate Holliston Celebrates Hidden Heroes



Celebrate Holliston's Board of Director are pleased to announce the winners of "Celebrate Holliston's Heroes." Due to the pandemic and the cancellation of field day, the CH Board decided that there are "hidden heroes" who helped the town during this health crisis that should be recognized.

Over 40 individuals and groups who were nominated, and Citizen of the Year committee is so grateful for all of their contributions and hard work to help Holliston weather this health crisis. After much discussion and deliberation, the COTY committee recommended the following individuals and groups and they were approved at the October CH Board meeting.

Here are the individuals and groups that will be honored at next year's Field Day and why we are honoring them.

Meaghan Alexis - Megan created Birthday Parades for young Holliston children - She coordinated over 200 parades including providing directions, decora-

tions, and made sure that each child could "see" their friends on their special day. If there were not a lot of cars in the parade, she coordinated friends to help make the celebration special! She brought joy to Holliston families during this difficult time.

Holiday Dreams Foundation (www.holidaydreamsfoundation.com) and **Anthony's on the Green** (www.anthonysonthegreen.com) - Holiday Dreams pivoted from their typical volunteer work to provide 10,000 meals to Holliston children during the school closure; they then partnered with Anthony's on the Green. Together, they prepared many of the meals to community kids in need - the restaurant was modified to help provide takeout meals for the community at large at reasonable rates.

Holliston Pantry Shelf (www.hollistonpantrysshelf.org) - Throughout this pandemic, the HFP did not stop, in fact increased their service to the community. Due to this health crisis, they could not allow anyone into the pantry, so instead they rallied their volunteers and delivered food to over 140 fami-

lies who were food insecure every week throughout the pandemic.

HCAT (www.hcattv.org) - Spiritual healing and being connected to one's church was vital for so many during COVID19. HCAT recorded live services from many different congregations every Sunday so anyone who was unable to attend a service in person, could still feel connected to their congregation.

Holliston Lions Club (www.hollistonmalions.org) - This club helped to deliver school lunches, food pantry supplies, and provided laptops for local hospitals so COVID patients could zoom with family members who were not allowed in the hospital. They all delivered lunches to Holliston seniors in lieu of their annual cookout.

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PHILLIPS 66

*Wishing all of our readers a
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Healthy and Happy New Year!
Best always ~ The Local Town Pages Team*

Holiday Gift Guide 2020

Make the Holidays a Little Sweeter

What would the holidays be without platters full of homemade cookies? It's that time of year for pulling out favorite recipes and filling the house with delicious aromas and delectable treats.

This recipe for "Stareos" from "Classic Stars Desserts" (Chronicle Books) by Emily Luchetti adds a gourmet spin to a popular chocolate sandwich cookie.

Stareos

Chocolate Sandwich Cookies

Makes 18 cookies

CHOCOLATE SHORTBREAD

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

Pinch of kosher salt

1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted

8 ounces (16 tablespoons)

unsalted butter, chilled, cut into 1/2-inch pieces

1/2 cup granulated sugar

FILLING

1 cup mascarpone cheese

1 tablespoon granulated sugar

1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

To make the chocolate shortbread: In a bowl, stir together the flour, salt, and cocoa powder and set aside. Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat on low speed until the butter and sugar begin to incorporate, about 15 seconds. Add the dry ingredients and continue to mix until the dough comes together, about 3 minutes. It will look dry just before it comes together.

Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. On a lightly floured work surface, roll out the dough 1/4 inch thick. Using a 2-inch star cutter, cut out as many cookies as possible. Gather together the scraps, reroll, and continue cutting out cookies until you have 36 cookies. Place the cookies on the prepared baking sheets, spacing them 1 inch apart. Refrigerate until firm, at least 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 300 F: Bake the shortbread until firm, about 35 minutes. At the midway point, switch the pans between the racks and rotate them 180 degrees to ensure even baking. Let cool on the pans to room temperature.

To make the filling: In a small bowl, stir together the mascarpone, sugar and vanilla until smooth.

To assemble the cookies: Turn 18 of the cookies bottom-side up on a work surface. Using a table knife or a small icing spatula, spread about 1 tablespoon of the filling on the bottom of each cookie. Top with the remaining cookies, bottom-side down.

Planning ahead: The shortbread dough may be made and cut out a week in advance. Wrap tightly and refrigerate or freeze. The cookies may be baked 2 days in advance. Store in an airtight container at room temperature. The mascarpone cream may also be made 2 days ahead. Cover and refrigerate, but bring to room temperature before assembling the sandwiches. The cookies should be assembled the day you are going to serve them and covered and refrigerated until serving.



Holiday Gift Guide

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Holiday Gift Guide



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Holiday Gifts for Four-Legged Family Members

Holiday shoppers who are busy making lists and checking them twice should make sure they don't overlook the family pet. Christmas has gone to the cats and dogs, as a greater number of people include their companion animals when selecting gifts each year.

A study by OnePoll conducted by Rover.com, the nation's largest network of dog sitters and walkers, found that 95 percent of pet owners have bought holiday gifts for their pets. Gifts can range from everyday needs, like food and treats, to more lavish extrav-

agances like spa treatments.

Pet owners who plan to get their pets gifts this year may want to consider some of the emerging pet trends as they browse wares and services. The Balance, a business, career and industry information site, says pet industry trends point toward these segments seeing growth.

Natural pet products

Just as people are interested in protecting the health of the planet and their own personal health, so, too, are they extending this concern to companion

animals. Natural pet products, which can include natural flea and tick remedies, holistic foods, organic items, and all-natural grooming products, can make great gifts.

Specialty pet services

The American Pet Products Association says the demand for high-end pet grooming and other services is substantial. In addition, personalized training, behavioral consulting, portrait photography, dog sitting, and upscale spa treatments like pet Reiki and massage are booming.

Mobile pet grooming

Mobile pet grooming has become the norm in many areas. Mobile pet grooming can reduce the potential stress on animals, and tends to be very convenient for customers, particularly seniors and others who have mobility issues.

Beyond these growing trends, pet owners have a bevy of other ideas from which to choose. Here are just a few different suggestions:

- tests to detect pets' DNA and trace breed and ancestry,

- interactive puzzles to keep pets engaged and banish boredom,
- stylish storage baskets for pet toys,
- hidden cat litter or dog crate items that camouflage commonly used pet items,
- heated pet bed for cozy nights and mornings, and
- signature vests, coats and sweaters to look good and remain comfortable.

Pet gifts are popular this time of year, ensuring all members of the family have a treat to open.

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Sports

Holliston Boys Hoop to Continue with Rebuilding Plans

BY KEN HAMWEY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Mark Champagne's rebuilding plan for the Holliston High boys' basketball team can move forward based on the action of one State agency.

Last month, the Mass. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) announced its approval for winter sports to move forward, but the Mass. Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) had yet to endorse winter sports at Local Town Pages deadline.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the two state agencies issued requirements and recommendations for the fall's sports teams. But now, school districts were still awaiting recommendations from the MIAA, its subcommittees and its Covid-19 task force.

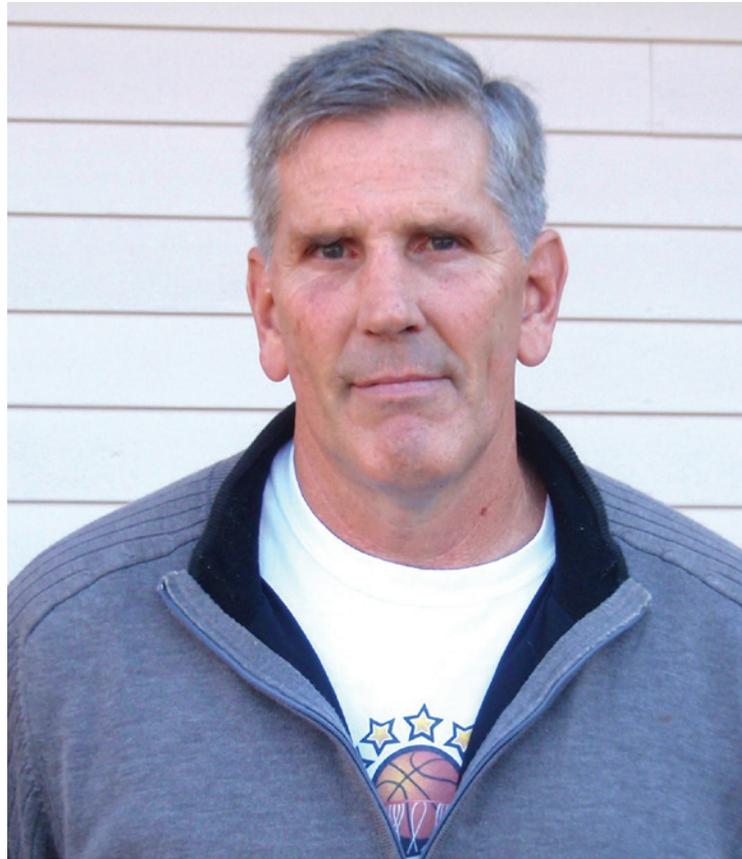
"We'll adjust and deal with any changes," said Champagne. "We're happy one agency has given basketball the green light, and we're grateful for any opportunity to compete. We'll strive to work hard and stay humble."

According to Holliston Athletic Director Matt Baker, modifications for basketball likely will include wearing masks on the court and on the bench, social distancing, no post-game handshakes, crowd limits, no locker-room presence, and hand sanitizing at the scorers' table.

Champagne, who took the reins of the Panthers' boys squad last year, is eager to get his second year of rebuilding started and to improve on last season's 5-15 record.

The 64-year-old Champagne, who led Ashland High to the Tri Valley League title in 2014, has a solid nucleus to work with this season because of six returning veterans and some promising underclassmen.

"We're grateful for the chance to play this winter," Champagne said. "But, if we couldn't, there was an opportunity to apply the life lessons that athletics teach. Lessons like overcoming adversity, looking out for each other and going outside of one's comfort zone. What's most important, however, is the health and



At press time, Holliston boys' basketball coach Mark Champagne was awaiting approval from the MIAA on winter sports moving forward.

safety of everyone."

Champagne has never had to deal with the ups and downs of a pandemic but he's a coach whose experience and wisdom are assets that are valued in these difficult times.

Besides Holliston, he's coached at three other high schools — Ashland, King Philip and as an assistant at Taunton. His college venues are diverse. He's been an assistant at his alma mater (UMass-Dartmouth) and also for the Boston University women's team. His prime stint at the college level, however, was at Bridgewater State where he guided the men's varsity for 10 years and compiled a .500 record.

His coaching philosophy features a three-prong approach. "The basketball court is an extension of the classroom," he emphasized. "Players must reach their potential as positively as possible and it's imperative to develop players to be good citizens. If I foster those three things, then winning will follow."

Those tenets are linked to Champagne's mission statement, and he's never strayed from them. "I'll stay true to my philosophy, but I also emphasize that if a kid

has passion for basketball, then it's my job to fuel it," he said. "Also, athletics is a laboratory for learning life lessons, and it's the only place where a kid can take on physical, emotional and intellectual challenges."

Champagne's goals this season are to get to know his players better, make sure they develop pride in the program and understand how to contribute to the legacy of a program.

"I was pleased with last year, in spite of winning only five games," he said. "We worked on developing a positive culture and focused on team play and sportsmanship."

Two players who will help strengthen those ideals this season are senior co-captains Spencer Mirken (5-10 guard) and Jackson Cote (6-4 forward).

"Both are good leaders who have matured so much," said Champagne. "Spencer is an organizer who's positive and supportive of his teammates. A good team player, he moves the ball well and has improved his shooting. Jackson is a solid rebounder who's competitive. He can score from the foul line in. A leader by example, he's got a strong work ethic."

Three other seniors who will be major contributors are 6-3 forwards Max Penn and Jack Winston and 6-foot off-guard Colin Daly.

"Max is solid around the hoop," Champagne said. "A good rebounder, he's smart and instinctive. Improved as a junior, he probably could be a double-digit scorer. Jack is a good outside shooter, a team-oriented player. Although quiet, he has gained confidence. Colin played mostly on the jayvees last year. We have hopes he will contribute and be in the rotation."

Junior Cooper Sweet (5-10 guard) no doubt will be a key cog. "Cooper is strong, shoots well and can pass," Champagne said. "He's a capable all-around player with good skills."

Two sophomores with lots of ability are Austin Mirken (6-foot guard) and Andrei Koev (5-10 guard). They will provide depth.

"Austin started towards the end of last season," Champagne recalled. "He's talented, has a high hoop IQ and plays with confidence. He's got good range on his shot, is instinctive and has a high compete level. Andrei is

tough, shoots well, has a high motor and quick hands. He's also got a high compete level."

Champagne was a top-notch point guard in his playing days, averaging 13 points a game at Medfield High, Mass. Bay Community College and UMass-Dartmouth. He's been an assistant coach at three venues and a head coach at four other stops. Those experiences obviously help him to understand and deal with the pandemic's ramifications.

"Parents and fans of Holliston's rich basketball history should be pleased with the way kids have dealt with the virus," he said. "They're getting a great education on how to deal with adversity at their school and in their community."

Mark Champagne, nevertheless, hasn't lost sight of his long-range goal at Holliston. It's about building and winning.

"When we get our foundation built, we'll develop consistency in winning and that means qualifying for post-season playoff games in a tournament setting," he emphasized.

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Attorney Arthur Bergeron: New Live Zoom Seminar Series:

December 1 at 1 pm. – a one-hour presentation, including questions and answers

Tis the Season, or is it?

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need nursing home care; but you may be giving the recipient increased tax liability, and the gifts may need to be given back later if you get sick. In this seminar, elder law Attorney Arthur Bergeron will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of gifting to help you determine the best approach for you.

Call the Senior Center at (508) 429-0622 to sign up in advance

Legal Advice:

Attorney Bergeron will continue to offer a free 15-minute legal advice through the Senior Center on the 4th Monday of the month from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

You have the option of either talking with him over the phone or virtually using Zoom video conference.

Call the Senior Center at (508) 429-0622 to sign up for your 15-minute meeting with Attorney Bergeron to discuss legal questions or concerns.

Programs to be aired on HCAT:

Check their schedule for date, times, and channel

It's That Time of Year Again is focused on reviewing your Medicare Plan options and discusses supplemental plans, drug coverage, and understanding your options to plan ahead and save time and money for 2021.

Tis the Season, or is it? The live zoom seminar will also be aired on HCAT in December in case you missed out.

Legal Hour with Attorney Jay Marsden

Helping clients plan and secure their legacy for future generations.

Attorney Jay Marsden continues to meet with individuals for a complimentary 30-minute consultation. This meeting will be done via Zoom or telephone on the 2nd Tuesday of each month between 10 a.m. and noon.

If you would like to schedule an appointment with Jay, please call the Senior Center at (508) 429-0622 to sign up for your personal consultation.

Book Club

We welcome you to join us on the second Friday of the month at 1:30 p.m. to enjoy some interesting titles. In December, we will discuss "That Churchill Woman: a Novel" by Stephanie Barron.

The Holliston Public Library can help you get books for the meetings and will be available for curbside pickup. Call the Library with any questions (508) 429-0617.

Please sign up at the Senior Center (508) 429-0622 to be added to the Zoom meeting. Conference call is also an option for those who do not have internet/camera access.

Grief and Loss Support Group

Second Tuesday of the month December 8th, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

If you have experienced grief and loss and would like to join us in community, friendship and support please join us on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. We're going "Zoom"! So, if you are interested and have access to a computer and the internet please call and register with our receptionist to get the Zoom invite.

Feel free to call Marty with any questions you might have regarding the group.

SHINE: Medicare Open Enrollment

SHINE is still available to help - by phone/Zoom! It's that time of year again! If you are enrolled in a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or a Medicare Advantage Plan (HMO/ PPO), you should be mailed an information packet from your plan by the end of September. It is important to understand and save this information, because it explains the changes in your plan for 2021. Premiums, deductibles, co-pays, and the drugs covered by your plan can change significantly!

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SENIOR CENTER

continued on page 15

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Living Healthy

Mary Ann Morse at Heritage Launches New Memory-Friendly Living Program

SENIOR CENTER

continued from page 14

everyone...on Medicare) volunteers offer free, confidential counseling on Medicare options. Call soon to schedule your phone appointment for any time through December 7th.

To schedule a phone appointment with SHINE Counselor, Pegg Rowe, please call the Senior Center at (508) 429-0622.

Fuel Assistance

Applications for Fuel Assistance are on the way. This program runs through April 30, 2021 and is available for both home owners and renters. We, here at the Senior Center, can assist any resident of Holliston (regardless

of age) with this application.

If you think you might qualify, need more information, or to set up an appointment, please call Marty Schneider at (508) 429-0622.

Phone-a-Friend

Recognizing the effects of the isolation this pandemic has had on all of us and how difficult it has become for some of us to see family and friends with any regularity, we here at the Senior Center would like to pilot a program to help people stay connected. If you think a weekly phone call might help (and making a new friend), or you are interested in volunteering your time to make calls, please contact Marty for more information at (508) 429-0622.

Mary Ann Morse at Heritage in Framingham has launched a new option in Assisted Living for seniors who could benefit from additional memory support, but who do not yet require the structure and security of a comprehensive Memory Care program. The new Memory-Friendly Living program at Mary Ann Morse at Heritage fulfills a growing need for an alternative assisted living program for individuals who are best served in an environment somewhere between typical assisted living and secure Memory Care.

“Our population is living longer than ever, and with normal aging there can be a need for extra support of memory and cognitive function,” said Bethany Mercer, Executive Director at Heritage.

“Our new Memory-Friendly Living program is a perfect environment for seniors who may require gentle redirection and reminders, assistance with personal care, activities, or medication supervision.”

The program provides a professional assessment to ensure the program best meets the resident’s needs, staff with specialized train-

ing in memory support, and a robust assortment of customized, memory-friendly activities which are offered in small groups. It also features regular wellbeing checks and wearable devices to keep loved ones secure. Mary Ann Morse at Heritage is located at 747 Water Street in Framingham. www.maryannmorse.org.



Helping at the Holidays

This has been a particularly difficult and devastating year for many of the people we serve. Project Just Because has committed to providing over 15,000 gifts to families and individuals who are struggling.

Please help us spread some light and hope this holiday season

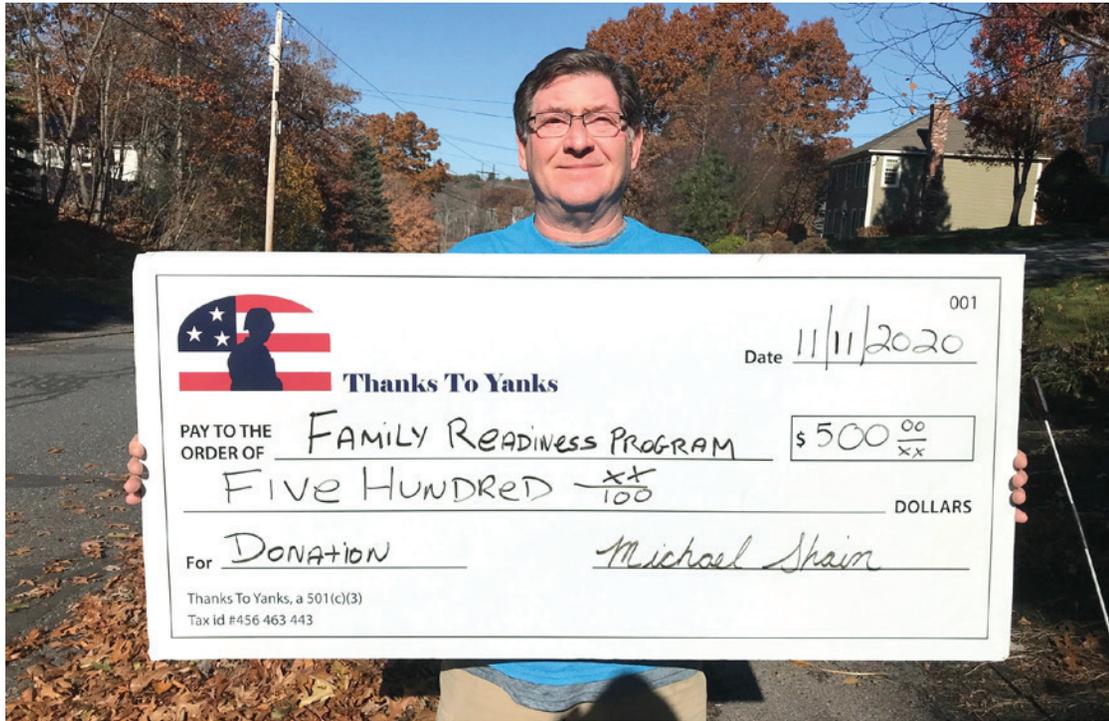
You can donate online at: <http://projectjustbecause.org/> (credit or debit or PayPal link) or

through the Amazon Wish List also located on the website. A financial donation via check may be mailed to Project Just Because, 109 South Street, Hopkinton, MA 01748. Gift cards can also be donated (Amazon, Walmart & Target).

We rely on our community to help us help families in need. In these times, we need your support more than ever!

Thank you!

Living Healthy



Thanks to Yanks Supports Troops and Families during Holidays

Pictured is Michael Shain founder and president of Thanks To Yanks. Recently, for the holidays, Thanks to Yanks made a donation to the Airman and Family Readiness Program of the 102d Intelligence Wing Otis ANG Base. The funds will be used for food baskets for both Thanksgiving

and Christmas.

Thanks To Yanks is a local charity that remembers, respects and reveres the sacrifices that our military and the families that love and support them make daily, to protect our freedom, for more information Like them on Facebook.

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Living Healthy

State Awards \$3.2 Million to Support Recycling, Waste Reduction in Municipalities

The Baker-Polito Administration has awarded \$3.2 million in grant funding to 269 municipalities and regional solid waste districts through the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP). The grants will help communities across the Commonwealth maximize their recycling, composting and waste reduction programs.

“Some of the most important environmental protection work happens every day in communities throughout Massachusetts through local recycling and solid waste programs,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “With this assistance, we are ensuring that local officials, residents and small business owners can continue protecting the Commonwealth’s neighborhoods and natural resources.”

“Under the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program, municipalities and solid waste districts are working even harder to improve recycling programs and reduce waste, which has

resulted in a seven percent increase in funding over last year,” said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito. “With these grants, our administration and our local partners are making a difference in communities across the Commonwealth.”

Under SMRP, 227 communities qualified for the Recycling Dividends Program (RDP) and will receive payments ranging from \$2,450 to \$97,500. The RDP recognizes municipalities that have implemented policies and programs proven to maximize materials reuse and recycling, as well as waste reduction. Communities that earn RDP payments must reinvest the funds in their recycling programs for things such as new recycling bins or carts, public education and outreach campaigns, collection of hard-to-recycle items and the establishment of recycling programs in schools, municipal buildings and other public spaces.

“The Baker-Polito Adminis-

tration is currently working to finalize the Commonwealth’s Solid Waste Master Plan for the next decade, which will establish aggressive goals to reduce our waste disposal and increase recycling,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides. “We are pleased to offer this assistance to help communities cycle resources back into our economy and support local businesses throughout the collection, processing and manufacturing chain.”

Local communities that have received RDP funds include: Franklin, \$18,200, Medway, \$9,600, Holliston, \$6,600 and Millis, \$4,550.

As part of this SMRP grant round, 42 municipalities that did not apply for or qualify for an RDP payment will be awarded a total of \$45,250 for a Small-Scale Initiatives Grant. These population-based grants range from \$500 to \$2,000 each and help communities purchase

modest, but critical recycling materials and outreach tools needed to sustain their existing recycling program or to facilitate new, low-cost initiatives. Each of these SMRP programs are administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP).

“These new funds give communities the opportunity to make critical investments in their recycling programs, capturing more materials that can be reused, and helping them to reduce their waste disposal costs,” said MassDEP Commissioner Martin Suuberg.

The RDP was rolled out in 2014 under MassDEP’s Sustainable Materials Recovery Program, which was created by the Green Communities Act of 2008. The Act requires that a portion of the proceeds from the sale of Waste Energy Certificates (WECs) be directed to recycling programs approved by MassDEP. The SMRP initiative has provided more than \$41.6

million in recycling programs since 2010.

“Massachusetts’ commitment to sustainable practices is one of the reasons our quality of life is so high here,” said Senate President Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland). “I am thrilled that so many communities in my district and across the Commonwealth have shown success in their recycling programs and will receive additional resources to continue investing in that success.”

The WEC payments received by MassDEP are deposited into the SMRP Expendable Trust, which is used to fund grants, technical assistance and educational outreach to help communities, businesses and institutions increase recycling and reduce waste.

MassDEP is responsible for ensuring clean air and water, safe management and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes, timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

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How to Discuss Estate Planning with Your Family during the Holidays

The holidays are going to look different this year due to COVID, but even though families may not have large in-person gatherings, they are still a time for family togetherness. The holidays are a time for celebration, spending quality time with loved ones, and exchanging meaningful gifts. We know that when it comes to your children, one of the greatest gifts you can give them is a legacy to continue when you are no longer around. In our practice, we work with families each day on matters just like this.

Despite the many benefits of creating a legacy for your family, it can be a challenging discussion, especially during the holiday season. Here are some tips on discussing estate planning with your family.

1. Plan ahead. Preparation is important. Set time before talking with your loved ones over the holidays to seek the advice of an estate planning attorney. Schedule time for all parties to have the conver-

sation, keeping in mind that the holidays can be a busy time. Think about what you are going to say, what your wishes are, and what you hope to achieve through the discussion. You may consider how you would like to structure the conversation, for example, whether you will bring any planning documents with you to show your children or supplement the discussion.

2. Be prepared to answer questions. Your family will likely have many questions, some of which you may not be prepared to answer. Try to think of questions your children may have. If questions arise that you are not equipped to answer, let them know that you hear their questions and concerns and will address them as soon as you have answers for them. This conversation may be overwhelming for your family if you have not brought up the topic before. Be prepared for a va-

riety of emotions from your family. It is important that you validate their feelings, but stick to your wishes, and do not let those emotions sway you from your plan.

3. Do not hesitate to follow up.

Whether your time with family is virtual or in person this holiday season, do not wait too long to check-in with your family after your conversation and follow up with questions you left unanswered. It is important to allow your family some breathing room to enjoy the remainder of the holiday season, process the information you gave them, and take time to think of additional questions they may have for you.

We know this can be a difficult conversation to have with your family. If you questions or need some more advice about how to get started, do not hesitate to contact our office to set up a meeting or attend a webinar. At Dennis Sullivan and Associates, we help clients meet their goals and objectives through a unique process that combines both education and counseling.

We hope you and your family have a happy and healthy holiday season.

This is a paid advertisement by Dennis Sullivan & Associates

Holliston Veterans Get Their Luncheon Home Delivered this Year

The annual luncheon couldn't take place this year due to the pandemic, but Holliston American Legion, Holliston VFW and the Holliston Lions got to work delivering meals this year as a thanks to those in town who've served our country.



Photos used courtesy of Tony Mistretta



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We wish you a happy and healthy holiday season!
Here's to a better 2021!

Steve, Tiffany & Karen

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Coming up at the Holliston Public Library

Ted Reinstein
Thursday, January 7,
2021 at 7 p.m.

Holliston resident and Chronicle host, Ted Reinstein, will share stories of people who have overcome harsh challenges and setbacks to survive, and even triumph in the face of adversity. Free, but please register at www.hollistonlibrary.org to receive your Zoom invitation. This is a virtual program sponsored by the Friends, the Holliston Historical Society and the Medway Library.

MEDITATION FOR EXTRAORDINARY TIMES with Roberta Weiner on Tuesday, January 19, 7 p.m.

Roberta will show us how meditation can help us control stress and live calmer lives even in the midst of a pandemic. Sponsored by the Friends of the

Library. Become a Friend for as little as \$ 20 per year and support free programming for everyone. Free, but please register to get your Zoom invitation.

MYSTERY BOOK CLUB: Tuesday, December 8, 11 a.m.

Gone to Dust, by Matt Goldman: In the small town of Edina, MN, private eye Nils Shapiro is hired to help the police solve the murder of a young mother and a crime scene obscured by hundreds of bags of vacuum cleaner dust.

More info. at <https://hollistonlibrary.org/adultprograms.asp>

VIRTUAL MORNING BOOK CLUB: Monday, December 7, 11 a.m.

Daisy Jones and the Six, by Taylor Jenkins Reid.

MassBay Launches Esports

MassBay Community College is proud to announce the launch of esports programming for enrolled students. Esports are video game tournaments in which student teams compete with other colleges and universities via virtual game rooms. MassBay is currently competing weekly in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Region 21. This fall, MassBay is competing in the popular game League of Legends against Bunker Hill Community College, Bristol Community College, and Quinsigamond Community College.

“I am extremely excited that our esports program is up and running,” said MassBay Assistant Director of Athletics and coach of MassBay’s esports program, Fielding Vaughn. “This is a great opportunity to get our students involved in a very popular, up-and-coming collegiate sport. We have a great group of students already playing, and we’ll be actively recruiting for next year’s teams.”

MassBay esports athletes virtually gather in the College’s Discord software account, where students individually participate in practices or games. Each week, MassBay livestreams their League of Legends matches over the MassBay Twitch account, and spectators can view previous games or catch replays.

MassBay currently has 100 active student members playing on our Discord account, and recruitment us underway to field teams in Rocket League and Overwatch games. In addition, students can compete in intramural esports opportunities, including playing the popular games NBA 2K, Madden, and FIFA.

According to www.grandviewresearch.com, the global esports market size was valued at \$1.1 billion in 2019 and is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 24.4% from 2020 to 2027.

Early this year, the NJCAA announced that fall sports would be postponed and played during

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HISTORY BOOK CLUB: Monday, December 21:
 The Perfectionists: How Precision Engineers Created the Modern World, by Simon Winchester
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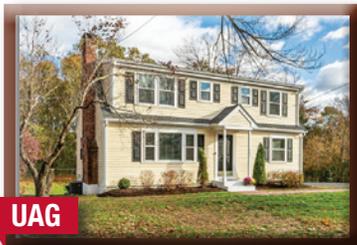
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