

Weekend Edition SOUTHBRIDGE NEWS

EVENING

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TODAY'S QUOTE

"Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs."

Henry Ford

LOCAL



'Snow Queen' auditions
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SPORTS



Indoor track
Page B1

WINNING LOTTERY NUMBERS

MASS. DAILY NUMBERS drawn Wednesday afternoon were **8-0-4-1**
MASS DAILY NUMBERS drawn Wednesday night were **6-4-4-3**

Megabucks Doubler:
4-5-8-29-45-48

Powerball:
13-17-19-27-38
Powerball: 12

OPINION



Bank Donation
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OPINION

GET YOUR POINT ACROSS
PAGE A4

WHAT TO DO

CALENDAR EVENTS
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DR. K
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MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL ...



Mark Ashton photos
RIGHT, Even from outside, the festivities look warm and inviting. ABOVE, Santa Claus shares some candy canes with Edna Bachand, right, and her family.

SOUTHBRIDGE — The evening was festive and the merry-making abundant as staff, residents, families, and friends gathered at Southbridge Rehabilitation and Health Care Center (SRHCC) for the annual Holiday Gathering at the Chapin Street facility Tuesday, Dec. 4.

For more photos, turn to page A2!



Selectmen mull EZ-ID proposal

BY GUS STEEVES
NEWS STAFF WRITER

CHARLTON — You wouldn't think license plates would be a particularly debatable issue, but when money gets involved, they are.

In this case, Charlton selectmen weren't being asked to pay anything, just throw their support behind a proposal in the Legislature colloquially termed "Molly's Law" or the "EZ-ID Law." If approved, that would replace some of the numbers on plates with symbols — hearts, stars, diamonds and the like — on the idea that they're easier to remember than just numbers.

However, Town Administrator Robin Craver noted that the Mass. Chiefs of Police, which had originally supported the bill, found information indicating the "creator of EZ-ID program has applied for patent rights and stands to make a profit" if it passes, citing a memo from Chief James Pervier. Beyond that, she said, they expressed concern that it might face a patent challenge from 3M and that the data used to claim the symbols improved recognition and safety were "inflated."

That was enough for Kathleen Walker to oppose it.

"On the face of it, it seemed like a great idea," but the new information made her "uneasy." She was especially uncomfortable about David Singer's proposal to have Craver send letters to every Massachusetts

town, even though he claimed he only wanted "letters letting them know this is out there." She noted she has "very very rarely" seen letters from other selectboards regarding policy issues and felt it would be seen as advocacy.

"There are too many red flags in this thing," she said.

To Rick Swenson, the profit concern wasn't an issue. He noted many firms profit off public policy, citing specifically the fact towns buy police cruisers.

"That's how America's supposed to work," he said.

Most public purchases have to be bid between multiple potential providers. A patented product, however, might make that impossible.

According to the EZ-ID website, the effort is run by Gary Richard of Danvers and James Gardiner of Worcester. The state's Corporate Database shows EZ-ID itself is a non-profit founded in 2011 (the website states the 501(c)3 status is "pending") and lists those two men plus Magdalen Bish and Loretta Tenglia as officers, although Richard is president, treasurer and clerk.

The nonprofit overlaps with two for-profit businesses, both owned by Richard alone or with family members exclusively: GPR Product Development LLC (formed March 2010) and Banner Industries of N.E., Inc. (formed 1979, with two name changes and a merger since then) The former seems to have no website,

Please Read ID, page A7

Keeping Southbridge moving

ZUMBA CLASS PROVING TO BE FUN FOR ALL AGES

BY MARK ASHTON
NEWS STAFF WRITER

SOUTHBRIDGE — To quote an old children's TV show (kind of): "Zoom a zoom a Zumba Zoom!"

The latest twist on "zooming" — on TV or not — may well be the Zumba craze, a Colombian dance workout as strenuous and cardio-beneficial as anything Elaine Benes — or this writer — ever attempted on a dance floor to the horror of

her/his dance partner. Growing in popularity in accordance with any community's desire to produce lithe and limber citizens, Zumba is the equivalent of "Footloose" with a Latin beat — and as aerobically advantageous as boot camp for the average 17-year-old Marine recruit.

"This is the best Zumba class in town," said one of the participants in last weekend's dance/exercise

session at the Arts Center. She and the others were puffing between songs/exercise routines — and feeling positively exhilarated for their efforts.

Certified Zumba instructor Erica Whitney of Southbridge puts the class members through their paces, working them hard but within the parameters of their individual wishes

Please Read ZUMBA, page A10



Mark Ashton photos

Celebrating the completion of one portion of their Zumba workout are, from left: Linda Girouard, Sandy Jajliardo, Arilys Ramo, Adriana Robaina, Edwin Rivera, and Carmen Iris.

Solar project proposal to see changes, reduction in scope

BYLAWS SENT TO JAN. 7 TOWN MEETING

BY GUS STEEVES
NEWS STAFF WRITER

STURBRIDGE — Opponents of the proposed Shepard Road solar farm got a reprieve last week, as proponent Mohd Aslami's engineers told the Conservation Commission he'd probably be withdrawing his plans to make changes.

This week, the selectmen approved sending two competing solar farm bylaws — both of which would prohibit such developments in residential zones — to the January 7 Special Town Meeting.

"It's not completely pulled. They actually asked for a continuance to a date to be determined," said Conservation Agent Glenn Colburn.

Aslami's engineer, Kevin Quinn, told the last session of the project's Conservation Commission public hearing he wants to reduce its size by about

a third, to "just under 25 acres" from 40 — ideally to avoid triggering state Endangered Species Act guidelines and other conservation-related oversight. But Colburn said he wasn't sure even that would do so on that property.

Selectman Mary Blanchard agreed. Although she's not personally opposed to residential solar projects in general and voted against adding the residential restriction to the town's version, she didn't think the geography of that property is conducive to one.

She's referring to the fact the land is fairly rugged, with ridges of rock and pockets of wetland, including several vernal pools. When it came to public hearing, several neighbors raised concerns that the proposed forest clearing could increase runoff onto their properties and force wild animals into their

Please Read SOLAR, page A7



File photo

Proponent and landowner Mohd Aslami answers a question as his wetlands scientist Glenn Krevosky listens at a public hearing Thursday, Nov. 1.



Local Zumba class offers cardio, with a twist

ZUMBA

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and limitations.

"You don't have to have any dance experience; all the routines are done at a comfortable level," said Whitney, who was pushing herself even harder than her crew, as if to demonstrate what was possible – with a little practice and a lot of energy.

Both men and women – and even children – are invited to take part in the weekly (Saturday morning) classes, typically held in the Arts Center (111 Main Street), but moved momentarily to the Arts Barn last weekend due to the Southbridge Garden Club's Greens Sale. Zumba has also been adapted to the needs and limitations of senior citizens, providing healthful recreation for bodies and improved blood flow for brains.

Cost of the local Zumba class is \$5 per person per lesson. Sessions are from 9:30-10:30 a.m. and include vigorous dancing/exercise at an age- and condition-appropriate pace. A combination of salsa/meringue and aerobics exercise moves, Zumba is done to music, with Whitney demonstrating all the moves needed for each number prior to beginning the music.

According to Wikipedia, Zumba was created by Colombian dancer/choreographer Alberto "Beto" Perez during the 1990s and involves both dance and aerobic elements. Its choreography incorporates hip-hop, soca, samba, salsa, meringue, mambo, martial arts, and some Bollywood and belly dance moves, along with occasional squats and lunges. An estimated 14 million people take weekly Zumba classes in more than 140,000 locations in more than 150 countries around the world.



"It don't mean a thing, if it ain't got that swing!" Leading a recent Zumba class at the Arts Center in Southbridge is Erica Whitney, right.

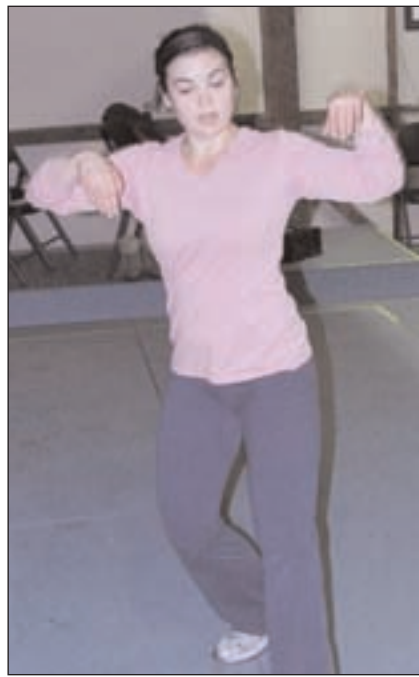


Feet, legs, and arms tend to fly in Zumba classes.

That's a lot of sweating and heavy breathing, but "because Zumba offers different options, proponents ... claim that is it safe for all ages," says the Wikipedia description. "A typical Zumba session burns between 500 and 1,000 calories."

The local Zumba classes are offered in conjunction with the Quinebaug Valley Council for the Arts and Humanities. QVCAH President Demetri Kasperson recognizes both the artistic (dance) elements and the recreational benefits of the exercising. For information on Zumba and/or how to join the classes, call Whitney at: 774-230-1415. A portion of local Zumba class proceeds benefits QVCAH programs.

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To the front, to the side, to the rear; every Zumba workout is poetry – and symmetry – in motion.



Aryllis Ramos Zumbas with the exuberance of youth.



Edwin Rivera, left, and Carmen Iris concentrate on following the instructor.



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Above, Erica Whitney demonstrates the moves for each workout number before starting the music for class members.

MARK ASHTON PHOTOS



From left, Sandy Jajliardo, Aryllis Ramos, and Adriana Robaina bust a few moves.

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