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Top Stories for FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2002:

CHOIR STRUTS ITS STUFF

STURBRIDGE - The Tantasqua Regional Junior High School Show Choir is going for the gold this weekend at its first regional competition. "We are going for the top," said Sarah-Kay Jerome, an eighth grade student from Sturbridge. "This is not for ourselves. This is for our school."

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Members of the Tantasqua Junior High School Show Choir rehearse 'Grease' Thursday, March 21. Their first competition is this Saturday.

AMERICAN OPTICAL REUNION PLANNED FOR MAY 28

SOUTHBIDGE - Local historian Richard Whitney is putting out the call to former employees of American Optical Co. and anyone else interested in the once-vibrant lens manufacturer to attend the semi-annual AO reunion on May 28.

The event, usually held at Rom's Restaurant in Sturbridge, is being planned for the new Southbridge Hotel & Conference Center at 14 Mechanic St. in the Southbridge Business Center. The site used to be home to the AO complex, and is now populated by several different businesses and the 203-room hotel, which opened late last year. The hotel and conference center is also the planned site for Department of Defense training classes.

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Employees of the American Optical Co. in 1890 gather in front of the main office.

BUILDER HOPES TO EMULATE TROLLEY STATION



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This site created by
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STATION

CHARLTON - There may soon be another place in town where people can stop for a couple gallons of gas and some hot coffee. Thaddeus Mroczowski, owner of Ted's Charlton City Package Store on Route 20, plans to build a Shell Oil gas station, a Dunkin' Donuts, and a convenience store across the street from the package store. The town's Planning Board has scheduled a public hearing on the project for Wednesday, April 3, at Town Hall.

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TANTASQUA STUDENTS NOT JUST READING ABOUT HOMELESSNESS

STURBRIDGE - Southbridge Interfaith Hospitality Network Director Margie Ducharme and one of the agency's former guests brought their mission to help homeless people into the classroom yesterday.

The pair spoke with two seventh-grade reading classes taught by Bobbie Helbig at Tantasqua Regional Junior High School, leading a 45-minute discussion to 14 students at a 9:15 a.m. class and to 15 kids at a 10 a.m. class.

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YET ANOTHER SHAKE-UP FACES BAY STATE POLITICS

It was a week of events that could only occur in a politically active state such as Massachusetts.

Only in this Commonwealth would a woman giving birth to twins, and months later tearfully announce that her family (and the recognition of dismal poll numbers) was more important to her than her job, make national news.


A WINTER OF WORK HAS WARRIORS' HOPES HIGH

STURBRIDGE - Nobody's perfect. However, that's not going to stop the

Jennifer Steele, a former homeless guest of the Southbridge Interfaith Hospitality Network, reads to seventh-graders at Tantasqua Regional Junior High School yesterday.



Tantasqua tennis player Carrie Wieland follows through on a backhand.



Tantasqua girls tennis team from shooting for perfection in 2002.

There isn't much else for the Warriors to strive for after a wildly successful 2001 campaign, in which they battled all the way to the Central Mass. Division 1 District Tournament final where they fell to Nashoba Regional on the courts at Clark University.

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