

Baker defends stance on school mask policies

BY KEVIN FLANDERS
STAFF WRITER

REGION – Facing increased pressure as the school year looms and the Delta variant spreads, Gov. Charlie Baker recently defended current policies.

During a press conference on Aug. 16, Baker said there are no imminent plans to alter masking recommendations statewide. Even with the nation's steady rise in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations over the last month, Baker believes Massachusetts is in a far better position than other states in the battle against the virus.

"I'm not considering changing the mask guidance at this time. We pay a lot of attention to the data associated with case counts, hospitalizations, and the tragic loss of life," Baker said. "The fact that so many people in Massachusetts have been vaccinated has put us in a dramatically different place than many other states across this country."

Baker also supported the joint deci-

sion from the state's Department of Public Health and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to leave masking policies up to individual school districts for the fall of 2021.

Statewide, each school committee has voted on policies that will determine how to address the highly contagious Delta variant in the classroom this fall. Information on policies has been mailed out to families.

"Giving the locals the opportunity to own the decisions they make is a big and important issue," Baker said. "If you look at what has played out in other states where the government has taken away the authority for locals to make their own decisions, that's not the right way to play this game."

Several local students, parents, and educators agree with the Governor's current handling of the Delta variant. Others fear that his hands-off approach is a dangerous gamble. As of last week,

every county in the Commonwealth had reached a threshold of COVID-19 transmission that automatically triggers a CDC recommendation for public indoor masking, regardless of vaccination status.

During his Aug. 16 press conference, Baker reiterated his recommendation that students in grades K-6 continue to wear masks indoors.

"We've made a very strong recommendation to our colleagues in K-6 education. Because there is not a vaccine currently available for that population, we recommend that those kids should be masked up until they have an opportunity to be vaccinated," Baker said.

State officials also recommend that unvaccinated students in grades seven and above, as well as unvaccinated staff members and visitors to schools, wear masks indoors. Additionally, any individual at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, or with a household member who is at high risk, is encour-

aged to mask indoors regardless of vaccination status.

Looking ahead, Baker hopes the Commonwealth continues to serve as an example to states that are lagging behind with vaccinations.

"I hope that many other states move as aggressively as the people in Massachusetts have moved to get vaccinated," Baker said. "Vaccinations are the pathway out of this pandemic – period. I can't tell you how grateful I am that so many people see that and have gotten vaccinated."

As the start of school rapidly approaches, state officials continue to promote vaccine clinics for eligible students. Governor Baker said Massachusetts is a national leader among young people ages 12-19 getting vaccinated.

To learn more about the state's efforts to combat the virus, visit www.mass.gov.

End of an era for local business

REGION — What began as a chance encounter in January 2002 led to a business partnership which at one time had grown to more than 40 retail stores throughout New England. On Aug. 1, this chapter came to an end as Mark Amadio and Kyriakos "KK" Konstantakis have just sold their remaining five locations of AMCOMM Wireless and enabled a respected industry peer to enter the New England market.

"Our initial stores were in West Boylston and Sturbridge," said Amadio, "and shortly thereafter we grew to stores in Worcester, Webster, and Fitchburg before expanding throughout New England. We began paring down three years ago, selling twenty-five locations to Go Wireless. KK and I moved the corporate office to Charlton, and we retained five retail stores in New Hampshire, all of which will now be sold to BeMobile. While not an easy

decision, he and I knew it was the right one for us at this time in our lives."

"We genuinely embraced each other's strengths, maintained a win/win philosophy and a passion for our work. This provided the synergy to help us drive through adversity and celebrate our successes. This, along with the opportunity to leverage the power of the Verizon brand as an Authorized Retailer, enabled the AMCOMM team to provide the best in technology-based mobile and IT solutions. "We partnered with the right company at the right time as cellular service burgeoned," remarked Konstantakis.

"We are proud of the success we've had," added Amadio. "Our mission was to deliver an exceptional customer experience and to be a vital part of

the communities we serviced. We are proud to have accomplished that goal."

Over the years, Amadio and Konstantakis have employed hundreds of people and created relationships with industry partners, vendors, and consultants.

"Having had the opportunity align our passion and our careers has been truly rewarding. We are proud of the lives we've changed through AMCOMM and grateful for those that changed our lives by helping AMCOMM succeed. These individuals know who they are and have left a permanent mark ... period," added Konstantakis.

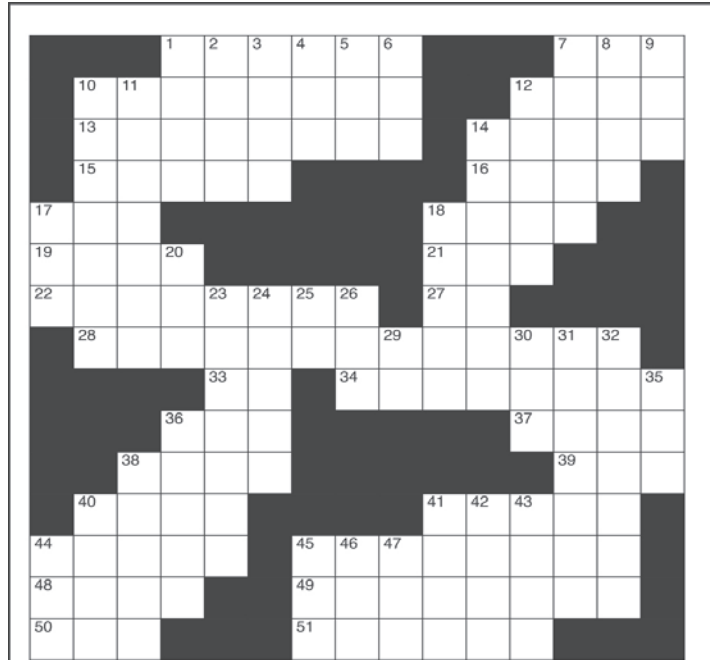
"While the sales team and technical teams drove growth and revenue, the back-office team was the glue that held it all together. KK and I were

blessed to have had the best of both. Of course, the support of our families, friends and key mentors and advisors played a strategic role in the success of our business," Amadio paused to smile then added, "and our sanity."

So what's next for this dynamic duo? "More time with our families, certainly," said Amadio. "It's time to figure out what I want to be when I grow up," he joked. "Seriously though, I will say this: Our partnership is not over."

"The next venture will be a bridge between our past and future," added Konstantakis.

When pressed as to what that next venture might be, Amadio remained coy, stating "As they say in your business, 'Watch this space!'"



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Nature expedition
- 7. Take the energy from
- 10. Bungled
- 12. Young salmon
- 13. Botanical gardens
- 14. Source of chocolate
- 15. Country singer LeAnn
- 16. Yokel
- 17. Unit of energy
- 18. Plant of the lily family
- 19. Tusked wild pig
- 21. Form of "to be"
- 22. Formerly
- 27. Letter of the Greek alphabet
- 28. Former First Lady
- 33. News organization
- 34. Shining brightly and intermittently
- 36. Brew
- 37. Teams' best pitchers
- 38. Edible fruit
- 39. Pitching stat
- 40. ___ or bust
- 41. Baby product manufacturer
- 44. Monetary unit of Finland
- 45. Small spherical structures in cells
- 48. Pouches
- 49. Reached
- 50. Investment account
- 51. Oft-repeated slogan

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Nuclear undersea weapon
- 2. Helps the skin
- 3. Evergreen coniferous trees
- 4. Relieve of employment
- 5. A way to drench
- 6. Journalist Tarbell
- 7. ___ and Venzetti
- 8. Alcoholic liquor
- 9. An athlete who plays for pay
- 10. Where to get drinks
- 11. Japanese art form
- 12. Baseball great Satchel
- 14. Winged angelic beings
- 17. One point south of due east
- 18. Group of islands in Polynesia
- 20. A place to play: ___ center
- 23. Masses of gray matter in the brain
- 24. Belgian city (alt. sp.)
- 25. Millilitre
- 26. Beloved Will Ferrell film
- 29. Railway above ground
- 30. Satisfaction
- 31. Aggregate of molecules
- 32. Type of barometer
- 35. Type of college teacher (abbr.)
- 36. Long periods of time
- 38. Native people of Nebraska and S. Dakota
- 40. Deliver
- 41. Thin, narrow piece of wood
- 42. Modern Israel founder
- 43. Small NY college
- 44. Pounds per square inch
- 45. Veterans battleground
- 46. Hollywood talent agency (abbr.)
- 47. Popular kids' channel



QCC announces Super Saturday registration event

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College is hosting two "Super Saturday" registration events before the fall semester begins on Sept. 8.

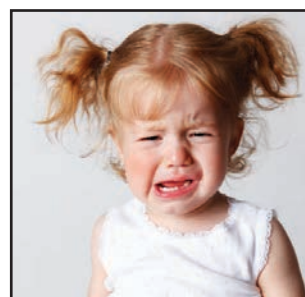
An in-person "Super Saturday" event will be held on Saturday, Aug. 28, at QCC's Welcome Center, 670 West Boylston St., Worcester, from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Students can save time waiting in line by scheduling an appointment through the College's new virtual waiting line service, Easy Queue (EZQ), www.QCC.edu/EZQ.

"These events are designed for students who

are unable to register during the week, or who prefer to get their registration needs taken care of remotely," said QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D. "At QCC, we are doing everything possible to remove barriers that prevent students from attaining a higher education."

To learn more about QCC's Super Saturday events, visit www.QCC.edu/saturday

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



Not getting enough attention?
Call your Sales Representative TODAY!

TO PLACE AN AD:
ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE
JUNE SIMAKAUSKAS
(508) 909-4062
jsima@stonebridgepress.news

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES:
KERRI PETERSON
(508) 909-4103
kerrip@stonebridgepress.news

TO PRINT AN OBITUARY:
E-MAIL:
obits@stonebridgepress.news
CALL: 508-909-4149
OR send to Charlton Villager
P.O. Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550

TO SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
E-MAIL: news@stonebridgepress.news
OR send to Charlton Village P.O. Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550

CHARLTON VILLAGER PUBLISHED BY STONEBRIDGE PRESS

PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER
FRANK G. CHLINSKI
860-928-1818 EXT. 103
frank@stonebridgepress.news

BUSINESS MANAGER
RYAN CORNEAU
860-928-1818 EXT. 102
ryan@salmonpress.news

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR
JIM DI NICOLA
508-764-6102
jim@stonebridgepress.news

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

PRODUCTION MANAGER
JULIE CLARKE
860-928-1818, EXT. 305
julie@villagernewspapers.com

CHARLTON ALMANAC

OPEN TO CLOSE
TOWN HALL (508) 248-2200

Office Hours:
Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays
..... 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Tuesdays..... 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Friday..... Closed

visit www.townofcharlton.net or more information.

Individual offices may vary
PUBLIC LIBRARY (248-0452)
For library hours please check www.charltonlibrary.org

POLICE DEPARTMENT (248-2250)
Monday to Friday..... 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
For emergencies, dial 911

FIRE DEPARTMENT (248-2299)
Monday to Friday..... 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

POST OFFICES
Charlton Center Post Office... (800) 275-8777
Charlton City (01508) (800) 275-8777

SCHOOLS
Dudley-Charlton Regional School District
..... (508) 943-6888
Charlton Elementary School
..... (508) 248-7774 or (508) 248-7435
Heritage School (508) 248-4884
Charlton Middle School..... (508) 248-1423
Shepherd Hill Regional High School
..... (508) 943-6700
Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School (508) 248-5971 or (508) 987-0326

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.
- **Living Word Church of Charlton**, 10 Main Street - Grange building 1st Floor, Charlton, MA 01507, Pastor Craig Bellisario, (508) 233-8349 Sunday Service 10:00am. www.livingwordcharlton.com info@livingwordcharlton.com
- **New Life Fellowship A/G, SNED Chapel**, 307 Sturbridge Road, Rt. 20, Charlton, MA, Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.

NEWSPAPERS

THE MOST CURRENT
TEXTBOOK
AVAILABLE

The Charlton Villager (USPS#024-954) is published weekly by Stonebridge Press, Inc., 25 Elm St., Southbridge, MA 01550. Periodical postage paid at Southbridge, MA 01550. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Charlton Villager, P. O. Box 90, Southbridge, MA 01550.