

Troop 163 survives and thrives during Covid-19 pandemic

STURBRIDGE — Covid restrictions have been a challenge for many of us. For the Scouting program, it turned things on its head. While Scouting as a patrol based and outdoor focused program Covid regulations caused some unit programs to come to a halt, virtual meetings were the norm, a handful of units did not survive. Several events and activities were cancelled, several camping trips were done in back yards. Camp Quarantine hosted by the Heart of New England Council was created as a virtual camp in your back yard and attend various activities online. Summer camp was cancelled for the 2019 season, camps were closed, group sizes limited, indoor gathering spaces closed.

Despite all of this, Troop 163 persisted. The Scouting Motto is: Be Prepared. Part of being prepared is having a backup plan in the event rain, lack of materials, location change. The 2019-2020 season added Covid. After the lockdown, and as things opened back up it changed to individual scouts in tents, sanitizing, distancing out, masking up, and last-minute location changes based on other restrictions. An abundance of lessons were learned during this time. The art of dressing appropriately for cold weather so outdoor winter meetings could be held. Projecting and speaking up to teach skills and rank requirements as everyone is spread out. Building confidence in their abilities to adapt, overcome, and learning to be flexible.

Leadership in the troop knew these Scouts needed something, some regularity in an irregular time in our history.

"We're here to provide a program, one that is safe yet encourages Scouts to step outside their comfort zone. We're trained for this, well sort of," Scoutmaster Chrissy said, explaining key leadership in the troop were in constant contact.

They created covid guidelines for

meetings and activities, presenting them for approval from the committee and subsequently the Scouts and their families.

"We laid it out, this is how we believe we can be safe; this is what our plan is," she added.

From there, it was up to the parents to decide what they were comfortable with, and a zoom option was available whenever possible to include as many Scouts as possible during this time.

Fast forward to February and the introduction of the vaccine and lifting of restrictions. Wow did these Scouts hit the ground running, making up for lost time. The very first Eagle Ceremony for the Troop was held, camping trips resumed, fundraisers were held, and Scouts really went all in when it came to ranking up and earning badges. The biggest point of excitement for the Scouts was the opportunity to attend summer camp.

"These Scouts really are nothing short of amazing, what they have accomplished, their drive and dedication to the program, so awesome!" Scoutmaster Chrissy said, clearly impressed with their accomplishments.

Since February, they have welcomed 10 new Scouts to the troop bringing total membership to 20 Scouts. Summer camp was well attended; 13 went to summer camp at the beginning of the summer, from there 1 became a full-time staffer, two went on to be CIT's (counselors in training), seven went back for a second week and one went back for a third. Even some of our leaders were excited about camp, one serving as the Provisional Scoutmaster for two additional weeks and another serving as Asst. Health Officer for a few weeks. A total of 112 merit badges were earned, 22 ranks were earned, 1 Scout earned BSA Guard, five Scouts completed the mile swim, two earned the National Outdoor Award for Camping, and one earned the National Outdoor Award

for Aquatics.

The troop also got creative with their fundraisers. What can you do that maintains distancing and capacity limits? Well, they figured it out. One of their fundraisers was "pinning pinwheels" where you could pay to have your yard, or someone else's yard, filled with pinwheels. One of the leaders or a Scout and parent would go around moving pinwheels from yard to yard spreading a bit of fun and smiles around town. The second was a Drive Thru Baked Potato Bar. Instead of a normal sit-down meal it was turned into a drive thru event. Tickets were sold in advance and on the day of the event your meal was brought to your car for you to enjoy at home or wherever you wanted.

"It's all about being creative and thinking outside of the box," said Scoutmaster Chrissy. "With the troop remaining active we knew we needed to do something to raise money to purchase all the equipment and advancement needed to keep the troop running."

So, what's next for the troop? There are numerous trips and activities planned including two can and bottle drives. A highlight for the troop; they have one Scout currently working on her eagle project. Micah is creating a memorial site for those who have served in the War on Terror for the Oxford American Legion Post. This project includes landscaping, a memorial bench, and steppingstones with the military branches and battles engraved on them. For more information about her project and how to help, please contact Scoutmaster Chrissy.

For more information on the troop, how to join, for returnable can and bottle pick up or general questions contact Scoutmaster Chrissy: ChrissyCSM163@gmail.com visit them at the Brookfield Apple Country Fair on Oct. 9 or find them on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/troop163sturbridge/>.

ACCURACY WATCH

THE SOUTHBRIDGE NEWS IS COMMITTED TO ACCURACY IN ALL ITS NEWS REPORTS. ALTHOUGH NUMEROUS SAFEGUARDS ARE IN PLACE TO ENSURE ACCURATE REPORTING, MISTAKES CAN OCCUR.

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Karl Benkert of Southbridge transferred to Nichols College for the Fall 2021 semester

DUDLEY — Nichols College is excited to welcome Karl Benkert of Southbridge as one of the new transfer students to the Fall 2021 semester.

Nichols College welcomes Karl to the herd!

About Nichols College
Nichols College is a college of choice for business and leadership education as a result of its distinctive career-focused and leadership-based approaches to learning, both in and out of the classroom, and through impactful research and professional education. Students thrive in a learning and living environment that is supported by an experiential business curriculum and a strong liberal arts foundation aimed at transforming them into tomorrow's leaders. Nichols also offers master's degrees in business, leadership, accounting, and counterterrorism, as well as a range of certificate programs, to promote career advancement for today's professionals.

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and how to advocate for the resources they need when they are challenged. The Mission of OSACPS is to provide k-8 students with rigorous, real world learning experiences in a supportive and nurturing school community, helping all students to become reflective inquirers, articulate communicators, critical thinkers, and skilled problem solvers. Thank you for your support!

About the Old Sturbridge Academy Parent Teacher Scholar Association

The mission of the OSA PTSA is to promote collaboration between families, scholars and teachers to enrich the educational experience at OSACPS. OSA PTSA will support the needs of scholars and staff through fundraising and by being active stewards of the academy.

Quinsigamond Community College offers free healthcare training

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College's Center for Workforce Development and Continuing Education (CWDCE) is once again offering a free Medical Administrative Assistant program and a Nurse Assistant/ Home Health Aide program, in late fall 2021 and early spring 2022. Each program takes approximately two months to complete.

"These free workforce training programs are one of the ways QCC is making an investment in the community our students live and work," said Kathleen Manning, dean of The Center for Workforce Development and Continuing Education.

The free Medical Administrative Assistants program prepares students to work as Medical Administrative Assistants in healthcare facilities such as hospitals and health systems, physicians' offices, clinics, long-term care facilities, surgery centers, ambulatory surgery centers, rehabilitation centers, and other types of healthcare areas. After successfully completing this course, students are eligible to sit for the National Health Career Association's Certified Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA). The program includes free tuition, textbook and Medical Office Simulation software; Microsoft Office training; Contract Tracing and Infection Control training; and the CMAA Exam fee.

The free Nurse Assistant/ Home Health Aide program is a dual certificate that will open many doors for students, whether they choose to work in a healthcare facility or home setting. Students will learn about basic patient care, medical terminology, nutrition, patient care procedures, communica-

tion skills, basic anatomy, and safety. Basic nursing skills are taught through classroom lectures, nursing labs and clinical practice in a long-term care facility. The program includes free tuition, textbook, scrubs, and the certification-testing fee.

For more information, or to request an application, email Jo Sundin jsundin@qcc.mass.edu or call 508-751-7921.

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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\$369,000, 30 Park St, Torres-Lebron, Madeline, and Lebron, Miguel, to Edma, Darly.
\$357,821, 42 Edwards St, Pbtld RT, and Robinson, C R, to Salomar Switchback LLC.
\$325,881, 25-1/2 Marcy St, Robinson, Karen P, and Robinson, Christopher R, to Salomar Switchback LLC.
\$127,000, 754 Worcester St, Edmonds, Tammy A, and Edmonds, Robert, to Real Est Invs NE LLC.
\$39,900, Harwood Farm Rd #5, Seamus RT, and Frateschi, Edward, to Harris, Jeremy D.
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