



# West Springfield Record

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**STURGEON MOON MONDAY** — Memorial Avenue resident Mike Balestri, a longtime member of the Springfield Stars Club, shot this picture of earth's original satellite last Friday, July 24 when the moon, now nearing full, was in its crescent stage. He took the photograph with the aid of a telescope on an evening when the moon appeared a little bit red due to atmospheric haze. This is what Space.com has to say about the full moon coming on Monday, Aug. 3, which Algonquin tribes commonly called the Sturgeon moon: "This time of year, this large fish of the Great Lakes and other major bodies of water like Lake Champlain is most readily caught. A few tribes knew it as the Full Red Moon because the moon rises looking reddish through salty haze. Other variations include the Green Corn Moon or Grain Moon." (Photograph by Michael Balestri)

## School plans uncertain amidst pandemic concerns

### District also eyes work on cultural issues

Question: What will school look like in the fall?

Answer: It all depends.

Superintendent Tim Connor gave a presentation to the School Committee and the public Tuesday. If parents were hoping for certainty, they didn't hear it.

And that's not the fault of local officials, since state guidelines continue to change. And the commonwealth can't be blamed either, as nationally, the coronavirus shifts almost daily.

By Laurie Cavanaugh Bobskill  
Correspondent, WS RECORD

Any plan, Mayor William Reichelt said, is a draft only. "I want to emphasize 'draft' ... the state guidance is ever-changing, almost daily, and something could come out tomorrow that may change what we're going to do. Who knows what's going to happen in the next couple of weeks?"

Tuesday night's session began on the Zoom remote meeting platform, which would allow parents to dial in and participate. But the meeting was hacked or "zoom-bombed" by an unauthorized person using the meeting code, and was halted nearly as soon as it began.

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## Study seeks West Side women

It is widely accepted that including fruits and vegetables in one's diet offers numerous health benefits, but it may even offer some protection against dangerous diseases such as breast cancer.

Melanie Sierra, a graduate student and a former West Springfield High School student studying veterinary animal sciences at UMass Amherst, is investigating the link between fruit and vegetable consumption and breast can-

By Charlotte Staudenmayer  
WS RECORD Intern

cer risk in a new study, and she is seeking participants from town.

"I feel like I can give back to my community now more than ever," said Ms. Sierra.

She is seeking "diverse and local" women for the study, and believes "West Springfield women could play a big role."

Participants must be females living within 25 miles of Amherst. They also must be at least 18, healthy, and either pregnant or up to five weeks postpartum.

The study is randomized, meaning women will either be assigned to an intervention or control group. The inter-

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Melanie Sierra, a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts, is seeking local women, who are about to become new mothers or have recently given birth, to engage in a study that examines nutrition and its influence on breast health. Ms. Sierra attended West Springfield High School.

## ZBA approves hotel plan on Elm, Riverdale

The Zoning Board of Appeals has given the go-ahead to a plan for a five-story hotel at Elm Street and Riverdale, at the bottom of the hill below Springfield Country Club.

Desai & Sons Inc. plans to construct an upscale hotel on two parcels, replacing the EconoLodge at 1533 Elm St. and Pho's Vietnamese Restaurant at 764 Riverdale.

The existing buildings will be demolished and replaced by a flagship hotel, not yet identified. The applicant had requested a special permit because existing regulations would only have allowed for a four-story structure.

John Carlin, with the design firm VHB in Springfield, explained that he had been working with Desai and the Planning Department for about a year to make the project work. Four stories would allow only 80 rooms, and national hotel franchisers require a minimum of 100 rooms.

When the owners had the property surveyed they learned that it was larger than they thought, he said.

"Once we did that we found that the property that we actually have out there is larger than the property that's shown," he explained. "So there was an error on the previous project years ago."

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# 'We can help new moms': study seeks West Side women

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vention group will receive deliveries of 8-10 daily servings of fruit and vegetables, while the control group will not.

Both the intervention and control group will participate in five study visits over the course of 52 weeks. All visits and inquiries will be done via phone or video call and supplies and samples will be mailed so that the study is contactless. The first one is an introductory visit, and the next four are data collection visits, which include questionnaires and collection of breast milk and infant stool samples.

There will be two annual follow-up visits, one year and two years after the final data collection visit, along with monthly inquiries until the participants are no longer breastfeeding.

Participants will be compensated with a \$25 Amazon gift card each time they send in milk, but Ms. Sierra says the most important compensations will be the support women may gain from this study and the information that the results may offer.

"First-time mothers may be overwhelmed," she said. "There are little areas where we can help, such as giving them access to a lactation specialist and a dietician. I hope the women in this study can learn from it."

Furthermore, this study has the potential to offer serious implications for breast cancer prevention. If a balanced diet can lower breast cancer risk, "it will be great," said Ms. Sierra. "Breast can-

cer is a serious disease, and it's cool to see how diet affects health."

Ms. Sierra's experience in West Springfield has made her all the more excited to get West Side women to participate in the study. "Maybe I'm biased, but I love West Side," she said. "It's a tight-knit community."

As a student at the High School, she was involved in several community service opportunities such as Habitat for Humanity and cleaning parks. Also a member of the Wildlife Club in high school, Ms. Sierra has wanted to be a veterinarian since she was 6.

"My family took in animals in need," she explained. "When my dog got a rare form of terminal lung cancer I became interested in oncology work and decided that's what I would specialize in."

These lifelong passions for science and helping her community are what have led Ms. Sierra to this study. She hopes that both the support and findings of the study will reach women in West Springfield. "We can help out new moms the way we've always helped the schools and the senior center," Ms. Sierra said. "This is a learning experience that the town could benefit from."

For more information, prospective participants can visit <https://blogs.umass.edu/newmomswellness/> or the UMass New Moms Wellness Study Facebook page.



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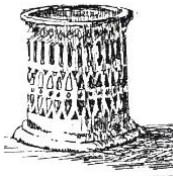
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# Registry of Motor Vehicles offers free upgrade to REAL ID

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) is encouraging all eligible customers to renew their standard Massachusetts driver's license or Massachusetts ID card online at [Mass.Gov/RMV](http://Mass.Gov/RMV) any time between now and Aug. 12, 2020, in order to qualify for a free upgrade to a REAL ID credential in 2021. This one-time, time limited offer is available to most customers who have an expired or expiring license or ID card dated between March 2020 and August 2021, as renewals are allowed up to two years after expiration, or up to a year in advance of the expiration date printed on their license or ID.

"The RMV is encouraging all of our customers to stay safe, save time, and go online during the COVID-19 pandemic to renew their license or ID card, rather than attempting to come in to get a REAL ID," said RMV Registrar Jamey Tesler. "Over 500,000 people have a license or ID credentials that expires this summer that can be renewed online, and we hope they will all take advantage of this one-time offer for a free, future upgrade to allow the RMV to prioritize 'social-distancing' and other essential transactions that may only be completed in-person."

Qualifying customers who complete their renewal online prior to Aug. 12 and

wish to upgrade to a REAL ID for free, will have to wait until at least February 2021 to visit an RMV Service Center. At this time, customers will not need a federally-compliant REAL ID for the purposes of boarding domestic flights prior to Oct. 1, 2021 because the federal government delayed the compliance effective date by one-year. The fee for obtaining a standard or REAL ID license is \$50, while the fee for obtaining a standard or REAL ID card is \$25. The typical \$25 upgrade / amendment fee will be waived under these qualifying circumstances. A limited digital campaign "Stay Safe, Save Time, Go Online" — will also accompany this promotion and can be viewed at the link: <https://youtu.be/B3NuHGTwa3Q>

Obtaining an initial federally-compliant REAL ID requires all customers to visit a Service Center in-person to present verifying documents. The RMV has introduced this initiative and fee waiver pursuant to Executive Order 39 issued by Governor Baker on June 12, 2020, and in light of the COVID-19 public health emergency to encourage 'social-distancing' and limit unnecessary travel by reducing the need for many customers to visit a Service Center, and allowing for the prioritization of essential in-person needs by appointment-only.

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