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Tuesday, January 29, 2008

## Regional digest

### Man arrested after guns found in vehicle

HOLDEN -- A Maine man was arrested last night when police found two handguns and ammunition in his vehicle after he was pulled over on Shrewsbury Street.

Douglas W. Stebbins, 24, of Norridge Wock, Maine, was charged with two counts of carrying a firearm without a firearm identification card and possession of ammunition without a firearm identification card. He was being held last night on \$2,500 cash bail in Holden Police Department lockup pending arraignment in Leominster District Court today, according to Detective Lt. Donald A. Ball.

Mr. Stebbins' Cadillac sedan was stopped about 9:50 p.m. by Holden police near South Wachusett Street as a result of an investigation, Detective Lt. Ball said. The bail was set so high because Mr. Stebbins was on probation in Maine for drug offenses, he said.

The case is being investigated by Detective Albert Bourget and other Holden police officers.

### Two injured in Rt. 146 head-on crash

SUTTON — A Leicester man drove the wrong way on Route 146 from Worcester to the Sutton-Millbury line before colliding with another car head-on, sending both drivers to Worcester hospitals with minor injuries yesterday, according to state police.

A state trooper noticed a 2006 Chrysler 300 traveling south in the northbound lane of Route 146 in the area of Interstate 290 and reported the car to state police in the Millbury barracks about 7 p.m., Trooper Eric Benson, a spokesman for the Massachusetts State Police, said.

Several state police cruisers were sent to the area and were able to locate the car, driven by Francis Pepin, 77, of Leicester, Trooper Benson said.

The car was still traveling south in the northbound lanes. State police, driving in the correct direction in the southbound lane parallel to Mr. Pepin, attempted to alert the driver to the fact that he was driving on the wrong side of the road by using their lights and sirens.

"Unfortunately, the troopers were not successful in getting the operator's attention," he said.

Mr. Pepin continued to travel south in the left northbound lane of Route 146, according to Trooper Benson, and his car collided head-on with another car as he approached the Millbury-Sutton line.

The other car, a 2001 Toyota Corolla driven by Matthew Stanley, 23, of Barre, was traveling north in the northbound lane of Route 146 when the two cars hit.

"Thankfully, there were no serious injuries," Trooper Benson said.

Mr. Pepin was taken by ambulance to St. Vincent Hospital at Worcester Medical Center with minor injuries.

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Mr. Stanley was taken by ambulance to UMass Memorial Medical Center — University Campus, Worcester, where he was treated and released, according to state police.

The accident remains under investigation, and no citations have been issued, Trooper Benson said. The Millbury and Sutton fire departments as well as emergency medical crews from both towns also responded to the accident.

#### Webster meeting lacks quorum

WEBSTER — A special town meeting scheduled for last night was adjourned to March 3 because the meeting lacked the quorum of 61 voters. At one point there were 57 voters at the meeting.

Town Administrator Raymond W. Houle Jr. said the delay means the town will not be able to issue property tax bills until late March.

Mr. Houle said he did not anticipate borrowing to meet the town's expenses. "Right now our cash flow is good. But I don't know if that will continue," he said.

The state Department of Revenue in December rejected the town's annual tax rate recapitulation sheet, a municipal financial statement that the DOR must certify before a community can set its property tax rate. The state agency said Webster had overestimated its revenue by about \$600,000.

Voters last night were to have acted on articles that would have balanced the budget and allowed the state to certify the financial statement.

#### Blaze destroys Shirley home

SHIRLEY — A house at 122 Hazen Road was damaged by a fire Sunday morning but nobody was injured, said Fire Chief Dennis Levesque.

Two cats died in the fire, however, which was contained to a bedroom in the ranch home, Chief Levesque said. The rest of the house sustained heavy smoke and heat damage, and Chief Levesque said he considered the structure to be a total loss.

The fire, which was reported at 7:30 a.m., is under investigation, he said.

The home is owned by Gary and Kathleen Bourassa, who lived there with their children. Some family members were home at the time of the fire, Chief Levesque said. However, everyone was able to get out of the house.



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