



## Try Halloween at St-Sturbridge Village with Phantoms by Firelight

Sturbridge Village hosts its popular Halloween program for 12 nights this fall and it's bigger than ever. You're invited and flame spinning. Watch acrobats fly high over the Village with their vampire-like ways. From specters to secrets, explore



to step into the fire lit shadows of history and uncover its eerie tales. Learn about the history of Halloween traditions, play games, find treats and listen to ghost stories by the bonfire. Plus, be entertained by the spectacle of mesmerizing performances including fire breathing

history's haunted mysteries. Don't miss this Halloween spectacular that runs Oct. 6-29 Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 4:30- 9 p.m. General admission

**PHANTOMS**  
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## The Awesome Elks of Auburn

BY JANET STOICA

They are quietly working behind the scenes to donate tens of thousands of dollars to local organizations and charities in our area. Do you know them? You've surely heard their name a few times or driven by their function hall on Route 12 in Auburn. They are the selfless and wonderful members of your local Elks organization and are truly one of the best of the best at what they do.

There are hundreds of charitable groups in our area whose members actively seek out those who need their assistance and they are all very worthy of mention. Society's givers are the greatest people you could ever meet and the Auburn Elks are one such chapter that stands proud. The Auburn Elks have a large membership. The Webster and Worcester chapters joined the Auburn group a few years ago and their membership now stands at

over 1600 individuals.

According to their website, "The National Order spends more than \$80,000,000 every year for benevolent, educational, and patriotic community-minded programs in such fields as benefiting special needs children, sponsoring Elks National Foundation scholarships, scouting, athletic teams, veterans' works, a national "Hoop Shoot" free-throw contest involving more than three million children, physical and occupational therapy programs, and patriotic programs.

The youth of our country have always been important to the Order. It is for this reason the Elks Drug Awareness Education Program was launched to warn primary grade students and their parents of the dangers in drug use. Additionally, every lodge observes June 14th as Flag Day, a tradition which the Elks began in 1907 and was later adopted by our U.S Congress as an official observance." Per-

sonally, I will always remember my local Webster Elks chapter holding a June 14th Flag Day parade as members first held a flag ceremony at their School Street Lodge and then walked from School Street to Main and then to the Town Hall. Very patriotic and emotional.

This year on September 16, the Auburn Elks will have held their second annual Build A Bed event with a purpose of building beds for children in need. A great team-building initiative sponsored by the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, a non-profit organization dedicated to ending homelessness. Teams of three to four individuals are organized and take a pre-packaged kit of lumber and transform each kit into a simple and sturdy bed. Elks members and their families also donate bedding

**ELKS**

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**ELKS**  
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items such as pillows, sheet sets, comforters, and stuffed toys that will complete each comfy twin bed. The process is as amazing as the Elks. Since the program's inception in 2012, volunteers from businesses, schools, and community organizations have put together over 4,000 beds for needy children.

"We have a grant committee that will determine how our funds will be used for the charities we support," said Elks member Joe Camere. Each bed's cost is \$350 and we allocated \$7,000 to make 20 beds. It was a great team-building event. The Build A Bed truck arrives with all the supplies and support we'll need. It's like we become IKEA (a Swedish company that designs and sells ready-to-assemble furniture.) We start at 9 a.m. and are finished a few hours later. Like their logo

states 'Every child deserves a place to dream.' Such a rewarding experience. We reward our teams with an enjoyable cookout after everything is completed."

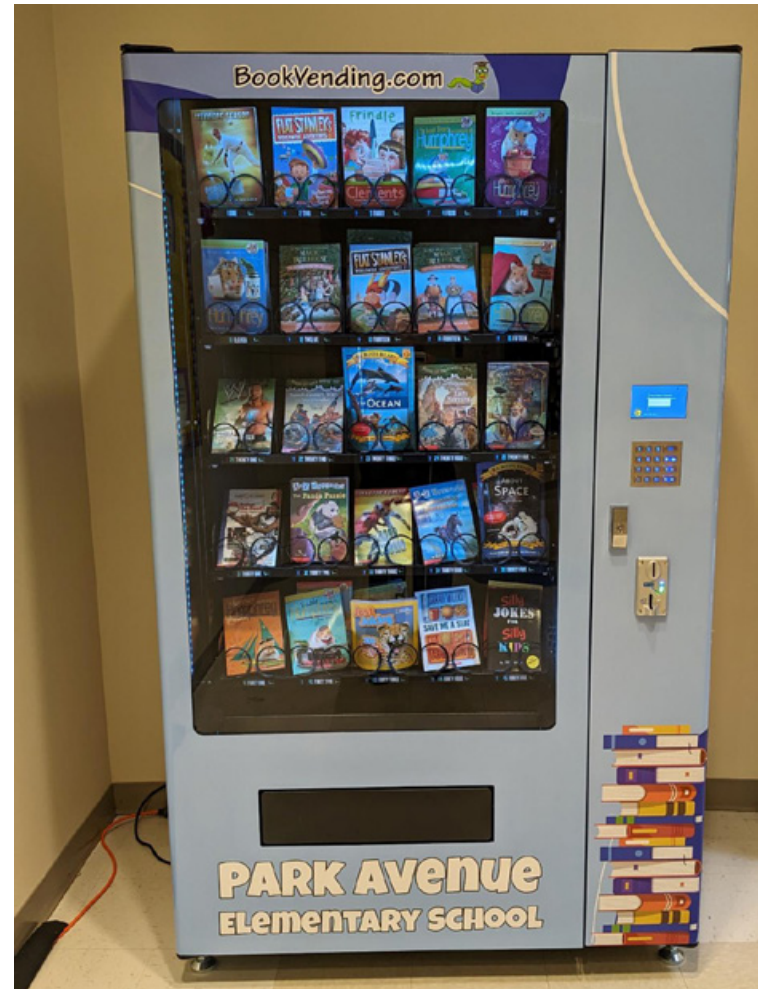
The Elks are involved in so many charitable events the list is incredible. They are so quiet about it which makes us appreciate them and their actions even more. "We go to soldiers' homes too," said Mr. Camere, "we'll provide summer cookouts and also donate \$5,000 to stock up their company store for the veterans' needs. We'll have November pie socials and also visit for cookies and ice cream events. Playing bingo is always a fun activity too. For our local children we'll have a Safety Day joining with the Auburn Fire and EMS Departments to provide childrens' bike helmets while educating them about bike safety and the DARE anti-drug program. We've donated to local high schools to help pay for student PSAT fees, sponsor Little League

and Lassie Leagues. For the Webster school system, we donated \$5,000 to purchase a Book Vending Machine that allows students to choose reward books."

Mr. Camere explained that the Auburn Elks chapter also provides student dictionaries. "You'd be surprised at the number of thank you letters we receive from students who appreciate receiving their own personal dictionaries!"

"Our local banquet hall does not charge a fee for local charitable events," said Joe, "we'll have Little League Banquets here as well as other charitable organization's functions. Our grounds have even held Soccer and Basketball Shoots. If one of the local participants makes it to the Nationals, we pay all expenses for their families to attend the National event. For scholarships, our lodge alone gives six to seven. Our bingo nights' income also helps pay for many of our donations."

Many of the local Elks' activities



include a fall dart league, cribbage, pool league, bocce, and a horseshoe league. They also host Valentine's Day dances and an adult and children's holiday party.

"I initially became involved with the Auburn Elks when I wanted to help provide Christmas baskets," said Joe, "these baskets included a complete turkey dinner for a needy family. I soon found myself more involved by helping to put together Bravery Boxes for our veterans. These boxes contained personal items like razors, toothbrushes, socks, and underwear. They were given to vets who had served overseas."

Mr. Camere has been an Elks member for about 15 years. "I'd go to events and then decided to become a member," he said, "I try to attend our monthly meetings as often as possible. Once you become an Elk and experience our activities and see what our goals are, you can't help but become involved with your community. Helping people is what it's all about."

The Auburn Elks are located at 754 Southbridge Street, Auburn MA 01501.

Phone: (508) 832-9303 or visit [elks.org](http://elks.org)

Contact Janet: [jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com](mailto:jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com)

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**Contact us:**  
Patty Roy, Editor: [proy@theyankeeexpress.com](mailto:proy@theyankeeexpress.com)  
Submit business news and community events to [news@theyankeeexpress.com](mailto:news@theyankeeexpress.com)  
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Laura Gleim, Billing & Sales: [lgleim@theyankeeexpress.com](mailto:lgleim@theyankeeexpress.com)  
Bill Cronan, Blackstone Valley Sales: [bcronan@theyankeeexpress.com](mailto:bcronan@theyankeeexpress.com)

Kimberly Vasseur, Production Manager  
Sally Patterson, Graphic Artist  
Contributing Writers and Columnists: Tom D'Agostino, Christine Galeone, Amy Palumbo-Leclair, Mark Marzeotti, John Paul, Janet Stoica, Christopher Tremblay

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## PHANTOMS

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tickets go on sale Sept. 9. Full online ticker prices are \$35 for an adult and \$17.50 for a youth. Members get reduced prices.

The extravaganza continues this year with new featured acts and returning acts to mesmerize and intrigue. Traveling performers take over the entire landscape with their feats of fire-defying dare. Whisperings of fire throwers, acrobatics, aerial dancers, and dark magicians have been heard about the town. You'll be enraptured by the captivating performances

appearing from all corners of the Village.

**Clues & Candy** is the Village's version of trick-or-treat! Come dressed in costume. This is a fun-filled activity for kids young and old. Collect all the stamps at various locations in the Village to reveal a finished image or travel around and answer all the riddles. At the end, collect a bag full of candy and sweet treats.

Gather around the warm glow of the bonfire and join us for family-friendly, spooky stories around on the Village Common. Our talented narrators will share tales of New England

ghosts, haunted houses not too far away, and gruesome legends from the past.

Learn about funeral traditions in the 1830s. Attend a wake, see coffin making in the Cabinetmaking shop, study examples of mourning jewelry and artwork being made from hair. Learn about the history of jack o'lanterns, other-worldly spirits, as well as creepy cures for diseases.

Try stilt walking or create spooky selfie for a spooky selfie contest.

Try a special menu at the Bullard Tavern or the Ox and Yoke Café to sample a spooktacular

menu created for Phantoms by Firelight.

On select nights, October 14th, 22nd, and 27th, there will also be a special author

book signing with Thomas D'Agostino, one of the region's most well-known writers and investigators of the paranormal.

# Ignite Success and up your game with BVCC

The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce (BVCC) is proud to launch "Ignite Success" a professional development conference from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 12 at the Community Harvest Project Barn, 37 Wheeler Road, North Grafton. The conference is aimed at professionals in business and non-profits who want to improve their emotional intelligence and learn how to interact with co-workers, customers, sponsors and donors more effectively. Through the power of storytelling, attendees will learn how to hone their decision-making skills and their chances of success in business.

"Whether you are in sales communicating with your customer, a non-profit trying to reach potential donors, or an entrepreneur becoming proficient in story telling is a provocative way to reach your target audience," said Jeannie Herbert, BVCC president and CEO.

Participants will be walked through a framework of storytelling as is used in PBS' "Stories from the Stage," by Cheryl Hamilton, the show's producer and founder of Stellar Story Company.

Cheryl points out, "Each day we

write a story when we decide what to focus on, what we rehash and what we worry about."

Ignite Success: A Professional Development Conference will give you the tools to help drive how you interact with co-workers, form decision-making and ultimately attain success. Facilitators joining Cheryl include Lynn Whitney-Turner, Business Coach and Owner of CoreXP Business Solutions, Andrew Shelffo, Professional Story Teller and Coach, and Elizabeth Solomon, Certified Coleman Emotional Intelligence Coach. While some of the participants are preparing their "Story Slam", they will be joined by a professional panel including John Penrose, CEO Leading Indicator Systems, Inc., Inventor of AgileBrain, Peter Stanton, Publisher Worcester Business Journal, (the media sponsor) and Moe Belliveau, Executive Director of the Greater East Hampton Chamber of Commerce and whose Ignite conference we are modeled from. They will be discussing "Why Our Story connections Matter".

Register online at [www.blackstonevalley.org/events](http://www.blackstonevalley.org/events). The Conference includes presenter materials,

continental breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks. Members 200.00, future members 275.00

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# Should I stay or should I go?

BY JANET STOICA

*Our columnist mulls over the good, the bad and the ugly of changing jobs.*

**D**o you know anyone who's stayed at their job for more than five years? If you do, these people are the exception. Most young graduates tend to be job jumpers seeking job satisfaction quickly or they're out. However, if you have a job that you love, it's not really a job after all, is it? You're just lovin' it. For myself, writing articles, stories, texts, and letters is, for the most part, fun and enjoyable. I came to write for newspapers like this one and the Worcester Telegram 13 years ago when the editor of a local

publication was looking for writers. Even though I had never written professionally before, she asked me to write a few samples for her. Apparently, she liked what I wrote as here I am 13 years later. I've had a few or more jobs in my life with one in particular that was a winner for sure.

I was working at a manufacturing company (let's call them company A) as a sales administrator for several years and when my manager was terminated, I was called upon to make a presentation to a small out-of-town corporation (company B) for one of the products we manufactured. I took this very seriously and prepared many slides and sales materials with the help of my production manager, purchasing manager, etc.

After my presentation and after company B's visiting president and vice president had departed our office with promises for follow-up and a possible sale (after all, no sale is ever final until that sales agreement is signed), I received a phone call from company B's vice president offering me a job and asking if I would like to work for them.

I was totally blown away and had never experienced a job offer in this way before. I was on cloud nine for several days while I mulled over my final decision. I wanted to make the sale to the prospective customer and also considered the pros and cons of accepting that new position. I told the VP that I'd have a decision in a week and did they have any questions about my product presentation? The VP

advised me that they'd like to go forward with the sale and that I should prepare the sales agreement documentation.

The sale was signed, sealed, and delivered in two days with my visit to company B's offices leaving with a deposit check in my hand. Three days later, I had also negotiated a company B employment offer with a substantial salary increase and had given my two-weeks' notice to company A.

After several months with company B, I realized that I had made the biggest mistake of my employment life. The first few weeks of my employment were filled with factory tours, product immersion, and customer backgrounds. I soon realized that my job was purely a quota fill for having more women on their staff as my responsibilities were almost non-existent. I also saw that there were no other women managers in the organization. In meetings, whenever I was asked for product suggestions or other comments which I willingly offered, there was lots of head nodding and thank you's given for my ideas, but not one of my suggestions, no matter how minor, was ever implemented. I felt useless. It was as if my job entailed sitting at my desk, smiling, and answering the few phone calls that came my way. I was bored beyond belief. I couldn't wait for my days to end, it was pure agony to even drive to work.

One day, in my 30-something year old life, I saw and heard an exchange between the owner and his production manager. The office I sat in was surrounded by a half-wall of glass to the ceiling. The outside cavernous hallway leading to the production area was clearly visible from my desk. As I hung up from one of the rare phone calls I received, I saw and heard the owner and his production manager in the hallway having a heated disagreement. Heavy profanity-laced words and phrases were flying and echoing off the hallway walls like bullets. Wicked phrases, the likes of which I had never heard, were enough to make me wonder if both men had gone mad. After this five-minute spectacle that seemed

like forever, they walked into the manufacturing area continuing their ranting as their spit flew and eyeballs bulged. I was incredulous. In all the previous jobs I'd held, I'd never seen a more unprofessional and degrading form of disagreement. This company was certainly not for me.

I had met a consultant at company B whom I had known from a previous employer. He had been hired by them to offer suggestions to improve sales into new areas. He and I had many talks about this company's future, its management, and how I did not feel that I fit into their management style. Between the well-respected consultant and myself, we came to a tentative solution of my employment dilemma. I would have a sit-down meeting with the vice president who had hired me with the consultant at my side. It was done. I expressed how I felt I had made an error in accepting the position. A cloud immediately came over the face of the vice president and he expressed his dismay that they had not fulfilled my job expectations and indicated that he would speak with the owner/president and would get back to me the next day.

The following day I was presented with an offer I could not refuse. I was given a two-month full-pay severance package, longer if needed, along with the use of the retired executive vice president's private corner office complete with computer, printer/fax, phone, etc. and anything else I needed for my new job search. I could come and go as I pleased. What? Who does that? Where was I, on another planet? Well, I did find a new position within the two-month timeframe and learned a huge lesson in life ... a big paycheck does not mean that a job will be fulfilling. I felt like the luckiest person in the world to have had such a generous departing gift from the company that wanted to fill its quota of women-on-board. They could have just terminated me and even though they were a wild and crazy group, they finally had treated me with respect and dignity.

Contact Janet: [jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com](mailto:jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com)

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# Blackstone River Valley Heritage Center at Worcester Reopens

The Blackstone River Valley Heritage Center at Worcester (3 Paul Clancy Way, Worcester, MA) has reopened for visitors under the management of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MassDCR). Operating hours are Thursday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In July, representatives from MassDCR and Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (BHC) were brought together by Senator Michael Moore and Representative Dan Donahue to discuss the reopening of the Worcester Visitor Center and its importance

to the community and the region. The Visitor Center opened to the public in October of 2018. Due to COVID, it was closed to the public in March of 2020.

"It was a pleasure to visit the Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center," Senator Michael Moore announced after his visit to talk about the reopening. "We discussed the history of the Blackstone Valley and the ways we're sharing its fascinating stories with residents and visitors alike through interactive exhibits. Thank you to Commissioner Arrigo for your incredible work to preserve the history of this great Commonwealth!"

The Heritage Center houses several hands-on exhibits, telling the nationally significant story of the Blackstone River Valley being

the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. In addition, there are a number of outdoor exhibits that interpret history and the natural environment. The Heritage Center is also home to the start of a 2.5-mile segment of the Blackstone River Bikeway that runs to Millbury for a five mile round trip ride.



From left: Susan Hamilton (MassDCR), Jennifer Stowe (MassDCR), Dennis Rice (BHC BoD), Senator Michael Moore, Commissioner Brian Arrigo (MassDCR), Representative Dan Donahue, Devon Kurtz (BHC), and Harry Whitin (BHC BoD). Photo submitted





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## Webster Five Gives \$6,000 Boost to Tri-Valley, Inc.

The Webster Five Foundation recently announced that they will be donating \$6,000 to Tri-Valley, Inc., based in Dudley, MA. The awarded grant monies will go to its Money Management Program to help provide seniors with services and support to maintain independence and financial stability.

The mission of Tri-Valley, Inc. is to promote and maintain an optimal level of independence, dignity, and well-being for elders and younger individuals with disabilities by providing information, advocacy, and access to quality services and resources, as well as caregiver support.

"We are deeply touched by the generosity of this donation," said Lisa Prince, Executive Director, Tri-Valley, Inc. "Thanks to contributions like this one from Webster Five, we can continue empowering seniors with the resources they need to maintain their financial independence."

"Webster Five is pleased to have the opportunity to provide this grant to Tri-Valley, Inc.," said Don Doyle, President and CEO, Webster Five. "Financial stability is critical in all stages of life, and we commend Tri-Valley for their efforts in advocating for our seniors."

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# Blackstone Valley Heritage Quilters Guild

The Blackstone Valley Heritage Quilters Guild would like to welcome new members to the guild this season 2023/2024 year. Are you a quilter? Maybe you have thought you might like to improve or learn how to make beautiful, fun quilts. Well, in this guild you will meet many talented ladies always willing to teach and help everyone. You will get to enjoy programs during meetings such as speakers from various quilt shops, like Blackstone Valley Quilt Shop from Rhode Island, the Quilted Crow and more. You will also learn helpful tips at the meetings and attend workshops with very creative ladies sharing their knowledge. BVHQ Guild meets on the last Wednesday of each month from 7-9pm. During the winter, our meetings are held on Saturdays 1-3pm. All meetings are held at St. Patrick's Church in Whitinsville, with doors opening ½ hour prior to the start of the meetings. Workshops

are 8:30-3:00 at St. Peter's Church in Northbridge on the first Saturday of each month. You will have the opportunity to learn hands on at the workshops while making an amazing pattern. This year our first workshop will be a holiday table runner. The runners will be shown at our first meeting. The instructor at the workshop will have samples and instructions as well as one-on-one assistance. These workshops are \$25 for members and \$35 for non-members. You can attend your first meeting free to enjoy and learn about us. We start Wednesday, September 27, 2023. The doors open at 6:30 and the meeting starts at 7:00. Annual dues are \$30. Attending our meetings, you will have the opportunity of learning amazing tips and tricks along with new skills. Feel free to bring a friend. Please consider joining us this season and start creating your own quilted projects. Dates for meetings, programs, workshops,

retreats and mystery trips will be available at the start of the meetings on September 27 at 7:00 at St. Patrick's

Church in Whitinsville. The doors open at 6:30. We would love to meet you at our meetings this fall. Come to

enjoy a wonderful social evening. For more information contact: Marsha Lambert Mluvs2sew@gmail.com



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LIVING WITH LUKE

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# Luke Valentino, a Dog with a Big Head

BY AMY LECLAIRE

Every dog I've owned has captured my heart in a different way. Duke was my humble German Shepherd, unaware of his majestic size, a dog whose stick happened to be a log that he carried around the yard. Max was my childhood flame, the hippie mongrel whose life was taken by the last car he would chase. Lincoln was my bestie, king of this very column, and victor of all things ball related. What about Luke Valentino?

Gosh how I love that meatball. His boxy head, gentle face, and inquisitive mind have had me at hello. His head (though a pedigree perk) has caused grand speculation. "Your dog has a blockhead!" They stalk him on the streets. "I've never seen a bigger block head than his!" They comment at cafes. "That is the blockiest head I've ever seen." Luke glances up at me while the irony settles between us. Luke Valentino is no blockhead. I say this with all due respect to



Clockwise from above: Luke and Rosie play hard, Luke and Rosie pose for the camera, Luke nibbles on a slice of watermelon.



the blockhead dogs out there (I've owned a few). Some dogs just don't listen, understand, or care to comply. They are the dogs who dash for the woods when you call them back. They are blockheads.

Luke, a non-blocky, is highly responsive, intelligent, and very capable when it comes to learning commands. He also knows how to do laundry, load the dishwasher, and dig holes for my flowers. Recently, he surprised me with even more knowledge—proper eating etiquette.

"Luke, do you want to try a piece?" He learned how to eat watermelon like a human! He sat, begged, and watched me eat with the attention of an overachiever. His nose moistened. His paw rose slowly from the ground, a trade-off. His eyes held the taste of desire while he watched the watermelon wedge move closer to his mouth. "Go easy, Luke." He nibbled off the top, chewed, then repeated, just the way he saw me do it. "Good boy!" I imagined him wiping the corners of his mouth with a cloth napkin.

His eating manners have followed him to the front steps, where he sits patiently and watches how the rest of the world works. He knows the rules. He needs to STAY,

even when tempted to GO. I've watched him lift his big head to the fascinating sights on the road. Dogs on leashes and children on scooters fill his gaze. His heart swells with longing. "There goes Oscar, my little dachshund buddy." Every temptation draws him one thought closer to making the right choice. It's not easy for a playful pup to stay put. His pumpkin squash of a head creases. A group of young boys begin a game of Race at the Stop sign down the hill from the front steps. "One, two,

three." He listens while they count and smiles. He seems to understand the sequence of numbers. Finally, off they go until out of sight. His smile closes while he concentrates on their disappearance, a sudden wolf in deep thought. "I bet I'm faster than them. The chubby one doesn't stand a chance." Sometimes the dichotomy between what Luke is supposed to do (STAY) and what he wants to do (GO) is just too great.

"Hi Rosie. I'm supposed to stay on my front step now." He watches his favorite Doodle stroll along the sidewalk with her Dog Mom. Typically, he sleeps late and doesn't get to see the early risers. This morning is special. Rosie's playful spirit matches Luke's exuberance. She's sprightly and spunky, known to bounce across into my yard for a sudden playdate. "Hi Luke. I need



Luke Valentino, 18 months

## Prayer



Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (intention), Amen.

If you pray three times a day, three consecutive days, you will receive your intention, no matter how impossible it may seem. Praise and Thanksgiving please the Heart of God. **Believer**

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LUKE

continued on page 9



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BY MARK MARZEOTTI

buying your first home or selling once again, it's critical to work with experts who can guide you through each unique step of the process like The Marzeotti Group.

The reality is, not all agents operate the same way. To truly make a powerful and confident decision as you buy or sell a home, you need a real expert who uses their knowledge of what's really happening with home prices, housing supply, industry projections, and more to give you the best possible advice. Someone who can provide clarity and trust like that is essential to your success.

Housing market headlines are everywhere. Many are quite sensational, ending with exclamation points or predicting doom and gloom for the industry. Unfortu-

nately, when information in the media isn't clear, it can generate a lot of fear and uncertainty for consumers. In the absence of trustworthy, up-to-date information, real estate decisions can be driven by fear, uncertainty, and doubt.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Buying a home is a big decision, and it should be one you feel confident making. You can lean on an expert to help you separate fact from fiction and get the answers you need.

The right agent can assist you in figuring out what's going on at the national level and in your local area. They can qualify headlines using data you can trust. Experts have in-depth knowledge of the industry and can provide facts, so you know how current trends compare to the normal ebbs and flows in the housing market, historical data, and more.

Then, to make sure you have the full picture, an expert can tell

you if your local area is following the national trend or if they're seeing something different in your market. Together, you can use all that information to make the best possible decision.

After all, making a move is a potentially life-changing milestone. It should be something you feel ready for and excited about. And that's where



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and noses her side. "Freedom!" Within seconds the two friends are a tangle of play in my yard. Dog Moms have been had. I should be redirecting my dog to his spot on the step and exerting a dose of tough love. Instead, I consider

the full evidence of his behavior. He stayed on the step while racers sprinted up the road. He learned how to eat watermelon.

Two out of three isn't bad, especially for a dog with a big head.

**LUKE**

*continued from page 8*

to walk today." This morning is different. Rosie needs to pick up the pace and get back home. She cranes her neck back to tell Luke. Still, he remains unconvinced. "Stay a few minutes?" He moves to the middle of the lawn to give her a closer look at his big, handsome head. He stares and smiles, in hopes that she'll reciprocate his advance.

"I have to go now, Luke." Her Dog Mom tugs her forward until she passes by our house. Her pace is a shuffle at best. She's unable to resist Luke's glance. "I-have-to-go-for-a-walk-Luke." Her footsteps continue to stutter. Luke picks up on the cue. "She wants to play just as much as I do. I can feel it."

Suddenly, he breaks the STAY rule. He turns into a blockhead. "ROSIEEEEEEE!!!!" He arrives within seconds at her shoulder

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**P**aying for health care can be challenging — but are you taking full advantage of all the resources available to you?



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

You might have access to a Health Savings Account (HSA) or a Flexible Spending Account (FSA), so let's look at both.

An HSA is a personal savings account used to pay health care costs. If you're enrolled in a high-deductible health plan, you also may be eligible to contribute to an HSA. You aren't taxed on the money you put into this account or on the earnings generated from your contributions, as long as withdrawals are used for qualified health care costs such as deductibles, copayments and coinsurance. And there's no "use it or lose it" provision with HSAs — the money stays in your account until you use it. In fact, you can carry your HSA with you all the way until retirement, when you can use the money to pay for qualified expenses that

Medicare or Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) doesn't cover. In 2023, you can contribute up to \$3,850 to an HSA, or \$4,850 if you're 55 or older; for family coverage, you can put in up to \$7,750.

It's important to keep in mind that your HSA's tax benefits only apply when your withdrawals are used for qualified health care costs. If you use the money for non-qualified expenses, it is considered taxable income, and you may also face a penalty of 20% on the amount withdrawn. However, once you turn 65, you can use your HSA funds for any purpose without a penalty, though the withdrawals will still count as taxable income.

Now, let's turn to the Flexible Savings Account. An FSA may be available to you if you get health insurance through your employer. And because you fund your FSA with pretax dollars, your contributions can reduce your taxable income. (In 2023, you can contribute up to \$3,050 to an FSA.) Your employer may also choose to contribute to your FSA. Once your account is funded and active, you submit claims with proof of your medical expenses, along with a statement that these expenses aren't covered by your plan, and you can be reimbursed for your costs.

It's helpful to have a good estimate of your yearly medical expenses for a Flexible Savings Account. That's because an FSA generally needs to be spent before the end of the plan year — if you don't use all the money, you can

only carry over some of it and any remaining balance is forfeited. (You can carry over up to \$610 from 2023 into 2024.)

You can't contribute to an HSA and a traditional FSA in the same year. But if you have an HSA, you might be able to use what's known as a Limited Purpose Flexible Spending Account (LPFSA) for dental and vision expenses. You'll need to check with your plan to see if this option is available.

Managing your health care expenses should be a key part of your overall financial strategy — so consider putting an HSA or FSA to work for you.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Dennis Antonopoulos, your local Edward Jones Advisor at 5 Albert Street, Auburn, MA 01501 Tel: 508-832-5385 or dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com. Edward Jones Member SIPC

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# Pricey catalytic converter, exhaust replacement necessary?

**Q.** I have a 2011 Honda CR-V that I bought new. It has 79,000 miles and runs fine. I have taken good care of it and always used high-quality gasoline. To pass inspection the upper catalytic converter and exhaust manifold needed to be replaced, at a cost of almost \$4,000.



BY JOHN PAUL

I was surprised that it failed so soon. I have driven several Toyotas and other cars over 100,000 miles and never had a catalytic converter fail. Could it have been defective or is there another reason it failed so soon?

**A.** Normally catalytic converters are designed to last the life of the vehicle. That being said, catalytic converters can fail early from overheating, chemical contamination, poor fuel quality, weird fuel additives, alcohol, and faulty sensors. As an example, a faulty coolant sensor or oxygen sensor that causes the car to use too much fuel can overload the

aftermarket converter. Talk to your shop and they will know which ones work best.

**Q.** I recently had an issue with my 2017 Toyota RAV4 air conditioning which stopped cooling when I turned it on. All I got was warm air and the settings were correct. I called my dealership and was told by the service representative that they would have to drain my air conditioning refrigerant and then put a dye in to see if there was a leak. The cost for that alone would be \$299 and then depending on what they found, there would be an additional cost to repair it. Is this standard procedure for my issue? It just seemed like a money grab to me. After talking to my son, he suggested that I purchase a can of A/C PRO with a hose and my son showed me how to use it and we fixed the problem, and it continues to work fine. Should that have been the first step for the dealership?

**A.** In my opinion both options are wrong. Adding refrigerant without knowing if something else is wrong can cause an issue with overcharging. Evacu-



converter and cause it to fail. The same type of issue is if you had a spark plug misfiring it will overheat the catalytic converter. The code is most likely a PO420 and although the converter could be faulty an exhaust leak could be the cause. The price of \$4000 is a little high but the shop may be adding time for rusty bolts. You may be able to save some money with a fully compliant

ating the system without knowing if there is an electrical problem first is not a great diagnostic procedure either. In both cases some basic testing should be performed first. The good news is that the air conditioner works, the bad news is that there is most likely a leak. The A/C PRO (a good DIY product) does have a sealer that could slow or even stop a leak.

**Q.** I am an artist and recently purchased a used minivan for going to craft fairs and shows to sell my art. The good news is the family I purchased it from only used it for vacations and as a spare vehicle. The bad news is every state park or attraction they went to they put bumper stickers all over the back hatch. The paint is generally in decent shape, how do I remove the bumper stickers, without damaging the paint?

**A.** Start with giving the car a good wash and then with a hair dryer or heat gun (set on low) warm up the sticker to soften the glue. When it is warm to the touch try to grab the edge of the bumper sticker and once you are able to lift it off, fold it over on itself and continue to apply heat. This is sometimes referred to as 180-degree release which works better than pulling the sticker off as a 90-degree angle. Once you remove the stickers clean up the glue with an adhesive remover such as Goo-Gone or even WD-40 can work. The adhesive remover will also remove the wax, so wash and wax the car to protect the paint.

**Q.** I recently purchase a 2008 Lexus ES350 with 79,000 miles and it is in remarkable shape considering its age. The gas door states Premium 91 octane gas only. The gas stations have Regular 87 octane, Special 89 octane, and Super 93 octane gas. Which do you recommend I use?

**A.** According to the Lexus web site 91 octane fuel is the minimum recommended, so that would be premium -highest grade at most pumps. But it is just a recommendation not a requirement. At AAA we did some very scientific testing on vehicles

that recommend premium fuel and we found in just about every case that using 87-octane fuel had no or little effect on fuel economy or performance. If you did notice a very slight reduction in fuel economy and performance, in my opinion it is not enough to justify the 75 cent's difference in cost. Readers, if your vehicle requires premium fuel, you must use it, but if it is

recommended you have a choice. John Paul is AAA Northeast's Car Doctor. He has over forty years' experience and is an ASE-certified master technician. He will answer readers' questions each week. Email your questions to jpaul@aanortheast.com. Follow John on Twitter @johnfpaul and friend him on Facebook at mrjohnfpaul.

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TALES FROM BEYOND

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# Where are the Remains of Rhode Island's First Settler? Part 2

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

*When last we heard of the whereabouts of the Rev. Blackstone's remains, they were interred in the vast works of the Ann & Hope Mill. Did they stay there? Read on to find out. (Missed Part 1? Visit theyankeeexpress.com)*

According to Amelia Daggert Sheffield who had taken her father's accounts and edited them for the book "A Sketch of the History of Attleborough from its Settlement to the Division," the box was to be buried under the building and the monument erected in his name. A very old postcard of the mill shows the monument beside one of the mill walls.

The monument as described by Mrs. Sheffield stood a few yards from the original grave which was now covered by the Ann & Hope mill. In her own words from the aforementioned book:

"It is of granite about twelve

feet high, -the base five or six feet square and the shaft a foot or more smaller, tapering slightly. It is within the enclosed grounds of the mill, surrounded by the vivid green of a beautiful lawn, being the only object on it."

The front has a cross on it, naming it as the Rev. Blackstone's burial place, as well as the claim that he was a founder of Boston and the first white settler of Rhode Island. The monument's other three sides boast the rest of his lifetime achievements, the date of his settlement in Rhode Island (a year before his friend Roger Williams) and date of his death. All in all, pretty typical of an honorary monument. As for his bones, a certain G.W. Pratt was entrusted to hold onto the wooden box which had been sealed with lead and metal bands until the mill was completed and the monument erected.

For many years the remains of Preacher Blackstone rested with his monument in the industrial clamor of whirring engines and

spindles. The "Spirit of the Gentle Sage" was most definitely out of his environment in this eternal habitat. His mortal coil was untouched from 1889 to the 1940's when the textile industry began a southward migration in search of cheaper labor. Ann & Hope's majestic walls soon held but memories and ghosts of the American Industrial Revolution. As for the monument, the grass grew wild and the stone fell into neglect.

This was short lived, however. World War II gave new life to the mill as a repair depot for armory of the Navy. Now the monument had a new dilemma. The hustle and bustle of trains loading and unloading threatened its existence. The First Presbyterian Church of Cumberland then entered in agreement to move the monument to a piece of their land for further preservation. The Navy agreed and in 1944 William Blackstone's monument was moved to its present location on Broad and Cumberland Streets which overlooks the rear of the great mill.

Were his remains moved with the monument? It was then unclear whether they had been dug up and relocated. It was unclear if they had ever been buried under or near the vast stone to begin with. The town of Cumberland now maintains the minute park where the stone graces the small walkway that encompasses it. The obelisk looks slightly out of place sitting on a corner right next to a sidewalk overlooking what is now deemed as America's first discount store.

The elusive bones can be traced up to the 1960's when James Furay, who was Ann & Hope's plant manager in the 40's, was overseeing a digging project to extend utilities to a newly constructed cottage that was to be used as an office. While digging, the backhoe ran into a box. It was sealed in heavy lead and the corners had been soldered tight. Upon opening it the crew found some bone fragments and very old nails. The box had been buried north of one of the north towers that was razed

during renovations to the mill.

The box sat in a store room until the 1960's when Ann & Hope went through another expansion. It was then that Furay's old office and store room were cleaned and room was made for a new structural enclosure. He had intended to give the box to the Rhode Island Historical Society but never got around to it. No one knows what happened to the box. It obviously, according to these accounts, was not reburied under the monument when the obelisk was moved to its present location.

Did the small coffin containing Reverend Blackstone's remains get thrown out when the store was expanding? If so, then it is more than likely our founder is now buried in the State Landfill. Does that sound like a fitting way to bestow our gratitude for the great Reverend who was the first white settler of our state, rode a bull, (that's right. Not a horse, a bull!) and gave Rhode Island it's famous apples?



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## QCC awards \$1.2 million under MassReconnect

Quinsigamond Community College has awarded 410 students a total of \$1.2 million to cover tuition, fees and books under Massachusetts's new MassReconnect program that makes community college free for eligible Massachusetts residents aged 25 and older. QCC's financial aid and admissions department worked rapidly to secure funding for the first group of students who will receive MassReconnect funding for the fall 2023 semester. QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja joined Governor Healey earlier today for the official announcement of the program.

"Governor Healey's MassReconnect initiative will be life-changing for so many residents in the Commonwealth who, until now, have not had the financial means to attain or complete a college education," said Dr. Pedraja. "At QCC, we anticipate MassReconnect to have a major impact on the communities we serve. This initiative will support thousands of Massachusetts residents to achieve their education and occupational goals, while increasing the economic health and prosperity of the Commonwealth. I want to personally thank Governor Healey and the Massachusetts legislature for supporting a program that will change the trajectory of the lives of so many people."

Governor Healey invested \$20 million in MassReconnect for the first year of implementation in her first budget that she signed earlier this month. This funding covers the full cost of tuition and fees and includes an allowance for books and supplies at each of Massachusetts' 15 community colleges. Additionally, each community college will also receive \$100,000 from this funding to support student and community program awareness, staffing, and program administration.

"MassReconnect will be transformative for thousands of students, for our amazing community colleges, and for our economy," said Governor Healey. "It will bolster the role of community colleges as economic drivers in our state and help us better meet the needs of businesses to find qualified, well-trained workers. We can also make progress in breaking cycles of intergenerational poverty by helping residents complete their higher education credentials so they can attain good jobs and build a career path. Our administration is grateful for the partnership of the Legislature to move forward on this critical program that will make our state more affordable, competi-

tive and equitable."

Funding from MassReconnect is still available for the fall semester. In order to qualify for MassReconnect, students must be 25 or older on the first day of their classes and be a permanent Massachusetts resident for at least one year at the start of the enrolled term. The program is limited to residents who have not previously earned a college degree (associates or bachelor's) who enroll in at least six credits per semester in an approved program of study leading to an associate degree or certificate at a community college.

To learn more, visit [QCC.edu/Massreconnect](http://QCC.edu/Massreconnect)

## Local author publishes book of poetry

"Thank God for Rainbows" is a series of poems written by a woman who was once

a submissive, very sensitive child whose potential was never reached because of childhood trauma and inappropriate marriages. It is a plea to parents, partners, and employers everywhere to be more compassionate, openly loving, and better listeners.

For years, the author contemplated suicide, but saw glimpses of hope (rainbows) around the corner. Her current rainbow is a

newly found conviction that there is a special kind of life and love after death.



### About the Author

From author Liz Braczyk: "I am an unwilling loner, although I was married twice. I had three goals as a teenager: to be a good student, then a good teacher, then a good wife. The "good student" I achieved, graduating from college summa cum laude. My teaching career lasted three months. (Junior high students were too difficult for me to control!) But I still consider myself an amateur teacher. My

primary goal was to be a good wife. Alas, not having found myself and labeled mentally ill, I could not love another "until death do us part". I divorced my second husband in 1995, but I stood by him as a friend, providing daily care to him from 2016-2020, when he entered a nursing home. During the years 2020-2023, I found freedom to be my true self, with the help of meditation, the arts, and my beloved cat Lucy, always a rainbow of love and optimism. Now age 72, I am facing end stage renal failure (as a result of psychiatric medication) and PTSD with God's help."

Thank God for Rainbows is a 66-page paperback with a retail price of \$13.00 (eBook \$8.00). The ISBN is 979-8-88925-326-6. It was published by RoseDog Books of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

+

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# Oxford Crop Walk

BY PATTY ROY

**C**laire Johnson has been on the Oxford Ecumenical Council for seven years, and this is her third year in charge of the of Oxford CROP Hunger Walk that takes walkers from all eight of the town's churches as well as people who are committed to "ending hunger one step at a time."

The goal this year is to \$2500 though walker sponsorships or online donations, Johnson said. The money goes to Church World Services to help families who are struggling with hunger in communities around the world and in Oxford.

The walk starts at First Congregational Church, 355 East Main Street at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 15.

"It's usually a nice day and a nice walk," said Johnson. "Everybody's welcome."

Anywhere from 20 – 50 walkers turn out for the event, she said, but they really encourage young walkers to join.

"I think they're the real influencers," she said.

The day starts off with a meet-up at First Church, along with the greetings there is a group

prayer and a prayer over the group, she said.

The walk is an easy one over flat ground and it's a fun chance to explore the streets of your hometown.

It's really nice to talk together and at the end, all the walkers stay for pizza and treats brought by the walkers.

The money raised goes to the international CROP hunger Walk organization, but 25 percent is returned to Oxford for the Ecumenical Council Food Shelf pantry that is located in the Oxford Community Center basement.

"That's huge," Johnson said, because the Food Shelf is able to shop at the Worcester Food Bank, buying in bulk at reduced prices.

High school students, elementary and middle school students can all make a bug impact, she said, not just by participating, but by holding canned goods and clothing drives.

Anyone who wants to avail themselves of what the Community Shelf offers, can show up at "shopping times" from 4:30-6:30 p.m. on Thursdays. People are allowed to get food two times a month, or three times in a month that has five Thursdays.

They must register before they shop, but typically will be allowed to shop with a helper the first time they show up.

Besides food, the Food Shelf stocks personal items like soap, deodorant and toothpaste.

There are canned goods, frozen foods, non-perishables and in season fresh produce from the Share Garden. There have been over 2000 visits in the decade between 2010 and 2020 to the Food Shelf food pantry,

On an international level, a donation of just \$17 will provide a family with chicken which will supply protein -rich eggs. Water filters can be had for a \$30 donation, offering clean water for drinking, washing and cooking. A refugee to the U.S. can get a week's worth of groceries for \$75.

Over 2000 communities join in the annual walk.

The volunteers at the Food Shelf want you to let anyone in Oxford who is having a hard time feeding themselves or their children, they should go to the Food Shelf where they will be gladly helped.

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2023/team/oxford-ecumenical-council-oxford-ma>

# Local artist receives 41st ArtsWorcester Award

**A**rtsWorcester has announced that Lora Brueck, artist, librarian, archivist, and volunteer, will be the recipient of the 41st ArtsWorcester Award. The ArtsWorcester Award is given annually to an individual who has made extraordinary contributions to arts and culture in this city. Its recipient list serves as a history of arts leadership in Worcester.

Lora Brueck's artistic career began with photography over forty years ago, and in 1995, she began to make artist books that integrated her photographs with collage, printing, and sewing with a refined standard of craftsmanship. Throughout her practice, Brueck has collaborated with members of the legendary women's artist group Art XII, the Boston Book Arts Group, the Sunday Photography Group, and F8.

Brueck worked as a librarian at the Gordon Library of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and served as WPI's first official archivist. She opened the library's exhibition spaces to Worcester-area artists, offering them a much-needed space to show their work, while ensuring a vibrant arts presence at an engineering school. She was a graduate

of Bartlett Jr. Senior High School.

Unsung, often invisible volunteer effort is the backbone of small arts organizations. At ArtsWorcester, Brueck was an exhibitions committee member and board member for decades, selecting, installing, and hosting exhibitions. As one of the early organizers of stART on the Street, Brueck brought steady calm, financial expertise, governance, and community connections. More recently, she has volunteered for the last five years at the Worcester Historical Museum, digitizing photographs for their special collections.

"Lora is a talented artist and a digital humanities pioneer, and this award recognizes both those qualities," says Juliet Feibel, Executive Director. "But it comes with particular gratitude for the decades of unassuming, effective volunteer labor she has given this city's arts organizations--and the wry wit she brought with it."

The award was given at ArtsWorcester's Season Kickoff, Wednesday, September 20, at 5 p.m. at the Printers Building, followed by the public reception for *Material Needs 2023*.



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# Nutritious & Delicious

*Fueling Students for Success with Healthy Meals Incentives Grant*

The Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) Food Services program is fueling its students for success through high-quality breakfast and lunch offerings that are nutritious and delicious. As a proud recipient of a \$65,800 Healthy Meals Incentives grant from Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK), the funds will support their efforts to enhance the nutritional quality of school meals. The grant is part of an allocation of nearly \$30 million by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to 264 schools across 44 states and the District of Columbia.

“We’re committed to creating restaurant-quality school meals that contain fresh, nutritious ingredients. Having continued access to nutritious meals promotes student learning and lifelong healthy eating behaviors,” said Chef Eric

Carlson, BVT’s Director of Food Services, who works alongside BVT’s Nutritionist Martha Pel-



legrino and the Food Services staff. “To help our students and staff manage their healthy eating habits, our lunch menu includes each item’s nutritional value.” As part of the USDA’s Healthy

Meals Incentives grant program, AFHK and with the support of its partners, the Chef Ann Foundation and Rocky Mountain Center for Health Promotion and Education, will provide BVT’s Food Services staff with in-depth, individualized assistance and opportunities to collaborate during the school year on topics such as menu planning, recipe development, and food safety. With this grant, the school will also modernize its operations with a walk-in refrigerator and meal prep workstations for its cafeteria.

BVT is proud to partner with Action for Healthy Kids and USDA to strengthen its school meal program. To learn more about the Healthy Meals Incentives grant and the tasty items on this month’s lunch menu, visit [valleytech.k12.ma.us/foodnutrition](http://valleytech.k12.ma.us/foodnutrition).

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publication. Email your calendar or event notice to [news@theyankeeexpress.com](mailto:news@theyankeeexpress.com).

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24**

• The UMass Cancer Walk and Run, celebrating twenty-five years of the community's commitment to cancer research, will take place at Polar Park in Worcester. Go to [umasscancerwalk.org](http://umasscancerwalk.org) or email [cancerwalk@umassmed.edu](mailto:cancerwalk@umassmed.edu) for further details.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30**

• The Greenway Challenge takes place in the Blackstone Valley and around the region.  
• General Rufus Putnam Building & Museum

200th Anniversary Celebration, 4 Uxbridge Rd., 12-3 p.m.

• The Friends of Charlton Public Library continues its September membership drive at the Fall Festival at The Overlook in Charlton on Saturday, September 30, from 11 am to 3 pm. Members of the group will be available to register new and returning members and to answer questions. A selection of used books will be available for purchase. Interested individuals can pick up membership forms at the circulation desk at the Charlton Library. They may also join the organization via PayPal. For more information, email [charltonfriends@gmail.com](mailto:charltonfriends@gmail.com).

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4**

• New member meeting of the Millbury VFW Post 3329 is held the first Wednesday of every month, 7-9 p.m., 16 South Main St., Millbury.

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5**

• The 7th Annual New England Electrical & Alarm Expo takes place from 1:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Twin River Casino, 100 Twin River Road, Lincoln, Rhode Island. The Exhibitor Show Floor opens at 3:30 p.m. More than 400 manufacturers will be represented. Visit [neeeae.com](http://neeeae.com) for further details.

**SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7 & 8**

• The American Heritage Museum, 568 Main St., Hudson, presents "Battle for the Airfield WW II Re-Enactment Weekend," with over 350 re-enactors from branches of the Allied and Axis military participating in encampments and battles, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. both days. [www.americanheritagemuseum.org](http://www.americanheritagemuseum.org) or call 978-562-9182.

fun family activities and more!

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21**

• St. Patrick's Church Recycling Event, 7 East St. Whitinsville from 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Accepting gently used books (no encyclopedias); gently used textiles/clothing; electronics for a fee (no propane, batteries or lightbulbs); rinsed bottles/cans returnable in Massachusetts (no glass); gently used media (video games, dvd's, cd's, etc.). Paper shredding at \$8 a box, 9 – 11 a.m. only. Please keep items for each station separate. For more information and pricing, email [officesupport@mystpatricks.com](mailto:officesupport@mystpatricks.com) or call 508-234-5656.

• The Blackstone Valley Crop Hunger Walk will start at 9 am at the Village Congregational Church in Whitinsville with registration at 8:30 am. For more information, contact the Blackstone Valley United Methodist Church office at 508-234-2275.

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28**

• Historic Cemetery Tour at Sutton Center Town Cemetery, 4 Uxbridge Rd. at 7 p.m. Re-enactors will tell the tale of early settlers buried in the cemetery.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5**

• The Harvest Home 5k Returns! Join Community Harvest Project to celebrate another successful season of volunteer farming for hunger relief. Our 17th Annual Harvest Home Festival & 5K, featuring a 5k and kids fun run, online auction, food and drink, kids activities, hay rides, pumpkin trebuchets, apple cannons, and more is fun for everyone! Our 5k course loops around our farm fields and showcases the beauty of the Grafton farm in the fall. Join us for this special community event, which will help support our neighbors in need! Location: Community Harvest Project, 37 Wheeler Rd, North Grafton - 11 am - 3 pm

*NOTE: Community bulletin board-type items are welcome for inclusion in the Happenings! section of the Xpress newspapers. Please allow enough lead time for*

# There's still time to enjoy the Big E!

The Big E is an annual event that begins on the second Friday after Labor Day and runs for 17 days. This year Sept. 15 to Oct. 1.

What are this years Special and State Days?

Experience something new every day of the Fair by aligning your schedule with The Big E's special and state days. Walk through one of the State Buildings and visit its exhibits or watch the Daily Parade, which honors each day in a special way.

- Friday, September 22 - New Hampshire Day
- Saturday, September 23 - Vermont Day
- Sunday, September 24 - Grange Day/ Chocolate Milk Day
- Monday, September 25 - Salute to Springfield
- Tuesday, September 26 - Salute to Chicopee
- Wednesday, September 27 - Salute to Agawam
- Thursday, September 28- Salute to Westfield
- Friday, September 29 - Harvest New England Day
- Saturday, September 30 - October Fun Day
- Sunday, October 1 - Salute to Special Olympics

Gates open at 8 a.m. Admission is \$20 for adults, \$12 children 6-12, 5 and under free.

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**HAPPENINGS!**  
*continued on page 17*

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 Day of \$40, Kids (18 and under) \$15 pre registration, \$20 day of.  
 Visit [community-harvest.org/events](http://community-harvest.org/events) for more information about this year's Harvest Home festival, including the schedule of events!

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7**

• The Sutton Historical Society welcomes Mark Savoio of the Thompson Historical Society for the presentation "The Mass 15th of the Civil War and Wilder Holbrook, Sutton soldier," at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, at 7:00 p.m. Go to [www.suttonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.suttonhistoricalsociety.org) for further info.

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15**

• The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's 45th Annual Meeting & Awards Ceremony will be held at Pleasant Valley Country Club on Armsby Road in Sutton from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. Do you know a business or individual deserving of recognition, or a business that is celebrating a milestone anniversary? Submit your nomination to Liz O'Neil at [loneil@blackstonevalley.org](mailto:loneil@blackstonevalley.org).

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2**

• Chain of Lights, Sutton's annual town-wide Christmas event. Free trolley rides from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. to participating locations. Food, children's activities, shopping and lots of holiday cheer. Tree lighting with Santa and the Sutton High School Band at 5 p.m. on the Town Common.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5**

• Christmas Potluck at 6:30 p.m. First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, Sutton.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31**

• Midnight, Last Night Cannon firing, M.M. Sherman Blacksmith Shop, 6 Singletary Ave., Sutton.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 16 2024**

• The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's Home & Community Expo will be held at the Northbridge High School Field

House on Linwood Avenue in Whitinsville from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Registration will occur late summer, early fall.



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# October 2023 Events at Purgatory Chasm State Reservation

All programs are free and open to the public. Bring water, wear sunscreen/bug spray, and dress for the outdoors. Sturdy footwear is strongly recommended for hiking events. An adult must accompany all children. Hiking programs are canceled in inclement weather. For more information call 508-234-9610 or visit: [mass.gov/locations/purgatory-chasm-state-reservation](http://mass.gov/locations/purgatory-chasm-state-reservation)

For 79 years Smokey has helped park goers understand the importance of using fire responsibly. Help us kick off Fire Prevention Week by meeting Smokey Bear and our Department of Conservation and Recreation firefighters!

Join us at the Pavilion near the chasm's entrance. The event will happen rain or shine, though will cancel for hazardous weather.

mouth of the chasm. Appropriate for ages 8 and above. About a half mile over moderate terrain.

### CHASM PRIMER SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS 11:30 A.M.

Find out the chasm's history in just 15 minutes. This is the perfect primer before your hike through the chasm. Meet at the mouth of the chasm. Appropriate for ages 8 and up.

### GLACIAL GEOLOGY HIKE MONDAYS 2 - 3:30 P.M.

Discover our glacial past on this one mile hike to Little Purgatory. Meet at the Visitor Center. Suitable for ages 8 and above. About one mile over moderate terrain.

### OFF THE BEATEN PATH FRIDAYS 2:30 - 3:30 P.M.

Hiking trails are the heart of our park system and getting outdoors is a great way to exercise. Join us on this recreational hike with other like-minded people. Meet at the Visitor Center. Appropriate for ages 8 and above. About one mile over easy terrain.

### ROCK DETECTIVES SATURDAYS 10 - 11 A.M.

Have you ever wondered where rocks come from? See a bunch of different rocks and find out more about where they have been and where they are going. Stay for five minutes or an hour. Meet in the pavilion near the entrance to the chasm. Appropriate for ages 4 and above. The program will be held in the Visitor Center during inclement weather.

### SECRETS OF THE SKULL SUNDAYS 10 - 11 A.M.

We can learn many things about how an animal lives by looking at its skull. Join us to look for clues about how different animals survive by examining their skulls. Stay for five minutes or an hour. Meet in the pavilion near the entrance to the chasm. Appropriate for ages 4 and above. The program will be held in the Visitor Center during inclement weather.

### TIME TRAVELER TOUR MONDAYS 11 A.M. - 12 P.M.

Take a step back in time! Get an introduction to this unique park as we walk among the historic structures and geological features, jumping around the park's history all the while. Meet at the Visitor Center. Suitable for ages 8 and above. Approximately one mile over easy terrain.

Purgatory Chasm State Reservation is located at 198 Purgatory Road, Sutton MA 01590.

Please note that public programming may be affected by construction projects taking place within the park.

### MEET SMOKEY THE BEAR SUNDAY, OCT. 8 1-2 P.M.

### CHASM HIKE FRIDAYS 11 A.M. - 12 P.M., SATURDAYS 2- 3 P.M., SUNDAYS 3- 4 P.M.

Scramble around boulders while taking in the mystery of Purgatory Chasm. Find out about the park's history and cultural influence, the chasm's rock formations, or the wildlife that call the chasm home. Meet at the pavilion at the

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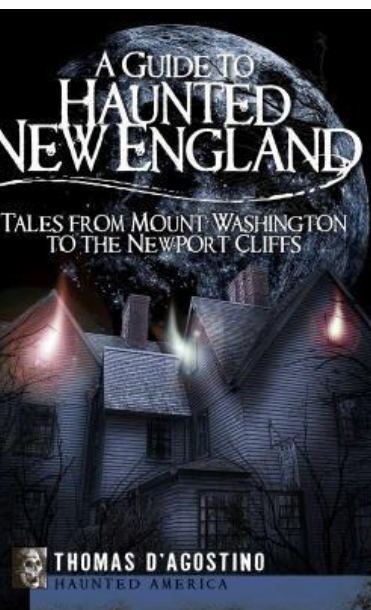


## Sturbridge Village Book Signing

Back by popular demand!

On select nights, join us for a book signing at the Miner Grant Store! Author of *A Guide to Haunted New England*, Thomas D'Agostino is one of the region's most well-known writers and investigators of the paranormal. His article "Rhode Island: Vampire Capital of America" was published in FATE magazine in October 2001. As founders of the Paranormal United Research Society, Tom and his wife, Arlene, have been extensively studying and investigating paranormal accounts for over twenty-eight years. In addition, Tom is author to numerous titles on the subject of hauntings in New England. Tom also builds musical instruments, rebuilds clocks and antiques and collects rare books on New England legends, haunts and folklore.

Visit Sturbridge Village on Saturday, Oct. 14; Sunday, Oct. 22;



and Friday, Oct. 27 from 5:30 - 8 p.m. You must have a ticket to Phantoms by Firelight at Sturbridge Village for the same date to access the book signing.




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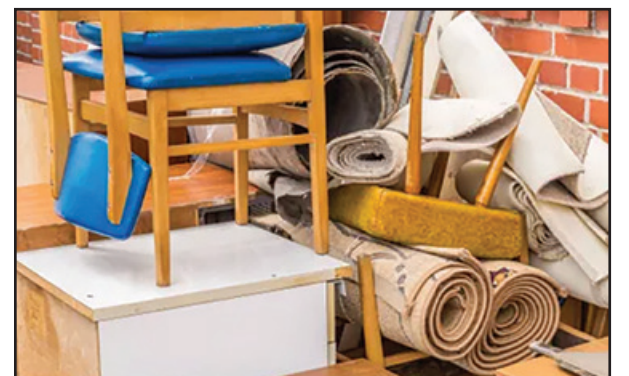
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