



Auburn Police Officer Randy McCarthy goes over safety tips with students at Bryn Mawr School in the days before Halloween. Officer McCarthy became a school resource officer this year, working with fellow Officer Jon O'Brien who has worked with the schools since 2022.

## Auburn Looks to New Fire Station

BY JANET STOICA

The police station has outgrown its current facility and the town looked at the feasibility of a joint public safety complex to include both the police and fire departments with a price tag of \$46 million, but that

quarters only. The fire dispatch department is currently housed in the police department and with the second fire station, the department will move there freeing up more space for the police. "Tax classifications for the town have been migrating to one single tax rate for business and



was a few years ago. At today's prices the cost was \$78 million so the Board of Selectmen decided to focus on a new fire station facility only. They are looking at one or two sites on the west side of town and the pricing is a more acceptable amount of \$35 million. According to Town Manager, Ed Kazanovicz, the process has now begun to examine a new building site that, hopefully, leads to a debt exclusion vote for the fire head-

residences for the past 12 years," said Kazanovicz, "As of June 30, the end of the last fiscal year, the rate is down to 1.12 and we hope to get to that single tax rate in the next three to five years." Currently the residential tax rate is \$15.88 per thousand and the commercial/industrial tax rate is \$18.58 per thousand.

**AUBURN**  
continued on page 2

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# Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park Events

Walk along the historic canal, which was once used for trade in the 1800s

Sunday, November 19  
Hike to Lookout Rock, 2 -4p.m.  
Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park  
Meet at the parking area by Rice City Pond on Hartford Avenue East.

Follow King Philip's Trail through forest and wetlands before ascending to Lookout Rock to enjoy scenic views of the Blackstone River. 2.75 miles over moderate terrain.

Sunday, November 26  
Eagle Bridge and TNT Trail Loop, 2-4 p.m.

Douglas State Forest  
Meet at the Route 16 parking area and follow the Schmidt Trail south.

Head back north through the Cedar Swamp along Eagle Bridge

Trail before taking the TNT Trail back to the trailhead. 2 miles over moderate terrain.

Sunday, December 3  
Mammoth Rock Trail Hike, 2-4 p.m.

Upton State Forest  
Meet at the trailhead parking area and start on CCC Way before heading orth on the Swamp Trail. Then follow Southboro Road to Mammoth ock Trail and then take Loop Road back to the trailhead. ~1.5 miles over moderate terrain.

Sunday, December 10  
Hike to Little Purgatory, 2-3 p.m.

Purgatory Chasm State Reservation  
Meet at the Visitor Center and

head south on Charley's Loop until you reach Little Purgatory, a miniature version of the park's iconic chasm.

Then continue on Charley's Loop back to the VC. ~1.25 miles over moderate terrain.

Sunday, December 17  
Tri-State Marker Hike, 1-4 p.m.  
Douglas State Forest

Meet at the parking area by the Wallum Lake Boat Launch and head west on the Coffeehouse Trail to the Mid State Trail. When the Mid

State turns south, stay straight on the SNETT trail and follow it to the Tri State Trail and then on to where three states meet!

## AUBURN

continued from page 1

The 40B housing in the Tinker Hill area on the Auburn/Oxford line is on a two-and-a-half year build out. There will be 325 rental units on the west side of town that will bring in \$500,000 annually to Auburn.

It is hoped that body cameras for the Auburn Police obtained with a \$93,000 will be put into use by January 1, 2024 and negotiations are currently in process with the police union.

Auburn's Housing Protection Plan expires this fiscal year

and they are currently putting together a plan that allows for more affordable housing while also keeping people in their own homes. Another program is the town's Housing Mitigation Plan which must be approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This plan will identify hazardous areas related to snow, flooding, and other possible dangerous sites. Town and city governments must develop and adopt hazard mitigation plans to receive funding for hazard mitigation projects so the community can rebuild in a way that

reduces future disaster losses in their area.

"It provides a local action plan for opening emergency operation centers for emergency shelters and similar facilities in disastrous events," stated Kazanovicz.

Additionally, the town has used the Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission to assist in promoting safer neighborhoods by creating new sidewalks, repaving existing walkways, and identifying traffic/pedestrian signal needs.

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

## The Yankee Xpress

Published on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month. Direct mailed to nearly 65,000 homes and businesses each month and available on news stands in the region.

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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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Diane Galipeau, Advertising Sales Manager: [dgalipeau@theyankeeexpress.com](mailto:dgalipeau@theyankeeexpress.com)  
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-LeClaire, Mark Marzeotti, John Paul, Janet Stoica, Christopher Tremblay

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## Help a Veteran

**M**en and women at the Veterans Inc. facility in Worcester are in need of new gloves, hats, socks, t-shirts, underwear, soap, razors, shampoo, deodorant, shoes, boots and bus passes. Donations can be dropped off at the American Legion, 60 Worcester Street. Grafton, 508-839-4169.

## bankHometown Supports Local Food Pantries through 20th Annual Neighbors Helping Neighbors Fundraiser

**R**obert J. Morton, president and CEO of bankHometown, is kicking off the bank's annual Neighbors Helping Neighbors fundraising drive for 2023 to help support local food pantries. The annual appeal is part of the bank's charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, which reflects the bank's commitment to making a real difference in the neighborhoods it serves.

This marks the 20th year of the bank's annual appeal, which invites bank customers, employees, and community members to donate money between November 1 and November 30 to help fight food insecurity. All donations up to \$2,500 per customer will be matched dollar for dollar by bankHometown and the total raised will be divided among participating food pantries across Massachusetts and Connecticut in communities the

bank serves. In 2022, through contributions and matching donations, the campaign raised over \$66,000, and since inception has donated more than \$331,000.

Donations of any amount are encouraged. As an added incentive to give, the bank offers those who donate the opportunity enter a drawing to win a \$25 gift card, which will be awarded at each of its 16 locations.

"Neighbors Helping Neighbors shows how communities can come together to help others in need," said Morton. "bankHometown is proud to lead this annual giving tradition. We thank everyone who selflessly gives each year."

Those who wish to participate have until November 30 to make their donations. Checks should be made payable to "bankHometown Neighbors" and can be dropped off at any bankHome-

town branch or mailed to:

A total of 16 food pantries will be supported this year and include: Athol Salvation Army Food Pantry, Auburn Youth and Family Services Food Pantry, CARE Food Pantry, Clinton, Food Share: Southbridge, Charlton and Sturbridge, Friendly House Pantry, Worcester, Ginny's Helping Hand, Inc., Leominster, Millbury Senior Center Food Pantry,

Oxford Ecumenical Food Shelf, Sutton Senior Center Michael A. Chizy Food Pantry,

St. John's Food for the Poor, Worcester, and St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, Webster.



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1-1/2 LB. HAM STEAK OR 1-1/2 LB. NY SIRLOIN STEAK  
1 PKG. (1-1/2 LB.) COOKED CHICKEN WINGS OF YOUR CHOICE OR 1 LB. OF OUR BACON OF YOUR CHOICE  
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## Webster Five Aids Fuel Assistance Program

Webster Five is helping the Worcester Community Action Council's (WCAC) Emergency Fuel Fund get ahead of the cold with its recent donation of \$25,000. This contribution marks the first significant gift the Fund has received for the 2023-24 heating season.

As winter approaches and the demand for emergency heating assistance grows, WCAC is working to ensure that some of the most vulnerable households in the region – seniors, disabled individuals, veterans, and families

with young children – have access to this basic necessity during challenging times.

Last year, WCAC received a total of 16,000 applications, representing a 44% increase in new and first-time applicants and a 20% increase in applications overall. Webster Five's donation in 2022 supported approximately 60 households with emergency fuel deliveries, among nearly 1,200 households WCAC served with emergency utility payments over the course of the year.

WCAC anticipates an equally busy season with a significant de-



mand from the community, having already received 6,000 applications prior to the program opening on November 1. With federal funds still awaiting release and WCAC's emergency fund having been completely depleted, WCAC was left with limited resources to address the growing needs of Central and South-Central Massachusetts residents.

"At Webster Five, we're committed to investing in our community and supporting our neighbors during times of need," said Don Doyle, President and CEO, Webster Five. "By making this donation early in the season, we hope to help WCAC get a jump start on funding for what is likely to be thousands of requests. We're proud to support this organization and the important work they do."

"We are exceedingly grateful for

Webster Five's ongoing support of WCAC and the Emergency Fuel Fund," said WCAC Chief Executive Officer Marybeth Campbell. "This donation comes at a critical time when our resources are stretched thin and will make a lasting impact on the lives of families in our community who are facing no-heat emergencies."

"As a board member of WCAC, I've had the privilege of seeing the significant contributions this organization makes every year to vulnerable households in our community," said Brian Westerlind, Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, Webster Five. "I'm thrilled that Webster Five has continued to be an active partner of the Fuel Assistance Program."

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## UNICEF Christmas cards at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy

If you are looking for a more meaningful way to celebrate the holidays this year, why not make an impact on the lives of vulnerable children through UNICEF? UNICEF, originally called the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund in full, now officially United Nations Children's Fund, is an agency of the United Nations responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide.

At Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, nursing student Ashley Rincon of Southbridge supports the holiday card sales. Every holiday card sale goes to UNICEF's efforts to help vulnerable children access education, health and nutrition, protection and support during emergencies. Rincon, a 2017 Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School graduate and an Associate in Criminal Justice degree holder with a minor in Science (2020) from Quinsigamond Community College believes that as a student nurse being compassionate, hardworking, helpful, and patient includes learning new things and using the new skills towards helping others.

"UNICEF's first greeting card was a painting by seven-year-old Jitka

Samkova, whose village in Czechoslovakia received UNICEF emergency assistance in the form of food and medicine following World War II. Jitka sent her painting as a special thank-you to UNICEF for helping children like her recover from the devastation of war. Since then, giants of contemporary art, including Picasso, Matisse, Miro and Chagall, have created original artwork for the cards, helping to propel a global sales operation that has generated significant revenue to help UNICEF save and protect the world's most vulnerable children. Every charity greeting card will help fund lifesaving vaccines, nutrition, education and emergency relief for the world's most vulnerable children (www.unicefusa.org)."

"We extend our heartfelt gratitude to faculty, staff, students, and alumni for graciously supporting UNICEF's work for the most vulnerable children," said Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN, Academy Director. She added: "When you gift a UNICEF holiday card to a loved one or friend, you are not merely giving a holiday greeting; you are also bringing a child one step closer to a brighter future."

# Welcome to Webster

BY PATTY ROY

**D**ave Laabs is a local guy who has always been good with his hands. A 13 year veteran of Ethan Allen Furniture, he began his art career in the three dimen-

name on record for the Department of the Interior and exists in other, abbreviated forms.

The lake was a cherished part of Laabs' childhood years spent at his grandparents' home in Reid Smith Cove.



sional sphere, crafting fine wood furniture. When the company began trimming its sawmill operations in 2003, Laabs was laid off.

That same year, the self-taught artist decided to open his own shop called The Airbrush Shack, at his home in Thompson Connecticut. Besides screen printed apparel, and lettering for signs and vehicles, Laabs is also a mural artist, having created many of the oversized paintings for restaurants, churches, homes and businesses.

His latest work is viewable from street side – 195 Thompson Road, Webster to be exact. Its subject is one that is close to Laabs' heart – Webster Lake. Or, as the purists may prefer, Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungmaugg.

It is the longest geographic place

“There were many seasons boating, fishing, ice skating,” he said, describing what sounds like a year-round idyll.

Laabs refers to the building the mural was painted on as his “48' x 11' canvas,” and covers the entire side of a shop owned by Amber and Wayne Stewart and where Amber operates The Water Lily, a small women's boutique.

Amber approached Laabs with the idea of a mural (he had already completed one on another wall of the building), but said she couldn't afford to pay him.

“That's okay, I'll do some fund raising,” was Laabs' cheerful reply. Though he didn't reach his fundraising goal, he got enough donations to enable him to start and complete the mural about two weeks ago, assisted by Scott

Ciprari.

The mural depicts a “Welcome to Webster” sign along with the lake's lengthy Eastern Algonquin name.

From left to right, the first illustration portrays folks enjoying a ride on a vintage wooden speedboat. The center portion of the mural is a giant map of the lake with points of interest, listing the three ponds that combine to create the lake and also shows its islands, shoals and coves.

On the far right, is a tribute to

the original Nipmuc inhabitants. Some small text lists John Eliot and Daniel Gookin who established the town of Chaubunagungamaug in 1674, site of the Praying Indian.

“This mural was a public art project involving many generous donors who all contributed in some way to funding the project,” said Laabs. “My intent was to help bring community together to bring some art to a very noticeable building for all who pass by not far from the Massachusetts-Connecticut line and welcoming all to Webster.”

The project was funded by Amber and Wayne Stewart, Indian Ranch, Samuel Slater's Restaurant, Webster Five Bank, Webster First Federal Credit Union, Lake Shore Legal, Webster Lake Gifts, Sandi Grzyb of Avenue Real Estate, Maureen Cimoch of Lake Realty, Hickey Fleet Service, Lakeview Marine, State Line Builders, Body by Tabitha, Crossfit Clean Slate, Doc Stop, Quinebaug Valley Broadcasting-WQVR 99.3, Glenn and Shelby Melia. There were also anonymous donors, Laab said.

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# Pickleball Health 101: 8 Tips to Prevent Injury on the Court this Fall

SEAN LORDAN PT, DPT, OCS, CSCS

**P**ickleball, the sport that has been capturing the hearts of many in our community, is a fantastic way to stay active, burn calories, and have a great time this Fall. As a physical therapist, I understand the joy this game brings, but I also recognize the importance of preventing injuries. We have

seen a large influx of pickleball injuries of late in all of the clinics.

In this article, I'll share my insights on how to keep yourself safe on the pickleball court, and prevent common injuries that can occur as a side effect of too much activity.

**1. Perform a Proper Warm-up:** Before diving into your pickleball match, take a few minutes to

prepare your body. Start with light aerobic exercises like brisk walking or gentle jumping jacks to increase blood flow and warm up your muscles. Follow this with dynamic stretching, focusing on the major muscle groups you'll be using, such as your legs, shoulders, and arms. This will help improve your flexibility and reduce the risk of strains and sprains. If you are unsure how to perform dynamic stretches, consult your local physical therapist for a specific program for you.

**2. Wear Proper Footwear:** The right pair of shoes is your first line of defense against pickleball injuries. Choose court shoes with non-marking soles to provide optimal grip and support for lateral movements. Avoid using running shoes, which lack the necessary lateral stability, and treaded soles, which can increase the risk of slips and falls. My personal favorites are "tennis shoes."

**3. Consider Protective Gear:** While pickleball is generally non-contact, accidents can happen. Depending on your level of play, consider wearing protective gear such as knee and elbow pads, and wrist guards for extra safety during fast-paced rallies. Wrist guards will specifically keep repetitive strain away from the elbow complex—which is where the most pickleball injuries I see occur.

**4. Technique Matters:** Proper



pickleball technique is key to preventing injuries. Work on your posture, grip, and swing mechanics to ensure you're playing with the correct form. Seek guidance from experienced players or even schedule lessons to hone your skills and reduce the risk of overuse injuries.

**5. Stay Hydrated:** This is a common theme in many of my articles regarding injury prevention! Dehydration can lead to muscle cramps and decreased performance. Before, during, and after your game, hydrate well with water, and consider replenishing electrolytes with a sports drink, especially while inside of a humid arena this Fall and Winter.

**6. Respect Your Skill Level:** It's natural to want to challenge yourself, but playing above your skill level can lead to injuries. Play with opponents who match your abilities, and gradually increase the level of competition as your skills progress.

**7. Court Safety:** Always be mindful of the court's condition. Loose gravel, uneven surfaces, or cracks can pose tripping hazards. Inspect the court before play and report any issues to the relevant authorities for prompt repairs.

**8. Consult a Physical Therapist:** A good physical therapist will screen you to provide you with the right stretches and exercises to perform to prevent injuries before they happen. Pay attention to your body's signals. If you feel pain or discomfort during the game, don't ignore it. This is your body's way of telling you that something is wrong.

In conclusion, pickleball is a fantastic sport that promotes health and social interaction in our community. By following these safety tips, you can reduce the risk of injuries and continue enjoying the game for years to come.

Stay safe, stay active, and have a great time on the pickleball court this Fall! If you ever have any questions or concerns about injury prevention, don't hesitate to reach out to a local physical therapist for guidance. Most often no referral is required and you can access physical therapy directly without having to stop by your PCP's office for a script.

*In good health,  
Dr. Sean T. Lordan*

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# Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy at the MassHire Career Fair

MassHire Southbridge Career Fair was successfully held Thursday, October 26 at the MassHire Southbridge Career Center located within the Southbridge Hotel and Conference Center, 14 Mechanic Street.

Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy was one of the featured training providers. The career fair was open to the public and over 100 training candidates participated. Prospective trainees who may be eligible for MassHire grant funds were provided prescreening at the event. Along with training providers, ten area employers were also in attendance.

MassHire Career Center maintained its strong support for the Practical Nursing Students of Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy in Charlton for the past several years, serving as a resource center. Practical Nursing students on the rigorous program at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy benefit from assistance offered by MassHire. The Practical Nursing students are academically qualified students who, despite other financial or social circumstances, have persevered and remained



Gretheline Bolandrina director of the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy at the MassHire Southbridge Career Fair.

dedicated to their nursing journey and future success.

“Our Practical Nursing students are blessed to be a part of MassHire’s programs,” said Academy director Gretheline Bolandrina. “MassHire has helped and prepared many of our students and graduates since 2016,

with job readiness techniques and tuition grants as they pursue their nursing career and navigate the healthcare system. MassHire gives our practical nursing students a chance to master their expertise in nursing skills and help make a difference in their lives as they start their nursing career.” Career readiness is a significant focus for MassHire. For the academic year 2023-2024, multiple practical nursing students received \$8,000 tuition grants.

In addition to providing support, online and hands-on assistance is available. MassHire also works closely with practical nursing students when they graduate providing support and assistance with NCLEX-PN preparation and the actual exam. Added work includes coaching graduates in resume-writing techniques, job interviewing best practices and other skills that not only help during a job search but are also relevant once they’re in the workforce. MassHire Worcester Career Center is located at 340 Main Street, Suite 400, Worcester, MA 01608 MassHireCentralCC.com

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# Luke and Bruno Reunite

BY AMY LECLAIRE

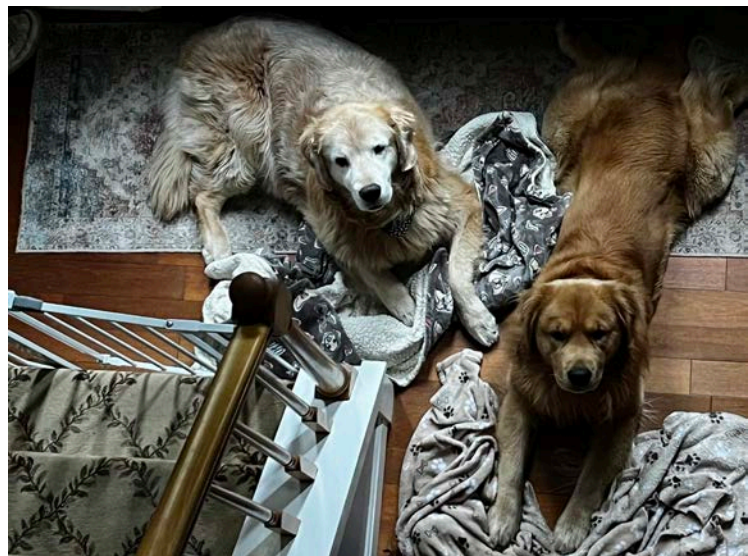
The first few minutes were less than graceful. Luke was so happy to see Bruno that he couldn't hold back a surge of testosterone. He smelled the signs. He saw the bags. He heard the news. "Sleep over!" Then he climbed on his friend's back and mounted him. "Luke! Please!" Of course, we redirected our one-year-old dog. Nevertheless, boundaries were in order and the two dogs, senior and young, would establish such.

"I love you, Luke, but I'm not into physical play." A few hours later, Luke suffered a bout of diarrhea while Bruno hacked up his dry dog food. Luke attempted to eat the mound of vomit, but I caught him in time. "Leave it." I yanked at his collar.

It's the life of a dog owner, chaotic and joyful all at once.

"Let's both get a drink of water!" The two pals—bonded by breed, temperament, and dog-parent-friends—drank and drank. I cleaned and cleaned. Bruno studied my moves. "Are you a professional cleaner, by chance?"

The dogs tap danced about the kitchen, grabbed stuffed animals, and followed me around the house. They did what dogs do. They stood at the door to go outside. They came back in. They settled



some sass. "That's my friend! You don't belong!" Luke mediated, baseball in mouth. "Let's just play chase and let it go, Rosie." Bruno sat at my husband's heel and waited to go back inside. "That Doodle's crazy."

Our love for the two Golden swelled with the passing of each day. Bruno adored family nights while we all hung out in the family room to watch football games and snuggle. He added a special charm to our time together. World News was grim, but we had two Golden in the same room. We were living the dream. Luke shared his orthopedic bed but struggled to let go of his shin bones. "Luke, no hoarding." Bruno smiled and went with the flow. "No worries. I'll take the stuffed beaver."

The subtle fashion by which the dogs bonded, be it via walks, play time, or sleeping schedules, was something I'll always cherish as a Dog Person. They checked on each other and chose to stretch out and nap in the same spots. Luke stared at Bruno while he rested and licked his nose. He also became a role model, showing Bruno how he stays "at his spot" during mealtimes. "Bruno, if you sit and wait long enough, eventually my mom will give you a treat, but you must be consistent. I think it's the teacher in her."

Bruno stayed by my side and leaned into my lap. Kind and sensitive, he whimpered while I trotted up our (gated) staircase. "I'll be right down, Bruno!" Luke craned his neck up to the foyer. "They

always come back. Let's go people-watch on the step outside."

Luke sustained his outdoor dog-watching routine while Bruno stayed inside with me, a loyal friend and gentle giant. He watched me practice dances and smiled up at me with adoration. He communicated his needs with patience and gratitude. "Thank you for taking care of me. I'm just so happy to be with you." A senior Golden is as warm and cozy as a cup of tea. Mornings were equally as gratifying with the two pups.

"Oh my gosh! Hello! It's a brand-new day! Can you believe it? Hey, how did you sleep? I'm loving the rug by the front steps, by the way. Let's go outside! I'm so excited for my breakfast! Hold on – I just need to pee. Don't forget, that's my dish. I'll take a water refill when you get a chance. Who's that at the bus stop??!"

Positivity has become cliché, a word preached but not always practiced. Dogs are naturally positive without the flood of pop psychology and cheesy inspirational quotes. Dogs don't post a wish that you "Have a Blessed Day" on social media. Dogs give you a blessed day by waking up genuinely happy to see and be with you, with and without messes. I've given every dog I've owned my best, but they give back so much more, especially when there are two.

Stay tuned for more on Living with Luke. Find him on IG @ livingwithlukevalentino

Write to Amy  
amyleclaire@hotmail.com

down. "I'm thriving at 'ten' aren't I?" Bruno smiled up at me. I had earned his trust. Meanwhile, Luke fought to claim his Golden bestie.

"Let him off the leash, Momma! He's my friend and you're being a control freak!" Luke hollered at me on that first day while we showed Bruno our unfenced backyard. "We just want to hang out, No Parents Allowed." Luke had a point. He was being reasonable. Dogs are supposed to run free in a big backyard. Still, there was no way I could risk losing sweet Bruno, who buried his whitened face in my lap. "Help."

Luke acquiesced; especially given multiple walks offered, a trade-off for the leash law. "This is my neighborhood, Bruno." Luke pulled ahead while Bruno ponied forward like a dog half his age. He revealed in new sights and fun neighbors to greet. I could tell he felt at home in the neighborhood. "This is Bruno." I boasted of my senior Golden while Luke did the same. "This is my friend, Bruno. Doesn't he look so good for his age? We're having a sleep-over tonight."

Rosie, Luke's girlie BFF, stopped over one day and showed Bruno

## 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**



REAL ESTATE

# The Perks of Selling Your House When Inventory Is Low

**W**hen it comes to selling your house, you're probably trying to juggle the current market conditions and your own needs as you plan your move. One thing that

BY MARK MARZEOTTI

may be working in your favor is how few homes there are for sale right now. Here's what you need to know about the current inventory situation and what it means for you.

The Supply of Homes for Sale Is Far Below the Norm. When you're selling something, it helps if what you're selling is in demand, but is also in low supply. Why? That makes it even more desirable since there's not enough to go around. That's exactly what's happening in the housing market today. There are more buyers looking to buy than there are homes for sale.

To tell the story of just how low inventory is, here's the latest information on active listings, or homes available for sale. The data from Realtor.com shows how many active listings there were in September of this year compared

to what's more typical in the market. Monthly listings in September, 2017 were 1.3 million, same in 2018. In 2019 there were 1.2 million and in September, 2023 there were only 700k

As you can see, if you look at the last normal years for the market versus the latest numbers for this year, it's clear inventory is still far lower than the norm.



What That Means for You. Buyers have fewer choices now than they did in more typical years. And that's why you could still see some great perks if you sell today. Because there aren't enough homes to go around, homes that are priced right are still selling fast and the average seller is getting multiple offers from eager buyers. Based on the

latest data from the Confidence Index from the National Association of Realtors (NAR):

69% of homes sold in less than a month.

2.6 offers: the average number of offers on recently sold homes.

An article from Realtor.com also explains how the limited number of houses for sale benefits you if you're selling: ". . . homes spent two weeks

less on the market this past month than they did in the average September from 2017 to 2019 . . . as still-limited supply spurs homebuyers to act quickly . . ."

Bottom line, because the supply of homes for sale is so low, buyers desperately want more options – and your house may be just what they're looking for. If you work with The Marzeotti Group or a trusted local agent to get your house listed at the right price for today's market. You could still see it sell quickly and potentially get multiple offers.

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# Do your investments match your goals?

As you go through life, you'll have various financial goals — and to achieve them,



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

you'll need to invest. But just recognizing the need to invest is not as useful as matching specific types of accounts or investments

with specific goals. How can you make these connections?

Let's look at some common goals and how they could possibly be met with appropriate accounts and investments:

- **Saving for a down payment on a house** – When you're saving for a down payment, you want a certain amount of money available at a certain time — so, for

this goal, you won't want to take too much risk. Consequently, you might consider investing in certificates of deposit (CDs), which will pay you regular interest payments and return your principal when the CDs mature. CDs are issued in a range of maturities, from one month to 10 years. Other vehicles you might consider are money market accounts or other cash equivalents.

- **Saving for a child's education** – If you have children, and you'd like to help them pay for some form of higher education, you may want to consider a 529 education savings plan. Any earnings growth in a 529 plan is federally tax free, provided the withdrawals are used for qualified education expenses, and you may also receive state tax benefits. A 529 plan can be used for college, approved trade school programs, student loan repayments and some K-12 costs. And if the child you've named as a beneficiary chooses not to continue their education, and doesn't need the money in a 529 plan, you can generally switch beneficiaries to another immediate family member.

- **Saving for retirement** – This is the one goal that will remain consistent throughout your working years — after all, you could spend two or even three decades in retirement, so you'll need to accumulate as many financial resources as you can to pay for those years. Fortunately, you likely have access to several good retirement-savings vehicles. If you work for a busi-

ness, you might have a 401(k) plan, which offers you the chance to put away money on a tax-deferred basis. (If you have a Roth option in your 401(k), your withdrawals can be tax free, although, unlike a traditional 401(k), your contributions won't lower your taxable income.) If you work for a public school or a nonprofit organization, you may be able to participate in a 403(b) plan, which is quite similar to a 401(k), and the same is true if you work for a state or local government, where you might have a 457(b) plan. And even if you invest in any of these plans, you can probably also contribute to an IRA, which gives you another chance to invest on a tax-deferred basis (or tax-free basis, if you're eligible for a Roth IRA). Try to take full advantage of whatever retirement plans are available to you.

Here's one final point to keep in mind: While some investments and accounts are appropriate for certain goals, they may not necessarily be suitable for your individual situation — so keep all your options in mind and take the steps that are right 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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## CDs, LEDs and Rotors, Oh My!

**Q.** I have a basic manual transmission 2019 Subaru Impreza 5-door (no frills). One thing I miss is not having a CD player which has been deemed no longer feasible. When I purchased the car, I asked if a CD player could be installed, and the dealers told me no.



BY JOHN PAUL

Can I have a CD player installed elsewhere and is my car capable of having Sirius Radio?

**A.** There are plenty of ways to go about this with add-on components. You can get a CD player that simply plugs into an available USB plug, SXM has adapters as well. But the other option is to upgrade the radio to one that has everything you want. If it were me, I would go to an auto stereo store and see what they have. The other option is a Bluetooth adapter for SXM and stream from your phone to your current radio.

**Q.** Two days after the water pump and timing chain in my 2015 Ford Explorer, an engine rattling noise started and it is coming from the timing chain area. I took it back twice, but they can't locate the problem. The head technician has ideas where the noise is coming from but is not 100 percent sure. The Ford runs great, and I have a good relationship with the shop and the engine was quiet before this work was done. I am trying to sell this car, but the noise is pushing buyers away. I also tried to trade it in but trade offer too low because of the engine noise. The dealership claimed it was the timing chain.

**A.** If the noise is loud and only on, startup (4 hours plus sitting) the issue is

with the camshaft phasers. The shop is likely reluctant to take the engine apart again to check their work (an all-day job) but this may be necessary to solve the problem.

**Q.** I'm writing about my 2013 Buick. I have to replace a blown headlight bulb. Can I legally replace it with a Sylvania XTRAVISION H11 bulb instead of a GM OEM? I read a review on the Sylvania bulb and one buyer said they both blew out in two months. He thought it was a fluke so he replaced them with the same Sylvania and they both blew out in four months, four hours apart. Do you have any experience and recommendations with these bulbs? And what is your opinion on LED replacements for my car?

**A.** Proper lighting is important especially as we age. We need three times as much light to see at 60 years of age than we did at 20. I have mixed feelings about higher performance bulbs, I have Sylvania SliverStar Plus in my car now (about \$55) and they are good. I have used them in the past in other vehicles and have only lasted about 18 months. They produce whiter light and certainly seem brighter. Conventional bulbs last a really long time, but they start to dim after three years. So sometimes just replacing the stock bulb with a new bulb just seems to make an improvement. As far as LEDs, technically they are not legal, since they are bigger than stock bulb and throw the optics off. Yes, they will be brighter but may not be aimed properly. Also, some require additional kits to trick the body control computer. The LED bulbs draw less current, and the car's computer thinks a bulb is out. You will find that the LEDs are not made by Sylvania, Wagner, GE or other major light-

ing companies and use words like almost exact size, works with most vehicles, and my favorite 300% Brighter than halogen bulbs: Well, I don't think you can have a bulb that is 300 percent brighter. Typical halogen bulbs are 1000 lumens, BMW high intensity discharge (HIDs) and LEDs are 2900 lumens. My poor math skills would put the LED claims at 150,000 lumens.

**Q.** My neighbor is a mechanic and does the maintenance work on my car. He is going to replace my car's rotors and brake pads. He is going to spray the rotors with a coating to prevent rust. Is this recommended because the rotors rust?

**A.** Seems like anything you spray on the rotors would wear right off since the brake pads are constantly "wiping" the rotors. A few years ago I even purchased rotors that we're supposed to be impregnated with some anti corrosion material, after about 60 days they rusted. Surface rust is not a concern, it wears off after a few stops. As long as this spray is not oil based it shouldn't cause any harm but the results in my opinion will be short lived. Give it a try and let me know.

*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 tomdagostino.com

# The Spectre Leaguers: Part I

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

Everyone is aware of the Salem, Massachusetts witch trials that took place in 1692 but few have knowledge of an event that took place just north of the Witch City. This ghostly occurrence took place at the same time and it was believed by many to be closely related. Author Samuel Adams Drake wrote of the physical phenomenon that plagued the town of Gloucester, located on Cape Ann.

"It is gravely told in the "Magnalia Christi" of Cotton Mather, and on the authority of the Rever-

end John Emerson of Gloucester, how a number of rollicking apparitions dressed like gentlemen, in white waistcoats and breeches, kept Gloucester and the neighboring towns in a state of feverish excitement and alarm for a whole fortnight together.

In the midsummer time, in the year 1692, Ebenezer Babson, a sturdy yeoman of Cape Ann, with the rest of his family, almost every night heard noises as if some persons were walking or running hither and thither about the house. He being out late one night, when returning home saw two men come out of his own

door, and then at sight of him run swiftly from the end of the house into the adjoining cornfield. Going in, he immediately questioned his family concerning these strange visitors. They promptly replied that no one at all had been there during his absence."

Babson and the rest of Cape Ann would be besieged for a "fortnight" by what they deduced were ghosts or specters, perhaps even demons in human form sent by the devil to torment them. Drake, along with Mather and others also vouch for the authenticity of the event. Drake, in his writing states,

"But the fact that they were spirits, and no ordinary spirits at that, being so confidently vouched for, and by such high authority on such matters as Dr. Cotton Mather, would seem to dispose of all doubt upon the subject."

Mather's account was written shortly after the event and in his own words in the telling, yet the conviction of his narrative has warranted the tale to become an integral part of New England folklore. He relied upon the

sworn testimonies of those who actually fought with the unknown assailants who, in their conclusion, were not of this world. The men involved were of solid character and highly respected. For them to fabricate such a story would be detrimental to their caliber in society.

To continue the above narrative by Drake, Babson seized his gun and went in pursuit of the strangers. As he came upon a log, the two men jumped up and ran into the nearby swamp. As they ran, he heard one of them say, "The man of the house is now come, else we might have taken the house." In an instant, they were gone.

Stricken with fear of an attack by hostile enemies, Babson and his family took shelter in the nearest garrison. Upon entering, the sound of heavy footfalls resembling an army marching around the house was heard. Babson, along with a few other brave souls armed themselves and sallied forth to confront the enemy. Instead, they saw the same two men fleeing the scene. It was then that they deduced it may

have been French scouts and an attack was imminent.

The next night, Babson, being out of the garrison, saw two men once again who he thought to be Frenchmen as one of them had a bright gun, such as the ones used by the French Canadian, slung over his back. Both started towards him but Babson was able to make haste to the garrison where he got safely inside. Once again the heavy footfalls commenced as if a league of men were circling the safe house. Babson and a man named John Brown spied three men outside and took a shot at them. To their surprise, the men dodged their bullets like snowballs lobbed at them from a lame arm. For the next three nights, the three men, or what the towns people now thought were demons or devils, continued to mystically appear here and there in attempts to lure the inhabitants from their safe haven in the garrison.

*Watch for Part 2 coming in the December issues.*

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## SPORTS

# Running To Get Into College

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Shepherd Hill's Anthony Graves had never really thought about running track until his freshman season. Prioritizing football as his number one sport, he was looking for something to do to keep himself ready for football season. With a lot of his football family participating in track following the season he was encouraged to try it out and once he stepped onto that track

ing drills the right way, studying and executing proper sprint technique and mechanics, while also working on overlooked aspects of sprinting such as balance, stability and power."

In addition to running the 300 and 400 during the winter season, Graves will also take part in the 4x200 relay team for Shepherd Hill. It was the 300 that allowed the then freshman to take his running to the next level.

"I just fell in love with the 300 during that winter season," he

New York were running in the 400 his time put him fourth on the all-time indoor list. It was here in New York that Graves realized that track could give him a foot in the door at going to college.

"Last year having the opportunity to qualify for the Nike Nationals in NY opened my eyes and I realized that I could actually go places with track," Graves said. "Following the winter season, it came to me that if I wanted to pursue college, track could be the sport that got me in. To be able to run at different colleges throughout the country would be amazing."

Harmon noted that the freshman struggled a bit with some nagging pain in his hip flexor, but instead of using it as a crutch he was able to go to physical therapy and make some adjustments to his mechanics and was ready to go for the spring season. Performances continued to grow as Graves was part of Shepherd Hill's 4 x 100 team that won the Central Mass Invitational, was third in the District E Relay Meet and finished first in the MidWach A League Championship Meet.

Graves also stepped up in the League Championship Meet when the Ram's senior captain suffered a hamstring injury. The freshman took on the 200-me-

ter dash and although not even ranked in the top eight heading into the meet was able to grab second place and finished a mere 1/10th of a second way from first place. He also finished seventh in the 400 at the statewide large school Freshman / Sophomore Meet, which ranks him as the number two freshman in the event in school history.

Much like the indoor sea-

son, the newcomer to running continued to show everyone that running was indeed his passion.

"His performances in outdoor track qualified him for a trip to Oregon to compete in the Nike Nationals in the 100 meter," the Coach said. "The facility on the campus of the University of Or-

## RUNNING

continued on page 15



Anthony Graves of Shepherd Hill Regional High School in Charlton (yellow running shoes) started his high school athletic career in football, but quickly evolved into a top runner

he would never be the same.

"I had never run track until last winter, football was always my main focus," Graves said. "I was quick on the football field, but I found a whole new level on the track. I found a passion running track, it's all about myself and I was locked in."

Although a first-time runner last winter for the Rams, when Graves took to the track he looked like a veteran runner. During the indoor season he posted a personal best of 38.89 (breaking the school's freshman record) in the 300 and a 56.47 running the 400.

"He joined the team as a freshman and relatively quickly made an impact contributing to the team's success," Coach Len Harmon said. "He is very disciplined and like most athletes who excel, he pays attention to detail by do-

ing drills the right way, studying and executing proper sprint technique and mechanics, while also working on overlooked aspects of sprinting such as balance, stability and power."

By the time that Graves' first indoor season came to a close, according to Harmon, the Shepherd Hill athlete recorded the top freshman time in the 300 and 400 and posted the second fastest time in the 600, while also becoming the 6th fastest runner in the 55-meter dash in Rams history. Graves also participated as the lead leg of the 4 x 200 relay team that was one of the best in Central Massachusetts, while posing the fourth fastest time in school history.

With all his accolades on the track that first season, the freshman earned himself a spot in the Nike Nationals at the Armory in

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# What About Those Three Stooges?

BY JANET STOICA

Are the Three Stooges relevant anymore? I say Yes! and we need their ridiculous slapstick antics now more than ever. They are silly and frivolous and it's just what we all need to take our minds off the everyday grind. After doing a non-scientific poll of 20 and 30 year olds, I have found that even these age groups are aware of who these three prolific physical-comedy clowns are. Brothers Moe and Curly Howard as well as Larry Fine can still bring a smile to our faces. Moe and Larry's superior roles to the third Stoooge never waver. The third Stoooge was played by four different comedians. The original third wheel was Shemp Howard (Moe's brother) then brother Curly

Howard (my personal favorite) followed by Joe Besser and finally "Curly Joe" DeRita. I was forced to grow up with the trio of Moe, Larry, and Curly. I say forced because it seemed that my older brother always controlled the TV selections on Saturday morning. Most of the time I enjoyed these comedy brethren as much as he did but as I grew older and into my 20's my disdain for their silly humor became very real. I saw how much my boyfriends bonded with my brother if they happened to be surfing through TV channels together watching football, basketball, or baseball games. If the Three Stooges suddenly appeared, the channel switching would stop and their howls of laughter would begin as Moe poked Larry's eyes

while proclaiming "Why I Oughtta".....or twisted Curly's nose or conked them over the heads with the loudest sound effects. It made me think how juvenile they all were and what a boy/man thing the Stooges were. In my 30's my eyes would roll back if I walked into the living room to see the guys hooting and laughing at Moe, Larry, and Curly. The slapstick antics were absurd, ridiculous, and so very stupid I thought to myself. How can these guys even watch this stuff? I wondered why or how the Three Stooges could



these bursts of injury-producing acting were fake but they sure did make us laugh. I think we thanked our family genes that we were not as stupid as the Three Stooges were to each other. We could feel superior to their dumb jokes and jabs at each other. Their reasonings and solutions to problems they encountered were very basic and juvenile. As our eight- and nine-year-old brains

enthral adult men into behaving like children with their silly laughter but now I think I understand. Who doesn't want to be transported back to the days of their childhood when life was simpler and you could watch these inane dopes pull punches on each other? The Stooges' levels of intelligence were in descending order of Moe, Larry, and Curly. Moe was the brains of the group with Larry and Curly distant followers in the common sense department. What was so funny about being clanged over the head with a cast-iron frying pan, hit in the butt with a baseball bat, or poked and punched? Maybe it's because these actions are what we'd really like to do to someone sometimes but know it'll never happen so it's enjoyable to watch these beloved numbskulls do such things to themselves.

saw what was happening in these old black-and-white shows, we instinctively knew it was all bogus and we knew we would never be in those situations or ever encounter the types of people the Stooges met and interacted with. At an early age I do recall thinking how ridiculous they all were as I didn't know any grownups who ever acted the way they did. It sure was fun while it lasted and I can still watch my three favorite Stooges in small doses but if I'm watching Moe, Larry, and Curly with a guy, look out! There seems to be a special and amusing attraction for males to be greatly fascinated by the Boys of Slapstick. It's the bond of childhood memories that should never be broken. Nitwit, imbecile, nyuk, nyuk, nyuk. Soitenly!

I guess even as kids we knew

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



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## RUNNING

continued from page 13

egon is one of the premiere facilities in the world and has hosted National, International, Olympic Trials and Collegiate national Championships. At the Nationals Tony finished 25th in the nation, running a personal best time of 11.66 which ranks in the top 15 all time in school history and is

runner. According to the Coach, Graves has already assumed a leadership role and has been independently working with two other sophomores during the off season to prepare for the upcoming indoor season.

As he gets ready for his sophomore season, Graves is hoping that he can shave as much time as possible off his times as well as continuing with his nutrition program.



number two for freshman all time in the event.”

As a first-time runner with Shepherd Hill, Graves took home Rookie of the Year honors in both the indoor and outdoor track seasons, so needless to say Coach Harmon is very excited about the upcoming indoor season to see what he can do as a second-year

“It used to be whatever I could find I put into my body,” he said. “I’m more disciplined now and have much more energy and my focus in school has improved. I want to do better in the indoor season and when spring comes I’m going to be shooting for that number one spot in the 200, where I finished second last year.”

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**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17**

• Millbury First Congregational Church will be holding their Annual Turkey Raffle on Friday, Nov. 17 at 6:30 p.m. at the Charles F. Minney VFW Post, 16 South Main St. Millbury. The top four prizes are: First Prize: \$500 in cash; Second Prize: \$250 Amazon Gift Card; Third Prize: Case of Assorted Wines; Fourth Prize: Thanksgiving Dinner Basket with Turkey. Raffle Tickets on sale outside Goretta's Supermarket, 1 Providence Street on Oct. 14; 17; 24; and Nov. 4. Refreshments will be sold during the drawing, including hot dogs and other delicious surprises.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18**

• Our Lady of the Valley Regional School hosts its 39th Annual Holiday Fair from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at 75 Mendon Street, Uxbridge behind St. Mary's Parish. The Holiday Fair has something for those of all ages. Shop for holiday gifts from a wide range of local vendors. Try your luck at one of the fair's many raffles, including basket raffles, the super raffle, and the grand raffle. And enjoy fresh baked goods, popcorn, soft pretzels, and the ever-popular cookie walk. Children will love the kid's activities, including crafts, games, inflatables, a scavenger hunt, a kid's raffle, balloon animals, a hot cocoa bar, and pictures with Santa. Come for lunch and choose from several delicious options, including chicken parmesan subs, meatball subs, hot dogs, pizza, and fries. You can also purchase homemade meat pies to heat up at home. The Our Lady of the Valley Holiday Fair is so big, that it takes place in three buildings—the main school building, the G.R.A.C.E. Center, and the St. Mary's Parish Hall (Good Shepherd Center). This year's fair includes 3,000 more feet. For more details, visit their website at [www.ourladyofthevalleyregional.com](http://www.ourladyofthevalleyregional.com). Vendors looking for table space can email [olvguild@gmail.com](mailto:olvguild@gmail.com) • Willard House and Clock Museum, 11 Willard Street, North Grafton will host a plein air painting event on its grounds for

any and all artists from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Also held on Nov. 25. The museum will also feature select works for those days on the museum Facebook, twitter and Instagram pages. Please join this informal gathering of artists who love to paint the New England landscape. Bring your own supplies. Register online at [willardhouse.org/events/calendar](http://willardhouse.org/events/calendar).

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24 – SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26**

• The Douglas Scouting Association will host a Hometown Holiday Hall at the Scott Hall Building, 22 Church Street, Douglas on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 24-26. The hours are 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Sunday. Free admission and free refreshments. All items are homemade. Holiday store atmosphere – one stop check-out. Cash, check major credit cards accepted. All proceeds to benefit the Douglas Scouting Association.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25**

• 10th Annual Shop Small holiday shopping event with local merchants in Whitinsville and Northbridge  
• Join us on Small Business Saturday, November 25 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Angel Hair Alpacas, 66 Wesson Street, North Grafton to meet our friendly alpacas and shop with several amazing area vendors! Get away from the box stores and enjoy a fun day out with family and find some unique gifts! We will be joined by Brookfield Candles, Minute-man Kettle Corn, Sweet Willow Naturals, Wright's Chocolates, Everything Jalapeno and Not, Stan's Wooden Toys and The Fudge Lady! No pets at this event please. Parking at the Willard Clock Museum.  
• The Farmer's Daughter, 150 Millbury Street, Auburn. oliday hours and events: Beginning Nov. 25, daily 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Christmas Eve: 9 a.m. – 1p.m.; closed

Christmas Day. Visit with Santa, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 26; Sunday, Nov. 27; Saturday, Dec. 3; Sunday, Dec. 4. Delicious apple cider donuts are made daily starting Saturday, Nov. 26.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2**

• Uxbridge First Holiday Night and Santa Parade 4:30 p.m. To register as a parade participant, complete the form found at [facebook.com/uxbridgefirstholidaynight](http://facebook.com/uxbridgefirstholidaynight) and return it by Nov. 26. Donation of \$100 per vehicle, float or marching group. Parade staging will begin at 3 p.m. Contact us at Mendon Street Kitchen, 508-278-5750.  
• 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.  
• Annual Christmas Bazaar, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. St. Joseph 's Parish Center, 68 Central St., Auburn. Come and enjoy an old fashioned Christmas Bazaar and check out the Collectibles, Attic Treasures, Jewelry, Plants, Knit Goods, Holiday Décor, Toys, Candy & Baked Items and so much more! Take a chance on one of our many raffles. There is something for everyone! Free Admission. Plenty of parking available. Handicap accessible.  
• First Congregational Church of Oxford presents their Annual Christmas Tea. 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.. Keepsake photo experience, Gift Center & Granny's Attic. Assorted desserts and teas served all day. Luncheon begins at 11:30. [www.firstchurchoxford.com](http://www.firstchurchoxford.com)  
• Breakfast with Santa, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Waters Farm, 53 Waters Road, West Sutton  
• St. Denis Church Holiday Fair, Douglas will be held Saturday, Dec. 2, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Purchase crafts, enjoy baked goods or try our raffles. Have lots of fun at the Kids' Table. Luncheon served from 11 a.m. to

1:30 p.m.  
• Annual Holiday Bazaar at the Sutton Senior Center, 19 Hough Road from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Shop for the holidays. There will be gorgeous gift baskets, jewelry, scratch ticket raffles, hats and mittens as well as dollar items. A take-out lunch of turkey soup or meatball sub will be available. All proceeds will benefit Sutton Seniors.  
• The parade will be held on Saturday, December 2nd, and will kickoff from the North Oxford Fire Station at 5:00 pm. The parade will continue down Route 12 to Joslin Park where Santa, Mrs. Claus and a special guest will light the tree on the Town Common Bandstand.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3**

• The Unitarian Church at 3 Grafton Common is having a traditional Church Faire on Sunday December 3, from 11:30-3:00. Enjoy a hot lunch including chili, cornbread, hot dogs and apple crisp; Attend a family friendly performance of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas at 1:00 featuring our hand bell choir; enjoy free kids crafts and shop at our local holiday market.  
• Grafton Celebrates the Holidays, 8 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Join the fun for the 28th year as more than 30 businesses, churches and organizations come up with a host of delightful seasonal activities. Keep an eye out for the "Frosty Stop" snow bear logo that marks fun spots like the Polar Express Trackless Train Ride, photos with Santa and the Craft and Vendor Fair at the Municipal Center Gym. The day starts with a pancake breakfast at North Grafton Elementary School. In other stops, enjoy hot soup, pizza or a grab and go craft for kids. The Baptist Church will display its traditional crèche from 1-5 p.m.  
• Millbury Chain of Lights at 11 a.m. Join the 24th annual, town-wide event to celebrate the holidays with local food, shopping and entertainment! Enjoy nearly 40 stops in town for live music, holiday shopping, holiday figures like Buddy the Elf and the Grinch, raffles and food. Old-fashioned trolleys provide free transportation throughout the day. The event is sponsored by local businesses and concludes with a tree lighting and appearance by Santa Claus at the Millbury bandstand

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5**

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

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9**

• Auburn Recreation and Culture is hosting its 10th Annual Holiday Craft Fair from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9 (snow date Dec. 10) at Auburn High School, 99 Auburn Street, Auburn. 150+ Craft Vendors will help you get into the spirit of the holiday season. Santa will be making an appearance from 10

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# Holiday Pops with the BVCC!

The Blackstone Valley Community Chorus will present their concert, HOLIDAY POPS with THE BVCC, on Sunday, December 3, 2023 at 3:00pm. The concert will take place at Valley Chapel at 14 Hunter Road in Uxbridge. Admission is free, though donations are accepted and appreciated!

HOLIDAY POPS with THE BVCC includes holiday classics and spirituals, a cappella tunes and a twenty-five member orchestra, and a sing-along of favorite Christ-

mas carols! The program promises fun and holiday cheer for an audience of all ages. Come celebrate the holiday spirit with family and friends and sing along!

The Blackstone Valley Community Chorus is a merry group of singers from towns throughout Central Massachusetts. Singing under the direction of Diane Pollard of Douglas, the BVCC has been committed to bringing varied musical performance opportunities to the Blackstone Valley for

nearly twenty years. Along with HOLIDAY POPS, the BVCC can be found performing throughout the Valley during the holiday season. Listen for us caroling at the Blackstone Valley's Festival of Trees, the Southwick Zoo Winter Wonderland, and at Mary Christmas and a Happy Moo Year! A Cozy Christmas Benefit Concert for the Whittiers. Visit the BVCC on Facebook or at www.bvccchorus.com for more information about all of these events!

## HAPPENINGS!

*continued from page 16*

a.m. – 2 p.m., so bring the kids. There will be activities, food, drawing, face painting and much more. For more information please contact the Recreation & Culture Division or call 508-832-7736.

- Annual Holiday Bazaar 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Webster Town Hall Auditorium, 350 Main Street

- Light It Up: A Christmas Concert with Whitinsville Christian School alumnus and Nashville star Jay Bragg Basiner, 7:30-9 p.m. at 279 Linwood Avenue. Tickets \$17.

- Celebrate with a traditional Christmas stroll in Sutton's historic village of Manchaug. The free community event

incorporates food, history, shopping and holiday merriment from 4- 8 p.m.

### DECEMBER 13

- Story Time at the Willard House and Clock Museum, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. for preschoolers and siblings. Children will hear a few stories, take a short museum tour and make a craft, 11 Willard Street, North Grafton.

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

- For over 65 years the Auburn Fire Rescue Department has brought Santa around town in the Fire Truck to visit children and adults throughout the community. It has become a tradition shared in families for generations. The route will start at approximately 11 a.m. from the Drury Square

Fire Station on Auburn Street. Times are approximate when listed. Please be patient as this is all dependent upon traffic and times are subject to change.

### 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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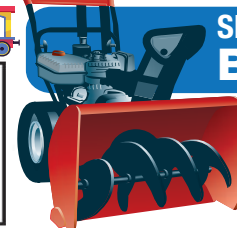


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# Those TV Drug Ads...

BY JANET STOICA

In 1985 the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) allowed drug makers to begin airing ads for new drugs as long as they adhered to agency guidelines on disclosing all side effects. Now, I don't know about you but I have certainly become numb to the multitude of drug ads that I see while watching TV. The drug makers seem to focus their ads on certain types of television shows such as Jeopardy and any of the nightly network news broadcasts. I swear if I see another ad for Rybelsus, Dupixent, or Ozempic, I will just scream. No, not really, but I will and do use my remote to the full extent of the law and that entails muting that drug

commercial and multi-tasking such as scrolling through my cellphone, Fire tablet, or even postal mail or quickly changing the channel to another station which surprise! is also advertising yet another drug.

It's no secret that the older sections of our population are the main viewers these days of paid TV. Younger viewers are enjoying their streaming services on Hulu, Netflix, or YouTube. Since streaming services don't carry ads except for the inexpensive versions of perhaps Netflix, the older population is the main focus of the pharmaceutical companies. And focus they do in the strongest way possible. Now, I don't consider myself a very gullible person and don't feel that I will listen very long to one of the

older actors in these drug commercials try to sell me on XYZ drugs to make me feel better or live longer. Why? Because once they start listing the side effects that must be disclosed, I immediately shut down mentally. Typically, the background announcer will quickly reel off or the tiny disclaimer at the bottom of the screen will say/state: "Do not take if you are allergic to XYZ drug, or if swelling occurs, or if paralysis occurs or if you feel suicidal. Stroke may ensue. Check with your doctor if any of these side effects happen."

Are you kidding me? Why would I ever want to take a drug I was allergic to? Am I supposed to start using the medication and then learn I'm allergic after my



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breathing shuts down? Before I get the pharmaceutical sales reps out there writing to me to explain about drug trials and how they work I have to state that yes, I do know how drug trials work. Before a drug can be approved by the FDA for release to the general public, new drug tests must be done on us humans to determine what their side effects might be. Big Pharma places ads out there in the internet world for people willing to be paid (enticing amounts of cash) to try experimental drugs. During the drug trials, if there are individuals who become dizzy, have elevated blood pressure, or succumb to any other of the ad disclaimers, the drug makers are obligated to disclose that effect at the end of their TV, print, internet, or radio ad. There are several phases to new drug testing before being cleared by the FDA for release to the general population.

One of the most appalling aspects of these Big Pharma drug ads is that the viewer will never be told that there may be other lesser expensive drugs that can help with their existing physical or mental condition. And, like the often-used

phrase about a used car salesperson (apologies to some of the honest used-car salespeople I know), they'll say anything to make the sale. The drug companies are out to make their bucks on their newly-minted drugs as Big Pharma is, after all, the most profitable industry in America. They have to recoup their expenses for making new chemical combinations that may or may not be of true benefit to us.

No one wants to add more chemicals to their bodies but on the flip side of the coin, there really are some drugs out there that do have terrible side effects but will also cure you. The ones we most all are aware of are cancer drugs. Most of us know someone who has undergone chemotherapy. We have seen the debilitating side effects of the chemo cocktails they must ingest to kill cancer. Our friends and relatives become a shadow of their former selves. Watching their physical changes is truly a testament to the strength and resilience of their wills to overcome the cancers trying to take over their bodies. In many cases, however, survivors overcome the harsh chemicals their bodies are subjected to in order to beat down the terrible affliction that has attacked them. The types of harsh drugs that cancer patients are subjected to could never be advertised on TV as their doses are individualized combinations of chemicals.

It's a rough situation that we are all a part of. Being subjected to an unending dose of drug ads from Big Pharma is not about to end. The best advice is to take your drug questions to your own primary care physician who will guide you in the most economical path to your own wellness.

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

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# Artists Wanted

**B**ooklovers' Gourmet, located at 72 East Main Street in Webster, is continuing their mission to offer space in their cafe gallery to showcase the talent of local artists through monthly exhibits. To consider applying for a month in 2024, please read the guidelines below.

- Original artwork in any media including photography, painting, drawing, collage, fabric, etc. 3-D work is allowed as long as it hangs on the wall.
- Expect to show 12-20 pieces, depending on size.
- All work must be framed, ready to hang.
- Not all work need be for sale, but is highly encouraged.
- Pricing is at the sole discre-

tion of the artist.

- A 30% commission will be taken on any sales during or as a result of the show.
- An artist's reception is offered during the month of display, usually on a Saturday afternoon.
- Artists are responsible for delivering and picking up work as well as providing a list of titles and prices with corresponding labels of the back of each piece.
- Upon acceptance, a brief artist bio, show description and title as well as an image representing the work in jpg format should be emailed to the store for promotional purposes.
- Booklovers' Gourmet will promote the show widely through its website, email newsletter, local

press releases and social media. Artists are strongly encouraged to do the same and invite their friends and family to see the show.

- Previous artists may apply again as long as they will be showing new work.
- Review of work may be done in person or via email. Send samples in jpg format to deb@booklovers-gourmet.com along with your requested month or make an appointment to come in Tuesday-Friday 10am-5pm. Months are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. For any questions, please call 508-949-6232.

## OPEN MIC NIGHT AND BOOK SIGNING

"Random Thoughts from a Curmudgeon" Book Signing and Open Mic featuring poet/humorist Joe Fusco, Jr. will take place on Saturday, December 2 from 2-4 p.m. at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 East Main Street, Webster, MA. Anyone interested in signing up for the open mic portion of the event, should email deb@bookloversgourmet.com or call 508-949-6232. Space is limited

and will be on a first-come, first-served basis. The event is free and open to the public. Signed copies of books will be available for purchase.

Joe Fusco, Jr. lives in Worcester, MA and is the author of four other books of poems and essays. His latest is "Random Thoughts from a Curmudgeon: Semi-Amusing Essays and Poems." You can often find his columns in Worcester Magazine.

## GET NOTICED!

Contact Diane at 774-364-0296 or by email at [dgalipeau@theyankeexpress.com](mailto:dgalipeau@theyankeexpress.com) to advertise today!

# Fundación MAPFRE Donates \$70,000 to United Way for Childcare and Nutrition Programs

**U**nited Way of South Central MA (UWSCM) is pleased to announce that it has received a \$70,000 grant from Fundación MAPFRE, a global non-profit organization that provides social assistance and promotes road safety. The grant is the first major gift this year that will support UWSCM's Bridging the Gap Campaign, which provides funding for critical childcare and nutrition programs in South Central Massachusetts.

"We are grateful to Fundación MAPFRE for their generous support of our partner agencies that provide affordable childcare and nutrition services for families and older adults," said Mary O'Coin, Executive Director at UWSCM. "This funding will help us to ensure that children in our community have access to the high-quality preschool and afterschool childcare and nutrition for families so they can all thrive."

The Bridging the Gap Campaign supports a variety of programs that provide childcare and nutrition assistance to low-income families in South Central Massachusetts. These programs include:

- Childcare subsidies that help families afford high-quality childcare at the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club of Webster-Dudley.
- Nutrition assistance programs through Tri-Valley, Inc. that provide food to older adults and individuals with disabilities.
- A weekly dinner program for families through the YMCA - Tri-Community Branch "What's for Dinner" program.

"Fundación MAPFRE is pleased to support the United Way of South Central Massachusetts in its important work in the community," said Jaime Tamayo, President and Chief Executive Officer of MAPFRE Insurance and Chief Representative of Fundación MAPFRE in the U.S. "We are proud to help the United Way's Bridging the Gap Campaign to provide more essentials to children and adults."

**About Fundación MAPFRE**  
Fundación MAPFRE is a global non-profit organization that provides social assistance and promotes road safety. The foundation was established in 1975 by MAPFRE, a leading insurance company. Fundación MAPFRE works to improve the lives of people in need through a variety of programs and services, including support for children and families, disaster relief, and road safety initiatives.

**About United Way of South Central MA**  
United Way of South Central MA is a nonprofit organization that works to improve the lives of people in need in the towns of Southbridge, Sturbridge, Charlton, Dudley and Webster. UWSCM funds over 26 programs and services that address the critical needs of the community, including education, income, health, and housing.

The 2023 campaign will run through December 31. People can donate online at [www.uwscm.org](http://www.uwscm.org) or by mail to United Way of South Central MA, 176 Main Street, Suite 400, Southbridge, MA 01550.

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