

Clinical trial funding sought for rare condition affecting local child

BY PATTY ROY

Seven years ago, Tom and Stacey Wallace of Northbridge were thrilled to welcome a second son to their family.

"Brooks was a vibrant, happy, healthy baby who was crushing all of his milestones," Stacey Wallace said. Baby and toddler milestones are those developmental measurements of every new skill mastered, while parents check off each one.

At 16 months old, Brooks was already a seasoned walker when his parents noticed a slight change to his gait. Their concern led them to a phalanx of doctors, a battery of medical tests and endless appointments.

"Six months later we were given the devastating diagnosis of metachromatic leukodystrophy," Brooks' mom said.

Metachromatic leukodystrophy (MLD) is a rare and progressive genetic disorder that affects the nervous system and causes severe neurological decline, often beginning in the toddler years. There is currently no cure for



Brooks' with his siblings Brady, Weston and Wyatt.

MLD, and existing treatments are few and not always effective.

The Wallaces were told by three different doctors from Boston Children's Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital and Connecticut Children's Hospital that there was nothing they could do.

"Brooks wouldn't make it to his fifth birthday," Stacey Wallace related the medical prognosis. "Devastated is an understatement at this point."

As so many parents are forced to do when confronted with their child's potentially fatal disease, Bob and Stacey dug into their own research to become Brooks' best advocates.

They discovered that stem cell or bone marrow transplants were showing promise as a treatment for a few types of the leukodystrophy group of disorders.

CLINICAL TRIAL

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Family Fun Fishing Day

Open Sky Community Services and the Blackstone River Watershed Association are on Saturday, May 4 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. with a rain date of Sunday, May 5. Prizes will be

excited to co-host the 9th Annual Family Fun Fishing Day at Riverbend Farm in Uxbridge along with partner organizations the Blackstone River National Heritage Corridor Volunteers in Parks Program, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.



This year's event will be held

awarded at 1:15 p.m. There will be activities for the whole family as well as a food and ice cream for purchase, free face painting and raffles. All ages and ability levels welcome.

Fishing poles, bait and instruction will be available with pre-registration and participants are welcome to bring their home. This is a catch and release event for everyone from first time anglers. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

Volunteer opportunities are available at openskyes.org/fishingvolunteers.

Pre-registration opened April 5 at thebrwa.org/family-fishing2024. This is a free event, but pre-registration is required. Contact Joanne Holsham at 508-278-5200 with any questions.

Also, be sure to sign up for the Earth Day Cleanup 2024. We are hosting a cleanup of the Blackstone River Bikeway between Millbury and Worcester on Saturday April 20, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to Noon. The cleanup will begin with refreshments, a short safety meeting and an opportunity to fill out volunteer forms.

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CLINICAL TRIAL

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“We did research and found a doctor in Pittsburgh who was willing to do a bone marrow transplant on Brooks,” Stacey Wallace said. “The transplant would save his brain and buy us time, but was not a cure.”

In October 2018 the family

was separated for four months while Brooks underwent a bone marrow transplant using stem cells.

“Fast forward five years and science has caught up with us,” Stacey said. “Brooks’ physician, Dr. Maria Escobar, has been working on gene therapy for this disease for over 25 years. The science is here, but the funding for

such a rare disease is not.”

Dr. Escobar began her research on rare neurodegenerative disorders in 2000, when she established the Program for the Study of Neurodevelopment in Rare Disorders (NDRD). Since then, she has published over 70 original research papers in peer-reviewed journals, including two influential publications in the New England Journal of Medicine. Dr. Escobar is a tenured Professor of Pediatrics and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities at the University of Pittsburgh. She is close to a clinical trial for MLD, but there is a shortage of funding for rare disorders.

To help with research funding, Northbridge resident Rachel Rhode has organized a Go Fund Me for Gene Replacement Therapy for MLD. Visit it at:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/>

gene-replacement-therapy-for-mld

The funds raised will go directly to a clinical trial for gene therapy for MLD.

Brooks is now seven years old and full of life, Stacey reports. He attends Northbridge Elementary School and loves being outside with his three brothers, Brady, Weston and Wyatt.

As Brooks gets older and bigger, it is more difficult to move him along with his therapeutic equipment around the house, Stacey said. But, for the moment, Brooks’ family is putting those concerns aside, and focusing hopefully on a better life for their son.

“We honestly thought that gene therapy would have been possible for him by now, but Covid and lack of funding has paused this treatment,” she said. “We are just trying to get the doctor the funds



Brooks Wallace is a student at Northbridge Elementary. His family and friends are trying to raise money to fund a clinical trial to help with a genetic condition.

she needs to get this treatment going, then we will worry about our house and what the long term plans are.”

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St. Patrick's Church will hold a spring recycling event from 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. on June 1, 7 East Street, Whitinsville. They will be accepting gently used books (no encyclopedias) and media; gently used textiles/clothing & accessories; electronics for a fee (no propane, batteries, lightbulbs); rinsed bottles/

cans returnable in Massachusetts (no glass); paper shredding (\$8.00/box) 9 – 11 a.m. only.

Please keep items for each station separate. For more information & pricing, email officesupport@mystpatricks.com or call 508-234-5656.

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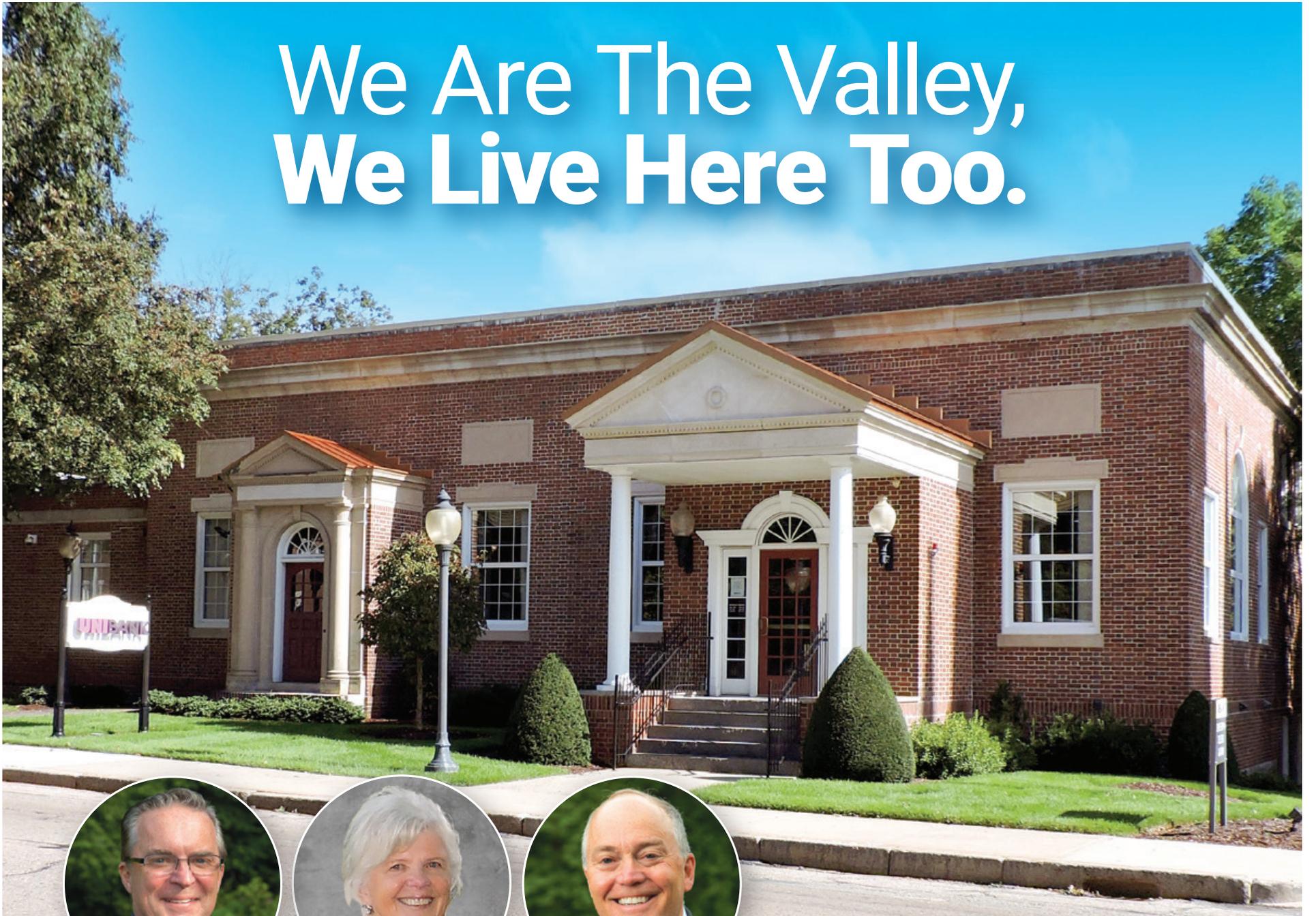
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BVCC Offers Free Master Classes for Women

BY PATTY ROY

The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce is invested in the success of women, notably through its Women's Success Network and is committed to helping women achieve success through creating support and inspiration for their personal and professional lives. In conjunction with the International Women's Organization (IWO) theme for 2024, "Inspire Inclusion," the BVCC is creating a virtual event via Zoom that is open to the public.

To access the Zoom presentation, visit <https://blackstonevalley.org/> and follow the WSN Master-class tile to use the QR codes.

The first class is Wednesday, April 24 from 9 – 10:30 a.m. with its subject "Breaking Barriers, Building Belonging, Empowering Women through Inclusive Success" presented by Lynn Whitney-Turner, a trained business coach with over 20 years of experience. She is the founder of CORE XP Business Solutions that focuses on people and culture with the objective of helping them remain agile in a changing business landscape.

On Wednesday, May 15 at 9 a.m. also via Zoom, Natalie Hahn will lead a class addressing imposter syndrome (when you're performing well but feel undeserving about your success) called "Who Do You Think You



Michelle Lemoi

Aren't? Dismantling Imposter Syndrome."

Hahn is the head of DGC (Dirty Girls Consulting) and says



Natalie Hahn

her business came into being because she wanted to help women find "their purpose and their joy in life."

Communication, both at home and work has an enormous effect on our lives, she says. Because clarity in our sense of purpose and the way we choose to fill our days IS what fills our lives.

"Stand in Your Power – 3 Tools to Define Your Success & Inspire Inclusion" with Michelle Lemoi becomes available via Zoom on Tuesday, June 18 from 9-10:30 a.m.

Lemoi spent more than two decades in the construction industry and offers life coaching to those who want to make a difference in their own lives first, and the lives of others. She is now pursuing a more caring path to help those "willing to dream big and design a life that focuses on women making themselves their number one priority."

"Inspire Inclusion" has been launched by the IWO as a way to celebrate diversity and empower-



Lynn Whitney-Turner

ment throughout the year and throughout society. It encourages everyone to recognize the unique perspectives and contributions of women from all walks of life, including those from marginalized communities. It calls for action to break down barriers, challenge stereotypes, and create environments where all women are valued and respected.

The event is a master class series endorsing this concept; the classes will provide assessments, profiles, lectures and take-away information.

One of the key pillars of "Inspire Inclusion" is the promotion of diversity in leadership and decision-making positions. Women, especially those belonging to underrepresented groups, continue to face barriers when seeking leadership roles. By championing inclusion, organizations and communities can harness the full potential of diverse perspectives, leading to better decision-making and innovation.

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Time for financial spring cleaning?



Mark Freeman

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Spring is almost here, which means it's time for some spring cleaning. This year, in addition to tidying your home and surroundings, you might want to consider sprucing up your financial environment, as well.

Here are some suggestions for doing just that:

- **Improve your vision.** Once the days are warmer and longer, you may want to get outside and clean all the winter grime

and smudges from your windows, allowing you to see the world more clearly. And you may want to bring more focus to your financial vision by asking some key questions: Is my investment strategy still appropriate for my needs, goals and family situation? If not, what changes should I make? And am I prepared for changes in my life, such as health challenges or a need to retire earlier than planned? The answers to these and other questions can help you clarify where you are, in terms of your financial picture, and where you want to go.

- **De-clutter.** As you look around your home, you may find things such as expired health care products, old prescriptions, ancient cleaning solutions, and so on, in addition to duplicate household items (how many blenders do you really need?) and non-working equipment — printers, laptops, etc. Most people find that eliminating this clutter

gives them a good feeling — and more livable space. As an investor, you can also find clutter in the form of redundant investments — for example, you might own several nearly identical mutual funds. You might be better off selling some of these funds and using the proceeds to find new investments that can help you further diversify your portfolio. As you may know, diversification is a key to investment success, but keep in mind that it can't prevent all losses.

- **Plant seeds of opportunity.** Whether they're planting camellias and crocuses or carrots and cilantro, gardeners are busy in the spring, hoping their efforts result in lovely flowers and tasty foods. And when you invest, you, too, need to plant seeds of opportunity in the form of investments that you hope will grow enough to enable you to make progress toward your goals. So, you may want to review your portfolio to ensure

it's providing this growth potential, given your individual risk tolerance.

- **Reduce dangers.** You may not think about it that much, but your home and surroundings can contain potential hazards. You might have ill-fitting caps on cleaning products with toxic chemicals, or sharp cutting instruments protruding from shelves in your garage, or heavy, cracked tree branches hovering close to your roof. Spending some time on a spring-cleaning sweep can get rid of these dangers — and devoting time to consider the possible threats to your financial security, and those of your family, can pay off, too. For starters, review your life insurance to determine if you've got enough. Your employer may offer some coverage as an employee benefit, but it might not be sufficient, so you may need private coverage. And the same is true for disability insurance, because

if something were to happen to you, and you couldn't work for a while, you'd still want to protect your family's lifestyle.

Spring is a great time for brightening your physical space — and your financial one, too.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

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Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) students put the systems voc-tech mission on full display. During the first of three SkillsUSA competitions, students test their vocational-technical competency by competing with other trained career and technical education students from six vocational high schools. On March 13th, 227 BVT students competed in the annual SkillsUSA Massachusetts District V Competition with outstanding

outcomes.

The competition allows students to demonstrate their vocational-technical education, skills, and knowledge with SkillsUSA employment and trade tests. Successfully demonstrating their knowledge in their career technical area of study, employability skills, and safety. Student competitors from BVT proudly claimed 36 gold, 27 silver, 31 bronze medals and swept 9 categories.

districts to compete amongst the most talented vocational-technical students in the Commonwealth at the SkillsUSA Massachusetts State competition held at BVT in late April. An additional 43 students will go directly to the state competition, and 13 student delegates will represent BVT. The complete list of medalists is available at www.valleytech.k12.

68 students will advance from

BVT

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Douglas Adult Social Center

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• The Senior Center is coloring a large canvas welcome sign for

our wall. Help us out. Drop in and color at your own pace.

• The new weekly dart group started in March. Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

• Don't forget. The Senior Center has lots of medical equipment to loan out. Call the center at 508-476-2283 if you need anything.

• Sun shine Club meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 2 p.m. The next meeting is May 7.

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Mondays: Pickleball 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.; Painting 9:45 – 11:45 a.m. ; Balance and Strength class 12 p.m.; Mat yoga, 2 p.m.

Tuesdays: Walking 9 – 10 a.m.; Cribbage 9:30 a.m.; Zumba 9:30 a.m. , Bingo and Lunch 11:30 a.m. (lunch is \$4). Technology class 1 p.m.

Wednesdays: Pickleball 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.; Balance and Strength 10 a.m.; Darts 10 a.m.; Mahjong 1 p.m.

Thursdays: Walking 9 - 10 a.m. ; Chair yoga 9:30 a.m.; Pitch 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. ; Hand and Foot card game 12:30 a.m.

Fridays: Balance and Strength – 10 a.m.

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BVT

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BVT students who earned medals at the SkillsUSA Massachusetts District V Leadership Conference are listed by hometown:

BELLINGHAM

Silver: Charlie Leighton, Major Appliance Technology; Kiele Sarnie, Carpentry; Lucien Stenehjem, Robotics & Automation Tech; and Tan Tran, Restaurant Service.

Bronze: Pyper Bourre, Health Knowledge Bowl; and Matthew Skarin, Welding.

BLACKSTONE

Gold: Haley McKinnon, Photography; and Carolyn Powers, Collision Damage Appraisal.

Silver: Mia DelVecchio, Baking & Pastry Arts; and Ella Ruth, Welding.

Bronze: Paige Connolly, Baking & Pastry Arts; Parker Guilbert, Nail Care; and Samaria Saylor, Web Design.

DOUGLAS

Gold: Caitlin Kelly, First Aid/CPR; Om Patel, Mobile Robotics Technology; Samantha Pinto, Health Knowledge Bowl; and Skyler Robinson, Restaurant Service.

Silver: Colin Lavoie, Photography.

Bronze: Addison Taylor, Nurse Assisting.

GRAFTON

Silver: Connor Mcinerney, HVAC/R; Cooper Often, Mechatronics; Owen O'Packi, Television (Video) Production; Ryan St. Angelo, Culinary Arts.

Bronze: Audrey Bell, Robotics & Automation Tech; Zoey Dauderis, Basic Health Care; Isabella Grabau, Power Equipment Technology; Soumith Madadi, Computer Programming; and Benjamin Miller, Urban Search & Rescue.

HOPEDALE

State Officer Candidate: Kallie Allen.

Gold: Gabriella Griffin, Health Knowledge Bowl; and Joshua Maillet, Diesel Equipment Technology.

Silver: Jason Abbruzzese, Mobile Robotics; and Igor Freeman, Additive Manufacturing.

Bronze: John Fumia, Television (Video) Production; Ashlyn Leonard, Health Knowledge Bowl; Eleanor Poitras, Health Knowledge Bowl; and Mikayla Sanosi, Web Design.

MENDON

Gold: Kalynn Bellefontaine, Nurse Assisting; Noah LeFave, Electronics Technology; Leila Leyvas, Health Knowledge Bowl; Abigail Scharnagle, Medical Math; and Arthur Tusoni, Television (Video) Production.

Bronze: Sophia Blalock, Cosmetology Over 500 Hours; and Charles Lozeau, Mobile Robotics Technology.

MILFORD

Gold: Lacey Coffman, Advertising Design; and Lizmary Vidal-Sanchez, Dental Assisting.

Silver: Andrew Dolan, Basic Health Care.

Bronze: Julia Ribeiro, Esthetics.

MILLBURY

Gold: Camden Darrell, CNC 2 Axis Turning Programmer; Mason Diosomito, Mechatronics; Dylan Fleming, Major Appliance Technology; and Jayden Quang,

Mechatronics.

Silver: Jack Kenary, Television (Video) Production.

Bronze: Nicole Boucher, Health Knowledge Bowl; Wyatt Darrell, Mechatronics; Jonathan Tremblay, Diesel Equipment Technology

MILLVILLE

Bronze: Hannah Murphy, Photography.

NORTHBRIDGE

Gold: Sosie Derkosrofan, Medical Terminology; Catherine Kingsbury, Customer Service; Dylan Leeds, Mobile Robotics Technology; Kayla Leppamaki, Robotics & Automation Tech; and Emma Vaughan, Baking & Pastry Arts.

Silver: Kayla Chausse, Cosmetology Under 500 Hours; Zabel Derkosrofan; Technical Computer Applications; Haley Marston, Dental Assisting; and Connor Mcquilkin, Automotive Refinishing Technology.

Bronze: Maddison Dos Santos, HVAC/R; and Mikaela Sadik, Television (Video) Production.

SUTTON

Gold: Caroline Martin, Additive Manufacturing.

Silver: Alexandra Nunnemacher, Painting & Design Technology

Bronze: Benjamin Hicks, Electronics Technology.

UPTON

Gold: Cassidy Lyon, Health Knowledge Bowl; and Ryan Poirier, CNC 3 Axis Milling Programmer.

Silver: Justin Fransen, Mechatronics; and Laith Shloul, Telecommunications Cabling.

Bronze: Ryan May, Urban Search & Rescue; and Van Richard, Mobile Robotics Technology

UXBRIDGE

Gold: Caterina Corapi, Robotics & Automation Tech; Samuel Kirby, Telecommunications Cabling; Brendan Knox, Cosmetology Under 500 Hours; Matteo Lame, Power Equipment Technology; Samantha Makynen, Additive Manufacturing; Cole Pinchuck, HVAC/R; Joshua Thompson, Television (Video) Production; Eli Tripp, Culinary Arts; and Samuel Waugh, Electrical Construction Wiring.

Silver: Kali Bly, Cosmetology Over 500 Hours; Jacob Giancola, Robotics & Automation Tech; Avery Herrick, Advertising Design; Makaylah Holzman, Additive Manufacturing; and Daniel Noel, Mobile Robotics.

Bronze: Breanna Donahue, Telecommunications Cabling; Dylan Ryan, Mechatronics; Roan Tajiani,

Major Appliance Technology; and Stephanie Zaitoun, Robotics & Automation Tech.

About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills.

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Whitinsville Social Library

Monday-Thursday: 10 AM-8 PM; Friday 10 AM-5 PM; Saturday 10 AM-2 PM; Closed April 15 for Patriots Day; Closing early at 7 PM on 5/7 for Northbridge Town Meeting

STORYTIME

Mondays & Thursdays at 10:30 AM

Ages 1-6
Join Miss Heather in the Children's Room for Storytime! We will read about a variety of topics, sing, play games, and do a fun activity or take home craft! Space is limited, registration is required. Registration opens one week prior to the event.

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT WITH DEB HUDGINS

Wednesdays at 10:30 AM
Ages 1-5

Join Miss Deb for plenty of singing, dancing, games, stories and fun for everyone! Space is limited, registration is required. Registration opens one week prior to the event.

STORYTIME PLAYTIME

Fridays at 10:30 AM

In this new storytime session, we will be learning and singing lots of hand rhymes with movement activities geared towards babies and young children. At the end of the session there will be lots of playtime to make friends! Ages 0-4. Registration required.

THE HISTORIAN IS IN

Wednesdays from 2-3 PM
Drop-in between 2-3 on

Wednesdays to get in-person assistance with your local history research from historian Carol Brouwer.

HOMESCHOOL MIXER

Tuesday 4/23 at 11 AM
Join Miss Heather in the Tween and Teen for a casual meet-up organized specifically for homeschool families of all ages! Start the hour with a brief presentation from Miss Heather, then spend the rest of the hour visiting and connecting with others, swapping ideas, and making new connections. Families who are considering homeschooling are welcome to attend. Fun activities will be available for children, tweens and teens. All children under the age of 9 must be accompanied by an adult at all

times. Registration is required.

GRAPHIC NOVEL BOOK CLUB

Thursday 4/25 at 3 PM
Join Miss Heather in discussing our April's book Lightfall by Tim Probert. Join as we have snacks, discuss the book, and make a fun craft based on the book. Ages 9-17. Registration is required.

BOOK CLUB FOR INTROVERTS

Thursday 4/25 at 6-8 PM
Come gather at the library with fellow book lovers to read and relax. There are no assigned readings. Bring your own book or browse and borrow one of the library's. Drinks and snacks will be provided. Meeting starts at 6, silent reading starts at 6:30. Small talk is not required. Please register.

CRAFT NIGHT FOR ADULTS

Monday 4/29 at 6 PM
Create a one-of-a-kind book bag using pre-cut fabric pieces and simple sewing techniques. Participants must have basic sewing skills and ability to thread a needle independently and execute a basic running stitch. For adults 18+. Registration required.

COFFEE HOUR

Friday 5/3 from 10-11 AM
Stop by the Library on the first Friday of the month for a cup of coffee with the Library Director in the Tween & Teen Room. Have any questions for Rebecca about the Building Program? Need some help using the library's apps or online catalog? Interested in volunteering? All these questions and more can be answered for you one-on-one.

FICTION BOOK OF THE MONTH

Monday 5/6 at 6 PM
May's book is "Yellowface" by RF Kuang. Books are available for pick up at the library. Ebooks are available via Overdrive/Libby. Meeting takes place at the library. Refreshments provided. Registration required.

GARDENING AND WATER CONSERVATION

Wednesday 5/8 at 6 PM
Kathleen from Blackstone Valley Veggie gardens will teach attendees several techniques to hydrate your garden in preparation for droughts and dry summer conditions. Drop in.

THE WHODUNNITS

Tuesday 5/14 at 11 AM
Discuss "Murder on Astor Place" by Victoria Thompson. Copies of the book are available at the circulation desk or via Libby. Refreshments provided. This new book club for readers of mystery, suspense and true crime meets the second Tuesday of each month. Registration required.

COOKIE DECORATING WORKSHOP

Thursday 5/16 at 6 PM
Sign up for this workshop to learn the skill of cookie decorating using royal icing. Learn a method called "flooding" and other specialized techniques. Leave with four spring decorated cookies. For adults. Registration required.

MEMOIR BOOK CLUB

Wednesday 5/22 at 6 PM
Join us in a discussion of "Unmasked: My Life Solving America's Cold Cases" by Paul Holes. Books are available for pick up at the library. Ebooks are available via Overdrive/Libby. Meeting takes place at the library. Snacks related to the book will be provided. Please register.

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DHA Alumnus was Anime Boston 2024 Panel Speaker

The organizers of the Anime Boston 2024 convention welcomed Chef Gino Bolandrina from KuruKuru Ramen Shop.

Chief Ramen Chef Gino Bolandrina of Boston, formerly of Douglas High School, 2012. He hosted "Irasshaimase! A Ramen Journey." The other key members of the KuruKuru Ramen Shop who joined Chef Gino includes, Jessica Pietroniro (DHS alumna 2009) Owner/ Chief Marketing Officer, and Nick Pietroniro Owner/ Chief Executive Officer, both of Waterbury, Connecticut.

The event took place at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston on March 29, 2024, with a running time of 90 minutes at Panel 207. "Irasshaimase! A Ramen Journey" is categorized as a Fan Panel and was attended by over 100 Ramen enthusiasts!

KuruKuru Ramen shop's panel aimed to educate attendees about the culture of Ramen through the world of anime! As restaurateurs who fell in love with Ramen culture through watching anime growing up, KuruKuru Ramen Shop was the perfect guide in showing the history of Ramen and how anime is able to make it look so delicious. At the end

of the panel Chef Gino answered questions and welcomed comments.

Chef Gino genuinely loves cooking and Ramen. He appreciates the art (and patience) of preparing a deliciously beautiful bowl of ramen. He is not one to cut any corners. Chef Gino had been enthusiastic about food since his childhood. At age 7, he trained at the Heny Sison Culinary School (Manila, Philippines) under Chef Jill Sandique (International ICE alumni and a graduate of the Institute of Culinary Education Pastry & Baking Arts program). Chef Gino's culinary experiences range from apprenticeship (The Ivy Restaurant, Boston), to Cooking Shows (Chef Heny Sison), to employments (Harvard Faculty Club, Cambridge; Pikaichi, Boston), to teaching Japanese cooking (Bay Path Adult Evening School, Charlton). He has traveled to Japan extensively and has enjoyed Ramen in Chiba, Kanagawa, Osaka, Kamikatsu, and Tokyo. At Pikaichi in Boston, where he worked as a waiter then kitchen chef, he honed in his passion for Ramen. He has over 10 years of experience running and managing Ramen restaurants in the

Greater Boston Area. Chef Gino leads menu creation, daily food prep, and all other cooking-related

responsibilities at KuruKuru. He collaborates with suppliers, ensures food quality in every

meal, and assists with all back-of-house tasks and duties.

Family-run Affordable Junk Removal takes the stress out of cleanups

BY CHRISTIE VOGT
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Whether it's one old fridge in the garage or an entire home of unwanted goods, the team at Affordable Junk Removal offers a cost-efficient, stress-free approach to waste management. "You don't lift a finger," says owner Jason Schadler, who started the company along with his wife Christine in 2005.

The business offers same-day service for both residential and commercial clients across eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island. In addition to junk removal, the company rents 15-yard dumpsters.

As a family-owned and operated company, Schadler says Affordable Junk Removal has lower overhead

costs and is more accessible than national competitors. "I answer my phone 24 hours a day," he says. "I was on vacation in Italy and Portugal, and I was still answering my phone on the beach. When you call us, you get me — not an automated machine!"

Schadler says the company has an environmentally friendly approach to disposal in which it recycles items whenever possible and properly disposes of non-recyclables.

During the business's early days, Schadler provided junk removal on nights and weekends when he wasn't busy working at a machine shop. Eventually, the business grew into a full-time endeavor, and the Schadlers invested back into the company with new equipment and techniques. "When I first started,

for example, we didn't have any tarps. I'm driving around and things are flying out of my truck," Schadler laughs. "I'm like, 'Oh my god, I need a tarp.'"

Schadler says his wife Christine "was equally as involved" in getting the business off the ground. "She handled the backend while I did the heavy lifting, all while she was working at EMC," he says. "Fast forward 17 years, and we both work full time managing the company as well as other endeavors. Business is doing great; it has grown tremendously to a fleet of trucks and dumpsters, and we've also been able to buy a pizza place, The Corner Market in Holliston."

In addition to delivering an in-demand service to the community, Schadler is appreciative that Affordable Junk Removal has

Business spotlight



Christine and Jason Schadler, shown here with their children and dog, started Affordable Junk Removal in 2005.

helped provide a work-life balance that suits his family. "It allows me to be able to do what I like doing and spend time with my kids," he says. "I'm home to see my babies play softball and do all that stuff. We are also able to give back to the communities we serve."

As for Uxbridge, Northbridge and Douglas in particular Schadler says they are proud to have many repeat customers and friends in the area.

One of the best parts of his job, Schadler says, is meeting and getting to know new people and developing relationships with returning customers. "We are really

grateful for the repeat business and the chance to form connections with residents across the Blackstone Valley," he says.

To receive a free junk removal estimate, call 774-287-1133 or visit affordablejunkremoval.com.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Schools, business partnership development opportunity

School administrators, internship coordinators, workforce development professionals, business partners, and legislators are invited to join a regional group event that includes rep-

resentatives from Central MA school districts, MassHire Central Workforce Development Board, DESE, legislatures, business partners and the Blackstone Valley Hub to discuss the next innovations in

integrating workforce development into public school as well as identify barriers and seek solutions to them. Registration is online for Central MA Connecting ActivitiesZ convening on May 1 from 9 a.m.

– 12 p.m. Visit bvhub.org for more information.

Hosted by the MassHire Central Region Workforce Board and Blackstone Valley Hub for Workforce Development.

The event will be held at the Blackstone Rive Valley Heritage Center, 3 Paul Clancy Way (for GPS use 115 McKeon Road) Worcester.

Workforce development leaders from Central Mass school districts, nonprofits, businesses and governance will convene to discuss practice being utilized at various Central MA school districts including Algonquin, Bellingham, Douglas, Dudley-Charlton, Milford, Northbridge, Shrewbury,

Sutton, Uxbridge, Webster and Worcester.

Participants will get an exclusive first look at two new major workforce development projects designed to enhance the services we provide youth in the Commonwealth: MCRWB's Connecting Activities Guidebook, BV Hub's Innovative Work-based Learning Ecosystem Tool (reflecting the Biden administration's "Career Z Challenge" project).

Discussions among attendees will focus on current best practice, funding opportunities, challenges and tools – expanding knowledge of current and promising trends in career readiness in regional high priority industries.

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Local Award of Academic Excellence Recipients

Ella Rogozenski of Northbridge and Laney Beahn of Douglas have been announced as the recipients of the Massachusetts Association of School Super-

intendents Award of Academic Excellence. They are both in the Engineering & Robotics program at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School. The annual commendation, also known as the Superintendent's Scholar Award, is presented to the two seniors who exemplify the school's commitment to cutting-edge career technical training and rigorous academics.



Laney Beahn (left) and Ella Rogozenski

Ella Rogozenski is the Class of 2024 valedictorian. Her dedication to academic and vocational studies was demonstrated when she earned a gold medal in the Safety Poster Design Team at the SkillsUSA State (Massachusetts) Leadership & Skills Conference in 2021, a silver medal in Urban Search & Rescue at the SkillsUSA District V Leadership Conference in 2022, and a bronze medal in Entrepreneurship at the SkillsUSA State (Massachusetts) Leadership & Skills Conference in 2023. A John & Abigail Adams Scholarship recipient, Ella has made the Commendation List every term of her high school career. Ella is a scholastically talented student who, in addition to her academic success, also excels as a student-athlete in lacrosse as a CAL All-Star 2022-2023 and is a National Girls and Women in Sports Award recipient.

Ella is analyzing multiple placement opportunities and options that will strengthen her workforce entry options. She wants to further her education and training by studying civil engineering or architecture at a four-year college.

Currently, Laney Beahn is the Class of 2024 salutatorian, the vice president of DECA (Distributive Clubs of America) and the Leo Club, a Senior Representative for the Student Council, and a National Honor Society and National Technical Honor Society member. She earned the Most Outstanding Student award in Engineering and Robotics. Her dedication to academic and vocational studies was displayed when she earned a silver medal in Urban Search and Rescue at the SkillsUSA District V Leadership Conference in 2021 and a bronze in Entrepreneurship at the SkillsUSA State (Massachusetts) Leadership & Skills Conference in 2022. Laney was a Massachusetts DECA Quiz Bowl State Semifinalist. She is a scholastically talented student who excels in addition to her academic success and extracurricular activities as a student-athlete in soccer. Laney is the girls' varsity soccer captain (2023) and a Massachusetts All-State All-Star in 2021, a Central Mass All-Star in 2021 and 2023, and a Colonial Athletic League All-Star in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Laney wants to further her education and launch her career with a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering to strengthen her workforce entry opportunities.

Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, at the January school committee meeting, on behalf of Assistant Superintendent-Director/Principal Anthony Steele and the School Committee, congratulated Ella and Laney on their awards and thanked them for their many contributions.

"Ella and Laney exemplify the modern-day career technical student. They can readily demonstrate high-level technical training and simultaneously validate high achievement in academics that serve as a foundation for their technical aptitude. Given Ella and Laney's commitment to growth and learning, it is not surprising that they also balanced their academic and technical education with extracurricular activities. It is an honor to have them represent BVT and, more generally speaking, the remarkable student outcomes possible within the Massachusetts model of career technical education," said Principal Steele.

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The month of April is a special month to celebrate our volunteers. Volunteer Recognition Day, as the name suggests, is a day

to honor, recognize and celebrate the selfless individuals who volunteer their time and energy to help others and promote good causes. I want to thank all our volunteers in the Town of Uxbridge, not only at the Senior Center, but also throughout the Town. Many of our volunteers are seniors, especially those who work for the Senior Work-off Program, who serve in different departments. Volunteerism empowers individuals to find their purpose, to take their passion and turn it into meaningful change. This is a time to honor the impact of all those who do good in our Town and inspire others to make a difference.

The senior center will be holding a luncheon for our volunteers on Monday, April 29th at 12 noon. Please consider joining us to celebrate our volunteers at this luncheon and don't forget to RSVP.

Our SHINE Counselor, Pat Nectow, is back from hiatus and able to assist you with your health insurance questions and concerns. Pat will be at the center at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, April 16. Please call the center to schedule your appointment.

A thank you to the Uxbridge Elderly Connection, State Rep. Mike Soter, our volunteers, and our donors for the Rise Up Easter ham lunch delivered to our seniors on Saturday, March 23rd. Our seniors appreciate your support & kindness!

New as of March 1, 2024: Medicare Savings Programs (MSP's)

If your income is at or below the amounts listed here, you may qualify for help from one of several Medicare Savings Programs:

Single individual \$2,824/month
Married couple \$3,833/month
There is no asset limit.

Please call the senior center for more information and to receive an application.

The Uxbridge Elderly Connection will be holding their Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 8th at 5pm at the Senior Center. We will

be reviewing the Annual Report and the election of Board of Directors members. Any member of UEC interested in running for the Board should contact Director Lisa Bernard or Donna Oncay at the senior center. The Uxbridge Elderly Connection is the fundraising arm of the senior center and provides financial funding for some of the senior center's activities and programs. Please join us!

Tuesday, April 2nd – 12:00 pm - Worcester Woo Sox Opening Day! Come celebrate with hotdogs, popcorn & peanuts during lunch!

Thursday, April 4th – 8:30 am – Podiatrist Dr. Biancamano will be available for appointments. Please call ahead to book yours.

Thursday, April 4th – 10:30 am – Veterans' Services with Carl Bradshaw by appointment only. Call 508-278-8622 to sign up.

Thursdays, April 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th May 2nd & 9th – 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm – Zumba Classes Continue! All classes are held at the senior center satellite campus, McCloskey School at 62 Capron Street in Uxbridge. Sign up for 8 weeks at a requested donation of \$25.00. Pre-registration is required, stop by the center to pick up your registration and waiver forms.

Thursdays, April 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th & May 2nd - 2:45 pm – 3:45 pm - Low Impact Exercise Classes Continue! All classes are held at the senior center satellite campus, McCloskey School at 62 Capron Street in Uxbridge. Sign up for 8 weeks at a requested donation of \$25.00. Pre-registration is required, stop by the center to pick up your registration and waiver forms.

Friday, April 5th – 12:00 pm – Lunch & Learn with Chief Montminy. His guest speaker will be Dawn Salkiewicz from Tri-Valley Inc. She will be discussing The Caregiver Program: Self Care & Caregiver Grant. Be sure to RSVP for this informational luncheon.

Monday, April 8th & April 22nd – 1:30 pm – Pottery Class with Christine Tansen. You can make a spoon rest and a trinket dish. The cost will be \$10.00 per person. We will be creating pottery on April 8th and then preparing for firing on April 22nd. Payment is due upon sign up.

Tuesday, April 9th – 1:00 pm – Uxbridge Library Book Club. They will be discussing "Go as a River" by Shelley Read. You are welcome to join us for lunch on this day, just be sure to call ahead to "book" yours! Next month is on Tuesday, May 14th and their book will be "The Nightingale" by Kristin Hannah.

Tuesday, April 9th – 1:00 pm – Benefit Enrollment Specialist – Tri-Valley, Inc. Call the senior center to book an appointment

with Katelynn Wackell. Next date will be May 14th.

Monday, April 15th – The Senior Center will be closed in observance of Patriots Day. We will re-open on Tuesday, April 16th.

Tuesday, April 16th – 9:00 am – 12:00 pm – SHINE Appointments – Pat Nectow, our SHINE Counselor, is back to help you with your health insurance questions. Please call 508-278-8622 to schedule.

Friday, April 26th – 11:30 am – 12:30 pm – "PopUp Library". Books will be on display to check out, library card sign-ups, book hold pick-ups, etc. This program is being offered by the Uxbridge Free Public Library.

Friday, April 26th – 12 noon – April Birthday Cake Celebration. Come Celebrate all the birthdays that are in April!

Monday, April 29th – 12:00 pm – Volunteer Appreciation Lunch! Please join us for lunch and celebrate our Volunteers! Be sure to RSVP.

Monday, April 29th - 1:30 pm – "Ask the Attorney" with Attorney Ralph Tepper by appointment only. Please Call 508-278-8622 to schedule your appointment.

Tuesday, April 30th - 11:00 am – 12:00 pm – Ask the Nurse Free Blood Pressure Clinic with Nancy Favulli, Salmon Health VNA. RSVP to participate and to join us for lunch.

Card Game played during lunch on Mondays.

Hannaford grocery shopping every Tuesday. Pick up begins at 8:30 AM. Please sign up in advance by calling us at 508-278-8622 to reserve your seat on the van.

Knitting Club every Tuesday @ 1:30 pm – Come join the creative fun!

Every Wednesday 9 am – 3 pm – The Uxbridge Senior Center Transportation Program Community Shuttle. This shuttle is for seniors and individuals with disabilities to destinations such as post office, pet care appointments, hair salon or barber, bank, pharmacy & shopping anywhere in the Uxbridge/Northbridge area. Note: this replaces the weekly bank/pharmacy and Shaw's Ocean State rides. Call 508-278-8622 for more information and to book your ride. Requests require a 48-hour notice.

Wednesdays - "Canasta" Hand, Knee & Foot Card Game – 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm.

Every Thursday – Play Scrabble! – 1:00 pm – Come by for an afternoon playing Scrabble. Boards are supplied by the senior center. Let us know if you'd like to join us for lunch!

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It is that time again when the Uxbridge Lions Club provides a much-needed service to the

community. Folks discover after tax time that they have way too many old documents and receipts hanging around the house. What should you shred? Just about all of them. Bring them to the VFW Parking Lot, Route 16 and Cross



Road in Uxbridge, on Saturday, April 27, between 8:30 and 11:30 a.m. You can watch the Pellegrino Truck securely shred your material.

Onsite Computers guarantees the secure destruction of electronic devices, including phones, electrical cords, DVDs, cameras, USB cables, flat screen monitors, keyboards, radios and stereos.

Contributions to this semi-annual service help fund the Lions Club's many charities. From the donation of \$5 per copy paper sized box or per electronic item, many local activities and organizations are supported. In addition,

tons of paper have been recycled over the many years of these shred events. No need to get out of the car. Just follow the signs and a Lion will be at your door. At its March meeting, the Uxbridge Lions honored Don Danforth and Bev Fanion, owners of Onsite Computers with the Lions Humanitarian Award. Danforth and Fanion were praised for the contribution of their services at the Recycle/Shred Events for the past

several years donating the proceeds to the club. At a recent event, they donated a refurbished laptop which was raffled off. In addition, they have contributed to other local non-profit organizations such as the Boy Scouts. "We cannot say enough good things about Don and Bev. Their knowledge can be relied on to be accurate and efficient and their energy to make work less tedious," says Mike Sulham, Uxbridge Lions President.

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LIVING WITH LUKE

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A Mother's Love

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

Something was different. Something wasn't adding up. I'm never up at 5 a.m. Nor do I shuffle down the stairs carrying a bright yellow container. Luke lifted his nose and sniffed out the truth. My dental retainer case would be the last to reach my suitcase. "Where's Mom headed?"

"I'll be back, Luke. I'll be back. I'm going to miss you so much." I kissed his head and embraced a bittersweet moment. I was headed for sunny Florida—no dog included. Would he be okay without me? Would the men of the household provide him with weekly playdates, surprise excursions and the daily assurance that he can sit outside on the front step as long as he's a good boy?

stay with you, Luke." He lifted his nose, skeptical.

Would they remember Luke's shows?

I gazed out the window on the way to the airport. The sky was dark, unforgiving. I wasn't supposed to be awake this early. The song "Don't Cry Out Loud" by Melissa Manchester, blared from the radio. Would Luke learn how to hide his feelings and keep it all inside? A lump settled in my throat. A dog will not leave our sides. Yet here I was leaving mine for a cheap stretch of sunshine.

A smooth flight led to an even smoother transition to the outdoors. Blue sky greeted me with a holiness that rallied New England greys. I felt optimistic about Palm Sunday and my pre-Easter vacation, while my parents pulled up to the sidewalk. We drove further away from home routines. Leisurely beach days gave way to dancing nights, poolside family reunions and sunny spirits. I followed Luke on his Instagram site (@livingwithlukevalentino) and sipped pina colodas. Luke offered

up a virtual smile from his perch at a picnic table at Charlton's Treehouse Brewery. "Love you, Luke." I sighed. Life was good.

Until it wasn't

The report rained down on me like a New England storm, four days following my kitchen departure.

"Luke gets a D- today for his behavior with Rosie." Daddy's text was flat, lacking in tone.

Oh no! Luke has been an A student since he learned how to come when called at 8 weeks! Luke aims to please and is the most well-behaved of all my dogs! What happened? The tale of a dog unable to hide his feelings in the absence of his mother came to me through a series of elaborate text messages and one sorry phone call. Here's the story.

I had scheduled a playdate for Luke and Rosie at our house. Nothing new there. Rosie's Dog Mom, Kara, was one of Luke's favorite people. An energetic and kind-hearted schoolteacher, Kara typically manages playdates with a special dose of curriculum. She



Rosie takes a turn with the Santa toy

encourages turn-taking with outdoor toys, allows for competitive games of fetch, and stands by for rounds and rounds of Chase in the yard. Doodle and Golden, Rosie and Luke, gallop freely around the perimeter of my yard. Their col-

laborative speeds (and the energy!) is both fascinating and remarkable to watch. They exchange roles with profound dog communication. Luke jumps on Rosie's back. Rosie snarls then grabs Luke's favorite toy, a squeaking Santa, to assert her status. Luke remains patient but hits a wall after some time "You've had him the whole time, Rosie. My turn!" He barks at his friend's cheek again. She bounces off him and tests her limits, crossing into a neighbor's yard. "We're supposed to stay with our moms, Rosie." Luke sits like a king with a dirty face and waits for her to come back.

That cold March Monday was different. Luke approached the mailbox, paused, and sniffed. Was he hoping to find a letter from me—a message to say that, perhaps, I was on my way home? We'll never know for sure. Nevertheless, he turned to the street and did the unimaginable. He raced towards a truck and apparently the decision was conscious! "Get back here, Luke! It's not worth it!! You have too much going for you!!" Warrior Rosemary lunged at Luke and bit his ear. Hard. "Get back into your yard this instance!" Her bark was grave, furious even.

Luke barked back. "Leave me, alone, Rosie!! You have your mom. I don't!" Thankfully, the driver, aware of looney Luke's behavior, slowed to a crawl. Unfortunately, a dog feeling abandoned wasn't through feeling sorry for himself. He dashed away, finally landing at the fox den beneath our neighbor's shed. "At least they'll love me here."

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REAL ESTATE

There won't be a wave of foreclosures in the housing market

My team often gets asked about...when are the foreclosures coming as a result of the pandemic? We always respond, "we hope never". But here is the response from some of our lender friends.

There won't be a wave of foreclosures in the housing market. When mortgage forbearance plans were first announced and the pandemic surged through the country in early 2020, many homeowners

BY MARK MARZEOTTI

were allowed to pause their mortgage payments. Some analysts were concerned that once the forbearance program ended, the housing market would experience a wave of foreclosures like what happened after the housing bubble 15 years ago.

Here's a look at why that won't happen.

1. There are fewer homeowners in trouble this time. After the last housing crash, over nine million households lost their homes to a foreclosure, short sale, or because they gave it back to the bank. Many believed millions of homeowners would face the same thing again this time. However, today's data shows that most homeowners exited their forbearance plan either fully caught up on payments or with a plan from the bank that restructured their loan in a way that allowed them to start making payments again. The latest data from the Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA) studies how people exited the forbearance program from June 2020 to November 2021.

Here are those findings:

- 39% left the program paid in full
- 20% made their monthly payments during the forbearance period
- 12% made up all past-due payments
- 7% paid off the loan in full
- 44% negotiated work-out repayment plans
- 29% received a loan deferral
- 14% received a loan modification
- 0.8% arranged a different repayment plan
- 0.6% sold as a short sale or did a deed-in-lieu
- 17% left the program still in trouble and without a loss mitigation plan in place

2. Those left in the program can still negotiate a repayment plan. As of last Friday, the total number of mortgages still in forbearance stood at 890,000. Those who remain in forbearance still have the chance to work out a suitable plan with the servicing company that represents their lender. And the servicing companies are under pressure to do just that by both federal and state agencies.

3. Most homeowners have more than enough equity to sell their homes. For those who can't negotiate a solution and the 16.8% who left the forbearance program without a work-out, many will have enough equity to sell their homes and leave the closing with cash instead of facing foreclosures. Due to rapidly rising home prices over the last two years, the average homeowner has gained record amounts of equity in their home.

4. There have been far fewer foreclosures over the last two

years. One of the less reported benefits of the forbearance program was that it allowed households with financial difficulties prior to the pandemic to enter the program. It gave those homeowners an extra two years to get their finances in order and work out a plan with their lender. That prevented over 400,000 foreclosures that normally would have come to the market had the new forbearance program not been available. Otherwise, the real estate market would have had to absorb those foreclosures.

5. The current market can easily absorb over a million new listings. When foreclosures hit the market in 2008, they added to the oversupply of houses that were already for sale. That resulted in over a nine-month supply of listings, and anything over a six-month supply can cause prices to depreciate. It's exactly the opposite today. Total housing inventory at the end of November amounted to about

1.11 million units, down almost 10% from October and down over 13% from one year ago (1.28 million). Unsold inventory sits at a 2.1-month supply at the current sales pace, a decline from both the prior month and from one year ago.

A balanced market would have approximately a six-month

supply of inventory. At 2.1 months, the market is severely understocked. Even if one million homes enter the market, there still won't be enough inventory to meet the current demand. If you have real estate needs, contact a member of the Marzeotti Group or a trusted real estate professional.




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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*

The Boys and Girls Club renovations from federal Community Project funding

State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) announced that Congressman Jake Auchincloss (MA-4th) secured \$850,000 in federal Community Project funding for the

Blackstone Valley Boys and Girls Club brings to our region," said Senator Fattman. "This investment will allow the Club to continue their summer offerings to students in

Let's keep working together to get this built." State Representative Michael Soter notes, "I am incredibly excited that the Blackstone Boys and Girls Club will have



Blackstone Valley Boys and Girls Club located in Blackstone. This funding is part of the federal minibus appropriations package.

The Boys and Girls Club will use this funding to renovate the Stone House on their grounds for continued programming for students from the surrounding areas.

"I'm grateful that our partners on the federal level recognize the value that the

Blackstone Valley which means more children getting to be children by playing outside and having fun."

"In this era of screen-time and stress, kids need more places to be outside and to have fun," said Congressman Auchincloss. "When I toured the Blackstone Boys & Girls Club and met the committed staff, I knew they just needed more resources to become an ideal venue for kids to play.

access to this funding. Programs like these are central to our communities, and to the development of our youth."

The Blackstone Valley Boys and Girls Club adds, "We are thrilled to resurrect the Stone House renovation project that has been on hold for 20 years."

This project will begin in the near future after next steps are provided by the funding source.



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TALES FROM BEYOND

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Abram's Rock

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

This story is from our upcoming book, *Ghosts of King Philip's War* due out on July 22, 2024. The book is filled with legends, ghost stories, and haunted places from the war and subsequent skirmishes that took place years after the last treaty was signed. If you are looking for a nice small hike with a lot of history and perhaps a ghost, *Abram's Rock* is the perfect place to visit.

At the outset of King Philip's War, several tribes chose to remain neutral for various reasons. Most of the converted, or praying Indians sided with the English. Members of the warring tribes often dissented and pledged their allegiance to the colonies much like the Tories of the American Revolution pledged their allegiance to the throne instead of fighting for independence from the mother country. This is the legend of one of those dissenters during King Philip's War called Abram by the English.

Abram was a renegade Christian praying Indian who de-

serted the Wampanoags during the conflict in favor of siding with the English. Abram became very close friends with the English, so much so, that there were rumors circulating among the Wampanoag that he even had an English girlfriend. This made Philip, whose real name was Metacom, very angry as Abram knew much of Philip's plans and strategies regarding the proposed annihilation of the enemy. Philip sought to take Abram back and sent a search party out to find him.

In the meantime, Abram had found a towering rock he used as a hiding place and lookout. The west side of the large boulder had a natural room formed by other large boulders. This was where he lived in seclusion for several months until he was found and captured. Philip, being merciful at the time, gave him a chance to live. Abram was given the choice of leaping from the massive formation three times or instant death. Abram chose to take a chance and leap from the rock. Some historians argue Abram voluntarily

performed the act as a testament of his loyalty to Philip.

Tradition says he successfully completed the first and second leaps unscathed, but the third one became his demise. Legend has it that his ghost can be seen leaping from the rock, then appearing again at the top for another leap. The third time the ghost attempts to leap, he vanishes. Perhaps he is still trying to complete the task he failed.

Whether a hike out to the rock reveals a ghost or not should not deter one from soaking up the history and atmosphere of the place.

Abram's Rock is in Village Park behind the Swansea Town Hall and Library complex at 81 Main St. The trail leading to the rock is easy and there are signs to follow. One trail heads straight toward the site while another takes hikers past the cemetery in a more circular route that is both pleasant and scenic. The natural room formation is still there and is called "Abram's Bedroom" as that is where he allegedly lived during his months of hiding.

LUKE

continued from page 14

The scene of a suicidal Luke played out viscerally in my mind as the story was told. My heart sank. Luke needed his mother. The men in my household did a tremendous job caring for him,

even walking him three times per day. Still, something was missing. I needed to call my pup. "Put Luke on speaker phone!" (I was afraid Facetime might be counterintuitive) "Hi Luke! Are you having a good day?" I spoke in the doggie voice he knew and loved. "Mummy's coming home soon!" I envisioned the tilt of his curious,

blockhead while he reconciled my voice through the phone. A call was okay, though pale in comparison to our in-person reunion.

"Luke!! I missed you so much! I dashed into the kitchen, tossed my bag aside, and planted myself on the floor. Luke grabbed his red-hot chili pepper, whimpered (overjoyed), and circled my lap. "Not gonna' lie, things have been rough, but I'm so glad you're back!!!" We settled down on his family room bed just like old times. Luke licked my face, chewed his bone, and fell back into old habits.

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Several possible causes for sudden deceleration

Q. My father listens to your radio program and said to reach out to you with a question. My husband's car suddenly slowed down. It has happened twice on the highway, he'll be driving the slowdown happens,



BY JOHN PAUL

he pulls over to the breakdown lane, and the car barely moves. Any ideas?

A. This could be the result of a

weak fuel pump, faulty sensor, or even the beginning of a catalytic converter issue. It could also be a bit of a driver error. In many cars today, if your left foot brake or your foot lands on the brake pedal while still on the accelerator the car will lose power for several seconds and then return back to normal.

Q. I'm the keeper of six cars, one boat and a Quad in my family and you recommended a scan tool in the past and it has worked out well. One of the scan tool functions is a battery test. It seems okay, and will state good or bad, but I want to see more. I want

to read amp ratings and would like to test the boat and Quad battery, any thoughts?

A. The tester we use at AAA is made by B2Q and is very accurate, but pricey and the one I would always recommend for a professional. Recently I have been using a battery tester from Topdon (a company I never head of until they sent me one) The tester is the Topdon BT100 and I have tested several good batteries and about a dozen "bad" batteries. My testing included a 12-volt Prius AGM battery, marine batteries, full sized AGM batteries and conventional batteries and so far, the testing is quite accurate when compared to more expensive tools. The one possible shortcoming is that the readings are not temperature compensated, which could mean that batteries tested at very hot or very cold temperatures may not be as accurate as a 70 degree day. This tester is about \$60 and recently sells refurbished online for \$30.

Q. I was wondering if you had any insight on this recall. I received a recall notice on my 2013 Hyundai Elantra back in October. The recall number is NHTSA 23V651000. It relates to the antilock brakes and brake fluid. As of today, Hyundai still does not have a fix for this. Have heard anything, or do you have any insight on this, i.e., why it's taking so long for them to find a fix for it?

A. The majority of the notifications went out in November, and it isn't unusual for the repair parts to take six months or more to ramp up. An example in our family we have a 2015 Volkswagen with an airbag recall. The recall is over a year old and just now the dealers are starting to have parts available for the repair. The recall on your car has to do with fluid leaking internally into the antilock brake system and there is a possibility of an electrical fire. Looking at the recall information, the repair looks relatively simple and similar to one I had on my own car where the dealer replaced the antilock brake fuse and fuse box cover. I would call the 800 number for Hyundai customer assistance to get an update, since this repair seems relatively simple. If there is any consolation of the 3.3 million Hyundai and Kia vehicles, there have been 22 cases of smoke or fire, and no injuries or crashes. Although it's a safety recall and it should absolutely be performed, the chance

of something happening based on the case numbers are very low.

Q. I am hoping you can help me with a reoccurring problem I have with my 2009 Chevy Malibu. The headlights are constantly not working. First one will not go on and then the other one will not work. We have changed the wires and tightened up the bulbs, but it still happens. The lights are not dead because if I press the unlock button on the car, both headlights will go on. But if I start the car usually one of them will go out again. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

A. The connectors to the headlights (low beams) have been especially problematic. After checking them for signs of melting I would check the four fuses, associated wiring, and ground connections. Although each headlight has its own power supply, the four bulbs share two grounding points. I would remove those ground wires and clean the connections of any rust and corrosion.

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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Movie Night at the Museum with Silent Movie Entertainer Richard Hughes

Experience one of the greatest films from the Golden Age of Silent Movies with Clara Bow, the quintessential 'flapper girl,' in "IT" at the Samuel Slater Experience museum

On Friday, April 19, the silent movie era of the 1920s will come alive at Samuel Slater Experience when silent movie entertainer Richard Hughes presents "IT."

A pianist and historian, Hughes will share the adventure, drama, romance, and comedy which characterized the silent movies of the Roaring Twenties.

This show is a trip back in time. The first part begins with movie clips from newsreels, cartoons, slap stick comedy clips and clips of groundbreaking movies.

Audience members will have an opportunity to synchronize sound effects like a wind machine, locomotive sounds, a slap stick, whooga horn, and more to these movie clips.

Then we will screen "IT," starring Clara Bow with her leading man Antonio Moreno. Now if you don't know what "IT" is, come and get "IT" because "She's Got IT." In fact, there was a popular song called "She's Got It" that Richard will sing before accompanying the film.

Clara Bow grew up as a tom-boy, loved sports and could out-pitch and out-hit all the neighborhood boys in baseball. She attended PS111 in Brooklyn and then graduated from an all-girls high school where she excelled in athletics. With all of her family problems, Clara escaped to Coney Island, Luna Park and Dreamland in summers. After

all, it was only a street car ride away. She probably would have become an athletics instructor if that newspaper ad for a chance to become an actress wasn't published. Her father encouraged her to fill out the application and include a picture, which he paid for. Although she was one of 300 contestants at the audition, her self-confidence, determination, and ambition won her first place. With persistence and just being a pest around the studio agency, she got a small part in a local movie which started her career. By 1929, she rose to stardom and was the most popular actress at the box office. Not bad considering she was just 24 years old. Come and get some of This ... I mean "IT".

What goes around, comes around ... Taylor Swift has just issued her new release with a song in the final track position entitled Clara Bow.

Admission is free. Popcorn and seltzer will be available for a donation.

Night at the Museum: Silent Movies with Richard Hughes at the Samuel Slater Experience, 31 Ray Street, Webster, Mass., Friday, April 19, from 5:30 -7:00 p.m., is sponsored by the Webster Cultural Council. Reservations are encouraged at samuelslaterexperience.org.

About Samuel Slater Experience
Samuel Slater Experience,

which opened in March 2022, employs state-of-the-art 4-D digital technology to tell the story of Samuel Slater, the beginnings of the American Industrial Revolution, and the founding of Webster, Massachusetts, in the early 19th century.

The museum is located in the former National Guard Webster Armory at 31 Ray Street, Webster, Massachusetts, and open to the public year-round. Daily Schedule: Fridays & Saturdays: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday: Noon to 4 p.m. Ticket purchases for school

trips, private events, and groups can be arranged directly with staff.

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SPORTS

Key to Douglas Softball Success – It’s a Family Affair

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

After losing their starting pitcher Madison McDermott to a major injury early in the season last spring the Douglas softball team, found themselves in a tough predicament and were only able to secure five wins. McDermott, now a junior, will eventually find her way back into the circle for the Tigers, but the rest of the team is still going to be very young.

“We were young last year and we will be young once again this season, it’s just the way things played out” Douglas Coach John Furno said. “We have seven middle schoolers (7th and 8th graders) on a team of 15 total players.”

Senior Emily Hamelin will join McDermott as captains of the squad this spring. Hamelin was a centerfielder for the Tigers last year, but will find herself playing first base this season filling in the vacant position. In the circle, McDermott has great movement on her ball with a good changeup, curveball and drop ball.

While McDermott will not see action for a few games once the season gets underway, Furno is confident in her back-up eighth grader Addison Trudeau.

“When Madison went down last year, Addison threw a lot of innings for us and coming into this year she knew that she would get the opportunity to once again be our starting pitcher,” the Douglas coach said. “She worked really hard on getting bigger and stronger during the off-season. She has come into her own and is more confident and ready to go.”

Behind the plate looking to share time are two catchers who also happen to be the sisters of the two pitchers: eighth grader and twin sister to Addison, Jasmine Trudeau and freshman Ayla McDermott, younger sister of Madison. According to the coach, it looks as though whoever is in the circle for a particular game; their sibling will be behind the plate.

“More than likely the sister will catch for their sister. With Addison getting the ball for the first few games, Jasmine will get the start behind the plate,” Furno said. “When Madison gets back,



Ayla will catch. I feel that having the sister behind the plate brings more stability and they work better together. Ayla has more size and experience, but both girls are good catchers and we’re not either way on the field.”

Offensively the Tigers will be powered by Hamelin and the McDermott sisters. The elder Mc-

Dermtt will most likely bat in the cleanup spot, while Hamelin will be in the three spot for the Tigers. Emma Kagels, who will play either shortstop or second base for the team, looks to be the team’s leadoff hitter. She has a knack of getting on base either by drawing the walk or reaching via the slap bunt from the left side.

Freshman Ariana Delgado, now a three-sport athlete, had never touched a softball until last year but Furno believes she is a natural athlete with the skills to play the game. She is very fast and will find herself playing second base or patrolling the outfield for Douglas this season.

Furno noted that a couple of seventh graders making the team have shown promise: Madelyn Hogan and Lexi Thibault, both of whom will see playing time in the outfield.

“A lot of the younger girls have been playing together for a long time,” Furno said. “Playing in the town youth softball league they have won the championship the last three years.”

Despite being a young team, Furno is hoping that the girls can put together at least a .500 season to get them into the playoffs and, once there, he made it clear that anything can happen; it all depends on the seedings. If Douglas plays their typically strong defense and the pitching comes through, the Tigers should be looking at a berth in the State Tournament.

SOUTHWICK’S ZOO PHOTO CONTEST

ILLUSTRATION BY ROMAN KAPLAN MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN



In 2025, Southwick’s Zoo will be celebrating 60 years of family fun! Share a photo of your favorite memories at Southwick’s Zoo for a chance to win a family four-pack of general admission passes for the 2024 season and make some new memories! Contest begins April 1, 2024.



Scan to Enter

By entering this contest, you are providing consent for Southwick’s Zoo and Our Town Publishing (the publishers of The Yankee Xpress/Blackstone Valley Xpress, Free Press and the newspapers of Local Town Pages) to use your photo(s) for print, digital and social media purposes, and allowing Southwick’s Zoo and Our Town Publishing to contact you via email for this promotion or upcoming promotions. Only one winner per household. Cannot be an employee or family member of Southwick’s Zoo or Our Town Publishing to win.

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NOTE: Community bulletin board-type items are welcome for inclusion in the *Happenings!* section of the Xpress newspapers. Please allow enough lead time for publication. Email your calendar or event notice to news@theyankeeexpress.com.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13

- St. Peter Parish in Northbridge is having a Ham Dinner on Saturday, April 13th starting at 5:30 pm in the Parish Hall. Bring you family and friends for a wonderful meal and meet some new friends. Tickets are \$17 per dinner and include salad and dessert. To go meals will be available for pick up at 5:00pm and all orders must be purchased in advance. "Pay It Forward" purchase an extra dinner and we will deliver it to someone in need in our local community. Please call the parish office at 508-234-2156 or email parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org to purchase tickets or if you have any questions.
- Meet author Ann Watt, whose debut book is a nursing memoir titled, "When Being a Nurse Was Fun: Tales From My Life as a Nurse", on Saturday, April 13, 1-2:30 p.m. at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 East Main Street, Webster. This book signing and presentation is free to attend and signed books will be available for purchase. For more information or to RSVP, call 508-949-6232 or email deb@booklovers-

gourmet.com. Ann lived in Worcester for a few years and was employed by UMass/Memorial at the University campus. The book starts with a few stories about her nursing training and employment at UMass.

- The First Congregational Church of Dudley (aka Dudley Hill Church, 135 Center Road) will host a turkey supper on Saturday, April 13, 2024. There are 2 seatings, one at 5 pm and the other at 6:15 pm. The meal is served family style with a menu which includes turkey, stuffing, mashed potato, turnip, squash, gravy, cranberry sauce, bread & butter, and golden gingerbread with homemade whipped cream. The price is \$18 for ages 13 and up, \$10 for children ages 6 - 13, and free for those ages 5 and under. Reservations are RECOMMENDED as there is limited seating. To make a reservation, please call 508-943-7320. Leave your name, telephone number, time of seating (5 or 6:15), and the number of adults/children you are reserving for.

THURSDAY, APRIL 18

- At 7 pm at Vaillancourt Folk Art, 9 Main Street, Manchaug Village, Sutton. Christine Watkins, Sutton Historical Society, will tell the story of the devastating 1924 Manchaug Village fire on its 100th anniversary which burned over 10 acres, left 25 percent of the Village population homeless, destroyed the retail section of the village, and made national news. This presentation will include photos, newspaper summaries, and eyewitness accounts. Come hear how a small community, with the help of generous neighbors, persevered over a tragedy.
- Learn everything about growing "Daylilies in the Garden" at the Sutton Garden Club meeting at 7 p.m. at the A.L. Gendron Post

414, 156 Boston Post Road, Sutton. Adel Keohan will be presenter.

- Sutton Historical Society's first speaker presentation at 7 pm at Vaillancourt Folk Art, 9 Main Street, Manchaug Village, Sutton. Christine Watkins, Sutton Historical Society, will tell the story of the devastating 1924 Manchaug Village fire on its 100th anniversary which burned over 10 acres, left 25percent of the Village population homeless, destroyed the retail section of the village, and made national news. This presentation will include photos, newspaper summaries, and eyewitness accounts. Come hear how a small community, with the help of generous neighbors, persevered over a tragedy.

SATURDAY, APRIL 20

- Home Baked Ham & Bean Supper, April 20, 2024 at 5:00 pm in the Community House, 8 Court St, Uxbridge located behind the Uxbridge Town Common. Sponsored by the Uxbridge Congregational Church. Menu includes baked ham, home baked beans, potato salad, coleslaw, brown bread, beverages & dessert. Donation of \$13.00 per adult, children under 6 free. Raffles will also be available. For reservations call 508.244.7849 Limited tickets will be sold at door. Come enjoy great food and fellowship.

SATURDAY, MAY 4

- The Millbury Nature Trails Committee will host an Arbor Day Tree Planting Event at 9 a.m. at the Brierly Conservation Area. Help plant trees and mark a new trail. Rain date is May 11. To register, visit the Nature Trails Facebook page.
- 9th Annual Family Fun Fishing Day - Open Sky Community Services and the Blackstone River Watershed Association

are excited to co-host the 9th Annual Family Fun Fishing Day at Riverbend Farm in Uxbridge along with our partner organizations, the Blackstone River National Heritage Corridor Volunteers-in-Parks Program, Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. This year's event will be held on Saturday May 4 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. with a rain date of Sunday, May 5. Prizes offered in four different age groups will be awarded at 1:15 p.m. There will be activities for the whole family, as well as food and ice cream for purchase, free face painting and raffles. All ages and ability levels are welcome. Fishing poles, bait and instruction will be available with

pre-registration and participants are welcome to bring their own. This is a catch and release event for everyone from first time fishers to experienced anglers. Adults must accompany children under 12. Volunteer opportunities are available at openskycs.org/fishingvolunteers. Pre-registration will open starting April 5 at thebrwa.org/familyfishing2024. This is a FREE event, but pre-registration is required. Please contact Joanne Holahan at 508-278-5200 with any questions.

- At 7 pm at Vaillancourt Folk Art, 9 Main

HAPPENINGS!
continued on page 23

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Shawna Foundation Hosts Poet at Local Libraries

April is Poetry month at area libraries and the Shawna Foundation will hold a poetry reading at Uxbridge Free Library and Milford Free library. The featured poet is Lea C. Deschenes.

Lea C. Deschenes is the author of "The Constant Velocity of Trains" and the editor of "Knocking at the Door: Approaching the Other" from Write Bloody Press. She was a co-founder of Damfino Press and is the fastest poetry book layout in the East. A long-time Worcesterite and veteran of the poetry scene, her work has appeared online, on stage, and in print. She holds an MFA in Poetry from New England College. She once found a five-leaf clover during a solar eclipse..

The readings will be held on April 17th, 7 p.m. at the Milford

Town Library and April 25th, 7 p.m. at the Uxbridge Free Library.

The program is financed in part by the Milford Cultural Council and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

The Shawna E. Shea Memorial Foundation, Inc is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit who believes the arts and education are essential to creating a vibrant, healthy community and world.

The mission of the Shawna Foundation is to equitably promote and support students through scholarship and showcase artists in filmmaking, performance arts, poetry and other creative endeavors with a focus on under-represented communities.

For more information visit [the shawnafoundation.org](http://www.shawnafoundation.org)

The New England Country Music Club will hold the following dances with live classic country bands at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge, MA: Sunday, May 19, "Al Carter & The Nashville Boys"; Sunday, June 9, "Rustic Country"; Sunday, June 23, "Angela West & Showdown"; Doors open at 12:15, live music 1-5pm. Snacks may be brought in, cash bar for beverages. facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub

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CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF JOURNAY
JUNE 9 • 1PM

GET THE LED OUT
A CELEBRATION OF "THE MIGHTY ZEP"
JUNE 15 • 7PM

THE MAVERICKS
MOON & STARS
SUMMER TOUR '24
JUNE 22 • 1PM

Scotty McCreery
LIVE IN CONCERT
JUNE 23 • 1PM

THREE DOG NIGHT
Live in concert
Chris Grapper
JUNE 29 • 1PM

Elle King
JUNE 30 • 1PM

THE VOICE OF THE ROCKY BLUES
JUSTIN HAYWARD
5 TIME GRAMMY AWARD WINNER
CHRISTOPHER CROSS
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Aaron Lewis
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RAISE YOUR HANDS KISS TRIBUTE
BACK IN BLACK METAL TRIBUTE
JULY 20 • 12PM

RUMOURS
THE ULTIMATE FLEETWOOD MAC
JULY 21 • 1PM

Yachtley Crew
JULY 25 • 7PM

ALMOST QUEEN
WITH SPECIAL GUEST STEVE LEONARD
JULY 27 • 1PM

THE CONCERT
A TRIBUTE TO ABBA
AUGUST 2 • 7PM

BADFISH
AUGUST 3 • 1PM

GRACE POTTER
AUGUST 4 • 1PM

TRIBUTE TO ELTON JOHN & BILLY JOEL
FACE 2 FACE
AUGUST 9 • 7PM

The Beach Boys
ENDLESS SUMMER GOLD
AUGUST 11 • 1PM

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AUGUST 18 • 1PM

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COMEDY NIGHT AT SLATERS
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HOSTED BY CHRIS ZITO
APRIL 19 • 7:30PM

MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH
MAY 12 • 10AM

AQUANETT
MAY 24 • 8PM

HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 21

Street, Manchaug Village, Sutton. Christine Watkins, Sutton Historical Society, will tell the story of the devastating 1924 Manchaug Village fire on its 100th anniversary which burned over 10 acres, left 25 percent of the Village population homeless, destroyed the retail section of the village, and made national news. This presentation will include photos, newspaper summaries, and eyewitness accounts. Come hear how a small community, with the help of generous neighbors, persevered over a tragedy.

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SATURDAY, MAY 11

• Rough Seas, Safe Harbor: Wings of Song Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Church 16 East Main Street, Webster, 7:30 p.m. Admission to concerts is free, with a freewill offering collected at intermission. "Rough Seas, Safe Harbor" will take audiences on a huge sea voyage, much of it aboard a whaling ship that might have left New Bedford, Mass. in, say, the 1850s, and sailed practically around the world, separating crew members from their families for as long as four years. These concerts are sponsored in part by the Monson and Sturbridge Cultural Councils, local agencies supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. Wings of Song is grateful for this support—and for the continued support of their many faithful audience regulars, supplemented by first-timers whom we're always glad to see! Anyone needing more information is encouraged to email Music Director Cooke at nymcooke@gmail.com or Wings of Song President Carol Curtin at carolcurtin77@gmail.com.

SATURDAY, MAY 18

• 4:00pm Bethel Lutheran Church/Grace Ministries of Auburn will be performing

music concert "Peace & Praise" as they continue to celebrate their Centennial Anniversary. The program will include present as well as many past organists/music directors, choir members & musicians including hymns/anthems/contemporary music by choir members, bell choir and children's performances. A reception will follow. All are welcome to either attend or participate in this festive, free-will offering event. For more information contact Adam Hanks at arhanks42385@hotmail.com.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1

• Saint Peter's Parish in Northbridge will be holding a Yard Sale on Saturday, June 1st, 7:30am to 3:00pm in the parish hall. If you are moving, spring cleaning or just have too much clutter, bring us your gently used items for our yard sale. You may drop-off your donations every Saturday from 10:00-1:00pm April through May, starting on

Saturday, April 6th at the parish garage. We are accepting kitchen items, home goods, toys, sporting goods, books, small furniture items, clothing for donation and much more. Please see our website for a complete list of what we are accepting. You may also call or email the parish office, if you have any questions: 508-234-2156 or email: parishoffice@stpeterockdale.org.

SATURDAY, JUNE 8

• Please join us for our Annual Community Yard And Plant Sale! As we've done in the past, we will rent spaces and tables, plus we'll do all the advertising and remember, our prime location can't be beat! Spaces Are \$25 For Non-Members. Tables Are Available To Rent For \$5 Each. Last year our Community Yard Sale and Plant Sale was so successful that we had to implement a wait list! We anticipate the same level of

interest again this year, so don't delay in reserving your spot. We are very excited at the thought of gathering, again, with our church family and our neighbors on the church's front lawn. Call the church office, 508-832-2845, to reserve your spot! All are welcome! First Congregational Church of Auburn, 128 Central Street, Auburn.

HIKES WITH BLACKSTONE VALLEY HERITAGE CORRIDOR HIKES

The following is a list of hikes in Massachusetts being led by volunteer Trail Ambassador Phil. Phil's hikes begin at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 20: Castle Hill Farm Hike, Whitinsville Saturday, May 4: Mendon Town Forest Hike, Mendon Saturday, May 18: Wallis Pond Loop Hike, Douglas Saturday, June 15: Douglas State Forest Hike, Douglas

BVCC Business After Hours at Whitinsville Golf Club

The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce proudly invites you to our premier networking soirée, Business After Hours. Join us on Thursday, April 11, 2024, at the scenic Whitinsville Golf Club, nestled at 179 Fletcher St., for an evening of strategic connections and refined relaxation from 5:30PM to 7:30PM. This event is an exclusive opportunity for both Members and Future Members to engage with the local business community. Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor, UniBank for their continued support of the BVCC and our networking events!

Experience an elegant atmosphere where business meets leisure, and where every handshake is accompanied by the serene backdrop of the golf club's sprawling hills and green. Indulge in a curated selection of beverages and hors d'oeuvres, each designed to complement the evening's spirit of collaboration networking.

As the seasons change, so do the opportunities for growth. Spring into action and enrich your professional landscape with new contacts and prospects.

Under the guidance of Jeannie Hebert, President and CEO, the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce is excited to host this highly anticipated event—a perfect opportunity for growing seeds of future partnerships. Admission is set at an accessible \$20 for Members and \$30 for Future Members, reflecting our commitment to accessible business advancement. We kindly ask that you confirm your attendance by April 4th. To reserve your place, please visit www.blackstonevalley.org/events, or swiftly secure your spot by scanning the QR code provided. For inquiries or assistance, reach out to Liz O'Neil at 508.234.9090 ext. 102 or via email at loneil@blackstonevalley.org.

The Mission of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce is to preserve and enhance the economic vitality of the Blackstone Valley by addressing the needs and concerns of businesses and providing leadership, support and resources in connection with issues which impact commerce and the quality of life in the Valley.

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April's theme: *Singing in the Rain*

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Friday, May 3, 2024

May's theme: *Celebration*

Featured artist: *Average Joel*





Doors open @ 6:00pm, Singh Performance Center, 60 Douglas Rd., Whitinsville, MA

Hosted by Open Sky's Community Membership Dept.

Questions? Michelle.Benjamin@openskycs.org or visit openskycs.org/openmic

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