

# The Yankee Xpress

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## INSIDE

### Think Tank session shows Auburn ready to launch into the future

By Rod Lee

A "Think Tank" meeting hosted by the Auburn Chamber of Commerce via Zoom the morning of February 10 and featuring Town Manager Julie A. Jacobson as lead presenter showed how much Auburn has accomplished in the ten years since she arrived on the scene from neighboring Worcester.

Ms. Jacobson, speaking from behind her desk, wasted no time in ticking off the positives, starting with a total of \$41,749,475 in savings to taxpayers through FY 2021 "and never a 2-1/2 override," for example. Then there is free cash, which has grown from \$1.4 million to nearly \$16 million over that period; and more than two hundred grants received, totaling \$6,246,516.

All of which points the town toward "priorities" it will be focused on for the coming year: enhanced public health initiatives related to the Covid-19 pandemic including education and outreach; no large crowd events; a continuation of the delivery of services through various mechanisms including remote communication; continued economic and housing development; grants management; continued roadway improvements; "conservative budgeting and adherence to financial policies;" and regular updates provided to residents of the town.

Looming large on the development front, Ms. Jacobson pointed out, is the need for a new public safety facility. Neither the Auburn Police Department nor the Auburn Fire Department buildings can be renovated. "We have no idea if residents will support" such a facility, to be located somewhere between "the mall and Loew's," but "that will be on our radar screen" going forward with a Town Meeting vote on the issue anticipated soon, she said.

Continued on page 2



The entrance to the Auburn Public Library. As part of a \$1 million redevelopment project in the town of Auburn, the library will get a sunroom off the back of the building, and a connection to Goddard Park by way of a pedestrian bridge.

FOOD AND FUN 13-16

**TIM HARE**  
Success selling cars  
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Customer loyalty continues  
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**VANDEBURGH HOUSE**  
Pacesetter in sober living  
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**CAPITOL SIDING**  
70 years of customer service  
PAGE 9

### Oxford's First Congregational Church celebrates 300th anniversary

By Janet Stoica

The history of our country is always fascinating, and it becomes more captivating when reading about our local area and how institutions came to be. Oxford's First Congregational Church has the distinctive honor of being the first place of worship in this area.

On the evening of Sunday, January 17, members of the church celebrated a very special milestone: three centuries of continuous parish life and for the first time in its history, the church's bell tower was illuminated. "Oxford has always done a great job of maintaining the town center and town com-

mon," said church historian Todd Sauter, "and now with the lighting of our bell tower, this serves to add even more attractiveness to the surrounding area. We've never had lighting in our bell tower and its beauty will be inspirational." The serenity and graciousness that the lit bell tower will add to Oxford's handsome Main Street is immeasurable.

The 20-minute ceremony was attended by 50 members, all socially distanced, in an outdoor setting with others enjoying the formality from the safety of their cars as they parked along Main

Street. After a welcome by Reverend Karen D. Fournier, an original hymn followed that was composed by Corbin and Alaina Calloway Bolton. The new steeple light was then dedicated and lit, and an historical proclamation given by Todd Sauter. The steeple bell was rung 30 times with one ring for each decade of the church's life. A very proud and most enjoyable evening. A more extensive ceremony will, hopefully, be held in June.

If the church's first pastor, Reverend John Campbell, could see how his church has fared since 1720

Continued on page 2



Bell tower lit up.

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**AUBURN**

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A highlight of Ms. Jacobson's "exciting news" for her fellow Zoom'ers (in a meeting moderated by the Chamber's Virginia Murphy) was a recitation of development projects around town. Principal among these is work involving Auburn St., Drury Square, the Auburn Free Public Library and Goddard Park.

Noting that "you can't get there from here," Ms. Jacobson said a pedestrian bridge will be built, connecting the library with Goddard Park. With this there will be construction of a large sunroom

on the back of the library and improvements to Goddard Park itself.

The pedestrian bridge, she said, will link the two parcels of land, which are separated by Auburn Pond.

"Planning is only good if you implement it—and we are," she said.

With more than \$500,000 in grant money already received from the Pappas Foundation toward the library/Goddard Park piece, the town is halfway there "to get this done," Ms. Jacobson said. This is the costliest component, she said. "Engineering is very expensive."

The Camp Gleason renovation project, the new joint public safety facility, completion of "Mary D. Stone redevelopment into senior housing with playground upgrades," redevelopment of the Julia Bancroft property into senior housing, proposed commercial/industrial development on fifty acres at 190 Washington St. (the Dartmouth property), proposed development of 50 Washington St. and development of 325-unit Chapter 40B housing at The Reserves at Ashworth Hill are all on the drawing board.

Wayfinding, streetscape and street lighting work will be undertaken. "We are finalizing a wayfinding logo" that will bear the message "Auburn: Embracing the past and launching into the future," she said.

"In my opinion" the various projects that have been ticketed for completion "will enhance the business community of this town," Ms. Jacobson said.

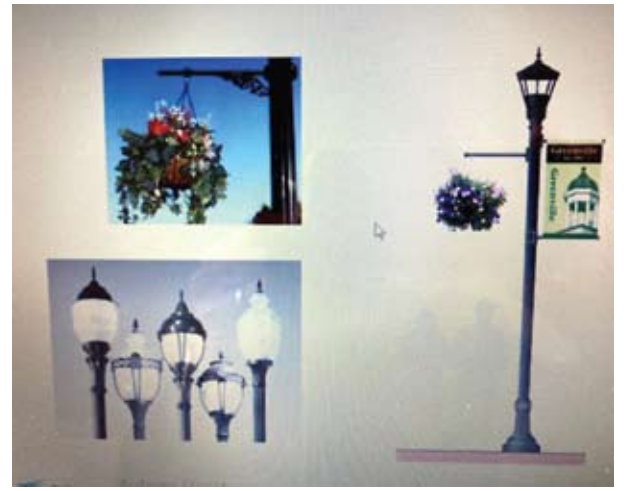
Ms. Jacobson enjoyed a receptive and appreciative

audience in the person of School Superintendent Casey Handfield, Steve Londregan of Chuck's Steak House & Margarita Grille, Dennis Antonopoulos of Edward Jones, Kerri Cunningham of Fuller Automotive, Tina Puzo of bankHometown, Realtor Matteo Gentile and Jackie Faron of Atlas Distributing.

All shared their thoughts on operating businesses in the face of a worldwide pandemic.

"Like everyone else, we had to adjust," Ms. Puzo said. "We can do pretty much everything at the drive-up."

Ms. Jacobson agreed. "People used to say you could never work remote if you are a public-service



Wayfinding signage that will be introduced with redevelopment of the Auburn St./Drury Square area of Auburn.

employee. That's just not true. You can be anywhere and service that customer. We have a drive-through kiosk in our parking lot. If banks and McDonald's can

service through a window, why not us?"

Contact Rod Lee at [rodlee.1963@gmail.com](mailto:rodlee.1963@gmail.com) or 774-232-2999.

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**OXFORD CHURCH**

Continued from page 1

he would be very pleased. In the early 1700s English settlers in the area looked avidly for a pastor for their church. The Massachusetts' Colony did not allow a town to be established unless four requirements had been met in the area: a grist mill, a sawmill, a minister, and a meeting house. The meeting house members began their search for a pastor in 1713 in the undeveloped frontier of New Oxford and it was no small task to find someone who wanted to establish themselves in this unfamiliar territory. Reverend Campbell served for 40 years until his death in 1761. Due to his privileged upbringing and education, he served as the de facto physician, judge, counselor,

and leader of the town militia. His grave is behind the church in south cemetery.

Many changes and anniversaries have been celebrated at the First Congregational, including the installation of their current and first female pastor, Reverend Karen Fournier. The first 32 pastors were men. "Church life was always essential to life in the colonies," stated Mr. Sauter. "It was intertwined with the town and supported by the town's tax dollars for the upkeep of the meeting house as well as to pay the pastor's salary. It was the same for all churches at the time. Oxford now has 12 Christian churches." Mr. Sauter enjoys history and has taken a special interest as his church's historian. "My job was made so much easier by those who served before me," he said. "There was Dorothy Barrie

and also Janice Moore. They were great historians for the church." Mr. Sauter owns his own business in the Worcester area, Audiology Associates, and is an avid student of history.

A video of the church's steeple lighting can be found on Facebook at "Facebook.com/firstcongregationaloxfordma/."

Their website is [www.oxfordfirstucc.org](http://www.oxfordfirstucc.org), where a contributions link can be found for the additional and upcoming celebrations that will be held later in the year. Traditional worship services can be viewed every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. on their website. Church offices may be reached at (508) 987-2211. Email: [officeadmin@oxfordfirstucc.org](mailto:officeadmin@oxfordfirstucc.org).

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

**Sen. Fattman announces district S.A.F.E. grants**

BOSTON - State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) announced that the fire departments in the towns he represents would receive nearly \$100,000 total in Student Awareness of Fire Education (S.A.F.E.) and Senior S.A.F.E. grants during the FY21 distribution.

Twenty-six years ago, the S.A.F.E. program was established, and since then, the average annual child fire deaths have been reduced by 78%. Senior SAFE was created to offer funds to local fire departments in support of senior citizen fire prevention training. Seniors are the most vulnerable of populations at risk of fire related deaths. This initiative is aimed at educating seniors on fire prevention, general home safety, and how to be better prepared in the event of a fire.

"The S.A.F.E. grant program is a great asset that is available to fire departments

in the Commonwealth," said Senator Fattman. "It is important for our kids to learn of the dangers of fire, how to prevent fire, and what to do if you face a perilous situation. I will keep advocating for funding of this program, so that fire departments may continue to educate young children about the importance of fire safety."

Within the Worcester-Norfolk District, the following towns were awarded funding through the Community Compact Information Technology Grant Program:

- Bellingham: \$5,281 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,680 for Senior SAFE funding
- Blackstone: \$4,692 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,480 for Senior SAFE funding
- Douglas: \$4,692 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,480 for Senior SAFE funding
- Dudley: \$4,692 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,480 for Senior SAFE funding

- Hopedale: \$4,692 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,480 for Senior SAFE funding
- Mendon: \$4,692 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,480 for Senior SAFE funding
- Milford: \$5,281 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,680 for Senior SAFE funding
- Millville: \$3,794 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,180 for Senior SAFE funding
- Northbridge: \$5,281 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,680 for Senior SAFE funding
- Oxford: \$4,692 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,480 for Senior SAFE funding
- Southbridge: \$5,281 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,680 for Senior SAFE funding
- Sutton: \$4,692 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,480 for Senior SAFE funding
- Uxbridge: \$4,692 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,480 for Senior SAFE funding
- Webster: \$5,281 for S.A.F.E. funding; \$2,680 for Senior SAFE funding

**The Yankee Xpress**

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## National Heritage Corridor announces new board appointments

WHITINSVILLE - Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (BRVHNC) announces appointments made to its Board of Directors following its annual meeting in January.

The Board of Directors elected new officers as follows: Chair, Richard T. Moore (MA); First Vice-Chair, Dennis Rice (MA); Second Vice-Chair, Lee Dillard Adams (MA); Treasurer, Yvonne Chita (MA); and Secretary, Todd Helwig (MA). BRVHNC's Immediate Past Chair is Richard H. Gregory III (RI).

Directors re-elected for a three-year term on BRVHNC's Board include Richard H. Gregory III (RI), Dennis Rice (MA), and Gary E. Furtado (RI).

Directors on the Board in-



**Richard T. Moore**

clude Bill Beitler (RI), Robert Billington (RI), Michael D. Cassidy (RI), Bob Contursi (MA), Robert Dandrade (MA), Gary E. Furtado (RI), Pieter de Jong (MA), Jeannie Hebert (MA), David W. Kellogg (RI), Thomas Kravitz, (RI), Harry T. Whitin (MA) and Donna M. Williams (MA).

## What's in it for me?

Isn't that just an attitude? This seems to have crept into society in the past couple decades. Why isn't it "What's in it for us?"

This is just one American Legionnaire's view. When soldiers came home to stay, (back in the day) it was all about family and community.

Have you noticed that we have gotten to the point where we are all so busy that family time is when we go on vacation?

Now there are so many activities that we rarely do things as a family. Back when there weren't any computers or cell phones, we as a society moved a lot slower. We took the time to take the back roads and enjoy the ride because there weren't as many highways.

In March 2019, the American Legion Post 279 in Auburn burned down. At that time the legion participated in a few mainstays in the town like organizing the Memorial Day parade and a couple of Legion programs for our youth to familiarize themselves with government and the state police.

The community probably knew us best for Friday Night Fish and Chips. We gave to many of the charities with cash donations but our post struggled to make ends meet like many other posts.

As we took stock of our post's history we remembered back when families used to be around all the time doing something. Some of you might remember the Drum and Bugle Corps. How about the great Chicken Bar-B-Qs. The Legion used to sponsor youth sports teams. These things were real family activities.

Back then the veterans from the WWII era were pretty much running the posts. But as time went by, something was lost as families found other avenues to entertain their families. The posts were thought of, in time, as a place where veterans could go and relax and tell stories and have a drink.

The service of helping the community and family-oriented activities was somehow lost. Membership is down everywhere because the younger veterans are in different circumstances than the ones of yesterday. Younger veterans want to be included in a group of people that support each other and they want their membership to mean something.

One of the ways that happens is providing interesting events for the communities. The younger Veterans are enthusiastic and most of the time have young children.

The Auburn American Legion Post is in the process of rebuilding. We are hoping for spring or early summer for our opening. Many new plans are in the making but with our large aging membership of Vietnam veterans, it is getting harder for us to participate in some of the physical activities that would attract younger families.

The Phoenix is rising from the ashes and with a new post, a new attitude will also arise. We are now looking for families to participate in creating a place that will draw other families to fun filled activities.

If you are a vet, you can join our Legionnaires. If you are a male decedent of a vet you are eligible to join the Sons of the Legion, and we also have a very strong auxiliary.

We also have a group called the American Legion Riders. You must be a member of one of the three groups to join and you must have a motorcycle. If you just want to come and help or enjoy the facilities please do.

Remember: when you join the American Legion, there is no rank among us. All races and genders are encouraged to come, join or both but over all have fun.

*Submitted by Steve Gallant, Chester P. Tuttle Post 279, Auburn*



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## Dudley-Charlton Education Foundation 12th annual appeal

The Dudley-Charlton Education Foundation (DCEF) is pleased to announce the launch our 12th annual appeal with a \$2,500 donation from Cornerstone Bank. Cornerstone Bank has supported DCEF annually since our inception. Each year, the DCEF awards grants to educators in our district to fund the implementation of creative and exciting ideas that enhance the school experience for our students. Although the classroom and school year look different this year, the need still exists and all funds contributed to the DCEF are used to support education in the community.

Previous donations have made a significant impact across all seven schools in the past 11 years funding 118 grants and more than \$300,000 for fresh and creative ventures in the classroom.

Please consider investing in the future of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School district students by supporting our

12th annual appeal which is running through March 31st. Donations may be made securely, on-line at: [www.dced-foundation.org](http://www.dced-foundation.org) or by sending a check to: DCEF, PO Box 92, Dudley, MA 01571.

On behalf of the thousands of students impacted, and the teachers who facilitate these learning opportunities, thank you for your support.

### Dean's List at WIT

BOSTON - The following local students have made the Dean's List at Wentworth Institute of Technology for the Fall 2020 semester. Nicole Marie Thackaberry of Douglas; Abagayle Paige Morin of Dudley; Madeline Rae Davis of Dudley; Brandon Scanlon of Dudley; Daniel Edward Vanderhoof of Webster; Adrianna T. Rocheleau of Webster.



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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

# Faith guided Tim Hare to success selling cars and Chamber award

By Rod Lee

Mike Hare, who is one of his father's four children, recalls how the imposition of discipline went when he and his brother Mark misbehaved as kids.

"If we owned up to it, there would be minimal punishment. But if we tried to weasel out of it..." Mr. Hare said in a telephone conversation in December. There was a hint of a smile in Mike Hare's voice as he spoke those words.

We were chatting about Tim Hare of family-owned and operated Harbro Auto Sales in Whitinsville and Webster, who received the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's 2020 Gerry Gaudette "Extra Mile Award" at the organization's 42nd annual meeting on November 19. Mike Hare did not see the ceremony, which was conducted virtually for attendees who had pre-registered and which featured a keynote speech by Maj. Gen. Thomas E. Murphy.

Maj. Gen. Murphy is director of the Critical Technology Task Force at the Department of Defense and a product of Oxford High School and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

"That's really cool and a great credit to my father," Mike Hare said, of the honor bestowed on Tim Hare. "He didn't even tell me that he won that award."

With the humility he has long been known for (and which many would agree is uncharacteristic of a car salesman), Tim Hare attributed his success in a business he and his brother Dave Hare started on Linwood Avenue in 1973 to his parents, to people who have helped him along the way, and to fully embracing Jesus Christ. "I was raised on the words of Jesus," he said, after accepting the award from Gerry Gaudette's son Lee Gaudette of Gaudette Insurance. "In my younger years, I rejected them. Thirty-eight years

ago, the Lord changed the course of my life and my wife's (Jane Hare)."

Mike Hare was not surprised to hear that his father pointed out in his brief remarks on November 19 that the phrase "extra mile" originated not with the Chamber but with Jesus Christ—in the Bible.

His dad's faith-based approach to business "just dovetailed into my brother and I's," Mike Hare said. "My grandfather was like that. My dad tells me a story about how he gave up drinking and smoking and used the money he saved to buy a little lake cottage in the 80s that we all still enjoy."

"I remember my dad driving around in a muscle car and drinking with his friends," Mike Hare said. Turning completely to Jesus Christ, "it's changed him one

hundred eighty degrees. He was never one to put up a cross or a big fish, he is quiet that way. He has always told me he doesn't want too many rewards on earth, they'll come in heaven."

Tim Hare has turned Harbro Auto Sales over to his sons (it is now a third-generation business with the addition of other family members). He and Jane Hare are involved with providing the battery-powered "Action Track Chair" to disabled veterans and others whose physical limitations prevent them from getting around. But when the pandemic hit last March and "none of us knew what was going on and we had to pretty much close the doors" for a time, "my dad saw what was happening and we talked it through. Even though he is not active in the business, we came up with



Tim Hare, a founder of Harbro Auto Sales, speaks after being presented with the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's "Gerry Gaudette Extra Mile Award."

the best plan we could, all things considered. Dad was more like a guiding light person for us. He's a phone call away and he always answers his phone. Who better than the guy who founded it?" to seek advice from, Mike Hare said.

"He has most recently been helping us find cars. Many leases were expiring but being extended because of a lack of inventory. A lot of the vehicles we would

normally buy are not there." Mike Hare said that with his dad's help Harbro has survived the pandemic so far. "Eight staff did not want to come back. All in all it blended out. We gave the Salvation Army some money. We are so thankful and feel blessed, even though people aren't driving as much."

Contact Rod Lee at [rodlee.1963@gmail.com](mailto:rodlee.1963@gmail.com) or 774-232-2999.

## Memorial Beach improvements with PARC grant

You may have noticed some activity down at Memorial Beach over the last week or so. Last year the Town of Webster applied for a grant through the state's PARC Grant Program. The town was awarded a grant in the amount of \$400,000 from the state to cover 73% of the cost of upgrades to be done at the beach.

The decisions on what upgrades to do came from various Beach Committee reports and was presented at town meeting. There are some great happenings going on.

A dog park will be erected near the animal shelter. On the far side of the dirt parking lot area there will be an all-purpose field and PickleBall Court.

Playground equipment will be updated, making it more ADA accessible. There will be play equipment for the water, and last but not least the beach house will see upgrades in the bathrooms and concession stand.

Officials would like to thank the residents of Webster for their support in this project.

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Living well and looking good

# Vestibular migraines often include vertigo

By Keith Roach, M.D.

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** Can you shed light on how vestibular migraines are diagnosed and the best treatment? – J.H.

**ANSWER:** The vestibule of the ear is where the organ of balance is located, so vestibular symptoms relate to balance issues in general, but most commonly, it means vertigo. The term “vestibular migraine” means vestibular symptoms attributed to migraine.

Vestibular migraine thus includes migraine headache – not everyone will have headache with every episode, but most people with vestibular migraine will have headache with at least some of the episodes – and vestibular symp-

toms. These could include vertigo (a sensation of movement when still), unsteadiness or movement symptoms with a change in head position that persists long after the head has moved. Abnormal sensitivity to sound and vision are also prominent in vestibular migraine.

There is a similarly named condition, basilar migraine, that also has vestibular symptoms. However, basilar migraine has additional symptoms seen during the early, or aura, phase coming from the brainstem, deep in the brain, such as clumsy movements or confusion. These occur most commonly five

minutes to an hour before the headache.

Making the diagnosis of vestibular migraine is challenging, since there are many clinical entities with similar symptoms. There is no conclusive laboratory or radiology tests to confirm the diagnosis. In practice, the diagnosis of probable vestibular migraine is made in people with recurrent migraine symptoms associated with vertigo. Often, treatment is begun when the condition is considered probable, and if the person does not respond well to treatment, a more thorough evaluation is considered.

Treatment for vestibular migraine is broken down into treatment for acute attacks and treatment to prevent at-

tacks. Many neurologists use diazepam (Valium) and similar drugs for acute attacks. Preventive medicines come

in many different families, and the choice of the best agent depends often on other conditions the person has. Everyone with migraine should try to find and avoid triggers.

This includes eating on a reasonable schedule and good sleep hygiene.

If medications are needed, prescription choices include blood pressure medicines (beta blockers like propranolol and calcium channel blockers), antidepressants and seizure medicines. Over-the-counter options include riboflavin, magnesium,

feverfew and coenzyme Q10, all of which have some but not conclusive evidence of benefit superior to placebo.

**Psoriasis**

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** Can you tell me the possible causes of psoriasis? I have read that it is related to chronic inflammation. What type of inflammation might this be? – C.K.

**ANSWER:** Psoriasis, a chronic skin condition that can sometimes affect the joints, is indeed an inflammatory condition, but inflammation is a set of symptoms and observable signs, not an underlying cause or diagnosis. There are five cardinal signs of inflammation: redness, swelling, pain, warmth and loss of function.

Psoriasis appears to be a problem of a dysregulated immune system. It is unclear what triggers the body to begin responding with inflam-

mation to the skin, but some proteins (called antimicrobial peptides) made by skin cells may start the process. These can be triggered by trauma to the skin, but also by some medications, alcohol, cigarette smoking, infections and stress, all of which can also act as triggers for people with psoriasis. These make the immune system cells specific to the skin become much more active.

Understanding the immune system issues in psoriasis has led to newer and more effective treatments, especially for more-severe psoriasis.

*Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu). (c) 2021 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved*

To your good health

## COVID vaccines for Dudley residents

The Town of Dudley announced that Dudley residents can now go to [dudleyma.gov](http://dudleyma.gov) to complete a brief form to be notified when a local COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic becomes available for residents, business owners and employees.

As the vaccination becomes available, in accordance with

the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ Phased COVID-19 Distribution Plan, enrollees will be contacted by the Dudley Board of Health and provided with the date, place and time to receive the vaccines. Residents who do not have the ability to access the internet are encouraged to first ask for

assistance from family members, caregivers or friends who will be able to go to [dudleyma.gov](http://dudleyma.gov) and complete the form on their behalf. The entire online process takes approximately five minutes.

Additionally, a vaccination phone number has been established to enable residents that are unable to complete the online form to receive assistance from a Dudley Board of Health Assistant to complete the form over the phone. The vaccination phone number is (508) 949 8036. Residents that call the vaccination phone number for assistance can expect to be asked to leave a message and to receive a call-back within five business days. Because of the volume of local vaccination requests that the Town is expecting, online form submission at [dudleyma.gov](http://dudleyma.gov) is

strongly encouraged.

The Town recognizes that members of the community may have difficulty in traveling to receive vaccinations, and different methods of delivering the vaccines locally are being developed through a cooperative effort between health care providers, the board of health and the Dudley Fire Department Emergency Management Division.

The Town of Dudley does not have the ability to purchase additional vaccines or expedite the process. The phased approach which is being followed across the State has been developed by medical and health professionals at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to best deliver the vaccine in a coordinated effort across the Commonwealth.

### Pamala Holt joins Goodrich Insurance Agency

We are excited to welcome Pamala Holt from Dudley, MA to our team of insurance professionals at Goodrich Insurance Agency in Milton, MA.

Pamala has over 20 years of insurance expertise and will be our Personal Lines Account Manager. Pam joined our office family on November 23, 2020 and will be working remotely from Dudley and in our main office in Milton. Help us give Pam a warm welcome!

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Donna Benoit, CIC CPIA, Vice President



Pamala Holt Account Manager

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# Charlton Optical's customer loyalty continues to rise

By Janet Stoica

There are approximately 200 optical stores in central Massachusetts, many of which are great places to have your eyes checked, contact lenses ordered, and eyeglasses chosen, but for the last five years, Charlton Optical has stood at the top of the list by being voted Best in Central Mass. by its loyal and happy customers.

Owner Peter Maly is understandably proud of his professional and customer-focused staff for all that they have accomplished in the areas of eye examinations, contact lens choices, eyeglass frame selection, and their own

unique lens grinding lab for customers' spectacles.

"It's our customer service," said Mr. Maly, "along with the longevity of our employees and our old-fashioned values. We want to make sure our customers are happy with our products. We stand behind what we offer our customers and honor all our warranties. Our crew and their personalities are what keeps our clients coming back. It's the teamwork."

Charlton Optical also has a new optometrist, Dr. Renee Gomez, who, according to their website, provides primary eye care for all ages, including contact lens examina-

tions and fittings, laser vision consultations, diabetic evaluations, pre-post cataract evaluations and general vision exams. Dr. Gomez is licensed as a Doctor of Optometry in Massachusetts and is a member of the American Optometric Association and the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists.

"We also have top-of-the-line equipment," stated Mr. Maly. "We offer Optos Retinal Imaging which captures a 200-degree high-resolution digital image of the retina in a single shot without using eye-drop dilation." Mr. Maly explained that his company chose to bump out their existing floor plan to accommodate their newest eye examination equipment.

The shop will be celebrating its 27th year anniversary at the same location this year. "We have a large selection of frames along with our ability to accept most insurances, making us one of the busiest shops around. The other very large advantage that sets us apart from our fellow optical shops is that we grind our own lenses here," Mr. Maly said. Charlton Optical also dispenses all major brand contact lenses along with rebates, if applicable.

Mr. Maly and his staff opticians actually create your eyeglasses right on the premises. The process involves blank generic power glass and/or plastic lenses that arrive in one-inch-thick formats.



Staff members (L-R): Shelley Smola, Peter Maly, Lynda Schultz, Jayne Deluca, John Verdolino, Dr. Renee Gomez, and April Swanson.

As prescriptions are accepted from customers, he and his fellow opticians use their lab equipment to grind the blanks to the proper power for each individual whether it's one power, bifocal, trifocal, or progressive lenses. One-stop shopping for sure.

Another interesting facet of this shop is its Chemistre line of sunglasses that includes the insertion of tiny magnets in the upper left and right corners of a customer's clear spectacles making those specs capable of accepting a flat pair of sunglasses with like magnets. Once those flat sunglasses are clicked on those tiny magnets, it is impossible to tell the wearer has clip-on sunglasses.

"We do almost all our own optical work," Mr. Maly stated, "grinding prescriptions with a computerized edger with most scrips done the same day presented. We also specialize in safety eyewear for companies."

Charlton Optical's customers hail from Massachusetts and Connecticut with their goal of purchasing contact lenses, eyeglasses, and frames—from designer to economy styles. Many of their regulars are local residents, coming from the Brookfields, Quinebaug and Thompson, as well as Webster and Dudley.

Mr. Maly began his career working at Gentex Optics of Dudley. He so thoroughly enjoyed working in the pro-

duction area making lenses that he decided to further his education in the lens grinding area. He is certified by the National Contact Lens Examiners, American Board of Opticianry, and the Opticians Association of Massachusetts.

Their two newest employees are Shelley Smola, a new optician who has been with the group for six months, and April Swanson, who began her career as a technician three months ago. They are also currently seeking another optometrist and a new billing employee.

Charlton Optical is open Monday - Saturday and is located at 109-6 Masonic Home Road, Charlton. (508) 248-1188. [www.charltonoptical.com](http://www.charltonoptical.com)



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# Vanderburgh House emerges as a pacesetter in sober living

By Rod Lee

It appears that there is no slowing down Hunter Foote, Vanderburgh House and the communities the upstart nonprofit is creating throughout the city of Worcester, South County and beyond.

A new residence in Southbridge, set to open on Main Street this month, typifies Vanderburgh House's rapid growth as a provider of structured and certified sober living for men and women in a recovery-focused and peer-supported environment.

"It's incredible," Mr. Foote said during a telephone conversation in January, in testament to the success Vanderburgh House's business model is enjoying so far.

Mr. Foote had just returned from one of a couple of trips he has made to Nairobi, this

time with his fiancé "and we met with her mother. Kenya has always been a big part of my life," he said.

He relishes talking about the endeavors his company is undertaking to help men and women try to shed the ruinous effects of alcohol and drugs.

"We now have a home in Maine, in South Portland, for women; a home for men in Rhode Island, in Pawtucket; a new home in Greenfield, Massachusetts, a two-family for men and women, side by side. It's so cool to work with independent sober home operators. They carry the flag."

The Vanderburgh House concept is built on five principles: recovery, community, accessibility, independence and sustainability.

In terms of the first, Vanderburgh House's policies, leadership and culture are all intended to support residents on their road to recovery. On the second, Vanderburgh House homes are supervised by a house manager who is dedicated to providing service to the home's residents. As for accessibility, homes are open "to every member of the global recovery community with a straightforward application process, transparent approval criteria and affordable costs." When it comes to the independence factor, Vanderburgh House does not direct its residents' actions; rather, "we coach, support and mentor our brothers and sisters in recovery." In terms of sustainability, residents are encouraged to be "good stewards of the earth and its resources."

The day-to-day workings of Vanderburgh House's homes are governed by a handbook and house rules.

Payment is weekly or monthly starting at just over \$100.

Vanderburgh House does not accept health insurance.

Homes Vanderburgh House has already opened

or will be unveiling soon include the Germain Estate in Worcester, for women; the Kenwood Home in Worcester, for men; the Elm Home in Worcester, also for men; the Chamberlain Home in Southbridge, which is coed; the Dartmouth Home for women in Springfield; the Rogers Home for men in Pawtucket; the Prospect Home for men in Springfield; the Calderia Home in Worcester, which is coed, and the Westville Home in Shrewsbury, also coed.

Chamberlain House is an example of the type of facility Vanderburgh House is looking for in its search for new properties that fit its needs. It is a restored Victorian on a large private piece of land with flowering fruit trees, fountains and gardens, two kitchens and "many updates."

"It's a challenge being able to work with independent operators who have experience," Mr. Foote said. "We attract individuals who are more serious" about being part of a life-changing initiative, he said.

COVID-19 "has not impacted us all that much," he pointed out. "Everyone needs a place to live, if we respect the safety protocols."



The Chamberlain Home in Southbridge is one of a number of sober living facilities Vanderburgh House owns and operates in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Maine. The company's business model is built on residents taking responsibility for their home and their recovery.

When we spoke, Vanderburgh House's new facility in Southbridge was in the process of being set up, and completely renovated.

As is true of other sober living facilities, Vanderburgh House requires abstinence from drugs and alcohol. Residents are engaged in their personal recovery journey by attending meetings and working with a sponsor and the house manager for support and encouragement. Residents adhere to a curfew, submit to drug and alcohol screenings and participate in home and community events.

All of Vanderburgh House's actions are guided by "clinical research and best practices."

Expansion beyond Southbridge in South County is something Vanderburgh

House is considering, Mr. Foote said.

"Indeed, we are opening the home in Southbridge in short order. We've looked into Webster as well. The rest (towns like Dudley, Oxford and Charlton, and Putnam and Thompson, for instance) are a bit too small to support a largely walking-only population. We would be happy to explore Connecticut as well," however, he said.

The growth of Vanderburgh House raises all kinds of possibilities along this line, which is good news for individuals looking for a stable and supportive environment in which to get and stay sober.

Contact Rod Lee at [rodlee.1963@gmail.com](mailto:rodlee.1963@gmail.com) or 774-232-2999.

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## H.A.N.D.S assistance available

The Dudley group H.A.N.D.S (Helping Address the Needs of Dudley's Seniors) is a local non-profit 501C 3 organization, which assists low-income town residents over age 60, with meeting their home heating needs. The group was formed in 2008. Since that time, they have provided more than \$84,000 to 174 deserving individuals. It is extremely taxing on those with insufficient means to decide between food, medicine, rent, and being warm. The pandemic has only added to these pressures. This group

helps ease some of the burden on people and ensures they are kept warm during the cold winter months.

H.A.N.D.S distributes over 95% of all donations received directly to service providers who assist these residents. For the 2020/21 Heating Season, H.A.N.D.S granted 11 awards totaling \$7,207.90. This will go a long way toward helping these seniors in this time of desperate need. Fundraising in the time of COVID-19 has been challenging for many organizations. The Annual H.A.N.D.S

Bucket Brigade fundraiser in the Spring of 2020 was eliminated. H.A.N.D.S' success is determined by the amount of donations received and the Board is grateful to every person, group, school, church, and business which supports this endeavor.

If you wish to learn more about H.A.N.D.S, including application or donation information, go to [www.handsofdudley.org](http://www.handsofdudley.org). It can also be found via email at [Handsofdudley@gmail.com](mailto:Handsofdudley@gmail.com), 508-943-8517, or by mail at H.A.N.D.S P.O. Box 343 Dudley, Ma. 01571.



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# Capitol Siding of Auburn celebrates 70 years in business promoting customer service

By Janet Stoica

Imagine 70 years in business. Their beginnings go back to 1951. Were you around then?

That is when Capitol Siding was being established by Mark Sarkisian, Sr. on Pleasant Street in Worcester. He and his brother Bill Sarkisian used their trusty station wagon to transport product to customers' homes.

Back then the company was known as Capitol Aluminum Siding as aluminum was the siding material used at that time. The Sarkisian brothers also sold storm windows and storm doors, which were installed over the exterior windows and doors of homes.

So much has changed since the early 1950s and Mark Sarkisian, Jr. and his brother Dale are now the family members who have continued this successful business model. Their dad and uncle's legacy has flourished and grown successfully over the years and has kept the same family values that were instilled in the sons at an early age. "We were taught to be honest, to do a good job, and to satisfy the customer," said Mark

Sarkisian, Jr., "and that's what we strive for daily on each job our crews work on. We've been a member of the Better Business Bureau for the past 60 years and are proud of our A+ rating."

The company is now known as Capitol Siding and Home Improvement Company, Inc. as not only do they offer siding, but also install windows, roofing, and gutters.

They are a Harvey Elite Dealer, which means that they are offered their best quality windows at a better price, which enables them to pass on the savings to their customers.

"When COVID first appeared, we thought our business would suffer," said Mark, "but we have been able to continue working through the entire situation using good safety guidelines. Because of the high quality of our siding, we also can continue to install this product through the colder months. We will install windows one unit at a time to keep our customer's home warmth at a respectable level."

The quality of window glass should be a major consideration when choosing windows said Mark. He listed the window types as double and triple-paned, Low E, and argon-gas-filled. "The lower the 'U Factor,' the better the window, as this indicates the heat transfer through the window glass," he said.

Capitol employs 10 siding crews, 3 window crews, and 2 roofing crews. Each crew has 2-4 members.

The company enjoys educating its customers too by advising them that when using contractors: a customer should always ask for a copy of the installer's Construction Supervisor License as well as their Home Improvement Contractor Registration License and Insurance Certificates. Having these certificates means that the installer is obligated to take continuing education classes in their area of expertise. "Many people don't realize that they can be sued if the un-insured installer has an accident on their property. Having Workmen's Compensation cover-

age is crucial," stated Mark.

Capitol does not ask for a down payment like many other contractors. Once the job is complete, payment is expected.

"We have the best customer-oriented employees," says Mark. "Toni Faccini is our office manager and she's been with us for over 15 years. If it wasn't for Toni I would never be able to take a vacation. She's unbelievable with our customers on the phone. She goes above and beyond her responsibilities. She's the salt of the earth. We also have my son-in-law, Ryan Sabatalo, working here as our sales manager and he does a great job in his position. Always focused on the customer's satisfaction and that's what it's all about."

Capitol is proud of how it gives back to the community. They've donated to the Auburn Family Youth organization by providing and installing siding on their building, donated a defibrillator to the Auburn Fire Dept., and made donations to the local dog kennel. Mark is chairman of the Auburn Chamber of



Ryan Sabatalo, Dale Sarkisian, Mark Sarkisian, Jr.

Commerce's Golf Committee. The committee has donated \$15,000 in scholarships annually to local high school students. "It's very rewarding," said Mark, "even though this year we could not have a golf

tournament due to COVID, people still donated to this worthy cause."

Capitol Siding and Home Improvement Co., Inc., 30 Auburn Street, Auburn. Phone: (508) 832-5981. www.capitalsiding.com.

## Residents earn awards from WGU

SALT LAKE CITY - The following residents have earned an Award of Excellence at Western Governors University. The award is given to students who perform at a superior level in their coursework.

Zaily Naranjo of Douglas, has earned an Award of Excellence at Western Governors University College of Business.

Mohammad Ghani of Oxford, has earned an Award of Excellence at Western Governors University College of Information Technology.



Jill St. Cyr, a 2020 Community Champion.

## MAPFRE recognizes N. Grosvenordale resident as 2020 Community Champion

MAPFRE Foundation recently named MAPFRE employee Jill St. Cyr of North Grosvenordale among its 2020 Community Champions, as part of its annual corporate volunteer award program. The program recognizes employees who are passionate about volunteering and participate in activities during the year

to help their communities. St. Cyr, a senior manager at MAPFRE, was recognized for work with It Starts at Home, Inc., a nonprofit organization that she founded in 2019 to help children through fundraising drives, volunteering activities, etc., in the Thompson, Connecticut, and Webster areas.

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Chief's corner

# The court system working during the pandemic

By Chief Steven J. Wojnar

**Dudley Police Department**  
Criminal court proceedings continue during the pandemic. Crimes are still occurring. To limit personal contact, many offenders are being summoned to appear at court as opposed to being arrested. I was asked to provide some information about the differences, if any, between the two.

Criminal charges against a person can be initiated by either an arrest or a summons. Eventually, they will end in the same place. When a person is arrested, they are physically taken into custody and processed (or booked) at the police station. A court official will determine if the subject is

eligible for bail (money to assure they will appear at court) or held without bail for an appearance at the next sitting of the court. When at court, the case is reviewed by the Clerk Magistrate and the individual is processed through the Probation Department. They are then arraigned (formally notified of the charges against them) before the judge. He or she will determine if the person is to be held, with or without bail, or released pending their next appearance.

In the case of a summons, a criminal application, with the list of offenses, is filed at the Clerk Magistrates Office. If sufficient evidence (more

commonly known as "probable cause") is presented, the Clerk's office will issue a notice to appearance for the person. In the case of a felony (serious crime that can include a state prison sentence) the person can be either notified of a date to appear for arraignment or a warrant for their arrest can be issued. Whichever occurs, the person will follow the process mentioned above. For misdemeanors (lesser offenses), a notice to appear or an arrest warrant can be issued. In most misdemeanor cases, the defendant is given the opportunity to appear at a hearing before the Clerk Magistrate. If "probable cause" is found at that point,

the subject will be scheduled for arraignment before the judge. There is the possibility the matter can be dismissed by the Clerk, based on insufficient evidence, or it may be resolved at that hearing.

Regardless of the path, the defendant will likely end up in the same place. Often victims can be frustrated if a person is not physically taken into custody. They could believe the suspect has avoided justice. This is not the case. In some instances, arrests are not authorized by law. Therefore, a summons is the only way for this to proceed. Depending on circumstances, as with the pandemic, a criminal

summons may be the most viable option to initiate the process. Certainly, criminal charges or arrests, are always determined on a case-by-case basis. Bottom line, whether it is a physical arrest or summons, these matters will end up in court for the appropriate criminal proceeding.

As the pandemic continues, we ask everyone to stay safe and continue to take the necessary precautions to protect yourselves. We continue to serve the people of Dudley and work with the community to improve the quality of life for everyone. I thank the men and women from my department for their continued dedicated service to the Town during these trying times. Thanks

also go out to the many Police Officers, Fire and Emergency Services members, public works, health care, government officials, and all other "essential" personnel for their continued hard work and service. We greatly appreciate the support we receive from our community.

*Thanks again for your questions and comments. Please send them to me at the Dudley Police Department 71 West Main St., Dudley, Ma. 01571 or email at swojnar@dudleypolice.com. Opinions expressed in this weekly column are those of Chief Wojnar only and unless clearly noted, do not reflect the ideas or opinions of any other organization or citizen.*

## Regional Microenterprise assistance grant program

If your business is located in Clinton, Douglas, Lancaster, Northbridge, Sterling or Webster, you may be eligible to apply for a Microenterprise Assistance Grant.

Grant awards of up to \$10,000 are available to eligible businesses within those towns that have experienced

financial loss due to COVID-19 and the associated shut downs. Eligible businesses must have five employees or fewer (including the owner(s)), must have been in business since January 1, 2019 and must be able to demonstrate revenue loss caused by the pandemic.

The business owner's family income must fall within certain limits. Other eligibility requirements apply.

The grants are made possible through a Community Development Block Grant program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development through

the Federal CARES Act and administered by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

Preliminary applications will be reviewed for eligibility. All businesses deemed eligible for assistance will be entered into a lottery that will determine the order in which applications are processed. Separate lotteries will be held for each community. Applications received after the February 8 deadline will be added to the wait list on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information and a preliminary application contact Carol Cyr at the Webster Office of Community Development: (508)949-3800 ext. 4004 or e-mail: ccyr@webster-ma.gov.

You can also visit www.webster-ma.gov, or the website of the municipality in which your business is located: www.douglas-ma.gov; www.clinton-ma.gov; www.ci.lancaster-ma.us; www.northbridgemass.org or www.sterling-ma.gov.

## Webster 2021 TOWN ELECTION SCHEDULE

Position	Years
Board of Selectmen	3 1
Finance Committee	3 1
Regional Vocational School Committee	3 1
Town Clerk	3 1
Trustees of the Public Library	3 2
Trustees of the Public Library	2 1
Board of Health	3 1
Redevelopment Authority	5 1
Housing Authority	4 1

WEBSTER - The annual town election will take place on Monday, May 3.

The last day for candidates to take out nomination papers is Thursday, March 11.

The last day for candidates to submit nomination papers to the Board of Registrars is Monday, March 15, by 5 p.m.

The last day for the registrars to certify papers and file them with the town clerk is Monday, March 29, by 5 p.m.

The last day to object or withdraw is Wednesday, March 31.

The last day to register to vote is Wednesday, April 14.

Nomination papers require a minimum of 50 certified signatures and are available in the town clerk's office.

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FAMOUS MAKER GAS OR ELECTRIC RANGE Reg. \$499.99 <b>\$449.99</b>	DELUXE TOP LOAD WASHER Reg. \$499.99 <b>\$449.99</b>	MAYTAG TOP WASHER Reg. \$699.99 <b>\$649.99</b>	GE TOP LOAD WASHER Reg. \$699.99 <b>\$699.99</b>	7 CU FT CHEST FREEZER <b>\$279.99</b>

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# Hoyt Foundation Donates \$35,000 to The Center of Hope Foundation, Inc.

SOUTHBRIDGE - The Center of Hope Foundation, a non-profit agency serving adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, is pleased to announce a charitable contribution in the amount of \$35,000 from the Hoyt Foundation. This contribution will help the Center of Hope to continue with its mission in providing services and opportunities so that the individuals who are served are achieving the most fulfilling,

meaningful and productive lives possible.

"The Center of Hope's fundraising events have been put on hold due to the current pandemic," said Cindy Howard, CEO of the Center of Hope. "The funds raised from these events are necessary to continue offering opportunities such as Special Olympics, holiday giving, food distribution and offering help in emergency situations that happen within the community."

Erika Travinski, COO of the Center of Hope says, "One of my greatest joys working at the Center of Hope, is the hope that surrounds the building. Hope for the well-being of those around us. Hope to continue offering services and opportunities that put

smiles on countless faces. The joy that emerges from such hope is magical. We are grateful to have the support from the Hoyt Foundation, who share and believe in our mission to provide as many opportunities as possible to the disability community."



Even a pandemic cannot keep Dick Hoyt, founder of the Hoyt Foundation, away from personally delivering a sizeable donation.

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Living with Lincoln

# The Senior Stroll

**By Amy Palumbo-LeClaire**  
Every pet owner, at one time or another, has experienced the joy of going for a WALK. Some dogs even know how to spell the W-A-L-K. I don't know what's better: the build-up to the walk or the actual stroll itself. When it comes to living with Lincoln, I'd have to give each a fair shake. Now that he's a Senior Pet, walks have become even more interesting, and treasured.

"Want to go for a walk?"  
The question passes through him like electricity while he relaxes in his preferred spot, the nook beneath our island countertop, his dog cave. He stiffens his posture, stretches his paws forward at an attentive numeral eleven, and tilts his square head. "Want to go for a walk?" I repeat the question just to plant that expression (a Dog Owner fave) in my mind. The second request sells him. He springs from his cave and grabs the nearest dishrag, one of several used to clean dirty paws. "I love this idea!" He parades around the kitchen with the dirty rag.

It's a Retriever thing. Dogs remind us that the simple joys in life are the sweetest. He waits for me to grab my coat from the closet and, since its winter, tack on a hat, scarf, and gloves. Leave it to a dog to give "his person" the charm of a butler. He observes my routine carefully. He grins while

I button my coat. He blinks while I wrap my scarf. Then he performs a happy dance, as though we've both just won the lottery. "Do you want to go see Gracie, Lincoln?" I keep the inspiration going. Naming other Golden in the neighborhood turns on his heart light even more.

"Do you want to go see the new puppy?" He tap-dances and grabs a dropped glove. "Let it go, Lincoln." I'll admit, this particular habit has lost its luster. "Lincoln, please. I need the glove. Let it go." Refusal. He wiggles to the front door mouthing the glove like a magician with a dove. I resort to the obvious: use my bare hands as a scissor to pry open his upper and lower jaw. The slimed glove drops to the floor like a dead bird.

"Go ahead, Lincoln." Since he's already pushed his way through the opened doorway, I gesture that he GO first.

"A couple throws?" Before I have a chance to attach leash to collar, he's found a ball in the yard. Now that he's ten, I have to monitor the number of throws because we still have an entire three mile walk to manage. "Just a few," I say to him. He drops the ball by my feet and waits, the indent at his head creased with that expression again. I toss him a few and he completes the 40 yard dash to retrieve one of thousands of balls thrown over a decade. I

resist the opportunity to offer the Gronk-toss—a high ball thrown perfectly to allow him to spring like a dolphin on all fours, catch the ball on the hop, and carry it back with a celebrity smile. 2020 has been a year of worry. Test positive? Torn ACL?

"We're going for our walk now, Lincoln." He stares up at me, foam lining his black lips like the suds of an ocean shoreline. He secures the ball to one side of his mouth with big canines that have been filed flat by so much ball play. He drools. A new battle begins. "Let it go, Lincoln." He turns his head away from me—a subtle hint to let me know he'll be bringing along the ball, thank you very much.

"Give."  
Refusal.  
Our latest problem.

His breathing is already compromised due to age and, well, a few senior issues. I use gloved hands to pry a slurpy ball from a surprisingly strong, old mouth. In the process, the ball shoots off my hand and takes a bad bounce. The two of us scramble like football players for the fumble. "Leave it!" I shout. Too late. Lincoln recovers the ball, a close snag. A ghost from NFL Football Past announces the play while Lincoln celebrates the victory with a dance. Meanwhile, I produce Plan B.

Reverse Psychology.  
I pretend I don't mind that he has won the battle and walk to the edge of the driveway, as though to desert him. "Bye, Lincoln. Have fun."

His expression softens. "You're really going to go without me?" He tip-toes toward the mailbox, ever so slowly, a lion studying his prey. "Can we talk about it?"

"I'll be right back, Lincoln." I lie, and keep walking. He comes closer to the driveway threshold, more vulnerable now. I spin around, dash towards my ball-obsessed dog and perform a quick, unexpected extraction. Then I jog back down the driveway, place the ball on a high garage shelf, return to his side, and snap on a leash. We cross over to the street. He pulls me back in the direction of the garage. "Cheap shot."

I tug him forward. Within seconds, the incident is a distant memory. Unlike humans, dogs forgive immediately, fully. They don't hold grudges. We go for a walk. Lincoln

wears a permanent smile that falls somewhere between the residue of ball play and the promise of new adventure. His trot is peppy, age-defiant. We pass kind neighbors, interesting shrubs, and the small, crabby pug whose bark is significantly worse than any dog's bite. He tailgates Lincoln's hairy butt with an obscene, gurgling rattle.

"Go home!" I turn around and stomp my foot. Lincoln shakes him off and proceeds, unaffected by bad behavior. "Hyper little fellow, isn't he?"

We pass the deserted apple orchard and Lincoln takes a shot at pulling me back to beautiful "off-the-leash" years when we'd tour rows and rows of apple trees long since cut down. The field, now overgrown and fenced in, is nostalgic for both of us. "You remember the orchard, don't you, Lincoln?"

I notice the memory emerge in his mind. He flecks me a knowing grin. Then, as quickly as it came, the memory morphs to a new sight. A friendly Human across the street walks a gorgeous German Shepherd pup. Normally, a tsunami could not hold me back from this pup. "What a beautiful pup!" I croon. Lincoln interrupts. "My name is Lincoln! I'm ten years old and have my own column! You can read about me in Living with Lincoln, of The Yankee Xpress!"

"I'm sorry. I'm on Day 10," the Human says, and we part like the Red Sea. Lincoln tosses a glance up at me. "He had the puppy smell, too."

It's a 2020 thing. We make our way to the "home stretch" at Dodge Road, where a trot becomes a stroll.

The pep in Lincoln's step becomes a pause in his paws. "You want to take a rest, Lincoln?" He sits, lifts his head, and smiles proudly. Despite an already healthy self-esteem, I pour on praise. "You're doing such a good job walking." I massage his ears. "Most ten-year old dogs couldn't walk this far. You're so athletic. We'll get some water when we get home. Sound good?"

He listens to me - happy tongue out - and agrees. Always, there is inspiration between us while we put our best foot forward and count our blessings. Life is worth living. Especially with a dog like Lincoln.



More ball please.



The glove caper.



We couldn't be happier or prouder to have served our community for half a century. Join our year-long celebration of this milestone by following us on Facebook or through our website to stay informed of our fun-filled activities.

For just fifty cents a day, fifteen dollars a month for 12 consecutive months, or a one-time payment of \$180, you will help us continue our mission and commitment to saving stray, homeless and unwanted dogs and finding them loving forever homes. Please help us reach our goal by becoming one of the 300 reoccurring donors we need to make this a success. To sign up as a reoccurring donor please visit our website [dogorphans.com](http://dogorphans.com).

## Dog Orphans 2nd annual virtual bow wow bingo

Dear friends,

We are very excited to be celebrating our 50th anniversary this year and will be holding many fun-filled activities throughout the year. Whether on-line, or in person, if possible, we have many events coming your way.

To kick off the year, we are proud to announce our second annual virtual bingo game. At this time, we are looking for sponsors to support this event. For only \$100, sponsors can take part in the fun and also enjoy a complimentary bingo card, a Dog Orphans 50th anniversary mask, promotion of your business on our Facebook page as well as during live streaming of the bingo games at least twice throughout the month.

We look forward to partnering with you to celebrate our 50th anniversary and happily promote your business.

Sincerely,  
Ron Morse  
(508) 475-1855  
Dog Orphans, Inc.  
90 Webster Street  
Douglas, MA 01516

## Prayer



Jesus

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

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

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# FOOD AND FUN SECTION

Save these pages as a guide to area dining and things to do

## Programs and events at the Pearle L. Crawford Library

**DUDLEY** - The Pearle L. Crawford Library, 40 Schofield Avenue, Dudley, has listed the following programs and events. Join them for one of the virtual programs at the Pearle! To register go to [www.crawfordlibrary.org](http://www.crawfordlibrary.org) or call 508-949-8021.

**Storytime on Facebook Live** - Wednesdays at noon. Join Miss Lida for a live storytime on Facebook, every Wednesday at noon, and then stop by the library for a free take-and-make craft kit. No Facebook account is needed for this free program. Just point your

browser to <https://www.facebook.com/crawfordlibrary> to access the video. Can't tune in at noon? Recordings of each week's storytime are available on the Facebook page beginning Wednesday afternoon.

**Music and Movement** - first Friday of every month at 11:00 a.m. Join Deb Hudgins on Facebook for Music and Movement, one of the most popular programs. Nothing gets kids on their feet and having fun quite like songs, dance and silly stories, and Miss Deb. No Facebook account is needed for this free program.

Just point your browser to <https://www.facebook.com/crawfordlibrary> to access the video.

**Hands on nature presents backyard birds** - Monday, March 22, 6:00-7:30 p.m. Meet the birds in your backyard with this fun free program for kids. Free; registration is required. Participants will receive a link to the Zoom meeting 24 hours before the event. Sponsored by the Hugh W. and Harriet K. Crawford Endowment.

**Tracing your immigrant ancestors** - Thursday, March 25, 6:00-7:45 p.m. Most of us are here today be-

cause someone, somewhere, left everything they knew for something unknown. Find out how, find out why, find out more. This talk will give you the tools you need to identify the place of origin of your European ancestors. Margaret Fortier will cover how to start, what to watch out for, and how to use the whole family to find what you are looking for. Case studies tracing local immigrants will illustrate the method. Free. Registration required. Participants will be emailed a zoom link 24 hours before the program. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

**Growing a summer salad with Blackstone Valley** - Thursday, April 8, 6:00-7:30 p.m. Is there anything better than a fresh summer salad? Join Blackstone Valley Veggie Gardens for this Zoom presentation where they will cover all

the basics of growing your own lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumbers. Free; registration required. Participants will be emailed a link to the Zoom meeting 24 hours before the event. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.



### St. Andrew Bobola take-out Lenten fish dinners

Fridays from February 19 through March 26, St. Andrew Bobola Church, 54 West Main St., Dudley, will be offering take-out Lenten dinners with your choice of baked or fried fish from 11 a.m. to 1

p.m. and again from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Fried dinners include french fries, cole slaw and tartar sauce. Baked dinners include baked potato, cole-slaw and tartar sauce. Please note - take out only and please call ahead 508-943-5633 to order.

Cost is \$12pp for adults and \$6pp for children. If you have any questions or to order, please call the rectory, 508-943-5633, during regular office hours, Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m. to noon. During Lent, come take home a great meal and avoid cooking on Fridays.

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**Donna's Day: creative family fun**

# Sunny-side up snowflakes

**By Donna Erickson**

Put "Snowflakes Sunny-Side Up" on your breakfast menu and the nutritious surprise will brighten even the darkest of wintry mornings. Made with colorful slices of sweet red pepper in shapes that resemble snowflakes, the whimsy adds fun to the start of the day. The curvy rings frame an egg as it fries into deliciousness for about 5 minutes. Top with a dusting of Parmesan or feta cheese, and serve with toast or an English muffin and fruit juice.

For a special weekend breakfast, let the snowflakes land on servings of hashed brown potatoes, bacon or sausage.

Let's get crackin'...

**Snowflakes sunny-side up**  
2 large firm red bell peppers with contours  
Butter  
6 medium eggs  
Salt and pepper  
Grated parmesan cheese or crumbled feta

1. Slice peppers into six 1/3-inch-thick rounds, keeping the cut edges smooth and even. Remove seeds and core pieces.

2. Melt some butter on a flat skillet. Cook the pepper slices on medium heat on one side for about 1 minute, then flip.

3. Carefully crack an egg into the center of each ring. Immediately press down on the ring with a spatula if egg white seeps through. Cook for about 5 minutes or until the yolks are firm. (Place a lid on the pan for the last minute, if you wish.)

4. Serve with salt and pepper, and cheese sprinkled on top. Makes 6 snowflakes.

TIP: For a springtime twist,

set a strip of cooked bacon upright under the pepper on the plate. Your winter snowflake instantly transforms into a blooming flower with a stem.

Find more recipes and family fun at [www.donnaerickson.com](http://www.donnaerickson.com). Write to Donna at [Info@donnaerickson.com](mailto:Info@donnaerickson.com) (c) 2021 Donna Erickson. Distributed by King Features Syndicate



## DWC February sunshine basket raffle

Tickets are now on sale for the Dudley Womans Club February sunshine basket raffle - check it out online.

This basket raffle is part of the Dudley Womans Club's ongoing effort to creatively raise money to support the annual scholarship program and many charitable undertakings during the absence of usual fundraisers due to COVID.

Tickets are \$1 each, with a minimum purchase of \$10 when purchasing online. You may also buy tickets from one of the February meeting captains. Contact Nancy at 508-943-4850 to arrange that, or for assistance with your online purchase. Tickets will be sold through 3 p.m. Sunday, February 28, with the drawing at 7 p.m. that day. The winner will be announced on the Dudley Womans Club Facebook page and also notified by



phone. This sunshine basket includes a sunflower table runner, four decorative sunflower plates, a sunflower candle, wafer cookies, a hand-painted sunflower wine glass, and a bottle of wine. Not pictured but included is a framed photograph of the club's iconic

sunflower. Please feel free to share this link with your friends and family and buy your tickets here: <https://www.dudleywomansclub.org/sunshinebasketraffle>. Good luck and thanks in advance for your support. Watch for future monthly raffle announcements.

## February group art show

WEBSTER - "New Hope" - February Group Art Show and Sale featuring 16 local artists will be on display and for sale February 2-27, at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 East Main Street, Webster.



John Gaumond photo le coeur.

All works will be the artists' interpretation of "hope" and includes photography, acrylic, watercolor, collage and mixed media.

The show may be viewed during regular business hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10-5. For more information call 508-949-6232 or email [deb@bookloversgourmet.com](mailto:deb@bookloversgourmet.com)



A. Tisdell Arctic Polar Bear with Cubs watercolor.

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- 2 LBS. HAMBURG OR 2 LBS. STEW BEEF
- 1 LB. HOT DOGS OR 1 LB. BACON
- 2 LBS. NEW YORK SIRLOIN STEAK OR 3 LBS. HAM STEAKS
- 2 WHOLE OR CUT UP CHICKENS (AVG. WEIGHT 3 LB. EACH) OR 3 LBS. PORK CHOPS

### B - \$50.00

- 3 LBS. BONELESS CHICKEN BREAST OR 1 PKG. (1 1/2 LBS.) MARINATED CHICKEN BREAST
- 2 LBS. HAMBURG OR 3 LB. GROUND TURKEY
- 3 LBS. PORK CHOPS OR 2 LBS. HAM STEAKS
- 1 WHOLE OR CUT-UP CHICKEN (3 LBS.) OR 1 PKG. SAUSAGE OF YOUR CHOICE
- 1 LB. BACON OR STEW BEEF

### \$75.00



- 5 LBS. CHICKEN LEG QUARTERS OR 1 LB. BACON
- 3 LBS. HAMBURG OR 3 LBS. STEW BEEF
- 2 LBS. LONDON BROIL STEAKS OR 2 LBS. NEW YORK SIRLOIN STEAKS
- 3 LBS. BEEF POT ROAST OR 3 LBS. BONELESS PORK ROAST
- 3 LBS. BONELESS CHICKEN BREAST OR 1 PKG. (1 1/2 LBS.) MARINATED CHICKEN BREAST OF YOUR CHOICE
- 1 WHOLE CHICKEN (3 LBS. AVERAGE) OR 1 LB. SAUSAGE OF YOUR CHOICE

### \$100.00

- 5 LBS. BONELESS CHICKEN BREAST OR 3 LBS. BEEF POT ROAST
- 4 LBS. CHICKEN LEG QTRS. OR 1 LB. BACON
- 3 LBS. BONELESS PORK ROAST OR 2 LB. NEW YORK SIRLOIN STEAK
- 1 1/2 LBS. SIRLOIN TIPS OR 3 LBS. PORK CHOPS
- 3 LBS. HAMBURG OR 1 PKG. (1 1/2 LBS.) MARINATED SIRLOIN TIPS OF YOUR CHOICE
- 2 WHOLE OR CUT-UP CHICKENS (6 LBS. TOTAL) OR 1 PKG. (1 1/2 LBS.) COOKED CHICKEN WINGS OF YOUR CHOICE
- 1 LB. SAUSAGE OF YOUR CHOICE OR 1 LB. HOT DOGS
- 1 ROASTING CHICKEN (6-8 LBS.) OR 2 LBS. STEW BEEF



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Sat. 9am-4pm



## DWC January meeting – a healthy lifestyle

The Dudley Womans Club held its January meeting at KBC in Webster on January 14. Bonnie from JOYasanAH shared her Yoga strategies for developing and sticking to a healthy lifestyle. Looks like everyone enjoyed the workout. Many thanks to Bonnie for showing us the way.



## DWC's January Giving Project a huge success



At the Dudley Woman Club's Zoomed January meeting, for the giving project "Walk in Their Soles" we collected 871 pairs of socks for an estimated value of \$900. These were collected throughout January and donated to the folks under the care of the Webster-Dudley Food Share and the Dudley veterans agent. The photos were taken at Empire Travel, West Main St., Dudley where the socks were dropped off. The DWC would like to publicly thank member Mary Anne Fontaine for offering her business as that drop off location.  
*Nancy Vajcovec*

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## Zoom boating safety courses offered

Local United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Tri-State Flotilla, Massachusetts will be instructing four upcoming boating safety classes through the Zoom video conference platform, due to COVID-19

restrictions. Registration is managed through the Milford Community School Use Program, Adult-Boating, at <http://mcs.milford.ma.us> or (508) 478-1119 at least 6 days prior; keeping in mind that

availability is limited and you will receive course materials prior, covered by the registration fee. Participants under the age of 16 must be accompanied online by a registered parent/guardian. For additional USCGAux. information: [phil.uscgaux@verizon.net](mailto:phil.uscgaux@verizon.net) or (508) 478-3778.

can also take the "Challenge Exam" for the RI Boater Education Card to operate motor vessels over 10 horse power, along with anyone, any age, from any state, wanting to operate a PWC on RI waters. It will also cover the requirements to operate a vessel in most other states & many countries where boating safety education is mandatory. Several of the boating insurance companies offer a discount on premiums for successful completion of this course. The Zoom ABS class is limited to 20 students.

**About Boating Safely \$45 Saturdays: March 27 and April 24, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.**  
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**Suddenly in Command \$5 Wednesdays: March 17 and April 14 7 - 10:30 p.m.**

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## Janet Malser Humanities Trust call for grant applications

The Janet Malser Humanities Trust is now accepting applications for the 2021 grant cycle. Ms. Malser set up the charitable Trust in order to support the arts and humanities, community service and conservation in the towns of Dudley, Oxford, and Webster.

The causes for which funding will be considered include: "the restoration and preservation of historic sites; the furtherance of art and music in the schools, both public and private; public concerts with an emphasis on classical music; the improvement and growth of public libraries; the support of church work aiding the indigent, homeless, aging citizens and needy children; beautification through planting and the preservation of park areas and cemeteries; the improvement of service and equipment at the Hubbard Regional Hospital [now Harrington Healthcare at Hubbard], and the environmental protection of Webster Lake."

Trustees make awards annually to verified tax-exempt organizations meeting the charitable purposes of the Trust. Prior recipients are eligible to apply so long as proper follow up status reports have been filed; otherwise they will not be considered.

Applications and additional instructions including filing final reports are available at [www.janetmalsertrust.org](http://www.janetmalsertrust.org). Because of COVID-19 concerns, the deadline has been extended and all applications must be postmarked by June 1.

## Dean's List at Norwich U

NORTHFIELD, Vt. - The following students from your readership area have been recognized on the Dean's list at Norwich University for the Fall 2020 semester:

Melina Liese Schilling, Douglas  
Wilson Robin Reich, Dudley  
Hannah Jane Mendez Rockwood, Webster

Full-time undergraduate students, who earned a semester grade point average of at least 3.40 and had no failures in the previous Fall or Spring semester are awarded Dean's List honors.

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# Student nurses use art to heal through the COVID-19 pandemic

As the number of new infections with the new COVID-19 variants and hospitalizations continue to rise, frontline workers and healthcare workers across the globe are being pushed to a further breaking point. While coping with the stress and anxiety of working during the pandemic is a struggle, the struggle is also real for nursing students who are just getting their first-hand experience and barely getting their feet wet.

**Brianna Cloutier of Charlton** - A practical nursing student at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, Brianna Cloutier is experienced in healthcare. Her resume boasts of previously working as a Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (Reliant Medical Group General Vascular Surgery), Developmental Specialist (Venture Community Specialist), and as a Certified Nursing Assistant (Beaumont Rehabilitation and Skilled Nursing). Since starting her nursing journey she has been learning about COVID 19, preventing the spread, and staying safe and healthy. She completed the COVID-19 Contact Tracing through Coursera at the Johns Hopkins University. Working on term two courses, which includes the challenging medical-surgical nursing, she has been channeling her experiences on the front line into the magic of scrapbooking and crafts. She is also actively participating in projects such as the diversity and inclusion for PN Class of 2021 having been picked as the liaison for Walmart's giving grant. She recently completed two days of clinical observation at the Wound Clinic and is in awe at the nurses involved with hyperbaric wound therapy.

**Cayla Jill Bueno of Quezon City, Philippines** - Thousands of miles away, Cayla Jill Bueno is going through a similar situation. As a first-year nursing student at the Far Eastern University Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation, Cayla Jill Bueno has seen her share of pain and suffering but mainly through the news and social media. When hospitals were running out of capacity

and healthcare workers were running out of personal protective equipment, Bueno felt helpless. Across the globe she witnessed her grandmother, Estrella Ramos in New York make fabric masks for the community, Bueno was inspired. Her grandmother's act of kindness impacted her. Her aunts and uncles in the healthcare field working in the frontlines in Boston, New York, New Jersey, Texas, and California as nurses, physical therapist, activities assistant, dialysis technicians, and even caregivers. Closer to home her first cousin, a Filipino-Japanese is also a nurse at Hiratsuka, Kanagawa, Japan.

That is why she started using her digital art skills to channel her emotions during the ongoing crisis. Bueno creates anime fan art stickers. Her website is called creativejuice\_on Shopee. To date she has 92 followers who imagine while Bueno draws. Her site boasts of 15 products. She has an ongoing sticker project commissioned for the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy students in Charlton.

**Isabella Boateng of Manchester, CT** - Isabella Boateng is a practical nursing student at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy. As a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) she spends her days caring for her patients and maintaining their safety from COVID-19 and its complications. Working at All Ways There Home Care, which is at Vernon, CT she has been channeling her experiences on the front line into the culi-

## Hannah Harwood Fund scholarship

OXFORD - The Oxford Board of Selectmen announced the availability of Hannah Harwood Fund scholarship applications. The scholarship has provided aid to Oxford students pursuing degrees in medicine and allied health fields for many years. The fund was established through the 1902 will of Charles Harwood in memory of his late mother, Hannah.

Oxford residents may come to the customer service window at the rear of the town hall, 325 Main Street, at the top of the entrance ramp Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. to receive application materials. Applications are also available at [www.oxford.ma.us/board-selectmen](http://www.oxford.ma.us/board-selectmen). Completed applications are due in the selectmen's office April 1 by 4:30p.m.

The board will select the recipient of the scholarship. To qualify the student must be a resident of Oxford and entering their undergraduate freshman year enrolled in the field of medicine or allied health. Economic need and grade point average or class rank will be considered in the decision.



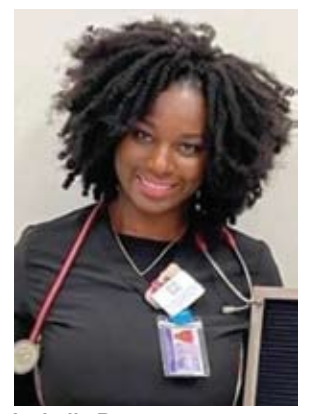
**Brianna Cloutier**



**Brianna Laforest**



**Cayla Jill Bueno**



**Isabella Boateng**

nary arts. She proudly states that her medium is cooking.

Her dishes have brought love, hope and faith to her family and close friends. As one of the student representatives for the PN Class of 2021, she helps spread the message for prevention: mask, physical distancing, and handwashing. As a UNICEF Club officer, she helps plan and hold food related fundraising activities to support projects for children's advocacy. Boateng has been called an "angel on earth" by a former patient. For her, honoring her heritage with the dishes she cooks and being at the bedside, caring for her patients is sacred.

**Brianna Laforest of Webster** - Creating art is a way for healthcare providers to remember and capture their experiences on the front line. Being creative and making art helps Brianna Laforest cope. She does so one flower at a time by making gorgeous flower arrangements and spreading cheer along the

way. Blooms have always had uplifting effects. The pandemic, chronic stress, and depression can contribute to negative health outcomes such as poor cardiovascular health. Laforest has young children and she hopes they can look back and say their mom worked during the pandemic and she did a great job. Work is exciting for Laforest as the nursing administrative coordinator at UMass Memorial Medical Center. As a practical nursing student, she reports to Harrington Hospital for her medical-surgical nursing rotation. She maintains a busy household, a challenging job, and a full plate as a practical nursing student. She can manage it all. Future generations can look back and learn more about how she balanced it all and what it was like to live through the pandemic.

Evidence shows that art can help ease stress and anxiety. Taking part in creative activities can help alleviate the burden of chronic diseases. It is also noted that creative activities help individuals express emotions and experiences

that are too difficult to put into words, such as experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These student nurses are on track to be LPNs and RNs upon graduation, albeit they are already healthcare heroes officially.

## Full Snow Moon Walk

A newly created non-profit organization, Local 4 Life, is holding a Full Snow Moon Walk at Walnut Lane Farm, 39 Koebke Road, Dudley, on Saturday, February 27. Participants will discover what happens on a farm during the winter months and will also learn about the Snow Moon and the winter night sky.

Registration is limited to 25 attendees and pre-registration is required.

The guided walk will begin at 6:30 p.m. and again at 7:30 p.m. All safety protocols will be observed.

The event is hosted by Local 4 Life and is sponsored by Webster Five.

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# The “French River Rivalry” - short lived but with everlasting memories

Final chapter

By Rusty Oleszewski

Last month we explored facets of the French River Rivalry between Bartlett and Shepherd Hill students after graduation. We also acknowledged the camaraderie which formed between the rivals as they became teammates for different teams or institutions.

I have been away from the local area since 1995 but have visited many times in the 25 years since.

Now as an outsider, but someone who previously lived in Dudley or Charlton for 36 years, I see those two towns have not developed

the social or commercial relationship that Dudley and Webster had, or in many cases, still has.

It seems, perhaps only to me, that Dudley and Charlton are partners in a school system but not much more. In the 50 years or so since the Webster and Dudley school systems split, let us imagine how those officials responsible for making that decision might feel now.

Certainly, Dudley’s farmland image has changed considerably with their population growth. So much growth that the town now has TWO stop light intersections. I used

to joke when I was away at college that to find my house “you just turned right at the light!”

The latest figures I have found show a student population of 1217 for grades 9-12 at Shepherd Hill. In comparison, Bartlett High School has 443 students in grades 9-12.

If you recall, when the Webster School Committee decided to dismiss Dudley students from Bartlett, the high school was overcrowded, with upwards of 1000 students roaming the halls during the 1960s.

The Dudley-Charlton school district has a total enrollment of over 4200 students compared to the Webster school district which totals near 1850 students. Webster still has two parochial schools through grade 8 whose students may or may not continue their high school years at Bartlett. But do these numbers mean that Dudley has fared better than Webster?

From a fiscal view, the added tax dollars from a housing boom has benefitted the Dudley-Charlton district along with the contributions of continued regionalization. Webster has built a new high school and junior high school, expanded and remodeled the former Park Ave. Intermediate school. Webster is also home to that lake with the long Indian name, and yes, I can still pronounce it correctly even today. The lake seems more popular than ever as many original summer camp homes have become million-dollar investments.

To yours truly Webster still has that tight knit, neighborhood community look and feel to it. I know the Main St. area has had its problems in recent times attracting commercial clients but a new library and police station seem to be helping spur new activity.

The neighborhood pubs may not be as abundant as in the 20th century but just across the street from Memorial Athletic Field in Webster, the **Polish-American Veterans Club**, commonly referred to as the **PAV**, is still a gathering spot for local sports enthusiasts. Just as old tales of baseball games between the Brooklyn Dodgers and Giants or football games pitting the Baltimore Colts against the New York Giants are rehashed, the battles between Bartlett and Shepherd Hill during their heyday are etched in time.

Names like **Jarosz, Kunkel, Bazinet, Bartolomei, Lindstrom, Daskowski, Miglionico, Stearns** etc. left their mark on this rivalry. During a stretch in the 1990s the schools played each other twice during the football season. Both schools benefitted from the packed grandstands. Unfortunately the respective coaches had to plea with their athletic directors to end the double meetings because the games were taking a toll on the players. They were such emotional and physical battles.

Throughout this look-back at the French River Rivalry, the majority of my focus has been on the football

and basketball programs of the neighboring schools. I wish to make mention of the many other athletes competing in sports such as soccer, field hockey, softball, cross-country, track, golf and cheerleading who also created their own memories of epic wins or losses.

I previously mentioned in an earlier chapter several coaches from both schools but I would also like to tip my hat to not only coaches at the high school level, but also, the junior high and intermediate levels and all the volunteer youth coaches. It is a huge commitment that these men and women make to teach our young athletes not only how to compete in their respective sports, but more importantly, how to do it the proper way. Sportsmanship and respect for an opponent are never misplaced by these two schools. I am proud to have been a part of helping to build from the ground up programs at a new school. Conversely, I cannot help but wonder how cool it would have been for many of us Dudley kids to have been part of the green and white tradition already in place at Bartlett High School.



Rusty Oleszewski

In closing, I want to thank The Yankee Express and Peter Coyle for giving me the opportunity to relive and learn about some of the most formative years of my life. As we grow old, we take comfort in some of the simpler things during what has been a very disruptive, stressful and bewildering year.

Let us pray that 2021 brings a safe and effective vaccine to citizens of the United States so that life as we remember it can slowly return and local athletes can return to playing the games that they love. Stay safe and always try to do the right thing. *The Yankee Xpress note: our sincere thanks to you, Rusty, for your contribution of the French River Rivalry. Your walk down memory lane has been enjoyed by those of us who remember it well.*



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## Dudley Cultural Council grant recipients

The Dudley Cultural Council is pleased to announce the following recipients of grants for Cycle 47, 2021:

**Jay Mankita**, “Chain Reactions @ Home From Household Materials, Tool, Toys, etc.” to be held online at the Pearle L. Crawford Library in spring/summer of 2021.

**Mark Chester**, Photographer; “The Bay State: A Multicultural Landscape” – Photographs of New Americans, April 1 thru 30 at the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library.

**Kirk Whipple** – “Duo Pianists” to be held on local cable access TV between March and December. Date to be determined.

**Dr. Jess “The Machine” Green**, “Chainsaws, Cheeseburgers and Rock n Roll”-Live at the Dudley Middle School. Date to be determined.

**Dudley Grange** – “Summer Musical Concert Series,” June 5, July 10, and August 7.

**Michelle Jervis** – “New Greenspace/Park” at 71 West Main Street, Dudley, construction to begin this year.

**Dudley Grange** - “Old Fiddlers of Rhode Island” October 2. “Hip Hop Dance Chair Exercise for Seniors” to be held at the Dudley Senior Center. Date to be determined.

Please check your local news media for specific dates when they become available.

Council members include Ginni DiDonato, Chairperson; JoAnn Brinker, Treasurer; Mary Kunkel, Secretary; Marilyn Kramarz, Audrey Resener, Sheryl Bernardo, Patty Biron, members.

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February means the Clark Tournament for the local boys' qualifying basketball teams that include eligibles in the likes of Bartlett, Shepherd Hill, and Oxford. The popular Worcester tournament will likely submit to COVID 19 precautions and continue reset for 2022. Let's hope the millennials don't forget how historic and exciting this annual event really is and make it a top priority to qualify and compete during the winter vacation week during Presidents Week. The MIAA is on the move and tradition is not a consideration anymore.

This space has not heard that this pandemic time is any fun for those attempting to play basketball although the unanimous sentiment is "the kids are together and competing" although handicuffed by MIAA rule changes to the rules of basketball that hardly make any sense. You either go to war or you don't, meaning the MIAA is handicapping the rules of the sport in hopes that this invisible disease doesn't go into gymnasiums. You can't stop what you don't see. A lot of schools have opted out of playing because of the pandemic. Wait until you see "fall 2" starting up February 22 to April 25 for football and indoor track. The rules and constraints put in by the MIAA in basketball have schools opting into the geographical pod model which is like playing in a straight jacket. Anyone who is refereeing or officiating these contests should receive immunity for any bad calls in the future. Officials and referees today are like traffic cops at Kelley Square in Worcester during rush hour. Way too many moving parts and the biggest enemy is COVID-19 which is invisible. Go figure. The bottom line this winter is some schools opted in and some school opted out to play basketball. COVID-19 is the enemy and it is invisible and causes death. Unless the MIAA restricted playing rules are 100% guaranteed not to spread the invisible COVID, then please wait until a vaccine is distributed as a safety measure and the COVID cases can be related to a safe environment. Are high schools

**Standing room only – no more bleachers at Memorial Athletic Field**

really going to attempt to play football in February? We will find out soon.

Taking a recent tour of Ray Street in Webster brings an eye catching major change in the landscaping at upper Memorial Athletic Field. No, second base hasn't moved since 1983 and remains in its usual place. But, both grandstands or bleachers on each side of the football field have been taken down because of safety issues. The safety project affects both the football and baseball situations. Officials have indicated that only a 200-seat maximum seating capacity set of portable seats will be put on the home side of the football field while the visitors side of the football field will be left vacant to sideline standing for fans. It will be standing-room-only on the visiting sidelines and both end zones. Visitors can sit on the home side if they wish. The school bands are going to have to find their own way to be comfortable at games. While the football grandstands or bleachers decision are just the sign of the times we are in, the baseball field just lost its personality by taking down the famed short porch in right field. The baseball field on Ray Street is an all time treasure in New England. One of the best high school venues ever. Its personality and layout make it as good as Fino Field in Milford and Tivnan Field at Lake Park in Worcester. Does anyone remember when Ray Street was a hotbed for learning how to compete and play all the sports of any season in the 50s, 60s, and 70s? When every kid settled his own differences in a world of playground pick-up games? Bloody noses and ripped pants were guarantees for the end of every day on Ray Street and we were better off for it. The lessons of LIFE on Ray Street became who we are today. Challenging yourself against older kids or more gifted talented kids were the best of times. The bloody noses and ripped pants measured where we were headed in life and we didn't even know it. Sadly to-

day Ray Street is home to the pigeons and that unused second base that sits so proudly in the middle of the baseball diamond waiting for some kid to slide into it one more time. Football and baseball will continue to be played at the Memorial Field in Webster under the watchful eyes of parents and officials and public address announcers and local cable TV. No more settling your own differences or bloody noses or ripped pants. No more limping home from Ray Street all alone thinking of going back to Ray Street tomorrow for another lesson in LIFE. Even the pigeons have nowhere to sit anymore. Well, there is still a reason to go to Ray Street, and that's the Samuel Slater Experience opening later this year.

Finally, Rusty Oleszewski's last excerpt on the French River Rivalry sadly ends in today's edition. Oleszewski captured everyone's imagination and soul over the last four months with his crystal clear remembrance of the Dudley students leaving Bartlett High School because of the local politicians and starting a bitter athletic environment between the two schools in 1974. A whole new world was made back in the early 70s and nobody knew that Shepherd Hill would become what it is today. Shepherd Hill grew by leaps and bounds over the last 50 years because of the real estate market in Dudley and Charlton. Shepherd Hill Regional High School became a thriving educational and athletic institution. Oleszewski gave us his perspective on how Shepherd Hill established itself over 50 years ago. Time has passed and the common denominator of all Bartlett-Shepherd Hill athletic events in the early times of 1974 to the mid-80s proved to be personal for each school, meaning it was a true rivalry in every sense. Both sides brought their emotions to the athletic events between the two schools and it is safe to say that you either wore green or maroon on your sleeve at all times. Unfortunately, there is no rivalry today as both schools



Memorial Athletic Field is now an open field with no bleachers for the fans.



dimmed the rivalry down to memories only and thankfully Oleszewski raised the great Bartlett-Shepherd Hill rivalry out of its grave and wrote about how both

schools handled their emotions during the French River Rivalry. Thank you Rusty on your outstanding insight about how it was and how it will never be again. You

suited up in the maroon and gold in three sports and went onto Amherst College and played football and baseball. Your loyalty will forever be appreciated.

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Tales from beyond

# The Ghosts of Pachaug State Forest

By Thomas D'Agostino

The ghosts of Pachaug are well documented and have attracted the curious and paranormal enthusiasts for years.

As the shadows grow long and darkness envelopes the terrain around Pachaug State Forest in Voluntown, Connecticut, unearthly shrieks permeate the wooded domain. They are the shrieks of an Indian girl who was killed by British soldiers over three centuries ago. The once flourishing village that is now deserted thicket is host to several creepy entities from colonial soldiers to the wraith of a little girl. There is even a black misty figure that stalks those who hike the trails and roads of the forest.

The ghosts seem to fall neatly into the history of the region. Pachaug is Indian for "bend in the river." The Narragansett, Mohegan, and Pequot tribes inhabited the area. Towards the end of the 17th century, the colonists began to settle there and convinced the Mohegan tribe to rid the others from the land. After they had gained the help of the Mohegans in successfully removing the other two tribes, the colonists then turned and pushed them out as well.

Around 1700, a six-square-mile expanse of land was given to veterans of the Indian Wars. They named the new settlement Voluntown

due to the fact that they had been volunteer soldiers during the conflict. In 1721, they shortened the moniker to Voluntown. A community was quick to spring up along the fast flow of the Pachaug River. This tributary runs through the forest from Beach Pond to the Quinebaug River. Mills began to dot the river as early as 1711. Nearly every brook has some remnant of the many mill ruins in the forest preserve.

Like many other small New England farming and mill communities, progress and technology became their enemy and soon the small village of Pachaug was on the downward slide. By the Great Depression of the early 20th century, the village was nothing but overgrown roads and crumbling homes. The mills, long dormant had also fallen into disrepair and were soon consumed by the ravages of time and nature. All that remained among the forest were the ghosts that still hold their vigil to this day amid the ruins of what was once their home.

There is a section of the forest called Hell Hollow along a road and pond of the same name. The name is not necessarily derived from the demonic forces that thrive in the area. The settlers named many parts of Connecticut with prefixes like "devil" or "demon," as the area gave them the feeling that there

were supernatural forces at work. In the case of Hell Hollow, the land was rocky and poor. Farming was brutal and the area was prone to flooding. Such names have carried on through history. If they are haunted at present, it only adds to the mystery of the locale. A rock formation known as "Devil's Den" can be seen northeast of Hell Hollow Pond, on the southwest side of Flat Rock Road along the Quinebaug Trail. This may not be of ghostly significance but tends to reiterate the fact that the settlers were probably a bit superstitious.

Visitors to this patch of the forest have witnessed a dark entity that rushes out of the woods directly in front of them. The strange mist is reported to be about fifteen feet long and hovers a few feet off of the ground as it makes its way across the road. Hikers and hunters alike have given testimony to the strange fiend that lurks in the dark bowers of the forest. Many also get a fearful feeling of being watched while traversing the trails of the Hell Hollow section of the forest.

Another haunting in the Hell Hollow area is that of an Indian girl. In the late 1600s, an Indian woman was slain by English soldiers near the present Hell Hollow Road. Since then her vengeful screams of murder and brutality have saturated the air in a tormenting aria that eerily replays over and over. The screams send even the bravest hunter on his heels for more hallowed ground. The local hunters will not venture far into that area according to the few I have talked to. They wished to remain anonymous for fear of ridicule but as one said, "When you hear that piercing scream come out of the woods, no one cares what

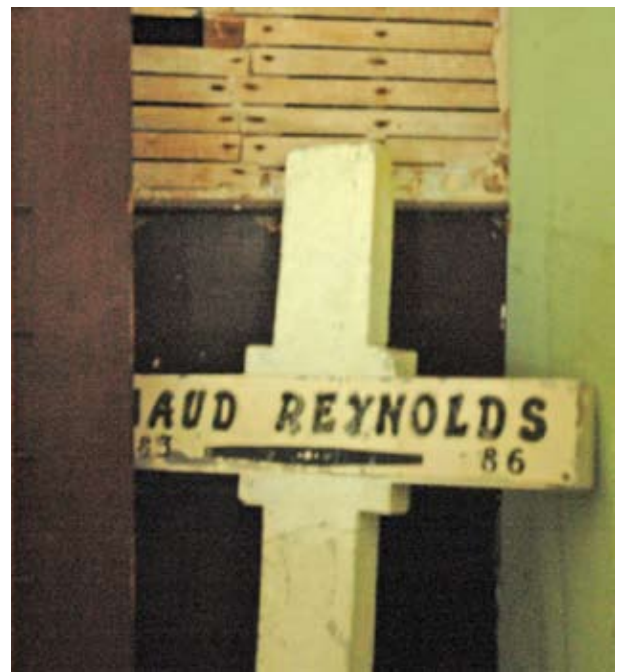
anyone might think. Your hair stands up on the back of your neck and you are out of there!"

The ghost of a colonial soldier still makes his rounds at a section along Breakneck Hill Road. Locals have encountered the vigilant spirit many times over the years as it marches back and forth along the side of the road. Some have actually almost hit the wraith as it crosses the road, still on eternal duty.

Author David Trifilo encountered the ghostly soldier once while traveling along the thoroughfare. He wrote of his experience in his book entitled, "The Hauntings of Pachaug Forest." The author was rounding a sharp bend of the road when he encountered a threadbare colonial soldier carrying a long musket over his shoulder. The entity marched into the road directly in front of Trifilo. When he hit the brakes, the ghost vanished into the void. The sightings of the soldier have been frequent over the years. Paranormal investigator and writer Lauren Neslussen has heard of others who have been startled by the ghostly guard as it crossed the road in front of them. Motorists have actually driven through the specter. Some have stopped for a moment to reflect on what they had just encountered while others do not stick around for a second meeting.

The ghost of this soldier has been witnessed for centuries. The first sighting recorded goes as far back as 1742. The description is the same as the present day witnesses accounts. The spirit is dressed in a tattered uniform holding a long musket slung over the right shoulder. He marches silent and dusty along the bend in the road, sometimes crossing as if looking for something on the other side. The date of the first sighting definitely places him well before the American Revolution. Perhaps he is a remnant of King Philip's War (1675 to 1676) or Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), which was the second inter-colonial war between France and England. Some claim he is from the French and Indian War, yet that conflict took place from 1754 to 1763, several years after the initial sighting of Pachaug's sentinel ghost.

Another spot of spectral relevance is an area of the forest called Maud's Grave. The original site of her burial was on a rise next to the remains of the Reynolds home at the Sterling/Voluntown border.



Maud Reynolds' grave marker.



Breakneck Hill Road where soldier's ghost is seen.



Hell Hollow Road.

Maud was the daughter of Gilbert and Lucy Reynolds. She died just before her third birthday after choking on an apple from complications due to diphtheria. The parents found her on the morning of October 12, 1886 with the apple by her side. They preserved the apple in alcohol because it had the impressions of her baby teeth in it.

She was the third child of the Reynolds to die within a few years, but she was not buried in the family cemetery. Mrs. Reynolds was so taken aback by the death of her daughter, that she buried her close to the home where she could see the cross that marked the grave. It is in this spot that

her ghost is seen, perhaps trying to find her family or wondering why she is not at rest with her brothers. No one has an answer, as she has never spoken. Even after she was laid to rest in the family plot, her ghost has continued to wander the grounds which were once her home.

In 1965, a relative moved the remains of Maud to the family burying ground on the top of Bare Hill. A cross was fashioned from bricks over her grave and her original marker was taken to the church the family once attended and put in a closet. It remains there to this day as a reminder of one of Hell Hollow's most famous ghosts.

## 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.

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**Q.** I have been watching the car auctions on television and all the cars look great. Would you ever buy a car from an online auction? I really would like a mid-60s pickup truck and many cross the auctions. I recently saw an auction of an entire museum out of Florida and the cars and trucks looked outstanding.

**A.** People buy vehicles at online auctions all the time and as long as you have an idea what you are getting and where it is coming from, I think you are generally not taking too much of a chance. I understand the idea of an antique pickup truck especially from the 1960s that is old enough to be fun, but useful enough to go to the home improvement store. I think the auction you may have seen was the Muscle Car Auction out of Florida. I visited that museum in Punta Gorda and the vehicles were, in many cases, nearly perfect. That being said they were set up for a museum environment and I'm sure at the least the fuel system, cooling system and brake systems would need refreshing.

**Q.** I own a 2018 Mercedes Benz and recently I noticed the highway exit numbers have changed. My question is, would the update to the factory GPS be covered under my warranty?

**A.** Yes, exit numbers will be changing as to comply with a 2009 mandate from the Federal Highway Administration for all states to have exit numbers match mile markers. This method will allow motorists to know the distance between exits or the miles to a destination. In addition, it should be easier to locate motorists if they break down. The old numbers are required to be posted for two years after the exit number has been updated. Since the navigation system is operating as it was designed

it would not be covered under the warranty. I recently evaluated a 2021 Mercedes Benz GLC and the navigation system in this brand-new vehicle had the old exit numbers. At this point all you can do is contact Mercedes Benz customer care and ask about an upgrade to the software.

**Q.** I have 2010 Mazda 3 and the rear shock mount broke. My question is, should I replace both rear mounts? The car has fairly low miles for its age and I do plan on keeping it for a while.

**A.** The mount is actually part of the rear shock, so in this case since the car is 11 years old, replacing both shocks would be money well spent. At the same time, it would be a good idea to give the car a thorough undercarriage inspection just to make sure there are no structural issues that you need to be concerned about.

**Q.** I was going through the garage at my dad's house and found a case of 20W-50 Castrol oil. The case was never opened and the cans (yes cans and even a spout) are in good shape. I remember this was the oil that we used in all of our vehicles when I was a kid. We even used it in my motorcycle. My question is, can I still use this oil?

**A.** I get this question periodically. The oil you have is at least 30 or more years old. Today's engines require more sophisticated oil with specific additives. You are better off trying to sell or trade the oil to an oil can collector. I looked on eBay and Castrol GTX 20W-50 oil had starting bids of \$8 or more per can, if you can get close to that per can, you can pay for the proper oil (and even upgrade to synthetic oil) for your newer vehicles.

**Q.** I have a Jeep and the battery was going dead. I found that for whatever reason the radio was staying on. I looked at wiring and plugs and finally just unplugged the radio. With COVID I don't drive much, but driving without a radio, especially in a Jeep is painful, any ideas?

**A.** Depending on the age, some 2002-2008 Jeeps were prone to an internal shorting of the ignition switch. When this happens even with the key off, power is still supplied to some accessory circuits. Testing the connections from the ignition switch should confirm the problem.



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## Tips on financial planning



**Dennis Antonopoulos**

Now that we're a few weeks removed from 2020, it's a good time to reflect on such a momentous year. We can think about developments in the social and political spheres, but we also learned – or perhaps re-learned – some valuable lessons about investing.

Here are four of them: A long-term perspective is es-

# What can investors learn from 2020?

sential. Volatility in the financial markets is nothing new, but, even so, 2020 was one for the books. Of course, the COVID-19 outbreak was the driving force behind most of the wild price swings. Soon after the pandemic's effects were first felt, the S&P 500, a common index of U.S. large-cap stocks, fell 34% but gained 67% by the end of the year. Consequently, investors who stuck with their investment portfolios and kept their eyes on their long-term goals, rather than on shocking headlines, ended up doing well. And while 2020 was obviously an unusual year, the long-term approach will always be valuable to investors.

Investment opportunities are always available. The pandemic drove down the prices of many stocks – but it didn't necessarily harm the long-term fundamentals of these companies. In other words, they may still have had strong management, still produced desirable products and services, and still had good prospects for growth. In short, they may still have been good investment opportunities – and when their prices were depressed, they may also have been "bargains" for smart investors. And this is the case with virtually any market downturn – some high-quality stocks will be available at favorable prices.

Diversification pays off. Bond prices often move in a different direction from stocks. So, during a period of volatility when stock prices are falling, such as we saw in the weeks after the pandemic hit in March, the presence of bonds in your portfolio can lessen the impact of the downturn and stabilize your overall returns. And this, in essence, is the value of maintaining a balanced and diversified portfolio. (Keep in mind, though, that diversification can't guarantee profits or prevent all losses.)

The market looks ahead. The pandemic-driven market plunge may have been stunning, but it made a kind of intrinsic sense – after all, the sudden arrival

of a pandemic that threatened lives, closed businesses and cost millions of jobs doesn't sound like a positive event for the financial markets. But the strong rally that followed the initial drop and continued into 2021 has surprised many people. After all, the pandemic's effects were felt throughout the rest of 2020, and are still being felt now, so why did stock prices rise? The answer is pretty straightforward: The financial markets always look ahead, not behind. And for a variety of reasons – including widespread vaccinations, anticipated economic stimulus measures from Congress and the Biden administration, and the Federal Reserve's continued steps to keep interest

rates low – the markets are anticipating much stronger economic growth, possibly starting in the second half of 2021.

All of us are probably glad to have 2020 behind us. Yet, the year taught us some investment lessons that we can put to work in 2021 – and beyond.

*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 SPIC*

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**RE: Real Estate**



**Mark Marzeotti**

# The Proposed Down Payment Homebuyer Tax Credit

Additional help could be on the way for first-time homebuyers. The new Washington administration proposed a Down Payment Homebuyer Tax Credit, which could be significant in aiding potential first-time homebuyers. For starters, the credit could be used to cover all or a considerable share of a buyer's down payment. With home prices rising ever higher, any down payment assistance is welcomed when a family is looking to buy.

For years, minority and millennial homebuyers have struggled unsuccessful

fully to save enough for a down payment. High student loan payments along with ever-increasing child-care costs and other urgent needs have made the goal of buying that first home far-fetched for too many Americans. Add to that the financial hardships brought upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit many American families, minorities and lower-wage workers particularly hard. These demographics especially would immediately benefit from this proposal. Down payment assistance – in this case, up to \$15,000 – could make all the difference in helping hopeful buyers get a foot in the door. And making the credit advanceable would mean

buyers could access the funds upon closing rather than having to wait until next year when their tax return is filed and the refund arrives.

That said, policies to increase the supply of homes are equally important. As we take a look at the current housing market and mortgage data, we see an upward trend. For instance, existing-homes sales totaled 5.64 million in 2020 – their highest level since 2006, before the Great Recession – with mortgage rates at all-time lows. But while demand is high, supply is registering at a 50-year low. This means home prices will continue to soar unless more residential units can be created. So, tax and other incentives that increase supply are equally important in order to keep home prices affordable. Many Realtor groups continue to advocate for the building of more affordable housing because, in addition to increasing the housing supply, it will provide a boom for our struggling economy.

The Marzeotti Group Realty is proud to share the

news about efforts that encourage policies and ideas that level the playing field and help all our neighbors achieve the American dream of homeownership.



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Landlords are faced with more challenges today than ever before. Whether you own and/or manage one rental unit or 100, the benefits of belonging to an organization such as ours are invaluable. Visit SWCLA.ORG and call any of the directors listed about becoming a member.



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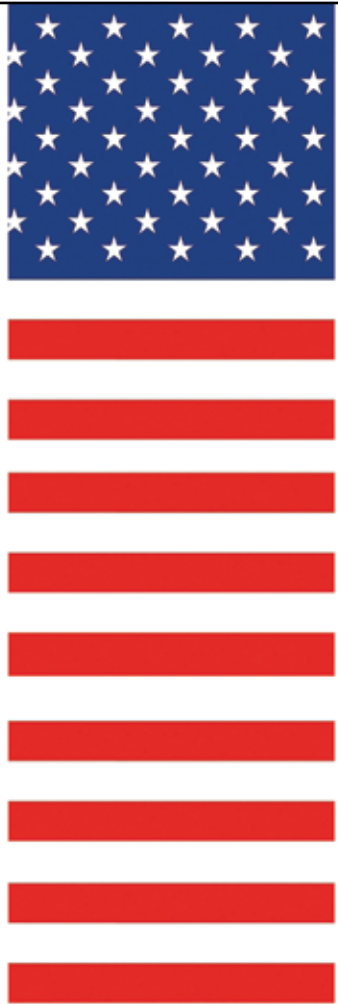
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