

# BLACKSTONE VALLEY Xpress

CROSSTOWN ADS AND BUSINESS NEWS

April 9-May 14, 2021

INSIDE

## Blackstone Valley Education Hub prepares area students and businesses for success

By Christine Galeone

Abraham Lincoln once said, "I will prepare, and someday my chance will come." Considered by many people to be the greatest American President to date, he was true to his word. It's also clear that the wisdom within his famous quote is just as applicable today as it was in the 19th Century. Being prepared will always be a key to success.

The Blackstone Valley Education Hub is well aware of that fact. The Northbridge-based nonprofit was founded in 2018 as the "non-profit and business development arm" of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce. Since then, it has been providing training and educational courses and workshops to local public school students and others. But it goes one step farther. It also connects students to employment opportunities available from local businesses. And despite the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has created, the nonprofit continues to grow.

Through its training courses and workshops, the Blackstone Valley Education Hub enables its students to gain skills, credentials and certifications in the growing field of Advanced Manufacturing. Its lab contains the latest generation of industry equipment, including 3D printers, augmented reality welders, universal collaborative robots and high-end Roland and FARO machines. It also has computers with the most recent versions of AutoCAD, MasterCAM and Solidworks, in addition to Microsoft and Adobe applications. The lab equipment gives students the hands-on experience needed to be prepared to enter a career in Advanced Manufacturing.

The hub's goal is to "meet the workforce needs of our region by enhancing educational opportunities for all ages." Since it began, the nonprofit has trained students from Blackstone Valley public high schools, Grafton Job Corps

participants and people being released from the Worcester County House of Corrections. It also provided fun and educational hands-on design STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) workshops to middle school students from Northbridge, Uxbridge and Blackstone during Massachusetts STEM Week.

And it has continued to thrive despite challenges. Karen Ares, Executive Director of the nonprofit, said that in addition to having to delay programs because of grant funding on hold due to a delay in the state budget process, it has been frustrating to receive calls from businesses that want to hire students who have completed training at the hub. "Although we were able to successfully pivot to remote learning with our students, there have been delays getting them back to hands-on instruction due to COVID restrictions this winter," she said. "We



Karen Ares, Executive Director of the Blackstone Valley Education Hub

are so happy to have two, small in-person classes running now. They started two weeks ago, and it's great to see students back to learning in our facility."

Ares, who said that people who want to help the nonprofit during the pandemic can do so by mailing a donation to her at the hub's Whitinsville address, is also happy about the hub's new partnership with ed2go, in order to offer several online classes. "These range from

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## Hey neighbor, our website is your website

The Blackstone Valley Xpress is excited to announce the re-launch of its website [www.theyankeexpress.com](http://www.theyankeexpress.com). It has a bright and streamlined new look. Our goal is to create a site that's about you, your neighborhood, your businesses, your community resources, your town's news, one stop - the voice of your community.

Online, you will be able to access the entire newspaper and features to empower you to become an active member of the community. Post events and what's happening around town directly to our community announcement page. Easily share to your social media. Don't forget to "like" us on

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## EDUCATION HUB

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short, fundamental courses to learn or enhance skills to in-depth, year-long advanced career training with credentials," Ares said. "Anyone can take these classes!"

That partnership is an important step towards her hopes for the future of the education hub. She said that she wants it to become a resource for the entire community. "I was talking with someone the other day who said, 'what a great resource you are for our communi-

ty,' she hit the nail on the head!" Ares said, noting that the nonprofit is willing to collaborate on learning opportunities. "Word has started to spread about who we are and what we do. We look forward to being a go-to resource for students, adult learners,

businesses and their employees."

More information about the nonprofit is available on the Blackstone Valley Education Hub website, www.bv-edhub.org. Its address is 670 Linwood Ave., Suite 5, Whitinsville, MA 01588.

If you would like to suggest a Blackstone Valley nonprofit or initiative for this series, please contact Christine at [cmgaleone15@gmail.com](mailto:cmgaleone15@gmail.com).



Blackstone Valley Education Hub inside The Linwood Mill.



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## WEBSITE

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# Rockdale Rug / Curtain Factory Outlet thrive on good old-fashioned customer service

By Janet Stoica

When's the last time you were greeted by name upon entering a retail store? That happens with customers of the Rockdale Rug & Braid Outlet and The Curtain Factory Outlet in the Rockdale section of Northbridge.

You'll be greeted by the most customer-friendly and service-oriented staffs in the area. These two complementary outlets are a true throwback to the days when a smile and great customer service ruled the retail trade.

Ten years ago, sisters Cindy Johnson and Patty Cloutier learned that The Curtain Factory Outlet was about to close its doors.

Patty already ran a successful business in the same building, Bay State Floor Company. She and Cindy had been in retail for most of their working lives and they felt that the well-known curtain outlet would be a natural progression and extension of the soft goods business. The sisters realized that local jobs could be saved as well.

In 1974, when the curtain factory first opened on the ground floor, all its curtains were handmade in the factory above the retail store. Times changed, the factory closed, and the product line was sourced elsewhere.

In 2011, with the impending demise of the well-known New England fixture, Patty Cloutier and Cindy Johnson saw the future and ran with it. Cindy also bought half of Patty's flooring business and opened Rockdale Rug & Braid Outlet.

Cindy knows her inventory and her customers. "Our customers have been indoors for a long time," she said. "They've spent many hours checking out their current furnishings and have decided it's time for some serious refreshing."

Braided rugs are the best

sellers here. "We purchase the majority of our rugs from a family-run company in Rhode Island. Our jute rugs are made in India in the style our customers want. They are low pile and thin which makes them less of a tripping hazard and their weave is tight so pets cannot pull up threads very easily," said Cindy. She also noted that some of their newer indoor/outdoor rectangular rugs are made from recycled water bottles, making them easy to clean by hosing them down outdoors. Very eco-friendly!

Braided rugs have always been popular in New England. They are fashionable and versatile and come in a variety of shapes and sizes. The rectangle shapes must be seen to be truly appreciated. Sizes for the braided rugs run from 2' x 3' up to 10' x 13'. Shapes include ovals, rounds, runners, and rectangles. The jute fiber rugs' sizes include 20' x 30' to 8' x 10'. Braided rug fiber choices vary from wool to nylon to polypropylene with looks that include traditional, transitional, and modern. Stair runners are available in any length and can be matched to area rugs for complete re-decorating harmony.

Oriental rugs are also part of their inventory. Many other products to complete a stylish makeover can be seen here, as well such as fascinating plug-in canvas wall art depicting cozy homes with their evening windows lit and even antique trucks with their headlights aglow sitting quietly in a barn's front yard.

"There's a little bit of everything for everybody's taste," says Cindy. "We have little rugs and mats for pet owners with the cutest of sayings on them, table rugs, braided trivets, night lights, and braided baskets. Faux animal-hide printed rugs are

popular right now; we have some very unusual designs. With Mother's Day coming up we've brought in some special towels and candles with beautiful designs and expressions.

"In these times where lots of companies have gone out of business, I'm so very thankful that we are doing as well as we are," she says. "We have a nice group of employees here who enjoy helping all our customers. And my husband, Alan, has just been great. He's done a lot of work here to make the store look as good as it does. I've driven out to elderly customer's homes, who can't get out, to make deliveries to them. It's just old-fashioned customer service. We want people to feel comfortable and happy that they're being helped."

Patty manages The Curtain Factory Outlet. "It's groups of ladies that I see here most often," she says. "It's like a family outing and we love to see them. They give each other decorating ideas and advice as they shop the aisles. With our on-line ordering we do sell all over New England and ship throughout the country." And, like her sister states, Patty is strongly focused on customer service. "We also emphasize that the majority of our products are made in the USA," says Patty, "and we proudly feature this in our advertising."

A large part of the store's business during COVID has been online. The Outlet specializes in custom window treatments: shades, vertical blinds, and wooden shutters. Their custom blinds are the Graber brand, and they will custom-fit to order. Patty recently measured for over 100 units of custom blinds for a newly-constructed building in Worcester. Estimates are always no-charge. In addition to curtain valanc-

es, tiers, and panels, the Outlet has shower curtains and draperies on display, along with a full range of hardware and custom accessories. There are over 450 displays of curtains in the store along with a craft department that includes country crafts, home décor, and floral arrangements.

They accept all major credit cards and have a generous return policy.

"Customer service is our Number One priority," says Patty.

With a large product selection, the shop draws customers from all of Worcester County and Rhode Island as well as from the Natick/Framingham area.

Rockdale Rug & Braid Outlet, The Curtain Factory Outlet are at 8-10 Sutton Street, Northbridge, Rockdale Rug phone: (508) 234-2882; Curtain Factory phone: (508) 234-2944. Hours: Wed-Sat 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. or by appointment.

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Patty Cloutier and Cindy Johnson.



Rockdale owner, Cindy Johnson, with staff: Kristi Secor and Sue Boudreau.



Curtain Factory Outlet owner, Patty Cloutier, with staff: Joan Nydam, Heather Dejordy, Kathy Oosterman, Penny Francisco, and Lynn Patton.

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# AHM brings story of armor, tanks, war and history to life

By Rod Lee

Proud as members of the Collings Foundation family are about the impressive array of tanks, armor and military apparatus that has been assembled at the American Heritage Museum in Stow, the real satisfaction for them comes in knowing the people and the history behind the exhibits and the stories of battles from the Revolutionary War to the present day.

Jacques M. Littlefield is one of those individuals whose name will be permanently associated with the American Heritage Museum.

As Hunter Chaney, who is director of marketing for the AHM, explained on March 24, while giving a visitor a guided tour of the more than 65,000-square-foot building, the Museum came into being only after the Collings Foundation was selected to receive "The Jacques M. Littlefield Collection" in 2013.

Mr. Littlefield, from the San Jose area of California, had "amassed the largest privately held collection of tanks and

military equipment" in existence, Mr. Chaney said. He died of pancreatic cancer in 2009. "In 2013, his foundation and family chose us to get the collection, which consisted of two hundred forty tanks and armored vehicles. Duplicates and extras were auctioned off. We received the rest. The proceeds from the sale went toward funding this museum."

The American Heritage Museum sits at the terminus of a long and winding road off Main St. (MA 62) on the Hudson/Stow town line, in a pastoral setting that seems incongruous with such displays as the "WWI Trench Experience," "Clash of Steel" and "War on Terror." Mr. Chaney said the museum began as "living history events, ice skating festivals, sleigh rides and classic car rallies" but is now "actually three museums" with a hangar and a classic car barn—and there is "a 2200-foot airstrip in back."

The Collings Foundation was started in 1979 by Bob and Caroline Collings, who still live

"on the other end of the property," Mr. Chaney said. Their son, Rob, is now executive director of the Foundation.

As the Collings family notes in a brochure, the AHM was designed "to fully engage people in understanding our turbulent past. In this remarkable place, American history will be explored, studied and, most of all, remembered. Through educational interpretation and a chronologically arranged series of dioramas and exhibits, the AHM brings the history of our veterans to life."

Unfortunately, Nathan Hall, driver of the M1A1 Abrams "White 2" tank in Iraq, is, like Mr. Littlefield, no longer with us. Mr. Hall died from a blood clot during his battle with leukemia on March 2. But before his passing Mr. Hall was able to see the restored M1A1 again, on the floor of the AHM—and to lend a poignant element to that moment.

The tank was on patrol near Falluja on August 3, 2006 when an IED blew up. Shrapnel damaged the tank



The display that greets visitors when they arrive at the American Heritage Museum in Stow.

and killed its highly respected commander, Sgt. George Ulloa Jr. The American Heritage Museum received the Abrams tank on a long-term loan from the Marine Corps Museum, tracked down the surviving crew and invited the crew and Sgt. Ulloa's widow Maria Ulloa to Stow, where a heart-wrenching video of their ordeal was recorded in front of the Abrams.

It was during this visit that Nathan Hall mentioned to Bob Collings that "something was missing." When he and his crew were assigned to the tank, he pointed out, he christened it with the name "SPAWN" on the barrel with colored pens. In a Facebook post announcing Nathan Hall's death, the AHM said Mr. Collings responded "you put it on the first time, there is no one more qualified to put it on again!"

Returning two weeks later with his wife and young daughter, Nathan stayed late into the

night and with Rob Collings looking on, he recreated the artwork with Sharpies.

Both Nathan and Nick Johns ("White 2" loader) came to the grand opening of the museum in May of 2019. "Nathan was so excited that he could not sleep," the AHM said on Facebook. "He told us the flight was delayed and he was crawling out of his skin just to get here...such a change from the tough Marine who was full of pain and tears on his first visit. Other veterans have told us of the therapeutic nature of the AHM, but it has never been so apparent to us as with Nathan. Unfortunately, that was the last visit Nathan had to the AHM as [his] health struggles started shortly after that."

Mr. Chaney said a memorial for Nathan Hall will be held in August "with family and crew" present.

Its activities curtailed by the pandemic, the American Heritage Museum is "chaf-

ing at the bit" to return to its regular programming, which involves a host of events for adults and children alike. Recently, for instance, the museum sponsored "the Ultimate WWII Tank Driving Experience," a sweepstakes fundraiser with the winner and a guest drawn on March 31. The prize: a chance to drive "the M24 Chaffee, M4 Sherman and ultra-rare M26 Pershing." The goal of the campaign was to raise \$100,000. "We're at \$97,000 and hoping to break \$100,000," Mr. Chaney said.

"Like all museums, the revenue faucet has shut off so this is a great way to raise money," he said.

A walkthrough of the museum is truly mesmerizing with film and sound effects provided by Boston Productions Inc. Theater 2, the WWI Trench Experience, for example, features sleeping quarters, bombs, vibrations, flashes, barbed wire, pickaxes and helmets. It is an interactive experience.

"This museum as a whole is unique on a global scale," Mr. Chaney said. "Some of the artifacts are all that are left in the world."

The American Heritage Museum is open Wednesday-Sunday. For more information, go to [AmericanHeritageMuseum.org](http://AmericanHeritageMuseum.org) or call 978-562-9182.

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



An overhead view of the floor of the American Heritage Museum. Exhibits light up as footage about them are shown.

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## Jack Walker marks 50 years in real estate—'a decent run'

By Rod Lee

Much has changed since Jack Walker opened his real estate business in Whitinsville on April 1, 1971.

He is older now, of course. His hair has thinned and is white as a bar of Ivory soap.

The town of Northbridge has grown. New housing tracts have sprung up including an over-55 currently under construction on a hill off Church St. A new high school came along. A new fire station is in the works.

Buildable land for residential is scarcer these days. Streets with new names—Eben Chamberlain Road, Eisenhower Drive, Jefferson Ave.—have appeared.

Property values are much higher than they were when Jack Walker started. "If you spent \$25,000 for a home in Whitinsville you were in the upper echelon and there were no developers to speak of," he says.

Today, the downtown Whitinsville commercial corridor is a shadow of the thriving sector he knew as a kid attending St. Pat's School in town (and then St. Mary's in Milford). In those days, he recalls, Whitin Machine Works

paid in cash "and people went downtown and paid their electric bill at Buffum's and their gas bill at Western Auto and there was a movie theater and a couple of Northbridge police officers would walk the street and if you had one too many they would drive you home.

"I can remember guys from Whitin Machine Works with baskets in their hands picking up trash. Heat for the Community Center went under the road from the factory to [the Gym].

"Back then, people didn't have charge accounts, in the 1950s."

Real estate "was easy," he says. "Today, you don't sign one paper, it's like this"—and he holds his hands widely apart.

The Whitin Machine Works influence was huge. "In those houses, if you needed kindling wood, they delivered it," Mr. Walker says.

So it goes; 2021 is a long way from 1971.

One of the constants amid the flux is Mr. Walker himself.

In a community with a population of 16,732 (2018 census), it would be hard to find a

more mercurial personality, someone "who talks fast and moves fast" as he puts it, who is so full of ebullience and energy, who has enjoyed such staying power in his profession, who so relishes the sheer joy of interacting with people, in this, Jack Walker's 50th-anniversary year as a realtor and appraiser.

He built his company the old-fashioned way, with hard work and a heavy reliance on his considerable conversational skills.

"I didn't have two nickels to rub together when I started out," he said on March 26th in the office he shares with long-time assistant Patty Palmer at 95 Church St.—the former "Dr. Roberts house," which directly abuts the smaller building he operated from before that.

He seems to have born with an abundance of infectious enthusiasm, a knack for engagement and a genuine interest in people he meets. These characteristics have not diminished one iota over time.

Neither has his approach to his work.

"I would go to the diner (Peg's, at 87 Church St.) for my coffee, and chit chat; then the post office, and chit chat; then Whitinsville Savings Bank, and chit chat," Mr. Walker said, over lunch at New England Steak & Seafood in Mendon the day before (March 25th). "All business was tied in" to that daily circuit—a routine that served him well in acquiring contacts, establishing lasting relationships and generating sales.

"I was it. There just wasn't a lot of competition."

Through his real estate business, his involvement with Rotary Club, Pine Grove Cemetery, the Whitinsville Social Library and the Northbridge Historical Society, he is a walking, talking authority on all things Northbridge.

At any given moment he is liable to drop names of family and friends dear to his heart, like the late Bob Alix, who worked for Mr. Walker for a while.

"He and I grew up in town, our dads both worked for Whitin Machine Works, Bob was a very good broker," Mr. Walker said. "He had his own pharmacy in Uxbridge, Spar-

tan Drug. He came to me and said 'I'd like to work for you part-time.' I jumped at the opportunity to hire him."

Mr. Walker was also quick to hire Patty Palmer (a White and a sister of Northbridge's current fire chief, Dave White), who has been with Mr. Walker's company for thirty-eight years, initially in a secretarial capacity. "One of the best things I ever did," he says.

Mr. Walker and Ms. Palmer have in fact "reversed positions," he says. He is now working for her part-time, in what he describes as "a transition in process"—her acquisition of the business.

The many people who have helped him along the way come up often, when he reminisces.

He speaks affectionately of his parents, his brother Kevin and his sister Maggie.

"My dad always said 'Jack, there's no free lunch. Someone has to write the check.' My mom was a great person. I owe her a lot. Being a teacher, the flag was everything to her. She would tell me 'they won't be satisfied until they take God out of everything—and then watch out.' When they were talking about a new high school she said 'Jack, you have to vote for this.'"

Friends have included Chiropractor Louis Amantea. "We built that building (on Providence Road) together," Mr. Walker says. Barry Smith ("Coach Smith's son). James M. "Jim" Knott Sr. and his wife Betty, both now deceased ("Jim poured so much money into that mill, the Kupfer," he says, of Riverdale Mills). Jim Knott Jr. Carol Brouwer of the Historical Society. Doug Carr, whose mother Nora started the Historical Society fifty years ago this year. Dr. Howard Gottlieb. Jeff Allard.



Mr. Walker at a desk he has turned over to Patty Palmer as she takes ownership of the real estate agency he started in 1971. He is still working part-time from an adjoining office.

Anyone who knows Jack Walker would say he is a throwback to yesteryear: a man who has one foot in the genteel society of the financial district and the other in the world of everyday. He dresses well. "I started out in diapers, then shorts, then chinos and then Brooks Brothers—no dungarees!" he says. He patronizes the finest restaurants, the Quirk family's New England Steak & Seafood being one of his favorites. There have been so many. The Cocke 'n Kettle. The Victorian. The Wayside Inn. Ken's on Rt. 9 in Framingham. The Coach & Six on West Boylston St. in Worcester. The Pillar House in Lower Newton Falls. The Ritz-Carlton street bar. "They're all kind of gone," he says of some of these.

Jack Walker is keenly aware that his real estate career is winding down.

"My wife (Karen) and I are going through stuff, we have so much," he says. "We used to entertain a lot then the young people came along and they don't want to polish silver. They want to put stuff in the dishwasher and hit a button."

He looks at today's chang-

ing world and the changing nature of the real estate business with a bit of disappointment. "A lot of people are overpaying. Listings are hard to get. As soon as it's on the market it's gone. A lot of buyers today are cash buyers, no appraisal is ever done. But sooner or later there is a correction. Death. Job transfer. Divorce. These always happen.

"The town at this stage is pretty well built out."

He is adapting, while holding onto the high standards he has always maintained.

"It's been a decent run," Mr. Walker says. "Last year I was afraid to go out" (because of the pandemic). "I was running around with bags of Lysol in my car."

He says "I can't complain." Whitinsville, and Northbridge, still have "a small-town identity and we like that."

Karen Walker's "honeymoon" lists "are getting longer and longer," he says, laughing. "She leaves them on the nightstand or at the breakfast table."

Contact Rod Lee at rodlee.1963@gmail.com or 774-232-2999.



Jack Walker in front of 95 Church St., the home of Jack Walker Realtor, a business celebrating a 50th anniversary this year.

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# BVT launches meal delivery service

*Delivering nutritious meals to its students is possible with a \$75,000 grant*

UPTON - The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District (BVT) is the proud recipient of a \$75,000 Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry grant. The funding will allow BVT to take its Drive-up Meal Service off-campus and

on the road, expanding access to nutritious school meals through a new Meal Delivery Service. The program is open to all BVT students during the 2020-2021 school year.

Whether students are on campus or in distance learn-

ing, having continued access to nutritious meals is vital to their health and wellbeing. Childhood hunger can have a devastating and long-lasting effect on a child's physical, emotional, and academic well-being. The free Meal Delivery Service addresses issues of food access and economic inequalities many students face during the COVID-19 pandemic

by utilizing their School Based Health Center to support the needs of its students enrolled in the program.

The delivery service provides a more convenient, user-friendly meal distribution plan for students, as they, or their parents, will no longer have to commute to pick-up the meals at BVT. This program removes the most prominent

financial/transportation barriers to ensure students with the greatest need for food receive nutritious meals during the pandemic. The service is appealing now to a more significant number of students and parents who need the meals.

BVT can effectively address requests for food assistance with the No Kid Hungry grant. The grant supports equipment

and supply expenses related to transporting and distributing packages of meals directly to its students in the 13-town district and additional support services available through the School Based Health Center. For more information or to sign up your BVT student, please visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/mealdeliveryservice](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/mealdeliveryservice).



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Living well and looking good

# Can mushroom microdose help with depression?

By Keith Roach, M.D.

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** I am battling depression and have a question about psilocybin. I stopped taking Effexor for my depression because I did not like the side effects. I also tried SAM-e, which had only a small effect. So, for the past three months I have been trying cognitive behavioral therapy, using certain tactics.

I've cut back my days of work and avoid all news when not on the job. I stringently avoid social media. I don't put myself into situa-

tions that I know will upset me. I am also limiting my alcohol consumption. Lately I've been reading about how microdosing the psilocybe mushroom can elevate or change moods for the better.

I would like to know your opinion on the use of psilocybin for depression. It seems to be gaining traction, but my fear is that it can bring on degrees of psychosis. - S.M.

**ANSWER:** I found two studies on psilocybin, a naturally occurring chemical in 200 or

so species of mushrooms, especially those of the genus psilocybe. One study from 2016 was in 29 people with cancer, and anxiety and depression: 60%-80% had "clinically significant reductions in depression or anxiety." Another study (also from 2016) treated 12 patients with treatment-resistant depression with two doses of psilocybin, and their depression scores were reduced by more than half at five weeks. All 12 patients had adverse

effects, usually mild, such as headache, nausea or confusion. Two patients had paranoia. All adverse effects lasted less than a day.

While I am optimistic that this might lead to an additional option for therapy, these are very small studies. Further, the authors of the second study note "patients have taken pharmaceutical grade compounds of known strength and purity, under the supervision of trained therapists." The authors and research institution "cannot advise on the procurement of illegal psychoactive substances, nor can we recommend self-medication." I can't emphasize that enough.

**Lyme disease**

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** Someone I know, who is a nurse, mentioned to me that she had Lyme disease about 15 years

ago. She said her doctor at the time told her that if she gets it again, she will die. Is this true? I would have thought some immunity would be gained once you have it. She is completely healed and said she has no health issues associated with it. - D.S.

**ANSWER:** Lyme disease is caused by the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*, and is spread by the deer tick. There are many manifestations of Lyme disease, including rash, many non-specific symptoms, and late symptoms such as arthritis.

Death from Lyme disease is rare, and is usually a result of carditis, which is heart inflammation. This happens in about 1% of cases of Lyme disease. There were nine cases of fatal Lyme carditis reported between 1985 and 2018.

People who are treated early for Lyme disease, such as those get the classic bull's-eye rash, do not get immunity to Lyme. However, people who have had Lyme long enough to develop arthritis do develop some resistance to future episodes. Unfortunately, we are still at least several years away from a Lyme vaccine.

I could find nothing to support a significant risk of death from people who get Lyme disease a second (or subsequent) time, so I think you can reassure your friend.

*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*

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# Four tips from the PT to get ready for spring

By Dr. Sean T Lordan

It's officially spring here in New England and finally winter is behind us. Being cooped up has been a staple of our lives this past year, so today I would like to provide some tips to help you have a great spring. This article specifically speaks to those who are baby boomers and are at an advanced age. My goal as a Physical Therapist is to guide people in moving and feeling as well as they can. Below are a few tips to do just that.

**1. Make it a habit to get outside.** The benefits of spending time in the sun (safely) are endless. The sun is at its highest angle in the sky during mid summer— so spring is a great time to get outside and catch some rays without the looming fear of sunburn. When your skin is exposed to sunlight it makes Vitamin D from cholesterol. Vitamin D is called the “sunshine

vitamin” and helps to counteract the effects of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and can boost your mood and happiness. If you are prone to sunburns or have a history of skin cancer, consult your PCP before spending extended time in the sun.

**2. While outside, try picking up a new hobby.** Preferably pick a hobby that requires you to be active. Some of my favorites are hiking, golf, tennis and running. While performing your new hobby you are actually killing two birds with one stone. First, you're getting your recommended daily allotment of exercise. Second, every time you do something new, your brain is forced to “re-wire” to learn and adapt to that activity. This is called neuroplasticity, and it helps prevent premature Alzheimers and some other forms of Dementia.

**3. Stay social, even in isolated times.** Connect with a distant family member via zoom who you haven't seen in a while. Travel to a different part of the state you've never been and try a new restaurant (take-out if you must). Aim to talk to one new person a day for a week. The benefits of this exercise will astound you. During an experiment on a Chicago train years ago, researchers asked riders if they would be happier to speak to no one or to chat casually with a stranger while on their way to work in the morning. Although almost all participants thought that they would be happier if they kept to themselves, happiness scores zoomed when they engaged with their train neighbors in conversation. Amazing things happen when we try something new.

**4. Volunteer your time.** The benefits of donating your time (notice I didn't say money) are well recorded. When volunteering you are exhibiting that the common good is more important than your own self interest. You are putting others needs before your own. I truly believe in the law of what goes around, comes around. The more you can do to help improve the quality of other peoples lives, the better. Find a way to add value to someone else's life and it will come back to you in spades.

There you have it, this month's edition of “4 Tips From Your Neighborhood PT!” As always if you have any questions for me personally I can be reached at (508) 861-1010 or [drlordan@conciiergephysicaltherapy.com](mailto:drlordan@conciiergephysicaltherapy.com)



Dr. Sean T Lordan

Dr. Sean T. Lordan PT, DPT, OCS, CSCS is a Board Certified Doctor of Physical Therapy and the Author of *11 Winning Secrets To Stop Aging In Its Tracks*. He is the Owner of *Concierge Physical Therapy* with locations in Sutton, and coming soon in May 2021 to Shrewsbury.

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# KOVELS® Antiques & Collecting

By Terry and Kim Kovel

## Penny Toys

**By Terry and Kim Kovel**  
Children's toys are valuable records of what life was like in the past. From about 1880 to 1914, inexpensive, me-

chanical lithographed tin toys known as "penny toys" were popular and affordable in America. A toy rickshaw with a driver and a lady in a small cart was made by George Fischer of Nuremberg, Germany in the early 1900s. The company made many different penny toys, all based on the life of the times. His trademark on most toys was "G.F." in capital letters. But was there really a rickshaw

powered by a man riding a bicycle?

Yes. It is thought that the first rickshaw was invented about 1869 by an American missionary to Japan who used it to transport his invalid wife. The idea became popular, and by 1872 there were about 40,000 rickshaws in use in Japan. There are many styles and names like bike taxi, pedicab, tricycle taxi and even modern electric models. Men pushed or pedaled the rickshaw because they were less expensive to hire than a horse. The driver and passenger of the Fischer rickshaw pictured here are wearing 1910 clothes, so the toy may have been



Penny toys are becoming harder to find, but at an appropriate auction of an old collection, they rarely sell for less than \$50.

made then. The price for this toy is no longer a penny; it sold for \$5,400 at a Berioia auction. For more collecting news, tips and resources, and to subscribe to the Kovels' free weekly email, Kovels Comments, visit [www.Kovels.com](http://www.Kovels.com). (c) 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.

## Whitin Community Center events

WHITINSVILLE - The Whitin Community Center, 60 Main St., will hold a *Sprint Into Spring Open House* one day only on April 19, (in person or online) When you pay for a new membership by monthly automatic withdrawal, receive 25% off the 2021 rates in addition to no joining fee.

Upcoming events include Camp Whitin and BVCP Summer EDventure; Cars In The Park on August 21; and the Fabulous 50s Homecoming Gala on November 13. Watch for updates in this paper and go to [www.WhitinCommunityCenter.com](http://www.WhitinCommunityCenter.com).



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# Early-blooming spring flowers

The arrival of spring is a welcome occurrence for many people. Budding flowers are among the harbingers of spring. Spring flowers can revitalize winter-weary people just when they need it most and provide reassurance that brighter, warmer and longer hours of sunlight are just around the corner.

Cold-tolerant flowers are hardy enough to start blooming before the last frosts have dissipated. Other flowers will begin to fill in as days warm a little bit more, according to Better Homes and Gardens. Home gardeners looking to warm up their gardens with

early blooms can use these flowers in their early-season containers, window boxes and planting beds.

• **Pansy:** Pansies prefer cool weather, which can make them one of the best flowers to plant in early spring and late fall. Pansies come in a variety of colors, so there's bound to be an offering that will blend with any homeowners' landscape design.

• **Creeping phlox:** Also known "moss phlox," creeping phlox is a short ground-cover that is a herbaceous perennial. Phlox produces small, fragrant flowers in

dense clusters, which can attract wildlife, such as butterflies, to their mats across the soil surface.

• **Snowdrops:** Snowdrops can peek out even when there is snow still on the ground, sometimes as early as January and February. But their name is actually a reference to their appearance, as snowdrops have three white petals that hang down like drops dripping off the stem.

• **Violets:** These flowers are closely related to pansies and, as a result, prefer cool seasons. Violets are generally slightly smaller than pansy blooms, but they can be just

as beautiful. But as with pansies, violets will start to fade when the heat arrives.

• **Crocus:** Crocus plants are relatively small, only reaching three to six inches in height. However, their grass-like leaves are some of the first sprouts that can be seen among bulb and corm plantings. Preferring full to partial sun, these gold, purple, lavender, white, or yellow flowers can be enjoyed during the earliest days of spring.

• **Daffodil:** Daffodil bulbs produce cheerful, yellow flowers in early spring. They're one of the most recognizable flowers



Crocus blooms are some of the first seen in early spring.


thanks to their familiar shape and fragrant aroma.

• **Lenten rose:** Hellebores, also called the Lenten rose or Christmas rose, can tolerate light frosts. These blooms get their name from the time of year when they bloom, which

is typically around the Christian Lenten season. Despite their name, these delicate flowers are not actually related to roses, however.

Early-blooming flowers give winter-weary gardeners hope that spring has arrived.

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# The average timelines for popular renovation projects

Home renovation projects are significant undertakings. Working with skilled and experienced contractors can ensure projects go smoothly and are completed promptly. Timing is a big consideration for homeowners as they begin renovating their homes, and the home improvement experts at HomeAdvisor note that the following are some general timelines for popular renovation projects.

• **Home addition:** Short of a full-scale demolition and rebuild, home additions are the most time-consuming projects homeowners can undertake. HomeAdvisor notes that its survey of customers who recently completed home addition projects reported that the average time from start to finish was between three and four months. Certain variables, including the scale of the project and the local permits process, can extend the time it takes to complete a home addition.

• **Kitchen remodel:** Scale is a big factor to consider when estimating the time it takes to complete various home improvement projects, and kitchen remodels are no exception. Some HomeAdvisor users reported projects taking as long as four months, though the average time reported was roughly six weeks. Projects that require major overhauls like rearranging the plumbing and moving walls will likely take longer than more cosmetic projects that are limited to replacing cabinets and countertops.

• **Bathroom remodel:** More than 1,000 homeowners surveyed by HomeAdvisor reported that bathroom remodels took about 4.5 weeks from start to finish. Small-scale remodels that focus on painting the walls a fresh color and replacing existing tiles can be completed in less than two weeks. But like with kitchen remodels, bathroom remodels that involve replacing plumbing fixtures and removing walls figure to take much longer than that.

• **Siding installation:** HomeAdvisor users report that new siding projects take roughly two weeks from start to finish. That estimate is the same regardless of which materials homeowners are replacing and installing.

• **Replacement windows:** Homeowners who want to replace all the windows in their home can expect such a project to take roughly three weeks. HomeAdvisor notes that such a timeline need not concern homeowners



ers worried that they will be forced to brave the elements during the length of the project. Much of a contrac-

tors' time during a window replacement project will be spent on upfront measuring and then ensuring a tight

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During 2020, many people began gardening for the first time or expanded their gardens. Flower gardens, vegetable gardens and even fruit and berry orchards offered outdoor activity, solace, and something to look forward to when we were staying at home. If you were just beginning last year, the hardest work is already done! Establishing new plots and new plantings is always hardest the first year. Now it's time to get those plots ready for another productive and beautiful year.

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are not sure when to start your seeds, consult our planting calendar ([Koopmanlumber.com/planting-calendar](http://Koopmanlumber.com/planting-calendar)) for advice on when to start, when to transplant, and how many days until maturity.

Our greenhouses are open, and new plants arrive almost daily. Garden vegetables and herbs of all kinds, as well as annuals and perennials for

your flower gardens are ready in season. It's a great time to plant something that rewards you every year like blueberry bushes, strawberries or rhubarb. If you love to see the first flowers of the year, try planting perennial Hellebores (Lenten Rose) along your patio or walkway. They'll be the first to bloom and cheer you up as early as late February!

While you're here, find the broadest selection of garden soils, mulches and

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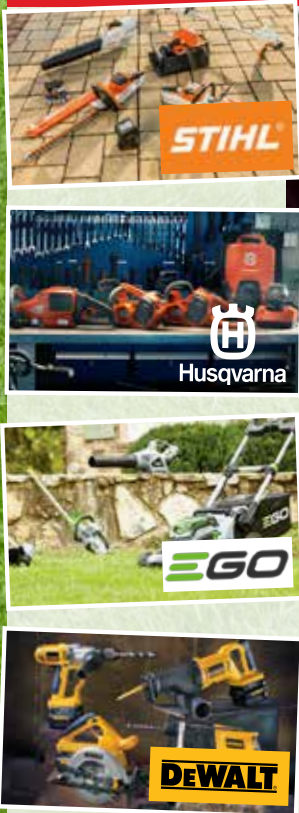


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# Two Girls Reclaimed – check it out!

By Janet Stoica

Their business must be one of the most unique in New England, no kidding. Their work is simply amazing, very well-made, and expertly crafted. They really should have their own HGTV show. Viewers would love it.

These two ladies, Ann and Jennifer Flanders-Doland, together for 24 years, have surely cornered the market on distinction and originality. "I've always enjoyed woodworking and refurbishing furniture," says Ann. "Welding is also a skill that I find rewarding, especially if a

client has a specific project in mind."

Jennifer's words describe their business as a blend of industrial and modern. "It really is cool," says Jen. "We create and mix the mediums of wood and metal. Recently, we took an old warehouse fire door and made a unique dining room table. We stripped the paint using wire brushes and sanding machines. It was brought down to the original bare metal. After putting the finishing touches on the "table," we applied several layers of a clear coat finish, added industrial bench legs, and the reclaimed fire door became a stunning eight-foot long and four-foot wide din-

ing table capable of seating 10-12 guests."

Their distinctive venue of exclusive and one-of-a-kind furniture must be seen to be appreciated. "We build furniture with reclaimed wood," Ann says. "We take down barns and use the material for our craft. A year ago we took down an old barn in the town of Barre. Some of our materials are barn beams from the 1700s. We make fireplace mantels, custom dining room tables, custom desks, live-edge coffee and side tables, console tables, and just about anything a client might request. We've used driftwood and plants in our designs.

"We also restore tables, buffets, and bars. Custom orders are the specialties of the house. Ask us, we'd be happy to discuss your thoughts and ideas. We really enjoy our customers, they truly are fantastic. When you genuinely enjoy what you do, it's simply a fun environment."

Recently, Two Girls designed and created the new Radio Worcester recording studio of broadcaster Hank Stolz. A respectable accomplishment indeed.

The latest original piece that Jennifer and Ann created was a bathroom double-vanity sink. No ordinary fixture to be sure as its construction involved a concrete sink with a back-slotted wide drain within a handsome five-foot wide red oak cabinet complete with a sliding barn door opening at its front. A striking creation with his and hers off-the-wall faucet fixtures. Simple and beautiful.

Ann's dad was definitely a great influence in her craft. "When he passed on," she said, "I inherited his chop, table, band, and circular saws as well as his lathe, sanders, clamps, and a multitude of accessories, his wood patterns included." Apparently she has inherited his genius and skills as well. Ann mentioned that the creations at the shop are her form of true relaxation and she hopes it will be her and Jen's retirement future.

Two Girls makes custom orders on a monthly basis and looks forward to new projects of creativity. The reclaiming of old wooden structures is what they are about. Their enjoyment of working with vintage wood like early cherry, blue pine, oak, and black walnut is enhanced by their abilities to work with exotic woods like St. Croix Monkey Pod, with its distinctive curly and wild grain patterns, as well as those from the sustainable acacia tree. "We re-



Jennifer and Ann Flanders-Doland.

cycle and reclaim everything we can," said Ann, "we are very proud of this."

Their retail outlet offers one-of-a-kind furniture creations as well as home goods like planters, pillows, vases, throws, candles, and Dixie Belle chalk paint (for which they are this area's exclusive dealer). "Dixie Belle chalk mineral paint is very durable and blend-able," stated Ann. "It's an artist's way to paint furniture. This paint is our biggest and best seller. We have about 35 vendors/craftspeople who come here exclusively for this brand of chalk paint.

Their retail emporium encompasses 1800 square feet of displays and hard goods

and they invite customers to come in to see their handiwork along with their fashionable presentations of home décor. "We do have terrariums too," said Jen, "we buy the glass containers and create miniature gardens of air plants and succulents." It's like a small forest enclosed in its own ecosystem.

Two Girls Reclaimed is at 22 West Street (Felters Mill), Millbury. Phone: (508) 581-4200. Hours: Thurs-Sat 11 a.m. – 7p.m.; Sun. 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Appointments are available. [www.twogirlsreclaimed.com](http://www.twogirlsreclaimed.com) Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/twogirlsreclaimed> Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/twogirlsreclaimed>



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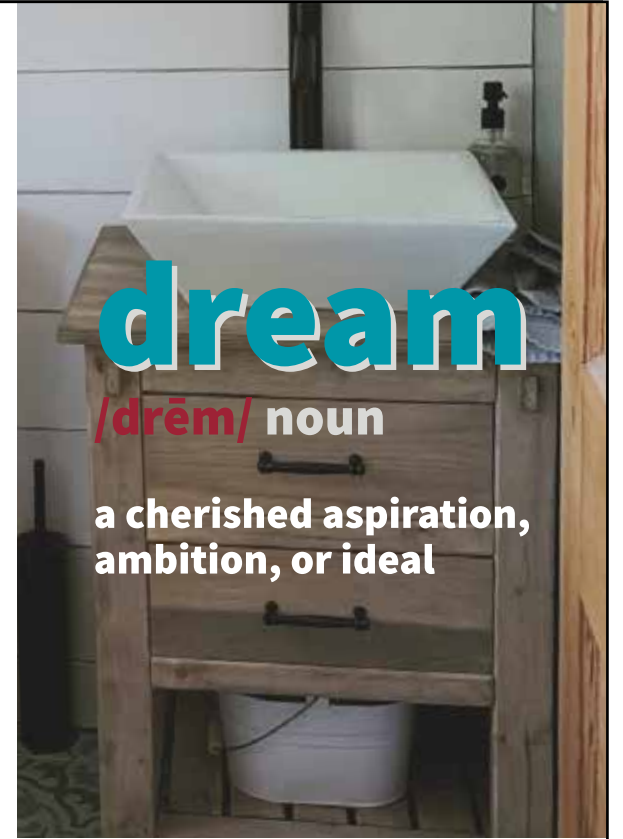


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## Techniques to revitalize a lawn after a long winter

Pristine, snow-covered landscapes can be wonders to behold. While that blanket of white is idyllic, a lawn's delicate blades may be paying a hefty price beneath the cold, heavy piles of snow.

Snow plows push salt and sand up on the grass while subterranean animals like mice and moles dig burrows beneath piles of snow as they try to find food and stay warm. Such conditions are not favorable for thriving landscapes. When the spring thaw arrives, lawns may be in dire need of some TLC. The following techniques can mitigate winter-related lawn damage.

- Clear out debris. Remove any scattered leaves, branches and other debris that has been strewn across the property due to storms or snow-laden trees. This will give you a clean canvas to work on.
- Dry out snow mold. The Family Handyman says snow mold is a cold-season fungus that causes gray-colored circles or patches on the lawn where there has been snow. To alleviate snow mold, rake the lawn to loosen matted grass and facilitate the drying-out process.
- De-thatch the lawn. Heavy snow can compress the grass and cause some of it to die



Remove any debris from the lawn after snow thaws to see what you're working with.

off. De-thatching helps to remove dead grass blades and separate any matting. This enables water, nutrients and air to reach the lawn's roots more effectively. Thinning out old organic matter also helps encourage new growth.

- Aerate the soil. Coupled with dethatching, aeration involves loosening the soil or poking holes to allow nutrients to move freely to the roots.
- Kill weeds before they spread. Weeds may be the first to start growing when the weather begins to warm. Address them promptly by manually pulling them or applying an herbicide.
- Overseed the lawn. Chances are there are some bare spots that have formed over

the winter. Overseeding can help to fill in the lawn. Make sure that frosts are largely a thing of the past and soil temperature is around 50 F to 60 F before seeding. Water daily until grass fills in.

• Apply nutrients. Fertilizer and compost can restore nutrients to the lawn that may have been used up over winter. A soil test at a nearby horticultural center can tell you which nutrients are needed, according to the Chemistry Cachet, a guide to using chemistry secrets for healthy living, beauty, cleaning, and gardening.

Lawns can be restored to their pre-winter glory after some sweat equity and about five to six weeks of consistent sunshine and warm weather.

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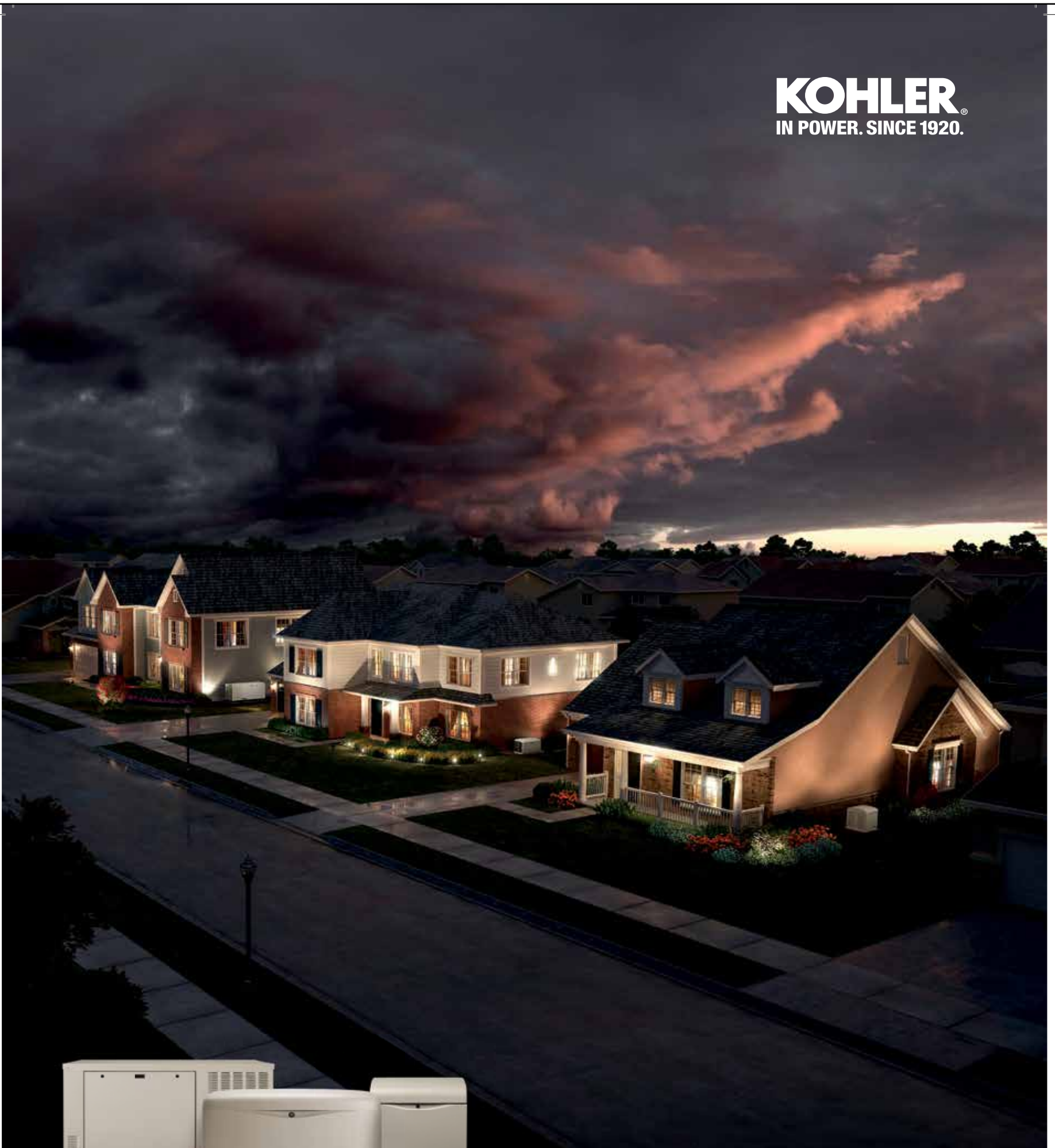
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# Renovation trends that figure to be popular in the year ahead

Home renovation trends are ever-changing. Renovations that might have been de rigueur 20 years ago may seem dated now. Recognizing the potentially popular trends of tomorrow is a great way for homeowners to give their homes a fresh new look and put themselves in position to capitalize on popular trends when they put their homes on the market. That's especially so after 2020, a year when millions of people spent more time at home than ever before.

All that time working from home and relaxing at home gave millions of homeowners ideas about what they like about their homes and what they hope to change. The following are some renovation trends that various experts suspect could emerge in 2021.

• *Eco-friendly living:* Climate change, and how to combat it, was a hot button issue during the 2020 presidential election in the United States. So it should come as no surprise that urdesignmag.com, a web magazine that

showcases creative trends in design, architecture, art, technology, and fashion, predicts that eco-friendly living solutions figure to be hot commodities in 2021. Eco-friendly appliances, furniture and designs can help to conserve energy and reduce waste, which environmentalists and government agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency note are two critical components in the fight against climate change.

• *Large windows:* Large win-

dows can provide stunning views of the outdoors and allow ample natural light into a home. It may not be a coincidence if large windows prove to be a hot trend in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic that dominated much of 2020 forced many people to spend considerably more time at home. Darker homes without much natural light can adversely affect mood, especially when people are spending more time at home. HGTV predicts that homeowners will seek ways to bring more natural light into their homes in 2021, and large windows naturally brighten homes while making rooms appear bigger, helping people feel less cramped. That's an especially beneficial characteristic when spending more time indoors at home.

• *Minimalism:* The anticipated popularity of minimalism in 2021 may also be connected to the pandemic. As professionals were forced to work from home and many families spent more time together inside their homes than ever before, they may have recognized a need to cut back on clutter, including extra furniture. A minimalist approach is both



simple and clean, which can make homes feel less claustrophobic.

• *Multi-functional spaces:* Homeowners asked a lot of their homes in 2020, as rooms were transformed into multi-functional spaces seemingly overnight. HGTV notes that spending

more time at home showed homeowners that it may not make sense to dedicate entire rooms of a home to a single purpose. Renovations that can help homeowners transform rooms into multi-functional spaces figure to be hot commodities in the years ahead.

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## Three techniques to keep mosquitoes out of your backyard oasis

The value of a retreat-like backyard was never more apparent than in 2020. Over the last year-plus, much of the world has been forced to stay home as a global pandemic has claimed millions of lives while countless others have had to fight to survive in hospitals. It's no surprise people have looked for a respite from the harsh realities of living during a deadly pandemic, and many turned their attention to their own backyards to provide such an escape.



A backyard retreat can be even more enjoyable when homeowners find ways to keep mosquitoes at bay.

The online home remodeling platform Houzz reported a 58 percent annual increase in project leads for home professionals in June 2020. Contractors who specialize in outdoor spaces saw the biggest increase in demand. A revamped outdoor space can provide the perfect retreat for homeowners who want to get away from it all. But one winged, unwelcome guest can quickly transform an oasis into an uninviting space.

Mosquitoes make their presence felt in many areas each summer. These pesky, often hungry insects can carry disease, and their bites can be painful and itchy. Homeowners can try these three techniques to keep mosquitoes out of their backyards.

**1. Remove standing water.** Standing water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes, who don't even need a lot of water to successfully breed. A

daily walk around the property may uncover kids' toys, empty flower pots or other small receptacles that can collect water. Even clogged gutters can lead to the accumulation of a small amount of water, and that can be enough for mosquitoes to breed. Remove these potential breeding grounds when you find them, and do so each day, as mosquitoes mature from eggs to nymphs in roughly four days.

**2. Mow regularly.** Mowing the lawn so the grass never gets too high is another way to make a backyard less hospitable to mosquitoes. The pest experts at Terminix® note that mosquitoes seek tall grass to protect them from the elements, including wind and hot summer sun. Mowing enough so grass never gets too high in summer can

make backyards less inviting to mosquitoes.

**3. Plant with mosquitoes in mind.**

The home remodeling experts at HGTV note that plants can be part of homeowners' strategy to repel mosquitoes. Various plants have mosquito-repellant qualities. For example, bee balm releases a fragrance as it grows, and mosquitoes don't like that fragrance. Homeowners can speak with a local lawn and garden professional for recommendations about plants that can thrive in their region and repel mosquitoes at the same time.

Mosquitoes can make it hard to enjoy a backyard oasis. But various strategies can help homeowners keep these unwanted guests out of their backyards.

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## What to expect during a bathroom remodel



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There are many reasons to renovate a home. Some homeowners purchase fixer-uppers and commit to making major renovations before they even move in, while others may renovate their homes with an eye on resale value. But many homeowners also take on renovation projects to make the homes more livable for themselves.

Bathroom renovations are popular projects. In fact, a 2018 survey from the National Association of Home Builders found that bathroom remodels are the most popular remodeling projects. But just because bathroom remodeling projects are popular doesn't mean they're easy to endure. Knowing what to expect during a bathroom remodel can help homeowners get through the renovation process.

**Cost**  
 Bathroom remodeling projects can be expensive. According to Remodeling magazine's "Cost vs. Value 2019" report, a mid-range bathroom remodeling project cost an average of \$20,420 in 2019, while an upscale remodel cost just under \$64,000. Homeowners should develop budgets for their bathroom renovation projects to determine which type of project they can afford. In addition, setting aside a little extra money for overruns is a wise move that can help homeowners handle any unforeseen expenses that arise during the project.

**Noise**  
 Few home renovation projects can be undertaken quietly, and bathroom renovations tend to generate a lot of noise. The noise can be difficult to overcome for professionals who work

from home full-time, and it also can be hard on parents of young children who still nap and don't yet go to school. Parents of young children may find it best to delay bathroom renovation projects until their children are school-aged and out of the house for most of the day on weekdays.

**Mess**  
 The debris generated by bathroom renovation projects is another thing homeowners must prepare for. In addition to preparing for the waste generated by the project, first-time renovators must realize that dust might be a big issue once the project begins. Dust can pose a threat to residents' overall health, particularly the health of youngsters whose bodies haven't yet fully developed. As a result, parents of young children may want to schedule renovations during family vacations so their children are exposed to as little dust as possible.

**Changes**  
 Few renovations go off without a hitch. Once a project begins, contractors often uncover issues that weren't noticeable to the naked eye. These issues may increase the cost of completing a project or force homeowners to change their plans to make the project stay as close to their budgets as possible. Recognizing that these decisions may have to be made on the fly can help homeowners feel more prepared when unexpected issues arise.

Bathroom renovation projects are worthwhile investments. Knowing what to expect during a bathroom renovation project can help homeowners handle all the twists and turns that may arise.





## Simple ways to reduce risk of disease in your garden

sistant to those diseases. A local garden center professional can help gardeners who are uncertain about what to plant.

- *Plant in the right spots.* The choice of where to plant is significant. Avoid wet areas with insufficient drainage. The home renovation experts at HGTV note that wet soil can decrease plants' chances for survival because of excess water and a lack of oxygen. If the only spots available for planting tend to be especially wet, consider planting in raised beds or having a French drain installed. Learn how much light plants need prior to planting them. Some

can thrive in shady areas, while others require ample sunlight each day.

- *Plant at the right time.* Planting too early when the soil is not yet warm enough can make plants vulnerable to disease by weakening their ability to fight. Use a soil thermometer to determine soil temperature and only plant when the conditions for planting are ideal.
- *Harvest on time.* When planting vegetables, it's imperative that the vegetables are harvested on time. The University of Georgia Extension notes that fully mature vegetables left on the plant attract disease

and are vulnerable to insect infestations.

- *Control insect infestations.* Certain insects can spread disease, so it's important that gardeners learn to recognize which insects pose a threat to their plants. Speak with a local

gardening center about invasive insects and how to address infestations without harming the plant. As the planting season approaches, gardeners can take various steps to make their plants and vegetables less vulnerable to disease.

No garden is immune to disease. Even the most attentive, experienced gardeners have had to confront disease in their gardens, which can lead to significant damage and potentially kill plants.

Various bacterial, fungal and viral diseases can affect gardens, and the University of Maryland Extension notes that fungicides, which are chemicals that destroy fungus, are only rarely recommended to combat disease. In fact, a proactive approach rooted in prevention is often the most effective way to reduce risk for disease in gardens.

- *Choose the right varieties of plant.* The UME notes that choosing disease-resistant varieties is an effective way to prevent disease in gardens. Gardeners who have confronted disease in their gardens in the past should do their best

to identify which diseases were present and then choose plants that are considered re-



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# Blackstone Heritage Corridor and All Out Adventures Partner to bring adaptive cycling to MA and RI

*Free accessible bike rides offer new experiences on the Blackstone River Bikeway/Greenway*

WHITINSVILLE – Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (BHC) is partnering with All Out Adventures

(AOA) to offer a series of free adaptive cycling events this spring on the Blackstone River Bikeway/Greenway in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The series kicks off with four rides for veterans along the Blackstone River Bikeway in Worcester, made possible by a Veterans Adaptive Sports Grant secured by All Out Ad-

ventures. Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces, and their loved ones, are encouraged to attend. The four events fall on the following Tuesdays: April 13 and 27, May 11, and June 1 and depart from the Blackstone River Valley Heritage Center in Worcester. The rides are available between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., by

reservation only.

Following the rides for veterans, the adaptive cycling series continues with programs for the general public, including all ages and all abilities. In recognition of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's "Celebrate Trails Day" on Saturday, April 24, BHC and AOA will host an adaptive cycling ride

on the Blackstone River Greenway in Blackstone. Cycling opportunities will include the new wheelchair tandem bicycle that BHC acquired last year through a grant from the network of the National Library of Medicine, New England Region. Reservations are required for the scheduled rides between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. This event is presented in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and Bike-On of Warwick, RI. BHC is dedicating this event to the memory of Margaret Carroll, who inspired bringing adaptive recreation to the Blackstone

River Bikeway/Greenway.

For the first time since BHC and AOA have partnered on offering free adaptive cycling programs together starting in 2017, two events will be hosted in Rhode Island this spring along the Blackstone River Bikeway in Lincoln, RI, on Tuesday, May 4, and Tuesday, May 18. These events are presented in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and Bike-On of Warwick, RI. Both events will run from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., by reservation only.

To register for these events, call All Out Adventures at 413-  
**Continued on next page**

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584-2052 or email info@alloutadventures.org. All Out Adventures will spend time talking with each individual to learn about their disability to select the proper piece of equipment ranging from single and tandem recumbent trikes to two-wheel tandem and upright and low style handcycles. Find more event details at BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org/events.



Front: Ellie Guild; rear: Susan Halpin of Network of the National Library of Medicine, New England Region.

Due to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines, participants who need assistance with self-care or transfers must bring and participate with their caregiver. Unlike previous events, volunteers will not be assisting participants with the equipment, nor will they be riding on any tandem equipment. Face masks must be worn, and all equipment will be sterilized between rides.

To learn more about All Out Adventures and other recreational programs it offers to people with disabilities and their family and friends, visit AllOutAdventures.org. To learn more about the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, visit BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org.

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Speakers Jeff Turgeon, the Executive Director of the MassHire Central Region Workforce Board, Kevin Kuros, the Central MA Regional Director for the MA Office of Business Development, Jibrael Younis, the Business Services Manager for the MassHire Central Career Center, and Sandra Foley, a Rapid Response Coordinator for the MassHire Department of Career Services will discuss the state of unemployment in Massachusetts and transitioning to the "new normal" after COVID.

- Finding jobs through virtual job fairs
- Resources for virtual placement
- Opportunities for workforce training

*Presentation will take place via zoom. Registrants will receive a link one day prior to event.*

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# BVCC ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

## Monday, May 10

## Pleasant Valley Country Club

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## BVT senior Natalie Bolduc's career plan takes a 'wild' ride

UPTON – To get where you want to be, sometimes you have to stay motivated and keep trying. As the saying goes, if at first you don't succeed, try, try again. That is how Natalie Bolduc of Bellingham, a senior in the Painting & Design Technology (P&D) program at Blackstone Valley Tech, chose to pursue her vocational-technical education with perseverance, determination, and a sense of adventure.

Natalie started as a sopho-

more, not having a traditional exploratory experience. She was given a choice between Electrical and P&D. She said, "I decided that P&D would suit my interests better, given that I've always been creative and love painting and art, so I went with that. It was a decision that has led me to have some incredibly memorable experiences."

Several local car enthusiasts entrust BVT's P&D shop to pro-

duce and apply graphics and wraps to their luxury vehicles, which is an incredible learning opportunity. It is something that Natalie never thought she'd be doing, but she has become rather skilled at it.

"I'm so grateful to my P&D instructor, Tom Lamont, for inviting me to apply Mission 22 vinyl graphics to a McLaren at the Dream Ride car show," said Natalie. "If you told me a year ago that I would be doing

that, I would've said you were crazy. I was a little nervous being around such expensive cars, let alone applying decals to them, but it was an amazing experience."

Natalie is maximizing her trade experience through BVT's cooperative education program (co-op). She applied, interviewed, and secured a co-op with Cadwell Sign in Holliston. "I'm enjoying it. Honestly, it feels a lot like being in our shop," said Natalie. "Our instructors taught us to treat our shop like a real workplace, but it's hard to realize what that means until you're in one. Cadwell has similar machines to those in our shop. I've used their Suma cutter and a laminate machine since I already know how to use them. I'm happy that I've traveled down this path. I'm confident in my trade knowledge and comfortable in the workforce."

"My post BVT plans are quite different from what I am doing now," said Natalie. "I have another adventure in mind, exploring Zoology or Wildlife Ecology at a four-year college, and I'll see where it goes from there. Wherever I go, I go prepared. BVT has provided me with skills and experiences that will serve me well in any career."

"What amazes me most



Natalie Bolduc of Bellingham, a senior in the Painting & Design Technology program at BVT, is pictured applying a Mission 22 vinyl graphic to a McLaren.

about our students is their growth and transformation. On their journey together as a class, each one of them is uniquely different. Even though I've been in the indus-

try for so long, they still surprise me with their choices," said Lamont. "That's what's cool. We train them, give them knowledge and tools to succeed, and then we let them go.

### Spring clean-up day

Grafton Lions Spring clean-up day is Saturday April 17, 9 a.m. at Lions Club / Dauphinais Park, 68 Brigham Hill Rd Grafton. The Lions are looking for volunteers to come join them for an hour or two throughout the day (until 2 p.m.) to perform the annual Spring clean-up of the the park and grounds that serves thousands in the community and beyond. Your safety is the number one priority. There will be plenty of face masks on hand for those who need them and hand sanitizer on site for all. Many of tasks set up will ensure social distancing to keep everyone safe and healthy. The Grafton Lions motto is "WE SERVE" and together, with your help, they will continue to do so. Thank you in advance for your help. Any questions, feel to contact info@graftonlionsclub.org or you can reach Mike directly at mlabbe@graftonlionsclub.org.

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## Living with Lincoln

# Day Old Cheese

By Amy Palumbo-LeClaire

The cat is out of the bag. I'd do almost anything for my dog. Even if that means hustling a slice of cheese for him. Here's the story.

Lincoln has been on a strict diet due to a few senior issues, along with a firm desire to offer him the very best nutrition amid his golden years. He's made it to the final stretch. A bad habit needed to go.

Dunkin's Munchkins.

I cannot possibly put a price tag on the joy accrued from countless Dunkin' Donuts drive-thru runs over the last ten years. In Pavlovian fashion, Lincoln came to associate the entire Dunkin'



A lot to smile about.

experience with pure joy. He learned the physics of my Honda Pilot while it rounded the drive-thru, the peculiar way in which a square box speaks, and the sweetened scent of the air while, head-out-window, he sniffed and salivated. Every moment became one step closer to the blessed window, where kind people wearing brown and

pink passed out small, edible balls. He studied these people over and over again, fixing his eyes on their hands from the vantage point of the opened back seat window. His chunky smile puffed to the very sight of them until—suddenly—the people appeared before his very eyes.

"Oh my gosh that is the cutest dog I've ever seen! Can he have a munchkin?"

"The driver in the car behind you wants to pay for your coffee."

"Do you mind if I post your dog on my Snapchat?"

Lincoln became a Dunkin' celebrity, the doggie in the window who cost nothing to flirt with. Shamelessly, he lapped up every handout.

"There's jelly in this ball!" He could barely hold back his joy for the donut holes and held me accountable for extras given. "Not to be a nudge, but I saw the person place a tire-shaped ball

in the bag." He stood formidable, propped like a security guard on the console, a spot of jelly at his nostril while he held me hostage at the wheel. "Lincoln. Go sit down, please."

I had created a monster. "Is this what heaven feels like?" Yet it was a happy monster. He inhaled crumbs from cracks between the leather seats and stalked wedges of donut beneath them. Like a drunken toddler, Lincoln was high

on Dunkin's munchkins. I needed to act fast, and help him attach "an experience" to a Dunkin' run, not a donut hole. A clean diet had already made a significant impact on his health. His golden years were becoming brighter. He needed to stay the course. But how?

"Can my dog have a slice of day-old cheese, please?" I

spat a tried solution from the passenger side of my husband's Infiniti one day. "Day old cheese?" A rash climbed his neck. "You can't just ask them to give you a slice of cheese!" He chided me with authority.

"Don't be ridiculous." I puffed. "They're a billion-dollar conglomerate. Our dog may not be alive tomorrow and you're worried about them losing a few pennies." Lincoln narrowed his eyes to the conversation. "I bet they throw away day old cheese anyway." His blonde lashes still, he transcribed the braille of our conversation with intellect. "Wah, wah, wah, wah, wah. Cheese. Wah, wah, wahnanna. Cheese. Wahnanna. Cheese."

Shhh. Lincoln shuffled back to the window. The kind person was on her way back. He sat politely and broke into smile, a twinkle in his eye. We shut up.

"You're such a good dog! Here you go!"

He took.

The people dressed in brown and pink had so many reasons to say no:

"We don't give away cheese."

"The practice is not sanitary."

"Giving away cheese is against policy."

"You need to pay for what you take home here."

Instead, the kind hearts of Dunkin' Donuts enabled a troubling sense of entitlement.

"Oh my gosh – look at him! Can he have two slices?"

"He is the cutest."

"I've read his column! One more slice for Lincoln!"

They passed the cheese. Lincoln licked his choppers.

We drove away in silence. I couldn't help but reflect on my behavior. Had I committed a small crime? A spot of guilt poked at my conscience while I fastened my seatbelt and thought harder. How inappropriate was my request? Like the warm scent of butter-

crunch, the truth came to me. I was able to trace my behavior back to my ancestry.

Nana!

My late grandmother, Madeleine Stelluti-Palumbo, an Italian immigrant, was a phenomenal cook. She was also fanatical about ensuring that not a morsel would go to waste. She would find a snip of arugula and turn it into a stew. Or whip up a frittata using overripe peppers and a few eggs. She would even napkin-wrap slices of bread taken from restaurant tables, and stow them away in her purse. "Me save," she'd say.

Deep down, was saving cheese in my DNA?

My gaze settled on Lincoln. He laid comfortably in the back seat and licked his leonine paws, thoroughly satisfied with how the day had unfolded. Then, at random, he lifted his big head, stared at me, and broke into an easy smile.

"Good boy, Lincoln."

If loving my dog too much is a crime, I'll have to plead guilty.

Tell me your dog story.

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Lincoln gobbles up a slice of day old cheese.



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Tales from beyond

# Baileys Mills/Spite Cemetery

By Thomas D'Agostino

One of the most interesting legends of New England takes place in the small village of Reading, Vermont, just southeast of Rutland. If you venture down a small gravel lane known as Bailey's Mills Road, you will come to a building that now resides as a bed and breakfast. The home came into the possession of the Innkeeper, Barbara Thaeader's family, in the mid 1960s. The small road travels directly in front of the house before turning up a hill and

out of sight through a narrow valley. In the winter, it is not advisable to travel the road any further than the Bailey's Mills front door. Bailey's Mills Bed and Breakfast also sports another eye-catching parcel of land just outside its doors. It is a sizeable burial ground that makes up what would have been the front yard. Although this may not be out of the ordinary to New England, the name of the cemetery and the reason for it being there is a tale for the telling.

Levi Bailey purchased the dam and mill in 1794. Between 1800 to his death in 1850 the enterprise prospered and Bailey continued to expand his industrial complex until the land held a three story woolen factory, several other mills, a blacksmith shop and a company store. Employees of the complex lived in a brick house and were paid in company script, meaning that they could only buy their goods at the company store, no doubt giving Bailey a chance to re-

coup his wages paid out.

In 1808, Bailey wished to expand beyond his property to a lot across the small lane, which at that period in time was a state road. Levi inquired his neighbor, David Hapgood; in good faith to purchase a piece of property that lay just across the street from his but Hapgood, who was irritated by the mere sight of Bailey, outright refused.

Persistent proposals to purchase Hapgood's piece of property were met with harsh denials. As time wore on, Bailey began to resent his neighbor and at one point yelled over to the man that he was getting on in years and when his time came the property would be taken. Hapgood, knowing this to be true, made arrangements for the land in such a way that his nemesis would never acquire it. He donated it to the town for use as a burial ground. To make matters more infuriating to Bailey, when John Hapgood died in 1829, he was among the first



to be buried in the cemetery. Every morning Bailey would tend to his businesses having to confront the gravestone of Hapgood sitting spitefully on the land he would never have. For this reason the burial ground is now called Spite Cemetery but there is an interesting epilogue to the story.

Levi Bailey also purchased a burial plot for his family in the cemetery and when he died October 21, 1850, at the age of eighty-five, he was buried right near his neighbor. This may have been a final attempt for Bailey to spite Hapgood as he did acquire the land he so desired, although not as much, and for eternity instead.

The bed and breakfast sits along the small lane with the cemetery in lovely Reading, Vermont. Take a trip and stay a night for the home also houses a few spirits of the past. Nothing harmful, or even spiteful, just good old Vermont ghosts keeping to themselves in a place where time seems to have slowed down to a relaxing pace.

*Thomas D'Agostino and his wife Arlene Nicholson are seasoned paranormal investigators, authors, and co-organizers of Paranormal United Research Society. You can find out more about them by visiting www.tomdagostino.com.*

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## Q & A with The Car Doctor

John Paul is AAA Northeast's Car Doctor. He has over 40 years' experience in the automotive business and is an ASE certified master technician. He will answer reader's questions each week. You can find the Car Doctor podcast at [www.johnpaul.podbean.com](http://www.johnpaul.podbean.com) or other popular podcast sites. Email your car questions to [jpaul@aaanortheast.com](mailto:jpaul@aaanortheast.com). Follow John on Twitter @johnpaul and friend him on Facebook [mrjohnpaul](https://www.facebook.com/mrjohnpaul).



economy. Depending on your driving style, you may be taking more electricity out of the battery than you are putting back in. It is my understanding that Subaru has updated the charging system profile and is now using a battery with more reserve capacity to combat the parasitic drain. When everything is functioning normally there is no reason you should not be able to leave your car unused for a month and have it start up. A float style battery charger would keep the battery charged, but it would need to be plugged into an electrical outlet. There are also solar style battery maintainers which could work.

**Q.** I am a faithful reader of your Car Doctor column and have a question I hope you can answer for me. Before considering a fully electric vehicle I wonder about the process of charging them. I live in a condominium in southern Maine with no garage. Can you tell me, is it possible to safely and securely connect an EV to a charger that is outside and uncovered in inclement weather, including rain, sleet and snow?

**A.** Most of the electric vehicle chargers that I see are outside including the one at our AAA headquarters building in Providence. I monitor the charging station at AAA and it has worked without issues now for five years through all kinds of weather. At home when I'm road testing an electric car, I plug into 117-volts to charge the battery and only once in all of the years I have been testing electric cars did the ground (GFCI) fault outlet trip. Based on my experience and if your condominium allows it, you should be able to set up a charging station.

**Q.** I have a 2014 Subaru Crosstrek, with almost 28,000 miles. I love it, and do all recommended services and oil changes at the dealer. I was told several years ago by the service manager that the car has 15 different computers that can drain the battery. He said to keep the battery charged I have to start and drive the car every two or three days or the battery will be dead. I'm on at least the third or fourth additional battery in the past seven years. I was concerned if I take a plane trip this summer and come back the battery will be dead. I spoke with another service manager and he said just have a new battery put in. I park in a large, locked lot which is very public, so is that good advice, or should I get one of the new small chargers I could leave attached and under the hood? And if I do that, I could use it normally instead of constantly going down and driving it two miles?

**A.** Subaru models have had their share of battery problems. The alternator that charges the battery is computer controlled and limits charging to improve fuel

**Q.** I have a 2013 Honda CRV, and it now has 79,000 miles on it, and I am having no issues. I do regular maintenance as needed. Under "recommendations" on my last receipt from the dealer is a transmission fluid service for \$199.95. Is that something I should do, or is checking all fluids at my next oil change sufficient?

**A.** Honda uses indicator-based maintenance rather than typical miles and time. With the Honda system you will get a message on the dash that tells you when certain items need attention. If the fluid is checked regularly and it looks good, wait until you see the number 3 come up in the instrument panel submenu that will indicate the transmission fluid needs changing.

**Q.** I have a 2017 Chevy Cruze with 125,000 miles. Would it be covered for the General Motors warranty on the accelerator?

**A.** The Chevrolet emissions warranty will cover some components for eight years or 80,000 miles whichever comes first. Although this is a common problem-you probably get a "reduced power" message, looking on the database that I use, at this time there has been no warranty extension.

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## Collect. Shred. Recycle. Repeat. Lions shred event

The semi-annual Uxbridge Lions Club shred event is planned for Saturday, May 8, from 9 a.m. to noon, at the VFW parking lot on Route 16 and Cross Road in Uxbridge. With Onsite Computers and Pellegrino Trucking Co., the Lions Club once again ensures secure paper shredding while you watch and certified guaranteed electronic destruction.

The Uxbridge Lions want to help you get rid of those documents you no longer need which are not securely stored and can pose a threat to your identity. Experts say just about everything with your name and address on it and other personal information should be shredded. The Pellegrino Trucking Co. will shred securely on site and the tons of paper resulting

will be recycled. Donation of \$5 per copy paper sized box will get it done.

Onsite Computers will accept any small electronic item except televisions and CRT monitors. No household appliances will be accepted. Dispose of devices such as phones, electrical cords, DVDs, cameras, USB cables, flat screen computer monitors, keyboards and ra-

dios and stereos. Onsite will provide a "Certificate of Guaranteed Destruction" for items with personal information. A \$5 donation per item will benefit local programs supported by the Uxbridge Lions.

The procedure for driving up to the site will be clearly marked and a member of the Lions will assist with your materials to be shredded. Wear a mask, please.



Lions and volunteers prepare material for shredding.

The Uxbridge Lions has been active in the community for more than a decade supporting many local programs including scholarships, eye glass and hearing assistance, local youth sports, the Uxbridge Senior Center and Beautify Uxbridge.

The Uxbridge Lions meet

every third Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. Until further notice, meeting will be held via Zoom. Contact President Diane Seely, dmseely@hotmail.com. New members are always welcome to join the largest service organization in the world whose motto is "We serve."



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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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**RE: Real Estate**



**Mark Marzeotti**

If you watch a steady stream of TV shows that focus on buying and selling homes, you've probably learned a lot about the process. As a result, you may think you have a solid enough handle on things to forego using a real estate agent when selling your house.

This is understandable, especially when you think about how much you could save on the realtor's commission. Plus, if you were captain of the ship, you'd be in charge of every decision during the process. But a few homebuyer education courses can't give you the years of experience realtors have. Here's the first thing you need to know before you take the reins and decide to sell your home without a real estate agent.

You may not be saving as much money as you think.

Hiring a real estate agent will typically cost you about six percent of a home's sale

**The first thing you need to know about selling your home without a realtor**

price. For a \$350,000 home, that's \$21,000. It'd be pretty nice to shave that number off your expenses, right?

The idea of saving thousands of dollars on commission by selling your own home can be tempting, and for a few it may even make sense, but for the vast majority of homeowners the desire to pocket more money by selling their own home will likely cost them.

Maybe you are thinking that a realtor writing a column, of course will say that." According to the National Association of Realtors, homes that are for sale by owner, or FSBOs, typically sell for less money than homes sold by realtors. In 2020, homes sold by owners closed at a median of \$217,900, while those sold by real estate agents closed for \$242,300. That's a \$24,400 difference.

The upside of selling your place on your own, per the report, is saving time. FSBO sold more quickly than homes sold by agents in 2020 – 77 percent of FSBO homes sold in less than two weeks. But NAR points out that's because the homes were often sold to someone the seller knew.

Some agents say they don't believe that selling your home without an agent is a

bad idea for all sellers – but it's probably a bad idea for most sellers. There are three reasons why.

First, there's pricing. One of the reasons you may not make as much is related to your potential pricing strategy. How will you determine the right price to sell? While multiple real estate websites offer quick estimates of your home's value, this is simply an algorithm – not a researched comparison of other similar homes in your neighborhood. In fact, she says those quickly generated estimates are often exaggerated, which can cause you to upcharge your home. You might already know what happens to overpriced homes: nothing. They languish on the market as buyers select more reasonably priced options. It's almost worth hiring an agent just to be sure that your home is priced right.

Even if you don't hire an agent, you might need to hire a lawyer to go over all your contracts. This will cost you money, too. Still, this isn't the only reason you might not get as much money as you think. You have to be prepared to put in the work necessary to at-

tract the right buyers. Just sticking a sign in your front yard will likely not generate the traffic and interest that you hope for. The owner is responsible for all the marketing, photos, property descriptions, inquiries, open houses, showings, and vetting the potential buyers.

Then there's the business of appealing to buyers. Sellers need to understand the pros and cons of their property, and know what will distract buyers and turn them off. However, since homeowners tend to gloss over their home's flaws, this can be a challenge. Having an unbiased person to help out can be a plus. Many times, sellers eventually realize they'd rather just spend five to six percent of the sale price and hire an agent to do all of this for them.

If you're selling to someone you know, marketing and appealing to potential buyers might not be necessary. But you will have to negotiate with the buyer no matter who it is. So let me ask you this important question: Can you negotiate as well as an agent can on your behalf? The answer may be yes, but be realistic – not everyone is a born negotiator. Leave the job to a professional!

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