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Indian Ranch back in gear for a blockbuster 75th anniversary season

By Rod Lee

There must have been moments over the course of the past year when Suzette Raun Coppola was burdened by serious misgivings about whether a 75th-anniversary season would occur at Indian Ranch.

Evidence of the struggle the business world was facing as COVID-19 wreaked its havoc was all around. Restaurants were limited to takeout-only. Work-from-home became a fixture. Doors to retail stores carried the warning "No Mask, No Entry." Some staple products were in short supply; and so on.

Indian Ranch suffered the same fate as many other entertainment settings.

Asked during a telephone conversation that took place on May 12 what the past twelve months were

like, Ms. Raun Coppola summed them up with one word:

"Terrible."

Elaborating on this, she said "we had to lay everyone off the first week the pandemic hit. A lot of my food staff took time off and we didn't have any seasonal help here in 2020.

"I felt bad for the smaller venues," she said, even as she regretted on behalf of her own employees the toll the virus was taking: no concerts at "the shed;" no music on the beach; no Indian Princess paddle wheeler in the water; no Samuel Slater's Restaurant welcoming diners; no activities in the banquet hall.

Today, however, the proverbial silver lining can be seen.

"We are planning on a full season...and I expect it will be the



Concerts are again on tap at Indian Ranch, as the popular Central Massachusetts entertainment venue swings into what is promising to be a stellar 75th-anniversary season.

busiest season ever," Adam Klein of CK Communications Group, which handles public relations for Indian Ranch, said.

"We'll be doing local bands on the stage in May and June. Capacity limits as of now go to 100% on August 1, and we have a great set of shows booked as part of the

Mike's Hard Lemonade Summer Concert Series.

"The governor has indicated that the August 1 date could move up sooner if the numbers continue to be good, which they have been. As a result, we are extremely optimistic that our July shows will play as scheduled" (these include, tenta-

tively, Chris Janson, Ziggy Marley and Marty Stuart).

"The 2021 season includes shows from Foreigner, Jamey Johnson, Get The Led Out, Melissa Etheridge, Grand Funk Railroad, Chase Rice, Kip Moore, and more.

Continued on page 2

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INDIAN RANCH

Continued from page 1

"The restaurant is open and has been featuring a number of BBQ items on the menu" (Samuel Slater's offers indoor, patio and beachside seating with dine-in service on the weekend in addition to takeout and delivery; reservations are recommended).

"The Indian Princess will be going back into the water and we'll be announcing cruises soon!"

Echoing Mr. Klein's remarks, Ms. Raun Coppola said "the beginning of summer is on the horizon" and with it better times. "We have a lot of big shows planned, 38 Special, Foreigner, Tower of Power, smaller ones to start and larger ones at the end.

"The restaurant just opened for in-person dining.

"We usually wrap things up at the end of September but this year we are extending our season by two weeks, to Columbus Day, and we will be offering a lot of daytime shows.

"Our campground opened May 1st."

"We are all into playing it safe but it's hard as a business not being able to plan ahead," Ms. Raun Coppola said.

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Audiology—Indian

Ranch has packed many of its headline shows into the month of September: Marc Martel, 9/4; Melissa Etheridge, 9/6; CountryFest, 9/11; The Mavericks, 9/12; Los Lobos, 9/18; George Thorogood, 9/19; HairFest, 9/25; Kip Moore, 9/26.

Long known as "the Nashville of the North" for its emphasis on country music, Indian Ranch, which has been in operation on Gore Road in Webster since 1946, now offers a range of music for fans of all ages and persuasions from country to acoustic, blues, roots, rock and pop.

Like other businesspersons, Ms. Raun Coppola has sought financial assistance where it can be obtained.

"We have received some PPE loans and a little grant from Massachusetts and we are working on a Shuttered Venues grant," she said.

What had looked for so long like a drawn-out period of inactivity at Indian Ranch is suddenly looking much more promising on all fronts.

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



The Indian Princess cruise boat will be back in the water, on Webster Lake, this year.

Webster Economic Development

Webster is fast becoming the place to dine

While it may seem as though time has stood still for the last 14 months, there has been a lot happening here in Webster, particularly when it comes to dining destinations.

Webster has always had a wide variety of restaurants and very soon we will be able to add a few more to our list. In spite of COVID-19, we welcomed **The Stave & Still**, which offers a variety of dishes using seasonal ingredients, at 131 Main St.

For smoothies and teas, we had **Factor Level Nutrition** open at 178 Main St.

If Spanish food is on your list, we have two options for you: **Just Wing it** at 548 S. Main St. has Spanish food along with a variety of other items, including pizza. **Caribbean Grill and Market** at 248 Main St. has Spanish food, sandwiches and a small convenience store.

As we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, we have even more choices coming our way. **Monte Bianco** has moved from their Thompson location to 140 Main St. They opened on May 18 with their amazing Italian dishes. Monte Bianco will be BYOB until their full liquor license comes in.

Also opening in May is **Mike's Crunchies and Munchies**. Whether you are in the mood for a snack or dinner they have you covered at 38 Main St.

Then, a little later in the summer we have an old favorite coming back. **Capellini's Italian Restaurant** at 141 Worcester Rd. will be returning with their wide variety of food items.

Also coming to Main Street this summer, at number 175, is a new brick oven pizza restaurant. For now, we can only enjoy their beautiful mural, but

soon we will be able to enjoy their food and drinks.

And let's not forget about the restaurants that have been in town for a long time, bringing you your favorites.

Listed in alphabetical order we have:

Alley Cat Diner, Apollo Pizza, B. Kind Café, Big Belly Café, Bistro Eighty Ates, Booklovers' Gourmet, Cakettes, Delray Docs, East Main Café, Eastern Pearl, Empire Wok, French River Taproom, Friendly's, Golden Greek, Himalaya Wok, Lake Pizza, Mama's Kitchen, Mexicali, Northeast Pizza, Point Breeze, Rainbow Pizza, Samuel Slater's Restaurant, Thai Cuisine, Thai Lemongrass, The Lodge, The Rose Room, Waterfront Mary's, Webster House of Pizza, and Wind Tiki.

If you need something on the run we also have a variety of fast food restaurants in town to suit your needs.

Whether the restaurant that you go to has been in town for decades or just opening, they have had to adjust a lot to follow the COVID guidelines and keep customers and employees safe. Please remember this if it means you might have to be a little more patient.

Thanks to the Webster Development Committee for this dining overview.

Lake Chargooggagoggmanchauuggagoggchaubunagungamaugg

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Slater's Sheep Art Project seeks to engage community with new Webster Museum

Samuel Slater EXPERIENCE

Artists and sponsors invited to participate



The fiberglass life-sized sheep are paintable and fabricated for outdoor display.

WEBSTER – Two hundred years ago, Samuel Slater, now known as the Father of the American Industrial Revolution, built textile mill complexes along the French River and Webster Lake, including one of the country's first woolen mills. Everyone in Webster and surrounding towns knew the Slater name; that is no longer the case.

Later this summer the **Samuel Slater Experience**, which recreates Samuel Slater's life and innovative contributions to textile manufacturing, will open in the former National Guard Armory on Ray Street in Webster.

Leading up to a grand opening of the new museum is the Slater's Sheep community art project, which will reintroduce Samuel Slater to the area's residents in a highly visible, fun way, tying it to his woolen and cotton mills.

The museum has acquired 25 life-sized sheep sculptures and is inviting the commu-



Local artist Dave Laabs has begun painting a Slater Sheep. When finished it will be displayed at a Webster location.

nity to become involved in this pre-opening campaign by decorating the sheep with creative images and naming them.

Local businesses, organizations, civic associations, individuals, and families can support the project as sponsors.

The uniquely painted sheep will be displayed at various locations in Webster and surrounding towns, in sponsors' locations and in public spaces.

Call for Artists
Can you decorate a life-sized sheep with a creative image?

Local artists and school art classes can apply to be on the list of artists that will be provided to sponsors. For details and requirements, contact Barbara Van Reed at bvanreed@samuel Slater Experience.org or call 508-243-6392. Artists will have six weeks to complete the painting and will receive a stipend for time and cost of materials.

Call for Sponsors
Members of the community, businesses, organizations, and individuals are invited to contribute to the Slater's

Sheep art project as sponsors. Each sheep will have a recognition plaque that gives both the name of the artist and the sponsor. For details, email Connie Gallant at cgallant@samuel Slater Experience.org or call 508-243-2543.

The sheep can be displayed at your business location or at another location of your choosing.

Additional Information
For more information about the Samuel Slater Experience, visit www.samuel Slater Experience.org.

Samuel Slater Experience to host WDO Chamber annual meeting

WEBSTER – The Webster-Dudley-Chamber of Commerce invites local businesses to attend its 2021 Annual Meeting, to be held June 8 from 5:30- 7:30 p.m. at the Samuel Slater Experience in Webster.

This will be the first public event hosted at the museum, which will open officially this summer. Attendees at the Chamber's Annual Meeting will be given preview tours of the interactive, 4-D, exhibits, which tell the story of Samuel Slater, known as the Father of the American Industrial Revolution, and the textile manufacturing that made Webster a boomtown in the 1800s.

The formal Chamber meeting will be held outside in a tent on the lawn at the Samuel Slater

Experience, allowing social networking while social distancing. The agenda includes a review of the past year by Chamber President Ross Lavoie, and the election of members of the Board of Directors for 2021.

To register, go to wdochamberma.org or email director John Milas at director@wdochamberma.com, or call 508-943-9700. Member fee is \$25, non-members \$30. Cash bar and appetizers, catered by Samuel Slater Restaurant. Sponsors for the event are Webster Five and Aubuchon Hardware.

The Samuel Slater Experience is at 31 Ray Street, Webster.

The Webster-Dudley-Oxford Chamber of Commerce is an affiliate of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, giving WDO members

of the benefits of the regional association.

Visit the website at www.samuel Slater Experience.org.

SPRED opening

SPRED (Special Religious Education) is opening a southern Worcester Diocese unit and welcoming new members. SPRED is a bi-monthly program for intellectually challenged children (age appropriate levels) and adults to learn about their Christian faith. Meetings are held at the Emmaus Center on the Sacred Heart of Jesus campus in Webster. For more information, please contact the coordinator Linda Brink at Lbrink2019@gmail.com.

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Monte Bianco Restaurante grand opening

After months of anticipation, Monte Bianco Restaurante opened Tuesday, May 18, on Main Street in Webster with a festive ribbon-cutting event attended by family, town officials, and friends. Pictured, Chef Manny Campoverde cuts the ribbon to officially open his restaurant in Webster. On hand to witness the special occasion were Town Manager Doug Willardson, Selectman Earl Gabor, Selectman Andrew Jolda, Monte Bianco family and staff, and State Rep. Joe McKenna.

Grange sponsors summer concert series

DUDLEY – Celebrate summer under the stars this year with the Dudley Grange Summer Concert Series.

The fun kicks off June 5 (raindate June 12) at 7 p.m. with The Blues Crew, a six-person family band doing “50s and 60s favorites, country oldies and Blues Brothers tunes.” Before the band plays, learn the ins and outs of raising backyard chickens from Poulin Grain’s Dan Wright at 6 p.m.

The following month, July 10 (raindate July 17), the Great Garage Band Reunion brings their self-styled “loud and outrageous” 60s and 70s funk, rock, R&B and blues (with six horns) to Center Road at 6 p.m.

The third show, 7 p.m., August 7 (raindate August 14), is still being finalized, but will feature music leading into a chance to stargaze and watch the Perseids meteor shower. NASA volunteer educator Dino Tata will lead that astronomical exploration if the clouds cooperate; bring your telescope or good binoculars, and we will have some available for use.

All three shows are outdoors, all ages and free admission on the grass at Dudley Grange’s historic location, 139 Center Road (next to Nichols College). Bring lawn chairs or blankets, snacks and drinks (no alcohol allowed) and intent to have some fun in the warmth of a summer evening. The series is being sponsored by a grant from the Dudley Cultural Council, the local agency of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. For more information on the Grange itself, go to <https://www.facebook.com/DudleyGrange.163/>.

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Chief's corner

Protocol reminder when exercising your right to vote

By Chief Steven J. Wojnar

Dudley Police Department
Whenever elections take place, signs and other informational material can be found on lawns, utility poles, and a variety of other locations. Some people have experienced problems with signs being removed improperly. With the local elections taking place in a few weeks, I was asked to provide information on this subject.

People lawfully exercising their right to vote must be as free from influence as possible. Voting must take place without intimidation or fear of retribution. When people post signs on their property, supporting a candidate or position, they assume control over them. Any removal or damage will fall under larceny or destruction of property statutes. These are determined on a case-by-case basis. The severity of the punishments will coincide directly to the amount or type of damage done. Threats of physical violence or damage to homes or buildings can carry more severe penalties. The goal is

to avoid any of these unfortunate events.

Obviously, the unauthorized removal or destruction of signs is not appropriate. Many homes and businesses now have camera systems which can assist in the identification of those responsible for these actions. We can criminally charge someone if they are identified engaging in these illegal activities. We certainly hope to avoid having to do that. Proper conduct on everyone's part will result in a fair election process and limit problems. We must respect other points of view and proceed forward in an orderly and cooperative manner. Finally, please remove signs promptly after an election. These can be a hazard if left in place too long. Thanks in advance for your assistance with this matter.

Another important reminder is the guidance for behavior on election day. Many regulations governing polling places are contained in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 54. Section 65 is entitled "Ac-

tivities at polling places." The law is rather comprehensive. It states in part, "no poster, card, handbill, placard, picture or circular intended to influence the action of the voter shall be posted, exhibited, circulated or distributed in the polling place, in the building where the polling place is located, on the walls thereof, on the premises on which the building stands, or within one hundred and fifty feet of

the building entrance door to such polling place." This can include shirts, stickers, buttons, signs, etc. Boundaries are established where these materials can be displayed lawfully on the day of elections. People should not bring or wear anything to the polling place that may fit into this category. Everyone's cooperation is greatly appreciated.

As the pandemic continues, we are encouraged that the

state is in the process of reopening. Some mask requirements and other limitations will remain. We ask everyone to stay safe during this process and continue to take precautions to protect yourselves. Vaccination information can be found at www.dudleyma.gov or by calling 508-949-8036. This has been a challenging year plus for everyone. We, at the Dudley Police Department, 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.

Summer yard sales

The Helping Hand summer yard sales schedule has been announced. The time of each sale is 8 am to noon. The dates include June 5 and June 19, July 10 and July 24, August 7 and August 21, and September 11. The yard sales are held at Dodge Chapel, 81 Hammond Hill Road, Charlton. To donate call Deb 508-987-0708, Annette 508-347-7596, or Judy 508-248-5580.



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Living well and looking good

There's no such thing as 'cure' for Autism

By Keith Roach, M.D.

DEAR DR. ROACH: A friend took her autistic son to a clinic in Mexico where he was fed a bleach solution that was supposed to cure his autism, but instead it made him very sick. He was deeply distressed and regressed in his behavior, and there was nothing my friend could do because in Mexico these kinds of clinics are allowed to operate with impunity. Isn't there some way to stop this kind of thing? - P.P.L.
ANSWER: Before I get into why this story makes me both sad and angry, I want to address autism. Autism is an increasingly diagnosed condition that

includes difficulty with social interactions, stereotyped repetitive movements and delayed language skills, although there is a subset of people with autism with no language delay. It's absolutely critical to recognize that autism is a spectrum condition, ranging from people with profound disabilities to those who are so mildly affected that the diagnosis is very subtle. Correct diagnosis is complicated, even for an expert. Intellectual abilities in autism range from severe cognitive impairment to far above-normal intelligence. As such,

the proper medical care of a person with autism depends on his or her unique situation.

Although most people on the autism spectrum need some extra empathy and understanding in order to have the best possible life, people with autism do not need to be "cured." There is no "cure" for autism, so when you hear a professed "cure," you should be deeply suspicious. In the case of the bleach so-

lution, it is sadly not just in Mexico where this happens. The Food and Drug Administration had to warn consumers against the use of a product called "miracle mineral solution," "chlorine dioxide" and other names. It is hard for me to believe the FDA has to warn people not to drink (or make your child drink) a

powerful bleaching agent, but there are increasing reports of its use. It causes damage to the intestines, as you correctly note, but may also cause liver failure, nausea and vomiting, and dehydration. There is no evidence that this "treatment" is effective for any condition, even though

it is marketed for cancer and HIV as well as autism. This is what makes me angry: I cannot imagine a crime much worse than profiting off of a treatment known to be both dangerous and ineffective.

What makes me sad is that I can empathize with parents who have a child with autism who want their child to be more like other children, more "normal." It takes time to come to grips with the fact that your child is not like others, but that he or she is a unique person who should be loved and accepted for who he or she is. That means finding creative ways to really help your child. There is a wide range of appropriate treatments for people with autism, preferably considered as early as possible,

which is why it is so important to make the correct diagnosis quickly in a child with autism.

DR. ROACH WRITES: After my recent column on mercury, a toxicologist wrote to remind me that metallic mercury can be absorbed through the skin and thus mercury, such as from a broken thermometer, should never be played with and should be properly disposed of.

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. (c) 2021 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved

To your good health



Pictured left to right: Joe Altavilla, SNE District Sales Manager; David Fayard, Sales Consultant; Carrille Dionne, Sales Consultant; Stephen Geer, Sales Manager; Scott Barry, Long Subaru Dealer Principal; Angela Stefanik, Accounting; Marie Costa, Accounting; and Abigail Granville, Service Advisor.

Long Subaru Shares the Love

The Subaru *Share the Love* event ran from Nov. 19, 2020 - Jan. 4, 2021 and combined with donations from Long Subaru Service and Sales departments generated a \$20,000 donation this year to Long's hometown charity, Boys & Girls Club of Webster Dudley.

This is the fourth year that the BGCWD has participated in this event with Long Subaru and checks presented total \$81,160.

Long Subaru also supports the BGCWD through their Back-a-Kid program, the annual Fill the Forester event, and more.

TLGV, Thompson Rec, TEEG and more team up for summer camp

The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) has partnered with Thompson Recreation, TEEG and others to offer a unique summer camp experience for 6th to 8th graders. Registration for the camp is now open and space is limited. Visit thompsonrec.org or call 860-923-9440 to register.

Up to eight campers in each session will spend one week exploring the Air Line Trail State Park. There are two sessions for the camp, June 28 - July 2 and August 16 - 20. Session one will travel the Air Line Trail from Thompson to Pomfret. Session two will begin in Hampton and end in Lebanon. All travel will be provided from the Thompson Recreation drop-off point and campers will return to Thompson at the end of each day.

Activities include a hike to the tri-state marker, orienteering, letterboxing, pottery,

historical tours and more. The idea for the camp experience grew out other efforts in Thompson to promote interest in the Air Line State Park Trail, including the design of an interpretive park at the site of the Great East Thompson Train Wreck and a multi-town initiative to develop a series of map-brochures highlighting the tourism assets in each community. All of the towns hosting activities for this special summer camp are also members of the 12-Town Task Force working to develop a master plan for the Air Line Trail, led by CT RC&D.

Funding for the camp is possible through a grant from the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut Foundation, The Last Green Valley, the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation

Assistance Program and private donors. The cost of camp is \$75 per week for Thompson residents and \$100 for non-residents. Financial assistance is available.

The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor is the last stretch of dark night sky in the coastal sprawl between Boston and Washington, D.C. The Last Green Valley, Inc. is a member-supported, non-profit organization working for you in the National Heritage Corridor. Together we can care for, enjoy and pass on The Last Green Valley!

TEEG (Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group) is a grassroots non-profit social service agency in North Groves-nordale. TEEG serves the communities of Thompson, Woodstock and Pomfret providing "a handup not a handout."

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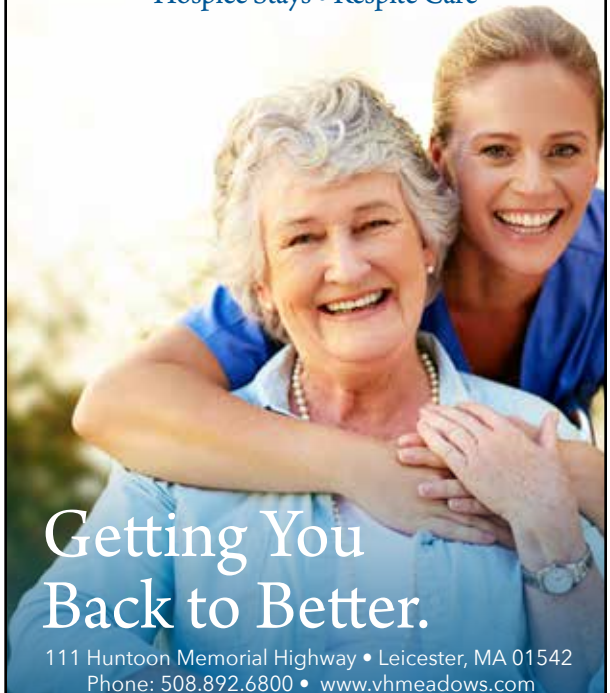
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Check presented to Drug Task Force



Pictured (left to right): Webster Police Deputy Chief Toby Wheeler, Charlton Police Chief Daniel Dowd, Oxford Police Chief Anthony Saad, Worcester County D.A. Joseph Early Jr., Dudley Police Chief Steve Wojnar, Webster Police chief Michael Shaw, Sturbridge Police Chief Earl Dessert, and Sturbridge Lieutenant Joseph Lombardi. (the member not present was Southbridge Police Chief Shane Woodson.)

On Monday, May 17, Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr. visited with police chiefs and command staff officers of the South Worcester County Drug and Counter Crime Task Force. This took place at the Webster Police Department.

DA Early presented the group with a check for \$10,000 to assist the organization with their drug and counter crime en-

forcement efforts in the Southern Worcester County area.

Partner police departments include Charlton, Dudley, Oxford, Southbridge, Sturbridge, and Webster. These agencies share the common goal to remove illegal drugs and their associated activities from the communities and provide a safer environment for all the residents. The Task Force wishes to thank District Attorney Early for his generous donation.

Oxford town hall fully reopened to the public; announces new hours

OXFORD - Town Manager Jennifer Callahan announced the Oxford Town Hall is now fully re-opened to the public. "With the COVID-19 case rates trending downward and increased vaccine availability, we feel confident in our ability to safely reopen the Town Hall to the public," stated Callahan.

Throughout the pandemic, town hall employees continued to work in town hall addressing residents' needs and worked to make more services available online. Additionally, a customer service window was opened four days a week to allow for in-person transactions.

Callahan also announced new hours for town hall. "Prior to the pandemic, I had announced new town hall hours which are more customer-friendly in that they include one night where we are open to the public," said Callahan. "With the reopening, we are launching these new hours, which I believe will be welcomed by the community. Many town halls offer an evening for their residents and this was an area where I felt customer service in Oxford could be improved."

The town hall is now open Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Wed-

nesday from 9 a.m.-7 p.m.; and Friday from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

COVID-19 precautions will be followed inside of town

hall including the use of masks, social distancing, frequent disinfecting, and the availability of hand sanitizer.

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Seated (l to r) Dick Norton, Vice Commander; Stephen Rogerson, Commander and Veterans Service Officer; Bob Guenther Quartermaster. Standing: Ron Prest, Trustee; Randy Snow, Trustee; John Blissell, Trustee; Kenny Kudzal, Chaplain; James Brinker, Past Commander of Post 654 who presided over the installation and the swearing of officers.

VFW Installation of officers

On Tuesday, May 11, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 654, representing the Towns of Webster and Dudley, held their installation of officers for the fiscal year 2022. VFW Post 654 celebrated its 100th anniversary in March 2021. The Post is named after the late Charles R. Guenther of Webster who was killed in the performance of his duty during World War I with the US Army in the Field Artillery.

He was awarded the Army Cross along with many other medals for his outstanding dedication to our country.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a nonprofit veterans service organization comprising veterans and military service members from the active, guard and reserve forces.

The VFW can trace their roots back to 1899 when

veterans of the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippine Insurrection (1899-1902) founded local organizations to secure rights and benefits for their service. Many arrived home wounded or sick. There was no medical care or veterans' pension for them, and they were left to care for themselves.

In their grief and suffering, some of these veterans banded together and later formed organizations that would eventually become known as the Veterans of Foreign Wars. After chapters were formed in Ohio, Colorado and Pennsylvania, the movement quickly gained momentum. Today, membership stands at more than 1.5 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary.

The VFW has many programs and services that work to support veterans, service members and their families, as well as communities nationwide. Please feel free to contact the VFW Post 654 in Webster for more information. The VFW Post is located in the Veterans Home, 4 Veterans Way, Webster, adjacent to St. Louis Church on Lake Street. The VFW Post also holds monthly meetings at 7:00pm on the second Tuesday of the month and veterans are welcome to participate in meetings. You can also contact the Commander, Stephen Rogerson by email at vwfpost654@vfwma.org.

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Programs and events @ the Pearle

DUDLEY - Join The Pearle L. Crawford Library for one of its virtual programs at the Pearle, 40 Schofield Ave., Dudley. To register go to 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 a.m. Join Deb Hudgins on Facebook for Music and Movement, one of our most popular programs. Nothing gets kids on their feet and having fun quite like songs, dance and silly stories, and Miss Deb has been. No Facebook account is needed for this free program. Just point your browser to <https://www.facebook.com/crawfordlibrary> to access the video.

Seed exchange throughout May. Have leftover tomato seeds you don't know what to do with? Want to try growing flowers? Changed your mind about that kind of squash? The Pearle is hosting a seed exchange during the month of May - take some seeds to try, leave the seeds you don't need, and get gardening. Exchange boxes will be placed in the library and all are

welcome to contribute flower or vegetable seeds or take some seeds for growing in your own garden.

Understanding your cat, Thursday, June 10 6:30-7:45 p.m. Join us for a presentation by Dr. Rachel Geller, certified cat behaviorist, as she shares insights into what makes cats tick and discusses the typical cat behavioral issues that she encounters in her work. Have a question about your feline friend's behavior? Dr. Geller will help you see what makes your cat tick. Considering getting a cat or kitten? Dr. Geller can help you decide which cat is purr-fect for your family. Questions are encouraged during this interactive Zoom program. Free. Open to all ages, but registration is required. Registered participants will receive a link for the Zoom program 24 hours before the event.

Summer reading kickoff event: Tails and Tales with Jungle Jim Monday, June 21 3 p.m. Join us on Zoom for our Summer Reading kickoff event with returning favorite magician Jungle Jim! Free, but registration is required. Registered participants will receive a link for the Zoom program 24 hours before the event. Sponsored by Hugh W. and Harriet K. Crawford Endowment.

Lunch time story times: Wednesdays at noon throughout the summer. Story time will be held outside in the lot near the children's wing. There will be a take home craft each week that goes with what we read.

These are geared for ages 0-5. Sessions are limited to 15 families. Be advised we will be in a wooded lot so bug spray and sunscreen is recommended.

6/23 Fish; 6/30 Unicorns; 7/7 Mermaids; 7/14 Dragons; 7/21 Animal Safari; 7/28 Bubble Party. Free; registration required.

Make a bug hotel - Friday, June 25 - multiple sessions. A backyard habitat series for birds and pollinators. This program teaches participants the basics of backyard habitats. We will be making a bug hotel to hang in your yard. This is for ages 6+. Limited to five participants per session. Sponsored by the Hugh and Harriet Crawford Endowment. Free, registration required.

Make a magic wand - Tuesday, June 29 - multiple sessions. Come join us to make a magic wand. This is geared for ages 8-12. Limited to five participants per session. Sponsored by the Hugh and Harriet Crawford Endowment. Free, registration required.

Rock painting - Thursday, July 1 - multiple sessions. Join us to paint your own rock. We will have some sample ideas you can copy or make your own idea. Ages 8-14. Limited to five participants per session. Sponsored by the Hugh and Harriet Crawford Endowment. Free, registration required.

Playful engineers - Tuesday, July 6, 11 a.m. Jay Mankita leads a Rube Goldberg-inspired romp into the world of building complicated chain reactions to accomplish simple tasks, from our own ordinary stuff. Free, but registration is required. Registered participants will receive a link for the Zoom program 24 hours before the event. Sponsored by the Dudley Cultural Council.

Mermaid keychains - Friday, July 9 - multiple sessions. Join us to make your own mermaid keychain using yarn and beads. Ages 8-14. Limited to five participants per session. Sponsored by the Hugh and Harriet Crawford Endowment. Free; registration required.

Nurse of St. Vincent Hospital speaks out

Hello—

My name is Melissa MacDonald. I am a nurse on strike at St. Vincent Hospital, Worcester, and I am starting my 37th year in nursing serving the public of Worcester County.

I am one of so many who have spent our entire careers at St. Vincent Hospital. We are asking the public for your continued support and to keep us in your thoughts and prayers.

We are fighting a for-profit-owner, Tenet Healthcare Corporation, which is based in Dallas, Texas. They have put profits over patients since they bought St. Vincent Hospital.

The striking nurses have been waiting for about two years for a fair contract.

We want Tenet to do the right thing for the nurses and for this community. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Melissa MacDonald
and the striking nurses
of St. Vincent Hospital

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Memorial Day parade cancellation

Dear town residents,

It is with much sadness that I inform our community that there will not be a Memorial Day Parade again this year. In light of the fact that the restrictions which were in place during the pandemic were not lifted until last week, there was no time or opportunity to make arrangements with such short notice. In order to plan a parade of the stature the Towns of Webster and Dudley have come to expect, we would need at least four months of preparation if not more and whereas there was no parade last year, many extra steps would have been needed and many changes took place in that year that affect the planning of the parade.

Please take a few moments on this holiday to remember those who have lost their lives in their endeavor to keep our country free. This is still the time to show respect by praying and honoring these heroes who have passed, however, there will be no public events or gatherings for this Memorial Day, May 31.

As far as the veterans organizations in our community and the veterans themselves are concerned, we will honor our fallen comrades by placing wreaths, flowers and flags at all heroes' squares and monuments within the Towns of Dudley and Webster prior to Memorial Day as we always do. We will also make sure all veterans' gravesites at all cemeteries in the towns of Dudley and Webster will receive an American Flag and receive military honors by the veteran community. We have already started these activities and will continue throughout the month of May.

Please keep all veterans in mind during this holiday. Stay safe. Thank you.

Stephen P. Rogerson

Veterans' Services Officer/Veterans Burial Agent

St. Andrew Bobola's new family Mass

Saint Andrew Bobola Catholic Church, 54 West Main Street, Dudley, will now celebrate Holy Mass on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. for children and families. The Mass will be short, not much longer than 30 minutes. The church seeks to provide a safe, welcoming environment where children and families can pray, worship God, learn, practice and witness their faith. Church pews are sanitized after each Mass. We practice safe social distancing with every other row blocked-off. Visitors to the church wear required facial coverings. For more info, please call the rectory at 508-943-5633. Please join us for this weekly family Mass as we thank God for all His blessings and give Him praise, honor and glory.

-Nancy Vajcovec

Bay Path Practical nursing students hosted a fundraiser plant sale

CHARLTON— The Bay Path Practical Nursing (PN) Academy, PN Class of 2021 hosted a plant sale the week before Mother's Day.

The members of the PN Class of 2021 offered a wide variety of plants with appropriate COVID-19 precautions in place. The fundraiser benefited an alumna diagnosed with cancer. The plants sold from an anonymous donor's garden which had been grown specifically for the sale including Chinese Money

Plant (Pilea), ZZ plant, Tiger Aloe, Snake Plant, Jade Plant, Peperomia, Oxalis, Pothos, Bromeliad, Ivy, Anthurium, and Cereus plants. The funds raised totaled \$505.

The fundraiser plant sale was made possible by the support of Khamphan Houatchanthara of Southbridge, Meghan Reidy of Auburn, Loise Kamero of Worcester, Tianna Welcome of Oxford, and the generosity of the management and employees of Simon Says Pizza Chef of Southbridge.



Meghan Reidy of Auburn with some of the plants that were sold.

Scholarship recipient

The Oxford Board of Selectmen announced that Tianna Welcome is a recipient of the 2021 Hannah Harwood Fund Scholarship. This scholarship is given to Oxford students pursuing degrees in medicine and allied health fields. The fund was established through the 1902 will of Charles Harwood in memory of his late mother, Hannah.

Tianna is a student at Bay Path RVTNS Practical Nursing Academy and achievements include: Candidate National Technical Honor Society; certified Mental health First Aid (National Council for Behavioral Health); Certified Dementia Care; member UNICEF Club, member Mock Code Team; attendee Vital Signs: Understanding What the Body is Telling Us (University of Pennsylvania); attendee, COVID-19 Contact Tracing (Johns Hopkins University). She is the recipient



Tianna Welcome

of the Horatio Alger Association Scholarship and Massachusetts Rhode Island League for Nursing Scholarship (MARILN).

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Ticket to Work program brings employers and workers together

By Janet Stoica

People with disabilities can achieve and accomplish as much as any other employee. It's all a matter of matching up each employer with an individual's capability.

At Life-Skills, it is Kim Lapworth's goal to make this happen. She is the vocational trainer for Life-Skill's Ticket to Work (TTW) program, which is designed to provide work-

place support for individuals with disabilities.

Her immediate challenge is to create awareness for the TTW program, as she says it is underutilized. She wants to get the word out to potential employees who receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance) and SSI (Supplemental Security Income) that they shouldn't be afraid to explore

their employment options.

The TTW program includes a safety net of assistance along with long-term support to success. "We focus on a person's ability and not their disability," says Ms. Lapworth. "We'll work with potential employees and employers to come up with reasonable accommodations for both to ensure long-term success. We're here

to help people find a job and keep working."

The Massachusetts' Ticket to Work program allows individuals receiving SSDI benefits to work and earn money without losing their benefits. "Disabilities shouldn't keep anyone from fulfilling their career goals," she says. "Each individual is perfectly capable of success. There's a place at the table for everyone."

The Massachusetts TTW program offered through the Social Security Administration also serves individuals through Mass. Rehab. It is a voluntary program for individuals receiving SSDI and SSI benefits.

Income limits can be discussed with the TTW counselor. Individuals aged 18-64 are eligible for the TTW program. Sheltered workshops used to be the norm but as things have moved to inclusivity and integration with all of society, so too has the TTW program evolved.

Ms. Lapworth has been with Life-Skills for many years and reveals that she too has a disability. Her awareness of what other others with similar challenges face makes her an excellent mentor for anyone wanting to become a part of the labor force.

She explains that the TTW goal is to help people get back to work full-time and to transition from SSDI and SSI benefits. Potential employees are guided and assisted with their resumes and with the network of potential employ-

ers that Ms. Lapworth has successfully worked with in the area, matches are quite fruitful. "If you have motivation, then the sky's the limit," she says. "With some of our clients, there is no end to their ambition. They want to get out there and do their jobs. They are willing to be diligent, ensuring their success. Additionally, with all that's gone on with COVID, employers are now looking at and beginning to value all who we work with. Our potential employees have been very reliable."

"There are many individuals out there who would like to try to go back to work," she said, "but they worry about their medical insurance and if other benefits will be taken away. With the TTW program, however, there's all sorts of safety nets. If your job doesn't work out, you can still get your benefits back. The good thing is though that once you get out there, you'll find yourself becoming very self-sufficient."

Life-Skills also offers a Milestone Reward Program where monetary incentives are offered after one and three months to assist the employee with everyday expenses.

"If some employees choose to disclose their disability to their employers, it's up to them. Our goal is to help people apply for competitive employment opportunities just like everyone else. We do assist them in working with job boards like Indeed.com so



Kim Lapworth

they're working just as hard as everyone else out there to find a job. Employers do receive a tax break and Federal employers are mandated to have a certain percent of employees from SSDI."

Kim will reach out to employers regarding the benefits of having a disabled employee on their payroll. She will brainstorm with the employer to assist in accommodating the employee. It's a win-win situation. "If someone has a career dream and is receiving disability assistance, give me a call. We'll work together to make your goals happen," said Ms. Lapworth. She can be reached from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Mon-Fri at (508) 943-0700, Ext. 2171.

Email: voctrainer@life-skillsinc.org Life-Skills, Inc., 44 Morris Street, Webster MA

Contact Janet: jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

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FOOD AND FUN PULL-OUT SECTION

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

Community yard sale - spaces available

AUBURN— Spring cleaning? Don't throw that good "stuff" away. Recycle it by selling it to someone who needs it. Do you have an accumulation of things that are too good to throw away but you no longer need? Don't have enough to hold your own yard sale? Join us on the lawn of the First Congregational Church, Saturday, June 12, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., for our annual Community Yard Sale/Plant Sale. This is a rain or shine event.

After having to cancel the 2020 yard sale we are excited to say we are back for this year. Because we have all been so restricted in what we could do this past year we anticipate even more people setting up to sell their "treasures" as well as a larger turnout of people looking for that special bargain or those out to get a feel for a return of normalcy. Masks will be required and all COVID guidelines will be enforced.

We also will be having our Plant Sale. There will be a large selection of annuals and perennials. Those who have been buying plants from us return year after year and see how each year we have more and more to offer. This year should be no different.

Spaces are available for a \$25.00 fee; a limited number of tables may be rented for \$5.00 each. We'll do all the advertis-

ing, both print and digital, and will post plenty of signs the day of the event at key locations in town. Depending on the COVID restrictions in place at the time we hope to have coffee and pas-

tries, and hot dogs and soda available for sale.

Due to our central location and previous yard sales (26), we expect a large turnout. Don't delay, reserve your

space now by calling Cindy Dube at 508-832-6646, please leave message, or the church office at 508-832-2845. You may also text 774-238-0260.

— Cindy Dube

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Cedar Street Café | 508-347-6800 | cedarstreetcafesturbridge.com

TLGV offers youth engagement grant opportunity

The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) has reimagined its annual grant program to focus on the needs of youth. The 2021 Youth Engagement Grant is designed to benefit youth (under 21) in projects to conserve, celebrate or enhance The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor's significant natural and historic resources or promote economic development.

Projects enhancing access for diverse audiences to the abundant natural and historic resources of the National Heritage Corridor are also encouraged. Projects developed or led by youth will receive priority consideration. The grant is open to nonprofits, municipalities and schools.

"We know many of our local nonprofits and organizations could use a boost from the

energy, vitality and new ideas youth can bring," said Lois Bruinooge, executive director of TLGV. "At the same time, young people need a supportive community around them more than ever. This grant program is one way we can support both young people and our community organizations to come together for the betterment of the entire National Heritage Corridor and everyone who lives, works and plays in it."

TLGV has committed up to \$30,000 to the program. Grants will range from \$3,000 - \$5,000. Funds will be dispersed on a reimbursement basis and must be matched 1:1 by cash or in-kind contributions. Projects that demonstrate the ability to generate more than 1:1 match will be given greater consideration.

All grant applications will be reviewed by a committee and allocations are approved by the TLGV Board of Directors. Applications must be post-marked or hand-delivered by 4 p.m. July 29. Applications may also be emailed to LyAnn@tlgv.org before 11:59 p.m., July 29. For the details of the program and application requirements please visit TheLastGreenValley.org/learn-protect/grant-opportunities/

The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor is the last stretch of dark night sky in the coastal sprawl between Boston and Washington, D.C. The Last Green Valley, Inc. is a member-supported, nonprofit organization working for you in the National Heritage Corridor. Together we can care for, enjoy and pass on The Last Green Valley.

Winfried P. Sommerfeld Photography Exhibit

The Auburn Historical Society and Museum is proud to be hosting the Winfried P. Sommerfeld photography exhibit created by Fred Miriani, from the Photographic Preservation Center in Cambridge.

Winfried P. Sommerfeld emigrated from his native Germany in 1945. Following his tour of duty in the US Army, he settled in Auburn. When stationed in Texas he photographed his army buddies who, impressed with his photographic skills, encouraged him to pursue a career in photography. Sommerfeld returned to Auburn and established Sommerfeld Photo Film on Southbridge Street. He traveled New England's country roads, photographing the vernacular architecture of motels, restaurants, and the rapidly growing automobile industry.

His photographs were printed as postcards and as advertisements and publicity. The Photographic Preservation Center which, with support of Mass Humanities, The Dr. Arthur Pappas and Dr. Martha Pappas Foundation and the Auburn Historical Museum is preserving over 1,000 of Sommerfeld's historic photographs.

Many of these photographs will be on display at the Museum at 41 South Street. Admission is free to the public on Saturdays and Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

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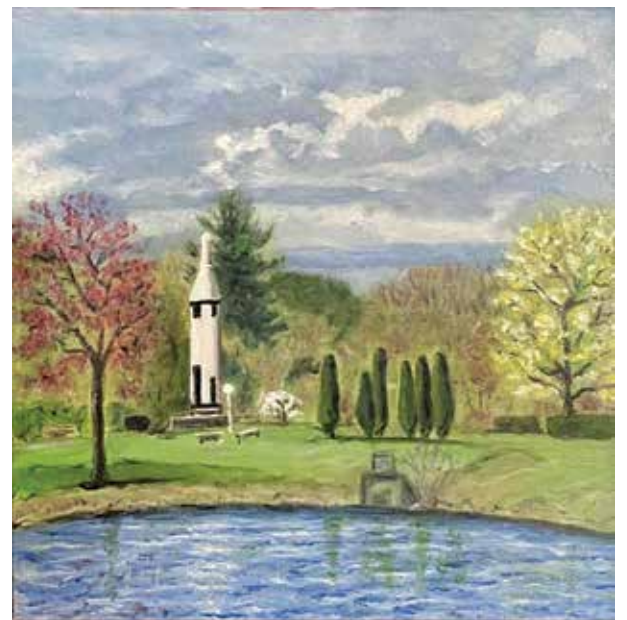
Auburn Recreation and Culture is offering Plein Air - painting outdoors, \$20 per session, \$110 for 6 sessions May 19 - June 23, Wednesdays 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., rain date Thursdays. Pre-registration is required and payment info contact kpappas@town.auburn.ma.us 508-832-7736 or 508-755-3291.

Acrylic painting classes for 15 students of any level, preferable some knowledge of basic acrylic painting, 13 years of age and older. Classes will be based on the foundational principles of painting

landscape. Class discussion on composition, color, value, building shapes and forms, light and shadow, and knowing when a work is done. We will paint at different locations throughout Auburn. Also, if additional time is needed to complete the art work, there will be a one hour follow-up session the next day at the location: Pakachoag Golf Course, Dr. Robert Goddard Park - Fire Station, Auburn Pond - Library, Auburn Senior Center, Water Street Memorial and Pakachoag Golf Course.

Supplies included in cost: acrylic paint, brushes, canvas, table easels, and palette paper pad. Students bring: jar of water, paper towels, newspaper, or rags, old cookie sheet (to hold palette paper) and table and chair.

Instructor Jayne Sarkisian is an art enthusiast and a lifelong resident of Auburn, enjoys painting landscape, sunrises and sunsets, and paintings that reflect nature. She pursued her talent by completing two degrees in Fine Arts at Leicester Jr. College and The



Worcester Art Museum. While raising two boys, she completed her Bachelor's degree in Education, and worked in the auto insurance field. In 2014, Jayne started a part-time business, Sarkisian Studios. She teaches acrylic painting and crafts to small private groups and to large groups raising money for charities. Jayne has recently retired, is now fine-

tuning her painting skills, expanding her paint business, and selling her artwork on Etsy and The Discerning Kaleidoscope. Jayne's teaching is a way of giving back and sharing her love of painting and the arts. jaynesark@aol.com, 508-414-2486, [facebook.com/SarkisianStudios](https://www.facebook.com/SarkisianStudios), [etsy.com/shop/SarkisianStudios](https://www.etsy.com/shop/SarkisianStudios).
- Kristen M. Pappas

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The fireworks are on - July 3

WEBSTER - Saturday, July 3, grab a blanket and a picnic dinner for the return of fireworks in Webster. The fireworks display will take place at Memorial Beach and will start at 9 p.m. Cost is \$10. The beach will open at 5 p.m. for this event. Carole Marchand shared this post on Facebook: We want to thank everyone for being patient. It was worth the wait. After watching the trend of COVID guidelines and having different discussions we have decided that Webster will be setting off fireworks this year at the beach. We will be scaling back as far as when the beach will open and not doing the food trucks and music. But we will have fireworks. When we get closer to the date we will have more information on the guidelines. But for now you can mark off July 3 on your calendar.



Douglas Orchard announces 12-concert series

One local concert venue that is not missing a beat this summer is Douglas Orchard & Farm, which has lined up 12 concerts at its outdoor pavilion for Saturday evenings,

beginning June 5, from 6 to 8 p.m. This will be the fourth year that the farm has offered the live concerts, which have become popular with local communities.

Among the featured bands are The Silverbacks with late 60s classic rock, the Hip Swayers with classic country, and 4EverFab with a Beatles tribute, the latter two sponsored by the Mass Cultural Council and Douglas Cultural

Council. Concert-goers can also visit the farm animals and try some barbecue. Bring a chair or blanket.

Concerts admission is \$10 per person, under 16 free. Cultural council concerts are free. Complete schedule with rain dates is on their website douglasorchardandfarm.com.

Douglas Orchard & Farm is located at 36 Locust Street in Douglas.

Author event

Saturday, June 26, 2-3:30 p.m. - an author event with Debi Graham-Leard and her latest novel, *Wedding Interrupted*, will take place at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 East Main Street, Webster. Free, RSVP requested. Call 508-949-6232 or email deb@bookloversgourmet.com

'Wedding Interrupted' - the 4th story in the mystery series - takes Gwen and her cousin Sally from Harbor Falls to Cape Cod in search of proof that her niece is innocent of any wrongdoing.



New England author Debi Graham-Leard retired from her marketing position in the business world before writing her first Gwen Andrews mystery titled *The Uninvited Guest*. Three more mysteries have been published in the series. Born in Delaware, she now resides with her husband in southeastern Massachusetts. For more information, visit debigrahamleard.com

Yard Sale

St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church will hold its Yard Sale on Saturday, June 19, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the church grounds, 126 Morris Street, Southbridge. Come one - come all - something for everyone.

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Booklovers' Gourmet in-person events

Booklovers Gourmet is pleased to announce that they are starting in-person events in June. Deb Horan requests, anyone who plans to attend, to RSVP via email to deb@booklovers-gourmet.com, or phone 508-949-6232, as there are capacity limitations.

June Art Exhibit - "Inspired by Nature," paintings by Jean Walker will be on display and for sale June 1-30, at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 East Main Street, Webster. A meet

ed getting commission work for her paintings. To her surprise and delight, students in the class were buying her paintings. As time went on, she acquired her own painting style, which comes from her love of nature. Jean has also taken lessons from Pierre Theriault, an artist in Charlton. With Pierre, Jean took her painting skill to another level, learning many mediums such as oils, pastels, tempera and oil pastels.

Saturday, June 5 at 2:30 p.m. - **Meet and greet** with Steven Rogers, author of *Into the Room*, A Contemporary Christian Novel & Book One in The Accidental Pilgrim Trilogy.

Can a journey across the Holy Land redeem a reluctant pilgrim? Ben Cahill's life is an alcohol-saturated mess. After an insincere effort in a rehab facility, he is alienated from his family, out of work, and determined to continue his habit. To make matters worse, thanks to his brother, he reluctantly finds himself on a twelve-day tour of Israel, along with, as he calls them, a bunch of Holy Rollers. As the trip progresses, Ben experiences the Holy Land's major historical sites and is exposed to God's word. He interacts with his fellow travelers, gradually learning about their faith and their lives. Along the way, Ben becomes embroiled in a spiritual war, reinforcing his guilt and, in turn, forcing him

to recall his past actions and behaviors. He also begins a different journey, one that leads him to redemption and a place in God's family.

Steve Rogers is an award-winning author and novelist. After attending The College of the Holy Cross, he became a Certified Public Accountant and went on to fill various roles in public accounting and private industry. When asked to describe his professional career, he uses the phrase, "fortunate beyond all reason." It enabled him to travel extensively around the United States, visit Amsterdam, England and South America, meet famous people like Alan Alda, Howie Long, and Earl Hamner, ride in a private jet, tour a nuclear power plant, interact with members of Congress, and, incredibly, stand next to Bill Clinton as the former President shaved in a public restroom. More importantly, his corporate career created profound and enduring friendships. In addition, Steve fondly remembers his time as a fifth-grade teacher, a role he filled for three years between financially oriented gigs.

In his free time, Steve loves to fish, hike, and travel. His favorite destinations are Israel, Jordan, Costa Rica, and Italy. Having grown up in Massachusetts, he is a die-hard Boston sports fan and enjoys visiting Maine every summer to fish. Steve, a proud father of three adult children and one incredibly lucky son-in-law, is happily married to his wife of thirty-four years, Kathy. They live in Richmond, Virginia.



and greet with the artist will take place on Saturday, June 12 from 2-4 p.m. Please RSVP to 508-949-6232 or deb@bookloversgourmet.com.

Jean Walker is a lifelong resident of Webster. Jean is married to her high school sweetheart and together they have two great children. Jean always wanted to paint and was surprised and excited that a paint studio opened in Webster in 2012. The studio was owned and operated by Cindy Smith, a talented artist who has been teaching for many years. With Cindy's teaching skill, Jean learned quickly and soon start-



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Dudley Womens Club completes the COVID Year

On Thursday, May 13, the DWC completed its 13th year with a fun banquet night in the barn at Roseland Park in Woodstock, CT. Delicious dinners supplied by Our Father's Table were enjoyed as the COVID-challenged club year came to an end. More than half of the members were able to join in for a game-filled recap night of last year's accomplishments. Despite the pandemic, DWC not only survived, maintained its usual level of giving projects but also "bloomed" (the current fundraising activity). As the photo shows, all enjoyed the opportunity to enjoy each other's company and to actually see each other's fully vaccinated faces.



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Tuesday 7:00-8:00 pm	Recovery Bible Study
Tuesday 8:15-9:15 pm	All Recovery Meeting
Wednesday 6:30-8:00 pm	Recovery Yoga
Thursday 6:00 pm-6:45 pm	Workout with Rachel Adams at Fitforyou Studio
Thursday 7:00-8:00 pm	Loved Ones Support Group
Friday 6:00-7:00 pm	Recovery Art class
Friday 8:00-9:00 pm	"Vision of Hope"—NA mtg.
Saturday 7:00-8:30 pm	Music in Recovery

All of our activities are free of charge. Just need to talk with someone about your recovery or that of a loved one? Call Pastor Janice (PJ) at 508-330-8073. She can meet with you in person or by phone or arrange for you to speak with a peer recovery coach. Never hesitate to reach out!

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DAV installation

On Tuesday, May 13, the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 53, representing the Towns of Webster, Oxford and Dudley, held their installation of officers for the fiscal year 2022.

The Disabled American Veterans of the United States is a nonprofit veterans service organization comprising veterans who are disabled due to service connected disabilities.

Today, the DAV has many programs and services that work to support veterans, service members and their

families, as well as communities nationwide. Please feel free to contact the DAV Chapter 53 in Webster for more information. The DAV Chapter 53 is located in the Veterans Home, 4 Veterans Way, Webster, adjacent to St. Louis Church on Lake Street. The DAV Chapter also holds monthly meetings at 7:00 pm on the second Thursday of the month and veterans are welcome to participate in meetings. You can also contact the Commander, Rinkie Lithicum by email rinkie@charter.net.



Pictured (l to r) Jim Brinker, Past DAV Commander; Rinkie Lithicum, new DAV Commander; Stephen Rogerson, Veterans Services Officer; Bob Mailloux, Past DAV Commander; Al Pizzetti, Treasurer; John Wojcek, Past DAV Commander, and Shannon Daggett, Adjutant.

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Standing guard: protect what you've worked for shares ways you can address key risks you may encounter and strategies to help prepare for the unexpected.

This program will be a webinar held via Zoom. The date is Wednesday, June 9, from 6-7 p.m. Speaker/presenter is Dennis Antonopoulos, Financial Advisor for Edward Jones (Auburn) and Attorney Brenda Rivard.

To register please call Karen Rieser at 508-832-5385 or email Karen.rieser@edwardjones.com by June 8, to receive the Zoom link. This a part of a monthly webinar series held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

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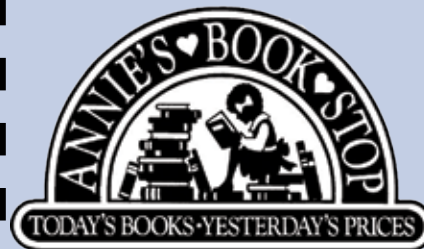
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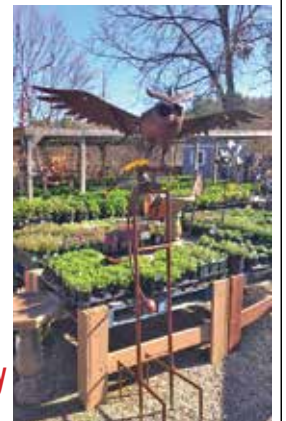
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Living with Lincoln

I'm only human

By Amy Palumbo-LeClaire
My house is not the same. I sit out on the deck to write, to remember him. The birds chirp and call to each other beneath a pale blue sky. They sing songs of spring and life and new beginnings. A neighborhood dog barks from a few houses away. Something is missing. I sit awkwardly and wait for Lincoln to lift his nose to the flutter of life around us. Satisfied, he'll collapse by my side to do what he always does in April—wait for the bunnies to appear. But he's not

here and, instead, I'm left with all that's left, his memory. My heart aches. Simple joys have been my winning lottery ticket for the past ten years while living with Lincoln. Now it's time to go on living without him. How did this happen?

His presence, like shreds of petal swirling through the air, are close enough to touch. His passing is a fresh wound. I want to grab our time together, clutch it in my hand and bring it back to life like a genie from a bottle. I want my dog back.

Alas, I've gone dark. I'm supposed to honor Lincoln's spirit and focus only on the good parts (he and I are optimists) but I'm human. I know we've been blessed. I know he had a good life! "I just miss you so much," I whisper, and in my mind's eye, he faces me with his "professor-serious"

expression. Then he breaks into that easy, boxy smile. "I'm with you. I'm okay. But go ahead and tell your story, Mom."

Lincoln defied an ultra sound report that he only had one to three months to live back in October, 2020. Pardon the male dog expression, but he chose to grab life by the balls and live each day as though it's his last. All winter long he played outside like a child on a snow day. He played Bury & Find with his ball, lapped up cups and cups of farm-fresh goat's milk, and hiked along trails in Sturbridge. He took his final swim at Wells State Park during an exceptionally warm Saturday in late March. He sniffed the shoreline, felt the water with a knowing paw, and waded

in. His best friend, Bruno, watched him swim with the indulgence of a dog whose full name, Lincoln Veto, means lake and love. "Look at him go!"

Winter drew to a close and along came a mild spring. The days became warmer and longer while Lincoln's panting grew more pronounced. We discussed summer plans for keeping him cool and healthy. We would get him a kid's pool for the yard, make up an "apartment" for him in the cool finished basement, and continue to cook his favorite beef stews, salmon, and steak dishes. We arranged another vet appointment to discuss more possibilities. We had plans for Lincoln. He knew how much we loved him and he loved us right back with zero complaint about

his health. The decline in his breathing (more panting, more hacking, more discomfort) seemed overshadowed by his thirst to go on living. He still climbed the stairs to greet us with his human smile, grabbed our socks, wiggled with joy when we came home, and played fetch in the yard. Then something happened a

few weeks after Easter Sunday.

We couldn't allow Lincoln to play ball anymore. Mild breathing issues worsened. Small sessions of play led to heavy panting and, more recently, wheezing. That's when we knew. He wouldn't choose to stop on his own. Taking away a game of ball felt

Continued on next page



My dog



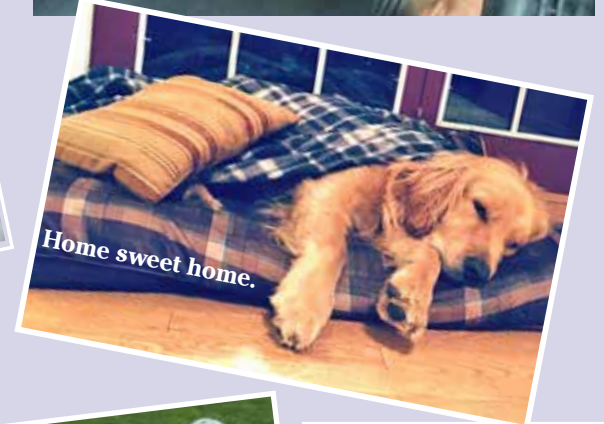
Lincoln's last car ride, following an April snow storm



Family love



Largest male of the litter



Home sweet home.



Bruno adores his cousin, Lincoln



Early car ride days with Mom



Happiness is a ball



Lincoln goes camping




Saying good-bye.



Soccer days



Relaxing after my last walk



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Continued

like murder. But we had to do what was best for Lincoln.

A neighborhood walk foreshadowed all of this. The truth passed through me like a lump of cold ice cream midway through the walk, one that began as it usually does, with off-the-leash time followed by my favorite routine: Lincoln lost track of time while distracted by his favorite grassy smells. Meanwhile, I walked ahead of him for, say, fifty feet before he realized that we had been separated. He lifted his head and froze to the sight of me. Then, as though we'd been apart for an eternity, he raced back to me, full-speed, to reunite and sat at my heels, smiling wildly. We are the greatest team ever!

I've since read The Rainbow Bridge poem, a replica of this experience to help explain to dog owners what it's like to cross over to heaven and reunite with our dogs "to never be separated again." I felt like I had experienced heaven on earth every time we walked the neighborhood.

His final sprint led to the final stretch of our walk. I leashed him back up and, understandably, his pace softened to a leisurely stroll. We stopped at the corner of Cedar Hill Road and McClellan. "You want to turn around and go home, Lincoln?" He sat, thought about it, and tugged me forward. "Let's go." We strolled past the field where the apple orchard used to be. He paused as he always does, recalling days past, when he'd nose through rows and rows of thick field and fallen apples. We kept going. But something was different. The truth hit me. This would be our last walk.

A driver appeared behind us suddenly, shaking his head in frustration, obviously in a hurry. I tugged Lincoln to the side of the road so that the driver had more space to pass. The irony that we'd come full circle to my first column written (Why I Like Dogs More than Humans) settled

cruelly in my chest.

I wiped tears from my cheeks. My thoughts addressed a driver now gone. "You don't understand. This is Lincoln. He sprung from the ground like a dolphin to catch a fly ball only weeks ago. He's just not himself. This is the dog in the paper. He's just feeling—"

Tears blurred my thoughts. I pressed on. "You coming?" Lincoln glanced back to check on me. "Don't worry about him. He's human. This walk is so much fun! Let's just be happy!"

I unleashed him for a second time at the edge of our neighborhood. He visited Sonoma, a friendly yellow lab, then found an old faded tennis ball in the Campbell's yard, one I didn't have the heart to throw back. A squirrel erected itself from a patch of woods, and stared up at us. Lincoln froze. A familiar outdoor friend! Ball in mouth, he launched forward for a quick, yet tired chase. "Good boy, Lincoln!" He trampled back to me, thoroughly proud of himself. "Still got it."

More days passed. I fought with my intuition. Maybe it's not the end? Maybe there's something I'm just not seeing. His love for life, his will to go on, was so strong. I reached out to dear Golden friends and invited them over for a visit. Please. Just tell me he's going to be fine. Talk me out of what's happening. You know more.

The skies produced a rare snowstorm on Friday, April 16, a mirror to the day he was born on December 26, 2010. He laid vulnerable in the foyer upstairs; paws outstretched amid heavy breathing. He needed help. Panic pressed against my forehead while I made phone calls. Everyone was busy, booked, overwhelmed. Everyone except his former veterinarian, Dr. Golden of Sutton Animal Hospital. She was available

at 12:30. Finally. A bright light.

My husband got the car started. Lincoln grabbed his ball, waited for me to grab my pocketbook and tap danced to the prospect of going for a ride. His eyes were bright with enthusiasm. We're going for a ride! He could hardly wait.

Due to COVID restrictions, the office staff banned us from attending the preliminary exam. "Please," I begged. "His condition is critical. He will get stressed and won't be able to breathe." My over-the-phone request was declined.

He was led on a short leash from our backseat. My husband and I held on. We could barely breathe ourselves. Within minutes, Lincoln arrived back at the car, gasping for air. He collapsed in a slush puddle, panting and smiling like a wolf, paws forward. "He's far too distressed to come in," the vet tech said. I swallowed the bitter taste of "I knew that" and opened the back door for Lincoln to jump back in. Home. He pasted his eyes to mine and struggled to calm down. But he was relieved. That much I was sure of. We're together again. Raw, blustery wind and rain rushed into the car. Dr. Golden appeared at the passenger window within minutes. She told us what to expect.

I sit in the backseat beside Lincoln. He's calmed down nicely. He lifts a big, strong paw for me to hold. Our eyes lock. I cannot find words. Fresh tears rain and rain down my face. My dog, my dog. Why this? Lincoln licks away a steady stream of tears. "I'm okay, Mom. I'm so happy we're together. This is the right thing."

"I'm not ready, Lincoln. Please. Please, hold on." My pain is excruciating, irrational.

"Thank you for loving me always. Thank you for understanding me and taking me for rides and pouring me goat's

milk. I'm okay, Mom. You are the best. I feel so relieved to be with you right now." He rests his head on my lap and calms down to a peaceful awareness. The dark of our plight recedes back like a wave at the shoreline, breaking then unfolding to an intense beauty. I pet his soft head while he rests comfortably on my lap. "Lincoln can come too," I speak his language. I repeat the phrase over and over again. He listens, raises a sleepy eye. "Lincoln can come too. Where do you want to go next? You are a good boy." All that's wrong crumbles around us like a falling tower while the two of us, kindred spirits, rest in final moments of peace and I'm blessed a thousand times by my dog's unconditional love. Lincoln goes to sleep.

Lincoln never asked for much, only to be together. Like me, he was always up for adventure. I'm so honored and proud to have given him exactly what he needed, over and over again. I'll go on Living with Lincoln in my heart and writing about him in honor of so many who loved him and saw their own dogs through a story told in the voice of a true Dog Person. He was the first pick of the litter, the largest male and last surviving pup, son of Sox and Tickle of Twin Beau D Kennel. I imagine him crossing over to miles and miles of glistening lake and baseball fields of rich greens and golds. I imagine that someday he'll freeze to the sight of me, only this time he'll find me seated on the ground, arms wide open. He'll race towards me until we meet again. Then I'll fold my arms around him, collapse and, this time, he'll lick away tears of joy.

Stay tuned for Lincoln's upcoming book, a compilation of columns (first published here!) that have made you laugh, cry, and nod your head knowingly. Please write to me at amy-leclair@hotmail.com.



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December 26, 2010 – April 16, 2021
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For Amy

When tomorrow starts without me

When tomorrow starts without me,
and I'm not there to see;
The sun will rise and find your eyes
All filled with tears for me.
I know how much you love me,
As much as I love you,
And each time that you think of me,
I know you'll miss me too.
But when tomorrow starts without me,
Please try to understand,
That an angel came and called my name
And petted me with her hand.
I thought about our lives together;
I know you must be sad,
I thought of all the love we shared,
And all the fun we had.
So when tomorrow starts without me,
Don't think we're far apart.
For every time you think of me,
I'm right there in your heart.

-Author unknown

All our love Amy,
from the staff at The Yankee Xpress and
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Cruising scene 2021

Five years of Buckleupallofus cruisin' safety car shows

By Jim Weicherding

Tri-State Cruisers Classic Car Club hosted the very first Buckleupallofus Cruisin' Safety Car Show in Pomfret, Connecticut on Saturday, May 15.

The weather was beautiful

and the turnout was huge. Plenty of kids attended with their parents and a lot of photos were taken of kids with the giant Buckleupallofus balloon attraction on display in the

field adjacent to Pizza 101. Even some of the teenagers were posing with Bucky for photos to share on social media all afternoon. They also took home Bucky coloring

books and coloring posters to learn about Buckle Up Safety.

Buckleupallofus has been cruisin' from one classic car and truck show and cruise night after another for the past

five years. Bucky is always in demand and showcases at more than one hundred of these automotive events reminding kids, teens and adults to always wear seatbelts and make sure kids are safely restrained in the back booster seats that are properly installed.

Buckleupallofus Child Passenger Safety Campaign is an award-winning traffic safety campaign recognized by the

US Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Safe Kids USA, Safe Kids Worldwide, American Academy of Pediatrics and many state and local municipalities across America.

Car shows and cruise nights are the most popular events for Bucky throughout the cruisin' season. Hope to see you at one. Remember to always buckle up.



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The Car Doctor

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Q. I am considering a new car with pushbutton start and keyless entry. What does AAA do when the battery in a keyless entry car dies, you are on the road and locked out?

A. The key-fob contains a hidden key that, in most cases, slides out of the key fob. The key is then used to open the locked car. In nearly every car there is at least one door lock (it may be hidden under some trim on the door handle). Once inside depending on the car, there is a spot to hold the key-fob while pushing the start button. Even a key-fob with a nearly dead battery has enough energy to communicate with the car to get the engine started.

Q. Our mechanic is suggesting that we change the timing belt/chain on our 2013 VW Beetle-Fender edition. The reason is that the engine is a 2.0-liter four-cylinder, and it is an inherent problem that the timing belt/chain breaks or comes off and destroys the engine. The mileage on the car is 107,000, and I intend to drive it for a few more years. The mechanic also says that the rear main seal is leaking a little bit and should be replaced. Should we do this work as well or just put an additive in to possibly correct the problem. The mechanic said an additive could cause more of a leak. It's approximately \$1,400.00 to change the rear main seal. Please advise if the timing belt/chain issue is something that should be done, and when. Are you aware if VW has any sort of recall regarding this issue or will pay for this work to be done?

A. In certain model Volkswagens with this engine, the timing chain (which typically lasts the life of the car) failed early. There was a class action lawsuit that, from what

I have read for certain qualified vehicles, has warranties on timing chains and timing chain tensioners have been extended by Volkswagen to 10 years or 100,000 miles. This leads me to believe that the timing chain typically fails earlier in the life of the engine and perhaps you and your car are one of the lucky ones. Regarding the rear main oil leak, it will not get any better by itself, but it may not get any worse. So perhaps in the case of the oil leak "watchful waiting" makes the most sense. Regarding additives that stop leaks, I am generally not a fan, but I haven't seen any that cause harm. Some readers have told me of success using "high-mileage" oil that has additives to stop or slow leaks. Perhaps try that oil on your vehicle's next oil change.

Q. I'm in the market for an SUV, however I find that most of the SUVs are all-wheel-drive which I don't feel I need as I drive only four thousand miles a year and I don't drive in the snow. Besides traction on slippery roads why do I need a vehicle with AWD. Is AWD standard on most SUVs or is there an option?

A. All wheel drive offers better traction in all driving conditions, but even all-wheel-drive, as good as it is, can't change the law of physics. Here in the Northeast most sport utility vehicles are all-wheel-drive; in Southern states that isn't always the case. The other issue is that if you order an SUV in front-wheel-drive, when it comes time to trade it in, it will have less value than a comparable AWD SUV. Depending on your budget, the Kia Soul (FWD only vehicle) has the utility of an SUV. If you wanted to move upscale, a Volvo wagon is always a good choice.

Q. I have a 2006 Ford Mustang GT. The headlight lens/covers (which are plastic and part of the headlights) are very fuzzy and cloudy. I have tried the headlight cleaners in the auto store to no avail. I have also tried scrub pads I read about online, but still not good. Any suggestions what to do? New headlights are \$400 apiece.

A. At 15 years old the plastic may have deteriorated to a point where they cannot be polished back to satisfactory performance. Although the factory headlamp assemblies are \$400 each, you could try an aftermarket replacement. I have seen CAPA (Certified Auto Parts Association) approved replacement headlight assemblies including the bulb for \$80 each online. The new light will improve the headlight performance as well as the appearance of the car.

Ron Moscoffian
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Tales from beyond

Union Cemetery known for haunts and tragedy

By Thomas D'Agostino

The Union Cemetery in Monroe, Connecticut, dates back to the 1600s. The ancient burial ground has for centuries become a focal point for haunts and tragedy. The ghost of a woman, known as the "White Lady," is often witnessed floating about the tombstones in a certain section of the cemetery. She is dressed in a white gown, some say it is a wedding gown, with her dark hair flowing from what looks like a veil. She sometimes appears in the road along Route 59, also known as Sport Hill Road. Many

unsuspecting motorists have "hit" the White Lady as she suddenly materialized out of nowhere. When they stop to check out the scene, they not only find no evidence of a woman dressed in white but there is no damage to their automobile.

Countless witnesses claim to have seen the White Lady. Some have even taken photos of the ghost that has roamed the area of the Union Cemetery for almost a century. Famous ghost investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren are among the lucky who have

photographed the Lady in White in Union Cemetery.

An itinerant wandering through Monroe in search of a place to stay saw the hill above Union Cemetery as a safe haven for the night. It was a balmy summer evening so sleeping under the stars was a pleasant experience for the vagabond. That is until he mysteriously woke up from a sound sleep and looked down into the burial ground. There he spied a strange glow moving about the tombstones. Curious, yet cautious as to the origin of

the glow, he ambled down the hill for a better look. He could now easily see that it was the figure of a woman in a white gown wearing a veil. Then in an instant she was gone, and the graveyard was once again dark, quiet, and tranquil.

There are a lot of possibilities as to who the white ghost that wanders the area may be. Some say she is the spirit of Ellen Smathers whose husband was murdered by Richard Dean Jason. Jason was so infatuated with Mrs. Smathers that he concocted a plan to get rid of the husband then make his move in wooing the woman. He did away with John Smathers, filled his pockets with iron weights and threw him into a sinkhole behind the church near the graveyard. Jason was caught, convicted and spent the rest of his life in prison.



Another prime candidate might be the soul of Ethel Hutchinson Knott, wife of George Knott whom Elwood Wade murdered in 1920 after an argument at the Knott residence. The two concocted to murder the husband but were caught and brought to justice. Mrs. Knott spent the rest of her life in prison and Wade was hanged for the murder. There are no records of Mrs. Knott per se after that, but it is conceivable that she may be haunting the area looking for restitution or a chance to tell her side of the story. She could be bound to the locale by eternal remorse. Again, no one knows for sure.

There are other sightings of odd ghosts in the area of the cemetery. One caretaker saw the countenance of a man dressed in furs with a raccoon skin cap. It was obvious that he was from centuries gone by. He encountered the ghost twice, once with a friend as a witness. There is a lot of urban legend surrounding the area as well. It seems to be a place where energy, both positive and negative can dwell and nurture for a very long time.

Did the settlers realize they were burying their loved ones in a ground so alive with energy?

Maybe they knew and actually buried them in hopes that they might come back. Or, it could be that they got more than what they bargained for when the misty figures began moving about the stones during the witching hour.

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.tomdagos.com

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School sports "wedge season" filled a void

The high school "wedge season" is complete and the MIAA hit a home run by following their plan and they deserve credit.

The kids got a half season in games played in football, soccer, and field hockey and they gave all of us hope and

enthusiasm after COVID-19 that paralyzed us since February 2020.

The breakout wedge season from COVID was courageous for anyone who was involved in the day-to-day process. Good job to student athletes, coaches, officials,

and all frontline staff from ticket collectors, groundskeepers, etc.

The upper athletic field on Ray Street in Webster was in terrific shape thanks to the work of Ken Pizzetti and his staff. Getting any field ready to play by mid-April during a normal year for baseball and softball is a challenge. Trying to get a football field ready for games in March is unbelievable and Pizzetti pulled it off. Kudos to Pizzetti again.

A lot of curiosity was spiked from a January story in this space about the removal and disappearance of the grandstands at the Memorial Field in Webster. Safety reasons forbade any further seating in those bleachers and that's the reason they were disassembled and removed.

After this "wedge season," it's sad to say that public seating isn't needed anymore. Spectators are non-existent at high school contests. Purchasing public seating for 40 people attending a football game is an economic waste. Thanksgiving Day games draw 250 people so what is the sense of purchasing expensive bleachers that have to pass a safety code every year at the town's expense.

After a year of being pent-up because of COVID-19, the Bartlett at Southbridge foot-

ball game on Patriots Day only attracted 200 fans. Sad times in front of us old timers who rarely followed the football as spectators. It was all about what the other players were doing on that specific play. If you don't understand that, please don't try. Just ask someone over 60 about blocking and tackling. It's a lost skill. Colliding into a runningback gets the applause today.

Back to no bleachers and no fans attending games these days it is because iPhones and iPads and live streaming allows any fan to sit at home and watch a high school sporting contest.

The dinosaurs are fading fast, meaning old school beliefs and traditions do not exist anymore. The millennial era is here to stay. Saw it coming like a tsunami.

Congratulations to the Oxford High School football program as they finished the wedge season at 4-1. That 4-1 record got Head coach Jeff Clarkson and his staff a complimentary breakfast at Carl's Diner.

Pirate alum Gordon Cook and head chef at Carl's will prepare the meal and even deliver the fixings to his old school. Cook is a favorite of this address and learned from the best while at Oxford in the late 70s in the likes of Roger Bacon and the late Joe Moran and also from Paul "the Bear" Brissette who greeted Cook at the front door every morning back in the day. After Cook passed inspection with Brissette, it was on to John Mullen's classroom for a quick rendition of the Pirate fight song and a lesson on semper fidelis.



BHS head coach Dane Laboissonniere (right) addresses his team following the win over Southbridge in the postponed Thanksgiving Day football game. He noted that the seniors have the distinction of beating their rival for all four of their high school years. This was his final on-field talk with the team as he has decided to retire. Good luck, coach.

Brad Smith, BHS legend

The recent passing of Brad Smith, a great friend to many and the ultimate teammate, who had an easy sense of humor, has saddened all who knew him.

Brad lived his life to the fullest and enjoyed any and all opportunities to compete and he excelled on the biggest stages as a Bartlett athlete.

He accomplished more championships-six-than any other athlete in the history of Bartlett athletics.

This space is challenging any athlete statewide ever to match Brad's six biggest stage championships. More on that later.

Brad's Bartlett High School athletic resumé has appeared in this space many, many times over the past 35 years as the all time benchmark of exactly what a teammate, leader, and winner should be.

The spirit of the Bartlett Athletic Hall of Fame never recognized their six highest and ultimate accomplishments from 1979 through 1981, with the individual common denominator being Brad Smith, until 2018. Brad was a great teammate and leader on all his Indian basketball teams and expressed many times that it was all about his teammates and timing.

Brad was proud to wear that Bartlett uniform and put it on in front of so many venues across the state in six championship games. Brad was one the best advertisers that Bartlett could have ever hoped for. Nobody ever advertised the green Bartlett uniform on the biggest of biggest stages more than

Brad Smith during his years at Bartlett from 1978 to 1981. No Bartlett graduate has ever accomplished what Brad Smith accomplished as a starter and a statistical leader during these milestones.

Basketball State Champion 1979, Clark Tournament Champion 1979, 1980, and 1981, and Basketball District Champion 1979 and 1981. Six for six. Perfect. That's six championships of the highest level of competition that Bartlett could ever qualify for.

No Bartlett student athlete in the history of Bartlett High School ever did what Brad Smith did as a starter on all these six championship teams.

Let's keep in mind that Brad didn't get inducted in the prestigious Bartlett Hall of Fame as an individual athlete until 2018, but he was most proud of the 1979 state championship team being inducted in 2002. The 1978-79 basketball team coached by Bob Paranto was inducted 2002.

Brad's additional accomplishments were Telegram & Gazette Super Team member, Border Conference All Star, member of the prestigious Best of 48 state-wide All Star game, and a member of the 10 best Central Mass team of basketball players.

Brad averaged 26 points his senior year and was a 1,000 point career scorer and played on a border conference championship team in basketball. Adding the border conference championship team totals Brad's championships to seven overall. But, those six championships on the highest of highest stages



will never be duplicated again at Bartlett.

Brad also started at short-stop in baseball a couple of years for the Indians.

He went on to start in basketball at Southeastern Mass University for three years.

Brad's brother Bruce has been on the waiting list on the Bartlett High School Athletic Hall of Fame committee's table for a long time and Bruce's athletic achievements as an Indian include being a three sport starter for three years and he excelled in football as a tightend and linebacker where he earned a full scholarship to Division One Northeastern. Bruce played on a Class B Central Mass Championship team for coach Joe Lucido and scored 988 career points in basketball.

The Smith brothers should have been in the Bartlett Hall of Fame a long time ago and imagine if they went in together... No, that would have made too much sense.

Thank you, Brad Smith, for spreading your good will smile to all whom you considered friends and we know you are looking down at your brother Bruce who deserves a place at the Bartlett Hall of Fame table.

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Tips on financial planning



Dennis Antonopoulos

June is Effective Communications Month, and it's a good idea to recognize the importance of good communications because it plays a role in almost every aspect of living – including your finances. You'll want to clearly communicate your financial goals to your loved ones – and you'll want to hear theirs, too.

Discuss financial goals with your family

Let's look at some of the communications you might have with family members:

• *Your spouse* – You and your spouse may have different thoughts about a range of financial topics – how much to save, how much to spend, the level of debt with which you're comfortable and so on. Try to reach some type of consensus on these issues. However, in regard to investing, you don't necessarily have to act in unison all the time. You each may have different investment styles – one of you may be more aggressive, willing to take on more risk in exchange for potentially higher returns, while the other would rather invest with

an eye toward mitigating risk, even it means accepting a lower return. Of course, there's nothing stopping each of you from pursuing your individual investment strategies in your own accounts – IRA, 401(k) and so on. Still, if you are going to work toward common goals – especially toward a shared vision of your retirement lifestyle – you each may want to compromise in your investment choices. And this accommodation is even more necessary in your joint accounts.

• *Your parents* – If you may someday be involved with your parents' financial plans – which is highly likely – you should know in advance what to expect. This may not be the

easiest conversation to have, but it's an important one. So, for example, ask your parents if they have a durable power of attorney, which allows them to designate someone to manage their financial affairs if they become physically or mentally incapacitated. You might also inquire if they have protected themselves against the potentially enormous costs of long-term care, such as an extended nursing home stay. If not, you might suggest that they contact a financial advisor, who can offer solutions. Once you begin communicating about these issues, you may well want to go further into your parents' estate plans to determine

what other arrangements, if any, they have made. If it seems that their plans are not fully developed, you may want to encourage them to contact an attorney specializing in estate planning.

• *Your grown children* – Just as you talk to your parents about their estate plans, you'll want to discuss the same topic with your own grown children. Let them know who you have named as a durable power of attorney, what's in your last will and testament and whether you've established a living trust. If you're already working with a financial advisor and an estate planning professional, make sure your children know how to contact these individu-

als. Of course, you don't have to confine your communications to estate plans – if you want to help your children financially, such as loaning them money for a down payment on a home, let them know.

By talking with your loved ones about key financial matters, everyone benefits. So, keep those lines of communication open.

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

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RE: Real Estate



Mark Marzeotti

The housing market is so competitive buyers are doing anything they can to get a home.

A common way to try to stand out is to write a heartfelt "love letter" to a seller – a seemingly harmless note to express appreciation of the home and make a personal connection.

But in this overheated real estate market, what were once simple handwritten or typed letters have lately given way to more polished packages, with photographs of the buyers and even videos. Some prospective homebuyers even purchase letter templates.

These letters can present problems, according to the National Association of Realtors, raising fair housing concerns. While some agents say the tactic is a tried and true way to win a bidding war, other agents, following recent industry guidance, won't deliver or accept love letters anymore.

According to the federal Fair Housing Act, it is illegal to discriminate in the sale of housing because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability. And these letters can be full of those kinds of details.

Typically, a letter like this is telling the seller who is going to live in the home and how they are going to live in it. But writing a love letter is not going to get you the house and you're putting that seller in a position that they could be violating Fair Housing laws.

A buyer may write a letter to the seller that says: "This is my dream home and I'm excited to live there with my husband and our two young children. We love that the home has a first floor bedroom for my mother, who lives with us. I can imagine the kids running down the stairs on Christmas morning."

Right there you have information about family status, religion and a possible disability. These are protected classes in the Fair Housing Act. You can talk about that kind of personal information, but you can't do it in a real estate contract.

Realtors surely feel for the buyers who want to snag a seller's attention. It's a boilerplate offer and they don't feel like they have a lot of control in the process, we get why they want to write a letter to find common ground. At The Marzeotti Group Realty, we tell our buyers to spend more time writing an offer, not a letter.

Due to the potential soft discriminatory issues that these letters cause, many listings might state clearly within, that no buyer letters will be accepted.

Buying a home? Skip the 'love letter' to the seller

Sellers should be making a decision only on the best combination of the highest amount of money, type of financing and least amount of risk from a buyer. It's not always the highest offer that is the winning offer, but a mix of factors. A letter could help sway a homeowner, but likely for the wrong reasons.

Letters of love or liability?

Last fall, the National Association of Realtors released guidance on love letters, advising agents they can be a liability. It isn't a rule and there are no consequences for agents who do otherwise, but NAR recommends that its member agents should not draft, read, deliver or accept love letters.

There are mixed views and articles about whether this practice is a liability, so the majority opinion is to avoid them all together.

Still, the NAR guidance is a warning for agents and their clients to be conscientious. "If you do rely on a letter, agents and sellers need to document that the decision to accept an offer had nothing to do with race, national origin, religion or other protected classes." *Best for buyers to focus on price and terms*

In such a competitive real estate market, many buyer's agents may be reluctant to turn off a buyer by telling them not to write a letter.

Letters that don't include any kind of information about protected classes are fine. Just saying you like the deck and fireplace is okay, but that ultimately shouldn't matter to the seller.

Similarly, a buyer could write a letter that highlights their intentions with the property – to live in it rather than to flip it, which doesn't include any personal descriptions. It is imperative that sellers don't choose someone because of a connection that is made through a letter, but on the criteria in the offer. I've never

seen a property sell on the letter on its own – only when a letter is also with an offer that is better than someone else's.

It may be small comfort to buyers frantically trying to appeal to a seller in this market especially, but sellers are less concerned about what may happen to their home after it sells or feeling a "connection" with the buyer than buyers may think.

Letters are not a major part of the transaction. The meat of the transaction is the price and the terms. That's where buyers should focus.

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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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MECHANIC WANTED

Pratt Trucking/Little River Recycling Oxford, MA

Job Summary: Pratt Trucking is a family owned and operated company in Oxford, MA. We are searching for a qualified mechanic to work on our fleet of Garbage Trucks, Roll Off Trucks, Hook Lift Trucks, and other equipment. Top Wages Paid, Weekends Off, and Benefits!

Responsibilities: Performs physical tasks in the shop or field in support of operations including, but not limited to: inspection, troubleshooting, repairs, and maintenance of equipment. Provides unscheduled repairs of equipment; reviews equipment status with operational personnel and performs scheduled maintenance of trucks and equipment. Inspects, repairs, maintains, and makes recommendations and performs modifications to functional parts of a variety of equipment and machinery. Diagnoses maintenance requirements on diesel engines, transmissions, drive lines, differentials, electrical circuits, hydraulic systems, and chassis through diagnostic aids, inspections, and interpretation of equipment reports with assistance. Disassembles, overhauls, and replaces worn parts on equipment as required. Reads and interprets work orders to perform required maintenance and service. Demonstrated commitment to a clean and safe working environment.

Qualifications and Skills: Knowledge of Mack, Cummins, GMC, Chevrolet trucks. Knowledge of troubleshooting/diagnostic tools. Experience as a heavy duty truck mechanic. Ability to work safely in a shop environment. Mechanical skills should include, but are not limited to, mechanical, electrical, pneumatic and hydraulic troubleshooting and repair of trucks and equipment.

Benefits: Health Insurance, Top Wages! Over-time optional.
Job Type: Full-time. **Experience:** Driver's License (Required), Diesel Mechanic: 1 year (Required), Diesel repair certification (Preferred), Trash industry experience (Preferred), Class A or B CDL (Preferred), Welding experience (Preferred)

Salary based upon experience (top wages paid)

Apply now in person at Pratt Trucking
22 Town Forest Rd • Oxford MA 01540
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