

# BLACKSTONE VALLEY *Xpress*

CROSTOWN ADS AND BUSINESS NEWS

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## Homefield CU, MNB dig in against ransomware actors

By Rod Lee

Yes, in case you were wondering, small local banks and credit unions in the Blackstone Valley are just as vulnerable to cybersecurity threats as large oil companies, food distributors and government agencies.

"We are extremely concerned and use all available resources to protect our members," Karl Moisan, president and CEO of Homefield Credit Union in North Grafton, said on August 3.

Mr. Moisan and others in the industry have every reason to be alarmed. Recently, Accenture (Accenture.com), "a third-party defender" against ransomware attacks, raised a new red flag. "Ransomware actors" are expanding data-leak extortion and devising new methods to pressure victims, Accenture said. "Response options are becoming more complicated."

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"Linda," a customer of Millbury National Bank, won a special anniversary coin bank with \$195 inside by playing "plinko," in 2020.

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World of Lights coming  
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## Labor Day doesn't mark end of summer in Grafton

By Christine Galeone

Kids are heading back to school next week. Labor Day is on the horizon. But that doesn't mean that people in the Blackstone Valley have to stop enjoying warm breezes and the accompanying colorful sights and inviting sounds of summer.

People can continue to visit the places that many have frequented this season, like the **Grafton Flea Market**, the **Grafton Farmers Market**, and **Swirls and Scoops**. And in Grafton in September, there will also be fun events and activities to enjoy.

One new event for beloved canine companions is **Quite Fetching's** first annual Pancake Break-

fast. The barkery and pet boutique, located at One Grafton Common, will offer dogs a free buffet of dog-friendly pancakes and toppings, while their humans can enjoy complimentary coffee. To celebrate Labor Day weekend, Quite Fetching will hold the event from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 5.

In North Grafton, an event that the barkery is helping to sponsor is returning to an in-person format this year. Presented by T-Mobile, the **23rd Annual Pet Rock Fest** will be held Sunday, Sept. 12 from noon until 5 p.m. at Wyman-Gordon. The non-profit festival that encourages kindness to animals and responsible pet ownership

and raises much-needed funds for animal welfare nonprofits throughout New England will feature live music by award-winning country singer Billy Gilman and others, guest speakers, vendors, animal nonprofits/welfare organizations, vegetarian food, games, a shelter pet parade, pet contests and activities. Grafton sponsors include **Quite Fetching** and **Gibson's Natural Pet**. For ticket information, a coupon and more, visit [petrockfest.org](http://petrockfest.org).

On Saturday, September 25, **Engine Company No. 2 of Grafton, Inc.** – a nonprofit run by firefighters from **Grafton Fire Department**

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The Quite Fetching Barkery & Pet Boutique Dogs. (Courtesy of Quite Fetching's Facebook Page)

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## RANSOMWARE

Continued

It is indeed a worrisome situation but one that is being addressed vigorously here in the Blackstone Valley.

“We dedicate a significant amount of resources to managing this area and [to keeping] customers’ information and money safe,” John T. Latino Jr., vice president and chief operating officer of Millbury National Bank, said. “Larger banks can be a target because of the quantity of information and accounts they have, but small banks can be just as vulnerable, if not more vulnerable, because of the often false perception that our systems are not as robust as larger banks/companies.”

Organizations and firms that want to protect themselves had better watch out, for several reasons, Accenture says. For starters, Accenture points out, “the first months of 2021 targeted critical infrastructure and upstream providers, such

as data-rich insurance companies.” Even before that, in 2020, one ransomware “negotiator” reported “multiple cases in which data was destroyed rather than just encrypted, preventing data retrieval even after ransom payment.” Then there are the new “exposure tactics” being employed. These have gathered speed, compounding data-leak damage and adding “reputation damage” to “victim liability lists.” Also, ransomware operators are using “tooling and hands-on keyboard actions to disable endpoint defenses.”

Millbury National Bank is working hard to protect itself, and its customers.

“We utilize a third-party company to provide our core data system and we also use their managed IT services,” Mr. Latino said. “They manage our IT infrastructure, network, internet service, intrusion detection and prevention, firewall, email, antivirus, data loss

prevention and provide us backups and redundancy to not only protect our data and our customers’ information, but also ensure we can recover quickly from a disaster, outage, or cyberattack.

“They have been successful in identifying several anomalies and potential attacks and provide 24/7/365 monitoring and protection. They are subject to strong regulatory oversight from the same agencies that regulate the bank as well as audits and other controls. We use them to provide the most safe and secure transaction channels for online banking, mobile banking, and item processing. Our customers’ money and data have never been safer.”

Millbury National has an advantage in being “such a small bank with our hands-on processing and knowledge of our customers,” Mr. Latino says. “Our internal controls for transaction monitoring, electronic transactions, ATM/



Homefield Credit Union is a strong supporter of local organizations, as evidenced by sponsorship money Homefield donated to the Grafton Lions Club in 2017.

Debit Card control, and wire transfers [are] extremely effective and [have] successfully prevented fraudulent transactions numerous times. We are a partner for our customers and community and try and educate customers whenever we can about the dangers and pitfalls that exist in our technology-driven world today. We also have continuous training for all of our employees to develop the best line of defense—a human firewall. Knowledgeable, informed,

attentive employees are the first and best line of defense against cyber risks.

“We have auditors test our systems and controls on an annual basis to ensure everything is working properly and is up to date. Our regulators also require an in-depth assessment of our risk and scrutinize this area closely.

“I am happy to say Millbury National Bank performs well in this area.”

Accenture’s recommendation—obviously self-serving to an extent—is that “orga-

nizations should focus on preparation, prevention and pre-encryption defenses.”

Banks and credit unions in the Blackstone Valley are constantly reminding their customers to be on guard against threats of all kinds; recently, for instance, Millbury National Bank posted “four steps to spot an online shopping scam,” on its Facebook page.

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

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2nd Friday: Auburn, Charlton, Dudley, Oxford and Webster, 1/2 all addresses.  
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4th Friday: Auburn, Charlton, Dudley, Oxford and Webster, other 1/2.  
4th Friday BLACKSTONE VALLEY North: Grafton, Millbury and Sutton.

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## Appreciating the Arts: BVT student-artists take brush-to-table in Milford Cultural Council's public art initiative

UPTON – Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick is proud to announce that Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School students Bianca De Oliveira of Milford and Murphy Potter of Douglas are two of eleven artists selected earlier this spring to design a picnic table through the Milford Cultural Council's Brush to Table contest, which is an effort to in-

crease public art in Milford.

The Milford Cultural Council unveiled all of the tables to the public at an outdoor exhibit in July at Plains Park before relocating them around town for public use. Locations for finished tables include the Garden of Hope at Fino Field, the corner of Dilla and Sumner Street, Rosenfeld Park, Plains Park, and the Milford High School fields.



Ashley MacLure proudly stands with Murphy Potter.

A recent graduate of the Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication program at BVT, Bianca De Oliveira, painted her version of "Starry Night" by Vincent van Gogh on the tabletop. Her masterpiece, "Touch the Sky," sponsored by Imperial Cars, also includes a skyline of Milford buildings along the bench.

Murphy Potter, a junior in the Painting & Design Technology program at BVT, said, "It is exciting to create a work of art that others in the community will have an opportunity to enjoy." Her table masterpiece "Redemption" is sponsored by Celebrate Milford.

"This table symbolizes many things to me, but mainly I want this painting to encourage reaching out for help or gaining a second chance," said Potter. "Depending on how you look at it, you could see a second chance at racial equality or life since butterflies are a common symbol for suicide prevention, or you could see two people connecting."

"It was an honor to be selected, especially since my

art teacher, Mrs. MacLure, was chosen to be a part of it as well," said Potter. "This is the first public project that I've ever done. I enjoyed the process and hope to do more projects like this in the future."

Ashley MacLure, Visual Arts instructor at BVT, is proud to lead by example, participating alongside two of her students. Letting her artwork, "Imagine," sponsored by Harold & Marcia Rhodes, inspire and speak to others by contributing to this initiative and others that encourage an appreciation for more cultural and visual arts in the local communities.

To view a sample of these works of art, visit: [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/brushtotable](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/brushtotable).



Murphy Potter working on her table masterpiece.

## 36th annual Valley Friendship Tour at the Whitin Mill

### Annual fundraiser to be held September 11

WORCESTER - In 2020, COVID-19 forced Open Sky Community Services' signature fundraising event, the Valley Friendship Tour, to go virtual. Although last year's Tour proved to be successful, raising close to \$150,000, Open Sky recently announced that the 36th Valley Friendship Tour is being planned as an in-person event. Scheduled for Saturday, September 11th from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, the Tour will return to the Alternatives Whitin Mill, 50 Douglas Road in Whitinsville. In light of the current rising rates of COVID-19 driven by the Delta variant, plans are being made to help ensure a safe and enjoyable experience.

The Valley Friendship Tour is an opportunity to gather friends, family and co-workers for a day of fun and exercise in the beautiful and historic Blackstone Valley. Participants of all ages and abilities can travel along one of three non-competitive routes: a one-mile walk titled the "Golden Mile", a 5K walk/run, or a 30-mile bicycle ride. After completing their route, participants enjoy a complimentary lunch on the Dennis H. Rice Community Plaza at the Whitin Mill, kid-friendly activities, raffles and live music. Since it began over three decades ago, the Tour has raised over \$3 million in support of individuals and families in Central Massachusetts.

For 33 years, the Valley Friendship Tour was the signa-

ture fundraising event for Alternatives Unlimited. In 2018, Alternatives affiliated with The Bridge of Central Massachusetts, another well respected non-profit with a long history in Central Massachusetts, to form Open Sky Community Services.

Open Sky has over 100 programs through the region and serves more than 4,900 individuals each year. The organization provides services and programs for youth, adults and families experiencing mental health challenges, intellectual/developmental disabilities, autism, brain injury, substance use disorders, homelessness or other complex challenges.

Sr. Director of Advancement and Marketing Karen Goldenberg is looking forward to welcoming participants back to the Whitin Mill. Goldenberg is also pleased by the support from area businesses who have signed on as sponsors, led by Champion Sponsors MSG Staffing and The Shop at Whitinsville.

Both teams and individuals are welcome to register; pre-registration is \$30 while registration the day of is \$35. For more information, or to register online, visit [openskycs.org/vft2021](http://openskycs.org/vft2021).

### Clothing swap planned

The Blackstone Valley United Methodist Church will host a clothing swap on Saturday, September 18, from 9-11 a.m. They accept donations of gently used women's, men's and children's clothing shoes and accessories. No rips or stains please. Everything is free and open to the public. You don't have to donate to take something home and you don't

have to take something home in order to donate. Donations can be dropped off on Friday, September 17, between 6 and 7 p.m. or the morning of the swap. The church will follow all local, state and national guidelines regarding the wearing of masks.

Any questions, please email [edalynne@hotmail.com](mailto:edalynne@hotmail.com) or call Christine at 774-262-6415

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## Millbury, Dudley launch housing rehab and community development activities

In March of 2020, the towns of Millbury and Dudley partnered to seek competitive Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to benefit local residents and infrastructure. A year later, after months of pandemic-related delays at the state level, the towns learned their application for \$664,500 had been approved. Grant-funded activities are now getting underway. The grant's three activities are being managed on the towns' behalf by Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC).

In Millbury, an architectural design project will address insulation and interior roof conditions at the Senior Center. An engineering design project will identify and specify solutions to aging infrastructure in Millbury's Pearl Street and Maple Street neighborhood, including the water and sewer lines, storm-water drainage, and roads and sidewalks. A portion of the latter project will include infrastructure fixes on the grounds of the Millbury Housing Authority's Linden Apartments. Construction of both design projects is dependent on future grants or other funding.

The largest item in the

grant is a shared housing rehabilitation program open to homeowners in both Dudley and Millbury. Eligible activities under the program focus on code-related repairs and other types of work needed to make homes safe and livable. Activities can include weatherization, access improvements for disabled persons, roof replacement, heating and septic systems, window replacement, new paint and siding, electrical and plumbing upgrades, structural repairs, and many other types of work.

Residents who meet federal income guidelines are eligible to participate. The current limit for a single-person household is \$55,350 in annual income. For a four-person household, the maximum income is \$79,050. Financial assistance is in the form of a deferred-payment loan secured by a lien. Repayment of the loan is generally required only if the home is sold during the 15-year loan period. Assistance through the program is capped at \$35,000 for most units. The program, which funds repairs by private contractors for homeowners meeting federal low-to-moderate income guidelines, has revitalized homes in several nearby towns, including

Leicester, Spencer, Charlton, Webster, and the Brookfields. The housing program is being implemented by CMRPC's partners at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

More than 50 Millbury and Dudley homeowners who submitted preapplications to the housing rehab program prior to the towns' grant application have been ranked by lottery and are being contacted in sequence as funds become available. But it's not too late for others to request housing rehab assistance. Interested residents can submit their preapplications now to secure a place in the next lottery should funds become available under the current grant, or if the towns receive additional grants. The pre-application form and additional program information are available on both towns' websites.

In addition to the current grant, both Millbury and Dudley are reviewing options to apply separately for addition-

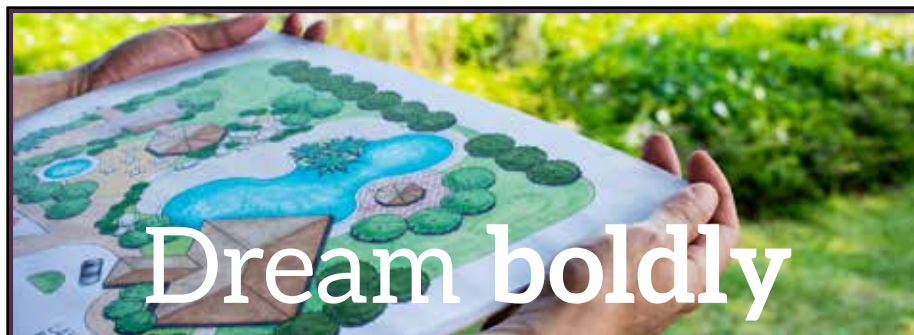
al CDBG funds in the FY 2021 grant round, due in September. Both communities expect to hold public hearings this month to discuss potential projects including construction of the Pearl and Maple Street infrastructure project in Millbury, infrastructure design and construction in Dudley's Brandon Road/Jericho area including First Avenue,

additional housing rehab, and possibly more. Dudley's hearing will be on August 23, and Millbury's on August 24. Residents are encouraged to participate.

Questions about CDBG-funded projects can be directed to Andrew Loew, Project Manager at the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, at

(508) 459-3339 or Conor McCormack, Millbury's Assistant Planner, at (508) 865-4754, or Bill Scanlan, Dudley's Town Planner at (508) 949-8014.

The state CDBG program is funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development through the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.



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### GRAFTON Continued from page 1

Station Two in North Grafton – will hold its Stephen H. Roney Memorial Cornhole Tournament at **Houlden Farm** in North Grafton. The event will raise funds for the Stephen H. Roney Memorial Scholarship. The registration fee is \$25 per player or \$50 per team. For more informa-

tion, you can visit the nonprofit's website, [graftongenine2.org](http://graftongenine2.org).

The **Grafton Public Library** is helping Grafton residents to get outdoors and explore the beauty of nature. It recently joined the Mass. Audubon's Library Partners program. Library card holders may now request passes that will allow them to visit

**Mass. Audubon Society** wildlife sanctuaries for the discounted rate of \$2 per person (for up to four people). For more information about the more than 50 Mass. Audubon wildlife sanctuaries, you can visit the nonprofit's website, [massaudubon.org](http://massaudubon.org).

Local organizations will also provide opportunities to people who are looking to express themselves creatively. **Apple Tree Arts**, the non-profit performing arts school on the Grafton Common, the **Blackstone Valley Art Association**, the **Worcester County Camera Club** and the **Shakespeare Club of Grafton** are collectively calling for entries for the 2021 Small Stones Festival of the Arts. Submissions of fine art paintings and photography will be accepted until the night that the 500th entry is received. For more information, visit the festival's website, [smallstonesfestival.org](http://smallstonesfestival.org).

It's clear that the season isn't over just yet. Whether it's by creating art, making memories with furry friends, or enjoying some outdoor fun, the joys of summer can still be found in September.

Contact Christine with your business news items at [cmgaleone15@gmail.com](mailto:cmgaleone15@gmail.com).



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For our full events calendar please visit our website at [www.blackstonevalley.org/event-calendar/signature-events/](http://www.blackstonevalley.org/event-calendar/signature-events/)

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Focus on non profits

# North Atlantic States Carpenters Training Fund provides training, opportunity and more in Millbury

By Christine Galeone

On Monday Sept. 13 at 6 p.m., the North Atlantic States Carpenters Training Fund will hold its monthly free information session at its Millbury Training Center, located at 13 Holman Road. Although the meeting will provide detailed information about the NASCTF, for some attendees, it will provide much more. "It's a gateway to the middle class," Thomas Fischer, NASCTF Executive Director, said.

That's because the fund provides four years of high quality tuition-free training and apprenticeship to qualified applicants. The program has led to multitudes of successful careers in the construction industry.

The apprenticeship program consists of a combination of classroom instruction, workshop training and job experience. Over the four years, the apprentices need to receive more than 640 hours of classroom instruction and up to 8,000 hours of on-the-job training at worksites in order to complete the program. As the apprentices gain experience and knowledge, their wages continue to rise until they become full carpenters,

which are referred to as journeymen.

And program applicants don't have to have prior construction industry experience. "It really is what's the best fit for your passion and maybe your skillset," Fischer said. He added, "You have to work incredibly hard to become a journey level carpenter."

The program, which has training centers throughout New England and New York, offers training in commercial and residential carpentry, floorcovering, pile driving and mill cabinet. With more than 2,500 apprentices currently enrolled in the program, it continues to grow.

Ziven Drake, the NASCTF Technical Coordinator, attested to the fact that's it's not just recent high school graduates and burly men who succeed in the program. Although she's a petite woman, she thrived in and completed the program before taking on her current role at the nonprofit. In recent years, she's also seen single moms complete the program to improve their financial situations for the health of their families. "My incredible instructors can

teach people how to be great carpenters," Drake said, noting that what matters most is a person's attitude, ability to be conscientious and desire to learn. She later added, "When I found this place, it was a gem."

Fischer, who has a Master's degree in Education and worked for many years as a high school educator, agrees. And both have seen how maintaining strict COVID-19 safety protocols and procedures has actually improved the program. Fischer explained, "Access to live on-line learning has been an upgrade to our training, and it's been well received as well."

Since the apprenticeship program is self-funded by the North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters and the council's signatory building contractors, the NASCTF isn't in need of funding or volunteers. But it could use the community's support in another way. "For people to continue to spread the word that we exist," Drake said.

Additionally, Fischer hopes that people will see beyond the misconceptions about carpentry that are prevalent in our society. "It's a very viable way to make a

living," he said, noting that choosing to pursue excellence in a vocation is no worse or better than choosing a college education. He added, "The lobster is no better than the filet mignon."

More information about the nonprofit is available on the NASCTF website, NASCTF.org. If you would like to suggest a Blackstone Valley nonprofit or initiative for this series, please contact Christine at cmgaleone15@gmail.com.



North Atlantic States Carpenters Training Fund program participants

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## Living well and looking good

### Non-stop Acid Reflux? Look at surgical options

By Keith Roach, M.D.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 78-year-old female who has suffered from acid reflux for many years and has been taking Prilosec (omeprazole) for at least 15 years. I have heard that it is not meant for longtime use. If I don't take it, I have such heartburn I can't sleep and am in misery all day and night. I recently attended a seminar on the new LINX surgery and hope to have it done. Do you have any information on the success of or problems after this surgery? - J.B.

ANSWER: The LINX device is a magnetic ring, placed by laparoscopic surgery, that helps increase the strength of the lower esophageal sphincter, the valve-like muscular structure at the junction of the esophagus and the stomach. This reduces reflux (backward movement) of stomach acid up into the esophagus.

The procedure was very effective at reducing both heartburn symptoms (89% before procedure to 12% after) and the need for daily medicines like omeprazole (100% before to 15% after).

The device has not been in use for a very long time, so long-term safety data is unavailable. Some people had to have the devices removed because they eroded into the esophagus, but only 0.3% of devices were removed at four years.

There are other types of surgeries used to treat reflux, most of which are effective at reducing both symptoms and the need for medication. There are now options for treatment being done endoscopically (with an instrument placed through the

mouth), without the need even for laparoscopic surgery (with the instrument being placed by small incisions through the skin).

My personal practice is to discuss medication treatments as well as surgical treatments for people with moderate to severe acid reflux. Surgery in younger people may have more benefit by preventing a lifetime of daily medication. People who do not get relief with medication

are those who most clearly benefit from these kinds of procedures.

#### Blood donor

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 90-year-old man. My wife's life was saved in 1952 with Red Cross blood. Since then, I have

donated more than 31 gallons of blood. My blood is CMV-negative. They want me to donate more.

I had a CT scan after a fall, and a 1-cm ground-glass nodule was found in my lung. They are going to do another scan in six months to see if it is growing. The Red Cross said if I had cancer I should refrain from donating. What should I do? - J.J.B.

ANSWER: Based on the information you are giving me, it's about 90% likely that this will not be cancer. A repeat scan to see if it is growing is a good idea.

Even in the unlikely event this is cancer, the likelihood of passing cancer cells along in a blood transfusion is very, very small. However, blood banks like the Red Cross are exceedingly careful to maintain a safe blood supply, and waiting six months to donate is safest.

Let me add my thanks to your selfless giving of a precious, life-saving resource - your blood - which is especially valuable to people with immune system disease given the lack of the common pathogen cytomegalovirus, which can cause serious disease in people after cancer

chemotherapy.

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

**To your good health**

### Divorce Support Group begins new session September 7 in-person or online

WHITINSVILLE - The DivorceCare support group begins a new weekly session on Tuesday, September 7. This program is for men and women struggling through separation and divorce. The program offers support from knowledgeable leaders and interaction with others going through the same experiences.

Each meeting includes time for making some new friends, refreshments, and a video, followed by small group discussion. Weekly topics include What's Happening to Me, Facing Your Anger, Depression, Financial Survival, Loneliness, and KidCare.

The meetings will be done in a hybrid fashion. Participants can come to the in-person meeting or join online if that is more comfortable.

The DivorceCare program is free, non-denominational, and open to all.

Meetings of the group begin Tuesday, September 7, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Pleasant Street Church, 25 Cross Street, Whitinsville. The program continues for 13 weeks, and participants can begin attending at any time. Contact Howard DeVries at 508-282-9347, e-mail [howard@pscr.org](mailto:howard@pscr.org) or visit [www.pscr.org](http://www.pscr.org) for more information and to register.

### Grief Recovery Support Group Starts September 7; in-person and via Zoom

WHITINSVILLE - A new grief recovery support group starts up on Tuesday, September 7, at the Pleasant Street Church. GriefShare is a program designed to help people in bereavement find encouragement and support during the grieving process. GriefShare meetings are for anyone who is grieving the loss of someone close.

The meetings will be done in a hybrid fashion. Participants can come to the in-person meeting or participate online via Zoom if that is more comfortable.

Each GriefShare session includes a video seminar and group discussion, providing an opportunity to interact with others who have experienced a recent loss. Weekly topics include "Living with Grief," "The Effects of Grief," "Your Family and Grief," "Why," and "Stuck in Grief."

The program continues for 13 weeks, and attendees are welcome to join the group at any point.

GriefShare is free, non-denominational, and open to all.

Meetings begin Tuesday, September 7, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Pleasant Street Church, 25 Cross Street, Whitinsville. Contact Marlene DeVries at 508-282-0436, e-mail [mrsrevhowie@gmail.com](mailto:mrsrevhowie@gmail.com) or visit [www.pscr.org](http://www.pscr.org) for more information and to register.

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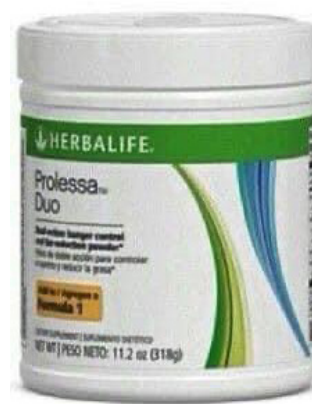
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## Sutton Historical Society to host speaker

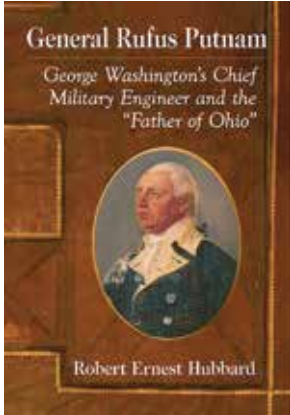
On Tuesday, September 7, at 7 pm, in the Sanctuary of the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, Sutton, the Sutton Historical Society will host author, Robert Ernest Hubbard, retired professor from New Haven, Connecticut. His presentation will highlight his recently published book, General Rufus Putnam, George Washington's Chief Military Engineer and the "Father of Ohio." This book is the first biography of Rufus Putnam in over 130 years. It will appeal to anyone interested in the founding of the United States of America or the history of efforts to eradicate slavery.

This event is open to all members and the general public.

Rufus Putnam, born in Sutton, Massachusetts, went on to serve as the Continental Army's chief military engineer during the American Revolutionary War. He made it possible for the American forces to drive the British army from Boston in 1776, and he designed and supervised the construction of many major American military fortifications, including the most indispensable—West Point. Rufus was a cousin of Major General Israel Putnam and served under

Israel at various times during the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War. Several years after the Revolutionary War, Rufus Putnam personally founded the first permanent American settlement in the immense Northwest Territory, which was ceded to the new American nation by Britain. Putnam's influence and votes prevented the introduction of slavery in Ohio, leading the way for the other Northwest Territory states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin to enter the U.S. as free states.

Any updates to this scheduled event can be found at our website [suttonhistorical-societyinc.org](http://suttonhistorical-societyinc.org).



## Garden party planned

MILLBURY - The Friends of the Asa Waters Mansion proudly present: A Secret Garden Party with magical surprises, on Sunday, August 29, at 2 p.m. at The Asa Waters Mansion at 123 Elm St., Millbury.

This special end-of-school vacation event for girls and boys of elementary school age includes a bird house decorating project led by Amy Crossin of the Parading Palette, a reading of the delightful book, *The Secret Garden*, and an ice cream sundae buffet.

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prises too. Cost is \$20 per child and \$5 for adults. Please call Marie at 508-865-5528 for reservations.

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# He rides from sea to shining sea

By Janet Stoica

"The west coast ride was colder than I thought it would be," said Denis LaForce of Manchaug, "even though the temperatures there had broken new records the likes of which no one had ever seen. It was 105 degrees in Washington State where I began my ride but the winds off the Pacific Ocean made it much colder."

Mr. LaForce is a dedicated bike rider of the highest magnitude or, as he likes to say "a reformed backpacker." He's in great shape for a man of 74 years having just reached his 74th birthday on his last trip down the west coast cycling along the PCH, or Pacific Coast Highway, as it's known to the locals. His 1800-mile cycling trip took him from the Canadian border to Mexico's boundary line which must be one of the most amazing trips

any of us could ever imagine. Can you visualize yourself cycling through Washington, Oregon, and California? Perhaps if it were all downhill, more of us might try it but Denis LaForce fulfilled a bicycle trip he'd been planning for some time knowing that his road trip would be as physical as it could get. As you can expect, he has his bicycle, packing, and planning down to a science of minimalism that ensures his comfort and everyday needs.

After hiking the Appalachian Trail twice, Denis decided it was time for some new activity and bicycle touring turned out to be something he dedicated himself to. He and his wife, Jane, also breed LaMancha goats and raise chickens and Jane has been known to make delicious cheese and

yogurt from their goats' milk. "The LaManchas are very personable, intelligent, and affectionate," says Mr. LaForce. Before embarking on one of his cycling trips, Denis is sure to stack the barn with hay and fill the grain cans to make it a bit easier for Jane to feed the animals in his absence.

Denis says that you don't really need a dedicated touring bike to make these types of long treks. "A steel frame is more solid," he says, "even though it's not lightweight, an extended wheelbase will take the road bumps better and the longer back end provides more supply-pack space too."

When he hiked the Appalachian Trail, he learned about post office restocking areas for food drops and how to pack his gear: a tent, sleeping bag, cook stove, and other essential items. He also ensured he carried lists of police dept. phone numbers as well as motel names, campgrounds, and grocery stores along his route. His daily biking mileage averages 70-80 miles sometimes pedaling as much as 100 miles.

For his recent Canadian to Mexico jaunt, he shipped his bike in two pieces with the use of S & S couplings (also known as bicycle torque couplings or BTC) via jet to Seattle, WA. Denis then flew to Seattle and reassembled his bike in his hotel room. As Canada was not yet allowing Americans across

its border, he was allowed to place his bike's back wheel on Canadian soil before pedaling off on his latest adventure.

"As I mentioned, the Pacific ocean breezes were quite cool pedaling down a highway so I'd have to put my windbreaker on but going up a hill that jacket was quickly put away. As I travelled the coastline I found that Washington had many peninsulas with the highway running along them. Sometimes, in the mountains, you could see the drop right to the ocean where there were many beautiful beaches but there were no people on those beaches as access roads were non-existent. They carved the roads right out of those mountains. And the redwood forests....you just wouldn't believe their beauty. Until you stand next to a giant redwood and look up to see their astounding height, you quickly realize that a camera lens could never capture the breadth and depth of their magnificence. Just amazing.

"Traveling across the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco was breathtaking. As you approach the bridge you begin to appreciate its structure and the feat of engineering that went into its construction. It was an incredible ride across that bridge. There is no comparison of biking through America's greatest landmarks at 12 mph where you can truly grasp and appreciate their beauty as opposed to a 60 mph car ride where the views speed by your window. Biking along the Big Sur with its ocean views and rugged coastline was just beautiful. The way the road wound around the mountains was impressive. I met so many interesting people along the way and they were doing biking and camping and hiking for the same reason I ride, pure enjoyment and the physical part of it all. There were many biker/hiker camp-



Denis LaForce at the Mexican border.



At the Canadian border.

grounds along the way and they always seemed to find room for a biker.

"I had so many great conversations around the picnic tables and campfires. We all gave each other advice on where to stay or stopover. Everyone was friendly and helpful."

Mr. LaForce has also biked many other parts of the USA and has actually biked the perimeter of our country on the bicycle routes laid out by the Appalachian Mountain Club and many other bicycling clubs. He is a member of the Seven Hills Wheelmen of Worcester. He teaches cycle touring and is a Certified Touring Leader with CPR training. Local touring includes a ride to Horseneck Beach in Westport. There are also beginner rides to selected locations, an annual ride to Winchendon from North Brookfield, as well as 3-10 day cycle tours.

He is proud to say that he has not had any accidents, uses a helmet mirror, and has never been "doored" (when someone opens a car door as he rides along a line of cars). However, his greatest fear currently is drivers who are cell-phone texting.


"To see the world at 12 mph is the perfect speed," says Denis, "I'm not out to do a certain amount of miles but I do enjoy the workout. Every part of our great country is just beautiful. We all have our political differences and opinions but when you have the chance to speak with a new person one-on-one, you quickly realize that we are all the same."

For more information on learning about bike touring, contact the Worcester Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club. [www.amcworcester.org](http://www.amcworcester.org)

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



Denis LaForce at the giant redwood trees.



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# Shrewsbury native Dr. Sean Lordan expands physical therapy clinic

Concierge Physical Therapy is now in Shrewsbury. Owned and operated by town native Dr. Sean T. Lordan, DPT, his new clinic is located at 307 Grafton Street (next door to Café Noir). This is Dr. Lordan's second location in just three years. In 2018, Concierge Physical Therapy opened the doors to its first location in Sutton.

Dr. Lordan also added the title 'Author' to his resume this summer, publishing his first book titled: 11 Winning Secrets to Stop Aging in Its Tracks. This book is focused on practical tips and anecdotes designed to help readers form and streamline healthy habits.

He is also connecting with listeners and viewers as the host

of the popular podcast "Hooked on Health." Dr. Lordan sits down with a variety of guests including local Orthopedic Surgeon, Dr. Phil Lahey, IV of Worcester County Orthopedics, and PGA Golf Professional, Allan Belden, owner of Belden Golf and Director of Instruction at Salem Country Club. He and his guests chat Live about an array of health and wellness topics, viewers can type in questions during the Zoom. Live and unscripted, viewers feel like they are taking part in a vibrant conversation with experts about topics that impact their daily life. Find "Hooked on Health" Apple and all other major podcast channels, on Concierge Physical Therapy's YouTube channel,

and streams Live on Facebook. Dr. Lordan grew up in Shrewsbury, a graduate of Saint John's High School and Northeastern University. He resides in Grafton with his wife and daughter. Valuing a strong community, Dr. Lordan donates 10% of gross revenues to several local nonprofits, including UMass Memorial Health, Girls on the Run, March of Dimes, CASA Project, Rainbow Child Development Center, and the Boys & Girls Club of Worcester. Dr. Lordan is a leading physical therapist whose focus is on delivering excellence in medicine and personalized care. His clinical practice is expansive, treating patients from pediatrics to professional and Olympic athletes. He is

Specialty Certified in Orthopedics by the American Physical Therapy Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (OCS). He is recognized as a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) through the National Strength and Conditioning Association and is Certified in Spinal Manipulation and Dry Needling.

A Worcester Business Journal, Forty Under Forty Honoree, Dr. Lordan is credited with establishing cutting-edge protocols to help adjust and strengthen the body. He routinely works with athletes, focusing on sports conditioning and rehabilitation, and regularly designs personalized treatment plans tailored to his patients' health, well-being, and specific goals.



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## Festival of Illumination World of Lights at Southwick's Zoo grand opening weekend September 9, 10, 11 & 12

Southwick's Zoo in Mendon, is excited to announce their much-anticipated Grand Opening Weekend of the "Festival of Illumination World of Lights," this September 9, 10, 11 and 12, - 5:30pm to 10:00pm each evening. Southwick's Zoo has part-

nered with the award-winning Zigong Lantern Group working together over the past two years to create this premium, one of a kind Chinese lantern showcase. In addition to the breathtaking lantern exhibits, guests of the Grand Opening Weekend will experience live entertainment including Chinese Acrobats, Asian Night Market, Street Performers, Specialty Foods and more.

From September 9 to January 3, 2022, Southwick's Zoo will be illuminated by breathtaking custom-built exhibits consisting of hundreds of Chinese lanterns meticulously handcrafted from silk, steel, and environmentally friendly LED lights. Guests will travel the globe through the incredible art-

istry of handcrafted Chinese Lanterns and be immersed in the magical world of imagination and illumination, visiting the African Savannahs, the Amazon rainforest, the Great Barrier Reef, as well as many beautiful and fascinating regions in between. Beginning on November 26 the Southwick's Zoo's traditional Winter Wonderland holiday lights as well as additional holiday themed Chinese Lanterns will be featured. Santa will also be visiting at his enchanted Village.

The Festival of Illumination World of Lights is an evening event, 5:30pm -10:00pm. September 9, 2021 to January 3, 2022. Advance ticket purchase is recommended for this must-see ex-

perience. More information please visit [www.festivalofillumination.com](http://www.festivalofillumination.com).

Southwick's Zoo is a privately-owned zoo located at 2 Southwick Street in Mendon, and has been a favorite New England destination for over 50 years. The zoo is home to over 850 animals, featuring more than 160 varied species, many of which are endangered. Southwick's Zoo's mission is to provide an extensive zoological collection and educational facility for their visitors, offering exciting family fun and entertainment for guests of all ages. [www.southwickzoo.com](http://www.southwickzoo.com)

### Labor Day breakfast

SUTTON - The First Congregational Church of Sutton will host it's 67th Annual Labor Day Breakfast on Sutton Center Common, rain or shine, Monday, September 6, from 7:00-10:30 am. Breakfast ticket donations \$12.00 adults / \$6.00 ages 5 to 10 years old / Free - 4 and under.

The Menu include eggs, ham, pancakes, home fries, cornbread, cereal, juice and coffee. Please bring a donation of non-perishables to benefit the Sutton Food Pantry.

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# Small Stones Festival of the Arts Announces 2021 Art Call

GRAFTON - Artists and photographers please submit your original works of art to the fourth annual Small Stones Festival of the Arts, a juried fine art painting and photography exhibit. The Festival returns Oct. 15 to the Great Hall, Grafton Town House, One Grafton Common, Grafton for a live ceremony announcing the winning artists. The top three artists in each category will win cash awards.

Four regional arts organizations - Apple Tree Arts, the Worcester County Camera Club, the Blackstone Valley Art Association and the Shakespeare Club of Grafton have collaborated to create the exhibit accompanied with music and literary programs, jurors and artist talks and an art collection presentation. The extended Festival runs Oct. 15-24 with free exhibit hours on weekends and weekday evenings of Oct. 20, 21 and 22.

The Festival's art call opened Aug. 15 for submissions of artwork. Photography and all forms of two-dimensional artwork are welcomed, with a maximum of three entries per artist. The art call will remain open until 500 entries are received. Visit <https://smallstonesfestival.org/> to submit artwork.

Three prestigious jurors for each category will select 144 works to appear in the exhibit and hardbound printed catalog. Fine art category jurors include renowned artist Carol Arnold, first place prize winner in the best figure/portraiture category of the June 2020 Plein Air Salon Art Competition; Charlotte Wharton, a highly accomplished portrait, plein air and genre artist and Susan Swinand, a prominent painter with a preference for water media. Photography category jurors are David DeMelim,

founder and managing director of Rhode Island Center for Photographic Arts; Jessica Roscio, director and curator at Danforth Art Museum; and renowned fine art portraiture photographer Al Weems.

Awards will include first, second and third cash prize winners, juror's choice and popular choice for each category. Cash awards are \$500 for first; \$250 for second; and \$100 for third place. The exhibit catalogue will be sold online in late November. For more information about the festival, visit <https://smallstonesfestival.org/> or contact chair Ken Crater, Worcester County Camera Club, [ken@smallstonesfestival.org](mailto:ken@smallstonesfestival.org).



Rockport Motif - Scott Nelson



Bonnie Frederico - Apple Blossoms



Carolyn Kinlock-Winkler - Sparrows in the Mulberry



Gimme a Break - Doreen Evangeline.



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We have several dogs up for adoption at this time with more scheduled to come in. They range in age from 5 months to 6 years. If you are not looking to adopt at this time, please share these beauties with friends and family to help find their forever homes. Visit our website [dogorphans.com](http://dogorphans.com) to see more photos of each.

Meet Rudolph. Rudolph is an 8 month old terrier mix from Florida. Rudolph was taken off the streets down there. No one ever came for him. Rudolph is a goofy, active, kind of class clown sort of character. Rudolph's got lots of young puppy like energy. He will need an active home and maybe a friend to play with to burn off his energy. Rudolph would do best in a home with kids 10 and up do to his energy level.



Meet Griffin! Griffin is a friendly, affectionate Lab/Great Pyrenees mix who is 8 years old and weighs 71 lbs. This beautiful boy came into Rescue in rough shape and was severely underweight at 46 lbs, but has been regaining his health and putting on pounds since he was taken in. He loves people (including kids), is fine with other dogs (although not a huge fan of young, crazy dogs in his face), and walks fairly well on leash. He enjoys hanging with his people if they work from home, going on the occasional walk, and exploring the fenced in backyard. He is a sweet, gentle, easy keeper and is pretty much perfect in every way! Can you give this happy, playful, deserving senior a loving home? He will be a wonderful, devoted & grateful companion! Griffin is housebroken, crate trained, neutered, fully vaccinated & microchipped.

Meet Biggie. biggie is a four year old Husky mix from Florida. This big handsome beefcake was abandoned down there. Biggie is a little bit of a shy guy but the most gentle giant ever. Down in Florida, do to over crowding, kennels are doubled up. Biggies Roommate was a 20lb feisty little mix. Biggie enjoyed spending his time with the other dog. Biggie needs a little bit of a confidence boost. All he needs is a loving family to never let him go again. Biggie would do well in a home with kids 7 and up as he is a large boy.



Meet Sunny! She is a 3 year old boxer mix from Georgia. Prior to being rescued, her name was "money". Can you guess why?! Her former owner would breed her over and over and sell her babies for drug money. We have given her a new name and a new start to a better life. Her mom was finally incarcerated and sunny was able to get away from that terrible life style. Sunny is a doll. A happy, goofy girl who loves all humans including kids. She will be hyper if you are, and calm if you are. She does loves to splash in her kiddie pool! Sunny gets along well with other dogs. She is great with everyone except cats. Sunny weighs 46lbs

Meet Benjamin! Benjamin is a 1 year old shepherd mix from South Carolina. Benjamin was taken in as a stray and no one ever came to claim him as their family pup. Benjamin is a goof ball who loves to run and play with his canine friends! Benjamin does great with kids but we prefer no toddlers as Benjamin is still just a pup himself and may accidentally knock them over. Benjamin weighs 47lbs



## "The Voice" star Billy Gilman headlines Pet Rock Fest 2021

GRAFTON – Pet Rock Fest and Entertainment Sponsor T-Mobile are pleased to announce that platinum recording artist and "The Voice" finalist Billy Gilman headlines this year's musical lineup at the annual Pet Rock Festival.

Gilman burst onto the national stage in 2000 with the release of his hit single "One Voice" and his debut album certified double platinum in the United States. He also holds the distinction of being included in the Guinness Book of World Records for being the youngest singer to ever reach number one on the Billboard Top Country Album charts.

"We couldn't be happier that Gilman was able and willing to headline our festival this year," says Pet Rock Fest Founding Partner Charlene Arsenault. "We were looking for a well-known artist whose music is appealing to all ages, but is particularly popular with the younger generation right now. He fits the bill to a T."

At 28, Gilman has sold five million albums worldwide and garnered awards and nods from the Academy of Country Music, Billboard Magazine, the American Music Association and the Country Music Association.

"It took me a good while to figure out exactly who I was, musically speaking," he said

in a statement. "As a little kid, sometimes I was just told what to sing. But now I have enjoyed coming into my own and discovering what it really is that I want to sing. And I think that my fans will be pleasantly surprised with what they hear."

Gilman became an instant fan favorite as the weeks went by on The Voice, his soaring vocals and amazing song choices earning him a spot in the finale of Season 11. Coach Adam Levine of Maroon 5 remarked, "You can emote so well. You can draw people in so easily."

Jeannie Hebert, Pet Rock Fest founding partner, adds, "We are so thrilled to be able to present Pet Rock Fest in person this year! Billy Gilman is a major talent and will attract his followers from the Voice to support our efforts to help animals in need, which is what the festival is all about."

The 23rd annual Pet Rock Festival gallops its way back to Wyman-Gordon, 244 Worcester St., in North Grafton on Sunday, Sept. 12, from noon to 5 p.m.

Pet Rock Fest continues to put the spotlight on the animal welfare organizations of New England that work hard to promote kindness to animals.

The event has all of our

popular attractions and more, including: K9 demos; an agility course hosted by CMDART; the Pups In The Air disc dog team; live music; the Rescue Groups and Shelters Pet Parade; kids activities, cat photo contest; book signings, annual Pet Rock Hero award; speakers; amateur dog contest; vegetarian food court; animal mascots, doggie massages, demonstrations, free and low-cost microchipping and rabies shots from VCA; a doggie water park; photos of your pets; animal-friendly vendors; and, most importantly, hundreds of nonprofit groups devoted to a huge range of animal welfare causes.

Supporting acts for Gilman include the Rafterers, Ric Porter and the Roadhouse Gypsies, Shiverlane and Three for All.

"T-Mobile is honored and excited to be the Entertainment Sponsor for the Pet Rock Festival, and thrilled to be announcing headlining act Billy Gilman," said Amanda Kinney, regional marketing manager, T-Mobile. "At T-Mobile, we strive to support our communities and highlight organizations and businesses that

are out there making the world a better place. The Pet Rock Festival gives so many groups the opportunity to share their mission and we are so happy to be a part of it all!"

Local nonprofit VegFest continues to partner with Pet Rock Fest to host its food court, packed with offerings from amazing vegan restaurants and food vendors. Originally called VegWorcester, VegFest hosts New England Vegfest, a free annual festival that celebrates animal-friendly, environmentally sustainable, and healthy lifestyles. This nonprofit dedicated to animal lovers was an easy fit to complement the mission of the Pet Rock Festival.

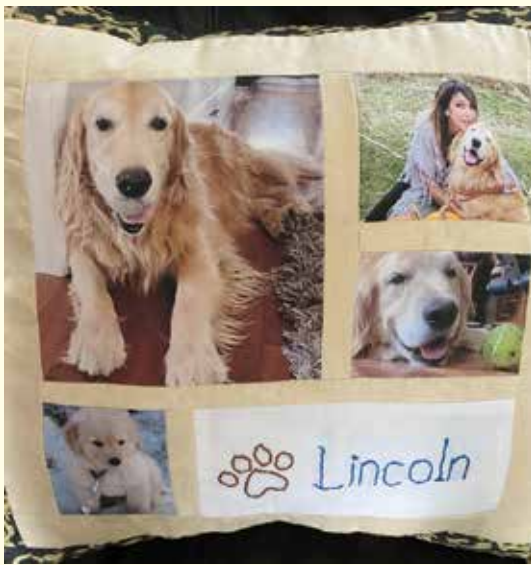
Anyone interested in volunteering for, performing at, or taking part in the festival in any way (including vendors and sponsors) should contact [petrockfest@gmail.com](mailto:petrockfest@gmail.com).

For updates on the plans for the day, groups signed up to attend, and other official or not so official news, visit [petrockfest.org](http://petrockfest.org) or check us out on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/petrockfest> and on Twitter @Petrockfestival.

## Back-to-school movie night

BOSTON – State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) and his family announced that they are hosting a back-to-school family movie night at Waters Farm in Sutton on Friday, September 10, starting at 6:00 p.m. with roasting marshmallows. The address is 53 Waters Rd, Sutton.

This event is open to families in all the towns of the Blackstone Valley, and it is sponsored by Ryan and Stephanie Fattman and Waters Farm. The featured movie will be Disney's Raya and the Last Dragon. The event is intended to celebrate the waning days of summer by gathering community at a local historical icon. Families are invited to attend and to bring their own seating. Other items for the event such as marshmallows and a fire will be provided.



One of so many heartfelt gifts received in honor of Lincoln. Thank you.

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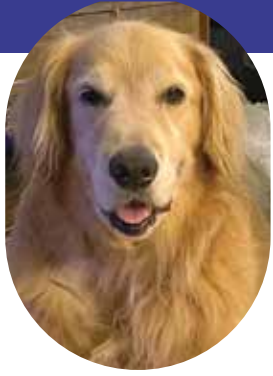
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## Living ON with Lincoln *Lincoln's best day*

By Amy LeClaire

The summer is different. His orange ball is still there, frozen in time beneath the deck. I walk around the yard to check out the new blooms (what did I plant last year again?) and wait for Lincoln to trot by my side, the blue ball (yet another) lopsided in his mouth. He loved to shadow me while I kneeled down to dig a hole, then drop the ball down into the fresh soil. "I was thinking we could play ball today."

Dog People understand. A dog's presence, coupled with his personality, are qualities unrivaled by anyone or anything else. Dogs bring us the intangible reminders that life is perfect just as it is, and so aren't we. Everything is as it should be, and we are just right, as-is. The sun is out, the birds are singing, and guess what? We're together. Let's go smell the roses. Better yet, let's play ball around the roses.

Every dog I have owned, though different in breed and personality, has reminded me of the importance to be present. Max, my childhood fave, was a medium-sized mongrel partial to Rhodesian Ridgeback roots. His sleek coat, a peppery cinnamon shade, betrayed a cheap diet of value-packed kibbles and occasional table scraps. My family's 35 mm slide shots (later) captured his life of leisure on the big screen, a white sheet repurposed for movie night. There's Max on the front lawn. Remember the orange shag. Max lived the life of a rock star. He would taunt our neighbor's long-leashed (mean) dog

Lito, galloping to the very border of the dog's furthest edge to flaunt his freedom—until the unlucky day when Lito broke free. "It's Max!" I sobbed to my father. "Lito's going to kill him!"

Max shook off the fight. He trotted the hood with one eye shut, but he got over it. That was the seventies.

Fast forward forty years. Living without a dog still feels unnatural and still, like sitting on a broken, unused wooden rocking chair. I'm still "getting-it-done" (an energetic person by nature) but there's a disconnect in the process, a blip in the journey. I no



Watching mom plant.

longer wait in Dunkin Donuts drive-through lines. What's the point? My trips with Lincoln were not about the donut and coffee. Rather, they were about the journey. I'll never forget the time I brought Lincoln through a McDonalds Drive-Through line for the first time. He sniffed the air, took in the sights, and barked with belligerence, completely unsatisfied. Where are the pinks and browns? The smell of hazelnut? What's with the gigantic letter M? Wrong, wrong, wrong. He paced the backseat with fury, beside himself. "It's okay, Lincoln. Mummy just wants to try a Newman's coffee today.

Change is good." A burger at the window may have sold him, but he knew what he wanted. I miss watching him tilt his head to the robotic sound of the speaker voice, then tap dance in the backseat before, finally, greeting his Dunkin pals. "Hi. My name is Lincoln! Do you happen to have a piece of Day Old cheese?"

Every single day spent together was the best day of Lincoln's life. Dogs appreciate us fully. They love us every day, regardless of circumstance and without exception. They study our habits and remind us of their favorite quirks. The mere jingle of my keys would set Lincoln into a spiral of elation, as though we were about to embark on an exotic cruise. He'd hop up to the backseat of my Pilot and wait for me to drop the window down. The destination didn't matter, only the journey. "You're such a good boy, Lincoln." I'd reach back to pat his head and he'd smile comfortably. "I know I am."

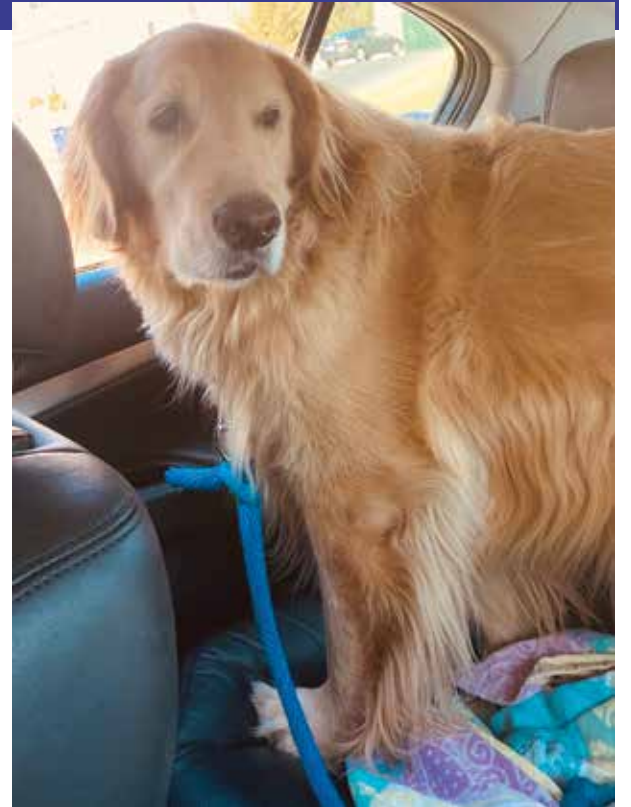
His last day of life, unexpectedly and remarkably, ended on a snowy April 16th with a car ride. He didn't know the ending of that ride, only that we were going on another adventure together. Although I've found myself second-guessing what I could have done better (why didn't I pack a jar of goat's milk for him to sip in the backseat?) I know in my heart that his ending was exactly as it should have been. My husband, heartbreakingly, had to turn down his request to play ball in the snow early that morning. "Daddy, it's snowing out! Let's go play!" More devastating (for me) was facing his moment of truth, when Lincoln actually made a mind-body connection in regard to what was happening with his breathing and con-

sequent ability to function normally. He knew he wasn't right. A few days before his time, he even tried to "hack up" the tumors in his throat while out in the back yard. My dog is innocent. Please, give me his pain.

Up until those final days, he was able to find a way around his illness. Most days, I don't think he even knew anything was wrong with him. His thirst for being happy and his will to go on overshadowed any discomfort.

"Go ahead, Lincoln. Take your ball." I was desperate to be with Lincoln as I always had, and as he always was. He was ageless, a survivor, the largest male of the litter, and he needed to go on. "I can't play anymore. It's my breathing." That morning was different. He rested his head on his chin and turned his head away. My eyes ached, rested shut.

Then something happened. The sound of my key jingle awakened him to his old self! "Want to go for a ride, Lincoln?" The inflection in my voice (I fought to give it a positive ring) was just what my dog needed. He snapped up and led me to the accent table by the refrigerator, where the same



Another car ride, another adventure.

ball he had just resigned from had rolled beneath. "Great idea! Let's bring my ball along too!" Old times. Thank you, Lincoln.

Rushes of cold air and snow blew his ears back while, window open, he watched the world pass him by. The moment was harsh and unforgiving but, for Lincoln, it was beautiful. Another day, another car ride, another journey to take part in. Yesterday's worries were gone. Tomorrows were point-

less. All that mattered was that his two favorite people were taking him somewhere. Where to? It didn't matter. "Lincoln can come too." I repeated the words over and over while he rested on my lap and went to sleep. All that mattered was this—that we were together.

Every day spent with Lincoln was the best day of his life, even his last.

Contact Amy at amyklaire@hotmail.com

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## Intrigue, Betrayal, Murder, Regicide... it must be Shakespeare

It's not all sonnets and flowery language. Reading Shakespeare means so much more. Opening its 33rd season on September 13, the Shakespeare Club of Grafton invites new members to experience

the joy of reading and discussing the works, life and times of the greatest literary figure of all time. Yes, he is the GOAT like Simone Biles and Tom Brady, but he was the first. Meeting every second and

fourth Monday each month, September to May, the Shakespeare Club of Grafton has met for many years at the Brigham Hill Community Barn on Wheeler Road in North Grafton at 7:30 p.m. Even COVID19

could not keep the group from meeting via Zoom for all of 2020-2021 season. The plays read and discussed included King Lear, Much Ado About Nothing, and the Oscar Wilde masterpiece, The Importance of Being Earnest. At this time, it is uncertain if the Zoom meetings must continue for a while, but the club certainly will. Interested people should check out graftonshakespeare.org or email info@shakespeare.org for updates.

The 2021-2022 selections were chosen at the final meeting of last season in May at which new officers also were elected. The officers include Manas Sarma, President; Donna Coleman, Vice President; Cathy Thornton, Secretary; Steve Sardella, Treasurer; Mary Claire Ryan, Casting Director. The plays selected for this season are Othello, The Winter's Tale, Macbeth and George Bernard Shaw's Major Barbara.

The enduring quality of the Shakespeare Club of Grafton is that the club has participants from various walks of life so discussions are lively with interesting points of view being expressed. The job of the Casting Director is to assign roles to members for reading aloud and to ensure distribution keeps everyone engaged. Often readings are supplemented by excellent film productions or excerpts which add depth to presentations. Members are hoping to return once again to attending live productions at Lenox's Shakespeare & Company or other local venues. Occasionally, guest speakers are invited to inform and enlighten.

"The Play's the Thing," naturally, is the club's motto. Join in the experience of the 2021-2022 season. As Will wrote in As You Like It, "All the world's a stage; and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts."

### 9/11 tribute and concert planned

DOUGLAS - Douglas Orchard and Farm, 36 Locust St., will present a 9/11 Tribute followed by Live Music at the Pavilion featuring 19th Nervous Breakdown - Rolling Stones Tribute on Saturday, September 11.

19th Nervous Breakdown is a Rolling Stones tribute band that celebrates the music of the greatest, most successful, and longest-running rock band of all time.

25th Anniversary of the 1993 World Trade Center attack will be commemorated at 4:15 p.m. 4:30-5 p.m. opening act is a female fronted tribute to Creedence Clearwater Revival. 5-7p.m. live music by 19th Nervous Breakdown.

\$10 per person 16 and older, kids free. Bring your own chairs. Food available from EB Flats serving BBQ, hamburgers, hotdogs and more.



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### Summer yard sale

CHARLTON - The Helping Hand final summer yard sale date is September 11. The time of each sale is 8 am to noon. The yard sale is at Dodge Chapel, 81 Hammond Hill Road, Charlton. To donate call Deb 508-987-0708, Annette 508-347-7596, or Judy 508-248-5580.

### First Congregational Church annual flea market

First Congregational Church at 148 West Main Street, Millbury is sponsoring the annual Flea Market and Craft Tables on Saturday, September 11, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Anyone wishing to reserve table space, please call Jeri Stead (508-865-5371). The \$25 inside area consists of a large supper table, plus a card table. An outside 10 feet plot reservation is \$20 and you will need to provide your own table. "The Kitchen" will be serving coffee and muffins, and at lunch time, Ron's hot dogs will be served. There will also be a Bakery Table, and a Church Flea Market Table.

### VFW Post flea market

UPTON - The Upton VFW Post 5594 will hold its flea market on September 11 and October 9 at Post headquarters, 15 Millford St., (Rt. 140) in Upton, weather permitting. Hours are 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Vendors and crafty people are more than welcome. Good sized spaces are \$10 each or \$15 if a banquet sized table is needed. No reservations are needed, although Post member David Kennedy can provide more information by calling him at 508-529-3314 or via the Upton VFW Facebook page.

### Stratford Village Yard Sales

MILLBURY - Many yard sales at the new Stratford Village Condos, off Burbank Street in Millbury. Sat., October 2 - Rain date Sun., October 3. 9 am to 1 pm. "We packed it, we moved it, and now we don't need it!"

### Yard sale

DOUGLAS - Yard sale to benefit Walking in Light (a non-profit that serves low income families in Worcester and greater Blackstone Valley) on Saturday, September 11, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Second Congregational Church of Douglas, 289 Main Street, Douglas.

### Yard Sale, Craft & Bake Sale

UXBRIDGE - The Prayer Shawl group of the Uxbridge Congregational Church will conduct a Craft and Bake Sale on October 2, from 9 - 2 p.m. in the church parking lot. It will be a good time to begin your holiday shopping with many beautiful items as well as homemade jellies, jams, gluten free baked good and pies.

A yard sale will also take place on the same day in the parking lot for those who enjoy browsing household items. More information on the yard sale will be available soon.

### Sacred Heart Church yard sale

HOPEDALE - Sacred Heart Church will hold two huge sales events on Saturday, September 11. "Twice Blessed" Thrift Shop Sale, 50% off all summer clothing and shoes, except special priced items; and the parish yard sale. Hours: 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Thrift Shop closed September 4. For more information regarding the parish yard sale, please contact the church directly. Catholic Community of Sacred Heart Church, 187 Hopedale Street, Hopedale, (508) 473-1900 or website sacredheartshopedale.org. Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/twiceblessedthriftshophopedale/

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Tales from beyond

# The Kennebunk Inn

The Kennebunk Inn has become known for its accommodations and cuisine although it is more known for its ghost.

Built as a private residence in 1799, it was sold to Benjamin Smith in 1804. In 1895 Dr. Ross purchased the building. He sold it in the 1920's to Mr. Baitler who turned it into the Tavern Inn. Walter Day expanded the hostel to 16 rooms and renamed it the Kennebunk Inn. Around this time, Silas Perkins became the night clerk. He worked there for many years with his room just above an old staircase now leading to nowhere in the cellar next to where the bar is located.

In 1980, Arthur and Angela LeBlanc purchased the inn and expanded it to 22 rooms. It seems this renovation awoke the spirit of Mr. Perkins who began showing his protest of the change. A bartender, Pattie Farnsworth was transporting provisions from the basement when she felt the awareness of a strange presence. Intuitively the name "Cyrus" materialized in her mind. Soon after, ghostly antics became a common occurrence and Cyrus was given all the blame.

A waitress carrying a tray of glasses witnessed in shock as the wine glass in the center of the tray rose above the rest then flew across the room shattering against a wall. A bartender was hit on the side of the head by three of the wooden mugs that were on a shelf behind him just above the liquor bottles. The staff would set the tables in the dining room before closing only to discover the next morning, napkins and silverware of the on the floor or in disarray. Chairs would be pushed out of place as if someone had finished their spectral cuisine, leaving cleanup to the morning crew. Bottles are often knocked over and moans from the basement seem to be common haunts of the inn.

In Room 17, an employee cleaning the room unplugged the television to move it. A few moments later, the TV turned on by itself- unplugged!

Salem author Robert Ellis Cahill and a few of his friends once booked an overnight stay at the inn. Although he experienced nothing unusual, his friend in another room was bothered all night by an unearthly moaning.

One day a man came to the

inn and began reminiscing of how he had lived there as a child with his grandfather. The conversation between the man and staff soon turned to the place being haunted by a man they call Cyrus. That is when the truth of the history came out about his relative, Silas Perkins who had died there and dearly loved the inn in life. Apparently, in death as well. Silas left his shift one night and while crossing the street, suffered a heart attack. He was brought to Room 11 where he expired shortly after.

Arlene and I stayed at the inn and visited frequently

while in Kennebunk. Nothing ever transpired in front of us that would be convincing but staff and innkeepers had plenty to tell. A few employees had some tales to share of napkins being lifted and dropped by unseen hands and footsteps ascending the stairs from an invisible source even when they are watching the staircase.

Activity in the bar is still a thrill to patrons either stopping to wet their whistle or partake in one of the delicious selections from the kitchen. Sounds of someone walking around in empty rooms are a regular part of the enchantment of



the inn. We talked to the new bartender and a few staff members. The staff claimed that some still hear old Cyrus making his nightly rounds in the otherwise empty bedchambers upstairs. Particularly Room 11.

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

## Big is back - The Big E is a go

SPRINGFIELD -Eastern States Exposition (ESE) is thrilled to announce that The Big E is Back!

ESE President Gene Cassidy, and West Springfield Mayor Will Reichelt met with media June 15 to officially announce the opening of the 105th edition of The Big E, September 17- October 3.

Cassidy said, "It's a good day! We have long awaited the opportunity to make this announcement and have been working diligently on our program. Preparations are underway as we look forward to welcoming everyone back to our beloved Big E."

Mayor Reichelt said, "The Big E is a West Springfield institution and we welcome all of New England to our Town in September. We have appreciated ESE's transparency and communication through this process as well as their assistance in providing a location for the West of the River Regional Vaccine Center. Personally I can't wait to get back to The Big E!"

Cassidy added, "Our thanks go out to Mass. Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Mayor Reichelt and a special thank you to West Springfield's Director of Public Health Jeanne Galloway, who has been working closely with us as we all navigated the many phases of the Massachusetts re-opening process."

"Big is Back" is the theme of this year's Fair. Currently the fifth largest fair in North America, The Big E will debut some BIG surprises this year including The Super Wheel, a 150 ft. high Ferris wheel with 36 climatecontrolled gondolas that seat up to six people. It will be located between the Better Living Center and the Gate 5 entrance.

Music fans will enjoy top-name concerts at The Big E Arena, sponsored by Truly Hard Seltzer. Guests will be able to visit the Avenue of States, Storrowton Village Museum, shop, eat iconic fair foods, watch the new Big Parade, ride the rides and much more. Look to our website and social media for announcements as information becomes available. Advance discount tickets to the 2021 Big E are on sale now online at [www.TheBigE.com](http://www.TheBigE.com) or at The Big E Box Office. Eastern States Exposition, home of The Big E, follows COVID-19 regulations required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Town of West Springfield now and will continue to do so during The Big E.

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**Q.** I have a 1998 Subaru Impreza 2.5 RS coupe that is rusting in the rear quarter panels. Subaru only has the front panels available, and my autobody guy says he cannot find high quality aftermarket rear panels. Would you be able to tell me where we could look?

**Cruisin' scene**



**Buckleupalofus Cruisin' Safety National Night Out**

By Jim Weicherding

The first Tuesday in the month of August was a National Night Out evening hosted by police departments across America. An event on Tuesday, August 3, had a creative twist included that also incorporated a classic car and truck show with a well known popular child passenger safety mascot for kids. His name is Buckleupalofus. A ten foot tall air inflatable balloon designed to replicate the buckle up, boost up and car seat safety cartoon character was showcased reminding everyone about traffic safety.

This Bucky Child Passenger Safety car show was hosted at the Crossings Restaurant and Putnam Bank located in Union Square, Putnam, Connecticut. Putnam Police Chief Chris Ferace sent two of his police officers to the car show to reach out to the kids attending this event educating them about buckle up safety in their town. Putnam Police Officer's Chip Carney and Roy Hicks also posed for photos with little kids and the Buckleupalofus giant balloon with their thumbs up, buckle up poses. A Bucky Coloring Poster is passed out at area classic car and truck shows all summer long to kids to color in and display. Another Buckleupalofus Cruisin' Safety Car Show with the Putnam Police and Fire Departments will be happening in the month of September in recognition of National Child Passenger Safety month.

**A.** The autobody shop has most likely tried all or the best sources for parts which leaves you with two options. The first option is removing all of the rusted metal and fabricate patch panels. This does take time and talent to get a solid repair. The second option is to use a replacement panel and rust proof it prior to assembly. The aftermarket panel fit may not be exact and may also require some extra finessing to make it look good.

**Q.** My Dodge Caravan has been smoking white smoke and almost but not quite overheated. I had someone look at it and the diagnosis is the engine needs at least one, maybe both head gaskets. I only want the van to last through the fall. In years past I solved radiator leaks with some additive that looked like aluminum powder. Is there any magic product that I can add to the engine that will stop the head gasket leak?

**A.** A neighbor of mine had a very similar situation and also didn't want to spend the money on a vehicle that was nearing the end of its life. Some shops had told me about a pour-in product called Blue Devil. The instructions are simple: you should remove the engine thermostat and allow the engine to cool overnight, drain some coolant and add the product and let the engine run for 45 minutes. Then let the engine sit overnight, before restarting it. This Blue Devil product in the case of my neighbors van seemed to work - no smoke and coolant level is staying full. Shops tell me they have had about a 75 percent success rate. For less than \$50 it is worth a try.

**Q.** I am planning to put turbo or supercharger onto the engine in my project Chevy Blazer. I want to add horsepower and torque but don't want to destroy the rest of the vehicle. I also have plans to upgrade the brakes and add larger exhaust. What else should I do?

**A.** It really depends on the vehicle you are starting with. Adding a supercharger to a tired engine will give you more power but will also shorten its life. Before I spend any money, I would join a forum and talk with members who did similar upgrades. One of the more active that I have read is [www.gm-trucks.com](http://www.gm-trucks.com). You may want to improve the cooling system and even upgrade the transmission and change gearing. It really depends on how far your imagination/plans and budget can take you.

**Q.** I recently read your answer about octane rating and possible damage to a Mercedes from using the wrong gas. My Acura states in the owner's manual and on the gas door that 91 octane fuel is recommended. My partner and I argue over this. I don't think it is necessary and he says it is. This bothers me for two reasons: it states recommended, not required (I take things very literally) and there is no such thing (at least in my area) as 91 octane so he uses 93 octane which is more expensive.

**A.** AAA engineers completed a study that concluded that in cars that recommend premium fuel; there may be a slight horsepower/fuel economy benefit of one to three percent, although in most cases there was no difference. Unless you are towing a heavy trailer on hilly terrain or a competitive racer I have found no difference in performance and fuel economy in day-to-day driving using 87 octane fuel when premium fuel is recommended. Years ago, when premium fuel only cost 10 cents more than regular fuel it made some financial sense. Today with premium fuel costing 20-60 cents more than regular any mileage gains are lost to the extra cost of the fuel. One note of caution for any vehicle owner, if your vehicle owner's manual requires premium fuel use it, but if it is recommended our studies show that for most drivers it is just money wasted.

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## A shiny, pleasant space awaits; BVT completes numerous campus enhancements

UPTON – Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School is a busy place, and summer break is no exception. While students and instructors are on sabbatical, it is the ideal time for routine and preventative maintenance, campus improvements, and special projects to be underway. Likewise, the break allows the administrative leadership team to recharge and prepare for the next school year through an annual retreat, professional development, and skill attainment activities.

As educators approach the next school year in an environment of ever-changing regulations, reopening plans must consider the possibility of additional adjustments to distancing requirements and other virus containment mandates. With a competitive grant provided by the New England School Development Council (NESDEC), the annual retreat allowed off-campus accommodations, providing a focused opportunity for strategizing reopening plans. As well as comparing notes, exchanging ideas, and sharing best practices with colleagues from other schools.

Meanwhile, the Facility Department completes a comprehensive checklist that includes a thorough inspection of the entire school building to ensure everything is in proper working order. All classrooms, vocational shops, common areas, corridors, and lockers are cleaned and disinfected. Resolutely, the campus is sparkling and ready for the return of its staff and students.

Staff and students will notice numerous enhancements. There is a new Biotechnology shop, Chemistry Laboratory, and a significant section of the Painting & Design Technology program received a complete renovation utilizing in-house resources, a cost-savings to the district, by tapping into student and staff expertise, talent, and skill to assist with creating a new student classroom and vinyl workroom within the shop. The Painting & Design students have happily applied the finishing touches, a fresh coat of paint, of course. They are eager to use their newly renovated area.

“At Blackstone Valley Tech, we cheer for each other, celebrate successes, and take pride in our continuous improvements and growth,” said Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick. “We are excited to deliver high-quality education, navigating students on their educational journey.”

With summer projects complete, 65 Pleasant Street is looking spiffy. The first day of school for all students is Monday, August 23rd. Be sure to start the school year off right, never miss any special school events, exams, and holidays by adding all these important dates to your schedule [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/importantdates](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/importantdates).

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# Uxbridge Lions Car Show slated

Collecting trophies and ribbons is one exciting aspect for participants in car shows, but showing off their autos in various categories with pride and love is what it is really about. The Uxbridge Lions will host its Third Annual Car Show on Saturday, October 2, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Valley Chapel, 14 Hunter Road in Uxbridge.

All car classes are welcome from antique to muscle to foreign cars and trucks.

Even motorcycles can zoom by. The Registration Fee for every category is only \$10.00. Admission to the public is free. For convenience, registration can be made in advance, but not required, by making checks payable to Uxbridge Lions Club, P.O. Box 455, North Uxbridge, MA 01538. Be sure to include pertinent information like name, phone number, vehicle make/model. Prizes will be awarded in a variety of categories by a panel of judges.

The People's Choice Award is always a favorite.

Building on the success of the previous two Uxbridge Lions car shows, the event will include DJ Mark Desmarais to entertain with music, announcements of awards, prizes and drawings keeping things fun and festive. Food will be available and Sweetwise Ice Cream Truck will be on site. A caricaturist will be a delightful addition. It will be

a fun event for spectators of all ages.

Local businesses and organizations can support and participate by being Bronze \$25, Silver \$50, Gold \$100, and Platinum \$200 sponsors. Sponsors will be prominently displayed and announced throughout the day and acknowledged in print and radio advertisement. Checks can be sent to the Uxbridge Lions Club, P.O. Box 455, N. Uxbridge 01538 or contact President Diane Seely

at dmseely@hotmail.com.

The Uxbridge Lions Club is a member of Lions International which is the largest service organization in the world with clubs in 205 countries with more than 1.4 million members. Locally, the Uxbridge Lions have supported many organizations including school programs, student scholarships, First Night, Uniquely Uxbridge, Uxbridge Senior Center, the Food Pantry, Uxbridge Little League and Flag Football. Recently, it took over Beautify Uxbridge. While contributing to resources aimed at sight and hearing research, di-

abetes relief, vaccinations and diabetes awareness, clearly home is where the heart is for this club.

President Diane Seely is enthusiastic about the club's third foray into the world of car shows saying, "We're hoping the community comes out to see these incredible vehicles of all time periods, colors, shapes and sizes and meet the great people who treat them with such TLC."

There you have it: Saturday, October 2 (rain date October 9). Enjoy the peeping at the car show. The leaves will be around for a while.

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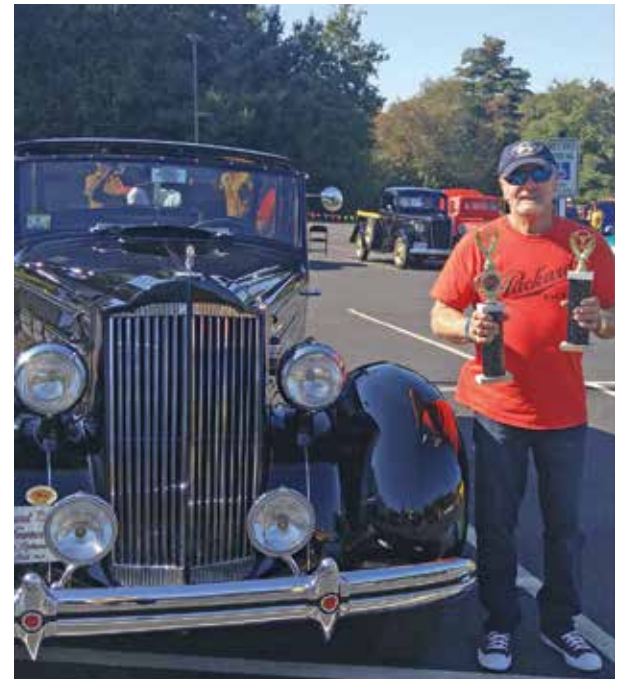
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Joe Cutler shows off awards for his Packard Towncar at 2019 Uxbridge Lions Car Show.

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Paying cash for a home may not be the smartest financial move even if you can afford it.

For most people, getting a mortgage to buy a house is essential because paying cash for a home isn't feasible. But for rich people with millions of dollars in the bank, covering the costs of a property out of pocket would likely be within reach.

Despite the fact that many wealthy people could afford to buy a home outright, they often get mortgage loans anyway. Here's why they make this choice.

*Wealthy people may see benefits to getting a mortgage.*

There's a simple reason why many rich people opt to get a mortgage even though they don't have to. They see this type of debt as being financially advantageous.

See, mortgage loans tend to come with very low interest rates – especially for well-qualified borrowers. If you can borrow at a 3% interest rate and use the bank's funds to pay for your home while keeping your money free to invest in assets that produce a higher rate of return, it may make sense to do so. After all, why tie up hundreds of

# Why don't rich people pay cash for homes?

thousands – or even millions – of dollars in a property when you could borrow at a very low rate and use your money elsewhere, like putting it in a brokerage account.

Many wealthy people also itemize on their tax returns. This means they claim specific tax deductions, rather than the standard deduction. And if you itemize, it's possible to deduct mortgage interest on loans up to \$750,000 (the IRS limit as of the time of this writing).

When you can claim a tax deduction for your mortgage interest costs, the government subsidizes some of your loan amount so the loan doesn't cost you as much. And wealthy people get an even bigger benefit from this because they tend to be in a higher tax bracket and pay taxes at a higher rate.

Say you can claim a mortgage interest deduction and reduce your taxable income by \$10,000, for example, because you pay that much in annual mortgage interest. In that case, you can avoid paying taxes on that \$10,000.

If you make a lot of money and are in the 37% tax bracket, that \$10,000 deduction could save you \$3,700 on your tax bill – not counting any state tax savings you're eligible for. The government, in other words, is basically covering \$3,700 of the mortgage interest costs incurred for the year.

Considering that interest is already really low, often barely above the rate of inflation, the

fact that the government lowers the cost further helps make mortgage debt even cheaper for the wealthy. And that tilts the balance that much more in favor of borrowing for a home to keep cash free for other things.

Of course, this doesn't mean that every rich person opts for a mortgage. But for many wealthy Americans, it just makes sense to optimize the use of their funds

## “The Chosen” on the big screen

WHITINSVILLE - Save the date and mark your calendar for a free community event on Friday, September 17, when two episodes of “The Chosen” will be shown on the “big screen” in Fairlawn Church's parking lot. Showtime begins at 7:30 p.m. (Rain date: Friday, September 24) This historical drama, directed by Dallas Jenkins and inspired by the Gospels, with its powerful

and invest their money while taking advantage of cheap debt that comes with generous tax breaks.

Of course, this doesn't just apply to wealthy people. Although many lower and middle-income Americans don't itemize on their tax returns, they can still get the benefit of borrowing at an affordable rate while using their money for other purposes. As a

performances, explores the life of Christ through some of the experiences, struggles, emotions and trials the people around him may have gone through. The Chosen is the #1 crowdfunded media project of all time, with a record \$22 million donated by 144,000 people. You won't want to miss it!

Fairlawn Church is located at 305 Goldthwaite Road (off of Hill Street or North Main Street) in

result, paying down a mortgage early – or making a very large down payment on a home – simply may not be the right choice. A *historic opportunity to potentially save thousands on your mortgage.*

Chances are, interest rates won't stay put at multi-decade lows for much longer. That's

why taking action today is crucial, whether you're wanting to refinance and cut your mortgage payment or you're ready to pull the trigger on a new home purchase. The Marzeotti Group Realty can help you with approved lenders for the purchase of your dream home or surely help you sell! Call 617-519-1871

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

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

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