

# The YankeeXpress

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## Andy's Neighborhood Canteen...good drinks, good people, good times

By Janet Stoica

The place is downright cozy, with low ceilings, polished wood bar and seating, along with a small area set up for musicians. Two pool tables await those who are ready to try their cue ball skills on the felt playing fields.

Andy's Neighborhood Canteen opened on November 18 with little fanfare, but inquisitive newcomers have now become regulars, mixing with all age groups, enjoying the easy-going atmosphere.

The weekend entertainment schedule is published 12 weeks in advance. Thursdays are for trivia.

Bill and Jessica Sabine, owners of The Rose Room on East Main Street in Webster, saw another opportunity in town to offer customers an enjoyable and entertaining evening experience. Judging from the Canteen's customer numbers, it appears to be another wonderful success.

Andy's Neighborhood Canteen was named for Jess's great-grandfather, Andrew Stefanik, who owned the former Andy's Restaurant & Bar, which was located at the present site of KFC/Taco Bell in Webster. Jess's uncle, Jeff Stefanik, visited Andy's Neighborhood Canteen 40 years to the month after the original Andy's Restaurant had closed shop. "He closed up the original place and was the last one to leave," said Bill Sabine, "and when we opened on November 18, he was the first one here!"

Bill's background centers on fine dining and bar management. He has managed several brewery distilleries and restaurants and he definitely knows his beers, which is very evident from the varied and impressive list of brews his new canteen offers.

The range includes from kolsh-style beers to bocks, lagers, IPAs,

and ciders. Draughts include Night Shift, Whirlpool IPA, Timberhitch Red Ale, and Nite Lite, to name a few of the 12 varieties available. Canned beers offered are Narragansett (making a comeback), Miller Highlife, Troegenator Double Bock, and Jack's Abbey from their list of 19.

Red and white wine are on tap too, along with a non-alcoholic kombucha.

One of the specialty registries is named Happy Meal Combos, a listing of five shots and beers with the most popular being a Gansett and Fireball. You will have to visit to see the rest of the list.

Andy's also has a refreshing batched cocktail on tap, Paloma, which is made with tequila, fresh-squeezed grapefruit juice, triple sec, and soda, along with popular slushies of Mai Tai and Gin Rickey. Standing out from the crowd of libations is a Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagunga-maugg shotski named for the skiing resort towns where it gets its second name "shotski." There are four shot glasses attached to an actual wooden ski. A shot of a foursome's choice is poured into each shot glass and the shots are consumed in tandem. Interesting indeed.

Side snacks include four Panini sandwiches (freshly made to order): turkey Reuben, a tasty Cubana (ham, roasted pork, Swiss cheese, pickles, and mustard), veggie, and cheese. Additional snacks: pretzels and house-popped popcorn varieties of plain, salt & oil, or cinnamon sugar.

The Canteen's large outside seating area will be used in the warmer weather. Outdoor heaters, corn-hole tossing, and outdoor musical entertainment will be part of the scene.

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Bartender Matthew Laverne, and owner Bill Sabine, prepare a Shotski.

## Restaurateurs upbeat about a strong dining scene in 2022

By Rod Lee

Talk to local restaurateurs and they will say the industry is maintaining surprising strength on the cusp of a new year, despite the lingering effects of the pandemic.

"Things are good," Josh Suprenant of Samuel Slater's Restaurant at Indian Ranch in Webster said on January 5. "We just rolled out a new menu, we hired a new chef in September and we have a lot of events scheduled, including monthly beer and wine functions. We are firing on all cylinders."

"We had one of our best Decembers," Steve Londregan of Chuck's Steakhouse in Auburn said. "We were encouraged about the number of gift cards customers purchased and some functions have come back. We hosted a lot of company Christmas parties, only two of about fifteen of those cancelled because of the virus."

Steve Bingham of Bentley Pub in Auburn expressed cautious optimism about 2022. Coming out of the holidays, "some days are good,

some aren't, that's the restaurant business," he said.

Mr. Bingham wants the public to know that Bentley Pub "follows all the protocols" relating to the virus, "more even than most" establishments.

Michael Glick at The Publick House in Sturbridge said "our big issue is staffing. Over the past six months we've seen more demand from customers wanting to come here to dine. Our need is for more cooks and servers. This week, the first week of January, is slow but we're looking forward to what next week will bring."

The Publick House is also eagerly anticipating wedding season.

Mr. Suprenant said Samuel Slater's under the direction of Chef Josh Brown is satisfying the palettes of patrons with "elevated comfort food" and "we're having fun with classic dishes."

Southern-style barbecue, "a nice little shepherd's pie" and southern

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Steak is a staple at Chuck's in Auburn, and one reason why the restaurant is celebrating almost forty-four years in business.



"Elevated comfort food" is drawing patrons to Samuel Slater's Restaurant in Webster for dinner 4:00 to 9:00 p.m. Thursday through Sunday.



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## ANDY'S

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Andy's second floor is available for group functions.



Parking is available on both sides of the facility.

"The area is very quiet and away from traffic,"

said Bill, "being next to the French River Park and the tranquility of the river lends itself to peacefulness. We want our customers to enjoy themselves in a laid-back setting."

He notes that Thursday's Trivia Night questions consist of music, entertainment, music, and sports, and he does not expect their friends here to be experts in any of these subjects. "It's just fun and a great time. We invite all age groups to come and experience our new place; we think they'll enjoy it."

Andy's Neighborhood Canteen is at 9 Frederick Street (behind the post office), Webster. Phone: (508) 461-7512. Hours: Thursday/Friday 4:00 p.m. – late; Saturday 12 noon – late; Sunday 12 noon – 7:00 p.m. www.andysneighborhoodcanteen.com Instagram: @andysneighborhoodcanteen and also on Facebook.

**CORRECTION:** Remarks about the imminent redevelopment of the Stevens Linen Mill in Dudley, made at a recent Webster-Dudley-Oxford Chamber of Commerce meeting at Samuel Slater's Restaurant, should have been attributed to Rep. Peter Durant of the 6th Worcester District. In announcing the positive news to those in attendance, Rep. Durant said the long-dormant mill will be transformed into housing and meeting space and that the project will "help revitalize that waterfront." Creation of an overlay district is the first step in the process, he noted.

– Rod Lee

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Andy's Neighborhood Canteen, an inviting environment overlooking the French River in Webster.

## RESTAURANTS

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fried chicken are mainstays.

"We have a big smoker outside" that has helped the restaurant keep pace with what customers want, he said.

"With any new business especially a restaurant, you have to find where you fit," Mr. Suprenant said. "We still do steaks, people can come in and grab a beer and a burger at the bar and watch the game."

Josh Brown was formerly executive chef at Prezo Grille & Bar in Milford. "We got to talking over the summer and he liked my vision" for Samuel Slater's, Mr. Suprenant said. "He's been in the industry; he's a very welcomed presence here."

Like its counterparts in South County, Samuel Slater's

was dealt a blow by the pandemic; "2020 came out of nowhere, like a left hook," he said. "We have had to evolve and adapt. We wait for them to tell us what to do."

Speaking of which, the Westborough-based Massachusetts Restaurant Association recently pushed back against new vaccination requirements for certain industries in the city of Boston. MRA President Bob Luz objected to "a one-size-fits-all mandate" in that it does not take into account "the day-to-day nuance of individual circumstances." Businesses, including restaurants, "should be able to make their own decisions," he said.

In Auburn, with a nearly 10,000-square-foot restaurant, Chuck's benefits from being able to separate cus-

tomers" and keep them safe, Mr. Londregan said. "We didn't steer away from the original COVID-19 protocols" either, he said.

"Absolutely we are concerned" about the new surge. "Every day one of the employees comes in contact with someone so we educate staff on what to do."

In terms of masking, "all we can do is encourage our people to be masked. The town of Auburn doesn't require it."

"We have a large supply of rapid tests on hand. No one is taking it lightly. We are almost back to our numbers from 2019," thanks to gift cards and the loyalty of Chuck's customers, he said.

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

# The YankeeXpress

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# Peek's Services offers auto detailing, tires, and oil changes

By Janet Stoica

Dudley resident Aaron Peek won't object to the label of perfectionist, at least when it comes to car detailing.

Mr. Peek thoroughly enjoys his work and came to car, truck, and motorcycle maintenance by way of Texas to Massachusetts. "When I was younger, I took my car to an auto detailer for the usual wash, wax, and vacuuming," he explains. "When I picked up my car and drove it home, I started looking at the work that was done. I wasn't satisfied with it so I took it back to the detailing company and went over the details they'd missed. I was hired by the owner to take over their detailing department and I found that it was something I enjoyed doing from start to finish."

After college, Aaron worked for a fiber optic cabling company that took him throughout the United States. In 1999, when his company was hired by Massachusetts to provide underground cabling conduits under and along the Mass. Pike, there was Aaron Peek. "I met and made a lot of good friends here, and when I came back to New England to visit, I ended up staying. I found that I really enjoyed the cold weather and the snow." He worked for Southbridge Tire Company, handling heavy equipment and truck tires. He also met his wife, Carmela, and settled in Dudley. The couple has two sons and two granddaughters.

Four years ago, Mr. Peek decided to pick up auto detailing again in the evenings after work and his expertise soon became well known through word-of-mouth. His customer base expanded, and he found that the satisfaction of his younger days' accomplishments worked for him once again.

Peek's Services has now become his full-time profession. His enthusiasm is evident when speaking with him. "Auto detailing here is given the highest priority and we use high-grade products. We also do oil and filter changes for all vehicle makes and mod-

els," he said. "We mount and balance tires. If you have a specific brand in mind, just let me know and I'll get it for you. All oil is recycled through an approved vendor."

The detailing work includes buffing minor scratches, carpet shampooing, and ceramic coating, which is a product that gives another layer of protection over your vehicle's clear coat. The ceramic coating will last up to five years with proper maintenance. Clay bars are used in the detail process too. This removes tar, brake dust, and other road grime and makes the exterior as slick as glass. It's an annual maintenance recommendation. No detail goes un-noticed."

Vehicles he has detailed include RVs, boats, trailers, even tractor-trailers. Aluminum polishing is offered for truck tire wheels that includes a four-stage sanding and buffing process. He's also had the experience of washing, waxing, and buffing PBS' This Old House trailer. From Subaru, Chevys, and Toyotas to Maserati Quattroportes and Jaguars, Mr. Peek has the keen expertise to truly satisfy his customers with the final shine and gloss of their transports.

Typical auto exterior detail

procedures begin with a hand wash with Meguiars Soap; blow dry; clay bar application; engine wash by hand with detailing using cotton swabs; Meguiars Tech 2.0 wax; and an F11 Top Coat. All wheels, tires, and fender wells are cleaned thoroughly as well. Interior details include cleaning of all door jambs, carpet shampooing, carpet blow drying, leather cleaning and conditioning, and air vent cleaning. Cotton swabs are always used for all the nooks and crannies. "Basically, everything that can be cleaned is taken care of," says Mr. Peek, "and we'll stand with our customer for their review and approval."

He also offers additional services like window tinting up to the 35% legal limitation and remote car starter installation. He snowplows commercially and residentially, power washes all types of home siding, including brick, vinyl, and wood clapboards. For new customers, Peek's Services is currently running a \$10 off oil change offer when you have your vehicle detailed.

With his charity work for the American Legion Riders for the last six years, Mr. Peek gives back to the community by detailing the rid-



Owner, Aaron Peek, stands near one of his detailed vehicles.

ers' motorcycles for \$65/each and then returning 100% of his earnings to the Legion. He has also done charitable work for the Holyoke Soldiers Home, American Legion Post Lego Ride, UMass/Memorial

Children's Cancer Unit, Southbridge's Eagle Riders Group, Leicester's Cherry Valley Riders, Worcester's Vernon Hill Riders, and the Sutton and Auburn Riders.

Peek's Services, 7 Johna-

than Pass, Dudley. Phone: (903) 900-0813. Appointments required. [www.peaksdetailing.com](http://www.peaksdetailing.com)

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

## February group art show

All local artists are invited to submit work for the 27th annual February group art show at Booklovers' Gourmet, located at 72 East Main Street, Webster. This year's theme is "Winter Vignettes."

Media to be considered include drawings, paintings, printmaking, collage, fabric and any mixed media that is able to hang on the wall. Size is limited to 16"X20" including framing, no exceptions. There is a \$10 submission fee for up to two pieces, part of which will be used for "People's Choice Awards."

All work must be ready to hang, preferably with a wire. Drop off dates are Friday, January 28 and Saturday, January 29, between 10 a.m.-5 p.m. The show will run from February 1-26 and will be on view during regular business hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10-5, Wednesday 10-6.

Call 508-949-6232 or email [deb@bookloversgourmet.com](mailto:deb@bookloversgourmet.com) for questions.



"Winter Trees in Sepia," photography by Debra Horan.



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# Holidays bittersweet with closing of Charlton Furniture

By Rod Lee

Hard as it is to imagine, the recently concluded holiday season was the town of Charlton's first in more than fifty years without a fully operational Charlton Furniture store as part of the scene.

Charlton Furniture, started in the early 1970s by Joseph Pikul and brought to prominence at its location on Dresser Hill Road by his children David Pikul and Susan (Pikul) LeBlanc, began a graceful exit this past summer with a large closing sale. More than \$3 million in inventory including floor stock, bedroom, dining, occasional lamps, wall art, accessories and area rugs was made available over the course of a number of weeks.

As a sign of the store's relationship with the community and with its customer base, a message was posted on Charlton Furniture's Facebook page on September 21st. It read simply, "We Love You for Loving Local."

A separate announcement, placed on the home page of the store's website, was equally poignant.

"After more than 50 years in business, we have decided to retire and close our doors. It was not an easy decision,

as we have had the most wonderful customers and community support throughout the years. Thank you for your investment in our family and our business.

*Sincerely,  
Susan LeBlanc and the Charlton Furniture team."*

As of December 21, Charlton Furniture was still doing business on an appointment-only basis, in a continuing effort to move its remaining merchandise. Mattresses, bedroom sets, dining sets, leather and upholstery options, occasional tables, lamps and artwork were among the furnishings available to customers.

"It's going good," Store Manager Karen Legendre said, that afternoon. "Val (Valerie Agos-Langlais) and I here, mostly during the week, 10:00 to 4:00."

Following their father's lead, and his vision, the Pikul children took Charlton Furniture from a small country furniture store into three galleries, showcasing fresh styles, new collections and unbeatable prices. Susan's attention to detail and passion led to the addition of a 12,000-square-foot showroom in 1998 and an on-site

design center. David was responsible for creation of the bedding department, featuring such premium lines as Tempurpedic, Serta and Gold Bond.

In 2010, Susan and David reopened The Annex, offering brand-name closeouts and discounted and one-of-a-kind items.

During the Xpress's years following the Charlton Furniture story, Susan LeBlanc expressed particular pride in the evolution of her design team's capabilities. She also enjoyed touting that Charlton Furniture was a primarily woman-run enterprise, consisting of a main staff that included herself, Karen Legendre, Judy Pelley, Kathy Zalewski, Melissa Trudo, Valerie Agos-Langlais, Johanna Tokarz and Lisa Carter.

Sadly, Charlton Furniture's closing follows that of Spencer Furniture, also family-owned, which closed its doors in 2018 after a nearly sixty-year run.

Anyone familiar with Charlton Furniture's charming country storefront on a knoll along picturesque Dresser Hill Road and all of those customers who got a chance to check out the American-

made solid-wood bedroom and dining room sets (or who encountered "Otis," the resident puppy) will undoubtedly agree that the business lived up to its motto: "Escape the ordinary."

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



Distinctive home furnishings and outstanding customer service were staples of Charlton Furniture under the ownership of the Pikul family. As of late December, the store was in the process of closing after more than fifty years in business.

## National Wreaths Across America Day



Pictured (l to r) James Brinker, VFW Post Surgeon; Rinkie Lithicum, DAV Chapter Commander; Stephen P. Rogerson, VFW Commander and Veterans Services Officer for the Town of Dudley; Representative Peter Durant of Dudley; Senator Fattman with his son; Representative Joe McKenna of Webster; Victor Jankowski, Commander Veterans Council of Webster and Dudley; Dudley Police Chief Steven Wojnar.

Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as at more than 2,500 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and abroad.

State Senator Ryan Fattman, Representative Peter Durant, Representative Joseph McKenna presented wreaths of remembrance at the Court of Honor in the Dudley Municipal Center at 71 West Main St., Dudley, as well as at the Court of Honor on 350 Main St. Webster at the Town Hall.

Due to COVID circumstances, the veterans were unable to hold these wreath laying ceremonies last year. This year the National Wreaths Across America Day was designated as December 18. The wreath presentation began in Webster at 10:00 a.m. under the watchful and grateful eyes of Fire Chief Brian Hickey of the Webster Fire Department along with firefighters, veterans representing VFW Post 654, DAV Chapter 53 and the Veterans Council of Webster and Dudley, and Dudley Police Chief Steven Wojnar, Dudley Police officers, and the Veterans Services Officers for both the towns of Webster and Dudley.

— Stephen P. Rogerson,  
Director of Veterans' Services

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Samuel Slater

EXPERIENCE

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Tickets may be purchased at the box office or on the website at [samuel Slater Experience](http://samuel Slater Experience). Tickets are \$16 for adults, \$10 for seniors, \$7 for kids.

The gift shop will also be open.

Museum memberships are available.

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# Whiskey Rocks will rock you

By Janet Stoica

"We tried to imagine a place that we'd like to visit," said Jessica Valby, co-owner of the new Whiskey Rocks Restaurant, bar, and rodeo experience, "and we're looking forward to our customer involvement being very different from the norm."

Craig Valby, who co-owns the new venue with his wife, said, "There really aren't that many unique, distinctive places to visit in this area and we wanted to bring a bit of flair and fascination to our customers, complementing the other good local dining establishments."

And distinctive it is.

Bull riding anyone? Take a ride on Bucky, the restaurant's mechanical bull. He is definitely one of the most realistic-looking bovines in the area. All Bucky needs is rip-snortin' steam coming out of his flared nostrils to add an extra bit of excitement to any rider's experience.

Ever tried your hand at axe throwing? Maybe you should. There are several hatchet-throwing alleys to set your energy afire and your determination to hit your mark will prove to be exhilarating.

Of course, there are plans for bull riding and axe throwing tournaments.

The Valbys also want everyone to know that they have taken every safety precaution to ensure the protection of their patrons. There will be a security team for both entertainment areas and the minimum age requirement is 18.

But this is not all that Whiskey Rocks offers. It presents a distinctive dining atmosphere and menu as well. The place is huge. As you enter, you'll notice the beautiful copper-top bar along with six sections of dining tables along the south wall. Each dining section will showcase two fireplaces, featuring colorized crystal fire gems, adding to a truly exceptional dining ambience. If there are parties who wish to use a dining section for their own family's privacy, the option is available.

The copper-top bar, clad with re-purposed antique

wooden doors, seats 30. The doors retain their original colors and paint dings. How cool is that? The same style runs along the front wall under the expansive window glass. A few skylights add to the bar atmosphere. In addition to the bar and cozy dining area along the south wall, there are plenty of glass-top whiskey barrel high seats as well as long wooden dining tables with comfortable soft seating.

The north wall includes a bandstand with a freshly painted wall mural created by Webster artist Emily Barnes. The mural's legend reads: "We are Whiskey Rocks. He's a little bit Country. She's a little bit Rock and Roll." The dance floor is waiting for you. The bandstand seating area is known as Maker's Mark Lounge, named for one of the premier whiskeys the site will offer. There is also VIP seating in the area with dedicated servers for dining and cocktail enjoyment.

Menu offerings include a first-class ½-pound prime rib hamburger, branded with the WB logo, 8-ounce filet mignon, ribeye, steak tips, short ribs, and a special or two like a build-your-own nachos platter and Drunken Duck quesadillas.

Steaks will be hand-cut by Ed Stearns of Charlton. Homemade mega fries are part of the dining selections, along with plenty of seafood, including a pecan-wood smoked salmon and sea bass. Poultry choices include chestnut-flour-coated chicken and waffles served with apple slaw and honey mustard apple syrup. Endless salad options will be on the menu too. Adult milkshakes are part of their fare as well, with desserts of Mississippi mud pie and other tasty endings. The children's menu features an activity piece for each youngster to enjoy.

"We always knew we wanted to open another restaurant," says Jessica. "Our Stave & Still location has done well."

"We saw a market niche and built a destination. Our thoughts were that people

always go out to enjoy dinner and then what? Just go home? We wanted to create an entertaining spot for everyone to enjoy. We are family friendly. Our spirit selections will include Maker's Mark whiskey, Olmeca Altos tequila, and Wheatley Vodka, to name a few. Our goal is to have the most extensive whiskey selections available, and we will have what I refer to as our Imbibable Bible much like Stave & Still."

The book lists all their liquor offerings with a quip for each spirit.

Executive sous chef is Franceska Rodriguez, formerly of Samuel Slater's Restaurant. Jessica Valby is the executive chef.

They will be open during standard dinner hours.

Whiskey Rocks is at 4 Airport Road (Dudley Plaza), Dudley. Phone: (508) 943-9759. Open Tuesday – Saturday. [www.whiskeyrocksbar.com](http://www.whiskeyrocksbar.com) Gift cards are available. Check them out on Facebook and Instagram @whiskeyrocksbar. Bucky the Bull has his own Instagram listing: @buckythemechanicalbull.

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



Craig and Jessica Valby, owners of Whiskey Rocks.

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

### \$75.00

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- 1 LB. BACON
- 3 LBS. HAMBURG **OR** 3 LBS. STEW BEEF
- 2 LBS. LONDON BROIL STEAKS **OR**
- 2 LBS. NEW YORK SIRLOIN STEAKS
- 3 LBS. BEEF POT ROAST **OR**
- 3 LBS. BONELESS PORK ROAST
- 3 LBS. BONELESS CHICKEN BREAST **OR**
- 1 PKG. (1½ LBS.) MARINATED CHICKEN BREAST OF YOUR CHOICE
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- 3 LBS. BONELESS POT ROAST **OR**
- 2 LBS. NEW YORK SIRLOIN STEAK
- 1½ LBS. SIRLOIN TIPS **OR** 3 LBS. PORK CHOPS
- 3 LBS. HAMBURG **OR** 1 PKG. (1½ LBS.) MARINATED SIRLOIN TIPS OF YOUR CHOICE
- 2 WHOLE OR CUT-UP CHICKENS (6 LBS. TOTAL) **OR** 1 PKG. (1½ LBS.) COOKED CHICKEN WINGS OF YOUR CHOICE
- 1 LB. SAUSAGE OF YOUR CHOICE **OR**
- 1 LB. HOT DOGS
- 1 ROASTING CHICKEN (6-8 LBS.) **OR**
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## Nichols College and Team Training Associates, LLC, create degree pathway in public safety leadership

DUDLEY – Nichols College has signed an articulation agreement with Team Training Associates, LLC (TTA) of Thompson, Connecticut, to streamline the transition to a bachelor's or master's degree program for TTA-certified public safety leaders.

Students who successfully complete the Public Safety Leadership Academy, and other certificate programs at TTA, can earn academic credit toward the Nichols College Bachelor of Science

in Business Administration with a concentration in criminal justice management or the Master of Science in Counterterrorism (MSC).

"This is a unique opportunity for the region's law enforcement and emergency response managers to increase their effectiveness as leaders and prepare for the future of these fields," said Glenn M. Sulmasy, JD, LL.M., president of Nichols College. "At Nichols, they will build on the excellent leadership

training offered by TTA to expand their understanding of and response to today's safety threats, including cyber-terrorism and violent extremism."

The Public Safety Leadership Academy is a five-day (40 hour) course covering a wide range of leadership topics, including self-awareness, effective communication, leadership analytics, wellness, and employee engagement.

Other eligible TTA programs include the Certificate of Supervisory Leadership (40 hours), Certificate of Strategic Leadership (40 hours), and the Public Safety Command College (80 hours). Each of these specialized programs includes rigorous curriculum requiring classroom participation, case study analysis, and comprehensive experiential learning components related to specific areas of professional development within the field of public safety leadership.

"The cadre at Team Training Associates are highly credentialed and experienced public safety practitioner scholars," notes Eric Murray, EdD, president of TTA who earned the Master of Science in Organizational Leadership at Nichols in 2009. "For over a decade, our team has helped public safety leaders throughout the country operationalize evidence-based strategies to improve their workforce. We strive to remain at the forefront of professional development and leadership training. Collaborating with Nichols College is setting new standards of excellence and academic opportunities for our public safety clients."



From left, sitting, Julie Rumrill, Senior Associate, and Eric Murray, President, of Team Training Associates LLC; Nichols President Glenn Sulmasy; standing, Nichols Associate Deans Tom Stewart and Allison McDowell-Smith.

The Nichols MSC is the only graduate program in the country to focus on violent extremism at home and abroad. The degree has provided a gateway to emerging careers as analysts and agents in agencies including the FBI, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and FEMA, and

is viewed as a critical component in the training of the modern police force.

According to Allison McDowell-Smith, PhD, associate dean of the Nichols Graduate School of Liberal Arts & Sciences, "The combination of education between TTA certification programs

and Nichols College graduate MSC degree can serve as a force multiplier for law enforcement as they are our first responders responsible for protecting our society. If they are able to lead others as to how to be proactive in regard to extremism threats, we can continue to make our communities safer."

## Quilts for vets

On Tuesday, November 30, Mr. Joseph Abdella, USMC veteran, and Mr. Peter Bucci, US Army/Air Corps veteran, were presented with Quilts of Valor in gratitude for their military service when their country called during WWII. The Quilts of Valor were hand-made by volunteers in our community to show appreciation to the veterans who sacrificed during war time and many of whom were injured in their duties. These quilts were given to Joseph Abdella and Peter Bucci at Brookside Rehabilitation Facility with their family at their side.

The mission of the Quilts of Valor Foundation is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor. The presentation of the quilts was done by foundation representative Theresa Perreault and Stephen Rogerson, Veterans' Services Officer, who presided over the presentation.

On that same day, the Dudley Senior Knitters Group led by Chris White, gifted every veteran with a lovingly hand-knitted afghan just in time for the coldest time of the year and also as a small Christmas gift of appreciation for those who served. The Dudley Senior Knitters Group meets once a week at the Dudley Senior Center to knit and chat while creating their projects. I am saddened to learn that the Group, which started at a rowdy group of twenty is now down to just a handful of women. If anyone is interested in joining the group please contact Chris White at 508-949-6260 or at email chrisw515@gmail.com. If anyone is available on Thursdays and would like to have a little fun knitting, please consider joining. –Stephen P. Rogerson



Peter Bucci US Army

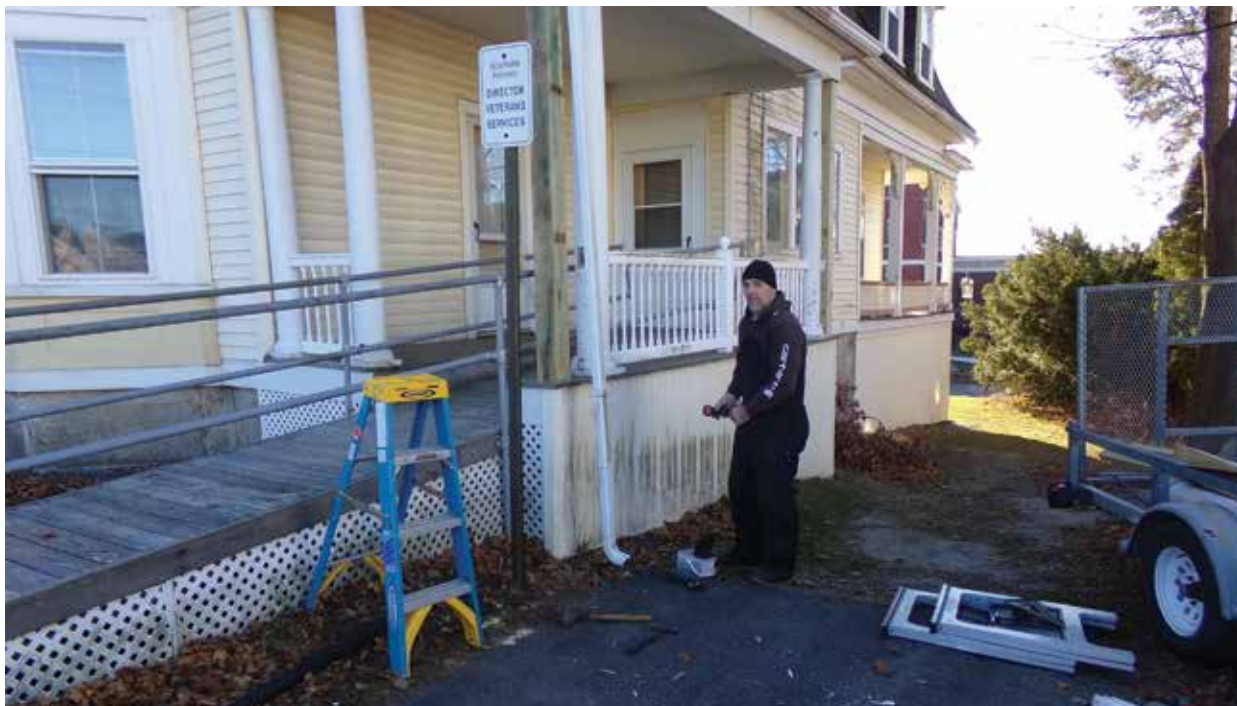


Joseph Abdella USMC



On Saturday, December 18, members of Oxford Masonic Lodge delivered holiday Poinsettias to local widow and veteran Masons of their lodge. Pictured from left to right are: Wor. Jerome H. Michaelson, R.W. Robert Schremser, Bro. Richard D. Majercik II and Wor. Bryan R. Wilson.

## Veterans home getting some repairs



Jeff Czechowski is pictured working on repairs to the Veterans Home in Webster. Jeff installed three 6"x6" beams that needed to be replaced. Thank you to Jim Bell, the accountant, who made it possible. Photo by Victor Jankowski, Commander of the Veterans Council.



## Dudley Womans Club Holiday Party

Recently the members of the Dudley Womans Club held their holiday festivities at the Dudley Municipal Complex. Plenty of fun, food and games were enjoyed by all. The club's giving project was donated gift cards for local veterans as well as gifts and gift cards for local teenagers through the Dudley Police Department Toy Drive. Happy New Year.



DWC members Maryellen Watson, Joan Stockwell



Paula Downer, Maribeth Marzeotti



DWC members Elaine Gould, Joan Gardecki



DWC members Vicky Robinson, Diane Perry, Dori Donahue

## The P.E.O. Sisterhood and Chapter R

CHARLTON - Sarah Garcia of Charlton was presented with a \$2,000 grant on October 23rd by members of an organization that's helping women reach for the stars.

Garcia was one of three women (and the most recent) from Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy who received a grant from the Philanthropic Education Organization. P.E.O. has 6,000 chapters across the United States and Canada.

Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN Academy Director said she didn't know much about P.E.O., other than her students and alumni receiving grants. "It is amazing what P.E.O. does," she said, thanking the members of Chapter R, who presented Garcia with the award.

Chapter R nominated Garcia for the Program for Continuing Education (PCE) and helped her with the process.

The P.E.O. began as a bond of friendship among seven young women in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, and is now one of the oldest women's organizations in North America. According to the P.E.O. website, "since its inception in 1869, the nonprofit has helped more than 105,000 women pursue educational goals by providing more than \$321 million in grants, scholarships, awards, and loans."

"I came across information on P.E.O. back in 2018 when I was researching scholarships for my nursing students," said Bolandrina. The P.E.O. sisterhood has brought together women in the United States and Canada who are passionate changemakers helping women's advancement through education, support, and motivation.

"There are meetings and socials," said Bolandrina, who has now been newly inducted to Chapter R. "I am very excited to participate, and there are special interest groups!" she exclaimed.

Chapters hold fundraisers throughout the year to support the organization's scholarship programs, as well as the stewardship of Cotney College, a nationally ranked,



Photo shows Chapter R members at a recent social. Photo Credit Barbara Smith

fully accredited, independent, liberal arts and sciences college in Nevada, Missouri. The women's college has been owned and supported by the P.E.O. since 1927. The fundraisers are as varied as the chapters that hold them.

"I saw the beautiful dishcloths of Chapter R," said Bolandrina. Chapter R also holds a Chocolate Sunday fundraiser. The fundraisers help support the national organization and help local women like Garcia.

Membership is by invitation only. Philanthropy is the goal of P.E.O.; however, friendship is its cornerstone. The P.E.O. has a long legacy of sisterhood. "The friendship and sisterhood brought me in" concludes Bolandrina.

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## Chief's corner

## Hunting and target practice issues; is the ice safe?

By Chief Steven J. Wojnar  
**Dudley Police Department**  
 Firearms regulations and questions are always popular. We receive many reports of people shooting in wooded areas, either for hunting or target practice. One question we seem to deal with frequently pertains to where are people authorized to lawfully shoot. I was asked to provide some information on this, including shooting on one's own property.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 269 Section 12E is the law pertaining to the discharge of a firearm within 500 feet of "a dwelling or other building in use." It does not cover property lines; it pertains to the actual location of structures. For example, someone is shooting on their own property and app. 100 feet from your boundary. If your house, or other applicable building, is further than 500 feet away,

the activity is lawful. There are several exceptions present in this statute. One of these allows for shooting within this distance "with the consent of the owner or legal occupant thereof..." A person would therefore be allowed to shoot in their own yard and not be in violation.

Another important point to take under consideration, is the presence of neighboring homes or buildings nearby. If these places would be within 500 feet of where the shooting is taking place, a person would need consent of those property owners. Penalties for a violation can include a fine of up to \$150 and/or a jail term of up to three months. For hunting purposes, people must be lawfully present and/or have permission of the property owner to do so. It is important to know where you plan to hunt, secure the proper permissions, and pay

particular attention to sign postings, which may prohibit this type of activity.

The discharge of firearms must always be taken seriously with the appropriate precautions. Bullets cannot be recalled in the event of a mistake. It is also advisable to notify neighbors if you will be target shooting. Often the sound can cause concern if people are not aware of what is occurring. It is also important to have a proper backstop for the bullets to land and be sure there is plenty of safe distance behind the target area. You do not want stray or missed bullets to cause injury or damage. Always be aware of your surroundings, exercise the appropriate care, and be cognizant of the possibility of a ricochet.

**Is the ice safe?**

We are in a very dangerous time involving ice on local

waters. Weather fluctuations cause some ponds to freeze, thaw, then re-freeze. Much of the ice present on any ponds, at this point, is very thin at best. A frequent question we as police receive during the winter is, "Is the ice safe?" People want to use the ponds for activities such as skating, ice fishing, hockey, or other recreation. I wanted to take a moment to remind people to exercise proper precautions when on the ice.

Certainly, the police will not declare any ice "safe" unless it is a controlled rink or another known location. Any time water is moving below ice, there is the possibility of thin spots and dangerous areas. This is even more critical at times, such as now, when varying weather conditions are involved. Cold weather followed by warming causes thawing and re-freezing. The ice can be thinner in some locations. It may appear to be thick; however, there is no

true way to be certain.

It is especially important to exercise caution if you make the decision to venture out. Please avoid areas near open water or any places where you can see under the ice. You should stay near shore or in places where the water is not deep. This will allow you to make it back to shore easier and allow you to stand in the event you should fall through. Whenever children are involved, ice should always be checked by an adult, and they should always have the proper supervision. It is also critical to avoid using recreational vehicles of any kind on the ice. In addition to environmental concerns and risk of crashes, the mere weight of these vehicles contributes to the possibility of accidents.

It is important to use your best judgment when venturing out onto the ice, especially at these times of changing weather. We have expe-

rienced some tragic events in the past and we hope to prevent future occurrences. Please exercise the necessary precautions and be safe.

The increase in COVID cases remains a concern. For those still seeking vaccination information, it can be found at [www.dudleyma.gov](http://www.dudleyma.gov) or by calling 508-949-8036. We encourage everyone to be safe. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. During these challenging times, 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](mailto: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.*

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## Holiday card contest winner



Presentation in Sage's fourth grade class (l to r) Dudley Police Sergeant Dean Poplawski, Officers Chandler Boyd and David Carpenter, Chief Steve Wojnar, with Sage Webster and her parents and her winning design.

The Dudley Police Department held its twelfth annual Holiday Card Contest with the fourth-grade students from Dudley Elementary School. All fourth graders were given the opportunity to submit a drawing which would be used as the cover picture of the holiday card sent out by the Dudley Police Department for 2021.

The program was on hiatus last year due to the pandemic. However, everyone is glad to have it back in action. It is designed to solicit the help of local children to promote the fun and excitement of the holiday season. Officer David Carpenter and Sergeant Dean Poplawski headed the program on behalf of the department.

Well over 100 entries were submitted. The winning design was created by Ms. Sage Webster.

On Tuesday, December 21, Sage was presented with a poster sized copy of her drawing, a box of cards for family and friends, and a gift card to acknowledge her efforts.

The Department sent the holiday cards out to numerous businesses and citizens in the town and local area. Cards were also sent to area police departments and many others including our local professional sports teams, Governor Charlie Baker, and President Biden.

The Dudley Police Department would like to thank Dudley Elementary Art Teacher Dawn Gravel for her work coordinating this program. Special thanks also go out to Principal Kelly True and all the teachers and students for all their participation and efforts in making this program a success.

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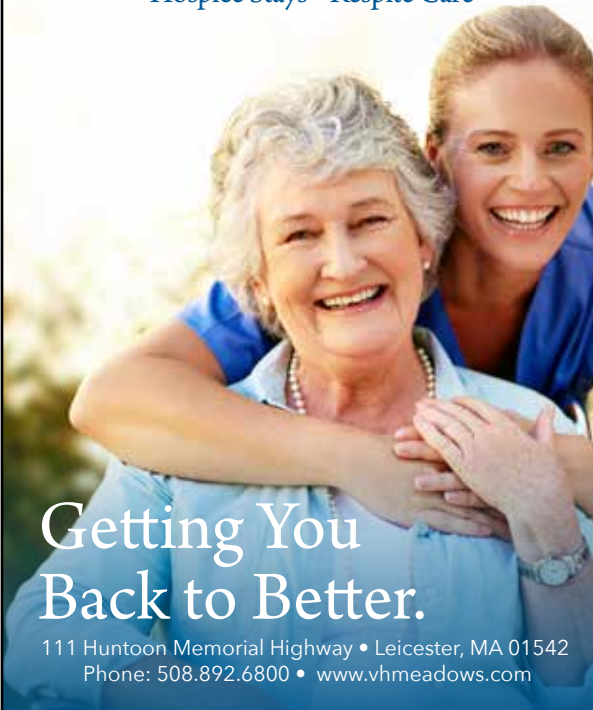
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# Fattman secures local aid for district towns

BOSTON – State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) announced that he was able to secure \$995,000 in aid for his district through a major spending bill that was recently signed into law by Governor Baker. In March of 2021, the United States Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that sent billions of dollars in aid to states across the country. The Massachusetts Legislature was able to invest \$4 billion, comprising of dollars from ARPA as well as money appropriated from the Transitional Escrow Fund, which is made up of state fiscal year 2021 surplus funds. This went to support economic recovery that had been caused by COVID-19. Investments were made in healthcare, housing, workforce development, the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund, economic development, infrastructure investment, and education.

In this spending package,

Senator Fattman was able to secure funding for capital expenditure projects for local priorities in his district municipalities. In the bill, he secured: \$30,000 for the Webster Fire Department to purchase new hydraulic rescue tools; \$75,000 for the Sutton Fire Department to purchase new generators; \$75,000 for the town of Millville to make public safety improvements to its highway department shed; \$75,000 for the town of Sturbridge to purchase new public safety equipment; \$150,000 for the town of Sutton for the repointing of Manchaug Pond dam and for the improvements to the Stevens Pond dam; \$200,000 to the Webster Lake Association, Inc. for the revitalization of Pout Pond; \$100,000 to Waters Farm in the town of Sutton for public access and infrastructure improvements; \$50,000 to the Douglas Orchard and Farm for sustainable farming infrastructure in the town of Doug-

las; \$40,000 to the historic E.N. Jenckes Store for improvements in the town of Douglas; and \$200,000 to the town of Sutton for extending fiber optic cable to the Wilkes section of town.

“The relief provided in the bill, as well as the relief I was able to secure for my district

will play a critical role in the ongoing recovery efforts in the Commonwealth,” said Senator Fattman. “These funds secured for my district will provide long-lasting equipment upgrades and infrastructure improvements that we will see the effects of for many years to come. I’m grateful we were

able to make this commitment to our municipalities and organizations after the hardships they have experienced over the last year and a half.”

“This ARPA money provided a unique opportunity to provide direct assistance to many organizations and service departments throughout

the district that have significant outstanding infrastructure and equipment needs. We are thrilled to be able to commit resources to assist our fire and emergency services while also preserving some vital local cultural resources,” said State Representative Joseph McKenna (R-Webster).

## SENIOR NEWS LINE

### Is telehealth all it’s cracked up to be

By Matilda Charles

Medicare started paying for telehealth medical visits last year and will continue through the end of 2023. With telehealth, we sit in our homes and talk to our doctor on a screen, and Medicare pays for it. In the beginning, the number of telehealth visits skyrocketed – and then fell dramatically. Is that because we learned the hard way just what the limitations of telehealth really are?

There are people on both sides of the “should seniors use telehealth” debate. They both say they offer solid evidence for their opinion.

Those who claim it’s a great thing for us to consult with our doctors via a little screen say it’s helpful because it keeps us out of the doctor’s office. We don’t have to go in among all the germs, and we don’t need to worry about transportation. On the other hand, those who are against telehealth appointments for seniors argue that many of us can’t even afford the very devices we would need for telehealth. Even if we have a cellphone, the screen is so small as to be worthless, especially if we have a vision or hearing problem. Then there are the plan fees needed for that device. And what of privacy when we need someone at hand to help navigate the software for us? Do we really want our grandchildren sitting there when we discuss a personal issue with our doctor?

Even if we have a computer, one with a large monitor, how is that going to work when we need the doctor to look at a rash on our back? Or if we really ought to have a stethoscope pressed to our chest because of that ragged cough we’ve had for days?

Note: If you have original Medicare, you’ll pay the same amount for the telehealth appointment as you would if you got the services in person.

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# Carole Marchand and crew bring Webster Lake alive with Hula and Fire Dancers

By Janet Stoica

Hold onto your hula skirts! Webster's Recreation Director Carole Marchand, the Recreation Committee, along with the Webster Cultural Council, are hosting their first February Luau event at Webster Lake Memorial Beach on Saturday, February 19, from 3 - 6 p.m. (Rain date: February 26). Yes, you read that right, it's a hula and fire dancer event that promises to be memorable.

Complete with food trucks with pulled pork sandwiches, hot coffee, and cocoa, an Ugly Hawaiian Shirt Contest, limbo contest, and kids' take-home craft kits, families are encouraged to hula their way to fun.

Ms. Marchand applied for and received a grant from the state's cultural council to hold a winter event in Webster. Collaborating, the town's Cultural Council and Recreation Committee decided that a summer event would be held in the winter and what better venue than the town's Memorial Beach? "There are plenty of Christmas in July events so why not a Summer in Winter event?" she said.

Polynesian Fusion of East Greenwich, Rhode Island, was contacted and the wheels were set in motion.

"It'll be Christmas in July in reverse," said Ms. Marchand, "and we're hoping it'll be a great success. The dancers just purchased new body suits and were only too happy to wear them again. We're looking forward to lots of people coming out to enjoy themselves. The fire dancers should be fascinating. We'll also be handing out leis to our attendees."

Carole Marchand has been Webster's recreation director for more than four years now and has made a big difference in bringing new and exciting community events to town. Her enthusiasm and upbeat attitude have made a world of difference for local families looking for local events. "One of the smartest things I've ever done was to take this position," she said. "I thoroughly enjoy what I do, working with our town groups, and I hope that Webster is happy with me."

Other activities on the 2022 recreation activity schedule include a wrestling night in March, sponsored by the

Webster Police Department. In April, events include the annual Easter Egg Hunt at Memorial Beach, which will feature a children's' Easter Egg Hunt with prizes and a visit from the Easter Bunny, and an Earth Day Clean-up on Saturday, April 23, when volunteers will help to improve local streets and roads by cleaning up litter.

"We are very grateful to Pratt Trucking for providing trash bins for litter disposal," said Ms. Marchand. "They've always been very generous to us. Our Webster Police Department also greatly assists us by picking up bagged litter on the streets we clean." A Rev3 Triathlon (swim, bike, and run) will be held again too.

From March through May, Ms. Marchand will be busy

interviewing and hiring beach personnel in preparation for opening day at Memorial Beach. "Our staff has to be put together and ready to go for Memorial Day weekend," she said.

In May, the Webster Fire Department will be holding its Tri-State Meet and on May 26/27, Jet Ski Races will entertain lake spectators. The town's annual fireworks display is scheduled for Sunday, July 3, along with pre-fireworks' music at Memorial Beach and food trucks with fried dough, snacks, French fries, soda, and ice cream.

The French River Concerts commence on Wednesday, July 6, and every week thereafter for 5-6 weeks. Ms. Marchand hopes to have some new and exciting performers added to the schedule this year. "There'll be something for everyone," she said. "It's always a fun get-together in the River Park." Of course, many of the above events are health-permitting, as in COVID and its variations. Townspeople



Carole Marchand, Webster's Recreation Director.

are encouraged to check the town website for updates: [www.webster-ma.gov](http://www.webster-ma.gov) as well as the Facebook page listed below for Recreation Department updates.

Looking ahead to the 2022 holiday season, the committee is reviewing displays. New street decorations were installed on Church Street this year. "We have limited opportunities for displays on Main Street," said Ms. Marchand, "as there are no electrical connections on the streetlight poles, making it a challenge. We did install banners on the poles but delivery trucks have damaged the flags and banner hardware. We hope to find a solution."

Carole Marchand also wants to invite any Webster citizen to participate in and contribute to helping make the town's surroundings and recreation activities more enjoyable for all. "I always welcome new suggestions and ideas," she said. "I can't promise that we can do it all but if our townspeople want to join in and make it happen, they are always appreciated."

Contact Carole Marchand at (508) 949-3800, Ext. 1023. Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster. Find them on Facebook: Webster Arts/ Recreation Group.

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



Easter bunny prize 2021.

## Trinity Catholic Academy announces open house

SOUTHBRIDGE - Trinity Catholic Academy is now accepting registrations for students in grades Pre-K through grade 8 for the 2022-23 school year. The open house on January 30, will be by appointment only.

Trinity Catholic Academy has a long history of providing students with a strong foundation that they take with them long after they graduate. Trinity takes pride in educating the whole child which includes strong academics, Christian values, and community service. Students are taught compassion and respect among a diverse school family. Although Trinity is a Christian based school, all faiths are welcomed.

Trinity offers two full day Pre-K programs, 3 days, or 5 days a week. Pre-K students must be age 4 by August 31st. Trinity also offers a 5 full day Kindergarten program. Kindergarten students must be age 5 by August 31st. The after-school program is available until 5:30 p.m. for all TCA students.



Trinity Catholic Academy has exciting plans for the upcoming school year which includes the building of a new state of the art Science Lab. The current classroom is the same lab that St. Mary's

HS students used back in the early 1960s. Feel free to visit the school's website at <https://trinitycatholicacademy.org/> to learn more about the project. Trinity is very proud of its school and looks forward to an amazing future as they continue to expand academics and extracurricular programs. The future is bright at TCA.

Open House appointments and inquiries can be made by calling the school at 508-765-5991 or by emailing Mrs. Symock, principal, at [angela.symock@tca11.com](mailto:angela.symock@tca11.com). The school is located at 11 Pine St., Southbridge.



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# How to improve flexibility

Many men and women become less flexible as they get older. That loss of flexibility can make performing everyday tasks more difficult while also increasing the risk of injury when working out. Fortunately, there are many steps men and women can take to improve their flexibility.

Embrace dynamic stretching before a workout. Static stretching was once the rage, but research has indicated that static stretching is not as beneficial as people once thought. Static stretching is a blanket term used to describe several techniques that stretch muscles while a body is at rest. When a person is performing a static stretch, he or she gradually lengthens the muscle until it reaches an elongated position, which is then held for 30 seconds or more. But recent research has indicated that static stretching is not as effective before a workout as dynamic stretching, which are stretching exercises done while a body is moving. Push-ups, squats and lunges are just a few examples of dynamic stretching techniques, and these exercises can warm up your body and prepare it for the workout to come.

Reconfigure your workout. When you want to improve flexibility, it's beneficial to examine your existing workout routine. Are you lifting as much weight as pos-

sible during your strength training workout but don't really know why? If building muscle mass is not your goal, you can probably improve your flexibility by lifting less weight. Lifting less weight can be a great way to tone your muscles, and you won't be sacrificing the benefits associated with strength training.

Drink water. Properly hydrated muscles are more capable of responding to flexibility training than poorly hydrated muscles. Make an effort to drink more water throughout the day, and bring your own water with you to the gym so you can stay hydrated during your workouts.

Find ways to unwind. Your workout may not be the culprit behind your inflexibility. Stress can cause muscles to tighten, and it also increases your risk for a host of ailments, including heart disease and stroke. If your workout routine is already one that promotes

flexibility but you are still dealing with tightness, then you might be falling victim to stress. If that's the case, find time to alleviate that stress throughout the day, whether it's taking a relaxing walk during your lunch break or embracing yoga at the end of a long day.

Perform static stretches at the end of your workout. Static stretches may be ineffective and contribute to injury at the beginning of workout, but that does not mean they can't help you improve flexibility once your workout is complete. Static stretches at the end of a workout can help you lengthen muscles that might have lost some of their flexibility during strength training.

Men and women who can't seem to improve their flexibility no matter what they do may benefit from working with a professional trainer or discussing their concerns with their physicians.



## Resolutions inspired by trending health topics

Improving personal health is a popular New Years resolution. A 2020 Finder survey found that an estimated 188 million Americans planned to make resolutions to carry them into 2021. Similar numbers of people likely will put personal goals on the calendar this year. Those focused on health and wellness may consider these trending topics.

**Collagen supplementation**  
Collagen is a family of proteins that serves as the structural component of most connective tissues in the body. Collagen production wanes as people age, but it also can drop quickly due to excess sun exposure, smoking, lack of exercise, and excess alcohol consumption, according to the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Many people are interested in maintaining adequate levels of collagen, which is vital to giving skin a

youthful appearance and helps to maintain healthy joints. According to Google Trends, online searches for collagen have increased steadily since 2014. Collagen has become a top-selling supplement to improve hair, skin and nails. Though human studies that prove collagen supplementation efficacy are lacking, some randomized controlled trials have found that collagen supplements improve skin elasticity and joint mobility and reduce joint pain. Collagen supplements are thought to be safe, but people should discuss supplementation with a doctor first.

### Fermented foods

More research is showing a connection between digestive tract (gut) health and immunity, and people concerned with boosting their immune systems are paying attention. Research published in the journal Cell in 2014 indicated the im-

mune system has evolved to maintain a symbiotic relationship with microbiota in the gut. Accordingly, when operating optimally, this immune system-microbiota alliance allows the induction of protective responses to pathogens.

Naturally fermented foods may help strengthen the gut microbiome by supplying it with healthy probiotics, according to Dr. David S. Ludwig, a professor of nutrition at the T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Some pickles, Korean kimchi, sauerkraut, and other foods can be beneficial. Consumers should look for product labels that say 'naturally fermented,' which use live organisms for the fermenting process.

Getting healthier is a common theme of New Year's resolutions. Various health trends could affect what people resolve to do in the year ahead.

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# Simple strategies to combat stress

Just about everyone experiences stressful situations. Sometimes a measure of stress can provide motivation to do one's best or strive for an especially lofty goal. However, when stress becomes a chronic condition, it can adversely affect individuals' quality of life and even their overall health.

Harvard Medical School says stress can manifest itself in myriad ways. Stress can cause tension headaches, indigestion, aches and pains, or even heart palpi-

tations, and it may affect the mind by making it hard to concentrate or make decisions. Many people experience stress through emotional or psychological symptoms, such as irritability or feeling down. Learning how to effectively manage stress is essential for individuals' overall well-being.

**Exercise regularly**

Exercise serves many functions, including acting as a potent stress relief strategy. The Cleveland Clinic says aerobic exercise releases endorphins, which

are natural substances that help a person feel better and maintain a positive attitude. Movement activities like yoga or Tai Chi also can relax the mind and body and promote physical health.

**Take media breaks**

Overwhelming oneself with a barrage of negative news stories or constant information can increase stress levels. Individuals can strive to remain informed and still build breaks into their schedules. Shut off news programs, turn over

the newspaper or tune out of social media from time to time. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that individuals who are stressed out by world events reduce the number of times they read the news or check the headlines each day.

**Meditate or perform breathing exercises**

Breathing and meditation can help alleviate stress, according to the American Heart Association. A quick meditation can provide some perspective. If a

situation is stressful, go for a walk or take a few slow, deep breaths until the body relaxes. Harvard Medical School also says meditation can induce a relaxation response, which is an antidote to stress.

**Change negatives to positives**

Negative self-talk may increase stress, but positive self-talk can help a person

calm down. Individuals should practice positive self-talk every day. Instead of saying, "I hate when this happens," say, "I know how to deal with this, I've done it before."

A small amount of periodic stress can be a good thing. However, chronic stress poses a significant threat to individuals' long-term health.

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We get our balance from the interaction of our ears, eyes and motor systems. The bottom of our feet provide important input to our balance systems. Eyes can see we are falling. The ears sense movement.

### How are hearing and cognitive decline related?

Managing hearing loss keeps us engaged and alert. It staves off depression and isolation. Studies on hearing and dementia are ongoing, but we do know that managing our hearing losses is one of a few factors we can control.

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# Lt. Karlowicz takes oath

“Marek Karlowicz was officially sworn in as Dudley Police Lieutenant at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting on

Monday, January 10. Town Clerk Lori Smith administered the oath to Lieutenant Karlowicz in front of his fam-

ily, several members of the department, and others in attendance.

Lt. Karlowicz has been with the department since November of 2000, starting as a reserve officer and dispatcher. He was promoted to full time in November of 2002 and attended the Western Massachusetts Police Academy in Agawam. He was appointed as Sergeant in July of 2019 and Lieutenant this past November.

Lieutenant Karlowicz has been an outstanding officer and performs multiple duties in the department, including serving as one of



Lieutenant Karlowicz and members of his family with the Dudley Board of Selectmen.

the department’s firearms instructors. He was also one of the officers conducting the annual holiday drive over the years. The department congratulates him on this achievement and wishes him well in the future.



Lt. Karlowicz administered the oath of office by Dudley Town Clerk Lori Smith.

## Politicians announce \$2.8 million Massworks Grant for Oxford

BOSTON – State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) and State Representatives Joseph McKenna (R-Webster) and Paul Frost (R-Auburn) announced that the town of Oxford is the recipient of a \$2.8 million grant from the highly competitive MassWorks Infrastructure Program that is administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED). The grant will be used to support the Route 20 Sewer Extension and Improvements project that is ongoing in the town.

Since the MassDOT Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will proceed as planned, EOHED Secretary Michael Kennealy approved the grant for the town of Oxford this year. Once EOHED receives final written approval

of the project design by MassDOT, all required permits and approvals are issued, and verification that all needed match funds for the full project budget have been secured, the town will be able to contract with the state for the \$2.8 million grant.

“The Route 20 reconstruction has been a long-discussed and planned project in the town of Oxford,” said Senator Fattman. “Seeing how the reconstruction project has already been scheduled, it is excellent to see that the state acknowledges the value this area brings to our region by making this commitment through MassWorks. The Oxford legislative delegation has advocated for these improvements to the area, and this continued commitment from

the Administration demonstrates their alignment with our advocacy that the region is a great place to work and call home.”

“I am very happy that the Administration has taken advantage of the timing of the already scheduled reconstruction of Route 20 in Oxford - a long time priority of the entire legislative delegation - to provide significant investment to allow for utility upgrades. This sizable commitment to the community will provide residential and business improvements that will allow for additional homes and businesses to continue to target Oxford as a great place to live and do business.”

“The state legislative delegation for Oxford has worked hand in hand with Town Man-

ager Jen Callahan, the Board of Selectman, Town Engineer and all town officials who have advocated tirelessly, past and present, to get the sewer project incorporated into the major public safety redesign of Route 20 in North Oxford. The Baker/Polito administration, the Office of Housing & Economic Development and MASSDOT have come through once again to make sure this economic development opportunity for Oxford didn’t go to waste. It makes perfect sense to tackle the placement of sewer lines in conjunction with the Route 20 improvement project instead of years later. I’m very happy to see this officially moving forward as I am with the bigger public safety reconstruction project.”

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# Dudley PD thanks all who donated toys this Christmas season

The Dudley Police Department collected donations for needy families during the holiday season. Many people and area businesses made generous contributions to this worthwhile cause. Needs were increased during the pandemic.

A large volume of toys, clothing, and other gifts were provided to Dudley residents who needed assistance during these difficult times. These were distributed on Monday, December 20.

Thanks to the generosity of those who donated, approximately 25 local families, including 60 children, enjoyed the holiday when they would have otherwise gone without.

This year, donations were

great. This was really an incredible effort by our residents and businesses, especially during these trying times. Several hundred gifts and several thousand dollars were donated toward this effort.

A special thank you goes out to the Fels' Family Foundation, Jimmy's Pizza, the Ziemiński and Nawrocki families for their generosity.

Several other families and individuals made significant contributions toward this campaign. Toy donations were also made by Dudley Elementary, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, and Nichols College. Tremendous thanks and appreciation go out to everyone who contributed.

Any leftover toys have either been saved for the future or will be distributed to local families. Credit and thanks go out to Sergeant/Lieutenant Marek Karłowicz and Officers Luis Pacheco and Chandler Boyd for another outstanding job coordinating and organizing this year's drive. Their hard work and dedication have made this event successful year after year.

The Dudley Police Department would like to thank the many residents and others who answered the call for assistance with extreme generosity toward this worthwhile cause. This was a tremendous success once again.

—Chief Steven Wojnar



Officer Luis Pacheco, Officer Ryan Daniels, Chief Steve Wojnar, Officer Tyler Smith.



Officer Luis Pacheco, Officer Ryan Daniels, Sgt./Lieutenant Marek Karłowicz, Officer Tyler Smith.



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# bankHometown raises \$39,200 for local food pantries in fundraiser

OXFORD – Robert J. Morton, president and CEO of bankHometown, announced that the bank's 18th annual Neighbors Helping Neighbors fundraising drive raised \$39,200 for local food pantries. This brings the total amount raised over the 18 years the program has been in place to \$264,900. The annual appeal is part of bankHometown's charitable giving program, called The Giving Tree, which reflects the bank's commitment to making a real difference in

the neighborhoods it serves. Throughout the month of November, the bank invited customers, employees, and members of the community to donate funds at bankHometown branches. All donations received were matched, dollar

for dollar, by bankHometown and the total divided among food pantries in Central Massachusetts and northeast Connecticut communities the bank serves. Each of these pantries received \$2,800 to help feed families in need:

- Massachusetts:
- Athol Salvation Army Food Pantry
  - Auburn Youth and Family Services, Inc. Food Pantry
  - CARE Food Pantry - Clinton

- Food Share - Southbridge, Charlton & Sturbridge
- Friendly House Pantry, Worcester
- Friends of the Millbury Seniors
- Ginny's Helping Hand, Inc. - Leominster
- Oxford Ecumenical Food Shelf
- Sutton Senior Center's Michael A. Chizy Food Pantry
- St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry - Webster

Connecticut:

- Community Kitchens of Northeastern CT - Killingly
- Daily Bread - Putnam
- Friends of Assisi - Killingly
- Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group (TEEG)

"bankHometown would like to thank everyone who selflessly donated to our Neighbors Helping Neighbors campaign," said Morton. "We're pleased that these food pantries will receive much-needed funds in time for the holiday season."



bankHometown's Southbridge St., Auburn office Vice President, Branch Officer Tina Puzo (left) presents a check to Sally D'Arcangelo, director of Auburn Youth & Family Services, Inc. Food Pantry, one of 14 pantries receiving donations from the bank's Neighbors Helping Neighbors fundraising campaign.



bankHometown's Sutton Ave., Oxford office Assistant Vice President, Branch Officer JoAnne Bussiere (right) presents a check to Christine St. Martin of Food Share, Inc., one of 14 pantries receiving donations from the bank's Neighbors Helping Neighbors fundraising campaign.

## January art exhibit



January Art Exhibit: "Journey in Dry Medium," colored pencil and mixed media drawings by Jim Palace will be on display and for sale January 6-29 at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 East Main Street, Webster, during regular business hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10-5, Wednesday 10-6. A meet-the-artist reception will take place on Saturday, January 22,

1-3 p.m. Free and open to the public. Call 508-949-6232 for more information.

Artist's statement: As a transplanted Long Island resident, I first started working in the Kitchen and Bath Industry at Weston Kitchens. There, I was a CADD (Computer Aided Drafting and Design) designer. I created floor plans, elevations and 3-D renderings for our clients. After 15 years, I changed directions and worked in the public school system's Special Education Department, as a one-on-one aide.

For the last 2 years, under the tutelage of Ed Turner, (owner of Art and Frame Emporium) I have concentrated on my colored pencil and mixed media projects. These are the pieces I have chosen for my show "Journey In Dry Medium."



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# Programs and events at the Pearle

Join the Pearle L. Crawford Library, 40 Schofield Ave., Dudley for one of the virtual programs at the Pearle. To register go to [www.crawfordlibrary.org](http://www.crawfordlibrary.org) or call 508-949-8021

**Knit and crochet group** Thursday 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. and Friday 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. All stitchers are welcome for this informal group, meeting weekly in the Fels Room.

**Toddler time**, Wednesdays 11:00 a.m. Come join us for Toddler Time. We will have a different theme each week with stories and songs. This is geared for ages 18 months to 3.

**Baby time**, Fridays, 11:30 a.m. Join us for a Baby Time story time. We will be doing songs, fingerplays, and reading to our babies. This is geared for babies 0-15 months.

**Pre-K power storytime** Tuesdays 11:00 a.m. Join Miss Lida for Pre-School Story Time. We will be exploring a new letter each week starting with A and ending in the spring with Z.

**Lego challenge** Wednesdays 3:30 p.m. Come join us each week for a different Lego challenge, from writing your name in Legos to making a Lego zipline. Ages 5+

**Wiggles and Giggles**, Fridays, 11:00 a.m. Ages 2-5 are invited to attend this fun, free program. Sing, move, play instruments, learn rhythm, and listen to stories with Laine Hanlon. Space is limited; registration required. Sponsored by the YMCA Community and Family Partnership.

**Adult book group**, third Thursday, 6:00-7:30 p.m. The adult book group meets for an informal discussion of the month's title, which is available at the circulation desk a month prior to the meeting. The first title is Commonwealth, by Ann Patchett. For more information contact Kathryn Ward at 508-949-0819

**Jewelry Jam with Kim Larkin**, Thursday, February 3, 6:00-7:45

p.m. Make a gift for your Valentine at this jewelry-making workshop for teens and adults and create a mixed-media necklace on colorful cording using a decoupage technique with scrapbook paper or text. Kim will bring an assortment of materials to inspire your creativity. Free, but space is limited: registration required. Sponsored by the Hugh W. and Harriet K. Crawford Endowment.

**Teen movie night**, Monday, January 31, 6:00-7:30 p.m. All teens are invited to a showing of "Jurassic Park." Pizza, popcorn, and drinks are provided. Free; sponsored by the Hugh W and Harriet K Crawford Endowment.

**Yoga with Julie**, Saturday, February 5 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. All ages are welcome at this beginner-friendly yoga class led by Julie St. Francis. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Sponsored by the Hugh W and Harriet K Crawford Endowment.

**Youth Advisory Council**, Monday, February 7, 5:00-6:00 p.m. All tweens and teens in grades 6-12 are invited to join. You will gain valuable leadership skills. You can meet new people. You can earn volunteer hours (please bring your form). Pizza and drinks will be served. Free, sponsored by the Hugh W and Harriet K Crawford Endowment.

**Valentine craft for kids**, Thursday, February 10, 4:00-5:00 p.m. Come and create a Valentine craft. Ages 5+ please. Space is limited; registration required.

**Wingmasters**, Thursday, February 24, 11:00 a.m.-noon. Birds of prey are also known as raptors, and they are hunting birds characterized by hooked beaks and powerful grabbing feet armed with sharp talons (the word raptor comes from a Latin word that

means "to seize"). Raptors can also boast the best eyesight and the sharpest hearing in the animal kingdom. Raptors include hawks, falcons and owls, and this presentation, which incorporates 5 live birds of prey, all native to New England, gives an overview of these different categories. The program is designed to explain predation, the birds' place at the top of the food web, their different hunting adaptations and their status in a rapidly changing world. Because many birds of prey are declining in number, this presentation also features one or more of the endangered raptors that WINGMASTERS cares for, and explains why these species face an uncertain future. Free; sponsored by the Hugh W and Harriet K Crawford Endowment

**Houseplants 101**, Thursday, February 24, 6:30-7:45 p.m. Join the master gardeners from Blackstone Valley Veggie Gardens to learn everything you need to know to successfully grow houseplants. Learn about several kinds of houseplants, and how to identify common plant-growing problems, so you can beautify your home and purify the air you breathe. Free; children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Sponsored by the Hugh W and Harriet K Crawford Endowment.

**Deb's sing and swing**, Friday, February 25, 10:30-11:00 a.m. Join Deb Hudgins for this interactive program featuring singing, music, dancing, stories, and a variety of fun props ranging from a parachute to pom poms. Free; sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

**Sensory storytime**, Saturday, March 5, 11:00 a.m.-noon. Children with special needs and their families are invited to this special program. We will read books, sing songs, and dance together. Free; registration required

# Gladys E. Kelly Public Library calendar of events

The Gladys E. Kelly Public Library in Webster. 2 Lake St., Webster, 508-949-3880, has listed the following calendar of events. All programs are scheduled to be held outside on the Library lawn (unless otherwise noted), weather permitting.

## Adult Programming

**Book Discussion Group** – January 24, 6:30 p.m. The Gladys E. Kelly Public Library Adult Book Discussion Group meets at 6:30 pm. New members are always welcome! Next month's book discussion will be on Monday, January 24th at 6:30PM the meeting will take place via Zoom, and will be about the book The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson. Stop by the library, or reach out by phone to 508-949-3880, or by email to [ehale@cwmar.org](mailto:ehale@cwmar.org) for inquiries.

**Yoga with Julie** – Saturdays through March 26, 10-11:15 a.m. Join Julie at the Gladys E. Kelly Library for a vinyasa yoga class for all levels. In Sanskrit, Vinyasa yoga translates to the "uniting of movement with breath". A typical class involves a centering of the mind with the breath, aromatherapy, movement of the body to release energetic blockages and, finally, a rest and relaxation. Classes are free for Gladys Kelly Library patrons.

**Candle Dipping** – February 10, at 6:30 p.m. Learn to dip candles just like Laura Ingalls did in Little House on the Prairie. Participants are able to choose wax colors, scents, and shapes of candles, and may choose to hand dip or use candle molds.

**Before Brooklyn book discussion with Ted Reinstein** – February 24, at 6:30 p.m. Ted Reinstein from WCVB-TV's Chronicle will be at the Gladys E. Kelly Public Library to present his latest book, Before Brooklyn. This book tells the story of the little-known heroes who fought segregation in baseball, from commu-

nist newspaper reporters to the Pullman car porters who saw to it that black newspapers espousing integration in professional sports reached the homes of blacks throughout the country. There will be time for a brief Q&A after the presentation as well.

## Children's and young adult programming

**Songs and Stories Storytime** – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Join Miss Emily Wednesday mornings at 10 a.m. to read books, sing songs, and do rhyme games. Meet other children and caregivers at this community event. After stories, catch up with other community members over a simple craft. This Storytime is best for children 0-5, but all ages are welcome. Masks are required for everyone in the children's room over the age of 2 years. Disposable masks will be available.

**LEGO Club** – Thursdays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. LEGO Club is back, and we're so excited to have you build with us again. Stop by the storytime room every Tuesday at 3:30 to freeplay with our bucketloads of LEGOs or try out our weekly challenge. Masks are required for everyone in the Children's Room over the age of 2 years. Disposable masks will be available.

**Drop in Paint Hour** – Tuesdays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. It's time to break out the paintbrushes. With a variety of paints and paper available, bring your artist of any age to join in the fun. Masks are required for everyone in the Children's Room over the age of 2 years. Disposable masks will be available.

**STEAM Kids** – Thursdays, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Join Miss Emily in a weekly STEAM event. That is Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics. Each week there will be a new project to tackle from slime making and catapult challenges, to board game development and bath bombs. Every week contains some take home element. These events are best for children 7-12, but siblings are always welcome. Some events may have a limited number of places, in this case children between 7-12 will have preference. Caregivers must remain for the duration of the event. Masks are required for everyone in the children's room over the age of 2 years. Disposable masks will be available.

**Working with Dangerous Animals** – January 22, at 12:30 p.m. Join Joy Marzolf to learn how animal keepers and scientists stay safe when working with dangerous animals, such as captive alligators or wild crocodiles. Meet some live animals at the end! Sponsored by the Friends of the Gladys E. Kelly Public Library.

**Maker Mondays** – Mondays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. This January we have Perler beads available for children and their caregivers to create with. Every month we will rotate our craft material, so stay tuned!

**Build Night** – Tuesdays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Every Tuesday in January we have Magnatiles for kids to create with. Building materials will change monthly, check back for more information!

**YFCP Wiggles and Giggles** – Every Friday until February 18, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Join us for a free music and movement series created and facilitated by music teacher Laine Hanlon. Children, ages 2-5, with a parent/caregiver, will sing, move, play musical instruments, learn rhythm and listen to stories. "Wiggles and Giggles" fosters physical, cognitive, social and emotional learning through music and motion. Siblings are welcome. Space is limited and registration is required each week. You can register at the Events Page on the Library's website.

**Special Pajama Storytime** – Wednesday, February 23, at 10 a.m. Wear your favorite jammies or something comfy to this extra special storytime.

**Children's Armchair Travel Series** – Thursdays in January at 3:30 p.m. Tired of being home all the time? Join Gladys Kelly Youth Services as we travel the world this January. From Trinidad to China and Russia to India, we'll be learning interesting facts about each country and creating an art project every week. January 27, travel with us to China and create decorations to welcome the Chinese New Year in February.

**February Vacation Week Programs** – February 22, 24, 25 and 26, – 3:30-4:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, February 22** – Wreck the Tech - Ever wondered what was inside a printer? We'll give kids screwdrivers and some old technology to take apart and explore. This program is best for ages 6 and up but all are welcome with a caregiver.

**Thursday, February 24** – DIY Slime - Slime was so popular this Fall, we're bringing it back. This program is for all ages.

**Friday, February 25** – Build Your Own Roadway - For all the vehicle-loving kids out there! Everyone will get a big piece of cardboard and a roll of road tape to create their own highway system. Hot Wheels provided for imaginative play after their creation is finished.

**Saturday, February 26** – Learn Ukulele for Kids - Join Julie Stepanek as she shows the fundamentals of ukulele playing. You'll learn how to tune, strum and read chords. After a short lesson, you'll be able to play some fun and easy songs. No experience necessary. Bring your own ukulele or borrow one of hers.

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**HOCUS-FOCUS**

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Cap is different. 2. Scarf is shorter. 3. Glove is smaller. 4. Shovel is turned. 5. Doghouse is missing. 6. Sign is missing.

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## Living ON with Lincoln



## The last gift given

By Amy LeClaire

Lincoln would have turned eleven on December 26, on the day after Christmas. We would celebrate by singing a wild and crazy rendition of the birthday song before presenting him with a slice of leftover prime rib, pegged with a candle. He'd smile to the melody (he knew the song was about him) and move his nose away from the flame, sensing the heat. Then we'd cut his slice into small pieces and let him at it. "He loves it!" we'd say, as though somehow surprised that our dog likes beef. Dogs do this for us. They make the small stuff the big stuff. They remind us of the spirit and magic behind life's ordinary routines.

Each season brought forth different routines. Winter (along with snow games) brought forth indoor sessions of baking and begging. "That smells sooooo good," Lincoln said, his snout lifted while I baked gingerbread cookies. He never knew when a scrap of food might drop; he wasn't taking any chances. "I was just thinking - that gingerbread boy's head got cut off. I could probably save you the hassle of putting him back together. Just a thought."

"Here you go, Lincoln." He gulped the ginger-head down.

Now that I'm spending more time indoors (for winter), I find myself thinking about Lincoln's presence by

my side. He'd press his face into the smallest of crevices to take care of fallen table scraps. I bend over to pick one up now, then hesitate. Lincoln would have loved that scrap.

My home certainly feels different now, but I'm at peace with a loss that's also a gain. Lincoln gave us perspective and bundles of small joys to pass on to pups we've yet to meet. He also had an extraordinary short life full of "presence" and, also, presents.

"Hey look! This wrapping paper stick rolls. On and on. Look at it go!" A typical pup, Lincoln was attuned to every detail as it unfolded before his eyes. "Another shoelace! Another shoebox!" However, back then, he couldn't distinguish an actual present from the new surprises laid out before his sniffing nose. "More stringy fingers at the edge of rugs!" A puppy's mind is a playground.

Lincoln grew taller and wiser; and while the leonine mane of his chest grew thick, so did his desire for actual presents. Through the years he watched and learned. He knew that when my hands disappeared into the mouth of a bag—Let's see who this one is for???—there was going to be something for Lincoln. He'd sit at my heels, chin up, on Christmas Eve while I led a "Secret Santa" gift exchange. He knew exactly what was happening. A gift was being shared. Mom was in charge of handing out gifts. Who would be the lucky winner?

"This one says it's for Lincoln!" His stare (along with a slight invasion of my personal space) put me under pressure. I had to make sure he opened first. He accepted his gift with pure fascination, as though each one was the first

ever opened. "I can't believe this is really happening!" He sniffed the gift as though it was alive, nosing and poking and finally looking up at me for help. "Let's get to the bottom of this!"

I tore off the paper. His brown eyes bloomed. "It's a baby possum!" He'd sniff the stuffed animal suspiciously. "Could it be alive?" Then he'd thrash it around the room and pounce on it.

"Look Daddy, it's a possum and he's dead!" He'd dominate an animal stuffed cheaply in China while we continued the gift exchange and celebrated Lincoln's gratitude. "I'll get you, possum." He'd pull cotton from the animal's belly using the only tiny part of his body, his front teeth.

"Lincoln..." I'd pick up the wounded possum and cradle him in my chest, "You have to be eaaassy. It's just a baby."

"I'll be easy. I didn't mean it. Can I have my possum back?"

"You have to be easy." I stroked the animal softly.

"I'll be easy. Promise. Put him back down, please."

Lincoln was intelligent. My tone of voice, along with his remarkable vocabulary, made an impact on his behavior. He chewed more gently while, paranoid, he tossed me guilty glances. "Be easy with the possum," I scolded with a facetious grin.

My attempt to protect the stuffed possum wore thin. It wasn't long before the poor animal bled out more cotton. I had to intervene. "What are you doing to the possum's guts, Mom?" I'd pull cotton from the animal's belly as though reeling in the long braid of Rapunzel's hair from a tower window. Lincoln

watched with intrigue. "How much cotton did that little guy eat?" Then I'd tie the possum's slimed coat into a knot and hand him back an evolved present. "What happened to you?" He'd sniff the emaciated possum and, nevertheless, sneak off to his nook beneath the dining room table to finish chewing.

On Lincoln's passing, one of our veterinarian's said it perfectly. "He was good until he wasn't." Lincoln found joy in every single activity until he couldn't any longer. He wanted to play ball in the snow on the very last day of his life, and suffered for only a few hours. I look at a picture of the two of us on his last day. I'm holding up his paw. He's smiling as though I've just handed him another gift. I'm devastated, but he's still happy. I look at the picture again and the truth rises like vapor through my tears. "You love me enough to make sure that I'm happy every single moment. You love me enough to not let me suffer, even though you are in pain." Lincoln knew this about me and while he licked away my tears, he gave me the last gift—the know that he was happy until he slept.

Write to me at [amyleclaire@hotmail.com](mailto:amyleclaire@hotmail.com)



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Buffy and Spike were so thrilled to have their photo printed in The Yankee Xpress, they couldn't stop looking at themselves in the paper. Happy New Year to all from Buffy and Spike.



Tales from beyond

FINAL CHAPTER  
The Unfortunate Hannah Robinson

By Thomas D'Agostin

Presented here is the final part in the story of Hannah Robinson.

Hannah was returned to her home, where she passed on October 30, 1773, at the age of twenty-seven. As for Simons, he returned from his fraternizing some time later and found that she had died. Simons asked permission to be present for her interment. Rowland Robinson granted his wish but spoke very little with the man who broke his daughter's heart and spirit. Hannah was buried in the family tomb not far from their former home. The Robinson house, now a private residence, still occupies its original place on Old Boston Neck Road. Hannah Robinson's headstone is located in a small plot behind a Cape Cod duplex off Riverdell Drive in Narragansett.

Rowland Robinson died in 1806, never fully recovering from the death of his daughter. In his book The History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett, Rhode Island,

Wilkins Updike presented Rowland Robinson as a stubborn, heartless man, yet his accounts and affections speak otherwise. Peter Simons is also portrayed as a villain, yet he may have also been cast in a bad light.

The previous version is taken from the writings of the Robinson and Hazard families, along with those of Updike. The Hazards and Updikes were married into the Robinson family and vice-versa.

J.R. Cole, in telling the tale, ends with, "She expired in her husband's arms." There is record that her husband was not the rogue he is written to be. According to other accounts, they married and stayed married and in love for ten years, until Hannah's untimely death, which may have been from one of the many illnesses that were prevalent of the day. Another not so small detail that may attest to their undying love is that they had a daughter.

Hannah Robinson Simons was born on February 19, 1762 (stone states 1767). She married Dr. Joseph Bowen of Glocester, Rhode Island and died on December 7, 1824, at the age of sixty-two, nine months and eighteen days. Joseph, born in 1756, died on August 12, 1832, at the age of seventy-six.

Hannah Robinson Simons-Bowen is buried in Acotes Cemetery in Chepachet, Rhode Island, along with her husband, her son and

a few other members of the Bowen family. You cannot miss the tall monument just at the top of the hill just past the corner.

One more quaint detail came to light while researching the complete story of Hannah Robinson. Dr. Joseph Bowen's father, Colonel Benjamin Bowen, was married twice. His second wife, Abigail, was the mother of Peter Simons.

McSparran Hill, where Hannah played as a child is

now called Hannah Robinson Park. The 1.52-acre section includes the ledge also known as Sad Rock, Crying Rock, and Meditation Rock where Hannah would sit and look out over the Narragansett Bay and Boston Neck; the great rock, now called Hannah Robinson Rock and a wooden tower named after Hannah rising forty feet into the sky. Her spirit still roams the grounds that bear her name in memory of her sad and tragic passing. It is

in that peaceful place where people occasionally see the ghost of young Hannah Robinson either sitting on the ledge looking out over the bay or on top of the great rock that bears her name. Visitors also hear her mournful sighs echoing in the wind as she relives the last moments of her life forever and ever. Legendary writer Howard Phillips Lovecraft once commented on the rock as being "the finest rural prospect I have seen anywhere."

The Dover Demon

By Thomas D'Agostino

On April 21, 1977, the small town of Dover, located just 15 miles from Boston, was thrown into world recognition. In this little quiet community, a strange creature was witnessed by several people over two days.

William Bartlett, then 17-years-old, was the first person to see the Dover Demon. As he and two friends, Mike Mazzocco and Andy Brodie, drove along their local Farm Street just past 10 p.m., Bartlett witnessed a creature "standing on a wall, its eyes glowing [in the headlights]. It was not a dog or a cat. It had no tail. It had an egg-shaped head." Its body was thin with long spindly arms and legs. The fingers resembled tendrils as they grasped the broken wall. It began to traverse the top stones of the wall. Bartlett saw it for but a few moments before passing it. When he turned around, it was gone.

A mere two hours later, 15-year-old John Baxter encountered the creature on Miller High Road. As Baxter proceeded down the street, he saw a small figure approaching him. The figure was at first unidentifiable in the dark. Still, as it neared,

Baxter knew it was not an ordinary animal or human; instead, something in between.

The figure then scurried off to the left, descending a wooden gully and stopped on the other side. Baxter followed the formation, pausing at the top of the gully, where he got his first good look at the being. It sat near a tree with its feet "molded" around the top of a rock. Its head was "figure eight" shaped with two dark eyes and a body that resembled a monkey. Struck with fear, Baxter left the scene, moving swiftly down the road until he reached Farm Street where a couple, noting he was visibly shaken, picked him up and gave him a ride home.

The next night, on April 22, a 15-year-old girl named Abby Brabham saw the creature standing upright next to a tree. Her time of witness was also around midnight. All three witnesses gave similar descriptions of what they saw and drew sketches of the creature. The monster was dubbed the "Dover Demon." Bartlett wrote on his sketch, "I, Bill Bartlett, swear on a stack of Bibles that I



saw this creature."

Noted Maine native and Cryptozoologist Loren Coleman spoke to the teens within a week of the sightings and concluded they were credible. The Dover Demon was sighted at night, for two days within a 2-mile radius, near water. Some authorities passed the creature off as a foal or a moose calf. Still, it soon became apparent that none such animals had been spotted in the area and any such young animals were out of season. If a moose was wandering the site, it would have been easily seen and captured. Another aspect that shot holes in that theory was that the witnesses saw the creature standing upright and walking like a human.

To this day, Bartlett still remains shaken and mystified by his witnessing of the Dover Demon. In an interview, he stated, "In a lot of ways it's kind of embarrassing to me. I definitely saw

something. It was definitely weird. I didn't make it up. Sometimes I wish I had."

For the record, the Dover Demon is not the first strange sighting in the small hamlet. Stories have circulated for centuries about buried treasure and pirates. Also, there are legends of the devil on horseback being seen in the 1600s. However, the Dover Demon has captured the attention of many since its brief sighting and disappearance over 40 years ago.

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.

ANSWERS

1. Gross, Grass	6. Bravo, Brave
2. Cellar, Collar	7. Danger, Dagger
3. Pully, Pally	8. Start, Start
4. Elate, Elite	9. Kitten, Mitten
5. Austin, Dustin	10. Hunch, Hunch



- At the height of their fashion craze in the 1580s and '90s, neck ruffs could include up to 6 yards of starched-stiff material with up to 600 pleats, supported by a wire, wooden frame or board.
- Starfish don't have blood. They circulate nutrients by using seawater in their vascular system.
- The first baseball caps were made from straw and worn by the New York Knickerbockers in 1849.
- After the Titanic sank in 1912, ships sent to recover the dead ran out of embalming supplies. It was decided to preserve only the bodies of first-class passengers, due to the need to visually identify wealthy men in order to resolve disputes over their estates.
- Between 1848 and 1850, the Gold Rush caused the population of San Francisco to grow from 900 to 35,000 people.
- A mother black lace-weaver spider will drum on her web to call her babies to come and eat her alive.
- In medieval times, fruit and vegetables were cooked because they were thought to cause disease, with a book from 1500 even warning consumers to "Beware of green salads and raw fruits, for they will make your master sick."
- A man literally died laughing while watching the movie "A Fish Called Wanda."
- \*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "Not all paths offer a vista. But every path offers a lesson." – Toni Sorenson

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## Even Exchange

by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from MASTER for an I, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

1. A dozen dozen	___ O ___	Mower's target	___ A ___
2. Basement	___ E ___	Arrest	___ O ___
3. Window sealer	___ U ___	Burger portion	___ A ___
4. Exhilarate	___ A ___	The upper crust	___ I ___
5. Lone Star capital	A ___	Actor Hoffman	D ___
6. Hooray, well done	___ ___ O	Heroic	___ ___ E
7. Peril	___ N ___	Cloak and	___ G ___
8. British drummer	___ ___ R	Turn on the engine	___ ___ T
9. Little meower	K ___	Hand warmer	M ___
10. Rabbit cage	___ T ___	Gut feeling	___ N ___

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## The Car Doctor

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



**Q.** I recently had to replace the engine in my Toyota Camry. It had 234,000 miles, and the newer engine has around 150,000 miles on it. I've notice when it's really cold, the car does not warm up when driving at highway speed. When it's idling or going slow, the engine warms up and therefore the heater works okay. What's up?

**A.** Start with a check of the engine thermostat. If the engine was sitting in a salvage yard for a while, the thermostat may be opening at too low a temperature. This would be most noticeable at highway speeds. If the thermostat is okay, then the problem could be air in the cooling system. This could be the result of a faulty engine head-gasket, which is why the car could have been in the junkyard.

**Q.** I love my 1998 Volvo and plan to drive it as long as it will go; it only has 223,000 miles so far. Volvo parts are really expensive so I have been buying parts online. I'd like to understand after-market parts. Are there various qualities? Should I be asking for a specific manufacturer given I plan on keeping this car as long as I can keep it running.

**A.** I have no problem with aftermarket parts. In fact many replacement parts are equal to and in some cases may surpass the original equipment parts. Look for name brands from reputable parts stores such as

NAPA. I have also had good luck with online parts retailers such as Rock Auto and CarID. When I'm shopping online, I tend to look for brand names that I am familiar with that will provide good service. As a general rule, if the replacement part is dramatically cheaper than the original equipment part, the quality may be questionable.

**Q.** I recently purchased a 2013 Nissan Pathfinder with only 27,000 miles on it. I hear a knock from the engine that is fairly apparent until the car warms up for a minute or two. I took the car to Nissan and had someone drive and test it. They told me there are no trouble codes and the knocking noise if cold is normal. Does my truck have a problem?

**A.** It is not unusual to hear a slight knocking noise when the engine is cold. There is so much aluminum in engines today that parts will expand and contract as they warm up. As long as the noise goes away quickly I would agree with the dealer and call it normal.

**Q.** I have a 1999 Honda Accord and the "service engine" light came on. The repair shop told me it was the evap system but they couldn't find anything wrong. They said the problem wasn't on the fuel side. They reset the computer, I filled the gas tank and only drove about 100 miles and all had been well for almost three weeks. Then the light came back on. What exactly is the evap system and should I be concerned about the light?

**A.** The evap system is the term used for the evaporative emission control system, which prevents gasoline fumes from escaping into the atmosphere and causing additional pollution. Since 1996 most cars have had an onboard test of this system to ensure it doesn't leak. Although in this case, the car's performance will not change when the "check engine" light is illuminated, your car is causing air pollution. The system typically performs self-tests when the fuel tank is between one quarter and three quarters full. When the fuel level dropped below three quarters of a tank of fuel, the system ran a test and detected a

leak. The most common cause of an evaporative failure is a loose or faulty gas cap.

**A.** I heard somewhere that if many people share a car, the quicker it wears out. We have three cars in the family. I think each person should drive their own car. The other two drivers feel they can jump into whatever is last in the driveway. Who is right?

**Q.** This comes from the old adage that the more people who drive a car the quicker it wears out. This may be true – but to a point. What I see is, the more people who drive a car, no one takes responsibility for the preventive maintenance and minor repairs. Everyone thinks the other person took care of the oil changes, checking the tires and other important issues. There is no reason a car driven by several drivers should have a shorter life as long as someone takes responsibility for maintenance and repairs.

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## Tips on financial planning



Dennis Antonopoulos

If you're a certain age, you'll need to withdraw money from some of your retirement accounts each year. But in 2022, the amount you must take out may be changing more than in other years – and that could affect your retirement income strategy.

Here's some background: Once you turn 72, you generally must start taking withdrawals, called required minimum distributions, or RMDs,

## Watch for changes in RMDs

from some of your retirement accounts, such as your traditional IRA and your 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan. Each year, your RMDs are determined by your age and account balances. This year, the life expectancy tables used by the IRS are being updated to reflect longer lifespans. This may result in lower annual RMDs than you'd have to take if this adjustment hadn't been made.

If you've started taking RMDs, what does this change mean to you? It can be a positive development, for a few reasons:

- Potentially lower taxes – Your RMDs are generally taxable at your personal income tax rate, so the lower your RMDs, the lower your tax bill might be.

- Possibly longer "lifespan" for retirement accounts – Because your RMDs will be lower, the accounts from which they're issued – including your traditional IRA and 401(k) – may be able to last longer without becoming depleted. The longer these accounts can stay intact and remain an asset, the better for you.

- More flexibility in planning for retirement income – The word "required" in the phrase "required minimum distributions" means exactly what it sounds like – you must take at least that amount. If you withdraw less than your RMD, the amount not withdrawn will be

taxed at 50%. So, in one sense, your RMDs take away some of your freedom in managing your retirement income. But now, with the lower RMDs in place, you may regain some of this flexibility. (And keep in mind that you're always free to withdraw more than the RMDs.)

Of course, if you don't really need all the money from RMDs, even the lower amount may be an issue for you – as mentioned above, RMDs are generally taxable. However, if you're 70½ or older, you can transfer up to \$100,000 per year from a traditional IRA directly to a qualified charitable organization, and some,

or perhaps all, of this money may come from your RMDs. By making this move, you can exclude the RMDs from your taxable income. Before taking this action, though, you'll want to consult with your tax advisor.

Here are a couple of final points to keep in mind. First, not all your retirement accounts are subject to RMDs – you can generally keep your Roth IRA intact for as long as you want. However, your Roth 401(k) is generally subject to RMDs. If you're still working past 72, though, you may be able to avoid taking RMDs from your current employer's 401(k) or similar plan, though

you'll still have to take them from your traditional IRA.

Changes to the RMD rules don't happen too often. By being aware of how these new, lower RMDs can benefit you, and becoming familiar with all aspects of RMDs, you may be able to strengthen your overall retirement income situation.

*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*

## DA offers funds to support safe end-of-year school events

WORCESTER – District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr. is inviting local schools and parent groups to apply for mini grants to support post-prom and post-graduation events designed to keep students safe and prevent drunken driving crashes.

"This time of year is supposed to be a celebration for students and their families, but too often we see tragedies," Mr. Early said. "We're hoping these grants will assist

more schools in offering safe options for students."

These events, organized and overseen by adults, offer safe drug- and alcohol-free alternatives to high-risk activities that often follow end of the year celebrations for high school students.

"While none of us know what the status of school activities will be in the spring of 2022 due to the COVID pandemic, we are cautiously optimistic and accepting appli-

cations for funding requests," Mr. Early said. "Some celebrations looked different in 2021, but we were proud to continue supporting these efforts and providing students with the fun and safe events they deserve."

This is the fourth year the office has offered grants thanks to the support of the Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance Drunk Driving Trust Fund. Prior to that, Mr. Early supported local post-

prom and post-graduation events at high schools across the county through his drug forfeiture funding.

Schools and parent groups can apply for these grants to either support existing events or to assist in establishing new events. Applications for funding requests are due by February 17.

To request a grant application, contact Ellen Miller at ellen.miller@mass.gov.

## Prayer

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

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

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## RE: Real Estate



Mark Marzeotti

If you're following along with the news today, you're probably hearing a lot about record-breaking home prices, rising consumer costs, supply chain constraints, and more. And if you're thinking about purchasing a home this year, all of these inflationary concerns are likely making you wonder if you should wait to buy. Economists explain that during a period of high inflation, prices rise across the board. And while home prices aren't immune from this increase, here's why inflation shouldn't stop you from buying a home in 2022.

Homeownership offers stability and security. Home prices have been increasing for quite some time, and experts say they're going to continue to climb throughout 2022. So, as a buyer, how can you protect yourself from rising costs for things like food, shelter, entertainment, and other goods and services? The answer lies in housing.

Buying a home allows you to lock in your monthly mortgage payment for the foreseeable future. That means as other prices rise, your monthly payment will

## Why inflation shouldn't stop you from buying a home in 2022

be consistent thanks to your fixed-rate mortgage. This gives you the peace of mind that the bulk of your housing costs is shielded from inflation.

A fixed-rate mortgage allows you to maintain the biggest portion of housing expenses at the same payment. Sure, property taxes will rise and other expenses may creep up, but your monthly housing payment remains the same.

If you rent, you don't have that same benefit and you won't be protected from rising housing costs. As an added incentive to buy, consider that today's mortgage interest rates are

lower than they have been in decades. While inflation decreases what your dollars can buy, low mortgage rates help counteract it by boosting your purchasing power so you can get more home for your money. They also help keep your monthly payments down. This is especially important during an inflationary period because you'll want to protect yourself from the impact of inflation as much as possible.

If you have cash and are expecting inflation, you want to think through where you can put your money so it does not lose value. Housing is commonly looked at

as a good inflation hedge, especially with interest rates so low.

Bottom Line, the best hedge against inflation is a

fixed housing cost. That's why you shouldn't let it stop you from buying a home this year. Not sure where to start? Connect with Marzeotti Group or a real estate professional so you have expert advice and help throughout every step of the home buying process.

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