

The Yankee Xpress

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Chris Robert brings Samuel Slater's and Webster's story to life

By Rod Lee

Only someone with the same unwavering sense of purpose as Samuel Slater could have created a museum dedicated to the life of "the Father of the American Industrial Revolution."

That person is Christopher Robert.

"The Samuel Slater Experience," an interactive, technology-driven and Disneyesque tribute to Samuel Slater and the town he literally put on the map two hundred years ago, opens for self-guided tours on March 4 in the former National Guard Armory on Ray St. in Webster.

More than twenty unique, immersive exhibits will transport museum patrons back to 1789, when a "young and conflicted" Samuel Slater arrived in New York City, moved first to Rhode Island and later to Webster, building new cotton mills and the first woolen mills in the country—all powered by the French River and Lake Chaubunagungamaugg (Webster Lake).

In one of the first exhibits seen during a tour of the museum offered by museum staff a video—Samuel Slater is portrayed as a man with "a near-photographic memory and ambitious nature" who is nevertheless told by an older Jedidiah Strutt "you will never own a mill." Caught "between the old world and the new," he was cast as "Slater the Traitor" for abandoning his homeland. At sea for more than two months, he at one point said to himself "I should have stayed in England."

The Samuel Slater Experience will be open to the public year-round. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday (open at 1 p.m. on March 4).

The museum is also open on

some Monday holidays and during school vacation weeks.

Private events and group visits may be scheduled for other days and time periods.

Call 508-461-2955 or email admin@samuel SlaterExperience.org for ticket prices and further details.

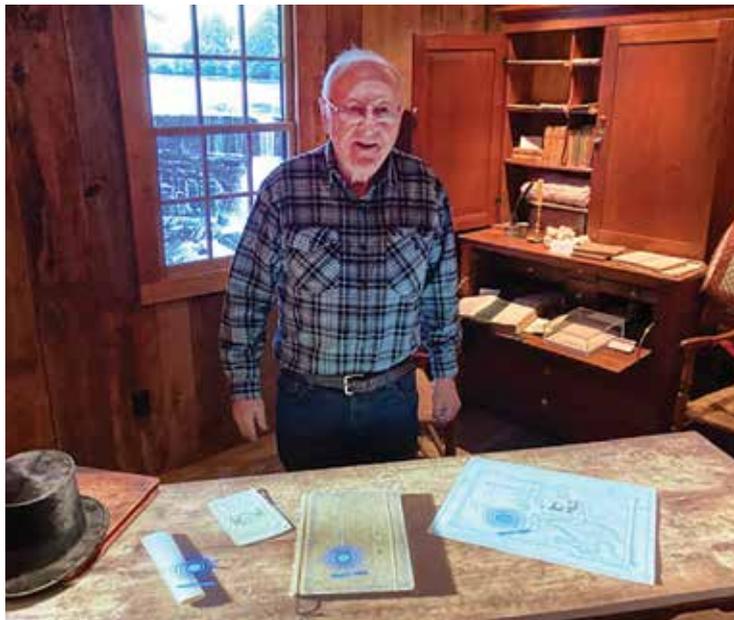
Chris Robert was honored as the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's "Cornerstone Award" winner at the Chamber's 43rd annual meeting at Pleasant Valley Country Club in Sutton this past November for his accomplishments as an entrepreneur and philanthropist. He has long been identified with Indian Ranch, a camping and entertainment venue on Gore Road in Webster. In recent years his family has added Samuel Slater's Restaurant and the Indian Princess paddlewheeler to the mix. Now there is the Samuel Slater Experience, the region's most exciting new attraction.

"We are thrilled to bring an interactive and dynamic experience that will engage students and families alike and take them back to the roots of this town and area," Mr. Robert said.

A key ingredient of the museum is a depiction of life on Main Street in "boomtown" Webster at the turn of the 20th century. Samuel Slater named the town after his friend, Sen. Daniel Webster.

Talking about the new museum while on the property on the afternoon of February 9, Mr. Robert said that when his daughter, Suzette Coppola, told him she wanted to open "a higher-end restaurant" on the grounds of Indian Ranch "and name it Samuel Slater's, I thought 'there's nothing here in

Continued on page 2



Christopher Robert stands in a replica of Samuel Slater's office at the museum he created in Webster as a tribute to the "Father of the American Industrial Revolution."

INSIDE

JAMES ANNESE

Promoted to sergeant
PAGE 4

NICHOLS COLLEGE

Reopens student bar
PAGE 7

LIVING ON WITH LINCOLN

Patience and OPDs
PAGE 11

TALES FROM BEYOND

Old York's witches
PAGE 12

Tuttle Post 279 in Auburn celebrates a phoenix-like rebirth

By Rod Lee

Bill MacLean was flicking on overhead TV screens in the lounge of the recently reconstructed Chester P. Tuttle Post 279 on Bancroft St. in Auburn the morning of January 24 when the visitor he'd been expecting arrived.

"You startled me," he said, as he turned to offer a greeting.

Mr. MacLean has been finance officer for Post 279 for more than twenty years. A Vietnam War-era veteran who is now in his seventies, he comes across as accommodating and personable. He smiles easily. This is even truer right now, as a beautifully rebuilt Tuttle Post enjoys a reopening after being struck by a catastrophic fire the evening of March 15, 2019.

"There was a lightning storm and a rainstorm that night," Mr. MacLean said, taking a seat at one of the tables in the lounge, which



These are heady days for Finance Officer Bill MacLean and members of the Chester P. Tuttle Post 279 in Auburn; the facility is fully reopened and fully operational just under three years after being destroyed by a fire.

seats one hundred people. "We had a full house, three hundred-plus people. A firefighter was here and he smelled smoke and said 'you've got a fire in the ceiling.'"

Fortunately, everyone got out before the roof collapsed. In further good news, firefighters saved

"all our plaques of past Post commanders, flags, even that Budweiser sign," he said, as he pointed to an object that has been a prized possession of the Post for many years.

"Anyone who comes to the Post knows that sign," he said.

Continued on page 3



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SAMUEL SLATER EXPERIENCE

Continued from page 1
Webster about Samuel Slater except his grave.' I said to myself 'now I have to do something!'"

Never one to turn away from a challenge, Mr. Robert began searching for a building that would suit his purposes in establishing the Samuel Slater Experience. This proved fruitless until the town of Webster approached him about the Armory.

Built in 1935 on land once owned by Samuel Slater, it was deeded to the town in 2005 and used by the Webster fire and police departments to store their vehicles and equipment.

Mr. Robert likes to reveal with a smile that after the town leased the building to him for thirty years at one dollar a year "I went into Town Hall, took thirty dollars out of my wallet and said to the town administrator 'here, I'm paid up for thirty years!'"

Of the half dozen or so

red-brick mills he looked at (and preferred) before choosing the Armory, "half were burned and the other half were in bad shape. I didn't want this building but Paul Kujawski (the former state representative) said it was solid, with walls made of concrete. But there was no water, no electricity and no heat. The center part had been a basketball court, parquet floor, the flooring was warped. I decided to bet on the mechanical part of this building. It took me one-and-a-half years to do the serious work. There was asbestos everywhere. It cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to refurbish."

Mr. Robert worked with Webster town officials and drew on the museum design experience of Doug Mund of dmdg2, and digital production mastermind Bob Noll of Boston Productions to bring the facility to life.

"The overall construction of the building, including many of the exhibit environments, were completed by local builders and craftsmen," Mr. Mund

said. "Only the very special props, such as the ship (that brought Samuel Slater to America's shores) were fabricated and installed from our design by museum specialty fabricators. Various other props were largely fabricated on-site by local craftsmen. Significant acquisition of period-correct artifacts were sourced for the project, many being donated by the local community."

Mr. Robert laughs in asserting that for his part, he went far and wide in search of items that would contribute to the atmosphere he wanted to create. A "steam and gasoline group," for instance, and the Brimfield Flea Markets.

"I became the world's best picker!" he said. "It becomes like a disease!"

Mr. Robert is far from finished in turning the 17,000-square-foot building into a place where students can experience history and technology in a way they will remember. He is confident the museum will be popular not only with schools but

with senior citizens.

Fran Thomas, principal at Bartlett Jr.-Sr. High School, said "from what I've heard it's going to be a fantastic place for field trips. Our History Department is aware of it and when we get past our testing period, into April, we will be visiting for sure."

On the matter of what he still has in mind for the Samuel Slater Experience, Mr. Robert says "I remember sitting on a stool as a boy at the local pharmacy and ordering a cherry coke. I want a soda jerk here. That's the next project!"

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



In his video, an elder mentor, Jedidiah Strutt, discourages a young and idealistic Samuel Slater against going to America, telling him "you will never own a mill."



More than twenty exhibits, some of them interactive, can be viewed at the Samuel Slater Experience on Ray St. in Webster.

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TUTTLE POST 279
Continued from page 1

A portrait of Chester P. Tuttle, for whom Post 279 is named, also survived.

In 1909 Mr. Tuttle, who was born in Needham, moved with his family from a farm in New Hampshire to Auburn and worked on what is now the Adamsky Vegetable Farm until enlisting in the Army in October of 1917. He was wounded in France a year later and died the following day. He was buried in France.

In 1921 his body was brought home and services were held at the First Con-

gregational Church, to which Mr. Tuttle belonged. He was interred in the Tuttle lot of Hillside Cemetery.

In July of 1922, a group of men, all veterans of "The Great War," whose vocations after their combat days varied from chauffeur to engineer, met at the Stoneville schoolhouse and voted to establish an American Legion post in town.

With this history behind them, Mr. MacLean and members of Post 279 are genuinely proud of what was built "from the ground up" over the past two-and-a-half years. The result is stun-

ning, consisting of the Tuttle lounge, a separate spacious banquet hall and "seating for forty on the deck," he said.

"This building is almost twice the size of what we had and the kitchen was set up to provide food for both the lounge and the banquet hall," Mr. MacLean said. "It can serve both sides."

A huge basement is available for storage, he said, in conducting what he calls "the nickel tour."

Funding for the rebuild came from insurance "and generous donations from the community." Nameplates on the back of stools at the bar in the lounge were sponsored by various individuals and are indicative of the sup-

port Post 279 has received.

Back in operation at full tilt, Post 279 is now the site of a range of daily activities and events in the lounge and banquet hall, including weddings and bridal showers, meetings, darts, trivia nights, bike nights, karaoke, "one of the largest meat raffles in Central Massachusetts" on Saturdays, lunch and dinner Wednesday-Saturday and an all-you-can-eat brunch on Sundays.

Catering is provided by Karol Lebrun and her husband Tom of Leicester. Construction was handled by John Riel of J.R. Associates in Sutton.

"We've had a very, very positive response from the public," Mr. MacLean said. "We had a tough nut to crack. We had to consider it a new business, with new hires."

As demolition of the remains of the old Post started, "we said to ourselves, 'we are going to be bigger and better' but then came the delays. Weather, the cost of materials. We had a lot to contend with."



The Tuttle Lounge at Post 279 seats one hundred and is available for lunch and dinner Wednesday through Saturday. The Post hosts an all-you-can-eat brunch on Sundays.



A Budweiser sign, a portrait of Chester P. Tuttle and other artifacts were salvaged and repositioned with the rebuilding of the Post.

Post 279's veterans remain active on many fronts. "We do the Memorial Day parade, we are involved with the Scouts, we sponsored Legion baseball for fourteen years, we place cemetery flags, we serve as a color guard for funerals. We just signed a contract for a golf tournament in September at Blackstone National."

Mr. MacLean smiles in relating that "I lost the slip for the paint color" for the walls

of the lounge. Going through samples at the paint store, he was shown one that "looked like pickles and I said 'I like pickles!'"

The resulting light green tint wasn't everyone's favorite to begin with.

But it grows on you, he said.

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J. Annese promoted to sergeant

“On Monday, February 7, The Dudley Board of Selectmen appointed Detective James Annese to the rank of sergeant in the Police Department. Detective Annese finished first out of five officers in a recent promotional process. Sergeant Annese has been with the department since Septem-

ber of 1995, starting as a reserve officer and dispatcher. He was promoted to full time in July of 2002 and attended the Western Massachusetts Police Academy in Agawam. In addition to serving as Detective in the department for over one-and-one-half years, Sergeant Annese has been an

outstanding officer and performs multiple duties in the department, including serving as one of the department’s evidence and crime scene technicians. Town Clerk Lori Smith administered the oath to Sergeant Annese on Tuesday, February 8th at the Dudley Municipal Complex and he has begun his duties with the department. The Dudley Police congratulates him on this achievement and wishes him well in the future.”



Sergeant Annese being administered the oath of office by Town Clerk Lori Smith.



Sergeant Annese at the selectmen’s meeting along with his wife Deirdre.

Independent bookstore and gift shop in Webster celebrates 27th anniversary

Booklovers’ Gourmet in Webster, MA celebrates 27 years in business this March. The independent bookstore, gift shop and coffeehouse moved to its current location at 72 East Main Street in April 2020 after being in the same location for 25 years. Plans are to hold special sales, raffles, giveaways and treats throughout

the day on Friday, March 4 and Saturday, March 5, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Other fun activities include writing on a “customer wall” and the opportunity to receive Psychic Messages with Nadine Nahabedian, formerly of The Cosmic Cat in Putnam, CT.

The shop is owned and operated by Debra Horan, a Webster native. Over the past year, as safety protocols have allowed, in-store events have been able to resume including author signings, local artist displays in the café, open mic poetry shares, book discussion groups and other small gatherings bringing the community together once again. Exciting online events were also a part of the mix, like being able to offer patrons the opportunity to take part in the virtual book release of Atlas of the Heart by Dr. Brene Brown and having conversations with winners of the Writers of the Future Volume 36 sci-fi anthology published by Galaxy Press. 2022 continues to be a year of expansion for Booklovers’ Gourmet. Despite the chal-

lenges of running a business in these stressful times, or perhaps as a result of them, the store is busier than ever and now has 2 part-time employees to keep up with the day-to-day activities. “I am grateful and fortunate to have hired the perfect individuals to keep the store in top shape and serve our customers in a helpful, friendly way,” said Ms. Horan. Recent endeavors include an enhanced online presence through a personalized storefront on Bookshop.org as well as Alibris.com for used, collectible books. E-books and digital audiobooks are available through the My Must Reads app as well.

The café area offers homemade pastries, espresso and other specialty drinks available for takeout or table service. Organic, fair-trade coffee beans, honey, chocolates, gluten-free granola and other snacks are also available. Alongside the new & used books, there is a wide selection of thoughtful, unique gifts and greeting cards for all occasions.

Children’s books are a specialty and the store works hard to be inclusive and diverse in their selections. As part of the American Booksellers Association mission states, “We believe that listening to many different perspectives and empowering underrepresented voices deepens our understanding and enriches everyone’s experience. We are committed to equity, dignity, and diversity for all Peoples.”

Future plans are to keep on developing and enhancing the vision of the store as a welcoming gathering place where people can connect in meaningful ways and enjoy cultural happenings in a local, community space.

Booklovers’ Gourmet is a member of The American Booksellers Association and The New England Booksellers Association. Debra is a founder and Board Director of The Webster Dudley Business Alliance. Current hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10-5, Wednesday 10-6. For more information, call 508-949-6232 or visit bookloversgourmet.com.



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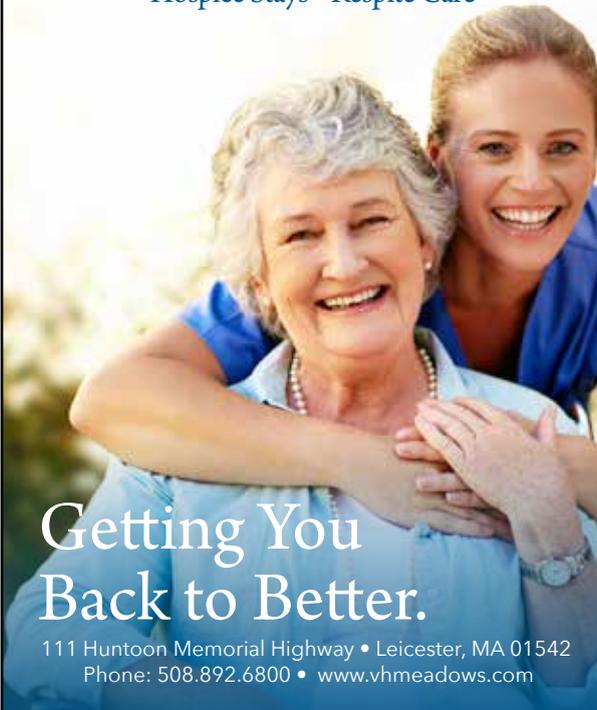
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Call for grant applications

Janet Malser Humanities trust deadline April 1

The Janet Malser Humanities Trust is now accepting applications for the 2022 grant cycle. Ms. Malser set up the charitable Trust in order to support the arts and humanities, community service and conservation in the towns of Dudley, Oxford, and Webster.

The causes for which funding will be considered include: “the restoration and preservation of historic sites; the furtherance of art and music in the schools, both public and private; public concerts with an emphasis on classical music; the improvement and growth of public libraries; the support of church work aiding the indigent, homeless, aging citizens and needy children; beautification through planting and

the preservation of park areas and cemeteries; the improvement of service and equipment at the Hubbard Regional Hospital [now Harrington Healthcare at Hubbard], and the environmental protection of Webster Lake.”

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

Applications and additional instructions including filing final reports are available at www.janetmalsertrust.org. All applications must be post-marked by April 1.

Nichols College board names new chair, vice chair

DUDLEY – At its January 27 meeting, the Nichols College Board of Trustees elected Randy Becker as the new chair and Carolyn Burke as the new vice chair of the 29-member board.

Becker, who earned a BSBA at Nichols in 1983 and an MBA in 1996, has been on the board since 2006, most recently serving as chair of the Finance

Committee. He succeeds John Davis, of Longmeadow, Mass., a 40-year member of the board who was chair for the past six years.

Becker is the retired executive vice president and chief financial officer of MAPFRE USA Corp., who continues to serve as director and board chair. A resident of Webster, he is a philanthropic and community leader who is currently chair of the Webster Board of Selectmen, director and chair of Harrington Hospital, and director and treasurer of The Health Foundation of Central MA, among several other roles.

“It’s an honor and a privilege to follow in John’s footsteps as chair,” said Becker. “I look forward to working with my fellow board mem-

bers and Nichols President Glenn Sulmasy in continuing Nichols’ success in transforming our students into tomorrow’s leaders.”

Burke earned an MBA at Nichols in 1992 and was elected to the Nichols board in 2015, currently chairing the Recruitment and Retention Committee. She succeeds Tom Hall, of Niantic, Conn., the board’s vice chair since 2011.

Both Hall and Davis will continue their service on the Nichols’ board.

Burke is the retired assistant vice president of talent acquisition at MAPFRE Insurance, where she had worked since 1987. Most recently, she has worked as an HR executive consultant. Burke currently serves



Randy Becker



Carolyn Burke

on the Human Resources Management Association of Central MA Board of Directors and chairs the College Relations Committee. She resides in Sutton, Mass.

“I am deeply honored to serve as vice chair and first female officer on the Nichols

College Board of Trustees,” said Burke. “These are exciting times for Nichols, and I look forward to positively impacting our future success. We are ‘on the move’ to becoming a regional and national business college of choice.”

Webster welcomes Richard LaFond as Town Administrator

The Town of Webster is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Richard LaFond as its new Town Administrator. At its Tuesday, February 1, meeting, the Webster Board of Selectmen unanimously approved an employment agreement with Mr. LaFond with an initial term through June 30, 2025. Mr. LaFond began work February 9, with a brief transition period with Interim Town Administrator Gregory Balukonis.

Mr. LaFond has a long and distinguished career in municipal governance, with more than two decades acting in a similar capacity for the towns of Carver and Abington.

“We are thrilled to welcome Rick to our community and look forward to his leadership and experience in working with our residents, businesses, town employees and the Board,” Webster Board of Selectmen Chairman, Randy Becker commented. “Based on Rick’s background, the Board is confident he will be an excellent fit for our town.”

Mr. LaFond commented that he felt he “would be a very good match and we’ll find that to be the case for a long time.” He also thanked the Board of Selectmen, the members of the Screening Committee and Search Consultant Kevin Paicos for their support and confidence.

The Board would also like to express its thanks and gratitude to Interim Town Administrator Balukonis who has done a truly admirable job for the Town of Webster for the past five months.

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 OR 1 PKG. SAUSAGE OF YOUR CHOICE
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 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
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 CHICKEN BREAST OF YOUR CHOICE
 1 LB. WHOLE CHICKEN (3 LBS. AVERAGE)
 OR 1 LB. SAUSAGE OF YOUR CHOICE

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'God is Love' contest won by All Saints Academy 8th grade student

The beautiful artwork by our 8th grade student, Maria Cintron-Perez, won the 'God is Love' contest sponsored by the C21 Center at Boston College and the Roche Center for Catholic Education. Out of hundreds of submissions, Maria's artwork stood out to the judges and is being made into Valentine's Day cards and sent to COVID-19 health-care workers. Pictured with Maria is Mrs. Beth Crowley, ASA art teacher.

Bay Path nursing students host lunar new year celebration

CHARLTON - Recently, the members of the Practical Nursing Class of 2022 at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy in conjunction with the mother-daughter team of Lizzette Hernandez and Marylee Panient both of Southbridge hosted a Lunar New Year celebration and quasi-lit the cafeteria at the Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School with colorful paper lanterns to kick off the year of the tiger. February happens to be Hernandez's birthday month and she graciously took leadership of the evening's diversity celebration. Professor Sarah Watson, MSN Ed, RN of Worcester and Academy Director Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN



Marylee Panient and Lizzette Hernandez both of Southbridge.

Ed, RN, CRRN of Douglas attended. "It is wonderful for PN Class of 2022 to celebrate each other, unite, find strength within our communities, and together make Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy an even more vibrant place to learn," Bolandrina said.

Bolandrina awarded members of the Mock Code Team (MCT) their MCT patches presented in colorful Chinese take-out boxes. The MCT members are Felisters Mburu of Shrewsbury, Jane Miru of Worcester, Rebecca Lorre of Oxford, Sarah Garcia of Charlton, Luciane Lindvay of Spencer, Martha Aboagye of Worcester, Marylee Panient of Southbridge, and Marites Sklarz of Southbridge. Bolandrina also recognized the three students recommended for induction to the National

Technical Honor Society (NTHS) namely, Sarah Garcia of Charlton, Eunice Kamau of Worcester, and Marvellous Undag of Worcester. The NTHS inductees received NTHS mementos in a red envelope, known as hongbao or ang pao. Traditionally given as gifts during holidays or for special occasions, the red color of the envelope symbolizes good luck and is a symbol to ward off evil spirits. Red envelopes are also gifted when a person is visiting, as a gesture of kindness for visiting. The PN Class of 2022 feasted on traditional Chinese dishes (take-out, individually packaged from two local Chinese restaurants), fortune cookies, and special Chinese dessert of walnut, date and black sesame slice (shared by Gladiola DeKing of Milford).

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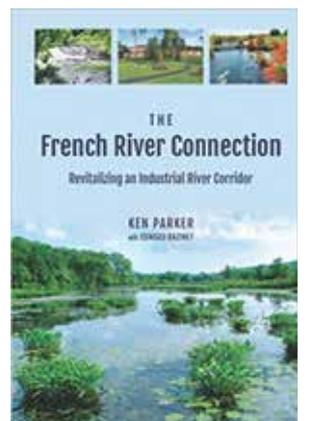
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The French River book

If you have ever wondered about the river that winds through our communities, there is now a book that recounts efforts to revitalize that natural source of power and beauty.

The French River Connection, Inc. has recently published a book detailing the origin and accomplishments of the local organization to revitalize the French River. The book can be read online at www.frenchriverconnection.org. It is also available at the Dudley, Webster and Oxford libraries, and can



be ordered at Amazon. The author of the book is Ken Parker, with Edward Bazinet.

Auburn Historical Society's Spaghetti Dinner

The Auburn Historical Society is holding its Annual Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser on Saturday, April 9, at the Pakachoag Church, 203 Pakachoag St. in Auburn. It will be a take-out meal only with pick-up times from 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. There will also be 50:50 and basket drawings.

Advance tickets for the supper are required and may be purchased for \$15 each at the Auburn Historical Society Museum at 41 South Street on Tuesdays

or Saturdays between 9:30 - 12:30 or by calling the museum at 508-832-6856.

Donations of baskets or gift cards for the drawings are welcome. Baskets will be displayed, and drawing tickets can be purchased, at the museum the morning of Saturday April 9th. They will also be available at the Pakachoag Church during meal pick-up times. Please let the Auburn Historical Society know if you are interested in donating to the drawings.

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Nichols College reopens student bar after more than a 20-year hiatus

DUDLEY – Nichols College has launched the Bison Den, a new campus and student establishment, in the newly renovated clubhouse of Dudley Hill Golf Club on Airport Road. The opening marks the first time in more than 20 years that Nichols students have had a campus bar.

“This is a historic occasion for the campus community, and especially for our students who have long sought a safe and convenient place where they can relax and socialize on the weekends,” said Nichols College President Glenn M. Sulmasy, JD, LL.M. “On our march toward greater prominence, the opening of the Bison Den is one initiative of many to provide our students with an exceptional and memorable student life experience.”

The Bison Den, named for the college’s mascot, is a throwback to its same-named predecessor, a student-run bar located beneath the auditorium that was in operation from 1969 to the 1980s and intermittently until the early 2000s. After multiple attempts over the past two decades to revive the facility to meet student desire and interest, and after the space was converted for office use, President Sulmasy eyed the Dudley Hill clubhouse as a suitable spot.

The college bought Dudley Hill in 2018 after it was previ-

ously leased to the college from 1949 to 1999 and continued to serve as home to the Nichols golf team. Today, the course and clubhouse are managed by Tri State Golf Company.

Over the past four months, the clubhouse has been transformed with new walls, flooring, furniture, and bar, and adorned with Nichols memorabilia. Overseeing the project was the college’s First Lady Marla Sulmasy, with help from the Office of the President and representatives from Student Affairs. Two Nichols College courses in hospitality management and entrepreneurship are actively involved this semester and held classes there in January.

For its ribbon-cutting and soft opening on February 8, the college invited the 30-member Senior Advisory Council to take the first look.

“It’s exciting! I’m glad to be a part of it,” says senior Maria Mironidis. “I can see hav-

ing pub nights here and as a place where students can go to have lunch, dinner, or just hang out.”

Brian Edmands remembers what the space looked like before the remodel. “This is a big change,” he says. “It looks amazing, a place where students will actually want to come.”

Dylan Mitchell agrees. “It is a completely different space. It feels like a nice college bar, put together with effort,” he says, adding, “I don’t know of any other college that would sponsor its own bar and make it look this nice!”

The Bison Den is currently available for private college events, with the potential for activities such as trivia nights, karaoke, and live music. In the near future, the college plans to open the facility to the general public as well as provide experiential learning opportunities for students in business operations and sport management.



Nichols College President Glenn M. Sulmasy, joined by First Lady Marla Sulmasy and college officials, cuts the ribbon to the new student bar at the Dudley Hill Golf Club.

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Dudley Womans Club February Stew & Story

Recently the Dudley Womans Club held its annual Stew & Story of Giving at the Dudley Municipal Complex. Non-profits that presented their "story" were Blessing Farm in Charlton and Worcester based Why Me. Donations from the DWC were presented to them and also to W.A.R.M., Center of Hope, Webster/Dudley Food Share and It Starts at Home. The February 'giving project' was socks for donation to the W/D Food Share.



Speaker Tracy Scott, Andrea Kane(DWC President) and Donna Bracken from Blessing Farm.



David Hagen from Why Me and Andrea Kane.



DWC sock drive was held over two months. Pictured are just a few of the socks collected.



Hannah Harwood Fund scholarship applications available

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

Oxford residents may come to Board of Selectmen Office, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Fridays 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. to receive application materials. The Town Hall is located at 325 Main Street. Application materials will also be available on the Town's website at <https://www.oxfordma.us/board-selectmen>. Completed applications are due to the Selectmen's Office April 1, by 12:30 p.m.

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

Moon Walk on Walnut Lane Farm

DUDLEY: Local 4 Life presents a Moon Walk on Walnut Lane Farm, 39 Koebe Road in Dudley, on Friday, March 18, at 7:00 p.m. Rain/snow

date is Saturday, March 19. Local 4 Life invites the general public to visit the farm and experience the March full moon and learn about the night sky from local astronomers. The walk will take place, in part, on hilly terrain. Farm appropriate footwear and flashlights are recommended. All ages welcome.

This event is sponsored by Webster Aubuchon Hardware.

The mission of Local 4 Life, a non-profit educational organization, is to cultivate connections through local farm and business partnerships. L4L provides diverse community outreach and youth education that promotes local conservation.

For more information, visit www.local4life.org or their Facebook page, www.facebook.com/Local4LifeMA.

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Headlights in your eyes

By Chief Steven J. Wojnar
Dudley Police Department

I recently received a question regarding headlights on vehicles. The person observed the headlights on some vehicles, approaching from the opposite direction, appearing very bright and almost bluish in color. I was asked if I could provide some information on this and to remind people of the rules surrounding the proper use of high beam headlights.

There are different style headlights on the market today. They are called High Intensity Discharge or HID headlights. They are installed in many newer vehicles. They are brighter than typical halogen headlamps, which are currently used on most vehicles. In addition to the increased brightness, they claim to use less energy and last up to three times longer than halogen bulbs. They utilize a combination of mercury and sodium vapor as their base material. The resulting reaction of these items make the lights appear blue. They are very bright in the high beam mode.

The dimming of headlights is contained in the Massachusetts Registry Rules and Regulations under 540 CMR 22.05. This section provides several guidelines for the use of headlights on motor vehicles. It authorizes operators to use additional light or "high beams" when there is insufficient lighting on the roadway to "make clearly visible all substantial objects within 350 feet." It calls for operators to "regulate" (or dim) headlights when a vehicle approaching from the opposite direction is within 500 feet. The regular, or "low beam" lights, must be positioned no greater than 42 inches off the ground at a distance of 75 feet. This is one of the features to be checked during the annual safety inspection of your vehicle. A violation of this section calls for a civil fine.

Vehicle headlights that are too bright are very distracting for drivers. This is especially true during rain or inclement weather. High beam lights can be blinding to oncoming traffic or while shining in rear facing mirrors. If you have changed halogen lights to the HID lights on your vehicle, please insure they are installed properly. If they are positioned too high, they can shine additional light into the oncoming traffic, even in regular use mode. They should be checked by a licensed professional to insure they are positioned in the proper location. In addition, always pay close attention to your high beam headlights. Night driving can be difficult enough without added distractions. This is especially true during the winter months. It takes sev-

eral seconds for a person's eyes to refocus after the passing of high beam lights. A few simple safety steps by drivers can be a key factor in preventing accidents.

Main and Schofield

The intersection of West Main Street and Schofield Avenue is extremely busy. The traffic signals were re-cycled several years ago, which assisted with improving safety for drivers. One problem occurs at this location, as well as many other intersections, when drivers are preparing to turn. Some vehicles will enter this intersection while the light is green, remain there until the light changes to red, then make the turn. I was asked to bring this issue to everyone's attention and provide information on this violation.

The rules for stopping at stop signs, flashing red signals, or intersections with traffic lights are contained under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 89 Section 9, 720 CMR 9.06, or other local traffic regulations. These all provide basic guidelines for drivers to observe when approaching intersections. Chapter 89 Section 9 states drivers must "(1) stop at a clearly marked stop line, but if none, (2) before entering the crosswalk on the near side of the intersection, or, if none, (3) then at the point nearest the intersecting roadway where the driver has a view of approaching traffic on the intersecting roadway before entering it." It is the obligation of the driver to bring their vehicle to a full and complete stop in the appropriate location. Vehicles entering an intersection with a green signal must be able to completely pass through the intersection, prior to the light changing to red. If traffic is backed up, or passing in the opposite direction, limiting movement or turns, drivers have the obligation to delay

entering the intersection. If the vehicle cannot pass completely through before the light cycles, that driver would be committing a violation. The main reason is traffic from other streets, with the green light, have the right of way to pass through the intersection and the remaining vehicle would prevent them from doing so. A penalty for a violation is most often a civil infraction.

If you find yourself in one of these situations, the best thing to do is to wait behind the stop line until the intersection is open sufficiently for you to drive through. It may take some time for this to occur, so it is important to be patient. By waiting a few extra seconds, you will either have sufficient time to make it through the intersection completely or you will allow traffic to flow freely in the opposite direction when the light changes. The appropriate signal for you will be along in a reasonable time. Hopefully your patience can prevent an accident or a possible "road rage" situation.

COVID-19 cases in our area are declining but remain a concern. For those still seeking vaccination information, it can be found at www.dudley-ma.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. 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.

Get Well George Bibeau



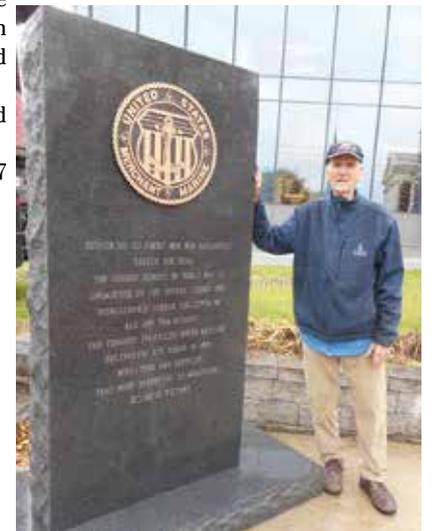
Webster and Dudley's #1 veteran George Bibeau is recovering following a bout with COVID-19. George had been recuperating in Pennsylvania being cared for by his son Neal and family and now he's back home in Dudley.

George is a devoted veteran who has spent years helping and promoting veterans in the area. For years he never missed participating in Memorial Day, Veterans Day and honoring departed vets at funeral services. He has served in many capacities in the local veteran organizations always offering services and support to local veterans.

Many of the monuments in the town squares and at Memorial Beach honoring veterans of different branches of the service and different wars have been completed through the hard work and determination of George Bibeau.

Your fellow veterans, family and friends wish you a speedy recovery.

You can send a card to George at 27 Fairview Ave., Dudley, MA 01571



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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 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 Com-

munity 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

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.

Iditarod dogs with Karen Land, Thursday, March 10, 6-7:30 p.m. This program is perfect for "kids" of all ages - from pre-K to retired adults. Karen Land will bring her actual Iditarod dog sled, gear, and arctic clothing for this presentation about the famous sled dog race - and Noggin, her Alaskan husky,

and Chloe, her corgi-spring mix, are the stars of the show. Free. Sponsored by the Hugh W and Harriet K Crawford Endowment.

Baby time, Friday, March 11, 11:30 .m.-noon.

Teen craft: bracelet making, Monday, March 14, 5-6 p.m. Teens are invited to bring their creativity and drop in to make a bracelet using a variety of materials at this free program.

Deb's sing and swing, Thursday, March 17, 10:30-11 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.

Spring fling paint night, Thursday, March 24, 6-7:45 p.m. Artist Jean Walker will lead this beginner-level paint class to celebrate the start of Spring. All materials are provided and no experience is necessary. Free; registration required. This class is intended for ages 12 and up. Sponsored by the Hugh W and Harriet K Crawford Endowment.

Cozy book night, Monday, March 28, 6-7 p.m. Kids up to age 10 are invited to join us for an evening of crafts, stories, and hot cocoa. Pajamas are encouraged and bring your favorite stuffed animal to this free program.

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

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.

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 free-play 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 chal-

lenges, 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.

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.

Children's Book Sale - April 19 - 21

The Friends are celebrating April vacation week by hosting a Children's Book Sale! Join us in the lobby from Tuesday, April 19 through Thursday April 21 to purchase your favorite stories.



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Living ON with Lincoln

Patience and OPGs



By Amy LeClaire

It's getting real. My puppy, the first of a projected two, is on its way this year. Well, almost. We are number eleven on a list we were fortunate enough to be placed on last June, thanks to Lincoln. Just as he had squared his head to the Dunkin' Donuts servers at the drive-through window, he made his presence known, again, while my husband relayed our Golden history to Cloverdale's owner. We came to find out that Lincoln's genes are actually entwined with those of her dogs. He was a Twin Beau D pup, son of Tickle and Sox, grandson of the remarkable Sir, a champion in his day. Twin Beau D and Cloverdale dogs had collaborated in the past to breed the healthy, widely admired and sought out show dogs we're about to join hands with. You're doing the right thing, Mom. This is my family. These puppies are my cousins. Of course, there's only one Lincoln, but you can do this again. You have my blessing. Just please don't give him the light blue ball.

We sent our deposit in last June and, since then, have practiced the fine art of patience while living vicariously through OPGs, that is, Other People's Golden. "Hello sweet girl!" I visited my neighbor's sweet Golden, Ellie, and made friends with the magnificent Henry of Cloverdale (a distant cousin of Lincoln's) who came over to visit. I even became tempted (last summer) by OPL, Other People's Litters.

"Let's do it!" I took a ride

with a neighbor who had recently lost her girl to check out a Golden litter just born. The experience confirmed for me the importance of researching breeders and avoiding the temptation to purchase in haste. "We can get our pups together! A friend of a friend at work says there are a few available! We're so lucky!" There was something suspiciously quick and easy about the sudden litter upon me. "I'll pick you up at noon!" But the thought of puppy playdates and puppy smells and all things puppy led us through winding, desolate back roads and, finally, to an overcrowded dog home, the stench and squalor of which has yet to leave my mind.

Don't get me wrong. An immaculate home does not necessarily translate to a happy home, for dogs or humans. Dogs are messy and hairy. So aren't people. I've seen enough college dormitory rooms (and bathrooms) to deem the lifestyle of a college student to be a public health hazard. But I'll say this. Feces does not belong on a frying pan. I have a soft spot for dogs (after all, my first column written here happens to be Why I Like Dogs More than Humans) and share the Dog Person belief that dogs love us unconditionally and deserve the same back. Amid a life that is heartbreakingly short, our pets are not stuffed animals to squeeze when we need a hug, or leave when we need to be elsewhere. They deserve attention, training, resources, and the healthiest of nutritional practices. They don't deserve to be twenty-five pounds overweight (the stud of the litter we had inspected, the Puff Daddy, was unhealthily puffy) or confined to a lifestyle designed for human needs alone. They don't deserve to be anxious and rambunctious due to

improper training and attention. They deserve our best.

My neighbor and I left enlightened. The backyard breeder came with too many questions, stench, and a family tree more gangly than a skeleton. Who was the Daddy again?

Awakened by a better attitude - to be patient - I chose to live vicariously through Golden on the loose (breweries are notably full of them) which are easy enough to hang with. I held the paw of Draper, a reddish Golden from Pennsylvania, swapped Golden stories with the owner of Mable, a feisty girl from New York, and learned about Lucky, a rescue from Connecticut who found his forever home. Golden are socialites. They'll lift their chins and smile while we talk about them, as though to say, "Aren't we the best?" They listen to you. "Lincoln sounded like so much fun. I like balls too. But I'm more of a Frisbee guy."

OPGs have kept me a believer.

My husband, a technologist, copes with our dogless household by watching (and sending me) reels upon reels of video clips featuring Golden with a larger Instagram following than the president. "Look at this one!" A Golden Daddy hovers at the edge of a pool while a puppy, possibly his own, paddles and learns to swim for the first time. Another happy Golden trots across a lawn with the swaddle-hammock of a new puppy clutched in his mouth. One walks along a treadmill above a tank of water. Then came my favorite, that of two adult Golden making friends with a baby fawn in the woods. Instagram Golden are remarkable, I think to myself, but my puppy will be better. My puppy will be almost as good as Lincoln, and that's still saying a lot.

We live in an era allowing a moment in time to be caught, saved and stored. Given the appeal of the breed, taking advantage of the ability to create a snapshot to be re-

lived over and over again is not surprising. Golden joy is contagious! Ironically, while Golden popularity grows, so do waiting lists. Patience remains the operative word. All good things take time, and all puppies deserve our best. All puppies deserve to live as Lincoln did. "I second that," he tells me from the sky. I

smile and whisper back to him, "He'll never be you, but he'll have an extraordinary life. And he'll be loved. Oh, how he'll be loved, Lincoln."

Stay tuned for more on Living On with Lincoln and updates on puppy news!

Write to me at amyleclaire@hotmail.com



A visit from Henry.



Hanging with Ellie.



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Tales from beyond

Old York's "witches"

By Thomas D'Agostino

New England and witches go hand in hand. Some were arrested for their "powers" while others were revered. Many of these so-called minions of the devil were feared or respected well into the 19th century, and in some cases, the 20th century. In York and Wells, Maine, there are two famous yet true stories of witches.

Witch Trot Road would be

a weird name for a thoroughfare in anywhere but New England. Reverend George Burroughs of Wells, who was accused of witchcraft during the height of the Salem Witch Trials. Burroughs pleaded his innocence and agreed to prove it in front of the Magistrate in Danvers. The Reverend suggested a shortcut that would bring them to Danvers much quick-

er. The men later believed that the witch enchanted them, then brought them to a dark forest bedeviled with evil throes of nature. When they came to a strange, high ridge, the sky grew dark and thunderclouds rumbled ominously above them.

The three lawmen became frightened out of their wits for they believed the man had summoned the powers

of the devil against them. Lightning struck on all sides and the horses flew in fear, yet the shadow of Burroughs in the flashing light remained calm and steady in his journey. The party hurried through the hilly terrain as the storm grew worse. Their doom loomed in the hands of the accused witch as they hurried along what would later be called



The grave of Mary Nasson, the White Witch.

Witch Trot Road. Soon the storm subsided and Reverend Burroughs remained undaunted in his trek to Salem. Burroughs, who was arrested on April 30, 1692, was executed for witchcraft on August 19th of that same year.

The next account may be more familiar with readers of witchery and ghosts in New England.

Indian Ranch offers music lovers a chance to see some of the greatest country, classic rock and pop bands steps from Lake Chagogagoggmanchuggagoggchaubunagungamaugg. Nestled between pine trees, the amphitheater offers the ability to see the stage from anywhere in the audience. More than a concert venue, Indian Ranch opened Samuel Slater's Restaurant and is also home to the Indian Princess paddlewheeler and Indian Ranch Campground. Already on sale are concerts with Trace Adkins on June 5, The Mavericks on June 19, Get The Led Out on July 8, Scotty McCreery on July 9, and ABBA The Concert on August 12. More shows will be announced soon.

Gates for The Outlaws will open at 11:30 a.m. and showtime is 1:00 p.m. Tickets are available online at www.indianranch.com, by calling 1-800-514-ETIX (3849) or at the Indian Ranch Box Office. All events are rain or shine. No refunds. Indian Ranch is located at 200 Gore Road in Webster. For more information, visit www.indianranch.com.

She was also a skilled exorcist who rid many houses of demons and infliction in her time. Her time was rather short though as Mary died on August 18, 1774 at the age of twenty-nine, less than a year after having their youngest child. It is quite obvious she loved children as her ghost not only roams the burial ground, but the playground across the street as well. Many mothers have sworn seeing their children being pushed on the swings in the playground near the cemetery by an unseen force. When asked, the children say it is a nice young lady named Mary who is playing

with them. Any local will tell you there is nothing to fear in the spirit of Mary Nasson.

Not only does her portrait adorn the top of her grave-stone, there is a great granite slab between the headstone and foot stone. Legend has it that the townsfolk put it there after she died to keep the "White Witch" from rising out of her grave. There is speculation that all of the graves in the burial ground were covered with a large granite slab due to the fact that wandering livestock tended to dig up the interred. Some time later, a wall was erected to keep the animals out and the great slabs were taken from the graves and used to line the top of the wall. Hers was the only one left with a stone in far corner of the small graveyard. After her death, her husband moved to Sanford, Maine. Each family was in charge of the upkeep of their graves, but being so far away, he would not have been able to care for Mary's grave, so the townsfolk left the stone there to keep the livestock from uprooting her remains. It is presently the only grave in New England of such nature.

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.

The Outlaws to perform at Indian Ranch June 11

WEBSTER - The Outlaws will return to Indian Ranch in Webster, as part of the Mike's Hard Lemonade Summer Concert Series on Saturday, June 11. Tickets are on sale at www.indianranch.com.

Formed in Tampa in 1972, The Outlaws - known for their triple-guitar rock attack and three-part country harmonies - became one of the first acts signed by Clive Davis (at the urging of Ronnie Van Zant) to his then-fledgling Arista Records. The band's first three albums The Outlaws, Lady In Waiting and Hurry Sundown - featuring such rock radio favorites as 'There Goes Another Love Song', 'Green Grass & High Tides', 'Knoxville Girl' and 'Freeborn Man' - would become worldwide gold and platinum landmarks of the Southern Rock era. Known as 'The Florida Guitar Army' by their fans, The Outlaws earned a formidable reputation as an incendiary live act touring with friends The Allman Brothers, Lynyrd Skynyrd, The Marshall Tucker Band and The Charlie Daniels Band as well as The Doobie Brothers, The Who, Eagles and The Rolling Stones. Henry Paul left after the group's third album to form The Henry Paul Band for Atlantic Records, and later co-founded the multi-Platinum country trio Blackhawk. Over the next 20+ years, The Outlaws would experience rampant personnel changes, tonal missteps, ill-fated reunions and bitter trademark battles



The Outlaws.

that left fans - not to mention Paul and Yoho - frustrated and saddened. And with the tragic deaths of co-founding members Frank O'Keefe and Billy Jones in 1995, and especially songwriter/vocalist/lead guitarist Hughie Thomason in 2007, it was feared that The Outlaws' trail had come to an end.

Along with founding members Paul and Yoho, the band features several of Southern Rock's most respected veterans: Keyboardist/vocalist Dave Robbins is a co-founding member of Blackhawk and has written hit songs for artists that include Restless Heart, Kenny Rogers and Eric Clapton. Longtime Outlaws' bassist/vocalist Randy Threet has performed with Trisha Yearwood, Pam Tillis and Blackhawk, and is familiar to TV audiences from USA Network's 'Nashville Star'. Lead guitarist Steve 'Grits' Grisham was a member of the Soldiers Of Fortune era Outlaws, as well as a noted songwriter whose tracks include The

Henry Paul Band's Top 40 hit, 'Keepin' Our Love Alive'. Co-lead guitarist Dale Oliver is one of Nashville's most versatile producers/songwriters/musicians and was formerly Blackhawk's lead guitarist and bandleader for more than 10 years, co-writing their hit 'Almost A Memory Now'.

"Our goal is to unite the fans and bring the band back into the light. In a way, this is like a second chance at my first love. It's about finishing what we started." For Henry, Monte, Dave, Randy, Steve and Dale, it's also about a band of brothers who love playing their own brand of rock, and who 40+ years ago first got the chance to share it with the world.

For The Outlaws, it's still about the music. And now more than ever, it's about pride.

Insiders Club memberships and GA Season Passes for the 2022 Summer Concert Series are on sale now. The Indian Ranch Insiders Club gives members exclusive access

to buy tickets before they go on sale to the general public. GA Season Passes include a general admission ticket to every show in the Indian Ranch Summer Concert Series. Both programs come with an array of other benefits and are available at www.indianranch.com/memberships.



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Q. I purchased a 2019 Toyota RAV 4 in October of 2020 with 10,400 miles on it. I like the car, no problem there. It came with a factory installed remote start that I used a few times last winter. When I went to use it this winter, it would not work. Come to find out I was on some kind of "service contract" good for six months. I was not aware of this, nor was I informed of this at the time of purchase. I found out by a couple of trips to the dealer speaking to the manager. After calling Toyota's service line I found that in order to use the remote start I had to pay \$8 a month or \$80 dollars a year. I almost fell off my chair. I never heard of such a thing. It's like having to pay to use my brakes. I was also told that other companies are doing the same thing. I have not heard of another auto maker yet who charges for these. Have you ever heard of such nonsense?

A. Toyota received a lot of backlash over this decision. The remote start feature is tied into the phone app which is subscription based. It is my understanding that the key fob should still activate the remote start, even without renewing the app. While Toyota is trying to make up its mind on this issue try this trick. Using the key-fob, press the lock button quickly twice and then once again for a longer time-so lock, lock and then lock. Regarding more technology nonsense, I read recently BMW was charging to Apple CarPlay and again after pushback from their customers, eliminated the \$80 annual fee. Readers have you experienced a surprise with subscription-based systems? Let me know what you think.

Q. I own a 2008 Subaru Impreza 2.5 hatchback with approximately 37,000 miles on it. Although it runs fine, and I stay on top of all maintenance I reviewed the Subaru recommendation for replacement of the timing belt on the interference engine which states to replace original belt at 105 months or 105,000 miles. My car is now 168 months old, and I had the belt checked recently by my mechanic and he says it looks good with little indication of wear. To be safe given the engine and owner's manual recommendation I plan to replace the timing belt, drive belts, water pump with all new components. I trust my independent mechanic to do the work with specified components. Would you agree with this approach?

A. If I recently purchased your low mileage 14-year-old Subaru, the first thing that I would do is exactly what you are planning. Although the belts may last longer to reduce my anxiety about possible timing belt failure and catastrophic engine failure this is money well spent.

Q. I have a 2018 Subaru Forester I recently purchased for my daughter's use. I understand the CVT transmission fluid is changed at 100,000 mile per Subaru North America. When looking online the recommendation is quite different in Japan and Canada where the recommendation is to drain and refill the fluid at three years or 36,000 miles. Do you have an opinion on this matter?

A. If this were my car, I would follow the recommendations in the owner's manual that came with the car. Certainly, replacing the fluid every three years can't hurt, but doesn't seem necessary.

Q. I have a 2005 Chevy Cobalt. My key fob needs to be replaced, I've been using my key to unlock my door. There are times when my key won't turn. Is WD-40 ok to use to lubricate the lock? Where do you recommend going to get a new key fob?

A. As good as WD-40 is I prefer to use a dedicated "dry" lock lubricant. I have found that WD-40 tends to wash

away some of the factory lubricant and also can attract dirt and over time cause more sticking. The dealer or a full-service locksmith can replace your car-fob. You can buy an aftermarket key-fob for your car for as little as \$25 online but it will require professional programming.



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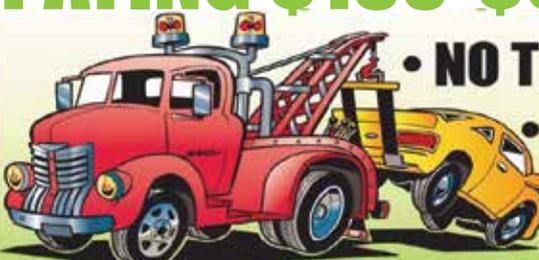
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Tips on financial planning



Dennis Antonopoulos

If your employer offers a 401(k) plan, consider yourself fortunate, because a 401(k) is a great way to help build retirement savings. But are you taking full advantage of your plan?

To help ensure you are indeed maximizing the benefits of your 401(k), consider the following suggestions:

- Earn your employer's match. It's a good idea to con-

Are you getting the most from your 401(k)?

tribute as much as you can afford to your 401(k) plan. (In 2021, you can put in up to \$19,500, or \$26,000 if you're 50 or older.) At least put in enough to earn your employer's matching contribution if one is offered. If you don't contribute enough to earn the full match, you're shortchanging yourself. For example, if your employer matches 50% of what you contribute, perhaps up to \$5,000, and you put in \$8,000, your employer's 50% match will just be \$4,000. You're actually leaving \$1,000 "on the table."

- Evaluate the Roth option. When you invest in a traditional 401(k), you put in pre-tax dollars, lowering your taxable income in the year you con-

tribute. Your 401(k) earnings then accumulate tax-deferred and are taxed when you take withdrawals from your plan. But if your employer offers a Roth 401(k), you can put in after-tax dollars, so your taxable income won't drop in the year you contribute. However, when you start taking money out, presumably when you're retired, your withdrawals - earnings and contributions - will generally be tax-free. (Your employer's matching contributions, and any resulting earnings, will be taxable.) If you think you'll be in a higher tax bracket when you retire, or you want to diversify the tax treatment of your accounts to provide greater flexibility in retirement, you might want

to consider the Roth option. Consult with your tax advisor before making this decision.

- Build an appropriate investment mix. You may have a dozen or more investment options within your 401(k) plan. Of course, the driving investment principle in the early years of saving in your 401(k) is growth - you are counting on your plan to help fund a long retirement. But growth-oriented investments are, by nature, higher in risk than fixed-income vehicles. When you're first starting out in your career, you may be more comfortable building a 401(k) portfolio that's more heavily weighted toward aggressive growth vehicles, as you have many years to recover from

short-term downturns. But as you approach retirement, you might consider moving your 401(k) toward a more conservative mix. You may want to work with a financial advisor to arrive at an appropriate investment mix, at various times in your life, for your given risk tolerance, time horizon and retirement goals.

- Keep your plan intact. At times, you may feel a financial pinch that leads you to consider taking out loans or early withdrawals from your 401(k). If at all possible, avoid such moves - not only can they incur taxes and penalties, but they also will likely slow the growth you need to help reach your retirement savings goals. Taking steps to prepare

for unexpected expenses, such as building an emergency fund containing three to six months' worth of living expenses, can help you avoid dipping into your 401(k). You may also be able to find other ways to access cash.

Following these moves can help you strengthen your 401(k) - and position it to be a key contributor to your retirement income.

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

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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**

RE: Real Estate



Mark Marzeotti

When you're selling any item, you usually want to sell it for the greatest profit possible, right? That happens when there's a strong demand and a limited supply for that item. In the real estate market, that time is right now. If you're thinking of selling your house this year, here are two reasons

Want top dollar for your house? Now's the time to list it

why now's the time to list.

1. Demand is very strong this winter. Spring, the hottest time of year for homebuyers and sellers, has started early, according to REALTORS and economists. . . . Home shopping season appears to already be in full swing!

REALTORS in the field aren't the only ones saying buyers are already out in full force. That claim is backed up with data released last week by ShowingTime. (ShowingTime is a platform real estate agents use to schedule appointments.)

The Showing

Time Showing Index tracks the average number of monthly buyer showings on active residential properties, which is a highly reliable leading indicator of current and future trends for buyer demand. The latest index reveals this December was the most active December in five years.

As the data indicates, buyers are very active this winter. Last December, 2021 saw even more showings than December of 2020, which was already a stronger-than-usual winter. And remember

- you want to sell something when there's a strong demand for that item. That time is now.

2. Housing supply is extremely low. Each month, realtor.com releases data on the number of active residential real estate listings (listings currently for sale). Their most recent report reveals the latest monthly number is the lowest we've seen in any January since 2017. And don't forget, the best time to sell an item is when there's a limited supply of it available.

Even though supply is at

a historic low, home sales are at a 15-year high. According to the latest Existing Home Sales Report from the National Association of Realtors (NAR), existing-home sales totaled 6.12 million in 2021 - the highest annual level since 2006. This means the market is hot and homeowners are in a great place to sell now while sales are so strong.

The ratio of buyers to sellers favors homeowners right now to a greater degree than at any other time in history. Buyer demand is high, and supply is low. That gives sell-

ers like you an incredible opportunity.

Bottom line If you agree the best time to sell anything is when demand is high and supply is low, contact Marzeotti Group or a local real estate professional to discuss listing your house today.

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TLGV 2022 cleanup and greenup funds

It's almost time to cleanup and green up The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor. The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) has committed cleanup and green up funds for 2022 to help organizations and municipalities organize events.

The program is funded, in part, thanks to the support of bankHometown. bankHometown has been a supporter of TLGV since 2008 and has sponsored the cleanup program since 2019.

In the last 10 years, 11,498 volunteers have collected 504,003 pounds of trash from parks, rivers and roadways throughout The Last Green

Valley National Heritage Corridor thanks to the program. TLGV is expanding the program this year to include efforts to plant pollinator gardens or eradicate invasive species harming the region's

Parking lot craft fair

The Auburn Historical Society & Museum will be hosting the First Annual Parking Lot Craft Fair on Saturday, August 27, at 41 South St., Auburn. It will be held 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., rain or shine. Vendors can reserve a 10 x 15-foot space for \$15. Vendors will be responsible for bringing their own table(s).

ecosystem. Organizations and municipalities working in The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor can request up to \$500 in funding. Those with projects outside the corridor, but still

Food selling will be restricted. For more information or to reserve a space, contact Helen at the Auburn Historical Society & Museum at 508-832-6856, by email at auburnmuseum@verizon.net, or come to the museum on Tuesday or Saturday 9:30-12:30. Put your reservations in early.

in the Thames River watershed, can request up to \$250 in funding.

Funding recipients will be reimbursed for expenses such as publicity, cleanup supplies such as trash bags, work gloves, small gardening tools, native seeds and plantings, and food for your volunteers. TLGV will also help publicize the event and recruit more volunteers. Application details can be found at TheLastGreenValley.org under "Grant Opportunities" in the "Learn & Protect" menu.

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

Harrington Auxiliary's Irish Night Feast



The Harrington Auxiliary, in conjunction with the Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale, invites the general public to partake of a traditional Irish Night feast on Wednesday, March 16. In accordance with COVID safety guidelines, individuals are asked to drive through the Public House main parking lot to pick up the meals. The pre-cooked dinner for one is available for \$16 and includes corned beef, boiled potatoes, carrots, turnips, cabbage, a dinner roll, Irish soda bread, a cupcake, and mustard and vinegar packets. No substitutions allowed. Simply reheate meal at home.

Tickets must be pre-ordered by Thursday, March

10. Two pick-up times are available: 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. or 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Please specify your desired pick-up time when purchasing tickets.

Tickets may be purchased and picked up at the Harrington Hospital Gift Shop on Mondays between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. or Wednesdays between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.

The Harrington Auxiliary established in 1932 is

a non-profit organization of dedicated and impassioned volunteers whose mission is to support and enhance the excellent services provided by UMass Memorial Health Harrington. Proceeds from the event enable the Auxiliary to continue to provide equipment and programs that benefit the health and well-being of the members in the communities it serves.

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