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October 7 - November 4, 2022



Plumbing at Bay Path. Instructor, James Primes. Students, Jack Papagni of Rutland and Seamus O'Rourke of Paxton.

Trade education on the rise at Bay Path Vocational Technical HS

BY JANET STOICA

Most of us have seen the shift in high school education. Freshman high school students are opting to choose a trade that will put them on the path to a well-paid and satisfying job right after high school graduation. Trying to find a good plumber, mason, electrician, carpenter.....someone who is educated enough to do a great job, is like looking for a needle in that proverbial haystack. The administration at Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School has seen this shift coming for quite some time however.

None too soon for those of us who are sick and tired of phoning tradespeople who say they'll

be here a certain day and time and then never show up or who are too "busy" to take on a job that's not worth \$2,000 or more. What goes around comes around, as they say, and those who ignore us will begin feeling the pinch in their wallets when the economy cycles through its usual ups and downs and they no longer have those \$2,000 jobs available. The next class of trade graduates will take up the slack and we'll be better off for it.

Bay Path High School is our local and premier craft and trade institution of higher learning in the 10-town area. The school has undergone major building and trade shop renovations and is proud to say that their trade shops and teachers are running

at full capacity. And, yes, they do have a sizeable student waiting list which is a credit to the shop teachers and academic educators. The school has existed since the 1970's and has earned a sterling reputation for its exceptionally skilled and avid graduates.

The tide has turned, ladies and gentlemen, and it has shown that having a bona fide and reputable trade is definitely the way to go in the 21st Century. These able-bodied young women and men who have done their jobs and done them extremely well are graduating from Bay Path Regional and entering appren-

BAYPATH
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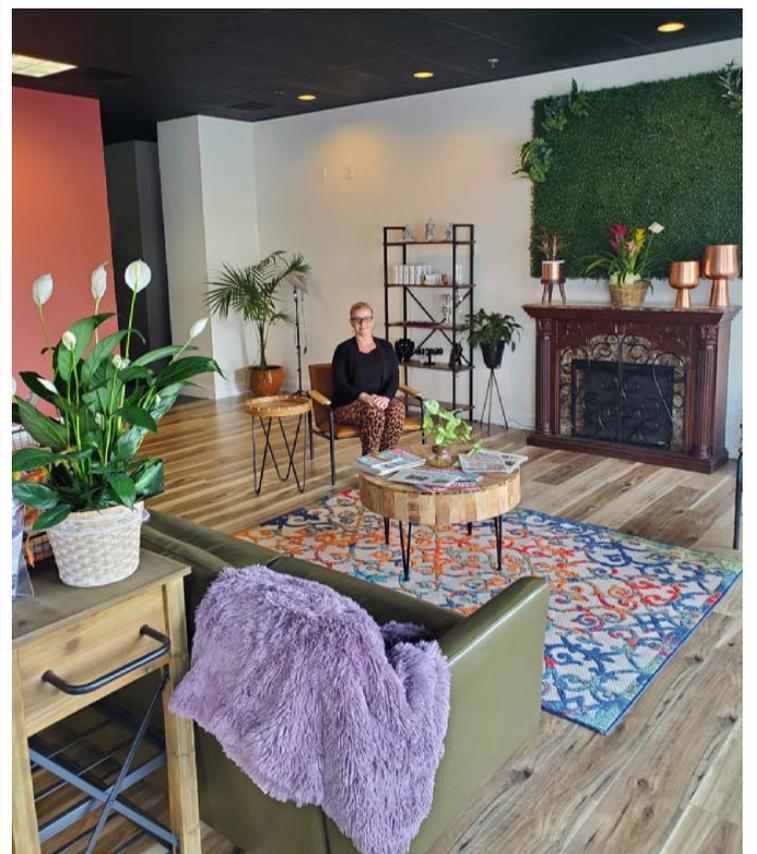
Prestige Salon & Day Spa: More than Fluff and Buff

BY JANET STOICA

When you enter Prestige Salon & Day Spa's doors, the first thing you notice is fresh air and a clean and invigorating environment. Wholesome. Healthy. Pleasant. Prestige is a 5-Star Safe Salon using the highest health and safety

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Lorri Ducharme in the cozy living room at Prestige Salon & Day Spa.

standards in all services. The spa's standards are over and above the state standards. The freshness of the air you inhale and immediately notice or, rather not notice, is that there are no aromas or malodorous vapors from their

exchange that employs a constant air recovery system. It really is a breath of fresh air. At each mani-

PRESTIGE
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BAYPATH

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tice trade programs with salaries that will make your eyes pop. It is refreshing to learn and know that this has happened to our smart and very well-educated Bay Path graduates in both the trades and academia.

Many graduates do go on to colleges and universities but with the cost of a four-year tuition it has become prohibitive for many of our young people to even consider affording a baccalaureate degree. Tuitions that will put them in debt for decades or, if you have a loving parent or other relative who has the tuition funds available and/or is willing to re-mortgage

their own home, that loving parent or relative will be in debt until death.

At Bay Path and hundreds of other excellent vocational high schools around the country, they are handing you a ticket to an engaging job which enables you to earn your way into the middle and higher income brackets. There is no doubt about it.

“We run a tight budget here,” said Cliff Cloutier, principal of Bay Path Regional Vocational High School. “We have 10 area towns sending us their students. We currently have a wait list of over 200 students who want to enter our school. Our two graduation diplomas consist of a vocational and

academic certificate. In our machine shop we have two instructors for 40 students and we could easily place 10 more students into this shop. We have offered evening classes for potential students as well. Our trade students have hands-on instruction as well as related theory which gives them the base/background for their shop. The opportunities that students have here is amazing. We tell them that the more you put into your classes, the better you’ll make out when you’re ready to start your career.”

According to James Tripp Pockevicius, Director of Career and Technical Education, “We’re seeing the trend for the trades



increase everywhere. More and more students want to attend. We use cooperative education as much as we can where the students will enjoy a structured style of classroom-based education and practical work experience. Local employers will then offer them jobs upon successful graduation. The cost of attending college may be a huge factor. We do track our graduates with a one-year follow-up survey. Approximately 47% of our 2021 graduates went straight into the workforce and 46-47% went on to post-secondary educational institutions such as the health tech field, dental, and four-year colleges along with 3% entering the Armed Forces.”

“We’ve had former students donate generously to our shops,” said Mr. Cloutier, “and they are grateful for the education they have received here. Their knowledge base seems to be well above average and the businesses that have hired them say our students have great backgrounds in their trade areas.” Mr. Tripp Pockevicius mentioned that a former carpentry student began his own business, became very successful, and made a \$5,000



Top, Chisholm family donation to Bay Path, \$5000 from local business owners Seth and Mary Chisholm, owners and operators of Skilled Trades Partners in Fiskdale. Seth Chisholm is a graduate of Bay Path, Class of 1993.

Advanced Manufacturing at Bay Path. Instructor, Stephan Zeveska. Students, left to right, Lucas Daoust of Charlton, Cayden Young of Webster, Midrose Freeman of Dudley, Emerson Pitz of North Oxford, and Ryan Dawson of Charlton.

donation to the Bay Path carpentry shop. Now that’s the biggest kind of Thank You a school could ever hope to receive.

Bay Path has an Advisory Committee that meets twice annually with local owners and workers of the various trades with the goal of keeping up with current product and trade techniques. The members will recommend new teaching methods, curriculum, and equipment.

For more information

on the 23 career areas offered by Bay Path Vocational (from Automotive to Culinary Arts to IT and Veterinary classes), please visit their website: www.baypath.net or phone the school at (508) 248-5971.

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Xpressly Yours ... a letter from the editor

Museum deftly captures Samuel Slater's perilous journey



At times the folks at Samuel Slater Experience must feel a little like the man for whom the museum on Ray Street in Webster is named.

Their task in establishing SSE as a major area attraction may be less daunting than fledging industrialist Samuel Slater's was in setting sail for America in 1789 at the age of twenty-one and bringing with him from his native England "trade secrets" involving cotton spinning that put his very life in jeopardy.

The assignment Barbara Van Reed, Reanna Kuzdzal, Sally Patterson, Connie Gallant and their cohorts have been given in carrying forward Chris Robert's goal of educating the public about Samuel Slater's importance to the area's manufacturing legacy and to the development of the town of Webster is one they find both absorbing — and challenging — as he did his own breakout role.

Typical for Ms. Van Reed and her colleagues were the difficulties that put a wrinkle in plans at SSE to take part in Smithsonian Magazine's 18th annual "Museum Day," on September 17th.

"Are all these cars here for the museum?" I asked her, upon arriving and discovering that there was nary a parking spot to be had in any direction.

"No," she said.

She was positioned along Memorial Drive near its intersection with Ray Street. She was trying to direct motorists into a lot behind the museum, if in fact

SSE was their destination. Unfortunately, many of them were headed instead to events taking place in the Memorial Athletic Field complex.

"Our first rodeo and no parking. I'm waiting for our sign guy to show up," Ms. Van Reed said, of the attempt that would be made to let people know there was something else going on in the neighborhood. Meanwhile, she was doing the best she could.

Samuel Slater, of course, faced his own adversities, principal among them a warning from his mentor, Jedediah Strutt, not to betray the confidences of those in his native England from whom he had been learning textiles since he was fourteen years old.

Mr. Strutt (1726-1797) was a hosier and cotton spinner who pioneered the production of ribbed stockings—on his "Derby Rib" machine.

You will be branded a traitor, Mr. Strutt told Samuel.

The only good outcome of that alert, as it turned out, was young Sam acquiring the rhymed moniker that has stuck with him to this day: "Slater the Traitor." Patrons of the museum will encounter the phrase at least once during their walk through the interactive exhibits, this while watching a video of Samuel Slater's treacherous voyage across the Atlantic and hearing him having second thoughts about the wisdom of his decision to leave England.

"He was twenty-one and trapped between the old world and the new," Sally Patterson told me, as we stood on "the ship" Sam effected his passage on.

"The boat was built in Georgia, taken apart, and rebuilt here," Ms. Patterson said. "A Bartlett class just had their reunion here."

Speaking of which, SSE is doing just fine in booking



Not heeding a warning from his mentor, Jedediah Strutt, of possible dire consequences if he took his manufacturing ambitions from England to America did not stop Samuel Slater, pictured here in character in the Samuel Slater Experience on Ray Street in Webster. The rest is history.

events, including school trips and private functions, Ms. Van Reed said.

"Our street promotion program (Welcome Webster Days) has also been amazingly popular," Ms. Van Reed said. This has consisted of free admission for Webster residents, based on their street address.

Museum Day on September 17th is being followed by "A Night at the Museum" on Friday, October 14th, featuring "Mark and Raianne" performing "an intimate concert along the museum's recreation of Webster's Main St., circa 1915." Mark and Rianna will be accompanied by their studio band of Doug Williamson on piano and guitar, Peter Hart on pedal steel and dobro, and Zack Ciras on upright bass.

This is a free event offered by the Webster Cultural Council. Andy's Neighborhood Center will provide a cash bar "in the lobby of the Maanexit Hotel."

A visit to Samuel Slater Experience almost certainly means an encounter with

Richard Clark, a guide whose enthusiasm for young Sam's story is infectious.

"We make a big thing of 'Slater the Traitor.' Mr. Clark told me, as he warmed to the sight of another person he could enlighten.

"The George White biography of Samuel Slater, we take that as the definitive life story," Mr. Clark said. "Sam was six-foot, two hundred pounds when he met Hannah Wilkinson, a Quaker. She passed away in 1812, on their anniversary, leaving him with six young boys. He married again,

with a pre-nuptial! The lawyers must have been licking their chops."

Docents like Richard Clark are essential to making Samuel Slater Experience worthwhile for patrons of the museum. He relishes his role. He is happy to be involved with the museum.

"I'm from Rhode Island, originally," he said. "My family had connections to the textile industry and I was a history major in college. It was kind of in the air, if you will."

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

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PRESTIGE

continued from page 1

cure station the system not only captures dust particles from your beautiful and charming nails while they undergo their beauty treatment, but it also eradicates any vapors from polish removers and other nail applications whether your fingers or toes.

Ms. Ducharme's salon has evolved from a simple mani/pedi establishment to offer a multitude of services for all ages. Ms. Ducharme and her professional staff are certified in just about all medical aspects of good foot health as well. Our senior citizen

population can benefit from economically-priced toe/foot services like nail clipping as well as a foot evaluation where they specialize in servicing diabetic, at risk, and immune-compromised (e.g., anyone going through chemotherapy due to the high risk of infection) clients. The staff is trained in and certified through MediNail which takes them to a higher level of sanitation procedures in the use of autoclaving, disinfecting, and sterilization procedures.

Their manicure nail-coloring products do not use artificial products like acrylics or gels. Everything is natural and non-hypoallergenic, a completely



Above, Prestige's new Main Street, Webster location. Right, Prestige's Salt Booth.



different experience than what most clients are accustomed to. Dazzle Dry Performance Polish is their preference for customer-approved nail-color applications. The product is no chip, lasts 7-14 days, is made entirely from vegan products and bio-organic, does not require the use of UV light and dries in just five minutes. "We used to fix nail smudges often before Dazzle Dry," said Lorri, "but not anymore. This product is truly wonderful. We prep the nail first with a moisturizer and strengthen the nail then a base coat is applied which is a proprietary blend, following this a second coat so the chip prevention is established." Their full pedicure stations offer a fleet of very comfortable plush chairs along with the use of luxurious hammered copper foot-soaking bowls. The copper is more sanitary as well as naturally anti-microbial and anti-bacterial while it also holds the heated foot bath water temperature longer.

There is certainly more that Prestige now of-

fers and that is a host of services certainly not found in this little corner of our world. In addition to wellness manicures and pedicures, there are two skin-care estheticians for your soothing facials based on your personal skincare analysis results including clarifying, vitamin infusion, oxygen RX, hydro facials, derma-planing, hydro jelly masks, and LED light. In the next year, the salon will also offer Botox and fillers administered by a Registered Nurse. Eye-lash extensions, either full sets or fills are also available.

There is organic spray tanning which eliminates the need for sunbathing. The tanning lasts for 7-10 days. Here you can tan just your face, partial body, or full body by choosing their plans offering discounts on multi-applications. Salt and halo therapies (breathing in microscopic salt particles) are one of the newest services at Prestige. The salt doses are said to be of benefit for many of us with respiratory issues. The pure-grade sodium claims to be of benefit for those

with allergies and colds.

Soothing massages as well as hypnosis are the missions of their well-versed and respected therapist-in-residence with high praise from many clients. Relaxing your muscles and taking away your soreness could only be one of the greatest benefits we all seek. You owe it to yourself to make an appointment with their well-qualified massage therapist.

Additional services include Water and Sky Reiki which is a Japanese meditative practice promoting relaxation and helps to reduce stress and anxiety. A light touch to greater wellness for sure.

Perhaps the most unique experience you'll encounter at Prestige is when you enter and relax in their living room complete with a sofa and chairs, coffee table sitting upon a uniquely cool rug in front of a faux fireplace that adds

a nice ambience. Sturdy tables and chairs sit along the floor-to-ceiling front windows, allowing a view of busy Main Street.

A coffee/tea/beverage bar also welcomes you with a few snacks to indulge in while you await your relaxing treatments. Their living room is also available to rent for small gatherings like Pampered Chef, Jewelry demos, bridal showers, get-togethers, or meetings on the days the salon is not open for business.

Prestige Salon & Day Spa, 118 Main St., Webster. Hours: Mon/Tues/Thurs 10-5; Wed/Fri 10-7; Sat 9-2. Phone: 508-671-0069. ThePrestigeSalon.com

Contact Janet: jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

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

LMT Oil Delivers With Community Involvement

LMT Oil is not new to Charlton and surrounding areas.

The company has been delivering goods and services for the past six years, but owner Tom Dolan has been doing service work on heating systems and air conditioners for 11 years.

The company is small — with six employees — and family owned, and loves being part of the community.

Business spotlight

“We are a small, family owned business but we are always looking to grow with our community, so we are always looking for experienced help,” said Holly Dancause.



LMT Oil delivers home heating oil, and also does service on heating, air conditioning systems, and heat pumps. They do installations as well.

But delivering oil isn't the only part of the business they love.

“We love being part of the community. Because we live in this community, as well, we get to know our customers, which creates a more personal relationship with them. Tom's kids, who the company is named after, go to our local schools, so he likes to be able to give back to the school community by making donations each year. He donates money to a classroom each year to purchase books every month for each child from the Scholastic Book Club,” said Dancause.

One recent challenge has been the increase in prices over the last year.

“It's been difficult for everyone, especially our customers. We have done our best to keep our prices low so we can be more affordable to our customers. Unfortunately with the rising cost of home heating oil as well as the diesel we need to transport to customers, it has made it difficult. We have encouraged customers who are considerably concerned about this upcoming winter's prices to consider applying for Fuel Assistance through the Worcester Community Action Council. We do accept Fuel Assistance customers,” she said.

LMT Oil can be reached by phone at 508-434-1335.



Company president Thomas Dolan named the company after his three children; Lillian, Madison and Thomas

With the colder months ahead, LMT Oil offered some advice for customers:

- Get a heating system tune-up — it will ensure you get the maximum performance out of your heating system.
- Open shades and drapes when the sun is out to help warm your home. Close them when the sun goes down to reduce heat loss through drafty windows.
- Turn down the thermostat at night and when you are away from home; even slightly lowering your thermostat during the day may save on your heating bill.
- Insulate pipes to guard against heat loss and to prevent them from freezing.
- Stop heat loss by weather proofing your home. Such as eliminating any gaps between your door and threshold. Caulk or re-caulk exterior spaces between the windows and walls of your home.
- Remove, cover or close air conditioning units and vents when not in use.
- Do not place furniture in front of radiators; it will block heat from circulating.
- For additional tips they can go to Mass Save to have an Energy Audit performed on their home. Mass Save is a helpful program to many of our customers.

Hopefully these tips can help save customers some money this winter.

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BLACKSTONE VALLEY Xpress

Webster: Little New York and Baa Baa Museum Sheep

BY JANET STOICA

Yes, you read that right, the town of Webster was formerly known as Little New York. From the

early 1900's to the 1940's, people came from far and wide to the town on the lake with the long Indian name. They came in droves really. According to local

artist Dave Laabs, "there were 3 movie theaters, 21 beer halls, gambling venues, a full array of Main Street shops featuring New York fashions, trolleys to Beacon Park which offered 3 ferries across Lake Chaubunagungamaug, and tethered hot air balloon rides. It was quite the little city."

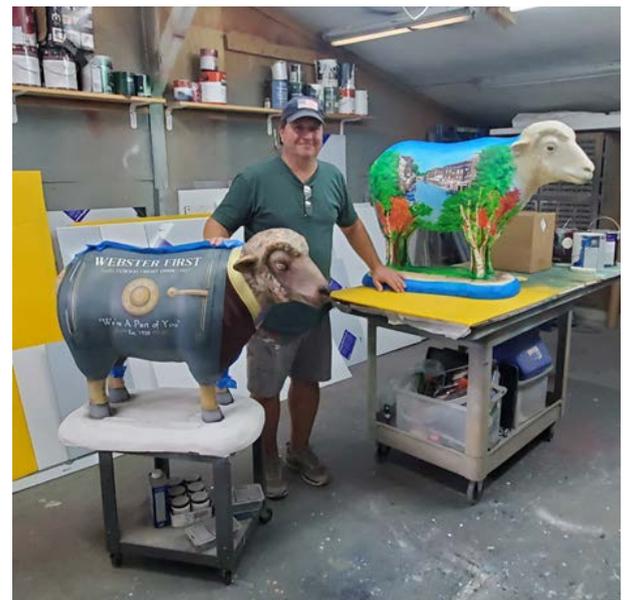
Dave Laabs has also lent his talents to the creation of the Samuel Slater Museum in Webster, now known as the Samuel Slater Experience. The brainchild of Mr. Christopher Robert, the Samuel Slater Experience has to be seen to be appreciated. But, a museum in Little New York? You bet! There might not be street cars clanging their way from Main Street to Lake Street and beyond anymore but there is a gem of an historical exhibition the likes of which may be hard to beat by any other similar-sized gallery. Don't go if you don't want to be impressed. Don't go if you think museums are stuffy and dull. Just go if you'd like to be pleasantly surprised that such a cool and wickedly amazing exhibition like this one is

your local trip to another dimension of Disneyesque profundity. And, to think this remarkable show is right here in Webster!

The Experience is a testament to the strength, will, and motivation of both Mr. Robert and his creative staff to one of the founding fathers of our local area. Samuel Slater was labeled a scoundrel and traitor by his home country of England when he rode the rough seas of the Atlantic on a cargo ship to America to seek his fortune. He kept the blueprint of the Arkwright Water Frame in his head (or perhaps sewn inside the lining of his waistcoat) as he counted the days to his landing in the new young country called America. After making his way to Rhode Island—after all Slatersville IS named after him,—he set out to our local area where he began prepping and making his yarn spinning frames. He settled upon the use of water to spin the yarn frames thus becoming the "Father of the American Industrial Revolution" as his business flourished.

Just look at what he built! The towns of Dudley and Oxford gave up land to form Little New York! Webster was named after Senator Daniel Webster who was a peer and good friend of Mr. Slater.

Now, let's get to the Sheep. The Slater Museum/Experience group decided upon an interesting way to attract people's attention to the town's new educational opportunity. A number of 25, life-sized poly-resin sheep was settled upon for manufacture by Icon Poly Studios of Gibbon, Nebraska. The critters are jobbed out for custom



Dave Laabs with two more sheep ready for their weather-proof sealant.

painting to various local artists who interview area companies interested in sponsoring a sheep. During their interview/meeting, the company sponsor determines what is to be painted on the animal, e.g., their logo, building, scenery, etc. After the painting scenario is approved, the artist's rendering is applied to the mascot and then brought to Dave Laabs' art studio for a weather-proof sealant application and then "put out to pasture" at either the business sponsoring the beast or at a public building. The sheep are very life-like in appearance and their replication is astoundingly attractive, not to mention the bright and colorful acrylic paints used to bring out their artfulness.

Webster truly was at the forefront of this Nation's textile industry. The local factories that were born here were astounding. Anglo Fabrics, Stevens Linen, and Cranston Print Works to name a few. Shoe

manufacturers set up shop too, such as Sandlerette, Webster Shoe, Bates, and B & W. The success of Little New York was legend. Area residents had jobs, received paychecks, and grew the local economy by spending their cash in town. Jobs attracted more workers. It was the rise to local prosperity. Times have definitely changed but if you'd like to see how it all started then the Samuel Slater Experience at 31 Ray St., Webster is the place to be. If you haven't had the opportunity of a visit yet, take a good look at their website, that alone should entice you. The most exciting historical experience in this area ever.....

Open on Friday/Saturday/Sunday. www.samuel Slater Experience.org Phone: (508) 461-2955.

Contact Janet: jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

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My Lydia

BY JANET STOICA

My Lydia died today. She was my five-year old domestic shorthair cat. Part of my heart has left with her.

I hadn't owned a pet since my childhood when my mom let me keep an abandoned kitten I had found in the middle of our backyard all those many years ago. The abandoned kit was fed with an eye-dropper by my mom and she grew into a most wonderful playful indoor/outdoor feline.

But my new companion, my sleek, black, and absolutely beautiful Lydia, was a special girl that I had found at the Woodstock CT Animal Shelter in March 2017. No one there knew her history as she had been found wandering about when she was rescued by the Woodstock Shelter staff. She had been given an odd name which I promptly changed once I brought my girl home with me. Lydia would be her name and I came to call her that as a tribute to the area shelter manager. I had never personally met the manager but when she phone-interviewed me and learned that I had just spent my vacation funds to cover the costs of major dental work on my Aunt Marie's cat, she was impressed that I would do such a wonderful and expensive assist for a furry feline. She also told me that I wouldn't have to undergo the usual background check to determine if I'd be a suitable owner for one of their rescued kits because of my previous generosity.

Lydia was one of the smallest girls in the shelter and she was also the cutest if I should say so myself. I was allowed to hold her out of her cage but it was obvious she wanted back into that cage as soon as possible. Apparently, she had not been handled as a kitten so she promptly let me know that she did not want to be held or picked up, ever. She was already litter-box trained, a big plus, and upon her entry to my home, I couldn't help but notice that she ate like each meal was her last, making me wonder if she'd been the littlest of her litter.

Her first day at her new home, she wandered everywhere and sprawled on every piece of furniture as if it were her personal palace. She was so shiny and well-pet together and made frequent eye contact with me when she was in a relaxed position which I came to read meant

that she was content and happy. She was an avid talker as well. She frequently expressed herself with chirps and many purrs when she would jump onto my lap on a cool night as I sat reading a book or watching television. She would also perform her favorite activity on my lap and that was kneading. She would have been a great bread prep lady. She would knead for



quite a while and then curl up and continue purring. Her contented vocals were a great de-stressor for me too. Who wouldn't want the gentle hum of a fuzzy and warm pet on their lap?

Lydia was as unique as most all cat buddies. She knew it was a bad thing when she had fur-balled up a mess on my new living room rug and would immediately distance herself and watch me intently as I would run for my rug cleaner and go through the steps of cleaning the muddle, then spraying the spot, rinsing, and then blotting it dry as best I could. Of course, once that task was completed, she would let me know that her belly was empty and it was time for more food and it could never be what she had just discharged. It became a routine that a new flavor of cat food was in order. Not a problem. Fancy Feast and I were best friends to Lydia. I always told friends and relatives that I was her beloved Can Opener. Chicken was originally her everyday choice along with some dry food for her "dessert." Other flavors she enjoyed were salmon, cod/sole/shrimp, and just maybe a very rare treat of Starkist tuna. Of course, she loved the tuna best of all but that was such a rarity. And, whenever I would decide to allow her that tuna treat, I would always wonder if she had x-ray vision or ESP as before I even opened the can, she would be at my feet waiting for a teaspoon or two. She would scarf her treat down with vigor and then walk toward me to bunt my open hand as if to say "Thanks a million!"

She could amuse herself for hours at night when I was sleeping. Her cat toys would be strewn about the living room and the swivel rocker would be facing the wall as

she most likely used it as a merry-go-round. A good friend from North Carolina had sent an interesting cat toy for Lydia's enjoyment, a motion-sensor padded fish about eight inches long. Once I had charged it up, I would place it on the floor. If Lydia touched it or walked by it, the fish would begin to wiggle and flop like a real trout. At first, she would crouch and

stare but soon became our professional fish wrangler. She would tap the toy quickly and it would begin to flop and hop about the living room as she attacked it from all angles poking at it and making it flip once

it had stopped its five-second non-stop routine. Sometimes she would look at me before pouncing on it as if to say are you watching me? Impressive aren't I? She sure was impressive and she learned things quickly without my assistance.

When I took a part-time job leaving her home alone, I bought a battery-operated gumball-type dry cat food dispenser. I poured the dry food into the upper clear chamber and set the timer before going to work setting it to dispense small amounts of dry food in three-hour intervals. Apparently, those amounts weren't enough for her majesty as when I arrived home by day two, I saw that way too much food had been dispensed from the upper chamber. It was then that I decided to watch my Lydia from a distance as she

sauntered to the dispenser which had not dispensed any food. With one paw, she lifted the small dispenser flap and with the other paw worked her way up into the dispenser chute releasing a good amount of tasty treats into the feeding dish. Why that little so-and-so! I was incredulous. A rotating five-serving auto-dispenser was immediately purchased and turned out to be the best investment I ever made for her. She couldn't force the serving wheel around and it worked out beautifully.

As cats sleep and/or relax almost all day, her usual wake-up time was when I was set to retire for the evening! My Aunt Marie would visit Lydia during the day and amuse her with various wands with stringed feathers and other toy attachments which Lydia loved to follow and bat around. The hours of 9:00 or 10:00 p.m., however, were my black beauty's favorite play time, something that I rarely caved to. After all, sleep time was important for me too. After dinner was my usual time to amuse her and expend some of her built-up energy.

She also became my computer lap-top companion. Whenever I would sit down at my desk to write an article or two, she would magically appear next to my feet chirping to let me know she was there. She would hop up onto my small file cabinet moving closer to the window "asking" me to open it for her fresh air pleasure. Once the window was opened, she would lie on the cabinet and watch me

LYDIA

continued on page 8

Children's author Tamra Wight to appear at Booklovers' Gourmet

Growing up in Charlton as the eldest of five children, Tamra "Tami" Wight loved the outdoors. She and her siblings built forts, raced pine cones and leaves in the brook and looked for frogs.

She was also an avid reader and a frequent patron of the Charlton Public Library, enjoying such books as "The Witch From Blackbird Pond" and "Are You There God? It's Me Margaret."

She wrote, too, from a young age, but never with the thought of getting published.

She has indeed followed that path and will make an appearance at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St. in Webster, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 22nd to discuss her latest work: "The Mystery of the Lost Lynx"—the fifth in Cooper & Packrat's eco-adventure series for middle-school readers.

Booklovers' Gourmet is offering those in attendance a chance to play a wildlife fact game while checking out Ms. Wight's tale of the Wilder Family Campground opening for the winter break and intrepid detectives Cooper, Packrat, Roy and Summer and "some cool friends" being

diverted from their plan to have a little "snowy fun" by an unexpected mystery.

When they see a lynx kit



Tamra Wight, author of "The Mystery of the Lost Lynx."

wearing a pet collar, watch a reckless snowmobiler dash across the ice and are warned about a dangerous poacher, they set off to find out what is going on and to protect the camp's wildlife from poachers before it's too late.

Ms. Wight writes from experience; she and her husband owned and operated Poland Spring Campground in Maine for twenty-seven years.

Signed copies of all of the books in the series will be available.

Call 508-949-6232 for more information.

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Battle for the Airfield takes center stage at AHM

Rarely has there been a better chance to experience living history up close and personal than is being offered by the American Heritage Museum (AHM) in Hudson over the Columbus Day weekend.

“The Battle for the Airfield: World War II Re-Enactment” will give

visitors to the AHM on Saturday, October 8th and Sunday, October 9th the opportunity to see over three hundred Allied and Axis re-enactors engage in simulated combat at 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 both days.

The Battle for the Airfield is a reflection of campaigns in a long-duration war that are now immortal-

ized for their ferocity and importance; among these, the Battle of the Atlantic (Sept. 1939-May 1945), the Battle of Britain (July-October 1940), the Battle of Stalingrad (August 1942-Feb. 1943), the Battle of Okinawa (April-June 1945), the Battle of Midway (July 1942), the Battle of Berlin (April-May 1945)

and the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944-January 1945).

As part of The Battle for the Airfield, tanks, military vehicles, artillery and encampments will be available for viewing from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. both days.

A full schedule of happenings connected with

The Battle for the Airfield include tank rides, paint-a-tank for children, World War II game and modeling demonstrations and a World War II Veterans Roundtable each day at 1:00 p.m. featuring remarks by vets who were engaged in the actual hostilities eighty years ago.

The Roundtable will

include a question-and-answer segment.

The event is a major fundraiser for the American Heritage Museum. Tickets also provide patrons with access to all three buildings on the grounds.

More details can be obtained at <http://ahmus.me/events>.

LYDIA

continued from page 7

type away as her contented purrs put me at ease. What a girl.

Today I arrived home to greet my Aunt Marie who had come to visit with Lydia. My aunt informed me that Lydia had just eaten and retired to her favorite napping spot. I called Lydia who trotted out to see me and to lovingly bunt my hand. She then reclined next to my aunt's chair. Suddenly, Lydia scrambled upright and rushed abruptly to the opposite side of the living room where she fell on her side and appeared to convulse. I hurried over to her and saw that she was not moving anymore. I lifted her to the sofa and began CPR as best as I could. My aunt phoned the vet's office to tell them I was bringing Lydia in immediately.

The vet and her staff worked on Lydia for what seemed forever. She was gone. The vet explained that Lydia had most likely succumbed to a clot/cardiac event.

I was allowed to see my dear sweet girl for the last time. I stayed with her alone in the room whispering tenderly to her. My dolly, my honey, my baby girl had left me. I kissed her a million times and petted her ever so gently. I thanked her for all the joy and happiness she had given me, all the smiles she had brought me, and all the hours of pure love she had bestowed upon me. There will never be another like you, my sweet girl Lydia. You were a diamond in the rough and I will cherish my memories of you for my lifetime. May eternity be good to you.

Contact Janet: jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

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Happenings!



Pakachoag Church in Auburn will host a Harvest Supper to benefit the Auburn Historical Society and Museum on Saturday, October 15th at 6:00 p.m. Tickets must be purchased by October 8th.

NOTE: Community bulletin board-type items are welcome for inclusion in the Happenings! section of the Xpress newspapers. Please allow enough lead time for publication. Email your calendar or event notice to rodlee.1963@gmail.com.

UPCOMING AT INDIAN RANCH IN WEBSTER:

October 8, Jamey Johnson Live in Concert, 1:00 p.m. Tickets are available at www.indianranch.com, by calling 1-800-514-3849 or at the Indian Ranch Box Office.

THROUGH OCTOBER 29

• An art exhibition featuring alcohol and ink paintings by Linda Littleton will be on display in the café gallery of Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster. A reception for the artist is scheduled for Friday, October 14th from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Call 508-949-6232 for further info.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8

• An Indian Princess tour of Webster Lake will take place at 9:45 a.m. Call 508-943-3871 or go to <https://indianranch.com/events> for more info.

• The General Ebenezer Learned DAR Chapter of Oxford is hosting a talk to answer the question "Was There Silver in Them There Towns?" and a discussion of the history of silver in American domestic life at 1:00 p.m. in the Oxford Police Department's Training/Community Room, 503 Main St. Dennis Knight, long-time collector and dealer, will

give an illustrated history of silver from Colonial times to the 20th Century. Mr. Knight's presentation will include items from his own collection to show how silver went from being made by small-town local artisans to large manufacturing in cities, from coinage to elegant dining settings and more. The public is invited to bring an item to be identified and perhaps given some insight as to its origin. The event is free but donations to the Oxford Food Pantry would be appreciated.

• Upton VFW Post 5594 will wrap up its summer series of flea markets at 15 Milford St. (Rt. 14). Spaces are \$10 each or \$15 if a banquet-sized table is needed. Parking is free. Call David Kennedy at 508-529-3314 or visit the Post's Facebook page for more details.

OCTOBER 8-9

• "The Battle for the Airfield WWII Re-Enactment" will take place at the American Heritage Museum, 568 Main St., Hudson. This is a WWII living history event with over 350 re-enactors representing several branches of Allied and Axis military in two large-scale battles daily. Re-enactor encampments will be open all day for both Axis and Allied soldiers. There will also be a WWII veterans roundtable daily in the hangar. Tank rides will be available all weekend for an additional charge. Visit www.americanheritagemuseum.org for more info.

OCTOBER 9-23

• The Friends of the Simon Fairfield

Public Library in Douglas will conduct a fall online auction, with all proceeds going toward the Library Building Fund. The Friends are seeking donations of crafts, services, gift baskets, antiques and "what-have-you" for this event. For more information, visit mysfpl.org.

OCTOBER 11 & 25

• "Meet the Candidate," Terry Burke Dotson, at the Millbury Public Library, 128 Elm St., 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12

• Come to the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville, for Frank Ruscitti's "Music Review" from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Mr. Ruscitti will share a "walk" through various original recordings from his musical collection. Sign up in the main office or call 508-234-2002.

OCTOBER 12 & 19

• "Meet the Candidate," Terry Burke Dotson, Oxford Public Library, 339 Main St., 5:00-6:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14

• Duranarama will take place at Samuel Slater's Restaurant at Indian Ranch in Webster. Show time is 8:00 p.m. Call 508-943-3871 or go to <https://indianranch.com/> for more info.

OCTOBER 14-23

• The fifth annual Small Stones Festival of the Arts will take place in the Great Hall of Apple Tree Arts, One Grafton Common, 2nd Floor, in the Community Room of the Grafton Public Library, 35 Grafton Common, Rear Entrance, and at the Congregational Church of Grafton, 30 Grafton Common. SSFA begins with an Opening Event and awards in the Great Hall on the 14th from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. This is followed by the exhibition of juried art and photography

throughout the dates involved. The Clafin Hill Symphony Orchestra will perform; Dr. Helen Whall will present on "Shakespeare Now and Then;" Nicholas Gage will talk on "A Writer's Odyssey;" Michael Rose will share his thoughts on "How to Market Your Art;" Annie Adams Fields will present "Victorian Gossip Girl;" and there will be artist and juror talks. Go to smallstones-festival.org for full details.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

• St. Patrick's Fall Recycling event will take place from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at 7 East St., Whitinsville. Profits will benefit upcoming YIA (Youth in Action) service projects. There will be on-site paper shredding, electronics recycling for a fee and a collection of bottles and cans and textiles. For more information and pricing, call 508-234-5656 or email officesupport@mystpatricks.co. Cash preferred.

• Open Sky Community Services' 8th annual Valley Bag Toss, an inclusive corn-hole tournament open to all individuals and all skill levels, will be held at Alternatives' Whitin Mill on Douglas Road from noon to 5:00 p.m.

• A Harvest Supper to benefit the Auburn Historical Society and Museum will be held at Pakachoag Church on Pakachoag St., Auburn, at 6:00 p.m. The menu is roast pork, seasonal vegetables and apple crisp. Patrons can dine in or dine out. There will be gift baskets for sale and a 50/50 drawing. Tickets are \$15 each and may be purchased at the museum, 41 South St., on Tuesday or Saturday between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Tickets may also be purchased by calling 508-832-6856 or with a check to the museum, 41 South St., Auburn 01501. Tickets must be purchased by October 8th. Baskets will be on view at the museum the morning of October 15th

and tickets for the 50/50 may be bought then too. Winners do not have to be present for the drawing and will be notified.

OCTOBER 15-16

• Waters Farm Days, a fall tradition, will take place at 53 Waters Road, Sutton, offering attendees an opportunity to learn about New England farm life in the 18th and 19th centuries. Highlights include tours of the farm house and the maple sugar house, a blacksmith at work and shingle making. There will also be tractor pulls, displays of farm equipment, a car show, farm animals, children's activities, crafters and more.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16

• The New England Country Music

Club presents live music by Rustic Country at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. with entertainment from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub.

OCTOBER 17 & 26

• "Meet the Candidate," Terry Burke Dotson, Auburn Public Library, 369 Southbridge St., Auburn, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18

• A Free Flu Shot Clinic is being offered at the Uxbridge Senior Center, 36 S. Main St. from 9:00 a.m. to noon, courtesy of Hanaford Supermarket's pharmacy.

HAPPENINGS!

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HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 9

All are welcome; the 65+ flu vaccine will be available to those who want the shot. Please bring insurance cards with you; no copays are required. Call the Senior Center at 508-278-8622 to obtain



Autumn, and farm life of yesteryear, will be celebrated at Waters Farm Days in Sutton the weekend of October 15 and 16.

registration forms before attending this event.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22

- The Pike 100.1 Halloween "Boos" Cruise with Chuck Perkins is scheduled for 5:45 p.m. Call 508-943-3871 or go to <https://indianranch.com/events> for more info.
- The Worcester Model Railroaders, Inc. will be holding an open

house from 10 a.m.-3p.m. at 14 Railroad Ave, Webster. On display will be two layouts: a 40'x60' HO, Digitrax, DCC operated layout representing central New England railroading from Providence up into the Worcester area, and the second layout is a three rail O gauge, 9'x30' in size. Trackwork is complete and scenery is 80%

finished. Both layouts will be operating and you will be welcome to join the operating session on the HO layout. Admission is free but donations are welcome. More information can be found at www.wmrr.org as well as on FB.

OCTOBER 24-25

- An AARP Safe Driver Course with Instructor Phyllis Masso is being

offered at the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville. Those taking the course may be eligible for a discount on their car insurance (consult your insurance agent for details). The classroom course is \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for nonmembers. Space is limited. Register by calling Michelle at 508-234-2002. Participants must attend both sessions to complete the course.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27

- The Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville, will host a "Pumpkins & Pranks" Halloween Party from 12 noon to 2:00 p.m., featuring a luncheon and a magician. Costumes are highly encouraged and there will be prizes in several categories. Tickets are \$5 and must be purchased at the main office prior to the event.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28

- The Millbury Senior Center's Halloween Party will be held from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at the Center, 1 River St. Call 508-865-9154 to RSVP.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29

- UniBank will offer a Community Shred even at its Sutton North branch, 29 Galaxy Pass, Sutton, from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2

- "Heart to Home" will present a hot-lunch event at the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville, at 11:30 a.m. Heart to Home provides a selection of over 160 frozen meals that can be stored in the freezer until ready to heat and enjoy. Come in for a free lunch—either honey rosemary chicken or crumb-topped cod in lemon sauce—trivia and a raffle-prize giveaway. Sign up with Amy; space is limited.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3

- Join BCBS at the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., for a free seminar on the difference between Medicare Supplement plans and Medicare Advantage plans, 11:00 a.m. Sign up in the main office or call 508-234-2002.

NOVEMBER 4-5

- The Gladys E. Kelly Library in Webster will host "Mini-Golf in the Stacks," featuring a putting course set up between the bookshelves. On Friday from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. the event will be for adults only with a minimum donation of \$10 per person. Beer, wine and soda will be offered for a small fee. Snacks will be free. Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. is for families with a \$5 donation for adults and no admission charge for children. All donations will go directly to the library to fund future events.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6

- The New England Country Music Club presents live music by Al Carter at the Progressive Club, 18 Whittin St., Uxbridge. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. with entertainment from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub.



An original painting by award-winning Millbury artist Michael Graves will be among the items up for purchase during the Simon Fairfield Public Library's Online Auction, October 9-23. Open bidding for Mr. Graves' painting and such other featured items as a Harry Potter signed first edition, a handcrafted knife by Jim Saviano, beautiful gift baskets, gift certificates, vacation packages, antique and vintage items and items of local historical significance has started. The Friends thank sponsors for donations that make this year's auction catalog the best ever. All proceeds benefit the library's building fund campaign including handicapped access. Go to <https://mysfpl.org> to place your bid(s).

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9

- A Lunch and Learn program featuring a visit by Blackstone Valley Physical Therapy Associates will be held at the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Instruction will be provided on safely using assistive devices that are often recommended after falls or setbacks. Sign up at the front desk.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11

- A Fundraiser for Friends of Northbridge Elders (FINE) featuring "A Night of Spirit Messages" with Dr. Cathy Ripley Greene, psychic medium, will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus, 77 Prescott St., Whitinsville. Tickets are \$50. There will be a cash bar and snacks will be provided. Tickets may be purchased at the Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12

- St. Denis Church's Holiday Fair will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at 23 Manchaug Rd., Douglas, featuring crafts, raffles, baked goods and a kids table. Luncheon will be served from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Vendor spaces are available. Go to SaintDenisChurch.com for more info and updates. Online! . . . coming soon . . . baskets in our holiday raffle; tickets are \$3 each or ten for \$15. Drawing is on November 12, no need to be present to win and tickets will be available at the Fair on the 12th.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20

- The New England Country Music Club presents live music by Kerrie Evers at the Progressive Club, 18 Whittin St., Uxbridge. Doors open at 12:30 with entertainment from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub.

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Higher energy bills: A roof leak can also increase your energy bills - all the water from the leak can saturate the insulation in your attic and prevent it from doing its job.

Fire hazard: A leaky roof can pose a fire threat if it reaches the electrical wiring in your home.

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Prepare your garden for winter's onslaught

Individuals who don't live near the equator or in another warm climate know that winter will rear its chilly head this year. Cold temperatures and snowy conditions may be excellent for skiing and sledding, but gardeners recognize these conditions are not ideal for their plants.

The inevitable slowing of activity in the garden during fall marks a time to shift attention from

constant plant care to preparing the landscape for next season. It may be tempting to simply let Mother Nature take over, but a little pre-winter TLC can ensure gardens make it through winter unscathed.

Remove spent plants
Decomposing organic material is the basis for compost and other fertilizers. However, vegetable plants that are left to sit can lead to decay in the gar-

den. Decaying plants can serve as hosts for pest populations and diseases. Rotting vegetables also can drop unwanted seeds into the soil, which eventually can strip nutrients that normally would go to next year's crops.

Ornamental plants and perennials can be cut back in fall. Cut down stalks and remove leaves.

Plant a cover crop
The gardening resource *This Is My Garden* recommends planting a cover crop to set the stage for a successful spring. A cover crop protects the soil and can return nutrients to it. When the soil is bare during winter, weed seeds can easily blow in and lie in wait, ultimately becoming a problem during the

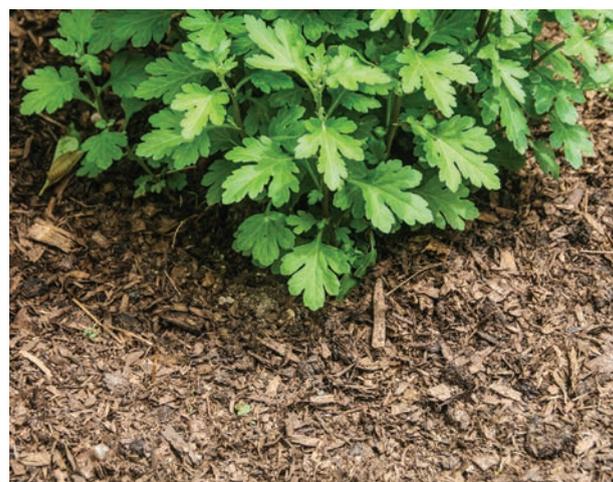
ensuing year. Cover crops can include clover or field peas, which will increase the levels of available nitrogen.

Amend the soil

Fall is a perfect time to add soil amendments, such as manure and compost. These fertilizers will add nutrients and break down gradually, enriching the soil over the winter.

Replenish mulch

Gardeners may have added mulch around shrubs and other areas of the landscape early in the season because it is attractive. But mulch also does much to reduce water loss and protect the soil from erosion. It may inhibit weed growth as well. Replacing mulch when the mercury drops can in-



Adding a layer of mulch around plants can insulate roots and the soil against hard frosts.

insulate the soil, which helps to regulate soil temperature. A thick layer of mulch around root vegetables left in the garden can offer protection against hard frosts.

Divide bulbs

Divide plant bulbs and plant them where you want flowers like daffodils and tulips to grow in the spring.

Prune dormant plants

Wait until plants are dormant to prune them and adjust their shape. Most shrubs

and trees should be pruned in late winter, right before new growth.

Move potted plants
Bring delicate plants into a sheltered area, such as a greenhouse or indoor garage, so they can continue to thrive during the winter.

Fall and winter still provide opportunities to spend time in the garden. At this point in the year, gardeners can prepare landscapes for the next season.



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Terri and Mike

Here's a tip...

By JoAnn Derson

- Apricots are a relative of the peach, and they can be ripened just like a peach can -- in a paper bag on the counter. They should be refrigerated when ripe.
- "I went to a tag sale and purchased a set of really cute flowerpots for barely anything. I like them so much that I am using them inside my house. They are holding utensils in the kitchen, and remotes and other odds and ends in the living room. They are great!" -- S.I.
- Laundry baskets can be your best friends when decluttering the house. Go from room to room collecting the clutter in a laundry basket, then bring it to a central location to sort and redistribute items that belong in each room.
- When purchasing school supplies, remember that paper, pencils, etc., typically aren't on sale mid-year, so stocking up is a good idea. Just make sure the deal you are getting is a good one. Then put it away for distribution later!
- Pint-size water bottles are great for refilling with milk. The

- milk boxes at the grocery store are so expensive, and this way, I can control how chocolatey the chocolate milk is. -- C.C.
- Add these to the list of items to eliminate the odor of cooking cabbage: a heel of bread, a whole walnut or a pinch of baking soda.
 - * To travel with pleated skirts, use this packing trick: Turn the skirt inside out and straighten all the pleats. Then tape the bottom so that all the pleats are held together. Next, feed the skirt into a leg of pantyhose with the foot cut off. You end up with a nice tube, which you can tuck into the sides of your luggage.
 - * When traveling for more than a few days, stick your plants into the bathtub with a little bit of water. They soak it up, and you don't have to have someone come over and water your plants. This will only work for a week or less, though. -- John McF.
 - * I keep grocery lists on my computer. When I am going to go shopping, I print out the list and fold the paper in half. Then I slip my coupons into the fold. Keeps them handy when I am shopping. -- Reader
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A beginner's guide to fall planting and maintenance

Spring and summer are perhaps the busiest times of year for gardeners. However, fall also is a prime time to tend to gardens. The tree and bare root retailer Bower & Branch advises that soil temperatures in many regions of the country may still be warm enough to encourage root growth well into the start of winter. Furthermore, fall is often the ideal time to plant, fertilize and keep a garden going or to get a head start on next year's bounty.

Here are some tips to make the most of the fall gardening season.

- Think about fall annuals and bulb planting. Near the end of September, start planting cool-weather-loving pansies and violas for pops of color as summer flowers fade. Also, it's a good idea to stock up on bulbs that will bloom in the months to come before they sell out in stores. Wait until the temperatures really cool

down before planting them in desired spots for spring sprouts.

- Sow salad seeds. Lettuce, spinach, radishes, and arugula tolerate cooler temperatures. Try new and interesting lettuce varieties and enjoy salads well into the fall season.

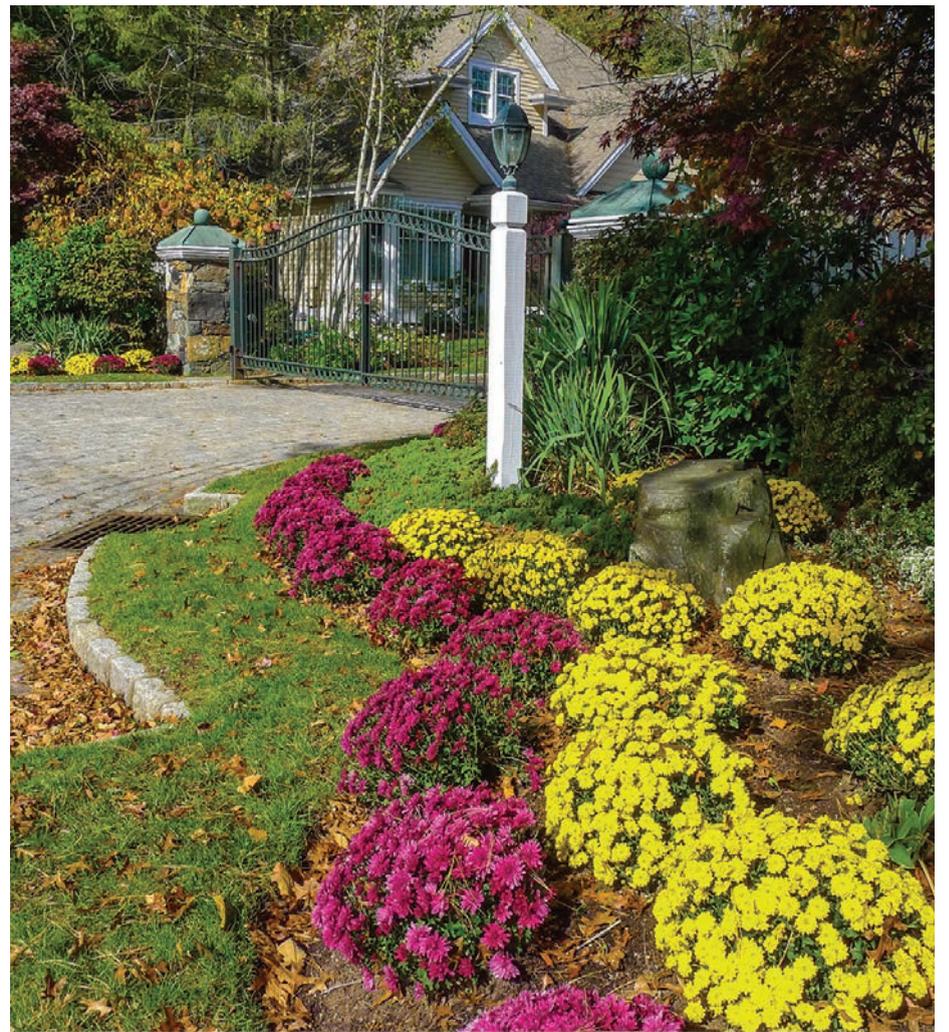
- Take inventory of the sun. Positioning a garden carefully means maximizing hours of sunlight, which begin to dwindle in the fall. Experts say gardens grow best in sunny locations that receive six hours of direct sunlight each day. This is where container gardens can be helpful, as they allow gardeners to move plants into spots that will get ample sunlight.

- Fill in landscaping gaps. Some fall plants can add color around the landscape and brighten up homes to add curb appeal. In addition to pansies and violas, asters, kale and chrysanthemums are fall blooms. Keep in mind

that mums can come back year after year. So take them out of those flower pots and get them into the ground. They can be enjoyed next year as well, sprouting in early spring and developing leaves and buds through late summer.

- Clean up unwanted growth. Fall is an ideal time to cut back spent vegetable plants and get rid of errant weeds. Rather than bagging leaves, mow them with a grass catcher and then add the mix to a vegetable garden as an excellent soil insulator. The nitrogen and carbon will fertilize the soil, enhancing growing possibilities and limiting weed growth.

- Propagate plants in the fall. As temperatures gradually begin to cool, start taking cuttings from perennials, gathering seed pods from azaleas and rhododendrons and dividing hardwood cuttings, says the resource Gardening Know



How. Consult with a garden center or horticulturist on the proper ways to propagate stems using rooting hormone and other techniques.

- Continue to water

plants. Water is essential in the fall and winter as roots can still be growing. Gradually reduce watering duration as plants go dormant.

Fall planting and

maintenance can extend gardening season and improve the chances of growing a healthy spring garden.

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Fireplace trends help create attractive, comfortable rooms

Fireplaces are useful features in a home. Fireplaces are sources of ambient heat and also add style to indoor spaces.

Fireplaces can complement just about any interior style. Fireplaces can be traditional and burn wood or connect to a home's natural gas supply for on-demand ambiance.

What's more, fireplaces may come in vented or ventless varieties, depending on homeowners' preferences and what is allowed by community building codes. That means a chimney or flue may not be needed — expanding the list of rooms where a fireplace can be installed.

Certain trends have emerged among fireplace fans in recent years. Here's a look at what's getting consumers fired up about these home decor elements.

- Minimalist style: Many

fireplaces are designed in neutral colors with minimal trim that directs focus on the fire and not the appliance. When the fireplace is not in use, it blends in with surroundings and will not compete for attention with other design elements.

- Convertible fireplaces: Homeowners can choose between open or sealed fireplaces. A convertible fireplace enables homeowners to have the best features of these options. A convertible fireplace can be converted to wood from gas, or the opposite, in as little as 30 minutes.

- Nature-inspired materials: Natural stone continues to be a material of choice in fireplace surrounds. Light colors work well for a fireplace, and also fit with today's lighter color interior design preferences. Natural stone

also works perfectly with both contemporary and rustic decor.

- Vintage fireplaces: Vintage continues to be a buzzword in 2022, and the choice to go vintage also applies to fireplace styles. A room decorated in vintage elements can be complemented with a vintage fireplace or one designed to look vintage.

- Integrate into wall decor: Fireplaces that are built right into a wall save space. One can have a television and a fireplace on the same wall. These types of fireplaces work well in modern home designs. Other fireplaces may be built into bookshelves or other wall features.

Fireplaces can improve the appeal of a home. Various trends are popular this year, making fireplaces highly coveted features.



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7 characteristics of modern houses

Homes contain a variety of components that appeal to homeowners with different ideas about the perfect place to call home. That starts with the style of a home.

Buildings are classified according to share components. A Craftsman style home will have a covered porch with a set of wide base columns, while a Cape Cod home is often defined by a gabled roof and dormer windows. Modern houses, which are sometimes called contemporary homes even though the terms are not interchangeable, will have their own sets of unique characteristics. Here's a look at seven features that make modern homes unique.

1. Minimalist approach: Contemporary and modern homes both employ an approach that leans toward minimalism, including clean

design lines. Spaces are open and airy without the clutter of too many ornate architectural details. While modern homes may have some curvature to their design, contemporary ones are all about an angular look.

2. Neutral color palette: Modern homes tend to utilize a neutral color palette. Modern homes may use 'earthy' elements, such as wood and brick, in ways that do not look rustic. Contemporary homes rely on a color palette of black and white with shades of gray or other neutral colors.

3. Geometric shapes: Modern homes have strong horizontal and vertical elements that showcase geometric shapes in their designs. Contemporary homes often have flat roofs, while modern homes may not.

4. Large, unadorned windows: Most modern homes showcase a lot of natural light by utilizing large windows that are not covered up by heavy window treatments or elements like shutters and thick trims. Large windows are the focus of the interior and shift attention to the view outdoors.

5. Open floor concept: A hallmark of modern interior design, the open concept floor plan removes many of the walls that tend to separate common areas of a home. This helps to foster the spread of natural light and maintains the emphasis on simplicity of design.

6. Smart elements: Thanks to the proliferation of smart technology, smart homes are cropping up with greater frequency. While smart devices can be included in any home



style, they tend to feel like they were designed specifically for modern homes. In a similar vein, modern homes may include environmentally friendly elements, such as solar panels, upcycled materials, added insulation, and energy efficient lighting.

7. Updated kitchen spaces: The clean lines and attention to technology and open space generally extends

to modern kitchens. Modern kitchens tend to feature efficient, top-tier appliances with additional storage and space amenities that keep the room from

feeling cluttered. While some may consider modern homes austere, many others are right at home among their clean lines and airy spaces.



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Signs your gutters are in need of repair

Fall is a great time to tackle projects around the house. The weather each fall allows homeowners to make improvements to their homes' exteriors without worrying about extreme heat or cold, while interior projects like painting are made easier because homeowners can open the windows to allow for proper ventilation.

Fall also marks a great time to prepare for upcoming projects that can make winter work that much easier. For example, fall is a great time to take stock of your gutters so you can address any issues before leaves begin to fall or the first snowstorm touches down.

Compromised gutters can contribute to water issues in basements and adversely affect a home's foundation if not addressed immediately, so it behooves homeowners to learn the signs that gutters are in need of repair or replacement.

• Gutter hanging off the home: Gutters were once installed predominantly with spikes. However, many industry professionals now install gutters with hanger brackets. Why the change? Spikes loosen over time, leading to the gutters hanging off the home. That can contribute to serious issues if left untreated. Gutters hanging off the home need not necessarily be

replaced, but rather secured to the home, ideally with hanger brackets instead of spikes. Brackets hook into the front of the gutter and are then screwed into the fascia of a home. A professional who specializes in gutter repair can perform this task relatively quickly, and it's an inexpensive yet highly effective solution.

• Gutter separation: Gutters that are no longer fastened together can leak and contribute to issues that affect the home's foundation, siding and appearance. Clogs and the accumulation of debris can cause gutters to separate because they are not designed to hold too much weight. Replacement of separated gutters may or may not be necessary depending on how big the problem is and the condition of the existing gutters. If replacement is not necessary, separated gutters may be remedied by securing the joints,

another relatively simple and inexpensive fix.

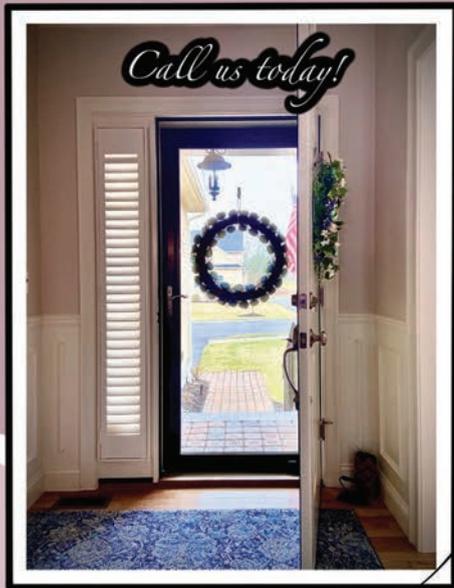
• Peeling exterior paint: Paint that appears to be peeling off of your home may indicate that water is seeping over the edge of the gutter closest to your home. When that happens, water is coming down the side of the house, causing the paint to peel. In such instances, replacing the gutters is often necessary.

• Basement flooding: Not all signs of deteriorating gutters are outside a home. Many a homeowner has been flummoxed by flooding in their basements, and such flooding can be caused by aging, ineffective gutters. That's because deteriorating gutters sometimes allow water to leak near the foundation of a home, contributing to basement flooding.

Fall is an ideal time to inspect gutters and have any issues fixed before leaves begin to fall or harsh winter weather arrives.

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Gourds, squashes and pumpkins, oh my!

Halloween takes place during a time of year characterized by earth-colored chrysanthemums, leaf-lined walkways and crisp autumn air. As colorful as the costumes children wear for trick-or-treating may be, nature's beauty is unsurpassed this time of year, and the scores of pumpkins, gourds and squashes on display only add to that colorful melange.

The Cucurbitaceae family may be best known for pumpkins, squash and gourds, but there actually are 800 species that belong to this family. While they share many of the same properties, these fruits each have their own unique attributes.

The main differences between squashes, gourds and pumpkins is their intended purposes - whether they're ornamental or edible.

Squash
Squashes come in summer and winter varieties.

Winter ones do not actually grow in the winter; in fact, they're harvested in late summer and early fall, but the name references the hard shell casing that protects the tender pulp inside. Zucchini are summer squash because their outer flesh is tender, while butternut, acorn, spaghetti, and hubbard squashes are winter squashes because they feature a tough skin. Even though it takes some effort to crack that shell, the dense, nutrient-rich flesh inside is well worth the workout.

Gourds
Gourds are essentially ornamental squashes; they aren't cultivated for eating. Instead they are bred to look beautiful and unique in autumn centerpieces. Types of gourds include autumn wing gourd, warted gourds, turban gourds, and bottle gourds. Each gourd is

unique in its shape and color.

Pumpkins
Pumpkins come in ornamental and edible varieties. Even though all pumpkins can be consumed, some taste better than others. Small pumpkins tend to be decorative because, according to Nutritious Life, they do not have enough meat inside to make them worthy of cooking. However, sugar pumpkins are best for baking and cooking favorite recipes, states the resource Pumpkin Nook.

The festive hues and flavors of squashes, gourds and pumpkins are one more thing that makes Halloween and autumn special.



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Opportunity knocks and Grafton Grill & Crust jumps in

BY ROD LEE

Steve Belfiore was probably just being modest or maybe it was because



Steve Belfiore, with son Drew (top), representing Grafton Grill & Crust and Mooving Cow (ice cream), and Nikki Hewey and Stacey Bernard from Post Office Pub, were among food establishment personnel taking part in Gazebo Palooza on September 17th. The event was a fundraiser for the fifth annual Small Stones Festival of the Arts (SSFA).

he and son Drew were busy serving food at the Gazebo Palooza to benefit the Small Stones Festival of the Arts on September 17th; either way, his description of the family's Grafton Grill & Crust restaurant was low key.

"We've been in business six years, and two years with Mooving Cow, our ice cream," Mr. Belfiore said.

"We're an American grill, fish, burgers, apps, and wood-fired pizza."

This only tells part of Grafton Grill & Crust's story; and it's an interesting one.

Upon relocating to Grafton fourteen or so years ago, Steve and Lori Belfiore wanted to take advantage of Steve's passion for food, which had manifested itself from the age of fourteen when he was shucking clams at a small oyster house in Woods Hole.

More recently, he had worked in the corporate wireless industry for Sprint, AT&T and Radio Shack. Lori had previously been employed with Bose in advertising.

Both were keen on seeing "a Boston-type restaurant" establish a presence in Grafton. It was, in their view, the only thing missing in their adopted community. They were initially thinking of a bagel shop,

pizza or an upscale burger eatery.

When the property that had been known by various names—The Wonder Restaurant, Sebastian's and Bridge Street Bistro—went up for auction and didn't sell, it was "now or never," the Belfiore's say.

Grafton Grill & Crust has thus found a home at 10 Bridge St. in North Grafton

MORE RESTAURANTS, DEARLY MISSED

Lawrence Bonetti of Uxbridge wrote this in an email on September 12th, in response to the previous week's Feisty Fork column lamenting once-popular restaurants in the Black-

stone Valley that are now long-shuttered and seemingly abandoned:

I read with interest your article about restaurants that have closed in the area. I would like to add two more.

NV Café (N. Uxbridge) Besides the good food, this place was famous for the tombstone erected at the front entrance, dedicated to the 1946 Red Sox and their famous loss to the St. Louis Cardinals in the World Series.

Kites Restaurant (S. Grafton) Famous for their steaks. [I am] not originally from the area, but I have visited all of the places mentioned. All gone but not forgotten.

News for The Feisty Fork? Contact Rod Lee at rodlee.1963@gmail.com or 774-232-2999.

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LIVING WITH LUKE

amyleclaire@hotmail.com

Luke reveals a stubborn side

BY AMY LECLAIRE

Life has been far more interesting with a puppy named Luke Valentino. He entered my life on Friday, March 25th at 11:00 a.m. He stole my heart at noon.

this is no exaggeration. Their love is unconditional, boundless. They see no baggage, hold no grudges, and appreciate us exactly as we are.

"You're such a good boy, Luke!" Positive affirmations are everywhere. Social media, inspirational quotes and Wall Art remind us to Be Positive and Live Well. Dogs naturally understand the vibe. "I really am a good boy." He smiles as dogs do, with genuine innocence

ing!" He's mastered having patience since he was eight weeks old. I want to sustain the achievement, one built on both our efforts. "Luke, go sit at your spot." He tap dances back to his spot and does his best to sit still but—

"She remembered the blueberries!!" I finally set the bowl down and another pie-eating contest begins. Sometimes I can't believe how much Luke Valentino embodies his name, one that contains the letters L, O, V, E (just as his cousin, Lincoln Veto did). Other times I can't believe how stubborn he is.

* * *

"Luke!!" I trot, barefooted, into my neighbor's backyard, where my pup has crossed a border of shrubs to chase after a bunny.

He zigs. He zags. He zooms. Then he finds himself in the middle of the road in front of both our houses. I watch him from a distance. A light bulb has gone off in his boxy puppy head. "How did I get here?" I watch him put two and two together. "What just happened? Something doesn't feel right. Where's my family?"

I approach him. "Get over here, Luke." He freezes to the sight of me. "Hi Momma." Then he shows me some sass. "Ha hah!" I lunge for his collar but he dodges me as though we're competing in a game of flag football. "Bet you can't catch me!"

Truth. I'm cannot catch a 55-pound puppy who's built like a miniature Rob Gronkowski. "Let's go back to Luke's house!" I reach into a pocket of invisible dog incentives. "I got something for Luke!" He knows the phrase. His head squares while he pauses to think it over. I've been very consistent with food rewards and am hoping to capitalize on the tactic. I move towards him.

"Let's play Keep Away instead!" Baby Gronk isn't sold on another kibble. He gallops further away from me then lowers his head in mischief, game on.

I have to be smarter. My pup is on the loose in the road and thinks he's being funny. "Bye, Luke." I cross over the sidewalk and head into my yard. I keep walking away until we're parted at a distance

curious enough to keep him engaged. "Where are you going? You're really going to leave me?" I make my way up to my deck and exaggerate the role of saddened Dog Mom. "I was hoping Luke would come home today." I even use his baby name. "I don't know what I'll do without my Lukey." He perks up and stiffens to my tone of voice. "I'm right here, Momma!!! Stay right there!! Coming home now!!!"

He rushes back to me as though auditioning for a role in Lassie. We reunite on the deck. "There's no place like home!" Dogs tell it like it is. I massage his ears. He lifts his head and smiles, his tongue hanging out of one side of his mouth. "Do you think I could have a few blueberries now that I've listened so well?"

Reverse psychology worked for a while. Until Luke's paws grew bigger, along with his will to do things his way. Walks have become more a chore than a score, and I'm partially to blame. I've introduced Luke to a variety of friends and he remembers exactly where they all live. He's wrestled and romped with Kaiser. He's played Chase with Rosie. He's pulled me onto Benny's front lawn for a quick game of let's-sniff-each-other.

Luke's popularity, however charming, has become problematic.

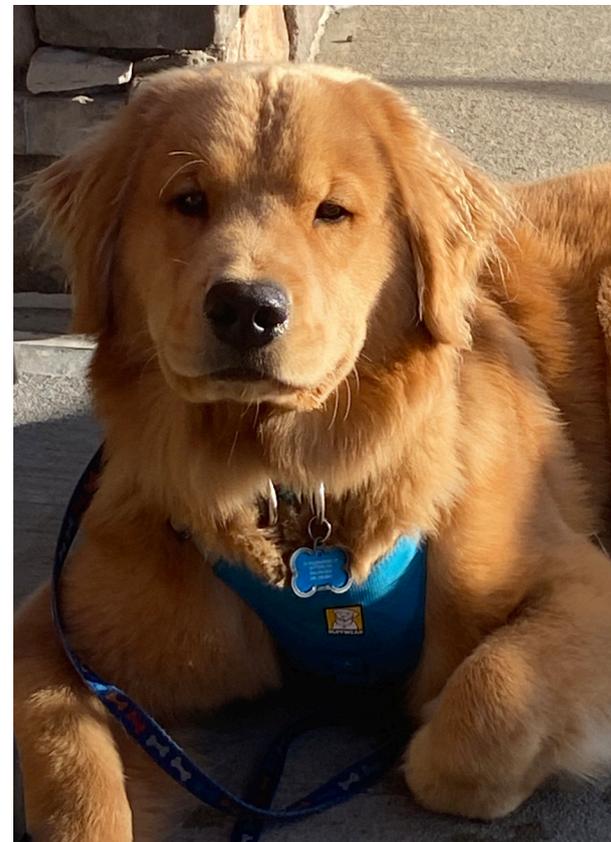
Every time we pass by the homes of his friends, he stops and sits. "I'm stopping to play with Kai." He glances up at me casually. "I'm not moving until I see my friend." My puppy appears calm and poised, as though he has all day to wait. Truthfully, he does. He's a dog. He lives in the moment and has no agenda. As a Dog Person, I empathize at first. "Kai has been a good friend, hasn't he?" It's the truth. Kai has allowed a feisty Luke to jump on his back, tear at his ears and be aggressive. Kai is twice Luke's size. He could easily pin my pup to the ground. Instead, a dog with a notably high self-esteem backs off and lets the crazy pup win. I endorse the friendship. Still, my patience has run thin. "Kai went for a ride, Luke." The white lie slips out easily.

"Woo, woo, woo, woo." My cover is blown. Kai calls back to his young



Above, Luke plays with Ellie.

Below, Luke at eight months old.



Luke sits at his spot.

"There you are! I can't believe it's you again!" He awakens to the sight of me and wiggles in a circle around me. The routine is utterly fantastic.

"Hi Luke!" We've been apart for over nine hours and I'm so ready to reunite. "How is my puppy?" He tells me how he is with whimpers of joy, a sneaker in his mouth. "I just can't believe this is happening!! You're here again and it's going to be such a great day!" Dogs are ecstatic about being with us—and

and appreciation for living. "Watch how good I am at finding my spot. I'll go sit down and you get my breakfast ready. Sound good?" He sits regally, posing like a dog model preparing for a headshot, then studies me. "She's going to make coffee, fill my water bowl and scoop up my cup of dog food, then add some water." His eyes are glued to my moves. "I just can't believe this is happening. My meal really is on its way!"

He jumps off of his spot. "Let's just get on with eat-

friend from the front window. "I see you, Luke! I want to play, too, but I'm door-blocked! Maybe there's a way you can let me out!"

I feel vulnerable suddenly, manipulated by a pair of dogs with a bond. Luke pulls and stretches closer to his doggie pal in the window. He's panting and desperate, as though his life suddenly depends on a reunion.

C'mon, Luke. We need to go see Daddy." I pull him forward while he puts on

his brakes, apparently unimpressed by the thought of Daddy. "Let's go home." He retracts and slips out of his harness until it rests on his head like the veil of a nun. "Luke, please." I pull him some more. His face folds up to convey The Joker's smile. "Aren't I cute?" The struggle lingers and starts to feel embarrassing. My neighbors have very possibly witnessed the scene

LUKE

continued on page 23

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THE CAR DOCTOR

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A little corrosion is enough to cause problems



BY JOHN PAUL

one ground a little corrosion it enough to cause problems.

Q. My 2017 GM truck has both low beams out. One day they worked and one day they didn't. I have a friend with a fancy computer scanner, and he said there were three codes. The codes were for headlight control circuits. What kind of problems am I looking at?

A. I suspect there is nothing wrong more than the bulbs need replacing. Headlight bulbs have pretty specific hour ratings and they both likely failed within a few days of each other and you never noticed until both failed. Start with some basic testing at the bulbs.

Q. In a past column, you had a reader that was looking for a mid-sized SUV that had some off-road capability but wasn't too "macho." I believe you recommended the Honda Passport and maybe a Subaru. I'm actually looking for something a bit more rugged. I looked at Jeeps, but there are just too many of them. I looked at the Ford Bronco, but there is a long wait and dealers are marking them up too high. What am I missing?

to the ground, a cartoon just run over. His eyes roll up to me in mischief. "I just want to play with Kai."

Somehow I muster up the energy to scoop him beneath the legs and shuffle ahead as though carrying an overweight lamb. I set him down at the next house, thankfully that of a non-dog owner. "Let's go, Luke." He

A. You are correct there are a lot of Jeeps because they are still wildly popular, and some people are paying \$10,000 or more for a Bronco. One vehicle that may work is the Toyota 4Runner. This is a solid vehicle that although matured has not lost its truck roots. The 4Runner is very capable off-road and has all the latest safety and convenience technology. The non-turbo-charged V-6 engine may seem dated by contemporary standards, but it makes 270 horsepower and can tow 5000 pounds. The interior is comfortable and the seats supportive. Fuel economy on the other hand is terrible with an EPA rating of 17 MPG combined city/highway. If fuel economy isn't a concern the 4Runner by Toyota may be a good fit.

Q. I have a 2010 Hyundai Elantra and the passenger side air conditioner vent has cold air coming from it, but the driver's side is warm. This is a basic car, so no fancy AC system with dual temperature settings. What is wrong?

A. The first place to start is to inspect the air conditioner pressure readings. At 12 years

trots beside me, the incident already a distant memory (because he's a dog), and we make our way home. I bring him a bowl of fresh ice water and place it down on his favorite spot at the front steps. Then, as though bobbing for apples, he draws out cube after cube and chews. He reminds me of Charlie Brown's Snoopy,

old the system has probably lost some refrigerant. Since the air conditioner evaporator is located on the passenger side if in fact the system is low on "charge" it is possible the passenger side would be cooler than the driver's side air. If this is the case, the system should be checked for leaks. If there appears to be no leaks, recharging the system should get the air conditioner fully operational again.

Q. My 2015 Ford Escape has the oil light on. The engine is quiet, and I replaced the oil sender unit with a Ford part and the light is still on. Any ideas?

A. Although your ear tells you the engine is quiet, I would still want to check the oil pressure with a mechanical gauge. You should see 30-60 pounds of oil pressure at 2000 RPM. In this case I did a little research on AllData (the technical database I use) in their community page. I found a very similar concern. In this case the BLU/BRN wire from the oil sender to the car's computer was shorted against the engine block near the starter motor. When the wire was repaired, the light operated normally. This would be a

crunching away at the ice cubes casually, as though the world is put on hold for him. Ice chips and water dribble from his mouth while I kiss his head. Luke Valentino has a stubborn side, but I still love him to pieces.

good place to start.

Q. I just purchased a classic 1994 Chevy Caprice wagon for my beach house. This boat of a car is powered by a fuel injected 5.7-liter V-8 engine. It is like driving around on your sofa. I love this car; I can put my wind surfing stuff in it and carry just about anything. The one problem is the engine stumbles, but never stalls. I have replaced the spark-plugs and the spark looks strong and bright and the check engine light is off. The engine runs smooth so I'm guessing compression is good. Any ideas?

A. If this was being diagnosed in a shop, the next step or perhaps the first step would have been to check for engine codes and fuel trim reading. The next step

would be to look at fuel pressure. In some cases, technicians will hook up a fuel gauge and mount it where they can see it. Then drive the car until it stumbles. With the ignition ON Engine OFF there should be 41.0 to 47.0 pounds of fuel pressure. With the engine running there should be 3-10 PSI less. When driving the car if the fuel pressure drops off considerably the issue could be a clogged fuel filter or weak fuel pump.

John Paul is AAA Northeast's Car Doctor. He has over forty years' experience and is an ASE-certified master technician. He will answer readers' questions each week. Email your car questions to jpaul@aanortheast.com. Follow John on Twitter @johnfpaul and friend him on Facebook, mrjohnfpaul.

Q. I have a 15-year-old Chevrolet truck with a V-8 engine, and it cranks forever before it starts. I have replaced the fuel pump, fuel pump relay and the computer and it still doesn't start correctly. I have spent way too much money and my wife said just get rid of the truck. I don't have a lot of skill with voltmeters; is there something else I should be looking for?

A. Replacing parts without testing circuits can result in spending a lot of money with no results. Start with looking at power and ground to the fuel pump relay. The first place I would start is to look for a grounding block and check the connections. I have seen on multiple occasions that where several items share

from high windows. "Cute pup but, gosh, he's stubborn. Nice girl, terrible dog trainer." My tone of voice darkens with impatience. "Luke Valentino!" I reach for the back loop of his harness, but he flattens himself

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REAL ESTATE

Buyers are regaining some of their negotiation power in today's housing market



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

If you're thinking about buying a home today, there's good news. Even though it's still a sellers' market, it's a more moderate sellers' market than last year. And the days of feeling like you may need to waive contingencies (home inspections, appraisals, etc.) or pay drastically over asking price to get your offer considered may be coming to a close.

Today, you should

have less competition and more negotiating power as a buyer. That's because buyer demand and bidding wars is easing this year. So, if bidding wars were the biggest factor that had you frustrated, here are two trends that may be just what you need to re-enter the market.

The return of contingencies. Over the last two years, more buyers were willing to skip important steps in the home buying process, like inspections or the appraisal, to try to win

a bidding war. But now, fewer people are waiving the inspection and appraisal.

The latest data from the National Association of Realtors (NAR) shows the percentage of buyers waiving their home inspection and appraisal is declining. And a recent survey from realtor.com confirms more sellers are accepting offers that include these conditions today. According to their August study:

95% of sellers reported buyers requested a home

inspection; also, 67% of sellers negotiated with buyers on repairs as a result of the inspection findings

This goes to show buyers are more able to include these conditions in their offers today and negotiate as needed based on the outcome of the inspection.

Sellers are more willing to help with closing costs. Generally, closing costs range between 2% and 5% of the purchase price for the home. Before the pandemic, it was a common negotiation tactic for sellers to cover some of the buyer's closing costs to sweeten the deal. This didn't happen as much during the peak buyer frenzy over the past two years. Today, as the market shifts and demand slows, data from realtor.com suggests this is making a comeback. A recent article shows 32% of sellers paid

some or all of their buyer's closing costs. This may be a negotiation tool you'll see as you go to purchase a home. Just keep in mind, limits on closing cost credits are set by your lender and can vary by state and loan type. Work closely with your loan advisor to understand how much a seller can contribute to closing costs in your area.

So regardless of the extremely competitive housing market of the past several years, today's data suggests negotiations are starting to come back on the table. This is good news if you're planning to enter the housing market.

To find out how the market is shifting in your area, connect with a team member of Marzeottigroup.net/617-519-1871 or your trusted Realtor today.

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SPORTS

Numbers are up, Shepherd Hill girls cross country team aiming high

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Over the years the girls cross-country squad at Shepherd Hill Regional High School has been typically a formidable team with resilient athletes, but once the Covid pandemic hit things changed course for the Rams.

“Historically we’ve been a strong girls cross country team, but Covid caused our numbers to plummet,” Shepherd Hill Cross Country Coach Nicole Fossas said. “I’m not exactly sure why, but girls stayed away from the sport. This year numbers are starting to rebound.”

Running in the Midwatch A League, Shepherd Hill will have eight seniors, one sophomore and five freshmen take to the starting line this fall. According to the coach, things have looked good during the early part of the season and with the incoming freshmen, who look to contribute, the Rams should be stronger than last year.

Last fall Shepherd Hill finished 5th in the Division 1C Tournament and went onto the All-State Meet, where the team finished 21st.

Looking to get Shepherd Hill back to the post-season will be senior co-captains Emily Mullen and Grace Bateman. Mullen, who grabbed an eighth-place finish at the State Sectionals, looks to be the team’s number one runner, but Bateman will push her for that top spot. Mullen posted a personal best time of 19:10 while Bateman was at 20:30 last year.

“They are both fantastic runners and as captains will set the tone and culture of the team encouraging the younger girls to put in the work,” the coach said. “They are a great overall group that works hard and wants to win. Grace is already running at last year’s pace and should do better as the season goes on.”

The team’s third runner will be newcomer sophomore Meghan Stevens. The first-year cross-country runner has run winter and



The 2022 Shepherd Hill girls cross country team. Photo submitted by Coach Fossas.

spring track for the school. Senior Karlee White will be right behind Stevens in the fourth spot.

Following the top four runners, Fossas has two freshmen who look to be a force on the varsity level for Shepherd Hill. Emily Hultgren and Megan Andress have already shown their prowess during their first junior varsity race.

“Emily won the junior

varsity race with a time of 20:50, some two and a half minutes better than her closest competitor. Megan, who had a good summer, finished fifth,” Fossas said. “It was their first-ever high school race, and I wanted them to get comfortable before running with the varsity team.”

Both girls look as though they are ready to run with the varsity squad. Both girls

ran a hard and poised race, and the coach has high hopes for their futures.

Another athlete looking to get back into running the cross-country course is senior Lilly Bateman, twin sister to Grace. Unfortunately, she was injured for the majority of the season last fall and didn’t get to run until the very end of the season. However, she has worked extremely hard

during the off-season and is ready to show improvement on the course this year.

With a solid core of girls taking to the courses in the Midwatch A League Fossas believes that the Shepherd Hill runners will be in the mix, while looking to improve upon their fifth place Divisional Meet finish in addition to getting to the State Tournament.

TIPS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING

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Failure to plan: Is it planning to fail?



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

Benjamin Franklin once said, “If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.”

But as you chart your financial course, what steps should you take to help you keep moving forward to where you want to go?

Consider these suggestions:

Establish and quantify your goals. Throughout your life, you’ll have short-term goals, such as an overseas vacation or a home renovation, and long-term goals, the most important of which may be a comfortable retirement. You’ll want to identify all your goals and put a “price tag” on them.

Of course, it’s not always possible to know exactly how much it will cost to achieve each goal, but you can develop reasonably good estimates, revising them as needed.

Create an investment strategy to achieve your goals. Once you know how much your goals will cost, you can create the appropriate savings and investment strategies to potentially help you reach the needed amounts. For your retirement goal, you will likely need to contribute regularly to your IRA and 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan. But for shorter-term goals, you may need to explore other types of investments. For all our investment moves, though, you’ll need to consider your risk tolerance. You won’t want your portfolio to have such a high-risk level that you’re constantly uncomfortable with the inevitable fluctuations of the financial markets. On the other hand, you won’t want to invest

so conservatively that you jeopardize your chances of achieving the growth you need to reach your goals.

Control your debts. We live in an expensive world, so it’s not easy to live debt-free. And some debts, such as your mortgage, obviously have value. But if you can control other debts, especially those that carry high interest rates, you can possibly free up money you can use to boost your savings and investments.

Prepare for obstacles. No matter how carefully you follow the strategies you’ve created to achieve your goals, you will, sooner or later, run into obstacles, or at least temporary challenges. What if you incur a large, unexpected expense, such as the sudden need for a new car or a major home repair? If you aren’t prepared for these costs, you might be forced to dip into your long-term investments—and every time you do that, you might slow your progress toward

achieving your goals. To help prevent this, you should build an emergency fund containing several months’ worth of living expenses.

Review your strategies. When you first created your financial strategy, you might have planned to retire at a certain age. But what if you eventually decide to retire earlier or later? Such a choice can have a big impact on what you need from your investment portfolio—and when. And your circumstances may change in other ways too. That’s why it’s a good idea to review your strategy periodically to make sure it still aligns with your up-to-date objectives.

None of us can guarantee that our carefully laid plans will always yield the results we want. But by taking the right steps at the right times, you can greatly improve our chances.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your

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CHIEF'S CORNER

swojnar@dudleypolice.com

Drug Take-Back Program - Oct. 29

BY CHIEF
STEVEN J. WOJNAR
DUDLEY POLICE
DEPARTMENT

I wanted to take this opportunity to inform residents that on Saturday, October 29th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., the Dudley Police Department and the Drug Enforcement

Administration (DEA) will once again give the public an opportunity to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted

prescription drugs. This has been a popular and much requested program in the past. Since these usually take place in the spring and fall, people have inquired about it. I wanted to take this opportunity to remind everyone of the details.

The Drug Take Back has been held several times over the years in Dudley. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked. This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health need. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses. Studies show that most of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine

cabinet. In addition, people are advised that their usual methods for disposing of unused medicines—flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash—both pose potential safety and health hazards. Events such as these greatly assist the public in properly disposing of these medications. Thanks to the effort of District Attorney Joseph Early's Office, we have a permanent Drug Disposal Kiosk located in our Police Station Lobby. These items can now be disposed of locally at any time during the year. Other communities have these kiosks at their police stations or other town buildings. If you are not from Dudley, be sure to check with your community for one of these disposal locations.

In addition to the prescription disposal, we will once again work with of-

ficials from UMass Hospital at Harrington to dispose of medical sharps (needles, etc.) on this same day. Collection bins will be on hand to dispose of these items properly and safely as well.

A number of these programs will take place on October 29th in communities all over the area. If you are not a Dudley resident, please check with your local officials for a disposal site near you. In Dudley, bring your medications to The Dudley Police Department located inside the Dudley Municipal Complex at 71 West Main Street Dudley, Ma. Please take some time over the next few weeks to check your medicine cabinets for old or unused medications and plan to drop them off for safe disposal. We thank everyone in advance for their participation in this worthwhile program.



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TALES FROM BEYOND

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Multiple spirits haunt the Shanley Hotel – Part II

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

Here is the second part of the two-part series on the haunted Shanley Hotel in upstate New York.

In 2001 the property was purchased and renovated by Salvatore Nicosia. Sadly Salvatore passed away in 2017, and one year later, the building was once again abandoned and up for sale. It reopened under new management in 2018 and has since become a destination for paranormal enthusiasts. Connecticut Paranormal Research Team founder Christine Peer worked with Sal at the hotel on weekends for eight years. She and her husband, Dan, witnessed countless paranormal phenomena.

According to Christine, in 1915, Dr. Walter Nelson Thayer backed his car out of the alley between his home and the hotel and accidentally ran over a boy named Jonathan. Jonathan was taken to his third-floor room, where he died

a few days later. His body was taken for burial, but his spirit remained, and to this day, he is one of the more active ghosts in the hotel. Jonathan's spirit became attached to Christine more than the others. The husband and wife research team would learn much more about the Shanley during their tenure there. Christine stated, "not only are there residual haunts, most of the haunts are intelligent. Each night the occurrences guests and [I] experienced would always be different. It was like the hotel was still in operation to the deceased that once visited. You never knew which spirit was going to come through and let you know they were there. I, along with several guests, have experienced seeing an apparition somewhere in the building, hearing footsteps going up and down the hallways when everyone is in one location together and seeing and hearing door knobs turning and doors opening or closing on their own."

Christine would help get the rooms ready for the arrival of guests. She considered those moments "quality time" with the spirits who would often call her name or use other ways to let her know they were there with her. One strange incident in particular sometimes happened while she was folding laundry downstairs.

She would hear a ball bouncing on the staircase in the hall. As she approached the staircase, she would watch the ball roll from the third-floor landing, turn the corner, bounce down the stairs to the second floor, and eventually roll into the room where she was folding the laundry. She would carry the ball back up the stairs and place it back in the room where Jonathan died. Within a few minutes, the ball would come rolling back into the room she was working in. It appeared that Jonathan felt like playing a game.

One time, while her daughters were staying the

weekend, Christine decided to give them a tour of the third-floor rooms. As soon as they came to Jonathan's room, they all heard a little boy's voice say, "Don't be scared; come in and play." Her daughters became frightened and ran back downstairs. They would later ask to buy toys for the little ghost boy so he would have some to play with. Guests also began to bring toys for both Jonathan and Rosie.

Christine, Dan, and their paranormal research team continue to make the Shanley Hotel their home base. They are always excited about visiting there because they never know who will "pop by" to visit and chat with them.

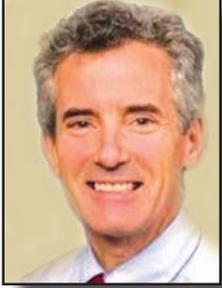
The hotel has 35 rooms, secret passages, a basement, an attic, quite an illustrious history, and plenty of ghosts. Guests can bring their own equipment, or it is furnished for use. The hotel also has ghost hunting equipment in the gift shop for sale. No weapons or alcohol are

allowed on the premises. For more information and booking, go to www.

thehauntedshanleyhotel.com.

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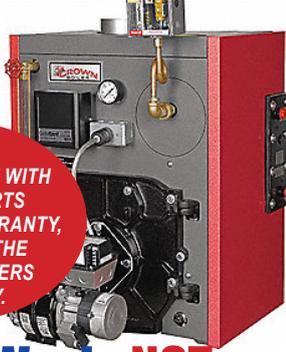
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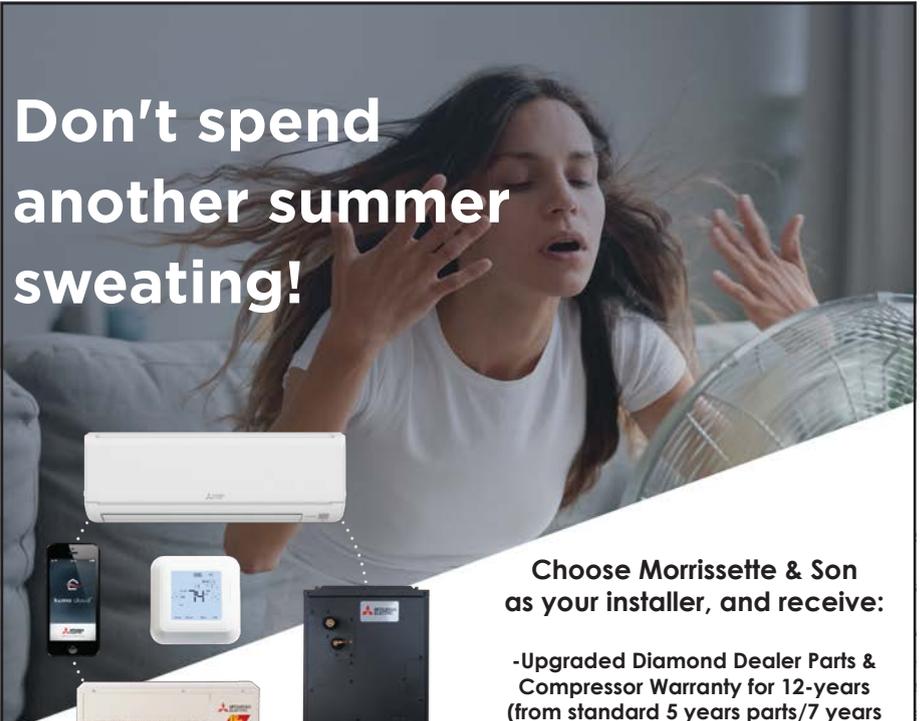
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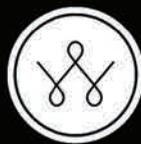
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