

## Small Stones Festival of the Arts wraps up October 21-23

BY ROD LEE

Although most of the fifth annual Small Stones Festival of the Arts has already taken place, the concluding weekend is well worth a look, highlighted by author and hometown boy Nicholas Gage's talk "A Writer's Odyssey" from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. on Friday, October 21st in the Community Room of the Grafton Public Library.

A collaboration of five organizations—the Worcester County Camera Club, the Shakespeare Club of Grafton, Apple Tree Arts, the Blackstone Valley Art Association and The Claffin Hill Symphony Orchestra—the SSFA brings the best painting, photography, music and literature in the area to the town of Grafton every fall.

For Kenneth C. Crater, president of Grafton Arts Inc., the SSFA is worth the effort he and other volunteers put into staging an event that directly precedes the big show. This being Gazebo Palooza, the latest version of which was held on September 17th under sunny skies.

"We have so many restaurants, a raffle, a silent auction and a number of vendors," Mr. Crater said, of Gazebo Palooza. "I originally brought this idea to Apple



Kenneth C. Crater, president of Grafton Arts Inc., talks about the Small Stones Festival of the Arts during Gazebo Palooza. SSFA runs from October 14th to the 23rd and all events are free.

Tree Arts. They had restored the Great Hall (next to the Grafton Town Common) and there wasn't a lot going on. I thought, 'why not a multi-genre and multi-artist program. It's turned

into something a lot larger than we had thought possible. Always

### SMALL STONES

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## Healey strikes the right notes in remarks to BV Chamber

BY ROD LEE

If Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey is successful in her bid to win the contest for governor next month,

engaging and on-message from the start to the finish of her talk as guest speaker for the Chamber's first get-together of the fall, Ms. Healey, who was looking sharp in an autumn-colored blazer and



Attorney General Maura Healey addresses the September 29th breakfast meeting of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce.

she will probably look back at an appearance at a Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce breakfast meeting on September 29th as a significant step along the way. Petite, personable, polite,

black slacks, appeared to make a good impression on those in attendance at the Charles F. Minney

### HEALEY

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## SMALL STONES

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in our mind was to get the painters and photographers involved and give them a chance to sell their work close to the holidays. It's been a labor of love for them but a chance to work some magic too. They are so encouraging and grateful. For some, it's their first opportunity to get published."

"I was on the first committee" for Gazebo Palooza, Bonnie Frederico said, while seated at a picnic table. "I try to be a jack of all trades, wherever I'm needed. Today I'm working on the silent auction."

The Small Stones Festival of the Arts has grown and so have the entries, Ms. Frederico said.



Mark Manzella of Worcester performs at Gazebo Palooza.

The good news for those who haven't yet sampled this year's SSFA is that the exhibition of artists' painting and photographs will be on display in the Great

Annie Adams Fields in a production of "Victorian Gossip Girl" at the Grafton Public Library from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

As for Mr. Gage, his remarkable career includes his work with the New York Times as an award-winning investigative reporter. He is also the author of seven books, including "Eleni," a searing account of his mother's life and death during the Greek Civil War. The book has been translated into thirty-two languages, made into a film and hailed by critics as "one of the rare books in which the power of art re-creates the full historical truth."

His coming-of-age memoir, "A Place for Us," recounts his struggles adjusting to a new life as a young immigrant to Worcester in the 1950s.

Mr. Gage also produced the Oscar-nominated film "The Godfather Part III."

The juried exhibition of

painting and photography is a staple of the Small Stones Festival of the Arts, with more than five hundred entries received and one hundred forty-four selected for showing in the Great Hall.

These works are also featured in a hardcover printed catalog of the exhibition, standing as a permanent record of each year's activity.

Dana Wilson, a spokesperson for the SSFA, invites all interested persons to respond when "our next Art Call goes live," tentatively scheduled to occur in July of 2023.

More details can be found at smallstonesfestival.org.

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

Hall from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Friday, October 21st, from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 22nd, and from noon to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 23rd.

Saturday's schedule also includes an appearance by

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## HEALEY

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VFW Post 3329 in Millbury.

This, after arriving late. “Is she here?” Chamber President and CEO Jeannie Hebert asked, shortly after 8:00 a.m.

“Yes, but give her two minutes,” came the reply.

Ms. Healey more than made up for the tardiness, which didn’t amount to anything anyway, with an informative talk and by patiently answering a number of questions afterward. She also spent time with several members of the media before departing with her trusty press secretary, Karissa Hand, by her side.

An overriding concern of Ms. Hebert’s, as expressed to this publication a few weeks ago, was whether Ms.



Bob Minarik, lead economic development official in Douglas, uses a hand-held microphone to ask Maura Healey a question about the lack of infrastructure to support “pad-ready sites” in the community.

Healey will be as attentive to the Blackstone Valley as Gov. Charlie Baker and Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito have been. The perception is that Ms. Healey isn’t as familiar with Central Massachusetts and the Blackstone Valley as

they are. Ms. Healey addressed this very subject more than once, however, effectively putting the matter to rest with her oft-repeated assertion that she wants to be “governor for all the

people.”

Ms. Healey even commended her host on a comment Ms. Hebert made at the outset of the meeting even though she wasn’t in the room to hear it at the time; namely, that the Chamber is the only organization of its kind in the U.S. “to build our own education training center.”

“I know this Chamber is a force to be reckoned with and punches above its weight,” Ms. Healey said, in acknowledgement of its achievements under Ms. Hebert’s direction—a principal example of which is the education hub on Linwood Ave. in Whitinsville.

Ms. Healey likewise punches above her weight.

“The basketball thing throws people, because I only stand five-foot-four,” she said, with a smile.

The eldest of five children, she was born in Massachusetts but grew up in Hampton Falls, N.H., a community still claiming a population of “only about two thousand people,” she said. “I was raised mostly by my mom. My mother sold her wedding ring in order to build a basketball court for us. I worked at the Hampton Beach Casino... and learned more there than at Harvard.”

Getting to the heart of her speech, she said “I think Massachusetts is the best state in the country. The No. 1 concern I have is affordability. The average price for a home in this area is over \$500,000. We have a housing issue across all sectors, which is why I have called for a secretary of housing with a dedicated focus.”

Tax relief, affordable and

safe public transit, maintaining sustained investments with Chapter 90 monies and responding to the needs of her constituents if elected governor are all top-of-mind, she said.

“I said to the mayors yesterday, ‘I want your wish lists.’”

Ms. Healey comes over as something of a charmer. But she also has a reputation as being a woman of steel, as evidenced by having taken on “big banks and prosperous for-profit colleges” as AG.

She realizes that the city of Boston commands much attention.

“I think too much of the economic focus has been in Boston. Let’s spread the wealth!” she said.

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# Finally, an official grand opening for Mickey’s Car Wash



BY ROD LEE

Tammy Bourakis hasn’t forgotten the hard early days she and her son Kyle Nigosian experienced with their startup venture Mickey’s Car Wash on

Galaxy Pass in the Pleasant Valley Crossing in Sutton.

“We applied for our building permit in February of 2020 and then full-blown Covid hit,” she says. “So we were shut down.”

Despite this setback,

Mickey’s Car Wash & Detail Shop has done “really great” since.

A celebration of how far Mickey’s has come will occur with an official Grand Opening of the retail, detailing and pet wash

components of the business on Saturday, November 12th from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The event will feature a ribbon-cutting ceremony with the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce at 10:00 a.m., food trucks, holiday gifts, demonstra-

tions, promotions, and live entertainment.

“It’s been awesome,” Ms. Bourakis said. “It’s great, it doesn’t even feel like work. I get to work with my son every day and my other son, Jason Richard, is in the band that will be playing.

He’s a drummer.”

Now, the first time, she said, “we will have four businesses in one.”

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# Xpressly Yours ... a letter from the editor

## Museum deftly captures Samuel Slater's perilous journey



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



*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.*

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 fledgling industrialist Samuel Slater's was in setting sail for America in 1789 at the age of twenty-one and bringing with him from

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 men-

tor, 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 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 prenuptial! 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](mailto:rodlee.1963@gmail.com) or 774-232-2999.-

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# Networking is backbone of WSN's aim for continued growth

BY ROD LEE

No one needs to tell members of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's Women's Success Network (WSN) how important connections made through face-to-face contact with other professionals in various business and social settings are.

As the WSN's Pat Hurton says, the word 'network' "is in our title."

The WSN's Pat Baker, a senior vice president/manager with UniBank, puts it like this:

"Our WSN networking events are places where dreams are revealed, partnerships forged, friendships made, mentors found, and new beginnings start to take shape. It is where resources are offered and skills are shared. We are women committed to helping other women achieve their vision of success."

The results of a study conducted by the Kellogg School of Management underscores the importance of networking for women. Professor Brian Uzzi, a co-author of the study, says 77% of the highest-achieving women in the study had strong ties with an inner circle of two to three other women. The research also showed that women who can share career advice are nearly three times more likely to get a better job than women who don't have this support.

Jeannie Hebert, president and CEO of the Blackstone Valley Chamber and the force behind formation of the Women's Success Network, said dur-



Alise Breton, Jeannie Hebert, Pat Hurton and Heather Elster are four professionals who have benefitted from membership in the Women's Success Network (WSN) of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce.

ing a telephone conversation on September 19th that networking has been "one of the most important aspects of my career."

Over the years, Ms. Hebert said, "I have been able to meet and work with a number of people who have given me valuable mentorship. In every business I've worked in, dental hygiene, candy, the CVB (Convention & Visitors Bureau), WICN and of course the Chamber, networking with different individuals gives you a different perspective; and when you build your repertoire you can always reach out to anyone" from this pool of contacts for support.

Ms. Hebert cites establishment of the education hub within the Chamber's

offices on Linwood Ave. in Whitinsville as evidence of this. The hub is flourishing.

"In building the school, for instance, I didn't know anything about that. Jack Healy of MassMEP encouraged me, before he retired," she said.

Like so many women in the workplace, Jeannie Hebert initially found networking to be somewhat of a scary proposition.

"It was very imposing at first," she said. "I didn't want to go to events without someone with me! I chuckle about that today. It's off-putting until you get your sea legs and find your voice."

"Everyone is afraid of networking at first."

"WSN is about putting people at ease."

Ms. Hurton notes that networking "is a significant component of our mission. It is not just exchanging business cards; it is building relationships based on trust involving give and take. It is about helping people know who you are and it is about giving so you can help others."

As a newcomer to the area, Paula Bertou says the Women's Success Network has been every bit as welcoming to her as Whitinsville-based Fulcrum Acoustic co-founder David Gunness was.

"I moved here in May from upstate New York and found out about WSN through emails—we are members of the Blackstone Valley Chamber," Ms. Bertou said. "I enjoyed meeting everyone involved. We

went to a steamers event and I ran into some of the ladies there. Heather Elster is right across the street from me at the Community Center (on Main St., opposite the Shop) so I chatted with her. I am on the WSN's Community Support Committee. It's interesting to see the leadership at work."

With Fulcrum Acoustic, a professional loudspeaker manufacturer whose products are known for their "stunning output and unmatched clarity even at high SPLs in the smallest enclosures possible" according to the company, "I have been doing accounting and admin stuff and my job is to know what kind of services are available to us," Ms. Bertou said.

WSN is one of these,



UniBank's Pat Baker says networking opportunities made available to members of the BV Chamber's Women's Success Network are beneficial in a number of ways.

for her.

More information about the Women's Success Network can be found on the Chamber's website, www.blackstonevalley.org.

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



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The menu is available on the town website, www.townofmillbury.org  
Or our Millbury Senior Center Facebook page.  
A 48 hour reservation is required.

**MILLBURY FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM**

The Millbury Senior Center's Friendly Visitor Program is a service that we provide to the seniors in our community. This program offers companionship and support to our elderly here in town. Volunteers can visit people at their homes, make a weekly friendly phone call

or provide transportation for those who would like to visit and meet at the Senior Center.

For more Information on the Friendly Visitor Program please call us at 508-865-9154

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& required documentation 508-865-9154

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# Emanuel Lutheran Church initiatives

Emanuel's Closet thrift store, which has been in operation since August of 2020; we offer "gently-loved" clothing and housewares at very reasonable cost, in response to Christ's command to serve our neighbors. "The Closet" provides people from the community a place to shop with dignity in a respectful, welcoming setting. Shoppers can purchase gently used and new clothing as well as household items while interacting with our

caring staff. Merchandise is changed frequently so you'll always find something different. Emanuel's Closet is open Saturdays from 9 AM - 2 PM; it is closed on holiday weekends.

**Yard Sales** and our annual **Harvest Fair** allow our neighbors to interact with our church in ways that are not necessarily faith-based. These are opportunities to "get to know" our community better.

The annual **Giving Tree** initiative supports the efforts of Florence House, local nursing facilities, and the students of the Quinsigamond Elementary School.

**Lutheran Inter-parish Youth Group (LIPY)** provides service and fellowship opportunities for the teens of several area Lutheran parishes.

**Back-to-School support** for local students is provided through our backpack and school supply drive through our connection with Quinsigamond Elementary School.

Our ongoing **Food Drive** partners with the Quinsigamond Community Center to provide non-perishables for families of young children at the Guild of St. Agnes and Quinsigamond Elementary School.

"We Care Kits" are distributed to people that our congregants might find in need of basic needs such as water, snacks, etc.

A collaborative **Meal Packaging** event with **The Outreach Program** resulted in providing nearly 18,000 meals for our needy neigh-

bors.

These groups and organizations call Emanuel Lutheran "home":

**Girl Scouts and Brownies**  
**Worcester Men of Song Barbershop Chorus**

**Quinsigamond Alcoholics Anonymous**

**Pakachoag Music School's Music Together®** program for birth to 5-year-olds and their parents. The school has also founded the **Quinsigamond Youth Theatrical Company** in partnership with Emanuel Lutheran Church. Thanks to a grant from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, eligible elementary school students may participate in this program at no cost.

At election time, we serve as a **polling site for local, state, and national elections.**

As we celebrate our 125<sup>th</sup> year we look forward in faith and hope to being able to serve our members, our neighbors, and any who are seeking a place for worship, fellowship, and servanthood in our community.

*Thomas Houston, Licensed Lay Minister  
 Emanuel Lutheran Church, ELCA*

*All persons are welcome to join us in worship at 9:30 AM Sunday mornings. We also livestream our services on Facebook; search for Emanuel Lutheran Church Worcester. Emanuel Lutheran Church, located at 200 Greenwood St. in Worcester's Quinsigamond Village neighborhood is member church of the ELCA, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

## Terry Burke DOTSON

### State Representative

7th Worcester District

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Active member of Millbury Veterans Council, VFW, American Legion, Millbury Historical Commission, Auburn Vietnam Veterans, Oxford Memorial Honor Guard, Rainers' Ice Hockey Booster Club.

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# Pre-Sale Tickets Begin for Christmas by Candlelight at Old Sturbridge Village

**C**hristmas by Candlelight at Old Sturbridge Village is kicking off its season early this year with pre-sale tickets available to members started Friday, Oct. 14. The popular holiday event will return with dates in November and December, inviting visitors to step into the past and celebrate New England holiday traditions of the 19th-century and today.

New to Christmas by Candlelight in 2022, the Asa Knight Store will feature six trees during the event representing the different decades of the 1800s sponsored by Oakwood Farms. Free ornament craft will be offered to guests as a hands-on activity. The Bixby House will be mulling cider, and Salem Towne House will be baking gingerbread, and other holiday treats will be offered across the Village. Also this year, Richardson House will be showcasing an international Christmas for the first time, with themes drawn from Puerto Rican traditions featured this year.

The event will also see the return of many favorite holiday activities, including some experiences that have been on hiatus for the past two seasons due to COVID-19. Highlights of the 2022 event will include:

Sights & Scenes of Christmas – Old Sturbridge

Village's 200-acre campus will be decorated for the holiday season. Guests can wander the Christmas Tree Trail and Christmas Wish Bridge, ride in the horse-drawn carry-all, enjoy a nightly tree-lighting ceremony, visit the 500+ piece nativity set and view Christmas décor from the 1830s, 1850s, and 1870s.

**Holiday Traditions** – Recreated – Demonstrations will be taking place throughout the event, including making woolen ornaments and authentic marzipan, knitting Christmas stockings, baking cakes, punching tin lanterns, making pottery and more. Guests can participate in candle dipping on-site for an additional fee.

**Storytelling** – Readings of stories like “The Nativity Gospel of Saint Luke,” “The Nativity Gospel of Saint Matthew,” and classic Christmas tales such as “The Night Before Christmas,” “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,” “How the Grinch Stole Christmas,” and more.

**Live Music** – Performances of live, festive music by costumed interpreters, musicians and bands in the Center Meetinghouse.

**Festive Food** – A variety of foods and beverages available for purchase at various locations throughout the museum, including treats

being made in the Village, baked goods, hot beverages, and specialty cocktails by the bonfire.

**Visits with Santa** – Santa Claus will make an appearance each night for little ones to tell him their special Christmas wish.

**Holiday Shopping** – Unique and handcrafted items, many of which are being demonstrated during Christmas by Candlelight, will be available at the Miner Grant Store and The Ox & Yoke Mercantile each evening during the event.

Tickets must be purchased online, in advance for Christmas by Candlelight at Old Sturbridge Vil-



lage. Tickets for the event are on sale now to members for a special, member-only

discount of 20% off standard admission. Ticket sales will launch to the general

public on Oct. 27 with early bird rates (10% off) through Nov. 17.

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

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

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# Opportunity knocks and Grafton Grill & Crust jumps in



BY ROD LEE

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



Steve Belfiore, with son Drew (top), representing Grafton Grill & Crust and Moving 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).

in response to the previous week's Feisty Fork column lamenting once-popular restaurants in the Blackstone 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](mailto:rodlee.1963@gmail.com) or 774-232-2999.

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**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.**

**THROUGH OCTOBER 23**

• The Friends of the Simon Fairfield Public Library in Douglas are conducting 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.

**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 22**

• The annual Blackstone Valley Crop Walk will be held with registration beginning at 8:30 a.m. under the portico at Village Congregational Church, 5 Church St., Whitinsville. The three-mile walk starts at 9:00 a.m. and will finish at the Community House on Court St. in Uxbridge. Light refreshments will be served outside. Donations can be made online at [www.crop-hungerwalk.org/northbridgema](http://www.crop-hungerwalk.org/northbridgema). For more information contact Tanya Morin at [danville-girl348@gmail.com](mailto:danville-girl348@gmail.com) or 508-341-6652.

• The Manchaug Pond Foundation will hold its Fall Cleanup of the pond and its watershed from 9:00 a.m. to noon with volunteers meeting at the state public access boat ramp on Torrey Road in Sutton. Good company, beautiful scenery, safety vests, rubber gloves and trash bags will be provided. Rain date is Sunday, October 23rd. For more information, visit [manchaugpond.org](http://manchaugpond.org).

• The Pike 100.1 Halloween “Boos” Cruise of Webster Lake with Chuck Perkins is scheduled for 5:45 p.m. Call 508-943-3871 or visit [\[ranch.com/events\]\(http://ranch.com/events\) for more info.

• St. Peter’s Parish is offering a Pork Roast Dinner “To Go” with pickup starting at 5:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall, 39 Church Ave. Tickets are \\$15 per dinner and include salad and dessert. All orders must be purchased in advance. Call 508-234-2156 or email \[parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org\]\(mailto:parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org\).

• Retro Fashion in Your Closet: Most people have lots of historic fashion moments happening right in their own closets. After all, fashion designers are always bringing styles back. The Grafton Historical Society and Grafton Public Library are betting that some folks will enjoy wearing, learning about, and talking about retro fashion and what fashion tells us about the values of the people wearing it. They are throwing a Retro Fashion in Your Closet event at 2-4 p.m. in the Community Room at the Grafton Public Library. Participants are invited to raid their own closets to find some clothing that has retro elements. Think high waisted jeans, frilly blouses, goth clothes, steampunk outfits, 1990s hip hop attire, gingham picnic shirts, etc.](http://indian-</a></p>
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**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25**

• “Meet the Candidate,” Terry Burke Dotson, at the Millbury Public Library, 128 Elm St., 5 - 6 p.m.

• Uxbridge’s Fall Town Meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at Valley Chapel, 14 Hunter Road. Contact the town manager’s office at 508-278-8600 Ext. 7 or email [ssette@uxbridge-ma.gov](mailto:ssette@uxbridge-ma.gov) for further details.

• Northbridge’s Fall Town Meeting will take place at 7:00 p.m. at the Northbridge Middle School, 171 Linwood Ave., Whitinsville. All warrant items can be found for review online at [northbridgemass.org/home/news/fall-annual-town-meeting-102522](http://northbridgemass.org/home/news/fall-annual-town-meeting-102522).

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26**

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

**OCTOBER 24-25**

• An AARP Safe Driver Course with Instructor Phyllis Masso is being offered at the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitins-

ville. 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.

• The League of Women Voters is sponsoring a forum on civil discourse at 7 p.m. in the Community Room of the Grafton Public Library, 35 Grafton Common. Professor Robert Boatright of Clark University will lead a discussion around the top “How worried should we be about the state of American politics today?” Join us for this lively and informative evening.

**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**

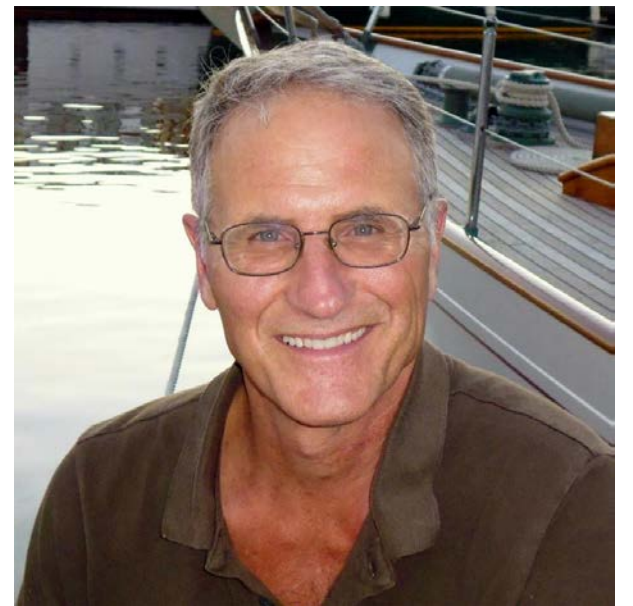
• UniBank will offer a Community Shred even at its Sutton North branch, 29 Galaxy Pass, Sutton, from 9 a.m. to noon.

• A Home-Baked Ham & Bean Supper sponsored by the Congregational Church will take place at 5:00 p.m. in the Community House, 8 Court St., Uxbridge. The menu includes baked ham, home-baked beans, potato salad, cole-

slaw, brown bread, beverages, and dessert. Donation of \$12 per adult, children under six are admitted free. Raffles will also be available. For reservations call 508-244-7849. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door.

• The Douglas Historical Society is hosting a Family Halloween Costume Contest from 5:00 p.m. until done at the E.N. Jenckes Store Museum on Main St.

• The Sutton Historical Society is hosting its 2nd annual Cemetery Tour as part of its larger “Oh My Gourd, It’s the Great Pumpkin Festival 2022,” in the Town Center Cemetery, 4 Uxbridge Road, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. The Cemetery Tour includes costumed interpreters telling stories of some of Sutton’s interesting citizens with a few surprises. Adjacent to the cemetery, on display in the General Rufus Putnam Museum, will be a Halloween town in miniature. The Society is partnering with other groups in town for this event, which includes the Sutton Public Library Boo Bash from 2-6 p.m., Witches Dance at 5:00 p.m.



Author and Historian Michael Tougias will talk about King Philip’s War—American’s “forgotten conflict”—during an appearance on behalf of the Sutton Historical Society at the First Congregational Church on Boston Road on November 1st. See Happenings! item.

on the Common followed by the Boy Scout Spooky Walk from 6-8 p.m. Trunk or Treat from 6-8 p.m. at the Sutton Elementary School complex and the “Oh My Gourd” jack-o-lantern display sponsored by the Sutton 4th Committee.

Carve a pumpkin and enter it for \$5. Reach out for more information at [sutton1704@gmail.com](mailto:sutton1704@gmail.com).

**HAPPENINGS!**  
continued on page 12

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**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2022**  
AT 8:00PM (DOORS AT 7:15PM)

**HAPPENINGS!**

*continued from page 11*



**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1**

• The Sutton Historical Society welcomes Author Michael Tougias for a talk on King Philip's War at 7:00

p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road. Mr. Tougias's two books "Until I Have No Country" and "King Philip's War—The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict," are both available through the Central Mass Library system for those interested in reading up on the subject before his presentation.

**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.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4**

• "A Night at the Museum: Silent Movies," with Pianist and Historian Richard Hughes, will take place from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Samuel Slater Experience, 31 Ray St., Webster. Two films will be featured at this free event: Charlie Chaplin's The Immigrant, and Sherlock Jr. starring Buster Keaton. Attendees will be transported back to Main St. in Webster, circa 1916, when black-and-white movies accompanied by piano music were popular. Reservations are encouraged; samuelslaterexperience.org.

**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 a.m. to 1 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.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5**

• The Uxbridge Lions Club's Shred Event returns from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. at the VFW parking lot at Rt.



Heather Glode is owner of LuLu's, a gifts and jewelry store at 68 Church St., Whitinsville. LuLu's is always a popular stop during Shop Small 01588, which starts the Saturday after Thanksgiving and runs through December 3rd.

16 and Cross Rd. Bring documents, files, old checks and mail to be securely shredded and recycled. For a donation of \$5.00 for a copy paper-sized box or for each electronic device, Pellegrino Trucking will shred and send for recycling the paper products while OnSite Computers will handle the secure

destruction of electronic devices including computers, phones, electrical cords, DVDs, cameras, USB cables, flat-screen monitors, keyboards, radios and stereos. • St. Peter's Parish in Northbridge

**HAPPENINGS**

*continued on page 13*

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**HAPPENINGS**

*continued from page 12*

will host its Annual Holiday Bazaar from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Parish Hall, 39 Church Ave. There will be a White Elephant Table, a Baked Goods Table, and Craft Tables with handmade items including quilts.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6**

• The New England Country Music Club presents live music by Al Carter 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](http://www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub).

**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 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.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10**

• The Douglas Historical Society is

hosting a night to thank veterans for their service and to view "A Touch of Home," about the "Donut Dollies" who supported our troops in Vietnam at 7:00 p.m. at the E.N. Jenckes Store Museum on Main St.

**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 6-8 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 a.m. to 2 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 [Saint-DenisChurch.com](http://Saint-DenisChurch.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.

• Mickey's Car Wash in Pleasant Valley Crossing in Sutton will host a Grand Opening for its Detail Shop, Retail Shop and Pet Wash

from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with live music, food trucks, demonstrations, promotions and holiday gifts.

• Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., welcomes Kathleen Webster O'Malley, author of "The Healing Wisdom of Dreams," published this year by Hay House, from 1-3 p.m. Signed copies of the book will be available, or pre-order by contacting the store at 508-949-6232 or [deb@bookloversgourmet.com](mailto:deb@bookloversgourmet.com).

• Giant Meat Raffle: 6 - 9 pm Sponsored by the Mary Martha Guild of St. Joseph's Church, Charlton, MA  
6 meat/ 1 turkey / 1 lobster tables  
Early birds receive 3 free tickets for any meat table. Free parking  
Homemade food purchases will be available for dinner / dessert.  
Beer and wine cash bar available

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18**

• The Douglas Sunshine Club is having their annual Beef Stew Dinner with entertainment on Friday, Nov. 18 at the Adult Social Center located at 331 Main St. Everyone is welcome to share a nice, warm dinner with friends and family. Tickets are \$10 per person and available either from Sunshine Club at 508-476-4474 or by calling the center at 508-476-2283. Reservations are required. Doors will open at 5:30 pm. Dinner is at 6 pm followed by piano and vocal with Nancy Marshall.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19**

• The Blackstone Valley Wine & Chocolate Tasting with a live auction, raffles, prizes and vendors will be held at Blissful Meadows Golf Club, 801 Chocolog Road, Uxbridge, at 7:00 p.m. This event is offered in collaboration with Marty's Fine Wines, The Candy Shoppe and The Afterglow Boutique. Tickets are \$40, \$50 at the door and may be purchased at Uni-Bank in Whitinsville or Uxbridge or online at [www.facebook.com/BVWinetasting](http://www.facebook.com/BVWinetasting). Proceeds benefit the Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter and the Blackstone Valley Rotary Scholarship Fund.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20**

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

**NOVEMBER 26-DECEMBER 3**

• Shop Small 01588 will be held in downtown Whitinsville, with dozens of businesses taking part in the passport-style event for an entire week, starting on Small Business Saturday.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3**

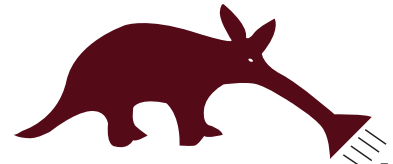
• The 25th anniversary of the Ux-

bridge First Holiday Night Celebration and Parade, a family tradition, will be held. Volunteers are welcome for the event. Stop by the Mendon Street Kitchen for more information.

• The Sutton Chain of Lights will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., featuring family fun with free trolleys,

boutique shops, local products, handmade gifts, specialty items and services for all the people on your Christmas list.

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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.

"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 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 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 eating!" 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."



Luke plays with Ellie.

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 blueber-

ries 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

**LUKE**

*continued on page 15*



Luke sits at his spot.



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TALES FROM BEYOND

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# Vermont's Dorset Inn, home of 'The General'

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

**D**orset is your quintessential Vermont village, complete with a green, shops, and a few inns where travelers can stay a night or two and relish in the atmosphere of the little hamlet.

The Dorset Inn is such a place. Since 1796, the Dorset Inn has welcomed travelers on their journey to areas such as Boston, Massachusetts and Albany, New York. The inn became a popular stop for many to partake in some food, beverages, and fresh beds. Many stayed for weeks or even months as the region provided many outdoor activities and exploration.

There are thirty-five beautifully decorated guest rooms, and several are part of the original structure where guests can enjoy the views of Vermont's picturesque countryside. The Dorset is also renowned for its fabulous cuisine. The Wine Spectator voted the establishment as one of America's best restaurants

in 2008. Diners can enjoy fine fare in the historic red dining room or tavern. They may have the opportunity to meet the oldest guest of the inn, a ghost the staff affectionately calls "The General."

The general has been seen by staff and guests alike. He is dressed in a dark military uniform with gold braid, much like that of the Civil War. According to members of the Dorset staff, he is often seen in the taproom. One employee claimed to have seen him on the third floor, but his appearance there is rare. He has also been accompanied on occasion by a woman in an old-fashioned long skirt and a child. No one knows when he will make his appearance, and his exact identity is lost to antiquity, but he still likes to make an appearance now and then.

Our friends and fellow paranormal investigators, Robert Hughes and Victoria Julian-Hughes, once stayed at the Dorset Inn during one of their many tours of Vermont. As avid paranor-

mal enthusiasts and investigators, it was natural for them to want to explore the premises during their visit. Owners Steve and Lauren Bryant allowed them to do a vigil or two around the building and even showed them the cellar, which was reported to be a part of the Underground Railroad.

During their investigations, they collected a few interesting pieces of paranormal evidence. One is what appears to be a bluish orb moving across the basement, and the others are EVPs (Electronic Voice Phenomenon). The EVP session took place in Room 35, where The General is reported to visit from time to time. Among the several questions asked during a particular EVP session, Vickie politely inquired, "How old are you?" The answer was very audible and sounded like "Ten." Simultaneously, the lights on a piece of a spirit communication device lit up and stayed lit. She then asked, "Where did you come from?" A faint, one-



The Dorset Inn in Vermont, where guests and staff alike have seen "The General."

word answer came through, "Here."

The rest of the investigation was quiet, but it appears they may have contacted the child's spirit that sometimes accompanies the ghost of The General, or perhaps it is altogether another spirit. With a place

that is over 225 years old, it can be assured there is a lot of energy lingering within. But, do not worry, all of it is friendly and positive. That is why the Dorset Inn is such a wonderful place to visit and stay; it has the endorsement of some permanent guests. If they are

not in a hurry to leave, then it must be a nice place to relax, at least for an evening or two, while basking in the history and hospitality the inn offers.

## LUKE

continued from page 14

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

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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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THE CAR DOCTOR

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# Mechanic is right about cost of replacing a water pump



BY JOHN PAUL

quickly. I would replace the drive belts, and perhaps the belt tensioners while replacing the water pump.

**Q.** My 2013 Honda CRV (AWD) is now starting to shimmy/vibrate when I accelerate between 25mph and 30mph. When I looked up this issue on some of the Honda Forums it appears that this is quite common, to my surprise. Honda service is unaware of this issue. My CRV has 55,000 miles, I drive very carefully in the suburbs (no hills or towing). Any idea what I should do next? Is this the start of a transmission problem?

**A.** Honda has had a problem with this transmission, and many times it can be repaired with a software update and fluid change. Honda describes it as a surge, vibration, or judder that may be felt while driving under light acceleration. Like many cars today, it is critical that manufacturer specific fluid is used when the transmission is serviced.

**Q.** I just got a brake job done at a shop on my 2002 Honda Accord. When doing a brake job, do you recommend resurfacing rotors in addition to installing new pads? Or is it sometimes just okay installing new pads only? Also is there a break in procedure for new

brake pads?

**A.** When I first started repairing cars many years ago brake drums and rotors were always resurfaced. Later I attended the General Motors training center and was told if the brake rotors are smooth, free of rust and there is no brake vibration it is perfectly acceptable and preferred to just replace the brake pads. Part of the reason is that brake rotors are thinner than ever, and resurfacing takes away metal and the rotors are more prone to distortion and vibration. In many cases to keep brake performance optimal pads and rotors are replaced together. New brake pads do require a break in. Depending on the manufacturer this can be accomplished in less than 10 minutes. This usually includes four or five aggressive stops from 30 MPH to 5 MPH in fairly rapid succession not letting the brakes cool down. Then drive for about five minutes at a moderate speed not using the brakes to allow the brakes to cool completely. This procedure is performed before the vehicle is returned to the customer.

**Q.** I'm in the market for a new SUV. Maybe Toyota 4Runner or a Ford Explorer, maybe even Ford Expedition? I cannot find anything in stock. Everything has to be ordered and the dealer wants \$5,000

above the Sticker. How can I find vehicles that are in stock? What does this lack of inventory and selling for above MSRP situation look like from your perspective? Will we see more vehicles before the end of the year?

**A.** A year ago, I would have said the new car inventories would have been back to normal by now. That unfortunately isn't the case. I'm not sure we may ever see "normal" again. I think that car will sell much closer to the sticker price than in years past. Of the vehicles you mentioned, you may have the best luck with the 4Runner. I recently evaluated a 4Runner and a neighbor saw it and loved it. I heard from his daughter that he found one

in stock at a local dealer at a price he was happy with. The Explorer is popular and may be harder to find and Expedition inventories were always on the low side at Ford dealers compared to other popular models. I would just go online to specific dealer sites or use Cargurus, Iseecars or AAA's car buying service, to check inventory and prices.

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

**Q.** I have been told that my water pump on my 2008 V-6 engine powered Toyota Highlander with 72,000 miles needs to be replaced. I took it in because there was a grinding sound coming from the pulley area. The mechanic said the pulley on the water pump is making a slight grinding sound suggesting the bearings are going and it has a small leak. According to the mechanic, replacing the water pump is a five-hour job and it's going to cost \$1100.00, is that true and if so, is there anything else that should be changed at that time, because a lot of parts have to be removed to get to the water pump? Right now, the car, besides the grinding noise, is running fine.

**A.** Your shop is correct that the labor time to replace the water pump is about five hours. Today we are seeing shop labor rates from \$100-\$175 per hour, so costs escalate

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**SPORTS**

# Millbury soccer's Rose Winston: Playing for her dad

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY, STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Growing up, Millbury native Rose Winston found herself infatuated

with watching her older brother Connor playing soccer, so her parents decided to sign her up for the sport and before you knew it she was totally hooked.

"I looked up to my older brother and wanted to try out the sport for myself," Winston said. "I loved watching him play, but as soon as I started playing I

loved it. It was a team sport where I could be involved while helping the team and I was having a lot of fun."

As a prior basketball player, she gave that up during her freshman year in high school so she could concentrate solely on soccer. Before long she would also give up playing on her club soccer team because it was getting to be too much with her school work; high school soccer would become her one and only focus on the field.

Although she decided to ease back on her other sports as a freshman, Winston had originally began playing varsity soccer as a seventh grader for the Woolies.

"Making the team as a seventh grader was really exciting, but as the season went on I began feeling nervous about being on the varsity team as the other



Rose Winston with her late father, Tom Winston—"Papa Tom." Photos courtesy of Rose Winston.

girls were getting better on the field and I wasn't," she said. "With the age difference I thought that I was in way over my head and not good enough to stay on the

varsity team." With the talent of the other girls weighing heavily on her, Winston decided to work on her game during the following summer. Her



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brother, two years older, was always on the field with a bunch of his friends working on their soccer game so the younger sister started to tag along and worked with them. Playing with her brother and his friends was better competition and they pushed her to excel in her game.

During her eighth-grade season she found that she was getting more minutes on the field and was becoming more positive with her play with the rest of the varsity squad.

"That year I felt that I could do this and was strong enough to compete with them," she said. "My dad told me that I was on

the team for a reason."

There was still a lot of high expectation with Millbury as the squad had won the Division 4 Central championship before falling to Millis in the State finals in 2017. The Woolies were eliminated in the Division Semi's in 2018 and were the State Champions in 2019 when they got revenge on Millis and beat that school 1-0.

With all the expectations on the soccer field Winston had one really big supporter off the field in her father (Tom Winston), who had come to learn and love the sport himself while watching his kids play the game over the years.

"My dad was our biggest supporter growing up and he coached us both," Winston said. "When I made the varsity team he was always on the sideline cheering me on and helped me with how I played each game."

Winston would go to her father for advice as he knew the potential that his daughter had and how he could push her to get the best out of her.

"My dad played soccer as a kid but nothing beyond that, he learned the game just by watching us so much," she said. "He pushed me to be the best out there and told me that if I wanted to continue to be on the



field then I needed to work for it."

While her father would never miss a game, things changed abruptly this past summer when he passed away unexpectedly while

driving to meet his wife.

According to Winston, he had cholesterol issues and was keeping his sodium down while eating better, but unfortunately he had a sudden heart attack while driving and before you knew it he was gone.

"When I first found out about his death through my mom it was really rough," she said. "I knew what was going on and my whole world came crashing down. Thankfully, I had a lot of family and friends supporting me though it all."

Tom Winston was known by all the Millbury girls on the varsity soccer team and was affectionately known as Papa Tom. He was a fun individual to be around, was always supporting the team and getting the players fired up before each game.

"He would help everyone," his daughter said. "I'm going to miss his contagious laugh and our after-game hugs. Immediately after games I went right to him, and he was always in a good mood win or lose."

In memory of Papa Tom and everything that he did for the team the girls decided to wear a band with his initials (TW) on it above their shin guards this year in addition to praying for him before each game.

"Rose is a wonderful kid and I feel her loss," Millbury first year Coach Sean Sullivan said. "All the kids loved her father and called him Papa Tom - he definitely had an impact on all of them. Unfortunately, I never had the chance of meeting him."

Before his passing Tom Winston was lucky enough to see his daughter named to the Central Mass All-Star team last fall as a junior. Along with her teammates Millbury was able to open the season, with Tom Winston heavily on their minds, posting a 2-0 win over Leicester.

"The win was definitely for him, and it was a great way to open the season, but we still have a lot of work to be done," Winston said. "It was hard to walk off the field after the game with him not being there to talk to. I know he's still watching and supporting me as we were so close."

The Woolies will continue to wear their TW bands throughout the season in honor of Tom Winston while continuing to remember what he taught them and hopefully make him proud as they look to capture another Division 4 State Championship - this time in his memory.

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