

Where there's a hero, there's a home, here in Central MA

BY ROD LEE

Bill Roland and Maria Reed were not selling the popular featured fruit at Dudley Grange #163's annual Apple Festival on October 1st. But this did not mean their presence wasn't an important part of the proceedings.

has served over 56,000 individuals and families, many of them right here in Central Massachusetts, according to Diane Casey-Luong, a realtor with RE/MAX Advantage 1 in Worcester.

Talking about her own role in the initiative in RE/MAX Advantage 1's office on Union St. in

said. "This Saturday, I will be at a golf tournament at Green Hill to benefit the Manny Foundation"—a cause initiated after the tragic death of Worcester Police Officer Emmanuel "Manny" Familia.

Ms. Casey-Luong's husband is also a Worcester cop.

RE/MAX Advantage 1 is a strong supporter of Homes for Heroes. "A week or so ago we were at Polar Park for a baseball game between police and firefighters," Ms. Casey-Luong said. "It was called after three and a half innings because of rain. The firefighters declared themselves winners! Over \$15,000 was raised from tickets and concessions. We contributed about \$2300 to that total."

The "reward" that heroes receive comes from the realtor's commission. "We pay 30% of our commission fee to Homes for Heroes and 25% of that goes directly back to our heroes," she said. "The other 5% goes to the Homes for Heroes Foundation, for grants to medical, teachers, military organizations for the disabled."

Ms. Casey-Luong is proud of her efforts on behalf of heroes. "I am the No. 1 Homes for Heroes agent in Massachusetts. I have rewarded about thirty-five heroes and we are going to reach our \$100,000 mark," she said. "Right now I have five transactions closing in October. I am married to a police officer here in the city and I know a lot of other people who would be eligible for assistance through this program," she said. "Four hundred of them right next door," she added, in a reference to the WPD.

"It's amazing, not a lot of people know about Homes for Heroes,"

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Maria Reed of RE/MAX Advantage 1 in Worcester and Bill Roland of Inland Home Mortgage in Charlton spread the word about Homes for Heroes during Dudley Grange #163's annual Apple Fest.

"Homes for Heroes," Mr. Roland said, as he handed a visitor to their booth on Center Road a flyer. "It's a national program, twenty years of giving back." He is a realtor with Inland Home Mortgage in Charlton.

Mr. Roland and Ms. Reed are part of a network of affiliate real estate offices, mortgage lenders and business specialists across the country whose mission is to help firefighters, EMS, law-enforcement, military (active, reserves and veterans), health-care professionals and teachers buy, sell or refinance a home.

Since being formed in the aftermath of 9/11, Homes for Heroes

Worcester on October 11th, Ms. Casey-Luong said she got involved with Homes for Heroes "about three years ago." She and Jo-Ann Szymczak, who is also with RE/MAX Advantage 1, are among approximately fifty agents working the program in the Commonwealth, she said.

Homes for Heroes was launched in Minneapolis in 2002 by current CEO Ruth Johnson and her family. The program has donated more than \$1.2 million through its Foundation. Its Circle of Giving arm has poured money into community as well.

"I have been extremely active promoting it," Ms. Casey-Luong

Relatives and friends say Ian even worse than forecast

BY JANET STOICA

When the local weather forecasters started talking about the latest hurricane (Ian) heading for Florida, the native Fort Myers' residents appeared to just continue along their merry ways. The bright sun shone, the skies were blue, and the Sunshine State's puffy white clouds scudded across their usual skyways. What? Me worry? It's probably just going to be one of the usual tropical storms, they speculated.

A few days before Hurricane Ian hit landfall, I spoke with my cousin Elaine and her husband Fred who live about 10 miles southwest of Fort Myers. Fred indicated they were observing and TV-monitoring Hurricane Ian's "cone" or projected path. Weather predictors' statements at the time were that Ian would come ashore well north of their residence to the Tampa/St. Pete area.

"Not to worry, Janet," Fred said, "it's going to be far from us. When we moved here from Leicester (Mass.) and built our home, it was constructed to withstand hurricane-force winds. We have wind-resistant glass windows, steel hurricane shutters for our windows, and have taken as many hurricane-precautionary measures as possible."

Elaine mentioned that they had withstood Hurricane Charley in 2004, a direct hit in their community, with 150 mph winds. "We'll never forget Charley," she said, "Fred and I were inside the house and had our backs up against our large wooden front door trying to keep the winds from crashing it open. It was horrifying. We're hoping we never have to go

through that again!" The couple recently purchased and installed a \$3,200 hurricane-proof front door with extra latches, hinges, and solid steel framing. They certainly seemed secure and very safe. I thought they'll be just fine.

A good friend, Gayle, from the local area, was also visiting people she knew in Fort Myers. The friend's residence was in a mobile home park. "It's so hot and humid here," she stated via text message, "I can't believe this humidity. Unreal. Yes, we're keeping an eye on Ian too. Looks like it might just be a typical tropical storm."

On September 28th, Hurricane Ian decided to shift his path and that path included a hard swing to the southwest Florida coast taking his aim and central eye right through the Cape Coral and Fort Myers' areas. All communications to my relatives and friend were now wiped out. Repeated phone calls to my cousin and friend went to voicemail or just a dead silence.

Television news now showed drone flights passing over the destruction and heart-breaking ruins left by Ian's 155 mph winds. The monster storm was just shy of being officially branded as a Category 5 hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 161 mph. According to the National Environmental Satellite Data Service, Ian thrashed parts of Florida's western coast bringing intense winds, heavy rainfall, and catastrophic storm surges. A storm surge with inundation of an unprecedented 12 to 18 feet above ground level was reported along the southwestern Florida coast, and the city of

HURRICANE
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HEROES

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Ms. Casey-Luong said.

That is changing, one event and one home sold, at a time.

"This is one of the best programs that I have seen since retiring from the U.S. Navy in 2006, where something is done to help veterans from start to finish," a vet named "Bobby" was quoted as saying on the Homes for Heroes flyer.

For more information, visit HomesforHeroes.com.

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

HURRICANE

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Fort Myers itself was hit particularly hard with a 7.26 foot surge—a record high. Ian was downgraded to a tropical storm on Sept. 29 as it tracked inland, crossing over the Florida peninsula. However, as it did so, extreme rain-fall became particularly destructive, producing 1-in-1000-year amounts in some communities.

And yes, climate change has now been scientifically proven for many Floridians after this horrible catastrophe. Damages are estimated in the tens of billions of dollars.

Luckily, before Ian hit, my friend Gayle and her acquaintance had evacuated

Fort Myers and had driven south to Naples to weather the storm. However, even Naples was without utilities after Ian's departure. "There are so many things that we all take for granted," said Gayle, "it's so automatic to go into a darkened room and reach for the light switch or click on the TV or turn on the faucet and expect water to flow. Then, to see all the hurricane's ruin left behind, it was so sad. In the mobile home parks there were tons of Styrofoam and metal everywhere. It looked like the authorities were coming by and picking up all the metal but the Styrofoam was broken into millions of pieces." (The construction of mobile homes uses foam as insulation between the

inner and outer walls of the units.) The friend whom Gayle visited had no visible damage to her mobile home and was very grateful. Apparently, the previous owners had hurricane-proofed the unit with the use of in-ground tethered steel cables at each corner of the home. A major and truly valuable asset. "Other homes in the park were not so lucky," Gayle said, "it looked like a tornado had affected the entire opposite side of the street. Lanais and decks had been completely torn off. One couple just decided that Florida's hurricanes were not for them ever again. They put their mobile home up for sale right away and returned to New York." In this particular neighborhood water and other utilities were restored in just a few days.

In Elaine and Fred's Cape Coral neighborhood, however, the hurricane's aftermath was an entirely different story. "Our power finally came back on Sun-



Packing winds in excess of 150 MPH, Hurricane Ian reigned destruction on Florida's southwest coast.

day (October 9th)," Fred explained when I reached out to him late Sunday afternoon, "12 days without power, water, or anything else. We certainly couldn't power up our steel window covers so they kept the house interior pitch black even at mid-day. After the hurricane had swept through, we peered out one of our small windows and saw that every home looked like it was on its own island as water had flooded the streets. The following day we were happy to see that the flood water had all drained away. We used our neighbor's generator to power up our cellphone. Another neighbor had propane for cooking so we

brought our freezer perishables there to be cooked and shared buffets with our neighbors. Our backyard sea wall had held but all sorts of floating and sunken objects could be seen in the canal behind our home including some nice cabin cruisers. Our pool and outdoor kitchen were none the worse for wear either. Outside of a few missing roof tiles, we appear to be in good shape."

Two fortunate families made it through one of the worst hurricanes Florida has seen. Thousands of others were not so privileged. The unfortunate prospect of future maelstroms, however, are certainly forces to be reckoned with.

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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 fledgling 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.

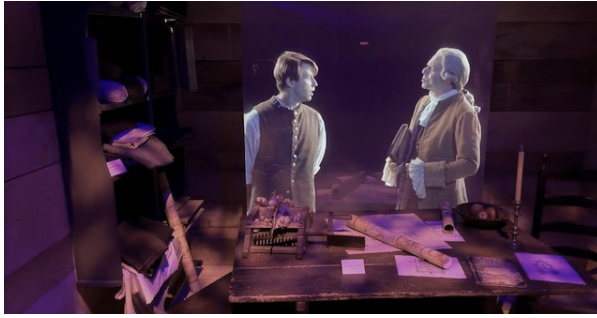
"Our first rodeo and no parking. I'm waiting for our sign guy to show up," Ms. Van Reed said, of the attempt that would be made to let people know there was something else going on in the neighborhood. Meanwhile, she was doing the best she could.

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."



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.

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 biog-

raphy 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 mak-

ing 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."

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Saloon 6 Bar & Eatery is Webster's nod to Wild Bill Hickock

BY JANET STOICA

Did someone say Wild Bill Hickok? Nope, he's not in right now. But is there someone else who can help you at Saloon 6? How about the on-point staff of cooks, waiters, and bartenders? Ahhh yes, at last there is another well-run and efficient restaurant in the Webster environs and the owners are no beginners to the restaurant trade. Bob Zalewski and Eric Gulkin are partners in this newest dining venture. Mr. Zalewski used to run the Doc Holliday Restaurant at the same location a number of years ago. Both partners knew what they needed

and wanted on their staff and menu. The goal? Good and delicious portions of food served up well for the amount paid. And, it seems to be working.

Their menu is extensive from a fried Fisherman's Platter filled with had-dock, scallops, whole-belly clams, and shrimp served with hand-cut fries and house coleslaw to a 14-oz. prime rib and everything in-between including homemade pizzas and BLTs. Appetizers include calamari with hot pepper rings to salmon cakes served over farmer's salsa topped with cilantro aioli, even boneless spicy maple chicken wings. Desserts are few but simply deli-

cious like their house-made whoopie pie with ice cream and whipped cream. Hungry yet?

"We've had so many diners visiting us that we've been running out of food. We are happy to use only local food service vendors and they have accommodated us in our crunch times. We pride ourselves on good quality food at a fair price," said Mr. Zalewski. "We've planned a good variety to our menu. Our pizza dough is made fresh daily and proofs overnight for the next day so when we run out, that's it until tomorrow. Our juicy fried chicken and waffles is a big hit with our customers as well as our

good-sized burgers, home-made fried mozzarella slices, and fresh-cut fries. All of our food is made fresh daily." Bob also notes that the staff is absolutely phenomenal and all areas are kept very sanitary and up to code. Tracy Sweeney is the restaurant manager. Additionally, they are in process of installing acoustical ceiling tiles to create a more pleasant restaurant experience.

Live weekend entertainment has begun on Saturdays from 9-11 p.m. with a late night menu during entertainment hours.

But Saloon 6. What's up with the name? Both Eric Gulkin and Bob Zalewski appreciate western themes



Opened recently, Saloon 6 Bar & Eatery with its Old West theme is already making a big hit in Webster.

so, if you've ever been to Wild Bill Hickok's haunt out west, you'd know that right off

Interstate 90 in Deadwood, South Dakota is a place named Legendary Old Style Saloon No. 10 famously and traditionally known as the stomping grounds for America's Old West legend, Wild Bill Hickok. Here is where Bill met his maker. They say he was gunned down playing poker in 1876. He held a two-pair poker hand of aces and eights along with a nine of diamonds that has come to be known as a Dead Man's Hand. So, if you're ready for an adventure, hop on your steed and gallop your way down the Mass Pike West, otherwise known as I-90, all the way to Deadwood where you certainly won't be disappointed as re-enactments of Wild Bill's last moments are held daily. The atmosphere is pretty authentic. By the time you return to the humbler surroundings of Webster,

you'll be ready to chow down on some of the best food east of Deadwood and your belly will thank you for it.

Oh, and you won't see any tumbleweeds rolling through their parking lot as diners' vehicles are packing the place daily. A very fortuitous outcome for the owners and staff. The time must pass quickly for their culinary and wait staff with non-stop orders being cooked up and served up for their customers' welcoming appetites. They probably could use a chuck wagon out back!

Saloon 6 Bar & Eatery, 141 Worcester Road, Webster MA 01570. Phone: (508) 461-7216.

Hours: Sun-Wed 11:30-11 p.m. Kitchen closes at 9 p.m.; Thurs/Fri/Sat open until 1 a.m. Kitchen open until 11 p.m. with late night menu from 9-11 p.m. Find them on Facebook.

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Dudley Vietnam vet Randall Snow is grand marshal for parade

Veterans of Webster and Dudley will hold their 17th annual Veterans Day parade this year on Friday, November 11th.

In addition and prior to the regularly scheduled parade, veterans encourage everyone to attend a brief ceremonial tribute to local veterans who paid the supreme sacrifice in World War II at the monument located at the Memorial Beach entryway off Thompson Road. Veterans will also be placing a wreath at the newly erected Women's Veterans monument. This ceremony will begin promptly at 9:45 a.m.

Upon completion of the tribute, veterans will go by bus from the St. Louis School parking lot to the Dudley Municipal Complex for ceremonies beginning at 11:00 a.m.

Veterans will then march from Dudley to the Webster Court of Honor on Main St. for a similar remembrance.

All scouting organizations that plan to participate are asked to meet at the Dudley Municipal Complex at 10:45 a.m.

This year's grand marshal will be Specialist E-4 Randolph P. Snow, an Army Vietnam veteran, who will be recognized for his service.

BY DONALD WAYMAN

Tam Biet! Goodbyes are emotional in any language. Randolph Paul Snow, Vietnam veteran, will relive those emotions as he leads the "Brotherhood" in a parade down Main St. on Veterans Day, November 11, 2022.

This is the story of Randy, the eldest of three boys in a typical Worcester family, living on Amber St. He was an active kid, playing seasonal sports while attending school at St. Peter's. As a teen he had a role in the class play and sang solo in the Glee Club. He was no wallflower.

Randy worked at a lumber yard after school and in a hospital kitchen on weekends. After graduation from high school in 1966 he studied at Quinsigamond Community College.

There was a bloody war going on in Vietnam, a long way from home. Randy volunteered for the draft and was inducted in mid-December of 1967.

The U.S. Army promised



"TRAVEL"...to Fort Dix for eight weeks of basic training, also called "indoctrination" into Army life: obey orders, stay in shape and remember the oath. Two months later the recruits were at Ft. Sill, Comanche County, Oklahoma, for an additional eight weeks of specialized training in the use of artillery, the big guns. It came as no surprise when VIETNAM appeared on Randy's itinerary. It would be a long and uneasy flight to where the killing and the dying took place.

"Snowy" and a planeload of young men just like himself landed at Tan Son Nhut Air base near Saigon in May of 1968. The air was thick, the heat was draining and the smell was sickening. A truckload of casualties was being offloaded at the base hospital. Some were treatable, most were not. It put a lump in a soldier's throat realizing that you were replacing a man covered with blood and mud.

Pvt. Snow was assigned to 7th Battalion, 8th Artillery, the gunner on a crew of five, manning a self-propelled eight-inch howitzer, lightly armored, but sufficient. Enemy mortars were their nemesis. The cannon had a ten-mile range and could fire off a projectile every two minutes or less. The vehicle was capable of 30 miles per hour when it was prudent to leave the scene, i.e., Bien Hoa, Xuan Loc and Ben Luc. These battles were considered "Adventure" in Draft Board vernacular back in

Worcester, the Heart of the Commonwealth, the home of candlepin bowling, the monkey wrench and the Smiley Face!

Randy utilized the Free Health Care clause of his enlistment agreement at a hospital in Japan. Serious injuries suffered in an accident kept him out of the kill zone for a considerable period of time. Upon returning to duty "Snowy" was assigned to 5th Battalion 2nd Artillery. The Mission: Ground Support, Perimeter Defense of Base Camps, and Convoy Security.

The good news: Snowy was now a short timer, his time in hell was expiring. The plan: stay low, stay alive and do not volunteer. When Randy's military commitment had been fulfilled, his orders arrived and a re-

placement was on the way.

Tambiet! It was time for "goodbyes," the heavy weight of war had been lifted from his soul, he had survived, now he could breathe again. There would be no more mortar attacks and no fear of ambush, there was also a genuine sense of sadness, despondence over leaving his buddies to continue the fight, the survivor guilt, and the question of WHO decides which ones die...and which ones live?

The charter flight back to the United States was comfortable, full of excitement and packed with emotion. The exhausted and haggard Brotherhood of Shared Experiences was heading home!

Snowy arrived at the Army Personnel Cen-



Left, the fiery blowback of a howitzer was somewhat dangerous if anyone got out of position. This is the type of gun Mr. Snow was assigned to, a "self-propelled eight-inch howitzer."

Inset, Specialist E-4 Randy Snow in Vietnam.

Above, Parade Grand Marshal Randolph P. Snow.

ter, Oakland, California, where he was honorably discharged after nineteen months of active service including fourteen months in 'Nam. It was time for a vacation and relaxation. It was time to pause and smell the roses and forget the suffocating stench of Vietnam...and rats.

Separation only means that you came home alive. For the combat soldier the war never ends. Many vets were hard pressed to transition back to civilian life. Statistics show that adjustment periods are directly proportional to battlefield experiences.

After a year Randy returned to his studies. Using the G.I. Bill, he worked as a bank messenger, bank teller and mortgage lender. He took night classes at Fairfield University in Connecticut and became proficient in his chosen field

of business while working at area banks. He retired as senior vice president of mortgage banking.

E4 Randolph Snow holds membership in the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans (chaplain), Veterans of Foreign Wars (Sr. vice commander) and Veterans Council Funeral Squad Honor Guard. He received the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with three Battle Stars, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon with Device and Sharpshooter Badge and Auto Rifle Bar.

Randy and his wife, Paula, reside in Dudley. They have three children, Kimberly, Matthew and Nicole.

Veterans Day Parade chairman is Richard J. Holewa with co-chairmen Andy Koslowski, Victor Jankowski and Ron Prest.

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Dudley Grange's Apple Festival good to the core

BY ROD LEE

With agricultural roots going back one hundred and thirty five years as of next April, Dudley Grange #163 quite appropriately presents events associated with farming and the equipment used for that purpose.

So it was that the Grange held its annual Apple Festival at its home on Center Road on October 1st, as it did a Strawberry Festival several months earlier.

Both are popular. Despite the threat of intermittent rain, the turn-



games, the Fire Department's smokehouse, Ray Sullivan demonstrating how an antique apple press works in front of the building, live music, crafts and vendors, there was plenty of reason to sample the goings-on.

Mr. Sullivan also helps "with the frog jumping" at the Strawberry Festival, Ms. Gillon said.

"We did OK," she said. "We made a profit, to pay



Scenes from Dudley Grange #163's Apple Festival include Dawn Beatty, Lenny Beatty and Laura Robbins at work inside the Hall, Bob Hanacek serving up French fries and the Old Fiddler's Club of Rhode Island performing.

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, Railers' Ice Hockey Booster Club.

Paid for by the Dotson Committee



out for the Apple Festival was strong, Karen-Beth Gillon, an officer of the Grange and co-chair of the production, said. "We had a good line of traffic, people came out for the apple crisp. We sold out of apple crisp by two o'clock."

Featuring an assortment of activities, including a petting zoo, children's

our bills."

The Apple Fest was made possible by grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Dudley Cultural Council, Ms. Gillon noted.

Dudley Grange #163 is looking forward to providing a music series next summer, Ms. Gillon said.

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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.crophungerwalk.org/northbridgema. For more information contact Tanya Morin at 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.

• 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 indian-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.

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 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 northbridgema.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., 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.

• 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, coleslaw, 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. 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.

• Auburn Historical Museum, 41 South St., hosts Halloween at the Museum: games, crafts, and trick-or-treating from 9:30 to noon. Meet the late Henry Auburnite and his scarecrow pictures, maybe even create or color your own to leave for a decoration! Get a trick or treat bag with crafts and goodies, tour the museum and see how many rubber ducks you can find.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1

• The Sutton Historical Society welcomes Author Michael Tougas for a talk on King Philip's War at 7:00 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road. Mr. Tougas'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

HAPPENINGS!

continued on page 8



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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.

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HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 7

• "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. 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 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.

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 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 contact-

ing the store at 508-949-6232 or deb@bookloversgourmet.com.

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 UniBank in Whitinsville or Uxbridge or online at 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.

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 Uxbridge 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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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 Septem-

Opportunity knocks and Grafton Grill & Crust jumps in

ber 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 Belfiores 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 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 or 774-232-2999.



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).

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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.

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 be-

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, 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!”

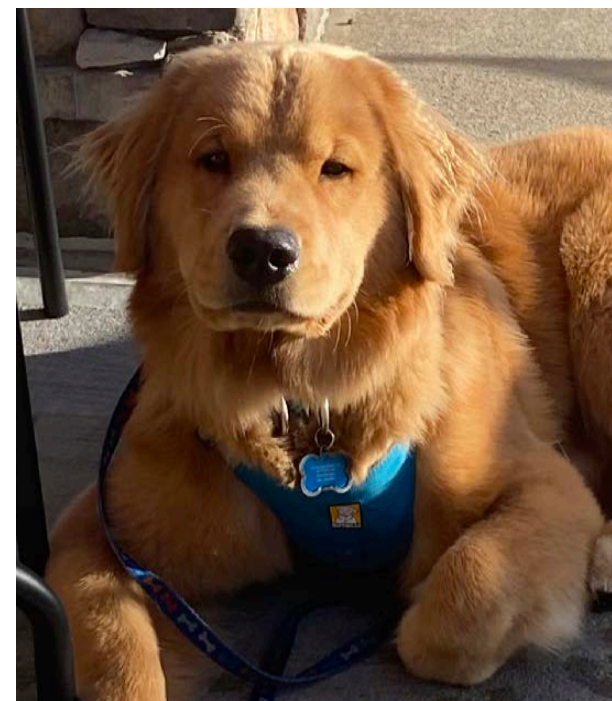
I feel vulnerable suddenly, manipulated by a pair of dogs with a bond. Luke pulls and stretches closer to his doggie pal in the window. He’s panting and desperate, as though his life suddenly depends on a reunion.

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



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 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

lieve 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

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.

THE CAR DOCTOR

jpaul@aanortheast.com

Mechanic is right about cost of replacing a water pump



BY JOHN PAUL

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 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.

Author's 'dreams' book is subject of talk at Booklovers' Gourmet

One of life's most mysterious phenomena, dreams, will be explored in depth at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster, on Saturday, November 12th when Author Kathleen Webster O'Malley appears to discuss her book "The Healing Wisdom of Dreams."

The event is scheduled for 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. and is free and open to the public. Signed copies of the book will be available for purchase and may also be pre-ordered by contacting the store at 508-949-6232 or deb@bookloversgourmet.com.

Described as "a guide to trusting in the wisdom of our nightly visions," Ms. Webster O'Malley's book tells how engaging with our dream world can give us a sense of direction, and help us to heal past and current

hurts—including pre-birth trauma.

When we understand and engage with our dreams, we are able to tap into a special, deeper kind of healing, the author says. "The process of healing is not about putting the same pieces back together; rather, it is about reclaiming what is already within us that could never be broken, the essence of who we are as individuals and as interconnected parts of a greater whole."

Ms. Webster O'Malley, a health and wellness practitioner, provides specific tools for enhancing dream recall. These include dream journaling. She brings in the practices of dream incubation: how to ask our dream a question and receive and interpret an answer—lucid dreaming. She talks about Tibetan dream



Author Kathleen Webster O'Malley will appear at Booklovers' Gourmet on November 12th.

yoga practices.

Nightmares, she says, are inevitable "when we start to dive deeper into our vulnerabilities and traumas." She discusses how to re-vision them as urgent messages that serve to deliver compassion and encourage others to align with their innermost wisdom to live with greater integrity, intention and purpose.

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REAL ESTATE



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

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

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 Marzeotti-group.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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Don’t overlook importance of cash



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

If you’re an investor, you no doubt pay a great deal of attention to your stocks, bonds and mutual funds. But you shouldn’t forget another key element of your financial strategy: cash.

Cash is part of any financial strategy and investment portfolio, but how much have you thought about the different uses of cash, and how much you really need? Consider these four key purposes:

- Unexpected expenses and emergencies – If you face an interruption in employment, you need an extensive home repair or

you encounter an unplanned medical expense, you may need access to cash. If you’re not retired, it’s a good idea to have three to six months of living expenses in cash, possibly supplemented by access to a line of credit. If you’re already retired, keeping up to three months of living expenses in cash, possibly supplemented by a credit line, is a good rule of thumb.

- Specific short-term savings goals – You may have some goals you want to meet within the next year or two, such as a wedding, a vacation or the purchase of a new car. And since you have a little more time to meet these needs than you would for an emergency, you might consider using a money market account or a short-term certificate of deposit (CD), in addition to your other savings vehicles.
- Everyday spending – You’ll always need cash to provide for your day-to-day

spending needs, such as your mortgage, other debts, groceries, utilities, entertainment and so on. If you haven’t already done so, you might want to create a budget, which could help highlight areas in which you can reduce spending to free up funds for investing in long-term goals. If you’re still working, keeping one to two months’ worth of living expenses in a liquid account may be sufficient, but if you’re retired, you may need up to twelve months of living expenses, which you can adjust to accommodate outside sources, such as Social Security or a pension.

- Source of investment – You can look at cash as an investment source in two different ways. First, cash can be considered its own distinct asset class, and because it typically behaves differently from other asset classes, it can provide some diversification to a portfolio containing stocks and bonds. (Keep in mind, though, that diversification can’t guarantee profits or protect against all losses.) And second, the cash in your portfolio could be used as part of a systematic investing strategy in which you put set amounts of money at regular intervals into investment vehicles that are appropriate for your goals and risk tolerance.
- Clearly, cash is an important part of planning for the future, but there can be too much of a good thing. While cash may seem like a perpetual safe harbor from the stormy investment seas, it is not without risk. If you hold too much cash, you could underfund your longer-term investments — the ones with the growth potential you need to reach some of your most important goals, such as a comfortable retirement.

Put your cash to work. By using it wisely, you can add a valuable element to

your financial picture.

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

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CHIEF'S CORNER

swojnar@dudleypolice.com

Happy Halloween

BY CHIEF
STEVEN J. WOJNAR
DUDLEY POLICE
DEPARTMENT

"Trick or Treat" in Dudley is scheduled for Monday, October 31st from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. With the COVID-19 shutdowns in prior years, it is always nice to see this fun holiday back in business. I wanted to remind everyone participating in this activity of some

important safety tips.

It is important to remember to have plenty of illumination when out at night. Carry a flashlight and use reflective tape on costumes, especially those that are dark in color. Adjust any mask or hood in such a way to maintain clear vision. This will not only protect you from cars, but also limit accidents on unfamiliar property. It is unsafe to walk in a location which is unknown and not

well lit. There could be hazard spots present which can cause an accident or injury. Also, stay on the sidewalks and away from traffic. If there are no sidewalks, walk along the road shoulder facing traffic. Never go out alone. Younger kids should always be accompanied by an adult. Older children, not accompanied by an adult, should be in a group and inform their families where they will always be. Since most people have access to a cell phone, keeping in contact should not be an issue. Children should never enter any home when they do not know the person. Wait outside and let the people bring the items to the door.

All candy must be inspected by an adult before the kids "dig in." Accept

only wrapped items and reject anything such as fruit or loose candy. There have been some reports of illegal drugs being packaged to look like candy. With this in mind, it is especially important to be certain what you have is the real thing. If anything is suspicious or if there is even a slight possibility of candy having been tampered with, discard it. There will certainly be enough left for everyone to enjoy. The evening is designed to be fun for children. Officers will be out during these times assisting everyone in having a happy and safe Halloween.

Finally, remember to respect those homeowners who do not participate in the holiday or may have run out of candy. A home without outside lights on can

be a good indicator of one of these circumstances. Try to avoid these locations out of respect for their privacy. Thank you in advance for your cooperation with these tips and try to keep this a fun and safe night.

As a reminder, on Saturday, October 29th from 9 am to 1:00 pm, the Dudley Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will conduct another prescription drug "Take Back" event. The public can safely dispose of expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs. The service is free and anonymous. During our previous events, large quantities of prescription medications were taken in. In addition, a needle drop box will also be available for those who need to safely

dispose of medical sharps. Several communities in our area will also be participating in this event. If you are not from Dudley, check with your local police for a participating location near you. I encourage everyone to mark their calendars and take advantage of this opportunity.

Thanks again for your questions and comments. Please send them to me at the Dudley Police Department 71 West Main St., Dudley, Ma. 01571 or email at swojnar@dudleypolice.com. Opinions expressed in this weekly column are those of Chief Wojnar only and unless clearly noted, do not reflect the ideas or opinions of any other organization or citizen.



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

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

Dorset 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.

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