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March 10 - April 14, 2023

Proposed expansion of Uxbridge historic district gains momentum

BY ROD LEE

These are heady days for Jane Keegan and members of the Uxbridge Historic District Commission (UHDC). If a warrant article Ms. Keegan and her cohorts have drafted is approved at Town Meeting in May, the town's historic district will undergo an expansion to include "additional significant properties" along North Main, Mendon and Capron streets.

The original historic-district bylaw was adopted in 2004 and updated in 2014. It initially encompassed the downtown core of South and North Main streets, adjacent Court St. facing the Town Common and a small portion of Mendon and Douglas streets heading east and west.

The enlarged historic district would include a total of ninety-four properties. Among these are such prominent buildings as St.'s General Store (also known locally as St.'s Deli), Andrews Survey & Engineering, the Polish American Social & Civic Hall and Buma Funeral Home.

Inclusion of the McCloskey



St.'s Deli on Mendon Street is one of the mom-and-pop businesses that are part of the proposed newly defined historic district in the town of Uxbridge.

Building "will be voted on separately within the article, because it is going to be developed in some way," Ms. Keegan said.

Ms. Keegan is optimistic about passage of the revised version of the historic district bylaw. The Uxbridge Historical Society has accepted wording of the article by unanimous vote, the Massachu-

setts Historical Commission was scheduled to render its judgment for or against at a meeting on March 8 and the UHDC will seek an endorsement of the Uxbridge Board of Selectmen on

DISTRCT

continued on page 2

'Be My Valentine' spirit prevails at Chamber breakfast

BY ROD LEE

The cozy relationship between the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce and its state legislative delegation might come as a surprise to some observers.

So too the warmth that exists between the elected representatives and senators themselves—a mix of Democrats and Republicans.

But it is real; and it is genuine, as those attending a "Love Your Legislator" breakfast at Galliford's Restaurant & Tavern at Southwick's Zoo in Mendon on Valentine's Day saw first-hand.

This chumminess is a direct result of the effort BVCC President and CEO Jeannie Hebert and her staff put into recognizing the work Sen. Michael Moore, Sen. Ryan Fattman, Sen. Anne Gobi, Rep. Paul Frost, Rep. Joe McKenna, Rep. David Muradian Jr., Rep. Brian Murray, Rep. Mike Soter and Rep. David LeBoeuf do on behalf of the Chamber's membership—and those legislators' other constituents.

Liz O'Neil pinning hearts on

people as they arrived at Galliford's on the morning of February 14th typified the welcoming mood that existed, as did the forthrightness of the legislators in fielding questions posed by Kevin Hayes and several persons in the audience.

Ms. O'Neil is director of programs, events and membership/marketing coordinator for the Chamber. Mr. Hayes is a senior vice president with Millbury Federal Credit Union and the Chamber's current chair.

In just a little over an hour, once the business at hand began, much information was conveyed about pressing issues. From the revelation that the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Council (CMRPC) is updating its five-year economic development strategy—which may mean more funding for the Chamber—to what can be done about families moving out of the state, to the high school dropout

CHAMBER

continued on page 4

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continued from page 1

March 13th—all in preparation for a hoped-for two-thirds vote embracing the article by residents on May 9th.

A public hearing is also scheduled for April 11th.

“This is such a logical extension of what we had in 2004,” Ms. Keegan said. “And coming up on our 300th anniversary we have a lot of precious history we want to maintain.”

Jane Keegan is eminently qualified to chair the UHDC and to be the lead “squeaky voice,” as she puts it, in championing the article’s passage.

She is a member of the Uxbridge Historical Society, retired as town moderator and a member



A stately presence on North Main St. in Uxbridge, Buma Funeral Home is one of ninety-four properties that would be included in an expanded historic district in the town of Uxbridge.

major purposes in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40c and the local bylaw: “to preserve and protect the distinguishing features of buildings and places significant to Uxbridge history; to maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places; and to encourage new designs that are compatible with existing buildings in the district.”

Ms. Keegan is expected to tell Uxbridge selectmen that, “collectively, the public looks to the BOS as the town’s primary visionary leaders. While the town manager deals with overseeing day-to-day operational objectives within departments, most importantly, this board sets the ‘tone’ for policy implementation. The BOS chooses the overall ‘atmosphere’ Uxbridge projects to those who want to build homes and businesses here.” Viewed in “modern marketing parlance, in this ‘image-driven’ society, you are responsible for creating the image that drives sales.”

Ms. Keegan adds “keeping in mind that the town will celebrate its 300th anniversary as independent of Mother Mendon in 2027, Preserve the Past; Enhance the Future should not be just a simple, unofficial UHDC motto but rather a town mantra! The local Historical Commission agreed to co-sponsor our expansion article. The consensus was that expanding the historic district should not be viewed in a small, backward-looking context but as a town-wide effort to acknowledge our important past and speak to what is important to our future.”

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

of the Uxbridge School Committee, a past regent of the Deborah Wheelock Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), and owner of the Simeon Wheelock House (1786).

Peter Pendergast is vice chair. Travis Do Rosario is clerk.

The UHDC’s enthusiasm for the proposed change is shared by homeowners whose properties are located in what would be the redefined historic district.

Peter Frabotta III is one of these homeowners. Mr. Frabotta’s home, “Barbaras Blue, circa 1908,” which he describes as “a center-entry formal Colonial,” is situated at 46 Capron St. The handsome home was built by E.J. “Johnny” Brady in 1908 and purchased by Mr. Frabotta’s family in 1968.

Mr. Frabotta has meticulously kept the home in its original condition with restoration work, and filled the residence with antiques.

“It is period-decorated,” he said on March 1st.

“Barbara’s Blue circa 1908” will be showcased during a spring house tour being offered from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 30th.

Although a previous attempt at expanding the historic district failed, Ms. Keegan believes this one will succeed. “Two people on the UHDC then who voted against it,” which resulted in its defeat at Town Meeting, are no longer involved with the Commission. Also, “we have shrunk the footprint,” she said; and because “there are so many exclusions,” she doesn’t anticipate widespread objections to its passage.

“If people want to build a chicken coup on their front lawn, they can, as long as it conforms to local zoning laws.”

Ms. Keegan points out that the UHDC aims to achieve three



Peter Frabotta III’s home at 46 Capron St. dates to 1908; the beautifully restored center-entry formal Colonial would be added to the town of Uxbridge’s historic district if an article prepared for consideration at Town Meeting this spring is approved.

BLACKSTONE VALLEY Xpress

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Xpressly Yours ... a letter from the editor

Old Navy 'clothed' in excitement for opening of Sturbridge store



BY ROD LEE

Inside the new Old Navy store in the Center at Hobbs Brook on Charlton Road in Sturbridge on the first Saturday in February all of the merchandise was arranged just so and there were tote bags with coupons inside for customers to use at the sales counter.

Jen Laramee who is the store's manager was in an ebullient mood after taking part in a morning ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"You look like a walking advertisement for Old Navy," Ms. Laramee was told, as she took a few minutes to talk about the grand opening.

"Head-to-toe, all the time!" she said.

Ms. Laramee is a veteran with the company, which is part of the Gap Inc. family.

"Twenty years, out of high school," she said. "I worked in Connecticut before. I live in North Brookfield but grew up in Spencer."

She loves being within easy driving distance of work.

As Deb Compton of Old Navy Communications explained to me in an email prior to February

4th, the Sturbridge store is part of a company strategy focusing on "new stores in smaller markets. Last year the brand opened twenty-five new company-owned stores with approximately twenty-three stores planned in 2023."

The Old Navy store, which is a reincarnation of one that occupied the grounds in the past, adds to the already established mix of businesses at The Blackstone Retail Group's Center at Hobbs Brook.

the Mass Pike-Rt. 20-Rt. 84 area.

Ms. Laramee and her staff are proud of Old Navy's reputation as a provider of quality casual clothing to consumers.

"You can truly be a customer here your whole life, with the Gap family," she said. "When I tell people I work for Old Navy it's 'wow,' never a 'ew!' To be part of the Sturbridge community" with such attractions as Old Sturbridge Village, shops, restaurants, hotels and tourist destinations in Central Massachusetts "is very exciting."

Construction on the new store began in the late summer of 2022 and personnel moved in during the month of January.

The culture is "denim and this is where lot of our fashion comes from," she said.

Ms. Compton points out that "we're also the first value retailer to integrate the shopping experience by offering the broadest assortment of women's sizes in stores and online, with no price difference."

Old Navy thinks of its approach as "democracy of style and service."

"We are creating magical moments and we're happy to execute those moments,"

Ms. Laramee said.

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



Store Manager Jennifer Laramee didn't mind that the ribbon cutting for the new Old Navy store in Sturbridge had to be held inside on a cold morning in February. A longtime employee of Gap Inc., she proudly wears the company's product line.

These include Walmart, Marshalls, Michaels, Staples, Petco and Stop & Shop, making the plaza one of the largest open-air retail sites in

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continued from page 1

rate, to whether state agencies will continue to be allowed to meet “virtually,” the legislators produced the answers their interrogators were looking for.

Which is not to say everyone was completely satisfied. When Devon Kurtz who is executive director of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor told the panel “we are looking for state funding for the bikeway, wayfinding, signage and programming” and Sen. Murray

suggested in reply that he “work through your legislator,” Mr. Kurtz said “that’s all of you.” The matter would have been left unsettled had not Sen. Gobi noted that a new entity—the Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation—would likely play a role in helping the Corridor advance its goals. That, and Sen. Fattman pointed out that \$50,000 had been asked for, to continue building out the bikeway.

Addressing the specter of people leaving Massachusetts, Sen. Fattman pointed a finger of blame at the recently passed “millionaire’s tax,” and the estate tax, which together represent “a major problem,”

he said. “People invest in what they are building their entire lives and when they die they get taxed. We don’t need this money. We have almost \$9 billion in the Rainy Day Fund,” Sen. Fattman said.

The subject that garnered the most attention was kids dropping out of school, at a statewide rate of 6-7%. The legislators were eager to tackle this one.

Rep. Muradian said the superintendent of schools in Northbridge told him that the system was implementing a “freshman academy model”—a Positive Behavior Intervention Support, or PBIS program—that has had “great



Barry Bacon who recently opened Spicy Waters, a distillery in Millbury, asks legislators at the BVCC’s Valentine’s Day breakfast if they can help in a plan he and Bri Azier of Bri’s Sweet Treats have for pairing spirits and chocolates; “we can’t put them together in one,” right now, he said.

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success.”

Rep. McKenna said “the idea is to target students who may not go beyond four years of high school, and the Chamber and its education hub” figure actively in addressing this need to help young people on their career path.

Almost every legislator weighed in on the dropout issue.

“Our numbers are disproportionately high among the ELL student body in my community,” Sen. Murray said. Rep. Frost added “we should allow public schools to adopt a vocational component. Not everyone can go to Valley Tech. Millbury has started this with the carpenters union.” Sen. Gobi said “I taught high school for ten years. In Spencer, we are finding ways to get the business community involved.” Sen. Fattman said “COVID was devastating” and that in Southbridge, where the state came in to take over the school system, an amount of “social angst” remains, but that this is being dealt

with. Sen. Moore said “Chapter 70 money has been increased.” Rep. Soter said “when I went to high school you had certain trades. I am introducing a bill for satellite pop-up locations in all of our schools. We will tap resources in the community, which will start a four-year process as if a kid was going to a vocational school. This will prevent a [financial] hit to our schools” that is inflicted “when students move to a voke school.”

The enormity of the challenges local legislators face in drafting bills was apparent when a question was posed about what can be done to ensure the safety of public buildings.

“As of last week about seven thousand bills have been filed, so I’m not sure,” Sen. Moore said.

What is certain is that the Chamber and its state legislators will stay on top of the situation.

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Before we delve into that question, let's consider the rules. In 2023, you can contribute the full amount to a Roth IRA

— \$6,500, or \$7,500 if you're 50 or older — if your modified adjusted gross income is less than \$138,000 (if you're single) or \$218,000 (if you're married and filing jointly). If you earn more than these amounts, the amount you can contribute decreases until it's phased out completely if your income exceeds \$153,000 (single) or \$228,000 (married, filing jointly).

A Roth IRA is attractive because its earnings and withdrawals are tax free, provided you've had the account at least five years and you don't start taking money out until you're 59½. Furthermore, when you own a Roth IRA, you're not required to take withdrawals from it when you turn 72, as you would with a traditional IRA, so you'll have more flexibility in your retirement income planning and your money will have the chance to potentially keep growing. But given your income, how can you contribute

to a Roth?

You may want to consider what's known as a "backdoor Roth" strategy. Essentially, this involves contributing money to a new traditional IRA, or taking money from an existing one, and then converting the funds to a Roth IRA. But while this backdoor strategy sounds simple, it involves some serious considerations.

Specifically, you need to evaluate how much of your traditional IRA is in pretax or after-tax dollars. When you contribute pretax dollars to a traditional IRA, your contributions lower your annual taxable income. However, if your income is high enough to disqualify you from contributing directly to a Roth IRA, you may also earn too much to make deductible (pretax) contributions to a traditional IRA. Consequently, you might have contributed after-tax dollars to your traditional IRA, on top of

the pretax ones you may have put in when your income was lower. (Earnings on after-tax contributions will be treated as pretax amounts.)

In any case, if you convert pretax assets from your traditional IRA to a Roth IRA, the amount converted will be fully taxable in the year of the conversion. So, if you were to convert a large amount of these assets, you could face a hefty tax bill. And since you probably don't want to take funds from the converted IRA itself to pay for the taxes, you'd need another source of funding, possibly from your savings and other investments.

Ultimately, then, a backdoor Roth IRA strategy may make the most sense if you have few or no pretax assets in any traditional IRA, including a SEP-IRA and a SIMPLE IRA. If you do have a sizable amount of pretax dollars in your IRA, and you'd still like to convert it

to a Roth IRA, you could consider spreading the conversion over a period of years, potentially diluting your tax burden.

Consult with your tax advisor when considering a backdoor Roth strategy. But if it's appropriate for your situation, it could play a role in your financial strategy, so give it some thought.

If you would like to discuss your personal situation with a financial advisor contact:

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Chamber's Home & Community Expo loaded with attractions

BY ROD LEE

For many of us, the month of March means the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's annual Home & Community Expo, which boasts all of the trappings and trimmings offered

by a lively and cherished indoor neighborhood marketplace.

The 23rd annual edition of the Expo will take place on Saturday, March 25th in the Northbridge High School Field House at 427 Linwood Ave. in Whitinsville.

Many activities will be crammed

into the four hours being set aside for the production, which starts at 10:00 a.m. and ends at 2:00 p.m. It will be an opportunity for George Simmons to showcase the high school as a perfect venue for the Expo. Mr. Simmons is in charge of buildings and grounds for NHS.



UniBank is a presenting sponsor of the Blackstone Valley Home & Community Expo; Harbro Auto is a longtime participating business.



UniBank is presenting sponsor. From mid-morning until mid-afternoon, Linwood Avenue and the parking lots at NHS will be crammed with individuals and families, all making their way into the field house to check out businesses' and nonprofits' exhibitor booths, the "Best of the Valley" Chowder Fest, fare from area restaurants, free goodies, networking, music and entertainment, demos, mascots and a scavenger hunt for "The Golden Egg." Attendees are invited to bring their favorite chowder recipe to

the Expo for consideration for the 2023 People's Choice and 2023 Judge's Choice awards. Free tickets can be downloaded at www.blackstonevalley.org/events. Admission is free with a non-perishable food item to benefit the Peace of Bread food bank. Entry is \$3 otherwise. To be a sponsor or otherwise participate, contact Liz O'Neil at 508-234-9090 Ext. 102 or email loNeil@blackstonevalley.org. Register online at www.blackstonevalley.org/events.

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A Senior Center taste treat: Phil Vandersea, Coach LaChapelle

BY ROD LEE

As one of the busiest settings around, Plummer Place at the Northbridge Senior Center never disappoints in the variety of events it hosts on behalf of elders.

This was true again on February 9th when Amy Cowen, who is

program and volunteer coordinator for the facility, rolled out an appearance by former Green Bay Packers fullback and linebacker Phil Vandersea and Northbridge High Football Coach Ken LaChapelle.

Ms. Cowen offered special thanks to the Friends of North-

bridge Elders (F.I.N.E.) for sponsoring the function.

An enterprising woman, she spares no effort in arranging for such activities. In this case, Ms. Cowen even went to the trouble of having a collectible sports card printed by Simply Designs in Northbridge. The back of the card included all of Mr. Vandersea's important stats—height, 6'3", weight, 240, birth date, 2/25/43, birthplace, Whitinsville—along with the notation that he was part of the first AFL-NFL championship game.

He wore the No. 37 for the Packers.

"I was looking for something to attract the guys," Ms. Cowen said. This thinking worked. The turnout, which filled the dining room at Plummer Place, was predominantly male, for a combination of lunch, remarks by Mr. Vandersea and Mr. LaChapelle, and a raffle.

Ms. Cowen could not have chosen two better speakers as symbols of the town's celebrated athletic history. During his forty-seven seasons as coach of the Rams, Mr. LaChapelle has racked up 388 wins, earning him induction into the Massachusetts High School Football Hall of Fame. In his 100th victory, Coach LaChapelle's son Trevor intercepted a pass and

returned it for a touchdown against Uxbridge.

As for Mr. Vandersea, he played under the legendary Vince Lombardi after graduation from Northbridge High and UMass Amherst.

His coach at Northbridge was John Doldoorian.

By way of introducing Mr. Vandersea, Coach LaChapelle said "I was fortunate to work out with Phil and his brother when I was in high school and he was going to the NFL. Phil has something Tom Brady and Patrick Mahomes will never have. He played in the very first Super Bowl."

Coach LaChapelle built a trophy case at the school just for Mr. Vandersea's artifacts.

Even more than anyone might have been expected, Mr. Vander-

sea peppered his talk with "Vince Lombardi stories."

He obviously has great affection for a man who is often remembered as garrulous and tough but who was actually "shy, one-to-one."

Mr. Vandersea drew laughs when he mentioned that members of the Packers were forbidden to drink in any of the hotel bars, with fines attached to the offense.

When he caught Max McGee, a star wide receiver and punter, doing just that, he told Mr. McGee "that will cost you \$250."

"Make it \$500, I'm going to have another one," Mr. McGee said.

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



Former Green Bay Packers' player Phil Vandersea and Northbridge High Football Coach Ken LaChapelle prepare to address a crowd during a luncheon at Plummer Place at the Northbridge Senior Center. The Center's Amy Cowen had a sports collectible card printed in celebration of Mr. Vandersea's appearance. "It was an honor to have them," she said of Mr. Vandersea and Coach LaChapelle.

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Valley Tech robotics team gets \$3000 boost from Bayer Fund

The robotics team at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) recently received a one-time grant from the Bayer Fund, a philanthropic arm of Bayer, in the amount of \$3000. The money supports Team 61, The Intimidator's participation in the FIRST Robotics competitions to enhance their skills in science and engineering.

Bayer Fund is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the communities in which

Bayer customers and employees live and work by providing funding for food and nutrition, education, and community development projects. This grant will allow students to take part in FIRST Robotics educational programs and competitions. FIRST enables teams of students to compete with others in building, designing and programming their own robots to perform preassigned tasks, giving students a chance to get involved with real-world engineering.

"As a Bayer Fund grant recipient, Team 61 will enhance their skills in science and engineering," Robotics Team Advisor Michael Norton said. "Our students will participate in FIRST competitions in March utilizing the Bayer Fund funding at the 2023 NE District SE Mass Event FIRST Robotics Competition in Bridgewater and the Western NE Event in Springfield.

Bayer Fund's sponsorship of FIRST Robotics teams continues the nonprofit's intentional sup-



port of programs that improve STEM education. Over the past five years, Bayer Fund has contributed over \$35 million to STEM outreach efforts.

"The FIRST Robotics program helps provide the necessary skills for young students to become STEM leaders," Bayer Fund President Al Mitchell said.

"This program not only inspires innovation, it provides life capabilities such as communication and self-confidence. Bayer Fund is proud to provide grants to student teams to encourage their development into future scientists, engineers and computer programmers."

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There are plenty of reasons to call a junk removal service. Maybe you're planning to move and need to clear out the basement and attic before your open house. Maybe you've spent way too much time at home lately and are feeling the need to declutter.

But figuring out who to call can be a pain. If you contact one of the big haulers, they route you to a phone center where they've never even heard of your town, plus their pricing seems vague and full of extra fees. No wonder you've let the stuff pile up—it's too much of a hassle to get rid of it!

Or you can call Affordable Junk Removal and let a local small business with deep community roots take care of everything.

Jay Schadler started his business in 2003. Back then, it was just him and a beat-up pickup truck taking small jobs and working nights and weekends when he could. As the years rolled on, his business grew, but his commitment to customer service never wavered. Now he's got a staff of ten, along with ten trucks, servicing eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island.

Affordable Junk Removal specializes in house and estate cleanouts. If your garage, attic, or office is overflowing with stuff, take back your space and let the pros do the heavy lifting.

Jay and his team have handled it all. They've dismantled above-ground pools, hauled away ancient hot tubs, taken down old fencing, and stripped away worn carpeting. They'll come for a single item, or they'll clean out an entire house. And they can take almost anything. They can't accept hazardous materials, brush, dirt, or concrete, but everything else is fair game for them to take away.

Not everything ends up in a landfill—not if Jay can help it. He first tries to either recycle or donate items. Only after he tries to repurpose items do they end up at the transfer station.

Working with Affordable Junk Removal is simple. First, you can load stuff yourself if you want by renting a 15-cubic-yard dumpster for a week and chucking up to a ton of your unwanted stuff. If you need to get rid of more weight, then Jay prorates that tonnage—you never pay for what you don't use.

Business spotlight

If you don't want to be bothered with the dumpster, they've also got a driveway special where they'll take away a truckload of your unwanted things if you pile it up. Or if you don't want to lift a finger, then you can point at the items, and the team will fill up their truck and haul away your unwanted things. However you do it, you're left with more space and more peace of mind.

Jay and his team beat the big waste haulers on both price and customer service. When you call Affordable Junk Removal, you aren't connected to an anonymous call center. Your phone call goes right to Jay.

And speaking of pricing, Jay is upfront about it. His website shows the truck sizes and prices, so you can save time knowing your costs before you call for an appointment. There aren't any hidden costs or surprise fees with Affordable Junk Removal.

Affordable Junk Removal is fully licensed and fully insured, and they'll treat your property



with care and respect.

They also have a thriving commercial business, working with contractors and roofers to clear away debris and keep the job site clean. They can even handle commercial and residential emergencies with same-day service.

Jay and his family are deeply involved in the community. He and his wife, Christine, run the Corner Market restaurant in Holliston as well as Resellables, a thrift store in Bellingham. It's not uncommon for someone

to reach Jay at the restaurant, order a sandwich, and then schedule a junk removal appointment. Yes, the local small business really can handle everything!

For more information, contact Jay Schadler at (774) 287-1133 or visit Affordable Junk Removal online at www.takeawayjunk.com.

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Lions Roaring into New Year

Events on the Uxbridge Lions Club calendar are bounding in on those big cat feet with major events already in full swing. Three activities were ushered in by the Lions Youth Speech Contest in January-

February, which will be followed by the Lions Beautify Uxbridge Project in March-April, leading into its Semi-Annual Shred Event in April.

Eabha Twohig-Mann, Uxbridge High School freshman, took the stage with confidence successfully navigating two rounds of the District 33A Lions Annual Youth Speech Contest. This year's topic, Environmental Crisis: Fact or Fiction, is competed in four rounds. In its final format, the five to eight minute speech must be memorized and delivered error free before a large audience at the Lions conference. Twohig-Mann performed with confidence on initial levels winning cash prizes at each competition. Coached by Uxbridge High teacher, Sheila Bernard, Twohig-Mann impressed judges and audience members with her poise and confident delivery.

The contestant who won at the District 33A Mid-Winter Conference in Southbridge in February and will move on to the state competition in April.

Next on the calendar is what has become the Annual Pansy Sale with the goal of raising funds to purchase flowers and plants for the large containers that adorn the Downtown Uxbridge area from spring through winter. The Beautify Uxbridge Project, initiated years ago by the late Marie Potter, has become the spring service project of the Uxbridge Lions Club. Pre-orders for the pansies are currently being taken. For \$20, buyers can choose among a Pansy Oval or Pansy Bowl. Pansies can be picked up at the Uxbridge Senior Center parking lot on April 1. Four ways to order: Text 508-450-2451; message on Facebook Uxbridge,

MA Lions Club or email uxbridge.ma.lions@gmail.com. Donations for the Lions Beautify Uxbridge Project can be sent to Uxbridge Lions Club, P.O. Box 455, North Uxbridge, MA 01538.

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Twice a year the citizens of Uxbridge and its environs haul boxes of paper and electronics to be shredded, destroyed and recycled for a donation of \$5 per copy paper sized box or per electronic item. So many tons have been processed by the Uxbridge Lions with Pellegrino Trucking dealing with the paper and OnSite Computers handling the electronics that they have stopped counting. Get those items together after tax season and bring them to the VFW Parking Lot, Route 16 and Cross Road, in Uxbridge, on Saturday, April 22, between 8:30 and 11.

OnSite will guarantee the secure destruction of electronic devices including phones, electrical cords, DVDs, cameras, USB cables, flat screen monitors, keyboards, radios and stereos.

Drivers need only follow the signs and guidance of Lions members at the VFW Parking Lot. No need to even get out of the car. Patrons may watch their material securely shredded on site.

These fundraisers enable the Uxbridge Lions to support many community activities. The Uxbridge Lions meet the third Wednesday of each month at the Uxbridge Senior Center at 7 p.m. Contact President Diane Seely at dmseely@hotmail.com for information. New members are always welcome to join the largest service organization in the world whose motto is "We Serve."

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Time to vote in ValleyCAST's Art Palette Contest

An opening reception will be held on Friday, March 10 from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. at Alternatives' Whitin Mill, 50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville, for ValleyCAST's Art Palette Contest.

ValleyCAST, the arts and culture arm of Open Sky Community Services, recently invited artists of all ages and abilities to transform ordinary wooden art palettes into unique works of art. The approximately eighty finished palettes will be hung together in the Spaulding R. Aldrich Heritage Gallery at Alternatives' Whitin Mill.

Members of the community is welcome to attend the opening reception, which will feature free wine and cheese and a chance to vote for their favorite palettes. Cash prizes will be awarded to first, second and third-place winners in three different categories and determined by visitors' votes. Some palettes are for sale. Voting ends

April 7th. The exhibit ends on April 21st.

ValleyCAST's mission is to foster a creative and engaged community the historic Blackstone Valley that is inclusive and supportive of all people with and without disabilities.

By blending best practices with the power of community, Open Sky provides individuals and families with the support they need to see beyond and live beyond perceived limitations to pursue fulfilling lives.



Dennis H. Rice named chair of Corridor Board of Directors

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor recently announced new appointments to its Board of Directors. This action took place at its annual meeting in February.

New officers include Dennis H. Rice, chair; Lee Dillard Adams, vice chair; Harry T. Whitin, vice chair; Bill Beitler, treasurer; and Todd Helwig, secretary. In addition, BHC's immediate past chair is Richard Moore.

Directors re-elected for a three-year term on BHC's Board including Richard Moore, Lee Dillard Adams, Jeannie Hebert, Harry T. Whitin, Donna Williams and Robert Billington. The Board also elected a new director, Jon Roberts. Other directors include Michael Cassidy, Richard Gregory, and Daniel DaPonte.

Many opportunities to volunteer with the Corridor are coming up; with the Volunteers-in-Parks program, for instance. Reach out to Molly Cardoza at mcardoza@BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org.

Sixteen volunteers served eighty-eight hours for a total value of \$2,635.60 during Maple Sugar Days at River Bend Farm in Uxbridge.

On February 12, the Uxbridge Historical Society hosted Susan Franz for a presentation of "Crossroads of the Underground Railroad-Part 2."

The North Smithfield Heritage Association (NSHA) is offering its



next Heritage Hike on Saturday, March 11th, visiting Union Village. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at Union Cemetery on Smithfield Rad. Find details at <https://fb.me/e/2oGe3xXjR>.

In preparation for National Learn About Butterflies Day on March 14, BHC's Bonnie Combs started reading "Bicycling with Butterflies: M 10,201-Mile Journey Following the Monarch Migration" by Steve Dykman. To learn more about Monarchs and what you can do to help their population, visit <https://monarchwatch.org>.

Celebrate World Water Day on March 22nd by attending an EnviroScape Training Skills Workshop from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Corridor offices at 670 Linwood Ave. in Whitinsville. RSVP to <https://bit.ly/EnviroScapeSW>.

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Congratulations to People's Choice Winners!

2nd Annual NESAsculpture Exhibit at Alternatives' Whitin Mill

ValleyCAST, the arts and culture arm of Open Sky Community Services, collaborated again this year with the New England Sculptors Association to bring yet another unique exhibit of sculpture to the Alternatives' Whitin Mill Complex. Over 30 sculptures were included in the exhibit and displayed inside the gallery, out on the Community Plaza, and around the grounds of the Mill Complex. Artists from all over New England were represented in the exhibit.

Prizes for favorites were awarded by people's choice for first, second, and third place. Voting took place on-line and in-person.

"It has been such a privilege to work with such talented artists." Commented Cristi Collari, judge and curator for the exhibit, and Director of Community Outreach for Open Sky. "This year's exhibit was absolutely stunning! We can't wait to collaborate with NESAsculpture again next year."

First prize and \$300 went to

Chris Plaisted of New Milford, CT for his inside, pedestal sculpture "Celestial Sphere" created out of steel.

Second prize and \$200 went to Carla Goldberg of Milford, CT for her inside, wall mounted "Between the Islands of Jura and Scarab" made with oil ink, resin, and enamel on acrylic panel.

And third prize and \$100 went to Domenic Esposito of Westwood, MA for his inside, wall mounted sculpture "Assailable" created from bronze and mounted on an oil painted wood panel.

Although the inside gallery exhibit has come down to make room for the ValleyCAST 10th Annual Art Palette Contest, you can still view the outside sculpture on the complex grounds by the following artists: Roe Osborn, Madeleine Lord, Philip Marshall, and Stephen Paulson until mid-April, 2023.

To learn more about the New England Sculptors Association, visit nesculptors.org.

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Sutton's Annie Lamoreaux running toward a bright future

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Having enjoyed taking part in sports growing up, Sutton's Annie Lamoreaux was hoping to continue participating in the

was cross country that year so I decided to give it a try and I found that I enjoyed it," she said. "The next year they offered track; I liked cross country and figured that it was similar so I gave it a try. I had never run before and enjoying



events when she got into Middle School. However, the sixth grader soon found out that there really wasn't too many options for her. "The only sport that was opened

sports I wanted to do something."

Lamoreaux soon found that she really enjoyed running, both cross country and track gave her the sense of taking part in an individual sport, but one that was also contingent upon the team as well.

During her first season running track she found herself to be very nervous and didn't break out of her shell until closer to the end of the season when she finally started to win some meets. That season the then seventh grader was participating in the mile and the 4 x 100 relay (an event that she said she much regretted as she found that she was not a sprinter). Lucky for her, by the next season Sutton had a bunch of sprinters come in so she didn't have to continue that event, instead she moved over to the 4 x 400 relay, an event she found herself to like much better.

"It all seems silly now, but all the



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older kids intimidated me and I figured that they would just blow me out," Lamoreaux said. "Eventually I realized that I didn't need to worry about them, instead I just needed to go out and run my own race."

runner in the middle school, she has always been a great runner that works extremely hard. Back then she was really quiet; it's nice to see that she has come out of her shell this year," the Sutton Coach said. "She has had almost a linear

would to set myself up for the rest of the race," she said. "I pace myself the next two laps before I kick it into high gear during the fourth lap going real hard and hopefully I'll catch some kids in front of me."

During the season the freshman has put together a rather successful campaign winning all but a few of her races while qualifying to take part in the State Tournament in the 1000, the mile and the 4x400 relay. She will only participate in the mile and 4x400 at the Tournament.

With the rest of this season as well as three more years of running track for Sutton High School Lamoreaux's next goal is to drop her time down to 5:20 and then she wants to go after the school record of 5:17.

"I would rally like to get that record," she said. "I think it would be really cool to see my name on the school record board."

Her coach believes that the record is something that is within Lamoreaux's reach.

"I think that she'll continue to do well as she really loves running," Stone said. "I see her improving on a regular basis with her drive. She has a very bright future in front of her."



Upon entering the high school this year, Lamoreaux has focused on running the mile and taking part in the 4 x 400, where she runs the first leg of the event. While there is pressure on her to go out and set the tone for the rest of her teammates she doesn't let it bother her.

"It worries me at times, but I can only work hard and do my best hoping that it sets my team up for success," she said.

As a seventh grader running the mile Lamoreaux posted a personal best of 6:15, thus far in her first year on the varsity track team the freshman has a personal best time of 5:30.

"I really love running the mile; it's the perfect distance not too short and not too long - it allows me to build up my speed," the freshman runner said. "I've been able to lower my times as I started pacing myself, consistently trying to accomplish my next goal. I go out and focus on my race and improving my time."

Coach John Sutton has been able to see what his freshman miler could do in the past and believes she can only get better as the years go on.

"I had Annie as a cross country

improvement throughout this year where she has had a pr (personal record) in most of the races she has done."

Stone continued to note that Lamoreaux seems to do well when the competition around her is similar in time and she knows what she has to do to succeed.

Lamoreaux has a strategy in mind when she steps onto the blocks.

"During my first lap I don't want to go too hard, but I do want to go a little faster than I normally



Prayer

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

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



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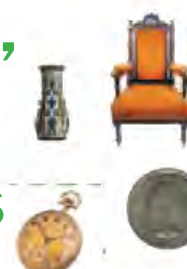
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AG supports Sen. Moore-filed bill to enhance community safety

Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell recently announced her support for legislation in the 2023-2024 session to create safer communities, build economic prosperity and stability and protect vulnerable communities. The five bills filed prior to the legislative filing deadline align with ongoing

work in the Attorney General's Office as well as the priorities laid out in AG Campbell's inaugural address. One of the bills she supports was filed by Senator Michael O. Moore (D-Millbury).

The bills include proposals to bolster the tools used by the AG's Office to address abuse and neglect

of elderly and disabled patients, strengthen protections for consumers, electric ratepayers, victims of crime and better enforce the state's common-sense gun laws.

"I'm pleased to have the support of Attorney General Campbell for my bill An Act relative to silencers, and I look forward to collaborating on this issue throughout the legislative cycle," said Sen. Moore (D-Millbury). "This legislation will align Massachusetts' laws with the federal definition of silencers to close any loopholes. All Bay Staters should be able to feel safe in their communities."

"If these bills become law, they will ensure we have the tools to fully protect our residents and our most vulnerable from abuse while holding bad actors accountable," Attorney General Campbell said. "Our office will continue to partner with the Legislature to pass laws that allow for greater economic prosperity for our residents while building safer, healthier communities so the next generation can do better than the last."

AG Campbell has signed on to the following bills:

SD1829, An Act relative to silencers.

SD968 / HD3662, An Act strengthening the Attorney General's tools to protect nursing home residents and other patients from abuse and neglect.

SD1829 / HD3258, An Act modernizing protections for consumers in automobile transactions.

SD648 / HD3214, An Act relative to electric ratepayer protections.

SD1511 / HD709, An Act to protect the privacy of crime victims.

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Local residents make Dean's List at Wentworth Institute of Technology

The following local students have made the Dean's List at Wentworth Institute of Technology for the Fall 2022 semester.

- Sophia Aquilino of Douglas, Mass. (01516)

- Samantha Kauzens of Uxbridge, Mass. (01569)

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Innovation helps The Uxlocale coming out of the pandemic

BY ROD LEE

The need for continuing adjustment as the Commonwealth slowly emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic is not lost on restaurateurs like Chef Elaine Cowan of The Uxlocale on West Hartford Ave. in Uxbridge. Just as it isn't for the Massachusetts Restaurant Association, which is pushing hard for legislators on Beacon Hill to make outdoor dining and cocktails-to-go a permanent fixture here.

Provisions for this allowance, which was granted to the restaurant industry during the health crisis, are set to end on March 31st.

The Westborough-based MRA notes that while the state's restaurants received strong support from customers when they needed it most, many were still forced to close, or were placed at the edge of bankruptcy. Takeout was a huge help, but close to 5000 restaurants shut their doors. Those that remain are struggling with worker shortages, supply-chain issues, the loss of financial assistance and inflation—as the cost of food soars.

Outdoor dining has helped to save the day, in numerous in-

stances.

"It's played a tremendous role in the recovery of our hospitality industry," State Rep. Manny Cruz, D-Salem, points out. "And it's really been a net benefit for the city. We look like a different community, similar to what you would see in Europe, with respect to outdoor dining."

With the short-term reforms that were enacted during Covid-19 about to disappear, the MRA is asking state legislators to give restaurants the opportunity to sell beer, wine and alcohol with takeout and delivery orders.

Ms. Cowan is known not only for her fresh and flavorful fare with



'Greenhouse' dining is one way The Uxlocale has dealt with space restrictions

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an accent on farm-to-table, but for her a willingness to think of new ways to increase the appeal of The Uxlocale—like a recent disco dance party she hosted.

This includes a step she took to expand the dining experience for her patrons.

"We are fortunate to have a great

enclosed (from the parking lot) patio space," she said. "I also added a 'greenhouse;' people have been eating outside all winter! It's been a saving grace."

Submit restaurant news to rodlee.1963@gmail.com.

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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 MARCH 31

• “Transitions: Winter to Spring,” paintings by Anne M. Tisdell, will be featured in the café gallery at Booklovers’ Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster and can be viewed during normal business hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10-5 and Wednesday 10-6. A Meet-the-Artist reception is planned for Saturday, March 11th from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. A native of Swampscott on the Massachusetts coast, Ms. Tisdell has dabbled in art all her life with sketching and drawing. She has exhibited in various places in Central Massachusetts and started taking art classes with Bill Griffiths at the Worcester Art Museum “which brought me to a new level as an artist.” Booklovers’ Gourmet was her first exhibit in 2020 and 2021.

SATURDAY, MARCH 11

• St. Peter’s Parish, 39 Church Ave., Northbridge, is hosting a Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner starting at 5:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Families and friends are invited for a wonderful meal and Irish Music by Alto Vista. Tickets are \$17 per person for a meal that will include potatoes, carrots, salad and dessert. To-go meals will be available for pickup at 5:00 p.m. All orders must be purchased in advance. “Pay It Forward” by purchasing an extra dinner for delivery to someone in the community in need. Call the Parish Office at 508-234-2156 or email parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org to purchase tickets or for more details.

TUESDAY, MARCH 14

• The Intrepid Readers of the Simon Fairfield Public Library, 290 Main St., Douglas, will discuss Joshua Slocum’s “Sailing Alone Around the World.” Slocum died in 1909 and the book was published in 1956. He circumvented the world by way of the oceans in a 34-foot sloop over a period of three years. All are invited to attend this event. Books, audio books and Libby copies are available. Call the library at 508-476-2695 for further info.

**FRIDAYS DURING LENT
MARCH 17, 24 AND 31**

• Lenten Fish Dinners, dine in or take out, are being offered at St. Denis Church, Douglas, from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. (NOT on March 10 and NOT on April 6). Includes baked fish, coleslaw, tartar sauce and your choice of baked potato or white rice. For an

additional cost, add a cup of homemade clam chowder. Prices to be determined; order online before 7:00 p.m. the Thursday prior, or tickets will be available at the door on Friday (while supplies last). Saint-DenisChurch.com/fish-dinners. Cash, check or Square payments accepted on arrival.

THURSDAY, MARCH 16

• Journey to the Polynesian Islands by attending the 29th annual Superintendent’s Gourmet Dinner at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, 65 Pleasant St., Upton. The competition center will be transformed into a tropical dining oasis. “Polynesian” is the theme the students have chosen for this year’s event. A variety of dishes reflecting this theme will complement carefully selected wines. The evening will begin with a social hour at 5:00 p.m. followed by a multi-course dinner



Kerrie Evers and her band will perform at a New England Country Music Club event at the Uxbridge Progressive Club on March 19th.

at 6:00 p.m. This gala event is a major fundraiser for the school. Tickets are \$140 per person or \$1300 for a table of ten and may be obtained by calling 508-529-7758 x3020. After confirming your reservation checks made payable to Blackstone Valley Tech can be mailed to BVT c/o Anne-Marie Colonero, 65 Pleasant St., Upton MA 01568, to hold your seat(s).

MARCH 17, 18 & 19

• The Uxbridge High School Drama Club will present “Grease: School Version” with book, music and lyrics by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey, with performances at 7:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday in the Uxbridge High School Auditorium. Grease: School Version is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French Inc., a Concord Theatricals Company. “Grease” is a turbo-fueled nostalgic musical road trip through the joys, relationships and dances—literally and emotionally—of the students of Rydell High in 1959. The UHS Drama Club boasts a cast and crew of sixty members, directed by Kathleen Penza and Mary Mangnall with assistance from Sue Hirtle. The production is a collaborative effort between several departments at UHS including Performing Arts, Visual Arts/Graphic Design and Technology and Construction. Contact the Uxbridge High School office to reserve tickets; tickets are free but are required for admission and will be available to the public starting March 6.

FRIDAY, MARCH 17

• In observance of St. Patrick’s Day, the Douglas Historical Society will serve a Corned Beef Sandwich Lunch at the E.N. Jenckes Store Museu, 283 Main St., Douglas, between noon and 6:00 p.m. Donations of \$12 will help support and maintain this historic building as patrons enjoy a corned beef sandwich on rye or pumpernickel with coleslaw, sour pickle and beverage, along with an Irish-themed cupcake or cookie for dessert.
• In celebration of its 125th anniversary, St. Patrick’s Church, 1 Cross St., Whitinsville, will host a free St. Patrick’s Day concert at 7:00 p.m., featuring Irish music by Chris Bilodeau. This event is sponsored by the Northbridge Cultural Council. Jim from Peg’s Diner will serve a meal of Fish & Chips. Dinner options also include Baked Fish/ Baked Potato and Coleslaw or Fried Fish/ Fries and Coleslaw for \$14. Jimmy’s famous Clam Chowder will be available for \$4/cup or \$6/bowl. Mac & Cheese with Fries for \$5.

Dinners will be available for in-house dining on Fridays during Lent through March 31st from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. Payment is by Venmo, Square, or cash.

SATURDAY, MARCH 18

• A Floral Arrangement Fundraiser Class presented by Sandy Michalak of Herbert E. Berg Florist will be held at the Millbury First Congregational Church, 148 West Main St., Millbury, at 2:00 p.m. Cost is \$25 for instruction and all materials. Beginners welcome. Advanced registration by March 14 is required by calling Janice Fortin at 508-826-6381.
• Irish Night will be celebrated at the Uxbridge Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., starting at 6:00 p.m. Corned Beef dinner served at 6:30 p.m. Music by the Laura May Band 7:00-11:00 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for dinner and dancing and \$15 for dinner-only, takeout (5:30-6:30 p.m. at the kitchen door). Please purchase tickets in advance at the club. Call 508-278-9800 for more

information.

SUNDAY, MARCH 19

• The New England Country Music Club will host a dance featuring the “Kerrie Evers” band at the Uxbridge Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St. Doors open at 12:15 p.m. with live music from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

• Whitinsville Christian School, 279 Linwood Ave., Whitinsville, welcomes Dr. John Abbondanza, a specialist in vision therapy and vision-related learning problems, for an informative presentation about the critical link between vision and learning. The event is scheduled for 5:15 p.m. Admission is free and all interested parents, guardians and educators are invited to attend.

HAPPENINGS!
continued on page 20

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HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 19

SATURDAY, MARCH 25

• The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's Home & Community Expo will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Northbridge High School, 427 Linwood Ave., Whitinsville. This is one of the area's premier events to advertise your business to residents and prospective customers. Single booths, double booths, nonprofit booths

are available; a "golden egg" exhibitor add-on provides for a prime location on the floor with identification as part of the scavenger hunt. Small businesses from all over the Blackstone Valley will showcase their products and services. Exhibitor registration deadline is March 8. For more information, contact Liz O'Neil, loneil@blackstonevalley.org or 508-234-9090 Ext. 102.

ON OR AROUND APRIL 1

• Southwick's Zoo, 2 Southwick St., Mendon,

opens for the season, with such attractions as a 35-acre deer forest, petting zoo, parakeet landing walk-through aviary, EARTH Discovery Center, Skyfari Ride, Woodlands Express Train, Rainforest Conservation Maze, Soaring Eagle Zipline and more. www.southwickszoo.com.

• The Town of Sutton will host its 2nd Annual Earth Day Cleanup. Anna Wence from the Genius Hour at Sutton Middle School is coordinating the event with friends Caitlyn, Taylor and Teagan. Last year's cleanup

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11:45am Egg Hunt starts in Whitin Park*

* If the weather is inclement the egg hunt for all ages will be cancelled, however all children will receive a goodie bag & may enter a raffle drawing to win the prizes. Drawing will be at 12:00pm.

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"After a Winter Storm" and other paintings by Anne Tisdell are on exhibit at Booklovers' Gourmet in Webster through the month of March.

resulted in the collection of two tons of litter. Ms. Wence and her colleagues are hoping to expand the initiative this year. Al's Rubbish, the Sutton Police Department, the Sutton Fire Department, Sutton 4H, the Boy Scouts and the Board of Selectmen have all pledged their support.

TUESDAY, APRIL 4

• The Sutton Historical Society welcomes Joe lamartino of the Thompson Historical Society for a talk, "The Nipmuc Lithic Trail," at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, Sutton, at 7:00 p.m. Go to www.suttonhistoricalsociety.org for further info.

SATURDAY, APRIL 22

• Douglas's Silver Club is sponsoring a bus trip to New York City to see the new Titanic

exhibit. Cost is \$120. There will be lunch at Ann and Tony's in the Bronx and time on Arthur Avenue (lots of Italian bakeries, butcher shops and delis). For more information call Sue at 508-476-5820.

TUESDAY, MAY 9

• The Sutton Historical Society welcomes Carol Crossed curator of the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum, bot a talk, "Vintage Tweets: A Book of Suffrage Era Postcards," at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, Sutton, at 7:00 p.m. Go to www.suttonhistoricalsociety.org for further info.

HAPPENINGS!

continued on page 21

Yummies Drive-Up Spring Calendar

New Location: Uxbridge VFW
(next to Police Station, corner of 14 Cross Rd. / Rte. 16, Uxbridge)

Plenty of parking for "Auto-Dining"/ Tailgating

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MAY 15-17

• Douglas's Silver Club is sponsoring a three-day trip to Maine (Portland and Kennebunkport) that includes guided tours of both places, a tour of the Victoria Mansion, a visit to the Seashore Trolley Museum with a trolley ride, two nights lodging, two breakfasts and two dinners (one of them lobster) as well as some free time for shopping. Cost is \$399 per person. Call Sue at 508-476-5820 for further details.

SATURDAY, JUNE 3

• St. Peter's Parish, 39 Church Ave., Northbridge, is hosting a Yard Sale and Vendor Fair from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Rain date is Saturday, June 10th. Volunteers will be available to pick up donated items. Vendors are welcome. Vendor tables may be secured for \$40. Call 508-234-2156 or email parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org for more information.

SATURDAY, JUNE 10

• Get The Led Out performs at Indian Ranch, 200 Gore Road, Webster, 7:00 p.m. www.indianranch.com.

SUNDAY, JUNE 11

• Kip Moore performs at Indian Ranch, 200 Gore Road, Webster, 1:00 p.m. www.indianranch.com.

SATURDAY, JULY 1

• Chase Rice performs at Indian Ranch, 200 Gore Road, Webster, 1:00 p.m. www.indianranch.com.

SUNDAY, JULY 9

• Rumours: The Ultimate Fleetwood Mac Tribute Show, takes the stage at Indian Ranch, 200 Gore Road, 1:00 p.m. www.indianranch.com.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

• The Sutton Historical Society welcomes Andrew Noone, author of "Bathsheba Spooner: A Revolutionary Murder Conspiracy," at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, Sutton, at 7:00 p.m. Go to www.suttonhistoricalsociety.org for further info.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7

• The Sutton Historical Society welcomes

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BY AMY LECLAIRE

In his defense, it had been a harried week. Dog owners understand. We do the best we can to give our pets the attention they need and deserve, but somehow, some way, we fall short.

“Luke, I just need to practice one more time. We’re going to go for a walk. Promise.”

Luke had been so patient with me (and family) all week. Daddy had another conference call. Momma had more dances and revisions. Bro was off to Boston. Again, my heart went out to Luke through all of it. He needed me, but I just couldn’t grab the time to give back. One more SEND. One more POLISH. Luke didn’t deserve such human craziness. Yet still, he waited patiently. He chewed his bone. He walked around the house. He collapsed

on the floor and waited by the door. He held onto one thought, a fragile hope that I’d stop what I was doing and think about how it might feel to be a dog who can’t grab his keys and go.

“If I can’t bring my dog, I’m not going.” The motto, a classic Dog Person quote, sits on the border of a frame, one of a few treasured gifts shared with me. The saying became my mantra. Luke’s been on crowded buses, through fragrant Health & Beauty aisles, and on the cement floors of dog-friendly coffee-shops.

“Your dog is so cute! Do you mind if I pet him?”

“Of course she doesn’t mind!” Luke puts his chin up and smiles like a dolphin for one more person who reciprocates his affection. I’ve developed a friendly observation throughout my dog-owning years. People seem kinder in the presence of pooches.

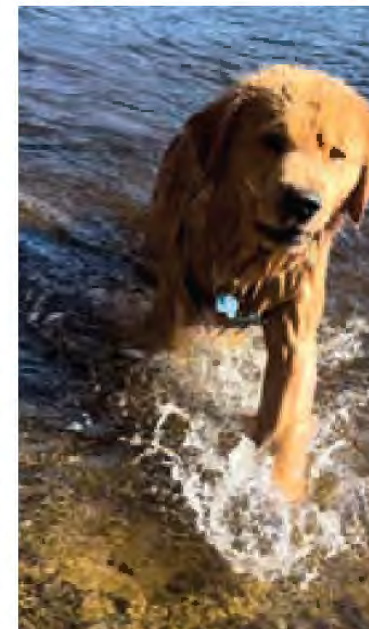
“Is he a service dog?”

I can’t lie. Even though my dog absolutely “serves” the needs of the community, it’s just not ethical to pretend.

“My name is Luke Valentino.



Luke takes the polar plunge at Wells State Park in Sturbridge



My Momma writes stories about me!” Luke is proud of me, proud of the person he just met, and proud to simply be out in public. His expression, once again, brings out the best in people.

“He’s not a service dog,” I confess. “I’m a columnist. I take him along for story inspiration.” Like jelly from a doughnut, the white

lie oozes from my mouth. Writers are not entitled to such special treatment. Nevertheless, I want to keep Luke in the loop.

“Want to take a selfie with me?” Luke has no idea that most dogs don’t go everywhere with their owners. He very well may think he’s a service dog. “You can follow me on Instagram too!” Luke’s personal web page, found at livingwithlukevalentino, features pieces of our excursions. The content of the posts tend to be light-hearted and humorous. However, the pictures do not tell the full story, I’m afraid. One picture features Luke Valentino playfully galloping along a trail in the forest of Wells State Park, Sturbridge. The date was Saturday, February 18th. Here’s how things went down.

“Luke – Come!”

The command echoed with the stern sound of my teacher’s voice. Luke has responded to this voice since he was an eight-week-old pup. My neighbors have heard the echo through opened

bedroom windows, while I’ve watched Luke consider straying from the yard. “LUKE, COME!” I’ve caught him in the act so many times. My voice, aided by an electric collar which corresponds to a remotely charged “beep” sound, has always been effective. Add food rewards to the mix, and the deal is sealed.

His electric collar had been on during that hike pictured so nicely on Instagram. His recall had been stupendous. “Luke, COME!” He heard my voice, then the beep, and ran back to me as though training for a horse race “Don’t worry!! I just wanted to see what the pavement smells like up ahead! I’ll never leave you, Momma!”

Off-the-leash time has proved an exhilarating experience for both of us. Watching my dog gallop amongst verdant pines reminds me of the easy way in which a tropical fish flows with the current of the sea. Dogs naturally need to run. I was about to learn, however, that freedom can also prove dangerous. Lukey V. was about to claim redemption for a week of neglect.

He tiptoed to a charming cove bordering the lake and sniff. No problem there. Then he dipped a paw in to test the waters. Things were getting hairy. My husband sniffed out his next move and approached the shoreline. Before we had a moment’s notice, he did the dirty deed.

“Ahhhhh. So refreshing.” Our pup took the polar plunge. Worse, he was completely unapologetic about the move, and oblivious to

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by Kelly Hauk

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REAL ESTATE

Wondering what's going on with home prices?

The recent changes in home prices are top of mind for many as the housing market begins gearing up for spring. It can be hard to navigate misleading headlines and confusing data, so here's what you should



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

know about today's home prices. Local price trends still vary by market. But looking at national data, U.S. house prices were largely unchanged in the last four months and remained near the peak levels reached over the summer of 2022. While higher mortgage rates have impacted demand, low inventories of homes for sale have helped

maintain relatively flat house prices.

This chart shows that the average decrease in the last two quarters is about .47, which is less than half of 1%.

What does this mean for you? If you currently own your house, you may be concerned about even the smallest decline in prices. But keep in mind how much home values grew over the last few years. Com-

pared to that growth, any declines we're seeing nationally are likely to be minimal. While prices continued to fall from November, the rate of decline was lower than that seen in the summer and still adds up to only a 3% cumulative drop in prices since last spring's peak.

It's also important to remember that every local market is different. That's why it's essential to lean on

experts from The Marzeotti Group or a real estate professional for the latest information on the home prices in your area if you're planning to make a move this spring.

To understand what's going on with home prices in your market and how they could impact your goals, contact The Marzeotti Group at 617-519-1871 or a local real estate professional today.

U.S. House Prices Largely Unchanged

2022 Month-Over-Month Percent Change in House Values

Case Shiller	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Case Shiller	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2	-0.2	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	NA
FHFA	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2	-0.2	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	NA
Black Knight	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	-0.1	-0.3	-0.4	-0.4	NA
CoreLogic	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2	-0.2	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	NA

LUKE

continued from page 22

our calls. Like a child surrounded by candy spat out of a pinata, he moved freely, biting at the air to catch bubbles. In my mind's eye, the song "I Feel Good" by James Brown played on.

Lukey V. had seized the moment and wasn't about to stop, just as his parents had not been to halt their activities a week prior. His paws flapped against the water while he created bubbles and swam like a confused duck.

"Luke!!" Our teaching voices failed us this time. Meanwhile a crowd of onlookers approached. "Oh my gosh, look at him go!"

We tried to lure our one-year-old pup back with treats.

"He doesn't need food. He be like, 'I got water, Man!'"

The teen-ager's remark dripped with sarcasm. Nevertheless, it was spot on. We watched our pup grab minutes of unadulterated, joy-infused moments. Cliché

as it may sound, Luke was in his own world.

We had to wait for him, just as he had for us. We snapped a few pictures (may as well capture the crazy) and, finally, something struck our pup. Perhaps the cold temperature had made its mark. More likely—

"Oooh-weee!" He shook his way to shore and accepted a few treats. "Swimming sure does work up the ol' appetite." He came back for food.

He shook off the cold until his fur frizzed out like an afro on a humid day. Then he rubbed himself, shoulder down, on the pavement. Thankfully, the mid-day sun was hot and full. We took him to a grassy meadow along the trail and let him shake, rub, and absorb the heat. I even surprised myself with a clever survival tool. Though I'm not known to be the G. I. Jane type of girl, the weapon came to me like a dream. "I have a blow-dryer packed in the car!"

We warmed and groomed our

pup until he appeared fresh and fluffy. Then we drove home and counted our blessings while he curled asleep in plush blankets lining the floor of his travel crate.

Sometimes a dog needs to take what he needs. Just as we do.

Write to Amy at amyleclaire@hotmail.com

Find Luke Valentino on Instagram: [@livingwithlukevalentino](https://www.instagram.com/livingwithlukevalentino)

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SPORTS

Douglas athletes 'on track' for New Balance Nationals

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

The Douglas indoor track team under the guidance of Coach Jeffrey Thayer is sending five athletes to take part in the New Balance Nationals, occurring March 3 -11 at The Track in Boston.

The Tigers will be sending representatives to run in the medley relay and the 55 meter dash.

Domonic Rossi will open the medley relay running the first 200 leg with Luke Lightbown taking the baton and the second 200 leg before passing it onto Darius Buivydas, who will run the 400 and Colin Squier will look to run

the 800 past the finish line to conclude the event.

The foursome got together during last year's outdoor season when Coach Peter Mannka put them together with the goal of running all the way to the Nationals in Boston.

The medley relay team punched their ticket to participate in the New Balance Nationals on Friday January 13 at the Northeast Invitational Meet when they ran a 3:46.77, just under the 3:47 qualification time.

"The Track is a brand new facility in which everyone wants to be able to run on it," Coach Thayer said. "I think that they will do pretty well in the Nation-

als, and I am hoping that they can put together a quicker race taking 2-3 seconds off their time from Sectionals."

At the Division 5 Sectionals Rossi, Lightbown, Buivydas and Squier set a new school record in the 4x400 event, breaking the old record of 3:38, which they owned, by posting a final time of 3:33.72. In doing so the four qualified to take part in the All-States on Saturday, February 25.

As the boys were doing their thing in the relay Abigail Bilodeau was running her heart out in the 55 meter dash in order to get her shot at the Nationals. Although running for the high school, Bilodeau is only a seventh grader in the Douglas Middle School. In addition to the 55, she also participates in the 300 and 4x200 relay for the Tigers. She has also qualified for the 60-meter dash in middle school.

In order to secure a spot in Boston Bilodeau needed a time of 7.93 or less, which she has



The Douglas High track team's medley relay team.



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NATIONALS
continued on page 25

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NATIONALS

continued from page 24

accomplished on numerous times this season. Currently her best time in the event is 7.81 and she was able to run a 7.86 as the only middle school participant running the event at the Division 5 Sectionals. That time of 7.86 gave her 19th place overall out of a field of 32 runners in the event.

"I knew of her from the middle school coach who had given me a heads up on the younger girls looking to make the team. Her very first race, she just blew me out of the water with how fast she was," Thayer said. "Right from the start she was more than impressive. She is someone who always has a smile on her face, works hard and enjoys every meet she takes part in."

As one of the younger girls to be going to the Nationals, Thayer is unsure of how she will do as he has not seen any of the other entries or their times as of this

writing.

"She since first qualified for the Nationals, she has continuously been able to decrease her times in the event throughout the year," the Douglas coach said. "She should be able to continue that trend and run a pretty quick



Abigail Bilodeau, Douglas's up-and-coming 55-meter dash competitor.

race. Having someone as young as she is with talent is unusual for us; we haven't sent anyone to the Nationals since 2014."

New Meditation Classes

The Uxbridge Senior Center, located at 36 South Main Street, is proud to present a new Meditation Class that will be held at the center starting on Wednesday, March 15th from 9:30am-10:15am. Classes will be held once a week for 8 weeks with a requested donation of \$25. The class instructor is Dr. David Tapscott who will be guiding the class

participants with various mindful exercises.

Meditation is a practice without a goal, it is an experience. The "goal" is, so to speak, to meditate. There are many forms of meditation including mindfulness, breath-centered, walking etc. Benefits of Meditation include the following: Lowers stress, reduces anxiety, enhances mental health,

improve self-awareness, increases concentration and attention span, reduce memory loss, generates empathy and kindness and improves sleep hygiene. No equipment is needed, wear comfortable clothing. All are welcome to register, for more information and to receive a registration packet, please call the senior center at (508) 278-8622.

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THE CAR DOCTOR

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Noisy lifters issue is best addressed by the dealer



BY JOHN PAUL

Q. I lease a 2020 Ford Edge ST with 24,000 miles. My lease started in September 2020, that means it is up this coming

September. I have a tapping noise which I believe is coming from the lifters. The drive train warranty is still in effect. Given the low mileage and the current status of used cars I was planning on purchasing this vehicle at lease end. I could not find any recalls or service bulletins on this. Do you feel this would be a deterrent for me to purchase this vehicle or would you know of any recalls?

A. This issue is usually caused by sticking components in the variable valve timing system. The problem which does sound like noisy lifters especially after sitting for six hours or more. At this point I would leave the car at the dealer

so they can start it cold the next day. Once they hear the noise, they should be able to repair it. Once it is repaired, I would have no problem buying the car at the end of the lease.

Q. I drive a 2016 Nissan Maxima and when the temperature dips below freezing (32) my dashboard warning system turns on that one or several of my tires need air. Once the temperature warms up, it shows normal pressure. It isn't always the same tire (s), but it does happen regularly. Anything I need to do or just live with it?

A. Tire pressure drops when the temperature in colder and expands as the tires and air temperature warm up. The first thing to do is to properly inflate the tires when the temperature is cooler. Also keep in mind that tire pressure drops about one pound for every 10 degrees change in temperature. If the tires were properly inflated at 70 degrees and the temperature drops to 30 degrees, the tire pres-

sure could go from 32 PSI to 28 PSI. Also tires will lose about one pound of air per month. So if the last time the tires were checked was in September the tire could be under inflated a few pounds, add in the temperature change and the difference can be enough to turn the TPMS light on.

Q. I own a 2018 Ford Escape SE with Eco-Boost 4 cylinder engine. The vehicle now has almost 60,000 miles. The Start Stop technology has not worked for a while. The vehicle runs fine in every aspect with the exception of this. At traffic lights, the engine no longer stops then starts when my foot is off the brake. When I brought it to the dealer for regular service, I mentioned this and after they looked at it, they thought that since the battery was more than a couple of years old, that could be the issue. The vehicle starts right away with no hesitation even in cold weather, so I question the weak battery suggestion. Do you have any thoughts on a possible solution?

A. Stop/start technology will only work under certain conditions. Those conditions include engine temperature, engine load and battery voltage. It is possible that the battery voltage is low enough (limited driving and short trips) that the system in keeping the engine running to charge the battery. At five years old, the battery could be nearing the end of its useful life and a replacement may be money well spent.

Q. I recently ordered a 2023 Lexus NX350h and was curious about an option that enables the car to tow a 2000-pound trailer. The option costs \$160 and I wonder what adjustments are made to the car to increase its towing power? Will this adversely reduce gas mileage?

A. Generally, when a tow package is selected the manufacturer upgrades the radiator and engine/transmission cooler. In some cases, the brakes are also upgraded. In the case of the Lexus NX 350 according to the Lexus website all models of the NX are capable of towing up to 2000 pounds. It may be that the \$160 option is a trailer prep package which may be nothing more than wiring and a hitch. Even if the tow package includes upgrades to brakes, transmission and engine cooling it won't affect fuel economy.

Q. I have a 2005 Toyota Corolla with 88,545 miles. Last year I replaced the catalytic converter, radiator, and front brakes. This year when I step on the brake I hear a squeaking sound, the repair man said I'm missing the brake dust shield. He said the part is not expensive, but labor is. He didn't seem like he wanted the job. I'm not sure what I want, love the car but is it time to let go. Or keep putting money into it.

A. To replace the brake dust shield requires removing the hub/bearing, brake caliper and rotors. I would go back to the shop that did the front brake repair. I have seen two-piece dust shields for some models that don't require the hub to be removed. Also, some shops will simply cut a portion of the replacement shield to get it into place, saving time and money. If the brakes were replaced one year ago the dust shield if rusted out should have been replaced at that time. If your Corolla is structurally sound at 18 years old with only 88,000 miles, it should have plenty of mileage left in it and is likely worth repairing.

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



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TALES FROM BEYOND

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Dudleytown II: The most haunted place in the U.S.?

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

The Carter family left Dudleytown for the wilderness of Binghamton, New York. The Dudleytown curse followed them to their new home. Not long after they settled into Binghamton, the entire family was slaughtered by Indians.

Ed and Lorraine Warren mentioned the village in their 1989 book "Ghost Hunters." The Warrens wrote about accounts from the 1930s where local youths would drive up the old roads to the highest point of the hill to make out. The deserted village was also the perfect place to scare their dates. One story pertains to a certain football captain who took his girlfriend up to the ghost town and began to tell her stories of ghosts and demons. He got so into the story, he spooked himself and ran from the vehicle, leaving the girl behind. Was it a prank, did he really see something, or did his imagination overwhelm him?

Many of the stories in regard to the early days of the town, its people, haunts and creatures began circulating around the 1930s. The town is mentioned in 1939 but again, not so much in regard to the

horrors, but in the famous people who founded it. In 1960, Fessenden Blanchard wrote about Dudleytown and mentioned the curse as it was related to him. He described the vanished settlement as, "a few crumbling cellars, massive stone walls and overgrown footpaths which were formerly roads."

The tales of monsters and cursed ground in Dudleytown have drawn people from far and wide and unfortunately, not all of them were harmless ghost hunters. Satanic rituals became a common problem in the woods, and many are certain this may have released negative energy into the air that still lingers to this day. If Dudleytown was never haunted, it most certainly may be now.

In 1971, Joseph Owens wrote about the history of Dudleytown. It was mostly a recount of the events that plagued the villagers through

the years, and once again, the "curse" was to blame.

In 1983 a film crew decided to do a story on the ghost town. Their accounts only helped cement the legend when the reporter got violently ill while trying to tell the story, and the equipment refused to work while in the confines of the village.

I was very fortunate to be able to visit Dudleytown many years ago before it was forbidden and illegal to enter. The trails, during our visit, were thinly defined in most cases with Dudleytown Road and Dark Entry Road meeting a few miles from their origin in the center of the old town. Any evidence of a once-thriving village was either long gone or covered by the overgrowth of time. The woods were eerily quiet and void of wildlife, yet there was a certain serenity about them. It felt as if the trees and remains of stone

walls and foundations were eager to speak of the history that made the place so famous. There are plenty of tales to peruse of the place and plenty of people who swear the stories are true, whether they have experienced the town for themselves or have only read about the history and haunts.

The area of Dudleytown is privately owned and has been for some time. Anyone caught within the boundaries of what was once Dudleytown will be arrested for trespassing. The town has gone as far as to rename the roads in order to confuse and thwart thrill seekers from going up there in the first place. Why Dudleytown? Is it the story of the ill-fated Dudley family

coming to New England to settle?

Is it the stories of cloven-hoof beasts that drove residents to the brink of their sanity? Was it the mysterious over publicized ill-luck of the townsfolk? Was it any of these or all?

Abandoned ghost towns create the perfect backdrop for the creation of scary stories and myths. The tales of ghosts, demons, curses, satanic rituals and tragedy have made many swear that Dudleytown is the most haunted place in the United States. Even if the place is now forbidden from the eyes, one may read about its history, using imagination to paint their own picture in deep corners of the mind.

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15 yard up to 2 ton \$450 - 7 day rental
20 yard up to 3 ton \$550 - 7 day rental

14 West Street, Douglas, MA 01516
www.benscontainerandrubbish.com

*Additional charges may apply for delivery beyond our service area or if weight of debris exceeds the ton limit. Surcharges may also apply for hazardous waste removal of construction materials.

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email at bcronan@theyankeeexpress.com to book your space today!