

June 23 - July 28, 2023

## Grafton business scene bustles with anniversaries, milestones

BY CHRISTINE GALEONE

Summer has officially arrived. And with it, there's an abundance of sunshine to illuminate events that welcome the season.

As summer begins in Grafton, some highly anticipated events are returning. And the light has also been shining on the milestones and achievements of local businesses.

A North Grafton nonprofit that gives back to its community just celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary in early June. To mark the special anniversary, it celebrated with 15 days of prizes for its customers. Over the years, **Treasures** – an upscale thrift shop that's located at 82 Worcester Street – has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to **Whitinsville Christian School**. The non-profit shop's efforts have enabled many students to be able to attend the school, since the money donated reduces tuition increases.

In June, two other shops also celebrated anniversaries. **Off the Common Antiques Marketplace** a multi-artisan, multi-vendor shop, located at 4 Worcester Street in Grafton, celebrated its 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The shop sells beautifully restored furniture, farmhouse style items and other antiques, in addition to new handmade items from local artisans. And **Paisley Boutique**, located at 40 North Main Street in North Grafton, celebrated its 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The shop, which also has a store in Hudson, carries affordable boutique style clothing and accessories in classic and contemporary styles.

Last year, to the delight of many, the **Grafton Lions Club** brought back its tradition of holding an **Independence Day concert**. This year, the free concert will be held



A recent display at Treasures Upscale Thrift Store in North Grafton (photo courtesy of Treasures' Facebook page).

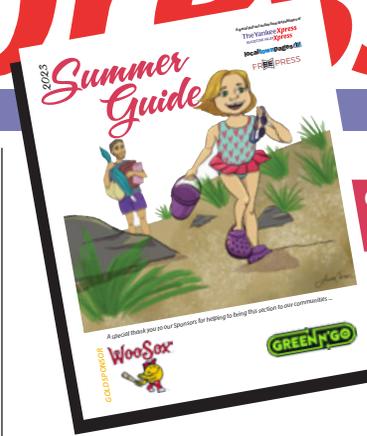
on Monday July 3 at 7 p.m. on the Grafton Common. And it will feature the **215<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Army Band**.

The **Town of Grafton's 2023 Concerts on the Common** will also return soon to provide free music-filled summer evenings. Presented by **Ross Mortgage Company**, sponsors include but aren't limited to **Homefield Credit Union**, **Premier Sport Taekwondo**, **Gaudette Insurance Agency**, **Savers Bank** and **Templeman Tree Service**. Held on the Common every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

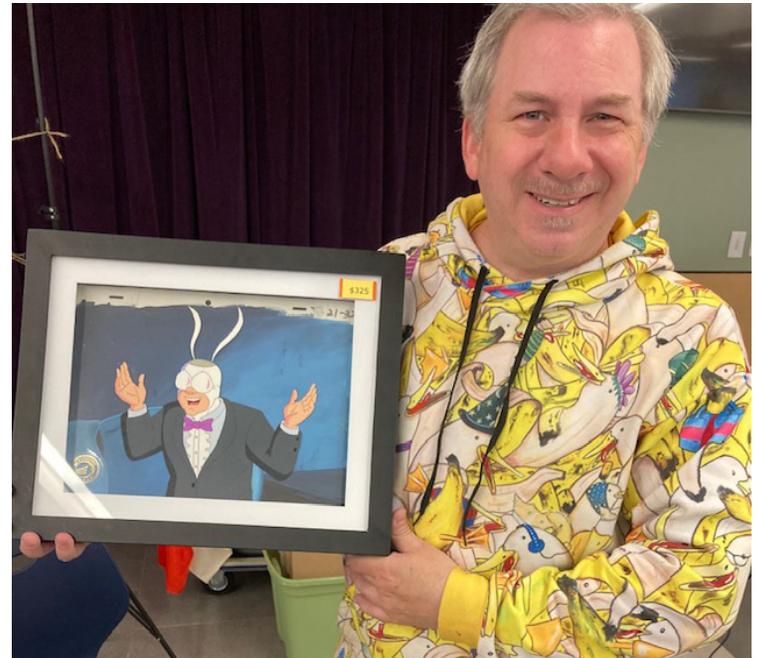
starting July 12, the first concert will be performed by **Hit the Bus**, a rock and dance band; the July 19 will be by **Northern Fried Revival**, a classic R&B and rock band; the July 26 one will be by the oldies band **Shades of Grey**; the Aug. 2 concert will be given by **Big Chief**, an R&B, Jump Swing and Boogie Woogie band; the Aug. 9 one will be by **Dock 10**, an eighties music band; and the final performance of the season will be given Aug.

**GRAFTON**

continued on page 2



CHECK OUT OUR ANNUAL SUMMER GUIDE, INSIDE!



Steve Gagliastro's collection of "cells" drew people to his table, at Arts in the Valley.

## BVEF-Green Bean Project's Arts in the Valley a showstopper

BY ROD LEE

The Blackstone Valley Education Foundation (BVEF) in collaboration with the Green Bean Project could not have capped its 2022-23 year in a more splendid fashion than by hosting "Arts in the Valley," a free family event held at Sutton Middle-Senior High School on May 20th.

The production, with ran from mid-morning to early afternoon, was packed with such ingredients as a fine arts show, a chance to "paint the community canvas

with Mrs. Hehir," "crafts with Mrs. Hutchinson," virtual reality arts experiences, vendor booths and workshops including "Arts Integration for ALL! With Lisa Donovan," a panel discussion featuring arts professionals and a "Green Bean Kids Fashion Show."

Among those in attendance was Vikrant B. Rana of Quincy, owner of Everest Wings and Boston Vibrations.

**BVEF**

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# concerge

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**GRAFTON**

*continued from page 1*

16 by the **Claffin Hill Symphony Orchestra**.

**Grafton Recreation** announced that **Silver Lake Beach** will be open every day (weather permitting) from Saturday June 17 through Aug. 13. Information about hours, fees and amenities can be found on the Grafton Recreation website, [www.grafton-ma.gov/recreation-department](http://www.grafton-ma.gov/recreation-department).

Finally, in North Grafton, a longtime business recently achieved something it has been working towards for a while. **Houlden Farm**, the multi-generational family-owned business which sells a variety of its produce along with dairy items, baked goods and more had been working diligently to be able to continue operations of

its **Sunflower Shanty**, which will return for the summer beginning Friday July 14. After working with the Town to draft Article 29, the farm was overwhelmingly supported by the enthusiasm of Grafton residents who showed their support by voting at the **Town Meeting** on May 8. On the farm's Facebook page, Houlden Farm recently wrote, "To say we are truly overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support would be an understatement. Walking into that jam packed auditorium had us speechless, and I hope you know we couldn't do it without you all."

The longest day of the year has come and gone. But its light certainly continues to shine on local businesses and events.

Contact Christine with your business news items at [cmgaleone15@gmail.com](mailto:cmgaleone15@gmail.com).

# Annual Bottle & Can Drive



The Sutton Historical Society will be hosting a bottle/can redemption drive from Saturday, July 8 to Sunday, July 16. Drop off is 24-hour at the M. M. Sherman Blacksmith Shop, 6 Singletary Avenue, Sutton. Simply place your returnable bottles/cans into the trailer which will be parked alongside the building. This annual event is a significant fundraiser for this 501(c)3 organization which is keeping history alive in Sutton. For more information or to join the Society, visit [suttonhistoricalsocietyinc.org](http://suttonhistoricalsocietyinc.org). Questions about the bottle/can drive can be emailed to [sutton1704@gmail.com](mailto:sutton1704@gmail.com).

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<b>BASIC WASH</b>	
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## Correction

In our Summer Guide, we listed the Auburn Farmers and Cultural Market as taking place on Sundays in error. The Market occurs on Thursday afternoons from 4-7 pm with the concert at 6pm. at the Dr. Arthur and Dr. Martha Pappas Recreation Complex through August 31. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused. Below is the line-up of concerts during the Market:  
**June 29 (Independence Day)** – Outriggers (Classic Rock)  
**July 6 – Aquanett Band** (80's Rock)

**July 13 – XS Band** (Motown to Top 40)  
**July 20 – Boom Box** (70's, 80's, and 90's)  
**July 27 – 4 EverFab** (Beatles Tribute)  
**August 3 – A Night of Zeppelin** (Led Zeppelin Tribute)  
**August 10 – Red Light** (Dance, Funk Rock)  
**August 17 – Below Deck** (Yacht Rock)  
**August 24 – Dock 10** (70's and 80's)  
**August 31 – Petty Larceny** (Tom Petty Tribute)

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**Contact us:**  
 Rod Lee, Editor: [rodlee.1963@gmail.com](mailto:rodlee.1963@gmail.com)  
 Submit business news and community events to [news@theyankeeexpress.com](mailto:news@theyankeeexpress.com)  
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 Laura Gleim, Billing & Sales: [lgleim@theyankeeexpress.com](mailto:lgleim@theyankeeexpress.com)  
 Diane Galipeau, Advertising Sales Manager: [dgalipeau@theyankeeexpress.com](mailto:dgalipeau@theyankeeexpress.com)

Kimberly Vasseur, Production Manager  
 Sally Patterson, Graphic Artist / Carol Kosth, Graphic Artist  
 Contributing Writers and Columnists: Tom D'Agostino, Christine Galeone, Amy Palumbo-LeClaire, Janet Stoica

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**BVEF**

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Mr. Rana is a sound bath therapist and Kundalini yoga practitioner whose business involves handmade hemp products from Nepal, women-made fair trade items, retail/wholesale, sound bath therapy, energy healing, Chakra balancing and “authentic singing bowls.”

“I want to introduce my culture



*Vikrant Rana shows a young visitor to his booth how to use a singing bowl, at the Arts in the Valley event on May 20th.*

of peace, happiness and humanity,” Mr. Rana said. He described the spot he was assigned on the floor as “very open” and welcoming.

“I am happy with the people,” he added, of event organizers and individuals frequenting his table.

Mr. Rana took a moment to tout services offered by a fellow health advocate, Sarah Coyne of Millbury, a Reiki practitioner whose focus is on fostering wellness in her clientele.

Also present and pleased to be represented was Mia Bonahan of Dudley, who has been doing professional photography for

“more than five years.” High school seniors, maternity, family, couples and engagement pictures are a specialty of Ms. Bonahan’s, who was told about the event by actress, director and marketing consultant Annie Kerins “and I said yes.”

Ms. Kerins’s husband Steve Gagliastro’s display of celluloids, or “cells,” was one of the more interesting exhibits of those available to patrons of the event. Mr. Gagliastro is an actor and musician who also

school districts in and around the Blackstone Valley,” Ms. Wence said. “We had 23 art teachers participate/representing students in Grades K through 12. Taking place during the celebration were three interactive workshops—Curriculum in Motion and Make a Story, Make a Play with Kelli Deliso as well as a workshop ARTS Integration for ALL with Dr. Lisa Donovan from Brainworks and MCLA.

“Our career speaker panel included Visual & Performing Artist Keri Anderson, Photographer Mia Bohanan, Actor & Music Director Steve Gagliastro, DJ, Drag Queen

and Social Media Director Patrick Allen Joslyn and Actress, Director and Marketing Consultant Annie Kerins.

“Other notable activities included a Community Canvas facilities by Kathy Hehir and sponsored by the Sutton Cultural Council; “Slay the Runway,” a theatrical fashion show; a virtual reality headset set; yoga with Michele Hutchinson; sound bathing with S.C. Wellness of Millbury; demonstrations by the Blackstone Valley Hub for Workforce Development; bounce houses; the Red Rock Wood Fired Pizza Truck; Sweetwise Ice Cream

and so much more!”

Ms. Wence noted that “we were blown away by the talent and enthusiasm of all the participations in our celebration. Our staff loves this event and we are grateful for the opportunity to engage over 700 attendees and participants.

“Our closing ceremony honored Denise Harrison for her efforts in fostering the ARTS programming in Sutton through the partnership with the Green Bean Project. Denise is retiring as the elementary school principal in June.”

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





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## Xpressly Yours ... a letter from the editor

# No such thing as bad blood among local legislators

Greeting them just before a ceremony marking the naming of a bridge for local World War II hero Robert Conroy in Auburn on May 26th,



BY ROD LEE

I couldn't help but think that Paul Frost had won "The Battle of the Ties" over Michael Moore.

Maybe it was the ensemble Mr. Frost had put together: blue jacket, blue tie checkered with white markings, blue shirt of a slightly softer shade, khaki slacks, black shoes.

Color coordinated and quite impressive.

Of course, there was no competition for the honor of Best Dressed involved—and Mr. Moore looked dapper in his own right for the start of the Memorial Day weekend.

Nor is there any friction or animosity between Mr. Frost, a Republican, and Mr. Moore, a

Democrat. None of the backbiting and vitriol that can regularly be witnessed between members of opposite political parties in Washington, or at some state houses and town halls across the country.

That is the thing about the Central Massachusetts and Blackstone Valley legislative delegations. An unmistakable rapport and common sense of purpose exists within their ranks.

Rep. Frost and Sen. Moore are evidence of this. Paul Frost, who lives in Auburn, has served the 7th Worcester District since being elected at the age of twenty-six in 1996. Mike Moore, a lifelong resident of Millbury, won his seat in the 2nd Worcester District in 2008.

Those who disparage "career politicians" often overlook the large swath of territory these officials are responsible for, on Beacon Hill; areas that demand much of their time and effort—including after-hours' commitments. Rep. Frost's district includes all or parts of Auburn, Charlton, Leicester, Millbury



Rep. Paul Frost and Sen. Michael Moore speak at a ceremony signaling the naming of a bridge in Auburn in honor of World War II hero Robert Conroy.



and Oxford. Sen. Moore's district includes all or parts of Auburn, Grafton, Millbury, Shrewsbury, Westborough and Worcester.

When it was their turn to offer brief remarks, Mr. Frost had high praise for the assistance Mr.

Moore provided in shepherding a bill Mr. Frost sponsored through to an affirmative vote, on Robert Conroy's family's behalf.

"It took some time, these bills are not so simple and easy to do, to name bridges after people who in their lives and actions have earned it and that's what Robert Conroy did," Rep. Frost said.

For his part, Sen. Moore noted

that Robert Conroy, who was killed in action in Italy along with his service dog, "made the sacrifice for others."

Sen. Moore might have been speaking for both Rep. Frost and himself when he said "having an opportunity like this is one of the best parts of the job."

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

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# Biggest threats to a comfortable retirement?



Mark Freeman

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These threats include:

- **Inflation** – Inflation has been high recently, but even a mild inflation rate can seriously erode your purchasing power. In fact, with just a 3% inflation rate, your expenses

could double in about 25 years — and your retirement could easily last that long. So, if you're going to rely on your investment portfolio for a sizable part of your retirement income, you will need to own a reasonable number of growth-oriented investments, such as stocks or stock-based funds, whose potential returns can equal or exceed the inflation rate.

- **Excessive withdrawals** – Once you retire, you should establish a withdrawal rate for your portfolio — an amount you can take out each year and still feel secure that you won't run out of money. Some people make the mistake of withdrawing too much, too soon, once they're retired. Your withdrawal rate should be based on several factors, including your age at retirement, the size of your portfolio and the amount of income you receive from other sources, such as Social Security. A fi-

nancial professional can help you determine a withdrawal rate that's appropriate for your needs.

- **Market volatility** – The financial markets will always fluctuate. When you're still working, this volatility may not be such a problem, as you have years or decades to recover from short-term downturns. But when you retire, you don't want to have to sell investments when their price is down. To help prevent this, you can tap into the cash in your portfolio, assuming you have enough to cover several months' worth of living expenses. You could also draw on a CD "ladder" — a group of CDs that mature at different times — to provide you with resources for the next few years and allow your equity investments time to recover their value.

- **Unexpected costs** – You had them when you were working, and you'll probably

have them when you're retired: the furnace that breaks down, the car that needs a major repair, and so on. But if you've established an emergency fund containing a year's worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid account, you may be able to "ride out" these costs without jeopardizing your investment portfolio. Be sure to keep these reserves separate from your typical day-to-day accounts to avoid the temptation of spending your emergency money.

- **Health** – Retirees may face more health concerns than younger people, and those concerns often come with larger medical bills. That's why it's important to maximize the benefits from Medicare or your Medicare Advantage plan. Also, if you contributed to a Health Savings Account (HSA) while you were working, and you haven't depleted it, you can use the money in retirement.

As long as the HSA funds are used for qualified medical expenses, withdrawals are tax- and penalty-free, and won't be included in your income. This could help keep your income below certain levels, lower your Medicare premiums or avoid the 3.8% surtax on net investment income that can be assessed on high-net-worth taxpayers.

Retirement can be a pleasant time in your life — and you'll enjoy it more if you're prepared for the challenges that face all retirees.

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# BVCC going out to the ballpark, and enjoying steamers, this summer

**B**aseball and steamers are in the spotlight this summer, for members of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber will celebrate "Craft Beer Night at the Worcester Bravehearts" at Hanover Insurance Park at Fitton Field on Thursday, July 13th, for the Bravehearts' game against the Vermont Lake Monsters. First pitch is at 6:30 p.m.

The BVCC has teamed up with the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Bravehearts to offer "an amazing night under the tent," where fans can catch a game, enjoy a brew and great music and some "some quintessential game bites."

Cost is \$35 for Chamber members and \$75 for future members. This includes 12 3 oz. drink tickets for tasting, access to the all-you-can-eat concession stand, live entertainment and the game.

Then on Friday, July 28, it will be "Blackstone Valley Day at Polar Park" for a game between the WooSox and the Rochester Red Wings. Game time is 6:45 p.m. Fireworks will follow the contest.

Admission is \$27 for Chamber members and \$37 for future members and tickets include a \$10 loaded value which can be used anywhere in the park for concessions, beverages and merchandise.

The Chamber's "Steamers at Sunset" signature event will take place at The Barn at Blissful Meadows Golf Club, 801 Chocolog Road in Uxbridge, on Wednesday, August 16th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Presenting sponsor is Precious Ones Child Care Center and Preschool.

The evening will feature "beautiful live tropical music, great food, refreshing cocktails, fun activities and even better company. Dress to



*Right, Golf plays an important role in the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's efforts to keep businesses connected; Above, BVCC President Jeannie Hebert, right, will be one of the hosts for the organization's "Steamers at Sunset" event on August 16th at Blissful Meadows Golf Club in Uxbridge.*

impress in your finest Hawaiian attire for a chance to win the coveted Golden Lobster Award!"

For more information about these activities or to register, go to



[www.blackstonevalley.org/events](http://www.blackstonevalley.org/events).

Interested in sponsoring a BVCC event as a way to increase marketing and exposure. Call 508-234-9090.

Join the Chamber for WCRN 830 AM's 16th annual golf tournament at Shining Rock in Northbridge on Tuesday, July 18th.

# Picnic in the Park keeps WCC's 100th rolling along

**T**he year-long celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Whittin Community Center continued on June 10th with the return of "Picnic in the Park," a longtime staple of the organization's relationship with the towns of the Blackstone Valley.

Among those in attendance as a vendor was Melissa Dettore of Uxbridge, who sells Tupperware as

a side venture.

Foam spray was a big hit with children, on the grounds behind the Main St. facility.

Activities and events are ongoing in the months ahead, starting with the Youth Outreach Summer Theatre Production on July 21 and 22, followed by Cars in the Park on August 19th and the WCC's Benefit Golf Tournament on August 28th.

See the Happenings! calendar for a full listing of WCC goings-on associated with its milestone.

*Children frolic in the foam at the Whittin Community Center's Picnic in the Park on June 10th.*

*Interest in Tupperware "is picking up," in large part based on stories passed along about the iconic product, Melissa Dettore said, at her booth at Picnic in the Park.*



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# Navy vet Mike DeFazio's service continues with nonprofit AOATG

BY ROD LEE

With determination and grit, and in a short amount of time, Michael DeFazio of Northbridge has grown his business—An Officer and Two Gentlemen—into a vital resource for veterans and first responders.

Mr. DeFazio is a veteran of the U.S. Navy, as was his father Frank; his sister Nicole is currently on active duty with the Navy.

The name he chose for his nonprofit venture, An Officer and Two Gentlemen—or AOATG—is an interesting one, and apropos.

Mike DeFazio's last deployment was to Somalia in 2019. He returned home from that tour as a self-described "desert sailor," tired and suffering from PTSD. But also with a desire to help people in the military—or in law enforcement or fire safety work.

Founder and executive director of his organization, Mr. DeFazio is "unpaid," as he told Harry Berkowitz during an appearance on May 11th on NCTV's "About the Valley" program.

He relies heavily on donations to underwrite his outreach efforts, and

is pleased to include first responders in that initiative.

"There are not a lot of organizations for first responders," he told Mr. Berkowitz.

There is also always a need for more services for retired and active-duty military personnel.

"We are vets helping vets, from as far south as Texas and as first west as Chicago," he says.

Mr. DeFazio says "we do a lot of fundraising." One of the current examples of this is a "No One Rides Alone Motorcycle Rally" planned for Saturday, June 17, with a rain date of June 18.

"The rally will be at NCTV and the American Legion Post (in Rockdale) and is open to not just motorcycles but classic cars, anyone who wants to get involved," he said on May 31st. "Registration is at 9:00 a.m. and the ride will start at about 10:00. There will also be a band and a barbecue."

Members of the American Legion are stepping up to assist AOATG in other ways, too.

Mr. DeFazio is keenly aware of the problems men and women returning from tours of duty face; including suicide.

"Many people locally don't think it affects them, but it does," he says.

"We have single-handedly saved lives," he told Mr. Berkowitz. "We have a big suicide issue in this country. The '3 % serving'" out of a population of millions are saddled with a suicide rate of "twenty-two a day," he said.

AOATG "was just an idea" when he came out of the service but "having PTSD myself it seemed like a healthier job choice and I have always been about helping others. I know we are making an impact. I am also working with Phil Cyr and Wally Smith in getting markers for unmarked veterans' graves here in town. There are more than people realize and some date back to the Civil War."

Mr. DeFazio's team at AOATG's includes his dad Frank, honorary co-founder, disabled U.S. Navy vet and guide; Michael Elkin, disabled firefighter, "our parts and oil guy," and guide; and Charlie Jackman, disabled U.S. Navy vet, firefighter, lead mechanic and guide.

Programs AOATG offers enable veterans to "experience reintegration" with, for instance, a trip to AOATG's lodge and vast snowmo-



Mike DeFazio is founder and executive director of An Officer and Two Gentlemen, or AOATG, "veterans helping vets and first responders."

bile trails and system in the area of Pittsburg, New Hampshire, and a deep sea fishing adventure.

The organization also has a retail component, providing such merchandise to consumers by way of its website and a trailer as No One Rides Alone shirts and caps, patch-

es, heavy-duty flannels, masks, neck gaiters and thermal boot socks.

The objective, Mr. DeFazio says, is to work with active-duty military, veterans and first responders with rehabilitation; to "help others."

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

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# Millbury Summer Concert Series returns for a third year

The town of Millbury's Summer Concert Series is back for its third year, and the Millbury Senior Center is involved. There will be ten shows across three locations, the Town Common, the Asa Waters Mansion and the Senior Center. Shows will start at 6:00 p.m. Bring a blanket, chairs and food. The Eddie Foreman Polka Band will perform at the Senior Center on July 13th and 4EverFab on August 3rd. For a full listing of shows, see the Happenings calendar in this issue.

## MANDEVILLE AND RICHARDS PERFORM

Those in attendance welcomed back Webster-based musical artists Mark Mandeville and Raianne Richards accompanied by band members Doug Williamson and Peter Hart for an afternoon of entertainment at Plummer Place at the Northbridge Senior Center, recently.

The free concert was sponsored



Above, Mark Mandeville and Raianne Richards; right, the Eddie Foreman Polka Band.

by a grant from the Northbridge Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Songs featured an array of authentic music which incorporated the guitar, harmonica, ukulele, penny whistle and clarinet, according to Amy Cowen who is program and volunteer coordinator at Plummer Place.

"Mark and Raianne's selections reflected many personal experiences from having been husband and wife for many years to experiences as factory workers, teachers, community organizers and natives of post-industrial mill towns in Central Massachusetts,"

Ms. Cowen said.

"Mark and Raianne further shared that they will again be participating in the Massachusetts Walking Tour this month, hiking the backroads and trails of Holland, Abington, Whitman and Rockland while carrying their gear and instruments. These concerts will highlight local artists, students, musicians and poets alike, with a performance by their troupe."

For more information about the Massachusetts Walking Tour, visit [www.masswalkingtour.org](http://www.masswalkingtour.org).

For more information about Plummer Place, call 508-234-2002.



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# Bloem's Auto Repair: Another day at the office after 30 years

BY ROD LEE

The significance of thirty years in business is not lost on Steve Bloem. Then again, he isn't making a fuss about the anniversary. This will come as no surprise to people who know him.

He is, after all, "a low-key kind of guy."

Bloem's Auto Repair is situated in a small one-story whitewashed building at 194 N. Main St. in Uxbridge. There are two service bays, out of which Mr. Bloem and his right-hand man Rick Costa operate. Around the walls of the garage are all of the trappings of the trade: tires, air filters, oil guns, air hoses, wrenches, screwdrivers; paraphernalia of every sort, which Mr. Bloem jokingly refers to as "the mess."

Mr. Costa's personality seems to reflect that of Steve Bloem: cordial, accommodating, unpretentious, matter-of-fact; and dependable.

Several years younger than his boss, Ricky Costa has been with Bloem's since 1995; in other words, for almost the entire time. He is Tonto to Steve's Lone

Ranger, Little John to Steve's Robin Hood, Gaga to Steve's Tony Bennett, Dustin Pedroia to Steve's David Ortiz.

"I just do my thing," Mr. Bloem says of his unruffled approach to his craft.

As for Ricky, "I stay in my corner," he says, with a smile.

There must certainly be moments after such a long run working side by side when friction has flared, but this is a case of "what happens here..." and the fact is, customers of Bloem's understand their vehicles are in good hands.

Steve Bloem has followed in the footsteps of his grandfather and father while keeping the enterprise "small and manageable. This is a comfortable life," he says.

Nevertheless, he has told his two daughters to "stay away from it."

His wife Sherri helps out as business manager, handling the financial details that her husband really does not have time in his busy workday to address.

He takes unexpected developments in stride. There are always those. "There is always the damsel in distress," he points out—which,

he notes, hearkens back to the days when the woman of the house was responsible for dealing with automotive repair shops while her husband was selling encyclopedias or running a drill press.

"Last-minute jobs, we strive to work them in," he says.

Bloem's services all makes and models of cars and trucks. Steve Bloem also sells used vehicles, "some years more than others. It complements the repair business."

There is no underestimating the value of Ricky Costa to Bloem's.

"We get along well and if I put him on a job I know it's done right," Steve Bloem says.

As for himself, clients of Bloem's get the impression he would rather be changing out brake pads or installing a new muffler than being stuck at his

desk in the office much of the time.

When it comes time to take a picture of the two of them, Ricky says, half-seriously, "Steve should have a pen or a telephone in his hand."

They keep up with the latest technology and they keep on

truckin'.

"If you want to be technical about it, we started in '49," he says.

He is carrying on a family business.

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



Steve Bloem, left, owner of Bloem's Auto Repair, with right-hand man Ricky Costa.

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# Fun is the summertime theme at Old Sturbridge Village

Summer at Old Sturbridge Village means more sun, fun and celebration of the season. A visit to the largest living history museum in New England is an ideal getaway for all ages. Whether you come to meet OSV's farm animals, marvel at the skills of the artisans, stroll through the gardens, listen to historical music, learn about New England history, or any combination of these, no two visits are alike.

## HAPPENING THIS SUMMER AT OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE:

July 1-4, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Join us in celebration of the Fourth of July! Experience fife and drum music, cannon demonstrations, games, a parade, and more. Up to three children seventeen and younger are admitted for free when

accompanied by an adult paying full admission (\$30) from July 1 through July 4.

On July 4th you can also join us for a special Citizen Naturalization Ceremony.

OSV will host "Taste of New England Summer" July 21-23 from 4:30 to 9:00 p.m.

All six New England states will be showcased as the Village transforms into an evening festival filled with food samples, local brews and other beverages, and live music from more than fifteen bands. Come learn about the roots of some of the summertime traditions we know today.

"Music and Art Weekend" will occur at the Village July 29-30, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Join us as we celebrate our skilled artisans and musicians through special

demonstrations and performances. You may find inspiration for your next craft project!

"Redcoats & Rebels" will be the featured attraction August 5-6, from 9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Saturday and 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. See the largest military re-enactment in New England with hundreds of costumed Revolutionary War re-enactors. Visitors cannot only explore our exhibits and galleries, and talk to our costumed historians about everyday life in early New England, they can also witness recreated skirmishes and battles, and hear fife and drum music.

"Textile Weekend" occurs August 12 and 13 from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. Have you ever wondered how we know what was made and worn by individuals in the 1830s? During Textile Weekend, "Behind the Scenes and Seams," we are highlighting original clothing and textile-related objects from the museum's permanent collection while creating new copies for side-by-side comparisons and a closer look at how we know what we know about the past.



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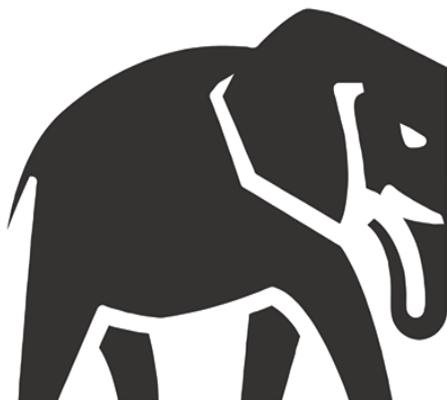
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# July 2023 Events at Purgatory Chasm State Reservation

All programs are free and open to the public. Bring water, wear sunscreen/bug spray, and dress for the outdoors. Sturdy footwear is strongly recommended for hiking events. An adult must accompany all children. Hiking programs are canceled in inclement weather. For more information call 508-234-9610 or visit: <https://www.mass.gov/locations/purgatory-chasm-state-reservation>

Purgatory Chasm State Reservation is located at 198 Purgatory Road, Sutton MA 01590.

Please note that public programming may be affected by construction projects taking place within the park.

## CHASM HIKE

**FRIDAYS 11 AM – 12 PM, SATURDAYS 2 PM – 3 PM, SUNDAYS 3 PM – 4 PM**

Scramble around boulders while taking in the mystery of Purgatory Chasm! Find out about the park's history and cultural influence, the chasm's rock formations, or the wildlife that call the chasm home. Meet at the pavilion at the mouth of the chasm. Appropriate for ages 8 and above. About 1/2 mile over moderate terrain.

## CHASM PRIMER

**SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS 11:30 AM**

Find out the chasm's history in just 15 minutes. This is the perfect primer before your hike through the chasm. Meet at the entrance to the chasm. Appropriate for ages 8 and up.

## GLACIAL GEOLOGY HIKE

**MONDAYS 2 PM – 3:30 PM**

Discover our glacial past on this 1-mile hike to Little Purgatory. Explore evidence of the ice that blanketed this park over 10,000 years ago! Meet at the Visitor Center. Suitable for ages 8 and above. About 1 mile over moderate terrain.

## KIDLEIDOSCOPE

**MONDAYS 11 AM TO 12 PM**

Join us each week for Kidleidoscope! We will read a short book, followed by an outdoor activity. Afterwards, enjoy a craft that relates to the story. Each week has a new theme, stop by often! Meet at the Visitor Center. Designed for ages 3 to 6. Siblings are welcome. During inclement weather this will be held in the Visitor Center.

## OFF THE BEATEN PATH

**FRIDAYS 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM**

Hiking trails are the heart of our park system and getting outdoors is a great way to exercise! Join us on this recreational hike with other like-minded people. Meet at the Visitor Center. Appropriate for ages 8 and above. About 1 mile over easy terrain.

## ROCK DETECTIVES

**SATURDAYS 10 AM – 11 AM**

Have you ever wondered where rocks come from? See a bunch of different rocks and find out more about where they have been and where they are going. Stay for five minutes or an hour. Meet in the pavilion near the entrance to the chasm. Appropriate for ages 4 and above. The program will be held in the Visitor Center during inclement weather.

## SECRETS OF THE SKULL

**SUNDAYS 10 AM – 11 AM**

We can learn many things about how an animal lives by looking at its skull. Join us to look for clues about how different animals survive by examining their skulls. Stay for five minutes or an hour. Meet in the pavilion near the entrance to the chasm. Appropriate for ages 4 and above. The program will be held in the Visitor Center during inclement weather.

## TIME TRAVELER TOUR

**SATURDAYS 4 PM – 5 PM**

Take a step back in time! Get an introduction to this unique park as we walk among the historic structures and geological features, jumping around the park's history all the while. Meet at the Visitor Center. Suitable for ages 8 and above. Approximately 1 mile over easy terrain.



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## \$200,000 matching grant a boost to AHM's Hanoi Hilton exhibit

The American Heritage Museum in Hudson has been awarded a \$200,000 matching grant as part of the Cultural Facilities Fund (CFF) administered by MassDevelopment and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

The American Heritage Museum is one of ninety-four cultural organizations in the Commonwealth that will be receiving portions of the \$7,661,000 total funds distributed. This important funding will enable the AHM to complete the "Hanoi Hilton" Vietnam POW Exhibit expansion that has taken place within the Vietnam War Gallery of the museum, honoring the bravery and sacrifice of those who endured years of captivity, isolation and torture during the Vietnam War.

The AHM is renowned for its commitment to preserving and showcasing the rich heritage of the armed forces of the United States from the Revolutionary War through modern conflicts, and the addition of the Vietnam POW exhibit represents a significant

milestone in this mission. The exhibit will provide visitors with an immersive experience, shedding light on the harrowing ordeal of American prisoners of war during the Southeast Asia era.

is our honor to provide a platform where their stories can be heard, understood and appreciated by present and future generations."

The Hanoi Hilton Vietnam War POW exhibit features the reconstruction of an actual cell of the infamous Hoa Lo prison in Hanoi where American POWs were held from 1965 to 1973. From their shoot-down and capture into months of interrogation and torture, isolation and inhumane captivity, the fortitude and determination that was shown by these POWs will be on full display for visitors to the AHM. Through the use of cutting-edge technology, multimedia installations and authentic historical artifacts, the AHM aims to foster a deep understanding of the sacrifices made by these POWs up to their release in 1973.

"We are deeply grateful to MassDevelopment and the Mass Cultural Council for their recognition and support," Rob Collings, president of the AHM, said. "This matching grant enables us to bring to life an important chapter in our nation's history and pay tribute to the incredible valor displayed by the POWs of the Vietnam War. It



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7 pm - 8 pm Hatha Restorative Yoga
- **Tuesdays**  
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5:30 pm - 6:30 pm Vinyasa Yoga
- **Wednesdays**  
9 am - 10 am Barre Sculpt  
5 pm - 6 pm Barre Strength Cardio  
6:30 pm - 7:30 pm Hatha Restorative Yoga
- **Thursdays**  
9 am - 10 am Barre Strength Cardio  
6 pm - 7 pm Slow Flow Yoga
- **Fridays**  
9:15 am - 10 am Curis & Crunches
- **Saturdays**  
8:30 am - 9:30 pm Weekly Rotate  
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## New Grafton Public Library Long Range Plan in the works

The Grafton Public Library's Long Range Plan (LRP) expired in December, 2029, "and we have had an extension due to the pandemic, but it's time to update, review priorities and see where we are going, next!" GPL Director Beth Schreiber says in her newsletter.

"Strategic planning isn't new for Grafton—it is a routine part of running a successful library, and considered to be a standard of best practices in library management.

"We are seeking a community of key stakeholders—Grafton residents, property owners, business owners, and community leaders—to volunteer to serve on a Planning Committee that will assist in setting library service priorities for the next five years (2024-2028).

"The time commitment is about six hours total," Ms. Scheiber said. "Participants MUST attend two evening focus group meetings, one in July, one in August. Meeting attendance is MANDATORY for Planning Committee members. The successful candidate has a strong working knowledge of the Grafton community, and may or may not be a current library user. The meetings will be facilitated by an outside library consultant.

"Meetings will include: defining a vision for the community served by the library; brainstorming; and conducting a strengths, weaknesses, growth opportunities and aspirations analysis, first looking at the community, then internally at the library. The feedback gathered will be used to develop the LRP for 2024-2028. This written document provides goals, measurable objectives and specific activities for library staff to execute.

"An LRP spanning five years

is required by the MBLC for any library that wishes to apply for—or keep—grant funding. We currently



"Cindy" prepares to welcome people to her table for the K-2 Literacy Night for the North Grafton Elementary School at the Grafton Public Library on May 31st.

have a MPLCP grant of \$7.4 million for our new library building, and need a LRP to remain compliant. The plan is due October 1, 2023.

"The LRP is reviewed annually by the Grafton Public Library Board of Trustees, and the library director must submit an approved, updated plan of action to the MBLC by December 1 annually.

"If you are interested in participating in the strategic planning process and joining the LRP committee, contact me at scribeb@graftonlibrary.org or call 508-839-4649," Ms. Schreiber says.

### AN ART FESTIVAL IN SUTTON

The Friends of the Sutton Public Library's Art Festival is scheduled for Saturday, August 26th, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on the Town Common.

### GIANT LEGOS IN MILLBURY

The Millbury Public Library will kick off its summer reading program with "Giant Legos on the Lawn" at the Asa Waters Mansion on Monday, June 26th from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

The MPL is also offering an Adult Ventriloquist Music Show on Thursday, June 29th at 6:00 p.m.

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# Daniels Farmstead poised for 13th season of Farmers' Markets

The Daniels Farmstead in Blackstone is gearing up for its 13th season of Farmers' Markets, beginning the first Sunday in July.

The Farmers' Markets will be held every Sunday starting July 2nd through October 1st, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Daniels Farmstead has a number of special events planned for this year too, including on July 2nd when it will host a Fourth at the Farm celebration.

On September 17th there will be an Apple Festival and Pie Contest and on September 24th an Antique Tractor, Truck and Car Show.

In addition to the special events, each Sunday morning the market will feature a local musical artist or group.

Everyone is welcome to visit and enjoy the property; shop from a wonderful selection of vendors offering fresh local produce, dairy products, bakery items, specialty sweets and fudges, handmade candles, soaps, quilts and more.

Doris's Kitchen will be open for lunch as well.

House tours are available.

Daniels Farmstead is actively seeking volunteers, docents and



vendors for the 2023 Farmers' Markets season. If you would like to be involved with one of the Blackstone Valley's historic gems, email

info@danielsfarmstead.org or visit the Daniels Farmstead Foundation website at [www.danielsfarmstead.org](http://www.danielsfarmstead.org).

The Daniels Farmstead is not just a piece of wonderful local history, it is also a community of everyday people who appreciate

agriculture, history, education, teamwork, nature's beauty and more.



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upon successful completion of 40-hour training and 1-year commitment to program

## SEXUAL ASSAULT/TRAUMA SUPPORT *VOLUNTEERS NEEDED* in Milford, MA

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*Wayside welcomes equity-minded applicants whose values align with our goal of being a child welfare and behavioral health agency committed to anti-racism, social justice, and advocacy. Successful candidates are asked to be engaged in Wayside's dedication to diversity, equity & inclusion. Bilingual/bicultural and LGBTQ+ applicants are encouraged to apply!*

# Experience the Blackstone on the Explorer riverboat, this summer

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and National Park are a happening place this summer and one of the best ways to experience the region is on the Explorer riverboat, celebrating thirty years in existence.

Nature and heritage tours are available Sundays at 1:00, 2:00, 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. with evening river cruises scheduled on Saturdays at 4:00, 5:00, 6:00 and 7:00 p.m.

Go to <https://www.rivertour-blackstone.com/site/explorer/> for all the details.

In other Corridor news:

■The Kelly and Ashton Mill Junior Ranger Booklet is a self-guided adventure around the Blackstone River State Park. Aspiring Junior Rangers of all ages are encouraged to acquire a booklet to explore the history and natural beauty of the area. Email Allison\_horrocks@nps.gov for a mailed copy.

■Ranger walkabouts are taking place Thursday evenings at 6:30

p.m. through August 31st. Visit <https://blackstoneheritagecorridor.org/ranger-walkabout-series-2023/> for more specifics.

■Join a National Park Ranger for a ride along the Blackstone River Bikeway on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. starting July 5th, through September 27th. Go to <https://www.nps.gov/thingstodo/bike-theblackstone.htm>.

■Thanks, Abigail Epplert, Patty McAlpine and Kathy Parlante for helping staff at the First Strike Festival at Old Slater Mill, and Joe Johnson for leading the Riparian Invasive Ramble for Jane Week and those who assisted on the Family Fun Fishing Day event.

■The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council is looking for volunteers to help pull water chestnut weeds, an invasive species that spreads rapidly and is hard to control. Dates are June 24th in Uxbridge with a rain date of June 25, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and July 8th at Lake Quinsigamond in Shrewsbury from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. Email



bvtrivertourprograms@gmail.com for full particulars.

■Guided Hikes are being offered on the following dates: July 8, Ten Mile River Greenway, Slater Park-Pawtucket; September 9, High

Rock Farm-Cumberland; September 24, Turner Reservoir-East Providence; October 14, Moshassuck River-Lincoln; November 24, Wolf Hill-Smithfield. Go to [blackstoneheritagecorridor.org](https://blackstoneheritagecorridor.org) for

more info.

■Guided Paddles are occurring Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m., through August 29th. Check out the Corridor website for more information.

# Southwick's Zoo to Host Boston 25 News Zip Trip

Southwick's Zoo is thrilled to announce its partnership with Boston 25 News to host a Zip Trip on July 14, 2023. The Zip Trip will take place at the event pavilion located across from the Southwick's Zoo main entrance, overlooking the beautiful African Plains.

Southwick's Zoo, family owned and operated, is one of the region's premier wildlife destinations and has captivated visitors for almost

60 years with its diverse collection of animals from around the world. Southwick's Zoo provides a unique experience for families, allowing them to connect with nature, enjoy interactive exhibits and rides, learn about wildlife conservation and create lasting memories.

Boston 25 News Zip Trips have been a beloved summer tradition for two decades, bringing communities together and showcasing

the unique businesses and local attractions of different towns and cities throughout the region. Southwick's Zoo, a treasured destination known for its commitment to conservation and education, is honored to be chosen as one of the venues for Boston 25 News 20th Anniversary of Zip Trips. The event will stream live on television beginning at 6:00 a.m. and will include interviews with Mendon newsmakers, special guests, hometown teams, and local heroes. Residents of all ages are encouraged to come out and be part of the audience and share what makes their hometown a great place to live.



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## HEALTHY BAKING IN THE BLACKSTONE VALLEY

# Berries give cakes, mini cakes that summertime sparkle

BY CHRISTINE GALEONE

When I was a child, picking berries with my mom and grandmother was always something to look forward to. It was a sweet summertime treat.

Many – if not most – of those berries would inevitably end up as the star ingredients in pies, crisps or shortcakes. And while those are all delicious options, berries are quite versatile. They needn't be limited to traditional berry desserts.

Ironically, berries don't play a starring role in these patriotic mini cakes. But they lend bursts of color, flavor and nourishment to light, luscious chocolate cake.

One of the reasons that these patriotic mini cakes – which are a slight variation of wacky (or Depression era) cakes – are healthier than similar mini cakes is because they contain less added sugar. They also contain far less fat and cholesterol.

The four types of fruit – yes, coconut is actually a fruit – that go into the cake are loaded with ben-

eficial vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. Blueberries – a heart and brain superfood – and raspberries, which both contain vitamin C, are particularly rich in antioxidants that could be helpful in preventing some diseases. Bananas are good sources of potassium, which benefits our hearts. And coconut has antibacterial properties. All four provide generous amounts of fiber as well.

### PATRIOTIC MINI CAKES

#### Ingredients for Mini Cakes:

- 1 ½ Cups of Flour
- 1/3 Cup of Unsweetened Cocoa Powder
- 1 Tsp. Baking Soda
- ½ Tsp. Salt
- ½ Cup of Sugar
- 1 Very Ripe Medium Banana (mashed)
- 1 Cup of Cold Water
- 1/3 Cup of Light Olive Oil
- 1 Tbsp. White Vinegar
- 1 Tsp. Vanilla Extract

#### Ingredients for Mini Cake Stars:

- ¼ Cup of Blueberries



- ¼ Cup of Red Raspberries
- ¼ Cup of Unsweetened Coconut Flakes

#### Directions:

Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, combine all the dry ingredients. Make a well in the center of the

mixture.

Pour each of the wet ingredients into the well, and combine the ingredients.

Stir the mashed banana into the mixture.

Whisk the mixture until everything is combined into a smooth cake batter.

Line the bottoms of two 6 ½ inch round cake pans with parchment paper, use butter to grease and lightly flour the pans, and pour the batter evenly into the two pans.

Bake for 30-35 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Let the mini cakes cool for about 10 minutes before carefully removing them from the pans. Then, place them into a freezer for about 15 minutes.

Once the mini cakes are completely cool, use a large star-shaped cookie cutter to cut and hollow out a star-shaped design out of the center of each one.

Just before serving, fill the bottom of the stars with the coconut. Then, alternate rows of raspberries, unsweetened coconut flakes and blueberries. Each mini cake contains about two to four servings. Enjoy!

Berries are outstanding in pies, crisps and shortcakes. But they can also give cakes and mini cakes that summertime sparkle. Happy (healthier) baking!

## Upton VFW Flea Markets

The Upton Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 5594 will continue its summer series of flea markets on Saturday July 8 at Post headquarters, 15 Milford St., (Route 140) in Upton. Hours are 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., always with free parking.

If you're anxious to clear out those unused attic or cellar almost

treasures to make room for more or to show off your craftsmanship, please join other vendors for this social event.

Spaces are available for \$10 each or, for an additional \$5, a banquet sized table can be provided. Reservations are not needed, although further information is provided via the VFW Facebook

page or by calling 508-529-3314. Post member David Kennedy heads up the summer series.

Enjoy coffee and donuts

throughout the morning, or hot dogs, chips, and cold drinks for lunch.

These events benefit the Post

as well as the community, therefore participation is appreciated.



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## Hiring headache real at restaurants, including Bentley Pub

BY ROD LEE

Life for restaurateurs like Steve Bingham of Bentley Pub in Auburn is about to get even more difficult in the days ahead, Stephen Clark, president and CEO of the Massachusetts Restaurant Association says.

Recently, Mr. Clark told a gathering of business leaders at the University of Massachusetts Club, as reported by the State House News Service, that profitability for restaurants is down in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the biggest impacts stemming from inflation and labor costs.

Now, there is a move afoot to raise the Commonwealth's minimum wage still again, by another

dollar, from \$15 per hour. This would translate into a \$1000 increase per employee, which would have a "cascading effect" for all workers in the industry.

"I don't have any minimum wage issues," Mr. Bingham told The Feisty Fork on June 1st. "I have no employees working at minimum wage. I do have servers working at \$6.75 per hour."

Bentley Pub's more pressing challenge is on the hiring front.

"Very difficult," Mr. Bingham said, of finding people to work. And it's across the board at Bentley Pub, wait staff, line cooks and so on.

The MRA's Mr. Clark does not believe the minimum wage fight will resurface this year, but it could in 2024.

The Raise Up Massachusetts coalition—a meshing of organized labor and community groups that influenced passage in 2018 of

the "grand bargain" law, setting Massachusetts on the path to a \$15 minimum wage—now has its sights set on another hike. The coalition is backing legislation that would gradually increase the minimum wage to \$20 by 2027 and nearly double the minimum wage for tipped workers to \$12 an hour. The latter move would definitely impact Bentley Pub.

In the interim, Steve Bingham says the minimum wage issue is undoubtedly of more concern to "consumers" in Central Massachusetts. "It doesn't affect me as much as the person who pays \$30 for a meal at McDonald's," he says.

The Raise Up people filed paperwork in March exploring an initiative petition, the goal of which, they say, is "building shared prosperity in the Commonwealth through higher minimum wages and fair and adequate taxation."



A turkey burger plate at Bentley Pub in Auburn.

Small businesses should be forewarned, if this were to advance to become a ballot question in 2024, Steve Clark says.

Ballot questions are "very expensive to defend," he said.

Hiring challenges, inflation, labor costs and steep health-

insurance costs are battering small businesses; on top of this, nearly 60% of Bay Staters support a minimum wage increase to \$20 per hour.

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



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



Judith Ferrara, author of "A Feast of Losses," about Yetta Dine and her son the celebrated poet Stanley Kunitz, will make an appearance at Booklovers' Gourmet in Webster on Saturday, June 24th.

**THROUGH JUNE 30**

• "Views from a Palace," paintings and drawings by Jim Palace, will be on display and for sale throughout the month at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster. A meet-the-artist reception will take place on Saturday, June 10 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Inspired by landscapes across the eastern coast, Mr. Palace's watercolors and colored pencil drawings capture views from the past several years involving travels he has made throughout Cape Cod, New Hampshire and North Carolina. Primarily self-taught, he has refined his craft under the tutelage of Ed Turner. Mr. Palace's skilled application of scumbling, crosshatching and burnishing can be seen in such works

as "Taylor's Crossing" and "Times in the Orchard."

**SATURDAY, JUNE 24**

• "Make Your Own Junk Journal" at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster, 12:30-2:00 p.m. Join in for a fun mini junk journal class. Learn how to use bits and pieces to make our journal. Junk journals are typically made with junk mail, leftover crafting supplies and miscellaneous ephemera. Each journal will have ten pages to work on. Learn how to add pockets, fold outs, journal cards and more. Class will be led by Arteria's Arts Owner Annette Provost. Cost is \$25 per person, all materials included.

• "A Feast of Losses" by Judith Ferrara Book Release and Signing will be held at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Join us for this free event. Signed books will be available for purchase. A Feast of Losses documents and celebrates the life of Yetta Dine, the poet Stanley Kunitz's mother, a fierce, loving, magnificent woman. Perhaps the most enduring poet of his generation, Stanley Kunitz once observed that "poetry is for the sake of the life." Based on his mother's recently recovered memoir, diary and letters, A Feast of Losses offers fresh and intimate insights into both her own and her son's lives.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 25**

• The New England Country Music Club hosts the Rhode Island Rednecks for entertainment and dancing at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Doors open at 12:15 p.m. with live music from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. [www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub](http://www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub).

**MONDAY, JUNE 26**

• Zoo Neighbors Day will be celebrated at Southwick's Zoo, 2 Southwick St., Mendon, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 27**

• Ed the Wizard's "Reading is Magic" performance will appear at the Whitinsville Social Library starting at 10:30 a.m. Enjoy this family friendly interactive magic performance full of comedy and suspense as Ed the Wizard weaves together the importance

of building and maintaining one's reading skills. Registration is required, register online at [www.tinyurl.com/EventsAtWSL](http://www.tinyurl.com/EventsAtWSL). This program is supported in part by a grant from the Northbridge Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 29**

• Dan Fontaine, an Elvis tribute artist, will return to Plummer Place (the Northbridge Senior Center), 20 Highland St., Whitinsville, for a performance from 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m. Lunch is a Memphis-themed barbecue. Tickets are \$10 each with a limit of two tickets per person.

• The Millbury Summer Concert Series continues with a performance by Robert Black at the Asa Waters Mansion. Start time is 6:00 p.m.

• 2023 Family Fishing Clinic: 6-8 p.m., Silver Lake Beach, Grafton. Learn how to fish with the MassWildlife Angler Education Program. Free. For ages 6 and up. Register at [graftonrec.com](http://graftonrec.com)

**FRIDAY, JUNE 30**

• Please join us in celebrating Senior Library Associate Marilyn Wilcox, who will be retiring on June 30 after nearly 19 years of service in the Children's Room at the Grafton Public Library. We will be honoring her with a reception on Friday June 30 from 10am-12noon at the Grafton Public Library, 35 Grafton Common and the community is invited to attend. Please RSVP via the event on our Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/GraftonPublicLibraryMA> or directly to Beth Schreiber at 508-839-4649 x1836 or by email at [schreiberb@graftonlibrary.org](mailto:schreiberb@graftonlibrary.org).

**SATURDAY, JULY 1**

• The Rockdale Congregational Church, 42 Fowler Road, Northbridge, will hold its Annual Yard Sale from 8:00 a.m. to noon with a rain date of Saturday, July 8th. Proceeds will go to the Northbridge Association of Churches Backpack and School Supply Program.

• Chase Rice performs at Indian Ranch, 200 Gore Road, Webster, 1:00 p.m. [www.indianranch.com](http://www.indianranch.com).

• Old Sturbridge Village - Kids Free All Week-

end! Up to three kids ages 17 and under are admitted for FREE per adult paying full price (\$30) From July 1 to July 4, 2023. Additional youth are admitted at the standard rate of \$15. Pre-registration is recommended. To purchase tickets go to [osv.org/event/independence-celebration/](http://osv.org/event/independence-celebration/)

**SUNDAY, JULY 2**

• Daniels Farmstead, 286 Mendon St., Blackstone, hosts Fourth on the Farm, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

• Honor Teachers Day will occur at Southwick's Zoo, 2 Southwick's St., Mendon, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**TUESDAY, JULY 4**

• A 4TH of July Special will be held at Southwick's Zoo, 2 Southwick St., Mendon,



from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**THURSDAY, JULY 6**

• "Architects and Anarchists: who has the power to make big decisions in your community" a program sponsored by the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor, will be presented at 6:30 p.m. at 12 Hopedale St. in Hopedale. This is a walkabout and will include a long history of habitation in the area and continue through the construction of large Draper workers' houses in the late 1800s.

**JULY 2-OCTOBER 1**

• Daniels Farmstead in Blackstone is open for its 13th season of Farmers' Markets,

every Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Email [info@danielsfarmstead.org](mailto:info@danielsfarmstead.org) for further details or visit the Daniels Farmstead Foundation website at [www.danielsfarmstead.org](http://www.danielsfarmstead.org).

**SATURDAY, JULY 8**

• North Smithfield Heritage Day will be held, 83 Green St., North Smithfield, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**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](http://www.indianranch.com).

**THURSDAY, JULY 13**

• The Millbury Summer Concert Series continues with a performance by the Eddie Foreman Polka Band at the Millbury Senior Center. Showtime is 6:00 p.m.

**THURSDAY, JULY 20**

• The Millbury Summer Concert Series continues with a performance by Turtlehead at the Town Common. Showtime is 6:00 p.m.

**THURSDAY, JULY 27**

• The Millbury Summer Concert Series continues with a performance by Far from Eden at the Asa Waters Mansion. Showtime is 6:00 p.m.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 3**

• The Millbury Summer Concert Series continues with a performance by 4EverFab at the Millbury Senior Center. Showtime is 6:00 p.m.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 10**

• "Of Farms and Factories:" Tour a history farm and homestead in beautiful Sutton at Waters Farm, 53 Waters Road, at 6:30 p.m. Presented by the Blackstone River Valley

**HAPPENINGS!**  
*continued on page 18*

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**HAPPENINGS!**

*continued from page 17*

National Heritage Corridor, this walkabout will show the important role local farmers

an informative and interactive afternoon of history at the Whitin Mill, 30-710 Douglas Road, Whitinsville, MA, from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Explore exhibits on manufacturing, see uniforms from the 1940s, and listen to The Company Bees (2:00 PM – 3:00 PM)

tendeas will meet local historian Christine Watkins who will discuss the opportunities and challenges of working in a restored mill space. The program is being presented by the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor in partnership with Deb Dunleavy of Manchaug Mills Inc.

• The Millbury Summer Concert Series continues with a performance by Dan Gable & the Abletones at the Asa Waters Mansion. Showtime is 6:00 p.m.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 19**

• The Whitin Community Center will host "Cars in the Park," 60 Main St., Whitinsville.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 24**

• The Silver Club of the Uxbridge Senior Center is planning a trip to The Theatre by the Sea to see the show "Jersey Boys." There will be a sit-down lunch at Bravo by the Sea with meal choices of haddock, chicken or pasta. Bus pickups will be at the Millbury Park and Ride in Millbury and at the Dollar General in Whitinsville. The cost including driver gratuity is \$150. Call Sue at 508-476-5820 for more details about this trip and a five-day trip in September to Penn Dutch to see the brand new show "Daniel" at Sight and Sound Theatre.

• The Millbury Summer Concert Series continues with a performance by Belit at the Town Common. Showtime is 6:00 p.m.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 26**

• The 2nd Annual Parking Lot Craft Fair sponsored by the Auburn Historical Society & Museum will be held at 41 South St., Auburn, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., rain or shine. Vendors are welcome. Contact Helen at auburnmuseum@verizon.net to reserve a space for \$15.

a duo who will perform music from the era. Rangers and partners will offer short lectures at 11:30 AM and 1:00 PM inside the Singh Theater. Free, drop-in activities will be available for kids throughout the day, offered by Battleship Cove. Program will be presented in partnership with Open Sky Community Services. Free and open to all.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 17**

• "Adaptive Reuse in Manchaug:" This program is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. at Manchaug Mills, 9 Main St., Sutton, and it will show how the creative adaptation of an old industrial complex can take shape. At-



Rumours, the Ultimate Fleetwood Mac Tribute Band, takes the stage at Indian Ranch in Webster on Sunday, July 9th.

have played in the evolution of industry in New England. The program is being presented in collaboration with Waters Farm Preservation Inc.  
• The Millbury Summer Concert Series continues with a performance by DJ and the Preachers at the Town Common. Showtime is 6:00 p.m.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 13**

• Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park and ValleyCAST Host Annual World War II Program. Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park and ValleyCAST will present



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\*Up to three kids ages 17 and under are admitted for FREE per adult paying full price (\$30) from July 1st through July 4th.



The Blackstone Valley River National Heritage Corridor is host a program on "Farms and Factories" at Waters Farm in Sutton on Thursday, August 10th. Pictured is a scenic view of Lake Manchaug from Waters Farm.

**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.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16**

• Bethel Lutheran Church/Grace Ministries will host a Community Yard Sale from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at 90 Bryn Mawr Ave., Auburn. Rent a table for just \$25. Contact Jackie Walsh at 508-769-0879 for jackmae@charter.net to register for this event.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30**

• The Greenway Challenge takes place in the Blackstone Valley and around the region.

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20**

• The Whitin Community Center will host a Halloween Haunted Swim & Costume Roller Skating Party. Go to www.whitincommunitycenter.com for full details.  
• The Whitin Community Center will host "Nightmare on Main St., 60 Main St., Whitinsville. Visit www.whitincommunitycenter.com for more info.

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7**

• The Sutton Historical Society welcomes Mark Savoio of the Thompson Historical Society for the presentation "The Mass 15th of the Civil War and Wilder Holbrook, Sutton," at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, at 7:00 p.m. Go to www.suttonhistoricalsociety.org for further info.

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**Prayer**

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

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

# SSE program tackles subject of child labor

BY ROD LEE

During the brief time it has been in existence, the Samuel Slater Experience in Webster has quickly gained stature as a museum that puts the cultural and historical life of the region in perspective.

Heddle Weaving.” A three-day workshop scheduled for July 15, 22 and 29, the course will show participants how to use their own rigid heddle loom. Call 508-461-2955 to register.

Ms. Hixon’s talk on child labor was a featured element of “Samuel Slater’s Birthday Weekend” at the

individual go from adolescence to adulthood? For a friend of hers, she said, it was “fighting in World War II at the age of sixteen.” He is now in his 90s and apparently still alive, although she has lost contact with him.

“Is this a soldier?” she asked as well, of Charles Everett. He was “a drummer boy” in the horrific “Battle of the Wilderness” and died at fourteen in 1854. An only child and standing just 5 feet 4 inches tall, he joined the Army in January and was killed in May.

“The Army knew better,” she said.

Ms. Hixon made a point of championing the work of Lewis Hine, whose remarkable photographs of children working in “the mills, the mines and as chimney sweeps” were meant to put an end to America’s horrific practice of depending on child labor.

An historian who has taught at Worcester State, she was introduced to a large and attentive gathering by the museum’s Barbara Van Reed, who said “a big part of our story here is the children.”

The stories Ms. Hixon told hammered home the message that utilizing children in mills for up to sixteen hours a day with the windows closed was just plain wrong.

“These places were death traps in a lot of instances,” she said, citing several examples.

Located at 31 Ray St. in Webster and dedicated to the life of Samuel Slater, “Father of the American Industrial Revolution” and a founder of the town of Webster, Samuel Slater Experience is open Friday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 4:00. The museum with its array of interactive exhibits is available for field trips, parties and private functions, and to tour groups.

Call 508-461-2955 or go to <https://samuel Slater Experience.org> for more information or to make a donation.

Samuel Slater Experience principal sponsors are the Janet Masler Humanities Trust and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

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



Historian Linda Hixon talks about “Women and Children in the Mills” during an appearance at Samuel Slater Experience in Webster on June 10th.



A Lewis Hine photo, calling attention to child labor in the nation’s mills in the 1800s.

Another example of the contribution the SSE is making in this regard occurred on June 10th with a presentation by Linda Hixon on “Women and Children on the Time Clock”—a captivating look at how boys and girls as young as ten, and adult females, were employed in mills in Lowell, Hopedale and elsewhere around the Commonwealth in the 1800s and the first part of the 20th Century.

Ms. Hixon’s program follows ones recently offered on “Ice Harvesting” and “Early Transportation.” Coming up at the SSE is an introductory course on “Rigid

museum, June 9-11. It was in every sense of the word an eye opener on the liberties manufacturers took in utilizing kids in the production of wool and cotton and other goods; “for every reason and for no reason at all,” as Mx. Hixon put it.

The Draper Company in Hopedale, where Ms. Hixon grew up, “was part of all of this, but later on,” she said. “We wouldn’t even contemplate that now.”

The initial portion of Ms. Hixon’s remarks, accompanied by pictures, focused on providing an answer to the question “what is childhood?” At what age does an

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# BVT confers diplomas and industry-recognized certifications

The Blackstone Valley Tech Class of 2023 Commencement Ceremony was held at The Hanover Theatre & Conservatory for the Performing Arts in Worcester on May 25th. The evening ceremony celebrated the accomplishments of the school's 294 graduates with all the pomp and circumstance they deserve. "We all have great reasons to be proud as we gather to honor these students for completing a major milestone in their lives," Assistant Superintendent-Director/Principal Mr. Anthony E. Steele II said in his opening remarks. "We commend the members of the Class of 2023 for maintaining their focus and for their dedication to reaching the goal of becoming a Blackstone Valley Tech graduate."

The ceremony included the National Anthem sung by graduate Carleigh Koopman of Northbridge. Next, Yvette Martin, Director of Student Services, delivered the benediction. Then graduates Mason Day of Hopedale and Luke Scholl of Northbridge performed "Wild Horses" by the Rolling Stones, followed by



several speakers.

Thanking those who helped them on their journey was a shared theme for those who spoke during the ceremony. **Katelyn Steele of Upton, Valedictorian,**

spoke about the positive traits the Class of 2023 possess as 'Beavers,' such as constructing houses, treating sick patients, and engineering solutions to global problems. **Isabel Cahill of Ux-**

**bridge, Senior Class President,** urged living in the present and being proud of who students have become. **Hunter Claflin of Douglas, Student Council President,** talked about memories made. **Natalia Vazquez of Mendon, Senior Class Historian,** noted that memories influence who we are and who we will become. Thanks for the memories! Lastly, **Maxwell Guyton of Uxbridge, Salutatorian,** noted that today is not the end but the beginning of the incredible things the graduates have yet to accomplish.

Assistant Principal Ms. Skye Bomba addressed the Class and took a moment to recognize those who were instrumental in helping BVT's students get to this finish line. In closing, she encouraged the Class to live a life of kindness and compassion for others, reminding them that it costs nothing to be kind.

"Few know the obstacles you



Left, The Blackstone Valley Tech Class of 2023 Commencement Ceremony concluded with cheers and applause for the graduates as they tossed their caps into the air. Above, Automotive Technology and Cosmetology are two of the vocational programs offered at Blackstone Valley Tech; hands-on training is a staple of the educational experience at BVT.

have overcome to be where you are today," said Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick. "You, the Class of 2023, are part of our legacy and forever a part of our collective voyage. As you set your sights on your future goals, do not give up on your dreams because real magic happens when you take a leap of faith and believe in yourself. We look forward to celebrating your continued success. Congratulations!"

Two hundred and ninety-four students concluded their dual high school education. They received a vocational certificate and a diploma, which certify mastery of competencies in their career-technical programs and a rigorous academic course of study. The evening celebration concluded with applause for the graduates as they tossed their caps into the air. To view the ceremony, visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/classof2023](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/classof2023).

*About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT):*

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills.



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# Scholarships and Awards at BVT: A springboard for success!

The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District is proud to announce its Class of 2023 Scholarship and Award Recipients.

As BVT's newest graduates prepare to advance their career training, awards totaling nearly 7 million in renewable value are a springboard for success allowing its recipients the financial freedom to implement their career plans across various pathways.

"Some students purchase new tools, clothing, and equipment to launch their careers while others use financial aid to cover tuition at colleges or universities," said Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick. "The assistance of these scholarships and awards set our graduates in motion toward a bright future to contribute as well-trained, educated, and skilled members of the workforce."

The following is a list of the scholarships and awards earned by members of the Class of 2023, including immediate plans for career training. Students are categorized by town and listed alphabetically by last name. Scholarship amounts reflect the first-year total. For more details, visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/scholarshiprecipients2023](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/scholarshiprecipients2023).

## GRAFTON

**Jordyn Carroll – Curry College (Nursing);** American Legion Post 92 Grafton: \$1,000.00, Curry Grant: \$2,000.00, Curry Resident: \$3,000.00, Curry Trustees: \$22,000.00, Early Action: \$2,000.00, Harold Mayer Memorial & Charles Hurley Memorial Award: \$1,000.00, Joey Wilson Memorial Scholarship - Town of Grafton: \$600.00, John & Abigail Adams Scholarship: \$1,400.00  
**Juliana Errara – University of Massachusetts Lowell (Applied Biomedical Science);** Dean's Scholarship: \$8,285.00, John & Abigail Adams Scholarship: \$1,454.00, UML Scholarship: \$3,000.00  
**Hailey Lutjelusche – Western New England University (Mechanical Engineering);** Western New England University Early Application Scholarship: \$2,000.00, Western New England University Grant: \$3,000.00, Western New England Univer-

sity Presidential Scholarship: \$29,500.00  
**Noah Mariano – Worcester Polytechnic Institute (Electrical & Computer Engineering);** WPI Grant: \$16,870.00, WPI Presidential Scholarship: \$20,000.00, Owen Mathieu – Westfield State University (Management), James Franklin Memorial Award: \$300.00, John & Abigail Adams Scholarship: \$1,400.00, Westfield State University Leadership Scholarship: \$2,000.00  
**Garrett Remillard – Truck Driver & Mechanic;** Joey Wilson Memorial Tool Award: \$600.00  
**Sean Sage – Anna Maria College (Business Administration);** Anna Maria College Merit scholarship: \$26,000.00, FA Application Incentive Grant: \$500.00, Howard W. Dunbar Scholarship: \$3,000.00, Resident Affordability Grant: \$2,000.00  
**Henry Warfield – Virginia Tech (Electrical Engineering);** VT scholarship: \$3,000.00

## MILLBURY

**Samuel Bazydlo – University of Connecticut (Management & Engineering)** Husky Achievement Award: \$16,000.00, Millbury Dollars for Scholars: \$500.00  
**Troy Cami – New England College (Nursing);** Blackstone Valley Rotary Club Scholarship: \$1,000.00  
**Ayla Corcoran – Westfield State University (Secondary Education-English);** Millbury Dollars for Scholars: \$1,000.00  
**Isabelle Corey – University of Arizona (Biology);** Academic Achievement Award: \$3,000.00, Arizona Recognition Scholarship: \$7,500.00, Grant: \$3,000.00  
**Lily Kimball – Bryant University (Health Sciences);** Milford Federal Bank Scholarship: \$1,000.00  
**Brianne Laudani – Welder;** Matthew L. Fleming Memorial Award: \$200.00, Town Fair Tire Foundation - Toolship Scholarship: \$500.00, Valley Tech School Committee Vocational Award: \$200.00  
**Brooke Maguire – University of Connecticut (Nursing);** The Husky Achievement Award: \$12,000.00  
**Chloe Persiani – University of South Florida (Advertising/Public Relations);** Millbury Dollars for Scholars: \$500.00  
**Kasey Reeves – Curry College (Nursing);**

**Andrew Cocaine Memorial Scholarship:** \$1,000.00, U.S. Army Reserve National Scholar/Athlete Award: \$300.00  
**Jayden Roderigues – Wentworth Institute of Technology (Architecture);** Wentworth High Academic Achievement Scholarship: \$21,000.00

## SUTTON

**Ryan Cyronak – Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (Mechanical Engineering);** Achievement Scholarship: \$4,000.00, Provost Scholarship: \$12,000.00  
**Katelyn Devine – Worcester State University (Psychology);** Dudley-Gendron American Legion Post 414 Sutton Clarence H and Helen B Chase Memorial Scholarship: \$1,000.00, Worcester State University Achievement Scholarship: \$3,000.00  
**Makayla Dunton – Johnson & Wales University (Hospitality Management);** JWU Academic Achievement Award: \$1,500.00, JWU Early Visit Grant: \$1,000.00, JWU Skills USA Scholarship: \$2,000.00, Presidential Academic Scholarship: \$17,500.00  
**Ethan Gervais – Apprentice Plumber;** Casey Bulger Memorial Scholarship: \$500.00  
**Katherine Hearn – Nichols College (Psychology);** Chad A. Holbrook Memorial Sports Scholarship: \$500.00, Honors Scholarship: \$1,000.00, Nichols College Grant: \$2,500.00, Nichols College Leadership Early Acceptance Program Grant: \$2,500.00, President's Scholarship: \$25,000.00  
**Neila Jerome – Keene State College (Construction Management),** Dean Scholarship: \$5,000.00, Valley Tech School Committee Vocational Award: \$200.00  
**Benjamin Judson – University of Massachusetts Amherst (Business Management),** Joey Wilson Memorial Scholarship: \$600.00, Michael J. Cammuso Jr. Memorial Scholarship: \$1,000.00  
**Samuel Judson – University of Massachusetts Amherst (Mechanical Engineering),** John & Abigail Adams

Scholarship: \$1,714.00, Polyfoam Corporation Scholarship: \$500.00  
**Brenna Kehowski – University of Massachusetts Boston (Biology),** UMass Boston Dean's Merit Scholarship: \$7,000.00  
**Haley Kirouac – Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (Biomedical Engineering),** Women's Leadership Scholarship: \$25,000.00, Rensselaer Leadership Award: \$10,000.00, Early Application Scholarship: \$10,000.00  
**Josie Lavoie – Suffolk University (Graphic Design);** University Achievement Grant: \$18,000.00  
**Ryann Lombardi – Assumption University (Nursing);** Sutton Lions Club: \$1,000.00  
**Adrian Lowell – Clark University (Psychology);** Clark University Grant: \$21,167.00, Federal SEOG Grant: \$2,500.00, Mass Gilbert Grant: \$2,400.00, MASS Grant: \$2,800.00, Pell Grant: \$7,395.00  
**Aidan Mcgrail – University of Massachusetts Lowell (Electrical Engineering);**

Dean's Scholarship: \$4,000.00, Elizabeth K Giordano Scholarship: \$1,000.00, John & Abigail Adams Scholarship: \$1,575.00  
**Nathan McMahon – Mechanic;** Paul Perreault Memorial Scholarship: \$500.00  
**Colin Medeiros – University of Massachusetts Amherst (Electrical Engineering);** John & Abigail Adams Scholarship: \$1,700.00  
**Olivia Oikle – Quinnipiac University (Nursing);** Bobcat Access Grant: \$3,000.00, Quinnipiac University Trustee Award: \$25,000.00  
**Marcel Peladeau – Welder;** Town Fair Tire Foundation - Toolship Scholarship: \$500.00  
**Hannah Snyder – Johnson & Wales University (Criminal Justice);** Academic Presidential Award: \$23,500.00  
**Benjamin Szydluk – University of Massachusetts Lowell (Engineering);** Dean's Academic Achievement Scholarship: \$3,000.00

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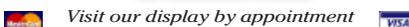
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LIVING WITH LUKE

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# Luke becomes a dirt digger, and teaches a lesson

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

Spring 2023 has brought forth new growth in Luke's personality. More specifically, he's become a dirt digger. I've watched him swipe dirt with the speed of a texting teen. My lawn, verdant with fresh grass

and deep holes, reflects life with a grown pup. "I need to get to the bottom of this." Head down, tail stiff, his focus is manic. Fresh dirt falls like powdered sugar around new holes. He looks up at me every so often like a lion who's found chocolate pudding in the garbage. "I like to dig."

Dogs, Google tells me, dig because they are bored or to bury prey. Luke Valentino, a current unneutered male, exposes a third reason.

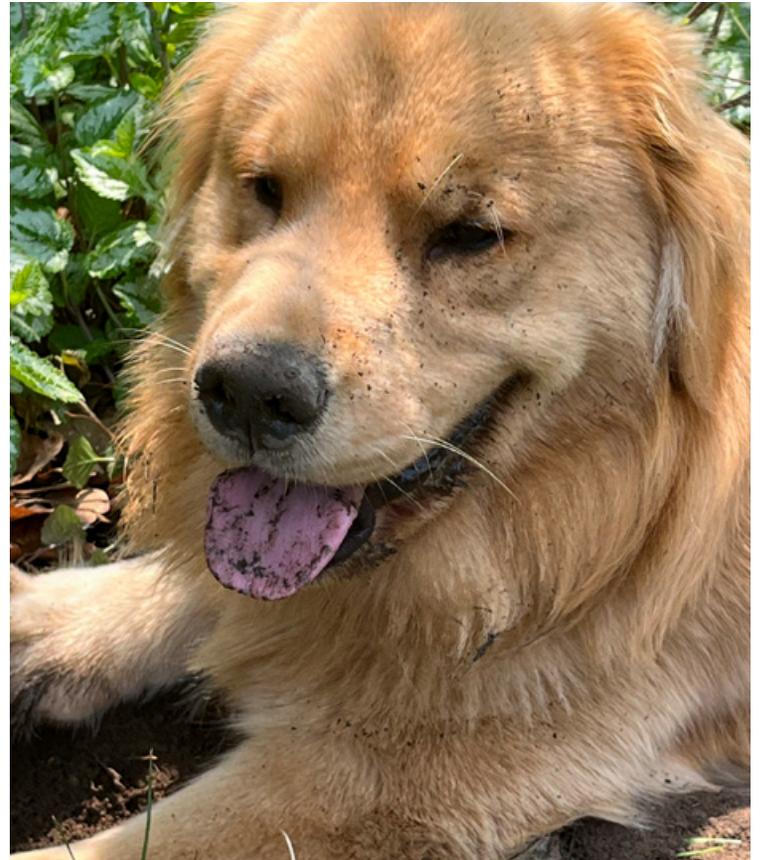
"Luke. Please." I caught him peeing on a worm after sniffing (and digging) him out. "I don't know who you think you are Mr. Slime, but I'm the boss of this yard." Dirty deeds aside, I can't help but appreciate my pup's natural tendency to play in the earth. I've watched him zoom around the yard like a fool falling in love. I've watched him rub his back in the grass as though scratching an itch. I've watched him sniff new blooms.

Spring has sprung. My pup wants a taste of it.

"We need to do something about Luke's digging. He's wrecking the whole yard." My husband is unimpressed by Luke's spring cheer. Keeping up with the Jones's is difficult with a sixteen-month-old digger. He grabs Luke by the collar to (literally) rub his nose in the dirt. "Nooooo."

Luke smiles down at one of numerous holes. "That bitch was my best work yet."

Never a fan of shame and blame, I've found that applying "natural consequences" works better for my adolescent pup. Imagine scolding



a child for building a sandcastle in the sand. "How dare you make that hole in the earth!" The process of digging is natural and playful, an act of innocence and an expression of a dog's personality. Luke is a big kid wearing a fur coat. Besides, Luke Valentino, quite admirably, has not chewed on a single piece of furniture, as many pups do. Granted, he's torn the guts out of a stuffed elephant, but that's about it. "It's just a phase," I tell my husband. "Leave Luke alone. He's just being a dog." My dog-friendly rationale has led to a rather ironic outcome. I've respected my pup's needs to be a dog and, in turn, he's understood my human side.

"You do yard work, Momma?" Luke watches me use a pitchfork to make final touches to one more dirt-filled hole. He stares up at me with a champion smile. His body

is finally catching up to his head. He's a beautiful, curious dog. I read his mind. "My Momma is so good at everything she sets her mind to. She types and dances and does yard work, too. Look at her go!" Dogs love us unconditionally. They have no agenda or expectations for us. They love every part of us.

"Luke, want to go for a walk?" My cheek is smeared with dirt, but Luke doesn't notice.

He translates the offer. I watch his smile close then open again as he thinks about it. "I was thinking the same thing!! I love going for walks!"

"You created a lot of work for Mummy, Luke. You'll have to wait!" I emphasize the word wait. He

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LUKE

continued on page 23

REAL ESTATE

# Why homebuyers need an expert agent by their side

The process of buying a home can feel a bit intimidating, even under normal circumstances. And today's market is not normal. There continues to be a very limited number of homes for sale, and that's creating bidding wars and driving home prices back up as buyers compete over the available homes. Navigating all of this can be difficult if you're trying to do it alone. That's why having a skilled expert to guide you through the home buying process is super important, especially today. Advice and guidance from a professional real estate agent can be invaluable, especially during a hot or unpredictable housing market.



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

Here are just a few of the ways a REALTOR, or real estate expert, makes a big difference:

**Experience.** We know the ins and outs of what's happening today, how it impacts buyers, and how to manage any hurdles that may pop up.

**Education.** Knowledge is power when it comes to buying a home. We will simply and effectively explain market conditions and translate what they mean for you so you can feel confident in your decision.

**Negotiations.** We advocate for your best interests. Having an expert on your side provides assistance with the written offer and purchase agreement. We also help you negotiate potential seller concessions if the inspection reveals issues with the home.

**Contracts.** We guide you through the disclosures and contracts necessary in today's heavily regulated environment.

**Pricing.** Making an offer and negotiating with a seller can be one of the most difficult and stressful

parts of the home-buying process. We will help you understand what similar homes are selling for so you have the full picture of what you may want to offer.

All of these reasons combined may be why 86% of recent buyers used an agent according to the latest Home Buyers and Sellers Generational Trends Report from the National Association of Realtors (NAR). NAR also has this to say about why an agent is so essential today:

"A great real estate agent will guide you through the home search with an unbiased eye, helping you meet your buying objectives while staying within your budget. Agents are also a great source when you have questions about local amenities, utilities, zoning rules, contractors, and more."

What's the key to choosing the right expert? It starts with trust. You'll want to know you can trust the advice they're giving you, so you need to make sure you're connected with a true professional. No one can provide perfect advice

because it's impossible to know exactly what's going to happen at every turn, especially in today's market. But a true professional like the Marzeotti Group can give you the best possible advice based on the information and situation at hand.

We will help advocate for you throughout the process and coach you on the essential knowledge you need to make confident decisions.

That's exactly what you want and deserve. It's critical to have an expert on your side who is skilled in navigating today's housing market. If you're planning to buy a home this year, connect with a member of The Marzeotti Group or another trusted real estate advisor who will give you the best advice and guide you along the way.

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**LUKE**  
*continued from page 22*

inspects the covered hole and smiles again. I can tell he's thinking about his actions. "Let's go for a walk!" But not for long. Luke is a dog. His guilt is short-lived. He's moved on three seconds ago. We move away from the hole (pun intended) incident. Boredom strikes a few days later. A young dog's energy is boundless. There aren't enough hours in the day, it seems, to take Luke on the walks, runs, playdates, and dog-friendly adventures which he requires. I gaze down at my yard to see the latest surprise, one that takes my breath away.

"What are you doing, Luke?"  
Luke is digging another hole, but this one is different. This one is created at the border of my Mother's Day Garden, in a spot naturally "prepped" for a new flower. "What do you think, Momma?" I can barely believe my eyes. He shows

me his work with a nose smeared in dirt. My yard is expansive. He could have dug in so many other areas but, instead, he chose this one. My mind draws up the memory. A few weeks back he sat and watched me plant flowers there.

He lifts his chin while I pet him. "I was thinking you could plant more flowers here, and that way you'll always remember me—Luke Valentino—your favorite Golden Retriever."

I cover the hole, but not completely. I think about all the dogs I've had; good dogs I've loved, missed, and cried for. Someday, I'll wish for one more day to watch Luke Valentino dig one more hole. Dog owners understand the empty holes in our hearts when we lose our pets. What I wouldn't give to have one more day with Lincoln!

"I love you, Luke." I massage the ears of my young dog's big head.

I've since planted marigolds in this garden for my favorite golden, Luke Valentino. There's no need to

wait for his passing to remember him.

He's with me now and, together, we're filling the holes.

Write to Amy at amy@leclair.com  
Find Luke Valentino on Instagram @livingwithlukevalentino

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# Going, Going, Gone! BVT to Comply with Records Regulations

Attention Class of 2016,  
Destruction of Student  
Records is set for August 1st

In accordance with state and federal regulations, special education (IEP) and 504 student records shall be destroyed seven years after the student leaves the school. For the Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School Class of 2016, this date is August 1, 2023.

The Class of 2016 may request special education and 504 records before the August 1st shred date by written request. Be sure to indicate

the year of graduation, and name while attending school, to Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, Student Services Record Dept., 65 Pleasant Street, Upton, MA 01568.

Student transcripts (a record of grades) shall be destroyed 60 years after the student leaves the school. For the Class of 2016, that date is August 1, 2076. An alum from that class may request a transcript from their graduation date: May 2016 through August 1, 2076.

If you want to retain your records, learn how at: [www.valley-tech.k12.ma.us/studentrecords](http://www.valley-tech.k12.ma.us/studentrecords).

# 4 Tips to Play a Better Golf Game!

BY DR. SEAN T. LORDAN DPT

With golf season back in full swing, it's time to make sure your backswing generates enough power to bring you just before the first snowfall!

Here are 4 tips to play a better golf game this season.

1. Practice 10 minutes a day. Whether it's an at home putting mat, using your favorite swing tool

(I like the swing proplus), or just mimicking the golf swing for 3 sets of 10. Ten minutes of practice daily, will help you become better each day.

2. Do these stretches: Open books, cross arm stretch, piriformis stretch

Open Books: Lay on your side. With your bottom leg lying straight, put your top leg at 90 degrees. Place your bottom arm, straight out in front of you, keeping your shoulder straight. Place your palm up. Place your other arm on top of the arm that is on the ground, palm down. Next open your top arm, opening your body to 180 degrees and return to your starting position.

Cross- Arm Stretch: Standing with your legs shoulder width apart, take one arm across your body. With your other arm pull

your arm close to your body to feel a deep stretch. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat with your other arm.

Piriformis Stretch: Lie on your back with your legs straight. Lift your one leg and bend your knee.

With your opposite hand, reach across your body, and then gently pull your knee toward your opposite shoulder. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat with your other leg.

3. Do this for strength: Pallof Press, Chops lo to hi and hi to lo, and planks. Core strength is important in golf to protect your spine and to deliver maximal efficiency when striking the golf ball.

Pallof Press: Anchor a resistance band to a doorway. Hold the resistance band or cable in front of your torso while pressing it out and back.

Chops hi to lo and lo to hi: Anchor a resistance band to the top of a doorway. With both hands, grip the band. Step away, and stand sideways to the band's anchor point. With near straight arms, make a sweeping, chopping-like movement diagonally downward. Return to a starting position in a controlled manner.

Planks: Begin in the plank position, face down with your

forearms and toes on the floor. Your elbows are directly under your shoulders and your forearms are facing forward. Your head is relaxed and you should be looking at the floor. Hold this for 20-30 seconds and then rest. Repeat 3 times.

4. Develop a relationship with your local Physical Therapist (PT). A PT will evaluate you to see where your specific deficiencies and efficiencies are. They will help you move and feel better to get the most out of your golf game. You do not need to be in pain or to see your PCP in order to make an appointment with your local PT.

Thank you for checking out this month's edition of "Tips From Your Neighborhood Physical Therapist". As always, if you have any questions for me personally, I can be reached at 508-861-1010 or [drlordan@conciergephysicaltherapy.com](mailto:drlordan@conciergephysicaltherapy.com).

Dr. Sean T. Lordan is a doctor of physical therapy and the author of "11 Winning Secrets To Stop Aging In Its Tracks." He is the owner of Concierge Physical Therapy with locations in Sutton, Shrewsbury and now Hopkinton!



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SPORTS

# Chase Falcon will continue with baseball on the next level

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Baseball has given Sutton's Chase Falcon a chance to continue playing after his high school days are over. Following the Division 5 State Baseball Tournament Falcon's baseball playing days will not come to an end; the senior will be taking his talent to Division

that was put on hold because of Covid. By the time spring rolled around again, during his sophomore year, baseball was back in full swing. Falcon made the varsity team as the starting left fielder playing along side all the older kids he grew up playing with.

However, being on the younger side, Falcon noted that he needed to work on becoming a better hitter

allowed 25 earned runs.

"Chase has solid footwork and a strong arm that has led him to be a very dependable part of our outfield. Offensively he has gone from a contact hitter to someone who now drives the ball, which is illustrated in his extra base hits this season." Sutton coach Casey Cummins said. "He is always willing to help the team out in any way that

working with the younger players.

"As a senior captain, Chase enjoys working with the younger players within the program and helping them through their struggles," the Sutton Coach said. "His game and leadership skills have grown through the years tremendously."

Although the senior enjoys working with the younger players, his greatest accomplishment is his defensive game. According to Cummins, his arm strength has improved through the years enough to lead the team in defensive assists this year.

"I take a lot of pride in my defense; it really means a lot to me. My mission is to be the best defensive player that I can," he said. "Being on the smaller size I was not thought of as a hitter, so I had to do something that would allow me to stay in the lineup. My older brother (Ryan, 4 years older) always had a good arm, so that was something that I wanted to copy, so I worked with him on getting stronger to make those kinds of throws."

Last spring Sutton, as a 13 seed in the Division 5 State Baseball Tournament, thrashed the number four seed Tahanto, 10-2 before falling to Pioneer Valley in a heart-break in the round of eight. It was one win away from Sutton history.

"The team came together to

make it as far as we could last year," Falcon said. "This year we want to do that again, only going further. If we can get that extra win it would be the furthest that any baseball team at Sutton has ever gone. We are working hard to get that accomplished."

Sutton will play in the Division 5 State Tournament once again this year as the 22 seed and will open up against Smith Vocational Tech.

Whenever the Sammys season does come to an end, Falcon will then begin to focus on the future of his baseball career.

"Playing professional baseball is every kid's dream and although I will be attending a Division 3 college, that doesn't see a lot of scouts I have not totally given up on that dream," Falcon said. "I'm just going to go out and play the best that I possibly can. Catholic University has a great baseball program, but I am going for my studies. It has a different atmosphere to it, and I wanted to do something different, and everything just fell into place."

If Falcon goes out and has himself a great four years of playing college baseball, his childhood dreams may be able to come true, but if things don't work out in his favor, it seems that he will have accepted it and move on. At least he had the opportunity.



Sutton's Chase Falcon will continue his baseball career at Catholic University.

3 Catholic University in Washington D.C., where he was offered a roster spot with the Cardinals.

"I've been playing baseball pretty much since the day I was born. My dad has always been a coach, so I grew up with baseball at a very young age," Falcon said. "The activity of the sport, being an active kid, it gave me something to do. It was also a way to bond with my dad."

Playing baseball in Sutton at a young age, there were not a lot of kids involved with the sport, so he found himself playing every position on the diamond at one time or another. Around the age of 13 he decided to transfer to the outfield on a regular basis.

"Having a younger birthday I could play with the kids my age, but I also had to play with the older kids," he said. "It was playing with the older kids when I discovered the outfield. They needed an outfielder, I gave it a try and after making a few diving catches while having fun playing the position, I rolled with it."

In addition to playing the outfield, Falcon occasionally found himself on the mound and while it was never a goal of his to be a pitcher he didn't mind eating up some innings for his team whenever they needed it.

As an eighth grader he was able to play baseball with the high school, but by the time he actually entered the high school baseball happened to be one of the sports

at the plate if he wanted to contend with the older players.

"I was on the smaller size but was very quick. I'd get a single and steal my way around the bases," he said. "Over the past few years, I've been able to put it out of the yard, but I do not consider myself a power hitter. My main philosophy is to see ball, hit the ball into a gap and take second base, then let my teammates bring me home."

At the time of this writing, Falcon was batting .509 with 27 hits (12 singles, 13 doubles, 1 triple and 1 homerun) while adding 17 RBI, 17 stolen bases and 16 runs scored. As a pitcher for the Sammys, the senior recorded 15 innings pitched, where he struck out 25 batters and

he can, which is illustrated by his ability to play multiple positions for us."

While he doesn't mind taking the ball every so often to help his team out, Falcon would rather play in the field.

"I prefer playing the outfield, with my focus being on becoming a better hitter," the senior said. "As a pitcher this year, I'm finding myself more in a reliever / closer role instead of starting. If I'm needed to pitch, I'd much prefer it as I get to come into the game and do my thing."

In addition to being a hard-working student in the classroom, Falcon carries that work ethic onto the field where he does a great job

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# Why does older Honda's tire pressure light stay on?

**Q.** I have a 13-year-old Honda with 120,000 miles on it. The issue is the TPMS (tire pressure light) comes on. This is not the light I see when the outside temperature is very cold, but the actual letters TPMS. The car is gared through-out the winter, only coming out for family, "we need another car" emergencies from November to late April. Because of the sensor being on I am always checking the tire pressure- which remains at a constant approximately 32 psi. So my question, why is this sensor on all the time?

**A.** There are two types of TPMS systems direct and indirect. The indirect system measures wheel/tire rotation using the anti-lock brake system. A low tire will roll at a different

speed than a fully inflated tire. The other system is a direct system which uses battery powered radio transmitter at each wheel and will give an actual pressure reading for each tire (most cars). When the transmitter stops functioning, the TPMS system light will come on to tell you there is an issue with the system. The typical life of these battery powered systems is seven to ten years. Until you decide to replace the sensors, continue what you are doing and check the tire pressure once per month.

**Q.** My 2005 Honda Accord with 150,000 miles recently had a few quick power drops while cruising at 60 miles per hour as well as frequent stalling while idling. I suspect the cause was bad gasoline. I flushed the system with Techron fuel system cleaner and high-test gas at various times. Everything ran fine until four weeks later when the car again had two quick power drops while cruising at 55 miles per hour and one stall while idling. The check

engine light came on but went off after 10 minutes. The car did not save the codes. My mechanic says the fuel filter and pump may need to be replaced, which would be expensive, and he is not sure if that is the problem. Any thoughts?

**A.** More testing will be needed to make an accurate diagnosis, but I suspect your mechanic may be correct. The best testing method would be to monitor the fuel system while driving and record fuel pressure when the engine acts up.

**Q.** What do you think of the new Ford Maverick truck and how does it compare to the Hyundai Santa Cruz?

**A.** If I were to buy a Maverick truck I would buy the front wheel drive hybrid, to me it is the best value of just about any vehicle today. As you move up to the all-wheel-drive version with the larger engine, then the Hyundai starts to look like then better

vehicle. Both are particularly good vehicles and, in my opinion, sorely missed the category of small useful trucks that are not outrageously expensive.

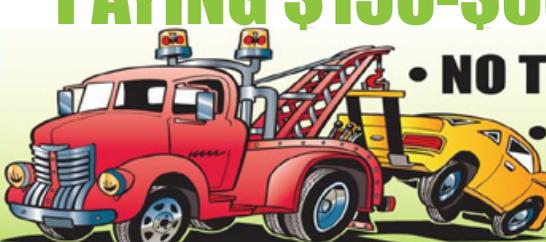
**Q.** I have my dad's 1985 Ford Crown Victoria and it has not run in at least 10 years and has been sitting in a carport. I want to see about getting it back on the road and thought it would be a good project with my kids. I was on YouTube and was watching Vice Grip garage and the host gets old car running all the time. My question is where to start?

**A.** You will have a fair amount of work ahead of you. The fuel in the tank has certainly gone bad, the fuel pump probably frozen up and won't pump fuel and of course it will need a new battery. The cooling system, belts, hoses, thermostat and perhaps even the radiator may need replacement. Then once the engine is running (you may need to replace the spark plugs) you

need to evaluate the brake system. More than likely the brakes are rusted and even brakes lines could be leaking or in need of replacement. The first place to start is to see if the engine will even turn over, sitting for 10 plus years the engine could be locked up. And of course, you will not know the condition of the transmission until you get the engine running. If you have the time and budget, and consider this a labor of love, then give it a go. If this were just a car you were going to fix up and drive, I would probably look for something else. Also keep in mind that Derek the host of VGG is a character but also is a skilled technician with years of experience.

*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 at mrjohnfpaul.*

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# Troubled history haunts Smith's Castle in Rhode Island

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

The history of Smith's Castle in North Kingstown, Rhode Island goes as far back as 1637 when Roger Williams and Richard Smith established a trading post on the land for local tribes and colonists to swap goods.

Williams, the founder of the Rhode Island colony, felt it important to build a trading post in the area in order to make friends with the local tribes. Richard Smith migrated to present day North Kingstown to build a home there. It was at the time called Smith's Blockhouse, located in what is still known as Cocumcussoc. Being on the water, it seemed perfect for trade until the outbreak of King Philip's War in 1675. There had already been Indian attacks upon the land and fearing for his family, he built tunnels that ran under the house and out to Rabbit Island very close by.

After the Great Swamp skirmish, the English militia hiked through the cold and snow to Smith's home where many were nursed back to health but some, unfortunately, succumbed to their wounds and

rigors of the brutal ordeal. Forty in all were buried in a single grave on the site. The area is well marked and easy to get to.

Another tragedy took place at the home after the fight. Joshua Teft was tried and found guilty of treason for helping the Narragansetts during the confrontation. He was duly hanged, drawn and quartered. Seventy men were ordered to remain behind after the Great Swamp fight, using the blockhouse as a temporary garrison. The day after they left, the Indians burned the house down in retaliation for the Great Swamp massacre. It was rebuilt in 1678 and thrived throughout the ages. In the 18th Century, it became a thriving plantation and is now labeled as the oldest in the nation. The property is also part of the Rhode Island Slave History Medallion program which promotes public awareness in regard to the awareness of former slavery in Rhode Island.

During the Revolutionary War, soldiers stayed at the secluded territory and according to historians of the manor, a few skirmishes on the land resulted in the



Image: www.smithscastle.org/

untimely demise of some soldiers during the war.

Combining the events from King Philip's War, the hanging of Joshua Teft, casualties of the Revolutionary War and the families of the property who died of more natural causes, it is inevitable that there would be ghosts lingering on the property. The ghosts of the castle seem to be trapped in an

eternal struggle to right the negative energy that holds them to the homestead. Phantoms of people in colonial attire are occasionally seen wandering through various rooms. Some appear out of nowhere then vanish into thin air. Various witnesses have seen a soldier in a revolutionary uniform walking along the grounds near the water. Perhaps he was one who met a sad

fate at the house or he is looking out to sea for something. His aeri-form presence is semi-transparent. Noises from inside the house give the curators and other guests a start, as many times the origin of the din is in the room they are in.

Voices and sounds of items falling are also heard by the docents who wear period clothing during tours to capture the mood and perhaps attract a few of the long deceased tenants of the house. There are reports of phantom slaves who died while hiding in the escape tunnels below the house. The tunnels have long been closed due to their dangerously frail condition yet the moans of the past and the apparitions of those who once tenanted there still permeate the walls and air of the ancient building.

Smith's Castle is a very great place to visit even if you don't see the four centuries of the "other" living history.

The house is located at 55 Richard Smith Drive off Route 1. Follow same directions for places above. The house is closed from Mid-December to Mid-April.

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