



The church group from Webster outside the building site. Photo submitted by Father Luke Veronis

Webster church builds homes for the poor

BY PATTY ROY

For the last 15 years the Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church has been heading to Tijuana, Mexico with an organization called Project Mexico, an group of Orthodox Christians that also supports the St. Innocent Orthodox Orphanage. "Over the last 35 years, this organization has built 420 homes. What you do, is you build a very simple home for a family," said Father Luke Veronis, Presiding Priest of Sts. Constantine and Helen said. "The homes that people were

living in often times had no windows or doors or solid roofs," he said. The newly built homes have a concrete foundation, secure roof and doors that lock, he said. The church has taken around 70 of their own parishioners for a week, along with another 100 volunteers from other churches as well as friends of their parishioners and students from Shepherd Hill Regional, Bartlett High and Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High Schools. The ages of the volunteers have ranged from 11 to 79 years, Father Luke said. This year they had eight teenagers and 10 young adults in

their 20s and the rest of the volunteers were older. "This summer we took 28 people and divided into two groups to build two homes," he said. Completing two homes on one mission trip was a first for them. "It's sort of like a spiritual retreat in the sense that our group was joined by volunteers from different parts of America. There are interns who live there for the summer," he said. "Two of the interns were my own daughters."

CHURCH
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Dudley voters save public safety, schools and library

BY PATTY ROY

In a victory for town services, Dudley voters supported a Proposition 2 ½ override to on Aug. 17 to fund public safety, the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library and the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District. About 31 percent of voters turned out at the ballot box to

The library budget was approved at \$297,528 to maintain its services with 1518 in favor and 1590 opposed. The highway department request for \$534,304 lost 1449 opposed to the expenditure and 1254 in favor. Town hall administrative function spending was requested at \$133,698 and failed with 1591 opposing and 1112 in favor.



decide five funding questions. Voters approved three of the five questions, turning down requests for the Highway Department and Town Hall administrative personnel. Voters did agree to raise taxes by \$556,111 to support the police and fire budgets, by a vote of 1660 in favor and 1057 opposed.

The approved questions add \$1.21 to the \$9.93 tax rate, which is an annual tax increase of \$353.72 for the average single-family home. The Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee action in June

OVERRIDE
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CHURCH

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Both his daughters have been on Project Mexico half a dozen times. Theodora, 23, recently graduated from St. Anselm's College and has committed to the program for a year. Panayiota, 20, attends Salve Regina College. The commitment to service is a Veronis family ideal. Fr. Luke and his wife, Presbyteria Faith have committed to the missions for years.

"My wife and I were missionaries in post-Communist Albania for 10 years," he said. "We lived there at a time when Albania was the poorest country in the world. I also lived in Kenya for a year after college, so we have this interest and love in doing this adventurous type of service project in the name of Jesus Christ."

The homes are built within a half

hour radius of the ranch where St. Innocent Orphanage is located.

Project Mexico's primary purpose is to build homes and the St. Innocent Orphanage houses teenage boys who have lost their parents. Over this summer, Project Mexico built 25 homes.

Families make their housing requests through Project Mexico. The homes are very simple, Father Luke stressed. There is no running water, but trucks bring water and can fill tanks. Project Mexico doesn't run electricity into the houses, but the residents are able to put that in.

It is a life transformative experience for whoever goes, Father Luke promised.

The volunteers turn to a whole new life, where for a week, every morning they join in prayer, turn in eight to 10 hours of hard work every day and have a session of fellowship around the campfire every night.



The group from Sts. Constantine and Helen shares a meal at Project Mexico. Photos submitted by Father Luke Veronis

"We all sleep in tents at the orphanage and there are very basic communal showers. It's very basic for a typical American, yet it's something that's very adventurous and exciting," he said.

There are wonderful interactions with the families for whom they are building homes.

"A single mother named Margarita had three children and she was just trying to survive. She was so grateful that we were giving her this new opportunity in life.

She was happy she didn't have to worry about getting kicked out of her apartment," Father Luke said.

Margarita was crying when the church volunteers handed her keys to her house on the last day, he reported and related her words, "This is a home that is mine and my children will have and no one can take it away from us."

The whole infrastructure in Mexico is very precarious, Father Luke said, so they struggle in many ways.

"Margarita told us she worked every day from 6 a.m. – 6 p.m. in a factory, seven days a week," he said. "Even though she had three young kids, she had to be away from home all day."

With as little as they had, the people who were getting homes shared, offering the volunteers lunch over several days.

"We were reluctant to take it, to feed 25 people is a big expense," he said. "Yet that is the joy they have in sharing."

A touching experience happened when people who received homes in previous years came by to help. A man named Fernando got a home a decade ago, and each year he takes a day off work to help build houses for other people.

"He said, I want to share the blessing that I had with another family," Fr. Luke said. "It's the beauty of these relationships that we build."

The volunteers fly to San Diego and take vans across the border. St. Innocent Orphanage is about 30 minutes across the border on the periphery of Tijuana and Rosarito.

"As soon as you cross the border, you realize you are in a whole new world," he said. "The green of California changes to the dust and dirt of Tijuana. Part of the experience is you realize it's a different world, yet the people are the same."

CHURCH

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2nd Friday: Blackstone Valley South: Douglas, Northbridge & Uxbridge
4th Friday: The YankeeXpress North: Auburn, Oxford
4th Friday: Blackstone Valley North: Grafton, Millbury & Sutton

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The Newspaper Press, LLC/©2023
168 Gore Road, Webster MA 01570 • 508-943-8784 • www.theyankeeexpress.com

CHURCH

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The Sts. Constantine and Helen Church funds the mission in part. The cost is \$1500 for airfare; each

person would have to raise money to pay that. With church aid, that number comes down to \$1100 or \$1000, Father Luke said.

The trip is undertaken every year in July when the weather is in the 80's and 90's, with no humid-



Above, The Project Mexico volunteers by a nearly completed house., left, proud new homeowner. Photos submitted by Father Luke Veronis

ity. Volunteers don't need to speak Spanish. Breakfast and dinner are eaten at the orphanage and lunch was taken at the work site.

Father Luke recalls a couple named Mario and Maria from Los Angeles. Mario, a construction manager, wanted his teenage boys to have the experience of helping others and so Googled "building

houses in Mexico." The search led them to the Project Mexico site.

"Mario said, 'I built multimillion dollar homes in Hollywood and Malibu, but this is different,'" Fr.

Luke said. "This house is built of the love of God."

For more information, visit ProjectMexico.org.

OVERRIDE

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to assess Dudley \$901,683 more than what was budgeted and approved at the annual May town meeting, threw the town's FY24 budget out of balance.

balance. The Board of Selectmen, Fire and Police Chiefs and Library Trustees said they were grateful for the support shown by voters.

"The Board of Selectmen is grateful that the majority of Dudley voters decisively chose to support fire, police, education and to keep the public library open," said Town Administrator Jonathan Ruda. "The voters' support of three of the five questions ensures the community will maintain the high quality of services our residents deserve and expect. The Board of Selectmen has perennially maintained a position of providing the highest level of quality services that the Town can afford, and that guiding principle will continue in the weeks ahead."

Restoring services in departments affected by the budget cuts that were needed to reduce spending and balance the budget at the May annual town meeting and a special town meeting held in July.

There were 32 possible funding outcomes based on the five menu-style questions presented on the ballot. The questions that

passed will result in fully funding those budgets. Notices to rescind layoffs were issued August 18 for fire, police and library.

"Over the course of the last five years, nothing has given me greater satisfaction than to have been able to sign the notices rescinding the layoff of police, fire and library staffing. It is not easy to ask residents to vote a raise in their own taxes. The wisdom of the voters to hear the message through all the

noise demonstrated our community commitment by stepping-up for the common good," Ruda said. "All the credit goes to the voters, the department heads and senior staff that kept the messaging

professional."

The Highway Department question fell short by 195 votes at a time when the town is just three months away from the start of the winter season. Still, the passage of the three other questions has freed-up revenue which will help to restore funding to other priority services such as highway, Town Hall staffing and online services.

Town officials have begun the process of preparing a supplemental budget. A balanced, supplemental budget that reflects the decisions made by voters at the polls will be presented at the October 16 Special Town Meeting.



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Blackstone River Valley Heritage Center at Worcester Reopens

The Blackstone River Valley Heritage Center at Worcester (3 Paul Clancy Way, Worcester, MA) has reopened for visitors under the management of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MassDCR). Operating hours are Thursday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In July, representatives from MassDCR and Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (BHC) were brought together by Senator Michael Moore and Representative Dan Donahue to discuss the reopening of the Worcester Visitor Center and its importance

to the community and the region. The Visitor Center opened to the public in October of 2018. Due to COVID, it was closed to the public in March of 2020.

"It was a pleasure to visit the Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center," Senator Michael Moore announced after his visit to talk about the reopening. "We discussed the history of the Blackstone Valley and the ways we're sharing its fascinating stories with residents and visitors alike through interactive exhibits. Thank you to Commissioner Arrigo for your incredible work to preserve the history of this great Commonwealth!"

The Heritage Center houses several hands-on exhibits, telling the nationally significant story of the Blackstone River Valley being

the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. In addition, there are a number of outdoor exhibits that interpret history and the natural environment. The Heritage Center is also home to the start of a 2.5-mile segment of the Blackstone River Bikeway that runs to Millbury for a five mile round trip ride.



From left: Susan Hamilton (MassDCR), Jennifer Stowe (MassDCR), Dennis Rice (BHC BoD), Senator Michael Moore, Commissioner Brian Arrigo (MassDCR), Representative Dan Donahue, Devon Kurtz (BHC), and Harry Whitin (BHC BoD). Photo submitted



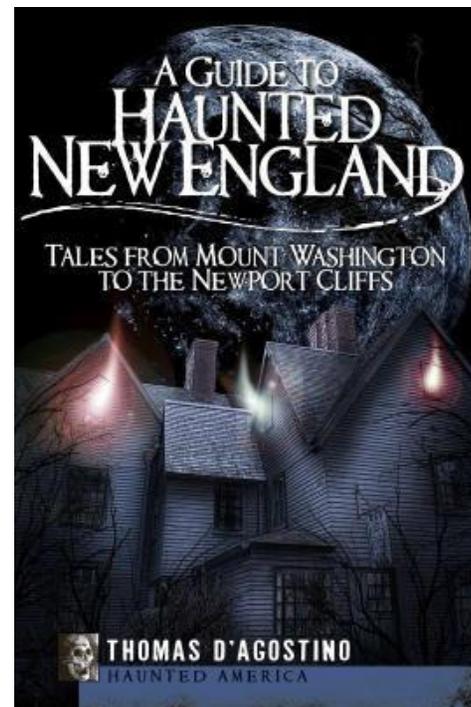
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Webster's Lake Street Construction and Other Town Projects

BY JANET STOICA

It began many months ago and feels like it won't ever be finished for many more months to come. The never-ending construction, reconstruction, and rebuilding of one of the main travel arteries in town seems like Webster's own version of Boston's Big Dig. The utility company opens up deep road canyons to install new gas piping, neatly covers the ravine up, and asphalts over it. Two weeks later, the same area is excavated again and recovered.

The road has been scarred, beaten, and rolled over by backhoes, heavy dump trucks, trailers, and thousands of passenger vehicles in the never-ending saga of placement of new water and utility piping. Poor Mother Earth! All this for the convenience of us who need water, sewer, and utilities! As one of the main thoroughfares for the municipality, townies cannot help but use the maligned street even though it's a ride on the worst roadway they've ever experienced. Your teeth jangle, your vehicle's contents shake, rattle, and roll, and expletives galore escape your lips as you navigate the feisty and

ugly tarmac of bumps, lumps, and dips. We should consider ourselves "lucky" to be allowed to use the street after its daily divoting and during its beauty treatment.

Its reconstruction has been a necessary evil. According to Webster's Water & Sewer Superintendent, Tom Cutler, the project should be wrapping up soon. "It's a combo-project of replacing old water pipes and gas lines that began in 2021," he said. When Superintendent Cutler joined the town's water and sewer department in July 2021, the project had already begun. According to the town website the project is part of the American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") and will replace 4,300 linear feet of 12- and 16-inch cast iron water piping with new ductile iron pipe from South Main Street to Emerald Avenue including replacement of hydrants, valves, service connections, trench repair, and appurtenant work. The fall should see the project's completion along with road repaving. "We'll have to go through a 90-day settlement of road trenches and then repaving should begin," said Mr. Cutler.

Other town projects include work on the Bigelow Road and

Memorial Beach wells for PFA's (Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substance "PFAs6") including estimated construction costs; water main work on North Main Street; and aeration work at the wastewater treatment plant. "We're being proactive and hope to avoid government mandates. We're in good shape with our PFAs limits as Webster began its action last year," stated Mr. Cutler, "and with rule changes this year, we hope to get PFA funding."

Another consideration that concerns our Superintendent is the residual sludge at our treatment plant. The sludge is transported to a special incinerator in Woonsocket RI but that facility is aging. Many area communities are equally as dependent with that one facility for their sludge so if Woonsocket goes down, we're in trouble, as other similar plants aren't accepting new customers.

Fie to the first jackhammer that touches the new Lake Street roadway once it's had a new and final coat of asphalt. You can hear the groans from here to Boston "Isn't it nice that they've decided to rip open newly-paved Lake Street again?"

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Don't miss this Halloween spectacular that runs Oct. 6-29 Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 4:30- 9 p.m. General admission tickets go on sale Sept. 9. Full online ticker prices are \$35 for an adult and \$17.50 for a youth. Members get reduced prices.

The extravaganza continues this year with new featured acts and returning acts to mesmerize and intrigue. Traveling performers take over the entire landscape with their feats of fire-defying dare. Whisperings of fire throwers, acrobatics, aerial dancers, and dark magicians have been heard about the town. You'll be enraptured by the captivating performances appearing from all corners of the Village.

Clues & Candy is the Village's version of trick-or-treat! Come dressed in costume. This is a fun-filled activity for kids young and old. Collect all the stamps at various locations in the Village to reveal a finished image or travel around and answer all the riddles. At the end, collect a bag full of candy and sweet treats.

Gather around the warm glow of the bonfire and join us for family-friendly, spooky stories around on the Village Common. Our talented narrators will share tales of New England ghosts, haunted houses not too far away, and gruesome legends from the past.

Learn about funeral traditions in the 1830s. Attend a wake, see coffin making in the Cabinetmaking shop, study examples of mourning jewelry and artwork being made from hair. Learn about the history of jack o'lanterns, other-worldly spirits, as well as creepy cures

for diseases.

Try stilt walking or create spooky selfie for a spooky selfie contest.

Try a special menu at the Bullard Tavern or the Ox and Yoke Café to sample a spooktacular menu created for Phantoms by Firelight.

On select nights, October 14th, 22nd, and 27th, there will also be a special author book signing with Thomas D'Agostino, one of the region's most well-known writers and investigators of the paranormal.



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Luke Valentino, a Dog with a Big Head

BY AMY LECLAIRE

Every dog I've owned has captured my heart in a different way. Duke was my humble German Shepherd, unaware of his majestic size, a dog whose stick happened to be a log that he carried around the yard. Max was my childhood flame, the hippie mongrel whose life was taken by the last car he would chase. Lincoln was my bestie, king of this very column, and victor of all things ball related. What about Luke Valentino?

Gosh how I love that meatball. His boxy head, gentle face, and inquisitive mind have had me at hello. His head (though a pedigree perk) has caused grand speculation. "Your dog has a blockhead!" They stalk him on the streets. "I've never seen a bigger block head than his!" They comment at cafes. "That is the blockiest head I've ever seen." Luke glances up at me while the irony settles between us. Luke Valentino is no blockhead. I say this with all due respect to



Clockwise from above: Luke and Rosie play hard, Luke and Rosie pose for the camera, Luke nibbles on a slice of watermelon.



the blockhead dogs out there (I've owned a few). Some dogs just don't listen, understand, or care to comply. They are the dogs who dash for the woods when you call them back. They are blockheads.

Luke, a non-blocky, is highly responsive, intelligent, and very capable when it comes to learning commands. He also knows how to do laundry, load the dishwasher, and dig holes for my flowers. Recently, he surprised me with even more knowledge—proper eating etiquette.

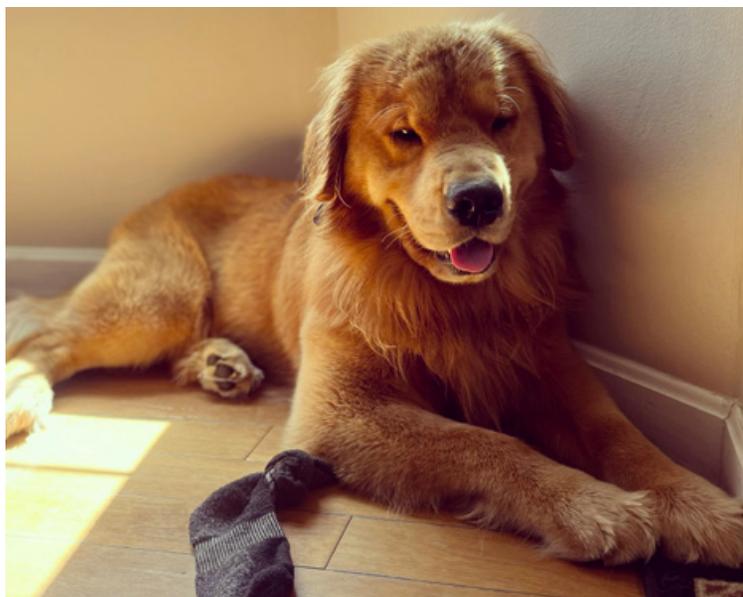
"Luke, do you want to try a piece?" He learned how to eat watermelon like a human! He sat, begged, and watched me eat with the attention of an overachiever. His nose moistened. His paw rose slowly from the ground, a trade-off. His eyes held the taste of desire while he watched the watermelon wedge move closer to his mouth. "Go easy, Luke." He nibbled off the top, chewed, then repeated, just the way he saw me do it. "Good boy!" I imagined him wiping the corners of his mouth with a cloth napkin.

His eating manners have followed him to the front steps, where he sits patiently and watches how the rest of the world works. He knows the rules. He needs to STAY,

even when tempted to GO. I've watched him lift his big head to the fascinating sights on the road. Dogs on leashes and children on scooters fill his gaze. His heart swells with longing. "There goes Oscar, my little dachshund buddy." Every temptation draws him one thought closer to making the right choice. It's not easy for a playful pup to stay put. His pumpkin squash of a head creases. A group of young boys begin a game of Race at the Stop sign down the hill from the front steps. "One, two,

three." He listens while they count and smiles. He seems to understand the sequence of numbers. Finally, off they go until out of sight. His smile closes while he concentrates on their disappearance, a sudden wolf in deep thought. "I bet I'm faster than them. The chubby one doesn't stand a chance." Sometimes the dichotomy between what Luke is supposed to do (STAY) and what he wants to do (GO) is just too great.

"Hi Rosie. I'm supposed to stay on my front step now." He watches his favorite Doodle stroll along the sidewalk with her Dog Mom. Typically, he sleeps late and doesn't get to see the early risers. This morning is special. Rosie's playful spirit matches Luke's exuberance. She's sprightly and spunky, known to bounce across into my yard for a sudden playdate. "Hi Luke. I need



Luke Valentino, 18 months

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

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

LUKE
continued on page 9

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BY MARK MARZEOTTI

The reality is, not all agents operate the same way. To truly make a powerful and confident decision as you buy or sell a home, you need a

real expert who uses their knowledge of what's really happening with home prices, housing supply, industry projections, and more to give you the best possible advice. Someone who can provide clarity and trust like that is essential to your success.

Housing market headlines are everywhere. Many are quite sensational, ending with exclamation points or predicting doom and gloom for the industry. Unfortunately, when information in the media isn't clear, it can generate a lot of fear and uncertainty for consumers. In the absence of trustworthy, up-to-date information, real estate decisions can be driven by fear, uncertainty, and doubt.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Buying a home is a big decision, and it should be one you feel confident making. You can lean on an expert to help you separate fact from fiction and get the answers

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The right agent can assist you in figuring out what's going on at the national level and in your local area. They can qualify headlines using data you can trust. Experts have in-depth knowledge of the industry and can provide facts, so you know how current trends compare to the normal ebbs and flows in the housing market, historical data, and more.

Then, to make sure you have the full picture, an expert can tell you if your local area is following the national trend or if they're seeing something different in your market. Together, you can use all that information to make the best possible decision.

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advice and trusted information about the housing market, reach out to The Marzeotti Group or

a trusted real estate professional today.

LUKE
continued from page 8

to walk today." This morning is different. Rosie needs to pick up the pace and get back home. She cranes her neck back to tell Luke. Still, he remains unconvinced. "Stay a few minutes?" He moves to the middle of the lawn to give her a closer look at his big, handsome head. He stares and smiles, in hopes that she'll reciprocate his advance.

"I have to go now, Luke." Her Dog Mom tugs her forward until she passes by our house. Her pace is a shuffle at best. She's unable to resist Luke's glance. "I-have-to-go-for-a-walk-Luke." Her footsteps continue to stutter. Luke picks up on the cue. "She wants to play just as much as I do. I can feel it."

Suddenly, he breaks the STAY rule. He turns into a blockhead. "ROSIEEEEEEE!!!!" He arrives within seconds at her shoulder and noses her side. "Freedom!" Within seconds the two friends are a tangle of play in my yard. Dog Moms have been had. I should be redirecting my dog to his spot on the step and exerting a dose

of tough love. Instead, I consider the full evidence of his behavior. He stayed on the step while racers sprinted up the road. He learned how to eat watermelon.

Two out of three isn't bad, especially for a dog with a big head.



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What does it cost not to have life insurance?

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It's probably not on your calendar, but September is Life Insurance Awareness Month. And that means it's a good time to become more aware of the benefits of having life insurance — and the dangers of not having it.

Unfortunately, confusion about some of the basic elements of owning life insurance may be keeping people from getting the protection they need. More than half of uninsured



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

Americans say they have put off purchasing coverage because they don't know what to buy or how much they need, according to Life Happens and LIMRA, two nonprofit organizations that provide research and education about life insurance.

Yet, while this confusion may be understandable, a delay in acquiring appropriate insurance can be costly in more ways than

one. From a strict dollars-and-cents perspective, it's generally much more affordable to buy life insurance when you're younger. But there are potentially much greater costs involved in not having insurance when it's needed — and these costs are personal.

To be specific, what is it worth ...
... to know your family could stay in your home if something happened to you?

... to know your children could continue their education plans?

... to know your debts could be paid without burdening your family?

Clearly, if you were to assign these benefits a "price tag," it would be pretty high.

And that's the value of owning sufficient life insurance.

So, let's return to the issue of people putting off buying insurance because they don't know how much they need, or what type they should have:

How much is enough? You might hear that you need life insurance equal to about seven to 10 times your pretax annual salary. That's not a bad "ballpark" figure, but not everyone is playing in the same ballpark. To get a true sense of how much of a death benefit you require from your life insurance, you'll need to consider a variety of factors, possibly including your current income, spouse's income, the size of your mortgage (in addition to other liabilities), number of children, educational expenses and final expenses for funeral arrangements.

What type? You can essentially choose between two basic types of life insurance: term and permanent. As its name suggests, term insurance is designed to provide coverage for a designated period, such as 10 or 20 years. Generally speaking, term insur-

ance is quite affordable for most people, especially when they buy policies as young adults. On the other hand, permanent insurance, such as whole life or universal life, is usually considerably more expensive than term insurance. This is because permanent insurance premiums, in addition to providing a death benefit, help build cash value, which you can typically access through loans or withdrawals, giving you additional flexibility should your financial needs change over time. In choosing between term and permanent insurance, you'll want to evaluate several issues, such as how long you think you'll need coverage and how much you can afford to pay in premiums.

Finding out about the benefits, costs and types of life insurance can help you make informed choices to help protect your family for years to come — so don't delay learning what you need to know.

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

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Coolant, transmission fluid change schedules

Q. This is not really a car question but would like your thoughts. I noticed many new cars on the road have LED lights. Some of the more expensive SUV's have small lights. Another nickel and dime project moving



BY JOHN PAUL

away from big red stop lights. My question is why manufacturers do not make amber turn signal lights standard equipment on all vehicles.

Years ago, we had it, but we moved away

from this. Safety-wise, it is much easier to see and certainly brighter than red turning lights. What is your opinion on this issue?

A. Rear lighting and all-automotive lighting need to pass DOT rules (usually Society of Automotive Engineer's suggestions) The smaller LED lights are quicker responding and I am guessing based on rule making meet the rules for brightness. Amber to me makes sense because of the sharper contrast between the red brake and running lights. Realistically the LEDs can probably be adapted to turn amber or red depending on what turns them on. It is interesting that the same car in Europe will have amber turn signals and red brake lights, but yet here that car may have just a red lens, perhaps cost saving or aesthetics?

Q. When should I change the coolant and transmission fluid on my 2016 Mazda 6? I tried getting info from my manual and found it difficult to understand and the dealer just told me it should be done. I just want to see it in writing before I spend the money.

A. According to the database I use, which gets its information from the vehicle manufacturer, the coolant should be changed at 120,000 miles. The

transmission fluid is considered a "lifetime fill." Now this can change if there are leaks, or heavy-duty use, such as towing a trailer or using your car as an Uber or Lyft vehicle. For average drivers, the Mazda is a low maintenance vehicle, and the levels should be checked periodically there is not



much to worry about.

Q. I have been reading your column for quite some time, and I enjoy it. I am curious however, that you consistently prefer the RAV4 or Rogue over the Forester, yet Consumer Reports has voted it the best small SUV for the last ten years. I bought a used 2020 and am very happy with it, other than at highway speeds, it is noisy inside. Could you give me some insight as to your preferences?

A. I prefer the Toyota RAV4 for reliability, comfort, and the availability of hybrid option. The Nissan Rogue is a vehicle that I have never been a big fan of, although for 2023 Nissan seems to have gotten many things right. Previous models had transmission issues as well as some premature rusting. Lately Subaru vehicles have been quite good I can easily

recommend the Forester due to its active safety equipment, superior performance in the snow and overall engine reliability. Previous Subaru models from 2010 to 2014 or so had engine problems, 2015 to 2018 or so had some electrical issues (dead batteries after only a day or two of sitting, early models

would rust out. Today Subaru and especially the Forester are nicely appointed vehicles, solid engines, and good on-road performance. Would I buy a Subaru-yes.

Q. I was listening to your radio program, and you mentioned that the Kia EV you were driving did not come with a charging cable, why? And what did you do?

A. Apparently Kia wants journalists to experience public charging and rather than Level I charging at home. Public Level II charging is pretty good, and Level II is still the best option for home charging but still

only adds about 20-30 or so miles of range in an hour. Using an Electrify America's 350KW charging station I was able to charge the battery from 10 percent up to 92 percent in 20 minutes at a cost of less than \$10. Since then, I now have a Juice Booster-2 <https://juice.world/en/product/juice-booster-2/>. This is a complete kit that plugs into everything from a 15-amp 120-volt outlet to a 240-volt outlet. I have been using a NEMA 5-20 adapter, which plugs into a 20 amp 120-volt outlet. From my limited testing the Juice Booster 2 does an excellent job on overnight charging with both a fully battery electric vehicle and plug in hybrid.

Q. I have 2020 Toyota Camry hybrid (now with 53,000 miles) which I purchased as a certified preowned car. This may be the best car I have owned with

one exception, the front brakes squeak. I returned to the dealer, and they checked everything and said the brakes looked fine. Any ideas how to get rid of the noise?

A. Toyota did come out with a fix, although a bit pricey. The fix requires replacement of the calipers with an updated design, new caliper mounting hardware and updated pad and shim kit. If you can live with the noise, perhaps wait until the brakes need replacement.

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](https://www.facebook.com/mrjohnfpaul).

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Where are the Remains of Rhode Island's First Settler? Part 2

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

When last we heard of the whereabouts of the Rev. Blackstone's remains, they were interred in the vast works of the Ann & Hope Mill. Did they stay there? Read on to find out. (Missed Part 1? Visit theyankeeexpress.com)

According to Amelia Daggert Sheffield who had taken her father's accounts and edited them for the book "A Sketch of the History of Attleborough from its Settlement to the Division," the box was to be buried under the building and the monument erected in his name. A very old postcard of the mill shows the monument beside one of the mill walls.

The monument as described by Mrs. Sheffield stood a few yards from the original grave which was now covered by the Ann & Hope mill. In her own words from the aforementioned book:

"It is of granite about twelve

feet high,-the base five or six feet square and the shaft a foot or more smaller, tapering slightly. It is within the enclosed grounds of the mill, surrounded by the vivid green of a beautiful lawn, being the only object on it."

The front has a cross on it, naming it as the Rev. Blackstone's burial place, as well as the claim that he was a founder of Boston and the first white settler of Rhode Island. The monument's other three sides boast the rest of his lifetime achievements, the date of his settlement in Rhode Island (a year before his friend Roger Williams) and date of his death. All in all, pretty typical of an honorary monument. As for his bones, a certain G.W. Pratt was entrusted to hold onto the wooden box which had been sealed with lead and metal bands until the mill was completed and the monument erected.

For many years the remains of Preacher Blackstone rested with his monument in the industrial clamor of whirring engines and

spindles. The "Spirit of the Gentle Sage" was most definitely out of his environment in this eternal habitat. His mortal coil was untouched from 1889 to the 1940's when the textile industry began a southward migration in search of cheaper labor. Ann & Hope's majestic walls soon held but memories and ghosts of the American Industrial Revolution. As for the monument, the grass grew wild and the stone fell into neglect.

This was short lived, however. World War II gave new life to the mill as a repair depot for armory of the Navy. Now the monument had a new dilemma. The hustle and bustle of trains loading and unloading threatened its existence. The First Presbyterian Church of Cumberland then entered in agreement to move the monument to a piece of their land for further preservation. The Navy agreed and in 1944 William Blackstone's monument was moved to its present location on Broad and Cumberland Streets which overlooks the rear of the great mill.

Were his remains moved with the monument? It was then unclear whether they had been dug up and relocated. It was unclear if they had ever been buried under or near the vast stone to begin with. The town of Cumberland now maintains the minute park where the stone graces the small walkway that encompasses it. The obelisk looks slightly out of place sitting on a corner right next to a sidewalk overlooking what is now deemed as America's first discount store.

The elusive bones can be traced up to the 1960's when James Furay, who was Ann & Hope's plant manager in the 40's, was overseeing a digging project to extend utilities to a newly constructed cottage that was to be used as an office. While digging, the backhoe ran into a box. It was sealed in heavy lead and the corners had been soldered tight. Upon opening it the crew found some bone fragments and very old nails. The box had been buried north of one of the north towers that was razed

during renovations to the mill.

The box sat in a store room until the 1960's when Ann & Hope went through another expansion. It was then that Furay's old office and store room were cleaned and room was made for a new structural enclosure. He had intended to give the box to the Rhode Island Historical Society but never got around to it. No one knows what happened to the box. It obviously, according to these accounts, was not reburied under the monument when the obelisk was moved to its present location.

Did the small coffin containing Reverend Blackstone's remains get thrown out when the store was expanding? If so, then it is more than likely our founder is now buried in the State Landfill. Does that sound like a fitting way to bestow our gratitude for the great Reverend who was the first white settler of our state, rode a bull, (that's right. Not a horse, a bull!) and gave Rhode Island it's famous apples?

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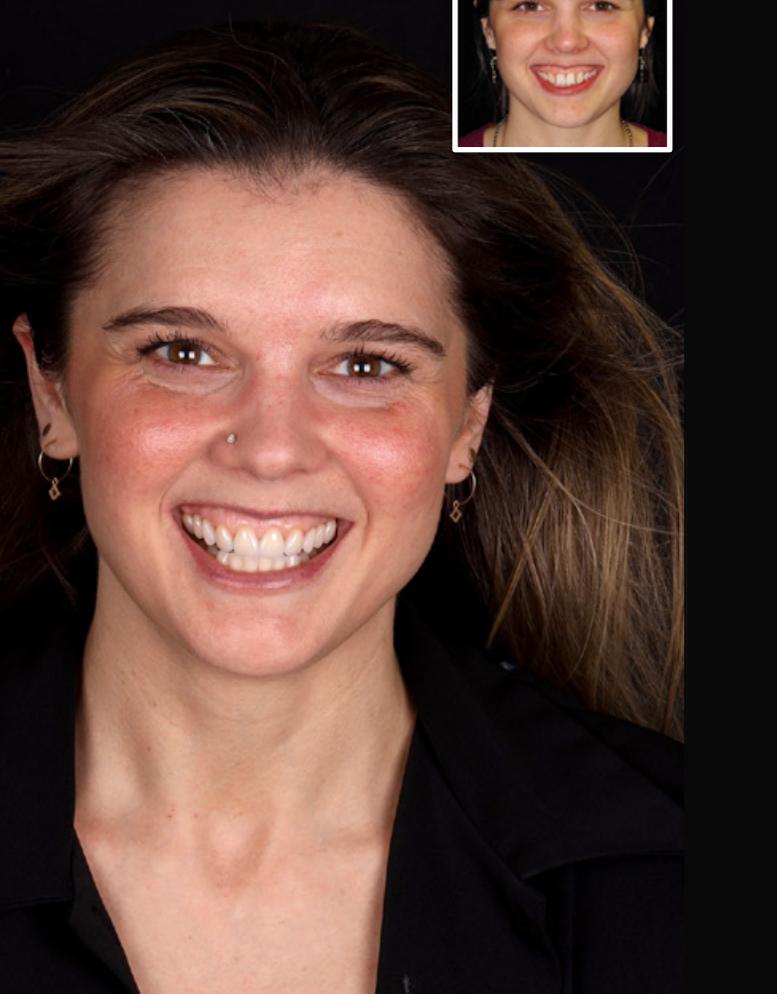
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Local artist to receive 41st ArtsWorcester Award

ArtsWorcester has announced that Lora Brueck, artist, librarian, archivist, and volunteer, will be the recipient of the 41st ArtsWorcester Award. The ArtsWorcester Award is given annually to an individual who has made extraordinary contributions to arts and culture in this city. Its recipient list serves as a history of arts leadership in Worcester.

Lora Brueck's artistic career began with photography over forty years ago, and in 1995, she began to make artist books that integrated her photographs with collage, printing, and sewing with a refined standard of craftsmanship. Throughout her practice, Brueck has collaborated with members of the legendary women's artist group Art XII, the Boston Book Arts Group, the Sunday Photography Group, and F8.

Brueck worked as a librarian at the Gordon Library of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and served as WPI's first official archivist. She opened the library's exhibition spaces to Worcester-area artists, offering them a much-needed space to show their work, while ensuring a vibrant arts presence at an engi-



neering school. She was a graduate of Bartlett Jr. Senior High School.

Unsung, often invisible volunteer effort is the backbone of small arts organizations. At ArtsWorcester, Brueck was an exhibitions committee member and board member for decades, selecting, installing, and hosting exhibitions. As one of the early organizers of stART on the Street, Brueck brought steady calm, financial expertise, governance, and community connections. More recently, she has volunteered for the last five years at the Worcester Historical Museum, digitizing photographs for their special collections.

"Lora is a talented artist and a digital humanities pioneer, and this award recognizes both those qualities," says Juliet Feibel, Executive Director. "But it comes with particular gratitude for the decades of unassuming, effective volunteer labor she has given this city's arts organizations--and the wry wit she brought with it."

The award will be given at ArtsWorcester's Season Kickoff, Wednesday, September 20, at 5 p.m. at the Printers Building, followed by the public reception for *Material Needs 2023*. This event is open to the public; please register in advance through Eventbrite.

Ignite Success and up your game with BVCC

The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce (BVCC) is proud to launch "Ignite Success" a professional development conference from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 12 at the Community Harvest Project Barn, 37 Wheeler Road, North Grafton. The conference is aimed at professionals in business and non-profits who want to improve their emotional intelligence and learn how to interact with co-workers, customers, sponsors and donors more effectively. Through the power of storytelling, attendees will learn how to hone their decision-making skills and their chances of success in business.

"Whether you are in sales communicating with your customer, a non-profit trying to reach potential donors, or an entrepreneur becoming proficient in story telling is a provocative way to reach your target audience," said Jeannie Herbert, BVCC president and CEO.

Participants will be walked through a framework of storytelling as is used in PBS' "Stories from the Stage," by Cheryl Hamilton, the show's producer and founder of Stellar Story Company.

Cheryl points out, "Each day we write a story when we decide what to

focus on, what we rehash and what we worry about."

Ignite Success: A Professional Development Conference will give you the tools to help drive how you interact with co-workers, form decision-making and ultimately attain success. Facilitators joining Cheryl include Lynn Whitney-Turner, Business Coach and Owner of CoreXP Business Solutions, Andrew Shellfo, Professional Story Teller and Coach, and Elizabeth Solomon, Certified Coleman Emotional Intelligence Coach. While some of the participants are preparing their "Story Slam", they will be joined by a professional panel including John Penrose, CEO Leading Indicator Systems, Inc., Inventor of AgileBrain, Peter Stanton, Publisher Worcester Business Journal, (the media sponsor) and Moe Belliveau, Executive Director of the Greater East Hampton Chamber of Commerce and whose Ignite conference we are modeled from. They will be discussing "Why Our Story connections Matter".

Register at www.blackstonevalley.org/events. Conference includes presenter materials, continental breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks. Members 200.00, future members 275.00. Group discounts available.



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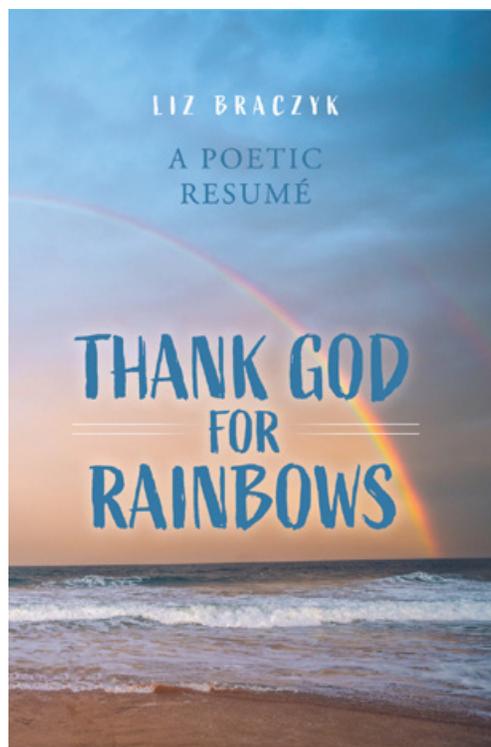


Local author publishes book of poetry

Thank God for Rainbows” is a series of poems written by a woman who was once a submissive, very sensitive child whose potential was never reached because of childhood trauma and inappropriate marriages. It is a plea

About the Author

From author Liz Braczyk: “I am an unwilling loner, although I was married twice. I had three goals as a teenager: to be a good student, then a good teacher, then a good wife. The “good student” I achieved, graduating from college summa cum laude. My teaching career lasted three months. (Junior high students were too difficult for me to control!) But I still consider myself an amateur teacher. My primary goal was to be a good wife. Alas, not having found myself and labeled mentally ill, I could not love another “until death do us part”. I divorced my second husband in 1995, but I stood by him as a friend, providing daily care to him from 2016-2020, when he entered a nursing home. During the years 2020-2023, I found freedom to be my true self, with the help of meditation,



to parents, partners, and employers everywhere to be more compassionate, openly loving, and better listeners.

For years, the author contemplated suicide, but saw glimpses of hope (rainbows) around the corner. Her current rainbow is a newly found conviction that there is a special kind of life and love after death.

the arts, and my beloved cat Lucy, always a rainbow of love and optimism. Now age 72, I am facing end stage renal failure (as a result of psychiatric medication) and PTSD with God’s help.”

Thank God for Rainbows is a 66-page paperback with a retail price of \$13.00 (eBook \$8.00). The ISBN is 979-8-88925-326-6. It was published by RoseDog Books of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Webster Police’s National Night Out a winner

BY JANET STOICA

Tuesday, August 22, proved to be a resounding success for Webster’s Police Department’s annual National Night Out event held at the town’s Memorial Beach. “This year was the best ever,” said Police Chief Michael Shaw, “we had over 500 attendees for our event and local donors played a large role in our successful event. From food to recreational activities to vendor displays, it all proved to be a great success.”

National Night Out began in 1984 to promote neighborhood and police friendship with average citizens. A great way for all to get to know each other on a more personal level. A better way for our youngsters and parents to get to know local law enforcement and what each other’s outlooks and expectations are. A national night out against crime.

“Well before I was chief here,” said Chief Shaw, “our Webster event was held at North Village but currently our event is held at Memorial Beach. In 2012, we branched out to include our police, fire, and EMS personnel along with local businesses and other corporate sponsors. It’s really grown in the last few years. We’ve tried to cast a wide net to include as many organizations as possible. A.J. Alkire, owner of Point Breeze Restaurant, as always, provided the hamburgers and hot dogs we grilled up for our attendees, Aaron and Carmela Peek of Dudley’s Ice Cream Pharm provided ice cream, and the Fraternal Order of Police provided the inflatable slides and

bounce houses. We were never charged for any of these valuable products and services. This year, though, I wanted to include our local small businesses so they could show what they were all about. It

dance. Organizations weren’t there to sell their products, we wanted them to show our community what they offer. This event has become one of our most popular events and it keeps getting better and



was a great success.”

The original date of August 2 was rained out and the next date chosen of August 9 suffered the same fate. August 22 finally worked out and the success was obvious to all who participated. Webster’s Emergency Medical Services organization donated school supplies for the kids, the Fire Department gave rides on their well-maintained and impressive fire apparatus, and all the volunteers handled everything like the reliable and very dependable group they are.

“Our volunteers were great,” said the Chief, “everyone knew what they had to do. We served up over 500 hot dogs and hamburgers. EMS gave out over 275 kits of school supplies, ice cream ran out at 300 servings, and the Webster Public School’s Food Lunch Department gave out samples of the new school lunch menus. Music was provided by Doc Siddall from our local radio station, WGFP The Lake 940, we had representatives from the Worcester County Sheriff’s office, MADD, the Girl Scouts, Worcester Community Action Council, and so many other great vendors as well as Worcester County District Attorney Joseph Early, Jr. and his daughter in atten-

bigger every year. It’s great to see our police, fire, EMS, and others make connections with our community members to show them the services they provide. We certainly couldn’t do this without our officers’ and their families’ help. It was a long day but filled with great community participation, spirit, and lots of fun for everyone involved.”

“What a great partnership and even greater symbol of the goodness and pride of all our volunteers and donors. It brings out the best in our employees and shows the true kindness and integrity of all the people in Webster. I just can’t thank the Webster Police Department, Fire Department, and EMS organization, their families, and donors of foods and services enough. We just couldn’t ever do this without them.”

If you or your company, organization, or group would like to participate and offer ideas for next year’s big event, Chief Shaw would like to hear from you. Contact him at (508) 949-3823 or ShawM@websterpolice.com.

Contact Janet: jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com



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QCC awards \$1.2 million under MassReconnect

Quinsigamond Community College has awarded 410 students a total of \$1.2 million to cover tuition, fees and books under Massachusetts's new MassReconnect program that makes community college free for eligible Massachusetts residents aged 25 and older. QCC's financial aid and admissions department worked rapidly to secure funding for the first group of students who will receive MassReconnect funding for the fall 2023 semester. QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja joined Governor Healey earlier today for the official announcement of the program.

"Governor Healey's MassReconnect initiative will be life-changing for so many residents in the Commonwealth who, until now, have not had the financial means to attain or complete a college education," said Dr. Pedraja. "At QCC, we anticipate MassReconnect to have a major impact on the communities we serve. This initiative will support thousands of Massachusetts residents to achieve their education and occupational goals, while increasing the economic health

and prosperity of the Commonwealth. I want to personally thank Governor Healey and the Massachusetts legislature for supporting a program that will change the trajectory of the lives of so many people."

Governor Healey invested \$20 million in MassReconnect for the first year of implementation in her first budget that she signed earlier this month. This funding covers the full cost of tuition and fees and includes an allowance for books and supplies at each of Massachusetts' 15 community colleges. Additionally, each community college will also receive \$100,000 from this funding to support student and community program awareness, staffing, and program administration.

"MassReconnect will be transformative for thousands of students, for our amazing community colleges, and for our economy," said Governor Healey. "It will bolster the role of community colleges as economic drivers in our state and help us better meet the needs of businesses to find qualified, well-trained workers. We can also make progress

in breaking cycles of intergenerational poverty by helping residents complete their higher education credentials so they can attain good jobs and build a career path. Our administration is grateful for the partnership of the Legislature to move forward on this critical program that will make our state more affordable, competitive and equitable."

Funding from MassReconnect is still available for the fall semester. In order to qualify for MassReconnect, students must be 25 or older on the first day of their classes and be a permanent Massachusetts resident for at least one year at the start of the enrolled term. The program is limited to residents who have not previously earned a college degree (associates or bachelor's) who enroll in at least six credits per semester in an approved program of study leading to an associate degree or certificate at a community college.

To learn more, visit QCC.edu/Massreconnect

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Free community college for hundreds under state's MassReconnect program

Quinsigamond Community College is poised to award free college tuition, fees and an allowance for books and supplies to hundreds of new and returning students for the Fall 2023 semester under the state's new MassReconnect program that makes community college free for eligible Massachusetts residents aged 25 and older.

Governor Healy recently signed the Fiscal Year 2024 \$56 billion budget, with \$20 million allocated to the state's 15 community colleges for the MassReconnect program as an effort to improve access to higher education. According to the state, there are 1.8 million Massachusetts residents with a high school diploma or equivalency but no degree and close to 700,000 Massachusetts residents who have some college credit but no degree.



"The MassReconnect program is a giant step forward in our quest for equity in higher education. By offering equitable opportunities and resources for our students, many of whom are juggling one or more jobs and caring for their families, we are bettering our entire community," said QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D.

"Obtaining a higher education is a way for people to advance a career, change careers and make a better life for themselves and their families. MassReconnect is going to be a gamechanger for so many."

"While QCC is prepared to include over 400 currently enrolled students in this no-cost college program pending their applications for financial aid, QCC is expecting many more eligible students to apply for the fall semester," said Michelle Tufau, vice president for Strategic Enrollment and Student Engagement.

Individuals aged 25 and older qualify for the program if they have not previously earned an associate or bachelor's degree and have been a legal permanent resident of Massachusetts for one year as of the start of classes. Students must complete the 23-24 Free Applica-

tion for Student Aid (FAFSA) and enroll in at least six credits per semester in an approved program of study leading to an associate degree or certificate. To learn more, visit QCC.edu/Massreconnect, or visit one of the information sessions QCC is hosting during its Super Saturday event on Saturday, August 26, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Sessions will run 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. (Spanish presentation), or 12:00 p.m.

Who will be eligible?

Eligible students must:

Be 25 or older on the first day of classes (September 6 for Fall 2023)

Have been a permanent legal resident of the Commonwealth for at least one year at start of the enrolled term

Have not previously received an associate or bachelor's degree, or the equivalent

Enroll in at least six credits per semester in an approved program of study leading to an associate degree or certificate

Maintain satisfactory academic progress according to the college's satisfactory academic record policy.

Complete the 2023-2024 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The College will use information you have provided during the enrollment process and other available data to determine your eligibility before making an award. If you are later determined to be ineligible for the MassReconnect Program, you may owe a balance to the College and/or be required to pay back funds received.

Worried you don't qualify for MassReconnect? Don't worry! There are many other federal, state, and institutional financial aid programs available to help students with the cost of their education. Complete the 2023-2024 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be considered.



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Stalking the Doctors of the Full Moon

In 1834, the American Industrial Revolution was evolving and growing at a frenetic pace along the Blackstone River in 1834, with dozens of textile mills fueling the new industrial economy.

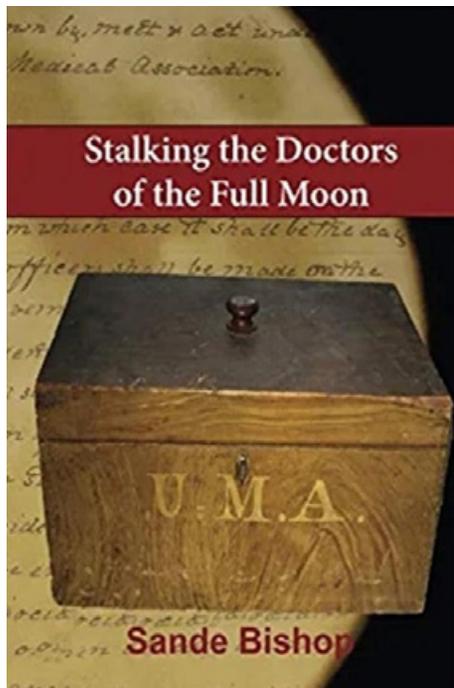
Medical practices, however, had yet to advance into a scientific era. Medical knowledge remained basically unchanged during the first half of the 19th century.

In the Blackstone Valley, a small group of well-educated and respected doctors formed the Union Medical Association to share their knowledge and document their cases. The group met monthly in Mendon on the Monday following the full moon, and each member was compelled to prepare a report.

The medicine the doctors practiced was based on the Hippocratic humoral system, that the body fluids blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile, when out balance, caused illnesses. Treatment generally involved bleeding and purging. Nothing was

known yet about infections and contagion.

More than 400 of the Association's medical reports, dating from



1834 to 1845, were stored in a small wooden box and found in a corner of the Worcester District Medical Society.

Medical historian Sande Bishop compiled and analyzed the papers for her book, *Stalking the Doctors of the Full Moon*, a fascinating look at the practice of medicine before the scientific era.

Ms. Bishop and curator of the Worcester District Medical Society Dr. Dale Magee will discuss the book at a special presentation at the Samuel Slater Experience museum, 31 Ray Street, Webster, on Sunday, September 10, at 2 p.m. The event is free, but registration is requested. To register, go to the museum website www.samuel Slater Experience.org or Eventbrite.com.

About Samuel Slater Experience

Samuel Slater Experience opened last year to tell the story of Samuel Slater, the beginnings of the American Industrial Revolution, and Slater's impact on mill towns such as Webster Massachusetts. The museum employs state-of-the-art digital technology with immersive video and interactive exhibits to recreate two time periods: the early 1800s and the early 1900s. For more information and tickets, visit

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SPORTS

Heidi Jarosz field hockey novice to All Star

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Shepherd Hill Regional High School's Heidi Jarosz is a stud three-sport athlete that provides an athletic presence and dominance on the fields according to Athletic Director James Scanlon. The Shepherd Hill senior participates in softball, basketball, and field hockey and although softball is her go to sport, she loves taking part in field hockey for the fun of the sport.

"I've been playing basketball and softball for a while but didn't get into field hockey until my freshman year in high school," Jarosz said. "My mom, aunt and older sister all played and having watched and played with my sister I thought that I'd give it a try. I was looking for something to do for fun and field hockey seemed to fit right in."

The senior center-midfielder enjoys the teamwork that's involved with the field hockey team as well as the skills that come with the sport, something that leaves room for improvement. Although she is not one to say she is perfect her coaches think



she is pretty close to it.

"She is one of those individuals that every coach wants on their team; she is very coachable and reliable," ex-Shepherd Hill Field Hockey Coach Vanessa Kent said. "She is always looking to do good and is continuously asking how she can improve her game."

This year's coach, Kate Dunn,

noted that she only had contact with Jarosz during her freshman campaign, but noted that she dominated when on the field and her ability was only going to get better through the years.

Taking on field hockey her freshman year saw its troubles with the pandemic, but the first-year athlete decided to use it to her advantage.

"My freshman year was difficult as it was the Covid Year; we were wearing masks and honestly I basically knew nothing about the sport," she said. "It was definitely a slow process, so I just sat back and watched the upper classmen while I learned."

In addition to watching her teammates and absorbing everything that she could about the actual game, Jarosz was also working on making her stick skills better. The now senior noted that she was not very good back then and watched a lot of videos while watching the older girls until she had them down.

"It was a lot of work, and I probably didn't put everything together until last year," Jarosz said. "Coach Ken was a big help in teaching me a lot and getting me to where I am today."

As a freshman, who didn't see all that much action her first season Coach Kent did see a spark when she did take to the field. According to the ex-Ram Coach, Jarosz originally played forward, but being one of the team's strongest individuals that possessed a pure athletic ability she decided to move her to center-mid where she flourished

and controlled the play across the field.

"You could see her confidence growing over the years and played every single game over her sophomore and junior years for us," Kent said.

Although named to the All-Star squad last fall, Jarosz and her teammates have never ventured into the post-season, something that she would like to accomplish but doesn't see it in the cards for this season.

"We've seen our share of tough seasons (record-wise)," she said. "I don't think that the field hockey team is as good as the basketball or softball teams is because there is not a lot of people involved with playing. We only have one or two club players, while basketball and softball there are many, a lot of the girls play field hockey for fun."

Having a new coach this fall as well as the returners and some girls moving up from the eighth grade the team should be better, but Jarosz sees it as a bridge year.

"I definitely think that it is

JAROSZ

continued on page 19

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SPORTS

Brian Pidgeon Feels Obligated To Ride PMC

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Originally from Pennsylvania, Brian Pidgeon had heard all the stories of the Pan Mass Challenge prior to moving to Uxbridge for his job in 2018. Pidgeon had heard of the PMC, the largest fundraising event in the country that involved riders and volunteers from 43 states and 12 countries all striving for the same goal – to rid cancer from our lives.

Upon relocating to Massachusetts Pidgeon met Joe Baker, who worked for Durand GMC in Leominster. Baker talked up the PMC and before he knew it Pidgeon agreed to ride in the August event.

“We had been talking and I told him about my bike riding, and he suggested I join him riding the PMC,” the now Uxbridge resident said. “Joe said that it was called a challenge for a reason but gave me ideas on how to train for the event as well as raising the money for the 186-mile ride. I took his word for it and in 2019 I did my first ride (Sturbridge to Provincetown).”

Prior to his first PMC ride the most that Pidgeon had ever ridden in one shot was about 25 miles, so he sought out and used every possible PMC resource tool that he could to prepare himself for his inaugural ride. Soon after he found himself committing to longer rides

on the weekends preparing for the miles he would log over two days the first weekend of August.

“I found myself just riding around Uxbridge at first, but eventually was going through Whitinsville, Millville and into Rhode Island,” he said. “I would head down to the Cape and do even longer rides in the 90-degree weather to prepare myself. Once I competed that first ride, it showed me that I could do this with whatever was thrown at me during the ride.”

One of the reasons that Pidgeon seemed to jump at the chance of riding the PMC was he himself was a cancer survivor. In 2015 Pidgeon was diagnosed with renal cell carcinoma. With all the care and treatment that he had received he felt a tremendous obligation to join the fight by helping to raise money for Dana Farber.

“Not only was I really inspired by the individuals who rode the 186-mile journey to Provincetown, I felt extremely lucky to have gotten through my cancer,” Pidgeon said. “And now as a Living Proof Rider, I felt that it was something that I could do to give back.”

According to Pidgeon, during

a routine blood test his doctor decided to do an ultra sound where the technician found a golf ball sized tumor in one of his kidneys.

hour surgery with no chemotherapy or radiation and have been cancer-free since. I have a sense of obligation to ride in the PMC.”

Riding in his first PMC five years ago Pidgeon came away with an unbelievable feeling on the experience. He was immediately hooked on the orientation that they had for the first-time riders and when Billy Starr described the ride with all the people lining the streets thanking the riders, Pidgeon was blown away.

“Seeing so many riders all there for the same cause was unbelievable,” Pidgeon said. “Everyone was great and once I realized that I could raise the money and do the ride I was looking forward to doing it again, I really had a lot of fun.”

Pidgeon went on to say that the energy of

all the other riders around him was inspiring, but the water stops were a giant party with the people cheering them on. He noted that when he completed the first day in which he did about 110 miles, although he was tired and hungry his body

handled things nicely and it didn't feel like he had been riding such a long distance.

The original thought of raising the required minimum amount of money for his two-day trek was definitely nerve wracking, but Pidgeon hit his goal with about one week before the event. Nowadays, he finds it much easier to get those donations.

“I was nervous that first year, but I've built a following and if I haven't reached out by a certain date, they're contacting me about making a donation,” he said.

Now riding in his fifth PMC, Pidgeon feels that every passing year he hears of someone that he knows who happens to be going through some type of cancer issue, so he firmly believes that he needs to get on his bike every August to help raise money for the Dana Farber Cancer Institute to help people, like they had helped him.

“I definitely know that as long as my knees hold up then I'll continue to ride the PMC each and every year,” Pidgeon said. “I have no plans on stopping anytime soon.”

Over the past years Pidgeon adorns himself with his official PMC shirt on day one of the event but likes to put a spin on things during day two and have some fun with his riding outfit. This year on his ride from Bourne to Provincetown he dressed as Big Bird.



Pidgeon had no symptoms or issues at the time and the finding of the tumor was clearly by accident.

“That is one of the biggest reasons that I ride, to be able to do something for others as so many people suffer,” he said. “I had a four

JAROSZ

continued from page 18

going to be a rebuilding year, but having a middle school team now will allow the girls coming into the high school to know the game as well as already having been playing it,” Jarosz said. “As a captain I want to continue to contribute to the team in whatever way that I can, while having a fun year. I want this team to play with good sportsmanship no matter how tough the games are.”

Incoming coach Dunn sees Jarosz has a key to the team's success. “As a center mid-fielder, she has

a birds eye view of the field, which will allow her to call thing out; she seems to be three plays ahead of the game,” Dunn said. “I am looking for her to provide a voice on the field; she has an amazing drive as a center-midfielder and will be just as valuable as a scorer.”

Field hockey may be a sport that Jarosz plays just for fun, and the record really doesn't matter, but it would be nice to advance into the state tournament for the first time before she leaves Shepherd Hill behind. However, while that may not be possible, the senior is hoping that she can help the younger girls improve their game in any way that she can.



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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 news@theyankeeexpress.com.

MONDAY, SEPT. 11

The Charlton Garden Club's Monday, Sept. 11, meeting will feature Bruce Hopper, owner of Pure BS speaking on Making Maple Syrup. Charlton Garden Club meetings are open to all interested in gardening and related themes. Whether you're a novice or accomplished gardener, the Charlton Garden Club is a great place to meet other gardening enthusiasts, learn about plants and planting, and to share your gardening tips and experiences. Meetings are held at 7 p.m. at the Charlton Public Library. A \$5 donation is suggested for non-members. If interested in joining the Garden Club, please contact Co-Presidents, Virginia Charette at (508) 248-7300 or Marcia Liedigk at (508) 434-0507.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

A one day Farmers' Market is coming to Oxford. On Saturday, September 16, 2023, from 12:00-4:00pm come down to the Oxford Common on Main Street to join the Town of Oxford for our first Oxford Farmers' Market, which we hope to continue on a regular basis next

year. The market will feature products from local farms and businesses, with a variety of offerings ranging from fresh produce, meat, flowers, and baked goods to handmade products and crafts. This is a result of a joint effort between the Oxford Board of Health and the Oxford Community

Center to provide Oxford residents with access to fresh, locally grown and produced food while also supporting local small businesses. The hope is to promote the local farming industry and to educate our community about agriculture and its value in our daily life while also creating a wholesome social experience to build community.

The Polish American Club will host a New England Seafood Bake on Sept. 16 from 1-4 p.m. They will be serving lobster, steamers, corn, chowder and more. Tickets can be purchased at the Polish Hall, located at 217 Mendon Street, Uxbridge. Cost is \$65 per person. The event will have music by The Salty Sisters. Advanced registration required, tickets will be limited.

Have fun at "An Evening with Elvis" on Sept. 16 at St. Denis Church, 23 Manchaug Road Douglas. Doors open at 5 p.m. The performance starts at 5:30 p.m. \$20 per person includes a light buffet. Beer and wine is available at a cash bar. Two drink limit. Raffle baskets and 50/50 cash raffle. 1950's theme dressing is encouraged. For more information, see StDenisChurch.com.

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.

The American Heritage Museum, 568

HAPPENINGS!
continued on page 21

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Main St., Hudson, presents "World War I/ Early Aviation Weekend," showcasing the original 1917 Nieuport 28—America's first and oldest fighter aircraft, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. www.americanheritagemuseum.org or call 978-562-9182.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

• Webster Natives and co-founders of the Massachusetts Walking Tour Mark Mandeville and Raianne Richards have partnered with The Last Green Valley and Local 4 Life for a very special "Walking Tour" event on the Quinebaug River Rail Trail in Dudley. This event is part of the very popular Walktober - a regional fall collection of walks, paddles, lectures and other events to connect people with the abundant and diverse natural, historical and cultural resources within eastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts. The event will run on Sept. 17 from 1-4 pm with the approximate schedule of gathering and welcome 1 - 1:15 pm; walk 1:15 - 2:15 pm; activities and concert 2:15 - 4 pm. The nature walk will be 2-miles round-trip to "Ken's Bridge" on easy, mostly flat terrain suitable for strollers. Local 4 Life will then lead a hands-on take-home kids activity to craft mason bee hotels (while supplies last). Light refreshments will be offered after the walk with an opportunity to visit with local partners like The Last Green Valley and others. Acoustic music will be performed by acclaimed local artists Mark Mandeville and Raianne Richards, accompanied by members of the Walking Tour band; attendees are welcome to bring a chair or blanket for the concert (can be left in the car or at the gathering space during the walk). Meet at the end of Blue Herron Rd. in Dudley (off New Boston Rd) for all activities; trail kiosk is located near the end of the cul-de-sac. Street parking is available on Blue Herron Rd. and in the surrounding neighborhood. Alternative parking for those who don't mind a longer walk can be found in the small lot off Schofield Ave in Dudley and along the driveway of the Webster Water Treatment Plant in Webster. See www.markandraianne.com for more information. Sponsored by Mark Mandeville & Raianne Richards masswalkingtour.org, Local 4 Life local4life.org, The Last Green Valley thelastgreenvalley.org, and the Town of Dudley dudleyma.gov and The Dudley Cultural Council.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

• Beatrix Potter: The Naturalist and Her World, an illustrated talk by Ellen K. Duzak will take place 1-2:30 p.m. at Dexter Hall, 40 Main Street, Charlton. Registration requested, 508-248-0452. Presented by the Charlton Garden Club Southbridge Garden Club and Charlton Public Library.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

• What role will Medicare play during your retirement? The increasing cost of health-care is a growing concern for current and future retirees. In fact, 30 years ago,

retirees spent almost twice as much on food as on health care; now the amounts are nearly equal. Join us for our presentation, "Health Care and Your Retirement" where we will discuss: Medicare coverage and traditional medical expenses, long-term medical expenses and strategies for discussing out of pocket expenses. The featured speakers are Dennis Antonopoulos (Financial Advisor for Edward Jones) and Lynne Mussulli (Medicare Specialist). Registration is at 5:45 p.m. The seminar begins at 6 p.m. Location: Brookdale Eddy Pond - West, 669 Washington St, Auburn. You and your guest are invited. Please call Karen Rieser at 508-832-5385 or email karieser@edwardjones.com by Sept. 20.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

• Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Women's Success Network at the Community Harvest Project, 34 Wheeler Road, North Grafton. Continental breakfast and networking at 9 a.m. Crop and harvest produce from the gardens, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. The event is in memory of Maria Remillard.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

• The UMass Cancer Walk and Run, celebrating twenty-five years of the community's commitment to cancer research, will take place at Polar Park in Worcester. Go to umasscancerwalk.org or email cancerwalk@umassmed.edu for further details.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Blackstone Valley Workforce Development and Education Foundation will welcome Patrick Tutwiler, PhD, Secretary of Education. 7:30 a.m. registration. Breakfast is served at 8-9:15 a.m. Charles F. Minney VFW Post 3329, 16 South Main Street, Millbury.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

• The Greenway Challenge takes place in the Blackstone Valley and around the region. • Village Congregational Church will hold its 15th Annual Harvest Festival from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. on the Northbridge Town

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Common. Rain date is October 1, 12-4 p.m. • Boy Scout Troop 1122 and Onsite Computer will hold an electronic recycling fundraiser from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. at the VFW Post 1385, 13 Cross Road, Uxbridge. Fees for disposing of electronics range from \$2 - \$30. • Northbridge High School Class of 1978 will hold its 45th Class Reunion from 6-11 p.m. at the Uxbridge Progressive Club, 18 Whitin Street, Uxbridge. Cost is \$35 per person. Venmo @Pamela-Dion-3 or send a check to Liz Brodeur, 8 Taft Street, Uxbridge 01569. RSVP by September 21.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5

• The 7th Annual New England Electrical & Alarm Expo takes place from 1:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Twin River Casino, 100 Twin River Road, Lincoln, Rhode Island. The Exhibitor Show Floor opens at 3:30 p.m. More than 400 manufacturers will be represented. Visit neee.com for further details.

OCTOBER 7 & 8

• The American Heritage Museum, 568 Main St., Hudson, presents "Battle for the Airfield WW II Re-Enactment Weekend," with over 350 re-enactors from branches of the Allied and Axis military participating in encampments and battles, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. both days. www.americanheritagemuseum.org or call 978-562-9182.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14

• Cornhole Tournament with Open Sky City Services at Alternatives' Whitin Mill, 50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville. 12-5 p.m. Food trucks, cash bar, \$500 worth of raffle

prizes. For player of 14 years and up, all abilities.

OCTOBER 9-23

• The Friends of the Simon Fairfield Public Library in Douglas's fourth annual online auction begins. Donations for the event will be accepted through September 14th at 8:00 p.m. Proceeds benefit the library's capital campaign to renovate the building.

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.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

• The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's 45th Annual Meeting & Awards Ceremony will be held at Pleasant Valley Country Club on Armsby Road in Sutton from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. Do you know a business or individual deserving of recognition, or a business that is celebrating a milestone anniversary? Submit your nomination to Liz O'Neil at loneil@blackstonevalley.org

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“Walking About Webster” photo exhibit

For the month of September, Booklovers’ Gourmet of Webster will host a photo exhibit by William “Bil” Gardiner entitled “Walking About Webster”. Bil walked about the town of Webster during the spring and summer of this year, photographing around town looking for the parts that create the whole of the town.

There will be a meet the artist reception on Saturday, September 9th, from 2-4 p.m. Light refreshments will be served and the public is invited to attend.

In addition to viewing the show, a contest will be held to try to guess the location of each of the photographs in the exhibit, which were all taken somewhere in Webster.

The person that accurately guesses the most locations will win one of the featured 12x12 inch photographs of their choice.

Viewing hours of the show are

Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.;
Wednesday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., closed
Sunday and Monday.

Artist’s bio: William “Bil”

type vending machine when he was around 8 years old.

From April 2012-13, he embarked on a year-long personal assignment “A Picture a Day,” carrying his camera with him wherever he went, producing one image every day for a year. Through this body of work, a fellow artist noted that his work in this area resembled the Tibetan concept of Miksang, or “Contemplative Eye.” In this way, his work captures only segments of objects, rather than the whole, inviting the viewer to deeper contemplation.

As a result, the photographer needs to slow down and take their time while “contemplating” how to create their image, and the viewer has to take their time while trying to identify what it is they are looking at.

Gardiner is a portrait photographer and photographic artist from Worcester. Bil has been a photographer for most of his life, getting his first camera from a bubblegum-



The Big E starts Sept. 15

The Big E is an annual event that begins on the second Friday after Labor Day and runs for 17 days. This year Sept. 15 to Oct. 1.

What are these years Special and State Days?

Experience something new every day of the Fair by aligning your schedule with The Big E’s special and state days. Walk through one of the State Buildings and visit its exhibits or watch the Daily Parade, which honors each day in a special way.

Friday, September 15 - Be A Kid For A Day/Military Appreciation Day

Saturday, September 16 - 4-H & FFA Day/Maine Day

Sunday, September 17 - Storrowton Day

Monday, September 18 - Salute to West Springfield

Tuesday, September 19 - Rhode Island Day/Salute to Holyoke

Wednesday, September 20 - Connecticut Day

Thursday, September 21 - Massachusetts Day

Friday, September 22 - New Hampshire Day

Saturday, September 23 - Vermont Day

Sunday, September 24 - Grange Day/ Chocolate Milk Day

Monday, September 25 - Salute to Springfield

Tuesday, September 26 - Salute to Chicopee

Wednesday, September 27 - Salute to Agawam

Thursday, September 28 - Salute to Westfield

Friday, September 29 - Harvest New England Day

Saturday, September 30 - October Fun Day

Sunday, October 1 - Salute to Special Olympics

Gates open at 8 a.m. Admission is \$20 for adults, \$12 children 6-12, 5 and under free.

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

CHASM HIKE
FRIDAYS 11 A.M. - 12 P.M., SATURDAYS 2 P.M. - 3 P.M., SUNDAYS 3 P.M. - 4 P.M.

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 a half mile over moderate terrain.

CHASM PRIMER
SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS 11:30 A.M.

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

GLACIAL GEOLOGY HIKE
MONDAYS 2 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.

Discover our glacial past on this one 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 one mile over moderate terrain.

KIDLEIDOSCOPE
MONDAYS 11 A.M. - 12 P.M.

Join us each week for Kidleidoscope! We will read a short book, followed by an outdoor activity. Afterwards, enjoy a craft that re-

lates 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 inside the Visitor Center.

OFF THE BEATEN PATH
FRIDAYS 2:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.

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 one mile over easy terrain.

ROCK DETECTIVES
SATURDAYS 11 A.M. - 12 P.M.

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 11 A.M. - 12 P.M.

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 P.M. - 5 P.M.

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 one mile over easy terrain.

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