



Holy Cross Women Rowing Team, photo submitted.

## Dozens turn out for Polar Plunge for Shelby

BY PATTY ROY

**O**n New Year's Day, a breezy beach in Douglas saw dozens of hardy souls plunge into the 39 degree waters of Wallum Lake. Swimmers hastily stripped down to swim suits, then with a few loud yells and big splashes ran into the water and ducked under, all for a good cause.

As the swimmers emerged shivering and smiling, they grabbed towels and sweatshirts and headed towards the firepit and barbecue where 8 month old Shelby Bedard was being held by her dad, Bob. Her mom, Shauna, a photographer, was wandering the beach snapping pictures of the couple's friends and family who have had a cottage on the lake for years.

Shelby was the star of the day because this Polar Plunge was being held in her honor to help fund her medical needs. The blue-eyed, cherub-cheeked baby had been born with an extremely rare metabolic disease, Glutaric Acidemia Type 1, referred to as GA-1. It is so rare, there are only



Shauna, Bob and Shlby Bedard. Photo, Patty Roy.

about 168 cases in the United States.

GA-1 is a lifelong condition that makes it impossible to process the amino acids – Lysine, Hydroxylysine and Tryptophan – that make up proteins, so affected babies cannot digest them. Forbidden foods include meats,

dairy, nuts, beans and legumes. "You have to eat proteins to grow," said mom Shauna. "So it's an unfortunate situation for her. Thankfully, Massachusetts does the newborn screening where

## Rowing for Rett

**G**race Rett was a real go-getter kind of girl who was up for any challenge. With a zest for life and a deeply held faith, she made a big impact in her too few years.

A varsity member of the Holy Cross Women's Rowing team, Grace tragically was the lone fatality on a 2020 Florida training trip when the team's van was involved in a crash. It happened on January 15, just one day after Grace turned 20 years old.

Raised in Uxbridge, Grace was a multi-sport athlete and proud member of the Our Lady of the Valley Regional School Angels, the Marianapolis Preparatory School Golden Knights and Holy Cross Crusaders.

On December 15, Holy Cross Women's crew team members organized a 62 hour rowing relay at

**RETT**

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**PLUNGE**

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### RETT

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Our Lady of the Valley Grace Rett Athletic Complex and Education (G.R.A.C.E.) Center to commemorate their fellow rower and the continuous indoor rowing world

p.m. Sunday, December 17, bringing in \$43,254 for the school and the G.R.A.C.E. Center.

Earlier relays raised funds to build the center.

The G.R.A.C.E. Center is currently being used by Our Lady of Victory students, staff and



Athletes from Cross Fit Final Duel, photo submitted.

record she set in 2019 at 383,000 meters. They were joined by the Marianapolis crew team, athletes from Cross Fit Final Duel and Hannah Strom, Our Lady of the Valley alum, all performed on erg machines.

Dubbed the Love-the-Fight-a-Thon, the event raised money for Our Lady of the Valley School.

The first virtual oar dipped at 6 a.m. on Friday and was raised at 8

the greater community. It hosts two classrooms, gymnasium, basketball practices, drama club rehearsals and the Diocesan Boys Basketball League. St. Mary's Parish and the Uxbridge knights of Columbus have also used the Center for meetings and educational programs.

Donations can be submitted through GivingForGrace.com

## BLACKSTONE VALLEY Xpress

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**2nd Friday:** The YankeeXpress South: Charlton, Dudley, Webster

**2nd Friday:** Blackstone Valley South: Douglas, Northbridge & Uxbridge

**4th Friday:** The YankeeXpress North: Auburn, Oxford

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**PLUNGE**

*continued from page 1*

they test for GA-1.”

Shelby was tested at four days old and her mom’s memories of the day are vivid.

“It was probably the most stressful day of my entire child-birth because you are just flooded with all these questions. What is this disorder? Is she going to be able to live a full life? Is she going to be able to survive?”

If a newborn is not diagnosed in the first week of life, by age two months, the baby will most likely suffer severe, irreversible damage, she said.

Shelby gets two grams of protein for right now.

“Hopefully, we’re looking to increase it slowly over time and maybe when she’s an adult she may get 15-20 grams of protein, if we’re lucky,” Shauna said.

Having too much protein can spark a metabolic crisis and leave the child with muscle spasms, seizures, brain swelling and eventually lead to death.

“The effects can be like muscular dystrophy or cerebral palsy,” she said. Additional concerns are possible learning disabilities, developmental delays and low muscle tone.

“If we follow the protocols



*Taking the plunge. Photo courtesy of Shauna Bedard.*

at the doctors’, and we’re really careful, we can avoid a metabolic crisis,” said Shauna. “Then, hopefully, she’ll live a normal life, but she’s going to be on this special formula for the rest of her life. There is no cure.”

There are frequent trips from their Whitinsville home to Mass. General Hospital which has

the only specialist team in New England.

Both parents have to have the gene, she explained, and even then, there is only a one in four chance of acquiring the illness.

Shauna and Bob are extra cautious with their baby’s health at this time of year. If Shelby gets sick, they end up at Mass. Gener-

al where she’s had five overnight visits already this year.

She is in the 20th percentile for weight and is a very active baby, her mom reports.

“So she’s developing her motor skills and miraculously has hit all her milestones, which is not the case for a lot of kids. We’ve just been really lucky.”

Shelby has 15 ounces daily of a special formula that has removed the amino acids she can’t eat. She has also been eating some solids like bits of apple. If Shelby doesn’t get the formula, the doctors will insert a gastronomy tube for her necessary nutrients.

“If she has a seizure, she’ll probably end up in a coma and the kids that end up in a coma die,” Shauna said.

The formula is expensive, and the Bedards’ health insurer has refused to pay for it.

“They said they wouldn’t cover anything until our family deductible was paid, which obviously is a lot of money when you’re not expecting it,” she said.

Fortunately the family just got approved for MassHealth Commonwealth that serves eligible disabled children.

The Bedards’ fundraising efforts also include selling #team-shelby bracelets and, at the Polar Plunge, raffling elaborate gift baskets.

Money raised will be used to pay for Shelby’s food and the rest will be donated to NECPAD, (necpad.org) the New England Connection for PKU and Allied Disorders, an organization that was helpful to the Bedards when Shelby was first diagnosed.

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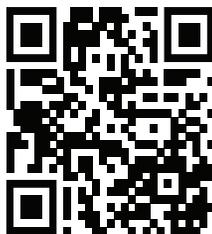
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Mark Freeman

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It's not as well-known as Halloween, but National Retirement Security week happens every October – the third week, to be precise — and while it doesn't involve ghosts and goblins, it does deal with something even more frightening: the risk of not being able to enjoy a comfortable retirement. Through various events, this occasion highlights ideas about building retirement security. What steps can you take?

Here are some suggestions:

- **Don't underestimate your longevity.** Consider this: 65-year-old men can expect to live another 20 years, while 65-year-old women can anticipate almost 22 more years, according to the Society of Actuaries. And these figures are just averages, meaning you could well exceed these ages, perhaps by many years. So, in thinking about how much money you'll need as a retiree, be aware that you could spend two, or even three, decades in retirement.

- **Don't underestimate health care costs.** When you retire, some of your expenses — such as transportation, wardrobe and other costs associated with your career — will drop. Others will not and may even increase. Health care is a prime example: Many people assume that Medicare or their Medicare Advantage plan will take care of virtually all their health care costs in retirement, but that's not

the case. Generally speaking, you could plan on spending \$4,500 to \$6,500 per year on health care costs during retirement, excluding the large expenses connected with long-term care. Your actual costs could be higher or lower, depending on your health, prescription drugs and supplemental insurance coverage, but make sure you plan for sizable health care costs in your projected retirement budget.

- **Contribute as much as you can afford to your retirement plans.** Try to put in as much as you can afford to your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan and try to increase your contributions whenever your salary goes up. You may also be eligible to contribute to a traditional or Roth IRA, which offers tax benefits and a wide variety of investment options. (Contributions to a Roth IRA may be limited based on your income.) Once you reach retire-

ment, you can still make some moves that could help boost your financial security:

- **Maintain an appropriate investment mix.** When you retire, you might be tempted to shift most of your portfolio into highly conservative investments to “lock in” gains and avoid being over-exposed to market volatility that could cause short-term losses. Yet, even in retirement, you should still own some growth-oriented investments that can potentially help keep you ahead of inflation. In fact, it's important to periodically rebalance your investments back to your preferred mix to avoid taking too much or too little risk, so you may want to consult with a financial advisor.
- **Identify a suitable withdrawal rate.** You don't want to take out so much from your portfolio each year that you run the risk of outliving your money. So, you'll

want to determine an annual withdrawal rate that can reduce this danger. A common withdrawal rate to start retirement is 4%, but your own rate should be based on several factors: your age, size of portfolio, other sources of income and so on.

It can be challenging to make all the moves necessary to help achieve retirement security — but it's worth the effort.

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

Mark Freeman  
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# Sen. Fattman and Rep. Soter Announce \$6 Million in Funding for The Blackstone River Greenway Project

On December 27th, Senator Ryan Fattman and Representative Michael Soter announced that the Blackstone River Greenway Project has received a \$6 million investment for a 0.5 mile section of the greenway in Blackstone. This funding was made available through a \$24 million investment in the state's recreational trails by Governor Maura Healey and Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll, initially received through The American Rescue Plan (ARPA).

The Blackstone River Greenway is a section of a longer 48-mile bikeway that connects Worcester, MA to Providence, RI, along the

National Heritage Corridor. The paved trail follows the Blackstone River and Canal wherever possible. Though intended as a bike path, it is also used for walking, jogging, and other recreational activities.

This funding will be used to invest in a 0.5 mile section of the trail from the Canal Street Bridge in Blackstone to the Rhode Island border, where the greenway joins another existing shared-use path. It will make possible repairs and upgrades to the existing trail.

"I am incredibly excited about the upgrades this funding will allow us to make to our existing recreational infrastructure," commented State Rep. Michael

Soter in response to this funding. "Trails such as the Blackstone River Greenway provide the perfect opportunity for everyone to explore the wonderful natural beauty of our town and state."

"The expansion of the Blackstone River Greenway trail highlights the importance of outdoor recreational space in my district," Senator Fattman continues, "I look forward to seeing this project bring more people to the area to enjoy our natural resources."

Rep. Soter and Sen. Fattman stated that they will continue to advocate for funding that will help towns expand and improve access to recreational activities.

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## Business spotlight

stripped away worn carpeting. They'll come for a single item, or they'll clean out an entire house. And they can take almost anything. They can't accept hazardous materials, brush, dirt, or concrete, but everything else is fair game for them to take away.

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

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

Jay and his family are deeply involved in the community. He and his wife, Chris-

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All programs and events, unless otherwise noted, require signing up in our main office to secure a spot. Light refreshments will likely be served at all events unless it is a lunch and learn program or a special event with a themed luncheon. If you

have signed up for a program and are unable to attend, please call and let us know, so that we may offer your spot to someone else on the waiting list for our programs. Please note: if you have purchased a ticket for a special event and cannot attend the event, please return the ticket to our main office, so we may offer your spot to the next person on the waiting list who we

know would be interested in attending the event.

**NEW: RECIPE CLUB** Fridays, January 12th and February 9th 10:30-11:30am Are you tired of always trying to come up with new recipes? Interested in sharing and swapping recipes? How about sampling recipes? Our first meeting in January will be the initial planning meeting and discussion about the group. Call Amy if you are interested in joining this exciting new club!

**HOMEFIT WORKSHOP** Thursday, February 1st from 1:30-2:30pm The AARPHomeFit Workshop provides information to participants on how to decide what type of home modifications are needed to stay in their homes as they age. It also provides ideas and inspiration on making those modifications. The goal of the presentation is to educate participants on home updates that can make it easier for them to go about their daily activities while staying comfortable, independent, and injury-free.

Wednesday, February 7th 1:00-2:30pm "The Impact of Alzheimer's and Dementia in our Community" Join us for an informative program to learn about the impact of the disease, local resources, and ways you can join the fight against Alzheimer's and all other dementias. There will be an opportunity for group and one-on-one discussion following the presentation.

Valentine's Day, February 14 – Our guest speaker Anthony Sammarco

will talk about Valentine's Day in an entertaining and informative way as he recalls the change in the holiday from exchanging cards in school to flowers and candy received as adults. He will discuss the greeting card industry's association with the holiday from Hallmark to Rust Craft and the history of St. Valentine's Day from Lupercalia, an ancient Roman festival to today's tradition.

Tickets are \$10 per person and Northbridge residents have priority. The event is generously sponsored by Rep. David Muradian and Sen. Ryan Fattman.

**Mondays** – Pitch 9 a.m.; Chair Exercise 9 a.m.; Scrabble 10 a.m.; Tai Chi 11 a.m.; Cribbage 12:30 p.m.; Mahjong, 1 p.m.; Aqua @WCC 1:30 p.m.

**Tuesdays** – Shuffleboard 9 a.m.; Painting 10 a.m.; Muscle Mix 11 a.m.; Lunch 12 p.m.; POKENO 12:30 p.m.; Bridge 12:30 p.m.

**Wednesdays** – Low Impact exercise 10 a.m.; Strummers 10 a.m.; Ukulele 2 p.m.; Tap 2:30 p.m.

**Thursdays** – Meditation – 9:30 a.m.; Chair Yoga 11:15 a.m.; Lunch 12 p.m.; Mahjong 12:30 p.m.

**Fridays** – Stretch and Strength class 9 a.m.

**Fuel Assistance 2023-24 Deadline** April 30, 2024 For assistance, please contact our Outreach Worker, Jeanne White at the Senior Center at 508-234-2002.

**COVID-19 VACCINE NEWS** Important: The updated 2023-2024

COVID-19 vaccines are now available to protect you against the most common variants of the virus circulating now. Medicare covers the COVID-19 vaccine at no cost to you. The CDC recommends that everyone ages 6 months and older get the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine to protect you against serious illness. Protection from previous vaccination or infection weakens over time, so it's important to get the updated COVID-19 vaccine now to stay protected. Also, every U.S. household can order 4 more COVID-19 at-home tests shipped directly to your home at no cost. Visit COVIDTests.gov to place your order.

**AARP TAX PROGRAM** Yes, it's that time of year! Steve Lotterman and Kathryn Converse will be back at Plummer Place for our tax preparation program. The program will begin on Friday, February 9th, 2024. They will have appointments every Friday through April 5th. Appointments will begin at 8:30am through 11:45am. Call Plummer Place to make your appointment.

**AARP NEEDS VOLUNTEERS!** If you or anyone you know is interested in being a volunteer "intake" person, please contact the senior center. The "job" entails greeting the taxpayers on the days we hold the Tax Program. Volunteers would also check patrons in and make sure they have completed their questionnaires for the tax prep.



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# The Small Stones Festival of the Arts

The Small Stones Festival of the Arts will hold its sixth annual fine art and photography exhibit of juried artwork will run Jan. 27 – Feb. 4 at the Brigham Hill Community Barn, 37 Wheeler Road, Grafton. The free exhibit is open to the public.

The Blackstone Valley Art Association and the Worcester County Camera Club have collaborated to create one of the region's largest juried exhibitions and to provide a venue to showcase artists work and elevate the practice and appreciation of fine art.

The exhibit will open Jan. 27 12-5 p.m. The awards ceremony and reception begins at 2 p.m.

Artist talks will be held at 2:30 p.m. on the gallery.

The exhibit hours are: Sunday, Jan. 28 from 12-4 p.m. ; Tuesday, Jan. 30 from 6-9 p.m. ; Wednesday, Jan. 31 – Thursday, Feb. 1 from 12-4 p.m. Extended hours will be held on Friday, Feb. 2 and Sunday, Feb. 3 from 12 – 6 p.m. The exhibit closes Monday, Feb. 4 with hours held from 12 – 4 p.m. Juror talks will be held at 2 p.m.

This year, the festival received a generous festival grant of \$2500 from the Mass Cultural Council as well as additional grants from the Cultural Councils of Grafton and Millbury.

A panel of six jurors (three for

each category) have selected 144 works to appear in the exhibit and the printed catalogue. The

hardback exhibit catalog is for sale online and at the festival. All submissions meeting

requirements are featured in at the Festival's web gallery.

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LIVING WITH LUKE

amyleclaire@hotmail.com

# Luke's NEW YEAR Goals

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

• THE MORNING WALK

December 2023 ended with peculiar high temps. A muddy ground complicated life with dog. I may have stood alone in my wish for a snowstorm, but I had good reason. Snow is pretty. Snow is quiet. Snow is clean.

"Luke! That hole is crazy big!" Luke's digging habit continued. He dug deep and wide, as though excavating the area beside our front steps for the benefit of a miniature pool. I tore open the door in horror. A cool gust of wind blended with the sound of my husband's cry. "I've worked hard on that lawn! Luke is getting a zap next time!"

Indeed, Luke's Daddy has slaved over that lawn. However, no such zap will occur. "Let's not be dra-



matic," I countered while my pup faced me, his face mottled like that of a child who's found the brownie bowl. "Dogs are natural diggers. Imagine zapping a child for building a sandcastle." I held my ground with the recurrent analogy. "Luke is just bored." The wheels of Luke's paws continued to spin in agreement. Once again, I couldn't help but feel impressed by the depth (no pun intended) of his work. "Besides, we don't need to keep up

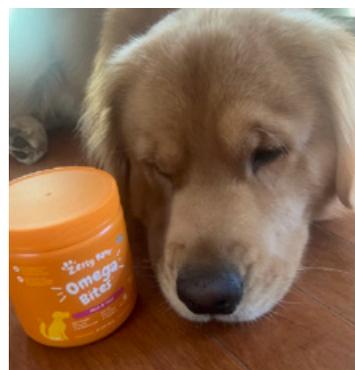
with the Joneses." I brandished the maintenance broom and pushed the pile of fresh dirt back into the hole. Meanwhile, my pup zoomed around the yard and tore through grass the Jones' would have approved of, if it weren't for fresh skid marks "Let's go for a walk, Luke." I grabbed his leash and the resolution settled in my mind. Give Luke early morning walks in 2024.

• BETTER NUTRITION FOR LUKE

Weight problems are both common and problematic in Golden Retrievers. Extra weight is hard to bear on dogs' joints and can lead to muscular problems, diabetes, digestion, breathing and mobility issues. Luke is a young, active dog with normal weight. Stocky and strong at seventy-three pounds, he's built like a linebacker who, nevertheless, isn't above begging for gingerbread cookies. Consistency is crucial when it comes to dog training. Show your dog that your food is not part of his, and he'll learn quickly. However, turning down the quiet face of a begging Golden

is easier said than done. We know gingerbread cookies are not good for them. Who are we kidding? Yet their pleading faces somehow manage to sell us.

"I was thinking that because I'm such a good boy, you'd be willing to share." Mesmerized, he stares up at the cookie, a bear cub lifting a paw ever so gently, a dog willing to behave forever—if only his Dog



Mom would share. I break the cookie in half. The creases of his head and expression deepen. He reminds me of a pumpkin with a personality. "My Momma is such a good person."

My goal for 2024 (along with being a good person) is to integrate more foods that a dog truly needs. I've since researched the practice of Dr. Marty Goldstein, a Cornell University graduate and veterinarian with over 35 years of experience in helping dogs thrive (he changed the life of one of Oprah Winfrey's dogs, who had been suffering, along with countless others who were nearly dying). His prescribed diet designed for dogs of all ages to thrive. Organ meats, omega 3, probiotics, flax, carrots, ginger, and blueberries are to name a few additions to Luke's upcoming Nutrition Plan! I also plan to remain educated on dog

foods and treats which are harmful, despite trendy catch phrases such as "All Natural" or "Organic". Certain fillers, preservatives and grains are detrimental to a dog's digestive system. Canine cancers have multiplied at an alarmingly fast rate, with some studies showing that one out of two Golden Retrievers will be struck by the disease. My eyes rest on Luke's kind, pumpkin face. He smiles up at me with love and innocence. I imagine shaking a message from a bottle that reads this: Luke Valentino is going to live an incredibly long life.

• MORE PLAYDATES PLEASE

A fellow Dog Person recently said it best. Our dogs used to run



free, find other dogs in the woods, and play. They naturally socialized. Now, constrained to short leashes, we find them territorial and pugnacious, almost as though to say, "I'm stronger than you and stay away from my owner." Unleashed, both of those same (aggressive) dogs would likely rumble and become best pals. Admittedly I'm guilty of the short leash rule, especially given that we live in a neighborhood, but I also appreciate Luke's needs to play with other dogs. At almost two, he's matured. He's learned that not every dog likes to wrestle. Some like Chase. Some (as Lincoln had) just want to play fetch. He's learned to submit to signals of other dogs. That said, Luke is a social creature! Forbidding him to play with other dogs is like asking a rugby player to sit down for a thoughtful game of chess. Though I'm reluctant to visit Dog Parks now (after the fight that ensued when he was only six months old) my 2024 goal is to set up more

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by Kelly Hauk

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REAL ESTATE

# Expert Quotes on the 2024 Housing Market Forecast

If you're thinking about buying or selling a home soon, you probably want to know what you can expect from the housing market in 2024. In 2023, higher mortgage rates, confusion over home prices, and a lack of homes for sale created some challenges



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

The good news is, many experts are optimistic we've turned a corner and are headed in a positive direction. Recently, mortgage rates have started to come back down. This has offered hope to buyers dealing with affordability challenges. Mark

Fleming, Chief Economist at First American, explains how they may continue to drop: "Mortgage rates have already retreated from recent peaks near 8 percent and may fall further . . ."

Jessica Lautz, Deputy Chief Economist at the National Association of Realtors (NAR), says: "For home buyers who are taking on a mortgage to purchase a home and have been wary of the autumn rise in mortgage rates, the market is turning more favorable, and there should be optimism entering 2024 for a better market."

As rates ease, activity in the housing market should pick up because more buyers and sellers who had been holding off will jump back in. If more sellers list their homes, the supply of homes for sale will grow, a trend we've already started to see this year. It is expected that supply will loosen up in 2024. Even homeowners who currently have a low interest rate on an existing mortgage, will increasingly find that changing

family and financial circumstances will lead to more moves and more new listings over the course of the year, particularly as rates move closer to 6.5%."

Mortgage rates pulling back isn't the only positive sign for affordability. Home price growth is expected to moderate too, as inventory improves but is still low overall. We expect that 2024 will be a better year for the housing market. So, if you're thinking about making a move next year, know that early signs show we're turning a corner. We're going into 2024 with slight home-price gains, more inventory, slightly increasing transaction volume . . . All in all, things are looking up for the U.S. housing market in 2024."

Experts are optimistic about what 2024 holds for the housing market. If you're looking to buy or sell a home in the new year, the best way to ensure you're up to date on the latest forecasts is to partner with The Marzeotti Group or trusted Realtor.

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**LUKE**

*continued from page 10*

playdates for Luke Valentino.

**• LUKE NEEDS HIS OWN SHOWS**

I've noticed that Luke is intelligent enough to understand certain



television scenes, especially those involving animals. His process for watching the activities of other dogs is a show in and of itself. He'll smile as though to say, "I love to eat dog food, too." Or tilt his head curiously. "Are you going to swim in that lake?" He'll even approach the television screen to get a closer view. "That person is climbing on top of a roof!!" Just as he revels in lighthearted television moments, Luke shows dissatisfaction for darker scenes. Lord Voldemort, a Harry Potter character, for example, sends chills through Luke's spine. "You do not look like a nice person. I don't trust you." He'll

lower his head in suspicion to the actor. Ralph Fiennes. I do my best to placate him. "Don't worry. That's just a man in a costume, Luke." He looks up at me, then back at the screen. "I don't trust him."

Whether it's through morning walks, playdates, better nutrition, or television shows; Luke Valentino needs the stimulation of new sights, suppers, and stories. 2024 is going to be my pup's year! Stay tuned for the next story, featuring Luke's two-year-old birthday on January 31st!

Follow Luke on IG @livingwith-lukevalentino  
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TALES FROM BEYOND

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# Beware of Krampus

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

This is the time of year everyone begins to think about spending the holidays with family

and friends. Shopping, decorating, holiday parties, gatherings and a visit from that magical icon, Santa Claus. Little do people think about the possible visit from Santa's exact

opposite, the creature that makes children shiver at the very thought of. Those who live in our western world may not be so familiar with him, but to the children of the Alpine region around Europe, he is a very real and evil spirit. His name; Krampus.

Krampus is a horned demon from Alpine folklore who, along with Santa visit the children in the night. The well behaved are rewarded with gifts from Old Saint Nick while the bad ones are punished by Krampus with a good swatting from the birch rods he carries with him. The origin of Krampus is not readily known, but there are recollections written of his being around since the 16th century, maybe hundreds of years before that.

Krampus appears in many variations, according to the artist's conception, but is generally accepted to be brown or black haired with cloven hooves, horns like a goat, and a long forked tongue. Basically a monster that is half man and half beast. He is sometimes depicted carrying a large sack which is used for putting the bad children in and taking them away.

Some claim he eats them, drowns them or transports them straight to hell. Krampus is also adorned with various sized odd looking bells and carries chains which he thrashes about. He also has on hand, a wealthy supply of birch branches which he uses to beat the badly behaved children before carting them away. Woe to the child who should talk back to their parents or disregard their rule, for like Santa, Krampus knows all.

During pre-Christain festivals, young men dressed as the horned demon and ran amok, scaring children in the villages and towns. The name is thought to have derived from the Bavarian word "krampn" which means dead or rotten, or from the German kramp/krampen which means claw. Either or both can be used to describe the hideous creature that stalks the children on a certain night in December, searching for those who misbehaved during the year. December 5 is known as Krampusnacht or Krampus Night where either St. Nick rewards the good little children or Krampus doles out his form of punishment to those who have been bad all year.

At one time, any celebrations regarding the existence of Krampus were banned in certain countries, like Austria in the 1930s, for fear it would mentally damage the children by threatening them with such a horrible fate. This idea was later rescinded and today, the legend of Krampus lives in parades and even greeting cards called Krampuskarten. Wooden masks are also made and adorned during the holiday season to pay tribute to the antithesis of St. Nick.

Krampus was very little known or recognized in the western world, but very well known in the Bavarian and Alpine regions of Europe until recently. Somehow, he made his way into our society and has been a growing force since. Krampus has been gaining so much popularity in recent years, one can find a vast number of Christmas ornaments, greeting cards and movies about him. So much so, that even Santa may have a bit of competition on his hands. That is, of course, unless the children are extra good this year.



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Questions? Contact Michelle.Benjamin@openskycs.org or visit openskycs.org/openmic



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For featured artist and volunteer inquiries contact  
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"Take Down the Wall Presents..." is a Performing Arts Initiative run by Open Sky's Community Membership Department. We use performing arts and other creative, cultural, social, and recreational opportunities to connect individuals served by Open Sky with others in their community who share these similar interests. Visit [www.openskycs.org/communitymembership](http://www.openskycs.org/communitymembership) for more ways you can be involved!

# Webster Five Recognized by MA Small Business Association

Receives 'SBA MA Lender of the Year to Veteran Owned Businesses' Award

Webster Five is honored to announce that they have been named 2023's #1 SBA Lender to Veteran Owned Businesses by the SBA Massachusetts District Office. The Webster Five Business Banking team was recently recognized at the 2023 SBA Massachusetts Lender Awards. This recognition highlights Webster Five's commitment to supporting Veterans, as evidenced by the bank's distribution of 16 SBA 7(a) loans totaling

over \$3.6 million. "Receiving this award is a tremendous honor for Webster Five," said Christopher Watson, SVP Senior Business Lending Officer, Webster Five. "Our team appreciates what U.S. Veterans have done to support our country and the unique challenges that they face. We strive to provide support with tailored financial solutions to help them grow and succeed."

From left, Robert Nelson, MA

District Director, SBA; Christopher Watson, SVP Senior Business Lending Officer, Webster Five;

Rob Totaro, Vice President, Business Loan Officer, Webster Five; and Ili Spahiu,

Lead Lender Relations Specialist, SBA.

# Frederick & Chamberlain perform at Bistro Eighty Ates

Frederick & Chamberlain has a list of influences ranging from different decades of music. Their influences are what shape them into their own



sound. Their sound is made with an acoustic guitar foundation while including rock, alternative and some country elements. Check them out Saturday, Jan. 20 from 7-10 p.m. at Bistro Eighty Ates, 172 Gore Road, Webster.

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 5 pm - 6 pm Barre Strength Cardio  
 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm Hatha Restorative Yoga
- Thursdays**  
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- Saturdays**  
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# Film Director Adam McKay Talks Satire on the Creating Dangerously Podcast

Brought to You by The Shawna Foundation, New Podcast Covers Film, Cult Art & Everything In Between

A new podcast “Creating Dangerously,” recently launched by The Shawna E. Shea Memorial Foundation, riffs on a 1957 lecture by the philosopher Albert Camus four days after he gave his

acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

What’s this all about? Camus said, “To create today means to create dangerously. Every publication is a deliberate act, and that

act makes us vulnerable to the passions of a century that forgives nothing.” And the “Creating Dangerously” podcast gives those words new life with a modern twist.

With hosts Skip Shea, Patrick Bracken and Andrea Wolanin, we explore artists past and present who are doing their part to create dangerously to try to make sense of a world that often doesn’t make sense at all and still forgives nothing.

“It’s not a bleak as it sounds,” said producer Skip Shea. “We have a lot of fun discussing topics like satire or cult art. I think the creative process itself brings something positive to the world, even if the subject is as bleak as Picasso’s Guernica.”

“We recently interviewed film director and Oscar winning screenwriter Adam McKay (“Don’t Look Up,” “The Big Short,” “Vice”) about the importance of satire and it was a lot of fun. Plus we got to discuss Worcester a little too as Adam grew up there.”

Joined by hosts filmmaker Andrea Wolanin and actor/writer Patrick Bracken, topics and issues

up for discussion include women who Create dangerously; cult and outsider art; subversive art forms and much more.

“We also give listeners some bonus episodes like the interview with Adam McKay; and poetry episodes where Tony Brown, the Poet Laureate of the Shawna Foundation, brings poems that reflect the themes of the recent episodes like the one directly related to Camus and his philosophy,” said Shea. “For that Tony chose Andrei Voznesensky’s Darkmotherscream.”

Fresh episodes of “Creating Dangerously” podcast are released at least three times a month and can be found on most of the major podcast platforms—Spotify, Apple Podcasts, iHeart Radio and Amazon Music.

Shea said, “In a recent interview on 60 Minutes, Little Steven Van Zandt said that ‘... we’re the only country in the world that thinks art is a luxury. Everybody else in the world understands that art is an essential part of the quality of life.’ I tend to agree. We hope ‘Creating Dangerously’ can help shift that.”

The mission of the Shawna E. Shea Memorial Foundation

Inc. is to support young people, especially women, in filmmaking, performance arts and other artistic and cultural endeavors through financial assistance, collaborative fellowships, mentoring and educational opportunities. We established the Foundation in memory of Shawna, a creative and artistic young woman from Uxbridge who lost her life too soon and we strive to sustain her legacy of encouraging young people who live in the margins of society and yet have dreams and aspirations in the fields of film and performance arts.

Links:

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/1Pg5Z9I2PevPEXG72Qop11>

Apple Podcast: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/creating-dangerously/id1716077784>

Amazon Music: <https://music.amazon.com/podcasts/c90536bc-e148-4a2d-8d2b-bcddb-3492ba3/creating-dangerously>

iHeart Radio: <https://www.iheart.com/podcast/269-creating-dangerously-126538860/>

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THE CAR DOCTOR

jpaul@aanortheast.com

# When trailer lights are out, check wiring in tow vehicle as well as trailer

**Q.** I was working on my boat trailer, which I use only a couple of times per year and noticed the lights are not working. Some work and some don't, where can I start and what else should I do to this trailer over the winter?



BY JOHN PAUL

**A.** The first place to start is to see if the trailer or the tow vehicle wiring is an issue. A simple 12-volt test light or an inexpensive trailer light testing tool is about all you need. Depending on the plug (flat four or round seven) the troubleshooting is about the same. Use your test light and see if the wiring will light the test light, if it does move onto the trailer wiring. The most common issues are related to corrosion of the lamp sockets. As for other repairs, check for rust, inspect the rollers or bunks, springs, shackles and remove, clean and repack the wheel bearings.

**Q.** I have a Honda Accord and it was in for an oil change and they said the brake pads on the front were down to 3mm. They were really busy and said they couldn't relace the brakes for a couple of weeks. I like this shop and would like to have them do the work, replacing both the brake pads and brake rotors. Should I wait or find another shop?

**A.** New brakes pads are generally about 10-12 millimeters thick. At 3 millimeters the brakes are just about worn out and should be replaced. Considering you are

replacing the rotors, a couple more weeks of normal driving shouldn't make a difference. If you hear scraping, bring the car in as soon as possible.

**Q.** Recent articles seem to point out that the public has not fallen in love with electric cars. If fact I have seen discounts and electric cars sitting on dealer lots. What is your take on this?

**A.** Electric cars are not for everyone. Buying an electric car depends on charging availability, budget and how far you drive. For my personal use a plug-in hybrid, that can charge on 120-volts, drive in electric or EV mode would suit my needs better than a pure electric car. But as the charging infrastructure changes and recharging becomes quicker, that could change.

**Q.** I have a 2008 Toyota Avalon and it is the best car I have ever owned and want to keep it forever. The problem is the high beam bulbs have shattered or blown twice. My mechanic said Toyota had sent a bulletin to the dealers about the problem. It is my understanding that some 2008-2010 models have a problem with the bulb housing, not the bulbs and the fix is to replace the housing. To me it is a manufacturing or design defective, and the car should be recalled. I haven't gotten anywhere with Toyota or the local dealer. Any suggestions?

**A.** As you stated, there is a technical service bulletin that describes the problem. The repair does in fact require replacing the housing and bulb. My only "guess" is this isn't a recall since the low beam light will still function when the high

beam light fails. If you decide to replace the housing, perhaps use an aftermarket part. If you go this route, look for a CAPA approved part. This certification tells you it is as good as the original or hopefully in the case of your Avalon better.

**Q.** I own a 2001 Lexus RX300 that was recently given to me. Over the six months I have owned it, the engine has gotten noisy. My mechanic says the oil is like sludge. I looked online and found this was a defect. So, do I have any recourse?

**A.** Oil gelling/sludge happens generally from the heating and oxidation of oil due to infrequent oil changes. Since you don't have much invested in the vehicle you could try an oil flush. Over the years mechanics have used transmission fluid rather than oil, kerosene mixed with oil and dedicated oil flush products, such as Seafoam to remove sludge. Sometimes this works and removes accumulated sludge, other times the sludge just moves around and causes other issues. Regarding Toyota standing by their product, I don't see them offering any relief on an 23 year old car.

*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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# BHC Honors Volunteers

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (BHC) held a “Champions of the Blackstone” Awards Reception on December 4th to celebrate its Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) volunteers and recognize its John H. Chafee Heritage Award recipients. The reception was held at the Singh Performance Center at Alternatives’ Whittin Mill and was sponsored by Navigant Credit Union.

“This past year, our over 250 volunteers worked as diligently as ever to keep our bike paths safe, our walking trails clear, and the river clean and accessible,” noted BHC’s Board Chair Dennis Rice. “On behalf of the Board, we can’t thank our volunteers enough. The sense of community amongst the volunteer corps and the importance of the institution’s mission keeps me invested.”

“On behalf of the Healey-Driscoll Administration, I want to thank everyone for sharing their time and talents in volunteer service to the Blackstone Heritage Corridor,” noted Priscilla Geigis, Deputy Commissioner for Conservation and Resource Stewardship, with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). “Time is a precious resource because you cannot get it back, so you need to spend it doing what you love and with the people you love.” Geigis thanked everyone for sharing their heart. “Your service is a testament to your passion for the Blackstone and each other, and your commitment to fostering shared stewardship of our special places.”

Allison Horrocks, Park Ranger with Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park, shared some inspiring quotes and reminded everyone that “the power of the Blackstone is with the people.”

Molly Cardoza, BHC’s Director of Volunteer and Community Engagement, congratulated its National Park Service Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) volunteers on their nearly \$1 million in volunteer service in fiscal year 2023. The VIPs logged 31,058 volunteer hours at an in-kind value of \$987,644.

Cardoza presented the 2nd annual Suzanne Buchanan Volunteer of the Year award to William McGinnis of Cumberland, RI. “Suzanne inspired all of us to imagine the possibilities,” Cardoza shared. She created the Bikeway Ambassador program. “Bill McGinnis embodies this vision as a Bikeway Ambassador and as a volunteer for Accessible Cycling Programs. Bill can frequently be found riding or walking the Blackstone River Bikeway helping cyclists with deflated tires and reporting in obstructions, down trees, or other hazards. Staff members of All Out Adventures, our partner in accessible cycling programs, praise Bill’s demeanor, professionalism, and can-do attitude.”

Cardoza presented the Volunteer Partner of the Year Award to Blackstone River Watershed Council/ Friends of the Blackstone for their outreach programs in the past year. “The Blackstone River Watershed Council/ Friends of the Blackstone is one of our longest-standing part-

nerships, working to improve the health and accessibility of the Blackstone River for over 30 years,” Cardoza noted. “This year we recognize their commitment to working with individuals with disabilities through their Connecting through Canoes program, their partnership with the Indigenous Peoples of our region in their work towards the building of a fish passage at Pawtucket, their outreach to diverse communities throughout the Valley through new fishing programs, and their continued work to clean up the Blackstone River and its watershed. They have led litter cleanups, water chestnut pulls, and are working to create a new town park. Last fiscal year, they logged 1,845 hours of volunteering.”

Cardoza also recognized volunteers with the Blackstone Valley Paddle Club who assisted the Harrisville Fire Department with a rescue of a missing resident they discovered while paddling on the Nipmuc River in Harrisville, RI: Steve Riendeau, Julie Riendeau, Dave Biernacki, Steve Norris, Manny Terezakis, Cheryl Thompson, Tom Farley, Cathy Cochran, Phil Johansen, Rick Everett, Orla Christiansen, Patrick Reddy, Joan Reddy, and Christine Satterwhite.

Volunteers who serve 250 hours earn a complimentary America the Beautiful Pass, providing them free access to more than 2,000 federal recreation sites.

Seventeen of BHC’s volunteers earned an America the Beautiful Pass in the Fiscal Year 2023 including Justine Brewer, Norma Bedrosian, Sue Ciaramicoli, Bill Ela,

Kenneth Ethier, Pam Gurney Farnham, Keith Hainley, Rich Keene, Stephanie Maoz, John Marsland, Albert Menard, Betty Mencucci, Lynne Pelletier, Alan Salemi, Paul Schaefer, Kim Walker, and Ross Weaver.

Devon Kurtz, BHC’s Executive Director, announced the recipients of BHC’s John H. Chafee Heritage Awards: Chuck Arning, Stefanie Covino, Christian de Rezendes, and Mary Lee Partington.

Created by the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, the John H. Chafee Heritage Award honors the late Senator’s legacy and recognizes individuals, groups, or students who have worked on projects that promote cultural heritage, environmental conservation, and the quality of life in the Blackstone River Valley.

Chuck Arning, a retired National Park Service ranger from Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park and a resident of Lunenburg, MA, was nominated for the John H. Chafee Heritage Award by BHC’s Executive Director, Devon Kurtz. “Chuck Arning retired from the National Park Service (NPS) after 24-1/2 years of service as an Interpretive Ranger in the Blackstone River Valley,” Kurtz noted.

“He currently works as a consultant for the Worcester Historical Museum and assists other museums and historic sites in accomplishing their missions. As the A/V Specialist for the Blackstone Valley, he produced over 85 videos and TV episodes on outdoor recreation, history, preservation efforts, and the people of the Blackstone River Valley. Arning produced, wrote, hosted, and was a contributing editor of the award-winning series “Along the Blackstone” for the NPS, along with numerous other awards for interpretation, history and project management.

Stefanie Covino, Program Manager at the Blackstone Watershed Collaborative, and a resident of Sutton, MA, was nominated for the John H. Chafee Heritage Award by Donna Williams, a BHC Board Director and President of the Blackstone River Coalition. “Through Stefanie’s efforts, the Blackstone Collaborative has become the de facto environmental arm of the Blackstone Heritage Corridor,” Williams explained.

According to Williams, Stefanie hit the ground running at the Blackstone Watershed Collaborative, and more than a year into the program, she has pulled together over 100 partners through the monthly Collaborative network meetings, rigorous research in grant opportunities, and cheerleading partner projects. Several such projects are: the Blackstone River Watershed Council/ Friends of the Blackstone’s “Be the Voice of Kittacuck: Enhancing Fish Passage” film and advocacy;

Southern New England Network’s “Creating Resilient Communities: Bylaws & Regulations” program; Mass Audubon’s Broad Meadow Brook Restoration project in Worcester; RISD’s Blackstone River Commons 4-day paddle of the River with Stefanie as co-organizer and participant; and the Blackstone River Coalition’s Water Quality Monitoring program.

Christian de Rezendes, producer of the documentary series “Slatersville: America’s First Mill Village” and a resident of North Smithfield, RI, was nominated for the John H. Chafee Heritage Award by BHC’s staff. Through his company, Breaking Branches Pictures (est. 1996), de Rezendes has produced critically acclaimed feature films. To date, his work has received more than 40 filmmaking awards. Many of his twenty-plus directing credits have been broadcast on PBS and screened internationally at film festivals.

“In the fall of 2022, after 11 years of production, the first half of his documentary series ‘Slatersville: America’s First Mill Village’ premiered on Rhode Island PBS and now streams internationally on the PBS app,” Kurtz added. ‘Slatersville’ won two Regional Boston/New England Emmy Nominations for Outstanding Documentary and Outstanding Musical Composition. The series also received a Gold Telly Award for Documentary Series and three film festival awards from the Mass Indie Film Fest, Block Island Film Festival, and the LifeArt Festival.

Mary Lee Partington of Gloucester, RI, was nominated by U.S. Senator Jack Reed. “A researcher at heart, Mary Lee’s vocation is to learn, teach, and inspire others to impart knowledge about the place, the people, the culture, the heritage, and the rich traditions of the land that she calls home – The Blackstone Valley,” Reed shared.

Nearly 40 years ago, Mary Lee, lead vocalist for Pendragon, was one of the founders of the group Pendragon which has celebrated the rich traditions in Celtic music and brought to life the legacy of generations of immigrants.

Nominations for the 2023 John H. Chafee Heritage Award are now open. Find the form at [blackstoneheritagecorridor.org/about-bhc/john-h-chafee-heritage-awards/](http://blackstoneheritagecorridor.org/about-bhc/john-h-chafee-heritage-awards/). Nominations should be submitted by January 30, 2024, and can be mailed to John H. Chafee Heritage Award, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, 670 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville, MA, 01588, or emailed to Devon Kurtz at [dkurtz@blackstone-heritagecorridor.org](mailto:dkurtz@blackstone-heritagecorridor.org). To learn more about the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, visit [BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org](http://BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org).



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SPORTS

# Uxbridge Brings Home Another State Championship

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

For the third consecutive year the Uxbridge Field Hockey team captured the Division 4 State Championship. The Spartans took home the title for the first time back in 2012 defeating Ipswich in the Championship game, the following year they took out Manchester Essex to go back-to-back. This past season, Coach Kelly Rosborough and her girls were intent on making it three in a row.

“This year we mixed things up with our schedule adding some division 1 schools to keep us ready. We played 5 top 10 division 1 teams and only lost to Andover,” the Uxbridge Coach. “The change to our schedule was beneficial to the team’s progress. After winning the State championship last year we knew that we had to do something to up our game.”

The Spartans also knew that if they were to continue to win they were going to have to keep playing as a team; an entire group effort with everyone contributing in some way or another.

“The girls are motivated, so our focus is on staying humble and playing for each other not for themselves,” Rosborough said. “The team aspect is a HUGE point of emphasis and caring about one another as human beings and teammates.”

This past season Uxbridge put forth a season that was one like no other before. The Spartans captured the SWCL Championship, defeated Division 1 Wachusett for the CMADA Class A Championship, took home their third straight Division 4 State Title, was ranked second in Massachusetts and 22 in the Nation. Uxbridge was riding a 67-game winning streak when Andover beat them this year.

In addition to the Spartans persistently winning, when the post-season came they seemed to take their game to the next level. Over the last three seasons the Spartans have played in 14 tournament games outscoring their opponents 85-2. This season Uxbridge shutout their adversaries in all five games while scoring 36 goals (averaging 7.2 goals a game). Enroute to the three-peat season Uxbridge



took out Tahanto 9-0, Stoneham 9-0, Quabbin 7-0, Sutton 7-0 and Monomoy 4-0 in the title match.

The ability to capture their third straight championship stems from the fact that the team is not solely focused on one individual doing all the scoring. According to Rosborough, Uxbridge has a lot of potential players who can put the ball in the net.

With that said, junior co-captain Ellie Bouchard is the team’s offensive driving force. The junior had 32 goals and 4 assists and during the Semi Final game against Sutton she notched her 100th career goal.

“Scoring her 100th goal was the first time in Uxbridge history that someone has accomplished that goal. Previously the most goals scored by an individual was 70,” the Coach said. “Ellie has been with the team since the eighth grade, but that year was Covid, and it wasn’t a true first season. I could only imagine where she’d be if she had that full year.”

Bouchard, who is committed

to playing field hockey at Bryant University, still has one more year with the high school to add to her history breaking numbers.

Another athlete who has been on the team since the eighth grade, is sophomore Julianna Casucci. Over her first two seasons she found herself patrolling the mid-field, but with the vacancies left by the graduating seniors Rosborough moved her into the forward position. Here she would score 34 goals, including 2 in the championship game, while adding 6 assists on the season.

Giving the Spartans a one-two punch are sophomore attacking midfielders Kendall Gillmore and Amelia Blood. Gillmore would net 16 goals and 12 assists for 28 points, while her counterpart found the net on 21 different occasions while adding 25 assists for a team leading 46 points.

Gillmore, who uses her incredible speed and stick handling skills to get down the field, was able to score the only goal in the game

against Division 1 Walpole. Blood, on the other hand, is the team’s quarterback on the field igniting and creating for her teammates. She is also the primary corner hitter for the team.

Both athletes are year-round field hockey players and have been named to the National team and are now hoping to make the travel team. Other offensive players for the Spartans on the forward line are Tessa Johnson and Ava Rosborough, while Brooklyn Kaferlein, Aubrey Bouchard, Natalie Orr, and Ella Pezzullo provided strong midfield play.

Defensively Uxbridge was led by yet another sophomore goalkeeper Julia Okenquist. In addition to not allowing a single goal during the tournament, the sophomore posted 16 shutouts in 24 games this season while only allowing 13 goals to get

**CHAMPIONS**  
continued on page 19

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# Nursing Student Earns “Be There Certificate”

**A**shley Breault of Brookfield, a practical nursing student at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy recently completed training and obtained her Be There Certificate.

The Be There Certificate is a self-paced learning experience designed to increase mental health literacy. The training provides knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to safely support anyone who may be struggling with their mental health. According to [betherecertificate.org/](http://betherecertificate.org/) “It provides a deep understanding of Be There’s Five Golden Rules — a simple but actionable framework on how to recognize when someone might be struggling with their mental health, your role in supporting that person, and how to connect them to the help they deserve.”

Breault has been a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at Quaboag Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center since 2021. She was previously honored as Employee of the month at Quaboag and is active with mentorship since 2022. She completed her CNA and Home Health Aide Certification at the Fieldstone School in 2021. Breault is an alumna of Quaboag Regional Middle High School (2019). She is certified in Mental Health First Aid, Dementia Care, Stop the Bleed, HCP/BLS Provider CPR and first aid. She recently participated in her clinical team’s Luminary lighting project for the Alzheimer’s Association’s the Longest Night to shine a light to diminish the dark-

ness and illuminate a path towards a world where Alzheimer’s and dementia are nothing but a memory.



Breault joins 31 other members of the 2024 cohort progressing to term 2 of the rigorous 10-month practical nursing program at Bay Path. She previously took the leadership in handling Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy merchandise (sweatshirts & hoodies) distribution for the PN Class of 2024 and assisted with stocking the Practical Nursing student food pantry. Photo shows Breault with her Be There Certificate.

According to Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN, Academy Director, “At Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy we believe that student engagement and

patient advocacy are contributory to a well-rounded, prudent nurse. Success is intentional. We ensure that our PN students are relevant and actively engaged in empowering themselves, especially when it comes to mental health.”

The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy program is a 40-week, (10-month), full-time, Monday through Friday, evening program. The program begins mid-August and is completed in late June. Graduates receive a Practical Nursing Certificate and are eligible to take the NCLEX-PN licensure exam. The Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy is fully approved by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services Department of Public Health Board of Registration in Nursing [mass.gov/dph/boards/rn](http://mass.gov/dph/boards/rn) and is accredited by the Commission on Occupational Education, [council.org](http://council.org). For more information visit [baypath.net](http://baypath.net).

## CHAMPIONS

*continued from page 18*

past her.

“While she may be the backbone, our defense played tough quality D-1 teams during the regular season and were able to get the kinks out,” the Coach said. “In doing so, they were more than ready for the post-season and came together to play some of their best field hockey.”

Coming to the aid in front of Okenquist was Maddie Cammuso, Addie Blood, and Bailey Dzivasen, who was consistent in her play, especially in her pressure.

With three State Championships within the last three years Rosborough doesn’t really have to do too much to get her squad ready for next fall as they look to go after number four.

“In terms of motivating them; there is nothing that I have to do. They are all experienced pleyer and know what it is like to be a state champion,” she said. “They

are athletes that want to win and push one another to be better. We definitely have the players and that has been the biggest difference in my 10 years. The only thing I wish they’d do more of is compete in the off-season more.”

Having the players ready for when they enter high school is one of the biggest reason the Spartans have had so much success over the past few years. According to Rosborough, the youth field hockey program has defiantly benefit the high school team. The girls are involved with field hockey at an early age and not only does their game evolve, but it prepares them and has them ready to step onto the high school field.

“Our success on the high school level is combined with the fact that it comes from the heart of the youth program,” Rosborough said.

As long as the girls in Uxbridge continue to play field hockey within the youth league the high school should be able to compete at a high-level year in and year out.

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# Celebrating Christmas Together In Uxbridge

The Uxbridge Senior Center hosted our annual Christmas gathering with all our friends on Thursday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. This event was sponsored by the Uxbridge Elderly Connection which is the Senior Center's major fundraising organization. Tommy Rull was back to entertain us. We all enjoy his music and appreciate his enthusiasm.

Everyone received Hannaford's gift cards from the Uxbridge Elderly Connection and received hand towels and dish cloths from the Uxbridge Knitting Group. A





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special donut treat was also provided by our Activities Coordinator, Sally Selvidge. Those that attended were served a delicious ham lunch, including all the fixings, cooked by our own chef, Pat Ordway. Hannaford's Market donated the dinner rolls and the holiday pie. We appreciate their ongoing support and contributions.

We also received a visit from State Rep Mike Soter who helped us serve the lunch. We also had a special visit from Santa, aka Russel Wise. Thank you for making our party very special!

Thank you to all our staff and volunteers for making this celebration such a success! The Uxbridge Senior Center wishes everyone a

very Merry Christmas and Happiest New Year for 2024! If you are interested in attending the Center or hearing about all our programs and services, please reach out to Lisa Bernard, Director, at 508-278-8622. The Center is located at 36 South Main Street in Uxbridge.

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# Uxbridge Senior Center

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**N**ews from Senior Center Director Lisa Bernard  
Need help filing your tax returns? Sign up for the AARP Tax Assistance Program! The program begins on Monday, February 5 takes place every Monday morning until early April. Please call the Center soon to book your appointment.

If you need fuel assistance, please call the senior center to book your appointment! Emergency applications are now taking seven days or more. Please do not wait until your oil tank is empty to get assistance. The senior center is here to help.

Certain seniors who own or rent residential property in Massachusetts, as their principal residence, are eligible for a refundable tax credit with the Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit. As a senior citizen (65 or older by December 31 of the tax year), you may be eligible to claim a refundable credit on your Massachusetts personal income tax return. The Circuit Breaker tax credit is based on the actual real estate taxes or rent paid on the Massachusetts residential property you own or rent and occupy as your principal residence. The maximum credit amount for tax year 2023 is \$2,590. If the credit you're owed exceeds the amount of the total tax payable for the year, you'll be refunded the additional amount of the credit without interest. Find out if you qualify and how to apply, go to Mass.gov for more information or call your tax accountant.

The senior center is working on our carpools to protect our vehicles in the winter months. The carpools are on order and will be installed soon. These carpools will be housed at the DPW parking lot located on Hecla Street. Thank you to the Town Facilities Manager, Bruce Burak, and the DPW for assisting us with this project. Our vehicles will soon be protected from the snow, sleet, and ice during the winter months.

Our computer and tech assistance classes are back on schedule on the first Monday of each month. If you need help on your laptop, cell phone or any device, please call us to book your appointment. Students from Blackstone Valley Technical High School and Uxbridge High School are here to help!

Just a reminder to all, when the Uxbridge Schools are closed

or have a snow delay due to inclement weather, the Senior Center lunch program will be closed. Be safe during the winter months and please call the senior center if you need assistance.

Thursday, January 4 - 10:30 a.m. Veterans' Services with Carl Bradshaw by appointment only. Call the Senior Center to sign up.

Friday, January 4 - 12:00 p.m. Lunch & Learn with Chief Montminy. Guest speaker will be Muriel Emond from Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging, Inc. She will be presenting "Grandparents Raising Grandkids." Be sure to RSVP for this informational luncheon.

Monday, January 8 - 3-4 p.m. Computer Tutoring with students from UHS and BVT. Call ahead to book an appointment. This program will be held on the first Monday of each month. Next date is February 5.

Tuesday, January 9 - 1 p.m. Uxbridge Library Book Club. They will be discussing "The Language of Flowers" by Vanessa Diffenbaugh. You are welcome to join us for lunch on this day, just be sure to call ahead to "book" yours!

Tuesday, January 9 - 1:00 p.m. Benefit Enrollment Specialist from Tri-Valley, Inc. Call the Senior Center to book an appointment with Katelynn Wackell. Next date will be February 13.

Thursdays, January, 11, 18, 25 - 1:30 p.m. Come play Scrabble! If you'd like to join us for lunch and have a relaxing afternoon playing Scrabble, give us a call to sign up.

Monday, January 15 - The Senior Center will be closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. We will re-open on January 16.

Friday, January 19 - 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. "PopUp Library" at the Senior Center. Books will be on display to check out, library

card sign-ups, book hold pick-ups, etc. This program is being offered by the Uxbridge Free Public Library.

Friday, January 26 - 12 p.m. - January Birthday Cake Celebration

Monday, January 29th - 1:30 p.m. "Ask the Attorney" with Attorney Ralph Tepper, by appointment only. Please the Senior Center to schedule your appointment.

Tuesday, January 30 - 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Ask the Nurse Free Blood Pressure Clinic with Nancy Favulli, Salmon Health VNA. RSVP to participate and to join us for lunch.

Card game played during lunch on Mondays. No card game on January 15.

Hannaford grocery shopping every Tuesday. Pick up begins at 8:30 a.m. Please sign up in advance by calling us at 508-278-8622 to reserve your seat on the van.

Knitting Club every Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.

Every Wednesday - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. The Uxbridge Senior Center Transportation Program Community Shuttle. This shuttle is for seniors and individuals with disabilities to destinations such as post office, pet care appointments, hair salon or barber, bank, pharmacy and shopping anywhere in the Uxbridge/Northbridge area. Note: this replaces the weekly bank/pharmacy and Shaw's Ocean State rides. Call 508-278-8622 for

more information and to book your ride. Requests require a 48-hour notice.

Wednesdays - 1- 3:30 p.m. Canasta Hand, Knee & Foot Card Game

Thursdays - 1:30 p.m. Come by for an afternoon playing Scrabble. Boards are supplied by the Senior Center.

Medical Transportation is accepting appointments. Call 508-278-8622 to schedule your rides.

The Senior Center is in need of the following donations: Lysol wipes, newly packaged napkins, paper towels, tissues, toilet paper, ground regular and decaf coffee. We thank you for your support.

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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@theyankeexpress.com](mailto:news@theyankeexpress.com).

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 13**

• Take Down the Wall presents Open Mic Night at 6-8:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 13 at the Singh Performance Center, 60 Douglas Road Whitinsville. Come in from the cold and enjoy an evening of music and

poetry in a safe and encouraging environment. All are welcome to this free event. Suggested donation, \$5. Future open mic nights will be held on Saturday, February 10 and Saturday, March 9. Reunion Tap and Table On Wednesday, January 24 from 5-9 p.m. Between the Waves Music presents Jean Batista at Reunion Tap and Table, 1227 Providence Street, Whitinsville.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 27**

• Third Annual Oxford Winter Fest 10:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. To benefit Special Olympics 4 Maple Road, Oxford. Public event.  
10:30am: POLAR PLUNGE at Carbundle Pond to benefit Special Olympics.  
11am: Pancake Breakfast at First Congregational Church with Elsa & Anna!  
Beginning at NOON: Activities on the Common: Food Trucks, 104.5 XLO, Children's Games, Ice Sculpture Demo, Fire Pits, S'mores, Wishing Trees, Hot Chocolate, Coffee, P&D Pizza, \*Horse-drawn Wagon Rides.

Community Center Vendor Fair & Ice-Skating Rink plus family games, crafts & cookie decorating workshop, Senior Center Art Exhibition, Library Book Bingo & StoryTime

**SUNDAYS JANUARY 14, JANUARY 21, FEBRUARY 4, FEBRUARY 18**

• The New England Country Music Club will hold the following dances with live Classic Country Bands at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., N. Uxbridge. Sunday, Jan 14, "The Farmhands" Sunday, Jan. 21, Al Carter" Sunday, Feb. 4, "Rustic Country" Sunday, Feb 18, "Jessie Caruso and Ambush" Doors open at 12:15 p.m., music 1-5 p.m., \$11 for non-members, Snacks may be brought in, cash bar. For more information, visit <http://www.Facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub>

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 16**

• The SciFi Book Club at the Douglas Library will next meet on January 16 @ 6:30 pm.

The book to be discussed is "Shadow and Bone" by Leigh Bardugo..

**MONDAY, JANUARY 22**

• Milford Regional Medical Center, Inc. Board of Trustees will host the Annual Meeting of the Corporation on beginning at 5:30 p.m. The in-person meeting will be held in the hospital's Atrium Café. The public is invited to attend.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 23**

• The Book Bunch at the Douglas Library will next meet on January 23 @ 4:00 pm. The book is The Courage of Sarah Noble by Alice Dalgliesh. Call 508-476-2695 or email [dso-derman@cwmmars.org](mailto:dso-derman@cwmmars.org) to register.

**STARTING TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13**

St. Peter's Parish in Northbridge will offer the ALPHA program on Tuesday evenings starting February 13, 2024 to May 7, 2024 from 6:30PM to 8:00PM. Sessions will be held in the parish hall, 39 Church Avenue, Northbridge. ALPHA is a series of interactive sessions to help people explore the basics of the Christian faith. The goal of ALPHA is to create a warm welcoming, non-threatening, non-pressured and non-judgmental environment where guests are accepted unconditionally. Each session looks at a different question around faith. We start with a light meal, followed by a video and small group discussion. There is no charge to attend ALPHA evenings. There is a good will offering to help cover the cost of the meal.

If you would like to join us for ALPHA, please contact Louise Forget, 508-234-6355 or email: [religoued@stpeterrockdale.org](mailto:religoued@stpeterrockdale.org) to register or for more information.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18**

• Storyteller Sari Bittocks will present the Tragic and True 1778 Crime Story of Bathsheba Spooner. Learn about the fascinating scandal that led to her unfortunate demise of Joshua Spooner at the hands of his wife in Brookfield. But why was Bathsheba really silenced and sentenced to death? At Mendon Historical Museum, 15 Hastings Street, Mendon. Snow date February 25.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25**

• Greater Worcester Model Train Show Auburn Elks 10 A.M. – 3 P.M. Auburn Elks Club, 754 Southbridge Street Auburn. Donation \$6, kids under 12 free with adult For show information, [mrr.org](http://mrr.org)

**SATURDAY, MARCH 16**

• Blackstone Valley Home Expo 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Sponsored by UniBank Northbridge High School Field House, Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville Admission \$3 For more information visit: [blackstonevalley.org](http://blackstonevalley.org) or contact: [loneil@blackstonevalley.org](mailto:loneil@blackstonevalley.org)

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

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

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Girls in Grade 4 and 5 are invited to join Girl Scout troop 65050 that meets every other Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. in Douglas.

Register now to save your place as troops fill up quickly. The cost of annual membership is \$35 and financial assistance is available.

Girl Scouts is the number one organization for girls to learn leadership, financial literacy, life skills, STEM skills, outdoorsmanship

and community service. Previous Scouting experience is not necessary. Register at <http://bit.ly/troop65050>.

troop65050. For more information, email [info@gscwm.org](mailto:info@gscwm.org) or call 508-365-0115.

# Pasta for Paws

Dog Orphans Inc will host its 10th Annual Pasta for Paws on Saturday, February 3 from 5-9 p.m. at the Pleasant Valley Country Club, 95 Armsby Road, Sutton. The Pasta Buffet will include salad, pasta with marinara, pasta primavera with vegetables, meatballs and rolls. Desserts provided by friends and Giovanni's Italian Bakery.

available at Dog Orphans or on our website [dogorphans.com](http://dogorphans.com). We are also looking for donations for gift baskets.



**Dog Orphans Inc**  
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