

## Auburn Emergency Services - Highly-Skilled Medical Professionals

BY JANET STOICA  
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They're certainly not like the shows depicted in movies and on TV. The calm and detail-oriented staffs of real-life ambulance services are cool, calm, and collected. "This is not how many

is to focus on our patient as the first 15 minutes of our call to them is critical for patient survival especially for cardiac events and strokes. Movies and TV shows set unrealistic expectations."

Outside of Worcester, Auburn is the largest and busiest fire and rescue department in the south-



Above, Tess DiDonato, EMS Coordinator, Auburn Fire-Rescue  
Left, Auburn's EMS Motorcycle

52 including the Chief, Deputy Chief, Captain/Fire Inspector, and administrative positions as well as a full-time mechanic. On the emergency side there is a staff of 44. For their two fire stations, there are four groups of 11 personnel on the 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. shifts. Seven are headquartered at the main fire station and four at the West Street station.

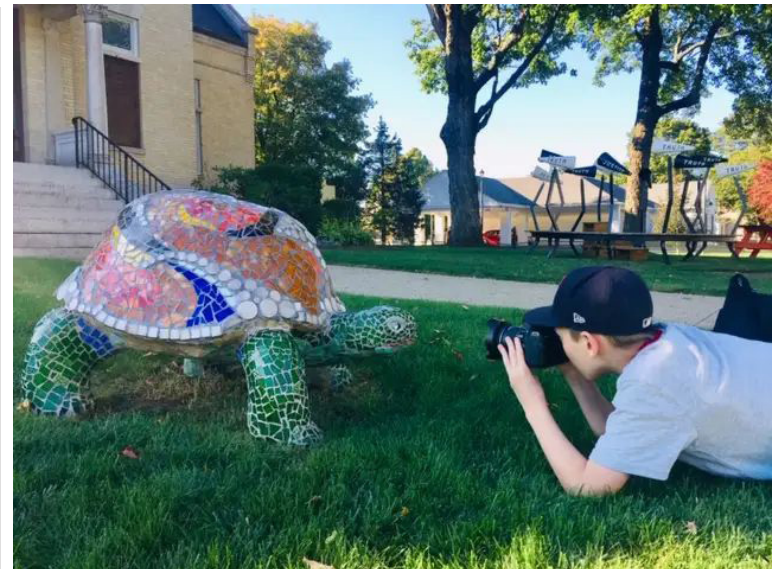
The town has four ambulances, but staff only two. "It's our goal to staff a third ambulance," said Chief Coleman, "we currently employ 32 paramedics and 8 basic EMTs. Basic EMTs perform largely first aid and our paramedics are able to deliver 35 different medications as well as administer advanced moni-

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emergency personnel are shown on media shows," said Auburn Fire-Rescue Department's Chief Stephen Coleman, "watching real paramedics is not a rapid-action movie, we are not go, go, go. Our job is to calm our patient and family and not to rush out of the situation they are in. Calm and precise treatment is our goal. In today's world, the best treatment

ern Worcester County fire district made up of 28 cities and towns. The district stretches from the western county towns of Holland and Wales to the southern towns of Webster and Douglas to Upton, Mendon, and Blackstone. It's a significant area according to Chief Coleman. Auburn's population is approximately 16,000 residents. Auburn has a full-time staff of



Oxford Library's Art in the Park sculpture

## Oxford's Free Public Library is for Everyone

BY JANET STOICA  
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Ah yes, your local public library! It's free and quiet and not used very much anymore, is it? If you happen to visit the Oxford Free Public Library though, you'll have to keep those preconceived thoughts to yourself. This place is hoppin' jumpin' and jiving like you haven't seen in decades. Their entire second floor is entirely dedicated to the children of our area, you know who I mean ... the next generation who will soon become members of our town committees and leaders of our government. As a child, I lived at

the library in the summer. I could drive there blindfolded on my bike with its flowing handlebar streamers and my brother's old unwanted baseball cards clothes-pinned to my wheel spokes so they'd make that crazy flapping noise. After parking my transport, I'd enter through the well-worn oak doors and return the books I'd just read to the check-in desk and begin my search for more adventures which I'd happily find and then plopp down in a chair to read the first few pages determining if this book would be one of my borrowed choices. Your

**LIBRARY**  
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**AUBURN**

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toring in addition to cardiac monitoring. We send an ambulance and fire truck to every call. Two ambulance personnel are good but having a third responder if the situation is serious is essential. We are then able to treat the patient and extricate them. The moving component works closely to the treatment component. Two paramedics must be able to handle the patient's vital signs. It's essentially bringing the Emergency Room to the patient. Medicines and pre-hospital care has transitioned

so much. The first 10-15 minutes spent with a patient are very critical, it's the patient's best chance for survival. Everyone on-scene has a role. With the extra personnel on our fire trucks, we can cut our on-scene time by 50% and then get the patient to the hospital."

Additionally, the Auburn Fire Rescue Department operates the only motorcycle in the state licensed as a Class V Ambulance. It's for special events and rides with the Central Mass Law Enforcement Counsel's Motor Unit. Although popular in other parts of the country, this is a unique way of providing advanced life support pre-hospital care at large gather-

ings that is not as popular in New England.

The town's Emergency Services Coordinator, Tess DiDonato, had just completed a 24-hour shift when I caught up with her. She has 31 years of experience and is a paramedic. "I always wanted to be part of this," said Ms. DiDonato, "I've always had a drive to help and I'm able to assist medically. We do not rush into a patient's home or situation and then rush them out. Your calmness level is extremely important not only to the patient but also to their family. If you can provide comfort and confidence to patients, the patient realizes that good and experienced people are

helping them and new paramedics will also take notice of the level of composure you are demonstrating."

"You never know what a situation will be. Auburn has several major highways running through town and we've had many auto accidents. We also have some town residents who are fall risks and that's fine because that's why we're here. I've delivered babies, helped our elderly, and assisted at major accidents. A recent situation involved a phone call asking for help because a flying squirrel was causing a ruckus in a resident's chimney." Apparently, the rodent had fallen into the chimney but just couldn't make its way out. The crew assisted with trapping the flying animal and releasing it to the outdoors.

"Another situation involved a tractor-trailer rollover. The driver was trapped upside-down in the tractor. The City of Worcester sent their heavy-rescue truck to stabilize the vehicle while we worked for 2-1/2 hours to extricate the driver. He did survive but with a leg injury. It took a huge amount of teamwork. On another occasion, I was driving home and saw cars ahead of me stopped with a bicyclist lying in the middle of the road. I approached the scene and saw a teenager on the ground. I

could tell she wasn't getting enough air and if she wasn't moved to another position, her oxygen levels would suffer possibly causing brain damage. I identified myself to the incoming paramedics and we were able to safely move her. She had been hit hard by a pickup truck and knocked out of her sneakers. I decided then and there that no matter what happened, I was going to notify her parents that I had been there to assist her. Even though I provided a small amount of assistance, it was rewarding to know that I helped her. She had a lot of broken bones and bruising. As it turned out, the young lady is in good condition now and just recently graduated from high school," said Ms. DiDonato.

"We are always cognizant of getting you out of your home and to the hospital as soon as possible," stated Ms. DiDonato, "that first 15 minutes of our entry to your home is so critical. We will get you to the hospital as quickly as possible."

There is no doubt that our paramedics and EMTs are the heroes of our world, in our time of need, in our emergencies. Calling "911" is always the fastest way to get help. Review and teach your children how to call "911" – it could be the best lesson they're ever taught.

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**LIBRARY**

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local library is brimming with things to do. All you have to do is visit and take a look.

The second annual Community Art Show will soon be appearing at the Oxford Library. All age groups will have fascinating displays of photos, quilting, and other artwork

will be available from 11:10 a.m. to 12:10 a.m. The program begins on June 24 and runs through August 16 (no lunch the week of July 1st due to the July 4th holiday). There will be four sites with two sites at the schools for breakfast and lunch, another site at the Orchard Hill Apartments, and the last site at the Oxford Library. There'll be picnic tables outdoors along with lawn games. We're excited to be able to

BulkBookStore.com site describes the fun and engaging publication as "exploring the fabric of America over hot coffee and penny candy. Step through the wooden doors of a New England general store and step back in time, into a Norman Rockwell painting and into the heart of America. A nostalgic picture of this colonial staple and, fortunately, steadfast institution of small towns from Connecticut

one else would. Stubborn as New Englanders themselves, the general store has refused to become a mere sentimental relic of an earlier age."

"My husband and I decided to take our vacation time and visit each of the general stores listed in the book," said Ms. Sullivan, "we've visited spots in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. Soon, we'll be finishing up our adventure by visiting five stores in Vermont. Each store was very different and brings us into small-town communities. In each town, we also visit their local library. Places we never would've known about. We recently visited the actor Steve Carell's General Store in Marshfield MA. He has a store manager who

runs the place for him." Sounds like a great adventure, for sure.

The library has received awards for its Children's Room. The area community has also voted the book haven "Best Library" and why not? With the attentive staff, collections, and ongoing educational programs, it's the absolute best place to simmer in the summer while also cooling off and entering the fascinating worlds of adventure. There's nothing like a good book!

Oxford Free Public Library, 339 Main Street, Oxford MA 01540. Phone: (508) 987-6003. Check out their website for more details and hours: www.oxfordmapubliclibrary.org Also on Facebook.



*Oxford Library's children enjoying themselves*

including an interesting seamstress display from the 1970's. "For the Love of Art" sponsored by funding from the Mass. Cultural Council will also feature various artwork like sculptures, knitting, and painting. Something for everyone to see and admire. Local artist displays will run from July 1st to August 10th. Art in the Yard begins on June 15 and will be shown through the fall months. There will be 8 pieces of artists' creation all with their own QR codes that can be scanned by visitors' cellphones and will describe the outdoor works. Art in the Yard is sponsored by a grant provided by The Janet Malser Humanities Trust.

"This year, the library will also be partnering with Project Bread to provide meals all summer for all Oxford school children aged up to 18 years," said Cathleen Sullivan, Assistant Library Director, "lunch

partner with our school system for the lunch program. The summer reading program begins soon and what better way to enjoy a book or other library activity?"

Ms. Sullivan lives in Oxford and has always brought her children to the town's library. She began her library affiliation as the Evening Circulation Clerk in the Children's Room. "It's the best hidden secret job," she said, "people come in for services that are fun and informative. I worked evenings and Saturdays while home-schooling my children so the schedule worked well for me for 15 years." Since 2017, she's been the Assistant Library Director and the teen librarian.

"A few years ago, Ted Reinstein from Boston Channel 5's Chronicle show came to the library to give a talk about his and Anne-Marie Dorning's recent book "New England's General Stores." The

to Maine. This is where children of each generation take their first allowance to buy their very own penny candy. In tough times, the general store treated customers like family, extending credit when no

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SPORTS

# Oxford Looking To Build a Field Hockey Program

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Last fall, the Oxford High School field hockey program had 21 athletes come out to play the highest number since the pre-Covid years. With that said, the Pirates also have a MIAA waiver that allows seventh and eighth grade students to participate in the sport if they desire.

While last season's numbers were up, Varsity Coach Dana Peloso was looking to move those numbers even further up the ladder. After putting on a field hockey clinic at the Middle School, he found that there was a large outpouring of fifth grade girls that were interested in the sport. Having such success with the clinic he proposed putting together a club team at the middle school level.

"After announcing the program at the fifth-grade level, we immediately had 29 girls sign up; we found that they were interested in playing the sport," Peloso said. "We are hoping that this will be the beginning of a feeder program to the high school. The kids will play on the club level then play at the middle school and right into high school."

The inaugural season began on April 11 at the Clara Barton School and

concluded on May 30 with the girls learning the necessities of the sport every Thursday from 2:45 – 4 pm.

"We wanted to teach the kids the sport using drill-based skills, including all aspects of the game of field hockey," Peloso said. "We incorporated them each week with the rules and fundamental skills. There were only three or four that knew of the sport, for the rest it was the first time that they had ever picked up a field hockey stick."

Peloso and assistant Alex "Snook" Kallgren volunteered to run the program. Kallgren, played the sport at East Connecticut State University, where she holds the school's scoring record.

Having been a main part of the learning process for these young girls, the Oxford varsity field hockey coach could see that the kids on the field were really enjoying themselves.

"Watching them take part in the



weekly teachings you could see that they were into the game," Peloso said. "And a majority of them seem to be enjoying learning and playing the sport, which is good for the sports future."

If things continue to go well, which they seem to be, Peloso is hoping to put together a sixth grade fall team which would allow the girls from this club extravaganza slide right into the next program this coming fall when they enter the sixth grade. By playing for the Oxford sixth grade team, those girls will then be eligible to try out for the varsity team when they reach the seventh grade.

The only thing stopping them from playing varsity field hockey as a seventh and eighth grader would be if Oxford were able to get more than enough girls to try out for the varsity team – allowing the Pirates to field a junior varsity team as well. If this, a JV team, were to happen then under the MIAA waiver rule the girls could only play for the lower team.

According to the coach, Oxford would need a minimum of 22 girls to have both a JV and varsity squad. Currently, the varsity team has 17 (14 from the high school and 3 from the middle school) players returning next fall, which gives the Pirates a good start on getting its second team. Peloso is also looking at some new seventh graders to try out for the team.

The coaches' goal is to have a solid 15 players (11 starters on the field and 4 subs) suite up for the Oxford varsity team. If they can then get at least another 7 (6 plus a goalie) they'd be able to field a junior varsity team.

"Most schools would prefer you had at least 11 players on the field, but they'd be willing to play with only 7 or 9," Peloso said "Ideally the JV team would be made up of the underclassmen with lesser skills, but girls on the varsity team not getting a lot of playing time could also drop down and play for the JV team."

If the school opts for the sixth-grade team, those fifth graders will be ready and willing to continue playing field hockey for them next fall and if Peloso can get the minimum of 22 girls he'd also have a junior varsity team in addition to his varsity team. With those teams in place, Oxford would know have the feeder program it has needed to be a successful team of the future.

The more girls get involved with field hockey at Oxford, the better the chance of the Pirates taking their game to the next level.

The Oxford field hockey club will be hosting another clinic July 8-9 from 9 a.m. to 3 pm and July 11 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for children ages 8 thru 17. The cost is \$80 for the first child and \$70 each additional child from the same family. For more information or to RSVP email Dana Peloso at dpeloso@oxps.org

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# Worcester County Seniors Celebrated at Sheriff's Annual Senior Picnic

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**O**n Saturday, June 8th, over 1,000 seniors from across Worcester County filtered through SAC Park in Shrewsbury to receive their FREE barbeque lunch provided by the Worcester County Sheriff's Office and Worcester County Reserve Deputy Sheriff Association.

Sheriff Evangelidis and his teams have been celebrating the senior citizens of Worcester County for over a decade. Each summer, a team of over 100 volunteers is assembled to serve seniors barbecue boxed lunches and to hand out raffle giveaways, goodie bags, scratch tickets, Chick-fil-A gift cards, and much more.

For many seniors, the Sheriff's Annual Senior Picnic signifies the start of summer and is a highly anticipated event.

The Sheriff's Office receives support and donations from local companies and organizations such as Table Talk Pies, Dimitria



Delights, the Massachusetts State Lottery, Polar Beverage, Atlas Distributing, Chick-fil-A Worcester, Chick-fil-A Westborough,

and Automatic Rolls of New England. "It doesn't get much better than this," commented Worcester

County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis as he stood among the cars navigating the Senior Picnic Drive-Thru. "We strive to deliver

the best experience possible for attendees. Our incredible volunteers make this event possible, and I couldn't be any more pleased with the turnout this year. I enjoy reconnecting with friends and familiar faces from all over Worcester County."

This year, the picnic was sponsored by the Worcester County Reserve Deputy Sheriff's Association and community partners such as CareOne at Millbury, The Overlook, Christopher Heights Assisted Living, The Gun Parlor, Mercadante Funeral Home, the Worcester Red Sox, McCarty Companies, the Massachusetts State Lottery, Tito's Handmade Vodka, and many other organizations.

A special thank you to the students and staff from Worcester Technical High School for volunteering their time to help make the day memorable for attendees.

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# Auburn and Oxford residents sworn in as correctional officers

On Friday, May 31, Sheriff Lew Evangelidis administered the Correctional Officers Oath to Katherine LaRose of Oxford (center) and Manuel Rosario of Auburn (left) and Ryan Logan (right) of

the care, custody, and control of inmates at the Worcester County Jail & House of Correction. The academy incorporates both classroom time and hands-on instruction. Throughout the academy,

exam, physical fitness test, background check, and psychological screening test. To ensure fairness and impartiality, Evangelidis has also implemented a policy that prohibits the submission of



WCSO Officers Katherine LaRose of Oxford, Ryan Logan of Millbury, and Manuel Rosario of Auburn.

Millbury, three of the 24 graduating recruits of the Sheriff's Office's 61st Basic Recruit Training Academy (B.R.T.A.) at the department's Training and Command Center in West Boylston. The graduates of B.R.T.A. #61 constitute a highly diverse cohort of recruits from eleven different towns across Massachusetts.

The Worcester County Sheriff's Office Academy is a paid full-time 13-week program that teaches recruits how to handle and maintain

recruits are exposed to all areas of corrections, including de-escalation, duty to intervene, fire safety, defensive tactics, first responder training, suicide prevention, mental health, and substance abuse. The academy also includes daily physical fitness training, weekly exams on classroom content, and frequent guest lectures/demonstrations from many partners in public safety.

Before the start of the academy, applicants must pass a written

letters of recommendation from politicians and gives preference to hiring those who have served our country.

The Worcester County Sheriff's Office is accepting applications for its 62nd Basic Recruit Training Academy, which will begin in September 2024. To learn more about what it takes to be a correctional officer, please visit WorcesterCountySheriff.com/Careers/Correctional-Officer-Academy/.

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# Webster Five CEO to retire

**W**ebster Five announced that Don Doyle will retire on July 1, 2025 from his role as President and CEO of the community Bank after 20 years with the company, nine of which have been at the helm. Brian Westerlind, Worcester native and current COO/CFO, has been approved by the Board of Directors and will take over the role upon Doyle's retirement.

Doyle has been a fixture in the Worcester banking industry for 40 years, having started his career at Mechanics Bank in Worcester in 1985. The foundation of his leadership philosophy has always been to find a way to meet the Bank's business goals, while positively impacting the community.

During his tenure at Webster Five, Doyle focused the institution on technological advancements and progressive practices to enhance the customer/employee experience and take the company's growth to the next level. While weathering the COVID-19 pandemic, he initiated the construction of a new Auburn-based headquarters. In addition, under Doyle's leadership, the Webster Five Foundation has annually awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants to local nonprofits.

"It has been a great honor to spend the second half of my career at Webster Five," said Doyle. "This is not a job that can be done alone, and I am lucky to have worked alongside some of the most dedicated, innova-

tive and passionate professionals in the industry. Together we have achieved remarkable results, and I am excited to see Brian continue Webster Five's growth and success journey."

Westerlind joined Webster Five in 2010 as Chief Financial Officer, has over 20 years' experience in the banking industry and was recently promoted into the role of Chief Operating Officer. Overseeing a multitude of departments and functions in his current role, Westerlind is well poised to take this next step in his leadership journey with the financial institution. Having worked alongside Doyle on the Leadership Team during his entire Webster Five tenure, Westerlind has played a significant role in steering the Bank's overall vision, significantly contributing to the organization's overall success and growth.

"We have made great strides under Don's leadership, and I am thankful for his partnership and collaboration during his time as President and CEO," said Westerlind. "During this transition period we will work together to ensure a smooth changeover. I look forward to sharing my vision for Webster Five's future and continuing to work with the Board and our employees to achieve even greater success in the years to come."

With over 155 years rooted in Central Massachusetts, Webster Five is a financial and civic leader in

Worcester County. Westerlind holds those values close and exemplifies his own commitment to the community through leadership roles on the Boards of both the Worcester Community Action Council and the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce.

"Brian's commitment to excellence, the mission of Webster Five and the communities where we do business is testament to his selection and approval as the next President and CEO of the company," said Stephen H. Charniak, Chairman of the Board. "The Board members of the Bank are thrilled to elevate Brian to

the next level of leadership and what it means for the future of Webster

Five and we thank Don for his dedication over the past two decades."

Lake Chaggoggagoggmanchauggagogggchaubunagungamaugg



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# Sticking Together

BY AMY LECLAIRE

Some mornings are simply crazy. The week following Memorial Day was no exception. A four-day week caused a traffic jam in the flow of our typical week. Since Luke is a dog who married into a busy family, he was about to pay an unfair price. Ahem. That is, until I stepped in. Here's the Wednesday morning story.

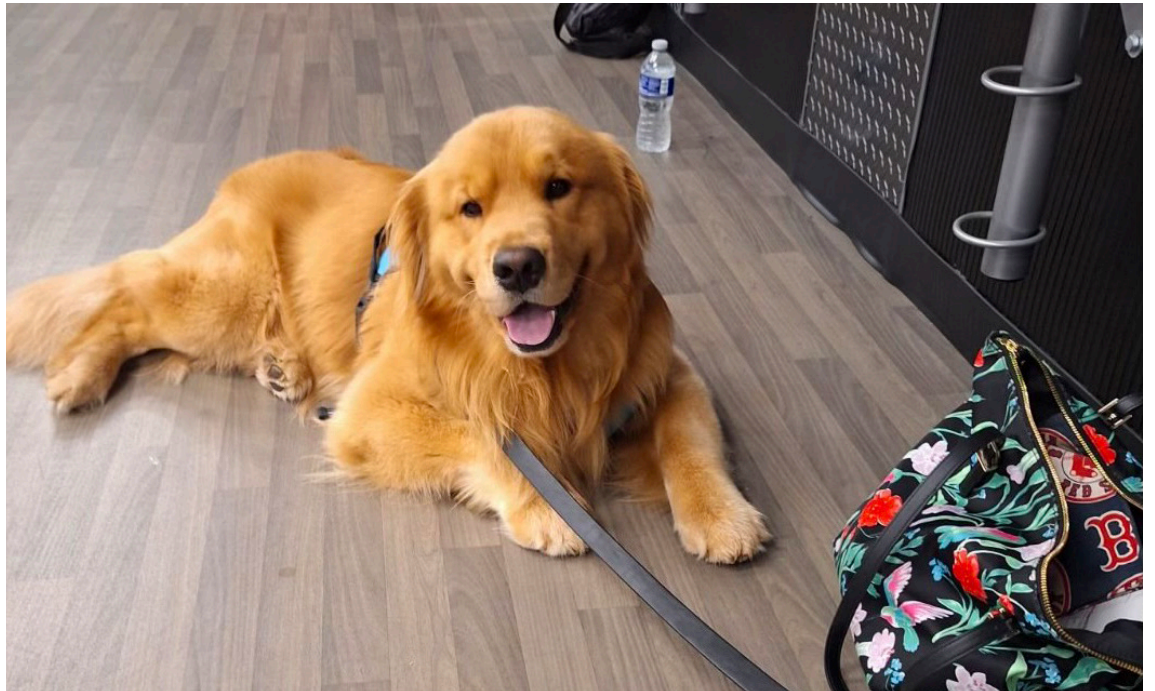
My son, Ben, fed Luke and let him out before leaving for work at 7:15 am. I checked into the kitchen fifteen minutes later to find the obvious note. LUKE ATE. (Luke has been known to bluff when a family member feeds him early, facing his bowl like an impoverished child in pursuit of a double dip). I did a happy dance. One less thing to do before leaving to teach a class. I texted my son a follow-up note. "Did Luke poop?" Dog parenting is much like training a toddler to

go on the potty. Scheduling and communication are important. My family is not above talking about Luke's poops. "No."

The weight of the world bore down upon me.

Jim, my husband and Luke's Daddy, entered the scene 15 minutes later, briefcase in hand. "You're headed to the office today?" I did the math. Who would be available for Luke this morning? "Do you think you can let Luke out to do his poop before you leave? I have class this morning."

Luke raised a brow. "Mummy, I'll go when I need to go." When Luke needed to and when he could go were two different things. Unlike my last few Golden Retrievers, Luke outgrew his crate when he was only four months old. He was a bull with a big head in a China closet that he resented. We heard him shift through the night like a sheet-tossing sleep partner and had to make a change. We allowed Luke the freedom to choose where he wanted to sleep downstairs. First, he created his own safe space beneath the kitchen table, where he curled up like a kitten throughout the night. I'd enter the kitchen to



find him waiting for the morning cue to get up and walk around. "Good boy, Luke!" Months passed, and he began to collapse on the dog beds we offered him. Now, at two and one-half, Luke has developed the sleep habits of a male living in his own bachelor pad. He snuggles with us on the couch. He stretches like a lion across accent rugs. He sips water from the toilet bowl. We're waiting to find him cracking open a Coors Light at 3 a.m. Luke stayed in his crate until he was over a year. When we left him alone for a few hours, even outside of the crate, he never had accidents. Luke is a dog of a different color.

"I never should have eaten that bunny poop. My stomach was off. I did my best to hide that mound on the edge of the carpet. How did you find it?"

Busy lives or not, Luke needed to do his business before we left the house. "Go do poopies, Luke."



Daddy let him out, but only to find Luke trotting back up the stairs, almost as though sensing the immediacy of our request, and

perhaps not wanting us to leave. He collapsed on the floor. His dog calendar was wide open. "I need to relax before the poop will come out."

"He'll be fine." Daddy detached from the conflict and headed out. I was less convinced that Luke would be fine. It wasn't fair to make him hold it or worse, not hold it. I did what every good Dog Mom does. I grabbed his leash and told myself we'd figure it out. "You want to come to Crunch Fitness with me, Luke?"

"I thought you'd never ask!" (I swear I noticed him wink to an invisible reader at that very moment). We drove in peace. Luke has been the easiest travel companion of all my dogs. He popped his head from the sunroof of his dog crate and quietly watched the cars and houses pass him by.

We arrived at Crunch Fitness ten minutes early on a sunny Wednesday morning. There was no way I could leave Luke in the car, even with the windows open. The temperature was already climbing. Dogs are vulnerable to heat stroke. With a few minutes to spare, I unloaded Luke and walked him along the sidewalk flanking the gym. We found a patch of mulch across the street. Luke did number two while solving problem number one. Hallelujah! But what would Luke do

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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



REAL ESTATE

# The Mistakes Buyers could Make Today Without a Pro Agent

**B**uyers face challenges in any market and today's is no different. With higher mortgage rates and rising prices and limited supply of homes for sale, there's a lot to consider. But, there's one way to avoid getting tripped up, and that's leaning on a real estate agent for the best possible advice. An expert's insights will help you avoid some of the most common mistakes homebuyers are making right now.



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

**PUTTING OFF PRE-APPROVAL**

As part of the home buying process, a lender will look at your finances to figure out what they're willing to loan you for your mortgage. This gives you a good idea of what you can borrow so you can really wrap your head around the financial side of things before you start looking at homes. While house hunting can be a lot more fun than talking about finances, you don't want to do this out of order. Make sure you get your pre-approval first. If you wait to get preapproved until the last minute, you might be scrambling to contact

a lender and miss the opportunity to put a bid on a home.

**HOLDING OUT FOR PERFECTION**

While you may have a long list of must-haves and nice-to-haves, you need to be realistic about your home search. Even though your ideal state is you find a home that checks every box, you may need to be willing to compromise especially since inventory is still low. Plus, a home that has everything you want may be too pricey. When you expect to find the perfect home, you could prolong the home buying process by holding out for something better. Or you could end up paying more for a home just because it meets all your needs. Instead, look for something that has most of your must-haves and good bones where you can add anything else you may need down the line.

**BUYING MORE HOUSE THAN YOU CAN AFFORD**

With today's mortgage rates and home prices, there's no arguing it's expensive to buy a home. And while it may be tempting to stretch your finances a bit further than you're comfortable with to make sure you get the house, you want to avoid overextending your budget. Make sure you talk to your agent about how changing mortgage rates impact your monthly payment. Focus on what monthly payment you can afford rather than fixating on the

maximum loan amount you qualify for. Just because you can qualify for a \$300,000 loan doesn't mean you can comfortably handle the monthly payments that come with it along with your other financial obligations. Every borrower's case is different, so factor in your whole financial profile when determining how much house you can afford.

**NOT WORKING WITH A LOCAL REAL ESTATE AGENT**

This last one may be the most important of all. Buying a home is a process that involves a lot of steps, paperwork, negotiation, and more. Rather than take all of this on yourself, it's a good idea to have a pro working with you. The right agent will reduce your stress and help the process go smoothly. Attempting to buy a home without a real estate agent makes the process more arduous than it needs to be. A real estate agent can give you professional guidance and legal references, market expertise and support, which will save you time, money and stress. They can also increase your chances of finding the right home so you don't have to spend hours scouring the internet for listings. Mistakes can cost you time, frustration, and money. If you want to buy a home in today's market, connect with The Marzeotti Group or a local real estate professional so you have a pro on your side who can help you avoid complications.

**LUKE**

*continued from page 8*

while I teach class? Where would I put Luke?

"That water bottle is the best!" Luke was about to party on through a Zumba class. He made an immediate connection with his Auntie Jo (sweet Bruno's Mom) and pranced about the room with her water bottle. He squealed joyfully. He could barely contain his sudden luck. "Fitness is the best. I feel like they cranked the AC too!" I set up my music with only one minute to spare. I couldn't let Luke roam freely about the room. Members needed to concentrate on the dances. How would I teach a full Zumba class with my dog?

I was about to find out that I would teach with my dog present very easily. Leashed and tied to a bar at the back end of the room beside Auntie Jo, Luke rested against her cloth pocketbook and listened

to the music calmly; an old man waiting for a catch on a fishing boat. He looked up every so often at me and broke into a smile that made my heart dance. "You can always count on me to be a good boy, Momma. We just need to stick together."

I couldn't agree with Luke more.

*Stay tuned for more on Luke Valentino.  
Follow him on IG @livingwith-lukevalentino  
Write to Amy at amyleclaire@hotmail.com*

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TALES FROM BEYOND

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# The Ghosts of Great Swamp

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

The Great Swamp fight in Charlestown, Rhode Island was one of the most important battles of King Philip's War. This is also known as the forgotten war as it does not appear in many scholastic history books or school curriculum which is rather unfortunate, as the conflict was the bloodiest war per capita ever fought on American soil. The Narragansetts had signed a neutral treaty with the English stating they would not get involved in the war but at the same time, felt obligated to help women and children from tribes that had been displaced during the conflict. Governor Winslow took this as a sign of treachery on the Narragansett's part and ordered an attack upon their winter quarters.

On December 19, 1675, 1,150 English and Mohegans, with the help of a captured Narragansett named Peter, easily marched up to Conanchet's five-acre fort in Great Swamp. At first, they found it difficult to penetrate the massive fortress until a Connecticut regiment found an opening from the rear of the fort and rushed in. The Indians immediately killed several of the English, including Captains Joseph Gardiner, Isaac Johnson and Nathaniel Davenport. The Indians, though great in numbers were mostly women, elderly men and children. They suddenly found themselves severely overpowered by the ingress

of colonial militia.

Ninety seven warriors fell that day and five hundred to one thousand women, children and other non-combatants were mercilessly slain. Most of the Narragansetts were killed, taken prisoner or ran into the woods where they succumbed to hunger or the elements. The brutal battle almost totally annihilated the Narragansett tribe. Upon retreat, the militia set the camp ablaze. The colonists, although victorious in the battle suffered greatly as well, having lost seventy men and one hundred and fifty wounded. Several of the casualties were English officers who fell early during this fight as they led the charge toward the fortress. More of the militia succumbed to their wounds on the long march through the deep snow and cold back to Smith's Blockhouse, now Smith's Castle in nearby North Kingstown.

There is a great burial ground where the casualties of war were interred and at night, the disembodied battle cries, gunshots, and screaming echoes through the hours of darkness as the spirits of those who perished in the struggle relive their last mortal moments.

Great Swamp Management Area is now used for hiking and scouting. In the fall and winter months, hunters grace the woodland looking for game. A long catwalk spans a section of the swamp where one can meander and imagine how difficult it must

have been to navigate the terrain, especially in winter. Many artifacts within the confines of the old encampment have been unearthed over the centuries such as arrowheads and musket balls. There are other artifacts, those from the other side that also linger within the management area. Ghosts of those who suffered in the skirmish are seen wandering throughout the swamp where they met their untimely fate. Warriors in full war paint and battle clothing are heard screaming battle cries and are sometimes seen flitting through the trees and brush. English militiamen and the ghosts of women and children who met a tragic end are among the spirits that still roam the swamp eternally reliving their day of infamy. Hunters, hikers and park service people all swear to the unearthly phenomena lurking among the thick within these cursed woods. As one traverses the trails and woods of Great Swamp, take in the history and never let it be repeated; there are enough ghosts in the recreational area due to the mistakes of humankind.

One more note; Since the 1930s, Narragansett and Wampanoag people have commemorated the battle annually at the site of the massacre in a ceremony initiated by Narragansett-Wampanoag scholar Princess Red Wing that includes ritual wailing by tribal women.

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# Quinsigamond Community College Spring 2024 Semester Dean and Merit Lists

A total of 459 students were named to the college's Dean's List and 1,072 students were named to the Merit List.

## QCC'S DEAN'S LIST SPRING 2024

Students who meet the criteria below and have earned 12 or more credits in a given semester are named to the Dean's List:

All grades must be "C" or higher. (No grades of "I" or "X" are permitted).

Semester Quality Point Average (QPA) must be 3.50 or higher, and cumulative QPA must be 2.00 or higher.

All courses must be college-level.

Auburn: Logan Alexander, Tyrese Baffour, James Bello, Emily Briddon, Kevin Do, Kevin Duong, Emelis Henriquez, Faith Joslyn, Tue Lac, Paul Landry, Andi Loce, Evelyn Montgomery  
 North Oxford: Joshua Addo  
 Oxford: Heather Byrne, Ariana

Gelardi, Jennifer Gum, Christopher Hadis, Melissa Lees, Patrick Reed, Tyler Wilson

## QCC'S MERIT LIST SPRING 2024

Students who meet the criteria below and have earned six or more credits in a given semester are named to the Merit List:

All grades must be "C" or higher. (No grades of "I" or "X" are permitted).

Semester Quality Point Average (QPA) must be 3.50 or higher, and cumulative QPA must be 2.00 or higher.

All courses must be college-level.

Auburn: Fiona Bruce, Zoe Coleman, Angela DiTommaso, Stefany Flynn, Daquan Gooch, Andy Ho, Mark John, Leesa Kamaru, Laura Keister, Michael Langway, Lais Milioli, Chanel Napoli, Jamie Nash, Tien Luc Nguyen, My Ortega, Hannah Patterson, Christopher Pierce,

Jessica Reed, Sara Rufli, Meaghan Wales, Amelia Whitney  
 North Oxford: Antony Bradford, Nicole Dayutis, Jessica Gonzalez, Shannen Hennessy,

Maureen Jones  
 Oxford: Louis Badu, Nicole Bjorklund, Samantha Borelli, Cassandra Bute, Zachary Finizza, Colton Heerd, Destiny Lentine,

Kimberly Lindsey, Ellie Makowiecki, Jared Torosian, Julie Viola, Juliana Zalewski

# Oxford Elects Russell Rheault to Board of Selectmen, 10% Voter Turnout

BY JANET STOICA  
 jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

Oxford held town elections on Tuesday, May 21, with results as follows: Russell Rheault, Board of Selectmen's 3-year term, 656 votes; Mark Dean Robbins, 373 votes.

Board of Library Trustees had Harry Roger Williams running solo for a 3-year term as well with 864 votes and Leah Ann Filipkowski running unopposed for a 2-year term on the School Committee. Ms. Filipkowski received 834 votes.

The School Committee's 3-year

term roster had 2 candidates up for election with no opposition: Palmina Elizabeth Griffin, 657 votes and Todd M. Proctor with 619 votes.

The Southern Worcester County Regional Vocational School District Committee 3-year term went to the solo candidate, David H. Grenier with 873 votes. Also unopposed for the Housing Authority's 5-year term was Wayne Alfred McFarland 855 votes.

Of the town's 10,667 registered voters, 1,044 votes were cast, a 10% turnout.

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**Brake caliper lubricant, DIY oil change and a used Tesla – to buy or not to buy?**

**Q.** I have a Honda Accord and it will need brakes soon. I know I should lubricate the brake caliper pins; is there a certain lubricant I should use?

**A.** Honda and many other manufacturers recommend ATE Plastic Lube (available online or at some auto parts stores). You would use this on the guide pins, guide surfaces of the calipers and the back of the brake pads. This will help prevent corrosion and squeaking.

**Q.** I have a 2013 Subaru and I have owned it since new and have changed the oil myself for the past 11 years. Over the years the drain plug has started to round off. I know I can just buy another one, I was thinking about trying to find the same size with a bigger bolt/head size to avoid this in the future. I do plan to keep this car until the wheels fall off.

**A.** This drain plug issue was a common problem, so much so that Subaru came out with a new design drain plug. The new drain plug is 17mm, whereas your car's original drain plug used

a 14mm wrench. This bigger size should improve the life of the drain plug. Any Subaru dealer should have the revised drain plug in stock.

**Q.** I belong to a local library group, and we meet periodically and discuss issues and interests. The topics could be anything from health care to real estate. Many people have expressed an interest in electric cars, do you know where we could find a speaker to come and talk with us?

**A.** You never mentioned where you are located, but if you are within AAA Northeast club territory, you can email me ([jpaul@aanortheast.com](mailto:jpaul@aanortheast.com)) and I will get your request to someone local who would be happy to come visit with your group.

**Q.** The tires on my car seem to be wearing faster than I expected. The dealer recommends tire rotation every 6000 miles. This to me seems excessive and it gets expensive. Is this necessary and what is the proper rotation these days? Is it front to back or X-pattern?

**A.** Most vehicle manufacturers as well as tire manufacturers recommend tire rotation twice a year. Rotating tires periodically helps reduce tire wear and is also a good excuse to check items such as brakes and suspension. As for rotation, if the tires are directional, move them front to back. If the tires are not directional, move the left front to the right rear, right rear to right front and right front to the left rear, left rear to the left front.

**Q.** I left my sunroof open, and it rained for hours, and the car got wet. I wet-vacuumed the seats and carpets, but the car still smells like a wet dog. What can I do, this is my only car and I need it to go to work.

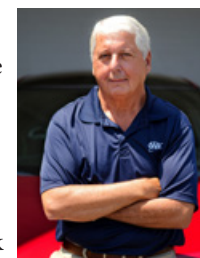
**A.** You may need to remove the seats and take the carpet out to get to the padding and dry or replace the pad. The jute material is very heat resistant and a good insulator, but also absorbs water. Remove the carpet and let it air out in the sun, replace the underlayment and then once clean and purchase a carbon/charcoal cabin air filter as a replacement for the standard paper filter.

**Q.** I have a chance to buy a 2013 Tesla Model S60. It is in good condition but has 169,000 miles on it. The dealer has it for \$16,000 which looks like a decent price and under my budget.

What do you think, is this a wise buy?

**A.** Buying an 11-year-old car always has the potential for problems, buying an 11-year-old luxury car that happens to be all electric can be even more challenging. The S60 had a range of about 210 miles when new and over the

past decade likely has some battery degradation and the range may be 10 to 20 percent less than it was new. Ask to see the car with a fully charged battery to determine how the battery has changed. Also, electronics can grow finicky as they age. Before I purchased this car, I would bring it to an EV specialist who is familiar with Tesla vehicles for an evaluation. I would also put the \$16,000 price slightly above market value. If I were to spend \$16-\$18,000 for an EV I would look for a newer Model 3, not as luxurious but likely a car with less potential to have problems.



BY JOHN PAUL

What should I do?

**A.** Volkswagen allows resurfacing of brake rotors (if the vehicle is less than 12 months/12,000 miles old providing they show no signs of corrosion, high heat discoloration or cracking. The brake rotor thickness measurement must exceed the minimum specification after the machining process is completed to be re-used. If the brake rotor thickness measurement did not meet this requirement after machining the dealer would have replaced the brake rotors.

**Q.** I have a new VW Jetta and it has brake vibration. I took it to the dealer, and they resurfaced the brake rotors. The car stops smoothly, but I have read your articles for years and you have stated that once you remove too much metal from the rotors, they are more likely to warp again.

**A.** Volkswagen allows resurfacing of brake rotors (if the vehicle is less than 12 months/12,000 miles old providing they show no signs of corrosion, high heat discoloration or cracking. The brake rotor thickness measurement must exceed the minimum specification after the machining process is completed to be re-used. If the brake rotor thickness measurement did not meet this requirement after machining the dealer would have replaced the brake rotors.

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](mailto:jpaul@aanortheast.com). Follow John on Twitter @johnfpaul and friend him on Facebook at [mrjohnfpaul](https://www.facebook.com/mrjohnfpaul).

**TIPS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING** *dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com*

# What to know before 'reversing' your retirement

If you've retired, you may have thought you closed the book on one chapter of your life. But what happens if you need to "reverse" your retirement?



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

Due to higher inflation and rising interest rates, many retirees are taking out more money from their retirement accounts than they

had originally anticipated. As a result, some are headed back to the workforce. If you're thinking of joining them, you'll need to consider some factors that may affect your finances.

First, if you've been taking Social Security, be aware that you could lose some of your benefits if you earn over a certain level, at least until you reach your full retirement age, which is likely between 66 and 67. Specifically, if you are under your full retirement age for the entire year, Social Security will deduct \$1 from your benefit payments for every \$2 you earn above the annual limit, which, in 2024, is \$22,320. In the year you reach your full retirement age, Social Security will deduct \$1 in benefits for every \$3 you earn above a different limit,

which, in 2024, is \$59,520.

Social Security will only count your earnings up to the month before you reach your full retirement age, at which point your earnings will no longer reduce your benefits, regardless of how much you earn. Also, Social Security will recalculate your benefit amounts to credit you for the months your payments were reduced due to your excess earnings. Social Security also allows you to pay back early benefits received if you withdraw your application within 12 months of starting benefits. This move could help you receive substantially higher benefits at full retirement age.

Your Social Security isn't the only benefit that could be affected by your earnings. Your Medicare Part B and Part D premiums are based on your income, so they could rise if you start earning more money. Also, your extra income could push you into a higher tax bracket.

Nonetheless, you can certainly gain some benefits by returning to the working world. Obviously, you'll be making money that can help you boost your daily cash flow and possibly reduce some debts. But depending on where you work, you might also be able to contribute to a 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan. And regardless of where you work, you'll

be eligible to contribute to an IRA. By putting more money into these accounts, you may well be able to strengthen your financial position during your retirement years. You might also be able to receive some employee benefits, such as group health insurance — which could be particularly valuable if you haven't yet started receiving Medicare.

In addition to the potential financial advantages of going back to work, you might get some social benefits, too. Many people enjoy the interactions with fellow workers and miss these exchanges when they retire, so a return to the workforce, even if it's on a part-time basis, may give you an emotional boost.

In the final analysis, you'll want to weigh the potential costs of going back to work against the possible benefits. There's no one right answer for everyone, but by looking at all the variables, you should be able to reach a decision that works for you.

*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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## Charlton Public Presents Composting 101 Program

On Tuesday, June 25, from 6:30-7:30, Charlton Public Library will host Blackstone Valley Veggie Gardens for a presentation on composting basics. Learn how you can build and maintain a compost pile with grass clippings, leaves, and kitchen scraps that will transform your garden with healthy nutrient-rich garden soil. Blackstone Valley will cover it all, from the "how to" to the "how much."

Blackstone Valley Veggie Gardens' mission is to inspire others to grow their own fresh produce by delivering residential and community based training, consulting, and assistance in vegetable garden development. They are dedicated to the belief that people should have the knowledge and opportunity to grow wholesome fruits and veggies in containers, raised beds, or in-ground gardens. This program is free and open to the public. Registration is encouraged by visiting the Library Program Event Calendar page, or calling the Library at 508-248-0452.

Charlton Public Library is located at 40 Main Street in Charlton, Mass. Additional parking is available across the street at Town Hall.



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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](mailto:news@theyankeeexpress.com).

**SATURDAYS, THROUGH AUGUST 31**

• Douglas Farmers Market from 9 a.m. – noon. Rain or Shine. Held at the historically significant E. N. Jenckes Store Museum, 283 Main Street, Douglas. Explore various vendors and support local businesses. Visit

the museum and learn about preservation efforts.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 22**

• Celebrate Pollinators Day Festival 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Joslin Park, Main Street Oxford (Rain Location Community Center) Join us for a fun-filled day learning about pollinators and native plants. Planned activities include firmative pplant give-away, pollinator talk, community challenge, plant sales, interactive demonstrations, information tables, craft vendors, children's games and crafts, ballong twister and face painting. Tour the 1872 Schoolhouse and more. Sponsored by the Oxford Conservation Commission and Oxford Grow Native for Pollinators Campaign

**SATURDAY, JUNE 29**

• Sutton Fourth of July parade kicks off from Sutton Center at 10 am. Fun community events will be held at the Sutton Schools

from 11 am to 4 pm. Information on the parade, participants, and the post parade events can be found at [thesuttonfourth.org](http://thesuttonfourth.org). The Historical Society will be set up with the civil war cannon for ole tyme photos. Stop by and learn about what the Society has to offer, and how we are preserving local history and preparing for the Nation's 250th anniversary. Visit [www.thesuttonfourth.org](http://www.thesuttonfourth.org) for more information.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 30**

• Alexander's Jazz Time Band. Come join us at Apple Tree Arts, One Grafton Common, Grafton, on Sun, June 30th at 6:30 PM for a concert of jazzy popular tunes for the 1920's and early 1930's. A period-style band will present a program of familiar standards - as well as some forgotten gems - by Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Hoagy Carmichael, and others - all in authentic Jazz-Age arrangements. Admission is \$20, \$16 for students and seniors.

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 10**

• Calling all trivia fans. Here's a chance to show off your knowledge at the E.N. Jenckes Store Museum at 283 Main Street, Douglas at 7 p.m. for the Time to test your trivia smarts. Entry fee is \$10.00 per team member. This covers your entry into the competition as well as never-ending refreshments of coffee, tea, cold drinks and confectionery treats. The winning team will receive half of the amount collected for entry fees and the other half

will be used for needed repairs and upkeep of the E. N. Jenckes Store Museum. There will be multiple rounds in several subjects. Total score from all rounds will determine the winning team. If necessary, a tie breaker question or questions will determine the winning team.

**THURSDAY, JULY 11**

• Polar Park Town Takeover Day for Millbury. Tickets are \$15 to watch the WooSox take on the Red Wings at 6:45 p.m. For the third straight year, the WooSox will host a number of towns and cities from across the commonwealth at Polar Park for "Town Takeover" nights. Tickets purchased for each Town Takeover game will benefit a non-profit from that town. At the end of the season, the town with the largest turnout will be rewarded with a trophy and special recognition!

**THURSDAY, JULY 18**

• Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce will hold a Business After Hours from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Asa Waters Mansion, 123 Elm Street, Millbury. Admission is \$20 for members and \$30 for future members.

**SATURDAY, JULY 20**

• St. Patrick's Parish, 7 East St, Whitinsville Sat, July 20th, 5PM - 9PM! Dynamite Sandwiches, ice-cold beer, hot dogs, chips, soft drinks and frozen treats will be served prior to the Northbridge Fireworks. Take-out options will also be available. The rain date for this event is July 21. For more information,

call 508-234-5656.

**MONDAY, JULY 22**

• Charlton City United Methodist Church is hosting Vacation Bible School (VBS) through July 25. VBS is from 6-8 p.m. come home from work and bring your bored kids to us! The kids will enjoy some fun time, but also learn about God and being a good person. Contact our director at [karenlee830@charter.net](mailto:karenlee830@charter.net) or Pastor John at [john@cc-umc.org](mailto:john@cc-umc.org) for more information or to register your kids. CCUMC is located at 74 Stafford Street in Charlton.

**SATURDAY, AUG. 3**

• Collectibles, Cards, and Craft Show Coming to Charlton. Charlton City United Methodist Church (74 Stafford Street, Charlton) will once again host Dynamic Collectibles, Cards, and Craft Show from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Planned as a quarterly event, the show will be jam-packed with vendors and feature lunch, baked goods, and other goodies. The previous show, held in May, attracted over 150 people. Entrance is free, but purchases support a number of non-profit organizations partnered with Charlton City UMC. Partial proceeds will support Abby's House in Worcester, a heat fuel assistance program for Charlton seniors, and UMCOR (the Methodist disaster relief agency. Donations will also be collected at the door for Target ALS. Further information, including vendor

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**HAPPENINGS!**  
continued on page 15

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| LAKE TOUR CRUISE  | JUL 14 • 10AM    |
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| SUNSET CRUISE   | AUG 3 • 7:30PM   |
| SUNSET CRUISE   | AUG 10 • 7:15PM  |
| CHILLIN IN THE 90'S CRUISE WITH CHUCK PERKS             | AUG 17 • 6:30PM  |
| BOOGIE NIGHTS/DISCO DANCE PARTY CRUISE WITH CHUCK PERKS | SEPT 18 • 6:30PM |
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# Representative Soter Supports Parental Equality Bill

State Representative Michael J. Soter (R-Bellingham) recently joined with his colleagues to approve legislation updating the state's parentage laws.

House Bill 4672, An Act to ensure legal parentage equality, was given initial approval by the House of Representatives on June 12 when it was engrossed on a vote of 156-0. The bill now heads to the Senate for its consideration.

Representative Soter said the House bill updates the state's laws by setting clear standards for establishing the legal relationship between parents and their children under several paths, including birth, adoption, assisted

reproduction, surrogacy, and other scenarios. He said this legislation will help to ensure equal treatment for same-sex couples and LGBTQ+ families by allowing them the same means of establishing parentage as heterosexual families and individuals.

Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury), a co-sponsor of one of the bills that formed the basis for House Bill 4672, noted the House legislation will ensure that children in all families "are afforded the same protections, regardless of how they came into this world or who is parenting them."

According to Representative Soter, the changes contained in House

Bill 4672 are important because the ability to establish legal parentage allows individuals to play an important role in their child's lives by conferring on them the power to make decisions impacting their child's education and medical care.

The Massachusetts Parentage Act is based on the Uniform Parentage Act of 2017, which is model legislation issued by the non-partisan Uniform Law Commission that is recommended for adoption in all states to ensure uniformity in parentage protections.

House Bill 4672 sets an effective date of January 1, 2025 for implementing these changes.

## HAPPENINGS!

*continued from page 14*

inquiries: Joe Dupont. joedupont@dynamic-cardcollectors.com.

### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14

The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce invites members and prospective members for its signature event, "Steamers at Sunset" held at The Barn at Blissful Meadows Golf Club, 801 Chockalog Road,

Uxbridge. The event runs from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Lobster, steak, chicken or vegetarian options. Prices range from \$75 - \$110 for members, higher for prospective members. Passed hors d'oeuvres, choice of steamers or corn chowder. Garden salad, baked potato, summer vegetable and light dessert. Cash bar. RSVP by August 7.

### THE NEW ENGLAND COUNTRY MUSIC CLUB

Dances with live classic country bands - Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge

Sunday, June 23, "Angela West & Show-down"

Sunday, July 7, "Rustic Country"

Sunday July 21, Oldies dance with DJ Paul

Doors open at 12:15, live music 1-5pm

Snacks may be brought in, cash bar for beverages. www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub

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Coin Show at the VFW Post 1385. 13 Cross Road, Uxbridge. 3-7 p.m. Free Admission, Free Appraisals

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