

## 26-Bed Refugee Shelter and Church are Proposed for Beacon Street in Webster

BY JANET STOICA  
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

According to public records a refugee shelter and church are proposed to be built on Beacon Street in Webster. The street is a short thoroughfare with limited egress and the lot, which has already been cleared, is located on the right side of Beacon Street which is near the Golden Greek Restaurant. The three-story building with full basement is proposed by the Reverend Kalimbiro Akeem Bujiriri of the Jesus Center of Good News ("JCGN") organization. Their offices are located at 345 Main Street in Oxford and they are registered as a non-profit 501(c)(3) group.

Rev. Bujiriri's project description states that the JCGN shelter will "help to satisfy the primary needs of refugees and immigrants aiming to intervene by applying strategies that consist of providing them shelter and food and building them affordable rental houses for them to own (rent-to-own) being integrated into the American dream. Also, the JCGN plans to help with other refugees and immigrant-related needs for their temporary care. They also seek to outreach to low-income people in Webster and Worcester County."

Architectural site plans, drawn up by 8TFive Studio of East Freetown MA, also detail rooms for offices, classrooms, prayer and



Proposed site

meditation, recreation and social events, a fitness/gym, a kitchen, showers, and bedrooms.

Webster's Town Engineer, Chuck Eaton, has reviewed site plans and has itemized his comments as they pertain to Webster's zoning bylaws. Mr. Eaton indicates that 42 parking spaces have been proposed with 31 provided; an erosion control plan and drawing must be submitted as well as proposed lighting plans and fixtures; landscaping; zoning variances; solid waste disposal; sanitary main connections which must be coordinated with Webster's Water and Sewer Departments; storm water systems as well as drainage calculations; and

groundwater recharge calculations.

According to the Town Administrator Rick LaFond, after clearing the site without notice to the town or abutters, the Fire Chief and Building Commissioner ordered Reverend Bujiriri to remove stumps and brush left on the property as they were determined to be a fire hazard.

Webster's Planning Board has been involved in ongoing meetings with the site developer, property owners abutting the site, and department heads to ensure that

### SHELTER

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## Dudley Elections Bring Out 15 Percent of Registered Voters

BY JANET STOICA  
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Dudley's town elections in June brought out 1,370 voters of the total registered electors of 8,923 for a 15 percent turnout.

The two select board members voted in were Jana L. Deschenes with 935 votes and Steven P. Sullivan with 718 votes. Both will serve three-year terms. David F. Durgin received 649 votes.

Running unopposed for the Treasurer/Collector's three-year term was Richard A. Carmignani, Jr. who received 1,050 votes. Joann C. Szymczak was voted in as Assessor for a three-year term receiving 1,057 votes while Thomas T. Chojnacki received 9 votes.

Also running unopposed was Cathleen A. Carmignani for a three-year term on the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District Committee. She received 1,021 votes. The Board of Health had one opening for a three-year term and the winner was Monica F. Kaufman with 487 votes; Anna T. Chojnacki-Durgin received 352 votes; J. Theodore Zajkowski 312 votes; and Carmela M. Manzano had 122 votes.

Sean T. Bowes and Scott E. Zajkowski were elected to three-year terms on the Water/Sewer Commission with 1,013 and 915 votes respectively. Thomas T. Chojnacki's vote count was 8.

Three-year terms on the Planning Board went to Guy E. Horne, Jr. who collected 782 votes and Steve



Watroba who received 726 votes. Thomas T. Chojnacki garnered 692 votes.

Library Trustees elected for three-year terms were Joyce M. Nierodzinski with 1,001 votes and Patricia B. Korch with 978 votes.

One ballot question passed with 686 Yes votes and 637 No votes:

"Shall the Town of Dudley be allowed to exempt from the provisions of Proposition 2-1/2, so-called, the Town's share of the amounts required to pay for the costs of roof repairs to the Dudley Middle School Building, upgrading fire alarm panels and devices throughout the Dudley School facilities, replacing and installing cameras and video infrastructure, upgrading radio communications, conducting an architectural review of Dudley's School buildings, and paying related professional fees associated therewith, and including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto as approved by the majority of voters by ballot vote at the Sept. 6, 2022 Dudley-Charlton Regional School District Election?"

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# Tax Savings Programs for Dudley, Charlton and Webster Residents

BY JANET STOICA  
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

Some local towns are generous to their senior citizens, those who are blind, those who are disabled veterans, surviving spouses and those who are considered extreme hardship individuals and some towns are not so generous. Tax savings are available for those who are part

of these categories. The following is a listing of real estate tax savings for those who qualify for benefits based on their income levels and status. The information is taken from each town's website or as otherwise stated.

**Dudley:** A variety of exemptions are available to reduce property tax obligations for certain qualifying taxpayers: el-

derly persons, blind persons, disabled veterans, surviving spouses and extreme hardships. The qualifying date is July 1. Applications are due within 90 days of the date the final tax bills are mailed. Each exemption must meet certain requirements such as income and assets. Specifics for senior citizens are that you must be age 70 with an income limit of \$38,480 if married and





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assets of no more than \$55,000; if single, your income limit is \$25,653 with assets of no more than \$40,000. You must have lived in your owner-occupied residence for a minimum of 5 years. Exemption: \$500. Required documents: birth certificate and account statements. If you are a widow there are no age or income limitations but there is a \$40,000 asset limit along with a 5-year residency requirement. Exemption: \$175. Required doc: spouse death certificate. Veterans and Disabled Veterans have no age

limits, income limits or asset limits but you must have been living in Massachusetts for 6 months before entering service or must have lived in Massachusetts for 5 years before discharge. Veteran 22 exemption is \$400 and Veteran 22E-100% is \$1,000. Required docs: Discharge paperwork (DD214) and VA letter with % disabled. For those who are blind,

**TAXES**  
*continued on page 3*

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**TAXES**

*continued from page 2*

37-A, there are no age, income, or asset limitations but you must occupy the property as of July 1. Exemption is \$500 and a Certificate of Blindness is required. All above information may be updated and inquired upon by contacting the Assessor's Office at (508) 949-8006.

**Charlton:** The town website states that "there are various exemptions to their tax relief program for senior citizens aged 70, surviving spouses or minors, veterans, veterans' surviving spouses or parent, or those who are blind. You may be eligible for all or a portion of taxes assessed on your domicile if you meet the qualifications for one of the exemptions allowed under Massachusetts law. Qualifications vary but generally relate to age, ownership, residency, disability, income, or assets. You may file an application if you meet the qualifications for an exemption as of July 1. Your application must be filed with the Assessor's office on or before April 1, or 3 months after the actual bills were mailed for the fiscal year, whichever is later." Qualifications for elderly are age 70, single, with maximum income of \$13,000 and maximum assets of \$28,000. Exemption: \$500. Elderly aged 70, married with maximum income of \$15,000 and max assets of \$30,000. Exemption: \$500. Surviving spouse or widow with max assets of \$60,000. Exemption: \$175. For Veterans there are 5 classifications with exemptions ranging from \$400 to 100%. Legally blind category has no income or asset qualifications with an exemption of \$500. For

extreme hardship qualifications exemptions vary. In-Law exemption qualifications for housing improvements for a person over age 60 vary up to \$500. The Council on Aging also offers an Elderly Tax Write-off Abatement Program which is based on income guidelines where elderly residents may qualify for up to a \$2,000/year exemption. According to Julia Korch, Outreach Coordinator, there were 20 openings for those wishing to assist in town offices and departments and as of the date of this writing, June 20, there were only 3 openings left. You may contact the Council on Aging for more information. (508) 248-2231. Please note: All guidelines listed are subject to change and the most up-to-date information may be learned by phoning the Assessor's Office at the Town Hall. Their phone number is: (508) 248-2233.

**Webster:** According to Marc Becker of the Assessor's Office, "real estate tax relief is based on income and assets of the individual applying for tax relief. For senior citizens over the age of 70 with income of less than \$18,000 you may qualify for an exemption based on your additional assets." The town's website lists qualifiers as those who are seniors, who are blind, who are disabled veterans, or a minor child of a deceased parent but there are no charts listing exemption amounts for each category. Please contact the Assessor's Office to ask about the current categories and exemption guidelines. They can be reached by calling (508) 949-3800, Ext. 4009.

**SHELTER**

*continued from page 1*

the town's zoning bylaws are being followed. There is also possible consideration of the state's Dover Amendment which, according to the Mass. Municipal Association, asserts that "if an owner or developer believes its project is entitled to Dover Amendment protection, its first step is to make a two-part showing to the local building inspector. First, the applicant must demonstrate that the proposed use of the property is for 'religious' or 'educational' purposes. When it comes to houses of worship or classrooms, this showing will be relatively straightforward. When it comes to a parking garage or half-way house, however, the purpose of the proposed use may not be so easily discerned. Second, the applicant must demonstrate that the proposed use of the property for 'religious' or 'educational' purposes is not a mere ancillary use but, rather, the dominant or primary one. Again, such a showing may not be

immediately evident. The burden will be on the applicant to prove that the regulation of its proposed religious or educational use is unreasonable. The Dover Amendment does not apply to non-zoning regulations concerning public health, safety or the environment, such as Board of Health regulations, the State Building Code, the State Plumbing Code, or state or local wetlands protections. Such regulations are still enforceable regardless of an applicant's proposed religious or educational use."

Rev. Bujiriri also wants to obtain Rosemont Street to give him

access to the back of the building as fire apparatus would not be able to access the rear of the facility. Rosemont Street is, essentially, a "paper street" which is a private property. He will have the burden of proof to establish who the original owner was as you cannot annex a piece of land that you do not own. As more than 70% of the cleared property has been disturbed, per zoning laws, a special permit is now required. Webster's Planning Board has now given the organization until August 26, 2024 to submit a new site plan.

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# Architect releases final rebuild design for the Fun Zone Playground located at the Dudley Municipal Complex

“It’s what the children chose,” was the comment made at a Dudley Recreation Commission meeting on June 18 when Michael Radner of Radner Designs Assoc. presented his firm’s final plan to rebuild the currently shuttered playground.

They were referring to the April 8 Board of Selectmen meeting where Radner led more than 60 children through creative exercises to express their equipment preferences for the new park.

The resounding message heard that evening was ‘water, water, water!’ And with this, a splash pad was built into the plan.

With the preliminary work done and the plan set, Town Adminis-



The current playground in Dudley. Photo submitted

trator Jonathan Ruda and Town Planner William Scanlon met with the Recreation Commission June 18 to place in its care the next steps through to the grand reopening.

The town recently updated its open space plan which made it eligible for the state Parkland

Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grant.

With the completed design plan in hand, the town is working with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) to submit its grant application by the July 11 deadline.

The PARC Program was established to assist cities and towns in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. These grants can be used by municipalities to acquire parkland, build a new park, or to renovate an existing park.

PARC is a reimbursement grant of up to 70 percent of the total construction cost, which is projected at \$614,911. If the grant is awarded, fall town meeting voters would be asked to authorize the borrowing of nearly the full project cost. Also at the fall town meeting, town officials are expected to present a plan for how the town would fund the \$150,000 to \$200,000 local match.

The Fun Zone playground was

updated around the time the old school building at 71 West Main Street was renovated into today’s Dudley Municipal Complex, circa 2005.

It was closed early in the COVID-19 pandemic. When it reopened, visible damage, such as cracked equipment and a deteriorating surface material caused its permanent closure.

At the May 2022 town meeting, voters passed over an article to borrow \$380,000 to rebuild the playground.

The Dudley Woman’s Club undertook a community fundraiser from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, to help get the rebuild project off the ground. The DWC raised \$41,390. The town used this donation to pay \$12,600 to Radner Designs in May 2023 to develop three conceptual plans for the playground and surrounding space. Those three plans were displayed in the town hall lobby for several months with ballots for residents to

vote for their favorite design.

The town paid \$5,400 to Radner Designs in March 2024 to fashion the highest vote getter into a preliminary rebuild plan, which was presented at the April 8 Board of Selectmen’s meeting. The remaining DWC donation of \$23,390 will go toward the rebuild.

Administrator Ruda told members of the Recreation Commission that the town must meet the present building code, safety, accessibility and adaptability standards in the rebuild.

Mr. Radner told the commission that if the grant is awarded and town meeting authorizes the borrowing this fall, he anticipates a spring 2025 groundbreaking with a target of opening to the public in the fall of 2025.

The final plan detailed at the June 18 Recreation Commission meeting here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXTth0TRnpA>

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Webster/Dudley Veterans  
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The Webster/Dudley Veterans Council would like to announce graveside Military Honors provided to our fallen area Veterans for the month of June, 2024. They were as follows: John Adamuska, USA; Joseph Turenne, USAF and Kenneth Koszewski USN. Thank you for your continued support.

## Dudley Hires New Town Accountant

The town of Dudley has hired Sarah B. Mongeau as its new Town Accountant.

“Ms. Mongeau’s experience and background combined with her education and credentials are exactly what is needed for taxpayers to better trust and understand the financial information the town provides to them,” Town Administrator Jonathan Ruda said.

Mongeau is a Certified Public Accountant, a Certified Government Financial Manager and a Certified Fraud Examiner with extensive experience conducting compliance and performance audits of Commonwealth agencies.

She has more than 20 years of experience working for the state and more than 10 years of diverse accounting experience in private and public accounting.

During her nearly seven years with the Office of the State Auditor, she led performance audits for Judiciary Agencies, Educational Institutions and Independent Authorities. As an Audit Director of Independent Authorities and Education with that office, she managed up to 20 audit teams.

During her nine years at the University of Massachusetts Office of the President, Mongeau first served as a Senior Internal Auditor and later as the University Controller.

She holds a Master of Science degree in Accountancy from Bentley University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Management from Emmanuel College.

Mongeau’s duties include presenting quarterly updates to residents at Board of Selectmen meetings, adding her expertise



to budget and finance hearings, providing subject matter expertise to volunteer boards and committees and attending town meetings to assist residents in interpreting municipal financial data and budget information.

Mongeau succeeds Deborah A. Thibaudeau, who is retiring on August 7 after 21 years with the town.

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SPORTS

# Garon Moving on to Play Softball in College

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Growing up Charlton's Grace Garon never imagined that sports would take her where she eventually wanted to be. At the age of five, she found out that her father had signed her up to play softball for the local town program. Garon would also play soccer and basketball, but it was her love for softball that kept her going.

"I loved how much confidence the game gave me," she said. "I began to feel that I was better than a lot of the other kids and when I hit my first homerun at the age of 9, my coach was really proud of me and it made me feel special and even more confident in my game."

In addition to playing youth softball, Garon would join the Charlton Wildfire, a travel softball team during the summer. She would eventually leave them for the Rhode Island Thunder, a team she has been with the past five years.

Entering Shepherd Hill Regional, she knew that she wanted to try out for the softball team, but being a Covid year she knew that the school would only have a varsity team making it that much tougher for the freshman.

"I really wanted to make the team, but with Covid I didn't know what to expect," Garon said. "After making the varsity team I figured

that I would never start and at best get into a few games here and there."

Little did she know Rams coach John Synder had a plan for the incoming freshman. When the lineup card came out for the first game of the season it had Garon's name penciled in at second base, batting fifth. The freshman was excited, but also scared. Despite being nervous, she let her confidence give her the ability to go out and play the game.

Garon would go on to start every game during that Covid-shortened season and recalled the team, as a whole, did really well that year. And, although there were no playoffs, she remembers vividly how Shepherd Hill finally was able to beat Wachusett, a team the Rams had not beaten in a very long time.

Following her initial season with the Rams she knew that softball was something that she wanted to do long term; so much she gave up her other sport soccer to focus on softball.

"I knew now that I wanted to be able to play softball in college, so I started going to some college camps during the summer in addition to continue playing for my travel team," she said. "(Coach) John told me to get as many looks as I could, put my name out there in the college coaches heads."

During her high school career Garon was not only a four-year

starter, but was named to the Mid Wach All-Star team three times while amassing 96 hits, 12 home runs, 70 RBI, scoring 75 runs and batting .412 over her career. She also possessed terrific speed on the bases and flashed superb fielding at both shortstop and in the outfield.

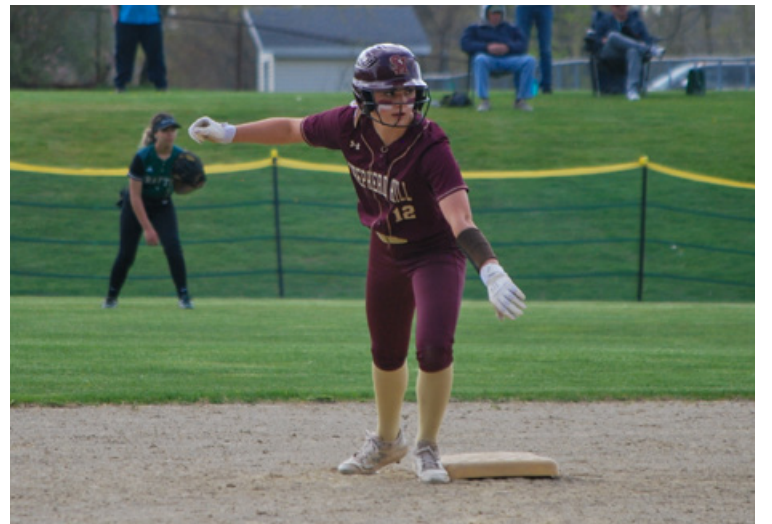
"Here, stats speak for themselves, but if not for Covid I believe she would have gone over 100 in hits which is a huge accomplishment in softball," Coach Synder said. "She'll do anything that is asked of her and having a very young team this year, she and the other three captains, took them all under their wings and guided them through the season."

The senior captain truly appreciates her 96 hits and although finding it an amazing feat, she never saw herself accomplishing the feat.

"I had always seen posts about others reaching 100 hits, but I never thought that I could get to that point," she said. "Ninety-six hits is amazing, but being so close now I wish I was able to have accomplished it."

Synder continued to say, that Garon put together a great season at the shortstop position this spring; a position she had never played before until the team needed someone to fill the void last year. According to the coach, she has not only improved on a regular basis, but she flourished there.

With her high school career



Garon has proved to be an agile base runner

over, it is now time for the Charlton native to take her game to the next level. Come this fall she will be attending Emmanuel College in Boston where she will play softball for the Saints, but originally the school was not anywhere on Garon's radar.

"I never really thought about Emmanuel as I didn't think that I'd like living in the city. I was looking at schools like Western New England, Endicott, and Wheaton," Garon said. "The school got a new coach last July and I emailed her and she invited me to come in for a visit, two weeks later I got an offer to play softball from her."

Garon is committed to play both shortstop and the outfield for the Saints. "Growing up going through the Charlton softball program there seemed to be so many players that were better than I was," she said. "I never thought that I was that good and would be able to accomplish what I have."

The softball player was also named a Micky Sullivan Award winner this year. The Massachusetts Secondary Schools Athletic Directors Association honors students who have made contributions to high school athletics in a meaningful and lasting way. Garon organized and implemented the school's cancer awareness game to honor the family of Dawn Lindstrom, who died of ovarian cancer.

"We all knew the family and I took a leadership role and helped set up a go-fund me page where we generated \$2000," she said. "I was honored to receive the award, something that I knew absolutely nothing about prior, but it was a team effort."

Garon will continue to play softball this summer with the Rhode Island Thunder before eventually heading off to Boston to start her studies while also enjoying her time on the softball field at Emmanuel College.

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# Dudley Water Dept. Earns Kudos for PFAS Remediation

At the June 17 meeting of the Dudley Select Board State Rep. John Marsi (R-6th Worcester) brought congratulations from MassDEP and the federal Environmental Protection Agency to the Dudley Water Department for its outstanding work in PFAS remediation. PFAS are known as “forever

chemicals” and are found in firefighting foam, non-stick cookware, fabrics and cleaning products among other places. They are called forever chemicals because they break down very slowly over time and can cause health problems in humans.

Reading from an email sent by the Central Regional Office of the MassDEP, Marsi said that agency extended recognition to the Dudley Water Department for being proactive on PFAS contamination since 2019.

“The Water Department through the help of consultants and the support of the people of Dudley, MassDEP has been able to approve activation of Dudley’s new wells, blending of wells, rehabilitation of tanks, a new well field, pump station upgrades, newly installed mains, newly installed raw water transmission main and approval of a centralized transmission plant for PFAS” Marsi read.

to say that Dudley Water and Sewer Superintendent George Patrinos should be commended for all his hard work getting the water department into a very, very competent place.”

Marsi presented a second citation that read in part, “The House of Representatives offers its sincere congratulations to the

one million gallons per day capacity to support future growth.

The Select Board noted that Patrinos has been “way ahead of the curve for years” regarding PFAS and offered him their congratulations.

Marsi also presented a cita-

tion to Administrative Secretary Michelle Jervis “we owe you a debt of gratitude” for all the outreach she has one for the town for nearly 20 years, as did the Select Board.

Marsi also offered her an official tour of the State House.



chemicals” and are found in firefighting foam, non-stick cookware, fabrics and cleaning products among other places. They are called forever chemicals because they break down very slowly over time and can cause health problems in humans.

The Dudley Water Department has been working diligently on the problem of eradicating PFAS from the town water supply. The town held an Open House and ribbon cutting for the new water treatment plant on June 8. The event included residents, town officials and repre-


sentatives from consultant Tighe & Bond.

“The Water Department through the help of consultants and the support of the people of Dudley, MassDEP has been able to approve activation of Dudley’s new wells, blending of wells, rehabilitation of tanks, a new well field, pump station upgrades, newly installed mains, newly installed raw water transmission main and approval of a centralized transmission plant for PFAS” Marsi read.

The communication went on

Dudley Water Department in recognition of your public water system award received by the U.S. EPA, MassDEP, and the New England Waterworks Association.”

The new water treatment plant is processing 500,000 gallons of municipal water per day to reach a clean water “non-detect” level for PFAS. The system was built with a



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# Calling All Contractors

The Webster-Dudley Veterans Council is seeking licensed contractors to volunteer their services for several renovation projects at the Veterans Home located at 4 Veterans Way in Webster.

Recently the Home Depot Foundation awarded the Veterans Council a grant for materials

needed for the replacement of the roll roofing over the front entryway, replacing the handicap ramp and replacing the gutters and downspouts. The Council will provide any required manpower to assist the completion of these much needed projects.

The Webster-Dudley Veterans Council is a non-profit organiza-

tion that is dependent solely on donations from the public.

The Veterans Home currently houses the office of the local Veterans Service Agent, provides organizational space for the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 53, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 654 and the Webster-Dudley Veterans Council.



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The Veterans Home. Photo credit Donald Wayman

Any contractor interested in assisting with these vital projects may please contact the Webster-Dudley Veterans Council at wd-veteranscouncil@gmail.com. Please note this is a new email for the organization.

The Veterans Home has a storied past. Also known as the "Marble House", it was constructed by Alexander Joslin in 1870 and was originally located at the corner of Main and Church Streets. It was sold to the Marble family and remained in their hands for several generations. When that land and house were

purchased for the construction of Bartlett High School and the current Town Hall, the Marble House was moved by teams of horses to its new foundation on Church Lane (now Veterans Way) on November 1, 1926.

The stately home was donated by the town to house Veterans Organizations over the years which included the Grand Army of the Republic, Sons of the G.A.R. Veterans, Spanish American Veterans, American Legion Post 184 and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

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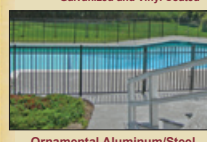
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What's happening now: [openskycs.org/news-events](https://openskycs.org/news-events)  
Connect with us on Social Media: [linktr.ee/valleycast](https://linktr.ee/valleycast)

ValleyCAST's mission is to foster a creative and engaged community in the Historic Blackstone Valley that is inclusive and supportive of all people with and without disabilities. ValleyCAST is the arts & culture arm of Open Sky Community Services.



## Take Down the Wall Presents: OPEN MIC NIGHTS

TDTW Open Mic is an inclusive opportunity for musicians and poets of all abilities - **ALL are welcome!** Have fun with monthly themes, meet new people, and share your talent in this encouraging environment. **Performers, please come early to sign up!**

**Doors open at 6pm**

**July 13 Freedom Rocks**

**Aug. 10 Grill at The Mill**

**Sept. 14 Magic Mania**



## Volunteer Opportunities

### Volunteers needed for our monthly Open Mic Nights:

- set up/breakdown crew
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- set design
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Interested? Please contact [michelle.benjamin@openskycs.org](mailto:michelle.benjamin@openskycs.org)

## Are you the next Club 21 Discovery Member?

We are seeking members of the community to partner with individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and mental health challenges as Discovery Members in our Club 21 program.

- Do you enjoy meeting new people and building friendships?
- Do you need more fun in your busy life?
- Are you interested in getting to know your community?
- Do you want to make a difference in someone's life?

If you said "Yes" to any of these, contact us at [club21@openskycs.org](mailto:club21@openskycs.org) for a no obligation informational meeting.

For more information about these opportunities and more visit [openskycs.org/communitymembership](https://openskycs.org/communitymembership)



# Gladys E. Kelly Library Events

2 Lake St., Webster, 508-949-3880

Library Hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs: 9 a.m.-8 p.m., Wed: 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Fri: 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

## ADULT BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

July 15 at 6:30 p.m.

This month's book discussion will be in the Library's Community Room. The Group will be discussing *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig. Stop by the library, or reach out by phone at 508-949-3880, or by email to rcox@cwmar.org for inquiries.

## ADULT BOARD GAME NIGHT

(No Meeting in July) August 12 at 6 p.m.

Come in and play games with other board game enthusiasts. Learn a new one, or play one you know and help others learn!

## COMPUTER BASICS CLASS

July 18 from 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Come learn some computer basics with Assistant Director Evan Hale. Registration is required for this event. You can do that by visiting our website or calling the library.

## MOTOWN HITS AND HISTORY

July 22 at 6:30 p.m.

In this one-hour concert, Melodious

Zach will perform Motown favorites, and entertain you with Motown trivia. Featuring songs from artists such as: Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder, Jackson 5, Four Tops, and many more. Zach will also discuss the cultural significance of Motown and how it changed over the years, he will also touch on Motown's relaunch in 2011.

## MATT YORK PRESENTS: WILLIE NELSON

July 29 at 6:30 p.m.

Longtime New England singer/song-writer Matt York will perform songs and tell

stories about the great Willie Nelson. York will focus on Willie's long and illustrious music career that has spanned over seven decades. In both 2022 and 2023, York was nominated for the Boston Music Award for Best Country Artist and last year, his album, *Gently Used*, was named one of the top albums by Worcester Magazine. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Webster Local Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council.

## CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMMING

• Scavenger Hunt - All month long  
What's more exciting than a scavenger

hunt? Come upstairs to the Children's room to pick up a list of things to find all around the library. Once you've completed the scavenger hunt, check in with the Children's Librarian to redeem a prize.

• Take and Make Craft - All month long  
Take and Make craft kits are now available for pick-up upstairs in the Children's Room. Each month will feature a different craft to create and instructions will be provided with the supplies. New Take and Make kits will be available for pick up on the first of

**LIBRARY**  
continued on page 11

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## Town of Dudley hires Assistant Town Administrator

The Town of Dudley has hired Olivia Antonson as Assistant Town Administrator. Her position began on July 1.

"Ms. Antonson is eminently qualified and has a vast wealth of relevant experience and internship," Town Administrator Jonathan Ruda said. "We face modern challenges; we need modern solutions."

Olivia will bring fresh eyes to the Town Administrator's office and the modern skill set that is required to give Dudley an edge that will move our community into the future."

Ms. Antonson graduated summa cum laude from Nichols College with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and graduated from Indiana University with a Master of Public Affairs with a concentration in Local Government Management.

She began with the Town of Dudley in September 2021 as a Municipal Administration & Op-



erations Intern. She held the position for 11 months before leaving to attend graduate school at IU.

She returned to Dudley in May 2023 as a Special Projects Intern.

During her second year of graduate school, Ms. Antonson balanced a full-time course load, while

holding internships with Dudley and the City of Bloomington, IN. She was hired in Dudley as the Assistant Town Accountant in May 2024.

"I see the position of Assistant Town Administrator as the next step in my career, and I believe there is no better place for this progression than the Town of Dudley," Ms. Antonson said in her cover letter, "I am committed to working diligently each day to keep this Town on a positive trajectory."

Ms. Antonson succeeds Assistant Town Administrator Michelle Jervis, who retires July 1, 2024. The pending vacancy was posted internally at Town Hall and the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library from June 6 to June 13, 2024, followed by an email to all employees advertising the vacancy. Ms. Antonson was the sole applicant.



**LIBRARY**

*continued from page 10*

every month, while supplies last, and are limited to one per patron.

• **Maker Mondays**

Mondays from 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Feeling artistic? We will have a variety of craft materials available to put your creativity to the test! Every month we will rotate our craft material, stop in to see what we're making this month!

• **Lego Club** - First two Tuesdays of the month at 3:30 p.m.

Come play with the library's Legos. If you like, we can put your work on display! No registration required

• **Build Tuesdays** - From 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Join us for the last two Tuesdays for a self-guided STEM-based building challenge, appropriate for all ages. Younger kids should bring a parent. Instruction sheets will be provided. Contact Andrew at 508-949-

3880, or atai@cwmar.org for more details.

• **Storytime**

July 16, 23 and 30 at 10 a.m.

Mornings will be filled with fun stories, songs, and activities perfect for ages 2-5 years. Siblings are welcome to join.

• **Sensory Bin Exploration**

July 15 and 22 at 10 a.m.

Join us for open sensory bin exploration. Bins will be filled up with sand, rice, dirt, dry pasta, and more! This program is geared towards ages 2 to 5 years, but siblings are welcome.

• **Let's Dance a Story** - July 24 at 10 a.m.

We read a story and create creative movement and choreography that goes along with the story in the book. The ideal age for this class is 3-6 years (grown-ups must stay but can observe).

• **Wiggles and Giggles** - July 25 at 10:30 a.m.

Come sing, dance, and make music with Lainey Hanlon! Geared for children ages 2-5 years and their caregivers, but all ages are welcome!

# Gladys Kelly Library Presents Works by Montana Artist

Originally from Montana, Green has made her home in Southern New Hampshire within reach of the mountains and ocean, making them important to her. She received her BFA from Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, and has done graduate work at Tufts University.

While studying painting and printmaking for a year in Rome, Green was profoundly influenced by the timeless grace and classicism of the Renaissance period.

During the 30 years since that time, she has been committed to the printmaking process of silk-screen, developing a style with an emphasis on color, form, pattern and detail.

Because Green as an artist desires complete and total involvement, she is the sole person involved in the production of her prints. The procedures include the initial conception of work, the stencil cutting and preparation,

choosing and mixing the colors, registering the paper, and printing the ink. Because of the complexity of some of the images, as many as 45 separate hand cut stencils may be needed for a single print and may take up to six months to complete. All silkscreens are printed with the finest ink on one hundred percent rag print stock of archival quality in signed limited editions.

You can come into the library and check out her art until July 17.





## LIVING WITH LUKE

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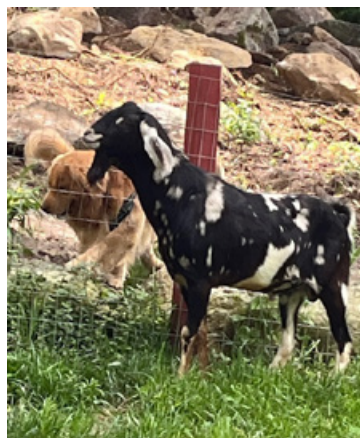
# Luke Visits Armsby Farm

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

Two things came to mind during my first visit to Armsby Farm, Sutton. First, I wanted to find a natural based body lotion for my skin. Second, I thought about my pup. Oh, how Luke would love it here! “BAA!” The goats welcomed me with blatant enthusiasm. Their calls echoed a time of innocence and childhood storybooks. Wide eyed and curious, a few stretched their necks from the edge of the pen. Others, unimpressed, chewed on hay.

“BAA!”  
Check out our lotions!  
“BAAAAA!”  
We have unscented!  
“BAA!”  
We are milked two times per day by hand!

Twelve years ago, if you told Misha Brigham, a former banker from the Czech Republic, that she'd be milking, bottling and freezing the milk of seven healthy goats, she'd have told you, you're crazy. Yet here she is in the small town of Sutton living a dream built on devotion, hard work, and unconditional love for goats who, ahem, expect to be milked in the same order. Misha and her husband, Justin, brought home seven two-week old female goats during the spring of 2022 with a



Malcolm eyes Luke

vision to, first, care for goats and, next, create something more. The goats were a birthday present to Misha. Little did she know that she was about to receive a gift even greater.

The couple bottle-fed the goats immediately so that they would easily transition from mother's teat to bottle nipple. Two years later (late January/early February 2024), Misha found herself camping out (for five days) in the barn to await the births of goats she had come to know and love. She facilitated the births of sixteen healthy goats. “I kept visiting the barn to see when it was going to happen. I couldn't wait and it seemed as though they knew I was supposed to be there. One goat had a kid unexpectedly and it caused chaos. Goats like their routine to stay the same. Every single birth was a different experience. Each of the goats did it differently and had her own little things that worked to deliver healthy babies. The experience was stressful, joyful and overwhelming. I wouldn't have it any other way,” she shared. “To witness a living thing being born was indescribable.”

The day had come for Luke to visit the goats of Armsby Farm. He couldn't believe his nose. “It smells like a goat was here!” Nose planted to the ground, and with Misha's permission, he pranced into the barn on a mission to greet new friends. “BAA! BAA!” He sensed Misha's acceptance for him and nestled beside her. “Go ahead, Luke. Come on up.” She tapped on the counter of the kids' wooden pen. “I can watch them up close?” He rested his front paws on the wood and reveled in the sight of so many goats. “You remind me of a dog with a long neck. Your eyes are so big!” He twitched his nose and smiled with the charm of an entitled pedigree golden retriever. “BAA!” The goats responded with cautious approval. Misha went on to share a story that's become a folktale, told and retold to Armsby Farm clients who



Luke faces a goat

take home a piece of Misha's goat-love—sold in a two-ounce, four-ounce, or eight-ounce pump bottle.

“I've never done anything like this before,” Misha admitted. “It was something unbelievable. I had so many emotions and cried a bit. The goats and I take morning strolls through the meadow each morning before being milked. They are trained to stay together and stay by my side.”

Luke listened with a leonine grin and looked up at Mother Goat. “But how about play time? Do your kids like to play?” A natural animal-person; Misha scooped up a goat and set her down outside of the pen to greet a rambunctious Luke. “BAA!! Who let the dog out? I'm not comfortable! I'm not comfortable!”

The freed goat darted and hid between Misha's legs as though auditioning for a Scooby Doo episode. Luke respected the kid's wishes with a hyper air of charm. “Don't let my big head fool you. I'm afraid of my own shadow at times. See ya!” Then he galloped out of the barn and romped up

the meadow hill, alongside the fence border.

“The girls are a handful, aren't they?” Malcolm, the bearded stud of Armsby Farm, stood tall and wise at the top of the hill where he eyed Luke. Despite some early “reluctance” to do his job, he became a proud father of sixteen goat kids (Misha ending up keeping four babies). Intoxicated by the farm; Luke lied on his back and rolled around foolishly, as though to brand the meadow with a lotion titled Luke's Scent. “Luke, please!” I scolded my pup. Good behavior on the grounds of the Billy Goat of my childhood seemed reasonable. Luke snapped to a seated position. “Can I have a sleep-over?” A piece of straw hung like a pipe from the corner of his mouth.

We decided to lock Luke up in his own pen quarters while I took more notes about the lavish Armsby Farm. “Am I in a time-out? The hay in this prison cell smells soooo good!” He sniffed and smiled and sniffed some more. “Any chance I could get a glass of water?” Misha grabbed a bucket, filled it with water, and set it down. Luke's eyes bloomed. “That water bowl is so big!”

We chatted some more about Misha's lotions and soaps, and she shared with me her love for the creative process of concocting lotions that are as lustrous as they are varied. She sells lavender, pink mimosa, hickory and suede, coconut paradise, sage and

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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 13



REAL ESTATE

# How Long Will It Take To Sell My House?

**Y**ou want your house to sell fast. And you may be wondering how long the whole process is going to take. One way to get your answer, work with a REALTOR! They have the expertise to tell you how quickly homes are selling in your area and what's impacting timelines for other sellers.



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

That way you have realistic expectations and can work together to come up with a plan that's based on today's market. One of the factors a great agent will walk you through is the supply of homes for sale and how that impacts your process.

Over the past few months, the number of homes for sale has increased. This is good news when you move because it means you'll have more options as you search for your next home. But it also means buyers have more

to choose from, so if your house doesn't stand out – it may take a bit longer to sell. Available inventory is made up of new listings (homes that were just put up for sale) and active listings (homes that were already on the market but haven't sold yet). And if you look at data from Realtor.com you would see a good portion of the recent growth is from active listings that are sticking around.

Think of the homes on the market like loaves of bread for sale in a bakery. When a fresh batch of bread is put out, everyone wants the newest and hottest one. But if a loaf sits there too long, it starts to get stale, and fewer people want to buy it. The same goes for homes. New listings are the freshest and most sought-after. But if a home isn't priced correctly, doesn't show well, or it doesn't have an effective sales or marketing strategy behind it, it can sit on the market and become less appealing to buyers over time.

A REALTOR will help your house stand out and sell quickly. Timing is important to you. You want to get this done, fast. By leaning on a pro, they'll make sure your listing is fresh and doesn't stick

around long enough to go stale. As the National Association of Realtors (NAR) explains: "Home sellers without an agent are nearly twice as likely to say they didn't accept an offer for at least three months; 53 percent of sellers who used an agent say they accepted an offer within a month of listing their home."

Your agent will factor the recent inventory growth into their plan and create a customized selling strategy for your house. The supply of homes for sale can vary a lot by area. So they'll do things like share their valuable insights into what's happening with supply in your market, help you price your home correctly, and create a marketing plan that gets your home noticed. Don't let your listing get stale, reach out to a REALTOR or real estate professional today to make sure your listing is fresh and appeals to buyers from the start. It makes a big difference. If you want your house to sell fast, you need to work with a REALTOR at The Marzeotti Group. Connect with a local agent, so you've got someone who understands the current market trends and how to build a strategy around those factors, so your house is set up to sell quickly.



**Mark Marzeotti**  
REALTOR®

Marzeotti Group  
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**LUKE**  
*continued from page 12*

lemongrass, and clover and aloe, among several others. Misha and Justin, additionally, plan on progressing to a small farm operation; growing vegetables, seasonal items, and eggs. "We hope to add to the already thriving farms in the community."

A sense of gratitude for the circle of life came over me during the drive home from Armsby Farm. I thought about the goats, first being loved and bottle fed, then growing to become nurtured mothers who provide rich milk for the well-being of others. Where would we be without a

Mother's Love? Meanwhile, Luke popped his head out of his travel crate, grinned, and watched the cars go by. I couldn't help but imagine the bumper sticker of Luke's car, should he learn how to drive.

**HONK IF YOU LIKE FARM LIFE.**

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Call Misha directly (mobile): 774-708-0730

Stay tuned for more on Luke Valentino.

Follow him on IG @livingwith-lukevalentino

Write to Amy at amyelaire@hotmail.com



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# Abram's Rock

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

**T**his story is from our upcoming book, Ghosts of King Philip's War due out on July 22, 2024. The book is filled with legends, ghost stories, and haunted places from the war and subsequent skirmishes that took place years after the last treaty was signed. If you are looking for a nice small hike with a lot of history and perhaps a ghost, Abram's Rock is the perfect place to visit.

At the outset of King Philip's War, several tribes chose to remain neutral for various reasons. Most of the converted, or praying Indians sided with the English. Members of the warring tribes often dissented and pledged their allegiance to the colonies much like the Tories of the American Revolution pledged their allegiance to the throne instead of fighting for independence from the mother country. This is the legend of one of those dissenters during King Philip's War called Abram by the English.

Abram was a renegade Christian praying Indian who deserted the Wampanoags during the conflict in favor of siding with the English.

Abram became very close friends with the English, so much so, that there were rumors circulating among the Wampanoag that he even had an English girlfriend. This made Philip, whose real name was Metacom, very angry as Abram knew much of Philip's plans and strategies regarding the proposed annihilation of the enemy. Philip sought to take Abram back and sent a search party out to find him.

In the meantime, Abram had found a towering rock he used as a hiding place and lookout. The west side of the large boulder had a natural room formed by other large boulders. This was where he lived in seclusion for several months until he was found and captured. Philip, being merciful at the time, gave him a chance to live. Abram was given the choice of leaping from the massive formation three times or instant death. Abram chose to take a chance and leap from the rock. Some historians argue Abram voluntarily performed the act as a testament of his loyalty to Philip.

Tradition says he successfully completed the first and second

leaps unscathed, but the third one became his demise. Legend has it that his ghost can be seen leaping from the rock, then appearing again at the top for another leap. The third time the ghost attempts to leap, he vanishes. Perhaps he is still trying to complete the task he failed. Sometimes a dark silhouette, alleged to be the ghost of Abram, is seen at the top of the rock looking down as if contemplating whether to leap or not off the precipice. The shade then suddenly vanishes into thin air.

Whether a hike out to the rock reveals a ghost or not should not deter one from soaking up the history and atmosphere of the place.

Abram's Rock is in Village Park behind the Swansea, Massachusetts Town Hall and Library complex at 81 Main St. The trail leading to the rock is easy and there are signs to follow. One trail heads straight toward the site while another takes hikers past the cemetery in a more circular route that is both pleasant and scenic. The natural room formation is still there and is called "Abram's Bedroom" as that is where he allegedly lived during his months of hiding.

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# QCC Spring Dean's List and Merit List

**Q**uinsigamond Community College has released its 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.

**Charlton:** Joshua Bond, Hayden Davis, Victoria Gaudette, Jordan Goulas, Elliott Hunt, Abigail Josten, Kellen Kinnes, Seth Lawendowski, Kevin McManus, Meghav Patel, Demerice Wolfenden, Marina da Paz de Barros

**Dudley:** Christian Bowlin, Luke Curtis, Marc Dinary, Valeria Ellison, Christa Griffing, Thalia Hernandez, Ryan Herriage, Aaron Jackson, Emily Kolodziejczak

**East Douglas:** Brennan Jones, Joshua McCullen, Hannah Rosen-

krantz, Alyssa Williston

**Northborough:** Tracy Ferro, Cole Jones, Katherine Lee, Imtiaz Rahman, Yame Rodrigues-Sousa, David Soboyejo, Cullen Walsh, Nicholas West, Kaitlyn Whelan

**Northbridge:** Aaron Bishop, Nicholas Cleary, Leah Connell, Dianna Lyness, Jacob Marinel, Timothy Vander Hart

**Uxbridge:** Christian Core, Rachel Demrest, Madison Deparatie, Carl Nathan Gallawan, Justin Meola, David Morse, Jared Peniche, Melissa Sabourin, Kaylee Tavares

**Webster:** Ashley Denham, Elaina Dunbar, Hlaing Htoo, Garrett Mann, Dakota Moore, Trisha Powers, Sean Sweeney, Diego Taborda, Tyler Verrier, Alexandria Wilson

**Whitinsville:** Hunter Fabri, Joseph Gauthier, Elizabeth Kramer, Joshua Poquette

## 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.

**Charlton:** Quinn Beck, Molly Cloutier, Alyssa Delgado, Christine Falardeau, Courtney Fowler, Joseph Gallant, Loriauna Graika, Joseph Heywood, John Jalbert, Chloe Jolin, Cheyenne Kelly, William Kinnes, Sophia Lynch, Kieya Santerre, Rebecka-Dawn Walley

**Charlton City:** Melissa Blanchette, Jennifer Stevens

**Douglas:** James Freeman

**Dudley:** Patricia Battista, Danielle Boilard, Daniel Brunelle, Xavier Collazo, Shelby Cotton, Tyler DeWitt, Holly Dolan, August Eaton, Danielle Manas, Laurelyn Mayen, Sophia McClay, Grace Nixon, Luis Pacheco, Angelina Ramirez, Michelle Reilly, Edward Ribeiro, Christina Richert, James Riordan, Clarice Smith, Natalia Sudyka, Cameron Therrien, Ashley Westgate

**East Douglas:** Courtney Barch, Abigail Bonneau, Gina Kalkounis, Joseph Lavallee, Melanie Lundstedt, Dana Markey, Nina Waiswa

**Northbridge:** Krystal Bonafilia, Matthew Canary, Dylan Mahoney, Edgar Nalbandyan

**Uxbridge:** Tanya Allen, Eric Anderson, Nathaniel Burket, Tyler Butler, Inna Embden, Amanda Flynn, Alicia Gauvin, Katie Parker,

Edrick Pereira, Nolan Ray, Brandon Roux, Klaiton Thomason

**Webster:** Sean Alger, Sarah Barr, Izabella Bezak, Tanairi Caraballo, Javery Crawford, Brandon Davenport, Jessica Davis, Jolin Etpison, Meredith Forman, Jake Franklin, Jasmine Jaber, Mallory Jakubiak,

Chime Lama, Nichole Lambert, Rena McGeary, Juan Medina, Jordan Miller, Maribel Reyes Ortiz, Patricia Rose, Justin Smith, Panagiotis Vlahos, Rachael Watterson, John Zamoider

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# Phone problem with Lexus - a Bluetooth issue?

**Q.** I have a 2019 Lexus 350 with less than 20,000 miles. When I try to make a call, I get a voice message saying "the phone book is being loaded, please try again later". I unpaired my phone and re-paired it and it did not fix the issue. I went to my dealer and paid for analysis, and they could not find anything wrong. They are saying something is wrong with my phone (iPhone 13). I contacted Apple and they checked all my settings, and they are fine. The car's phone app shows all my contacts are loaded. My dealer had no idea what the issue was. They said it may be an Apple update that caused it. This issue did not happen after any updates. John, do you have any ideas/suggestions?

**A.** Seems as if the dealer should know more than me, but I would try the simplest fix first. I would remove the car from the phone and the phone from the car. Not just

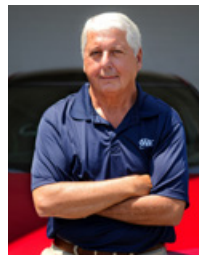
unpair them but delete the settings entirely. Now start fresh and see what happens. I agree with the dealer, and I have seen some Bluetooth compatibility issues as the software is updated. As of the date of this column the latest IOS software version is 17.5.1. perform the update and then start the pairing process from scratch. The other possibility is when you load multiple contacts, it doesn't overwrite the contacts but just duplicates them which maxes out the memory of the car.

**Q.** So, the other day that I spotted one of those Tesla Supertrucks, it was coming out of the parking lot of a local restaurant. It is certainly a strange looking thing, what are your thoughts on this, and have you driven one?

**A.** The Tesla Cybertruck when first teased was to cost, less than \$40,000, have 400-500 mile range, phenomenal acceleration and off road capability. According to Tesla's website the starting price for the rear-wheel-drive model is \$60,000 and the advertised range is 250 miles. The Cyberbeast, the most expensive and powerful model with all wheel drive is about \$100,000 and has 320 miles of range and can accelerate to 60 miles per hour in 2.6 seconds. To date I have not driven one, but on paper it looks like a pretty competent truck, decent cargo space,

secure storage (front and rear) and great towing ability. Right now, the design seems a bit more novelty than work/play/computer truck and I also wonder if people spending upwards of \$100,000 for a vehicle are happy with no factory color choices.

**Q.** I am looking for at least five-person (although three row would be preferred) luxury SUV. I looked at the Acura MDX, Lincoln Aviator and Infiniti QX60. Which would you choose and why?



BY JOHN PAUL

**A.** I recently evaluated the Infiniti QX60 and was quite pleased with the ride, handling and comfort. The Acura MDX is always a solid and reliable choice. The Lincoln Aviator has more horsepower and a bit more room. The three vehicles are pretty closely matched and really come down to personal preference. Historically the Acura holds its value better and typically a bit more reliable, but all are good choices.

**CAR DOCTOR**  
continued on page 17

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# How strong is your emergency fund?

You can't predict financial emergencies — but you can prepare for them.

To do that, you can build an emergency fund to pay for unexpected expenses, some of which may be sizable. Without one, you might be forced to dip into your investments, possibly including your retirement accounts, such as your IRA or 401(k). If this happens, you might have to pay taxes and penalties, and you'd be withdrawing dollars that could otherwise be growing over time to help pay for your retirement.

In thinking about such a fund, consider these questions:



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

• **How much should I save?** The size of your emergency fund should be based on several factors, including your income, your spouse's income and your cost of living. However, for most people in their working years, three to six months of total expenses is adequate. Once you're retired, though, you may want to keep up to a year's worth of expenses in your emergency fund — because you don't want to be forced to cash out investments when their price may be down, and you may not be replenishing these accounts any longer.

• **How can I build an emergency fund?** Given all your normal expenses — mortgage, utilities, food, transportation and others — you might find it challenging to set aside some extra money in an emergency fund. But you do have opportunities. If you're working, you could set up a direct deposit so that part of your paycheck goes

directly into your emergency fund. You could also save a portion of any extra income you receive, such as bonuses and tax refunds.

• **Where should I keep the money?** An emergency fund has two key requirements: You need to be able to access the money immediately and you need to count on a certain amount being available. So, it's a good idea to keep your emergency fund in a liquid, low-risk account that offers protection of principal. For this fund, you're less interested in growth than you are in stability. But because interest rates have recently changed, you may be able to get a reasonable return without sacrificing liquidity or safety.

• **What types of emergencies should I prepare for?** Your emergency fund could be needed for any number of events: a job loss or early retirement, housing or auto repairs, unreimbursed medical bills, unexpected travel, and so on.

But this fund may also be needed to help you cope with other threats. Consider this: In 2023, the U.S. saw a record 28 weather and climate disasters, each of which resulted in at least \$1 billion in damages — and often many times this amount — according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Depending on where you live, your home or business may be susceptible to tornadoes, floods, wildfires, hurricanes and extreme heat and cold waves. These events can, and do, result in property repair and relocation costs, higher insurance premiums and even price increases for basic goods, such as groceries and prescription medications.

One final word about an emer-

gency fund: It takes discipline to maintain it and to avoid tapping into it for everyday expenses or impulse purchases. The name says it all — this is a fund that should only be used for emergencies. By keeping it intact until it's truly needed, you can help yourself weather many of the storms that may come your way.

*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*

## CAR DOCTOR

continued from page 16

**Q.** I have a 2012 Mercedes GLK350 with 140,000 miles, which I bought new (picked it up in Germany). The check-engine light came on about a month ago, which showed faults in two systems; Intake Manifold Tumble Flap is binding and needs replacing. Also, Air Injection System Diverter Valves needs replacing. I had a diagnostic done at local shop. I also got a second opinion from a shop specializing in German cars. Same diagnostic results. Repair costs are \$3,000 - \$4,500. I like the GLK very much and usually keep my cars to the end. But do I want to put this kind of money into an almost 13-year-old car, when the chances of something big breaking down with the usual high cost of repairing a Mercedes. The check-engine light remains on, which doesn't bother me, knowing what the problem is. What are the risks of continuing to drive it in its cur-

rent condition? The car continues to drive great.

**A.** Putting \$4000 or so into this car is a bit of a gamble since the transmission and all-wheel drive systems seem to be a weak spot as these vehicles age. Also, at 12 years old, electronics can start to get a bit finicky. The intake system is designed that the air tumble flap defaults to open, this will have an effect on vehicle emissions but little else. Readers with Audi's and Volkswagens with similar systems have told me they have gone years without any real problems. Still the check engine light is on for a reason and should be repaired.

**Q.** My car, a great running Toyota, has a recommended oil change interval or 10,000 miles or once per year. What are your thoughts on this long oil change interval?

**A.** Long oil change intervals are fine as long as you are vigilant about checking fluid levels. All cars will burn oil and over 10,000 miles even a great engine can use several quarts of oil. Running an engine with low oil can certainly accelerate wear. If you don't regularly look under the hood, changing the oil every six months or 5000 miles might make the most sense.

*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@aaanortheast.com. Follow John on Twitter @johnspaul and friend him on Facebook at mrjohnspaul.*

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**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

**SATURDAY, JULY 13**

• Santana's musical wizardry coming to the Grange! Love salsa-tinged rock & roll? Then pack your lawn chair and come on down to Dudley Grange Saturday, July 13 from 5-8 PM to groove the evening away with Supernatural. Formerly known as Abraxas, they're a tribute to one of the guitar wizards – Carlos Santana and his famous melding of rock, jazz and Latin rhythms. In case of rain, Supernatural will perform July 20. Dudley Grange is next to Nichols College, 139 Center Road, Dudley. Shows are free and sponsored by the Dudley and Massachusetts Cultural Councils. Bring a picnic (no alcohol) or get some snacks from the bake table and enjoy!

**MONDAY, JULY 15**

• Join Taft (Mendon) Librarian Tara and

Ranger Viola on Monday day July 15th for Bird Watching in the Woods, Wetlands and Grasslands! Meet us at the West Hill Dam office, near the main parking lot, 518 East Hartford Avenue, Uxbridge at 10:00am. Bring binoculars, water bottle, wear sturdy shoes and come play along the river banks, wetlands and in the forest and grasslands . . . . as birds will unfold around us while going about daily survival and foraging for food. For more information we post updates on Facebook and Ranger Viola is happy to take your calls at (978)318-8417. Wear sturdy shoes, bring a water bottle, dress for the weather, be prepared to walk about a mile, round trip. Recommended ages 5 and up, registration is required, some trails do not work for strollers or wagons, and expect downed trees and logs etc. (walking or hiking stick will be helpful). Expecting a range of ages, so under the age of 5 this is highly not recommended. Binoculars, field guides and restrooms will be available. Eagles have been sighted passing through to nearby avian zones along the Blackstone River. Registration required at [www.taftlibrary.org](http://www.taftlibrary.org) for options how to register. Cancelled for heavy rain.

**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 Beer and Dynamite Blast Come celebrate America with St. Patrick's Parish, 7 East Street, Whitinsville from 5-9 p.m. on Saturday, July 20. They will be serving dynamite sandwiches and cold beer prior to the Northbridge fireworks. The menu will also include hot dogs, chips, soft drinks and frozen treats. Take-out options will also be available. The rain sate for this event is July 21. For more information, call 508-234-5656. Payment by Venmo or cash. • Join Upton Library, Ranger Viola and Upton State Forest partners on Saturday July 20th for Treking in the Woods! Salamanders, toads, frogs, black raspberries, wild grapes, snakes, beavers, woodpeckers and whatever joins us on this trek . . . Meet us at the Civilian Conservation Camp Museum, at the main parking lot, Upton State Forest at 10:00am. You might even hold snakeskin or a toad or nibble a few black raspberries, but the wild grapes won't be ripe yet. For more information we post updates on Facebook and Ranger Viola is happy to take your calls at (978)318-8417. Wear sturdy shoes, bring a water bottle, dress for the weather, be prepared to walk about a mile, round trip. Recommended ages 5 and up, registration is required, trails do not work for strollers or wagons, and expect downed trees and logs etc. (walking or hiking stick will be helpful). Expecting a range of ages, so under the age of 5 this is

highly not recommended. Binoculars, critter viewing jars (with lids) and magnifying glasses for all to share! So many national parks and our state and federal forests were built by these great family men from the Civilian Conservation Corps, come explore this incredible resource here in your Big Back Yard! Cancelled for heavy rain.

**SUNDAY, JULY 21**

• The New England Country Music Club Dances with live classic country bands - Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge 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](http://www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub)

**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.

**HAPPENINGS!**  
continued on page 19

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 <b>PIPE</b> AUGUST 10 • 12:15PM	 <b>The Beach Boys</b> AUGUST 11 • 1PM	 <b>TYLER HUBBARD LIVE</b> AUGUST 18 • 1PM	 <b>GET THE LED OUT</b> AUGUST 23 • 7PM	 <b>Little Feat</b> AUGUST 24 • 1PM	 <b>ROK FEST 2024</b> AUGUST 31 • 12PM	 <b>BRETT YOUNG</b> SEPTEMBER 7 • 1PM	 <b>30 EVENTS</b> SEPTEMBER 22 • 12PM	 <b>CHRIS JANSON</b> SEPTEMBER 29 • 1PM

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# Charlton City UMC Launches Food Pantry

Charlton City United Methodist Church recently launched a food pantry to serve members of the local community who don't know where their next meal is coming from.

Called Manna, the new program operates Saturdays 10 am to Noon at the church on 74 Stafford Street in Charlton. A variety of staple

foods are available, from canned food to pasta to cereal, along with household supplies like toilet paper and tissues.

While most people take for granted being able to eat when they're hungry, there are those in the community cannot do that: their cupboards are bare, or nearly so, and food insecurity has become

a daily struggle for individuals and families.

Manna one of several community outreach ministries to fulfill the Charlton City UMC's mission of "being a scriptural 'good neighbor'" and serve as a resource for the people in the community.

## HAPPENINGS!

*continued from page 18*

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 24

• Ed the Wizard's "Reading is Magic" performance will appear at the Simon Fairfield Public Library on Wednesday, 24 July, starting at 10:30 a.m. Enjoy this family friendly interactive magic performance full of comedy and suspense as Ed the Wizard weaves together the importance of building and maintaining one's reading skills. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Douglas Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

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

• Get a dose of a wider range of classic rock from the Great Garage Band Reunion from 5-8 p.m. (Rain date: Aug 17.) Dudley Grange is next to Nichols College, 139 Center Road, Dudley. Shows are free and sponsored by the Dudley and Massachusetts Cultural Councils. Bring a picnic (no alcohol) or get some snacks from the bake table and enjoy!

### 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.

### THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH

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

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