

Grafton's Business Scene

BY CHRISTINE GALEONE

Although January is nearly over, it's still a new year. And it's still an ideal time to focus on getting healthier.

One of the greatest things that you can do for your health, if you're a smoker, is to quit smoking. There are some excellent online resources that can help people achieve that goal, such as CDC.gov/quit and smokefree.gov.

But for everyone, smokers and nonsmokers alike, improving overall fitness and nutrition can go a long way to fostering better health. Fortunately, Grafton businesses and organizations can help.

The Grafton Senior Center is trying to help seniors to get and stay healthy. The center's exercise classes include Breathing and Healing Chair Yoga, Fall Prevention Exercise, Cardio Barre Exercise, Tone and Stretch Exercise, Zumba, Senior Bootcamp and Senior Exercise Class.

Similarly, Grafton Community Television has also been helping seniors. GCT airs the center's pre-



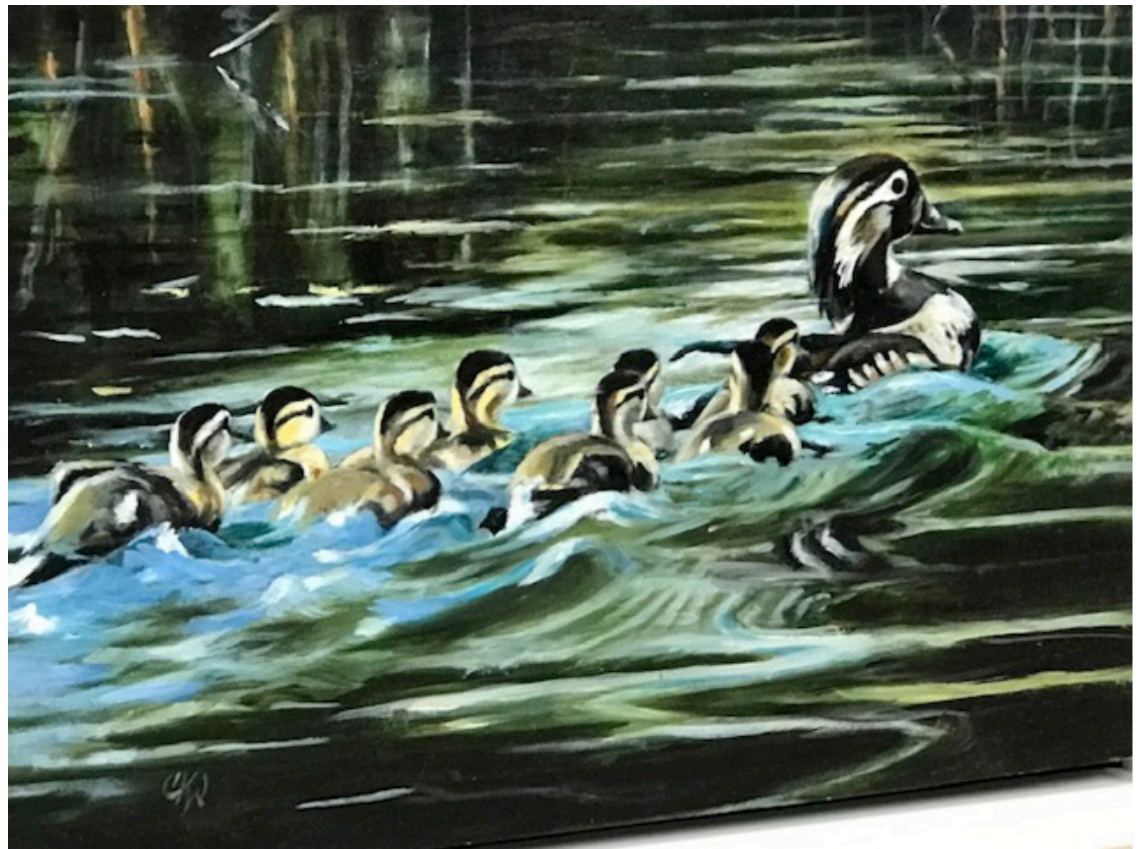
vious Senior Strength and Balance class at 10:30 a.m. every day. The classes can be viewed on Ch. 34 on Verizon and Ch. 191 on Charter.

In North Grafton, Anytime Fitness offers various coaching options to help people reach their fitness goals. New members who are 18 years old or older and live in Grafton can get a free trial by signing up on the business's website, anytimefitness.com/gyms/954/grafton-ma-01536/.

In Grafton, another option is Fitness Asylum. The fitness center offers an array of classes at its four area locations. And it's

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Local Art on Display as part of 'Art in Bloom'

The paintings of Grafton resident Carolyn Kinloch-Winkler will be on display at the Grafton Historical Society

Museum, February 8 and 9, 2025. As part of the series, Art in Bloom, Carolyn's paintings will be florally interpreted by members of the

Grafton Garden Club. Her paintings feature wildlife, including birds and flowers, and scenes from Grafton.

Ms Kinloch-Winkler is a former art teacher in the town of Northborough. She was raised in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. Her father worked at Longwood Botanical Gardens, and some of her earliest memories were playing among the flowers. Her mother was an artist, whose forte was sculpture.

"She taught me how to paint when I was six. She would awaken me in the morning so I could practice painting before I caught the bus for school," recalled Kinloch-Winkler. Despite the death of her

ART IN BLOOM

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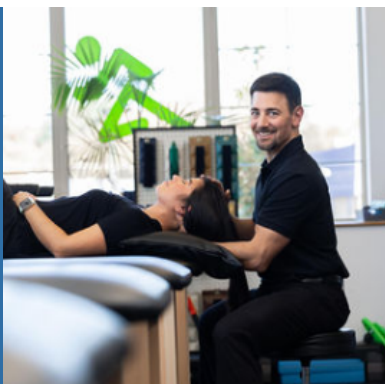
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GRAFTON

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currently offering a \$5 for 15 days trial, which people can sign up for on the business's website, <http://fitness-asylum.com/intro-offer/>.

If you have an interest in martial arts and self-defense training, Premier Sport Taekwondo in North Grafton can help you through a variety of classes. Premier Sport Taekwondo, www.premierkick.com, teaches martial arts, taekwondo and self-defense classes for kids, teens and adults. Although they might be sold out by the time this column goes to press, special highly-discounted two-week passes to the studio's martial arts classes are being offered through mid-February or until they sell out. They include the Women's Positive Mindset classes, Adult Taekwondo

classes and Teen Taekwondo classes.

For adults, teens and children who want to get fit and express themselves through dance, there are at least a few Grafton businesses that can help. Dance classes for children, teens and adults of all ages (including people with special needs) are available at Grafton Common-based Beatz Dance Studio, www.beatzdance.com. In addition to its adult Zumba and Tap classes, the studio has adult Ballet Tone and Technique, Dancers' Way to Wellness and Hip Hop classes. Several dance classes for kids and teens are also available at North Grafton's Dance It Up, www.danceitup.com. And all levels of Irish dance classes for children and teens can be found at Murphy Academy of Irish Dance, www.murphyacademy.com.

Finally, if you live in Grafton

(North, South or Grafton proper) and you're going through a time of hardship that makes it difficult to prepare home-cooked meals, you can request a nutritious meal from the nonprofit Meals that Matter. Lori Houlden Girard, who runs Houlden Interiors, started the nonprofit in 2024 and delivers the free meals on Sundays. For more information, visit www.mealsthatmatter.net.

Whether you need to quit smoking, gradually improve your fitness level, or eat more nutritious food, the positive changes you make should make you healthier. And being healthier should make you happier as well!

Note: It's best to check with your doctor before starting a new fitness routine.

Contact Christine with your business news items at cmgale-one15@gmail.com.

Millbury Nomination Papers

Nomination papers are now available at the Town Clerk's office. Papers must be returned by Tuesday, March 11 at 5 p.m. Office hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. Tuesday, 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Friday, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

The following seats are up for election:

Select Board – Two (2) three year seats

Board of Assessors – One (1) three year seat

School Committee – Two (2) three year seats

Board of Health – One (1) three year seat

Planning Board – One (1) three year seat

Library Trustees – Three (3) three year seats

Re-Development Authority – One (1) five year seat

Re-Development Authority – One (1) two year seat

Blackstone Valley Technical School Committee – One (1) half year seat

Housing Authority – One (1) five year seat

The annual town election will be held from 7 a.m. – 8 p.m. on April 29 at Millbury High School.

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Sutton Police Chief

Sutton Town Manager James Smith told the select board on January 7 that a conditional offer of employment for the position of Sutton Police Chief has been extended to Thomas Calouro, Deputy Chief of the Woonsocket Police Department. Calouro was chosen from two of the five finalists recommended after interviews by a committee consisting of David Hall, Ken Stuart, Matt Belsito, George Watson and Erin Chinappi.

The two finalists were Calouro and Newport Police Captain Michael Naylor.

Smith said Deputy Chief

Calouro has 25 years of experience in policing and 30 years of military experience in the U.S. Marine Corps reserves and the Air National Guard, where he will retire in March as a Command Chief Master Sergeant of the Rhode Island Air National Guard.

A ratification hearing and swearing in will be held at the select board's January 21 meeting.

This will be the second ratification hearing for a police chief candidate: in July, Chief Dennis Towle and Smith put forward Lt. Lisa Sullivan, chosen by a consultant hired by the board, as the top candidate

for the position. The board voted 3-2 not to ratify that appointment, citing concerns about the process as well as about the fact that fellow Sutton police officers had voted no confidence in Sullivan. The events of that occasion brought a discrimination lawsuit and an open meeting complaint from Sullivan. Select board vice chair Jesse Limanek announced at the January 7 meeting that the state had found that there was no open meeting law infraction. There has been no public announcement regarding the discrimination lawsuit.

ART IN BLOOM

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mother when Carolyn was only seven, the spark of creativity had been ignited in her, and she pursued her degree in art at the University of Delaware.

Teaching art has been her passion, from instructing elementary-aged children to adults. Ms Kinloch-Winkler added, "I am a contemporary artist. I paint natural, living subjects with all their complexities, flaws, and mystery. I work from my own photography, so my work is my eye, from inspi-



ration to finish."

Art in Bloom, featuring the paintings of Carolyn Kinloch-Winkler, will be open to the public on Saturday, February 8, from

1- 4 p.m. and on Sunday, February 9, from 1- 4 p.m. at the Grafton Historical Society Museum, 71 Main Street, South Grafton. All are welcome and there is no charge for admission. Participating in the exhibit are Grafton Garden Club members Rebecca Ahlfors, Joan Avato, Helen Blazis, Carolyn Dee, Evelyn Guillette, Jess Reese, Stephen Reese, Jen Thomas, Elizabeth Weeks, and Rita Zeffert.

Art in Bloom is sponsored by Five Stars Liquor and Grafton Savings Bank. Chairs of the event are Joan Avato, Helen Blazis, Nancy Therrien, and Elizabeth Weeks.



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Sutton Annual Town Election

Nomination papers are available for the board, committee or town official positions listed. The annual town election will be held on May 27, 2025.

- Select Board – One (1) seat for three years
 - School Committee – Two (2) seats for three years
 - Planning Board – One (1) seat for three years
 - Library Trustee – One (1) seat for three years
- Call the Town Clerk's office at 508-865-8725 or email l.caruso@town.sutton.ma.us with any questions.

Employee Handbook Workshop

The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce (BVCC) and Employers Association of the Northeast (EANE) are proud to announce its Employee Handbook Workshop, to be held at the BVCC's Office on January 23, 2025, from 8:30 a.m. go 11:30 a.m. Spaces are limited, so early registration is encouraged. Just \$199 for Members, and \$245 for Non-Members. To reserve your spot or learn more about this essential workshop, visit www.blackstonevalley.org/event or contact the BVCC at 508-234-9090 by January 9, 2025.

Millbury Public Library

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www.millburylibrary.org

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| Tuesday-Thursday 10:a.m. – 8 p.m. | Cookbook Club |
| Friday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. | Thursday, Feb. 6; 13; Feb. 20;
Feb. 27 at 6-7:30 p.m. Cribbage Club |
| Saturday 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. | Thursday, Feb. 13; 20 at 3-5 p.m. Teen Dungeons and Dragons |
| Events: | Fridays, Feb. 7 at 6 p.m. Dungeons & Dragons for Adults |
| Monday, Feb. 3 at 4-5 p.m. Messy Hands! | Friday, Feb. 21 at 10:15 -11 a.m. Sensory Play |
| Tuesdays, Feb. 4 at 6-7:30 p.m. Wood Carving Demonstration | Friday, Feb. 21 at 2-3:30 p.m. Mask Making |
| Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 3-4 p.m. Middle Earth Quest: Wrath of the Witch King | Saturdays, Feb. 1 and 15 at 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. 3D Print Club |
| Wednesday, Feb. 5; 12; 19;26 at 10:30 a.m. Story Time | Saturday, Feb. 8 at 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Sweet Escape: DIY Sugar Scrub Workshop |
| Wednesday, Feb. 5; 19; 26 at 6-7:30 p.m. Intro to Watercolor | |

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Women caregivers face financial challenges



Tim Furbush, CFA

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On March 8, we observe International Women’s Day. Although this event celebrates women’s achievements, it’s still true that women, especially caregivers, face significant financial hurdles. How can these challenges be met?

To begin with, let’s look at some concerning statistics connected to American women in the “sandwich generation” — those who care for children and parents or other relatives — from a study

by Edward Jones and research firms NEXT360 and Morning Consult:

- Nearly half of women report feeling financially strained.
- Almost two-thirds of women say caregiving duties have harmed their ability to save for their own financial goals.
- More than half of women have had to reduce their professional responsibilities due to caregiving, resulting in the loss of potential income. So, if you’re a sandwich-generation woman, what can you do to improve your financial outlook?

Consider these suggestions:

- *Establish your own financial goals.* Depending on the length and complexity of your caregiving duties, your own financial goals could be affected. For example, you may need to change your retirement date from what you had originally intended, or else adjust the retirement lifestyle you had envisioned. However, this doesn’t mean you shouldn’t try to establish your own short- and long-

term financial goals and then create a strategy for achieving them. In doing so, you may find it helpful to work with a financial professional.

- *Contribute as much as you can to your retirement accounts.* Your caregiving obligations may be preventing you from working as many hours as you like, or perhaps even from accepting a higher-paying position. In either case, your ability to contribute to your retirement accounts may well be diminished. Nonetheless, each month try to put in as much as you can afford to your IRA and your 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored retirement plan. And if you do get salary increases, think about boosting your monthly contributions to your plan.
- *Don’t rush into taking Social Security.* You can start collecting Social Security as early as age 62, and you might be tempted to do so if you’re feeling some financial pressure because of your caregiving responsibilities. But your monthly benefits can be

bigger if you wait until your full retirement age, which will be age 67 if you were born in 1960 or later. So, if you can find other ways to bridge this gap — possibly through a spouse’s income or your own savings — it may well benefit you to wait as long as you can before collecting.

- *Maintain separate finances.* If your parents are concerned about falling behind on their bills, they might suggest combining their bank accounts with yours. This may not be a good idea — if your finances get tangled with those of your parents, you could end up paying for some of their expenses, even if they can afford to do so themselves. Consequently, try to keep your finances separate.
- *Create a financial power of attorney.* You may want to see whether your parents will agree to give you a financial power of attorney, so you can make decisions on their behalf should they become incapacitated. Such an

arrangement can help protect them and you.

There’s no sugar-coating it: Caregiving can be financially taxing on caregivers. But by taking the appropriate steps, you may be able to help reduce some of the stress involved.

Contact Tim for assistance with your personal finances.

Tim Furbush, CFA
Edward Jones Financial Adviser
Westborough, MA 01581
508-854-1608
Tim.Furbush@edwardjones.com

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Figuring out who to call can be challenging. If you contact one of the big haulers, they route you to a phone center where they've never even heard of your town, plus their pricing seems vague and full of extra fees. No wonder you've let the stuff pile up—it's too much of a hassle to get rid of it!

Or you can call Affordable Junk Removal and let a local small business with deep community roots take care of everything.

Jay Schadler started his business in 2005. Back then, it was just him and a beat-up pickup truck taking small jobs and working nights and weekends when he could. As the years rolled on, his business grew, but his commitment to customer service never wavered. Now he's got a staff of ten, along with eight trucks, servicing eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island.

Business spotlight

Affordable Junk Removal specializes in house and estate cleanouts. If your garage, attic, or office is overflowing with stuff, take back your space and let the pros do the heavy lifting.

Jay and his team have handled it all. They've dismantled above-ground pools, hauled away ancient hot tubs, taken down old fencing, and stripped away worn carpeting. They'll come for a single item, or they'll clean out an entire house. And they can take almost anything. They can't accept hazardous materials, brush, dirt, or concrete, but everything else is fair game for them to take away.

Not everything ends up in a landfill—not if Jay can help it. He first tries to either recycle or donate items. Only after he tries to repurpose items do they end up at the transfer station.

Working with Affordable Junk Removal is simple. First, you can load stuff yourself if you want by renting a 15-cubic-yard dumpster for a week and chucking up to a ton of your unwanted stuff. If you need to



get rid of more weight, then Jay prorates that tonnage—you never pay for what you don't use.

If you don't want to be bothered with the dumpster, they've also got a driveway special where they'll take away a truckload of your unwanted things if you pile it up. Or if you don't want to lift a finger, then you can point at the items, and the team will fill up their truck and haul away your unwanted things. However you do it, you're left with more space and more peace of mind.

Jay and his team beat the big waste haulers on both price

and customer service. When you call Affordable Junk Removal, you aren't connected to an anonymous call center. Your phone call goes right to Jay.

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

Affordable Junk Removal is fully licensed and fully insured, and they'll treat your property with care and respect.

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

residential emergencies with same-day service.

Jay and his family are deeply involved in the community. He and his wife, Christine, run the Corner Market restaurant in Holliston. It's not uncommon for someone to reach Jay at the restaurant, order a sandwich, and then schedule a junk removal appointment. Yes, the local small business really can handle everything!

Contact Affordable Junk Removal and let a local small business take care of everything for you. Call Jay Schadler at (774) 287-1133 or visit us online at www.affordablejunkremoval.com.

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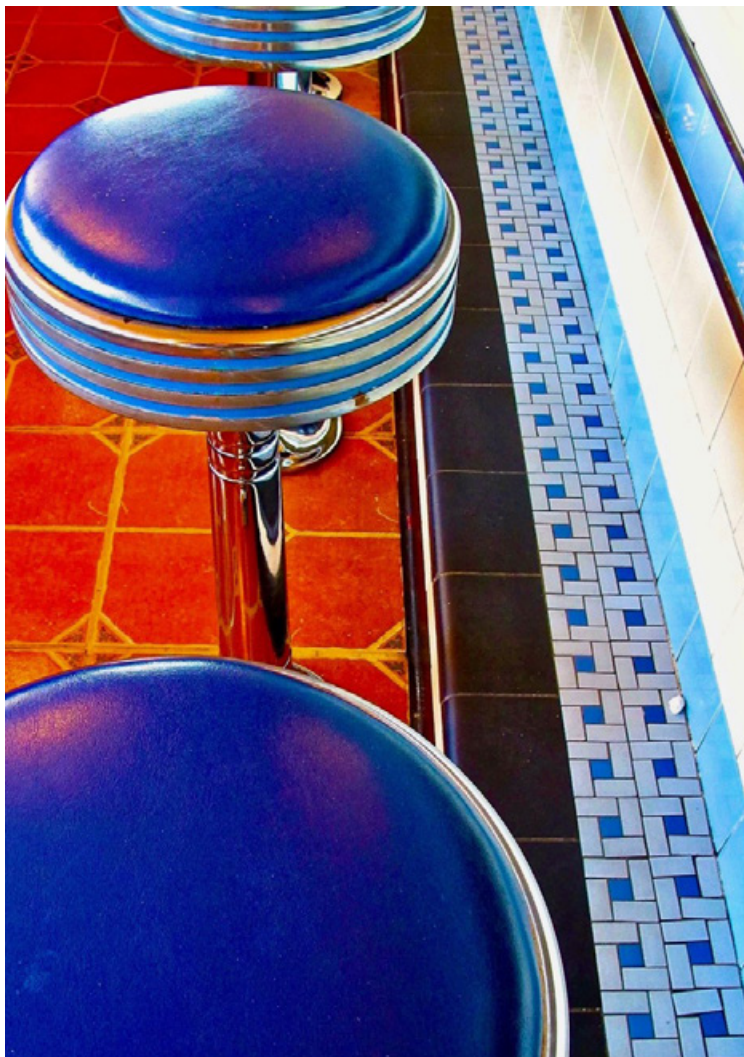


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Local artists shine at Small Stones Festival

The Small Stones Festival of the Arts opens January 25 for its seventh annual exhibition of juried fine arts and photography

featuring many central Massachusetts artists including Douglas, Northbridge, Uxbridge and Whitinsville.



Above, "Adrianna's Lily" by Sue Dion; Left, "Miss Mendon Blues" by Candace Imming

Brandi Van Roo, with a painting of Corona, Italy.

Artists from Northbridge and Whitinsville include fine art photographs by Candace Imming titled "Miss Mendon Blues" and Lindsey-leigh Campos titled "Going Down" and Frank Bartucca titled "Modernity."

Artists from Uxbridge and North Uxbridge include: Sue Dion for "Adrianna's Lily", Tory Kohn for "Buckets of Fun" and Rita Hills for "Cairn." Fine art photographers included Michael Zeis with "Fossils" and Glen Matheson for "Rowing on the Golden Horn."

The mission of the Small Stones Festival of the Arts is to elevate the practice and appreciation of fine art and photography in the Blackstone Valley. It is a collaborative effort by the Blackstone Valley Art Association and the Worcester County

Camera Club under the sponsorship of Grafton Arts, Inc. a 501 (c) 3 organization.

The exhibit opens at 2 p.m. on January 25 at the Brigham Hill Community Barn, 37 Wheeler Road, Grafton. It runs until February 2. Visit www.smallstonesfestival.org for a full schedule.

Douglas artists include Mary Silva with a photograph of the "Amalfi Coast", Leslie Breault, with a painting entitled "1860" and



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Comedy Returns to Samuel Slater's

Comedy returns to Samuel Slater's Restaurant in Webster on Friday, February 21 featuring Juston

McKinney plus special guests Andrea Henry and Jeff Koen for a night of laughs. Doors open at 6:30 PM;

show starts at 7:30 PM. Tickets are on-sale now at www.samuelsslatters.com.



Juston McKinney

Juston McKinney has multiple appearances on the Tonight Show, Conan O'Brien and one-hour specials on Comedy Central. He also has two one-hour specials on Amazon Prime and his latest special "On the Bright Side" you can see for FREE on this Youtube channel. Throw in some appearances at the TD Garden for Comics Come Home, a Show-time special with Rob Gronkowski, and you can see why NH Magazine named him "Best of New Hampshire" and the New York Times called him "Destined for stardom."

Andrea Henry has appeared on Comedy Central's "Open Mic Fight," "Nickelodeon's Search for America's Funniest Mom 3," "NBC's Last Comic Standing" and "Yuk Yuk's Great Canadian Laugh Off." She was the opening act for The Last Comic Standing Tour, Gary Gulman, Caroline Rhea, and E's Chelsea Handler. She also participated in Comic in Residence, Butterfinger's Stand-Up Comedy Showdown, The Rhode Island Comedy Festival and The

Boston Comedy Festival.

Jeff Koen is a comedian and actor who stars in the cult classic independent film Heavy Times. Koen performs standup in and around the Boston area and has toured New England theaters opening for many national headliners. Koen also recently won \$10,000 on America's Funniest Home Videos.

Samuel Slater's Restaurant at Indian Ranch offers a variety of events year round, along with seasonal concerts at Indian Ranch amphitheater, the Indian Princess paddlewheeler and Indian Ranch Campground.

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MassBay Community College Dean's List

Local resident Staline Younkoua of Sutton, who studies General Studies has been named to the MassBay Community College Dean's List, achieving this outstanding academic honor for the fall 2024 semester.

MassBay Community College is located in Wellesley Hills. To be eligible for the MassBay Dean's List, students must complete at least six credits of college-level courses, be in good standing with the College, and earn a grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

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Healthier Baking in the Blackstone Valley

BY CHRISTINE GALEONE

On a blistery cold New England winter morning, many of us reach for a hot beverage to help warm us up and launch the day. But sometimes you want a bit more warmth and a bit more of that cozy feeling.

This recipe for No Sugar Added Apple Hand Pies is perfect for those kinds of mornings. Thankfully, the hand pies are just as good when they're re-heated the next day or the day after that.

One of the primary reasons that these hand pies are healthier is because there's no added sugar. Inflammation caused by eating too much sugar can make us more

and salt in a large bowl.

Cut in butter until like peas. Sprinkle vinegar over the mixture.

Sprinkle 1 tbsp. of water over part of mixture, toss with a fork, and move moistened dough to the side of the bowl. Repeat with the rest of the mixture, until it's all moistened.

Gather dough into two balls. Then, divide each ball in half, so you have four balls.

On a well-floured piece of parchment paper, divide the first ball of dough into two. Then, flatten and shape the first one into the bottom of a hand pie crust. Place the second aside. And repeat this step until all four have been shaped

a few small cuts on the top of each for ventilation.

Bake the hand pies for about 20 minutes or until golden. Let cool, and enjoy!

There's a good chance that we'll have many more of those typical New England winter mornings. So, there's no better time to try this recipe and pair it with your favorite cozy beverage. Happy (healthier) baking!



susceptible to most of the worst illnesses, diseases and conditions.

Another good reason is because of the health benefits of apples and cinnamon. They're both high in antioxidants, which can reduce free radical damage. Apples also contain fiber, vitamin C, vitamin K, vitamin E, vitamin B1 and vitamin B6.

You're probably familiar with the old adage, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." But did you know that it's because of all the ways that apples benefit your health? Research has shown that the popular fruit promotes heart health, mind health and bone health. Additionally, apples can strengthen your lungs, lower cholesterol, boost your immune system, boost gut health, and offer some protection against Type 2 diabetes.

NO SUGAR ADDED APPLE HAND PIES

Hand Pie Crust Ingredients:

- 2 Cups of Flour
- ¾ Cup of Butter (melted to the consistency of shortening)
- ½ tsp. Baking Powder
- ½ tsp. Salt (omit if using salted butter)
- ½ tsp. white vinegar
- 10 tbsp. cold water

Directions:

Combine flour, baking powder

and are ready to be filled.

Hand Pie Filling Ingredients:

- 1 Cup of Rinsed, Peeled and Thinly Sliced Apples
- 1 tsp. of Cinnamon

Directions:

Pre-heat the oven to 375 degrees.

In a medium-sized bowl, combine the filling ingredients.

Spoon ¼ of the filling into each unbaked pie shell.

Flatten the four remaining balls of pie crust dough and place each on one of the filled crusts. Then, seal the crusts together, and make

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WPI Students Complete Research Projects

Three students from Millbury and Sutton have completed research-driven, professional-level projects that apply science and technology to address an important societal need, called the Interactive Qualifying Projects (IQP) at Worcester Polytechnic Institute

(WPI).

Griffin Melia from Sutton, Massachusetts, class of 2026, majoring in Mechanical Engineering, completed a project titled Assessing Newsstands in Venice and Exploring Alternatives.

Gwyneth Dube from Sut-

ton, Massachusetts, class of 2026, majoring in Biology and Biotechnology, completed a project titled Educational Modules on Water Management Issues.

Kailey Pitcher from Millbury, Massachusetts, class of 2026, majoring in Biology and Biotechnology, completed a project titled Decarbonization Measures and Underwater Radiated Noise.

A total of 356 undergraduate students have completed their IQPs.


The project is a core part of the innovative undergraduate experience at WPI. Centered around project-based learning, this hands-on approach offers students opportu-

nities to help develop thoughtful solutions to open-ended problems. These real-world problems affect the quality of life for people in the communities where students work, giving students a chance to make a difference in the world before they graduate. About two-thirds of WPI students complete their IQPs at one of the university's 50+ off-campus project centers located in more than 30 countries around the world.

"The WPI project-based curriculum's focus on global studies brings students out of the classroom and their comfort zones and into the global community to apply their knowledge and to solve problems,"

said Professor Kent Rissmiller, professor of International & Global Studies and associate dean of The Global School. "Students are immersed in all aspects of a different culture—from the way people live and work to the values they hold to the foods they eat, all valuable perspectives for surviving and thriving in today's global marketplace. They also learn the meaning and magic of teamwork; make a real and meaningful difference in their host community; and gain a competitive edge for any resume, or graduate or professional school application."

Prayer



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

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

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At the January Dudley Woman's Club meeting, Heidi Murray helped our 70 or so members get up and move in the New Year with some country line dancing. To thank Heidi for her time and expertise, the club donated \$200 to a local charity of her choice, which was PinkHippy.org.

Also at the meeting, DWC members assembled and donated "birthday boxes" for the Webster-Dudley Food Share in Webster and the CHIP-In Food Pantry in

Charlton. The estimated value of these boxes that contain the supplies for a child's birthday celebration is \$646.

The DWC membership of more than 70 women of various ages and backgrounds from Dudley, Webster, Millbury, Southbridge, Charlton, Uxbridge, and several Northern Connecticut towns work together to uplift and support our communities. For more information, please visit www.dudleywomensclub.org.

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4th Annual Inside & Out Sculptors Exhibit



Valley CAST, the arts and culture arm of Open Sky Community Services welcomes back the New England Sculptors Association for the 4th Annual Inside & Out Exhibition.

Thirty artists from all around New England have submitted works that will on display inside the Spaulding R. Aldrich Heritage Gallery, 50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville and outside on the ground of the Alternatives' Whittin Mill Complex at the same address.

The inside exhibit, which will consist of 27 works in a variety of media, including bronze, paper, marble, steel, fabric and more, opened on January 5 and will close in February. The public will also be encouraged to vote for their favorite work by casting a ballot inside the gallery up to February 14.

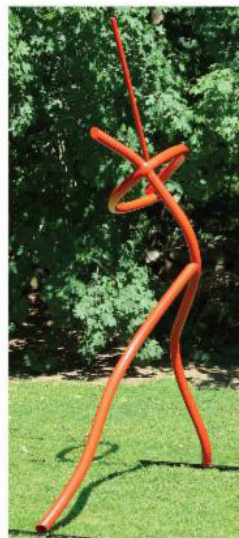
A reception will take place at the People's Choice Awards on Sunday, February 23 from 2- 4 p.m. The exhibit will close afterwards. Visitors may also view the exhibits during regular gallery hours Monday-Friday, from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. The gallery will be closed on Martin Luther King Day, January 20 and Presi-

dents Day, February 17.

The New England Sculptors Association (NESA) was founded in 1948 and recently celebrated its 75th anniversary. NESA members are jury selected and create in a variety of media. NESA partners

with local galleries, museums and historical sites to bring its works to the public.

To learn more visit openskyes.org.





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LIVING WITH LUKE

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Luke Sees the Best in Others

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

I've noticed that Luke sees the good in me, and in others. He'll watch how I wrap a present and break into a quiet smile as though to say, "My Mom is so good at folding seams." He doesn't notice that I misjudged how much paper I'll need for the gift size, or that the pattern is off the mark. Instead, he stares up at me with the curiosity of a chimpanzee.

"Santa is going to bring Luke presents." His head froze while his mouth stiffened to the thought of Santa Claus, another good person. He knows what Santa looks like and what he stands for. "Look who's here, Luke!" December brought forth vast displays of Santa Clauses: hip shaking Santas, squeaking Santas, and fire-truck riding Santas. Golden retrievers behave like children until the age of seven, so it felt okay to play up the red suited hero of his dog-hood. "It's Santa! It's Santa!" He raced to every door in the house to catch a glimpse of Santa Claus riding in the back of the fire truck while the siren blared. Luke's December flame, however, came with exception.

The Catholic church bishop wore the wrong hat. He looked like Santa. He dressed like Santa. But something was all wrong. Luke noticed the bishop's "mitre" (a tall ceremonial hat) and growled from the gingerbread table in the basement of my town's church festival. "GRRR!" "Luke, please!" My dog's

suspicion did not belong in the church. "That's not the real Santa, Momma." I shushed. I scolded. I hushed. Still, he wouldn't let it go.

"Leave it." I spat the command with firmness, as though we were on a walk and a big dog equally as handsome as Luke was on the other side of the road. Then I dis-

arm and salivated. Call it a bribe, but the bishop became a distant memory. (It's worth a mention that Luke's discrimination does not rest solely on a Catholic Church bishop. He doesn't care for, or accept, Mrs. Claus. Perhaps, her hair bun does not work for him).



tracted him with another clutch tactic. I broke a gingerbread boy in half and gently placed it in his unearned mouth. He inhaled an

Luke may have a few quirky preferences but, thankfully, he sees the good in most dogs, especially small ones. I've never



owned (or particularly cared for) little dogs, especially those with rattling barks. Perhaps the gurgling and growling chihuahua who lived in the window of my childhood neighbor's home has led to my—distaste? Lack of understanding?—ignorance?—of small dogs. Hear me out. Little Chico had eyes that bulged while he choked on his own venomous growls. I don't know how much that doggie in the window cost, but one thing was for certain. Chico was certifiably crazy. His temper was hotter than a habanero. His growl was a low murmur, a ticking time bomb that haunted me. I never knew when Chico would snap and plummet through the window to

grab my leg while I delivered the newspaper. However ruthless, I'm convinced Luke would have loved little Chico. He allows them to snarl, jump up his chest and tap dance around him. "Those little dudes are hyper, but I love 'em to pieces." Perhaps as a big dog, Luke doesn't feel the need to compete with them. He only picks on dogs his own size. The cat has been a small friend of even greater intrigue.

"Where'd you go? Why'd you hide? Can we be just friends?" I've always worried about the cat picking on Luke because of his size. His exuberance has sent

LUKE

continued on page 13

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REAL ESTATE

What will it take for prices to come down?

You may be wondering if home prices are going to crash. Believe it or not, some people might even be hoping this happens so they can finally purchase a more affordable home. But experts agree that's not what's in the cards and here's why. There are more people who want to buy a home than there are homes available to purchase. That's what drives prices up. National-ly, home prices aren't going to be coming down anytime soon. Prices depend on supply and



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

demand. The housing market works like any other market – when demand is high and supply is low, prices rise. According to the latest estimates, the U.S. is facing a housing shortfall of several million homes. That means there are far more people looking to buy (demand) than there are homes for sale (supply). That mismatch is the key reason why prices won't fall at the national level. The main driving force on pricing is the limited amount of inventory in most markets across the country. That issue is not going to be solved overnight or in the next twelve months. How did we get here? For over 15 years, homebuilders haven't been building enough homes to keep up with buyer demand. After the 2008 housing crisis, homebuilding slowed significant-ly, and it's only recently started to

recover. Even with new construc-tion on the rise over the past few years, builders are playing catch-up. They're still not even keeping up with today's demand, let alone making up for years of underbuilding. As long as there's a housing shortage, home prices will remain steady or increase in most areas. What about next year? The majority of experts agree prices will keep rising next year, but at a much slower, healthier pace. But it's important to note home prices vary by market. What happens nationally might not reflect exactly what's happening in this area. If your local market has more inventory available, prices could grow more slowly or even decline slightly. But in areas where inventory remains tight, prices will keep climb-ing – and that's what's happening

throughout most of the country. That's why it's crucial to work with a local real estate expert like the Marzeotti Group who understands this market and can explain what's going here. If you're wondering what it'll take for prices to come down, it all goes back to supply and demand. With inventory still limited in

most markets, prices are likely to remain steady or rise. To see what's happening with home prices where you live, contact the Marzeotti Group or another trusted Realtor. We can help you understand your market and make a plan that works for you.



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LUKE
continued from page 12

crafty cats up trees, under beds, and behind closed doors. A black cat named Regina, his first love, once emerged from her hiding spot to allow Luke to stare at her. The two locked eyes for timeless moments. "I won't hurt you. Promise. I just want to tell you that you have the most beautiful green eyes." Luke is certainly not perfect. But his ability to see the good in others is something I hope will



continue to rub off on me, just like the blonde hairs on my black clothing.

Write to Amy:
amyleclaire@hotmail.com

Find Luke on Instagram
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Moll Pitcher

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

by Arcadia Publishing.

This story is an excerpt from the book *Strange New England* by Thomas D'Agostino and Arlene Nicholson published

New England is full of tales regarding witches, wizards and other seers who made their living through the telling of fortunes, but few ever reached the celebrity

of Marblehead's own Moll Pitcher.

Moll Pitcher was the granddaughter of famed Marblehead wizard John Dimond who was known to magically guide ships to safety during storms from atop Burial Hill in the small village. Moll was born Mary "Moll" Dimond in 1736 in a house called the Old Brig at the foot of Burial Hill.

Moll was of medium stature, possessing an unusually large head, with a pale, thin face, arched eyebrows and long brown hair. She was also a very wise and intelligent woman who had an uncanny knack for reading people by how they moved or acted.

Moll married a shoemaker by the name of Richard Pitcher on October 2, 1760, and had four children, John, Rebecca, Ruth and Lydia. They later moved to nearby Lynn, where she soon gained a reputation far and wide for telling fortunes.

From royalty to rags, they came seeking the talents of Moll. Her cottage at the base of High Rock created the most appropriate atmosphere for her craft. She made predictions of events that

would transpire up to ten, even twenty years later. It was said that she even predicted the outcome of the Battle of Breed's Hill. Generals such as Burgoyne, Pitcairn, Gage and even Washington were among those who heeded her predictions.

Sailors and sea captains came to see Moll before setting sail and would often postpone their journeys based on her predictions. In some cases, ships would sit at port empty for weeks until Moll gave a good prediction to sail. Nearly every port an American ship sailed into around the world knew of Moll Pitcher, and many would inquire of those who came from her jurisdiction of any news, good or bad. Business people often sought her advice before making important decisions.

Moll used tarot cards and read palms on occasion, but her primary fortunetelling method was derived from tea leaves. She would boil the leaves and dump them into the client's cup. From there, she would read the leaves that settled at the bottom of the cup. Their position revealed the fate of the inquirer. If the leaves fell scattered, the client would be

unfortunate in love. If they fell crowded together, that meant happiness and wealth. If they arranged themselves in a series of lines, the client would live a long life and have many children. If but a few remained in the cup, the inquirer would die young.

Whether or not her predictions held much preciseness is a matter of modern conjecture, but those who sought her wisdom in her day, took them as the wise words of a true seer. It is told that treasure hunters often sought out Moll for locations of lost booty. She would say something to the fact, "Fools, if I knew where money was buried, do you think I would tell you where it is?"

Moll Pitcher died on April 9, 1813, and was buried in the West Lynn Burial Ground. Her stone states her name, Mary Pitcher, with her birth date of 1738. Her original grave was unmarked until 1887, when a proper monument was erected in her honor.

Molly may have gone to live with the spirits, but her predictions live on in a book published in 1895 called *The Celebrated Moll Pitcher's Prophecies*.

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SPORTS

Grafton: 3 Goals on the Docket

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

As always, the goals put forth by the Grafton boys basketball team is the same that it's been in the past: make the Clark Tournament, qualify for the Division 2 State Tournament and win the South Worcester County League (SWCL). While the Gators have been able to get into the State Tournament with regularity, they have not been able to win too many games once there. On the other hand, Grafton has been to many Clark Tournaments and done well for themselves.

"It is always a big deal to get into the Clark Tournament and advance through it. We have advanced to the championship and semifinals in previous years and just two years ago were in the Semifinals," Grafton boys basketball coach John Patraitis said. "We are the longest running school to have qualified for the Clark Tournament and we are proud of our consistency over the last several years."

Senior captain Jake Robertson echoed his coach's sentiments.

"We obviously want to make it to the Clark Tournament, it's a really big deal to do so," he said. "Then we want to get into the state playoffs and win a game. I don't think that we've done that in some time."

The Gators earned a 19 seed in the Division 2 Tournament last year and had a first-round bye before meeting up with Bedford, a team that would eventually lose in the Final 4. Grafton hung with Bedford for a good part of the game but eventually the Buccaneers would take off and win the game 53-41.

"Last year we had a really good team (14-6 in the regular season), the best in sometime. We lost our top two leaders but we have three starters coming back and we should be able to continue winning," Robertson said. "Playing defense is our calling card and although we may be undersized this year we do have players who can score and give us the opportunity to win."

In order to capture any of the three goals Grafton is going to have to keep their opponents under 50 points per game and if they can continue to do that Patraitis is rather confident that thing will fall in place.

"We talk about this daily: if we can keep our opponents under 50 we will be competitive and have a very good chance of getting a win," the coach said. "Defense pushes

our offense into transition and we like to play quick. I feel that if we do this and push the basketball up the court as fast as possible we can expose the other team and be successful."

The three returning starters who

ing to the coach, Lamar is a tough individual to handle and the other teams are scouting him. The senior point guard can drive to the hoop and get to the rim with the best of them; he is a physically strong player that doesn't shy away from



will be the leaders on this year's team are Robertson, James Hannah and Larry Lamar. Robertson was a top defensive stopper last winter for the Gators, but this year the coach is asking him to pick up his scoring numbers and through the early part of the season he is doing just that. Hannah has moved into the vacant center position and like Robertson wasn't asked to do too much last season, but things are different this year.

"James was primarily used for his defense, rebounding and rim protection last year," Patraitis said. "We didn't ask him to do that much scoring as we had players in front of him doing that, but this year we're going to need more scoring from him and Jake." (Robertson is currently the team's second leading scorer, while Hannah is third).

Lamar is the team's starting point guard and leading scorer. Last season he averaged 17 points per game and so far this year he has increased that to 21. Accord-

contact.

The other two starters will be Lucas McNery, a small forward who came off the bench last year and logged some significant minutes for Grafton and junior Lucas Montvitt, a swing player last year who is making big strides this year and is becoming more confident in his game.

Rounding out the significant players will be junior Zealand Youngblood, the team's sixth man. According to Patraitis, he sets the tone defensively and brings an energy off the bench giving the Gators a great advantage.

"There are a lot of new roles this season and all of the guys are taking it seriously and it seems to be working so far," the Grafton Coach said.

Robertson noted that despite the team being on the younger side, the younger players have been stepping up and the team should be in good shape to go after their goals.

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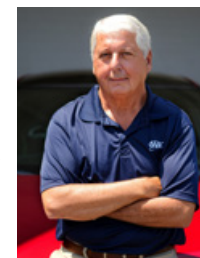
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THE CAR DOCTOR

jpaul@aanortheast.com

Old Battery Can Leave You Stranded in Winter



BY JOHN PAUL

Q. I purchased a 2014 certified preowned BMW from a dealer in 2017. It came with a Carfax report, so I know it has the original battery. I am not having any problems. How long can it last?

A. The average life of a battery in the Northeast is about five years, so based on that you are overdue. At the very least have the battery tested to see how it is doing. Have I seen batteries last 10 years, yes, but not often. If this were my car with what is typically the coldest part of winter approaching, I would replace the battery.

Q. Huge fan of your weekly articles. I have a question. Recently, in a Home Depot parking lot I drove over what I believe was a spray paint tube and it splattered in the back of my car. What can I do to get this off? I believe it is paint but it could be spray glitter. I was curious if taking it for detailing would do the trick.

A. A detail shop would be best if you do not want to try to clean it yourself. A professional shop will try nonabrasive solutions first. They will use chemicals such as Prep-All, acetone, and Goof-Off. If that does not work, then a very light sanding with 2000 grit paper and then a buff and wax. The sooner you get to it the better the end results.

Q. I have four cars that I keep in storage. They are a 1984 corvette, 1962 Austin Healy, 1961 280 SL Mercedes and a 2000 Porsche 911. Can you please recommend a trickle charger that will last and keep batteries fresh?

A. First off, nice collection of cars. The two brands that I have had the best luck with are the Deltran Battery Tender. They have one unit that is switchable depending on battery chemistry. The other is from CTEK MXS 5.0. Both of these units are good quality and will keep the batteries fully charged/maintained and ready to drive next season. If it makes any difference Jay Leno uses the CTEK chargers.

Q. What do you think about disconnecting the negative side of battery for 10 seconds on 2017 Mazda CX5. I want to do this to reset dash and get rid of check engine light? Do all other electronics on computer stay set?

A. Generally, no, this clears the memory in the computer which also can clear the radio presets. The car may even start and stall a couple of times once the battery is reconnected. Clearing a check engine light never fixes a problem. When the issue is detected again the check engine will come back on. If it is an intermittent issue or one you repaired the light should go off on its own.

Q. I love reading your column weekly, it keeps me updated on the automotive world. I do most work on my vehicles from my 1968 Oldsmobile to my 2018 Dodge Durango. Here is my issue my

wife's 2013 Cadillac ATS. The car has a 2.0-liter engine, and it has an anti-freeze smell that comes and goes, and the engine light stays on for days and then disappears. I find no leaks or wet spots anywhere. I do notice that the antifreeze refill bottle gets full and does not drain after the car is warmed up. Any suggestions will be appreciated.

A. Start with a check of all of the fluids. Then a scan of the car's computer system to see why the check engine light is on. The cooling system in those cars is complicated with lots of places where there could be leaks. From the radiator itself to the numerous cooling lines that run up to the intake manifold. Anyone could leak very slightly but not enough to change the level very much. When I first see a surge or overflow tank acting up the first place, I think about is the pressure cap. Whether it is a cap on a radiator or one on a surge tank it is designed to allow vacuum to build and release to allow fluid to move. At a shop, a tech would test the cap with a pressure tester as well as pressurize the entire system to look for a leak and perhaps add a dye to the coolant. If this were me, I would get a good bright little flashlight and look at all the coolant hoses and the radiator, especially where the tanks attach to the core. If all looks good, then I would replace the pressure cap.

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The following members of the Class of 2025 have earned a John and Abigail Adams Scholarship (students are listed alphabetically by town):

BELLINGHAM

Kiele Sarnie, Construction Technology.

BLACKSTONE

Braedon Ando, Culinary Arts; Nathaniel Cook, Biotechnology; and Keira Kelliher, Health Services.

DOUGLAS

Michaela Boulette, Biotechnology; Haley Chamberlain, Cosmetology; Conner Champagne, Information Technology; Justin Dooner, Engineering; Tyler Grybowski, Information Technology; Emily Muniz, Engineering; Om Patel, Engineering; Liam Peach, Multimedia Communications; Samantha Pinto, Health Services; and Willow Windoloski, Engineering.

GRAFTON

Audrey Bell, Engineering; Raghav Dave, Electronics; Nora Iadarola, Multimedia Communications; Christopher Joiner, Biotechnology; Keyara Jones, Health Services; Ella McCann, Advanced

Manufacturing; Owen O'Packi, Multimedia Communications; Brodie Remillard, Electronics; Joshua Siefert, Engineering; Carly Simpson, Health Services; and Daniel Warfield, Electronics.

HOPEDALE

Kallie Allen, Biotechnology; Nathaniel Allen, Information Technology; Anthony Bucchino, Engineering; Eric Deppe, Engineering; Connor Griffin, Electrical; Gabriella Griffin, Health Services; Riley Jackson, Information Technology; Jacob Noble, Engineering;

Declan Reilly, Information Technology; and Christopher Russell, Biotechnology.

MILFORD

Nicolas Alvarez-Benincasa, Construction Technology; Lacey Coffman, Multimedia Communications; Gregory D'Orazio, Advanced Manufacturing; Adriana Hawkins, Culinary Arts; Matthew Hunter, Biotechnology; Charbel Jebara, Electronics; Ryan McGuire, HVAC/R; Jack Nevens, Information Technology; and Joel Puri, Engineering.

MILLBURY

Wyatt Darrell, Engineering; Mason Diosomito, Engineering; Joshua Gould, Information Technology; Jayden Quang, Engineering; and Luke Rutkiewicz, Engineering

MILLVILLE

Julia Trujillo, Health Service

NORTHBRIDGE

Ava Bates, Cosmetology; Steven Caya, Engineering; Sosie DerKosroffian, Health Services; Zabel DerKosroffian, Information Technology; Conner Gomez, Engineering; Mara Keane, Electronics; Dylan Leeds, Engineering; Haley Marston, Dental Assisting; Markas Petone, Health Services; and Alexa Seward, Engineering.

SUTTON

Jeffrey Brooks, Electronics; Emma Cliadakis, Culinary Arts; Colton Corash, Electronics; Morgan Gervais, Advanced Manufacturing; Benjamin Hicks, Electronics; William Kelly, Construction Technology; Caroline Martin, Engineering; and Jacob Rajotte, Information Technology

UPTON

Samantha Carroll, Information Technology; Kylie French, Painting & Design; Cassidy Lyon, Health Services; Harmony Melendez-Torres, Biotechnology; Ryan Poirier, Advanced Manufacturing; and John Simas, Electronics.

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Alexi Cox, Electronics; Samantha Fairhurst, Health Services; Dylan Ryan, Engineering; and Mikaela Swanson, Biotechnology.

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Prizes, and an array of Vendors, attendees can anticipate an unforgettable experience, all while supporting two significant causes: aiding the homeless in the Blackstone Valley and funding scholarships through the BV Rotary Club.

“The event isn’t just about indulgence; it’s about coming together as a community to uplift those in need,” remarked Leslie Reichert, CEO of the Blackstone Valley Emergency

Shelter. Proceeds from the evening will be allocated to the Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter, providing essential support to those experiencing homelessness in the Valley.

With an expected turnout of approximately 275 guests, organizers urge community members to participate in various capacities. Whether attending, sponsoring the event, or donating auction items, every contribution is valued and makes a tangible impact.

“We extend our heartfelt gratitude for everyone’s generosity and support. Together, we

can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those experiencing homelessness. Together, we can give them HOPE,” concluded Reichert, expressing appreciation to the community for its ongoing dedication.

For those interested in participating or contributing, further information can be obtained at www.BVemergencysshelter.org or on Facebook at BVwinetasting. Don’t miss out on this opportunity to join in the festivities and make a positive impact in the community.



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We will meet at the Community Harvest Project Barn, 37 Wheeler Road in Grafton at 9 a.m. The program will last about 2 hours, including an indoor presentation on tracking basics, followed by a walk outdoors. In the event of no snow, additional tracking information will be discussed indoors.

Registration is required for this event as space is limited to 25. Priority registration is being given to Grafton Land Trust members. Registration for non-members will open up on February 1st.

If you would like to attend, please email: info@graftonland.org.

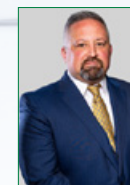
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