

## Grafton's Business Scene

BY CHRISTINE GALEONE

Spring is the season of new life. It's the season of renewal as well. And, while spring is generally associated with birds returning to nearby trees, flowers blooming and vibrant hues of green painting the landscape, the season itself can inspire renewals and fresh starts in people and organizations. Springtime in Grafton is no exception.

The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's Women's Success Network and some other local organizations have been inspiring

One business that's helping Grafton nonprofits that serve others to experience new life or renewal is Tufts University. Its Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine is located in North Grafton. Grants for \$3,000 from Tufts Community Grants program will be awarded to non-profit organizations in Grafton, Boston, Medford and Somerville that have volunteers who are or have been associated with Tufts (i.e. alumni, students, current employees, etc.) in the past year and that didn't receive TCG grants in both 2023 and 2024. Grant applications are being accepted through



people to help low income women as they strive to get the fresh start or renewal that they badly need. Sponsored by Millbury Federal Credit Union, Grafton Country Store, UniBank, Whitin Community Center and the BVCC, the WSN has been holding its Purse Project collection drive to benefit women in need. Through March 31, people can drop off purses and items to fill them – such as store gift cards, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, jewelry and gloves – at the sponsors' locations. More information can be found on the BVCC website, [www.blackstonevalley.org](http://www.blackstonevalley.org).

Friday Feb. 28. Applications and more information can be found at [go.tufts.edu/tcg](http://go.tufts.edu/tcg).

For Truth Organic Spa, this spring should be both a time of renewal and new beginnings. When its original North Grafton building was nearly destroyed by a late 2022 fire, it had to move to a temporary facility. Now, renovations and construction of a new addition are underway. The spa should be able to return to its original home by the end of April.

### GRAFTON

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## Millbury Educator Receives Award

Tamisha Thompson, STEM Instructional Coach at the Raymond E. Shaw Elementary School in Millbury was one of three Massachusetts educators to receive the 2024 Bright Light Award from the Mass Learning Project. The Bright Light Award recognizes recipients' contributions to implementing Project Lead the Way programming in the fields of engineering, computer science, or biomedical science in their schools.

Founded in 1997, Project Lead the Way (PLTW) is the leading K-12 engineering, computer science, and biomedical science curriculum and training provider in the country. PLTW provides relevant, hands-on, project-based curriculum and training focused on real-world activities, projects, and problems that help students apply knowledge and skills to everyday life.

Millbury Public Schools offers



PLTW programming in grades K-12, including computer science, robotics, automation, engineering, design and modeling, and advanced manufacturing. Thompson has helped to lead the implemen-

tation of computer programming, robotics, and engineering in grades 3-6 at the Raymond E. Shaw Elementary School.

## Charles Tyler Turner Joins UUSGU as Music Director



Charles Tyler Turner brings a wealth of musical talent to his role as music director at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Grafton & Upton (UUSGU). He is an accomplished musician, with years of experience leading music and choral programs at area churches and schools.

UUSGU has a long history of musical excellence. Choral and instrumental music play a key role in UUSGU services and events. Under Turner's guidance, artistic excellence will continue, and the program will develop in new and interesting ways.

Turner holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in music from Rhodes College, Harvard University, and Boston University. He has also served in leadership capacities with Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries.

*About the Unitarian Universalist Society of Grafton & Upton*

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## Sutton Historical Society Announces 2025 Events

Mark your calendars for free upcoming events for Sutton Historical Society members and the general public of all ages. In recognition of America250, the anniversary of events during the Revolutionary War, the Sutton Historical Society will be hosting four presentations.

On Thursday, April 17, at 6:30 p.m., join us at Blaxton Hall, 9 Main Street, Sutton, for “Rendezvous with Rachel Revere”, presented by History At Play, LLC. This event will highlight the decisions and concerns of Rachel Revere, wife of Paul Revere, in the days after his famous ride to warn of the arrival of the British. On Thursday, May 15, at 1 p.m. in the

Sutton Senior Center, 9 Hough Road, Sutton, Historical Portrayals by Lady J will present “Farm Girl on the Front Lines: Deborah Sampson’s Secret” highlighting the story of this Patriot who disguised as a male to serve her young, developing country. Joel Bohy, local author, “Bullet Strikes from the First Days of the American Revolution”, will share his knowledge of Revolutionary War munitions on Thursday, September 4, at 7 p.m. in the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road. Lastly, our own, Charlotte Wilson, will share fascinating facts about Sutton’s citizens during the Revolutionary days on Tuesday, November 11 at 7 p.m. also at the First Congrega-

tional Church. These programs are supported in part by a grant from the Sutton Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. Check out our full calendar at Sutton1704.org which includes many other events highlighting Sutton’s rich history.

March is membership renewal month. Society members and those interested in joining, can access membership forms at Sutton1704.org. Membership renewal forms will also be included in our upcoming newsletter to be mailed to all current members. Membership dues can be paid by cash, check or UNIPAY.

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### GRAFTON

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UniBank, which has a North Grafton branch, is helping some local businesses to renew their strength and others to launch their businesses. It’s supporting them by being the Presenting Sponsor (and an exhibitor) for the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Home and Community Expo. The annual family-friendly event will return this year. It will include live entertainment, a chowder festival, a pie eating contest, a scavenger hunt and more. It will be held Saturday March 15 from 10 a.m. to

2 p.m. at Northbridge High School.

Murphy Academy of Irish Dance has been preparing for one of its favorite times of the year – an exciting time of renewal. The dance school will once again share its love and talent for Irish dancing with audiences at St. Patrick’s Day celebrations in the area, including the Worcester County St. Patrick’s Parade.

The inspiration for renewal and fresh starts that springtime brings is as vibrant as flowers blooming and birds flocking to the trees. It also can manifest in a variety of ways. Throughout Grafton and the region, that inspiration can also lead to hope for a joyful season!

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**4th Friday:** Blackstone Valley North: Grafton, Millbury & Sutton

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# Grafton Pd Promotes Four

The Grafton Police Department will soon have two new lieutenants and two new sergeants. During the Select Board meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 21, Police Chief Neil A. Minardi presented the officers who were promoted within the department. Sgt. James Crosby was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. Crosby served with the U.S. Air

Force during Operation Desert Storm. He has served with the department for 28 years. He is currently in the detective division and has been a sergeant since 2016. He has been the department's leader in charity events, such as Project New Hope and the dunk tank at the annual National Night Out. Sgt. Liam O'Rourke was also promoted to the rank of lieutenant.

A full-time officer since 2002, O'Rourke was promoted to sergeant in 2016. He is a drug recognition expert, and a member of the Blackstone Valley Drug and Counter-Crime Task Force. "He's a really good street cop," said Minardi.

Officer Mark Benoit was promoted to the rank of sergeant. A member of the department for 22 years, Benoit is an instructor in several fields, including firearms, RAD (women's self-defense) and ALICE (response to active shooter). He is also an investigative officer. He was also a member of the Police Station Building Committee. Officer David Spellman was promoted to the rank of sergeant. He has been with the department for eight years. Spellman is also a field training instructor and a crisis intervention specialist. He took part in a hostage negotiation program sponsored by the FBI. He began the Youth Academy, which runs each summer, and set up a hoarding resource network. He is currently the department's liaison

for the senior center. The board approved the promotions, which became effective Feb. 9.

A pinning ceremony is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 10.



# Small Stones Festival of the Arts Winners

The Small Stones Festival of the Arts awarded prizes in two categories at the opening of the festival on Saturday, January 25 at the Community Barn, 37 Wheeler Road. In the photography category: First place: Sculpted Beauty, by Mads Otis Second place: Sunny Day in Rothenburg, by Larry Joubert Third place: Apex of the Pounce,

by Lucia Hackett Juror's choice: Aftermath, by Bob See Juror's choice: Ukraine, by Lisa Shea In the painting category: First place: Buckets of Fun, by Tory Kohn Second place: Riparian Roots, by Jaimee Dunham Third place: Arrival, by Caroline Williams

Juror's choice: Afternoon Breeze, by Jo Ellen Reinhardt Juror's choice: Once Upon a Rabbit Moon, by Jennifer Behymer Juror's choice: The Sitting Buddha, by Xiang Li

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Members \$30 Non-Members \$35  
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**Vision Board Workshop**  
Friday, March 21 • 6pm and Sunday, March 23rd • 1pm  
Members \$35 Non-Members \$40  
Spring into the season of rebirth by planting seeds for the new year! Let our vision board workshop inspire and motivate you to become the best version of yourself. With a lasting visual to take home and keep an eye on your goal, you are sure to make successful strides in becoming a better you!

**Yoga Nidra Workshop**  
Friday, April 4 • 7pm  
Members \$20 Non-Members \$25  
Improve your sleep quality, and remove stress and anxiety with guided meditation. This workshop will induce deep relaxation and restore your body and mind, setting you up for a night of restful sleep!

**Spa Yoga Night**  
Friday, April 18 • 6pm  
Members \$35 Non-Members \$40  
Treat yourself to a luxurious Spa Yoga Night! Enter a state of deep relaxation through Restorative Yoga, Thai Foot Massage, Reiki, and Meditation. We will end with tea, chocolates, and a take home goodie bag!

**Sound Bath**  
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## Plenty Going on in Manchaug

The popularity of the Annual Manchaug Stroll has snowballed over two years it has brightened the Christmas season in the historic 1800s mill village.

The free outdoor event is hosted by Vaillancourt Folk Art and District V Design and District V House in conjunction with the Sutton Historical Society and Sutton Fire Department.

The village transformation into a winter wonderland is already set for Saturday, December 13, 2025, 10 months from now.

Luke Vaillancourt, president of the renowned chalkware company, appeared before the Sutton Select Board on February 4 seeking 19 one day inside/outside wine and malt beverage licenses for upcoming events.

Are there any concerns about that being too much of a good thing, queried board chair David Hall.

Last year there were 13 special events hosted by the businesses at 9 Main Street, so asking for 19 is something of a bump.

Vaillancourt also asked for three outdoor entertainment permits for the Christkindl Markt on November 14 and 15 and also one for the



Manchaug Stroll on December 13.

Town Manager James Smith said he is working with the Vaillancourts to come up with a year-round solution rather than handing out many separate licenses. He hopes to go through the state ABCC to streamline the application process.

Vaillancourt said he was also looking to do an auction in March, as well as adding events during the Christmas season including an uncorking (wine) event and a play "Nicholas Nickleby" with Gerald Charles Dickens, a classically trained London actor and descendant of Charles Dickens who has presented a sell-out one-man play "A Christmas Carol" over Thanksgiving weekend in the past.

The Select Board agreed the programs have a positive impact on the community.

Vaillancourt said he hasn't heard any negative comments from residents, he is just "trying to create something special" that is really focused on the collector of his company's chalkware products.

Board chair Hall said the town has had no problem with alcohol service at any of the events.

The board unanimously approved 19 one-day special licenses

to serve wine and malt liquors as well as the three outdoor entertainment permits for 9 Main Street. A TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedures) certified bartender will be onsite for all these events.

**New Events Coming Up**

District V House and the Vaillancourts have set up a new 501(c)(3) called Manchaug First. Its goal is to promote and preserve Manchaug, maintain its community and celebrate its history.

The organization's first event is the Heart of Sutton Festival to be held on Saturday, June 28 and Sunday, June 29.

The event is set to be held on the strip of road that is right on the Manchaug Common with the roadway to be closed for the duration of the festival. Wine and beer service would be in District V's courtyard since alcohol sales cannot occur on town-owned land.

They are looking for 50 - 75 vendors attending to help raise money for the ambitious goals of preserving Manchaug.

It would be like a farmer's market or artisan's fair, Vaillancourt said.

We're looking to have that whole Parisian circus-y feel to celebrate the French roots of Manchaug, he said.

Since it is a daytime event, there is likely to be parking in the Manchaug Mills lot and maybe the fire station. A pedestrian crossing is also planned as is hiring a police detail, as has been past practice.

Jen Miller of District V also applied for a one day wine and malt liquor license for a Spring Soiree set for Saturday, March 1 from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. as an open house event for the store, Customers will not be able to walk around the store or outside with drinks.


The wine and beer and entertainment licenses were unanimously approved by the Select Board for the events.



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which can lower your taxable income, and your money can grow tax deferred. If you have a Roth 401(k) option, you can contribute after-tax dollars, which aren't deductible, but your eventual withdrawals will be tax-free if you've had your account at least five years and you're at least 59½.

For either a traditional or Roth 401(k), as well as similar plans such as a 457(b) (for government employees) or a 403(b) (for educators and employees of some nonprofit groups), the contribution limit has increased by \$500 for 2025, to \$23,500. If you're 50 or older, you can contribute an additional \$7,500, for a total of \$31,000. And under the SECURE 2.0 legislation, if you are between 60 and 63, you have a higher catch-up contribution — \$11,250, instead of \$7,500, for a total of \$34,750.

If you can afford to contribute the full amount to your 401(k) or similar plan, consider

doing so. Of course, not everyone is in that position. If you're a younger worker, you may well have other financial obligations, such as paying off student loans. And even if you've been in the workforce for a while, you may be putting away money for other things — such as your children's education — as well as your own retirement. But even if you can't "max out" on your 401(k), try to contribute at least enough to earn your employer's matching contribution, if one is offered.

Regardless of how much you contribute to your 401(k), consider these suggestions on managing the money within your plan:

**• Create a portfolio that fits your risk tolerance.** Most 401(k) plans offer up to a dozen investment options, while some plans offer many more. You obviously want to increase your 401(k) balance as much as possible, but that

doesn't necessarily mean putting all your 401(k) dollars into the most aggressive funds available. Instead, consider spreading your 401(k) contributions among a range of investments, which can help you lower your risk level while still giving you opportunities for long-term growth. Everyone's risk tolerance is different, though, so you'll want to evaluate yours when constructing your 401(k) portfolio.

**• Adjust your portfolio as needed.** It's a good idea to review your 401(k)'s investment mix at least once a year to see if it's performing as you'd hoped. But be patient — one "down" year doesn't necessarily mean you must make changes. However, as you approach retirement, you may want to lower the risk level of your 401(k) by moving some of your dollars into more conservative vehicles. Still, even when you're retired and have started drawing

money from your 401(k), you might want to keep some growth potential in it to help you stay ahead of inflation.

By contributing what you can afford to your 401(k), and by carefully managing the investments within your plan, you can help maximize the value of this powerful retirement savings vehicle — and give yourself a key asset to help you enjoy your retirement years.

Contact Tim for assistance with your personal finances.

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# D.A. Early Offers Safe Prom and Graduation Program Funding

For the seventh year, District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr. is offering funding for safe post-prom and post-graduation events designed to keep students from driving impaired.

“Prom and graduation are major milestones that deserve to be celebrated, but too often we see young people engaging in risky behavior following these events,” DA Early said. “We’ve been proud to help fund post-prom and post-graduation programs year after year. We know that life can change in the blink of an eye, and we want to do everything we can to prevent a tragedy before it occurs. We will continue to offer these funds to help provide students with the fun and safe events they deserve.”

The grant program has supported these events, organized and overseen by adults, which offer safe drug- and alcohol-free alternatives to the high-risk activities that often follow end

of the year celebrations for high school students.

Now in its seventh year, the program annually awards funds to support events in more than 20 different schools across Worcester County.

District Attorney Early felt it was vital to continue supporting these prevention programs and is utilizing his Drug Forfeiture Reinvestment Program this year. Funding to support these grants was previously provided by the Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance Drunk Driving Trust Fund.

Schools and parent groups can apply for these grants to either support existing events or to assist in establishing new events.

Applications for funding requests are due by Feb. 14, 2025. To request a grant application, contact Julia Baronowski at [Julia.baronowski@mass.gov](mailto:Julia.baronowski@mass.gov)

# Safety Pledge

Grafton High School’s SADD group, alongside School Resource Officer Mark Alves, organized a powerful pledge to encourage making safe choices. Students pledged to not drink and drive or not to enter a vehicle if the driver had been drinking. Thanks to Pepperoni Express owner Lucky, who generously donated a free pizza or sub to every student who signed the pledge! In total, 54 students proudly took the pledge. Great job, SADD! Big thanks to Lucky for the support!



# Sutton Garden Club Presents “Winter Pruning” Program

Sutton Garden Club will have our first program of 2025 at our Thursday, March 20 meeting, focusing on “Winter Pruning: Why, When, and How to Prune your Shrubs”. Jan Weathers, a Master Gardener, will present this program. Doors open at 6:45 and the Program starts at 7pm.

We will learn the basics of pruning deciduous shrubs, with an em-

phasis on structural pruning that can be done during winter, even for spring-flowering shrubs. We will come away with new insights and skills, including “how to” information on proper methods and tools.

Sutton Garden Club welcomes new members throughout the year. Annual membership remains at \$20 individual/\$30 family. Membership forms are available on

our website, <http://www.suttongardenclub.typepad.com> and at our meetings.

First time “check it out” visits are free; subsequent visits will be charged \$5.

website: <http://www.suttongardenclub.typepad.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SuttonGardenClub/>

# Sutton Food Pantry

19 Hough Road, next to the Senior Center. Open Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. For questions, or for food assistance, call the Senior Center at (508) 234-0703. All donated items must be within the use-by-date. The pantry is not permitted to give out expired food.

# Millbury Public Library

The Millbury Public Library is located at 128 Elm St., (508) 865-1181. The website is [www.millburylibrary.org](http://www.millburylibrary.org).

Southwick’s Zoo passes are

available at the library!

*Recurring events*  
Monday, Mar. 3; 4 p.m. *Messy Hands*

Thursday, Mar. 6; 6 p.m. *Cribbage Club*

Friday, Mar. 7; 10:25 a.m. *Sensory Play; Dungeons and Dragons (adults)* 6 p.m.

Saturday, Mar. 8; 11 a.m. *Sea Glass Trees with The Art Lab*

Tuesday, Mar. 12; 6 p.m. *Indoor Mushroom Growing*, register

Thursday, Mar. 13; *Dungeons and Dragons (teens)* register; 6 p.m. *Cribbage Club*

Saturday, Mar. 15; 10 a.m. *Fam-*

ily *Dungeons and Dragons*

Wednesday, Mar. 19; 5 p.m. *Painting on Silk*. Register; 6 p.m. *Cookbook Club* Register

Thursday, Mar. 20; 3 p.m. *Teen Dungeons and Dragons*, register. 6 p.m. *Cribbage Club*

Friday, Mar. 21; 10:15 a.m.

*Sensory Play*  
Saturday, Mar. 22; 10 a.m. *3D Print Club*

Tuesday, Mar. 25; 6 p.m. *Epic Tales Teen Writing Group*

Wednesday, Mar. 26; 6 p.m. *Downton Abbey Tea and Chocolate Event*, register

Thursday, Mar. 27; 6 p.m. *Cribbage Club*

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# UPS Warehouse Cleared to Go Ahead

An 845,000 square foot UPS warehouse on the Grafton/Shrewsbury line is set to become a reality now that both towns have given the project the thumbs-up.

Prologis, Inc. of California is the developer of the 212 acre lot at 50 Centennial Drive. Most of the project will be located in Grafton, with the warehouse itself about 70 percent in that municipality with the rest in Shrewsbury. The warehouse will sit behind the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority commuter rail stop in Grafton.

UPS representatives expect to open the warehouse in 2027. With its 282 loading docks, traffic has been a concern throughout the hearing process. Prologis,



Inc. has proposed paying to improve the Route 20 and Centech Boulevard intersection.

The warehouse will also have 757 exterior trailer parking stalls and 830 car-parking stalls for employees. It is expected to handle more than 50,000 packages per

hour.

Plans show the warehouse generating 5000 vehicle trips in every 24 hours, combining the figures from 3600 employee trips, 500 from single-unit trucks, and 900 from articulated trucks.

# Grafton Annual Town Meeting and Election

The Annual Town Meeting is May 12, 2025 at Grafton High School Auditorium. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. The last day to register to vote for this Town Meeting is Friday, May 2, 2024 at 5 p.m. (in person registration).

Grafton's Annual Town Election is May 20, 2025. The last day to register to vote in this election is Friday, May 2, 2025 at 5 p.m. (in person registration). The polls are

open 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. Precincts 1, 2, and 3 vote at the Grafton Middle School. Precincts 4 and 5 vote at the Millbury Street Elementary School.

The deadline to apply for an Absentee/Mail-In Ballot is 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 13. The in-person absentee voting deadline is 12 p.m. Monday, May 19. Early voting hours to be decided.

**Contact Bill at 774-289-5564 or at [bcronan@theyankeeexpress.com](mailto:bcronan@theyankeeexpress.com) to learn how you can reach nearly 170,000 households and businesses each month!**

# Millbury Food Pantries

The following food pantries are available for residents:

Millbury Federated Church, 20 Main St., Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to noon, 508- 865-6274.

Millbury Senior Center, 1 River St., Mondays to Fridays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., 508-865-9247.

St. Vincent de Paul, St. Brigid's Church, 59 Main St., first Sunday of the month, 12:15 p.m.

Some forms and requirements must be met; emergency need available.

For other locations, call 508- 865-4710

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# Healthier Baking in the Blackstone Valley

BY CHRISTINE GALEONE

It's hard to believe that spring is right around the corner. But far beneath the mounds of snow, there's a lot of lush green life waiting to sprout. In the meantime, we can bring the colors and scents of spring into our homes.

With their sunny hue and fresh scent, lemons are a cheerful spring staple. Not only can they be used for some spring cleaning tasks and for beverages as garnishes, they're healthy and delightful combined with blueberries, poppy seeds or on their own in many desserts and breakfast treats. This recipe for lemon coffeecake is a delectable example of the latter.

Although most of us don't often think of the health benefits that lemons offer, they're much healthier than we may have imagined. They're an excellent source of vitamin C, fiber, citric acid and flavonoids. They also contain folic acid and vitamin B.

And lemons are a heart-healthy and brain-healthy food. The plant compounds limonin, hesperidin and diosmin that are found in lemons lower cholesterol levels. The fruit may also reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, while reducing the risk of diabetes and brain disease as well. Additionally, the citrus fruit has antibacterial and antifungal properties that can help fight infections.

Overall, this coffeecake is healthier because of its natural ingredients. In addition to the lemon juice and peel, cinnamon, milk and eggs contribute to the treat's nutritional value – especially compared to store-bought cakes. And it has less sugar and fat than similar coffeecakes.

## LEMON COFFEECAKE

### CAKE INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ Cups of Flour
- ¾ Cup of Sugar

- 3 tsp. of Baking Powder
- ¼ tsp. of Salt
- 2 tbsp. of Lemon Zest
- 2 Eggs (beaten)
- ¼ Cup of Light Olive Oil
- ½ Cup of Milk
- 2 tbsp. of Lemon Juice (or 2 tsp. of lemon extract)
- 1 tsp. of Vanilla Extract

### TOPPING INGREDIENTS:

- ¼ Cup of Brown Sugar
- 1 tbsp. of Flour
- 1 ½ tbsp. of Lemon Zest
- 2 tbsp. of butter
- ½ Cup of Pecans (optional)

### DIRECTIONS:

Pre-heat the oven to 375 degrees. Combine flour, baking powder, sugar, lemon zest and salt in an 8X8-inch baking pan. Make a hole in the center, and pour in the wet coffeecake ingredients. Combine all the ingredients. In a small bowl, combine the topping ingredients. Distribute the topping evenly over the coffeecake batter.



Bake the coffeecake for around 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Serve warm, and enjoy!

If the winter doldrums are getting to you, don't be discouraged.

Spring will be here soon. And until it is, this lemon coffeecake can bring you a bit of sunshine and cheer. Happy (healthier) baking!

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## Sutton Public Library

The Sutton Public Library is located at 4 Uxbridge Road, (508) 865-8752, www.suttonpubliclibrary.org.

### Recurring events

#### Dungeons and Dragons:

Wednesdays through **March 26**, 3 to 5:30 p.m. Begin a 12-week campaign. For ages 12 to 18, registration required. Should attend all dates.

**Baby Storytime:** Tuesdays, 10:30 to 11 a.m. For babies and caregivers to meet friends, read books and sing songs. No registration required.

**Wednesday Storytime:** Every Wednesday, 10:30 to 11 a.m. No registration required.

**Thursday Storytime:** Every Thursday, 10:30 to 11 a.m. No registration required.

**Cribbage Club:** Mondays, **February 24**, 1 to 2 p.m. Beginners or experienced players' welcome! No registration required.

#### Other events:

Monday, Mar. 3; 11 a.m. Music & Music with Deb Hudgins

Tuesday, Mar. 4; 3:30 p.m. Rainbow Macrame Wall Hanging 12-18 yrs. Register

Wednesday, Mar. 5; 6:30 p.m. Cookbook Club Share a potluck style meal.

Thursday, Mar. 6; 3 p.m. Oreo Taste Test for Teens. Register.

Friday, Mar. 7; 3 p.m. Free Movie Friday for Tweens, 8-12 years

Tuesday, Mar. 11; 4 p.m. DIY Light Switch Cover for 8 – 12 years. Register.

Wednesdays, Mar. 12; 6 p.m.

Stop the Bleed® From UMass Memorial Injury Prevention Department. Learn to save a life with three quick actions. Register.

Thursday, Mar. 13; 6 p.m. Writing Group

Friday, Mar. 14; 2 p.m. Free Movie Friday for Kids Luca (PG) and snacks, 5-12 years.

Tuesday, Mar. 18; 4 p.m. Rock painting for all ages.

Wednesday, Mar. 19; 2 p.m. Afternoon Book Group. "The Mighty Red" by Louise Erdich.

Thursday, Mar. 20; 6 p.m. Evening Book Group. "The Mighty Red" by Louise Erdich.

Friday, Mar. 21; 3 p.m. Free Movie Friday for Teens, "Five Nights at Freddy's" (PG13) Ages 12-18.

Saturday, Mar. 22; 12:30 p.m. Viking Wire Weaving. Register.

Monday, Mar. 24; 6 p.m. Film Virtual Discussion Group – "The Sisters Brothers."

Tuesday, Mar. 25; 12:30 p.m. Adult Craft: Wildflower Bombs

Tuesday, Mar. 25; 3 p.m. Read to Glory, the non-judgy therapy dog.

Tuesday, Mar. 25; 6:30 p.m. Adult Craft: Wildflower Bombs

Wednesday, Mar. 26; 6:30 p.m. Knots and Thoughts: Fiber Club

Thursday, Mar. 27; 6:30 p.m. Adult Craft: Wildflower Bombs

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# BVT Budget Subcommittee Urges Residents to Attend Public Hearing

“Your investment is integral to our continued success”

As the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District 2024-2025 Budget Subcommittee prepares the FY26 annual budget, it remains committed to producing a sustainable operational budget, mindful of its obligation to complement assessments requested of its thirteen member communities.

Preparing an operational budget involves many steps. The Budget Subcommittee embraces a multifaceted, mindful approach that requires collaboration among its school community members and informed stakeholders. From October to March of each year, the Subcommittee holds working sessions to examine, discuss, investigate, research, expand, delete, or otherwise modify its proposed budget, which is submitted to the District School Committee for approval before it seeks districtwide support.

The finance committee members, who review the proposed budget request each year, often commend the capital planning approach, which seizes selective cost-effective strategies with needed campus improvements. Rather than burden its member communities with additional capital-related assessments, the District vigilantly looks for external federal, state, and supplemental funding sources to initiate enhancements through

reimbursement or outright award.

Reviewers of the FY26 proposed budget will observe many mitigation strategies to reduce assessments despite continuing inflationary pressure. Such measures include negotiating and securing employee health insurance benefits at last year's level, creative revenue generated via the sale of surplus property, pension billing relief from the Commonwealth, building rentals, and District Excess and Deficiency reserves to reduce the assessment of its thirteen town municipalities. The District continues to pursue competitive grant opportunities, but grant funds, by design, do not serve as a renewable source for daily operational expenses. Therefore, blending local assessments with secured grant resources is highly beneficial and avoids any audit exceptions.

The Budget Subcommittee has seized every resource and examined every opportunity for cost savings to enhance and protect district taxpayers' investment and develop a plan worth supporting. A public hearing will be held at BVT on March 13, 2025, beginning at 5 p.m. in the Cafeteria, 65 Pleasant Street, Upton. It is an opportunity for residents to consider the proposed FY26 Budget, which puts needed resources behind supporting student success.

About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT):

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham,

Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT creates a positive learning

community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills.

# Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce

The BVCC will hold its signature event, the Annual Charity Golf Tournament on Monday, May 12 at 10 a.m. at the Pleasant Valley Country Club, 95 Armsby Road, Sutton.

This major fundraising event for the BVCC funds essential programs to support students and schools in the Blackstone Valley. The mission of the tournament is to enrich education, invoke innovation and strengthen leadership among students, teachers,

businesses and communities in the Blackstone Valley.

Registration is \$300 for a single player and \$1200 for a foursome. \$125 for dinner and programs only.

Boxed lunch on the course and buffet dinner included for all players, spirit tasting on the course, swag bag included for all players. Raffle prizes, silent auction and live auction at dinner. Putting contest with cash prize. Register at www.BlackstoneValley.org/events.

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1 BR	\$1602	\$48,000
2 BR	\$1728	\$51,600
3 BR	\$1851	\$55,400

\*Rent may be adjusted based on annual income limits provided by HUD.  
\*\*Minimum Income Requirement does not apply to households receiving housing assistance such as Section 8 or MRVP.

**Eligibility Requirements:**

- Must meet all income and background eligibility requirements under the Tenant Selection Plan approved by EOHLIC.
- Minimum 1 person per BR

**Maximum Income per Person/People Household Size**  
*(2024 limits, provided by Worcester MA, HUD Metro Area)*

1 person	2 people	3 people	4 people	5 people	6 people
\$68,500	\$78,250	\$88,050	\$97,800	\$105,650	\$113,450





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# Millbury Senior Center

The Millbury Senior Center has many services for seniors including: SHINE clinic, by phone anytime; podiatry clinic, third Friday of each month; Memory Café, fourth Tuesday of each month. All three require appointments by calling 508-865-9154. Other drop-in activities include: Monday, light exercise, Mahjong, Zumba, Tuesday, blood pressure clinic, Tai Chi, Cribbage; Wednesday, craft class, line dancing, social bingo; Thursday, yoga, coloring class, Pitch; Friday, shopping, light exercise. Lunch is offered every day. For more information about Senior Center activities, visit <https://www.millburyma.gov/senior-center/pages/classes-clinics>.

- March 6 – Senator Moore’s Office 11 a.m.
- March 7 – Movie “Queen Bees” 1 p.m.
- March 13 – St. Patrick’s Day celebration and lunch 11 a.m.
- March 15 – Podiatry by appointment
- March 19 – Tuesday, Craft with Jayne- \$5 pp sign up by 12:30 p.m.
- Easter Egg Decor
- March 21 – Lunch with the Public Health Director. Sign up in advance
- March 26 – Better Breathers 10:30 a.m.
- March 26 – Memory Café 2 p.m.

# Sutton Senior Center

**Activities**  
 Darts - Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.  
 Cribbage - Wednesdays at 1 p.m.  
 Pitch - Thursdays at 10 a.m.  
 I’m Sorry - Fridays at 9:30 a.m.  
 A fun and easy-to-learn card game  
 Bingo - Fridays at 1 p.m. presented by The Friends of Sutton Sutton Elders  
 Book Club - Our reading group meets monthly hosted at Sutton Library  
 Computer Club - A social gathering for all skill levels Thursdays at 9 a.m. led by Paul Holzwarth  
 Movie & Popcorn  
 Health and Wellness  
 Blood Pressure Clinic - Wednesdays at 10 a.m. a nurse will check

your blood pressure, height & weight  
 Chair Yoga - Mondays at 10 a.m. and Thursdays at 1 p.m. Yoga exercise while seated, focused on stretching and relaxation led by certified instructor Gloria Beaupre  
 Barre Cardio - Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m. Low intensity workout inspired by ballet moves led by certified instructor Crystal Lee  
 Muscular Strength & Range of Motion Exercise - Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Light weights and bands are used to strengthen and tone muscles led by certified instructor Gloria Beaupre  
 Tai Chi - Thursdays at 9 a.m.  
 Gentle & flowing movements for

a low-impact workout led by certified instructor Gary Lachapelle  
 Gentle Mat Yoga - Mondays at 12:15 p.m.. Combination of gentle positions to increase mindfulness, breath and flexibility led by certified instructor Crystal Lee  
 Kung Fu Fitness - Tuesdays at 11 a.m. An upbeat combination of various karate moves led by certified instructor Gary LaChapelle  
**Haircuts by Rita:** By appointment. Friday, \$13.  
**Behavioral Help Line Outreach Department, Q & A:** Wednesday, 1 p.m. The Behavioral Help Line is 833-773-2445.

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Five Scouts from Sutton Troop 131 recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest award in in Scouts. Benjamin Hicks, Ryan Gleason, Sadie Stadinski, Amsden Klinghard and Connor Moore all achieved the award.

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# Grafton Senior Center

30 Providence Road  
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Open Monday- Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Blood Pressure Clinic: Thursdays at 11 a.m. Breathing & Healing Chair Yoga: Tuesdays at 9:00 am and Fridays at 10 a.m.- Free for Grafton Seniors thanks to FOGÉ Cardio Barre Exercise: Thursdays at 12 p.m. Congressperson Office Hours: Vary Council on Aging: Meets 2nd Thursday of every month at 1 p.m. unless otherwise posted Day Trips/ Extended Trips: Vary-see newsletter/ brochure rack for details Dull Men's Club: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. Duplicate Bridge: Thursdays at 9 a.m. Fall Prevention Exercise: Mondays and Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.- free for Grafton

Seniors Fuel Assistance: See Lisa Kelley for appointment Hooked on Books Club: First Wednesday of the month- 10:30 a.m. Jog Your Noggin: Spirited conversation with Lisa one Wednesday a month at 10:30 a.m. Line Dancing: Every Friday at 1 p.m. \$3/ person Lunch: Monday- Friday at 11:45 a.m.- suggested \$3.00 donation. Please call 2 days prior for reservation Mahjong (Chinese Form): Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Mat Yoga: Thursdays at 1 p.m. Medical Equipment Loan Closet: walkers, wheelchairs, shower chairs, etc Nutrition Class: an interesting discussion with Senior Exercise instructor, Wendy Reid Oldies Singalong: a fun singalong of the classics. One Friday a month. Outreach: Assessing needs and linking resources Call for appointment with Lisa Out to Lunch: Monthly

outing to area restaurant Painting Independently: Fridays 10 a.m. Pinochle: Thursdays 9:30 a.m. Pitch: Monday and Tuesday at 1 p.m. Rummikub: Wednesdays at 1p.m. Senior Bootcamp: A more intense workout that combines cardio & strength training. Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. Senior Exercise Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. Free for Grafton Seniors thanks to FOGÉ Social Knitting: Mondays at 10:30 a.m. SNAP (Supplemental Food Assistance Program): See Lisa Kelley for appointment Tap Dancing: Every Wednesday at 2 p.m.; \$5 pp Tax Work Off Program: Call Shannon for more info Tone and Stretch Exercise: Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Transportation: Call the office for info! Watercoloring Class: Fridays at 1 p.m. Wii-TV Game Exercise: Available in the TV room almost

any time! Writer's Group: Meets 2nd and 4th Friday at 1 p.m.

Zumba: Wednesdays at 8:45 a.m.- FOGÉ sponsored

# Blackstone Heritage Corridor's Trail Ambassadors to Guide Spring Hiking Series Through Region

Now got you down? Think spring! A dynamic spring hiking series starts on March 8. The hikes will be led by volunteer Trail Ambassadors from the Blackstone Heritage Corridor, a nonprofit collaborating with community partners to provide strong leadership to preserve, promote and celebrate the Blackstone Valley's resources for current and future generations.

The series is designed for all levels of hikers to experience the history and natural beauty of the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. The seasoned Trail Ambassadors will guide participants through many of the 100 trails in the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, which covers 25 communities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Participants will take scenic routes comprised of glacial gorges, granite quarries, dams, streams and ponds, among other natural features along the Blackstone River. The hikes are designed to explore

historic sites, namely native lands, and farms and homesteads dating back to the 18th century.

From early March to mid-June, Trail Ambassador Phil Johanson will guide hikes in the Massachusetts portion of the Corridor, and Trail Ambassador Ernie Germani will lead treks through the Rhode Island section.

"Phil and Ernie are experienced volunteers and outdoorsmen who know the lay of the land throughout the region," said Blackstone Heritage Corridor Executive Director Devon Kurtz. "For their hikes, they welcome visitors to the trailheads and share insights about the history, flora, fauna and physical features of the trail being explored."

The spring series is as follows:

- Saturday, March 8 - Douglas State Forest Midstate Trail, Douglas
- Saturday, March 22 - Cormier Woods, Uxbridge
- Sunday, March 30 - Cumberland Monastery, Cumberland, RI

- Saturday, April 5 - Waters Farm, Sutton
- Saturday, April 12 - Camp Shepard, Smithfield, RI
- Saturday, April 19 - Castle Hill Farm, Whitinsville
- Saturday, May 3 - Mendon Town Forest, Mendon
- Saturday, May 17 - Warren Brook Conservation Area, Upton
- Sunday, May 18 - Hawkins Pond, Gloucester, RI
- Saturday, May 31 - Stowe Meadows Conservation Area, Millbury
- Saturday, June 7 - Mercy Woods, Cumberland, RI
- Saturday, June 14 - Douglas State Forest, Douglas

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## LIVING WITH LUKE

amyleclaire@hotmail.com

# Luke Turns Three Years Old

of other dogs. Where was Obi?

“LUKE!!!” Obi was on the opposite side of his massive lake house when we arrived. “THAT’S OBI’S HOUSE DOWN THERE! WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF THE CAR.” I parked, circled to the back of my vehicle, popped

chased, fought for the blue snake, cheated, grabbed ears, and teased. Meanwhile, the moms held mugs of hot tea by a slider door that made play far too convenient.

“We want to come in.”  
“We like to be out.”

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

Luke’s birthday falls on the last day of January, topping the month off with sweet inspiration.

Readers may recall last year’s birthday bust, when I found a deep scratch on his neck, the result of a rare encounter with an opossum. I rushed him to the vet and poor Luke had to wait half the day for song and celebration. This year, I wasn’t taking any chances. I gave Luke two celebrations, the first of which has made headlines here.

We headed to his friend Obi’s house, pup cakes and a numeral three candle packed. “We’re going to Obi’s house to have a party, Luke!” He popped his head from the travel crate sunroof and searched the streets for Obi. Dogs live in the moment. “I hear my friend’s name. I know what he looks like. But where is he?” Cars, storefronts, other dogs walking with owners, and shops passed us by like a scene from a movie. Luke perked his ears to the sight



open the trunk and unzipped the mesh door. I was just in time. Luke dove like Superman from his travel crate, nearly plunging through the fabric. “TIME TO PARTY!” Both dogs, ecstatic, reunited in a back yard flanking Singletary’s frozen lake. “Happy Birthday, Luke!” Obi greeted his friend with a head poke and invitation to play Chase. Dog play had begun. A dark and light-colored male rolled, romped,

“It’s time for us to be in.”  
“Can we go out please?”  
“We want to play inside now.”

The life of a Dog Mom is unglamorous, especially in January. We opened and shut the door dozens of times, letting out heat and letting in the cold air. We used damp cloths to skate over a dirtied floor and filled bowls of water. “Why did we get a dog again?” We chatted and chuckled



while our dogs caused trouble. “Ha ha. You can’t get me here.” Obi, the master of cleverness hid behind a shrub with the blue snake. “A frustrated Luke barked. “It’s my turn now!” Obi, kind to the core, gave up the snake. After a few more crazy games, we noticed Luke sniff the frozen shoreline, testing his boundaries. A light bulb went off in his head. “I remember swimming here. What if I go ice skating instead?”

The ice was, indeed, safe, but we couldn’t set the precedent that it would stay that way. The appearance of a frozen pond is deceiving. I imagined for a horrifying second the image of my curious Luke, on a later day, realizing that his paw broke through and cracked the ice. He’d start to sink but he’d manage to—

“Luke! Come!” Obi’s Mom commanded the rule with her sternest of voices. I gushed as my almost three-year-old dog rushed toward her voice. “Today is my birthday and I am so aiming to please!!” The choice to behave called for cake. I put the pup cakes on a plate, and lit Numeral Three. The flame quivered, as though aware of Luke’s pressing stare. He didn’t sit at my heels. He was nearly on top of them, following the flame’s shaky path as though managing an eye exam.

He lifted his nose to see better. “I am so worth it.”

Something about his energy (intrusive, stalking) made me nervous. Luke wasn’t a jumper, or a counter surfer. But birthday cupcakes were a whole different animal. What if he jumped on me and inadvertently caused my clothes to light on fire?

“Happy Birthday dear Loo-ewk. Happy Birthday to you!” Honestly, I couldn’t wait for the song to be over. I blew the frightened candle out, tore off the paper wrapper, and flipped a peanut butter frosted pup cake (one inhaled in one second) to the floor. Meanwhile, Obi smacked his lips sideways as though making a llama impression in a game of charades. “Myyyyyy mmm--outh feeeees stiiiiicky.” The texture of the peanut butter had caused Obi to eat in slow motion. Luke noted his friend’s vulnerability and sat like a shark in front of him. “Momma, I think Obi is allergic to peanut butter.”

“Let him be, Luke,” I chided, but we did allow Luke to lick the bowl when Obi was finished.

It’s not every day that your dog turns three.

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REAL ESTATE

# The Perks of Buying a Fixer-Upper

There's no denying affordability is tough right now. But that doesn't mean you have to put your plans to buy a home on hold. If you're willing to roll



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

up your sleeves, or have family members with the know-how (or hire someone who will), buying a house

that needs some work could open the door to homeownership. Here's everything you need to know so you can decide if this is the right move for you.

What's a fixer-upper? A fixer-upper is a home that's livable but requires some renovations. Think cosmetic updates like wallpaper removal and new flooring or more extensive repairs like replacing a roof or updating plumbing. While fixer-uppers need a little TLC, here's why

they may be worth considering, especially right now: They Usually Have a Lower Price Point. Because of the repairs involved, these homes are usually less expensive up front than move-in-ready options. Statically, fixer-uppers come with price tags that are about 29 percent lower, making them a solid choice if you're having trouble finding anything in your budget.

Less competition. When you're ready to make an offer, you're less likely to deal with competition from other buyers who are focused on move-in-ready homes.

Build equity faster. From choosing how to redo the floors to picking which cabinets you want in the kitchen, a fixer-upper allows you to design a space that fits your needs and style. Also with smart renovations, you can increase your home's value faster and potentially see a big return on your investment. If you're a house hunter who's not afraid of sweat equity, buying a fixer-upper could be your opportunity to own a home.

What to know about buying a fixer-upper. The possibilities that

come with a fixer-upper are exciting, but there are a few things to think about first. Do you have a game plan? Consider if you have the time, skills, or budget to tackle renovations. Be honest about what you can handle yourself, what you'll need to hire out, and if a fixer-upper is truly a good fit for you. Remember, you'll likely be living in a construction zone at least for a little while.

Prioritize the repairs and upgrades. Don't stress yourself out thinking you've got to do all the work up front. Space out renovations over time in a way that makes sense for your budget and what's most important to tackle first.

Location matters too. You want the money you're spending to fix up a house to be worth the investment. So, make sure the home is in an area with increasing home values and amenities locals love, like parks and restaurants.

Get a home inspection. Hiring an inspector to do a thorough inspection before you buy is a must. What they find will help you understand what needs to be

updated, renovation costs, and if it's a project you want to take on. And budget for surprises. Renovations rarely go as planned. So, be sure to set aside extra money to cover things like extended repair timelines, an increase in the cost of materials, or other unknowns that may come up.

Talk to a lender about financing options. There are some renovation mortgages designed for homes that need a little work. But they may have requirements like spending and timeline limits, so talk to a trusted lender to understand the fine print.

Fixer-uppers aren't for everyone, but if you're open to doing a bit of work, they can be a great way to overcome today's affordability hurdles and find something in your budget. With the right mindset and careful planning, you could turn a less-than-perfect house into the perfect home for you. So, if you're considering taking the plunge, talk to The Marzeotti Group another trusted real estate agent about finding a fixer-upper that fits your budget and goals.

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# Sutton Historical Society Announces Scholarship

Sutton Historical Society, Inc., is proud to announce the launch of the 2025 Sutton Historical Society \$1,000 Scholarship, made possible through the generosity and dedication of our volunteers and members.

This non-renewable scholarship is designed to support Sutton students who demonstrate a pas-

sion for history and community engagement. Eligible applicants are high school seniors who are residents of Sutton, including Sutton High School students, resident seniors attending other high schools, and homeschooled resident seniors. This scholarship aims to encourage the next generation of historians, educators, and

engaged citizens.

Application for the scholarship is now open. The deadline for submission is March 31, 2025. Full details, including eligibility criteria and submission guidelines, can be found on our website at Sutton1704.org.

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# Wee Witches of Chatfield Hollow

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

Witches in New England were very common in the days of old. Connecticut had more than its share wandering among the village folks, sometimes anonymously or in the case of Goody Wee, very well known. Killingworth's Goody Wee lived just outside the village with her daughter Betty, who was also known to work in the dark arts.

The farmer's of Killingworth sought good wood for their fences and pens and the only place to find the best timber was in Cedar Swamp, the home of Goody and Betty Wee. The two enchantresses lived in a small cottage in a valley

called "Goody Wee's Crotch."

The two witches would demand money, gifts, or favors from the farmer who wished to haul his load of wood. If someone attempted to take a load of wood or split rails from the forest without paying their due, the load would continually fall off the cart before the poor transgressor could ascend the hill successfully to the main road. Many swore that the witches had help from the devil in their ploy to make such an otherwise effortless task almost impossible.

Even the local wives had their run ins with Goody and Betty. If the Wees showed up at one's door, it was more than wise to give them what they wished, which was usu-

ally milk, bread, cloth, or other necessities the two sought for daily living. If they were refused, they would curse the churns that made butter and cheese, thus leaving the home with spoiled milk and no such provisions until their wish was fulfilled.

For many years the people of Killingworth were subject to Goody and Betty Wee's powerful enchantments. When they passed, the townsfolk figured they were relieved of the minions of the dark one, but were wrong. For even now, when the dark sets in upon the area of the town, there are reports of two ghosts roaming the valley where Goody and Betty lived. The forms of the two females are still

watching over their domain that they once ruled with an evil eye, and according to the old folk, the help of the devil.

The following account will be of interest to the reader. J.B. Beer's History of Middlesex County, published in 1884, page 428, contains a letter written by Martin Lord to Henry Hull. Martin Lord was a respected resident of Killingworth and lived on Roast Meat Hill Road. Henry Hull was the Town Clerk and served in that office for 49 years. In the letter, Lord relates several events in Killingworth's history including the legend of the witches. He wrote:

"In regard to the witches, I know nothing about them, only what I have heard, and perhaps that is as much as any one ever knew. I cannot give the name of the one that lived in Lane District. It has been reported, over and over again, about witches living in Chatfield Hollow. The old woman's name was Goody Wee, and her daughter's name was Betty Wee. There is a cut between the hills a little northeast of the Leander Watrous place, which has for nearly or quite a century been called 'Goody Wee's Crotch.' Undoubtedly, it was named after the supposed witch. It was formerly reported, the above named witches made their neighbors considerable trouble. For instance, they would enter the cream so it could not be worked

into butter, and perform, according to the legends, other equally strange feats. It was said a person could not reach the top of Cedar Swamp Hill with a load of rails, as they would all slide out of the cart, by the agency of witches. Those things were imagined before Webster's Spelling Book and Beckwith's Almanac were published. The witches aforesaid are declared to have been seen riding through the air on broom sticks. I have never learned how they sat on them. I do not think of anything more in particular to write."

"Yours Most Respectfully, "M. Lord."

Lord's writing provides some clues, including an approximate timeline of when the witches were in Killingworth. Noah Webster first published his *American Spelling Book* in 1783, concluding that the accounts must have taken place before then. The witches lived in a cut in the hills northeast of Leander Watrous. The Watrous house still stands on Champlin Road. Northeast of the house would put them in Chatfield Hollow or on an old road that ran south from where the entrance to Chatfield Hollow Park now is. The road ran along a stream between hills which may have been the "crotch." The "Hill" was probably the steep hill coming out of Chatfield Hollow to where a traffic circle now resides.

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## SPORTS

# Sutton Native Shines for Co-op Hockey Team

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Having an older brother, as well as a grandfather, who played hockey a young Leah Medeiros was introduced to the sport, which she came to love in no time.

"I loved skating and playing on the outside rink with my brother," she said. "I enjoy the competitiveness of the game while learning and improving my hockey skills."

It was around the age of 10 when she changed club teams (moved to the Lady Crusaders, which is now the White Hawks out of Worcester), that she realized that her hockey skills were those that allowed her to be competitive. By playing with the Lady Crusaders, Medeiros found herself getting better and learning more from her teammates and thus was ready for playing the Auburn co-op team in high school.

Originally, the Sutton native played center but was moved over to the wing for a time during her club days. When she got to high school she reverted back to playing center for the Rockets, which was well and good for Medeiros.

"I prefer playing center as it allows me to be all over the ice," she said. "Playing high school hockey was something that I knew that I wanted to do ever since I was a young girl."

Not having a team of their own at Sutton, Medeiros knew that she would have to play for the Auburn co-op team which is made up of around nine towns from all over the area.

"As a freshman coming into try-outs I knew a lot of the girls from club hockey, so it wasn't all that bad," Medeiros said. "I just wanted to go in and do my things, hoping to stand out to the coaches. It was very different than I was used to as the level of skating was high and much quicker, but I adjusted fast."

After going out and giving it everything that she had, she was very excited and pumped when she was named to the varsity squad. That first year, she found that she had a lot of friends on the team and the older girls were more than accommodating in helping the younger girls improve their game at the high school level.

After her first year with the Auburn team Medeiros kept working on her game in an effort to improve her skills while being able to keep up with the older girls and their physical play.

The Sutton junior, who like her older sister also plays field hockey



for the high school, Medeiros finds a skills that shared by both sports.

"Stick handling definitely translates in both sports," she said. "It seems that the better I become in hockey, the better I become in field hockey."

Medeiros is always looking to give 100 percent each time that she skates onto the ice and communicating to her linemates is key. She considers herself mainly someone who will assist on a play other than scoring.

"I want to focus on improving my goal scoring to help the team," she said. "But I find myself setting up goals more, although a personal goal of mine would be to start putting the puck in the net more."

Coming into this season the junior was hoping that she could continue to keep connecting with her linemates and get the team into the tournament. Over the last two seasons playing with Auburn the team has managed to make the post-season; losing to Bishop Feehan in the first round of the Division 1 Tournament and then to Algonquin Regional last year in the first round.

Medeiros definitely wants to help get the Rockets deep into the playoffs this year while improving her own play. At the time of this writing, Auburn girls seemed to be working as a unit and had a 10-1-4 record.

Although she still has this year and all of next year with the high school team, the junior would eventually like to take her game to the next level and hopefully play with a college team. In order to do that she knows that she needs improving as a player in a sport that she loves more than anything else in her life.

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THE CAR DOCTOR

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# Toyota tops Nissan for Reliability

**Q.** I am an 80-year-old woman who owns a 2014 Toyota Avalon, which has been a great car. I am interested in buying a new car (am I crazy?), but I would like a small SUV. I'd like the height. Last year I drove a Toyota RAV4, found it noisy and not comfortable. My nephew has suggested the Nissan Rogue Platinum. That

seems to have more of the accessories I am used to in the Avalon. I have not test driven it yet. We have had Toyotas since 1980, and rarely had trouble, is Nissan as good mechanically? Can you please give me your opinion?

**A.** The Nissan is a good car, but not nearly as dependable as your Avalon or in my opinion any Toyota product. There is not any car that rides as well as the Avalon and it is a shame that Toyota chose to discontinue it. Any small or mid-sized SUV is going to ride a bit more firmly. Even Lexus, the luxury line of Toyota is quiet but does ride firm. I would try the RAV4 again, but this time look for the XLE Premium trim. I would also look at the Hyundai Tucson in the Limited trim level. Both are very good cars and the premium trim levels take away a little noise.

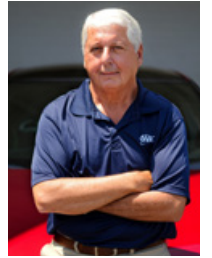
**Q.** I brought my 2015 Chevrolet Equinox with 37,000 miles in for inspection to a local shop. It passed. After five miles the check engine light came on. A local shop diagnosed it with an air pump failure and quoted me \$700 for the repair. It has been almost three weeks, and I still do not have my vehicle back. The shop says they are having trouble getting

the part. What are your thoughts on this whole story?

**A.** I do not believe the inspection had anything to do with the air pump failure. Regarding the part availability, it does seem to be available online at gmparts.com. At this point I would have a conversation with the shop and have them expand their search for the part.

**Q.** I am looking for an impartial set of eyes on my 2010 Honda Insight gas/hybrid known in my house as "Dinky White". "Dink" has 103,000 miles on it and up to 2022 did not cost a dime above normal maintenance, when it has cost about \$1,500 in repairs each of the last two years (door latches draining the battery and TPM system issues '2023 and 2024 respectively). Now it is giving a "Check Emissions" alert. I had my local shop (a smart guy) looked and said the catalytic converters are the issue. The problem is these parts are \$3000 each and there are two. There are also a couple of sensors that are also recommended (online research) that may need replacement. The car is only worth \$3000 on a good day. Except for the check engine light, the car runs fine. We are retired and while not wanting to take on the cost of a

new or fresh off lease hybrid replacement, we could really use a fresh set of eyes on this one and we value your opinion and input.



BY JOHN PAUL

**A.** The sensors which I believe are the oxygen sensors, are crazy expensive at over \$700 each for Honda parts. To replace both of the catalytic converters and both oxygen sensors you could easily spend \$6000 using Honda factory parts. To me spending twice the value of the car is not a great investment. Since the car runs well there might be an option recommended by readers. There is a catalytic cleaner called CATAKLEAN. I have never tried it, but several people have said it works for lazy converters which your car seems to have.

**Q.** My friend owns a Subaru Ascent; he says when active cruise control uses the brakes to slow his vehicle it only uses the rear brakes. Is this correct? Also do the brake lights come on even though you are not touching the brake pedal.

**A.** Initially yes, the rear brakes are used to control speed. Automatic Emergency braking uses all four brakes. So, if you are on the highway and a car in front of you slows slightly the rear brakes engage. If the car then suddenly stops, and all four brakes engage. As for the brake lights, they do illuminate when the car is using the brakes to slow down. Just a reminder that all of these advanced driver assistance systems do not replace an engaged driver.

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# Millbury Girl Wins Free Throw Contest

**O**n February 2 Kinsley Polissack of Millbury, shot 18 out of 25 free throw shots to win the Massachusetts Elks Annual



Hoop Shoot Contest in the girl's 8-9 age bracket. Kinsley bested competitors from across the state to advance to the Elks Regional Hoop Shoot

contest in Portland, Maine, that will be held March 7 to 9. The winners from the Portland Regional competition will advance to the National Hoop Shoot to be held in Chicago in April. Kinsley represented the Auburn Webster Elks Lodge #2118, winning the local contest in November and advancing through the West Central District contest in January.

Kinsley is the daughter of Michelle and Joseph Polissack of Millbury. Through the Hoop Shoot program, the Elks have been developing and reinforcing grit for nearly 50 years—long before researchers and experts concluded that grit is so important for our children. Each year, the six Hoop Shoot National Champions will have their names listed alongside their picture in a brand-new digital exhibit in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts. Additionally, two of the Frank Hise National Champions are in attendance

when the Hall of Fame inductees are honored at the Enshrinement Ceremony. For more information, please contact David Charbonneau (davecharbonneau@email.com) Auburn Elks Lodge Director.

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# Historical Society Looking for Volunteers for Smithsonian Exhibit

**T**he Douglas Historical Society will host a Smithsonian Museum traveling exhibit along with five other Massachusetts towns as part of its Museum on Main Street Program. The exhibit is titled "Voices and Votes" and explores democracy in America. The exhibit is scheduled for September and October, in addition to which the Historical Society will also present six special programs

exploring topics highlighted by the exhibit. Volunteers of all ages are requested from around the region who would like to help with the planning and logistics, program development, docent training and coordination, communications and more. Please contact Lisa t 508-341-4876 (call or text) or at lisam367@gmail.com for more information and to join the fun.

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## 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**



**NOTE: Community bulletin board-type items are welcome for inclusion in the Happenings! section of the Xpress newspapers. Please allow enough lead time for publication. Email your calendar or event notice to [news@theyankeeexpress.com](mailto:news@theyankeeexpress.com).**

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28

• Sutton Democrats will host an informational meeting from 7-8:30 p.m. in the Community Room in the Sutton Police Department, 489 Central Turnpike, Sutton. The Community Room is located on the ground floor.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 1

• Local quilting legend Holice Turnbow will give a presentation at the Charlton Public Library, 40 Main Street from 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Join Holice as he takes you through his fifty-plus years as a quiltmaker.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 2

• The New England Country Music Club will hold the following dances with live classic country bands on Sundays at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin Street, Uxbridge. On March 2, "Angela West and Showdown" will play and on Sunday, March 16, "Al Carter & the Nashville Boys" will provide the music. Doors open at 12:15 p.m., live music 1-5pm. Snacks may be brought in, cash bar for beverages. <http://www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub>

### THURSDAY, MARCH 6

• ValleyCAST, the arts and culture arm of Open Sky Community Services, will be exhibiting the 12th Annual Art Palette Contest at the Spaulding R. Aldrich Heritage Gallery, 50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville. The Art Palette Contest features artists of all ages and abilities who have transformed an ordinary wooden art palette into a unique work of art. The opening reception will be held on Thursday, March 6, 2025, from 5:00-7:30 PM. The community is welcome

and encouraged to attend the free wine and cheese reception and meet the artists.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 8

• At 2 p.m. at the Willard House and Clock Museum, 11 Willard Street in North Grafton David G. Gow Scholarship recipient, Patrick Mont will give a talk on Chelsea Clocks.

### TUESDAY, MARCH 11

• The Charlton Senior Center will hold the Rainbow Café at 4 p.m., a monthly get-together for LGBTQIA+ community to have a safe space to gather. The first meeting was held Feb. 11. Those from other communities are invited to attend. In the Senior Center, 37 Main Street (lower level Town Hall), Charlton. Questions? Contact [michelle.drumm@townofcharlton.net](mailto:michelle.drumm@townofcharlton.net) or call 508-248-2231.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 15

• Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce will host its 25th Anniversary Home & Community Expo, the top event to promote your business to local residents and potential customers. Face to face networking opportunities. Bring your best chowder recipe to "Best of the Valley" Chowder contest. Compete for 2025 People's Choice and 2025 Judges' Choice awards. The event is being held at Northbridge High School 427 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. For both and contest information, visit [www.BlackstoneValley.org](http://www.BlackstoneValley.org).  
• 10 a.m. to 1p.m. is Pollinator Meadow Volunteer Day at Willard House and Clock Museum. Help us plant trees, bushes and flowers, 11 Willard Street, North Grafton.  
• St. Peter's Parish in Northbridge is having a Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner on Saturday, March 15 starting at 5:30 p.m. in the parish hall. Bring your family and friends for a wonderful meal and meet some new

## HAPPENINGS!

*continued on page 19*

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 or email [TinyTimsCatering@gmail.com](mailto:TinyTimsCatering@gmail.com)

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**HAPPENINGS!**

*continued from page 18*

friends. Tickets are \$17 per dinner and include potatoes, carrots, salad and dessert. To go meals will be available for pick up at 5:00pm. All orders must be purchased in advance by Tuesday, March 11. Please call the parish office at 508-234-2156 or email parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org to purchase tickets or if you have any questions.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 23**

• The Dudley Woman's Club is bringing back its popular game, "Pocketbook Bingo" at PACC, 37 Harris Street, Webster. Door

open at 1 p.m. and Bingo starts at 2 p.m. Ten designer bags to win, raffles, and best spirit contest for Best Table Décor! Advance tickets are \$35 per person, \$40 at the door. \$280 reserves a table. Each ticket includes a book of 10 Bingo cards with three games each and one door prize raffle entry. Tickets available online at [www.dudleywoman-sclub.org/pocketbookbingo](http://www.dudleywoman-sclub.org/pocketbookbingo).

**SATURDAY APRIL 5**

• Simon Willard's Birthday Party from 12 – 3 p.m. Willard House and Clock Museum, 11 Willard Street, North Grafton.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 12**

• Former science teacher David Hagberg talk

on tower clocks and why he has one in his house. At 2 p.m., Willard House and Clock Museum, 11 Willard Street, North Grafton.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 17**

• "Rendezvous with Rachel Revere" presented by History at Play, LLC at Blaxton Hall, 9 Main Street, Sutton at 6:30 p.m. Presented by the Sutton Historical Society/.

**THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH**

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

# Sutton Annual Town Meeting and Election

The Annual Town Meeting will be held on Monday, May 12, 2025 at the Middle School/High School Auditorium, 383 Boston Road. Check-in begins at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting starts promptly at 7 p.m.

Sutton's Annual Town Election is scheduled for May 27, 2025. Nomination papers are listed for the positions listed. Nomination papers The last day to submit nomination papers to Board of Registrars, Tuesday, April 8, 5 p.m. For more

information, contact the Town Clerk's office at 508-865-8725 or [lcaruso@town.sutto.ma.us](mailto:lcaruso@town.sutto.ma.us)

- Select Board - one position for 3 years
- Select Board - one position for 1 year
- School Committee – two positions for 3 years
- Planning Board – one position for 3 years
- Library Trustee – one position for 3 years

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FOR MENUS, RESERVATIONS, TICKETS, AND MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.SAMUELSLATERS.COM](http://WWW.SAMUELSLATERS.COM)  
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- Pie Eating Contest
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BLACKSTONE VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SIGNATURE EVENT  
HOME & COMMUNITY EXPO  
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FREE Admission with this ticket or bring a non-perishable food item to benefit Peace of Bread! \$3 Admission per person otherwise.  
Northbridge High School, 427 Linwood Ave. Whitinsville, MA 01588

FREE Admission with ticket or bring a non-perishable food item to benefit Peace of Bread!

**\$3**

Access free digital tickets here!



BLACKSTONE VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

For more information, please visit **www.blackstonevalley.org**