

## Dori Vecchio, Auburn's Interim Town Manager, has Auburn as her Priority

BY JANET STOICA  
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

After working for the City of Worcester for more than two decades, Auburn's Assistant Town Manager/ Human Resources Manager and now Interim Town Manager, Dori Vecchio, says her focus on civil service has not changed over the years. "I'm here to provide the best service possible to all Auburn residents," said Ms. Vecchio, "working for our cities and towns has been an opportunity like no other. The satisfaction of completing a project within budget and having it completed in the best way possible for all residents and taxpayers is an accomplishment that benefits our residents in the best way possible."

She has worked towards ascending positions of town management in her years of employment for Worcester, Blackstone, and now Auburn. "This job feels good, it's fun and very rewarding," said Ms. Vecchio.

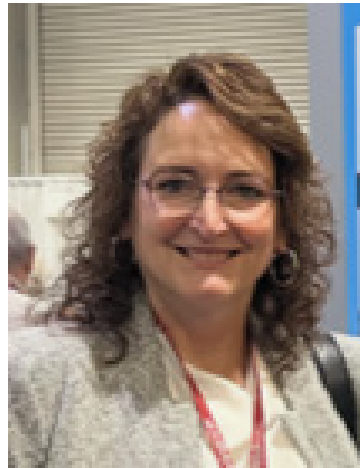
After receiving her Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Worcester State College (now known as Worcester State University), she furthered her educational expertise by earning her Master's Degree in Public Administration from Clark University in Worcester.

Vecchio worked in various positions for the City of Worcester for 23 years. She began her career in the City Manager's office as Direc-

tor of Administration for 10 years then served in the Budget Office as Finance Manager with her last position being Human Resource Director for 10 years working with former Worcester City Manager Michael O'Brien. She has also been the Town Administrator for the town of Blackstone.

Since her appointment as interim Town Manager on February 1, 2025, her schedule has been filled with department head meetings. "I wanted to meet with everyone to let them know what I wanted to do and to learn what they needed from me. Our employees are unique and that's why Auburn is so great," she said. She has aspired to the Town Manager position since she began working for the town. "We're all in the same boat. We must provide the best service possible to all the town residents. When I left Worcester to become the Blackstone Town Administrator and then saw the Auburn Assistant Town Manager posting, I knew I wanted to be here," said Ms. Vecchio, "there's always a lot going on in Auburn. We're expanding and growing daily."

She expounded on the recent Fire Station Building Committee's meeting with the Board of Selectmen to approve use of the \$5 million of free cash in the town's stabilization fund saving Auburn taxpayers \$1.7 million. "The Committee has also amended the new building's plans with additional cost-saving measures and hired a



project manager who will manage and design resulting in more cost savings," she said. "We want to save money to build our new structures dependent upon whether new growth may happen in the future. With an eye to the future, we hope to be able to add on to existing buildings."

"A month or two ago, we got involved with a project the town of Spencer is working on to look into the feasibility of a shared 911 dispatch center. It's a grant-feasibility study for regionalizing 911 dispatching," she added.

Ms. Vecchio stated that she has four months to do as much as she can for the town of Auburn. "I look forward to being interviewed with all other candidates," she said, "Auburn deserves the best Town Manager candidate, someone who will fight for them, and that doesn't involve a four-month break."

## Oxford Plans Bulk Item Drop-Off Dates and Flu Clinic, Announces Lowes Pond Update, and Town Grant

BY JANET STOICA  
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

According to Assistant Town Manager, Tony Sousa, Oxford announces the following agenda of information for its residents:

### BULK ITEM DROP-OFF:

The Town of Oxford's Spring 2025 Bulk Item Drop-Off will take place on April 27 (north of Charlton St./Sutton Ave.) and May 4 (south of Charlton St./Sutton Ave.) from 8 AM to 3 PM at the Oxford Transfer Station (200 Leicester Street). This residential-only event allows each household to drop off two loads of bulk waste, with proof of residency required. For a list of acceptable items, please visit the Oxford DPW website or call the DPW office at 508-987-6006.

### FLU CLINIC:

The Oxford Board of Health will be having Flu Shot Clinics in the 2nd Floor rear meeting room of the Town Hall every Wednesday from 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM starting February 12th through March 5th, 2025. Please bring your insurance card. Walk-ins are welcome but registration is preferred. A registration link is available on

the Town website. Please contact the office of the Board of Health at 508-987-6045 ext. 5 if you have any questions.

### LOWES POND UPDATE:

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has selected T Ford Company, Inc. to complete the planned work, with construction set to begin on March 17, 2025. The project will start in late March or early April. Construction is expected to be finished by late November. A project update webpage is being developed and will be shared soon to provide ongoing construction updates. The link will be posted on the town website once it is available.

### HOME DEPOT FOUNDATION GRANT:

Mr. Sousa is pleased to announce that the Oxford Community Center and DPW have received a grant in the amount of \$11,716.00 from the Home Depot Foundation. This funding will be used for storage containers, a utility cart, and flooring materials at the Oxford Community Center, and construction materials for additional space at the DPW Headquarters at 450 Main Street. Many thanks go out to Community Center Director, Shelley Lambert, for seeking this grant funding.

## Bingo for Books Brings Fun and New Reads to Barton Students

Excitement filled the air as students as Barton Elementary School in Oxford gathered for a special event—Bingo for Books! Hosted by the dedicated PTO, this fun-filled event gave every child the chance to play bingo and win a brand-new book to take home.

Laughter and anticipation spread throughout the rooms as students eagerly waited for their numbers to be called. With each "Bingo!" shouted, another child picked out a book of their choice, adding to the joy of the day. Not only was this a fantastic way

to bring the school community together, but it also ensured that every student had a fresh, exciting story to enjoy over the upcoming February vacation.

A huge thank you goes out to the Barton PTO for organizing and running such a wonderful event. Their hard work and dedication to our schools make a lasting impact on students, supporting literacy and fostering a love for reading in a fun and engaging way. We appreciate everything they do to make our schools a better place!



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# 2025 Oxford Annual Election Calendar

**THE ELECTION IS TUESDAY, MAY 20 FROM 8 A.M. – 8 P.M.**

Last day to obtain nomination papers: Friday, March 28 at 5 p.m.

Last day to submit nomination papers for certification: Tuesday, April 1 at 5 p.m.

Last day to object or withdraw: Thursday, April 17 at 5 p.m.

Last day to register to vote in town election: Friday, May 9

Last day to apply for mail-in ballots (absentee or early): Tuesday, May 13

## 2025 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING CALENDAR

Last day to register to vote: Friday April 25 at 5 p.m.

Deadline for Warrant to be posted: Wednesday, April 30

Annual Town Meeting: Wednesday, May 7 at 7 p.m.



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## Students of the Month

Congratulations to the Oxford Middle School January Students of the Month. These students were nominated and selected by staff for demonstrating the characteristics of Be the 3: Respect, Responsibility, and Safety and/or showing remarkable growth and improvement in areas such as academics, leadership, and/or citizenship. This month we recognize Caleb Anderson, Catalina Montalvo, Jenna Shenette, Maxwell Palaia, and Rebecca Wiafe (not photographed).

**TOPOGRAPH**

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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 EOHLC.
- 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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# The History of the Auburn Library - Part 2 1900-1950

BY HELEN POIRIER, AUBURN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Last month's article dealt with the early years of the development of what is now the Auburn Free Public Library. This article will start at the turn of the 20th century. It had been over 30 years since William Craig donated \$1,000 towards establishing a permanent free library for all town residents, but it still hadn't been done. In 1900, over 1,435 books were borrowed from the library that was in the basement of Town Hall. In 1906-07, with Abby Shute as librarian, a card catalog was created, and the Dewey Decimal System was installed for better sorting of books. A new branch library was opened in 1908 in the Stoneville School with Mrs. William Barrows as assistant at the branch for 15 years.

In 1910 Leander S. Merriam made a donation of \$8,000 for a library building as a memorial to his parents, Ebenezer and Clarissa, and his sister, Lucy. The lot where the cornerstone was laid was formerly the site of the Melish homestead. The dedication of the Merriam Library Building was held June 17, 1911. After the death of Herbert G. Mellish in 1912, his widow gave \$100 for books. In 1912 there were 3,639 books in the library collection.

The 1920s saw the Stoneville branch being opened Thursday 4-5 p.m. for children and 7:30-8:30 p.m. for adults. Children's Week was being celebrated in both branches. Sizeable donations came from the late George H. Sibley estate, Mrs. Buffam of New York, Mrs. Clare S. Pond, Mrs. Mary D. Stone, Abby's sister, and Leander Merriam. Lecture programs, club meetings and children's programming grew. In 1927 Abby Shute, who had been head librarian for 20 years, retired and Miss Mona Adshad



became the head librarian.

In the 1930s the town yearly reports chronicle the need for more room, changes to the borrowing system, more shelving space and grading of land around the Merriam building to mitigate dampness in the basement. There were increased phone requests for information, the need for reference books, and more library access in the outlying areas of the town. In 1930 the book circulation was 24,114 for the year with the total number of books in the library at 3,239.

The 1938 hurricane damaged the lights so only daylight hours were available. Looking for ways to expand regular delivery of books to the Boyce, Pakachoag, and West Auburn schools, the idea of a bookmobile emerged as a better way to cover the town, but was put aside due to lighting repairs at the main library.

The decade of the 1940s brought a new focus to the town library with the threat of war. New books pertaining to war

and civilian defense were added to the collection, requests were made for more hours during the day to accommodate the decrease in the evenings due to the "dim out" rules. There were 988 books collected for the Victory Book Campaign. Improved lighting and more shelving was added in both buildings, but more room was still needed. Librarians did more outreach programs and talks. Mr. Carl Erickson, curator of Conchology at the Museum of Natural History of Worcester, arranged for more natural history exhibits and students visiting during the day with their teachers from Mary D. Stone School.

As the decade ended the circulation of books had increased to 52,020 books, a collection of recordings was added for borrowing. A card catalog was in place, a children's vacation reading club had been organized, and a book lending plan was started in October 1949 at the Pakachoag School P.T.A. meeting. The library was working to solidify its impor-

tance to the town of Auburn with a dedicated and diligent head librarian and supportive Board of Trustees.

Next month is Women's History month and will feature a look at Abby B. Shute, the first long-term librarian for the town. This article is made possible by

the Auburn Historical Society & Museum, 41 South Street. The museum is open Tuesday and Saturday mornings 9:30-12:30 and may be reached at auburn-museum@verizon.net or 508-832-6856.

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# Oxford Middle School Honor Roll Quarter 2 - 2024-2025

## HIGH HONORS

Grade 8 - Alexander Campbell, Bella Coghlan, Nikolas Coraccio, Emma Farrar, Ashlyn Halliday, Tucker Harrity, Ali Johnson, Riley Maki, Nathan Mayo, Tyler Melton, Catalina Montalvo, Gunjan Niroula, Brooke O'Connor, Savannah Pratt, Destiny Purcell, Colton Toedt, Samuel Yogarotnam

Grade 7 - Abigail Burke, Sadie Crouch, Karoline D'Alessandro, Lily Dolbec, Zachary Dubsky, Max Figueroa, Jillian Gustafson, Liam Harrity, Willow Keller, Alana LaFrance, Lucas Laurie, Ashton O'Malley, Michael Peck, Mateo Quintero, Jenselys Ramos, Megan Riley, Heather Stebbins, Lilliana

Tervo, Jordyn Torteson, Harrison Voas

Grade 6 - Hazel Burlingame, Sadie Coghlan, Hadley Coraccio, Brynn Czernicki-Nasis, Cora Descheneau, Caleb Dubsky, Trevor Gould, Margaret Griffin, Jackson Harvey, Isabella LaMountain, Stella Pantano, Jenna Shenette, Chad Sliwoski, Sarah Stebbins, Sadie Stewart, Raeann Teal, Liam Valipour, Marissa Worden, Maklenzie Zwang,

## HONORS

Grade 8 - Brenna Burke, Ethan Campbell, Mason Case, Chase Checkoway, Kendra Cutroni, Kellsey Dunn, Michael Forbes,

Sophia Francis, Natalie Gauthier, Emmary Gustafson, Mary-Jane Hall, Ethan Hamilton, Victoria LaMountain, Chloe Lavallee, Lily Margoupis, Samantha Marrier, Olivia Martinez, Keigan McIlvaine, Agnes Molloy, Kaliyana Padilla, Joseph Peters, Noah Poirier, Dionne Quarshie, Isabelle Richmond, Jayden Rosado, Alexander Skeates, Ava St. Peter, Jameson Tyrrell, Jude Worden

Grade 7 - Cameron Aquafresca, Lilah Archambeault, Gemma Balboni, Dylan Barberio, Marina Biancanello, Olivia Boulette, Haley Capistran, Hailey Cicerchia, Noah Durand, Brielle Fournier, Ava Graika, Sophia Meneguzzo, Maxwell Palaia, Pedro Paniagua, Sophia Renaud, Hunter Rodriguez, Rhegan Stopyra, Parker Tyrrell, Anabelle Watters,

Grade 6 - Clayton Almstrom, Saige Angell, Diego Aponte, Charles Augustynski, Kaylee Augustynski, Logan Barnes, Hayden Bates, Jack Belmore, Narta Berisha, Brianna Borelli, Emile Bourbeau IV, Gavin Brown, Bradley Bush, Riley Capistran, Briella Caracciolo, Kyle Case, Amber Conway, Kaiden Corriveau, Olivia Daoust, Anthony Degaetano, Kendall Donnelly, Joshua George, Ethan Gustafson, Kellen Harrison, Travis Kogbe, Mason Livingston, Brooke Mastro-matteo, Joseph Menke, Ava Montalvo, Caroline Montalvo, Beowulf Morin, Landon Morris, Brandon O'Connor, Tianna Parker, Matthew Peck, Tessa Peloso, Mason Roux, Elijah Sims, Jr. Mia St. Peter, Briley Todd, Aislyn White

# 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)

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# Worcester State University Dean's List

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Tran, Nicolas Vanegas, Jonathan W. Walsh, Thomas W. Willette, Abigail J. Zicuis, David R. Zona

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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**



# BVT Student Presidential Scholars Candidate

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick is proud to announce Christopher E. Joiner of Grafton as a 2025 candidate for the prestigious U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Candidates are selected based on academic performance, standardized test scores, and contributions to their schools and communities. Only a select number of students' nationwide progress to the finalist stage.

Chris, a senior in the Biotechnology program, has proven himself to be an extraordinary student who demonstrates academic excellence, leadership, service, and honorable character. His achievements include membership in BVT's National Honor Society and National Technical Honor Society, serving as the president of both societies. Named most outstanding English, Math, and Chemistry student for earning the highest class grade. A silver medalist in the SkillsUSA Biotechnology Knowledge Bowl State Competition.

Chris is an enthusiastic school community member who participates in many extracurricular

organizations. He is actively involved in the LEO Club, Student Council, and SkillsUSA, having served as a delegate. He volunteers at Project Just Because (a local non-profit that helps families attain basic necessities) and Pawfect Life Rescue (a local animal shelter). His self-motivation extends to independently studying multiple Advanced Placement courses to challenge himself academically while employed through BVT's Cooperative Education program at UMass Chan Medical School, where he helps conduct novel Down syndrome research.

Having gained valuable industry experience, Chris intends to further his career training by studying biomedical engineering at a four-year college, earning a master's degree and then entering the industry. He aspires to start his own neural prosthetics company, focusing on minimally invasive neural prosthetics. This career path aligns perfectly with his passion for helping others, advancing science, and applying creativity to design life-changing medical devices.

On behalf of the school community, Dr. Fitzpatrick is proud to recognize Chris and the many ac-



complishments and contributions that have led to his nomination for this distinguished recognition, which will ultimately lead him to an incredibly bright future.

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. For more information about the school, visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us).

# The Auburn Public Library is now fine-free!

Starting February 11, 2025, the Auburn Public Library is no longer be charging late fees for the overwhelming majority of its items if they are returned overdue. As long as you return a book, DVD, music CD, etc. undamaged, there will be no overdue fee charged no matter how late the item is. Not only that, but any old overdue fines that still remain on patron accounts will be waived. Have you been hesitating to use the library because of an ancient fine on your account? Feel free to swing by the library and we'll be happy to wipe the slate clean!

### WHAT WILL NO LONGER RESULT IN A FINE?

- Returning a book late
- Returning a DVD or Blu-ray late
- Returning a music CD or audiobook CD late
- Returning a magazine late
- Returning items borrowed from other libraries late (as long as they are returned at Auburn)

### WHAT MAY STILL RESULT IN A FINE?

- Returning a museum pass late
- Returning a Library of Things item late
- Returning a library item damaged or missing a piece
- Losing/failing to ever return a library item

*\*Even though the Auburn Public Library is no longer charging fines, please do try to return items on time so that other patrons can enjoy them.*

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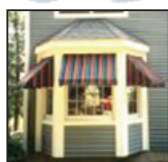
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# Annual Hairfest Rerurning to Indian Ranch in July

The annual Hairfest is set to take place at Indian Ranch in Webster, MA on Saturday, July 19, 2025. The show will feature tributes to all of your favorite 80's bands. This year's lineup includes Empire (Queensryche Tribute), Shot Of Poison (Poison Tribute), Ozzmosis (Ozzy Osbourne Tribute), and Beyond Purple (Tribute to Deep Purple, Whitesnake, Dio and Rainbow). Tickets go on-sale this Saturday, February 22nd at 10:00 AM at [www.indianranch.com](http://www.indianranch.com).

Hailed as THE Most Authentic Queensryche Tribute, EMPIRE brings you the amazing music of one of the leaders of the progressive metal scene of the late 1980's/early 1990's. This talented group of renowned New England based musicians has been entertaining

large crowds to rave reviews for years. EMPIRE performs Operation: Mindcrime, one of the greatest heavy metal concept albums of all time, as well as other hits including "Silent Lucidity," "Jet City Woman," "Queen Of The Reich," "Another Rainy Night," and many more. Don't miss EMPIRE-THE Most Authentic Queensryche Tribute.

Shot of Poison is a group of talented, veteran, rock musicians who've created the world's best tribute to the 35th anniversary of the greatest, hard-rocking, glam-slam party band ever - Poison. Shot of Poison's intention is to bring audiences the look and sound they expect, to make the very best modern-day Poison experience. Few tribute artists have achieved such world-stage exposure. Attention to detail, both aural and

visual, has been critical to this success, and includes accurate impersonations of each Poison member with wardrobe accurate to Poison's 2017-18 tours, CO2 jet effects, an interactive video show, balloon drops, rose give-aways, choreographed movements, and big audience interaction.

Are you an Ozzy fan? Then get ready to rock! The members of Ozzmosis take great pride in creating the next best thing to a live Ozzy performance that transports you through time to experience the energy of Ozzy Osbourne capturing his solo career from Randy Rhoads to Zakk Wylde. As the song says, "You can't kill rock-n-roll, it's here to stay!" Ozzmosis proves it every time. Join them on this journey of classic metal and relive the complete Ozzy phenomenon.

Beyond Purple creates a dynamic journey through the timeless music of Deep Purple, Whitesnake

Rainbow & DIO. With authentic vocals, commanding performances and that unmistakable sound, Beyond Purple's fast growing reputation as THE 80's Rock tribute experience, has propelled them onto the top-ranking concert stages and festivals across North America. The band faithfully re-creates the vivid experience of live, high-energy music from what many consider to be Rock's greatest era.

Indian Ranch offers music lovers a chance to see some of the greatest country, classic rock and pop bands steps from Lake Chargog-gagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg. Nestled between pine trees, the amphitheater offers the ability to see the stage from anywhere in the audience. More than a concert venue, Indian Ranch opened Samuel Slater's Restaurant and is also home to the Indian Princess paddlewheeler and Indian Ranch Campground. Tickets are on sale now for Tesla on June 1st,

Get The Led Out on June 6th, Let's Sing Taylor on June 22nd, Little River Band on July 6th, Rumours: The Ultimate Fleetwood Mac Tribute Show on July 20th, Yachtley Crew on July 24th, Jake Owen and Uncle Kracker on July 27th, The Concert: A Tribute to ABBA on August 3rd, and Tyler Hubbard on August 18th. More shows will be announced soon.

Tickets for Hairfest on Saturday, July 19, 2025 go on-sale Saturday, February 22, 2025 at 10:00 AM. Gates open at 11:00 AM and showtime is 12:00 PM. Tickets are available online at [www.indianranch.com](http://www.indianranch.com), by calling 1-800-514-ETIX (3849) or at the Indian Ranch Box Office. All events are rain or shine. No refunds. Indian Ranch is located at 200 Gore Road in Webster, MA outside of Worcester and less than an hour's drive from Boston, Providence, Hartford and Springfield. For more information, visit [www.indianranch.com](http://www.indianranch.com).

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## Full Circle Moment for QCC Alum New Trustee also Foundation President

"I am thrilled that Jorgo has been appointed to serve. His experience in governance and history with QCC brings a new dynamic that is so needed during these challenging times. We welcome his refreshing perspective that energizes all of us in moving the college ahead," said Board Chair Dr. Linda Maykel.

Gushi came to the U.S. from Albania at age 18 and two weeks later started his first semester at QCC. With his sights set on a bachelor's degree in engineering, Gushi made

the decision to obtain an associate degree at QCC and then transfer to Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), where he earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree.

While a QCC student, Gushi was elected as the president of the Student Government Association and the chair of the Student Advisory Council to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. He advocated to advance open educational resources and championed a successful campaign that changed a state law, which now allows part-time students to run for student trustee positions. His advocacy extended to shaping the MA Department of Higher Education's 10-year Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. In 2022, he received citations from the Massachusetts Governor's Office, State Senate, and House of Representatives for his higher education advocacy work. He also received a WPI GOLD Award for community outreach and inclusion.

Gushi is currently a technical

account manager at MathWorks, a global company specializing in technical software for engineers and scientists.

"QCC changed the trajectory of my life," said Gushi. "As an immigrant, it gave me the opportunity, community and foundation for success. Now, as a trustee and Foundation president, I'm honored to give back by supporting students, expanding opportunities and ensuring that everyone who walks through QCC's doors feels empowered to chase their dreams, just as I did."

*Quinsigamond Community College provides high quality, affordable higher education in Worcester County. As a regional leader in education and workforce development, QCC serves the diverse educational needs of Central Massachusetts by providing affordable, accessible and high quality programming leading to transfer, career and lifelong learning. Visit [www.QCC.edu](http://www.QCC.edu) to learn more.*



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# Auburn Senior Center Activities

**Mondays 10 a.m.**  
Senior Sweat with Dr. Clermont, \$3. Emphasizes balance, stretching and strengthening. Also posture, coordination and working essential muscle groups.

**Mondays 11 a.m.**  
Taiji (aka Tai Chi) \$3 Certified instructor George Chase includes slow, rhythmic patterns of movement.

**Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 a.m.**  
Chair Dance \$3 with Forty Arroyo, instructor. Seated exercise with upbeat music.

**Tuesdays 11 a.m.**  
Gentle Flow Yoga \$3. With certified fitness instructor Angie L. Lavache. Slow-paced for strength, flexibility, mobility and holding postures.

**Tuesdays 1 p.m.**  
Classic Cardio Blast \$3 with Angie Lavache. Classic strength training, balance, mobility and flexibility.

**Wednesdays and Fridays 10 a.m.**  
Strength & Balance \$3 With Lin Hultgren Ace certified fitness instructor. Strengthen and tone your body while improving your mobility.

**Wednesdays 1:30 p.m.**  
American Sign Language. No fee. Learn ASL with Laurie McGarry and her service dog Princess.

**Thursdays 1 p.m.**  
iPad Club. No fee. Join us as we socialize and investigate the world of iPad and iPhone apps.

**Fridays 11 a.m.**  
Meditation Class with Usha Verma. No fee. Positive effects on health, well-being, sleep problems, chronic pain, anxiety and depression.

**Fridays 12 p.m.**  
Quilting. No fee. No experience necessary. We adapt to whatever skill levels students bring to class.

- Canasta – Mondays 12:45 p.m. \$2
- Adult Coloring Club – Mondays 10:30 a.m.
- Cribbage – Wednesdays at 6 p.m.
- Bridge – Fridays 12:45 p.m. Saturdays once a month
- Walking Club – Every Monday and Wednesday 9 a.m. at Auburn Mall.

- Knit and Stitch – Monday 10 a.m., Wednesday 9 a.m. Make new friends while working on your project.
- Tech Clinic – Wednesdays (check calendar) 11 a.m. Having trouble or questions with computers, phones or tablets, stop in.
- BINGO – Thursdays 12:45 p.m.
- Pitch – Wednesdays, 1 p.m. and Fridays 6:30 p.m.

**Chat with Auburn Police Officers.** Join officers for lunch or coffee and dessert on the second Thursday of the month, March 13, at 12 p.m.

**Blood Pressure Clinic** on the first Monday of the month, March 3 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. No charge.

**Grief and Loss Support Group.** Tuesday, March 18 at 1:30 p.m. Call 508-832-7799 to register.

**Men's Club Tuesday, March 11 at 9 a.m., drop-in program.**

**Senator Moore's Office Hours at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 5.**

**Caregiver Support Group** for those caring for a loved one with

Alzheimers or dementia. Second Monday of the month, March 10. From 1-2:30 p.m. at the Auburn Senior Center. Guest speakers, information about community resources. For more information. Call Usha Verma, Outreach, at the Senior Center 508-832-7799.

**Veterans Agent Coffee Hour** with David Adams, third Monday of the month March 17 at 9 a.m.

**SHINE Appointments** – a state program that provides free health information. Make an appointment with Patrick Morris at the Senior Center, 508-832-7799.

The Auburn Senior Center and the WRTA offer a transit service for the residents of Auburn who are age 60 and over and for people with disabilities of all ages. This is a shared ride service that will pick you up at your home. The van may make stops to pick up/drop off other passengers while you are on the way to your destination. Call the WRTA 508-752-9283 to set up an account and schedule service.

**Programs - Please RSVP to 508-832-7799 if you plan to attend**

Karaoke with Bruce- Come sing

your heart out, Monday, March 3 at 1 p.m. Join us for fun and songs.

**Longevity Movement - Wednesday, March 5 at 1 p.m.** Who wants to live forever? Dr. Clermont explains it all for you.

**Sam's Stems Flower Arranging Class – Wednesday, March 12 at 1 p.m.** Cost \$15, due at registration. A hands-on class. Included: flowers and materials, step-by-step instruction with an experienced florist, perfect for all skill levels.

**Central Mass. singer-songwriter Stephen George** will entertain with oldies, pop, folk, Christian and Country genres, Monday March 17 at 1 p.m.

**The Magic of Steve Charette – Monday March 24 at 1 p.m.** Comedy, magic and mentalism. Incredible sleight of hand, quick wit and endearing personality.

**Easter Crafts with Brookdale Eddy Pond - Wednesday, March 26 at 1 p.m.** Free class.

**Nancy Marshall – Singer/songwriter, musician and teacher at Berklee College of Music** entertains us on Monday, March 31 at 1 p.m.



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## SPORTS

## Twin Record Holders

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Cam and Kyle McLaughlin have been playing baseball just about their entire lives. As twins it only made sense that one (Kyle) would be a pitcher and the other (Cam) would be his battery mate behind the plate calling the pitches. Around the sixth grade

to shave time off every time he ran and now as he end his senior year he finds his personal best time sitting at 17:15 for the 5K. As he continued to get better over the years he realized that running was something that he could pursue in college and has since committed to Central Connecticut State University to run track and field for the Blue Devils.

lisecond the first time I have since broken it two more times," he said. "Getting the record in the relay during our very last race of the year was awesome. To cross the line with a group of guys you've run with all year was really special, especially since they were all seniors and I was the only junior when we broke it."

Much like his twin brother, Kyle decided to join track during his sophomore year to help his baseball career.

"I felt that I have always been fast and athletic on the baseball field; track was a good way to expand my athleticism," he said. "That sophomore year I figured I'd do the dash as I was quick and had no endurance to run distance events."

Auburn Track Coach Steve Quitadamo had no idea where Kyle would fit in or if for that matter what he would be able to do, but then he had a brainstorm.

"I had three senior hurdlers who would be graduating and I knew that we'd be in trouble the next year so I asked him if he want to give it a shot," the coach said. "Kyle took it on and the rest is history."

At first the then sophomore found running and jumping over hurdles was difficult and something he was unsure if he could do, but after working on perfecting the event he was all in.

"It was very challenging with the technique of getting over the hurdle the hardest part. You need to perfect going over the hurdle or you'll trip and fall," he said. "It took me basically my entire sophomore year to get things down, but once I did it came easy to me."

During his junior campaign, he had a breakout season with the event and eventually ran in the New Balance Nationals. Although he didn't perform his best, he was happy to get the opportunity to go and is looking to improve upon his first performance this year.

During his three seasons running indoor track for Coach Quitadamo, Kyle has been able to up his brother by capturing six Auburn and two league records. He holds the school and SWCL record in both the 55-meter dash (6.3 seconds) and the 55-meter hurdles with a time of 7.6 seconds. He also holds the records for the 50-yard dash (5.7), 50-yard hurdles (6.7), the long jump (21'9") and the pentathlon with a total of 3193 points.

"Having six school records and two league records is a really cool achievement. To get a record in every event that I take part in is actually crazy," he said. "I never thought about records when I joined track,

Having participated in cross-country and baseball his freshman year at Auburn High School, he decided to try running track during the winter season his sophomore year. Although he found running inside in an enclosed place with people all around him something very different than running by yourself in the woods, he did find a few events in which he could excel. His main event was the 1000m, in which he ran in 2:41.49 to set the school record and was also part of the 4x800 relay team, running the anchor that raced off to another school record finishing the event in 8:48.59. Cam also has a personal best time of 10:45 in the 2-mile for the Rockets.

"Getting the record was really cool, not a lot of people can say that they have a school record. Although I only broke it by a mil-



Cam was looking for something different to take part in and discovered running.

"I just fell in love with it right from the beginning. It was something to do by yourself," he said. "It was an escape that allowed me to clear my mind; never thought it would take me as far as it has."

As the twins entered Auburn High School, Cam was enticed to join the cross-country team to help him get fit for the baseball season, although he was apprehensive about it at first.

"I was really not sure about it; going from 1.5 miles to 3.1 miles on the high school level, but I have not regretted doing it at all," he said. "As a freshman it was daunting to be told to run as fast as you can for 3 miles. I had no confidence in myself whatsoever."

During that season he continued



never mind going to Nationals."

The first record to drop for Kyle was the 55-meter hurdles and he remembers the moment the coach told him after the race that he had broken the record; it was a great moment. Later that junior year he grabbed the school record in the long jump.

"I've got to thank Coach Q; he put me into the hurdles and thought that I would be good in the long jump, he was right on both decisions," Kyle said. "Knowing that I was fast and could jump he had a feeling I'd do good. During my very first jump I broke the school record and have since rebroken it."

Much like learning the specific techniques to get over the hurdles he had to learn the proper techniques with the long jump event. In taking the school record in the pentathlon (hurdles, long jump, high jump, 1000 and shot-put) he knew that he had a shot of doing well.

"This was the first time that I took part in the pentathlon, it was fun but challenging," he said. "I went into it knowing that I was good in most of the events, so I'd come out with a decent score, but never thought it would be a record-breaking score."

According to Coach Quitadamo the two are not only very close but they push one another to get better and are very coachable athletes.

Together the twins have been able to accumulate eight Auburn track and field records. While Cam will be attending college for track and field in Connecticut next fall, Kyle will take his pitching and outfield talents to play baseball for the University of Massachusetts in Boston.

And although they have more records than they could have ever imagined, each knows the other is the best in his particular events.

"Kyle will win the shorter races any day, but if you add just a little distance I'll beat him every single time," Cam said, "You really can't compare us, we both take part in different events."

Kyle echoed his twin brother's sentiment adding that he has no chance whatsoever with long distance and he'll leave that to Cam.

With the track season winding down, the twins will be on the baseball diamond one last time together as pitcher and catcher for the Rockets, looking to add a championship to their resume.



## TALES FROM BEYOND

tomdagostino.com

# 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 usually 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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LIVING WITH LUKE

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# Luke Turns Three Years Old

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 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 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, 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.

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



"We want to come in."  
 "We like to be out."  
 "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

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. "Myyyyyyy mmm--outh feeeeeeels 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.

Visit Luke at IG [livingwithlukevalentino](https://www.instagram.com/livingwithlukevalentino)

Write to Amy [amyleclaire@hotmail.com](mailto:amyleclaire@hotmail.com)

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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 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.



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

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.

# Mark Riley Headlines Comedy Night At Slater's

Special Guests Steve Scarfo And Chris D

Comedy returns to Samuel Slater's Restaurant in Webster, MA on Friday, March 21st, 2025, 7:30 PM featuring Mark Riley plus special guests Steve Scarfo and Chris D for a night of laughs.

Mark Riley was born and raised in Boston (yes, he can sort of pronounce his "r's") and is one of the most-booked comedians in New England. His high energy and unique perspective on everyday situations combined with his sharp observational humor keeps audiences in stitches. His material is always changing so you'll never see the same show twice. He connects with audiences in a unique way and is fearless to hecklers! Whether you're looking for a family-friendly show, PG-13, or R rated, (he draws the line at X rated) he will deliver laughter.

Steve Scarfo is a 25+ year veteran of the Boston Comedy Scene and was noticed by The Boston Globe at his first performance. His high-energy, real-life approach to material coupled with his sometimes bizarre viewpoint is sure

to strike a chord in any audience and keep them in stitches. He has worked all over New England, including Comedy Connection in Boston and Portland, Nick's Comedy Stop in Boston, Laugh Boston, Comix, North Shore Comedy and Headliners Comedy Clubs, Laugh New England and with Laugh Riots Productions.

Chris Dimitrakopoulos aka Chris D. is a Greek-American comedian from Peabody, MA. With his blend of jokes about his quirky, immigrant family and his unique perspective on the world around him, Chris is quickly becoming one of the nation's rising, young talents. He has been a standout at The Beantown Comedy Riots, The Boston Comedy Festival, and The Burbank Comedy Festival in LA. In addition to regularly opening for national headliners like Juston McKinney and Lenny Clarke, Chris once held the prestigious title of "Comic in Residence" at the famous Comedy Studio in Cambridge, MA.

Tickets for Comedy Night at

Slater's with Mark Riley & Guests on Friday, March 21st, 2025 are on-sale now at samuelslaters.com. Doors open at 6:30 PM; show starts at 7:30 PM. Samuel Slater's Restaurant is located at 200 Gore Road in Webster.




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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 Plati-

num. 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.

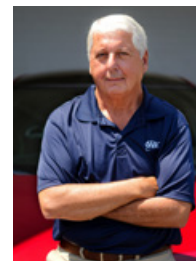
**Q.** I am looking for an impartial set of eyes on my 2010 Honda Insight gas/hybrid known in my house as "Dinky White". "Dink" has 103,000 miles on it and up to 2022 did not cost a dime above normal maintenance, when it has cost about \$1,500 in repairs each of the last two years (door latches draining 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 re-

ally use a fresh set of eyes on this one and we value your opinion and input.

**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 CATAK-LEAN. 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.



BY JOHN PAUL

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TIPS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING

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# Consider these moves when considering a career transition

If you are navigating a career transition, what financial moves should you consider? Here are five things you need to know before making a move.



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

• **Know the money involved.** If your transition is due to a layoff or early retirement package, you need to understand how much money you'll receive and for how long. Will the money stop if you accept a new role, will you accrue sick leave and vacation time during your transition and will you be paid for unused leave at your final resignation date. You should also investigate if you qualify for any programs that would support you during your transition.

• **Know your benefits package.** Many companies and orga-

nizations offer extended benefit packages for those transitioning into retirement or being laid off. For example, the Federal government may offer coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program, or you can research programs like the Temporary Continuation of Coverage, which can last up to 18 months for separating employees. Regardless of your situation, doing your research and asking questions about understanding what programs and support is available to you is key.

• **Know your retirement plan options.** Many Americans have retirement savings in 401Ks and similar programs. Government employees use the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). You should work with a financial professional who can explain how you'll be taxed on withdrawals from these accounts, should you need them. In some cases, you can qualify for early retirement and can avoid the 10% early withdrawal penalties. If you're transitioning to a new role, you may have the option to transfer past accounts

like your TSP to a new employer's 401(k) if the plan accepts transfers. Finally, you could roll over your existing savings plan into an IRA allowing you to avoid immediate taxes and potentially providing you with some attractive investment options.

• **Review your finances and budget.** What sources of income can you count on during this transition? If you have built an emergency fund containing several months' worth of living expenses, you may need to tap into it. If you were already nearing retirement age, you might start drawing on Social Security, even if it's earlier than you planned. If you aren't near retirement age, you may be able to find some part-time work until you land your next full-time job. At the same time, you may want to closely examine your budget to find areas in which you can cut back. One of the many free budgeting apps available online can prove useful in this area.

• **Get some answers — and some help.** You may want to consult with

a financial professional, who can provide advice and guidance and help you work toward your short- and long-term goals.

This can unquestionably be a challenging time for you. But by looking at all your options, drawing on all your resources and getting some financial advice and guidance, you can make decisions that can help you be prepared for whatever life throws at you.

Edward Jones, its employees, and financial advisors cannot provide tax or legal advice. You should

consult your attorney or qualified tax advisor regarding your situation.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Dennis Antonopoulos, your local Edward Jones Advisor at 5 Albert Street, Auburn, MA 01501 Tel: 508-832-5385 or dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com. Edward Jones Member SIPC*

## Auburn Students Make Dean's Lists

### UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA STUDENT HANNAH SWENSON OF AUBURN EARNS DEAN'S LIST HONORS

Hannah Swenson, of Auburn, earned Dean's List honors at University of Tampa for the Fall 2024 semester. Swenson is a Junior majoring in Marketing BS. Students must maintain a GPA of 3.75 or higher to be eligible for the dean's list. The University of Tampa is a private, comprehensive university located on 110 acres on the riverfront in downtown Tampa. Known for academic excellence, personal attention and real-world experience in its undergraduate and graduate programs, the Uni-

versity has about 200 programs of study and serves more than 11,000 students from 50 states and most of the world's countries.

### THOMAS COWDEN QUALIFIES FOR DEAN'S LIST AT SETON HALL

Seton Hall University of South Orange NJ, is pleased to announce Thomas Cowden of Auburn has qualified for the Fall 2024 Dean's List. After the close of every semester, undergraduate students completing all courses with a GPA of 3.4, with no grades lower than "C" qualify for the Dean's List. As one of the nation's leading Catholic universities, Seton Hall has been

showing the world what great minds can do since 1856. Home to more than 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students and offering more than 90 rigorous majors, Seton Hall's academic excellence has been singled out for distinction by The Princeton Review, U.S. News & World Report and Bloomberg Businessweek.

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- Roll the account over to an individual retirement account (IRA).
- Cash it out, which is subject to potential tax consequences.

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

**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 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](mailto: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/.

**SATURDAY, MAY 17**

• The Coast Guard is offering its 2025 Boat America Course from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. at the Webster Fire Department Classroom, 55 Thompson Road, Webster. Contact Public Education Officer Phil Kubat for registration or additional information. Call 508-478-3778 or email [phil.uscgau@verizon.net](mailto:phil.uscgau@verizon.net). To locate these and other USCG Auxiliary course (BA and BS&S) that will meet certification requirements, visit: [https://www.cgau.org/boating/class\\_finder/index.php](https://www.cgau.org/boating/class_finder/index.php).

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# Maple Days at Sturbridge Village

Old Sturbridge Village is open during the winter months with many seasonal programs and special events happening each week.

Included with standard day-

time admission on select dates in March, guests can see the entire sugar-making process, from tapping the trees to “sugaring off,” and learn why maple sugar was more commonly used than maple syrup in early New England. Costumed

historians will also cook period foods made with maple products and the tinner and cooper will make maple-related items. Maple Days go until March 9 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. In addition, guests can stop by the Miner Grant Store and the Ox & Yoke Mercantile

to purchase a variety of maple-themed items. Find maple syrup, maple candy, maple-themed books, maple-scented soaps and lotions, and more!

Additional winter season events include walking through historic buildings, engaging with our

costumed historians, and seeing heritage-breed animals. Guests are encouraged to reserve tickets in advance for their date of arrival. Tickets and more information can be found online: <https://www.osv.org/event/maple-days/>



## “Wharf-rats and Irishies”: The Blackstone Canal and the Story of the Irish in Worcester

Join us for a talk about the historic Irish community in Worcester from 2-3 p.m. on Sunday, March 9 at the Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center at Worcester, 3 Paul Clancy Way, Worcester. Discover how it emerged alongside the Blackstone Canal and how they overcame prejudice to leave a lasting impression on the city and its culture.

Appropriate for ages 15 and up. For more information please call (508) 373-7056.

For information on ADA/Reasonable Accommodations, contact: 617-645-0358 Moneesha.dasgupta2@mass.gov

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## SUNDAY BRUNCH

10:00 AM - 3:00 PM


<p><b>HAPPY HOUR</b> 1/2 PRICE APPS: WEDNESDAYS &amp; THURSDAYS (4PM-6PM) ONE PER PERSON MAX. PORTIONS MAY VARY. CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH OTHER OFFERS OR SPECIAL EVENTS.</p> <p><b>BAR:</b> \$5 BEER • \$6 WINE • \$7 COCKTAIL <small>THESE PRICES ARE LIMITED TO SEATING AND SPECIAL EVENTS.</small></p>	<p><b>MUSIC BINGO &amp; BURGERS</b> WEDNESDAYS 4:30-7:00 PM BINGO PRIZES: \$1000, \$500, \$250, \$100, \$50, \$25, \$10, \$5, \$2, \$1 BURGER SPECIAL: \$5.99</p>	<p><b>PRIME RIB WEDNESDAYS</b> 12oz PLUS TWO SIDES FOR \$25 STARTING AT 4PM • LIMITED TIME OFFER WHILE SUPPLIES LAST • DINE-IN ONLY</p>
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<p><b>THE VERGE</b> APRIL 5 <b>WHISKEY BOULEVARD</b> APRIL 12 <b>ABRAXAS: SANTANA TRIBUTE BAND</b> APRIL 19</p>	<p><b>THE BANGING 88'S DUELING PIANOS</b> APRIL 26 <b>TICKET2RIDE: THE ROCK &amp; ROLL COMEDY GAME SHOW</b> MAY 10 <b>TRAILER TRASH</b> MAY 16</p>	<p><b>AQUANETT</b> MAY 23 <b>PAPER IN FIRE: JOHN MELLENCAMP ANTHOLOGY</b> MAY 24 <b>KSF: A TRIBUTE TO KANSAS, STYX AND FOREIGNER</b> MAY 31</p>
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FOR MENUS, RESERVATIONS, TICKETS, AND MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.SAMUELSLATERS.COM](http://WWW.SAMUELSLATERS.COM)  
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