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South Edition: Douglas, Northbridge, Uxbridge

March 14, 2025

UHS Student Wins Poster Contest

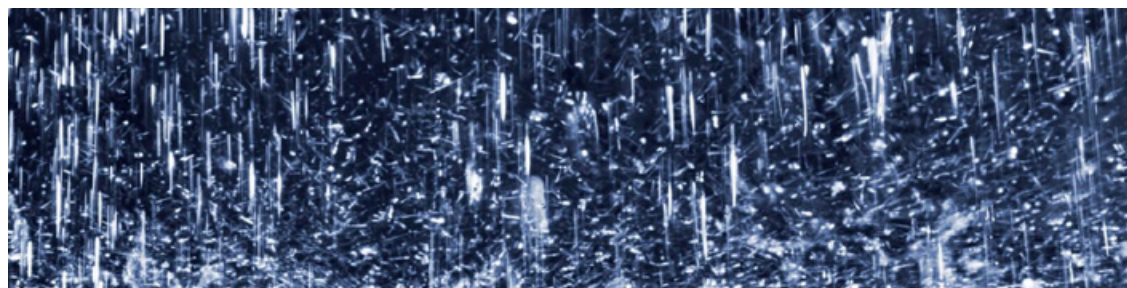
Uxbridge High School sophomore Clarah Avery-Boyer has been named the winner in the grades 9-12 category of the 2025 Massachusetts Youth Art

Month celebration. "Our UHS students have such a variety of exceptional talents and skills," said UHS Principal Dr. Michael Rubin. "Awards like this



Month poster contest. Avery-Boyer's poster addresses the theme of "Connected Through Color" and was chosen from numerous entries across the state. Her winning design will be featured in the Youth Art Month virtual exhibit that goes live on March 17 as part of the Massachusetts Art Educators Association Youth Art

certainly validate the creativity of students like Clarah and the effort and support from her teachers." "We are incredibly proud of Clarah's talent and accomplishment," said Claire Munley, one of the art teachers at Uxbridge High. "Her design beautifully captured the essence of the contest theme and showcased her artistic talent."



Weathering the Storm

BY LINDA WESSLING

I have experienced numerous highs and lows in my life, each leading to emotional and spiritual growth. My life lesson, sunshine is not always easier than rain. I was elected to the 1978 Boston Globe All-Scholastic team in my senior year at Winthrop, Massachusetts high school. In 2008 I was inducted into the Winthrop High Hall of Fame. In the quarterfinals of the Eastern Conference State Championship match between Newburyport, Mass and my high school, exhausted from playing the entire game I was fouled after sinking an outside shot. The ball rolled into the basketball net and out. That loss which knocked us out of the semifinals remains like a ghost haunting me to this day.

At the end of my basketball career, at the banquet dinner,

I experienced one of the most incredible pains of my life. The Coach's Award each year is given to a team member who displayed strength, courage and leadership. In my senior year of high school, the award was given to another member of my basketball team. In high school, I was quiet and soft-spoken, but also very respectful to adults. I was humiliated as my basketball coach gestured deaf signals saying, "In the four years I have known Linda, this is how much she has spoken to me." I ran to my house through Ingleside park with my sister following me and plopped myself into my bed and cried as if someone had died. My mother, unable to handle the situation, said that if acting in this manner was how I responded to my coach's despicable behavior, she was not going to allow my participation in sports. I awoke in the morning upset at everything

that had occurred at the sports banquet, but I held my head high and went to school. That pain cut through my heart as if Cupid scored a direct hit with a flaming arrow through my heart.

Pain can be the loss of a loved one, enduring a child's broken heart, enduring your own broken heart, and in Hemingway's words, "the betrayal of false friends," and estrangement from a family member. My physical pain experiences include spinal fusion back surgery, lacerated righthand surgery, and in addition, I played assistant coach to my husband, Jack's, many injuries and illnesses. One horrific experience occurred when my husband was hit head-on in an automobile crash. A 16-year-old boy on his way to pick up his friends, collided with Jack's car on a rainy fall day. Jack was on his way back from watching the New York Marathon at a friend's house in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

I worked at Heartland Drug store in Allston at the time. I received a telephone call urging me to drive to the Mass. General emergency room because Jack was potentially facing surgery. Alone in the rain, I drove to MGH without any indication of where I was going. After driving in circles, with tears streaming down my face, I pulled my car to an obscure side road. In a state of shock, I began walking, until a kind stranger pulled next to my car. He asked if I was in "some kind of trouble." Through my tears I explained the situation and asked him for directions. Thank God for the kindness of strangers. The gentleman drove me to the emergency room instructing me to inquire at the nurse's desk about my husband.

In the emergency room, I was escorted to a waiting room, scared at what I might discover about my husband. Was he dead? A kind ER doctor took my hand and led me to the room where my husband lay bleeding from his jaw. I overheard

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Douglas Deputy Fire Chief to Speak at Women's History Month Program

The Douglas Historical Society invites members of the public to a Women's History Month Presentation with Kelly Manning, Deputy Fire Chief of the Town Of Douglas.

The month's theme is "Moving Forward Together! Women Educating & Inspiring Generations," and celebrates women who have dedicated their lives to leadership, education and mentorship.

The presentation will be held at the E.N. Jenckes Store Museum at 283 Main Street, Douglas at 7 p.m.

on Thursday, March 27. Refreshments will be served.

Manning is the first woman to hold the Deputy Fire Chief position and has been a part of the Douglas Fire Department since 2006. Rising through the ranks, she was hired as the department's first full-time Assistant Fire Chief in 2020. In 2024, she was promoted to Deputy Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director. Manning has served with both the Southbridge and Westborough fire departments and has over 20 years' experience in fire and emergency services before being named as a Chief Officer in Douglas.

Manning serves in a state capacity as a hazardous materials technician with the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services Hazardous Materials Response Team. She is also a member of the Massachusetts DEI Committee and the state's Technical Rescue Coordinating Council. Manning is also a licensed registered nurse and has worked part-time in the emergency room for over 10 years. She also holds an MPA from Anna Maria College, a Bachelor of Science Degree from UMass Amherst and an Associate's Degree in Nurse Education from Quinsigmond Community College.



Douglas Deputy Fire Chief Kelly Manning

Manning grew up in a small town on Cape Cod has lived for many years in Douglas. She enjoys playing ice hockey and snowmobiling with her husband and has completed the Boston Marathon three times.

She will discuss about her challenges as a female in the fire and rescue field. She will offer advice to young women looking to break into the profession and give an update on the new certification program at the Blackstone Regional Vocational High School.

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STORM

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the boy's parents discuss with each other how their son, knowing he was going to crash, threw himself across the passenger seat and thus endured minor injuries. Jack suffered 14 fractures in his jaw, which a plastic surgeon who was called to the MGH Emergency Room, repaired with catlike precision. Jack's jaw was wired shut and he was required to drink liquids with a syringe to keep the wires intact. It was Thanksgiving time and the best liquid available to me was turkey gravy. Each night I went to Brigham's located in downtown Winthrop to buy a frappe for my husband. The employees at Brigham's came to know me and would prepare extra-large frappes for me.

That frenzied MGH emergency room remains the scariest event of my life. When you experience a near death situation, you long to talk to the very person you need to speak with, worrying he is not there. Jack, a tough Marine sniper 14 years my senior, survived the crash with an extremely long road to recovery. I learned more about pain than joy that day. But that pain is embedded horrifically in my mind.

In 1984, I worked as a book-keeper at Heartland Drug store located on Commonwealth Ave in Allston. I graduated from Boston University in 1982 with a degree in journalism with a concentration in magazine writing. I moved out of my childhood home in Winthrop with no clear path for a career. At 23 years old, I needed to experience living alone away from my parents. My parents were naturally upset by my need to spread my wings and fly away from my cozy childhood home. I spent less than a year substituting in the Boston school system. One day I was sent to East Boston as a fill-in for a teacher who experienced emotional upset from trying to control a basically uncontrolled classroom. At that time Boston was undergoing school busing attempting to give each student a chance at graduating from rough neighborhoods and into more well-established school systems.

I rode the MBTA line from Allston to East Boston with no expectation of a situation in a rapidly descending immersion into a school system with literally no controls. The classroom in which I found myself was something akin to a Farside cartoon. Paper airplanes, made from the fourth worksheet the students were given in a month's-time, flew around

my head with rapid speed and precision. At one point I called the principal to my classroom. I was fascinated by what little discipline he was able to dispense. When the day was over, the principal pleaded with me to return the next day. That experience ended my career as a substitute teacher.

My job at Heartland Drug was literally one of the best decisions

I made in my life. Located in the heart of Allston, I met and have met friends from Tennessee, neighboring cities and towns to as far away as Egypt. My biggest worry at the time was rent and utility bills. That job allowed me to meet my best friend and husband Jack where he worked at Pizzeria Uno bar and grill, located around the corner from my Allston apartment.

As is the case with friends in life, I believe some friendships carry on while others dispel into infinity. Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning how to dance in the rain.

Linda Wessling is a resident of Uxbridge and a new correspondent for Blackstone Valley Xpress.

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Spring Yoga Workshop
Sunday, March 16 • 4pm
 Members \$30 Non-Members \$35
 Learn a bit about Spring Equinox and plant seeds of intention for the coming year with thoughtful journal prompts. We will get the energy flowing with a spring focused yoga class for all levels and end with a guided meditation.

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!

Sound Bath
Saturday, April 12 • Time TBD
 Members \$35 Non-Members \$40
 Join us and immerse yourself in the deep relaxation and healing vibrations of sound. Sound baths use specific tones and frequencies that have the ability to help heal your body.

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!

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Ice Rescue Training

The Northbridge Fire Department trained on ice rescue techniques Sunday, March 9 on Arcade Pond. Department members caution that ice is unsafe at this time of year.
 Photo from Northbridge Fire Facebook



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Lions Beautify Main Street

The Uxbridge Lions have contributed to the Beautify Uxbridge Project for four years, leading Club members and residents in bringing flowers to Main Street. Many supplies are donated by local merchants, but the Lions Club's March Pansy Sale is the main funding driver.

The Lions will be taking orders for pansies, aiming for a lot of advance sales by March 19. A Pop-Up Garden Tent will be set up at the Uxbridge Senior Center 37 South Main Street, from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 5 for customers to pick up orders or to make purchases while supply lasts.

Pansy Bowls are \$25, Pansy Ovals are \$20 and a Pansy Market Basket is \$20. Orders may be placed by texting 508-450-2451, messaging <https://www.facebook.com/UxbridgeLions/> or emailing uxbridge.ma.lions@gmail.com. The flowers are supplied by King Farms in Townsend, Massachusetts.



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Women caregivers face financial challenges



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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

To begin with, let's look at some concerning statistics connected to American women in the "sandwich generation" — those who care for children and parents or other relatives —

from a study by Edward Jones and research firms NEXT360 and Morning Consult:

- Nearly half of women report feeling financially strained.
- Almost two-thirds of women say caregiving duties have harmed their ability to save for their own financial goals.
- More than half of women have had to reduce their professional responsibilities due to caregiving, resulting in the loss of potential income.

So, if you're a sandwich-generation woman, what can you do to improve your financial outlook?

Consider these suggestions:

- *Establish your own financial goals.* Depending on the length and complexity of your caregiving duties, your own financial goals could be affected. For example, you may need to change your retirement date from what you had originally intended, or else adjust the retirement lifestyle you had

envisioned. However, this doesn't mean you shouldn't try to establish your own short- and long-term financial goals and then create a strategy for achieving them. In doing so, you may find it helpful to work with a financial professional.

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

to do so if you're feeling some financial pressure because of your caregiving responsibilities. But your monthly benefits can be bigger if you wait until your full retirement age, which will be age 67 if you were born in 1960 or later. So, if you can find other ways to bridge this gap — possibly through a spouse's income or your own savings — it may well benefit you to wait as long as you can before collecting.

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

agree to give you a financial power of attorney, so you can make decisions on their behalf should they become incapacitated. Such an arrangement can help protect them and you.

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

Contact Mark today to discuss this topic or any of your financial goals.

Mark Freeman, CEPA
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
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Walking Club 9 – 10 a.m.
 Cribbage 9:30 a.m.
 Zumba 9:30 a.m.
 Bingo/lunch 11:30 a.m.
 Technology Class 1 p.m.
 Line Dancing 2 p.m.

WEDNESDAYS:

Pickleball 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.
 Balance & Strength 10 a.m.
 Darts 10 a.m.
 Mahjong 1 p.m.
 Dominoes 1 p.m.

THURSDAYS:

Walking Club 9 – 10 a.m.
 Chair Yoga 9:30 a.m.
 Pitch 9:30 a.m.
 Hand Foot Cards 12:30 p.m.

FRIDAYS:

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Please feel free to stop by our Blood Pressure/ Wellness Clinic held twice a month from 10 a.m.-12p.m. Have your Blood Pressure checked, have a quick finger-stick blood sugar check or just come and discuss any health concerns, or questions you might have. Nurse Ann Holden R.N. looks forward to meeting you. Call 508-476-2283 for an appointment. Walk-ins also welcomed. March 18, April 7 and April 22.

Podiatrist Dates: Wednesday, April 30 and Thursday, May 1.

Appointments must be made in advance, please call the center at 508-476-2283 to schedule your appointment time.

SUNSHINE CLUB EVENT:

Thursday, April 17
 Join us for a presentation on Douglas early history. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Presentation from 7-8 p.m. Refreshments will be served. Please sign up at the center by April 14.

Three Seasons Restaurant Luncheon on Wednesday, March 26 at 11 a.m. The cost for lunch is \$12 per person. Please stop in the center to sign up; payment must be made when you sign up. Thank you, Sunshine Club for offsetting the cost. Please sign up by March 15.

APRIL EVENTS:

Free Easter Craft, Thursday,

April 3 at 11:30 a.m. We will be making a springtime wreath. All supplies are provided and refreshments will be served. Please sign up by March 28.

Game Day with Patrice and Jennifer Thursday, April 10 at 12 p.m. Lunch will be Ham & Cheese Croissants, Broccoli Cheddar Soup and Pineapple upside down cake for \$4 per person. Please sign up by April 3.

Lunch and a movie on Thursday, April 17 at 11:30 a.m.. We will be watching "Unstoppable". Lunch will be chicken parmesan, mashed potatoes, green beans, & dessert for \$4 per person. Sign up by April 10.

May Day Craft, Wednesday, April 30 at 11:30 a.m. Create a small May Day Baskets. All supplies are provided and refreshments will be served. Please sign up by April 23.

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DOUGLAS SENIORS

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Haddock Dinner & Cash Calendar Raffle

St. Peter's Parish in North-bridge is hosting a Haddock Dinner on Saturday, April 12 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 salad and dessert. To-go meals will be available for pick up at 5 p.m. All or-

ders must be purchased in advance by Tuesday, April 8th.

Tickets are also on sale for our Cash Calendar Raffle that will be held during the month of May. Tickets are \$20 each or 6 tickets for \$100. A winner will be drawn every day during the month of May and the winner's name will go back into the pool. You can

win more than once! To purchase tickets and for more information, please visit our web site: www.stpeterrockdale.org.

Please call the parish office at 508-234-3511 or email: parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org to purchase tickets for our dinner or for our Calendar Raffle or if you have any questions.

Grungefest Set for Indian Ranch

The first-ever GrungeFest is set to take place at Indian Ranch in Webster, MA on Sunday, July 13, 2025. The show will feature tributes to your favorite grunge artists including Say Hello II Heaven (Chris Cornell Anthology), King Jeremy (Pearl Jam Tribute), Rotten

Apple (Alice In Chains Tribute) and Nirvani (Nirvana Tribute). Tickets are on sale now.

This brand-new festival is the latest addition to a series of day-long events put together by Octo Rock Cinema Productions at Indian Ranch, which also pro-

duces HairFest, RokFest, and Local CountryFest.

Indian Ranch offers music lovers a chance to see some of the greatest country, classic rock and pop bands. www.indianranch.com. All events are rain or shine.

DOUGLAS SENIORS

continued from page 6

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Watershed Group Needs Volunteers

Uxbridge Opportunities Available

The Blackstone River Coalition (BRC) needs volunteers to assist with its 22nd year of water quality monitoring of 28 sites in the Mid-Reach section of the watershed. Enjoy being out along waterways? Volunteer as a regular

site monitor assigned to a particular site or serve as a "floater" to cover sites on an "as needed" basis. Fieldwork not your thing? Come volunteer in the water-testing lab which operates out of the Tri-River Family Health Center in Uxbridge.

The BRC trains community scientists to participate in the Coalition's watershed-wide water quality monitoring program. The goal of this long-running program is to gather information about the current status of, and long-term changes in, the health of the Blackstone River watershed. This information helps local policy makers, state officials, and concerned community members make the Blackstone River cleaner for people and wildlife.

Over 90 volunteers work with the BRC to sample 75 sites throughout the watershed from Worcester to Pawtucket. Sites are sampled on the second Saturday of each month from April through November. Field monitors and floaters are trained in a 1 hr. ses-

sion to test for dissolved oxygen at the site, record physical and aesthetic parameters, and collect a water sample that they drop off at the lab between 9 a.m. and noon on the Saturday of testing. Lab volunteers, who help test these samples for nutrients, conductivity, and turbidity, do not need to commit to helping each month and can be trained the first time they assist.

There are two additional sampling teams in the program. The Headwaters Team samples waterways from Worcester to Grafton and runs its lab out of Mass Audubon's Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary in Worcester, MA. The Rhode Island Team sam-



ples waterways from Woonsocket to Pawtucket and runs its lab out of Sycamore Landing in Lincoln, RI. The Rhode Island Team and the Headwaters Team are also looking for volunteers.

To volunteer as a field monitor, floater, or lab assistant, please contact Heather Parry, Coordinator, BRC Volunteer WQM Program at 508-579-9188 or heatherparry.wqm@gmail.com.

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Back by popular demand, St. Patrick's Church, 7 East Street, Whitinsville will be offering delicious Fish & Chips Dinners again this year during Lent on Ash Wednesday & Fridays (Mar 5th - April 11th) from 4:30- 7p.m.

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Place orders to go by calling 508-234-3511 after 4pm. Payment by Venmo or Cash. Thank you for supporting the Youth in Action Summer Service Trip to Billings, MT.

Douglas Public Library Schedule

The Simon Fairfield Public Library's Upcoming Schedule. Please note that some events do require registration. If you have any questions regarding any events, please do not hesitate to contact the library at 508-476-2695 or email at us at douglas@cwmar.org.

Reader's (Grades K-2), I Lost My Tooth by Penda Diakite
Thu, 04/10 @ 4:00 : Book Wizards (Grades 5-7), The Wishing Spell by Chris Cofler

Children's Happenings

Tue, 03/18, 04/08 @ 11:30 : Music & Movement with Deb Hudgens
Wed, 03/19 @ 3:30 : Lego Club II (Registration Required)
Wed, 03/19 @ 5:45 : Reading to Gabby (Registration Required)
Wed, 03/26 @ 3:30 : Lego Club III (Registration Required)

Children's Book Clubs (Registration Required)

Tue, 03/25 @ 4:00 : Book Bunch (Grade 2-5), I Survived the Battle of Gettysburg, 1863 by Lauren Tarshis
Tue, 04/08 @ 4:00 : Young

Mon, 04/07 @ 10:00 : Spring Storytime (Registration Required)
Tue, 04/08 @ 10:00 : Spring Storytime (Registration Required)
Wed, 04/09 @ 3:30 : Lego Club I (Registration Required)

Adult Book Clubs

Tue, 03/18 @ 6:30 : Sci Fi Book Club, The Mechanical by Ian Tregillis
Mon, 03/24 @ 6:30 : Plot Twisters Book Club, Long Time Gone by Charlie Donlea
Thu, 03/27 @ 6:30 : Muggle Meet-Up, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban by J.K. Rowling
Thu, 04/03 @ 6:30 : Greatest Book Club Ever, Book TBA
Tue, 04/08 @ 6:30 : Intrepid Readers, Book TBA

Adult Happenings

Thu, 03/27, 04/10 @ 5:45 : Fiber Arts Friends
Sat, 03/15 @ 10:00 : Seed Swap at the Library
Thu, 03/20 @ 10:00 : Get Help with Jenna Gouin (Registration Required)
Sat, 03/29 @ 10:00 : Blue Envelope Program Information Session
Wed, 04/09 @ 6:30 : A Perky Pairing: Coffee and Chocolate Tasting (Registration Required)

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Uxbridge Police and Fire Get Generous Donation



Uxbridge Police and Fire Departments each recently received \$2500 from UniBank, the largest mutual community bank in Central Massachusetts.

“As a mutual bank, we have been and continue to be focused on giving back to the communities we serve,” said Michael Welch, CEO of UniBank. “As we see around the country, it is crucial for our first responders to be well-equipped for the well-being of lives and community soundness.”

Welch added that UniBank was certain that both police and fire

would use the funds to assist in purchasing any equipment that contributes to community safety.

UniBank is dedicated to assisting with the overall quality of life

and economic health of the community it serves. It is an Equal Housing Lender and Member FDIC.



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HELP WANTED: A guide to getting your next job

You've landed an interview, now to prepare

BY THERESA KNAPP

Congratulations, the company has noticed your résumé and they've scheduled an interview with you. Now what?

Now you prepare. Getting a job is difficult and time-consuming. The more prepared you can be, the more confident you can be, and the more successful you can be.

For the employer, the purpose of the job interview is to assess the candidate's skills, their motivation, and to see if they are a good fit with the company's culture and mission.

For the candidate, the interview can help assess if the job description is accurate, if you're comfortable with the "feel" of the company and its representatives, etc.

Preparation is key

- Read the job description thoroughly, research unfamiliar terms and acronyms
- Research the company through its website, blog, and LinkedIn page
- Search for company reviews on sites like GlassDoor, Indeed, Jobcase, etc.
- Search for the company in the news, is there anything about the culture, stock, etc., you should (or should not) discuss during the interview? A quick Google search could reveal important information
- Be familiar with the office location (even if it's a virtual position or interview)
- Have your elevator pitch ready



First impressions count

According to the American Psychological Association, first impressions can have a real impact on your professional success. Ways to strengthen your chances of making a good first impression include:

1. **Know your audience:** Know who you're interviewing with so you can speak to them directly
2. **Exude confidence:** Speak slowly and calmly, make eye contact
3. **Field questions gracefully:** Don't get defensive, you don't know an answer, it's okay to say so
4. **Prepare and practice:** You cannot overprepare
5. **Be a good listener:** Pay attention, make eye contact, nod, don't interrupt or finish their sentences

Source: www.apa.org/gradpsych/2012/11/first-impressions

Your "elevator pitch" should be "u-nique"

An elevator pitch is your introduction. The pitch should be 30 to 60 seconds long and should address your professional history, accomplishments of which you're most proud of, and relevant career goals which tie in with the job for that you're applying.

The pitch should end with a fun fact about yourself, something that can help you stand out from the other candidates. It should be positive and not too personal.

Many employers receive hundreds of applications for each job. It will help your chances if you have a memorable interview. What makes you "u-nique"? Employers often ask each candidate the same list of questions so they can make accurate comparisons, and they often hear similar answers from each applicant. By sharing something unique about you – that you can directly relate to the job responsibilities – your chances of standing out can increase. Do you speak several languages? Do you have a unique hobby? Did you audition for American Idol? Were you at the 2004 Red Sox World Series Game?

Five questions to ask yourself as you prepare

According to the job search engine Indeed.com [bit.ly/Indeed5questions], five questions

to ask yourself before a job interview include:

- What past accomplishments are you most proud of?
- What three things do you want to get better at this year?
- What skills do you have that you've noticed differentiate you from your peers?
- What would your past or present colleagues say is the best thing about working with you?
- Where do you want to be in three or five years?

Take some time to think about your answers. An interview is the time to shine, to identify areas in which you are proud, and to share those accomplishments. Let the employer know what skills and energy you'll bring to their company.

If you're wondering how to highlight your strengths in an interview, Indeed [bit.ly/IndeedPersonalStrengths] says focus on quality not quantity, back up your strengths with examples, and provide original answers to routine questions – you want to provide the answers they're looking for while standing out from the competition.

10 common job interview questions and how to answer them

According to the *Harvard Business Review* [bit.ly/HBR10CommonInterviewQuestions], the following questions are often asked during a job interview:

- Could you tell me about yourself and briefly describe your background?
- How did you hear about the position?
- What kind of work environment do you prefer?
- How do you deal with pressure or stressful situations?
- Do you prefer working independently or on a team?
- How do you keep yourself organized when balancing multiple projects?
- What did you do in the last year to improve your knowledge?
- What are your salary expectations?
- Are you applying for other jobs?
- Can you explain a time gap on your résumé?

Be prepared to respond to these questions with the answer and, when appropriate, why that is the answer.

For helpful detailed responses,

INTERVIEW PREP

continued on page 11



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HELP WANTED: A guide to getting your next job

Digital footprints, yours and theirs

BY THERESA KNAPP

According to Business News Daily, “It’s no longer that a great resume and a solid interview dictate whether you get a job offer. Your personal social media profiles can potentially seriously affect your professional life.”

Business News Daily suggests the following tips for passing social media screenings:

1. Don’t erase your profile: This can imply you have something to hide and does not guarantee the profile

is completely deleted (but do remove inappropriate content)

2. Use social media to your benefit: Use your socials to promote content that shows your knowledge, professionalism, achievements, etc.
3. Google yourself to see what others will see when they do the same
4. Consider making your profile private: It is legal for employers to check public social media accounts, and be wary of hiring managers

requesting information beyond what’s available online (this is similar to employers asking inappropriate questions during interviews and should raise a red flag)

Source: www.businessnewsdaily.com/2377-social-media-hiring.html

There are ways to make social media work to your advantage during the interview process, including updating your social media profiles with up-to-date information, this includes Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Tik-

Tok, X – anywhere you have an active account; and like/follow companies that interest you and companies where you are interviewing.

LinkedIn.com offers the following tips to improve your LinkedIn profile:

1. Choose the right profile picture
2. Add a background photo
3. Make your headline more than just a job title
4. Record and display your name pronunciation
5. Grow your network

6. List your relevant skills
7. Request recommendations
8. Showcase your passion for learning
9. Add comments

Follow relevant influencers in your industry

Source: bit.ly/LinkedInProfileTips2024

This article includes original content and information from Business News Daily and LinkedIn.

INTERVIEW PREP

continued from page 10

visit bit.ly/HBR10CommonInterviewQuestions.

“What is your greatest weakness?”

Another often-asked and often-dreaded interview question is, “What is your greatest weakness?” The purpose of this question is to see if you’re honest, self-aware, and open to self-improvement; it gauges your emotional intelligence.

According to themuse.com [bit.ly/MuseGreatestWeakness], there is a simple formula to answer this question:

- Clearly describe your weakness [ex. Delegating]

- Give a short example of a time your weakness affected your work [ex. The meeting started late because I did all the prep work myself, I should have delegated.]
- Talk about what you’ve done to improve your weakness. [ex. I now look to my team or coworkers to ask for assistance at the beginning of a project.]

When answering the question, be sure to answer concisely and focus on the solution, not the weakness. And always leave the answer on a positive note.

“Do you have any questions for us?”

At the end of most interviews is one last question: “Do you have

any questions for us?” Your answer should always be “yes” even if the employer has answered every question you had. It is important you ask at least one question, preferably 1-3 questions as time allows. Suggestions include:

- How would you define success in this role?
- How is success measured in this role?
- What is the most challenging aspect of this role or this team?
- What do you like about working here?
- How many other members are in this department?
- How would you define company culture?
- What opportunities do you offer for professional development?
- Questions related to information on their website, blog, or social media
- What are the next steps in the hiring process? [this

should not be your only question]

It’s always best to ask some of these questions during the interview but be sure to save one or two questions for the end.

For the “70 best questions to ask in an interview,” visit bit.ly/Indeed51QuestionsToAsk.

This article includes original content and information from Indeed.com, themuse.com, Harvard Business Review, and PositivePsychology.com

“What’s your greatest weakness?” possible responses

When a potential employer asks this question, and they usually do, the following topics can be good answers as long as the ‘weakness’ is not directly related to the job you’re seeking. For example, if you’re applying to be a salesperson, you would not say your weakness is cold calling; and

if you’re applying to be an auditor, you would not say your weakness is math.

Other possible responses relate to:

- Public speaking
- Delegation
- Time management
- Writing
- Organization
- Attention to small details
- Cold calling
- Confidence
- Decision-making
- Explaining complex or technical topics
- Feedback, giving or receiving
- Grammar
- Math
- Patience
- Self-esteem
- Understanding when and how to say no

A full list can be found at bit.ly/MuseGreatestWeakness

What is emotional intelligence?

Questions like “What is your greatest weakness” test your emotional intelligence, to see how you would behave, engage, and react in certain situations. Other questions used to gauge emotional intelligence, and could easily be asked during an interview, include:

1. How do you de-stress after a bad day at work?
2. What’s something you’ve achieved that you’re most proud of and why?
3. Who are some of your top role models, why do they inspire you?
4. How do you celebrate success?
5. How do you respond when a co-worker challenges you?
6. Have you ever had to change your behavior, either at work or home, if so, why did you have to change, and how did you change?
7. How do you recover from failure?
8. When have you felt demotivated, and what did you do to overcome this?
9. How would some of your closest friends describe you?
10. What kind of behavior makes you angry/annoyed?

Source: positivepsychology.com/emotional-intelligence-interview-questions/

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HELP WANTED: A guide to getting your next job

Résumés, cover letters, and references

By THERESA KNAPP

Résumés and cover letters are important because they help job seekers convey their qualifications, experiences, and skills to potential employers. Your resume and cover letter should be tailored to each specific job and should mention several of the qualifications listed in a job description.

Many companies use an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) so it is important to use as many keywords from the job description as

possible as this will increase your chances to make it past the initial filter.

Résumés

Résumés provide a first impression to the employer and should put your best foot forward. The ideal resume is one page long, but two pages is common.

The layout should include your name, email address (be sure it is a professional email address), and phone number at the top of the page, your home address is

not necessary. The next section can be a Professional Summary or Objective (optional), then Experience (in reverse chronological order) in paragraph or bulleted list form. Follow this with Education, and end with an optional Achievements or Skills section.

Do not include a Reference section on your resume. According to indeed.com, resume tips to help you land an interview include:

- Look for keywords in the job posting and include those on your resume
- Review resume examples for your industry
- Résumés should be simple and brief
- Include concrete achievements and metrics when possible
- Include only relevant information
- Use a professional font, 12 points, black font (unless your industry prefers color and creativity)
- Margins should be one inch (expand to 1.15 or 1.25 inches if you don't have a lot to fill the document)
- Call attention to important achievements within a job description or in a separate "Achievements" or "Skills" section at the bottom of the resume
- Proofread, proofread, proofread
- Make multiple versions of your resume

Source: www.indeed.com/career-advice/Résumés-cover-letters/10-resume-writing-tips

Coursera [www.coursera.org] suggests using action words such as *generated, reviewed, crafted, analyzed, developed, compiled, arranged, secured, collaborated, documented,*

presented, administered, refined, produced, accomplished, increased, grew, improved, managed, delivered, transformed, fulfilled, engaged, negotiated, etc.

For 150 resume action words, visit www.coursera.org/articles/resume-action-words. According to Forbes.com, the top skills to put on your resume in 2025, if applicable, are:

- Data analysis and project management
- AI and machine learning
- Software engineering and IT infrastructure
- Critical and strategic thinking
- Problem-solving
- Adaptability and agility
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication skills

Source: www.forbes.com/sites/rachelwells/2025/01/10/top-skills-to-put-on-your-resume-in-2025/

Cover letters

If a job description says a cover letter is not required, you don't have to submit one. If it says a cover letter is optional, it's in your best interest to submit one.

A cover letter is a short letter that accompanies your resume and illustrates how your experience would directly relate to the specific position to which you're applying.

According to the Columbia University Center for Career Education, the goal of a cover letter is to highlight your qualifications, showcase your motivation, and reflect your voice and written communication skills. To write an effective cover letter, you should review the job description and research the company and its values and mission. The Co-

lumbia website says, "As you craft your cover letter, use examples that demonstrate your relevant skills, knowledge, and interests."

The standard format includes a heading that matches your resume (centered), the address of the company (against left margin), then a salutation (if no name is given use "Hiring Manager or the title mentioned in the job description). The first paragraph is the introduction where you say what job you're applying for and why; and the second paragraph (this could be two paragraphs, if need be) can highlight one or two skills or experiences and how they are relevant to the job for which you are applying. The last paragraph is a conclusion where you recap what you would bring to the organization and your interest in the position, and thank them for their consideration.

Source: <https://www.careereducation.columbia.edu/resources/how-and-why-write-great-cover-letter>

References

References are typically not requested until a job offer is pending, though some companies may request them up front.

Be sure to alert the people you are using as references so they are not surprised when they receive an email or phone call related to your application.

Carefully consider who in your current job you can use as a reference that will not compromise your current work situation.

When choosing your references, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) says you should find colleagues you can trust, pay attention to titles, be prepared (always keep an updated list of references, keep them updated with current information), follow up after they provide a reference with a thank you note and tell them if you got the job. And finally, never misrepresent your references or yourself.

Source: www.aauw.org/resources/career/boost-your-career/providing-references/

This article includes original content and information from the American Association of University Women, [coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org), [forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com), [indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com), and [Columbia University](http://www.columbia.edu).



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HELP WANTED: A guide to getting your next job

Job search and technology, what you need to know about AI

BY VICTORIA RAYEL
CAREER COUNSELOR AND
LIFE COACH

If you're thinking about starting the new year with a new job, it's important to be clear about your job targets, ideal industry,

applicants and expedite the process.

To stand apart in this market, you need to know what to expect when it comes to technology in the job search. Three tips to ensure you don't get lost in the application 'black hole' include

application materials match the job for which you're going. You can use tools like Jobscan and free AI Chatbot's (ex. ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini) to help make sure you match the skills and experiences the job requires.

For example, upload your ré-

sumé. Put this list in a grid"

Consider "Apply for me" Tools

Sites like Ladders and Lazy-Apply apply to jobs on your behalf for a fee. You will fill out a series of questions, select the jobs that are interesting, then the tools will submit your application. Job searching can be a tedious task, and technology can help you save time in applying. Now you can spend more time on important things like interview preparation, upskilling, and the next tip.

Networking

Roughly 15% of positions are filled through online applications, so it is suggested job seekers spend at least 50% of their job search time on reconnecting with their existing networks and building

WHAT IS "ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE"

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www.nasa.gov/what-is-artificial-intelligence

new relationships. If online applications are not helping you get interviews, start having conversations. Coffee chats, phone calls, networking events, LinkedIn Group discussions, Discord, Facebook and any community groups you're involved in can be an amazing resource to connect to people.

Finally, don't let AI intimidate you. It's time to embrace the new normal and leverage technology to help you succeed.



location, pay, and have a résumé. With an increasing number of applicants due to a changing business environment, geo-political landscape and overall economic changes, recruiters use tools like AI to help them quickly find top

using artificial intelligence (AI), helpful automatic tools, and networking.

Use AI to Beat AI

When applying for a position, it's important to make sure your

sumé and the job description into ChatGPT, then try these prompts:

Type "Select three accomplishments from my résumé that match this job best" or

Type "Create a list of key skills this job is looking for and

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Grafton High School Co-Op Swim Team Makes Waves with an Outstanding Season

The Grafton High School Co-op Swim Team has made a splash this season, delivering record-breaking performances and proving their dominance in the pool. Comprising athletes from Grafton, Auburn, Blackstone Millville Regional, Douglas, Millbury, Nipmuc Regional, Northbridge, Sutton, and Blackstone Valley Tech, the team, led by Head Coach Kevin Saleeba and assisted by Sydney Cayer and Peter Zeiger, has solidified its position as one of the top programs in the region. Training out of the Whitin Com-



munity Center in Whitinsville, the team's relentless dedication has resulted in incredible victories and shattered records across multiple championships.

Girls' Team: Nearly unstoppable, finishing 9-1 in dual meets.

Blackstone Valley Technical swimmers also made an impact, securing second place overall at the State Vocational Championships with 18 top-five finishes.

Midland-Wachusett League Championships

At the Midland-Wachusett League Championships, the boys' team clinched first place, while the girls' team secured an impressive second-place finish. The combined efforts of both teams led to a staggering 38 top-10 finishes. In a historic moment, the relay team of Breacan Shea, George Lam, Braedon Ando, and Simon Turcotte rewrote the record books, setting a new meet record in the 200 Medley Relay with a time of 1:39.93.

Looking Ahead – Sectionals & States

As the season progresses, the team has its sights set on Sectionals and State Championships, with an impressive 47 qualifying swims for Sectionals and 28 for States.

"This season has been nothing short of remarkable," said head coach Kevin Saleeba. "Our swimmers have shown unwavering dedication, resilience, and a true team spirit. We are incredibly proud of their accomplishments and are excited to see what they achieve at Sectionals and States."

Dominance in Dual Meets & Vocational Championships

The team didn't stop at league championships—their regular season performance was just as dominant.

Boys' Team: Undefeated with a perfect 10-0 record.

With a winning legacy and championship mindset, the Grafton High School Co-op Swim Team is ready to dive into the next stage of competition and continue making waves in the world of high school swimming.

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Call for Art CowParade Old Sturbridge Village 2025

Artists Application Due March 30, 2025

Old Sturbridge Village invites artists to unleash their creativity at the 2025 CowParade in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. Artists can apply for the opportunity to transform life-size cow sculptures into unique artworks that support the largest outdoor living history museum in the Northeast.

With over 200,000 visitors annually, Old Sturbridge Village provides a unique and inspiring backdrop for this vibrant public art event. CowParade welcomes artists of all levels to apply—from acclaimed professionals to enthusiastic amateurs. A panel of renowned judges from New England will select standout designs to become part of this celebrated tradition that has traveled the globe.

Over 20 talented artists will have the opportunity to participate. Once completed, the cows will be publicly displayed at New England's largest living history museum from June to September 2025.

Old Sturbridge Village Chief Marketing Officer Chris Tieri said, "CowParade at Old Sturbridge Village presents an

exciting opportunity for artists to showcase their creativity in a globally recognized event that has captivated audiences in remarkable cities around the world. This event invites artists of all levels to participate in a celebration of culture and creativity as well as the opportunity to showcase their work to thousands of local, regional, and international visitors expected at the Village this summer."

CowParade Old Sturbridge Village is looking for artists to be inspired by their own cultural contexts and their artistic vision. There are three categories for artists to consider:

Life in New England: Designs that celebrate the essence of life in New England. Submissions considered for this category should be inspired by Old Sturbridge Village, drawing from 19th-century textiles and wallpaper, historic homes, gardens, traditional trades, and extensive museum collection.

America 250: Designs that honor the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, reflecting the spirit of the nation's founding.

Artist's Choice: Designs with limitless creative freedom. Artists are invited to express their unique vision and style, exploring any theme or concept that resonates with them.

Artists, individuals, or groups interested in applying to paint, sculpt, or decorate a cow must submit their application online (osv.org/cowparade) by March 30, 2025. More information is available at osv.org/cowparade.

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- Roll over to an IRA.
- Cash out the account value.

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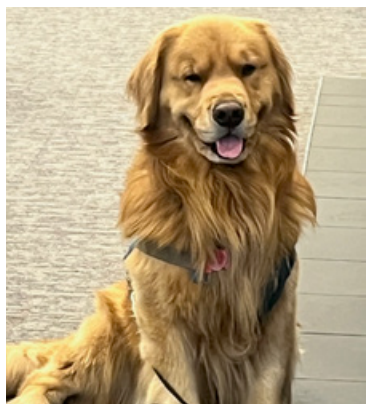


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LIVING WITH LUKE

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More Than Words

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

Professional writers are encouraged to “find their voices” when they write. Doing so is a process that develops gradually and takes time and self-reflection. We grow to write what’s in us to write, and to tell a story with structure, tone, cadence, and knowledge of language. Dogs, too, must find their voices. They can’t write notes or text their owners. “Out searching for a new stick. Would you mind grabbing me a new shin bone at the store today?”

How do dogs survive? How do they communicate their needs?

“HELP! HELP! HELP!” Luke learned to communicate early on, at seven weeks old to be exact. “I need to get out right now!” His 3 a.m. barking frenzy reflected a primal need to survive. New people. New bed. New rules. He wasn’t



having it. Where were his warm brothers and sisters and puppy scented towels? His voice was high pitched and surprisingly loud. My husband and I felt like new parents trying to help our infant learn to sleep through the night. “We have to go get him, Jim,” I pleaded. “He sounds terrified. He’s trying to tell us something.”

I trotted down the stairs, my own heart beating like a nervous kitten’s. “I’m sorry, Luke. Mummy’s right here.” I shuffled to the crate

door, nearly tripping over my slippers to reach him. I smelled my puppy before I saw him. Little Luke had pooped all over himself. “Ohhhhhh. Gosh. Luke!! You poor thing.” I placed my hands beneath his armpits, lifted him up, and headed for the sink. He hung limp and apologetic. “I had an accident. I used my puppy voice, but you ignored me. I screamed. I howled. I was trying so hard to tell you something. You ignored me.”

Every mother is guilty of something. This incident, a reminder of my most unheroic moment as a Dog Mom, has scarred me. Luke was trying to tell me something, but I didn’t listen. Fear not, readers. While Luke aged, I grew wiser. I learned to listen more closely to what my dog was trying to say.

I just want to play.

Luke initiates play with a peculiar voice. Sharp and relentless, the voice reflects that of a barking seal. His playful voice has grated on the nerves of parents at the dog park.

“My dog doesn’t like being barked at this way.” A Dog Mom

expressed her disappointment to me one time. “He’s just not used to that behavior.” Meanwhile, an oblivious Luke carried on. “Let’s play! Let’s play! Let’s play! C’mon!



You chase me, then I’ll chase you! The introverted hound turned his head away. My exuberant pup was learning an important lesson. The world doesn’t revolve around him. We discussed the matter during the ride home. “Dogs don’t like when you bark in their faces, Luke.” I spoke to his reflection in the rearview mirror. He popped his big head out of the sunroof travel crate and thought about it. “If dogs don’t like barking, then maybe they shouldn’t be in a dog park.”

I’m very uncomfortable with you.

Luke’s ferocious bark is the one I’m most appreciative of, especially when it happens at night. He uses a deep, magnificent roar to protect his home from predators. One night while he was in the backyard for a final check, I heard the distinct roar.

“Who’s that, Luke?” I hoisted open the upstairs window and

watched him roar in the direction of our driveway. Apparently, someone or something was lurking in a shadowy corner of our home. “Woo. Woo. Woo. Woo.” He crouched down; broad shoulders bulging, hair raised. I imagined a wolf with yellow eyes and red gums showing his teeth at my dog. “Go Away! Go Away! Go Away!” The bark was extraordinary. Even I felt intimidated.

“Luke, get over here!” Jim was less enchanted. Luke turned his head to the voice of his intolerable leader and dashed back inside.

“Good boy, Luke.” I needed to praise my dog for using his voice to protect us. I rubbed his ears. He sat proudly, chin lifted. “Thank you for telling Mummy about that bad guy! He licked my hand. “Someone’s got to do the dirty work around here.”

The next morning, we realized that my son had left the light on in his car, casting the unusual effect that a person was seated there. Car burglaries are common. I imagined a scarfed thief scheming—right there in our driveway! Our dogs’ eyes and ears remain open to potential danger. Luke was doing his job.



I’m seriously afraid!

If only the villain of Luke’s nighttime watches could see him at the groomer’s doorstep. “I. Just. Want. To. Be. With. You.” Luke doesn’t shake at the groomers. He quakes. He tells me how he feels with a full body vibration that breaks my heart. He digs his paws into the floor so that

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REAL ESTATE

Why a pre-listing inspection may be worth it in today's market

Selling a house comes with a lot of moving pieces, and the last thing you want is a deal falling apart over unexpected repairs uncovered during the buyer's inspection.



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

That's why it may pay to anticipate potential issues before buyers ever step through the door. And one way to do

that is with a pre-listing inspection. A pre-listing inspection is essentially a professional home inspection you schedule before putting your house on the market. Just like the inspections your buyer will do after making an offer, this process identifies any issues with the condition of your house that

could have an impact on the sale – like structural problems, faulty or outdated HVAC systems, or other essential repairs. While it's a great option if you're someone who really doesn't like surprises, this may not make sense for all sellers.

While it can be beneficial for a seller to do, a pre-listing inspection isn't always necessary. For example, if your home is relatively new and you've been the only owner, you're most likely already aware of any big issues that could impact a sale. But for an older home, a pre-listing inspection can be very insightful and help you get ahead of any potential problems. The key is deciding whether the benefits outweigh the costs for your situation. Sometimes a few hundred dollars now can get you information that'll save you a lot of time and hassle later on.

Why it may be worth considering in today's market. Right now, buyers are more cautious about how much money they're spending. And they want to be sure the home they're buying is worth the

expense. In a market like this, a pre-listing inspection can be your secret weapon to make sure your house shows well. Here are just a few ways it can help. 1. Gives you time to make repairs: When you know about issues ahead of time, it gives you the chance to fix them on your schedule, rather than rushing to make repairs when you're under contract. 2. Avoid surprises during negotiations: When buyers discover issues during their own inspection, it can lead to last-minute negotiations, price reductions, or even a deal falling through. A pre-listing inspection gives you a chance to spot and address any problems ahead of time, so they don't turn into last-minute headaches or negotiation roadblocks. 3. Sell your house faster: if your house is listed in the best shape possible, there won't be as many reasons for buyers to ask for concessions. That means you should be able to cut down on negotiation timelines and ultimately sell faster.

But before you think about

reaching out to any inspectors to get something scheduled, be sure to talk to a member of The Marzeotti Group or another trusted agent. We will give you advice on whether a pre-inspection is worthwhile for your house and the local market. Because it may not be as important if sellers still have the majority of the negotiation power where you live. If your agent does recommend moving forward and getting one done, here's how they'll support you throughout the process. Offer Advice on How To Prioritize Repairs: If the inspection uncovers problems, your agent will sit down with you and offer perspective on what's going to be a sticking point for buyers so you know what to prioritize. After talking to your agent, you may decide not all of the repairs are worth it right now. Just be ready to disclose

what you're not tackling. Some states require disclosures as a part of a listing – lean on your agent for more information.

While they're definitely not required, pre-listing inspections can be especially helpful in today's market. By understanding your home's condition ahead of time, you can take control of the process and make informed decisions about what to fix before you list and what to disclose.

If you choose to skip this step, you may be just as surprised as your buyer by what pops up in their inspection. And that could leave you scrambling. Would you rather fix issues now or risk trying to save the deal later? Connect with The Marzeotti Group or another trusted agent to see if this is a step that makes sense in your market.

LUKE

continued from page 16

I must drag him (sliding) from the doorway entrance. "It's okay, Luke. You're going to look so handsome!" I once followed him to the groomer's table and held his paw while he had his nails trimmed. He shook atop the table like the victim of a Frankenstein science project (who also happens to be afraid of heights). I read his mind. "Cages, latches and locks. Sad faces. Noisy dogs, razor blades and scissors. This place is off."

He nearly knocks me over to jump back into his travel crate in the parking lot and sits like a star pupil while I pull out. "I told you I'd be right back, Luke. You do look handsome," I say to his reflection in the rearview mirror. He gazes out the back window. The groomer's shop sign fades in the distance. "Next time I'm about to be chopped up and sold for pedigree beef, I'll keep my looks in mind."

Time to eat.

I'm afraid that Luke has learned to use his intelligence as a weapon. Of course, he knows exactly when dinnertime happens and lets me know by resting conveniently beside his bowl an hour before. "Just in case you happened to forget, Mom. This is where my bowl is located." He's developed a second

habit to further my understanding. He'll stand over his bowl, typically after I've rewarded him for coming back when called inside, and stare into it like a gambling addict fixed on a number. "Show me the money. My recall is outstanding." I toss him a few kibbles. "Good boy, Luke." I relish the jingle of good behavior. My dog could have roamed anywhere, but he ran back to me for a few dry kibbles. Has Luke learned to capitalize on the reward system?

"I could have run from our home to greet that cute Collie, but I stayed right here on the step." He rushes to the foot of his dish and waits for me to pay up. He inhales the kibbles, freezes for a moment, then looks up at me. "A dog's restraint in the space of another dog is one of the hardest learning tasks, Mom. Just a few more and we'll call it a day." Perhaps Luke, indeed, has become a capitalist.

I love you.

My dog wiggles with a happy squeal, grabs his lamb and brings it to me when I arrive home. "I just want to let you know how happy I am to see you, to spend time with you and just be together. He watches me take a rare seat on the couch. "I'm so happy you are sitting down, Mom. You work so hard to help others. I see you. I feel you. I want to be with you." He climbs up and collapses beside me. His head falls easily onto my lap. "I love you, Momma." Some-

times a dog says what words cannot.

Visit Luke at IG [livingwithlukevalentino](#)

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TALES FROM BEYOND

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Gillette Castle

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

Atop a hill called the Seventh Sister, the last of a group of knolls known as the Seven Sisters, sits a medieval-style, twenty-four-room castle in East Haddam, Connecticut overlooking the Connecticut River. This stone edifice was owned and designed by William Hooker Gillette, famous for his stage role as Sherlock Holmes. In fact, his performances as the master detective numbered 1,300, the third-highest number of stage performances of a role in history.

Gillette was born on July 24, 1853, son of former United

States senator Francis Gillette and Elizabeth Daggett Hooker Gillette, descendant of Thomas Hooker, founder of Hartford. Even as a child, he was very inventive and outgoing in his pursuits of the stage. These traits would follow him into adulthood. During his lifetime, he wrote two novels and thirteen plays. He also produced and directed various plays starring none other than himself. His love of special effects led him to invent many stage tricks and lighting techniques. His last performance was at the Bushnell Theatre in 1936. Gillette died a year later on April 29, 1937. He is buried in the Hooker family cemetery in Farm-



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ington next to his wife.

His castle is a stone legacy born of an inventive and brilliant mind. Gillette designed the whole structure, right down to the slightest detail. The basic building took five years to construct. By 1919, the man who made Holmes famous was finally home. Through the years, he made enhancements upon his castle to suit his tastes. He also had a three-mile-long railroad that circled his property. Evidence of the railway still exists in the form of tunnels and the station, as the tracks were later torn up for hiking trails. Do not be dismayed, however, for one can still ride the famous span, as Lake Compounce Amusement Park later purchased portions of the railway to shuttle visitors around the pond located on the property.

Gillette died a widower with no children. His estate had no heirs, but in his will he ruled out the chance of his possessions going to unsavory prospects by adding the sentence that the property would never fall into the hands of some "blithering sap-head who has no conception of where he is or with what surrounded." In 1943, the State of Connecticut acquired the land and turned it into a park for all to enjoy, complete with camping, hiking, picnicking and, of course, tours of the castle. But is the medieval-style fortress

haunted? The stone edifice imparts upon the gazer of the image a most confident feeling that Mr. Gillette could possibly still reside within.

Some have even claimed to see the ghostly image of the famous actor, smoking his calabash pipe, while touring the structure. Others claim to see the spirit of his gardener roaming the grounds, still tending to the massive landscaped flora. Many have felt sudden cold spots within the walls of the castle, but as it is made of stone, that could be entirely natural. There are reports of hikers and campers seeing the ghostly figure of someone moving about the castle holding a smoking pipe during the winter and spring hours when it is otherwise closed and locked tight. Perhaps it may be William Gillette in search of an audience to once again entertain after a long winter of solitude in the locked-up mansion. Or perhaps just the site of the edifice evokes the imagination, thus creating vivid scenes from the past within the mind's eye. Haunted or not, Gillette Castle State Park offers beautiful vistas of the Connecticut River and surrounding landscape, scenic hiking trails and a host of other outdoor activities. Bring a lunch, take a tour and relish in the architect of the castle. The famous actor just might treat you to a small performance while you are there.

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SPORTS

He's "Alaska" on the Mat

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Growing up in Alaska Cody Coonrod was always intrigued with wrestling and wanted more than anything to get onto the mat and grapple. Unfortunately, his family was unable to afford it at the time. When he was in the sixth grade, he and his mom moved to Soldotna, a small borough in Alaska with a popula-

tion of 4342 people. It was here that they came across a wrestling program and the youngster got try a sport he had wanted to take part in for some time.

quitting more than once, but I just pushed through." During those early years Coonrod noted that he was not the healthiest of eaters. On the way to practice he'd pick up some Oreos and eat them all.

"Eating all those Oreos before practice was reckless," he said. "I still don't follow a real strict diet, I have a sweet tooth, but I am not doing the things that I did in the past."



"I was small and was getting beat up a lot, but I really enjoyed wrestling," Coonrod said. "The middle school sought me out and asked me to join the team, which I did, but it was really tough in the beginning. I even thought about

Wrestling in middle school in Soldotna Coonrod came across some of the best coaches in the state who have helped him with his anxiety.

"As a seventh grader I was not the best of wrestlers and I was getting anxious a lot when I got ready for a match," he said. "It was all my own fault; I was getting into my own head thinking too much about the match that was coming up. I

have since gotten it under control, but to this day I still have to fight it off."

As a freshman still wrestling in Alaska, Coonrod had a skin infection and couldn't wrestle all that much. He did finish the season with a positive record with 15 wins and 9 losses.

Following his freshman campaign, his mother made the decision to move closer to her family in Massachusetts and they left Alaska for Northbridge where Coonrod immediately get involved in wrestling in the area, although it was not what he expected.

"My first impression of wrestling in Massachusetts made me angry.

In Alaska we had college style facilities and everyone in the room cared about the sport," he said.

"Eventually I came to know that Northbridge was a young program so there wasn't the commitment to the sport that I was used to."

Prior to taking to the mats at Northbridge the Alaskan native hooked up with Carmine Colace's New England Gold Wrestling Club in Franklin. Here he was introduced to high quality wrestling with a group of individuals that were really focused at honing their craft. It was also here that they gave him the nickname Alaska, something that he finds really cool.

Working with New England


Gold gave the new Massachusetts wrestler confidence in his ability to wrestle on the Northbridge High School team. It was at the Lowell Tournament that justified his thoughts.

"Going into that tournament I was unranked, an underdog that just wanted to do my best," Coonrod said. "I wanted to have some good matches to prove myself and finished sixth in the tournament. It was then that I realized that I could actually do something here."

Wrestling in the 157-pound

SPORTS

continued on page 21



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Onboard Maintenance Reminder Will Tell You When to Change Timing Belt

Q. I own a 2015 Honda Pilot with 44,147 miles on it. It runs great and looks great, so I have no practical reason to replace it. Today I had a state inspection performed at a local Honda dealership. The results showed that all inspection points were "Satisfactory" except the external drive belts and radiator hoses which were checked off as "Requires Immediate Attention." The customer service representative recommended that I seriously

consider replacing the serpentine belt for \$250 and timing/water pump belt for \$2,350, but no pressure was applied to have this service performed today, except to say that if the timing belt fails the engine will be destroyed. My question is: should this service be performed on a vehicle with forty-four thousand miles? It does not seem that service that expensive should be necessary at this mileage, especially when vehicles these days are delivering

far more mileage with just regular oil changes. What do you think?

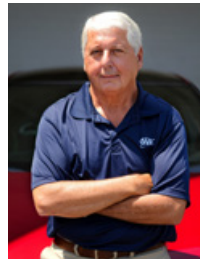
A. When the service is required, the onboard maintenance reminder will show service 4. This typically happens around 110,000 miles. Honda recommends timing belt change at 60,000 miles if driven in very hot or cold conditions. If it were my car I would wait until you see reminder 4 displayed. At this age it will probably happen closer to 60,000 just due to age. There was a time when we were lucky to see radiator hoses and fan belts lasting three or four years. Today we are seeing a 10 plus year life span on those. Since your car is getting close to that age, I would consider replacing the drive-belt and the upper and lower radiator hoses and carefully inspecting the other coolant hoses. Whenever in doubt get a second opinion.

reason? Second, the steering wheel has the ability to warm up in cold weather. However, it only warms up across the two sides: not around the entire wheel. Is that normal? It seems rather foolish since the hands go from warmth to cold when turning the steering wheel.

A. Many vehicles with remote start will shut off when the door is opened, so yes normal. Regarding the heated steering wheel it can vary, generally with most cars the heat grid is made into the leather of the steering wheel cover and most of the wheel is heated. This may also be Lexus's attempt to get you to place your hands in the proper driving position which is 3 and 9 (numbers on a clock). I looked at a Lexus forum and most owners commented that the entire wheel is not heated.

tires. What are your thoughts?

A. At this point I would have the dealer swap out another set of tires from another vehicle and see how the car reacts. The Denali option is a luxury trim package that provides high-end features, and a quiet smooth ride. So even "off-road" tires should be smooth and quiet when slowing down. If the dealer temporarily swaps the tires and the feeling goes away then it is the tires, if it does not (and I do not think it will) then I would be looking at other problems. This could be an issue with the anti-lock brakes or the driveline.



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Q. I have two new questions: My wife set up an app to start her new to her 2021 Lexus RX 350. Although it seems to work to heat up the car, when she goes to open the car door, the engine stops, and she has to restart it. Is that normal for some safety

Q. We purchased a certified pre-owned 2021 GMC Sierra Denali. When you brake and hit around 13 mph it feels as if you are driving over a rumble strip. I brought it in for service, they say it is the tires. They said this is a characteristic of off-road tires. I then brought it to my mechanic, and he said either drivetrain or

Q. I inherited a John Deere garden-tractor that has not run in a decade. Where do I start to get it running? You once said you answer every question, even lawn tractor questions?

A. Getting an old tractor to start is pretty similar to rescuing any old vehicle. Typically, the fuel system is usually the biggest issue. Drain the fuel tank, replace the fuel filter and clean out the carburetor. Depending on the condition, you may find the carburetor needs a rebuilding. Drain and replace the oil and spark

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CAR DOCTOR
 continued on page 21

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Uxbridge Free Public Library Puzzle Swap

Join the Friends of the Uxbridge Free Public Library for their first official puzzle swap from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. on March 22 at the library, 15 North Main Street. Bring your clean, used puzzles (with no missing pieces) to the Circulation Desk. You will receive a ticker for each puzzle donated. You will be able to get a used (but new to you!) puzzle for each ticket. Of course, you do not have to take any puzzles home if you don't want. There will also be a Spring Raffle basket for you to buy chances on. All proceeds will go towards the purchase of museum passes and programs at the library. Remember to stop by the swap for the fun.

SPORTS

continued from page 19

weight class in his inaugural wrestling season in Massachusetts, Coonrod has been able to secure a total of 39 wins against 5 losses. The sophomore wasn't looking for a specific amount of wins during his first year in Northbridge, he just wanted to go out and wrestle to the best of his ability while helping his new team win.

"As only a sophomore he has become one of the top wrestlers in the state," Northbridge coach Baird Lashley said. "He loves to compete and wants to wrestle the best in his weight class. Opposing coaches have been continually commenting on his competitiveness and sportsmanship. Cody is a very exciting

individual to watch."

Coonrod took a 10-8 overtime decision over the defending senior champion in the Division 2 West Tournament to grab his first Sectional Championship here in the Bay State, but firmly believes he has a lot of work still to do.

"It was really exciting winning the Sectionals, but I feel that I haven't worked hard enough yet and I don't believe that I've seen too many of the higher ranked wrestlers," he said.

With the Sectionals behind him the Alaskan native will head into the Division 2 State Tournament ranked fifth in his weight class. He is not looking to win the Championship here, but he does plan on working extremely hard to get ready for the tournament and hopes that he can finish some-

where in the top three. He also noted that he will not be disappointed if he doesn't accomplish finishing that high as long as he pushes himself and gives it his all.

During the off-season Coonrod is planning on hitting as many camps as possible that he can to get better while defending his Sectional Title to become a two-time Sectional Champion and even go onto win a State Title.

expected during summer when the weather is warm outside. I had the dealership check it, but they said this is normal behavior as the temperature sensor is outside the car and not inside. All other cars I have been in function like an air conditioner in all seasons. Is something wrong with my car?

A I did a bit of research to see if there were any Honda technical service bulletins that would apply and did not find anything. Regarding the temperature sensor, there are actually three, an external sensor, an internal sensor, and a solar sensor. The system, since it is computer controlled, has some diagnostic capabilities. I am wondering if the dealer actually tested anything or just wrote is off as normal? If the dealer truly considers it normal, I would look for another 2021 CR-V and compare them. I suspect you will find a difference between the two vehicles.

plug(s). When the spark plugs are out, add some light oil to the cylinders. Check the engine turns over and there is spark. On the first attempt to start the tractor I would use premixed two-stroke fuel. The little bit of oil in the fuel will help lubricate the engine. Once it is running, let it fully warm up and then shut it down. Check the oil and belts and look for loose bolts, brackets and wire connections. Yes, I do try to answer every email, usually within 24 hours.

Q I have a 2021 Honda CR-V. I am having trouble with the temperature setting inside the car during winters. Anything above 62 degrees on the dial blows hot air. Anything less than that blows cold air. The settings function normally and as

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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@theyankeexpress.com.

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 oppor-

tunities. Bring your chowder to the "Best of the Valley" Chowder contest. Compete for the 2025 People's Choice and 2025 Judges' Choice awards. The Expo is being held at Northbridge High School, 427 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. • 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. 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 holding a Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the parish hall. Bring your family and friends. Tickets are \$17 per dinner and include potatoes, carrots, salad and dessert.

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

• The New England Country Music Club will hold a dance on Sunday, March 16 with Al Carter at the Uxbridge Progressive Club, 18 Whitin Street, North Uxbridge. Doors open at 12:15 p.m. and the performance is from 1-5 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 23

The Dudley Woman's Club is bringing back its popular game, "Pocketbook Bingo" at PACC, 27 Harris Street, Webster. Door opens 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. Tickets are \$35 per person in advance and \$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.dudleywomanclub.org/pocketbookbingo.

SATURDAY, MARCH 29

• 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Family Fest and Home Show at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, 65 Pleasant Street, Upton. Bring the whole family along for an exciting day out! We've got a fantastic array of activities lined up that everyone, young and old, will enjoy. For the kids, there's a variety of fun activities to keep

them entertained. Meanwhile, adults can explore the offerings from 100 plus vendors, featuring a wide selection of products and services for your homes and businesses. Don't forget to join in on the fun by voting for your favorite Mac & Cheese! Admission is free, just bring some canned goods for the local food pantries!

FRIDAY, APRIL 4

• The Holy Spirit Episcopal Church hosts a monthly Community Breakfast on the First Friday of each month from 8-9 a.m. A full breakfast will be served for a donation of \$5.00. Location of the event is Holy Spirit Episcopal Church located at 3 Pleasant St, Sutton.

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 will offer a 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 Histry 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.uscgaux@verizon.net. To locate these and other USCG Auxiliary course (BA and BS&S) that will meet certification requirements, visit: https://www.cgau.org/boatinged/class_finder/index.php.

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<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">HAPPY HOUR</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">1/2 PRICE APPS: WEDNESDAYS & THURSDAYS (4PM-6PM) (ONE PER PERSON MAX. PORTIONS MAY VARY. CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH OTHER OFFERS OR SPECIAL EVENTS)</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: x-small;">BAR:</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">\$5 BEER • \$6 WINE • \$7 COCKTAIL (TUES-THURS. 12:00-11:00 PM. 18+ DRINKING AGE RESTRICTIONS)</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">MUSIC BINGO & BURGERS</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">10:00-12:00 AM BURGERS</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">BINGO PRIZES</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">PRIME RIB WEDNESDAYS</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">12OZ PLUS TWO SIDES FOR \$25</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">STARTING AT 4PM • LIMITED TIME OFFER WHILE SUPPLIES LAST • DINE-IN ONLY</p>
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Grass Roots Coffeehouse Show

The Grass Roots Coffeehouse welcomes back "SloGrass" for our next concert on Saturday, March 29.

"SloGrass" features Mark Davis on guitar, Fran McConville on mandolin, David DiBiasio on banjo, resophonic guitar, and nylon string guitar and Bob Dick on bass. The music they play is a reflection of their own interests. From bluegrass to jazz, folk to blues - all wrapped up into a style that can only be called "SloGrass". Tight three-part harmonies and intricate instrumental arrangements are hallmarks of the SloGrass sound.

The Grass Roots Coffeehouse is located at the Rockdale Congregational Church, 42 Fowler Road, Northbridge. Admission to the concert is \$15. Hot foods, beverages and desserts are available prior to the concert and during intermission. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., concert begins at 7:30 p.m. and usually wraps up by 9:30 p.m.. Proceeds support the artists and the church. The Coffeehouse is run entirely by volunteers. For more info visit <http://www.rockdalechurchonline.org> or call Bob at 617-429-0347.

Prayer



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

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



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Watershed Group Needs Volunteers

The Blackstone River Coalition (BRC) needs volunteers to assist with its 22nd year of water quality monitoring of 28 sites in the Mid-Reach section of the watershed. Enjoy being out along waterways? Volunteer as a regular site monitor assigned to a particular site or serve as a "floater" to cover sites on an "as needed" basis. Fieldwork not your thing? Come volunteer in the water-testing lab which operates out of the Tri-River Family Health Center in Uxbridge.

The BRC trains community scientists to participate in the Coalition's watershed-wide water quality monitoring program. The goal of this long-running program is to gather information about the current status of, and long-term changes in, the health of the Blackstone River watershed. This information helps local policy makers, state officials, and concerned community members make the Blackstone River cleaner for people and wildlife.

Over 90 volunteers work with the BRC to sample 75 sites throughout the watershed from Worcester to Pawtucket. Sites are sampled on the second Saturday of each month from April through November. Field monitors and floaters are trained in a 1 hr. session

to test for dissolved oxygen at the site, record physical and aesthetic parameters, and collect a water sample that they drop off at the lab between 9 a.m. and noon on the Saturday of testing. Lab volunteers, who help test these samples for nutrients, conductivity, and turbidity, do not need to commit to helping each month and can be trained the first time they assist.

There are two additional sampling teams in the program. The Headwaters Team samples waterways from Worcester to Grafton and runs its lab out of Mass Audubon's Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary in Worcester. The Rhode Island Team samples waterways from Woonsocket to Pawtucket and runs its lab out of Sycamore Landing in Lincoln, RI. The Rhode Island Team and the Headwaters Team are also looking for volunteers.

To volunteer as a field monitor, floater, or lab assistant, please contact Heather Parry, Coordinator, BRC

To volunteer as a field monitor, floater, or lab assistant, please contact Heather Parry, Coordinator, BRC Volunteer WQM Program at 508-579-9188 or heatherparry.wqm@gmail.com.



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Free Eggstravaganza

**WCC's Egg Hunt
Sat, April 12th**

BRING YOUR CAMERA!

PRIZE 1 FREE Youth Membership **Ages 5 & Under**
11:00am & 11:45am starts in Whitin Park*

PRIZE 1 FREE Week of Camp **Ages 6-8**
11:00am Egg Hunt starts in Whitin Park*

PRIZE 1 FREE Youth Membership **Ages 9-12**
11:45am Egg Hunt starts in Whitin Park*

* If the weather is inclement the egg hunt for all ages will be cancelled, however all children will receive a goodie bag & may enter a raffle drawing to win the prizes. Drawing will be at 12:00pm.

Thank You To Our Sponsors

UNIBANK **KOOPMAN LUMBER & HARDWARE** **OSTERMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION**

60 Main St. Whitinsville, Ma 01588
www.WhitinCommunityCenter.com

For more info contact
Ginny Alicea, BVCP Director, 508.234.8184 ext 105

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Saturday, April 12, 2025

6:00-8:30pm

April's Theme:

April in Paris

Featured Artist:

Shaun O'Connor

Open Sky
COMMUNITY SERVICES

Signs ups begin @ 5:30pm

Singh Performance Center, 60 Douglas Rd., Whitinsville, MA

Hosted by Open Sky's Community Membership Dept.

Questions? Michelle.Benjamin@openskycs.org or visit openskycs.org/openmic