



In June, the Patrol Dog trial and certification for Region 4 was held in Essex. K9 Dozer and Patrolman Derek Gaylord participated in the Novice division as it was their first time seeing this Trial.

K9 teams from across the region were tested and judged in obedience, evidence recovery, suspect searches, and apprehension.

K9 Dozer and Patrolman Gaylord really came through for Charlton and took home 3rd Place in Suspect Search, 2nd Place in Apprehension, 1st Place in Obedience and 1st place in Evidence Recovery. This secured the team a 1st Place Overall in the Novice division.

Nichols College board elects new chair, vice chair, trustees

Bedard, Paris Boisvert elected new chair, vice chair; Landry and Cornell as trustees

At its May 2 meeting, the Nichols College Board of Trustees elected David G. Bedard as the new chair and Jaime Paris Boisvert as the new vice chair of the 27-member board. During the academic year, the

Boisvert is the executive director for global development in the Sustainable Infrastructure division of Johnson Controls, which is known for delivering outcome-based infrastructure solutions. She resides in Woodstock, Connecticut.



David C. Bedard and Jaime Paris Boisvert assume new roles at Nichols College

board also elected Edmond J. (E.J.) Landry and Taylor Cornell as new trustees.

Bedard is a 1986 graduate of Nichols and has been a member of its board since 2011, serving on the Executive and Finance committees and as chair of the Audit Committee. He succeeds Randy Becker, a member of the board since 2006, and chair for the past three years. Bedard is a retired financial services executive with 35 years of experience, most recently as senior vice president and head of New York Life's Finance Services Organization, the company's global shared services group in New York City. A native of Shrewsbury, Mass., he currently resides in Estero, Florida.

Paris Boisvert, a 1998 graduate of Nichols, was elected to the board in 2021 and has served on the Executive and Finance committees and as chair of the Academic & Faculty Affairs Committee. She succeeds Carolyn Burke, a trustee since 2015 and vice chair for the past three years. Paris

New trustees Landry and Cornell began their terms in the 2024-2025 academic year.

Landry is a 1986 graduate of Nichols and a retired partner at Deloitte. He is a seasoned financial expert, and risk and controls

NICHOLS

continued on page 2

Thank Goodness for Our Parents...

BY JANET STOICA
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

Having recently experienced the holidays of Mother's Day and Father's Day, we've all thought deeply about our parents or caregivers. Rich, poor, or in-between, without our parents and caregivers none of us would be here. For sure. I don't mean just biologically. I mean spiritually, morally, and physically. For the most part, our parents/caregivers made us toe the line. They kept us clean, safe, and warm. They nurtured us as if we were their lion cubs. Just don't let anyone or anything stand between us babies and our parents or there would be hell to pay. They would lay down their lives for us.

As we grew from dependent infants, who couldn't even hold our dainty heads up without their cradling us in their soft arms, into toddlers who tested their patience as we managed to find new cabinet doors and drawers to get into to our teenage years when we might've told them to leave us alone because we already knew what we were doing. Our parents stood behind us, sometimes in silence, allowing us to explore within the boundaries they had

set. When we flew the coop and left high school for trades or college, they sat home wondering what we were up to. Some parents experienced the "empty nest syndrome" never saying anything aloud to us but sitting at home marveling at how empty and silent their homes now were since we weren't there for them to look after anymore. Maybe they threw themselves into work or volunteerism to fill the hours that they did not have to care for us any longer. Maybe they just coped as best they could. We were the center of their universe and now, we were gone.

Perhaps at holidays or birthdays, we came back home to celebrate with them. The sparkle in their eyes when they saw us couldn't be missed. The joy they expressed at seeing us home again was certainly unmistakable. They loved being our caregivers once again if only for a day or a weekend. When we left after the festivities ended, they appeared wistful and solemn. Most likely thinking how silent the house would become once more. They couldn't wait to answer the door when we arrived again.

Suddenly, on one of our visits back home, we might have noticed that mom or dad weren't moving as fast as

they used to and now it was our turn to cook the big holiday meal and take care of the cleanup afterwards. They might be a little more forgetful but they always had a big smile for us and their carefree laughs were still there. It was time for us to be their protectors now and to assume the roles they had always carried for us.

We might then begin to reflect on all the sacrifices, large and small, they made for us. Saving their overtime pay so we could go with our college friends on a Spring Break vacation, helping us with a down payment on our first car, or even putting their own personal needs on hold so they could provide something more for us.

They never stopped praying for our safety and to arrive home without incident. They devoted themselves to us completely and devoting ourselves to them as they age is the very least we can do. My parents have passed years ago, my dear Dad suddenly when I was 16 and my sweet Mom 10 years ago and this little tribute is for them. They've made me the caring and responsible individual I am today. God bless you, Mom and Dad, you were the best!

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Country Bank Announces Stonier Graduates

Country Bank, a full-service financial institution serving Central and Western Massachusetts, is pleased to congratulate two of its team members, Jodie Gerulaitis, First Vice President of Community Relations and Jennifer Bujnevici, Vice President of Retail Banking Regional Manager, on their recent graduation from the American Bankers Association, Stonier Graduate School of Banking.

The ABA Stonier Graduate School of Banking continues to lead the way as the industry's preeminent graduate banking program. Professional development is important now more than ever, and Stonier delivers the highest standard of executive education through its highly regarded program. Graduates receive both a Stonier Diploma and



Jodie Gerulaitis and Jennifer Bujnevici

a Wharton Leadership Certificate.

"Over the last three years, I've gained meaningful insight into leadership, strategy, and collaboration that will stay with me throughout my career. This experience allowed me to grow both personally and professionally, while building relationships with peers from across the country. I'm thankful to Country Bank for supporting my development and for investing in the future of its leaders," expressed Jodie.

"This journey challenged me to think differently, lead more effectively, and expand my perspective on the evolving banking landscape. The knowledge and connections I've gained will continue to shape my leadership approach and benefit our teams and customers. I'm grateful to Country Bank for its continued

commitment to leadership development," expressed Jennifer.

"We congratulate Jodie and Jennifer on their completion of the American Bankers Association Stonier School of Banking. We're incredibly proud of the dedication and commitment they have demonstrated to get here; working hard over the course of this three-year program designed to enhance their leadership skills as Bankers and thought leaders for Country Bank. Jodie and Jennifer have always been enthusiastic about the variety of learning & development opportunities offered by the Bank throughout their careers at Country Bank and we applaud and support their continued commitment to their growth and excellence," said Miriam Siegel, Chief Culture & Development Officer..

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NICHOLS

continued from page 1

expert, with significant experience auditing and consulting with companies in the life sciences (med device), technology and manufacturing industries. Prior to his role on the trustees, Landry served a three-year term as co-chair of the college's Board of Advisors. He resides in Franklin, New Hampshire.

Cornell graduated from Nichols in 2024 with a degree in general business and minors in

psychology and criminal justice. As a student, she founded the Bison Pantry to help address food insecurity on campus, played a key role in establishing the Equestrian Club, was an inaugural member of the women's golf team, and served as vice president of student advocacy on the Student Government Association. Currently, she is a financial aid officer at Keiser University in Sarasota, Fla., and vice president of the Haiti Plunge program board of Berkshire County, Mass. She resides in North Port, Florida.

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

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Gladys E. Kelly Public Library

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Library Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9 a.m.-8 p.m., Wednesday 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Adult Programming Yoga – Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

Join Julie or Lauren at the Gladys E. Kelly Library for a vinyasa yoga class for all levels. A typical class involves centering the mind with the breath, aromatherapy, movement of the body to release energetic blockages, and, finally, rest and relaxation. Classes are free. Funded by the Friends of the Gladys E. Kelly Public Library.

Yoga Nidr – Wednesday Mornings at 8:15 a.m. Join Adult Services Librarian Jess for a relaxing yoga nidr practice to start your day on Wednesdays. Jess will guide participants through a few simple yoga asanas to release physical tension. Participants will then settle into a reclined position for a guided relaxation (yoga nidr). If you have your own yoga mat, please bring it and be sure to dress

in comfortable clothing. This program takes place before the library officially opens. Registration is required and Jess will meet you at the program door.

Library for All – First Two Mondays; Last Two Fridays 10 a.m. (Chair Yoga or Craft) This program includes one chair yoga class and one craft project that will be held on first two Mondays and the last two Fridays of the month. Either join Jess for a one-hour relaxing Chair Yoga class or join us for our craft program. Check the online calendar to see which event is scheduled. No experience necessary. This program is for teens and adults of all abilities and their caregivers. Please call ahead if special accommodations or requirements are needed.

Take and Make Craft--- All month long New Take and Make kits will be available for pick up in the Children's room on the first of every month, while supplies last. Maker Mondays – Mondays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Feeling artistic? We will have a variety of craft materials

available to put your creativity to the test!

Mini Block Party – Tuesdays from 3:30-5 p.m. Play with magnets, wooden blocks, and Legos.

Toddler Playtime--- Tuesdays at 10 a.m. Kids 0 to 6 are invited to get their wiggles out with weekly obstacle course and fun.

Storytime for Littles – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Join Andrew the Children's Librarian for a few of his favorite stories, felt story fun, and some free play. This storytime is geared toward ages 0 to 3, but siblings are welcome.

Play-doh Storytime – Fridays at 10 a.m. Join Youth Services Librarian Andrew for stories, play-doh, and fun! This storytime is geared toward ages 2 to 5, but siblings are welcome.

Beginner Origami-Fridays at 3:45 p.m. Are you interested in making origami, but you don't know where to start? You can start here. And if you do know how to make some origami, feel free to come make some as well.

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Worcester State University Gets a Boost from Cornerstone Bank

Cornerstone Bank, a community bank with locations throughout Central Massachusetts, is donating \$15,000 a year for the next three years, a total contribution of \$45,000, to Worcester State University's STEM Connections program.

The gift continues Cornerstone Bank's generous multi-year support of various STEM initiatives at Worcester State.

"This donation is personal for me," said Cornerstone Bank President Randy Webber, who graduated from Worcester State University with a B.A. in business administration and

sits on the board of the Worcester State Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the mission of the university. "I cherish my time spent at Worcester State, and I'm proud to be able to support the academic endeavors of students there now."

The university's STEM Connections program focuses on engaging junior and senior high school students from Worcester public high schools in fun and informative hands-on laboratory and data analysis projects at the Worcester State campus. Professors from

chemistry, biology and environmental science lead the program, and a Worcester State student serves as the teaching assistant. The participants take field trips, hear from local experts, and participate in a variety of learning activities to encourage a love for science. The program also introduces pathways to higher education in STEM fields. Students gain valuable knowledge and skills about navigating the college application process through presentations by the university's admissions and financial aid teams.

The program is one of the university's signature summer educational programs, said Worcester State Vice President for University Advancement Tom McNamara, adding, "The Cornerstone STEM Connections program has a tremendous impact

on students by igniting their enthusiasm for science, building confidence, and enabling them to envision a future college education in STEM. We are tremendously grateful to Cornerstone Bank for providing this multiyear support. This gift represents an important investment in the future workforce for our region."

"I hope this donation helps open doors for students the way Worcester State helped me build a strong foundation for a rewarding career at Cornerstone Bank," said Webber. "The future is bright."

About Cornerstone Bank
Cornerstone Bank was formed in 2017, born of a long history of supporting the community, and providing a strong foundation to help people and businesses thrive. Serving Worcester County, Cornerstone Bank's local presence and community-based banking model enables a unique ability to deliver outstanding service, with a personal touch. Cornerstone provides the highest level of service and expertise for individuals, businesses, and community organizations with branch locations throughout Central Massachusetts.



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R.D.O. PETER MALY • DR. RENEE GOMEZ

DR. JENNA LAROCQUE



Charlton Library

40 Main Street, Charlton

Tuesday, July 15

9:45 a.m. Yoga for Seniors (through Senior Center)
1 p.m. . Movie “Dog Man”
2:30 p.m. Mason Jar Pencil Holder. Register
5:30 p.m. GSA for Teens
6 p.m. Local Food Matters. Register

Wednesday, July 16

10 a.m. Robot Obstacle Course with Mobile Quest. Register
11:30 a.m. Battle Bots with Mobile Quest. Register

Thursday, July 17

9:45 a.m. . Yoga for Seniors
1 p.m. Threaded Together Fiber Arts Group
6 p.m. Alzheimer’s Caregiver Support Group
6 p.m. Death Café

Friday, July 18

10 a.m. Exploration Corner.

Register

Monday, July 21

10 a.m. Open Play for Babies
2:30 p.m. Fiber Arts Club for teens and tweens

Tuesday, July 22

9:45 p.m. Yoga for Seniors
1 p.m. Movie- Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy
4 p.m. One-on-One Visits with Olive the Therapy Dog. Register
4:30 p.m. Visit with Olive the Therapy Dog
5:30 p.m. GSA for Teens

Wednesday, July 23

10:30 a.m. Pirate Party with Ed the Wizard. Register

Thursday, July 24

9:45 a.m. Yoga for Seniors
1 p.m. Threaded Together Fiber Arts GRop

6 p.m. Charlton Ukulele League and Ensemble

6 p.m. Better Pictures Start Here. Register

Friday, July 25

10 a.m. Exploration Corner.

Register

1 p.m. Critical Discussion Group: The Charterhouse of Parma
2:30 p.m. Crafternoon for Kids

Monday, July 28

10 a.m. Me and My Mini with Sunflower Movement Therapy.

Register

Tuesday, July 29

9:45 a.m. Yoga for Seniors
10 a.m. Author Storytime: Dragonfly Hope
1 p.m. Movie: The Alto Knights
4 p.m. One-on One Visit with Olive the Therapy Dog. Register
4:30 p.m. Visit with Olive the Therapy Dog

5:30 p.m. Needle Felted Owls. Register

Wednesday, July 30

10:30 a.m. Harry Potter Potion Slime. Register

Thursday, July 31

9:45 a.m. Yoga for Seniors

10 a.m. Musical Playground with David Maloof

1 p.m. Threaded Together Fiber Arts Group

6 p.m. Summer Concert Series: Tony Gahan

MassBay Community College Honors

The follow local residents have been named to the MassBay Community College President’s List, earning this academic honor for the Spring 2025 semester.

- Michelle Leonard of Douglas, who studies General Studies
- Julia Rocha Dos Santos of Uxbridge, who studies Accounting
- Alvaro Mendoza Carroll of Uxbridge, who studies Business Administration

To be eligible for the MassBay President’s List, students must be enrolled in 12 or more college-level credits, achieve a 3.7 grade-point average or higher, and be in good standing with the College.

The following local resident’s academic dedication and hard work were celebrated at MassBay Community College’s 63rd Commencement ceremony in Wellesley Hills on May 29, 2025.

- Charlene DeVincent of Uxbridge has earned a Certificate in Phlebotomy.

The follow residents have been named to the MassBay Community College Dean’s List, earning this academic honor for the Spring 2025 semester.

- Robert McLaughlin of Uxbridge, who studies Business Administration
- Mariestela Rosario of Uxbridge, who studies Engineering Design
- Victoria Caruso of Uxbridge, who studies General Studies
- Jude Goncalves of Uxbridge, who studies General Studies
- Jessica Lutton of Uxbridge, who studies General Studies
- Kendall Knapp of Uxbridge, who studies Liberal Arts - Psychology/ Sociology
- Georgia Oakley of Uxbridge

To be eligible for the MassBay Dean’s List, students must complete at least six credits of college-level

courses, earn a grade-point average of 3.5 or higher, and be in good standing with the College.

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Stochaj Insurance of Dudley Celebrates 50 Years of Excellence

BY JANET STOICA
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.co

Edwin and Ann Stochaj's legacy of their insurance business began in Webster on North Main Street in a small establishment near a former credit union building. It was July 1, 1975. Their son, James, has now seen and experienced the humble beginnings of his parents' business grow into a

multi-agency establishment while also being a member of Renaissance Alliance with its aggregation of 91 independent insurance agencies (primarily in Massachusetts) which form the 21st largest insurance agency in the country. Being a member agent of the Alliance gives E.J. Stochaj Insurance Agency the ability to write insurance coverage with ten insurance companies for both home and

auto (most agencies have only two or three). The Alliance also gives them access to over 75 insurance carriers for business insurance. By having access to such a host of companies, they have the ability to bring the best possible coverage at the best possible price to each and every one of their clients.

"In 1982, I began my insurance agent career at the age of 19. In 2002, my wife, Lisa, and I purchased the agency from my parents. We still are generalists with a wide range of knowledge of each of the companies we represent," said Jim Stochaj, "we offer all lines of property and casualty insurance and all types of business insurance. We are unique and part of a massive aggregation of insurance agencies in the U.S. Because we're a part of this, we represent 12 companies of personal insurance and 40+ companies of commercial insurance from home, auto, boat, tenant/condo, and motorcycles. You name the company and you'll find us involved with them from the oil industry to glass, construction, building owners, bakers, condo buildings, and apartment buildings. We are licensed in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire."

The agency has added three additional groups to their family. In 2008, they purchased the former Bouvier Insurance Agency of Sturbridge and rebranded it as the Hometown Insurance Center which serves Sturbridge and the surrounding area. In 2018, the Tonry Insurance Agency of Webster was added to their growing organization and in 2020 they expanded again and purchased the well-established Crimmins-Graveline Agency of Palmer with roots dating back to 1928. The Stochaj family of insurance agencies is certainly not standing still and are growing and establishing them-



James Stochaj

selves as a powerhouse of offerings to assist their customers in every way they can helping them find the best value at the best rates.

"Our industry has changed dramatically," said Mr. Stochaj, "fifty years ago everything was handwritten including the typing of policies and services manually. Today, most all of what we do is highly-automated. Drones are used to inspect properties we insure and being on-line is in real time. We have a rating system and take information from prospective clients using that rating system which gives us 12 companies' worth of rates. The natural disasters in our country have had a trickle-down effect and rates have gone up across the country. Our agencies will strive to get you the best rates

possible. Many agencies nowadays are being acquired by large venture capital firms whose philosophy is certainly not customer service. These types of acquisitions have really been a boon for us as we do pride ourselves on great customer service – that's us."

"Our success will always be measured and based on our dedicated hard-working employees and how we pride ourselves in having a very loyal customer base, some customers having been with us for 50 years and four generations of family. I can think of lots of them where we have our original customers' great-grandchildren as customers now. Our business is fully in growth mode and we are looking to acquire more agencies should the right opportunity present itself. We do all we can to attract the best talent in personal and commercial insurance, processors, and, of course, bookkeepers and runners."

The agency welcomes new customers and would be pleased to quote using their large network of providers. The Stochaj Insurance Agency is located at 93 West Main Street in Dudley MA 01571. You can't miss them, their landscaping and grounds makes them stand out from their competition representing their sharp attention to detail. Phone: (508) 943-4124. Hours: Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Get a quote online: stochajinsurance.com



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Etiquette isn't about being fancy—it's about being thoughtful. In today's fast-paced world, small courtesies and everyday respect go a long way in building trust, connection, and community. Whether you're at work, out running errands, or simply spending time with family, how you treat others makes a difference.

Maya Angelou once said, "People will forget what you said, forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel."

Etiquette Express is here to offer practical tips and honest answers to modern etiquette dilemmas, big or small. Each month, you'll find a reader-submitted question along with a clear response, plus a practical etiquette tip you can try the next time you need it.

Q. My coworker microwaves fish at lunch almost every day, and the smell takes over the whole office. What's the polite way to handle this?

A. Ah, the infamous office microwave mystery meal. If you have a friendly rapport, try something light like: "Hey, I know we all love our lunches, but the fish smell really hangs around. Any chance we could switch it up once in a while?"

If that feels too direct—or if it doesn't work—you could also ask your manager to send a general reminder about keeping shared spaces comfortable for everyone. It's a common issue, and it can usually be handled with a bit of tact and teamwork.

ETIQUETTE TIP OF THE WEEK: NAPKIN KNOW-HOW

Place your napkin on your lap as soon as you sit down. No

need to wait for the food. It's a small move that shows you're relaxed, confident, and ready to enjoy the meal. If you need to leave the table, don't place your napkin on your chair. Instead, set it loosely to the left of your plate.

Pro tip: Fold the napkin with the crease facing you. That way, when you dab your mouth, you're using the inside—keeping the outside neat.

Have a situation you'd like help with? Write in and your question may be featured in a future column. Let's build a kinder, more respectful world, one interaction at a time.

Lee-Ann Barkhouse is a certified etiquette and leadership coach who helps people show up with confidence, kindness, and credibility. At Invest in You, she shares practical tools to make everyday moments more thoughtful and meaningful—whether at work, at home, or right here in the community.

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State Lawmakers Honor Bay Path Nursing Grad

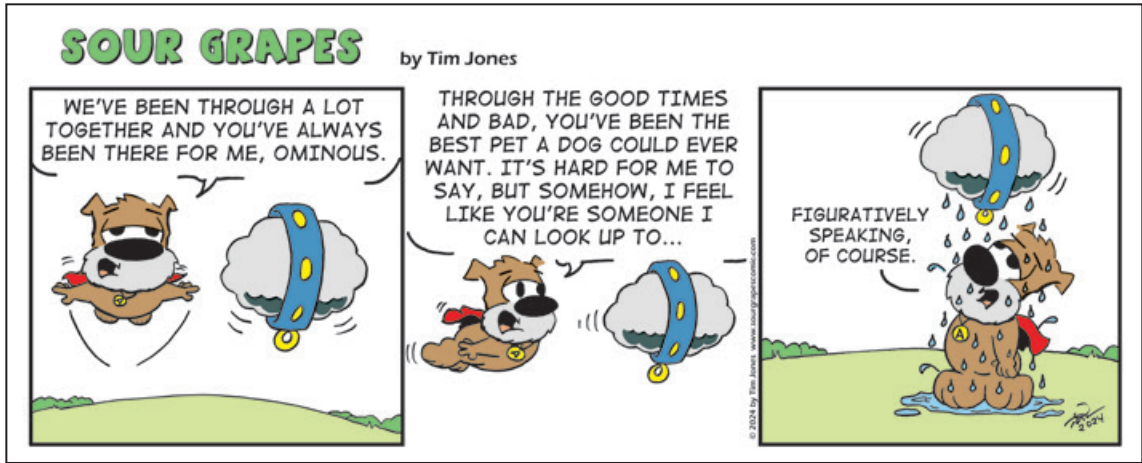
Loise Ngigi, a recent graduate of the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy in Charlton, was honored on June 20 at her graduation and pinning ceremony held at the Overlook Performance Arts Center. State Rep. John J. Marsi, Jr. (6th Worcester District) and State Sen. Ryan C. Fattman (Worcester & Middlesex District) presented

Ngigi with a citation acknowledging her accomplishments, including being named the MassCTE.org Postsecondary Student of the Year for the Central Chapter. Citations are awarded to constituents who have reached significant personal or professional milestones. Representative Marsi, who presented the citation, also did so on behalf of Senator Fatt-

man. Both legislators are Republicans serving the Massachusetts General Court. Loise Ngigi, a resident of South Grafton and a member of the Practical Nursing (PN) Class of 2025, was recognized for her outstanding achievement by MassCTE.org at a recent banquet and awards ceremony at the Renaissance Boston Patriot Place Hotel.

“What an honor to witness and celebrate this recognition for our nursing graduate,” said Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN, Academy Director at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy. “We are proud of Loise for this achievement and grateful to both Senator Fattman and Representative Marsi.” Ngigi, who also served as a UNICEF Club officer, accepted the award, saying, “I am forever grateful.” She brings a wealth of experience to her nursing career, with seven years of direct experience as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and certified Home Health Aide (HHA). She earned her nursing assistant certification in 2017 from 3 Dimensions College in Worcester and obtained her high school diploma from Moi Girls Kamangu High School

in Kenya in 2012. During her time at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, Loise also completed her Dementia Care certification and is certified in BLS/HCP/ CPR (Basic Life Support, Health Care Provider C a r d i o p u l m o n a r y Resuscitation), the Medical Administration Program (MAP), and Mental Health First Aid. Her professional experience includes working as a CNA at River Terrace Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center in Lancaster, and currently as a direct support professional at Venture Community Services in Sturbridge. She will be competing at the SkillsUSA national conference in Atlanta, GA as the Massachusetts state champion for First Aid/ CPR.





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Tuesday, July 15 10:30 a.m. 80's & 90's Time Travel Party Dress for the occasion! Sponsored by Families Together. 3 p.m. Memory Friends Cafe - sponsored by Helping Hands Society

Wednesday, July 16 Foot Clinic by appointment

9 a.m. Spa Time sign up in advance. Paraffin hand wax and more!

Thursday, July 17 10:30 a.m. Rivers Between Music Duo, courtesy of Auburn Life Care Center. Snacks for Bingo at 12:45 p.m. and Prizes 12:45p.m.

Monday, July 21 10:30 a.m. Arm Chair Travel to Iceland

Tuesday, July 22 10:30 a.m. Dull Men's Group Meets—with refreshments

Wednesday, July 23 10:30 a.m.

Walk In With Your Medicare Questions with Ed Spater
Thursday, July 24 10:30 a.m. Cornhole

Monday, July 28 9:30 -10:30 a.m. Coffee and Donuts with Commonwealth Care Alliance 10:30 a.m. Fit Minds

Tuesday, July 29 9 a.m. Rock Painting . Sign up in advance!

Wednesday, July 30 10:30 a.m. Show and Tell. Bring your stories and unique or interesting items.

Thursday, July 31 10:30 a.m. July island birthday party with Brian and his Steel Drum music. Dress for an island vacation. Suzie Q's Ice Cream Truck will be on hand.

The Elder Bus van is available to Charlton residents 60+ or disabled. You can visit the Senior Center, travel to medical appointments or grocery shop. There is no charge for this service, you just need to call 48 hours in advance:1-800-321-0243.

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Worcester Polytechnic Institute announces Dean's List

A total of 2,331 undergraduate students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) were named to the university's spring 2025 Dean's List. The criteria for the WPI Dean's List differ from that of most other universities as WPI does not compute a grade point average (GPA). Instead, WPI students are named to the Dean's List based on the amount of work completed at the A level in courses and hands-on projects. "WPI's academic programs are rigorous and require a level of independence beyond what is required in traditional courses. WPI students work on real-world, open-ended problems on campus and in communities around the globe. Far from

being simple academic exercises, the projects students complete have genuine and lasting impacts in our partner communities," said Provost Andrew Sears. "Some of this nation's best and brightest students come to WPI to study engineering, science, business, and the humanities. Those named to the Dean's List have excelled in all of their work, and we are exceptionally proud of these outstanding students." The following students were named to the Dean's List for Spring 2025

Mina Boktor from Dudley, class of 2027, majoring in Computer Science Nathan Card from Dudley, class of 2028, majoring in Aerospace Engineering Marlee Dono-

hoe from Dudley, class of 2026, majoring in Mechanical Engineering Sarah Fenton from Dudley, class of 2025, majoring in Chemical Engineering

Samantha Loy from Webster, class of 2028, majoring in Biology and Biotechnology Szymon

Mamro from Webster, class of 2026, majoring in Computer Science Sofia Napierata from Webster, class of 2026, majoring in Interactive Media and Game Development Benjamin Perry from Dudley, class of 2026, majoring in Computer Science and Interactive Media and

Game Development - Technology Luke Poirier from Dudley, class of 2028, majoring in Civil Engineering Rami Rachid from Dudley, class of 2027, majoring in Biomedical Engineering

Hofstra University Congratulates Dean's List Students

Hofstra University congratulates the students named to the spring 2025 Dean's List for their outstanding academic achievement. Students must earn a grade point average of at least 3.5 during the semester to make the Dean's List. Local students who earned placement on the list include: *Cooper Cooke of Dudley. Cooke's major is Computer Science. *Molly Starczewski of Dudley. Starczewski's major is Dance. Hofstra University's is located in Hempstead, New York.

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- MARGARITAVILLE CRUISE - AUGUST 29
- MUSIC CRUISE WITH TYLER FAUXBEL - SEPTEMBER 5
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SPORTS

Athletes Excelling in the Classroom

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

High school athletes can potentially earn more scholarship money by excelling both academically and athletically, leveraging multiple offers, and understanding the nuances of scholarship types. While full-ride scholarships are rare, especially outside of a few sports, combining

athletic scholarships with other forms of financial aid can help make college more affordable.

Strong grades and challenging coursework can make a significant difference, as coaches often combine academic and athletic aid to create a more attractive package. Maintaining a good GPA and preparing for standardized tests can also help.

Currently, the percentage of high

school athletes awarded any form of athletic scholarship to compete in college remains relatively low, estimated at around 2%. These scholarships, primarily for Division I and Division II, however, will only cover some of the college cost, not all of it. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) reported that over 180,000 student-athletes receive about \$3.6 billion in athletic scholarships annually within the two divisions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, some high school athletes likely missed out on scholarship opportunities due to factors like canceled seasons and limited recruiting access. College coaches couldn't visit high school campuses as easily, and some schools offered fewer scholarships. The "extra year of eligibility" granted to college athletes who missed a year due to the pandemic also increased competition for scholarships, making it more challenging for incoming freshmen.

Academic scholarships are generally more widely available than athletic scholarships. Many colleges and universities offer various types of academic scholarships, including merit-based and

need-based aid, making them more accessible.

According to Bartlett athletic director Tony Paranto in the past the academic scholarship money

and it's not just here," he said. "I've been to a lot of local and national conventions as well as seminars and everyone has no idea what has caused the increase."



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primarily went to the book worms, but things are changing.

"Fifteen years ago when I took over as AD, athletes were getting a lot of awards, but that number started dropping. Things seem to be moving back up and athletes receiving academic awards are on the upswing," the Bartlett athletic director said. "Seventy percent of our student athletes received scholarship money this year."

Over the past few years a lot of kids were not taking part in athletics as much as they did a decade or so ago. A big part of fewer kids taking part in athletics had to do with Covid-19.

"During my generation parents were pushing their kids to play athletics, the millennials don't see it that way, especially on the youth levels. Not a lot of kids were playing sports and we saw a lot of co-ops pop up," Paranto said. "Covid took sports away for awhile and kids started to settle in and do other things. Not having sports lead kids in a different direction."

While Covid had a lot to do with the downswing of kids taking part in sports, that was five years ago and the AD is unsure what caused the recent up tick.

"It's a new generation and no one can totally figure out why all of a sudden things have changed

Athletes seem to have become academically stronger; they're buckling down with their school work and it is showing in the amount of academic scholarships they are receiving.

Paranto cited the Bartlett softball team as an example. In the past the girls playing softball struggled and posted a combined 2.90 GPA, but nowadays they are right up there and a lot of them are making the honor roll.

"The dynamics are changing and those athletes looking to go onto a four-year college have to strive in the classroom as well as on the field if they are hoping to secure scholarship money," Paranto said. "Things look to be turning in the right direction. It starts with youth sports and moves up to the middle school and then here at the high school level."

Those athletes that not only want to attend college while playing a sport are going to need to find another way to secure that scholarship money. One way to do that is to succeed in the classroom as well as on the field, giving the athlete two ways to grab some scholarship money. Athletes at Bartlett seem to have already figured out the algorithm and are improving their chances.

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p.m.; Sat. 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Wed, 07/16 at 1 p.m. Diane Edgecomb 'Game Time'
Wed, 07/23 at 1 p.m. Chain Reactions & Creative Contraptions
Wed, 07/30 at 1 p.m. Mobile-Mini Golf
Wed, 08/06 at 1 p.m. Henry the Juggler
Wed, 08/13 at 1 p.m. Ed the Wizard's Winged Dragon Balloon Twisting Workshop

Wed, 08/13 at 2 p.m. Ice Cream Social and Prize Giveaway

Children's Happenings
Mon, 07/14, 07/21, 07/28, 08/04, 08/11 at 10 a.m. Summer Storytime (Registration Required)
Tue, 07/15, 07/22, 07/29, 08/05, 08/12 at 10 a.m. Summer Storytime (Registration Required)
Wed, 07/16 at 5:45 p.m. Reading to Bryce (Registration

Required)
Tue, 07/22, 08/05 at 11:30 a.m. Music & Movement with Deb Hudgins

Adult Book Clubs
Mon, 07/28 at 6:30 p.m. Plot Twisters Book Club, "None of This is True" by Lisa Jewell

Adult Happenings
Wed, 07/16, 07/30, 08/06 at 10 a.m. Fiber Arts Friends

Sat, 07/19 at 10 a.m. Painting By Numbers (Registration Required)
Mon, 07/21 at 5:30 p.m. Painting By Numbers (Registration Required)
Sat, 08/02 at 10:30 a.m. SFPL Gardeners - Companion Planting & Design with Kate Donovan

Southwick's Zoo announces birth of three cheetah cubs

Southwick's Zoo is thrilled to announce the birth of three cheetah cubs, a significant milestone for the zoo and its animal care team. Born in early May to Nya, a female cheetah from Southwick's Zoo and part of the Zoo Association of America's (ZAA) Animal Management

ing, monitoring, and support for their social development. "These cubs are already showing off their energy and personality," said Betsey Brewer, Executive Vice President of Southwick's Zoo and Board Chair for ZAA. "They've kept our team on their toes, and it's

ment and species sustainability, Southwick's Zoo plays an important role in the conservation of this iconic species.

"These cubs represent more than just an exciting moment for the zoo," Brewer added. "They're part of a larger purpose—to help secure the future of a species that's facing real challenges in the wild. At the same time, they allow us to inspire the next generation of advocates."

Southwick's Zoo will continue to share updates on the cubs, including names, photos, and videos, on its social media platforms in the upcoming weeks.



Two of the three newborn cheetahs are pictured here. Courtesy photo

Program (AMP), the cubs are healthy and thriving under expert care. Shortly after giving birth, Nya experienced complications and rejected the cubs in her litter. Female Cheetahs are generally good mothers, even though only 5% of cheetah cubs reach adulthood in the wild. While rejecting cubs is not typical, it is not an uncommon behavior for first-time cheetah mothers. To ensure the cubs' survival and well-being, Southwick's experienced animal care staff stepped in to raise them behind the scenes, providing round-the-clock feed-

been a joy to watch them grow and explore each day. The work our team has done to care for these cubs is nothing short of extraordinary." Over the summer months, they will move into the cheetah habitat for public view, where guests can watch as they continue to develop. Cheetahs are listed as Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with fewer than 7,000 individuals remaining in the wild. Through its participation in the ZAA's AMP, which focuses on population manage-

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Twelve Weeks of Summer – Free Entry by Birthday

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Everyone will have an opportunity for free admission to the Samuel Slater Experience during the summer months, 31 Ray Street, Webster. Beginning the weekend of June

20-22, anyone who has a birthday in January will receive two free tickets. The following weekend, June 27-29, anyone who has a birthday in February will receive two free tickets. The weekend

after that, July 5-6, anyone with a birthday in March will receive free tickets. (The museum will be closed July 4.)

The free weekends will continue through September 5-7. See the complete breakdown below.

The Twelve Weeks of Summer special also features a raffle for gift certificates for local restaurants and shops. Every “birthday person” will receive two free tickets for the raffle, which will be drawn on Sunday, September 7. All museum visitors may purchase raffle tickets as well.

Raffle participants include Book-

lovers’ Gourmet, Samuel Slater’s Restaurant, The Rose Room Café, Webster Lake Gifts, and Prestige Nails and Day Spa.

Museum open hours are Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sundays noon to 4 p.m. Last admission is at 3 p.m. For more information, go to samuelslaterexperience.org or call 508-461-2955.

January : June 20-22; February: June 27-29; March: July 5-6; April: July 11-13;

May: July 18-20; June: July 25-27; July: August 1-3; August: August 8-10; September: August 15-17; October: August 22-24;

November: August 30-31; December: September 5-7

About Samuel Slater Experience

Samuel Slater Experience opened in 2022 to tell the story of Samuel Slater, the beginnings of the American Industrial Revolution, and Slater’s impact on mill towns such as Webster, Massachusetts. The museum uses advanced digital technology with immersive video and interactive exhibits to recreate two time periods: the early 1800s and the early 1900s.



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Does Age Make A Difference in the Workplace?

Traditionalist, Boomer, Gen X, Millennial or Gen Z? Can’t We All Just Get Along?

The Graduate School at Nichols College will host the Intergenerational Workforce Summit, bringing together regional business leaders, HR professionals and early-career employees for a unique, action-oriented event focused on the future of work across generations. The event addresses one of today’s most pressing business challenges: managing and motivating a multigenerational workforce. The summit will take place from



8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 6 on the Nichols College campus in Dudley.

With five generations now active in the workforce - Traditionalists, Boomers, Gen X, Millennials and Gen Z - many employers are facing increased friction, communication gaps and challenges in employee engagement and retention. This summit transcends awareness and stereotypes to foster shared understanding, inclusive leadership and collaborative action.

“At Nichols, we are committed to helping both organizations and individuals thrive. This summit is not about telling young professionals how to behave or asking leaders to lower expectations - it’s about creating space for mutual listening and collaboration,” said Robin Frkal, dean of the Graduate School at Nichols. “Our goal is to equip participants with real tools and ideas they can take back to their workplaces to build stronger, more inclusive teams.”

The summit is part of Nichols’ executive education series and will feature:

- An intergenerational panel discussion
- Facilitated breakout sessions focused on practical solutions and inclusive leadership practices
- Networking to strengthen community and employer connections

• A Nichols-branded digital badge recognizing participation in this groundbreaking summit

The event is co-hosted by Visions Internships, which is led by intergenerational workforce expert and CEO & Founder Amy Mosher Berry, who will moderate the panel and facilitate breakout sessions alongside Kim Krumsiek, associate professor of human resource management.

“Today’s young professionals are particularly purpose-driven. Most people crave meaningful (as opposed to menial) work and want to know that their efforts are making the world a better place,” said Berry. “I can’t wait to help unpack some of the common intergenerational challenges and offer insights and tools to empower professionals of all ages at this unique event.”



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TALES FROM BEYOND

tomdagostino.com

I Am Waiting And Watching For You

The Mistaken Vampire

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

One of the most famous Rhode Island vampires was never exhumed and exorcised as an alleged creature of the night, although she was taken from the family burial lot and reburied in a public cemetery on October 26, 1889, when the family sold their farm. Other than that, she would have remained anonymous; that is, until a group of legend-trippers stumbled upon her grave in the 1960s.

Nellie Louise Vaughn died on March 31, 1889, at the age of nineteen, presumably of pneumonia. She was first buried in a lot on the family farm. Small, private family plots were very common in Rhode Island and, in some cases, are still in use to this day.

As the story goes, a Coventry, Rhode Island high school teacher told a class of students about a vampire grave, just off Route 102 in South County, of a

nineteen-year-old girl who died in the late 1800s. The teacher never gave a name or exact location. It can be assumed that this particular teacher was referring to Mercy Brown, the most famous case during New England vampire scare of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Being close to Halloween, a group of classmates gathered together one night to find the grave of the vampire. How they came upon the historical cemetery remains a matter of mystery, but their travels landed them in front of an old burial yard behind an abandoned meeting house.

It did not take long for the seekers of the unknown to find what convinced them that their search was over. Just inside the cemetery sat Nellie's stone with the now-famous inscription, "I am waiting and watching for you." This ominous epitaph, along with Nellie's age at the time of death and the date of her death closely matched

the teacher's description, and another Rhode Island vampire was born.

Since then, countless people have paid a visit to the graveyard looking for the grave where, as legend states, no moss, lichen or grass will grow. It was also related that the grave continues to sink into the earth. There is no stone marking her plot, as it has been removed and stored away in an undisclosed location for preservation. Nellie's burial plot remains unmarked, but there are a few areas in the burial yard where people claim she is buried, and all of them for the most part, have plenty of vegetation on them. Unfortunately, the cemetery has been subject to much vandalism—so much so that there is a neighborhood watch, as well as police patrols on a regular basis.

Another aspect of the Nellie Vaughn saga involves the alleged sighting of a young woman in the graveyard and an

ethereal voice emanating from nowhere saying, "I am perfectly pleasant." In the book *New England Ghost Files*, Charles T. Robinson states that people have heard the words echo through the air while in the cemetery and have spotted the visage of a young woman near the alleged grave site of Nellie Vaughn.

Acclaimed author and paranormal investigator Christopher Balzano once stated that we have a tendency to immediately blame a haunting on the most famous person in the area. Unfortunately, there is no indubita-

ble evidence on the paranormal side that even if there is a voice calling out to the visitors, it is actually Nellie's. We already know she was never accused of being one of the spectral visitors blamed for sucking the life from family members in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. If anything, there is an old beautiful historical cemetery and meetinghouse that should be left alone and respected. There is no need to waste your time traveling miles up a winding road to see, well, nothing.

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LIVING WITH LUKE

amyleclaire@hotmail.com

When Luke Acts Human

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

Luke had been watching me for weeks from his spot in the kitchen. He seemed mesmerized, as though I held up a slice of the moon. That's when I knew I had to share my watermelon with him. I kneeled by his side and angled the wedge so that he could bite off the sweet melon. He used his tiny front teeth to chisel the fruit from its rind, just as we do. Most of my dogs would have tried to swallow the wedge whole. Luke may as well have mentioned that the watermelon was on sale. "This is so good." He concentrated on the snack as would a bear cub a jar of honey. Sharing healthy food with Luke offers one example of how he's learned to act human. There are several others.

LUKE WATCHES TELEVISION

The first time he noticed dogs on film, he nosed the television screen then backed off, just to be on the safe side. "How did you flatten yourself to fit inside the screen?"

for my entertainment. You are real, but also far away." Luke was onto the dogs on film.

"Look at how carefully the labs walk over the bridge, Luke!" I crooned. I wanted him to identify

with the story. He tilted his head to my voice then glanced at me. "I see."

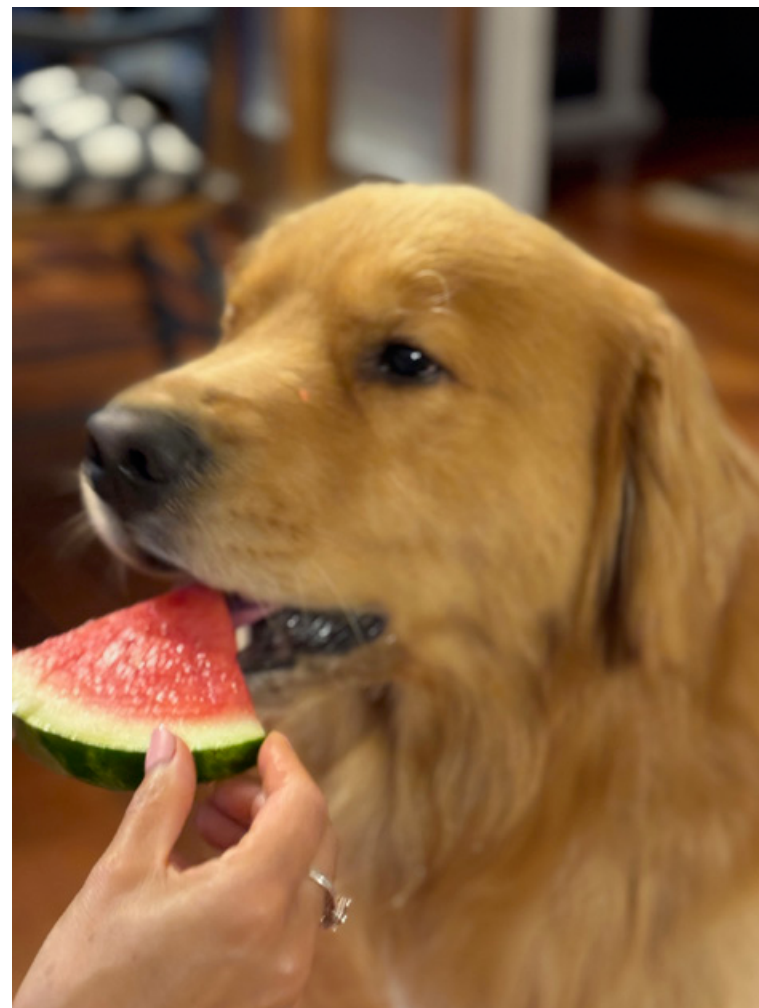
Before long, Luke became a regular couch potato. "Make sure you put on Luke's shows." I made sure the last person left in the house would turn on the Dog Channel, should Luke be left alone.

He munched on his popcorn and learned to watch television with the expression of an avid sports fan. He'd smile while watching an actor sail through a field on a horse. He'd lift his ears to an Olympic swimmer. "I would love to swim in a lane!" He'd growl to the deep, philosophical scenes, such as that shown in the classic Ten Commandments, which features Charlton Heston at Mount Sinai. The sight of the burning bush and God's omnipresent voice seemed to move Luke. He lowered his head and grumbled, as though sensing a universal power.

LUKE UNDERSTANDS SARCASM

My son, Ben, the youngest of our human family, often

messes with his dog bro. "Luke, go this way," he jests. Allow me to explain the joke's context. Luke was only a puppy when he experienced a unique trauma. A heavy, iron counter stool bobbed then fell over



on the kitchen floor with a thunderous bang. Luke backed off and yelped while the stool lied helpless. "You almost killed me!" The whole incident freaked little Luke out. Worse, it caused an indelible scar. He is now anxious around obstacles, particularly those with the potential to fall on him. Therefore, a simple trip from the deck to his dish (where the kibble rewards lie) causes discomfort, especially in a cluttered kitchen. Quirky? Perhaps. Nonetheless, Luke has a right to his feelings. One never knows when a Swiffer mop may drop. Not to mention the dangling beach bag, also suspect.

"Slow and steady wins the race." He noses the floor and takes the safer route. He's even calculated the best way to pace himself. A hasty sprint around the table has caused him to slide off balance, and away from his bowl. "Food. Food. Food." He's learned his lesson. He now takes the corner with a deliberate downshift. I gush while watching him slow down and master the corner. My dog understands physics. He finally arrives at his dish and inhales his reward. "I am such a good boy."

Sometimes big brothers get in the way.

"Go this way, Luke." Ben teases and gestures for Luke to do the unthinkable. "I-don't-like-that-

way, Ben." He retracts from Ben's hold so that his face creases like a Shar Pei's. I defend Luke vehemently. "You let Luke go the way he wants! He's not comfortable that way." Luke breaks free and approaches his bowl with a breach to his typical pace. He cannot stifle the urge to take the corner slowly. Big brother may toss another joke. Speed is key. Nonetheless, the entire incident is forgotten in a matter of two bites. His smile and jovial spirit convey a more fascinating trait. Luke is in on the joke. "My brother is a big tease, but I still love him."

LUKE RELATES TO CHILDREN

Luke appreciates the smallness of children. He aligns his posture with theirs, often crouching down on the lawn to shrink himself when they come off the bus to say hello. "Lewwwwwk!" They chant his name, and he stares longingly until they arrive. Children carry joy, along with all kinds of trinkets, and Luke relates to them in full color. He even thinks he's one of them. "You are all so fun and happy like me!" He'll grab a dropped stuffed bear then romp in a circle. "Luke, give

LUKE

continued on page 15



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REAL ESTATE

Why most sellers hire real estate agents today

Selling your house without an agent as a “For Sale by Owner” (FSBO) may be something you’ve considered. But you should know that, in today’s changing market, more homeowners are deciding that’s just not worth the risk. According to the latest data



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

from the National Association of Realtors (NAR), the number of homeowners selling without an agent

has hit an all-time low. And for the small number of homeowners who do decide to sell on their own, data shows they’re still not confident they’re making a good choice. A recent survey finds three out of every four homeowners who don’t plan to use an agent have doubts about whether that’s actually the right decision and here’s why. The market is changing – not in a bad way, just in a way that requires a smarter, more strategic approach and having a real estate expert in your corner really pays off.

Here are just two of the ways an agent’s expertise makes a difference.

1. Getting the price right in a market that’s evolving. One of the biggest hurdles when selling a

house on your own is figuring out the right price. It’s not as simple as picking a number that sounds good or selling your house for what your neighbor’s sold for a few years back, you need to hit the bullseye for where the market is right now. Without a Realtor’s help, you’re more likely to miss the mark. We are pros when it comes to pricing properties and have their finger on the pulse of your local market. We understand current buying trends and can provide insight into how your home compares to others for sale nearby. Basically, we know what’s really selling, what buyers are willing to pay in your area, and how to position your house to sell quickly. That kind of insight can have a big impact, especially in a

market that’s balancing out.

2. Handling (and actually understanding) the legal documents. There’s also a mountain of documentation when selling a house, including everything from disclosures to contracts and a mistake can have big legal implications. This is another area where having an agent can help. We have handled these documents countless times and know exactly what’s needed to keep everything on track, so you avoid delays. And now that buyers are including more contingencies again and asking for concessions, we will guide you through each form step by step, making sure it’s done right and documented correctly the first time.

3. Selling your house quickly even in a shifting market. Now that the number of homes for sale has grown, homes aren’t selling at quite the same pace they were. But you can still sell quickly if you have a proven plan to help your house stand out. Just remember, homeowners don’t have the same network or marketing tools an experienced agent does. So, if you want the process to happen fast, you’ll likely want a pro by your side.

Having the right agent and the right strategy is key in a shifting market. Connect with a local pro so you don’t have to take this on by yourself and so you can list with confidence, knowing you’ve got expert guidance from day one.

LUKE

continued from page 14

that back,” I command, and he lets it go. “I was just trying to fit in, Mom.” Luke adjusts to a toddler’s size even more, settling himself to the gentlest pose he can muster. “Can my daughter pet your dog?” He lifts his head. “Take your time, little cutie.” Toddlers giggle and tap his head. “Soft.” Luke sits patiently while they hug, climb, hang over his neck, and kiss him.

LUKE COMMUNICATES SADNESS

“You’re leaving?” I’ll never stop feeling guilty when leaving Luke. I haven’t fully let go of the plan to make Luke a Daddy and adopt one of his own pups. After Lincoln passed, we grieved deeply but eventually warmed up to the idea of doubling our joy with two pups. The plan was to start with one, then add another. We trained Luke, brought him on adventures, and bonded with him. Then, somehow, we settled into family life with an ease and routine that countered the thought of doing it all over again. Life had become comfortable. We could sleep late, trust Luke to hang in the house alone, travel with him, and give him the independence he

needed in our yard. We were living the dream. But was being an Only lonely?

“I’ll be right back, Luke. Then we’ll play, okay? Promise.” I holler out to him from my car in front of our house. He sits on the step and watches my car roll onto the street, then manage its turn to pull away. My mind wanders. I imagine him sitting beside his own son or daughter.

“You always say that. But almost every morning you leave me here.” His head rests on his paws. My car is still in view. I notice him lift his

head to keep on watching me.

“Daddy’s home, Luke!” I turn my music down and yell out to him.

“He’s boring.”

“Oh, Luke.” I fight the urge to pull back into the driveway and rescue him. But my dance hours pass as they always do and before long, I’m home again.

“I CAN’T BELIEVE IT’S YOU AND WE ARE TOGETHER AGAIN!!” Luke’s joy in reuniting with me after two hours reminds me of this. He may know how to act like a human, but his dog-ness will always be his best quality.

Write to Amy
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Follow Luke on IG
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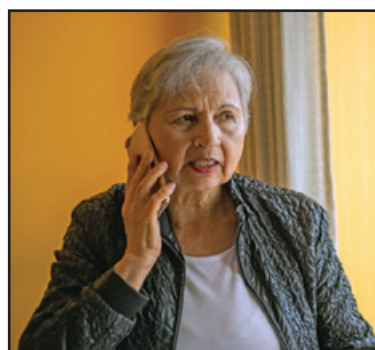
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THE CAR DOCTOR

jpaul@aanortheast.com

Smartphone Not Connecting with Car, Is It a Problem with the Tech?

Q. I recently acquired a new Motorola Moto G Power 2025 smartphone, which will not connect to Android Auto in my 2017 Chevrolet Malibu. When I connect the phone to the car, the Android Auto icon

appears on the My Link screen in the car, but when I tap on it, the screen goes blank and freezes. Now, my previous Motorola Moto G Fast (2021) phone connects just fine. And the new Moto G Power phone connects to Android Auto

just fine in my wife's 2019 Subaru CrossTrek. I have spoken with Tech Support at both Motorola and Chevrolet My Link, and none of the various changes in settings, different connecting cables, etc. on both the phone and the Malibu solved the problem. I am dubious that the dealer would be aware of any issues, not to mention what they would charge just for looking at the problem. Any thoughts on this?

A. Based on all the work you did I do not think there is a cure. I believe it is just a technology compatibility issue between 2025 tech and 2017 tech. Unfortunately, this is something we are seeing more and more. I found no tech bulletins except for one that was Apple related that had to do with software but required a complete radio replacement. What might be worth trying is going to an auto stereo store and see if they have seen something, but I suspect it is just trying to combine new and older tech.

Q. I have a 2011 Honda Pilot with 90,000 miles. For the past six months or so it has been exhibiting an increasing frequency of noticeable transmission shuddering. It generally occurs at speeds approximately between 10 and 40 mph and only lasts for less than five or six seconds. Could the ECO Drive feature in this car be a cause or is it a transmission problem?

A. I believe this shudder is caused by the transmission torque converter. The transmission fluid should have been

replaced at 45,000 miles. If it has not been performed I would start there. Although you do not need to go to the dealer it is important to use Honda fluid.

Q. I had a 2007 Toyota Rav4 for years and then gave it to my son. I liked the SUV but after my grandkids got older and we no longer picked them up, I felt like I was rattling around in that SUV. It was too big. So, in 2017 I bought the Toyota C-HR, the first model. It is stylish, peppy and everyone remarks on its great looks. But even though originally, I thought it would be a good idea because it was an SUV and had height, the back is claustrophobic. We cannot drive our friends anywhere and even the grandchildren are too big and not comfortable in the back seat. So now I am looking for a new car SUV but do not want a big one and want one larger than the C-HR. I've been looking at the Kia Sportage and the Hyundai and Toyota brands. I do not want to make an expensive mistake again. We've had Toyotas for years and love their reliability. So, I am looking for something bigger than the C-HR but smaller than the ordinary SUVs.

A. The Toyota Corolla Cross has replaced the C-HR and may be a good option. As for a smaller vehicle from Hyundai or Kia, yes, they make good vehicles. The Hyundai Kona and Kia Seltos fit in that category you are looking at and are certainly worth looking at.

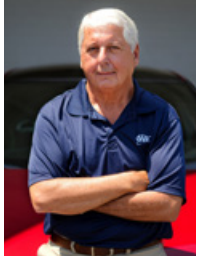
Q. I have a 2016 Honda CRV which I brought new. It has 83,500 miles and I have always used good fuel. My check engine light came on with a code of P0420 which points to the catalytic converter. My mechanic reset the

computer, and the light stayed off for one week of driving, and then it went back on. The car still runs great and the gas mileage is the same as always. My question is, would you recommend a catalytic converter cleaner and if so, do you have any recommendations?

A. You could try Cataclean fuel and exhaust system cleaner, readers have told me they have had good results. The most common repair is replacement of the catalytic converter usually combined with a new factory oxygen sensor. Occasionally an exhaust leak can be the culprit, but typically the catalytic converter is the issue.

Q. I want to replace the brakes on my minivan. They are disc brakes front and rear. Do you have any tips to share?

A. My suggestion is to buy quality brake pads and rotors. Look for brake pads that come with associated hardware and proper brake lubricant. When replacing the rotors, clean any rust off on the hubs for the rotors lie flat. A wire brush on a drill works well. If the rear rotors do not come off easily the parking brake could be binding up. There is an adjustment that may be able to be backed off to allow for rotor removal. It is generally recommended to open the bleeder screws when pushing caliper pistons back in. This helps to prevent pushing contaminated fluid back into the master-cylinder and potentially damaging the ABS system. Top off with fresh brake fluid.



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TIPS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING

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The importance of setting strong financial goals

There's a quote about the importance of setting goals that says, "If you don't know where you're going, any path will take you there."



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

You probably have dreams about retirement, vacations, hobbies and more. But if you don't have a strategy with financial goals in place, you may not make the choices that can best set you on the path to achieve those dreams.

Setting goals helps define and showcase your purpose, passions, and priorities. And establishing your own strong financial goals can help you earn and enjoy a wide variety of short- and long-term achievements throughout your life. When you reach your financial goals, you can feel a sense of accomplishment in seeing your efforts literally pay off. But how do you get started?

• **Prioritize your needs and wants.** Think about the things that are most important to you and then outline them as financial "must-haves" and "wish-list" targets. Start with the big-ticket items and work through to ideas that may not cost as much. A must-have for many people is having enough to live comfortably through retirement. Being able to afford the college of your child's choice, without incurring mounds of debt, is another.

Your wish list, on the other hand, may include things like saving for vacations, hobbies, or entertainment expenses.

• **Create detailed short- and long-term goals within your financial strategy.** It's important to be specific about the goals you want to achieve and how much you'll need to achieve them. One way to do this is by making your goals measurable. Assign estimated dates and costs to each goal so you can plan how much to save and how much time you have before you need the money. For example, for your retirement goal, be specific about how many years before you want to retire. And once you do, how you plan to spend your time — perhaps traveling the world, turning your hobby into a business or taking your grandkids on outings. These can have vastly different price tags.

• **Be willing to compromise.** Reaching one, or more, of your goals may mean compromising. If your must-have is building your dream home but it's not looking quite affordable, you may need to make a trade-off — build it a bit smaller, work a year or two longer or trade in some of your wish-list goals so you can stay focused on your must-haves.

• **Hold yourself accountable to stay on track.** Once your strategy is in place, it's not a set-and-forget exercise. Actively tracking your progress and managing your decisions and actions can help you be better positioned to reach your goals. Use time-tested principles for making financial decisions, not

predictions. Diversify, own quality investments, and keep a realistic perspective, especially for your long-term goals. Maintain your focus and don't let your emotions control your investment decisions. It can be helpful to meet with a financial advisor at least annually to review your full financial strategy, address any changes in your life or your goals, and discuss your progress and new ideas.

As you achieve certain milestones, celebrate them. You may even want to refresh your outlook with new goals. Take pride in your ability to strategize and accomplish a personal financial goal for yourself by following the path you envisioned and created.

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.

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SATURDAY, JULY 12

• An artist's reception will take place on Saturday, July 12, 2-4 p.m. to view the "Painted Sky Collection" by Jim Palace at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 East Main Street, in Webster. The public is invited and light refreshments will be served.

Palace's artwork will be on display and available for sale during business hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Wednesday 10 a.m.-6 p.m. for the entire month of July.

SUNDAY, JULY 13

• The New England Country Music Club will hold a dance with live classic country music by "The Farm Hands" at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Doors open at 12:15 p.m., live music from 1-5 p.m. Snacks may be brought in cash bar for beverages.

SATURDAY, JULY 19

• The Friends of the Auburn Public Library will hold their Summer Book Sale at the library, 369 Southbridge Street, Auburn. Tables will be set up outdoors by the pond (indoors, if raining). Hours at 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Payment by cash, check, credit card or PayPal.

• A fun day of events is planned for today at Legacy Church, 659 Central Turnpike, Sutton. Nearly two dozen local artisans will showcase their creations. Artists include The Colorful Crocheter, Odd Duck Crafters, U & O, the Pampered Chef and Cathy Lee Tupperware, Hispanic Foundation (African Jewelry), Coastal Creations – Sea Glass Art by Amy G, and Crafty Girls. Hot dogs and beverages for sale. Proceeds will be used for community events.

• Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 East Main Street, Webster is pleased to host the upcoming release of "Xavier," a bold new graphic novel written and illustrated by talented 11-year-old storyteller Allen Oliver Jean-Paul. Bursting with action, heart, and originality, "Xavier" is a work of fiction that proves age is no barrier to creativity. This free event starts at 11 a.m. Signed copies will be available for purchase in both hard cover and soft cover editions. Call 508-949-6232 for more information or to reserve a seat.

THURSDAY, JULY 31

• The Charlton Public Library Summer Concert series sponsored by Cornerstone Bank presents Tony Graham, a singer-songwriter from County Tipperary, Ireland, will perform. He has an extensive catalogue of songs ranging from traditional ballads to more contemporary Irish hits. His passion for Irish music shows through in his performances, as every song he sings tells a story. From 6-7:30

p.m. at Charlton Library, 40 Main Street. Free and open to the public. Additional parking is available at the Elementary School and Town Hall.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6

• The Millbury Farmers Market will take place at the Asa Waters Mansion, 123 Elm Street, Millbury, brought to you by the Friends of Asa Waters. Shop for local food, handcrafted goods, enjoy live music and eat from food trucks. The hours are 3-7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13

• Have Steamers at Sunset with the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, held at the Barn at Blissful Meadows Gold Club, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Celebrate summer with your friends, colleagues and chamber members at this signature event. Musical stylings by Caribbean Blue. Deck yourself out in your finest Hawaiian attire for a chance to win the coveted Golden Lobster Award. Lobster \$110 (\$135 future members); steak \$90 (\$120) chicken \$80 (\$110) vegetarian \$75 (\$100). RSVP by August 6. Cash bar. (lobster is market price). All dinners include garden salad, steamers of corn chowder (chose when registering), baked potato, summer vegetable and light dessert. To register, visit blackstonevalley.org/events

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

• Local author, Joel Bohy, who wrote "Bullet Strikes from the First Days of the American Revolution" will share his knowledge of the fight for America's freedom at 7 p.m. in the first Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, Sutton. Courtesy of the Sutton Historical Society.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

• The Knights of Columbus #1562 of St. Mary's Parish presents the 2025 Annual Car Show & Community Event from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Uxbridge High School,

300 Quaker Highway, Uxbridge. Registration of cars begins at 8:30 a.m. The event promises a day filled with classic and custom cars, family-friendly activities, local vendors, music, food, raffles and more – all in support of local charitable initiatives such as Camp Sunshine, Our Lady of the Valley Scholarship and Abby's House. All makes and models of cars are welcome, whether classic or muscle cars, motorcycles trucks or military vehicles. Trophies (popular vote) 1 p.m.; Dash plaques (first 200); Food trucks, door prizes, raffles, 50/50 drawing, DJ, local emergency vehicles, Kids Fun Zone, face painting, balloons, caricatures and more! Admission is free, but donations are appreciated. Vehicle entry fees, \$10 or donation.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

• The Grafton Land Trust is hosting a "Good Dog Run" at the Lions Club property on Brigham Hill Road, Grafton. It will be a fun run for dogs and owners. Keep an eye on social media (Facebook and Instagram) for more information. If you would like to receive an email about the event, contact admin@graftonland-trust.org

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7

• Then Grafton Land Trust will hold its annual dinner meeting at 6 p.m. at the Highfields Golf Club in Grafton. This year's speaker will be Dr. Stephen Mrozowski, the founding director of the Andrew Fiske Memorial Center for Archeological Research at University of Massachusetts Boston.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11

• Charlotte Wilson will share fascinating facts about Sutton's citizenry during Revolutionary days at 7 p.m. in the first Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, Sutton. Courtesy of the Sutton Historical Society.

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bankHometown promotes Likes to Learning and Development Officer

bankHometown recently announced that Alexandra Likes has been promoted to learning and development officer, based at its 182 Main St., Putnam, Connecticut office.

Likes, of Dudley, has 12 years of experience in banking. She rejoined bankHometown in 2018 as learning and development specialist, was promoted in 2021 to

senior learning and development specialist, and then promoted to learning and development manager in 2022. As learning and development officer, she will manage a team of learning and development specialists across the Hometown Financial Group family of banks, which includes bankESB, bank-Hometown, North Shore Bank and Abington Bank, a division of North

Shore Bank. She will travel across the Hometown Financial Group footprint to provide training and staff support.

Likes earned an associate's degree in business administration from Cambridge College, and is currently working toward a bachelor's degree in business administration from Nichols College.

Fattman Announces Cultural Council Grants

State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) announced that his district will receive \$336,000 in grants from the Mass Cultural Council. The grants provide funding to the Cultural Councils for every town in the district as well as culturally focused programs for local organizations and schools.

"Funding for organizations in my district to pursue cultural programs is invaluable," said Senator Fattman. "It's incredibly important that we continue to preserve the

history of the Worcester-Hampden District and the people I represent which is possible, in large part, because of the cultural councils in each town."

The following communities in the Worcester and Hampden district received Cultural Council grants:

Blackstone \$20,600
Brimfield \$5,900
Charlton \$17,700
Douglas \$10,900
Dudley \$16,600
Holland \$5,700

Hopedale \$9,300
Mendon \$8,800
Millville \$6,100
Monson \$26,700
Northbridge: \$22,000
Oxford: \$18,000
Southbridge: \$29,700
Sturbridge \$68,200
Sutton \$10,000
Upton: \$12,100
Uxbridge \$17,800
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JAKE OWEN JULY 27 • 1PM	FLATLAND CAVALRY AUGUST 2 • 1PM	THE CONCERT AUGUST 3 • 1PM	JAMEY JOHNSON AUGUST 7 • 7PM	BADFISH AUGUST 10 • 1PM	LEE BRICE AUGUST 16 • 1PM
TYLER HUBBARD AUGUST 17 • 1PM	GET THE LED OUT AUGUST 22 • 7PM	CLAYTON LEWIS AUGUST 23 • 7PM AUGUST 24 • 1PM	KC AND THE SUNSHINE BAND AUGUST 30 • 1PM	FACE 2 FACE AUGUST 31 • 7PM	ROKFEST 2025 SEPTEMBER 6 • 12PM

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MARGARITAVILLE CRUISE - AUGUST 29

MUSIC CRUISE WITH TYLER FAUXBEL - SEPTEMBER 5

MARGARITAVILLE CRUISE - SEPTEMBER 19

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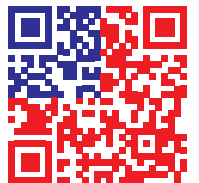
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