

## Grafton's Business Scene

BY CHRISTINE GALEONE

Most of the fireworks have ended. Many beaches will be closing soon. But this time of the year is still an ideal time for families to spend quality time together.

And in Grafton, several organizations and businesses offer ways to do so. Whether the family time happens at a local event or by participating in a fun activity together, it's punctuated by the warm breezes of August and a deepening of that family bond.

From 5 - 8 p.m. on the grounds adjacent to the **Grafton Police Department** on Tuesday August 5, for the 18<sup>th</sup> year, the **GPD** will return to joining with many police departments across the country to hold a **National Night Out** block party to give families a unique opportunity. It hopes to further strengthen the bond it has with residents. There will be family-friendly activities, kids' activities, safety tips and literature, free food, games and giveaways.

Later this weekend, there will be a chance for many families to expand their cultural horizons together. The **Hassanamisco Powwow: We are Still Here!** will be held Sunday July 27 beginning at 10 a.m. It will be hosted by the **Nipmuc Nation Tribal Council** at 25 Main Street in South Grafton.

Grafton Common-based **BeatZ Dance Studio** has been providing a fun opportunity for families in **Norcross Park**, which is located at 18 North Street in Grafton. From 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 on Fridays through Aug. 15, the studio has been holding a free dance session

for families with kids ages pre-school through fifth grade. The sessions are called **"Movement in the Park."**

If your family would prefer seeing a film together, there's an option for you as well. On Thursday, Aug. 21 at dusk, the **Town of Grafton Recreation** department will once again present its **Movie Night on**



Join the fun at the Grafton Police Night Out on the Common.

**the Common.** The film shown on the Grafton Common will be Disney's "101 Dalmatians."

For families who would like to try planting a garden, it's not too late. There are at least two Grafton businesses that have been announcing summer sales on vegetable plants, perennials and annuals lately. **Perreault Nursery & Landscape Supply** in North Grafton and **Pete's Oasis at Blackstone River Farm** in South Grafton might have just what you're looking for.

Whether you want to foster a love of gardening in your children or you want to support our local police department while enjoying family fun and safety tips, the opportunities for family bonding are there. And you certainly don't have to go far to experience them.

Contact Christine with your business news items at [cmgaleone15@gmail.com](mailto:cmgaleone15@gmail.com).



A rendering of the planned Claremont Grafton housing development.

## Multifamily Development Coming to Grafton

BY PATTY ROY

The Claremont Grafton, a mixed income rental housing development, is slated to be built at 5-9 Millennium Drive, adjacent to the MBTA commuter rail station in the town's Chapter 40R smart growth district.

The Claremont will comprise 113 one-bedroom, 95 two-bedrooms and 25 three-bedroom units throughout two five-story buildings. One building will contain 123 apartments and the other will contain 110. Forty-seven of the 233 units will be designated as affordable housing as required by state law.

"MassHousing is thrilled to support the development of Claremont Grafton, bringing new housing to a smart growth location, and providing more housing choices to households who live and work in Worcester County," said a release from Chrystal Kornegay, CEO of MassHousing. "Momentum equity has now accelerated construction on nearly 500 new homes. Thanks to the Healey-Driscoll Administra-

tion's Affordable Homes Act, we are putting innovative finance to work at scale, and working collaboratively to address the state's housing needs."

This is the third financing commitment by the Healey-Driscoll Administration under the Momentum Fund, a first-in-the-nation state revolving fund to support mixed-income housing production.

The Momentum Fund is the largest housing bond bill commitment to date in the state. Its goal is to accelerate housing production – especially middle-income units – without relying on typical grant and subsidy resources.

The concept leverages low-cost capital with the input of private developers and incentivizes already permitted housing projects to begin construction.

MassHousing aims to support the creation of more than 1,000 new units of multifamily housing with \$50 million of state investment capital and is evaluating how to further expand this goal with co-investment partnerships.

"Building more housing will drive down costs for residents and businesses across the state," said Governor Maura Healey. "The Momentum Fund is proving to be a successful new tool to accelerate the development of the multifamily housing we need."

Momentum Fund financing will support the development of Claremont Grafton. The sponsor is the Claremont Corporation. MassHousing has committed \$9 million in public equity financing to the project, and will partner with Berkadia, a real estate leader offering services to commercial and multi-family housing clients, to provide the project with taxable permanent financing from Freddie Mac.

"Claremont has been providing quality housing to Massachusetts residents for over 57 years. We are very grateful for Governor Healey's program to assist more construction for the needed housing shortage in the Commonwealth," said Patrick Carney, Chairman & CEO of Claremont Companies.

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# A Night Among the Stars

Join the Willard House & Clock Museum, Grafton Public Library and Aldrich Astronomical Society (AAS) at a star-gazing party on Friday, August 1 beginning at 7 p.m. at the museum, 11 Willard Street, North Grafton.

The program is entitled “Europa: Unlocking the Secrets of an Ocean World & Star-gazing Party.” NASA/JPL Solar System Ambassador, M.J. Johnson will guide attendees through the unfolding story of Europa, the frozen moon orbiting Jupiter. From its early exploration by the Galileo spacecraft to the

thrilling discoveries by the more recent Juno mission, scientists have learned that beneath Europa’s cracked and ridged icy crust, there may be a vast, global ocean hiding more water than all of Earth’s oceans combined. Could this alien sea harbor the conditions necessary for life? Is there life on other worlds?

After Johnson’s non-technical talk, stay around for a “star party” on the lawn, co-hosted with the AAS.

Robert Gierschick, the museum’s director of development has high



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hopes for this event. “This is our third year hosting the event and we hope to have a fantastic turnout,” he said, adding, “AAS members will be available to help attendees navigate the starry night (weather permitting) and to share views of the heavens through their telescopes.”

Guests are encouraged to register at [graffonlibrary.libcal.com/event/14698118](http://graffonlibrary.libcal.com/event/14698118)

This free and open-to-the-public event is generously supported by

the Webster First Federal Credit Union.

Appropriate for all ages. Rain date is Saturday, August 2.

The Grafton Public Library will also be on site with its expanded telescope loaner collection, and it will explain how to borrow the instruments. Astronomical resources, including books, magazines, movies, music, and kits will be available for checkout to help families discover the beauty of the night sky for themselves.

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:**

7 p.m. Event open to public, tabletop displays, Q&A

7:30 p.m. Presentation on Europa: Unlocking the Secrets of an Ocean World

8:30 p.m. Presentation Q&A

8:45 p.m. Transition from presentation to outdoor stargazing

About the Aldrich Astronomical Society: <https://www.aldrich.club/about-us/>

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# Sutton Power Choice Prices to Increase in September

The Sutton Board of Selectmen announced in a press release from their July 8 meeting that Sutton Power Choice prices will increase beginning with September meter reads due to a regulatory change.

Sutton's contract with the program's electricity supplier, Constellation NewEnergy, allows a price increase in the event of a regulatory change that increases costs during the contract. These



changes are rare, and Sutton Power Choice has not previously had a price increase due to a regulatory change since the program launched in 2017.

Sutton Power Choice has two options, and prices for each will increase by 0.303 ¢/kWh: Power Choice Standard will increase from

14.728 ¢/kWh to 15.031 ¢/kWh. Most Sutton Power Choice participants are enrolled in the Power Choice Standard option. The Power Choice Green option will increase from 15.608 ¢/kWh to 15.911 ¢/kWh.

## What it means to the average electric customer

The new prices will first appear on electric bills in October, and they will be fixed through the end of the contract with Constellation, which is January 2026. An average residential customer will see a bill increase of approximately \$2.50 per month, an increase of 2 percent.

Most participants in Sutton Power Choice will continue to see savings because, even with the price increase, the Sutton Power Choice Standard price will remain below National Grid's residential Basic Service price, which will change to 15.484 ¢/kWh on August 1.

Sutton Power Choice has a track record of providing savings for the community. Since launching in 2017, the program has saved participants nearly \$7 million compared with National Grid's electricity supply prices.

The regulatory change is known as the Day-Ahead Ancillary Services Initiative (DASI), and it is designed to improve the reliability of the electric grid. DASI enables the electric grid operator, ISO New England, to ensure that electricity generators are on standby so that they can be called upon if needed. The initiative was approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in January 2024 and took effect in March of 2025. www.suttonma.org The costs of DASI must be paid by all retail electricity suppliers. These costs will be included in National Grid's Basic Service prices beginning on August 1, and they will be included in the price for all future electricity supply contracts for Sutton Power Choice. More information about Sutton Power Choice is available at SuttonPowerChoice.com.

# Millbury Resident Joins Police Department

Lifelong Millbury resident Cody Bohanan was sworn in as a Millbury police officer after successfully graduating from the Police Academy in June. Cody was pinned at the Academy ceremony by his father, long-time Sutton police sergeant Matthew Bohanan.

Officer Bohanan attended Sutton schools and played soccer, basketball and track for the Sutton Sammies. In 2020, he was named "Sammie Senior Athlete of the Year." He is a 2024 graduate of Nichols College with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and a minor in Psychology.



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# Sutton Resident Appointed to Tower Hill Board

The New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill in Boylston is operated by the Worcester County Horticultural Society which has recently announced six new members to its board of trustees.

Among them is Sutton resident Andrea Mattei. She has dedicated her legal career to commercial and corporate finance with expertise advising in the real estate and hospitality sectors. She completed her J.D. at The University of Maryland Carey School of Law and currently practices with Lerch, Early & Brewer based in Bethesda, Maryland. She lends her skills in several



volunteer capacities including as a member of the President's Working Group on Real Estate at her undergraduate alma mater, Mount Holyoke College.

Grace Elton, CEO of the Botanic Garden said of the new board

members, "Their professional expertise, diverse perspectives, and passion for our mission of connecting people and plants will surely strengthen the Garden's leadership in the field of public horticulture."

# Sutton Senior Center

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Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Every Monday at 8 a.m. Meet up with the Monday Brew Crew for coffee, tea, juice and a morning treat. 10:45 a.m. Chair Yoga. 12:15 p.m. Mat Yoga  
Tuesday at 9 a.m. Daily Brew; 10:30 a.m. Darts; 11 a.m. Tai Chi with Gary; 12:15 Cardio Barre  
Wednesday at 9 a.m. Line Dance Exercise with Paul; 10 a.m. Blood pressure clinic; 1 p.m. Cribbage; 2 p.m. Yoga  
Thursday at 9 a.m. Tai Chi; 10 a.m. Pitch; 1:15 p.m. Chair Yoga; 2:20 p.m. Reverse Painting  
Friday at 9 a.m. Muscular Strength; 9:30 a.m. I'm Sorry Card Game; 1 p.m. Bingo presented by The Friends of Sutton.  
Monday, July 28 at 1:30 p.m. Movie, "Neighborhood Watch" (2025)  
Wednesday, July 30 Sutton Police & Central Mass Law Enforcement Council  
Multi-town presentation and BBQ  
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# Does the 4% rule still make sense for your retirement?



Tim Furbush, CFA

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You may have heard of the “4% rule” when it comes to retirement. The idea is simple: After you retire, you withdraw 4% of your investment portfolio each year. In theory, this helps ensure your savings last for your lifetime. While this rule can be a helpful starting point, it's not a one-size-fits-all — and it's definitely not a substitute for a plan tailored to your specific needs, wants and wishes.

The truth is, how much to withdraw in retirement depends on factors like when you retire, if you'll work part time, how long you expect retirement to last, your lifestyle goals, inflation and whether you want to leave a financial legacy to heirs. So, the 4% rule should be viewed as more of a guide than a strict rule.

Let's start with age. The 4% rule is often based on someone retiring at 65 and expecting to live until about 92. But if you retire earlier, you may want your portfolio to stretch further. In that case, you might need to start with a lower withdrawal rate, maybe closer to 3%. And if you retire later, you might safely withdraw a little more — perhaps 4.5% to 5% — depending on your financial situation.

Your retirement lifestyle also plays a big role. Are you planning to travel the world or spend more time at home? If you expect higher spending in the early years of retirement,

you may need to adjust your withdrawal rate or plan to reduce spending later to balance things out.

Your financial flexibility matters too. If you have less wiggle room with your expenses, rely heavily on your portfolio for income or want to preserve wealth for your heirs, a more conservative approach might be wise. In this conservative scenario, your portfolio withdrawals may be met from interest and dividends. Think of your withdrawal rate as existing on a spectrum from more conservative to less conservative, with your personal situation determining where you land.

Then there's inflation. A well-built strategy usually includes small annual increases in withdrawals to keep up with rising costs — about 2.75% per year. But you don't need to take a raise just because the calendar says so. If the markets have had a tough year or you don't need the extra income, it might

be smart to skip an increase. Being flexible can improve the chances your money will last.

It's also important to understand what's known as your “portfolio reliance rate” — how much of your retirement income comes from your investments versus other sources like Social Security or pensions. The higher this percentage, the more conservative you may want to be with withdrawals.

And don't forget the IRS. If you're drawing from a traditional IRA or 401(k), you'll need to take required minimum distributions (RMDs) once you reach age 73. Your RMD for any year is the account balance as of the end of the prior calendar year divided by a life expectancy factor according to the IRS. These RMDs need to be accounted for in your strategy.

The bottom line? The 4% rule is a useful starting point, but it's just that — a starting point. A good financial advisor

can help you build a strategy that reflects your age, your goals and your full financial picture. By revisiting your plan regularly and staying flexible, you'll give yourself the best shot at turning your savings into a secure, fulfilling retirement.

Contact Tim for assistance with your personal finances.

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# Family-run Affordable Junk Removal takes the stress out of cleanups

BY CHRISTIE VOGT  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Whether it's one old fridge in the garage or an entire home of unwanted goods, the team at Affordable Junk Removal offers a cost-efficient, stress-free approach to waste management. "You don't lift a finger," says owner Jason Schadler, who started the company along with his wife Christine in 2005.

The business offers same-day service for both residential and commercial clients across eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island. In addition to junk removal, the com-

pany rents 15-yard dumpsters. As a family-owned and operated company, Schadler says Affordable Junk Removal has lower



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## Business spotlight

overhead costs and is more accessible than national competitors. "I answer my phone 24 hours a day," he says. "I was on vacation in Italy and Portugal, and I was still answering my phone on the beach. When you call us, you get me — not an automated machine!"

Schadler says the company has an environmentally friendly approach to disposal in which it recycles items whenever possible and properly disposes of non-recyclables.

During the business's early days, Schadler provided junk removal on nights and weekends when he wasn't busy working at a machine shop. Eventually, the business grew into a full-time endeavor, and the Schadlers invested back into the company with new equipment and techniques. "When I first started, for example, we didn't have any tarps. I'm driving around and things are flying out of my truck," Schadler laughs. "I'm like, 'Oh my



Christine and Jason Schadler, shown here with their children, started Affordable Junk Removal in 2005.

god, I need a tarp."

Schadler says his wife Christine "was equally as involved" in getting the business off the ground. "She handled the back-end while I did the heavy lifting, all while she was working at EMC," he says. "Fast forward 17 years, and we both work full time managing the company as well as other endeavors. Business is doing great; it has grown tremendously to a fleet of trucks and dumpsters, and we've also been able to buy a pizza place, The Corner Market in Holliston."

In addition to delivering an in-demand service to the community, Schadler is appreciative that Affordable Junk Removal has helped provide a work-life balance that suits his family. "It allows me to be able to do what I like doing and spend time with my kids," he says. "I'm home to

see my babies play softball and do all that stuff. We are also able to give back to the communities we serve."

As for Grafton, Millbury and Sutton in particular Schadler says they are proud to have many repeat customers and friends in the area.

One of the best parts of his job, Schadler says, is meeting and getting to know new people and developing relationships with returning customers. "We are really grateful for the repeat business and the chance to form connections with residents across the Blackstone Valley," he says.

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# Master Plan Update – Signed, Sealed and Delivered

On June 23, the Grafton Planning Board approved the 2025 Master Plan update. This plan's success comes from a dedicated Master Plan Working Group and Planning Department. The plan calls for a focus on the Town's unique village centers for new mixed-use development, in-

frastructure support for industrial zones, connecting multi-modal transportation options, and stewarding parks and waterways.

The group's vision for Grafton's future transition from a rural town to a suburban hub underscored the importance of strategic, long-range planning. Town board members

and residents have shaped a vision that balances economic development with environmental stewardship and quality of life. Whether through fostering life sciences innovation, increasing housing diversity, or enhancing public spaces, the Grafton Master Plan charts a path toward sustainable growth while preserving Grafton's historic roots and community values.

Central Mass Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) officials say they look forward to partnering with Grafton on the implementation of this long-range comprehensive plan.

For complete plans, visit <https://cmrpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Grafton-Master-Plan-Approved-2025.pdf>



# 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
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# Blackstone Valley Schools Get \$15K in Grants

**C**elebrating Innovation: \$15,485 in Grants Awarded to Blackstone Valley Schools  
Across the Blackstone Valley, classrooms are preparing to transform learning thanks to \$15,485 in school grants awarded by the Blackstone Valley Education Foundation (BVEF) for the 2025–2026 school year. From early childhood to high school, these grants will help educators bring real-world skills, creative exploration, and future-focused experiences directly to their students.

This year, 14 applications were submitted from seven districts. After careful review, BVEF is proud to fund 13 projects that reflect its mission: empowering educators, connecting students to careers, and fostering hands-on, meaningful learning at every grade level.

## SPOTLIGHTING FUTURE-READY LEARNING

Several funded grants directly support career-connected learning through cutting-edge technology and immersive experiences:

Milford High School will expand its VR Learning initiative,



Millbury High School students in a jewelry and wearable art class.

integrating virtual reality into courses like computer science, web design, and media arts to deepen student engagement in design, coding, and creative production.

Blackstone Valley Tech (BVT) will launch Virtual Pathways, a new VR simulation experience embedded in its nursing assistant training program. This project allows students to

build critical clinical and communication skills in an immersive healthcare setting.

## STEAM & DESIGN IN ACTION

Creativity, engineering, and applied design come to life in several standout STEAM initiatives:

## GRANTS

continued on page 11

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## Grafton Library

35 Grafton Common  
508-839-4649  
[graffonlibrary.org](http://graffonlibrary.org) for full listings of events

Monday, July 28  
Library Babies – 9:30 a.m.  
Board Game Tasting – 2 p.m.  
Children’s Room  
Game On! Adult Board Game Night -5:30 p.m.  
Movie Mondays – Children’s Program Room -5:30 p.m.  
“Reads Well with Others” Book Group Room 228 - 6:30 p.m.  
Tuesday, July 29  
Yoga for Kids – 10:30 a.m.  
Tasting Tuesday, Maker Space - 1 p.m.  
Arts & Crafts, Children’s Pro-

gram Room - 5:30 p.m.  
Inspirational Book Group and Guided Meditation -6:30 p.m.  
Yoga at the Library - 6:30 p.m.  
Wednesday, July 30  
Toddler Time - 9:30 a.m.  
Wednesday Watch Party, Maker Space - 10 a.m.  
Wingmasters: World of Owls - 2 p.m.  
Ghost Stories Children’s Program Room - 6:30 p.m.  
Thursday, July 31  
Storytime at Willard House and Clock Museum -10:30 a.m.  
Card and Dice Games, Children Program Room - 2 p.m.  
Friday, August 1  
Fri-YAY game Day - 10 a.m.  
Movement in the Park with

Beatz Dance Studio! Norcross Park - 10:30 a.m.  
Drop-in Cribbage at the Library - 1 p.m.  
Friday Fun: PC Game-a-thon, Children’s Program Room - 2 p.m.  
Stargazing at the Willard House & Clock Museum - 7 p.m.  
Saturday, August 2  
Dungeons and Dragons: Tomb of the Forgotten Paladin, Group Study Room 228  
Perils and Princesses One Shot Campaign, Teens/Tweens - 10 a.m.  
Switch Saturdays , Children’s Program Room - 10 a.m.

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[suttonpubliclibrary.org](http://suttonpubliclibrary.org).

Special events: Call or register at <https://suttonpubliclibrary.org/calendar-of-events>

Quick Pickling Workshop:  
Thursday, July 31, 6:30-7:30 p.m. - Blackstone Valley Veggie Gardens is going to teach us how to make Summer squash, zucchini or cucumber pickles! All participants will go home with a pint jar of delicious pickles that they make themselves. This program was funded with a donation from UniBank.

History of Nintendo: Saturday, August 2, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. - Geared towards ages 12-18. One Up Games is bringing a walkable/ playable museum to Sutton library! Players will be able to learn about how Nintendo started and see how the iconic console evolved to where it is today. All Nintendo systems from NES to Switch are available to play throughout the exhibit on old-school CRT TVs. At the end of the exhibit, players will have the chance to play all the OG Nintendo games on Switch emulators.

How to Draw a Pokémon: Saturday, August 16, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

For ages 8-12. Join us for a fun and engaging art class where you’ll learn to draw your favorite Pokémon characters, including Pikachu! Pop up Art School will guide you with step-by-step instructions using basic shapes, making it easy for all skill levels. As you draw, enjoy playing Pokémon trivia and showcase your knowledge. Perfect for Pokémon fans and budding artists alike!

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

Cribbage Club: Mondays, 1 to 2 p.m. Beginners or experienced players welcome! No registration required. Writing Group: Second Thursday of each month, 6 to 7:45 p.m. Join local author Lisa Shea for our writing group. Come bounce your ideas off of other authors and get creative and constructive feedback. For full details about the writing group please visit <http://www.suttonmass.org/writing-group/>



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### BVT

*continued from page 8*

Aid Scholarship  
Jacob Rajotte – Wentworth Institute of Technology (Computer Science)  
\$5,000 Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation  
Kathryn Shultz – Roger Williams University Marine (Biology)

\$1,000 FEA Franklin Scholarship  
Spencer Stephenson – University of Northwestern Ohio (High Performance Motorsports)  
\$500 James Sochia Memorial Award for Tools  
\$1,000 Michael Cammuso Jr. Memorial Scholarship  
\$100 University of Northwestern Ohio FAFSA scholarship



## ETIQUETTE EXPRESS

# Making Everyday Interactions Better

BY LEE-ANN BARKHOUSE  
*Etiquette & Leadership Coach*  
helping people show up with confidence, kindness and credibility.

**E**tiquette is not complicated, it's thoughtful, intentional, and simple. When practiced with sincerity, it builds confidence, strengthens communication, and creates meaningful connections in every setting, both personal and professional. It's less about rigid rules and more about showing respect. Etiquette is reflected in how you carry yourself, how you treat others, and how you make people feel in your presence. When you lead with kindness and self-awareness, people notice—and remember.

**Q.** What's the best way to recover when I forget someone's name—especially if we have met before?

**A.** Be sincere and own it with grace. Say, "I'm so sorry—I know we have met before, but I'm blanking on your name. Would you remind me?" A warm, honest approach is far better than pretending. Acknowledging the familiarity shows respect—and most people will appreciate your sincerity.

**Q.** Everyone's on their phone at dinner. Is it really that rude if I am too?

**A.** Yes—this is still rude, even if everyone else is doing it. Using your phone at the table sends the message that your company is less important than your screen. If you are expecting something urgent, let others know ahead of time. Otherwise, give your full attention to the people in front of you. Connection starts with presence.

**Q.** Being back at the office, even with headphones on, my coworkers chime

in from across the cubicle during my conversations, even when it doesn't involve them. How can I ask them to stop without sounding rude?

**A.** Try this: "I appreciate your interest, but you're only hearing part of the conversation. I would really appreciate a bit of privacy, it helps me stay focused and respectful of the person I am speaking with."

This is direct, professional, and kind. Boundaries aren't rude, they are necessary. And sometimes, even well-meaning coworkers need a gentle reminder to stay in their own lane.

### ETIQUETTE TIP OF THE WEEK:

Confidence is quiet. Consideration speaks louder. True polish isn't loud or flashy—it's in how you hold a door, pause to listen, offer a genuine thank you... or simply share a warm smile. Master the small things, and the big moments will follow.

Have a situation you'd like help with? Write in or email: [info@investinuma.com](mailto:info@investinuma.com) 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 ([www.investinuma.com](http://www.investinuma.com)), she shares practical tools to make everyday moments more thoughtful and meaningful—whether at work, at home, or right here in the community.*

## GRANTS

*continued from page 9*

Grafton High School will implement Project Lead The Way's Introduction to Engineering curriculum, giving students a robust foundation in real-world design and problem-solving.

BVT will support a group of students attending the 2026 STEM Education Outdoor Classroom Day at Six Flags, making the trip more accessible and reinforcing STEM pathways through immersive, out-of-school learning.

### EXPANDING ACCESS FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

BVEF also remains committed to early learning and inclusion: Millbury's Elmwood Elementary School will enhance its pre-

school courtyard to create a more developmentally rich outdoor environment that supports play-based learning and exploration.

### WELLNESS, INCLUSION & STUDENT VOICE

Several projects directly support student wellness, voice, and real-world leadership:

Grafton Middle School will integrate Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) STEPPS-A into a Tier 2 group therapy intervention, equipping counselors and staff with tools to support students' emotional well-being through targeted SEL programming.

### LOOKING AHEAD

These grants reflect the strength and creativity of the Blackstone Valley's educators, who continue to design meaningful, relevant experiences that

prepare students for life beyond the classroom. As these projects launch in the coming school year, we look forward to sharing their stories and celebrating their impact.

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# Temporary Closure at Millbury Senior Center

**D**ue to a roof insulation project, the Senior Center will be closed while it undergoes renovations. During July and August, the Senior Center will operate remotely.

Meals on Wheels (MOW) recipients: Your service will not be affected. MOW's Menu will be updated on our Facebook Page facebook.com/p/Millbury-Senior-Center-100075920318569/ and on our website, millburyma.gov/senior-center. No lunches will be served at the Center during the closure.

Grab-and-go meals will be available on Mondays and Thursdays through July and August. You must sign up at least 48 hours in advance to receive a lunch, 508-865-9154. It must be picked up between 11- 11:30 a.m. at the Mill Church, 45 River Street. Transportation will continue to run as usual. To schedule a ride, please call WRTA at 508-752-9283. Blood Pressure Clinic will be every Tuesday at 9 a.m. at the Elm Street Fire Station. There will be no Zumba or Line Dancing. These classes will resume

when the building re-opens. All staff will still be available during regular hours and can be reached at the usual phone number: 508-865-9154. Please don't hesitate to call the Senior Center if you need assistance.

## WEEKLY ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

**Mondays:** Coffee Talk at Mill Church, 8:30 a.m.; Light Exercise at Mill Church 9:30 a.m.; Grab and Go lunch, Mill Church 11-11:30 a.m.

**Tuesdays:** Blood Pressure Clinic at the Elm Street Fire Station, 9-10 a.m.; Tai Chi at NE Kung Fu, 4 Jackson Court, Oxford, 9:30 a.m.

**Wednesdays:** Walking Club 8:30 a.m. at Cemetery; Lunch at Care One, 12:45 p.m. \$5 (Call 48 hours in advance); Social Bingo, 2 p.m. at Care One

**Thursdays:** Yoga 9 a.m. at Care One; Care One Outreach available from 8:30 -10:30 a.m.; Grab and Go Lunch 11-11:30 a.m. at Mill Church

**Food Pantries:** Millbury Federated Church, 20 Main Street, Monday and Wednesday from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

St. Vincent De Paul at St. Brigid Church, 59 Main Street 774-262-5506 first Sunday of the month.

Please call the Senior Center if you have an urgent need. 508-865-9154

**Flower Arranging Class** on Thursday, Aug. 28 and Sept. 18 at 1 p.m. Cost is \$20. To be held in the Selectmen's meeting room in Town Hall. Call to sign up-508-865-9154.

**Outreach Coordinator** Julie Fitzgerald Outreach Coordinator-508-865-9154 Email- jfitzgerald@millburyma.gov Julie is available during regular business hours While the Senior Center building is temporarily closed for renovations, Julie will remain available to assist you. She continues to offer all regular outreach services, including home visits, to ensure your needs are met during this time. Julie will

be available to schedule appointments. Our Memory Café meet off-site the Mill Church, 45 River St. at 11 a.m. on the following dates: Tuesday, July 29 and August 26.

**Friends of Millbury Seniors, Inc.** 508-581-7424 Free weekly shopping trip every Friday. Pickup starts at 9 a.m. August 1 – Market 32, Sutton August 8 – Market Basket, Shrewsbury August 15 – Market 32, Sutton August 22 - Market Basket, Shrewsbury August 29 – Market 32, Sutton Special Monthly trips: August 7 – White City, Shrewsbury \$5 van fee, pickup 10:30 a.m. Return 1 p.m. August 14 - Cracker Barrel, Sturbridge \$5 van fee, lunch, and shopping on your own. Pickup 10:30 a.m. return 1:30 p.m. August 21 Ice Cream at Whitinsville Northend Creamery. Van fee is \$5. Pickup at 1 p.m. August 28 - Ocean State/Walmart, Northbridge. Please call to make a reservation.

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# Grafton Senior Center

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graffton-ma.gov/524/Council-on-Aging

## REGULAR EVENTS:

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

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

**Out to Lunch:** Monthly outing to area restaurant. Painting Independently: Fridays 10 a.m. Pinochle: Thursdays 1:15 p.m. Pitch: Monday and Tuesday at 1p.m. Rummikub: Wednesdays at 1 p.m. Senior Bootcamp: A more intense workout that combines cardio & strength training. Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. Senior Exercise Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. Free for Grafton Seniors thanks to FOGC Social Knitting: Mondays at 10:30 a.m. SNAP (Supplemental Food Assistance Progra.m.): See Lisa Kelley for appointment. Tap Dancing: Every Wednesday at 2 p.m.; \$5 pp. Tax Work Off Program: call Shannon for more info. Tone and Stretch Exercise: Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Transportation: call the office for info. Watercoloring Class: Fridays at 1 p.m. Wii-TV Game Exercise: available in the TV room almost any time! Writer's Group: Meets 2nd and 4th Friday at 1 p.m. Zumba: Wednesdays at 8:45 a.m.- FOGC sponsored.

**Become a Dementia Friend!** As part of our Dementia Friendly initiative, we will be hosting a Dementia Friends training. In this session, you will learn how dementia affects people and simple ways to make a difference. This session will be held on Wednesday, July 30 at 10:30 a.m. Please call to make a reservation.

TRIPS We are partnering with

**GRAFTON**  
continued on page 13

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# Sen. Moore Secures Funding for Millbury Senior Center Roof

According to a news release from the office of Massachusetts State Senator Michael Moore (2<sup>nd</sup> Worcester) on June 30, the Massachusetts Legislature enacted a \$61.01 billion state budget for the 2026 fiscal year.

"The investments we've made in the FY26 budget are a reflection of

our confidence in the future of the Commonwealth, despite ongoing uncertainty at the federal level," Moore said in a press release. "I'm also pleased to have secured \$1.5 million in investments in my district which will support educational programs, community services, infrastructure, veterans' services

and more in our neighborhoods," Moore said. In the Blackstone Valley region, these include \$70,000 to Grafton for the removal of invasive plants. There is also \$57,000 earmarked for Millbury for repairs to the senior center roof.



## GRAFTON

continued from page 12

Best of Times Travels to offer multiple trips throughout 2025! Day trip: Lake Winnepesaukee & Castle in the Clouds on August 14, 2025. Enjoy a scenic luncheon cruise on Lake Winnepesaukee followed by a tour of the Castle in the Clouds. \$199 pp. 508- 839- 9242 for assistance.

Day trip: The New Hampshire Turkey Train on October 2, 2025.

Ride the Turkey train through NH to enjoy the beautiful foliage and a Turkey Luncheon. This trip includes a mystery spot! \$159 pp. Call us at 508- 839- 9242 for assistance.

Overnight trip: The Christmas Prelude in Kennebunkport, ME December 9th- 10th. Enjoy a beautiful visit to Kennebunkport, ME during their Christmas Prelude celebration. This trip includes tours of two famous historical mansions and a mystery tour! \$599/pp double occupancy; \$749. Register

here: <https://tri.ps/oXoaU> or call us at (508) 839-9242 for assistance.

We are also offering another trip through Bus Trips by Zinkus. This trip will be on Friday, December 5, 2025. It includes lunch at the Salem Cross Inn, a trip to the MGM Casino and a viewing of Bright Nights Springfield. \$100.00 pp. Call 508-779-0144 to register.

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# Millbury Adopts 5 Year Housing Production Plan

By recently completing its first housing production plan, Millbury has joined a growing number of towns in central Massachusetts that are strategically planning for housing.

Throughout last year, the town's Housing Production Plan (HPP) Steering Committee worked with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission to summarize the current demographic and housing conditions

in the community, gather public input through a community survey and workshops, evaluate barriers to housing production, identify specific sites suitable for housing development, and establish proactive strategies to guide the town's efforts to address its housing needs while achieving its 10 percent affordable housing goal. In 2025 Millbury has only 221 units or 3.7 percent of its year-round housing stock that qualify as affordable under Chapter 40B.

The Executive Office of Hous-

ing and Livable Communities approved Millbury's HPP on June 2, 2025, which will be active for a five-year period. Millbury has already begun implementation of the HPP with support from CMRPC to facilitate more diverse and affordable housing opportunities. Using District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program funding, Millbury is updating its accessory dwelling unit (ADU) bylaw and evaluating inclusionary zoning as an affordable housing production tool.

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# For an Exciting Bit of Time Travel, Try the Asa Waters Mansion

The museum of the Millbury Historical Society in the Asa Waters Mansion, 123 Elm Street, will be open on Saturday, August 23 from 9:30 a.m. - noon.

Some of the museum's holdings are: A Century of Aftermath in year-books and photos of churches, schools, downtown buildings and sports of the past. Not only that, but there are also scrapbooks, research books and histories of Millbury and Sutton going back to colonial times. President Taft photos and memorabilia, military uniforms, guns, and flags.



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## SPORTS

# Orzechowski Getting a lot of Attention

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

It's been a dream of his since he began playing t-ball at the age of five and now, Nolan Orzechowski is on the verge of making that dream become a reality. Baseball has always been a passion of the Millbury native and as he enters his senior year with the Woolies, college coaches are starting to



Woolies shortstop Nolan Orzechowski has developed into a top college prospect.

"Number one – he loves the game and works tirelessly at getting better," the coach said. "Two – the kid can play!"

Since his Little League days Orzechowski has primarily been an up the middle player in the field where he has always possessed an above average defense. By the time that he entered high school he started to improve his hitting, so that he'd be a well-rounded player by the time college came around.

"I have always had natural athleticism and took pride in my defensive ability," the Millbury shortstop said. "Around the seventh or eighth grade I was working on my hitting but still improving my defense with a lot of footwork drills trying to become that well rounded player."

Following his eighth-grade season and prior to entering high school he started taking a lot of batting practice reps and worked in the field with his grandfather hitting him ground balls. During the summer months he would play AAU ball to maintain his skill assets. Originally he played for the Strike Zone out of Worcester, but that last

reach out to him hoping that he takes his talents to their schools in two years.

"He had a great year and is one of the best defensive players in the state; he just loves the game of baseball," Millbury coach Ron Silvestri said. "He's gotten bigger and stronger, he has a great arm and his defense has always been good. He's drawing a lot of interest from college coaches."

Originally, the outgoing junior also played football and basketball but when Covid struck the area, he pushed those sports aside and became focused solely on baseball in the hope that he could play on the collegiate level. As he prepares to enter his senior year at Millbury, Orzechowski has been in touch with some 20 New England colleges across all levels, but his ultimate goal would be to play for a smaller Division 1 school.

"I want to play for the highest level possible and be able to challenge myself," the incoming senior said.

Silvestri noted that the senior has begun going to showcases and firmly believes that he will do really well on the next level.

two years he's been suiting up for the Evolution out of Shrewsbury.

The work prepared him for the high school tryouts and although he knew that he had a good opportunity to play second base as a freshman he continued to work hard and give everything his best effort.

Orzechowski earned a spot on the varsity team as the Woolies second baseman and although he felt that he hit well and played good defense that year he still knew he needed to improve.

"It was definitely a big jump going to varsity baseball and mentally being able to handle failure and adversity," he said. "This was the highest level of baseball that I had ever played and had to learn from my mistakes."

During the AAU season he continued to work diligently and began focusing on hitting the weight room to get stronger. Going into his second varsity year he was looking to bat .400 but instead, was only able to hit .308.

"I was tough on myself for not hitting the goal, but I reflected on the mental aspect of my hit-

ting and used it to help me back," Orzechowski said. "I worked extremely hard during that off-season and had my biggest improvement hitting wise this past year."

Orzechowski hit .347, with a .462 on-base percentage and a .569 slugging percentage. He was also named to the Southern Worcester Country League (SWCL) All-Star team for the first time. Although he found the honor "pretty cool" he said he really wasn't paying attention as the Woolies were in the middle of their playoff run to the Division 4 State Championship.

Going in as the number 5 seed after putting together a 15-5 season, Millbury defeated West

Bridgewater (10-1), Monument Mountain Regional (9-0), the number four seed St. John Paul II (4-0), the number one seed Pittsfield (11-7) and finally the number two seed Lynnfield (3-2) to bring home the title to Millbury for the first time since the 1980's.

In the Championship game Orzechowski was perfect on securing all four balls that were hit his way in the field and knocked in the Woolies first run of the game in the first inning. Silvestri credits Orzechowski move from second to short this season as a big key to the success Millbury had in the post-season.

"Nolan had a phenomenal year

after moving into the shortstop position," the Woolies Coach said. "This team was the best defensive team that I've coached in 39 years and he was a big part of it."

As he looks forward to eventually making a decision on where he wants to continue his collegiate baseball playing days, Orzechowski knows that he still has a year of playing on the diamond with Millbury. When he enters his senior season his goals are to bat .400 while improving his game all around. With his team they all want nothing more than repeating as the State Champions, going back-to-back and capturing another Division 4 Title.

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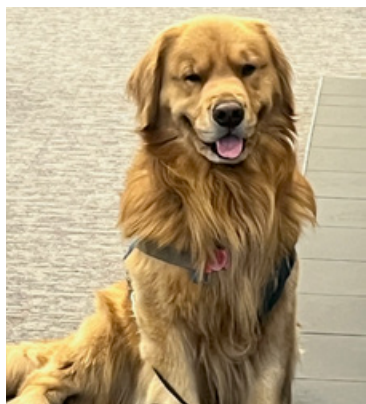
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## LIVING WITH LUKE

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# 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 knelt 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?" The hairs on his back stood high and his shoulders bulged like a lion's. "How is this possible? You smell like Mom's cleaner, but you look like me."

The dogs were real, yet somehow intangible. However intriguing, the truth surfaced in no time. "Ah. Now I understand. You are there 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

continued on page 17

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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 from the National Association of



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

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 Realtors 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 16*

### 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. “Lewwwwk!” 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 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.

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# 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 indubitable 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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# 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 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 feeding, 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 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 management 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



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THE CAR DOCTOR

jpaul@aanortheast.com

Bent Front Wheel Ok to Drive if There's No Vibration

**Q.** I brought my Honda Accord to the dealership because of a slow leak in the front passenger tire. I thought I might have gone over a nail, but the mechanic said there was nothing wrong. He did, however, say that the passenger front wheel was slightly bent. What do you think may have caused this and is it safe to drive? There did not seem to be a concern by the dealership.

**A.** If you do not feel any vibration then the wheel is most likely fine and there is nothing to worry about. Wheels can be knocked out-of-round from a pothole or even bumping a curb. As for the tire leak, as good as new car dealers are with mechanical repairs, when it comes to tire issues I have had the best luck at tire stores. This is especially true when looking for very slow tire leaks.

**Q.** On my old Dodge pickup truck, I replaced the battery which went fine, however what I did not realize was my voltage regulator was failing. So, without realizing it, I was cooking the battery, and it boiled some, and got some battery acid on the aluminum radiator. It caused a stain, white in color. I tried to remove it with metal polish including Noxon, nothing works. Do you have any suggestion to remove the stain, or should I just try aluminum paint?

**A.** I have used Eastwood Radiator black for regular radiators. For aluminum I would start with a gentle cleaning with baking soda and water and then rinse and see how it looks. Then use some alcohol to remove any residue. You could also try commercial air conditioner coil

personally I would leave that as the last option. Readers do you have a better suggestion?

**Q.** I have a 2008 Toyota Corolla, is the brake fluid DOT 3 or DOT 4? And if the fluid in the master cylinder is conventional, can I add synthetic fluid? Also, I have always read only use brake fluid from a sealed container. So once the container is open, is the brake fluid okay to use?

**A.** When the car was new it was DOT 3 fluid, and you can use DOT4 or DOT 5.1 but not DOT 5 which is silicone based. All brake fluid is technically synthetic since it is a blended manufactured product. DOT4 has a higher boiling point than DOT3 and DOT5.1 is higher still; all are backwards compatible. What you would not want to do is use DOT3 in a car that requires DOT4 or 5.1 Again do not use DOT 5 silicone fluid which is not compatible with DOT 3, 4 or 5.1 fluids. As for the sealed container warning, brake fluid absorbs water, water is the enemy of a brake system. You want to store brake fluid in a sealed container, not one that is open to the air.

**Q.** I own a 2021 Kia Seltos with 29,000 miles on it. My engine light went on one day and the very next day the car stalled and died. It was towed to Kia dealership. My warranty ends soon. My car did have symptoms of recent recall: intermittent stalling and is now told to be abnormal oil consumption but my car was not part of the recall. My car has been sitting on the lot for weeks waiting for approval from Kia to cover total engine damage from lack of oil. The oil light never came on to warn me of this. The Kia dealership claims they are going back and forth with Kia technical assistance for approval. I have sent proof of all my oil changes, so I

have kept up with maintenance. The Kia mechanic told me that they are trying to make a case about how it was not serviced at Kia and the non-factory oil filter could have caused this issue. Just would like to know your thoughts on this and is this common for a company to try to get out of the warranty? I am at my wits end!

**A.** Seems to fit the criteria for the recall. Did the engine have a recall to have different sensing software installed? Most engines in the 2014-2024 decade did. If that was not performed, then that may be an issue. Regarding maintenance, as long as you can prove the oil was changed at 6-month intervals and the correct grade of oil and a quality oil filter was used, there should be no reason to deny warranty coverage. Recall or not, your car has a 10-year 100,000-mile warranty or 5 year 60,000-mile warranty. As long as you maintained it, the coverage should be intact. Regarding the oil light, the oil light measures oil pressure not quantity so it is not unusual the light was not on. Regarding the oil filter, the Magnuson Moss law protects you. The Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act prevents manufacturers from voiding warranties or denying coverage simply because a consumer used a non-original part or had repairs done by a non-dealer shop unless they can prove that the aftermarket part or repair caused the defect.



BY JOHN PAUL

CAR DOCTOR  
continued on page 21

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Recurring events: Storytime: Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. For ages 0-4. No registration required. Stories, fingerplays and sensory playtime.

Knitting/Crochet Group: Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Cribbage Club: Thursdays at 6 p.m. Beginners or experienced welcome. No registration required.

Teen Dungeons and Dragons: Thursdays from 3 to 5 p.m. Registration required.

Watercolor Painting, Level 2: Thursdays, 6 to 7:30 p.m. Build on techniques learned in the beginner class. Must have beginner class or equivalent experience/knowledge. Must attend all four classes. First class is mandatory. Bring a notebook, all other supplies provided. Registration required.

Special events: Call or register online at millburylibrary.org

Castle Nitor: A Journey Through the Roots of American Popular Music: Wednesday, July 30 at 6 p.m. - Using music to inspire enthusiasm for and a desire to explore history, Jon Waterman features original and traditional

songs and stories about characters and events at the origins of blues, rock, and country music. Perfect for both American history and music fans! For all ages. Registration required.

Fortnite Tournament: Saturday, August 2, 10:30 a.m. - One Up Games returns this summer to host a Fortnite Tournament! For tweens/teens. Registration required.

Sleep Tight: Make-and-Take Aromatherapy Workshop: Wednesday, August 13 at 3 p.m. - Join us for a soothing hands-on experience where you'll learn how to create your own all-natural bedtime essential oil blend in a nourishing linen spray. This relaxing workshop is led by a nurse and aromatherapist passionate about wellness and natural living. Participants will also make a calming aromatherapy inhaler to support better sleep and emotional well-being. All materials are included— just bring yourself and get ready to unwind! This class is for adults. Registration required.

A Masterclass in Podcasting with Jeff Belanger: Wednesday,

**MILLBURY**  
continued on page 23

## CAR DOCTOR

continued from page 20

**Q.** I have a 2010 Toyota RAV4 with 116,000 miles and a 2019 Toyota RAV 4 with 20,000 miles. Neither car accumulates much mileage in the course of the year. I am no longer taking the 2019 to the dealership, as I have found a very reliable local garage that does the work for a fraction of the cost of the dealership. That being said, I try to self-maintain certain items, if I can, and the replacement of an air cabin filter would now be one of them. I've read where they should be replaced on a yearly basis (or sooner if driving on very dusty roads), and with the beginning of the hot weather summer driving season, I would like to place fresh cabin air filters in each vehicle. What would be your recommendations? I have gone to Amazon.com, and of course there are many brands listed such as Puroma, EPAuto, Fun-Driving, Fram, Bosch, Pure-Flow. Bosch and Fram seem to be double the price of others, and I am not exactly sure if that's marketing or

not. In any case, I would appreciate your thoughts as to which brand might be optimal for my two autos, which are driven mostly on local streets and highways.

**A.** I replace cabin air filters when they are dirty, not just on time or mileage. Toyota makes it quite easy to check the cabin air filter. The filter sits behind the glove compartment. Open the glove compartment and allow the door to fully open. You may need to move the stops to allow the door to drop down. Then the filter is located in a tray behind the glove box. Take out the filter if it is quite dirty and dusty replace it. If there is only a little dust, pollen leaves, shake it out and reinstall it. As for brands, I prefer the factory filter, then WIX filter products and the newer Bosch HEPA filter. Readers seem to highly recommend Puroma Cabin Air Filter with Activated Carbon. I have not tried this filter, but even vehicle manufacturers are recommending these charcoal/carbon filters to eliminate odors.

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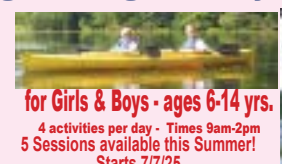
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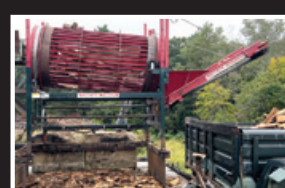
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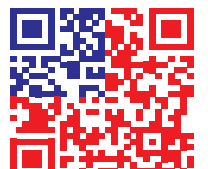


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*NOTE: Community bulletin board-type items are welcome for inclusion in the Happenings! section of the Xpress newspapers. Please allow enough lead time for publication. Email your calendar or event notice to [news@theyankeeexpress.com](mailto:news@theyankeeexpress.com).*

**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.  
• Sutton Cultural Council summer concert series with Bad News Jazz & Blues Orchestra at 6:30 on the town common. Free.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 1**  
• Talk with Author - Revolutionary War Munitions: Joel Bohy, local author, Bullet Strikes from the First Days of the American Revolution, will share his knowledge of Revolutionary War munitions on Thursday, September 4th, at 7 p.m. in the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road. Revolutionary War Fascinating Facts: Charlotte Wilson will share fascinating facts about Sutton's citizens during the Revolutionary days on Tuesday, November 11th at 7 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 2**  
• Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for the Fast Dog Café At 11 a.m. at Whittier Farms, 90 Douglas Road, Sutton right by the Milk Store at

Whittier Farms.

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 5**  
• Millbury Town Takeover at Polar Park, beginning at 6:45 p.m. Worcester Red Sox vs. Buffalo Bisons. Tickets purchased for the takeover night benefit a non-profit from Millbury, get tickets at [www.gofevo.com/event/millburytt](http://www.gofevo.com/event/millburytt)

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 7**  
• 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 locally baked food, fresh produce and handcrafted goods. Enjoy live music and buy lunch from food trucks. The hours are 3 - 7 p.m.  
• Sutton Cultural Council Summer Series concert with Far From Eden at 6:30 p.m. on the town common. Free.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 9**  
Second Annual Hometown Heroes and Local Legends Concert at 2:30 p.m. at Mill Villages Park, 61 Main Street (Route 122A) South Grafton. Free to all. Bring a lawn chair and a friend. With Bob Jordan, Mike Ladd, Joe Kuras and a special mystery guest! Sponsored by the Grafton Cultural Council, Mass Cultural Council and Homefield Credit Union. Rain date is August 10.

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13**  
• Have Steamers at Sunset with the Black-

stone Valley Chamber of Commerce held at the Barn at Blissful Meadows Golf 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](http://blackstonevalley.org/events)

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 16**  
The Auburn Historical Society Parking Lot Craft Fair will take place from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Rain or Shine. Vendors are welcome to contact the Auburn Historical Society & Museum at [auburn.museum@verizon.net](mailto:auburn.museum@verizon.net) for more information or to reserve a space for \$15.

**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

**HAPPENINGS!**  
*continued on page 23*

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<p><b>BADFISH</b> TRIBUTE TO SUBLIME SURF PARTY SUMMER AUGUST 10 • 1PM</p>	<p><b>LEE BRICE</b> WITH SPECIAL GUEST grace tyler AUGUST 16 • 1PM</p>	<p><b>TYLER HUBBARD</b> WITH SPECIAL GUEST BRANDO WISHAM AUGUST 17 • 1PM</p>	<p><b>GET THE LED OUT</b> A CELEBRATION OF "THE MIGHTY ZEP" AUGUST 22 • 7PM</p>
<p><b>CLARON LEWIS</b> AND THE STATELINERS AMERICAN AS IT GETS 2025 AUGUST 23 • 7PM AUGUST 24 • 1PM</p>	<p><b>KC AND THE SUNSHINE BAND</b> DOIN' IT! WORLD TOUR 2025 AUGUST 30 • 1PM</p>	<p><b>FACE 2 FACE</b> TRIBUTE TO ELTON JOHN &amp; BILLY JOEL AUGUST 31 • 7PM</p>	<p><b>PIKE ROKFEST 2025</b> 4NRS JOURNEY WITH KEITH CARMICHAEL TRIBUTE TO FOREIGNER AND JOURNEY SPEEDWAGON THE RED EXPERIENCE BEAUTIFUL LOSERS TRIBUTE TO BOB SEGER CRYSTAL SHIP TRIBUTE TO THE DOORS AMERICAN BADASS KID ROCK TRIBUTE SEPTEMBER 6 • 12PM</p>

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## MILLBURY

continued from page 21

August 20, 4-5 p.m. - Ever want to start your own podcast, or take your existing podcast to a higher level? Jeff Belanger has been the co-host, writer, and producer of the New England Legends podcast for the past eight years. His show has garnered over 6 million downloads. Plus, Jeff has been a guest on hundreds of other podcasts throughout his career. If you have a great idea for a show, it

doesn't take a lot of money to get started, but you do need a plan. In this program, you'll learn the basics of what you'll need from developing your idea, equipment, software, hosting, advertising opportunities, getting your show listed in all of the directories, and promoting your show once it's done. Whether you want to share your business expertise or entertain the masses, bring your questions! Best Small Museums in Massachusetts: Wednesday, September 3, 6-7 p.m. - Author and journalist Alison O'Leary

returns with a virtual visit to the Best Small Museums in MA! Discover quirky collections, surprising exhibits, and the histories behind them. Sea Glass Windows: Wednesday, September 10, 6-7:30 p.m. - Mike from Art Lab returns with more sea glass art! This freestyle project can be designed any way you like. Patrons will be provided with a prepped window, sea shells, sand, colored glass, and more! You can bring your own items to add in as well, and while Mike will guide you through each step, how your piece looks is ultimately up

to you. (Due to curing time, the piece will need to sit overnight and be picked up the next day.) Registration for this event opens

Wednesday, August 27 at 10 a.m.

## HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 22

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@graftonlandtrust.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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## 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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