

Town Planner Ann Morgan Says Goodbye

BY JANET STOICA
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

November 14 will be the departure day for Webster's Director of Planning and Economic Development, Ann Morgan. Her original day of departure was October 3, but she has been asked to stay on as the town awaits a suitable candidate to replace this well-experienced and diligent employee who has worked tirelessly and has guided and worked in successful tandem with its Planning and Zoning Boards for the benefit of the town.

Director Morgan began her Webster position in 2017 when she was contacted by former Town Administrator Doug Willardson. Willardson and Morgan had previously worked for the town of Grafton. In the eight years that Morgan has been with Webster, she has refined and adapted many procedures within the planning areas for the direct benefit of the town while also ensuring proper zoning and planning laws were being meticulously followed.

She has overseen the refugee site on Beacon Street, adhered to state and town standards on new and old projects within town, and appears to have worked well with the boards in charge of all things to be built in town. Her expertise and professionalism are well known by

other towns near to Webster.

Some of Webster's upcoming projects include the changeover of Jimmy's Convenience Store to the redevelopment of a gas station and convenience store. The former Colonial restaurant building situated next-door to Jimmy's will soon be part of the new parcel. Indian Ranch's entertainment venue and camping area is working on the modification of new signage and seek to expand their dynamic message sign. Special permits will be required. Two new Mexican restaurants have opened their doors on the west end of Main Street and other buildings are being refurbished and cleaned up.

During Morgan's tenure an in-town group of business owners now meets regularly to discuss options of Main Street buildings and improvements. "When we hear of grant opportunities, we apply for those to assist new businesses. I've enjoyed being in Webster and can honestly say I've learned something new every day. Our Zoning and Planning Boards are a young and dynamic group that knows their stuff. They are good folks who are wonderful to work with. This group has been a real pleasure to work with for the past eight years. It was Willardson's vision to assist in this area and invited me to apply for this position. Doug felt it would be a good



idea for all departments to get together and support each other. This way it helps everyone to stay informed about town planning. The Library folks have been very good about the business-oriented Nest opportunities. The local Small Business Administration also gave much guidance and even hired a representative for the local area. Networking has been improved significantly.

Morgan mentioned how a candidate for her replacement was on the verge of job acceptance when his spouse accepted a position in another part of the country and the search had to begin again. Best wishes to Director Morgan and her family and many thanks go out to her along with her expertise and guidance for the town of Webster.

Fire Chief Jeffrey Saad Brings Strong Family History to His Job

BY JANET STOICA
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Jeffrey Saad has a family history of meaningful service to the town of Webster dating back to the 1890s.

"It's a generational thing for me," said Fire Chief Saad. "My mother's family has served the town for over 100 years. Rodney Budrow, Sr., my grandfather, retired from town service in 1970 serving in the fire department, and my uncle, Rodney Budrow, Jr., retired from the police department in 1999. I've always been aware of my relatives serving the town in significant ways since I was a kid. With relatives being so involved in the fire department, I just grew up with the history and witnessed large fires in town like Paul's Pizza and always saw how closely the fire crews worked together to bring down a fire situation and I saw their camaraderie and how they learned from each other."

Chief Saad holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice as well as a Master's Degree in Public Administration with a concentration in Emergency Management Services. He initially explored the field of police work after his first degree's accomplishment but soon



found that it was very competitive at the time. In 2011, he began working for the Webster Fire Department's on-call division and worked his way up from Private to Driver then Lieutenant, Deputy Chief and was recently appointed Fire Chief in August 2025. He's done his certifications including a

FIRE CHIEF
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FIRE CHIEF

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17-week stint in the Chief Fire Officer's Program.

Some of the highlights of his career include seeing the progression that Webster's Fire Dept. has made expanding from a call department to a full-time staff of personnel ready for service im-

mediately. "The service we provide today is so much better than five years ago," said Saad, "our fire trucks are dispatched immediately and are so much quicker with our experienced fire department personnel. Future plans are to increase our services and staffing and to modernize our fleet, although much of our current equipment is up-to-date and we are also awaiting a new piece of equipment that will be delivered in 2027. We'll increase training and decrease our response times. We want to ensure that we are all current in every way to ensure the safety of our town residents. I've been fortunate enough to take many classes at the Fire Academy where I've had the

opportunities to meet many other Fire Chiefs to learn from their experiences and to network with them. It's been extremely valuable to gain knowledge and to learn from them at our seminars."

The Webster Fire Department currently has a staff of 18 full-time personnel including Saad and the Deputy Chief. There are four groups of four personnel at the station at most all times. Saad is looking to add a Fire Prevention Officer who will be in charge of permitting and inspections and hopes to be able to add this position next year.

"Budget reviews are coming up in January and February," he said. "And budgeting has become challenging. A few years ago, you knew

what state aid you'd be receiving but today, it's not the same. We all have to work together or we'll fail. We all have to make sacrifices with our budgeting to help each other. In our department we tend to manage our budget well to the best of our ability and we want to add what we can for the better of the town and its residents. The budget is a challenge as is the staffing that must be maintained while keeping on safe levels of personnel. Four people isn't a lot and we rely heavily on mutual aid. Staffing is critical. I give our Fire Department staff much credit. I'm fortunate to have a great crew and I look forward to providing the best service to the town."

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Charlton Library Friends Hold Trivia Night

The non-profit Friends of Charlton Public Library will hold a Trivia Night on Thursday, October 16, at the Charlton Beagle Club, 103 Bond Road in Charlton. The event will take place from 6 to 8 pm.

The Friends invite the general public to test their knowledge and challenge their friends as they attempt to answer a variety of questions provided by Wise Guys Trivia. In addition, attendees will have an opportunity to enter a raffle to win prizes such as a pickleball set, seasonal items, a game package, window garden, gift cards for local businesses, and

more. A cash prize will be awarded to the overall winner.

ate the businesses that donated raffle items, including Alternatives For Health, Anglez, Book-lover's Gourmet, Charlton Food Mart, Entertainment Luxury Cinema, Frito-Lay, Golden Nails, Savage Smash, Sturbridge Coffee Roasters, and Ted's Package Store.

Tickets are \$10 per participant and can be purchased at the Charlton Public Library circulation desk or at the door the evening of the event. All proceeds benefit the Charlton Public Library.

For more information, please email charltonfriends@gmail.com or call 774-230-1410.



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Webster Works on its 2026 Budget with State Aid Decreases

BY JANET STOICA
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“We’ve done a good job in not spending all the funds our town has,” said Rick LaFond, Webster’s Town Administrator, “we recently held a tri-board meeting between the Select Board, Finance, and School Committees. Our goal was for every board to agree and understand what we have to do for our 2026-2027 budget.” Webster

School Superintendent Monique Pierangeli and Town Administrator LaFond felt that a tri-board meeting would be beneficial before a final budget meeting to get a sense of and to document Webster’s needs and then to analyze town budget goals in order for everyone to understand what upcoming cuts would entail.

“Basically, what we’re looking at is approximately a \$2.3 million shortfall (operating deficit),” LaFond noted. “We’ll balance our

budget with our reserves. Last year, we used \$1.3 million of our free cash to balance our budget but the budget process hasn’t begun yet. The state doesn’t finalize their budget process until after our town meeting. State aid was comprised of \$900,000 and two years ago it was double this amount.” \$1.3 million is dedicated to Special Education transportation costs for out-of-district transportation. For two years it was \$2 million-plus for local aid.

The substantial decrease has a large effect on all town budgets.

“We managed to put a lot in our reserves thank goodness,” said LaFond. “We put a lot in the bank. Unfortunately, we don’t have any reasonable expectations now for more state aid. We know we’ll be dealing with service cuts, there’s no way around it. Everyone’s in the dark about our state aid dollars. We’re in good shape with our reserves. Last year we had \$6 million in free cash

and \$6 million in our stabilization fund but we simply cannot continue to plug these gaps of large budget shortfalls. State aid is critical. We know they will be revising their funding guidelines and we’re hoping it will be better for us and will provide more relief. We’re awaiting advice about a dollar commitment from the Millionaires’ Tax funding to help our budget process.”

John Spurr Historical Correction

BY JANET STOICA
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Thank you to our Yankee Xpress readers who have notified me about an historical update to John Spurr of Charlton. In last month’s Yankee

also a member of the Charlton Historical Society put me in touch with Frank Morrill, who had the following information to offer:

“I am past president for many years of the Society and have been a member for 49 years and somewhat the town histo-

it comes out probably sometime in October. All these many years I had been using and going along with the research done by others decades ago regarding John Spurr and his home on Charlton Common and it is incorrect. (Note here: His house is not the only one standing that was built in the 1700’s. The first Salem Towne House across from the post office was built in 1775. It has changed a lot through renovations but it is still under there.) Getting back to John Spurr... our John Spurr did not attend the Boston Tea Party in 1773. My research shows that he was only 11 at the time. I am attaching a photo of his grave stone. John Spurr was indeed at the Tea Party but it was a different John Spurr from Rhode Island. He was born in Dorchester in 1748 and he is buried at the Central Burying Ground on Boston Common, Tomb 5. Needless to say, I was very surprised what my research showed but it is correct and verified by the Official Boston Tea Party Committee Website in Boston. Our John Spurr was still an important figure of the time. He became a Major General and fought at Bunker Hill. He owned 3,000 acres in town.”

So, there you have it! Corrections noted and printed. For further information, you are invited to read the Charlton Historical Society’s October newsletter which will be available soon.

Thank you to Mike Bowie and Frank Morrill for your eagle-eyed

attention to detail. Corrected historical facts are always very much appreciated. “There is nothing new in the world except the history you do not know.” Harry S. Truman



Xpress, I wrote about this 1700’s era gentleman using information gleaned from the National Register of Historic Places as written in the Spurr family’s genealogy records of 1974, Charlton’s Town Assessor records of 1798, Benjamin Thatcher’s Tea Party List of 1835, Hamilton Hurd’s History of Worcester County of 1877, and Wesley Griswold’s The Night the Revolution Began, printed in 1972.

Recently, I received emails from two Charlton residents advising me that, coincidentally, new research had been done by Frank Morrill, past President and current member of the Charlton Historical Society, that retracts John Spurr’s involvement in many of the 1700’s events, Mike Bowie,

rian. This new information will come out in the newsletter when

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Free Haunted Happenings Event at Webster's Slater Experience

BY JANET STOICA
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

Just in time for those who enjoy learning about haunted happenings and paranormal events, Webster's Samuel Slater Experience will hold a frighteningly delightful presentation on Friday, October 17, at 6 p.m. Seats are limited, so your registration is required by visiting samuel Slater Experience or emailing samuelslaterexperience.org or calling 508-461-2955. The Slater Experience is located at 31

Ray Street, Webster.

Join Thomas D'Agostino and Arlene Nicholson as they present some of the most haunted mills in the region, complete with ghost voices and other evidence that the long dead are still on the clock. This free one-hour presentation is supported by the Webster Cultural Council.

According to D'Agostino's press release "New England is the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution in America. Countless mills creating all kinds of goods sprouted

up along its rivers and streams. Many of these mills were the site of tragedies that left an indelible psychic scar on the property which resound to this day."

Being the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, New England is renowned for potentially haunted mills that are now abandoned. Most manufacturing has moved away from North America as owners are continuously in search of the cheapest labor available. With these abandoned structures' cavernous and echoing interiors that have been abandoned for decades, mills are the most obvious places

for ghosts to establish their homes, aren't they? Local abandoned mills and factories include Slater Mill in Pawtucket RI, North Grosvenordale Mill in Thompson CT, Ram Tail Factory in Foster RI, and Mordecai Mill in Massachusetts. Many of these mills were sites of difficult labor, accidents, and even suicides, which are often the source of ghost stories. Drownings, tragic deaths, and the hardships faced by mill workers contribute to the legends of the past. The eerie and abandoned nature of these structures attracts ghost hunters and paranormal investigators.

Tom D'Agostino and Arlene Nicholson are well known regionally for their decades of paranormal research and investigations, with 18 books published on the ghosts, legends and folklore of New England.

Ghostly legends abound in many of New England's former mills and factories and with the research and visits that Tom and Arlene have done, this presentation is sure to put you into the mood for a cool and seasonal attitude. Don't forget to register at the Samuel Slater Experience. Just ignore those ghostly apparitions! Bwaaa, ha, ha, ha!

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Charlton Cultural Council Seeks Grant Funding Proposals

The Charlton Cultural Council has set a deadline of October 16, 2025 for organizations, schools, and individuals to apply for grants supporting Charlton community cultural activities including community-oriented arts, humanities, and science programs. The online Grant Application form and more information about the Charlton Cultural Council Program are available at: townofcharlton.net/322/Cultural-Council.

This year, the Charlton Cultural Council (CCC) will distribute almost \$10,000 in grants. CCC will prioritize partial funding of multiple projects over fully funding fewer projects, therefore allowing more programs for the Charlton community.

According to CCC Chairper-

son Angela Casasanto, these grants can support a variety of artistic projects and activities in Charlton, including exhibits, festivals, field trips, short-term artist residencies, performances in schools, workshops, and lectures.

New applicants and new programs will be prioritized over repeat applicants and repeat programs to broaden the variety of cultural events and activities that we are able to bring to our community. Performances that take place in Charlton and are for the general public will be prioritized ahead of target audiences, as the CCC strives to fund projects that will benefit as much of the Charlton community as possible.

The Charlton Cultural Council is part of a network of 329 Local Cultural Councils (LCCs) serving

all 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The LCC Program is the nation's largest grassroots cultural funding network, supporting thousands of community-based projects in the arts, humanities, and sciences every year. The state legislature provides an annual appropriation to Mass Cultural Council, a state agency that allocates funds to each community.

For local guidelines and complete information on the Charlton Cultural Council, send a message to Cultural.Council@townofcharlton.net. The online Grant Application form and more information about the Charlton Cultural Council Program are available at townofcharlton.net/322/Cultural-Council.

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Dudley celebrated “refreshed” Senior Center with open house

The Town of Dudley celebrated its newly refreshed Senior Center with an Open House on September 18.

Dudley Council on Aging volunteers served refreshments to more than 60 guests in the renovated space that recently received fresh paint, new ceiling tiles, wheelchair friendly flooring and countertop.

“The refreshed Senior Center is a true gift to our community,” Town Administrator Jonathan Ruda said. “Thanks to the generosity of the Dudley Woman’s Club, the leadership of Mrs. Johnson, and the dedication of our volunteers, we now have a space that honors our seniors and strengthens the heart of our town.”

The celebration attendees included lots of seniors, State Representative John Marsi, Amanda Galonek Hellyar of State Senator Ryan Fattman’s office, Town Administrator Jonathan Ruda, Selectman Steven Sullivan, town staff and members of the Dudley Woman’s Club.

Council on Aging Director Deborah Johnson spoke of the Senior Center revitalization and the many benefits the refreshed space will bring to the seniors and community.

“I, along with the men and women who frequent the center, want to thank the DWC, and especially Nancy for making this refresh happen,” Ms. Johnson said. “We are all so happy with the new floor, the walls, the ceiling tiles, everything that was done to update and brighten our area. The DWC always supports our senior community through many programs and donations, for which we are very grateful. We cannot thank them enough for this beautiful gift.”

The Dudley Woman’s Club donated \$30,000 to modernize the 71 West Main Street space that provides meals and enrichment programs to our seniors as well as activities and event space to our community.

This donation was made in memory of the DWC’s founding member Nancy J. Vajcovec, who dedicated countless volunteer hours to the town and local nonprofits by serving on several committees and commissions. Nancy Jane A. Vajcovec, (February 18, 1947 - November 26, 2022) of Dudley was one of five women who founded the Dudley Woman’s Club in 2008.

- Submitted by the Town of Dudley



Music and Memory: The Accidental Creation of a 92-year-old Social Media Sensation

On Wednesday, October 22 at 2:30 p.m., Dr. Randi Lebar will present an inspirational talk about the wild ride she has taken with her mother, pianist Elaine Lebar (born in 1928) who went viral on TikTok in 2020 while living in a memory care unit in Buzzards Bay. Specifically focusing on the magic and power of music in dementia, the talk features many videos of Elaine, and also includes lessons Randi learned along the way about finding meaning and joy

in their relationship, in spite of her mother’s mental decline. The presentation is sure to entertain a wide audience, and it will be especially educational and hopeful for those dealing with a loved one in any stage of cognitive decline.

Elaine Lebar began playing piano at the age of 3. She graduated from the High School of Music and Art in NYC, received a BA in music from Brooklyn College and an MFA in music education from the University of Missouri. She

is an accomplished performer, accompanist and composer. And now, living with dementia, Elaine has become a TikTok star with over 250,000 followers. Randi Lebar graduated from Cornell’s College of Arts and Sciences in 1978 with a BA in Chemistry and went on to receive an MD in 1982 from the University of Maryland School of Medicine. She then served for 11 years in the US Navy, completing her Orthopaedic Surgery residency at the Naval Hospital Oakland.

After serving as an orthopaedic surgeon in Okinawa, Japan, Dr. Lebar left the Navy and moved to Maine where she continued her orthopaedic practice. Now retired from medicine, Randi lives in Sagamore where she knits, crafts,

gardens, and pursues her passion for all forms of dance.

Everyone is welcome, no registration is required.

Charlton Public Library is located at 40 Main Street in Charlton.

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Arriving on the Midstate

Visiting the Site of the Great Train Wreck, Crossing Three States and Standing on a Path from the Mountains to the Sea

BY THOMAS J. MCLAUGHLIN

Thomas McLaughlin is writing a series of articles on hiking in the region.

Finding the Midstate Trail isn't difficult. You could say it finds you. Maybe you've seen the signs for it driving over it on Route 20, or under it on the Mass. Pike, or along it on several roads throughout the region. But arriving at the starting point takes a little planning since it begins and ends in the middle of the woods.

The 92-mile Midstate Trail passes through fourteen Central Massachusetts towns. The blaze of yellow triangles marking the Midstate runs through Douglas, Sutton, Oxford, Charlton, Spencer, Leicester, Oakham, Rutland, Barre, Hubbardston, Princeton, Westminster, Ashburnham, and Ashby. All the towns are in Worcester County, except for Ashby, which is in Middlesex County. Ashby is also the only town among them that borders three different counties—Worcester, Middlesex, and Hillsborough (New Hampshire).

If you want to hike the Midstate or just learn more about it, a great starting point is midstatetrail.org, the official website of the Midstate Trail, where you can view maps and get information on the trail.

For fifteen bucks you can buy their Midstate Trail Guide Book, which provides topographical

maps with northbound and southbound distances, access points, elevations, and trail descriptions.

In hiking articles, terminus is a word that's commonly used to describe the two ends of a trail. It's a centuries-old Latin word that's become part of the long-distance hiking jargon since one hiker's starting line is another's finish line. Merriam Webster defines it as, "either end of a transportation line or travel route," and as, "an extreme point." So, depending on the direction you're going it can be the end or the beginning of your journey.

I decided to start at the southern terminus of the Midstate and head north since these towns were closer to my home. Before I began, I studied the map, estimated the miles, and researched all the connecting trails leading to the Midstate.

I could come at it from any direction. From Massachusetts, I could connect to it in the Douglas State Forest at Wallum Lake. In Rhode Island, I could reach it from Pascoag. From Connecticut, I could arrive via the Tri-State Trail.

I saw online pictures that hikers posted of the Tri-State Marker where you can stand in three states at once. Located high atop a hill in the middle of the forest since 1883, is a small granite obelisk marking the spot where Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island meet.

I liked the idea of hiking in three states and eventually four (it sounds impressive), and I wanted

to see the Tri-State Marker and stand in three states at once so I headed to East Thompson, Connecticut.

Connecticut's Air Line Trail extends 50-miles from the 'quiet corner' of northeastern Connecticut to the Connecticut River. You can walk this trail from East Thompson to Portland. This was where the legendary "ghost train," the New England Limited, the Boston & New York Air Line Railroad, formerly known as the New Haven, Middletown and Willimantic Railroad once roared across the rails during the Gilded Age of the 1890s. According to the Pomfret Historical Society, it was known as the "ghost train" because of its "creamy white color with gold trim." Even the black coal used for fuel was whitewashed. The crew wore white uniforms and much of the interior was adorned with white and gold trim. It was a luxury line that traveled the shortest distance between New York City and Boston with limited stops, making record time.

Today, on the Air Line Trail in East Thompson you can visit the site of the Great East Thompson Train Wreck, a massive collision involving four rail lines that occurred on the morning of December 4, 1891.

The local Southbridge Freight, Boston Freight, Long Island and Eastern States Express, and the Norwich Steamboat Express



crashed into each other on this spot. ConnecticutHistory.org describes it as, "the site of one of the most horrific railway accidents in American history," and "one of the only accidents in US history to involve four trains."

There are signs at the site describing the catastrophic events of that morning, along with the foundations and remains of the engine house, depot station, and engine turn table. Transparent historical pictures allow viewers to catch a glimpse of what the station and the surrounding area looked like in 1891.

After visiting this site, I headed northeast for a half mile on the Air Line Trail, which is a flat and straight-line trail as it would have been when it was a railway. I proceeded to the Connecticut and Massachusetts border marker, hiked uphill along the rocky Tri-State Marker Trail, and arrived at a clearing at the top of the hill where the Tri-State Marker sits where the

three states meet. I stood in three states, and continued along the Tri-State Trail with Massachusetts to my left and Rhode Island to my right.

I could sense there was someone behind me some distance on my way up the hill to the Tri-State Marker. He maintained the same pace and distance the whole time until I stopped to take some pictures of a scenic turn in the path and he caught up to me.

He was a physically fit, retiree from East Thompson, Connecticut, who in his earlier years hiked over a hundred miles of the Appalachian Trail from Massachusetts through Vermont into New Hampshire. He hikes a circuitous route of a few miles, three times a week from the site of the Great Train Wreck to and from the southern terminus of the Midstate and the northern terminus of Rhode Is-

MIDSTATE
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Talk Saves Lives

A program on suicide prevention in teens

The Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library will present an important program on teen mental health, focusing on suicide prevention. It will be presented from 6-8 p.m. on October 16.

Library director Nicole Messier is responsible for bringing the workshop by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention to the public library. The presenter is from the Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL) of Dudley, said.

The Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PPAL) is a statewide family organization dedicated to improving the mental health and well-being of children, youth and families through support, education and advocacy.

The workshop presenter is a local man associated with PPAL who volunteered to lead the workshop, Messier said.

“PPAL are experts on mental health support,” she said. The program will offer up to date research on suicide prevention and teach participants how to save lives.

The workshop will not only

raise mental health awareness for parents and professionals, but will also offer tips on warning signs of

raising children with behavioral needs.

Their website states: “We can offer support, suggest new strategies to move forward when families are stuck trying to access services through school or insurance, and connect you with other parents and family members.”

There is a registration link for the suicide prevention program, if for reasons of privacy, people would prefer not to register, they are welcome to do that. Since the information is sensitive, Messier asks that youngsters ages 14-16 to bring an adult with them.

To register for the library program, visit <https://bit.ly/10PPALtalk>

The Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library is located at 40 Schofield Avenue, Dudley.

The PPAL website is <https://ppal.net>

suicidal thoughts in teens.

I wanted to bring this program to the library because of the too common instances of suicide in the past,” Messier said. The grief following such a death affects not only families, but communities.

PPAL has a dedicated Central Mass. office that offers free support to families when children have emotional, behavioral or mental health needs. The organization is staffed by family support professionals who have lived experience

If you're up for a long walk to the beach, 78-miles, the North/South trail leads to the Atlantic Ocean (Ninigret Beach), or you can walk 92-miles north on the Midstate to Mt. Watatic. Beyond that is the Wapack Trail, extending another 21-miles to North Pack Monadnock, where you can see the White Mountains off in the distance. It's something to appreciate when you're standing there in the middle of the forest. This narrow footpath leads from the mountains to the sea. I enjoyed the moment, but the North/South Trail would have to wait another day. Today I was hiking the Midstate.

MIDSTATE

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land's North/South Trail. It's great exercise with its varying terrain.

We walked to the southern terminus of the Midstate Trail between Pascoag, RI and Douglas where wooden signs point in one direction for the Midstate in Massachusetts and in another direction for the North-South Trail in Rhode Island. We talked for a little while and I told him of my plan to hike the Midstate. He said, “Enjoy your hiking,” and he continued back to East Thompson.



Local 4 Life's Comedy Fundraiser Supports Educational Outreach

Local 4 Life, an educational nonprofit organization located in the Webster/Dudley area, is partnering with Funny 4 Funds for a Comedy Fundraiser at The Mill at French River (9 Frederick Street, Webster, MA) on Saturday, October 18, 2025 at 7pm. Proceeds from the event will benefit Local 4 Life's educational outreach efforts in the area, which include community events, children's workshops, and family programs.

Local 4 Life would like to thank our generous sponsors for this show: JV Mechanical Contractors of Webster, D. Mason Paving of Webster, and Red Tail Valley Farm of Pomfret, CT. The night will include incredible raffle prizes from Wormtown Brewing Company, Tree House Brewing Company, Taylor Brooke Winery, Prestige Salon & Day Spa, Generations Gift Shop, Ruby Wines, Sturbridge Coffee Roasters, Hank's Liquors, Cuttin' Loose Hair Salon, PT Pet Supply, Booklover's Gourmet, Ultimate Touch Salon, Ascent Mechanical Solutions and Ascent Elite Cleaning Solutions, and more.

In 2025, Local 4 Life held several educational events, including five science-based children's programs, featuring local farmer guest speak-

ers, at the Pearle Crawford Memorial Library. Local 4 Life has also donated CSA gift cards to local families in the Dudley area, provided hands-on lessons and a field trip to Walnut Lane Farm with Mason Road Elementary School kindergarteners. Since 2019, the non-profit has also offered children's educational workshops at local farms and businesses, and sponsored Earth Day community events and family-friendly events at local farms. All of these programs are exclusively supported through generous donations, sponsorships, and grants.

Tickets for the Comedy Fundraiser are \$35 each and should be reserved online before the event on October 18. Please visit the Funny 4 Funds website, funny4funds.com/events, scroll down and choose the Local 4 Life Fundraiser Night. You can also purchase tickets by visiting Local 4 Life on Facebook or by contacting Erin Anderson at (508) 341-5347 or by email at local4lifema@gmail.com.

The non-profit Local 4 Life aims to cultivate local connections through agricultural and business partnerships that provide educational outreach, promote conservation, and foster community.



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SPORTS

New Coach Hoping to Bring Bay Path Back to Relevance

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

After having played soccer through high school as well as on the collegiate level Ed Meyer was looking to continue playing the sport he loved. At one point in 1999, he felt that he was getting a little too old to continue to lace up the cleats to compete so he began helping the Olympic Developmental Program as an assistant coach. He would continue to coach on a variety of levels until his son was old enough to get involved with sports.

"I had continued to coach soccer until my son was about 8 years old. I was at the height of my coaching career, but I needed to step back," he said. "So I basically took a 10 plus year hiatus to be a father. Unfortunately, my son was interested in hockey instead of soccer."

A few years after Meyer's son graduated from high school he started to contemplate returning to coaching when Ric Carrero, the Bay Path Athletic Director came to him asking him to coach the junior varsity program. A year after taking on the position, the varsity coach put in his resignation and it was obvious that Meyer apply for the opening, especially now that his son had completed his collegiate career at Penn State where he played hockey.

Historically, Bay Path soccer teams have been good on a regular basis, but over the past few years, the Indians have found themselves to be around a .500 team, and the new coach wants to change that.

"Coming into this season I knew we had some good talent with the upperclassmen (15 seniors tried out and the team kept 10 of them)," Meyer said. "I also knew that we had a lot of talented younger kids, but our biggest issue was going to be to get the senior captains to buy into my specific program's style of play so they could pass it along to the other players."

Meyer was looking to reevaluate what this team was and what it was going to become. During the tryouts, when 15 freshmen took to the field looking to earn a spot, the new coach kept them all to play on the JV team.

When Meyer was the JV coach, he always connected with the varsity coach about the style of soccer that his team was playing so that he could develop his players for the varsity team in the future. Now, as the varsity coach, he is having both programs work out together in all facets of play.

"We need to develop the younger players for the future and they are playing a similar style of skill sets, so that they can move up to the varsity team without an issue," the coach said. "This year, we are



looking to move forward with what we are doing with both programs, especially since we have 10 schools to feed from."

First and foremost Meyer is looking for his senior captains to take the reins and run with them to get this team ready to move forward. The two captains this fall are Cody Dombroski and Sebastian Moniz, both starting strikers

who will be also looked upon to provide some goal scoring. At the time of this writing, the Indians were currently 3-1 with their only loss coming at the hands of Diman Regional Vocational High School (3-1) and Dombroski had notched three goals and six assists, while Moniz also had three goals and a single assist.

This fall Sebastian Vargas, a 6'4" club soccer player who plays the game at a high level, was moved to the center back position. Bay Path lost their center back and the coach was scrambling to find a replacement.

"Sebastian stepped up and asked

to fill the void moving from his forward position," Meyer said. "He's athletic, smart, aggressive and bought into the system, so I knew that he'd be able to handle what we were about to throw at him."

Another big part of what the team will be doing this year is junior center mid Josh McLaughlin, a dynamic soccer player according to his coach. Sophomore Arlind Aliu "All Defense" will be paired with Cameron Barry in the back end.

All 10 of the seniors will contrib-

SPORTS

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TALES FROM BEYOND

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Some "Other" Witches of New England

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

New England, notably, Salem, Massachusetts is known for its witchcraft dilemmas. Connecticut held witch trials and executions as early as 1647 when Else (Alice) Young was hanged at the gallows for witchcraft on May 26 of that year. This took place forty-five years before the Salem witch trials. There are many accounts of witches in the pages of New England history books. Presented here are a few of the lesser known witch accounts of the region.

This excerpt is from Henry Nourse's History of the Town of Harvard Massachusetts, 1731-1893.

"Throughout that century and even to within the memory of the living, from time to time in Harvard individuals otherwise sober-minded have declared themselves the victims of witchcraft; usually charging their mishaps to the evil eye or magic arts of some forlorn old crone. For instance, the later years of Moses Tyler and Daniel Willard, it is said, were greatly embittered by their believing themselves afflicted by witches; and good dame Knight, when she had ill success in butter-making, never blamed her own lack of skill,

but inveighed against her neighbor Goody Pollard for bewitching the cream. She declared that she one day struck with the peel a great, black spider which ran out from the churn, but, though seriously crippled, it got away up the chimney; and the next day she found out that it was a witch she had hurt, and who it was, for Goody Pollard had to send for the doctor, having been badly lamed, as she alleged, by falling downstairs."

Like many of the original churches in early New England, the first meeting house in Simsbury, Connecticut served as both church and town hall. The original site of the building was at the foot of a hill near the old cemetery. This story takes place between 1690 and 1710 and concerns the alleged witch of Simsbury, Debby Griffen.

Debby was a recluse for the most part. She was tall with piercing eyes and a most unfriendly demeanor. She spent much of her time in the woods around her small cottage gathering herbs or mushrooms and berries. The only time she found herself in the public eye was when she wandered into the village for provisions. The townsfolk shied away from her lonely cabin in the woods, for it was there that black cats with ar-

rogant yellow eyes pranced about, or massive gray ganders squawked at those who had no choice but to traverse past her home. There was one story that circulated about the town concerning two militia men returning from training. As they cautiously passed Debby's house they were startled by a clamor. Looking up, they saw Debby flying away on one her giant ganders.

On a sunny April Sunday morning, Deacon Eleazer Hill inserted the key into the lock of the church but then something strange transpired; a small bird that had followed him to the meeting house chirped, "you'll find trouble, you'll find trouble." The deacon swung the heavy wooden door open and to his horror, discovered the wooden chest holding the alter ornaments had been broken into.

A quick inventory revealed the only item stolen was the silver drinking chalice but that was more than enough for the congregation to bear. They assembled and narrowed down the suspects to only one person, Debby Griffen. It was thought she may return for a second helping the next night.

As the sun set, several villagers took positions around the church. When darkness had completely enveloped the land, the men spied a figure slowly moving down the hill past the cemetery leading to

the church. As the figure grew near, they immediately recognized it as Debby Griffen. She approached the door but did not attempt to open it, instead she turned into a vaporous mist and disappeared through the keyhole.

Moments later she reappeared with one of the silver communion plates. The group stealthily followed her to the area of Three Corner Pond. There the witch paused for a few moments. This gave one of the pursuers enough time to raise his musket and fire at the woman.

His aim was true and Debby Griffen was hit by the musket ball, but before she fell, she screamed a curse, held the silver platter in the air and jumped into the pond, never to be seen again. Subsequent searches of the water proved fruitless in finding the old hag or the plate. It is reported to this day that sometimes, when the moon is full one can look into the water where Debby met her end and see the glimmer of what resembles a silver plate reflecting the moon's rays into the night sky.

Happy Hallowe'en

SPORTS

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ute in their own way this season, but it's the junior class that has been giving the team its edge as well as the fantastic group of youth players coming up.


Coming into the season Meyers' goal, playing in the new conference with all new teams, is just looking

for the program to get going and become successful with all their hard work.

"Of our 11 losses last year, we had five games that we lost by three or more goals. We are not looking for a championship or a Conference Title - we just want to reduce our goals against average," the coach said. "Last year, at times our offense was anemic and we couldn't score. We need to produce a posi-

tive goal differential while committing to our defense."

Meyers knows that his squad will be able to bet the bad teams and stay in the games against the better teams, while making sure they play competitive soccer. If Bay Path can follow Meyers' plan the team should be able to accomplish an above average record in addition to improving their goals against average.



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Luke's To Do List

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Luke has a charmed life—plush beds, a soft lawn, and slices of salmon. He's living the dream, though he doesn't know it. Doesn't every dog wake to the sound of chirping birds? To the jingle of kibbles?

"GOOD MORNING, MOM!!"

He does his morning duty, then gallops back inside, grinning wide. "Breakfast time!" He sits tall while I prepare his meal: a bowl of Science Diet kibbles—chicken or beef. The same dish, twice a day, still sparks the same boundless joy. A dimple creases the corner

of his mouth, forming an adorable question mark. Sometimes I want to stop mid-task just to kiss him.

"Luke, you are so cute!"

He squirms with impatience. "I know, but hurry!"

To make his breakfast special, I pour warm bone broth over the kibble and stir. "Mummy is so proud." He ignores my chatter; eyes locked on the bowl. He watches me drizzle broth with the scrutiny of a wine connoisseur. When I finally set it down, he lunges into his feast—tail wagging in overdrive. Lamb kibbles again! One more bite. One more lick. Scrape the bowl clean. Done. Thank you, Momma!

Then he freezes. Time to bring a gift.

A retriever at heart, Luke noses through his toy box, pulls out his stuffed elephant, and prances back. The trunk bounces like a pipe as he tap-dances around the kitchen.

Let's play elephant today!

"Do you have Elefante, Luke?"

I add a little Spanish for fun. He loves to tease, brushing close but whisking the toy away with a flick of his head whenever I reach.

"Can Mummy have a turn?"

He freezes with understanding. "Boo Hoo Hoo," I fake cry and turn my knuckles to the beat of fake tears. Puzzled, Luke stares at me. Who ate Mom? Then he trots off with Elefante and plops onto his bed.

Our mornings unfold in dialogue—about what I must do, and what he must do.

"Mummy has to go for a ride



in his travel crate. When I rushed back and popped the trunk, he popped his head out of the sun-roof with bedhead and a panting smile that said—it was kind of clammy in here. Please remember that I can't sweat the way people can. But I'm over it, Momma! I still love and forgive you. Let's go for a walk now.

Luke is so pure and innocent. He always sees the good in me. It's what dogs do. I think about the difference between our agendas. His: breakfast, bone chewing, shrub sniffing, napping, socializing, one more nap, walking. Mine: teaching, errands, deadlines, housework, appointments.

While I chase lists, Luke chases joy. And maybe—just maybe—he's got the better plan.

Wake up grateful. Eat with gusto. Bring a gift. Play elephant. Nap like it's your job. Forgive each other. Repeat tomorrow.

Luke's To-Do List:

1. Wake up wagging.
2. Kiss Mom with my eyeballs.
3. Eat kibbles like a champion.
4. Deliver elephant. (Important.)
5. Nap aggressively.
6. Forgive freely.
7. Repeat steps 1-6 forever.

I feel like I'm onto him.

Write to Amy at amyleclaire@hotmail.com

Follow Luke on IG @livingwith-lukevalentino

today, Luke."

He tilts his boxy head, as if to say: I would love to go for a ride. My mind connects impossible dots (especially on hot days) to bring

him to work with me. Even with windows open, a dog cannot regulate body temperature and cool down in a car as we can. One time I left him for a very short period

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REAL ESTATE

3 Reasons Affordability is Signs of Improvement This Fall

For the past couple of years, it's been tough for a lot of homebuyers to make the numbers work. Home prices shot up. Mortgage rates, too, and a number of people stopped looking because it just didn't feel possible. Maybe you were one of them!



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

But there's some encouraging news. If you've been waiting for a better time to jump back in, affordability may finally be showing signs of improvement this fall.

The latest data shows the typical monthly mortgage payment has been coming down, and is now about \$290 lower than it was just a few months ago, and here's why this is happening. The cost of buying a home really comes down to three things: mortgage rates, home prices and your wages. Right now, all three are finally moving in a better direction for you. While that doesn't mean it's suddenly easy to

buy at today's rates and prices, but it does mean it's not as challenging.

Mortgage Rates. Mortgage rates have come down compared to earlier this year. In May, they were roughly 7 percent and now, they're closer to 6.3 percent! That may not sound like a big deal, but it does matter. Even small changes in rates can make a difference in your monthly payment. Compared to when rates were 7 percent, if you take out an average \$400K mortgage now at 6.3 percent, it'll cost about \$190 less a month based on just rates alone and for some people, that's been enough to make buying a home possible again. Lenders have explained it this way: The downward rate movement spurred the strongest week of borrower demand since 2022. Mortgage applications increased to the highest level since July and continued to run more than 20 percent ahead of last year's pace.

Home Prices. After several years of prices rising very rapidly, price growth has finally slowed. Economists have said: National home price growth remains positive, but muted, low single digits and we expect this trend to continue in the second half of the year. For buyers, that's actually a big relief. That

moderation makes it easier to plan your budget and in some markets, prices have even dipped slightly. If you're in one of the markets, you may be able to find something that's more affordable than you'd expect.

Wages. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), wages are up near 4 percent annually. It's been stated: wage growth is now comfortably outpacing home price growth, and buyers have more choices. In other words, the typical paycheck is rising faster than home prices right now, which helps make buying a little more affordable. Now, it's not a big difference, but in a market like this, every bit counts.

What this means for you is lower rates, slower price growth, and stronger wages might be enough to make the numbers finally work for you this fall. While affordability is still tight, it's a little easier on your wallet to buy now than it was just a few months ago. Remember, data shows the typical monthly mortgage payment is already around \$290 lower than it was earlier this year.

Have you been wondering if it's worth taking another look at buying? Contact a member of The Marzeotti Group or another Real

Estate Professional to re-run the numbers. Together you can go over your budget, see what's changed, and figure out if this fall is the time

to turn window-shopping owning something of your own!

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The Haunting of Dudley

Those who haunt Town Hall and the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library have been scurrying about to transform parking lots and lawns into a free

This event hosted by the Dudley Recreation Commission with spirited participation from the library crew is set to thrill during the daylight hours of 5 – 6:30 p.m.

field Ave., for fun family activities.

At 5 p.m. the gaggle of ghosts and goblins will receive a police escort as they parade up Brandon Road to Town Hall.

There, families will be greeted with lots of frightfully free fun. Highlights include games, live music, a balloon artist, a Cauldron of S'mores, hot dogs and drinks.

No Halloween party would be complete without a costume contest, and this one will award prizes for the scariest, funniest, and most unique costumes.

This program is funded in part by a grant from the Dudley Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the state MassCultural Council.



Halloween family event for ghosts and goblins of all ages.

Dudley's annual Spooktakular returns on Thursday, October 23.

Festivities begin at 4:30 p.m. when families are invited to gather in costume at the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library, 40 Scho-

field Ave., for fun family activities.

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Failing Turn Signal Could Be a Wiring Problem

Q. I have a 2025 Cadillac Lyriq with 2500 miles and a chronic problem with the left turn signal. The signal will

intermittently fail. I got an error message to check the taillight bulb. I've had the car to the dealer twice. The first time they rebooted

the software with no success. They then replaced the taillight assembly, and this corrected the problem for about a month. The second time the taillight failed I brought the car in for service and the service manager saw the taillight was not working. However, when they restarted the car to bring it into the service bay the taillight was working fine. GM stated that this is not a known issue, and there are no recalls. I do know that if I turn the car off and let it sit for a while the problem does resolve itself. This is becoming a major concern and annoyance, any thoughts?

A. Since replacing the tail lamp assembly fixed the issue for a while, it seems like it could be related to a wiring problem. I did see one technical service bulletin that mentioned a harness retainer clip that could allow the wiring to rub on an axle. As a side note, the all-electric Lyric has a long list of technical service bulletins (and I don't see them all) and many are software related. At this point I would try

to document the failure as much as possible and see if the dealer can get a Cadillac field engineer out to investigate the issue.

Q. I know you are a safety guy, and I believe you got an award from NHTSA for your efforts. What are your thoughts about electric scooters? I see people buzzing around on them all the time. My college student, who can't have a car yet wants one to use in and around her campus.

A. E-Scooters are considered micromobility devices and certainly have their place. Recently I have been riding a Kaabo Urban e-scooter and although I have ridden bikes both electric and manual, gas scooters and motorcycles, at first I found the E-scooter a little terrifying. Now that I have practiced a bit, it is a fun way to get around. The Kaabo scooter is well made has decent performance, very good brakes and suspension. Required or not I would recommend a helmet and other safety gear. I would also not modify the speed, 15 miles per hour is plenty fast. And like all vehicles, never ride impaired or distracted.

Q. Walmart has full synthetic and advanced full synthetic motor oil. The advanced is 66 more cents. Is it worth it?

A. The Walmart Advance synthetic oil looks like it is designed for extended oil changes. The difference between the SuperTech Synthetic and Advanced Synthetic oil is likely the additive package which may allow longer intervals between oil changes. Although any advanced synthetic oil may offer better protection against wear, I do not believe in extended oil changes unless the oil is analyzed on a regular basis. You could certainly use this advanced synthetic oil but replace the oil and filter at the manufacturer's recommended interval.

Q. While doing other repairs on my

2005 Jeep Grand Cherokee, my mechanic noticed a minor leak from the transfer case. First, he said he added some 'stop leak' fluid to the unit. At pick up he said he 'temporarily disconnected the 4-wheel drive' till we replace or rebuild the unit! It is not leaking and drives fine for now. It has been only in my family, always well maintained and well-kept since brand new. I know it is old, but my adult son exclusively drives it and can't afford to buy another vehicle now.



BY JOHN PAUL

A. If the fluid level is full and not leaking, I would hook up whatever your mechanic disconnected. The shop may have removed a fuse or even the front driveshaft. The sealer may have swelled the seals and stopped the leaks, certainly a stop gap repair, but at 20 years old it may be a good enough solution.

Q. My 2009 VW Jetta Sportwagen remote recently stopped beeping when I lock my doors. The battery is new. I like the idea of hearing this sound to confirm the doors are locked. Is there a way to retrieve the beeping sound when locking? I don't have the car owner's manual, and the dealer was not much help.

A. The first thing to do is make sure the horn works. Then if there is a menu, look for ATA settings. This is the notifications which chirp or flash. Some VWs have this menu, others do not. Here is a link to an owner's manual: vwmanual.net The manual is over 400 pages, go to page 235. It explains resynchronizing the remote and finding the settings.

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TIPS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING

dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com

Making the Most of Medicare Open Enrollment

When you turn 65, Medicare becomes a vital part of your health care coverage. But signing up is just the beginning. Many people don't realize that Medicare isn't a "set it and forget it" program. In fact, you have the



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

opportunity — and often the need — to review and adjust your coverage every single year.

The annual Medicare Open Enrollment period,

which runs from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7 each year, is your chance to take a fresh look at your health care needs and make sure your Medicare plan still fits your life. Then you can determine whether your medical and prescription plans need to be switched or dropped.

Just like your health can change from year to year, so can Medicare plans. Insurance companies may adjust their coverage and costs or even discontinue certain plans

entirely. By taking time during the open enrollment period to compare your options, you might discover a plan that saves money, offers better coverage or both.

As a reminder, you have several options when it comes to your Medicare coverage.

Original Medicare (Parts A and B) covers hospital stays and medical services such as doctor visits. Part A typically comes with no monthly premium if you've worked for at least 10 years. Part B requires monthly premiums — \$206.50 or more in 2026, depending on your income. They may also be copays and deductibles.

Medicare Advantage (Part C) offers an all-in-one alternative to Original Medicare. These plans are offered by private insurance companies. They often bundle together hospital, medical and prescription drug coverage. They may also include extra benefits like vision, dental and wellness programs that Original Medicare doesn't cover.

Medicare Part D provides stand-alone prescription drug coverage for those who stick with Original

Medicare.

Medicare Supplement (Medigap) policies help cover the out-of-pocket costs that Original Medicare doesn't pay, such as copayments and deductibles.

When shopping for Medicare plans, there are several important areas you should consider to determine which options are right for you:

Out-of-pocket costs such as monthly premiums, deductibles, copayments and any other expenses Medicare doesn't cover. Sometimes a plan with a higher premium saves you money overall because of lower copays.

Prescription drug coverage deserves special attention. All Medicare plans for 2026 will include a \$2,100 cap on what you pay out of pocket for covered prescription drugs, up from \$2,000 in 2025. However, this cap only applies to drugs that your plan covers, making it crucial to verify your medications are included.

Your health care needs for the coming year matter too. Do you have surgeries planned? New

health conditions to manage? You'll want to make sure your potential plan covers the care you expect to need.

Travel plans can also influence your choice. Original Medicare typically doesn't cover services overseas, so frequent travelers might want supplemental coverage for emergencies abroad.

If you don't make any changes during open enrollment, you'll likely be automatically reenrolled in your current plan for the following year, as long as it's still available and you continue paying required premiums.

Don't let your Medicare plan run on autopilot. Take advantage of the annual open enrollment period — between Oct. 15 and Dec. 7 — to ensure your coverage continues to serve you well in the year ahead.

Dennis Antonopoulos
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This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

Nichols College donates iPads to Dudley Fire Department to help upgrade FD technology

Nichols donated the iPads during a brief ceremony at the town's fire station

Nichols College donated 10 iPads to the Dudley Fire Department today during a brief ceremony held at the town's fire station. At the event, Nichols President Bill Pieczynski presented the new technology to Dudley Fire Department (DFD) Chief Dean Kochanowski and Deputy Chief Erik Spahl.

The iPads will support the fire department's new cloud-based software program for fire and emergency medical services reporting, an application that is designed to be used in the field on iPads.

"Nichols has been part of the fabric of Dudley since 1815, and we are proud to support the Dudley Fire Department, who help keep our campus and community safe," said Pieczynski of the donation. "The Dudley Fire Department is a trusted partner to our College, and

these iPads will enhance their ability to respond to incidents quickly, manage resources effectively and conduct inspections more efficiently. We are pleased that this gift of technology can help modernize their operations and further strengthen the services they provide to Dudley and beyond."

The College selected the DFD for the donation due to their frequent collaborations. The DFD is one of the town departments the College interacts with the most, said College leadership. The DFD and the College work closely together on regulatory and emergency response, as well as ensuring inspections of all campus buildings. The DFD also interacts with the College's public safety, residence life and athletics offices.

The iPads will also assist the DFD with: onsite inspections; apparatus checks; previews of building replans while enroute

(complete with shutoffs, access points and hydrant locations); and response unit tracking during an incident.

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Job change?

Whether retiring or changing jobs, you'll want to know your retirement account options.



There are four potential options for your 401(k) when leaving an employer:

- Leave it in your former employer's 401(k) plan, if allowed by the plan.
- Move it to your new employer's 401(k) plan, if you've changed employers and your new employer plan allows for it.
- Roll the account over to an individual retirement account (IRA).
- Cash it out, which is subject to potential tax consequences.

We can talk through your financial goals and find the option that works best for you.



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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.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11

Halloween Harvest Festival at Douglas Orchard and Farm, 36 Locust Street, Douglas from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Get ready for a tail-wagging, treat-filled Halloween Festival with our amazing partners, Dog Orphans. Bring your pups dressed in their spookiest, silliest, or most creative Halloween costumes for our paws-itively adorable Dog Costume Parade Contest—winners will be announced with fang-tastic prizes. Kids can join the spooky scavenger hunt around the farm and grab their treat bags full of goodies. Don't forget

to come in your Halloween best, because it's costumes galore for everyone! Plus, enjoy magical performances by the Witches of Sutton and the talented Dance Sensation children's dance troupe. It's going to be frightfully fun for the whole family!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16

- The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce (BVCC) announces its upcoming Business After Hours networking event, hosted by Fidelity Bank in Millbury. The event will take place on from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. at Fidelity Bank's Armory Village branch, located at 16 South Main Street, Millbury. It's free to attend!
- The Friends of the Auburn Public Library host Robert Stacy, historian at the Museum of Worcester who will give a presentation on "The Lives of Worcester Workers 1830-Present from 6:30-8 p.m. at the Pakachoag Center, 203 Pakachoag Street, Auburn. The doors open at 6 p.m. Admission is \$15. Payment by cash, check or PayPal. The event is a fundraiser for the Friends. Kindly pre-register at Friendsofauburnlibrary@gmail.com

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18

Auburn Homecoming and Fall Festival from

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Join us for a wonderful celebration of our Fall Festival and Homecoming at Auburn High School, 99 Auburn Street, Auburn. Enjoy sports games, a live band, a truck load of pumpkins to decorate, with food trucks, ice cream trucks, wonderful artisans and awareness groups.

- A Meat Raffle will be held by the Millbury Lions Club, 2 p.m. - 5 p.m., St. Charles Hotel, 126 West Main St, Millbury. Early bird tickets at 1:30 p.m. Funds will help the Millbury High School Boys Varsity Basketball Team.
- The First Congregational Church of Dudley, 135 Center Road, is holding a Turkey Supper with seatings at 4:30 and 6 p.m. The menu includes turkey, stuffing, mashed potato, turnip, squash, gravy, cranberry sauce, bread and butter, golden gingerbread and tea. Tickets are \$18 each for ages 13 and up, \$10 for ages 6-12 years. Kids 5 and under are free. For reservations, call 508-943-7320 and leave your name, phone number, time of seating and number of guests in your party.
- St. Peter's Parish in Northbridge is having a Haddock Dinner at 5:30 p.m. in the parish hall. Bring your family and friends for a wonderful meal and meet some new friends. Tickets are \$17 per dinner and include salad and dessert. To go meals will be available for pick up at 5 p.m. All orders

must be purchased in advance by Tuesday, October 14. Please call the parish office at 508-234-2156 or email parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org to order your meals or if you have any questions.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18 AND SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19

- 45th Annual Waters Farm Days 53 Waters Farm Road, West Sutton. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Antique tractor and Doodlebug show, animal exhibition, 4H animals, craft vendors, tractor pull, car show, food vendors, barrel train, kids' bouncy houses, robotics club, police/fireman meet and greet, blacksmith and shingle making demonstration, pottery demonstration, peddler shop, tractor-pulled hay rides, apple crisp, and circa 1757 farm house tours.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19

- The Museum of the Millbury Historical Society at the Asa Waters Mansion, 123 Elm Street, will be open from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. This coincides with the Asa Waters Fall Festival. Some of the museum's holdings are: 100 years of Aftermath yearbooks; photos: churches, schools, downtown, sports; scrapbooks; research books & histories of Millbury & Sutton going back to colonial times. Also, President Taft photos and memorabilia; military uniforms, guns, and flags.

- Fall Festival in Nelson Park, North Grafton, 6 Prentice Street from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. There will be music, inflatables, food trucks, and local businesses joining in on the fun! FREE!! Music, food, games and more! Decorate a pumpkin and build a scarecrow while supplies last. Presented by Coral Care & Country Bank.

- The New England Country Music Club will host "The Rhode Island Rednecks" at the Progressive Club, 18 Whittin Street, Uxbridge. Doors open at 12:15 p.m. Music from 1-5 p.m.

- Join Oxford Ecumenical Food Shelf Volunteers for the Annual Crop Hunger Walk. Beginning at First Congregational Church, 355 Main Street, Oxford at 1 p.m. Please arrive at 12:30 to sign in. This is an easy 3.5 mile walk through Oxford. A small monetary donation is requested. This year's goal is \$2500 which will help stock the shelves of the Food Shelf, Oxford's community food pantry, in the weeks ahead. Register at crophungerwalk.org or just show up on the 19th. The food pantry is open to Oxford residents for free.

- Uxbridge Youth Soccer League will again host its annual RC Air Show and Vendor Fair from 12 – 4 p.m. at the Sutton Street Field Complex (298 Sutton Street, Uxbridge). Donations are recommended at \$5 per person.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22

Friendly Trick or Treat from 3 – 4 p.m. at Grafton Municipal Center, 30 Providence Road, Grafton. Hosted by Grafton Rec and sponsored by the Town. The event is designed for ages 5 and under, though all are welcome. Come visit Town Hall and trick or treat at town offices and tables set up by

local businesses. Dress up in your costume and collect goodies in a safely lighted and non-scary environment. Start at the Senior Center Gym tent to collect your bag and a map. Face painting available!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23

- The Sutton Garden Club will host Gretel Anspach, Trustee of Mass Horticulture and a Lifetime Master Gardener of the MA Master Gardener Association, who will talk about cold frames and hoop houses to extend the growing season by as much as 2-4 weeks. These tools let you transition seedlings and from windowsills or greenhouses to the outdoors. Presented at 7 p.m. at the A.L. Dudley-Gen-dron Post 414, 156 Boston Post Road, Sutton. The Garden Club welcomes new members: \$20 individual or \$30 for a family.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25

- St. Patrick's Church Autumn Recycling Event, 7 East Street, Whitinsville. 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Accepting gently used books (no encyclopedias), media & magazines, gently used textiles/clothing and accessories, electronics for a fee (no propane, batteries, lightbulbs), rinsed bottles/cans returnable in MA (no glass).

Please keep items for each station separate. Call 508-234-5656 or contact Officesupport@mystpatricks.com for price list or questions. Proceeds benefit Youth in Action service projects.

- Blackstone Valley Crop Hunger Walk will start at 9 a.m. at the Village Congregational Church in Whitinsville. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. For more information, contact Barbara Fortin at 508-234-2137.

- The Sutton Historical Society will be set up at the M. M. Sherman Blacksmith Shop, 6 Singletary Avenue, from 4-7 p.m. as part of the OMG Pumpkin Festival 2025 hosting a miniature Halloween village exhibit, Revolutionary War metal detecting finds from several Sutton farms, and interpreters sharing some of Sutton's more colorful and historic events. This community event at the Sutton Common is sponsored by the Sutton Fourth organization and includes a costume parade, tractor parade, scarecrow and jack-o-lantern contests, trunk-or-treat at the school complex, as well as a Boo Bash at the Sutton Library. More information can be found at the Sutton Fourth. This event is free and open to the general public of all ages. The Historic Sutton Center Walking Tour begins at 5 p.m. on Sutton Town Common, 4 Uxbridge Road. Re-enactors will guide visitors to multiple stops around the Common sharing the town's history and some stories befitting the Halloween season.

- Great food and fellowship can be had at the Community House Ham & Bean Supper, 5 p.m. at 8 Court Street, Uxbridge (behind the Uxbridge Town Common). Sponsored by the Uxbridge Congregational Church. The menu includes baked ham, home-cooked beans, potato salad, coleslaw, brown bread, beverages and dessert. \$15 per person,

New England Ghosts and Legends

Come for a boo-tiful evening

The Charlton Public Library will host Jeff Belanger on Thursday, October 23 at 6 p.m. for a talk on New England Ghosts and Legends. This ghostly multi-media program will take you on a journey through the haunts in your backyard, and around the world. Pulling from Jeff's 25 years of research for his books, podcasts, adventures, and the various television shows he's worked on, join one of the nation's premiere storytellers for a trip through the unusual and the

unexplained.

Jeff Belanger is a storyteller, adventurer, journalist, and one of the most visible explorers of the unexplained today. The author of over a dozen books published in six languages, he is also the Emmy-nominated host, writer, and producer of the PBS and Amazon Prime series "New England Legends" and the weekly "New England Legends" podcast. He's the writer and researcher for the "Ghost Adventures" series, and he's

been a guest on hundreds of television and radio networks and programs, including History, Travel Channel, Biography Channel, PBS, CBS Sunday Morning, NPR, BBC, and Coast to Coast AM.

Registration is required and can be done at charltonlibrary.org or by calling the library at 508-248-0452.

Charlton Public Library is located at 40 Main Street in Charlton. Additional parking is available at the elementary school and the town hall.

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26

• Howl-O-Ween Costume Parade at the Uxbridge Dog Park (rain date Nov. 2). A family friendly event that invites dogs of all shapes and sizes (and their humans) to show off their most creative costumes. Registration from 12-12:45 p.m. Parade starts at 1 p.m. sharp. Suggested donation: \$10 per dog. Proceeds go towards maintaining the Uxbridge Dog Park.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30

• "Vampires in New England? Myths and Realities of the Undead." The Willard House Clock Museum presents Old Sturbridge Village Historian and Curator Tom Kelleher with an intriguing story that goes back hundreds of years. "Did some rural Yankees 200 years ago believe in vampires?" Kelleher queries. "Why did scores of early new Englanders open the graves of their sweethearts, sons, daughters, husbands and wives?" What were they looking for and what did they do with the unearthed corpses? And what about Count Dracula? So many questions.

The presentation will take place from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the museum, 11 Willard Street, North Grafton. Wear your Halloween costume and the museum will have treats.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1

• Annual Holiday Fair from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

at St. Denis Church, 23 Manchaug Road, Douglas. Crafts, raffles, baked goods, kids' table. Luncheon served from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Vendor spaces still available. Visit SaintDenisChurch.com for more information.

• St. Peter's Parish in Northbridge will hold its Annual Holiday Fair from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. in the parish hall, 39 Church Avenue, Northbridge. Come out with your family and friends to enjoy the day! We will have all of your favorites: White Elephant Table, Baked Goods Table, Holiday Table, Craft Table with beautiful handmade quilts. There will also be tables filled with raffles (you never know what will be there!), a silent auction, scratch ticket raffle, quilt raffle and a gift basket raffle. Stay and enjoy a bite to eat with all of your favorite foods being served. For more information, please contact the parish office at 508-234-2156 or email: parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org

• Meat Raffle, sponsored by the Millbury Lions Club will be held from 2 p.m. – 5 p.m., St. Charles Hotel, 126 West Main Street, Millbury. Early bird tickets available at 1:30 p.m.

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.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9

• A Polka Dance featuring Dennis Polisky & Maestro's Men will be held from 1-5 p.m. at the Uxbridge Polish American Social Civil Club, 217 Mendon Street, Uxbridge. Plenty of seating and room for dancing. Full bar, food and raffle tickets will be available

for purchase. \$15 admission. For more information, call 508-278-7583.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11

• Charlotte Wilson will share fascinat-

ing 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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<p>Stanton ABRAXAS Tribute Band</p>  <p>OCTOBER 17</p>	<p>FALL CUSTOM SUCCULENT & PUMPKIN WORKSHOP FROM BEMIS FARMS NURSERY</p>  <p>OCTOBER 23</p>
<p>COMEDY NIGHT AT SLATERS FEATURING CHRISTINE HURLEY SPECIAL GUEST MITCH STINSON HOSTED BY DAN MILLER</p>  <p>OCTOBER 24</p>	<p>Wizard of Oz The Ultimate Party Experience</p>  <p>OCTOBER 25</p>

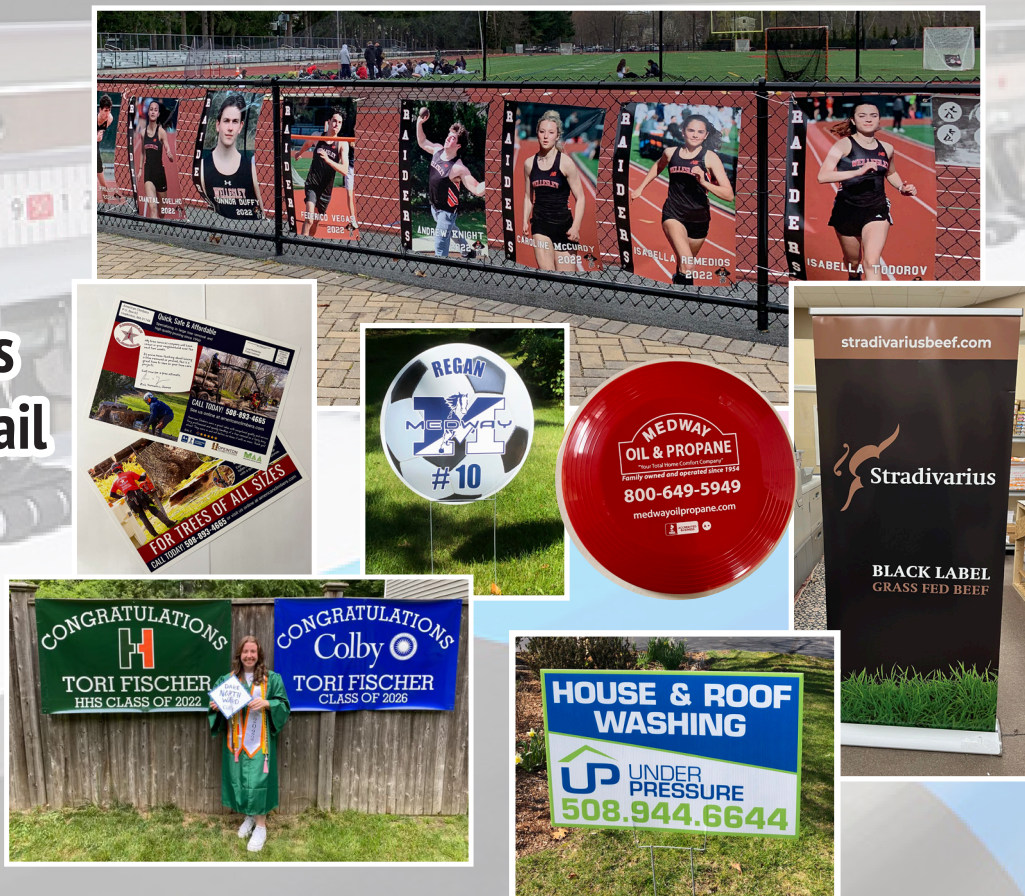
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COMEDY NIGHT: WILL NOONAN, DAVE RATTIGAN, AND ZACH REMI • November 21
DOCK 10: A TRIBUTE TO THE '80S • November 22
KSF: A TRIBUTE TO KANSAS, STYX, AND FOREIGNER • November 29
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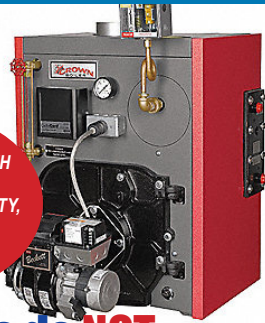
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