

## Auburn Receives \$1.9 Million FEMA Grant for Firefighter Hiring, Safe Harbor Designation, Camp Gleason Restoration, Auburn Library Events

BY JANET STOICA  
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

The Town of Auburn has received notification from FEMA that their 2024 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant in the amount of \$1,910,318.87 has been approved for award.

The town had been discussing staffing within the Fire Rescue Department for several years since their staffing study was completed in 2022. The SAFER grant was created to provide funding directly to fire departments to help them increase the number of trained front-line firefighters available in their communities. The goal of SAFER is to enhance local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response, and operational standards established by NFPA 1710.

This grant has secured funding to hire eight (8) additional firefighters as recommended by the independent staffing study commissioned by the town. This will bring each group to thirteen (13) members and will allow them to more appropriately staff two suppression companies and maintain



a shift commander position staffed daily.

Auburn has recently been informed by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) that they are now designated a "Safe Harbor" from 40B developments under certain conditions. The town is actively monitoring its Subsidizing Housing Inventory (SHI) status to determine if it can assert these

protections. In addition to the three statutory requirements that can provide Safe Harbor, the town can gain temporary Safe Harbor status by maintaining its 5-year Housing Production Plan and meeting annual affordable housing production goals. To invoke Safe

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## Keeping Local News Alive and Communities Connected

BY JENNIFER RUSSO

For the first time in our newspaper's history, the cost of postage has surpassed the cost of printing. On average, mailing services have increased in price by over 7% in the last couple of years. While the USPS may require this operationally, it does underscore the growing financial challenges facing local journalism today. Paper, ink, fuel, and distribution costs have all risen sharply in the past year, and while we've absorbed those increases for as long as we could, we now find ourselves at a turning point.

Despite these challenges, one thing hasn't changed: our commitment to providing free, local news that keeps our communities informed and connected. Local journalism is not just about headlines — it's about people. It's about the high school team's championship win, the opening of a new family business, the celebration of a lifelong volunteer, and the coverage of town meetings, and ensuring that every story is told.

When you open your community newspaper, you read about your neighbors, your schools, and the heartbeat of your area. You're

seeing your community reflected in print - its triumphs, challenges, and spirit. Local news brings people together, fosters accountability, and preserves the stories that make each town unique. Without it, those small but powerful connections risk being lost.

Advertising revenue has always been a vital source of support for our papers, and we are deeply grateful to the local businesses that continue to support us. But as printing and mailing costs rise to historic levels, advertising alone can no longer carry the full weight of production. We recognize that our small businesses are facing similar pressures, and we would prefer not to raise advertising rates too much. Instead, we're turning to you — our readers — for help.

This November, we're launching our annual Support the Newspaper campaign. Every donation, no matter the size, helps offset the rising costs of printing and distribution, ensuring that your paper remains free, local, and delivered right to your doorstep or mailbox. Your contribution isn't

### COMMUNITY NEWS

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## BUYING OR SELLING A HOUSE?



I feel it's important to recognize those who serve the community!

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# MassDOT Opens Route 20 Roundabout

BY JANET STOICA  
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has fully opened the roundabout at Oxbow Road to both lanes of traffic effective the week of October 6. The temporary closure of Oxbow Road at Route 20, across from Arnie's Towing, has been lifted to the relief of many commuters. MassDOT will place signage notifying drivers of the approaching roundabout and speed limits.

MassDOT would like to remind drivers that when entering the roundabout, they should always yield to traffic already in the roundabout and enter only when there is a safe gap in traffic.

If staying on Route 20-Eastbound, drivers may use either lane to take the first exit to continue on Route 20-Eastbound and if reversing direction to travel on Route 20-Westbound, they should use the left lane of the roundabout and then take the third exit. If your destination is Oxbow Road, you

should also use the left lane and take the second exit.

The roundabout on Route 20 at Oxbow Road was installed to address traffic and safety concerns in the area as well as to provide access to Oxbow Road and a location between Route 56 and Richardson Corner Road that allows vehicles to make a U-turn. Read more about roundabouts on the Federal Highway Administration website.

MassDOT also offers some tips for traveling through the new roundabout:

- Slow down and follow the posted advisory speeds as you approach the roundabout.
- Yield to traffic already in the roundabout and enter only when

the roundabout.

- If necessary while traveling in the left lane, use the truck apron, the central raised portion of the roundabout which has been



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there is a safe gap in traffic.

- Be sure to allow extra space for trucks and large vehicles.
- Use your turn signal when exiting the roundabout.
- While inside the roundabout, keep moving and only stop unless necessary to keep traffic flowing smoothly.
- Please pay attention to all signage.

Tips for Trucks and Large Vehicles

MassDOT also advises additional tips for oversized trucks and other large vehicles traveling through the roundabout:

- Enter and exit the roundabout at slower speeds to ensure the safety of other drivers traveling in

designed to accommodate large vehicles.

- Be mindful of your truck's path, especially in the single-lane configuration.
- Allow extra space for turning and merging and be cautious of smaller vehicles.

MassDOT is redesigning and reconstructing Route 20 in Charlton and Oxford to improve safety and traffic operations. Proposed work includes widening the roadway, replacing bridges over the Little River and the French River, adding sidewalks and shared use paths, installing a median barrier, improving safety and traffic operations at various intersections, and enhancing stormwater treatment.

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## Affordable Housing Opportunity

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# of bedrooms	Rent*	Minimum Income Requirement**
1 BR	\$1602	\$48,000
2 BR	\$1728	\$51,600
3 BR	\$1851	\$55,400

\*Rent may be adjusted based on annual income limits provided by HUD.  
\*\*Minimum Income Requirement does not apply to households receiving housing assistance such as Section 8 or MRVP.

**Eligibility Requirements:**  
•Must meet all income and background eligibility requirements under the Tenant Selection Plan approved by EOHLC.  
•Minimum 1 person per BR

**Maximum Income per Person/People Household Size**  
*(2024 limits, provided by Worcester MA, HUD Metro Area)*

1 person	2 people	3 people	4 people	5 people	6 people
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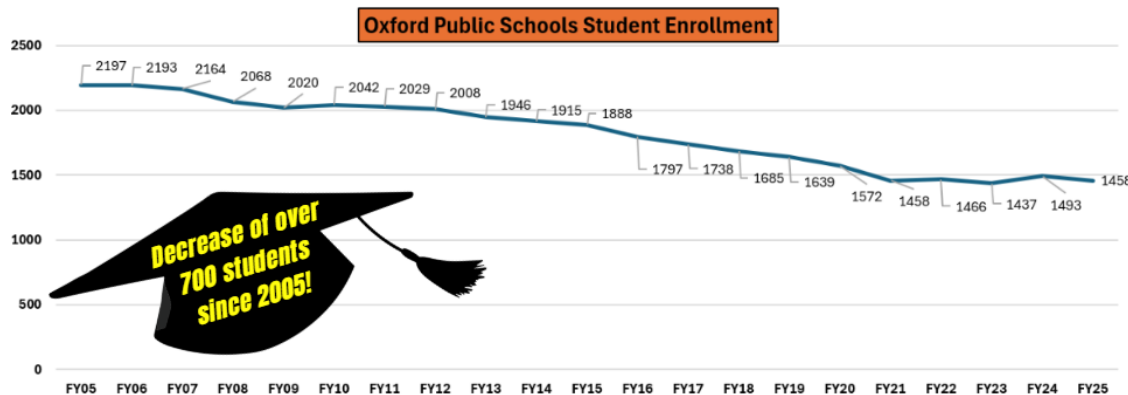
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# Oxford Launches Educational Facilities Study



BY JANET STOICA  
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According to a report submitted by Tony Souza, Oxford's Assistant Town Manager, over the past twenty years Massachusetts has seen a steady drop in student enrollment across both K-12 schools and colleges. In Oxford, enrollment has declined by more

than 700 students since 2005.

Even though student enrollment fluctuates, school buildings remain unchanged. The buildings are required to be maintained, heated, insured, and staffed daily. Fixed costs accumulate and are a challenge for taxpayers.

The Board of Selectmen and Town Manager Jennifer Callahan have made the long-term future of

Oxford's schools their top priority. In FY25, the town launched a comprehensive Educational Facilities Study to assess whether their school buildings meet today's needs, how the town can best prepare for the future, and how

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Harbor, the ZBA must notify the 40B applicant within 15 days of opening the comprehensive permit hearing providing documentation to support the claim. Then EOHLIC will review the claims and make a determination. Auburn has received a certificate of approval from the EOHLIC on September 23, 2025. This certification is effective for a two-year period from July 21, 2025 to July 20, 2027. As a result, the ZBA is not required to accept 40B applications during the Safe Harbor time period. For more information, please visit <https://www.auburnma.gov/808/40B-Information> to see the certification and other Auburn 40B information. Newly-restored Camp Gleason

was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 6th. The event marked the culmination of years of hard work, dedication, and community spirit to bring new life to the local landmark. Town Manager Dori Vecchio and Assistant Town Manager Paul Dell'Aquila led the ceremony joined by local State Representatives, members of the Board of Selectmen, Auburn's Police Chief and Fire Chief, and many other residents. Special guests in attendance were Betty Murphy and Donald Staruk, whose family had special ties to Camp Gleason. Ms. Murphy's father-in-law, John J. "Johnny" Murphy, played a pivotal role in Camp Gleason's history. Mr. Murphy was on the building committee that helped select the camp's location. Originally intended to be in Millbury it was Mr. Murphy who successfully advo-

cated for Auburn thereby helping secure Camp Gleason's place in the town's legacy.

The Auburn Public Library recently launched a new graphic novel section for adult readers who may want to check out works like Kentaro Miura's Berserk or Emil Ferris's My Favorite Things Is Monsters! If you're a fan of comics the library will be adding more inventory regularly. They will also be launching a Library of Things which will allow patrons to borrow useful household items such as a sewing machine, a portable DVD player, and a paper shredder, as well as unique kids toys and board games. The library asks that if there are additional items you'd be interested in borrowing, please let them know. Check out their calendar for a listing of upcoming programs. <https://auburnlibrary.org/>

## COMMUNITY NEWS

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just helping to print pages — it's helping to keep civic engagement alive, preserving our community history, and giving a platform to local voices that deserve to be heard.

We are endlessly thankful for your readership, your trust, and your belief in the value of local journalism. For decades, this paper has been honored to share your stories, celebrate your milestones, and champion the spirit of our towns. With your help, we can continue to do so for many years to come.

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# Auburn and the American Revolutionary War

## Part 7, the Wiser/Printer Family of the South Parish of Worcester

James Wiser, also known as Artimus James Wiser, was a Native American who lived in the South Parish of Worcester and answered the alarm to Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775. He

was a private in Captain Timothy Bigelow's Company of minutemen and militia in the Colonel Artemas Ward regiment. He was also listed in Captain Jonas Hubbard's Company, of Colonel Jonathan Ward's

regiment as a private. According to the muster roll dated August 1, 1775, James enlisted April 27, 1775, and served for three months and 15 days. After the Battle of Lexington the militia, under the direction of Colonel Ward, held the British in Boston until additional British forces arrived in May and June.

James was the son of Benjamin and Sarah (Printer) Wiser. He was born November 1, 1752, in Grafton. He was named after his grandfather, James (1685-1713) who was credited with building the house at what is now 13 Bancroft Street in 1797, as noted in the "Historic Houses of Auburn" book. The only position recorded in town records that James held was fence viewer in 1781. His job was to make sure fences in the town were properly maintained to cut down on neighbors arguing and other difficulties with uncontained animals getting into gardens.

James's great grandfather was James Quanohpohkit Rumney Marsh Wiser. According to the Native Northeast Portal, he was a member of a leading Natick family tribe at Medfield. He and his brother, Thomas, were scouts for the English during King Philip's War, in 1675. He and his brother were used as guides for troops from the Mass. Bay Colony. James helped the English recruit the Praying Indians interned on Deer

Island to spy on the Narragansett and Wampanoag to gain information on attacks to Lancaster. After the war, James returned to Natick.

James Rumney Marsh Wiser's father was John Awassamog, aka Sagamore John. He married Yawata

married Benjamin Wiser. The couple lived on Wiser's farm in Worcester and raised five children, James, Benjamin, Hannah, Sarah, and Abigail. Sarah died in Auburn in the winter of 1794 at age 77.

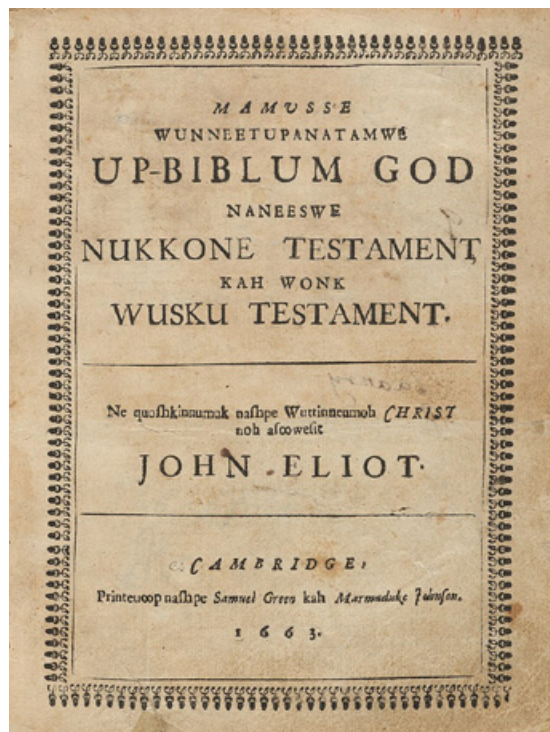
Her grandfather was James (Wawaus) Printer and was a Nipmuc leader from Hassanamesit, (Grafton). He is known for his work at the first printing press in the colonies. He helped produce the first Indian Bible in the Algonquin language. He also set the type for books like "Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson." He also served as an interpreter for Rev. Eliot, especially in translating the Bible. He worked on Indian Primers, Psalm books, and typeset Puritan missionary works to be used to Christianize Native Americans. James Printer worked as a typesetter for 16 years before King Philip's War. Sarah's grandmother's name was never recorded.

Sarah's great-grandfather was Naoas who was a convert of Rev. Eliot and one of the leaders of the Christian Native church in Hassanamesit.

Artimus James never married and died April 24, 1811 and is buried in the Auburn Center Burial Ground with many of his family members.

This article is made possible by the Auburn Historical Society & Museum, 41 South Street. The museum is open Tuesday and Saturday mornings 9:30-12:30 and may be reached at auburnmuseum@verizon.net or 508-832-6856. You may also visit: auburnhistoricalmuseum.org or follow on Facebook at Facebook.com/AuburnMuseum/ .

*Submitted by Helen Poirier*



*The first Indian Bible in the Algonquin language known as the Eliot Bible.*

(Abigail) and they were living in Medford when Awassamog converted to Christianity and followed the Reverend John Eliot, the overseer of the "Praying Towns" where tribes who converted to Christianity lived together. James was well educated and a family leader.

Artimus James Wiser's mother was Sarah Printer who was born in 1717 in Grafton, and was the daughter of Ammi Printer, of Natick, Massachusetts. In 1747, while living in Southborough, she

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### OXFORD continued from page 3

to make the most effective use of the space they already have. The report will demonstrate Oxford's commitment to being both fiscally responsible and student-focused. Their goal is to plan with accurate data and ensure that their schools serve families and taxpayers for years to come.

The study includes three major components. First, it provides enrollment projections with a ten-year outlook using housing trends, census data, and other demographic factors to forecast future student populations. Secondly, it conducts an educational program analysis reviewing class sizes, grade

configurations, and space utilization to ensure that school buildings meet the advanced learning needs of students. Finally, it undertakes a comprehensive building conditions assessment examining the physical state of the schools to determine what repairs, upgrades, or potential replacements may be necessary.

To make this study possible, Oxford received a \$50,000 Community Compact Best Practices Grant and procured Arrowstreet Architects to lead the work. Arrowstreet is a Boston-based award-winning architecture and design firm.

The study will include several key steps to guide long-term school planning. Initially, building site visits will be conducted at each school to inspect facilities and prepare detailed reports on their condi-

tions helping to set clear capital priorities. The next phase will be educational planning workshops to be held with school and town leaders to discuss long-term goals, space needs, and potential options including consolidation, upgrades, or new construction. Finally, a comprehensive report will be delivered that brings together enrollment forecasts, grade configuration options, facility condition findings, cost estimates, and a long-term plan for the future of the schools.

"This study is about making sure our schools are not only right-sized for today but designed to serve the Oxford community for generations to come," said Town Manager Jennifer Callahan. The study is expected to be completed in 2026.

# OHS Outstanding Student Athlete Named

The Massachusetts State Field Hockey Coaches Association (MSFHCA) is proud to recognize four outstanding student-athletes as the September Players of the Month, representing each region of the state. These athletes exemplify the skill, leadership, and sportsmanship that define high school field hockey in Massachusetts. In the Central Region, Amelia Blood, senior captain at Oxford High School was named.

Amelia Blood continues to demonstrate what it means to be a complete player and leader. Guiding her team to a 9-0 start, she has recorded 8 goals and 8 assists while contributing on both sides of the ball. Most recently, she opened the scoring in a key win over Division 1 #9 Andover. Known for her versatility and integrity, Amelia is also recognized for her leadership off the field—often staying behind after games to ensure the team bus is spotless.



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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).

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If you want to hike the Midstate or just learn more about it, a great starting point is [midstatetrail.org](http://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 pic-

tures 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 Island'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.

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.

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SPORTS

# Karate On Another Level

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

In 1995 Christopher Amato was introduced to the sport of karate while attending the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, seven years later he met Leah, who would later become his wife and karate partner. Once their kids were old enough, around four, they too were introduced to the sport.

Christopher has risen to the Renshi (polished instructor) level, while his wife Leah is a Sensi or teacher and their two kids Dominic (15 years old) and Gabby (14) have both climbed the ladder to Sempai (senior student). The family trained at the Bushi Karate Club, a dojo in Oxford. When the facility became available, the Amato's jumped at the chance to purchase the dojo so they, as well as all the friends they had made there, could continue to train there.

Bushi karate provides traditional Japanese karate in an approachable but rigorous way for students of all ages to the community of Oxford and surrounding towns. Karate schools are often a much-needed

social resource within a community, providing structure, discipline, goal-oriented achievements, and healthy after-work or after school activity for every student.

The Amato's became the owners of the Bushi Karate Club in 2019, a year before Covid-19 ravaged the world and according to Leah, it was a rather stressful year once the pandemic hit. However things would eventually subside and the dojo has been a place to go to learn the sport.

While the family has all been successful with their training, young Gabby has taken the sport to another level.

"Two years ago we went to an AAU Tournament in New Jersey and she really like participating with a different set of competitors and really wanted to pursue it more," her mother said. "We then had to change her training. She had built her foundation with our family but she was now getting ready to move onto a higher level so we got her a strength and conditioning coach (Ashlee Nosek) and an elite Kata (Sensei Joey Castro) coach."

Kata (forms) is the practice of

performing sequences of specific Karate basic moves in multiple directions targeting a virtual opponent. The ultimate goal of learning and presenting a Kata is to be able to demonstrate the sequences of self-defense movements at full speed, with precision, power, and fluidity between various movement segments while ensuring breathing, timing, and purpose of movement are aligned.

In addition to being involved with karate Gabby plays softball, fences, plays the flute and participates in student government, but it is karate that is atop that list. So much so she trains three nights a week at the Bushi Club, works one night with her conditioning coach and one with her elite Kata coach.

In April of this year she took part in her first big national tournament in Las Vegas coming home with three medals – third place in Kata and two second place finishes in long and short Kobudo (weapons). That gave her a sense of what she could do.

"I love seeing the progress that I have made at AAU Tournaments, but coming home from Las Vegas with three medals changed my outlook," Gabby said. "Originally I had not been super confident in my abilities, but this definitely boosted my confidence."

In addition to her confidence beginning to soar, she was invited to become part of the US team that was going to participate in Sweden as well as qualifying for the Nationals in Fort Lauderdale, Florida later in the year.

"Taking part in Nationals I was very nervous, but excited – I was just looking for the experience," she said. "I was not expecting anything else. There I got to train with the only female gold medalist."

She may not had expected anything else but a learning experience at the US Nationals but she left



Florida with two more medals – a gold in long kobudo and a silver medal in short kobudo. As soon as that tournament came to an end Gabby had to immediately jump on a plane and head to Malmö, Sweden to take part in her first World Championships. Once again she would surprise herself and walked away from the World Union Karate Federation (WUKF) with yet another gold medal in long kobudo.

"I felt good going in, but I was still very nervous," she recalled. "It was such an honor to compete with higher level athletes from around the world."

Having grown up watching her older brother take part in karate, she knew that she wanted to follow in his footsteps. Not only has she followed her brother's success (Dominic is a first degree black-belt), but she has also surpassed him. In addition to the many med-

als she has received over this past year, she has completed her second degree blackbelt and is looking to go even further. Gabby has dreams of earning her third degree blackbelt that will take another three years where she will have to go through another four katas and take part in another 30 fights before she can take the four-hour test showing everything she has learned to become a sensei.

"To some it may be a lot of time, but it has definitely been worth all the time that I have put in," Gabby said. "I love being able to continually progress, while competing with all the friends I've made along the way."

Friends, that not only works out in the Oxford dojo, but now all over the world. As a young 14-year-old it is certain that Gabby Amato will be making a name for herself as she continues to move up the karate ladder.

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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 arrogant 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*

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## LIVING WITH LUKE

amyleclaire@hotmail.com

# Luke's To Do List

AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

**L**uke 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 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 regu-

late body temperature and cool down in a car as we can. One time I left him for a very short period in his travel crate. When I rushed back and popped the trunk, he popped his head out of the sunroof 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.

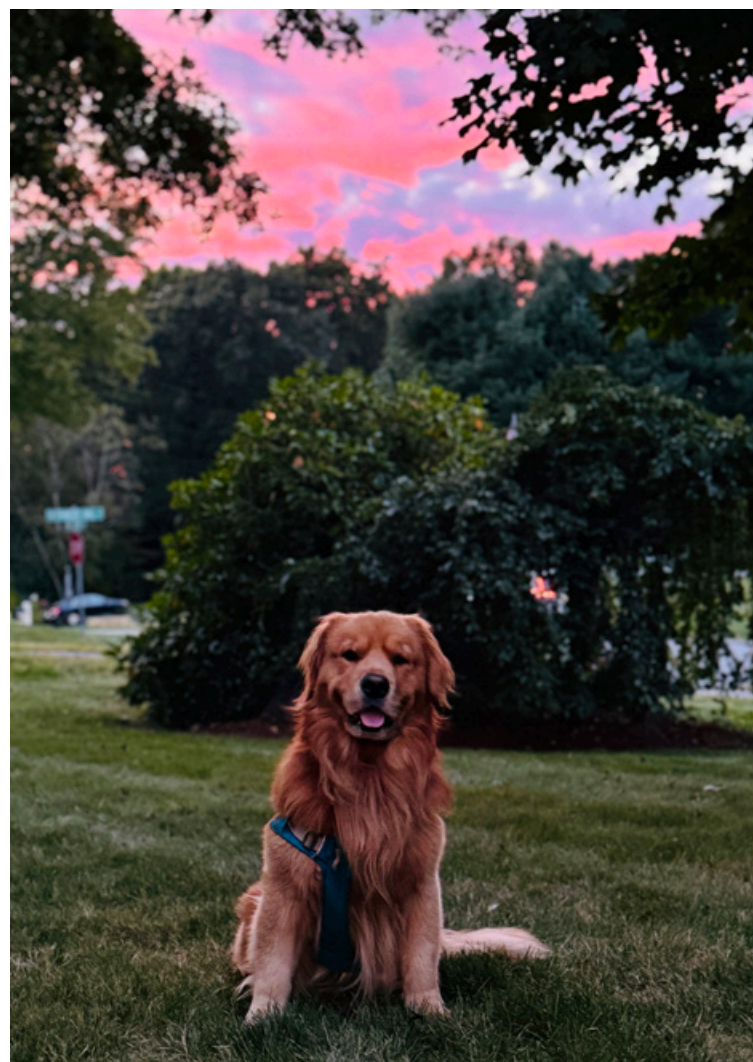
Luke is so pure and innocent. He always sees the good in me. It's what dogs do. I think about the difference between our agendas. His: breakfast, bone chewing, shrub sniffing, napping, socializing, one more nap, walking. Mine: teaching, errands, deadlines, housework, appointments.

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

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October 28 –Five Nights at Freddy's and Armpit Fudge, 4-6 p.m. Nothing says Halloween like a scary movie with popcorn and armpit fudge! Join the crowd in

the Teen Room for one or both. No registration required.

November recurring events:

Tuesdays: Sunset Storytime 5:30- 6:15 p.m. For preschool and kindergartner (3-6 years). Songs, rhymes, stories and crafts with a different theme each week.

Wednesdays: Terrific Tots

Storytime 10:30 a.m. (ages 2-3.5) Songs, rhymes, stories and crafts.

Thursdays: Hooray for Pre-K Storytime 10:30 a.m. (ages 3.5 – 5)

Knitting, Crocheting and Embroidery Group 1-3 p.m.

Fridays: Wonderful Ones Storytime 10 a.m.

Baby Besties Storytimes 11:15 a.m.

Saturdays: Nov. 1 and 15 Storytime (ages 2-5) Nov. 1 and 15

Special Program: Ghosts of New England with Jonah Knight. This program explores local history through the lens of spirits and unexplained phenomena.

We will learn about a story from each NE State.... MA: A benevolent spirit cares for a child, telling her things she would have no way of knowing VT: The ghost of a

man afraid of being buried alive haunts his graveyard. CT: One of America's first serial killers can be felt where his body was discovered. NH: A woman who died in the White Mountains is frequently heard by hikers near her resting place. ME: Sailors and visitors still report signs of a grisly lighthouse murder RI: The ghost of a famous author has been seen multiple times at the location of his greatest heartbreak.

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REAL ESTATE

# 3 Reasons Affordability is Signs of Improvement This Fall

**F**or 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!

# Small Business Series Announced by State Treasurer and M&T Bank

Series will provide valuable insights and resources to empower small businesses

**I**n collaboration with M&T Bank, State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg's Small Business Initiative (SBI) opened online registration for its Fall 2025 Small Business Empowerment Series. The series includes two free virtual workshops that will help Massachusetts entrepreneurs becoming business owners and protect themselves from fraud. Both workshops will be presented in English with live interpretation in Spanish.

"Small, growing businesses need access to the right kind of information, tools and support when starting out," said State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg. "That is why our empowerment webinars, developed to support our state's entrepreneurs, are so critical to their long-term success. We thank M&T

Bank for partnering with us on this important work."

"M&T Bank is proud to partner with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts offering a series of informative webinars that help protect small business owners from fraud and empower them to grow. We're deeply committed to serving and supporting the people and small businesses of the Bay State to help build stronger, more resilient communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive," said Jeff Carpenter, M&T Bank's Interim Regional President in Massachusetts.

The series will kick off on October 27 with recorded remarks from Treasurer Goldberg and Kim Gainsboro, Head of Government Banking at M&T Bank, and will conclude on November 3. During

the series, participants will attend virtual trainings presented by experts at M&T Bank who will cover topics related to expanding access to business ownership and fraud prevention.

You can register for one or both of the following sessions at: [https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/WN\\_I0UkGcKsQT-2f0f-sPNNiww](https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_I0UkGcKsQT-2f0f-sPNNiww) \t "\_blank"

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# Should I replace a six year old battery with some life left?

**Q.** I have a six-year-old Toyota with the original battery. The car has started fine so far this year. I am wondering, should I just replace the battery due to age?

tery soon. The last test showed it was at 71 percent life. I will replace this six-year-old battery for no other reason that I do not want to hear from my wife that the car did not start.

**A.** The typical life of a battery is five years, so you are to some extent on borrowed time. I test my car's batteries routinely to see how they are doing. I am in a comparable situation with one car and will replace the bat-

**Q.** I purchased a Ford Explorer when they came out more than 20 years ago, and it was a great vehicle. About 10 years later I purchased the redesigned model

and found it was lacking in several areas. I am looking at the latest Explorer, what are your thoughts on the newest model.

**A.** Based on my most recent experience, this latest version may be the best Explorer that Ford has built to date. The optional 400 horsepower turbo-charged V-6 engine is smooth and powerful, the newly redesigned 10-speed transmission shifts smoothly and is nicely matched to the engine. The model I evaluated was the "platinum" trim and it was very luxurious. As a three row SUV, Ford did an excellent job with this newest Explorer.

**Q.** I purchased a new battery from the local parts store. I based on one of your columns purchased a TopDon battery tester and found this battery although new

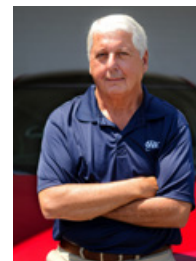
was at only 80 percent life. I asked the parts guy about it and he just shrugged. He suggested that after a month or so of charge cycles it should get over 90 percent life. Your thoughts.

**A.** Batteries can degrade as soon as they leave the factory. At AAA we test every battery before we install it to make sure it is at 90 percent or better life. The idea that the battery was not "fully baked" yet sound like an excuse for a less than stellar battery.

**Q.** I was given a Bolens garden-tractor that has not run in a long time. I think it was made in Canada and then the company went out of business. I really like the looks of this tractor; it has a manual transmission and differential. It looks like it would be handy around my property. Where do I start to get it running? You once said you answer every question, even lawn tractor questions?

**A.** Getting an old tractor to start is pretty similar to rescuing any old vehicle. Most of these 1970s vintage tractors used engines still in use today, so parts should be available. Typically, the fuel system is usually the biggest issue. Drain and clean the fuel tank, replace the fuel filter, and clean out the carburetor. Depending on the condition, you may find the carburetor needs a rebuilding. Drain and replace the oil and spark plug(s). When the spark plug(s) are out, add some light oil to the cylinders. Check the engine turns over and there is spark. On the first attempt to start the tractor I would use premixed two-stroke fuel. The little bit of oil in the fuel will

help lubricate the engine. Once it is running, let it fully warm up and then shut it down. Check the oil and belts and look for loose bolts, brackets, and wire connections. Yes, I do try to answer every email, usually within 24 hours. If you do not hear from me, send a follow up.



BY JOHN PAUL

**Q.** A simple question I recently purchased a used car, and it has an inspection sticker, parking sticker, and car wash sticker on the windshield. It also has a few off-color bumper stickers. How do I get these off?

**A.** On the windshield use a razor blade scraper, with a new blade. Carefully scrape off the stickers, being careful not to slip and nick the trim. Once the stickers are removed, use a little cleaner such as Goo-Gone to remove the sticky residue then follow up with glass cleaner to clean the entire windshield. On the bumper use a hair dryer and warm up the bumper stickers and with your fingernail try to lift up the corner of the sticker. Once you have a good grip on the sticker try to pull it back on itself. Using an 180-degree release angle, combined with heat is key to minimizing tearing and reducing leftover residue. Once the stickers are removed clean off any residue and wax the bumper.

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# Open enrollment: what to know before you enroll

For many people, fall brings an important opportunity: open enrollment. While it may not sound as exciting as planning for the holidays, taking a careful look at your workplace benefits now could save you hundreds or even thousands of dollars next year.



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

Open enrollment is the period when you will choose your medical and other workplace benefits for the year ahead. Most employers hold it in the fall, with elections taking effect in January. Once the window closes, you usually can't make changes unless you experience a major life event like marriage, divorce, the birth of a child or when a dependent has become an emancipated adult.

While it may be easy to simply renew last year's choices, that could be a costly mistake. Your employer's plans, providers or costs

may have changed. It's also possible your own circumstances are different than they were a year ago — for example, if you had a baby, got married or expect new medical needs. Taking a fresh look helps ensure your benefits match your life today.

Here are a few tips for navigating open enrollment.

**Compare health plans carefully.** Employers often offer more than one health, dental or vision option. Look at differences in provider networks, prescription coverage and premiums. If you and your spouse both have coverage options, compare plans across employers. Just be mindful that some companies charge a fee if you enroll a partner who has their own workplace coverage. Many plans offer wellness discounts on monthly premiums based on your personal health condition.

**Check your life insurance.** Many employers provide a base level of life insurance, with the option to buy more. If your family has grown or your financial responsibilities have increased, now is the time to make sure you have enough cover-

age to protect your loved ones.

**Consider disability coverage.** A short-term disability plan can help cover income gaps for up to 12 months during recovery from surgery, illness or childbirth. Long-term disability insurance offers protection if you're unable to work again for an extended period up to age 65. Ideally, coverage should replace up to 60% of your pre-tax income.

**Understand supplemental options.** Some employers also offer accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) insurance. While it can provide peace of mind, remember that it's not a substitute for life or disability insurance, since it only covers specific accidents.

**Take advantage of tax-friendly accounts.** Flexible spending accounts (FSAs) and health savings accounts (HSAs) let you use pretax dollars for eligible medical expenses. If you have young children or other dependents, ask whether your employer offers a dependent care FSA to help offset care costs. Note that these are use-it-or-lose-

it, so contribute only what you expect to spend every year. HSAs, available with high-deductible health plans, are more flexible, since unused funds roll over from year to year and can even serve as long-term savings.

**Review your retirement savings.** While your retirement plan usually isn't part of open enrollment, this is a good time to revisit it. Make sure you're contributing enough to earn your employer's match. Small increases can make a big difference over time.

Open enrollment may not be

the most thrilling item on your fall to-do list, but it could be one of the most important. Taking a little time now to review your employee group benefits could give you greater financial security and extra savings throughout the year.

Dennis Antonopoulos  
Edward Jones Financial Advisor  
5 Albert Street, Auburn, MA 01501  
508-832-5385  
Dennis.Antonopoulos@edwardjones.com

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

## Oxford Bulk Drop-Off

Residents may drop off bulk items on the following days. No commercial/business loads. One ton truck or van is the maximum size that will be accepted. Must have proof of residency. Households are limited to two loads only. Loads will be checked and recorded at the gate. If you arrive on the wrong day, you will be denied access to drop-off.

Drop-Off Dates: Saturday, Oct. 25, Oxford Center. Residents North of Charlton St./ Sutton Ave.  
Saturday, Nov. 1, Oxford Center. Residents South of Charlton St./ Sutton Ave.

Time: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Location: Oxford Transfer Station, 200 Leicester St., North Oxford  
508-892-1219

Drop -Off dates will be strictly enforced. If you have any question on what is accepted, call Casella at 508-892-1219.

If you are unable to make your Bulk Drop Off day: Please call the DPW before Oct. 23 at 508-987-6006 to switch your Saturday.

### ACCEPTABLE BULK MATERIALS

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- AIR CONDITIONERS, APPLIANCES
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- LAWN MOWERS (DRAIN FLUID)
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- WATER HEATERS
- BIKES

### UNACCEPTABLE MATERIALS

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- TEXTILES
- CAR PARTS (INCL. TIRES)
- HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
- PAINT

- PROPANE TANKS
- WASTE OIL
- FLUORESCENT BULBS
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- HOUSEHOLD TRASH

For more information contact the Department of Public Works at 508-987-6006

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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](mailto:news@theyankeeexpress.com).

**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, gen-

tly 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](mailto: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 Millbury Historical Society in the Asa Waters Mansion will be open 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. 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.

• 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 [thesuttonfourth.org](http://thesuttonfourth.org). 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, children under 6 years are free. For reservations, call 818-361-2881. Limited tickets will be sold at the door.

**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](http://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](mailto: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 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.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16**

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

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**“Discover the Nipmuc Lithic Trail” October 25 at the Samuel Slater Experience**

Native Americans in the Nipmuc Territory surrounding Webster and northeastern Connecticut left tangible artifacts, called lithic structures, and some can be found today in area fields and woods. Examples are cairns, chambers, anthropomorphic stone art and weirs.

Joe Iamartino, longtime president of the Thompson Historical Society, will present photographic and written evidence of the purpose of these historic structures in Class 5 of his presentation series. Learn about the latest finds and efforts to preserve these treasures.

The talk will be given on Saturday, October 25, at 11 a.m. with

an encore at 1 p.m. Each will last about one hour.

The lecture is free; to register, go [www.samuel Slater Experience.org](http://www.samuel Slater Experience.org), email [admin@samuel Slater Experience.org](mailto:admin@samuel Slater Experience.org), or call 508-461-2955. Tours of the museum before or after the talk will be available at a reduced ticket price.

Samuel Slater Experience is at 31 Ray Street in Webster. For more information, email [admin@samuel Slater Experience.org](mailto:admin@samuel Slater Experience.org) or call 508-461-2955.

Discover the Nipmuc Lithic Trail is supported by a grant from the Webster Cultural Council and is a part of The Last Green Valley Walktober Series.

# Oxford Scarecrows on the Common

Oxford's 6th Annual Scarecrows on the Common Festival gets underway from 11 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 25.

It's a call to celebrate the fall season by building your own scarecrow on the Common for the entire town to enjoy. The community votes for their favorites and prizes are awarded to the top three scarecrows in each of the following categories: Funniest, Best Town Spirit and Most Creative.

Do some shopping at the Vendor Fair, enjoy children's games, snacks

and crafts while dancing to live music by DW and the Shakemakers from 12 – 3 p.m. The Witches of Sutton will swoop by with their broomsticks at 1 p.m. A children's costume parade at 3 p.m. will wrap up the festivities.

*A very hungry caterpillar crawls on Oxford Common at last year's Scarecrow Festival.*

*The Witches of Sutton invite you to dance up a storm on Oxford Common.*



## "Painting a Family" New Book Release with Mary Anne Slack

Booklovers' Gourmet is hosting a book release and signing

with author Mary Anne Kalonas Slack on Saturday, November 1st from 2-4 p.m. Her second novel, *Painting a Family*, features mother and daughter relationships. Her short stories have been published in *Adelaide Literary Magazine* and in the 2013, 2024, and 2025 *Quabbin Quills Anthologies*. Her first



About the book: *Painting a Family* tells the story of Jane, who endures a strict Catholic upbringing in the 1960s and 1970s, when good girls only leave the nest to marry and have babies. Longing to be an artist, Jane dares to follow her dreams—until she meets handsome, stalwart Tim O'Connell. They marry and have four daughters. But when her girls are nearly grown, Jane is faced with a challenge for which she is

utterly unprepared.

With twists and turns along the way, the mother and daughters shield themselves with secrets and test their loyalties to one another, until the ties that bind threaten to break once and for all.



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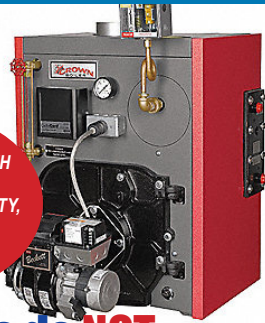
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77 Providence Rd., Sutton, MA 01590  
Phone: (508) 865-4193  
Website: [www.alsrubbish.com](http://www.alsrubbish.com)  
E-Mail: [alsrubbish@gmail.com](mailto:alsrubbish@gmail.com)



## Al's Rubbish Provides

- Dumpster Rental Services 7 Days
- All Rentals Include Drop Off and Pick Up
- No Service or Fuel Charges
- Estate Clean Outs
- Furniture and Appliance Removal
- We Recycle



1995-2025  
Locally Owned and Operated

## DUMPSTER RENTAL SPECIAL!

Sutton, Millbury  
15 yard dumpster  
For 2 tons **\$475**

Grafton, Auburn, Oxford, Webster, Whitinsville and Northbridge  
15 yard dumpster  
For 2 tons **\$495**

All Other Towns **\$525**

Additional charges for tvs/monitors, mattresses & box springs  
Serving the Blackstone Valley and the Surrounding Towns in Worcester County



FREE DROP OFF AND PICK UP!

508-865-4193 • WWW.ALSRUBBISH.COM

Support Local Small Business