

Auburn Select Board Votes on New Fire Station Equipment, Zoning Board Interviews, Budget, and Tax Committee

BY JANET STOICA
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At the most recent Select Board meeting, members heard from Rockland Road residents about the above-average levels of truck traffic in their neighborhood. Many residents voiced their opinions and displeasure of the alleged violations of the amount of truck/trailer traffic that passes by their homes. A concerned resident stated that there was to be a strict limit on the number of these large vehicles per hour allowed to use the roadways.

The Board also conducted Zoning Board Associate Member interviews. Mr. Mark Binnall was the only candidate of the three listed on their agenda who showed up in person. Candidates Catherine Burke-Kolodny and John Shea were not in attendance. The Board then voted to re-notify the absent candidates to appear at their next meeting in order for a final candidate to be voted on.

An Auburn Fire Department (AFD) representative reviewed

the next phase of the new AFD building to be constructed at 10 Prospect Street reviewing proprietary-specified items necessary so all locations were in compliance of using the same equipment as in



other facilities, specifically their security system, vehicle exhaust extraction system, as well as instrumentation and controls for their heating, ventilation, and cooling systems. The Board was also advised that the new station's progress was on track, on time, and on budget. The town's Department of Public Works was praised for its hard work on the AFD's new building site

thereby saving taxpayers between \$350,000-\$400,000. Groundbreaking was expected to be held in early May 2026 with final occupancy expected in 2027. Furniture specifications are now in process of review.

Town Manager Dori Vecchio advised the Board that Tuesday, May 5, would be the date for the Spring Annual Town Meeting and the Board then voted to open the town warrant effective January 12 and to close the warrant effective February 23, a six-week period. Vecchio stated that the town budget should be delivered to the Finance Committee by February 25.

A discussion was then held regarding a possible Board vote to create a committee to investigate what is needed for the town of Auburn to cap the growth in annual residential property assessed value in a similar manner to laws in California, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, and Nevada. After much debate it was decided to table the voting until after the new fiscal year begins in July.

Reverend Julia Dunbar has had Quite the Journey in her Career

BY JANET STOICA
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Reverend Julia Dunbar was ordained an Episcopalian priest at the age of 50 and she's always looked forward. Woman Priests have been common in the Episcopalian denomination since the 1970's. Now however, she has officially retired from her last congregation, Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, located at 270 Main Street in Oxford, Mass. December 31, 2025 was her official and final day to share with the Good Shepherd members.

She was raised in a Roman Catholic family but found that she wanted to learn more about the Episcopalian denomination. She has two sisters who became Roman Catholic nuns. One of those sisters did leave the sisterhood. Reverend Dunbar had no intention of becoming a priest but once she was assigned to an Aids Action Committee and was requested to meet with a prisoner in a long-term jail facility, she realized what her calling truly was. "Just visiting him in prison, I could see his suffering and it was this that was instrumental in my



becoming a priest," she said, "not that he was a choir boy. This part of my training in clinical pastoral care which involved 2500 hours of working with patients really opened my eyes to the need for counseling."

She then worked with inpatients at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston and trained at Brigham and Women's Hospital becoming a Chaplain. "It was such a fascinating experience

DUNBAR

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Heading West on the Midstate Trail

Bugs Swamp, Scythes, Past Residents, and Diminished Expectations

BY THOMAS J. MCLAUGHLIN

At nearly 65-square miles it was big - a land area bigger than Worcester or Boston. It was half the size of modern-day Detroit or Philadelphia, it was one and two thirds the size of Disney World, and almost as large as Washington D.C.

More than three hundred years ago, a grant was approved to create a new town southwest of Worcester. It would encompass a

large part of what is now Charlton, a quarter of Auburn, a fifth of Dudley, several square miles of Southbridge, and all of present-day Oxford, which bears the name. (History of the Town of Oxford, Massachusetts by George F. Daniels, 1892.)

Oxford, Massachusetts was named after Oxford, England, the "city of dreaming spires," and home to the oldest university in the English-speaking world. Today, from the U.S. Virgin Islands

to Colorado, there are more than two dozen Oxfords throughout the U.S., but our Oxford was the first.

Oxford or Oxenforda, "ford of the oxen." It's a word that's as old as England itself. Ox (a castrated bull) and ford (a shallow area in the water that can be crossed) are two ancient, Old English words with Germanic roots going back centuries. The origin of "Ox" goes back thousands of years and has a Proto-Indo-European ori-

gin with a rare linguistic connection to several language families.

The names of the first three roads of the Midstate Trail in Oxford reflect more recent times. Lovett, Brown, and Dana are old Oxford family names going back to colonial days. These street names are probably where their homesteads were once located.

MIDSTATE TRAIL

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MIDSTATE TRAIL

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In his 19th century History of the Town of Oxford, Massachusetts, George F. Daniels mentions brothers Herbert and Walter Lovett owning land in 1738, a tailor named Joseph Brown, making jackets for soldiers during the American Revolution in 1775, and John Dana, serving on a town committee dealing with an ecclesiastical and legal matter in 1783.

The Midstate Trail typically runs north and south, but in Oxford, it's west and northwest, if you're a NoBo (northbound) hiker. It crosses farm fields at the top of Whittier Hill in Sutton and leads into the forest toward Oxford where it crosses a small stream between Sacarrappa Pond and Bugs Swamp.

This is a hidden and secluded place with no public roads running around it. There's little to no development here. You would never know it looking at it now, but there was once a lot going on here.

In his History of Oxford, Daniels tells us about a saw-mill (built in 1792) located on the uppermost part of Bugs Swamp

stream. He noted that it was "un-serviceable in dry seasons."

There was also a second saw-mill located on the lower end of the stream (built in 1788), that didn't fare well in drier spells—it probably didn't help having another built upstream from it. This lower stream mill was sold in 1801, when the owner, whom I'm guessing was fed up or bored, packed it up and moved to Maine.

The new owner of the lower end mill, David Lilley, built a shop there to manufacture scythes – those long, curved blades with bent handles used for harvesting and reaping (think Grim Reaper).

When Lilley died in 1815, Joab Maynard tried his hand at scythe making for a couple of years before selling it to the original scythe maker's sons. The Lilley brothers made scythes for four more years until leaving the property "unoccupied."

A half dozen years later in 1827, two brothers, Lawton and Joseph Pratt, bought the property to make shingles, washing machines, and "other household utensils," before they went broke and disappeared for "parts unknown," three years later. As Dante wrote about another place,



Footbridge over the French River. Thomas J. McLaughlin photo

"Abandon all hope, ye who enter here"

After all these attempts to give it a go, two more guys gave the scythe making business a shot before finally abandoning the place. The property was later purchased by Slater & Co.

In 1792, there was also a house, a blacksmith shop and a coal house on the brook at Sacarrappa Pond where they made scythes and nails. They built two shops and two dams there.

The only activity I found passing through there was of the flying and biting variety. Bugs Swamp really lived up to its name, especially in May, following rising temperatures and springtime rain.

I enjoyed a scenic stroll through this area that turned into a mad dash, outrunning swarms

of black flies and mosquitoes.

They're evil suckers. You can evade them if you move fast enough without stopping, but it's better to bring bug spray and mosquito face netting, or wait until colder and drier weather.

After emerging from the woods for several miles, going across Oxford under I-395, across the railroad tracks, before it reached the center of town at Rt. 12/Main St.

Continuing onward to the end of Rocky Hill Road, the Midstate goes back into the woods. This is a beautiful stretch of hiking under the pines, along the flood plains of Hodges Village Dam.

You eventually cross a foot-bridge over the French River that was built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. According to

their website at nae.usace.army.mil, "there are approximately 22 miles of trails weaving their way around the Hodges Village project area," which has nearly 1,200 acres of land.

At more than 25-miles long, the French River (a name stemming from Oxford's early French Protestant/Huguenot settlement) drains into dozens of lakes and ponds, eventually flowing to rivers in Connecticut before reaching Long Island Sound via the Thames.

The hike continues past nearby sand and gravel pits posted with hazard and danger warning signs. It goes uphill for a nice stretch, along a winding stream with small, tranquil waterfalls, before reaching Charlton.

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DUNBAR

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introducing myself to and talking with patients to learn where they were in life. Just listening and sensing them through the stage of life they were in, observing their body language," she stated. Soon she became Director of Pastoral Care and Education at Beth Israel (the department is now labeled as Spiritual Care and Education). She worked closely with graduate students in the program which she found gave her the greatest satisfaction as she guided and educated them.

Upon reaching the wonderful age of 50, Reverend Dunbar was ordained an Episcopalian Priest but had also begun employment with a wonderful philanthropist while also being involved in her ordination process. She ran the charitable office while handling their incredibly large donation portfolio. She ultimately left the organization as she found she could not be available 24/7. She was quick to note that she had a great relationship with the humanitarian but the hours were non-stop. She soon found herself handling the Volunteer Services Department at Beth Israel. "Their pastoral care department was very small," said Reverend Dunbar, "and soon hospital social workers began phoning me for patient assistance. Suddenly the director departed and I learned that there were many national and international applicants applying for his job. The department and patient needs were a large part of my pastoral care." After all interviews had been held for the open position, Rev. Dunbar learned that she had been chosen as the new Director.

"I met many, many people from all walks of life and that's when I realized that we are all carrying a heavy load in life. I

am so grateful to have had that opportunity to meet these people and will always feel honored that they felt trustful enough to share their words with me. I remember a call once when I'd gotten home late at night after having been with a dying patient with her son at her bedside when she passed away. The floor nurses phoned me to ask if I'd return to the now-deceased patient's room because the son did not want to leave his mom. It was now a few hours after the woman had passed. Her son was so broken at every level. I stayed another two hours with him and he was able to leave afterwards. I walked him to his car and saw him drive away. I then returned to the patient's floor to check on the nurses who had compassion fatigue." The challenges and life connections that Rev. Dunbar experienced were such true blessings for her. She mentioned how privileged she felt from her patient interactions.

After working for several years in the Pastoral Care Department at Metrowest Medical Center in the Framingham/Natick area, she was asked to fill in for other priests at their churches when they were away on sabbaticals. St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Auburn was her next assignment when parishioners asked her to join them. Then, COVID happened which closed everything down. The rectory was sold and the church was closed quickly. Some of the St. Thomas parishioners chose to attend Grace Episcopal Church in Oxford and that's when Rev. Dunbar learned that Grace Episcopal needed a priest. She joined the church. As COVID was still rampant, most services were held outdoors and people showed up in their heavy winter coats, mittens, gloves, scarves, and woolen caps. The merged congregation members voted for a new church name and thus Good Shepherd was born.

The parish grew to approximately 65 members.

As most Sunday Mass attendees are aware, there is an acute shortage of priests and most are

more attracted to full-time positions. After her recent unexpected shoulder injury/accident due to a sudden medical condition, Rev. Dunbar knew it was time to

retire. She still keeps busy and active with many friends she's made along the way of her remarkable career and life's calling.



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Auburn's Civil War Navy Men

The Auburn Historical Society and Museum started a program to document the military men and women who served through the years for the town of Auburn. While entering data from the museum archives for the Civil War, six men stood out as enlisting in the Navy. People don't usually picture the naval aspect of the Civil War. When the Civil War started the U.S. Navy had about 90 ships, less than half have were combat ready, with only 26 of them steam powered. Commercial vessels of the time had been steam-powered for more than 40 years. There were about 7,600 men of all ranks of the navy at this time. Most were pro-Union, but about 259 naval officers, 43%, resigned or were dismissed for Confederate beliefs.

The six naval men that were credited to Auburn were Benjamin Thomas Chapin, James S. Southgate, John Tucker, John Tye, Charles Usher, and George White. These men all have one thing in common; they started out on the USS Ohio which was a receiving

ship in Boston. The definition of a receiving ship is a vessel that serves as a point of induction into the service for new recruits. They remained on this ship long enough to get the paperwork done and to draw initial issues of clothing. Receiving ships were also used by sailors whose enlistments were ending and were being processed out of the Navy.

Benjamin Thomas Chapin was born in 1835 in New York. According to his obituary, he was member of one of Worcester's most prominent and influential families. His grandfather, Dr. Benjamin Chapin, owned the greater part of the Front St. business district. Ben's father was Benjamin T. Chapin Sr. Worcester, and mother was Alice Knowles of Auburn. Benjamin married Silence Eleanor Thayer and had three children, Alice, Everette T. and Martha A. All are buried at Hillside Cemetery.

Benjamin enlisted at the age of 29 in 1864 with his occupation being a mechanic. Besides being received on the USS Ohio, he served on the USS Connecticut and USS Stars and Stripes. The USS Connecticut was carrying men to the fleet between July 30 and October 30, 1864. It was placed out of commission at Boston from October to February 1865 in Boston. Her last cruise from February 21 to August

1865 was to the West Indies and east coast looking for Confederate privateers.

The USS Stars and Stripes was built at Mystic Connecticut and bought by the Navy in 1861. In September it was assigned to the East Gulf Blocking Squadron where it operated off the coast of Florida for the remainder of the war. In October she destroyed a Confederate fishery at Marsh Island and captured the troops stationed there. In December Benjamin was part of the landing party that destroyed the Salt Works at Rocky Point in Tampa Bay.

Benjamin was discharged June 2, 1865, with the rank of Fireman 1st Class. According to Benjamin's obituary, after the war he was a locomotive engineer for the Norwich & Worcester Railroad. Later he was a member of the Worcester engineering department. He was a member of the George Ward Post #10 G.A.R., Worcester. He remained in Auburn the rest of his life. According to John Hartwell's notes, Benjamin lived on Leicester St. at the intersection of [old] Rochdale St. where he operated a saw grist mill. He died January 5, 1927.

James S. Southgate was born on October 8, 1842, in Worcester. He was the son of John Parker and Sarah L. "Sally" (Swan) Southgate. He married Emma Swan in 1875.

They had three children, Freddie S., [Dr.] Alfred W., and Edna. The family lived near the intersection of Central and Water Streets operating a small mill across Water Street. He died of heart disease on November 22, 1899, at the age of 57. He was buried in Hope Cemetery in Worcester.

When James enlisted on July 15, 1863, he was a resident of Worcester but was credited to Auburn. He was assigned to the following ships: USS Ohio in Boston July 15-25, 1863, USS Wabash to August 10, USS Canandaigua to August 21. He served in the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron which was cruising off Charleston S.C. The Canandaigua cooperated with the Union Army taking part in a series of attacks on positions in Charleston Harbor. He was then hospitalized for rheumatism August 13 to October 3. He was released for duty and stationed on the USS Princeton, which was a receiving ship in Philadelphia on August 28, 1864, when he was discharged from the Navy.

John Tucker was born January 11, 1822, in South Charlton [Charlton City]. He was the son of Manasseh and Mary "Polly" (Sabin) Tucker. He married Lucy M. Davidson on April 3, 1844, in Oxford MA. They had two children: Ella Augusta and Henry Charles.

Lucy's parents were Simeon and Dorothea "Dolly" (Cudworth) Tucker. Dorothea's parents were the subject of the Clark/Cudworth Burial Ground article, The Forgotten Burial Ground.

John was a 45-year-old engineer when he enlisted February 19, 1862, in Boston and was assigned to the USS Ohio. He served on the USS Penobscot and USS Sonoma. He was appointed Acting 3rd Assistant Engineer on the Daffodil on August 6, 1864, and was part of the South Atlantic Squadron.

The USS Penobscot was built in Belfast Maine and was launched in November 1861. The Penobscot destroyed the Confederate schooner, Sereta, in June 1862. Other conquests included the sloop Lizzie, British brig Robert Burns off Cape Fear, as well forcing the Kate ashore at Smith's Island in July.

The USS Daffodil started out as the side-wheel steamer, Jonas Smith built in Keyport Kentucky in 1862. It was then purchased by the Navy and renamed the Daffodil being fitted out at the New York Navy Yard. It sailed on November 24, to join the South Atlantic Blocking Squadron. She arrived

CIVIL WAR
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SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones

Neighbors and Fences 2026 Call For Grant Applications

BY JANET STOICA
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

As the third-generation owner of my family home I have seen my neighbors come and go, some good, some not so good. Some as fierce as can be and others with hearts of gold.

There is always one side of our homes that we seem to pay more attention to, which, in my case, is my driveway along one side of my home leading to my garage and the widest part of my property. This wide open space also gives me a bird's eye view of my neigh-



bor's home and their wide-open property or rather, what once was a wide-open and most beautifully-manicured and well-maintained property. The space is now filled with a large over-filled storage shed, a rusty and unlicensed construction trailer, piles of rotting firewood with other debris, and chipmunks, squirrels, and other rodents that enjoy living in the rotting firewood and trash pile.

No, I'm not happy to look out upon that property daily. What was once a well-kept yard from the previous homeowner became a hay field during the warm weather which serves as a haven for other creatures that enjoy crossing the property line to my well-kept yard and property.

Many years ago, my grandmother installed a chain-link fence along the shared boundary line. It has served three generations of my family very well, that is, until now.

To look upon the unkempt and junk-filled neighbor's property is to cringe and wish that the previous

owners had never moved away.

Several months ago the neighbor installed a 6-foot solid fence along the top of his property line and along the public sidewalk next to my driveway. Needless to say, as I drive up my driveway to exit onto our one-way street, my view is zero and totally obstructed for oncoming vehicles of which there are many. I had many close calls inching my way into the street to make a left turn onto the roadway.

The property owner has since taken a few panels of the fencing down with the exception of three panels which makes the entire

fence project look like a toothless, poor, and not-very-well-thought-out endeavor. Just add this deconstruction to the rest of the junkyard and you get the idea.

I have thought about installing

those tall and slim privacy hedges along my fence line but I'll be dead before they grow tall enough to make a difference. There's also a gas line running along my fencing so the privacy hedge idea is out. I cannot imagine any other simple solution to having irresponsible and uncaring neighbors forcing their bedraggled and shabby property views onto their neighbors. I don't think giving my neighbor a copy of Robert Frost's Mending Wall poem would be of any help! Now, I always look forward to the snows of winter which will blanket and cover their unsightly chaos. I must say that I haven't wished for snow in many years, last wishing for the white stuff during my childhood school years when we might have a school cancellation, but I sure DO wish for a snow blanket right now. Looking at their discombobulated array of piles of scrap and trash is so demoralizing. How can I possibly look away? Help, Mother Nature, help!

Janet Malser Humanities Trust – Deadline April 1

The Janet Malser Humanities Trust is currently accepting applications for the 2026 grant cycle. Ms. Malser set up the charitable Trust in order to support the arts and humanities, community service and conservation in the towns of Dudley, Oxford, and Webster. Trustees make awards annually to verified tax-exempt organizations meeting the charitable purposes of the Trust. Prior recipients are encouraged to apply and are eligible as long as proper follow up status reports have been filed.

The causes for which funding will be considered include: "the restoration and preservation of

historic sites; the furtherance of art and music in the schools, both public and private; public concerts with an emphasis on classical music; the improvement and growth of public libraries; the support of church work aiding the indigent, homeless, aging citizens and needy children; beautification through planting and the preservation of park areas and cemeteries; the improvement of service and equipment at the Hubbard Regional Hospital (now UMASS Memorial Health), and the environmental protection of Webster Lake."

Any questions should be addressed to janetmalsertrust@gmail.com.

Applications and additional instructions including filing final reports are available at www.janetmalsertrust.org. All applications must be postmarked by Wednesday, April 1st, 2026.





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Esther C. Kish the Woman Behind Dr. Robert Goddard

The start of this new year will bring many celebrations to look forward to. One of these will be the 100th anniversary of Dr. Robert Goddard's launching of a liquid-propellant rocket and the start of the space age. There will be many articles written about the "Father of Modern Rocketry", but what about the women behind this man who helped him?

The Auburn Historical Society will be looking at the history of aviation in Auburn as well as the people who advanced that history. The first person will be Esther Christine Kish, who became the wife of Goddard. She spent a great deal of her life making sure the world did not forget what Robert Goddard had done to advance technology to the stars.

Esther was born March 31, 1901, in Worcester to August Wilhem Kish and Augusta Johnson both born in Sweden. Esther also had a brother, Albert Walter, who married Beatrice D. Labossiere. The 1910 census had Kish family living on Fountain St. in Worcester with Grandmother Johanna Anderson and 5 other boarders. By the 1920 census the family had moved to Gates St. and Esther was 18 and working as a clerk. She studied at Bates University before she met Robert at Clark University where

she was the secretary to the college president, Joseph N. Dinand. Robert was a physics professor and had asked Esther to help transcribe his notes. Esther was 20 years younger than Goddard, but that didn't matter to either of them. They were married on June 21, 1924, at St. John's Episcopal Church in Worcester. They took up residency at Maple Hill Farm, which was Robert's ancestral home on Talawanda Drive in Worcester. Esther was a photographer and used that skill to document her husband's early launches as well as stamping out brush fires and collecting pieces of the rocket after it landed. She was able to decipher his notes, kept his account books, did the sewing of parachutes used in launches and gave unlimited support to her husband's dreams for the rest of her life.

It was in 1929 that funds from the Guggenheim Foundation and the backing of Charles Lindbergh encouraged the move to Roswell New Mexico. There also were the reoccurring fires after the launches at Aunt Effie Ward's farm that didn't endear him to the neighborhood on Pakachoag Hill that could have influenced the move. While they lived in Roswell, Esther was part of the Roswell Music Association, The Women's Club, the Shakespeare Club, and founded a book club. She

also got her husband to join some of the activities in the area and take time away from his work and relax.

Unfortunately, in 1932 the funding from the Guggenheim Foundation was stopped due to the Depression. This forced the Goddard family to return to Maple Hill and Robert went back to the Physics Department at Clark University. In this time his health began to be an issue and the doctors suggested they return to Roswell. The Guggenheim Foundation was able to support Goddard again thus allowing for the move back to Roswell. They were visited by Charles and Anne Lindbergh who were on their way to the west coast shortly afterward they moved into their new home. During the 1930s the Goddard's entertained the likes of the Guggenheims, and officials from the Navy and Army, as well as those interested in seeing his rockets.

Esther wanted her husband to fit into Roswell and encouraged him in group activities like singing and playing bridge, anything that would pause his devoted attention to rocketry. She did get him to take a vacation to France and Switzerland in 1938, and this helped improve his health. The 1940 census listed Esther as a housewife, and Goddard's mother was living with them after his father died.

The Navy Department was interested in the military potential that rocketry had and in 1942 persuaded Goddard to move to Annapolis, Maryland to set up his machine shop and testing stands. Esther was able to enroll at John Hopkins University in Baltimore and finished her studies that she was doing before her marriage. Esther brought her mother to live with them to help take care of Robert and the house while she was away. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with honors. The throat cancer that had started in 1941 finally took Robert on August 10, 1945. He was buried in Hope Cemetery in Worcester on the 14th which was the same day the Japanese signed the surrender ending WWII.

Esther moved back to Talawanda Drive and, with the help and support of her family, started to work on getting her husband the honor and credit he so rightly deserved. She organized his papers to get patent right and stop others from pirating his inventions. She worked with Charles Hawley who was a Worcester patents attorney and got 214 patents, of which 131 were posthumously granted because of Esther's efforts. According to "This High Man" Milton Lehman 1965, Esther donated the oldest space-oriented artifact (1916) the

Magnesium Powder Experiment Box to the National Air and Space Museum. Esther traveled worldwide to lecture & receive many awards and honors bestowed on Robert as well as other public appearances including cutting the ribbon at the opening of the Auburn Mall in 1971, a large picture of which can be seen at the Auburn Historical Society's Museum. Esther is also credited with being the first woman to receive an honorary degree from WPI, was active on several college boards, received her own awards and edited a three-volume work of Goddard's papers that were published in 1970. She received a Doctor of Physics degree from the University of Maine in 1945 and a doctor of humane letters from Clark University in 1972. Esther died June 5, 1982, and was buried in Hope Cemetery with her husband.

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, www.auburn-historicalmuseum.org or follow us on Facebook at Auburn Historical.

– Helen Poirier



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CIVIL WAR

continued from page 4

at Port Ryal SC in December 1862 and served as tug until the end of the war along the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia. Daffodil's history includes towing 25 boats in the assault on Fort Sumter, taking part in the successful Army-Navy expedition up the Broad River to destroy the Charleston & Savannah Railroad Bridge near Pocotaligo SC. The ship did a reconnaissance mission up the Ashepoo River and February 9, joined the batteries in the Tugaloo River SC. John Tucker was aboard during these engagements. After the war John lived in West Auburn on Southbridge St.

He died June 21, 1869, at the age of 47 and is buried in the West Auburn Burial Ground.

John Tye was born in New York about 1815. He was credited to Auburn, but no evidence has been found that he ever lived in town. In the 1860 census he was living in Greenfield, Saratoga County, New York. He was living with a Michael Tye age 26, and a Margaret Tye age 23. There was no listing of age for John.

He enlisted February 17, 1862, at the age of 44, for three years as a seaman. He served on the USS Ohio, USS Wachusett, and USS Currituck. He was wounded on the Currituck and died September 15, 1863, as a Boatswain's Mate.

The USS Wachusett was an Iro-

quois class screw sloop of war built at the Boston Navy Yard and commissioned March 1862. She was part of the attack on the Drewry's Bluff fortifications in Virginia, was a flagship of a special "Flying Squadron" searching for Confederate Navy raiders in the Caribbean and captured the Southern cruiser, Florida, in Bahia, Brazil.

The USS Currituck was a wooden-hulled screw-propelled steamer and was used as a gunboat doing river patrols and guard duty. It was assigned to the Potomac Flotilla in the Chesapeake Bay and tributary waters working with the Army on shore as well as convoying transports and hospital boats.

Charles Usher was born about 1820. He enlisted for three years

on May 22, 1862, at the age of 42. He served on the USS Ohio, USS Rhode Island, and USS Harriet Lane before being discharged on May 29, 1863, in North Carolina as a Seaman. He was admitted to the US Naval Hospital in Chelsea MA in 1863 being listed as a Gunner's Mate. He was suffering from a fractured leg. He then enlisted and was credited to Wilmington on June 6, 1863, for one year serving again on the USS Ohio and the USS Ethan Allen. The Ethan Allen was a "bark" which is a type of sailing vessel with 3 or more masts of which the fore mast is rigged for a fore-and-aft rather than square sail. From Jun 22 to Oct 28, 1863, she patrolled the Grand Banks, protecting NE fisheries from Confederate raiders. Early in November, she joined the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, patrolling the coast off Port Royal S.C. Charles's discharge was June 8, 1864, as a Seaman.

George White was 21 when he enlisted January 21, 1863, as an ordinary Seaman. He served on the USS Ohio and USS Restless. The Restless was a bark vessel. The first Restless was purchased from Everett and Hawley at New York on 26 August 1861 and commissioned the following December, Acting Volunteer Lt. Edward Conroy in command.

The Restless sailed to Norfolk, took on supplies for the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, and toward the end of January 1862 arrived at Port Royal, S.C. and assigned to the blockade force off Charleston. She took up station off Bull's Bay on February 4th.

George was credited to Auburn, but no documentation shows a George White living in town at the time.

The Veteran Project to document and honor the military of Auburn is an ongoing project of the Auburn Historical Society & Museum. If you would like to contribute to the Military Data Base please contact the museum or go to the website and download the Veterans Project information sheet and return it to the Auburn Historical Society and Museum.

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, www.auburnhistoricalmuseum.org or follow us on Facebook at Auburn Historical.



Oxford Middle School recognizes students each month who exemplify our Be The 3 goals of Respect, Responsibility, and Safety as well as showing that attendance matters, displaying citizenship, and showing growth in a variety of ways. This month, OMS celebrates Mia Mazella, Savanna O'Hearn, Jacobe Barrette, Chayse Bouthiller, and Kellen Harrison as our December Students of the Month. Phot submitted.

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Representative Frost Extends Perfect Voting Attendance Record Through 2025

Completes 29 Years of Making Every Vote

Massachusetts House Minority Whip, State Representative Paul K. Frost (R-Auburn) has made all 116 roll call votes



Photo: paulfrost.com

fect voting record since first taking office, bringing his total to 7,461 votes cast since 1997. His streak is the second longest running of all current members in the House of Representatives, surpassed only by that of the House Minority Leader who has served longer than Frost.

House Minority Leader Bradley Jones, Jr. in commending Frost said, "I congratulate House Minority Whip Paul Frost as he continues an impressive streak of making every roll call vote in the Mass House since he first took office 29 years ago. I know firsthand the personal sacrifices and dedication it takes to having a perfect voting attendance record this long. Paul is always there representing those who sent him and doing the job for all his communities. He gives this position his full-time attention. The people and towns of his district are fortunate to have him and I am thankful for his leadership as one of my top Floor Leaders in our attempts to make Massachusetts more affordable."

Frost commented, "We have all heard the expression that showing

up makes a difference. Being there is important. The people of this district know I take this position seriously and that I never take it or them for granted. We aren't always going to agree. Bipartisanship isn't a one-way street, and we need differences in opinions and ideas and

not just one way of thinking.

Representative Frost represents the 7th Worcester District, comprised of the towns of Auburn and Millbury, as well as Precinct 4 in Charlton, Precinct 3 in Leicester, and Precincts 2, 3, and 4A in Oxford. Along with being the House

Minority Whip he is also the Ranking Minority Member on the Joint Committee on Election Laws, and he also serves on the House & Joint Committee on Rules and the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing.



The Central Mass Conference Football Officials (CMCFO) presented the 2025 Sportsmanship Award to the Oxford High School Football team on January 8. The award reflects exemplary sportsmanship exhibited by the team, coaching staff, administration, student body and fans as voted by the officials of the CMCFO. Since 1982, the CMCFO has awarded a Sportsmanship Award to the school that best demonstrates outstanding sportsmanship across Freshman, JV, and Varsity football. The award is voted on by the officials who work the games each week. Congratulations to all past, present, and future winners. Photo submitted.

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Oxford 5th Annual Winter Festival

It's time for Fun, Frost and Family on Saturday, January 31. The activity begins with the Polar Plunge in Carbuncle Pond at 10:30 a.m., 12 Carbuncle Drive, Oxford. This event raises money for the

Special Olympic.

Ready to warm up with some carbs? Try the Pancake Breakfast at 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Held at the First Congregational Church, 355 Main Street, Oxford.

Enjoy the Festival's Main Events from 12-3 p.m. at the Oxford Community Center. Outside, you'll find music & games, food trucks, fire pits and s'mores, free hot cocoa, a wishing tree and youth sports.

Inside the Community Center, there will be a Vendor Fair, cookie decorating, board game room, Magic Shows, balloon art, face painting and glitter tattoos and a photo booth.

The Oxford Public Library will host Story Time and Drop-In Kids' Crafts from 12-3 p.m. at 339 Main Street.

Auburn Library

369 Southbridge Street, Auburn
508-832-7790

February ongoing events:

Mondays - 1:30 p.m. Pre-school story time with Miss Caitlin (ages 3-6); 4 p.m. Lego Club;

Tuesdays - 10 a.m. Baby-Toddler Storytime (ages 0-3); 3:30 Kids Crafternoon (ages 5+); 5:30 p.m. Knitting Group - all levels

Wednesdays - 10 a.m. Baby-toddler Storytime with Miss Andrea (ages 0-3); 11 a.m. Alphabits (ages 3-6); 2:30 p.m. Teen Volunteers (grades 7-12)

Thursdays- 10 :15 a.m. Young Scientists with STEM BEGIN-

NING (ages 3-6); 3 p.m. Dungeons & Dragons (8-12 grades); ^ p.m. Teen Crafting (grades 5-12)

Thursday, Feb. 5 - 7 p.m. Virtual Author Talks: Swashbuckling Heroines and High Seas Adventures with Novelist Vanessa Riley

Monday, Feb. 9 - 5:30 p.m. Book Club

Wednesday, Feb. 11 - 5 p.m.

Children's Book Club (grades 4-5)

Thursday, Feb. 12 - 2 p.m. Virtual Author Talks: Mojos, Mermaid, Medicine and 400 Years of Black Women's Magic with Dr. Lin

Wednesday, Feb. 18 - 10:30 a.m.

Children's Concert with Erica from Parody Playhouse

Wednesdays, Feb. 18 - 5 p.m.

Children's Book Club (grades 2-3)

Thursdays, Feb. 19 - 6 p.m. Create Copper Bookmarks with artist Heather Beck (adults 18+)

Monday, Feb 23 - 5:30 p.m. Friends Meeting

Tuesdays, Feb. 24 - 2 p.m. Virtual Author Talks: Smithsonian's Gamble: The Incredible History Behind the World's Largest Museum

Be sure to check out the Library of Things, Museum Passes and Electronic Resources on the website: auburnlibrary.com

Oxford Senior Center

323 Main Street, Oxford
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Oxfordma.us

Fitness:

Strength & Balance, 9:15 a.m.

Tuesdays with Donna Freeland \$3

Chair Yoga, 9:15 a.m. Wednesdays with Heidi Gambaccini/CYT \$3

Chair Volleyball, 1 p.m. Wednesdays

The Senior Book Club meets Friday, February 6 at 12:45 p.m. The book being discussed is "The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife."

Senior Services

Tri-Vally Inc. Options Counselor Kristina Goode will be at the Senior Center on the third Tuesday of the month, by appointment from 12:30 - 2 p.m. She can assist you in making informed decisions about care and long-term goals. Call 508-987-6000.

Need assistance with MassHealth? Sign up with a Certified Application Counselor at Tri-Valley Inc. They can help with eligibility, Medicare Savings, Updating documentation and renewals. To schedule, call 508-949-6640 ext. 7250.

Basketball Schedules

OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL - BOYS

Wed, Jan 28
6:30 PM Blackstone -Millville Regional - Blackstone Millville Regional Gym
Fri, Jan 30
6:30 PM vs Bartlett High School - Oxford High School Gym
Mon, Feb 2
6:30 PM vs Uxbridge High School - Oxford High School Gym
Wed, Feb 4
6:30 PM vs Sutton High School - Oxford High School Gym
Mon, Feb 9
7:00 PM vs Auburn High School - Auburn High School Gym
Thurs, Feb 12
6:30 PM vs Quaboag Regional Middle High School - Oxford High School Gym
Fri, Feb 14
TBA @ TBA - Oxford High School Gym
Sun, Feb 15
TBA @ TBA

AUBURN HIGH SCHOOL - BOYS

Mon, Jan 26
6:00 PM vs Wahconah Regional High School - Auburn High School Gym
Wed, Jan 28
6:00 PM @ Saint Paul Diocesan Jr/Sr High School - St. Paul Junior-Senior High School Gym
Sun, Feb 1
1:00 PM vs Foxborough High School - Auburn High School Gym
Wed, Feb 4
7:00 PM vs Montachusett Reg/Voc Tech High School - Auburn High

School Gym
Fri, Feb 6
7:00 PM @ Uxbridge High School - Uxbridge High School Gym
Mon, Feb 9
7:00 p.m. Oxford High School - Auburn High School Gym
Wed, Feb 11
7:00 PM vs Tantasqua Regional Senior High School - Auburn High School Gym
Mon, Feb 16
TBA - Auburn High School Gym
Wed, Feb 18
5:00 AM vs TBA - TBA

OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS VARSITY BASKETBALL

Friday, Jan. 23 - 6:30 p.m. Burncoat High School Oxford High School Gym
Monday, Jan. 26 - 6:30 p.m. Bromfield School Oxford High School Gym
Wednesday, Jan. 28 - 6:30 p.m. Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School Oxford High School Gym
Friday, Jan. 30 - 5:00 p.m.

at Whitinsville Christian School Nehemiah Center Gym
Monday, Feb. 2 - 6:30 p.m. at St. Bernard's High School St. Bernard's Activity Center Gymnasium
Wednesday, Feb. 4 - 6:00 p.m. at Worcester Technical High School Worcester Technical High School Gym
Thursday, Feb. 5 - 6:30 p.m. Keefe Technical High School Oxford High School Gym
Tuesday, Feb. 10 - 6:00 p.m. David Prouty High School Oxford High School Gym
Wednesday, Feb. 11 - 6:45 p.m. Quaboag Regional Middle High School Oxford High School Gym

AUBURN HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS VARSITY BASKETBALL

Fri Jan 23 6:00 PM vs North High School North High School Gym
Wed Jan 28 6:30 PM vs Blackstone-Millville Regional

High School
Auburn - High School Gym
Fri Jan 30 7:00 PM vs Leicester High School Auburn - High School Gym
Mon Feb 2 6:00 PM vs North High School Auburn - High School Gym
Mon Feb 2 6:00 PM vs North High School Auburn - High School Gym
Postponed
Wed Feb 4 5:30 PM @ Douglas High School Douglas High School Gym
Fri Feb 6 6:30 PM

vs Nipmuc Regional High School Auburn - High School Gym
Mon Feb 9 5:15 PM vs Doherty Memorial High School Auburn - High School Gym
Wed Feb 11 6:30 PM @ Uxbridge High School Uxbridge High School Gym
Fri Feb 13 7:00 PM vs Grafton High School Auburn - High School Gym
Mon Feb 16 5:00 AM vs TBA Auburn - High School Gym
Wed Feb 18 5:00 AM vs TBA

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Togetherness is the Best Exercise

BY AMY LECLAIRE

Confession: I'm not the best dog mom—at least during the winter months. Cold weather is a powerful demotivator, especially when it comes to dog walks. Cold toes give me the shivers; three layers, the quivers! I feel badly about it, but Luke has been remarkably understanding.

"Mummy's cold, Luke." I tug a blanket around my shoulders, which slips to the floor like a queen's robe that inadvertently collects dog hair. "I'm sorry. How about a peanut butter bone?"

The tactic—winning Luke over with food—is far from noble. Peanut butter? On my bone? Seriously? His heart seems to grow three sizes. I prepare the bone with shameless diligence. Meanwhile, he sits with a Grinchy grin, nose lifted as the scent of peanut butter fills

his space. I raise the bone to carry it to his spot, and he stalks me from behind. "Put it down. How about right here? Where's the best spot, Mom?" He hovers, invading my personal space, until I finally surrender and drop the bone.

YOU ARE THE BEST DOG MOM.

Luke stands over his prize, laps it clean, then lies down to wedge it firmly between his front paws. He gnaws with his back molars, his big head shifting to find the perfect chewing angle. He chomps hard, as though breaking down chunks of ice. The strength of Luke's jaw is magnificent—one of his many impressive traits. I once cracked a molar on an almond, yet here lies my dog—shredding the shin bone of a cow with finesse.

My heart swells with gratitude. My dog is understanding—and strong.

I lower myself to the floor and crowd him with a bear hug. He keeps chewing while his tail thumps happily. I kiss his head and pretend to take big bites of his bone. "Chomp, chomp. Gobble, gobble, gobble." I make ridiculous



Luke reminds me of something important: our physical, social, and emotional connection matters. Dog walks matter, yes—but so does time together.

That wisdom shows up outside, too. Luke has plenty of opportunities to run around the front or back yard on his own, yet he often chooses not to. The reason is simple: it's more fun when we're together.

His signature zoomie gallop has become my favorite sport to watch, and he loves to show it off the moment he realizes I'm planted outside.

"Ohhhh, wow. Look at Luke. No one can catch Luke." I feed his ego

as he gallops the perimeter of our property, exercising both athleticism and an impressive knowledge of our boundaries. He grazes the shrubs at our lawn's back edge, swivels through elegant pear trees and, more profoundly, dares me to try to catch him. If I stomp in pursuit, he runs and zigzags even faster.

Luke's joy coats the air like a hazy sunlit vapor. His companionship warms me even more.

Write to Amy at amyleclaire@hotmail.com

Follow Luke on IG @livingwith-lukevalentino

noises while Luke chews faster, making it clear he's not interested in sharing.

Just when I think he's perfectly satisfied, I tiptoe into the kitchen—only to be reminded otherwise.

"Mom? Where are you going? I kind of liked chewing with you beside me." He looks up from his bone as though we've just shared a dance. Why has the music stopped so suddenly?

I answer the cries in his eyes. "I'll be right back, Luke."

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REAL ESTATE

Reasons to be Optimistic about the 2026 Housing Market

If a move is on your radar for 2026, there's a lot more working in your favor than there has been in a while. After a stretch where many people felt stuck, 2026 is shaping up to be a year with more options and more clarity for people who want to make a move. Not because the market is suddenly "easy," but



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

because several key conditions are shifting. Top economists have one word to sum up the housing market for 2026: opportunity. Lower mortgage rates and a rising supply of homes are expected to open up the housing market - something the real estate industry and potential home buyers and sellers have been waiting for. For the first time in several years, things finally aligned toward gradual improvement. Mortgage rates may drift down slowly, but because income growth has exceeded house price appreciation, it will provide a boost to house-buying power, even in a higher-rate world. Affordability won't snap back

overnight, but like a ship finally catching a steady tailwind, it's now heading in the right direction. Just remember, while the national outlook is improving, conditions will still be different based on where you live. Some markets will move faster than others. Some will see stronger price growth. Others will remain flat. Market performance will be based on local economic conditions, making 2026 one of the most geographically divided markets we've seen in years, say some economists. That's why understanding what's happening in your specific area is key. The national trends set the stage, but local dynamics determine how they play out for you.

And that's why you need an agent. If you want more information on what these trends mean for your local market and which trends you'll want to take advantage of, reach out to a member of the Marzeotti Group@Lamacchia Realty, or another trusted real estate agent.

And that's why you need an agent. If you want more information on what these trends mean for your local market and which trends you'll want to take advantage of, reach out to a member of the Marzeotti Group@Lamacchia Realty, or another trusted real estate agent.

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Oxford Public Library

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Oxfordmapubliclibrary.org

Tuesday, Feb 3 - 2:30 - 4:430 p.m.p.m. Share the Love, Valentine for the senior community. Perfect program for students looking to

fulfill their community service hours. All materials provided. Also on Saturday, Feb. 7 at 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Thursdays, 1 p.m. Knitting, Crocheting and Embroidery Group Friday, Feb. 6, 12:45 p.m. Senior Book Group at the Oxford Senior

Center Tuesday, Feb. 10, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday Night Book Group Wednesday, Feb. 25, 5 p.m. Dungeon Master Erika leads the teen group in a new theme each month.

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jpaul@aanortheast.com

Volvos Can Be Fussy About Battery Voltage

Q. I have a 2016 Volvo XC70 wagon. Both the large and small batteries were replaced about two years ago. Frequently, both summer and winter, the warning "low battery charge" is displayed. The car always starts on the first attempt. I purchased a trickle charger and occasionally have it hooked up to the main battery. I still occasionally get this

warning despite being hooked up for hours.

A. Volvos are famous for this message, even with a brand-new batteries. Normally the message will go away once a battery reset is performed. If this procedure was not performed the message will still be displayed. Also, Volvo cars are very fussy about battery voltage.

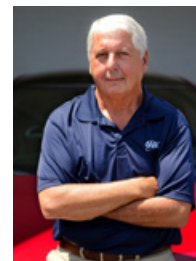
Although I believe aftermarket parts can be very good, some aftermarket batteries will cause this message to pop up from time to time. If the charging system is working properly then the issue may be short trips that never fully recharge the battery. At this point charge the batteries and check the charging system, if all looks good then keep doing what you are

doing.

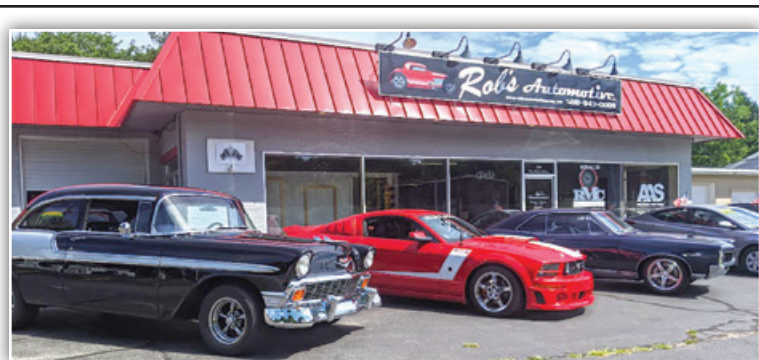
Q. I turned on my heater this morning on my 2013 Ford Mustang and there was a small hiss sound. Any idea what that might be? Perhaps a leaking heater core? When I turn on the AC it does not do it, just with the heat.

A. I suspect an issue with a temperature blend door. On your Mustang the doors are electric not vacuum actuated, so that would rule out a vacuum leak. If one of the doors or motors is hanging up a bit they could be making a noise. But at this point you need to narrow in on the noise to see where it is coming from. A rubber hose about two feet long can make a pretty good mechanics stethoscope to pinpoint noises.

have replaced four-year-old tires that were dry rotting due to constant exposure in the sun and had tires that were nine years old that looked fine. There are no hard and fast rules, six years is where you need to give tires a good look. As an example, I would not plan a cross-country road trip on tires more than 10 years old. If I had a collector car that only gets driven a few miles occasionally to shows, the age of the tire (providing there are no obvious issues) would not concern me. I will say if you have the budget, replacing tires is one of the best ways to give a older car that quiet new car ride.



BY JOHN PAUL



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Q. I purchased four new tires (GoodYear Assurance) in September 2018. I now have 42,000 miles on these tires. All tires have good tread on them. The tires are seven years old. I read that tires should be replaced every 6 years, even if tires look good. The reason is the rubber degrades over time, which compromises their safety and performance. We drive about 10,000 miles per year. Both local and long distance, should I replace these tires because of their age?

Q. The windshield on my 2021 Lexus RX350 appears to have many very small dots on the outside. They appear to be the result of sand or something hitting it. It did not seem apparent when I bought the car used a couple of years back. Recently it can be seen from the inside when the sun shines on it and I am driving. I am trying to avoid replacing the windshield, and all that goes with it. Could the dealer have used something to cover up the dots? Is there a prod-

A. It really depends on the overall condition and how the tires have aged. I

CAR DOCTOR
continued on page 13

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TIPS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING

dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com

Putting your aging parents' wishes first

As your parents grow older, it may be time to talk with them about financial and aging issues, which may involve difficult conversations.

You'll want to be careful how you approach this. Mention ahead of time that you'd like to talk to them about their future plans and reassure them that you want to understand their wishes, so their affairs will be taken care of as they would like.



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

money, as this could be interpreted as your seeking information about your inheritance or being skeptical about their financial decisions. Instead, build a broader discussion about their vision for their aging years. A series of shorter conversations may allow you to cover topics more comfortably rather than trying to solve everything at once.

Try to address these areas:

- **Health care** – Seek to learn whether your parents have established appropriate health-related legal documents such as a health care power of attorney, which gives someone the authority to make decisions about their medical care if they become unable, and a living will, which spells out the extraordinary medical treatments they may or may not want.
- **Independence** – As people age, they may begin to lose their independence. Have your parents considered options for long-term

care, such as an assisted living community, a nursing home or a home health aide? If they plan to receive support from family members, do your parents' expectations match yours?

- **Financial goals** – Focusing on the personal and financial aspects of the legacy your parents want to leave can be a valuable conversation. Have they updated their will or other estate documents, such as a living trust? Have they created a durable power of attorney for a trusted family member to make financial decisions for them if they become incapacitated? Do they have the proper beneficiary designations on their insurance policies, retirement plan and bank accounts? If you position these issues around your parents having control over transferring their assets, rather than curiosity over "who will get what," you'll more likely have a productive conversation.
- **Last wishes** – You'll want to learn whether your parents have

instructions in their will about their funerals and last wishes. Express that you or another close family member should know who is responsible for making sure their wishes are met in a timely fashion.

Money, independence and aging can be sensitive topics. You don't have to go it alone, though — enlist help from another close family member. Or, if your parents work with an attorney, financial professional or other trusted advisor, consider asking if they're interested in having them participate in your talks. You might even be able to introduce your parents to one of your advisors.

In any case, keep talking. These conversations can be challenging, but if handled correctly can be of great benefit to your parents and your entire family.

Dennis Antonopoulos
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508-832-5385
Dennis.Antonopoulos@edwardjones.com

THIS ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN BY EDWARD JONES FOR USE BY YOUR LOCAL EDWARD JONES FINANCIAL ADVISOR

EDWARD JONES, MEMBER SIPC

CAR DOCTOR

continued from page 12

uct that polishes or minimizes this condition? I must add that I am an older conservative driver who does little high speed and/or highway driving.

Unfortunately, the glass is just what you thought "sand-blasted". You may be able to get a glass shop to try and polish the windshield, although personally I have never had good luck with this. What you could try is to get the windshield very clean. Use a mild abrasive like Bar Keepers Friend or Bon Ami then wash with clean water. Once this is done Clay-Bar the windshield. This clay (you can get it at an auto parts store) picks up all the very small bits of dirt. Then go over the windshield with a good window cleaner. I use Spray Way aerosol glass cleaner. The last step in the cleaning process is to polish the windshield with a microfiber cloth. If this does not help, a new windshield may be in your future.

The dash on my 2003 Toyota 4Runner is sticky and cracking. I put wax paper on the sticky part, but it just stuck to the dash. What's your recommendation to make it unsticky?

I would start with a mild cleaner like Dawn dish detergent and warm water. Vinegar cleaner can also work. If

you don't have any success, then move to isopropyl alcohol. Try to find alcohol that is 90 percent concentration. You can also try combining the rubbing alcohol with the dish detergent. Readers have recommended Goo Gone

adhesive remover. Use microfiber cloth and light to moderate pressure. If this still does not work perhaps the easiest thing would be a dashboard cover which is available online for \$25-\$50.

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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, JANUARY 24

• Join Family Board Game Night with Grafton Rec. Tons of different board games to enjoy from 3-6 p.m. in the Municipal Center Gymnasium. Free. Concessions available for purchase. Sensory friendly space is available in the Arts and Crafts Room. Registration required. Good for all ages.

• The museum of the Millbury Historical Society in the Asa Waters Mansion 123 Elm Street, Millbury will be open from 9:30 a.m. until noon. 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; President Taft photos & memorabilia; military uniforms, guns, and flags.

• At 6 p.m. the same evening, The Historic Asa Waters Mansion is delighted to announce "A Toast To Two Centuries: A Candlelit Inaugural Dinner, an exclusive evening of refined dining, live music, and intimate historic charm. Guests are invited to step inside one of Millbury's most treasured landmarks for an unforgettable candlelit dinner prepared by award-winning Johnny Burke Catering. The evening will feature exquisite cuisine, atmospheric lighting, a beautifully curated musical performance by renowned cellist Skip VonKuske, and a refined selection of

refreshments at the cash bar. In addition to dinner, attendees will enjoy exclusive mini-tours of the Mansion, offering a rare opportunity to experience its rich, two-century history and architectural beauty up close. Experience the Mansion in a new light!

Register online at <https://unipaygold.unibank.com/transactioninfo.aspx?TID=35274> or

The cost to attend is \$65 per person, seating is limited, and advanced ticket purchase is required. For more information, please contact Traci Parath at 508.865.0855 or email Traci at tparath@millburyma.gov.

MONDAY, JANUARY 26

• The Webster Dudley Oxford Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. at J. Anthony's Italian Grill, 917 Southbridge Street, Auburn. The guest speaker is Brian Westerlind of Webster Five. You can register for the meeting at www.wdocchamberma.com.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

• Dudley Library is offering a program on effective and thoughtful communication with family, friends, and colleagues. At a time when listening across differences may feel harder than ever, learn how to listen, share, and find understanding – even when you don't agree. The next session will be held at the Dudley Library at 6:00pm. No registration required.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

• The Millbury Historical Society and the Millbury Lions will be holding a Meat and Seafood Raffle from 2-5 p.m. at the St. Charles Hotel at 126 West Main Street, Millbury. The Lions are requesting contributions

of canned goods to their Food Pantry for which you will receive extra tickets!

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

• Come to the first ever Active Agers health Fair for Older Adults at Plummer Place, 20 Highland Street, Whitinsville. The event is packed with fun and engaging activities, screening and wellness tips to keep you thriving. The first 20 people will receive a free reflective drawstring backpack. Free door prizes and grab and go snacks will be available as well as bone density tests and blood pressure screenings. There is a \$5 attendance fee, payable in cash at the door. Featured vendors and Organizations: Agria Draper Place, Azza Law, Alzheimer's Association, BrightStarCare, Cornerstone, Fallon Health, HearJoy Audiology, Lifeline, Salmon Home Care, SHINE and TriValley, Inc.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

• St. Peter's Parish in Northbridge is having a Meatloaf Dinner on Saturday, February 28th starting at 5:30 pm in the parish hall. Bring you 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 5:00pm. All orders must be purchased in advance by Tuesday, February 24th. Please call 508-234-2156 or email the parish office: parishoffice@stpeterockdale.org for tickets.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

• Shamrock & Roll St. Patrick's Day Luncheon and Concert at Plummer Place. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. Event is 12:30 - 2 p.m. Snow date is Thursday, March 12. Local musician and singer Russ Pimental will play a Celtic mix of songs along with some oldies and goodies, as well as cover tunes by the Everly Brothers, Johnny Cash and Church Berry. A themed corned beef sandwich luncheon is included. Sponsored by State Rep. David Muradian and the Friends of Northbridge Elders (F.I.N.E.) \$10 per ticket. Limit two per

person. Northbridge residents have priority. Tickets go on sale February 9 at the Plummer Place main office, 20 Highland Street, Whitinsville.

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

• The 26th Annual Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Home and Community Expo will take place from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Northbridge High School, 427 Linwood Ave, Whitinsville. Register early and save on your booth. Save room to taste the goods at the Best of the Valley Chowderfest and vote for 2026 People's Choice. Judges will award a separate prize.

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TALES FROM BEYOND

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The Windham Frogs

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

Not every tale from beyond has to deal with ghosts, UFOs, cryptic creatures and the like. Sometimes a moment in history becomes almost unbelievable. This is an account of one of those moments, a true story that took place in Windham Connecticut.

Windham is known for its historical significance in the thread industry, but one incident took place in 1754 causing much of the colonies to take delight in printing the dilemma that befell the good people of the village on a dark and murky summer night. One such printing was called "Lawyers and Bull-Frogs." Other publications took pleasure in creating their own tongue-in-cheek humorous titles to describe the following account. A recorded writing of the incident appears in a letter obtained by Dr. Stiles in the summer of 1754. Read on and let the unpredictable spirit

of nature fuel your imagination with this next account.

The inhabitants of Windham had finally laid down to rest on a hot summer evening when the silence of the night was shattered by a most unearthly disharmony of wails and screams. The hour had barely passed the midnight tolling when the townspeople were summoned from their slumber by the shrieks that filled the air above them. The French and Indian War was in full force, and the villagers at first feared the worst: an Indian attack. Many of the men from the village were already off fighting the campaign, leaving few to repel any such raid. The noise persisted with no physical beings pressing upon the township. Other members of the frightened throng surmised that judgment day had come and began hiding under their beds or running frantically in the streets.

As the terrified citizens huddled in fear, some of the screeches began

to take on a more linguistic character most peculiar yet familiar to their ears. The names of Colonel Dyer and Elderkin, two prominent citizens and attorneys, echoed through the night air, sending even more panic through the hearts of the confused multitude.

Several town militia loaded their muskets and wandered into the darkness to meet their foe. The brave souls meandered up the hill bounding the town to the east. It was there that they halted, daring not to march forward into an ambush, as the darkness had completely stunted their vision. Surely they would not wander into the blackness with no confirmation of the whereabouts of their enemy, whose cries seemed at that point to whirl around them from all directions.

The terrified citizens held fast until the dawn's rays brought abatement to the racket. The early morning light at once gave them an

opportunity to see what the clamor was. Many of the villagers joined the militia that had camped out on the hill overnight, and together, they cautiously sallied forth toward a millpond that lay about three-quarters of a mile east of the village. As they approached the pond, a most remarkable sight awaited them. Whether the discoverers of the commotion were amused, embarrassed or just outright relieved by what they beheld has never been recorded, at least not on an individual discourse. There in the dried-up pond lay (some say hundreds and other accounts say thousands) dead bullfrogs that had obviously battled all night for the remaining puddle that they needed for survival. On both sides lay the defunct combatants, whose cries of "Colonel Dyer, Colonel Dyer!" were offset by those that took a stand on the opposite side of the waterhole screaming, "Elderkin too, Elderkin too!" It was as if the

frogs of Windham were blaming these two men for their plight and, thus choosing sides, began a heated battle that persisted through the night. These cries, in the silence and absence of our modern noises and distractions, carried easily across the fields and forests and into the ears of the people of Windham.

Perhaps the frogs were not way off on their reprimands. It appears, according to record, that Colonel Dyer had drained the pond that June in order to repair the dam. Dyer, Elderkin and a man named Mr. Gray were among those who saddled up and rode toward the crest of Mullien Hill to find the source of the racket.

From that moment on, the waterhole was known as Frog Pond, and the town was written into history as the place where multitudes of frogs brought fear and embarrassment on that hot summer night so long ago.

Lions Clubs Volunteers Package 13,000 Meals to Fight Hunger

The Oxford Lions Club along with volunteers from more than 20 Lions Clubs across Central Massachusetts gathered recently to package more than 13,000 meals for local families facing food insecurity.

The effort, part of Lions Club

meals that will be distributed throughout Worcester County.

The district-wide service project was organized by Lions Club International District 33A and included participants from 23 Lions Clubs across the region.

"We are seeing pandemic-level

Andrew Keane, district governor for Lions District 33A, said the project reflects the organization's mission of community service.

"By working collectively across Central Massachusetts, we are making a real, measurable impact in combating food insecurity in our local communities," Keane said.

The project was supported by a \$3,000 grant from the Lions Club International Foundation,

along with additional contributions from local Lions Clubs and a corporate sponsorship from bankHometown. Total funding support for the project reached \$5,200.

The packaged meals will be distributed through local food pantries, backpack programs and community organizations serving families in need throughout Worcester County.

Lions Club International's Global Week of Service is an

annual initiative that encourages clubs worldwide to participate in hands-on service projects focused on hunger relief and other community needs.

The Boys & Girls Club of Worcester serves more than 8,000 children annually through programs at its three clubhouses in Main South, Great Brook Valley and Plumley Village.



Volunteers from the Oxford Lions Club, including the District 33 Governor, and a Leo volunteer from Baypath Regional Vocational Technical High School.

International's Global Week of Service to Combat Food Insecurity, brought together more than 158 volunteers, including Lions members, high school Leo Club members and community residents. Working side by side, the group packaged 13,002 nutritious

need among our families, and we anticipate that it will continue to grow," said Liz Hamilton, CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Worcester, which partnered in the effort. "The only way to truly make a difference is by coming together as a community."

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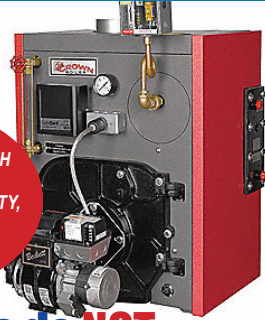
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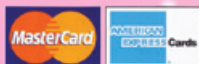
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