

The parcel in question is proximate to the part of Webster Lake called the Narrows, a tiny channel between the north and middle lakes.

## Webster's Zoning Board of Appeals Approves Pavilion Avenue Special Permit

BY JANET STOICA  
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

Many residents are unaware of the responsibilities belonging to the Webster Zoning Board of Appeals. The Board operates under the authority of Chapter 40A of the Massachusetts General Laws and acts as the town's Special Permit Granting Authority regarding the application or interpretation of the town's zoning bylaws. If there were no

zoning bylaws, you could be living next to all sorts of unexpected neighbors like junkyards, factories, nightclubs, or even pig farms. There's nothing horrific about any of these types of facilities but it's better if they were situated in more suitable areas specific to themselves. Each town's zoning authority adopts specific ordinances and bylaws regulating the use of land, buildings, and structures.

At the Webster board's most recent meeting, they reviewed a

site plan for 11 Pavilion Avenue concerning a demolition of an existing lakeside home to construct a new building. The location is on Webster Lake near "the narrows." Questions were raised about road and water proximity while the board reviewed whether the new construction would be substantially larger than the previous structure and whether there would be a significant impact to the local

**WEBSTER**  
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## Fiscal Year 2027 Town Budget Review, Town Board Candidates' Forum

BY JANET STOICA  
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

At the March 24 meeting of the Charlton Select Board, Town Administrator Andrew Golas provided a quick overview of the fiscal year 2027 budget, which has not been finalized, stating "total revenues that we're projecting are \$50.46 million with a total expenditure budget of \$48.3 million essentially leaving a margin of \$2.6 million in unused tax levy capacity. It's projecting \$250,000 in new growth and some increase in ambulance receipts. Overall educational spending increases 6.79 percent primarily driven by an 11 percent increase in minimum net school spending. There is an increase for police, fire, and DPW departments reflective of their respective collective bargaining agreements. An increase to the fire and EMS budget will fund four additional firefighters to staff the second station. We've included projected benefit costs and increases in debt service and overall, I think it's pretty strong and shows our strong financial position especially where our right out of the gate budget is showing a net posi-

tive where a lot of communities this year are showing net negatives and trying to figure out how to dig out of that hole," he said.

The budget review required no Select Board vote.

The Board then reviewed potential changes to the town's medical insurance provider which appeared to provide cost savings but more research and cost reviews are to be done by the town's insurance reviewer.

The Board then briefly examined Town Administrator Golas' performance review where he was given a score of 4.79 out of a possible 5. Mr. Golas thanked the Board for a positive review.

### CANDIDATES' FORUM SCHEDULED

Also at the meeting, the Charlton Select Board heard from resident Kathleen Walker about the town board candidates' forum to be held on Saturday, April 11, at 10:30 a.m. The forum will be held at the Charlton Library located at 40 Main Street. Ms. Walker stated that "all 16 candidates who are

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## Dudley Selectboard Reviews Regional School Budget

BY JANET STOICA  
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

At the March 23 meeting of the Dudley Select Board, Steven Lamarche, Dudley-Charlton Regional School District Superintendent, presented the school district's budget update, saying that "we are still in flux as to where the state is going to land and we hope the House comes out with its budget in two weeks maybe and we'll have a better understanding on a couple of these items. Chapter 70 funds have not changed and we

do not anticipate that the Governor will change what she has put into her budget."

Lamarche then reviewed each budget aspect as it pertained to funding from school choice, resource officers, health insurance costs including savings resulting from GLP-1 weight loss drugs' reclassifications and their effect on health insurance budgets, out-of-district placements, and a 30 percent increase in students who identify with disabilities in the school district of approximately 700 students. He spoke about

employee health benefits that had a downward adjustment. Lamarche stated, "We are looking at a 12 percent increase in health insurance benefits. That's half of what it was last year for us. Retiree health benefits are the biggest nugget that hit us on January 1. We are absorbing this in our operating budget. We are making sacrifices to make sure we are paying for this year without coming back and asking for additional money and that's a \$522,000 increase for the fiscal year 2027. We have 351 retirees who are participating in retirement

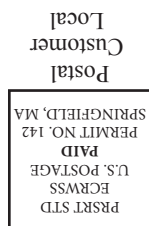
insurance as a school district. The retirees don't fall back on the town budget; we take care of the retirees in our regional school budget. There was a 60 percent increase in their benefits from December 31, 2025 to January 1, 2026 and we don't think it will be that large (of an increase) going forward as there was a three-year contract with the insurance company; this is the reason for the 60 percent increase. There was no doubt that the insur-

**DUDLEY**  
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# Collaborative Poetry Project Presented in Webster

In celebration of National Poetry Month, Booklovers' Gourmet, located at 72 East Main Street in Webster, MA is hosting an Open Mic Poetry Event with Featured Poet Brian Mosher, on Saturday, April 18 from 2-4 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. There is space for up to 14 readers for the open mic. To sign up to read, please call 508-949-6232 or email deb@bookloversgourmet.com.

Brian Mosher resides in Mansfield, MA. His work has appeared in Blood and Bourbon, Lily Poetry Review, Literary Underground, Nixes Mate, Anomaly Poetry, eMerge, Esoterica, and others. He received Honorable Mention in the Joe Gouveia Outermost Poetry Contest, and his short story "Fragments" was a winner of the Nikki Hanna Literary Challenge. His most recent books are the collection, "A Muster of Melodious

Musings" (2025 Metaphysical Fox Press); Double Vision, a collaboration with artist Becky Haletky (2026); and the chapbook "Relict" (2026 Finishing Line Press).

His website is Phlubbermatic: www.phlubbermatic.blogspot.com.

Relict is the result of the author's struggle to figure out what the death of his father meant to him. Does a person become something different on the day they no longer have any living parents? A child becomes an adolescent, becomes an adult. A single person becomes part of a couple, becomes a parent, becomes again single either as a widow or through divorce. But we have no word for the stage of life that begins

once both a person's parents have died. This book is an attempt to document the feelings of grief, and



to reconnect to a lost past through stories about ancestors, all without losing sight of a hopeful future.

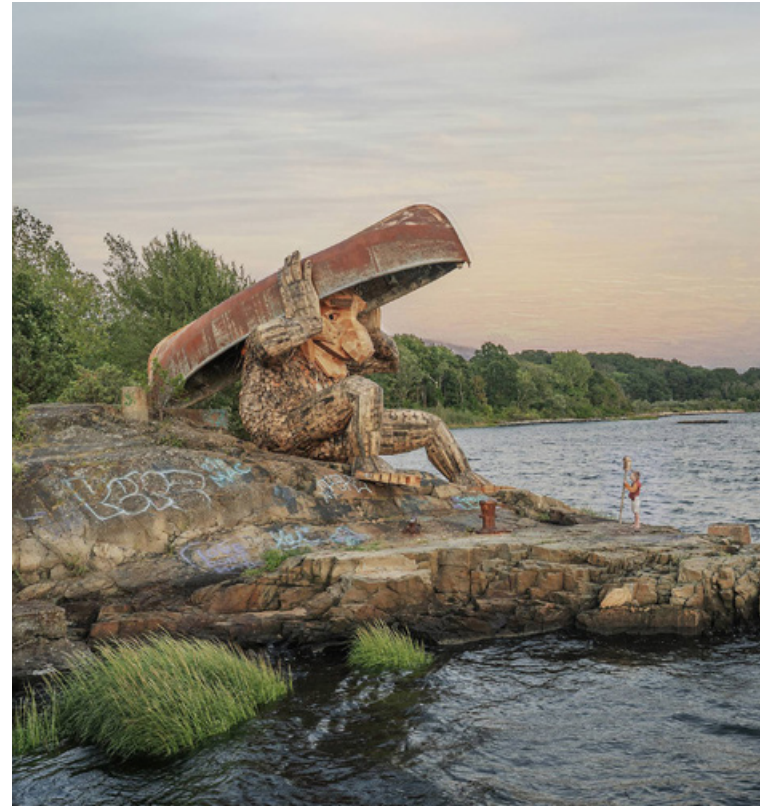
Artist Becky Haletky and poet Brian Mosher present their collaborative project, Double Vision. Becky has created gorgeous and colorful collages of diners, historic locations and other attractions (both real and imagined), and Brian has written poems to accompany each one.

## CHARLTON

*continued from page 1*

running for elected positions will have the opportunity to present their visions and answer your questions. Why does this matter and why should you care? Our elected officials directly affect every aspect of our lives from our children's education to our tax bills from public safety to the character of our

the policy recommended by the town insurer which would add the following wording to the process: "if the incident reported is severe, it must be reported to the town cyber liability insurance provider immediately to facilitate the ability to deploy critical breach response resources." Golas recommended that the Board approve the revision and the Board voted unanimously to approve.



The Thunder Stone in Rhode Island is one of Thomas Dambo's recent installations. [www.thomasdambo.com/](http://www.thomasdambo.com/)

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community. Our towns usually see lower voter turnout than state or national elections and many of our local decisions are made by a relatively small percentage of eligible voters." She urged voters to attend the April 11 candidates' forum.

### NEW DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF

Fire Chief Barton introduced newly-appointed Deputy Fire Chief Joshua Bennett. Deputy Chief Bennett thanked the Select Board for the opportunity of his new position. The Board then voted on the town cyber-security incident response policy. Town Administrator Andrew Golas reviewed

### NOT ALL TROLLS ARE ON THE INTERNET

Other business included an interesting project by Thomas Dambo, who places large elf-like troll figures in selected areas, specifically at Charlton's Capen Hill Nature Sanctuary. Mr. Dambo's goal is to place his creations in every U.S. state as presented by Diane Doherty, former Recreation Commissioner, and Barbara Frederick, Director of the Capen Hill Nature Association. More details will be provided in the near future.

Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg



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**DUDLEY**

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ance company was losing money by the third year.”

Lamarche also stated that the budget increase was 5.69 percent. To offset some of the budget increase, he mentioned that the school district did not use the Amazon monies given to the district last year but held it to offset the school budget this year for customary school supplies and the district will also be using state aid toward their \$60 million budget.

A Finance, Advisory, and Appropriations Board member asked Jon Ruda, town administrator, “What is your time frame for budget recommendations?” Mr. Ruda responded “We still have to hear from Water and Sewer and we’re going to need some time to work through all the recommendations.”

Ruda further stated “Every year we balance our budget for July 1 and then we actually fix and set our budget in October. It’s just the way it seems to work every year. We never have a full picture in front of us until we get to October and all the budgets have been settled and the revenues collected have been settled and then we’re able to realize a free cash number and come up with a balanced budget for the remainder of the year. It’s just the way it works every single year. We don’t have the extra money to play with to balance for July 1 ever.”

Dudley Library Director, Nicole Messier, presented an additional fiscal budget 2027 request for a 1.85% increase, or \$7,500, to run the Pearl Crawford Memorial Library. Selectman Steve Sullivan asked Messier if the additional

funds were to keep the town’s library certification and Messier stated that to keep within the state budget requirements the library would have to maintain a minimum amount of operational funding to qualify for state aid.

“In order for us to meet the requirements we would have to take the average funding of the past three years and add an additional 2.5 percent so the \$413,145 (total operational budget) gets us to where we need to be and then we will qualify for our state aid,” she said.

Also at the meeting, the Select Board approved a Class II license for Pro Automotive owner, Jason Rousseau, to operate his auto and truck repair business in a former Toyota Dealership building at 191 West Main Street. Board member Sullivan thanked Mr. Rousseau for keeping his business in Dudley after which the board approved the Class II license.

A Class II license allows buying and selling used cars and authorizes the purchase and display of used motor vehicles for resale to the public with the licenses generally expiring on January 1 of each year. It also covers persons who display used vehicles not owned by them, in exchange for compensation. Licensees must maintain a \$25,000 surety bond to protect consumers who may suffer a loss. Holders must abide by local zoning laws and maintain records of all vehicles bought or sold.

A town-wide yard sale date was approved for Saturday, June 27, at the Dudley Town Hall, 71 West Main Street, to be held from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nichols College was also granted parking exceptions for May events as well as for student move-out dates.

Piader then informed the builder that his special permit was approved and that he now had a 21-day waiting period for any appeals. Following this 21-day wait, he then would have to return to town hall to obtain a Certificate of No Appeal which verifies that the time allowed for appealing has expired and confirms the board’s decision is final. The permit would then be issued by the town of Webster and construction would follow.

**DWC Fundraiser Successful**

The Dudley Woman’s Club Pocketbook Bingo on March 22 at the PACC in Webster was a winning success!

More than 200 enthusiasts gathered to win designer handbags, raffles and contests. As part of a Giving Project, our generous guests donated 201 breakfast items valued at \$1,283 to the Webster-Dudley Food Share.

Also, as a thank you to our volunteer emcees Lester Buggio and Ben Kane, the DWC donated \$200 in their name to the Webster-Dudley Food Share.

Proceeds from this event support the many charitable undertakings of the DWC, including college scholarships. For more information about the club and the charities we support, visit [www.dudleywomanclub.org](http://www.dudleywomanclub.org).



Two women enjoying themselves in hand-made hats at the Dudley Woman’s Club Purse Bingo Fundraiser.

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**WEBSTER**

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area. A height restriction of 30 feet maximum was specified to be measured from the lowest point of the property. Abutters’ comments were also reviewed and after discussion and a geo-map review, a special permit was approved with the normal conditions of the zoning by-laws along with the new height restriction. Chairman Jason

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# Programs & Events @ the Pearle L. Crawford (Dudley) Library

40 Schofield Avenue, Dudley  
508-949-8021

To register for events or sign up for the newsletter, go to [www.crawfordlibrary.org](http://www.crawfordlibrary.org) or call.

The Library will open at 11 a.m. on Friday, April 10 due to a scheduled school visit.

The Library will be closed on Monday, April 20 in observance of Patriots' Day.

Please join us in April to celebrate local artist Tim Oliver. A variety of his pieces will be on display for you to enjoy in the Fels Room whenever the Library is open.

## Gentle Yoga

Every Monday-NO SESSION  
April 20  
10-11 a.m.

Join yoga instructor Patricia for a traditional "on the mat" yoga class with chair yoga modifications. This truly is a one-size-fits-all class. Bring your own mat. Wear layers, do not eat heavily 1.5-2 hours before class. Registration is required.

## Mahjong at the Pearle

Every Wednesday

10 a.m. -12:30 p.m. Fels Community Room

The game consists of players competing to form distinct sets or pairs of tiles, similar to gin rummy.

Everyone is welcome; registration is not required.

## Quilting Group

Every Wednesday  
1:30- 3:30 p.m.

All quilters and would-be quilters are invited to join our new group. Bring your projects!

## Knit & Crochet Group

Every Thursday 5:30-7:45 p.m. and Friday 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

All stitchers are welcome to this informal group.

Bring your project, enjoy the company

## The Dangerous Art of Chainsaw Sculpture

Thursday, April 9  
6-7 p.m.

A fun, interesting, interactive and engaging journey through the amazing career of world-famous Master Chainsaw Sculptor, Dr. "The Machine" Jesse Green (AMERICAN CHAINSAW on National Geographic Channel, ESPN/ Disney and more.) Through an incredible series of photos, the process of creating gigantic, death-defying works of art from trees is brought to life in a BIG way! Attendees will be able to ask questions throughout and

fully participate in the discussion. You've never seen anything like it!

## Friends of the Library Annual Meeting

Monday, April 13  
1:15-2:15 p.m.

The annual meeting of the Friends of the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library. Voting on changes to bylaws. All are invited to attend!

## Pearle's Genealogy Group

Monday, April 13  
4-5:30 p.m.

The genealogy group is growing! Join us in the Local History Room on the second Monday of every month. Facilitated by professional genealogist Patricia St. Marie.

## Gel Printing with Happy Arts

Monday, April 13  
5:30-7:30 p.m.

Let's experience artist creativity using a gel plate. You can make beautiful prints and use them for cards, wall art, journal-making, and so much more.

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Dudley Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. Registration is required.

## Corbin Cemetery Restoration Project

Thursday, April 16  
6-7 p.m.

Join us to learn about the

restoration project at the Corbin Cemetery in Dudley. Presentation by Betty and Carlo Mencucci of Burrillville, R.I. will tell the story of conserving gravestones in the Corbin Cemetery over the course of 4 summers. This cemetery has a very old section with graves of Revolutionary War soldiers. Many of these old slate stones were leaning, fallen or broken. The slideshow will show the labor involved to properly repair and reset these old, fragile gravestones to bring back the dignity and respect that they deserve.

## Crawford Library Book Group

Thursday, April 23

Looking for Alaska by John Green & The Art Spy by Michelle Young  
6-7:30 p.m.

Books are available at the circulation desk for checkout one month prior to discussion.

No Registration Required

## "Cook the Book" Book Club-Dinner: Changing the Game by Melissa Clark

Monday, April 27  
6-7 p.m.

Any family recipe is fair game, except alcoholic beverages-sorry! Prepare the recipe at home and share it at the library. We cannot reheat or keep food warm, so consider this when choosing your recipe.

You are responsible for bringing

serving utensils. We will provide paper goods and utensils for eating.

There will be a place to include your recipe selection in the reservation form. Registration is required.

## Tuesday Crafternoon- Diamond Painting

Tuesday, April 28  
1- 2 p.m.

Try your hand at diamond painting. Four designs to choose from. Don't panic, the designs are small and easy to complete.

Ages 17+ Registration is required

## National Grid Advocates

Wednesday, April 29  
10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

National Grid has a team of Community Advocates dedicated to assisting low-to moderate-income customers in navigating their utility needs. Our Advocates provide personalized support and can help residents with a variety of services. Drop in for one-on-one help.

## Meet the Artist-Tim Oliver

Thursday, April 30  
5:30-7 p.m.

Let's celebrate our Artist of the Month, Tim Oliver, who continually pushes beyond the boundaries of traditional drawing, painting, and sketching, exploring bold and intriguing new directions. Cookies will be served.

## The Yankee Xpress

Published on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month. Direct mailed to nearly 65,000 homes and businesses each month and available on news stands in the region.

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**2nd Friday:** Blackstone Valley South:  
Douglas, Northbridge & Uxbridge

**4th Friday:** The YankeeXpress North:  
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**4th Friday:** Blackstone Valley North:  
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# Frost, Marsi, Fattman & McKenna File Legislation to Recognize Brodeur Family with Route 20 Dedication at Curve

State Representatives Paul K. Frost (R-Auburn), John J. Marsi (R-Charlton) and Joseph D. McKenna (R-Sutton), along with Senator Ryan C. Fattman (R-Sutton), announce they have filed a bill to dedicate a section of Route 20 as the Brodeur Curve, in memory of Michael and Kyle Brodeur of Charlton, who were struck head-on by an impaired driver in November of 1997 at the dangerous curve in the Town of Oxford.

Michael was killed and his son Kyle lived with severe brain damage until his untimely passing in 2025 due to the injuries from the accident. For the decades that followed the tragic incident Kyle and his mother, Lisa Brodeur, dedicated themselves to raising awareness of the dangers of impaired driving, educating high school and driver's ed students, working with drivers who lost their licenses on the consequences of impaired driving, and comforting the victims of motor vehicle accidents and their families.

In sharing their story with the hope to save lives and help others make better choices, Kyle and Lisa's tireless advocacy not only received recognitions but also led

to increased safety measures along Route 20 from the Oxford/Auburn line to Richardson's Corner in Charlton. Today this section has been dramatically improved through the widening of the roadway and installation of a median barrier separating the opposing directions of travel.

Representative Frost, who represents North Oxford and the area of Charlton along Route 20 where the safety improvements were made, commented, "We are filing this bill in cooperation with MassDOT to recognize the sacrifice and the advocacy of the Brodeur Family. From this terrible tragedy came hope, love and a desire to educate to save lives. Route 20 is a better and safer road to travel than it ever was because of Lisa and Kyle's advocacy. At one time the curve was referred to as Dead Man's Curve. Now after the safety improvements and once this bill becomes law, it will be forever known as Brodeur Curve."

"The Brodeur Family deserves to have this section of Rt. 20 named after them to ensure that Michael and Kyle Brodeur are always remembered," said Representative

Marsi. "The many, many years of advocacy Lisa Brodeur and family gave to improving the road so others can be safer will live on for generations."

"This honorary naming is just a small token of gratitude that we can show to the Brodeur family for their enduring advocacy in light of tragedy and hardship," added Representative McKenna. "I pray that no more lives will be lost, and that is largely thanks to the family's decades of enduring commitment to ensuring that this road was rebuilt and made safe."

Senator Fattman said, "The Brodeur family has transformed devastating loss into a mission to keep others safe and prevent even more driving tragedies. The stretch of Route 20 dedicated as Brodeur Curve ensures that Michael and Kyle's story, and Lisa and Kyle's relentless advocacy, remind us that safer roads are built with compassion. I hope and pray that the Brodeur family's impact will be felt by every individual traveling on this roadway."

The Brodeurs turned their loss into decades of giving back to our society, and this legislation honors

the family's efforts to enhance the safety of commuters across our region and the Commonwealth. Additional cosponsors of the bill

include Senator Peter Durant, Representative Todd Smola and Representative Donald Berthiaume, among others.

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# Earth Day Events

## DUDLEY SETS EARTH DAY CLEANUP FOR APRIL 18

The Dudley Board of Health calls residents to an Earth Day cleanup from 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday.

April 18, with a rain date of April 25.

This annual event sponsored by the Board of Health and the Last Green Valley celebrates the arrival of Spring by removing trash from our roadways and waterways.

Starting at 8 a.m. volunteers may pick up trash bags, gloves, sanitizers, reflective vests, snacks and water from the Dudley Highway Garage at 7 Indian Road. Trash is to be returned to the Highway Garage when finished.

Teams are encouraged!

For more information, please contact the Board of Health at

508-949-8012 or email [building1@dudleyma.gov](mailto:building1@dudleyma.gov)

## CHARLTON CELEBRATES EARTH DAY, APRIL 25, 2026

Charlton residents of all ages are invited to participate in a town-wide road clean-up and fest in celebration of Earth Day on Saturday, April 25, 2026, from 8 am to 2 pm.

Residents may sign up online at <https://www.townofcharlton.net/238/Earth-Day-Committee> to claim a road, or portion of a road to clean. Online registration begins April 1st; residents may also sign up in person at the event.

Residents who commit to a road will receive sturdy yellow plastic bags, protective gloves, grabbers, safety vests, tick prevention kits and tick removal kits. These items will be distributed on the Town

Common beginning at 8 am the day of the event. Grabber supply is limited; please reuse grabbers from previous years if you have them. Collected trash should be brought to a dumpster, donated by Casella Waste, located behind Town Hall. The Charlton DPW is available to pick up bags for residents who are unable to deliver them to the dumpster; residents need to notify the Earth Day Planning group at [cjolicoeur64@yahoo.com](mailto:cjolicoeur64@yahoo.com) of the exact location of these bags.

Residents are urged to use gloves to protect themselves from sharp objects and to wear bright clothing or a safety vest so drivers can see them easily. Residents are cautioned to never open containers of unknown substances. Contact the Police to dispose of any needles or syringes – do not touch or place them in bags with other refuse.

While most roads in town need cleaning, some of the worst are the most traveled and therefore more dangerous to address. If you are up for the task, but not for children, these roads are hot spots: Route

31, Brookfield Road, Route 20 traffic lights, and Saundersdale Road.

To encourage participation from children, Erin Anderson, fifth-grade science teacher at Charlton Middle School, held a contest for students to design a tee shirt based on this year's Earth Day theme: Our Power, Our Planet. The winning design was submitted by seventh-grader Riley Boland. Millenium Power Company has generously donated tee shirts with the winning design, available on a first come, first serve basis, one per person.

In addition to a town-wide clean-up, Charlton will hold an Earth Fest on Saturday, April 25, 2026, from 11 am to 2 pm. The event will feature live music, food trucks, and vendors promoting environmentally sustainable lifestyle choices. The Earth Day Planning Group invites residents to enjoy the festivities, while learning ways to help the earth, its animals, and plants.

Earth Fest vendors include AnnieMike's Honey, Buffumville

Army Corps of Engineers, Charlton Business Alliance, Charlton Conservation Commission, Charlton Garden Club, Charlton Heritage Preservation Trust, Charlton Public Library, Eric's Aviaries, Local 4 Life, Keep Charlton Beautiful Committee, The Last Green Valley, the Opacum Land Trust, Swampdog Native Plants, and more.

Cara Smick Photography, Charlton Heritage Preservation Trust, The Last Green Valley, and Millenium Power Company have generously agreed to sponsor the event.

The Wormtown Mugwumps, Worcester's premier purveyors of jug band music, and Acoustic Ruckus, formerly known as Grey Whisker Pickers, will provide entertainment. The event will also feature food trucks 3 Kings BBQ, Suzy Q's Ice Cream, and Toasted Roasters.

Funding for Charlton Earth Day is generously provided by The Last Green Valley.

For more information, email [pmhanlonwriting@gmail.com](mailto:pmhanlonwriting@gmail.com).

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## Boating Safety Course May 16

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Tri-State Flotilla, Massachusetts will be instructing two upcoming boating safety classes that meet current state mandated educational requirements.

The BOAT AMERICA COURSE is offered in a one-day format developed to provide the skills and confidence needed to explore the coast and inland waters by boat. Basic knowledge and skills are needed to have safe and enjoyable boating experiences. This course is perfect for families that have

just purchased any type of boat or are planning to in the future, and for the boater keeping up with changes to boating regulations and laws. Basic marlinespike seamanship (knots etc.) will also be included. Successful completion of the course will certify any minor, from 12 to 16 years of age, to operate a powerboat, including a Personal Water Craft / Jet Ski (for 16 & 17-year-old operators), on all Massachusetts waters; in conjunction with the Mass. Environmental Police. Approved by National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) it will also cover the requirements to operate a vessel in most other states & many countries where boating safety education is mandatory including RI and CT.

The Hanson-Milone Boater Safety Act, signed into Mass. Law, will now requires ALL Mass. motorboat operators to complete an approved Safe Boating Certificate course before April 1, 2026, for anyone born after 1/1/1998, and

by April 1, 2028, for boaters born before 1/1/1998. Enforcement of the new law will begin on September 1, 2026. This course meets the new Mass. requirement. Most boating insurance companies offer a discount on premiums for successful completion of this course. Participants 16 years old and under must be accompanied, in person, by a registered parent/guardian.

SPACE IS LIMITED so register soon:

Webster Fire Department Classroom, 55 Thompson Road, Webster 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

The registration deadline is May 10. Contact our Public Education Officer Phil Kubat for registration or additional information: email [phil.uscgaux@verizon.net](mailto:phil.uscgaux@verizon.net) or call 508 -478-3778.

To locate the BA meeting certification requirements, and other USCG Auxiliary courses offered go to: [https://www.cgau.org/boating/class\\_finder/index.php](https://www.cgau.org/boating/class_finder/index.php)

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# Dudley secures the \$1.3 million in state funding needed to reopen the Mill Race Bridge

A temporary bridge to reopen the Brandon Road/Hill Street crossing over the French River on the Dudley and Webster town line has been fully funded by the state's "millionaires' tax" and FAIR Program funds.



Work will begin this spring. The two-bridge crossing was constructed in 1937 and closed indefinitely in 2021 causing headaches for businesses and motorists seeking to bypass traffic congestion on Main Street in Webster.

In June 2021, MassDOT ordered the crossing closed when a dry bridge on the Dudley side, known as the Mill Race Bridge, was deemed unsafe.

Dudley Town Administrator Jonathan Ruda then launched what became years of appeals to federal and state legislators to secure special funding and grants to reopen the roads.

Working with MassDOT and the town's engineering consultant Tighe & Bond, a plan was developed to install a temporary "Acrow" modular bridge that would be borrowed from MassDOT until a permanent bridge could be installed.

Work ensued to demolish the unsafe structure and ensure the temporary bridge project would be shovel-ready, while Mr. Ruda continued to pursue funding to cover the \$1.3 million cost.

It was announced in July 2025 that local legislators state Sen. Ryan Fattman, state Rep. John Marsi and state Rep. Joseph D. McKenna had secured \$600,000 from the state's "millionaires' tax" funds toward reopening the bridge.

At the time, Mr. Ruda said the town was planning to use a large portion of its state Chapter 90 funds to bridge the funding gap.

"I wasn't happy about it, but short of asking voters to approve a tax increase to pay for the rest of the project, we were stuck," Mr. Ruda said.

In a February 27, 2026, letter

to MassDOT, Mr. Ruda wrote, "Without additional assistance, the Town would be required to use a substantial portion of its Chapter 90 roadway allocation to fund the remaining balance. Doing so would significantly limit the Town's ability to address roadway maintenance, repair, and infrastructure improvements across multiple locations throughout the community. The Town therefore respectfully requests FAIR Program assistance in the amount of \$758,586 to complete the funding necessary to advance this project."

MassDOT responded favorably. In a March 16, 2026, letter District Highway Director Barry Lorion wrote, "Through the FAIR Program, the community will receive \$758,586 in additional funding beyond the \$600,000 Fair Share supplemental transportation earmark authorized in December 2025, for a total funding commitment of \$1,358,586."

"The Town appreciates the help from our local legislators and MassDOT, and I'm especially thankful to Representative Marsi for supporting Dudley's request for the release of additional funding from the FAIR Program," Mr. Ruda said.

The Funding for Accelerated Infrastructure Repair (FAIR) program is funded by "Fair Share" (millionaire's tax) revenue to repair, replace, and rehabilitate municipal-owned bridges.

The proposed permanent solution for the overpass would eliminate the Mill Race Bridge by re-grading the area to replicate its primary purpose, which was flood control.

In a January 2023 letter, MassDOT deemed the permanent bridge eligible for funding and approved the estimated cost of \$6,235,000. At the time, it was reported that state and federal money would fund the \$6.2 million project, but such a project would be years away.

*Courtesy of the Town of Dudley*

## Robert T. Brezniak



TEMPLE, TX - Robert T. Brezniak, 77, died on March 20, 2026 at home in Temple, TX.

He was predeceased by his wife, Sharon.

He leaves behind children Nichole Brezniak, Robert Brezniak, Jr. and wife Jennifer, a stepson Rusty Sutterfield; grandchildren Taylor Mota and spouse

Victor, Hayden Curry, and great-granddaughter Aurora Mota.

Born in Webster, graduate of Bartlett High School in 1966, Bob moved to Texas in 1988. He served in the Army Security Agency during Vietnam and received the Bronze Star.

He earned a BS(T) in electrical engineering at Nichols College in 1984 and later completed post graduate courses for full EE requirements at WPI, UMass, Worcester State.

Bob loved history, quantum mechanics, cooking and was a dedicated Patriots fan.



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SPORTS

# Bay Path Softball

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTSWRITER

Originally, Ric Carrero moved over from Southbridge to Bay Path Regional Voke in 2015 to teach history. In addition to teaching history at Southbridge High he was also their softball and football coach for the past six years. Two years after arriving at Bay Path he took over the Minuteman softball

program where he would continue to coach for seven years (the program lost one year due to Covid in 2020). Three years ago, while still coaching softball he became the Athletic Director as well.

Prior to Carrero taking over the Bay Path softball team, then playing in the Colonial League small division, the girls had only made the playoffs once during the team's history. When Carrero came in

he was looking to retain athletes as Bay Path was not only having trouble hanging on to kids to play the sport, but many didn't fully care about the program and it was touch-and-go if they'd show up on any given day.

"When I was in Southbridge I put in a set of rules and expectations to give the program structure," he said. "It worked there so when I got to Bay Path I sat the team down and had them sign a contract in terms of their pathway with the program. By the end of the year we had no seniors on the team, just 10 players remained (one junior and a bunch of freshman and sophomores)."

Those remaining 10 players took to the field and played their hearts out and were eventually able to win their first District game in 20 years. The girls that stuck with Carrero and his philosophies were serious about the sport and wanted to play. In the end everything worked out for the program.

During his tenure, the coach was able to guide the Minutemen to 3 consecutive small school Championships in the Colonial league in 2017, 18 and 19 before the season was canceled in 2020 due to Covid. The following year, with no real league to play in because of the lingering effects of the Covid shut-down, Bay Path was able to go 9-5 in the shortened season. The Colonial League merged the small and large school divisions into one league and in 2023 and 2024 Bay Path took top honors capturing the Colonial League Championships under Carrero.

Over his seven campaigns as head coach Carrero led the Minutemen to a 95-66 won/loss record having advanced into the tournament each year. When the MIAA got rid of the District Tournament and went with a State Tournament format Bay Path was able to secure



Bay Path Shortstop Gabi LaPan, coach Joe Pietrzak and center fielder Miranda Linde. Submitted photo

an 18th seed in 2022 and 2023 while in Division 4. In 2024 they were moved up to Division 2 where they were 20th (if they were still in Division 4 they would have been an 8 seed) and last year the team was ranked 35th.

According to Carrero 2025 was a reboot season having lost 8 seniors from the previous year. Despite not expecting a lot, Bay Path found themselves at 8-10 with two games left on their schedule and, after capturing W's in those games, they were able to get into the State Tournament for yet another season to keep their streak alive. Unfortunately, the young Bay Path team lost 3-1 to Oliver Ames in the first round but they were proud of being a consistent team that made it back into the playoffs.

Throughout his coaching career at Bay Path the furthest that the

team was able to go in the post-season was in 2019 when they reached the Semi-Finals of the District Tournament. While Bay Path was never able to get out of the first round in the State Tournament they had changed the culture of the program. In 2023 they were the runners up in the large school Vocational Championship game.

With the girls buying into Carrero's philosophies they were able to make that culture change and put the softball program in a better place.

"At first, I was told that it was going to be a struggle; softball was not all that important in the school. The 10 kids that finished that year showed that it could work and we could win and be competitive with rules. What we were able to build here I am super proud of and going forward the girls are very serious about the program," he said.

The coach continues to express his gratitude for having been given the opportunity by Bay Path and how proud he was to coach the girls over the last seven seasons. In the beginning it wasn't the case that the girls were all that proud to put on the Bay Path uniform, but things changed under Carrero.

Now after seven years at the helm Carrero is stepping down as the coach but wouldn't do so until he found someone with the same values that he held - enter Joe Pietrzak. The new softball coach has been involved in coaching a multi-

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**SPORTS**

*continued from page 8*

tude of sports for the past 30 plus years. For the past 11 seasons he has been coaching boys' basketball for Oxford and since 2021 he has been the assistant varsity softball coach as well as the coach of the junior varsity team at Shepherd Hill.

Pietrzak was looking to get back into a head coaching role on the softball field when the Bay Path opportunity opened.

"I was looking for a challenge and wanted to become a varsity softball coach," the new coach said, "Here at Bay Path I am looking to build upon the program that Ric put together over the last decade and keep softball successful here."

Although still early in his new position Pietrzak has seen that the team has a good mix of senior leadership with some talented underclassmen. Senior captains Gabi LaPan, the team's shortstop, and Miranda Linde, the centerfielder, will be heavily relied upon by the incoming coach.

"I am looking for their leadership on and of the field more now as I transition into my new role as head coach," he said. "Both captains have shown to be good softball players, and I am hoping that they can give our lineup some pop. They've got the tools and are

disciplined at the plate."

Pietrzak continued to note that Linde is one of the best centerfielders around and LaPan has the range to be a lock down shortstop. In addition, both girls also have strong arms at their positions.

In addition to the captains, the new coach is watching freshman pitcher Serina Lynch, hoping that the young hurler can compete for a chance to get into the circle for the Minutemen this season. Competitiveness is something that has been truly intriguing to the coach thus far.

"It's rather indicative of all the competitions that we have within the program," he said. "Our depth is good and that allows the girls to push one another for jobs making everyone better."

Coming into his first campaign with Bay Path Pietrzak is very excited about not only building upon Carrero's success but being able to take it to the next level. With that said, it may not be as easy as it seems. The MIAA moved things around this year, and Bay Path will be playing in the CMAC B this spring amongst some quality teams.

Despite the toughness of the upcoming season Pietrzak is hoping that his girls can compete for the league championship, while also qualifying for the MIAA playoffs as well as getting a chance to play for the State Vocational Championship.

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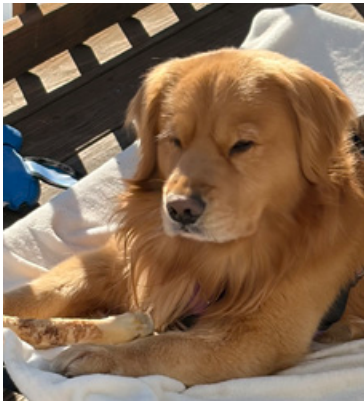
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# Luke Does His Job

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

I don't like to leave Luke alone for more than three hours, let alone for almost a week. But vacations are a part of life. I needed some Florida sunshine. I'd like to say Luke understood - that he was happy for me, supportive even. But I'm a terrible liar.

The truth is, Luke did not understand.

Why would anyone walk out on a loved one?

"My Mom doesn't love me anymore." He sniffed the evidence - the overstuffed bag that meant Mom's annual mission to avoid checking-in luggage. Then he turned and escaped to his bed, curling into a tight ball until his tail covered his mouth.

"I love you, Luke! Mummy's going for a ride. I'll be back in a few days. You're going to stay with Daddy." I cupped his bear cub face in my hands and kissed his nose.

The whisker above his right eye lifted when I spoke his language: Stay with Daddy. He considered the phrase, one with multiple meanings—fun walks, snuggle time, shared silence during workdays, frisbee, and yard work. Daddy is a good person.

The problem was -  
He sighed long.  
Daddy isn't Mommy.

My early morning flight didn't help sanctify our lukewarm separation. I followed the airplane alphabet to a row of seats that resembled a toddler's booster chair and popped open the overhead bin. No room for another bag. Worse, even my small one barely fit beneath the seat.

A watchful flight attendant

Easier said than done. My belted midsection - seatbelt light on - couldn't bend enough to manage the bag. Under her eye, I wrestled with a stubborn metal bar until, finally, I shoved it into place. The stares of my cabin neighbors - an elderly couple far more organized than I was - beat down on me like a noon day sun.



Which was ironic, considering he trembles at the hum of a nail buffer at the groomers. His back legs shake, his eyes widen - every unfamiliar sensation a small betrayal. There is no version of this world where I could place him in a crate beneath a plane and call it care.

I've been told there's an easy workaround. "Just get him a service vest—you can bring him anywhere."

But I'm a terrible liar.  
Luke isn't a service dog.  
And yet -

"You have the best dog!" says the delivery driver, pausing for a game of frisbee.

"Can they pet him?" asks a tired mother, grateful for a moment's stillness while her children reach for his soft ears.

"Can I give him a command?" a teenager asks, lingering a little longer than necessary.

"Do you want to talk about it?" he seems to say without words, again and again, to the people who need it most.

Luke does not perform tasks on command. He doesn't wear a vest or carry credentials.

But he serves.

In presence. In patience. In the steady offering of himself.

A few rows ahead, the flight attendant demonstrates the oxygen mask - how to secure it over your face, how to help others once you've helped yourself. Her gestures are practiced, efficient, necessary.

She is doing her job.

By the time I return home, the trip has blurred into sun and salt and easy conversation. The door opens. My bag drops. His name leaves my mouth before I see him.

"Luke!"

The sound comes first - his nails striking the floor in a rapid, uneven rhythm - then his whole body, wiggling, folding, spilling toward me. He whimpers, yelps, sings something that resembles a trumpet played just slightly out of tune.

I sink to the floor, and he crowds into me, insistent, certain. The bags are forgotten, reduced to objects to sniff, proof that I left and - more importantly - returned.

His joy is immediate. Physical. Unfiltered.

There is no hesitation in it. No withholding.

Only presence.

Luke doesn't question where I've been. He doesn't measure time in days or distance in miles. He knows only this: I am here.

And he is exactly where he needs to be.

Doing his job.

Write to Amy - amyleclaire@hotmail.com

Visit Luke on IG livingwithluke-valentino

noticed. "Please be sure your bag is tucked fully underneath the seat," she said.

"Hi there," I tried. "I'm Amy."

The wife adjusted her mask to blow her nose into a wad of tissues, then folded it neatly for reuse. Her husband gazed out the window. I leaned back and closed my eyes.

Luke filled my thoughts.

"Hey Mom! Sit next to me!"

What's in that bag? Did you bring any frisbees? No problem - I'll give you my paw in case you're nervous about flying. Anxiety? Who am I to talk? I can't even handle the vibration of my groomer's nail buffer.

His imagined voice was bright, reassuring.





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While the Spring season consistently offers up some of the best conditions for home sellers, there's one window where the stars really seem to align year after year and it's coming up fast. Based on an analysis of



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

historical trends, the ideal week to put your house on the market this year is April 12-18. Here's why this window stands out as being particularly seller-friendly:

Buyers are more active. According to the research coming out of

Realtor.com, homes listed during this week typically get about 16.7 percent more views than in a normal week and in a market where buyers have options, getting that extra attention can set the tone for your entire sale.

Sales happen faster. The added demand from buyers sets you up for a faster process. While homes have been taking longer to sell lately, homes up for sale this week were on the market for 17 percent less time than usual and that's a difference you'll be able to feel.

A better price for your house. Since the number of homes for sale has grown, it's normal for buyers to ask for credits, repairs, and price adjustments today. But, during this early Spring window, about 18.9 percent fewer homes do a price cut. That gives you a better chance of getting your full asking price.

More profit in your pocket. According to the study, well-prepped

homes listed this week can command a price that's about \$5,300 more than the average week and \$26,000 more than homes at the start of the year. What seller doesn't want more eyes on their house, getting an offer in hand sooner (rather than later), and their best shot at selling for top dollar?

What you need to do to get ready? If you're already thinking about selling and you want to take advantage of this sweet spot, your next step is shockingly simple. Just talk to a member of The Marzeotti Group or your trusted real estate professional. Our expertise on your area is going to be key over the next few weeks because these trends are going to vary by state, city, and even neighborhood. We will use that insider knowledge to help you figure out what you need to do now to get your house

ready. Including: What you'll want to spruce up before listing, how to prioritize any repairs (and contractors that can help), quick wins that'll have a big impact.

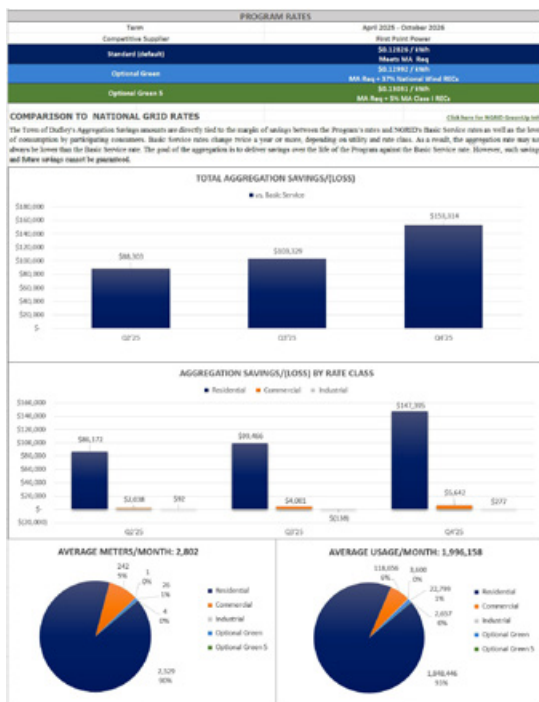
What buyers care most about today: For some sellers, that's a few easy fixes they can knock out in the next couple of weeks. A fresh coat of paint, some new mulch, or some light Spring cleaning. For others, it's worth taking another month or so to make some minor updates before listing and that's okay. Because while this mid-April window may give sellers an advantage, it's not your only opportunity to sell. Other experts say a great time to

list is in May too and that means the golden window for sellers isn't closing after this one week.

Getting your house on the market in mid-April may give you an extra edge, but the bigger opportunity is the Spring season as a whole. The real question is: Do you know what you need to do before you can list, because it's officially go-time for any seller planning a Spring move. If you want your house to hit the market this week (or even this season), talk to a member of The Marzeotti Group today to about what it'll take to get it ready.

# Dudley residents enrolled in the town's energy aggregate realize savings over a cold and energy demanding winter

The Dudley Community Choice Power Supply Program currently provides competitive power supply to approximately 2,800 consumers in the Town of Dudley. The aggregation report for the fourth quarter of 2025 shows those consumers saved a combined \$153,314 compared to NGRID's Basic Service rates. "With over \$150,000 in savings in just one quarter, this program is delivering real results for Dudley residents," Town Administrator Jonathan Ruda said. "The Board of Selectmen and I are pleased to offer an option that helps our community—especially seniors and families—manage rising and unpredictable energy costs." The town's first electricity aggregation program was developed by Town Administrator Jonathan Ruda to reduce energy costs for Dudley residents. Mr. Ruda worked with a municipal aggregation consultant, Colonial Power Group, Inc., and the state Department of Energy Resources to develop a public aggregation in compliance with state law. The plan represents Dudley residents in



competitive markets to negotiate electricity rates. In doing so, it brings together the buying power of more than 11,900 consumers to reduce energy costs for residents. It further enables the town to take greater control of its energy options, including the ability to pursue price stability, savings opportunities and increased renewable energy procurement. The 18-month contract with First Point Power, which began in April 2025, offers three products with varying amounts of renewable energy content. More information about the program is available at <https://colonialpowergroup.com/dudley/>

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# Molding or 3-D Printing a Replacement Part

**Q.** My son just picked up his new leased 2026 Honda CR-V Sport and while parked someone hit the driver side rearview mirror enough to just knock off a small two-inch chunk off the edge. I checked to see if I could get a replacement part, but it would require taking the mirror off the door. This looks like an expensive job at the dealer and too

difficult for a DIY-er. Will leaving the "wound" open mess up the electronics in the mirror? Can I make my own mold of the missing piece and epoxy on my home-made replacement and paint it? Or should I just ignore the "wound" and forget about it?

**A.** Concerning the electronics in the mirror, they are quite robust and the

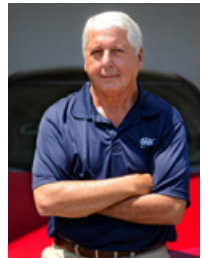
weather will not affect the operation. Could you mold or 3-D print a replacement part and epoxy it in place, it is certainly possible. You can buy color matching factory paint through automotivetouchup.com. Also, something to think about, with a lease you are going to be responsible for damage that is not considered normal wear and tear. Here is my story, my last new

car was damaged in a parking lot when it had about 1000 miles on it. The damage was about \$1000, and since the car was new, I had it repaired, it just felt like it was the right thing to do with a new car. If it were older I would have probably made some DIY repair and moved on.

gine gasket oil leak. What could be the problem?

**A.** If the engine was overheating before you noticed the gauge warning, that certainly could have caused the engine to stall.

The overheating could be caused by a faulty thermostat, cooling fan, clogged radiator, or a cylinder head gasket. A good shop should be able to check these items and determine if there is permanent damage to the engine.



BY JOHN PAUL

**Q.** I have two Toyota vehicles, a 2015 Toyota Tacoma and a 2020 Prius Prime. When I use iPhone Maps in the Tacoma, both visual and audio work fine. Audio comes through the phone. When I do the same thing in the Prius, the audio portion does not work. Any ideas, as all settings are there same as far as I can tell.

**A.** Once you have determined that the IOS of the phone is up to date as well as any software for cars, the next step is seeing if the audio source is set wrong. Select CarPlay, USB and Bluetooth. Some Toyota products have separate volume levels for radio and phone audio one could be set to mute. Depending on how you connect the phone, sometimes Bluetooth and USB conflict with each other. Then sometimes it is just a matter of one technology not being compatible with another.

**Q.** I am reaching out about an issue with my 2019 Honda Pilot. We got a new battery and then a couple of days later took it in for state inspection. It did not pass emissions test because it was "not ready." The mechanic said this happens with new batteries and suggested driving it for a few days. For the past two to three weeks, we have been driving it a lot (over 500 miles) and doing the cycle resets suggested online. Still coming up "not ready" when tested with at home with OBD scanner. Is it weather-related or something else?

**Q.** I recently experienced my car cutting off while driving, I was able to restart my car and drive for about four miles then I noticed my engine was overheating. I checked fluid and was normal; oil was normal even though I was told I had a slow en-

**A.** All cars have emissions monitors that need to run to pass mandated emis-

CAR DOCTOR  
continued on page 13

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# Risks threatening Gen Z's retirement – and how to tackle them

While older generations worry about having enough money for retirement, many Gen Z workers aren't even starting to save. Research in 2025 by Edward Jones and Morning Consult shows that nearly half haven't begun setting money aside for their golden years, and only 22% are contributing to a workplace retirement plan.



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

The culprit is a perfect storm of financial pressures that can make saving for the future feel impossible.

One of the biggest challenges this generation faces is debt. High-interest credit card balances and persistent student loan payments leave many feeling they're just trying to stay afloat, rather than planning decades ahead.

The cost of living doesn't help either. Nearly 60% of Gen Z renters are considered "rent-burdened," spending more than 30% of their pre-tax income on rent, according to a StreetEasy analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data. Rising prices driven by inflation and tariffs squeeze budgets further, moving retirement savings down the priority list.

The nature of work has also changed. Gen Z is more likely than previous generations to hold gig jobs, contract positions or other flexible work arrangements that often don't include employer retirement plans, according to Pew Research. Even when plans are available, only 22% participate. Feeling overwhelmed by jargon, confused by investment choices or focusing only on today's experiences and technology can all delay participation. These early gaps may lead to catch-up needs later in life.

Unfortunately, Gen Z has little faith in the retirement safety net. Only about a third of Gen Z-ers say they believe Social Security will still exist when they retire, according to the latest information from the CATO Institute.

Fortunately, there are steps Gen Z can take now to get their retirement savings off to a good start:

- **Start small:** Even a few dollars per paycheck builds a savings habit and gets compounding interest working in their favor. Early momentum matters more than starting big.

- **Let compounding do its work:** Small, consistent contributions can grow dramatically over time, especially when they have decades to accumulate.

- **Use a workplace retirement account:** For anyone with access

to a plan, enroll and contribute at least enough to receive any employer match. It's one of the few forms of "free money" available.

- **Open an IRA:** If no plan is available through work, take charge by opening an individual retirement account (IRA).

- **Simplify investing:** If the choices feel confusing, consider options such as a target date fund, which reduces complexity and helps keep you properly invested without needing expert advice.

- **Use found money:** Direct tax refunds, bonuses or gig income into retirement savings to boost progress without straining the monthly budget.

- **Automate contributions:** Automatic transfers make saving effortless. Review this annually and increase contributions as income grows.

- **Build confidence:** If investing feels overwhelming, look for quick financial education resources from an employer, plan provider or reputable nonprofit organization. Even a little knowledge can make decisions easier.

The path to retirement doesn't require perfection — just progress. Building consistency early helps create choices, security and financial breathing room later in life.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Dennis Antonopoulos, your local Edward Jones Advisor at 5 Albert Street, Auburn, MA

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## CAR DOCTOR

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sions inspection. In all the states I am familiar with you can have one monitor "not ready." The most common is the EVAP monitor. This system only self-tests when the fuel tank is between one quarter and three quarters full. Weather can also affect this test. If you are just checking the car with a code reader, it may be coming up not ready due to one monitor not being ready. Also, your comment about cycle resets, if you are clearing codes each time you check the car, you are starting the process all over again.

**Q.** I think I have a small head gasket leak on my 2005 Toyota Corolla. The engine is losing about one quart of coolant every six or seven weeks. I, have never had a head gasket leak before, but then I have never kept a car for over 20 years. If I put a

low-pressure radiator cap on will that reduce the leak? I would like to get another year or two out of the car without spending a fortune on repairs.

**A.** If the leak were a water pump or radiator, the low-pressure cap would limit system pressure and hide a leak. If it is a head gasket the pressure is coming from combustion gases and the coolant is being ingested during combustion. The first thing I would do is a pressure test of the cooling system, if there are no visible leaks, then check for a head gasket leak. There are "block-check" kits that you can buy or even rent that measure combustion gases in the cooling system. If it is determined there is an internal leak you could try Blue Devil or K-Seal head gasket sealer. I have had decent luck with both. These chemicals are simple to use, just pour the chemical in and let the engine idle for about an hour and hope for the best.



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**SATURDAY, APRIL 11**

• Shouts of "Bingo!" followed by laughter and groans will be heard at the 50's Rock 'n' Roll Bingo Party, Saturday, April 11, sponsored by the Uxbridge Lions Club. The fundraiser benefiting the club's local and other Lions' charities will be held at the Uxbridge Progressive Club, 18 Whitin Street, Uxbridge. Doors will open at 1:00 pm with Bingo starting at 2:00 pm. Grooving to the Oldies and sporting 50's themed outfits, the Lions members encourage participants to play along and play dress up as well. Bingo Cards with ten games will be sold for \$20 each with a coverall for \$5.00. Additional cards will cost \$10. In addition to cash prizes for Bingo winners, refreshments will be available to purchase with a cash bar on site. So slick back your hair, pull up that ponytail, or bust out those bobby sox, and spend an

afternoon with the Lions at the Progressive Club and rock on! For more information, contact Diane at 508-450-2451.

The Uxbridge Lions provide scholarships, donations to various local sports teams and organizations, and perform projects to benefit the community and individuals. The club meets every third Wednesday of the month at 6:15 pm at the Uxbridge Senior Center.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 16**

• "Shay's Rebellion and the Meaning of Time in the Early Republic" Willard House & Clock Museum is pleased to announce an upcoming lecture by noted historian and curator Tom Kelleher exploring the causes and consequences of Shays' Rebellion and its profound connection to the legacy of the American Revolution. Tom Kelleher is currently Historian, and Curator of Mechanical Arts at Old Sturbridge Village. The historic lecture will take from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Willard House & Clock Museum, 11 Willard Street, North Grafton. The event is expected to fill up quickly so register at [willardhouse.org/events/calendar/2026/4/16/shays-rebellion-tom-kelleher](http://willardhouse.org/events/calendar/2026/4/16/shays-rebellion-tom-kelleher)

**FRIDAY, APRIL 17**

• Join the Friends of the Auburn Public Library at a Fundraiser to support the library titled "Herbs and the Art of Healing in the Middle Ages" presented by Professor Giovanni Spani, Professor of Italian and Medieval Studies in the Department of World Languages, Litera-

tures and Cultures at the College of the Holy Cross. This presentation examines medieval healing techniques for the cure of multiple diseases. 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm at The Pakachoag Center, 203 Pakachoag St., Auburn, MA. Doors open at 6 pm and admission is \$20 (Cash, Check, PayPal). Seating is limited so Pre-registration is required by emailing [friendsauburnplibrary@gmail.com](mailto:friendsauburnplibrary@gmail.com)

• Grafton's Community Harvest Project major plant sale Plantapalooza returns, with your every purchase contributing to providing fresh food for families across Central Mass. From vibrant flowers to berry bushes and heirloom vegetables, this year's selection has something for every garden. Early Access for Monthly Growers begins at 8 a.m. on Friday, April 17. Sales to the public open online at 8 a.m. Friday, April 24. Access via the email newsletter or wait for the link will show up that day on our website. Online store closes May 4 at 12 p.m. Pick-up and inperson sales are May 9 from 2-6 p.m. at Grafton Farm, 37 Wheeler Road. Last chance to shop in-person is May 9 from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Mulch from Angel Hair Alpacas available for sale.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 18**

• St. Peter's Parish, Northbridge is holding a baked haddock dinner at 5:30 p.m. in the parish hall. Bring your family and friends and meet new friends. Tickets are \$17 per meal and include salad and dessert. To-go meals will be available for pick-up at 5 p.m. All orders must be placed in advance

by Tuesday, April 14. Call 508-234-2156 or email the parish office: [parishoffice@stpeterrochdale.org](mailto:parishoffice@stpeterrochdale.org) for tickets.

• The Uxbridge Congregational Church will host a Home Baked Ham & Bean Supper at 5 p.m. in the Community House, 8 Court Street, Uxbridge, located behind the Uxbridge Common. Menu includes baked ham, home made baked beans, potato salad, coleslaw, brown bread, beverages & dessert. Donation of \$15 per adult, children under 6 are free. Raffles will also be available. For reservations call 508-244-7849 or 818-430-3731. Limited tickets will be sold at the door. Come enjoy great food and fellowship.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 25**

• The museum of the Millbury Historical Society in the Asa Waters Mansion will be open from 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Some of the museum's holdings are: 100 years of Aftermath year books; photos of churches, schools, downtown and sports. Also, scrapbooks, research books, and the histories of Millbury and Sutton going back to colonial times. President Taft photo memorabilia, military uniforms, guns and flags.

**SATURDAY, MAY 16**

• The 11th Annual Family Fun Fishing Day at River Ben Farm, 287 Oak Street, Uxbridge will be held from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. with a rain date on Sunday. Fishing will take place until 1 p.m. with awards at 1:30 p.m. There will be activities for the whole family with food and ice cream available for purchase. All ages and ability levels are welcome. Fishing poles, bail and instruction will be available with pre-registration and participants are welcome to bring their own. Pre-registration will open on April 15 at [openskycs.org/fishingday2026](http://openskycs.org/fishingday2026). This is a free event, but pre-registration is hosted by Open Sky Community Services and Blackstone River Watershed Association.

• Calling all Gardeners, Growers & Farmers to the 5th Annual Dudley Grows Together Plant Hop The Dudley Agricultural Advisory Commission is excited to announce the 5th

Annual Dudley Grows Together Plant Hop, taking place on Saturday, May 16, 2026, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM — rain or shine.

The Plant Hop is a community event that gives local Dudley farmers and gardeners the opportunity to sell vegetable and flower seedlings directly from their homes or growing locations throughout Dudley. A map of participating locations will be created and distributed by the Commission so visitors from Dudley and surrounding communities can easily travel from stop to stop to shop for locally grown plants. New this year, the Agricultural Advisory Commission seeks Dudley residents who are interested in participating as plant sellers. Gardeners are welcome to sell vegetable or flower seedlings and plants (please note cannabis and hemp plants are not permitted). Residents who would like to participate should sign up by emailing [ameradaholsteins@charter.net](mailto:ameradaholsteins@charter.net) or [LLorkiewicz@dudleyma.gov](mailto:LLorkiewicz@dudleyma.gov) so their location can be included on the official event map. The deadline to sign up as a seller is Monday, April 20, 2026.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 20**

• Dudley's Town-wide Yard Sale! What better time for a yard sale than the end of spring-cleaning season? Office: 508-949-8030 Mobile: 508-847-2206 The Dudley Recreation Commission has set its annual town-wide yard sale for 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. June 20, with a rain date of June 27. Residents are invited to set up and sell at their home or at the Dudley Town Hall where free 10x10-foot spaces are available in the parking lot on a first-come, first served basis. A site map, prepared by the Recreation Commission, will guide bargain hunters to the sale locations. Participants are encouraged to register for free by June 6 to be included in a map. The maps will be available for a \$3 donation at the Dudley Town Hall from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. To register, email [recreation@dudleyma.gov](mailto:recreation@dudleyma.gov) with your name, address, phone and description of the items for sale, or stop by the Recreation Office at Town hall.

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# The Legend Of Laura Sherman

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

New England is full of incredible legends and stories that add to the magic of the region. There is one certain legend that resides near the Tri-State border of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

At the crossroads of Wakefield and Croff in Burrillville, Rhode Island, one will find the remains of a small burial lot. If it were not for the sign that marks it as Rhode Island Historical Cemetery #1, visitors may never know it is actually the Sherman family burial lot.

Raised up from the road by a stone wall, the unmarked plot holds the remains of five members of the Sherman family and what looks like the remains of a cellar hole where perhaps their cabin

once graced, or the last remnants of a family mausoleum. Buried in this lot are Caroline Sherman, born 1837- death unknown, Clark Sherman, born 1831- death unknown, Ellen Sherman, birth and death dates unknown, Laura Marsh Sherman, born September 24, 1803- died 1870, and Squire Crandell Sherman, born July 1828 and died April 21, 1879.

The only trace of gravestones is the base of Laura Sherman's monument. The others have nothing left but mounds rising from the earth to show of their being buried there. Legends states the rest of the stones were stolen to perform some sort of rituals. More than likely, they were field stone markers long sunken into the earth or stones that were carried away for some other re-purposing. This would seem

easy to do as the lot is located in an isolated area along the woods of Buck Hill.

The lack of death dates on record would indicate that the Clark family buried their own and never bothered to record exact dates of death with the town. Some claim that Caroline and Ellen may have been the wives of Clark Sherman, but it is the grave of Laura Sherman, the oldest of them all, that is of interest in this narrative. Laura may have been the matriarch of the family, who even in death, still watches over her loved ones.

It has been passed down from generation to generation that Laura haunts the lot. If you visit on a full moon and dance around her grave thirteen times, she will appear and answer your questions. It is a local legend that has been attempted

many times. Some have fled in fear as Laura Sherman materialized out of a wisp of smoke, keeping her part of the bargain for their toil, while others swore the whole story is nothing more than an urban legend created by the local boy scout camp at Buck Hill.

There are other stories of people who swore Laura Sherman watches over the graveyard. Many of the Burrillville residents say that they have been startled, or even frightened by what they believe is the ghost of Laura standing at the edge of the plot looking at the road as they drove by. When they would look back, the ghost would be gone.

One account relates to a small group of high school students who

decided to call forth the spirit of Laura. One of the girls circled the grave thirteen times while the small throng waited anxiously for the ghost to appear. After a while, they felt deceived by the spirit and left the lot. While driving away, the people in the other car noticed an old woman sitting in the back seat of the car driven by the girl who tried to summon Laura from her eternal rest.

If you decide to visit the cemetery, it is advised to do so for historical purposes only and be thoughtful and courteous to both the living and the dead. The neighboring houses keep watch for vandalism or unruly behavior.

## Nature Photography at Booklovers'

"Still", a series of nature photographs by Janel McDonald, will be on display and for sale throughout April in the cafe gallery at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 East Main Street, Webster, MA. A meet and greet with the artist will take place on Saturday, April 11th from 2-4 p.m. The public is invited to attend. The show may also be viewed during normal business hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10-5, Wednesday 10-6. For more information, call 508-949-6232.



Janet McDonald Great Blue Heron 2026

Artist's Statement: "This exhibit is an invitation to pause, to observe and to remember that photo-

graphs are a glimpse into an entire ever-changing landscape. These captured moments, frozen in time, tell a story, evoke a feeling, memo-

rialize a memory.

As I raise my camera to capture these still moments, the photograph becomes a fraction of the world around me. My canoe will glide past the subject. I'll continue my walk down a garden path or my hike in the woods, leaving the stillness to continue or disappear from sight.

Enjoy these photographs and the luminous detail that emerges on the surfaces. And enjoy the concept of fleeting moments and the feelings they evoke instead of skip-

ping to the end. It's about taking the time to stop and smell the roses along the way!"

## Dudley Senior Center events for April

Office: 508-949-8030  
Mobile: 508-847-2206

April 16 at noon: Memory Café with Franny Mik to entertain us with all our favorite oldies. We will be serving baked ziti, meatballs, salad and dessert. Please RSVP by calling 508-949-8015 or sign up in the Dudley Senior Center. The cost for this event is \$5 per person.

April 22 at noon: Potluck Lunch serving chicken, mashed potato, stuffing, butternut squash, cranberry, and dessert. Please RSVP by calling 508-949-8015 or sign up in the Dudley Senior Center. Cost for this event is \$5 per person. Due to

the rising food costs for the Brown Bag Lunch, Memory Café and Potluck, you must sign up and give 24-hour notice if you are unable to make it. No shows will be charged \$5. Seating is limited to 45 people.

Monthly Activities at Dudley Senior Center:

Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. – Pitch League

Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. – The Dudley Senior Center Knitters

Tri Valley lunches served Mondays and Thursdays

Ask about Book Club!

The Dudley Senior Center is closed Monday April 20, 2026, for Patriots Day.

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April 17 - Uncle Dean Band  
April 24 - Fender Road

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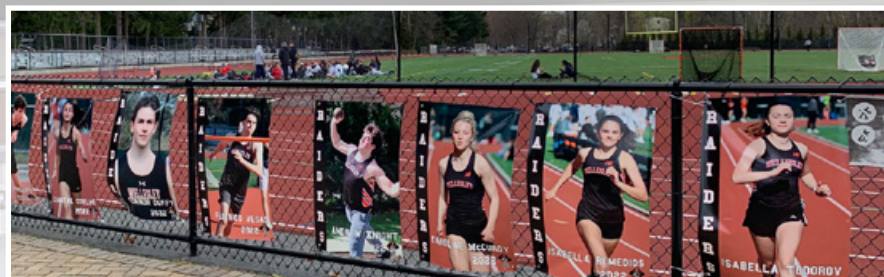
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