

Webster's Memorial Day Parade, Monday, May 25

This Memorial Day Webster resident James E. Sundstrom is being honored as this year's Parade Gand Marshal.

James was born in Worcester in 1940. As a child, his parents moved the family to Oxford, where he was a graduate of Oxford High School Class of 1959.

James comes from an Army family as his father David served in the 10th Mountain Division, in Pisa, Italy during World War II. His brother Gary served in the US Army as an Airborne Ranger in Vietnam.

The main parade typically begins at 11 a.m. near St. Anthony Cemetery in Webster, marching

toward Town Hall, preceded by a busy schedule of wreath-layings at various local cemeteries. The day honors veterans with a parade and ceremonies.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR MEMORIAL DAY

6:30 a.m. Start at Veterans Home, Webster.

7:25 a.m. - 8:10 a.m. Cemetery visits in Dudley (Corbin, Village, Town Common).

9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Services at Dudley Town Hall, Calvary, St. Joseph, Sacred Heart, and Mt. Zion cemeteries.

11 a.m. Main Parade starts (Route 12/Worcester Road to Webster Town Hall).



12:15 p.m. Urbanowski Memorial by the PAV Club.

The event features local school bands, Veterans groups, and scouting units.



Dudley Voters to Consider \$31M Budget Firearms Policy at Annual Town Meeting

BY PATTY ROY

Residents will gather for the Annual Town Meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday, May 18, at Shepherd Hill Regional High School, where a proposed \$31 million budget and several policy questions are set for consideration.

The Select Board and Finance Committee are asking voters to approve a \$31,027,502 operating budget for Fiscal Year 2027 that begins on July 1. The spending plan includes major allocations of approximately \$13 million for the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District and \$1.2 million for Bay Path Vocational Technical High School. Enterprise funds account for \$2.3 million for the water department and \$2.4 million for sewer operations.

Revenue supporting the budget

is expected to come largely from \$17.6 million in property taxes, supplemented by \$2.4 million in state aid, \$3.9 million in local receipts, and transfers from stabilization funds, including \$252,676 from general stabilization and \$578,548 from capital stabilization.

In addition to the budget, voters will be asked to weigh in on a firearms-related policy proposal. Police Chief Marek Karłowicz is seeking approval to exempt municipal buildings, grounds, and parking areas from being designated as prohibited locations for firearm possession under state law.

Several warrant articles are sponsored by the Water-Sewer Commission, which is backing six of the 17 items on the agenda. Among them

Webster Town Administrator Reviews Town Budget, Brian Road, and Cites Water/Sewer Manager Cutler

BY JANET STOICA
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

Town Administrator Rick LaFond stated that "the town's budget for the new fiscal year will be using \$1.3 million from free cash, the same as last year. We're not compounding vs. last year's numbers. We're not building a larger structural deficit between our recurring

revenues and our projected expenses. We're using our savings. With our police department, we'll be able to add one new officer but we are in need of another eight officers. We're unable to add eight new personnel but we're going to try and start that this year."

LaFond stated that the town's financial future depends upon state aid and that everyone's on

board that the town has to move in a better direction. With the school budget, special education is the big driver. The town did slightly better this year with its state aid because the state funding follows the student. Attrition is what's keeping the schools

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WEBSTER

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from making more cuts.

The Brian Road access for a large building project in Thompson, Connecticut has had recent updates. Thompson's First Selectmen and Planner have contacted LaFond to schedule the long-awaited meeting with the propo-

nents of the project, the Sharma family. LaFond expected to be sitting down (without attorneys) very soon. As of this writing, Thompson legal counsel still had not responded to Webster's motion to strike portions of the record that contain documents created after the decision and timeline for submission of briefs. This particular matter will likely

be concluded at a court hearing to be held soon. Webster's attorney expects the court will rule on Webster's motion without a written reply from Thompson or following an oral argument from Thompson. Once this matter is resolved, a date will be set for pre-trial briefs. Thompson would then have 45 days to reply to that brief. This timeline may be extended if either party requests. The project consists of 16 multi-housing single family homes, 4 duplexes, and a community building.

The Town Clerk's office and the Town Administrator's office have switched locations. The Town Clerk has now been moved to the first floor of the town hall. The Town

Administrator's offices will soon move from its temporary location in the auditorium to the second floor.

Reconstruction and replacement of the town hall's front and side entries began recently. The project will be completed in phases to always allow for public access. The parking lot entry will be the last section to be completed to minimize the time that alternative handicap access will be necessary. The town's solar field funds in the amount of \$50,000 will assist with this project. The funds were specifically designated for repair and maintenance of the town hall.

Collective bargaining has begun with two of the town's three employee unions. Contracts expire on June 30.

Additionally, Water and Sewer Superintendent Tom Cutler has

been recognized by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's Drinking Water Program for his "outstanding performance" in 2025. The award cites his service in the industry, qualifications, managing many of the critical system upgrades since his hiring in 2021, and efforts and assistance in securing significant funds through the State Revolving Fund Grant to help offset the costs of upgrading the facilities at Memorial Beach and Bigelow Road to address PFAS regulations (PFAS are "forever chemicals" that have contaminated many drinking water sources). This is brief synopsis of his recognition. Tom will be honored at an event in Shirley on May 5. The town is honored to have Mr. Cutler's expertise and knowledge to ensure its drinking water's safety and quality.

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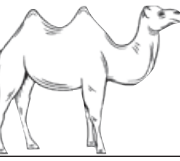
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DUDLEY

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are end-of-year budget transfers, a \$75,000 transfer from retained earnings to replace a sewer department truck, and a \$207,505 transfer from the PFAS Settlement Account to address existing PFAS-related debt. Additional requests include

borrowing \$100,000 to update the town's inventory of lead and other service lines, along with \$120,000 for equipment to support that effort.

The Select Board is also proposing a change to local alcohol regulations, seeking permission to allow on-premises alcohol consumption between 10 a.m. and noon on Sundays, as well as on the last Monday

in May and Christmas Day.

Meanwhile, the Board of Assessors is requesting \$12,000 to fund property value recertification and \$21,000 to inspect properties that have not been reviewed in the past decade.

The full warrant, including all articles to be considered, is expected to be published ahead of the May 18 meeting.

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Charlton Prepares for Annual Town Meeting on May 18

Residents will gather for the Annual Town Meeting on Monday, May 18, at 7 p.m. at Charlton Middle School on Oxford Road, where a wide-ranging warrant will guide decisions on spending, bylaws, and future development.

A central focus of the meeting will be capital planning, with voters asked to approve funding for town buildings, infrastructure improvements, and equipment purchases. The article also authorizes town officials to enter into contracts and complete necessary projects.

The proposed fiscal year 2027 town budget appears under Article 7. Voters will determine funding levels for municipal operations beginning July 1, including setting salaries for elected officials. Separate enterprise budgets for the water and sewer departments will also be considered, covering operating

expenses supported by user fees and other revenues.

Financial management articles include potential transfers to and from the town's



stabilization fund, as well as acceptance of \$18,675 in cemetery perpetual care funds. Another article seeks to reauthorize a series of revolving funds used by departments such as inspectional services, recreation, planning, and public health. These accounts allow certain fees and revenues to directly support related services, with limits on how much can be spent annually.

Property and infrastructure matters are also on the agenda.

One article proposes the acceptance of an easement on Stevens Park Road, while another would increase fines for handicapped parking violations, raising the penalty for a first offense from \$50 to \$100.

Several zoning bylaw amendments are scheduled for review, including updates to definitions, use regulations, and special provisions such as reduced frontage lots and large energy systems. Full details of the proposed

changes are available through the Town Clerk and Planning Board offices.

The warrant concludes with a citizen's petition seeking to rescind the town's Stretch Energy Code, originally adopted in 2016 to promote energy-efficient construction standards.

Residents are encouraged to attend and participate in the decision-making process that shapes Charlton's budget, policies, and long-term planning.

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Charlton Develops Housing Production Plan

Local residents are helping shape the future of housing in town as officials work to develop Charlton's first Housing Production Plan, an effort supported through a state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Planning Assistance Grant.

As part of the planning process, the town's Housing Production Plan Committee, in collaboration with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), hosted two public forums in March to gather input from community members.

The sessions featured presentations, question-and-answer discussions, and interactive exercises designed to better understand local housing needs. Residents partici-

pated in a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats)

analysis and small-group breakout discussions focused on different

housing types.

Participants also took part in a visual exercise, placing color-coded dots on images representing various housing options to indicate which types they felt were most needed — and which were less desirable. Organizers said the feedback highlighted a strong interest in housing solutions that would allow residents to age in place while remaining in the community.

Insights gathered from the forums will help guide the development of Charlton's Housing Production Plan, which aims to identify strategies for meeting current and future housing needs while preserving the character of the town.



Community Baby shower Provides Moms in Need with Essential Supplies

The United Church of Christ Federated launches its annual community baby shower/donation drive to benefit the Visitation House in Worcester.

The drive, running until May 31, is aimed at providing essential supplies to mothers, allowing them to keep their pregnancies and their babies. With many single mothers struggling to afford basic necessities, this initiative seeks to collect diapers, clothing, hygiene products and other items to ensure mothers and chil-

dren have a safe and healthy start.

Community members are invited to drop off new and unopened items at the church office, from Tuesday to Friday, from 9:30 to 1pm, or Sunday morning before 1pm. The drive is specifically focusing on collecting high-need items, including crib sheets, diapers, clothes (newborn to 12 months) including sets, baby bassinets, baby security blankets, unscented baby wipes, baby grooming kits, Dreft deter-

gent, feeding (formula: unopened, non-expired, bottles, nipples, bibs, and burp cloths), hygiene (diaper rash cream, baby wash, lotion, and shampoo), Mom Care Packages (nursing pads, nipple cream, toiletries [shampoo, conditioner, lip balm], and body lotion).

All donations will benefit the Visitation House in Worcester. Visitation House offers a program in Worcester County which provides women with unplanned pregnancies a path to cherish and

sustain the life of their babies. They provide each woman a welcoming home and opportunities to develop the skills, confidence, and self-knowledge necessary to create a beautiful future for her and her baby. The House opened its doors on May 31, 2005. Since that time, they have welcomed over 300 women and their children.

The United Church of Christ Federated is located at 4 Church Street, across from Town Hall, 508-943-0061, uccfedwebster.org.

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Could Dudley's French River Bridge be Replaced Sooner Than Expected?

BY JANET STOICA
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

In just four months since its launch, the FAIR Program is showing immediate results, first in Middlefield, and with several more coming soon," said **Undersecretary and State Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver**. "Thanks to the Healey-Driscoll Administration's leadership, we're partnering directly with cities and towns to address deficient bridges that play a key transportation role in their respective communities, by providing technical and financial support that might otherwise pose

immense challenges to getting locally-owned bridges back open."

Governor Maura Healey launched the FAIR program earlier this year, which is funded through Fair Share revenue and assists municipalities with bridge replacement and repairs. Projects focus on reopening closed bridges, removing postings on restricted bridges, and preserving additional bridges before restrictions or closures are required. MassDOT District offices will coordinate with municipalities on each project.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announced

the completion of the Town Hill Road bridge replacement project in Middlefield, which is located in Berkshire County in the western part of the state, which marks the first completed project of the recently announced Funding for Accelerated Infrastructure Repair (FAIR) program. The bridge carries Town Hill Road over Factory Brook in Middlefield and was closed to traffic in August 2025, following an inspection and subsequent load rating analysis. With the nearest detour routed over narrow seasonal gravel roads adding approximately 20 minutes of travel time, restoring access was a prior-

ity for the community. The replacement bridge, reusing a structure previously utilized in Conway, was designed in-house by MassDOT and constructed by MassDOT Contractor J.H. Maxymillian, Inc. at an estimated cost of \$850,000. Construction began on December 8, 2025, and the bridge was successfully reopened to traffic on March 31, 2026, with a total project duration of just 113 days. The new structure will restore a vital connection for the community of Middlefield.

Governor Healey's FAIR program, directs revenue from a 4 percent surtax on annual incomes

over \$1 million into education and transportation projects. It funds initiatives like free community college, childcare vouchers, road repairs, and public transit improvements to increase equity and affordability.

The program was launched in Berkshire County and will soon be coming to Worcester County according to John Goggin of the Mass DOT. Worcester county area bridge improvements will be announced in the very near future. Dudley is in Worcester county.

Katherine Dalimonte, She's Young, Fast, and Fearless, Chasing 26.2

BY JANET STOICA
jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

When she's not working in the financial planning and analysis area of a clinical trial software company, Katherine Dalimonte is running. Or involved in other physical pursuits like leading Pilates classes (strength and flexibility workouts). The activities she has chosen are not your average person's lifestyle. Clearly, she has chosen a physical routine that most of us would be envious of.

While in high school, she enjoyed lacrosse, soccer, and track. "The track team gave me exposure to consistent running," said Dalimonte, "and when I entered college, I was trying to find different routines to keep fit. My friends were into running and it was something we could all do together." After graduating from the University of New Hampshire, where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Care Administration, she moved to Boston. She saw that the city was filled with most every type of gym and fitness center that one could imagine. "Boston has a huge fitness community," said Dalimonte, "and you can find many people who are really into fitness routines. I began running with my boyfriend, Nick (Cappucci) and determined that I enjoyed the 5k races (3 miles). We began running half-marathons in 2022 (13.1 miles). The Falmouth Road Race of 7 miles was our first race together and we've continued running it as it's our favorite time to-

gether. We really love the Falmouth." The Falmouth is customarily held in August and is a scenic route along the shoreline. Great and exhilarating views!

Katherine proudly ran her first full marathon in Chicago on October 25, 2025 finishing with a time of 4 hours and 32 minutes which averages out to a 6-minute mile. 880 steps per minute. Are you serious? You GO girl! "It was a fantastic day," said Katherine, "the crowds were amazing! They cheered everyone on, it was great."

"However, everyone knows that the Boston Marathon is the most elite and prestigious race. My running in the Chicago marathon will establish me as a Boston qualifier. With the Boston race, it's a point-to-point race from Hopkinton to Boston. With Chicago, you start and finish in the same area. The New York Marathon is running through many boroughs, there's more hills and it's more comparable to Boston. You're running over the Queensboro and Brooklyn Bridges, and Central Park is very hilly too. The New York qualifier is a time of 3 hours and 13 minutes. With Boston you can qualify through charities. A charity will interview you and your fund-raising efforts would be a minimum of \$10,000. Having a connection with the charity is a positive so you can review, reach out, and apply through that charity. Last year, we decided to forego the 2026 Boston Marathon because of our Chicago run. In a good way, you're trying to raise as much money

as possible while having a special connection. Boston is the only race without a lottery system. All others are charity and a lottery system. Your age group with qualifying time and a buffer with best qualifying times is a definite positive."

In the New York Marathon, only 7 percent of those who apply are accepted. There are now 7 major marathons: Boston, New York, Chicago, Tokyo, Berlin, London and Sydney, Australia. Sydney, Australia has now become the seventh sanctioned marathon as of 2024. Katherine was recently accepted into the Sydney Marathon for 2026.

Runners are tracked via microchips in their running bibs and they are pinged after a certain amount of miles by fixed electronic tracker poles that are positioned every so

many miles. There are also running clocks positioned along the routes. Katherine also uses her own electronic bracelet that she downloads the race app to.

"I'm definitely going to run Boston in 2027," she said, "I'll do whatever it takes to get in. In September the list of charities will be published and then fundraising begins in December."

"I was the most nervous I've ever been for the Chicago Marathon," Dalimonte stated, "it was the first time I'd ever done a marathon. At 5 a.m., the day of the race, I began to get very nervous because you just never know what'll happen but then once you start running you settle in and you start having fun. You really have to be mentally strong. At mile 15 you start to think oh my God, I

have 11.2 miles to run! At mile 20 you start to wonder about yourself. You start wondering about why you are running. Your thoughts are everywhere. I created a marathon playlist to listen to. Then, you rely on the crowds lining the roadways. They are wonderful, they will push you on. At mile 25 you start getting psyched that you're almost finished and you realize that you can run that one mile more since you just ran 25."

Katherine is the daughter of Tammi and Gary Dalimonte of Pomfret, Connecticut.

Good Luck in Australia and Boston, Katherine! We know you can and will do it!



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New England Stone Walls

BY THOMAS J. MCLAUGHLIN

No matter where you go in the New England woods, you're bound to come across the iconic 19th century stone wall. They can be seen everywhere, including on the Midstate Trail.

It's commonly believed that the early New England farmers made these walls as they uncovered frost heaving rocks while plowing their fields each spring, which surely happened. But as to why and when the walls were built, it depends on the wall and who you ask.

Robert Thorson, a landscape geologist at the University of Connecticut, the founder of The Stone Wall Initiative, and the author of Stone by Stone, shares this view, "The walls are simply a disposal pile." But Tom Wessels, an ecologist and the author of Reading the Forest Landscape, says that the earliest New England farmers fenced in their livestock with wooden split rail fences, which was much easier than lugging heavy stones up a hill to build a wall. Wessels believes that farmers would throw the rocks in a rock dump rather than putting time and effort into constructing an extensive network of walls.

Nearly a quarter of a million miles of stone walls were con-

structed throughout our region according to Thorson. Wessels calculates that central New England alone has 125,000 miles of stone walls, a length that could wrap around the equator five times or



extend more than halfway to the moon. Wessels believes that most of these walls were built in thirty years and that if these walls were in the Mediterranean, rather than New England, they would be the eighth wonder of the world.

Some walls are older than others, depending on when the area was first settled. Walls were built between 1750 and 1850, when

New England farms were in their heyday. But according to Wessels, most of the stone walls you see today in Central New England were built between 1810 and 1840, during a period known as "Sheep Fever."

New England was about to experience the most profound change to the landscape since the Ice Age. It was an event that would see more than 80 percent of our forests cut down, hillsides eroded to bare rock, and natural habitats wiped out.

It was a shift from the small farm to larger commercial farming. Between 1810 and 1820 the number of textile mills in the region processing Merino wool multiplied threefold.

It all began after France and Spain invaded Portugal in 1807, then Napoleon and his French army invaded Spain in 1808, toppling Spain's King Ferdinand VII.

A Bostonian financier, William Jarvis, was appointed by Thomas Jefferson to be the U.S. Consul to Portugal. During the chaos of Napoleon's conquest of Spain, Jarvis seized the opportunity to obtain the previously restricted and much sought after Merino breed

WALLS

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<p>TRACY LAWRENCE</p> <p>JUNE 21 • 1PM</p>	<p>THREE DOG NIGHT WITH SPECIAL GUEST Chris Propper</p> <p>JUNE 27 • 1PM</p>	<p>VOYAGE CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF JOURNEY</p> <p>JUNE 28 • 1PM</p>	<p>RUMOURS THE ULTIMATE FLEETWOOD MAC</p> <p>JULY 12 • 1PM</p>	<p>Yacht Club Crew THE WORLD'S #1 YACHT ROCK BAND</p> <p>JULY 16 • 7PM</p>
<p>CHRIS PROPPER OTOWN BGMAN</p> <p>JULY 19 • 1PM</p>	<p>DIRTY DEEDS THE AC/DC EXPERIENCE</p> <p>JULY 25 • 1PM</p>	<p>KIP MOORE</p> <p>JULY 26 • 1PM</p>	<p>THE CONCERT A TRIBUTE TO ABBA</p> <p>JULY 30 • 7PM</p>	<p>PIKE GRUNGE Fest 2026 SCHISM (TOOL TRIBUTE) ROTTEN APPLE (ALICE IN CHAINS TRIBUTE) LOUNGE FLY (STONE TEMPLE PILOTS TRIBUTE) DROWN (SMASHING PUMPKINS TRIBUTE)</p> <p>AUGUST 1 • 12PM</p>
<p>THE MARSHALL MUCKER BAND WHILE I'M YOUNG TOUR</p> <p>AUGUST 15 • 1PM</p>	<p>Pure Prairie League AR5 CALLENS SOUTHERN REGION</p> <p>AUGUST 23 • 1PM</p>	<p>MELISSA ETHERIDGE THE RISE TOUR</p> <p>AUGUST 29 • 7:30PM</p>	<p>CHRIS JANSON Wild Horses UNIMAD TOUR</p> <p>AUGUST 30 • 1PM</p>	<p>PIKE HAIRFEST 2026 OZZMOSIS (OZZY OSBOURNE TRIBUTE) VAN HALEN (VAN HALEN TRIBUTE) CRUCIFIED (MOTTLEY CRUE TRIBUTE) SHOT OF POISON (POISON TRIBUTE) THE PRIESTS (THE PRIESTS TRIBUTE)</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 6 • 12PM</p>
<p>9TH LOCAL COUNTRY FEST ANNUAL 2026</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 13 • 12PM</p>				

Pearle L. Crawford (Dudley) Library – May Events & Programs

40 Schofield Avenue, Dudley
508-949-8021
www.crawfordlibrary.org

Library Closures

Saturday, May 23
Monday, May 25 (Memorial Day)

Featured Exhibit

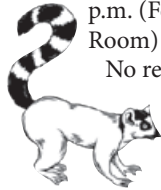
Local Artist Showcase: John Gabrieli
On display throughout May in the Fels Room during library hours

Ongoing Adult Programs

Fitness & Wellness
Gentle Yoga
Mondays, 10:00–11:00 a.m.
No session May 25
Bring mat; registration required
Yoga with Buffy
Fridays, 10:00–11:00 a.m.
Registration required; co-payment applies

Clubs & Social Groups

Mahjong
Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. (Fels Community Room)
No registration required
Quilting Group
Wednesdays, 1:30–3:30 p.m.



WALLS

continued from page 6

of sheep, known for its fine, soft wool. He imported 4,000 of them back to his farm in Weathersfield, Vermont.

Those 4,000 sheep eventually surpassed a million and a half in the next two decades. The boycott of British goods during the War of 1812 was an additional boon to New England's farmers. Wessels

Knit & Crochet Group
Thursdays, 5:30–7:45 p.m.
Fridays, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Special Adult Events

Electronic Recycling Event
Saturday, May 9 | 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. (Parking Lot)
Fees apply; rain or shine
Friends of the Library Annual Meeting
Monday, May 11 | 1:15–2:15 p.m.
Genealogy Group
Monday, May 11 | 4:00–5:30 p.m.
CrafterNOON: Mandala Rock Painting
Tuesday, May 12 | 1:00–2:00 p.m.
Ages 17+; registration required
The Words & Wisdom of Willie Nelson
Thursday, May 14 | 6:00–7:45 p.m.
Performance by Matt York
Book Talk: Chasing Bandits
Saturday, May 16 | 11:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m.
With author Michael E. Neagle
Cook the Book Club
Monday, May 18 | 6:00–7:00 p.m.
Emily Dickinson Lecture
Tuesday, May 19 | 1:00–2:00 p.m.

believes that it was during this thirty-year period that most of New England's stone walls were built to pen the Merino sheep.

But by 1840, as prices plummeted, new markets opened, and land became available for farming in the west; New England's sheep farms were being abandoned, and by 1900 more than half of the cleared land was reforested once again. Today, these picturesque walls that once meandered through fields and pastures can be found throughout our forests.

p.m.
Registration required
Library Book Group
Thursday, May 28 | 6:00–7:30 p.m.
Book: Beautiful Ugly by Alice Feeney
Spring Bowl Planting (Bemis Farms)
Thursday, May 28 | 6:00–7:30 p.m.
Ages 17+; registration required

Children & Family Programs

Once Upon a Storytime
Mondays, 10:00 a.m.–10:45 p.m.

Ages 3–5
Sunflowers with Kelcy
Thursday, May 7 | 5:30 p.m.
Deb's Sing & Swing
Friday, May 8 | 10:30–11:15 a.m.
Wiggles & Giggles (6–24 months)
Thursdays (May 14, 21, 28)
10:00–10:30 or 10:45–11:45 a.m.
Registration required
Yoga for Children
Friday, May 15 | 11:00–11:45 a.m.

Teen Programs

Dungeons & Dragons
Thursdays, 6:00–7:30 p.m.
Ages 14–19
Off the Hook Crochet Club
Thursday, May 7 | 6:00–7:00 p.m.
Ages 12–17
Cake Decorating 101
Thursday, May 21 | 5:00–7:00 p.m.
Ages 14+; registration required
Registration Information
Register online at www.crawfordlibrary.org
Or call 508-949-8021

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SPORTS

Savaeh Perry, Bartlett Track

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTSWRITER

Having transferred into Bartlett High School prior to her junior year, Savaeh Perry considered herself a volleyball player and was intent on playing the sport for her new school. However, her friends convinced her to come out for the track team during the winter season, and it was here she found a love of throwing.

“My friends were on the track team, and they enjoyed running so they convinced me to join,” Perry said. “I tried running and at first I really didn’t like it, but I have since come to accept it and run the 100 and 200.”

Not really finding herself into the running scene in the beginning, Perry was glad to try other events when her coach approached her. It was here that she came across the throwing events,

something that she would come to love. While she loved throwing in general she was not fond of the shot-put right from the get-go.

In throwing the shot-put she found that the pit was much smaller than the discus and too compact for her liking. She didn’t like the confined feeling and really was not into the event and almost immediately gave it up. On the flip side Perry found that the discus had a larger throwing space and she felt comfortable there. While she did improve her discus throwing that first year it was nothing extreme.

Following the spring track season of her freshman year she took home the discus for the summer and continued to work on her throwing. At this time, she was just figuring out how to get the best out of her throwing. The following year she would be shown the spin throw, which she noted took her the next three years to perfect.



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The discus spin throw is a 1.75 rotational throwing movement designed to maximize a thrower’s centrifical force and velocity. The thrower starts at the back of the circle rotating toward the front while focusing on the lower body’s speed so that you can get a powerful and balanced release of the discus.

Last year, Perry’s first season with the Indians, she added the javelin to her repertoire as she was looking for another throwing event but didn’t want any part of the shot-put. She feels that she has been able to toss the javelin a good distance in only doing it for a short time.

While at Bartlett High School she

has been a two-time captain for the track team and last year won the Coaches Award.

“As a first-year athlete here she was a silent leader, but one that is very consistent in her events,” Bartlett girls track coach Chris Nasis said. “She threw the discus and javelin while taking part in the sprints for us and started to come into her own.”

Coach Nasis found that Perry was inconsistent and seemed to foul a lot while learning the discus spin throw. Originally, the accuracy wasn’t there as well, but she began to move in the right direction and now seems to have it under control.

This year Perry has been the team’s number one scorer each meet. She has thrown the discus a personal best this year at 67’ 10”; the javelin at 67’ 9” and run the 200 meter with a time of 33.2 seconds.

“Savaeh is the type of kids who will do just about anything to help out the team,” Nasis said.

Coming into her final track season with Bartlett and as the team’s one and only captain Nasis is looking for her to go out and lead this team.

“Last year I wanted her to go out and try to recruit some athletes for the track team,” the coach said. “I told her to get as many kids as she could. She got 35 kids recruited; we haven’t had those type of numbers in a long time.”

At the time of this writing Perry was taking part in four events for Bartlett this spring season. According to the coach, thus far the senior had achieved four personal records, five seasonal records while finishing in first place three times, 2 second place finishes and a third-place finish. She currently ranks number one on the team for the most points scored for the Indians thus far. Next year she is heading to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst to study Pre Vet / Animal Science. While at UMASS she is hoping to join a volleyball club team.



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Dudley Senior Center – Upcoming Events & Activities

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Thursday, May 21
 Memory Café: 12:00 noon
 Mother's Day Brunch Celebration
 Featuring music by Sandy Allen
 Cost: \$5 per person

Seating Limit: 45 people
 Reservation Information:
 RSVP by calling 508-949-8015
 or sign up at the Senior Center
 24-hour notice required for
 cancellations
 No-shows will be charged \$5

Weekly Activities

Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m.: Pitch League
 Wednesdays at 11:30 a.m.: Knitting Group

Meal Program

Tri-Valley Lunches: Served

Mondays and Thursdays

Holiday Closing

The Senior Center will be closed Monday, May 25 in observance of Memorial Day



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 Septem-

ber 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 or call 508-478-3778.

To locate the BA meeting certification requirements, and other USCG Auxiliary courses offered go to: https://www.cgaux.org/boating/class_finder/index.php

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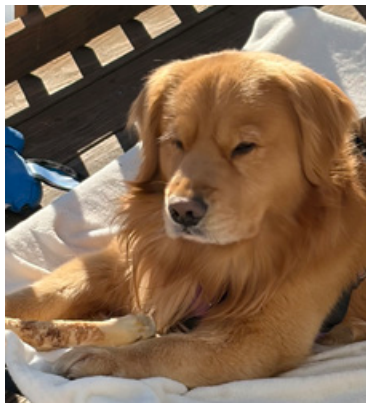
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Luke, and the Shape of Everyday Love

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

Dog people share an unspoken understanding. The early mornings, the muddy floors, the constant responsibility - none of it feels like a burden once you've known the joy. We scroll through endless photos not out of boredom, but because each one captures a personality we feel lucky to witness. To those outside this quiet club, the devotion can seem excessive—confusing, even. Why invest



so much emotion in an animal? What binds us isn't just affection. It's the depth of connection. Living with a dog means sharing routines, space, and a steady companion-

ship that gradually weaves itself into the structure of daily life. Over time, their presence stops feeling separate and starts to feel essential.

That depth of connection makes the absence disorienting. Not greater than other losses, but different - like something foundational has shifted. The grief reflects the bond. And the bond is worth understanding.

Living with Luke has given me a few answers.

Unconditional Love

The only thing I must prove to Luke is that I'm alive, present, and walking through the door. He isn't concerned with my accomplishments or failures. If anything, he seems to prefer me undone - no makeup, salt on my skin after long days teaching cardio dance classes.

Nothing compares to the greeting I receive when I come home.

Mom! You're back!
I collapse to the floor as Luke

spirals around me in joy, performing what I've come to call "The Happy Dance." His excitement is so pure it feels medicinal, dissolving the weight of an eight-class week. I laugh despite myself. Sometimes he laps at my ears until the tickling becomes unbearable, and my laughter only encourages him further. We meet each other there—in a mo-



ment that asks nothing and gives everything.

Happy Habits

Luke also reminds me, quietly and persistently, how to live well.

He seeks sunlight. He wants to be outside - walking, wandering, simply existing in the day. Thunderstorms aside, he doesn't waste energy on what he can't control. He doesn't hold grudges. He gravitates toward warmth - toward people, toward connection.

He has his own sense of duty, too. Ever watchful, he monitors the neighborhood with the seriousness of a seasoned guard.

Woo woo woo! Mom, I'm not trying to alarm you, but that van driver is definitely looney.

His instincts may be exaggerated, but his intention is not. He cares about his surroundings. He participates in life fully.

Quirky Routines

Dogs are masters of presence. They show up the same way

every day—fully, faithfully, without hesitation.

Luke, one fine example, appears in the laundry room, nose first.

Hi Mom. You missed something.

Before I can intervene, he's trotting proudly through the kitchen, a pair of underwear dangling from his mouth like a trophy. Ridiculous, yes - but de-

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LUKE

continued on page 11

REAL ESTATE

Three Things That Are Not Going to Happen in Today's Housing Market

There's a lot of uncertainty right now and that's leading to some dramatic headlines. If you're thinking about buying a home, that can make you feel a little less



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

sure about your decision. A recent study by CNBC asked homebuyers what they're most worried about, and three themes kept coming up again and again: mortgage rates, the number of homes for sale and home prices.

But a lot of what you may be hearing on those is based more on misconceptions and not facts. So, let's break it down and separate fact from fiction.

Misconception #1: "I'll Just Wait, Because Mortgage Rates Are Going to Fall Dramatically"

One idea making the rounds on social is that mortgage rates are going to drop dramatically soon. So, it's better to wait to buy. But is that really what's expected? While mortgage rates have come down a

bit in the last few weeks, forecasts don't show a major drop ahead. The most likely scenario is that rates stay somewhere in the low 6 percent range this year. That's not a big change from where rates are now. Of course, this depends on where inflation and the economy go from here. But, based on what we know today, waiting for a big drop in rates may not work out the way some people hope. Not to mention, even with rates where they are today, it's already more affordable than a year ago. So, even if they don't change much, it's still better than it was.

Misconception #2: "There Are Too Many Homes for Sale Right Now"

You've probably heard inventory is up, and nationally, it is. The number of homes for sale is 8 percent higher than this time last year. But that's not a bad thing. In fact, it's one of the reasons buyers have a bit more breathing room right now. The problem is, the headlines are making something good, sound bad. They're focusing on how this is the most inventory we've had since 2019 or how many homes builders are building. That can make it sound like the number of homes for sale is rising too far, too fast. But that's not what the bigger

picture shows. Data from Realtor.com proves that, even though inventory is up compared to last year, it's still nearly 14 percent lower than it was during the last normal housing market (2017-2019). While it can vary a lot based on where you live, only nine states have more inventory than pre-pandemic today. That's a key reason why there still aren't enough homes for sale to trigger something like the crash back in 2008.

Misconception #3: "Home Prices Are About to Crash"

You've probably seen this one, too. The confusion comes from the fact that some metros are experiencing slight price declines. Influencers are running with that and saying prices are crashing but that's not the reality. Most areas are seeing prices rise, not fall and that's because many homeowners aren't selling because they don't want to give up the low mortgage rate they locked in a few years ago. That is limiting on how much inventory can grow. Since inventory is still below pre-pandemic norms, there aren't enough homes for sale to cause a price crash. Even in markets with more inventory, some sellers are choosing to pull their homes off the market instead of cutting prices. Those are three

big reasons prices aren't headed for a crash. Even in the markets experiencing mild declines, the price drops aren't enough to cancel out the big gains most homeowners have seen in the last five years. That's not a crash, it's just prices moderating after a few record-

breaking years.

Online posts are going to make things sound worse than they are. If you want a true, factual look at what's really happening in today's market, contact The Marzeotti Group or a trusted REALTOR.

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LUKE

continued from page 10

pendable. He is as much a part of my daily rhythm as the sunrise.

In quieter moments, his presence softens. When I settle onto the couch, he waits.

Hi. It's just me. I was wondering if you might consider snuggling.

He doesn't jump or demand. He sits, steady and patient, making his case with nothing but eye contact. I give in. How could I possibly say no to the bear cub resting at my feet? He climbs up

and rests his head on my chest, heavy and warm. I pet him gently, aware of something I try not to dwell on too often: time moves differently for him.

Every moment, then, feels a little more significant.

Living with a dog doesn't just add something to your life - it rearranges it. Not loudly, not all at once, but in small, steady ways that become impossible to ignore. And maybe that's the answer. It's not that we invest too much in them. It's that they show us, every day,



what it looks like to give without measuring, to stay without question, and to love without condition.

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Clearing Up the Backup Camera

Q. My question concerns my 2016 Mazda6 backup camera. It is just not as bright as it once was. I have tried cleaning it with a Zeiss lens wipe and increased the brightness setting to max, but little has changed. Any thoughts on other steps I can take?

A. The first step is to check for any wiring or connection issues. Try gently

moving the wiring or even tapping on the trunk lid to see if the image changes—if the camera flickers, that can point to a wiring concern. Also inspect the lens closely; over time, it can become hazy or pitted, which reduces image quality. If there is no change, the camera itself may be nearing the end of its service life. It's not uncommon for backup cameras to degrade after

eight - ten years due to moisture intrusion or sensor wear. A replacement camera from Mazda can be costly—around \$500-\$600 plus labor—so you may also want to consider a quality aftermarket option.

Q. I have a 2023 BMW 330 xDrive coming off lease in three months. I would like your insight on whether to buy it

out for \$28,000 plus tax or start a new lease. The interesting part is that by then the car will have only 3,000 miles. There is also the option of buying a BMW extended warranty.

A. Based on the numbers, you would likely be getting a very good deal by purchasing your BMW. At the time of writing, wholesale (trade-in) values appear to be in the \$30,000-\$33,000 range, while private sale values could be in the \$32,000-\$35,000 range, depending on condition and market demand. With such low mileage, keeping the car makes a lot of sense—especially if you're satisfied with it. As the factory warranty will expire in a few years, a BMW extended warranty is worth considering for peace of mind, given the potential cost of repairs.

Q. I see you mention Harbor Freight tools and equipment from time to time. Are the Icon brand tools as good as the "tool-truck" tools?

A. There is a lot of debate on this topic. I recently purchased four Icon 10-millimeter sockets (two 1/4-inch drive and two 3/8-inch drive) for about \$10 total. By comparison, a single 3/8-inch drive deep socket from a tool-truck brand can cost \$20 or more. Considering how commonly 10mm sockets are used and misplaced, the value is hard to ignore. While tool-truck brands may still have an edge in finish and long-term durability, the Icon line offers very good quality for the price and is a solid choice for many users.

Q. My 2016 Toyota 4Runner seems to go through brakes at a rapid pace. I am not an aggressive driver—I tend to slow down gradually and avoid hard braking whenever possible. However, at 99,000 miles I have re-

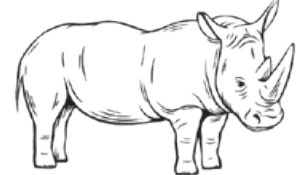
placed the brakes and rotors at least four times and calipers three times. Right now the brakes vibrate at highway speeds, and I am taking it in again for service. It has been suggested that the parts my local garage uses may be inferior. (This last issue began after an emergency stop to avoid a collision.) Can you recommend high-quality parts so I don't feel like I'm replacing brakes every time I get gas?



BY JOHN PAUL

A. Akebono makes excellent-quality brake components, and OEM Toyota parts are also very reliable. I have also had good results with PowerStop brake components, which offer coated rotors that help resist rust buildup. That said, the frequency of your repairs suggests something beyond just parts quality. In many cases, repeated brake issues are caused by improper installation, combined with sticking caliper slide pins or seized caliper pistons. Brake vibration is often the result of uneven or excessive wheel lug torque, or rust and debris on the hub surface that prevent the rotor from mounting evenly. This can lead to what feels like "warped" rotors. Proper cleaning of the hub and correct torque using a torque wrench are critical. It would be worth discussing installation procedures with your shop or seeking a second opinion.

Q. My 2019 Toyota Avalon warranty is over in August. Do car dealers accept service contracts from companies like CarShield and Endurance? I typically go to the dealer for maintenance. Is there a warranty company you would recommend?



CAR DOCTOR
continued on page 13



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TIPS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING

dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com

Saving for Retirement: Are You Guessing or Planning?

Let's say you dream of spending your retirement mornings on a warm beach, coffee in hand, waves rolling in. To get there, you had a simple plan: save \$1 million and buy the beach house you always wanted.

But when retirement arrives, reality hits. After accounting for keeping your current home, everyday expenses and health care, \$1 million doesn't stretch as far as you thought, and the beach house remains a dream. The problem wasn't your discipline – it was that your number was never really your number. It was arbitrary, not anchored to what your ideal retirement would actually cost.

How can you make sure your retirement number is right for you?

A solid savings goal starts with a clear picture of the retirement you want. Think through where you plan to live, whether you'll keep your current home or downsize,

how much you plan to travel, if you'll help children and grandchildren financially and what health care might cost you later in life. Build a realistic monthly budget, then multiply by 12 months to find your annual need. Adjust this amount for inflation until the first year of retirement.

Then, multiply that figure by 25 to get a sense of how much may be needed to save. It's a formula based on the idea of withdrawing 4 percent annually from your savings, assuming you retire in your mid-60s. If you need \$60,000 a year, your target is around \$1.5 million. You may need more or less depending on your lifestyle, health, unexpected expenses, Social Security benefits and other income. No single rate or strategy will work for everyone. A financial advisor can help you determine your number and strategy.

Once you know your target, the path forward becomes clearer. Here are a few tips for next steps:

Start early. The sooner you begin saving, the more time compound interest has to work in your favor. Small amounts set aside automatically each paycheck have the opportunity to grow significantly

over decades.

Live below your means. Spending less than you earn is one of the most powerful wealth-building habits. When your income rises, save and invest the difference instead of upgrading your lifestyle.

Keep your debt under control. Since credit cards and other high-interest debt can slow your progress, pay off balances monthly when possible.

Invest consistently. If your employer offers a 401(k), aim to contribute at least 10%-15% of your salary, and increase your contributions after every raise. If you max out your 401(k), a traditional IRA or Roth IRA may offer additional tax-advantaged growth (eligibility and contribution limits apply).

Boost your income when you can. Develop new skills, ask for a raise or explore a side income. Every extra dollar saved moves you closer to your goal.

The difference between a retirement you love and one full of compromises often comes down to the planning you do today. Know your real number, build a solid plan and get the right help along the way.

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 01501 Tel: 508-832-5385 or dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com.

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BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS



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CAR DOCTOR

continued from page 12

A. This is always a difficult question. Keep in mind that extended warranties—more accurately called service contracts—cover repairs, not routine maintenance. Many dealerships will accept third-party service contracts, but coverage and ease of claims can vary widely. If you're considering additional coverage, it's often safest to go with a manufacturer-backed plan or one offered through a reputable organization such as AAA. Over the years, many aftermarket warranty companies have come and gone, sometimes leaving customers without coverage, so it's important to choose carefully and read the


fine print.

Q. My neighbor showed me pictures of his family's Rolls-Royce, which he claims was made in Springfield, Massachusetts. When I did some research, it looked like New England was once an automotive hub. What happened?

A. Yes, there were once dozens of vehicle manufacturers in New England, particularly in the early 1900s. Some produced thousands of vehicles, while others built only a handful. The industry changed dramatically over time, especially during and after the Great Depression. There wasn't a single cause for the decline—it was a combination of factors such as labor costs, access to materials, supplier net-


works, and increasing competition from larger manufacturers in other regions. For example, General Motors closed its Framingham, Massachusetts plant in 1989. Today, companies like Factory Five Racing in Wareham, Massachusetts are among the few remaining low-volume manufacturers in the region. Events such as the Bay State Motor Festival in Framingham help showcase the area's rich automotive history, including brands like Knox, Stanley Steamer, and Indian Motorcycle.

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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, MAY 9

- Volunteer Work Session, Waters Farm, 53 Waters Road, West Sutton.
- The Friends of Charlton Public Library will hold a Book Sale on Saturday, May 9, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Dexter Hall, second floor inside the Charlton Public Library. Current members in good standing are invited to a preview on Friday, May 8 from noon to 4:30 p.m. Donations of cash, check, and Venmo will be accepted during the sale.

SUNDAY, MAY 10

- Antique Tractor Pull Competition at Waters Farm, 53 Waters Road, West Sutton. Registration for tractor owners starts at 9 a.m. The pull competition starts at 10 a.m. and ends when the last tractor pulls the

heaviest load over the finish line. Free.

THURSDAY, MAY 14

- Time to stock up on summer books for your summer reading! The Friends of the Gladys E. Kelly Library, 2 Lake Street, Webster, are holding a book sale from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m. The sale will also run on Friday, May 15 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. and Saturday, May 16 from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. You will find a wonderful selection of adult and children’s books, paperback \$.50, hard copy \$1, coffee table books \$5 and a bag of books for only \$5. Also for sale: games, jigsaw puzzles, CDs and DVDs.

FRIDAY, MAY 15

- Booklovers’ Gourmet, located at 72 East Main Street in Webster, is hosting “Fins and Feathers”, a small works show of paintings by local artist Linda Littleton in its cafe gallery May 1-30. The works will include watercolors, prints and acrylics of some of our favorite feathered friends and fish and may be viewed during normal business hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.- 5 p.m., Wednesday 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. The public is invited to a meet the artist reception with light refreshments on Friday, May 15, 5-7 p.m. For more information call 508-949-6232.

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 par-

participants are welcome to bring their own. Pre-registration will open on April 15 at 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 or Llkorkiewicz@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.
- Saint Peter’s Parish in Northbridge is having an Italian Chicken Dinner on Saturday, May 16th 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, May 12th. Please call 508-234-2156 or email the parish office: parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org for tickets.

be followed at 7 pm by our guest speaker, Stefanie Covino. Covino is the Executive Director of the Blackstone Watershed Collaborative and she will discuss the importance of our land and water nexus. She will describe how the work of the Collaborative and Metacomet Land Trust is critical to the overall health of the communities where Metacomet works including Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Franklin, Hopedale, Mendon, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge and Wrentham in south Central Massachusetts. We will also play a quick round of watershed trivia! Please join us as we all strive to know our watershed better. For more information, go to MetacometLandTrust.org.

- The Douglas Open Space Committee invites Douglas landowners to attend an informational session on how to protect their fields and forests. The event will be held on Thursday, May 21 at 6 pm at the Douglas Municipal Center at 29 Depot Street in the Resource Room. A Mass-Woods land preservation webinar will be shown and Lisa Mosczynski, President of the area’s regional Metacomet Land Trust, will provide additional information and answer questions. Excellent permanent protection is available to landowners and can offer property tax reduction or elimination, be tailored to specific needs such as including a building envelope for future generations and offer peace of mind for estate planning. Permanent protection also has great public benefits including watershed protection, habitat preservation for flora and fauna and permanent protection for our farmland through agricultural preservation restrictions. Come find out more! For more information email openspace@douglas-ma.gov.

SATURDAY, MAY 23

- Second Annual Event! Free Kids’ Clothing giveaway and Family Fun Day. Valley Chapel is hosting a fun day out for the family. From 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Youth Center, 130 Douglas Road, Uxbridge.

MONDAY, MAY 25

- Parade Grand Marshal James Sundstrom will lead the Webster Memorial Day Parade. Schedule of Events for Memorial Day 6:30 a.m. Start at Veterans Home, Webster. 7:25 a.m. - 8:10 a.m. Cemetery visits in Dudley (Corbin, Village, Town Common). 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Services at Dudley Town Hall, Calvary, St. Joseph, Sacred Heart, and Mt. Zion cemeteries. 11 a.m. Main Parade starts (Route 12/ Worcester Road to Webster Town Hall). 12:15 p.m. Urbanowski Memorial by the PAV Club.

JUNE 2

- BVT Band & Choir host concert at 7:30 p.m. in the Competition Center at BVT, 5 Pleasant Street, Upton. The music program at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) Conducted by

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SUNDAY, MAY 17

- The Friends of the Auburn Public Library cordially invite you to Afternoon Tea, a fundraiser, 1– 4 pm at the Pakachoag Center, 203 Pakachoag St. Auburn. Featured guest speaker Lewis Alderton, Beekeeper. Menu: A delicious assortment of finger sandwiches, savory delights, sweet treats and tea. \$30 per person in advance (cash, check, PayPal). Space is limited, please reserve your seat. Email friendsofauburnlibrary@gmail.com to reserve a seat, for payment methods, or a brochure. Brochures are also available in the lobby of the Auburn Public Library.

THURSDAY, MAY 21

- The Metacomet Land Trust will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, May 21, 2026 starting at 6:30 pm with a business meeting and the presentation of Community Spirit awards at the Sutton High School auditorium at 383 Boston Road in Sutton. This will



TALES FROM BEYOND

tomdagostino.com

Reuben Jenckes's Black Horse Tavern Ghost

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

This is an old ghost story dating back a few centuries. It is typical of the romantic tales of haunted places that Rhode Island has become famous for. This account has been told and retold in several antiquated tomes. A tavern called the Black Horse once stood in the middle of Scituate Village in Rhode Island. A man named Reuben Jenckes owned the establishment and was cordial to all who entered its door, whether it was food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty or lodging for the weary.

As the story goes, the ghost of a Narragansett Indian haunted the building out of embarrassment for an event that took place many years before while he was alive and

visiting the hostelry. Some claim he also haunted the Black Horse Tavern because he preferred the nearby Pine Tree Tavern in life and wanted the business to migrate there.

The ghost haunted the family in the form of strange dreams. He would be seen by various family members in their dreams, pointing to someplace on the property before slowly walking toward where he was pointing. The vision was often followed by some sort of horrific nightmare.

One of the main recipients of the ghostly dreams was Reuben Jenckes's daughter, Lucy. He often appeared to her while she slept, pointing toward the carriage house. In her dream, she would be compelled to follow him, but he

would either vanish before reaching the destination of his quest, or she would suddenly wake up.

One night, she saw the man in her dreams, but this time, she did not wake up and could follow him as he moved toward the carriage house, with each turn, pointing the way. The ghost led Lucy Jenckes to a loft in the carriage house where a coffin lay in the rafters. The next day, Lucy ventured into the loft where she spied the coffin she had been led to in her nightly vigil. She slowly ambled, towed the box, and opened it. Inside she found a dressmaker's doll with its hair cut off. That is when an old tale came to light.

It is rumored that the Indian tried to scalp the doll in a drunken state, thinking it was a rude person

who would not return his conversation. Thoroughly embarrassed by the act, the Narragansett chose to take his business down the road to the Pine Tree Tavern. The next night, the ghost requested that she remove the doll from the crime scene. She removed the doll, and the haunting supposedly ceased. Guests of the tavern still insisted the man was making his presence known, as many were jolted out of sound sleep in the night by frightening war cries. Some claimed to be pulled out of bed by the hair.

The tavern was used as a meeting house and local social place. The second floor held ample amounts of revelers until all hours of the night. There were other tavern owners, so the exact timeline of the haunting is unclear in records

but is said to have taken place before the 19th century.

Deeds to such small towns with farming origins can become quite vague. What is clear is that licenses, which read for "Tavern, Ale, and Victualing House," were handed out to early settlers like the Potters, Manchesters, Smiths, and Hopkins in the mid-18th century. Reuben Jenckes probably owned the Black Horse after 1800.

The structure is no longer a tavern, and various owners have experienced some strange occurrences or nothing. Whether the ghost still wanders the confines of the structure is a matter of conjecture. The building has long been renovated and sits on the corner of Danielson Pike and Route 116 (East Road)

HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 14

Dr. Colton Cox, students will showcase their musical talents in a dynamic performance. The ensembles will perform a diverse selection of music spanning genres from folk and classical to pop and movie soundtracks and incorporate singing in multiple languages. This program is funded in part by grants from the Grafton, Northbridge and Upton Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. Students, families and community members are invited to attend the free performance, which is open to the public.

TUESDAY, JUNE 16

• Regional musician and Dan Kirouac will bring his successful and singer Dan Kirouac

will bring his program THE MUSIC OF MCCARTNEY: The World's Most Successful Songwriter to the Oxford Free Public Library on Tuesday, June 16th at 6:00 PM.

The program, delivered on piano and vocals, will explore the music of Paul McCartney from the Beatles years through Wings and into the 1980s, highlighted by informational commentary. Dan Kirouac is a 40-year veteran of the New England music scene, and has appeared in two long-term Beatles tribute bands from 2000 to 2022. The program is free and open to the public. For more information, please call the library at (508) 987-6003. This program is sponsored by the Oxford Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

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 with your name, address, phone and description of the items for sale, or stop by the Recreation Office at Town hall.

SATURDAY, JULY 18

• Northbridge Annual Fireworks Show. (Rain date July 19) Gates open at 5 p.m. Celebrate our nation's 250th birthday with an evening

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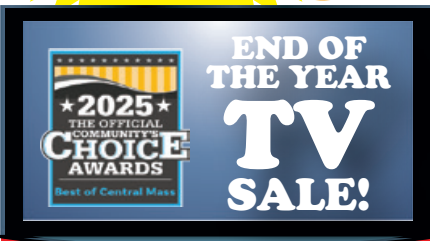
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