



Pedestrian bridge over Singletary Bridge at former Arnold Pond Dam site. Photo supplied by Caleb Slater

Massachusetts dam removals restore rivers and wildlife

BY BRITTANY AMALFI

Across Massachusetts, aging dams that used to serve an important purpose are now being removed to restore rivers, improve wildlife habitats, and reduce public safety risks. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) is leading an effort to remove seven outdated dams located on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in Athol, Sutton, Brookfield, Hardwick,

Windsor, and New Braintree.

Many of these dams were built decades ago and have outlived their original purpose. Over time, they fell into poor condition, creating costly maintenance problems and environmental concerns. Rather than spending millions of dollars on repairs, MassWildlife has chosen to restore the rivers to a more natural state.

One of the most successful dam removals can be found along Singletary Brook in Sutton. Ac-

ording to Caleb Slater, who is the Chief of Hatcheries at MassWildlife, the agency has owned the land for many years. In the early 1900s, MassWildlife's predecessor built a series of dams and ponds that operated as freshwater fish hatcheries. However, the hatcheries were abandoned in the 1950s, leaving the dams behind.

DAMN REMOVALS

continued on page 2

BVT Signing Day Celebrates Skilled Seniors

Co-Op program connects 180 students to high-skill, high-wage jobs

The Cooperative Education (Co-Op) program at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT) held its 6th annual Career Signing Day on May 15. The ceremony recognized the senior Co-Op and career placement students, who proudly announced their career or military plans and signed commitment letters to work with their employers after graduation.

their trade area and the Co-Op program.

The Class of 2026 produced record-setting Co-Op numbers, with 180 students participating in the program. Since March of 2025, students have worked more than 75,000 hours and earned a combined total of more than \$1.3 million in wages. The Co-Op experience is made possible through partnerships with a growing num-



After graduating from BVT's Plumbing program, Kaelynn Kennerknecht of Bellingham will continue her employment with Notturmo Home Services. Photo submitted

Vocational Director Kerri Baltramaitis welcomed the soon-to-be graduates, parents, instructors, industry partners, and school administrators before highlighting each student's achievement in

ber of local businesses that support students each year, demonstrating the program's positive impact on the local workforce and community.

During the ceremony, students signed employment contracts with representatives from local companies, including A.S Jones, Adaptive Plumbing & Heating, AFDJ Contracting, Armed Services, Avenue Fifty, Back Bay Mechanical, Boots on the Ground Landscaping, Boston Lawnmower, Boston Volvo, Boucher Energy Systems, Bulldog Fire Apparatus, Capurso Electric, Control Point, Crothers Tire & Auto Repair, D.C. Bates Equipment, G&C Plumbing & Heating, Grasseschi Plumbing, J&P Truck and Auto, JTS Diesel Performance, Kevin Allen Carpen-

SIGNING DAY

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DAMN REMOVAL

continued from page 1

Decades later, the Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety inspected the structures and notified MassWildlife that many of the dams were in poor condition and needed attention. Repairing dams can be extremely expensive, and Mass-

not eliminate habitat but instead transform one type of wetland into another. Areas that used to be ponds often become wet meadows and natural stream corridors that support a wide variety of plants and animals.

MassWildlife has also worked to address community needs during these projects. For example, a dry hydrant was relocated to Arnold



Schoolhouse after removal - culvert under 8 Lots Road. Photo supplied by Caleb Slater

Wildlife faced a difficult decision about how to move forward.

The agency ultimately repaired one dam at Arnold Pond but removed four others, including the Welsh Pond, Adams Pond, Putnam Pond, and Schoolhouse Pond dams. Slater explained that dam removal is often less expensive than repair and eliminates future maintenance costs and liability concerns.

The environmental benefits are significant as well. Dams change the way rivers function by turning flowing water into stagnant ponds. They trap sediment, increase water temperatures, lower oxygen levels, and block fish and other aquatic species from moving freely through waterways. Many of the streams affected by these projects are designated Coldwater Fish Resources, supporting species such as brook trout that depend on clean, cold, flowing water.

By removing dams, rivers can once again flow naturally. Fish and wildlife gain access to more habitat, water quality improves, and biodiversity increases. Slater emphasized that the projects do

Pond so the local fire department could maintain access to water for fire protection. At Adams Pond, the agency added four parking spaces and a pedestrian bridge, allowing visitors to reach a historic cemetery located across the stream.

The current dam removal initiative is supported by \$5 million from the American Rescue Plan Act. Construction began in 2025 and is expected to be completed by June 2026. The projects include the removal of the dams at Cusky Pond, Patrill Hollow Pond, Salmon Pond, Thousand Acre Reservoir, Weston Brook, and Schoolhouse Pond.

MassWildlife still owns approximately 20 dams across the state and hopes to continue removing them when possible. For the agency, the goal is simple: restore natural rivers, improve wildlife habitat, and leave Massachusetts' waterways healthier for future generations.

Building community through sculpture

New England Sculptors Association creates opportunities for local communities.

ValleyCAST, the arts and culture arm of Open Sky Community Services, is thrilled to welcome the New England Sculptors Association (NESA) every winter for their Annual Inside & Out Exhibition. Artists from all around New England submit amazing sculptures that are seen inside the Spaulding R. Aldrich Heritage Gallery, 50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville, MA, and outside on the grounds of the Alternatives' Whitin Mill complex for people to enjoy throughout the winter. January 2026 marked the 5th anniversary of this amazing collaboration that brings sculpture to the local community.

This year, in addition to this collaboration, NESA's grant writer, Christina Speidel, secured a grant from the Mass Cultural Council. The funds enabled several NESA sculptors to work with area non-profit agencies to bring the joy of building sculpture to underserved communities. Because ValleyCAST has a long-standing collaboration with NESA, Open Sky was one of the lucky agencies chosen to participate along with the Worcester



Workshop participants Stephen Paulson and Kyle Arsenaault, and NESA artist and workshop instructor Lynn Simmons at the Birdhouse Installation Celebration.

Public Library, Hector House, Abbey's House, Worcester Art Museum's Victory Program, ACE, Bertram Senior Home, and The Mystic Learning Center's After School Youth Program.

NESA Sculptor and Community Arts Liaison, Lynn Simmons and NESA Sculptor and Vice President, Bayda Asbridge, worked with Cristi Collari, Direc-

tor of Community Outreach at Open Sky to teach a Birdhouse Building Sculpture Workshop. Each of the nine participants, a mix of community members and individuals from Open Sky programs, assembled and then painted their own separate birdhouses. Most participants had never used a power tool before and said they felt empowered

as they successfully screwed the birdhouses together. Participants then painted their birdhouses with brightly colored rainbows, pink and red hearts, and green landscapes, some adding painted words like hope and peace to their finished designs. All nine birdhouses were then installed together on a post secured into the ground in a garden in the lower parking lot. Together, these vibrant, multi-colored homes for birds can be enjoyed by all who visit the Alternatives' Whitin Mill Complex, which hopefully, one day soon, will also include the local community of birds.

The New England Sculptors Association was founded in 1948 and now has over 210 professional sculptor members, emerging sculptors, and Friends of NESA from all 6 New England states and New York. NESA members are selected by jury, and work in a variety of media. Since the Association has no brick-and-mortar presence, NESA partners with local galleries, museums, historical sites, and communities to bring sculpture in all its amazing forms to the public. NESA and ValleyCAST have been

enjoying their collaboration for 5 years. The 6th Annual the Inside & Out Exhibit will be held in January 2027.

ValleyCAST fosters a creative and engaged community in the Historic Blackstone Valley that is inclusive and supportive of all people with and without disabilities. ValleyCAST curates events and activities that bring people of all ages, abilities, and walks of life together. ValleyCAST is the arts and culture arm of Open Sky Community Services.

Open Sky Community Services provides the foundation for those served to see beyond and live beyond their circumstances. By blending best practices with the power of community, they enable individuals and families to achieve their goals and live their best lives.

To learn more about the New England Sculptors Association, visit nesculptors.org. To learn more about ValleyCAST and/or Open Sky Community Services, visit openskyics.org.

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Grafton Clean-Up Day

Grafton is perennially a shining example of conservation and care for its outdoors. This year, the Grafton Garden Club once again organized numerous teams to collect unsightly trash from its roadways, streets, parks, and playgrounds.

When the Grafton Garden Club began Grafton Clean-up years ago, it was a one-day affair. More recently, it has become a one-week affair. Now, according to the Grafton Department of Public Works (DPW), individuals are regularly getting their yellow bags and patrolling their neighborhoods, picking up the trash year-round. These conscientious citizens are models for all of us. Let us teach our children well. Earth is our home.

Hundreds of yellow trash bags were filled and left for the DPW to collect and dispose of. I was told we filled one dumpster to the brim

with our bags of trash. Congratulations to the many people who do care about our town and our environment and took the time to clean up Grafton.

All volunteers were treated to a free slice of pizza or small sandwich at Pepperoni Express, followed by a free child-size soft serve cone at Swirls & Scoops on Saturday, April, 25, 2026. Good businesses have an environmental conscience and give back to their community. Additionally, Savers Bank provided bottles of water, and the Grafton Garden Club provided coffee and doughnuts. The Grafton DPW gave clean-up volunteers free white spruce and balsam fir tree saplings to celebrate the greening and beautification of Grafton. Many thanks to these sponsors of Grafton Clean-up Day.

Every community depends on a small core of special, concerned citizens to make good things happen. Serving on the Clean-up Day

Committee were Helen Blazis, chair, Elizabeth Weeks, Deb Graham, and Linda Bent. Jim and Roger Graham were very helpful, too.

The many cleanup teams included members of the Grafton Garden Club, including Evelyn Guillette, Shannon Phelan, Theresa Churchill; Troop 2019 who cleaned the High School and Middle School areas; Rebecca Alfors and family who picked up trash at the North St. Playground; Helen and grandson Skyler Campanale who picked up trash along Routes 122 and 140; the family of Kristin Pliakas who cleaned up Fay Mountain and George Hill Roads; and the Berardi family who cleaned up the Elliot Trail.

Additionally, the following individuals participated in the spring-cleaning of Grafton: Rich and Carol Lupien picked up trash at the Lake Ripple Boat Ramp, Candice Lefebvre and Lisa Arboyst disposed of a vast amount of trash

that was thrown into the treed lot near Subway, and Noel and Ingelise Sherry had noticed all the trash on scenic Merriam Road and decided they would clean up that street.

Our valiant clean-up crews also included Dale Bent, Michael Sasseville, Stephen Crawley, Mary Pollinger, Lauren Nielson, Victoria Duckworth, Patti Orlando Tilotson, Pat Loconto, Rachel Muse, Kay Malloy, Samuel DiBello, and Lisa Krahan, Susan Duval and family, Jessica Belton, and Sara Hallor.

Leah Wilson and family collected trash along Milford Rd. Christine Nichols offered to clean up Greenlawn Avenue and Providence Rd. Mel Perez planned to clean up South Grafton, along Rt.122A. Nickie Gregor picked up trash along Hudson Ave. Gary and Jackie Mills removed trash, including a large white barrel, from the Flint Pond area. Todd Cahill registered to clean up Depot Street.

Steve and Wendy Pope picked up trash in Dauphinis Park.

And a hurrah shoutout to Ed Murphy, who collected 5 bags of trash over two days along Millbury Street.

Thanks also to those Graftonites who helped with the Grafton Clean-up, who are not mentioned here. The Grafton Garden Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Their purpose is to promote knowledge of plants and gardening, to raise money through our Plant Sale for scholarships for students and grants for teachers, and to beautify our wonderful Town of Grafton. For the past 20 years, the Garden Club has organized Grafton Clean-up Day, in remembrance of the first Earth Day, many years ago.

The Grafton Garden Club, where gardeners grow...and keep Grafton clean and green.

Submitted by Helen Blazis, Chair of the Grafton Clean-Up Committee

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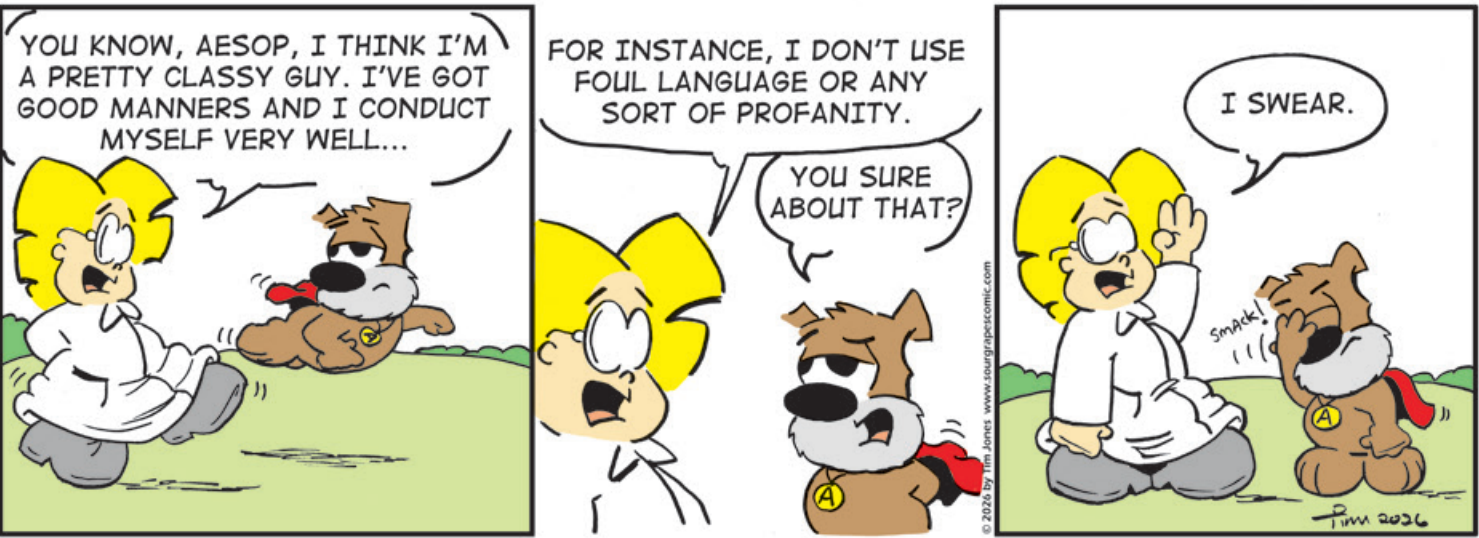
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SOUR GRAPES by Tim Jones



PANEL 1: A woman with blonde hair is talking to a dog named Aesop. She says, "YOU KNOW, AESOP, I THINK I'M A PRETTY CLASSY GUY. I'VE GOT GOOD MANNERS AND I CONDUCT MYSELF VERY WELL..."

PANEL 2: Aesop replies, "FOR INSTANCE, I DON'T USE FOUL LANGUAGE OR ANY SORT OF PROFANITY."

PANEL 3: The woman asks, "YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?"

PANEL 4: Aesop says, "I SWEAR." The woman smacks him on the head.

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UUSGU to host reading of Frederick Douglass' Together on July 5

Grafton, Massachusetts - On July 5, 2026, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Grafton and Upton (UUSGU) and Grafton Public Library will host a public reading of Frederick Douglass' powerful speech - What to the Slave is the Fourth of July? - first delivered in 1852 in Rochester, NY, to the Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society. The event will be held at the UUSGU meetinghouse at 3 Grafton Common in Grafton, MA, beginning at 5 PM.

The injustice that continues in our country makes the Frederick Douglass speech as relevant today as it was in 1852, and the reading offers an occasion to consider racism and the legacy of slavery in the United States.

The program begins with a "call to the Common" by African drummer Akili Jamal Haynes, as Frederick Douglass called people to the Common with a bell in 1842 after initially being denied access to local churches, homes, and marketplaces when he came to Grafton to speak out against slavery. He returned to Grafton Common to speak again in 1874.

The drumming will resonate throughout the Grafton Common, inviting the community into the meetinghouse. Once indoors, volunteers will take turns reading Douglass' speech aloud from start to finish. The moving oratory prompts our consideration of the nation's stated values, its triumphs and failures, and the actions and resolutions required of us as participants in the American project, a 250-year-old experiment in democracy.

Following the reading, those interested will break into smaller



Reverend Daniel Gregoire of UUSGU reads during a past 'Reading Frederick Douglass Together' event.

groups to discuss what we, each of us, here in 2026, can do to further Douglass' vision of a more just and equitable American society.

Reading Frederick Douglass Together, a free community event, is made possible by a grant from Mass Humanities, provided by funding through the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). The UUSGU meetinghouse is welcoming to everyone, is accessible, and offers assistive listening devices. Volunteer readers will speak from an accessible lectern.

About the Unitarian Universalist Society of Grafton & Upton

The Unitarian Universalist Society of Grafton & Upton is a community of people who recognize the inherent good in all people, extend love and acceptance to everyone, embrace the worth and dignity of every individual, and foster each other's spiritual growth, no matter their beliefs.

About the Grafton Public Library

The Grafton Public Library provides residents of any age opportunities to find and use information in many formats as they pursue personal growth and education throughout their lives.

About Mass Humanities

Mass Humanities, a non-profit foundation based in Northampton, creates opportunities for the people of Massachusetts to transform their lives and build a more equitable commonwealth through the humanities.

Since its founding in 1974, the

organization has provided millions of dollars in support of thousands of humanities projects across the Commonwealth. Established as the state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Mass Humanities is an independent programming and grantmaking organization that receives support from the NEH and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, as well as private sources. For more information, visit www.masshumanities.org

[masshumanities.org](http://www.masshumanities.org)

About Mass Cultural Council

Mass Cultural Council works to elevate the rich cultural life in Massachusetts by amplifying creativity, providing resources, expanding relationships, and championing transformational changes that maintain and grow a thriving creative and cultural ecosystem. For more information visit: <https://massculturalcouncil.org/>

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Etiquette express: Making everyday interactions better

BY LEE-ANN BARKHOUSE

June is a season of new beginnings.

Across our communities, tiny kindergarten graduates proudly cross the stage, middle school students prepare for new adventures, high school seniors take their first steps toward adulthood, and college graduates launch into careers and opportunities that await them.

No matter the age, graduation is more than a ceremony. It is a milestone that marks growth, perseverance, and the start of a new chapter.

For graduates, this season often brings a mix of excitement, anticipation, uncertainty, and hope. While some people have a clear plan for what comes next, many do

not, and that is perfectly okay.

One of the greatest lessons we learn in life is that our journeys rarely follow a straight line.

The world is filled with possibilities. Some opportunities arrive exactly as planned. Others appear when we least expect them. Be open to learning, exploring, and discovering what brings you joy and purpose.

As you move into your next chapter, be patient with yourself. New routines, unfamiliar environments, and changing responsibilities can feel uncomfortable at first. Growth often begins with uncertainty. Give yourself permission to learn, adjust, and find your footing.

For parents, grandparents, family members, mentors, and friends, graduation is a time of

both celebration and reflection. We take pride in the accomplishments of those we love while recognizing that a new journey is about to begin. It is a reminder to savor life's milestones, cherish the memories, and embrace the opportunities that lie ahead.

This graduation season, take a moment to celebrate how far you've come and embrace the opportunities that await in your next chapter. Whether you are receiving a diploma, cheering from the audience, or supporting someone you love, remember that every ending creates the opportunity for a new beginning.

Congratulations to the Class of 2026 and to graduates of every age! Your next chapter is waiting to be written.

Q. I am attending a graduation party for my friend's child, but I do not know the graduate very well. What is an appropriate gift?

A. Cash and gift cards are always appreciated because they allow the graduate to purchase what they need most. If you prefer something more personal, consider a journal, a quality pen, a book on personal growth or etiquette, or another practical item they can use as they begin their next chapter. Thoughtful and useful gifts are always appreciated.

Q. My child's friends are graduating. Do I need to buy gifts for all of them?

A. No. There is no expectation that you purchase gifts for every graduate you know. It is perfectly acceptable to give gifts only to those with whom you or your family have a close relationship. A heartfelt card and sincere congratulations are always meaningful.

Q. I am unable to attend a graduation party. Should I still send a gift?

A. A gift is not required if you cannot attend. Sending a congratulatory card is a thoughtful way to acknowledge the graduate's achievement. If you are particularly close to the graduate or family, you may choose to send a gift, though it is not expected.

Q. Is it acceptable to attend a graduation party without bringing a gift?

A. Yes. While many guests choose to bring a gift or card, your presence and good wishes are what matter most. Never allow concerns about a gift to prevent you from celebrating someone's accomplishment.

Q: What should I write in a graduation card?

A. Keep it simple and sincere. Share your congratulations, express your confidence in the graduate, and offer encouragement for the future. A few heartfelt words often mean more than a lengthy message.

Etiquette Tip of the Month

When congratulating a graduate, make it personal. A sincere message highlighting a strength, accomplishment, or positive quality is often remembered long after the gifts are opened.

Warm regards,
Lee-Ann

Have a situation you'd like help with? Write in or email (info@investinuma.com) and your question may be featured in a future column. Let's build a kinder, more respectful world, one interaction at a time.

Lee-Ann Barkhouse is a certified etiquette and leadership coach who helps people show up with confidence, kindness, and credibility. At Invest in U (www.investinuma.com), she shares practical tools to make everyday moments more thoughtful and meaningful—whether at work, at home, or right here in the community.

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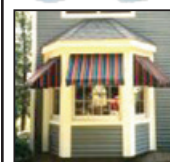
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Five questions that could change how you see retirement



Jamie DeCaire

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Saving for retirement is important, but it's only part of the picture. If you're within five to 10 years of your target retirement date, it's time to start thinking about what you actually want your retirement to look like. After all, getting to retirement isn't the end goal — it's what you want to do once you're there that matters.

Start by asking yourself these five questions.

When do you want to retire? The age at which you retire matters more than you may realize. Retiring early sounds appealing, but it means saving more and having less time to do it. It can also create gaps in health care coverage and income before key benefits kick in. For example, Social Security benefits can begin at 62, but at a reduced amount. Full benefits are available between ages 66 and 67, depending on birth year, and waiting until 70 means the maximum benefit. Medicare doesn't start until age 65, and penalty-free withdrawals from retirement accounts generally aren't allowed until age 59½.

For couples, timing gets even more complicated. Staggering retirement dates can sometimes maximize benefits; in other cases, retiring at the same time works better.

A financial advisor can help you sort through these decisions and find the approach that makes the most sense for your situation.

How do you want to spend your time in retirement? Many new retirees are surprised to find that having unlimited free time feels disorienting rather than freeing. Thinking ahead about how to fill the days with meaningful activity — whether that's travel, volunteering, pursuing hobbies or spending more time with family — can make the transition smoother.

It helps to sketch out what a typical week, month or even first year might look like. If there are big gaps, it's worth thinking now about what might fill them in rewarding ways.

Where do you want to live as a retiree? Some retirees stay put, while others downsize or relocate entirely. Either way, it's wise to consider whether a chosen location will work well as you get older, taking into account factors like proximity to family, access to health care, cost of living and climate.

What will your retirement lifestyle cost? It's not uncommon for retirees to discover that their travel, entertainment or leisure expenses were higher than expected. The more active and involved you plan to be, the more you will likely need to budget.

Does your retirement involve giving back? Retirement often brings both the time and motivation to be more generous. Whether the goal is helping family members, donating to charity or volunteering in the community, it's worth defining those goals and building them into an overall plan.

Now that your vision is

taking shape, turn it into a plan. Work with your financial advisor to align your savings with the life you want — and revisit that plan as your priorities evolve so your retirement keeps pace with you.

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Metacomet Land Trust looks to host TerraCorps service member

(Regional) Metacomet Land Trust, a regional non-profit land protection organization, is pleased to announce that it has been chosen to host a TerraCorps Service Member in the upcoming 2026-2027 service year. TerraCorps is an AmeriCorps program.

"We are excited to hire and host a Community Engagement Coordinator who will help share our mission and goals for land protection throughout our 15 communities," said President Lisa Moczynski. "Metacomet's mission is to help private landowners, municipalities, and other local organizations to protect their unique natural spaces. Working alongside a TerraCorps service member will enable Metacomet Land Trust to broaden our audience so that those concerned about the environment and our local landscape hear our message."

"Our Community Engagement Coordinator will be assigned to our new Northbridge office beginning in September. Among other things, they will be plan-

ning and organizing events, growing our social media presence, and creating programs that can bring young and old together around land protection themes."

TerraCorps Service Members must be 17 or older, and interested applicants can read the position description and apply online at <https://terracorps.org/apply-to-serve-with-terracorps/>. Service Members receive compensation as well as medical benefits, school loan deferrals, access to training and reimbursement for mileage.

"In this relationship we are hoping that our Community Engagement Coordinator gets the opportunity to learn as much as possible from us so that we can proudly say that we helped foster a young person who will become a leader for our future," Moczynski said.

TerraCorps is a nonprofit organization working at the intersection of land conservation, sustainable farming, and local food systems to build local nonprofit capacity while growing the next generation of emerging leaders

committed to making a difference at the community level. TerraCorps helps nonprofits in Massachusetts succeed by providing them access to the AmeriCorps national service model to build organizational capacity. The program is funded in part by a grant provided by AmeriCorps, a federal agency, and administered in Massachusetts by the Massachusetts Service Alliance.

Metacomet Land Trust was founded in 1988 by local conservationists and now protects over 1,300 acres of conservation land in south central Massachusetts. Metacomet Land Trust owns 672 acres of protected lands which are open to the public at no charge. The trust also holds permanent conservation restrictions on 656 acres of privately owned or town-owned open space. The organization can assist property owners who wish to preserve the natural landscape as well as partner with communities to protect open space. The land trust's website is www.MetacometLandTrust.org.

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History comes alive at the Asa Waters Mansion this August!

MILLBURY, MA: In celebration of the Asa Waters Mansion's 200th Anniversary and in conjunction

ence, taking place on the historic grounds, located at 123 Elm Street, Millbury, from Friday, August 7



HISTORY COMES ALIVE
at the Asa Waters Mansion
AUGUST 7th-9th
123 Elm Street, Millbury

The 15th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Reenactment Regiment, The Liberty Greys, and The Asa Waters Mansion are proud to announce a Civil War living history event to be held at the historic Asa Waters Mansion.

Scheduled programming will include military drill demonstrations and tactical displays, live period music performed by the Shades of Grey string band, educational presentations covering the history of the Civil War era in Massachusetts and beyond, and immersive civilian and military camp demonstrations. Sutlers, merchants who operated as period-authentic field vendors, will also be on hand offering a variety of 19th-century goods and treats, providing visitors with an opportunity to connect with the material culture of the era.

This event is designed to be an engaging experience for visitors of all ages, with programming that emphasizes accurate historical interpretation alongside genuine community connection to the region's Civil War heritage. Times and admission details will be announced as planning is finalized.

- *Narrated Battle Demonstrations*
- *Military Drill & Weapons Demonstrations*
- *Civilian and Domestic Programming*
- *Educational Lectures*
- *Candlelight Mansion Tours*
- *Live Period Music*
- *Sutlers*
- *Sunday Church Call*

Note: All times are tentative and specific programs are subject to change.

with the 250th Anniversary of the United States, the Mansion is proud to announce History Comes Alive at the Asa Waters Mansion. History Comes Alive is a three-day Civil War living history experi-

through Sunday, August 9.

Presented in collaboration with the 15th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Reenactment Regiment and The Liberty Greys, this immersive weekend event will transport

visitors back in time through engaging historical interpretation, live demonstrations, educational programming, and authentic encampments designed for all ages. Throughout the weekend, guests will experience narrated battle demonstrations, military drill and weapons demonstrations, civilian and domestic life programming, educational lectures, candlelight Mansion tours, live period music, sutlers, Sunday church call, and additional interactive experiences that showcase the Civil War-era America from multiple perspectives.

The event is intended to create an engaging and educational environment where history can be explored in a meaningful, approachable, and community-centered way. Organizers hope visitors will gain a deeper appreciation for the region's Civil War Heritage while experiencing the sights, sounds, and stories of the era firsthand.

"This event is about bringing history to life in a way that is immersive, thoughtful, and accessible for everyone," said Asa Waters Mansion Executive Director, Traci Parath. "Whether you are a history enthusiast, a family looking for a unique weekend experience, or someone interested in learning more about the stories behind the Civil War, there will be something meaningful for everyone."

Many events throughout the weekend are expected to be FREE and open to the public, with additional admission and scheduling

details to be announced as planning is finalized. Asa Waters Mansion remains one of the Blackstone Valley's treasured historic landmarks, and History Come Alive aims to connect the community with the rich and complex history that helped shape both our region,

Massachusetts, and the nation. For more information, please contact Asa Waters Mansion Executive Director Traci Parath at 508.865.0855 or email Traci at tparath@millburyma.gov.

SIGNING DAY

continued from page 1

try, L.R Favreau Septic, Lavallee Systems, Marty's Auto Service, Medway Oil & Propane, Milton CAT, Nicks Landscaping, Northbridge Smiles, Notturmo Home Services, nVent, Pace Auto Service, RJM Custom Autobody, Rob Roy Hair Salon, Scott Caffrey Plumbing, T&J Plumbing & Heating, Tegra Medical, Top Notch HVAC, Valente Plumbing, Heating & AC, Waters Corporation, Wayne J. Griffin Electric, and Z&E Landscaping.

Career Signing Day reflects a growing upward trend of students pursuing employment over post-secondary education. These modern vocational students are heading directly into industry careers with high-skill, high-wage employment, while continuing to build experience through full-time work and on-the-job training.

For more information about the school, the Cooperative Education program, and Signing Day, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/

signing day.

About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT):

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Mill-

bury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills.

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SPORTS

High expectations reached on the diamond

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Last spring, the Grafton baseball team finished the year with a 14-6 record and found their way into the Division 2 state Tournament, where they defeated Middleboro and then lost to Walpole, the eventual State Champion. This year the Gators were looking for more.

“This year was the first year that we had set some real high expectations,” Grafton Coach Brian Andersen said. “The goals were set out to protect home field and get back to at least the Round of 16 again in the tournament.”

During his nine years coaching the Gators, Grafton had never been able to secure a home playoff game, and this year they wanted to accomplish that feat. According to Andersen, it was a rather lofty goal, but the players had high expectations.

This year Grafton, which moved from the SWCL to the tougher CMAC, was still able to finish with a respectable 12-8 record and earned a 13 seed in the State Tournament. The 13 seed was good enough to get the Gators the elusive home game in the post-season. Grafton put home-field advantage to use as they edged out Somerset Berkley 3-2 in the first round before having to travel to #4 Milton 7-4 in the Round of 16.



Photo submitted by Coach Brian Andersen

“The guys went out and proved themselves getting that home game and then traveled to Milton where they lost,” the Coach said. “They competed hard and with a bounce here and there, we could have come out with a win.”

One of the bigger reasons Grafton had such a successful season was its one-two punch on the mound with senior captains CJ Chagnon and Haylan Oberg. Chagnon was the backbone of the

pitching staff, and although he was realistically a much better outfielder, he was bounced to the infield for the good of the team. Being one that wanted to succeed, Chagnon made the sacrifice for the team. Oberg gave the Gators the ability to compete in back-to-back games, although he hadn't pitched all that much before this season.

On the mound, Chagnon went 5-1, pitching 50 1/3 innings with a 2.33 ERA, while his counterpart

pitched 47 2/3 innings, posting a 3-5 record and a 3.08 ERA. At the plate, Olberg, the team's first baseman, was the team's leading hitter with a .352 batting average. He had 25 hits, including 5 doubles, two triples and 15 RBI, in addition to scoring 14 runs.

“Transitioning from the SWCL to the tougher CMAC, he had to face a lot of better arms,” Andersen said. “To see him hitting .352 was a true average at the plate.”

Both Chagnon and Olberg were named to the CMAC All-Star team. Another All-Star for Grafton was senior Charlie Law, the team's leadoff hitter. Law contributed 23 hits and 15 RBI, encompassing a .315 average in addition to stealing 24 bases for the Gators.

Kyle Brown, the team's senior catcher, was not only the support system of the defense, but he also was the team's fifth hitter in the lineup.

“He was the Heart and Soul of this team,” the Gators Coach said. “It doesn't show up in the stats, but he motivates this team and in doing so was named the Coaches Award winner this season.”

In order to make their goals become a reality, Grafton had to jump through a lot of hoops this season. Earlier in the year, they lost an athlete to a torn ACL; they endured a 2-3-week period where Mono was going through the clubhouse and also had a concussion sideline another athlete for a few games.

“With the ACL injury I had to shuffle the lineups around, but with mono there is nothing that a coach can really do,” Andersen said. “There were numerous times that I set the lineup then drove to

the field and by the time that I got there I had to adjust it.”

However, with all the turbulence swirling around the team, Grafton was still able to put together a 9-3 record during that time of distraction. It showed that although Andersen's rally didn't want to go into the reserves, the team had enough depth to get them through it.

As this year comes to a close, the Coach knows that he is losing 11 seniors from this year's roster, and although everyone is looking at the team as having some big voids, the coach isn't all that worried about it.

“Everyone is saying that we're going to have a down year next season,” said the coach. “Our cupboards are not bare, and although the guys are going to have to step up in places to replace what we lost, we do have talent.”

From a coach's perspective, Grafton's defense, which was stellar this season, will be back, as will 4 or 5 arms to throw the ball, and the batting should be ok. Those who have not played on the varsity team prior will have to get used to the types of pitchers they will face next spring and will need to take their game to the next level.

“We are not going to be down and out – it will be the complete opposite of this year,” Andersen said. “There will be no real expectations; the kids will be able to go out and play loose and free; everything else will be gravy. How many coaches can see they already can pencil in five solid hitters into their lineup already.”



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TALES FROM BEYOND

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Rachel Burton of Manchester, Vermont

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

The New England vampire scare that took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is widely known in some parts of the region. Public awareness of this strange time in New England history has grown with books, documentaries, movies on the subject. Some historians claim the panic and its related attempts to curtail the creatures of the night took place even into the twentieth century.

The first known recorded vampire case occurred in Willington, Connecticut in 1784. The case of Rachel Burton of Manchester, Vermont, took place nine years later and is one of the earliest recorded cases in the region.

In 1789, Captain Isaac Burton

married Rachel Harris. She was a strikingly beautiful woman with a charming personality. About a year into their marriage, her health began to rapidly decline, and she grew more ill with each passing day. She was soon diagnosed with consumption (tuberculosis), which took her to her grave.

Within a short time following Rachel's death, the captain married his second wife, Hulda Powell. She, too, was a good-looking woman with an affable nature. Soon, however, Hulda began to show symptoms of the same dreaded affliction that took Isaac's first wife. Hulda's strength and vigor were waning fast, and something had to be done without delay.

It was then that a strange belief took hold of the family and friends of Captain Burton. Based on

other stories they had heard, they concluded that the first wife was coming back from the grave and feeding on the lifeblood of Hulda. Perhaps it was revenge for the captain remarrying so quickly, or it was, more likely, the work of a vampire. The word vampire was not used at the time. The dead were not thought to rise from the grave in the dark bowers of the night. It was their spirit or ghost that would leave the tomb and prey upon the living, then return to nourish the body that lay in repose. As long as the body remained in whole within its grave, the spirit would continue to make its nightly rounds.

The townsfolk feared that it was Rachel's spirit that was leaving the tomb and feeding upon Hulda before returning to the grave each morning. Family and friends

pleaded that Rachel's corpse must be disinterred and her vitals removed, then burned. This ritual, already practiced in a few other places in New England, would surely exorcise the demon that wreaked havoc upon the Burton family.

In February 1793, residents gathered at Rachel's grave and began the task of ridding the family of its vampire. Rachel had been buried for three years when she was disinterred. It is reported that almost 1,000 people showed up for the gruesome event. Her vitals were cut out and taken to the forge of blacksmith Jacob Mead, where they were reduced to ash. Timothy Mead, Jacob's minister brother, blessed the remains in an attempt to purge the demon that was sucking the life from Hulda. This form

of medicine did not work, unfortunately, as Hulda succumbed to the dreaded consumption on September 6, 1793.

In many similar cases around New England, the sick were given a concoction of medicine mixed with the ashes of the cremated organs. It is not recorded whether Hulda was administered such a potion to imbibe. Folklore and superstition played a vital part in the fear that gripped New England during this period. There was no cure for consumption, so when medicine failed, superstition took over, and several practices of exorcising suspected vampires became common.

The ways of the New England vampire were strange, but not nearly as strange as the cures carried out in hopes of eradicating their deadly "bite."

Going, Going, Gone! BVT to Comply with Records Regulations

Class of 2019: Destruction of Student Records is August 6

UPTON – Attention, Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School Class of 2019: In accordance with state and federal

regulations, temporary student records, including special education files (IEP), 504 plans, and student health records, will be destroyed

seven years after a student leaves the school. For the Class of 2019, records are scheduled for destruction on Aug. 6, 2026.

Members of the Class of 2019 may request their temporary student records (any information not contained in their transcript) before the Aug. 6 shred date by submitting a written request. If you want to obtain your record, please send a written request indicating the year of graduation and your name while attending school to Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, Student Services Record Dept., 65 Pleasant Street, Upton, MA 01568.

Student transcripts (records of grades) will be retained for 60 years after a student leaves the school. For the Class of 2019, transcripts are scheduled for destruction on Aug. 6, 2029. Alumni may request transcripts at any time between 2019 graduation and Aug. 6, 2029.

If you want to retain your records, learn how at: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/studentrecords.

About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT):

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The Museum of the Millbury Historical Society

The Museum of the Millbury Historical Society will be open on Thursday, July 16, from 4-6 p.m. at the Asa Waters Mansion, coinciding with the Farmers' Market held downstairs. Come in and see the new Millbury Police History Exhibit!

Supporting military service

Recently, Blackstone Valley Cannabis in Uxbridge held a collection drive in conjunction with Thanks To Yanks in support of veterans and military families. Jared Freeman, Cortney Lubash, and Jessica Dalton of Blackstone Valley Cannabis and Michael Shain of Thanks To Yanks. The local nonprofit has a long history of supporting those in uniform, past and present. "Shain said, "We are thrilled to work with local businesses in support of our military families." For information about Thanks To Yanks, please like them on Facebook.

Submitted by Michael Shain of Thanks To Yanks

Millbury Public Library events

The Library will be closed on July 4
 Cribbage Club: Every Thursday from 6:00-7:30 p.m.
 Story Time: Every Wednesday from 10:30-11:30 a.m.
 Tuesday, June 30
 From Van Gogh's Iris: Learn to Pastel Paint: 5-7 p.m.
 Wednesday, July 1
 Dungeons & Dragons for Adults: 6-8 p.m.
 The Blackstone Poets Society: 6:00-7:30 p.m.
 Tuesday, July 7
 Create a Dungeons and Dragons Character: 2-3:30 p.m.
 Pokémon Club: 6-7:30 p.m.
 Wednesday, July 8
 Mystery Making with Sisters in Crime: 6-7:30 p.m.
 The Millbury Writers' Society: 6-7:45 p.m.
 Thursday, July 9
 Improv for Dungeons & Dragons: 2-3 p.m.
 Saturday, July 11
 Beyond D&D: finding the game and group for you: 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Monday, July 13
 Minecraft Physics: Roller Coaster Design: 3:00-4:30 p.m.
 Wednesday, July 15
 Cribbage Tournament at Upton Library: 5:30- 7:30 p.m.
 The Blackstone Poets Society: 6:00-7:30 p.m.
 Friday, July 17
 Mini Big Top, a Mini Circus for Mini Readers: 11 a.m.-12 p.m.
 Monday, July 20
 Roblox: 3:00-4:30 p.m.
 Tuesday, July 21
 Dungeons & Dragons for Teens: 2-5 p.m.
 Wednesday, July 22
 A Cemetery Safari with Jeff Belanger: 6-7:30 p.m.
 The Millbury Writers' Society: 6:00-7:45 p.m.
 Tuesday, July 28
 A Map for a Cat: 6-7:45 p.m.
 Wednesday, July 29
 Beyond 40 Whacks: Exploring the Legacy of Lizzie Borden: 6:00-7:30 p.m.

The Blackstone Poets Society: 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Thursday, July 30
 How to be a Gamemaster: 3-6 p.m.

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Grafton Public Library events

The Library will be closed from July 3-July 5.

Maker Monday- Every Monday from 3:00-4:30 p.m.
 Tasting Tuesday- Every Tuesday from 2:00-7:30 p.m.
 Wednesday Watch Party- Every Wednesday from 2-4 p.m.
 Thursday Theme Day- Every Thursday from 2:00-7:30 p.m.
 Friday Game Day- Every Friday (Except 7/3) from 2:00-5:30 p.m.

Annual bottle and can drive

The Sutton Historical Society will sponsor its annual returnable bottle and can drive from Saturday, July 4 through Sunday, July 12. Simply drop your rinsed, empty returnable bottles and cans in the trailer parked at the M. M. Sherman Blacksmith Shop, 6 Singletary Avenue. This event is a significant fundraiser for the Society, supporting our annual scholarship for a local graduating senior as well as assisting with our operating costs.

The Society is dedicated to preserving the history of Sutton. Check us out at Sutton1704.org for membership information, our calendar of events, and much more. Membership is open year-round, and members do not have to reside in Sutton.

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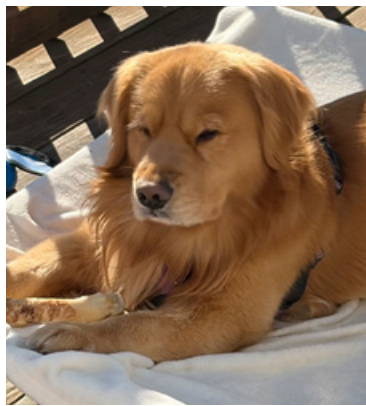
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LIVING WITH LUKE

amyleclaire@hotmail.com

The moments we choose to keep

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

Spring has officially arrived, and Luke is feeling it.

He announces the season with bold grandeur—shedding the cocoon of his blankets and bursting into the yard as if he’s been personally invited by the sun. Within seconds, he’s airborne in spirit if not in fact, tearing across the grass with the unmistakable swagger of James Brown.

“I feel good,” I imagine him singing. “You knew that I would.”

He tests the edges of the yard like a seasoned explorer, sprinting just shy of the boundary line, flirting with freedom but never quite crossing it. And just when I think he’s finished, he doubles back for more.

“Excuse me while I christen the grass with my extraordinary scent.”

He lowers his head to the grass and smears the grass with the side of his face. The result is equal parts impressive and foolish. Then he shakes the earth from his head and stares up at me. “Need something?”

“Luke,” I answer with a jangle of



his leash. “Let’s go for a walk.”

He stops instantly. For a brief, hopeful second, I think I’ve won. Then his eyes narrow with the defiance of a confident Golden.

“Freedom!”

Aretha Franklin channels in.

He darts toward the far edge of the yard and reappears with a Frisbee clamped triumphantly in his mouth.

“You’d rather play?” I try. “Okay. Drop it for mummy to throw.”

Somewhere in the background of my mind, my to-do list flickers to life—emails unanswered, errands undone, the quiet pressure of a day already spoken for. Time,



Clearly, he doesn’t need me for this game.

And yet.

Standing there, separated by glass and intention, I feel the small, unmistakable weight of the choice I’ve made. Independence is a good thing—his and mine. The list matters. The day moves forward whether I join him or not.

But watching him—fully absorbed, wholly present, asking nothing more of the moment than to live inside it—I begin to question my math.

Of all the tasks waiting for me, none feel quite as immediate as the one I declined.

The list will still be there when I return.

But this version of Luke—the one who believes spring is something to celebrate at full speed—won’t wait forever.

I step back outside, take the frisbee from his eager mouth, and send it sailing—watching it rise and arc through the open air like a small, bright permission slip, reminding me that sometimes the highest things we throw are the moments we choose to keep.

Write to Amy - amyleclaire@hotmail.com

Visit Luke on IG livingwithluke-valentino

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suddenly, feels accounted for.

“I dare you,” Luke seems to reply, leaning just out of reach.

My lower back offers another perspective. Enough of this. You’re too darn old.

“Mummy’s not going to play if you can’t drop it,” I tell him, extending an arm for a final scoop. “Give me the Frisbee, please.”

He considers my tone. Then,

with perfect comedic timing, turns his head away.

Negotiations have ended.

I know this game—tug-of-war, keep-away, a test of endurance I didn’t sign up for today. I do the practical thing. I go inside.

From the bay window, I watch him. At first, he pauses, as if registering my absence. But it doesn’t take long. He lowers the Frisbee, paws at it, flips it, digs around it—transforming a nine-dollar toy into an entire universe of possibility. A new game blooms like a June rose. The writer in me considers potential titles: Bury-and-rescue? The improvisation of Joy?

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Blowing hot air, best tools, and the lowdown on gas additives

BY JOHN PAUL

Q. My wife's 2007 Honda Civic was blowing hot air when the A/C was turned on. I purchased a 12-ounce can of R134a refrigerant and recharged the system. It is working fine right now. However, this car's A/C was also recharged last year by my mechanic. How long should refrigerant normally last? I have never recharged my 2009 Volkswagen Jetta. I'm thinking there may be a leak in the Civic's air-conditioning system. Your thoughts?

A. There was a time, many years ago, when recharging an air-conditioning system every few years was fairly common. Today, because systems are much better sealed, some vehicles — like your 17-year-old Volkswagen — may never need refrigerant added. If your Civic needed refrigerant again after only a year, there is likely a slow leak somewhere in the system. Topping off the refrigerant will usually restore cooling temporarily, but eventually the system will become low enough that performance drops off again. Keep in mind that adding refrigerant can temporarily restore cooling if the system is low, but overcharging can also damage the system. At that point, have the system professionally checked for leaks. Common sources include leaking hoses, O-ring seals, condensers or compressor shaft seals.

Q. I watch a lot of DIY videos and notice some people carry knives, multi-tools or mini pliers. What do you — or did you — keep in your pocket?

A. Although a bit geeky, for years I carried a pocket protector with a Phillips/flat-head combination screwdriver, flashlight, tire-pressure gauge and a decent-quality pen. Today, I usually carry a small pocketknife and keep a multi-tool nearby. Lately, it has been the TRUE Titanium Pocket Multi-Tool. For lighting, I replaced my old Streamlight with an OLight ArkPro Flashlight. It is compact, rechargeable and very bright. It also features a green laser pointer, which is handy for pointing out issues on cars without touching them, plus a UV light that can help track leaks when fluorescent dye is added to the system.

Q. Are gas additives to clean injectors necessary or recommended? I see lots of mixed answers. We have a 2024 Toyota RAV4 Hybrid that we really like and plan to keep for a long time, so I want to do right by it. If injector cleaners are worthwhile, what ingredient should I look for?

A. Based on testing I have seen over the years, using a fuel-injector cleaner periodically does make sense. In fact, some vehicle manufacturers now include injector-cleaning service as part of regular maintenance. For something like your Toyota hybrid, using a cleaner two or three times a year is reasonable. My preferred product is Chevron Techron because it contains polyetheramine (PEA), which is an effective combustion-chamber and injector cleaner. Using gasoline from stations listed at Top Tier Gasoline can also help keep injectors and combustion chambers cleaner over time.

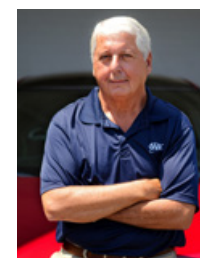
Q. My car's check-engine light is on. What should I do first?

A. Start with the basics and make sure the gas cap is tight. A loose or faulty

gas cap is a common reason for a check-engine light. If the light is flashing, get the vehicle to a repair shop as soon as possible. A flashing check-engine light typically indicates an engine misfire that can quickly damage the catalytic converter. If the light is on steadily, have the computer scanned for diagnostic trouble codes. The code itself does not always identify the exact failed part, but it points a technician in the right direction. Some auto-parts stores will scan the codes free of charge and may even provide a basic AI-assisted diagnosis.

Q. About two or three months ago, my son received notice that his 2004 Dodge Ram pickup has a faulty airbag that needs to be replaced immediately. The notice said the truck is dangerous to drive and should be parked until repaired. My son has called the number on the recall notice several times and left messages, but no one has responded. He also contacted a dealer who said he would order the part and call back, but he heard nothing. The truck has only 60,000 miles, is in good condition and is registered and insured. It really needs to be back on the road.

A. This is especially frustrating when there is a "do not drive" warning and no one follows up. I would escalate the issue directly through Stellantis. The company has a dedicated number for "Stop-Drive" advisory notices: 833-585-0144. I would also contact multiple dealers instead of relying



BY JOHN PAUL

CAR DOCTOR

continued on page 17

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REAL ESTATE

Did you try to buy a home last year but end up pressing pause?

Maybe you couldn't find a home that really fit your needs. Or maybe the ones you liked just weren't affordable.



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

Those were the top two reasons buyers gave up on their search in 2025. But this Spring, there's one trend that could help fix both of those frustration points: more homes are hitting the market. The number of fresh listings. Data shows there are nearly 2x as many new listings hitting the market today as there were just 3 months ago. Those are homes the seller just put up for sale.

This is a significant rise, and while we usually see an uptick as we head into the busiest time of the year, this increase was bigger than normal. New listings jumped

21.2% from February to 439,000, a larger-than-typical seasonal surge. March typically sees the biggest month-over-month jump in new listings of the entire buying season, averaging an 18% increase since 2017; this year it exceeded 20%. That means more sellers are jumping back into the market, and that's giving buyers more fresh options to choose from. So, if you feel like you have seen everything out there and still nothing was quite right, this may be your moment. With that many "just listed" homes, one of them could be exactly what you've been searching for. This trend is happening across most of the country, so you should have more options pretty much wherever you are.

Earlier this year, the Northeast had fewer new listings because winter storms delayed sellers from putting their homes on the market. But now, that region is catching up fast. In March, new listings jumped across nearly every state, especially in the Northeast, helping drive a strong national rebound.

What rising inventory means for you. Right now, there are almost a million homes for sale nationwide. That's up over 8% compared to last year. With that many homes on the market, there's a much better chance something will fit what you're looking for, especially with so many new options being added right now. One of the most encouraging signals heading into the spring home-buying season is the improvement in for-sale inventory levels compared with last year... More homes on the market give buyers greater choice and, combined with improved buying power, expand the range of homes they can realistically consider.

More fresh listings are hitting the market right now, and that's creating real opportunity. If you put your search on hold last year, this Spring may be the time to jump back in. Connect with a member of The Marzeotti Group or a trusted local real estate agent to see what's newly available in your area.

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CAR DOCTOR

continued from page 16

on just one. In addition, it would be worthwhile filing a complaint with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). This is a federally tracked safety issue, and the manufacturer is legally required to remedy the safety recall.

Q. I have a new Honda CR-V, and my neighbor has a small boat that I am interested in buying. The boat, motor and trailer weigh about 2,500 pounds. Can I tow it with my Honda?

A. Most Honda CR-Vs have a towing capacity of 1000-1,500 pounds. Your CR-V may be able to tow that amount of weight, but it exceeds the vehicle's rated towing capacity and is not recommended. The concern is not just engine power. The bigger issues are the cooling system, transmission durability and, most importantly, braking capability. A CR-V can generally handle towing a Jet Ski, lightweight utility trailer or small camping trailer, but a 2,500-pound boat package is simply beyond what the vehicle was designed to tow safely.

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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, 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 of music, activities, food and a spectacular fireworks display at Northbridge Middle School in Whitinsville.
- Come and celebrate America's 250th with St. Patrick's Parish, 7 East Street, Whitinsville on Saturday, July 18th from 5pm - 9pm. They will be serving dynamites and ice-cold beer prior to the Northbridge fireworks! The menu will also include hot dogs, chips, soft drinks, and treats. Take-out options will also be available. FMI 508-234-5656. Payment by cash or VENMO. The rain date for this

event is July 19th.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

- The Whitin Community Center (WCC) is excited to invite all automotive enthusiasts and families alike to celebrate the 12th Anniversary of our highly anticipated "Cars In The Park" event. Join us for a day of automotive excellence and community fun from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the picturesque 7.5 acre Whitin Park, located at 60 Main St., Whitinsville. This year's Cars In The Park promises an unforgettable showcase of classic and contemporary cars, trucks, and motorcycles. Participants can vie for the prestigious Best In Show title and 25 other trophy categories, People's Choice Award, with the first 100 registered

vehicles again this year receiving exclusive Show Dash Plaques and Goodie Bags. The event will also feature a selection of food trucks, exhibit vendors, a 50/50 raffle, and live entertainment, ensuring a fun-filled day for the entire family. Entry is complimentary for all spectators, making it the perfect summer outing. Last year's event had a turnout of over 300 cars! Vehicle owners are encouraged to register early and take advantage of a special \$10 donation fee before July 15th, after which the registration donation will increase to \$20. Pre-registration closes on August 12, 2026. Registration for vehicles is available online at www.WhitinCommunityCenter.com, in-person at our Member Services Desk, or on the day of the event. Additionally, we are now welcoming applications from exhibit and food vendors looking to be part of this exciting event. Funds raised during Cars In The Park will directly support the Whitin Community Center's mission as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to enhancing the health, well-being, and community spirit of the Blackstone Valley. For more information on vehicle and vendor registration, volunteering, or any other inquiries, please visit our website or contact Tammy Bodwell, Director of Operations, at Tammy.Bodwell@OurGym.org or call 508-234-8184 ext 118.

com, in-person at our Member Services Desk, or on the day of the event. Additionally, we are now welcoming applications from exhibit and food vendors looking to be part of this exciting event. Funds raised during Cars In The Park will directly support the Whitin Community Center's mission as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to enhancing the health, well-being, and community spirit of the Blackstone Valley. For more information on vehicle and vendor registration, volunteering, or any other inquiries, please visit our website or contact Tammy Bodwell, Director of Operations, at Tammy.Bodwell@OurGym.org or call 508-234-8184 ext 118.

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As the Historical Conjurer, Professor D.R. Schreiber evokes the spirit of early magical performances and brings parlor magic back to the public. In the 18th century, conjuring (as magic was called then) emerged as a genuine art form and entertainment. Known as "professors of natural philosophy", magicians would rent taverns, legitimate theaters or lecture halls for the exhibition and displays of legerdemain, necromancy, or what would today be called "illusion" and "magic tricks." Top dollar would be paid by the citizens of Europe to see the latest discoveries in the science of "natural philosophy" presented by these conjurers. Today, Professor D.R. Schreiber presents an historic look at the beginnings of modern magic in his performances and exhibitions. Professor D.R. Schreiber leads his audiences on a stroll through the past centuries of conjuring entertainment. His unique presentations entertain while educating the audience about historical events, literary and cultural figures, and the science and art of conjuring.

The Samuel Slater Experience will be closing at 2:30 p.m. on July 3, to accommodate this special performance. Please purchase tickets online, at the box office, or by calling 508-461-2955. Buy both museum admission for Friday, June 3 and performance tickets for a discount. Email admin@samuelslaterexperience.org with any questions. The performance will be held at the Samuel Slater Experience, 31 Ray Street, Webster, MA.

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Millbury Farmers Market at the Mansion returns for another exciting summer season

MILLBURY, MA: The Friends of Asa Waters Mansion is proud to announce the return of the Millbury Farmers Market! Held on the scenic and historic grounds of the Asa Waters Mansion, located at 123 Elm Street, Millbury, the Market brings together local farms, artisans, crafters, makers, food vendors, and small businesses from across the Blackstone Valley and beyond.

This Summer's Market is set to kick off on June 18, running from 3-7 p.m. and continuing on the third Thursday of each month through October, concluding with the Mansion's Annual Fall Fun Day celebration on October

18. This season already features an impressive and expanding lineup of vendors offering everything from farm-fresh produce and locally sourced goods to handcrafted jewelry, artisan soaps and candles, baked goods, chocolates, coffee, barbecue, and more. Guests will also have the opportunity to enjoy offerings from local breweries, specialty food vendors, and talented craftspeople representing the region's vibrant small business community.

"This Market is quickly becoming a special community tradition. Now in its second year, we are seeing new and returning vendors, and growing excite-



ment around supporting local farms and small businesses. We are thrilled to welcome everyone back to the Mansion grounds for another incredible year." Said Traci Parath, Executive Director, Asa Waters Mansion.

The opening Market on June 18 will also feature a FREE live performance by Friends of Coop, beginning at 6:00 p.m., adding live music and entertainment to the evening experience.

For more information, please contact Asa Waters Mansion Executive Director, Traci Parath, at 508.865.0855 or email Traci at, tparath@millburyma.gov.

To The Nines

BVT Named a 2025-26 PLTW Distinguished School

UPTON – The hard work and continued dedication of students and staff at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT), have once again earned national recognition from the nonprofit organization Project Lead the Way (PLTW).

"We are proud to honor BVT for providing students with hands-on, career-connected learning that builds the confidence, knowledge, and skills to navigate their futures," said Dr. David Dimmett, PLTW President and CEO. "Their commitment to real-world, project-based learning ensures students experience education that is meaningful and directly connected to what comes next."

"It is an honor to be named a 2025-26 PLTW Distinguished School for the ninth consecutive year," said Superintendent-Director Anthony E. Steele II. "This recognition reflects our shared commitment to high-quality instruction and the dedication of those who make it possible."

The PLTW Distinguished School designation recognizes schools committed to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in PLTW programs. To qualify, schools must meet rigorous criteria, including the number of PLTW courses offered, and the percentage of students enrolled in multiple PLTW courses.

BVT remains proud to be part of the PLTW community, united in preparing students for school, work, and life through engaging and empowering learning experiences. The school continues to expand its PLTW course pathways, strengthening opportunities for student success.



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