

Q&A with new Oxford Police Chief Jeromy Grniet

BY WALTER BIRD JR.

When you're a kid, you're often told your parents know best. There was even an old TV show called "Father Knows Best." In Jeromy Grniet's case, it turned out his grandmother may have known best.

An Oxford High School graduate, Grniet is a "Pirate through and through." What he was going to be when he grew up, however, wasn't quite in focus when he attended Worcester State University. It was his grandmother who one day told him that the deadline for the police officer's civil service exam had been extended, and she thought he should give it a try.

"I don't think you're the type who wants to sit at a desk all your life," Grniet recalled her saying. So, he did. And he passed. In December 1998, Grniet was one of nine who were appointed as permanent intermittent police officers in Oxford. About four years later, in 2002, the town hired him full-time.

Twenty-seven years later, in June 2026, Grniet, a near lifelong resident of Oxford whose parents moved the family there from Worcester, was named Chief of Police, succeeding former Chief Mike Daniels.

The YankeeXpress had the opportunity recently to sit with Grniet in his office, talk policing,



Chief Jeromy Grniet. Photo by Walter Bird Jr.

tour the station, and watch him interact with his officers. Over the course of a little over an hour, a few things became crystal clear: Grniet loves his town. He loves his family (his parents still live in town, and he and his wife have raised three boys). And he absolutely loves his job.

From how he talked about the chiefs under whom he has served, including Charles Noyes, who first recommended hiring him many years ago, to the praise he lavished on his current crop of 23 officers, the passion was evident,

the energy, even after nearly three decades in uniform, palpable.

All of that was on display as he answered a wide range of questions from a reporter, who among other things learned that the new chief's biggest wish when he ultimately retires is for one opportunity to wind the clock in the tower at Oxford Town Hall.

What are your top priorities for the Oxford Police Department?

CHIEF

continued on page 2



Photo: Tony Webster, Wikipedia

Auburn's Flock cameras; A crime-fighting tool that comes with privacy concerns

BY RILEY FRANKIAN

Auburn police are adding six new cameras to the town's roadways, giving officers another tool to investigate crimes while joining a growing national debate over privacy and surveillance.

The Auburn Police Department began installing Flock Safety automated license plate readers, or ALPRs, in July. Four cameras are currently operating, with two more awaiting installation. The cameras were purchased through grant funding and placed along selected

roadways and travel corridors based on Mass. Department of Transportation (DOT) traffic data.

The technology is designed only to capture information about vehicles, not the people inside them.

When a vehicle passes a Flock camera, the system captures still images in an attempt to read its license plate. It can also identify characteristics including the vehicle's make, model, color, and other distinguishing features.

The cameras do not continuously

CAMERAS

continued on page 7

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CHIEF*continued from page 1*

We've been taking off like a rocket these last two to three years. We're in rebuild. My goals for the next six to nine months are to rebuild the rank structure. We're pursuing accreditation, which is important. Another goal is to get our detective and investigations positions allocated. We have 23 personnel.

We had a staffing study conducted. It came back that we needed five additional positions. We're working toward that. We got one, a full-time School Resource Officer, which is up and running.

Is there a growing disconnect between how police do their jobs and how public views policing? In my job interview, they asked me what I felt would be challenging to me. I challenge every police chief to insulate their police department,

support everybody inside, and insulate them from political opinions. We are going to do our job. No matter who's on the other end of the phone, no matter what your political views are, if you pick up the phone and call us, we're going to respond to you. As police, you deal with five percent of the public, 95 percent of the time. We're here for the 100 percent of the public. The 95 percent you're not hearing from are satisfied, happy, and sup-

portive, and care about the police department. They understand what we have to go through to support them. Maybe the loudest voices get heard, but that's a small percentage.

What are your thoughts on a Civilian Review Board? Absolute-

is watching you at that moment? What is their expectation? That's your job, to fulfill that expectation of how you should perform your job.

What is something people don't know about you? I'm a big golfer. I

“No matter who's on the other end of the phone, no matter what your political views are, if you pick up the phone and call us, we're going to respond to you.”

— Police Chief Jeromy Grniet

ly. I think it would be a red flag if you said, 'Oh, no, we don't want to do that.' If civilians are educated on what their job is and what our job is, and collectively they take a look at things, sure. We're completely transparent.

Do you support having a mental health professional responding to 911 calls? We are working on a licensed mental health pilot program. Officers have to wear multiple hats. What we've done recently ... is look at a four-town pilot, with Auburn, Charlton, Oxford and Leicester. We're looking into getting the grant money for a shared mental health worker. The officer will always have to still go to a call. The policy is for officers to facilitate and de-escalate and get to the point where the mental health worker can come in and do their job in a safe setting.

Would you support using Flock cameras in Oxford? It's been presented but we do not have them. I'd have to look at where and to what level. AI is here. We do have a nice AI camera system for our own safety. I look at it from a standpoint of an investigative tool for us. I do understand there are perfectly law-abiding citizens who aren't for it. I get why they're not for it. It's always been that in a public place you don't have a right to privacy. Basically, when you go out, you've always been subject to filming and recording.

Is there anything you wish the public could understand better about what police deal with on a daily basis? It's hard for people to take the uniform off and see that we're human. We do make mistakes, but we have high standards for ourselves. But you have to take that uniform off and see us as that father, that son, that mother, that brother, that sister. Our officers are just like you. If we can connect like that, and we don't think we're better than anybody else ... I tell officers to think about what if, whether you're making a stop or answering a call, the whole world

have three boys, so my big thing is if I can get together a Father's Day foursome. Growing up, my dad was a motorhead. He built hot rods. He'd be in the garage. I'd be handing wrenches to him, and he'd be working on something he got out of the junk yard. Even to this day, I have an older car my dad passed down that we work on together when we can. I love old, vintage stuff. Old cars, old sports stuff. I love going to the flea market. I'm a big history person.

Throughout the interview, Grniet appeared relaxed and at ease, a man thoroughly comfortable with the new job title bestowed upon him. He smiled frequently, and when he was asked about mental health workers responding to 911 calls, he swiveled in his chair to the desk behind him, picked up a report he had been reviewing earlier, and grinned again, pleased to reveal to his questioner that a program was already in the works. There was an obvious reverence for the job and the career he has had, which was apparent when he talked about the previous chiefs.

The lasting impression came when Grniet took his guest into another room, where two on-duty officers and an off-duty officer, Robert Picard, sat at their stations. Officer Larry Carlberg, originally from North Carolina, stood up immediately and extended his hand. He and Grniet chatted a bit, as did Officer Daniel Cavic, before Cavic and Carlberg hurried out the door in response to a call on Old Worcester Road.

As the chief made his way back to his office, he praised all three officers and the department in general.

“We have a great team right now. We really do,” he said. “There's so much camaraderie right now with new people coming in.”

Grniet was told that it seems like his grandmother was right with her suggestion all those years ago.

“Yeah,” he said. “She was.”



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From the Publisher

Dear Readers and Valued Advertisers,

For many years, it has been our privilege to publish and deliver your hometown newspaper, connecting local businesses, organizations, and residents throughout the communities we proudly serve. We sincerely appreciate your loyalty and support.

Like many community newspapers across the country, we have experienced significant increases in postage, newsprint, and production costs, along with the impact of new tariffs. At the same time, we can no longer pass these increases along to our advertisers, which makes it increasingly difficult to sustain direct-mail delivery.

After careful consideration, we have decided to transition to a community-distribution (drop) model beginning with our September edition. While the way our newspapers are delivered is changing, our mission is not. Our readership isn't ending—

it's evolving. Instead of arriving in your mailbox, our newspapers will be available at convenient community locations, including local businesses, restaurants, libraries, municipal buildings, and other high-traffic destinations. This makes it easy for readers to pick up a copy while they're out in the community and helps keep our publication highly visible.

Community-distributed newspapers are intentionally picked up by readers who want to stay informed about local news, events, and businesses, creating an engaged audience and continued value for our advertisers.

Most importantly, this change allows us to continue to support local businesses, promote community events, and provide the trusted hometown publication you've come to expect.

This decision was made with one goal in mind: to ensure the long-term future of our newspaper and our commitment to the communities we proudly serve.

Thank you for your continued confidence in Our Town Publishing, publisher of the YankeeXpress Publications. We appreciate your support as we begin this next chapter and look forward to serv-

ing our communities for many years to come.

With sincere appreciation,
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A hard defeat for Oxford Senior Little League

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

After putting up back-to-back 10-0 victories over Worcester and Melrose, the Oxford Senior Little League team once again found themselves as state champions. For the second

straight year, the Oxford team headed to the regional tournament in Bangor, Maine.

Going up against eight teams in the regional tournament, Oxford came across something they had not experienced all season long - a loss. Maryland took home a 9-8 win, putting the first blemish on Oxford's perfect record. The eight errors made in the opening game were a significant contribution to the loss.

"Playing in a double elimination tournament, losing that first game really hurt us," Oxford Coach Jay Reyes said. "If we had only committed five errors, we probably would have won that game. Losing put us in a tough situation: if we lose again, we're all done."

The Massachusetts team found themselves trailing 8-4 going into the final inning. Oxford scraped across one run before Owen Leavey launched a three-run homer to tie the contest. In the bottom of the inning, Oxford pitchers administered two walks, a passed ball and a blooper to seal the loss.

But the Oxford team put that loss behind them and focused on the task at hand. Over the next four games, Oxford played the type of baseball that got them

to the regional tournament in Maine. For the second straight year, they advanced into the championship bracket. But they were up against a high task - they would have to defeat Delaware twice without losing once to capture the regional title.

The championship game brought the kind of excitement one hoped for, as both teams managed a single run through four innings. Oxford pushed across another run in the sixth to take the lead, leaving the team with hopes of forcing a winner-take-all game. Unfortunately, the Massachusetts champs allowed a walk, an error, and a base hit with three runs scoring - and Delaware closed the door on Oxford once again.

"We needed two wins and with the team being up 2-1 late we thought that it was going to be enough," the coach said. "But the walks [six in total] came back to hurt us again and put the game in a different perspective."

Reyes went on to state that Delaware was very patient at the plate, while Oxford was not getting the calls from the umpires and that sealed their doom.



first game really hurt us the most. If we had won that game things would have looked very different. I think that we were the better team throughout this series."

Over the last four years, Chase Reyes has found his way into the regional tournament in all four years (two years with the Auburn Little League as 13- and 14-year-olds, and two with Oxford as 15- and 16-year-olds). He will be one of many players who will move on next summer, leaving the Oxford team with a very different look.

The Oxford players (13 from Oxford and three from Charlton) learned how to lose in a high-stakes game last year, and unfortunately, they learned this hard lesson again.

"We had very high expectations coming into this year," Reyes said. "If we don't lose that first game - I believe that we win the tournament."

It's a guaranty that the Oxford Senior Little League team will rebuild for next summer's play. How it will look and how far the team will go will be exciting to watch.

Mason Foskett went five innings for Oxford allowing one hit, two earned runs, with six walks and nine strikeouts.

"To lose in the championship game two years in a row was tough on the kids. A lot of these kids have played together for some time," Reyes said. "Looking back on that

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Contact us:
Martha Akstin, Editor:
martha@localtownpages.com
Submit business news and community events to news@theyankeeexpress.com
To request advertising info, please email ads@theyankeeexpress.com

Jen Schofield, Publisher: The Yankee Xpress, Blackstone Valley Xpress, Local Town Pages, Milford and Upton Mendon Free Press;
jenschofield@yankeeshopper.net
Bill Cronan, Blackstone Xpress North and South (Douglas, Uxbridge, Northbridge; Millbury, Grafton, Sutton);
bcronan@theyankeeexpress.com
Kate Carr, The Yankee Xpress North and South (Auburn, Charlton, Dudley, Oxford, and Webster); katecarr@localtownpages.com
Susanne Odell Farber, Upton, Mendon, Hopedale: sue@sodellconsult.com
Laura Gleim, Billing & Sales: lgleim@theyankeeexpress.com

Kimberly Vasseur, Production Manager
Sally Patterson, Graphic Artist
Contributing Writers and Columnists:
Tom D'Agostino, Christine Galeone, Amy Palumbo-Leclair, Mark Marzeotti, John Paul, Christopher Tremblay

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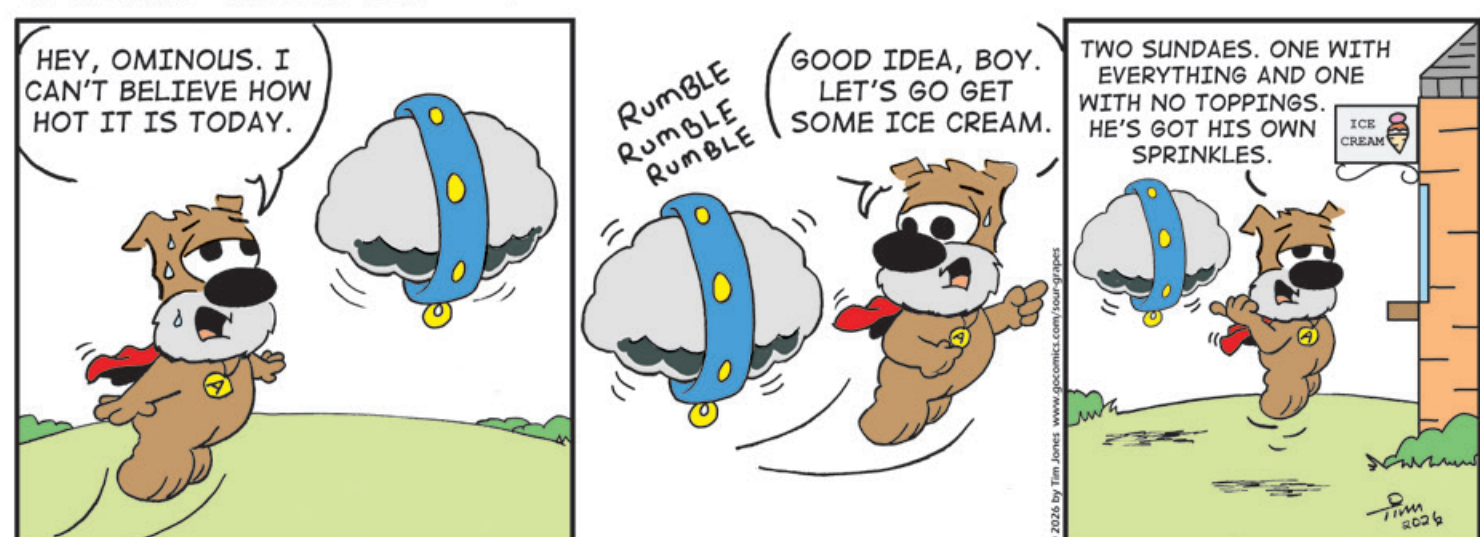


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What does financial fulfillment actually feel like?



Catherine Harrington
Financial Advisor

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Feeling financially fulfilled means so much more than just the number in your bank account. It's about being able to take your family out to dinner without calculating whether you can afford

it. It means sleeping soundly on a Sunday night, knowing that if the water heater gives out tomorrow, you can handle it. And it's saying yes to a vacation because you planned ahead and the money is there.

In short, financial fulfillment is the feeling that your money is supporting the life you want.

Yet true fulfillment is surprisingly rare. Only 16% of Americans are financially fulfilled, according to a 2026 study by Edward Jones and Gallup, "Money and Meaning: Understanding Financial Fulfillment." Those at the other end of the spectrum, the financially stressed (32%), often say that money regularly controls their daily decisions. Most Americans (51%), however, fall in the middle — the financially conflicted. They manage to get by but often carry a persistent undercurrent of worry.

Notably, where you land on this spectrum has less to do with your income than you might expect.

More than half of households earning \$175,000 or more are still financially conflicted.

Building the foundation
So, the question becomes, "What do financially fulfilled people do differently?" Simply put, they tend to have foundational planning structures in place. Five behaviors show up consistently among the financially fulfilled, and they're simple steps you can take, too.

- **Build an emergency fund** (98% of fulfilled have this). Aim for saving three to six months of living expenses in a liquid, easily accessible account. When you know you can handle the unexpected, you stop bracing for it, and lower stress gives you a higher quality of life.
- **Create a financial plan for retirement** (91% of financially fulfilled have one). It's hard to feel in control if you don't know where you're going. A retirement plan puts a real number on what you'll need and lays out

a clear path to get there, with built-in protection against life's unexpected curveballs.

- **Save intentionally for major milestones** (87% of financially fulfilled do). A home renovation, a new vehicle or a child's education don't have to feel disruptive. Setting money aside deliberately for the milestones you anticipate means you can say yes without scrambling.
- **Put an estate plan in place** (66% of financially fulfilled have). Estate plans are not just for the wealthy. A will and basic estate plan help ensure what you've worked for still reflects your wishes after you're gone.
- **Work with a financial advisor** (60% of financially fulfilled who sought any guidance have used an advisor in the past year). The internet is great, but real guidance comes from a credentialed person who knows you and your family and what you want your money to do for you.

Knowing that your money is working toward the life you want doesn't happen by accident. Feeling financially fulfilled is worth the effort and may be more achievable than you realize.

Contact Catherine today to discuss this topic or any of your financial goals.

Catherine Harrington
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
11 Millbrook Street
Worcester, MA 508-755-1213
Catherine.Harrington@edwardjones.com

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Grand Prize winner Chelsea T. recently redeemed her four-pack of tickets to Southwick's Zoo, enjoying a memorable day with her extended family. Pictured above, Chelsea is the second from the right.

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BY LEE-ANN BARKHOUSE

Self-Awareness: The Foundation of Respect

The best etiquette isn't about knowing which fork to use or when to send a thank-you note. It's about self-awareness. Self-awareness is the ability to recognize how our words, actions, and behaviors affect the people around us. Whether we're responding to a coworker, posting on social media, supervising our children, or navigating family relationships, etiquette begins with three timeless principles: Respect. Consideration. Honesty.

Before speaking, posting, or reacting, ask yourself: Is it respectful? Is it considerate? Is it honest?

Those three simple questions can prevent misunderstandings, strengthen relationships, and create more positive workplaces, families, and communities. This month's questions all remind us that etiquette isn't about rules. It's about

the choices we make every day.

Q. I have a family member and his wife who have two lovely young children who have not received any vaccinations. The parents are firmly against vaccines. How do we respectfully handle family gatherings when there are elderly relatives and others with health concerns?

A. This is one of today's most sensitive etiquette challenges because it involves both personal beliefs and health concerns. The goal isn't to debate vaccination choices but to communicate with kindness and respect.

If certain family members have health concerns or feel uncomfortable, it's perfectly appropriate to acknowledge those feelings and look for alternatives. You might say: "We'd love to spend time together. Because we have older family members and others with health concerns, we're trying to be

extra cautious. Perhaps we could meet outdoors or plan another visit that works for everyone."

Respect doesn't always mean agreement. It means recognizing that people may have different perspectives while honoring one another's boundaries with kindness. Relationships are far more valuable than winning an argument.

Q. While working in an office cubicle area, is it best practice to keep your personal cell phone on silent and take personal calls outside of the office? In my office, one person has been asked multiple times to silence their phone, yet they become annoyed and dismiss the request. Human Resources won't do anything about it.

A. Absolutely. One of the foundations of workplace etiquette is respecting the shared environment. A cubicle may feel like your personal workspace, but it is still a communal setting where everyone deserves the opportunity to work without unnecessary distractions.

Keeping your phone on silent and stepping away for personal calls demonstrates professionalism and consideration for your coworkers. Just as we silence our phones during meetings, presentations, or performances, the same courtesy belongs in an open office.

This situation also highlights the

importance of leadership. Organizations benefit from establishing clear expectations for shared workspaces through employee handbooks, posted office etiquette guidelines, or discussions during staff meetings. When expectations are communicated consistently and applied fairly to everyone, they become part of the workplace culture rather than a personal criticism directed at one individual.

A respectful workplace isn't created by policies alone. It's built one thoughtful action at a time.

Q. I keep seeing passive-aggressive posts on social media. Recently, a friend's daughter publicly criticized people for being unkind to her mother. I don't know the full story, but it seems like posting online only makes things worse. What is the best approach?

A. Social media has made it easy to express our emotions instantly, but it is rarely the right place to resolve personal or family conflict. Once emotions become public, misunderstandings often multiply and people feel pressured to choose sides.

Before posting, ask yourself, "Am I trying to solve a problem, or simply express my frustration?"

If the goal is healing, a private conversation is almost always more effective than a public post.

If you're simply observing the situation, resist the temptation to comment or become involved unless someone has asked for your support.

Before you hit "Post," remember that words written in anger often last much longer than the emotions that inspired them.

Q. My brother recently posted something on social media. Instead of responding to his post, a relative commented by asking whether he was still speaking to me. How should this be handled?

A. Family relationships deserve privacy and respect. Public comment sections are not the appropriate place to discuss personal family matters or invite others into them.

The best response is often no public response at all. If you feel the need to address it, do so privately. A simple message such as, "I'd appreciate keeping our family matters offline. If you ever have a question, please ask me directly," is respectful, honest, and protects everyone's dignity.

Sometimes the most gracious response is choosing not to continue a conversation that never belonged in public.

Q. I recently attended a sporting event where there were many empty seats around us. Several young children sat in seats that didn't belong to their family while their parents sat elsewhere. The parents brought them food but left them unsupervised. The children climbed on the seats, were disruptive, and one even slipped and got hurt. Later, when the actual ticket holders arrived, the children moved. What is the proper etiquette in this situation?

A. Purchasing a ticket gives you the right to the seat you've selected, not to any unoccupied seat you happen to find. While some venues permit guests to move to open seats later in an event, children should never be left unattended in seats that don't belong to their family.

Good etiquette begins with respect—for other guests, for the venue's policies, and for safety. Parents have a responsibility to supervise their children and teach them that public spaces are shared with others. Climbing on seats, disturbing nearby spectators, or occupying seats that may belong to someone else affects everyone's

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CAMERAS

continued from page 1

record video, use facial recognition, identify drivers or passengers, track cell phones, or issue automated traffic citations, according to Auburn Police Chief Richard Mills.

"Auburn is located at the intersection of several major roadways and is in close proximity to multiple interstate highways," Mills said. "Vehicles involved in crimes committed both within Auburn and in surrounding communities frequently travel through town."

The department says the cameras can help locate stolen vehicles, wanted suspects and missing or endangered people and assist with criminal investigations.

Flock Safety Chief Communications Officer Josh Thomas said the company's technology is "not observing humans" and "not track-

ing people," adding that its LPR devices do not use race, gender, or biometric identification.

Still, the technology has become controversial in communities across the country. Axios, a news and media website, provides an in-depth analysis of public opinion on Flock cameras. Critics argue that compiling time and location-stamped information about vehicles can amount to a form of mass surveillance, while supporters point to cases in which ALPRs have helped police solve crimes and locate missing people. Recent months have seen growing opposition to Flock cameras, with some Massachusetts communities, such as Littleton and New Bedford, removing their cameras or pausing their use.

Auburn police say safeguards are intended to address privacy concerns.

All Auburn officers and civilian

ETIQUETTE

continued from page 6

experience.

If the children's behavior becomes disruptive or presents a safety concern, it's appropriate to notify an usher or event staff member. They can address the situation professionally without placing other spectators in an uncomfortable position.

Public events offer wonderful opportunities to teach children consideration, responsibility, and respect for others. Those lessons often leave a far greater impression than the final score of the game.

ETIQUETTE REFLECTION

Etiquette is not about perfection or memorizing rules. It is about making choices that strengthen relationships and demonstrate respect for others.

The next time you find yourself in a difficult situation, pause and ask yourself:

- Is it respectful?
- Is it considerate?
- Is it honest?

When those three principles guide our decisions, good etiquette becomes more than good manners—it becomes a way of living.

Until next month, be kind, be thoughtful, and remember that the smallest acts of consideration often leave the greatest impression.

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 the founder of Invest in U, where she helps individuals and organizations build confidence, professionalism, and meaningful connections. She is a certified etiquette trainer, board-certified health & wellness coach, and workshop facilitator who inspires people to communicate with confidence, strengthen relationships, and show up as their best selves. Learn more at www.investinuma.com

dispatchers are trained and currently have access to the system. Data collected by the town's cameras is retained for 30 days before being automatically deleted unless lawfully preserved for an investigation or another legitimate law enforcement purpose.

Every search is logged and auditable. Mills said the department also subscribes to Flock's audit assistance program, which can flag searches that may warrant additional review.

Flock ensures that outside law enforcement agencies do not automatically have access to Auburn's data. Requests must be reviewed by Auburn police on a case-by-case basis.

"The data is not freely shared," Mills said. "We believe we are rather conservative in our sharing."

Flock Chief Information Security Officer Chris Castaldo has similarly emphasized that private customers cannot access law enforcement data, while agencies maintain control over whether their information is shared.

Auburn has also stated that it will not grant access to its LPR data for civil immigration enforcement.

For residents, the debate ultimately comes down to how much surveillance is acceptable in exchange for another tool for public safety.

Mills said the department recognizes that the technology must be

accompanied by restrictions and oversight.

"The value of this technology is dependent on using it responsibly and transparently," he said.

Auburn's Flock transparency portal, linked through the police department's website, provides information about system usage, searches, and data access so that people can stay informed about Flocks policies and practices. The department also plans to make its own policy available through the portal.

The YankeeXpress will continue to cover the latest developments when it comes to Flock cameras and their usage in nearby municipalities.

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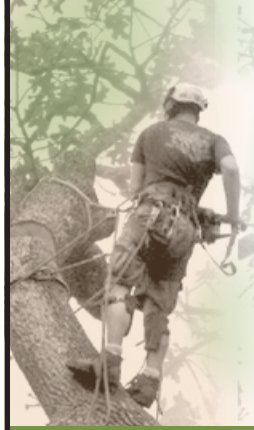
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Help shape Oxford's future: Take the Master Plan survey

What should Oxford look like 10, 20, or even 30 years from now? That question is at the heart of the Town of Oxford's Master Plan process—and residents are asked to help provide the answer.

The town encourages residents, business owners, property owners, and anyone who has a connection to Oxford to participate in the Master Plan survey. The survey provides an opportunity for the community to share its thoughts about the future of the town, particularly how Oxford should approach land use and development.

A Master Plan is more than a planning document. It establishes a long-term vision for the community and provides a framework to help guide future decisions about growth, development, infrastructure, housing, open space, transportation, and other issues that affect the character and quality of life in Oxford.

One of the most important components of developing a successful Master Plan is understanding what residents value about their community—and what they would like to see change.

Oxford has experienced significant growth and change over the years, and additional changes are likely in the future. Decisions about where and how development occurs can have lasting impacts on neighborhoods, businesses, natural resources, municipal services, and the overall character of the community.

The Master Plan survey gives residents a chance to weigh in on these issues. Do you think Oxford has the right balance of residential, commercial, and industrial development? Are there areas where additional development would make sense? Are there places where development should be limited or carefully managed? What charac-

teristics of Oxford are important to preserve as the community grows?

These are the types of questions that community members can help address through the Master Plan process.

Importantly, residents do not need to be experts in planning, zoning, or development to participate. The survey is designed to gather the opinions and experiences of the people who live, work, own property, operate businesses, and spend time in Oxford every day.

Every response helps provide a clearer picture of the community's priorities. While the survey is only one part of the Master Plan process, broad participation will help ensure that the plan reflects the community rather than the views of only a small group of residents.

The Master Plan will ultimately serve as a roadmap for Oxford's future. It can help the town identify priorities, establish policies, and make informed decisions about how land is used and how future development should occur.

Your participation matters. Whether you have lived in Oxford for decades or recently made the community your home, you have a perspective that can contribute to the conversation.

Take a few minutes to complete the Master Plan survey and help shape the future of Oxford.

Oxford's future is a community decision. Make sure your voice is part of it.

Paper copies are available in the town hall, library, and senior center and completed surveys can be returned to any of those locations. To take the

survey, go here: <https://cmrpc.typeform.com/oxfordmp> or scan the QR code.

The survey is open through September. The Master Plan Committee's next meeting is September 14 at 6 p.m. at the Oxford Town Hall.



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SPORTS

Above par: Tyler Friend plays for Bay Path golf

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

It wasn't something that had been on his radar, but a few years ago after driving past Thompson Speedway with his grandparents, Tyler Friend noticed a driving range and wanted



Tyler Friend on the fairway.

to find out more about it. The Bay Path athlete checked out the range, started to enjoy the time he spent there, and eventually purchased his own golf clubs.

"Originally I was just at the driving range hitting balls," he said. "I enjoy trying new things, this was fun and I was getting into it."

When they were freshmen, he and his friend Andrew Lashua tried out for Bay Path's golf team. The duo made the junior varsity squad and as Friend continued to put up good numbers, he was elevated to the varsity team.

"It was definitely a surprise to me, but I felt that I was capable of

playing good on this level," Friend said. "My first varsity match I shot a 44 and while not that good to today's standards, I was very happy with the score as a freshman."

While playing as a freshman, Friend continued to learn about the game and fell in love with the sport. Following that season, he spent a good portion of his summer on the golf course looking to better his scores.

"Tyler loves the game of golf, which is always a plus," Bay Path Coach Mike White said. "He has improved his game and is our best player by far. Last year he shot in the 37-38 range, one or two over par which is pretty good for a high school athlete that hasn't really played the game all that much."

Throughout the summer Friend continued to work on his game and found that he was becoming increasingly consistent with his shooting. Once he came to the realization that his game was continuing to evolve, he made the decision to work even harder to improve. Friend started to focus

on just going out and getting the ball down the fairways and onto the greens. He learned to take low risk shots to bring his game to the next level.

As he got ready to enter his junior campaign, Friend found that he had been named a captain and needed to take more responsibility with the Minutemen golfers.

"As a captain, I need to make sure that the team is confident every time that we take to the course and we all play well together as a team," Friend said. "This summer a lot of us have been getting together and working on our games for the upcoming season."

Friend noted that he and his

teammates will need to stay consistent throughout the season. In the past, the team had had a few golfers posting lower scores, but others put up higher numbers, which hurt the team's overall games. This year the Bay Path golfers are looking to all be on the same page and put some good rounds together as a team.

When it comes to his personal game, Friend hopes that he can

break par and continue to do that throughout the rest of the year. Coach White is on the same page as his top golfer.

"His chipping and putting have improved since he first began playing on the team while his driving is already great," the coach said. "I am looking for him to hit par this season and if he can do that, it should help the team out a lot."

In addition to watching his game improve to help the team, the junior golfer would like to eventually win a tournament at some point. Last year at the Central Mass Vocational State Championship, Friend finished fifth and he wants to improve upon that finish this year.

"Golf sparked something inside of me and I want to see how far it can take me," Friend said.

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BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

Just when I thought I couldn't get any closer to Luke... It's happening before my eyes. Our bond has deepened. Our love has grown wide and strong—right alongside his big, chunky paws. The Morning Wail Nothing compares to the greeting that awaits me every morning after our daily rituals. Bathroom duty, check. Bowl of kibble, check. Speed-eating gobble, check. Finally, the best part of our morning surrounds me like the sound of an orchestra playing at dawn.

LIVING WITH LUKE

amyleclaire@hotmail.com

Paws for thought

"Arrrahh-oooh!" Luke wiggles around the kitchen carrying his red-hot chili pepper—his favorite stuffed toy. His morning greeting falls somewhere between the sound of a singing cow and a very happy dog. Whatever it is, his joyous serenade makes a profound statement about the best way to begin the day. "Guess what? A new day has begun! I'm so happy to see you! Thank you for loving me! Thank you for being the best Dog Mom! I love you so much! Let's play! Let's wiggle! Let's just get the most out of life!" The more I reinforce his gratitude, the more dramatic he becomes. "Is that your chili pepper, Luke? I like that toy. Do you want to playyyyy?" He rubs his whole body against my lap in enthusiastic agreement while also reminding me of something important: I am part

of Luke's territory. I'm his person, and his dog hair says so. A pattern of loose fur scattered across my clothing has become my eccentric tattoo. But how can I complain? Luke's morning attitude is contagious—in all the right ways. He reminds me that a good attitude leads to a good day. He reminds me that happiness is a choice. Circumstances are irrelevant. What happens to you or around you doesn't define you. When life gets hairy, shake it off onto your person and remember that GOD—dog spelled backwards—doesn't make mistakes. "Today is going to be soooo fabulous!" Luke dances happily around me while I squeeze his chili pepper at the middle, making it squeak. Beedoo. Beedoo. Beedoo. The playful rhythm mirrors our joy, and before long we're both moving foolishly to the beat. Sharing mornings together has certainly brought me closer to Luke. Thankfully, there are many more examples of our deepening bond. Maturity The bark-back-harder spats of Luke's younger years have been replaced by a quiet confidence. Often, while we stroll through the neighborhood and encounter more aggressive dogs, he'll simply gaze up at me and smile, as though to say, "He doesn't know any better." Or "She's still learning." Likewise, he's become much more subtle when begging for table scraps. "I was thinking, since you're probably full by now, you could toss me a little piece of that egg." He stares at me with the stillness and authority of a presidential profile carved into New Hampshire's White Mountains until I finally



surrender. "Do you want some egg yolk, Luke?" As though a genie has suddenly brought Luke's statue to life, he softens and breaks into a warm smile. "I would be honored to try some." Snuggle Time Luke is, by far, the most affectionate dog I've ever owned—and the first to earn on-the-couch privileges. "Do you want to snuggle, Luke?" He'll wait patiently at the edge of the couch before sauntering away, as though he'd rather have his own space. I play along. "Okay, Luke. I'll be right here if you change your mind." Before long, he returns to the nook by my feet and looks up at me. "I'm ready to join you now." I pat the cushion, inviting him up. He prepares for snuggle time

with the careful precision of an airline passenger rearranging luggage in an overhead bin. He shifts. He maneuvers. He turns one completely unnecessary circle. Finally, he settles, resting his head in my lap. Together, we share an unspeakable moment of quiet understanding. Every season with Luke reminds me that God's greatest lessons don't always come wrapped in words. Sometimes they arrive with four paws, a squeaky chili pepper, and a heart that loves without condition. And every month, our bond grows just a little deeper. Until next time. Stay tuned for more wagging tales. Write to Amy. amyleclaire@hotmail.com Visit Luke on IG@livingwithluke-valentino

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The house that started it all could kick-start what's next

Remember how exciting it was to buy your first place? It felt like crossing a long-awaited finish line. It gave you a place to build your life. Maybe it's where you lived when you got married or where you welcomed



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

a child or a pet into the family. But that was just the beginning. For most people, your first house was never meant to be your

forever home. It's a stepping stone for what comes next, and if your life looks different today than it did when you got the keys, you're not stuck. Moving may be more realistic than you think.

Starter home inventory is still relatively low. If you've been wondering whether now is the right time to move up, here's what you need to know. Starter homes remain one of the hardest types of homes to find, and that's good news if you're thinking about selling your first place.

Historically, we haven't been building enough homes for first-time buyers, and even though homebuilders have shifted more attention toward smaller, entry-level homes lately, the Census shows there's a long way to go to rebuild. That means your current

house is in demand – and that's a dream scenario for sellers. But that's only half the story. You also need somewhere to go, and there are more move-up homes on the market; this is where this gets interesting. While the supply of starter homes remains tight, data from Redfin shows that the number of homes for sale has been climbing overall.

Too much of the inventory available today remains concentrated at higher price points, leaving a shortage of options for entry-level and middle-income buyers. That means you may have more choices for your move up than you'd expect. Whether you're hoping for another bedroom, a home office, a bigger backyard, or simply more room for this next stage of life, today's market may finally be giving you the chance to find it. At the same time, your current house may be exactly what someone else has been looking for because homes like yours are still in short supply. That's a unique advantage for move-up buyers, and it could help you sell for a stronger price. Starter home value appreciation has outpaced other types of homes nationally, mostly because they're so in demand.

Your biggest advantage may be your equity. There's one more thing your first home has been doing behind the scenes, and that's building equity. Every mortgage payment you've made and every year your home's value has grown has quietly increased

your ownership stake in your house. The average homeowner with a mortgage has \$295k in equity built up. While your number may be different, once you sell, it could become the down payment on your next home or help reduce the amount you need to borrow at today's rates. Put it all together, and your move up becomes a lot more realistic than you think:

1. The house you're selling is in demand.
2. The house you're buying may be easier to find, and the equity you've built can help bridge the gap between the two.
3. Your first home did exactly what it was supposed to do. It gave you a place to start. Now, it may be the thing that helps you take the next step.

So, your first home was never meant to be your forever home. It was meant to help you build a life and build the financial foundation for whatever came next. If your current home no longer fits the life you're living today, connect with a member of The Marzeotti Group or a trusted Real Estate Professional. You may be closer to your next chapter than you realize.



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Flickering headlights, routine oil changes, worn tires, and more

Q. I own a 2015 Audi A3 convertible with 80,000 miles on it. In December 2024, the right headlight needed replacement.

The bulb cost about \$190, and with labor, the total came to \$210. The left headlight failed in April 2026, and now, after only about a year and

a half, the right headlight has failed again. I have a couple of concerns. First, I brought the car in for an inspection and asked the shop to check a flickering right headlight. I was never told the bulb needed replacement until I picked up the car and found the work had already been done. Second, how could the original bulb last 10 years while the replacement lasted only 16 months? The car is garaged, driven on good roads, and the lights are set to automatic. Shouldn't the mechanic have asked my permission before replacing the bulb? And rather than simply installing another bulb, shouldn't he be looking for an underlying cause?

A. On the authorization question, if you asked the shop to inspect a flickering headlight, they certainly had reason to conclude the bulb was failing. However, unless you previously authorized repairs up to a certain dollar amount, I would have expected a phone call before the work was performed. Audi commonly uses Osram and Philips HID bulbs, so unless the replacement bulb was

defective or improperly handled during installation, I would have expected a longer service life than 16 months. I would also want the shop to look beyond the bulb itself. Based on the bulb price, your Audi likely uses HID/Xenon headlights, and a failing ballast (flickering headlight symptom), wiring issue, control module problem, poor electrical connection, or even charging-system voltage fluctuations could contribute to premature bulb failure. A thorough diagnosis is warranted before simply replacing another bulb.

Q. I have a 2016 Hyundai Santa Fe. Can you tell me how to upgrade the software? My clock is off by two minutes.

A. There was a time when vehicle clocks were never particularly accurate. Like you, many people now want their vehicle clocks to be as accurate as the time on their phone or computer. The 2016 Hyundai Santa Fe does not support over-the-air (OTA) software updates. That technology was introduced on much newer Hyundai models and was not available on this generation. You should be able to correct the clock through the vehicle's settings menu. If the clock continues to lose or gain time, it may be worth checking whether the time is being set manually rather than through the radio's GPS or synchronization feature, if equipped.

Q. About six months ago, my wife and I bought a 2024 Subaru Crosstrek from our local Subaru dealer. Naturally, they are sending us emails saying it is time for an oil change. They advertise genuine Subaru synthetic oil and a genuine Subaru oil filter. Since dealerships generally charge more than local repair shops, is it worth paying extra for the "genuine" parts, or would I be just as well off using a quality synthetic oil such as Havoline and a good aftermarket filter?

A. For routine oil changes, what matters most is using the correct oil specification and a quality oil filter, not necessarily whether the products come in Subaru-branded packaging. Subaru's factory oil and filters are excellent, but many independent shops use premium oils and filters that meet or exceed Subaru's requirements. If your vehicle is still under warranty, keep detailed maintenance records and make sure the shop uses products that meet Subaru's specifications. Whether you choose the dealer or

an independent shop, following the recommended maintenance schedule is far more important than the logo on the bottle.

Q. My boss provides me with a company car, which I appreciate, and she also takes care of the maintenance. Here's my dilemma: the tires are getting pretty worn. When I mentioned replacing them, she said her

mechanic had inspected them and found they were fine. I measured the tread depth with a metal ruler and got about 1/8 inch. Should I be concerned?

A. A tread depth of 1/8 inch, which equals 4/32 inch, is above the legal minimum tread depth and generally provides adequate performance on dry roads. The concern is wet-weather traction. Studies have shown that tires worn down near 3/32 inch can require substantially longer stopping distances on wet pavement, even though they remain legally usable. Since safety is the primary concern, you might consider offering to split the cost of replacement tires. A good set of all-weather tires would provide significantly better traction in rain and also improve performance in snow and ice.

Q. I recently purchased a relatively inexpensive new car. It has smart cruise control, blind-spot monitoring, automatic emergency braking, and several other advanced safety features. With so much technology involved, how reliable are these systems over the long term, and what can I do to help prevent expensive electronic problems as the vehicle ages?

A. Modern automotive electronics are generally very reliable, but they can be sensitive to low battery voltage, water intrusion, poor-quality collision repairs, and lack of maintenance. Keeping the battery in good condition, addressing warning lights promptly, and using a reputable repair facility after any accident can go a long way toward preventing problems. Fortunately, most manufacturers have spent years refining these systems, and many have proven to be remarkably



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TIPS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING *dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com*

Build confidence in your 401(k) decisions

In its simplest form, saving can mean putting money into a jar, adding to it and letting it grow slowly. A 401(k), or other workplace retirement plan, is a step beyond that. It's more like a garden than a jar. Once you understand the basics of your 401(k), it becomes easier to feel confident in your decisions.

In a jar, your money only grows when you add more. In a garden, what you plant can begin to grow on its own. Your investments can earn returns, and those returns may in turn earn additional returns. That's called compounding, and it can have a meaningful impact over time. Like a garden, however, growth is not guaranteed. Markets can rise and fall, and investments can lose value.

Most workplace retirement plan contributions are made with pre-tax dollars, which lowers today's taxable income; you'll pay taxes when you withdraw it in retirement. Some plans also offer a Roth option: you contribute after-tax dollars and withdrawals in retirement can be

tax free. Your plan administrator can provide more information.

Many 401(k) plans include an employer match, either up to a set dollar amount, perhaps \$500, or a percentage of your salary, typically three to five percent. Contributions you make, as well as those from your employer, can grow over time. Try to contribute at least enough to capture the full match; anything less means you're leaving money on the table.

Now the question is how to invest your contributions inside your 401(k). The menu of investment options may seem complicated, but most fall into a few common categories.

Stock or equity funds focus on stocks, which represent ownership in companies. Because they're tied to company performance, they have the potential for higher growth over time, but their value can go up and down in the short term. When you're decades from retirement, that short-term volatility matters less; you have time to ride out the swings.

Bond funds invest in loans made to governments or corporations. These tend to be more stable than stock funds but typically grow more slowly. They can help balance the ups and downs.

Balanced or blended funds hold

a mix of stocks and bonds in a single investment.

Target-date funds combine different types of investments in one fund. As you move toward a specified retirement year, the fund gradually adjusts to focus more on stability and less on growth.

The earlier you start planting, the more time your money has to grow. Even small contributions early in your career can end up as large amounts later, simply because they had more time to compound.

If you change jobs, keep in mind that your employer's contributions may not be fully yours immediately. It depends on your plan's vesting schedule, so it's worth checking before you go.

The most important steps in a retirement plan are getting started, contributing consistently, and taking advantage of what your plan offers. With a little knowledge, you can feel more confident moving forward. The garden is yours. Start planting.

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. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

CAR DOCTOR

continued from page 12

durable in everyday use.

Q. I expect to be shopping for a new vehicle within the next year. As automakers continue improving fuel economy through smaller engines, turbochargers, hybrid systems, and advanced transmissions, I worry about long-term repair costs. For drivers like me who tend to keep vehicles for 15 or 20 years, are these newer technologies really worth it? Should I sacrifice a few miles per gallon in exchange for lower maintenance and repair costs down the road?

A. In many cases, the fuel savings outweigh the added complexity, especially for drivers who accumulate a lot of miles. However, long-term ownership costs can vary dramatically by make and model. Before buying, research reliability records, review long-term ownership data, and look for powertrain combinations with a proven track record. A slightly less efficient vehicle with

an excellent reliability history may ultimately cost less to own than a highly sophisticated model with expensive repair requirements, especially when you consider big ticket items like hybrid batteries.

Q. I was watching YouTube and saw someone repairing rust holes with expanding foam. When he finished, it actually looked pretty good. I have an older truck with rust holes in the rocker panels. Could this be an effective repair?

A. I have seen those videos as well. The process usually involves filling the hole with expanding foam, shaping it, covering it with body filler, and then priming and painting the area. While the finished product may look good from a distance, it is not a proper rust repair. Expanding foam can trap moisture and allow corrosion to continue spreading behind the panel. A durable repair requires removing the rusted metal, treating any remaining corrosion, and welding or patching in new metal before refinishing. Foam repairs should be

viewed as temporary cosmetic fixes rather than permanent solutions.

John Paul is AAA Northeast's Car Doctor. He has over forty years' experience and is an ASE-certified master technician. He will answer readers' questions each week. Email your questions to jppaul@aaanortheast.com. Follow John on X @johnfpaul and Facebook at mrjohnfpaul.



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SUNDAY, AUGUST 30

• 3-5 pm: Oxford's Summer Bandstand Concert with the band Eagles Encounter. Another concert on September 13 has been added to the concert calendar

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

• State Primary Election Day. Polls open 7 am – 8 pm. All mail-in ballots must be received by 8 pm on Election Day.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

• 4-7 pm: Auburn Summer Farmers & Cultural Market final day of the season at Pappas Recreation Complex. For more information call 508-832-7736, email Kpappas@town.auburn.ma.us, or visit auburnma.gov.
• 6-8 pm: Auburn's Summer in the Park Concert Series takes place at the Riley-Pappas Performance Pavilion at the Pappas Recreation Complex. The season ends with tonight's performance by Petty Larceny, a Tom Petty Tribute.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

• 1 pm: Fiber Facts: Join Dr. C at the Auburn Senior Center as he talks about fiber and its health benefits. Look at how smart food choices support digestive health, help you feel satisfied, and promote overall wellness. RSVP 508-832-7799.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 AND 13

• 11 am-5 pm: 44th Annual Intertribal Powwow featuring the Blackstone Valley Singers, Walking Bear Singers, and traditional food, crafts and jewelry, drumming and dancing. Grand entry at noon. The public is invited to attend this event. Donations: \$5 adults, \$2 elders, \$2 kids 6-12, kids under 6 free. Bring your own seating. Lake Siog Park, Dugg Hill Rd. Holland.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

• 3-5 pm: Chuck & Mud and The Hole in the Dam Band (Walter Crockett, Peter Allard, Dan Gay, and Joe Desmarais) play at the Oxford Bandstand on the Oxford Common. Bring family, friends, chairs, blankets and picnics!

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

• 12:15 pm: Cabaret Show with Mike and Beth and lunch of pizza, salad, beverage, and dessert. \$3 p/p. Tickets available at the Auburn Senior Center front desk.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

• 1 pm: Want to simplify your home, preserve family memories, tackle those cluttered spaces? Join this informative discussion at the Auburn Senior Center on organization and practical strategies for creating a more functional, stress-free home. RSVP 508-832-7799.
• 4-5 pm: Virtual Author Talk: The Art of Fighting: Building Better, Stronger Relationships with Priya Parker hosted by the Auburn Public Library. Join this paradigm-shifting, essential event with world-renowned master facilitator Priya Parker to discuss her new book, The Art of Fighting:

The Transformative Power of Conflict. Parker explains that we can't form and grow effective relationships without a fight. She rejects the idea that conflict is abnormal or that good groups don't fight. Register today to learn how to turn everyday arguments into profound moments of connection and trust. Follow the link to register and submit questions to the author: <https://libraryc.org/aurburnlibrary/195779>

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

• 9:30 am-4 pm: The Auburn Police Department partners with the Kraft Family Blood Donor Center to host this blood drive at the Horgan Hockey Rink lot, 403 Oxford Street North, Auburn. Your donation can make a lifesaving difference. Scan the QR code to reserve your spot. Walk-ins may be accepted as time allows, but appointments are strongly encouraged. While supplies last, every donor will receive a Crucial Catch sweatshirt. Roll up your sleeve to make a



difference. Scan the QR code or register at: https://mgb.softcomputer.net/donorportal/donate-blood/?mobile_code=159919
• 1 pm: The History of Pets with the Auburn Historical Society's at the Auburn Senior Center. Join this fun look at the history of pets through the ages. Discover stories of weird and wonderful, creepy and historic

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

• 6-7 pm: Prep your garden for fall and winter at the Auburn Public Library. For ages 18+. Registration required at auburnlibrary.org. Shannon from the Central MA Seed Hub will present on putting your garden to rest, how to grow native plants in winter, and more.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

• 1 pm: Tech Time: Cybersecurity Part I (ages 18+), Auburn Public Library. Interested in exploring computer functions and applications? We'll learn in an open, supportive environment. Sessions are 30 minutes of presentation, 15 minutes of guided practice, 15 minutes of Q&A. This session explores strategies to avoid scams and malware on digital devices, including phishing and computer viruses. We encourage participants to bring their own devices. Register for each tech session at auburnlibrary.org or call 508-832-7799.
2-6 pm: Oxford Farmers' Market on the Town Common. Today's market celebrates First Responders.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

• 8 am-2 pm: Oxford's Town-wide yard sale. Clean out those attics, sheds, closets, basements, garages, and storage units. Locations either at your home or if not an Oxford resident, on the Oxford Common. No vendors allowed on the Common – yard sale items only. If you sell from your home, the town will issue you a yard sale permit once your registration is complete. For more information, oxfordma.myrec.com/info To

be listed on their digital map, you must be registered. Sellers can share their goods on the Facebook Event page: www.facebook.com/share/14k8aBARSEFX/

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

• 2 pm: North Cemetery Veterans' Walk with Terry Cummings. Learn about the men and women who served this country and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Presented by the Oxford 250 Planning Group.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

• 1 pm: Tommy Rull, Singer/entertainer will delight with his "Musical journey through the years" at the Auburn Senior Center. Free apple cider and apple cider donuts. Sing along – or get up and dance! RSVP 508-832-7799.
• 6-7 pm: English conversation circle for ages 18+ at the Auburn Public Library. Join this informal conversation group to practice speaking English in a welcoming environment. Come to one or multiple meetings. Registration recommended at auburnlibrary.org.

TUESDAYS, SEPTEMBER 22 - OCTOBER 27

• 11 am-1 pm: Creative Writing: Memoirs at the Auburn Senior Center. Your memories are a gift that can be treasured for generations. If you've ever wanted to preserve your experiences, reflect on meaningful moments, or if you simply enjoy putting your memories into words, this 6-week workshop offers inspiration. No writing experience necessary: just bring your memories. RSVP 508-832-7799.

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10/16	COMEDY NIGHT WITH PAUL D'ANGELO, MAYA MANION, AND DAN MILLER	11/14	PETTY LARCENY: A TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF TOM PETTY
10/23	BLOOD, SWEAT & KEY'S HALLOWEEN DUELING PIANOS	11/21	LITTLE LIES: A TRIBUTE TO FLEETWOOD MAC
10/24	A WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ MURDER MYSTERY DINNER	11/27	AFFINITY: A TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF JOURNEY
11/7	BEST OF TIMES: THE MUSIC OF STYX, FOREIGNER & REO SPEEDWAGON	12/5	THE FOOLS
		12/11	COMEDY NIGHT WITH KELLY MACFARLAND, KENDRA CUNNINGHAM, AND GARRETT FINN

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The Old Harbor boys

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

Slowly and stealthily, oars silently dipped into the water quietly pushing their vessel toward its destination at the Old Harbor of Block Island. Its nine inhabitants, shrouded in secrecy, dared not make any unnecessary noise that might signal their impending arrival to the island. They had set out in the dark of night in a light boat called a "shaving mill" to exact revenge upon those who were responsible for taking their land and possessions in the name of Liberty. It was the closing years of the American Revolution and anyone in the colonies who did not support the cause for liberty from England was considered a Tory, or sympathizer to the English throne. The small assemblage in the boat had been labeled Tories by their peers and for that, suffered the consequence of being traitors to the cause of freedom from the rule of England. Some reports say they were mere pirates using a small boat as cover, for they knew well of the islander's famous signal fire that was often lit on Beacon Hill

to warn of approaching vessels, especially during the times of the revolution and age of piracy.

The nine rogue's mission was to wreak havoc on the islanders by raiding and pillaging what they could. While some Tories denounced the king and were sworn to loyalty to America, other fled the colonies in haste to Canada or the motherland in order to avoid severe punishment. They left everything behind to be ransacked and sold by the Sons of Liberty to help fund the war effort. Some hid, living in secrecy until the struggle ended and some, like the group in the shaving mill, decided to take a stand for themselves and their king. The Old Harbor was now in sight and the men aboard began to finalize their plan. But, alas, it was not to be. A sudden surging rogue wave crashed into the boat.

At the same time, a signal flame was lit on Beacon Hill that gave the islanders who saw it ample warning of the impending intruders. Those who saw the signal convened along the shore to greet the intruders, but what they saw was not a boat docking. The islanders were witness to

an event that would echo along Old Harbor for centuries to come. The nine men struggled in vain to land the boat at the harbor as the people looked on, but could offer no help due to the surging waves. Before the boat was upset, one loud voice could be heard over the crashing waves shouting, "Pull Boys! Pull For Your Lives!" The rough seas instantly capsized the vessel as it neared Old Harbor Point Landing, sending all its inhabitants into the ice cold unforgiving sea. The men

tried desperately to right the boat or swim for shore, but their efforts were futile in the freezing surf. All that were aboard perished within minutes. Their cries to each other and for help from the people on shore went unaided in the pounding of the waves on the beach and docks.

Folks living near the harbor soon heard the same cries night after night, even when there were no boats or boatmen in the area. The supernatural cries came about

the same time the tragic event took place and to this day, are still heard. On chilly Autumn nights, when the surf runs high, pounding the docks and crashing on the beach, the sound of ethereal voices can still be heard off the shore of the neighborhood still known as Old Harbor. Ghostly voices screaming "Pull Boys! Pull For Your Lives!" permeate the night air and then are gone, fading into the night leaving only the sound of seagulls and the ebb and flow of the tide.

HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 14

1 pm: Floral arranging class with Sam's Stems at the Auburn Senior Center. \$15 p/p. Bring your own vase and enjoy this fun DIY workshop. RSVP 508-832-7799.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

• 11 am: Property tax exemption assistance session at the Auburn senior center with Auburn's Assessors office.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

• 9 am-4 pm: Oxford Lions Club Annual Fall Festival at the Oxford Bandstand on the Common. Craft and retail vendors, food trucks and food vendors, live entertainment, free activities for the kids – this is the annual festival that everyone looks forward to. Come on down and enjoy the day.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

• 1 pm: Big Crimes 2 with the Auburn Police Department at the Senior Center. Ever

wonder what goes on behind the yellow crime scene tape? Join Sgt. Greg Wildman and a detective from the Auburn PD as they share stories about some of the town's biggest crimes and the investigations that solved them. It's an afternoon of mystery and stories you won't want to miss. RSVP 508-832-7799.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

• 1 pm: Singing Trooper Daniel M. Clark entertains at the Auburn Senior Center. You know him from his appearance at sporting and national events. Performing patriotic and military songs, plus upbeat musical selections that will leave you feeling great. All are welcome, light refreshments will be served. RSVP 508-832-7799.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

• 1 pm: Create and paint a moonlit owl scene with instructor Delores Palmer at the Auburn Senior Center. All skill levels are welcome at this acrylic paint workshop that is limited to 10 people. \$5 p/p. RSVP 508-832-7799.

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