

BVT receives CTI grant to expand workforce training

The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District has received an \$880,000 Career Technical Initiative (CTI) grant to train 84 adults for careers in high-demand skilled trades through the Blackstone Valley Technical Institute (BVTi).

The Round 11 grant, announced Aug. 10 by Massachusetts Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Lauren Jones during an event at Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School, is part of \$15.5 million in CTI grants awarded to 24 organizations across the Commonwealth.

The CTI program enables Massachusetts vocational technical high schools to use classrooms, labs, and equipment in the evenings and on weekends to provide workforce training outside the traditional school day. Through partnerships with employers, workforce boards, community organizations, and educational institutions, CTI helps prepare participants for in-demand occupations.

The Round 11 funding will support training in carpentry, automotive collision, automotive technology, culinary arts, electrical, HVAC, plumbing, and advanced manufacturing. The programs are designed to address regional workforce needs and provide adult learners with opportunities to gain

industry-recognized skills and credentials.

Through BVTi, the District will continue to expand its adult education programs. Fall courses include advanced manufacturing, electrical, HVAC, and welding. Spring courses will include auto body, automotive technology, construction, culinary arts, and plumbing.

"We're proud to expand access to career technical education at BVT," said BVT Superintendent-Director Anthony E. Steele II. "This grant will allow BVTi to deliver high-quality career technical education to adults seeking to upskill or retrain, strengthen the regional workforce by preparing skilled employees for in-demand careers, and generate revenue that supports our students and programs."

This grant is funded by the Career Technical Initiative through State Appropriations and funds appropriated through the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. This grant initiative is administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the Workforce Skills Cabinet.

For more information about adult education at BVT, visit the Blackstone Valley Technical Institute at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/bvti or www.bvtadulthood.org.

About the Commonwealth Corporation

The Commonwealth Corporation, a quasi-public agency of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, administers the Career Technical Initiative (CTI) grant program. In partnership with the Executive Office of Education, CTI transforms career and technical education schools across the state to become "Career Technical Institutes" that run three shifts a day for skill-building programs in the trades, construction, and manufacturing career pathways. For more information, visit www.commcorp.org.

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

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopdale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, 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.

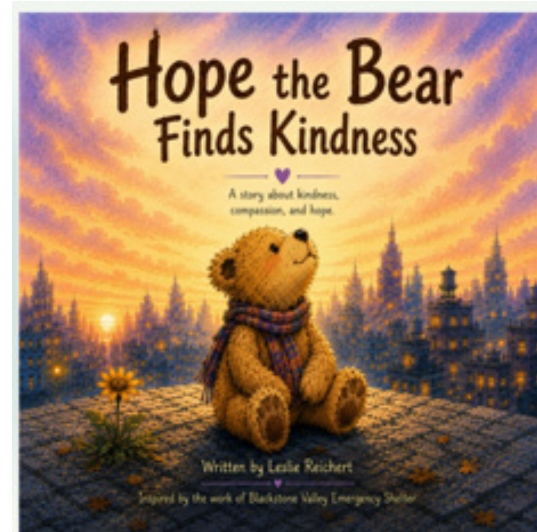
Local nonprofit leader publishes children's book to help families talk about homelessness with compassion

After nearly a decade of helping individuals and families experiencing homelessness throughout the Blackstone Valley, Leslie Reichert, Founder and CEO of the Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter (BVES), has transformed those experiences into a children's picture book designed to teach empathy, kindness, and hope.

Hope the Bear Finds Kindness tells the story of Hope, a gentle bear whose life unexpectedly changes when she loses her home. Through simple acts of kindness from strangers, Hope discovers that even during life's most difficult moments, compassion can restore dignity, friendship, and hope.

The book was inspired by the countless stories Reichert has witnessed since founding BVES in 2017. During that time, the organization has grown into a

regional leader in addressing homelessness through emergency shelter, homelessness navigation, police partnerships, volunteer engagement, and innovative



housing initiatives serving communities across the Blackstone Valley.

"Many children notice people experiencing homelessness but don't understand what they're seeing," said Reichert. "I wanted to create a story that helps parents and teachers answer those difficult questions with honesty, while reminding children that every person deserves kindness and compassion."

Unlike many books that focus primarily on homelessness, Hope the Bear Finds Kindness centers on the power of ordinary people to make a difference. The story encourages children to look beyond circumstances and recognize the humanity in every person they meet.

The book is intended for children ages 4 to 8 and is an ideal resource for families, elementary schools, libraries, churches, and community organizations seeking to foster conversations about

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Local students recognized with debut New England Botanic Garden award at the Worcester Regional Science and Engineering Fair

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocation Technical High School Students are first to receive the Garden's Plant Science & Sustainability Award

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill is pleased to announce the inaugural winners of its Plant Science and Sustainability Award, which debuted this year as part of the Worcester Regional Science and Engineering Fair. The award recognizes projects by high school students that align with the



Plant Science and Sustainability Award recipients from Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School pictured with Worcester County Horticultural Society Board President Gayle Weiss and New England Botanic Garden CEO Grace Elton. From left: Gayle Weiss, Evan St. George, Anna Platek, and Grace Elton. Awardee Britha Abunga (not pictured) was also recognized. Photo by Troy B. Thompson Photography.

Garden's mission of creating experiences with plants that inspire people and improve the world. Winning projects use plant science to address questions about ecosystems, agriculture, climate resilience, or sustainable use of land and resources.

Britha Abunga, Anna Platek, and Evan St. George of Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School earned the special recognition this year.

FAIR

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Fall Craft Fair and Flea Market

The Millbury First Congregational Church at 148 West Main Street in Millbury is sponsoring a Craft Fair and Flea Market on Saturday, September 26th, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Anyone wishing to reserve table

space, please call Jeri Stead (508-865-5371). The \$25 inside area consists of a large supper table plus a card table. An outside 10-foot plot reservation is \$15, and those chancing the weather need to provide their own table.

"The Kitchen" will be selling refreshments, including hot dogs at lunchtime. There will also be a Bakery Table and a Church Flea Market Table.

BOOK

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empathy, inclusion, and caring for neighbors in need.

Reichert believes children's literature has a unique ability to shape how future generations see the world.

"When we teach children kindness at an early age, we help build communities where people look out for one another. If this book inspires even one child to treat someone with greater compassion, then it has accomplished exactly what I hoped."

Proceeds from Hope the Bear Finds Kindness support the mission of Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter, helping provide emergency shelter, crisis intervention, homelessness navigation, and housing stabilization services to individuals and families throughout the region.

Since opening its doors, BVES has mobilized hundreds of volunteers and built partnerships with local police departments, faith communities, healthcare providers, businesses, and civic organizations to ensure that no one faces homelessness alone.

Reichert is available for interviews and is also scheduling author visits, school readings, library story hours, church presentations, and community events throughout Massachusetts. The book is a 5-star bestseller on Amazon: <https://a.co/d/01UyVDuD>

About Leslie Reichert

Leslie Reichert is the Founder and CEO of Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter, a Massachusetts nonprofit dedicated to helping individuals and families experiencing homelessness move from crisis to hope. Through innovative community partnerships and volunteer engagement, BVES has become a

regional model for compassionate, collaborative homelessness response. Hope the Bear Finds Kindness is her first children's book.

About Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter

Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter mobilizes the community to ensure no one faces homelessness alone. Through emergency shelter, the Police Partnership Program, homelessness navigation, volunteer engagement, and Hope Housing, BVES helps individuals and families transition from crisis to stability while restoring dignity, hope, and opportunity.

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FAIR

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Their project, Cracking the Code: Enhancing Fruit Life by Identifying the Enemies of Freshness, aims to provide solutions to global hunger by researching alternative methods for preserving fresh fruits and vegetables. Through experimentation, they explored how applications of a specific bacterium can help slow decomposition in combination with refrigeration.

"We offer our enthusiastic congratulations to the winners," says Marissa Gallant, Director of Education at New England Botanic Garden. "We were impressed by all of this year's entries and are inspired to see our region's students applying themselves to the sciences in ways that improve our collective world."

Projects were judged by New England Botanic Garden representatives who looked for how well students demonstrated a clear plant- or nature-based research question, applied sound methods, communicated their research, and made connections to real-world environmental or community needs.

Each student awardee received a one-year family membership

to New England Botanic Garden and garden gear. They were celebrated at the New England Botanic Garden on June 25 during the 185th annual meeting of the Worcester County Horticultural Society, the owner and operator of the Garden. A number of other annual awards were also made at this time, honoring individuals and groups whose contributions advance the horticultural field and strengthen communities through plants and gardening.

To learn more about New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill, visit nebg.org.

About New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill, now celebrating its 40th anniversary, is a nonprofit organization located at 11 French Drive in Boylston, Massachusetts. A regional destination, the Garden is operated on nearly 200 acres by the Worcester County Horticultural Society, one of the oldest of its kind in the country, and is open to the public for garden viewing, trail walking, educational programs, private events, weddings, exhibitions, and more. In 2023, New England Botanic Garden was voted "Top Botanic Garden in the U.S." by TravelAwaits. New England

Botanic Garden is an AAM-accredited museum that includes an irreplaceable collection of plants and creates opportuni-

ties for visitors to experience the wonder of plants, learn about the natural world, and make joyful connections. Learn all about the

New England Botanic Garden, including its history, mission, and staff, at www.nebg.org.

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Youth Academy students get a hands-on look at law enforcement

The first two days of the Youth Academy gave participants an up-close look at several areas of law enforcement and public safety.

Day One featured visits from helicopters representing Life Flight and the Massachusetts State Police Air Wing, giving students the opportunity to see the aircraft and learn more about their roles.

Students also watched K9 dem-

onstrations from Charlton Police Officer Derek Gaylord and K9s Dozer and Raya, as well as Dudley Police Officer Louis Pacheco and his bloodhound, K9 Maverick. The day concluded with drone demonstrations led by Grafton Police Officers Atchue and Lyver.

For Day Two, the academy traveled to Boston to visit the Massachusetts State Police Marine Unit. Students toured Boston Harbor

aboard the unit's newest 57-foot vessel and learned about the important role the Marine Unit plays in law enforcement.

The day wrapped up with classroom exercises focused on communication and public speaking, giving students an opportunity to build skills that are useful both in law enforcement and everyday life.

Photos courtesy of the Grafton Police Facebook Page



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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 3%-5%. 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.

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Grand Prize Winner enjoys a day at Southwick's Zoo



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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Thank you to all our readers for your enthusiastic participation in making this contest a fun and successful community event!

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The Yellow Tulip Project comes to Uxbridge

BY: BRITTANY AMALFI

(Trigger Warning: This article mentions suicide)

The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Women's Success Network (WSN) is inviting the community to take part in a hands-on effort to promote mental health awareness by helping plant a Hope Garden in Uxbridge.

The event will take place on Saturday, September 26, beginning at 9 a.m. on the Uxbridge Town Common, located at 20 North Main St. Volunteers will work together to plant 500 yellow tulip bulbs as part of a partnership with The Yellow Tulip Project, a nonprofit organization focused on ending the stigma surrounding mental illness and encouraging conversations about mental health.

Community members of all ages are all welcome to participate. The Hope Garden is designed to serve

as a visible reminder that support is available for those facing mental health challenges and that no one has to struggle alone. The yellow tulip, which represents happiness and hope, was chosen as the organization's symbol and reflects its mission to encourage conversa-



tions about mental health while reminding people that brighter days are possible. The Yellow Tulip Project's mission is to "smash the stigma" associated with mental illness while building stronger, more connected communities. Through Hope

YELLOW TULIP
continued on page 9

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BVT's School Lunch and Breakfast Programs Policy

The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District (BVT) is pleased to continue offering students one free breakfast and one free lunch each school day, thanks to permanent funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. While meals are provided at no cost, families are still encouraged to complete the Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application on the school website. Doing so helps expand other educational and nutrition initiatives across the district and supports funding for these programs in future years.

You do not need to complete an application to receive free meal benefits if you receive a letter stating

that your child is eligible through the direct certification process. Families who qualify for free or reduced-price meals may also become eligible for SUN Bucks, a program that provides grocery assistance during the summer months when school is not in session. Eligible families may also qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides monthly financial assistance for groceries. If you are not currently receiving SNAP benefits but think you may be eligible, contact Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333 or apply online through DTA Connect.

To determine whether your household qualifies for free or

reduced-price meal benefits, visit the school website to view the current federal income eligibility

chart, find answers to frequently asked questions, and complete an online application at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/freereduced-mealsfaq.

YELLOW TULIP

continued from page 8

Gardens, workshops, educational programs, and more, the organization encourages open conversations about mental health and reminds people that there is always hope and help available.

The organization was founded by Julia Hansen after her own experiences with depression during middle school and high school. Hansen has shared that she often felt isolated because of the stigma surrounding mental illness, making it difficult to ask for help.

At the age of 15, Hansen lost two of her closest friends to suicide. The tragedy motivated her to speak openly about mental health and inspired her to create change for other young people who may be experiencing similar struggles.

Together with her mother, Suzanne Fox, Hansen founded The Yellow Tulip Project to create opportunities for young people to challenge misconceptions about mental illness, build supportive communities, and encourage honest conversations about mental health. Since its founding, the organization has expanded its reach through community events, educational initiatives, and Hope Gardens planted in cities and towns across the country.

The upcoming Uxbridge planting is one of those efforts, bringing together local residents, volun-

teers, and organizations to create a permanent symbol of hope in the heart of the community. While the bulbs will bloom in the spring, the message behind the garden extends well beyond the flowers themselves.

This fantastic event will encourage people to connect with one another while supporting an important cause. By planting the bulbs together, participants will help create a space that serves as a reminder that conversations about mental health matter and that seeking help is a sign of strength.

Organizers encourage anyone interested to attend, whether they have personal experience with mental health challenges, want to support a loved one, or simply wish to be part of a community project with a meaningful purpose. Just remember those gardening tools and gloves!

Those attending are asked to arrive at the Uxbridge Town Common by 9 a.m. on September 26 to help plant the 500 yellow tulip bulbs. When the flowers bloom next spring, they will stand as a lasting reminder of hope, community, and the ongoing effort to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.

For more information on the Yellow Tulip Project, please visit <https://theyellowtulipproject.org/>

Photo: Courtesy of <https://theyellowtulipproject.org/>

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Healthier Baking in the Blackstone Valley

BY CHRISTINE GALEONE

James M. Barrie, the legendary author of “Peter Pan,” once said, “Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves.” In a world burdened with wars, chaos, violence

and general cruelty, those people are as cherished today as they were in the early 20th century when the playwright and novelist made the observation.

One way of bringing a bit of sunshine to others is by baking something for them. Even better would be inviting them to have tea and baked goods. If you would prefer the latter, this recipe for sunshine thumbprint cookies may help your tea to shine.

One thing that makes these sunshine thumbprint cookies a bit healthier than some other types of cookies and most store-bought cookies is their lack of artificial ingredients. Even with the lemon curd, they also have less inflammation-causing sugar than many cookies. And in both cases, less is definitely more.

An ingredient that provides a bit of nutrition is the egg found in both the curd and the cookies. Eggs are filled with nutrients. They’re excellent sources of protein, selenium, vitamins B5, B12, and B2.

Finally, cardamom is a healthy spice. Nutrients found in the spice include calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium. Additionally, it contains vitamin C, B1, B2, B3, B6 and B12 as well as iron,



zinc, copper and manganese. And its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties are believed to be able to support heart health, reduce

inflammation, heal infections, and fight cancer.

SUNSHINE THUMBPRINT COOKIES

- Ingredients:**
- 1 ½ cups of flour
 - 1 tsp. of baking powder
 - 2 tsp. of cardamom
 - ½ cup of granulated sugar
 - 1 large egg
 - 1 tsp. of vanilla extract
 - ½ cup (1 stick) of salted butter (slightly softened)

- Directions:**
- In a mixing bowl, mix together the dry ingredients.
- In a separate mixing bowl, cream the butter and sugar together.
- Add the egg and vanilla to the butter mixture, and combine.
- Gradually combine the mixed dry ingredients with the mixed wet ingredients.
- Use a cookie scoop to scoop the cookie dough onto a baking sheet.
- Form each scoop of dough into a ball, and gently press a thumbprint into the center of each one.
- Bake at 350 degrees for around 12-14 minutes.
- Remove from oven and let cool for a couple of minutes before transferring to cooling racks or plates. Just before serving, fill each thumbprint with lemon curd. It’s best to only use the curd for the cookies that will be eaten in a sitting due to the egg in the curd. Enjoy!

Makes about 30 cookies

Through his work, James M. Barrie knew quite a bit about spreading sunshine. Bakers and others are invited to follow in his footsteps. Happy (healthier) baking!

LOCAL AUTHOR
Cara Murphy
IS EXCITED TO SHARE

Walking with Dad
By Cara Murphy

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SPORTS

Grafton Football looking to take that next step

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Last fall, the Grafton football team fought hard. The Gators, playing in Mid-Wach A, managed only 4-7 and found themselves one spot outside the Division 4 Tournament. Possessing a lot of young athletes last year, Coach Wayne Page is hoping that with a year of experience under their belts, the team can perform at a higher level.

"We not only need to play to our potential to be successful, but we also need to stay healthy. Last year we were hit with a rash of injuries near the end of the season," the Coach said. "We're not shooting at winning every game, but at this time we are waiting to see how things go. It's primarily going to be one game at a time."

The Gators will be led by four captains this fall: seniors Connor Lum, Ryder Sheehan, Andrew Wheeler and junior Nick Jordan. Lum is a big, strong kid who will play guard and defensive tackle for Page once again this season. Last year he was named the CMASS Division 4 defensive MVP and was also named to the Mid-Watch All-Star team; the coach is hoping for more of the same this year.

Sheehan will also play guard on the offensive line as well as defensive end. Last year as a junior, he recorded around 10 sacks. During the off-season, he had worked extremely hard, and with his size and agility, Page is looking for Sheehan to improve upon his sack numbers while using his larger size to put forth a tremendous season. Wheeler is an inside linebacker who was named to the Mid-Wach All-Star team last fall with Lum. Unfortunately, he underwent shoulder surgery in the off-season.

"It was a nagging injury that bothered him throughout the football season, and right before the lacrosse season got underway he had it checked out," Page said. "He missed all of the lacrosse season, and hopefully we'll have him back

by October or November. We'll do whatever is best for him."

The only junior captain will line up in the backfield as the team's running back, and he will also see action as an outside linebacker. Having been the backup back to

begin last season, Jordan forced his way into the starter's position. According to Page, the young back was too good not to play him, and although he was not

really big, the team used him as a fullback because the team was hit with injuries at the position. He is a very tough and physical athlete. Jordan is a versatile athlete who will also see some time as a slot receiver as well as drop back into the safety position.

Junio Zach Barnhill will line up as a fullback and an inside linebacker this fall. Last year Barnhill tore his ACL, and during the off-season he has been working hard to get back onto the field. As of the time of this writing, he has been cleared to get back onto the field, and now Page is waiting to see if he'll be ready for the opener.

"I am just hoping that Zach can stay healthy," the Gator Coach said. "It hurt not having him in there as he's a big part of what we do. If he can't give us 100%, we do have others who can step up and hopefully fill his spot."

The quarterback position was one that was going to be closely contested as Grafton said goodbye to two-year starter Sean Griffin. Junior Theo Mahassel and sophomore Quinn Davis were primed to battle for the signal caller's position, but after having a great off-season, Mahassel suffered an elbow injury, and it looks like he will be unavailable this season. Davis, who looks to now be the team's starting quarterback, has looked good so far in the early goings-on of tryouts.

Playing in a tough league where each and every game will be a difficult challenge, Park is looking for his team to rise up and play with dignity, and hopefully the wins will follow.



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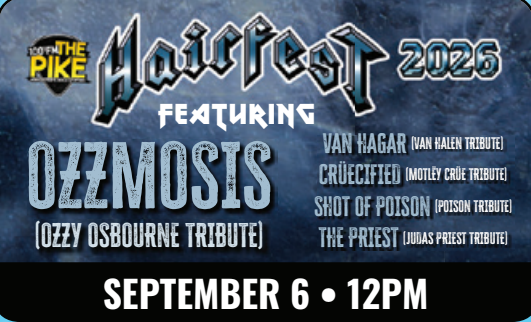




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“Show of Hands” winners

Congratulations to the winners of the Blackstone Valley Art Association’s “Show of Hands” community art show – a celebration of all forms of art except photography. This is the counterpoint to our January Photography-only art show. The winners were: 1st Jayne Sarki-

BVAA Fall Art Show will be on display at ValleyCAST’s Heritage Gallery in the Whitin Mill in Whitinsville. We also have a rotating art show at the Milford TV Station. In our BVAA Uxbridge art gallery, we host free monthly workshops every third Tuesday from

sian (pictured), 2nd Steve Paulson, 3rd Carol Frieswick, Honorable Mentions: Laura Cenedella and Melissa Beyer. This show is live until Sept 5. Sat Sept 5 is the drop-off date for our members-only “Blue” art show. You can interpret “Blue” any way you wish! Membership is only \$25/year and provides access to over 100 local art events, shows, workshops, and more. From Aug 26 to Oct 22, our

6:30-8:30 p.m. These are open to the public. Check out our BVAA.org website for the scheduled instructors. In the past, we’ve hosted workshops on printmaking, figure drawing, film photography, and more. We also have open art drop-ins every Saturday from 10-3. We offer supplies to share, or you can bring your own if you have a project you’d like to make progress on. We’re at 5 South Main St, Uxbridge – stop by and say hi!

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TALES FROM BEYOND

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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 island'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.

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The Museum of the Millbury Historical Society will be open on Thursday, September 17, from 4-6 p.m. at the Asa Waters Mansion, and this coincides with the Farmers' Market being held outside downstairs.

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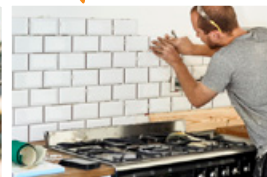
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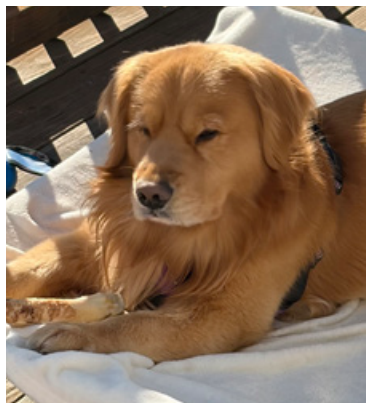
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LIVING WITH LUKE

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Paws for thought

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.

"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 cer-

tainly 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

continued on page 15

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Millbury Fire Department Color Guard Makes Its Return at Polar Park

The Millbury Fire Department as the revived Color Guard made its first appearance at Polar Park during the WooSox vs. IronPigs game as part of the Mill-

field alongside a three-member Color Guard from the Groton Fire Department. Representing Millbury were Andrew Carnes, Jason Jumper, DJ Lizzote, Chris

proudly representing the Town of Millbury at community and ceremonial events.

The Millbury Fire Department extends a special thank-you to the Worcester Red Sox organization for hosting such a memorable evening and providing an incredible opportunity for their members to participate.

MFD is proud of everyone involved and looks forward to continuing this tradition in the years ahead.

Pride. Tradition. Service.

Article and photo courtesy of the Millbury Fire Department's Facebook page



bury/Groton Town Takeover Day.

As Millbury native and fan favorite Dylan Jumper performed the National Anthem, members of the Millbury Fire Department Color Guard stood proudly on the

Bruinsma, Brian Dalton, and Myles Hebert.

The return of the Millbury Fire Department Color Guard reflects our commitment to honoring the traditions of the fire service while

LUKE

continued from page 14

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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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 indepen-

dent 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.

BY JOHN PAUL

dent 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.

CAR DOCTOR
continued on page 17

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REAL ESTATE

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 a child or a pet into the family. But that was



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

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.

CAR DOCTOR

continued from page 16

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 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 jpaul@aaanortheast.com. Follow John on X @johnfpaul and Facebook at [mrjohnfpaul](https://www.facebook.com/mrjohnfpaul).



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.

**MONDAY, AUGUST 24 –
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11**

• Craft Materials Drop-off at the Charlton Public Library, 40 Main St., during regular hours. They will collect arts and crafts mate-

rials only (fabrics, yarn, paper, patterns, tools, beads, etc.) so knitters share some of that yarn stash. They will NOT accept office supplies such as binders, file organizers, etc. Items must be able to be reused (new or gently used, not expired). When in doubt, use the best friend rule—would I give this to my best friend? They cannot accept opened liquids such as paints, chemicals and glue. Items should be brought to the adult circulation desk. PLEASE do not put items in the outside return bins or leave them outside the library. Their very popular Craft Supply Swap will be back on Saturday, September 12 from 10 am-2 pm. Everyone is welcome to take materials regardless of whether they donated any. If needed, more parking is available across the street at town hall and at the elementary school. For more information, visit their website charltonlibrary.org

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29

• Residents of Douglas, Sutton and North-

bridge can buy one admission and receive one admission free (BOGO) for Saturday, August 29 to the Samuel Slater Experience! This summer, the Samuel Slater Experience is celebrating the communities connected to our region's rich mill history with a new series of Hometown Days. Begin your visit anytime between 10am and 3pm (museum closes at 4 pm). Purchase your tickets in person to get this great deal. Samuel Slater Experience is located at 31 Ray St., in Webster. www.samuel Slater-experience.org.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

• Saint Peter's Parish in Northbridge is having a Chicken Parm Dinner on Saturday, September 12th starting at 5:30 pm in the parish hall. Bring you family and friends for a wonderful meal and meet some new friends. Tickets are \$17 per dinner and include salad and dessert. To go meals are be available. All orders must be purchased in advance by Tuesday,

September 8th. Please call 508-234-2156 or email the parish office: parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org for tickets.

• The Dudley Agricultural Advisory Commission and the Dudley Recreation Commission are excited to announce a AgriFest & Family Fun Day, on Saturday, September 12, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Dudley Municipal Building, 71 West Main Street. Rain or Shine! This exciting community event will give local residents and visitors an opportunity to engage with local farmers and vendors. It's a great way to support local agriculture while bringing the community together for a fun-filled day. Event features include: Heaviest Tomato Contest - Think you've grown a prize-winning tomato? Enter our Heaviest Tomato Contest for a chance to win a gift card prize! Contest entries must be brought to the event in person—photos will not be accepted. Free Family Fun for Everyone In addition to shopping from local farms: • Food vendors • Live music • Access to Dudley's new Fun Zone Playground • Family-friendly activities

website: www.suttongardenclub.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/SuttonGardenClub/

• Join us at The Black Tavern on Dudley Hill (138 Center Road, Dudley) on Thursday, September 17th at 7:00pm for a performance by Premier Swing Band. As we begin the Fall portion of our annual programs, we will put your memory to the test as Premier Swing Band performs the most iconic TV theme songs – from beloved sitcoms to classic comedies and even today's favorites. This lively interactive program is full of laughter and guaranteed to bring back great memories. No matter your age, challenge yourself to match decades of television shows with their timeless classic tunes and modern melodies. So, if you think you can remember these tunes and their shows, or maybe they may jog a few memories, join us for a night of fun, amusement and reminiscing. The show is free and open to all. This presentation is funded with assistance of the Dudley Cultural Council. Light refreshments will be served after the performance. For more information, please check www.theblacktavern.com

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

• Grab a teammate and join Open Sky Community Services for an afternoon of friendly competition, live music, great food, and community spirit at the 12th Annual Valley Bag Toss, Saturday, September 19, 2026, at the historic Alternatives' Whittin Mill in Whitinsville. This inclusive cornhole tournament welcomes players of all abilities, ages 14 and older, and has become a favorite annual tradition in the Blackstone Valley. Whether you're competing for the championship or cheering from the sidelines, the Valley Bag Toss offers a fun way to connect with friends, family, and neighbors while supporting a meaning-

HAPPENINGS!
continued on page 19

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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
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HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 18

ful cause. The tournament will take place from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. at 50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville, MA. Team registration is limited, and advance registration is required. To register a team, become a sponsor, or learn more, visit www.openskycs.org/valleybagtoss.

SEPT. 28-OCT. 3

• The Silver Club of the Uxbridge Senior Center will be taking a trip to Virginia Beach from Sept. 28 to Oct. 3. For \$819, it includes the bus, the hotel, 5 breakfasts, 3 dinners, a guided tour of Williamsburg, a narrated Norfolk Naval Base Harbor Cruise, admission to the Nauticus and Battleship Wisconsin, the boardwalk, Virginia Beach Aquarium, and the Mariner's Museum and Park. Everyone is invited to join the group on this tour. Please call Sue at 508-341-0797 for more information.

STARTING MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

• The Uxbridge Senior Center is proud to present a live 8-week session of Chair Yoga Exercise classes for Seniors. This class is a safe, gentle form of exercise that builds strength, improves balance, and enhances flexibility using a stable chair for support. The benefits of chair yoga include better balance, pain relief, and flexibility. The program will begin Monday, September 28th from 10:30 am-11:30 am at the Uxbridge Senior Center Satellite Site which is located at the McCloskey School at 62 Capron Street. The class will run for one hour, one day a week, on Mondays, for an 8-week time frame. The schedule will vary and is not consecutive Mondays, due to the availability of the gym. This program is free for Uxbridge residents. There is a requested donation of \$25.00 for out-of-town residents. Interested individuals should call or stop by the Uxbridge Senior Center at

508-278-8622 for more information and receive their enrollment form, the schedule, and waiver forms prior to the start of the program. The Center is located at 36 South Main Street in Uxbridge and is open Monday thru Friday from 8am to 4pm.

• The Uxbridge Senior Center is proud to present a live 8-week session of Low Impact Exercise classes for Seniors. This class is a fitness program that utilizes light weights, and some Tai Chi moves to help with balance. The benefits of this program include improved balance, range of motion and coordination. This exercise is a lightweight strength circuit with gentle movements to improve flexibility. Most exercises will be seated with a focus on improving muscle strength especially around the knee area which is crucial for balance and walking and hopefully avoiding falls. This program focuses on light cardio, strength, and fun activities to train the body for real life movements and activities. Some poses can also be done standing using a chair for support. The program will begin Monday, September 28th from 11:45am-12:45pm at the Uxbridge Senior Center Satellite Site which is located at the McCloskey School at 62 Capron Street. The class will run for one hour, one day a week, on Mondays, for an 8-week time frame. The schedule will vary and is not consecutive Mondays, due to the availability of the gym. This program is free for Uxbridge residents. There is a requested donation of \$25.00 for out-of-town residents. The class would be open to all in the community, including those outside the Town of Uxbridge. Interested individuals should call or stop by the Uxbridge Senior Center at 508-278-8622 for more information and receive their enrollment form, the schedule, and waiver forms prior to the start of the program. The Center is located at 36 South Main Street in Uxbridge and is open Monday thru Friday from 8am to 4pm.



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15 yard dumpster For 2 tons

Grafton, Auburn, Oxford, Webster,
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