

In Dudley, Koebke family making a difference in farming for generations

BY WALTER BIRD

It's easy to forget, when you're making your way across the fields at Walnut Lane Farm in Dudley, that you are mere minutes away from a bustling downtown, and not that much farther away from the second-largest city in New England. That would be Worcester.

In fact, feeling the ground crunch beneath your feet as you walk under a sprawling sky that on this day allowed both the sun and clouds to share equal billing with only a view of farmland and cattle in your immediate sight, you may have thought you'd been transported to somewhere in the Midwest, circa the 1800s or early 1900s.

In one fenced-in area, several beef cattle (the family farmed dairy cows until around 2017) busily grazed away, ignorant to their ultimate destination, and equally unaware of the vital role they play for a farm that has been in operation for well over 100 years.

Jim Koebke is the fourth generation of Koebke farmers in Dudley, working the farm off of the aptly-named Koebke Road started by his great-grandfather, a German immigrant, in 1910. He does so with his wife Krisanne and their three sons, Gus, Nolan, and Curtis.



Koebke family from left: Gus, Nolan, Krisanne, Jim, and Curtis.
Photo by Walter Bird

They are a self-proclaimed "mom and pop farm." Their farm and adjacent land do not stretch as far as some farms in the Midwest may reach, but what they do is fiercely personal, rooted in tradition and a commitment to healthy farming, and dedicated to serving the town they call home and neighboring communities.

Koebke freely admits some changes will likely have to be made to secure the farm's long-term viability, even if some of it is admittedly out of his comfort zone.

But what they do now, they do

FARMING

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A Book in Bloom by Deb Horan of Booklover's Gourmet:
"Song of the Flower XXIII" by Khalil Gibran.

Bites, Books and Blooms gala returns to Gladys Kelly Library

BY ELIZABETH PROCTER-GRAY

For the fourth year in a row, the Gladys Kelly Library in Webster will host its annual fundraising event showcasing the talents of the area's local florists and creative artists.

Elaine Davies, chair of the Bites, Books and Blooms planning committee, was instrumental in beginning this event three years ago. After admiring the Art in Bloom displays at the Worcester

Art Museum and elsewhere, Davies thought, "Why not invite people to apply floral representation to favorite books or poems and display them at the library for the community to admire?"

That is how Books and Blooms began, but what about Bites? "If you want to have a fundraiser, of course you have to have good food," continued Davies. Just like last year, that means delicious hot

GALA

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very well, and with pride in how they do it and a deep connection to the animals they raise and the land they farm.

“Our business,” Koebke said during a walking interview that stretched about 90 minutes, “is built on helping local small business, doing the best for the land that we can, making it as productive and healthy as possible, and trying to improve people’s diets and health, essentially.”

They accomplish that largely by eschewing commercial fertilizers

and conventional tilling, instead engaging in regenerative farming, which involves several key practices such as cover crops, crop rotation, adaptive grazing, and composting.

Their cattle are moved regularly, grazing in one area as a herd before moving onto greener pastures, so to speak. The cows simultaneously feed on and trample a diverse, multi-species mix of plants, creating a natural cycle that both fattens the cattle and fertilizes and restores the soil biology.

Koebke likened their management system to how soil was formed long ago.

“If you went thousands of years

back on the prairies out west, even here, there were bison. They moved in groups,” he said. “The predators kept them in a tight group because if you got out by yourself, you’re all done. They would graze voraciously. When you get cattle into a tight group, they graze better, more intense.”

The bison, he continued, would graze non-selectively, meaning, in short, they would only eat in a certain area, consuming and trampling all the plants there, versus choosing only their favorite plants.

“We’re doing a managed version of that,” Koebke said.

The benefits are many, including better water storage, because healthy soil absorbs more water; climate mitigation, by pulling carbon from the atmosphere and storing it in the ground; and lower costs, because of less need for expensive chemical fertilizers and synthetic pesticides, which Koebke would like to see used as little as possible with different management systems.

“Ninety-five-percent of insects are beneficial,” he explained. “Once you go out there with insecticides, it doesn’t just take out the one you’re after. It takes out everything.”

Agriculture, he said, is often about killing things. Conversely, regenerative farming is about “bringing life back.”

“The woods, for example, are very healthy. The soil is well aggregated,” Koebke said. “There’s a lot of oxygen in the soil. When you go for a walk in the woods after it rains, that smell you get, that’s water going in and oxygen coming out. That produces that



Jim Koebke (right) with son Nolan on their family farm in Dudley.
Photo by Walter Bird

earthy smell.

“We’re trying to do that in our fields. The majority of farmland in this country ... has no oxygen. There’s a lot of tillage. The soil is pretty dead.”

The family’s farming methods aren’t necessarily easy; Koebke admits he could probably get more done using more machinery and chemical fertilizers. But that’s not what Walnut Lane Farm is about. And it’s not the legacy he wants to leave.

Koebke’s parents took over the farm in 1957 after the death of his grandfather, continuing the focus on dairy. Koebke and his wife bought the operating business from them in 1992 and continued strictly as a dairy farm until 2013, wholesaling and getting into the raw milk business.

As Krisanne Koebke explained, the dairy industry changed, so the family adapted and looked at how they could incorporate other animal products.

“Beef cattle seemed like a natural fit,” she said. “We’re ‘cow people’ and love beef, plus we had been rotationally grazing our dairy herd and had a lot of water infrastructure in place.”

Adding chickens for eggs and meat, she added, made sense.

It also makes for a cacophony of sound when you visit the farm

to buy meat or other products at the small store where you’re often greeted by Krissanne. The hens in the nearby barn are happy to alert you to their presence.

The Koebkes sold most of their dairy herd in 2017 to a family farm in Maine.

From that point on, sales were exclusively for raw milk on-farm, along with eggs, beef, and chicken. Pigs ultimately joined the business as well. The remainder of the dairy cattle were sold in 2024.

“Dairy farming at our small scale is intensive,” Krisanne Koebke said, “and it’s easy to burn out.”

For the past two years, she said, the family has focused on improving its management and marketing while maintaining its farm-to-table business.

While the bulk of their retail sales is conducted from their small store, they partner with a couple of local businesses, including BT’s Smokehouse in Sturbridge and Deep Roots Distillery in Brimfield.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Jim Koebke cites cost as the biggest challenge facing the farm.

“Overhead,” he said. “Cost of equipment. Cost of repair. We’re lucky. We’re mechanics. We save

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FARMING

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and chilled hors d'oeuvres from Eighty Ates of Webster. In fact, one could keep the alliteration going with Beverages (cash bar also from Eighty Ates) and live Band (the smooth sounds of Rio Flow, formerly the Carlos Odria Trio).

It will be a delightful evening wandering through the displays, sitting down with friends for a bite and a drink, and just relaxing to light jazz. We asked Elaine a few more questions, specifically about the 2026 event.

Do you have anything special this year for Bites, Books and Blooms?

"Yes. To kick off Bites Books and Blooms week, Diana Hart Smith, a Sogetsu Master of Ikebana—the art of Japanese floral design—is coming from Washington, D.C. on Monday, September 21, to explain and demonstrate the art from 6 to 7:30 p.m. The Sogetsu School is interesting because its creed is 'Any time anywhere, by anyone, with anything.' Sogetsu designers use flowers, fruits, vegetables, and assemblages of unconventional things - clock parts, metal tubes, electronic components, etc. - to construct designs. The arrangements will stay in the library for

public viewing through the BB&B event and there will be a door prize of one of the arrangements.

"Second, thanks to the Szczepanski family, the Community Room will be full of the beautiful floral paintings of the late local artist and former art teacher Francis Szczepanski. Last year his paintings of historical Webster were exhibited and were quite the hit with a large gathering of locals at a presentation featuring the history of Webster as portrayed by Mr. Szczepanski.

"And of course, as our normal warmup — in the library there will be a display of books recommended by our town and state leaders during the month of September."

What can we expect from the 2026 crop of Books in Bloom?

"When we started the process this year, we suggested that people honor the richness of American literature since it was the 250th Anniversary of America. And we will have some American classics like *Little Women*, *Casey at the Bat*, and *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*. As in every past year, we will honor our namesake, Gladys E. Kelly, with one of her favorite poems, 'Summer Shower' by Emily Dickinson. There will be an American take-off on Sherlock Holmes introducing his wife. But there will also be other favorites like *Pride and Prejudice* and *Lord*

of the Flies."

Anything else to add?

"The Friends of the Library want to keep the excellent programs offered by the library to all generations free. This is a fundraiser. So buy your ticket now! Most of the floral books in bloom will be raffled. Thanks to many local businesses and Friends of the Library there will be plentiful raffle baskets available and a door prize.

"And since our intent is also to encourage reading and creativity — especially in our youth — the Books in Bloom will remain on site in the library for one day after the event—Thursday, September 24 from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

"Grateful thanks go to our Planning Committee members, faithful volunteers, and all who support this effort."

Tickets for the Bites, Books & Bloom gala, at \$50 each, may be purchased on the library's website, gladyskellylibrary.org or in person at the library, 2 Lake Street, Webster. While the Ikebana demonstration is free, please register to attend on the library's website.

Area residents recognized by Worcester Business Journal

Congratulations to three area residents who were named to the Worcester Business Journal's 40 under 40, class of 2026.

As the WBJ wrote in its announcement:

"Their impact extends beyond their day jobs. Throughout this year's class, professional achievement is intertwined with community involvement. Winners coach youth sports, serve on nonprofit boards, mentor students and younger professionals, advocate for people in need, raise money for charities, and volunteer in the communities where they live and work.

"Now in its 27th year, WBJ's 40 Under Forty awards recognize some of the region's most promising young professionals. If you want to celebrate with them and meet this amazing class of winners, you are invited to attend the 40 Under Forty event at 4:30 p.m. Sept. 16 at Mechanics Hall in Worcester.

"These 40 leaders aren't preparing to shape the future of Central Massachusetts.

"They've already started."

Akosua Agyepong lives in Dudley and is a senior attorney at Turco Legal, P.C., in Worcester. Agyepong's commitment to ensuring access to justice extends well beyond her family law practice at Turco Legal. She provides pro bono assistance to residents navigating probate and family court.

Sarah Foley lives in Charlton and is vice president of marketing and culture advancement, Coghlin Cos., in Westborough. Foley has spent nearly 14 years helping shape how Coghlin Cos. presents itself to customers, employees, and the Central Massachusetts community.

Nayara Tonin lives in Webster and is a lead bioprocessing associate, WuXi Biologics, in Worcester. Tonin came to the U.S. to pursue biotechnology and is now helping design a more than \$300-million biologics manufacturing facility, representing manufacturing end users as the company designs its commercial facility.

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Nipping trash in the bud

Charlton takes roadside trash seriously. Every year on the last Saturday in April, more than 100 residents of all ages register for the Charlton Earth Day Roadside Clean Up. Their efforts yield big results. In 2026, residents filled a bin, supplied by Casella Waste Management, with

2.13 tons of trash and cleaned more than 75 percent of the local roads. The bulk of the trash included water bottles, soda cans, lottery tickets, coffee cups, cannabis containers, empty cigarette packs, food wrappers, and various other waste items. But of major concern was the enormous amount of nip bottles that were collected.

This past April the Earth Day Planning Group, in collaboration with the Keep Charlton Beautiful committee, decided to tackle the problem in earnest. Spearheaded by local resident Susan Chanel, the committees asked volunteers

to separate nip bottles and alcohol containers from other roadside trash. Volunteers received clear plastic bags, courtesy of the Keep Charlton Beautiful Committee, as a way to highlight the depth of the problem. The Earth Day Planning Group distributed pickers, gloves, and sturdy trash bags for other roadside trash. A grant from The Last Green Valley helped to cover the cost of some supplies.

While everyone who registered to clean a road was not aware of this new campaign, the results were astounding - an estimated 5,000 nip containers and approxi-

mately 10 bags of liquor bottles were collected. Photos were sent to local legislators, urging them to support an expansion of the Bottle Bill, specifically to include a deposit and return on nip bottles.

When Terek Mroczkowski, owner of Ted's Package Store, learned of our initiative, he offered his support by installing bins at the four liquor retailers in Charlton where empty nip bottles may be discarded. Every time a bin is filled at Ted's, they will make a monetary donation to the Keep Charlton Beautiful Committee. These funds will help

continue efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle to support Earth Day.

We are grateful for the generosity of the Mroczkowski family and the time commitment of our volunteer citizens. But litter still remains a costly problem. We appreciate those businesses that provide trash receptacles for items purchased at their storefronts and encourage people to use them. By working together, we can help to Keep Charlton Beautiful and take care of Mother Earth.

This article was submitted by Keep Charlton Beautiful and the Earth Day Planning Group.

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on that. Our repair costs would double or triple if we had to send them out to a company. The cost of equipment is insane."

Taxes are another challenge, Jim Koebke said. And this year, fuel costs have been an added burden.

As for the future, he predicted more direct sales among New England farms, like his family does. He said the region has a big enough population to support that.

The future of their farm, in particular, is something the family will likely address in the winter,

when the business of farming slows down. With their three sons having expressed an interest in becoming involved, Jim Koebke said they want to produce a plan to keep the farm going for another 100 years.

"The way it's managed is going to allow us to get bigger," he said, even if he still faces the challenge of finding a way to safely migrate the cows to some of their other properties so they can expand the grazing. Busy roadways make that problematic. "Not having contiguous land is a problem. If it were all close to home, I could probably run 250-300 head [of cattle]. I just can't, as it is right now.

"Without us becoming an enter-

tainment business where we have live bands and wedding venues ... I'm not sure that's in my DNA."

In the meantime, Jim Koebke encourages folks to think about where they shop. He knows their product is more expensive, but he's confident it's among the best.

"We'll put our product against anybody in the country," he said. "I think we do as good a job or better than probably 99 percent of the farms offering meat for sale."

Comparing it to going to the polls and voting, Jim Koebke said people can make a big difference with their pocketbook and where they shop.

"We're just a small farm," he said.

"We can't spread our costs out, so it's going to cost a little more, but when you drive by and you see cattle on the hillside, you see green open fields, there's something behind that. Your pocketbook can really dictate what happens in your community.

"You're spending a little more, but you're getting a better product. Your health is better. What is the cost of poor health? You can't put a dollar sign on that."

So, Jim Koebke concluded, "Be thoughtful about where you shop. Help small businesses where you can."

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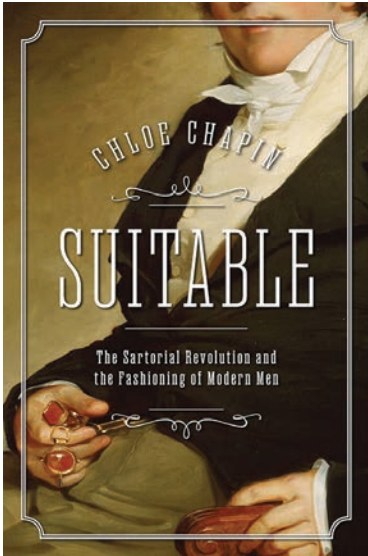
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September events at Samuel Slater Experience

A Perfect Fit: Author talk with Chloe Chapin



Samuel Slater Experience will host an historical talk, "A Perfect Fit: Samuel Slater's Mills, Daniel Webster's Wardrobe, and the Fashioning of a Republic" by author Chloe Chapin. The program will be held on Saturday, September 12 at 11 a.m. at the museum, 31 Ray St., Webster.

Samuel Slater and Daniel Webster were towering figures in 19th-century America, united by

friendship, a Massachusetts town, and a textile revolution. While Slater is famous for his cotton mill in Rhode Island, he also helped establish America's first woolen mills in Webster, MA. Slater's friend Daniel Webster was not a handsome man, but boy did he love to have his portrait painted. Images of Webster show he was a very fashionable dresser, dressing in the most current fashions for suits. In this talk, dress historian and former Broadway costumer Chloe Chapin uses these two men to tell the story of American industry and men's fashion. She will explore how the rise of factory-produced cottons and woolens allowed American statesmen to project power, civility, and republican equality through the dark, tailored suit. Drawing from her new book, *Suitable*, Chapin reveals how the mills of New England wove the fabric of the modern man.

This free talk is hosted at the Samuel Slater Experience in Webster, MA. The talk will be approximately one hour, followed by a short Q&A session and opportunity for book signing. Copies of Chapin's newly published book, *Suitable*, will be available

for purchase at the Samuel Slater Experience shop. Attendees will receive a small discount card to use toward museum admission. To register for this talk, call 508-461-2955, or emailing admin@samuel Slater Experience.org.

Fact vs. Fiction: Death by Lightning and the assassination of President James A. Garfield

Paul E. Lambert, Sr., a 31-year member of the History Department at Nichols College in Dudley and a staff member of the Samuel Slater Experience, will give a presentation on Sunday, September 20, entitled Fact vs. Fiction - "Death by Lightning" and the assassination of President James A. Garfield. The talk will begin at 1 p.m. and is free to attend with registration. Samuel Slater Experience is located at 31 Ray St., Webster.

Everyone loves a good story. Seeing it unfold before your eyes on a theater screen or on TV can really make it come alive and make it something to remember. When that story is about an actual event from the past, however, the historian wants to be sure that what viewers are getting

is both memorable and accurate. "Death by Lightning" is a television miniseries that was released by Netflix in November 2025. It is based on the events historian Candice Millard writes about in her 2011 book *Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of the*

supporter of civil rights for the slaves freed by the U.S. Civil War, he would frequently find himself at odds with many fellow Republican politicians – including his own Vice President Chester A. Arthur. Only four months into his term, he would be shot by a disgruntled office-seeker, Charles Guiteau; he would suffer a long, agonizing decline in health at the hands of incompetent doctors until he finally died on September 19, 1881. His successor, Chet Arthur, would unexpectedly become the reformer that Garfield had hoped to be.

Garfield is one of our lesser-known presidents; his short term left little time to establish a legacy, and many Americans simply aren't aware of the facts behind his assassination and death. Did Hollywood get the story right?

To register for this free event, call 508-461-2955, or email admin@samuel Slater Experience.org.



Paul E. Lambert, Sr.

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experiences. This course is perfect for families that have just purchased or are planning to purchase any type of boat, as well as for the boater who wants to keep informed of changes to boating regulations and laws.

The class is scheduled to begin on October 13, 2026. The two-session course will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School with a fee of \$65.

The Hanson-Milone Boater Safety Act, signed into Mass. law, now requires all Mass. motorboat operators over 12 years of age to complete an approved Safe Boating Certificate course before April 1, 2026, for anyone born after 1/1/1998, and by April 1, 2028, for boaters born before 1/1/1998. Enforcement of the new law will begin on September 1, 2026. Personal watercraft and Jet Ski operators are required to be at least 16 years of age are also included. A certificate, required to be carried onboard, will be issued by the state to resident motorboaters.

Successful completion of this BA course meets this requirement and inclusion into the Mass. Environmental Police Boating Safety Database. Approved by the Na-

tional Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) it will also cover the requirements to operate a vessel in most other states where boating safety education is mandatory including New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

You will receive the additional USCG Auxiliary certification and a possible discount on premiums for most boating insurance companies for successful completion of this course. Some basic marlinespike seamanship (knots etc.) will also be included as part of the course. Participants 16 years old and under must be accompanied, in person, by a registered parent/guardian. Space is limited so register soon.

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- Class ID 43489. Or call Sheri Dreitlein 508-248-5971 or email her at sdreitlein@baypath.net You can also contact the Flotilla Commander Kyle Cimochofski 860-227-7274 or Marc French at 508-318-7152 for additional information.

To locate these and other USCG Auxiliary courses go to: cgaux.org/boating/class_finder/index.php

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Auditions for Gateway Players Theatre

If you have ever thought about taking to the community theater stage - or helping behind the scenes - now is your chance.

Gateway Players Theatre in Southbridge has announced auditions for "The Spirit of Christmas or The Story of Ernestina Scrooge," written by Tom Fuller. Auditions will be held Tuesday, Sept. 15, and Thursday, Sept. 17, at 6:30 p.m. in

the Fellowship Hall at Elm Street Congregational Church, 61 Elm Street, Southbridge. The Fellowship Hall can be accessed from the Park Street side of the building.

Auditions will consist of cold readings from the script. Each auditioner should come prepared to sing one of their favorite Christmas carols as well. Show dates are planned for Friday, Dec. 4, Saturday, Dec. 5, and Sunday, Dec. 6. Rehearsals will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays in September, and then Mondays and Wednesdays in October and November.

A combined adult and youth production, it will be directed by Lou-Ellen Corkum and Alex Gardner and produced by Stephanie Ruggiere.

In this adaptation of Dickens' A Christmas Carol, audiences are introduced to Ebenezer Scrooge's great-granddaughter, Ernestina, the lead character of the play. In this imagining, Scrooge married and had a son after the events of A Christmas Carol, and Ernestina lives in the United States.

The production calls for six women and six men in the age range of 25 to 60ish, and six teenagers in the age range of 12 through 17.

The principal roles to be auditioned include: Ernestina Scrooge - the great-granddaughter of Ebenezer, 40 years old. Bob Kravachic - Ernestina's clerk, father of three, 30 to 40 years old. Bill McDougal - Ernestina's former boyfriend, 40 years old. Young Ernestina - a 15- to 17-year-old girl who appears in Christmas Past as a high school student. She also has a singing solo. Little Bob - a 6- to 8-year-old boy who appears in Christmas Present.

The ensemble will have multiple roles, including carolers, narrators, Spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and Future, students, Kravachic family members, party guests, and more.

For more information, call Gateway at 508-765-4531, or email Lou-Ellen Corkum at lcorkum14@gmail.com. The show is presented by permission from Dramatic Publishing.

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Goings-on at Booklovers' Gourmet

September Art Exhibit—"Green Rapture" by Debra Horan.
This month's featured artist in the



Green Rapture by Debra Horan.

cafe gallery is Debra Horan, who happens to be the owner of Booklovers' Gourmet. Her work centers around meaningful connections and experiences in nature, whether walking a trail in the woods or lingering in a backyard garden. Spending time in nature is a simple way to reconnect with ourselves and restore our well-being. For the body, fresh air, sunlight, and movement can help us feel more energized and relaxed. For the mind, being surrounded by trees, water, and open spaces can quiet the noise of everyday life, reduce stress, and create a sense of clarity. And for the spirit, nature offers a beautiful opportunity to slow down, be present, and remember that we are part of something greater than ourselves. Even a little time outdoors can leave us feeling grounded, refreshed, and renewed.

A meet & greet with the artist will take place on Saturday, September 12th, 2-4 p.m. with

light refreshments. Booklovers' Gourmet is located at 72 East Main Street in Webster. Business hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5pm, Wednesday 10am-6pm. For more info, call 508-949-6232.

Whispers from Spirit with Psychic Medium Leo McCarthy
Wednesday, September 16, 6:30-8 pm.

Join us for an in-person experience like no other! Leo McCarthy, a gifted psychic medium, will guide you through an evening of connection, insight, and messages from the spirit realm. Whether you're curious or seeking closure, this event promises an intimate and powerful journey. Don't miss out on tapping into the whispers from beyond and unlocking your own intuitive powers!

Tickets are \$45 each. Space is limited to 12 attendees. You may reserve your spot in store or online through the store's website at bookloversgourmet.com (ticket fees apply).

Due to the nature of the event, not all attendees may receive a connection. However, every attempt is made to provide a fulfilling experience. There is also time for Q&A.

Musical Evening with Dynamic Duo Eddie Barnett & Bob Jordan
Saturday, September 19, 6-8 pm.

This promises to be a one-time treat, with lots of humor, spontaneity, and a surprising selection of songs in a variety of genres: rock, folk, country & more. The

show will include short solo sets from each performer on voice and guitar, with the bulk of the concert featuring the Dynamic Duo, whose chemistry will remind some folks of other Dynamic Duos such as Lennon & McCartney, Jagger & Richard, Abbott & Costello, and Batman & Robin.

Ed Barnett was 11 years old when he moved to Shrewsbury and started dropping in at MacDuff's Music (next to Spag's), where Bob Jordan worked. The bond that was made then has persevered to this day. Over the years they have played together in dozens of live and studio sessions but have never presented a concert with just the two of them. A Webster resident for 20 years, Barnett gives an annual summer concert in Webster and plays in a variety of bands. His past bands include Bees Knees and Cosby Sweaters.

Jordan, who resides in Winchendon, now performs at farmers markets and various elder-care facilities, with the occasional concert. Tickets are \$20 per person/\$30 per couple.

"Beach Rocks" Book Reading & Pebble Craft with J. Roach-Evans
Saturday, September 26, 1-3 pm

Join us for a fun afternoon learning all about beach rocks and painting your very own beach rock creature with children's book author J. Roach-Evans.

Beach Rocks is about common rocks and pebbles found along the northeast coast of the U.S. It covers

their shapes, sizes, and the pebbles people most enjoy collecting. From Maine's "wishing stones" to New Jersey's Cape May "diamonds," this beginner's guide explores the beautiful coastal beach pebbles. The back pages include a helpful guide for identifying the pebbles you are most likely to find as well as common minerals and rocks.

Joanne Roach-Evans is a local author and illustrator of six children's beginner guidebooks about seashore life. She grew up in Auburn, MA, and studied art, English, and graphic design at the

School of the Worcester Art Museum, Worcester State University, and Quinsigamond Community College. She also earned a master's degree in education from Worcester State University.

She has written seven books since 2013; Beach Rocks is her latest book.

Booklovers' Gourmet is located at 72 East Main Street in Webster. Business hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5pm, Wednesday 10am-6pm. For more info call 508-949-6232 or visit bookloversgourmet.com.

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The table in front of the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library donated in memory of Norma Waterhouse.

the donations made in Norma Waterhouse's memory have been used to purchase and dedicate a round picnic table in front of the library. The table is ADA-compliant so that someone using a wheelchair can comfortably sit at the table.

This special space was created as a gathering place where community members, family and friends can spend time together, a value that Norma cherished throughout her life.

We invite you to stop by, have a seat and enjoy the new area dedicated in her honor. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this meaningful tribute and helped recognize Norma's commitment to the library and our community.

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TALES FROM BEYOND

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The ghost pirates of Goat Island

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

An incident that took place on Goat Island in Newport, Rhode Island in the early 18th century is mostly untold, save for those who are passionate about the sea or local history buffs. Even the history books about Goat Island and Gravelly Point in Newport give it but a scant few sentences. This alone may be the reason 26 restless spirits roam the area and waters around Goat Island.

At one time, Newport was the pirate haven of New England. So many pirates made Newport their base of operations in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, that the London Board of Trade petitioned for help from the English Government to eradicate them from the island. Just about every famous pirate knew the wharves of Newport well and were well welcomed there for a portion of gold and silver.

The people knew the buccaneers and received them with friendly, open arms. They spent freely and often paid a fine token for their anonymity. They were, do not forget, outlaws after all. Because of this constant unlawful activity, Newport became known as the scourge of the colonies. Privateers and pirates alike were sometimes greeted with proces-

sions from the whole town.

That was until the colonial leaders were given no choice by the throne of England but to arrest the corsairs or face charges of piracy themselves. Things changed rather quickly along the docks of degradation and in 1723, 26 pirates were arrested for crimes on the high seas. It all began on June 10 when Captain Solgard, commander of the man-of-war The Greyhound, engaged two Caribbean pirate ships off Block Island. One of the vessels, manned by the notorious Ned Low, managed to evade capture but the sloop, Ranger, manned by young Captain Charles Harris, was captured after an epic day-long sea battle.

Harris, along with 35 crew members, became the largest capture of pirates in the colonies at the time. Admiralty judges, including Rhode Island's Governor Samuel Cranston, assembled in Newport to be part of the trial. In the end, 26 were found guilty of piracy, two were reprieved and eight were acquitted.

The guilty were sentenced to death by hanging and later taken to Gravelly Point, an area across from Goat Island and hanged there on July 19, 1723. The whole event took about two hours. From there, the executed buccaneers were taken to Goat Island (named after the fact that the colonists let their goats

graze there away from the bustling ports) and buried between the high and low water marks on the north end of the island. This was done as further punishment to make sure they would never be buried on land or at sea. Their eternal souls would never find rest in a consecrated grave.

This may have worked, for on dark misty nights, their ghosts rise from the water and ascend upon the shores of the island, perhaps in search of those who brought an end to their illustrious careers. Their misty forms wander the area where they were hanged as well. Some claim they are in search of their ship in hopes of finally boarding the vessel and sailing from their makeshift graves. There is a claim that a clam digger once saw a ghostly ship sail past him at Bonnet Shores, then float over the land toward Gravelly Point. Maybe the ghost ship was the Ranger, returning for its crew.

The Basin and Gravelly Point were eventually filled in during the 19th century. Today, Long Wharf leads past the Newport Yacht Club and the Wyndham Inn. Gravelly Point is buried beneath both of them, but the ghosts of the 26 pirates hanged so long ago refuse to remain buried.

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The 1,000 BBK Challenge

Ava of Dudley has successfully completed the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program at the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library. Ava found that books about Paw Patrol made reading so many books, so much fun. The Pigeon books by Mo Willems are also some of her favorites and make her laugh out loud.

Congratulations, Ava, on this wonderful accomplishment! We are incredibly proud of your dedication to reading and learning.

The 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program encourages families to read together every day, helping children develop early literacy skills while strengthening the bond between parent and child. The mission of the 1,000 Books Foundation is to promote reading to newborns, infants, and toddlers, laying the foundation for a lifetime love of books and learning.

The Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library's 1,000 BBK program is generously funded by the Friends



Ava of Dudley surpasses the 1,000 BBK challenge.

of the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library.

Families with children from birth through age five are encouraged to stop by the library to register for this free early literacy program and begin their own reading adventure.

SPORTS

Colleges scout Bartlett athlete

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

When Bartlett's Tyler Whiting began playing football in middle school some six years ago, he could never have imagined that numerous colleges would be courting him in his senior season. In such a short time, Whiting has not only become proficient playing the offensive line, but he has also contributed to the Indian's defensive line as well.

"The coaches in middle school put me on the o-line due to my size and then the next year they asked me to play d-line as well," the Bartlett senior said. "Today, I feel that I am better suited for playing d-line due to my speed."

The three-sport athlete (baseball, basketball and football) found that playing the offensive line was a completely different position where he saw the game in a new perspective. He admits it took time to learn the position.

"It was difficult at first; there was so much work and a lot of techniques to learn. At times it felt like a lot, but with hard work I could see there was an end goal," Whiting said. "I can assure you that my first game was not very good and it took me three years to figure everything out while understanding what I was actually doing."

By the time he was entering high school, Whiting knew that he wanted to try out for the football team. While his goal was to make the varsity team, he would have been happy to land on the junior varsity squad. However, earning a position with the varsity team made him feel that all his hard work had been rewarded.

During his sophomore season, Bartlett Coach Dane Laboissonniere approached Whiting and asked his opinion about playing football on the collegiate level.

"Was I serious about playing football on the next level - of course I was," the athlete said. "If I could continue playing football while going to college, I would do whatever it took to get me there. I just want to play somewhere where I can get a good education as well."

At the time of this writing, Whiting has no specific college in mind, although according to his coach, some 30 schools from Division 1 through Division 3 are



Tyler Whiting, a formidable presence on the field

looking at him. Whiting is totally surprised about having this opportunity.

"If I had told my 12-year-old self that I could potentially be able to play football in college, I definitely wouldn't have believed myself," he said. "When I started playing football, I never even imagined taking this to college; it never crossed my mind - I was a baseball player through and through."

While many schools have displayed interest in the senior joining them next fall, Whiting has a couple of schools floating around in the back of his mind. Salve

Regina University in Newport has a decent football program and it has a very good business and marketing program, something that interests Whiting.

As he gets ready to enter his senior campaign with Bartlett, Whiting realizes that he has an opportunity that not many athletes get to experience and he is not going to throw that away. If he continues to work on his game and put his mind to it, college should be on the horizon, the only question is where.

"Ty is a great kid and does all the right things," Laboissonniere said. "He is definitely the type of kid you want leading your program. During the off-season, the coaching staff threw around the idea of moving him to tight end, giving our new quarterback a big body to throw to and he's all in. During the summer he was doing an outstanding job in the 7-on-7 drills and has been catching the ball really well. There's a learning curve but he's up to the challenge."

Whiting is excited about taking on a new position to help his team and he really shouldn't have any problems making the transition from the line to tight end. According to the coach, he's going to do great things for Bartlett this year at the position.

Whiting was excited when he heard he could be playing tight end his senior season. When the coaching staff made the change official, Whiting began studying the tight end playbook to learn the routes and the blocking skills that he will need to play the position.

In addition to helping his team get into the division playoffs and get past the first round, Whiting is aiming to earn CMASS All-Star status, something he has yet to accomplish. He also wants to play his new position as best as he can so that colleges continue to look at him for their football programs.



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Should Pebbles be open to an impromptu playdate, Luke will perch regally at her driveway, beaming, his leonine mane puffed out while Pebbles bounces around his calmer stature. The scene resembles a page from a Winnie-the-Pooh storybook. Luke plays the part of Pooh Bear; Pebbles, the buzzing bee.

Of course, Luke knows that little dogs aren't typically a threat—even those with the vicious snarl of Maui, the bossy Frenchie in the neighborhood.

"Tough morning, Maui? I hear you. Try to look on the bright side."

He'll bury his nose in the sweet scent of a grass patch and ignore the behavior. Ditto for the rattling pug who rushes to the edge of his driveway to harass us during our walks. His stout body reminds me of the chunky gold bulldog perched atop the hood of my father's pickup truck named Red. Like the boss of that truck, the pug claims his territory.

"Go away! Get out! Get out!"

His flattened face and red-hot attitude make us smile, though I manage to stick to my training script.

"Leave it, Luke."

Little dogs with big attitudes are part of life, Luke has learned. Usually, they are harmless.

But what happens when they become a threat—not to his size, but to his wellness?

Read on.

Luke recently attended a summer barbecue, a lakeside gathering



at a home where several little dogs had arrived first and apparently decided they owned the place.

Beagles and spaniels, poodles and doodles, and—most foreboding of all—Pearl, a Chihuahua wearing a miniature pink vest.

They greeted Luke's arrival with an orchestra of untamed melody.

"You don't belong! We were here first! We don't like you!"

Luke, oblivious, had only one thing on his mind: THE LAKE!

He beelined through the chaos, found the water and created his own swimming oasis. Ahhh. Sweet peace.

He swam for a few quiet minutes before climbing out to dry off. After a vigorous shake, he set off to explore the boat dock.

Big issue.

Pearl stood upright at the edge, snarling and guarding with bulg-

ing, blood-shot eyes.

"You don't belong."

Frustrated, Luke tried to work his way around Pearl's wrath to reach the exquisite treasures scattered across the dock: fishing lures and one magnificent patriotic float. He sniffed with hyper-focus and poked at the float with trepidation.

"Do you move like a person?"

He investigated while an encore of barking resumed. Pearl had apparently called in the troops, creating the latest surround-sound track of We Don't Like Luke.

It was time for Luke to chill out and rest.

I leashed him, and we made our way to the deck, where a pair of King Cavaliers protested our arrival.

"This is our space."

We sat on a bench opposite them, and eventually they quieted.



The savory scents of barbecue wafted through the air. Luke lifted his head and smiled.

Life was good.

We ate, shared easy conversation with the guests and talked about our dogs. Luke remained patient.

Until he was not.

"Summer is flying, Mom. We need to enjoy the lake because we'll practically blink and it will be covered in ice."

He had a point.

"Okay, Luke. You can swim again."

I unhitched his leash, and he made his way toward the back of the house.

Pearl and her cronies stood barking like trolls.

GRRARGOUGH.

Luke had had it.

In a matter of three seconds, he became a lion leading his pride, growling and moving toward every reckless yapper. The little dogs scattered like ants beneath the rush of a garden hose. They fled with their ears peeled back, leaping into the arms of Dog Moms who cuddled and cooed over them.

Of course, I intervened. I scolded Luke and restrained him.

Thankfully, no one lost an eye.

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LUKE

continued on page 11

REAL ESTATE

The kind of house buyers are willing to pay more for

That spare room on the main floor. The finished basement with a kitchenette and its own entrance. The bonus room you've been using for storage. To you, it's extra space, but to a growing pool of buyers, it's the reason they would pick your

BY MARK MARZEOTTI

house. Here's why: multi-generational home buying is on the rise. Millions of families are living multi-generationally – that's when three or more generations live under one roof – and that number is only climbing. Data shows those households grew from 3.2 million to almost 4 million between 2014 and 2024 according to Realtor.com. Each year, more people are shopping for a larger home that fits their combined needs. While the appetite for this type of house is

rising across the board, data shows multi-generational living is more common in some states than in others. Where does your state fall? California, Texas and Hawaii are leading the pack. Massachusetts is at four percent while Connecticut is just under four percent.

Depending on where you are, the pool of buyers looking for a house like yours could be even bigger than you'd think. But the overall bottom line is this: There's a real market out there for larger homes with room for multiple generations under one roof, especially since affordability is still so tight. If you own a house like that, it's in demand.

Multi-generational houses sell at a premium and that extra room carries real value with the right buyer. According to Realtor.com, in 2025 the median asking price for a multi-generational house was \$709,000, roughly 65 percent higher than the \$429,900 median for a standard house. Some of that is simply size. But compare multi-generational homes to regular homes with the same amount of square footage, and they still come

out on top – \$262 per square foot versus \$215. That's a 22 percent premium you could command for special features like in-law suites, second kitchens, and separate entries.

When you sell, this could help you walk away with more money in your pocket, especially when your agent highlights your home's multi-generational features in your listing. And even with slightly higher price tags, buyers aren't getting sticker shock. Multi-generational houses drew 13.5 percent more online views than standard ones, and they still sold just as fast – in about 59 days – per the same Realtor.com report.

Basically, when buyers want something that's very specific, the house that checks the boxes tends to stand out. Your multi-generational-friendly, or simply larger-than-average, house might meet criteria a lot of buyers can't find in a standard one. That's what gets attention and offers. So, talk to a member of The Marzeotti Group or your trusted real estate professional about what it could get you in your market right now.

LUKE

continued from page 10

Still, the incident got me thinking about something more serious: the importance of training every dog, regardless of size. Somehow, little dogs are often given a pass. Their lunging, barking and aggressive behavior can be dismissed as cute, funny or harmless—just because they are small. Certainly, a tiny dog cannot inflict the same physical damage as a large one.

But that doesn't mean the behavior is without consequences.

A small dog that repeatedly lunges at or provokes a larger dog may eventually trigger a defensive reaction. And when that happens, it is often the big dog who gets blamed—even if the little dog

started the confrontation.

Training isn't about turning a small dog into a military recruit or expecting every Chihuahua to become a Zen master. It is about giving dogs the tools to navigate a world that can be overwhelming from their perspective. Training builds confidence, establishes boundaries and helps dogs—and their people—understand one another.

Luke has learned that little dogs come in many varieties. Some are Pebbles, all bouncing affection and buzzing energy. Some are Maui, all snarl and attitude. And some are Pearl, ready to defend the entire lake from an innocent visitor.

Luke, for his part, has learned that sometimes the best response is to walk away.

Apparently, he's still working on

that one.

And maybe that's the real lesson: every dog deserves the chance to learn how to be confident without being confrontational—and every big dog deserves the chance to enjoy the lake without having to become the lion of the neighborhood.

Visit Luke on Instagram @living-withlukevalention

Write to Amy amyleclaire@hotmail.com



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THE CAR DOCTOR

jpaul@aanortheast.com

McLaren fun, 2012 'stang, lug nut retightening, plug-in hybrid repairs, and more

Q. I think I have been reading your column for more than 25 years. I know you drive a variety of vehicles, but most are “every day” cars and SUVs. Do

you ever evaluate exotic cars, such as Corvettes, Porsche and other unobtainable cars that most of us will never own?

A. You are correct, and I tend to drive mainstream vehicles (although those are averaging \$55,000 these days). Recently I spent some time in a McLaren 750S. It was ridiculously fast with a 0-60 MPH time of a claimed 2.3 seconds, extremely responsive steering and a surprisingly comfortable ride. Now does

anyone need a 200 mile per hour, \$400,000 car, no. Am I glad they made one, yes.

Q. I have a 2012 Ford Mustang convertible with only 17,600 miles. I had the coolant replaced five years ago. Nothing else has been done except oil changes every two years. The brakes seem kind of mushy but work. Any recommendations as to what I should have changed or replaced?

A. I would start with a thorough overall inspection of the car, focusing on the safety items first. The mushy brakes could be caused by air in the brake lines or sticking brake caliper slides. I would also consider changing the oil annually, since oil oxidizes from air exposure and its critical additives, such as rust inhibitors and detergents, break down over time. Check the tires, steering and suspension components as well. Since it has been five years since the coolant was

replaced, I would replace it again and inspect the coolant hoses, thermostat, and drive belts. Have the battery and electrical system inspected. Give the other vital fluids a good look and replace any that show signs of age. This would include the transmission fluid as well as the brake fluid. At 14 years old, even with low mileage, changing the spark plugs and checking the ignition system is money well spent.

Q. I read your most recent article and always check it for good advice. One reader asked about having to come back for lug nut tightening after a new tire replacement. You said, “Most reputable shops will recommend returning to check lug nut torque.” Last month, I got new Continentals tires installed by my Subaru dealer, who I hope is reputable, but they never asked me to come back. I now have about 500 miles on them. Not having a torque wrench myself, should I go in and have them check, or is it too late and a moot point now?

A. Chances are they used a torque wrench to tighten the wheels, and everything is fine. Part of the rechecking process is a combination of building customer loyalty and reducing liability. In your case, I would put it in the category of “it can’t hurt” to have the lug nut torque rechecked. On my own vehicles, have I checked lug nut torque after the wheels were removed and installed? Yes, but not always.

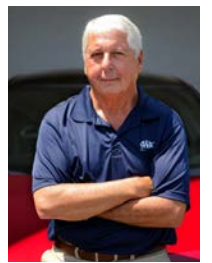
Q. My wife has a 2022 Prius Prime plug-in hybrid. We are looking for a private garage to work on hybrid and electric vehicle components. Can you recommend a tool to find one that will work on the car and also not void the warranty with Toyota? I have a great mechanic who is now in his 60s and has no interest in working on hybrids.

A. If it is just regular maintenance, such as brakes, steering components, bulbs, spark plugs, and oil changes, any good repair shop can handle that. If the repair is related to the hybrid drive system, then a hybrid specialist would be a good idea. AAA has Approved Auto Repair shops. Go to aaa.com/repair to find a shop near you. There is also a hybrid and electric vehicle training center (fixhybrid.com). Perhaps give them a call and see if they have trained anyone in your area.

Q. My 2014 Mercedes-Benz GL 450 has been deemed a total loss after an accident. The engine, however, was replaced by the Mercedes dealership in 2021, making the engine mileage approximately 45,000 miles less than what the odometer reads (120,000 miles). How can I maximize the amount of money I get from the sale of the car after the insurance company pays me for it? I plan on keeping the car and not turning it over to the insurance company after they pay the claim.

A. First, you need to look at what the insurance company will pay you outright and then compare that to what they will pay if you choose to keep the vehicle. Before agreeing to the settlement, provide the insurance company with documentation of the replacement engine. They may adjust the vehicle valuation upward based on that information. Looking online at CarGurus, the average Mercedes-Benz GL-Class GL 450

BY JOHN PAUL



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CAR DOCTOR
continued on page 13

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

Simple budgeting tips that fit real life

If you've just started managing your own finances, recommitted to doing it well or noticed your spending isn't making you as happy as you'd hoped, a budget might be exactly what you need. When you



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know where your money is going, you're likely to feel more in control and more confident that your finances reflect what actually matters to you.

A simple budgeting framework to start: The 50/30/20 rule

One of the easiest ways to structure a budget is the 50/30/20 rule. The concept is refreshingly straightforward: Put 50 percent of your after-tax income toward necessities (housing, groceries, utilities, transportation), 30 percent toward wants (dining out, entertainment, streaming subscriptions), and 20 percent toward savings or paying down debt.

The 50/30/20 rule is a great foundation, but you may need to adjust it a little. If you live in a high-cost city, housing alone might require more than half your paycheck. Or you may have high income and can save more than 20 percent. Think of the 50/30/20 rule as a starting point you can adjust as your life evolves.

Not sure where your money goes?

That's completely normal. If

you honestly don't know what you spend each month, try a low-pressure approach first. Spend a few months simply observing. Check your accounts without judgment, noting money coming in and going out. Think of it as a financial check-in rather than a report card. You can't change the past, but you can absolutely adjust for the future.

From there, small steps go a long way. Even spending 15 minutes a week on your budget can make the whole process feel far less daunting.

Make technology your easy button

Some budgeting apps do the routine work for you, syncing with your accounts and tracking spending automatically. Others are more hands-on, encouraging you to map out your spending plan in advance. There's likely one out there for every style of budgeting. The goal is to find a system you'll actually use and stick with.

When the numbers feel discouraging

Sometimes looking at spending brings up more stress than relief. If that happens, start by shifting your perspective. Focus on the expenses that brought you real value — a modest gift that meant the world to a friend or how your rent provides a comfortable, stable life. Then look for changes that align your spending with your values. Substituting expenses, reducing expenses or creating more income could all be used to help you keep your spending below your income.

Build a buffer

was offering, as a realistic example, \$13,000 if they take the car and \$7,000 if you keep it, I would let it go. Complete salvage GL450s are selling for roughly \$7,000 to \$10,000 online. If you wanted to disassemble the vehicle as a hobby and sell the parts individually, you could potentially do better, but that is more work than I would want to take on.

*Do you have a car question?
Email the Car Doctor for a personal
reply at jpaul@aanortheast.com*

If you can, consider building a small buffer into your budget for unexpected expenses such as birthdays, minor repairs or spontaneous plans. Adding perhaps 3 percent of your income or a set dollar amount, like \$200, helps keep those costs from throwing your whole plan off course.

The bottom line

With a few simple steps, budgeting becomes easier to stick with and more meaningful over time. At its core, it's a way to align your money with what matters while enjoying today and planning for tomorrow.

*This article was written by
Edward Jones for use by your local
Edward Jones Financial Advisor.
Please contact Dennis Antonopoulos,
your local Edward Jones Advisor,
at 5 Albert Street, Auburn, MA
01501 Tel: 508-832-5385 or dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com.
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CAR DOCTOR

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4MATIC sells for about \$12,500. Also, based on online listings, a used replacement engine can cost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$7,000. Could you keep the car and sell it as a complete parts vehicle? Yes. Could you disassemble it and sell the major parts individually to maximize the value? Yes, but only if you have the time and space to do it. If your insurance company

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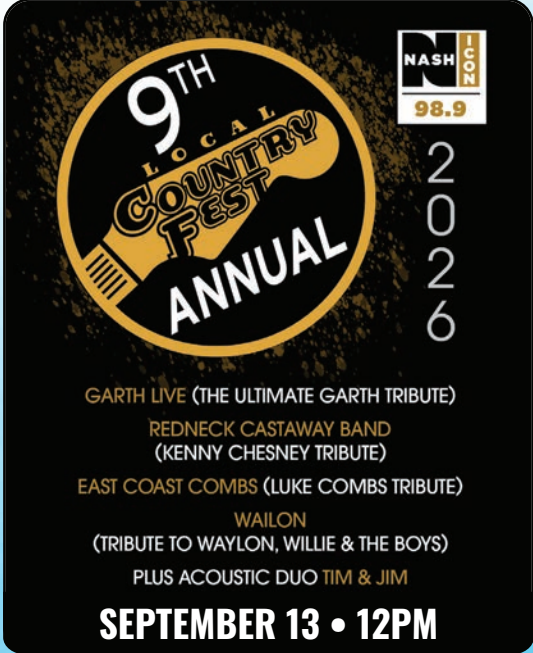


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SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 AND 13

• 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/auburnlibrary/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 pets and learn how the world's first emotional support dog helped save an entire breed from extinction. RSVP 508-832-7799.

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.

HAPPENINGS!
continued on page 15

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1. While our reporter Walter Bird toured the Koebeke Family Farm for this months' cover story, these cattle lined up as if to say, "Take our picture, too."
2. An explanation really isn't necessary, is it? Just read the sign.

We hope you enjoy Photo Finish, Yankee Xpress' newest feature. But we can't do it alone! Are you involved with a community group from Charlton, Dudley or Webster that honored a member? Was someone recognized in scouts, youth sports, your church group, or a town department that you think the Xpress readers should know about? Maybe a volunteer went above and beyond or a scholarship was given to an outstanding student. Or it's a photo of something or someone that will make us smile. Please email the photo(s) and a short description to Martha@localtownpages.com. Also include your name, address, and contact information (not for publication) should we have any questions.



HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 14

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/14k8aBARSFX/

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.
• 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.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15

• 5:45 p.m. Health care & your retirement. Join us for our free presentation where Dennis Antonopoulos (Financial Advisor for

Edward Jones) + Lynne Mussulli (Medicare Specialist) will discuss: Medicare coverage and traditional medical expenses, Long-term medical care expenses, and strategies for addressing out-of-pocket expenses Brookdale Eddy Pond West, 669 Washington St., Auburn. Please call Karen Rieser at 508-832-5385 or email karen.rieser@edwardjones.com by 10/2/2026.

Free performance by Premier Swing Band at The Black Tavern

Join us at The Black Tavern on Dudley Hill (138 Center Road, Dudley) on Thursday, September 17, at 7 p.m. 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: theblacktavern.com

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