

# The Yankee Xpress

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## INSIDE

### Nichols Consulting Group a boon to students, businesses they help

By Rod Lee

Long and deservedly known as a top school for business, Nichols College is always finding new ways to prepare its students for success in the world of commerce.

Nichols is ranked 12th nationally among undergraduate business schools for salary potential and 13th nationally as a Best Value Business College by Payscale.com. It is also ranked second most affordable online college in Massachusetts by OnlineColleges.net.

According to Nichols' website, 96% of its 2019 graduates were employed or in a graduate program six months after receiving their diplomas.

One of the people at the forefront of the continuing mission to groom Nichols students for future accomplishment is Leonard K. Harmon, the school's associate professor of marketing and an instructor with years of classroom experience behind him. Professor Harmon's credentials as a mentor to aspiring entrepreneurs and other students seeking professional attainment upon graduating includes having worked for such large consumer brands as Nestle' Chocolate and Transitions Optical.

Who better, then, to talk about the "Nichols Consulting Group,"

a program that gives Nichols students a chance to use what they've learned on Dudley Hill to help local businesses grow?

"When I took over the marketing program from Larry Downs in 2009, he had done a Capstone course and he had worked with an external company," Professor Harmon said on February 23. "I thought that was a valuable experience for the students so I expanded it and created teams. We worked to develop an action plan" from there, he said.

More recently, a Stansky professorship he was awarded, good for



Professor Len K. Harmon works with Nichols College students in a consulting group that provides support to the small business community.

two years, has enabled Professor Harmon to get the neophyte Nichols Consulting Group on a firm footing. A contribution from a Nichols alum

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Check out page 9 for details!

### Perro's Auto of Auburn makes it easy

By Janet Stoica

Thinking about the car of your dreams? Make, model, color, cool accessories? The dealer of choice is right here in Auburn, Perro's Auto Sales, located at 772 Southbridge Street.

Michael J. Perro established the business in 1965.

"If you have a job that you enjoy and it keeps you busy, it's a great experience" says Mike A. Perro, son of the dealership's founder, "I thoroughly enjoy greeting our new customers and seeing our repeat customers. We are happy to assist a customer in choosing their pre-owned vehicle."

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Mike Perro in his dealership showroom.

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## PERRO'S AUTO

Continued from page 1

According to Bankrate.com, a new car loses up to 30% of its value as soon as it's driven out of the new car dealer's lot. This is where Perro's Auto comes in. They will find you just about any make or model of a pre-owned car or truck of your specifications.

"Most of our cars and trucks are strictly lease cars," said Mike, "and the majority are one-owner only. They are genuine off-lease sales right from the major auto manufacturers. We travel to the larger auto auction sites to buy the real thing. We'll buy only one-owner vehicles that we do our homework on. If we learn that the vehicle's been in an accident, 99% of the time we will not purchase it. We thoroughly inspect each car and truck before we put it on our lot."

Perro's has three mechanics and an auto body shop located at 354 Harding Street in Worcester. Their Auburn location will perform quick vehicle repairs and oil chang-

es as well as tire rotations.

The Auburn and Worcester locations are all in the family with brothers Anthony and Robert Perro managing the Worcester location and brothers John and Mike at the Auburn location. There are also two additional sales personnel at the Auburn site.

"People are finally beginning to come back into our lots again," Mike stated. "We have many repeat customers and look forward to meeting new shoppers. Someone new to our dealership might be apprehensive but our customer service is top-notch and we feel that they'll enjoy the selection experience. We take many custom orders but also have a good inventory to pick from.

"You just tell us what type of vehicle you're looking for and what options you like along with your budget and we'll search through the New England area as well as Pennsylvania and New Jersey to find your choice.

"Today everyone has the internet at their fingertips, and you don't have to be a car guru to find what you want but our reputation

means a lot to us and we'll try our best to accommodate our customers."

He explains that many of their cars are a factory sale, meaning that the manufacturer was the actual lease company. Some of the makes are Toyota, Honda, Ford, Hyundai, GMC, Dodge, etc. and all have been previously one-owner lease cars. Most are still under remaining factory warranties.

"We are good people and most people who buy cars here come back to us," said Mike. "That in itself is truly a positive as people's allegiances today are not what they were years ago."

Mike also indicated that owners are keeping their cars longer today. Drive trains haven't changed much in 50 years, he stated, but the electronics have multiplied.

Perro's Auto Sales sets itself apart from other previously-owned vehicle dealers with their RMV program. "All you have to do is contact your insurance agent," he said, "and we'll take care of the registration process for you. There's no need for you to drive to the RMV and wait in a long line, we'll do it



Perro's Auto Sales is located at 772 Southbridge St. in Auburn.

all for you. You'll walk into Perro's and choose your vehicle and in short time, you'll walk out with your new registration in your hand."

There is a nominal fee for the RMV service but it's a much smaller fee than the cus-

tomary "documentation fee" charged by new car dealers.

Perro's does take trade-ins and can compete with most car/truck dealers on any make and model of vehicle you're interested in. They also assist with financing, us-

ing many local credit unions and banks.

Perro's Auto Sales is at 772 Southbridge Street (Route 12), Auburn. Phone: (508) 721-1444. Hours: Mon-Fri 9:30-7; Sat., 9-6; Sunday 12 noon-5. www.perroauto.com

## Dudley-Charlton Education Foundation 12th annual appeal

The Dudley-Charlton Education Foundation (DCEF) is pleased to announce the launch of our 12th annual appeal with a \$2,500 donation from Cornerstone Bank. Cornerstone Bank has supported DCEF annually since our inception. Each year, the DCEF awards grants to educators in our district to fund the implementation of creative and exciting ideas that enhance the school experience for our students. Although the classroom

and school year look different this year, the need still exists and all funds contributed to the DCEF are used to support education in the community.

Previous donations have made a significant impact across all seven schools in the past 11 years funding 118 grants and more than \$300,000 for fresh and creative ventures in the classroom.

Please consider investing in the future of the Dudley-

Charlton Regional School district students by supporting our 12th annual appeal which is running through March 31. Donations may be made securely, on-line at: www.dcedfoundation.org or by sending a check to: DCEF, PO Box 92, Dudley, MA 01571.

On behalf of the thousands of students impacted, and the teachers who facilitate these learning opportunities, thank you for your support.

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# PT Pet Supply & Grooming Salon grows as it gets back to basics



Mr. Hedgehog fits in the palm of your hand.



Bunny rabbit all groomed and ready for Easter.



A serval keeps watch.

**By Janet Stoica**

In early 2020, before COVID became a household word, Yolanda DeGaetano had been seriously thinking about closing the business she had established in Webster 16 years earlier, PT Pet Supply & Grooming Salon.

"The craziest thing is that business was down 50%," she said, "I only had one employee and then COVID happened. I told my husband 'we're done,' as this store is our only income." Yolanda's husband is a stay-at-home dad caring for their special-needs son.

Adding to the turmoil, her brother had suddenly passed away; it was a very emotional time.

After COVID struck, however, PT Pet Supply's business suddenly increased. "It was certainly the opposite of what we expected," Yolanda said, "and so far, it's still busier than it was in the past four years, so I can employ more people."

She explained that before the COVID crisis, she could barely afford to pay one employee and now with the business increase, she can employ six. "We are unhappy about the current health situation, but we are so grateful that our business has weathered the storm. We are getting back to our roots where we began 17 long years ago."

PT Pet Supply specializes in quality all-natural foods. "We've gotten back to our original ideas and offer our customers and their pets unique natural products that you will never find in chain stores. In the past two years we've increased our pet food lines to include more high-quality goods like raw food for dogs and cats."

She has added another freezer for those lines and now has three freezers filled with nutritious pet food. "These are clean products with only one, two, or three all-natural ingredients," she said. "They are all as biologically appropriate as possible."

Yolanda has expanded her grooming business too. She now employs three groomers, and all services are by appointment-only. They can do nail trims, ear cleanings, and sanitary shaves for pets who are unable to groom themselves in their remote areas.

"COVID restrictions shut down our grooming area as it was deemed a non-essential service. We knew some of our customers' pets needed specific grooming services to maintain their health, so we petitioned the state to allow us to groom. Eventually, by May 2020, we were allowed to help our customers' pets and their owner's relief was unmistakable. We had one dog who had developed a terrible medical condition due to the lack of routine grooming. We were able to relieve his condition with the grateful approval of his owner."

Through the end of March 2021, PT Pet Supply and Grooming Salon is having a Paws-itivity Video Clip Contest! Using Instagram or their Facebook page, enter your 10-20 second video clip with you and/or your pet dancing using the song Champagne Night by Lady A. Check it out on YouTube and proceed. The winner will receive a \$50 gift card to PT Pet Supply and Grooming Salon.

Yolanda and her business have supported many local worthy causes. They have worked with the Webster Animal Shelter and raised \$1,500 for agility equipment used by long-term shelter dogs and helped raise funds for the Community Cat Connection, as well as Dog Orphans.

They have gladly groomed many types of furry friends too, like baby kangaroos, monkeys, servals, cockatiels, bunnies, ferrets, and even guinea pigs. "We're like that TV show Cheers," says Yolanda. "When you come in here and we become friends, Everybody Knows Your Name."

Yolanda's irresistible enthusiasm comes through in the tone of her voice and the grateful comments she makes about her customers. It is especially rewarding to know that her business has turned a corner and that local customers now know what true assets she, her employees, and her outlet are to our community of pet owners.

PT Pet Supply and Grooming Salon is at 86 Worcester Road, Webster. Phone: (508) 943-9600. Hours: Mon-Fri 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.; and Sunday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Find them on Facebook and Instagram.



One of the employees holds a kangaroo from Records & Burpee's Petting Zoo.



Yolanda has done Husky rescue. Isaiah, in this photo, was adopted by Renee and her husband. They visited once in a while and Isaiah lived a great life until he was 16.

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## NICHOLS COLLEGE

Continued from page 1

helped the endeavor along as well. Students who are part of the Nichols Consulting Group are paired with businesses that have expressed a need for assistance with any or all aspects of their enterprise.

“Last fall, we undertook nearly twenty projects,” Professor Harmon said.

Finding prospective clients is not as hard as it might seem, he noted.

“Some companies come to me,” Professor Harmon said. “But we also work with

Chambers of Commerce and local economic-development organizations” to obtain clients. In addition to companies Nichols students have worked with so far and for which good results have been generated, “we are now hoping to connect with women-owned companies and minority-owned companies,” Professor Harmon said. “We have thirty students in the Capstone course. We are doing a project with the Worcester Red Sox in sports management, one of our largest majors.”

The reward for students, Professor Harmon said, is that

projects they tackle let them “put their skills into practice and more importantly learn how to create a leadership team. They bring their status, concerns and projects to me. From the clients’ standpoint, it has a practical benefit.” Nor does it necessarily end with an initial partnership. “We look to have ongoing relationships with our clients,” he said.

A businessperson with whom the Nichols Consulting Group has formed such a relationship is Michael Frisbie, a Nichols alum and real estate developer who owns a number of Noble gas stations and convenience stores in Connecticut. One of these “had a dairy barn” ingredient that Mr. Frisbie was looking for help with.

“We picked out two graduating students. They went to Ice Cream University and presented a business plan to Mike and the bank and it was accepted,” Professor Harmon said. “This was in May of 2019. They took over the location (the Frisbie Dairy Barn in New Britain) and ran



Paul Parks III at his Nichols College graduation in May of 2019; he has gone on to realize almost immediate success in the business world.

it all summer. This led to us working with Mike on other projects. Then Paul Parks (III), who is an instructor at a martial arts studio (Mastery Martial Arts in North Attleborough), bought the dairy barn with his dad.” After seeing the results the Parks father-and-son team produced, organizationally, “Mike Frisbie told Paul ‘I want you to open ice cream shops in all my gas stations,’ so there were unintended [positive] consequences,” Professor Harmon said.

Professor Harmon points out that while internships—a traditional path into the business sphere—are “valuable,” supervisors do not always have time to think about their role in the arrangement. The Nichols approach works differently by giving students more direct hands-on involvement with the businesses they work with.

In recent years, Nichols students have lent support to SJC Custom Drums in Southbridge, Sturbridge Coffee Roasters of Southbridge and Dudley, Alternatives for Health Herbal Apothecary in Sturbridge, Paw Plaza in Sturbridge and Kells Brewing Co. in Natick—for instance.

The Nichols Consulting Group is just one example of



A finance class at Nichols College.

a college that keeps its course content fresh. In 2019, Nichols launched two new marketing concentrations: “Digital & Social Media Marketing” and “Marketing Analytics.” Also introduced in the fall of 2019 was a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration with a concentration in corporate finance and investments.

All of this is exciting to Professor Harmon, who teaches marketing, advertising and public relations. He can see how Nichols students are playing key roles in today’s technologically driven marketplace.

As Professor Harmon says, “we are closing the loop on the marketing process—from research and analysis to planning, execution and evaluation of marketing campaigns.”

Paul Parks III, a 2019 Nichols grad, said in a telephone conversation on February 24 that he and Taylor Kerr were the two students Professor

Harmon mentioned who worked at Frisbie’s Dairy Barn. “We came in and ran it, [he] wasn’t happy with the previous management. We set up an operations plan, trained employees, remodeled. It was one of the earliest versions of the Nichols Consulting Group,” Mr. Parks said.

“It was a great season, a lot of fun.”

Paul Parks III is also lead instructor at Mastery Martial Arts in North Attleborough.

Now, Mr. Parks said, Mike Frisbie is “building out additional travel plazas and convenience stores” and the Parks’ are involved with that initiative.

“Absolutely, for sure,” he said, of the value of his Nichols education to his budding career.

Contact Rod Lee at [rodlee.1963@gmail.com](mailto:rodlee.1963@gmail.com) or 774-232-2999.

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**Pamala Holt joins Goodrich Insurance Agency**

We are excited to welcome Pamala Holt from Dudley, MA to our team of insurance professionals at Goodrich Insurance Agency in Milton, MA. Pamala has over 20 years of insurance expertise and will be our Personal lines Account Manager. Pam joined our office family on November 23, 2020 and will be working remotely from Dudley and in our main office in Milton. Help us give Pam a warm welcome! We look forward to providing our current clients and new clients with professional, personal, knowledgeable valued client services you expect from Goodrich Insurance Agency!

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**Business profile**



**Rob Mack**

**By Janet Stoica**

The saying goes “you can’t judge a book by its cover.” And so it is with the carpet and flooring outlet called North Oxford Mills.

“We might have the ugliest building, but the savings are beautiful,” to paraphrase owner Rob Mack’s words in his latest TV commercial.

Located off Route 12 in North Oxford, the store appears to be the ultimate local choice for a variety of flooring needs. They sell and install carpeting, laminate, hardwood, cork, and linoleum. And besides, why wouldn’t you want to buy local, from the businesses that are the lifeblood of our community?

“We’ve always been known as a carpet outlet, but we also offer all types of flooring,” says Rob Mack. “We buy a lot of inventory from brands such as Stainmaster, Shaw, Mohawk, Dixie Home, and Masland. We have waterproof vinyl floating floors that have a wood floor appearance. Sheet vinyl, however, is impervious to everything once it’s glued down to the base floor. The vinyl floating floor material styles and colors are truly beautiful; however, they’re not the least expensive, though easy to install over existing floors.”

North Oxford Mills also has a good commercial base. They’ve installed for and been involved with local banks, colleges, housing authorities, and general contractors. “During the COVID situation we’ve been included in lots of home improvement projects as well as many commercial jobs,” said Rob, “I think with people working from home, they’ve been looking at their current flooring more critically and realizing it’s time for replacement. Last May and June were busier than normal for us as was the summer, fall, and winter. The holidays slowed things down but it’s picked up once again. We are very thankful for the business uptick and greatly appreciate our customers’ contact with us.”

Rob Mack had worked for

**North Oxford Mills has you covered, including Katharine Hepburn**

his father-in-law, Bernie Edinberg, for a number of years before buying the business from him in 2005. The business currently employs two full-time and 2-3 part-time personnel as well as an installation team. “All of our work is fully guaranteed,” says Rob. “We don’t do ceramic tile, but we do most everything else. We also support our local schools and safety personnel. Additionally, I’ve hired our local high school students for after-school work and they are great additions to our staff.”

“Our installation team is amazing; they are second to none,” says Rob. “Anybody can sell flooring but it’s only as good as the quality of the installation including the underlay. The work of our installers is the best in Central Mass. Their work is high-quality and we’ll stand behind it. We take responsibility for materials, installation, everything.

My father-in-law is 79 and he is the person who visits people’s homes to assist with their choices and takes measurements. He also buys inventory and waits on store customers. During COVID, however, he has curtailed his work activity. Soon, he will re-join us.”

Rob related a story about a movie-star personality, the regal Katharine Hepburn, who visited the store in the 1970s. Ms. Hepburn purchased flooring for her Connecticut home, and it was an honor that she had chosen North Oxford Mills as her residence’s ultimate resource.

“We’ve been pleased to have been chosen to supply multi-million-dollar homes in the local area as well as for the average buyer,” says Rob. “Every job is interesting and unique. I enjoy the mathematical part of my job as well as its complexity. All of our customers are the

best. This area has the most down-to-earth people. They are good, honest, hardworking people that you want to do a good job for. Many of our customers know the value of their purchases and this is the most satisfying

part of my job. Our patrons work hard for their money and we work hard fulfilling their needs knowing it’s important to them. We are extremely grateful to have the local community as our customer base.”

North Oxford Mills is at 3 Clara Barton Road, North Oxford. Phone: (508) 987-8521. Hours: Tues-Sat 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Wed until 7 p.m. Closed Sunday and Monday. [www.northoxfordmills.com](http://www.northoxfordmills.com) and on Facebook.



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# Think Tank session shows Auburn ready to launch into the future

By Rod Lee

A "Think Tank" meeting hosted by the Auburn Chamber of Commerce via Zoom the morning of February 10 and featuring Town Manager Julie A. Jacobson as lead presenter showed how much Auburn has accomplished in the ten years since she arrived on the scene from neighboring Worcester.

Ms. Jacobson, speaking from behind her desk, wasted no time in ticking off the positives, starting with a total of \$41,749,475 in savings to taxpayers through FY 2021 "and never a 2-1/2

override," for example. Then there is free cash, which has grown from \$1.4 million to nearly \$16 million over that period; and more than two hundred grants received, totaling \$6,246,516.

All of which points the town toward "priorities" it will be focused on for the coming year: enhanced public health initiatives related to the Covid-19 pandemic including education and outreach; no large crowd events; a continuation of the delivery of services through various mechanisms including re-

mote communication; continued economic and housing development; grants management; continued roadway improvements; "conservative budgeting and adherence to financial policies;" and regular updates provided to residents of the town.

Looming large on the development front, Ms. Jacobson pointed out, is the need for a new public safety facility. Neither the Auburn Police Department nor the Auburn Fire Department buildings can be renovated. "We have no idea if residents will support" such a facility, to be located somewhere between "the mall and Loew's," but "that will be on our radar screen" going forward with a Town Meeting vote on the issue anticipated soon, she said.

A highlight of Ms. Jacobson's "exciting news" for her fellow Zoom'ers (in a meeting moderated by the Chamber's Virginia Murphy) was a recitation of development projects around town. Principal among these is work involving Auburn St., Drury Square, the Auburn Free Public Library and Goddard Park.

Noting that "you can't get there from here," Ms. Jacob-



The entrance to the Auburn Public Library. As part of a \$1 million redevelopment project in the town of Auburn, the library will get a sunroom off the back of the building, and a connection to Goddard Park by way of a pedestrian bridge.

son said a pedestrian bridge will be built, connecting the library with Goddard Park. With this there will be construction of a large sunroom on the back of the library and improvements to Goddard Park itself.

The pedestrian bridge, she said, will link the two parcels of land, which are separated by Auburn Pond.

"Planning is only good if you implement it—and we are," she said.

With more than \$500,000 in grant money already received from the Pappas Foundation toward the library/Goddard Park piece, the town is halfway there "to get this done," Ms. Jacobson said. This is the costliest component, she said. "Engineering is very expensive."

The Camp Gleason renovation project, the new joint

public safety facility, completion of "Mary D. Stone redevelopment into senior housing with playground upgrades," redevelopment of the Julia Bancroft property into senior housing, proposed commercial/industrial development on fifty acres at 190 Washington St. (the Dartmouth property), proposed development of 50 Washington St. and development of 325-unit Chapter 40B housing at The Reserves at Ashworth Hill are all on the drawing board.

Wayfinding, streetscape and street lighting work will be undertaken. "We are finalizing a wayfinding logo" that will bear the message "Auburn: Embracing the past and launching into the future," she said.

"In my opinion" the various projects that have been

ticketed for completion "will enhance the business community of this town," Ms. Jacobson said.

Ms. Jacobson enjoyed a receptive and appreciative audience in the person of School Superintendent Casey Handfield, Steve Londregan of Chuck's Steak House & Margarita Grille, Dennis Antonopoulos of Edward Jones, Kerri Cunningham of Fuller Automotive, Tina Puzo of bankHometown, Realtor Matteo Gentile and Jackie Faron of Atlas Distributing.

All shared their thoughts on operating businesses in the face of a worldwide pandemic.

"Like everyone else, we had to adjust," Ms. Puzo said. "We can do pretty much everything at the drive-up."

Ms. Jacobson agreed. "People used to say you could never work remote if you are a public-service employee. That's just not true. You can be anywhere and service that customer. We have a drive-through kiosk in our parking lot. If banks and McDonald's can service through a window, why not us?"

Contact Rod Lee at [rodlee.1963@gmail.com](mailto:rodlee.1963@gmail.com) or 774-232-2999.



Wayfinding signage that will be introduced with redevelopment of the Auburn St./Drury Square area of Auburn.



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Living well and looking good

# CT scan unlikely to miss advanced lung cancer

By Keith Roach, M.D.

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** Is it possible for X-rays and a CT scan to miss advanced lung cancer? My brother worked two days before he died. He went to the hospital, was admitted to hospice and died the next day. I wonder if he knew at least a year ago, but didn't tell anyone. He said his scans showed pneumonia. His son was called to the hospital and spent the day with him until he died. During his last day, my brother told him that he had lung cancer and that it was not diagnosed earlier. – N.W.

**ANSWER:** I am very sorry about your brother. Lung cancer, especially early lung cancer, is often missed on a regular chest X-ray. Pneumonia can accompany early lung cancer, and the pneumonia can hide the cancerous mass, but experienced radiologists should be able to see something. Also, experienced clinicians should check an X-ray weeks after a pneumonia to be sure there is no cancer in a person at risk, such as a current or former smoker.

Advanced lung cancer is only very rarely missed on X-ray, and should essentially never be missed on a CT scan. While I can't say it's impossible, it's much more likely that a year ago he was told that he had lung cancer and did not say anything, perhaps to spare his family's feelings, or perhaps he didn't want the sympathy and attention that accompany a diagnosis such as advanced lung cancer.

**Vague symptoms**

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** What does a person do when symptoms

are vague and hard to explain? I am an 82-year-old woman. I started feeling discomfort in one breast about three weeks ago. It felt like irritation from a bra. I did all the things I thought I should, and three weeks later the symptoms are the same or slightly worse. Nothing looks or feels different when I touch it. Do I see my primary doctor (he's never seen me naked), or find a gynecologist? How do I present this issue? I feel like a fool. – V.B.

**ANSWER:** Both clinicians should be able to appropriately evaluate this concern.

**To your good health**

You should go to whoever you are more comfortable seeing. What you should not do is ignore it.

In your particular case, it's unlikely that your symptoms are because of something serious. Breast discomfort is common and only rarely due to breast cancer, which is what you must surely be concerned about. You should

NEVER stop yourself from seeing your doctor for fear of not being taken seriously.

Primary doctors like me and gynecologists are very familiar with women coming in with breast symptoms, and we take them seriously. Clinicians know how justifiably concerned women are about breast cancer. Most often, a woman can be reassured with a careful history and physical

exam; other times, a mammogram or ultrasound may be ordered. You don't want to regret missing that visit to the doctor.

It is often said that the only foolish question is the one that is not asked. This situation is analogous: It would be foolish for you not to go. While the overwhelming likelihood is that you will be reassured, in the unlikely event there is

something wrong it's far better to know about it earlier than later.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu).

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## MCU meeting reports historic earnings

MILLBURY—Millbury Federal Credit Union (MCU) held its 86th annual meeting on Monday, February 22. The meeting was held virtually and in accordance with the state mandated Covid-19 guidelines.

Chairman Robert LeClaire opened the meeting verifying a quorum was present. He congratulated MCU management and the staff for surpassing the \$400 Million asset mark, a major milestone in MCU's history.

President Joseph F. Barbato reported on the financials, noting that MCU closed the year 2020 with \$407.4 Million in assets and

Net Income of \$2.75 Million, both historic achievements. He also noted that both MCU subsidiaries, Security First Mortgage Funding and MCU Commercial Services had historic earnings as well.

Four directors were recognized for their years of service: Robert LeClaire - 60 years; Alexander G. Belisle, Ph.D. - 31 years; Joseph F. Barbato - 27 years and John J. Connor- 26 years.

In addition, two employees were recognized for 25 years

of service: Denise Bates and Lisa Prouty.

Four Directors were elected to 3-year terms expiring in 2024: Paul Irish, David Roach, Heather Trudell and Joseph Barbato.

MCU began in 1934, with 20 members and total assets of \$100.00. Today, assets exceed \$407 million. Members enjoy a wide variety of innovative financial services through offices in Millbury, Auburn, Worcester and South Grafton.

## Dudley Cultural Council grant recipients

The Dudley Cultural Council is pleased to announce the following recipients of grants for Cycle 47, 2021:

**Jay Mankita**, "Chain Reactions @ Home From Household Materials, Tool, Toys, etc." to be held online at the Pearle L. Crawford Library in spring/summer of 2021.

**Mark Chester**, Photographer; "The Bay State: A Multicultural Landscape" - Photographs of New Americans, April 1 thru 30 at the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library.

**Kirk Whipple** - "Duo Pianists" to be held on local cable access TV between March and December. Date to be determined.

**Dr. Jess "The Machine" Green**, "Chainsaws, Cheeseburgers and Rock n Roll"-Live at the Dudley Middle School. Date to be determined.

**Dudley Grange** - "Summer Musical Concert Series," June 5, July 10, and August 7.

**Michelle Jervis** - "New Greenspace/Park" at 71 West Main Street, Dudley, construction to begin this year.

**Dudley Grange** - "Old Fiddlers of Rhode Island" October 2. "Hip Hop Dance Chair Exercise for Seniors" to be held at the Dudley Senior Center. Date to be determined.

Please check your local news media for specific dates when they become available.

Council members include Ginni DiDonato, Chairperson; JoAnn Brinker, Treasurer; Mary Kunkel, Secretary; Marilyn Kramarz, Audrey Resener, Sheryl Bernardo, Patty Biron, members.

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## Memorial Beach improvements with PARC grant

You may have noticed some activity down at Memorial Beach over the last week or so. Last year the Town of Webster applied for a grant through the state's PARC Grant Program. The town was awarded a grant in the amount of \$400,000 from the state to cover 73% of the cost of upgrades to be done at the beach.

The decisions on what upgrades to do came from various Beach Committee reports and was presented at town meeting. There are some great happenings go-

ing on. A dog park will be erected near the animal shelter. On the far side of the dirt parking lot area there will be an all-purpose field and PickleBall Court.

Playground equipment will be updated, making it more ADA accessible. There will be play equipment for the water, and last but not least the beach house will see upgrades in the bathrooms and concession stand.

Officials would like to thank the residents of Webster for their support in this project.

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**Town of Auburn  
2021 Annual Town Election  
Information and Calendar**

Tuesday, May 4 - Annual Town Meeting - High School Auditorium  
Tuesday, May 18 - Annual Town Election-Precincts 1,2,3,4 & 5 Auburn High School Gym

**Nomination papers**

Tuesday, March 30, 5:00 PM last day for candidates to file nomination papers with the board of registrars  
Thursday, April 15, 5:00 PM Last day for filing objection/withdrawals

Wednesday, April 28, 8 AM - 8 PM- Last day to register to vote  
Monday, May 10, 4:00 PM Campaign Finance Reports (Town-wide only) 8 day report

Thursday, June 17, 4:00 PM Campaign Finance Reports Due 30 day report

**Nomination papers - number of signatures required**

Town-wide Office - Minimum of 50 voters of the town. No more than four blank nomination papers issued

Town Meeting member - Minimum of 10 voters of the precinct in which the candidate resides. No more than one blank nomination paper issued

Incumbent Town Meeting Members - Last day to notify the Town Clerk in writing they wish to be on the ballot, is Tuesday, March 23.

Auburn residents 18 years of age by Election Day, May 18, 2021, or older may register to vote in the Town Clerk's office. A resident may register to vote by mail, in person or online <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/>; the mail-in form must be postmarked on or before April 28, 2021 for the voter to be eligible to vote at the annual town election. 16 and 17 years of age may also pre-register.

**Town of Auburn Ballot openings**

Annual election May 18, 2021

On Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at eight o'clock AM to elect by Official Ballot the following Town Officers and Committees for the following terms of offices as provided by the Charter, March 10, 1969, under General Laws, Chapter 43B Section (9c).

- One Housing Authority for Five Years
- Two Library Trustees, Auburn Free Public Library for Three Years
- One Moderator for One Year
- Two School Committee Members for Three Years
- Two Board of Selectmen Members for Three Years

**Town meeting members**

- Precinct One - 8 to be elected for Three Years
- Precinct Two - 8 to be elected for Three Years; 1 to be elected for One year unexpired term
- Precinct Three - 8 to be elected for Three Years; 1 to be elected for One year unexpired term 2 to be elected for Two year unexpired term.
- Precinct Four - 8 to be elected for Three Years
- Precinct Five - 8 to be elected for Three Years; 3 to be elected for One year unexpired term

**NHC announces new board appointments**

WHITINSVILLE - Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (BRVHNC) announces appointments made to its Board of Directors following its annual meeting in January.

The Board of Directors elected new officers as follows: Chair, Richard T. Moore (MA); First Vice-Chair, Dennis Rice (MA); Second Vice-Chair, Lee Dillard Adams (MA); Treasurer, Yvonne Chita (MA); and Secretary, Todd Helwig (MA). BRVHNC's Immediate Past Chair is Richard H. Gregory III (RI).

Directors re-elected for a three-year term on BRVHNC's Board include Richard H. Gregory III (RI), Dennis Rice (MA), and Gary E. Furtado (RI).

Directors on the Board include Bill Beidler (RI), Robert



Richard T. Moore

Billington (RI), Michael D. Cassidy (RI), Bob Contursi (MA), Robert Dandrade (MA), Gary E. Furtado (RI), Pieter de Jong (MA), Jeannie Hebert (MA), David W. Kellogg (RI), Thomas Kravitz, (RI), Harry T. Whitin (MA) and Donna M. Williams (MA).

**Webster 2021  
TOWN ELECTION SCHEDULE**

Position	Years	Avail.
Board of Selectmen	3	1
Finance Committee	3	1
Regional Vocational School Committee	3	1
Town Clerk	3	1
Trustees of the Public Library	3	2
Trustees of the Public Library	2	1
Board of Health	3	1
Redevelopment Authority	5	1
Housing Authority	4	1

WEBSTER - The annual town election will take place on Monday, May 3.

The last day for candidates to take out nomination papers is Thursday, March 11.

The last day for candidates to submit nomination papers to the Board of Registrars is Monday, March 15, by 5 p.m.

The last day for the registrars to certify papers and file them with the town clerk is Monday, March 29, by 5 p.m.

The last day to object or withdraw is Wednesday, March 31. The last day to register to vote is Wednesday, April 14.

Nomination papers require a minimum of 50 certified signatures and are available in the town clerk's office.

**OWC scholarships**

The Oxford Woman's Club is happy to announce the offering of three \$750 scholarships to be awarded to graduating seniors residing in the Town of Oxford and who attend school in Oxford, Dudley, Charlton, Southbridge, Shrewsbury, Worcester and Thompson, CT.

Applications will be available at their schools or by contacting Anne Marie Palermo, Chairperson of the Oxford Woman's Club

Scholarship Committee. Please plan to contact by emailing to simplyannie14@gmail.com (for confidential use only). All applications must be submitted in writing with all completed requirements in order to be considered for one of the scholarships. All applications must be postmarked no later than Saturday, April 17. The Oxford Woman's Club mission statement is "Working together for our community."

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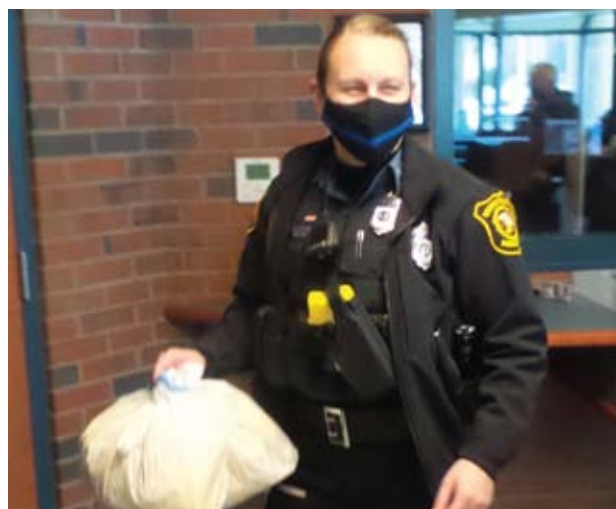
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# Webster's Masonic Lodge provides nourishment to essential workers



Members of Webster's Masonic Lodge at the Webster Fire/Rescue and Webster Police Station with their meal delivery.



**By Janet Stoica**

It's all about living up to faith, hope, and charity and members of Webster's Masonic Lodge abided by that credo on Monday, February 22, when they provided more than 80 meals to local police, fire, and emergency service and dispatch personnel. Steaming hot containers of homemade potato leek soup as well as individually wrapped sandwiches were delivered to these essential service members of the Webster community.

The service project was the brainchild of Webster chapter Lodge Master Mike Chiler.

Richard Clark, Junior Warden and previously Master of the Webster Lodge, said "We discussed a number of community outreach activities. Mike Chiler was the one who got us motivated. It was his idea. He wanted to do a service for our community, presented it well, and we all felt it was a great idea. Our members came up with a menu and it all came together."

Mr. Chiler owns a successful food business in Webster, Mike's Crunchies and Munchies, and it appears to be a natural fit for him to offer up some of the delicious items on his menu.

Mr. Chiler explained that the Masons' officers had discussed how they could

serve the local community by doing a good service. "We knew of the sacrifices made by our first responders," he said. "They are always there for all of us when we need them and what better way to thank them for their valuable services? We recently celebrated George Washington's birthday and since President Washington was a Mason, we felt this was an appropriate act of kindness for our town's most important assets."

"The Webster Masonic Lodge is the oldest fraternal

organization in Webster," said Mr. Clark. "Our mission is faith, hope, and charity and we try to provide men with an opportunity to interact with others and live up to our mission statement. There have been 14 U.S. Presidents and 30 Supreme Court Justices who have been Mason members. The organization grew out of the Enlightenment to share

ideas. In Masonry there is no religious test—it is to believe in a Supreme Being. In 1733 when it was founded in Massachusetts, the religious aspect was unavailable to people of that time."

For more information about the Massachusetts Masons group, you may visit [www.massmasons.org](http://www.massmasons.org) or contact Richard Clark at (508) 858-9625.

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Join Dennis Antonopoulos, financial advisor for Edward Jones, in Auburn for the presentation Here's what will be discussed:

- How does Social Security fit into my retirement income plan?
- When should I start taking benefits?
- What about taxes?

The date is Wednesday, April 14, from 6:00-7:00 pm. This Webinar is being held via Zoom.

To register please call Karen Rieser at 508-832-5385 or email Karen.rieser@edwardjones.com by April 13 to receive Zoom link. This is a part of the Edward Jones monthly webinar series - Held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

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## Food Drive

### March 18<sup>th</sup> - March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021

**The Black Tavern Historical Society** and **First Congregational Church of Dudley, UCC** have once again partnered with **Tammy Ducharme**, from **TMD Small Business Group**, to collect non-perishable food items (Monetary donations and gift cards will also accepted.) to benefit local non-profit organizations and food pantries throughout our community.



Contactless Donation Drop Off will be available anytime from Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, March 21<sup>st</sup> on the front porch of:

**The Black Tavern Historical Society**  
138 Center Road  
Dudley, MA 01571

## What's in it for me?

Isn't that just an attitude? This seems to have crept into society in the past couple decades. Why isn't it "What's in it for us?"

This is just one American Legionnaire's view. When soldiers came home to stay, (back in the day) it was all about family and community.

Have you noticed that we have gotten to the point where we are all so busy that family time is when we go on vacation?

Now there are so many activities that we rarely do things as a family. Back when there weren't any computers or cell phones, we as a society moved a lot slower. We took the time to take the back roads and enjoy the ride because there weren't as many highways.

In March 2019, the American Legion Post 279 in Auburn burned down. At that time the legion participated in a few mainstays in the town like organizing the Memorial Day parade and a couple of Legion programs for our youth to familiarize themselves with government and the state police.

The community probably knew us best for Friday Night Fish and Chips. We gave to many of the charities with cash donations but our post struggled to make ends

meet like many other posts.

As we took stock of our post's history we remembered back when families used to be around all the time doing something. Some of you might remember the Drum and Bugle Corps. How about the great Chicken Bar-B-Qs? The Legion used to sponsor youth sports teams. These things were real family activities.

Back then the veterans from the WWII era were pretty much running the posts. But as time went by, something was lost as families found other avenues to entertain their families. The posts were thought of, in time, as a place where veterans could go and relax and tell stories and have a drink.

The service of helping the community and family-oriented activities was somehow lost. Membership is down everywhere because the younger veterans are in different circumstances than the ones of yesterday. Younger veterans want to be included in a group of people that support each other and they want their membership to mean something.

One of the ways that happens is providing interesting events for the communities. The younger veterans are enthusiastic and most of

the time have young children.

The Auburn American Legion Post is in the process of rebuilding. We are hoping for spring or early summer for our opening. Many new plans are in the making but with our large aging membership of Vietnam veterans, it is getting harder for us to participate in some of the physical activities that would attract younger families.

The Phoenix is rising from the ashes and with a new post, a new attitude will also arise. We are now looking for families to participate in creating a place that will draw other families to fun-filled activities.

If you are a vet, you can join our Legionnaires. If you are a male descendant of a vet you are eligible to join the Sons of the Legion, and we also have a very strong auxiliary.

We also have a group called the American Legion Riders. You must be a member of one of the three groups to join and you must have a motorcycle. If you just want to come and help or enjoy the facilities please do.

Remember: when you join the American Legion, there is no rank among us. All races and genders are encouraged to come, join or both, but over all have fun.

*Submitted by Steve Gallant,  
Chester P. Tuttle Post 279, Auburn*

## Bay Path nursing students help give COVID vaccines

SOUTHBRIDGE - Health departments and hospitals around the state are continuing to work to vaccinate as many people as possible, and for Harrington Hospital that means the inclusion of help from Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy students.

Harrington Hospital and Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy have partnered to help administer more vaccines to the community. The practical nursing students who are on term 2 and on their medical-surgical nursing clinical rotation have been asked to help at the vaccine clinic at the Armory.

For clinical facilitators like Professor Cheryl Cahill, MSN

Ed, RN, this is a wonderful opportunity for her students. "The students are doing a wonderful job providing pre-vaccination teaching, obtaining informed consent for vaccines, administering COVID vaccines, and monitoring patients after the vaccines are given. They really feel part of the team at Harrington. We are so happy to be of service during this pandemic" said Cahill. The sentiment is echoed by Gretheline Bolandrina, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN, Academy Director, "this is an unbelievable opportunity for our practical nursing students to participate in a history making event like this." Clearly in line with service learning. "The oppor-



**Bay Path Nursing students.**

tunity allows our students to fine tune their skills in something that we don't always get a lot of opportunity to do, IM injections" said Bolandrina.

Over the past weeks, students under the supervision of their clinical facilitator worked alongside other healthcare workers at the Armory.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to assist at the Armory! On top of being able to

practice giving vaccines, I enjoy being able to see all of the details to ensure that the clinic is able to run smoothly. It is a very informative learning environment!" stated Carolyn Jenkins of Cherry Valley.

"I am really grateful for the opportunity to be able to learn, help, and make change. The people's appreciation makes me feel good too," shared Tianna Welcome of Oxford.



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# The Bird Store and More really is more

By Janet Stoica

Can you imagine selling through 6,000 – 8,000 lbs. of bird seed weekly? That's the average amount of bird seed sold by Bill and Nancy Cormier, owners of The Bird Store and More in Sturbridge. Amazing. If you have outdoor bird feeders and enjoy seeing the beautiful avians indulge in their favorite treats then you owe yourself a visit to The Bird Store and More. The most frequently bought items are bird seed, bird feeders, and suet but you will lose yourself in the many other products that the store has on display for your surfing enjoyment.

First of all, let's just clear up a little trivia about birds. According to their definition in The Free Dictionary "If you ask your average paleontologist, who is familiar with the phylogeny of vertebrates, they will probably tell you that yes, birds (avians) are dinosaurs. Using proper terminology, birds are avian dinosaurs; other dinosaurs are non-avian dinosaurs, and (strange as it may sound) birds are technically considered reptiles." They may be considered all of the above, but they sure are graceful, beautiful, and full of wonder-

ful feathery color palettes. The red cardinals are a beauty to behold as are the Eastern bluebirds, American goldfinches, and red-bellied woodpeckers. If they choose to grace our backyards with their elegance and variety, we should look upon them as one of the greatest gifts of nature. Just watching them dine on the seeds in our feeders is mesmerizing.

If you are looking for the absolute freshest bird seed, pay a visit to The Bird Store. Their bird seed is shipped weekly from an Amish packing house in Ohio so their entire warehouse of bird seed is replenished with fresh seed weekly. The fresh seed is packed on a Monday and delivered to Sturbridge on a Thursday. "We don't use any chemicals on our bird seed mixes," says Nancy Cormier, "this would be detrimental to the birds' hatchlings. Hopefully, after a customer buys their bird seed, they'll use it within a month. If you can't use it within that time frame, it's best to freeze it, that way it will kill any moth eggs that have been laid in the seed when it is in the fields. The moths lay their eggs in the

fields before harvesting begins." By the way, The Bird Store does sell moth traps that use pheromones to attract both male and female moths if you ever encounter such a moth infestation problem.

There are three varieties of seed that the store offers: the most popular blend is the #2 Sunflower Seeds which are partially hulled so not as messy; Hi-Energy which is their custom blend consisting of nuts, berries, and a small amount of millet; and Nutrasaff, safflower seeds loved by birds but shunned by squirrels and starlings. Additional bird attractions are dried and live meal worms which bluebirds thoroughly enjoy.

The store does sell a great amount of suet. Hint, buy the hot pepper variety if you don't want the squirrels enjoying the suet. The birds' taste buds will not pick up the hot pepper but the squirrels are sure to shy away after their first taste. There are squirrel treats here too though, known as Critter Vittles, such as dried corn on cobs and sunflower seeds with corn and peanuts.

Additional browsing in this wonderful store will uncover delicate wind chimes, garden extras, beautiful bird houses, and hummingbird feeders as well as human coffee cups, locally-harvested honey and local maple syrup for those fluffy pancakes you might make on winter weekends. The items are relaxing to look at and wonderful to consider, including puzzles for adults and children, kids' plush toys, Australian Natural Soaps that are triple-milled along with goat's milk soap too, including a soothing variety of scents. Of course, they have an interesting variety of tee shirts and even bird-watching binoculars with field guides which could come in handy if you join the

couple on bird walks in late April and early May. They carry a pretty cool variety of greeting cards, including the Pumpnickel brand, wall art, and fascinating whirligigs, which are yard ornaments powered by the wind. Their webstore presence allows them to take orders from all over the country and their 10-year employee, Dezeree Kelley, is only too happy to help customers find the products they are searching for.

A visit to the Crooked Shed is in order to admire the largest cuckoo clock in New England. The cuckoo sounds off every hour from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. while the store is open. Mr. Cuckoo appears from his perch once his door opens and is currently two-dimensional but Bill Cormier hopes to change the crooner to a three-dimensional version in the near future.

"Our business has boomed during the COVID situation," said Mrs. Cormier, "and we consider ourselves very fortunate. Our store is always evolving. It's the 'more' in Bird Store and More. In the spring we look forward to expanding our product lines with additional items. We're always looking for new things to add." The couple has a store mascot named Alf. He's a cockatiel, which is a small parrot that is a member of the Australian cockatoo family. He is a rescue bird and enjoys being the overseer of the store. Up until last year, a turtle dove also enjoyed residence at the store for 18 years but an unfortunate accident ended his habitation there. And, no, they don't sell birds!

Making the drive to the Bird Store and More will be very rewarding. Check it out. The Bird Store and More, 4 Cedar Street, Sturbridge. Open Monday – Saturday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Phone: (508) 347-2473. www.thebirdstore-andmore.com



Nancy and Bill Cormier, owners of The Bird Store and More



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Chief's corner

# Scammers always finding new angles

By Chief Steven J. Wojnar  
Dudley Police Department

A variety of financial fraud "scams" continue to occur in our area. People can be asked to send money to various locations or provide personal or bank information. These can take place in person, on-line, over the phone, or by mail. As a result, many have lost large sums of money. In recent weeks, several people, including me, have been called by someone posing as a power company or motor vehicle warranty official. I wanted to provide once again everyone with some information on these illegal activities.

Money and identity scams have been occurring for many years. Various types have taken place during this COVID-19 time. Those responsible prey on unsuspecting individuals, particularly seniors. Their goal is to obtain either quick cash or bank account numbers. Armed with this documentation, the criminal can commit identity theft and access your finances. Scammers can be well versed and prepared. Many do extensive on-line research, includ-

ing checking obituaries, tax records, or other publicly available information prior to calling you. They may have the names of children, grandchildren, a deceased spouse, and a variety of other information, which they can use to intimidate or trick you.

In this instance, an automated message plays informing the person they have been overcharged by their power company and they are due a refund. Others tell people their vehicle warranty is up, and they are eligible for renewal. The goal is to get you to engage with one of their "representatives" and provide personal information or send money. They most likely have little of the information they called you about and will ask you to provide it to "confirm" their records. The caller tends to become rude if they are questioned. This is a hoax. If it is legitimate, the caller should already have all the information and be able to provide phone numbers, addresses, etc. to you to confirm their legitimacy. Do not trust any of this business over the phone.

You can follow up with your power company or car dealership. In addition, Social Security scams are also prevalent, especially during tax season. People can be told their number has been compromised or blocked. Callers threaten you with arrest or other penalties unless you divulge personal information or send some form of payment. No one is ever threatened over the phone by the Social Security Administration and our department has never arrested anyone on behalf of this agency. Please exercise caution and seek out help from trusted people (family member, bank, police, etc.) before taking any actions. If you receive unexpected requests for money or other personal information, assume it is a scam. Be very cognizant of these occurrences and protect your personal information. Report anything suspicious to the proper authorities.

As the pandemic continues, we ask everyone to stay safe and continue to take the necessary precautions to protect yourselves.

For those eligible, vaccination information can find it at [www.dudleyma.gov](http://www.dudleyma.gov) or by calling 508-949-8036. We continue to serve the people of Dudley and work with the community to improve the quality of life for everyone. I thank the men and women from my department for their continued dedicated service to the Town during these trying times. Thanks also go out to the many Police Officers, Fire and Emergency Services members, public works, health care, government officials, and all other "essential" personnel for their continued hard work and service. We greatly appreciate the support we receive from our community.

*Thanks again for your questions and comments. Please send them to me at the Dudley Police Department 71 West Main St., Dudley, Ma. 01571 or email at [swojnar@dudleypolice.com](mailto:swojnar@dudleypolice.com). Opinions expressed in this weekly column are those of Chief Wojnar only and unless clearly noted, do not reflect the ideas or opinions of any other organization or citizen.*

## Janet Malser Humanities Trust call for grant applications

The Janet Malser Humanities Trust is now accepting applications for the 2021 grant cycle. Ms. Malser set up the charitable Trust in order to support the arts and humanities, community service and conservation in the towns of Dudley, Oxford, and Webster.

The causes for which funding will be considered include: "the restoration and preservation of historic sites; the furtherance of art and music in the schools, both public and private; public concerts with an emphasis on classical music; the improvement and growth of public libraries; the support of church work aiding the indigent, homeless, aging citizens and needy children; beautification through planting and the preservation of park areas and cemeteries; the improvement of service and equipment at the Hubbard Regional Hospital [now Harrington Healthcare at Hubbard], and the environmental protection of Webster Lake."

Trustees make awards annually to verified tax-exempt organizations meeting the charitable purposes of the Trust. Prior recipients are eligible to apply so long as proper follow up status reports have been filed; otherwise they will not be considered.

Applications and additional instructions including filing final reports are available at [www.janetmalsertrust.org](http://www.janetmalsertrust.org). Because of COVID-19 concerns, the deadline has been extended and all applications must be postmarked by June 1.

## SENIOR NEWS LINE

### Seniors have financial clout

By Matilda Charles

Have you given any thought to just how much financial clout we seniors have? Not because we necessarily have a lot of money, but because there are so many of us. As a "silver block" we can make some changes. And with every day that passes, more and more people join our group.

Shopping locally has immediate benefits close to home. According to the Small Business Administration, for every \$100 spent locally, \$48 of it stays in the community. At a big-box chain store, only \$14 stays in town.

Consider that every local purchase you make might actually be the one that keeps a neighbor employed as small businesses struggle to stay open. Foods that are made locally will be in your hands when they're fresher. And you're likely to get better service and free delivery from a local business that's grateful for your order.

Check a list of stores in your area to see if they have websites. If not, call and ask how orders are placed.

Look for local farmers who sell their products at farmers markets. Call local appliance dealers before your next big purchase. Contact bakeries, shoe stores, and toy, pet and furniture stores that are locally owned.

If shopping locally is too limiting, expand your view to goods made in the U.S.A. As a block, we have a lot of clout there as well. Finding those items, however, can be difficult. When it comes to products made in America, here are a few websites that list by category dozens or hundreds of items made here:

I Buy American Store ([www.ibuyamericanstore.com](http://www.ibuyamericanstore.com)). Made in America Store ([madeinamericastore.com](http://madeinamericastore.com)). Clark Howard ([clark.com](http://clark.com)). Put "Made in America" in the search box and look for 100-plus brands made in the U.S.A.

Do your homework before you place an order. Call the individual manufacturer to verify that the items are indeed made in America.

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# FOOD AND FUN PULL-OUT SECTION

PULL OUT SECTION

Save these pages as a guide to area dining and things to do

## St. Andrew Bobola take-out Lenten fish dinners

Every Friday from March 12 through March 26, St. Andrew Bobola Church, 54 West Main St., Dudley will be offering take-out Lenten dinners with your choice of baked or fried fish from 11 am to 1 pm and again from 4 pm to 6 pm.

Fried dinners include french fries, cole slaw and tartar sauce. Baked dinners include baked potato, sour cream, coleslaw and tartar sauce.

You can call ahead to order, 508-943-5633 but

please understand there may still be a wait time in our parking lot, depending

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## March art show

March Art Show – “It’s Never Too Late,” paintings and mixed media work by Meg Harrison Young and her late twin sister, Martha, is on display until March 31 at Booklovers’ Gourmet, 72 East Main Street, Webster, during regular business hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10-5. For more information, call 508-949-6232 or email deb@bookloversgourmet.com.

Artist’s statement: After graduate school I worked for 25 years as an Art Therapist with mentally ill adults. In

the almost decade since, I’ve been a mental health counselor. Over the years, art making was a hobby, with long stretches of time when materials lay idle and dusty. In January 2020, my terminally-ill twin, Martha, could no longer care for herself, and so moved in with my husband and me. Soon thereafter, COVID made sheltering in place another challenge. Martha had art school training, and over the years had exhibited her work on occasion. Making art again would become a self-therapy



and an activity we could share. And then, she passed in November. The opportunity to exhibit here seemed an excellent way to first and

finally show together.

### Book group zoom event

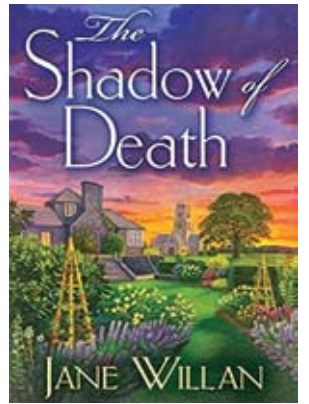
Wednesday, March 31st at 5:30 p.m. Booklovers’ Gourmet will host a special book group event with local mystery author Jane Willan via ZOOM. The book to be discussed is *The Shadow of Death*, a refreshing change in the cozy mystery book category. The first in a series, the story is centered around a convent in the Welsh countryside and the



main character, Sister Agatha, sets out to solve a murder that occurred at the Abbey. For the Zoom link, please email deb@bookloversgourmet.com

Jane Willan wants to live in a world where everyone has time to read their favorite books, drink good coffee and walk their dog on the beach, but

until that can happen she enjoys life as a pastor and writer. When she’s not working on a sermon, or hiking with her husband, Don, you can find her re-reading Jane Eyre,



binge-watching Downton Abbey and trying out new ways to avoid exercise. This is her first Sister Agatha and Father Selwyn mystery.



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- 5 LBS. CHICKEN LEG QUARTERS OR 2 LBS. BONELESS CHICKEN BREAST
- 2 LBS. HAMBURG OR 2 LBS. STEW BEEF
- 1 LB. HOT DOGS OR 1 LB. BACON
- 2 LBS. NEW YORK SIRLOIN STEAK OR 3 LBS. HAM STEAKS
- 2 WHOLE OR CUT UP CHICKENS (AVG. WEIGHT 3 LB. EACH) OR 3 LBS. PORK CHOPS

**B - \$50.00**

- 3 LBS. BONELESS CHICKEN BREAST OR 1 PKG. (1½ LBS.) MARINATED CHICKEN BREAST
- 2 LBS. HAMBURG OR 3 LB. GROUND TURKEY
- 3 LBS. PORK CHOPS OR 2 LBS. HAM STEAKS
- 1 WHOLE OR CUT-UP CHICKEN (3 LBS.) OR 1 PKG. SAUSAGE OF YOUR CHOICE
- 1 LB. BACON OR STEW BEEF

**\$75.00**

- 5 LBS. CHICKEN LEG QUARTERS OR 1 LB. BACON
- 3 LBS. HAMBURG OR 3 LBS. STEW BEEF
- 2 LBS. LONDON BROIL STEAKS OR 2 LBS. NEW YORK SIRLOIN STEAKS
- 3 LBS. BEEF POT ROAST OR 3 LBS. BONELESS PORK ROAST
- 3 LBS. BONELESS CHICKEN BREAST OR 1 PKG. (1½ LBS.) MARINATED CHICKEN BREAST OF YOUR CHOICE
- 1 WHOLE CHICKEN (3 LBS. AVERAGE) OR 1 LB. SAUSAGE OF YOUR CHOICE

**\$100.00**

- 5 LBS. BONELESS CHICKEN BREAST OR 3 LBS. BEEF POT ROAST
- 4 LBS. CHICKEN LEG QTRS. OR 1 LB. BACON
- 3 LBS. BONELESS PORK ROAST OR 2 LB. NEW YORK SIRLOIN STEAK
- 1½ LBS. SIRLOIN TIPS OR 3 LBS. PORK CHOPS
- 3 LBS. HAMBURG OR 1 PKG. (1½ LBS.) MARINATED SIRLOIN TIPS OF YOUR CHOICE
- 2 WHOLE OR CUT-UP CHICKENS (6 LBS. TOTAL) OR 1 PKG. (1½ LBS.) COOKED CHICKEN WINGS OF YOUR CHOICE
- 1 LB. SAUSAGE OF YOUR CHOICE OR 1 LB. HOT DOGS
- 1 ROASTING CHICKEN (6-8 LBS.) OR 2 LBS. STEW BEEF

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## Farmers and Cultural Market at Pappas Recreation Complex

Spring is right around the corner and I couldn't be more excited! I am reaching out to our farmers and artisans to see if you are interested in joining us in a safe and fun Farmers and Cultural Market for 2021. Please let me know if you are interested in joining us again this year. Last year all of you were so supportive as I received guidance from the state, attending zoom meetings regularly to be able to provide fresh local items to our community with your help. Thank you so much

for all of your support over the years. This will be the Town of Auburn's 5th year hosting the market.

*Kristen M. Pappas*  
Director of Recreation and Culture/ Club Manager  
Pakachoag Golf Course

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WEBSTER RECREATION PRESENTS

# EASTER EGG HUNT

STARTING MARCH 27

TOWN-WIDE

Starting 3/27/2021 the egg hunt is on! This year eggs will be hidden "around town" for you to find at your leisure. There will be 12 Golden Eggs, which can be turned in for a special surprise. This post will be updated with locations of clusters of eggs, but you may find some anywhere and everywhere...Keep your eyes open

## Random acts of kindness: hearts of Bay Path PN students on display

CHARLTON - According to research, "spreading kindness not only helps others feel better about themselves - it can also boost the giver's health and happiness." February 17, the National Random Act of Kindness Day was celebrated by the Practical Nursing Class of 2021 at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy by displaying their "RAKtivism" or being a "Random Acts of Kindness Activist."

Gretheline Bolandrina, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN Academy Director, is grateful for the PN Class of 2021 and their kind gestures. She strongly believes in kindness's many health benefits such as lower blood pressure, pain reduction, happiness, and the ultimate helpers' high. "Our student nurses are making the world a better place," she said. "Any act of kindness, no matter how small changes the world, and any kindness

given to others is also a gift to yourself."

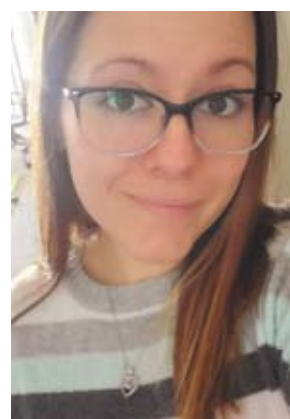
"Sometime back, on a Thursday morning while driving on Route 31 in Spencer, The two cars in front of me got into a collision. I pulled over and made sure the police were called. The accident involved a middle-aged man and an older woman. I had the woman stay in her car and not move in case she had any injuries as she was affected more than the male was. The male was anxious and really worked up. I did what I could to reassure him that he needed to be calm. I waited until the police arrived. Fortunately, both collision survivors left with only minor bumps and bruises." - **Brianna Cloutier, SPN of Charlton**

"When a neighbor's dog, Juda (a German Shepherd) passed away (of old age), my 8-year-old daughter who had a small stuffed animal that looked like Juda gave the neighbor her stuffed animal in remembrance. It made Juda's mom (who is in her 50s) so happy, she gave my daughter daisies with thanks. She makes me so proud."

"On Christmas Eve I gave a homeless man in downtown Worcester (under a bridge)



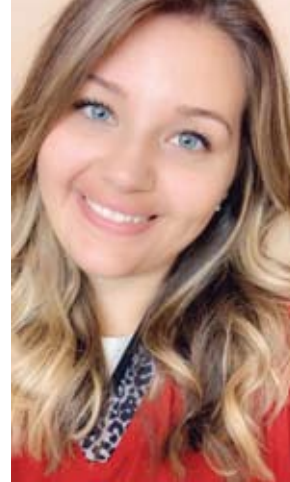
Brianna Cloutier



Tianna Welcome



Brianna Laforest



Elizabeth Larson

a variety box of homemade cookies. There were chocolate chips, snowballs, thumbprints, peanut butter balls, peanut butter cookies, and sugar cookies with frosting.

Small acts of kindness warm the heart." - **Tianna Welcome, SPN of Oxford**

Brought flowers to cheer up and celebrate milestones for staff and faculty: "Florigraphy, the language of flowers, was developed as a form of communication at a time where it was not appropriate, polite or proper etiquette for an individual to fully express their emotions with another."

**Brianna Laforest, SPN of Webster**

ARC blood donor: "Blood donors report feeling a sense of great satisfaction after making their blood donation." - **Elizabeth Larson, SPN of Webster**

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation lists kindness ideas organized by work, community, environment, animals, strangers, kids, seniors and more. For more information visit <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org>

## Charitable trust funding available

OXFORD - The Trustees of the Cecelia J. Smolenski/Millette Charitable Trusts have announced applications are available for grant funding for projects and programs that promote and foster recreational and literary opportunities and activities for children in Oxford.

The Smolenski/Millette Trusts were established in 1995 and 2000 to be used for the charitable, recreational, literacy, or educational purposes for the benefit of the youth of Oxford. The Trustees comprise various town officials as well as members of the public. The original donation to the town totaled over \$2 million and distributions are made from trust income.

Previous projects and programs funded in whole or in part through the trust include the Splash Pad, the NJROTC program at the high school, the library pass program, the skate park, activities at Joslin Park, the Greenbriar osprey camera, playground equipment, upgrades to the Little League concession stand, and activities at the Community Center.

Applications can be found online at [www.oxfordma.us/town-manager](http://www.oxfordma.us/town-manager). Applications are due no later than April 30. Applications are also available by contacting the town manager's office at [manager@oxfordma.us](mailto:manager@oxfordma.us) or 508-987-6030, ext. 8.

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## Tales from beyond

### Rachel's Curse

By Thomas D'Agostino

In Plymouth, Massachusetts, there once lived an old woman the locals called "Aunt Rachel." She earned a modest living telling fortunes to the locals, but it was mostly sailors who called upon her talents of predicting the weather and their future. Many seafaring folk relied on her predictions in regard to whether they would head out to sea or not. Sailors have always been a superstitious lot and Rachel often told them a safe journey or eminent danger lay ahead.

One day a few sailors called upon her for her talents, and she immediately recognized one as a friendly and decent fellow villager. The others she knew to be of shady character, and Rachel chided the local for keeping society with the "rogues" he was with. One of the other men interrupted her lecture by stating, "None of your slack old woman or I will put a stopper on your gab."

It was then Rachel began calling them mooncussers; those who lure unwary ships onto rocks or shore for plunder by using false beacons. She looked the man straight

in the eye and cursed, "He who rides the pale horse be your guide, and you be of the number who follow him." The men laughed at her rambling and set off to the local pub for a tankard.

That night Rachel's house mysteriously burned to the ground, almost taking her with it. A few days later, the brig with the men who had visited her previously was ready to set sail, and Rachel joined the townsfolk to see her off. The owner of the brig offered his deepest sympathies on the loss of her home. She retorted by stating, "I need it no longer anyway. For the narrow house will soon be my home and you wretches cannot burn that. But you! Who will console you for the loss of your brig? She now carries a curse and will not sail long."

The owner scoffed at the old woman's words, for he had no doubt his ship was seaworthy and his crew among the most experienced to sail those waters. This he assured Rachel as the brig navigated past the hidden shoals and bars that had claimed so many other



vessels. All the while, the old woman mumbled and chanted curses in the direction of the brig, then in a blinding moment, she thrust her bony arm into the air and let out a scream like a banshee. The crowd immediately focused their attention on her but was quickly drawn away by a cry from another. The brig had come to a sudden stop and shuddered before breaking up. It listed and sank until only the tops of the masts were visible above the water. Rescue crews frantically rowed out to the sunken ship picking up the crew as they swam for their lives. All were brought to shore and accounted for, except for one;

the man who dared insult Rachel and burn her home. During the melee, no one noticed that Rachel had died just after the ship had hit the rock previously unknown to the area's navigators.

Rachel was buried on the site where her house once stood, and the rock that sent the brig to its doom was forever known as Rachel's Curse.

*Thomas D'Agostino and his wife Arlene Nicholson are seasoned paranormal investigators, authors, and co-organizers of Paranormal United Research Society. You can find out more about them by visiting [www.tomdagostino.com](http://www.tomdagostino.com).*

## Good Citizens award announced

The General Ebenezer Learned Oxford Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) would like to announce the school winners of the Good Citizens Award from the schools that the chapter sponsors.

Bartlett High School in Webster, is represented by Gabriela Piwoarczky, Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School in Charlton, is represented by Cheyenne Courtney. Daniel Bowen represents David Prouty High School in Spencer, Keegan Gleason represents Millbury Jr/Sr. High School. The North Brookfield High School representative is Mikayla Bokis, the Oxford High School representative is Amy Vo, and Joshua Gray represents Quaboag Regional High School in Warren. Cutter Beck not only repre-

sents Shepherd Hill Regional High School, but also is the General Ebenezer Learned Chapter at the state level.

The DAR Good Citizens Award and Scholarship Contest, created in 1934, is intended to encourage and reward the qualities of good citizenship.

This award recognizes and rewards individuals who possess the qualities of dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism in their homes, schools, and communities. These students are selected by their teachers and peers because they demonstrate these qualities to an outstanding degree.

•This program is only open to high-school seniors whose schools are accredited by their state board of education.

•Only one student per

year may be honored as a school's DAR Good Citizen.

•United States citizenship is not required.

•Additional rules and guidelines can be acquired by contacting your local DAR chapter.

Once a student is chosen as the DAR Good Citizen the student is invited to participate in the scholarship portion of the program. This consists of a personal state-

ment and an essay

The Daughters of the American Revolution is a non-profit, non-political volunteer women's service organization. DAR members are dedicated to promoting historic preservation, education and patriotism in communities across the nation. All students are invited to participate and learn more about the educational programs the DAR offers.

## Palm Sunday weekend Polish food sale

St. Andrew Bobola Parish, 54 West Main St., Dudley can make your Easter table a bit more special. On Saturday, March 27, the parish will be holding its 2nd annual Easter drive-thru Polish Food Sale from 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. As you drive thru, contactless frozen food orders will be taken at the back entrance of the church and then delivered directly to you as you sit in your car. Pierogi (homemade cabbage or cheese) for \$18/dozen \$9/half dozen; small pierogi (blueberry, potato/cheese, cabbage/mushrooms) for \$7/dozen, gołabki \$3 each, smoked or double smoked kielbasa for \$12 and Bigos (kapusta) \$10/quart will all be available along with Babka (cheese or cherry cheese) and Strudel (poppy seed or prune) for \$10 each. Make your Easter so much more special, and let us do some of the cooking for you.



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**Qualifications and Skills:** Knowledge of Mack, Cummins, GMC, Chevrolet trucks. Knowledge of troubleshooting/diagnostic tools. Experience as a heavy duty truck mechanic. Ability to work safely in a shop environment. Mechanical skills should include, but are not limited to, mechanical, electrical, pneumatic and hydraulic troubleshooting and repair of trucks and equipment.

**Benefits:** Health Insurance, Top Wages! Over-time optional. **Job Type:** Full-time. **Experience:** Driver's License (Required), Diesel Mechanic: 1 year (Required), Diesel repair certification (Preferred), Trash industry experience (Preferred), Class A or B CDL (Preferred), Welding experience (Preferred)

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## Living with Lincoln

# I got you, ball

By Amy Palumbo-LeClaire

Lincoln chose our family at a fluffy seven weeks old. His “pick-up day” had been scheduled for February 12 – on Abraham Lincoln’s birthday.

Lincoln. The name sprung off of the calendar and into our hearts and home. Little did we know that our largest male of the litter, a puppy named after a president, would not only choose us, but also his way in the world.

“Mom, we have to take this one.” My son, Ben, at an intuitive ten years old, had known what we know now. Lincoln was meant to be with us, and us with him. Confirming such, he grabbed the miniature leash from my hand and paraded around his blonde siblings, as though to claim his new family.

“These are my People.”

We cradled him onto our laps, then lifted him to face us. His morsel nose twitched while he found our eyes. “Are you ready to play?”

We were ready to play. Yet little did we know just how much.

“Lincoln!!”

I’ll never forget the day he had been trotting along a Cliff Walk ledge at Newport, RI. A precocious puppy, he had tottered about clusters of rock to explore, then struggled to negotiate a sudden narrow path. Whoa! Not enough room. He lost his footing and fell off of a twelve-foot incline. Somehow, he managed to wrestle his body back to a soft landing. Then, exhausted, he had collapsed.

“I think he may have broken a bone.”

“Does he need some water?”

“That puppy needs to rest.”

A crowd of onlookers shuffled to our side while, smothered in guilt, I teared up and kneeled by my puppy’s side. His chunky belly rose and fell beneath my palm. What had I done? How could I ever forgive myself?

“Let’s finish the Cliff Walk!”

Lincoln sprang to his feet. His miniature tongue shook while he smiled, panted, and colored the world pink again. I sighed, massaged his ears. “You’re okay.” It was only a case of Lincoln being Lincoln.

Fast forward ten years. Lincoln fell off of a ledge of a different sort. His health took a dip during the Fall of 2020. His breathing was abnormal. An ultrasound indicated large masses at on both thyroid glands. We were told his life was about to end. Little did we know—

“Want to play?”

Lincoln was just being Lincoln. A clean, protein-based nutritional plan (and a whole lot of love) turned a fat, ugly report into something slender.

\*\*\*

Lincoln scratches at the deck door. I open it and there he stands, propped up on the step, appearing larger than life. His black, senior nose quivers with desire. He’s wearing the expression I’ve come to know and love. “Few throws?” I read his mind.

Frozen with hope, he stares at me and awaits a verdict. His tail wags slowly, gearing up for action.

“Can you wait, Lincoln? Mummy has to work.”

More charming than his thirst for life has been his sensitivity to his owner’s role in it. My dog understands nuance. “Can you wait?” I accent the word wait.

“But can you just come out? I was thinking we could play in the snow today.”

His cuteness tempts me. He’s a dog, fully immersed in the present, yet intelligent enough to discern my needs as a human. “Bring the ball here, Lincoln.” I gesture with grand enthusiasm. “Go get it and put it here for Mummy!”

The compromise sells him. He’s willing to negotiate. I can play ball in my slippers, from the comfort of my now-drafty kitchen. I gaze out the window and watch him nose the snow as though searching for a diamond in a corn maze. He zigs. He zags. Then a stiff wagging tail produces the truth. He’s found the ball! But before he brings it back, he performs a clever trick, one he created on his own. I watch him through the window and giggle to myself. Work can wait.

“I’m in charge of you, Ball.”

He digs a hole with manic concentration then pushes the ball down in the snow to bury it. He pounces on the burial ground over and over again, as though to set a final nail in the ball’s coffin. Then he digs it back up and sashes it about his frothing mouth with crazy joy. His process is deliberate, even calculated. Dig, Bury, Pounce, Find, Slosh. Over and over again. Every now and then, he tosses a glance up to the window, sensing that I’m watching.

“Good boy, Lincoln!” I hoist the window open and holler the compliment. He’s patented Bury & Find, a game which offers rationale for the need to allow a dog to be a dog. Work with them. Allow them opportunities to do what dogs do. They need to run, dig, play, and be reckless. Let them be dogs and they’ll let you be human. I settle back to my work and welcome a sip of coffee. The door rattles again.

“I found the ball!”

I open the door. Cold air accosts me, fueling my laziness.

“Lincoln, put it right here.” I don’t want to reach any further than I need to for the ball on the snowy deck. He grumbles yet complies, still managing to toss the ball as close to the threshold as possible. I don’t have to set a single toe outside. “Thank you, Lincoln.”

I hold the ball up like a trophy. He races down the stairs, not wanting to miss out on the throw. “Which way?” I refuse to endorse the bullyish “fake throw” which forces a dog to track the ball tirelessly through the yard. I’m confident that he’ll find it either way. A dog’s senses truly are remarkable. Like a professional outfielder, he watches the ball sail through the air. He backs up to gage position. I underhand a solid throw, and he freezes to capture its soft whooshing sound through the air, then its notable drop into the snow.

“I hear you, Ball! I’m coming!”

I watch him romp through the snow after a ball that he protects like an abducted baby. His tail stiffens and wags while he appreciates a scent made for a dog. “I knew



I was thinking we could play in the snow.

I’d find you.” He sashes the ball, then indulges in another game of Bury & Find.

Dig. Bury. Pounce. Dig. Bury. Pounce. “I got you, Ball.”

I watch him from the window. Work can wait.



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## Zoom boating safety courses

Local United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Tri-State Flotilla, Massachusetts will be instructing four upcoming boating safety classes through the Zoom video conference platform, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Registration is managed through the Milford Community School Use Program, Adult-Boating, at <http://mcs.milford.ma.us> or (508) 478-1119 at least 6 days prior; keeping in mind that availability is limited and you will receive course materials prior, covered by the registration fee. Participants under the age of 16 must be accompanied online by a registered parent/guardian. For additional USCGAux information: [phil.uscgaux@verizon.net](mailto:phil.uscgaux@verizon.net) or (508) 478-3778.

**About Boating Safely \$45 Saturdays: March 27 and April 24, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

A one-day course developed to provide the skills and confidence needed to explore the coast and inland waters by boat. Basic knowledge and skills are needed to have safe and enjoyable boating experiences. This course is perfect for families that have just purchased any type of boat or are planning to in the future, and also for the boater keeping up with changes to boating regulations and laws. Successful completion of the course will also temporarily certify (until a proctored exam is

completed) any minor, from 12 to 16 years of age, to operate a powerboat, including a Personal Water Craft / Jet Ski for 16 & 17-year-old operators, on all Massachusetts waters; in conjunction with the Mass. Environmental Police. Rhode Island residents born in/or after 1986 can also take the "Challenge Exam" for the RI Boater Education Card to operate motor vessels over 10 horse power, along with anyone, any age, from any state, wanting to operate a PWC on RI waters. It will also cover the requirements to operate a vessel in most other states & many countries where boating safety education is mandatory. Several of the boating insurance companies offer a discount on premiums for successful completion of this course. The Zoom ABS class is limited to 20 students.

**Suddenly in Command \$5 Wednesdays:**

**March 17 and April 14 7 – 10:30 p.m.**

Imagine you are out on the water when the boat's captain somehow is incapacitated or falls overboard and can't swim back to the boat. Are you prepared to take basic actions to get help, stop or start the engine and take the helm? A little knowledge could save lives and make you feel more comfortable boating when you're not generally at the helm.

Misfortunes can and do happen while on that fishing, diving, adventure, or party charter. Being out on your own boat with that significant other at the helm, or going out on a friends' pontoon boat can also turn to horror if the skipper is suddenly out of commission. This is a boating safety primer for those not generally at the helm but would like to know what to do, to be better prepared.

### Prayer



Jesus

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (intention), Amen.

If you pray three times a day, three consecutive days, you will receive your intention, no matter how impossible it may seem. Praise and Thanksgiving please the Heart of God. **Believer**



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## The Kitchen Diva

# Winter squash is healthy addition to any meal

By Angela Shelf Medearis

Winter squash are prominently displayed at grocery stores in the fall and winter months, but many shoppers pass them by because they don't know how to make them. Winter squash are easy to prepare and are a healthy addition to any meal.

The Cucurbitaceae family is the Latin name for gourds, pumpkins and squash. The terms Summer and Winter can be deceptive. Summer squash types are on the market all winter; Winter squash types can be found in late summer and fall, as well as winter. This terminology was never meant to confuse – it just dates to a time when the seasons were more crucial to man's survival than they are now. Vegetables that would keep until Decem-

ber became known as winter vegetables.

Winter squash are picked when they are fully mature, and they have a thick, inedible skin. This thick skin provides a protective covering for the squash and allows for a long storage life. Winter squash can be stored for three months or longer in a cool, dry place, preferably in a single layer.

Every part of the squash plant can be eaten, including the leaves and tender shoots, which can be cooked in omelets or made into soup. Winter squash are a good source of vitamins A and C, potassium and fiber. One-half cup of cooked winter squash has only 40 calories. Some of the most popular types of winter

squash are butternut, spaghetti, acorn squash and Delicata. \*Butternut squash is tan in color and has a long, bell-like shape.

\*Spaghetti squash is oblong or oval in shape and yellow in color.

\*Acorn squash is actually shaped like an acorn. It is dark green and has a ridged rind or skin.

\*Delicata squash is oblong, ridged, and yellow and green. The skin is soft and edible.

When shopping, look for squash that are heavy for their size, free of soft spots and have a dull sheen (a shiny skin is an indicator the squash is not fully mature).

Once butternut or acorn squash is cooked and cooled, it can be peeled away from the

skin, cut into cubes, and used in soups, stews and casseroles along with other vegetables. Butternut or acorn squash can be used interchangeably in recipes.

Spaghetti squash is the exception. Once it is cooked, use a fork to peel the flesh away from the skin. It looks just like spaghetti as it peels away. Sauce and serve spaghetti squash like regular noodles. Delicata squash is the easiest squash to prep and cook because of its soft, edible skin. It contains seeds in the center, but they can be easily removed by scraping them out with a spoon.

This delicious recipe for Southwestern Stuffed Butternut Squash is a wonderful side dish or vegetarian entree on a cold winter's day!

### Southwestern stuffed butternut squash

- 2 Delicata squash
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground black pepper
- 1 cup cooked rice
- 1/2 tablespoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper or hot sauce
- 1 (15-ounce) can black or pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 large bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 4 springs cilantro, chopped
- 6 cherry tomatoes chopped
- 1/2 cup shredded Pepper Jack or Cheddar cheese
- 1 large avocado, peeled and sliced
- 4 tablespoons plain Greek yo-

gurt or Mexican crema

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Place Delicata squash on a cutting board and use a sharp knife to cut the tips and tails off. Cut the squash in half, then scoop out the seeds and fibrous strands.
3. Drizzle the inside of the squash with oil. Use your hands to spread the oil all over the exposed interior so it is well-coated. Sprinkle the squash with 1/2 teaspoon each of the salt and pepper.
4. Place squash cut-side down on a large baking sheet. Bake 30 to 40 minutes, until squash is soft when poked with a fork.
5. While the squash is baking, prepare the quick rice. Before adding water or broth to the rice, season with the remaining salt and pepper, the chili powder, cumin and cayenne pepper or hot sauce. Mix well and proceed with the directions for preparing the rice.
6. When the rice is done, add in the beans, chopped peppers, cilantro and chopped tomatoes. Mix together and heat on low for 3 minutes, stirring once.



Depositphotos

7. Fill each half of the squash with even amounts of the rice mixture. Top each half of the squash with shredded cheese, then put the stuffed squash back in the oven for about 5 minutes to melt the cheese.
8. Remove from oven and top with avocado slices and plain Greek yogurt or Mexican crema, if desired. Serves 4.

Angela Shelf Medearis is an award-winning children's author, culinary historian and the author of seven cookbooks. Her new cookbook is "The Kitchen Diva's Diabetic Cookbook." Her website is [www.divapro.com](http://www.divapro.com). To see how-to videos, recipes and much, much more, Like Angela Shelf Medearis, The Kitchen Diva! on Facebook. Recipes may not be reprinted without permission from Angela Shelf Medearis. (c) 2021 King Features Synd., Inc., and Angela Shelf Medearis



- On March 20, 1861, President Abraham Lincoln's sons, Willie and Tad, are diagnosed with the measles. The boys recovered, but in 1862 Willie contracted typhoid fever and died. Tad died at age 18 in 1871. Of Lincoln's four boys, only the first child, Robert, lived to an advanced age; he passed away at age 82 in 1926.
- On March 18, 1911, Irving Berlin copyrights the biggest pop song of the early 20th century, "Alexander's Ragtime Band." The song was easier to play than Joplin's "The Entertainer," which encouraged sheet music sales. Those topped 1.5 million copies in the first 18 months after publication.
- On March 16, 1926, Robert Goddard successfully launches the world's first liquid-fueled rocket at Auburn, Mas-

sachusetts. The 10-foot-tall rocket traveled for 2.5 seconds at a speed of about 60 mph, reaching an altitude of 41 feet and landing 184 feet away.

- On March 19, 1953, for the first time, audiences are able to watch from their living rooms as the movie world's most prestigious honors, the Academy Awards, are given out at the RKO Pantages Theatre in Hollywood, California.
- On March 15, 1968, construction starts on the north tunnel of the Eisenhower/Johnson Memorial Tunnel on I-70 in Colorado west of Denver. At more than 11,000 feet, the project became the world's highest vehicular tunnel when it was completed in 1979.
- On March 17, 2000, Julia Roberts becomes the first actress ever to command \$20 million per movie when "Erin Brockovich" is released. At the time, \$20 million was the standard paycheck for Hollywood's male stars. (c) 2021 Hearst Communications, Inc. All Rights Reserved

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## Municipal employees to receive cybersecurity training

BOSTON – State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) announced that over 1,000 municipal employees in his district would be receiving cybersecurity training through the 2021 Cybersecurity Awareness Grant Program.

According to the application, the program is a one-year competitive grant program to support local government efforts to improve overall cybersecurity posture through comprehensive user training, evaluation, and threat simulation. Participating communities must demonstrate leadership buy-in and commit to making staff available to successfully complete the program and be willing to collaborate.

The funding is used on a wide range of municipal staff, and it may be used to train school district personnel as well.

“Over the past several years, schools and municipalities have become increasingly reliant on technology to aid in the workplace or classroom development,” said Senator Fattman. “This training has become even more necessary as society was forced to shift to virtual engagements last year. It is great to see our municipalities invest in cybersecurity awareness training. I will continue to support their endeavors to receive this grant in the future, so that we may have a safer, more secure, technologi-

cal background.”

In the Worcester-Norfolk District, the following communities received funding:

- Bellingham: 50 employees; town only.
- Douglas: 280 employees; town and school.

### St. Andrew Bobola Church's April calendar money raffle

St. Andrew Bobola Church, 54 West Main St., Dudley will sponsor a calendar money raffle for the month of April. Buying a raffle entry gives you up to 30 opportunities to win any on of the daily monetary prizes. The prize pool for the month totals \$1775 and the last week in April is big – each day's drawing is \$100 or more. So it is never too late

- Dudley: 30 employees; town only.

- Milford: 250 employees; town only.

- Southbridge: 120 employees; town only.

- Sutton: 280 employees; town only.

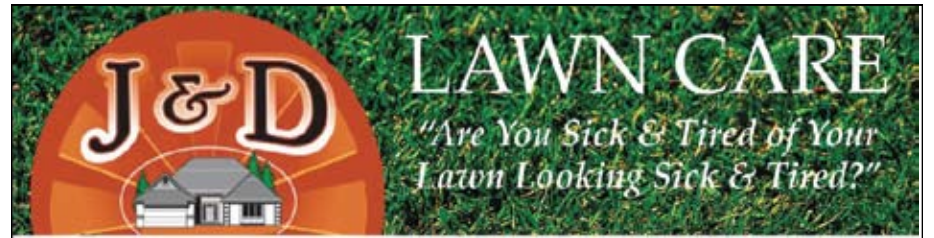
to enter. Pick up entry sheets at (and also make returns to) the rectory by April 1 for the maximum chances to win. Additional calendar entry sheets are available from parishioners or after Masses in the church. For more info, please call the Rectory (508-943-5633), or Paula (508-248-4237). We appreciate your support of our parish fundraiser and good luck.

### SWCLA membership

Landlords who own one or several multi-family buildings have questions about the landlord-tenant relationship. Over the years, the “landlord” business has evolved from one of almost total freedom in operating rental property to one of the most highly regulated businesses in the country. The Southern Worcester County Landlord Association (S.W.C.L.A. non-profit) was formed in 1979 covering the Southern Worcester County area. From its original mem-

bership of seven individuals it grew to where they now maintain a membership of hundreds of landlords representing many hundreds of units - united in a common goal.

Landlords are faced with more challenges today than ever before. Whether you own and/or manage one rental unit or 100, the benefits of belonging to an organization such as ours are invaluable. Visit SWCLA.ORG and call any of the directors listed about becoming a member.



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Peter Coyle



# Remember when... Webster-Dudley sports scene

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This space will forever be grateful to the great contributors over the past years, including **John Mullen**, for the History of Oxford High School Football celebrating their 50th anniversary in 2018 featuring head Coach Paul Brissette and his legacy. To **Justin "Jut" Stockhaus**, grandson of legendary football coach Rene Langevin, who took us through the fall of 2019 to help celebrate the 100th Thanksgiving Day game between Bartlett and Southbridge when the Indians were victors at Southbridge in 2019.

The past half year featured

the French River Rivalry where former Shepherd Hill and Amherst College athlete **Rusty Oleszewski** took us through the separation of Webster and Dudley students and how the two towns used student athletes in the early 70s as a political forum to isolate only Webster residents to attend Bartlett while Dudley residents formed what is now Shepherd Hill High School with the town of Charlton. Little did the politicians of both Webster and Dudley realize that the present school choice rule would give all sides their cake and eat it at the same time.

Tip of the hat to these contributors as they reported on their stories with passion, hard work, and enthusiasm. Others have also helped this space in the past by dropping an email, text, or phone call to correct a fact or provide an idea. This space

needs all the help it can get. Please keep your ideas coming. Always appreciated.

**The legendary Mike Vendetti**

The cast of characters who have played a role at this address have been local giants regarding athletics and giving back to the community. The leader for this space will always be the "godfather," Nichols College legendary football coach **Mike Vendetti** and his two loyal assistants **Ed Kunkel** and **Rene Langevin**. The Golden Era of Nichols Football in the 70s has never been duplicated by any measure.

Next is the best high school football game ever seen in these parts. Shepherd Hill at Bartlett in 1987, a Saturday night special when Shepherd Hill beat the Indians in overtime 18-10 as **Kyle Kunkel** of SH made a game saving tackle on the one-foot-line near the Ray Street ticket box end



1973 Starr Realty Senior Little League baseball team. Photo contributed by Jeff Stefanik

zone as Bartlett's **John Lamontagne** was rambling in for a touchdown during the overtime. Lamontagne and Shepherd Hill's **Ron Springer** headlined the anticipated clash that drew 6,000 fans in week five of the football season. The quarterbacks were Hall of Famer **Dave Ceppetelli** of Bartlett and **Brian Ravenelle** of Shepherd Hill. Langevin coached the Indians and **John Hickman** coached Shepherd Hill. The game was played as advertised and remains as a heavy weight toe-to-toe great high school football game.

Some other past memories are loyal readers **John Hejwosz**, **George Kujawski**, and **Ringer** keeping us on our toes. The induction of **Bob Daigle** into Bartlett's Hall of Fame was a highlight in October 2018. And the legacies of **Ziggy Strezlecki**, **John Stefanik**, **Paul Lamontagne**, **Tate Dion**, **Wiggs Deary**, **Kiki Kunkel**, **Charlie Pappas**, **Chet Starzec**, **Rocky Miller**, and so many more have been a part of the local fiber.

Memory Lane includes the Intermediate School gym on Ray Street in Webster which was always the place to be on a week night any time of the year. **Gerry Canty** was the captain in call-your-own fouls league when tempers and competing went hand in hand. **Jack Kelly**, **Kenny Moran**, and **Al Malkaisian** tried to keep the natives in order despite a lot of bloodshed every night. But a lot of fun. Canty's playground drew 30 customers a night with free admission.

Post 184 American Legion started a baseball team in 1970 and the coaches were **Norman "Frenchy" Millette** and **Levi Brisbois**. Two good guys who went on the ultra competitive Legion circuit with a brand new team. We held our own and those guys knew the game and taught us how to respect it and eventually handed the coaching reigns over to **Francis X. Kasheta** who went on to win many Zone 4 titles. Kasheta pitched for the San Francisco Giants with the great **Juan Marichal**. Millette, Brisbois, and Kasheta believed in fundamental baseball. The 1966 Webster Little League All Star team led by **Paul Kujawski** is still the town's best Little League team after 55 years. The '66 team got into the state tournament and beat Boston Red Sox player and television commentator **Jerry Remy** of Somerset to advance to the quarterfinal game only to be beaten by Weymouth South. Kujawski was hitting home runs at a record pace

and shared the pitching duties with left handed **Mike Quigley**. The big reason for the '66 team retaining its self-proclaimed best team ever is because they won district 5, 6, 7, and 8, by playing single elimination. One loss and it's over. **Wiggs Deary** was the manager.

If you have anything you would like to share in this space please do so by emailing me at [pcoyl@oxfordinsuranceagency.com](mailto:pcoyl@oxfordinsuranceagency.com).

**1973 baseball**  
**Jeff Stefanik**, longtime friend and Bartlett baseball captain, is going to help the memory lane cause going forward with pictures from the past and he submitted this photo circa 1973. Didn't know Stefanik was ambidextrous. Look how he is holding his glove? How many of these players can you name? The coach is **Tony Vegnone**. The team is the Starr Realty Red Sox, 17-1 record four years in a row as well as league champions.

For all you AAU pay-to-play, everybody gets a trophy yahoos.... this 1973 team didn't have to pay a dime to play. There are 14 players on the team ages 13-15. The team was part of the six team Webster Senior Little League circuit. Here is the math: six teams with 14 players per team equals 84 players playing baseball in a constructive environment for free. Vegnone did not get paid for coaching. His teams practiced twice a week and played two games per week. Only a championship trophy was given to Starr Realty. Times have changed.

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## Q & A with The Car Doctor

John Paul is AAA Northeast's Car Doctor. He has over 40 years' experience in the automotive business and is an ASE certified master technician. He will answer reader's questions each week. You can find the Car Doctor podcast at [www.johnpaul.podbean.com](http://www.johnpaul.podbean.com) or other popular podcast sites. Email your car questions to [jpaul@aaanortheast.com](mailto:jpaul@aaanortheast.com). Follow John on Twitter @johnpaul and friend him on Facebook [mrjohnpaul](https://www.facebook.com/mrjohnpaul).



**Q.** I just recently purchased a new car, my first new car. How soon can I wax it? I once heard that you should wait before you wax a new car.

**A.** Years ago, especially with newly painted cars, the rule was wash it in a week and wax in a month. With your new car you can wax it as soon as you get it home. In fact, the sooner you wax it there will be less chance of environmental damage from road debris, acid rain, decomposing leaves and bird droppings. This time of year, if you are going to wax your car, find a heated garage. Wax likes temperatures above 50 degrees. The colder the temperatures the longer it will take for the wax to dry. Today there are also lots of choices when it comes to wax. There are spray-on (quick and easy), liquid waxes (more work and lasts longer) paste wax and carnauba and ceramic and hybrid ceramic coatings.

**Q.** I have a 1966 Jeep CJ-5 with a V-6 engine. It generally runs pretty well but the engine bogs down when accelerating. I have replaced the spark plugs and plug wires and the timing was checked, it was slightly advanced. Any thoughts on this?

**A.** This is a case when starting at the beginning makes sense. Check the ignition points and point gap (dwell), check the ignition coil for a strong spark, check the fuel pressure and volume. I would also be looking at both the distributor vacuum and mechanical advance. The carburetor is a 2-barrel which was very common on your

Jeep's Buick derived engine. There should be two strong jets of fuel squirting down the carburetor when accelerating. Typically, with that carburetor, the accelerator pump gets lazy and there are a couple of springs and check balls that stick and cause fuel flow issues. Rebuilding that carburetor is not difficult but the main components should be soaked overnight in a special cleaning solution to clean up all the internal passageways.

**Q.** What are your thoughts on those small jumpstart boxes. Some are the size of a paperback book with small jumper cables attached. Do the work? What do you use at AAA?

**A.** At first, I was concerned with voltage spiking from the Li-ion batteries but they have become very popular and maybe my concerns were unfounded. I have tried different units from WORX, NOCO and Scosche and they all work and worked well. Based on what I have seen personally I have one in each of my family vehicles as part of my emergency kit. At AAA where we use jumper packs 24 hours a day, we use a more robust unit with a larger sealed and serviceable lead acid battery.

**Q.** I love old cars and would love to restore one, but don't have the space or budget to buy and restore an old car. Now that I'm retired, I'm looking for a hobby, any thoughts?

**A.** Many people collect vintage oil and gas products, sometimes called Petroliana. This can be an addictive hobby, researching, finding and restoring and even sometimes reselling vintage signs, gas pump globes and even oil cans. Some others will find and restore pedal cars. The cars were once a fun way for kids to get around, but original cars from the 1950s and 1960s can sell for several thousand dollars. If you just like mechanical tinkering small engines and vintage minibikes can be a fun project. Finally, you could volunteer at a car museum.

**Q.** I have a 10-year-old minivan and I have a volt gauge in it. Two weeks ago, I replaced the original battery, and everything was fine, I thought. Lately when I'm

driving on the highway the voltage (charging gauge) doesn't show the alternator is charging. Concerned my new battery would go dead I replace the alternator. Even with the new alternator, on the highway the alternator doesn't seem to charge. What is wrong?

**A.** Perhaps nothing. The alternator uses horsepower to recharge the battery; horsepower comes at the expense of fuel economy. Many manufacturers will limit charging when there is low electrical demand to maximize fuel economy. Next time you are on the highway turn on the lights, wipers and rear defroster and then check the voltage. Chances are with the additional electrical load you will see the alternator charging as designed.

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## Tips on financial planning



Dennis Antonopoulos

Typically, this time of year is filled with graduation ceremonies and celebrations. But with the coronavirus

# Can you invest for retirement and education?

pandemic, not much has been typical lately. Eventually, though, things will return to normal and schools will reopen for in-person learning. And if you have young children, you may want to save for their higher education, whether that be college or trade school. At the same time, though, you're moving ever closer to retirement. Can you save for your kids' education and a comfortable retirement for yourself at the same time?

It is indeed possible, although you may need to prioritize somewhat. Specifically, you may not want to put off saving for retirement in favor of education. But by viewing these goals together and investing as early as possible in each of them, you can take advantage of one of your biggest assets – time.

Of course, you'll still have to budget your resources. You want to invest as much as you can, but not so much that your monthly cash flow is crimped. Consequently, you may have to consider retiring later, contributing less to your child's education, or a combination of the two. But in terms of logistics, you can make saving and investing easier.

First, consider your retirement accounts. If you have a traditional 401(k) or similar plan, your contributions come out of your pay-

check before you even see the money – so it's about as painless a way of building your retirement fund as possible. Put in as much as your budget allows and consider increasing your contributions when you receive a raise at work. You can also direct your bank to move money each month from your savings or checking account into your IRA.

Now, let's move to your other key goal: education. Several education funding vehicles are available, but one of the most popular is the 529 plan. Your earnings grow tax-deferred and withdrawals are free from federal tax, provided the money is used for qualified higher education expenses. (529 plan withdrawals not used for qualified expenses may be subject to federal and state income tax and a 10% IRS penalty on the earn-

ings.) Furthermore, your 529 plan contributions may earn a state tax deduction or credit if you participate in your own state's plan.

You can set up recurring contributions from a bank account to a 529 plan. And you don't have to fund your 529 plan on your own. Instead of gifts for birthdays, holidays, graduations and other occasions, why not ask friends and relatives to contribute to the 529 plan you've set up for your child? They're all eligible to participate – and their contributions may earn them tax benefits if they live in your state and you've invested in your own state's plans.

A financial advisor can help you plan for more than one goal, understand the benefits and tradeoffs of your decisions, and make the process of saving for those goals easier. So, get the help you need to stay on track – or

rather, two tracks – toward the important objectives of education and retirement.

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

## Dean's List

BOSTON - The following local students have made the Dean's List at Wentworth Institute of Technology for the Fall 2020 semester. Nicole Marie Thackaberry of Douglas; Abagayle Paige Morin of Dudley; Madeline Rae Davis of Dudley; Brandon Scanlon of Dudley; Daniel Edward Vanderhoof of Webster; Adriana T. Rocheleau of Webster.

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RE: Real Estate



Mark Marzeotti

# The Proposed Down Payment Homebuyer Tax Credit

Additional help could be on the way for first-time homebuyers. The new Washington administration proposed a Down Payment Homebuyer Tax Credit, which could be significant in aiding potential first-time homebuyers. For starters, the credit could be used to cover all or a considerable share of a buyer's down payment. With home prices rising ever higher, any down payment assistance is welcomed when a family is looking to buy.

For years, minority and millennial homebuyers have

struggled unsuccessfully to save enough for a down payment. High student loan payments along with ever-increasing childcare costs and other urgent needs have made the goal of buying that first home far-fetched for too many Americans. Add to that the financial hardships brought upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit many American families, minorities and lower-wage workers particularly hard. These demographics especially would immediately benefit from this proposal. Down payment assistance – in this case, up to \$15,000 – could make all the difference in helping hopeful buyers

get a foot in the door. And making the credit advance-able would mean buyers could access the funds upon closing rather than having to wait until next year when their tax return is filed and the refund arrives.

That said, policies to increase the supply of homes are equally important. As we take a look at the current housing market and mortgage data, we see an upward trend. For instance, existing-homes sales totaled 5.64 million in 2020 – their highest level since 2006, before the Great Recession – with mortgage rates at all-time lows. But while demand is high, supply is registering at a 50-year low.

This means home prices will continue to soar unless more residential units can be created. So, tax and other incentives that increase supply are equally important in order to keep home prices affordable. Many Realtor groups continue to advocate for the building of more affordable housing because, in addition to increasing the housing supply, it will provide a boom for our struggling economy.

The Marzeotti Group Realty is proud to share the news about efforts that encourage policies and ideas that level the playing field and help all our neighbors achieve the American dream of home-ownership.

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