

The Yankee Xpress

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New Webster Library Director looks forward

By Janet Stoica

If travelling to exotic places is a requirement for becoming a savvy and knowledgeable library director, then Sondra Murphy has certainly checked that box. In the past few years, she has experienced the sights, sounds, and people of India, Nepal, and Vietnam.

Ms. Murphy is the Gladys E. Kelly Public Library's new director.

The education, experiences, and world views Ms. Murphy has obtained surely cannot be measured, but those travels have served to

expand her life outlook and ability to relate to all library patrons. To paraphrase Mark Twain: "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrowmindedness. Broad wholesome charitable views of all of us cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."

Ms. Murphy volunteered at an American school in Siem Reap, Cambodia, where she helped to build and train personnel for the school library. "The opportunity and experi-

ence I had there were amazing," she said. "My husband and I then visited India, where we experienced yoga and meditation retreats. In Vietnam, we became fans of the wonderful foods offered and visited the many museums. While in Kathmandu, Nepal, I learned about a library director position in Leominster, which I interviewed for and accepted."

Ms. Murphy earned a master's degree in Library Science at Simmons University, Boston. Originally

Continued on page 3



Sondra Murphy

- PULL OUT AND SAVE
- FOR HOME AND GARDEN
- BUSINESSES & ADVICE

DUDLEY HILL GOLF CLUB
First shots of spring
PAGE 2

**ROCKDALE RUG/
CURTAIN FACTORY OUTLET**
Old fashioned customer service
PAGE 5

BOOKLOVERS' GOURMET
All the right moves
PAGE 6

AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM
Brings military history to life
PAGE 7

M&M AUTO BODY
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PAGE 17

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Online, you will be able to access the entire newspaper and features

to empower you to become an active member of the community. Post events and what's happening around town directly to our community announcement page. Easily share to your social media. Don't forget to "like" us on Facebook. We have built an online directory, with maps, where you can effortlessly explore local businesses serving our

Continued on page 3



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First day of spring, first shots hit at Dudley Hill Golf Club

By Rod Lee

As is so typical of New England, one moment winter seems to have a firm grip on the situation and the next players are at the first tee at Dudley Hill Golf Club, which is exactly what transpired the morning of March 20—the first day of spring.

“My wife thinks I’m raking the leaves!” Tim King, who had joined Ed Ohlmeyer and Pedro DeJesus in a threesome, said, to spontaneous laughter all around, with temperatures in the 50s and the sun shining. They were in a jovial mood, with clubs in hand and green acreage stretching before them. The reason for their upbeat attitude was obvious. They were back on the links possibly earlier than they would have thought possible.

Mr. Ohlmeyer had just struck the first shot, a low bullet that carried more than two hundred yards down the

left side of the fairway. He seemed pleasantly surprised.

It was Opening Day at Dudley Hill Golf Club, a nine-hole course nestled next to Nichols College, and golfers like Mr. Ohlmeyer and his pals were eager to get back into action.

Clubhouse Manager Jim Siekierski, who was accepting the payment of greens fees through a window of the building, was also upbeat. A friendly man, he has worked at Dudley Hill for sixteen years.

“For this time of year, it’s drying out quick,” he said. “We just cut the greens. After a week or so they will turn brown but they will come back.”

“We’re part of the Tri State Golf Company, with Raceway (in Thompson), which opened last week, and we have a course in Rhode Island, Melody Hill in Chepachet, which also opened last week. We just bought another course, a nine-hole course, in Harrisville, Rhode Island.”

The satisfaction of seeing Dudley Hill being able to begin welcoming golfers two weeks before Easter was apparent in Mr. Siekierski’s comments.

“Last year, we didn’t get going until May 8, because of COVID-19,” he said.

Again in 2021, precautions



Ed Ohlmeyer, Pedro DeJesus and Tim King on the first tee at Dudley Hill Golf Club on March 20. They are co-workers at IPG in Oxford.

are in place. Mr. Siekierski was masked. The clubhouse is closed to foot traffic, as it was in 2020. Whether the kitchen and restaurant will resume operations “is yet to be determined,” he said. “We are selling beer out of the window. You have to have beer on the golf course.” Golf carts are not being used right now, in that the course is still soft and wet. As to ball washers becoming operational soon, that’s a “maybe,” he said.

“With four courses” in its stable, the Tri State Golf Company has “in the neighborhood of five hundred members and with a season pass

they can play any one or all of the four of our courses at any given time,” he said.

Mr. Siekierski said Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont gave golf courses an all-clear to open earlier than those in Massachusetts last year “and half the vehicles were from Massachusetts.”

He is optimistic that 2021 will be better for golfers than 2020 was.

He’s ready. “I’ve had my second (vaccination),” he said.

Contact Rod Lee at rodlee.1963@gmail.com or 774-232-2999.



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Dudley Hill Golf Club on Airport Road in the town of Dudley is a Devereaux Emmett design that opened to the public in 1926. It plays to a par of 36. Brian Daigneau is course superintendent.

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SONDRA MURPHY

Continued from page 1

from Boylston, she was the Children's Librarian in the town of Oak Bluffs, on Martha's Vineyard, which has a population similar to Webster, about 15,000, (with a summer population of about 150,000).

A year later she was promoted to be the library's director. She successfully rebranded the local library and set up a new website. She stayed on the Vineyard for five years and also met her husband there.

When their housing needs changed, they moved back to this area. She accepted a position as Youth Services Coordinator with the Worcester Public Library, becoming immersed not only with the main branch at Salem Square but also with the four school/public libraries in Worcester's four quadrants. After a stint as the Library Director in Leominster she realized that she wanted a more hands-on approach where she could mingle with library patrons, and after applying for and interviewing with Webster, she successfully landed here.

Webster's library is currently operating in COVID mode. Ms. Murphy has met individually with her staff of three full-time and three part-time employees. The library also has two volunteers who are essential to its operation. "I really enjoy the staff here," she said. "The town hall staff has been wonderful as well. They're amazing. I can tell

this is going to be a great place to work and be part of. Everyone looks forward to working in a newly-built and well-organized library like Webster's. Some of the projects I'll be working on are the internal processes and procedures, our summer reading program, and bringing programs outdoors to the lawn area. This beautiful building is so modern, spacious and bright. It's truly inspirational and every librarian's dream to work in such a new establishment. I hope to bring new and interesting programs to our library."

Long-term plans include boosting programs and offerings to make the facility a vital place in town, maintaining good relationships with other town boards and committees, working closely with the Friends of the Library, ensuring fresh collections, and getting to know the community.

Ms. Murphy looks forward

to hearing suggestions and getting feedback. "People tend to have an old view of libraries," she says. "We're not old and stodgy and quiet. We are a living, breathing entity that is a reflection of the community. Our staff is vibrant, warm, and welcoming to our patrons and we look forward to expanded hours of operation in late April. I'm excited to be here and look forward to new and innovative programs for Webster."

Hours of operation are limited currently due to COVID and the lobby is the only area available to patrons. Books are held there for those requesting them and staff will be happy to retrieve additional materials requested. Chromebooks and Hot Spots are available for lending.

Gladys E. Kelly Public Library is at 2 Lake Street, Webster. Phone: (508) 949-3880. Hours: 10 - 5 Mon/Tues; 10-1 Wed; 10-7 Thurs; 10-5 Friday.

WEBSITE

Continued from page 1

community. Get updates on what's going on in your area on our event and calendar page.

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• President of the St. Louis School Endowment Fund which funds All Saints Academy • Couple to Couple Pre-Marital Ministry with wife Donna for over 25 years

Dear Webster Citizens:

My wife Donna and I have been blessed to grow up, live and work in Webster for practically all our lives. Giving back to our community, of time, talent and treasure, is always something we and our families have tried our best to do. I have been honored to serve as one of your Selectmen. Reflecting on all the good that has taken place in Webster these past six years, I truly believe we are in a far better place today. Working together we will continue our upward trajectory of improving our Town for the betterment of its citizens. This past year, COVID-19 dominated our lives, resulting in untold hardships, including the loss of some of our loved ones. In addition to the truly outstanding effort to fight COVID-19 put forth by our Town Administrator, Board of Health Agent and many others, some of the top positive outcomes in Webster these past six years, include: (1) the hiring of Town Administrator (TA) Doug Willardson; (2) completion of the new water treatment plant, coupled with a prioritization of pipe re-lining/replacement in the most acute areas of town; (3) under both the TA's and Town Accountant's leadership, the Town's financial condition is far better than it has been in decades; (4) the Head Start program, sponsored by the Worcester Community Action Council, has taken over the old Senior Center providing needed care for Webster's little ones; (5) the Town has a truly dedicated Opioid Task Force and we also have the CDU and AIC at Harrington's Webster Campus to help combat and treat the terrible disease of opioid/pain killer addiction; (6) significant improvements made to Memorial Beach, many thanks to our Recreation Director and the folks she works with; (7) increased attention to Main Street, including new businesses and the River Walk; and, (8) a higher level of

volunteerism and enthusiasm towards our Town. These accomplishments and many others are a testament to a very dedicated group of Town employees, my fellow Selectmen and our citizens. Being a Selectman is a role I've been entrusted with and take most seriously. I believe we have an exceptionally dedicated Board of Selectmen that work extremely well with our TA.

My number one concern, in fact the ONLY reason I am seeking a third term, is the potential break down of our Town's positive direction over the past few years through a disruptive change in the Board of Selectmen. I'm a firm believer in the saying attributed to Bert Lance: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

We still have much to accomplish, including: (1) continuing our work with the Water/Sewer Commission on replacement/re-lining of the highest priority water pipes in town; (2) continuing the Board of Selectmen's responsibilities of oversight and providing guidance, while rejecting any desire for interference or involvement in the day to day operations of the Town - after all, that's why we hired TA Willardson to run the Town; (3) reviewing what additional Town services can be streamlined and improved; (4) continuing prioritization of capital plans; (5) continuing the focus on Economic Development, including Main Street, North & South Main Streets and the Shaws/Kmart Plaza; and, (6) listening to the concerns of our citizens.

If re-elected, I will continue to take seriously my oversight and guidance role. I will steadfastly do my very best to continue moving Webster forward in the most positive way possible.

Thank you for your consideration,
Randy Becker

PLEASE VOTE: We'll need to have a really good voter turnout on May 3rd so please remind your friends and family to get out and vote.

Paid for by Donna Becker

Praying Indian sign looking for a new home



If you're stopped at the lights on the intersection of Thompson Road and Birch Island Road, sneak a peek at the northeast corner across from the Webster Five. There, you'll find an old, rusty sign.

What sign, you ask? Exactly. In 1930 the Mass Bay Colony Tercentenary Committee commissioned a sign on the location of the "Chaubunagungaung Site of Praying Indian Town Established by John Eliot and David Gookin in 1674, and Known as Chaubunagungaung."

But is the sign located in the right place? The answer is, apparently no.

A brief history:

This Praying Indian town and 11 others were established by Reverend John Eliot, a Roxbury minister bent on Christianizing the Indians in what would one day be called Massachusetts. Major Daniel Gookin, Eliot's loyal associate, aided in the missionary work with the Indians. The praying town was located on what would be known as The Great Trail.

The Great Trail of the Indians extended from what is now Boston to Hartford on the Connecticut River.

Three places, notable in Indian life, were controls for the trail that would become the Connecticut Path.

There were salt-water inlets and beaches of the Boston Bay, the central fresh-water lake at Webster known as Chaubunagungaung, and the falls and long rapids on the Connecticut River at Windsor. The northern Narrows was part of the Indian Trail. There, a short and easy way and low lying peninsula (Killdeer) facilitated the crossing to or from the Douglas Forest.

Years later the paths of the pioneers crossed at that Narrows before roads were laid out around the lake.

Known today as Lake Chargoggagoggmanchaugagoggchaubunagungaung, it was a Lake of the Great Spirit in Indian mythology. A neutral gathering place (not belonging to any one tribe), and the abode of the Great Spirit as well as the souls of the deceased, the lake was a hunting, fishing and nutting preserve (as was the nearby Douglas Woods).

So sacred was the lake, no wigwams were built by any tribe along its shores. An exception occurred in 1672 with the establishment at the head of the lake (the northern end) of Chabanakongkomum (spellings vary), an Indian-praying town.

There is an ancient plan in the Massachusetts Archives which clearly indicates the site of the praying Indian Town at the northern end of the lake, marked "old forte." The Leaven's report (Vol. 3) states that the town was at the top of the hill called Yellow Barn Hill. The fort was at the "left" of the yellow barn and pound which were once on the hill's top (in the 19th century). It appears this was the land where Eliot



had established his praying town of Chaubunagungaung. An old fort is shown in the middle of the plans (photo above). These forts were built by the praying Indians who still enjoyed the indulgence of the white settlers. The only evidence of the old fort was a flattened hill above what was Cranston Print Works. How-

ever, the hill seems to have been excavated to make way for I-395. For perhaps 100 years (or more) the general area spreading over to the shores of Webster Lake at Beacon Park (and now Memorial Beach) had been called "Eliot's Shore." Many have assumed it was named for Reverend John Eliot.

Lake Chargoggagoggmanchaugagoggchaubunagungaung

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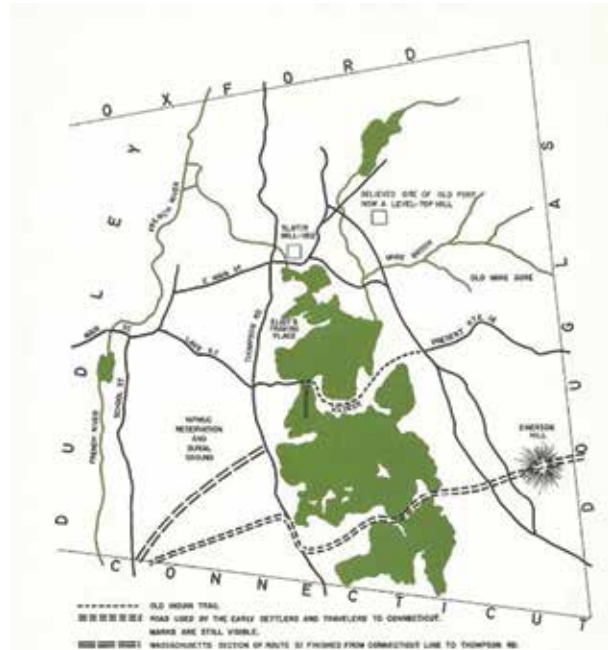
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The above map shows the Old Fort north of the lake in the Mine Brook area. It also identifies Eliot's Praying Place at an area on the lake that is now Beacon Park - Memorial Beach. The Webster Historical Commission is in the process of restoring the sign back to its original condition. The Commission will also be looking to relocate the sign in the coming months. With a suitable site approved by the state the tercentenary sign may finally be located in an area that can be accessible for all to see and visit in an appropriate setting. The preferred site appears to be the Memorial Beach area, which is currently being given a beautiful face lift under the

direction of Carole Marchand, Recreation Director. **Webster Historical Commission** The mission of the Webster Historical Commission is to preserve the rich heritage of the Town of Webster for future generations by identifying historic resources, encouraging preservation and adaptive reuse, advocating for preservation bylaws where needed, and educating the public about the history of the Town and the importance of historic preservation. For more information about the tercentenary sign and the Webster Historical Commission please visit the commission's website at webster-ma.gov.

Rockdale Rug / Curtain Factory Outlet thrive on good old-fashioned customer service

By Janet Stoica

When's the last time you were greeted by name upon entering a retail store? That happens with customers of the Rockdale Rug & Braid Outlet and The Curtain Factory Outlet in the Rockdale section of Northbridge.

You'll be greeted by the most customer-friendly and service-oriented staffs in the area. These two complementary outlets are a true throwback to the days when a smile and great customer service ruled the retail trade.

Ten years ago, sisters Cindy Johnson and Patty Cloutier learned that The Curtain Factory Outlet was about to close its doors.

Patty already ran a successful business in the same building, Bay State Floor Company. She and Cindy had been in retail for most of their working lives and they felt that the well-known curtain outlet would be a natural progression and extension of the soft goods business. The sisters realized that local jobs could be saved as well.

In 1974, when the curtain factory first opened on the ground floor, all its curtains were handmade in the factory above the retail store. Times changed, the factory closed, and the product line was sourced elsewhere.

In 2011, with the impending demise of the well-known New England fixture, Patty Cloutier and Cindy Johnson saw the future and ran with it. Cindy also bought half of Patty's flooring business and opened Rockdale Rug & Braid Outlet.

Cindy knows her inventory and her customers. "Our customers have been indoors for a long time," she said. "They've spent many hours checking out their current furnishings and have decided it's time for some serious refreshing."

Braided rugs are the best

sellers here. "We purchase the majority of our rugs from a family-run company in Rhode Island. Our jute rugs are made in India in the style our customers want. They are low pile and thin which makes them less of a tripping hazard and their weave is tight so pets cannot pull up threads very easily," said Cindy. She also noted that some of their newer indoor/outdoor rectangular rugs are made from recycled water bottles, making them easy to clean by hosing them down outdoors. Very eco-friendly!

Braided rugs have always been popular in New England. They are fashionable and versatile and come in a variety of shapes and sizes. The rectangle shapes must be seen to be truly appreciated. Sizes for the braided rugs run from 2' x 3' up to 10' x 13.' Shapes include ovals, rounds, runners, and rectangles. The jute fiber rugs' sizes include 20" x 30" to 8' x 10.' Braided rug fiber choices vary from wool to nylon to polypropylene with looks that include traditional, transitional, and modern. Stair runners are available in any length and can be matched to area rugs for complete re-decorating harmony.

Oriental rugs are also part of their inventory. Many other products to complete a stylish makeover can be seen here, as well such as fascinating plug-in canvas wall art depicting cozy homes with their evening windows lit and even antique trucks with their headlights aglow sitting quietly in a barn's front yard.

"There's a little bit of everything for everybody's taste," says Cindy. "We have little rugs and mats for pet owners with the cutest of sayings on them, table rugs, braided trivets, night lights, and braided baskets. Faux animal-hide printed rugs are

popular right now; we have some very unusual designs. With Mother's Day coming up we've brought in some special towels and candles with beautiful designs and expressions.

"In these times where lots of companies have gone out of business, I'm so very thankful that we are doing as well as we are," she says. "We have a nice group of employees here who enjoy helping all our customers. And my husband, Alan, has just been great. He's done a lot of work here to make the store look as good as it does. I've driven out to elderly customer's homes, who can't get out, to make deliveries to them. It's just old-fashioned customer service. We want people to feel comfortable and happy that they're being helped."

Patty manages The Curtain Factory Outlet. "It's groups of ladies that I see here most often," she says. "It's like a family outing and we love to see them. They give each other decorating ideas and advice as they shop the aisles. With our online ordering we do sell all over New England and ship throughout the country." And, like her sister states, Patty is strongly focused on customer service. "We also emphasize that the majority of our products are made in the USA," says Patty, "and we proudly feature this in our advertising."

A large part of the store's business during COVID has been online. The Outlet specializes in custom window treatments: shades, vertical blinds, and wooden shutters. Their custom blinds are the Graber brand, and they will custom-fit to order. Patty recently measured for over 100 units of custom blinds for a newly-constructed building in Worcester. Estimates are always no-charge. In addition to curtain valanc-

es, tiers, and panels, the Outlet has shower curtains and draperies on display, along with a full range of hardware and custom accessories. There are over 450 displays of curtains in the store along with a craft department that includes country crafts, home décor, and floral arrangements.

They accept all major credit cards and have a generous return policy.

"Customer service is our Number One priority," says Patty.

With a large product selection, the shop draws customers from all of Worcester County and Rhode Island as well as from the Natick/Framingham area.

Rockdale Rug & Braid Outlet, The Curtain Factory Outlet are at 8-10 Sutton Street, Northbridge, Rockdale Rug phone: (508) 234-2882; Curtain Factory phone: (508) 234-2944. Hours: Wed-Sat 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. or by appointment.

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Patty Cloutier and Cindy Johnson.



Rockdale owner, Cindy Johnson, with staff: Kristi Secor and Sue Boudreau.



Curtain Factory Outlet owner, Patty Cloutier, with staff: Joan Nydam, Heather Dejordy, Kathy Oosterman, Penny Francisco, and Lynn Patton.



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All the right moves and more to come at Booklovers' Gourmet

By Rod Lee

Significant as is twenty-six years in business, Debra Horan, owner of Booklovers' Gourmet in Webster, has no intention of settling for that particular milestone.

Booklovers' Gourmet celebrated its latest anniversary—Ms. Horan's first at the store's new home at 72 E. Main St.—the week of March 2-7. A large sheet cake was put out for cus-

tomers to enjoy as they sampled the "cultural oasis" Ms. Horan has established since opening her business in 1995.

Her goal from the outset was to create "a cultural oasis" in town. By every measure she has achieved that with a friendly local independent bookstore that defies the odds of "smalls" struggling and in many cases not making it. A combination of gently used books on virtually every subject imaginable, specialty drinks, fresh pastries, unique gifts including leather-bound journals, pottery, gemstone jewelry, bookmarks, aromatherapy and incense, handcrafted soaps and soy candles, jigsaw puzzles and children's toys have worked to make Booklovers' Gourmet popular with customers.

The event was a success, Ms. Horan said.

"It was a steady flow of people, I was happy with the turnout. I decided to spread

it out over the week," she said, choosing a five-day happening rather than limiting the festivities to the actual date of her anniversary, which was March 4.

Sandra Chase of Danielson, Connecticut, a first-time patron, and Sue Wargo of Thompson, a regular, happened to be in the store at the same time one afternoon during anniversary week. Both were complimentary of what Ms. Horan has accomplished.

"The merchandise is quite varied," Ms. Chase said. "I'm more of a gift shopper. For books I usually go to Pourings & Passages in Danielson. It's run by a priest from St. James School. I haven't paid full price for a book in a long time."

Ms. Wargo described herself as a customer of Booklovers' "almost from the beginning. I'm a retired librarian and taught in many schools. I am a voracious reader. It could be a bestseller or a used book. I like the collegiality and the chance to talk about books. It's kind of like Cheers for the bookish. Everyone knows your name."

Ms. Horan moved Booklovers' Gourmet from its previous location just down the block and on the other side of the street on April 1 of last year but "didn't open until mid-May" because of the pan-



Booklovers' Gourmet Owner Deb Horan, left, recently welcomed Tina Brooks to the store as a team member. Tina is a longtime resident of the town of Webster whose reading interests include art, mystery, science and health.



Deb Horan offers Sue Wargo of Thompson some anniversary cake at Booklovers' Gourmet.

demic—and then on a limited basis. Like other businesses, she has struggled through the partial shutdown.

Her attentiveness to what it takes to stay current and interesting is manifested in "Shelf Awareness" emails she shares with her audience, periodically. A recent "Shelf Awareness" featured Robert Gray's comments on a release from Rapper/Singer/Songwriter Dessa, entitled My Own Devices: True Stories from the Road on Music, Science and Senseless Love and praise for Gabriel Byrne's "compelling memoir" Walking with Ghosts. Shelf Awareness also includes notes on "Great Reads," "The Writer's Life" and "Book Reviews."

Ms. Horan expresses optimism about being able to return to normal.

"Yeah, I'm hoping to have warmer weather and do outdoor poetry readings," she said. "I'm starting to plan things for early summer."

"I have more ideas," she said: a hint that Booklovers' Gourmet will only get better. "Even extending hours a little bit" is a possibility, she said.

She is pleased that customers appreciate Booklovers' atmosphere.

"I think people are starting to know that I have a lot of books but other things too, like gifts and coffees," she said.

Contact Rod Lee at rodlee.1963@gmail.com or 774-232-2999.

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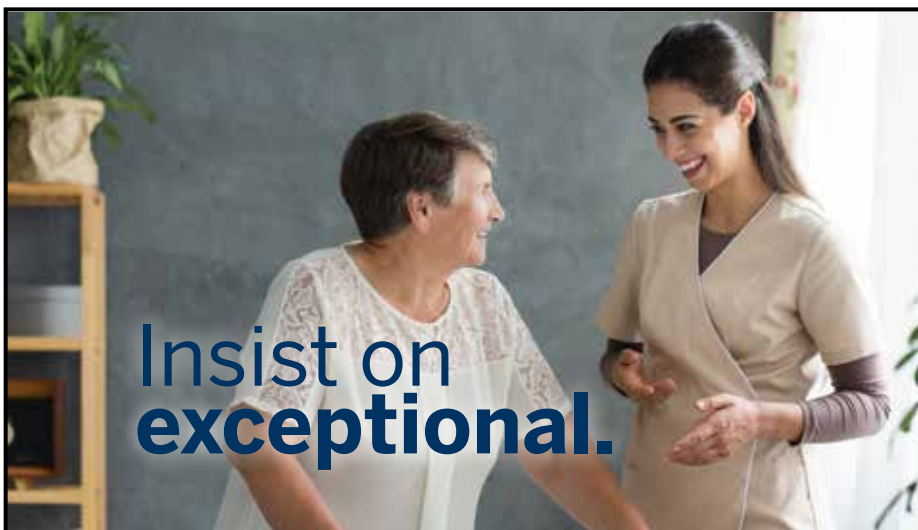
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AHM brings story of armor, tanks, war and history to life

By Rod Lee

Proud as members of the Collings Foundation family are about the impressive array of tanks, armor and military apparatus that has been assembled at the American Heritage Museum in Stow, the real satisfaction for them comes in knowing the people and the history behind the exhibits and the stories of battles from the Revolutionary War to the present day.

Jacques M. Littlefield is one of those individuals whose name will be permanently associated with the American Heritage Museum.

As Hunter Chaney, who is director of marketing for the AHM, explained on March 24, while giving a visitor a guided tour of the more than 65,000-square-foot building, the Museum came into being only after the Collings Foundation was selected to receive "The Jacques M. Littlefield Collection" in 2013.

Mr. Littlefield, from the San Jose area of California, had "amassed the largest privately held collection of tanks and military equipment" in existence, Mr. Chaney said. He died of pancreatic cancer in 2009. "In 2013, his foundation and family chose us to get the collection, which consisted of two hundred forty tanks and armored vehicles. Duplicates and extras were auctioned

off. We received the rest. The proceeds from the sale went toward funding this museum."

The American Heritage Museum sits at the terminus of a long and winding road off Main St. (MA 62) on the Hudson/Stow town line, in a pastoral setting that seems incongruous with such displays as the "WWI Trench Experience," "Clash of Steel" and "War on Terror." Mr. Chaney said the museum began as "living history events, ice skating festivals, sleigh rides and classic car rallies" but is now "actually three museums" with a hangar and a classic car barn—and there is "a 2200-foot airstrip in back."

The Collings Foundation was started in 1979 by Bob and Caroline Collings, who still live "on the other end of the property," Mr. Chaney said. Their son, Rob, is now executive director of the Foundation.

As the Collings family notes in a brochure, the AHM was designed "to fully engage people in understanding our turbulent past. In this remarkable place, American history will be explored, studied and, most of all, remembered. Through educational interpretation and a chronologically arranged series of dioramas and exhibits, the AHM brings the history of our veterans to life."

Unfortunately, Nathan Hall, driver of the M1A1 Abrams "White 2" tank in Iraq, is, like Mr. Littlefield, no longer with us. Mr. Hall died from a blood clot during his battle with leukemia on March 2. But before his passing Mr. Hall was able to see the restored M1A1 again, on the floor of the AHM—and to lend a poignant element to that moment.

The tank was on patrol near Falluja on August 3, 2006, when an IED blew up. Shrapnel damaged the tank and killed its highly respected commander, Sgt. George Ulloa Jr. The American Heritage Museum received the Abrams tank on a long-term loan from the Marine Corps Museum, tracked down the surviving crew and invited the crew and Sgt. Ulloa's widow Maria Ulloa to Stow, where a heart-wrenching video of their ordeal was recorded in front of the Abrams.

It was during this visit that Nathan Hall mentioned to Bob Collings that "something was missing." When he and his crew were assigned to the tank, he pointed out, he christened it with the name "SPAWN" on the barrel with colored pens. In a Facebook post announcing Nathan Hall's death, the AHM said Mr. Collings responded "you put it on the first time, there is no



The display that greets visitors when they arrive at the American Heritage Museum in Stow.

one more qualified to put it on again!"

Returning two weeks later with his wife and young daughter, Nathan stayed late into the night and with Rob Collings looking on, he recreated the artwork with Sharpies.

Both Nathan and Nick Johns ("White 2" loader) came to the grand opening of the museum in May of 2019. "Nathan was so excited that he could not sleep," the AHM said on Facebook. "He told us the flight was delayed and he was crawling out of his skin just to get here...such a change from the tough Marine who was full of pain and tears on his first visit. Other veterans have told us of the therapeutic nature of the AHM, but it has never been so apparent to us as with Nathan. Unfortunately, that was the last visit Nathan had to the AHM as [his] health struggles started shortly after that."

Mr. Chaney said a memorial for Nathan Hall will be held in August "with family and crew" present.

Its activities curtailed by the pandemic, the American Heritage Museum is "chafing at the bit" to return to its regular programming, which involves a host of events for adults and children alike. Recently, for instance, the museum sponsored "the Ultimate WWII Tank Driving Experience," a sweepstakes fundraiser with the winner and a guest drawn on March 31. The prize: a chance to drive "the M24 Chaffee, M4 Sherman and ultra-rare M26 Pershing." The goal of the campaign was to raise \$100,000. "We're at

\$97,000 and hoping to break \$100,000," Mr. Chaney said.

"Like all museums, the revenue faucet has shut off so this is a great way to raise money," he said.

A walkthrough of the museum is truly mesmerizing with film and sound effects provided by Boston Productions Inc. Theater 2, the WWI Trench Experience, for example, features sleeping quarters, bombs, vibrations, flashes, barbed wire, pickaxes and helmets. It is an

interactive experience.

"This museum as a whole is unique on a global scale," Mr. Chaney said. "Some of the artifacts are all that are left in the world."

The American Heritage Museum is open Wednesday-Sunday. For more information, go to AmericanHeritageMuseum.org or call 978-562-9182.

Contact Rod Lee at rodlee.1963@gmail.com or 774-232-2999.



An overhead view of the floor of the American Heritage Museum. Exhibits light up as footage about them are shown.

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This Webinar is being held via Zoom. To register, please

call Karen Rieser at 508-832-5385 or email Karen.rieser@edwardjones.com by May 11 to receive Zoom link.

This a part of the monthly webinar series held on the second Wednesday of each month.



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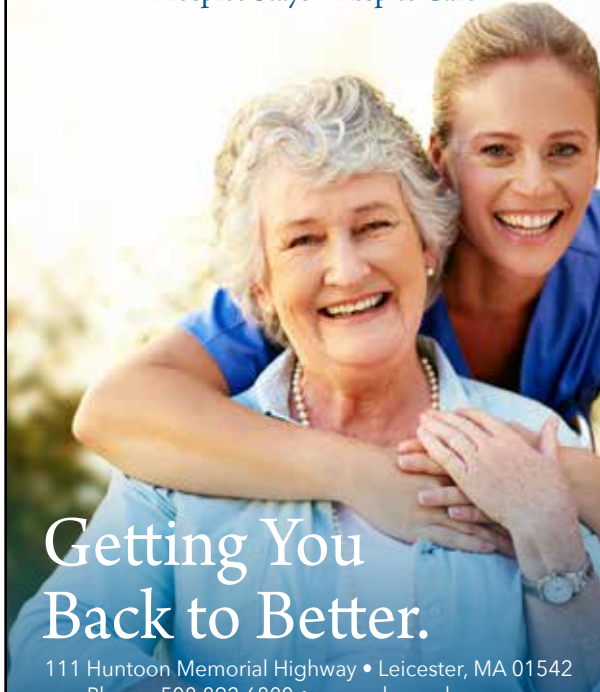


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Facebook, every Wednesday at noon, and then stop by the library for a free take-and-make craft kit. No Facebook account is needed for this free program. Just point your browser to <https://www.facebook.com/crawfordlibrary> to access the

video. Can't tune in at noon? Recordings of each week's storytime are available on the Facebook page beginning Wednesday afternoon.

Music and movement first Friday of every month at 11 a.m. Join Deb Hudgins on Facebook

for Music and Movement, one of our most popular programs! Nothing gets kids on their feet and having fun quite like songs, dance and silly stories, and Miss Deb has been. No Facebook account is needed for this free program. Just point your

browser to <https://www.facebook.com/crawfordlibrary> to access the video.

Seed Exchange throughout the month of April. Have leftover tomato seeds you don't know what to do with? Want to try growing flowers? Changed your mind about that kind of squash? The Pearle is hosting a seed exchange during the month of April - take some seeds to try, leave the seeds you don't need, and get gardening, just in time for Earth Day. Exchange boxes will be placed in the library and all are welcome to contribute flower or vegetable seeds or take some seeds for growing in your own garden.

Exploding seed ball craft for kids, Tuesday April 20 (multiple sessions). Want to have some fun while making the world a greener, more environmentally friendly place? Make exploding balls of seeds that are both fun to throw and an easy way to grow native wildflowers. This activity will take place outside in the side parking lot. We will be roping off a safe area. We will have tables set up 6ft apart and only 5 children per session. We will be disinfecting between sessions. This is for ages 2-6. Free; registration is required. Sponsored by the Hugh W. and Harriet K. Crawford Endowment.

Earth up. Nature tales and songs for the planet, Thurs-

day April 22, 2:24:45 p.m. Celebrate Earth Day with Storyteller Diane's "Earth UP! Nature Tales and Songs for the Planet!" These interactive stories and songs are fun for the whole family and nature too, so join us and all of nature for this celebration of stories and songs about all the simple things we can do to help the planet. Earth UP! Nature Tales and Songs for the Planet has participatory tales and songs like "Kate's Acorn." Kate wants to Save the World, but when she starts by saving a bunch of squirmy earthworms she helps a little acorn grow up strong. Before the story is done, the whole audience is acting out a trio of funny bugs as we learn just how important soil creatures are to the life of plants. This original story is complemented by "The Garden Song" by David Mallet accompanied by musical husband Tom Megan on guitar. Free; registration is required. Participants will receive a link to the Zoom meeting 24 hours before the event. Sponsored by the Hugh W. and Harriet K. Crawford Endowment.

Make a mini garden, Friday, April 23 (multiple sessions for tweens, teens, and adults). A terrarium is like an aquarium, but for plants instead of fish. It is made in just about any glass container. It is planted to look like a miniature garden or for-

Continued on next page

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required. Sponsored by the Hugh W. and Harriet K. Crawford Endowment.

A celebration of women composers, Thursday, May 6, 6-7:30 p.m. Historian Jeffrey Engel will highlight the lives and the music of several distinguished female composers/concert pianists who attained recognition and success during the nineteenth century in this Zoom program. There have always been women composers. As

far back as the seventh century BC, Sappho, the Greek lyric poetess, played her own accompaniments on the barbiton and the pektis. Throughout the twelfth century there were female troubadours and during the sixteenth, madrigal composers. Francesca Caccini (1587-1638) is thought to be the first woman to write an opera and Elisabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre (1663-1729), the author of an early ballet. It is not

until the end of the nineteenth century, however, that significantly more women begin to enjoy public performances of their music and become professional composers. Perhaps you've heard of Teresa Carreno, Sophie Menter and Clara Schumann? Free; registration is required. Participants will receive a link to the Zoom meeting 24 hours before the event. Sponsored by the Hugh W. and Harriet K. Crawford Endowment.

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Early-blooming spring flowers

The arrival of spring is a welcome occurrence for many people. Budding flowers are among the harbingers of spring. Spring flowers can revitalize winter-weary people just when they need it most and provide reassurance that brighter, warmer and longer hours of sunlight are just around the corner.

Cold-tolerant flowers are hardy enough to start blooming before the last frosts have dissipated. Other flowers will begin to fill in as days warm a little bit more, according to Better Homes and Gardens. Home gardeners looking to warm up their gardens with

early blooms can use these flowers in their early-season containers, window boxes and planting beds.

• **Pansy:** Pansies prefer cool weather, which can make them one of the best flowers to plant in early spring and late fall. Pansies come in a variety of colors, so there's bound to be an offering that will blend with any homeowners' landscape design.

• **Creeping phlox:** Also known "moss phlox," creeping phlox is a short groundcover that is a herbaceous perennial. Phlox produces small, fragrant flowers in

dense clusters, which can attract wildlife, such as butterflies, to their mats across the soil surface.

• **Snowdrops:** Snowdrops can peek out even when there is snow still on the ground, sometimes as early as January and February. But their name is actually a reference to their appearance, as snowdrops have three white petals that hang down like drops dripping off the stem.

• **Violets:** These flowers are closely related to pansies and, as a result, prefer cool seasons. Violets are generally slightly smaller than pansy blooms, but they can be just

as beautiful. But as with pansies, violets will start to fade when the heat arrives.

• **Crocus:** Crocus plants are relatively small, only reaching three to six inches in height. However, their grass-like leaves are some of the first sprouts that can be seen among bulb and corm plantings. Preferring full to partial sun, these gold, purple, lavender, white, or yellow flowers can be enjoyed during the earliest days of spring.

• **Daffodil:** Daffodil bulbs produce cheerful, yellow flowers in early spring. They're one of the most recognizable flowers



Crocus blooms are some of the first seen in early spring.


thanks to their familiar shape and fragrant aroma.

• **Lenten rose:** Hellebores, also called the Lenten rose or Christmas rose, can tolerate light frosts. These blooms get their name from the time of year when they bloom, which

is typically around the Christian Lenten season. Despite their name, these delicate flowers are not actually related to roses, however.

Early-blooming flowers give winter-weary gardeners hope that spring has arrived.

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The average timelines for popular renovation projects

Home renovation projects are significant undertakings. Working with skilled and experienced contractors can ensure projects go smoothly and are completed promptly. Timing is a big consideration for homeowners as they begin renovating their homes, and the home improvement experts at HomeAdvisor note that the following are some general timelines for popular renovation projects.

• **Home addition:** Short of a full-scale demolition and rebuild, home additions are the most time-consuming projects homeowners can undertake. HomeAdvisor notes that its survey of customers who recently completed home addition projects reported that the average time from start to finish was between three and four months. Certain variables, including the scale of the project and the local permits process, can extend the time it takes to complete a home addition.

• **Kitchen remodel:** Scale is a big factor to consider when estimating the time it takes to complete various home improvement projects, and kitchen remodels are no exception. Some HomeAdvisor users reported projects taking as long as four months, though the average time reported was roughly six weeks. Projects that require major overhauls like rearranging the plumbing and moving walls will likely take longer than more cosmetic projects that are limited to replacing cabinets and countertops.

• **Bathroom remodel:** More than 1,000 homeowners surveyed by HomeAdvisor reported that bathroom remodels took about 4.5 weeks from start to finish. Small-scale remodels that focus on painting the walls a fresh color and replacing existing tiles can be completed in less than two weeks. But like with kitchen remodels, bathroom remodels that involve replacing plumbing fixtures and removing walls figure to take much longer than that.

• **Siding installation:** HomeAdvisor users report that new siding projects take roughly two weeks from start to finish. That estimate is the same regardless of which materials homeowners are replacing and installing.

• **Replacement windows:** Homeowners who want to replace all the windows in their home can expect such a project to take roughly three weeks. HomeAdvisor notes that such a timeline need not concern homeowners



ers worried that they will be forced to brave the elements during the length of the project. Much of a contractor's time during a window

replacement project will be spent on upfront measuring and then ensuring a tight fit once the windows have been installed.

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During 2020, many people began gardening for the first time or expanded their gardens. Flower gardens, vegetable gardens and even fruit and berry orchards offered outdoor activity, solace, and something to look forward to when we were staying at home. If you were just beginning last year, the hardest work is already done! Establishing new plots and new plantings is always hardest the first year. Now it's time to get those plots ready for another productive and beautiful year.

If you're planting a vegetable garden, we have seeds of every variety. We have tried-and-true vegetables and flowers, but also heirloom varieties,

certified organic seeds, and guaranteed non-GMO selections. Why not make a little room in your garden to try something new, like chilies? If you



are not sure when to start your seeds, consult our planting calendar (Koopmanlumber.com/planting-calendar) for advice on when to start, when to transplant, and how many days until maturity.

Our greenhouses are open, and new plants arrive almost daily. Garden vegetables and herbs of all kinds, as well as annuals and perennials for

your flower gardens are ready in season. It's a great time to plant something that rewards you every year like blueberry bushes, strawberries

or rhubarb. If you love to see the first flowers of the year, try planting perennial Hellebores (Lenten Rose) along your patio or walkway. They'll be the first to bloom and cheer you up as early as late February!

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Two Girls Reclaimed – check it out!

By Janet Stoica

Their business must be one of the most unique in New England, no kidding. Their work is simply amazing, very well-made, and expertly crafted. They really should have their own HGTV show. Viewers would love it.

These two ladies, Ann and Jennifer Flanders-Doland, together for 24 years, have surely cornered the market on distinction and originality. "I've always enjoyed woodworking and refurbishing furniture," says Ann. "Welding is also a skill that I find rewarding, especially if a

client has a specific project in mind."

Jennifer's words describe their business as a blend of industrial and modern. "It really is cool," says Jen. "We create and mix the mediums of wood and metal. Recently, we took an old warehouse fire door and made a unique dining room table. We stripped the paint using wire brushes and sanding machines. It was brought down to the original bare metal. After putting the finishing touches on the "table," we applied several layers of a clear coat finish, added industrial bench legs, and the reclaimed fire door became a stunning eight-foot long and four-foot wide din-

ing table capable of seating 10-12 guests."

Their distinctive venue of exclusive and one-of-a-kind furniture must be seen to be appreciated. "We build furniture with reclaimed wood," Ann says. "We take down barns and use the material for our craft. A year ago we took down an old barn in the town of Barre. Some of our materials are barn beams from the 1700s. We make fire-place mantels, custom dining room tables, custom desks, live-edge coffee and side tables, console tables, and just about anything a client might request. We've used driftwood and plants in our designs.

"We also restore tables, buffets, and bars. Custom orders are the specialties of the house. Ask us, we'd be happy to discuss your thoughts and ideas. We really enjoy our customers; they truly are fantastic. When you genuinely enjoy what you do, it's simply a fun environment."

Recently, Two Girls designed and created the new Radio Worcester recording studio of broadcaster Hank Stolz. A respectable accomplishment indeed.

The latest original piece that Jennifer and Ann created was a bathroom double-vanity sink. No ordinary fixture to be sure as its construction involved a concrete sink with a back-slotted wide drain within a handsome five-foot wide red oak cabinet complete with a sliding barn door opening at its front. A striking creation with his and hers off-the-wall faucet fixtures. Simple and beautiful.

Ann's dad was definitely a great influence in her craft. "When he passed on," she said, "I inherited his chop, table, band, and circular saws as well as his lathe, sanders, clamps, and a multitude of accessories, his wood patterns included." Apparently she has inherited his genius and skills as well. Ann mentioned that the creations at the shop are her form of true relaxation and she hopes it will be her and Jen's retirement future.

Two Girls makes custom orders on a monthly basis and looks forward to new projects of creativity. The reclaiming of old wooden structures is what they are about. Their enjoyment of working with vintage wood like early cherry, blue pine, oak, and black walnut is enhanced by their abilities to work with exotic woods like St. Croix Monkey Pod, with its distinctive curly and wild grain patterns, as well as those from the sustainable acacia tree. "We re-



Jennifer and Ann Flanders-Doland.

cycle and reclaim everything we can," said Ann, "we are very proud of this."

Their retail outlet offers one-of-a-kind furniture creations as well as home goods like planters, pillows, vases, throws, candles, and Dixie Belle chalk paint (for which they are this area's exclusive dealer). "Dixie Belle chalk mineral paint is very durable and blend-able," stated Ann. "It's an artist's way to paint furniture. This paint is our biggest and best seller. We have about 35 vendors/craftspeople who come here exclusively for this brand of chalk paint.

Their retail emporium encompasses 1800 square feet of displays and hard goods

and they invite customers to come in to see their handiwork along with their fashionable presentations of home décor. "We do have terrariums too," said Jen, "we buy the glass containers and create miniature gardens of air plants and succulents." It's like a small forest enclosed in its own ecosphere.

Two Girls Reclaimed is at 22 West Street (Felters Mill), Millbury. Phone: (508) 581-4200. Hours: Thurs-Sat 11 a.m. – 7p.m.; Sun. 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Appointments are available. www.twogirlsreclaimed.com Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/twogirlsreclaimed> Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/twogirlsreclaimed>



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Techniques to revitalize a lawn after a long winter

Pristine, snow-covered landscapes can be wonders to behold. While that blanket of white is idyllic, a lawn's delicate blades may be paying a hefty price beneath the cold, heavy piles of snow.

Snow plows push salt and sand up on the grass while subterranean animals like mice and moles dig burrows beneath piles of snow as they try to find food and stay warm. Such conditions are not favorable for thriving landscapes. When the spring thaw arrives, lawns may be in dire need of some TLC. The following techniques can mitigate winter-related lawn damage.

- Clear out debris. Remove any scattered leaves, branches and other debris that has been strewn across the property due to storms or snow-laden trees. This will give you a clean canvas to work on.
- Dry out snow mold. The Family Handyman says snow mold is a cold-season fungus that causes gray-colored circles or patches on the lawn where there has been snow. To alleviate snow mold, rake the lawn to loosen matted grass and facilitate the drying-out process.
- De-thatch the lawn. Heavy snow can compress the grass and cause some of it to die



Remove any debris from the lawn after snow thaws to see what you're working with.

- off. De-thatching helps to remove dead grass blades and separate any matting. This enables water, nutrients and air to reach the lawn's roots more effectively. Thinning out old organic matter also helps encourage new growth.
- Aerate the soil. Coupled with de-thatching, aeration involves loosening the soil or poking holes to allow nutrients to move freely to the roots.
- Kill weeds before they spread. Weeds may be the first to start growing when the weather begins to warm. Address them promptly by manually pulling them or applying an herbicide.
- Overseed the lawn. Chances are there are some bare spots that have formed over

the winter. Overseeding can help to fill in the lawn. Make sure that frosts are largely a thing of the past and soil temperature is around 50 F to 60 F before seeding. Water daily until grass fills in.

• Apply nutrients. Fertilizer and compost can restore nutrients to the lawn that may have been used up over winter. A soil test at a nearby horticultural center can tell you which nutrients are needed, according to the Chemistry Cachet, a guide to using chemistry secrets for healthy living, beauty, cleaning, and gardening.

Lawns can be restored to their pre-winter glory after some sweat equity and about five to six weeks of consistent sunshine and warm weather.

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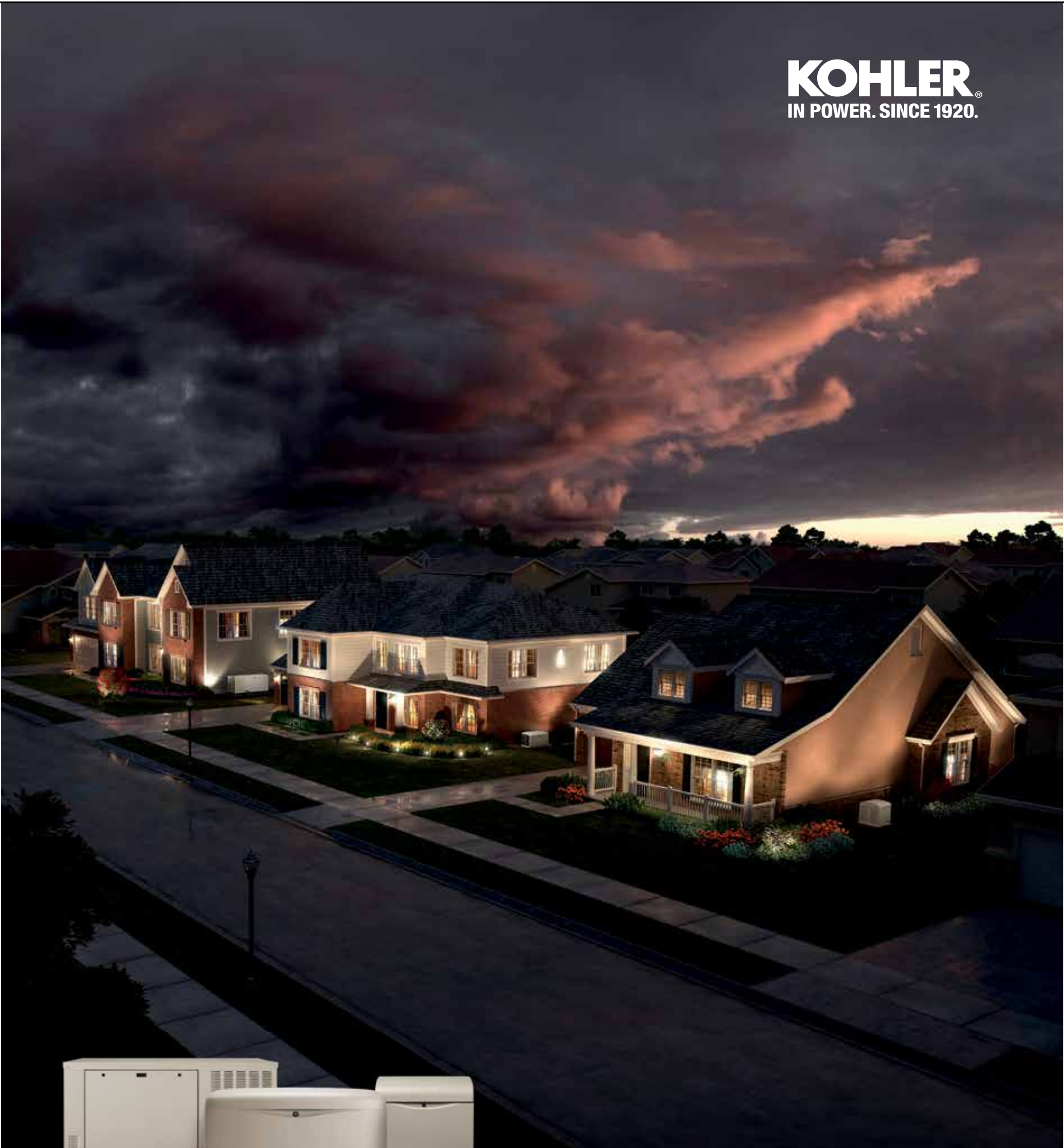
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Renovation trends that figure to be popular in the year ahead

Home renovation trends are ever-changing. Renovations that might have been de rigueur 20 years ago may seem dated now. Recognizing the potentially popular trends of tomorrow is a great way for homeowners to give their homes a fresh new look and put themselves in position to capitalize on popular trends when they put their homes on the market. That's especially so after 2020, a year when millions of people spent more time at home than ever before.

All that time working from home and relaxing at home gave millions of homeowners ideas about what they like about their homes and what they hope to change. The following are some renovation trends that various experts suspect could emerge in 2021.

• *Eco-friendly living:* Climate change, and how to combat it, was a hot button issue during the 2020 presidential election in the United States. So it should come as no surprise that urdesignmag.com, a web magazine that

showcases creative trends in design, architecture, art, technology, and fashion, predicts that eco-friendly living solutions figure to be hot commodities in 2021. Eco-friendly appliances, furniture and designs can help to conserve energy and reduce waste, which environmentalists and government agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency note are two critical components in the fight against climate change.

• *Large windows:* Large win-

dows can provide stunning views of the outdoors and allow ample natural light into a home. It may not be a coincidence if large windows prove to be a hot trend in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic that dominated much of 2020 forced many people to spend considerably more time at home. Darker homes without much natural light can adversely affect mood, especially when people are spending more time at home. HGTV predicts that homeowners will seek ways to bring more natural light into their homes in 2021, and large windows naturally brighten homes while making rooms appear bigger, helping people feel less cramped. That's an especially beneficial characteristic when spending more time indoors at home.

• *Minimalism:* The anticipated popularity of minimalism in 2021 may also be connected to the pandemic. As professionals were forced to work from home and many families spent more time together inside their homes than ever before, they may have recognized a need to cut back on clutter, including extra furniture. A minimalist approach is both



simple and clean, which can make homes feel less claustrophobic.

• *Multi-functional spaces:* Homeowners asked a lot of their homes in 2020, as rooms were transformed into multi-functional spaces seemingly overnight. HGTV notes that spending

more time at home showed homeowners that it may not make sense to dedicate entire rooms of a home to a single purpose. Renovations that can help homeowners transform rooms into multi-functional spaces figure to be hot commodities in the years ahead.

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Three techniques to keep mosquitoes out of your backyard oasis

The value of a retreat-like backyard was never more apparent than in 2020. Over the last year-plus, much of the world has been forced to stay home as a global pandemic has claimed millions of lives while countless others have had to fight to survive in hospitals. It's no surprise people have looked for a respite from the harsh realities of living during a deadly pandemic, and many turned their attention to their own backyards to provide such an escape.



A backyard retreat can be even more enjoyable when homeowners find ways to keep mosquitoes at bay.

The online home remodeling platform Houzz reported a 58 percent annual increase in project leads for home professionals in June 2020. Contractors who specialize in outdoor spaces saw the biggest increase in demand. A revamped outdoor space can provide the perfect retreat for homeowners who want to get away from it all. But one winged, unwelcome guest can quickly transform an oasis into an uninviting space.

Mosquitoes make their presence felt in many areas each summer. These pesky, often hungry insects can carry disease, and their bites can be painful and itchy. Homeowners can try these three techniques to keep mosquitoes out of their backyards.

1. Remove standing water. Standing water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes, who don't even need a lot of water to successfully breed. A

daily walk around the property may uncover kids' toys, empty flower pots or other small receptacles that can collect water. Even clogged gutters can lead to the accumulation of a small amount of water, and that can be enough for mosquitoes to breed. Remove these potential breeding grounds when you find them, and do so each day, as mosquitoes mature from eggs to nymphs in roughly four days.

2. Mow regularly. Mowing the lawn so the grass never gets too high is another way to make a backyard less hospitable to mosquitoes. The pest experts at Terminix® note that mosquitoes seek tall grass to protect them from the elements, including wind and hot summer sun. Mowing enough so grass never gets too high in summer can

make backyards less inviting to mosquitoes.

3. Plant with mosquitoes in mind.

The home remodeling experts at HGTV note that plants can be part of homeowners' strategy to repel mosquitoes. Various plants have mosquito-repellant qualities. For example, bee balm releases a fragrance as it grows, and mosquitoes don't like that fragrance. Homeowners can speak with a local lawn and garden professional for recommendations about plants that can thrive in their region and repel mosquitoes at the same time.

Mosquitoes can make it hard to enjoy a backyard oasis. But various strategies can help homeowners keep these unwanted guests out of their backyards.

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What to expect during a bathroom remodel



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There are many reasons to renovate a home. Some homeowners purchase fixer-uppers and commit to making major renovations before they even move in, while others may renovate their homes with an eye on resale value. But many homeowners also take on renovation projects to make the homes more livable for themselves.

Bathroom renovations are popular projects. In fact, a 2018 survey from the National Association of Home Builders found that bathroom remodels are the most popular remodeling projects. But just because bathroom remodeling projects are popular doesn't mean they're easy to endure. Knowing what to expect during a bathroom remodel can help homeowners get through the renovation process.

Cost
 Bathroom remodeling projects can be expensive. According to Remodeling magazine's "Cost vs. Value 2019" report, a mid-range bathroom remodeling project cost an average of \$20,420 in 2019, while an upscale remodel cost just under \$64,000. Homeowners should develop budgets for their bathroom renovation projects to determine which type of project they can afford. In addition, setting aside a little extra money for overruns is a wise move that can help homeowners handle any unforeseen expenses that arise during the project.

Noise
 Few home renovation projects can be undertaken quietly, and bathroom renovations tend to generate a lot of noise. The noise can be difficult to overcome for professionals who work

from home full-time, and it also can be hard on parents of young children who still nap and don't yet go to school. Parents of young children may find it best to delay bathroom renovation projects until their children are school-aged and out of the house for most of the day on weekdays.

Mess
 The debris generated by bathroom renovation projects is another thing homeowners must prepare for. In addition to preparing for the waste generated by the project, first-time renovators must realize that dust might be a big issue once the project begins. Dust can pose a threat to residents' overall health, particularly the health of youngsters whose bodies haven't yet fully developed. As a result, parents of young children may want to schedule renovations during family vacations so their children are exposed to as little dust as possible.

Changes
 Few renovations go off without a hitch. Once a project begins, contractors often uncover issues that weren't noticeable to the naked eye. These issues may increase the cost of completing a project or force homeowners to change their plans to make the project stay as close to their budgets as possible. Recognizing that these decisions may have to be made on the fly can help homeowners feel more prepared when unexpected issues arise.

Bathroom renovation projects are worthwhile investments. Knowing what to expect during a bathroom renovation project can help homeowners handle all the twists and turns that may arise.



Simple ways to reduce risk of disease in your garden

No garden is immune to disease. Even the most attentive, experienced gardeners have had to confront disease in their gardens, which can lead to significant damage and potentially kill plants.

Various bacterial, fungal and viral diseases can affect gardens, and the University of Maryland Extension notes that fungicides, which are chemicals that destroy fungus, are only rarely recommended to combat disease. In fact, a proactive approach rooted in prevention is often the most effective way to reduce risk for disease in gardens.

•Choose the right varieties of plant. The UME notes that choosing disease-resistant varieties is an effective way to prevent disease in gardens. Gardeners who have confronted disease in their gardens in the past should do their best

to identify which diseases were present and then choose plants that are considered re-

sistant to those diseases. A local garden center professional can help gardeners who are uncertain about what to plant.

•Plant in the right spots. The choice of where to plant is significant. Avoid wet areas with insufficient drainage. The home renovation experts at HGTV note that wet soil can decrease plants' chances for survival because of excess water and a lack of oxygen. If the only spots available for planting tend to be especially wet, consider planting in raised beds or having a French drain installed. Learn how much light plants need prior to planting them. Some

can thrive in shady areas, while others require ample sunlight each day.

•Plant at the right time. Planting too early when the soil is not yet warm enough can make plants vulnerable to disease by weakening their ability to fight. Use a soil thermometer to determine soil temperature and only plant when the conditions for planting are ideal.

•Harvest on time. When planting vegetables, it's imperative that the vegetables are harvested on time. The University of Georgia Extension notes that fully mature vegetables left on the plant attract disease

and are vulnerable to insect infestations.

•Control insect infestations. Certain insects can spread disease, so it's important that gardeners learn to recognize which insects pose a threat to their plants. Speak with a local

gardening center about invasive insects and how to address infestations without harming the plant. As the planting season approaches, gardeners can take various steps to make their plants and vegetables less vulnerable to disease.



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April calendar at Booklovers' Gourmet

April 1-30, "Nate's Great Adventures," photography by David Niles will be on display and for sale at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 East Main Street, Webster. Gallery open Tuesday-Saturday 10-5. For more information call 508-949-6232 or email deb@booklovers-gourmet.com

David Niles is a photographer, graphic designer and videographer living in Paxton, Mass. with his artist wife Jen (www.JenNilesArt.com) and his son Nathaniel. A graduate of Rhode Island School of Design, he has exhibited his photographs throughout New England and worked as a freelance photographer for news outlets, magazines and commercial clients.



Several years ago, David began photographing his son, creating playful environments that portray a child's creative and limitless inner world. "Nathaniel walks around in a bubble of imagination," a close friend once observed. This imagination has always been present for Nathaniel, helping him navigate the fictional and real landscapes of his life, discovering and creating new ones every day.

Celebrate National Poetry Month and Independent Bookstore Day with Poetry hors d'oeuvres at Booklovers' Gourmet, April 24, 2:00 p.m. Free, reservations are requested. RSVP to deb@booklovers-gourmet.com or 508-949-6232.

Three Worcester poets join Booklovers' Gourmet in celebrating Independent Bookstore Day and the last weekend of National Poetry Month. Curt Curtin, Judith Ferrara and John Gaumond will each share a few small bites of poetry from their respective works and will join other patrons in

festivities to honor Independent Bookstore Day.

Curt Curtin is a first generation Irish-American poet who lives in Worcester. Both his parents emigrated from County Kerry at the beginning of the 20th century, taking different routes but finding one another in Boston. Curt's newest collection, Kerry Dancers, captures many ways that Irish settlers attempted to retain their heritage while also assimilating into American culture. The book is published by Kelsay Books which also published his first full length collection, For Art's Sake. Curt also has three chapbooks and has won local awards for poetry including the Connecticut River Review Poetry Contest (2019) and of the Frank O'Hara Award (2010) from the Worcester County Poetry Association. He was twice named a Pushcart Prize nominee and has been a featured reader at many events in Massachusetts and also in Ireland.



Writer and visual artist Judith Ferrara lives in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her poetry, essays and artwork have been published in three collections: Gestures of Trees (2000), A Brush with Words (2013) and The little O, the earth: Travel Journals, Art & Poems (2015), as well as in journals such as the black fly review, The Comstock Review, The Portland Review Literary Journal, GSU Review and The Worcester Review. In 2009, she began a study of poet Stanley Kunitz and continues to do research on his family and Worcester-based poems. Since 1998, her art has been shown in group



and solo exhibitions. Visit www.PaletteAndPen.com to read the complete collection of Judy's Journals, a monthly blog on the creative process.

John Gaumond of Worcester is a poet, photographer and gardener, and professor emeritus at Fitchburg State University. He led a poetry writing workshop at Borders Bookstore for five years. His poetry has been published in Poets in the Galleries, The Connecticut River Review, Sahara, Worcester Magazine, The Longfellow Society Journal, The Leaflet, The Lancaster Times, The Issue, Ballard Street Poetry Journal, The Worcester Telegram and The Worcester Review. He received The Jacob Knight Poetry Award in 2006. His photographs have appeared in The Worcester Review, Diner, Ballard Street Poetry Journal, The River Valley Current, The Worcester Telegram and Worcester Magazine. His photograph Flower Pots, Siena III was selected for the 2014 Art in the City program. PoetryArt2@aol.com



Independent Bookstore Day is a one-day national party that takes place at indie bookstores across the country on the last Saturday in April. Every store is unique and independent, and every party is different. But in addition to events and other fun stuff, there are exclusive books and literary items that you can only get on that day. Not before. Not after. Nowhere else.



Samuel Slater EXPERIENCE

Collection Curiosities by Curator Olivia Spratt

This map, graciously donated by the LaPlante family, is the oldest map of the town we have in our collection. Published by F. W. Beers & Co., it dates back to 1870, 38 years after Webster was founded. The map is composed of paper mounted onto a linen backing. It is extremely fragile, but came to us in good condition. Objects like these are very useful because they provide a glimpse into life when Samuel Slater's sons took over the family business. We can see which plots of land were owned by whom, many of which belonged to the Slaters. Also by looking at this map, we can see the evolution of the name of Webster Lake. There is a map of Massachusetts from 1795 currently held at the Boston Public Library that shows the lake being referred to as Chaggogagogg-manchogagogg Pond. It stayed

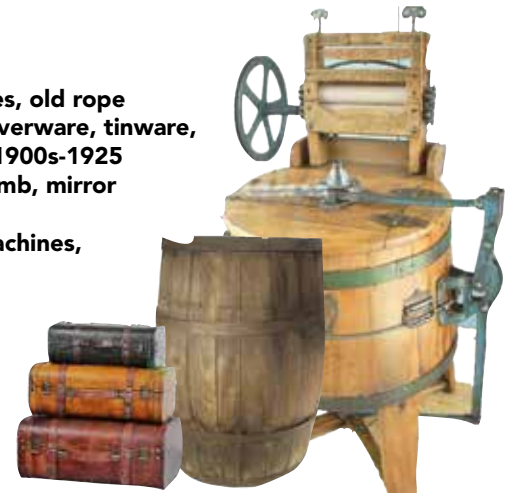


that way until the 1830s, when it was changed to Chaubunagungamaug Pond, as seen here on the map in our collection. Look out for this map on display in our orientation exhibit!

Do you have any old things?

Many area residents have donated their antique items to the Samuel Slater Experience, but a few more are still needed to complete all the exhibits. Here is a list. If you have any these and are willing to part with them, please contact Olivia Spratt at ospratt@samuel Slater Experience.org or call the museum at 508-461-2955. Please include a photo with your email.

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Lincoln has been on a strict diet due to a few senior issues, along with a firm desire to offer him the very best nutrition amid his golden years. He's made it to the final stretch. A bad habit needed to go.

Dunkin's Munchkins.

I cannot possibly put a price tag on the joy accrued from countless Dunkin' Donuts Drive Thru runs over the last ten years. In Pavlovian fashion, Lincoln came to associate the entire Dunkin experience with pure joy. He learned the physics of my Honda Pilot while it rounded the drive-through, the peculiar way in which a square box speaks, and the sweetened scent of the air while, head-out-window, he sniffed and salivated. Every moment became one step closer to the blessed window, where kind people wearing brown and pink passed out small, edible balls. He studied these people over and over again, fixing his

eyes on their hands from the vantage point of the opened back seat window. His chunky smile puffed to the very sight of them until—suddenly—the people appeared before his very eyes.

"Oh my gosh that is the cutest dog I've ever seen!! Can he have a munchkin?"

"The driver in the car behind you wants to pay for your coffee."

"Do you mind if I post your dog on my Snapchat?"

Lincoln became a Dunkin' celebrity, the doggie in the window who cost nothing to flirt with. Shamelessly, he lapped up every handout

"There's jelly in this ball!"

He could barely hold back his joy for the donut holes and held me accountable for extras given. "Not to be a nudge, but I saw the Person place a tire-shaped ball in the bag." He stood formidable, propped like a Security Guard on the console, a spot of jelly at his

nostril while he held me hostage at the wheel. "Lincoln. Go sit down, please."

I had created a monster. "Is this what heaven feels like?" Yet it was a happy monster. He inhaled crumbs from cracks between the leather seats and stalked wedges of donut beneath them. Like a drunken toddler, Lincoln was high on Dunkin's munchkins. I needed to act fast, and help him attach "an experience" to a Dunkin' run, not a donut hole. A clean diet had already made a significant impact on his health. His golden years were becoming brighter. He needed to stay the course. But how?

"Can my dog have a slice of day-old cheese, please?" I spat a tried solution from the passenger side of my husband's Infiniti one day. "Day old cheese?" A rash climbed his neck. "You can't just ask them to give you a slice of cheese!" He chided me with authority.



Lincoln gobbles up a slice of Day Old cheese

"Don't be ridiculous." I puffed. "They're a billion-dollar conglomerate. Our dog may not be alive tomorrow and you're worried about them losing a few pennies." Lincoln narrowed his eyes to the conversation. "I bet they throw away day old cheese anyway." His blonde lashes still, he transcribed the braille of our conversation with intellect. "Wah, wah, wah, wah, wah. Cheese. Wah, wah, wah-hwannna. Cheese. Wahnanna. Cheese."

Shhh. Lincoln shuffled back to the window. The kind person was on her way back. He sat politely and broke into smile, a twinkle in his eye. We shut up.

"You're such a good dog! Here you go!"

He took.

The people dressed in brown and pink had so many reasons to say no:

"We don't give away cheese."

"The practice is not sanitary."

"Giving away cheese is against policy."

"You need to pay for what you take home here."

Instead, the kind hearts of Dunkin' Donuts enabled a troubling sense of entitlement.

"Oh my gosh - look at him! Can he have two slices?"

"He is the cutest."

"I've read his column! One more slice for Lincoln!"

They passed the cheese. Lincoln licked his choppers.

We drove away in silence. I couldn't help but reflect on my behavior. Had I committed a small crime? A spot of guilt poked at my conscience while I fastened my seatbelt and thought harder. How inappropriate was my request? Like the warm scent of butter-crumbs, the truth came to me. I was able to trace my behavior back to my ancestry.

Nana!

My late grandmother, Madeleine Stelluti-Palumbo, an Italian immigrant, was a phenomenal cook. She was also fanatical about ensuring that not a morsel would go to waste. She would find a snip of arugula and turn it into a stew. Or whip up a frittata using overripe peppers and a few eggs. She would even napkin-wrap slices of bread taken from restaurant tables, and stow them away in her purse. "Me save," she'd say.

Deep down, was saving cheese in my DNA? My gaze settled on Lincoln. He laid comfortably in the back seat and licked his leonine paws, thoroughly satisfied with how the day had unfolded. Then, at random, he lifted his big head, stared at me, and broke into an easy smile.

"Good boy, Lincoln."

If loving my dog too much is a crime, I'll have to plead guilty.

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Happy with how the moment has unfolded.

QCC student named Massachusetts New Century Workforce Pathway scholar

WORCESTER — Quinsigamond Community College student Vincent Strzelecki, of North Oxford, has been named a 2021 New Century Workforce Pathway Scholar and will receive a \$1,250 scholarship.

Only one New Century Workforce Pathway Scholar was selected from each state. Over 2,000 students were nominated from more

than 1,200 college campuses across the country. Students were evaluated on academic achievement, leadership, service, and significant endeavors. Mr. Strzelecki received the highest score in Massachusetts.

"I'm proud to congratulate Vincent for this great accomplishment. He is an example of the many QCC students who enter the workforce with

the high-caliber skill sets they need to be successful," said QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D. "Computer scientists like Vincent are helping to transform our world, which is especially evident today, as the pandemic has shown just how much we rely on technology to live our day-to-day lives."

This national scholarship is the first of its kind to support students at associate degree-granting institutions who plan to enter the workforce after completion of a degree

or certificate. The program is sponsored by The Coca-Cola Foundation and the Phi Theta Kappa Honor (PTK) Society.

Mr. Strzelecki is a member of QCC's PTK Alpha Theta Zeta Chapter, and is currently completing his Computer Science-Transfer Associate Degree. His goal after graduating is to become a video game software engineer for a well-known video game developer.

"I want to create a future where anyone can play video

games, beyond any barriers of wealth, mental capacity, and coordination," he said.

"We congratulate Vincent for receiving this prestigious scholarship, and we are honored to partner with The Coca-Cola Foundation to recognize his outstanding achievements," said PTK's President and CEO Dr. Lynn

Tincher-Ladner. "Scholarship programs like this are integral for creating opportunities for students to succeed as they prepare to enter the workforce and for putting college completion within reach."

The New Century Workforce Pathway Scholars will be recognized in the fall.

St. Andrew Bobola Parish Yard Sale

On Saturday, April 24, St. Andrew Bobola Parish, 54 West Main St., Dudley, will resume its annual spring yard sale from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the church's rear parking lot. Household items, yard accessories, seasonal decorations and much more, good 'useable' items: all available at bargain prices. As you drive in the normal entry driveway to the church, please park in the designated area at the rear of the lot. Then walk thru the tables following the marked arrows on the pavement as indicated, keeping in a single file as you proceed. Masks must be worn and social distancing protocol must be followed. Once you have left the cash out table, please proceed to exit in your car thru the normal exit driveway. (Rain date: Saturday, May 1). Thank you in advance for helping our little parish rebound. May

many blessings be bestowed upon you.

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Compost facility now open

WEBSTER - The compost facility opened on April 2. Spring/summer hours of operation are Monday and Thursday 2-6 p.m.; 1st, 3rd and 4th Saturday of the month 8 a.m.-12 noon.

You can purchase stickers at the town hall administrator's office on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Compost stickers will also be available at the town hall on Sat-

urdays until April 10, from 9-11 a.m. in the rotunda. Available online at this link and follow directions: <https://secure.recl.com/MA/webster-ma/catalog>.

The town encourages purchasing online. If you purchased a compost sticker online last year you will have an account already set up. To log into your account please follow the link. Your username will be your email. If you have forgotten your password you can use the "forgot password" link to reset.

If you do not already have an account you can set one up as long as you are not a veteran. If you are a veteran and not already in the system please purchase your sticker in person and bring your DD214.

Beach stickers are available online only for now. You will be able to get them in person once the beach opens for the season.

Sticker fees: resident - (leaves and grass clippings only) - \$40. Veterans - (leaves and grass clippings only - \$15 (must show DD214 or NGB Form 22). Resident/veterans: (brush, leaves and grass clippings) - \$100

This facility is open to Webster residents only for the disposal of material originating from properties located in the Town of Webster only. A sticker is required.

Accepted: brush/limbs 2 inches or less in diameter and no more than 4 feet in length. These restrictions will be strictly enforced. Disposal will be denied for all debris in excess of these size limitations. Grass clippings, hedge clippings, and leaves (no plastic bags) not accepted.

Commercial vehicles/contractors or landscapers: Construction debris (lumber or other building products) dirt, concrete or any other form of solid waste, double axle trailers, pine needles, stumps. Violation of the above regulations may result in denied access and/or fines.

Community yard sale - spaces available

AUBURN— Spring cleaning? Don't throw that good "stuff" away. Recycle it by selling it to someone who needs it. Do you have an accumulation of things that are too good to throw away but you no longer need? Don't have enough to hold your own yard sale? Join us on the lawn of the First Congregational Church, Saturday, June 12, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., for our annual Community Yard Sale/Plant Sale. This is a rain or shine event.

After having to cancel the 2020 yard sale we are excited to say we are back for this year. Because we have all been so restricted in what we could do this past year we anticipate even more people setting up to sell their "treasures" as well as a larger turnout of people looking for that special bargain or those out to get a feel for a return of normalcy. Masks will be required and all COVID guidelines will be enforced.

We also will be having our Plant Sale. There will be a large selection of annuals and perennials. Those who have been buying plants from us return year after year and see how each year we have more and more to offer. This year should be no different.

Spaces are available for a \$25.00 fee; a limited number of tables may be rented for \$5.00 each. We'll do all the advertising, both print and digital, and will post plenty of signs the day of the event at key locations in town. Depending on the COVID restrictions in place at the time we hope to have coffee and pastries, and hot dogs and soda available for sale.

Due to our central location and previous yard sales (26), we expect a large turnout. Don't delay, reserve your space now by calling Cindy Dube at 508-832-6646, please leave message, or the church office at 508-832-2845. You may also text 774-238-0260.

- Cindy Dube

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M & M Auto Body highly wreck-amended

By Janet Stoica

Picture this, years ago, two first graders meet while attending Chaffee School in Oxford. They forge a friendship that lasts decades, hang out together, and promise to go into business as partners one day.

It really does happen, as Scott Milner and Ron Moscoffian of M & M Auto Body of Oxford can attest. With Lee Collins on their staff, Scott and Ron have partnered longer than most businesses. Through thick and thin, family milestones, and their own children, the partners' longevity and business acumen have turned their humble beginnings into a successful and customer-appreciated enterprise.

"Nothing leaves this shop until we're 100% satisfied that we've done the best job possible for our customers," said Ron Moscoffian, "it has to be done right and done well before we are satisfied. We're a small shop but we do what's best for our customers. We do it hands-on ourselves. If we're satisfied and happy with the results, then our client will see that and be satisfied too."

M & M works on every model and make of vehicle out there. Their services include auto body repairs, painting, and collision services, including buffing, scratch, and dent removal as well as custom paint mixing to a customer's request and specifications. Vehicle frame straightening is one of their specialties. Have

you ever driven behind a car or truck with a front end drifting off to its right side and its back end floating to the left? Those vehicles definitely need the services of M & M's frame-straightening expertise! "I've seen those drivers on the road. Looks like they're taking up two lanes, doesn't it?" Ron laughed.

Many of today's vehicles are lighter in weight than those manufactured even five years ago. "You'd be amazed at the amount of plastic in today's vehicles," said Ron. "The amount of synthetic materials in our cars and trucks is mind-boggling."

M & M works closely with many insurance companies. They're a licensed, registered, and insured body shop and are also licensed vehicle appraisers. "We'll attend vehicle auctions, carefully check the repairable ones, fix them up, and then sell them. We're Dodge and Plymouth guys. We've been to many raceways watching Richard Petty and his Dodge and Plymouth vehicles of choice."

The men like Mopar products. Mopar was founded in 1937 and is the parts, service, and customer care division of the former Chrysler Corporation now owned by Netherlands-based automobile manufacturer, Stellantis.

Ron and Scott will be celebrating their 24th year as business partners this month. They began their business venture



L-R, Scott Milner and Ron Moscoffian in 1997 and then in 2021.

on April 1, 1997, fulfilling their first-grade pledge to each other. "There was a blizzard that day that we'll never forget," said Ron. "The snow, wind, and cold forged our partnership."

The two have always been car enthusiasts and went to Bay Path Vocational High School to learn their trade in the auto body shop. Scott furthered his education in the service area along with truck driving and worked and managed auto body shops at Worcester dealerships. Cadillacs were his favorites. They were very spacious and made well, he said. Every year Anthony Borgatti (owner of the well-known and famous Spag's Retail Store in Shrewsbury) would visit the dealership to trade-in and buy another Cadillac. "He was a great customer."

The crew has many projects and has also built many cars for auto shows. One of their steady customers is Harbro Auto Sales of Webster and

Whitinsville. "We're very honored to be part of Harbro's success," said Ron.

M & M Auto Body is at 7 Industrial Park Road, West, Oxford. Phone: (508) 987-7070.

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Tales from beyond

Baileys Mills/Spite Cemetery

By Thomas D'Agostino

One of the most interesting legends of New England takes place in the small village of Reading, Vermont, just southeast of Rutland. If you venture down a small gravel lane known as Bailey's Mills Road, you will come to a building that now resides as a bed and breakfast. The home came into the possession of the Innkeeper, Barbara Thaeader's family, in the mid 1960s. The small road travels directly in front of the house before turning up a hill and

out of sight through a narrow valley. In the winter, it is not advisable to travel the road any further than the Bailey's Mills front door. Bailey's Mills Bed and Breakfast also sports another eye-catching parcel of land just outside its doors. It is a sizeable burial ground that makes up what would have been the front yard. Although this may not be out of the ordinary to New England, the name of the cemetery and the reason for it being there is a tale for the telling.

Levi Bailey purchased the dam and mill in 1794. Between 1800 to his death in 1850 the enterprise prospered and Bailey continued to expand his industrial complex until the land held a three story woolen factory, several other mills, a blacksmith shop and a company store. Employees of the complex lived in a brick house and were paid in company script, meaning that they could only buy their goods at the company store, no doubt giving Bailey a chance to re-

coup his wages paid out.

In 1808, Bailey wished to expand beyond his property to a lot across the small lane, which at that period in time was a state road. Levi inquired his neighbor, David Hapgood, in good faith to purchase a piece of property that lay just across the street from his but Hapgood, who was irritated by the mere sight of Bailey, outright refused.

Persistent proposals to purchase Hapgood's piece of property were met with harsh denials. As time wore on, Bailey began to resent his neighbor and at one point yelled over to the man that he was getting on in years and when his time came the property would be taken. Hapgood, knowing this to be true, made arrangements for the land in such a way that his nemesis



would never acquire it. He donated it to the town for use as a burial ground. To make matters more infuriating to Bailey, when John Hapgood died in 1829, he was among the first to be buried in the cemetery. Every morning Bailey would tend to his businesses having to confront the gravestone of Hapgood sitting spitefully on the land he would never have. For this reason the burial ground is now called Spite Cemetery but there is an interesting epilogue to the story.

Levi Bailey also purchased a burial plot for his family in the cemetery and when he died October 21, 1850, at the age of eighty-five, he was buried right near his neighbor. This may have been a final attempt for Bailey to spite Hapgood as he did acquire the land he so desired, although not as much, and for eternity instead.

The bed and breakfast sits along the small lane with the cemetery in lovely Reading, Vermont. Take a trip and stay a night for the home also houses a few spirits of the past. Nothing harmful, or even spiteful, just good old Vermont ghosts keeping to themselves in a place where time seems to have slowed down to a relaxing pace.

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.

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with both mechanical items and electrical issues. What do you think about doing something like this? Is the expense worth the outcome? I have the garage space and I'm newly retired, so I have nothing but time.

A. A Jeep is a popular project. There are parts galore from specialty websites that only sell Jeep parts to RockAuto, CariD and CarParts.com. Online you can buy just about any Jeep part. Jeeps can suffer from frame rust. The other common issue is transfer case failure (usually from running mismatched tires). There are plenty of Dune Buggy projects although with legendary Dune Buggy builder Bruce Myers passing away this year, these once affordable projects have seemed to jump in price. Most are simple due to the VW Bug components and simple air-cooled engine. Here in New England there are some great choices. Factory-Five www.factoryfive.com has kits for Cobra roadsters, Subaru powered sports cars, supercars and a classic 33 Ford hotrod. Then there is Smyth Performance www.smythkitcars.com who sells a kit that, in a couple of weekends, you can make an Australian style Ute out of a VW Beetle, Dodge Charger, Audi or Jeep Cherokee. Any time you build or restore anything, the reward is priceless.

Q. I have a 2008 E150 van that I use when I attend flea markets to sell my artwork. It has a small V8 engine and automatic transmission. The truck has about 175,000 miles on it and I know at 13 years old I should expect some problems. Last year before I parked it for the winter, I noticed the idle becomes rough as it starts to warm up and the engine gets up to temperature and if I'm stopped, it almost feels as if it is going

to stall; also there is a weird exhaust odor. Except for this, the van runs pretty well and gets about 15 miles per gallon, which I think is pretty good for a vehicle that is as aerodynamic as a refrigerator box. So far there is no check engine light, any ideas?

A. It sounds as if the truck is running slightly "lean." This would give you a slight stumble, rough idle and eye burning exhaust smell but still behave acceptably on the road. I would look for vacuum leaks around the intake manifold and the EGR valve (exhaust gas recirculation valve). The EGR valve could also be sticking slightly open causing the lean running condition. This vehicle is no fun to work on, so be a bit patient with the shop who is working on it.

Q. We purchased a 2015 Dodge Dart, was this a reliable car to purchase for our grandson?

A. It depends on who you ask. Consumer Reports readers (not the magazine) give it a pretty good report. JD Power, one of the largest rating companies, puts the car near the bottom of the reliability list. I would also put it near the bottom as well on reliability based on my experiences with the car. But it isn't all bad news. The positives: it did well in crash testing, so it is a safe small car, and it gets pretty good fuel economy and it is fun to drive. If you got a good deal on the car, just know that there may be some problems that you need to deal with.

Q. I am considering an electric car in the future and I know you have driven some of the newest electric cars. What do you think of the Lucid Air?

A. It is too early to tell. The specifications on the car look quite good. Lucid is offering three years of free charging. In some situation you can recharge in as little as 20 minutes, range (400 miles in the base model) and performance is outstanding. Safety is well addressed with a full suite of semi-autonomous driving features. The starting price of the car is \$77,400 and goes up to \$161,000. At the end of last year Lucid completed its factory in Arizona and there are about 100 prototypes in testing. The last I read production should start in the Spring. Let me know if you buy one.

Q. I am looking for a fun project, maybe to restore an old Jeep, dune buggy or even a kit car. I'm pretty handy

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BHS Seniors honored



Bartlett High School recognized their senior cheerleaders and football players at Saturday's game held at the Memorial Athletic Field. Congratulations seniors. See more photos on the Yankee Xpress Facebook page.



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The nice weather is coming and vaccine shots have brought hope and enthusiasm to all of us over the past few months. Tough times during the COVID-19 pandemic and once again, our hearts go out to all who perished and their families who were left behind from this invisible disease. Caution still is the way to go, meaning wearing masks should be the rule for awhile. We are 14 months into COVID-19 and still have a long way to go.

The good news is high school sports are back and are presently in their wedge season of playing fall sports, namely football, field hockey, soccer, and basketball. The wedge season is the past fall season that was cancelled because of the COVID. Now, all sports are being played and practiced under restrictive rules and conditions. This space was against the "wedge season" and admits it was wrong as the MIAA pulled it off so far without any major crisis or setbacks. Happy for the kids. That is all that counts here. Tip of the hat to the MIAA. The weather cooperated for the wedge season as the month of February flexed its snow muscles way too much but the coaches and kids stayed with the MIAA plan and persevered by practicing in school parking lots. The month of March, even though very cold, gave the wedge season a chance to succeed. The kids deserve it.

Let's catch up with the local high school football teams. The wedge season football schedule for football is five

The wedge season is in full swing

games for every MIAA school unless a COVID protocol cancels a game. Shepherd Hill is the only "big" school in our area, meaning Division One because of their regional school enrollment. The Rams are 2-1 with two games remaining. At Doherty on April 10 and then at home against Shrewsbury on April 16. The Rams have beaten Leominster and Algonquin to date and lost to Wachusett. If the Rams finish at 3-2, meaning splitting between Doherty and Shrewsbury in their final two games, then they head into the 2021 fall season with a lot of momentum. Former SH lineman and current Atlanta Falcon starting guard Chris Lindstrom is coaching the line at SH because he is in his NFL off-season and the wedge season in Massachusetts gives him that opportunity. It doesn't get any better than that in Dudley. Imagine being a current Ram player today and seeing Lindstrom every day at practice. Lindstrom is such a solid human being in every way there is in life. The Rams are lucky to experience his presence. So much to learn from him and football is only half of it. His life values are off the chart.

The Bartlett Indians are also 2-1 after beating North and Abby Kelley and then losing to Millbury 34-14. The Indians play at Sutton and then close out the season at Southbridge on April 19, Patriots Day, at 10:15 am. This makes it a

holiday game. Remember Thanksgiving Day longtime fans, your Bartlett Indians play Southbridge at home on even years. The Indians always travel to Spectown on odd years. The 100th Thanksgiving Day game was played in Southbridge in 2019. That was the last time BHS played SHS in football. 2020 turkey day was cancelled due to COVID. The point here is the over 100 years of even years in Webster and odd years in Southbridge, 2021 should be in Southbridge. The Indians could end up at 4-1. As the old saying goes, "beat the teams you are supposed to beat."

The 4-1 wedge season will also give great hopes and promises for fall season. The Oxford Pirates are also 2-1 and they too can control their destiny and get four wins this wedge season. The Pirates beat Quaboag and Bay Path and have David Prouty and Worcester Voke left on their schedule. St. Paul beat Oxford in Game 2 of the season. Bay Path is 0-1 with Voke, Burncoat, and Prouty left on their schedule.

Just putting this out there: as the Oxford Pirates pursue two more wins this "wedge season," breakfast is on the Oxford Insurance Agency for the Pirate coaching staff at Carl's Diner on Main Street in Oxford if Coach Jeff Clarkson's Pirates go 4-1. Oxford proud alumn Gordon Cook will serve that breakfast anywhere in Oxford. When the Pirates deliver the four wins, Gordon will deliver the bacon.



Who are these guys? Submitted by Jeff Stefanik.

BHS suffered first loss to Millbury 34-14



The Bartlett Indians took on Millbury Saturday afternoon at the Memorial Athletic field. Pictured, Quiava Brown made the catch from Alex Nunez which set up a touchdown on the next play. See more photos on the Yankee Xpress Facebook page.

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Chief's corner

Mounting your cell phone in vehicle is the topic

By Chief Steven J. Wojnar
Dudley Police Department

Hands-free cell phone use while driving, has been the law for two years here in Massachusetts. Cell phones and electronic devices are supposed to be mounted in a safe location in the vehicle. I was recently sent a photo of a vehicle traveling on a local road with a dash mounted cell phone. I was asked if this was allowed?

According to the law, Massachusetts drivers can only use electronic devices and mobile phones in hands-free mode. You are only permitted to touch devices to activate them for that purpose. Drivers cannot hold or support any electronic device/phone while operating. MGL Chapter 90 Section 1 provides some information on mobile devices and calls for them to "be properly mounted to the windshield, dashboard, or center console in a manner that does not impede with the operation of the vehicle." This applies also to other devices, such as GPS navigation systems. The key requirement is it must be in a place that does not interfere with the operation of the vehicle. These situations are always determined on a case-by-case basis. In the photo provided to me as an example, the cell phone is rather large. It is mounted on the dashboard in a spot

which does appear to impede the driver's vision. This driver could be the subject of a violation. It is important to position these in a safe place. Cup holder mounts work great. The device is nearby, in the event it is used for navigation purposes, and it is below the dashboard level. This ensures the operator's field of view is clear.

The penalty for a first offense violation carries a \$35 fine under the impeded operation statute (MGL CH. 90 Sec. 13). Again, with the prevalence of cell phones in vehicles today, these situations are always determined on a case-by-case basis. It is important to do your research and outfit your vehicle with the appropriate hands-free mounts to make certain any phone use is both safe and in compliance with the law. Do your best to limit distractions and

try to only use phones when necessary. If the call or message can wait, let it.

As the pandemic continues, we ask everyone to stay safe and continue to take the necessary precautions to protect yourselves. Vaccination information can be found at 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. Hope-

fully, the end of this pandemic is in sight. 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. 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.



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Tips on financial planning



Dennis Antonopoulos

We're now well into what's known as "Tax Season." If your income in 2020 was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, your tax return will reflect it. However, if your earnings were fairly normal last year, you might look at your tax situation and wonder how you could improve it in

Put tax-smart investing moves to work

2022. One area to look at may be your investment-related taxes.

To help control these taxes, consider these moves:

- *Take full advantage of tax-deferred investments*

As an investor, one of the best moves you can make is to consider contributing as much as you can afford to your tax-deferred accounts – your traditional IRA and 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan – every year.

- *Look for tax-free opportunities*

Interest from municipal bonds typically is exempt from federal income tax, and, in some cases, from state and local income tax, too. (Some municipal bonds, however,

may be subject to the alternative minimum tax.) And if you qualify to contribute to a Roth IRA – eligibility is generally based on income – your earnings can be withdrawn tax-free, provided you've had your account for at least five years, and you don't start taking withdrawals until you're at least 59½. Your employer may also offer a Roth 401(k), which can provide tax-free withdrawals. Keep in mind, though, that you contribute after-tax dollars to a Roth IRA and 401(k), unlike a traditional IRA and 401(k), in which your contributions are made with pre-tax dollars.

- *Be a "buy and hold" investor*

Your 401(k) and IRA are

designed to be long-term investments, and you may face disincentives in the form of taxes and penalties if you tap into them before you reach 59½. So, just by investing in these retirement accounts, you are essentially pursuing a "buy and hold" strategy. But you can follow this same strategy for investments held outside your IRA and 401(k). You can own some investments – stocks in particular – for decades without paying taxes on gains. And when you do sell them, you'll only be taxed at the long-term capital gains rate, which may well be less than your ordinary income tax rate. But if you're frequently buying and selling

investments you've held for one year or less, you could rack up some pretty big tax bills, because you'll likely be taxed at your ordinary income tax rate.

- *Be prepared for unexpected taxes*

Mutual fund managers are generally free to make whatever trades they choose. And when they do sell some investments, they can incur capital gains, which may be passed along to you. If this is a concern, you might look for funds that do less trading and bill themselves as tax efficient.

While taxes are one factor to consider when you invest, they should probably not be the driving force. You need

to build a diversified portfolio that's appropriate for your risk tolerance and time horizon. Not all the investments you select, and the moves you make with them, will necessarily be the most tax efficient, but by working with your financial and tax professionals, you can make choices that can help you move toward your long-term goals.

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

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RE: Real Estate

The first thing you need to know about selling your home without a realtor



Mark Marzeotti

If you watch a steady stream of TV shows that focus on buying and selling homes, you've probably learned a lot about the process. As a result, you may think you have a solid enough handle on things to forego using a real estate agent when selling your house.

This is understandable, especially when you think about how much you could save on the realtor's commission. Plus, if you were captain of the ship, you'd be in charge of every decision during the process. But a few homebuyer education courses can't give you the years of experience realtors have. Here's the first thing you need to know before you take the reins and decide to sell your home without a real estate agent.

You may not be saving as much money as you think.

Hiring a real estate agent will typically cost you about six percent of a home's sale price. For a \$350,000 home, that's \$21,000. It'd be pretty nice to shave that number off your expenses, right?

The idea of saving thousands of dollars on commission by selling your own home can be tempting, and for a few it may even make sense, but for the vast majority of homeowners the desire to pocket more money by selling their own home will likely cost them.

Maybe you are thinking that a realtor writing a column, of course will say that." According to the National Association of Realtors, homes that are for sale by owner, or FSBOs, typically sell for less money than homes sold by realtors. In 2020, homes sold by owners closed at a median of \$217,900, while those sold by real estate agents closed for \$242,300.

That's a \$24,400 difference.

The upside of selling your place on your own, per the report, is saving time. FSBO sold more quickly than homes sold by agents in 2020 – 77 percent of FSBO homes sold in less than two weeks. But NAR points out that's because the homes were often sold to someone the seller knew.

Some agents say they don't believe that selling your home without an agent is a bad idea for all sellers – but it's probably a bad idea for most sellers. There are three reasons why.

First, there's pricing. One of the reasons you may not make as much is related to your potential pricing strategy. How will you determine the right price to sell? While multiple real estate websites offer quick estimates of your home's value, this is simply an algorithm – not a researched comparison of other similar homes in your neighborhood. In fact, she says those quickly generated estimates are often exaggerated, which can cause

you to upcharge your home. You might already know what happens to overpriced homes: nothing. They languish on the market as buyers select more reasonably priced options. It's almost worth hiring an agent just to be sure that your home is priced right.

Even if you don't hire an agent, you might need to hire a lawyer to go over all your contracts. This will cost you money, too. Still, this isn't the only reason you might not get as much money as you think. You have to be prepared to put in the work

necessary to attract the right buyers. Just sticking a sign in your front yard will likely not generate the traffic and interest that you hope for. The owner is responsible for all the marketing, photos, property descriptions, inquiries, open houses, showings, and vetting the potential buyers.

Then there's the business of appealing to buyers. Sellers need to understand the pros and cons of their property, and know what will distract buyers and turn them off. However, since homeowners tend to gloss over their home's flaws, this can be a challenge.

Having an unbiased person to help out can be a plus. Many times, sellers eventually realize they'd rather just spend five to six percent of the sale price and hire an agent to do all of this for them.

If you're selling to someone you know, marketing and appealing to potential buyers

might not be necessary. But you will have to negotiate with the buyer no matter who it is. So let me ask you this important question: Can you negotiate as well as an agent can on your behalf? The answer may be yes, but be realistic – not everyone is a born negotiator. Leave the job to a professional!

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ALL NEW INSTALLS COME WITH A 3 YEAR PARTS AND LABOR WARRANTY, AS WELL AS THE MANUFACTURERS WARRANTY.



We do NOT Sell Biofuel!

Which will help prevent less system breakdowns.



Central air conditioning and ductless mini splits



A Full Service Oil Company
24-Hour Emergency Service

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Don't spend another summer sweating!



Choose Morrissette & Son as your installer, and receive:

- Upgraded Diamond Dealer Parts & Compressor Warranty for 12-years (from standard 5 years parts/7 years compressor)
- Financing through the MassSave HeatLoan
- Rebates through MassSave, with processing on your behalf
- Extended Labor Warranty Available
- Highly trained technicians with Installation & Service
- Maintenance Contracts Available

In the ceiling, on the wall, ductwork or no ductwork. We provide energy-efficient heating & air conditioning.



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