

July 9-August 13, 2021

INSIDE

Hard-working Tracy Sharkey is GBI Avis' new COO

By Rod Lee

Lou Tusino wasn't going to hire Tracy Sharkey when she expressed interest in coming to work for Guaranteed Builders Inc. (GBI Avis) fourteen years ago, not long after graduation from Springfield College.

"I didn't want to give her a job," he said in GBI Avis's offices on West Street in Douglas the afternoon of June 25.

Now, the man affectionately known as "Uncle Lou" is glad he did.

Ms. Sharkey was recently promoted to chief operating officer (COO) of the company, from vice president.

"Get your real estate license," Mr. Tusino told her, then, thinking it wouldn't happen. "You can't work here without a real estate license."

When she came back a week later and produced the document, he had no choice.

"He's a man of his word," Ms. Sharkey said.

A go-getter in the fashion of Mr. Tusino himself, Tracy Sharkey has emerged as not only one of GBI's most important operatives (more about why that is true, shortly), but a prominent figure in town. She holds a number of lofty titles with GBI Avis, including "Professional Wetlands Specialist" and "Registered Sanitarian." She is a certified building official. She also chairs Douglas's Planning Board and Conservation Commission.

"She studied biology, now she's a sanitarian," Mr. Tusino said, with pride in his voice.

"I love it here," she said. "Lots of action, lots of flexibility and lots of opportunities to make money."

Well-known locally for its garages and modular homes (a dis-

Continued on page 3



GBI Avis' Tracy Sharkey recently took on the position of COO, solidifying her role with the Douglas-based general contracting company.

WCRN, Shining Rock partner up for thank-you golf tournament

By Rod Lee

Chris Thompson would probably be the first to admit he is not as good a golfer as Lou Papadellis was a soccer player.

Asked recently whether he is proficient on the course, Mr. Thompson laughed and said "I'm terrible. The last time I played I shot 139 and I lost thirty-seven balls. I'm just the casual guy who rides around in a cart."

Regardless, he and Mr. Papadellis are both looking forward to WCRN 830 AM's 15th annual golf tournament at Shining Rock Golf Club in Northbridge on July 27.

Continued on page 2



The path leading to the clubhouse at Shining Rock Golf Club in Northbridge.

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Joe O'Donnell, 77, of Natick, spent some time on the putting green before joining friends for a round of golf at Shining Rock on June 24. "There are six to eight of us and we play different courses," he said.

SHINING ROCK

Continued from page 1

Mr. Thompson is general manager of the Westborough-based station, which touts itself as "full-service radio." Mr. Papadellis is GM of Shining Rock, an award-winning track that has been compared to "a Vermont mountain course with a number of holes built into the sides of hills."

Shining Rock is also nestled high above School Street, and surrounded by expensive homes. New ones are being constructed as part of a large development.

Despite his lack of credentials swinging a driver or a nine iron, Mr. Thompson is no slouch—in terms of professional accomplishment. He is in fact "Dr. Christopher Thompson," with a degree from the University of Phoenix and a solid resume as a published scholar and marketing executive. Steeped in

sales and the broadcasting industry, he has been an adjunct professor of marketing at Quinsigamond Community College, Mount Wachusett CC and Fitchburg State.

The son of immigrants, Mr. Papadellis is a former Framingham North soccer standout and Natick boys soccer coach whose initial interest in the sport was sparked by George Wheeler—Framingham's "father of soccer." Mr. Papadellis developed his skills playing alongside talented Portuguese kids from the south side of town and in the rivalry between North and South, and went on to star at Boston College where he set school records and led BC to an ECAC title his senior year.

He is a member of BC's Athletic Hall of Fame.

He ran the pro shop at Hopkinton Country Club for three years. The owners of that club brought him with them when they bought Shining Rock.

Its collaboration with Shining Rock has been beneficial for WCRN and the tournament is the station's way of saying thank you to its clients, Mr. Thompson said. Few tournaments in the area boast as many incentives to register and participate. There is a continental breakfast, a post-event barbecue

and awards, closest-to-the-pin, longest drive and hole-in-one contests, cash and door prizes and hole sponsorships—for instance.

Of particular appeal is a \$1500 advertising package that can be scheduled for airing on WCRN before September 1 and that also includes a round of golf that day, four invites to the post-tournament barbecue and pre-registration, and a gift bag from local merchants.

This year, WCRN is adding a hot-air balloon to the mix.

"We're getting there," Mr. Thompson said on June 21, of signups so far.

Talking about Shining Rock at the club on June 22, Mr. Papadellis said, surprisingly enough, "the pandemic was very good for the golf industry. We had a good year, for two reasons. It was safe to be on the course, and when restaurants were allowed to open ours became a destination to eat outside" (on a patio overlooking the first tee).

All of Shining Rock's leagues are back and running.

"Two took last year off, we have seven going" in 2021, he said.

"Tournaments, that suffered, but overall it didn't hurt us because we filled

tee times seven days a week, and 90 percent of our tournaments are back this year. The course is in good shape and doesn't get burned out. We have irrigation.

"It's also the first year for our driving range."

With a pro shop, a restaurant (fried scallops with sweet potato fries and steak tips are among the favorites), a driving range, putting green, mixed tee boxes and spectacular layout, 6735-yard, par-72 Shining Rock, a semi-private course, has settled in as one of the Blackstone Valley and Central Massachusetts' premier golf courses.

An elevation change of two hundred fifty-five feet from its highest and lowest points results in stunning views.

WCRN is also doing well, Mr. Thompson said.

"It's like everything else. COVID changed the rules. Things are looking optimistic," he said.

Individual and team entrants for WCRN's golf tournament are being accepted. Contact WCRN's Harry Berkowitz at 508-769-1591 or berkoy1@charter.net.

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

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TRACY SHARKEY

Continued from page 1

play of these products can be seen on Main St.—Rt. 16—in Douglas), GBI Avis' expertise extends as well to foundation and excavation, permitting and engineering, zoning requirements and title search, planning and conservation, electrical and plumbing, demolition and septic, Title V and design.

Ms. Sharkey's thumbprints are on most of these facets of the business.

Mr. Tusino describes Ms. Sharkey as "a hard worker, from six in the morning. She's the boss, I look for the deals. We have almost a thousand acres we have to turn around."

Speaking of which, in the latest evidence that "she runs the show and she does a hell of a job," as Mr. Tusino puts it, Ms. Sharkey closed the deal for sale of the former Serendipity site on Rt. 16 in Uxbridge (before that it was the home of the Patrick's banquet hall) to Amazon for a 726,000-square-foot sortation facility.

"She was very instrumental in making that happen and it didn't get appealed," Mr. Tusino said. "She bought the land with my money and Amazon liked it. It will put a lot of people to work and help the commercial tax base."

"I'll be happier on Saturday morning!" she said, in accepting congratulations two days before the paperwork was to be signed.

Amazon's redevelopment of two parcels, back and front, "should be finished in the first quarter of 2022," she said. "They have a very aggressive timeline to get up and running before Thanksgiving."

"Everybody said I would be stuck with it the rest of my life," Mr. Tusino said, of the property.

GBI Avis weathered the pandemic with its typical commitment to serving the



An aerial view of the former Serendipity grounds on Douglas St. in Uxbridge, where Amazon will set up a sortation facility—a deal transacted by GBI Avis' Tracy Sharkey.

customer, Mr. Tusino said.

Like most everything else, modular homes activity was negatively impacted by the crisis, Ms. Sharkey said. "Last year it was hard to get building permits because town halls were closed. We had to pay close attention to the price of material. Our check boxes were still in place but we had to put a lot of effort into it."

"I think we will be very busy for homes this next year," Mr. Tusino said.

GBI Avis is looking to build on Winter St. in Douglas, "up to thirty homes near Wallum Lake, and we have another eight hundred acres to go with that but we need a

road," he said.

Now eighty years old and with an adopted son, age five, Mr. Tusino says, of GBI Avis, "we have done this for fifty-eight years and we have survived it all."

With seventy employees, GBI Avis is well-positioned for continued growth.

Ms. Sharkey is key to this.

"I needed someone with a specialty. She listened very carefully," Mr. Tusino said, in bringing Ms. Sharkey on board and bringing her along.

"I can still play biologist," she said, of her undergraduate focus. "Soil evaluating. I'm in the field at least once a week."

"Day-to-day, I wanted to take more responsibility so it all doesn't fall on Lou."

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

Norwich U. President's List

NORTHFIELD - The following student from your readership area has been recognized on the President's List at Norwich University for the Spring 2021 semester:

Melina Liese Schilling, Douglas

Full-time undergraduate students, who earned a semester grade point average of 4.0 and had no failures in the previous Fall or Spring semester are awarded President's List honors. These students cannot have any pending Incomplete (I) grades. President's List honors are noted on the official transcript each term earned.

In addition to the above criteria, students in the Spring 2021 semester had to meet the following criteria in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which introduced the option for students to choose an alternative grading system or to maintain earned letter grades. To be eligible for President's (GPA 4.0) and Dean's lists (GPA 3.40) for the Spring 2021 Semester, students must have additionally maintained full time enrollment for the Spring 2021 Semester, chosen to keep letter grades in at least 12 credits of classes, and must not have received any Incomplete or No Pass grades.

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The Massachusetts Cultural Council awards grants

On June 22, Representative Soter announced that the Massachusetts Cultural Council awarded all 329 of its Local Community Council (LCC) Programs \$4.35 million dollars to regrant locally for the FY21. This year, LCCs were

able to award 6,000 grants totaling \$5.9 million, with \$4.35 million coming from Massachusetts Cultural Council allocations and \$1.55 million from local fundraising.

Funding from LCCs enrich the cultural life of both cit-

ies and towns within Massachusetts. Led by municipally appointed volunteers, LCCs award over \$4 million annually. Of the 6,000 grants awarded this year, 5,900 of them were awarded to benefit community-based projects in the arts, humanities, and sciences, including activities such as field trips, lectures, festivals, and performances.

This type of funding gives Commonwealth families access to greater education, and provides critical financial aid needed to support aspects of education that fall outside of the set core curriculum.

The towns within the 8th Worcester District received the following grant amounts:

- Bellingham - \$8,200
- Blackstone - \$6,800

- Millville - \$5,300
- Uxbridge - \$7,600

Representative Soter commented on this release stating, "The grants awarded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council will have a long-lasting impact on the children and families within this district. I am a strong supporter of the benefit of well-rounded education, and the money

awarded to our towns will offer our children the ability to establish unique opportunities where all aspects of education are promoted and celebrated."

Each town will receive their grant funding through their respective cultural council.

Local student receives diploma from Norwich U

NORTHFIELD, Vt. – The following local student received her degree from Norwich University at the May 1 commencement ceremony in a hybrid of virtual streamed and in-person events held campus-wide in accordance with Vermont pandemic guidelines and with the Norwich community's health and safety as the highest priority.

Madison Louise Cahill of Uxbridge received a Bachelor of Arts in criminal justice.

Norwich University was honored that Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Mark A. Milley gave the commencement address to the Class of 2021 in recorded remarks. Milley is the military's senior-most ranking member and serves as principal adviser to President Joe Biden, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin III and the National Security Council.

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Fattman and Soter announce \$153,775 in grants to local businesses

BOSTON - State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) and State Representative Michael Soter (R-Bellingham) announced today that two businesses in their districts were chosen as recipients of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's Workforce Training Fund Program (WTFP). Wrentham Tool Group, Inc. of Bellingham was awarded \$87,375 to train 51 employees and anticipate adding 9 additional jobs to the workforce by 2023. Precision Engineering, Inc. of Uxbridge was awarded \$66,400 to train 30 employees and anticipate adding 3 additional jobs to the workforce by 2023. The businesses received a combined total of \$153,775 in funds from this highly competitive grant program.

Funded by Massachusetts employers via contributions made to unemployment insurance, the Workforce Training Fund helps companies improve productivity and competitiveness by providing resources to invest in the Massachusetts workforce. In partnership with EOLWD, Commonwealth Corporation reviews and awards training grants of up to \$250,000 to Massachusetts businesses and consortia of businesses to fund training for current and newly hired employees.

Grants are awarded on a rolling basis throughout the year. In FY2020, more than 700 Massachusetts employers were approved for more than \$20 million in WTFP grant-funded training for more than 16,000 workers. The program is a powerful tool to create new jobs, increase skills and opportunities for our workers, and maintain the economic strength and viability of the Commonwealth's businesses.

"The funding from this program grants employers and their workers access to world-class trainings that make them competitive on the national and global level," said Senator Fattman. "In the high-paced world that we live in, it is crucial to provide training to help businesses adapt to an ever-changing economy. I want to commend the businesses in my district that were named recipients of this highly competitive grant program—it is a

testament to the hard work, dedication, and loyalty to their employees."

"The workforce training grants will make a profound impact within these two 8th Worcester District companies. Grant programs like this one are key to developing a strong workforce and promoting the creation of jobs in Massachusetts. We must continue to seek out these opportunities as we emerge from the pandemic," said Representative Soter.

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Unibank welcomes summer interns

WHITINSVILLE – On June 7, UniBank welcomed nine local college students to take part in the bank's 2021 Summer College Internship program. The program, coordinated by UniBank's Training and Development Manager Heather Kicelemos allows the interns to integrate knowledge and theory learned in their col-

lege classrooms to contribute to bank projects. The goal is for the interns to experience valuable applied experiences and make connections in the fields they are considering for their respective career paths. Each intern has been paired with a mentor in their respective field of interest which includes Finance/Ac-

counting, Marketing, Retail Administration, Credit, Sterling Associates, Commercial Lending, Compliance, and Community Reinvestment. They will work closely with their mentors on assignments and projects. While completing the designated assignments, the interns will be included in department

and committee meetings and will be provided networking opportunities with other departments throughout UniBank. They will also have weekly interactions with the bank's Senior Leadership Team.

UniBank's 2021 Summer College Internship program interns include:

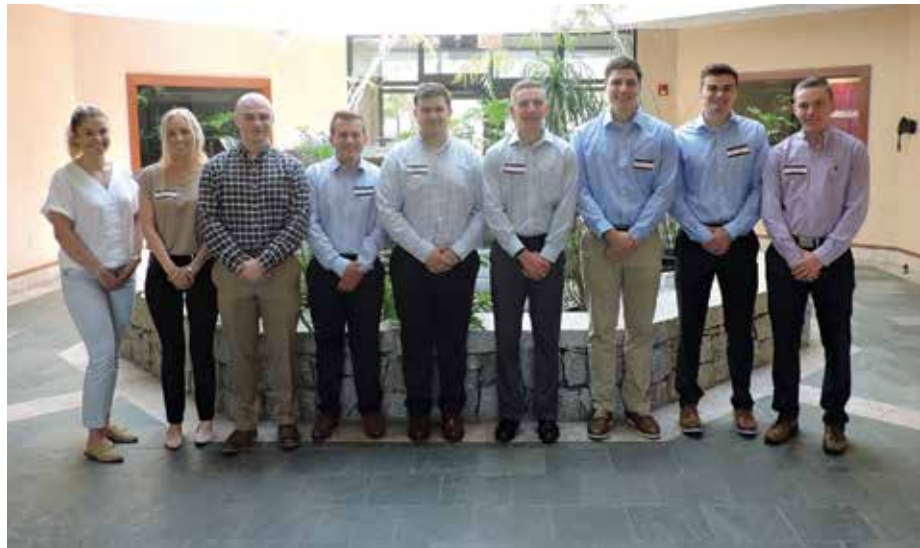
- James Cannon (CRA) – Providence College, Management
- Robbie Cannon (Marketing) – Providence College, Marketing and Finance

- Trevor Ham (Credit) – Clark University, 2021 Economics and Management graduate/2022 MBA candidate
- Derek Knobloch (Credit) – Bryant University, Finance and Applied Analytics
- Kate Labrie (Sterling Associates) – Bryant University, Human Resources
- Sophie Plouffe (Finance) – UMass Amherst, Economics and IT
- Ben Potter (Compliance) – UMass Amherst, 2021 Finance graduate
- Jack Tessier (Commercial

Lending) – Holy Cross, Economics & History

- Mike Wickstrom (Retail Administration) – Providence College, Marketing & Sociology

"It is quite exciting to see these students embarking on their summer internships with UniBank," commented Michael Welch, UniBank CEO. "The teams they join from across the bank share in my excitement and are eager to work with these students. We are looking forward to a productive summer providing enriching experiences for our interns."



UniBank 2021 Interns.jpg Photo Caption: UniBank's 2021 Summer College Interns include: (L-R) Kate Labrie, Sophie Plouffe, Ben Potter, Mike Wickstrom, Jack Tessier, James Cannon, Trevor Ham, Derek Knobloch, Robbie Cannon.

BVT students secure 18 Medals at SkillsUSA National Competition

UPTON – The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District is proud to announce that twenty-four of their student-competitors placed in the top 9 of sixty-seven contests during the Annual 2021 SkillsUSA Massachusetts National Leadership and Skills Conference Championship.

The students successfully represented their school and

Massachusetts in the national career competitions, testing their competency against the best vocational-technical competitors by applying skills learned at BVT to secure 18 medals - 8 Gold, 2 Silver, and 8 Bronze.

This year, the final stage of the SkillsUSA series was held virtually throughout June. The championships showcase the nation's best career and technical education students through competitive events and technical exams designed and judged by industry leaders and officials to celebrate career technical education.

BVT has a lot to cheer about following their outstanding performance representing the Commonwealth at the National Leadership and Skills Conference Championship. The complete list of medalists is available at www.valley-tech.k12.ma.us/skillsusa.

The following BVT students, organized by hometown, earned gold, silver, and bronze medals at the SkillsUSA National Conference Championship:

- Blackstone**
Gold: Mandolin Simpson, Career Pathways - Industrial and Engineering Technology
Bronze: Andrew Konicki, Entrepreneurship; and Kyle Penta, Entrepreneurship
- Douglas**
State Officer Elect: Hunter Claflin
Gold: Logan Hampson, Resi-

dential Commercial and Appliance Technology

Grafton
Gold: Maggie McCann, Career Pathways - Industrial and Engineering Technology
Silver: Catherine Rozanas, Technical Drafting

Hopedale
Gold: Gabriel Chaves-Silva, Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration
Bronze: Ashley King, Entrepreneurship

Millford
Bronze: Christopher Mason, Robotics Urban Search and Rescue

Millbury
Bronze: Julia Drapeau, Health Occupations Professional Portfolio

Millville
Gold: Myra Dehestani, Career Pathways - Industrial and Engineering Technology

Northbridge
Gold: Cullen Jacene, Robotics and Automation Technology

Sutton
Bronze: Benjamin Judson, Automotive Refinishing Technology

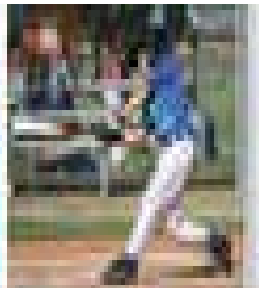
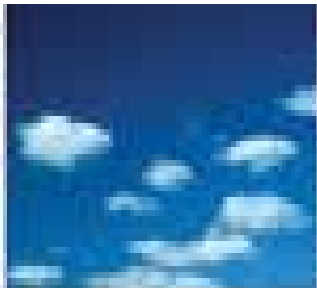
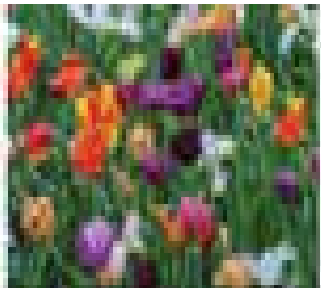
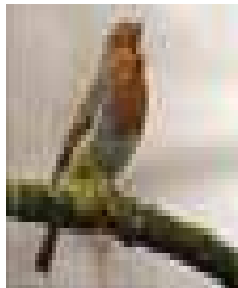
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Bronze: Chloe Terrell, Entrepreneurship

Uxbridge
Gold: Khushi Patel, Nurse Assisting; and Adam Pratt, Robotics and Automation Technology

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Focus on non profits

Bay State Trail Riders Association continues to delight equestrians and others

By Christine Galeone

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, when Becky Kalagher would go horseback riding on a Massachusetts trail, she wouldn't generally see many other people. But in 2020, things changed.

"Trails became a haven for people during the pandemic," Kalagher said, adding, "My 'hobby,' while riding last year, was to count how many people I encountered out on the trails. One afternoon, on an hour-and-a-half ride, I counted over 60 people. That was mind boggling to me, and it was the same thing all over the place."

That realization of how vital trails are to her fellow equestrians and other outdoor enthusiasts was encouraging to Kalagher, who is the president of the Bay State Trail Riders Association. Although the pandemic forced the nonprofit to postpone several equestrian events – including group rides and campouts – and volunteer trail work sessions last year, BSTRA has continued to thrive. It has remained dedicated to preserving and maintaining equestrian trails throughout the state.

Founded in 1973 and based in Douglas, BSTRA is run by

hundreds of volunteers. It creates, improves and restores Massachusetts trails that are open to equestrians and are also used by hikers, mountain bikers, dog walkers, cross-country skiers and other outdoor enthusiasts. Since 1989, it has put more than \$630,000 into the trail projects it has completed.

Despite the pandemic, BSTRA was able to accomplish a significant amount of volunteer work cleaning and clearing equestrian and equestrian-friendly multi-use trails during 2020. Along with Department of Conservation and



Bay State Trail Riders Association holds a ride on National Trails Day 2021. (Submitted)

Recreation (DCR) employees, the nonprofit also made major safety improvements to the Eagle Scout Bridge, which is located on a trail in Douglas State Forest. It made similar improvements to the Sweet William Bridge on the Sweet William Farm Conservation property in Upton.

But Kalagher is especially excited about a recent milestone achievement. Even though, in the past, BSTRA has donated money to fundraising campaigns to purchase property that would protect or establish a trail connection or expand a system of trails, it hadn't purchased land until now. It recently bought 17 acres of land that connects the Southern New England Trunkline Trail to a 131-acre parcel of Town of

Douglas-owned land.

"Short term plans for the property will be to clean up the old farm dump and establish a connector trail; long term plans are to turn the property over to Metacomet Land Trust to ensure its protection in perpetuity," Kalagher explained. She added, "It accomplishes our goal of preserving land that is open for horseback riding, walking and mountain biking."

Kalagher envisions a bright future for the nonprofit. She's looking forward to the creation of a BSTRA trails committee that will work with towns, land trusts and other organizations to help the nonprofit discover new trail projects to work on.

In the meantime, Kalagher is happy to see so many

enthusiastic horseback riders and volunteers helping BSTRA with its priority to keep trails open for equestrian use. "This year, the biggest thing I have heard from our volunteer workers and attendees on our rides is that it's just great to be normal again," she shared. "My hope is that the rediscovery of the great outdoors via our trail system will continue and that people will get involved with the stewardship of our trail systems."

More information about volunteering for the nonprofit or becoming a member is available on the BSTRA website, www.bstra.org. If you would like to suggest a Blackstone Valley nonprofit or initiative for this series, please contact Christine at cmgaleone15@gmail.com.



Bay State Trail Riders Association volunteers do a trail work project in Douglas State Forest. (Submitted)



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Thank you to all who entered!

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Living well and looking good

C. Diff tricky to treat, but rarely terminal

By Keith Roach, M.D.

DEAR DR. ROACH: In December, I developed an abscess in my jaw from food getting caught in my tooth. I went to see a local dentist who prescribed clindamycin and metronidazole. I came down with a case of C. difficile. I have since found evidence that multiple antibiotics and clindamycin are causes of C. diff.

I am getting mixed messages about my prognosis. Some medical people are telling me it's not a big deal and to just wash my hands a lot. My primary physician, however, gave me the impression that this is basically a terminal diagnosis.

She told me how sorry she was and that I had been a very healthy person but am not any longer. She told me that it will most likely recur, and every time it does it will be more difficult to treat until I become antibiotic resistant, and that people die from it. She also told me that she would set me up for the standard yearly appointment, but that I should

come see her whenever I need to.

I am paranoid about what my future holds and what, if anything, I can do. I would like your opinion of this situation. Any guidance you can give me would be greatly appreciated. – Anon.

ANSWER: Clostridium difficile ("C. diff") infections are common but can be serious. As you correctly note, many antibiotics are associated with the acquisition of symptomatic C. diff infections, and although clindamycin is the best known, other antibiotics (quinolones, amoxicillin and related penicillins) are actually more common. The antibiotics kill off large numbers of healthy bacteria, allowing the unhealthy C. diff to take over. The cardinal symptom of C. diff is watery diarrhea, at least three loose stools in 24 hours. Abdominal pain and cramping, nausea and poor appetite are common. Fever is less common. Symptoms can start during antibiotic treatment or up to a month after completing

antibiotics.

Treatment is stopping the antibiotic if possible and if still being given. Antibiotic treatment against C. diff is with the newer drug fidaxomicin or with oral vancomycin; unfortunately, fidaxomicin is ridiculously expensive – a course of fidaxomicin is

\$3,000 via goodrx.com in the U.S. at the time of writing. A course of oral vancomycin costs much less, often less than \$200 through the same website. If neither of these is available, metronidazole is a less-expensive alternative.

Fidaxomicin has the lowest risk of recurrence of the infection, and many experts will reserve it for a person who has recurred after oral vancomycin. For the unusual person who continues to recur after antibiotic treatment, fecal microbiota transplants (processed from stool of healthy donors) have been safe and effective.

I am disturbed that you got the impression that C. diff is a terminal diagnosis. Although in rare cases, hospitalized

patients can get so sick that they can die from C. diff, this would be very unusual in less severe disease, as in someone who is able to go home from the hospital.

Handwashing is necessary to reduce infection to others. Avoiding drugs like Prilosec that suppress acid can help prevent recurrences. Finally, probiotics (live healthy bacteria) may be of use in reducing infection and recurrence.

Commercial lab tests vs genetic counseling

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have a daughter (almost 31 years) who is concerned about Charcot-Marie-Tooth syndrome. Her maternal grandmother has been diagnosed with that condition. She is interested in seeking out a genetic test for the condition to learn if she is susceptible. She was referred to a commercial, direct-to-consumer laboratory for the test.

How likely is it that a lab test for this specific condition would be accurate? Should she be doing all of this through either a particular type of genetics counselor or her private physician (internist) rather than an independent effort? – R.C.

ANSWER: Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease is the eponym given to a family of hereditary motor sensory neuropathies: diseases that affect the nerves that carry the impulses necessary for movement and sensation. The initial symptoms are most commonly weakness and atrophy in the feet, followed by similar problems in the hands and sensory changes.

The diagnosis may be made by EMG testing (electromyography, a needle study of the electrical activity of the muscles), but genetic testing is another way of making the diagnosis. If her grandmother has a known mutation, then genetic testing is likely to give her confirmation of her own status.

Commercial genetic testing is certainly available, and probably accurate. However, I would still recommend a visit to a genetic counselor. This may require a referral from her primary-care doctor. The correct test to order, and its

interpretation, depends on the exact diagnosis of her grandmother's condition, since there are many genetic variations of Charcot-Marie-Tooth. It is likely that your daughter will have questions after the test results, and the benefit of having an experienced clinician there to answer them would be invaluable.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu. (c) 2021 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

Ordering your free credit reports

By Matilda Charles

For years we've been able to get one free credit report per year from each of the three credit bureaus. Right now, we're able to get a free one each week until the middle of April.

Why? Their generosity is likely due to the astronomical number of scams coming out of the COVID crisis. The number of unemployed crooks has surely gone up, making your good credit too enticing to pass up.

This is one time when constantly monitoring our credit is a good idea. Besides ordering your credit reports, one additional big step is to freeze your account, making it impossible for someone to apply for credit in your name.

All three credit bureaus (TransUnion, Equifax and Experian) can be accessed in the government clearinghouse website www.annualcreditreport.com ... theoretically, that is. In 2015, 2017 and today, I was only able to access TransUnion. For the other two I had to go to the individual website. One I had to call, as the website was down.

If you decide to order your credit reports by phone, allot several hours to the task and turn down any background noise so you'll be able to hear clearly.

Go to www.usa.gov/credit-reports to learn more about credit reports, scores, freezes and errors.

If you want to try to get all three reports at once, call 1-877-322-8228 at the Annual Credit Report location. The others are: Equifax: 1-888-548-7878 or 1-800-685-1111; equifax.com. Experian: 1-888-397-3742; experian.com.

TransUnion: 1-800-916-8800 or 888-909-8872; transunion.com.

Once you get your report, either online or in the mail, study it carefully. Look for accounts that you never opened and the names of people you don't know. Be sure all the information is correct. If you need to file a complaint, go to ftc.gov/complaint or call 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357).

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The Kitchen Diva

Three Cheers for the red, white and green

By Angela Shelf Medearis

A July picnic, an ice-cold watermelon, patriotic songs and lots of loud, brilliantly hued fireworks are my idea of a wonderful month long holiday celebration. Watermelons serve two purposes on a hot July day – they're a sweet finish to a meal, and a source of nutritious hydration. Watermelon also is low in fat and cholesterol-free. It has a vast nutritional profile including high levels of the antioxidant lycopene, an excellent source of the important amino acid citrulline and is a good source of vitamins C, B-1, B-6, and a source of vitamin A.

Watermelons are classified as a fruit, much like the pepper, pumpkin or tomato. However, as a member of the cucurbitaceae plant family of gourds, watermelon also is related to the cucumber and squash. Watermelons are planted from seeds or seedlings, harvested and then cleared from a field like a vegetable. Since watermelon is grown as a vegetable crop using vegetable production systems, it also can be considered a vegetable. Some refer to watermelon as a "fregetable" – a combination of a fruit and a vegetable.

Watermelons are now available year-round in mini, seeded and seedless, and yellow-and orange-flesh varieties. They also come in various sizes, as well as two colors: red and yellow. This "fregetable" is especially plentiful from April through October. About 200 to 300 varieties are grown in the U.S. and Mexico, although only about 50 are very popular.

There's an art to picking the perfect watermelon. Look the watermelon over and pick it up. The one you select should be firm, symmetrical and free from bruises, cuts or dents, and heavy for its size. Watermelon is 92% water weight. To find out if a watermelon is ripe, knock it, and if it sounds hollow then it is ripe. The underside of the watermelon should have a creamy yellow spot from where it sat on the ground and ripened in the sun.

Compared to most fruits, watermelons need a more "tropical" climate – a thermometer reading of 55 F is ideal. Maintain the purchase temperature of watermelons. If you bought it at room temperature, you can keep it at room temperature. If you refrigerate it after buying, be sure to keep the watermelon cool. Whole melons will keep for seven to 10 days at room temperature. Store them too long, and they'll lose flavor and texture.

According to the FDA, you should wash all fruits and vegetables, including all melons with rinds, in clean, running water before eating. Don't forget to dry them, too. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before cutting the watermelon. Wash all food-contact areas and equipment such as cutting boards, countertops, peelers and knives with hot water and soap to avoid cross contamination.

After cutting the watermelon, store the wrapped pieces in a refrigerator (32-40 F) for no more than three to four days. After two days of refrigeration, water-

melons start to develop an off-flavor, become pitted and lose color. Freezing causes the rind to break down and produces a mealy, mushy texture. Peeled and/or fresh-cut fruit should be refrigerated if not consumed within two hours, and leftover fresh-cut fruit should be discarded if left at room temperature for more than two hours.

If you didn't buy a seedless watermelon, here's how remove seeds quickly and easily:

1. Wash and quarter a whole watermelon.
2. Cut each quarter into three or four wedges.
3. Cut lengthwise along the seed line with a paring knife, and lift off the piece.
4. Using a fork, scrape seeds both from the removed piece and the remaining flesh on the rind.
5. Cut into desired sizes.

Now that you know how to select and prepare a watermelon, use the cubed pieces in this recipe for Sweet and Sour Watermelon and Cucumber Salad. It's the perfect salad for a picnic as it keeps well and is easy to transport. Enjoy a sweet, delicious slice of watermelon at your Fourth of July picnic and all year-long!

Sweet and sour watermelon and cucumber salad

- 3 cups seedless watermelon balls or small chunks
- 2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded and sliced
- 1/2 cup cider vinegar
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup sugar

- 1 tablespoon poppy seed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 bunch green onions, trimmed and chopped

Mix together the vinegar, water, sugar and poppy seeds in a bowl and season with salt and pepper. Stir in the chopped green onions. Place the watermelon and cucumber in a serv-

ing bowl and pour the marinade over the top. Toss gently before serving. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate a couple of hours before serving.

(Information and recipe courtesy of The National Watermelon Promotion Board, www.watermelon.org.)

Angela Shelf Medearis is an award-winning children's author, culinary historian and the author of seven cookbooks. Her latest cookbook is



"The Kitchen Diva's Diabetic Cookbook." Her website is www.divapro.com. To see how-to videos, recipes and much, much more, Like Angela Shelf Medearis, The Kitchen Diva! on Facebook. Recipes may not be reprinted without permission from Angela Shelf Medearis.(c) 2021 King Features Synd., Inc., and Angela Shelf Medearis



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BVT receives \$21,200 through the equitable access grant program

On June 25, State Representative Michael J. Soter announced that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education awarded fifteen towns within the Commonwealth Career Vocational Technical

Education (CVTE) Equitable Access grants amounting to a total of \$1,078,112 for the FY22. This grant is broken into three priority sections: Data Usage, English Learner Recruitment, and Building Equitable Structures. For the FY22, \$237,208 was awarded in Data Usage grants, \$754,204 was awarded in English Learner Recruitment grants, and \$86,700 was awarded in Building Equitable Structures grants.

Funding from all three of CVTE grant priorities offers schools and districts financial aid needed to grow and strengthen efforts made to implement culturally responsive admissions and equitable learning environments in districts students have suffered

due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When applying for CVTE grants, applicants can apply for as many of the above-listed priorities that are of interest to them and do not have to apply to all. This allows applicants to focus on areas of their school where an increase in diversity, equity, and inclusion is most needed. Funding may also be used to improve recruitment practices, application reviews, and informational tours.

In this round of funding, the Blackstone Valley Technical Vocational High School will receive \$21,200 for a Priority Two: English Learner Recruitment grant.

Representative Soter commented on this release stating, "The grant awarded to BVT

will give administrators and faculty the tools needed to continually develop a positive and inclusive environment for students. Every student should have access to basic educational resources that allow them to succeed. The grant awarded to BVT will provide more students access to appropriate educational resources and will encourage the further development of fair and inclusive admissions processes."

Grant funds must be used to implement systems and strategies outlined in a school's submitted proposal. More information about the CVTE grant breakdowns can be found on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website.

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Local students honored at annual SkillsUSA Workforce Development event

LEESBURG, VA — Career and technical education students in your area won one of the nation's highest awards at the 2021 SkillsUSA Championships, held virtually from June 14-24. More than 3,700 students competed at the national showcase of career and technical education. The SkillsUSA Championships is the largest skill competition in the world.

Students were invited to the event to demonstrate their technical skills, workplace skills and personal skills in 107 hands-on occupational and leadership competitions including robotics, automotive technology, drafting, criminal justice, aviation maintenance and public speaking. Industry leaders from 650 businesses, corporations, trade associations and unions planned and evaluated the contestants against their standards for entry-level workers. Industry support of the in-person SkillsUSA Championships is

valued at over \$36 million in donated time, equipment, cash and material. More than 1,000 industry judges and technical committee members participated this year. Due to the pandemic, contests were conducted locally at schools or industry sites nationwide, with proctors supervising events and judges evaluating the students' work.

More than 1,100 gold, silver and bronze medals were presented to students. Many winners also received industry prizes, tools of their trade or scholarships.

The following students received a SkillsUSA Championships medal from your area:

- Logan Hampson, from Douglas and a student at Blackstone Valley RVTHS, was awarded the high school gold medal in Residential Commercial and Appliance Technology.
- Team I (consisting of Myra Dehestani, Mandolin Simpson, Maggie McCann), from Blackstone Valley RVTHS, was awarded the High School Gold medal in Career Pathways - Industrial and Engineering Technology.
- Team I (consisting of Ryan Steiner, Jessi Escoto-Cifuentes, Nathan Dreitlein, Michael Mullaly), from Bay Path RVT High School, was awarded the

High School Bronze medal in TeamWorks.

- Benjamin Judson, from Sutton and a student at Blackstone Valley RVTHS, was awarded the high school bronze medal in Automotive Refinishing Technology.

- Khushi Patel, from Uxbridge and a student at Blackstone Valley RVTHS, was awarded the high school gold medal in Nurse Assisting.

- Madison Gannon, from Uxbridge and a student at Blackstone Valley RVTHS, was awarded the high school silver medal in Related Technical Math.

- Team O (consisting of Casey Goyette, Christopher Mason), from Blackstone Valley RVTHS (Upton), was awarded the High School Bronze medal in Robotics Urban Search and Rescue.

The SkillsUSA Championships event is held annually for students in middle school, high school or college/postsecondary programs as part of the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference. The national, nonprofit partnership of students, instructors and industry is a verified talent pipeline for America's skilled workforce that is working to help solve the skills gap.

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HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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Re-emerging in the Valley

An art exhibition celebrates community at the Whittin Mill

WHITINSVILLE - The Blackstone Valley Art Association (BVAA) invites the public to view "Re-emerging in the Valley," a community arts exhibition of BVAA member works celebrating the re-emergence of community after a year of isolation. This special group exhibition will be held at the Spaulding R. Aldrich Heritage Gallery at Alternatives' Whittin Mill, 50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville, MA 01588.

This event is being organized by the Blackstone Valley Art Association (BVAA) in association with ValleyCAST, the art and culture subsidiary of Open Sky Community Services.

The exhibit will run from Thursday, July 1 through August 20, with limited access during the ValleyCAST Free Summer Concert Series on Thursday nights from 6-8 p.m. Other visits by appointment only.

One goal of the exhibit is to highlight some lessons learned during the pandemic, including the importance of connecting with loved ones, sharing laughter and treasuring the moment. The BVAA hopes to inspire others to explore new avenues of expression through photography, painting, drawing, and other forms of art.

To schedule an appointment to view the exhibit, call 508-234-6232. For more information, visit <https://www.openskycs.org/news-events/events/valleycast-art-exhibit-re-emerging-in-the-valley/> or <https://www.facebook.com/ValleyCAST>.

The BVAA is a local non-profit organization that has been promoting the arts in the Valley since 1956. Learn more at BVAA.org. To learn more about ValleyCAST and/or Open Sky Community Services, visit [openskycs.org](https://www.openskycs.org) or call (508) 234-6232.



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<p>MARTY STUART</p> <p>JULY 31 • 1PM</p>	<p>JAMEY JOHNSON</p> <p>AUGUST 1 • 1PM</p>	<p>Justin Moore</p> <p>AUGUST 7 • 1PM</p>
<p>GRAND FUNK RAILROAD The American Band</p> <p>AUGUST 8 • 1PM</p>	<p>THE CONCERT ABBA THE CONCERT A TRIBUTE TO ABBA</p> <p>AUGUST 13 • 7PM</p>	<p>CHASE RICE</p> <p>AUGUST 14 • 1PM</p>
<p>TOWER OF POWER</p> <p>AUGUST 15 • 1PM</p>	<p>YACHT ROCK REVUE THE HOT DADS - TIGHT JEANS</p> <p>AUGUST 21 • 1PM</p>	<p>SCOTTY MCCREERY</p> <p>AUGUST 22 • 1PM</p>
<p>THE GREATEST HITS OF FOREIGNER</p> <p>AUGUST 26 • 7PM</p>	<p>JULY 24 - SOLD OUT! 2ND SHOW ADDED! GET THE LED OUT A CELEBRATION OF "THE MIGHTY ZEP"</p> <p>AUGUST 27 • 7PM</p>	<p>JOSH TURNER</p> <p>AUGUST 28 • 1PM</p>
<p>THE ULTIMATE QUEEN CELEBRATION STARRING MARC MARTEL</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 4 • 1PM</p>	<p>MELISSA ETHERIDGE</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 6 • 1PM</p>	<p>2021 THE GREATEST HITS OF</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 11 • 12PM</p>
<p>THE MAVERICKS</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 12 • 1PM</p>	<p>LOS LOBOS</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 18 • 1PM</p>	<p>45 YEARS OF ROCK GEORGE THOROGOOD AND THE DESTROYERS GOOD TO BE BAD</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 19 • 1PM</p>

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BVCC awarded Small Business Technical Assistance Resiliency Grant from Mass Growth Capital Corporation

The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce (BVCC) is pleased to announce that the Small Business Assistance Grant Review Committee recommended the BVCC be awarded a grant of \$79,900 for the SBTA Resiliency Grant Program. The Secretary of the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development has approved this grant per the recommendations of the RFP Review Committee and

the Technical Assistance Subcommittee of the Board of Directors of Mass Growth Capital Corporation. (MGCC)

The mission of Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation is to create and preserve jobs at small businesses, women and minority owned businesses, and to promote economic development in underserved, gateway municipalities and low and moderate income communities. Larry

Andrews, Executive Director of MGCC, stated, "Your proposal demonstrated a strong alignment with this goal. We appreciate your organization's current efforts and willingness to continue to play a vital role in this important work."

The purpose of the Small Business Resiliency Technical Assistance Grant Program is to ensure that startups and existing businesses continue their path towards recovery

in order to ensure future economic and entrepreneurial opportunity throughout the Commonwealth in a post Covid-19 era. The program is designed to complement and enhance traditional public and private small business assistance networks by providing technical assistance or training programs for under-resourced and disadvantaged businesses with 20 or fewer employees. The program

seeks to facilitate economic stability and viability for small businesses by helping to improve their ability to navigate business operations in a post Covid-19 era, including ability to secure private and public financing, business grants, and micro-loans.

Jeannie Hebert, President and CEO of the BVCC states, "The BVCC values our long running partnership with MGCC and is honored by their trust and belief in our programs to support small busi-

ness in the Blackstone Valley and Central Massachusetts. We look forward to utilizing this funding to help empower small businesses to grow and thrive in our region."

The mission of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce is to promote the economic vitality of the Blackstone Valley. Meet the needs of the Chamber's business members, while providing leadership on issues which impact the economy and quality of life in the Valley.

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Dean's List

WELLESLEY HILLS - The following local students have been named to MassBay Community College Dean's List, achieving outstanding academic honor for the spring 2021 semester.

Kenneth Goncalves of Uxbridge (01569) studying computer science

Tiffany Huth of Uxbridge studying general studies.

Geovanna Freire of Uxbridge studying general studies.

To be eligible for the Mass-Bay Dean's List, students must complete at least six credits of college-level courses, be in good standing with the College, and earn a grade point average of 3.500 or higher. The spring 2021 semester Dean's List includes 930 full- and part-time students.



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For our full events calendar please visit our website at www.blackstonevalley.org/event-calendar/signature-events/

Visit www.blackstonevalley.org to register for these events and more and to also find out how you can apply for money saving benefits through our ASSOCIATION HEALTH CARE PLAN and offer affordable retirement benefits to your employees through our ASSOCIATION RETIREMENT PLAN. Group membership saves money and administrative time and costs. Let us help you do better business!

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Northbridge High School fourth quarter honor roll

Northbridge High School listed the honor roll for the fourth quarter of school year 2020-21.

Highest honors

Grade 12: Kristina Brenn, Colin Brody, Callie Ellis, Patrick Gahan, Emma Ganley, Wendy Gordor, Katelyn Lombardo, Hannah Lomonaco, Angela Lovering, Brennan Mahoney, Yira Navarro Rodriguez, Katharine Tubbs, Michael Wilkes

Grade 11: Sara Bedigian, Ruby Holtz, Caitlyn Mahoney, Dev Patel, Tyler Richards, Christopher Smith, Colin Tognazzi

Grade 10: Abby Barnatt, Meghan Cummiskey, Madeleine Lannon, Coulton Manning, Caroline O'Brien, Kathryn O'Brien, Caitlin Porcelli, Keira Touhey, Emily Wheeler, Gra-

ham Williams, Nathan Williams

High honors

Grade 12: Afia Aning, Branden Asante, Ally Boucher, Vincent Duca, Asa Flannery, Charlotte French, Trinity Grondin, Destiny Ingersoll, Brooke Jackson, Theodore Jee, Emma LaChapelle, Olivia LeBrasseur, Domenic Malone, Kiera McMahon, Justine Michaud, Trevor Moorey, Alexandra Padula, Emma Paulhus, Jared Wielsma

Grade 11: James Bartlett, Joshua Berkowicz, Samantha Billmyer, Tyler Bliss, Sydney

Boudreau, Jared Dermooshegian, Collin Falconer, Lauren Ferreira, Virginia Greenan, Hayleigh Hoffman, Mallorie Mercer, Aidan Roy, Zoe Taylor, Matthew Wildman

Grade 10: Karlee Battista, Brynn Burt, Connor DeCiero, Hannah Dizenzo, Elizabeth Duca, Ian Gahan, Mary Goodrow, Jenna Malone, James Oatis, Andrew Padula, Caramia Pozzi, Abigail Schofield, Nina Szymanowski, Jenny Wagenhoffer

Grade 09: Timmothy Adams Jr, Logan Ballou, Gary Bunis, Evan Carrachino, Madelynne Driscoll, Charles Dupuis, Olivia Frabotta, Dakota Grazulis, Ainsley Hogan, Kayla Hubbard, Kayda King, Charlotte Leppamaki, Kaydence Melanson, Zachary O'Meara, Marcus Reilly, Rachel Sawyer

Honors:

Grade 12: Emma Barnatt, Matthew Ceruti, Jonathan Cray, Jill Labrie, Olivia Lavallee, Morgan Mawn, Julia Mezynski, Rhian Murray, Jacob Orell, Avery Senosk, Kayley Tivnan, Melanie Warner

Grade 11: Makenzie Alicea, Lily Allen, Andrew Banas, Anderson Barnicoat-Sansone,

Valery Bravo, David Castellon Palma, Olivia Clemente, Kyla Dominguez De Los Santos, Emma Donahue, Abigail Fraser, Charles Garrigan, John Gifford, Olivia Guest, Kayla Kamishlian, Maeve Kelly, Joseph Maxim, Christopher Rivelli, Rory Schofer, Patrick Smith, Colton Verra, Timothy Visbeek, Celia Walker, Lindzy Winslow

Grade 10: Cameron Athanas, Payton Brooks, James Canoy, Ian Claudio, Molly Conroy, Yeva DerKosroffian, Timothy Labrie, Colin Marino, Adam Minior, Kayla Munson, Katie Murray, Lillian Naylor, Parker Scott, Jack Vaughan

Grade 09: Macie Allen, Madelyn Andresen, Lillianna Avila, Drew Beaudoin, Haily Billmyer, Kiara Bodreau, Samantha Brody, Allison Canal, Rebecca Cleary, Nicholas D'Alfonso, Ryan Flaherty, Kylie Green, Tyrese Holder-Hinds, Callie Jee, Dominic Keddy, William Leonard, Delaney Mahoney, Molly Mawn, Joseph Mazzarelli, Joseph McKeown, Reine O'Brien, Mason Remillard, Emilee Snedegar, Mary Sullivan, Jack Wallace, Matthew Waterson, Natalie Zborowski

SONIC Drive-In donates to local teachers this Teacher Appreciation Month

OKLAHOMA CITY - To honor the creative efforts teachers have made to maneuver their ever-shifting learning environments and keep students engaged this past year, SONIC® Drive-In donated \$1.5 million to teacher requests on national education nonprofit site DonorsChoose on Teacher Appreciation Day, May 4. As part of SONIC's ongoing Limeades for Learning initiative, the \$1.5 million donation helped fund more than 7,000 teacher requests across the country in need of critical resources.

On Teacher Appreciation Day, the brand matched 50 percent of each donation made to all teacher requests on DonorsChoose. The following exceptional teachers received funding:

• In Dudley, one teacher received a total donation of \$502.00. Mrs. Montville at Dudley Elementary School for the project The P3 Club: Puppets Promoting Positivity

• In Uxbridge, one teacher received a total donation of \$64.00. Mr. Carter at Taft Early Learning Center for the project Larger than Life Projections.

"Teachers took this past year head-on, engineering a variety of innovative methods to keep their students learning in both in-person and virtual classrooms," said Lori Abou Habib, chief marketing officer for SONIC. "We express our gratitude to these teachers, who create inspirational learning environments for students during a challenging time. With SONIC's \$1.5 million donation match, we were able to help teachers access much-needed supplies to successfully complete this school year."

SONIC is committed to helping teachers now in this time of need, and all year long. Through Limeades for Learning, SONIC has donated more than \$19 million to public school teachers, helping more than 36,000 teachers and impacting nearly 7.4 million students in public schools nationwide since 2009. Visit LimeadesforLearning.com to learn about future funding opportunities and explore public school teacher requests in your community in need of support.



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Free Summer Concert Series at the Alternatives' Whitin Mill

ValleyCAST is proud to announce the return of its Free Summer Concert Series featuring an incredible line-up with a wide variety of music. Enjoy Rock n' Roll, Big Band, Country, Folk, Bluegrass, Classic R&B, Funk, Reggae, Blues, and even a Symphony Orchestra.

The concert series, now in its 12th year, is one of the most popular events at the Alternatives' Whitin Mill drawing crowds of all ages and walks of life.

The series kicked off on Thursday, July 1, and continues every Thursday evening (6:00 – 8:00 p.m.) through September 2, at the Alternatives' Whitin Mill, 50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville. In case of inclement weather, the concert moves inside the Singh Performance Center at the same location.

"After a year of isolation, the Free Summer Concert Series is a wonderful way for people of all abilities to gather together in the plaza and sing, dance, or just relax and enjoy a summer evening of music while watching the sunset over the Mumford River," says Cristi Collari, Director of Community Outreach.

Free Summer Concert Series schedule:

Join ValleyCAST for its "Kick-Off" Concert on Thursday, July 1, with the Blackstone Valley Bluegrass Band (sponsored with a special grant from the Northbridge Cultural Council, which is funded by the Mass Cultural Council). Free Thursday Night Concert series:

July 15: Knock on Wood

July 22: Chuck & Mud and the Hole in the Dam Band

July 29: Superchief Trio

August 5: Far from Eden

August 12: Claflin Hill Summer Winds

August 19: Le'Mixx Band

August 26: Michelle Canning Band

September 2: Changes in Latitudes

The concert series is sponsored by Lampin Corporation, UniBank, Wiersma Insurance Agency, the Northbridge Cultural Council; which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, Open Sky Community Services and ValleyCAST.

For more information or for links to each band's website, visit opensky.org/news-events. Or visit Facebook/ValleyCAST

For more information about ValleyCAST and/or Open Sky Community Services visit opensky.org or call (508) 234-6232.

ValleyCAST's mission is to foster a creative community in the Blackstone Valley that is inclusive and supportive of people with and without disabilities. ValleyCAST is a subsidiary of Open Sky Community Services (Open Sky is a DBA of Alternatives Unlimited, Inc. and The Bridge of Central Mass).

St. Mary's adult faith formation offerings

The Sanctuary Course for Catholics - The Consecration to St. Joseph

St. Mary Parish, Uxbridge, will be offering two adult faith formation opportunities this summer. The Sanctuary Course for Catholics, by The Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries, will be offered along with The Consecration to St. Joseph, using the book with the same name by Fr. Donald H. Calloway, MIC.

St. Mary's CARE Support Ministry will be presenting The Sanctuary Course for Catholics which began July 1 through August 19, from 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm. This is an eight-part series utilizing film and small group discussion. It seeks to ease any stigma af-

filiated with mental illness and to open a dialogue for those living with mental illness along with those supporting them. According to research published by the National Institute of Health, one in four people will turn to their faith community for help before seeking help from clinical professionals.

Each session features a compelling profile of a Christian living with a mental health challenge and discussing how faith and their mental illness intersect. The films also feature archbishops, theologians, and psychologists. This series is for anyone who wants to

learn more about faith and mental illness and also how to support those with mental illness. A different topic is discussed each week and is explored from a psychological, sociological and theological perspective. This is not a support group, but the CARE Team consisting of mental health and medical professionals will be presenting and facilitating. There is no cost, but space is limited.

The other program, Consecration to St. Joseph, is being offered in conjunction with the year of St. Joseph which Pope Francis declared for this current year. This is

a six-part series designed for small group discussion using the book, "Consecration to St. Joseph," by Donald H. Calloway, MIC. The class will begin Thursday, July 12 through August 16, from 6:30 pm – 7:45 pm. The book can be ordered through St. Mary for \$16.00.

Both classes will be held in the parish hall at St. Mary Church, 77 Mendon St., Uxbridge. Registration is required for both classes. Current protocols at the time will be followed. You may register through St. Mary website: <https://stmaryuxbridge.org/>, email: dmoriarty@stmaryuxbridge.org or call 508-278-2226.

Psychic event planned



Gary McKinstry, internationally known psychic medium entertainer will appear at the Asa Waters Mansion under the tent, 123 Elm St., Millbury, on Friday, August 20, from 6-8 p.m. Tickets \$35.00, sponsored by The Friends of Asa Waters Mansion, Gary McKinstry will share his gift to connect with the spirit world. To purchase tickets call Marie at 508-865-5528. Light refreshments will be served.



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Uxbridge Senior Center

Director's news for July

The Senior Center is in the process of slowly opening our programs again. Please be reassured that we have planned this re-opening with your safety and health in mind. We have worked with the local Board of Health for guidance and received help from a local nursing student from Southern New Hampshire University, Lindsey Bernard, to assist us with this process. Lindsey completed a comprehensive health education module which will assist the Senior Center on best practices with the re-opening of the Center. We wish to thank Lindsey for her efforts and appreciate her hard work.

We know that older adults are more vulnerable to COVID-19 (8 out of 10 COVID-19 deaths reported have been in people 65

years and older). With more and more seniors being vaccinated and the positive COVID cases decreasing, we are now in a better position to scale up our programs even more. Our Senior Center is a great place to fulfill your physical, emotional, nutritional, and social needs. However, due to our space limitations of the Center and the inability to adequately socially distance our participants, we will be going thru various stages on scaling up our Center's programs and activities.

Last month, we opened up our activity programs with outdoor programs with a limited number in attendance. Due to the hot weather anticipated for the month of July, we will move our outdoor programs indoors with a continued limit of participants and continue to maintain social distancing. This will allow our seniors to be in a more comfortable environment with the a/c and continue to maintain safe practices. In addition, we are so excited to announce live Yoga and Zumba classes to be held again. The 8-week classes will be held at our satellite site at McCloskey School, located at 62 Capron Street, effective July 22. Our Yoga instructor is Dr. David Tapscott, a certified yoga instructor and our Zumba instructor continues to be Amy Smith. We appreciate our instructor's willingness to help us scale up our programs again. Please be sure to sign up early as space will be limited. See details inside our newsletter.

The Nutrition Program has been extremely innovative during the pandemic. We went from serving a congregate lunch program five days a week into a two day/two meal home delivery system as well as a twice a month curbside lunch. The home delivery program has been very successful, but the senior center will not be able to sustain this delivery system, as well as

scaling up the congregate meal setting which we previously had. We anticipate slowly discontinuing the home delivery meals by the end of the summer. For the month of July, in addition to the home delivered meals and curbside lunches, we are excited to announce the opening of the congregate lunch on Mondays only starting July 12. Please RSVP 48-72 hours ahead to reserve your seat. Transportation will be available to the center on Mondays. Again, we are slowly scaling up operations and we appreciate your patience while we navigate through this process. We miss you all and are hopeful that we will be back to "normal" soon.

Our SHINE representative Pat Nectow will be returning on the third Tuesday of each month by appointment only, for those that need assistance with health insurance information. Please call the center for more info. We are excited to welcome Pat back. Dr. B (our foot doctor) will be returning back on July 29 at 8:30 a.m. Please call to book your appointment. Our Transportation Program continues to provide rides to medical appointments as well as for shopping, pharmacy and banking needs. Please call Donna to book your ride.

Lisa Bernard, Director

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Differences: 1. Window is wider. 2. Ball is different. 3. Hedge is smaller. 4. Cap is reversed. 5. Shoes are different. 6. Fence is broken.

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Living ON with Lincoln

Lincoln finds me a puppy

By Amy LeClaire

I'm on the road, driving in my old Honda Pilot. Lincoln sits patiently by the window. He's staring intently at the scene outside, our latest destination. I park, open the back door and let him out for the latest excursion, one set at a small pond located below a woodsy incline at the edge of a back road. We're in a dream, one that holds the quiet authenticity of the way things have always been. I know I'm in a dream while I'm in it. I watch him hustle down the hill and find the water. He sinks down into the pond and dog paddles, his head lifted while he bobs to the rhythm of his swim.

The dream, I sense, is about to end. I soak up the moment and watch my dog revel in what comes naturally. We may be in two different worlds but we're still together. Like an ocean wave against shoreline, we'll keep meeting this way. We may exist in two different forms, but we're still connected.

I wake up, palm my chest. Lincoln.

The dream floats with me into the kitchen. The hardwood floor is polished, hairless. I pull out a box of Grape Nuts and wait for Lincoln to remind me of where his dish

is located, just in case I happened to forget. I wait for him to stare at my banana while it's unpeeled, then turn his nose up at a brownish wedge. Overripe. I gaze out at the bay window at a back yard too lush. Where are the yellow patches? Why are the bunnies so liberated, the crows cockier than usual? We need Lincoln. Sigh.

A puppy might help.

I find myself scrolling through dozens and dozens of websites and Facebook Golden groups. My heart swells while I peruse picture after picture, Golden after Golden. One stands at a dock, another snuggles with a litter mate, one wears a checkered bow tie. My eye catches one that looks just like Lincoln. He sits proudly and smiles, his chesty lion mane puffed out.

The thought of enduring loss, grief and pain—yet again—borders on the absurd. Happy people choose to be happy, and move away from pain. Besides, my house sparkles, my car is clean, and my freedom—

Freedom is subjective when it comes to owning a dog. On one hand, you are able to pull off a day excursion without worrying about leaving your dog home alone. Ditto for the vacation to Europe. On the flip side, a dog “frees” us from life's petty stresses. Have you ever noticed that a dog, unlike a human, does not sweat the small stuff? Imagine you've just dropped a pint of blueberries on your kitchen floor.

They scatter and roll beneath the crack where the fridge meets the floor. Blood pressure rises. The entire day has been this way, one disaster after the next. Now imagine that same happening with a dog. Blueberries drop. Whoopsie. Three seconds flat and the mess will be gone. A dog will speed-vacuum one blueberry at a time, press his face against the fridge crack to sniff out the lost berry and, in the process, make you smile. Dogs make the hard things easy. They lighten our loads and help us realize that the small stuff is just that, small stuff. In doing so, they don't take away our freedom, so much as they do offer a way to live freely. Dogs don't need yoga to de-stress. They live it.

As natural free-spirits, dogs also allow positive attitudes to overcome negative situations.

Humans can be difficult. They can be defiant, rebellious, obnoxious, cruel, intolerant, rigid, insensitive, or unreasonable. How do humans approach conflict with other humans? They judge, scorn, fight, gossip, or avoid hard situations all together. They grow apart and divide, forever stuck in a stalemate of egos. Have you ever watched how a dog approaches a difficult human?

“Did you see that woman in the car beside us? She's waving her hands and wagging her finger at us! I think she wants to play!” If that same woman were in a dog's presence, he'd lick salty, sweaty anger from her palms and make her laugh. Dogs see the very best in people. They don't keep score or a record of wrongs. A dog makes it impossible to be angry with the loved one who has just stepped on your last nerve. “Is that a spot of scallop you're wearing on your shorts?” Dogs sniff out the good parts. They forgive, forget, and approach conflict with compassion.

I try to practice what Lincoln has taught me. He's still with me. I want to relate to people the way Lincoln would. I want

to be a better person. But I'm only human. Dogs are better.

“Either you find me a puppy or I'm getting a rescue.”

I need a puppy. I blame a husband who, less hasty, chooses to window shop for cute Golden retrievers via smartphone searches. “Look at this guy!”

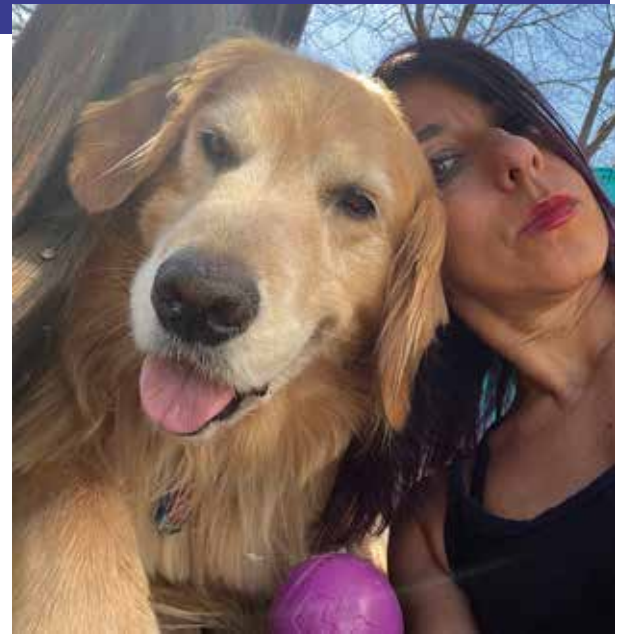
My patience for cute on-line Golden retrievers wears thin. I want my own. “We need to get on a puppy list with a quality breeder,” I say. “We will,” he says back. But his lax demeanor fails to convince. Since when is Living Without Dog tolerable? I'm suspicious.

The search begins. I read, write, network, Google, and collaborate with neighbors and Dog People. I learn that due to the 2020 pandemic, the demand for Golden retrievers soared, causing a puppy shortage, lengthy wait lists, and frustration. Golden Dames can only have so many puppies in the course of a year, and there are several variables which may or may not hinder the birthing process. I imagine Lincoln sitting at my heels at an ice cream counter while I admire the puppy beside us. “Yeah, yeah, he's cute. But let's talk about my soft serve.”

Does Lincoln not want me to get a puppy?

By mid-June, puppy doors begin to open via friends who know of my situation and are also looking for one. One call led to another, until I'm offered a spot on a list. A July litter is available! I'm excited but everything is moving along so fast and I need more answers. I want to know more about the parents of my puppy. I seem to have a lot of questions, but not enough answers, and there are too many loopholes in too many changing facts. Something is amiss. One puppy deal falls through, followed by other dead-end leads. That puppy would be perfect, but I can't travel to Seattle. Gorgeous dogs, but what about health clearances?

Meanwhile (and somewhat miraculously) my husband reaches Cloverdale Golden



Kindred spirits.

Retrievers of CT via his own (more analytical) search. He manages a phone call with the owner, an experienced high-quality breeder who—who has collaborated in the past with Twin Beau D Kennel, Lincoln's birth place! She has seen his pictures, knows of his roots, and, technically, some of her pups may even be

distant cousins!

Sold! We're getting a puppy next spring! Better than that, the puppy is a part of Lincoln! I couldn't be happier.

Lincoln isn't against getting a puppy. He just needed to be involved in the process. Once again, my dog brings out the best in tough situations.

“Thank you, Lincoln.”



Heaven on earth for Lincoln.



Lincoln enjoying his soft serve.



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Cruising scene 2021

Cruisin' Scene at Bass Pro Shops and Gillette Stadium

By Jim Weicherding

It took awhile but it appears after weeks of non-stop postponements due to the pandemic we are starting to get back to normal. Normal being used relatively and nothing like we were used to on the cruisin' scene pre-pandemic.

After two months of delays, Mass Cruisers and Bass Pro Shops began hosting their bi-weekly car shows at Gillette Stadium to the delight of thousands of show vehicle owners and spectators. This show attracts the largest crowds across New England and you will find show vehicles adorned with license plates from New

York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

This car show is the longest running seasonal automotive event that typically ends the week of Halloween every year. Most expire in late September or early October. I don't know of any other area car show that goes until Halloween week.

Governor Charlie Baker recently lifted all restrictions across the state allowing this venue to start for the cruisin' season. Better late, than never, like last summer. If you have a classic ride or just love seeing all of the beautiful show vehicles and mingle with automo-

tive enthusiasts, then Bass Pro Shops and Gillette Stadium is the place to be every other Thursday over the next four months thanks to the Mass Cruisers.

Enjoy the great oldies during the event brought to you by Cruisin' Bruce Palmer and sponsored by Peter Sacchetti at Sacchetti Classic Insurance. This is a fantastic car show and everyone involved is dedicated to making sure you have a great and exciting experience. Keep this automotive hobby and car culture thriving for years to come. Please, "take a kid to a car show."



KOVELS® Antiques & Collecting

By Terry and Kim Kovel

Vintage lunchbox

Vintage collectibles, especially those related to sports, sell quickly at auction, perhaps because not all are expensive. Sometimes they are not noticed by the dedicated sports collectors and sell at bargain prices. This metal lunchbox was made in 1976. It is decorated with the helmets of the National Football Conference

on one side, and American Conference helmets on the other side.

Lunchbox collecting began in 1950, with the first example picturing the cowboy movie star Hopalong Cassidy. The metal boxes and matching thermos bottles remained popular until 1960, when soft plastic boxes were the style. (And it is a myth that metal boxes

were replaced because students were hitting each other in the head and causing injuries.) This football collectible included a matching thermos and was an auction bargain at \$35. The King-Seely Thermos Company made many metal lunchboxes, including the one with the football helmets.

The most expensive metal lunchbox ever sold pictured

"Toppie the Elephant," a Kroger grocery store figure that promoted plaid Top Value stamps. A 1957 Toppie lunchbox with thermos sold for \$2,784.

Hummel figurine

Q: On the TV show "Better Call Saul," the plot included a Hummel figurine that was so rare that it would sell for thousands of dollars. Your comments on Hummels say they are bought for very low prices today, most under \$50. Did the show make up the story? Or is there a type of Hummel that sells for over \$1,000?

A: The "Better Call Saul" show was talking about the rarest Hummels, a group called International Figures. The characters talked about the Bulgarian figure, but the real one depicted a Bavarian figure. In 1976, eight were in a sale by Robert Miller, the author of the first Hummel price book and

an expert in all things Hummel. He realized they were different from any he owned, so he made for a dealer in Hungary before World War II.

Later research claims that 24 or 26 different designs were made in the 1940s. The figures are marked with the M.I. Hummel signature used from 1935 to 1955 and mold numbers that run consecutively from 806 to 813 and others with numbers up to 968. Each figurine is depicted in its country's national dress. The thieves in the TV show wanted to steal an ordinary Hummel figurine and redecorate it to look like the famous one that has sold for thousands of dollars. The first sales were at \$20,000, but by 2013, the price for the International figure was as low as \$5,000.

Currier & Ives print

A: Currier & Ives was in business in New York City from



It took only \$35 to win this lunchbox, a football sports collectible, at a Main Auction Galleries sale in Cincinnati. Kovels

1857 to 1907 and is famous for its American lithograph prints. Reproductions and fakes have been made. "A Mountain Home" is not one of the prints listed in books that catalog the original Currier & Ives prints. It's often offered for sale online, identified as a Currier & Ives print from 1890, but one seller probably got it right when he said it is "after Currier & Ives," which means it was done in the style of the famous printmakers.

Current prices

Advertising playing cards, Schlitz Brewing, Milwaukee, globe logo on back, c. 1900, full deck, box with logo, \$520. Wristwatch, Rolex, Oyster Perpetual, diamond bezel & hour markers, date window, 1974, 34 millimeter case, \$2,125. For more collecting news and resources, visit www.Kovels.com. (c) 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.

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Q & A with The Car Doctor

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



Q. In January 2021 I found and purchased a brand new 2019 Ford Mustang GT Premium Convertible. The car was built in June 2019, so sat around for 18 months. I love the car and the sound of the 5.0 Coyote V8 engine. It's only driven on weekend highway rides with my kids. A week after I brought it home, the check engine light came on, and the FordPass app alerted me, stating the engine control system is unable to control the fuel pressure as expected. Two trips to the dealer found codes P008A low fuel pressure and P068A related to low battery. The battery was tested, failed, and replaced. A few weeks later, the car stalled with the same messages, but before I could get to the dealer, the check engine light went out and all seemed well. A few weeks after that, the check engine light came on again, with the same messages. Do I have a lemon? Is there some electric gremlin at play? Should I try a trickle charger on the battery since the car is only used on weekends? Any advice will be appreciated as it's terribly inconvenient to keep running to the dealer. Also, the problems are really ruining enjoyment of the car.

A. Starting with a fully charged battery makes sense. In fact, it is possible the replacement battery was not fully charged when it was installed. I would get a

float style battery charger (Battery Tender is one brand) and fully charge the battery. I would also use the battery charger whenever the car sits for more than a few days to keep the battery fully charged. Prior to recharging the battery disconnect the cables and touch them together for about a minute. This will completely clear the computer memory. When the car is restarted for the first time it may stall or act odd, until it relearns proper operation. If you still have a problem after this then you will need to go back to the dealer for warranty repairs.

Q. My 2019 Kia Soul with 31,284 miles on it has a portion of the warranty that is about to expire. The dealer is offering an extended warranty/service agreement, do you think it might be worth it?

A. The basic warranty is five years or 60,000 miles whichever comes first. The powertrain warranty is 10 years or 100,000 miles. To me it seems too early to pay for something that will most likely be covered by the factory warranty.

Q. My car has been safely tucked in my garage due to illness. The battery needs charging to get started. I also plan on getting an oil change, tire check and fluids checked. My car is a 2006 Toyota Camry with only 82,000 miles. My car should be okay, right?

A. Let your repair shop know the car has been sitting for a time. In fact, depending how long the car has been sitting it may be best to get it towed to your repair shop. Slow charge the battery and change the oil and check the vital fluids. Check the brakes, tires and add gas stabilizer and gas line antifreeze to the fuel. This will help if the gasoline picked up any moisture. Take it easy with the car until it shakes the cobwebs out.

Q. I have a fully optioned 2011 Dodge Citadel with the 5.7-liter engine. Over the 10 years I have owned the vehicle it has stalled unexpectedly three times. It appears to be an electrical system failure and the headlights and taillights flicker. The first time it happened, I had the car towed to a dealer and they said they could not find any issues. The last two times it happened I was able to remove the negative cable to the battery. When reconnected, the car started and ran normally. I researched online and I saw some discussion about alternator or computer module problems. What are your thoughts and suggestions on how to diagnose and correct? This is my wife's car with only 70,000 miles on it and I want her to be able to drive it with confidence.

A. The first place I would be looking is a faulty ground circuit and poor connections to common relays. Also this vehicle, like many Dodge Durango models, had a recall to the fuel pump relay. Unfortunately, there is also a problem with the replacement fuel pump relay which could lead to stalling.

Reader comment:

I ran across your column and appreciate your solid practical advice. I'm a former GM Goodwrench mechanic from the 1980s and have had a couple of other careers since then, but worked my way through college and grad school, working on everything from a 1925 Model A used in a Norman Rockwell painting to Mercedes and BMW. A recent column contained an inquiry on disposal of old diesel fuel. For diesel and kerosene, some folks (mostly shops but a few rural homes) have heaters that run on used motor oil or diesel. I ran across a guy on Craigslist who takes my "old" diesel and kerosene and heats his repair shop with it.

Thanks for the tip, it sounds like you had an interesting career.
—The Car Doctor



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Neighborhood yard sale

OXFORD - A neighborhood yard sale will be held Saturday, July 10 and Sunday, July 11, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 5 Founder's Court, Oxford. Please no early birds.

Some of the items available are furniture, jewelry, tools, toys, glassware, lawn items, Christmas items, clothes, TV, chests, books and lamps.

Summer yard sales

The Helping Hand summer yard sales schedule has been announced. The time of each sale is 8 am to noon. The dates include July 10 and July 24, August 7 and August 21, and September 11. The yard sales are held at Dodge Chapel, 81 Hammond Hill Road, Charlton. To donate call Deb 508-987-0708, Annette 508-347-7596, or Judy 508-248-5580.

Flea market

The Upton VFW will hold the next in its summer series of flea markets from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. beginning July 10 at Post headquarters, 15 Millford St., (Route 140) in Upton. The markets are held the second Saturday of each month through October, weather permitting.

Spaces for vendors and craftsmen are \$10, or \$15 if a banquet sized table is needed. Reservations are not necessary. Post member David Kennedy can provide further information by calling 508-529-3314 or via the VFW Facebook page. Coffee and donuts will be available in the morning. Hot dogs, chips, and cold drinks will be offered at lunchtime.

Yard Sale

Saturday, July 10 and Sunday, July 11 – Yard Sale – 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at 31 Conlin Road, Oxford, for items such as books, clothes, furniture, household, tech, jewelry, etc. No early birds, please.

Tales from beyond

The Spooner House in Plymouth

By Thomas D'Agostino

When visiting Plymouth, Massachusetts, one finds there is so much to take in and so little time. One suggestion would be to stay the night and take a few tours, especially a ghost tour, for Plymouth has plenty of spirits to visit in the dark of night. One good example is the Spooner House on North Street. By day it is a museum but by night, it comes alive with those who once roamed its chambers in a mortal frame.

The Spooner House was built in 1749 and stayed occupied by five generations of the family. When James Spooner died in 1954, the house was passed over to the Plymouth Antiquarian Society where it became a museum. It is still furnished with Spooner family heirlooms

for all to see. It is also furnished with at least one busy little ghost. Abigail Townesand was a little girl when the Spooner family took her in. Unfortunately, she died of an infection from an abscessed tooth. She still remains, either not knowing her time has long past, or to play with the visitors both day and night.

One group on a lantern light ghost tour encountered the little girl when it came up to them and touched one of the women on the back of the shoulder. The little girl in the white robe said, "I have to go now," and melted away. The group ranted about how the special effects of the tour really had them fearful for a moment. That is when the guide reluctantly told the crew he



does not have any little girl running around in a robe at 10:30 p.m. trying to scare people. Although it is a great idea, it is not quite legal. A member of another tour saw her standing by the corner of the house before vanishing.

Workmen came to the house to do restorations. The door was locked so they began knocking. Moments later a little girl let them in then ran off into another room. The workmen called the curator to let him know the door was locked but a little girl let them in. The curator stated in astonishment that there is no little girl in the house, as it is a museum and always locked.

They then followed the direction of the little girl and were taken aback at the fact that she had entered a room where the only exit was in their eyesight, yet she was gone.

Lights appear in the upper windows as if someone was walking to and fro with a lantern or candle. One night, a woman sought to peek into the house while the inside shutters were ajar. The tour guide kindly aimed a flash-

light through the crack. The shutters flew wide open and on the other side of the dark room was the distinct face of a woman staring back at them. She then vanished in the beam of light as the onlookers dispersed in fear. The building had been well secured and empty for the night.

Larry, one of the guides, had one experience with the ghost while explaining the house during a tour. As he stood at the door of the Spooner House in the alley, there began a small knocking sound from the other side of the door. Once again, the place had been secured for the night.

A visit to Plymouth is a must. It is classified as the birthplace of America with the landing of the Pilgrims in 1620. But it is after hours when the spirits begin their own pilgrimage.

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.

Prayer



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

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

Believer



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Uxbridge High School receives national recognition for commitment to empowering students

UXBRIDGE – Uxbridge High School announced today that it has been recognized as a 2020-21 Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Distinguished School. It is one of just 204 high schools across the U.S. to receive this honor for providing broad access to transformative learning experiences for students through PLTW Computer Science, Biomedical Science, and Engineering. PLTW is a non-profit organization that serves millions of PreK-12 students and teachers in over 12,200 schools across the U.S.

“Our partnership with Proj-

ect Lead the Way has yielded incredible results for our students and formed the basis of many outstanding classroom achievements,” said Uxbridge High School Principal Michael Rubin. “For us to be in this select group of schools nationwide speaks to the commitment of our educators and district in providing high-quality learning opportunities.”

The PLTW Distinguished School recognition honors schools committed to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their PLTW programs. To be eligible

for the designation, Uxbridge High School had to meet the following criteria in the 2019-20 school year:

- Had 95 percent of students take the End-of-Course (EoC) Assessments;
- Had 25 percent of students or more participate in PLTW courses, or of those who participated in PLTW, at least 33 percent took two or more PLTW courses;
- Offer and had students enrolled in at least three PLTW courses;
- Had strategies and procedures in place that support

reasonably proportional representation with regard to race, ethnicity, poverty, gender and can support such claims with relevant data.

“It is a great honor to recognize Uxbridge High School for their unwavering commitment to provide students with an excellent educational experience despite the unusual circumstances and unique challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic presented to the educational landscape this past year,” said Dr. Vince Bertram, President and CEO of PLTW. “They should be very proud of their

achievements in unlocking their students’ potential and equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in life beyond the classroom no matter what career path they choose.”

Uxbridge High School is one of just four schools in New England and the only public, comprehensive high school in Massachusetts to have earned program distinction for multiple years.

Uxbridge High School is part of a community of PreK-12 schools, colleges and universities, and corporate and philanthropic partners across the country united around a passion for providing students with inspiring, engaging, and empowering learning opportunities. For more information about PLTW’s recognition program, visit pltw.org/our-programs/program-recognition.

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RE: Real Estate



Mark Marzeotti

89 percent of sellers list their home with a real estate agent. The sellers surveyed listed trustworthiness, responsiveness, local market knowledge, a good reputation in the community, and a strong sales track record as the most important attributes in a top-notch agent.

A great real estate agent can make a huge difference in many aspects of your selling experience, from your stress level to your profits. I want to share the many benefits of selling with a local agent, and share with you what it will cost you.

What is the standard commission for a real estate agent?

Real estate agents work on a commission basis, making a percentage of the sale or purchase price of the home their client is buying or selling. Typically, as a seller, you'll pay 6 percent of the sale price, with half of the total serving as the buyer's agent's commission.

Keep in mind that the commission may be negotiable up front, depending on local market factors or your own situation. For example, if you're going to be using the same agent to help you sell your house and also to buy your new home, you may be able to negotiate a lower rate since they'll be getting two commissions.

Why use a real estate agent to sell your home?

What is the difference between a listing agent and a buyers agent?

The listing agent, also known as a sellers agent, works for the seller to help them sell their house, from listing to closing. The buyers agent works for the buyer, guiding them through the process of finding a home they love, into negotiations, and all the way through closing.

Benefits of using a listing agent

You might ask yourself, "Why use a real estate agent to sell my home?" There are a number of services and plenty of expertise a real estate agent can provide, so it's important for each seller to take a look at the list of benefits and decide if an agent is worth the expense.

1. Real estate agents provide local housing market expertise:

- We have access to a comprehensive list of comparable homes and understand the value of homes in your area.

- Taking into consideration the current market conditions, we can strategize ways to craft the optimal selling approach, with the goal of earning the highest possible return on your home.

- We can guide you to setting the right price for your home, one that will allow you to both pocket as much money as you can while selling in a timely manner.

- We understand local housing codes and can point out any red flags on your property that buyers (and their home inspectors) will find.

- We can recommend the specific home improvements that matter most to buyers in your area.

2. Real estate agents market your listing:

- We can provide recommendations for staging your home.

- We can hire a professional photographer to take great listing photos including drone pictures. Common practice for Marzeotti group.

- Creating an enticing listing description of a property is an art form, and a skilled agent can call out features local buyers are looking for.

- We list your property on the MLS and online real estate sites like Zillow. In fact, agents have access to many more listing outlets than sellers who are listing on their own.

- We host open houses and showings, physically showing your home to buyers.

- We serve as a buffer between you and all potential buyers, fielding calls, answering questions, and scheduling showings.

3. Real estate agents network with other agents to increase buyer interest:

- We may show your home to

an agent-only crowd to increase buzz and spread the word.

- We talk to other agents about your home, positioning it as a match for their buyers.

- Homes sold by agents are typically more appealing to buyers agents, as they know they'll get a commission on the sale.

4. Real estate agents handle your negotiations:

- We vet all potential buyers, identifying the serious offers.

- We skillfully work with the buyer's agent to get you an offer that meets your needs in terms of price, timing, and repairs.

- We help you make smart decisions on negotiating counteroffers.

5. Real estate agents ease the selling process:

- Selling a home comes with a lot of paperwork, and your real estate agent will handle it all.

- Professional real estate agents keep an eye out for deal loopholes and unusual requests, and read all the fine print.

- In a multiple-offer situation, they'll help you identify the pros and cons of each offer, making your decision easier.

- We'll recommend when you should counteroffer and when you should accept the deal.

How do I hire a real estate agent?

There are lots of ways to find a great local real estate agent. A great way is to ask friends and family members for referrals and searching online. Some-

times it is clear who you should choose based on local newspapers and other advertising media.

You'll also want to pay attention to the duration of your agent's contract. If you're working with an agent you haven't worked with before, you may want to go with a short contract term, so that if your house doesn't sell quickly, you can pivot to an agent who better fits your needs.

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