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July 23-August 27, 2021

An unobtrusive Fourth, and a Declaration of Independence, in Auburn

By Rod Lee

It was a sleepy Sunday afternoon and a quiet Fourth of July in the town of Auburn this year. Businesses were mostly closed for the holiday. Auburn Town Pizza, closed. Bells Lawn & Garden Center, closed. Arcade Snacks, closed. Capitol Siding, closed. The Coffee Mug, closed. Fuller Automotive, closed. The Framers' Gallery, closed.

No fireworks to commemorate the holiday, as was true of virtually every community in Central Massachusetts.

That is not to say that the celebration of American freedom from British rule went unrecognized. Shortly before four o'clock, a small crowd began to gather in front of

Auburn Town Hall on Central St. to hear a recitation of the Declaration of Independence by resident Bruce Hopper.

Mr. Hopper is fairly well known in Auburn and the region. An attorney by trade, he is also the brains behind the "Pure BS Maple Shack." During a "Chamber Exchange" interview with Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce President Tim Murray in March of 2019, Mr. Hopper said that upon purchasing his home, he "got excited" at the sight of maple trees "in the backyard." So began experimentation making maple syrup in the kitchen. "I ruined an oven, got kicked out

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Auburn's own Bruce Hopper recreates Isaiah Thomas's rendition of the Declaration of Independence in front of Town Hall.

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Dennis and Donna Dion.

Erich's Cutting Edge celebrates 20-year anniversary

By Janet Stoica

It seems like just yesterday, doesn't it, Donna? As the owner of Erich's Cutting Edge Barbershop located at 304 Main Street in Oxford, Donna Dion has seen hair styles come, go, and come back again.

As Mrs. Dion celebrates her 20-year anniversary in one of the town's oldest buildings (1749), located at Oxford's busiest intersection (Main Street and Sutton Avenue), she has seen and been part of much of downtown Oxford's activities.

The screaming sirens of fire trucks, ambulances, and other emergency vehicles; traffic mishaps; weather changes; and many walk-in customers have kept her aware of events but with a keen eye for detail of her clients' hair styling expectations. Her focus has never wavered. Once those clippers and scissors are in her hands, she hones in on every strand of her customer's hair. Her eyes never wander. She is

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AUBURN FOURTH

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of the kitchen and sat in the driveway with a turkey fryer," he said, with a chuckle. But he did not give up on his idea of maple syrup as an entrepreneurial venture.

Fast forward to 2020 and beyond. Mr. Hopper's product is now in demand at the Birch Tree Bread Co., in the hill towns in Western Massachusetts, and at Chuck's Steak House and the Salem Cross Inn—for instance.

It was a "pinch me" moment when he realized that the syrup generated at Pure BS Maple Shack could become so popular, he told Mr. Murray.

An interesting man possessed of an inherent curiosity, it is not surprising, then, that Mr. Hopper took on the garb of Worcester's own Isaiah Thomas to replicate "the patriot printer," newspaper publisher and author's performance in the first-ever public reading of the Declaration more than two hun-

dred years ago, in his reenactment of the speech, all this time afterwards.

Milling around before the event, looking puzzled as the appointed hour arrived and people grew anxious, Mr. Hopper was asked whether there was a problem that would prevent the reading from taking place. "No, just waiting on my daughter," he said with a smile.

Lauren Hopper did not disappoint, in delivering a preamble in the same ringing tones as her father would then employ, when it was his turn. Ms. Hopper introduced Isaiah Thomas, relating how with "no shots fired" he helped "end British rule in this area."

Isaiah Thomas was no shrinking violet. His first accounts of the battles of Lexington and Concord and his resistance to British authority that propelled the Revolution forward also put his life in jeopardy and resulted in his escape from Boston to Worcester, where he printed and sold books, built a paper mill and bindery, published

the Massachusetts Spy, and founded the American Anti-Quarian Society.

Mr. Hopper isn't shy, either. Following his daughter to a lectern that faced Town Hall, he delivered the Declaration with energy and force. Often his voice rose to a crescendo, his face turned red and his fingers thumped on the lectern as he described the grievances against King George III contained in the original document. He did this flawlessly, without even stumbling over a word like "magnanimity."

King George III had to be held accountable for a variety of offenses, Mr. Hopper proclaimed (capitalization retained where it appeared in the Declaration): "For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us... For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States... For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world... For imposing taxes on us without our Consent...For

depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury..." and so on.

"He," Mr. Hopper said, thunderously, "has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us."

Congratulated on his reading as applause filtered across the grounds and told "it's too bad there wasn't a larger turnout for this event," Mr. Hopper was not dismayed. "Well, word will get around," he said.

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



Bruce Hopper's daughter Lauren Hopper "introduces" Isaiah Thomas to people gathered for her father's reading of the Declaration of Independence, in Auburn on July 4.

Webster Five moves corporate offices to Auburn

AUBURN – Webster Five has finalized its relocation of the bank's corporate offices to 35 Millbury Street in Auburn, Massachusetts. The bank has completed an extensive redesign of the existing 39,000 square-foot building, creating an inviting and collaborative workspace for its employees. The consolidation of more than 100 team members from three distinct locations in Auburn, Webster, and Worcester into a common office will increase efficiencies and foster innovation, as the bank sustains its focus on delivering exceptional customer service. Webster Five has experienced significant growth over the past 25 years, and its footprint now extends well beyond its original markets of Webster, Dudley, and Oxford. As the bank approaches \$1 billion in

assets, the modernization and centralization of corporate workspace is essential to providing an outlet for continued growth. Webster Five's corporate offices have been significantly enhanced, as the design of the new space fosters a strong sense of collaboration, creativity, and inclusion for employees throughout the organization. There will be no change to the bank's branch footprint; existing branches will continue to be important centers of activity and convenience for customers.

While Webster Five remains deeply committed to its roots in Webster, the new corporate offices in Auburn offer an ideal central hub for both its employees and customers. Webster Five believes that this location will play a significant role in the bank's continued

growth as a leading community bank in Worcester County. Donald F. Doyle, president and chief executive officer of Webster Five, stated, "This consolidation gives us the opportunity for increased interactions between departments to enhance collaboration. The design of the spaces was thoughtfully considered to create a unifying feel. While this move was planned prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are deeply conscious of the changes many of our employees have faced in the pandemic's wake. We are aware that our employees' family lives and schedules are still disrupted, so the transition back to full time in the office will be gradual and our new space will accommodate a hybrid work model for the foreseeable future."



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Webster Dudley Business Alliance regroup, and looks ahead

By Rod Lee

The scene that unfolded shortly after 5:00 p.m. on June 24 at The Rose Room Café and Tonic Bar in downtown Webster is the same one playing out across the country right now.

Organizations whose in-person activities had been grounded to a “virtual” halt by the pandemic are getting back into face-to-face meetings; without masks.

On the last Thursday evening of the month, the Webster Dudley Business Alliance (WDBA) became the latest to welcome its members to a live gathering. In the WDBA’s case, a resumption of near-normal operations took the form of a networking event hosted by Bill and Jess Sabine at The Rose Room on E. Main St. in Webster.

About twenty people attended. Represented were businesspersons from banking and finance, construction, technology, the arts, the media, property management, the salon industry—even the soon-to-open “Samuel Slater Experience” in the former National Guard Armory in Webster.

The mood was understandably upbeat as Deb Keefe, the WDBA’s treasurer, signed participants in, and

Lucas Perzan, the WDBA’s new president, welcomed them.

The usual chatter accompanied the early portion of the proceedings. Ericka Labonte of B.Kind Café in Webster was telling Dan Bennett of N. Grosvernordale-based D.B.C. Solutions about recent thefts her restaurant has been subjected to, resulting in “a need for security.” Ms. Labonte added that she knows and admires Mr. Bennett’s work as a master carpenter and residential construction expert.

“He’s awesome, he did my deck,” she said.

COVID of course was a hot topic. For Mr. Bennett, orders for his company’s services “never slowed down, it got busier,” over the past year. He doesn’t believe a reoccurrence of the potentially deadly disease is imminent. “We’re about to start a job in Dayville,” he said. “A 30’ x 40’ barn, for storage. It will take about three to four weeks.”

Mr. Perzan said a prime goal of his Insation Technologies firm, which is housed in the Nipmuc Plaza on Thompson Road in Webster, is “to save people money for phone, Internet and TV.” Insation’s “Stream Live TV

(7000+ channels),” he explained, is “TV with a fire stick, two TVs for twenty-five dollars a month, three TVs for \$35 a month. We have several hundred customers all over the country.”

Each person in attendance was allocated one minute to say something about their business, with Mr. Perzan joking that if they exceed that time “we’ll throw forks at you.” This part of the meeting allowed Ms. Sabine to announce that The Rose Room was launching “full sit-down dinners at night” for the first time; and for Deb Horan of Booklovers’ Gourmet to talk up her busy shop. Throughout July, for instance, a display of Dudley mixed-media artist Lisa Kretchman’s work, entitled “At Peace in Nature,” will be on display at Booklovers’. A meet-and-greet with the artist will take place on Saturday, July 17 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

With its stop at The Rose Room—home of seasonal fare showcasing local growers since November of 2018—the WDBA is eager to keep events like its networking session coming. Up next, Mr. Perzan and Ms. Sabine announced, would be an opportunity for members to volunteer for a few hours the following Saturday morning (June 26) at Tim Carroll’s “Farmer Tim’s” 92-acre historic property in Dudley.

Still ahead too, probably in September, is a visit to the new Samuel Slater Experience, a museum now being put together on Ray Street in Webster.

In briefing the WDBA on the progress of the endeavor to celebrate the life and contributions of Samuel Slater, Barbara Van Reed said the museum is using a “Slater’s Sheep Community Art Project” as a way to introduce the textile manufacturer to the public in a highly visible, fun way. The museum has acquired twenty-five life-sized sheep sculptures

and is inviting local artists to get involved by painting creative images on the sheep. Local businesses, organizations and individuals are invited to support the initiative as sponsors.

The sheep will be displayed at various locations in Webster and surrounding towns.

“Help us make a decorated sheep parade a reality,” the museum posts on its Facebook page.

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



Ericka Labonte of B.Kind Café and Dan Bennett of D.B.C. Solutions converse at the outset of the Webster Dudley Business Alliance’s first in-person gathering in months, at The Rose Room in Webster.



WDBA President Lucas Perzan of Insation Technologies addresses members in attendance at the event at The Rose Room.

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Webster Police Chief Michael Shaw.



District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr.



Rev. Janice Ford of the Open the Word Recovery Center.

Worcester County Overdose Response Program sees successes in first year

WORCESTER – More than half of those offered services following an overdose accepted treatment as part of a program launched last year by District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr. and all 60 police departments in Worcester County.

Critical Incident Management System (CIMS) launched in March 2020 and was used by police departments in all of Worcester County's cities and towns over the last year to collect overdose data and respond to non-fatal overdose victims to offer services. The response visits were performed with a plainclothes police officer and a recovery coach usually within 48 hours of an overdose incident.

Data from the last year shows that on 52 percent of the follow-up visits, individu-

als accepted services. In another 9 percent of instances the individuals were already seeking services.

"These are encouraging numbers," said Mr. Early in a press conference today. "It was a challenging year to launch this program with the roadblocks presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. These numbers are a promising start. Any time we can help even one person get access to treatment is a life that is being saved."

The District Attorney's office purchased the CIMS software for \$40,000 using drug forfeiture funds in 2019 from developers Kelley Research Associates. The implementation of CIMS was a successful partnership between the District Attorney's Office, local police departments and municipalities.

"By getting the names of the folks who've had the non-fatal overdoses and by giving them the opportunity for the follow up...what you've done is open the door. You've made the connection. You've provided an opportunity for that person when they're ready to take advantage of the treatment options that are available to them," said Worcester City Manager Edward Augustus.

CIMS allows police departments to share information, as well, so that when a person overdoses outside of their hometown they are still receiving a follow up visit.

"Addiction has no jurisdictional boundaries," said Fitchburg Police Chief Ernest Martineau, former President of the Central Mass. Chiefs of Police Association. "When there's no boundary for that, there can be no boundary for helping people. And that's what this does. It connects 60 cities and towns police departments in responding and helping."

"The beauty of CIMS coming on board is now we have a centralized database that's tracking and we get an alert when we have to go offer up services. And the other thing that we were missing was when people were outside of

Webster having an overdose, we never knew. Now with CIMS, we can follow up with them. It's a really integral part of getting these people the help they need," said Webster Police Chief Michael Shaw. Webster's responses to those in need are assisted by a partnership with Opening the Word Recovery Center, run by Rev. Janice Ford,

which opened in June 2020 and served more than 2,000 people.

In fall of 2020, the District Attorney's office was awarded a \$1.2 million grant from the federal Department of Justice-Bureau of Justice Assistance to fund recovery coaches that will respond with police to follow up and offer services after an overdose.

Mr. Early was also joined at the press conference by Worcester Police Chief Steven Sargent, current President of the Central Mass. Chiefs of Police Association and Southbridge Chief Shane Woodson, Dudley Police Chief Steven Wojnar, and Worcester Fire Department Deputy Chief John Powers.

Lamoureux receives Community Service Award

CHARLTON - Emily Lamoureux, LPN of Charlton, a member of the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy Class of 2019, received the 2020 Community Service Award during a special award ceremony on June 21, 2021, at the Lakeside Pavilion of the Indian Ranch in Webster. The award was granted in recognition of Lamoureux's volunteer work creating critical partnerships between the Academy, the Bay Path community and the Worcester County.

The Community Service Award was developed to honor a person who is making significant contributions to the Bay Path Practical Nursing community through their time, actions, talents and dedication through any volunteer work done. The honoree selected serves as a role model

for compassion, service, giving back, and striving to make the world a better place.

Lamoureux's passion is in helping others. She has made important contributions to the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy through her participation in mentorship, blood pressure clinics, information sessions, college fairs, health fairs, SkillsUSA, tutoring, and participation in all other volunteer events.

While a student at Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy Lamoureux was a UNICEF Club member. She was a SkillsUSA District Champion, earning a bronze medal in First Aid/CPR. She is Dementia Care Certified, Mental Health First Aid Certified, and Certified in Infusion Therapy and Central Line Care. Lamoureux represented Bay Path Practical Nursing Acad-



emy at the Innovation Summit at Northeastern University and was a recipient of \$5,000 grant from MassHire Worcester Career Center. She was a nominee for the 2019 Clinical Excellence Award and volunteered at the Charlton Lion's Club mobile health screening and a volunteer at the Charlton Senior Center's Blood Pressure Clinic.

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Dean's List at WIT

BOSTON - The following local students have made the Dean's List at Wentworth Institute of Technology for the Spring 2021 semester.

Madeline Rae Davis of Dudley
Brandon Scanlon of Dudley
Adrianna T Rocheleau of Oxford

Founded in 1904, Wentworth Institute of Technology is a nationally ranked university offering career-focused education through bachelor's and graduate degree programs in areas including engineering, architecture, computer and data science, life sciences, management, and design. Its 31 acres are situated in the Fenway neighborhood of Boston, Mass., within walking distance of leading several cultural, educational, sports, and medical hubs. Wentworth is known for its emphasis on career preparation for students through its leading co-op programs, hands-on learning approach, and alignment with 21st-century workforce needs.

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Cornerstone Creations casts your wishes

By Janet Stoica

For over 20 years, Pete Robitaille has been casting his artwork at his Sturbridge studio to the delight of his customers. What began as a hobby for this creative collector of architectural art has blossomed into a full array of unique and custom-made everlasting pieces of concrete art.

"It's not a heat process to cast these pieces of concrete statuary," said Pete, "a mold is used to create each one and then a refinement process is used to bring each unit up to its full potential."

Mr. Robitaille began his venture into concrete creations about 20 years ago when he met someone who was selling molds for the same price as statues. Apparently, his first purchase resulted in a creative streak that continues today with his large display of just about anything that his customers might imagine. "I make over 3,000 designs now," he said, "and I work with mold-makers internationally from England to Australia to Germany and Russia. I look for unique designs in the mythical, gothic, and nature-

inspired areas. The most popular requests currently are for gnomes, gargoyles, bird baths, planters, and wall hangings."

His wall hangers can be used indoors or outdoors and are completed in a standard gray or antique finish.

It's a niche market according to Mr. Robitaille as no one really does concrete art anymore. There are plastic resin designs from China but they certainly do not retain their sturdiness like the creations offered by Corner-

stone, especially if the piece is an outdoor unit. Withstanding the New England weather from summer to winter is a true testament to the strength and durability of Cornerstone's offerings. "These are not lightweight pieces," he said, "these are made to last."

The most unusual creations that Mr. Robitaille has created are for repositories of loved ones' cremation ashes, be it for a family member or a dear family pet. He has also made statues of pets, epitaphs, and quotation markers.

The casting process involves the use of a blended concrete mixture that is poured into a mold form, taking care to ensure that air pockets are non-existent. Once the casting process has been completed and molded, a curing process is next, which may last up to a week. The finishing stage involves the use of a cement compound, filling in any imperfections for a fine finish and then, if requested by a customer or decided by Mr. Robitaille, priming and painting is done for an even more refined look. Some of his creations are definitely in the family heirloom category. His 1,000 square foot



inventory includes a wide range of creations. Stunning statuary in a most unique environment.

Hours: Thursday - Sunday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Find them on Facebook.

Cornerstone Creations, 71 Main Street, Sturbridge. Phone: (508) 347-0888.

Contact Janet: jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com



Nichols College names women's institute for departing president to honor decade of leadership

DUDLEY - The Nichols College Board of Trustees has announced that the college's Institute for Women's Leadership (IWL) will be named for Susan Engelkemeyer, who retired in June after serving 10 years as Nichols president. The new name is the Susan West Engelkemeyer, PhD, Institute for Women's Leadership.

"Nichols has come a long way in the past 10 years with Susan's steady hand at the helm. She has navigated the college through tough waters and positioned us for even greater success," said Board Chair John H. Davis, referring to the gains the college made in enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, and endowment growth under Engelkemeyer's leadership, as well as

the completion of a historic \$66 million fundraising campaign.

In honor of Engelkemeyer's retirement, members of the board contributed a total of \$400,000 to the endowment for the IWL, which she created in 2013. The Institute focuses on the issues and challenges impacting women in business using campus initiatives, industry partnerships, research analysis, and thought leadership. Its goals are to develop the leadership potential of students and serve as a resource and authoritative voice on women's leadership for the community. Among its programs are the annual Empowering Women in Business Conference and the biennial Massachusetts Women's Leadership Index, released this spring.

"Susan has been a model leader and an inspiration to our students. We are excited that the IWL, one of her crowning achievements, will reflect and honor that legacy," Davis added.

"The Institute for Women's Leadership is an integral part of the Nichols College mission to develop prepared, confident and ethical leaders of tomorrow," said President Engelkemeyer. "Our students - both female and male - benefit from the Institute's efforts to foster awareness of gender inequality and to affect change at the personal and institutional levels. I am proud that my name will continue to be associated with this important work and truly thank the Board of Trustees for this honor."

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Living well and looking good

What is the treatment for a fatty liver?

By Keith Roach, M.D.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 77-year-old woman. I am 5 feet, 2 inches tall and weigh 107 pounds. I take no medication. When I went to the doctor last week, he found that my alkaline phosphatase was 176, my ALT 10, and my AST 11. He told me I had fatty liver and to get a scan, but I had no way to get to the place to have it done. He did not say anything else about it. I have no symptoms. Does this sound like fatty liver to you? I did not really like my doctor, but with my insurance it is hard to change doctors.

If I do have fatty liver, is there anything I can do for it? - J.F.

ANSWER: Fatty liver is an increasingly common problem. Risk factors include being overweight and having diabetes, high blood pressure and abnormal blood cholesterol levels. Alcohol use is also a cause of fatty liver, and all people with fatty liver are strongly recommended to abstain from alcohol entirely. The primary treatment is diet and weight loss.

It sounds like there was some missed communication between you and your doctor. Fatty liver is a possibility; however, it does not seem likely to me, as you have not identified any of the risk factors, and you are certainly not

overweight (if anything, you are a bit underweight). Further, although the alkaline phosphatase can be elevated in fatty liver (yours is just a bit high), it is more common for AST and ALT to be elevated, which yours are not.

An ultrasound scan is a good, but not definitive, way of looking for fatty liver. A liver biopsy is still the definitive test, but it's often not done in people whose history, physical exam and ultrasound are all suggestive.

A slightly abnormal alka-

line phosphatase does not necessarily mean you have a liver problem. Bone issues (fractures, Paget's disease of bone, high thyroid and parathyroid hormone levels) can cause a high alkaline phosphatase, too. Additional liver tests - checking the GGT level or specifically what kind of alkaline phosphatase you have (by isoenzyme analysis) - can make the source of the elevated alkaline phosphatase clearer.

Getting an ultrasound scan and additional blood tests is a

reasonable place to start. Unfortunately, lack of confidence in your physician is a different problem. If you really can't get a new doctor, then you need to have a conversation about proceeding with evaluation in such a way that you can do so while being confident that you are getting good advice.

Herbal supplement

DEAR DR. ROACH: A few years ago, I read that the herbal supplement feverfew may help with some migraines. Having suffered with severe migraine for over 50 years, I decided to try it. I take one capsule four times a day, and it has completely rid me of my migraines. Would you please mention it again? - B.J.F.

ANSWER: Feverfew is a common herbal remedy to prevent migraine, and although not all trials have shown benefit, the majority of studies I have read showed that it is more effective than a placebo and the side effect risk is very small. Other nonprescription treatments that have been shown in most studies to be beneficial include magnesium, riboflavin and coenzyme Q10. They are generally safe and well-tolerated, and I hope others may get the same relief you have found.

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

To your good health

The Janet Malser Humanities Trust 2021 grant recipients

The Janet Malser Humanities Trust recently awarded their eleventh annual distribution of grants to various local non-profit organizations totaling just under \$150,000.

The following are this year's grant recipients: The Black Tavern Historical Society, Dudley; Boys & Girls Club of Webster-Dudley; Dudley Conservation Land Trust; Dudley Grange #163; First Congregational Church of Dudley; Friends of the Gladys E. Kelly Public Library, Webster; Gladys E. Kelly Public Library, Webster;

Nichols College, Dudley; Putlaski Brass Band, Webster; St. Joseph School, Webster; Town of Dudley; Town of Oxford; Webster Lake Association.

The Janet Malser Humanities Trust was established in 2009 as a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation and started annual distributions of grants in 2011. Its purpose is to fund educational, cultural, historic, and charitable causes which fit the guidelines set in the Trust within the towns of Dudley, Oxford, or Webster. For more information visit janetmalsertrust.org.

Keiran P. Holahan is CFO at Millbury Federal Credit Union

MILLBURY— Millbury Federal Credit Union (MCU) President and CEO Joseph F. Barbato is pleased to announce the appointment of Keiran P. Holahan as Chief Financial Officer.

Mr. Holahan has over 30 years of credit union and banking experience. His most recent position was Vice President, Finance at St. Mary's Credit Union in Marlboro.

President Barbato noted Mr. Holahan's extensive background and experience in Finance along with his successful leadership skills. He will be a welcomed addition to the MCU Senior Management team.

Mr. Holahan is a Magna Cum Laude graduate of Providence College with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting. He and his family reside in Northbridge.

MCU began in 1934, with 20 members and total assets of \$100.00. Today, assets exceed \$349 million. Members enjoy a wide variety of innovative financial services through offices in Millbury, Auburn, Worcester and South Grafton.



Keiran P. Holahan



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Military History Through The Ages August 7th & 8th

The American Heritage Museum is presenting a living history exhibition – Military History Through The Ages, August 7th and 8th. This extraordinary weekend program features multiple historical encampments laid out chronologically over the great expanse of the museum grounds. Starting as early as the French Indian Wars and Revolutionary War, to the Civil War, World War One, World War Two, Korean War, up to the Vietnam War will be represented.

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Quinsigamond Community College 2021 grads

WORCESTER - Quinsigamond Community College has released its 2021 list of graduates. On Friday, May 21 QCC hosted a virtual commencement ceremony to honor this year's 1,441 graduates. To view the 2021 Commencement Ceremony, visit www.QCC.edu/commencement-2021. Local graduates are listed here.

Associate in Applied Science

Auburn: Jacob Paradis

Webster: Gary Watson

Associate in Arts

Auburn: Giuliana Bacoccini, Reese Casavecchia, Lauren Francis, Erin Gallivan, Nancy Gatui, Danielle Hastings, Michael Imse, Lolitha Ntonmeu Messa Tiako, William Ritacco

Charlton: Lucas Lanier, Caroline Lawson, Paige Leite, Conner Meece, Robert Orasz

Dudley: Tiondra DeBoise, Sara Patrinos, Tiffany Sousa

Oxford: Amber Comptois, Austin Dickhaut, Lindsey Donnelly, April Kennedy, Luke Knowles, Samantha Lemay, Trenton Lovejoy, Emily Maynard, Abigail Rice

Webster: Eunice Artey, Sarah Condon, Katelyn DiTullio, Chime Lama, Eliza Larson, Kelly Moriarty, Danielle Zecco

Associate in Science

Auburn: Faith Barbieri, Adriana Bennett, Autumn Boateng, Bright Bremang, Elizabeth Burch-Elder, Quinn Bushe, Samantha Deso, Corey Duff, Adam Easty, Michael Flannery, Jeanna Marion, Quinne Masiello, Benjamin Rackett, Haley Rivers, Ricardo Rodrigues, Katelyn Roy, Edward Stanton, Sam Taki, Jonathon Wambach

Charlton: Joseph Bailen, Matthew Beals, Michael Bjorn, Sarah Caplette, Radoslaw Denert, Morgan Doucimo, Victoria Gaspar, Chase Mannila, Collin Mulcahy, Jeffrey Pearlstein, Arlene Rodriguez, Jessica Trindade, Abigail VanDeMark, Gabriel Varner, Jennifer Vezina, Izabela Warnajts

Dudley: Jillian Baker, Erin Bernard, Celia Bohaboy, Anna Donohue, Shannon Ebbeling, Joy Goguen, Gregory Gunsalus, Veronica Helock, Kennedy Kamicha, Glenn Levasseur, Danielle Moore, Averyl Nowosadko, Joanna Paradis, Nicholas Sheehan, Cassandra Smeltzer

North Oxford: Kaylie Mauch, Michael McCarthy, Kayla Soto

Oxford: Lisa Atsma, Christopher Bartczak, Gabriella Blackwell,

UMass Lowell Dean's List

LOWELL - Local residents have been named to the dean's list at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Among those recognized for achieving academic distinction for the spring 2021 semester at UMass Lowell are:

Sarah Lavoie of Dudley, majoring in business administration

Karina Provost of Dudley, majoring in mathematics

Troy Hogan of Dudley, majoring in nursing

Madison Marsh of Dudley, majoring in nursing

Natalie Bolio of Oxford, majoring in biology

Jillian Pare of Oxford, majoring in business administration
Alexandria Holmes of Oxford, majoring in chemical engineering

Khadeer Choudhry of Oxford, majoring in computer science

Kaitlyn Palmer of Oxford, majoring in psychology

Kimberly Nene of Webster, majoring in biology

Izabelle Somicu of Webster, majoring in business administration

Patryk Piwowarczyk of Webster, majoring in computer science

Amyah Chagnon-Verdieu of Webster, majoring in nursing

Allison Wood of Webster, majoring in public health

Cameron McLaughlin of Webster, majoring in undeclared liberal arts

UMass Lowell is a national research university offering its more than 18,000 students bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in business, education, engineering, fine arts, health, humanities, sciences and social sciences. UMass Lowell delivers high-quality educational programs and personal attention from leading faculty and staff, all of which prepare graduates to be leaders in their communities and around the globe. www.uml.edu.

Kylie Brenneman, Adam Brindley, Shannon Donnelly, Carolyn Hodge, Audrey Hopkins, Breanna Kielinen, Jacob Laplante, Kevin Le, Danielle McGlone, Erica Mucci, Kathryn Tagg, Adam Weiner, Maxwell Zostant

Webster: Emily Anderson, Sierra Bourke, Danielle Cerasoli, Marina Daniels, Dereck Edith, Jacob Gatto, Laura Hoey, Tara Jolda, Champayne Leshore, Makenzie MacGregor, Kelly Marcoux, Mackenzie Mountain, Eunice Osei, Barbara Peralta, SherryAnn Potenti-Crumbliss, Matthew Rakowski, Joe Ramos, Tara Rudolph, Orion Walker, Danielle Zecco

Certificate

Auburn: Tracy Anctil, Caleb Buckley, Chantal Champagne, Casey Clouthier, Nancy Gatui, Zachary Hall, Jacob Paradis, Makenzie Ward, Cheryl Wheeler

Charlton: Natasha Emco-Rollins, Alexandria Macaruso

Dudley: Alise Arnold, Lilianna Bedard, Nikolina Chludzinska, Samantha LaFleur, Sara Patrinos

North Oxford: Daniel Donovan

Oxford: Jasmine Dyer, Jennifer Gum, Felecia Violette

Webster: Lamidi Akibu, Carolyn Almanzar Gutierrez, Abigail Biernacki, Kathryn Brown, Ryan Clark, Courtney Currier, Audrey Ducharme, Dereck Edith, Lynn Fellman, Monica Gaithuma, Jacob Gatto, Champayne Leshore, Antonia Lopez, Chauntel Martin, Ashley Martinez, Solmary Medina, Jillian Morrow, SherryAnn Potenti-Crumbliss, Matthew Rakowski, Veronica Sagal, Nicole Swift, Gary Watson, Danielle Zecco



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'Tanks' for that!

Oxford resident and Wentworth Institute of Technology Senior Mikey Peloquin had no idea where a grandfather was taking him on June 16; or that, upon arriving in Hudson, he would be treated to a personally guided tour of the American Heritage Museum by Hunter Chaney who is the AHM's director of marketing and communications. With a budding interest in history and aspirations to possibly pursue aerospace as a career, Mikey was dazzled by one of the largest displays of military apparatus in the world (which began with "The Jacques M. Littlefield Collection"); especially "the hang-ar," where he is pictured with Mr. Chaney (Al Capone's V-16 Cadillac sits behind them, in readiness for a "Tanks, Wings & Wheels" event over Father's Day weekend). In the museum itself, addressing the original acquisition of the many tanks that now occupy the floor, Mr. Chaney said curators asked themselves "what do you do with tanks? It's like what do you do with a herd of elephants?" Newly arrived is "the only Panzer 1 tank in North America. Germany claimed 'these are just tractors.'" As for Al Capone's car? "It runs really smooth," Mr. Chaney said.



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ERICH'S CUTTING EDGE

Continued from page 1

centered on the job at hand and that is to make her customers as pleased as she is when her work is done.

"We enjoy customers from ages 7 to 90+ years old," said Donna. "We have about a 50/50 age mix. There are many older gentlemen who are our customers.

Donna graduated from Worcester's Girls Trade School, which is now part of Worcester Vocational High School. She is also a graduate of Brom's Barber School. While at Girls Trade, she and her fellow students often cut the Boys Trade School students' hair for practice. This is when she learned that barbering would be her life's passion. "Fancy styling is not part of what we do here," said Donna. "We will cut to a requested type of haircut. The latest cut requested is a 'bald fade.' This type of cut is close on the sides and then faded into the longer hair on the top of the head." Usually taking about 45 minutes to complete, most customers appear to be very pleased once they hop out of the barber chair. Beard trims are also offered.

Another recent trend is called a "hard part." This cut is with short sides and a long top with a part cut into the long top. Clients

will comb the top and gel it back. "I'll show them how to do the gel. It's truly amazing, however, to see the really young kids who come in here for a cut and are really into taking care of their own styling. Really amazing. In summertime, we use colored gels for them." (The gel color washes out.)

Tubes of colored gel sell for \$5 each and styling gels run about \$12 each. Gel lines include Crew and Suavecito (pomade) for the perfect hold and finish. Donna enjoys cutting fades and regular cuts and will also do flat-tops but the flat-tops are very tedious work as the top must be squared off. "It involves a lot of keen eye-work and lots of hair wax," Donna says.

When she was younger and right out of high school, Donna and a good friend decided to take a cross-country tour. They packed up their car and part of their graduation money setting out on the open road driving down the eastern seaboard and across the southern states, visiting tourist spots along

the way from New York City to Florida to Louisiana, Texas, even crossing the border into Mexico and then driving back up into California, hitting Las Vegas and the sights of the Grand Canyon. "We actually got a jay-walking ticket in Los Angeles, can you believe it? "We stopped to do laundry and crossed the street to visit a convenience store to buy a beverage while our clothes were washing. When we crossed back to re-enter the laundry, we were stopped by the police and given a ticket for jaywalking! Of course, we settled the fine and ticket before leaving the city." Route 66 was part of their trip as well. Donna talks about how she and her friend lived on pizza and peanuts during their travels. Their two-month adventure was a trip of a lifetime. What a great book of memories. This lady has led a most wonderful life.

She is married to Dennis Dion, who is retired, but assists Donna by maintaining the building's landscaping and upkeep. Appointment

scheduling is also part of Mr. Dion's responsibilities. "He keeps the place running efficiently," says Donna. She and Dennis have two adult children, daughter Deseree, who is expecting their first grandchild in August, and son Devon.

Donna attends several hair conventions annually. Her favorite is the New York City International, held at the Jacob Javits Center. This convention seems to be the premier show for learning the latest and greatest cuts.

As Donna has been barbering for 43 years and thoroughly enjoying every minute of her day, she takes pleasure in citing the Mark Twain quote: "Find a job you enjoy doing and you will never have to work a day in your life." Donna obviously relishes her vocation, the clientele who visit her shop to look their best, and the happiness each day brings her as she jokes, cuts, and perfects each client's style.

On July 23, the 20-year anniversary date, she will be having a Customer Appreciation Day to celebrate.

Erich's Cutting Edge is at 304 Main Street, Oxford. Phone: (508) 987-1870. Hours: Mon/Tues/ Fri 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Wed 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.; Thurs 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sat 7 a.m. - 1 p.m. Find them on

Facebook. And, Donna says: "Walk-ins are welcome but we encourage you to make an appointment."

Contact Janet: jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

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Drive-thru Polish Platter sale

DUDLEY - St. Andrew Bobola Church, 54 West Main St., Dudley will again be holding a Polish Platter drive-thru food sale on Saturday, July 24, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and also from 5 to 7 p.m. Polish Platter meals will be packaged for take-out only. Cost is \$15 per platter which includes kielbasa, kapusta, a golabek (stuffed cabbage), and two homemade pierogi (one cheese, one cabbage). We are also continuing to offer frozen food: pierogi, kielbasa, golabki and kapusta. No need to order ahead. Why cook? Swing by on the 24th to pick up and enjoy some fresh Polish food and help support the church.

Programs and events at the Pearle

DUDLEY - The Pearle L. Crawford Library, 40 Schofield Avenue, Dudley, invites you to join us for one of our virtual programs at the Pearle. To register go to www.crawfordlibrary.org or call 508-949-8021.

Knit and Crochet group, Thursdays 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. and Fridays 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. All stitchers are welcome for this informal group, meeting weekly in the Fels Room.

Lunch time story times, Wednesdays at noon throughout the summer. Story time will be held outside in the lot near the children's wing. There will be a take home craft each week that goes with what we read. These are geared for ages 0-5. Sessions are limited to 15 families. Be advised we will be outdoors so bug spray and sunscreen are recommended.

July 28 - Bubble Party - free, registration required.

Stuffed animal sleepover, Thursday, July 29, 2:00-4:00 p.m. We are letting your stuffed animals take over the library. Drop in and create a bed for your stuffed animal to sleep in, and then leave them to sleep overnight. We will then make sure they have a fun night at the Library. (We will post their adventures on Facebook and Instagram.) Please register your animal. You can drop them off anytime between 2-4 p.m. Sponsored by the Hugh and Harriet Crawford Endowment. Free, registration required.

Summer reading ends - Friday, July 30 1:00PM-3:00PM

Drop in and get an ice cream sandwich or popcorn for participating in summer reading. Ms. Lida will be outside for your last minute reading tracking to put your tickets in the raffle baskets. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

Black Tavern scholarship awarded

The Black Tavern Historical Society of Dudley is pleased to announce the recipient of the Michael Branniff Memorial Scholarship for 2021 is Colin Humphries.

Colin is a graduate of Shepherd Hill and will attend the University of Massachusetts this fall, with a major in political science.

The Board of Directors met with Colin at their annual meeting on Saturday, June 26. Marc Mosely, a member of the scholarship committee, presented the award.



WDO Chamber scholarships

The Webster-Dudley-Oxford Chamber of Commerce scholarship program has been in place dating back to the mid 90s, awarding over \$125,000 in scholarships. The funds are generated primarily from the Chamber's annual scholarship golf tournament from

the generous support of sponsors and golfers who play in the annual event.

The scholarships (\$1500.00) are awarded to students from Bartlett High School, Shepherd Hill, Oxford High School, Bay Path and a WDO member.

The 2021 recipients are: Gabriela Piwowarczyk from Bartlett High School Panayiota Veronis from Shepherd Hill Regional High School

Joseph Szela from Oxford High School Ryan Steiner from Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School Tyler McKay, the Philip L. Hopkins Memorial.



Music at the bandstand

OXFORD - The Oxford Woman's Club is pleased to sponsor music by "Don't Tell Dan."

They are a group of high school seniors from the area. They will be playing both Oldies and Jazz. The date is Sunday, July 25, 4-5:30 p.m.

Please bring your own chairs; water and chips will be available for a donation. Also a raffle basket of summer fun will be given away.

For information about the Oxford's Woman's Club, contact Paula Parker 508-987-2804.

Every Thursday through September 30, from 4-7pm, the Auburn Farmers' and Cultural Market will take place at the Dr. Arthur and Dr. Martha Pappas Recreation Complex, 203.5 Pakachoag Street, Auburn.

Participants include Fay Mountain Farm/Kettle brook; Moosup Valley Farm-fresh cut flowers perennials; Elzire's Acre Farm-goat milk soap; Lady Love Lamas-makes lama yarn items; BS Maple Syrup; Charlton Honey; Jackson's Creative handmade art; Center Bakery-baked breads and more; Crystal Clear Emotions-silver jewelry blue topaz; The Art Lab and Gallery-handmade art; B-Organic-organic bags for produce and more; Mandie C's Sweetery- assorted cookies; Sarkisian Studios-hand painted art items; American Flag Craft-\$25 pp.

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2021 Bay Path alumni complete intravenous certification course



CHARLTON - On Tuesday, July 6, the Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy and Intravenous Edu celebrated the completion of the practical nursing student graduates Intravenous Certification Course. The staff and faculty of Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy, with Academy Director Gretheline Bolandrina, DHA, MSN Ed, RN, CRRN and Intravenous Edu lead by Jan Stephanos, RN, CRNI, partnered to offer the IV Certification Course to graduates of PN Class of 2021. The seven practical nursing graduates Monique Bull of Worcester, Luz Mercado of Worcester, Stefanie Lauretano of Webster, Julia Martinez of Spencer, Brianna Cloutier of Charlton, Amanda Wonderlie of Webster, and Khamphan Houatchanthara of Southbridge completed the course and successfully completed their IV Certification exam.

The IV Certification Course

was held at the Seminar Rooms A & B at Bay Path. The IV certification course load required 8 hours of instruction and the practical nursing graduates completed 8 hours of instruction. The syllabus included instruction on legal aspect of IV therapy, history, Basic A & P Vascular, Circulation, Autonomic nervous system, Fluid & Electrolytes, Malnutrition, Pharmacology, Infection control, Blood component therapy, Antineoplastic and Biologic treatments, Pediatrics, Geriatrics, Peripheral access, Central Venous access devices, Flushing, complications, Peripheral IV insertion, and Sterile central line dressings.

Immediately after the course completion, the practical nursing graduates thanked the instructor, Jan Stephanos, RN, CRNI of Intravenous Edu and the staff and faculty of Bay Path Practical Nursing Academy for the valuable opportunity to learn about IVs.

In turn, Bolandrina thanked the practical nursing graduates for their dedication and sacrifices to further their education and careers.

ates for their dedication and sacrifices to further their education and careers.

July Art Exhibit

WEBSTER - At Peace in Nature, mixed-media artwork by Lisa Kretchman, is on display and for sale July 1-31 at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 East Main Street, Webster, during regular hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10-5.

Lisa Kretchman is a local mixed-media artist living in Dudley. She studied painting, illustration, and digital media at Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Her artwork has been shown in local galleries, museums, and events, including the Warwick Museum of Art, The Attleboro Arts Museum, the RI Convention Center (as part of the Flower Show), and the Quinebaug Valley Council for the Arts & Humanities. She also participates in several public art

projects, including Putnam's Fire & Ice Festival, and is a regular artist at the Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular at Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence, RI, an event that draws tens of thousands of viewers each year.

Much of her work is inspired by nature, often with added story or symbolism. In her process, she blends media including watercolor, pastel, and acrylic, and found objects. By exploring themes of positive intention, compassion, and peace, she hopes to share that energy through her work with others.

More examples of the artist's work, including her Art Hearts charity project can be seen at: lisakretchman.wordpress.com/fine-art/



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Chief's corner

Vital information regarding 911 cell phone calls

By Chief Steven J. Wojnar
Dudley Police Department

With many people now using cell phones as their primary home service, there are some important things to understand when making emergency calls. I recently saw an incident where one of these calls went outside our area. I wanted to provide some information for people to be aware of when making these calls.

Our 911 call center is in Webster as part of the South Worcester County Regional Communications Center. Any 911 call made from either town on a traditional land-based phone should be automatically received there. This should be true no matter if you use standard telephone lines or internet-based phone services (such as Spectrum or others). Our dispatch center also has the capability to receive 911 cell phone calls. Any 911 cell call made within our area should be directed to our local call center. It is important to know, however, this may not always occur. Cell calls generally go through the nearest available tower. Depending on that location, it is possible these calls can initially be directed to a regional dispatch center run by the Massachusetts State Police. In some cases, due to our proximity to the State of Connecticut, the call

may be received by a regional center in that state. It is important for people to know they may not be speaking with local authorities initially. There is no need to worry as these calls can be transferred to the proper community or call center. People must understand; however, this can take a few minutes to complete. That can be stressful, particularly in an emergency. You may experience a few brief moments of silence during the transfer process or even hear a "click." Do not assume the call was dropped and hang up. Wait for a response. If you hear nothing within approximately a minute or if you are in a poor service area, there is the possibility of "dropped" calls. If this problem occurs, try again to ensure the local emergency department has received your report.

To avoid potential problems, you should make note of and program your cell phone with the local emergency number for your community. Here in Dudley, our business line of 508-943-4411 Option "0" should be added to your contacts under whatever title deemed appropriate (police, emergency, etc.). All emergency services (police, fire, ambulance, etc.) can be accessed in this way. This will

ring directly to our dispatch center and assistance can be provided to you faster.

You can still call 911 from your cell phone for emergency purposes. Many phones, even those which have been disconnected or are no longer in service, can call 911 should the need arise. It is important for people to be aware of how these calls are handled when they are made. It is also important to make a follow-up call if there is any possibility your initial call may have been lost. It is better to make several calls and know your message was received than take a chance that your only call did not arrive to its intended destination.

For those still seeking vaccination information, it can be found at www.dudleyma.gov or by calling 508-949-8036. Please continue moving forward with the "re-opening" of our state in a reasonable manner. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. Another sign of good news is our local Senior Center is now open in full operation. If interested, please check out their schedule for events that appeal to you. During these challenging times, we, at the Dudley Police Department, greatly appreciate the support we receive from our community.

Road construction

With a great deal of road construction taking place in the area, it is important to drive safely when passing through. Often drivers can be detoured onto lesser traveled streets or thickly settled places. There can also be increased penalties for traffic violations in construction zones. I was asked to provide some information about this and remind drivers to proceed with caution in these areas.

Speeding regulations are generally covered by Sections seventeen and eighteen of Chapter 90 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The penalties for violation are controlled under Chapter twenty. Generally, the minimum fine for speeding is \$50 for the first ten miles over the speed limit. In addition to this fine, surcharges are added to this amount and earmarked for such places as the Head Injury Trust and Public Safety Training Funds. Also, the fines are increased by an additional \$10 per mile for speeds more than the first ten miles per hour. For example, if traveling 50mph in a 30mph zone, the minimum fine applies up to 40mph, plus an additional \$100 for the ten miles from 40 to 50.

Several years ago, fines were authorized to be doubled in construction areas. This means, in reference to the example above (50mph in a 30pmh zone), the fines could be \$300 (plus surcharges) if the violation occurs in a construction area. A "construction area" appears to be defined by Mass Law in 720CMR9.06. It offers guidelines in application to highways where "traffic signs are erected, or warning lights are displayed...to notify of the presence of men or equipment." This is general and broad, so numerous areas of work can apply. These can be places where accidents or injuries can take place, so the laws provide stiff penalties for speeding in these areas. The presence of heavy equipment and workers contributes to the hazards in the locations. It is important to control your speed and watch for things such as vehicles entering and exiting.

Whether or not it is a construction zone, it is important to remember vehicles share the road with pedestrians, bicyclists, and others. The need to detour traffic onto various side streets naturally increases the volume of cars in construction areas. Drivers may be unfamiliar with

certain roads. When this is combined with excessive speed, it complicates matters. People who live in those areas are generally not expecting fast traveling or large amounts of vehicles. Drivers must remember to watch their speed and drive defensively. By combining cautious driving with the proper use of the roads by the public, we can reduce the chances of accidents and injuries.

For those still seeking vaccination information, it can be found at www.dudleyma.gov or by calling 508-949-8036. Please continue moving forward with the "re-opening" of our state in a reasonable manner. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. During these challenging times, we, at the Dudley Police Department, greatly appreciate the support we receive from our community.

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

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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 display 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 customer, Mr. Tusino said.

Like most everything else,



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



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.

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 Wal-lum 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.

Prayer



Jesus

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

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DUDLEY – Celebrate summer under the stars with the final Grange Summer Concert.

August 7, 7 p.m. (raindate August 14), will feature music from Art Sandoli leading into a chance to stargaze and watch the Perseids meteor shower. NASA volunteer educator Dino Tata will lead that astronomical exploration if the clouds cooperate; bring your telescope or good binoculars, and we will have some available for use.

The show is outdoors, all ages and free admission on the grass at Dudley Grange's historic location, 139 Center Road (next to Nichols Col-

lege). Bring lawn chairs or blankets, snacks and drinks (no alcohol allowed) and intent to have some fun on a summer evening. The show is sponsored by a grant from

Friday night movie

AUBURN - The Auburn Recreation and Culture department will hold a free movie "Tom & Jerry" at the Dr. Arthur & Dr. Martha Pappas Recreation Complex, 203.5 Pakachoag St., on Friday, July 23 starting at dusk until 8:15 p.m.

the Dudley Cultural Council, agency of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. For more information on the Grange itself, go to <https://www.facebook.com/DudleyGrange.163/>.



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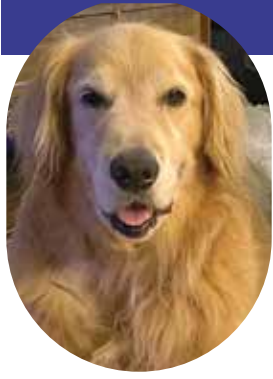
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Living ON with Lincoln

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 woody 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. Override. 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.

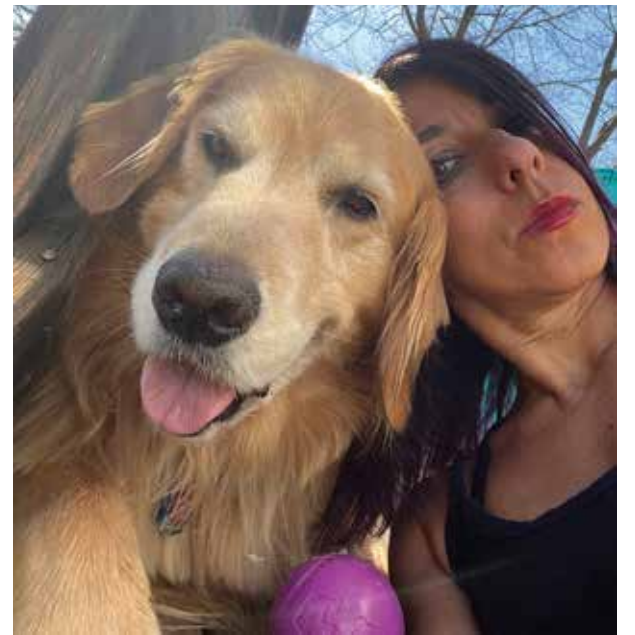
Humans can be difficult. They can be defiant, rebellious, obnoxious, cruel, intolerant, rigid, insensitive, or unreasonable. How do humans approach conflict with other humans? They judge, scorn, fight, gossip, or avoid hard situations all together. They grow apart and divide, forever stuck in a stalemate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



Kindred spirits.

chooses to window shop for cute Goldens via smartphone searches. "Look at this guy!"

My patience for cute on-line Goldens 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 Goldens 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 ex-

cited 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 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."



Lincoln enjoying his soft serve.



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Shepherd Hill welcomes football coach Dave Buchanan

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Welcome **Dave Buchanan** as the new head football coach at Shepherd Hill. Buchanan succeeds **Ryan Dugan** who was a former SH player, assistant coach, and the head coach since 2017-2021. Dugan has a four year head coaching record of a respectable 21-17 in the strongest league in Central Mass, the Mid Wach A. Dugan was an important cog in the SH football program especially during his assistant years dating back to the early 2000s. His fingerprints and dedication were all over the Ram football blueprints. Credit Dugan for being the glue to the Ram program as he held things together as a very loyal assistant in so many ways. A lot of guys have played and coached at SH, but

one thing is for sure and that is Ryan Dugan has seen it all and has been there through every situation for the maroon and gold.

This address only knows Dugan from a distance, but it is clear that he made the right impressions with people who are respected here. Dugan's football acumen is excellent and he continued to be a student of the game at all times. Because of Dugan, SH made the transition from the SWCL to the Mid Wach A league. His SH goal was only success for the program. His situation at SH was unique as his stepfather is **Chris Lindstrom** who played at Boston University and then the NFL. Dugan's brothers are **Chris and Alec Lindstrom**. With all that in Dugan's life, he is seen here as the leaning post and sounding board for his close-knit family. That entire mentioned group are truly loyal to each other who supports each other in every aspect of life. All their records and accomplishments are outstanding, but their family beliefs are the deepest in support. Here's wishing Dugan the best in the future. His mark on Shepherd

Hill football was a successful one.

Here is a brief look back on the SH history over the last four and a half decades.

The Shepherd Hill football brand has marketed itself well over the past ten years. Although they have appeared in four Super Bowls over 48 years of playing football, they have been well respected since 1973 in the eyes of every opposing coaching staff. 2012 was their last appearance in a Super Bowl and their only bus ride to Gillette Stadium. They won a Division 2 Super Bowl in 2000 and 2007. Both the 2007 and 2012 teams were coached by Chris Lindstrom who had a record of 96-43 at Shepherd Hill and a 16-28 record previously at Tantasqua. To Lindstrom's credit, he put Shepherd football on the map as he developed the programs reputation as being tough and well coached. Lindstrom made the weight room important to being successful on game day. The weight room became a culture change in Dudley under Lindstrom. A former pro player, Lindstrom was a humble coach who never liked the limelight. His players played hard and his assistant coaches coached hard. His teams began to dominate the SWCL on the early 2000s when he stopped the Auburn win streak

at 41 wins-in-a-row which was a state record at the time and he dominated Northbridge to the point of Northbridge saying "no mas." Northbridge couldn't figure out the SH double wing offense and ended the series. Right about that time Shepherd Hill's calling card of being physical in the interior lines caused concern in the SWCL.

Leo Biron was the original and first football coach at Shepherd Hill and his 2000 team went to a Super Bowl. He leads the Shepherd Hill program with 100 wins and is the soul of the football program. Biron had three stints as the head coach at SH. The 1973 was the first Ram team under Biron and he coached the first eight years of the program and then came back for one year in 1985 and had one last stint from 1993-2000. Biron is the program leader in wins at exactly 100. He was an assistant at Milford before getting the Shepherd Hill job that included being the schools first Athletic Director and taught in the physical education department. Biron went to Bartlett and is responsible for Bartlett's biggest upset on Thanksgiving Day when he quarterbacked the Indians to a 44-12 victory over undefeated Southbridge in Webster.

Biron's Shepherd Hill teams competed in the old Border

Conference before their move to the SWCL ten years ago. Biron remained loyal to the Rams football program and was the freshmen coach under Lindstrom. **John Hickman** coached the first Super Bowl team in 1987 where the Rams lost a 3-0 heartbreaker to Worcester South at WPI. Hickman coached for six seasons. The other Shepherd Hill head football coaches were **Jim Hackenson** two seasons and **Bob Bradley** and **Bob Galante** each coached one season.

Here are a few SH tidbits:

The Rams best player ever is current Atlanta Falcons starting right guard and their number one draft pick **Chris Lindstrom** who started for four years at Boston College.

The Rams most important football player of all time is the late **Eddie Jarosz** who quarterbacked the very first Ram team and never let SH be a start up program. Jarosz led SH like it was a seasoned long standing football program. Eddie had ice water in his veins.

The Rams beat Bartlett right away in their very first year with Jarosz and the football program was competitive because of Jarosz' leadership from the beginning. He had first year football players surrounding him. Only **Marty Pagnone** had football experience

then. Jarosz was "the guy" back then and he would be the guy today. He was charismatic on the playing fields. The true definition of a competitor.

Amazing. Another pearl is that quarterback **Drew Ravenelle** is the all time victory leader with 24 quarterback wins at SH. He is the only Ram quarterback to start a game at Gillette Stadium in 2012. Ravenelle credits his teammates and coaches for all those 24 wins. By the way, those 24 wins hold a state standard and could be close to the state record for high school quarterbacks.

Bartlett football
The Bartlett football coaching opening has not been filled as of this deadline. Times have changed as Bartlett's football tradition doubles Shepherd Hill in years played. **Rusty Oleszewski's**, *The French River Rivalry*, printed here over the past eight months showed us all in his own vision how the Shepherd Hill rise came about to be today. The real estate market certainly boosted the Dudley-Charlton school district.

Bartlett needs a shot in the arm and hopefully the new football coach will come with the purpose of enthusiasm and building a roster of 40 players. That is the only way to bring the pride back to Bartlett football.



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 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.

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prises too. Cost is \$20 per child and \$5 for adults. Please call Marie at 508-865-5528 for reservations.



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Tales from beyond

The ghosts of Hopkins Mills

By Thomas D'Agostino

Hopkins Mills off Route 6 in Foster, Rhode Island, is a place where time and progress have yet to invade. Each structure is a living museum of the past with a rich history and interesting story to match. There are also some of the past residents still residing in the historic district.

I actually witnessed my first full body apparition when I was twelve years old while fishing with my father at Hopkins Mills in Foster, Rhode Island. There is a small pool at Dolly Cole Brook that was perfect for casting a line. My father meandered down the path and out of sight. A few moments later a barefoot woman dressed in a shabby long white dress came from the same direction on the

path, leaned over with an old wooden bucket and drew some water from the pool. She had a strange aura about her, almost as if she was an image being projected onto the scene. This did not register so much in my mind at the time as I was in a bit of a start by the looks of such a person in the modern age. She then rose from her mission and glided silently down the path from where she came.

My father emerged from the brush moments after, and I asked him if he had seen that peculiar woman pass by him, but much to my astonishment, he had seen no one. I later read an article on the ghost of Dolly Cole of Hopkins Mills. Research would soon lead to the true identity

of the ghost. It was not Dolly Cole but a woman named Betsey Grayson. Foster records indicated that she drowned in 1860 when she dipped her wooden bucket into the pool and the swift current somehow pulled her in. Her ghost has been seen many times over the centuries wandering the perimeter of the brook.

Another ghost is that of a woman who could actually be Dorothy Cole. She is often seen next to the bridge on Route 6 where the Dolly Cole Brook flows. This was the Cole property, and she would often keep watch for the stage that ran through Hopkins Mills. Her ghost is also seen quite frequently in the area.

The ghost of a man is seen near Hopkins Mill Pond. William Potter once owned the property and is buried on a rise above the mill pond. The mill was taken down years ago but remnants of it still lace through the woods near the water. It could easily be one of the Potter family, Burdick family, as some of them are buried in the small cemetery, or Peleg Walker. Walker, who married Mary Potter is buried in the same lot. He is the subject of the next paragraph.

Peleg Walker was one of the partners of the Foster Woolen

Manufactory founded on the edge of Hopkins Mills. William Potter and his son Olney E., along with another son-in-law and brother-in-law founded the enterprise. All went well until, according to legend, some sort of falling out caused Peleg Walker to commit suicide. His ghost taunted the mill owners soon after and in time, the mill closed and was burned to the ground. His ghost, along with a few others are still witnessed at the site of the Ramtail Factory and village remains. Orra Cole-Potter is also one of the spirits that remain. Richard Salisbury (who used to hide in the ramshackle homes to imbibe in his favorite drink) may still frequent the area and perhaps Jonathan Bucklin, who also



committed suicide in the mill in 1817 are among the ghosts of Hopkins Mills. There are several more, but unfortunately they do not make a habit of stating their name before making an appearance, so who they are will remain a matter of conjecture until.

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

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Cruisin' scene

Summer rain

By Jim Weicherding

I'm a huge classic car and truck show enthusiast as well as a fan and patron of cruise nights across the region all cruisin' season. I have been for more than twenty five years. I also know New England weather patterns whether it is summer, fall, winter or spring. I'm not liking the trend I've seeing over the past couple of years related to our classic car and truck shows and cruise nights.

This past Memorial Day weekend was three days of cool and rainy weather. Fourth of July weekend was cool, rainy and raw for three days. In fact, when it isn't cool, rainy and raw weather it's so hot nobody can tolerate the high heat and humidity. Enthusiasts for the most part just avoid outdoor activities altogether. The daytime hours are brutally hot and in the evening we deal with severe thunderstorms and torrential downpours, high winds, hail and flooding with a possible tornado watch tossed in for good measure.

This is the third year in a row that we have been dealing with these poor weather



conditions. Normally, these trends last every three years and go back to normal. Let's hope this is the case.

Why? Car shows are being cancelled. You can't host a cruise night with thunderstorms in the forecast. I've spoken with area DJs and they say the same thing.

Dick Salvas, president of the Tri-State Cruisers and DJ, hosts Saturday Night Cruises to help raise funds for the Hole In The Wall Gang Camp in Pomfret, Ct. "This poor weather and daily thunderstorm consistency is hurting our events and our charity causes. We are cancelled more often than holding the cruise night because it's always raining in the afternoon

and evening. This is more like Florida weather. Not New England weather. It hurts all of us."

I hope this is the last summer in this three year weather cycle. If this weather pattern remains the same over the years, I see a lot of automotive enthusiasts throwing in the towel and just staying home with their show vehicles parked in the garage. They will take them out and drive them occasionally if the weather is mild. We don't even have spring season anymore. We need to build these automotive events and promote them in order to keep this hobby growing.

By the way, take a kid to a car show.

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The Car Doctor

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



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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The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) has been selected by TerraCorps, an AmeriCorps affiliated environmental non-profit, to be a Service Site for the 2021-22 TerraCorps program year. This partnership will allow TLGV to host a Youth Education Coordinator in a full-time, 11-month service position from August 2021 to July 2022.

As part of TerraCorps, TLGV's Youth Education Coordinator will spend their service term supporting the local community by developing partnerships, leading programming and engaging with volunteers. The coordinator will collaborate with TLGV's Board of Directors and staff to create new inclusive programming and evolve current programming to engage new

audiences, such as youth, young families and racially and economically diverse communities.

As a TerraCorps Member, the Youth Education Coordinator will have the opportunity to gain hands-on experience serving with a local non-profit and will receive professional development, training and mentorship. As part of TerraCorps, Members will also receive a living allowance, and will be eligible for healthcare coverage, childcare coverage, loan forbearance and an education award through AmeriCorps.

TerraCorps is currently accepting applications. If you are interested in learning more about how serving with TerraCorps will offer you professional experience and

opportunity in the conservation sector by service with The Last Green Valley, please visit Terracorps.org. For questions about serving with TerraCorps, please contact Lianna Lee, Chief Program Officer at llee@terracorps.org.

For additional information about the opportunity to serve with The Last Green Valley, please visit TheLastGreenValley.org or contact Lois Bruinooge at 860 774-3300 or lois@tlgv.org.

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Open Sky Community Services receives grant to train first responders in mental health crisis response

WHITINSVILLE - Open Sky Community Services has been awarded a \$116,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health to oversee a Crisis Intervention Team Training and Technical Assistance Center (CIT-TTAC), which will train police and other first responders in Central Massachusetts on handling calls that involve behavioral health issues.

"We are proud to have received this grant from the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health," said Kenneth Bates, president and CEO of Open Sky. "Through this program, law enforcement officers will learn skills to respond compassionately and effectively to the needs of individuals experiencing behavioral health crises in our communities."

The purpose of the CIT-TTAC is to support communities by ensuring that first responders are well-trained when called to crises involving individuals with behavioral health difficulties. The goals are to increase safety to law enforcement and the individual in crisis by effectively de-escalating situations and safely diverting individuals from the criminal justice system and emergency rooms when possible.

The CIT course consists of a 40-hour training with five key themes: understanding behavioral health, developing empathy, navigating community resources, de-escalation skills and practical application. Officers and first responders who complete the program gain insight into behavioral health crises, and into the system that provides services to individuals with behavioral health disorders. This allows officers to resolve crises more efficiently and effectively.

The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) also assists cities and towns across the Commonwealth in covering costs associated with sending personnel to this training. Despite the pandemic, DMH awarded more than \$1.3 million to fund training and training centers in the Commonwealth. About 125 cities and towns participated and 740 officers received either Crisis Intervention Team or Mental Health First Aid training.

In addition to CIT, the new Center will offer Mental Health First Aid for Public Safety. Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour training which provides first responders with options to de-escalate incidents and better understand mental illness in order to respond to mental health-related situations without compromising safety. The next session will be held at the Alternatives Whitin Mill in Whitinsville on July 12th.

"We are very enthusiastic about providing this long-awaited support to our Central Mass communities," said Hector Quinones, CIT-TTAC Project Coordinator for Open Sky. "Our hope is to work collaboratively with our police departments, first responders, municipalities and local agencies to create a bridge of support between local first responders and the public."

The CIT model was first developed in Tennessee in 1988 to bridge the gap between police response and mental health care through

community partnerships. According to the TAPA Center for Jail Diversion, the CIT model provides more options for people with mental illness and has led to a 58% decrease in arrests of people with mental health challenges.

For more information about training through Open Sky, please email Hector Quinones at hector.quinones@openskycs.org.

Learn more about Massachusetts Crisis Intervention Training and jail diversion at Jail Diversion Programs | Mass.gov



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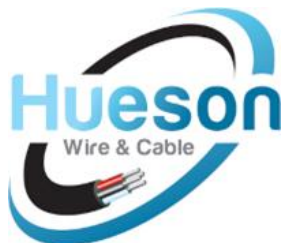
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Tips on financial planning



Dennis Antonopoulos

It's always smart to stay physically fit, at every point in your life. But financial fitness is important, too. Are you doing everything you can to boost your financial well-being?

The topic of financial health is certainly on the minds of many people. In fact, 70% of Americans say the COVID-19 pandemic has caused them to pay more attention to their long-term finances, according

How can you improve your financial fitness?

to a recent Edward Jones/ Age Wave survey titled Four Pillars of the New Retirement: What a Difference a Year Makes.

While interest in financial health is widespread, some groups are feeling more positive about their future than others. Baby Boomers came through the pandemic in generally good financial shape, while Gen Z and Millennials felt the greatest negative financial impact, according to the Four Pillars study. And women's confidence in their retirement savings remains low, as the pandemic widened the economic gender gap, particularly for women of color. So, your outlook may depend somewhat on your demographics.

But regardless of your age or

gender, you can still take some steps to improve your financial health, including these:

- Conduct an investment "check-up." Getting a regular check-up is a key part of maintaining good physical health. And the same principle applies to your investments – you need to periodically assess their "vital signs." Is your portfolio still appropriate for your risk tolerance and time horizon? Is it providing you with the growth potential you'll need to help you achieve your long-term goals, such as a comfortable retirement? Is it diversified enough, or do you own too many of the same investments? Even though diversification can't guarantee profits or protect against all losses, it can help reduce the impact of

financial market volatility on your portfolio.

- Take preventive measures. Throughout your life, you probably take medicines as needed, and possibly vitamins and other supplements, in an effort to treat existing illnesses or prevent future ones. You also can, and should, take preventive measures to boost your financial health. For example, do you have sufficient life and disability insurance? If your family situation has changed through divorce, remarriage or the births of new children, have you updated the beneficiary designations on your insurance policies? And have you taken steps to protect your financial independence – and possibly avoid burdening your family – by addressing the potentially

huge costs of long-term care, such as an extended nursing home stay?

- Avoid unhealthy moves. Smoking, a sedentary lifestyle and excessive stress are all considered unhealthy for our bodies. But some activities are unhealthy for our financial fitness, too. You may be tempted to tap into your IRA or 401(k) to pay for a short-term need, such as a down payment on a new car, but if it isn't absolutely essential that you get this car, or if you possibly can obtain other sources of funding, you may want to avoid touching your retirement accounts. For one thing, withdrawals may incur taxes and penalties, but, just as important, these accounts are intended to provide you with some of

the income you'll need when you're retired – so the more you deplete them now, the more financial strain you may face during retirement.

Staying physically fit requires determination and work – and the same is true for maintaining financial fitness. But the effort you put into staying financially healthy can help you keep moving toward your financial goals.

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

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RE: Real Estate



Mark Marzeotti

Today's buyers may face added challenges if they're not coming in with a conventional mortgage.

Buying a home today is not an easy feat. While mortgage rates are competitive, there's a major shortage of property listings that's making today's housing market very tough to navigate. Not only are buyers being forced to compromise on home features, but they're also being forced to pay a premium to get a place of their own.

As a general economic rule, whenever a commodity is in short supply and demand for it is high, its price tends to go up. This is the case in the hous-

Sellers are rejecting offers that come with FHA and VA financing

ing market today. Home prices have soared on a national level, and that alone is making it harder for buyers to qualify for high enough mortgages to make owning property possible.

But these aren't the only challenges buyers are facing. Some buyers may have a harder time getting their offers accepted – not because they aren't high enough, but because sellers aren't happy with the type of mortgage those offers are tied to.

Sellers are rejecting FHA and VA loans

Many people who apply for a home loan take out a conventional mortgage. But many buyers turn to FHA and VA loans to make the purchase.

FHA loans allow buyers to purchase a home with as little as 3.5% down, while conventional mortgages generally require a higher down payment. Some conventional mortgage lenders will take as little as 5%

down, but often, buyers will need to put down a minimum of 10%. VA loans, meanwhile, allow buyers to purchase a home with no money down at all.

Both FHA and VA loans have been around for years, and they're backed by solid guarantees from the Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans Administration, respectively. Statistically, only 30% of sellers say they'd likely accept an offer from a buyer who's planning to use an FHA or VA loan. By contrast, 89% of sellers would likely accept an offer from a buyer with a conventional mortgage. Obviously this is driven by the current market.

This could put lower-income buyers at a disadvantage in this market. It could close off buying opportunities for a wide range of prospective homeowners, including some who may not necessarily be on the lower side of the income spectrum, but rather, be U.S. military members or

veterans who want to take advantage of the VA loan program.

Why are sellers rejecting these loans? Often these loan products with stricter home inspection requirements and home appraisal contingencies. Of course, home appraisals are a requirement for any mortgage. But for FHA and VA loans, sellers must reduce their homes' purchase prices to match their appraised values, so it's easy to see why some may be less than eager to work with buyers who are coming in with these types of financing.

Because it's a seller's market, those who put their properties up for sale can afford to be choosier than usual. But that could hurt a lot of buyers and make it even more difficult for them to enjoy the benefits of homeownership in this market.

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Chances are, interest rates won't stay put at multi-decade lows for much longer. That's why taking action today is crucial, whether you're wanting to refinance and cut your mortgage payment or you're

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