

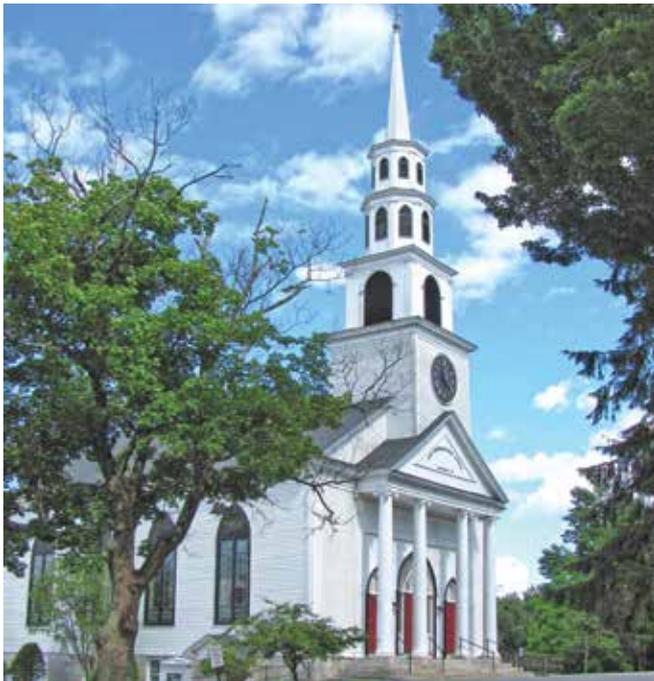
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CROSSTOWN ADS AND BUSINESS NEWS

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INSIDE



Stately looking, the First Congregational Church on Boston Road in Sutton is celebrating a 300th anniversary with a fundraising golf tournament at Blissful Meadows on September 11.

'Tee it up' in support of Sutton First Congregational's 300th anniversary

By Rod Lee

Think of the preservation of important historic sites around the country and what almost immediately comes to mind is work done in recent years on Old Ironsides in Boston, the Statue of Liberty in New York and the Washington Monument in the nation's capital—for instance.

Of no less significance in the town of Sutton is the First Congregational Church on Boston Road. Now three hundred years old (as of 2020), "First Church" was organized by ten members, all male, just sixteen years after the town's founding and just three years after it was settled.

First Church's initial home, built in 1720, was located on the west side of the Common. Its second, built in 1751, was situated on the south side of the Common (that structure burned in 1828). Its current building was constructed in 1829 and has stood as "a light on the hill" ever since, with additions in 1965 and 1985.

An icon in the community as a meeting house and place of worship, First Congregational is obviously an asset that members of the church and residents of Sutton want to keep secure and hold onto. Hence the launch

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Find the joy in the journey

By Christine Galeone

In the past year, there's a saying that's been popping up a lot. You've probably already spotted it on t-shirts, mugs or placemats. And it's easy to see why it has become so popular. "Find the joy in the journey" resonates with many of us.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic started more than a year ago, most people have been on some sort of rocky journey. The same can also be said about most small businesses. But, along those journeys, there has been joy among the rocks. Recently, in Grafton, sev-

eral small businesses and nonprofits have been finding that joy and sharing it with their customers.

Next month, Community Harvest Project, the non-profit farm that supports hunger relief in Massachusetts, will share its joy in having its annual flower festival return to be an in-person event. "Carolyn's Garden Summer Flower Festival" will be held on Saturday Aug. 21 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at its farm located at 37 Wheeler Road in North Grafton. Included in the \$10 admission fee (free for kids under

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Go Go Goat Mowers team at home in Upton. (Courtesy of Go Go Goat Mowers website)

SPECIAL INSIDE

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Continued

of a three-phase “renewing, restoring and rejoicing” fundraising campaign in 2019 by a committee consisting of Glenn Anderson, Russ Kasatly, Todd Mitchell, Scott Paul, Marty Shaw and Gary Verrill.

Throughout its storied life, First Congregational has benefitted from such gifts as stained-glass windows and a communion table; its pipe organ was a dream of Grace Mills Jordan, a former church organist and teacher, who, in starting a bank account in 1939 for eventual purchase of the instrument said “not in my day but perhaps in yours.” The pipe organ became a reality in 1971.

As Rick Stockhaus and Bruce Smythe related to the Blackstone Valley Xpress, the push is on to raise monies in order to continue enhancements that

have already been done to the church, or that are underway, such as a freshly painted ceiling and a rebuilt steeple.

To realize its fundraising goal, and to commemorate the church’s 300th anniversary, First Congregational is hosting a golf tournament at Blissful Meadows in Uxbridge on September 11. The event was supposed to be held last year but was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Stockhaus and Mr. Smythe are on the Golf Committee, along with Hope Stockhaus, Judy Allison, Doug Reid and Brian Cornwall.

The tournament provides companies with “a unique opportunity” to reach clients in multiple ways including through local media recognition and signage, networking, and dinner and socializing after play is concluded, Mr. Stockhaus and Mr. Smythe said.

“We have done rather well with sponsorships so far,”

Mr. Smythe said on July 8.

Businesses that have stepped up in support of the campaign include UniBank, for \$750; Mulhane Home for Funerals, \$750; Benjamin Insurance, \$500; Drenzo Towing, \$500; Goretta’s Supermarket, \$500; Judy Allison, a parishioner who is a franchisee of three businesses (Got Junk?, Men in Kilts and Merry Maids), who contributed \$300 on behalf of each of her enterprises; AJM Realty, which is paying for the hole-in-one insurance; and “a ton of hole sponsors,” he said.

The Golf Committee has left no stone unturned in the number of sponsorships it is making available to businesses that want to help: 300th Anniversary sponsor, dinner sponsor, ball-drop sponsor, outing sponsor, hole-in-one sponsor, gift-bag sponsor, tee-box sponsor, driving-range sponsor and putting green sponsor.

To further augment its restoration initiative, First Congregational is also hosting a

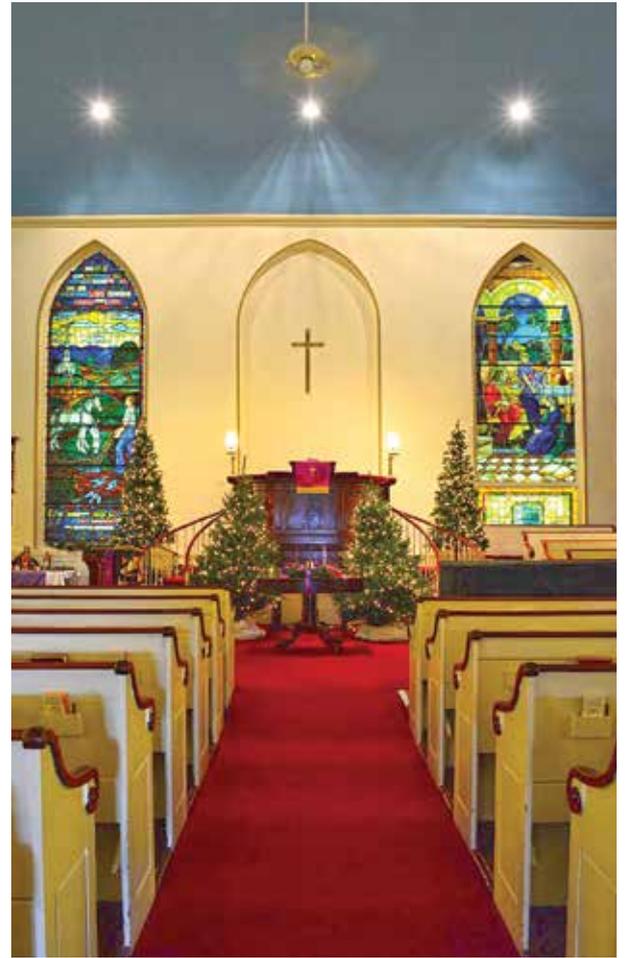
Labor Day Pancake Breakfast and Ball Drop featuring prizes of \$1500, \$1000 and \$500.

Each golf ball purchased will be assigned a number and dropped from a Sutton fire truck on the soccer field behind the church after the breakfast. First, second and third prizes will be awarded to the golf balls that land closest to the hole. Participants do not have to be present to win.

Ball-drop tickets may be purchased at the church, 307 Boston Road, by calling 508-865-6914, or by going to <https://suttonfirstchurch.net/golfouting>.

Those interested in playing in the golf tournament can also register to do so at that web address.

Committee members “have done a phenomenal job” in promoting the church’s anniversary and fundraising efforts to support “the overall mission of the church,” which is “community-based,” Mr. Smythe said.



Stained-glass windows contribute to the calming atmosphere of the sanctuary at Sutton’s First Congregational Church.

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BASIC WASH	\$7
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Contact Rod Lee at rodlee.1963@gmail.com or 774-232-2999.

BVT announces third-trimester Commendation List

UPTON - Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick has released the Commendation List for the third-trimester of the 2020-2021 academic school year at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School.

To be named to the Commendation List, students must meet rigorous standards that include maintaining a grade point average of 88 percent or above in each technical, related, and academic course for the trimester.

Students are listed by grade level, hometown, and alphabetically by their last name. To view the complete list, visit the school website at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/3tcommendationlist.

SENIORS -

Grafton - Rebecca Ashmore, Electronics & Engineering Technology; and Audrey Karyabdi, Dental Assisting.

Millbury - Evan Pariseau, Engineering & Robotics; Nicole Rannikko, Health Services; and Abigail Weagle, Health Services.

Sutton - Emily Devine, Painting & Design Technology; Erin Fitman, Dental Assisting; Jenna Jennison, Culinary Arts; Ava Larocque, Dental Assisting; Hannah Limanek, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Blake Stone, Business & Entrepreneurship.

JUNIORS -

Grafton - Meghan Alessi, Cosmetology; Emma Conkey, Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration; Andrew Corbett, Engineering & Robotics; Noelle McDonald, Construction Technology; Celine Vaz, Information Technol-

ogy; and Sofia Yitts, Culinary Arts.

Millbury - Gabriella Brouillard, Health Services; Ava DiDonna, Health Services; Julia Drapeau, Dental Assisting; Madison Forget, Multimedia Communications; Aivrielle Krause, Health Services; Amy Lukowski, Multimedia Communications; Seth Moore, Electronics & Engineering Technology; Thomas O’Leary, Electronics & Engineering Technology; and Isabelle Shum, Health Services.

Sutton - Carley Capobianco, Multimedia Communications; Gwyneth Dube, Health Services; Sarah Grant, Multimedia Communications; Camilla Moroney, Health Services; Coryn Myette, Drafting & Design Technology; Kaitlyn Reed, Health Services; and Emily Westbury, Health Services.

SOPHOMORES

Grafton - Jordyn Carroll, Health Services; Juliana Errara, Health Services; Hailey Lutjelusche, Engineering & Robotics; Noah Mariano, Engineering & Robotics; Owen Mathieu, Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration; and Henry Warfield, Electronics & Engineering Technology.

Millbury - Ally Johnson, Engineering & Robotics; Brooke Maguire, Health Services; Jayden Roderigues, Drafting & Design Technology; and Natalie Rutkiewicz, Cosmetology.

FRESHMEN

Grafton - Tyler Bell, Electronics & Engineering Technology; James Benoit, Electrical; Madison Collins, Painting & Design Technology; Lou-

renco DaSilva, Information Technology; Skyla Jack, Construction Technology; Ethan Keenan, Health Services; Soumith Madadi, Information Technology; Isaac Ortiz, Plumbing; Grant Purcell, Engineering & Robotics; Haleigh Reynolds, Dental Assisting; Lily Turcotte, Construction Technology; and Casey Wong, Engineering & Robotics.

Millbury - Nicole Boucher, Health Services; Ava Lawton, Engineering & Robotics; Madison Moore, Painting & Design Technology; McKenna Morin, Engineering & Robotics; Braelyn Piscitelli, Cosmetology; James Richert, Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication; Isabella Rose, Health Services; and Emma Shum, Dental Assisting.

Sutton - Michaela Gledhill, Construction Technology; Christopher Gubbins, Construction Technology; Juliana Hawley, Multimedia Communications; Joshua Smerlas, Engineering & Robotics; and Macyn White, Construction Technology.

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Millford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, Blackstone Valley Tech creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills.

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4th Friday: Auburn, Charlton, Dudley, Oxford and Webster, other 1/2.
4th Friday BLACKSTONE VALLEY North: Grafton, Millbury and Sutton.

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

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

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

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

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

Ms. Sharkey is key to this.

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

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

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

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



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.

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Quinsigamond Community College 2021 graduates

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 Arts

Grafton: Andrea Carenzo, Matthew Deely, Mya Martin, Ryan Sullivan

Millbury: Dorothy Katiyo, Hailey Maynard

North Grafton: Jovelyn Flores, Tara McCurley

Sutton: Tanigh Clark, Francesca De Mora Ocana, Catherine Forde, Elliott MacNeil, Emily Perry, Haley Rodrigues

Associate in Science

Grafton: Christopher Peterson

Millbury: Devin Barrell, Mariah Benson, Crystal-Ann Boisseau, Kyle Boria, Tara Cadorette, Tara Curnin, Amanda Hernandez, Michael Lirange, Emily Matson, Zachary Munoz, Rose Nagelschmidt, Lucas Pham, Sabrina Piscitelli, Jillian Richard, Courtney Schultz

North Grafton: Shannon Adams, David Chanthavangso, Kyoko Ibaraki, Christian Loja, Colby Magan, Ryan Moorman

Sutton: Anthony Campanelli, Kevin Doherty, Scott Gressak, Lily Lavender-Hoge, Courtney Moczymski, Mateusz Poluha, Patricia Rumford

Certificate

Grafton: Cameron Forbes-LeBeau, Christopher Peterson, Christopher Pinnock, Kaitlyn Wooten

Millbury: Crystal-Ann Boisseau, Hector Diaz, Brianna Manzella, Nicole Plourde, Julie Polo, Loren Rezende, Crystal Thomas, Sarah Yates

South Grafton: John Boelke

Sutton: Natalia Dominguez Carranza, Nicholas Jepsen, Courtney Moczymski, Matthew Thurber

Celebrating 20 years of the Unibank Greenway Challenge

WHITINSVILLE - The Whitin Community Center is pleased to announce that registration is underway for the 20th Anniversary 2021 UniBank Greenway Challenge, New England's premier adventure race that promotes the recreational quality of life in the Blackstone River Valley. The first Greenway Challenge was organized and run in 2001. It was an offshoot of "Expedition 2000," sponsored by the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. Expedition 2000 comprised a group of men and women who, by canoeing the entire length of the Blackstone River, put a spotlight on the emerging recreational opportunities in the Blackstone Valley, which stretches from Worcester, to Pawtucket, RI. The mission of the UniBank Greenway Challenge is to promote the recreational quality of life in the Blackstone River Valley.

This year's milestone event will be held on Saturday, Sep-

tember 25 (rain date October 2), and will feature fun and exciting run, bike and paddle segments which will take athletes from Lincoln Woods State Park, Rhode Island up through the Blackstone Valley with transition sites in Douglas State Forest and Riverbend Farms to the finish line at the Whitin Community Center's Whitin Park, in Whitinsville, over 50 miles later. This adventure race includes street running, trail running, paddling, street bike, and mountain bike segments, that is designed to bring you through one of the most beautiful and historic regions of New England, the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. Teams can be made up of 1-8 people with team members doing just 1 or 2 segments each, up to individuals conquering all of the segments themselves! Athletes can compete in any of the following categories:

Individual Participant (Male or Female), 2-4 Person Team (Male, Female & Co-Ed), and 5-8 Person Team (Male, Female, Co-Ed & Corporate). Whether you've been with it since the very beginning, or just joining in on the fun now, there has never been a better time to get involved with the Greenway Challenge.

The Greenway Challenge, is also looking for volunteers to staff the start and finish lines, our transition sites, and photographers to take pictures on the course. If you are interested in volunteering at this incredible historic event, please visit www.greenwaychallenge.org/volunteer or contact, Monique Boucher-Adams at 508.234.8184 ext 121 or Monique.Boucher@OurGym.org for more information.

Thank you to our incredible sponsors for supporting this event: UniBank, Koopman Lumber & Hardware, Osterman Propane, NEDT,

Inc., Ski With Charlie, Massachusetts DCR, and Rhode Island D.E.M. Please contact Sarah Lawson at 508.234.8184 ext 122 or Sarah.Lawson@OurGym.org for more information about sponsorship opportunities.

A program of the Whitin Community Center, presented by UniBank and supported by other partner organizations, the Greenway Challenge supports the development of new programs, purchase of additional equipment, and facility renovations for the members and guests of the Whitin Community Center (WCC). The WCC is a 501(c)(3) organization committed to enhancing the health and well-being of individuals and families and to building a strong community in the Blackstone Valley.

Head on over to www.GreenwayChallenge.org to register yourself, your team, or volunteer for this milestone event.

For any questions regarding participation please contact the Greenway Challenge team at GreenwayChallenge@OurGym.org or 508.234.8184 ext 132 for more information.

The Whitin Community Center is committed to enhancing the health and well-being of individuals and families and building a strong community in the Blackstone Valley. We offer social, recreational, educational, and outreach programs that bring community members of all ages and backgrounds together. The Whitin Community Center is the Blackstone Valley's most complete family and recreation center with two swimming pools, a gym, fitness center, early learning programs, summer camps and a seven and a half acre park. For more information call 508.234.8184 or visit www.WhitinCommunityCenter.com.



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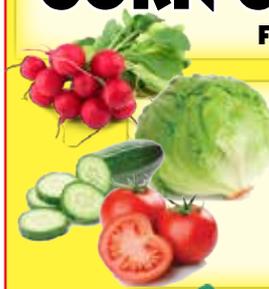
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UniBank Summer Interns Volunteer

Bank interns provide support at Peace of Bread Food Pantry



UniBank summer interns Sophie Plouffe and Mike Wickstrom volunteering at the Peace of Bread Food Pantry.

WHITINSVILLE - UniBank recently announced that their summer interns provide both business and community support. Recently, they spent an evening serving over 120 meals to people in the community at the Peace of Bread Food Pantry in Whitinsville.

Michael Welch, CEO of UniBank, stated, "As part of our long term and strategic planning, we have developed a robust Summer Intern Program to cultivate the financial and business skill-sets of some very promising college students in our region. They are doing some great and important work internally here at the bank and

true to our mission as a mutual / community bank, and part of our Foundations Program, they are also learning the importance of service as an element of being on Team

UniBank. At its core, mutual banking when done well is an exercise of the mind and heart. At UniBank, we strive to embody the concept of servant leadership."

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It's a Four-Peat for BVT!

Named a PLTW distinguished school for STEM and Career Learning Program

UPTON - On behalf of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District, Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick is proud to announce that BVT is a 2020-21 Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Distinguished School. It marks the fourth consecutive year that BVT has earned this national recognition.

"It is an honor to once again be recognized by Project Lead the Way as a Distinguished School for our commitment to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their PLTW programs," said Superintendent-Director Dr.

Michael F. Fitzpatrick. "I am proud of our students and staff who continually strive to succeed in all aspects of the curriculum. Earning this credential is a testament to the sustained approach in delivering quality cross-curricular instruction and the students willing to do the work."

BVT is one of 204 high schools to receive this honor for providing broad access to transformative learning experiences for its students through the PLTW Computer Science, Biomedical Science, and Engineering pathways. PLTW, a nonprofit organiza-

tion, serves millions of PreK-12 students and teachers in over 12,200 schools across the country.

To be eligible for this designation, BVT had to meet the following criteria: offer at least three PLTW courses; of those who participated in PLTW, at least 33% took two or more PLTW courses during their high school tenure; and at least 95% of students complete the PLTW End-of-Course assessments; have strategies and procedures in place to support reasonably proportional representation regarding race, ethnicity, poverty, gender,

BVT currently offers six PLTW courses in our Engineering Pathway and the Computer Science Pathway in our Information Technology program. BVT has implemented an academic set of courses in the Biomedical Science Pathway starting last fall.

The PLTW Computer Science interdisciplinary courses engage students in compelling, real-world computer science challenges. As students work together to design solutions, they learn more than just how to code, developing computational thinking and communication skills for our increasingly technology-based economy.

PLTW Biomedical Science introduces high school students to medicine and human body systems and the vast array of biomedical science careers. Students take on the same real-world challenges as biomedical science professionals throughout the program, preparing them for careers in medical and health-related fields.

PLTW Engineering empowers high school students to step into the role of an engineer and adopt a problem-solving mindset. Students engage in collaborative, real-life activities like working with a client to design a home, program electronic devices or robotic arms and explore algae as a biofuel source.

BVT is proud to be part of a community of PreK-12 schools, colleges, universi-

ties, and corporate and philanthropic partners across the country united around a passion for providing students with inspiring, engaging, and empowering learning opportunities through its PLTW courses.

About Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT):

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone,

Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Millford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills. The school's website is www.valleytech.k12.ma.us.



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Rensselaer Medal winner

For more than 100 years, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY, has awarded the Rensselaer Medal and scholarship to promising high school juniors who have distinguished themselves in mathematics and science.

Rensselaer has announced that Francesca Beyer of Millbury is one of this year's medal recipients.

The Rensselaer Medal was first presented in 1916 with two purposes: to recognize the superlative academic achievement of young men and women, and to motivate students towards careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. The merit scholarship, with a value of \$30,000 per year, is guaranteed for four years for each



Francesca Beyer Medalist who is accepted and enrolls at Rensselaer, for a total scholarship amount of \$120,000.

"The Rensselaer Medal winners represent the next generation of leaders, scientists, innovators, artists, scholars, game designers, architects, humanitarians, and entrepreneurs," said Karen Long, director of undergraduate admissions at RPI.



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The Blackstone Valley Education Hub has become a sponsor for CNC Machinist Apprentices. Are you interested in receiving free training and job placement for a new career? Apply now! Classes start July 13th. For more information and application, check out our website <https://www.bv-edhub.org/programs> or contact Karen Ares at ares@bv-edhub.org



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Check out our online options at careertraining.ed2go.com/blackstone/training-programs

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



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- Chicken \$60
- Vegetarian \$50

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*Vegetarian option is a Beyond Burger
*Steamers come with every meal
*Cash Bar

Registration Available on our website:
<https://blackstonevalley.org/event/steamers-at-sunset/>

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

Five tips to improve your core for beach and pool season

By Dr. Sean T. Lordan

Beach and pool season is now upon us! Here are a few tips to show off a strong core (and ward away low back and neck pain) for the summer season.

- Do These 2 Exercises: Plank and Side-Plank. Both planks and side planks show excellent recruitment of the transverse abdominus (TA) on electromyogram (EMG) testing. The TA is your innermost abdominal muscle group and is responsible for the corset effect of the core, stabilizing the spine. Side planks will also recruit the obliques, which act as adjust stabilizers of the spine and get rid of love handles.

- Hydration Is Key. It is no wonder many of us become slightly dehydrated on hot summer days. Our bodies are 60% water and when we're outside, we're primarily in the sun. The old rule used to be eight, 8 oz glasses of water per day. Drinking plenty of water will help maximize physical performance, will aid in weight loss and keep hydration levels up. A 2013 study showed that drinking a full glass of water before a meal, 3x per day, for 8 weeks, significantly reduced their body weight and fat compared with pre-study measures.

- Get This Foam Tube: The Foam Roller. Rolling out your

mid back and opening up your chest by laying on the foam roller length wise is a great way to stretch your muscles and keep your posture in peak shape.

- Get Active. Walking, running and swimming are all great aerobic activities that are easy to perform during the nice summer weather. Aerobic exercises in conjunction with cross training are great for building a strong "core." It is important to note that swimming is a great way to get aerobic exercise and protect the joints at the same time.

- Make Smart Food Choices Do not consume processed foods. Processed foods are often tasty, but are loaded in sugar, sodium, and fat which will trick the brain into a craving. Have you ever had a hard time putting down the bag of Doritos? That's why.

Processed foods not only increase risk for many cancers but also are more calorie-dense, thus making it easier to



Dr. Sean T. Lordan

put on added weight.

As always, if you have any questions please feel free to call me at (508)861-1010 or email me at drlordan@conciiergephysicaltherapy.com.

Dr. Lordan is the owner of Concierge Physical Therapy in Sutton and Shrewsbury and is a Doctor of Physical Therapy with Board Certification in Orthopedics. He resides in Grafton with his wife Brooke and daughter Noelle.



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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 alkaline 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

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Garden party planned

MILLBURY - The Friends of the Asa Waters Mansion proudly present: *A Secret Garden Party with magical surprises*, on Sunday, August 29, at 2 p.m. at The Asa Waters Mansion at 123 Elm St., Millbury.

This special end-of-school vacation event for girls and boys of elementary school age includes a bird house decorating project led by Amy Crossin of the Parading Palette, a reading of the delightful book, *The Secret Garden*, and an ice cream sundae buffet.

There are a few more sur-



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

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Free Summer Concert Series at the Alternatives' Whitin Mill

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

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

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

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

Free Summer Concert Series schedule:

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

Free Thursday Night Concert series:

July 29: Superchief Trio
 August 5: Far from Eden
 August 12: Claflin Hill Summer Winds
 August 19: Le'Mixx Band
 August 26: Michelle Canning Band
 September 2: Changes in Latitudes

The concert series is sponsored by Lampin Corporation, UniBank, Wiersma Insurance Agency, the Northbridge Cultural Council;

which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, Open Sky Community Services and ValleyCAST.

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

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

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

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 THE GREATEST HITS OF FOREIGNER AUGUST 26 • 7PM	 GET THE LED OUT <small>A CELEBRATION OF "THE MIGHTY ZEP"</small> AUGUST 27 • 7PM	 JOSH TURNER AUGUST 28 • 1PM
 MARC MARTEL SEPTEMBER 4 • 1PM	 MELISSA ETHERIDGE SEPTEMBER 6 • 1PM	 2021 SEPTEMBER 11 • 12PM
 THE MAVERICKS SEPTEMBER 12 • 1PM	 LOS LOBOS SEPTEMBER 18 • 1PM	 GEORGE THOROGOOD AND THE DESTROYERS <small>GOOD TO BE BAD</small> SEPTEMBER 19 • 1PM
 THE PIKE Hairfest 2021 SEPTEMBER 25 • 12PM	 KIP MOORE <small>with special guest AFTER MIDTOWN</small> SEPTEMBER 26 • 1PM	 ZIGGY MARLEY <small>A LIVE TRIBUTE TO HIS FATHER</small> SEPTEMBER 30 • 7PM

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Grafton's Business Scene

Continued from front page

age 10) will be five free flowers and a day of flower arranging workshops, music, food, kids' crafts and tours. Visitors can also purchase professional brief photography sessions from Carolyn Tay of Sparkz Photography. The festival, which honors the memory of CHP's development manager Carolyn Ambrose, helps fund the nonprofit's mission "to engage and educate volunteers to grow fruits and vegetables for hunger relief."

While the Grafton Farmers Market has provided joyful shopping experiences for many, it is now doing so at a new location. It has moved to the grounds of the Grafton Municipal Center at 30 Provi-

dence Road due to renovations planned for the Grafton Common. Although it has moved, it will still be open every Wednesday from 2 p.m. to 6 through September.

One restaurant that's found a fun way to share its happiness with customers and small businesses is the Grafton Grill & Crust. The restaurant, which is located at 10 Bridge Street in North Grafton and serves American grill cuisine, will hold a "Shopping Under the Stars" event from 4 p.m. until 9 p.m. on Sunday July 25. Singer Ron Jendrysik will provide live music, and there will be cocktails, ice cream and wood-fired pizza for sale while people can shop various local vendors under the restaurant's tent. There will also be a raffle.

Last month, two stores celebrated milestones. Off the

Common Antiques Market-place a multi-artisan, multi-vendor shop, located at 4 Worcester Street in Grafton, just celebrated its 4th anniversary. The shop sells beautifully restored furniture, farmhouse style items and other antiques, in addition to new handmade items from local artisans. And Paisley Boutique, located at 40 North Main Street in North Grafton, celebrated its 7th anniversary. The shop, which also has stores in Mashpee and Hudson, carries affordable boutique style clothing and accessories in classic and contemporary styles.

A business that will soon be celebrating a milestone is Koopman Lumber. The hardware and paint store, which carries a wide variety of

items for the home and backyard, is located at 82 Worcester Street in North Grafton. It was founded 82 years ago by Pete Koopman.

Dr. Mary Ellen Curran Rancourt, an audiologist, is enjoying her business's third summer in South Grafton. Hear Joy Audiology, which opened in July 2019, at 43 Main Street, offers a variety of hearing services and products for all ages (including infants). The services include hearing aid evaluations, pediatric audiology, immittance testing and tinnitus consultations. For appointments or more information, you can visit the business's website, www.hearjoyaudiology.com.

Finally, what could be more joyful than a herd of

friendly goats? Willard House and Clock Museum, which is located at 11 Willard Street in North Grafton, recently hired such a group through Go Go Goat Mowers. The museum, which has clocks displayed in captivating period room settings in the 1718 Joseph Willard homestead, the 1766 Benjamin Willard Clock Manufactory and its three modern galleries, contracted with the Upton business in order to reduce its invasive plants and unwanted overgrown

brush in a green, safe and effective way. And it also seems to make the well-fed goats quite happy.

"Find the joy in the journey" has become a popular expression for a reason. Whether that means stopping to smell the flowers or celebrating milestones, it's nice to know you can find some in Grafton.

Contact Christine with your business news items at cmgaleone15@gmail.com.

Free community event

WHITINSVILLE - A Bike Rodeo for Kids is planned for Saturday, August 7, from 10 a.m. until 12 noon in Fairlawn Christian Reformed Church's parking lot. This annual event is a highlight for many in the neighborhood, as kids gather to compete in a number of fun and challenging courses, as well as short-distance races, for the fastest and slowest riders in different age categories. (Riding a bike slowly is harder than you think.)

Part of the morning's event is dedicated to bicycle safety, an excellent presentation provided by a member of the Northbridge Police Department. Come for a fun time and light lunch. Kids (through 5th grade) need to bring their own bikes and helmets, and they should be accompanied by a responsible adult. Questions? Call the church office at 508-234-2838. Fairlawn Church is located at 305 Goldthwaite Road in Whitinsville.



Summer yard sales

CHARLTON - 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, Aug. 7 and Aug. 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.

First Congregational Church annual flea market

First Congregational Church at 148 West Main Street, Millbury is sponsoring the annual Flea Market and Craft Tables on Saturday, September 11, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Anyone wishing to reserve table space, please call Jeri Stead (508-865-5371). The \$25 inside area consists of a large supper table, plus a card table. An outside 10 feet plot reservation is \$20 and you will need to provide your own table. "The Kitchen" will be serving coffee and muffins, and at lunch time, Ron's hot dogs will be served. There will also be a Bakery Table, and a Church Flea Market Table.

VFW Post flea market

UPTON - The Upton VFW Post 5594 will hold its flea market on Aug. 14 at Post headquarters, 15 Milford St., (Rt. 140) in Upton. Others will be Sept 11 and Oct 9, weather permitting. Hours are 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Vendors and crafty people are more than welcome. Good sized spaces are \$10 each or \$15 if a banquet sized table is needed. No reservations are needed, although Post member David Kennedy can provide more information by calling him at 508-529-3314 or via the Upton VFW Facebook page.

List your yard sale here.

Send info to: news@theyankeeexpress.com



Potluck Supper at Eight Lots School House

The Sutton Historical Society will hold its annual Eight Lots School House Potluck Supper on Friday, August 6, at 6:30 p.m. at the school house located at 54 Eight Lots Road. Bring your favorite main dish or dessert, a chair or blanket, and your love of Sutton history. This event is open to both members and the general public.

The school house was built before 1773 on land that was deeded to the town in 1799 by Timothy Sibley. It is believed to be one of the oldest one-room school houses in the United States still standing on its original foundation. Deeded to the Sutton Historical Society by the Eight Lots School Association in 1990, the building underwent a 3-year extensive restoration which was completed in 2015. This building is a treasure to the Sutton community. So, mark your calendars and join in for a summer evening at an historically significant venue.



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Focus on non profits

Upton Men's Club has been quietly enriching the community for more than 20 years

By Christine Galeone

When something goes wrong in a small town, the people responsible for causing the problem usually can't remain anonymous for long. But when things go well, not too many people tend to be aware of those responsible for the successes that support and bolster the community. Many don't know about all the genuinely concerned citizens who work behind the scenes to enrich their communities.

The Upton Men's Club is filled with those types of citizens. It exists "to provide support to the community where public funds fall short." But that doesn't begin to describe the positive difference the club's members have had on the lives of people of all ages.

Since 1997, members of the Upton Men's Club have helped their community by volunteering for and donating to programs, initiatives and organizations that enhance/revitalize Upton. While it provides opportunities for local men to build friendships and a professional network of peers, it also focuses on providing service to the community and working with other organizations that serve Upton as well. The 54-member club has raised more than

\$500,000 to benefit Upton and its residents.

Alan Nasuti, the club's president, said that the nonprofit is currently "comprised of a diverse set of citizens focused on giving back" to their community. And the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic didn't deter them from pursuing those goals. "Our mission is to provide support for above-and-beyond projects that benefit our community at large," Nasuti said. "With that in mind, the biggest challenge the club and its members faced during the pandemic was getting together in person to plan and hold charitable events. We pivoted to online meetings but found there was a bit of Zoom fatigue for our members and constituents."

Over the years, the club has had an indelible impact on its community. For children, it has donated playground equipment to the Upton Town Playground and Miscoe Hill School, provided funding for the S.T.A.R. program in local schools, sponsored summer reading programs at the Upton Library and more. Among its safety-related endeavors, it donated emergency call boxes to Kiwanis Beach and the Upton VFW playground,

and it donated truck-mounted lights and 30 smoke-piercing emergency flashlights to the Upton Fire Department. The club also holds monthly dinners for seniors at the Upton Senior Center, awards annual community service scholarships to graduating students, and manages the annual Upton Fireworks event.

And the pandemic didn't stop the nonprofit from continuing its altruistic work. "The great thing about the club is our members' innovation, dedication and fortitude," Nasuti shared. "As such, we were able to still provide boxed dinners for local seniors, we held an ice-out challenge as part of a community engagement and fundraising event, we partnered with the Fire and EMS to build stands for holiday trees and had families decorate them on our town common, and partnered with the Upton Police to deliver Easter eggs to over 160 households and 300 children. All being socially distant and following CDC protocols."

"We are looking forward to getting back together, in person, as a group and community," Nasuti said. "We will be holding our annual fireworks celebration on Au-

gust 21, and we will be holding our charity golf event on September 24."

More information about volunteering for the nonprofit or becoming a member is available on the Upton Men's Club website, www.upton-mensclub.org.

If you would like to suggest a Blackstone Valley nonprofit or initiative for this series, please contact Christine at cmgaleone15@gmail.com.





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Millbury Senior Center

MILLBURY - THE Millbury Council On Aging, 1 River St., has listed the following calendar of events.

Senior work-off program for eligible seniors, 60 or older who are residents of Millbury, Receive up to \$1,500 per year that can be used to pay real estate property tax. In return for voluntary service at a town department. For more informa-

tion or to pick up an application please call the center at 508-865-9154.

Exercise classes - Mondays and Fridays 9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Classes are held inside with limited capacity. Reservations required, please call the center at 508-865-9154.

Walking club - Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m. We will be walking around the garden. This will be followed by coffee in the garden.

Social bingo - Wednesdays at 1 p.m. Bring your pennies. Registration required, Please call the center at 508-865-9154. If you would like lunch before Bingo call 48 hours ahead for reservations.

Summer concerts are back Thursday, August 19, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Eddie Forman Polka Band Orchestra. Concerts are sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and Mike and Lucille Maguire. Hot

dogs and drinks will be available for sale. These events will be held rain or shine, bring your lawn chairs.

Memory Cafe - next Memory Café will be held on, Tuesday, July 27, at 2 p.m. We will be having Matt Brodeur, Acoustic guitarist, entertaining in the Garden. Everyone welcome and encouraged to come and enjoy an afternoon of socialization, refreshments and friendships.

Millbury Friendly Visitor Program - Our Friendly Visitor Program is now being provided by telephone. Volunteers call clients to check in with them, chat and hear a friendly voice. For more information on coordinating a Friendly visitor

Call the center at 508-865-9154
Millbury Senior Center Food Pantry is open for Millbury residents Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Please call ahead to place your order and pick up 508-865-9154.

Millbury Senior Center Transportation is provided for Millbury senior residents Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. We travel one town out in each direction including Sutton, Grafton, Auburn and Worcester. A 48 hour notice is required for scheduling rides (business days) For more information or to schedule transportation call the center at 508-865-9154.

Blood Pressure Clinic every Tuesday from 9 - 10 a.m. Clinic is now held inside.

Grab and Go Meals - Lunch is at 12 p.m. Monday through Friday available to be picked up or served inside. Menu is available on Town Website, www.townofmillbury.org or our Millbury Senior Center Facebook page. A 48 hour reservation is required. For more information or reservations call us at 508-865-9154.

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August 7th & 8th

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Paws corner

Help fight off fleas with brewer's yeast

By Sam Mazzotta

DEAR PAW'S CORNER:

Regarding cats with fleas, I have had great success eliminating fleas by adding powdered brewer's yeast to their food. One of my cats even licked it out of her bowl dry. Brewer's yeast is usually available at health food stores. – Suzanne F.

DEAR SUZANNE: Thank you for the tip! Brewer's yeast is a great nutritional supplement for cats and dogs, and many owners have observed that their pets have fewer fleas when it's added to their food. It can certainly be a strong asset to a well-rounded flea fighting strategy.

For cats and small dogs, sprinkle about half a teaspoon on their food at mealtimes. For medium dogs up to 30 pounds, increase that to a teaspoon. For every 30 pounds over that, add a teaspoon of brewer's yeast. Consistency is important.

Brewer's yeast, unfortunately, does not repel ticks, so pets – even those who stay indoors – should be checked regularly throughout the spring, summer and fall for these little hangers-on.

Brush your pet's coat daily to remove flea eggs and any remaining fleas. Owners may need to use stronger flea and tick treatments in addition to brewer's yeast, but it's still a great ally in the fight against fleas.

Other flea prevention strategies include vacuuming your home twice a week during peak season to reduce tracked-in fleas and their eggs, and quickly ruffling your pet's coat with a towel and cleaning their paws when they come indoors. Bathing your dog or cat can help reduce irritation from flea bites, but only use shampoos designed for pets to keep their skin from drying out and becoming more irritated.

Cats shouldn't get a free pass to poop

DEAR PAW'S CORNER:

Could you explain why cats can poop in my garden and the owners are not responsible for them? Cats kill birds and chipmunks, and they dig in my garden. Children's sandboxes get fouled by cats. Cat poop is really unpleasant and can spread diseases. It seems unfair that cat owners should get all the enjoyment out of them, but not have to be responsible for their messes. Why do cat owners get a free pass? What can be done to keep the cats from killing birds and leaving messes in my yard? – Pat in Spokane

DEAR PAT: You're absolutely right. Cats can wreak havoc on the local environment as they don't limit their hunting to mice. A 2013 study estimated that cats kill billions of songbirds per year in the U.S. alone (www.smithsonianmag.com and search for "The Moral Cost of Cats"). Yet owners who allow their cats outdoors often don't think that their sweet, adorable Fluffy could be a neighborhood menace.

That's one reason I constantly ask owners to keep their cats indoors. It's also for the cats' personal safety; they're at risk of being attacked by bigger wildlife or other cats.

Right now, there are two things you can do. First, deter cats from coming onto your property. Scatter a mixture of used coffee grounds, lemon peels and vinegar around the perimeter of the yard (pans of vinegar also work). Cover exposed ground in garden beds with river rock to discourage digging.

Second, raise awareness in the community. Spread the word about the damage cats do, and what owners can do to prevent it. Do this by talking with your neighbors and speaking at town or HOA meetings. Get the word out so the entire community can address the problem.

Send your flea-fighting tips to ask@pawscorner.com. (c) 2021 King Features Synd., Inc.

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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. Overripe. I gaze out at the bay window at a back yard too lush. Where are the yellow patches? Why are the bunnies so liberated, the crows cockier than usual? We need Lincoln. Sigh.

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

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

Freedom is subjective when it comes to owning a dog. On one hand, you are able to pull off a day excursion without worrying about leaving your dog home alone. Ditto for the vacation to Europe. On the flip side, a dog "frees" us from life's petty stresses. Have you

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

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

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

"Did you see that woman in the car beside us? She's waving her hands and wagging her finger at us! I think she wants to play!" If that same woman were in a dog's presence, he'd lick salty, sweaty anger from her palms and make her laugh. Dogs see the very best in people. They don't keep score or a record of wrongs.

A dog makes it impossible to be angry with the loved one who has just stepped on your last nerve. "Is that a spot of scallop you're wearing on your shorts?" Dogs sniff out the good parts. They forgive, forget, and approach conflict with compassion.

I try to practice what Lincoln has taught me. He's still with me. I want to relate to people the way Lincoln would. I want to be a better person. But I'm only human. Dogs are better.

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

I need a puppy. I blame a husband who, less hasty, chooses to window shop for cute 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

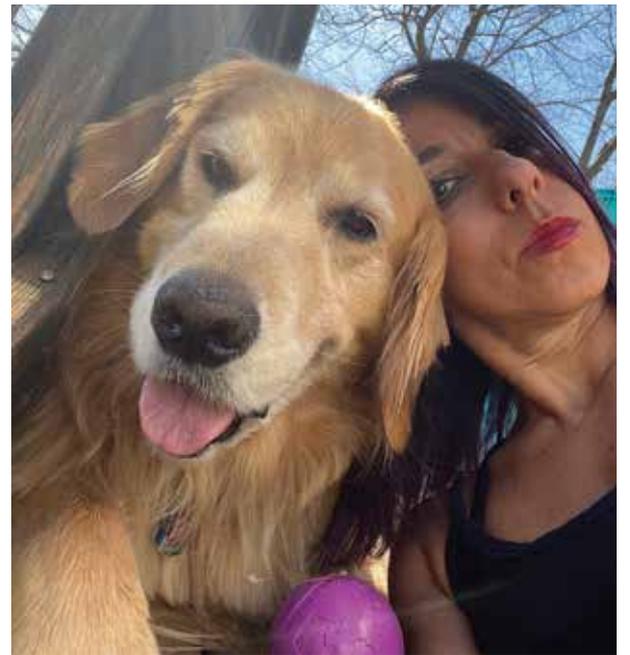
a spot on a list. A July litter is available! I'm excited but everything is moving along so fast and I need more answers. I want to know more about the parents of my puppy. I seem to have a lot of questions, but not enough answers, and there are too many loopholes in too many changing facts. Something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

Meanwhile (and somewhat miraculously) my husband reaches Cloverdale Golden 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."



Kindred spirits.



Lincoln enjoying his soft serve.



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Back-to-school movie night

BOSTON – State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) and his family announced that they are hosting a back-to-school family movie night at Waters Farm in Sutton on Friday, September 10, starting at 6:00 p.m. with roasting marshmallows. The address is 53 Waters Rd, Sutton.

This event is open to families in all the towns of the Blackstone Valley, and it is sponsored by Ryan and Stephanie Fattman and Waters Farm. The featured movie will be Disney's Raya and the Last Dragon. The event is intended to celebrate the waning days of summer by gathering community at a local historical icon. Families are invited to attend and to bring their own seating. Other items for the event such as marshmallows and a fire will be provided.

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. 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.

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.

BVAA busy in spite of COVID

The Blackstone Valley Art Association is finally emerging from its COVID state. The members were not idle during the pandemic, however. Many continued with their artistic endeavors. Like everyone else, they were online, virtually showing their work and taking virtual classes. Many professional artists from around the world gave free demonstrations which provided much inspiration and learning opportunities, most of us would never have had the chance to see.

Thanks to many local cultural council grants from the Valley towns BVAA was able to purchase equipment to do video sessions and Lisa Shea has produced several Youtube art videos featuring all of the towns that donated. They are available to view at your leisure. The towns include, Millville, Blackstone, Douglas, Upton, Auburn, Spencer, Grafton. The towns of Uxbridge and Northbridge annually provide grants to buy supplies and have artist demos at meetings,

which are open to the public.

The first live show was at the Spaulding Aldrich Gallery at the Open Skies Administration Building on the Plaza. It was a juried show. JoEllen Reinhardt, from the New England School of Fine Arts was the juror. Winners were: Lynne Randolph first place, Beverly Tinklenberg second place, Bob Evans third place, Mike Zeis, Carol Frieswick and Alexandra Spano Honorable Mention. The show is open during the free weekly concert series sponsored by Valley Cast, on Thursday evenings from 6-8 p.m., rain or shine. The show will be up for viewing until August 28.

BVAA also has art exhibited at the Uxbridge Open Skies Gallery, Hunter's Tavern in Grafton Center and at the Milford Local Access TV station Gallery.

The Uxbridge Open Skies facility is open on Saturdays from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. for open paint sessions and for lively artistic talks.

Monthly paint-outs have been ongoing since spring with collaboration with the Blackstone River Heritage Commission. BVAA has increasing attendance at these events and artists from several towns from MA and RI have been participating. It is a great low key way to practice painting out-of-doors. It is also a great way to network with and meet other local artists.

Membership to the BVAA is open now and the form can be found at bvaa.org. BVAA will be planning its next season soon, but have events planned through the summer. Contact Carol Frieswick info@bvaa.com.

Eastern States Exposition hosts 4-H summer event

Eastern States Exposition will present the 4-H Summer Event for agricultural-minded youth in the region to showcase their educational work and take part in competitions with their animals, Sunday, July 25 through Thursday, July 29.

Competitions will take place for dogs, horses, dairy cows, sheep, dairy goats, and beef cattle. ESE has worked closely with its partner, the New England 4-H Council on planning and procedures for the event.

ESE Trustee and committee member Nick Barishian said, "We have joined forces with all six New England 4-H Programs, 4-H Staff, 4-H Volunteers, and 4-H Youth from across New England to re-imagine the New England 4-H Program to take its current best-in-class event, and bring it to an even better place, truly living the 4-H motto to 'Make the Best Better.'"

The event is sponsored by Eastern States Exposition, Farm Credit East and the New England 4-H Council.

4-H activities and events will continue to be held during The Big E, September 17-October 3, including the New England 4-H Grilled Cheese and Milkshake Contests, various judging contests and skill-a-thons, and demonstrations of the projects of regional 4-H Clubs which take place in the New England Center. The 4-H Beef Sale will also be held September 27 and the public is invited to bid on the steers raised by 4-Hers.

Additionally, innovative programming is being developed to further support 4-H youth and to educate them on career opportunities and workforce development.

Gene Cassidy, President and CEO of Eastern States Exposition, said, "During this unique time in our history, with the state re-opening, ESE is doing all it can to support and provide an appropriate venue for youth and agriculture, the core of our mission." The Big E's many adult "Open Shows" will take place throughout the Fair, September 17- October 3.

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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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Blackstone Valley Tech scholarships and awards

A springboard for its 2021 grads with nearly \$8 million in student scholarships

UPTON – The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District is proud to announce its class of 2021 scholarship and award recipients.

As BVT's newest graduates advance their career training, these awards totaling nearly eight million in renewable value are a financial springboard that allows its recipients the financial freedom to explore various pathways and put their career plans into action.

"Some students use financial aid to cover tuition at colleges or universities, while others purchase new tools, clothing, and equipment to launch their careers," said Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick. "The assistance of these scholarships and awards help propel graduates towards a bright future-ready to contribute as well-trained, educated, and skilled members of the workforce."

The following is a list of the scholarships and awards earned by members of the BVT Class of 2021 from Millbury, Grafton and Sutton, including immediate plans for career training. Scholarship amounts reflect the first-year total. For more details, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/scholarshiprecipients.

Grafton

Matthew Fiore - Bryant University (Finance) - Archway Scholarship: \$25,000; Joey Wilson Memorial Scholarship: \$600.

Audrey Karyabdi - University of Connecticut (Biomedical Engineering) - Leadership Scholarship: \$21,999

Angela Nolan - University of Rhode Island (Biotechnology) - Founders Grant: \$12,000

Catherine Rozanas - Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach (Aerospace Engineering) - Presidential Scholarship: \$18,000; Women of Excellence Award: \$5,000; Embry-Riddle Travel Grant: \$250

Vivian Staheli - Georgia Institute of Technology (Materials Science and Engineering) - Valley Tech School Committee-Vocational Award: \$200

Emily Valoras - Employed by Iconic Ink - Valley Tech Ed Foundation: \$300

Millbury

Aiden Bourdeau - Worcester State University (Visual and Performing Arts) - Grant: \$1,500; WSU Tuition Award: \$970; BVT Teachers Association-Richard Bernard Scholarship: \$500

Payton Hartshorn - Employed in Auto Collision Field - Joey Wilson Memorial: \$600

Nicholas Healey - Electrical Apprenticeship - Polyfoam Corporation Scholarship: \$500; VTC Trade Memorial Scholarship: \$1,000

Evan Pariseau - Western New England University (Engineering) - First Robotics Scholarship: \$1,000; Presidential Scholarship: \$22,000; Western New England University Scholarship: \$1,000

Dylann Rebidue - University of New Hampshire (Undecided) - Chancellor's Scholarship: \$10,000

Abigail Weagle - University of New Hampshire (Occupational Therapy) - DAR-Good Citizenship: \$575; Mendon Lions Club: \$1,000; Trustees' Scholarship: \$12,000; UNH Non-Resident Tuition Grant: \$10,600

Sutton

Trin Astrella - Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (Aeronautical Engineering) - Presidential Scholarship: \$16,000

George Briggs - UMass Boston (Biology) - Full Scholarship: \$30,000

Emily Devine - Wentworth Institute of Technology (Interior Design) - Presidential Scholarship: \$17,000; Early Action Scholarship: \$500; Early Filer Award: \$500; Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild of Mendon: \$1,000

Tyler Distefano - University of Rhode Island (Computer Engineering) - Grant: \$10,000

Rachel Dube - Quinnipiac University (Nursing) - Trustee Award: \$28,000; FWS Award: \$2,000; Grant: \$3,544 Grant: \$2,000; Quinnipiac Award \$1,183

Erin Fitman - Emerson College (Media Arts Production) - Aspire Scholarship: \$20,000; Emerson Grant: \$9,450

Kiera Gruttadauria - Suffolk University (Marketing) - Trustee Scholarship: \$10,800; Achievement Grant: \$15,000

Ava Larocque - UMass Amherst, Commonwealth Honors College (Construction Management) - Deans Scholarship: \$2,000

Hannah Limanek - Roger Williams University (Engineering) - American Legion Dudley-Gendron Post 414: \$500; Roger Williams University Presidential Scholarship: \$18,000; Sten K. Brote Memorial Scholarship: \$1,000; Sons of the American Legion Post 414 in Memory of WWII Veteran Victor Karaciuc: \$1,000; Sutton Lions Club: \$500

Jaedyn Snow - Assumption University (Nursing) - Assumption University Grant: \$11,000; Milleret Scholarship: \$20,000

Tigest White - Hawaii Pacific University - Provost Scholarship: \$13,000

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School serves the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. Located in the heart of the Blackstone Valley, BVT creates a positive learning community that prepares students for personal and professional success in an internationally competitive society through a fusion of rigorous vocational, technical, and academic skills.

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Most Holy Apostle, St. Jude, faithful servant of Jesus, the church honors and invokes you universally as the patron of hopeless cases, of things almost despaired of. Pray for me, I am so helpless and alone. Make sure I implore you of that particular privilege given to you, to bring visible and speedy help where help is most despaired of. Come to my assistance in this great need that I may receive the consolation and help of heaven in all my necessities, tribulations, and sufferings, particularly (Here make your request) and that I may praise God with you and all the elect forever. I promise, O blessed St. Jude, to be ever mindful of this great favor, to always honor you as my special and powerful patron, and to gratefully encourage devotion to you. Amen. ECB

Prayer



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

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

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Q & A with The Car Doctor

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



Q. I have a 2009 Honda Fit, which I just changed the oil, yet the dash indicator still says my oil is now at 20%. How do I return it to 100% oil life since the oil and filter are new?

A. Every car is a little different when it comes to resetting maintenance reminders. Some require a scan tool and others, like your Honda, are menu driven. Turn the ignition switch to the ON position. Press the select/reset knob repeatedly until the engine oil life is displayed. Press the select/reset knob for about ten seconds. The engine oil life and the maintenance item code(s) will blink. Press the select/reset knob for another five seconds. The maintenance item code(s) will disappear, and the engine oil life will reset to 100.

Q. How many miles is it safe to switch to synthetic oil? I have 6000 miles on my 2019 car and want to switch to synthetic oil.

A. There was a time where it was thought that a switch to synthetic oil early in the life of an engine would not allow the piston rings to seat properly. Today we see cars come from the factory with synthetic oil in the engine and the engines are fine. Call me a little old-fashioned I typically wait, depending on the car, until the second oil change before switching to full synthetic oil. Since your car is two years old you can switch to synthetic oil with no worries.

Q. I have a car that my brother gave me and wanted to know if it's worth putting money into to fix it or just get another used car. The car I have is a 2007 Dodge Nitro SLT 6 cylinder with all-wheel-drive. The check engine and airbag lights are on, it failed emissions, brakes need to be done, it idles rough. The belts I see look like they need replacing. Plus, the two rear windows will not go up.

A. You easily listed what could amount to several thousands of dollars worth of repairs. Considering the car is 14 years old and was not the best vehicle built by Chrysler at the time, even as a free car, the repairs may not be a good investment. At this point the best money you can spend is to have a good repair shop give the car a thorough inspection to get a detailed repair estimate of the overall cost of the repairs. As a general rule if the cost of the repairs exceeds 50 percent of the value of the car, it is not a good investment.

Q. My daughter recently bought a 2006 Acura TL with 206,000 miles on it. I have two questions. The owner's manual says to use premium fuel. If she does not, what are the consequences. With 206,000 miles, what oil should she use? The owner's manual says 5w20 oil, but should she use conventional, synthetic blend or full synthetic? I had heard that using full synthetic in high mileage cars will cause oil to leak from seals. Is that true?

A. If the owner's manual or on the fuel door states premium fuel required you need to use it or risk engine failure due to detonation (pinging). If the manual only recommends premium, use 87 octane fuel. The car's computer system will adjust the engine systems to prevent any damage. AAA tests show that any loss in fuel economy is vastly offset by the reduced cost of regular fuel versus premium. Synthetic oil will not cause a leak, but it may find one and make it more noticeable. If this were my car and as much as I am a fan of synthetic oil I would use conventional oil and change it as recommended in the owner's manual.

Q. I just read your column. I'm desperate and hoped for some clear thinking advise. My 1996 Dodge pickup truck is in great shape, looks impressive and starts every time. It has been relegated to dump runs and trips to the beach with the dog. My dashboard, being a Dodge, disintegrated into chips and dust. I can't seem to locate a replacement for a reasonable price. It ends up at about \$1000 for a piece of plastic, not including the installation. I don't care what it "looks like" so I am willing to think way out of the box. My question: is there a way to find a dash that will basically fit? Ford, Toyota, Chevy or whatever. I'm one step away from using cardboard cutouts covered with resin and fiberglass. Thanks for your time, I know this is a weird request.

A. Not really a weird request. You have a couple of options that are relatively inexpensive. You could get a dash pad cover (looks like carpet) (\$50 online) that covers most of the dash. The second option is a complete overlay of the dash, about \$150 online. The overlay requires some prep and patience when installing but both could be workable solutions. If the dash is really deteriorated, yes you could make something up with fiberglass. Hotrod shops build custom dashboards all the time.



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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.



- Want bananas to last a little longer? Do not separate your bunch, and wrap the tip in foil.
- Instead of baking soda, I use three or four charcoal briquettes in a bowl to control odor and moisture in my refrigerator. I place the briquettes in a shallow dish, then cover the top of the bowl with a small piece of cheesecloth and secure it with a fat rubber band. The best thing is that I can still use these briquettes on the grill. In the summer, they get changed very regularly.
- To ripen a green tomato, wrap it in a sheet of newspaper or place it in a paper bag. It can then be left on the counter for several days to ripen.
- After a hard day's work in the garden, I soak in a rosemary bath. It's a natural anti-inflam-

matory, and it smells wonderful. I just add a few sprigs from my plant out back to very hot water, and then let the water sit for a while until it's just warm. Then I get in. Heaven!

• Keep laundry baskets in your automobile's trunk for easier organization. You could even add a small cooler to hold cold items if you need to make a stop somewhere on the way home from the grocery store.

• Use a muffin pan to make big ice cubes for drinks.

• Add a cinnamon stick or softener sheet to your vacuum bag when you change it. As you clean, you will distribute the good smell throughout your home.

• Need to remove fruit or food coloring stains on your hands or your countertop? White vinegar will clean it off. It's good for so many things.

• Great ways to remove stuck labels: nail polish remover (NOT for use on plastics), WD-40 oil, soaking in hot water, rubbing alcohol.

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A 'Sweet' Accolade: BVT's Culinary Arts instructor receives MVA's new teacher award

UPTON – Under the watchful eye of Chef Laura Campagna, the Culinary Arts instructor in charge of the baking program at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT), students create custom baked goods, cookies, and pastries that not only look good but taste amazing. If you're looking for a yummy treat, they're in the student-run pastry counter in the BVT Bake Shop.

Chef Campagna proudly provides her students with an outstanding vocational-technical education. Her positive energy, creative thinking, and hard work have brought the Bake Shop to a new level. Paired with an engaging curriculum and challenging projects,

all contributed to earning recognition from the Massachusetts Vocational Association (MVA) as the recipient of their annual New Teacher Award.

"Receiving the MVA New Teacher Award exemplifies the talent and passion that Laura Campagna brings to our Culinary Arts program," said Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick. "We are proud of Chef Campagna and her achievement. We enjoy pursuing the pastry counter and sampling her students' work."

"I enjoy teaching our students the science of baking and the role each ingredient plays in the process. When a student can isolate what each ingredient contributes to a recipe and learns how

different ingredient combinations trigger varying outcomes, they can better understand how to troubleshoot a recipe or work on developing recipes of their own," said Chef Campagna. "In the Bake Shop, students have an opportunity to do ingredient experiments, talk things through, share successes and analyze mistakes. Whether a student becomes a professional baker or not, this process helps with so many life skills."

The MVA New Teacher Award is given to a new teacher that exemplifies excellence in teaching in the vocational high school setting. The award includes five hundred dollars for the purchase of new supplies for the shop program. Campagna plans to use those funds to enhance her students' learning experience with a touchscreen or projection unit, which would allow her to easily display notes, recipes, class outlines, and more.

"BVT has welcomed me with open arms, allowing me to reimagine what the Bake Shop could be," said Chef Campagna. "I've had access to financial support to purchase equipment, redesign the shop lab, and change the curriculum to create learning progression for the students. I am part of a wonderful department that makes group decisions and is vested in creating a positive experience for all of our students."



Chef Laura Campagna, Culinary Arts Instructor at BVT, is the recipient of the Massachusetts Vocational Association's New Teacher Award.

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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 Within 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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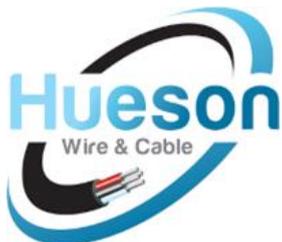
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RE: Real Estate



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

Sellers are rejecting offers that come with FHA and VA financing

short supply and demand for it is high, its price tends to go up. This is the case in the housing 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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