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November 5-December 3, 2021

Battle lines drawn in special election for Oxford selectman's seat

By Rod Lee

The choice for Oxford voters in the special election coming up on November 16 is not just between a relative newcomer to town (Robert J. King) and a lifelong resident (Norman Leblanc Jr.). It rests as well with differences between the two men on key issues facing the community.

They are running for the seat on the Board of Selectmen previously held by the late Anthony Saad.

For his part in recent interviews the candidates gave to the Oxford Democratic Town Committee, Mr. King said he was originally from New Jersey and that he attended high school in Pennsylvania, served in the Navy and took up a career in lasers and fiber optics that led to a job with IPG and "a move to Oxford to set down roots."

"I had never heard of a Town Meeting form of government" before relocating to Massachusetts, he said. "Some negative experiences" piqued his interest in getting involved in politics and specifically the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Leblanc told the Democratic Town Committee that he is a third-generation resident of Oxford. "I owe the town a lot," he said. He has coached, been active in scouting, served on the Housing Authority, was involved in the Liberty

Heights program, sat on the ZBA for twelve years "and the Planning Board for the last fifteen years—the most important board in town for planning." The Planning Board "has no issues," he said. "It's never been sued."

His parents taught him "to give back," Mr. Leblanc said.

Although they fielded questions on a wide range of topics, the candidates identified the relationship between Town Manager Jenifer Callahan and the Board of Selectmen as "the most pressing."

Mr. King said "we have to be ready to build consensus; there is a perception that certain things can't be brought into meetings. I will push for bringing back the public comment period. The Board had that for a long time."

Mr. Leblanc lamented the "lack of communication" between selectmen and the town manager and added "citizens, the Board of Selectmen and the town manager is the right chain of command." Further, "the Board of Selectmen needs to give the town manager goals and meet with her at least quarterly."

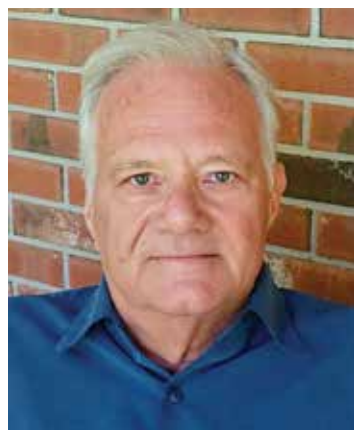
Mr. King and Mr. Leblanc were not in agreement on everything.

On a query about a "debt exclusion for roads" that will be voted on soon, Mr. King said "we could



Robert J. King: Bring back public forums.

account for a lot" of the money needed "with free cash. It's not the right time for a debt exclusion but I like the DPW plan." In sharp contrast, Mr. Leblanc said "I am



Norman L. Leblanc Jr.: "Why not robo calls?" to keep Oxford residents better informed.

100 percent in favor of it. It's more reasonable than the previous attempt."

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Resonates in community
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HOLIDAY FAIRS

For gift giving
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PETE'S SPORTS

Oxford Pirates ready for playoffs
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Pictured (left to right) Sgt. Joseph Reed, Officer Thomas Motyka, District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr., Officer Jacek Ochocki, Officer Francheska Cedeno and her son, and Webster Police Chief Michael Shaw.

DA Early honors Webster Officers who saved house fire victims

WEBSTER— Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr. honored four Webster police officers for saving residents from a house fire.

Sgt. Joseph Reed, Officer Jacek Ochocki, Officer Francheska Cedeno, and Officer Thomas Motyka were presented with the District

Attorney's Team Excellence and Merit – TEAM – Award, which recognizes outstanding service

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OXFORD ELECTION

Continued from page 1

A light moment was struck when the subject of "healing tensions in town" came up and Mr. Leblanc said "I think I'd send them all to Dr. Phil" before getting more serious and saying "I would set an example. I'm a straight shooter. I vote on what's best for the town." Mr. King's stance on

the same subject was "hear people out. Don't be quick to make judgments. Educate residents on town plans and projects (he applauded the recently released town newsletter Onward Oxford!). Hold forums. Big things take consensus."

Mr. King was more critical of the town manager than his opponent, asserting that even though Ms. Callahan is "now living in town," she is

"too combative" and "needs a thicker skin." On the other side, "the town manager feels she is not given specific goals and priorities," he said.

On the matter of the town's "financial stability," Mr. King said the amount of free cash "looks great" but raised the question "where to put it," and said the town needs to "bring in more business." He noted too that "a lot of

residents are upset with the current tax rate."

Mr. Leblanc had a number of recommendations relating to financial stability. "Continue to apply for grants," he said. "We need to improve our bond rating. Continue to build up free cash and spend it wisely. Do a better job of funding capital programs." Although the town has obtained more than \$13 million in grants over the past several years, when "the new high school roof started leaking, we did nothing."

Mr. Leblanc stressed the importance of the ten-year master plan, and pointed to the Ashworth Hills condos and commercial project, which will be owner-occupied, as a positive.

In an email following the Q&A, Mr. King said "I believe the major differences between myself and Norman can be summed up as a large difference in perspective."

A selectman, Mr. King said, "needs to be reaching out in the community, meeting residents and finding out how they want the issues before the town to be addressed (a good example, recent crosswalk islands installed in Main St. with no resident forum, [and] approving funds to plan a redesign of Main St. with no prior resident forums on the topic."

"Norman seems to believe that he is already familiar with the issues in town and does not need resident input on them based on his decades of experience on various town boards. This is why I have spent months

going door to door speaking to residents, writing them letters, have a campaign website, provide telephone and email contact information, and Norman has not and does not. Norman has seen many selectmen come and go and how they campaigned whereas I am a newcomer to town politics looking to use 21st Century tools to personally reach and interact with more voters than ever before."

Elaborating on what separates the two men, Mr. King said "Norman states that future large-scale development is required for the financial stability of the town. My view is that past promises of large-scale development mitigating tax increases is no longer credible with many voters and that we need to rebuild their trust and engage them in a positive way by addressing their priorities. The residents have generously accepted the tax increases up to this point and if that is not shown to be appreciated we run the risk of future budgets and requests not being approved."

Mr. Leblanc's "perspective as someone who has been a part of town government for decades is that things have been done basically 'right,' whereas my perspective is that some things have not and need to be improved. This is on full display in our answers to the 40B (affordable housing) question. My view is that the town needs to be familiar with and use the regulatory tools in 40B to be in compliance so that future development conforms

to town zoning (which the town has had decades to do and has not done yet). Norman seems to believe that the town has done a good job blocking projects, but some will just inevitably happen."

Mr. King casts himself as "an outsider opposed by Board of Selectmen Chair (Dennis) Lemarche" while Mr. Leblanc "has a long history" with Mr. Lemarche "and his campaign is supported by him."

In a telephone conversation the morning of October 29, Norman Leblanc took issue with much of what Robert King said.

For one thing, "I have received a lot of resident input on the boards I have served on," Mr. Leblanc said, so he is not out of touch with residents as Mr. King implied. "I have worked with them and listened to what they say."

In regard to the Main St. redesign, "it will be least five to six months before we do anything with Main St., not even twenty-five percent of the design work has been done," Mr. Leblanc said.

Mr. Leblanc noted too that even though he is a lifelong resident "this is my first time running for public office. I have always been a volunteer with people on local boards and a problem solver."

Also, "I never said anything about blocking projects and I have the support of a lot of business people."

On 40B, "there are state mandates we have to follow," Mr. Leblanc said, "but I am opposed to it."

Both men emphasized the need for better communication between Town Hall and residents.

But Mr. Leblanc questioned where Mr. King is getting his information from.

"The only conversation I've had with him, I wished him luck," he said.

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

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Fattman nominates Henke Sass Wolf of America for prestigious Manufacturer's Award

BOSTON – State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) announced Henke Sass Wolf of America as his nominee for the Outstanding Leadership Skills in the Manufacturing Industry award. Each elected official in the Legislature had the opportunity to nominate one manufacturer in their district to receive this unique distinction. That manufactur-

er would receive the award for the district in which their business operates.

Senator Fattman represents the Worcester and Norfolk Senate district, which comprises fourteen towns: Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Dudley, Hopedale, Mendon, Millis, Millville, Northbridge, precincts 1 and 3, Oxford, Southbridge, Sutton, Uxbridge, and Webster.

Henke Sass operates in Dudley, which made them eligible for Senator Fattman's nomination, but it was their exceptional lead-



Pictured (l to r) State Senator Eric Lesser, Henke Sass associates Jennifer Soponski, Casie Babineau, Chelsea Bryer, Robert Rivera, Benjamin Ortega, Loretta McHugh, State Senator Ryan Fattman, and State Representative Jeff Roy.

175th Anniversary Fireman's Ball

Indian Ranch is hosting Webster's 175th Anniversary Fireman's Ball on Saturday, November 6. The Fireman's Ball will celebrate this monumental anniversary with dinner and dancing beginning at 6 p.m. Live music from Pieces of Eight. Should be a fun party for all.

The history of the Webster Fire Department can be viewed at <https://www.webster-ma.gov/767/Department-History>

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ership in the industry, providing high quality medical products across the world, that made them the clear choice to receive the award for the Worcester and Norfolk Senate district.

Awards were given to recipients at the 6th Annual Manufacturing Awards, hosted at the newly constructed Polar Park in Worcester.

Legislators, manufacturers, and affiliated partners gathered to celebrate the successes of those in the industry.

"While there are many manufacturers in my district that would be deserving of this distinction, it was clear that Henke Sass Wolf of America was an outstanding choice for this award," said Senator Fattman.

"Their attention to detail by providing high quality medical devices is a beacon to all those in the manufacturing industry. I am proud to have this company in my district, and I look forward to seeing many more years of

their success in our region."

"This day celebrated the diversity in manufacturing and the people who contribute to its success in Massachusetts. We are proud at Henke Sass Wolf of America of our production employees whose dedication and teamwork provided us the opportunity to be recognized by the Commonwealth," said Henke Sass Wolf of America's Human Resource Manager, Christine MacGrory.

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bankHometown adds Fitzmaurice



Courtney Fitzmaurice

OXFORD — bankHometown recently hired Courtney Fitzmaurice of Charlton as commercial credit analyst officer.

She rejoins the bank, having previously served as a credit analyst for several years until 2017. Fitzmaurice has nearly

20 years of banking experience, most recently as assistant vice president, credit analyst at TD Bank. She also previously held the roles of credit analyst and assistant vice president, commercial portfolio manager with North Brookfield Savings Bank.

Fitzmaurice earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and a certificate in accounting, both from Worcester State University. She also attended the Massachusetts Bankers Association's School of Commercial Lending and Fundamentals of Credit Analysis program.



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POLICE

Continued from page 1 by those in public safety.

"A single cigarette sparked a fire that threatened multiple homes and lives," Mr. Early said. "Despite having no protective gear, these four officers didn't hesitate to rush into the buildings and ensure the safety of all residents. Lives surely would have been lost if it were not for their bravery."

While on patrol at 4:42 a.m., Sgt. Reed reported a house fire on Robinson Street. The

triple decker home was engulfed in flames. With high winds, the nearby home was in danger of catching fire. Acting quickly, Reed, Ochocki, Cedeno, and Motyka ran into both houses, waking and evacuating all occupants.

"I am proud of the actions of these officers," said Web-

ster Police Department Chief Michael Shaw. "They are a fine example of the caliber of Officer the Webster Police Department has in its employ. I am honored to be their Chief."

All residents made it to safety and the Webster, Dudley, Southbridge, Douglas and Sutton Fire Departments

responded to combat the flames.

Mr. Early created the TEAM Award in 2019 to recognize public safety employees who go above and beyond the call of duty. Contact the Worcester County District Attorney's Office at (508) 755-8601 to nominate someone for this award.

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Oxford Town Manager Jen Callahan, who says the Onward Oxford newsletter will be sent out to residents and businesses quarterly.

By Rod Lee

Oxford Town Manager Jennifer M. Callahan, her colleagues with the municipality and residents and businesspersons in the community are in an understandable state of excitement these days, with the inaugural issue of a newsletter, Onward Oxford, now in circulation.

Brimming with timely information including reports by Ms. Callahan, all of her department heads and key personnel, the neatly packaged debut edition of Onward Oxford went out in September and is already generating positive feedback.

"It's unique, it's different," Ms. Callahan said of the newsletter on October 8. "It's been a major key performance indicator for me.

"We had been talking about how to brand the town, how to really engage the residents. Facebook wasn't cutting it. We wanted to revamp material to connect with people. It started

with a number of different things we wanted to do and I thought of 'onward' and arrows and our production media coordinator pulled it together."

Known throughout her public life as a hard-charging go-getter, Ms. Callahan said that when the possibility of an endeavor of the sort was "revisited" in July she said to staff "we have such a story to tell and with the pandemic it gets lost."

She asked every department head to "put something together, something terrific, something transformative, send us pictures and data and we'll send it out. The response has been resoundingly positive."

This can in large part be attributed to the content that was submitted by Ms. Callahan's "correspondents." DPW Director Jared M. Duval, for instance, talked about "a repair alternative" that involved "grinding existing gutters," i.e., "shim-

'Onward Oxford' battle cry resonates with the community

ming and/or levelling them with hot mix asphalt and installing an 'HMA' overlay to provide an improved roadway profile and wearing surface."

Tony Sousa, who is director of planning and economic development, reported on the \$24,000 that was awarded to the town by the Janet Malser Humanities Trust "for streetscape beautification in the Main St. Historic District."

From Fire Chief Laurent R. McDonald came announcement that Oxford Fire and Emergency Services had launched an "address indicator" program as part of a "Community Risk Reduction" initiative, in which highly visible reflective street number signs were being made available to households.

Building Commissioner Patrick Dahlgren shared the news that the number of applications for swimming pools had "doubled."

Town Clerk Michelle Jenkins, Treasurer/Collector Jillian Connor, HR Specialist Joanne Frederick, Town Assessor Chris Pupka, Finance Director Katie McKenna, Senior Center Director Laura Wilson, Tree Warden Wayne Burlock, Library Director Brittany McDougal, Police Chief Anthony P. Saad and Shelley Lambert of the Oxford Community Center were among those who chipped in or were highlighted.

Ms. Callahan herself struck an upbeat tone in the first pages of the newsletter with comment about the renewed financial stability that the town is enjoying. When she came aboard three years ago, Ms. Callahan said, "the town had spent down all of its reserves, was not generating any substantial new revenues, had no comprehensive financial policies in place, had very low end-of-year free cash and had not avidly pursued existing grant opportunities."

She immediately trained "a laser focus" on 1) conservative financial forecasting and balanced budgeting; 2) increased revenues; 3) building reserves; 4) leverage grant assistance; and 5) investing in town infrastructure.

The subsequent "fiscal outlook turnaround" is reflected in the Rainy Day Stabilization Fund climbing from \$163,000 to \$1.7 million, the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Fund rising from \$3.1 million to \$5.0 million and the Certified Free Cash numbers increasing to \$3.5 million, which allowed for addressing "a backlog of deferred

maintenance and major infrastructure projects without increasing taxes on residents."

On grants too there has been steady improvement, with more than \$13 million obtained, including \$0.4 million for Parks, Seniors, Historic, Trees and Playgrounds, \$0.5 million for Best Practices: Green Communities, Finance and IT, \$2.3 million for Public Safety, MEMA and Covid, \$2.0 million for Brownfield, Environmental and Climate; \$3.25 million for Dam and Bridge Safety and \$5.0 million for Transportation, Pedestrian Safety and Sewer.

Congratulated on the number and amount of grants the town has secured since she began work on Main St. including one for repairs at Town Hall, Ms. Callahan laughed and said with her typical ebullience "I go after money wherever it is! A lot of it is timing. When I arrived the town had had no town planner for a long time. Now we have a really solid team."

An email Ms. Callahan received from a resident of Minuteman Lane mirrored the glowing commendations the town is receiving.

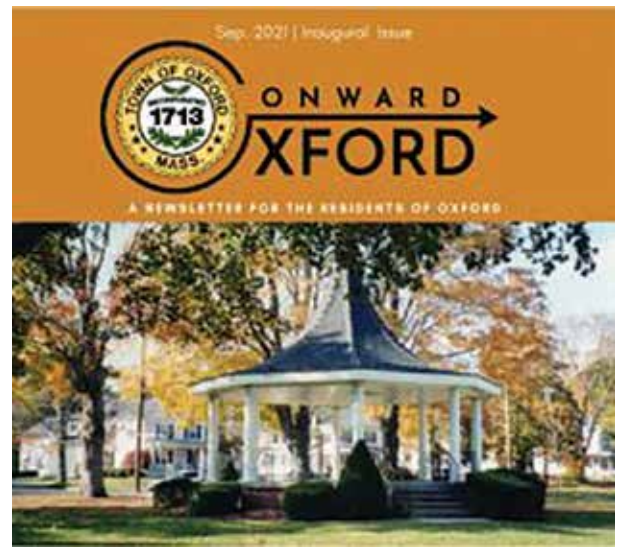
"I just finished reading the Onward Oxford newsletter that was mailed to our homes and I wanted to thank you for pulling it together. It's OUTSTANDING!" the resident wrote. "The newsletter shines a much-needed light on all of the good that is happening around town. I was happy to see all of the positive steps made by yourself and all of the departments covered in the newsletter. I have noticed several of the improvements listed and loved read-

ing about the projects that are underway within our town. Keep up the great work and thank you again for the newsletter."

Oxford is many things. Movies on Main. The Teddy Bear Picnic. A partnership between Swissturn/USA and the Samuel Slater Experience for "Community Art" sheep.

Now is also the Onward Oxford newsletter.

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



The splashy cover of the new Onward Oxford newsletter, with a symbolic arrow pointing the community forward.



Oxford Town Hall, where parking has been set aside "exclusively for the convenience of residents and businesses," Ms. Callahan says. The hours of operation at Town Hall have also been changed; the building is now open until 5:00 p.m. and until 7:00 p.m. on Wednesdays (closing at noon on Fridays).

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Living well and looking good

Help with Parkinson's Disease symptoms

By Keith Roach, M.D.

DEAR DR. ROACH: Is acupuncture a possible therapy to relieve back pain and stiffness associated with Parkinson's disease? – R.G.

ANSWER: There have been many trials that show acupuncture is superior to no treatment for various symptoms of Parkinson's disease. This is true especially for fatigue, but also in a composite score that includes stiffness. A systematic review of published studies found that "acupuncture has significant positive effects."

Other studies have shown that sham acupuncture,

where random areas of the body were needled, was also effective in treating symptoms. This has led some skeptical authors to conclude that acupuncture is a placebo effect: The treatment convinces people that they are getting better, so they do feel better. However, if acupuncture were completely harmless and improved symptoms, I would recommend it to people who were interested.

Acupuncture is mostly, but not entirely, harmless. Adverse events are not common with acupuncture,

but they do happen. Minor adverse effects happen in about 9% of cases. Serious adverse events such as pneumothorax (sometimes called a collapsed lung) and nerve damage are occasionally reported.

Who to contact

DEAR DR. ROACH: I recently read in a magazine that it would be better to contact a registered nurse over a physician assistant for medical questions. I was surprised. Just what is the hierarchy below a doctor?

How about a nurse practitioner? – P.H.

ANSWER: I don't look at doctors, nurses and physician assistants as being in a strict hierarchy, but as important members of a team, whose job is to provide care.

All of us on a team have different strengths and different knowledge. There are many parts of a nurse's role that I (like the vast majority of doctors) am unqualified to perform, and any hospital (and many doctor's offices, including mine) would descend into chaos within hours without nurses.

Individual offices have different ways of answering patient's questions by phone. In some offices, the doctor answers it directly,

but in others, the nurse or PA might. Both have knowledge and expertise to do so, and can contact other members of the team if necessary. Both PAs and RNs are trained and skilled professionals.

Nurse practitioners are clinicians. They act in nearly all ways as a doctor does with their patients. Most NPs I have known have specialized areas of knowledge. In my first faculty position at the University of Chicago, the NPs there had near-encyclopedic knowledge of gynecologic care of healthy women, and not only did they teach me a great deal, they were a valued resource when I had questions about well-woman care or common gynecologic issues.

My NP colleagues at Cornell have great expertise in care of diabetes, and I fre-

quently solicit their advice; I am also delighted to answer questions my NP colleagues have of me in other areas. Years of practicing together has led to a mutual respect for each other's strengths.

However, NPs are not physicians and generally do not perform surgery as a gynecologist does, nor usually take care of complex cases of Type 1 diabetes with insulin pumps, for example. It's important for all of us clinicians not to exceed our level of competence, and to recognize when we need help and to make appropriate consultations.

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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bankHometown's 18th annual Neighbors Helping Neighbors fundraiser

OXFORD – Robert J. Morton, president and CEO of bankHometown, announced the start of the bank's annual Neighbors Helping Neighbors fundraising drive for 2021 to help support local food pantries.

This marks the bank's 18th year of hosting the program, which invites bank customers, employees, and members of the community to donate money toward food pantries throughout the month of November. All donations (up to \$2,500 per customer) will be matched dollar for dollar by bankHometown and the total raised will be divided among participating food pantries across Massachusetts and Connecticut in the communities the bank serves.

In 2020, through contributions and matching donations, the campaign raised \$32,200 and resulted in \$2,300 contributions to 14 participating food pantries. Over the years, the program has contributed more than \$225,000 to help fight food insecurity.

The bank encourages donations of any amount, with contributions of as little as \$1 to \$5 helping to provide 10 to 50 meals. As an added incentive to give, the bank will offer those who donate the opportunity to win a \$25 gift card at each of its locations.

"Neighbors Helping Neighbors is a great example of how communities come together to help others in need," said Morton. "bankHometown

is proud to lead this annual giving tradition and thankful to our valued customers and employees who selflessly give each year."

Those who wish to participate have until November 30 to make their donations. Checks should be made payable to "bankHometown Neighbors" and can be dropped off at any bankHometown branch or mailed to: Mary C. Mulrenin Executive Secretary, bankHometown, 31 Sutton Avenue, Oxford, MA 01450.

The food pantries that will be supported this year include:

Massachusetts:

- Athol Salvation Army Food Pantry
- Auburn Youth and Family Services, Inc. Food Pantry
- CARE Food Pantry - Clinton
- Food Share - Southbridge, Charlton & Sturbridge
- Friendly House Pantry, Worcester
- Friends of the Millbury Seniors
- Ginny's Helping Hand, Inc. - Leominster
- Oxford Ecumenical Food Shelf
- Sutton Senior Center's Michael A. Chizy Food Pantry
- St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry - Webster

Connecticut:

- Community Kitchens of Northeastern CT - Killingly
- Daily Bread - Putnam

- Friends of Assisi - Killingly
- Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group (TEEG)

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Alzheimer's Support group

The Alzheimer's Support Group sponsored by the Alzheimer's Support Network of South Central MA meets the second Monday of the month at St. Denis Church in Douglas, at 23 Manchaug Road, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. The meetings were formerly held at Webster Manor.

New caregivers can learn from experienced caregivers and support group leaders so they leave each meeting feeling more supported.

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Nichols College professor featured in National Geographic

DUDLEY – The work of Mauri Pelto, PhD, professor of environmental science at Nichols College and a world-renowned glaciologist, is the subject of a National Geographic feature released on October 13.

In August, Cassidy Randall, a reporter for National Geographic, accompanied Pelto to the North Cascades, where he has been studying the impact of climate change and heat waves on glaciers over the past four decades. They found the volume loss in 2021 to be greater than 5 percent of the total – the

highest Pelto had observed since he began monitoring the glaciers 38 years ago.

An increase in heat waves over the past two years has affected glacier regions around the world, according to Pelto, who first reported his observations in the Yukon to NASA's Earth Observatory in 2018. Since then, Pelto, a glaciologist on the Science Advisory Board at NASA EO, has shared his findings on the snow line rise and retreat of the Taku Glacier in Alaska, the rapid formation of melt ponds on Eagle Island Ice Cap, and

the appearance of snow-free glaciers in winter on Mount Everest caused by record warmth in January.

Throughout his career, Pelto has extensively contributed to the body of knowledge on glaciers and is highly sought after by print

and broadcast media for his expertise. The National Geographic article is just the latest publication to feature his research, which has garnered the attention and interest of scientific and mass media news outlets across five continents.

THE CENTER OF HOPE'S HOLIDAY GIVING PROGRAM

The Scott Mackay Golf Tournaments raise over \$31,000 to help make this a success

Every year around the holidays the Center of Hope Foundation begins to prepare for its annual Holiday Giving Program. "It's around this time of year that we see the families we serve begin to worry about how to make this holiday season special for their loved ones. How will they put food on the table for Thanksgiving and gifts under the tree for Christmas/Hanukkah, etc.? This is what the Holiday Giving Program has been about for the last 30 years. Taking the worry and stress away and putting smiles on as many faces as we can," said Cindy Howard, CEO at the Center of Hope.

Many businesses and members of the community step up and participate in raising money, giving gifts, or donating food. The Help Wanted Band has been a major supporter of this program for well over 20 years. Prior to the pandemic, the Center of Hope hosted a fundraiser, Country for a Cause, where The Help Wanted Band would come and play for a fun afternoon of music and dancing. Six years ago, the band lost their drummer, Scott Mackay who said, "Country for a Cause was his favorite band gig throughout the year." It was then that the Mackay and Ljungberg families came together and began hosting a golf tournament in memory of Scott, with the proceeds benefiting the Center of Hope's Holiday Giving and Special Olympics Programs. The generosity from golfers and sponsors has helped the tournament raise over \$31,000 throughout the last 6 years.

The Center of Hope wants to thank the Mackay and Ljungberg families, golfers and the sponsors who have made this event so successful. The proceeds are such a great help in putting smiles on so many faces. "We are truly grateful for everyone's help in making the Holiday Giving Program a continued success," said Cindy Howard.

To learn more about the Center of Hope and the Holiday Giving Program please visit our website at www.thecenterofhope.org or by calling us at (508) 764-4085.

Christmas traditions featured at meeting

CHARLTON - The Charlton Garden Club's Monday, November 8, meeting will feature Sari Bitticks of the Auburn Historical Society and Museum. She will be speaking on Christmas traditions and the History of the Christmas Carol.

Charlton Garden Club meetings are open to all interested in gardening and related themes. Whether you're a novice or accomplished gardener, the Charlton Garden Club is a great place to meet other gardening enthusiasts, learn about plants and planting, and to share your gardening tips and experiences. Meetings are held at 7 p.m. at the Charlton Federated Church. If interested in joining the Garden Club, please contact Co-Presidents, Virginia Charette at (508) 248-7300 or Marcia Liedigk at (508) 434-0507.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Endorsement for candidate LeBlanc

To the editor,

As the Oxford special town election for selectman approaches, I find myself remembering a time long ago when our elected officials acted with integrity, dignity and respect. They cared about the residents and worked together to serve the community and its people. We need a leader who is dedicated to bringing these values back to our board and committed to developing our town and community. There is no better candidate to do this than Norman LeBlanc Jr. The unique combination of his experience and commitment to the town along with his approachable and calm demeanor make him the leader best qualified for the job. I encourage you all to vote for Norman LeBlanc Jr. as town selectman on November 16.

Sincerely,
Nancy Maki, North Oxford

Answered questions

To the editor,

As I was considering who to vote for in the upcoming Oxford Selectman election, I was happy to find the Oxford Democratic Town Committee conducted a Q&A with both candidates to help us understand their positions on certain issues. I really appreciated Norman LeBlanc's ability to answer questions directly and thoroughly. He had a realistic and practical approach to addressing the town's issues and provided substantiated facts to back up his reasoning. I was also impressed with his commitment to serve the town and bringing order back to the current board. I will be voting for Norman LeBlanc Jr. this November 16. He is exactly what this town needs.

Lori Tinsley, Oxford

An approachable leader

To the editor,

We are writing to encourage the residents of Oxford to elect Norman LeBlanc, Jr. as selectman for the town of Oxford. Not only is Norman committed to the town in which he grew up, he also has the necessary experience to lead the town and bring unity and respect back to the board. In addition to being well-liked and respected, Norman is a strong and reliable, yet approachable leader. He is an independent thinker who votes based on the issues and their impacts on the greater community and its residents. We believe it is in the town's and citizens' best interest to elect Norman LeBlanc Jr. on November 16.

Sincerely,
Craig and Sally Lussier, Oxford

Candidate's position

To the Editor,

As we learned more about the two candidates running for selectman in Oxford, it was easy for us to choose Norman LeBlanc Jr. As we listened to his position on various issues, we found that his answers aligned to our beliefs in what the town needs to improve, including serving the community, the chain of command in the town, the communication, maintaining vs. rebuilding and being proactive vs. reactive. We appreciate his ability to research and assess situations based on facts, which shows he has no hidden agenda, and he truly wants what is best for our community. We will be voting for Norman LeBlanc this special election.

Chris and Anna Boulmetis, Oxford

Candidate aware of issues

To the editor,

We are writing to show our support for Norman LeBlanc Jr. in the upcoming special election for the Oxford selectman seat. Norman brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and love for our town that is hard to beat. As chairman of the Master Plan and member of the Master Plan Implementation Committee, he is aware of the issues the town faces and has already played a significant part in addressing them. He, along with the rest of the Master Plan Committee, have done a tremendous job of creating and implementing a plan to improve and sustain our community while minimizing costs to the citizens. Norman will be getting our votes on November 16 to continue the momentum.

Bruce and Susan White, North Oxford

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Chief' corner

Fall and winter changes bring challenges to watch for

By Chief Steven J. Wojnar
Dudley Police Department

Now that fall is well underway and winter is looming, weather conditions are changing. This can cause difficulty for drivers when dealing with such issues as earlier darkness and solar glare. Clocks will fall back in early November also.

I was asked to address the topic of pedestrian safety while on the roads. Also, some people traveling in pairs do not move to a "single file" manner when cars approach, while others walk with the flow of traffic. These situations can also be very dangerous. Based on all these factors, I was asked to provide some pedestrian safety reminders.

The rules for use of streets are contained in both state laws and local regulations. If sidewalks are in place on a particular street, they should be used. If there are no sidewalks, people should walk along the shoulder of the roadway facing into traffic. You are likely to see a vehicle heading toward you if walking in this manner. Unless the shoulders of the road are particularly wide, there is little to no room for people to walk side by side without one person being on the roadway. The acci-

dent possibilities increase, especially when solar glare, inclement weather, early darkness, or other factors reduce a driver's visibility. All precautions should be taken to stay off the roadway whenever possible. When you wish to cross the road, do this at crosswalks when they are available. If there are no crosswalks, pedestrians should yield the right of way to vehicles before crossing and avoid "jumping out" into traffic. The excuse of "pedestrians have the right of way" is used often to explain why people walk side by side in roadways or dart across a road in front of vehicles. This is never the correct way to think when it comes to pedestrian vs. vehicle situations.

Of equal importance at this time of the year is to make every effort to be seen. Wearing reflective vests and or clothing is crucial. You should carry a flashlight or other device to illuminate your path and warn drivers. Darkness can increase the possibility of injuries, so take the extra precautions to be safe. In addition, many side streets, dead ends, or other lightly traveled locations may have people using a more relaxed

approach to pedestrian rules. Do not forget the basic safety rules of looking both ways and paying attention to the possibility of cars. Vehicles may come from anywhere, so it is always important to treat these locations with the proper amount of caution. Sharing the road and respecting each other's use of it will limit accidents and injuries.

Watch for school buses

The pandemic shutdowns caused several changes in our society. One major one was school students participated in remote learning for much of the past year and one half. This resulted in the limited the presence of school buses. Perhaps many drivers have forgotten about the increased presence of these vehicles back on the roads now that we are "open." We have received reports of vehicles travelling through the bus "red lights" while children are entering and exiting. Busses transport hundreds of children each day and, since safety is a great concern, I was asked to remind everyone of the laws surrounding school busses.

The law covering school bus violations is contained in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 90 Section 14. Driv-

ers are required to come to a full stop when these vehicles have red lights flashing and children are entering or exiting the bus. A first offense penalty for a violation carries a \$250 fine. Subsequent offenses can range from \$500 to \$2,000 and can also include a license suspension for a minimum of 6 months. Drivers must also keep their vehicles at least 100 feet behind a school bus. Busses are required to have the words "keep back 100 feet" prominently displayed on the rear of the bus.

It is important to note, there are many other vehicles used to transport school children that are considered outside the normal "large yellow bus." Passenger cars and vans are used quite often to transport students, particularly those who are disabled or with special needs. The Dudley Charlton Regional School District will have a number of these vehicles out transporting children in our area. Due to the less obvious appearance of these vehicles, many drivers fail to stop when required. The same bus rules apply to these vehicles. Please pay extra attention and be aware of their presence.

Thanks again for your ques-

tions 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.

Drug take back



Pictured: prescription drugs and medical sharps turned in during the program.

On Saturday, October 23, the Dudley Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) conducted another prescription drug "take back" event. For the seventeenth time in Dudley, the public had the opportunity to provide for safe disposal of expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs. The service was free and anonymous. This was a well-attended event. Over 30 people dropped off a large quantity of prescription medications. The department also had needle drop boxes for those who sought to dispose of medical sharps. It was another successful event and the Dudley Police encourage everyone to take advantage of these programs in the future. The next one is tentatively planned for the spring of 2022.



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Nichols College receives gift from DCD Automotive for new video scoreboard

DUDLEY – Nichols College recently unveiled a new digital scoreboard donated by Nucar, a subsidiary of the DCD Automotive Group based in Norwood.

A brief ceremony took place on Vendetti Field on September 23, prior to the start of the college's Homecoming football game, which included several members of the Dagesse family, who own and operate the DCD Automotive Group. Founder

Dan Dagesse and his son, President and CEO Chris Dagesse, were joined by Nichols College President Glenn M. Sulmasy, JD, LL.M., Athletic Director Eric Gobiell, Football Coach Dale Olmstead, and Thunder, the school's bison mascot.

The 30-foot state-of-the-art sign – emblazoned with the Nucar logo – was built by Digital Scoreboards LLC, and features hi-def video capability, electronic score-

keeping, and a premium built-in sound system, among other features.

Nichols is the only college in the Commonwealth Coast Conference to have a video scoreboard.

"The new video board is certainly a game changer for Nichols and the athletic department, allowing us to bring a whole new interactive experience for our fans and student athletes," said Gobiell. "We could not

be more thankful to the Dagesse family for their extremely generous gift and continued support!"

In addition to football, the scoreboard will support the other teams that use Vendetti Field, including field hockey and men's and women's lacrosse. Beyond athletics, Nichols plans to use the video feature for campus events, such as movie nights, and extend opportunities to the local community, such as advertising during the game.

"This donation reflects our commitment to innovation and giving back," said Chris Dagesse. "We are also proud that the Nucar name will now not only be gracing dealerships in Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island but will also be attached to this great institution."

Coach Olmstead called the scoreboard "awesome," adding, "Looking down on Vendetti Field from the hill and seeing a scoreboard of that magnitude makes a statement about Nichols commitment to athletics. Our players love it, and I am looking forward to showing it off to our recruits!"

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View the full menu at table3restaurantgroup.com/thanksgiving.
Make your reservation now by calling 774-241-8450.

Healthier baking in the Blackstone Valley

Coconut custard pie for Dad

By Christine Galeone

Coconut custard pie is one of my dad's favorite desserts, so it's something that I've made and brought to him several times since I learned how relatively easy it is to make it. It's also a great comfort food.

In addition to being fairly inexpensive to make, since most of the ingredients are refrigerator and baking staples, it can be somewhat healthy.

Although the saturated fat in coconut oil is something that people with high cholesterol should probably avoid, a moderate amount of unsweetened coconut flakes could be healthy for people who don't have

problems with their cholesterol. Coconut contains protein, fiber, Iron, Magnesium, Copper and Manganese. And many people believe that it has the ability to kill bacteria, reduce inflammation and protect against diseases.

In small amounts (too much can be toxic), nutmeg is also a healthy ingredient. The spice has antibacterial properties, and it's rich in fiber. It's also a source of Iron, Zinc, Copper and Vitamins A, C and E.

The recipe below is also healthier because it requires less sugar than similar recipes. And making the pie crust from scratch is

healthier than buying processed refrigerated unbaked pie crusts.

Coconut Custard Pie

Pie Crust Ingredients:

- 2 Cups of Flour
- 1/2 Cup of Butter
- 1/2 tsp. Baking Powder
- 1/2 tsp. Salt (omit if using salted butter)
- 1/2 tsp. white vinegar
- 7 tbsp. cold water

Directions:

- Combine flour, baking powder and salt in a large bowl.
- Cut in butter until like peas.
- Sprinkle vinegar over the mixture.
- Sprinkle 1 tbsp. of water



over part of mixture, toss with a fork, and move moistened dough to the side of the bowl. Repeat with the rest of the mixture, until it's all moistened.

• Gather dough into ball, and flatten by pressing the side of your hand into the ball (on a floured surface) three times horizontally and three times vertically.

• Roll dough into 1/8 inch thick pie crust.

• Place into pie plate, turn edges under, and flute the edge of the crust.

Pie Filling Ingredients:

- 4 Large Eggs (slightly beaten)
- 2 Cups of Milk (scalded)
- 1/3 Cup of Sugar
- 1 tsp. Almond Extract (or Vanilla Extract)
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 2/3 Cup Unsweetened Coconut Flakes
- Sprinkle of Nutmeg

Directions:

- Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees.
- In a large bowl, combine the sugar, almond extract and salt.

- Add the eggs to the mixture.
- Gradually stir in the scalded milk.
- Pour the mixture into the unbaked pie shell, and distribute coconut flakes evenly over the filling.
- Sprinkle the pie with nutmeg, and bake the pie for about 40 minutes.

This hearty dessert is especially perfect for the colder months. So, it's a great time to try this recipe. Happy (healthier) baking!

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Dudley Womans Club Pocket Book Bingo

The fall 2021 fundraiser is Pocket Book Bingo will be held at Point Breeze Restaurant in Webster on November 7, at 3 p.m. At least 10 designer bags are up for winning, as is a 50/50 raffle and a unique item raffle. Your \$30 entry fee buys 3 bingo cards for all games and one entry into the door prize raffle. Additional bingo cards are available at \$5 for each set of 3 bingo cards. For the giving project please

bring a gently used pocketbook and/or feminine hygiene product for donation to the Webster/Dudley Food Share and receive one free entry to the door prize. Purchase your tickets online for this event at <https://www.dudleywomansclub.org/pocketbookbingo>. Sponsors are: Andrea Kane Decorative Painting, Anonymous Friend of the DWC, Burlap to Boards, D. Mason Paving Inc., Dior On Main

Salon & Spa, Marty's Liquor Store, Marzeotti Group/ReMax Advantage 1, New Start Nutrition, O'Connor Insurance, P&P General Contractors, Precision Auto Rebuilders, Inc., Prestige Salon Nails & Pedicures, Pro Automotive LLC, Sam S. Pappas CPA, Tracy Design and Webster First. Come join in, have some fun and help support DWC charitable endeavors.

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Christmas Craft & Holiday Market



Holiday Bazaar

St. Peter's Parish in Northbridge will be holding its annual Holiday Bazaar on Saturday, November 6, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. in the Parish Hall, 39 Church Avenue, Northbridge. Come out with your family and friends to enjoy the day. They will have all of your favorites: white elephant table, craft tables with beautiful handmade items, handmade quilts. There will also be tables filled with raffles (you never know what will be there) and the famous silent auction and gift basket raffles. Stay and enjoy a bite to eat with all the old-time favorite foods being served. If you would like more information please contact the parish office at 508-234-2156 or email: parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org

Shepherd Hill

Festival of Crafts

DUDLEY - The 29th annual Festival of Crafts at Shepherd Hill Regional High School will be held Saturday, November 20, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Over 125 top-quality New England crafters and artisans will be on hand offering wonderful ideas and items for Christmas gift giving. There will also be raffles and food trucks. Parking and shuttle service is free with free package carry-out service. The fair is sponsored by the Shepherd Hill Music Parents and is held at the high school, 68 Dudley-Oxford Road, Dudley. Look for the \$1 off admission coupon printed on page 15.

Twice Blessed Thrift Shop

Sacred Heart Church "Twice Blessed" Thrift Shop offering clothing and shoes, jewelry, pocket books, fall decor, come check out the in-store pop up sale. Store hours: Saturday, November 6, 8:30am - 12:00pm (first Saturday each month, except when there is a holiday). "Our thoughts and prayers are with all who are directly impacted by COVID-19." Catholic Community of Sacred Heart Church, 187 Hopedale Street, Hopedale, (508) 473-1900 or visit our website; sacredheartopedale.org. Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/twiceblessedthriftshopopedale/

Craft and Vendor Fair

The Boys and Girls Club of Webster Dudley will be hosting a craft and vendor fair at the club on Oxford Ave. on Saturday, November 13, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. We are selling spaces to artists, crafters, holiday fair and decor vendors for \$25 and donation of one raffle item to the host table. For more information contact kmayotte@bgcworcester.org.

Holiday vendor and craft fair

WEBSTER - Holy Trinity Church at 68 Lake Street, Webster will be having a vendor and craft fair on Saturday, November 13, from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. in the parish hall. Join us for a day of shopping, taking a chance on some beautiful raffle items or having a bite to eat. We look forward to seeing you.

Basket Festival

OXFORD - Good Shepherd Episcopal Church (Grace and St. Thomas Church), 268 Main St, Oxford, will hold a Basket Festival on Saturday, November 13, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be basket raffles, a silent auction and baked goods. For more information call (508) 987-1004.

Gently used toy sale

UXBRIDGE - Many families have slightly used Children's items or toys that their families have outgrown. This is a way for parents, grandparents and others to get gifts for the holidays, in light of the reports of shortages of toys etc. this year and also the increased prices.

If you have items you'd like to sell and share with others this is your chance. Suggestions: toys, books, puzzles, craft items, back packs, etc.

On Saturday, November 27, there will be a Gently Used Toy Sale at the Community House, Uxbridge Congregational Church in Uxbridge. Table space donations are \$20.00. The hours will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Deadlines for reserving tables will be November 14. Table space is limited. If you would like to reserve table space, please contact Andrea @ 774-696-6243.

Veterans Day Parade Thursday, November 11

Webster Dudley veterans will be holding the 16th annual Veterans Day Parade on Thursday, November 11. In addition, and prior to regularly scheduled parade activities, we are also encouraging everyone to attend a brief ceremonial tribute to our local veterans who paid the supreme sacrifice for their country in WW II at The Memorial Monument located at the Webster Lake entryway off Thompson Road. We will be placing a wreath at the Women's Veterans' Monument. This ceremony will begin promptly at 9:45 a.m.

Upon completion of our memorial tribute all marching veterans will meet with their perspective colors/weapons at the St. Louis School yard parking area located next to the gymnasium at the bottom of the entryway at 10:15 a.m. Transportation by bus will leave at approximately 10:30 a.m. and proceed to the Municipal Complex in Dudley.

Upon arrival we will assemble at the Veterans' Court of Honor. Ceremonies will commence promptly at 11:00 a.m. Our Chaplain will lead us in prayer, immediately following will be a three-shot volley performed by the weapon detail and Taps. Our guest speaker (speaker to be named) will then present a brief ceremonial message; upon conclusion we will march in procession to the Webster Veterans' Court of Honor for a similar presentation with Chaplain's prayer, three-shot volley and Taps. Ceremonies will conclude at approximately 12:45 p.m..

All scouting organizations who plan to participate are asked to meet at the Dudley Municipal Complex (Town Hall) at 10:45 a.m.

This year's Grand Marshall for the Veterans Day Parade is U.S. Navy Veteran Petty Officer Third Class Francis J. Mikolajczak.

All former military veterans wishing to join us are certainly welcome and are encouraged to march. Those who plan on doing so should meet at the Dudley Municipal Complex at 10:45 a.m.

Host this year for refreshments will be the Polish American Veterans on Ray St. in Webster. All those participating/marching are invited to attend immediately upon conclusion of this event.

Please keep in mind that we are honoring all those who are serving and those who have served this great nation. We sincerely thank everyone for their participation with helping to make this day a memorable one.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Holewa, Chairman Veterans Day Parade

Paul Kujawski, Master of Ceremonies.

Co-Chairmen: Commander Victor Jankowski-Webster/

Dudley Veterans Council, George Bibeau,

Joseph Sendrowski, Stephen Rogerson

St. John Paul II parish bazaar

SOUTHBRIDGE - The St. John Paul II Parish annual Bazaar will be held on Sunday, Nov. 7, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at The La Salle Reception Center 444 Main St., Southbridge. It will feature, craft items, jar deal table, jewelry and watches, theme baskets (\$5 for 26 chances). Breakfast and lunch items will be available for purchase in the beautiful Tuscan Room located in the La Salle lower hall. There will be music, kid games, special raffles and more. Vaccine shots for COVID, the flu and Shingles will be available by appointment only. You can call Ray Fournier at 774-318-8928 to schedule a time between 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Due to COVID-19, we ask that everyone who comes to the Bazaar, to wear a mask to protect all who participate, especially the children.

Food Drive

The Black Tavern Historical Society and First Congregational Church, UCC will once again partner with Tammy Ducharme to collect non-perishable food items to benefit local non-profit organizations and food pantries in our community. The food drive will take place from November 4 to November 7. Monetary donations and gift cards will also be welcomed.

This partnership has resulted in many successful collections in the past, which have proved of great value to our neighbors struggling to meet their food needs at this time. Contactless donations may be dropped off anytime from Thursday, November 4 through Sunday, November 7, on the covered front porch of the Black Tavern Historical Society located at 138 Center Road, on Historic Dudley Hill. Mailed donations can be addressed to The Black Tavern, PO Box 143, Dudley, MA 01571.

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Living ON with Lincoln

Destined for a good life

By Amy LeClaire

I've yet to name the puppies I haven't met yet. Lincoln has left a gape in our hearts, as is the case with the loss of any family member. Loss is loss. But the loss of a family pet, I've come to know, is unique. We not only lose a dog-son or dog-daughter, but also a full-time compan-



Lincoln assuming his namesake.

ion, therapist, clown, walking partner, driving partner, work buddy, and domestic assistant. Dogs, simply put, are just there, and there for you. A dog meets our basic human need for love, affection, security, connection, laughter, and friendship. They give us what matters the most in this life with one simple request asked in return. Spend time with me.

Lincoln adored people. He would rush to the front door to remind me of how important it is to say hello to the Go Green Man, even when my patience with outdoor solicitors had worn thin. "Someone is AT OUR HOUSE and he might want

to PLAY!" He'd wiggle and glance up at me with a shoe in his mouth. "Hurry and open that door. This man looks so fun."

Lincoln was right. The salesman may have interrupted my 5:00 p.m. bustle and train of thought but I needed to cut him some slack. He has a hard job. How many rejections might this young man have already endured? "Hello. My name is Bob. I was wondering if you were interested in hearing—"

"HI!! MY NAME IS LINCOLN! I BROUGHT YOU A SHOE!"

Lincoln made awkward situations pleasant. Professional dog trainers advise that dogs (reasonably) wait at their "spots" while the owner opens the door. A dog needs to learn salutary manners and know his boundaries.

"Want to play a quick game of fetch? Hold on!"

Lincoln was exceptional. He had to be the first to meet and greet. He learned manners by spending long happy and sad days together. He learned by watching his favorite people get along in this clumsy world. "Lincoln - you can have some eggs..." I'd tell him in a gentle, positive tone, "but you have to wait. You just have to wait." I emphasized the key word as though holding up a flash-

card for him. "Got it!" He sat patiently at his spot, lifted his nose to egg scented air, and waited. Every so often he'd break into that infectious Golden smile. "Damn, I got it good here."

Lincoln had it good because he was so damn good. He reminded me of how much there was to be joyful about. Like me, he wore rose-colored glasses and saw the very best in people and in situations. The puppies I've yet to meet will have it good as well. That said, will it be possible for my two pups to be as remarkable as Lincoln? I'm skeptical. In any event, their names will suit who they are, or perhaps who they are destined to be. Lincoln's name emerged while looking at a pocket calendar to plan ahead for his pick-up date. We would bring home a Twin Beau' D puppy on February 12, which happened to be Abraham LINCOLN'S birthday. Truthfully, I can't remember why I walked into the kitchen at times, but the memory of seeing Lincoln's name in that booklet is as clear as the lake waters he would swim through over and over again. Like a message from a bottle, Lincoln's name came and stayed.

Later, we would learn that

his name implies a connection to lakes and cliff climbing, both of which marked two prominent inspirations in his life. He would grow to be a remarkable long distance, stick-holding swimmer. At only six months old, he would climb up and fall off of a small cliff at Newport but he'd be okay. He was robust and resilient and he'd go on loving life until he no longer could.

My family still awaits details on pregnancies and parents of puppies we've yet to meet in the spring of 2022. We haven't decided on whether we'll take two boys, or a boy and a girl (from the two different breeders for which we are enlisted) but we do know of a few names that we like. Though we are hesitant to share names publicly at this time, we hold them dearly in our hearts and want to thank all of you who have taken the time to share names with us! One thing is for sure, the puppies will have it good. Stay tuned for more on Living ON with Lincoln.

Tell me a story about your dog's name - amyleclaire@hotmail.com



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From left to right: Jimmy Machado, Executive Director of MPA, Ryan Fattman, Stephanie Fattman, Alissa Burke, President of MPA.

Fattman receives Legislator of the Year award from police organization

BOSTON – State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) was awarded the 2021 Legislator of the Year award from the Massachusetts Police Association on October 21. The MPA is the largest police organization in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and their Legislator of the Year award is the highest honor conferred by the organization to a legislator for their commitment to law enforcement officers.

Senator Fattman has been a life-long supporter of law enforcement and sees public safety as a top priority of his legislation since he began his tenure at the State House. This was amplified when he stood up to defend law enforcement officers when no one else would. In July 2020,

immediately after the July 4th holiday, Senate leadership unveiled a sweeping police reform bill. Members of Senate were given an amendment deadline of 24 hours after it was released, and then they were expected to vote on the bill within 48 hours of that deadline. Citing that this process was rushed, reactionary, and unfair, Senator Fattman used a procedural move to delay a vote on the bill. The rushed process resulted in a flawed product with multiple unintended consequences. Furthermore, key stakeholders such as law enforcement, were not brought in on the process of creating this bill. When Senator Fattman delayed the bill several days, those stakeholders were allowed a seat at the table. Ul-

timately, the bill passed, but it was not as onerous as the first one that was brought to the Senate floor. Senator Fattman's life-long commitment of law enforcement coupled with the bold actions taken on the Senate floor to bring awareness to this harmful bill, made him a deserving recipient of MPA's Legislator of the Year Award.

"I was honored to receive MPA's 2021 Legislator of the Year Award," said Senator Fattman. "The brave men and women of our law enforcement carry a difficult burden in their profession, and it often comes without any thanks. My commitment to public safety officials in the legislature is the least I can do to say, 'Thank you,' for all that they do for our communities."

bankHometown promotes Donohoe to VP

OXFORD – bankHometown, a \$1.3 billion bank with 16 offices in Central Massachusetts and northeastern Connecticut, recently announced that Thomas "Todd" Donohoe has been promoted to vice president of commercial lending. In this role, Donohoe will serve as a trusted advisor to local businesses, connecting them to the financing and other solutions they need to grow, as well as oversee the bank's new Small Business Initiative.

Donohoe, of Dudley, joined the bankHometown Commercial Lending team in 2015 and was promoted to assistant vice president in 2019. During his 14-year career in banking, he has also held positions as banking center manager at Bank of America, assistant vice president and branch manager at Santander, and sales and service representative at the former Fleet Bank.

Donohoe received a bachelor's degree in Japanese studies and business studies

from Providence College, and spent a year at Kansai Gaidai University of Foreign Studies in Osaka, Japan, where he studied the Japanese language, culture, banking, finance, and management. Donohoe is active in the community, serving as treasurer for the Town of Dudley's Economic Development Committee, treasurer and secretary of the Oxford Lions Club, and treasurer of the Alzheimer's Support Network of South Central Massachusetts.

Samuel Slater EXPERIENCE

Help us tell the story as a Slater Experience Guide

Slater Experience Guides are volunteer hosts of the Samuel Slater Experience (SSE) who support and enhance visitors' experiences throughout their tour of the museum.

As knowledgeable emissaries, they greet visitors, assist with self-guided tours, supply transitional and anecdotal information for each exhibit, explain the digital technology and techniques used, and answer specific questions about the Samuel Slater story, the founding of Webster, and the history of the Samuel Slater Experience.

Requirements

Slater Experience Guides are expected to share an interest and enthusiasm for the history of the American Industrial Revolution and the town of Webster.

They should have good people skills and the ability to actively interact with children, school groups, and adults in public speaking settings.

Volunteer Experience Guides are asked to make a one-year commitment and be available for at least two 3-hour shifts per

month during SSE's hours of operation, including at least two weekend days each quarter.

SSE will provide periodic training sessions covering all aspects of the museum, the technology, and the building. Slater Experience Guides must be able to attend Slater Experience Guide Orientation and Training and are expected to review additional material as periodically provided or approved by SSE in order to stay up to date on any changes, additions or deletions, and to broaden their knowledge of our mission.

Benefits

Experience guides will receive a family pass for free entry to the museum during their tenure as volunteers. They will receive a 20% discount in the gift shop, a 20% discount on event rentals, and invitations to special events.

For an application form, contact Barbara Van Reed at 508-243-6392 or email bvanreed@samuel Slater Experience.org. Applicants will be asked to come in for an in-person interview.

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Gladys E. Kelly Public Library calendar of events

The Gladys E. Kelly Public Library in Webster, 2 Lake St., Webster, 508-949-3880, has listed the following calendar of events. All programs are scheduled to be held outside on the Library lawn (unless otherwise noted), weather permitting.

Adult Programming

Holiday Harvest – November 9, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Join us to celebrate the holiday season with a lovely eye-catching three table display. Elements include how to construct a fun, colorful buffet, tablescaping techniques 101, healthful recipes handouts, easy wine and spirit recommendations, cheeseboard primer, and easy entertaining ideas. There will be samplings of fine chocolate, Klassic Harvest Bark, a festive virgin beverage and more. Space is limited, so call the library at 508-949-3880 to sign up, or email webstercirculation@gmail.com.

Fall Concert Series – Claudia Schmidt – November 13, 2:00 p.m. Claudia Schmidt has been perfecting her craft of performing for almost four decades. It is a quirky and wonderful hodge-podge (her word!) of music, poetry, story, laughter, drama, and celebrating the moment. Work in clubs, theaters, festivals, TV, radio has added depth and dimension, and since she has always included her original work along with very personal versions of the work of others, what you get is a unique look at the world from someone who says what she sees with clarity, humor, and wonder. The San Francisco Bay Guardian said: Schmidt's shows are a lot like falling in love.

You never know what's going to happen next, chances are it's going to be wonderful, every moment is burned into your memory and you know you'll never be the same again." More succinctly, Garrison Keillor said "when Claudia sings a song, it stays sung."

Book Discussion Group – November 15, 6:30 p.m. The Gladys E. Kelly Public Library Adult Book Discussion Group meets at 6:30 pm. New members are always welcome. Next month's book discussion will be on Monday, November 15 at 6:30 p.m. the meeting will take place via Zoom, and will be about the book *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict. Stop by the library, or reach out by phone to 508-949-3880, or by email to ehale@cw-mars.org for inquiries.

Indoor Movie Night – Third Thursday of the month, next on November 18, at 6:00 p.m. Join us monthly on the third Thursday of each month as we show a new release film. We'll make theatre-style popcorn for you to enjoy. The film selection changes each month; call the Library for this month's title.

Children's and young adult programming

Songs and Stories Storytime – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Join Miss Emily Wednesday mornings at 10 a.m. to read books, sing songs, and do rhyme games. Meet other children and caregivers at this community event. After stories, catch up with other community members over a simple craft. This Storytime is best for children 0-5, but all ages are welcome. Masks are required for everyone

in the children's room over the age of 2 years. Disposable masks will be available.

LEGO Club – Thursdays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. LEGO Club is back, and we're so excited to have you build with us again. Stop by the storytime room every Tuesday at 3:30 to freeplay with our bucketloads of LEGOs or try out our weekly challenge. Masks are required for everyone in the Children's Room over the age of 2 years. Disposable masks will be available.

Drop in Paint Hour – Tuesdays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. It's time to break out the paintbrushes. With a variety of paints and paper available, bring your artist of any age to join in the fun. Masks are required for everyone in the Children's Room over the age of 2 years. Disposable masks will be available.

STEAM Kids – Thursdays, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Join Miss Emily in a weekly STEAM event. That is Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics. Each week there will be a new project to tackle from slime making and catapult challenges, to board game development and bath bombs. Every week contains some take home element. These events are best for children 7-12, but siblings are always welcome. Some events may have a limited number of places, in this case children between 7-12 will have preference. Caregivers must remain for the duration of the event. Masks are required for everyone in the children's room over the age of 2 years. Disposable masks will be available.

Programs and events at the Pearle

Join the Pearle L. Crawford Library, 40 Schofield Ave., Dudley for one of the virtual programs at the Pearle. To register go to www.crawfordlibrary.org or call 508-949-8021

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

Toddler time, Wednesdays 11:00 a.m. Come join us for Toddler Time. We will have a different theme each week with stories and songs. This is geared for ages 18 months to 3.

Baby time, Fridays, 11:30 a.m. Join us for a Baby Time story time. We will be doing songs, fingerplays, and reading to our babies. This is geared for babies 0-15 months.

Pre-K power storytime Tuesdays 11:00 a.m. Join Miss Lida for Pre-School Story Time. We will be exploring a new letter each week starting with A and ending in the spring with Z.

Dungeons and Dragons group Mondays 5:00 p.m. Have you ever wanted to learn to play D&D or are you a player looking to join a group? We have an experienced DM starting a group on Monday Nights at the pearle. If you have a Player's Handbook or dice bring them with you. We will have extras for anyone who needs them. Free; registration required.

Pokemon Club, Tuesdays 3:30 p.m. Calling all Pokemon fans!

Children ages 7 to 14 are invited to join our club. This meeting will be a great opportunity to meet other players and share ideas. Please make sure you bring your trading cards and anything else you would like to share and discuss.

Lego challenge Wednesdays 3:30 p.m. Come join us each week for a different Lego challenge, from writing your name in Legos to making a Lego zipline. Ages 5+

Deb's sing and swing, Thursday, November 18, and December 16, 10:30-11:00 a.m. Join Deb Hudgins for this thirty minute interactive program featuring singing, guitar music, dancing, stories, and more! This program will be held via Zoom. Registered participants will receive the link 24 hours before the program. Free; registration required. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

Adult craft workshop: make a holiday craft, Saturday, November 20, 10:30 a.m.-noon. Join library staff for a fun crafting workshop where you'll have the opportunity to make a variety of holiday crafts. All supplies will be provided – just bring your creativity. Free, but space is limited, so please register. Sponsored by the Hugh W. and Harriet K. Crawford Endowment.

Youth Advisory Council, Monday, December 6, 5:00-6:00 p.m. All tweens and teens in grades 6-12 are invited to join. You will gain valuable leadership skills. You can meet new people. You

can earn volunteer hours (please bring your form). Pizza and drinks will be served. Free; Sponsored by the Hugh W and Harriet K Crawford Endowment.

Healing oils of the Bible, Thursday, December 9, 6:00-7:45 p.m. In the Bible, there are more than five hundred references to aromatic plants. Join us as anthropologist Christal Whelan presents the plants most valued in the ancient Middle East through relevant passages in the Bible. Essential oils extracted from these key plants were used for religious ceremonies, anointing kings, healing the sick, embalming the dead, and as perfumes and ointments. Participants will have the opportunity to sample twelve therapeutic-grade essential oils chosen to highlight the rich diversity of cultures, races, and ethnicities of the Biblical world and each participant will receive a kit with their own samples of oils to enjoy. Free, but space is limited; registration required. Sponsored by the Hugh W and Harriet K Crawford Endowment.

Make a gingerbread house, Saturday, December 11, multiple sessions. Come make and decorate a gingerbread house. We'll have everything you need to create your own unique house. Free, but space is limited, so please register. Sponsored by the Hugh W and Harriet K Crawford Endowment.

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November events at Booklovers' Gourmet

November Art Exhibit & Sale - "It's a Colorful Life." paintings by Jennifer Niles will be on display and for sale November 2-30, at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 East Main Street, Webster, during regular business hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10-5, open Wednesdays until 6. For more information call 508-949-6232 or email deb@bookloversgourmet.com

Artist's Statement: I am a self-taught artist living and working in Paxton, Mass. I've been drawing all my life, and for many years concentrated on pen & ink illustrations including commissioned house portraits. In 2001 I began experimenting with acrylics, inspired by the comical antics and effortless elegance of my two cats, PK and Nellie. From there, I developed a recognizable, whimsical style usually featuring bold color and cheerful subjects from everyday life. In recent years, I've started teaching both adults and children, including my popular "Paint Your Pet" classes. Whether it is animals, my surroundings here at home in New England, or scenes from daily life, I never fail to find inspiration.

Join us on Saturday, November 6, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. for a Children's Author Extravaganza featuring three local authors and their new books! Please register to attend by calling 508-949-6232 or emailing deb@bookloversgourmet.com.

Julia Kneeland is a Connecticut author of Jig Gets Lost, an adventure story about a dog named Jig. He lives in a big city and decides he wants to go exploring. One day he leaves his home and discovers the wonderful smells from the street vendors selling all different kinds of foods. He meets a young vendor who gives him a treat! But when he looks around to get back home, he cannot find his way.

Julia Kneeland is a retired public school teacher. She taught in Eastford and Tolland Connecticut for twenty-six years. She especially enjoyed teaching writing classes to her fifth grade students. She would share with them her own writings. Also, she participates in the Teacher as Writer classes at University of Connecticut.

Pedro Samuel Saquic and Ana Echevarria DeSaquic are a mother/son duo authors of the bilingual book Pedro Penguin:



Let's Go to the Beach/Vamos a la Playa. Pedro Penguin a great story that teaches children to be kind and share.

Ana and Pedro live in Rhode Island. Ana enjoys writing and crafts while Pedro loves watching gaming videos and playing his Nintendo Switch games. They're tight-knit and enjoy spending family time at the beach. Pedro is an energetic young one who enjoys nature and playing in the great outdoors. The pair hopes to inspire other families to try new activities and stay positive no matter what obstacles arise in life.

Shawn Boyle of Massachusetts, is the author of several children's books in The Chief & Lefty series, which take place in Paperville City, a place where almost everyone and everything is made of paper. The top cops in charge of keeping everyone safe are The Chief, a paper action figure and Lefty, a paper hand turkey. They deal with great adversity when they encounter an epic losing streak trying to catch bad guys.

Shawn currently lives in Massachusetts with his wife, two daughters and son. Shawn has spent the last several years as a stay at home dad. In a different lifetime, Shawn had a job in finance just outside of Boston. He has also tried his hand at stand-up comedy and improv.

On Saturday, November 13, from 1-3 pm join us in welcoming Sharon Healy-Yang, author of a new film noir mystery Always Play the Dark Horse, the third installment of her Jessica Minton Mystery series. Once again diving into the perspective of Jessica Minton, Always Play the Dark Horse shows a gradual but significant transformation in this main character; Healy-Yang describes the newly engaged Jessica Minton as someone who has transformed from the strong woman who felt she had to prove herself to the strong woman who is confident in having proved herself.

Healy-Yang finds mystery narra-

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tives as the best format to imagine contemporarily written film noir worlds, as the genre regularly proves itself particularly adept at moving readers into dreamy and shadowy new worlds with sharp twists and turns.

Always Play the Dark Horse returns to these aesthetics as Healy-Yang once again brings the magic of film to the page for all mystery-book lovers.

Sharon Healy-Yang is an aficionado of 1940s cinematic and written mysteries. A professor emerita at Worcester State University in Massachusetts, where she was known for her 1940s hats, she had the great fortune to share her love of literature and film with her students in her courses. Now retired, she's excited to recapture for readers the smart-talking heroines, suspense, adventure, and sharp wit of 1940s films in her Jessica Minton Mystery series: Bait and Switch, Letter from a Dead Man, and Always Play the Dark Horse.

Local residents make Dean's List at Wentworth Institute of Technology

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

Nicole Thackaberry of Douglas.

Abagayle Morin of Dudley.

Kevin Huang of Oxford.

David Peloquin of Oxford.

Jared Creighton of Uxbridge.

Wentworth Institute of Technology

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



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Interested applicants may direct questions and application requests to **Jessica Pinto-Boniface at 508.248.7242**



BHS 1961 reunion

The Bartlett High School graduating class of 1961 recently held their 60th reunion with a luncheon at Point Breeze. Sixty members of the class and guests attended the event, which included a "sneak peek" for some classmates at the nearly completed Samuel Slater Experience (<https://samuelslaterexperience.org>). Those who visited the museum were quite taken with the impressive presentation and high tech infusion with historic artifacts that bring the history of Webster's mill origins to life in the former armory building on Ray Street.

OHS scoreboard dedicated to Cdr. Michael Masley Jr.

The Oxford High School football field scoreboard was dedicated to Cdr. Michael C. Masley Jr. before the game on Friday, October 23. School and town officials presented the program with Cdr. Masley's family members present.

Cdr. Masley graduated from the US Naval Academy with honors in 1975. Cdr. Masley served 20 in the Navy, retiring from active duty in 1995.

Cdr. Masley was then hired as the first Senior Naval Science instructor at Oxford High School and began the Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Core (NJROTC) unit at the school. Under his direction,



the unit earned 25 national program awards in 20 years. Cdr. Masley not only led his unit to achieve great recognition, he was a mentor and friend to his cadets and their

families. He retired from his post as director of the NJROTC unit in 2017. See more photos on the Yankee Xpress Facebook page



Oxford High School's Navy JROTC Naval Science Instructor Master Chief David Youngsman addressed Cdr. Michael Masley's family and the audience at the football field scoreboard dedication on Friday evening, October 22.



Members of the Oxford NJROTC participated in the dedication ceremony.



Cdr. Michael Masley (right) sharing a proud moment with his unit in Alabama years ago. Photo from Facebook



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Retired Coach Laboissonniere honored



Pictured (l to r) Alex Nunez, Coach Dane Laboissonniere and Sam Kontoes.

The Bartlett High School Football Gridiron Club honored retired Coach Dane

Laboissonniere at the first home game at Memorial Athletic Field. Coach L was

honored for his commitment and dedication to the organization for the last 11 years.



Although his tenure as head coach has ended, his legacy will remain forever. Coach L brought us six playoff wins, three championships and most importantly ended his career with wins against Southbridge.

Coach L is also recognized for assembling a talented and dedicated coaching staff. Thank you for mentoring so many young athletes and for your contributions to the tradition of Bartlett football. Coach L was presented with an engraved football by former players Alex Nunez and Sam Kontoes.

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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](https://www.facebook.com/mrjohnpaul)



Q. I recently purchased two Duralast Gold car batteries. They both have removable caps to check water level. I thought I would be replacing the old batteries with sealed maintenance free batteries, but the caps come off to check water level. I had a hard time finding replacement batteries, so I purchased these two. The auto parts store told me that these batteries should never require water added. Can you tell me if that is true, and if not what type of maintenance I need to perform with these?

A. Once upon a time all batteries required water to be added. In fact checking water level was standard procedure during oil change service. Today most batteries are maintenance free. Some batteries are sealed and some, like the batteries you purchased, have removable caps. During the life of the battery most people will never add water to their car's batteries. Since your batteries have removable caps, there certainly is no harm in remov-

ing them and adding water (distilled water only) if the fluid level is low. If you are adding water periodically suspect that the charging system is overcharging the battery and "boiling" off the water. If this is the case, have the charging system evaluated.

Q. My wife just purchased a 2021 Volvo XC40 T5 R design. We have been told that we can use regular gas in this vehicle. Exactly what grade of gasoline should we be using for this vehicle?

A. Fuel requirements are typically listed in two ways. The fuel that is required or the fuel that is recommended. In your particular model the XC 40 T5 Volvo requires premium fuel (91 octane or higher). This applies to all T5, T6 and T8 engines, and recommends 93 octane fuel for optimal performance and fuel economy. Volvo recommends (not requires) premium fuel (91 octane and higher) for T4 engines. Volvo goes on to say engine reliability should not be affected as long as 87 octane fuel or higher is used. In the case of your 2021 Volvo XC 40 T5, you should be using fuel with an octane rating of 91 or higher to prevent engine damage.

Q. With the shortage of used cars, how do I know the car I'm considering buying wasn't involved in a recent flood?

A. Here are a few things to look for. Inspect the car thoroughly, look for rust stains inside the car especially around seat brackets. Does the car smell

like mold/mildew or does it smell like someone is trying to cover something up? Look in the trunk, under the spare tire. On an SUV lower the spare tire and look for mud and debris. If the spare tire looks like it was just steam-cleaned, be suspicious. A spare tire that has been under a vehicle for a few years should be dusty, not caked with mud or spotlessly clean. Look for water in the headlights and taillights. Open the hood and look for water stains, mud and dirt in nooks and crannies, like the alternator, cooling fan and other surfaces. Check fuse boxes for signs corrosion. Recent rust on unpainted screws indicate moisture. Check all the fluids, if they are milky color this could indicate water contamination. On a warm day, if all of the windows have condensation, this could indicate the interior has been flooded. Finally, when in doubt have a good repair shop inspect the vehicle before you purchase it. And remember what mom said: if the price looks too good to be true, it probably is.

Q. Headlights are clouded up on my 17-year-old Infinity, what to do?

A. You have a couple of options. The cheapest and sometimes the most effective method is to have the headlights cleaned. You can DIY it with some kits. Some use a buffing wheel that attaches to a power drill, others use a series of very fine sandpaper and then polishing compound. You can also have the lenses professionally cleaned (about \$100-\$125). Finally you can replace the headlight assemblies with a quality aftermarket part.

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Pete's Sports



Peter Coyle

Oxford Pirates in gear for playoffs

Happy Thanksgiving to all the local sports fans.

First off is the Oxford Pirates football team. The Pirates, 6-2, are going to the state playoffs with their huge 36-7 romp over Leicester last Friday night at Oxford High School. According to the MIAA website as of this past Sunday, Oxford will travel to number 7 seed Manchester Essex Regional HS who went 6-0 so far this season. They are located in Manchester

by the Sea. For all you Pirate fans, that's about 85 miles away by automobile. For all you real Pirate fans, get on your Pirate ship and navigate your way up the north shore. If you have a good crow's nest, you might get their in a day. The MIAA has a way of making us local schools get to the gas pumps. This trip will hurt in your pocket book. So let's bring home a victory. Oxford alumn and Head Coach Jeff Clarkson deserve a tip of the fedora not only for the huge win over Leicester that secured a playoff slot, but for having the most consistent football program in the

South County over the past five-plus years.

Wins and losses are the obvious trademark of a great program, but Clarkson has built an old school culture with new age ideas and has proved he is the smartest guy in the football coaches' classroom in these parts. Hey, nobody else is doing this consistently, so it's Clarkson's time to be the guy. Being a former Oxford Pirate puts him in the dinosaur category these days. Clarkson deserves that title as the smartest considering everything starting with feeder systems to enrollment and everything else

that is imaginable when you have to build a program.

Parents included, meaning they get in the way of most anything in today's world. Parents are the biggest obstacle and are every high school coaches' nightmare. They can run a coach out of town very easily. Just look to your neighboring high school football programs for consistency and the closest comparisons are eastward to Grafton and Northbridge and Blackstone Valley Tech. Look at our own neighbors and it's a struggle to build and maintain a winning culture. These times are not easy to be a coach.

Most of us baby boomers could never coach as we were coached back in the glory days. Remember when everyone got a trophy 15 years ago? Well nobody wants a trophy today. They don't care anymore.

Back to Oxford football. To qualify in consistency it means do it for five years in a row at a high level. Oxford and Clarkson have done this. Good for the Pirates. Oxford will play MER in Manchester by the Sea Friday night. Sixteen teams qualified in Division 8 and that's the Division Oxford is placed in because of enrollment numbers, but they play a regional school in Eastern Mass.? Go figure? The winner advances to the semi finals. **Go Oxford.**

Turkey Day football

Are you getting ready for your Bartlett-Southbridge Granddaddy Turkey Day game? Or how about the Shepherd Hill Tantasqua approaching 50 years of playing each other on Thanksgiving Day? Or the newly formed Oxford - Bay Path Turkey Day game?

Somewhere in November there is a Thanksgiving Day. Don't tell the MIAA that because they want to go straight to Christmas so their Texas-Florida-Ohio football playoff model doesn't include the traditional over 110 years for some schools playing a meaningful game against your rival on Thanksgiving morning.

November was always the month that we counted down the days to the most important day ever in high school sports - Thanksgiving Day football. It's just not the same since the MIAA blew

up Turkey Day across Massachusetts 15 years ago. Entire communities used to gear up for the 10:15 a.m. kickoff and family turkeys were precisely cooked and timed around that kickoff time. Local taverns and bars opened their doors at 6 a.m. for indoor tailgating for all local fans that included a breakfast menu with a bloody Mary. Times have changed. Even my close friends and confidantes keep telling me to get off the Thanksgiving football soapbox.

Times have changed for sure and you better believe this for Thanksgiving Day 2021, Southbridge is in jeopardy to forfeit playing football against Bartlett because they cannot produce a team because of not enough players. Yes, Southbridge has already forfeited two games this 2021 season because of not enough players.

Safety concerns were the obvious reason to forfeit and the elaborated breakdown stems from the MIAA playoff format beginning 15 years ago. The bottom line is the MIAA took the fun out of football for kids. Their Florida, Texas, and Ohio adoption football playoff format has left the suburban schools in Massachusetts with a lack of interest for playing football. Way to go MIAA. Add the concussion controversy and the end result is crystal clear to this address. You can't play football with 20 players in your program. High School football needs a shot in the arm. Start with going back to scheduling teams that are in the radius of 15 miles. Forget the MIAA schedule. That's for Eastern Mass, not us.

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Tales from beyond

Old Coot of Mount Greylock

By Thomas D'Agostino

From our latest book, *Strange New England* by History Press. In 1861, a North Adams farmer named William Saunders, like many of his time, left his home to fight for the Union in the Civil War. Saunders kissed his wife and children goodbye on the promise of a speedy return. During his tenure as a soldier, he wrote faithfully to his wife, Belle,

who waited anxiously for her beloved to come home. About a year after enlistment, a letter arrived at her door stating he had been seriously wounded by a cannonball in battle and was not likely to survive his injuries. This would be the last correspondence she would receive in regard to her husband.

Her sorrow was deep, for she feared the worst of his fate, yet she needed to tend to the farm. She hired a young man named Milton Clifford to help with the work while she and the children did what they could. As time passed, she realized that her husband must have perished in the war and eventually married Milton,

who, in turn, adopted her children.

The War Between the States ended in 1865, and the soldiers of both sides went back to their respective lives. One of these was a bearded, weathered farmer named William Saunders, who had survived his injuries only to continue fighting for the cause. Saunders made his way back to his home, gaunt, tired and ragged yet eager to reunite with his wife and children, who were but babies when he left.

His joy turned to disbelief when, from afar, he saw his wife in the arms of another man whom his children now called "Daddy." This devastated the poor Saunders, who realized his family had gone on without him during his absence. Instead of encountering them to announce he had come home, he turned and headed toward Mount Greylock, where he built a crude cabin in the remote portion of Bellows Pipe. There he lived out the rest of his days, occasionally working at local farms for his necessities. The locals called him "Old Coot," as he never gave them



a proper name. This moniker he was happy to accept. No one he knew before recognized him due to the injuries he suffered in battle and the aging beyond his years from the rigors of the war. It is said that he even helped at his own farm, sometimes joining his family for meals. Whenever he faced his family, it was with his long, straggly hair covering what was left of his gaunt face. To say he may have gone insane, either from the war or over losing his family, was an understatement. Either way, one cold winter day in January, hunters stumbled upon his shack, where they found Old Coot dead. They were more than frightened when his spirit jumped from his body, bolted out the door and flew up the mountain-

side. To this day, his "be-dragged spirit" is seen on Mount Greylock, always ascending the peak near Bellows Pipe and Thunderbolt Trails, but never reversing direction.

Bellows Pipe derives its name from the wind that whistles through the pines, making the sound of a large pipe being blown into. Is it the wind, or could it be the wailing of a sad spirit that left for a good cause only to be left behind?

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.

Gary McKinstry returns for Harrington Auxiliary benefit

SOUTHBRIDGE: The Harrington Auxiliary is proud to bring back Gary McKinstry, world-renowned, professional medium and psychic, to the Southbridge Senior Center 153 Chestnut Street in Southbridge. McKinstry's presentation, which offers attendees an opportunity to connect with loved ones who have passed to the other side, will take place on Wednesday, December 1, from 6 to 8 pm.

McKinstry's psychic activities are legendary and have been chronicled in Ghost Hunters of America: Real Stories of Paranormal Investigators. He is one of a handful of psychics to have toured the Victorian Man-

sion in Gardner, which he certified as unquestionably haunted. McKinstry has also verified that the Public House in Sturbridge is haunted and has been since the Colonial era.

At the event attendees will have an opportunity to purchase raffle tickets for a one-hour private reading with McKinstry. Raffle tickets are three for \$5.

Tickets for the main event are \$25 and can be purchased through Harrington Hospital's volunteer office at 100 South Street, Southbridge. For more information, please call 508-765-6473 or email khibbard@harringtonhospital.org.

This event featuring Gary



Gary McKinstry

McKinstry is held in memory of Cecile T. Edmunds. All proceeds enable the Harrington Auxiliary to provide programs, equipment and other items that promote the work of UMass Memorial Health Harrington.

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Tips on financial planning



Dennis Antonopoulos

Your employer-sponsored retirement plan is a valuable asset. But sometimes things happen that can affect the status of your plan. So, for example, if you work for a hospital that changes ownership, and you have been participating in a 403(b), 457(b) or 401(k) retirement plan, what should you do with it now?

Managing your retirement plan under a new employer

Basically, you have four options:

• **Cash out your plan**

You can simply cash out your plan and take the money, but you'll have to pay taxes on it, and possibly penalties as well. So, unless you really need the funds and you have no other alternative, you may want to avoid liquidating your account.

• **Roll your account into your new employer's plan**

If it's allowed, you can roll over your old 403(b), 457(b) or 401(k) plan into your new employer's plan. Before making this move, you'll want to look at the new plan's investment options

(which should be numerous) and fees (which should be low). If you move the money directly to the new plan, you won't be taxed at the time of the transfer, and your funds can continue to grow tax-deferred.

• **Leave your plan with your old employer**

If your account balance is above a certain level, you may be able to leave your plan with your old employer's plan administrator. You won't be able to contribute any more money to the plan, but if you like the investment options you've chosen, keeping the money in your old plan might be a viable choice.

• **Move your account into a traditional IRA**

One possible advantage to moving your 403(b), 457(b)

or 401(k) into a traditional IRA is you'll open up a world of new investment options, because you can fund your IRA with virtually any type of vehicle, including stocks, bonds, mutual funds, certificates of deposit (CDs) and exchange-traded funds. And if you already have a traditional IRA, you can combine the new funds with the old ones, making it easier to track your holdings. As is the case with leaving your money in your old employer's plan or transferring it to a new plan, you'll continue to benefit from tax-deferred growth. Keep in mind, though, that IRAs have costs, too, possibly including transaction costs to buy or sell new investments. (One more thing to keep in mind: When you want to

move a retirement plan to an IRA, you may want to make a direct rollover, so the old plan's administrator moves the money directly into the IRA, allowing you to avoid immediate taxes. If you were to make an indirect rollover, you'd get the money yourself, but your old employer would have to deduct 20% for federal taxes, and you'd have to deposit the entire balance, including the withholding, into your IRA within 60 days.)

Which of these choices is best for you? There's no one "right" answer for everyone. You'll want to consider all the options and

possibly consult with your tax advisor and financial professional. But do all you can to protect your retirement plan – you've worked hard to build it, and you'll need to rely on it to help you pay for your years as a retiree.

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

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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What is an attractive nuisance?



Mark Marzeotti

An attractive nuisance might sound like a trendy term for a cute kid or a pet begging for your attention. But it's actually a real estate term, and as a homeowner, you should know what it means.

What is an attractive nuisance?

An attractive nuisance is the name given to any object or structure on a property that can lure people – typically children and elderly adults – into unsafe or even deadly situations.

A swimming pool is one of the most popular attractive nuisances known to homeowners. If a pool is not guarded by a gate, fence, or other type of enclosure, someone can wander over, fall in, and potentially drown.

Here's a list of common attractive nuisances: trampolines, jungle gyms, swing sets, dangerous animals, including some dog breeds, decorative fountains, Koi ponds.

That last one you might question, but remember that it is possible for someone, especially a small child or an adult with limited mobility, to drown in shallow water.

An unattractive liability for homeowners

When you set up a homeowner's insurance policy, you will likely be asked about whether you have some common attractive nuisances on your property. But don't think you're completely in the clear if your backyard doesn't have a pool or your kids prefer to play on the swings at the park.

It's not about an object being attractive to the eye as much as it is about appealing to someone's curiosity. And no one is more curious than a child, who can easily get into all sorts of trouble the moment an adult looks the other way.

"The owner of the property has to have it in mind that there may be a chance that a child can stumble onto their property for something that might not be shiny or pretty in the aesthetic sense, but they certainly can appeal to a young person's curiosity. A few more examples:

- An abandoned, rusted-out car that can cause injury
- Discarded appliances that can cause entrapment
- A construction site with dangerous tools or deep ditches
- A tractor or other piece of rideable equipment that could be deadly in the hands of the wrong driver

It's important for homeowners to understand that

young children don't really understand what it means to trespass – all they want is to get close to whatever it is that has grabbed their attention.

Does insurance cover attractive nuisances?

In the case of a lawsuit stemming from an injury or death caused by an attractive nuisance, an insurance company will fight for the homeowner if precautions were in place. However, there is a burden of proof for the homeowner.

For example, if someone sued a property owner for an injury or death sustained in their pool, it wouldn't be enough to prove the pool was fenced in; the homeowner would have to prove that the gate was closed and locked, which can be difficult. Even a "No Trespassing" sign on the property might not be of much help.

Protect yourself and others

Does this mean you have to give up on dreams of owning a home with an Olympic-sized pool with a diving board

(that's another attractive nuisance, by the way) or a water fountain that you can dance in like they did in "Friends"? Not exactly. But you do have to take measures to secure them all and

make sure they are properly covered under your homeowner's insurance policy so that you (and future buyers, possibly) can enjoy your attractive nuisances responsibly. A realtor can help you

identify these risks in your home and as always help you get the most value from your home in this brisk market. Call a Marzeottigroup team member today at 617-519-1871.

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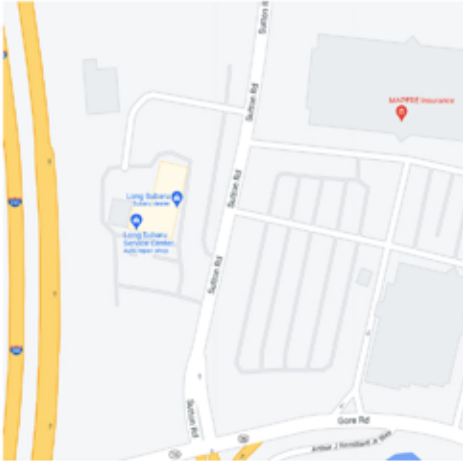
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