

May 27 - June 24, 2022

Chamber's Hebert receives 'Manufacturing Champion' award

Directors of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce undoubtedly knew soon after hiring Jeannie Hebert as president and CEO fourteen years ago that they had made the right choice.

This has become ever more apparent since 2008, as Ms. Hebert lifted the Whitinsville-based organization to new heights.

Drawing on an already established familiarity with the Worcester-area business scene and the solid rapport she had forged with state and federal legislators, Ms. Hebert set to work raising the Chamber's profile and influence. She put economic development at the top of her agenda, and set about reaching out to the partners across the region and the Commonwealth who would help her achieve the Chamber's objectives.

In recognition of all that she has achieved, Ms. Hebert was honored as the Worcester Business Journal's "Manufacturing Champion" award winner during a ceremony held in the Hogan Campus Center at the College of the Holy Cross on May 10th.

She was in good company in that re-

gard. Also celebrated at the event were such high-octane companies as Solvus Global (Rising Star Manufacturer), Burkart-Phelan Inc. (Top Product Design & Innovation), Ascend Elements Inc. (Green Manufacturing), Bristol Myers Squibb (Workforce Development & Productivity), Waters Corp. (Collaboration in Manufacturing) and Catania Oils (Manufacturer of the Year).

In her keynote address to an audience that included local titans of commerce from a variety of fields, Christine Nolan compared the ramp-up of U.S. production following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 to a similar resurgence that took place in response to the onset of the Covid-19 virus in 2020. Ms. Nolan, who is director of the Massachusetts Center for Advanced Manufacturing with the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, noted that when the coronavirus struck, an emergency response team mobilized by Gov. Charlie Baker immediately began manufacturing "hospital gowns, masks, face shields and ventilators"—a plethora of "PPE" materials.

Ms. Hebert played an active role in

this process.

The initiative that sprang from the ensuing pandemic has not slowed, but rather accelerated, Ms. Nolan told her audience. Soon, she said, the state will be launching "a new brand, 'MassMakes,'" which she described as new technology to help for- and non-profit companies continue to do their important work "effectively."

Ms. Hebert and the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce fit nicely as part of this scenario.

Through Ms. Hebert's guidance, the WBJ pointed out in a pamphlet distributed at its "Summit," the Blackstone Valley Chamber created a non-profit agency called the Central Massachusetts Center for Business and Enterprise (CMCBE) that connects businesses to organizations, state agencies and directors. The CMCBE also provides free business counseling, financial analysis and legal assistance to the small business community.

The WBJ further observed that Ms. Hebert "has been instrumental in securing over \$1 million in grants to build the Blackstone Valley Education

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Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Jeannie Hebert speaks to a crowd of business leaders after receiving the "Manufacturing Champion" award at the Worcester Business Journal's 2022 Manufacturing Summit ceremony.



G9 Financial shred event is a backbone of 'Owen forever'

By Rod Lee

Ten years after his untimely death at the age of six, Owen E. Carrigan has not been forgotten by his parents, family members, friends and the town of Millbury.

A buoyant first grader at the Elmwood Street School, Owen was known for his infectious smile and love of sports and the outdoors. That he is sadly missed is reflected in a plaque and tree placed in his honor at the school, in a Facebook page dedicated to his memory, and in an annual shredding event hosted

Volunteers helped collect documents for shredding at G9 Financial's ninth annual fundraising shred event on behalf of the family of Owen Carrigan.

by G9 Financial in partnership with P. Pellegrino Trucking and Ray's True Value.

Dan Girard of G9 Financial, an independent, growing investment and insurance-services firm established in 1999, with offices in Millbury and Franklin, is pleased to be part of a community carrying on Owen's legacy; in Mr. Girard's case by offering residents a chance to dispose of unwanted documents—every spring.

"I'd been wanting to do a shredding event with proceeds going to a charity," Mr. Girard said on the morning of May 14th in the parking lot of Ray Dubois Jr.'s store on Howe Ave. Upon learning of Owen's passing, "I asked the family if we could choose them as a charity and they agreed."

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HEBERT

Continued from page 1

Hub.” A workforce training school located in the Chamber’s Linwood Mill building, the Ed Hub “offers classes focused on advanced manufacturing. These certificate courses in OSHA, MACWIC, NIMS, CAD, Welding, Robotics, Electronics, Shop Math, Blueprint Reading and more are offered to students of all ages throughout Central Massachusetts to help close the work-skills gap.”

Ms. Hebert’s part in the proceedings at the Hogan Campus Center was not limited to the award she received. She also moderated a panel discussion featuring Joseph Basile of Catania Oils, Eric Gratz of Ascend Elements, Odile Smith of Bristol Myers Squibb and Dan Welch of Waters Corp.

In acknowledging receipt of the Manufacturing Champion award, Ms. Hebert thanked “Melissa Kane, an amazing grant writer,” other key members of her organization, and “the many collaborators and



Ms. Hebert serves as moderator of a panel discussion on manufacturing at the Hogan Campus Center at the College of the Holy Cross on May 10.

partners and students” who have made the Ed Hub possible. The students, she said, “came to us with no confidence and they couldn’t get into the voke system.”

Dubbed “the queen of collaboration,” Ms. Hebert used the WBJ Summit to announce additional strides the Blackstone Valley Chamber will be taking in the near future.

“We will be building an electronics and robotics lab,” she said.

Reflecting on the success of her efforts to put education and workforce development at the forefront, Ms. Hebert said “one naysayer said to me ‘this is not going to happen.’ But I’m a dreamer; and, looking out at all of you, I see that you are too.”

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

OWEN FOREVER

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Shawn Carrigan and Michelle Girouard, both of whom were present on May 14th, are appreciative of G9 Financial’s support. Monies raised at the shredding event go toward scholarships for Millbury High School senior student-athletes.

“This year we are giving out six thousand dollars,” Ms. Girouard said. “We get a good turnout for this event. It comes in waves.”

“We stay pretty busy for four hours,” Dan Girard said. “We have raised about \$50,000” since starting the initiative, he said.

The collection is a free service provided by G9 Financial and a cast of volunteers but donations of \$20, \$40, \$60 or more are encouraged. When a man running past waved a greeting to Mr. Girard, he returned the gesture and yelled “hey, make a donation!”

Mr. Girard sees his efforts on behalf of Owen’s family as paying back for his company’s success.



Dan Girard of G9 Financial is joined by Shawn Carrigan and Michelle Girouard, parents of Owen Carrigan, at G9’s annual Owen Carrigan memorial fundraising event at Ray’s True Value in Millbury. Owen died at the age of six in 2012.

“We’re blessed,” he says. Contact Rod Lee at rodlee.1963@gmail.com or 774-232-2999.

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Millbury Senior Center offers lighthouse and cruise tour

Mark Tuesday, June 28 on your calendars, elders; the Millbury Senior Center is sponsoring a Narragansett Bay Lighthouse & Cruise Tour with departure from the Center at 9:30 a.m. and return at 5:30 p.m. The trip includes a full-course lunch at the Quonset Point Officer’s Club (fresh baked scrod or baked chicken with lemon) and seats aboard the Millennium Ferry for a narrated tour of ten beautiful lighthouses and a look at historic Newport Harbor. Cost is \$110 per person all-inclusive.

Call the Center at 508-865-9154 to sign up or for more details.

Summer concerts at the Millbury Senior Center include Robert Black, an Elvis impersonator, on Thursday, June 16, 6:00-7:15 p.m., and 4Ever

Fab, a Beatles tribute band, on Thursday, July 14, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

The Millbury Senior Center is pleased to provide a variety of activities and programs for the town’s senior citizens.

- Herbert Berg Florist of Worcester’s Arrangement Club meets once every month.

- Computer/cell phone classes are held every Thursday from 2:30 to 3:00 p.m.

- The Worcester County Sheriff’s Department offers a house-number program to seniors, to assist emergency personnel in locating homes when responding to calls.

- A representative of Sen. Michael Moore’s office will be at the Center on Wednesday, June 8 from 11:00 a.m. to noon to take questions.

- The Senior Work-off Pro-

gram enables participants to receive up to \$1500 per year to pay their real estate property tax in return for voluntary service to a town department.

- Other activities and programs available to residents at the Millbury Senior Center include vaccine booster appointments, light exercise, Tai Chi, yoga, Wii bowling, mahjong, blood pressure readings, cribbage, social bingo, coloring, the Dull Men’s Club, lunches Monday-Friday at noon, the Friendly Visitor Program, transportation and SNAP applications.

Call 508-865-9154 for further information on any of these offerings.

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Where some ancients gather at ten minutes to eight o'clock

What a curious sight the six or so of us must make, standing at the doorstep of the Dollar Tree in Whitinsville every morning just before the store opens.

People unfamiliar with the scene who are driving past on their way to Shaw's or Koopman's (or maybe McDonald's, for their morning coffee and a breakfast sandwich) must do a double take, or say to themselves "what are all those old guys up to? What are they waiting for?"

The newspaper, for one American greenback—a third of its regular price—that's what.

The composition of the group has not changed much over the

John is the "elder statesman" in his light vinyl jacket and Harvey Industries cap. He is ninety-one going on ninety-two. He touches a stanchion in the parking lot as he walks toward the store from his truck, presumably for good luck.

Frank's thick white hair is combed straight back. He became the talker of the group after Butch suffered a mishap, underwent rehabilitation, and decided not to come around anymore. Frank drops names of people he knows, wondering if we know them too. Or he will complain about such things as Uxbridge raising property taxes

"No, not dead," John replied.

Pablo is still masking up although the rest of stopped wearing them as soon as the sign that they were required for entrance to the store was removed. Pablo is typically in a cheerful mood and liable to break into a rendition of "You Are My Sunshine" or "Good Morning, Vietnam."

Dick wears brown cotton garden gloves even on a forty-degree spring day with the sun flooding the stoop and warming our creaking bones. His car brakes mysteriously started giving out on him a month or so ago. He would have to pull off the road for fear of hitting something. He subsequently traded up to a new vehicle.

Jack is an off-and-on presence. He worked for National Grid, I think, and so pays close attention to construction projects and road work and detours. He will say in amazement "have you noticed how many trees they're taking down around here?"

As for myself, I am unofficial co-captain of this strange band of brothers, with Buzzy, as two founding members of the group. When I am not engaged in the innocuous but often entertaining chit chat that develops between us I am probably thinking about the books from Richard Whittaker's private collection that I purchase on a regular basis from Deb Horan at Booklovers' Gourmet in Webster. I am always trying to grow my own ever-expanding personal library, like Thomas Jefferson did.

I do not know much about Mr. Whittaker but at Ms. Horan's store I typically gravitate to the back room, where the biographies and classics and historical fiction are shelved. I know I will probably find a book previously owned by Richard Whittaker, whose taste matched mine. I latched onto two more of Mr. Whittaker's books recently. The first was Gerald Clarke's

account of the life of Truman Capote. A week or so later I discovered a hardcover copy of In Cold Blood—Mr. Capote's most famous work. Both books, as usual, contained Richard Whittaker's signature just inside the cover, in a flowing, graceful script.

I consider any book owned by Richard Whittaker to be worth the price. In Cold Blood cost me more than I am used to paying

but on the copyright page I saw what I look for as a pre-condition of purchase whenever possible: FIRST PRINTING. That the book and its dust jacket are in near-perfect condition clinched the deal.

I don't mention my visits to Booklovers' Gourmet to the others as we wait for the newspaper. There is more pressing subject matter to discuss: the weather; the Red Sox; presidential poli-

tics; the war in Ukraine; and of course our aches and pains and medical appointments.

We don't contribute much of significance to the public discourse.

But, as Buzzy likes to say, "at least we have fun."

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years. Near as I can determine, all of us are in our seventies, or older.

Buzzy is usually the first to arrive, always pulling into the same parking spot, like a parishioner claiming the pew he is accustomed to occupying Sundays in church. All of us do the same.

Buzzy wears sunglasses to protect his eyes when there is a glare because he recently had cataract surgery. Possessed of an agreeable disposition, he is prone to saying, when the weatherman's forecast is off the mark, "how would you like to make six figures and be wrong half the time?"

on two-family houses "and we were supposed to get something out of it, but haven't."

Frank can be counted on to keep the dialogue going. On a recent Monday morning, noticing a man flying a kite-like contraption powered by a gasoline engine across the sky west to east, toward Mendon and Milford, he said "look at that! Remember, Romasco used to do that!" There were nods of affirmation from those who recalled just such a sight.

"Yeah, and once he ran into some high-tension wires and zap!" John said.

"Dead?"

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Course	Description	Dates
OSHA 10hr General Industry Certification course	This course teaches a variety of required safety & health topics for everyday industry. Certification exam & card included.	2 sessions: July 19-28: T/Th, 5-8pm <i>Or</i> Aug. 16-25: T/Th, 5-8pm
Introduction to Welding	This training prepares students with welding vocabulary, techniques, and basic operations of a welding gun using augmented reality welders.	July 18-Aug.24: Mon/Wed, 6-8:30pm
CNC Machinist Apprenticeship Course	This training is a commitment of 150 hours which includes topics in shop math, blueprint reading, quality assurance, safety, work readiness, CNC mill operations, CNC lathe operations, and gcode. Upon completion of the technical training, the apprentice will be placed with a cooperative employer to receive on-the-job-training for 1 year.	July 18- Sept.28: Mon/Wed/Fri, 9am-3pm
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Boat responsibly: get your 2022 vessel safety check

Tri-State Flotilla 10-2 US Coast Guard Auxiliary VSC Station announces boat safety inspections to be held at the Memorial Boat Ramp, Nipmuc Cove on Wallum Lake on Saturday, June 11 and at the Wallum Lake Boat Ramp, Douglas State Forest, on Saturday, June 18.

Bring any type of watercraft from kayaks, canoes, PWCs, sailboats, cabin cruisers, to ski & pontoon boats for a stern check of equipment for compliance to federal and state safety regulations. Vessels can be inspected on a trailer as well as afloat.

Trailer vessels, not having Webster access sticker and not launching, can be examined at the entrance gate to Memorial Ramp. Personal watercraft, not allowed to launch at the Wallum Lake Ramp on weekends, can also be examined at the gate. Both locations can accommodate boats arriving by water. The stations will be active from 9 AM to 4 PM at both these locations.

Vessel examiners are qualified and experienced to answer any boating related questions or concerns along with being trained to spot any potential problems. They will award your vessel with a 2022 VSC decal if it meets Auxiliary standards on items such as: registration and

hull numbering, life jackets, fire extinguishers, expiration dates on flares (if required), working navigation lights, overall vessel condition, etc.

A VSC is conducted only with your consent; no reports are filed with any law enforcement agency. There are no citations, legal obligations, or penalties on violations or potential problems found. A VSC decal might result in a boat insurance discount and will indicate to law enforcement on the water that your vessel complies with safety regulations. The examiner will give the vessel owner options and information on correcting any issues. Often a quick trip to the nearest boating supply vendor is all that is necessary to obtain missing safety items and easily pass a re-inspection, sometimes on the same day.

Coast Guard Auxiliary vessel examiners will be around the local lakes at various, un-scheduled times during the boating season; they are few in number and not readily available inland. Can't make it to the station...schedule a VSC online at the link below.

Best to take advantage of this scheduled opportunity and start your boating season with a visit to our station and a free 2022 VSC Decal on your craft.

For more information, visit vesselsafetycheck.org or email



CGAux1002@aol.com

Lakeside Kids Event at Memorial Beach: Thursday June 9, 4:00-7:00 p.m.

Sponsored by Lakeview Marine, this event has been planned to introduce the kids of our community to the fun that can be had on and around the water! Learn the many ways to enjoy our beautiful lakes - sign up for swim lessons, try out a kayak, learn fishing casting techniques, "Touch a Boat" get up close to recreational and public safety boats from the police and fire departments. The Coast Guard Auxiliary Tri-State Flotilla will have a boating safety tent with information, handouts, and CG coloring books for kids. VSC examiners will also be available there for boat owners wanting a 2022 decal. The posted activities are subject to change based on weather conditions and vendor availability.

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Oxford HS, Grafton HS celebrate return of Best Buddies prom



After a two-year hiatus due to COVID, Oxford High School and Grafton High School were able to join together once again for the annual Best Buddies prom on Friday, April 29.

The two schools alternate hosting the prom and this year's event was held at Oxford High School. Students are paired with a "buddy" from the special education

program and they meet for one-on-one activities throughout the year. Once again, it was a complete success and everyone danced the night away.

ValleyCast's summer concert series starts June 30th

ValleyCast, the arts and culture arm of Open Sky Community Services, announces the return of its free summer concert series featuring local (and not so local) bands and a wide variety of popular music.

Now in its thirteenth year, the concert series is one of ValleyCast's most popular events at Alternatives' Whittin Mill complex, 50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville.

This year's kickoff is scheduled for Thursday, June 30th. Two bands will play back-to-back on the Dennis H. Rice Community Plaza to coincide with the opening of the new "Beyond Zentangle" exhibit in the Spaulding R. Aldrich Heritage Gallery. Samuel Bowen will perform from 5:30

to 6:30 p.m., followed by the Blackstone Valley Community Concert Band from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

The series continues Thursdays on the plaza from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. through September 1st. In case of inclement weather, the shows move inside to the Singh Performance Center. Cristi Collari, director of community outreach for OSCS, said "this is a wonderful way for people of all ages and abilities to gather together in the plaza and dance or just relax and enjoy a summer event of music by talented musicians while watching the sun set over the Mumford River.

In addition to Opening Night on June 30, here are the other dates for 2022.

July 7: Chuck & Mud and the Hole in the Dam Band.

July 14: Blackstone Valley Bluegrass.

July 21: Country Wild Heart Band.

July 28: Michelle Canning.

August 4: Ash & Eric (formerly The Promise is Hope).

August 11: Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra's Summer Winds.

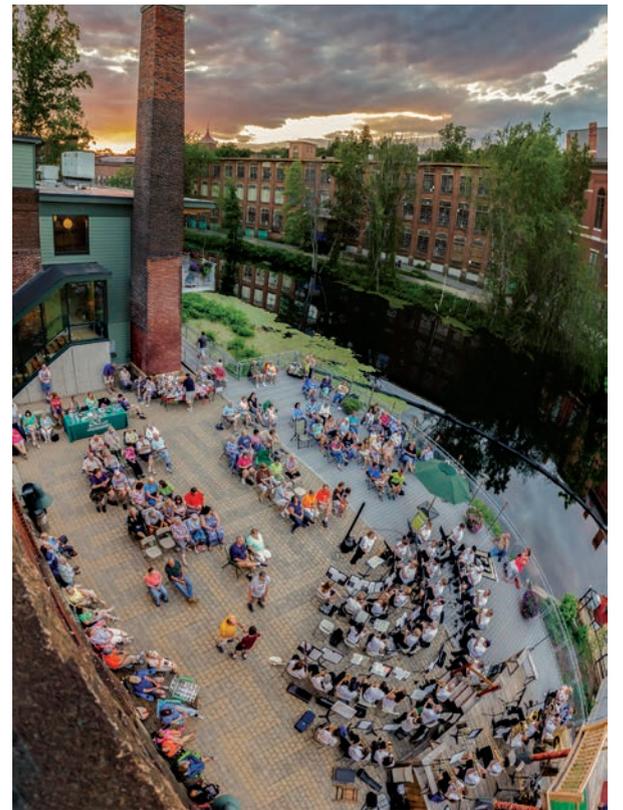
August 18: Le'Mixx Band.

August 25: Grayson Ty.

September 1: The Eagles Experience.

The summer concert series is sponsored by Weirsma Insurance Agency, UniBank, Lampin Corp., Open Sky Community Services, ValleyCast and with a special grant from the Northbridge Cultural Council which is funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

The Blackstone Valley Community Concert Band in performance on Alternatives' Dennis H. Rice Community Plaza. (Photo by Cristi Collari).



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Healthier baking in the Blackstone Valley

Banana Split Brownies

By Christine Galeone

I don't think there are many people who can resist a fresh, delicious brownie. The moist, rich, decadent treat would most likely make the top ten favorite desserts list of every chocolate lover. But they would probably never make the list of top ten healthiest desserts.

Although it might not be possible to make a brownie

– that actually tastes like a brownie – that's both healthy and delicious, it really is possible to make healthier brownies. And this recipe for banana split brownies is one example of how to accomplish that nearly monumental achievement.

It's easy to see why any processed, store-bought brownies are unhealthy. And even though mixes call for a couple of additional fresh ingredients,

and, like most, the results taste great, they're still processed and generally include unnecessary ingredients. But even most homemade brownies that are made from fresh ingredients are unhealthy, because they call for lots of added sugar. In fact, it's not uncommon for a recipe to call for two cups of sugar. That sugar causes inflammation. Inflammation is linked to various diseases and other harmful

health conditions.

This recipe calls for significantly less sugar, because the banana contains natural sugar. It also calls for healthier fats, instead of butter, margarine or other unhealthy fats that can lead to clogged arteries and heart disease. And while walnuts are heart-healthy and brain-healthy nuts, bananas contain important vitamins and minerals, including potassium, vitamin B6, vitamin C and magnesium.



Banana Split Brownies

Ingredients:

- ½ Cup of Unsifted All-Purpose Flour
- ⅓ Cup of Unsweetened Cocoa
- 1 tsp. Baking Powder
- ¾ Cup of Sugar
- ½ Cup of Light Tasting Olive Oil
- 1 tsp. of Pure Almond Extract
- 2 Eggs
- 1 Banana
- ½ Cup of Natural Walnuts
- ¼ Cup of Dark Chocolate Chips (Optional)

Directions:

- Combine flour, cocoa and baking powder in a large bowl.
- In a separate bowl, combine sugar, olive oil, almond extract and one mashed ripe banana.
- Add eggs to the mixture, and beat well with a spoon.
- In a few increments, add the dry mixture to the wet mixture. Blend together with a spoon.
- Mix in walnuts and dark chocolate chips.
- Pour batter into a 9"X9" baking pan.
- Bake in a pre-heated oven at 350 degrees for around 25 min-

utes. Brownie should begin to pull away from the edges of the pan.

Now, if you don't like bananas, this probably won't be your new go-to recipe for summer cookouts. But if you do, you'll most likely find them irresistible. The only temptation you'll have to resist is the one to eat too many in one sitting. Happy (healthier) baking!

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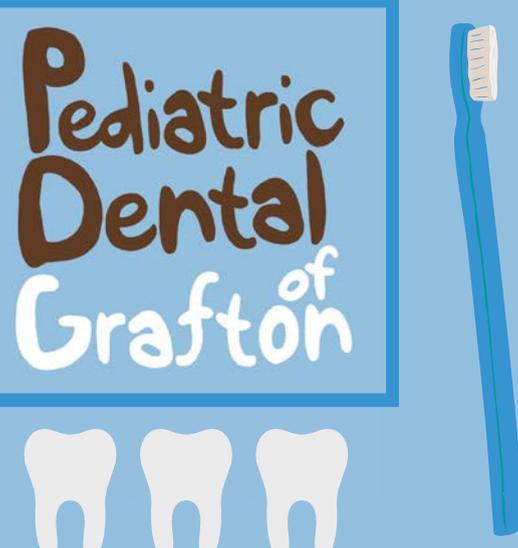


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Grafton PL hosting free food-advice talk

The Grafton Public Library invites interested residents to a free nutrition talk on the topic "How specific foods may be causing your fatigue and weight loss resistance" on Wednesday, June 15 at 7:00 p.m.

Deborah Genovesi, FDN-P, a certified holistic health coach and founder of Deborah G Wellness, will be the presenter.

Certain foods can drain your energy and may cause you to hold into weight, regardless of how many calories you are eating.

Learn more about this subject at the Grafton Public Library, 35 Grafton Common.



Deborah Genovesi



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Grafton's Business Scene – May 2022

By Christine Galeone

With May and June being two of the most beautiful months of the year, this is the perfect time to get outside and reconnect with nature. It's also a great time to reconnect with other members of the community.



Shoppers browse a previous year's Grafton Farmers Market. (Courtesy of Grafton Farmers Market Facebook Page)

Thanks to several local organizations and businesses, Grafton is an ideal place to reconnect with both. There are also opportunities to socialize and enjoy nature at the same time.

Grafton Recreation recently announced that it will be holding two free fun family events. On Saturday June 18 from 10 a.m. until noon at Millbury Street School, kids

can explore a variety of big rigs during **Big Truck Day**. Then, on Thursday June 23, families are invited to bring lawn chairs or blankets to gather at the Grafton Common under the stars to watch **"The Secret Life of Pets 2."** The free film, presented by **Quite Fetching**

Lumber, the hardware and paint store in North Grafton. Besides selling a varied selection of items that shoppers can use to enjoy spending time outdoors, the store will be holding a propane sale on Friday May 27 and Saturday May 28. After buying a \$15 tank fill, customers with a free advantage account will receive a \$15 Kooon that can be used for anything in the store June 1 through June 14.

In June, two shops that can help people enjoy the outdoors and gatherings – one through breezy style options and one through décor – will celebrate milestones. **Off the Common Antiques Marketplace** a multi-artisan, multi-vendor shop, located at 4 Worcester Street in Grafton, will celebrate its 5th anniversary. The shop sells beautifully restored furniture, farmhouse style items and other antiques, in addition to new handmade items from local artisans. And **Paisley Boutique**, located at 40 North Main Street in North Grafton, will celebrate its 8th anniversary. The shop, which also has stores in Mashpee and Hudson, carries affordable boutique style clothing and accessories in classic and contemporary styles.

Beginning June 15, people can also come together to appreciate the joys of nature and

community while supporting small businesses. The **Grafton Farmers Market**, which will be held every Wednesday from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. on the grounds of the **Grafton Municipal Center** at 30 Providence Road, will return for the season. With a wide variety of vendors (which vary each week), the volunteer-run market works hard to achieve its goal of providing "fresh, local food directly from farmers to consumers." Its vendors offer an array

of local produce, baked goods, jams, syrups, candy, natural skincare items, handcrafted gifts and more.

Finally, for people who would like to buy Memorial Day baskets, there are at least two Grafton businesses that sell beautiful arrangements. The baskets can be found at **Perreault Nursery & Landscape Supply** in North Grafton and at **Pete's Oasis at Blackstone River Farm** in South Grafton.

With everything that's hap-

pened in the world in the last couple of years, everyone could use some relief. Enjoying the sunshine and fresh air with family, friends and neighbors is something that we can be grateful for. At the same time, it can also help us to appreciate the freedom that so many of our brave military members gave their lives to protect.

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

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By Rod Lee

Two martinis and a case of mistaken identity

During the course of his long career as an owner and man-

ager of Chuck's Steak House & Margarita Grill in Auburn, Steve Londregan has witnessed more than his share of humorous moments.

Chuck's, by the way, celebrated a 44th anniversary on Mother's Day.

Mr. Londregan, a recent president of the Auburn Chamber of Commerce, was happy to share "my funniest story ever" with The Feisty Fork.

"This happened around 1982 or 1984," he said. "I was behind the bar on a Sunday afternoon. A lovely older couple from Prospect St. who came in regularly always had martinis before they sat down to dinner. They did this that day, too, before walking into the dining room.

"About fifteen minutes later, one of our waitresses came running up to me and said 'Steve,



A varied menu has been a staple at Chuck's Steak House in Auburn for more than forty years.

you have to come, now.'

"I hurried into the dining room.

"Mrs. — had just come from our all-you-can-eat soup and salad bar. She said to me, 'Steve, this minestrone soup is ice cold.' She was very adamant about it."

Mr. Londregan recognized the problem right away.

"I said to her 'Mrs. — you have a bowl of Italian salad dressing in front of you!

"That's all I got," Mr. Londregan added, on the telephone, in referring to the invitation The

Feisty Fork has issued to restaurateurs for interesting items to be included in this column.

Patio dining in the works at Grille 122

William "Billy" Therecka may have run into some bad luck, opening Grille 122 on Providence Road in Whitinsville in July of 2019, just before Covid-19 hit, but he held his ground and the restaurant is attracting a steady stream of customers.

"It was a bad time for everyone," he said on April 28th. "My sister has a restaurant in Coventry, Connecticut with water frontage and she faced the same issue. Now it's getting better. My only struggle is finding help (especially in the kitchen). I'm reaching out to everyone I know. I'm trying my best."

An ambitious and energetic man, Mr. Therecka was not about to be deterred by the pandemic, in his plans for Grille 122. The restaurant serves lunch and dinner. It also hosts functions, including business meetings, bridal showers and mercy dinners.

"I'm stubborn. I'm a workaholic, seven days a week," he said.

Mr. Therecka now owns the building in which Grille 122 is situated. He has also purchased two apartment buildings next door.

Although he didn't get much of a chance to incorporate outdoor dining into the mix last year, despite having set up an area with picnic tables for it to one side of the restaurant, he is looking to add an outdoor patio "with masonry and flowers"—possibly in time for patrons to

enjoy by the summer of 2023.

"If I do it, I want to do it right," he says. "When I'm done I don't want to have to worry about anything at all."

Mr. Therecka came into the town of Northbridge as an unknown but he has won over the local populace.

"My customers are my friends now," he said.

Then and now, at UXLocale

Elaine Cowan, owner/chef of UXLocale on Hartford Ave. West in Uxbridge, shared with The Feisty Fork these reflections about her restaurant's years, past to present.

The UXLocale, now, then, and everything in between. When asked to look back over the last few years and how they have changed the way we are doing business, a quick response could never suffice, and I still feel my shoulders move up to my ears as I type. In the beginning, after the initial shock wore off, there was a scramble to figure out how to make this whole thing work.

Then
Sleepless nights began on Monday, March 11. They lasted two weeks until I figured out converting my menu to 98% web-based business. Then, I converted the old ice cream windows to curbside pickup while losing over one-third of business, the ability to sell beer and wine with food helped a little, but overall, it was bleak.

Now
We still service the takeout window. Although it is steadily decreasing, while indoor dining is increasing, we still have a population of people who get curbside takeout every week. These people have been with us through the darkest hours, and I will do this as long as they need



Billy Therecka, owner of Grille 122 in Whitinsville, with Bruno. Grille 122 is open for lunch and dinner.

me. One silver lining is that I got to know so many regulars by their orders: some would even write little notes of encouragement on their slips. These little notes got us through the worst of it.

Then
Like the UXLocale, many other businesses were doing the same thing: going online, which caused servers to crash, slips not printing to the kitchen, or pizza oven. A little background. On an average day, we begin prep at 10:00 a.m. Service begins at 5:00. After cleanup and sanitation, it's usually a decent twelve-hour day. I had no time for a learning curve. I worked with the POS people to move al my content to another server.

Now
Every Wednesday-Saturday, I manually check inventory, take photos of everything I make, write descriptions, and get them up online before 10:00 a.m. That has not changed. Then a quick post to Instagram and Facebook, and I'm on my way to doing the thing I love. COOK!

Then
Because I converted my pantry into a takeout expedition center, I moved my pantry to the dining room. With that, I obtained a retail license and sold Italian imports and local cheeses.

Continued on page 9

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PHANTOM GOURMET

THE FEISTY FORK

Continued from page 8

Then Part II

When we were able to seat folks inside again, I kept small pyramids of pantry items for two reasons: transparency—people got to see the ingredients they were eating; and social distancing. Fortunately, the pyramids created a barrier between tables, and plexiglass went up...everywhere.

Now

The dining room has been relieved of all the (Covid) extras. I built some new narrow tables that allow space and symmetry. We host Wise Guys Trivia on Wednesday nights. Live music is back most Fridays. We added a proper DJ booth, and on Saturdays, DJ Proud Larry spins records. He may be the only DJ who spins records—no antics, just outstanding music.

Now Part II

Inventory is a struggle, the same products that I rely on aren't always available. If the pricing increases are too night, I'm fearful not to pass that on to the diner, but I still want a family to be able to come and dine without breaking the bank. We have gone up on some things because I will not substitute qual-



Pizza is just one of the favorites with diners at UXLocale in Uxbridge.

ity ingredients.

Now

The menu! Because everyone's schedule is still so topsy-turvy, I run "weekend" specials every night. Some things I can't in good conscience put in a box to go, but if it travels without ruining texture and presentation, I'll let it ride. So lots of my specials are going back to my roots. Keeping it fresh, flavorful, and unfussy.

Throughout-Today

My staff. There is no scenario where we successfully came out of this without the fantastic people behind the scenes, the ones you barely see. Still, they are grinding day in and day out, 99% of whom have been with

me since the beginning and all the people in the front that you see. I've made some great hires. They want to be there, and they are about what happens next. I feel so incredibly fortunate to have the staff I have. Something remarkable that I notice daily is how kind they are to one another. That's a gift.

Submit your restaurant news to *The Feisty Fork* by email to rodlee.1963@gmail.com.

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 Scotty McCreery JULY 9 • 1PM	 LITTLE RIVER BAND JULY 17 • 1PM	 Ann Wilson JULY 23 • 1PM
 THREE DOG NIGHT JULY 24 • 1PM	 HAIRFEST 2022 JULY 30 • 12PM	 TESLA JULY 31 • 1PM
 WEIRD AL YANKOVIC AUGUST 5 • 7:30PM	 SWITCHFOOT AUGUST 6 • 1PM	 LOST 80'S LIVE AUGUST 7 • 1PM
 ABBA THE CONCERT AUGUST 12 • 7PM	 BADFISH AUGUST 13 • 1PM	 Home Free AUGUST 20 • 1PM

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COUNTRYFEST	SEPTEMBER 11 • 12PM
JAMEY JOHNSON	OCTOBER 8 • 1PM

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LAKE TOUR	JUNE 25 • 10AM
SUNSET CRUISE	JULY 1 • 7:30PM
FIREWORKS CRUISE	JULY 3 • 7:30PM
MARGARITAVILLE CRUISE	JULY 7 • 6:30PM
THE PIKE "AWESOME 80'S DANCE PARTY"	JULY 9 • 6:30PM
SUNSET CRUISE	JULY 15 • 7:15PM
SUNSET CRUISE	JULY 22 • 7:15PM
MARGARITAVILLE CRUISE	AUGUST 4 • 6:30PM
THE PIKE "BOOT SCOOTIN BOOGIE CRUISE"	AUGUST 13 • 6:30PM

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NOTE: Community bulletin board-type items are welcome for inclusion in the Happenings! section of the Xpress newspapers. Please allow enough lead time for publication. Email your calendar or event notice to rodlee.1963@gmail.com.

THROUGH MAY 31ST

- May Art Exhibit, "Is There Beauty Within Tragedy," at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster, featuring the work of Eren Torres, a seventeen-year-old up-and-coming artist and a proud member of the LGBT community. A meet-and-greet with

the artist will be held from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 14th. Call 508-949-6232 or email deb@booklovers-gourmet.com for further info.



SUNDAY, MAY 29

- Town of Blackstone Memorial Day Parade, 1:00 p.m.

MONDAY, MAY 30 (MEMORIAL DAY)

- Memorial Day Parade, Northbridge, 9:30 a.m.; contact Don Lesard, derbydan476@gmail.com or 508-476-2836 for more information.
- Memorial Day Parade, Putnam, 10:00 a.m.
- Memorial Day Parade, Webster Dudley.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1

- Mark Mandeville and Raienne Richards will present an outdoor concert, featuring fresh and refined acoustic folk music for the modern times, at the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Sign up with Amy at the front desk. Call 508-234-2002 for more info.

SATURDAY, JUNE 4

- bankHometown is hosting a Shred Day, 8:30 a.m.-noon, 4 Gore Road, Webster. Bring old mail, receipts, statements, bills, cancelled checks, pay stubs, medical records and other unwanted paper documents.
- Open Sky Community Services

is co-hosting the 7th annual Family Fun Fishing Day at Riverbend Farm, 287 Oak St., Uxbridge, along with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor's Volunteers-in-Parks program, the Blackstone River Watershed Association, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. This event takes place from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 with a rain date of Sunday, June 4, and will

feature activities for the whole family including food and ice cream from GottaQ BBQ and the Sweet Wise ice cream truck. All ages and abilities are welcome. Fishing poles, bait and instruction will be available with pre-registration, or participants can bring their own. Registration is now open at thebrwa.org/familyfishing2022. This is a free event but pre-registration is required. Contact Lori Girard at 508-234-6232 or lori.girard@openskycs.org for more information.

teries with Rattlesnake Hill. In her latest work, Shuntoll Hill, Boston library curator "Kathryn Stinson" returns to the Berkshires hoping to rekindle a romance with "Earl Barker" but instead winds up in a battle with a New York developer that puts her in grave danger. Sharon Healy-Yang, professor emerita at Worcester State University, dives again into her character "Jessica Minton" in Always Play the Dark Horse.

signature fundraising event for Alternatives Unlimited (now Open Sky Community Services) for 33 years. Since it began it has raised over \$3 million in support of individuals and families in Central Massachusetts, including \$160,000 in 2021. To pre-register \$30, visit openskycs.org/vft2022. Registration the day of the event is \$35.



Sharon Healy-Yang (left) and Leslie Wheeler will appear in tandem for a Double Author Event on Saturday, June 1 at Booklovers' Gourmet in Webster.

feature activities for the whole family including food and ice cream from GottaQ BBQ and the Sweet Wise ice cream truck. All ages and abilities are welcome. Fishing poles, bait and instruction will be available with pre-registration, or participants can bring their own. Registration is now open at thebrwa.org/familyfishing2022. This is a free event but pre-registration is required. Contact Lori Girard at 508-234-6232 or lori.girard@openskycs.org for more information.

SUNDAY, JUNE 5

- "Into the Garden series: Seed Propagation Lecture," is being offered at the Asa Waters Mansion, 123 Elm St., Millbury, at 2:00 p.m. Free admission.

Farm, 36 Locust St., Douglas. \$10 cash per person 16-and-older, kids admitted free, 5:30-8:00 p.m. No rain date. Go to douglasorchardandfarm.com for further info.

SATURDAY, JUNE 11

- A Community Yard Sale/Plant Sale will be held at First Congregational Church, 128 Central Ave., Auburn, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Spaces are available for \$25, tables (on a limited basis) for \$5. Annuals and perennials. Call or text Cindy, 774-238-0260, or contact the church office, 508-832-2845, for further details.

MONDAY, JUNE 13

- Blackstone Valley Tech's annual golf tournament will be held at Highfields Golf & Country Club in Grafton. Proceeds benefit the school's Education Foundation and Athletic Department activities and programs.

- A Double Author Event featuring Leslie Wheeler and Sharon Healy-Yang will be held at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Ms. Wheeler launched her Berkshire Hilltown Mys-

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15

- The McCartney Years: Live in Concert will be presented as a day trip to Danversport, Danvers, by the Northbridge Senior Center. The cost, \$101 per person, includes the show and a plated lunch before the performance. Sign up with Amy at the front desk. Call 508-234-2002 for more info.
- A BangoGals concert will take place at the Asa Waters Mansion, 124 Elm St., Millbury, from 6:00 to 7:15 p.m. Free admission.

Continued on page 11

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Internships are a strength of the operation at Southwick's Zoo in Mendon, where Earth Limited's fundraising BASH will take place on Friday, June 24.

HAPPENINGS

Continued from page 10

THURSDAY, JUNE 16

• **The Memphis Sun Mafia Band** will bring Memphis to Northbridge with an acoustic journey through the music of Elvis at the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville, from noon to 1:30 p.m. Doors open at 11:45 a.m. Tickets are needed for this event, which includes a BBQ-themed luncheon. Sign up with Amy at the front desk. Call 508-234-2002 for more info.

• **Robert Black, an Elvis impersonator**, will perform at the Millbury Senior Center, One River St., from 6:00 to 7:15 p.m. Call 508-865-9154 for further info.

SATURDAY, JUNE 18

• **The Sutton Historical Society's town-wide yard sale** will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Rain date is Sunday, June 19. The cost is \$10 for participating resident addresses to be included on a map and in advertising for the event. Registration forms are available at suttonhistoricalsocietyinc.org. Limited table space at the M.M. Sherman Blacksmith Shop, 6 Singleary Ave., is also available for \$10. The Society is accepting donated items (no upholstered furniture or electronic equipment) and will pick up if necessary. Contact sutton1704@gmail.com for more details.

• **Tony Soul Project, from the Delta Blues to Soul to Rock & Roll**

will perform as part of the Summer Concert Series at Douglas Orchard and Farm, 36 Locust St., Douglas, 5:30-8:00 p.m. Admission is \$10 per person 16-and-older, kids get in free, no rain date. Check douglasorchardandfarm.com for further info.

FRIDAY, JUNE 24

• **EARTH Limited's largest annual fundraiser is back for 2022 at Southwick's Zoo** in Mendon, from 5:00 to 10:00 p.m. Proceeds support EARTH Limited's many education initiatives, such as internships, docent/volunteer training, rhino encounters, zoo mobiles, wild adventure programs, junior zoo keeping and more. Guests will enjoy an event of adventure and explore the zoo after-hours. Go to earthltd.org to purchase tickets. Email Betsy Brewer Bethel at betsy@southwick-zoo.com for more details about EARTH Limited.

SATURDAY, JUNE 25

• **Dark Desert Eagles, the ultimate tribute band to The Eagles**, comes to Indian Ranch in Webster as part of the Mike's Hard Lemonade Summer Concert Series. Songs from The Eagles' Greatest Hits 1971-1975 album along with hits from Hotel California and several gems from Joe Walsh's solo career will be featured in this live show. Touched by the passing of Glenn Frey, a co-founder of The Eagles, Pat Badger (an original member of the multi-platinum rock act Extreme) set out to form Dark Desert Eagles in paying homage to The Eagles' musicianship, vocal harmonies and timeless catalog.

In doing so, "we really paid attention to the wardrobe, the hairstyles, the guitars...everything that made The Eagles so cool," he says.

Also upcoming at Indian Ranch:

June 5, Trace Adkins; June 11, The Outlaws; June 19, The Mavericks; July 2, Michael Franti & Spearhead; July 8, Get The Led Out; July 9, Scott McCreery; July 17, Little River Band; July 23, Ann Wilson of Heart; July 24, Three Dog Night; July 30, The Pike Hairfest; July 31, TESLA; August 5, "Weird" Al Yankovic; August 6, Collective Soul and Switchfoot; August 7, Lost 80s Live; August 12, ABBA The Concert; August 13, Badfish; August 20, Home Free; September 2, Extreme.

Tickets are available at www.indianranch.com, by calling 1-800-514-3849 or at the Indian Ranch Box Office.

• **Rolling Stones & CCR Tributes: 19th Nervous Breakdown with Kelly and the Poor Boys: A Creedence Tribute Band**, will perform as part of the Summer Concert Series at Douglas Orchard and Farm, 36 Locust St., Douglas, 5:30-8:00 p.m. Admission is \$10 cash per person 16-and-older, kids get in free, no rain date. Go to douglasorchardandfarm.com for more info.

TUESDAY, JUNE 28

• **A Narragansett Bay Lighthouse & Cruise Tour** is being offered by the Millbury Senior Center. Cost is \$110 per person, all-inclusive, with departure at 9:30 a.m. and return at 5:30 p.m. A full-course luncheon is included. Call 508-865-9154 to sign up or for more information.

THURSDAY, JUNE 30

• **Tim VanEgmond** will present an outdoor concert, featuring traditional and contemporary songs as well as tales about what draws a community together, the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Sign up with Amy at the front desk. Call 508-234-2002 for more info.

• **Dan Gabel & The Abletones** will present a summer concert at the Asa Waters Mansion, 123 Elm St., Millbury, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Free admission.

MONDAY, JULY 4

• **Celebrate the 4th on the Grafton Common!** Dress up in costume! Decorate your bicycle! Build a float! Dress up your dog! From North Street to Oak Street starting at 12:00 p.m. Line up at the North Grafton Elementary School. For more details contact grafton4thofjulyparade@gmail.com.

SATURDAY, JULY 9

• **A Night of Zeppelin: A Led Zeppelin Tribute Band**, comes to Douglas Orchard and Farm, 36 Locust St., Douglas, as part of the facility's Summer Concert Series, 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. Admission is \$10 cash per person 16-and-older, kids get in free, no rain date. Go to douglasorchardandfarm.com for more info.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 13

• **A Blue Shades luncheon concert** will take place at the Asa Waters Mansion, 123 Elm St., Millbury, from noon to 1:00 p.m. Free admission.

THURSDAY, JULY 14

• **4Ever Fab, a Beatles tribute band**, will perform at the Millbury Senior Center, One River St., from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Call 508-865-9154 for more info.

SATURDAY, JULY 16

• **The town of Northbridge's 250th anniversary festivities** will kick off with a parade from the elementary school on Crescent St. at 10:00 a.m. and conclude with fireworks at the middle school on Linwood Ave. Gates will open at 6:00 p.m. for the pyrotechnics show, which will be preceded by activities for the whole family: food trucks, music, face painting, potato-sack races and more.

• **Douglas Orchard and Farm, 36 Locust St., Douglas, welcomes Araxas**—a Santana Tribute Band, for a show at 36 Locust St., Douglas, 5:30-8:00 p.m. Part of the Douglas Orchard and Farm's Summer Concert Series. Admission is \$10 per person 16-and-older, kids get in free, no rain date. Visit douglasorchardandfarm.com for more info.

THURSDAY, JULY 21

• **Icons & Legends Concert**, including a Maine Lobster Bake in York, is being presented by the Northbridge Senior Center. Cost is \$110 per person. Sign up with Amy at the front desk. Call 508-234-2002 for more info.

• **Enjoy a Far from Eden summer concert** at the Asa Waters Mansion, 123 Elm St., Millbury, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Free admission.

SATURDAY, JULY 23

• **Exit 17th Band, a Rock & Roll Band**, will perform at part of Douglas Orchard and Farm's Summer Concert Series, 36 Locust St., Douglas, 5:30-8:00 p.m. Admission is \$10 per person 16-and-older. Kids get in free, no rain date.

SATURDAY, JULY 30

• **Douglas Orchard and Farm's Summer Concert Series** continues with a performance by Petty Larceny, a Tom Petty Tribute Band, 5:30-8:00 p.m., 36 Locust St., Douglas. \$10 cash per person, kids are admitted free,

Continued on page 12

no rain date. Visit douglasorchardandfarm.com for more details.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 4

• **The Hip Swayers** will perform a summer concert at the Asa Waters Mansion, 123 Elm St., Millbury, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Free admission.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 6

• **4 Ever Fab, a Beatles Tribute Band**, will perform as part of Douglas Orchard and Farm's Summer Concert series, 36 Locust St., Douglas, 5:30-8:00 p.m. Admission is \$10 per person for those 16-and-older. Kids get in free, no rain date. Go to douglasorchardandfarm.com for more info.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 9

• **Judy Saves the Day, a puppet show**, will take place at the Asa Waters Mansion, 123 Elm St., Millbury, from



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HAPPENINGS

Continued from page 11

4:00 to 5:00 p.m. Free admission.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13

• Counterfeit Cash, a Johnny Cash Tribute Band, will perform at Doug-

las Orchard and Farm, 36 Locust St., Douglas, 5:30-8:00 p.m. Admission is \$10 per person 16-and-older, kids get in free, no rain date. Go to douglasorchardandfarm.com for further details.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17

• Taking it to the Streets: The Ultimate Doobie Brothers Tribute Show, will be performed in Plymouth, New Hampshire at the Flying Monkey Theatre—a trip offered by the Northbridge Senior Center. Show and a buffet lunch are included at a cost of \$110 per person. Sign up with Amy at the front desk. Call 508-234-2002 for more info.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

• The Northbridge Senior Center is offering a "Lake Winnepesaukee Cruise & Castle in the Clouds Estate Tour," including lunch at Harts Turkey Farm, for \$151 per person. Sign up with Amy at the front desk. Call 508-234-2002 for more info.

The Mike's Hard Lemonade Summer Concert Series at Indian Ranch in Webster features a performance by Trace Adkins on Sunday, June 5.



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Living with Luke

Our time, as Luke learns his way around

By Amy LeClaire

Luke Valentino has been a part of our family for only two weeks, yet it feels as though we've known him our whole lives. He's comfortable in his new home, secure with his new dog family, and determined to learn, please and communicate his needs. In the process, he's exposed a puppy personality that has won us over. He's laid-back yet playful, intelligent and intuitive, affectionate and affable. He's everything contained in the unscrambled letters of his

in training sessions which unfold naturally during playtimes threaded with teachable moments. Luke's intelligent and calm nature makes the process smooth, though the job of training a puppy is bound by work. He is learning how to live under human conditions—no easy task—even for a human. I don't want to take the pup out of my puppy, but we need to be reasonable.

"Luke, please!" I am ten times heavier, five times taller, and over fifty years older. I teach up to six Zumba classes per week, yet I am unable to catch my ten-pound pup. He zig-zags like a fly throughout the yard, a piece of mulch resting dangerously in his mouth.

We compete in another game of Keep Away, one in which

down. He dashes off then sits fifteen feet away and stares at me, a casual tobacco chewer. "You didn't." Oh, but he did. Clever Luke hid the piece of mulch beneath his tongue.

My pup has a mind of his own, but it's a smart one. I've learned to capitalize on his intelligence and willingness to learn. He's the first puppy I've had to not only learn the commands sit, stay, and come at only eight weeks but, also, apply them to spontaneous (real life) situations.

"Luke, come!" I'll never forget the first time he spun around to come back to me after dashing towards a dog walker. Hard work had led to the reward of knowing that my puppy will be safe while allowed off-the-leash time. I'm a believer in letting a dog be a dog. A dog ought to run freely, sniff, explore, dig, and roll in the grass. Luke comes back, sits at my feet, and looks up at me. His teddy bear face betrays a chimpanzee mind. I reward him with a kibble (from his own diet), a blueberry, or piece of apple. "What a good boy you are! That was really hard!" I gush and praise my puppy. I'm a proud parent who's not above driving with a bumper sticker that reads, My Puppy Comes When Called.

The consistency required to train a puppy (on top of hours wedged between my own work, household and social life) has become a full-time job but I do believe that anything worth doing is worth doing well.

Luke seems to feel the same way. He's already shown protectiveness to our family; barking at the big dogs who stop by to visit. His innate ability to do so, coupled with a lion's will to set the dogs straight, are a sight to see. His bark, though mighty, is still unmistakably that of a puppy's. Luke Valentino, in action, has no idea how cute he is. He crinkles his snout and growls, the toughie of a motorcycle gang wearing a royal blue harness as a vest. He



simple happiness can be. I want to stop time and freeze the moment but my puppy is on the move.

I rest on the assurance that time (in lieu of rest) is on our hands now. There will be time to watch Luke take one more dramatic, flying leap off of the second-to-last deck stair and time to watch him zoom around the house at record speed. There will be time to zip through shopping aisles like burglars on the run and time to sit out on the deck and watch the birds, just as Lincoln and I used to do. There will be time because this is our time.

Stay tuned for more on Living with Luke as Luke Valentino adapts to his new home! Write to me at amyleclaire@hotmail.com



full name: L-O-V-E.

"I love you, Luke Valentino." I lift him from his crated bed each morning, pull him to my chest, and breathe in the warm scent of puppy breath. He yawns, licks my chin and studies my mouth with a wet nose. I'm disheveled and tired, dressed in frayed, March layers but the moment is immensely joyful. "Let's go do pee-pee." Our day begins.

Together, he and I engage

Luke plays the Star and I assume the less glamorous role of Crazy Dog Person. My bashful lamb of a pup has put on a devil's costume. Worse, it's twenty-five degrees out. My muscles are stiff and tight, my shoelaces untied. Luke has worn me to the bone. I finally reach him and pry open his tiny mouth, visions of surgical risk sailing through my head. Where is the mulch? Did it drop out on its own? I set him

stiffens and lets the big dog see him roar. He's just doing his job, scaring off the baddies to protect his turf. He's been in his home for only a few weeks, yet he's compelled to protect it. He makes me smile over and over again. After losing Lincoln, it was hard to imagine that I could love another puppy this much, and so uniquely. There was only one Lincoln. There will only be one Lincoln. Yet this little guy has stolen my heart.

"We are a good team." I cradle him like a baby and he chews on my sweatshirt tassel. His eyes

are as black as marbles, his nose moist. He reminds me of innocence and goodness, and how

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Q & A with The Car Doctor



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Q. I have a leased 2019 Mazda CX-9, which is a great car except back in February my display screen cracked internally in the upper right corner. Then in April, my car sat for the day, then on Saturday morning when I started it the lower left side cracked from the inside. There are no scratches on the outside of the screen or markings, I am the only driver of the car. Do you know what is happening?

A. In previous models, there was a defect in the display, in fact Mazda issued a technical bulletin concerning the spider cracking issue. The factory warranty is 36,000 miles or three years, If the car has more than 36,000 miles on it, I would contact the dealer and have them contact Mazda and reference the technical service bulletin.

Q. I have a 2015 Dodge Journey with 33,000 miles. I ran great for over five years. I did replace the starter and at the same time replaced the battery. Now it starts every morning without fail and when I leave work it also starts without fail. However if I drive the car five minutes and then wait twenty minutes it will not start. When this happens there is no sound, then if I wait about 40 minutes it will start every time. If I leave it in the driveway and start and restart 10 times without moving the gear shift it will start every time. If I start it and put it in gear and back to park it will also not start. I swapped the starter relay, and some say it is the ground cable, but I think it is something with the anti-theft system. No one seems to know what the problem is, any thoughts?

A. There are a couple of possibilities. From your initial description it sounds like a faulty transmission range sensor (neutral switch). Unfortunately, Chrysler did not make this easy to replace, it is about four hours labor and about \$80 for the switch. The second possibility and one that I suffered with was with a replacement starter. It was also an intermittent no start, but I was thinking how could it be the starter, it was only 11 months old. In fact, it was a faulty starter. Since the issue is consistent, it would be easy enough to check the starter using something as simple as a test light.

Q. My husband owned a 1959 Chevrolet Corvette for approximately 40 years. I believe he was only the second or third owner. It is white, red leather interior, 4 speed, black soft top roof, with a white hard-shell top. When he bought it, it was stripped down to the fiberglass and showed no damage. The car is in excellent shape and runs perfectly.

Unfortunately, I must sell the car. I cannot drive it and my children do not want it. I have been offered \$50,000 but that was the first person to see it and his first offer. I know how difficult it is to determine what is a fair amount for the seller to receive but am I being taken advantage of? What could or should I ask so as not to "give away" my late husband's dream car?

A. The first generation C1 Corvette is an extremely popular vehicle. Some buyers keep them all original, and some people modify them (resto-mod). The resto-mod vehicle can sell for \$200,000 or more. The stock vehicles with documentation can sell for \$80,000-\$120,000 depending on condition. Considering the value of the car, having an appraisal of the vehicle would be money well spent. This way you will have a better idea of the actual value and spending the money on the appraisal could keep you from making a \$40,000 mistake.

Q. I am about to buy two of the Battery Tender Juniors that you recommended. When I emailed this company, they said to buy the larger unit. I am right that is incorrect since the larger units charge and the Junior maintains. Would this be accurate?

A. Actually, both will charge a battery, the Battery Tender Junior would just do it much slower. I have used the Battery Tender Junior for the past two years on cars that sat idle for six months and the engine always start because the battery is fully charged.

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Ranger Walkabouts return in the Corridor

Ranger Walkabouts are back, as part of a flurry of upcoming activities for people of all ages in the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. Corridor rangers will lead these walkabouts on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. in June, July and August.

Go to nps.gov/blrv/planyourvisit/guidedtours.htm for more information.

In other Corridor news, Independent Sector has announced new hourly values for volunteer service. The Massachusetts rate is now \$36.38 and the Rhode Island rate is \$29.17. These are important for the impact they have in Corridor communities but also because the dollar values count as in-kind contributions and can go toward grant matches and more.



Pictured above is the first class of Whitinsville Christian School's First Aid certified graduates, Kathy Parlante and Bill McGinnis (Bikeway ambassadors), John Marsland (Blackstone River Watershed Council and Friends of the Blackstone), Al Menard (North Smithfield Heritage Association) and Mark Dennen (Bikeway ambassador, certified in CPR and First Aid training). The class also included Molly Cardoza.

Contact Molly Cardoza, director of volunteer engagement and community outreach, at mcardoza@blackstone-heritagecorridor.org if you are interested in signing up.

Register now for Blackstone Valley Day at Polar Park on June 14. Go to <https://blackstone-valley.org/event/blackstone-valley-day-at-polar-park/>

A Pollinator Garden Bike Tour will be held on Wednesday, June 22nd from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. For more details go to <https://bit.ly/PollinatorRide22>

The Blackstone Valley Paddle Club starts its 22nd season on Tuesdays, through August 30.

Accessible cycling for veterans and their loved ones is now available. To find out more, go to info@alloutadventures.org or call 413-584-2052.

Below, volunteer Linda Primel (orange vest) represents volunteers at the Accessible Cycling for Veterans at the Blackstone River Greenway.



Tales from beyond

Creatures of The Bridgewater Triangle - Part 1

By Thomas D'Agostino
www.tomdagostino.com

One of the most famous, if not the most famous areas along US Route 44 lies in what is known as the Bridgewater Triangle. Residents of Southeastern Massachusetts have long been plagued by strange phenomena that has mystified scientists, archaeologists, cryptozoologists, historians and researchers of the paranormal. The triangle is a parcel of land two hundred square miles in size that apparently harbors mythical creatures, ghostly lights, phantoms, and even UFOs.

The triangle first got its name in the 1970s when researcher Loren Coleman carried out paranormal investigations in the area. Following his extensive research and studies, he mapped out a triangle where the strange phenomena seemed to be intensely active. Christopher Balzano, paranormal investigator and author, compiled an astounding amount of data on the area. This data he used to write several books including, "Ghosts of the Bridgewater Triangle."

The corners of the triangle are defined by the towns of Abington, Freetown, and Rehoboth. Within the triangle are the towns of Taunton, Brockton, Raynham, Bridgewater, Marshfield, Norton, Easton, North Middleboro, Segragonset, Dighton, North Dighton, Berkeley, and Myricks. Within the triangle lies the Hockomock Swamp, where much of the activity is focused. Accounts of strange creatures abound in the triangle. Here are some that have stunned researchers and scientists alike.

In 1988 two boys followed a pair of giant three-toed footprints into the swamp. To their horror they came upon a massive bird-like creature that neither had ever witnessed the likes of in their life. The winged monster caught a glimpse of the two boys and took off straight into the air. The frightened youths ran for their lives, later ranting their story to police and neighbors. It was concluded that the two youths witnessed a great blue heron, a very large bird native to the New England area. The children swore the creature they saw was much larger than any heron, being more the size of a tall man with half human features. The story was almost laughable until someone remembered another similar sighting. This one was by a well-respected and notable Norton police sergeant named Thomas Downy.

In 1971, as Sergeant Downy was driving home along Winter Street in Marshfield, he came upon a giant creature standing at the edge of the swamp. Accord-

ing to the officer, it resembled a bird, but stood over six feet tall. The creature moved toward the car, then flew straight up away from the vehicle. It had a wingspan of about eight to twelve feet in length. When other officers arrived at the scene, a few large three-toed footprints were all that was found as evidence of such a creature. Oddly enough, the sighting was at a place called Bird Hill where the indigenous people spoke frequently of a legendary Thunderbird. Their ancestors claimed the great bird lived in the swamp and to this day, apparently still does.

Thunderbirds are not solely responsible for the cryptid sightings within Bridgewater Triangle. A more famous and often talked about "monster" is reported to roam the area. It is the creature affectionately known as Bigfoot, Yeti or Sasquatch. In 1970, residents reported seeing a hairy seven-foot monster running through their yards, sometimes on all four legs. Local and state police conducted a lengthy manhunt for a giant bear, yet no such animal was ever spotted or captured.

On April 8, 1970, two officers were parked in a police cruiser near the swamp. Suddenly, the rear end of the car lifted into the air and then dropped with a loud bang. The officers quickly spun the car around and trained their spotlight on something hairy resembling a bear as it ran on two legs behind a house. A thorough search of the area commenced, but no bear, or any other creature, was ever found.

A hunter once shot at a large animal in the woods that ran off and gave a half human, half animal cry. Later he found brown hair and blood on some leaves along the path the creature fled down. A woman in West Bridgewater heard a noise one night in her yard. She looked out her window and saw a large bipedal

creature eating a pumpkin in her garden. The hairy animal looked at her through the window with reddish-orange eyes then with a grunt, took off with the pumpkin into the woods.

A triangle resident, Joseph M. De Andrade, spent decades collecting reports of the creature. The average lifespan of a wild bear is about five to seven years. Fifteen years would be extremely unlikely and thirty years in the wild is impossible. So what is it out there roaming along the outskirts of the human population?

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RE: Real Estate

The dream of homeownership is worth the wait



Mark Marzeotti

By Mark Marzeotti

If you're in the market to buy a home this season, stick with it. Homebuyers face challenges in any market, and today's is no exception. But if you persevere, your decision to purchase a home will be worth the effort in the end. In fact, a recent survey among new homeowners revealed that nearly three in four

say they would still buy their current home if they had it to do all over again.

That means the results of owning a home and the benefits that come with it outweigh the effort needed to achieve their goal. If you're a homebuyer, let that give you the confidence to know the work you're putting in today will pay off for years to come.

Here are a few reasons to stick with your search and focus on the outcome.

- Homeownership contributes significantly to your financial well-being. The National Association of Realtors (NAR) lists several motivations to consider if you're thinking about buying a home. One of the top financial reasons is the equity you build. Money paid for rent is money that you'll never see again, but mortgage payments let you build equity. Building equity in your home is a ready-made savings plan. Your equity is a powerful tool you can leverage in a number of ways. And with recent home price appreciation, homeowners are seeing record levels of equity today. That may be one reason why so many people view owning a home as a great investment and a top indicator of financial well-being. In fact, the same recent survey mentioned above reveals that Americans place a higher



value on homeownership than on any other indicator of economic stability.

"Owning a home ranks above other major accomplishments, like retirement, having a successful career, and getting a college degree." That shows just how impactful the financial benefits of homeownership truly are.

- The emotional benefits of owning a home are powerful

too. Of course, homeownership is more than an investment. In a buyers' list of top reasons to buy a home, some non-financial aspects of homeownership emerge. Among these is the opportunity to customize your home to reflect your personality and needs. The home is yours. You can decorate any way you want and choose the types of upgrades and new amenities that appeal to your lifestyle.

- Another benefit homeowners enjoy is the stability it provides. Homeowners typically stay put longer than renters. When you remain in one place longer than a few years, you can grow closer to your community. And that can enhance your sense of pride and lead to better relationships.

What does that mean for you? The benefits of homeownership are powerful, from building personal wealth to fostering communities.

Even if you face challenges in today's market, the payoff when you succeed and purchase a home will be worth it.

If you're planning to buy a home this year, there are incredible benefits waiting for you at the end of your journey. Speak with a team member at Marzeotti Group or a trusted real estate advisor today about everything homeownership has to offer.

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Millbury Federal Credit Union (MCU) recently announced the election of E. Bernard Plante as chairman of the Board of Directors

MCU President/CEO Joseph F. Barbato also announced a number of promotions and appointments, and welcomed all of the individuals to the team in their new capacities.

Mr. Plante has served MCU as a voluntary member of the Board of Directors for eighteen years. He replaces Robert L. LeClaire as Board president. Mr. LeClaire held that role for sixty-one years.

Mr. Plante is a resident of Millbury and well-known in town for his many contributions. He was a member of the Millbury Board of Selectmen for twenty-four years, including sixteen as chair. His other credits include having served with the Millbury Cemetery Commission, as town auditor, and as chair of the Shaw School Building Committee. He is a charter member of the Millbury Lions Club.

A graduate of the New England School of Accounting and the Williams College School of Banking, he is a veteran banking official who has worked with MCU, Bank of Boston and Shawmut National.

Alise Breton of Dudley has been promoted to VP and Retail Director at MCU. She has fourteen years of banking experience, including twelve with MCU. She will oversee the four outlying MCU branches

and continue as social media manager. She is a graduate of Worcester State University.

Keiran P. Holahan of Northbridge has been promoted to senior VP and chief executive officer. Mr. Holahan joined MCU in 2021 as chief financial officer. A magna cum laude graduate of Providence College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting, he has thirty years of credit union and banking experience.

Robert Leonardi of Douglas has been appointed vice president and controller by MCU. Mr. Leonardi has more than twenty years' experience in the accounting and financial services industry. He graduated cum laude from Nassau Community College.

Thomas Clancy has been appointed vice president and IT manager at MCU. A UMass Amherst graduate, he has extensive experience

in banking operations and IT management.

Millbury Federal Credit Union began with twenty members and total assets of \$100 in 1934. Today, MCU has assets in excess of \$460 million with offices in Millbury, Auburn, Worcester and South Grafton.

Blackstone River Valley brims with wildlife



One of the country's newest national parks, the Blackstone River Valley never ceases to surprise; witness this image of two Great Horned Owls in Blackstone captured by Paul S. Robinson Photography.

In other news from the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, the recipients of the John H. Chaffee Heritage Award for 2021 have been named, and are as follows:

Congressman James P. McGovern-MA.

U.S. Sen. Jack Reed-RI
Ross Weaver, Sutton, MA
John Marsland, Cumberland, RI

Student Award: Painting

& Design Technology students at Blackstone Valley Regional Technical High School (seventeen sophomores).

Corridor officials note too that many historic cemeteries through the region have fallen into disrepair and experienced neglect. Fortunately, volunteers who have the skill and desire to preserve and protect them are doing their part.

May is National Preservation Month.

For information on how you can help, contact Molly Cardoza, director of volunteer and community engagement for the Corridor, at mcardoza@BlackstoneHeritageCorridor.org.



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Brass players sought for Mechanics Hall concert

Northbridge Brass Endeavors is enlisting professional brass players to perform in an "Afternoon of Brass" at Mechanics Hall, 321 Main St. in Worcester at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 5.

An Open Rehearsal for the show will be held with the Pitzen

Brass Resurrection at the Village Congregational Church, 5 Church St. in Whitinsville, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 4.

The concert at Mechanics Hall will feature:

- An uplifting video tribute to

local firefighters set to the music of John Williams.

- "Resurrection Symphony Finale" Gustav Mahler, arranged by Stephen Bulla.
- Brian McCreath, emcee.
- Leonardo Ciampa, organist.
- Bay Colony Brass (BCB),

Lawrence Issacson.

- New World Chorale (NWC), Holly Krafka.
- Pitzen Brass Resurrection (PBR), Mitchell Arnold.
- Free face painting, beginning one hour before the concert in the lobby.

• Firefighters and their guests receive a 50% discount on tickets. With their admission all firefighters go into a lottery with a chance to win \$1000-plus.

General Admission tickets are \$10 to \$20 and are on sale now (both live stream and in-person). Go to <https://ABMH.eventbrite.com/> or <https://ORPBR.eventbrite.com/>.

"The Mahler Finale alone is worth the price of admission," said Patrick Smith, executive producer of Afternoon of Brass and publisher of the Mahler arrangement. "I attended the premiere in Chicago with Steve Bulla. It was a critically acclaimed success but it lacked the original chorus."

The Afternoon of Brass combines the forces of Bay Colony Brass, the New World Chorale and Leonardo Ciampa. Led by Maestro Lawrence Issacson, it showcases just eleven minutes of a length (eighty-minute) work.

"This should be a spectacular and emotionally moving concert," Mr. Smith said.

The Afternoon of Brass is supported in part by grants from eight local cultural councils—Auburn, Burlington, Charlton, Grafton, Hopedale, Sterling, Uxbridge and West Boylston—and with separate state-level grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Daniels Farmstead issues call for volunteers

Historic Daniels Farmstead, 286 Mendon St. in Blackstone, is preparing for an exciting 2022 season with a number of special events planned for the enjoyment of its patrons.

The Farmstead begins its new summer and fall season on the first Sunday in July. The Farmstead will be open into October, Belinda Mazur announced.

Among the attractions visitors to the Farmstead can look forward to this year are "Fourth at the Farm," "Classic Movie Night Series," "Antique Tractor, Truck and Car Show," and "A Polish

Picnic at the Farm."

Daniels Farmstead is appreciative of the support it gets from the community. There is a need for volunteers, members, sponsors, community representative and donors. Please think about helping out in the garden, selling Daniels Farmstead produce, working in Doris's kitchen on Sundays or assisting with events.

Volunteers become part of the Daniels Farmstead family, Ms. Mazur said.

For further details go to info@danielsfarmstead.org.

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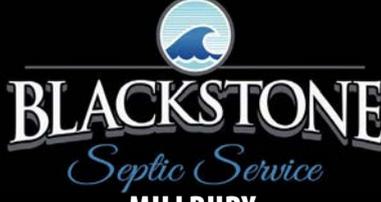
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If you pray three times a day, three consecutive days, you will receive your intention, no matter how impossible it may seem. Praise and Thanksgiving please the Heart of God. **Believer**

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National Heritage Corridor

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Contact Liz O'Neil at loneil@blackstonevalley.org for more information.

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