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August 12 - September 9, 2022

Oxford's Geoffrey Esper A-OK in dog-eat-dog world

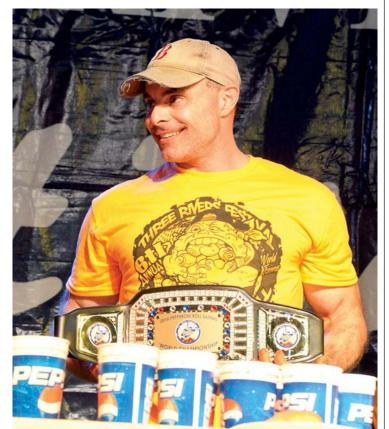
BY ROD LEE

n electronics teacher may be Geottrey Esper Spanial Coccupation, but increasingly Geoffrey Esper's principal the 47-year-old, 195-pound resident of Oxford is better known as a Major League Eating dynamo.

Mr. Esper's most recent accomplishment was finishing second to the world-famous Joey "Jaws" Chestnut in the Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest at Coney Island over the Fourth of July weekend. He downed forty-three hot dogs and buns to Mr. Chestnut's sixty-

Reflecting on what has become a second career for him over the past half dozen or so years, Mr. Esper told The Yankee Xpress on July 7th, as he did CBS News shortly after the competition ("I'm a little bit puffy") that he was still recovering from the exertion involved.

To the irresistible ask "are you familiar with Carl's?" a diner on



Oxford's Geoffrey Esper, a schoolteacher, is also ranked No. 2 in the world by Major League Eating.

McGovern briefs Webster on PFAS, January 6 riots

BY JANET STOICA

ebster residents came out to the Webster Senior Center on Saturday, July 16, to tell Congressman McGovern what was on their minds. Rep. McGovern indicated he was resuming his district visits after having temporarily halted them due to the COVID pandemic.

Many attendees wore face masks.

He began his introduction by stating that he was visiting to take questions from the audience. The gathering was scheduled for one hour but lasted more than two hours as many voters had many questions. Among those questions was one about the PFAs in everyone's drinking water. PFAs are otherwise known as "perand polyfluoroalkyl substances." According to the Earth Justice organization, PFAs are "chemicals in more than 5,000 substances that are found in products like nonstick pans (e.g., Teflon), food

packaging, waterproof jackets, and carpets to repel water, grease, and stains. They're also used in firefighting foam often used on military bases and at commercial airports.

Even personal care products like waterproof mascaras and eyeliners, sunscreen, shampoo, and shaving cream can contain PFAs.

These chemicals don't easily break down, and they can persist in your body and in the environment for decades. As a result of their pervasiveness, more than 95 percent of the U.S. population has PFAs in their bodies, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These chemicals are currently in our water supplies and the Town of Webster is continuously testing and monitoring its well water supplies to ensure the PFA levels meet Environmental Protection

> **McGOVERN** continued on page 4

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ESPER

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Banquet and Conference Center at Union Station

ESPER

continued from page 1

Main Street in Oxford that is justly celebrated for the enormous portions of food it doles out to patrons for breakfast and lunch, Mr. Esper said "sure. One time I went in there and put in seven orders for pancakes, thirty-some pancakes."

Now a star on the Major League Eating circuit, he says "I always liked watching it on TV, and I could always eat a lot."

Hot dogs are not part of his regular diet, however.

"What I eat is not very glamorous," he said. "Tuna fish, chicken breast and vegetables."

A humble and modest man ("I don't get too busy" with calls of congratulations), he is nevertheless an individual Major League Eating likes to tout. Most of the "positive feedback" he receives comes from kids who are impressed, and on TikTok.

"He is a true multidisciplinary eater—as comfortable eating 83 slices of John's Incredible Pizza in 10 minutes as he is eating 281 Hooters wings in the same amount of time," Major League Eating brags the 2017 and 2019 Hoot-



Geoffrey Esper of Oxford is a regular contestant at Major League Eating events; here is shown chowing wings, and taking part in a qualifying round for an event.

records." His forays with Major League Eating take Geoffrey

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Esper far and wide. Earlier this year, he downed 32 1/4 egg rolls in eight minutes in the inaugural Outlaws Egg Rolls World Egg Roll Eating Championship in Lubbock, Texas. Chomping that many four-ounce fried tubes filled with ground beef and macaroni and cheese was made even harder in 100-degree heat as "the first crunches rang out," the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal reported.

"I've already had eight contests this year, and eight more are coming up," Mr. Esper said, of a season that runs from April to November. Many of these are conducted out of doors. In

the days and weeks ahead he will be taking on banana pudding and ribs.

Mr. Esper and Joey Chestnut are not exactly bosom buddies, but they are respectful of one another's talent.

"I talk to him, I see him at contests," Mr. Esper says. He was standing alongside Mr. Chestnut at Coney Island and got bumped when his archrival put a protester who came on stage into a headlock, while hardly missing a beat chowing down hot dogs. As someone who usually keeps his eyes closed while eating, Mr. Esper opened them only when his concentration was

broken by the commotion.

Major League Eating (MLE) stages approximately seventy events a year. MLE developed competitive eating as a sport and includes the sport's governing body, The International Federation of Competitive Eating. Original content from MLE contests has aired on ESPN, MTV, The Travel Channel, Spike TV, Discovery and The Bio Channel.

Geoffrey Esper is considered one of MLE's top stars along with Joey Chestnut, Matt Stonie, Miki Sudo, and Eric "Badlands" Booker.

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

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Correction

In our Summer Guide it was incorrectly stated that the Grafton Farmers Market took place on Thursdays. It actually takes place on Wednesdays. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.



Xpressly Yours ... a letter from the editor

A concert goer in pink with a stage of her own



BY ROD LEE

nderstood by most everyone who takes in concerts at Indian Ranch is that a staple of the experience is "people watching."

On any given day performances by groups like the Little River Band, which took place the afternoon of July 17th, are sure to bring out an assortment of characters more colorful in attire and more captivating in personality than even Big Bird, James Cagney as Yankee Doodle Dandy, Liberace or Jerry Lee Lewis at the piano or Aerosmith's Steven Tyler in a lavishly embroidered jacket.

Such was the case again when hundreds of people (some of who, like myself, received a VIP invitation for a thank-you press party prior to the main event from Indian Ranch Publicist Adam Klein) gathered at the venerable location at the edge of Webster Lake in anticipation of the music they would be hearing from Wayne Nelson and his mates; songs like "Cool Change," "Reminiscing," "Playing to Win," "Help is on its Way" and of course "Lonesome Loser."

For me, the chance to sing along to the lyrics "Have you heard about the lonesome loser?/Beaten by the queen of hearts every time/Have you heard about the lonesome loser?/He's a loser but he still keeps on tryin" was made all that much better by the presence of a granddaughter who came along for companionship—and by a surprise reconnection with former colleagues from the Telegram & Gazette.

Seeing Jay Valencourt and Deirdre Baldwin again meant catching up on "the good old days" we shared on Franklin Street in Worcester, followed by lunch together at a picnic table (the food was provided by the staff of Samuel Slater's Restaurant) and then seats in the bleachers to the right of the stage for the show.

Jay and Deirdre were much more familiar with the Little River Band's

catalogue than myself and so they did not raise their hands when Wayne Nelson asked "how many here are seeing the Little River Band for the first time?" To the many hands that shot up at this question, Mr. Nelson said "where have you been for the last forty-seven years?"

Perhaps more than is true at even the Comcast Center, The Palladium, the South Shore Music Circus, the Cape Cod Melody Tent, Boston's Hatch Shell or the Hampton Beach Casino, there is an energy at Indian Ranch that can lift the most downtrodden spirit. This will undoubtedly continue to be true as the Mike's Hard Lemonade Summer Concert Series continues with shows featuring such acts as ABBA The Concert-ABBA Tribute, Get the Led Out, Extreme and the Pike Rockfest—together with other bookings, which are being added all the time.

Long associated with Country & Western music, this is not so typical anymore, but as a venue Indian Ranch stands second to none in New England; and there is as compensation for the loss of Charlie Daniels and other cowpoke-oriented productions the Nash

Icon Local Countryfest on September 11 to look forward to.

In the meantime, several rows in front of where we were seated, a young

 and anyone nearby who desired the shower as well - while dancing continuously. At times she left her place about midway up the grandstand to bolt down



woman in sandals, black shorts and a sleeveless pink top (identified here as "Rose" for the purposes of this column) kept people around her entertained from start to finish.

In deference to the oppressive heat, Rose used a spray bottle to douse herself with cooling water the aisle and engage with others she knew, without missing a beat. At other times she dropped into the lap of the man who was with her, still gyrating and singing along with the band.

Wayne Nelson may not have noticed Rose in the throng but if he did,

perhaps he was toasting her when he raised a glass, took a sip and said "Kentucky water, brown."

One thing is for sure. Rose got her money's worth by letting off a little steam. She was not alone. Invariably concerts at Indian Ranch get the audience up on its feet. The acts — in this case the Little River Band — respond affirmatively.

"We'll be back!" Wayne Nelson said, while paying homage to keyboardist Chris Marion, singersongwriter-guitarist Bruce Wallace, drummer Ryan Ricks and guitarist Colin Whinnery.

An Australian rock group that has been around since the 1970s the Little River Band has been dubbed "the best singing band in the world" by Glenn Frey of The Eagles. LRB continues to demonstrate staying power as it moves from Webster to Dallas, Winder, Georgia, Anderson, Indiana, Nashville and beyond-in 2022.

Just like Rose, who never seemed to tire on a blazing hot day that left a lot of others wilting.

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What's in YOUR water?

BY JANET STOICA

e might not have the terrible Flint, Michigan water contamination problem in our area but there are other evil chemicals lurking in our everyday tap and private well water as well as bottled water that the Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA"), Food and Drug Administration ("FDA"), and our state Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP") are taking a closer look at.

These chemicals are known as PFAS ("forever chemicals") or "per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances" and a recent review from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention outlines a host of health effects associated with PFAS exposure, including cancer, liver damage, decreased fertility, and increased risk of asthma and thyroid disease.

PFAS are found all around us and chemical companies had been declaring them safe for decades but in response to health concerns and public pressure to discontinue their use, these companies have now stopped their former PFAS usage but have now replaced them with other forms of PFAS that they've declared safer. Whether the "new" PFAS are any safer remains to be seen.

In the product manufacturing process used by chemical companies, PFAS are disposed of in our waterways. Additionally, those PFA-filled products we use every day and then throw into our trash are dumped into landfills or incinerated

spreading their poisonous remains everywhere. Some of those products are Teflon pots and pans, fast food wrappers, microwave popcorn bags, pizza boxes, candy wrappers, cleaning products, shampoo, dental floss, nail polish, eye makeup, paints, varnishes, etc.

The EPA has PFAS regulations stating that no more than 20 ppt (parts per trillion) may be allowed in our drinking water. It does not appear that the FDA has adopted a definitive regulation on PFAS in bottled water. Consumers are encouraged to research PFAS on their brand's websites.

In our area towns, action is being taken or has already been taken. Here's what our local towns are doing or have done in response to PFAs:

Auburn's Water Superintendent, Greg Woods, mentions that "the town has 12 wells and 11 of those 12 wells have measurable amounts of PFAS but they are all currently below the EPA's maximum testing level of 20 ppt. Half our wells are below 10 ppt and the other half are below

10-15 ppt. We are keeping our eyes on our wells and closely monitoring them on a monthly basis." Auburn is also at a Level 2 Drought Stage and its residents use the odd/even outdoor watering practice where those houses numbered with odd and even numbers may water their lawns on specific days. "Water conservation is always at the forefront of our goals," said Mr. Woods.

George Patrinos, Dudley Water and Sewer Superintendent, stated that Dudley was well ahead of the curve for sure. "We're in pretty good shape right now," Superintendent Patrinos said. "A few years ago when we had to take a closer look at our water pumping stations, we realized that rebuilding had to be done. We've done \$13-16 million worth of work here. We applied for and received grant money from the Mass. Revolving Fund. We cleaned and remodeled our water tank systems, upgraded one well, and installed a Granular Activated Carbon ("GAC") unit which treats for PFAS and cleans the water which is then treated with corrosion control and sanitizing chemicals. Our previous system was so antiquated that we had to take action and then the PFAS treatment system opportunity opened up. We were lucky to have had the chance to control this at the beginning of the PFAS notification process. Once our new main in the Mason Road area is finished next spring that completes the connection of our blended water

well system." Charlton's Water and Sewer Superintendent, Peter Boria, referred to WhiteWater, Inc. which operates the town of Southbridge's water system and also provides piped water to parts of Charlton. Steven Gregoire, Manager of the Southbridge Water Department at WhiteWater, stated "we've just completed four straight quarters of state PFAS testing here with zero PFAs detection. The testing equipment could not detect any PFAS. We have 3,000 acres of protected reservoir

drinking water. You could say that nature's natural filtering system of trees and surrounding land is the reason for our well-purified water. Before the water source is sent out to our customers a series of three filtration systems clean the naturally-occurring organic materials."

Oxford's water system is monitored and serviced by **Aquarion Water Company** of Massachusetts with an office in Oxford. According to the company's website, Oxford's water supply, which consists of three wells, is monitored every quarter with the last sampling completed in April 2022. Their report states that Wells 1 and 2 had no PFAS detection for the last three quarters. Well 3 tested at 2 ppt in December 2021 and January 2022 with no PFAS detection in April 2022. All well tests are below the 20 ppt DEP guidelines.

Tom Cutler, Webster's Water Superintendent, said that of the town's seven wells, there are five currently in service. "We are ready to put our Bigelow Road well back on-line," he said. "We had to order new parts and getting them took a while due to the long wait times. We have six wells at Memorial Beach and five are currently in service. We are doing a complete rehab on Well Number 6 at Memorial Beach including motor replacement. The rehab and cleaning of our five other wells should be done in 4-6 weeks.

In the last few years, Webster built a multi-million dollar water filtration and treatment facility at



The town of Dudley's Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) unit. Janet Stoica photo

Memorial Beach to eliminate manganese and iron water fouling. "Our wells are testing below the 20 ppt maximum," said Mr. Cutler, "but we are watching the Bigelow Road well as its readings have been close to the maximum allowed. We are blending water from our wells and look forward to obtaining funding from the state's Revolving Fund to assist with PFAS filtration. Tighe & Bond, our engineering consultants, are working on filing our request for funding. We have also joined with other cities and towns in a class action lawsuit filed by the law firm of Baron and Budd against the companies who made PFAS products. Additional-

ly, we see the EPA lowering their allowed PFAS levels and we are looking to the future."

Webster residents were strongly encouraged to attend a PFAS Public Hearing on Wednesday, August 10, at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmens' Meeting Room at Town Hall. The town's engineering consultants, Tighe & Bond, were to present PFAS water treatment options including estimated treatment costs at that time.

Contact Janet: jstoica@ TheYankeeXpress.com

McGOVERN

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Agency ("EPA") guidelines. Audience members further inquired about what the EPA's plans were to help eliminate PFAs along with grant assistance to cities and towns like Webster. "We've had to shut one of our wells down because of high PFA levels and it's hard enough for us to do without that well especially in the summer. We're having a study done now and we don't know what we're going to do," one attendee stated. "We want funded mandates. We have a plan to reach the current PFA levels but we need more advice."

Mr. McGovern responded by saying that "the House and Senate has put



Congressman McGovern answers questions during an appearance at the Webster Senior Center.

money into bills to assist with this situation and that our Commonwealth was overflowing with funds from the infrastructure bill and that some of these monies should help fund the PFA challenge." Rep. McGovern also suggested that a teleconference call be held with Webster officials, the EPA, and the state Department of Environmental Protection. His staff was directed to follow-up.

Another voter asked about the January 6th riots that occurred in Washington. Mr. McGovern said "I was in the House Chamber when the riots began with Speaker Nancy Pelosi chairing the session. She received a phone call and asked me to take over which I did. As there are no TVs in the chamber, members were unaware of the events

occurring at that time. I adjourned the House briefly and then brought us back into session and we were told by the Capitol Police to close down because of the riots happening outside. We learned that there was no safe route to get the representatives out of the building. We walked down three flights of stairs to the basement and saw that suddenly one of the rioters had broken a window. We then walked out to the speaker's lobby and awaited further instruction. We all saw the mob banging on and smashing windows with their fists. We couldn't leave and saw that the woman who had been shot was brought in and then we were all brought to a safe location. We learned that one hundred forty Capitol Police had been injured,

stabbed, and traumatized. We're now learning that we came this close to a coup.

"You know Rep. Liz Cheney and I used to serve on the Rules Committee together. I admire her guts. She's impeccably conservative but she took an oath for office to uphold the Constitution of the United States. This is not about whether you like President Biden or Donald Trump. This is about our country, our Constitution. We have to think about our future. This is an uneasy time and we have to get through it. The Republican Party is good to have and it's good to have differing opinions and insights but I'd like to see them move away from groups like QAnon."

Contact Janet: jstoica@ TheYankeeXpress.com

Doughty Best Choice for Governor

ur state is facing some serious problems including high cost of living exacerbated by inflation, an ailing MBTA system, rising crime rates, businesses leaving the state, and declining schools. We need a governor who will put aside politics and put people first. That person is fiscally conservative outsider Chris Doughty.

He is not a professional politician. Chris has spent a lifetime creating jobs, not worrying about the next election. He is the only job creator in the race. For more than three decades he has worked to build businesses that provide good jobs, while juggling being a hands-on dad for his six children and serving in the community.

Doughty has overseen the expansion of Capstan Industries from its initial startup of a few dozen employees to become, at its peak, a large multinational manufacturer. As a business owner and job creator, he dealt with all kinds of challenges — from low-cost international imports to government regulation. He has worked hard to make his company a place people



so there is no reason that

by immediately suspend-

the State House cannot help

the hard working taxpayers

ing the gas tax. As the next

Governor, we will be proac-

tive in responding to crises,"

Doughty wants to end

reputation of being "Taxa-

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more than Bill Weld did as

Governor. This will make

our state more competitive

nesses so that we can grow

Like you, Doughty op-

for attracting new busi-

jobs and wages.

the Commonwealth's

said Doughty.

were proud to work.

Doughty graduated from Brigham Young University with a B.S. in economics and received an MBA from Harvard Business School. He is well qualified to be our Governor.

But, what will Doughty do for you? As he likes to say, "You will have more dough with Doughty."

Doughty was the first candidate to call for the suspension of the gas tax to help ease the pain at the pump. His plan is to suspend the gas tax until the price of gas drops below \$3.70 per gallon.

poses licenses for illegal immigrants. But, he knows that the true problem is that Massachusetts is a magnet state. As our next Governor, he will strengthen verification of applications for public assistance so only

> residents receive benefits. As an experienced job creator, Doughty has a small business bill of rights plan to support those who create the majority of new jobs in our state.

the truly needy and legal

political

"As a business owner, I have worked hard to always comply with new regulations, but it has not been easy. Creating jobs and meeting a payroll is not for the faint of heart. State government should be advocates and partners with our local businesses so the Commonwealth can create more jobs and raise wages. We do that by encouraging entrepreneurship and small businesses that are the backbone of our economy," said Doughty.

As a father and grandfa-



ther, Chris Doughty knows that education is the heart of our Commonwealth and that we need to provide the best educational opportunities for the next generation. Our state is a national leader in education at all levels but it is often uneven in its availability. Doughty will work to ensure parents can access the very best education for their children. The equation is simple: high expectations, a strong curriculum, excellent teachers,

and empowered parents.

We can count on Chris Doughty to make Massachusetts affordable again. To see more details on his small business bill of rights and other issues visit ChrisforMA.com. Chris would be honored to have your vote in the GOP Primary on September 6th.

This article is Paid for by Committee to Elect Chris Doughty



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Webster voters OK Bartlett High renovation funds, 1095 yes to 611 no

BY JANET STOICA

t's official, at the June town meeting and ballot voting thereafter, 1,706 Webster voters came out in full force to vote prorenovations for Bartlett High School.

At the original May town meeting, the renovation question required a 2/3 majority to pass. When it did not pass, the opportunity to have the Mass. School Building Association ("MSBA") pay 55% of the renovation costs would have folded up completely without another chance to request funds for at least five more years and without any guarantee that any further grant money consideration would even be made.

Bartlett High School



had been asking the MSBA for funding for at least five years without success as it must compete with all other schools in the state for the monies available likened to a lottery as each school awaits a decision by the MSBA based on need and funds available. Large repairs like the heating system and roofing had reached the end of their life expectancy and were in need of complete replacement as ongoing upkeep and repairs could no longer sustain their viability.

The MSBA grant along with taxpayer funding will now allow the high school to be brought up to state educational/learning environment standards and fire and safety codes for the benefit of the high school students, faculty, and additional personnel.

Webster's School Superintendent, Ruthann Goguen, stated "I would like to thank the community for sharing their opinions through their votes. I am pleased the Webster community did not lose the \$51 million grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority. This grant took many years to get and it will assist the community with the costs of this renovation project. Through this renovation project we are now able to further advance the educational programming we offer our students. With this redesign of the existing building, students will have access to classrooms and science labs that meet state standards. In addition students will have learning environments where they can become more involved in hands-on learning. The renovation plans include an Advanced Manufactur-



Webster Superintendent. of Schools Ruthann Goguen

ing Lab, a Health and Human Service Lab, a Maker Space, and a Media Center. I would like to thank the community for supporting the further advancements of the educational programming and improving the learning spaces for our students!"

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Beaches; and how I added to the ocean's sea glass

BY JANET STOICA

hen did all the beaches become so crowded? My initial memories of visiting Misquamicut State Beach, Rhode Island with my family was when I was about eight years old and it really didn't seem that the beach

used blackboards to draw their clouds and smiley suns along with an isobar or two....you just knew that Don Kent on WBZ-TV wouldn't steer you wrong).

Soon, we could smell the salt air and yes! We could see the ocean....couldn't wait to splash around in that salt water. After parking

anything about sunblocking qualities, they just touted themselves as helping you get a deep, dark tan. My dad and I were the definite "tanners" in the family and used to compare tans as I became older to determine who had "won the tanning contest" that summer. These days, having a dark

some for me!)

On this one particular Sunday beach trip, I was wearing my first pair of new eyeglasses----oh m'gosh, I could see stuff I never knew was there before. It was early morning and not too many other families were on the beach yet, as usual. My brother and I searched for shells, starfish, hermit crabs, unusual stones, and even sea glass. As we both bent down to study some new sea life and after a wave had just retreated back to the ocean. my brother turned around quickly and his elbow hit my specs and out popped one of my eyeglass lenses. Realizing immediately that I could not see clearly, I began to shout that my eyeglasses were broken. (Actually more like screeching bloody murder...). Hearing/ seeing that I was in distress, my dad came running over. He began a quick sweep of the immediate area only to come up with nothing. The sea had claimed a new piece of glass. Waves began to reach our feet and soon my tears became mixed with the ocean. Dad consoled my little girl self and carried me back to the blanket where mom became my newest grief counselor. My

brother apologized for his behavior and soon the sun shone brightly again if only to be seen clearly enough by my one "good" eye. Off in the not-so-distant future, someone was bound to pick up a nice sea glass souvenir ... I wondered if they'd make good use of it like I had

If you enjoyed this story, please let me know if you'd like to see more: jstoica@ theyankeexpress.com



was all that crowded then. We'd be packed into the car by 7:00 a.m. with our bathing suits on under our tee shirts and shorts. My dad drove Route 12 south most of the way through CT and then south on Route 49 (now officially designated by the State of CT as a "scenic route" due to its dramatic views of handsome farms. beautiful tree-lined roads bordered by century-old stonewalls and cornfields that go on forever). To my brother and me, it was a very long and meandering way just to get to the ocean. Are we there yet, are we there vet?

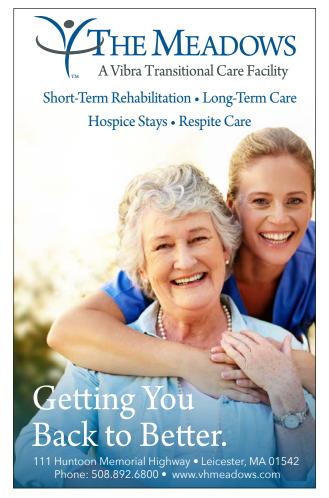
Of course, we never knew how mom and dad managed to always pick the sunniest and clearest blue sky day our little eyes could ever imagine. We just thought they must know these things because that's what parents do. (I think, at this time, the TV weather-people

the car and unloading our beach gear, it was usually the same, no more than five or six families had staked their blanket's boundaries before our own claim to the most heavenly spot on the sandy shore. Everything had to be laid out just so with mom. Blanket here, beach chairs on the right and left, round metal food cooler with its red plaid décor placed near the top middle of the blanket covered with extra beach towels to keep it cooler. An insulated Coleman gallon jug filled with ice and water mixed with ZaRex grape or orange flavors.

The remainder of our supplies included flip-flops, pails & shovels, individual towels of which my brother and I had our own personalized themes, sunglasses, goofy sun hats, and lots of Coppertone suntan lotion. Come to think of it, those lotions never mentioned

tan is considered an extreme health hazard as well as contributing to the worst wrinkles as we age. But I digress....

Another thing I still don't understand after all these years is why does a homemade sandwich taste so awesomely delicious while at the beach? Something about that fresh salt air I guess. My mom was the official sandwich-maker for us and a bologna, tomato, and lettuce sandwich on white bread never tasted so good as when you just returned to your blanket after sandcastle-making and body-surfing for an hour or two! We were exhausted from those waves you know ... I think we could've eaten two of those wonderful sammies. We were also allowed to have a sandwich bag portion of potato chips, fresh fruit, and, of course, ZaRex. (Hey! Quit hogging all the ZaRex and leave





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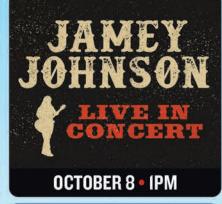
TESTIMONIAL: "When my mother's dementia progressed to the point that she was no longer able to live by herself: I was in desperate need of help and found it with the folks at Accord."



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The Indian Ranch Box Office is open Thursday through Monday, 10AM - 4PM. Tickets are also available by phone: 1-800-514-ETIX (3849). All events are rain or shine. No refunds. For ticketing and group sales, contact tickets@indianranch.com or call 508.943.3871. For event booking, contact banquets@samuelslaters.com. Indian Ranch is less than an hour's drive from Boston, Providence, Hartford and Springfield. Indian Ranch is located at 200 Gore Road in Webster, MA.

Vendors sought for Apple Festival

udley Grange #163 is seeking vendors for its annual Apple Festival, which is scheduled for Saturday, October 1 on the Dudley Grange grounds at 139 Center Road in Dudley. Artisans, antique vendors and local small businesses are welcome to participate. **Dudley Grange also supports** nonprofit organizations that service the Dudley-Webster area. Contact Karen-Beth at 508-341-6289 to reserve a space.



Space available for Craft Fair



The first annual "Parking Lot Craft Fair" fundraiser sponsored by the Auburn Historical Society is coming along nicely. There is still some space for vendors who might want to participate. The Craft Fair will be held on Saturday, August 27th from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., rain or shine. Vendors can reserve a 10x15foot space for \$15. If you are interested in being part of the Craft Fair contact the Auburn Historical Society and Museum at 508-832-6856 or auburnmuseum@ verizon.net.



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The Rose Room, Andy's—and now comedy nights



BY ROD LEE

ot only did Bill and Jess Sabine realize a dream with the opening of The Rose Room at 4 E. Main St. in Webster in November of 2018, they have now taken a bold new step forward by launching a companion business-Andy's Neighborhood Canteen.

Run by Mr. Sabine, Andy's is located at 9 Frederick St., just a short hop from The Rose Room.

Situated in a building that formerly housed a brewery, Andy's has been in operation for less than a year. The facility, with a first and second floor and an outdoor seating area, suits Bill Sabine's designs perfectly.

Word is getting around about Andy's.

"People are still finding us," Mr. Sabine said on July 30th.



Sam Stefanik, Anna Stefanik, Bill Sabine, Dot Sabine and Jess Sabine make The Rose Room in Webster a family affair.

He sees Andy's as an extension of what the couple began with The Rose Room, a café and tonic bar. The Rose Room with its concentration on locally sourced meat, dairy, grains, flour, eggs and produce from farms throughout the Northeast has already proven popular with customers. So much so that Bill and Jess say on their website "the impact this café has

had in its short life has been indescribable."

Mr. Sabine's intention is for Andy's to exert similar influence on the food and beverage scene in South County and Central Massachusetts.

Andy's draws on his more than twenty years' experience in the industry, from his days starting out as a manager, server and bartender in Hoboken, New Jersey, to other stops along the way: as service director at Sheridan Square in New York City; as general manager at The Pearl Restaurant and the Dune Restaurant on Nantucket; as front-of-the-house manager at the East Ender in Portland and bartender/ MOD at the Liquid Riot Bottling Company, also in Portland.

A graduate of the New

Jersey Institute of Technology with a major in Architecture, he is versed in all aspects of the culinary trade including Operations, Food & Beverage, Hospitality, Wine & Spirits and Customer Service.

"During the week I open when The Rose Room closes, for people to get a bite to eat, shoot pool," Mr. Sabine said. "This space was built out for when [Brian Kretschmann of KBC) was brewing.

"We do trivia on Thursday nights, music on Fridays. We are starting a comedy series the second Saturday of the month, upstairs on the stage. That begins Saturday, August 13 with Matt Devlin hosting from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m."

Andy's also offers a

\$6 sandwich night on Wednesdays, to go with a wide selection of draught beer, cocktails, sandwiches, snacks and "sweet treats" from The Rose Room.

As part of its regular entertainment, the Evan Wood Trio is scheduled to perform on August 12 from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. and Christopher Listorti on August 19th from 7:00 to 10:00.

Since meeting on Nantucket, marrying and having a child, Bill and Jess Sabine have returned to her native area of Dudley and brought to fruition their separate visions of owning a restaurant/café.

Submit restaurant and food and beverage news to The Feisty Fork by email rodlee.1963@gmail.com.





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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. Emai your calendar or event notice to rodlee.1963@ gmail.com.

THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF **AUGUST**

• Classic Cars & Ice Cream. This event occurs every Wednesday from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Nor'easter Blizzard's Ice Cream, 278 North Main St., Uxbridge, hosted by Top Dog Entertainment.

The 6th annual Blackstone Valley **Art Association Sunflower Show** will take place at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster, with viewing hours for the café gallery Tuesday-Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. A reception for some of the artists will be held on Saturday, August 13 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Masks are requested in the store at this time. Contact Deb Horan, 508-949-6232 or deb@bookloversgourment.com for further info.

UPCOMING AT INDIAN RANCH IN WEBSTER:

7:00 p.m.; August 13, Badfish Summer Tour, 1:00 p.m.; August 20, Acapella Country Sensations Home Free, 1:00 p.m.; August 26, Get The Led Out, 7:00 p.m.

September 2, Extreme, 7:00 p.m.



The amazing sunflower will be celebrated throughout the month of August at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster. Nearly all of seventy species of sunflowers are native to North America. They can grow to six feet tall and they tilt as the sun moves, so that they are always facing it.

September 3, Aaron Lewis and The Starliners, 1:00 p.m. September 10, The Pike Rok Fest 2023, 12:00 noon. September 11, Local Country Fest, 12:00 noon. October 8, Jamey

Milford St. (Route 140). Vendors and craftspeople can rent spaces for \$15 each. For more information call 508-529-3314. The Post's flea markets will be held the second

October. Parking is free.

Tickets are available at www.

indianranch.com, by calling

Ranch Box Office.

initiative.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12

1-800-514-3849 or at the Indian

• The Blackstone River Fest will be

held from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the

287 Oak St., Uxbridge. This is a free

River Bend Farm Visitor Center,

event celebrating fifty years of

the "Zap the Blackstone" cleanup

• The Evan Wood Trio performs at

Frederick St., Webster, 7:00-10:00

Upton VFW Post 5594 is hosting

1:30 p.m. at Post headquarters, 15

a flea market from 8:00 a.m. to

Andy's Neighborhood Center, 9

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13

Counterfeit Cash, a Johnny Cash Tribute Band, will perform 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. Go to douglasorchardandfarm.com for further details.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, AUGUST 12-13

 A Tank Demonstration Weekend will be celebrated at the American Heritage Museum, 568 Main St., Hudson, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. both days. World War II veterans will participate in this exhibition of such tanks as the M4 Sherman, M24 Chaffee, M26 Pershing, M8 Hellcat and the German Jagdpanzer 38 Hetzer.

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.

Steamers at Sunset, a signature event of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in The Barn at Blissful Meadows Golf Club, 801 Chocolog Road, Uxbridge, with "music, good food and great company." Register at www. blackstonevalley.org/events/.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 18

 ValleyCast presents Le'Mixx Band, 6:00 p.m., Whitin Mill complex, 50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville. In the event of rain the show will move indoors to the Singh Performance Center.



Tanks from its collection take center stage at the American Heritage Museum in Hudson the weekend of August 13-14, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. both days.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 20

• Cars in the Park returns to the Whitin Community Center in Whitinsville from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with a car, truck and motorcycle show, vendors, food trucks, children's activities, 50/50 and mystery boxes, music and entertainment in 7.5 Whitin Park (corner of Main and Hill streets, at Memorial Square). Proceeds benefit the Whitin Community Center as a place of well-being for individuals and families.

• The First Congregational Church of Millbury, 148 W. Main St., invites residents to bring donations of food, personal hygiene items, Goretti's or CVS gift certificates, to the church parking lot from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. All donations will be taken to the Millbury Senior Center. Suggested items include canned tomato macaroni meals, fruit juices, canned has, Mimi hot dogs, jelly or jam, ketchup, mayo, mustard, relish, salad dressing, Pop Tarts, cracker snack packs and paper towels. A long row of tables will be set up for drive-by drop-off, or those donating can stay in their vehicle and pop the trunk or hatch back. Enter from W. Main St. and exit to Beach St. Please join us in celebrating the blessing of helping those in need!

SUNDAY, AUGUST 21

• The Uxbridge Youth Soccer League will host an RC Air Show and Craft Fair from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Sutton Street Fields, 320 Sutton St., Uxbridge. Once complete, the fields will provide a one-of-a-kind sports complex for both the soccer league and other youth leagues in the community. G to Uxbridgeyouthsoccer.com or email info@ uxbridgeyouthsoccer.com for more details.

• The Pout Pond Recreation Committee is hosting its second annual Cardboard Boat Regatta at 3:15 n m. Visit the committee's Facebook page at facebook.com/ poutpond for further info.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24

• Good Energy will be at the Douglas Adult Social Center, 331 Main St., at 11:30 a.m. for a discussion on the cost of electricity and how changing your supplier could save you money. Call 508-476-2283 for more information.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 25

 ValleyCast presents Grayson Ty, 6:00 p.m., Whitin Mill complex, 50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville. In the event of rain the show will move indoors to the Singh Performance Center.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 26

• Joe Cicero performs at Andy's Neighborhood Center, 9 Frederick St., Webster, 7:00-10:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 27

• The Auburn Historical Society & Museum presents the first annual Parking Lot Craft Fair, 41 South St., Auburn, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., rain or shine. For more information or to reserve a spot contact Helen Poirier at auburnmuseum@verizon.net, or stop by the museum Tuesdays or Saturdays between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

• "Zap 50," a re-enactment of the original "Operation Zap" cleanup of the Blackstone River, will be held throughout the watershed in Massachusetts and Rhode Island from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. All volunteers are welcome to take part; for more information contact the Rhode Island Historical Society or the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30

• The Uxbridge Senior Center's Pout Pond Lunch Outing is scheduled for 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. There will be bingo with Sally. Van rides are available or meet at the site. Call ahead to RSVP, 508-278-8622.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31

· Amy Cowen, a former resident of the island of Oahu, brings the Hawaiian Islands to Plummer Place at the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville, for an end-of-the-summer party from noon to 2:00 p.m. Authentic Hawaiian entertainment and a themed luncheon with dessert will be served. Seating is limited. Sign up with Amy, 508-234-2002, to attend.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

• ValleyCast presents The Eagles Experience, 6:00 p.m., Whitin Mill complex, 50 Douglas Road,

HAPPENINGS!

continued on page 11



HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 10

Whitinsville. In the event of rain the show will move indoors to the Singh Performance Center.

Society.

• The Millbury Lions Foundation will host its 5th annual Antique & Classic Car Show at Hebert Candy Mansion, 574 Hartford Turnpike, Shrewsbury, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. More than one hundred



Cars in the Park, one of the largest events of the year, returns to Whitin Park in Whitinsville from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 20th. Last year over 3000 people attended, with more than 200 vehicles on display.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

• A Dragon Boat Festival celebrating fifty years of the "Zap the Blackstone" cleanup movement will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Festival Pier, 50 Tim Healy Way, Pawtucket. For further info contact the Rhode Island Historical fifty classic cars, hot rods, trucks, foreign automobiles, motorcycles and other vehicles are expected with over six hundred spectators in attendance. Rain Date is Saturday, September 10th. Awards will be presented to the Top 50 entries with a trophy ceremony at 2:00 p.m. Pre-registration fee

is \$10.00 if paid by August 15th. Registration on the day of the show is \$15.00. Cruisin Bruce Entertainment will provide music throughout the event. There will be dash plaques and goodie bags for the first one hundred participants who register. There will also be raffle prizes, door prizes and a 50/50 raffle. The Dog Father food truck and Hebert Ice Cream will be on-site. Vendor and flea market space is available at a minimal fee. All proceeds benefit the Lions' community projects. For more information visit www. millburylions.org.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

 Charlton's Old Home Day, established in 1897, returns with a plethora of activities including soap box races, a kids fun run (a collaboration between the Charlton PTO and Charlton Cross-Fit), arts, crafts, flowers, music, awards, an information booth, a road race, a bicycle stunt show, a parade (starting from Overlook at 3:30 p.m.), Grizzly Adams photos, Scottish Highland Games, Blessing Farm pony rides and fireworks. This family-friendly event will be occurring throughout town from dawn until after dark.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

• The Northbridge Senior Center is offering a "Lake Winnipesaukee 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.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

• Infinite Groove performs at Andy's Neighborhood Center, 9 Frederick St., Webster, 7:00-10:00

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

• The Zap the Blackstone Revival, celebrating fifty years of efforts to clean up the Blackstone River, will be held from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Old Slater Mill National Historic Landmark, 67 Roosevelt Ave., Pawtucket.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

• The Rotary Club of Blackstone Valley will host its annual Rotary Scholarship Golf Tournament at Blissful Meadows in Uxbridge from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Cost is \$125 per golfer or \$500 per foursome, and \$40 for dinner only. Register

HAPPENINGS!

continued on page 13



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Gay City State Park Part 2: A ghost wandering in the woods

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

Part One began to tell of the ghosts of Gay City State Park in Hebron, Connecticut. Here is the conclusion for anyone who might want to visit the ghost town and hopefully encounter one of its permanent residents.

The peddler's ghost, as if seeking justice for his untimely demise, now roams the perimeter of the little hamlet. More than a few visitors have stumbled upon the old charcoal pit,

where they have witnessed the ghastly sight of a glowing skeleton hovering just above the ground. The spectral skeleton is not the only permanent phantom of the old village. The spirit of a young man wanders among the thicket eternally trying to appease his employer centuries after they have both turned to dust.

A teenage boy became apprentice to the local blacksmith in hopes of someday becoming his successor. The blacksmith was a gruff, shorttempered man with not much patience for insubordination, but he took on the role as teacher to the young man. One day the apprentice decided he was going to take the long way to the shop, stopping and enjoying the morning every chance he could. When he arrived at the forge, the blacksmith, having expected him to arrive at work on time, was steaming with rage. No one

knows what exact words may have been exchanged, but the blacksmith lost his temper and hacked the boy to pieces with a butcher knife. Legend has it that he even lopped the poor soul's head off. The blacksmith was never brought up on charges, and the ghost of the apprentice now wanders among the woods, hastily making his way to some unknown destination, perhaps for fear of being tardy. Some have seen him running with his

bloody head cradled under his arm.

Paranormal investigator and reporter Lauren Neslusen paid a visit to Gay City State Park in the winter to see if the legends of the haunts held any weight. Her account is as follows.

"When I was investigating there I saw and heard some very weird things. The strangest thing I saw was a black mist that disappeared quickly off to the side of a trail. The best way to describe it was about four feet off the ground and maybe three feet wide. It was solid in the middle but seemed transparent around the edges. The second weirdest thing was the other investigator and I were exploring the old mill site and rocks and debris kept falling from the top of the wall to the ground. (almost as if someone was standing there.) We went in the middle of winter while the ground was still frozen so I don't think it could have been the ground thawing

or anything. I took some EVPs (electronic voice phenomena, or ghost voice recordings) at the site but nothing came up on the recorder. As we were walking up to the pond though, we did hear distinct voices coming from the mill site. We ran back but found no one. We even called out and no one answered. The last thing I wanted to mention was we did hear something walking in the woods (you could hear crunching in the snow) but we saw no animal and no people; it was just very strange."

A few months after Lauren's encounter, we received an email from an investigator in regard to a visit he and his mother paid to the park. They were wandering the park just before closing, talking about being locked in if the gates closed. When they played their recorder back, there was a third voice accompanying them as they traversed the trails laden with old home foundations and other remnants of the past.

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Dr. Rancourt will be splitting her time until a 2nd audiologist can be hired for Smithfield. She will remain in South Grafton.



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erexperience.org. or call

508-461-2955 for hours

and further information.

in them, she said.



lthough only open for a short time, the Samuel Slater Experience in Webster is already creating a positive vibe and attracting notice.

Recently showcased on Lake 940 and in The Boston Sunday Globe's VIP Lounge section, the Samuel Slater Experience has also drawn interest from the Dudley Middle School, Douglas Elementary, St. Joseph's in Webster, Park Avenue Elementary, the Sutton Historical Society, Swissturn USA and the Studebaker Car Club.

As the SSE's Reanna Kuzdzal told Doc Siddall of Lake 940 during a sixminute segment on his program, the former National Guard Armory is a perfect educational tool for teachers to use for instruction

they provide students in Grades 3 and up. Children are not treated to a museum in the traditional sense but rather a truly immersive experience through the use of high-tech media, video, audio, motion, wind and scents.

The SSE covers two time periods, the early 1800s and the early 1900s. It describes in vivid detail Samuel Slater's travels from England to America in 1789 and how he took Great Britain's textile industry secrets with him and used these to power America's first cotton spinning jenny and establish the American factory system.

"You can meet Samuel Slater on video and ride with him on a boat," Ms. Kuzdzal points out.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

at https://tinyurl.com/unipaybvrotary or send your payment to The Rotary Club of Blackstone Valley, PO Box 4, Whitinsville MA 01588.

HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 11

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

• The Stewardship Committee of St. Denis Church, 23 Manchaug Road, Douglas, will present a "divine" comedy of belly laughs, blessings, blarney and bingo featuring Fr. Patrick Aloysius Misgivings relating his stories and one liners about growing up Catholic. This event is for those 21 or older. Doors open at 4:45 p.m. The show starts at 5:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20 per person and include heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Tickets can be purchased online at SaintDenisChurch.com, in person after all masses in August and early September or by calling the Rectory at 508-476-2002. "Don't miss this delightful and uplifting one-man show!" Cynthia Murphy

• The 16th annual Uxbridge Senior Center "Sweet 16" Golf Outing, sponsored by the Uxbridge Elderly Connection, will be held at Whitinsville Golf Club in Whitinsville starting at noon with a shotgun start. This fundraiser benefits programs and activities at the Uxbridge Senior Center. Teams of four can sign up to play for \$100 per golfer for nine holes including cart and buffet dinner. Contact Russ Rosborough at 508-579-5983 or Karen Beane at 508-769-3816. A full sponsorship is available for \$600, which includes fees for four golfers, carts and dinner plus tee sign with additional acknowledgement in press and print matter.

OCTOBER 9-23

• The Friends of the Simon Fairfield Public Library in Douglas will conduct a fall online auction, with all proceeds doing toward the Library Building Fund. The Friends are seeking donations of crafts, services, gift baskets, antiques and "what-have-you" for this event. For more information, visit mysfpl.

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BY AMY LECLAIRE

uke follows me everywhere, even into the bathroom. Dog People understand. Dogs want to know where we are at all times. Therefore they make themselves available to us all the time. For this reason, amongst so many others, it's so very hard to lose them. A dog's life is far too short. They're there, and then suddenly they're not. The empty space marking 'what was' and 'what is' often leads to one of the most painful life transitions for a dog owner.

Henceforth, we don't mind tinkling on the toilet while our dogs sit in front of us and wait casually, as though there's no reason to be private about the business of going pee-pee. A dog has a one-track mind. Follow owner. Be with owner. Love owner.

I've had dogs my whole life, and appreciate their brand of love. Never would I have guessed, however, that my latest addition to the family would follow me into the bathroom for yet another reason.

"What are you doing, Luke?"

Luke happens to be watching me do laundry. He sits and waits for me to drop socks and shirts, piece by piece, into the washer tub as though to say, "When will it end? Look at all of those clothes!" His ears prop up intelligently. He's hoping that I'll accidentally drop a sock onto the floor amid a soft toss. Here's the sad truth about this.

A part of me actually wants to feign an accident for him just to witness the surge of joy in his eyes as he realizes his good fortune. "My life is short. I'm grabbing that baby before Mom

LIVING WITH LUKE

Luke learns through play

takes it back." Believe me, I've played Bad Cop, and said no to my pup often. Still, I must confess—it's difficult to say no to a sixmonth-old pup with eyes that plead, "I'm just going to hold it, Mom. I promise to give it right back."

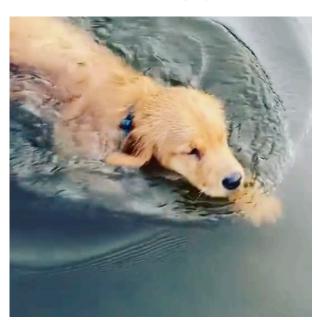
Nevertheless, Professor Luke isn't fooling anyone. I've seen that pup steal a sock with the grace of a burglar in slippers, then dash beneath the kitchen table (his cave) and tuck it between his paws. "No one can see you under there, Luke," I say with sarcasm not lost on a smart puppy. He looks up in paranoia yet refuses to come clean. "Let me just take care of this loose thread."

His cuteness tempts me, but most times, it's not enough to sell me. So I make sure that every sock makes it into the washer. Then I kneel down with him and share in the joy that is the laundry finale. I press the magic button and we both watch the clothes

never forget the first time he watched me water flowers. "The water is shooting from the snake's mouth!" He couldn't hold back his elation, and wanted IN. He barked, crinkled his nose and became boss to the water. He chomped at the droplets and struggled to track the irregular direction of the spray, while I moved the hose back and forth.

create a bubbler for him to drink from.

Empowered, Luke gulps at the water with the satisfaction of a mob boss. He even takes a shot at biting the green tube, a final nail in his coffin of frustration. "Take that, Hose!" I use the hose as a gun (capitalizing on an ironic defense) and spray him. "Luke - No!" He jumps backwards and





dance and bounce against the washer door. "There they go, Luke!"

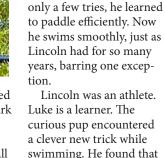
Professor Luke is always on the move to learn new things. Water play has offered him added opportunity, especially during the summer months. I'll

"I'm gonna' get you, sprays of water. And you! And you, too! Hey, what happened?"

The water game has been a hit all summer long. A child of the seventies (and to my pup's benefit) I still adore playing with the hose. I hold my thumb against its mouth to control the water flow. The water stream changes shape, morphing to a thin section that sprays and darkens Luke's roaring little face. "Knock it off!" He digs his heels into the grass and barks some more. Luke is rather cute when he's angry but I haven't the heart to frustrate him more with the water's erratic behavior. Instead, I lower the hose to the ground and

shakes his head. "He started it!" His bear cub face is dark and dirty. Residual water drips from his mouth and he smiles devilishly, a small wolf with a temper. I make an important decision to turn the water off at its

Luke carries his love for ater to pools and lakes. His first swim at Lake Singletary proved to be an enlightening experience. My son, a former lifeguard, dove underwater first. Luke, needing to follow his brother (and favorite person) learned to swim by virtue of needing to swim. It was that simple. He initially slapped down at the water, his paws frantic



Luke is a learner. The curious pup encountered a clever new trick while swimming. He found that he's able to create the same "hose effect" by slapping his paws against the water. Then he'll bite and swim after delicious circles of bubble and spray I'll never tire of watching Luke bring life to the term, Simple Pleasures. My pup is intelligent enough to create his own fun.

and desperate, as though he

needed to save himself, then

his brother, from a horrific

drowning accident. After

Luke's quiet side is as remarkable as his fun side. He goes out to lunch with me often, and rests calmly beneath an outdoor table while person after person comes by to pet him and

The education of Luke Valentino starts with his expression "I'm ready to



learn" and continues with "I'll give that sock right back, Mom," encounters with a hose and spray, and mastery of the stroke needed to stay afloat in the water.

learn more about him. He especially loves children. I think he senses his own small age while watching them move and speak in small voices. "Can my daughter pet your dog?" He listens to Mom and lowers his head obediently while a small hand pets his head. One time, from a distance, he watched as a child cried. He softened his gaze and studied her intently. His mouth stilled. I think he may have been saying what dogs have been telling us for years.

"It's okay. I understand you, and I love you. I don't know what happened or how it happened, but I'm here for you."

Dogs do not leave our sides. For this reason, Luke is always welcome to join me in the bathroom.

Write to me at amyleclaire@hotmail.com

Find Luke on Instagram: instagram.com/livingwithlukevalentino



THE CAR DOCTOR

jpaul@aaanortheast.com

Returning car to dealer might be best fix for brake rotor issue



BY JOHN PAUL

I have a 2018 Acura RDX with 29,000 • miles on it. When applying the brakes there is a thumping sound from the right front. I checked the tire and there is no visible damage. The brake rotor also looks okay. I still have a warranty on it since it was a certified pre-owned vehicle, what could be wrong?

A thumping sound is typically a lose • component or an out of round brake rotor. The issue could be a lose caliper mount, pad moving or even a suspension part. At this point the only thing to do is take the car back to the dealer and demonstrate the problem to get it fixed. Additionally, Acura did issue a revised brake rotor part for this vehicle due to noise concerns

I have a 2007 Nissan Sentra and • replaced compressor and recharged the A/C system correctly. Now when the weather or vehicle is hot inside the air conditioner will not work. The compressor just cycles on and off. Otherwise, the AC blows cold at about 40 degrees. What could be the cause? Could it be A/C pressure transducer sensor?

At an 85-degree day all I would expect • would be the duct temperature to be 55-60 degrees. Typically, rapid compressor cycling is due to a low refrigerant charge. You didn't say what the pressures are, but I would expect to see 200-220 on the high side and 35-45 on the low side. If the pressure is normal but the switch is reading a low pressure, then it will cycle the compressor. The switch sends a signal to the ECM (computer), and you would also want to check proper voltage just to make sure there isn't a wiring harness issue.

I have a 2021 Honda Pilot with just 7500 miles on it. I'm getting a crackling sound coming from the AC/heat vents periodically. The dealer says



it's a loose connection that requires removing the dashboard to replace. Is it worth going through this process and risking future problems with the dashboard or should I just live with it. Your thoughts please.

It is a very timeconsuming job to completely remove the instrument panel—almost a full day's work. Since there are no known issues with this that I am aware of (no tech bulletins) my

concern would be that after taking it apart and putting it back together it would be worse. I think just having the dealer note the issue and if it gets worse and a bit easier to identify, then have it repaired.

I have some issues with my 2009 Lexus • RX 350 that I bought certified used in 2014 and have several problems. I use the preset buttons when getting in and out of the car to adjust the seat height.

For the last three years, the seat has been making an awful groaning sound when I change the positions. This only happens when it is warm/hot outside—during the winter there is no noise at all. Also, the driver's window slows down when it's warm out and sometimes makes a gritty sound. The passenger mirror doesn't stay in position where I have left it. Finally, the radio sometime shuts off when I hit a bump (but it never goes on when hitting

bumps). Any insight you can provide will be greatly appreciated since I am very comfortable with the rest of

From your description it sounds like • four separate issues, The power window motor and seat motors (there are three at about \$500 each) may be getting near the end of their useful life. The mirror could be worn, have a faulty controller or motor. The radio could be a poor connection to the radio or internally in the display screen. At 13 years old, it is not unusual to see some electrical issues. It is also possible that there is some sort of rust/coorsion issue bridging some of the problems. It would be best to start with a basic check of the electrical system to rule out any basic problems.

John Paul is AAA Northeast's Car Doctor. He has over forty years' experience and is an ASE-certified master technician. He will answer readers' questions each week. Email your car questions to jpaul@ aaanortheast.com. Follow John on Twitter @johnfpaul and friend him on Facebook, mrjohnfpaul.

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REAL ESTATE

Should you buy a home with inflation this high?



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

while the Feds are working to bring down inflation, the latest data shows the inflation rate is still going up. You no doubt are feeling the pinch on your wallet at the gas pump or the grocery store, but that news may also leave you wondering: should I still buy a home right now?

Economists are saying inflation will have a strong influence on where mortgage rates go in the months ahead. Whenever inflation finally starts to ease, so will mortgage rates — but even then, home prices are still subject to demand and

very tight supply.

No one knows how long it'll take to bring down inflation, and that means the future of mortgage rates is also unclear. While that uncertainty isn't comfortable, here's why both inflation and mortgage rates are important for you and your homeownership plans.

When you buy a home, the mortgage rate and the price of the home matter. Higher mortgage rates impact how much you'll pay for your monthly mortgage payment - and that directly affects how much you can comfortably afford. And while there's no denying that it's more expensive to buy and finance a home this year than it was last year, it doesn't mean you should stop your search. Here's why.

Homeownership Is historically a great hedge against inflation. In an inflationary economy, prices rise across the board. Historically, homeownership is a great hedge against those rising costs because you can lock in what's likely



your largest monthly payment (your mortgage) for the duration of your loan. That helps stabilize some of your monthly expenses. Not to mention, as home prices continue to appreciate, your home's value will

too.

Real estate has historically been one of the time-honored inflation hedges. It's a tangible asset, and those tend to hold their value when inflation reigns, unlike paper assets.

More specifically, as prices rise, so do property values. Also, no one is calling for homes to lose value.

Economists I've spoken to say the current home price growth rate is unsustainable, and higher mortgage rates coupled with more inventory will lead to slower home price growth but unlikely a decline home prices.

Your home search doesn't have to go on hold because of rising inflation or higher mortgage rates. There's more to consider when it comes to why you want to buy a home. In addition to shielding yourself from the impact

of inflation and growing your wealth through ongoing price appreciation, there are other reasons to buy a home right now, like addressing your changing needs and so much more.

Homeownership is one of the best decisions you can make in an inflationary economy. You get the benefit of the added security of owning your home in a time when experts are forecasting prices to continue to rise

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Dudley's John Glowacki a PMC veteran with no plans to stop riding

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY. STAFF SPORTS WRITER

he Pan Mass Challenge (PMC) is a Massachusetts-based bike-a-thon that raises more money than any other single athletic fundraiser in the country. Held the first weekend of August every year, 100% of the funds go to the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, the world leader in adult and pediatric cancer treatment and research.

Billy Starr created the organization in 1980 after losing his mother at the age of 49 to melanoma. Thirtysix riders and 10 volunteers took part that first year and although many riders got lost during that inaugural ride, they accomplished what they set out to do raise funds (\$10,200) for cancer research. Today the PMC has 6,800 riders, 3,000 volunteers and has raised \$831 million for Dana Farber's Jimmy Fund.

In 2014 Dudley's John Glowacki finally became one of those PMC riders after years of thinking about jumping on his bike and making the trek to Provincetown. He and his wife had always seen the ads on

TV while on vacation and Glowacki told her he was one day going to do the ride. It became a joke between the two until it came to fruition.

"I always filled out the application, I just never hit the submit button," he said. "Things seemed to come up and I was worried about the fundraising minimum. Once you hit that submit button, things become real and if you don't reach that monetary goal, it comes out of your pocket, you signed up to raise that money and it is your responsibility."

Although it was a daunting task to raise the required amount of money, Glowacki noted that he has been lucky and never in the situation to take money out of his pocket.

"I've had a lot of sponsors and supporters through the years," the Dudley resident said. 'Even during the pandemic year, it didn't happen; cancer affects so many, people were still willing to give. The work and research Dana Farber does, people don't hesitate to donate."

In 1991 Glowacki lost his father at the age of 50 to cancer. Then again in 2013 his nephew Rob, who was

in his early 20's, was diagnosed, this gave him the opportunity to do something to help the cause. Since 2014 Glowacki has ridden the two-day event from Sturbridge to Provincetown, pedaling his bike 186 miles.

Glowacki is part of Team Cyclosaurass, a team that was formed before he first decided to take part in the PMC. His sister-in-law (Rob's mother) worked at a company with the riders of Cyclosaurass and when they heard he was going to ride they invited him to join them.

Although the Dudley resident was well prepared for the ride, he was not ready for what Mother Nature was going to end up dishing out that August weekend.

"It was one of the worst days they've had, it was cold and raining," Glowacki said. "Although the weather was not cooperating the ride was good for me. I got to see so many people along the routes with signs and cheering the riders on, they didn't think twice about the rain. There was not a mile that you didn't see people even in this type of weather."

Luckily for Glowacki, he

had packed a raincoat for his ride, just in case. And although he still got soaked from the rain, he was able to contain body heat with it.

"Nothing was dry, but the worst part of the ride was not being able to see in front of you at times because of the rain in your eyes. As you rode you just hoped that no one in front of you stopped short or had in accident in front of you," he said. "Even when we got to Bourne (the end of the first day's ride) the field to get to the food tent was flooded with four inches of water. I think it took until Wednesday before my shoes finally dried, but even through all that I'd do it again."

2014 was supposed to be Glowacki's one and done with the ride, but like so many he just couldn't say goodbye to the event after taking part in it.

"I just wanted to say that I did it once. I never imagined that I'd still be doing it eight years later," Glowacki said. "The whole experience during the entire weekend was unbelievable and it just sucks you in. The PMC changes your life forever once you get involved and



John Glowacki of Dudley: "I ride year-round anyway, why not the Pan Mass Challenge?"

see the impact that it has on the people, you can't not go back."

As an avid bike rider Glowacki knows that he'll be on his bike anyways, so why not just ride for the PMC and do something meaningful. While he had said it was only going to be a one-year thing, then bumped it up to five years, Glowacki's new milestone is ten years, but once that goal is reached, he seems to start contemplating the next goal.

"Every time I start to think about it coming to an end I start to reconsider," Glowacki said. "During the pandemic I really thought

that it would lose its luster but that didn't happen instead more and more people were signing up and they were opening more routes to ride."

Glowacki, who rides year-round (on a stationary bike inside during the winter and on the roads once the weather allows him too) knows that his 10th year will be coming up soon and he will once again have to make a decision as to continue riding for the PMC or hang it up. However, it seems that as long as he is in good health and can climb aboard his bike the PMC will have a partner for some time.

TIPS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING

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When can you choose retirement?



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

f you're like most people, your work has been a central part of your life. So, wouldn't it be nice to have the flexibility to decide when you no longer want to work?

Many people of retirement age have achieved this type of control. In fact, two-thirds of workers age 65 and older say they work primarily because they want to, not because they have to, according to a 2021 study by Edward Jones and Age Wave. But that means that

one-third of workers in this age group feel financially compelled to work. This doesn't necessarily mean they dislike the work they do—but it's probably fair to say they would have liked the option of not working. How can you give yourself this choice?

You can start by asking yourself these questions:

■When do I want to retire? You'll want to identify the age at which you wish to retire. You may change your mind later and move this date up or back, but it's a good idea to have a target in mind.

■What sort of retirement lifestyle do I want? When you retire, do you anticipate staying close to home and pursuing your hobbies, or do you hope to travel the world? Would you like to spend your time volunteering? Open your own business or do some consulting? Clearly, some

of these choices will require more resources than others, so you'll want to follow a financial strategy that aligns with the retirement lifestyle you intend to pursue.

•Am I saving and investing enough? As you chart your retirement journey, you'll want to assess the sources of income you'll have available. If you think you may be falling short of achieving your retirement goals, you may need to consider saving more.

■When should I start taking Social Security? You can begin collecting Social Security benefits as early as 62, but your monthly payments will be much bigger if you wait until your "full" retirement age, which will likely be between 66 and 67. Your decision about when to take Social Security will depend on several factors, including your other sources of income and your family history of longev-

ity. Of course, as you're probably aware, the Social Security system is facing significant financial stress, so it's possible that we may see changes to Social Security, based on actions Congress could take. In any case, you might want to be fairly conservative in estimating how much Social Security can contribute to your retirement income.

By addressing the above questions, you can get a clearer sense of when you might reach the point at which work is optional. But you'll also need to consider other factors, too, such as how much you enjoy working or when your spouse or partner is planning to retire. In any case, the sooner you start planning for this next phase of your life, the better position you'll be in when it's time to make the transition.

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

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Opinion: From the Physical Therapist: Five Tips To Fix a Sore Back

DR. SEAN T. LORDAN DPT

ack pain is one of the most common reasons people visit a doctor or miss work, and it's a leading cause of disability worldwide. If you're one of the millions of Americans who experience back pain, you may be looking for relief.

A physical therapist regularly helps to treat back pain by developing a personalized exercise and activity program that strengthens the muscles that support your back and improves your flexibility.

Here are 5 tips to fix a sore

1. Stretching exercises can help improve your flexibility and range of motion, which can lead to a decrease in back pain.

Here are a few stretches that I recommend my patients incorporate into their daily routine:

Child's Pose

This stretch is helpful for lengthening the spine and relieving tension in the lower back and hips.

To do this stretch:

- Start on all fours with your knees directly beneath your hips and your hands placed flat on the ground in front of you.
- As you exhale, slowly lower your buttocks towards your heels and rest your forehead on the ground.
- Allow your arms to relax by your sides, with your palms facing up.
- Hold this stretch for 30 seconds to 1 minute.

Prone Press Up This exercise helps to strengthen the muscles in the back and shoulders while also stretching the chest.

To do this exercise:

- Lie on your stomach with your legs extended behind you and your arms by your sides, palms facing
- As you inhale, slowly press up onto your hands, straightening your arms and lifting your head and chest off the ground.
- Hold this position for 2 to 3 seconds before slowly lowering back down to the starting position.
- Repeat this exercise 10 to 12 times.

Piriformis Stretch This stretch helps to loosen the piriformis muscle, which is located in the buttocks. When this muscle becomes tight, it can irritate the sciatic nerve and cause pain in



the lower back and legs. To do this stretch:

- Lie on your back with both knees bent and your feet flat on the ground.
- Cross your right ankle over your left knee and grab your left thigh with your right hand.
- Gently pull your left leg towards your chest

until you feel a stretch in the buttocks.

- Hold this stretch for 30 seconds to 1 minute before repeating on the other side.
- 2. Drink plenty of

Staying hydrated is important for your overall health, and it can also help to reduce back pain. When you're properly hydrated, the discs in your spine are better able to absorb shock and prevent injury. Aim to drink 8 to 10 glasses of

> **BACK PAIN** continued on page 19

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Financial Scams

BY CHIEF STEVEN J. WOJNAR **DUDLEY POLICE** DEPARTMENT

nfortunately, various people have been the victim of financial "scams." I was recently asked about contributions to national police organizations who solicit donations over the phone. Many of us, including me, have received calls, from various groups, seeking donations. I was asked if these organizations were legitimate and what, if any, benefits do local police departments receive?

Money related scams have been occurring for years. Those responsible prey on unsuspecting individuals, such as seniors. People take advantage of their kind nature and can sometimes fool them into believing a story. The scammer's goal is to obtain either quick cash or other personal information, such as bank account numbers. It is natural for people to be skeptical of anyone calling, asking for money. When it comes to police organizations soliciting funds, I do not wish to mention any group by name for the purposes

be legitimately established national programs who do aid law enforcement. I can only speak from the perspective of our department. We rarely, if ever, see any monies from these various national groups who claim they raise funding for training, equipment, etc. Most of our sources of funding come from state and local budgets, grants, and direct donations. Locally, we have conducted fundraisers in the past. We try to be as open as possible with our residents when these will occur to establish the fact, they are for specifically for us. We want people to understand their donations are meant for local purposes.

Certainly, some national organizations have supported the families of officers who have been killed in the line of duty and their work is commendable. I can only recommend you do your research on any group soliciting funds. Ask for a web site and other agency contact information to conduct your own research. You can also request information be sent to you by mail (if you wish) or ask for a phone number for you to call back at your convenience. Legitimate organizations should have

lice department if you ever Most departments or police associations maintain gift or donation accounts for these very reasons. This money on equipment, training, or personnel needs. We thank our residents for their the years. We do not wish question, do not hesitate to reach out to the department

vaccination or COVID refound at www.dudleyma. gov or by calling 508-949-8036. During these greatly appreciate the support we receive from our community.

Thanks again for your questions and comments. ment 71 West Main St.

Winning Secrets To Stop Aging In Its Tracks." He is the owner of Concierge Physical Therapy with locations in Sutton and Shrewsbury.

no problem accommodating these simple requests. Feel free to contact the pohave questions. Certainly, if you ever feel hesitant, do not give. You should never be pressured in anyway and you are always welcome to donate locally at any time. can then be spent locally generosity and support over to see anyone lose money or become the victim of a scam. If you ever have a

lated information, it can be challenging times, we, at the Dudley Police Department,

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Please send them to me at the Dudley Police Depart-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.

swojnar@dudleypolice.com

An Invitation

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Sunday, August 14 - Free admission for residents of:

Applebee Ave Batten St Groveland St Harvard St

Hayes Ave Hickory Ln Highland St Kelly Erin Ln

Kenneway Ln Linda St **Orchard Ave Overlook Ave**

Raleigh Rd **Sears Ave** Winter Haven Dr

Sunday, August 21 - Free admission for residents of:

Abbey Rd Ash St **Brookside Ave** Gia Ln **Grenier Ave**

Holly Ln **Irene Ave Malden Dr** Old Thompson Rd Oscar Rd

Perryville Rd Pine Tree Ln **Rainville Ave Richard Ave** Riebe Ave

Stephen Dr Surrey Ln W Hollow Ln **Westview Dr** Woods Grove Dr

Sunday, August 28 - Free admission for residents of:

Beacon Park Birch Dr **Birch Island Rd** Cedar Dr **Checkerberry Is** **Cranberry Rd Juniper Ln Klebart Ave Kosmas St** Lake Pkwy

Nipmuck Dr Nipmuck Ln **Pavilion Ave Point Pleasant Ave** Point Pleasant Rd Rodio Dr

Rodman Rd **Seminole Ave** Sumner St **Thompson Rd** Treasure Island Rd **Union Point Rd**

MORE STREETS/DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED

*Two free admissions per household. Cannot be combined with any other coupon or offer. Address ID required. Samuel Slater Experience closes at 4 p.m. Therefore latest admission time is 3 p.m.

> **NOTICE: Samuel Slater Experience will** be closed on Sunday, September 4

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BACK PAIN

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water each day. Fun fact: you are taller in the morning than at night! This is due to the fact that your spinal discs absorb water as you sleep.

3. Exercise 3-4 days per week.

Regular exercise is important for maintaining a healthy weight, improving your flexibility and range of motion, and strengthening the muscles that support your back. I recommend patients exercise 3-4 days per week for 30-60 minutes at a time. If you are new to exercise, please consult your PCP prior to starting a program on your own. I recommend beginning with a trainer at the gym, or your local physical therapist.

4. Get plenty of sleep. Most people need 7-8 hours of sleep each night. If you're not getting enough sleep, your body isn't able to properly heal and repair itself. This can lead to increased pain and inflammation. Aim to get

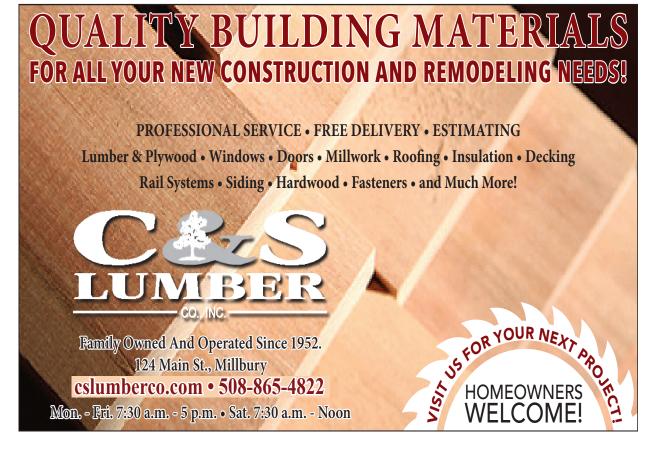
a good night's sleep every night and you will feel well on your way to better movement. One trick is to go to sleep preparing to sleep for 9 hours. Because you are awake and could be disturbed at night more than you may think, you should account for about an hour of "awake" time each night.

5. If you're struggling with back pain, talk to a physical therapist.

A physical therapist can help you identify the underlying cause of your pain and develop a treatment plan to address it. They can also teach you exercises and stretches that can help relieve pain and improve your overall

Thank you for checking out this month's edition of "Tips From Your Neighborhood Physical Therapist". As always, if you have any questions for me personally, I can be reached at 508-861-1010 or drlordan@conciergephysicaltherapy.com.

Dr. Sean T. Lordan is a doctor of physical therapy and the author of "11









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