

BLACKSTONE VALLEY *Xpress*

CROSTOWN ADS AND BUSINESS NEWS

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One of many floats that were entered in the parade.

Northbridge's 250th anniversary parade, fireworks a roaring success

BY ROD LEE

For months on end, with little fanfare developing, there was understandable concern in some quarters about whether the town of Northbridge's 250th-anniversary parade and fireworks would come together as hoped.

Not to worry; the event was in capable hands—those of members of a committee headed by Selectwoman Alicia Cannon.

When the big moment finally arrived, on Saturday, July 16th, the blare of fire engines leading the way on Main St. and Church St., and the sight of spectators lined up to shout and wave their

approval, served as ratification that the event would be a smash hit.

"It went off without a hitch," Lt. Tony Genga of the North-

NORTHBRIDGE
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MA State Police Museum finds a home in Whitinsville

BY ROD LEE

Saturday, July 16th was not just the occasion for a parade and related activities to mark the town of Northbridge's 250th anniversary.

The date also represented a soft

Byron, VP Eric S. Bernstein and Jack Crawford—three principals at the forefront of efforts to relocate the museum from its previous home at the State Police barracks in Grafton—are in an understandably celebratory mood, knowing that they were able to get the premises



Memorabilia housed at the Massachusetts State Police Museum walks visitors through the organization's past.

opening of the Massachusetts State Police Museum and Learning Center in the historic former Whitinsville Bank Building at Memorial Square.

MSPMLC President Stephen F.

ready for area residents to enjoy as part of festivities associated with the municipality's big milestone.

MUSEUM
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NORTHBRIDGE

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bridge Fire Department and a member of the 250th Anniversary Committee, said. "We had over three hundred participants in the parade. All of them showed up on time and



assembled and the Northbridge Fire Department, the DPW, the police did a great job and we had a lot of good sponsors. We had a late start (getting organized), we wish we

had more time."

Lt. Genga commended state legislators Michael Moore, David Muradian Jr. and Ryan Fattman for "coming through really big" with the \$25,000 that was needed for the fireworks, and UniBank for taking on the role of main sponsor.



Left, Beverly Graveson, Yasmine Graveson and Alexis Burditt share a perch on a wall in front of UniBank, for a good view of the parade. Above, chosen as grand marshal, Ken Warchol addresses the audience as Northbridge's 250th anniversary parade gets started in Church St. in downtown Whitinsville.

"I'm glad it's over but I enjoyed it while it was happening. I can't think of anything that went wrong. I was very surprised," he said.

Lt. Genga also noted that his wife, Christy, played an important role with marketing, social media publicity and fundraising.

"All roads lead to Northbridge!" UniBank President and CEO Mike Welsh said, before introducing Grand Marshal Ken Warchol—a logical choice for that honor given Mr. Warchol's longstanding work with the Northbridge Historical Society. Mr.

Warchol invoked the name of Peter Hackett, which he often does, as a person whose vision paved the way for the town and the Blackstone Valley's eventual acceptance as a U.S. national park.

The 250th Anniversary Committee's largely unsung labors resulted in a steady stream of floats, many of them representing local businesses and organizations. Foxy Travel, the Whitinsville Social Library, the Northbridge Senior Center, the Family Karate Center, Carr Funeral Home, Harbro Auto Sales, Shaw's, Tom Berkowitz Trucking,

Crothers Tire, West End Creamery, Morrisette & Son, Vanderzicht Towing, Cappy's Auto, Nydam Oil, Koopman Lumber.

There were tractors. There were politicians. There was the Boston Firemen's Band. There was candy being thrown to children.

Urged to call it a morning as the action hit a brief lull, one woman was heard to say "I'm not leaving. I'm sitting right here. I'm not done yet."

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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.

BLACKSTONE VALLEY Xpress

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Doughty Best Choice for Governor

Our 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

political spotlight

his company a place people 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.

“The state has the funds, so there is no reason that the State House cannot help the hard working taxpayers by immediately suspending the gas tax. As the next Governor, we will be proactive in responding to crises,” said Doughty.

Doughty wants to end the Commonwealth’s reputation of being “Taxachusetts” and reduce taxes



more than Bill Weld did as Governor. This will make our state more competitive for attracting new businesses so that we can grow jobs and wages.

Like you, Doughty opposes 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 the truly needy and legal 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.

“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 grandfather, 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 cur-

riculum, 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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Xpressly Yours ... a letter from the editor

A concert goer in pink with a stage of her own



BY ROD LEE

Understood 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 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 — 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 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, singer-songwriter-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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MUSEUM

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“We started this in 1995 as an idea. It took until 2007 to get it organized as a nonprofit,” Mr. Byron said on July 20th. “We have more stuff than we know what to do with.”

His comments came as he and Mr. Crawford ushered Amy Sondrup, Scott Williams and Dean Cerrati of Access TCA through the premises.

Mr. Byron and Mr. Crawford had high praise for Access TCA, which was largely responsible for creating the atmosphere that has been achieved in the 6,000 square feet the museum occupies on the first floor of the building. As Mr. Crawford told Ms. Sondrup, Mr. Williams and Mr. Cerrati, “we’re police officers, not design experts.”

“They’re incredible,” Mr. Byron said of Access TCA’s crew.

They are indebted as well to Vincent Osterman of E. Osterman Gas, the building’s owner, for providing them with a two-year lease.

“We landed here in eight days and we had to be out of the building we were in a month,” Mr. Crawford said. “This is one of the most



Above, Steve Byron talks with officials from Access TCA during their visit to the Massachusetts State Police Museum on July 20th. A 1951 Indian motorcycle is prominently displayed on the floor of the museum. Right, Jack Crawford helps lead representatives of Access TCA through the Massachusetts State Police Museum. A team from Access TCA played an important role in crafting the displays and exhibits at the museum.



beautiful buildings in town. We thought it was too big when we first saw it. It is a bases-loaded home run. It’s perfect. Everything meets our requirements for a public building.”

Mr. Crawford, a longtime prominent townie who now lives in Uxbridge, believes the museum will quickly be embraced as an important addition to Northbridge’s downtown historic district. Initial response from those who are checking the museum out indicates his optimism is well-warranted.

The museum is open Tuesdays and Saturdays

from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and by appointment.

“We are always looking for volunteers,” to assist with shepherding visitors through the museum and explaining the exhibits, Mr. Byron said.

In giving the Access TCA team a guided tour, Mr. Byron and Mr. Crawford were pleased to offer remarks on many of the artifacts that have been arranged for viewing. There are vintage and current State Police uniforms, helmets, countless photographs (including some of various State Police troop locations), scanners, license plates, telephones, a holster with bullets (“twenty-four rounds, loaded individually,” Mr. Byron said), patches, the learning center (a separate room), pennants, firearms (“we had a pistol team”), a board room, a replica canine, and a 1951 Indian motorcycle—for instance.

“At one time,” they said, “every trooper was required to learn to ride a motorcycle.

“Most motorcycles have the throttle on the right, these were on the left, so an officer could shoot with his right hand if necessary,” Mr. Byron said.

Exhibits include a lunch counter dedicated to Artist Norman Rockwell’s famous painting “The Runaway,”

which appeared on a cover of the Saturday Evening Post. It depicts a trooper and a child sitting side by side on stools.

“Rockwell approached a trooper who lived nearby, Dick Clemmons, to help him with this,” Mr. Byron said. “Dick Clemmons became a goodwill ambassador and is now deceased. The boy, Eddie Lock, is still alive.” Mr. Lock was an eight-year-old third grader at the Plain School in Stockbridge in 1958 when he was selected to pose for a picture Mr. Rockwell used to create his painting.

Addressing his new tenant on the morning of July 22, Mr. Osterman said “I think the museum is going to be a great asset for the town. It fits well in the historic district to have a facility like that. My hope is that they will get the education community involved.

“We’re very happy to have them as a tenant.”

Persons interested in learning more about the museum and learning center (“preserving a history of service to the citizens of Massachusetts”) can do so by going to the website, www.mspmlc.org.

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Koopman Lumber adds ninth location in continued growth spurt

BY ROD LEE

Ambitious, industrious and community-minded as he was, Peter T. Koopman probably did not foresee when he launched his family-owned lumber and hardware company in Whitinsville in 1939 that the firm would eventually grow to nine locations.

With its recent purchase of Boilard Lumber in Indian Orchard (Springfield), Koopman Lumber now has a presence in Whitinsville, North Grafton, Uxbridge, Sharon, Milford (for paint), Hudson, Andover, Fairhaven and Indian Orchard.

Five of these stores have been added to the fold since 2011. The Koopman name has emerged on a par with those of Gillette, Hood Ice Cream, Friendly Ice Cream, Polar Beverages, Boston Lobster Company and Herb Chambers as one of the most recognizable and respected in New England.

Peter's grandson Dirk, Dirk's sister Denise and her husband Tony Brookhouse

run an operation that boasts approximately two hundred employees in storefronts across Eastern, Central and Western Massachusetts.

"It's a great generational story of a very hardworking family," Northbridge Selectman and former Northbridge Police Chief Thomas J. Melia said. "When I started in the police department in late 1969-70, working 12-8 (mids), I can remember the original owner Pete Koopman always being in early to start the long day rolling! Looks like a very eager, intelligent and hard-working new generation at the helm now! Best of luck to them!"

A builder, volunteer and family man, Pete Koopman passed his values on to his son Don, who with his wife Doris carried forward the enterprise. Present-day Koopmans are just as dedicated to Pete Koopman's legacy of honesty, integrity and unending hard work.

Jeannie Hebert, president and CEO of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, is among those who

applaud the success Koopman Lumber continues to enjoy.

"We do a lot with them," Ms. Hebert said on July 7th. "They are a big supporter of the Chamber and Tony used to be on my Board of Directors. We are happy to see them growing. Western Massachusetts is a great partner to us too. We have some companies from Western Mass and the Springfield area. We have a peer chain and exchange of ideas."

With Covid, Ms. Hebert said, many more connections are occurring virtually, but in no less vital a fashion. Koopman Lumber is a good example of how to grow a retail business, she said.

"From a small beginning they have set the standard for quality. They have provided materials for my own home."

Koopman Lumber's signature stores in Whitinsville, Uxbridge and Grafton are convenient go-to stops locally for a clientele that includes contractors and



Koopman Lumber's first retail store, in Whitinsville, 1950.

builders and homeowners and do-it-yourselfers. Koopman Lumber's product line, featuring Benjamin Moore paints, is second to none, and staff members are knowledgeable and eager to assist customers.

Boilard Lumber's roots, like Koopman Lumber's, extend back to the 1930s.

"After eighty-six years of continuous family ownership, we are happy to have found another business that shares our history and values to continue our legacy in Western Massachusetts,"

Mike Boilard said. "It was important to us to turn the reins over to people who are as committed as we have been to both our customers and employees. The Koopman family fits that bill."

Boilard Lumber adopted the Koopman name on June 27th. All Boilard employees were welcomed to remain on staff and Bob Boilard will stay on as VP and general manager as well.

"We are excited about the opportunities this merger presents," Dirk Koopman said. "It's an

honor to partner with a business as well-respected as Boilard Lumber, and to expand our business into Western Massachusetts. We have an experienced transition team," assuring for a smooth changeover, he said. "We'll offer additional product lines, enhanced capabilities and greater resources, all in the capable hands of the same staff who know their customers and their business needs."

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Community Ties and a Commitment to Customer Service: Affordable Junk Removal

There are plenty of reasons to call a junk removal service. Maybe you're planning to move and need to clear out the basement and attic before your open house. Maybe you've spent way too much time at home lately and are feeling the need to declutter.

But figuring out who to call can be a pain. If you contact one of the big haulers, they route you to a phone center where they've never even heard of your town, plus their pricing seems vague and full of extra fees. No wonder you've let the stuff pile up—it's too much of a hassle to get rid of it!

Or you can call Affordable Junk Removal and let a local small business with deep community roots take care of everything.

Jay Schadler started his business in 2003. Back then, it was just him and a beat-up pickup truck taking small jobs and working nights and weekends when he could. As the years rolled on, his business grew, but his commitment to customer service never wavered. Now he's got a staff of ten, along with ten trucks, servicing eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island.

Affordable Junk Removal specializes in house and estate cleanouts. If your garage, attic, or office is overflowing with stuff, take back your space and let the pros do the heavy lifting.

Jay and his team have handled it all. They've dismantled above-ground pools, hauled away ancient hot tubs, taken down old fencing, and stripped away

worn carpeting. They'll come for a single item, or they'll clean out an entire house. And they can take almost anything. They can't accept hazardous materials, brush, dirt, or concrete, but everything else is fair game for them to take away.

Not everything ends up in a landfill—not if Jay can help it. He first tries to either recycle or donate items. Only after he tries to repurpose items do they end up at the transfer station.

Working with Affordable Junk Removal is simple. First, you can load stuff yourself if you want by renting a 15-cubic-yard dumpster for a week and chucking up to a ton of your unwanted stuff. If you need to get rid of more weight, then Jay prorates that tonnage—you never pay for what you don't use.

If you don't want to be bothered with the dumpster, they've also got a driveway special where they'll take away a truckload of your unwanted things if you pile it up. Or if you don't want to lift a finger, then you can point at the items, and the team will fill up their truck and haul away your unwanted things. However you do it, you're left with more space and more peace of mind.

Business spotlight

Jay and his team beat the big waste haulers on both price and customer service. When you call Affordable Junk Removal, you aren't connected to an anonymous call center. Your phone call goes right to Jay.

And speaking of pricing, Jay is upfront about it. His website shows the truck sizes and prices, so you can save time knowing your costs before you call for an appointment. There aren't any hidden costs or surprise fees with Affordable Junk Removal.

Affordable Junk Removal is fully licensed and fully insured, and they'll treat your property with care and respect.

They also have a thriving commercial business, working with contractors and roofers to clear away debris and keep the job site clean. They can even handle commercial and residential emergencies with same-day service.

Jay and his family are deeply involved in the community. He and his wife, Christine, run the Corner Market restaurant



in Holliston as well as Resellables, a thrift store in Bellingham. It's not uncommon for someone to reach Jay at the restaurant, order a sandwich, and then

schedule a junk removal appointment. Yes, the local small business really can handle everything!

For more information, contact Jay Schadler at

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Happenings!

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.

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@bookloversgourmet.com for further info.

UPCOMING AT INDIAN RANCH IN WEBSTER:

• August 12, ABBA The Concert, 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. 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 Johnson Live in Concert, 1:00 p.m. Tickets are available at www.indianranch.com, by calling 1-800-514-3849 or at the Indian Ranch Box Office.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12

• The Blackstone River Fest will be held from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the River Bend Farm Visitor Center, 287 Oak St., Uxbridge. This is a free event celebrating fifty years of the "Zap the Blackstone" cleanup

initiative.

• The Evan Wood Trio performs at Andy's Neighborhood Center, 9 Frederick St., Webster, 7:00-10:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13

• Upton VFW Post 5594 is hosting a flea market from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Post headquarters, 15 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 Saturday of each month through October. Parking is free.

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.,



A parade at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, September 5th (Labor Day) is a highlight of the town of Charlton's Old Home Day festivities but by no means the only attraction. See the Happenings! listings for further details.

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.

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, Gorette'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.

HAPPENINGS!
continued on page 9

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HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 8

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 Uxbridge-



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.

• "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 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 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



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.

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 Winnepesaukee Cruise & Castle in the Clouds Estate Tour," including lunch at Harts Turkey Farm, for \$151 per

HAPPENINGS!

continued on page 10

outhsoccer.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 p.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.

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

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 Society.



BLACKSTONE VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SIGNATURE EVENT

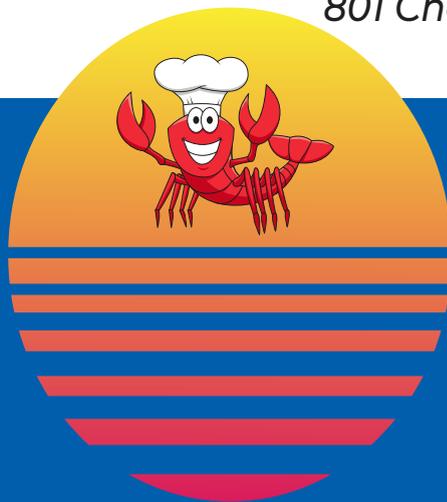
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Please contact loneil@blackstonevalley.org with any questions!

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HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 9

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 p.m.

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

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 pur-

chased 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 says.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

• 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 acknowledgment in press and print matter.



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



BY ROD LEE

Not 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

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

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.



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

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.

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

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.

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'Zap 50' may be even bigger cleanup than the original

Nearly fifty years have passed since 10,000 volunteers gathered along the banks of the Blackstone River to remove tons of trash, including appliances, furniture and even cars and a school bus.

Thus began, in September of 1972, an initiative called "Zap the Blackstone."

Today, although many challenges still remain in the effort to "Bring Back the Blackstone," the waterway is much cleaner than it was

half a century ago. It is also a focal point for many of the activities taking place in the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

In anticipation of a 50th-anniversary reenactment of the original cleanup,

Raymond Kelley, whose grandfather was part of the initial effort, is making an appearance at Blackstone Valley Historical Society on August 14th to help kick off "Zap 50."

Mr. Kelley's hope is that

this year's watershed-wide cleanup in Massachusetts and Rhode Island will be an even more massive undertaking than its celebrated predecessor.

Personnel in the Corridor office are understandably proud of all of the happenings that are calling overdue attention to the region's prized national park. Recently, for instance, the Corridor issued a call for help in growing its "pollinator gardens;" asking, "do you have a green thumb? Want to volunteer for gardening projects?"

Individuals interested in helping out in this capacity should email Ms. Cardoza at mcardoza@blackstoneheritagecorridor.org.

There is also an opportunity to take "the pollinator pledge" by going to <https://blackstoneheritagecorridor.org/protect-our-pollinators/>.

Also contact Ms. Cardoza if you want to become a volunteer.

ties available to residents looking to experience the National Heritage Corridor up close and personal.

The Blackstone River Bikeway can be accessed on bike or on foot. Twenty-four miles of the path are constructed. It will eventually run forty-eight miles from downtown Worcester to India Point Park in Providence, and connected there with the existing East Bay Bike Path and continued to Bristol, Rhode Island for an additional 14.5 miles.

Self-guided paddling is available to both the novice and the expert. Paddlers will be pleasantly surprised as they move through quiet, teeming marshes, challenging narrows and unusual flows. At least two hundred species of birds can be seen along the river, which drops 450 feet over 46 miles.

Among the birds living in the watershed are sixteen types of waterfowl.

Butterfly Festival is August 13th

The Corridor just announced the 15th annual

Bikeway, paddling are staples of river activity

The Blackstone River Bikeway and self-guided paddling are just two of the recreational opportuni-

ZAP 50

continued on page 13

Spreading the Joy of Precious Sound to a second location

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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ZAP 50

continued from page 12

Barbara J. Walker Butterfly Festival, which is scheduled for Saturday, August 13th from noon to 4:00 p.m. at the Mass Audubon Broad Meadow Brook Conservation Area at 414 Massasoit Road in Worcester. "Where butterflies roam free in

workshops, a display of live caterpillars, children's activities, garden tours, a plant sale and more. Anyone arriving in costume may win a prize.

Call 401-651-6316 for further details.

Battling the invasive water chestnut

The Corridor recently

who presented a skills workshop on the invasive water chestnut just days before the volunteer water chestnut pull hosted by the Blackstone River Watershed Council and the Friends of the Blackstone River. Eight cubic yards were pulled over two days.

The Blackstone River today, much cleaner than in



Self-guided paddling is a perfect way for the novice or expert to explore the Blackstone River.

their natural habitats."

Activities as part of the Butterfly Festival will include naturist-led walks,

issued a thank you to Kate DeGoosh, environmental analyst for the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management,

the past but still with challenges. A 50th-anniversary Zap the Blackstone cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, August 27th.

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Dr. Helen Whall, Nicholas Gage are Small Stones Festival headliners

Though still several months away, the Small Stones Festival of the Arts in Grafton is quickly shaping up with Dr. Helen Whall and Grafton's own Nicholas Gage stepping forward as key presenters.

In announcing the dates of October 14-23 for this year's production, Festival Spokesperson Dana Wilson

said the event will take place at three locations: the Great Hall at Apple Tree Arts, the Community Meeting Room at the Grafton Public Library and the Congregational Church of Grafton.

An Opening Reception is scheduled for Friday, October 14th at 7:00 p.m. at the Great Hall, on the Grafton

Town Common.

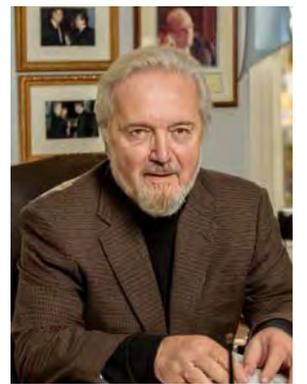
Exhibitions to be judged will be available for viewing on Saturday, October 15 from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Sunday, October 16 from noon to 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 19 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., Thursday, October 20 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., Friday, October 21 from

4:00 to 7:00 p.m., Saturday, October 22 from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, October 23 from noon to 4:00 p.m.

In Dr. Helen Whall and Nicholas Gage, the Festival has two big-name attractions.

Dr. Whall is a retired professor of English who taught for forty-two years at the College of the Holy Cross. Five years after her retirement, the college received an endowment of \$2.6 million to establish the Helen M. Whall Chair in Race, Gender and Social Justice. The three-year endowment will allow Dr. Whall's impact on students to continue. It recognizes her contributions to the students and to the college with her service on many committees.

A graduate of Yale University with a Ph.D. in English Lit, Dr. Whall's focus at Holy Cross was on William Shakespeare, among other subject matter. She will be discussing the works of Shakespeare—one of her favorite topics—on



Dr. Helen Whall, left, and Author Nicholas Gage.

Saturday, October 15th at 3:00 p.m. at the Grafton Public Library.

Dr. Whall's lecture is free to all and will be followed by a question-and-answer session.

As it happens, last year, according to Ms. Wilson, the Festival debuted a new and well-received Literary Track Program with The Shakespeare Club of Grafton. This year's Festival will present three literary programs in collaboration with the Club, to be held at the newly expanded Grafton Public Library.

Nicholas Gage is the Grafton-based author of "Eleni" and "A Place for Us" and is well-known for these autobiographical memoirs. Eleni is about his family's

life in Greece during World War II and the Greek Civil War and his experience as a New York Times reporter traveling to Greece to find out about his past.

Mr. Gage's presentation as part of the Small Stones Arts Festival is scheduled for Friday, October 21st at 7:00 p.m., also at the Grafton Public Library. He often talks about his investigative reporting and his literary life.

His talk will also be followed by a Q-and-A session.

Another highlight of the Festival will be a Music Program featuring Paul Surapine and musicians from

FESTIVAL

continued on page 15

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FESTIVAL

continued from page 14

the Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra and Apple Tree Arts. This will take place on Saturday, October 15th at 7:00 p.m. at the Congregational Church of Grafton.

Also, "History at Play: Annie Fields," will be presented on behalf of History at Play, LLC, by Judith Kalaora as another ingredi-

ent of the Festival at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 22nd at the Grafton Public Library.

"Victorian Gossip Girl" Annie Adams Fields exerted incredible influence on the literary decisions made at Ticknor and Fields Publishing House (forerunner of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). She also had a great ear for gossip. Nathaniel Hawthorne, Oliver Wendell

Holmes and Charles Dickens were among her closest friends. She witnessed a great deal of Victorian revelry at her waterside museum on Beacon Hill in Boston. She wrote about her beloved guests in her novel "Authors and Friends" (1896).

An Art Call for the Festival went out on July 15 for submission of work. All

fine-art artists and photographers are invited to join the region's finest painters, photographers, water colorists and two-dimensional artists for the fifth year of the Festival.

The Festival returns to the Great Hall at One Grafton Common with winning artists to be announced at the Opening Reception. Apple Tree Arts, The

Worcester County Camera Club, the Blackstone Valley Art Association, the Shakespear Club of Grafton and Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra are collaborating to showcase the art exhibition, artist and juror talks, music and literature programs.

Photography and all forms of two-dimensional artwork are welcomed for judging, with a maximum

of four entries per artist. The Art Call remains open until midnight of the day five hundred entries are received.

All artwork meeting acceptance criteria will be displayed online.

Visit smallstonesfestival.org to submit artwork.

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LIVING WITH LUKE

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Luke learns through play

BY AMY LECLAIRE

Luke 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 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 six-month-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."

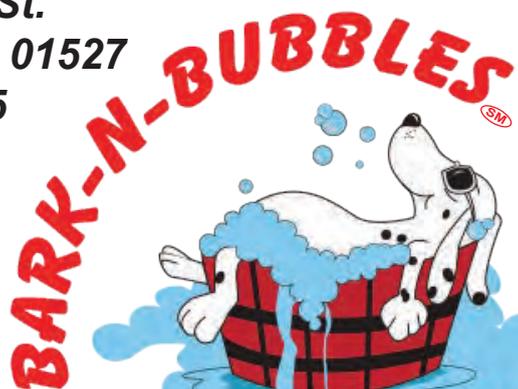
His cuteness tempts me, but most times, it's not enough to sell me. So I make sure that every sock makes it into the washer. Then I kneel down with him and share in the joy that is the laundry finale. I press the magic button and we both watch the clothes dance and bounce against the washer door. "There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



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"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 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

LUKE

continued on page 17

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LUKE

continued from page 16

hose as a gun (capitalizing on an ironic defense) and spray him. "Luke - No!" He jumps backwards 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 source.

Luke carries his love for water to pools and lakes. His first swim at Lake Singletary proved to be an

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.

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 learn more about him. He especially loves children. I think he senses his own small age while watching them move and speak



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 and desperate, as though he needed to save himself, then his brother, from a horrific drowning accident. After only a few tries, he learned to paddle efficiently. Now he swims smoothly, just as Lincoln had for so many years, barring one exception.

Lincoln was an athlete. 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

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 amy-leclair@hotmaill.com

Find Luke on Instagram: instagram.com/livingwith-lukevalentino

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 ad-

dition 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 ben-

efit of the added security of owning your home in a time when experts are forecasting prices to continue to rise.

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TALES FROM BEYOND

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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 black-

smith was a gruff, short-tempered 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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THE CAR DOCTOR

jpaul@aanortheast.com

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



BY JOHN PAUL

this vehicle due to noise concerns.

Q. 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?

A. 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.

Q. I have a 2021 Honda Pilot with just 7500 miles on it. I'm get-

ting a crackling sound coming from the AC/heat vents periodically. The dealer says it's a loose connection that

concern would be that after taking it apart and putting it back together it would be worse. I think just having

I change the positions. This only happens when it is warm/hot outside—during the winter there is no noise

A. 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@aanortheast.com. Follow John on Twitter @johnfpaul and friend him on Facebook, [mrjohnfpaul](https://www.facebook.com/mrjohnfpaul).

Q. 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. 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

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.

the dealer note the issue and if it gets worse and a bit easier to identify, then have it repaired.

Q. 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

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 the car.

A. It is a very time-consuming 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

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SPORTS

Northbridge's John Phelan dedicates PMC rides to family, friends

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

In 2008 Northbridge's John Phelan found out that his friend (Jim Rice) was diagnosed with cancer. To make things worse a few months later Phelan was notified that his sister Kathleen was also diagnosed with the disease. The Northbridge native found it hard to believe that two people close to him who were so young would be affected by the disease.

"I wanted to do something to help out and having my dad die of cancer in 1995 I was familiar with the PMC," Phelan said. "The following spring, I immediately signed up to do the 2009 PMC to do my part."

The Pan Mass Challenge (PMC) was founded in 1980 by Billy Starr and has become the nation's most successful athletic fundraiser, donating 100% of every rider raised money to Dana Farber. The PMC accounts for 55% of the Jimmy Fund's annual revenue.

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic the PMC has raised more than \$114 million for Dana Farber, bringing its 42-year contribution to \$831. There are 16 different routes for riders to partake in ranging from 25 to 210 miles and catering to all levels of cyclists and fundraisers.

Having just confirmed to ride the two-day, 186-mile event from Sturbridge to Provincetown, Phelan had to get on his bike and begin training for the early August event.

"I had not been on a bike in a long time, and I was



not in the best shape to ride it," he said. "I got out on the bike that I had owned and did a 6-mile ride, but I had to keep stopping so I went out and bought myself a nice bike."

For five months Phelan trained every other day, weather permitting. Unfortunately, during that time, he got the news that his friend had passed away at the young age of forty-nine. The loss of Rice gave the Northbridge rider even more motivation to take part in the event and he even dedicated his first year to his friend.

During that first-year ride Phelan found that it was not only more than he could have ever expected, but it was something special.

"Once you get out onto the road the people that you

meet while riding and at the stops are wonderful," he said. "It is Simply Love, all with a common cause - to see the end of cancer. The organization does a tremendous job with everyone involved going to extreme lengths."

Phelan noted that while the two-day bike ride wasn't all that bad, it was the fundraising that was the hardest thing for him, but it's all worth it.

With his sister's treatment being a success, he originally decided on a five-year plan to ride in the PMC, but during his fifth year his world would be turned upside down when his wife Cathy, who was a nurse, was diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer.

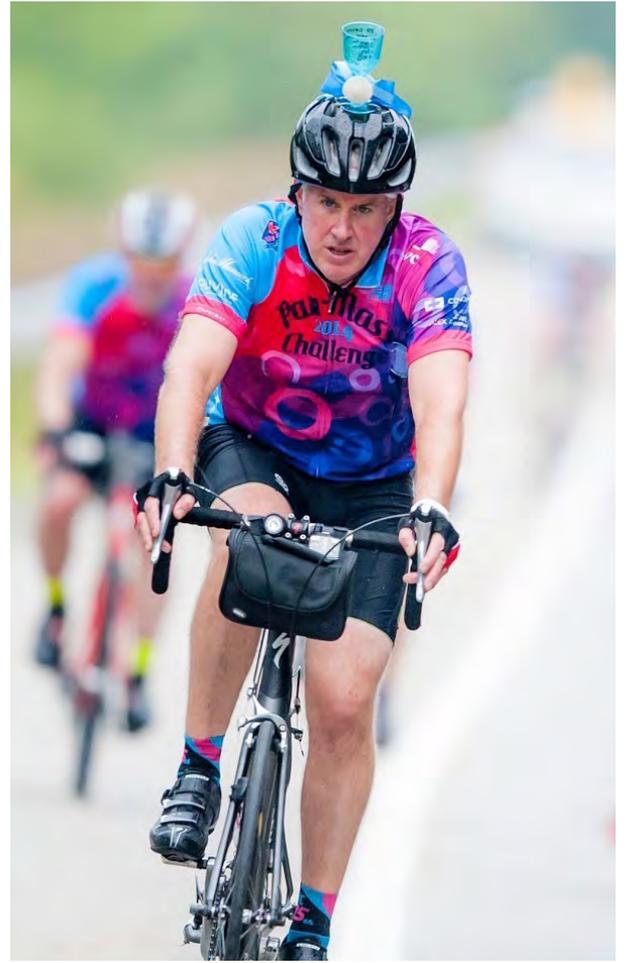
"It was 2013 and as I was finishing, I scanned the crowd for my family, but

my wife was missing. Cathy never misses anything, so I knew something was wrong," he said. "They were not giving her much of a chance and she eventually passed away after a seven-month fight. We talked a lot about our future, especially money without her, and she wanted me to keep living and not give up; that's when my five-year plan changed."

August 6-7 will be Phelan's 13th riding in the PMC and he is currently taking part in his fifteen-year plan, when he will be 60-years old, but he is looking to continue his cycling for Dana Farber as long as he can.

"I'll be 60 by the 15th year, if I can't continue to do the full two-day event I can always switch to a shorter route," Phelan said. "I can't stop, it's a big part of my life. I ride for Cathy, Jim, my dad and everyone else I know that has been affected by cancer and will do it as long as I am able."

Phelan noted that once



PMC Rider John Phelan of Northbridge plans to continue in the event as long as he can, in support of people stricken by cancer.

the ride begins and he leaves Sturbridge, the first water stop would be in

Northbridge where his family would be waiting for him and cheering him on.



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Samuel Slater Experience stirring an early buzz

Although 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, Swisburn USA and the Studebaker Car Club.

As the SSE's Reanna Kuzdzal told Doc Siddall of Lake 940 during a six-minute 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.

"Field trips are so much fun" for those taking part in them, she said.

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

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Milford Federal Bank appoints Daniel McElhinney, Vice President Retail Market Manager



MILFORD, MA (August 3, 2022) – Milford Federal Bank announced today that Daniel McElhinney has joined the Bank as VP, Retail Market Manager. Mr. McElhinney will lead a growing team of Milford Federal's Retail Bankers. "We are thrilled to welcome Daniel to our Retail Banking Team" said Paul

Gilbody President & CEO, "Daniel's depth and experience in Retail Banking expands our capabilities significantly throughout Milford Federal's growing customer base. He brings strong relationships and familiarity in the communities we serve that will benefit our existing customers and future expansion of our

retail portfolio." Daniel has over 29 years' experience as a Retail Market Manager at institutions such as; Sovereign Bank, Berkshire Bank and East Boston Savings Bank. Established in 1887,

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