

Harbro Auto Sales & Service: Family, faith, fifty years!

First of several articles leading up to Harbro Auto Sales' 50th anniversary celebration, in 2023.

BY ROD LEE

That his family was destined to make its mark in the automotive business was apparent early on, Paul T. "Tim" Hare of Harbro Auto Sales & Service said on August 26th.

"When I was eight or nine, my brother and I took an engine out of a 1955 Ford," Mr. Hare said, while seated at a picnic table at the waterfront cottage on Northwest Main St. in Douglas that he shares with his wife Jane as a seasonal retreat.

A friendly and engaging man, he spoke reflectively about the nearly half century Harbro has been in operation but also with the sunny disposition that he is known for. He even shared a printed historical timeline that dates from 1973 when Tim and Dave Hare rented space at 110 Linwood Ave.—where Crothers Tire is now located—to 1995 when Tim purchased "Harbro Auto Service" from Dave and noted, prophetically at it turned out, a desire then to buy "a new-car franchise if one becomes available in the Blackstone Valley or Webster area." Which is exactly what happened. The Webster facility on Rt. 12 opened in 1985.

Much has happened in the thirty-seven years since, of course. The "history of business" will have to be updated.

From the outset, Harbro (named thus for obvious reasons) was a venture the two brothers split right down the middle in terms of their respective responsibilities.

The business was incorporated in 1976 with Tim owning



The Hare family, another generation of which is now part of the Harbro Auto Sales & Service business. From the left, Leah, Abram, Mike, Jane, Tim, Jonah, Mark and Emmet. Harbro will celebrate a 50th anniversary in 2023.

fifty shares and Dave owning fifty shares. In 1978, the company was divided into two divisions, Auto Sales and Auto Service, with Tim managing the Auto Sales and Dave managing the Auto Service. "Each division to be a separate profit center with (each manager) having full control and compensation of profits."

A bicycle division and Depend-A-Car Rental were added in 1981. Auto-glass replacement was added in 1988, computerized accounting and office systems in 1989. Also in 1989, Harbro was granted variances from the town of Northbridge allowing for the placement of a sixty-square-foot sign on the property, and permission to place eighty-six unregistered vehicles on the lot.

In 1990, auto detailing was introduced; in 1991, state inspections.

The growth continued, as

it does to the present day with younger members of the family now involved.

In 1991, Harbro began a wholesale operation "to buy and sell used cars and trucks on the wholesale market, and to dispose of trade-ins which do not meet our quality standards."

This emphasis on quality, and a conscientious, faith-based approach to providing outstanding customer service, has been a hallmark from the beginning—as evidenced by the contemplation of a then-revolutionary "30-day buyback program." Under consideration, the history of business document notes, because "the biggest negative about buying a 'used car' is getting a lemon, and fear of warranties and 'used-car dealers.'" Hence thought given to "[investigating]

HARBRO

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Webster Supt. Dr. Ruthann Petrino-Goguen looks to retirement

BY JANET STOICA

It seems like just yesterday when Webster's School Committee chose Dr. Ruthann Petrino-Goguen as its new superintendent. Her six years as the town's school administrator have sped by like the crack of a lightning bolt. Superintendent Petrino-Goguen is retiring. Her last day as school manager will be March 3, 2023.

"It'll be a sad day and a happy day," said Dr. Petrino-Goguen. "My family will be happy but this community has become part of my heart and soul. I am so proud of all the work everyone in our school system has accomplished as a team. Our teachers, aides, office staff, school committee, counselors, cafeteria personnel, maintenance crew, and especially our parents are all to be commended for their valuable part in making this school system the best it can be. Teamwork is key to helping our students get the best education we can give them."

Her influence and accomplishments will remain, however, for years to come. Time and hard work have passed quickly for Webster's school management, teachers, and support personnel and their achievements have been many. There has been an enormous amount of student development since Superintendent Petrino-Goguen has taken the helm. Among her many accomplishments are instructional practices and teacher development. The Bartlett High School building project is another positive achievement voted on by a majority of the town's residents who believe in a safer and better brick-and-mortar learning environment for their children.

"I'm grateful for my time here



Dr. Ruth Petrino-Goguen's career as superintendent of schools in Webster is drawing to a close.

and for working to make change to benefit our students," said Dr. Petrino-Goguen, "it's a very hard position and I've been a superintendent for twelve years with six of those years here in Webster. We're a turn-around district and we've done great work. I'm so very proud of all we've accomplished."

During Dr. Petrino-Goguen's tenure, there have been many changes in the areas of curriculum renewal with new instructional materials based on English, math, and the sciences; professional teacher development to meet diverse student needs; and improvement of high school student programs that provide many opportunities for college pathways. The superintendent was quick to point out that Webster's students, teachers, and support personnel went above and beyond during COVID with a much better than average student participation.

"Our Mapfre Insurance Company partnership for our junior and senior high school students is

RETIREMENT

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the feasibility of offering 30 day 'satisfaction or we will buy it back' guaranty."

This was subsequently implemented. "We have never promoted it properly," Tim says. "My hope when I put it in place was that it would change the industry."

Tim Hare recalls that by April of 1973, drawing on their mutual interest in automobiles, he and Dave Hare were doing "just gas and repairs" on Linwood Ave., at the address Crothers now occupies. Shortly thereafter, they relocated to Providence Road, which at that time was so quiet a stretch of highway that "you could play baseball in

the middle of it," Tim said with a smile and a twinkle in his eye.

"We started out as service only. I worked for J&S as a teenager, Dave worked at Farrar's in Hopkinton, building fire trucks. I asked him if he wanted to go into business. Jane and I got married in 1974 and I wanted to sell cars. She had a 1972 Chevy Malibu that was paid off. 'If you let me sell your car' I said to her...I sold it for \$2200 and I bought her a car for \$1000. I lost money on that first car."

With mentoring help from Gordon Hathaway—"and he was my competitor," Tim points out—the Hare brothers took a chance on the Providence Road site. "It was a cellar hole and a barroom," Tim

says. "We saved the original foundation. I had an inspiration in the early 80s that every town needed a car dealership like ours but I didn't want to do it if work consumed me. I had a young family."

This devotion to family has stayed strong down through the generations. "At one time, seventeen family members worked at Harbro. My sister June worked there for years," Tim says.

Through the years, he said, "I've seen a lot of ups and downs." One of these came right away, in 1973, when the OPEC oil crisis hit. "The EPA controlled your allocation...in a day we were out of the gas business."

In 2008-2009 "there was a big shortage of used

cars."

More recently there was the Covid-19 pandemic.

Today, as Tim's son Mike Hare notes, Harbro remains true to the business's core principles. This explains why Mike and Mark Hare are carrying forward the tradition of brothers owning the business and shouldering the workload equally.

But they are not alone. Despite the loss of Dave Hare, who died earlier this year, family members are active in the dealership. "My Uncle Dan, my mom's brother, still works with us," Mike Hare said. Mark's daughter Leah, Mike's sons Jonah and Emmet and Abram and Mike's nephew Jude (my wife's sister's son) all have roles.

"Other than mom and dad," Mike Hare says; can't forget Tim and Jane.

"I have thirty-two nieces and nephews and most of them have worked here," Tim Hare says. "This is the next best thing to a family



Above, brothers Dave and Tim Hare, who started Harbro Auto Sales & Service in 1973.

farm. I am very thankful about the way it's worked out."

Harbro's golden anniversary will be observed

with appropriate fanfare next spring.

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

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Xpressly Yours ... a letter from the editor

Women's Success Network delivers a boatload of fun



An invitation from Pat Hurton to join members of the Women's Success Network (WSN) for an evening "charter cruise" of Webster Lake on the Indian Princess gave me momentary pause. There was an initial hesitation, governed by the feeling that I would be "a duck out of water"—so to speak.

Not to worry. There was not only the warm welcome extended by Ms. Hurton, Jeannie Hebert, Alise Breton and others in attendance, there was the chance to experience Chris Robert's paddleboat for the second time in the past several years.

Doing so, the thought that inevitably came to mind—as I'm sure it did for the WSN'ers—was "what was all the fuss about? Why was there such an uproar and so much consternation, so much opposition, when Mr. Robert first proposed the idea of putting such a craft on "Lake Chaubunagungamaug"?

Many of residents of the lake who resisted Mr. Robert's plan "have been on the boat" themselves

since the tumult settled down, David Balessandro told me. We were standing on the lower deck just outside an enclosed area that features a bar, the galley, two "heads" and a full-screen TV.

The 59-ton vessel, propelled by two stern wheels, was moving smoothly and quietly through the water.

A mid-October night that had started with temperatures near 70 degrees was still perfectly comfortable and when a breeze with a chill in it kicked up people topside were advised by "Mary," a deck hand, to move to a spot behind the control room "and you'll be nice and warm."

Ms. Hebert of the host Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce was one of the first to climb the stairs to the upper deck from the lower floor, where drinks and hors d'oeuvres were served. "Come on up," she said over the loudspeaker. "It's a great view!"

Mr. Balessandro is known as "Diver Dave" for his scuba-diving expertise. "I also hold a captain's license," he said. He was enjoying filling members of the Women's Success Network in on the nuances of the lake, which is dotted with homes all around. Passing these, he returned waves and whistles from people hailing the Indian Princess from their front porch, some of them tending steaks on the grill. "That's Waterfront Mary's,"

he noted, pointing to a popular restaurant and its bright lights. "We're in Vodka Cove right now, also known as The Dug-out."

Carol Archambault of Green Compass, a USDA organic leader in the hemp wellness industry, was impressed by the boat and the reception she got from WSN leadership. Ms. Archambault sees membership in the Women's Success Network as an exciting new thread in her life.

"Membership in WSN will help me step out of my comfort zone, personally as well as professionally," Ms. Archambault said. "Connecting with other women, making new friendships and sharing ideas on how we can help one another is what I am most looking forward to."

"I believe that Green Compass can impact people's lives for the better and I love sharing the message of how women can start their own business to help contribute financially to the family. Whether they are a stay-at-home mom, work full-time or part-time, or are recently retired, this business is for everyone, at any age."

"I started with Green Compass because I saw how its products really make a difference in someone's quality of life. I love helping people feel better!"

Green Compass's operation is "vertically integrated," she said. In other words, the company

controls the entire process, from when the seeds are put in the ground on the farm it owns "to the product that arrives at your doorstep."

A clean CO2 extraction process, independent third-party lab testing and an adherence to "Good Lab Practices" (GLP) and "Good Manufacturing Practices" (GMP) are the foundation of Green Compass's commitment to quality.

"We're moving!" Carol Dauphinais of the Grafton Country Store said, as the Indian Princess left port.

"What a fun evening!" Heather McGuire of Sundance Newbridge Publishing wrote Ms. Hurton in an email after the event. "Thank you for being so kind to me, and taking time to introduce me to some new people. I am really enjoying being part of this network."

Ms. McGuire told me on the boat that Sundance, which is based in Marlborough, publishes educational and children's books. She is a sales consultant. "It's a good industry," she said. "Teachers are a caring group of people."

For more information about the Women's Success Network and upcoming WSN events like "Commerce on the Common" in Grafton, go to blackstone-valley.org.

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

Twas The Night author to discuss classic poem at Booklovers' Gourmet

Perfectly timed for the arrival of the holiday season is an appearance by Pamela McColl, author of *Twas The Night/The Art and History of the Classic Christmas Poem*, at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St. in Webster, on Friday, November 25th from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Ms. McColl, an author,

collected work of all time in the English language.

Signed, personalized copies of the book will be available for purchase that day, or by pre-order in the store.

Following right on the heels of Ms. McColl's date at Booklovers' Gourmet is the return to the store of paranormal investigators



historian, collector and an authority on the popular poem, spent a decade compiling and writing her book. This included visits to Troy, New York, Lyndsey, Oklahoma, and New York, New York.

Her appearance at Booklovers' Gourmet coincides with the bicentennial of the iconic 'Twas the Night Before Christmas/A Visit from St. Nicholas. It is generally accepted that Clement Clarke Moore (1779-1863) wrote the poem and presented it to his children for the first time at his home in Chelsea, New York on Christmas Eve 1822.

The poem was first published in the Troy Sentinel newspaper on December 23rd, 1823. It has been published thousands of times and is considered the most

Tom D'Agostino and Arlene Nicholson on Saturday, November 26th from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.—in celebration of Small Business Saturday. They will discuss their latest book, *Strange New England*, which contains sixty stories of unusual happenings throughout the region.

Mr. D'Agostino and Ms. Nicholson's previous titles include *Legends, Lore & Secrets of New England*, and *Guide to Haunted New England*.

Deb Horan, owner of Booklovers' Gourmet, says "our shelves are brimming with gift ideas and we encourage you to shop early for the best selection of books, calendars, cards, puzzles and ornaments. Shop early and shop local to make this holiday season bright!"

RETIREMENT

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a great success," stated Dr. Petrino-Goguen, "our One Goal program, which works with students to help them achieve college degrees, has been very successful where 100% of those students moved on to college education. Our community outreach through our North Village program, our teamwork with the Samuel Slater Museum, and our Mapfre alliance have been just some of our school system successes. Our innovation pathways in the bio-medical fields have been a great student accomplishment. Bartlett students participated in a STEM competition

and took 3rd place in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' dentistry field. We are proud of our students' accomplishments."

One thing's for sure, the halls of Webster's school system will be silent for some time after Superintendent Ruthann Petrino-Goguen's departure. She will be greatly missed for all that she's given to this town and its school system. Her stamina, strength, successes, efforts, and never-ending optimism for the goodness and well-being of all those she touched, student and staff alike, will now be added to the history of the Webster school system. We will miss you dearly, Superintendent Petrino-Goguen, and hope you will continue

to have a very sweet finish here in Webster for all that you have given us. You've been through trials and errors, ups and downs, frustrations and joys, and your accomplishments have been many. We can only hope your successor will bring the same grace and professionalism that you have blessed our school system with. Best wishes for continued success through March 2023 and may all kindness and honor be yours for the future!

"Time flies over us, but leaves its shadow behind." ~ Nathaniel Hawthorne

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WDBA meeting boosts SSE's prospects for more events

BY ROD LEE

The prevailing mood during the annual meeting of the Webster Dudley Business Alliance on October 19th was appreciation for the setting: the new Samuel Slater Experience on Ray Street in Webster.

As host for the evening, Barbara Van Reed expressed a hope that more groups like the WDBA will take advantage of the chance to mix and mingle in a museum brimming with interactive exhibits showcasing the life and times of the founder of the American Industrial Revolution.

In expressing thanks as she accepted a plaque from WDBA President Lucas Perzan of Insation Technologies in Webster in recognition of the SSE's first year of operation, Ms. Van Reed said "we are glad you are here. We need more events!"

Prestige Salon & Day Spa, a new business in town, and Marty's of Dud-



Lucas Perzan, re-elected president of the Webster Dudley Business Alliance, is joined by Kim Labbe, treasurer, Tamera Taft, director, Nancy Healy, alternate director, Jess Sabine, director, Carl Kaliszewski, vice president, Deb Horan, director, and Mark Marzeotti, secretary at the WDBA's annual meeting at the Samuel Slater Experience in Webster. Director Halina Jachimczak was not able to attend. Photo by Sally Patterson

ley, a longtime presence, were also honored with plaques.

Marty's supplied the night's beverages, dutifully dispensed by Mark Marzeotti of the Marzeotti Realty Group. Big Belly Café in Webster provided the food.

When it comes to getting companies and organizations to join schools, senior centers and others in sampling the Samuel Slater Experience as a venue, museum staffers are already making progress.

An example of this took place on Friday, Novem-

ber 4th with "Night at the Museum: Silent Movies with Richard Hughes," from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. This was a free event. Popcorn and a cash bar was available.

The opportunity to watch two silent movie classics with Mr. Hughes

providing musical accompaniment on the piano is exactly the kind of attraction that Ms. Van Reed and her colleagues know will enhance the museum's appeal to visitors.

The choice of films for Night at the Museum will go far in bringing to life the adventure, drama, romance and comedy that characterized the silent movies of the early 1900s in the Liberty Theater along the re-creation of Main St.—one of the museum's most popular exhibits.

Charlie Chaplin's "The Immigrant" is considered by critics and enthusiasts to be among his best work. "Sherlock Jr." starring Buster Keaton has been named one of the American Film Institute's funniest movies of all time.

Networking that preceded the business portion of the WDBA's annual meeting included discussion among the principals involved about why there is no hotel in the town of Webster; the growth that has been experienced in

nearby Putnam; and Webster in the days of yore.

"In the last ten years, Putnam has really taken off," Dan Bennett of DBC Solutions, which specializes in residential remodeling and outdoor living, said. Mr. Bennett is president of the Thompson Business Association.

"I remember going roller skating on the second floor (of a building) on Main St.," Deb Horan, owner of Booklovers' Gourmet, said.

Ms. Horan's store at 72 E. Main St. in Webster will host the next gathering of the Webster Dudley Business Alliance, a holiday party from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 6th.

With the WDBA certain to return to the Samuel Slater Experience, the museum is gradually building interest in after-hours events.

For more information about the Alliance, go to thewdba.org.

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

SSE offers special school vacation week hours—and St. Nick

The Samuel Slater Experience will celebrate its first holiday season with special hours during school vacation week between Christmas and New Year's and with a visit from Santa on the museum's popular re-creation of Webster's Main Street at the turn of the 20th Century.

Described as "Disney-like,"

the SSE employs state-of-the-art 4-D digital technology to tell the story of Samuel Slater. Exhibits cover two time periods: the early 1800s and the early 1900s.

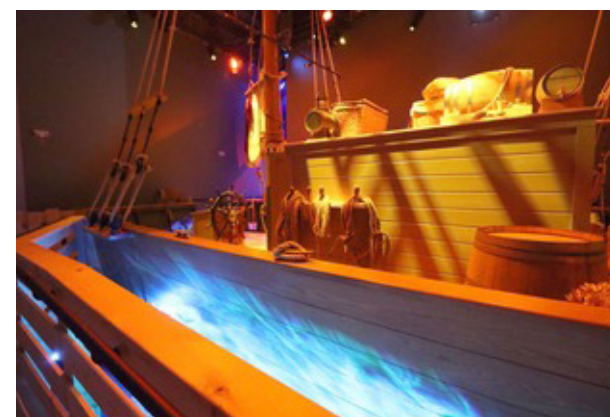
A welcome sight on Main Streets everywhere in December is Santa Claus and on Saturday, December 3 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., young

visitors to the museum will have a chance to meet St. Nick for a holiday photo with this historical figure and young Samuel Slater.

A great family activity during school vacation week, the Samuel Slater Experience is designed to be educational and entertaining. It encourages visitors to see and feel

history in a new, immersive way as they climb aboard the ship that carried Samuel Slater to America, learn about life in the early 1800s and ride a trolley through downtown Webster a century later.

Samuel Slater traveled from England to America in 1789 with Britain's textile industry secrets in his head. He suc-



The Samuel Slater Experience in Webster heads into its first holiday season with special hours and special events for the whole family.



cessfully created the country's first cotton spinning jenny and established the American factory system. He became known as "the father of the American Industrial Revolution."

By the early 1900s, rural New England was dotted with thriving mill towns. One of these was in Webster, where Slater owned and operated six cotton and woolen mills. Webster became a vacation destination for tourists from as far away as New York City.

The Samuel Slater Experience is supported by the Janet Malser Humanities Trust, the Massachusetts Cultural Coun-

cil, and individual donations.

Special December vacation hours are December 27-29, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The daily schedule is Fridays and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and on Sundays from noon to 4:00 p.m. NOTE: The museum will be closed December 23-25 and December 30-January 1.

The museum will host an Open House for Webster residents with proof of residency on Sunday, December 4 from noon to 4:00 p.m.

For more information, visit <https://samuelslaterexperience.org>.

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Holy Cats! You're needed at the Community Cat Connection

BY JANET STOICA

Volunteering isn't the most glamorous job at times but the satisfaction you feel from helping others, including animals, is truly immeasurable.

Volunteers are greatly

and then brought to clinics like Tufts or Second Chance in Worcester and North Brookfield for neutering or spaying. The furry bundles of joy are then vaxed for rabies and distemper as well as given flea baths and de-worming treatments

your friend, relative, son, daughter, husband, wife with you and get the chores done in half the time. You may be right and I might be crazy but you just might be the cat fanatic they're looking for. (Thanks, Billy Joel.)

"So many people just leave their cats behind," said Ms. Hassett, "it's a shame. They'll move out of an apartment or home and just leave the animal with no regret. Many of our cats here have the sweetest personalities and are the best companions. They are low maintenance and don't have to be walked outdoors in all kinds of weather. They are indoor creatures and are such good buddies. We had a little kitty that was abandoned in an apartment after its owner moved. The landlord found the kitty. He was such a sweet cat. How can anyone just abandon an animal like that? By the time we had him vetted he was even sweeter from having more love given to him while at our center." Barbara and her two daughters began their volunteering seven years ago when the girls were in high school and wanted to do community service. They've been volunteering every other Saturday since high school.

The CCC was the recent recipient of a \$1,000 Walmart Community Award for its service to the local area. Brett Bergeron, Walmart's Pharmacy Manager in Walmart's North Oxford store, presented the grant to the Connection's staff. The award funds will go toward the trap and release program.

Ms. Trudy Charette of

Dudley was the founder of the CCC when it began. She used her Dudley home as the original site and then moved into a small storefront near the French River Bridge. The Community Cat Connection is also synonymous with its generous benefactor, Mrs. Marilyn Fels. Without Mrs. Fels' benevolence and concern, the Connection's current building construction, maintenance, and upkeep would never have happened. Her caring and goodwill is an asset to the Town of Webster and surrounding communities.

As Charles Dickens wrote: "What greater gift than the love of a cat?" and there are quite a few beautiful cats waiting for you to choose them as your faithful and loving companion.

Potential volunteers may download Volunteer Forms from their website: www.communitycatconnection.org

Community Cat Connection, 289 Thompson Road, Webster MA 01570 (across from the former Colonial Restaurant). (508) 949-0779. Open

hours to the public: Thurs/
Fri 12 noon – 3:30 p.m.;
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them on Facebook. Info@

ccatconnection.org

Contact Janet: jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com



Walmart Pharmacy Manager Brett Bergeron with Community Cat Connection volunteers after presenting the CCC with a check. From the left, Wendy, Sarah, Barbara, Mr. Bergeron, Lisa and Doris.

needed at Webster's no kill cat shelter, Community Cat Connection ("CCC"). The shelter has been a shining beacon for area towns and those individuals who must give up a furry feline due to an owner's inability to care for their furry companion or for someone who may have passed on. Their trap-and-release program capturing stray felines is also a large part of the job to benefit those cat owners who allow their cats outdoor access. When a pet owner allows their feline outdoor access they may come in contact with stray tabbies who haven't been vaxed for rabies, distemper, or a myriad of other contagious diseases. Your tabby could conceivably bring home an unwanted virus. Not good. The CCC's volunteers capture strays and get them vaxed before releasing them back to the wild as a valuable benefit to those house cats they may come in contact with.

However, for all the good they do, the CCC is desperately low on volunteers. Barbara Hassett is one of the dedicated volunteers who assists with the everyday care of the lovable critters. "This is my happy place really," said Barbara, "it's so fulfilling knowing I'm helping these animals find good homes. My fellow volunteers also make it worthwhile to come here knowing all the good we are doing." Doris Bemis' volunteer job at the CCC is to seek out strays who are reported to them. She will scope out their habitats with capturing devices. Once in Ms. Bemis' care, the cats are quarantined

if necessary. They are also chipped and clipped as well as FIV-tested for immunodeficiency. Some of these kitties are then socialized and put up for adoption or they may be released back to their original environment.

Doris' job is a hardy one and not for the faint of heart. It's tough going out and trying to coax strays into a transport cage but Doris knows every detail and best procedure for helping these kits as she's a 15-year volunteer. She's an angel for sure but she needs more angels to assist her just like the CCC shelter does for the care, cleaning, and feeding of these beautiful pets. Doris related a story about an 18-year-old lovable tom cat who needed care during his last days. Tears came to her eyes as she described her time spent with the wonderful animal before he passed. When I visited the CCC, volunteer Dorothy Berard was diligently caring for the majority of the felines in the main caging room. She had her routine down pat and was enjoying her time spent with the adoring kits.

If you are looking for a satisfying volunteer job, the CCC needs you! If you are a high school student looking to beef up your credentials and resume by doing community service activity, here's your chance. If you love fuzzy and endearing creatures, you're the one they need. If you have a big heart and the desire to make a difference, they're waiting for your phone call. One day a week for 3 hours can make you a hero. Take

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Water Lily by the lake, a boutique, caters to you

BY JANET STOICA

It's refreshing to have a new retail outlet in the area that is willing to go the extra mile for its customers. This is what Amber Stewart's goal is as proprietor of Water Lily by the lake, a unique women's boutique in Webster. It's okay to bring your children here. There's a little cozy corner designated just for their imaginations while moms, grams, aunties, and young ladies shop the eclectic mix of new clothing Ms. Stewart has chosen for her clientele to browse through. Inventory changes weekly with new arrivals daily. How exciting!

A cause for celebration perhaps. There is something for all age groups from 20



years old to 90 years young. Casual clothing to office attire. It's a calming and relaxing atmosphere from the mint-fresh walls to the soothing lighting effects blended with lots of natural illumination from the generous front windows. Friendly and unpretentious for sure.

"Water Lily became

a women's boutique by chance but it has become so much more than that now," says Ms. Stewart. "My husband Wayne and I bought this property as an investment with the intent of renting it out. One day I mentioned that this place would be a good spot for a boutique and here we are." Amber's first passion, how-

ever, is teaching, which she has happily engaged in for the past fifteen years. She is a third-grade teacher at the Heritage School, part of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District. "My first-grade teacher, Mrs. Day, made a lasting impression on me when I was a student in the Connecticut school system," she said, "and I



Amber Stewart, owner of Water Lily by the lake, holds a Jomanda Baby Soother.

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really enjoy my young and enthusiastic students today."

Amber's husband, who owns his own plumbing business, and remodelers, played a large role in converting the building to its present state. The Stewarts make their home in Sutton and have two young sons aged nine and seven. There is a beautiful and peaceful pond on their residential property replete with flowering water lilies much like the local Webster Lake. Their visually calming effect is similar to the atmosphere here and, therefore, the name Water Lily symbolizes the store's serenity but also some of its playfulness with many unique and one-of-a-kind gifts from facial masks and body lotions to coffee mugs inscribed with humorous expressions.

"We have a wide variety of new and fashionable clothing and products here for all ages," said Ms. Stewart, "I didn't want to cater to just one body size. We're all different. We have all styles, all comfort levels, and all price points. Most items are in the \$30-\$40 range but additional items are lower and some higher in price. Our mix consists of casual, work clothes like dress slacks, dressy tops, sweat-shirts, cardigans, lounge wear, even tee shirts and casual shoes. Our jewelry is a big seller. We have a natural deodorant line that is aluminum-free, called SmartyPits. The brand also donates to breast cancer research with the purchase of each product. There's also another big seller and that's the Dammit Doll... um...darn it. A whimsical take-off on the stress ball of

yore. These 12-inch soft and whack-able dolls are used to take out your frustrations on anything nearby when you're frustrated. Just grab it and start whacking, dammit!"

There are candles, bath bombs, gel facial relaxers, scrunchies, and headbands. Cute shatter-proof stemless wine goblets, handbags, purses, and their best-selling comfy blankets suitable for those cooler nights when you need an extra coverlet. Their size is excellent too spanning 50" x 80" instead of the usual 50" x 60" dimensions. One unique product line Water Lily offers is Jomanda. Imported from England, these baby soothers are small, softer than soft plush mini-blankets of sorts with a baby lamb attachment. Babies will find them to be just their size to grab, hold, and cuddle with. Of course, gift cards are always available and never go out of style. With the holidays fast approaching, gift wrapping will soon be available as well.

You can't miss their building on Thompson Road in Webster. A beautiful water lily mural covers the entire length of their building. Stunning!

Water Lily by the lake, 195 Thompson Road, Webster MA 01570. Phone: (508) 461-7444. On Instagram and Facebook: @waterlilywebster. Email: waterlilywebster@gmail.com Hours: Mon/Tues Closed; Wed-Sat 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Contact Janet: jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com



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 NOVEMBER

• A Mother-Daughter Art Show featuring the mixed media work of Kathleen Kunkel and the pottery creations of Hanna Kunkel is taking place at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster, during regular business hours.



The history of the battle-hardened M1 Abrams tank, named after Creighton Abrams, will be the topic of a presentation by Mike Manougian from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Saturday, November 26th at the American Heritage Museum, 568 Main St., Hudson.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18

• The Douglas Sunshine Club is hosting its annual Beef Stew Dinner along with entertainment at the Adult Social Center, 331 Main St. Tickets are \$10 per person and available by calling 508-476-4474 or 508-476-2283. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. Dinner is at 6:00 p.m. followed by piano and vocal with Nancy Marshall.

NOVEMBER 18 & 19

• The Uxbridge High School Drama Club will present "The Play That Goes Wrong" by Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer and Henry Shields in the UHS Auditorium at 7:00 p.m. The play is presented with permission from Dramatists Play Service Inc. In 2015 The Play That

Goes Wrong won Best Comedy at the 2015 Laurence Olivier Awards. It has been running since 2012 in London. Forty-four UHS students are involved in this production. Tickets will be available at the door; \$5 for adults and \$3 for students and senior citizens.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19

• The Blackstone Valley Wine & Chocolate Tasting with a live auction, raffles, prizes and vendors will be held at Blissful Meadows Golf Club, 801 Chocolog Road, Uxbridge, at 7:00 p.m. This event

is offered in collaboration with Marty's Fine Wines, The Candy Shoppe and The Afterglow Boutique. Tickets are \$40, \$50 at the door and may be purchased at Uni-Bank in Whitinsville or Uxbridge or online at www.facebook.com/BVWinetasting. Proceeds benefit the Blackstone Valley Emergency Shelter and the Blackstone Valley Rotary Scholarship Fund.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20

• The New England Country Music Club presents live music by Kerrie Evers at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Doors open at 12:30 with entertainment from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24

• The Uxbridge Quaker Meeting House Association is hosting a traditional nondenominational service at 9:30 a.m. the corner of Aldrich St. and Quaker Highway. A fellowship gathering in the new carriage shed will follow. The Association is a nonprofit founded in 1952. Its primary purpose is the preservation of historic buildings. The Association also urges the use of the meetinghouse for religious, educational and civic engagements. Contact quaker-meetinghouseassoc@gmail.com or go to [UxbridgeQuakerMeeting](https://www.facebook.com/UxbridgeQuakerMeeting) at Facebook.com.

NOVEMBER 26-DECEMBER 3

• Shop Small 01588 will be held in downtown Whitinsville, with dozens of businesses taking part in the passport-style event for an entire week, starting on Small Business Saturday.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26

• Mike Manougian, a volunteer docent at the American Heritage Museum, 568 Main St., Hudson, will discuss the history of the M1 Abrams tank from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. The M1 Abrams is a 68-ton third-generation American main battle tank designed by Chrysler Defense. Mr. Manougian, an Abrams tank commander, will talk about the tank's capabilities, tactical employment, and lessons learned from recent wars.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

• St. Gabriel's Church, 151 Mendon St., Upton, will host its Christmas Fair from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. with a variety of fresh balsam wreaths, cemetery baskets and table-top arrangements. Raffles for theme baskets, gift certificates and more than \$450 worth of scratch tickets will be available. A new gift boutique featuring new

and "like new" items, Oldye Tyme Christmas decorations, gems, jewels seasonal décor will be included along with a Bake Table where cookies, pastries, candy, jams and jellies will be presented. Face masks are encouraged. • The 25th anniversary of the Uxbridge First Holiday Night Celebration and Parade, a family tradition, will be held. Volunteers are welcome for the event. Stop

by the Mendon Street Kitchen for more information.

• The Uxbridge PSG 2023 is hosting a Jack-a-doo Holiday Vendor Fair from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Uxbridge High School, 300 Quaker Highway. More than thirty local vendors with unique gifts for the holidays will be on hand and there will be raffle items and a concession stand. This year's event is dedicated to Tricia Trask, who is

dearly missed and remembered. Tricia's son Jack is graduating. Contact PSG for more information at psguxbridge@gmail.com or check Facebook, [UxbridgePSG2023-ParentsforSafeGraduation](https://www.facebook.com/UxbridgePSG2023-ParentsforSafeGraduation). • The Sutton Chain of Lights will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., featuring family fun with

HAPPENINGS!

continued on page 8

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BY ROD LEE

The buzz in the neighborhood began soon after the banner was strung across the front of what was Jube’s, announcing the arrival before long of a new restaurant—Reunion Tap & Table.

Residents of the town of Northbridge and surrounding communities are hungry for just such an establishment, Sargon

Make way for Reunion Tap & Table, in Whitinsville

Hanna, an owner of Reunion Tap & Table, said on October 19th.

They may have to wait a little while longer, however. But hiring is underway.

“We are looking to open in December or January,” Mr. Hanna said. The premises previously occupied by Jube’s, in the Whitinsville Plaza on Providence Road, are undergoing an extensive renovation. The rebuild, which is being done by Paul Apkrian Architects of Westborough, involves ripping out the

tables, floors and ceilings that were in place and will include the addition of a bar.

This will be a second location for Reunion Tap & Table, a companion to the storefront the restaurant has occupied on Worcester St. in North Grafton for about four years and that is doing well.

“We are looking to expand and this is an underserved market,” Mr. Hanna said. “People have been clamoring for a new restaurant, as they were in

Grafton and we have killed it here. The space we are moving into in Whitinsville made sense. It’s the 2.0 version of Reunion Tap & Table, a smaller footprint.”

Mr. Hanna described the menu as being highlighted by “pizza, burgers and wings” but if North Grafton is any indication, it will be much more extensive than that—and a welcome addition to the dining scene in the lower Blackstone Valley.

Reunion Table & Tap’s mantra is “familiar food



The storefront in the Whitinsville Plaza formerly occupied by Jube’s will be home to Reunion Tap & Table.

favorites and craft beers” and cocktails.

The countdown is on to the day the doors open.

Send your restaurant/food news to Rod Lee at rodlee.1963@gmail.com or call 774-232-2999.

Sean Buckley joins Webster Five as controller

Webster Five recently announced that Sean Buckley, CPA, has joined the bank as controller. Mr. Buckley hits the ground running at Webster Five after having the bank as a client for several years while working at the national CPA firm Wolf & Company, PC, where he specialized in financial institution accounting.

“I knew from the first day I had Webster Five as a client that it was a great place,” he said. “Everyone enjoyed being part of the bank and with its continuous growth, strong leadership team and culture of giving back to the commu-

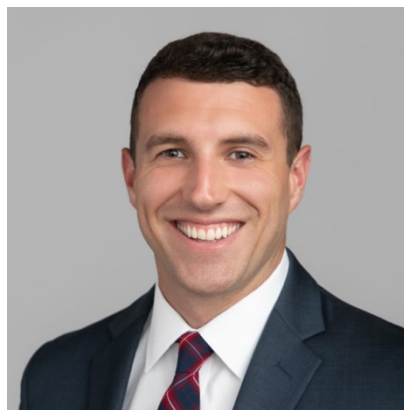
nity, it always seemed like Webster Five was one step ahead compared with other community institutions. I’m excited to be part of the team.”

As Webster Five controller, Mr. Buckley will oversee the bank’s accounting operations including compiling financial information and activity, as well as working on the annual budget to meet the bank’s strategic initiatives.

Webster Five Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Brian Westerlind said Mr. Buckley brings valuable perspective to the controller role. “Sean’s background

is such a great asset because he worked with a diverse roster of financial institution clients and has incredible insights,” Mr. Westerlind said. “We were his client for more than five years, so he already knows Webster Five inside and out and we are thrilled to have him.”

Prior to joining Webster Five, Mr. Buckley worked at Wolf & Company for more than eight years, starting as an auditing team member



Sean Buckley has been named controller at Webster Five.

and rising to audit manager. He is a graduate of Providence College and a member of the Massachusetts Society of CPAs. He lives in Pawtucket, Rhode Island with his wife, Julia.

HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 7

free trolleys, boutique shops, local products, handmade gifts, specialty items and services for all the people on your Christmas list.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

• The New England Country Music Club presents the Rhode Island Rednecks at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. with live entertainment from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6

• The Webster Dudley Business Alliance’s Holiday Party will take place from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Booklovers’ Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

• The Auburn Chamber of Commerce’s annual Holiday Party will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Realtor Association of Central Massachusetts, 492 Washington St., Auburn. Bring an unwrapped toy and a door prize. All donations will benefit Auburn Youth & Family Services.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16

• The Birch Alley Brass Ensemble will present a free concert of Christmas music from around the world at 7:00 p.m. at Valley Chapel, 14 Hunter Road, Uxbridge. Directed by William Moffett, the ensemble is made up of thirty-five student and professional musicians from area towns including Uxbridge, Upton, Hopedale, Mendon and Milford. This is the 11th annual version of the concert, which is made possible by the Mendon, Milford and Hopedale Cultural Councils.

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SPORTS

Oxford cross country finds a diamond in the rough

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY, SPORTS STAFF WRITER

Every once in a while a gifted athlete comes along that brings great promise to their high school sport. Cameron Davis is one such athlete that has been bringing success to the Oxford Cross Country team in her first varsity season while technically not even in high school as of yet. Davis is only an eighth grader at the Oxford Middle School.

The youngster got involved in running in the fifth grade, but unfortunately the following year was the start of the Covid pandemic and her running slowed to a crawl for a period of time, but now she's shining for the varsity squad and Coach Tim Craig.

"Despite being an eighth grader running for the varsity team she adapted very quickly and has the ability to handle whatever is asked of her," the Oxford coach said. "There is a competitiveness about her; there is no big ego, but she wants to win, and this is something that you can't coach."

According to the Oxford runner she got involved in running because her older brother Nathan, by two years, was running cross country at the time and her mother thought that it would be a good idea for her and her twin sister (Abigail) to also run cross country.

"It was really exciting to follow in my brother's footsteps," Davis said. "Both my mother and father also ran in high school."

Although the entire Davis family found themselves running a few years



back, it's basically now just Cameron who is running for the high school. Nathan has shifted his focus to soccer and Abigail does not participate in high school sports. In addition to running cross country Davis also plays club soccer for the Spirit of Liverpool, where she plays defense.

"I like both sports, but to choose between the two is a tough question," she said. "If I had to choose I think that I'd pick running because I think that I am better at cross country."

The eighth grader originally found that running with the varsity team was a rather tough transition and much different than running with the middle school. However, after a few races she began to feel comfortable and found that it really wasn't that much different than what she was used to.

"Having the ability to run with the high school had me very nervous at first because the team was a lot of older girls and I was only an

eighth grader," Davis said. "I thought that I was not going to be as strong as they were, and I wouldn't be able to keep up with them. I just went out and tried to run as well as I could and found my way through the courses staying with them."

According to Davis, she can usually finish a 5K race in about a 20-22-minute time frame. Over the first few races she found herself running right there with the older girls on both teams and before too long she was crossing the finish line before anyone else.

"It was really quite a shock to me," she said. "It was a lot different than middle school and the girls on the high school team were older, so I figured that it was going to be tough. I guess that running just comes naturally to me."

Craig, who had seen Davis run as a seventh grader last year, knew that she had raw talent, but would that be able to translate to the cross-country courses on the high school level?

"Reality is that you really don't know what you've got until you see her progress on this level throughout the high school season. At this point I honestly don't know what her ceiling is," Craig said. "I don't think that she has found her best pace

yet. The only time that she hasn't finished in first place this year was the first meet of the season (she was third) as I told the younger runners not to go crazy having not run in a varsity meet before."

The Pirates coach went on to note that since that first race Davis has had no real competition and being a competitive individual, you know that she's going to give it her best effort each time.

Davis not only runs 6-6 1/2 miles on Fridays but trains with the boys team and she believes that is a big

help in her training.

Although only a first-year varsity high school runner with the cross-country team the eighth grader is looking to continue running cross country for the Pirates over the next four years while also giving distance running for the track team a try in the spring.

This year she is hoping to make it to the middle school state tournament once again (last year she ran the 1.7 miles in 10:43), while her coach wants her to try to qualify for the high school state tournament. The young runner says she'll give it a shot but knows it's going to be a challenge for sure.

Despite being an eighth grader running for the varsity high school team, Davis is always looking out for her teammates and how they are doing, especially her captain, Carly Cornacchioli.

"Cam is very close with Carly, and she made a comment to her saying that she wished that she was only a junior so that she could be the captain again next year,"

Craig said. "That speaks volumes about her as a person and her relationship with her captain."

It may only be her first season running cross country for Oxford, but she is looking to improve upon her running and continue dropping her times in hopes of eventually earning herself a scholarship and get into college. While the possibility of running for a collegiate school is still almost five years away, Davis plans on working on her running for this year and accomplishing her goals of making it to the State Tournament, where she hopes to do well.

Running the 2.95-mile course in the SWCL Cross Country Championship Meet, Davis once again found herself crossing the finish line first with a time of 19:41 to capture the title. The eighth grader's closest competitor (senior Tessa Kline of Tantasqua) was 48.4 seconds behind her. The top five runners consisted of Davis and four seniors.

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LIVING WITH LUKE

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Luke visits Butler Farm Bark Park of Millbury

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

Luke is one of the more social puppies I've had, especially when it comes to playing with other dogs. Luckily, my neighborhood is full of interesting dogs for Luke to bump shoulders with. He's learned to bark back in the face of aggression, romp with rambunctious rescues, and chase after sleek dogs built like greyhounds. When it comes to Dog Play, Luke never gives up. For this reason, we have called him a Scrapper. He's even invented a signature move, ramming his shoulder and one side of his body against a bigger dog, as would a defensive back.

He'll sit on the front steps, ears lifted in curiosity, to watch leashed dogs walk by. Often times, a friend will prance onto my front lawn to invite spontaneous play. "Hi Luke. Let's play!" Rosie, an exuberant Goldendoodle, flounces onto the front steps. "No more resting. Let's get this party started!" Luke responds as he always does. He sits with a quiet aloofness, as though needing to make an independent choice. He lifts his big puppy head to sniff the air, twitches his nose and thinks over the idea. Then—"Game on!" Just like

that, Luke has convinced himself that he's in. The two dogs dash around my house like running fools.

Despite Luke's social nature, I still felt apprehensive about a trip (his first) to Butler Farm Bark Park, a dog park located in Millbury and "funded through the generosity of the Stanton Foundation and donations from local business, non-profit organizations and individual dog lovers." The park boasts charming bridges to climb upon, a water station for dirty paws, a leash hitch, and spacious area for running. The park is everything a Dog Mom could hope for. Still, I found myself worrying about little Luke. What if a Pit-bull with low self-esteem attacked him? What if the adult dogs don't like the color of his coat? Questions passed through my mind while I parked.

We arrive and make our way to the gate. A pack of dogs stiffen their necks from high ground in the park ground. "A newcomer!!" They rush towards the gate entrance to greet a pup named Luke Valentino. A few dogs poke their noses through the bars of the gate. One barks and this dog creates a domino effect until we're greeted by a crescendo of yelping. The sunny Friday weather has definitely let the dogs out of the house, I think to myself. There are about five dogs



waiting for Luke to enter. I begin to stereotype them. In my mind, they are villains behind a jail cell. I don't want my puppy to play.

"Hello there! Don't mind these guys. They're fine." A sprightly Dog Mom struts over to the gate entrance, sensing my apprehension. "Don't be afraid." I can tell she's a veteran Dog Parker who knows the ropes. Still, I'm afraid.

"It's just that Luke is still a puppy. I'm a bit nervous," I say back.

"He can wait here until he's ready to join the group." She guides me to a smaller, gated area at the border of the main park. Grateful for the veteran's compassion, I lead Luke to seclusion. "Am I in a time-out?" He sniffs the ground anxiously.

We are protected. The Dog Park feels suddenly perfect. Then the gate latch jingles. A sleek, muscular dog strolls in. His ears are



small and pointy. His coat is the bright grey of a newly minted nickel.

"Is he a Pitbull??"

The accusation is inappropriate, even unfair. The owner responds casually, with indifference. Perhaps he's used to the comment. "He's not a Pitbull. He's only seven months, still a puppy."

"Luke is a puppy as well!" I croon, hoping to redeem myself with a clever dog connection. Luke tugs at

me. "I want to play with the non-pit pup!!"

The owner opens the door of the time-out section. Maybe I was distracted. Maybe I let my guard down upon learning that another puppy is here to join us. In any event, I didn't expect Luke to break free but he does just that, and finds the gate opening to the jungle of big dogs. I feel small and helpless. I watch my pup enter the park and pray that everyone will play nice. Four dogs rush towards Luke and sniff his body at all sides, an initial frisk, a rite of passage it seems. Luke lowers his head. His ears are pinned back like a bunny's while the dogs encircle him like vultures. "What have I done? Will the dogs play nice?" I feel my heart skip a beat.

"Bring it on!" Luke isn't concerned about playing nice. Instead, he chases the tail of a Shetland Sheepdog, then snaps back around to growl at the Black Lab sniffing his butt. "I'm playing with the Shetland!" He stands his ground, even growling to fend off two dogs at once. I can barely believe my eyes. My puppy, whose name contains the letters L, O, V, E, has figured out how to handle multiple personali-

ties at the dog park.

I perch on a wooden bridge in the center of the park that reminds me of the fairytale, The Three Billy Goats Gruff. Other dogs, sensing that I'm a Dog Person more than I am a troll, wander over to sit beside me. Beneath a sunny, autumn sky, I hang out with them while my own plays freely below. The dogs lick my face and hand me their paws. They nestle close and love me unconditionally. I realize, then, that I have not given these dogs enough credit. They look into my eyes with acceptance and a gentle understanding, as though to say, "Your puppy is safe with us." Something tells me they're right. Dogs always know the truth.

Butler Farm Bark Park is located on 44 Singletary Road, Millbury and is available to Millbury and Sutton residents for a \$20 annual fee (which includes a dog tag, special instruction on rules, and an open invitation to enjoy off-leash social interaction for your dog!

Find them:
www.butlerfarmdogpark.com

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Soldering as a repair should be a permanent fix



BY JOHN PAUL

Q. I purchased a new 2022 Infiniti several months ago and the car has just about 1,600 miles on it. All of a sudden, the car has a low “beep” instead of a loud “honk”. I took it to the dealer and the work order stated: found low horn inoperative due to break in ground circuit, re-soldered to correct concern. My question is, will this repair be permanent, or should the harness have been replaced? I would greatly appreciate it if you can respond in your column.

A. I’m perfectly comfortable with soldering as a repair. A properly repaired circuit should be serviceable for the life of the car. Keep in mind that nearly

everything electronic has a soldered joint.

Q. I’m a long time reader and need your help. My Lexus RX 350 is extremely noisy for the first ten minutes after a cold start. It sounds like an old car tappet or valve noise making this “luxury” vehicle sound like an old Singer sewing machine. Lexus says, “That’s the way they all sound”. I find this very hard to believe, as the noise was not there when the car was new but developed after about 8,000 miles. Am I going to have to live with this irritation for the next 17 months of the lease? Not having a fix for this problem is like going to the dentist and being told I have a broken tooth but can’t be fix it because “...that’s the way teeth are”.

A. Years back Lexus engines were making some odd noises when cold and the issue was addressed with a technical service bulletin, but my experience today is that the engines are quite quiet. I would ask the dealer to explain what the noise is and also compare the car to a similar make and model. Unfortunately,

it may be a characteristic of the engine.

Q. I recently took my car to a local auto service for an oil change and the shop made service recommendations that I now fear I did not need. I own a 2015 Acura with about 78,000 miles on it. Their recommendation was to have the power steering fluid and the brake fluid exchanged, as they said the fluids looked dirty. I agreed, but when the invoice came at \$327.00, I started thinking that maybe they just needed to make a sale. What am I trying to confirm is whether or not their recommendation was necessary?

A. There is no specific recommendation from Acura to replace the brake or power steering fluid as routine service during the life of the car (although interestingly some Honda models do). If the fluid is dirty or contaminated it certainly makes sense to change it but it may not have been necessary. Typically, at AAA we do recommend brake fluid replacement every three to five years.

Q. I was told by a local Toyota dealer that a law prohibits a floor mat to be on top of a mat on the driver’s side. To protect my floor mats, I added some carpet remnants. They removed the carpet and I had to put it back. Do you know of any such law?

A. There is no such law. Now with that said, one of the reasons that some Toyota products years ago may have had unintended acceleration issues was with the floor-mat getting stuck on top of the gas pedal. This is why floor mats in most cars have anchor points. Personally, I would get rid of the carpet remnants. If you are worried about the factory mats getting dirty over winter, change them out for winter mats. Winter mats rubber are bigger and have grooves to hold snow, water and sand.

Q. My Ford Taurus has a problem that if the car sits for three or four days it won’t start. If I get a jump start it fires right up. My battery and starter were fine and everything else tested okay could it be a sensor or fuel pump?

A. If the car starts with a jump and the battery is fully charged, I would look for an electrical problem. On some Ford vehicles the battery ground cable has been known to cause intermittent

no-start problems. A technician with a voltmeter will perform a “voltage-drop” test to determine the cause of your car’s intermittent no-start problem.

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



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

Should you still buy a home with the latest news about inflation?

While the Federal Reserve is working hard to bring down inflation, the latest data shows the inflation rate is still high, remaining around 8%. This news impacted the stock market and added fuel to the fire for conversations about a recession.

You're likely feeling the impact in your day-to-

against inflation as I have stated in previous columns. 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.

A fixed-rate mortgage allows you to maintain the biggest portion of housing expenses at the same

payment. Sure, property taxes will rise and other expenses may creep up, but your monthly housing payment remains the same.

If you wait and the interest rate continues to climb, (which is likely to happen) you will be further behind by locking in at yet a higher rate later on. And with



rents being as high as they are, the ability to stabilize your monthly payments and protect yourself from future rent hikes may be even more important. Inflation refuses to budge.

In September, consumer prices rose by 8.2%. Rents rose by 7.2%, the highest pace in 40 years.

When you rent, your monthly payment is determined by your lease, which typically renews on an annual basis. With inflation high, your landlord may be more likely to increase your payments to offset the impact of inflation. That may be part of the reason why a survey from realtor.com shows 72% of landlords said they plan to raise the rent on one or more of their properties in the next year.

Becoming a homeowner, if you're ready and able to do so, can provide lasting stability and a reliable shelter in times of economic uncertainty.

The best hedge against inflation is a fixed housing cost. If you're ready to learn more and start your journey to homeownership, connect with Marzeottigroup.net/617-519-1871 or another real estate professional today.

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Realtor

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TALES FROM BEYOND

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Otherworldly voices and forms haunt The Dover Mills

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

The Dover Mills still sits at One Washington Center in the heart of downtown Dover, New Hampshire. The mill's history is ripe with tales of prosperity and woe. Perhaps that is why its walls are full of ghosts and ethereal noises passing through the time barrier.

The mills go back to the early days of the Industrial Revolution. John Williams and fellow investors formed the Dover Cotton Factory in 1812 along the Cochecho River. In 1823 the name was changed to Dover Manufacturing Company because they began manufacturing other items along with the cotton.

Factory life was hard. Mr. Williams paid his worker girls forty-seven cents a day. They received room and board and put two cents per day towards medical. The workers toiled for eleven to twelve hours a day. From March thru October, the workday ran from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM with forty-five minutes for lunch.

John Williams moved to Boston around 1828, leaving James Curtis in charge of the business. He was harsh and insensitive to the woman employees. He cut their wages from fifty-eight cents a day to fifty-three cents. He even imposed a fine of twelve and one-half cents for anyone who showed up late.

On December 30, 1828, about four hundred of the eight hundred female workers stormed off the job and took up a picket line in front of the factory. This was the

first strike by women in the workforce of the United States. Unfortunately, the strike was a failure. The mill owners placed an ad for replacements, and the women were forced to return to their jobs on January 1, 1829, with a reduction in pay.

Expansion created another building to manufacture cloths and other related goods. This branch was named the Cochecho Manufacturing Company. The spelling error in the name was due to an oversight by the state clerk when recording the birth of the business. Even the river now bears the name with the missing "H."

Years passed, and the mill grew into several buildings. One building of particular interest was the new Building #1, built at the bend of the river, known as "The Beach." This building is the site of the tragic fire that occurred on January 26, 1907. The fire broke out on the fourth floor at about 6:30 PM. Since the sprinkler system was down, the fire spread quickly. Workers had to leap from the windows, and many were injured. The firefighters fought the blaze for one and a half days in temperatures that plummeted as low as twenty-six degrees below zero.

In the end, four people were lost to the fire, and the building was gutted. They rebuilt the structure and by 1908, it was back in business.

In 1909 the factory was sold to Pacific Mills of Lawrence, Massachusetts. At the end of World War I, things took a turn for the worse.

Then came the Depression, and in 1937, the great facility finally closed its doors. In 1940 the town of Dover bought the mill at an auction for the sum of fifty-four thousand dollars.

They rented the complex to small businesses, but the buildings had fallen into a sad state of disrepair. By the 1960s, only the ghosts inhabited the empty shells that loomed over the center of town. In 1984 the mill was purchased and renovated into office and business spaces. The building lives once more with the advent of present-day industry and the revenants of the past.

People standing outside of the building after business hours have claimed to see strange glowing lights hovering around the upper floor windows. Voices of the long-dead still echo through the building as if calling out over the clamor of the machinery that once graced its walls. Other noises frequently heard are the clanging of old machinery. The sounds resemble old looms and other manufacturing machines starting and stopping. A custodian working the night shift often heard the phantom machinery running while he was working.

Otherworldly voices and forms have been witnessed in one of the towers. Eerie lights sometimes emanate from the basement windows. This would not seem so strange if it was not for the fact that the basement has been securely sealed for

many years.

Could the workers of the past still be drawn to their duties long after their

mortal time on earth? Is the machinery that maimed or claimed the lives also part of the spirit world; or is it just

a byproduct of the ghost's never-ending tenure at the haunted Cochecho Mill?

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CHIEF'S CORNER

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BY CHIEF STEVEN J. WOJNAR
DUDLEY POLICE
DEPARTMENT

"Right turns on red" at traffic signals have been the topic of recent questions. There have been some cities considering banning these turns at all traffic signaled intersections. By state law, these turns are allowed, unless there is a sign prohibiting it. The person wondered how a driver, who happens to travel in a community who may enact this ban, will know if these turns are allowed?

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 89 Section 8 is the law allowing a right turn, or a left turn in the case of a one-way street, at a red traffic signal. Two very important provisions must be observed prior to this movement. First, the vehicle must come to a full and complete stop prior to the crosswalk or in the location where stopping is intended at the intersection. An example of this can be the stop line. Second, the driver preparing to turn, must yield the right of way to any vehicles or pedestrians traveling through the intersection as directed by

the signals. If a driver feels it is unsafe to turn, they have the obligation to wait until such time as it is safe to do so. Should an accident occur, it will most often be the fault of the person making this turn on red.

In those intersections, where there is a sign prohibiting these turns, there is generally a good reason. At any intersection where signals are in place, studies have been conducted on the traffic conditions in that area. These will include vehicular and pedestrian volume, speeds, and crash data. Often, drivers may not pay attention to

traffic or people approaching from multiple directions. Any city or town that prohibits these must receive authorization from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, if such permission is required, and signs, prohibiting the turns, will need to be placed at ALL locations. This way the signs are posted lawfully, and all drivers will have sufficient, and standardized, notice on how to proceed.

It is most important to remember traffic signals at busy intersections are in place due to the heavy vehicle and/or pedestrian traffic. When drivers disregard these sig-

nals, make prohibited turns, or fail to pay added attention, problems can occur. There are many dangers which can approach from seemingly all directions. The rush to save a few seconds of travel time can result in a crash or injuries.

Our department will once again be collecting Christmas gift donations for local families in need. New and unwrapped toys and clothing can be brought to the Dudley Police Department at 71 West Main Street. Monetary donations as well as gift cards are also accepted. Anything remaining is distributed

locally (at places such as Webster / Dudley Food Share) for families on our two towns. Checks should be made payable to the "Dudley Police Association" with a special note for the Holiday Drive. Officers Keith Remillard and Luis Pacheco are leading this year's drive and they can be contacted at the station if people have questions or require more information. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. There are definite needs in our area for these items and our Department thanks everyone in advance for their continued generosity.

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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.

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

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TIPS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING

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Roth IRA conversion right for you?



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

Depending on your situation, it might be appropriate to make some year-end financial moves. But there's one in particular that may allow you to take advantage of the current investment climate while providing potential benefits far into the future.

This move is called a Roth IRA conversion — the process of converting all or a portion of a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA. Traditional IRAs are often funded with pre-tax dollars, so contributions can lower your taxable income, and earnings can grow tax deferred. A Roth

IRA, however, is funded with after-tax dollars, so you get no immediate tax deduction, but earnings and contributions can be withdrawn federally tax free, as long as you meet several requirements, including holding your account for five years and not taking withdrawals until you're at least 59½.

If you're attracted to the prospect of tax-free withdrawals in retirement, you might consider converting some or all of your traditional IRA dollars to a Roth IRA. Yet, there's one major issue to address: taxes. Any deductible contributions to your traditional IRA, and the earnings generated by these contributions, will be fully taxable the year of the conversion. If you've invested in your traditional IRA for many years, this tax bill could be considerable.

But if you were interested in converting some of your traditional IRA funds

to a Roth in 2022, you might have one advantage, tax-wise — and that's the state of the financial markets. As you are no doubt aware, it's been a rough year for stocks, so the value of some of the investments in your traditional IRA may have fallen, perhaps substantially. If you were to convert these assets to a Roth IRA, your tax bill might be quite a bit lower than it would have been last year amid the lengthy bull market.

Still, lower taxes aren't the same as no taxes. Ideally, you probably don't want to take money out of the IRA itself to pay the taxes, since this might reduce some of the benefits. So, if you don't have another source from which you can draw, you may find that a conversion might not make as much sense.

However, you could lower this tax bill by making smaller conversions over several years. And you might ultimately find

this strategy worthwhile, because moving from a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA can offer some advantages. For one thing, since qualifying Roth IRA withdrawals won't be counted as income, they won't cause additional taxation of your Social Security benefits or bump up your Medicare premiums. (If you wait until retirement before making the conversion, the conversion itself could have these effects, at least for the years in which it takes place.)

Also, with a traditional IRA, you typically must start taking withdrawals once you reach 72, but a Roth IRA doesn't have this requirement. So, if you don't need all your Roth IRA funds to support your retirement lifestyle, you can pass the reminder, tax free, to your beneficiaries. Consequently, a Roth IRA can play an important role in your estate planning.

Whatever the benefits of a Roth IRA, it's essential

that you consult with your tax advisor before making a conversion decision. It's a big move — so you'll want to be sure it's right for you.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward

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