

January 6 - February 10, 2023

## BV Education Foundation aims for a momentous 'new' year

BY ROD LEE

There was unmistakable pride in Jeannie Hebert's voice when she told those in attendance at a breakfast meeting of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce in Millbury on September 29th that "we are the only [such organization] in the U.S. to build our own education training center."

Ms. Hebert, president and CEO of the BV Chamber, was speaking of course of "the Hub," which recently celebrated a third anniversary. A center for workforce development situated in the Chamber's offices in the Linwood Mill, the Hub has come far in a short time. It is now offering expanded curriculums in workforce training for high school students and adult learners, and custom retraining for Chamber members' incumbent employees.

The Chamber has also forged "a new and stronger connection with the Blackstone Valley Education Foundation," or BVEF, Ms. Hebert pointed out. This is reflected in "jointly writing grants, sharing events, supporting Innovation Pathways programs, and funding scholarships for high school students."

No one is more excited about the role the BVEF plays than Danielle Wence, the Education



A BVEF field trip. Sen. Ryan Fattman was a guest speaker.

Foundation's outreach director—recently promoted to that position. She joins a growing team that includes the BVEF's new executive director, Joscelyn Young, Associate Director Holly McNeil, Partnership Coordinator Lauren Barrett, Internship Consultant Tom Belland, Grant Administrator Annie Kerins and BV Youth Leadership Academy Instructor Chelsea Swan.

Several of these key principals are new, as is the incoming executive director of the Hub, Ashley Bregman.

Ms. Wence said during a conversation in the Chamber's conference room on December 13th that she was hired to "do marketing last October." That job has now turned into something more:

establishing a stronger connection with schools and businesses.

"How can we reach down to teachers and families," she said. "We already have a relationship with superintendents and principals."

She welcomes the challenge, with obvious enthusiasm.

"I was home with children for the last seven years," she said. "I worked in golf at Pleasant Valley and Cyprian Keyes. That was seasonal."

A graduate of Holy Name High School in Worcester and Anna Maria College in Paxton, Ms. Wence has already witnessed what

**BVEF**

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Heather Carr Reiter and Abbie Jackman-Tallent are pictured with a sleigh stocked with toys for kids and teens, in front of Carr Funeral Home during Shop Small 01588.

## Shop Small puts 01588 zip code on the map

BY ROD LEE

The zip code 01588 may not be America's most famous. Not when it is put alongside "Beverly Hills 90210" which spawned a television show, 99501 which is Anchorage where "the first fast and fluffy Huskies took off in the world's longest sled-dog race (the Iditarod)," 33162 which is Miami (home of the action-packed TV drama Miami Vice), or 10007

which is where you won't get a wink of sleep.

But for the merchants who took part in the latest "Shop Small 01588" event from November 26 through December 3, and customers who patronized them, those five digits gain in importance every year.

During the course of that week, local residents had a chance to

**SHOP SMALL**

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**BVEF**  
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“connecting education with experience”—the BVEF’s mission—can mean in inspiring children to think about their futures.

“We did an event with FLEXcon in Spencer and we went into a second and third grade classroom in Uxbridge, to get the wheels spinning (for those children) at a young age to find a career they can enjoy,” she said.

Ms. Bregman, who began as the Hub’s executive director on January 2nd, shares Ms. Wence’s enthusiasm for the BVEF and the Hub as twin pillars.

“I have been in the education sector for many years, mainly teaching at Quinsigamond Community

College,” she said on December 19th. “I trained as a biomedical engineer. I have taught in high school and I also teach online chemistry through the University of Southern New Hampshire’s global campus.”

Ms. Bregman said she was hired to do some reorganizing of the Hub and to “increase access. They’ve done a phenomenal job, it’s time to grow. I kind of have a case of ‘I love what I do,’ to break down barriers in education and I look for other than traditional avenues and this is a good fit for me in terms of workforce development.”

Lee Gaudette who succeeded his father, Gerry Gaudette, as president of Gaudette Insurance, says the growth of the Education Foundation has been “a very long road. What’s hap-

pening with the Foundation now is really exciting, but not so much change as enhancement.

“The Foundation was started by myself and Marty Green in 1999. Early on we were trying to build connections between the school community and the business community. But the overarching goal was a competitive curriculum that would prepare kids for real-life jobs.”

Mr. Gaudette said the student who complains that he doesn’t like geometry but who wants to become a carpenter and build a flight of stairs has to understand that “that’s geometry!”

“We have come a long way from classroom grants,” Mr. Gaudette said. “Back then it was twenty \$250 grants for teachers. What’s that, \$5000?” Today’s BVEF



*BVEF Outreach Director Danielle Wence says the organization is looking toward a host of new possibilities for growth in 2023.*  
Photo by Jonathan Rochleau

parcels out many thousands of dollars, a third of which come from “our public schools that sign up. The rest of our revenue comes from the state.”

Mr. Gaudette said he had been with his father’s agency “only weeks or months” when his dad informed him that “the Mendon-Upton district doesn’t have a representative so guess what?”

Tara Bennett who is interim principal at Douglas High said the Foundation has been working on a collaboration with the Chamber and the Hub to provide more opportunities “for our Valley students. Joscelyn Young has done work with the Foundation previously and is looking to expand our programs, looking to build on the great ‘Foundation’ we have with our schools and industrial partners.”

Ms. Bennett has been in education for more than twenty years and with the

Foundation for the last eight or nine. She said Douglas students have benefited and not just at the high school level; through the Leadership Academy, BV Excel programs, middle school and up, and our staff has benefited too.”

Ms. Wence said “this year the Foundation has gained tremendous momentum with the support of Central MassHire Connective Activities program, regional business partners, and supporting organizations and private community members. We all look forward to collaborating and increasing programming with our primary partners, Ashley Bregman, executive director of the Hub for Workforce Development, and Jeannie Hebert, executive director of the Chamber, in the coming year.”

Ms. Wence said new programs such as the Internship Program and Innovation Pathways Pro-

gram “are growing by leaps and bounds. We have been working with the majority of our seventeen school districts to add or grow existing programs.”

Significantly, the Foundation added three school districts as members this past fall: Auburn, Bellingham and Whitinsville Christian.

The Foundation, the MassHire Central Career Center and Connecting Activities recently announced completion of Phase 1 “of our NextGen Project. Wondering ‘where are the well-paying jobs in Central MA?’ Check out our new labor market literacy tool at <https://public.tableau.com/.../WherearetheGood-JobsinCentr...> It’s been soft-launched with CCR and Internship Coordinator groups. Scheduled training and demos will be available in the new year. Not to mention...work has already begun on the searchable database portion of this exciting new project.”

Two professional development series will start in January.

Also in January, on the 25th at 5:00 p.m. there will be BV Partnership Open House in the shared offices of the Foundation, Hub and Chamber. The evening will highlight the elevated partnership between the three organizations and celebrate new staff, new opportunities, new programs, new partnerships, new endeavors and new possibilities. Those interested in attending should RSVP by January 16 to Kristen at [kkearnan@blackstonevalley.org](mailto:kkearnan@blackstonevalley.org).

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The business offers same-day service for both residential and commercial clients across eastern and central Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island. In addition to junk removal, the company rents 15-yard dumpsters.

As a family-owned and operated company, Schadler says Affordable Junk Removal has lower overhead costs and is more accessible than national competitors. "I answer my phone 24 hours a day," he says. "I was on vacation in Italy and Portugal, and I was still answering my phone on the beach. When you call us, you get me — not an automated machine!"

Schadler says the company has an environmentally friendly approach to disposal in which it recycles items when possible, properly disposes of non-recyclables and resells many items at the Schadlers' secondhand store, Resellables. "We opened that store in Bellingham because we hated to see things thrown away," Schadler says. "We have four kids and sustainability is extremely important to us."

During the business's early days, Schadler provided junk removal on nights and weekends when he wasn't busy working at a machine shop. Eventually, the business grew into a full-time endeavor, and the Schadlers invested back into the company with new equipment and techniques. "When I first started, for example, we didn't have any tarps. I'm driving around and things are flying out of my truck," Schadler laughs. "I'm like, 'Oh my god, I need a tarp.'"

Schadler says his wife Christine "was equally as



involved" in getting the business off the ground. "She handled the backend while I did the heavy lifting, all while she was working at EMC," he says. "Fast forward 17 years, and we both work full time managing the company as well as other endeavors. Business is doing great; it has grown tremendously to a fleet of trucks and dumpsters, and we've also been able to buy a pizza place, The Corner Market in Holliston."

In addition to delivering an in-demand service to the community, Schadler is appreciative that Affordable Junk Removal has helped provide a work-life balance that suits his family. "It

## Business spotlight

allows me to be able to do what I like doing and spend time with my kids," he says. "I'm home to see my babies play softball and do all that stuff. We are also able to give back to the communities we serve."

As for Sutton, Millbury and Grafton in particular, Schadler says they are proud to have many repeat customers and friends in the area. The Schadlers' Resellables store also donates items to the Grafton Flea Market, where Jason has been a lifelong patron.



Christine and Jason Schadler, shown here with their children and dog, started Affordable Junk Removal in 2005.

One of the best parts of his job, Schadler says, is meeting and getting to know new people and developing relationships with returning customers. "We are really grateful for the repeat business and the

chance to form connections with residents across the MetroWest area," he says.

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# WSN, Upton 4-H's team up on Yellow Tulip Project

By ROD LEE

Suzie Barrows is only in her sophomore year at Nipmuc Regional High School, but she can already see herself as a member of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's Women's Success Network (WSN) in the near future.

The seeds of this possibility have been planted through her involvement with the WSN's Yellow Tulip Project for the past two years.

"I know of [the WSN] and the amazing work they do, so yes, I hope," Ms. Barrows said on December 5th. "My career goal is to become an occupational therapist but whatever I end up doing it will be helping people in the community."

Jeannie Hebert, Pat Hurton, Heather Elster, Alise Breton and others who have nurtured the growth of the Women's Success Network would welcome the addition of Ms. Barrows and some of her fellow Upton Hoofbeats 4-H'ers to the organization.

Ms. Barrows' mother, Karla Barrows, whose family operates Rock Hill Farm in Upton, said an interest in community service and mental health "is how we got hooked up with the

Women's Success Network."

Suzie Barrows is prone to anxiety, her mother said, but this has not stopped her from engaging in all kinds of teenage activities, from traveling the country for 4-H events to clearing trails and performing with a mounted drill team; and with an involvement in drama.

Such undertakings have been "a real boost to her confidence, and the whole purpose of yellow tulips is to get rid of the anxiety," her mother says.

The WSN's Yellow Tulip Project has been a huge success. WSN members planted five hundred yellow tulips at the Millbury Town Common in October, in support of mental health awareness, according to Ms. Hurton.

Suzie has embraced being part of the initiative and has become "a yellow tulip ambassador" at her school, Ms. Hebert noted.

"We're very proud of her!" Ms. Hebert said.

"We learned about the Yellow Tulips Project in October of 2021 with plantings done at the Whitin Community Center," Suzie's mom said.

More recently, working with several hundred bulbs provided to her by the



Suzie Barrows and fellow members of the Upton Hoofbeats, a 4-H club, have become an integral part of the Women's Success Network's Yellow Tulip Project.

WCC's Ms. Elster, Suzie and fellow 4-Hers have been doing plantings at all four of the schools in her district.

Ms. Elster chairs the WSN's Community Service subcommittee.

"I have been in 4-H almost since I was born," Suzie said on December 5th. "My sister Elina was

doing it and my mom was a leader."

Earlier this year, Suzie Barrows won a public speaking contest in Kentucky at the 4-H Eastern Nationals. This was followed by a trip to Atlanta for 4-H's National Congress, where, she says, "I got to meet people from all over

the country, which was eye-opening." She was mistress of ceremonies at the Atlanta function.

"Our club is really active," Karla Barrows said, of the Upton Hoofbeats, a group that numbers more than a dozen girls. "Suzie won a Citizenship Award from Sen. Brewer. We have done a coat drive with Rep. Muradian."

Aligning herself with the WSN's Yellow Tulip Project is a natural fit for

a busy young woman, Karla Barrows says of her daughter. Suzie is a straight-A student. She also takes night classes through the Blackstone Valley Education Hub.

Whatever vocation Suzie Barrows ends up pursuing, it is safe to say that yellow tulips will always be an important part of her life.

Contact Rod Lee at [rodlee.1963@gmail.com](mailto:rodlee.1963@gmail.com) or 774-232-2999.

## SHOP SMALL

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check out the diversified mix of businesses whose owners signed up for this fall's production. There was no shortage of products and services to choose from: pet treats, handbags and

accessories, jewelry and gifts, food, fitness, crafts, flowers, karate and martial arts instruction, design services, banking services, automobiles for sale, lumber and hardware, art glass, clothing, barbering and handmade wood pieces—for instance.

Many of the participat-

ing establishments have had a long involvement in Shop Small 01588. Others are new, including Carr Funeral Home on Hill St., where Heather Carr Reiter and Abbie Jackman-Tallent could be found next to a sleigh donated by Jeff Koopman the Saturday after Thanksgiving, collecting

toys.

"It was fantastic," Ms. Carr Reiter said several days later. "We received over eighty toys which is great for our first time. The sleigh bells are jingling" for what will be possible when the 2023 version of Shop Small 01588 rolls around, she said.

"We brought the toys to Bill Audette for the Toys for Kids & Teens program."

Mr. Audette, a retired Northbridge Police Department patrolman, heads up the Toys for Kids & Teens initiative here. Toys for Kids & Teens is a nonprofit association sponsored by veterans and volunteers. Its members gather playthings during the months of No-

ember and December and distribute them to families.

"Last year Toys for Kids & Teens served about one hundred sixty to one hundred eighty families. This year they are up at least one hundred more," Ms. Carr Reiter said.

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# Xpressly Yours ... a letter from the editor

## The Oxford Free Public Library and bank robbers?



Thoughts written while awaiting Christmas breakfast at a granddaughter's home in Putnam, and a New Year's Eve dinner with close friends at Point Breeze in Webster.

Dan Prouty of the Oxford Business Association and the new "Gateway Park" in town is one of those people any journalist would love for the tips they pass along that turn into good story material. Recently, Mr. Prouty sent me this email.

"Try to read this about Oxford bank robbers from the 19th Century. When I was a kid, old-timers told me that the \$\$\$ for the library came from the Larneds who were infamous bank robbers. Thus the Larned library in Oxford. Several years ago I came across a short story about an 1850 bank robbery in Charlestown, NH (boyhood home of Carleton Fisk). The Larneds were supposedly tied to other robberies in NH, VT and NY State. Clara Barton's brother Stephen was an accomplice and a biography about Clara included in her correspondence about Clara having to reimburse an insurance company after the Larneds and her brother were accused of burning down a textile mill... They were evidently great entrepreneurs..."

A separate email, forwarded to me by Mr. Prouty and headed "Monadnock Moments No. 34: The Bungling Bank Robbers—Historical Society of Cheshire County," describes an incident that occurred the evening of June 11, 1850, when "Abijah Larned

and an accomplice broke into the bank at Charlestown, New Hampshire. By midnight they had loaded nearly \$12,000 in gold, silver and bills into their carriage and drove peacefully out of town." The report goes on to say that eleven miles to the south they came to a long hill between Drewsville and Marlow and got out of the carriage so their horse would have less weight to carry. They somehow managed to lose the horse and the carriage, which were discovered by Horace Gee of Marlow, who returned the money to claim a reward.

"Abijah Larned was later arrested and agreed to return to Charlestown to stand trial, probably in part so that he could learn what happened to his carriage of riches. He asked to be taken before the bank officers where he confessed to the crime and apologized for the trouble he had caused. It was also discovered that the horse had turned off on a side road halfway up the hill and wound up at Mr. Gee's house.

"Larned's apology so impressed the local officials that they returned his burglar's tools and allowed him to leave Charlestown after posting a small bail. Needless to say, Larned jumped bail and never returned to stand trial. He did continue to use his burglar's tools, however, and was later arrested and jailed for robbing the bank at Cooperstown, New York."

In trying to pin this down, and Clara Barton's brother's actual role, I could find no mention of the Larned family in a "Centennial Celebration" report written by Gilbert Asa Davis for Windsor County, Vermont. The information was voluminous, however, so I might have missed it.

The only reference to the Larned family I have come across so far comes from The Oxford Free Public Library's own website,

which states that Charles Larned, a former resident, donated money in memory of his mother, Clarissa Larned, for construction of what was called the Larned Memorial Library "on the former Hyde lot." The building opened in 1903 and featured a stained glass window at the top of the stairs in the front foyer, depicting the arrival of the Pilgrims with a caption "Let there be light."

I am not sure when the Larned Memorial Library became The Oxford Free Public Library. The library's director, Brittany McDougal Bialy, put me in touch with her catalog and technology coordinator, Jacob Potter.

Mr. Potter likes to do "historical sleuthing," she said.

I have not yet heard back from Jacob Potter.

Given Clara Barton's sterling reputation, which is enshrined at the Clara Barton Birthplace Museum in Oxford, it is hard to believe she had a brother who was up to such no good. The museum's website lists as family members her father, Capt. Stephen Barton (1774-1862), "a prosperous businessman, captain of the local militia and a selectman in Oxford;" her mother, Sarah Stone Barton (1983-1851), "an independent woman who was known for her thrift, eccentricity and volatile temper;" and siblings Dorothea Barton (1804-1846), Stephen Barton (1806-1865); Capt. David Barton (1808-1888);

and Sarah "Sally" Barton Vassall (1811-1874).

Which leaves Stephen

Barton as something of a mystery man, in the scheme of things.

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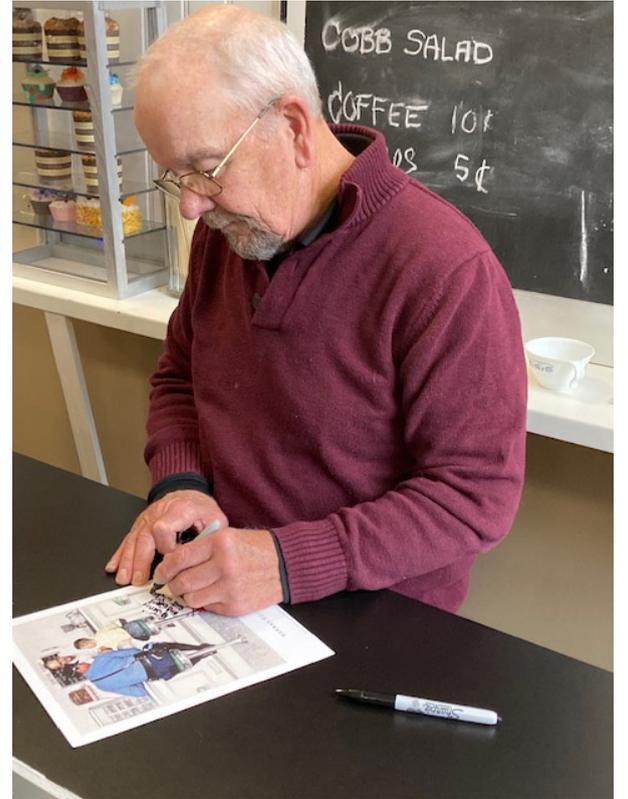
## State Police Museum welcomes a famous 'Runaway'

BY ROD LEE

John H. "Jack" Crawford, who was instrumental in the recent relocation of the Massachusetts State Police Museum and Learning Center to the former Whitinsville Bank Building, cannot say with certainty how long the operation will be housed there.

"We're on a two-year lease but our goal is to go back to Grafton, I think. We'll see," Mr. Crawford said on December 10th, while waiting for Ed Locke of Norman Rockwell painting fame to make an appearance.

Meanwhile, those responsible for setting up the exhibits on the first floor of the well-preserved structure at Memorial Square are grateful



Ed Locke signs a poster-sized replica of Norman Rockwell's painting "The Runaway" on December 10th at the Massachusetts State Police Museum and Learning Center in Whitinsville. He was chosen by Mr. Rockwell as the boy for the illustration, which became a celebrated Saturday Evening Post cover.

### RUNAWAY

continued on page 7

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**RUNAWAY**

*continued from page 6*

to Vincent Osterman of Osterman Propane for providing them with the space they need to display a varied assortment of Massachusetts State Police memorabilia. Clothing, collectibles and a town of Northbridge 250th anniversary commemorative coin are available for purchase at the museum. The museum is open

Tuesdays and Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and is already drawing encouraging patronage (admission costs just five dollars and children get in free).

This was especially the case on the second Saturday in November, when troopers from around the state joined members of the public in welcoming Mr. Locke for pictures and autographs. He was eight years old in

1958 when asked to pose with a trooper—the late Richard Clemens—for Mr. Rockwell’s “The Runaway,” which became a Saturday Evening Post cover.

State Police Col. Christopher Mason was among those who showed up for the proceedings.

The Massachusetts State Police began as a state constabulary in 1865 to enforce liquor laws that went largely ignored by the populace and local

authorities. The need for a statewide law-enforcement agency grew due to an increase in crimes that crossed the jurisdictional boundaries of the Commonwealth’s cities and towns.

A focus on child labor laws and the advent of the automobile brought changes to the force. This included the formation of a uniformed State Patrol in 1921.

Today the Massachu-

setts State Police is a full-service law-enforcement agency consisting of over two thousand personnel including patrol, investigative, administrative and tactical resources.

With the Learning Center component now up and running as an educational link, the museum is an asset to the town of Northbridge and the Whitinsville historic district.

Understandably, many

area residents are hoping it stays that way.

Go to [mspmlc.org](http://mspmlc.org) for more information.

Contact Rod Lee at [rodlee.1963@gmail.com](mailto:rodlee.1963@gmail.com) or 774-232-2999.

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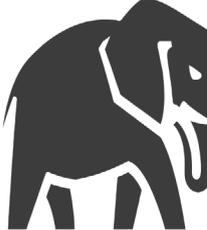


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# Abigail Epplett named Suzanne Buchanan Volunteer of the Year Award winner

**B**lackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (BHC) hosted a volunteer recognition celebration for its Volunteers-In-Parks program on December 15, where the first recipient of its Suzanne Buchanan Volunteer of the Year Award was named.

This prestigious award was created to honor the legacy of BHC's former

volunteer program coordinator, who served in that role for a combined total of twenty-three years with the National Park Service and the nonprofit BHC. The special event also marked the eighth anniversary of its partner, the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park, created on December 19, 2014.

Abigail Epplett of

Uxbridge earned the distinction of receiving the inaugural Suzanne Buchanan Volunteer of the Year Award through her varied and consistent volunteer efforts with BHC and Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park.

"Suzanne Buchanan inspired volunteers to imagine the possibilities of historic preservation and

natural resources conservation. She showed us that these resources can be the basis for exciting recreation and a vibrant quality of life," said Molly Cardoza, BHC's Director of Volunteer and Community Engagement. "When looking towards our volunteers, there is no one who better embodied Suzanne's welcoming spirit and enthusiasm as a Volunteer-In-Parks volunteer with the Blackstone Heritage Corridor than Abigail Epplett."

According to Ms. Cardoza, Abigail volunteered across the VIP program, with the National Park Service in Pawtucket, at special events, and with BHC's partners. "When we put out a call for volunteers, Abigail is always one of the first to respond and always arrives with infectious energy and enthusiasm," Cardoza said. "Abigail started volunteering with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor in 2019 and has served as a volunteer and an intern with us. This year Abigail has greeted visitors to the Old Slater Mill Na-

tional Historic Landmark, helped with maple sugaring crafts at Maple Sugar Days, showed visitors the stars at a Night Sky program, cleaned up the Blackstone Valley as part of ZAP50, and did so much more. We know when Abigail signs up to volunteer, she will be there and will give her all! Volunteers like Abigail are what make this program so successful."

Volunteers with the Volunteers-In-Parks program, including several partner organizations throughout the Blackstone River Valley, served a total of 30,607 volunteers hours for the Fiscal Year 2022 (October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022) at a value of \$916,679. The national average value of a volunteer's time is currently \$29.95. Reported hours are considered an in-kind donation and can be used toward matching grants.

Three of BHC's volunteer partner organizations received Partner of the Year Awards this year, including Waters Farm Preservation, Inc. of Sutton; East Provi-

dence Historical Society of East Providence, RI; and North Smithfield Heritage Association of North Smithfield, RI.

"Volunteers are literally worth their weight in gold!" said Richard Moore, BHC's Board Chair. "That statement isn't false praise by any means when, according to calculations from Independent Sector, our Blackstone Heritage Corridor volunteers contributed the equivalent of nearly one million dollars as a key part of the Heritage Corridor team! For an organization that receives only limited federal and some private funding, BHC could not be as successful as it has been without the time and talents of our volunteers."

Volunteers who serve 250 hours earn a complimentary America the Beautiful Pass, providing them free access to more than 2,000 federal recreation sites. The pass covers entrance fees at national parks and national wildlife refuges as well as standard amenity fees (day-use fees) at national forests and grasslands and at lands

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Thirteen of BHC's volunteers earned an America the Beautiful Pass in the Fiscal Year 2022, including Norma Bedrosian, Sue Ciaramicoli, Bonnie Combs, Bill Ela, Ken Ethier, Pam Gurney Farnham, Keith Hainley, John Marsland, Albert Menard, Betty Mencucci, Alan Salemi, Paul Schaefer, and Edward Walker.

"BHC's award-winning volunteers are essential to the mission of the Heritage Corridor beyond the valuable time they donate," Mr. Moore said. "They are often among our most loyal donors of financial support, provide contacts for grants from businesses and foundations, and represent the public face of the Corridor. They collectively make a positive impact and ensure the long-term vitality of their communities and the region!"

According to Mr. Moore, BHC's Volunteers-In-Parks volunteers embody the mission of the Blackstone Heritage Corridor to work with community partners to preserve and promote the Valley's his-



Abigail Epplett's continuous efforts on behalf of the Corridor have earned her the Suzanne Buchanan Volunteer of the Year award.

toric, cultural, natural, and recreational resources for current and future generations. "Our actions today support and promote development which, in turn, supports and promotes our environmental systems and enhanced recreational opportunities, as well as our

social and cultural heritage," he said.

To learn more about the Volunteers-In-Parks program, contact Molly Cardoza at mcardoza@blackstoneheritagecorridor.org or call 508-234-4242. To learn more about BHC, visit Blackstone-



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SPORTS

# Douglas boys basketball: all together again

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Playing together on the travel team since the fourth grade, members of the Douglas boys basketball team are united again on the school's varsity squad this winter. In their first season together, some eight years ago, this group of athletes was able to win the league title and they went on to play in the state tournament every year thereafter. Each year these Douglas basketballers would advance into the finals, but could never capture the title they so often chased.

"They've been playing basketball together for a good number of years," Douglas Coach Chad Gosselin said. "Last year as sophomores the core group of them made the varsity team; this year the remainder of them moved up to once again play together."

The starters, all juniors now, will look to not only get the Tigers back into the Division 5 State Tourna-

ment, but secure a few wins once there. Last season Douglas qualified for the tournament but fell in the first round to Hull 67-53.

Last year's back-up point guard, Isaac Gosselin, has been elevated to the team's starting point guard and it will be his show this winter. Playing some solid minutes last year as a sophomore he was able to lead the team in scoring during a handful of games.

Owen Gray, who has been on the varsity squad since his freshman campaign, will be the Tigers' shooting guard or small forward. Gosselin will be looking for Gray to be the team's offensive presence this season and hopes he takes that next step forward.

"Owen definitely has the talent to take his game to the next level," the coach said. "Last year was really tough, he was injury-plagued and along with Covid didn't get much of a chance to play all that many games. I expect him to be back to his usual self this year and leading us on the

court."

As the team's sixth man though the first few games last season, Adam Dunphy was the first one to come off the bench for Douglas. It didn't take too long before Dunphy to insert his influence on the court and before long he had earned a starting spot for the Tigers. Playing last winter as the team's four, Dunphy will be the team's starting center at 6'2" this year.

Colton Howard will be the team's two; according to the coach he's more of a slasher and attacker to the basket and is able to create offense off the dribble.

Rounding out the starting lineup and playing in his first season with the varsity team is 6'4" Brady Nolan. As a Junior Varsity member he was playing the five, but this year he has not only grown, he has improved on his rebounding and ability to hit the boards.

Gosselin is hoping that Gray can carry the team's offensive attack this fall with Gosselin right behind him on the scoreboard.



Members of the Douglas High boys basketball team have a long and successful history behind them, as they try to make a run in 2022-23.

Dunphy, who had himself some monster games for Douglas last year, should also find himself in the top three of scoring this year. The first guy of the bench

this year will be Josh Farrell and he too could have himself an early season similar to that of Dunphy's a year prior.

"I see him in our sixth

man role," Gosselin said. "But he definitely has the

**BASKETBALL**

continued on page 13

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# Coffee Break women's group begins winter/spring Bible study

Coffee Break, a non-denominational community Bible study for women, began its winter/spring season on January 5th with a study of 1st and 2nd Timothy—"Love and

Loyalty." Together, no matter where each of us is in journey, the group will be looking for the themes of truth, loyalty and endurance in difficulty, legacy

and more—and how these themes touch our lives today. The study will be in small groups at Fairlawn Church, 305 Goldthwaite Road (off Hill St.) in Whitinsville.

Coffee Break offers groups for those who feel more comfortable wearing masks, and those who prefer not to wear masks. All of the study groups are physically distanced in spacious rooms. Refreshments are provided and child care is available for infants through pre-school age.

Coffee Break is free and open to anyone in the community and is held each Thursday from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. at Fairlawn Church. Coffee Break offers women



in the Blackstone Valley the opportunity to read and discuss the Bible, share questions and concerns, and develop new friendships.

Each lesson is independent, so those who are unable to attend every week won't feel "lost." There is

no "homework" required, and no previous Bible knowledge is necessary. Study guides and Bibles are provided free of charge.

For more information call Ginette at 508-234-4806 or visit [fairlawnrc.org/outreach/coffeebreak.cfm](http://fairlawnrc.org/outreach/coffeebreak.cfm).

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## Plummer Place hosts Senior SAFE fire safety program

Seniors and older adults recently joined Firefighter/Paramedic Arthur Fenno, who is also public education coordinator for the Northbridge Fire Department, for a Senior SAFE Fire Safety Lunch and Learn program at the Northridge Senior Center—Plummer Place.

Senior SAFE provides funding to local fire departments to improve fire and life safety of older adults through education that addresses the unique fire risks of this age group.

Firefighter Fenno discussed safety using home and medical oxygen equipment, preventing cooking fires, using and



Firefighter/Paramedic Arthur Fenno visited the Northbridge Senior Center at Plummer Place to talk about the Senior SAFE Fire Safety Lunch and Learn program.

maintaining fire and carbon monoxide alarms, the fire risks of smoking, and how to create a fire escape plan.

Seniors participated in the discussion by asking questions about how to monitor the extinguishers in their homes, property cleaning dryers and vents, and cooking safety.

The Northbridge Fire Department has been participating in this program since 2014 when the Senior SAFE grant

program was initially created to address fire safety for older adults.

For more information about the NFD's public education programs, call Arthur Fenno at 508-234-8448.

For more information about Plummer Place and its special events, call Amy Cowen at 508-234-2002.

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# Halloween a big hit at Douglas Orchard & Farm

More than three hundred fifty people turned out for Douglas Orchard & Farm's Halloween blast on October 22nd, adding signature fall event to a summer-long series of happenings at the facility.

Those in attendance enjoyed chatting with Merlin (a real witch), checking out vendor products, eating brisket from The Barre Patch and cotton candy from Jerry's Tastee-Freezee and apple donut whoopie, observing oxen plowing, seeing winged miniature donkeys and much more.

Best dog costume winners were selected for most creative, scariest and cutest.

A dog parade was led by a scarecrow and a Dog Orphans fundraiser raffle featured a Ping Pong Drop from tractors. Children were able to take part in a scavenger hunt and get trick or treat bags from UniBank and GBI, and there was live music provided by The New England Time Band—sponsored by the Massachusetts and Douglas Cultural Councils.



Dance Sensations performed and there was live music.

Among those who thanked Douglas Orchard & Farm was one attendee

who said Halloween was enjoyable "for the whole family, especially our four-legged" member.

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## BASKETBALL

*continued from page 10*

potential to break into the starting lineup at some point."

The rest of the team that could see some action throughout the season includes Andrew and William Hogan, Ethan Vassar, Mathew Doyle, Gavin Gaultieri, Bo Grier, and Felipe Sena. Gaultieri will be a back-up to Dunphy and Nolan as one of the team's bigs. Sena, the team's only senior, is hoping to see some action on the court

but it's unsure at this point as he tore his Achilles during the fall league and isn't expected to be back before February, but that may be pushing it.

The Tigers are looking to earn a spot in the 76-year-old nostalgic Clark Tournament, which takes place during February school break. Teams must earn their right to participate. Douglas took home the Christmas Tournament Championship last year against the likes of Milford, Bethany-Christian and Ludlow and would like to do so once again this

winter. Rounding out the coach' expectations will be qualifying once again for the Division 5 State Tournament.

"We are hoping to build off last year's momentum and getting that tournament experience under our belts," he said. "I would like to host a game or two while also winning a few," Coach Gosselin said. "I don't see our team going to the finals this year, but next year as a collectively senior team with everyone together on the varsity team having a year together I believe that we could have a shot."

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# NE Steak and Seafood evolves and grows with the times

BY ROD LEE

Today, more than ever, the Quirk family's New England Steak and Seafood in Mendon is not just about the fare in its name by which the restaurant has thrived for almost sixty years. Famous for its old-fashioned atmosphere, New

England Steak and Seafood is also becoming known for such things as partnering with the Mendon Police Department on a "stuff the cruiser" campaign to benefit struggling families in the Blackstone Valley. And, recently, "Christmas dinner to go," featuring Roast Prime Rib of Beef, pumpkin bread, cinnamon rolls and onion rolls. Whitinsville Realtor Jack Walker is among those

who regularly frequent New England Steak and Seafood for lunch or dinner. Strong patronage is not uncommon!

- Anticipation continues to build for the opening of **Reunion Tap & Table's** second location, in the Whitinsville Plaza, in a spot formerly occupied by Jube's. Described by the Phantom Gourmet as "a big,



New England Steak and Seafood has become a go-to source for holiday takeout meals.

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fun eatery," Reunion's first restaurant in North Grafton was started by brothers Josh and Sean Briggs, Sargon Hanna and "lots of family and friends." The new Reunion site will be a smaller version of the first store but with many of the signature elements including the popular Pork Belly Poutine, Grilled Chicken Wings tossed in a house-made garlic parmesan sauce and French Onion Soup. Look for a launch this month or next; hiring for staff positions is ongoing.

- The Villatico family has a good thing going at **J Anthony's Italian Grill** in North Oxford and part

of the reason for that is the lounge where "Game Day" including the Patriots' regular season-ending game in Buffalo on January 8 will attract a throng—as will Red Sox games just around the corner. With a Garden Room, a Deck Room and a Terrace Room, J Anthony's is a popular choice for private events.

- Many area residents may not be aware that in addition to such staples as Fried Chicken and Short Rib Shepherd's Pie, **Samuel Slater's Restaurant** at Indian Ranch in Webster also plays host to events, like a celebration of Elvis Presley's 88th birthday on January

7th—and Comedy Night fun, which will resume the evening of January 26th.

- Nowhere is "Yankee hospitality" on better display than at the **Publick House Historic Inn** in Sturbridge, where outstanding cuisine can be accompanied by an overnight stay. The Publick House is also a favorite jumping off point for sightseeing, shopping for antiques, golf and skiing.

*Restaurant and food-industry news is welcome for this column. Please submit material to [rodlee.1963@gmail.com](mailto:rodlee.1963@gmail.com), or call 774-232-2999.*

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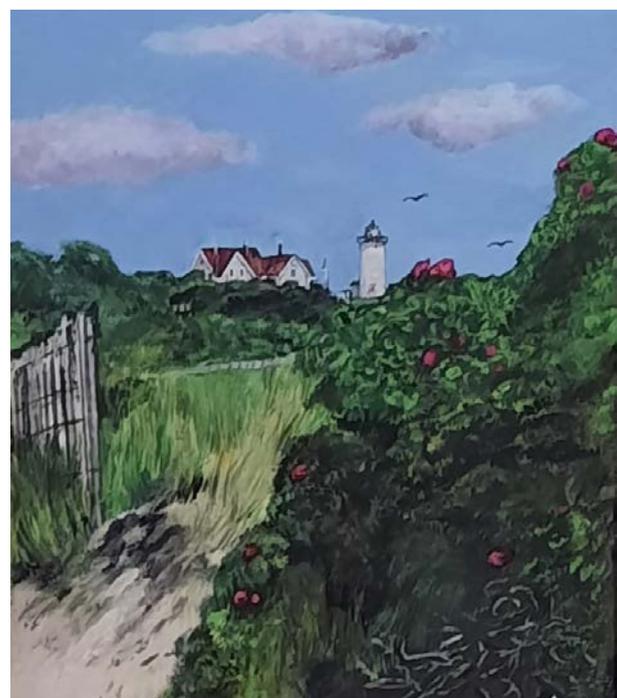
# Happenings!

**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.**

**JANUARY 13-FEBRUARY 24**

• ValleyCAST, the arts and culture arm of Open Sky Community Services, is partnering with the New England Sculptors Association

from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The public is also encouraged to attend the closing reception, which will include announcement of three People's Choice Awards, on Friday, February 24th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Voting ends at the end of the day on Friday, February 17th and the exhibit will end right after the closing ceremony on February 24th. For more information visit opensky.org. To schedule a visit to the gallery, call 508-234-6232 or



Photographer and Painter Jim Wilton is exhibiting samples of his work at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., throughout the month of January.

for the second annual Inside and Out Exhibition. Seventeen sculptors from around New England have created over thirty works that will be on display in the Spaulding R. Aldrich Heritage Gallery, 50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville, and outside on the grounds of the Whitin Mill complex at the same address. The inside exhibit will open with a wine and cheese reception on Friday, January 13th

email Cristi.Collari@opensky.org.

**THROUGH JANUARY 31ST**

• "Lights and Icons: A Study in Acrylics," paintings by Jim Wilton, will be on display and for sale at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster, during regular business hours, Tues.-Sat., 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in the café gallery. A public reception with the

artist will take place on Saturday, January 7th from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Artist's Statement: "I have been photographing and painting for years, in fact all my life. I'm mostly self-taught. I have photographed lighthouses as well as other subjects for inspiration for my art. I spent many years painting portraits but have switched it up to trying lighthouses after a hiatus to raise children but also found myself return to portraits. I began photography of outdoor scenes and wildlife in 2008 after finding digital photography, making it more accessible. A few years ago I began painting again after a friend painted from one of my photos, thus inspiring me to try again. I haven't stopped but also got into crafts such as seashell jewelry boxes, Christmas trees and light-houses. I hope folks enjoy my work as much as I enjoyed painting it."

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 8**

• The New England Country Music Club presents the Al Carter Band at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Doors open at 12:15 p.m. with dancing and live entertainment from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. www.facebook.com/NECountry-MusicClub.

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 20**

• Comedy Night at Samuel Slater's Restaurant, 200 Gore Road, will feature Frank Santorelli from "The Sopranos" with special guests Chris Zito and Mitch Stinson. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the show starts at 7:30 p.m. This is a 21+ event.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 22**

• The New England Country Music Club presents the Rhode Island Rednecks at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Doors open at 12:15 with dancing and live entertainment from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. www.facebook.com/

NECountryMusicClub.

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25**  
• A Blackstone Valley Partnership

Open House will be held at the shared offices of the Blackstone Valley Education Foundation, the Hub, and the Blackstone

Valley Chamber of Commerce, 670 Linwood Ave., Whitinsville, at 5:00 p.m. RSVP by January 16 to kkearnan@blackstonevalley.org.



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March 18, 2023  
8:00pm

**SUNDAY**  
March 19, 2023  
2:00pm



# Webster Five, YWCA partnering on financial seminars

Webster Five announced recently that it has established an exclusive relationship with the YWCA Central Massachusetts to

provide financial seminars for domestic violence survivors the YWCA serves as part of its comprehensive domestic violence program.

The \$15,000 grant from Webster Five will provide the necessary funding to serve one hundred twenty-five people per year over three years. The seminars will be delivered in person, remotely, one-on-one, and

in small groups as well as sessions conducted in Spanish. Participants will sign up for five-week sessions, which will include a one-hour seminar each week.

"We are very excited

to partner with Webster Five to provide this critical financial information for the people we serve," Tara Huard, manager, community-based intervention services, YWCA, said. "Understanding how to

manage and budget money is an important step in helping survivors reach financial freedom and stay safe after leaving an abusive relationship. We are grateful to the Webster Five facilitators, who will

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Join the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce for our Business After Hours networking event hosted by Raymour & Flanigan Furniture located at The Shoppes at Blackstone Valley in Millbury. Engage, meet and forge new business relationships with other local area business professionals!

Raymour & Flanigan will also be making a special donation this evening to Apple Tree Arts - a deserving local non-profit!

Admission  
\$20 Member  
\$30 Future Member

RSVP By Jan 19, 2023

To register, please scan the QR Code or visit our website

www.blackstonevalley.org/events

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February 14, 2023 | 7:30am-9:15am  
Galliford's Restaurant & Tavern, Southwick Zoo  
2 Southwick Street, Mendon MA

Join the BVCC and your legislators for a delectable breakfast at the cozy and rustic, Galliford's Restaurant & Tavern in Mendon. This networking event will give business owners and the community the opportunity to meet and hear directly from our local dignitaries that represent the Blackstone Valley. Learn and have the chance to ask questions about upcoming bills, what's in store for 2023, and other legislative updates. We look forward to seeing you there!

Members: \$45  
Future Members: \$55  
RSVP By February 1, 2023

For more information & to register, please visit  
www.blackstonevalley.org/events

participate in a training themselves to recognize the signs of domestic violence, for sharing their knowledge.

"It is important for everyone to build their financial confidence by learning more about money management, and this is especially important for domestic violence survivors who often are denied access to finances b their abuser," Donald Doyle, president and CEO of Webster Five, said. "We are proud to support this important initiative

and hope it will make a difference in the lives of everyone who participates in the seminars."

The seminars will include such topics as saving, budgeting, protecting financial information, building and repairing credit, and first-time home buying programs.

In other news involving Webster Five, the bank was recognized recently as a 2022 winner of a BBB of Central New England Award for Marketplace Excellence.

The award celebrates

businesses in Central Massachusetts and Northeast Connecticut that epitomize corporate responsibility and always do what's right by the customers. Honorees convey to the community of businesses that upholding the ethical standards of the BBB is the hallmark of a successful business. Other winners for 2022 included Harbro Auto Sales and service and the Worcester Railers Hockey Club.

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WITH STEVE SWEENEY PLUS GUESTS  
GRAIG MURPHY AND CHRIS D  
FEBRUARY 17 • 7:30PM

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# Luke finds the Merry in Grinchmas

BY AMY LECLAIRE

Christmas shopping 2022 has been interesting, especially alongside a puppy named Luke Valentino. The retail industry is short staffed, short fused, and short on certain sizes. Not enough help. Not enough patience. Not enough hours in the day to curb long lines of shoppers who sneeze into their elbows, yet still leave us suspicious. Which variant might she be carrying? Tis the season to stay home, I thought to myself one Tuesday, December afternoon, despite managing a To Do list that seemed do-able.

1. Return an oversized rug purchased at Amazon at Kohl's.
2. Shop for a few Christmas gifts.
3. Vacuum my car. (I've

found the process of sucking up dirt and washing windows to cleanse my attitude as well).

Like most zealous Christmas shoppers, I wanted to Get Things Done. Little did I know that a series of unfortunate events were about to foil a well-laid plan.

"We can't take that rug back. You'll need to bring it to Michael's for the return. The label is for UPS." The Kohl's Sales Associate wore a nametag claiming her title. She stated the rule with knowledge, though I couldn't help but notice the glimmer of smile at her lips. Perhaps, she secretly didn't want to help me. Truthfully, who could blame her? My fixation with area rugs (buying and changing) was becoming a problem.

"Okay," I sighed. The rug sagged heavily on my shoulder, compromising a reserve of energy I typically have for shopping mayhem. I felt like a scrawny Santa carrying a sack, and who was soon to ride in a dirty sleigh. Others waiting in line gazed up from their

phones to eavesdrop. Their concern, I knew, lay in being first in line.

I hauled the rug back to the car, popped the trunk and stuffed it back in. Luke popped his head out of the sunroof and smiled. "I'm so glad you're back!" My puppy found joy simply upon seeing me. "We have to go to Michael's now, Luke."

Keys in ignition; I backed up and made my way to Michael's. Slow-moving pedestrians crossed the street. I waved them by and found a snug parking spot.

The 6' x 9' sack hung tiredly over a weakened shoulder. "I was just sent here from Kohl's," I huffed. "Apparently you're able to take returns with UPS labels?"

The employee, as one might guess, did not come with the softness of her store's silk flowers. "We can't take a rug without a box."

My eyes settled on her grey roots. My upper body slouched to the dead weight of an unwanted rug. More productively, my mind wandered to the Michael's storage room, where I

imagined castles and castles of cardboard boxes stacked wide and high amongst spools of satin ribbon. The sales associate did not read my mind. Instead, she said, "I can't take that."

"You don't have one cardboard box to spare in this entire store?" With my free arm, I gestured to the store's abundant decorations. Hadn't these items been delivered to the store



Luke Valentino is perfectly fine with a photo op; here he poses for the camera while on a Christmas shopping spree.

in boxes?

"Unfortunately we don't," she spat back. "You need to bring it to UPS and have it fully taped up. There's a UPS in Auburn," she added, as though traveling to a third location was helpful. I contemplated a third trip. Then I was struck by an ironic memory—that of my puppy attacking the missing box as would a lion his prey. He enjoyed every moment of dominating that box as it popped and bounced about the floor like a geometric cartoon. Back then it was funny, but now—

"Thank you," I said, and

hauled the rug back to the car. Luke popped his head out of his box and smiled. "Hi there! It's such a nice day outside! Love you, Momma!"

It still was funny. "Guess where we're going, Luke?" I needed to align my attitude with my puppy's optimism. His head squared. He smiled and listened intently.

"We're going to get Lukey a present!"

"No way!" He did a puppy dance on the floor of his crate. He understood the majority of my message. "We're going to get Luke"

was a phrase he knew, as was "going to get." Lastly, he knew his baby name. "I can't believe this is happening!"

I drove to the opposite side of the Mall, parked, and walked my puppy to the Mall's sidewalk. The Cookie Crumb'l storefront sign sailed into view. We followed the warm aroma of freshly baked cookies to an outdoor bench and sat down.

"What's your puppy's

**LUKE**

*continued on page 20*

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TALES FROM BEYOND

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# Peter Rugg's eternal search—Part II

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

The stage made it to Polly's Inn just as the storm hit and soon a wet peddler entered and sat by the fire. When conversation turned to the phantom chaise, he admitted that he had seen the spectral carriage and its occupants four times in the last few weeks. Each time, a serious storm followed the sighting. He then, half jesting, remarked how he needed to take out marine insurance on his merchandise if this was going to keep up. Dunwell would encounter the wraith one more time some years later in Hartford, Connecticut while on a business trip. He immediately recognized the glowing countenance, commenting to the alarmed throng that the ghost was further from Boston than ever.

A toll operator on the Charles Street Bridge in Boston had many run-ins with the ethereal carriage. On several occasions, around midnight, the wagon raced through the booth never even slowing to pay the crossing fee. At one point the operator got so angry he threw his stool at the speeding rig. Imagine the look on his face when the stool passed right through the manifestation and bounced off of the guardrail on the other side of the road.

Mrs. Betsey Croft, who later owned the Rugg home, claimed that a man once came to her door soaking wet with a scared, pale looking child by his side. The sight gave her a start, as she knew he was not of the present. His clothes were at least a century old and he spoke in an old English dialect. As she glanced over his shoulder in the moonlight, she saw a decrepit antique carriage at the curb with

a massive black horse harnessed to it. When the man asked for Mrs. Rugg she told him Mrs. Rugg died many years ago at a very old age, and that she has owned the house for a half a century. The odd-looking man told her he was in haste and needed to get to Boston. She told him that he was in Boston, but he did not acknowledge her insistence on the matter. He spoke of roads and people from years past and maintained his need to get home. As she looked them over intensely she knew beyond any doubt by their eerie shade that they were not of this world, but instead, ghosts of the past revisiting their former home.

William Austin wrote the accounts of Peter Rugg from 1824 to 1826 and claimed to have met the ghost himself when Rugg flagged down his carriage. The man identified himself as Peter Rugg and asked for directions to Middle Street in Boston. When told he was near Hartford, Connecticut, Rugg became irritated and argued with Austin before speeding off in furious skepticism at Austin's statement. The rig, horse and riders all vanished before the road turned.

Solid proof of Rugg's eternal journey exists in North Kingstown, RI where Route 1 crosses over Route 403, also known as Devil's Foot Road. It is there where Reverend Samuel Nickles encountered the wraith of Peter Rugg while returning to Providence from the village of Wickford. Near dusk, the preacher and his old nearsighted nag, Romeo, were caught in a sudden thunderstorm as they rode through Quonset. As they entered a narrow passage between a steep hill and a rock ledge, he heard the thunderous sound of

hooves in front of him. He looked up and saw a man frantically pulling at the reins of an immense horse and a frightened child gripping his arm for dear life. The horse drawing the speeding chaise had eyes glowing red like coals from a blacksmith's fire.

The reverend's nag became spooked and threw him from his saddle onto the great ghost bay. The preacher let out a scream of mercy and the horse bolted up the rock ledge in a flash of lightning, throwing the priest to the ground, unconscious.

When the preacher awoke, the sun was shining and Romeo was grazing in the grass nearby. As he glared at the rock, he saw cloven hoof prints embedded into the edifice. He sped from the sight but for years to come, people from all over flocked to see the rock with its footprints that still sits behind a row of trees near a gravel parking lot immediately after the bridge on Route 1 South.

What holds Rugg eternally bound to wander the earth? A tavern keeper once suggested that Heaven has a way of setting trial or judgment on a man for his actions or words. Peter Rugg, when he failed to fulfill his oath, cursed himself and his daughter to eternally ride the New England roads searching in vain for home.



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REAL ESTATE



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

# Planning to retire? It could be time to make a move

If you're thinking about retirement or have already retired this year, you may be planning your next steps. One of your goals could be selling your house and finding a home that more closely fits your needs. Fortunately, you may be in a better position to make a move than you realize. Here are a few things to think about when making

that decision. Consider how long you've been in your home. From 1985 to 2008, the average length of time homeowners typically stayed in their homes was only six years. But according to the National Association of Realtors (NAR), that number is rising today, meaning many homeowners are living in their houses even longer. When you live in a home for a significant period of time, it's natural for you to experience a number of changes in your life while you're in that house. As those life changes happen,

your needs may change. And if your current home no longer meets them, you may have better options waiting for you. Consider the equity you've gained. Also, if you've been in your home for more than a few years, you've likely built up significant equity that can fuel your next move. That's because the longer you've been in your home, the more likely it's grown in value due to home price appreciation. While home price growth varies by state and local area, the national average shows the typical homeown-

er who's been in their house for five years saw it increase in value by over 50%. And the average homeowner who's owned their home for 30 years saw it almost triple in value over that time.

Consider your retirement goals. Whether you're looking to downsize, relocate to a dream destination, or move so you live closer to loved ones, that equity can help you achieve your homeownership goals. NAR shares that for recent home sellers, the primary reason to move was to be closer to loved ones. Plus, retirement played a large role for those

moving greater distances. Did you know that Marzeotti Group was licensed in Florida!

Whatever your home goals are, The Marzeotti Group or a trusted REALTOR can work with you to find the best option. They'll help you sell your current house and guide you as you buy the home that's right for you and your lifestyle today.

Retirement can bring about major changes in your life, including what you need from your home. Connect with us or a trusted REALTOR to explore the opportunities.

Maribeth Marzeotti  
Broker Associate/GRI/SRES

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**LUKE**  
continued from page 18

name? Can I pet him? Oh my gosh, this puppy just made my day!" Person

after person came over to pet Luke. I broke off warm pieces of a peanut butter cookie to share with my social pup. We told dog stories and laughed. Holiday music filled the air. Luke listened to every person, and lifted his paw. He understood. He validated. He loved unconditionally. The bitter edges of shopping turmoil crumbled away like pieces of cookie. Luke Valentino had offered the public a special dog's gift, that of Presence.

Then came a Christmas miracle. There, across the street, in front of Longhorn Steakhouse to be exact, I saw it with my very own eyes—a massive, brown UPS truck. My legs wobbled as I grabbed Luke's leash. Within seconds, the two of us floated towards the truck. The UPS driver, amused by us, rolled down his window.

"That is the cutest pup I've ever seen."

"Thank you." I struggled to breathe. "I'm so happy to have found you." Luke looked up at me, then at the driver. "We're so happy to have found you!"

"I have a rug," I huffed. "In my car. That way," I gestured. "We have a rug!" Luke said, sitting proudly at my heels. "I brought it to Kohl's, then to Michael's," I went on. "Wrong size. I was told I'll need a box in order to return it to you." My problem spilled from me.

He nodded to the back of his truck. "I don't have a ton of room back here."

My heart sank. "Wanna' play chase?" Then the driver chuckled like Saint Nick and his cheeks became rosy. "I can make room for your rug. Where are you parked?"

"Seriously? That is so kind of you!" I said. "I have a stuffed cherry pie in the car!" Luke added, trying to

keep up. Minutes later, the three of us congregated at the trunk of my car, where we fumbled to squish the rug into a well-behaved square and seal the deal. "You know what? I can do this in my truck." The driver seemed skeptical of my packing ability. Nonetheless, the Saint Nick of UPS hopped back up into a tall seat and waved good-bye.

Meanwhile, Luke and I made one last stop. Shopping wouldn't be the same without a present for Luke Valentino.

The PetSmart sweater fit him perfectly, and the inscription said it best. "Merry Grinchmas!" Thanks to my puppy, I was able to put the Merry back in Christmas that day.

Write to Amy at [amyl-eclair@hotmail.com](mailto:amyl-eclair@hotmail.com)  
Find Luke on Instagram @ [livingwithlukevalentino](https://www.instagram.com/livingwithlukevalentino)

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THE CAR DOCTOR

jpaul@aanortheast.com

# Honda battery disconnect, reconnect is tricky business



BY JOHN PAUL

**Q.** I was told by Honda to have my battery disconnected and then reconnected to fix the date issue on my 2011 CRV EXL with navigation. The date fixed itself at the beginning of December. The date advanced to 2003 from 2001. Still have nine years to go to get to 2022! Have you heard anything about this and would it even work? I have a service appt for them to see if it works and won't be a happy camper if it doesn't work!

**A.** The issue with the date on some Honda models came up this year. The electrical voodoo of disconnecting the battery and holding the cables together, essentially reboots the car's computer system. At the end of summer, Honda still didn't have a software fix for this issue. But a check online shows that once the GPS sends a new signal, at least in some models the date can be manually corrected. Let the dealer give it a try and let me know how you make out.

**Q.** What is a decent price for a front-end alignment on a 2017 Toyota Corolla?

**A.** There was a time when most cars only had the front steering angles adjusted and when I first started repairing vehicles that price was \$19.95 (that was a long time ago). Today even on a relatively simple car like your Corolla both

the front and rear wheels have adjustment angles that need to be checked and adjusted. I did a little research, and the typical cost of a four-wheel alignment is \$79.00 to \$129.00. As a rule, if suspension or underbody components have been removed/installed or replaced, front and rear steering angles should be checked and if needed adjusted.

**Q.** We have a 2009 Volkswagen CC. The alarm which the dealer installed and still is working stopped beeping, when prior it would beep once when the key fob was pressed. Also, at about the same time the rear passenger window stays down about a half an inch and doesn't fully go up. Any ideas or suggestions before I take it to the dealer. A local shop looked quickly and said it's not a fuse.

**A.** This may be two separate problems even though they appeared at about the same time. The alarm may have a faulty module/relay that is not signaling the horn. The rear window may need to be reset. Sometimes this is as simple as from that seating position, run the window

down and hold the button for a few seconds and then up for a few seconds and the window will reset.

**Q.** I read one of your answers about a tire leak and wanted to relay my experience. I have a 2013 Honda Accord; last month my car's low tire light came

on and I went to a service station. They put air in the tire and all was okay for two weeks and then the light was back on. I went to a big tire store. They said the front driver tire was low, then put the tire in soapy water and said

**CAR DOCTOR**  
continued on page 23



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# Senate passes bill supporting parents running for office

The Massachusetts State Senate has passed legislation that would support parents running for public office by recognizing childcare as a valid campaign expense.

"The decision to run

for office should not hinge on whether the would-be candidate can afford to pay out of pocket for childcare during the campaign," said Senator Michael Moore (D-Millbury). "This legislation breaks down barriers

to those with kids seeking to serve in elected office. By allowing campaign funds to be spent on childcare, parents will have one less worry while they knock doors or meet with their community while cam-

paing. I'm proud to support this bill and I hope the House will join us in making election to public office more accessible to single and working parents."

Under the bill, a political candidate would be able

to expend campaign funds for childcare costs, using money raised in support of a political campaign. The bill tasks the Director of the Office of Campaign and Political Finance with the creation of regulations to

oversee the implementation of this change.

The bill now heads to the Massachusetts House of Representatives for consideration. The 2021-2022 legislative session ends January 3, 2023.



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**The Worcester Bravehearts** have officially released their 2023 schedule, which includes 64 games, 32 of them to be played at Fitton Field. For the first time in team history, the Bravehearts will host an "Opening Morning" game on May 24th at 10:30 a.m. for a kids-only Baseball in Education Day in which schools from across Central Massachusetts can take a field trip to see the Bravehearts play their first game of the year. The team will then host its Opening Night on Friday, May 26th against the reigning Futures League Champion Nashua Silver Knights. This game will feature ceremonies marking the team's tenth anniversary. The team will host two more "You-Choose-The-Rules" games on their Baseball in Education Days on June 6th and 7th.

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**CAR DOCTOR**

*continued from page 21*

no leak was detected. A few weeks later the low tire light came on again. I went to the tire store again and they inflated the tire and nothing else. A while later again the low tire light came on. I went to the tire store now for the third time at 3:40 PM and they stated, "they do not know if they can take care of the problem today because they close at 5:00 p.m." Isn't that a very nice service they provide? I waited in the waiting room for over an hour and forty

minutes. Finally, a person came in took my car to the service area and came back a little later and told me they found a nail in the tire and now it is finally fixed. What do you think of all of this?

**A.** Finding a tire with a slow leak requires patience and in my experience a "dunk-tank" with clear water to look for bubbles. I have seen many shops just take a spray bottle with soapy water and spray the tire, that can work for some leaks, if the leak is big enough. On your car it may have taken three weeks for the nail to

make a little bigger hole for the leak to become more apparent. Regarding customer service, one of my first jobs was in a good-sized tire store and if we were in the building even after hours, we never turned down a customer with a flat tire. In fact, in most cases if it was after hours, we repaired the tire at no charge (the cash drawer was put away). The owner always said treat customers like family and they will come back, and he was right.

*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 questions to [jpaul@aaa-northeast.com](mailto:jpaul@aaa-northeast.com). Follow John on Twitter @johnfpaul and friend him on Facebook, [mrjohnfpaul](https://www.facebook.com/mrjohnfpaul).



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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. **Believer**

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