

LKQ called to account for soot draining into Webster Lake



Damaging runoff like this from the LKQ Auto Parts lot above Webster Lake needs to be contained, Glenn Krevosky of EBT Environmental Consultants in North Oxford says.

BY ROD LEE

The folks at LKQ Route 16 Auto Parts on Old Douglas Road in Webster are undoubtedly familiar with Glenn Krevosky and Mr. Krevosky's concerns about runoff from the company's property onto land owned by at least one client of his and into Webster Lake.

Mr. Krevosky is the owner of EBT Environmental Consultants

Inc., a North Oxford-based firm that has been in business since about 1986. He describes himself as a wetland scientist, a restoration professional and a cold water fishery expert. His forte is ecological science and regulatory policy.

By his own count, Mr. Krevosky is working on more than seventy projects at any given time, while trying to get LKQ to adhere to an Order of Conditions imposed on

it by the town of Webster approximately two years ago.

Recently, Mr. Krevosky reached out to The Yankee Xpress in an effort to call new attention to the situation.

"LKQ is the largest polluter of soot that goes into Webster Lake,"

LKQ

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Oxford Town Manager Jen Callahan, a former Massachusetts state representative.

Callahan stresses teamwork as Oxford town positives

BY JANET STOICA

When Oxford Town Manager Jennifer Callahan was asked what the town's major accomplishments have been, the overview she gave was quite remarkable. She was quick to mention the teamwork and achievements of all town employees.

"Oxford is very fortunate to have exceptional employees who work for the benefit of all of us. Our town employees come to work each day and do the best job they can. This is why at our town meetings

we vote for the best benefits we can for our town workers," she said. "Teamwork is essential for our town's success."

"Last year we had a lot of great success coming out of the pandemic and trying to pick up our normal business routine," said Ms. Callahan, "but I can't be more thrilled about our master plan and the well-measured spending of our resources for capital projects and community

TOWN MANAGER

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LKQ

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he contends. “They have been getting away” with it even though the Webster Conservation Commission, the Webster Lake Association, the EPA and the Commonwealth are aware of the problem.

According to Mr. Krevosky, the Webster Lake Association, of which he is a member, has a

“I just want them to comply with the Order of Conditions. You have to stabilize that yard, for heavy, silty, clay soils. This is clay and silt. Bigger basins are needed. I told them they had to crush-stone their yard. When it rains you can’t see a quarter inch into the water, and I have a client just below there. Rocks are coated with silt and algae, out comes a plume of silt on leaves and rocks. It’s truly ‘Brown’s Brook’ during a rain event. This is

French River, to clean it up in my lifetime, and I’m in my 60s.”

Sadly, he adds, of damaging runoff from the LKQ property, “with rain it will show its ugly head again; and our rain events are now several times a year.”

He identifies LKQ as “a Fortune 500 company” whose principals may not be that alarmed about the matter.

As this is written, messages have gone out to LKQ, to Joseph Wigglesworth and Dawn Portman of the Webster Conservation Commission, and to the EPA, with no response to date.

On Thursday, February 2nd, Dave Deegan in the Office of Public Affairs with the EPA’s New England Region, replying to a follow-up email, wrote “thanks for the reminder—I’ll recheck for you.”

“This is in EPA’s hands right now,” Mr. Krevosky says.

“I don’t trust them.”

In an email on behalf of the US EPA, Dave Deegan wrote “as you know, in 2012 EPA announced a settlement with LKQ Northeast Inc., for alleged violations of federal storm water requirements at several of their facilities, including in Webster. EPA’s enforcement action against the company was for the discharge of pollutants (including sediment). Under the settlement the company is required to implement improvements to their site’s best management practices in order to have pollutant concentrations come below their industrial sector’s benchmark thresholds.

“In addition to taking specific actions to mitigate the excess pollution to the surrounding environment, the settlement requires the company to provide regular reports to EPA documenting the progress and compliance with terms of the settlement agreement.”

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



An overhead view of Webster Lake with Lakeview Marine on Thompson Road in the foreground.

“Stream Team” that monitors the condition of such waterways as Mine Brook, Sucker Brook and Brown’s Brook.

The issue involves fifteen acres of “exposed canton soil” from which contamination leaks, especially during periods of heavy rain.

The LKQ property sits high above Webster Lake. As soon as water that is “crystal clear” up to that point hits the LKQ yard “you have chocolate coming out of that site,” Mr. Krevosky says.

an ongoing issue.

“Nine, ten years ago, I went there for water-quality testing. A basin was required and the EPA was involved. The basin only receives 1/6 of that drainage.”

There are those who say “it’s all been rectified. Look at it during a rain event and it’s not fixed,” Mr. Krevosky says.

Mr. Krevosky is a veteran of such battles.

In 1979, he said, “I took on the

TOWN MANAGER

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planning. Our financials were addressed in a very positive way. The success of our accomplishments is reflected in the \$6 million in grants we received.” Examples are the \$2.8 million MassWorks grant received to provide sewer access across Route 20; a \$200,000 Green Communities grant; \$302,000 street grant; and an ADA grant of \$182,000 to increase ADA access.

“These are huge opportunities,” said Ms. Callahan. “We also have the Leicester Street bridge project which will make over that structure using multi-million dollar state funding. We have many other grants that will help Oxford like the Open Space Recreation Grant. I’m proud of all our departments working together to obtain this funding. An example is the Lowe’s Pond Dam that will be replaced with assistance from the Department of Conservation which is a significant infrastructure project. Another great asset to our town has been the appointment of Laura Wilson as our Senior Center director. We have seen a very positive response from our town’s celebrated senior population to her appointment. Her hard work and dedication has been a great success for all of us.”

The Mass. School Building Authority has recently granted funding for new roof replacements in the town’s two elementary schools and the town has also recently begun a feasibility study for its Community Center. “The building needs upgrades and a final report is due in February,” said Ms. Callahan. “We realize this building is a valuable asset to our town and we want to ensure it remains that way.”

Successful town activities launched and well-attended by

townspeople include the Winter Festival, Movies-on-Main, Teddy Bear Picnics, Carbuncle Pond activities, and the Holiday Parade. “Our master plan and public-ity has attracted people to come downtown and enjoy the camaraderie of their fellow neighbors. It brings people closer together. It’s so positive,” said Town Manager Callahan.

“We have been so very successful working together in all our town departments,” said Ms. Callahan. “Our employees have been great. Other projects that we’re looking forward to include grant funding for the French River Bike Trail by having discussions with adjoining towns, our Visitor Center on Charlton Street, and our Store Front Enhancement Program that will offer assistance to our local businesses for their façade improvements in the areas of signage and landscaping. We hope to work on unique storefront enhancements. We are also looking forward to the Orchard Hill improvement and expansion project. This looks like it could be several hundred million dollars of new investment in Oxford that includes beautiful townhouses. I am very excited about the work we do here. I said when I came to Oxford four years ago that I wanted to make sure we improved the town for all residents and I believe with the hard work and great accomplishments of all our town employees we are well on our way to achieving our goals.”

“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.”

— Andrew Carnegie

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Xpressly Yours ... a letter from the editor

Women's Success Network, BV Chamber spread a little love

February may be a short month, but it is also one of substance thanks to the Women's Success Network and its parent organization: the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce.



BY ROD LEE

The first day of February marked the start of the Women's Success Network's "New Mother Collective Drive," with donations of such items as baby formula, diapers, wipes, baby toiletries, new clothes (size newborn-4T), new baby equipment (car seats, bouncy seats, pack and plays, etc.), gift cards, handmade items (blankets, hats, toys, etc.) and items to pamper mom being accepted at a number of convenient drop-off locations.

Homefield Credit Union is one of those and pleased to be a participating, according to President and CEO Karl Moisan and his managers and staff.

"This is our first time," Mr. Moisan said, of the second annual event, which runs right through the 28th. But giving back is nothing new for Homefield Credit Union, whose employees engage with community through such activities as the Frosty stop with the Grafton Fire Department, the Grafton PD's annual toy drive and night out initiatives, the UMass Cancer Walk and Family Night at the Bandstand in Milford.

This past fall, Homefield worked with the Grafton PD to collect seventy-five toys for the "fill-a-cruiser" campaign, and with the Post Office Pub to arrange for sixty meals for local senior citizens—complete with a slice of apple pie.

Homefield has been involved with the Chamber's Women Success Network for just under a year. The New Mother Collective Drive coincides with the start of

the credit union's "twelve months of giving," Mr. Moisan said.

Day One of the New Mother Collective Drive was also a "Rewards Day" for Homefield employees, in which they are allowed to dress down in recognition of efforts they have made in the credit union's ongoing "quest for the best" push.

UniBank, Millbury Federal Credit Union, the Chamber and the Whittin Community Center are also all drop-off sites for the drive. Donations will be distributed to local food pantries and nonprofit community agencies serving new mothers in the Blackstone Valley.

In the case of the banks and credit unions, donations are being accepted at all branches. All of the banks and credit unions participating are active on the giving-back-to-community front.

Individuals and families that want to donate an item not listed among those that are being accepted for the New Mother Collection Drive are asked to email administrator@blackstonevalley.org or to call 508-234-9090.

Pat Hurton notes that the Women's Success Network is always looking for new members as a way for women to expand their business opportunities through access to prominent speakers, educational workshops and networking social events.

February and March are busy months for the Blackstone Valley Chamber.

On Friday, February 10th at 10:30 a.m. there will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Spicy Water Distillery at 108 Elm St. in Millbury. The new distillery specializes in creating unique handcrafted flavor experiences with such offerings as Caribbean-inspired rum, gluten-free vodka, a variety of gins and an American agave spirit.

A "Love Your Legislator" breakfast at Galliford's Restaurant & Tavern at Southwick's Zoo in Mendon will occur, appropriately enough, on Valentine's Day—Tuesday, February



14th—as a salute to the region's legislative delegation. The event will give attendees a chance to ask questions about pending bills in the Massachusetts House and Senate and other action taking place on Beacon Hill.

Then on Saturday, March 25th, the Chamber's annual Home and Community Expo returns for the twenty-third time at the Northbridge High School Field House.

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

Pictured from left: Karl Moisan, Jen Marble, Stephanie Antaya, Maureen Wojnar, Julie Tripp and Kelly Benoit prepare to accept donations at Homefield Credit Union in Grafton on February 1st as the Women's Success Network's month-long New Mother Collective Drive kicks off.

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Booklovers' Gourmet to host special mid-winter concert

Booklovers' Gourmet's reputation as a bastion for artists of all kinds will take another leap forward on Saturday, February 11 when the Webster-based married duo Mark Mandeville and Raianne Richards perform a variety of folk songs from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in "an intimate listening-room setting."

Booklovers' Gourmet is

located at 72 E. Main St. in Webster.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for the show and general-admission tickets are limited. Call 508-949-6232 or email deb@bookloversgourmet.com to reserve a spot.

Beverages and snacks will be available.

Mark and Raianne have produced more than seventeen

albums and toured regularly in the U.S. and Canada.

Attendees of the concert will get to know the couple through their vocal harmonies, poetic lyrics and down-to-earth persona.

Their music reflects the experiences of factory workers, teachers, community organizers and natives of post-industrial mill towns in Massachusetts.



The Webster folk duo Raianne Richards and Mark Mandeville.

Evident in their work are memories of days gone by and the toils of history, in such songs as "The Old Machine" and "Winds of Change."

They will utilize the guitar, harmonica, ukele, penny whistle, electric bass and possibly clarinet in delivering songs that are musically uplifting and

spiritually captivating.

Home to new and used books, gifts and jewelry, journals, a café, author appearances, exhibitions, poetry readings and the like, Booklovers' Gourmet has earned its place as a favorite stop for aficionados of art and literature.

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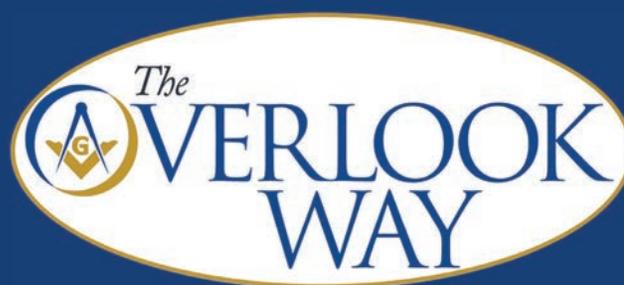


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I've been DECA-fied, and proud of it

BY JANET STOICA

Last year, a teacher I know in my local school system asked me to be a judge at a competition for high school students at the DCU Center in Worcester. I enjoyed that competition so much that I enrolled as a judge again this year for the January 12th activity.

The event, entitled DECA ("Distributive Education Clubs of America") District 7 Competition, involves students who prepare business presentations while in groups of two. They are given their assignment after they have arrived at the competition venue and must use their prep time wisely team-collaborating to not only prepare their marketing techniques but also to practice their public-speaking skills. The students are bussed in from high schools as far as Palmer to Grafton and all towns in-between. Judges are teachers, sales reps, managers, lawyers, and every profession in-between.

The judges are seated in various large conference rooms awaiting pairs of student presenters who must use presentation standards established by DECA. Each presentation involves a scenario for marketing a product or service. These young women and men in attendance are dressed in business attire such as suits, business dresses, or jackets and ties. Do teenagers really dress like this? Is this for real? Yes, it most definitely is...seeing is believing, and immediately gives us judges a refreshingly excellent first impression of our future leaders of tomorrow. Most of these high schoolers are in their junior or senior years but a few are also freshmen and sophomores. I



must give a large amount of credit to the freshmen and sophomores for their ability to qualify for this district event.

Once formal introductions are made by the students to the judges, much like that in real life if one were presenting an idea/product to a business, the students have up to 15 minutes to make their pitch. They review what they are about to present for their marketing goals and then dive into the salient points of their presentation. One student will begin the presentation and hand off the next section to their partner. After their address, judges ask the team prepared questions and listen intently to their responses. Students are then thanked for their time while judges, using

an e-tablet or laptop, must then score the students on a scale of 1-8 (with 8 being the high score) on various aspects of their presentation skills. Judges' comments are also encouraged and appreciated for the benefit of student review.

I was blown away, once again, by the professionalism and imaginations of these future leaders of our country. Not only were they exact and extremely proficient in their presentations but their courtesy to one another as they finished each piece of their report was truly exceptional. Their parent(s) and/or

caregiver(s) are to be commended for their teenager's manners and mindset. Their instructors are to be praised for their coaching skills assisting our future leaders to stay on course and to the point. I mean, these students were extraordinary, they were stupendous, they were rock stars! Of course I'm impressed and you would be too after seeing, reading, and hearing too much negative behavior that seems to permeate our society these days.

Listening to the words and watching the behavior of all the young men and women at the

DECA competition will remain with me for months to come. I was astounded by their competence, their mannerisms, and their style. I have truly been DECA-fied and hope to continue judging at this most important event which will always serve to rejuvenate my faith in our best and brightest younger generation. "Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family." Kofi Annan

Contact Janet at jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com

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United Way is Our Way

BY JANET STOICA

“What I like about the United Way is that they support so many non-profits,” said Denise Gorski, Campaign Chairman of the South Central United Way organization, “donation dollars given go a long way. There’s such a great bridge of support for so many different needs in our community. When I worked for IBM 16 years ago, I became a member of their local planning committee and then served on their board. When I returned to this area, I served on the local board. Three years ago we merged with three other towns becoming the South Central United Way. Those towns are Charlton, Dudley, Southbridge, Sturbridge, and Webster.”

Ms. Gorski stated that the South Central United Way serves 70,000 residents and supports 21 non-profit agencies such as the Tri-Valley Meals-on-Wheels program (providing meals for our disabled and senior population), The Boys and Girls Club, Guild of St. Agnes, Big Brother/Big Sister Organization, Care Central (VNA and hospice services), and Our Bright Future (an academic youth program). “Our campaign goal this year,

which ends in September 2023, is \$584,000. We’ve raised 70% of our goal and look to the local citizens of our towns to help us in meeting our target. Without the help of our area community, we could never reach our goal to help so many in our own neighborhoods. We have seen an increase in our workplace campaign contributions which is so very rewarding. We’d like for everyone to find it in their hearts to support us as the money stays right here in our area. It’s for the good of all of us,” she said.

Workplace campaigns are overseen by United Way and there are large donors that the local chapter is extremely grateful for: Cornerstone Bank, Karl Storz Endovision, Dexter-Russell, Incom, Inc., and Savers Bank. The chapter has recently created a 365 Small Business Circle to bring together smaller businesses to help with meeting their donation goal. These businesses can help improve the lives of struggling families by showing the community they care.

The local United Way chapter’s overhead is 7% which means that 93 cents of every dollar given goes directly to each non-profit agency supported by your donation. This overhead amount falls into the highest ranking category of Charity



Volunteers are crucial to the United Way’s mission, which includes programming like robotics. Denise Gorski is a campaign chair.

Navigator, the nation’s most-utilized charity evaluator, which states that a charity organization that has an overhead below 15% is one of the best.

February kicks off with the United Way accepting non-profit agency applications for their annual Day of Caring. This is a project where United Way volunteers assist non-profits with projects such as indoor or outdoor painting, cleanups, etc. This year the event is scheduled for June 3rd and volunteers are always welcome.

“I get satisfaction from helping people and seeing the results of our programs that help people. When you see the outcome of your efforts it’s a good feeling,” said Ms. Gorski.

It’s true! A rising tide does lift all boats! Your donation to the United Way of South Central Massachusetts, no matter how small, will surely benefit not only those who need your help the most but will also be passed on to the local economy. To donate, to volunteer, to make a difference, please contact the local office at (508) 765-5491.

On-line giving forms can be found on their website: www.uwscm.org United Way of South Central Mass., 176 Main Street, Suite 400, Southbridge MA 01550

“For it is in giving that we receive.”

– St. Francis of Assisi

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New chief in Dudley

Dudley Police Lt. Marek Karlowicz was sworn in as the town’s next police chief by Town Clerk Lori A. Smith on January 9th. Chief Karlowicz was the unanimous choice of selectmen to succeed retiring Chief Steven Wojnar, effective at noon on January 13th. Lt. Karlowicz was hired as a reserve officer in 2000. He became a full-time patrolman in 2002 and was promoted to sergeant in 2019. He was sworn in as Lt. in January. The town extends its congratulations to Chief Wojnar on his retirement and to incoming Chief Karlowicz.

Highway superintendent gives update on Webster road work

BY JANET STOICA

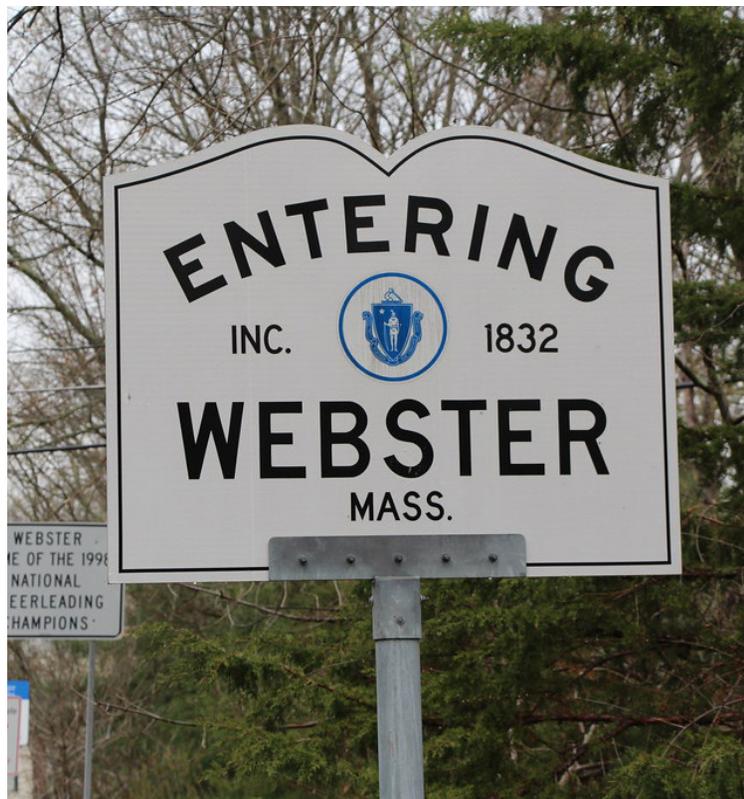
According to the town of Webster's website, the following roads are scheduled for utility updates beginning in January and running through March. The National Grid Gas Division has scheduled the roadwork in order to install new gas main replacements. Residents and drivers are asked to exercise caution when negotiating the following byways of town:

- East Main Street/Route 12 (Worcester Road)
- Thompson Road Intersection – East Main Street to Second Island Road
- Thompson Road/Kosmas Street
- Lake Street/Thompson Road Intersection
- Racicot Avenue

As many residents are aware, there has been much water and sewer main road construction in the Lake Street area as well and Highway Superintendent Ken Pizzetti stated that due to road construction supply hold-ups it will be a few more months before completion of the project. The backup in construction is expected to last until April of this year.

"By the time road settlement occurs in a 60-day period, the road should be finished and striped by August," he said, "and if all goes well, the road may be finished earlier but with supplies being delivered later than expected, we are being cautious with our completion dates. We have no control over the manufacturers. So much depends upon the winter weather which is so unpredictable. Temperatures could be 30 degrees for three days and then 50 degrees for the next three days delaying the supplier's manufacturing process."

National Grid's nine-year new gas main project is nearing its end in the Webster area. Webster's gas main replacement project is most likely in its seventh year. "National Grid has the capability to dig and complete their projects through the winter," Mr. Pizzetti said. "This will allow us to pave in the spring and summer. With a decent winter, we might have three of their street projects finished soon. We have to allow the road to settle first and then paving can begin. We're definitely ahead of the curve based on their timeline. The rest of Granite Street is on the schedule too. We hope to begin the remainder of the Granite



Motorists entering the town of Webster will encounter a number of road construction projects that are due to be completed soon.

Street project by April 1st."

The old steel gas pipes were more susceptible to leakage. The new gas main material is rated to have a 100-year life and is manufactured using a high performance, bi-modal, medium density polyethylene resin which exceeds industry standards and provides excellent environmental stress crack resistance and outstanding long-term stress rupture performance and the trenching is cleaned and packed well once the new mains are installed.

When asked about how the highway department treats the local roads in winter, Mr. Pizzetti explained that pre-treated salt is used. "All road salt is EPA-rated," he said, "it's safer for the environment and is just a better product. Road materials are much better too. When treating the roads during the winter you just don't put a cost on the material used as it's a public safety issue. Webster was

one of the first towns in the area to use pre-treated salt resulting in neighboring town highway departments visiting us and observing the product usage and its better results. It saves us money in the long run and is much better for road cleaning too. There's no use for sand anymore which also saves money on road cleaning. There's a lot of planning that goes into the clearing of our roads when snow and ice hits. We keep our snowplows in great shape and are well organized with a great crew. They are a very talented group. We hold monthly meetings for updates and for obtaining feedback from our staff."

Contact Janet: jstoica@TheYankeExpress.com

Prayer



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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Webster's Gladys E. Kelly Library visitor numbers increase by 300%

BY JANET STOICA

The Gladys E. Kelly Library is alive, vibrant, and pleased to report a 300% increase in patrons visiting the educational institution over the past year. In 2021, visitors were tallied at 1,000. In 2022, the library experienced an increase to 4,000 users. The number is incredible and a testament to the voters of Webster who saw the future benefit of their library's building and expansion of services offered.

"We attribute our increased population to our new and regularly scheduled and dependable programs for all ages," said Sondra Murphy, Library Director. "We have recently added a full-time Program Coordinator, Randa Cox, who has been instrumental in activity development. Our entire staff has been working hard to keep our programs and activities going. We are proud of what we have accomplished." Staff members include: Evan Hale, Assistant Director; An-

drew Tai, Children's and Youth Services Librarian; Natalie McDonald, Children's Assistant; and Jen Millett and Janessa Barrette, Library Assistants.

The Library Board's agenda recently included a five-year plan in accordance with state requirements and asked the town's citizens to participate by placing the survey on the library website, in the library lobby, at the senior center, and in the town hall. As of this writing, over 100 responses had been received with a last



The Gladys E. Kelly Library's newest member tries out the new Magnetic Board with her dad.

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submission date of February 1. Community involvement is the life blood of any public entity and the library's goals have gained a great amount of momentum. "We have hired a consultant, Barbara Alevras, to assist us with our five-year plan. Our local committee consists off Donna Becker, Elaine Davies, Rena Klebart, and myself.

We've created the community survey and after tabulating the survey results, we hope to have focus groups," Ms. Murphy stated.

Brainstorming will continue with a look at the history of and future plans for the library. Once results have been compiled objectives and goals will

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be established for the strategic plan which will be reviewed and approved by the Library Trustees with submission to the state in October. The end goal is to use the plan to navigate the library's future. "There hasn't been a comprehensive plan done in a long time," said Ms. Murphy, "but we will use this new information to learn what the community wants as we look at and plan for the future."

Ms. Murphy elaborated on the Kelly Library's recent developments where they applied for

and received a \$9,000 grant for a Community Garden. "The Webster DPW is gracious enough to assemble the raised beds for our garden and we will be collaborating with local farmers for seedlings beginning in May. This project is part of our food literacy and outdoor education program. The garden's dimensions will be 10 feet by 50 feet. We also have other new programs in the works including a Cookbook Club where members can take home cookbooks, choose and make a recipe, and

bring that food item to the next meeting. A Spice Club is also on the menu where members can enjoy and explore new spices and their uses with the current spice-of-the-month being cardamom, a flavor native to the Indian subcontinent."

The Kelly Library was also fortunate to receive a grant from the Janet Malser Humanities Trust for STEM funding for children. They have added 15 new learning kits to their collection such as programmable robots and children's learning games like the

new Giant Magnet Wall, a light table, and wind tunnel. There are many other exciting events spearheaded by the Friends of the Library such as the Taste of Webster Event and Books, Bites, and Blooms. A new website has also been online for the past six months making it easier to navigate the library's website. There's so much activity going on at the library that you owe it to yourself to check out their building and to check out their website. www.gladyskellylibrary.org (508) 949-3880. Gladys E. Kelly Public

Library, 2 Lake Street, Webster MA 01570.

Hours: Mon/Tues/Thurs 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.; Wed 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.; Fri 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sat 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

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–Neil Gaiman

Contact Janet at jstoica@TheYankeeXpress.com



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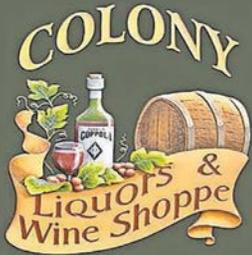
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Reunion Tap & Table ready for opening in Whitinsville

BY ROD LEE

Shawn Briggs was literally putting the finishing touches on a shelf behind the bar of the new Reunion Tap & Table restaurant in a section of the Whitinsville Plaza on the morning of February 1st: a coat of black paint.

Taking up a spot formerly occupied by Jube's that had been vacant for a while, Reunion Tap & Table has been months in the making, with a complete rebuild of the premises undertaken and now finished.

"We'll be opening next week," Mr. Briggs, one of the partners, said. "The day we get our occupancy permit, we'll be open the next day."

Reunion Tap & Table is well

known for its signature restaurant in Grafton; this one, though slightly smaller, is cut along the same lines. It will offer lunch Friday, Saturday and Sunday and dinner every day for starters. Plans are for takeout pizza too.

"We're just waiting for a delivery from Sunshine Sign," Mr. Briggs said. A banner has been strung across the front of the restaurant in the meantime.

Shawn Briggs, Josh Briggs, Sar-



Shawn Briggs, with Paul Apkarian, left, is anxious to open the doors of the new Reunion Tap & Table restaurant in the Whitinsville Plaza.



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gon Hanna and Paul Apkarian are all principals in the operation.

GALLIFORD'S SUNDAY BRUNCH IS A LAVISH SMORGASBORD

It may be wintertime and Southwick's Zoo in Mendon is closed at the moment but Galliford's Restaurant is going strong with lunch and dinner and most recently with a reintroduction of its popular "Sunday Brunch in Style at Galliford's"—through April 9th.

"Oh my gosh, great," Chelsea Daniels, restaurant manager at Galliford's, said on January 29th, in assessing response so far, just before the start of the brunch, which

runs from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The buffet features "something for everyone" including savory breakfast dishes, creative twists on traditional favorites, "our popular Omelet Station, Carving Station, Waffle Station, Millionaire Cinnamon Rolls, Lox, Crème Brulee French Toast, Braised Chicken Marsala, Parmesan Pesto Salmon, Eggs Benedict and so much more.

Reservations are recommended. Call 508-928-0928 or go to www.gallifords.com.

Submit your restaurant news to Rod Lee at rodlee.1963@gmail.com.

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

THROUGH FEBRUARY 24

• ValleyCAST, the arts and culture arm of Open Sky Community Services, is partnering with the New England Sculptors Association 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 Whittin Mill complex at the same address. The inside exhibit opened with a wine and cheese reception on Friday, January 13th. The public is 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 email Cristi.Collari@opensky.org.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11

St. Peter Parish, 39 Church Ave., Northbridge, is hosting a Ham Dinner starting at 5:30 .m. in the Parish Hall. Tickets are \$17 per dinner, with salad and dessert included. To-go meals are available for pickup at 5:00 p.m. and all orders must be purchased in advance. "Pay it forward" and buy an extra dinner and it will be delivered to someone in need in the community. Call 508-234-2156 or email parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org to purchase tickets or for more information.

FEBRUARY 11-12

• The Grafton Public Library, 35 Grafton Common, is hosting a Book Sale from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday and from noon to 2:00 p.m. on Sunday.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11

• Enjoy an evening of live music with the Webster duo Mark Mandeville and Raianna Richards at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. The show starts at 7:00. Email deb@bookloversgourmet.com or call 508-949-2322 to reserve your seat.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

• "The Hanoi Hilton POW Experience Exhibit" opens at the American Heritage Museum, 568 Main St., Hudson, fifty years after American POWs release from the prison that became synonymous with the Vietnam War. There, hundreds of American aviators shot down over North Vietnam were subjected to torture, isolation and malnutrition while housed in squalid cells during years of captivity. The AHM has built a lasting tribute to these POWs with a reconstruction of the last two remaining original cells that held Americans, first-hand accounts of their ordeal and interactive displays.

Ready to go for 2023

The Webster-Dudley Veterans Council held its installation of officers for 2023 on January 4th. Pictured in front from the left are Senior Vice Commander Ronald Prest, Commander Victor Jankowski and Junior Vice Commander Randy Snow. Standing are Meeting Chaplain Kevin Kozdzal, Funeral Chaplain Joseph Sendrowski, Sergeant at Arms James Brinker, Adjutant Andrew Kozlowski and Treasurer Robert Guenther.



www.americanheritagemuseum.org
 • The Uxbridge Historical Society will present "Uxbridge: Crossroads of the Underground Railroad" at 2:00 p.m. at the former Uxbridge Unitarian Church, Rt. 122, with narration from notable town historians. Presenters will reveal how Uxbridge residents ran stations along the Underground Railroad, opened schools to teach those seeking freedom to read and write and became leaders in the national anti-slavery movement. Refreshments will be served. All are welcome.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

• The Intrepid Readers of the Simon Fairfield Public Library, 290 Main St., Douglas, will discuss Beryl Markham's "West with the Night," in which the author describes growing up in an Africa that no longer exists, training and breeding race horses, flying mail to Sudan and being the first woman to

fly the Atlantic, east to west. Copies of the book will be available. All are welcome.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

• Enjoy a BVT buffet breakfast that includes waffles, pancakes, bacon, sausage, home friends, scrambled eggs and toast, 65 Pleasant St., Upton. Cost is \$7.50 per person plus gratuity. Doors open at 8:30 p.m. Sign up on the main office no later than February 1st. This is a self-drive, self-pay program.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16

• A "Women's Health Forum with Dr. Maggie Lunch & Learn" program will be held at the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland

St., Whitinsville, from 11:30 to 12:30 p.m. Lifestyle choices impact the aging process. Come and learn about diet, nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity and social engagement for older adults. Space is limited. Priority will be given to those who have not yet attended one of Dr. Maggie's health forums. Sign up with Amy Wednesday-Friday to attend.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17

• Samuel Slater's Restaurant at Indian

HAPPENINGS!
continued on page 12

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HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 11

Ranch, 200 Gore Road, Webster, present a night of comedy featuring Steve Sweeney with Graig Murphy and Chris D, 6:30-9:30 p.m. This is a 21-plus event. Go to www.samuelslaters.com or call 508-943-1639 for more details.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

• "Take a Hike" with the Plummer Place Walking Club, 10:00 a.m., weather permitting. Call the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville, at 508-234-2002 for locations.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

• "The Violin Kat," music by Violinist Kathryn Haddad, will be presented at the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Kat is an eclectic freelance violinist based in the Worcester area. She has performed to many crowds. Light refreshments will be served. Sign up at the main office.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23

• A CPR, AED and Epipen Training Class will be held at the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Instructor Scott Celikbas from the Northbridge Fire Department will train participants in these important lifesaving

techniques. A heart-saver certification will be awarded at the end of the course. The cost is \$55 per person, check or cash due to the instructor on the day of training. Sign up at the main office.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

• Ice cutting expert Ken Ethier will present his popular program describing the methods and tools used to harvest ice from lakes and ponds two centuries ago, when ice was the only way to keep things cool. His one-hour talk will be held 11 a.m. at the Samuel Slater Experience museum in Webster. Ethier will demonstrate ice harvesting techniques with his own collection of antique tools, the often-dangerous scoring



The notorious Hóia Ló Prison—the Hanoi Hilton, where American POWs were held during the Vietnam War—is highlighted with a new immersive exhibit at the American Heritage Museum in Hudson. Visit www.americanheritagemuseum.org for more information.



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Society for a talk, "The Nipmuc Lithic Trail," at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, Sutton, at 7:00 p.m. Go to www.suttonhistoricalsociety.org for further info.

TUESDAY, MAY 9

•The Sutton Historical Society welcomes Carol Crossed curator of the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum, bot a talk, "Vintage Tweets: A Book of Suffrage Era Postcards," at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, Sutton, at 7:00 p.m. Go to www.suttonhistoricalsociety.org for further info.

TUESDAY, APRIL 4

•The Sutton Historical Society welcomes Joe lamartino of the Thompson Historical



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Webster Five steps up for African Community Education



Pictured in front of ACE's new building are Biodun Akande, board chairperson, and Kaska Yawo, executive director and co-founder of ACE. (Photo courtesy of the organization).

Webster Five recently donated \$25,000 to African Community Education (ACE), a Worcester organization dedicated to assisting African refugees and immigrant youth and families in achieving educational and social stability. The donation will go towards ACE's campaign to renovate the new ACE Center and expand program access.

ACE's programs include after-school and family education programs, mentorship opportunities, community outreach and more. ACE currently serves 6.3% of African-born immigrants and their children living in Worcester within 200%

of the poverty line. With their 2022 move to a larger headquarters, ACE looks to expand its programs and grow its reach to serve even more families.

"Webster Five is proud to support the important work African Community Education is doing to increase access to resources promoting personal growth and stability in our community," Don Doyle, president and CEO of Webster Five, said.

"African Community Education is extremely grateful for Webster Five's generous contribution to our organization," Kaska Yawo, executive director and co-founder of ACE, said. "This gift will have

a tremendous impact as we renovate the new ACE Center and expand access to education, outreach and workforce development programs for thousands of African refugees and immigrants in Central Massachusetts. We are thankful Mr. Doyle and the Webster Five leadership

team recognize the important role this project has in our local community and believe in our work at ACE enough to be an early supporter of these efforts."

To learn more about ACE's mission and programs, visit <https://www.africancommunityeducation.org>. To learn more

about Webster Five's charitable giving, visit <https://www.web5.com/about-us/our-story/our-news/>.

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The multiple-personality aura of Luke Valentino

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

There's something about Luke that has us talking. We can't put our finger on exactly what has us so crazy in love with him. Perhaps my son says it best. "He has an aura." Truth. His personality is full of innocence and curiosity, fragrance, and flaw. I've never met a puppy quite like him. He's about to celebrate his first birthday. I couldn't help but reflect on traits that have earned him a few nicknames.

PROFESSOR LUKE



Luke is a Watcher and a Thinker. He's the first pup I've owned who adores sitting on the front steps to watch what's happening in the neighborhood. He's a thoughtful observer, seemingly ahead of his time for a puppy. Amid his research, he's drawn conclusions about who he will and will not accept. Chest puffed out, he sits regally on those steps, a giant teddy bear on the look-out. There he has made dog friends and human friends. His tail senses good and bad vibes. Fortunately, he's experienced more of the former. He wears his love for others in a kind, "bear cub" expression. I've watched his nose twitch while a

serious mouth breaks open to a casual smile every time a guest arrives. "Hi! My name is Luke Valentino." He lowers his head and wiggles, humbled by the goodness of Dog People, who happen to be one of the more understanding breeds, I've found. I trust my dog's instincts.

"Hi Luke!" Known for his columns and charisma, Luke has become popular in the neighborhood. "You wanna' play in my yard?" Dog walkers make their way onto our lawn. Luke can barely believe his luck. His tail wags. He fights to restrain his joy (not wanting to come on too strong) but his love for people and the various dogs that extend from people, explodes on that very step. "I'm so excited that you're here! I want you to know, I'm well trained. I have my moments, but for the most part, I know how to behave." The owner approves of Luke. Professor-style, he lifts his head, and the two dogs exchange sniffs. "Are you a dog? I'm a dog. Are you a boy? I'm a boy. Are you nice? I'm nice." Trust established, the owner unclips the leash and—BAM—two dogs rumble in my front yard.

I used to worry about Luke amid spontaneous play. What if the dog is more experienced? Overly aggressive? "I'll take you down if you keep it up." I've since watched my pup take a cheap shot at a loose collar. Needless to say, I'm over it.

Still, watching my pup develop the realization that not every dog likes him, or wants to play with him, is hard for a Dog Mom. He once approached a unique dog couple at the dog park. The dogs entered together, side by side. They were obviously tight and their owners, also best friends, stated the obvious. "These two are boyfriend and girlfriend."

Luke, nevertheless, didn't understand the history or intimate nature of the long-term dog relationship. He trotted over to their side and used his famous shoulder move to greet them. "Wanna' play?" Boyfriend snarled and shunned my pup. "Get away from my girlfriend!! Just go away!" His

growl was aggressive. Luke turned away from the dogs and joined me at the park bench. "Someone's having a bad hair day." I felt bad for my pup. He sees the best in every dog, despite the feeling not always being mutual. "It's okay, Luke. You're a good boy. They're be another dog to play with."

My concern faded upon watching him take a stand for bad behavior on future playdates. "I DON'T LIKE YOU ANYWAY!" I've seen him bark back in the face of a hater.

"Let it go, Luke." My pup's ego was bruised.

"YOU'RE UGLY and SO ISN'T YOUR MOTHER!!"

"Luke!" My pup's temper has warranted another nickname.

LUKEY V

Lukey V is the side of Luke known to show some sass—the "bark at me and I'll bark back louder" side, the Valentino (Italian) side that was suspicious of our front yard snowman. "You're cold and you're still and you don't belong



here!" My son built the snowman with love, but Luke refused to accept him. He barked, backed away, and snapped his head around, as though paranoid of the snowman's next move. "Mess with me and I will destroy you, Frozen Man."

"Luke, be nice. The snowman can be here," I pleaded with my gangster pup. "He's a phony, Momma." He gazed up at me, then back at the Snowman. "He's pretending to be a person, but he's full of cold air. Look at the Stiff. I've seen his type." Days passed. January rain beat down on an innocent snowman who somehow had caused bad blood on our front lawn. He melted. He slouched. He aged. Worse, Lukey V lifted his leg and peed on his bottom ball.

POOPY LUKEY

Puppies poop a lot, exposing a more vulnerable side to their character. Luke is no exception. Our

puppy slept in a comfortable crate until the age of six months, when he outgrew a bed designed to look like a piece of furniture. I lined it with a plush mattress and blankets. It was beautiful. Still, my husband



and I heard our growing puppy jostle and struggle to try and get comfortable through the night. We could have purchased an extra-large crate but, instead, came to the same conclusion. "Luke needs to move around and sleep comfortably. Let's give him a chance to sleep outside of the crate."

We were both on eggs that first night. We gated the stairs and shut the bathroom door. Luke had the entire downstairs to himself. We also left the crate door open, should he want to go back in. Was he ready for his own apartment? What if he chewed on table legs? Tearing apart the shag carpet? There were so many unknowns. Despite our fears, I entered our kitchen in the morning to find him curled up beneath the kitchen table. Of all places he could have slept, he chose the confines of an enclosed area, a cave of sorts. "What a good boy you are, Luke!"

Weeks passed and Luke became more liberated to try out new sleeping spaces. He slept on his plush bed by the bay window. He slept by the front door. He toggled between spots. Then, to our surprise, he pooped on the dining room carpet.

"Ohhhh Luke. What happened?" Suspicious of his own accident, he inspected the mound with a stiff sniff. "How did my poop get in the house?" He couldn't help it. Nevertheless, the odor was horrible. I gagged, cracked a window, and began the unfun process of cleaning poop from an expendable area rug. My mind traced back through his diet. Admittedly, he had some junk food at a friend's house the night before, bones said to be "all natural" but they all claim such. He had also been chewing on rained-on sticks drenched in bacteria. Both inges-

tions, I knew, were a culprit to his maturing digestive system. Poor Luke. He can't hop onto a toilet when a bad stomachache strikes. I forgave my pup. Then I bagged his poop and threw it outside for him to see. "Poopy goes outside." I treated the stain with a small army of toxins. Digestion issues (and diarrhea) are not uncommon for puppies. He watched me scour the carpet, head over paws, as though to say, "I'm sorry, Momma. I know my poopy is stinky."

Luke's stools hardened with each passing day. He became more "regular" with clean eating, a close monitor on snacks (and sticks), and mounds of freshly cooked white rice. My family celebrated progress. "Lukey did poopies outside!" We visited the spot on the rug for gentle reminders. "Noooo." I stretched out the word and kneeled to a spot overly fragrant. "Lukey does poopy outside." He glanced up at me then looked away. "Can we move on, please?"

BABY LUKE

Baby Luke emerged, suitably, when my pup was about eight weeks old. I'd cradle him in my arms like a baby so that he could gaze into my eyes, then chew on a dangling sweatshirt tassel. The habit continued as he grew, and even until he reached a stocky sixty-five pounds. Baby Luke doesn't realize he doesn't qualify for the standard of a lap dog. I return home from teaching Zumba classes to find him ready and waiting for our special routine in the family room. "Let's do Baby Luke!" He hovers about my gym bags and winter clothes, holding me to it. I collapse to the



floor and maneuver Baby Luke onto my lap. He licks my neck and face. We cuddle like a pair of honeymooners, and I think to myself, "Of all of my puppy's sides, this just might be my favorite."

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REAL ESTATE

Where will you go if you sell? You have options



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

There are plenty of good reasons you might be ready to move. No matter your reasons, before you list your current house, you need to consider where you'll go next.

In today's market, it makes sense to explore all your options. That includes both homes that have been lived in before as well as newly built ones. To help you decide which is right for you, let's compare the benefits of each. Regardless of which option you choose to explore, working with a trusted Realtor throughout the process is essential.

First, let's look at the benefits of purchasing a newly constructed home. With a brand-new house, you'll be able to:

1. Build your dream home. If you build a home from the ground up, you'll have the option to select the custom features you want, including appliances, finishes,

landscaping, layout, and more. Building means customizing, instead of wishing your home had a certain kind of flooring, a sunroom or some other special feature, you'll be able to tailor the property to your exact needs. You also won't be limited to a specific location or neighborhood.

2. Take advantage of builder concessions. In today's market, a lot of home builders are working hard to sell their current inventory before they add more to their mix. That means many of them are offering concessions and are more willing to negotiate with buyers. That could work to your advantage in the process.

3. Minimize home repairs. Many builders offer a warranty, so you'll have peace of mind on unlikely repairs. Plus, you won't have as many little improvement projects to tackle. If something goes wrong with your new home, not only are there likely some manufacturer warranties in place, but many builders also include additional home warranties.

4. Take advantage of energy efficiency. When building a home, you can choose brand-new, energy-efficient options to help lower your utility costs, protect the environment, and reduce your carbon footprint.

Now, let's compare those to the perks that come with buying an existing home. With a pre-existing home, you can:

1. Explore a wider variety of home styles and floorplans. With decades of homes to choose from, you'll have a broader range of floorplans and designs available.

2. Appreciate that lived-in charm. The character of older homes is hard to reproduce. If you value timeless craftsmanship or design elements, you may prefer an existing home.

3. Join an established neighborhood. Existing homes give you the option to get to know the neighborhood, community, or traffic patterns before you commit. Plus, they have more developed landscaping and trees, which can give you additional privacy and curb appeal.

4. Move in faster. If you have a short timeframe to move or you just don't want the process to take several months while your home is under construction, buying an existing home might make sense for you. When thinking about where you'll go after you sell your house, remember your options. As you start your search, think about what's most important to you. By working with a trusted Realtor, you can be confident you're making the most educated, informed decision. If you have questions about the options in your area, meet with a team member of marzeottigroup.net, call 617-519-1871 or a local real estate professional to discuss what's available and what's right for you.

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TIPS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING

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Don't let fear drive investment decisions



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

In the past year, we've seen some big swings in the financial markets. This volatility may make you feel as if you have little control over your investment success. But the truth is, you do have more control than you might think — as long as you don't let fear guide your decisions.

Investment-related fear can manifest itself in a few different ways:

- **Fear of loss** – Some investors may emphasize avoiding losses more than achieving gains. Consequently, they might build portfolios they consider very low in risk, possibly containing a high percentage of certificates of

deposit (CDs) and U.S. Treasury securities. Yet, a highly conservative approach carries its own risk — the risk of not achieving enough growth to stay ahead of inflation, much less meet long-term goals such as a comfortable retirement. To reach these goals, you'll want to construct a diversified portfolio containing different types of assets and investments — each of which may perform differently at different times. Your objective shouldn't be to avoid all risk — which is impossible — but to create an investment strategy that accommodates your personal risk tolerance and time horizon.

- **Fear of missing out** – You're probably familiar with the term "herd mentality" — the idea that people will follow the lead of others for fear of missing out on something. This behavior is responsible for fads or the sudden

emergence of "hot" products, and it's also relevant to investing. In fact, herd mentality may contribute to sharp jumps in the financial markets as investors drive up prices by buying stocks to avoid being left behind. And the same may be true in reverse — when the market starts dropping, skittish investors may accelerate the decline by selling stocks so they, too, can get out before it's too late. Buying or selling investments should be considered as needed to help advance your long-term financial strategy — not in response to what others are doing.

- **Fear of the unknown** – Some investors fall victim to "familiarity bias" — the tendency to invest only in what they know, such as local or domestic companies. But this behavior can lead to underdiversified portfolios. If your portfolio is dominated by just a few

investments, and these investments are fairly similar to each other, you could experience some losses when the inevitable market downturn occurs. To help reduce the impact of market volatility, it's a good idea to spread your investment dollars across large and small companies in a range of industries and geographical regions. And that's just on the equities side — it's also wise to consider further diversifying your portfolio by owning bonds and government securities. (Keep in mind, though, that diversification can't guarantee profits or protect against all losses.)

- **Fear of admitting failure** – Some individuals don't like to admit when they've been wrong about something, and they may continue the same failed activities, hoping for eventual success. This behavior can be costly in the investment arena. Sometimes, a

particular investment, or even an investment strategy, just doesn't work out, but an investor is determined to stick with it — even if it ultimately means considerable financial loss. Don't let his happen to you — if it becomes apparent you need to change your investment approach, move on to something better.

Fear can hold us back in many walks of life — but don't let it keep you from making appropriate investment moves.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Please contact Dennis Antonopoulos, your local Edward Jones Advisor at 5 Albert Street, Auburn, MA 01501 Tel: 508-832-5385 or dennis.antonopoulos@edwardjones.com. Edward Jones Member SIPC

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THE CAR DOCTOR

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Reloading Sirius; storing a hybrid battery, long-term



BY JOHN PAUL

Q. I have a 2012 Toyota Sienna minivan, this past March we drove to Florida in another car leaving the Toyota in the driveway

for three weeks. The day after we returned, I went to start the Toyota but it wouldn't. I then called AAA and a tech came and replaced the battery. Using the car later, I turned on the factory radio which is AM/FM and Sirius, but the Sirius wouldn't load and read out "no signal." Is it possible the radio was damaged from exchanging the battery? Please advise as I have called Toyota, who wants \$2500 to replace it but no one can give me a definitive answer to what is wrong.

A. Generally, what happens is the radio loses its memory when the battery fully discharges. I would start by calling SXM and see if they can restart (send a refresh signal) the radio signal from their end. I had a very similar issue (no signal) with a very used vehicle I purchased, after confirming the antenna was okay, I called SXM and after about 45 minutes on the phone and multiple attempts the radio came to life.

Q. I am going to buy a new 2023 Toyota RAV4 soon, but I can't get a straight answer to a question from any of the dealers I've talked to. I will be storing the vehicle for about half the year, every year. It can be connected to a battery tender, but it will not be started or driven. I've done this with my gas-powered vehicles without issues. My question is, would this kind of storage degrade a hybrid battery? Should I stick with the gas-powered model?

A. Toyota has a bit of a vague answer to this, stating that the traction battery should be left in a 20-80 percent state of charge, but other than that doesn't mention long term storage. Based on my conversations with hybrid vehicles owners who do something similar, I would say that the battery

pack should be okay. Out of curiosity I also checked the recommendations from the all-electric Tesla and was a bit surprised to read, If the weather is extreme, whether it's extremely cold or hot and you cannot park in an isolated area and are going away for more than two weeks, then you may want to consider a different mode of transportation. If the car battery is drained completely, it could lead to battery damage since the car can no longer keep the batteries at an ideal temperature and it'll no longer be able to protect itself from harsh weather.

Q. I'm a snowbird and is it best to leave that vehicle in summer heat in Florida or northeast winter cold. Is there any difference between storing a hybrid or any car in heat or cold?

A. There are challenges with both. The summer Florida heat, humidity, heavy rain and hurricanes versus winter cold, snow slush and blizzards. The summer heat/humidity can mildew the interior and age the tires and paint as well as shorten the battery life. The bitter winter cold can cause body seals to harden and crack. I have left a car outside (under a cover) in both Florida heat and Massachusetts winter and I found the hot weather to be slightly less detrimental to the car overall.

Q. What brand qualifies as a "quality" fuel additive? I have seen you mention this but have never named a brand(s). My second question is how often should it be added? My other question is how long have you been helping people with your column and radio program, and hopefully you are not retiring anytime soon.

A. I have had the best results with Techron fuel additive, which came with the very first fuel injected Corvette. The other product which I like, is from Lucas. Both of these are simple pour-in products and work. For me I use these products more sparingly than the directions, about twice per year. I also when I can use gasoline with more cleaning additives which help keep injectors and combustion chambers clean

(www.toptiergas.com). I am in my 38th year at AAA and started a column in our own publication which expanded to live chats and placement in several newspapers and websites. I hosted my first radio program about 30 years ago and have been on the air almost continually since then (now on Sunday morning at 11 on 95.9 WATD). I don't think I'm going anywhere soon.

Q. I have a 2016, Subaru Legacy with about 47,500 miles. I have always kept it in good shape, and it runs well. For the past couple of months, I have sporadically been having problems getting the key out of the ignition switch when I shut the car off. At first, I started the car again, moved it and then tried again. This worked sometimes. Lately, I just turn the key to the on position without starting the car and then try again. Sometimes I have to do this several times. I took the car to a transmission shop and the said there doesn't seem to be any problems with the linkage or neutral switch to (whatever that is).

A. Subaru has had some issues with the shifter, I would go to the dealer and have them

reference technical service bulletin 16-112-18R.

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@aanortheast.com. Follow John on Twitter @johnfpaul and friend him on Facebook mrjohnfpaul.

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SPORTS

Shepherd Hill girls ready to take step toward a title

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

After finishing the 2021-22 season with a 16-7 record, the Shepherd Hill girls' basketball team found themselves with a 21 seed under the new MIAA power ranking system as they entered the Division 2 State Championship Tournament. The Rams would run all over the High School of Commerce, picking up a convincing 57-22 win. Unfortunately, in the second round against Newburyport it was different story and Shepherd Hill fell 57-43.

Playing in the Midwatch B now during the regular season, Shep-

herd Hill seems to be comfortable.

"This team is made up of a group of dedicated girls who are invested in the program. We've had success over the years, but we are finding ourselves in our third league (SWCL, Midwatch A and now the Midwatch B)," Shepherd Hill Coach Maura Hackenson said. "I feel that the Midwatch B is about where we belong. Shepherd Hill is not as big of a school as many believe; some of the Midwatch A schools are three times our size and although we can compete against them it's tough."

Like every other high school athletic program, the goal is to win as many games as you can (or

now compete in) so that you can qualify for the State Tournament. Once there, anything can happen and with a little luck added to your skill you just might walk away with a State title. Shepherd Hill is no different and despite losing three starters from last year's 17-win season, Hackenson believes that her large senior class will be able to step into the vacant positions and pick up right where they left off last year.

Senior tri-captains guard Emery Mullen and forwards Olivia Krukonis and Emma Drake are expected to provide team leadership while contributing quality minutes on the court. Mullen is the offensive leader and the team's leading scorer. Last year she averaged 14 points and 9 rebounds per game.

In the early part of the season the Rams have gotten off to a rough start with all the illness the team has been battling, but they continue to fight game in and game out. Although Hackenson has yet to field a full squad through the first three weeks, Shepherd Hill has been able to get off to a 7-1 overall start and should be able to continue its success with everyone returning to the court. The Rams had different



The Shepherd Hill girls basketball team, thinking of a championship run this season.

10 players score in a victory over Westboro, which was 6-1 entering the game.

While Mullen will be the team's top scorer, sophomore guard Aryanna Sheehan has been putting up some offensive numbers through the early part of the season, giving the Rams a secondary scorer. Thus far this season Sheehan is averaging 14 points per contest.

"Emery and Aryanna will be the focal (point) of our scoring," the Shepherd Hill coach said. "We need at least one of them to be on top of things [each] night but having them both on their game together will definitely be a help and a big plus in our winning."

In addition to Sheehan and Mullen putting the ball in the basket for the Rams this season, the squad also will see some offensive output from seniors Shaylan Cashman and Drake while junior Heidi Jarosz will be the team's top rebounder. Cashman will also haul down some boards from time to time.

Although scoring is important in winning games, Hackenson firmly believes that defensive end of it is much more important.

"Defense is our top priority as we enter games, defense wins," the

coach said. "We need to go in and rebound and box out, but we also need everyone playing defense at all times if we want to win."

Hackenson will look to freshman Lily Connole for her defensive prowess; the incoming varsity athlete can cover with the best of them. Freshmen Sarah Miller and Gianna Neri can and will also play some tough defense for the Rams.

Other athletes hoping to see some floor time and help Shepherd Hill this winter will be seniors Victoria Cravedi, Meridan Wildes and Abigail Lombardi; sophomore Ashley Dickhaut as well as freshman Riley Bowes.

"Every year we evaluate the talent that we have while putting together a schedule that benefits the kids. Playing a tough schedule is better for the team in the long run," the Rams coach said. "While you need to play those top teams, you don't want the kids to get discouraged. Luckily that hasn't happened and the girls have bought into everything that we are coaching them."

Upon entering the season the Shepherd Hill goals were simple: win the Midwatch B League title and qualify once again for the Division 2 State Tournament with at least one home game. Once in the tournament Hackenson is hoping that her girls can get past the second game, unlike last year.

"During the regular season we like to play a tougher schedule against good competition so that we are ready when the tournament rolls around," Hackenson said. "We would also like to take part in the Westboro Tournament at the end of the year; this too would help us as we enter the post-season."

If all goes as planned Shepherd Hill will be entering the State Tournament as Midwatch B champions and playing some of their best basketball in hopes of winning a championship.

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Dudleytown-Part 1: Demons, evil spirits, foreboding horrors

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

A deserted settlement deep in the woods of western Connecticut has been the subject of writings, short stories and even movies. Owlsbury was once the more common name for what we today call Dudleytown. The abandoned settlement is said to harbor demons, evil spirits, negative energy, and a host of other foreboding horrors that have caused people to either shun the area, or at present, risk being arrested while searching for the now forbidden ghost town. There are many narratives regarding the area and the negative energy that abounds within. Many have sworn to the old tales while others brush them off as legends created to scare the meek.

Dudleytown is nestled on a plateau in the middle of three mountains and a hill. The original owner, Thomas Griffis, took deed to the area in 1738. Abiel and Barzillai Dudley, both soldiers in the French and Indian War, took title to a parcel of land in 1747, "on the road from the meeting house to Mr. Griffis." This would soon be-

come known as Dudleytown. The Dudley family was said to have brought a family curse over from England where several of their ancestors were executed for various plots against the government.

At one point thirty-five families called Dudleytown their home. Names like Carter, Jones, Tanner, Dibble, Rogers and others unknowingly made history by settling in the small town. The chief product was charcoal, for the area was heavily wooded.

It cannot be precisely discerned when the horror stories about Dudleytown began to circulate. The 1938 Federal Writer's Project book on Connecticut gives the abandoned village but a small paragraph within its pages and not much more. It mentions the trail where hikers traverse to "the dead end and mystery of Dark Entry... no other road, other than a pack horse trail ever penetrated this forbidding region."

The writer continues; "Tradition tells of a man, who with his wife, built a cabin in this wilderness. After an absence of two days, in which he tramped to the village for supplies, he

returned to find his wife a raving maniac, driven mad by some terrifying experience which she was never able to relate."

The narrative most likely concerns Dr. William Clarke and his wife. The doctor bought a piece of land in Dudleytown and built a cabin as a summer retreat. He became one of the founders of the Dark Entry Forest Association, a group of people who bought land in and around Dudleytown to preserve the former settlement and woods around it. The entry in the book also states that there are graves deep in the woods of those who have gone in and died of starvation or an accident. The writer refers to the place as Dark Entry or Owlsbury but never once mentions it as Dudleytown. The term Dark Entry referred to a forty foot tunnel that ran from the road to the cellar of a home. Unfortunately, both are long gone but the name has stayed on, creating ominous visions for those who read of the lost town.

One very famous account is that of Richard Brophy, the last inhabitant of Dudleytown. Brophy left his land in 1901 after his house

burned to the ground. Before that, his sons disappeared after they were caught stealing sleigh robes, and his wife died of consumption shortly after. It is alleged that the man showed up at the local tavern half insane and jabbering about half man-half animal cloven hoof beasts chasing him off his property. After that, he was never heard from again.

People suffered strange calamities while living in the cursed village. One of the Dudley brothers was found hacked to death near his home, another mysteriously fell from a ladder, one more died while visiting a neighbor's home. These and many more were attributed to the curse and the demons,

both visible and invisible that were said to inhabit the land.

Tales of people going insane ran rampant. Abiel Dudley was one of those who went mad, but he also was about ninety years old when he was considered feeble of mind. William Tanner was another Dudleytowner who was considered to have become feeble-minded. He lived to be one hundred and four years old. Several other accounts tell of Dudleytowners going mad after witnessing what they called wild half human beasts. Dr. William Clarke's wife was another as previously stated, but records indicate she died in a New York hospital from a physical illness.

Part II next month.

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