



Samuel Slater Experience staff aboard the trolley, a popular exhibit at the museum.

Samuel Slater Experience's first-anniversary party is March 4

The non-traditional Samuel Slater Experience museum will celebrate its first anniversary in a traditional way, with balloons, raffles, photo stickers, food truck, fun, and free admission for kids 12 and under. The festive event for the public will be held on Saturday, March 4, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 31 Ray Street in Webster.

Samuel Slater Experience opened one year ago to tell the story of Samuel Slater, the beginnings of the American Industrial Revolution, and Slater's impact on mill towns such as Webster, Massachu-

setts. Described as "Disney-like," Samuel Slater Experience employs state-of-the-art 4-D digital technology with immersive video and interactive exhibits to recreate two time periods: the early 1800s and the early 1900s. It creatively blends historical settings with experiential multi-media sight, sound, scents and movement.

In its first year, Samuel Slater Experience hosted hundreds of students on school field trips, many historical societies, special interest groups and organizations, as well as visitors from far beyond

the local area.

"To be remembered you have to make an impression, and we've certainly accomplished that," said founder Christopher Robert. "Visitors tell us this is the best museum they've ever been to, that it's amazing, beyond spectacular."

MARCH 4 DETAILS:

Raffles: Raffles for gift cards from local businesses, includ-

SAMUEL SLATER

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Tiny house a big deal for lifelong adventurer

BY JANET STOICA

When Kurt Kauppinen of Charlton decided to build a tiny home, he was thinking how cool it would be not to pay rent but after the completion of his small but mighty housing, it has turned out to be yet another adventure in his amazing history of accomplishments and worldly expeditions.

He is not quite thirty years old but has already forged a personal tale of exciting journeys to remote parts of Mother Earth. Call it wanderlust, the love of travel, the need to roam, hike, and experience more than what most of us will ever see or do but average is not what Mr. Kauppinen is all about. He's a seeker of experiences that many of us will never know and his quest for those experiences is what sets him apart from most of us.

"When I was living in Peru with the native population, I got the idea about building a tiny home," he said, "and the local people's living quarters were compact and practical. A tiny house seemed just about right. I felt that building a house this size also meant I could build it with wheels so that if I wanted to move, then I could. It was the freedom that attracted me and how I could also learn to build a structure of this size."

Mr. Kauppinen began his project by reading a book about tiny homes. He researched extensively and continued to review information about these modest living quarters. "I sat down and designed the home while educating myself on house framing, specifically on the



Kurt Kauppinen (second from left) with his two brothers, mother and grandmother in front of the tiny house he built.

2 x 4 framing in the construction process. YouTube was very instrumental in my learning process. You know, we're looking at a new age of learning and if you're willing to research, you can find what you need." He borrowed tools from friends and was able to procure framing wood from a Winchendon lumberyard at a great price. He also wanted to buy local and not build from a kit.

He began by buying a properly-sized trailer that would be able to carry the weight of his new home. He then cut and welded the metal pieces to the specifications of his own blueprint plans. The wooden structure began to take shape. By

TINY HOME

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SAMUEL SLATER

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Children get a first-hand look at old-time newspaper printing during a visit to Samuel Slater Experience.

Spa, Burlap to Boards, and PT Pet Supply. Other prizes are Worcester Bravehearts tickets, gift baskets and Nichols College merchandise. Raffle tickets will be available March 2-5; participants do not have to be present to win.

Food Truck: Tony Island Hot Dog Company of Oxford will park

onsite from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. with their famous grilled hotdogs. If the weather is bad, diners will be invited to eat inside the museum, whether or not they have purchased tickets.

Photo stickers: A local photographer will take pictures of kids on the trolley and make stickers for them to take home.

Special prices: Reduced admission prices are \$11 for adults, \$5 for seniors (over 60), \$7 for students 13-17, kids 12 and under free with paid adult admission. Kids 16 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Tickets can be purchased in advance online at <https://samuel Slater Experience.org>.

Where is the Samuel Slater Experience?

Samuel Slater Experience is located in the former National Guard Armory at 31 Ray Street, Webster, Massachusetts, and open to the public year-round. For more information, tickets, or group tours visit www.samuel Slater Experience.org.

Year-round Daily Schedule:
Fridays & Saturdays: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday: Noon to 4 p.m.
Last entry is at 3 p.m.

TINY HOME

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the way, Mr. Kauppinen has no experience in carpentry. His tutor was strictly YouTube and the confidence he had in himself to learn and to finish his project. He enjoys working with his hands and feels that "if someone else can do it, so can I." He said he never thought about quitting but it helped if he thought about the project in small chunks so as not to be overwhelmed by the entire job. He focused on framing first, then roofing, and after the wiring was done, it was smooth sailing.

He spent six months on his workmanship. "I began in June 2022 and finished in January 2023," he said. "I learned so much. I had to fix my mistakes. I learned how to make Shaker-style interior cabinets with live edge slabs. The interior colors were the hardest. I'd walk through Home Depot and check out appliances, furnaces, water pumps, hot water heaters, and electrical plugs. No microwave oven for me though. Everything will run on solar power with a whisper generator for backup in case my solar power runs out on a cloudy week. I have three 100-watt solar panels.

As an experiential education major, Mr. Kauppinen has attained a Bachelor of Science degree in Adventure Education. I would imagine that a bit of his college days were spent mountain backpacking and some in a classroom-learning environment with a few things certain—continuing to learn, to educate, and to experience life's offerings. He is an educator at an agency that assists young single moms from the street life. The agency's and his goals are to lend a hand to benefit those in need to get back into productive society.



Mr. Kauppinen consulted YouTube and worked with local materials suppliers to build his tiny house.



Mr. Kauppinen appears to be in the right place at the right time. Life is a challenge for most of us and for some, more arduous.

"When I was in college I decided that I wanted to stop paying rent," Mr. Kauppinen said, "I actually lived in a tent for a month by a river but one day the river overflowed its banks. One of my friends joked that I should just get a van and live in it. I just wanted my own spot. Since then, I've lived outdoors in Utah, Mexico, Nepal, and Peru. I didn't visit the major tourist areas but chose to experience and live with the local indigenous people. In the Amazon the husband would build the home and the family would live in it. I spent one month in the jungle harvesting Brazilian nuts. We hunted, fished, and ate local foods." Did he eat insects? "Yes, I did taste/eat some of their insect diet. The taste was metallic," he said. He has also enjoyed the fruits of the protected Costanias tree. The nut pods are as big as a

coconut and once broken open will yield about 25 individual nuts. The Costanias tree is a member of the chestnut tree family.

Mr. Kauppinen has learned that patience and taking smaller steps to attain a larger goal is the key to finishing anything in life he enjoys. "I learned from my own running and jogging routines to keep things in perspective by taking each part of a long run and breaking it into smaller pieces. Instead of thinking about running fifty miles, I would tell myself to concentrate on running 20 miles and then keep going." Would he ever build another tiny house? "Yes, but not alone," he says. "I'd do it again with a friend or family member."

"The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

- Lao Tzu

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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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Webster's Routes 16 at 395 to be reconfigured

BY JANET STOICA

You won't see any changes for 18-24 months but it's finally going to happen. Yes, the rumors, the frustrations, and the final reconstruction of the traffic exchanges for Route 16 and the I-395 ramps will begin in this

decade. We hope. Let's face it, our Webster Highway Department is the best at what they do but they are not the almighty State Highway Department which is overseen by the Federal Highway Department when it comes to Interstate 395.

We all know how slow the state and federal governments move,

don't we? Leeway should be given to them I suppose because it's not like Webster or any other wonderful town like ours is the only municipality requesting highway construction assistance. Yes, there are hundreds of thriving towns like ours waiting (patiently?) to have their turn at state and federal funds



to improve heavy-traffic areas like our Route 16 and 395 interchanges.

But big changes are coming. We hope. The miserable wait for those cars, trailer trucks, and buses waiting to make a left turn onto Route 16 after using the Webster 395-southbound exit ramp will soon be but a distant memory. We hope. The vehicles trying to make a left turn onto Route 16 from Cudworth Road will finally be blessed with a rotary that will stop 4-way traffic and make it much easier to navigate as we enter the rotary. Just think of this rotary as Webster's version of the peanut rotary in Worcester's Kelley Square. It's not so bad. It'll still be a crazy gauntlet of driving antics but at least we all get a chance to enter that round-about, right? One-two-three Ready? Go!

Here's the deal: A draft Notice of Intent permit application was submitted to the Mass. Dept. of Transportation with approval slated for spring 2023. The Webster Conservation Commission then reviews. After approval, the right-of-way process begins consisting of property appraisals and negotiations with land owners that could take up to one year. Con-

struction bids will be advertised in the fall of 2024.

Construction entails new traffic lights to be installed at the I-395-South exit ramp into Webster. The new lights will be programmed and tied into sequence with the lights at Price Chopper plaza to prevent backups to the 395 exit ramp area. Additionally, a rotary will be constructed at the Cudworth Road/Route 16 intersection. There will also be bicycle lanes, pedestrian sidewalks, and a replacement of the Mill Brook culvert to a precast concrete box culvert.

Can't wait to have a smoother driving experience. Can't come a day too soon. From 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. daily the I-395-South ramp is sometimes backed up onto I-395. It's like kamikaze driving trying to make a left turn onto Route 16-East. It's like having the composure of a saint if you are an employee of Mapfre Insurance waiting to get onto Route 16 to head into Webster never mind trying to make a left turn towards Douglas although I'm sure that many Mapfre employees have learned different ways to escape their parking lot dilemma by now. Hope springs eternal!

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No cast for me; it was my leftie

BY JANET STOICA

Okay, this is Part 2 of 2. A continuation of my story from last month's Yankee Xpress where I wrote about my broken wrist/hand experience. It's been an unforgettable experience. And yes, the CAT scan ordered by my excellent primary care physician, Dr. Beata Stancel-Grabias, proved that I had two separate fractures, one on each side of my left wrist. I guess I was fortunate (really?) that since I'm a right-handed individual, the shatters were in my left carpus. Hey, if you've got to go without the use of one wrist for a while, it might as well be the left, right?

All of this was a nightmare. How can you do much of anything without the use of both hands/wrists? The orthopedic specialist advised me that since 3-1/2 weeks had passed from the day of my injury, it was now too late to place my wrist into a cast. I am in awe of my fellow humans who do not have the use of both hands, legs, arms. My situation seems

like nothing compared to those of us who have lost their symmetry. Your balance is off as you come to realize that you cannot depend on your twin appendage's stability to dress yourself, to maneuver, to lift items, just hundreds of everyday tasks that we take for granted are no longer part of our routine. It's like learning a new set of exercises. You just cannot do what you want to do. Yes, of course, it's frustrating. It's also frightening and maddening as well.

Can you drive a car? Maybe, but you really shouldn't be one-hand driving as we all pretty much realize. You do need the stability of two hands on the wheel at the prescribed 10 and 2 o'clock positions. My sister-in-law, who is an attorney, advised me that "you can drive at your own risk but I wouldn't advise it." I learned quickly on my first driving challenge when I ventured out to the grocery store that cast or no cast, splint or no splint, two-handed driving is the preferred method. As I turned out of my driveway onto the street, I found that the two-hand approach

is best. I un-splinted my hand/wrist/arm and painfully placed my injured wrist as an anchor on the steering wheel. Once my shopping/driving experiences were over I learned to order my grocery items online for home delivery even if it was using the one-finger method pecking away on the computer keyboard.

Dressing myself? Forget about it. The chore of getting my clothes on became a 20-minute lesson in how to slowly but surely get into my attire. Dealing with buttons or snaps? You've got to be kidding! Lots of pullover sweaters and sweatshirts became my new style including sweatpants. The only kind of footwear I was friends with were plush easy-pull-on socks and slip-in shoes. What a royal pain. Earrings? Since I have pierced ears that part wasn't too bad but slipping a watch over my fractured wrist wasn't even a remote thought and I had no intention of using my right wrist as my timepiece's new spot. My cellphone became my new chronometer.

Making Sunday dinner was a

huge mistake. How to lift a large pot of water out of the sink to bring to the stove was a dilemma. I was really running on overtime trying to adjust to my new lifestyle. Using a 2-quart pitcher to carry water from the sink to the stove became my latest idea to fill the pot. I think my right arm was starting to look like Popeye's. Capellini was on the menu and I wouldn't be denied. How I wished I had a pot-filler faucet right over the stove. Why do pots and pans have to be so heavy?

I never thought I was good at adapting to anything quickly but now I consider myself a rapid responder to changes. Using a vacuum cleaner, washing dishes, putting dishes away, lifting packages delivered or rather empty boxes that carried my deliveries as I learned to open the boxes on

my front porch and take items out one-at-a-time, taking a shower and towel drying, so many daily activities that were always taken for granted.

After four months, my left wrist has gone through occupational therapy but the results haven't yielded anything exceptional. I still wake up with partial numbness of my fingers, my wrist aches before a rain or snowstorm, and I have to be mindful of when I decide to use my leftie for lifting anything major. I'm sure it will improve as it gradually has over the past few months and I hope to see that day sooner than later! Staying off ladders is also part of my new lifestyle too....

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LKQ called to account for soot draining into Webster Lake

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," 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 "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.

"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 an ongoing issue.

"Nine, ten years ago, I went there for water-quality testing. A basin



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.

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 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.



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Getting You
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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

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

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

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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 Navigator, the nation’s most-utilized charity evaluator, which states

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

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– St. Francis of Assisi

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A bookstore, and more, in Webster

BY ROD LEE

Between plucking his guitar and singing tunes during a performance in concert with Raianna Richards on the night of February 11th, Mark Mandeville recalled visiting Booklovers' Gourmet in Webster when Deb Horan's shop "was the size of a broom closet."

Today's Booklovers' Gourmet, at 72 E. Main St., home of new and used books, journals, jewelry, gifts, sweets, coffee and more, is a bigger and busier operation than ever—as evidenced, for instance, by "Winter Light," a group art show with works on display in the café gallery all month long, through February 28th.

This exhibition followed a hosting of Author Leslie Wheeler by the store's evening book group in January. Signed copies of "Rattlesnake Hill: A Berkshire Hilltown Mystery," were available, as was the latest in the series: "Wolf Bog."

From Open Mic Poetry Share to Drink Coupon of the Month to a Writers Group, a Mystery Book Group, a Peer Support Group and other regularly scheduled activities and special offerings, Booklovers' Gourmet is a place of almost constant action, Tuesday



Deb Horan introduces Raianna Richards and Mark Mandeville for "An Evening of Music" at Booklovers' Gourmet on February 11th.

through Saturday.

Several of those who attended the hour-and-a-half concert by Mr. Mandeville and Ms. Richards were familiar with their work. One friend from Shrewsbury, waiting for the show to begin, said "there is no better song-writing duo in New England." Another said he had been part of "a walking tour of the Berkshires, ten towns," that the couple had

undertaken last year.

Webster residents, Mr. Mandeville and Ms. Richards come across as down-to-earth folkies with songs like "Hello Bill," in tribute to a late musician who spent his final days at a VA home; "When Love Comes Round Again" (to which Mr. Mandeville said "I'm getting mushy writing all these love songs"); and "Another Day Tomorrow"—the first

song they wrote in tandem "after twenty years together."

They recently spent "a whole year in Canada, playing just house concerts," Mr. Mandeville said.

Musing on being asked "are there any musicians anymore with messages like Bob Dylan and Woody Guthrie," Mr.

Mandeville replied "maybe not, but we can sell out Booklovers' Gourmet!"

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

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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.

Reunion Tap & Table ready for opening in Whitinsville

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.

ONGOING AS OF FEBRUARY 12

• The plight of American POWs in Vietnam is realized in an extraordinary exhibit on the 50th anniversary of their release, at the American Heritage Museum, 568 Main St., Hudson. Coined “the Hanoi Hilton” by American POW Robert Shumaker, the Hoa Lo Prison became synonymous with the torture, isolation and malnutrition U.S. aviators were subjected to after being shot down over North Vietnam. Half a century later, the AHM has built a lasting tribute to these men, featuring the last two remaining cells that held Americans, first-hand accounts, and interactive displays, which provide a unique and intimate look at the physical and psychological challenges they faced.

**MOST FRIDAYS DURING LENT
FEB. 24, MARCH 3, 17, 24 AND 31**

• Lenten Fish Dinners, dine in or take out, are being offered at St. Denis Church, Douglas, from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. (NOT on March 10 and NOT on April 6). Includes baked fish, coleslaw, tartar sauce and your

choice of baked potato or white rice. For an additional cost, add a cup of homemade clam chowder. Prices to be determined; order online before 7:00 p.m. the Thursday prior, or tickets will be available at the door on Friday (while supplies last). Saint-DenisChurch.com/fish-dinners. Cash, check or Square payments accepted on arrival.

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 Whitin 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 ended 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@openskycs.org.

THROUGH FEBRUARY 28

• The Women’s Success Network’s New Mothers Collection Drive continues throughout the Valley, with drop-off locations at the offices of UniBank, Millbury Federal Credit Union, Homefield Credit Union, the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce and Whitin Community Center. All donations will be distributed to local



Harbo Auto Sales with locations in Whitinsville and Webster is among the many local businesses that are typically represented at the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce’s Home & Community Expo. The 23rd annual edition of the event with UniBank as presenting sponsor is scheduled for Saturday, March 25th at Northbridge High School.

food pantries and nonprofit agencies serving new moms in the Blackstone Valley. Persons interested in knitting, crocheting or making anything handmade for this campaign are asked to contact the Chamber at 508-234-9090.

SUNDAY, MARCH 5

• The New England Country Music Club will host a dance featuring “The Farm Hands” band at the Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge. Doors open at 12:15 with live music from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub.

THURSDAY, MARCH 16

• Journey to the Polynesian Islands by attending the 29th annual Superinten-

dent’s Gourmet Dinner at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, 65 Pleasant St., Upton. The competition center will be transformed into a tropical dining oasis. “Polynesian” is the theme the students have chosen for this year’s event. A variety of dishes reflecting this theme will complement carefully selected wines. The evening will begin with a social hour at 5:00 p.m. followed by a multi-course dinner at 6:00 p.m. This gala event is a major fundraiser for the school. Tickets are \$140

per person or \$1300 for a table of ten and may be obtained by calling 508-529-7758 x3020. After confirming your reservation checks made payable to Blackstone Valley Tech can be mailed to BVT c/o Anne-Marie Colonero, 65 Pleasant St., Upton MA 01568, to hold your seat(s).

HAPPENINGS!
continued on page 12

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HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 11

MARCH 17, 18 & 19

• The Uxbridge High School Drama Club will present "Grease: School Version" with book, music and lyrics by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey, with performances at 7:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday in the Uxbridge High School Auditorium. Grease: School Version is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French Inc., a Concord Theatricals Company. "Grease" is a turbo-fueled nostalgic musical road trip through the joys, relationships and dances—literally and emotionally—of the students of Rydell High in 1959. The UHS Drama Club boasts a cast and crew of sixty members, directed by Kathleen Penza and Mary Mangnall with assistance from Sue Hirtle. The production is a collaborative effort between several departments at UHS including Performing Arts, Visual Arts/Graphic Design and Technology and Construction. Contact the Uxbridge High School office to reserve tickets; tickets are free but are required for admission and will be available to the public starting March 6.

SATURDAY, MARCH 18

• A Floral Arrangement Fundraiser Class presented by Sandy Michalak of Herbert E. Berg Florist will be held at the Millbury First Congregational Church, 148 West Main St., Millbury, at 2:00 p.m. Cost is \$25 for instruction and all materials. Beginners

welcome. Advanced registration by March 14 is required by calling Janice Fortin at 508-826-6381.

• Irish Night will be celebrated at the Uxbridge Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., starting at 6:00 p.m. Corned Beef dinner served at 6:30 p.m. Music by the Laura May Band 7:00-11:00 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for dinner and dancing and \$15 for dinner-only, takenout (5:30-6:30 p.m. at the kitchen door). Please purchase tickets in advance at the club. Call 508-278-9800 for more information.

SUNDAY, MARCH 19

• The New England Country Music Club will host a dance featuring the "Kerrie Evers" band at the Uxbridge Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St. Doors open at 12:15 p.m. with live music from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub.

SATURDAY, MARCH 25

• The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's Home & Community Expo will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Northbridge High School, 427 Linwood Ave., Whitinsville. This is one of the area's premier events to advertise your business to residents and prospective customers. Single booths, double booths, nonprofit booths are available; a "golden egg" exhibitor add-on provides for a prime location on the floor with identification as part of the scavenger hunt. Small businesses from all over the Blackstone Valley will showcase their



Southwick's Zoo in Mendon with wildlife experience spread over two hundred acres is looking toward an early-April opening of its 2023 season.

products and services. Exhibitor registration deadline is March 8. For more information, contact Liz O'Neil, loneil@blackstonevalley.org or 508-234-9090 Ext. 102.

ON OR AROUND APRIL 1

• Southwick's Zoo, 2 Southwick St., Mendon, opens for the season, with such attractions as a 35-acre deer forest, petting zoo, parakeet landing walk-through aviary, EARTH Discovery Center, Skyfari Ride, Woodlands Express Train, Rainforest Conservation Maze, Soaring Eagle Zipline and more. www.southwickzoo.com.

TUESDAY, APRIL 4

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

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.

SATURDAY, APRIL 22

• Douglas's Silver Club is sponsoring a bus trip to New York City to see the new Titanic exhibit. Cost is \$120. There will be lunch at Ann and Tony's in the Bronx and time on Arthur Avenue (lots of Italian bakeries, butcher shops and delis). For more information call Sue at 508-476-5820.

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.

MAY 15-17

• Douglas's Silver Club is sponsoring a three-day trip to Maine (Portland and Kennebunkport) that includes guided tours of both places, a tour of the Victoria Mansion, a visit to the Seashore Trolley Museum with a trolley ride, two nights lodging, two breakfasts and two dinners (one of them lobster) as well as some free time for shopping. Cost is \$399 per person. Call Sue at 508-476-5820 for further details.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

• The Sutton Historical Society welcomes Andrew Noone, author of "Bathsheba Spooner: A Revolutionary Murder Conspiracy," at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, Sutton, at 7:00 p.m. Go to www.suttonhistoricalsociety.org for further info.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7

• The Sutton Historical Society welcomes Mark Savoio of the Thompson Historical Society for the presentation "The Mass 15th of the Civil War and Wilder Holbrook, Sutton," at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, at 7:00 p.m. Go to www.suttonhistoricalsociety.org for further info.



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Local 4 Life Sponsors Annual Worm Moon Walk

Have you ever wondered why the March moon is called the Worm Moon? Join Local 4 Life to experience the March full moon and learn about the night sky from local astronomers at its Annual Worm Moon Walk on Walnut Lane Farm, 39 Koebke Road in Dudley, Massachusetts, on Saturday, March 4th at 6:30 pm. The rain/snow date is Sunday, March 5th.

The walk will take place, in part, on hilly terrain. Farm appropriate footwear and flashlights are recommended. Refreshments will be

available, and all ages are welcome. There is no charge for this event.

This event is sponsored by Green Light Baking, the Rose Room, and Webster Aubuchon Hardware.

Since its inception in 2019, Local 4 Life, a non-profit educational organization, has been making a positive impact in the community by cultivating local connections and providing educational outreach opportunities. Its staff and volunteers have offered unique events, such as family outings at local farms, educational children's

workshops at local farms and businesses, and contests that promote the importance of supporting local. Local 4 Life provides diverse community outreach and youth education that also promotes local conservation. These programs have spanned six surrounding towns and impacted people of all ages in those communities.

For more information, visit www.local4life.org or their Facebook page, www.facebook.com/Local4LifeMA or call Erin at 508-341-5347.

UniBank To Host Free UniPay Payment Meet-Up For Businesses And Non-Profit Organizations

UniBank will be sponsoring a free UniPay Online Payment Solution Meet-up for businesses and non-profit organizations who are interested in offering online payment as a solution to customers/donors. It's a simple fact: customers today expect the convenience of making payments online. UniPay by UniBank is simple, efficient, secure, reliable, and can help your business or non-profit increase efficiencies. The solution is customizable and offers your business or non-profit the ability to accept payments securely 24/7.

Join Kristy Genga, AVP

from UniPay by UniBank for a 45-minute webinar on Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 1 p.m. to learn how this solution can help your business or non-profit and enhance your revenue collections!

All attendees will be entered to win a \$250 UniPay Setup Fee Coupon. Register at unibank.com. Sweepstakes to win UniPay Setup Fee Coupon is subject to complete official rules which are available at www.unibank.com. To enter, individuals must register and attend the meeting. No purchase or account required to enter or win.

New chief in Dudley

Dudley Police Lt. Marek Karłowicz was sworn in as the town's next police chief by Town Clerk Lori A. Smith on January 9th. Chief Karłowicz was the unanimous choice of selectmen to succeed retiring Chief Steven Wojnar, effective at noon on January 13th. Lt. Karłowicz 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 Karłowicz.



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LIVING WITH LUKE

amyleclaire@hotmail.com

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 ac-



cept 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? Teared 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 ingestions, 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 knelt 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."

Write to me at amyleclaire@hotmail.com

Visit Luke on Instagram @living-withlukevalentino



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**

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.

Looking to fall in love with a new home? I can help.



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Don't let fear drive investment decisions



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

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

In the past year, we've seen some big swings in the financial markets. This volatility may make you feel as if you

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 under-diversified 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 this 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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Drive your Corvette regularly to help keep it fit



BY JOHN PAUL

Q. I have a question about my 2014 Corvette which has 4,500 miles on it which I bought it new. Since I have owned it, I

have had nothing but problems. The transmission went at about 2,500 miles, the info center had to be replaced twice and the car needed to be towed to replace a spark plug. About six months later another plug went bad. The dealer tells me it is because I don't drive the car

enough. I always let the car idle for about five minutes to get the plugs hot, are they right about plugs fouling because the car is not driven enough? Recently I took my car for an oil change. After the oil change the white smoke was so intense coming out of the exhaust, I couldn't see the cars behind me. When I got home the hood of the engine was so hot, I could hardly touch it. I checked the oil and it was overfilled almost a quart of oil, I brought the car back and they drained the oil and put the right amount of oil, the car still smokes a lot and leaves heavy black carbon on the exhaust and leaves gray dust on the bumper and license plate along with little black dots all over the bumper. My car was always at car shows and was cleaned once a week and never had this problem. The dealer claims there is nothing they can do, and now I'm stuck

with cleaning exhaust and bumper every time I use it. Help!

A. The dealer is correct, just letting the car just run is not good for it. Your Corvette and really any vehicle needs to be driven. Letting the engine idle will carbon up the spark plugs and cause them to fail. You are better off driving it every few weeks, if possible, for about 30 minutes and during this time some of the driving should be at highway speeds. If you



put the car away for the winter, just leave it. Many owners are tempted to start their cars and let them run, which is not a great idea. You are much better off waiting for a nice dry day and going for a ride. Regarding the exhaust, I'm concerned about the white smoke which is typically from coolant being burned during combustion. It is also possible the exhaust is filled with the excess oil which should burn off over time. My suggestion is drive your car and enjoy it. \

Q. The drive belts on my car are six years old and have about 70,000 miles on them. Should I change them? There looks like just a bit of wear on the sides. Also, I'm thinking of going electric with my next car, is it true there is almost no maintenance?

A. There was a time when fan belts and radiator hoses were replaced every few years. Today we routinely see drive belts as well as coolant hoses last well over 100,000 miles and 10 years. In addition to fraying, turn the belt to look at the underside, if there is deep cracking, replace the belts. Regarding electric cars, as an example on the Ford Mustang Mach-E, there are still cabin filters to change transmission fluid replacement, brakes wear (slower than ICE vehicles) tire replacement (faster than ICE vehicles), suspension checks, wheel alignment and tire rotation. But overall there is less maintenance.

Q. My question involves connecting a solar charger to maintain the charge on my battery. The 12V charger port on my vehicle does not stay on with ignition key removed. This would require me to connect the solar charger directly across the battery with a controller relay. Can the solar charger with the controller remain connected while I drive the vehicle?

A. The controller of the solar charger should have diodes that only allow the electricity to go in one direction. I see people leaving them connected to boats and RVs without issue. That being said, I looked up two different solar battery chargers and both stated the charger should be disconnected when the vehicle is being driven. So based on that, I would say, connect the battery with a quick disconnect plug and disconnect the charger when the vehicle is in use.

Q. I have a 2022 Hyundai Santa Fe and the manual states to use 0W-30 oil which i don't see on store shelves.

is it ok to use 0W-20 oil?
A. If the manual or oil cap states 0W-30 that is what you should use. Although interestingly my data base lists 0W-20 oil but I would defer to the owner's manual or oil cap on the engine.

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 at 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, Shepherd 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 10 players score in a victory over



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

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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TALES FROM BEYOND

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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 Dudleytown resident who was considered to have become feeble-minded. He lived to be one hundred and four years old. Several other accounts tell of Dudleytown residents 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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