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## A Walk in the Park will showcase Uxbridge historic district



BY ROD LEE

A spring house tour sponsored by the Uxbridge Historic District Commission (UHDC) that involves several of the town's prime vintage properties will give homeowners like Peter Frabotta III of "Barbara's Blue House" at 46 Capron St. a chance to unveil for rare public viewing residences they are proud of and eager to show off.

Dubbed "A Walk in the Park," the spring house tour is scheduled for Sunday, April 30th from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. All are welcome to participate. In lieu of an admission charge, those joining the tour are asked to bring a food item for donation to the local pantry.

An Uxbridge Senior Center shuttle will be available from the McCloskey Building parking lot, and informational flyers can be obtained at the Mendon Street Kitchen's main location. Mendon Street Kitchen is also playing an active role with the food aspect of the proceedings as well.

Peter Frabotta on the steps of 46 Capron St., a home he has meticulously updated with beautiful furnishings and overall improvements.



The Whitin Community Center on Main St. in Whitinsville. The facility is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2023 with a fundraising Gala in May and other special activities throughout the year.

## A fundraising Gala and special events mark WCC's 100th

BY ROD LEE

In this, its 100th-anniversary year, the Whitin Community Center has demonstrated an ability to stand the test of time. It would be easy to assume, then, that the sturdy, low-slung brick structure and grounds on Main Street, just west of Memorial Square, have never experienced challenging moments.

In fact, just the opposite is true, the WCC's executive director, Heather Elster, pointed out during a conversation in the main lobby of the building on March 21st.

Most recently, "the Gym," as the facility is called in local parlance—just as the former Whitin Machine

CHAMBER  
continued on page 2

WCC  
continued on page 4

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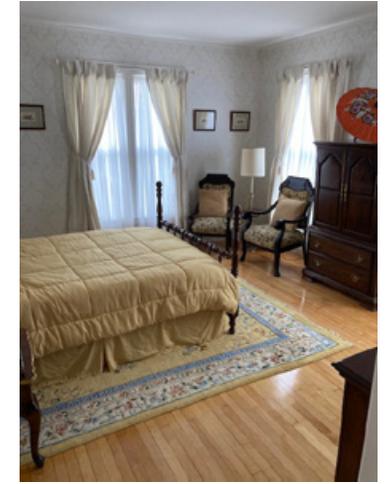
## UXBRIDGE

continued from page 1

The 77 Blossom Shop and Lucille's Floral Designs are contributing arrangements for the homes that are open for the tour.

UHDC Chair Jane Keegan and her colleagues are using the event to build interest in hoped-for passage of an amended town bylaw that would expand the bounds of the historic district farther along Mendon, No. Main and Capron streets. The proposal is headed for a vote at Town Meeting on May 9th. It has received the unanimous endorsement of the Uxbridge Planning Board.

Ms. Keegan says "strollers" taking advantage of the tour are invited to start at the east end of Mendon St. in the "Wheelocks-ville," or "Wheelock Village" area with its "astonishing mixture of



Unlike some other homes in the neighborhood that have been "bastardized" over the years, Peter Frabotta's residence at 46 Capron St. has undergone only enhancement from its original state, as depicted in these photos of various rooms. The home will be open as part of a spring house tour being sponsored by the Uxbridge Historic District Commission on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

distinguished architecture." In this sector, mill owners and management personnel lived side-by-side in close-to-the-street homes.

Continuing in a westerly direc-

tion from that point, beyond "the flats" and the Blackstone River lies the Central Woolen Mill, or "Workingman's," district, including the repurposed Stanley Woolen

Mill with its antique shops connected to the Blackstone River Canal tow path.

The highlight of the spring house tour will undoubtedly be homes that will be open for inspection. These include the aforementioned 46 Capron St. (Mr. Frabotta's home), 236 Mendon St., 35 Capron St. and 115 South Main St.—the Zadock (Taft) House.

Like Mr. Frabotta, Timothy and Kristina Johnson, Karen Beane and Kevin Donaldson are eager to put properties they own on display for the community's admiration.

Ms. Beane and her sisters Alice and Pat own 236 Mendon St., which she calls "The Beane Compound." The Johnsons own 115 South Main St.—the circa 1780 Zadock (Taft) House. They also live at 8 Capron St. Mr. Donaldson's owns 35 Capron St.

Mr. Frabotta's enthusiasm for showcasing 46 Capron St. runs high. He has spared no expense in turning Barbara's Blue House into a masterwork. A man with discerning and exquisite taste, he has filled the premises with period

furnishings and antiques acquired throughout New England. All of these are creatively and tastefully arranged. He frequently entertains guests.

Barbara's Blue House is a circa 1908, 4500-square-foot center-entry formal Colonial named for Mr. Frabotta's mother. The handsome two-story structure was purchased by the Frabotta family for \$28,000 in 1968. It sits on three-plus acres of land and is fronted by handsome black wrought-iron fencing with a separate carriage house and garage in back.

"The fence is brand new and looks like it was put in one hundred years ago," Mr. Frabotta says.

"I want to personally thank Joe McCourt for his tireless efforts and hard work in the revitalization of this property," Mr. Frabotta said. Mr. McCourt is a retired Uxbridge teacher who still coaches tennis. He has proven to be of invaluable assistance as Barbara's Blue House

**UXBRIDGE**  
continued on page 6

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# Xpressly Yours ... a letter from the editor

## A Hannaford remodel...and a Big Y coming to town?

Notes taken along the trail, while waiting to see how efforts to speed up the game of



BY ROD LEE

professional baseball play out in the major leagues and at Polar Park—and in anticipation of the Worcester Bravehearts' season opener against the Norwich Sea Unicorns at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, May 24th . The expression “can't find the chips!” and others like it are commonly heard at the Hannaford supermarket these days, as the store undergoes an extensive renovation and redesign—its first, customers say, in many years.

Along with this, there is widespread speculation that a Big Y is going to be setting up shop in the near future just down the road, at the former site of sand pits in South Uxbridge.

Google “Big Y in Uxbridge?” and the result is an “offering memorandum” from Horvath & Tremblay for space to lease in what appears to be a listing for a new-construction plaza just north of the towns of Blackstone and Millville that will apparently be anchored by a Big Y. “Nothing yet,” however, by way of commitments, according to Bob Horvath, executive vice president of Horvath & Tremblay.

The arrival of a Big Y would of course mean serious competition



Redesign of its produce area is a work in progress, as Hannaford Supermarkets' Uxbridge store undergoes a major facelift. The remodel is expected to be finished by mid-June.

for Hannaford—the former Victory. Victory stores were started by the DiGeronimo family of Leominster in 1923 and sold to Hannaford in 2004.

Springfield-based Big Y boasts more than eighty locations in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and employs over 72,000 people.

Horvath & Tremblay notes that 222,000-plus individuals live within ten miles of the prospective grounds of a Big Y, with an average household income of \$115,889.

Caitlin Cortelyou, external communications manager for Hannaford Supermarkets, gave me the following statement about improvements being made to the

company's North Main Street, Uxbridge store:

“We anticipate the upgrades currently underway at our Uxbridge store to be complete in mid-June. Designed to enhance the overall shopping experience, the remodeled store will feature a

fresh look, as well as new products and services to make shopping as easy and convenient as possible for our customers.

“We're excited to introduce a greater variety of grab-and-go meal options to our already expansive selection of fresh, quality items, including hot soups, chef-crafted sushi, hot and boneless wings, ready-to-heat and ready-to-eat entrees and flatbread pizza, freshly made sandwiches and salads, and pasta and taco meal kits.

“An enhanced selection of organic and natural products and dairy and frozen items will be available, as well as a greater variety of local products storewide.

“Customers will also enjoy more fine cheeses.

“As a thank you to customers, the Uxbridge store will offer a variety of special giveaways, coupons and offers for shoppers in June and July.”

Ms. Cortelyou (she/her) told me anything to do with the rumors about a Big Y would have to come from Big Y, a hard outfit to get in touch with.

Meanwhile, Hannaford's Ux-

bridge store is looking better by the week, as a familiar market gets a new look and feel.

▪ Speaking of the Bravehearts, the team has sold out their June 6 and June 7 games, for the earliest sellouts in the Futures Collegiate Baseball League perennial contender's ten-year history.

▪ Looking forward to the Blackstone Valley Education Foundation's annual Business & Education Forum at the Grand View in Mendon on April 13th... more later.

▪ The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce is touting a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 11th at 12:00 noon at Manchaug Mills, 9 Main St., Sutton, for the new Heirloom Emporium. Heirloom Emporium is a unique consumer experience, offering a wide variety of handcrafted, authentic and natural creations transformed from lonely heirlooms into one-of-a-kind modern antiques.

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**WCC**

*continued from page 1*



Alice Bridges of Uxbridge trained in the Whitin Community Center pool and competed in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin.

Works, across the street, is referred to, affectionately, as “the Shop”—underwent a struggle as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Closed for several months and with each of its departments facing their “own set of regulations” in dealing with the crisis, the Community Center was knocked off its firm foothold.

“At one point we were down to 30% of our membership,” Ms. Elster said.

“We received PPP loans in partnership with UniBank” in surviving the ordeal, she said.

The Community Center has clawed its way back, as it did after a devastating fire in 1959.

“We always say the Whitins built it very well,” she said.

A plaque recognizing George Marston Whitin hangs in the lobby.

Approaching two decades with the Community Center, and nearly ten years as executive director, Ms.

Elster has proven to be a worthy successor (after two other short-termers) to Charlie Thompson. A small-town Connecticut girl and graduate of Connecticut College in New London, she brings to the position of executive director the same commitment that guided Mr. Thompson’s actions in establishing himself as a pillar on the business scene in the Blackstone Valley.

Ms. Elster has utilized her employment and outside-activities background to move the Community Center forward with a mix of social, recreational, educational and outreach programs designed to meet the needs of residents of all ages in the Blackstone Valley. The competition pool was done over, the Rockdale Youth Center was opened (“our first big project”), roofs were replaced, and flooring in the child-care rooms was upgraded.

Her resume is extensive. She is

The cover of a brochure the Whitin Community Center has published as a benefit for members of “the Gym.”

a co-founder of Soccer Kicks for Cancer, a member of the Northbridge Coalition (civil rights and social action), part of the leadership team of the Blackstone River Bikeway Association, on the executive steering committee for the town of Sutton’s 300th anniversary, part of a Sutton-Douglas support group, part of People First in Uxbridge, a member of CHNA 6 (a community health network) and a member of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce’s Women’s Success Network—for instance.

She is a recipient of the Massachusetts Commission on the

Status of Women Unsung Heroine Award, and has been recognized as a Worcester Business Journal 40-under-40.

Overseeing the operations of the Community Center is the best job in the world, she says.

“I love working here. It’s nice to be part of the community. We should feel grateful we’re still here after one hundred years.”

In observance of its milestone, the Community Center will host a

**WCC**

*continued on page 9*

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# New Law May Offer Financial Opportunities



Mark Freeman

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Your own decisions and actions typically determine your financial strategies. But outside events can affect your choices, too. And that may be the case with the recent passage of the SECURE 2.0 Act.

This piece of legislation covers many areas. But here are some changes that may be of interest to you, depending on your situation:

### If you're a retiree ...

- *Higher age for RMDs* – The

age at which you must take withdrawals — known as required minimum distributions, or RMDs — from your traditional IRA and 401(k) has increased from 72 to 73, effective this year. (If you turned 72 in 2022, but still haven't taken your first RMD, you will need to do so this year.) And in 2033, the RMD age will increase again, to 75. You don't have to wait until these ages before taking withdrawals, but the new age limits may affect your withdrawal decisions.

- *Lower penalties for missed RMDs* – If you don't take at least the RMD for a given year, you could face tax penalties. Previously, this penalty was 50% of the amount you were supposed to have taken but now it's reduced to 25%.

- *New options for qualified charitable distributions* – If you're 70½ or older, you can make a one-time qualified charitable distribution (QCD) of up to \$50,000 to entities that previ-

ously couldn't receive these QCDs, including charitable remainder annuity trusts, charitable remainder unitrusts and charitable gift annuities that meet certain criteria. Because QCDs are typically excluded from your taxable income and could satisfy some or all of your required RMDs, which are otherwise taxable, these expanded opportunities may prove beneficial from a tax standpoint. Consult with your tax advisor to determine if and how QCDs make sense for your situation.

### If you're still working ...

- *Roth contributions to retirement plans* – Starting this year, if you participate in a 401(k) or similar plan, you can take your employer's matching and other contributions on a Roth basis. While these contributions will count as taxable income, they can ultimately be withdrawn, along with any earnings they generate, tax free, provided you meet certain conditions.

### If you're a business owner ...

- *Increased tax credit for starting a retirement plan* – If you have 50 or fewer employees, you can now claim a startup credit covering 100% — up from 50% — of the administrative costs of opening a 401(k) plan, up to \$5,000 for each of the first three years of the plan.

- *Employer contribution credit* – You may now be able to get a tax credit based on employee matching or profit-sharing contributions. This credit is capped at \$1,000 per employee and phases out gradually over five years.

- *Military spouse tax incentive* – If you have 100 or fewer employees who earn at least \$5,000 annually, you can earn a tax credit of up to \$500 for three years if you make military spouses eligible for a retirement plan, such as a 401(k) or SEP IRA. You can receive the credit for the year in which the military spouse is hired, plus the next two taxable years.

These aren't the only provi-

sions in the SECURE 2.0 Act that may be relevant to you, and some parts of the new law go into effect in the future. You may want to contact your financial and tax advisors to see just how you might ultimately be affected by this legislation, and how you could take advantage of it.

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**UXBRIDGE**

*continued from page 2*

(Peter Frabotta's mom's favorite color) has been updated over the past several years.

Furnishings that add character can be found in almost every room. An original hand-carved cigar-store Indian. Distinctive floor lamps from the playhouse in Marblehead. An 1880s Charles Stieff piano from Baltimore. All original crystal chandeliers. Genuine tribal Persian carpets ("very rare, very hard to come by"). A Belgian hunt board from the 1890s.

An encyclopedia of cartoons from The New Yorker on a coffee table embellishes the spacious living room with a literary touch.

In an interesting twist, Mary Brady, from whom the Frabotta's purchased the home, "forgot her

hair pins and her cane." They remain on the premises, in a coat closet on the first floor.

That Barbara's Blue House has good bones is reflected by Mr. Frabotta's comment that he only recently replaced a more than one hundred year-old boiler.

He has been told "your parents would be so proud" of the embellishments he has incorporated into the home.

Donaldson home in the family since 2015

Nearby, 35 Capron St. has had a slightly different history.

"The original structure was built in the late 1800s," Mr. Donaldson says. "In 1910 the house sustained a fire and the deed was rewritten. The home was rebuilt as it stands today.

"The Donaldson Holdings Trust is the fifth owner of the house."

Mr. Donaldson notes that "the

unique layout of the house" has accommodated many political parties throughout the years, including a campaign function for John F. Kennedy.

"The company that manufactured the wallpaper that can be seen in the main halls and dining room went out of business in 1956.

"In the early 1900s the Clark family" of the Clark Electric Co. owned the house and poured a lot of money into maintaining it.

"Some of the fixtures seen throughout the house were written into the original deed to remain in the house," Mr. Donaldson said.

In 2015, Mr. Donaldson said, "the Donaldson Holdings Trust purchased the house after it sustained damage from a Boillard failure, flooding all of the steam lines and the house hard froze.

"The restoration continues to this day."





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*Karen Beane's home at 236 Mendon St. — the former "Keegan House" — is set back from the road and bordered by a wall, allowing for privacy. The living room, one of ten in the home, includes a beautiful fireplace.*

Beane home was "the Keegan house"

The Beane Compound on the northeast side of Mendon St. has been occupied by the family since 2011, Karen Beane said.

Since it was constructed in 1939, the ten-room, three-and-a-half-bath home has been known as "the Keegan House" after its original owners. It was conceived by a partner at Hutchins & French, a prestigious architectural firm in Boston.

For almost fifty years the property was the home of Gordon W. Keegan Sr. and his wife Florence Moore, both of Uxbridge.

The land on which the house sits was a wedding present from Sarah Austrup Scott, whose son, Gordon, was the groom's best friend. As bachelors, they lived in the Cornet Farnum House (c. 1715) with Leo Kenney, later a well-known state representative. Both "Gordons" were prominent in the woolen

business, the former being employed at Scott's Mill at the end of Hecla Street and the latter as the wool buyer for the Uxbridge Worsted Co. owned by Charles Root Sr. and originally on the site of the Bernat Mill, which burned in '07, at Mendon and Depot streets.

The stretch of Mendon Street, known locally as "Wheelockville," is officially labelled "Wheelock Village" by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The architectural style of the Keegan House is described in MHC records as Colonial Revival. Like nearby wood-framed houses, the front face is clapboard. But unlike its neighbors, the architect departed radically from the norm, using brick on the side faces and then building a distinctive brick wall versus a more traditional NE picket fence in the front yard.

**UXBRIDGE**

*continued on page 8*

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**UXBRIDGE**

*continued from page 6*

Also, the house is set back farther from the street than the others, and the brick wall offers more separation and privacy from this busy main east/west thoroughfare through town.

Not only does the Keegan House differ architecturally with its combination of brick and clapboard, the roof and driveway are slate. Formal, circular gardens with a pergola and large fieldstone fireplace for barbecues were constructed in the back yard.

The (original) interior features were unusual, too, Jane Keegan points out.

Several exotic woods were chosen to panel the formal living room, den, and large basement area, but family memory only recalls one. The basement family/rec room featured Japanese wormwood. That ran short during World War II, and the “wormwood effect” had to be achieved by drilling holes in another wood to approximate the “look” of the original panels. A fireplace and bar area with beer on draft finished the family room.

In addition, there was a basement photographer’s dark room, mangle in the laundry off the kitchen, “bell system” to connect help, heated two-car attached



**Left, Tim and Kristina Johnson are pictured inside of the Zadock (Taft) House at 115 So. Main St. Right, The Donaldson Holdings Trust home at 35 Capron St. is undergoing continued restoration. The home has been the scene of many political functions, including a campaign event for John F. Kennedy.**



garage and built-in, bedroom bureaus/closets, predating the California closet concept by generations.

Since the Keegan House was sold in the late 1970s, three sets of owners have made interior and exterior changes to accommodate 21st Century tastes. The original screened-in porch, shutters and seasonal awnings have been removed. In the back of the house, den, kitchen and laundry areas have been reworked for a more open concept, and the in-ground swimming pool replaced the formal gardens.

“To blend old with new is the

essence of ‘preservation,’ and the Keegan House remains a lovely lady more than eight decades later,” Ms. Keegan said.

Ms. Beane said the home features ten rooms and three and a half baths; and a fireplace.

Zadock (Taft) House “has a lot of character”

The Zadock (Taft) House was probably built in the 18th Century and received its present Greek revival styling in the 1840s or 1850s, according to Ms. Keegan.

It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

Tim and Kristina Johnson of Capron St. purchased the home,

which is situated just south of Uxbridge Center, in January of 2022 and immediately set to work updating the property.

“We’ve always loved old houses,” Mr. Johnson, who is assistant vice principal at Hopedale Junior-Senior High School, said, in welcoming a visitor to the address on Palm Sunday.

Ms. Johnson worked at UMass Memorial in ultrasound and has taken on restoration of the home as somewhat of a personal crusade.

The home features four large rooms on the first floor and four large rooms on the second floor and has “a lot of character,” Kristi-

na Johnson and her husband point out. This is typified by “a lot of the original molding,” old built-ins, old floorboards, and window seats. Ms. Johnson has tackled much of the interior redesign she wants to see happen, with the addition of wallpaper as an accent piece, for instance.

Their initial intent is to use the home as an Airbnb, “to rent the whole house,” and to utilize it for small events including bridal parties and showers. But Ms. Johnson’s

**UXBRIDGE**  
*continued on page 9*

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**WCC**

*continued from page 4*

100th Anniversary Fundraiser Gala on May 6th. Appropriately, this black tie-optional sit-down event

tank, carnival games, a doll and pet parade, vendors, “and maybe foam!”

On July 21st and 22nd, the WCC’s free Youth Outreach Summer Theatre student-led production will take place at ValleyCast’s

A WCC Appreciation, thanking “our hundreds of volunteers, donors, sponsors, members, guests and staff,” will wrap up 100th festivities on Thursday, November 16th.

But there’s more. “Santa’s com-

ing” on Saturday, December 9th.

Sidetracked temporarily by the pandemic, the Whiting Community Center has maintained its focus on health and wellness as “the most complete family and recreation facility” in the area with two swimming pools, a gym, a fitness center, early-learning programs, a weight room, summer camps and a seven and a half acre park.

The Community Center owes its heritage to George Marston Whiting, treasurer and CEO of the Whiting Machine Works from 1886 to 1920. Mr. Whiting prized service to community. He planned construction of a place where residents of the region could swim and socialize.

After G.M. Marston’s death his daughters Elsa, Katharine, Lois and Elsa provided the funding that saw his vision through to completion of the gym and pool. During the 1920s and 1930s the WCC was known for its excellent aquatic program and served as a regional training site. Several local swimmers went on to compete nationally and internationally including Alice Bridges of Uxbridge, who finished second in the 100-meter backstroke in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin.

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

**UXBRIDGE**

*continued from page 8*

long-term objective is to possibly have a coffee shop on the premises.

The land has long been associated with the locally prominent Taft family. As early as 1708 it was the farm of Joseph Taft, who helped oversee construction of the town of Uxbridge’s first meeting house in 1728-30. It was acquired in the 1860s by Zadock Taft, a great grandson of Joseph Taft, who owned several industrial concerns including a half interest in the Rivulet Mill complex.

The Zadock (Taft) House will host a Mother’s Day Tea Party from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

“We’re feeling really good right now,” Mr. Johnson said, of the couple’s acquisition of the home, with rooms they have labelled “The Flower Room,” “The Family Parlor” and “The Tea Room.”

All of these properties are part of what the UHDC sees as “a logical extension” of what the town had in terms of an historic district in 2004 “and coming upon our 300th anniversary. We have a lot of precious history” to hold onto, she said.

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



WCC Executive Director Heather Elster, right, with her Greenway Challenge team: Debra Moore, John Beaupre, Richard Nelson, Robert Naser and Stephen Witkus.

will take place in the WCC gymnasium and will include cocktails, dinner, dancing, a live auction, a commemorative photo gallery and more.

The gym is being renovated for the occasion. “It hasn’t been touched since the fire in ‘59,” she said. At a cost of \$250,000, repairs will be made and the floor will be replaced.

“We will do AC in there for the first time,” she noted; though not in time for the Gala.

The Gala headlines a series of happenings associated with the anniversary. These began with a Kids Fair and Eggstravaganza on April 1st.

Following the Gala in early May, on Saturday, June 10th, “we are bringing back Picnic in the Park,” Ms. Elster said. “It’s been over ten years since we had it. This should be fun,” restoring to the calendar “a favorite,” with food trucks, a dunk

Singh Performance Center at Open Sky.

Cars in the Park will take center stage on Saturday, August 19th in Whiting Park.

The WCC’s Benefit Golf Tournament is planned for Monday, September 11th. That same month, on the 30th, features the Greenway Challenge, one of New England’s premier adventure races.

The month of October includes a Halloween Haunted Swim & Roller Skating Costume Party on the 20th and “Nightmare on Main St.” on the 27th. The former includes a kids open swim with Halloween music and pool toys and a kids open skate with Halloween costumes and music. The WCC’s “Nightmare on Main Street” returns on the 27th in Whiting Park, which will be transformed into a spooky outdoor haunted trail for middle schoolers and up. There will be food trucks and goodie bags.



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# Team effort results in crowd-pleasing Chamber Expo

BY ROD LEE

As members of the nine-person committee in charge of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's Home & Community Expo, Chris Whitten of Premeer Real Estate and Ashling Rowen of Infinity Events were pleased with this year's event, held on March 25th at Northbridge High School.

Chamber President and CEO Jeannie Hebert, staffers Liz O'Neil and Kristen Kearnan, Heather Elster of the Whitin Community Center, Wendy Brown of UniBank, Ashley Daviau and Tony Romniou



Above, Marcus Seedhom, postmaster in Linwood, asked for and received a Koopman Lumber bucket, a popular item at the Expo. Left, Harry Berkowitz and Russ Youmans were present on behalf of WCRN 830 AM at the Expo. The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce has a close working relationship with the radio station.

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were also on the organizing committee for the Expo.

"I love it," Mr. Whitten said, of the 23rd version of the Expo. "I had clam chowder for lunch!"

Premeer was both one of the sponsors of Expo, and a participating exhibitor.

The Expo returned in 2022 for the first time since the pandemic, and was welcomed again this

spring by a long line of people waiting to get in at 10 o'clock, as Mary Whittier's daughter Samantha (Whittier) Staebner from Whittier Farms handed out packets of cheese.

"Every year people ask 'is this

**EXPO**

*continued on page 11*

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**EXPO**

*continued from page 10*

going to be the last one' because everything is going virtual," Mr. Whitten said. "For me, it's a chance for people in the Blackstone Valley to get together." In fact, that explains a name change, he said, noting the replacement of the word

and the father of five children, he is active in town cleanups, fireworks and the Uniquely Uxbridge Day. His parents and several siblings still live in Uxbridge. As a businessperson, he is proud of Premeer's giveback program; "\$150 of every closing is turned over to charity," he said.

As a planner of memorable events for her own clients, Ms.

went flawlessly."

She developed an interest in coordinating "remarkable events" from the age of seven and used the Hospitality program at Endicott College as a springboard into an internship planning high-end events in Ireland and Europe and then a career in hotels and nonprofits before starting her own company.

Ms. Rowen noted that every feature of the Expo was planned to assure the satisfaction for both the exhibitors and the attendees, "from the exhibitor lounge for them to have a quiet place to go and get a coffee or a snack to the check-in process, everything was fantastic."

Each element of the Expo from Easter Bunny photos to a mascot dance contest to a performance by Murphy's Irish Step Dancers ran on time and people "enjoyed the entertainment," she said. "While walking around and checking on exhibitors and vendors," she saw that those in attendance "seemed to really enjoy their conversations at each booth and each exhibit was very engaged with the guests."

Ms. Rowen said the chowder competition was "a great hit."

Overall, Ms. Rowen said, Chamber staff "was on top of every detail. Nothing was overlooked. This was definitely a huge team effort."

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



Members of a younger generation helped represent Harbro Auto Sales at the Expo: Present were James Donnelly, Abby Donnelly, Emmet Hare, Ken Donnelly and Jonah Hare.

"Business" with the word "Community."

Premeer Real Estate is based in Smithfield, Rhode Island, but Mr. Whitten's roots are in Uxbridge. A Uxbridge High grad, Class of 1995,

Rowen also appreciated having a role in the Expo.

"I was asked to assist with the logistical details for the Expo and worked with Liz O'Neil," Ms. Rowen said. "I felt that the day

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# BVT students earn 104 SkillsUSA medals at District V competition

**B**lackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School students had an opportunity to test their vocational-technical competency by com-

peting with other trained career and technical education students from six vocational high schools during the first of three SkillsUSA competitions. On March 20th,

223 BVT students competed in the annual SkillsUSA Massachusetts District V Competition with outstanding outcomes. The competition allows students to demonstrate their vocational-technical education, skills, and knowledge with SkillsUSA employment and trade tests. Successfully demonstrating their knowledge in their career technical area of study, employability skills, and safety, student-competitors from BVT proudly claimed 37 gold, 37 silver, 30 bronze medals and swept 11 categories.

Eighty-three students will advance from districts to compete amongst the most talented vocational-technical students in the Commonwealth at the SkillsUSA Massachusetts State competition held at BVT in late April. An additional thirty-five students will go directly to the state competition, and twenty-five student delegates will represent BVT. The complete list of medalists is available at [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/skillsusa](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/skillsusa). BVT students who earned medals at the SkillsUSA Massachusetts



District V Leadership Conference are listed by hometown:

**BVT**

*continued on page 13*

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**BVT**

*continued from page 12*

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Gold: Nicholas Cummings, CNC 3 Axis Milling Programmer; Lucien Stenehjelm, Robotics & Automation Tech; and Ellen Franco, Technical Computer Applications.

Silver: Kyle Bates, Diesel Equipment Technology; Pypier Bourre, Health Knowledge Bowl; and Dimana Hristova, Mechatronics.

**BLACKSTONE**

Gold: Carolyn Powers, Collision Damage Appraisal; Luke Tellier, Major Appliance Technology; Evan Bouvier, Photography; and Daniel Cardone, Web Design.

Bronze: Keira Kelliher, Medical Terminology.

**DOUGLAS**

National Parliamentarian: Hunter Claflin  
Gold: Julia White, Esthetics; Om Patel, Mobile Robotics Technology; Skyler Robinson, Restaurant Service; and Brett Staples, Web Design.

Silver: Haley Chamberlain, Cosmetology Under 500 Hours; and Baron Sherry, Mechatronics.

**GRAFTON**

Gold: Soumith Madadi, Computer Programming; Owen Mathieu, HVAC/R; and Isabella Grabau, Power Equipment Technology.

Silver: George Mahassel, Cabinetmaking; Ryan St. Angelo, Culinary Arts; Lourenco DaSilva, Technical Computer Applications; and Casey Wong, Urban Search & Rescue.

Bronze: Douglas Kennedy, Mechatronics; Jordyn Carroll, Nurse Assisting; Owen O'Packi, Television (Video) Production; and Danica Fiore, Welding Sculpture.

**HOPEDALE**

State Officer Candidate: Kallie Allen

Gold: Joshua Maillet, Diesel Equipment Technology.

Silver: Kaden Crawford, Internetworking.

Bronze: Gabriella Griffin, Health Knowledge Bowl; Ashlyn Leonard, Health Knowledge Bowl; and Eleanor Poitras, Health Knowledge Bowl.

**MENDON**

Silver: Naomi Tsuda, Baking & Pastry Arts; and Arthur Tusoni, Television (Video) Production.

Bronze: Josh Blalock, Diesel Equipment Technology; Noah LeFave, Electronics Technology; Lilly Rezek, Health Knowledge

Bowl; Leo Camilli, Major Appliance Technology; and Charles Lozeau, Mobile Robotics Technology.

**MILFORD**

Gold: Igor Freeman, Additive Manufacturing; Lizmary Vidal-Sanchez, Dental Assisting; Jason Cardente, Electronics Technology; Heather Jarek, Television (Video) Production; and Lucas Brault, Urban Search & Rescue.

Silver: Lacey Coffman, Advertising Design; William Naff, Automotive Service Technology; and Hannah Murphy, Photography.

Bronze: Mayra Desousa, First Aid/CPR; Jack Eastwood, HVAC/R; and Iwan Steinmann, Television (Video) Production.

**MILLBURY**

Gold: Jayden Quang, Mechatronics; and Mason Diosomito, Mechatronics.

Silver: Nicole Boucher, Health Knowledge Bowl.

Bronze: Natalie Rutkiewicz, Esthetics.

**MILLVILLE**

Silver: Evan Mendes, Power Equipment Technology.

**NORTHBRIDGE**

Gold: Emily Wildfeuer, Architectural Drafting; Catherine

Kingsbury, Customer Service; Riley Driver, Industrial Motor Control; Sosie Derkosroffian, Medical Terminology; Dylan Leeds, Mobile Robotics Technology; Sam Grilli, Technical Drafting; and Jenna Dolber, Television (Video) Production.

Silver: Travis Cook, Major Appliance Technology; Spencer Vilt, Plumbing; Bridget Roy, Restaurant Service; and Kayla Leppamaki, Robotics & Automation Tech.

Bronze: Lukas Petone, Additive Manufacturing; Joseph Hutchinson, Architectural Drafting; Emma Vaughan, Baking & Pastry Arts; and Jackson Doan, Technical Drafting.

**SUTTON**

Gold: Benjamin Judson, Automotive Refinishing Technology; Joshua Smerlas, Urban Search & Rescue; and Marcel Peladeau, Welding.

Silver: Caroline Martin, Additive Manufacturing; Scott Glode, Electrical Construction Wiring; Brenna Kehowski, Medical Terminology; Samuel Judson, Technical Drafting; and Andreanna Distefano, Welding.

Bronze: Ryan Cyronak, Additive Manufacturing; and Ryann Lombardi, Basic Health Care.

**UPTON**

Gold: Jacob Giancola, Robotics & Automation Tech; and Laith Shloul, Telecommunications Cabling.

Silver: Skyla Jack, Carpentry; Logan Rae, First Aid/CPR; and Cassidy Lyon, Health Knowledge Bowl.

Bronze: Justin Fransen, Mechatronics; and Samantha Carroll, Technical Compute Applications.

**UXBRIDGE**

Gold: Makaylah Holzman, Additive Manufacturing; Nicholas Mellen, CNC 2 Axis Turning Programmer; and Samuel Waugh, Electrical Construction Wiring.

Silver: Samantha Makynen, Additive Manufacturing; Kali Bly, Cosmetology Over 500 Hours; Mia Guadagnoli, Health Knowledge Bowl; Cole Pinchuck, HVAC/R; Caterina Corapi, Robotics & Automation Tech; Autumn Herrick, Telecommunications Cabling; Joshua Thompson, Television (Video) Production; and Noah Cahill, Urban Search & Rescue.

Bronze: Savannah Brodeur, Cosmetology Over 500 Hours; Eli Tripp, Culinary Arts; Van Richard, Mobile Robotics Technology; Isabel Cahill, Photography; and Samuel Kirby, Telecommunications Cabling.




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## Sen. Moore announces proposed Chapter 90 funding

On March 30th, the Massachusetts State Senate passed a bill that includes \$350 million in bond authorizations for transportation needs across the state, including \$200 million for the state's Chapter 90 program, which provides municipalities with a reliable funding source for transportation-related improvements, including road and bridge repairs.

"Improvements to our roads, bridges, public transit, and broader transportation systems are some of the most effective investments we can make when it comes to improving the day-to-day lives of Bay Staters," said Sen. Michael Moore

(D-Millbury). "I'm pleased to have voted to approve these funds, and I'd like to thank my colleagues for advancing this vital legislation."

This legislation also authorizes \$150 million in programs that will assist municipalities with various transportation-related projects. This includes \$25 million for each of the following:

- the municipal small bridge program;
- the complete streets program;
- a bus transit infrastructure program;
- grants to increase access to mass transit and commuter rail stations;

• grants for municipalities and regional transit authorities to purchase electric vehicles and the infrastructure needed to support them;

• and new funding dedicated to additional transportation support based on road mileage, which is particularly helpful for rural communities.

A different version having previously been passed in the House of Representatives, the two chambers will now reconcile differences before sending the bill to the governor's desk.

## Ribbon cutting is May 3rd for Family Orthodontics in North Grafton

Join the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday, May 3rd at 10:00 a.m. for a grand opening ribbon-cutting event at Family Orthodontics, 80 Worcester Street, North Grafton.

Family Orthodontics is dedicated to providing outstanding orthodontic care and customer service to you and your family and is located in three convenient locations, North Grafton, Milford and Westborough. Family Orthodontics works hard to treat their patients the same way they would like to be treated: with respect, professionalism, and sensitivity toward your needs. Their practice utilizes the most advanced techniques available, including Invisalign® clear aligners and Damon® Smile, to provide the most effective and efficient treatment for both children and adults. From TMJ to braces, under bites and overbites, surgical orthodontics, or simply looking for

that perfect smile, Family Orthodontics is your dental specialist for the proper treatment, prevention and care for your smile!

Jeannie Hebert, president and CEO of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, said, "The Chamber is excited to welcome Family Orthodontics to the Blackstone Valley offering such caring orthodontic services to all ages. Family Orthodontics works hard to ensure you and your family feel comfortable, safe and welcome while in their care. There has never been a better time to work towards that smile you've always wanted!"

This event is free and open to the public. We hope to see you there!

## Booklovers' Gourmet marks Independent Bookstore Day on April 29

This year marks the tenth anniversary of Independent Bookstore Day and Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster, is celebrating the occasion with an appearance by Tom Ingrassia.

Mr. Ingrassia is co-author with Jared Churdimsky of "One Door Closes: Overcoming Adversity by Following Your Dreams." He will talk about the inspiring stories of sixteen people from all walks of life who are featured in the book. Many of them live in Central Massachusetts. They have overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles in order to achieve their dreams.

Also sharing their stories in this special event from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on April 29th are Scherrie Payne

(formerly of The Supremes), June Monteiro of The Toys, and the late Mary Wilson of The Supremes who wrote the epilogue for the book.

Through their powerful, first-person accounts, these dreamers share a road map guiding the reader to discover how to live with vision, courage, determination and passion.

One Door Closes was named Best Self Help Book by the New England Book Festival and was a finalist in the National Indie Excellence Awards. The book is currently being adapted as a documentary film: One Door Closes: Corey's Courage, which will have its premiere in Worcester in September.



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# St. Patrick's Day 'a blowout' at Plummer Place

Plummer Place at the Northbridge Senior Center sold out for an incredibly festive celebration of St. Patrick's Day on March 16th, according to Program and Volunteer Coordinator Amy Cowen.

The event featured a corned beef luncheon and lively sing-a-long

entertainment provided by a Rock & Roll band.

"The party was a blowout!" Gloria Woodson of Whitinsville said. "I can't wait for the next big party here!"

Seniors who attended came dressed in colorful attire including paddy caps, Irish skirts, sweaters and scarves, green necklaces and

shamrock headbands.

Themed raffle baskets were donated by Atria Draper Place, Blackstone Valley Health & Rehabilitation and Cornerstone Assisted Living of Milford.

The band Driveway Chicks kept toes tapping!



March 16th brought local seniors to Plummer Place at the Northbridge Senior Center for a rollicking good time to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

# Southwick's Zoo gears up for season opening on April 15th



As of 10:00 a.m. April 5th the clock was ticking on the Southwick's Zoo website for the facility pre-season opening in 2 days, 23 hours, 50 minutes and 52 seconds, with a full official start to 2023 scheduled for April 15th.

Located at 2 Southwick St. in Mendon, the zoo is home to over 850 animals representing 150 different species from around the

world. Exhibits feature naturalized settings and a main draw is the zoo's EARTH Discovery Center with its live presentations and educational programming.

Events begin in earnest with "Trash to Treasure" on April 22nd, followed by Law Enforcement & First Responders Day on May 3rd, Honor Teachers Day on May 7th, Mother's Day Weekend on May

13, "Passionate About Primates" on June 11th and Father's Day Weekend on June 17th.



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BY ROD LEE

# Chowder call for The Green Plate and others; The Lodge at 70

With her well-established reputation for nutritious and wholesome food, Danielle Desrosiers of The Green Plate in Whitinsville was a natural to line up alongside competitors from Galliford's Restaurant & Tavern, Samuel Slater's Restaurant and the Grafton Job Corps in the chowder contest at the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's 23rd annual Home & Community Expo on March

25th. Ms. Desrosiers declared her experience a satisfying one. "The chowder contest was great!" she said. "I offered a dairy-free clam chowder. It was so nice to see some familiar faces, but getting positive feedback from people who had never been to the café or some who had never heard of us was great too! The event was so well attended!" Liz O'Neil, director of programs, events and membership/marketing coordinator for the Chamber, said "the People's Choice winner was Grafton Job Corps and the Judge's Choice winner was Galliford's." By the way, Expo concessions were provided by The Neighbor-

hood Kitchen, also in downtown Whitinsville.

Wood-fired pizza and more The Lodge is something of an institution on Gore Road in Webster. Celebrating seventy years in business, the restaurant's appearance has not changed dramatically over that time. Antique rifles are still mounted on the wall. Easter bunnies adorn the fireplace. But one thing that's different is a brick oven, which commands a prominent spot in the vicinity of the bar, lounge and dining room. "That was added two years ago," Heidi, a waitress, said on the evening of March 30th. "Coming out of the pan-



The Galliford's booth at the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's Home & Community Expo. Galliford's was the Judge's Choice winner in the chowder contest.

demically, we asked ourselves how can we change things up?" The result is wood-fired pizza that is proving to be popular. On this particular occasion the choices were wood-fired chicken parm with linguine and baked had-dock cooked in sherry and lightly covered in Ritz crumbs, served with hand-cut fries and smashed turnips and carrots.

Happy Hour at Samuel Slater's There has been a lot of talk about a possible return of the Happy Hour in Massachusetts, and Samuel Slater's Restaurant at Indian Ranch is doing something

about it. In addition to "Prime Rib Wednesdays" (a 12-ounce cut plus two sides), Samuel Slater's has brought Happy Hour back from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on both Wednesday and Thursday. Don't forget the events...Comedy Night with Tony V and Guests on April 21st, Music with Aquanett on April 29th and Music with Boombox on May 5th.

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



**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](mailto:rodlee.1963@gmail.com).

**THROUGHOUT APRIL**

• "Through an Artist's Eyes—Paintings & Carvings" by Wayne Yacino will be on display and available for purchase at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster, during regular business hours, Tuesday-Saturday 10-5 and Wednesday 10-6. The store will be closed for vacation April 10-13. Mr. Yacino is a native of Oxford, Massachusetts of Metis (French-Abenaki), Italian and Polish descent who began painting at the age of five. He is self-taught. He has exhibited his Native American imagery in Europe and the U.S. and has taught the Ancient American Skills the first weekend of October at Waters Farm Days in Sutton since 1996.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 14**

• The Millbury Women's Club will host its Ladies Night Out fundraiser with WHDH TV Investigative Reporter and Thriller Novelist Hank Phillippi Ryan as guest speaker. Ms. Phillippi Ryan will be selling and signing her newest novel "The House Guest." There will be a cash bar, light refreshments and raffle prizes donated by businesses in town and members of the MWC. Tickets are \$35. Contact MaryLou Mulhane at [mlmulhane1@gmail.com](mailto:mlmulhane1@gmail.com).

**SATURDAY, APRIL 15**

• St. Peter's Parish, 39 Church Ave., Northbridge is hosting a Chicken Parm Dinner starting at 5:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Tickets are \$17 per dinner for a meal that includes salad and dessert. To-go meals will be available for pickup at 5:00 p.m. All

orders must be purchased in advance. Pay It Forward by purchasing an extra dinner to be delivered to someone in need in the community. Call 508-234-2156 or email [parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org](mailto:parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org) to buy tickets or for further info.

• The Grass Roots Coffeehouse's first concert of the season with the band Redwood Hill performing will take place at the Rockdale Congregational Church, 42 Fowler Road, Northbridge. Doors open at 6:45 p.m. The show starts at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$15; \$5 for students under age 18. Proceeds benefit the Rockdale Congregational Church. Redwood Hill is a tribute band that pays homage to The Country Gentlemen, one of the most influential bluegrass groups of all time. Redwood Hill is made up of veteran southern and western New England musicians Dave Orlomoski, Terry McGill, Keith Edwards and Lilian Fraker. Hot soups, chili, beverages and desserts will be available for purchase. For more details, visit [www.rockdalechurchonline.org](http://www.rockdalechurchonline.org), email [aplantdbob@aol.com](mailto:aplantdbob@aol.com) or call 617-429-0347.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 16**

• The New England Country Music Club hosts dancing featuring the "Crossfire" band at the Uxbridge Progressive Club, 18 Whittin St. Doors open at 12:15 p.m. with live music from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. [www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub](http://www.facebook.com/NECountryMusicClub).

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19**

• Join Rainne Richards and the Plummer Place Pluckers for a ukulele sing-a-long concert featuring favorite songs from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s at Plummer Place at the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitisville, at 2:00 p.m. Lyrics provided. All are welcome. Snacks will be provided. Sign up at the front desk.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 20**

• Kids of all ages are invited to be entertained by pianist and historian Richard Hughes as he present a special children's silent movie program at the Samuel Slater Experience museum on Ray St. in Webster at 2:00 p.m. Mr. Hughes will begin with a ragtime solo from the early 1900s. He will talk about silent movie days, cylinder phonographs, synchronized sound effects, animation devices and motion picture



The American Heritage Museum, 568 Main St., Hudson, will host a World War II Tank Demonstration Weekend May 27th and 28th from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. [www.americanheritagemuseum.org](http://www.americanheritagemuseum.org).

cameras. He will play the piano along with historic movie clips. The event is free, but registration is required at [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com) Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Visit [samuel Slater Experience.org](http://samuel Slater Experience.org) for more information.

**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.

• The Manchaug Pond Association hosts its annual Spring Cleanup of Manchaug Pond. Volunteers are invited to join members and friends of the Manchaug Pond Foundation in this initiative. Volunteers with boats are also welcome to help clean up coves. Meet at the state public access boat ramp on Torrey Road in Sutton. Rain Date is April 23.  
• A Home Baked Ham & Bean Supper is being offered by the Uxbridge Congregational Church at 5:00 p.m. in the Community House, 8 Court St., behind the Uxbridge Town Common. The menu includes baked ham, home-baked beans, potato salad, coleslaw, brown bread, beverages and dessert. Donation is \$12 per person. Children under six are admitted free. Raffle tickets

will be available. RSVP by calling 508-244-7849. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door. Come enjoy good fellowship and good food.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26**

• The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Com-

merce's Women's Success Network is hosting "Night with a Psychic," featuring Spiritual Medium and Animal Communicator Lisa

**HAPPENINGS!**

*continued on page 18*

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## HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 17

Powers from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Apple Tree Arts, 1 Grafton Common, Grafton. Contact Liz O'Neil, 508-234-9090 or go to [www.blackstonevalley.org](http://www.blackstonevalley.org) to register.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 27

• Come dance the afternoon away to music from the Disco era of the 1970s at Plummer Place at the Northbridge Senior Center, 20 Highland St., Whitinsville, 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Costume attire is highly encouraged. \$10 per ticket, limit two tickets per person. Sponsored by AdviniaCare and F.I.N.E. Sign up in the main office.

• The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce will host a Business After Hours with Affiliates from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Southwick's Zoo, 2 Southwick St., Mendon. Go to [www.blackstonevalley.org](http://www.blackstonevalley.org) to register or for more info.

### SUNDAY, APRIL 30

• The Uxbridge PSG 2023 is hosting a Spring Vendor Fair from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Uxbridge High School, 300 Quaker Highway. More than thirty local vendors will be on hand with unique gifts. Raffle items will be available. PSG-raised funds go towards the Uxbridge High School Class of 2023 graduation event to help students celebrate in a safe, alcohol and drug-free environment. Contact Uxbridge PSG FMI: [psguxbridge@gmail.com](mailto:psguxbridge@gmail.com) or on Facebook @Uxbridge-PSG2023-Parents for a Safe Graduation.

• The Uxbridge Historic District Commission is hosting a Spring House Tour from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. with magnificent architecture available for viewing including homes open to the public at 236 Mendon St., 115 So. Main St., 46 Capron St. and 35 Capron St.

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 3

• Music for seniors by Howie Newman will be presented at The Residences at Advini-

aCare, Northbridge, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Howie Newman brings music and laughter through his original songs. This program is sponsored in part by a grant from the Northbridge Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

### FRIDAY, MAY 5

• St. Peter's Parish, 39 Church Ave., Northbridge, will host a Trivia Night at the Knights of Columbus, 77 Prescott Road, Whitinsville. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. The trivia game starts at 7:00 pm. Tickets are \$20 per person and can be purchased in advance or at the door There will be a cash bar, food for purchase and a 50/50 raffle. To buy tickets or for more info call 508-234-2156 or email [parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org](mailto:parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org).

### SATURDAY, MAY 6

• Open Sky Community Services is co-hosting the 8th annual Family Fun Fishing Day at River Bend Farm in Uxbridge, in

coordination with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Volunteers-in-Parks program, the Blackstone River Watershed Association, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. This year's event will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. with a rain date of May 7th. Pre-registration is required. Contact Lori Girard at 508-234-6232 or [lori.girard@openskycs.org](mailto:lori.girard@openskycs.org).

• The Millbury First Congregational Church, 148 West Main St., is sponsoring a Flea Market from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. To reserve table space, call Jeri Stead at 508-865-5371. "The Kitchen" will be selling coffee and muffins, and hot dogs at lunchtime. There will also be a bakery table.

• Whittin Community Center hosts its 100th Anniversary Gala, a black-tie fundraiser featuring cocktails, dinner, dancing, a live auction, a commemorative photo gallery and more, 5:00 p.m., 60 Main St., Whitinsville. Visit [www.WhittinCommunityCenter.com](http://www.WhittinCommunityCenter.com) for more information.

• A Scottish Highland Game featuring nine events of strength and agility will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 4 Dresser Hill Road, Charlton. Robert Sims, athletic director for the day, says "guys and gals in kilts will be throwing stupid heavy things:" stones, weights, hammers and the most recognized one of them all, the caber toss, AKA the "tree throw." Athletes from New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York and even one from Canada will take part—from a teacher to active-duty Navy. For more information email [rsims@charter.net](mailto:rsims@charter.net).

### MONDAY, MAY 8

• The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's Annual Charity Golf Tournament will be held at Pleasant Valley Country Club in Sutton to benefit the Chamber, the Blackstone Valley Education Foundation and the Blackstone Valley Hub. [www.blackstonevalley.org/events](http://www.blackstonevalley.org/events).

### TUESDAY, MAY 9

• The Sutton Historical Society welcomes Carol Crossed curator of the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum, with a talk, "Vintage Tweets: A Book of Suffrage Era



"Fisher boy," an oil painting by Wayne Yacino, is typical of works by the artist that will be on display throughout the month of April at Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster.

Postcards," at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, Sutton, at 7:00 p.m. Go to [www.suttonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.suttonhistoricalsociety.org) for further info.

### SATURDAY, MAY 13

• The Northbridge Historical Commission in partnership with the Northbridge Historical Society and will funding provided by a grant from the Northbridge Cultural Council hosts its popular Trolley Tours with three times offered: 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. Space is limited. The tours begin at the 1770 Fletcher House, 1 Main St., former home of James Fletcher and now the home of the Northbridge Historical Society. Northbridge Historian and Teacher Ken Warchol will serve as guide for this two-hour tour of Northbridge Center and the Historic District of Whitinsville. The tour will take participants back to 1772, when Northbridge received its town charter. Information will be provided about the vital role Northbridge played in the Industrial Revolution with establishment of the Whittin Machine Works as the most prominent textile machine shop in the world by the end of the 1920s. There is no charge for the tour. Registrations are required. Maps of the walking district are available for \$5, and donations are accepted. To register and for more information contact Ken Warch at 508-680-3440 or email [kenwarchol2@msn.com](mailto:kenwarchol2@msn.com). Leave complete contact info including full name, contact number and email and preferred time and the number of seats requested.

### MAY 15-17

• Douglas's Silver Club is sponsoring a three-day trip to Maine (Portland and Kennebunkport) that includes guided tours of

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## HAPPENINGS!

continued on page 19

**HAPPENINGS!**

*continued from page 18*

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.



Lisa Powers of Worcester will be the featured attraction for "Night with a Psychic" hosted by the Women's Success Network of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce at Apple Tree Arts in Grafton on April 26th.

**MAY 27-28**

• World War II Tank Demonstration Weekend takes place at the American Heritage Museum, 568 Main St., Hudson, featuring the M4 Sherman, the M24 Chaffee, the M5 Stuart, the M18 Hellcat, the M26 Pershing and the first-ever event for the AHM's new

M35 Jackson Tank Destroyer. Times are 9:00 a.m. on Saturday and 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. www.americanheritagemuseum.org or call 978-562-9182 for further details.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 3**

• St. Peter's Parish, 39 Church Ave., Northbridge, is hosting a Yard Sale and Vendor Fair from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Rain date is Saturday, June 10th. Volunteers will be available to pick up donated items. Vendors are welcome. Vendor tables may be secured for \$40. Call 508-234-2156 or email parishoffice@stpeterrockdale.org for more information.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 9**

• The Millbury Women's Club will host "Under the Tent," a concert with singing sensation Dan The Singing Trooper and his wife Mary Colarusso a coloratura soprano performing. There will be a cash bar, raffles and an evening of "incredibly beautiful and inspirational" entertainment. Contact Jane Cheetham for tickets at jane.cheetham@gmail.com. Space is limited.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 10**

• Picnic in the Park, the Whitin Community Center's popular event with food trucks, live entertainment, community vendors, a doll and pet parade, a dunk tank and more, returns to Whitin Park, 60 Main St., Whitinsville. Visit www.WhitinCommunityCenter.com for further details.  
• Get The Led Out performs at Indian Ranch,

200 Gore Road, Webster, 7:00 p.m. www.indianranch.com.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 11**

• Kip Moore performs at Indian Ranch, 200 Gore Road, Webster, 1:00 p.m. www.indianranch.com.

**MONDAY, JUNE 12**

• Blackstone Valley Tech's 24th annual golf tournament will be held at Highfields Golf & Country Club, 42 Magill Drive, Grafton will proceeds benefitting the school's Education Foundation and Athletic Department activities and programs. Registration is \$150 for individuals and \$125 per person for a foursome and includes 18 holes on the

championship course, golf cart and a buffet dinner. There will be a silent auction and raffles. To register, support the event as a sponsor or donate a raffle item, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/golftournament.

**SATURDAY, JULY 1**

• Chase Rice performs at Indian Ranch, 200 Gore Road, Webster, 1:00 p.m. www.indianranch.com.

**SUNDAY, JULY 9**

• Rumours: The Ultimate Fleetwood Mac Tribute Show, takes the stage at Indian Ranch, 200 Gore Road, 1:00 p.m. www.indianranch.com.

**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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# Samuel Slater Experience enjoys a banner first year

BY ROD LEE

The Samuel Slater Experience on Ray Street in Webster faced the kind of challenges that would confront any startup—any nonprofit—in the first year of its existence, when the museum opened in March of 2022.

The biggest of these being, will the people come? Will patronage justify Chris Robert's efforts to bring the story of pioneering manufacturer Samuel Slater and the history of the town of Webster (and Dudley and Oxford) to life?

For all involved in the venture, the answer is a resounding yes.

"We had more than 4000 visitors, groups of all kinds, schools, organizations, and a lot of private events, corporate and Chamber of Commerce gatherings," SSE's Barbara Van Reed said on March 11th.

Her remarks came a week after an official celebration of the museum's first anniversary, which drew strong backing from local businesses and an appreciated turnout.

"There were a lot of happy raffle winners," she said.

As evidence that the SSE is indeed attracting all sorts of support, a baby shower was taking place in the large meeting room just off the lobby, as Ms. Van Reed spoke.

"That's been our major focus, to let people know we're here," she said. "In some respects the first impression people have of a museum is that it's stodgy. People don't think of the museum industry as a growth business. But this is different. It is interactive. This is what museums are going to be like in the future. We have good space and we have Main Street with the ambience."

The Samuel Slater Experience also has the volunteers, who serve as guides and in other capacities. They are the backbone of the operation, she said.

"They are the best people in the world. This couldn't happen without them," Ms. Van Reed said.

Word of mouth—people telling others about the museum—is driving attendance, she noted. Visitors are coming in from near and far.

Plans are afoot to expand on what has already been put in place.

"We are looking at developing an exterior site plan with more parking," she said. This will enable the museum to host concerts and other attractions beyond its doors.

Meanwhile bookings continue.

On Saturday, April 15th, Sharon Geyer, a fiber artist who specializes in weaving, will make an appearance as part of a one-day Log Cabin Workshop for intermediate weavers. This occurs from noon to



Jacklyn Bonneau, a guide at the Samuel Slater Experience in Webster, introduces Steve and Kathy Bullock of Medway to the interactive aspects of the museum. "I'm a teacher at heart," Ms. Bonneau told the couple.

3:00 p.m.

Ms. Geyer began her weaving career in 1995 as a tapestry weaver (French tapestry technique) under a master artist in Philadelphia. From there, she began to explore patterns and textures on a large eight-harness loom. Her membership in the Yankee Fiber Friend Guild has advanced her prowess over the past two decades.

Her most recent work has been as a rigid heddle weaving instructor at Woolworks in Putnam. The rigid heddle loom captured her heart from the first project in 2019. The ease of use and portability of these little looms has led to the current weaving workshop series she has developed.

On Thursday, April 20th, Richard Hughes returns to the SSE, during School Vacation Week, "and we have discovered that kids love silent movies," which are part of

Mr. Hughes' presentation. "You'd be amazed," Ms. Van Reed said.

The Samuel Slater Experience will benefit too from being incorporated into the final segment of a documentary about "Slatersville" that has been coming together for some time now.

The museum's hours are 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday and noon to 4:00 on Sundays. Visit <https://samuel Slater Experience.org> or call 508-461-2955 for information about field trips and tours.

Visitor numbers including those who showed up for private events totaled 4500 in the museum's first year, Sally Patterson of the SSE said.

Another beginner weaving class starts April 22.

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

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# Register now for June 17th Sidewalk Sale in Northbridge!

BY CHRISTINE GUANIPA

Calling all Northbridge businesses and beyond! Apply now to be part of Northbridge's Annual Sidewalk Sale on Saturday, June 17th from 10:00 to 2:00 p.m.

This community-driven event gives local small businesses the perfect opportunity to showcase their business, connect with other local small businesses, and meet and greet the local community!

This year we are anticipating a crowd of more than five hundred people attending from Northbridge

and surrounding towns. Last year we saw Church Street filled with local businesses, shoppers, food trucks, children's activities, street performers and more—all enjoying this family-friendly event.

This year we will again be closing Church Street from UniBank to The Neighborhood Kitchen for the festivities.

If you're a local resident: Save the date, share the news, and plan to attend the Annual Sidewalk Sale on Saturday, June 17.

If you're a Northbridge-registered business or maker: register

for a 10 x 10 space by contacting The Crafty Nest DIY (Church Street, Whitinsville) to receive an application and priority placement.

If you're a neighboring registered business or maker: contact Lesley at The Crafty Nest in Whitinsville for an application.

All applications are due April 15th and spaces are limited so get your applications in soon.

Many thanks to the coordinators of this local community event: The Crafty Nest, Driven to Train, Little Man and Katalina's Boutique.



Shortly after moving into the new home of Lulu's in the Whitinsville Plaza, Heather Glode sent this photo of signage that has been installed on the building.

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LIVING WITH LUKE

amyleclaire@hotmail.com

# Away to Aruba and a vacation closer to home for Luke

BY AMY PALUMBO-LECLAIRE

Plans to leave Luke for a much-needed Aruban vacation had not been easy. We needed the sun. We needed time away. We needed time to regroup. However reasonable, we also needed Luke to be safe and cared for by someone who truly wanted to be with him. Dogs lie at the mercy of people, preferably good people, who also happen to be Dog People. We knew Luke would love and trust another person freely. The only problem was, who would love him back in the same way? Who would take the time to embrace his Lukiness?

"Amy, we would be honored!" My good friend JoAnne DiTommaso, a Golden Retriever enthusiast by nature, agreed to take him on. Since our initial plan to hire a Dog Nanny went sour, we couldn't have been more grateful.

The Dog Nanny, I learned during an interview, was a kind Dog Person. However, she was also a busy lady. "I get up at four a.m. but will be home with him as soon as I'm done with my first job."

"Your first job?" My mind saw a lonely Luke lying on the floor, head over paws. "I'm sorry I left the yard to chase after my girlfriend. I promise to do better."

"I work nights at the restaurant, but I'll be home with him on the weekends!" I did the math. Eighty dollars for eight nights equals \$640.00, a hefty expense, especially given that Luke would be a third job for this woman.

"We've found someone whose schedule is a bit more compatible with Luke's. Thank you." Leaving Luke at home just wasn't going to work out. Little did I know, Luke was about to embark on his own brand of vacation.

### BRUNO LETS HIS GUARD DOWN

Luke first met Bruno, a nine-year-old senior Golden who once

knew Lincoln (first protagonist for this column) when he was about twelve weeks old. "Hey, you look like me only your face is white! Let's wrestle!" Uncle Bruno, who preferred humans, hid in the bushes. This pup was certifiably crazy.

Now that Luke was nearly full-grown and stronger, the gap in age had me concerned. Certainly, my pup had matured. But he was un-neutered and had sometimes shown aggressiveness toward male dogs. Bruno, a Senior Pet, deserved peace and respect.

"Mom, why is this mini-me on my turf and how long is he staying?" Bruno questioned the decision during their first day together. He was tolerant but kept his distance. "Our family is fine just the way it is. Aren't I enough?" Oblivious, Luke grabbed a stuffed turkey and paraded around the kitchen. "Let's get this party started!"

Exuberance aside, days passed, and Luke had begun to earn the trust of his elder golden pal. He



JoAnne and Pete DiTommaso create a happy family for Luke.

gave him space. He respected his boundaries. He even helped him bark at a suspicious dog outside of the property. "Woo, woo, woo, woo!!"

"That dog's odor is off. I feel ya' Bruno. Let's bark at him together. Woo, woo, woo, woo!!"

The two Golden, young and old, had begun to synchronize. They walked together. They slept side by side. They sipped water together. They searched for each other in the yard. "Where'd you go Luke?" Bruno became protective of his young pal. They grabbed the birdfeeder and played soccer with a basketball. Luke helped Bruno stay young. Bruno helped Luke stay wise.

"This is how you stay cool, little fella." A fluffy Bruno, older and wiser, rubbed his back in the one patch of snow in the backyard. Luke watched intently from a high platform on the deck. "You are so good at snow angels, Bruno." The two Golden bonded. They had numerous visitors amid shared rest

times and playtimes. JoAnne felt her heart swell with joy, having experienced a double shot of Golden love. "I am crying just thinking about leaving Luke." I sipped a rum cocktail on an Aruban lawn chair and counted my blessings. My friend loved my dog just as much as I do. I perused the pictures she sent. He looked so happy. Luke was not only safe. He was also loved. By the end of the week, Bruno even shared the Orvis king bed once owned by Lincoln. "You're not so bad, Luke." He even let Luke hog the middle.

### THE CAT

"There's a live paw coming out of the crack beneath the door!" A mystery that was a black cat behind a closed bedroom door captivated Luke's attention. She sensed Luke's presence and teased him with affection. "Love me. Love me not. Love me. Love me not." She extended a paw from beneath the door and pulled it back. As though playing a game of Wack-a-Mole, Luke tracked her paw and covered it with his own. "Who are you? What are you?"

DiTommaso daughter Angela, equally as supportive to Luke's stay at the house, finally opened her bedroom door. Exposed, Luke's intrigue came to life. "A whole other animal lives here!!" Regina, the mysterious black cat, hunched over and stared spookily at Luke, who stared right back. They even touched noses. "It's love at first sight!" The DiTommaso family revealed at a first date that carried on with the world's longest staring contest. "You have the pointy ears

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REAL ESTATE

# What's ahead for home prices in 2023?

Over the past year, home prices have been a widely debated topic. Some have said we'll see a massive drop in prices and



BY MARK MARZEOTTI

that this could be a repeat of 2008 – which hasn't happened. Others have forecasted a real estate market that could see slight appreciation or depreciation depending on the area of the country. And as we get closer to the spring real estate market, experts are continuing to forecast what they believe will happen with home prices this year and beyond.

While 2023 kicked off on a more optimistic note for the U.S.

housing market, recent mortgage rate volatility proves how much uncertainty remains. However, the continued shortage of inventory is likely to keep price declines modest, which are projected to top out at 3%.

The latest economic forecast is as follows:

- 2023 – down 1.91%
- 2024 – Up 3.6%
- 2025 – Up 4.25%
- 2026 – Up 4.44%

So, given this information and what experts are saying about home prices, the question you might be asking is: should I buy a home this spring? Here are three reasons you should consider making a move:

1. Buying a home helps you escape rising rents. Over the past several decades, the median price of rent has risen consistently. The bottom line is, rent is going up.
2. Homeownership is a hedge against inflation as I have stated

before. A key advantage of homeownership is that it's one of the best hedges against inflation. When you buy a home with a fixed-rate mortgage, you secure your housing payment, so it won't go up like it would if you rent.

3. Homeownership is a powerful wealth-building tool. The average net worth of a homeowner is \$255,000 compared to \$6,300 for a renter.

Experts are projecting slight price depreciation in the housing market this year (as noted above), followed by steady appreciation. Given that, you may be wondering if you should move ahead with buying a home this spring. The decision to purchase a home is best made when you do it knowing all the facts and have an expert on your side. Reach out to Marzeottigroup.net or a local real estate professional to make the most informed decision about your next move.

adored Regina.

Joanne sent me a picture of Cat and Dog staring at one another. Not having grown with cats, I confess to a mild cat fear. My heart stirred. Cats are unpredictable. I imagined coming home to greet Luke, one eye sewn shut. "The cat scratched my eye out, Momma. But I had so much fun!" Regina and Luke, I later learned, respected each other's differences just as he and Bruno did.

Our vacation to Aruba, one that marked our first time away from Luke, turned out to be a success in more ways than one. We were happy to be on vacation and, equally important, Luke was happy to be with his second family, the very wonderful

DiTommaso's. He was loved and he knew it.

Find Luke Valentino on Instagram @ livingwithlukevalentino

Write to Amy at amyelaire@hotmail.com

## LUKE

continued from page 22

of a fox. But you're not a fox. You have a small nose, but you're too frigid to be a small dog. Why so still? Want to play Chase?" Luke



The staring contest ...

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

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

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# Nathaniel Philbrick appearance at Uxbridge library a big hit

What's new at the Uxbridge Free Public Library? New bestsellers including "I Will Find You" and "The London Séance Society," and new movies: "A Man Called Otto," "M3GAN" and "The Walking Dead Season 11."

The library thanks all who helped make a recent appearance by Nathaniel Philbrick a success: The Uxbridge Historical Society, the Uxbridge Police Department, Barry Giles at Uxbridge Community Television, the First Evangelical

Congregational Church and the many volunteers who assisted. "Great to speak to a standing room only crowd on behalf of the Uxbridge Historical Association, which owns the bed George Washington slept in while visiting the town in 1789," Mr. Philbrick said.

Tote bags available at the WSL The Friends of the Whitinsville Social Library organization is now selling tote bags. Visit the library during business hours to acquire one. The Friends exist to support



The overflow crowd at the Uxbridge Free Public Library for Nathaniel Philbrick's talk.

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the goals and mission of the WSL. The Friends meet on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the Historical Room.

May's book club pick is now available for patrons of the WSL, "Wrong Place Wrong Time," by Gillian McAllister. The Fiction Book Club meets on Tuesday, May 16th at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the book.

With daffodils in bloom at the WSL, now is a good time to pick up some spring and gardening books, and check out the library's seed library.

On March 15, library directors and library advocates from all over the Commonwealth converged on the State House to build legislative support for public libraries with an eye on the next fiscal year's budget. Rebecca from the WSL met with Sen. Ryan Fattman's office to request his support for state aid and proposed legislation on limiting ebook costs for libraries.

Library fundraising hits \$18,000-plus in 2022

Carolyn S. Dorval, president of the Friends of the Simon Fairfield Public Library in Douglas, reports that fundraising efforts generated \$18,136.51 in 2022 for handicapped accessibility "and we

are hoping to match or exceed this goal in 2023. We are planning a Memorial Day plant and book sale and look forward to seeing you there. Also, please keep in mind our online auction which is coming this fall. We would appreciate items in good condition, gift cards or services that would benefit the auction.

Library Director Justin Snook adds "I am ever so grateful to our core group of Friends for all they do. The Friends pay for book delivery, our website and newsletter, programs, supplies and snacks for story times, and a lot more that would be harder to manage through the town's financial process.

"In recent years the Friends have made phenomenal contributions to the library's capital campaign, stepping up in a way that fills me with awe and humility. So thank you so much to the Friends who give so much time volunteering on the board, sorting books, preparing the auction, and managing book sales. And thank you to all the Friends who give of your resources to make all of that possible."



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# April Events at Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park

Public programs at Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park begin on April 13th, 2023. All programs are free and open to the public. Bring water, wear sunscreen/bug spray, and dress for the outdoors. Sturdy footwear is strongly recommended for hiking events. An adult must accompany all children. Inclement weather cancels hiking programs. For more information call (508) 278-4608 or visit: <https://www.mass.gov/locations/blackstone-river-and-canal-heritage-state-park>. Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park is located at 287

Oak Street, Uxbridge

## TREK THE BLACKSTONE

Thursdays and Sundays 1 pm – 2:30 pm

Join us for an easy to moderate 1.5 to 3 mile afternoon hike. Please bring water and a snack, and wear sturdy footwear. Hike details for the week will be posted in advance in the Visitor's Center. For beginner ability, all ages welcome.

## KIDLEIDOSCOPE

Fridays 10:30 am to 11:30 am

This program is designed to help

young children understand the natural world around them. You'll hear a story, participate in a short activity and make a craft to take home with you. Appropriate for ages 3 to 6. Siblings are welcome, children must be accompanied by an adult.

## CANAL WALK: BUILDING THE CANAL

Saturdays 1 pm to 2 pm

Learn about how the Blackstone Canal was built. We'll trek 2.5 miles round-trip from River Bend Farm to the Goat Hill Lock and back. Please bring water and a snack, and wear sturdy footwear. For all ages.

# Family Fun Fishing Day

Open Sky Community Services is excited to co-host the 8th Annual Family Fun Fishing Day at Riverbend Farm in Uxbridge along with the Blackstone River National Heritage Corridor Volunteers-in-Parks Program, the Blackstone River Watershed Association, Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife.

This year's event will be held on Saturday May 6th from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. with a rain date of Sunday, May 7th. There will be activities for the whole family, ice cream will be available for purchase from Sweet Wise Ice Cream truck, as well as food, face painting and raffles. All ages and ability levels welcome.

Fishing poles, bait and instruction will be available with pre-registration and participants are

welcome to bring their own. This is a catch and release event for everyone from first time fishers to experienced anglers, with prizes for each age group. Adults must accompany children under 12.

Registration is now open at [thebrwa.org/familyfishing2023](http://thebrwa.org/familyfishing2023). This is a FREE event, but pre-registration is required. Please contact Lori Girard with any questions at 508-234-6232 or [lori.girard@openskyks.org](mailto:lori.girard@openskyks.org)

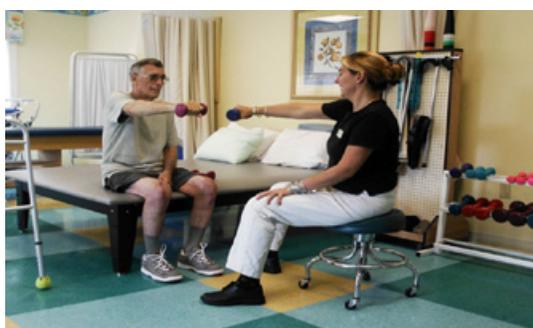
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THE CAR DOCTOR

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# Start with a scan to address Odyssey EX heating system issue



BY JOHN PAUL

**Q.** I own a 2010 Honda Odyssey EX, purchased new in July 2011, which is kept outside and maintained as directed.

It has been modified so that I can drive from my wheelchair and is important for my personal mobility. In 2019, after chronic problems with cabin cooling, the AC condenser was replaced. In 2020 the AC compressor, expansion valve and receiver dryer were replaced, and in 2022,

another AC compressor. After the last cooling repairs, it appears that my heating system is not working as well as previously. At 75° the air is hot, at 70° the air is tepid, if not cool. It was diagnosed as needing a door actuator motor after the two center console vents stopped producing airflow, which was installed. However, the air is still not warm. I am told fuses, sensor, cabin filter and electrical shorts have been ruled out. Any ideas?

**A.** Like many vehicles built in the past 15 years, the climate control is managed by a computer. In the case of the Odyssey the system can be checked with

a professional scan tool or onboard diagnostics. I would start with a scan of the system (there are at least 15 possible fault codes). In addition, I wouldn't rule out the basics. As complicated as this system seems there is still a cable-controlled heater valve and basic water pump, thermostat and hoses, that all should be inspected.

**Q.** Our 2020 Ford Escape Titanium Hybrid at just 25,000 miles is already on its third 12-volt battery and is at the dealer right now potentially gunning for its fourth. This time and the last time, the dealer has kept the car for several days to search for any unusual parasitic drains. All software updates have been done and the charging system checked. I've suggested that the tiny 12-volt battery is undersized given the plethora of accessories it supports. Reading online on various car forums where other owners have solved this same issue with a larger battery that bolts right in. The dealer, tech advisor says they can only do what the factory authorizes or recommends, and an upgraded battery is not among them. The

notion of "too many short trips" has been discussed, but the use that this car gets should more than allow sufficient recharge time with each use. I started tracking the output voltage of the battery regularly since the last replacement was done in November, and lately it hasn't been above 11.8 volts in the morning and rarely reads above 12.3 volts even after a long trip. As I understand it, these are dismal readings. Any thoughts?

**A.** A battery is at 100 percent state of charge at 12.6 volts and at the reading provided, 12.3 volts is about 70 percent state of charge and 11.8 volts is closer to a 30 percent state of charge, so something is certainly going on. The dealer is correct, when it comes to warranty, they can only repair or replace as authorized by the manufacturer. Although a bigger battery may cure the symptom of the car not starting it doesn't address the issue of why the battery voltage is low. Although if this were my car, I certainly would try replacing the 12-volt battery with the larger battery for a non-hybrid vehicle. The hybrid Escape battery is a 45-ampere hour battery with 395 cold cranking amps. The non-hybrid Escape battery is 70-ampere hour battery with 760 cold cranking amp rating.

**A.** In many vehicles today, there are sensors that measure both low oil pressure and low oil level. You are correct when the red oil pressure light illuminates you should shut off the engine ASAP to prevent possible internal damage. The oil level light (typically yellow) will usually illuminate when the oil level is down one quart. Like many warning lights red requires the driver to take immediate action and the yellow warning lights are cautionary, but shouldn't be ignored.

**Q.** I have a 2018 Mercedes-Benz GLA 250. Is it necessary to get it maintained/serviced at the Mercedes-Benz dealership? They are ridiculously expensive.

**A.** There are times when the dealer is the best choice, such as warranty repairs, recalls and some tricky and complicated repairs that may require software updates. Although it is possible that independent shops can do some of this work, they may not have the necessary tools. As for regular maintenance (fluid changes) tires, brakes and suspension services as examples any quality should be able to provide these services.

**Q.** I occasionally see your readers reference a Low Oil 'Level' light. It has always been my understanding that the Oil light indicates a loss of oil 'pressure' which warrants shutting off your engine ASAP. Am I wrong? Are there actually sensors now that monitor oil 'level'?

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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TALES FROM BEYOND

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# Ghost Cats-Part 1: Return visits are not unusual

BY THOMAS D'AGOSTINO

Many people believe that animals cannot become ghosts. It seems rather implausible since they are living beings with a personality, life force, and intelligent energy that can remain behind after they are gone. There is also the residual factor, where the earth tapes a moment in time and replays it when the conditions are just right. In many cases, people have had their beloved fur family member return after passing over to the other side to let them know they are still there, in spirit at least. It seems the most common entity other than humans to come back and pay a visit are cats.

Cats are amazing creatures. They are highly intelligent, athletic, independent, and adaptable. Arlene and I presently have five of the lovely fur folk, having lost a few over the years due to age, and yes, they have visited us from the other side.

When we lived on Mowry Road in Burrillville, Rhode Island, we sometimes heard what sounded like a cat running around in the room above us. The landlord, who later became a great friend, told us that section of the house was completely closed off, yet what sounded like a cat was running around. We would later add to our living space to include the upstairs, accessible through a door on our side of the house. We then witnessed the cat several times in the

two upstairs rooms. No one knew the feline's identity, but for some reason, it always preferred to stay upstairs, never venturing down to the first floor.

Our friend Kevin once saw the ghost cat, which is a rather amusing tale. He frequently accompanied us on paranormal investigations, yet never saw anything unusual. His very first actual sighting of a ghost was seeing our little ethereal friend running around the corner. His only comment was, "wouldn't you know it, the very first time I see a ghost and it had to be a cat's behind."

Our cat, Cooneys, named so because she resembled a raccoon, passed away in 2008. She not only came back to visit, but we received a message from a "pet medium" telling us that our little girl actually visited her and wanted her to tell us she was fine and doing 'the good work' of helping other fur people on the other side. If that was not enough, she appeared several times in our home. One time she even appeared on the stairs to have her picture taken by none other than paranormal investigator and author Chris Balzano while he was writing his book, *Picture Yourself Ghost Hunting*. When the photo was examined, there she was, stretching out across a few stairs, looking out at us like she always did.

Our beloved Arthur passed away in 2013. Arlene had him since he was very young, and he was the love of her life, so much

so that she had a portrait painted of him, which still hangs in our living room in a place of honor. He was an amazing and intelligent little guy. Arthur loved going for rides in the car; he came along on vacations with us and accompanied us on shopping excursions, picnics and visiting friends. He was our constant companion.

When he passed, we were very heartbroken, but a few nights later, we heard the distinctive sound of Arthur's voice in the house. A few nights after that, as we both sat in bed reading, the

end of the bed suddenly moved as if something had jumped up on it. We both watched in astonishment as little paw prints made indentations in the blanket on the bed.

Arthur would one up coming back in spirit. We buried him outside and made a little yard for him. Early summer, we decided to clean his yard and put flowers in it. As we were planting the flowers, we heard Arthur cry. The cry permeated the air around the yard and froze us in our work. We heard it again and traced it to the little hill behind our house.

Upon investigating, we discovered a small kitten that we would later be able to capture and bring in the house. When we brought her to the veterinarian to have her checked out, it was discovered that she was born about the same time Arthur passed. As she grew, her mannerisms and habits were just like his. She loved to sit and sleep in the same places he did and knew the house instinctively. We feel that a part of Arthur was reincarnated into Freyabelle just so he could be with us again.

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