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Dr. Beata Stancel-Grabias and Dr. Piotr Grabias have forged successful medical careers after immigrating to the United States.

A nation of immigrants: Dr. Beata Stancel-Grabias

BY JANET STOICA

This is the second in a series of articles about local immigrants and their lives in the United States, why they came, how they lived, and what their outlook is about this country.

In 1992, after winning a green card lottery held by the Polish government, medical students Beata Stancel-Grabias and her

husband, Piotr Grabias, took those green cards and made their way to the United States of America. Their destination was Atlanta, Georgia. Their newborn son, Michael, was their most precious carry-on parcel when they boarded their jet to America. Their goals were to become medical doctors in the United States.

"In Poland, at the time, becoming a doctor was certainly not as comparable as it was in America,"

said Dr. Stancel-Grabias. "Medical students were assigned via contacts made in the governmental bureaucracy. It was very difficult and career advancement was very challenging. The economy was not in good shape. My husband and I decided to try to make it here

IMMIGRANTS

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New Webster school superintendent is homegrown

BY JANET STOICA

She really did rise through the ranks, she did. Monique Pierangeli has been with the Webster school system for twenty-three years.

When she began her association with the local schools as a parent/volunteer in 2000 at the Park Avenue Elementary School, she probably didn't realize where her life journey would progress to in 2023. Having been recently appointed as Webster's new school superintendent, Ms. Pierangeli is a success story that demonstrates refinement, experience, and strength. She knows the ins and outs of just about every nook and cranny in the school system's accounting, curriculum, staffing, and planning departments.

She substitute taught when called upon, worked in the central office area as a Medicaid clerk and data collection clerk. She was

taught how schools receive their revenue and the state reporting and information behind it all. In the business office she learned the payroll system and became the assistant to the business manager,



New Webster School Superintendent Monique Pierangeli is right at home in a system she knows well.

became recording secretary for the building committee while also completing her Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management.

SUPERINTENDENT

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IMMIGRANTS

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in America. If we failed then we would return to Poland.”

The couple found jobs as medical assistants in an Atlanta medical practice. As English grammar was taught to them since elementary school in their native country, they did have a basic start on their new country’s language, which improved during their employment and patient interactions.

“We always seemed to become acquainted with Americans who helped us along the way. We felt so very fortunate. We decided to take our medical boards, passed those boards, and were accepted into the medical residency program at UMass Medical School in Worcester. We had to prove ourselves and felt that more doors would be open to us if we studied hard and applied

ourselves to our ultimate goal. This is the only country in the world where you can do this. If you work hard and focus on your objective, you can do anything and be anything,” Dr. Stancel-Grabias said.

“It was a very long and challenging road but we did it. We were very privileged to have the help of our parents who came to the U.S. to help with caring for our children. They took care of our children while we studied at the local library. We were in that library on a daily basis, we persisted. We knew what we wanted and we wanted to be a success.”

In 2000, Dr. Stancel-Grabias and Dr. Piotr Grabias became U.S. citizens. Dr. Stancel-Grabias related that knowing the English language was most important to passing the 120-question test. She also mentioned that since medicine’s universal language is Latin-based, it was a defining factor in their medical education classes. When some days became frustrating and they were weary, the couple coped by lifting each other’s spirits and just kept going. They certainly persevered.

“If it weren’t for communism, we’d never be here,” said Dr. Stancel-Grabias. “The land of opportunity, America, welcomed us. I’ve always tried to be an optimist but sometimes life can be demanding. We’re glad that we took the chance to come to this country as we couldn’t be happier.”

After their graduation from UMass Medical, Dr. Piotr Grabias was offered a practice in Framingham. Then, word came that Hubbard Hospital (now known as UMass Memorial Health/Harrington Hospital) in Webster was searching for a Polish-speaking physician.

Dr. Grabias visited the hospital, toured the town of Webster,

liked the environs, and told his wife that this location would be a good choice. Even though Atlanta was calling them back, they opted to stay in New England. After Dr. Stancel-Grabias completed her schooling one year after her husband’s graduation, Hubbard Hospital also offered her a position to take over a retiring doctor’s practice. It was a daunting situation to be in but she was able to transition and make it all a success.

In 2004, Dr. Beata Stancel-Grabias and her husband, Dr. Piotr Grabias, established their internal medicine practice in Webster and have become well-known and revered by their patients. Their practice is very busy but they do accept new patients. Because of their superior academic achievements while at UMass Medical School, both doctors were offered professorships at UMass Medical School where they still teach students about internal medicine to this day.

“I always see many young patients and young students everywhere,” said Dr. Stancel-Grabias, “and it’s so difficult to even get into medical school. I tell them that if you put your heart and hard work into something, you will always succeed. Anything is possible. It might not happen right away but it will happen. Never stop dreaming and reaching towards your goal. I always worked hard and was never easy on myself. I do always see the glass as half-full. Life can be hard but when we overcome we can appreciate when life is good.”

“Remember, remember always, that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants.” –Franklin D. Roosevelt

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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 professional baseball play out in the major leagues and at Polar Park—and in anticipation of the Worcester Bravehe-

BY ROD LEE

arts' 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 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



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.

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.

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

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SUPERINTENDENT

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In 2018 she became the school system's business manager.

"I really feel that I lived and breathed everything about our school system," said Ms. Pierangeli. "This job is for the community and being with our students. It all starts with our bus drivers as we build student relationships. It's a nice warm welcoming breakfast for our learners. It's not just one person, it's all of us. We try to go to as many town events as possible. At the high school level we have a hands-on curriculum project called

'Lead the Way,' our students are building robotic cars; doing blood draws; participating in forensic science through the use of hypothetical crime scenes; we have a great engineering program as well as a good focus on health and human services to name a few."

She stated that she applied for the superintendent's position because she was aware of the school staff's efforts and didn't want to see all the hard work go to the wayside. She felt she could help the school system continue to move forward. Her main goal is improving academic performance. "Community engagement and parent involvement are key. I hope we can have

more Family Meals events where we are all together as a group moving forward as one much like our Empty Bowls program. We have to reach out to our families more. I've begun making phonecalls to our parents when new children enroll in our school system. Following up is vital. We have hired a District Family Liaison and will hire another liaison next year to bridge gaps between our schools and home. I'm hoping to reach out to the Webster Library and collaborate with them as well."

Superintendent Pierangeli elaborated on the Bartlett High School building and renovation project. They are currently in the 60%

design phase and are submitting designs to the Mass. School Building Authority and are meeting with architects discussing traffic flow, hardware, furniture, and ultimate designs. She mentioned that there will be fourteen modular school classroom buildings in front of the school while renovations are taking place inside. The modulars will be delivered in June 2023, set up over the summer, and be ready for students when they return to school in August 2023. The project will be done in phases with an expected completion date in 2026.

"I'm not your typical superintendent," said Ms. Pierangeli, "as I've focused on the business area but I'm confident in our staff being successful at what their strengths are. Our teachers are so very classroom-experienced. You have to listen to be successful. There's no one person who can walk in here and change everything for Webster. Our central office leadership is outstanding from our principals to our teachers to our support staff. Everyone's in this and we all play a

role in our students' successes. Our team here is absolutely wonderful and we're continuing to change the dynamics to a higher level. We have steady leadership in our schools now and we all share the same vision. Having more community involvement is our goal. This is a safe environment for our students. I might have to make some hard decisions going forward but it's important that we all connect and speak with each other."

She stressed the importance of the supportive Webster School Committee. "Webster has my heart," said Superintendent Pierangeli. "I'm just proud and very excited to be representing our Webster students and our staff."

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." -Nelson Mandela

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Webster Town Meeting, Selectmen Candidates Forum, and Town Voting set

BY JANET STOICA

A Selectmen's Candidates Forum will be held on Saturday, April 29, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Gladys E. Kelly Library, 2 Lake Street, Webster. One Selectman's seat is open and in the running for office are incumbent Tom Klebart and challenger Mark Rogers. Citizens will have the opportunity to speak with the two candidates about issues impor-

tant to them in an open meeting format. This forum is sponsored by the Webster Democratic Town Committee.

Webster's Elections will be held on Tuesday, May 2, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Webster Town Hall.

The Webster Special and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Monday, May 8, at 7:00 p.m. in the Bartlett High School Auditorium, 52 Lake Parkway, Webster.



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Transportation talk at SSE: Canals, trains and trolleys

Boston businessmen were more than a little perturbed in 1828 when the newly built Blackstone Canal gave Worcester

The train had turned a two-day journey into a two-hour trip and didn't freeze in winter.

Trains were followed by trolleys

Ethier is the Auburn town historian, board member of the Auburn Historical Museum, member of the Auburn Historical Commission, board member and past president of the Auburn Historical Society, board member of Waters Farm in Sutton, the Straw Hollow Engine & Tractor Club, and a member of the Central Mass Gas & Steam Engine Club. He is also a volunteer at Samuel Slater Experience.

Samuel Slater Experience opened last year to tell the story of Samuel Slater, the beginnings of the American Industrial Revolution, and Slater's impact on mill towns such as Webster. Described as "Disney-like," Samuel Slater Experience employs state-of-the-art 4-D digital technology with immersive video and interactive exhibits to recreate two time periods: the early 1800s and the early 1900s.

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



A train travels alongside the tow path of the Blackstone Canal.

merchants direct access to Providence and the sea for transporting freight. At the time, raw materials and finished goods were moved most efficiently via water routes.

But just two decades later, the first train carrying freight and passengers between Providence and Worcester made the Blackstone Canal obsolete, and it was closed.

for local transportation, though trolleys disappeared too with the advent of cars and better roads.

Historian Ken Ethier will talk about early transportation in Worcester County on Saturday, May 20th at 11:00 a.m. at the Samuel Slater Experience in Webster.

The event is free register at Eventbrite.com.

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Dudley's French River trace bridge ready for demolition

BY JANET STOICA

Residents of Dudley have been waiting for what seems like eons for their bridge to reconnect to the roadway that links Hill Street of Webster to Chase Avenue of Dudley. This particular span hasn't been usable for a number of months and those who used the crossover for their daily commute from Route 395-South to Lake Parkway and School Street to Hill Street have finally resigned themselves that this route is no longer possible and won't be for a while longer. So frustrating to have to change a habit, isn't it?

Actually, it's more than a habit. It's a way to circumnavigate the knot of traffic that is always stopped along Webster's Main

Street to commute to Dudley.

There are four routes that Dudley residents can use when driving south from Auburn/Worcester/the Mass Pike. Route No. 1 would be exiting the Cudworth Road-Webster ramp and wending your way south on Route 12 to Cemetery Road to Bigelow and South Main to the bridge behind Calvary Cemetery to Dudley. The second choice is the Route 16 exit to the East Main Street lights which would bring you to the heavy traffic congestion on Webster's Main Street. Thirdly, your option would be the last Webster exit to follow the aforementioned Lake Parkway route unless you live in the extreme south end of Dudley in which case your fourth selection would be navigating

Lake Parkway to its end and then taking a left to Snow's Corner and a right onto Perryville Road which would bring you to Route 12-Dudley.

It's a crazy deal which most commuters realized was best travelled via Hill Street and over the two French River bridges to Dudley. Perhaps some commuters don't watch their TV's local access channel or attend the Dudley selectmen's meetings in order to be best informed about the status of the bridge updates as their highway superintendent has been very diligent about keeping the selectmen and TV watchers well-informed. Oh, wait a minute, I guess most of them don't watch and/or don't care except to complain on social media about what is going on with that



A road closed sign has become a familiar sight to Dudley residents. Finally, a bridge that spans a dry trace will be demolished and replaced with a temporary crossing until a permanent one can be built.

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dang bridge. I suppose I could expound about citizen apathy but that's for another time. Let someone else do it, right?

According to Jeff Murray, Dudley's highway superintendent, the bridge spans what is called a dry trace which means there is no water passing underneath the structure. It is an overflow passage in the event of future flooding from the French River which passes under the Webster span with the French River being the official dividing line between the towns of Dudley and Webster.

Demolition of the Dudley bridge will begin this month. After this happens the town must come up with funding for the temporary bridge that will be installed. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Dept. of Transportation (DOT) has a temporary bridge that Dudley can borrow but still requires Dudley to put together a funding plan for the permanent span. A full replacement cost according to the Mass. DOT is approximately \$6,235,000 and that's in today's dollars. Federal funding could come in very handy at this point.

The new structure would be

designed and built by the Mass. DOT and outsourced to a private contractor without using local funds. The DOT has also recommended replacing the Webster bridge, which was built in 1923. As with all state and federal projects, however, there is a waiting list and, of course, every town and city feels that their project is the most important and should be pushed to the top of the priority list. The Dudley bridge project must be approved by the Mass. Project Review Committee which is comprised of members from the Mass. DOT. They are in charge of rating the importance, the funding, the designing, and then putting out to bid each and every project. "It's not a quick process," said Mr. Murray. "We've involved our state senator and representative to move this along and have been unsuccessful. There have been funding opportunities as well but they fell through. We've explored other funding sources as well but it's a very slow-moving process. The

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Prestige Salon crew undertakes a humbling mission

Good Friday took on an even more special meaning this year for Lorri Ducharme of Prestige Salon and Day Spa.

Here is how she describes what happened.

"Myself, my husband and two of my employees, Amber



Antonopoulos and Savannah LaBranche, traveled to Columbia, South Carolina to volunteer our time and services for an amazing event that serves a meal and foot washing along with palliative foot care to almost three hundred homeless and less fortunate individuals.

"We drove nine hundred miles early Thursday morning.

"There were many roles for volunteers to fill that day.

"Our day started with setting up bags of breakfast items, fruit and drinks. Tables were arranged for runners to bring over basins of fresh water. Individuals were checked in and their name was written on a card.

"They were seated and had their feet washing with items in their care bag (Castile soap, nail clippers, nail files, foot care foam, bandaids, antibiotic cream and a small towel).

"Nails were trimmed and smoothed, foot foam applied to their feet.

"If any anomalies were visible they were sent over to the seven nail techs who

are medically trained to address things like corns, calluses, thickened toenails and much more.

"They were given a new pair of Bombas socks and a City Pack backpack with toiletries.

"The individual who started this nonprofit is Donna Muszynski. She pairs with a local Christ Ministry to use their church hall for the event. This is her tenth year of organizing it and our second time attending.

"Before the doors open Donna shares a brief prayer. Blood was shed for our sins, so that we can be a vessel of His love through service. Our hands provide care for the homeless, they are our instruments. It's a reminder that he died for us; He knows our names.

"To say it is humbling is an understatement. The individuals are so grateful for the care and attention they receive. It is so sad to see the large numbers of homeless in the Columbia area.

"I have reached out to the Blessed Backpack Brigade to see if we can team up to bring much-needed care to this area in the future.

"There was local coverage from Fox 57 news station."

BRIDGE

continued from page 6

project is now in the hands of the Mass DOT and the Federal Highway Administration. As another example of the approval and construction process we have the Dudley/Quinebaug bridge which has been on the Mass DOT list since 2017-2018 and it's just moving to the top of the list with that bridge replacement scheduled for fiscal year 2024-2025.

"There are many varying factors used for facilitation. The permanent solution is a very lengthy process. The Chapter 90 funds of \$148,500 which we would customarily use for our town's road resurfacing projects will now be directed to the demolition and temporary bridge

for the dry trace bridge so we can open up access again."

If local residents really care about and wanted to move the permanent bridge project along in addition to requesting funding for it, they should get in touch with their State Senator Ryan Fattman who can be reached at (617) 722-1420, Ryan.Fattman@masenate.gov or their State Rep. Peter Durant (617) 722-2260 peter.durant@masshouse.gov Locals can also contact their federal representatives: Rep. Richard Neal (202) 225-5601, Senator Edward Markey (202) 224-2742, and Senator Elizabeth Warren (202) 224-4543.

Now what's that old saying? The squeaky wheel gets the grease!

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Rip roarin' riders eager to help support Boys & Girls Club

BY JANET STOICA

They're hoping for a beautiful day on Saturday, May 6, when the American Legion Riders from Oxford's Post 58 along with other motorcyclists from the area take to the road for their 120-mile roundtrip to The Berkshires and back to benefit the Webster-Dudley Boys and Girls Club.

It's all to benefit one of the most worthy causes in the area--funding for the after-school programs at the club located at 55 Oxford Avenue in Dudley.

"Christopher Battista of Oxford, a retired Air Force veteran, was grateful for those club programs as a youth and the purpose of this



A ride to the Berkshires and back on May 6th is serving as a fundraiser for programs administered by the Boys & Girls Club of Webster-Dudley.

ride means a lot to him. He's looking forward to seeing and meeting many of the participants," said Aaron Peek, of Peek's Auto Detailing of Dudley, one of the event's organizers.

"The riders' contributions will greatly benefit our after-school youth programs," said John Lefebvre, member of the Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors. "This will be our first year and we hope to make it an annual event. We used to have a motorcycle run for fundraising but it ended about ten years ago and we're glad to see it back as a wonderful event to benefit our kids. Aaron Peek saw a need and wanted to help fund our efforts. The benefits to our local youth are immeasurable. Such a great cause."

Tyler Bailey, Club Unit Director, said "this is a great opportunity for community involvement. The funds raised will not only help with our eight-week summer programs but also assist with our ongoing after-school programs like athletics, STEM (STEAM), arts, and all recreational programs that provide for our kids. We never turn members away because of the \$50 annual fee. We currently have eighty-five members and average sixty members daily. Most youngsters are from the Webster/Dudley area but we also have members from Connecticut and Worcester. All youth are welcome here."

"American Legion Riders from Oxford Post 58 make it a point to ride for their communities. We all scramble to raise money for worthy

causes whether it's to help those who need funds for their heating and utility bills or similar funding projects, we want to make a difference," said Mr. Peek.

The May 6th ride begins at the Boys and Girls Club on Oxford Avenue, Dudley, where registration starts at 8:30 a.m. There will be fresh coffee and donuts kindly donated by Dippin Donuts of 32 West Main Street, Dudley. Kickstands go up at 11 a.m. sharp for the 60-mile Berkshire ride to Griffin's Restaurant for a quick lunch and then return ride back to the Oxford American Legion Post 58, 227 Main Street, Oxford. The 2:30 expected arrival time and the festivities awaiting the riders will prove to be truly worth it! Live music by East Coast band Crossfire playing classic rock; food provided by Mack's Catering of Quinebaug CT; bounce house and games for the kids; many vendors; and a great variety of raffles including 50/50. Registration is \$20/bike plus \$10/passenger and includes music and entertainment. Two, three, and four-wheelers welcome. All riders from solo to groups are welcome. It's sure to be a great day for riders and, most importantly, for the youth of The Boys and Girls Club.

Contact Aaron Peek for more details at: (903) 900-0813.

"It's easy to make a buck, it's a lot tougher to make a difference." Tom Brokaw

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- 2 LB HOT DOGS
- 3 LB HAM STEAK **OR**
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- 2 LBS HOT DOGS
- 3 LB BONELESS PORK ROAST **OR**
- 3 LBS BONELESS CHICKEN BREAST
- 2 LBS STEW BEEF **OR**
- 1 PACKAGE OF MEATBALLS OF YOUR CHOICE (ITALIAN, CHICKEN OR DORITO AN CHEESE)
- 1 1/2 LB HAM STEAKS **OR**
- 1 1/2 LB NY SIRLOIN STEAK
- 1 PACKAGE (1 1/2 LB) COOKED CHICKEN WINGS OF YOUR CHOICE **OR**
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A Great Notion: Books and more in Auburn



Courtney Alicia on the job at A Great Notion, a bookstore she owns with her husband Tyler.

BY ROD LEE

In this, the age of the comeback of independent bookstores, Tyler and Courtney Galicia are happy to climb on board with the launch of A Great Notion at 65 Southbridge St. in Auburn.

Taking the name of their business from a Ken Kesey book title,

“Sometimes a Great Notion,” the Galicia’s have transformed space that was previously occupied by a church into an emporium for new and used books and an assortment of merchandise.

“This is our retirement plan,” Ms. Galicia said on April 12th. That day is a ways off. Tyler Galicia is an English teacher at Uxbridge

High School. Courtney has worked as a school adjustment counselor.

“It’s going really well,” Ms. Galicia said. A Great Notion opened February 18th. Store hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

As booklovers, the Galicia’s were looking for a spot to fulfill a dream of a store devoted to reading when they found their home. “We looked at this to get our feet wet” and decided it was just right.

“Tons of donations” of used books, as many as “two hundred a day,” are keeping A Great Notion

well stocked. There is a children’s section. Inventory also includes such items as glassware, candles, stationary, bookmarks, artwork, some apparel and coffee and drinks and snacks.

The Alicia’s are especially proud of the connections they have already made, including one with the Auburn Public Schools that will enable them to start an after-school book club for kids. An initial such undertaking involved the six to nine age group.

They look forward to hosting events; among these, author ap-

pearances, musical presentations and more.

With the availability of “a 15% educator discount” and a “loyalty card” (every eleventh used book is free), the Alicia’s have put the pieces in place for success.

Call 508-373-2315 or email agreatnotionbooks@gmail.com for further info on “books, community and goods.”

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

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BY ROD LEE

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 satisfy-

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

ing 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 Neighborhood Kitchen, also in downtown Whitinsville.

Wood-fired pizza and more The Lodge is something of an



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.

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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 pandemic, 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 haddock 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 or 774-232-2999.

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Happenings!

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

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.

THURSDAY, APRIL 27

• The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Com-

merce will host a Business After Hours with affiliate chambers from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Southwick's Zoo, 2 Southwick St., Mendon. This networking event will be co-hosted by the Chambers of Commerce in Auburn, Central Mass South, Worcester Regional and Webster Dudley Oxford.

SATURDAY, APRIL 29

• A Selectmen's Candidates Forum will be held from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Gladys E. Kelly Library, 2 Lake St., Webster. This is a chance for residents to meet the candidates and discuss with them topics that are important to voters in the town of Webster. Election Day is Tuesday, May 2 from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. webstermassdems.org.
• Hot Polish Dinners will be sold at St. Andrew Bobola Church, 54 W Main St in Dudley, MA. Dinners will be available from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 4-6 p.m. in the church hall. \$18 price includes 2 pierogi (one cheese, one cabbage), kapusta/bigos, kielbasa, and one gołąbek (stuffed cabbage). Looking forward to seeing you there!!

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 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 South 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 AdvinaCare, 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.

THURSDAY, MAY 4

• The Uxbridge Senior Center is presenting an eight-week session of Zumba Gold classes for elders, from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. at the Uxbridge Senior Center Satellite Site at the McCloskey Building, 62 Capron St. Amy Smith, a licensed Zumba Gold instructor, will lead the exercise. The suggested donation for this eight-week class is \$25. Checks may be made payable to the Uxbridge Senior Center. Call 508-278-8622 for more details.

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.

SATURDAY, MAY 6

• bankHometown invites customers and

HAPPENINGS!

continued on page 12

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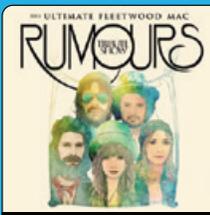
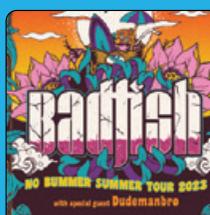


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5/14: MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH - 10AM-3PM
5/20: COMEDY NIGHT FT. PAUL D'ANGELO AND GUEST JEFF KOEN
HOSTED BY JACKIE FLYNN - DOORS 6:30PM/SHOW 7:30PM

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HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 11

members of the community to three free Shred Days at local offices. Events will be held on the following dates and at the following locations. No appointment is necessary. 9:00-11:00 a.m., Auburn office, 569 Southbridge St. Local residents can reduce their risk of identity theft by bringing old mail, receipts, statements or bills, cancelled checks, pay stubs, medical records, or any other unwanted paper documents containing personal or confidential information and shredding them safely and securely for free. A professional document destruction company will be on site in the bank's parking lot and can accept up to two boxes of documents per person.

• 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@openskysky.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 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.



Author Elena Palladino will discuss her book "Lost Towns of the Swift River Valley" in an appearance at the Auburn Historical Society & Museum at 6:30 p.m. on May 18th.

• Booklovers' Gourmet, 72 E. Main St., Webster, is hosting a book release and signing event for Lorelee Dubeau's new memoir "Language of the Sacred" from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. This event is free and open to the public. Signed copies will be available for purchase. For more information call 508-949-6232 or email deb@booklovers-gourmet.com.

• The Charlton Helping Hand Society Inc. announces the schedule for our popular, annual Saturday Summer Yard Sales. All held at the Dodge Chapel, 81 Hammond Hill Road, Charlton from 8 am to noon. All monies raised will help fulfill the mission of Helping Hand - "Help us to Help Others."

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 Postcards," at the First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Road, Sutton, at 7:00 p.m. Go to 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. Leave complete contact info including full name, contact number and email and preferred time and the number of seats requested.

• The Northbridge Fire Department will host its annual Spaghetti Supper with dine-in and pick-up options available between 4:00 and 8:00 p.m. at current NFD headquarters, 193 Main St., Whitinsville. Homemade meatballs, spaghetti, salad, bread and dessert will be served. All proceeds go towards the Northbridge fireworks display to be held on July 15th, organized by the NFD. Contact eventsNFD@gmail.com for further info.

• Take a Hike for Hope & Wellness, sponsored by the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., Riverbend Farms DCR, 287 Oak St., Uxbridge. www.blackstonevalley.org.

• The Grass Roots Coffeehouse's Spring Concert featuring the band Blackstone Valley Bluegrass will be held at the Rockdale Congregational Church, 42 Fowler Road, Northbridge. Admission is \$15; \$5 for students under 18. Doors open at 6:45 p.m. and the show begins at 7:30 p.m. Proceeds benefit the Rockdale Congregational Church. The band is beginning its 26th season. Members include original guitarist Bob Dick, Mandolinist Tim St. Jean, Peter Tillotson on bass and Pete Fein on banjo. Go to www.rockdalechurchonline.org, email aplantdbob@aol.com or call 617-429-0347 for more information.

• The Upton VFW Post 5594 on Rt. 140 (15 Milford St.) in Upton will begin its summer series of flea markets at post headquarters on Route 140 in Upton. The events are held from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. the second Saturday of each month through October, weather permitting. Reservations are not required. Coffee and donuts are available

HAPPENINGS!

continued on page 14

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HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 12

during the morning, then hot dogs, chips, and cold drinks for lunch.

MONDAY, MAY 15

• "Social Security: Your Questions Answered," featuring Dennis Antonopoulos, a financial advisor with Edward Jones, will be offered at the Brookdale Eddy Pond West, 669 Washington St., Auburn. Registration is at

5:45 p.m. and the seminar begins at 6:00 p.m. Such questions as "how does Social Security fit into my retirement income plan," "when should I start taking benefits" and "what about taxes" will be addressed. Social Security will likely be the foundation of

your retirement income. Before you retire, it's important to understand your options and the effect your decisions will have on your retirement.

MAY 15-17

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

THURSDAY, MAY 18

• The Auburn Historical Society & Museum will host Author Elena Palladino and the "Lost Towns of the Swift River Valley," drowned by the Quabbin, at 6:30 p.m.. The program will be presented at the Auburn Sportsmen Club, 50 Elm St., Auburn. Contact auburnmuseum@verizon.net or call 508-832-6856.

SATURDAY, MAY 20

• Yard Sale, 46 Glen Drive, Whitinsville, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Host family recently downsized. Ping pong table, weight machine, poker table, full-length standing mirror and many other household items.
• The Dudley Grange is participating in the Dudley Agricultural Commission's second annual "Dudley Grows Together" Plant Hop from 9:00 a.m. to noon. The Grange will be

offering a variety of vegetable, herbs and some "uncommon" house plants for sale. There will also be Strawberry Shortcake tickets available for sale for the Grange's annual Strawberry Festival to be held on June 15th on Dudley Hill at 139 Center Road.
• Historian Ken Ethier will talk about early transportation in Worcester County in a special appearance at the Samuel Slater Experience, 31 Ray St., Webster, at 11:00 a.m. Mr. Ethier is the Auburn town historian, board member of the Auburn Historical Museum, member of the Auburn Historical Commission, board member and past president of the Auburn Historical Society, board member of Waters Farm in Sutton, the Straw Hollow Engine & Tractor Club, and a member of the Central Mass Gas & Steam Engine Club. He is also a volunteer at Samuel Slater Experience. www.samuel Slater Experience.org.

SUNDAY, MAY 21

• 6th Annual Food Truck Festival and Craft Fair to benefit the Millbury redevelopment Authority. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., rain or shine at the Millbury High School, Martin Street, Millbury. \$5, Children 12 and under free. Facebook: Millbury Food Truck Festival

MAY 27-28

• World War II Tank Demonstration Weekend takes place at the American Heritage

HAPPENINGS!

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HAPPENINGS!

continued from page 14

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.

• The Charlton Helping Hand Society Inc. announces the schedule for our popular, annual Saturday Summer Yard Sales. All held at the Dodge Chapel, 81 Hammond Hill Road, Charlton from 8 am to noon. All monies raised will help fulfill the mission of Helping Hand - "Help us to Help Others."

SUNDAY, JUNE 4

• The Sutton Preservationist 4H Club will host its second annual Coffee with Cows event on the Sutton Town Common. Last year the club reached out to other nonprofit organizations including the Lions Club, the



Ken Warchol will again lead his popular Trolley Tour of historic sites in the town of Northbridge throughout the morning and afternoon on Saturday, May 13th.

Green Bean Project, the Congregational Church, the Historical Society and the Cultural Council to join in staging this event.

TUESDAY, JUNE 6

• Join the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's Food, Beverage and Hospitality Network for a Business After Hours networking event hosted by Rushford & Sons Brewhouse, 8 Grove St., Upton, 5:30-7:30 p.m. www.blackstonevalley.org/events.

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.

• St. Patrick's Church's Spring Recycling Event will take place at 7 East St., Whitinsville, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Profits will benefit upcoming YIA service projects. Please keep items for each station separate. On-site paper shredding, electronics recycling, recycling of bottles and cans, textile collection and donated books are all part of the event. For more information and electronics pricing, call 508-234-5656 or email officesupport@mystpatricks.com.

• The Auburn Historical Society & Museum will host a Yard Sale, 40 South St., Auburn, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. No Early Birds please.

• 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 proceed 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.

THURSDAY, JUNE 15

• The Dudley Grange's annual Strawberry Festival will be held on the Grange's grounds on Dudley Hill at 139 Center Road.

SATURDAY, JULY 1

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

SATURDAY, JULY 8

• The Charlton Helping Hand Society Inc. announces the schedule for our popular, annual Saturday Summer Yard Sales. All held at the Dodge Chapel, 81 Hammond Hill Road, Charlton from 8 am to noon. All monies raised will help fulfill the mission of Helping Hand - "Help us to Help Others."

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.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5

• The Charlton Helping Hand Society Inc. announces the schedule for our popular, annual Saturday Summer Yard Sales. All held at the Dodge Chapel, 81 Hammond Hill Road, Charlton from 8 am to noon. All monies raised will help fulfill the mission of Helping Hand - "Help us to Help Others."

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26

• The 2nd Annual Parking Lot Craft Fair sponsored by the Auburn Historical Society & Museum will be held at 41 South St., Auburn, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., rain or shine. Vendors are welcome. Contact Helen at auburnmuseum@verizon.net to reserve a space for \$15.

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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Urban Chic caters to women's and girls' fashion tastes

BY ROD LEE

The business-friendly town of Auburn recently welcomed still another storefront with the opening of Urban Chic, a women's fashion shop situated in a busy plaza at 482 Southbridge St.

"We're two parts," Alycia Tarasiak said on April 12th. "Urban Chic for women's apparel and Lovely's a youth boutique in front, and we have rental space in back for fashion shows and other happenings."

Started by two sisters, Urban Chic features such hip women's wear as a Mocha Mousse Pull-over, Park Striped Shorts, Endless Joy Floral Top, Two Hearts Meet Maxi Skirt, Diana Straight



Leg Jeans in White, Skies The Limit Button Up in Lavender Blue, Eugenie Blazer in Mauve, Blooming Stripes Hoodie in Coral, Blooming Stripes Hoodie in Pink, Baby Blue Kylie Romper, Sage Ruffled Linen Romper, Paisley Blue Blouse and Gingham Maxi Dress.

New arrivals include "anything leisure" including denim.

Accessories? You bet.

Trendy workout gear? Of course.

"Any local business that wants to be involved" is welcome to talk to Urban Chic about having its products represented in the store, Ms. Tarasiak said. Several have already.

"We are working with different suppliers and vendors and everything is reasonable priced," she said.

"We are moms who have partnered together."

Store hours are Wednesday and Thursday noon to 6:00 p.m., Friday

11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Visit urbanchicfashion.com for more information.

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

Booklovers' Gourmet poised for Independent Bookstore Day

Independent Bookstore Day across the nation on Saturday, April 29th will give Booklovers' Gourmet a chance to share with customers all that the store has to offer after three years at its current location at 72 E. Main St. in Webster.

Owner Debra Ostrokolowicz

picked unique gifts, journals, bookmarks, pottery mugs, local art, gemstone jewelry, incense, handcrafted soaps and soys, candles, jigsaw puzzles and children's toys.

To mark Independent Bookstore Day, Booklovers' Gourmet is hosting Tom Ingrassia, co-author



Author appearances are a regular happening at Booklovers' Gourmet in Webster. Here Leslie Wheeler talks about *Wolf Bog* and other mystery novels she has written, during a visit.

opened Booklovers' Gourmet in March 1995 with the idea of making the store a cultural oasis in her hometown of Webster. Booklovers' features new and gently used books, from the hard-to-find to bestsellers, and a curated selection of staff picks. Books can be specially order at no additional charge.

Booklovers' also carries hand-

of "One Door Closes: Overcoming Adversity By Following Your Dreams."

Mr. Ingrassia will be in the store from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Another author will take center stage at Booklovers' on Saturday, May 6th when Coralee Dubeau signs copies of her new memoir "Language of the Sacred."

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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**

M36 Jackson Tank Destroyer undergoes restoration at the AHM



Volunteer Jim Winroth works with the newly rebuilt cabin firewall in the M36 Jackson Tank Destroyer at the American Heritage Museum.

Under restoration in the American Heritage Museum's restoration workshop in Hudson is the original World War II vintage M36 Jackson Tank Destroyer. Under the supervision of Team Leader Dick Moran, volunteers have been hard at work reconfiguring the engine compartment and transmission back to original World War II standards

with a Ford GAA V-8 engine as this particular M36 was one of 399 purchased by Yugoslavia and re-equipped with a 500 HP Soviet diesel engine used in the T-55.

Once complete, the M36 will operate as it did in World War II.

The M36 was completely stripped over the winter and has been fully sandblasted inside and out. It has been primed for paint.

Internal compartments are being reinstalled.

The M36 will be on display along with other famous tanks during the American Heritage Museum's World War II Tank Demonstration Weekend, May 27th and 28th.

Tanks visitors can see include the M4 Sherman, the M24 Chaffee, the M5 Stuart, the M18 Hellcat, the M26 Pershing and the M36 Jackson Tank Destroyer for the first time.

Gates open at 9:00 a.m. and the grounds are open until 5:00 p.m. both days.

Captivating historical narration will bring these amazing machines to life. The 101st AB Re-Enactor Group will be on site and tank driving demonstrations will be ongoing throughout the event.

The AHM is located at 568 Main St. in Hudson.

Visit <https://www.americanheritagemuseum.org>.

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SPORTS

Shepherd Hill celebrates Bateman and Mullen college signings

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Recently Shepherd Hill Regional High School seniors Grace Bateman and Emery Mullen were onstage in front of family and friends as they signed letters of commitment to continue their academic and athletic careers

on the next level following their graduation.

Bateman will be attending NCAA Division 1 and member of the Patriot League College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, where she will run women's cross country as well as track, while Mullen will take her basketball talents to Vassar College, a NCAA Division 3 school

and member of the Liberty League, in Dutchess County, New York.

"First and foremost, congratulations to Grace and Emery on this impressive achievement. Putting athletics aside for a moment, both institutions these young women are committing to are not only two of the oldest and most revered colleges in the nation," Shepherd Hill Athletic Director James Scanlon said. "The lists of notable alumni who have graduated from Holy Cross and Vassar are truly remarkable and there is no doubt that both of these student athletes have earned their place among those who seek the highest and most rigorous of standards."

Both the Crusaders and Brewers are programs that continuously find themselves amongst the top of their respective leagues athletically while striving for academics.

Bateman, who had played soccer and basketball, began her running career in middle school. Having found that her favorite part of her other two sports was running, she decided to give cross country a try back then and found that it was something that she really enjoyed doing.

"I really liked the running aspect of soccer and basketball, so I thought that I'd give cross country a try," she said. "Being that I love running I stuck with it and eventually got into track as well. The sport is where I've made some of my best friends."

During the indoor season Bateman has posted a best 3:06 in the 1000 meter where she qualified for the State Tournament and finished in third place. In the spring she runs the 800 meter with a personal best time of 2:26 and although she loves running, never in her wildest dreams did she believe that run-



Emery Mullen and Grace Bateman are bound for Vassar and Holy Cross, respectively, to continue their athletic and academic careers, after graduation from Shepherd Hill.

ning would create a path for her into college.

"I knew that I wanted to run in college; that was a goal of mine. Never did I think that running would get me into college," Bateman said. "I had no idea where I was going to go to what division it would be I just wanted the opportunity. It's still a shock to me that someone would give me a scholarship."

In addition to scoping out Holy Cross, Bateman had also been offered an opportunity to run at Stonehill College in Easton. When all was said and done it was the academics as well as the challenge that played a big part in her decision to attend Holy Cross.

Mullen, who is going to Vassar to play basketball had also contemplated running in college as well.

"Although I was recruited for basketball I thought about running too, but unfortunately tore my ACL near the end of the season," she said. "I'll be having surgery in mid-

April and the rehab is nine months so I'll probably miss some of the pre-season but should be ready to go for the opener."

Basketball has always been a part of Mullen's life; her mother was her coach growing up and her father and brother both played the sport. Mullen earned a position on the Rams varsity squad her freshman season. On the track she ran middle distances for Shepherd Hill, while also throwing the javelin, an event she was just a few feet short of the school record and was looking to surpass this spring.

In addition to Vassar contacting her, Mullen was talking to Division 3 Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY and Mercyhurst University in Erie, PA.

"Mercyhurst was where I was leaning toward as I was hoping to play basketball as well as run track. Vassar was on the backburner as I really didn't think it was on the table being so highly competitive," Mullen said. "Vassar was my reach school, but when everything started to come into place it was a rather easy pick. It gives me a good opportunity career wise, and the basketball team is building, so it's a good time [for] me as an incoming point guard."

Scanlon also told the crowd in attendance that he had the privilege of getting to know these two student-athlete leaders over the past few years.

"Grace's quiet but confident leadership and Emery's inclusive, endearing personality have left an indelible mark on me," the AD said. "And I know that it is what will make them both tremendous assets to their future teams."

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TALES FROM BEYOND tomdagostino.com

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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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

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."

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



JoAnne and Pete DiTommaso create a happy family for Luke.



Bruno accepts Luke...

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.

"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-



Luke hogs the bed...

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 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 sticks together. They checked out 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

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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.

LUKE

continued from page 20

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 reveled at a first date that carried



The staring contest ...

on with the world's longest staring contest. "You have the pointy ears 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 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 amyleclaire@hotmail.com

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TIPS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING

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Retiring early? Know your healthcare choices



BY DENNIS ANTONOPOULOS

Life doesn't always go as planned. For example, you might think you'll retire at 65 or later, when you'll be eligible for

Medicare. But if you retire before then, how will you pay for your health care?

Without insurance, you risk incurring thousands of dollars of expenses if you are injured or become seriously ill. And if you must pay for these costs out of pocket, you might have to dip into your IRA, 401(k) or other retirement accounts earlier than you had planned – which could result in a less desirable retirement lifestyle than you had envisioned.

What, then, are your options? It depends on your situation, but here are four possibilities:

- Employer retiree health benefits – If your former employer offers health coverage to retirees,

it could well be your best choice, especially if the employer continues to pay a share of the premiums. However, fewer employers are offering continuing health coverage to former employees, and among those who do, they may use certain criteria – such as length of service and position within the company – to limit eligibility.

- Spouse's plan – If you're married and your spouse still has employer-provided insurance, you may be able to get coverage under this plan or continue this coverage if you have it already. If the employer subsidizes premiums for spouses, this plan could be an affordable choice – if not, though, it might be more expensive than other options.

- COBRA – The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) allows you to maintain your existing coverage with the same benefits and provider network. However, COBRA is typically only available for a specific time – usually 18 months – after you leave your employer, and coverage can be expensive. Your previous employer subsidized a portion of the premium as a benefit, but once you've retired, you'll likely have to pay the entire premium, plus an additional charge.

- ACA Marketplace plan – Through the Affordable Care Act Marketplace, you can find a variety of plans from which to choose, possibly including ones that include your existing network. If you qualify for subsidies, the premiums for your coverage may be similar to employer-sponsored coverage;

if not, though, they can be more expensive. For information on ACA Marketplace plans, visit www.healthcare.gov.

If you have options for health insurance, you'll want to take into account differences in coverage and cost. Check whether your desired health care providers are in-network and try to determine if your current medications and the benefits you rely on are covered. You may also want to consider a plan that allows you to open a health savings account (HSA), which offers potential tax benefits. To contribute to an HSA, you must be covered by a high deductible health plan (HDHP), so there's that cost to consider, but if you're in generally good health and you don't expect to depend heavily on your health insurance until you're eligible for Medicare, you might want to consider an HDHP.

One final note: Even when you do enroll in Medicare, you will still incur expenses for premiums, deductibles and co-pays, so you'll want to budget for these costs in your overall financial strategy.

In the meantime, explore your health insurance options. The future is not ours to see – so you'll want to be prepared for anything.

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... In search of a softer and quieter ride ...



BY JOHN PAUL

Q. I've worked for a GM car dealer for over 30-35 years in the parts department and am a former mechanic, so I know a little

about cars. Now I've retired and have a 2018 KIA Forte 5 SX and want a softer ride than the 40 series tires give. What can I do to get a softer and quieter ride?

A. I think you are stuck with the firm sport ride you have. The 40-series tire doesn't give you much choice. On less sporty models, there is a 17-inch wheel 45-series tire and I'm not sure the money spent on new wheels would be worth it. The ride is more or less determined by the height of the sidewall. Moving to a 235/45R18 is only going to gain .3 or .4 of an inch of sidewall while still keeping about the same overall diameter and might give you a slight improvement in ride quality. When shopping for tires I would also look for reviews that specifically mention a quiet ride.

Q. I have a 1998 Lexus ES with 155,000 miles on it. The timing belt was last changed 8 1/2 years and 40,000 miles ago. The manual calls for six years and 90,000 miles. Should I go by time or mileage to determine when to change it? The car is always garaged and goes about 6,000 miles a year.

A. It is entirely possible that the timing belt is in good condition, but there is no way to know unless you actually inspect it. Rubber timing belts (and many rubber parts) can fail due to mileage and age, if this were my 25-year-old Lexus and I planned on keeping it for a while, to be safe,

and have a dependable car, I would replace the timing belt.

Q. I have a few questions about the insulation used in Honda car wiring. From what I understand, the insulation of Honda car wiring is soy-based. I've been the victim of critters eating the wiring of my Honda car, and the expense of getting it repaired. Now that Honda knows that little animals like to eat their soy-based wiring insulation, has Honda switched to an alternative wiring insulation, or are they still manufacturing new Honda cars whose wiring they know will be eaten by critters? I suspect it's a money thing. It must be cheaper to manufacture car's wiring using soy-based insulation than whatever it was that was used previously (and never suffered critter nibbles). Is soy-based wiring used by any other car manufacturers? Is soy-based wiring still being used? I'm contemplating buying a new car, or at least a newer used car, which will be parked outside since I have no garage and I'd like to avoid buying a car whose wiring is so tasty to little critters.

A. I too thought the soy-based wiring was an issue, but after talking to engineers at Honda, Ford and Toyota although the insulation is soy based it is not a food grade of material. The previous material was petroleum based and the soy-based material was developed to be more environmentally friendly than petroleum-based insulation. In many cars the seat cushions are also soy based. We recently had one of our AAA vans not start, and the issue was a huge nest under the hood. In this case based on the nest it was likely an opossum. Since rodents and squirrels chew through house and commercial wiring, walls and other building materials, I don't think the insulation is the issue. I think the rodent problem is just

that, a rodent problem. As we build more and take over open space these destructive critters move into our vehicles.

Q. I am having a problem with my 2018 Hyundai Tucson, it appears to be guzzling oil. Hyundai completed an oil consumption test and found it to be within range, so they will not fix it. As a result, I need to have my oil changed every 2000-2500 miles or it completely runs out. A quick Google search told me that there is a class action lawsuit from other Hyundai and Kia owners with the same problem, but Hyundai does not acknowledge that it is a problem. Any advice? Getting an oil change every two months is a huge inconvenience.

A. I would continue to work with Hyundai on this issue. Hyundai's guideline on oil consumption is, that if the engine uses more than one quart of oil in 1000 miles, the engine is replaced. Based on your comments that the engine runs out of oil every 2500 miles, your car's engine should qualify for engine replacement. In the interim, you don't need to change the oil every 2500 miles, but you do need to check the oil periodically and add as necessary to keep the engine properly lubricated.

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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