

REVVED UP FOR HALLOWEEN!



Each Halloween for the past five years, the brothers Moore set out on a trick-or-treating cruise in a home-made vehicle constructed from cardboard by their dad Jim. Last year James, 10, in a replica of the family's 20-foot Four Winns boat, and Matthew 8, in the Mach 5 from "Speed Racer," each took second-place awards in the city-sponsored Halloween costume party at Grey Court Park. In the foreground are (from left) a Coady's monster tow truck, a Skidoo snowmobile and Lightning McQueen from the animated film "Cars." Jim flattens the cardboard with a rolling pin then spends weeks cutting, shaping, gluing and painting. At this year's Oct 23 event, look for submarine and camera costumes.
 Photo by Steve Whipple



Happy Hearts' spellbinding show!
 Disney concert was magical, Page 14



Meet our 4 state rep candidates
 Their views on taxes, casinos, etc., Pages 4 & 5

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'Elvis' rocks Methuen Village
 Residents swing, swoon to oldies, Page 18



Tracking Methuen's Civil War vets
 Research leads to 500+ names, Page 38

Costumes made with love ...

EEK!!!!

Christine McLaughlin Howell,
Guest Editorial Writer

I officially cast off my end-of-summer blues and embraced autumn. I am not sure when it happened. Maybe when I was standing, waving at the school bus.

Apple picking, pumpkin carving, Oktoberfest, balmy days and chilly nights ... and, of course, Halloween are approaching. My kids are already perusing the flyers and choosing costumes. Every year, my husband cajoles, "C'mon, when I was a kid, we made our own costumes." They staunchly refuse and point out generic Hannah Montana and Darth Vader costumes.

"A mummy? A robot?" he persists. He is itching to wrap them up in toilet paper or tin foil.

Kids today and their fancy store-bought costumes. When I was in third grade, my sisters and I were dressed as flowers for

When I was in third grade, my sisters and I were dressed as flowers for Halloween. We didn't choose this.

Halloween. We didn't choose this. Our Aunt Eileen, who is blessed with a m a z i n g creativity and enthusiasm, told our mother about her c o s t u m e idea. Off to Grandma's we went, dutifully

getting our faces fitted for the middle of the flowers. My kids would never go for that. Kids today and their fancy opinions.

Aunt Eileen fashioned enormous petals out of cardboard and affixed a bee to the top petal. The petals extended about 2 feet. We

dressed in green. Three glum-looking flowers, heading out for Halloween, making eerie shadows under the streetlights.

As we approached our neighbors' stairs, we had to wait for other trick-or-treaters to e x i t or risk knocking t h e m off the p o r c h with our flower petals.

After trick-or-treating, we headed to the school Halloween party around the corner. When we a r - rived, I encountered a haunted maze made of boxes taped together and creepy crawlers hanging inside. I stood there, flummoxed. No way could I fit through there. The line behind me was shifting impatiently and the aide snapped, "Oh, just give it to me," and held my flower-petal head as I crawled through the maze. My kids might be on to something.

Aunt Eileen got a break from costume making when we entered the hobo stage. Hordes of hobos with dirt-smudged faces, carrying pillowcases were the final stage of trick-or-treating. This usually happened around fifth grade. By then, kids were too lazy to make creative costumes and single-minded about getting candy.

Dressing as a hobo might even be politically incorrect today. We didn't think like that in the '70s. One year, I dressed up as

a Chinese person. Bizarre as it sounds, it was a huge compliment. I coveted the long, shiny black hair and the colorful robes they wore. My version was not as

lovely. I put a pair of black tights over my hair, tied the legs together with an elastic and drew black lines next to my eyes with eyeliner. My mother's bathrobe completed the ensemble. It was colorful; it was a robe. That is where the simi-

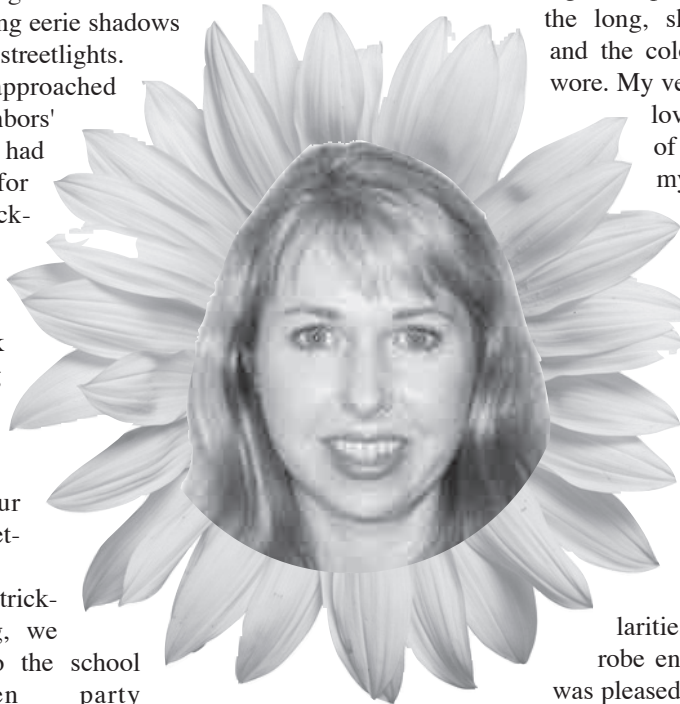
larities to a Chinese robe ended. However, I was pleased with the result.

"Oh, are you Oriental?" our worldly neighbor asked.

"Nope, I'm Chinese!" I replied proudly.

My daughter and sons are waiting to visit the Halloween store in Salem, N.H. Every time we drive by, they ask if it is open. Undoubtedly, we will purchase the same mass-produced costumes as half of their class. I will happily snap pictures at the annual Marsh School Halloween parade and hope I get pictures of my Hannah Montana or my Darth Vader. Maybe I can find an off-the-rack flower costume for my daughter ...

Guest editorial writer Christine McLaughlin Howell, who is currently on the hunt for a flower costume for Steve Whipple, lives in Methuen.



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ON THE COVER

Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo: Fairy Godmother Barbara Lattin worked her magic during "The Sounds of Disney" concert put on by the Happy Hearts Chorus.
Election is Nov. 2: Check out the state rep candidates' answers to a MethuenLife survey.
Elvis lives! Stan Anderson Jr. brought down the house during an afternoon of crooning Presley hits at Methuen Village at Riverwalk Park.
Hunting down history: Dan Gagnon and Joe Bella have teamed up to keep track of Methuen's Civil War veterans, like GE Merrill.



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Local dancers opening for Rockettes!

By Darrell Halen
MethuenLife Writer

Courtney Patterson was so excited when she learned she was going to be part of an opening act for the world-famous Radio City Rockettes that the Methuen dancing student shed a few tears of joy.

"It's like a dream come true," said Courtney, 15, who has been studying dance for about 12 years. "It was really exciting because they're so famous and popular."

"The Rockettes are so fantastic and perfect. To know that we're opening – it's an amazing opportunity."

~ **Dancer Chase Lambert, 15, of Methuen**

because they're so famous and popular."

Courtney is a student at Dance Images Dance & Music Center in Methuen, which has been invited to send a group of students to open

one of the Boston performances of the "Radio City Christmas Spectacular starring the Rockettes."

The Rockettes will perform Dec. 3 through 29 at the Wang Theatre. Eighteen youngsters from Dance Images, who range



Performers from Dance Images Dance & Music Center in Methuen will be opening the world-famous Radio City Rockettes' holiday show in Boston this December. These dancers were guest artists last month at Faneuil Hall in Boston to start promoting the show. Here, the dancers, their director and their choreographer pose with two members of the Rockettes (rear, center). Courtesy photo

See DANCERS, Page 10



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MEET YOUR STATE REP CANDIDATES

Three challengers are looking to unseat Methuen's two-term state Rep. Linda Dean Campbell in the Nov. 2 election. State representative candidates for Methuen's 15th Essex District will join MCTV and MethuenLife for a live forum Tuesday, Oct. 12 at 6:30 pm on Comcast 22 and Verizon 33. Moderator Seth Graham will lead the 90-minute discussion with the candidates. If you have a question you'd like to have asked, please submit it to info@methuentv.org by Oct. 9.

STATE REP CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

1. Do you support casinos being built in Massachusetts? Why or why not?

2. Do you support the sales tax being rolled back to 5 percent? Why or why not?

3. What can be done to improve the plight of Massachusetts businesses that lie on the New Hampshire border?

4. From a state government standpoint, what is Methuen's biggest challenge and how would you work to overcome it?

5. Complete this sentence: "I'd fight for a Methuen cash windfall to be put toward ..."

6. There's talk of beefing up the law that cites those caught with an ounce or less of marijuana a \$100 fee. Would you support a harsher penalty?

7. How do you think Lawrence's fiscal crisis will impact Methuen?

8. Why should Methuen residents vote for you?

Linda Dean Campbell

Age: 54
Methuen's incumbent state representative
Democrat
Experience: Active duty Army officer (lieutenant/captain) for 8 years. High school teacher and college instructor for 2 years. Community activist and leader in fight against power plant construction on the Methuen border. Served as West District City Councilor for 6 years and I am completing my second term as your state representative.



Unique/surprising fact about me: Although I was a paratrooper while serving in the Army, I am terrified of heights. My first child was born only a week after my husband was deployed to Desert Storm.
E-mail: campbellmethuen@comcast.net
Web site: www.campbellformethuen.com

1.
Yes. I voted for the House casino measure in the last session and would support any reasonable measure to do so in the future. We are already absorbing the social costs without receiving revenue. Between \$800 million and \$1 billion of revenue and thousands of jobs are transferred each year from Massachusetts' pockets to Connecticut and Rhode Island.

2.
Yes. I voted against the measure that raised it to 6.5 percent because it was bad for Methuen business and effectively transferred money and jobs from Massachusetts to New Hampshire. It also hurts many who are struggling and those who are under- or unemployed.

3
Roll back the recent sales tax and alcoholic beverage tax increases and work to reduce them further. Offer Massachusetts' small businesses tax incentives and more low-interest loans to borrow for expansion. Offer further legislation to help small businesses reduce health-care costs.

4.
Additional state legislation needs to be enacted to further reduce both the health-care costs and pension liabilities for cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

5.
Revitalizing our downtown; offering more reasonably priced housing units for retirees and our elderly; updating our public safety infrastructure; public park improvements, more public parks and the purchase of open space. Note that Methuen just received a windfall — \$64.7 million for the renovation of our high school and millions of state and federal dollars allocated for the Methuen Rotary Project.

6.
The current law is ineffective and police officers want tools to enforce the current law. We should require violators to identify themselves for the police and criminalize evasion to avoid payment of the civil fine.

7.
It already has placed an unsustainable demand upon fire services in the surrounding communities. Morally, we have to respond to calls but when we do, we leave ourselves vulnerable and endanger our firefighters and police officers. This is one of the reasons why I have been calling to place Lawrence into state receivership and have consistently voted against giving Lawrence additional state funds.

8.
I have a deep respect for the people of Methuen and have achieved remarkable results during my short tenure in office: \$64.7 million to renovate our high school, bridge repairs over Rt. 213, a Head Start building in Methuen, and more. I will continue to oppose tax increases and fight for pension and health-care reform in the public sector. I will continue to lead in an independent manner that truly represents the concerns of the people of Methuen.

Al DiNuccio

Experience: 30 years managing large and small manufacturing corporations, 6 years Methuen Community Development Board, 20-plus years Methuen Police Department.

Unique/surprising fact about me: 27 years ago I built the Nativity scene for St. Michael's Church and they still use it every year.



1:
Yes, because it creates jobs and brings in additional tax revenue for the state.

2:
Yes, you cannot tax your way out of a fiscal crisis. You need to cut spending.

3:
Reduce the state sales tax and streamline the regulatory process for businesses.

4:
Continually rising pension and health-care costs. I have a plan to address each problem. Please visit www.dinuccio.com for "My Plan" details.

5:
Lowering property taxes for the citizens of Methuen.

6:
No, the people voted on this in the last referendum. I respect their vote.

7:
We should learn from the Lawrence crisis and be sure to elect leaders who will not make the same mistakes for Methuen.

8:
I am the only state rep candidate that has the background and experience to help lead us out of this current environment. I am also the only candidate who has been endorsed by the Citizens for Limited Taxation.

Election Day is Nov. 2

Across the state, voters will head to the polls on Tuesday, Nov. 2. In Methuen, polls are open at 7 am.

Among the offices on the ballot are governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, treasurer, auditor, representative in Congress, councillor, senator in General Court, representative in General Court, district attorney and sheriff.

Local officials looking to retain their seats are state Rep. Linda Dean Campbell (15th Essex District), state Sen. Steven Baddour (1st Essex District), state Rep. Barbara L'Italien (18th Essex District) and Congresswoman Niki Tsongas (5th Congressional District).

Voters will also be asked to decide three questions on this ballot. Question 1 is about eliminating the sales tax on alcohol. Question 2 would repeal the Chapter 40B zoning law, a tool for creating affordable housing. Question 3 would reduce the state sales tax and use tax rates from 6.25 percent to 3 percent.

MEET YOUR STATE REP CANDIDATES

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6. There's talk of beefing up the law that cites those caught with an ounce or less of marijuana a \$100 fee. Would you support a harsher penalty?

7. How do you think Lawrence's fiscal crisis will impact Methuen?

8. Why should Methuen residents vote for you?

Philip Lahey

Age: 62
Semi-retired
Independent
Experience: Serving my third term as a Methuen city councilor.
Unique/surprising fact about me: After almost 5 years on the council, I still don't take things personal.
E-mail: Lahey2000@verizon.com
Web site: Phillahey.com



1.
Yes. The main reason I'm running is to increase our local aid. Although I'm not a fan of gambling, I believe this could have an immediate impact.

2.
Yes. As we all know the increases were supposed to be temporary.

3.
A lower sales tax for the border towns might keep shoppers from heading north. Also it would not hurt to lower the corporate tax.

4.
Methuen's biggest challenge is the loss of local aid. Eliminating non-essential grants and applying the funds to local aid would help.

5.
Property-tax relief. The governor promised property-tax relief when he ran the first time. It would be a good time for him to actually keep his promise.

6.
Yes. Many people don't realize that marijuana is the gateway to hard drugs. I'm not saying that everyone who uses marijuana will go to the hard stuff, but most addicts start off with marijuana.

7.
It already has. Because of their cuts in public safety, our Fire Department has had to come to the aid of Lawrence more frequently. Also, the crime from Lawrence is already starting to spill over to the Methuen border.

8.
My one and only concern is the welfare of our city. I don't have to play up to Republicans or Democrats. I am a true Independent and will not allow myself to be intimidated by the Beacon Hill bigshots.

Hector Montalvo

Age: 40
Independent
Experience: none/self-taught
Unique/surprising fact about me: I produce and host a local access show in Methuen called "Behind the Scene with Hector Montalvo," which can be seen in 47 communities around the commonwealth as well as in California, New York and Connecticut. I also have a bill which was signed into law, and brought forward by Sen. Steven Baddour within one year.
E-mail: thehactormontalvoshow@yahoo.com
Web site: www.votehector2010.weebly.com



1.
Yes. The majority of the people voted for it, and it will create some jobs which is well needed.

2.
Yes. The people have been ignored for too long. It will allow the people to keep more of their money instead of the government.

3.
I am not sure there is anything I can do personally. This problem has and will continue to be an issue as long as N.H. and Mass. border one another. I would support tax breaks for existing businesses within 20 miles of the N.H. border.

4.
Methuen's biggest challenge is that there is no accountability to the taxpayers. The people don't have a say in the hiring process of those who are currently appointed. I will work to ensure the taxpayers don't have to pay when their government misuses their funds, then raises taxes on the people because they couldn't balance their budgets.

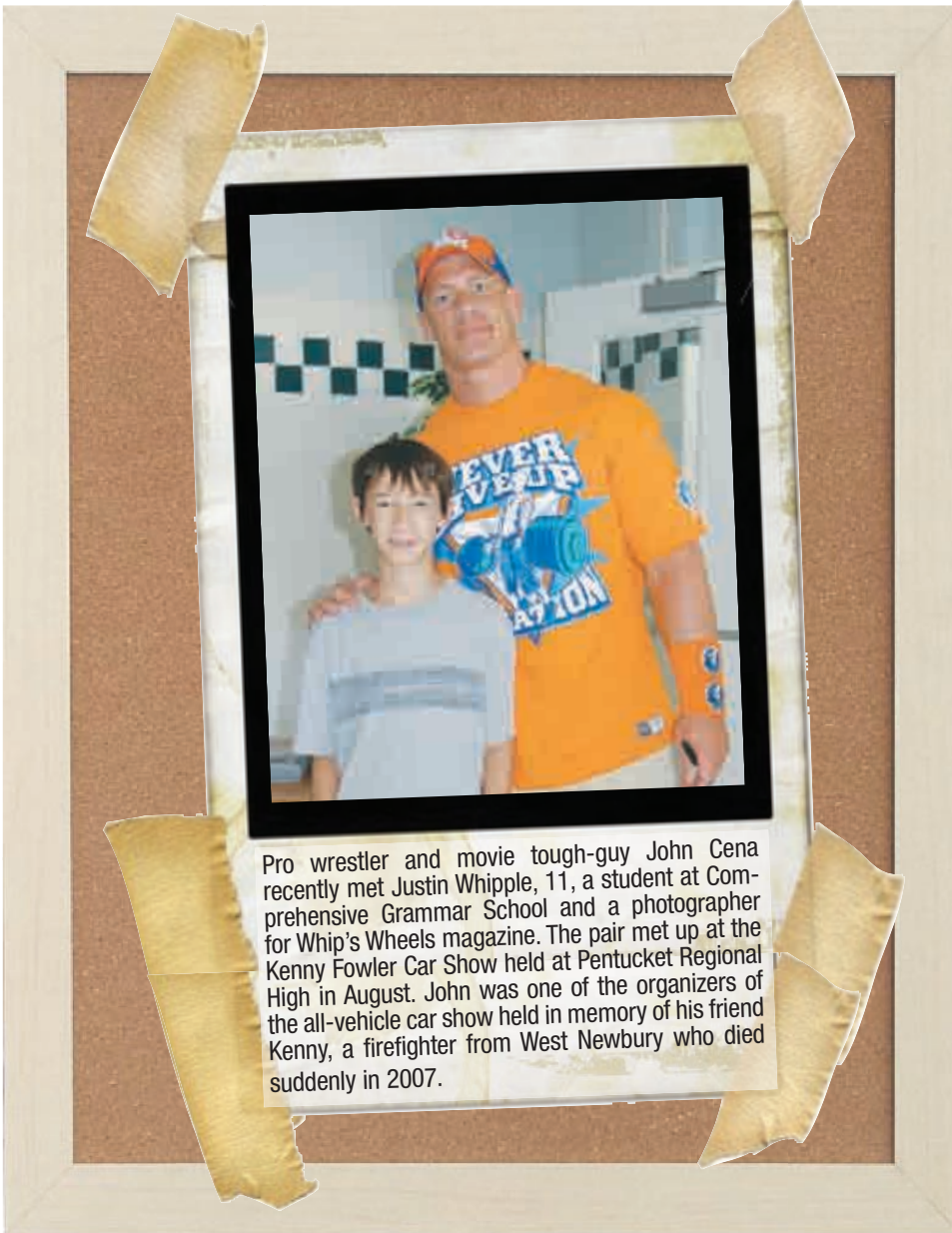
5.
Capital Improvement, fix schools, police station, Senior Center. This will help with the budget.

6.
No. The people have spoken on this issue, the state wrote the ineffective rules to enforce it. The people are tired of the government creating new laws. We have our laws and the Constitution, and I support less government intrusion.

7.
It will affect fire, police, education, and local services asking for Methuen's services to supplement their shortcomings. It directly affects the people.

8.
A vote for me will be a vote to bail the people out. To hold government accountable, to reduce wasteful spending in government. A vote for me will send a strong message to government: If you're short staffed, hire taller people.

Celebrities & YOU!



Pro wrestler and movie tough-guy John Cena recently met Justin Whipple, 11, a student at Comprehensive Grammar School and a photographer for Whip's Wheels magazine. The pair met up at the Kenny Fowler Car Show held at Pentucket Regional High in August. John was one of the organizers of the all-vehicle car show held in memory of his friend Kenny, a firefighter from West Newbury who died suddenly in 2007.



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A salute to Gold Star Mothers

A large crowd gathered at Lawrence Municipal Airport in North Andover on Sept. 26 to honor the family members of fallen Massachusetts service members. Thanks to the efforts of local Veterans Service officers, and many local groups supporting veterans

such as Support Our Troops, this has become an annual tradition in the Merrimack Valley. The names of 36 Merrimack Valley service members killed in combat since Vietnam

See GOLD, Page 9



Celeste Vincente (second from left) is the Gold Star Mother of Cpl. David M. Vicente, USMC of Methuen who was killed in action in Iraq on March 19, 2004. Mrs. Vincente is flanked by (from left) state Rep. Linda Dean Campbell, U.S. Sen. Scott Brown and state Sen. Steven Baddour. Courtesy photos

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Check It Out!

Library hosting Atkinson book launch

Methuen's favorite literary son, writer Jay Atkinson, will have a new book coming out Nov. 1. To celebrate this new collection of short fiction, entitled "Tauvernier Street," the Nevins Library will host a Launch Party for Jay, featuring a reading from the book, a book signing and a reception to meet the author.

Earlier this year, Atkinson published "Paradise Road, Jack Kerouac's Lost Highway and My Search For America." He is also the author of two novels, a collection of stories and three narrative nonfiction books. His work has appeared in the New York Times, Boston Globe, Men's Health and many other publications. He teaches journalism at Boston University.

The "Tauvernier Street" book launch is a free event, open to the public, and will be held Friday, Oct. 22 at 6:30 pm. Join us for an enjoyable evening to celebrate this new work!

Pumpnickel Puppets presents 'Peter Rabbit'

Pumpnickel Puppets will present a retelling of the famous Beatrix Potter story of "Peter Rabbit." Will the mischievous Peter escape from the clutches of Farmer MacGregor?

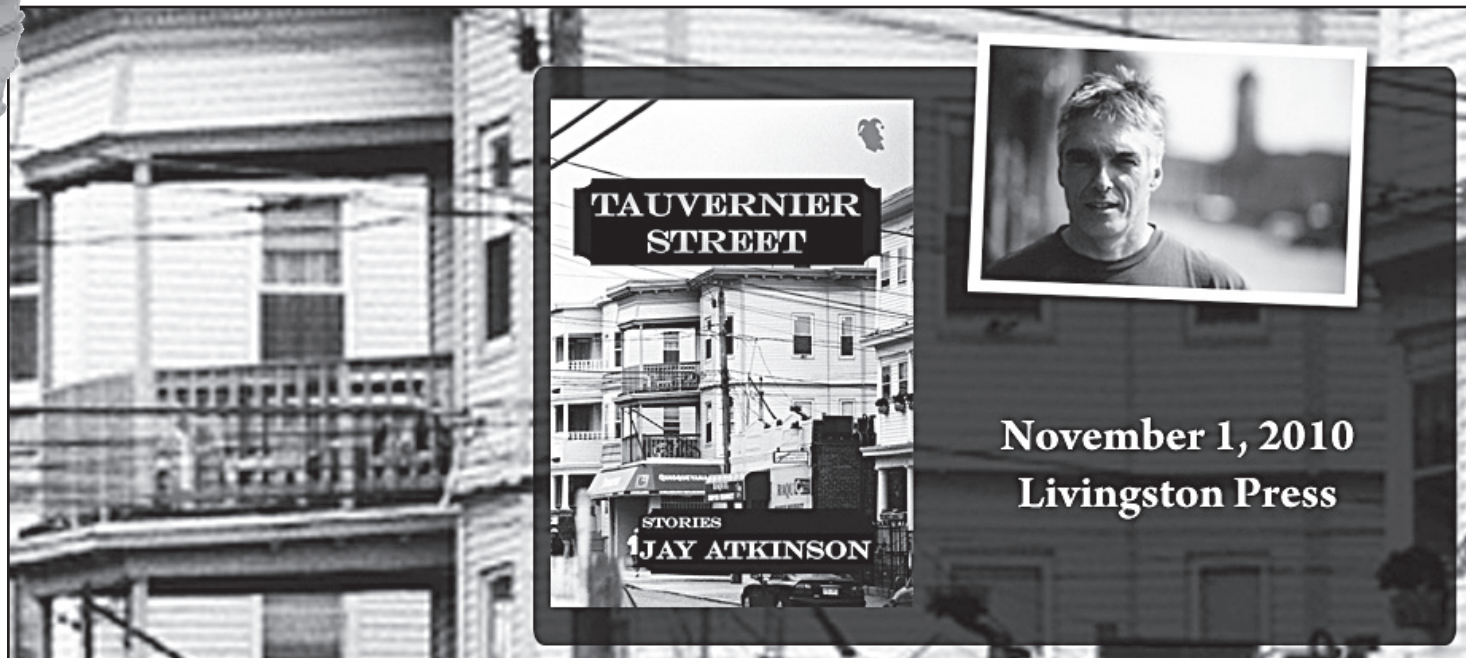
Puppeteer John McDonough will also show us how he moves the different types of puppets used in a puppet show. Great family fun!

The program is sponsored by the Friends of the Nevins Memorial Library and is free to all. It is appropriate for children ages 3 and up. This program will be held Oct. 21 at 10 am. Please register by going to www.nevinslibrary.org and finding the link on our Calendar of Events, or by calling the Children's Department at (978) 686-4080 ext. 26.

Join the Friends of Nevins Memorial Library

Do you support the Nevins Memorial Library? Have you ever thought about joining the Friends of the Library to show your support?

The Friends is a nonprofit organization created to support library programs and activities. While operating expenses for the library are funded with municipal, state aid and trust funds, there are many programs that are not in the library's regular budget that the Friends are able to provide through memberships and fund-raising. These include, but are not limited to: the popular museum passes; the summer reading programs for children, teens and adults; the subscription to the free



"Tauvernier Street," a collection of short fiction, is Methuen resident Jay Atkinson's newest book.

book review magazine Book Page; holiday decorations for the library, equipment for the library; and maintenance for the fish tank at the entrance of the Children's Department. Throughout the year the group also sponsors activities including the annual book sale, holiday workshops, spring and holiday concerts, a Lowell Spinners outing in August, house and garden tour, family workshops, restaurant dinner fund-raisers, and author and/or speaker events. As a Friend, your membership entitles you to a 10 percent discount on Friends merchandise such as Nevins Library tote bags, caps, mugs, postcards and other collectibles.

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Narrative nonfiction: A Book List

What exactly is "narrative nonfiction"? Well, journalist and author Edward Humes defines it thus: "Somewhere between the newspaper on your doorstep and the novel on your nightstand lies narrative nonfiction, literary journalism — the nonfiction novel. Whatever you want to call it, to me, this sort of writing occupies a fascinating and fertile boundary, full of possibility and peril, as it can so easily combine the best of both worlds — an Among Schoolchildren by Tracy Kidder, The Right Stuff by Tom Wolfe, or pick your title by John McPhee. It is hard to imagine a more vibrant genre, combining the immediacy of journalism and the power of

true accounts with the texture, read, drama, emotional punch, point of view and broad themes of a novel." (from Hume's blog edwardhume.com)

We are big fans of narrative nonfiction here at the Nevins Library, and here is a short

list of a few of our favorites you might wish to check out:

"Devil in the White City" by Erik Larson: History, architecture and murder in this

See JAY, Page 10

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Gold, continued from page 7

were read aloud as a bell tolled. After all the names were read, there was a rifle salute and the playing of Taps.

The weather was perfect for parachutists who jumped in unfurling the American and POW flags during their descent. These flags were displayed at the ceremony.

According to state Rep. Linda Dean Campbell, vice chair of the Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs, "The event was somber, but at the same time family members of deceased service members were clearly comforted by being together."

Major General Carter, the adjutant general of the Massachusetts National Guard,

along with U.S. Sen. Scott Brown, state Sen. Steven Baddour and state Rep. Barbara L'Italiani were also in attendance.

As a result of legislation recently passed into law, family members were presented with the Massachusetts Medal of Liberty, symbolic of the Purple Heart Medal given to members of our Armed Forces. This recent legislation provides Massachusetts service members a "Welcome Home Bonus" for multiple combat tours as well credit for transferring certain military skills to civilian occupations. Family members and service members needing additional information should contact their local Veteran Services officer.



Representatives from all of our Armed Services bear the flags of their service at the ceremony. At left is a wreath honoring the sacrifices of our Gold Star Mothers. In the foreground, the helmet atop a rifle and empty boots is a memorial to one's fallen comrades.

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Dancers, continued from page 3

in age from 13 to 19, will open their Sunday, Dec. 19, noon show. Three more students will be understudies.

"That's huge," said Deb Steele, the studio's owner. "There's a lot of us in our lifetime that have never danced on the Wang Theatre stage or will ever get to."

The studio was invited to participate by Joe Lanteri, the executive director of New York City Dance Alliance, an organization that nurtures young dancers through workshops and competitions. According to Steele, the Rockettes turn to Lanteri when seeking talent.

Lanteri is familiar with Dance Images and the high caliber of its performers. Steele hasn't been told yet what music her dancers will be performing to. Lanteri chose them, according to Steele, because he knows they're up to the task of putting together a fine routine in time for the show.

"Somebody can't just wing this," said Steele, whose students have twice won the critics choice award by the judges at NYCDA competitions. "You're opening for professional dancers. You have to make sure you look just as professional. Whatever he gives us doesn't make any difference. We'll (do) the rehearsals (and) ... make it professional looking."

Five groups were chosen to perform an opening number in Boston for the Rockettes. At a Sept. 11 show at Faneuil Hall in Boston, where a competition was held to determine the fifth group to be selected, the Dance Im-

ages group performed for the audience as guest artists.

"These 18 kids are our highest group of dancers here," said Steele. "They dance between 10 and 14 hours a week, every single one of them."

Inspired by a dance troupe, the Tiller Girls, in the Ziegfeld Follies, the Rockettes was founded in 1925 in St. Louis by Louis Markert. The precision dance company was originally known as the Missouri Rockettes.

Markert had envisioned a troupe of young women that would perform complicated tap routines and eye-level kicks that would "knock your socks off."

Later, the group was brought to the Roxy Theatre in New York City by Samuel Roxy Rothafel and renamed the Roxyettes. When he left to open Radio City Music Hall, the troupe followed him and became the Rockettes.

"The Radio City Christmas Spectacular" is performed annually at Radio City Music Hall, which is located in Manhattan, and several American and Canadian cities by a touring company of Rockettes. With more than 2 million viewers each year, it is one of the most watched live shows.

Dubbed "the grandest holiday show of all" by show organizers, the Christmas season performances are returning to Boston this year by popular demand.

"The Rockettes are so fantastic and perfect," said Methuen's Chase Lambert, 15, another member of the select group. "To

THE DANCERS ARE ...

Performers from Dance Images Dance & Music Center were selected to open the Radio City Rockettes' holiday show Dec. 19 in Boston. Getting ready to kick up their heels are **Methuen residents** Niko Martinez, Miranda Whealan, Victoria Melo, Jessica Sanchez, Sarah LaPorte, Carolyn O'Leary, Chase Lambert, Leah O'keefe, Emily Round, Lindsey Round, Courtney Patterson, Alexandra West and Natalie Colonna; **Lawrence residents** Kayla Smith and Kourtney Suliveras; **North Andover residents** Megan Munroe and Sarah Elaz; **Haverhill residents** Cayley Dorr and Kendra Kane; **Pelham, N.H.**, resident Allison Blanced; and **Andover residents** Michaela McIver, choreographer/instructor Erika Steele and director Debra Steele.

know that we're opening – it's an amazing opportunity. I was jumping for joy."

Steele and her daughter, artistic director Erika Steele, 24, chose the 21 dancers. Erika will choreograph their number.

"(They were) the ones that we thought at this point had (paid) their dues," said Deb Steele, who had gathered the teens to share the good news. "They've been here enough, they've done enough competitions. They were seasoned enough to not jump on stage and be nervous."

Dance Images offers lessons in a wide variety of dance, including ballet, tap, jazz and hip hop. The studio is in its twenty-fifth year.

"Our goal is – when they hit the upper levels of competition, if they were to walk out and audition for a professional (job), they should be able to get it," Steele said.

Steele expects her group will be performing a jazz number at the Rockettes show. She anticipates they'll rehearse two hours a week – on top of their usual technique training and

rehearsals for an NYCDA competition on Dec. 4 and 5 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston.

"Our kids are really good at time management," said Steele. "Mindless TV watching – there's just no time."

Their number will have to be choreographed by the end of November so there is time to "tweak and clean it." Seamstress Linda Elaz, whose daughter, Sarah, is in the group, will make the costumes. The group might perform their routine in the Methuen Santa Parade, said Steele.

Being chosen to open for a Rockettes show, according to Steele, has had a very positive effect on all her students.

"I think it opens up doors," said Steele. "To them, it (puts them) in a place where no longer do things seem unattainable. It doesn't limit what they can do. Their frame of reference has just gotten bigger. 'If I can do that, then I can go on to do something larger than that.' ... It opens up their whole frame of reference of what they're capable of."

And the younger kids, according to Steele, will look up to these older students and believe they too can someday dance for the Rockettes.

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Jay, continued from page 8

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"**The Right Stuff**" by **Tom Wolfe**: Wolfe is a master of the nonfiction narrative, and this book, in which he examines the history of the U.S. space program, is one of his best.

For an extensive list of Nevins Memorial Library happenings, check out www.nevinslibrary.org.

Lending an ear for 30 years

By Darrell Halen
MethuenLife Writer

Five hours every week, Bob, a volunteer for the Samaritans of Merrimack Valley, answers a confidential crisis help line and lends a sympathetic ear to the callers who share their personal problems with him.

It's called befriending and it's an important job that Samaritan volunteers, who strive to prevent suicides, provide 24 hours every day.

Volunteers like Bob are the backbone of the organization. On Oct. 14, at a breakfast at the Andover Country Club to celebrate the organization's 30th anniversary, a quilt commemorating the work of the Samaritans will be displayed. There, past and current volunteers, which include more than 700

"This is probably, in my view, one of the hardest volunteer jobs anyone could do, obviously. When it comes down to it, possibly saving somebody's life. That's a big burden for our volunteers."

~ Debbie Helms,
director of Samaritans
of Merrimack Valley



A volunteer for the Samaritans of Merrimack Valley speaks with a caller on one of the organization's 24-hour confidential crisis help lines. Photo by Darrell Halen

people, will be honored.

"We get a lot of people who are very lonely and they have no outlet," said Bob, a Methuen resident, who typically speaks with 10 to 15 callers during a shift. "(There's) no one they can trust, no one they can speak to or feel comfortable with."

Following standard policy, Bob and other volunteers ask every caller if they are feeling suicidal. If the answer is yes, they assess how great the risk is of the caller actually taking their own life.

A majority of callers, however, are not suicidal.

"Most people who (call) aren't looking to die," said Debbie Helms, the organization's director. "They want the emotional pain to stop."

The organization answers 12,000 to

14,000 calls a year. Volunteers who man the phones first undergo 12 hours of classroom training and spend 20 hours shadowing another volunteer as they talk with callers.

To do the job, volunteers need to be compassionate, patient, open minded, nonjudgmental and willing to listen to others.

"We're looking for people who have a desire to help other people," said Helms. "This is probably, in my view, one of the hardest volunteer jobs anyone could do, obviously. When it comes down to it, possibly saving somebody's life. That's a big burden for our volunteers."

Bob, who has been donating his time for about a year, has found the experience rewarding.

"There's been a couple of times I've talked to people and they were really desperate to talk to someone. They were crying ... and by the time I got done, they felt a bit better about themselves," said Bob.

Some callers, in fact, have thanked him.

"I'm not looking for (the gratitude) but to me it's nice," said Bob. "To me, that's worth giving my time up. I know I'm helping someone feel a bit better about themselves."

Bob has been touched personally by suicide. His sister took her life when she was 21.

"Joining the Samaritans actually helped me understand better about suicide and why she did it and the signs (people) were going

Samaritans marks anniversary by honoring 700 volunteers this month

to commit suicide that I wasn't aware of," said Bob.

People dial the Samaritans' crisis line for a variety of reasons, including loneliness, financial worries, relationship problems and loss of a loved one. Some call several times a day. Some have called for years.

"If you let them know we're here, that we care about them, and there are other alternatives to suicide – that's a lot of what people are looking for," said Helms.

One of the biggest misconceptions about suicide, according to Helms, is that it's an act of choice by the person who took their own life.

"It's never a choice," said Helms. "The reason ... is because 90 percent of people who die by suicide have some kind of mental health issue that they may not know about or they may not be seeing a therapist about or (receiving) medication (for)."

"It's not because they can't get a job. It's not because they didn't get into the right college. It's because, chances are, most times people are depressed and they don't even realize it," she continued. "And you add all those things on top – all those life stresses

See VOLUNTEER, Page 13

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"It's like a modern miracle", says PGA golf professional Frank Nobilo. "I was in agony. I can actually have a normal life that I never thought was possible." Those with chronic back and neck pain can breathe a sigh of relief thanks to Dr. Sung and his **non-surgical technology, a non-surgical spinal decompression system**. Non surgical decompression is quickly becoming the treatment of choice for herniated and bulging disc, sciatica, facet syndrome, failed back surgery and degenerative disc disease. The doctors explain that "This technology works by creating a vacuum. The vacuum effect repositions the disc and allows nutrients, oxygen and water to re-enter the disc. That's what makes this a lasting treatment."

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-Huguette G. Nashua, NH
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3. I have no reservations in recommending this treatment to anyone that is suffering from chronic back pain-Mark S. Winchester, MA
4. You were especially sympathetic to my pain when I first came in
- Thank you!-Sara B, Winchester MA

A study in the Journal of Pain Management showed that up to 70-86% of those treated for ruptured discs reported significant improvement using this technology. The doctor further state, "I administered thousands of treatments to patients with chronic pain who thought there was no hope, some even had prior surgery."

Treatment for the patient is extremely comfortable and most patients fall asleep during their 45-minute treatment session. In many cases, the pain resolves after the first few minutes of being on the machine. This same technology is now being used to treat disc problems in the neck. The doctor further explains that, "Thanks to this technology, we are able to offer people a lasting solution without any risk of surgery." See if you qualify for this treatment. Until October 15, 2010 you can receive a comprehensive consultation and examination for \$49.

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Alien chatter, bickering bosoms & stolen belly buttons

Welcome to Jerry Valley's world of hypnosis!

By Steve Whipple
MethuenLife Writer

Sahara Club audience, Sean O'Claire, 38, has peeled off his shirt and struts about the dance floor like a veteran stripper. Never mind that he had hernia surgery a couple weeks earlier.

It's the most fun you can have with your clothes on.

Then again, not all the clothes are on. To the delight of most ladies in Methuen's

See HYPNOSIS, Page 13



Despite graduating from Methuen High in 1984, Lana Silva-Grelle can't accurately count her fingers. Maybe it had something to do with hypnotist Jerry Valley removing the number "6" from her vocabulary.



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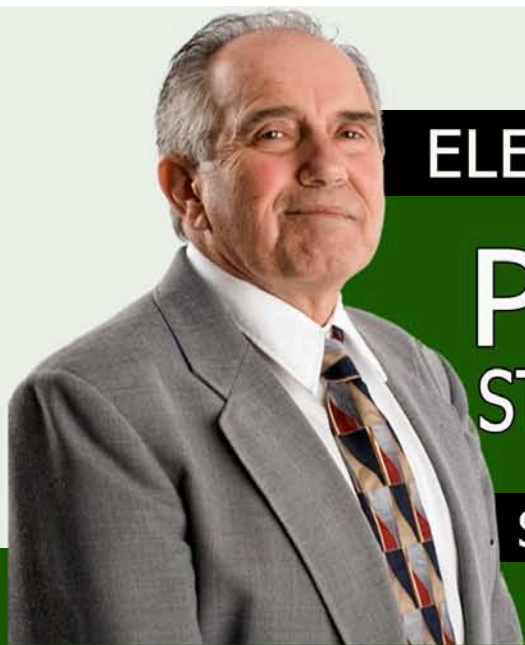
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Hypnosis, continued from page 12

Meanwhile, Sean's girlfriend Lana Silva-Grelle has made peace with the man she accused of stealing her belly button. And she is no longer chattering in her native Martian.

Ah, the things folks will do while hypnotized. Not to worry. Legendary hypnotist and Methuen resident Jerry Valley (Anthony Vitale) has things under control. With a word or two he can transport Lana, Sean and the five other volunteers back to normal consciousness.

For most, the one-hour and 45-minute exercise in relaxation and the power of suggestion will seem like a 10-minute dream.

"It's crazy," says Lana later. "You're conscious, but you don't really know what you're doing. I don't remember anything. I remember feeling warm from the (stage) lights, but you're so comfortable and relaxed that you don't care what's going on."

Plenty goes on, she will soon discover upon watching the DVD of the night's hypno-hilarity.

"My girlfriend was trying to tell me about what we did, but in the 12 years I have known her I've never heard her laugh



"He couldn't put me under," declared Claire Lacourciere of North Andover after the show. Oh? Then who was barefoot and leading the troupe of hula dancers?

so hard. I couldn't understand her," said Lana, a 1984 Methuen High graduate.

And what about Methuen's David Santiago, 37, who was convinced he had forgotten his own name.

"I remember (Jerry) asking me to say my name, but for the life of me I couldn't think

of it. There were blanks in between, but I remember I was laughing. That was the first time I ever did something like that. It was weird but fun," said the FedEx worker.

You'd laugh, too, if you were present when a nearby participant's "growing" bosoms were arguing with each other.

At 9 pm Jerry, 75, asks for volunteers to join him on the stage. He reassures

everyone that people, through relaxation and a willingness to be coaxed, hypnotize themselves.

Initially 11 men and women from age 20 to 65 take a seat on stage. Not everyone can relax deeply enough to respond to Jerry's instructions, so four volunteers are asked

See VALLEY, Page 16



Ever wonder what it looks like to milk seven invisible cows? Now you know.

Volunteer, continued from page 11

– not getting into the right college or losing a job or you're health is poor. It's like the perfect storm."

In the last two years, as the economy has soured, the number of calls has increased. The number of new callers has risen and the number of male callers has jumped dramatically. The highest risk category, which used to be elderly, is people age 35 to 54.

The organization was formed in 1980 by three local teachers in response to an increase in teenage suicides. A small group of volunteers sought to reduce suicides by befriending people who were depressed, lonely and contemplating self-injury or taking their own life.

In the past three decades, there have only been about a dozen times when someone was actively pursuing suicide and volunteers were trying to stop them.

Six years ago, the organization became part of Family Service Inc., in Lawrence,

which provides financial and administrative support.

In addition to Helms, two former volunteers work as part-time paid staffers. Bob Laprel, a retired police officer, is the training facilitator. Mary Quinn, a licensed independent clinical social worker, is the training coordinator.

The organization also operates a teen line, provides support to people who've lost loved ones to suicide in group sessions and at home, teaches organizations how to prevent suicide by older adults, and performs community outreach – such as the time staffers talked to guidance counselors at Methuen High School about the warning signs and risk factors of suicide in teenagers.

The support groups are offered twice a month in Lowell and North Andover.

"They just talk about whatever feelings that come up," said Quinn. "Because suicide grief is a grief different than any other type

of traumatic loss, because of the shame and the stigma attached to it. A lot of people don't want folks to know their loved one died of suicide. It's sort of a black mark against them – couldn't you have prevented it? Why didn't you see the warning signs? – that kind of thing. It's unique and it needs to be talked about among folks that know exactly what you've gone through because they've gone through the same thing."

Quinn spent roughly three years as a volunteer in the 1980s. She studied psychology at the University of Lowell, earned a master's degree in social work and joined the staff in 2006.

Thanks to a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Quinn teaches a program, Suicide Prevention Training for Gatekeeper of Older Adults.

"I go to area nursing homes, councils on aging, assisted-living facilities and train their staff," said Quinn, a Methuen resident. "(I

talk) about ... how to recognize signs and symptoms of depression and suicide, how to talk with someone who's at risk for suicide and then hook them up with resources available to them."

To date, more than 800 people have been trained at 68 locations.

"I love training people. I think it's an important piece of the work that we do here – getting the word out, trying to de-stigmatize suicide, and normalize it in the sense of talking about it," said Quinn. "(Suicide) is a taboo subject for a lot of people to talk about so we try to get it out in the open, so there isn't much shame for survivors, folks who've lost someone to suicide. It's a real important part of what we do."

If you are lonely, depressed or suicidal, call the Samaritans' confidential crisis hot line at (978) 327-6607. Teen-agers who need someone to listen can call the Teen Help Line at (978) 688-8336.

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Disney songs make for magical show

The Happy Hearts Chorus' latest concert had an entire audience feeling like kids again.

"The Sounds of Disney" two-act performance at the Methuen Senior Center last month featured favorites like "Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah" and "Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo" to "It's a Small World" and "A Spoonful of Sugar." There were costumes, laughs and plenty of impressive singing that brought the show to life. A sing-along featuring the theme song from "The Mickey Mouse Club" TV show even allowed the audience to get into the act! Emcees were Seth Graham and Michelle Houle from Methuen Community Television. Chorus director is Senior Center activities director Sue Foster; providing the piano accompaniment was Susan Forbes.



Hilda Beberian and Barbara Jacques portray "Happy" and "Doc," two out of the seven dwarfs. Their comedic routine about where the other dwarfs were had the large crowd in stitches. Photos by Melissa Fili

Look on page 15 for more magic




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Crowd-pleaser Al Blazavitch was all dolled up for "Jolly Holiday."



Happy Hearts singer Marion Phillips (center) was presented a beautiful bouquet, courtesy of family members Malcolm Andrews, Lynne Heard and Rose Andrews.



Tom Johnson and Stella Azzarelli teamed up for a beautiful rendition of "Someday My Prince will Come."



Fairy godmother Barbara Lattin was adorable in the "Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo" piece.



Numerous Minnie and Mickey Mouse dolls found premium seating all along the stage and atop Susan Forbes' piano.

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Valley, continued from page 13

politely to return to the audience.

For better or worse, the remaining seven are willing to be hypnotized and instructed to do and say an impressive number of zany things. Jerry instructs them to go “deeper and deeper” and the deeper they go, the better they will feel.

“You will drift and dream and float. We’re good friends and everything I say becomes real to you,” Jerry coos.

Over the next 90 minutes in their state of altered awareness, the cast of characters:

- believes they are very cold, then very hot, then terrified as a vampire will dine on their blood.

- believes their belly buttons have been swiped; some accuse each other of the crime.

- believes there’s a gaping hole in the back of Jerry’s pants, causing endless laughter.

- two men attempt to converse but their tongues fall out when they try to speak.

- believes they are milking a cow, then they are the cows being milked.

- believes they are martians and each chatters on their own version of the language; Sean delivers an emotional Martian national anthem

Janine Gauntt, who truly seems to enjoy her time as a cow, would later explain that the hypnosis is like a much-needed nap.

“You feel completely refreshed. I’m going for karaoke after this and I knew this would be like a nap. When I was up there, I thought I wasn’t hypnotized. Now I realize I was,” she said.

Eventually, Jerry talks them back to their normal state of mind. Well, almost. Before they are dismissed he convinces Ed Stape of Merrimack, N.H., that when he hears the word “microphone” he will be dragged through the crowd by a very large, very strong dog on a leash.

Lana will kiss any man in the audience with glasses. And Sean will believe he is Tarzan.

A couple minutes after the subjects return to the tables with their family and friends, Jerry announces the trigger word and three things happen suddenly:

Ed lunges zig-zag style through the place behind an invisible bloodhound. Lana stops in mid-conversation and darts off to kiss strangers. And Sean would love to go clobber the kiss recipients.

Except he’s too busy pounding his chest and howling like Tarzan.



Sean O'Clare of Methuen takes his role as famous stripper Gypsy Rose Lee very seriously.



Dracula’s here and he’s really hungry. And Leah Hilton, 20, doesn’t seem too pleased.

Photos by Steve Whipple

How hypnosis works

Methuen hypnotist Jerry Valley, 75, works his craft for two purposes: to help and to entertain.

Some are familiar with Jerry and his son Tom Vitale through their work at Valley Hypnosis. There they work to cure people of smoking, over-eating, phobias and other destructive behaviors.

But most people know Jerry as the performer who has worked cruise ships, resorts, night clubs, Las Vegas and was even featured on an episode of the TV news show “20/20.”

White-haired, goateed and dressed in black, Jerry looks and sounds like a performer. The path to his surreal stage shows began in 1969.

“(Hypnotist) Sam Vine was appearing in Lawrence. I didn’t believe in it. I thought people were paid to go up and act silly,” said Jerry. “But it was \$2.50 for a chicken dinner and a show. There were six of us and one girl was an introvert — a little mouse. She got hypnotized and she blew my mind: She was singing and dancing all over the stage. So ... I changed my mind. I said maybe there’s something to this after all.”

For the skeptics, Jerry admits a person can’t be hypnotized if he doesn’t want to be. Resistance or distractions will prevent a subject from drifting into the deep relaxation where he is receptive to the power of suggestion.

Jerry says a combination of factors draws a person into hypnosis at his shows.

- stage lights.
- soft music such as the theme from “Somewhere In Time.”
- a soothing but completely confident voice.
- a pre-established perception that they will be hypnotized.

“There’s six levels of hypnosis ... some people go very deeply, so that I could take them into major surgery without anesthesia,” he said.

At least two of the volunteers at the Sahara Club show — Lana Silva-Grelle and her boyfriend Sean O’Clare — drifted into somnambulism (sleepwalking) where they could perform activities but remember nothing.

Said Sean, “(Jerry) asked us to look into the light, and after that everything started to fade away. I was nervous that maybe I couldn’t get hypnotized, or maybe it was an act. But now I believe in it.”

During a show Jerry will remind his entranced co-stars how relaxed and comfortable they are, moments before they carry out their next outlandish mission.

If a volunteer doesn’t hear Jerry’s voice for five minutes, he or she will withdraw from the hypnosis on their own. And as easily as people are guided into the dreamy state, they are returned to normal consciousness with a specific word that Jerry chooses.

After more than 40 years of hypnotizing, Jerry says he never knows exactly what to expect.

“The only thing you can be sure of in hypnosis is that you can’t be sure of anything,” he said.

“At one show I asked the subjects to explain why each was a good entertainer, and one gorgeous 23-year-old woman said, ‘I’m a woman, and a woman can do anything a man can do ... except p--s on a wall.’ I fell off the stage laughing.”

— Steve Whipple



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'Elvis' leaves senior fans all shook up!

They weren't exactly tailgating, but dozens of seniors staked out their spots at Methuen Village at Riverwalk Park up to two hours before show time.

The draw? None other than Elvis Presley impersonator Stan Anderson Jr. who last month put on an incredible concert that had his audience singing, swaying and even dancing in the aisles. Methuen Village is an assisted-living facility that also specializes in Alzheimer's care.

"Is it OK to swoon?" half-joked one female resident prior to the show.

Anderson, all dolled up in a white jacket, black dress shirt and pants, a glittery STAN belt buckle, and plenty of gold around his neck and on his fingers, had his King of Rock 'n' Roll persona down pat. From hip-swiveling dance moves and fist-pumping song endings to his, "Thank ya, thank ya verrrry much," the senior

crowd soaked it all up. His deep, strong voice seemed to bring the crowd right back to the 1950s and '60s.

Anderson's repertoire ranged from favorites like "All Shook Up" and "Don't Be Cruel" to "Love Me Tender" and included a bit of history on Elvis and his music.

"I want to take him home!" called out one excited audience member, while watching Anderson in action.

"This is great!" said Social Program Director Kathleen Corey-Rahme, who organized the show. "I haven't seen the residents this animated in a long time."

"That was the best!" smiled resident Maria Daigle. "I'm in La-La Land!"

More Elvis photos on page 18.



Alice Pedro snapped, clapped and was swingin' in her seat during the show.



Methuen Village resident Lois McAvoy and Stan Anderson Jr. as Elvis team up for "Don't Be Cruel." The show was held in celebration of National Assisted Living Week.

Photos by Melissa Fili





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'Elvis' at Methuen Village



Singing along with the man of the hour are (from left) Helen Tanionos, Carol Gilbert and Paula Kutcher.



Maria Daigle sang along during most of the concert. At the end of one of the faster numbers, she threw her arms in the air and yelled, "Woo hoo! That one was the best!"



Associate Robbie Rys and resident William McGrath hit the dance floor for "Are You Lonesome Tonight?"



Showing their approval are (from left) Florence Heider, Jackie Agazarian and Louise Perkins.



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Bulbs pay big dividends for little effort

*A little Madness in the Spring
is wholesome even for the King.*

~ Emily Dickinson

In The Garden

By Chris Young
MethuenLife Writer

The colorful perennials and flowering shrubs that greet you when you visit Methuen City Hall are planted and cared for by Methuen Garden Club.

But the gardens are bare in the spring. There are no daffodils and tulips to delight the soul of winter-weary residents.

That's about to change.

"We are going to start doing some bulb planting at the Searles Building this month and next," said MGC President Teri Karamourtopoulos. "We have come to appreciate how much we enjoy the early color and getting the planting season started. Our hope is that in a few years the daffodils will naturalize and give the Searles a large planting of daffodils for everyone to enjoy."

That's great news, but you don't have to rely on public gardens to reap the pleasure that spring bulbs bring. For a few dollars, you can make your home a showplace in April, although prices of bulbs have risen with the price of oil.

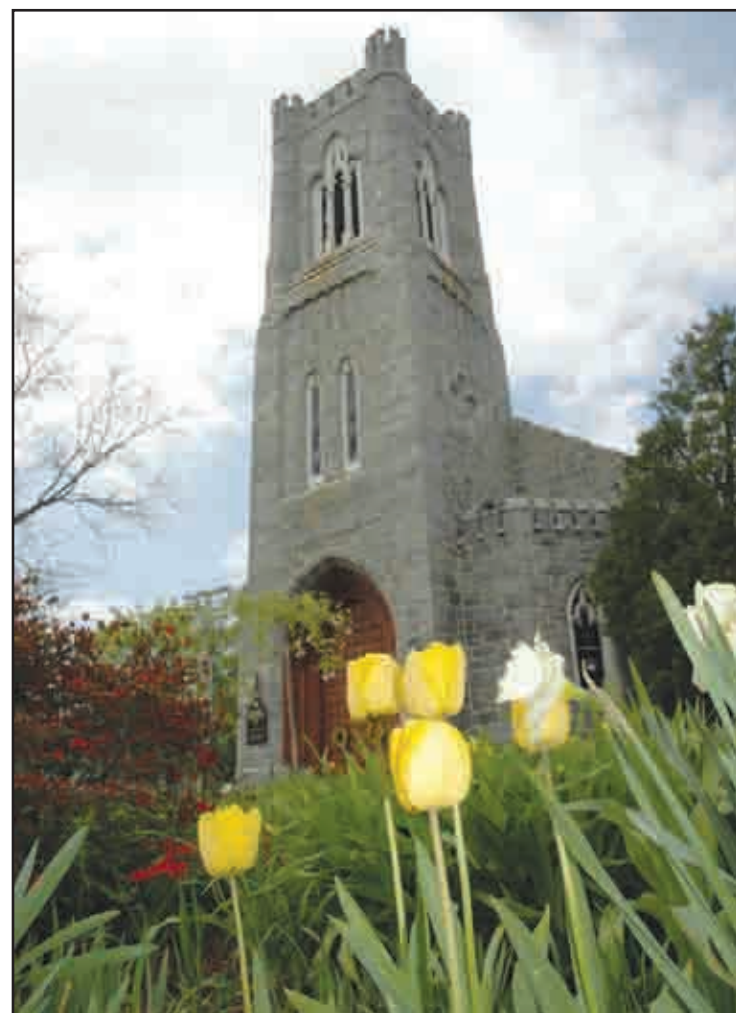
It is not too late to plant bulbs for next spring, because there is still time for the bulb's roots to become established before the cold weather. Actually, bulbs don't like to go into the ground too early because the warm earth sends them into active growth before they are ready to bloom. Your local garden supply store



With minimal effort and cost now, you can plant bulbs like these ...

has a good selection right now, but in the future you might also want to look at catalogs to find even more variety.

See GARDEN, Page 25



... and in the spring you'll have a yard filled with glorious tulips and daffodils, just like these which sprouted in front of First Church Congregational last April.

Photos by Melissa Fili



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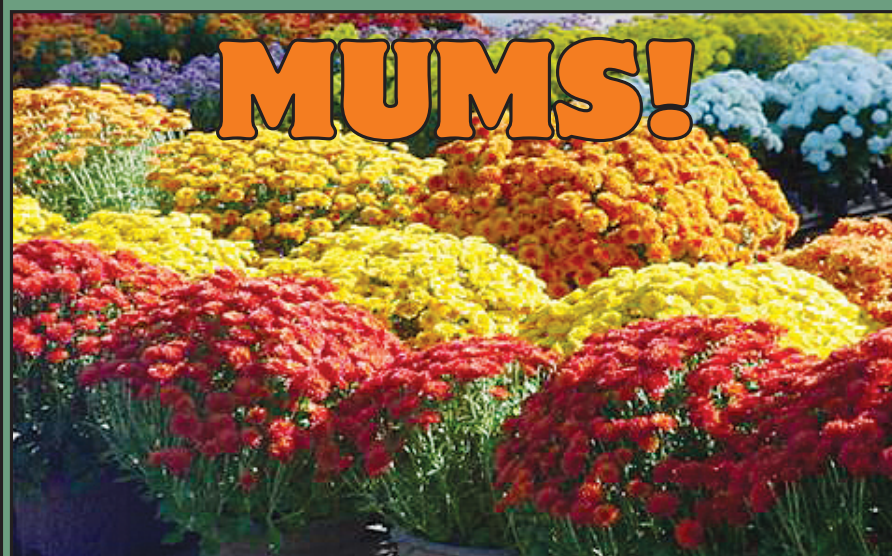


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TEENFEST *in action*



The Northeast Independent Living Program, a nonprofit organization serving people with disabilities in the Merrimack Valley for the past 30 years, hosted its sixth annual TeenFest summer program for youth with disabilities and youth at risk. This year's program included web-page creation, a youth-created play with help from the Epic Theatre Ensemble of New York City and independent living-skills activities. Principal funders of TeenFest include Essex County Community Foundation-Greater Lawrence Summer Fund, The White Fund in North Andover, the Lawrence Rotary Foundation Inc., Citi Bank Andover, Ride-Away in Londonderry N.H., and John Galinato of Build-It-Yourself in Cambridge. TeenFest players include (front, atRIGHT) Kevin Hatch of Methuen. Courtesy photo.



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Mom's the Word

By Melissa Fili
MethuenLife Writer

School is back in full-swing and the calendar says October, but wherever I go people are still gabbing about our amazingly sunny summer. No one, it seems, is ready to let go.

They chat about their to-die-for week at the lake, delightfully sizzling days at the beach, and picture-perfect afternoons spent by the pool — relishing in that sticky summer air like it was just yesterday.

“We deserved it,” folks rationalize, recalling the previous summer’s wash-out conditions.

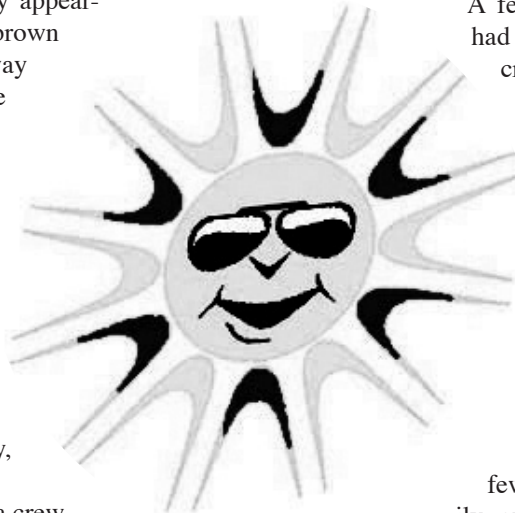
Of course, you can’t please everyone. When my sister and her girls escaped sweltering Florida to visit us in early August, their arrival coincided with a super-sweaty Bay State heat wave.

“If I wanted this, I would’ve stayed home,” lamented my sister, who had hoped to cool down seaside with evening temperatures in the 70s. It simply was wasn’t meant to be. Even the fireflies were perspiring.

My 9-year-old baseball fanatic was dis-

gusted with the ratty appearance of our sharp, brown lawn (“It’s no Fenway Park ...”). While driving in the car, he would regularly call out from the back seat, “Now THEY’VE got great grass!” as we’d pass some lush, obviously sprinkler-assisted front yards. Lawn envy is never pretty, especially on a kid.

After years with a crew cut, my 12-year-old decided to grow out his hair this summer. But by the fourth consecutive 95-degree day, where he felt as if his brain was melting, he caved: “I need a haircut, like, NOW!”



A few gardeners I know had a booming tomato crop, courtesy of a wet spring and a sun-baked summer, but struggled to have success with their other veggies that aren’t keen on such non-stop heat. You can only eat so many tomato salads, you know?

But I think those few minuses were easily outweighed by all of the plusses this summer. There were no rain-outs when it came to baseball tournament time, I ate my weight in hot-fudge sundaes and my Irish-Canadian skin was actually looking tan. To this day I’m wearing flip flops to my son’s ice

hockey practice and I refuse to put up any fall decorations until I’m emotionally ready. Please, Summer, don’t go!

We need to get a grip, neighbors. Summer can’t — and won’t — last forever. Remember: The change in season is one of the best parts about living in New England. I’m wondering, though, what Mother Nature’s got up her sleeve for winter. My weather-watching friends tell me that an early start to fall foliage and an abundance of fallen acorns are signals that fall will pass swiftly and winter could be a doozy. Just ask the squirrels, they tell me.

Maybe we’ll have record-setting snow this time around. Now *that* would be something to talk about!

In between heaps of laundry and endless errands, Melissa Fili writes a column for MethuenLife. She can be reached at Melissa@MethuenLife.com.

Nevins Library Adult Fall Programs

Pastel Workshop with Sharon Morley – Tuesday, October 19th at 6:30 PM

Experience the beauty and luminosity one can achieve through the use of pastels. No experience necessary. All materials provided.

Jay Atkinson Book Launch – Friday, October 22nd at 6:30 PM

Welcome Methuen’s own author for the launch of his new short story collection, *Tauvernier Street*, with a book reading, signing and reception. Register at the Reference Desk (978) 686-4080x12.

Author Talk: Eric J. Dolan – Tuesday, October 26th at 7:00 PM

The author of *Leviathan* reads from his new book, *Fur Fortune and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in America*. Signed books will be available.

Sex, Lies & Dracula: Vampires in History and Popular Culture – Saturday, October 30th from 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Dr. Robert Smart, formerly of Bradford College and currently of Quinnipiac University, explains the historical and mythical character of Dracula.

Poetry Reading with Maria Mimi Molori – Wednesday, November 3rd at 7:00 PM

The poet will read from her latest book *Walking with the Blade: Poems*. Refreshments will be served.

Nevins Staff Author: Loreen Augeri – Monday, November 8th at 7:00 PM

Children’s Room staff member reads from and discusses her recently published first novel *Tormented Hearts*, a romance. Refreshments will be served.

Book Talk and Signing of Dark Tide: The Great Boston Molasses Flood of 1919 by Steve Puleo – Tuesday, November 30th at 7:00 PM

The author, historian, university teacher will discuss his book *Dark Tide: The Great Boston Molasses Flood of 1919*. Copies of the book will be available for a signing.



Be sure to log onto www.nevinslibrary.org or call (978) 686-4080 for details on all these programs and to register.

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Church of Spiritual Life relocates



The Church of Spiritual Life, formerly of Salem, N.H., held a dedication ceremony last month at its new location — 126 Merrimack St., Methuen, behind Heav'nly Donuts. Many New England reverends attended, in addition to congregation members, their families and friends. The dedication was led by the Rev. Catherine Snell and Christine Dube, the church's acting pastor. Church leaders are thrilled to be back in Methuen where the congregation began 50 years ago. Spiritualists believe in communicating with those on the spirit side of life, personal responsibility in complying with the Laws of Nature, and in the brotherhood of humanity. Sunday morning service is at 10:30 am and weekly development classes are Wednesday evenings at 7. All are welcome. For more info, visit www.nhspiritualist.com. Shown are (back, from left) Christine Dube, the Rev. Gloria Nye, Christine Nagle, Patricia Gosselin, the Rev. Kathleen Rottino, the Rev. Catherine Snell, April Sheerin, the Rev. Janet Travis, Lic. Minister Louisa Roof; (front) the Rev. Kenneth Wingood and Edna Mitchell. Courtesy photo

LEAVIN' THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Applebee's restaurant, across from the Haffner's gas station on Pleasant Valley Street, last month closed its doors for good. "I called and spoke to the manager and said we were sorry to see him leave. He was pretty tight-lipped and said it was a business decision," said Matt Kraunelis of the mayor's office. As of MethuenLife press time, unconfirmed rumors were that British Beer Works was interested in that location.

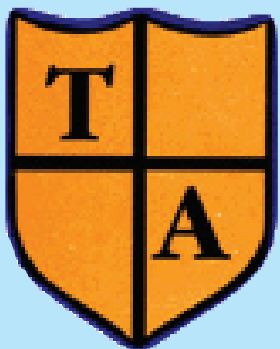


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- * Emphasize zero tolerance for the use of alcohol and impairing drugs of any kind. Even some over-the-counter medications can adversely affect driving ability.
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By John Molori
MethuenLife Writer

SPORTS BLITZ

DeCola making mark in sports media

As a much-anticipated Boston Celtics season approaches, expectation fills the autumn air. Will Shaquille O'Neal provide the rebounding and inside scoring that the team sorely needs? Can the Big Three dig deep for one more title run? Will Rajon Rondo continue to develop into one of the league's best point guards?

These questions and more make for an exciting preseason, and no one is more excited than Methuen's Pat DeCola, a 2005 graduate of Central Catholic High School. DeCola, 23, is making a name for himself as

"I think Shaq is going to be the man, and Kendrick Perkins will have to fight for his job when he returns from injury."

~ FoxSports.com writer Patrick DeCola's Celtics prediction

an up-and-coming sportswriter, but he took a circuitous route to the profession.

"For the first 20 years of my life, I wanted to play for the Red Sox," says DeCola, who played and coached baseball locally. "I

went to St. Joseph's College of Maine on a baseball scholarship, but hurt my back and had to have spinal fusion."

The injury closed one door for DeCola, but opened another. He relates, "I had to pick a major my sophomore year and decided that if I couldn't play sports, I would do the next best thing. I majored in communications with a concentration in journalism."

DeCola became the sports editor for the St. Joseph's College newspaper. While at school, he had a chance encounter with Comcast SportsNet New England (CSNNE)



While growing up, Methuen's Pat DeCola had big dreams of playing for the Boston Red Sox. The 2005 Central grad didn't get to the big leagues, but he has made a name for himself as the first writer to work exclusively for FoxSports.com web sites. He provides insight on not only Major League Baseball, but pro football and basketball as well. Courtesy photo

sportscaster Gary Tanguay. DeCola interned, wrote a sports blog and was the New England Revolution beat writer at CSNNE.com

for most of 2009.

It was another St. Joseph's connection that sent DeCola on a new career challenge.

He explains, "Randy Freer, the president of Fox Sports Networks, is a St. Joe's graduate. He was on the cover of the school magazine and I contacted him just to get some advice. Three months later, he called me and told me about a local web initiative at Fox. I moved to Houston in October of 2009 and worked for FoxSports.com as an editorial assistant and sportswriter."

DeCola penned Daily Dribbles, an NBA rumor mill column, and Quick Pitches, a similar column dealing with MLB tidbits. His work was eventually picked up by other regional FoxSports.com sites, making him the first writer to work exclusively for FoxSports.com web sites.

DeCola returned to Methuen this past July, but continues to write MLB, NFL and NBA columns for FOXSportsSouthwest.com. This season, he will begin writing about Larry Bird's Indiana Pacers for FoxSportsIndiana.com and FSMidwest.com.

Moreover, DeCola has not forgotten his Merrimack Valley roots and still pens local sports articles for Tewksbury.Patch.com, Chelmsford.Patch.com and the Union Leader newspaper. With the increased popularity of sports blogs, on-demand news and interactive media, there has never been a better time to write about sports.

"I like blogs because you get immediate response from your readers," says DeCola. "That is a good thing. I am not a respected journalist yet, but I feel that I have some credibility writing for FoxSports.com and other media outlets. When I tell people I have a blog, they say, 'So do I.' All these blogs are good because they allow more opinions to get out there, but it also brings down the quality."

DeCola has covered numerous sports in his young career, but Celtics basketball holds a special place, so what does he think

See SPORTS, Page 25

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Sports, continued from page 24

about those aforementioned expectations for the C's?

"I think right now, they are actually an underrated team," he explains. "Their experience cannot be overlooked. It will be a feeling-out process for Shaquille O'Neal and Jermaine O'Neal at the beginning. I think Shaq is going to be the man, and Kendrick Perkins will have to fight for his job when he returns from injury."

Undoubtedly, the biggest off-season NBA story was the union of superstars Dwyane Wade, LeBron James and Chris Bosh with the Miami Heat. DeCola has some pointed opinions on this much-ballyhooded alliance.

He states, "They have a lot to prove. I don't see them as even a top-3 team in the East this year. I just don't think they will mesh well the first year. Maybe in two years they will be a threat. LeBron went about it the wrong way. It's one thing to leave your hometown, but it's another to drag the whole city through that long process. His

advisers should have shown him a better way. There is a right and wrong way to do that. His popularity has gone down tremendously."

As sportswriting continues to become more intimate, and the world gets smaller through online communication and social networks, DeCola hopes to continue his rise in this dynamic world of sports media.

"I definitely want to keep moving forward in the business," he relates. "I might even want to expand into sports broadcasting. I've been lucky to get into this business now. Before the Internet, you had to interview with editors face-to-face. You had to look more established and older. In the business today, people can check out my work online and I can be judged solely on my writing style. This is extremely helpful to me in my career."

Syndicated columnist John Molori writes for numerous publications and websites. E-mail John at MoloriMedia@aol.com.

DENNIS BISTANY GOLF TOURNEY

The Dennis Bistany Memorial Golf Tournament, held Aug. 30 at Merrimack Golf Course, raised \$18,000 while honoring the memory of a beloved Methuen teacher and mentor. Bistany drowned in 2009 while boating in Bristol, N.H. There were 105 golfers who took part in the tourney, joined by an additional 30 guests at dinner. Proceeds from the event benefited the Dennis Bistany Scholarship Fund. Shown are the tournament's first-place winners: Kevin McGovern, Bryan Duplissie, Pat Spellman and Mark Fitzgerald. Also noteworthy is John Stikeman's hole-in-one on Hole 6. Courtesy photo



Garden, continued from page 20

Don't stick to just tulips and daffodils.

If you enjoy seeing flowers poking out of the snow, plant snowdrops (galanthus). To get a low carpet of blue across your lawn or under trees, plant scilla (squill), which you will probably have to order from a catalog.

But daffodils (narcissus is their Latin name) and tulips are the most popular because they are care-free and give us a burst of color when we need it most – after a long winter.

Daffodils particularly give good value for your investment. They truly are perennial and can be divided every five years to produce more. Another plus with daffodils: The deer and mice don't like their taste.

Tulips, on the other hand, are fussy and may bloom only once or twice, although some in my yard have bloomed for years.

Did you ever wonder how the tulips in the Boston Public Garden look so uniform and magnificent year after year? The sordid truth is the staff digs up the old after they bloom and plants new ones every fall. They may give the spent bulbs to the less fortunate to plant in their own yards where it won't matter to visitors if they aren't perfect.

Tulips do not have natural protection from critters as do narcissus. Deer, mice, rabbits and God-knows-what-else love them and sometimes eat them before they have a chance to bloom. The Internet is full of tricks to outwit the critters, such as planting bulbs in wire baskets, but it does take some effort. Despite all the problems, I plant tulips every fall and enjoy them for as long as they last. There is no flower that attracts compliments from neighbors as do colorful, long-blooming tulips. You can trick people into thinking you are a clever gardener when you fill your front yard with tulips.

Daffodils and tulips have been enjoyed in Europe since the 16th century.

Today, when we think of tulips, we think Holland. In truth, both the flower and its name originated in the Persian empire. The tulip is indigenous to Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and other parts of Central Asia.

According to Webanswers.com, it is the Turks who made the tulip known in Europe.

The most widely accepted story is that of Oghier Ghislain de Busbecq, ambassador from Ferdinand I to Suleyman the Magnificent of the Ottoman Empire, brought them to Europe in 1554.

Narcissus originated in Europe, North Africa and Asia.

Although bulbs are relatively easy to plant, there are a few rules to follow to assure success. More information about bulbs and how to grow them is abundant on the Web.

Tips for planting spring bulbs

- **Always plant tulips** in a well-drained and airy soil. Wet soil promotes fungus and disease and can even rot bulbs, especially tulip bulbs. Wet soil can also cause bulbs to drown which is actually due to suffocation. Suffocation can also be caused by tight soils that don't hold much oxygen. Adding compost and coarse sand to a soil will make it more airy.

- **Fertilize and water** bulbs when planting, but too much water is not good. One inch a week should ensure the start of a strong root system.

- **The general rule** for planting is to plant bulbs as deep as three times their height. For tulips, that's about 6 to 8 inches deep, measuring from the base of the bulb. If you add mulch after planting, include this as part of your overall planting depth.

- **After the tulips have passed** their peak, cut off the old blooms and let the plants die down normally. This will replace some of the nourishment the bulb needs to bloom again. Cover the messy look of dying leaves by planting annuals near them.

- **Fertilize your old bulbs** in the fall with special bulb fertilizer to get them to bloom again.

Chris Young is a free-lance writer who loves gardening. You can write to her at Chris-words@verizon.net.



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Outdoor Life

By Roger Aziz
MethuenLife Writer

Fun under the pines

Going back to camping in August was a very busy experience. Once our camper was delivered, set on blocks and leveled, my wife and I began those chores that are an essential part of camp life.

Fortunately for my wife and I, some of our friends from 12 years ago were still in the campground. Being as it is that we are the oldest of the group, they pitched in heartily and set up our awning and add-a-room.

The add-a-room was a pleasant surprise to us. It was never once mentioned during the sales pitch for the camper. I was already calculating the cost of a screen room for the future. These were simple screen-only affairs. When the trailer was delivered, we discovered that we had a full add-a-room under the bed. This is an excellent addition because it not only has screening but it also has privacy walls that drop down. And the quality of the room is even better than the add-a-room we had over a decade past. And that one cost us \$1,200.

For the first two weeks it seemed that all we did was work on the site, spend money on necessities, and worry. The worry concerned a troublesome refrigerator. The refrigerator had to be run on gas because when run on electricity an annoying alarm sounded every two seconds. The noise was not a problem for me once I removed my hearing aids, but it drove Shirley mad.

Added to this fault was the fact that it frosted everything up inside, yet failed to keep the food safely cold. This problem, according to the dealer's repairman, was due to a faulty "mother board," the brains of the unit that tells it when to switch from electric to gas when in automatic mode. However, it didn't actually do this when in auto mode. It had to be set manually to gas in order to stop the alarm.

The board in question was no longer replaceable. To add to this woe, the substitute

boards were also obsolete. Too often, old campers encounter these shortages of parts. A replacement refrigerator would have cost an estimated \$1,200 to \$1,300.

After an amicable discussion with Campers Inn of Kingston, N.H., they asked if we would accept an apartment-size Whirlpool in black to match our other appliances in the kitchen area. Because we have no intention of ever moving the camper, we agreed. It was a favorable solution.

Since we had previous good service from Campers Inn, it was our first choice for shopping for another camping trailer for this renewal of camp life. We have had great times since returning to Adventure Camp ground thanks to good friends and favorable weather.

Fishing at Duncan Lake in August is not the best. This was especially so this year because the excess trout that are usually stocked in late June were stocked in Loon Lake instead. I know this because after I loaded my kayak into my truck after I exited Round Pond in June, I saw the hatchery truck at Loon Lake right across the road. When I asked the hatchery worker why he was stocking lightly fished Loon Lake, which is in Freedom and not as busy as Duncan Lake that is right off Route 16 in Ossipee, he said he usually puts trout there but he was told this year to stock Loon Lake. Loon is a fine lake, but too lightly fished to warrant such attention. The picture of this stocking appeared in the August issue of MethuenLife.

At present, Duncan Lake is about to close to fishing for the season. Oct. 15 is the end of trout fishing in designated trout ponds in New Hampshire. The cormorants are plentiful there this year and they have eaten too many trout through the slower months of August and September. Because fishing had been so spotty, there have been fewer fishermen on the lake most of the



Shirley Aziz stands in front of the new used camper she and husband Roger own near Duncan Lake in New Hampshire. She has been busy decorating the rocks at the small site. And to help her out, Roger goes fishing. Photo by Roger Aziz

summer. I won't complain about it though; fishermen don't need company, only golfers do.

It will soon be time to close up for winter and that is usually a chore not welcomed here. Once the screen house is removed and the awning is placed back against the camper, the scene seems very bare. And indeed it is. The last and final step to closing, after the pipes are drained and treated,

is placing the tarp over the roof and sides. Such a shroud certainly spells the end of camping for the year. Until that time, we will enjoy pleasant times with good friends around a campfire and memories enough to last through winter.

Outdoors writer Roger Aziz lives in Methuen. He can be reached at Outdoor7@aol.com.

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Young People's Theatre stages 'HMS Pinafore' to celebrate 25th year

The Methuen Young People's Theatre came full circle by performing the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta "H.M.S. Pinafore" — the same show staged by the group during its first year together a quarter-century ago.

Back in 1985, a cast of 13 youngsters hit the stage. This summer, at the Methuen Memorial Music Hall, 60 cast members put on the phenomenal comic opera, set aboard the British ship H.M.S. Pinafore and focusing on love between members of different social classes.

The Methuen Young People's Theatre was founded by the late Ellen Stahle, then a trustee of the Methuen Memorial Music Hall, and her daughter, Ellen Meuse. Mrs. Stahle's sister, Hilda Wagner, was another founding member who remains active with MYPT. Founding director was the late Margot Warner.

"The show was to be an opportunity for any youngster, with or without prior training, to experience the joy of being part of a musical performance," according to the Music Hall's

web site. "Gilbert & Sullivan shows have wonderful language, complicated plots and enjoyable comedy, coupled with music that offers huge variety and challenges. What could be better for a young person's experience?"



Shown (front, from left) are Kelsey Paine, Paul Delabruere, Dan Morton, Alicia Rose Benvenuti, Chantel Choiniere and Owen White.



Included in this Dick Dead-eye scene are (from left) Alex Sasso, John Vellante and Shawn Onessimo. Photos by Tina McFadyen



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The Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc., 2010-2011 Fuel Assistance Program has begun registering appointments to take Applications for FIRST TIME APPLICANTS*. (Prior year applicants have been mailed an application again this season.)

CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY:

- Residency: Participants must reside in Lawrence, Methuen, Andover, North Andover, Reading or North Reading.
- Low Income: Participants must prove they meet Federal and State Income guidelines by providing income and documentation showing gross household revenue for all household members 18 years and older for a minimum of 4 weeks (one month) prior to their application date.

Persons whose heat is included in their rent (including those individuals who reside in Federal Section 236, Section 211 (D) (3) and Section 202 developments and in state Section 13A rental housing) may be eligible for assistance.

APPOINTMENTS MAY BE MADE BY CALLING THE FUEL ASSISTANCE OFFICE AT (978) 681-4950.
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PRIOR YEAR APPLICANTS: PLEASE RETURN YOUR APPLICATIONS BACK TO US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
FUNDING IS LIMITED AND CANNOT BE GUARANTEED AFTER APRIL 1, 2011.

FY' 2011 PROGRAMA DE ASISTENCIA PARA LA ENERGIA PARA HOGARES DE BAJO INGRESO

El Programa de Asistencia para la Calefaccion del Concilio de Accion de la Cornunidad de Lawrence (GLCAC, Inc.) a cornenzado a hacer citas para 2010 para el ano 2011. "PERSONAS QUE SOLICITAN POR PRIMERA VEZ." (A los solicitantes del año anterior la solicitud les fue enviada por correo.)

CRITERIOS PARA ELEGIBILIDAD:

- Residencia: El solicitante debe residir en Lawrence, Methuen, Andover, North Andover, Reading o North Reading.
- Bajos Ingresos: El solicitante debe estar dentro de los limites de ingreso Federales y Estatales. Debe proporcionar prueba de ingreso y documentation que muestre las entradas gruesas de todos los miembros de la familia de 18 años en adelante por un minimo de 4 semanas (un mes) anterior a la fecha de la solicitud.

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SYNCHRONIZED-SWIMMING SISTERS GO NATIONAL!

The YMCA's Andover/North Andover Synchers are set to begin a new season with some impressive accolades to add to the team resume. This summer, ANA Syncher swimmers competed at the largest synchronized swimming event in the world, Age Group Nationals held in Tonawanda, N.Y. With over 1,000 swimmers competing at this event, AG Nationals is the most intense competition of the year for ANA swimmers.

In the 11/12 Age Group, sisters Monica Alvarado and Jessica Alvarado of Methuen were among the team that placed 10th place. They are the 11-year-old twin daughters of Marlene and Daniel Alvarado. The girls are sixth-graders at the Tenney Grammar School.

The YMCA's ANA Synchers is one of the largest synchronized swim teams in the country and is already back at work training for the upcoming season, including recently working with Olympic gold medalist Nathalie Bartleson.



Jessica Alvarado (left) and her twin sister Monica



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Poet's Corner

THE SOARING SOOTHER

By Dawn Orlando-Kelley

Toss
me into the
air and watch me climb!
I catch the wind & reach
for eternity. Bright playful colors
and a fanciful ribbon tail,
I mesmerize my admirers.
I lighten hearts &
bring whimsical
joy to the most
downtrodden.

Hope
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Dawn Orlando-Kelley is a teacher at Central Catholic High School in Lawrence; she is also a member of Grey Court Poets and Soroptimist International of Haverhill/Merrimack Valley. She enjoys spending time with her young family, creating poetry in her spare time, and taking advantage of a windy day!



SCHOOL BRIEFS

PMA going co-ed for 2011

For the first time in its 52-year history, Presentation of Mary Academy is preparing to welcome high school boys to its classrooms.

The school is now accepting applications from male students for its freshman and sophomore classes for the school year beginning September 2011. The school will host an open house Oct. 17 from 10 am to 1 pm.

"We are sincerely excited to invite the young men of our surrounding communities to experience PMA's tradition of excellence," says Sister Susan Frederick, president of PMA. "To be clear, the Sisters' Council and Board of Directors carefully considered all of the input and feedback from PMA's families, alumni and staff. In the end, this is the right decision for the school and for the community. I can speak for everyone at PMA when I say that we look forward to a very bright future."

Principal Rose Maria Redman, an alumna of the school, adds, "While we certainly understand that this is a significant change for our current students and their families, we will work tirelessly to make this transition as seamless as possible. While it is an absolute priority for our current students to continue to feel at home at PMA, I also want our incoming male students to feel comfortable from Day One, and that will certainly be one of our objectives as we refine

our transition plan."

Check out www.pmamethuen.org for information concerning the transition.

PMA is a private, non-profit, Catholic, college preparatory high school. The student body represents 30 local communities throughout Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. Since it began with 20 students in 1958, PMA has earned a reputation for providing high quality and spiritual development within a close community.

Science student earns scholarship

Quynh Giao Nguyen of Methuen is one of three Northern Essex Community College students to earn this year's Dr. John G. Santos Environmental Education Scholarship.

The award provides \$1,000 per student. Recipients must be enrolled in an associate degree program pursuing their education in earth science, physics, biology, chemistry or laboratory science and having earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.0. Nguyen is studying laboratory science.

Dr. Santos is a 1968 graduate of NECC's liberal arts program. He earned additional degrees from Amherst College and Worcester State College, and a doctorate from Boston College.

Money Matters



By Sal Petralia

Breast-cancer prevention just makes sense!

"The best way to control the future is to create it."

~ Words adorning a wall at the Sparhawk School in Amesbury



This column is dedicated to Aunt Lee and Mom who fought the battle, and cousins Gail and Angela who continue to do so.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Knowing that health and medical bills are entwined with financial health, I'd like to give my small contribution to breast-cancer prevention.

I'm not in the business of giving medical advice, but the numerous sources available on the Internet are truly impressive. Walk-a-thons and fund-raisers are very useful and fund much of the information on-line in addition to research and treatment. But only participating in those and not being personally proactive gives a false sense of security.

These risk factors for breast cancer are from the Centers for Disease Control web site (www.cdc.gov):

- Getting older.
- Being younger when you first had your menstrual period.
- Starting menopause at a later age.
- Being older at the birth of your first child.
- Never giving birth.
- Not breastfeeding.
- Personal history of breast cancer or some non-cancerous breast diseases.
- Family history of breast cancer (mother, sister, daughter).
- Treatment with radiation therapy to the breast/chest.
- Being overweight (increases risk of breast cancer after menopause).
- Long-term use of hormone replacement therapy (estrogen and progesterone combined).

- Having changes in the breast cancer-related genes BRCA1 or BRCA2.
- Using birth control pills, also called oral contraceptives.
- Drinking alcohol.
- Not getting regular exercise.

"Having a risk factor does not mean you will get the disease," according to the CDC site. "Most women have some risk factors and most women do not get breast cancer. If you have breast cancer risk factors, talk to your doctor about ways you can lower your risk and about screening for breast cancer."

The web site www.webmd.com has extensive information gleaned from the American Cancer Society and the American Institute of Cancer Research. One of their easiest offerings to put into effect is their list of the top cancer-fighting foods. I just included a short summary of the list because in October I hope you're going to start surfing the web for info and making a list of questions for your doctor.

- Eat tomato-based products, beans, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, red and purple grapes, dark green leafy vegetables, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and curcumin, the main ingredient in the Indian spice turmeric.

- Meals should be at least two-thirds plant-based foods and no more than one-third animal protein.

- Pass up the deli counter, i.e. smoked and salted meats.
- Drink water.
- Eat as little sugar as possible.
- American Cancer Society research emphasizes that getting cancer-fighting nutrients from foods is much better than getting them from supplements.

Be in charge and begin the new year in October. You owe it to yourself and those who love you. Another good site: www.breastcancer.org.

Sal Petralia is a Certified Financial Planner and a Registered Principal with Linsco/Private ledger, 1 Branch Street, Unite 103, Methuen, MA 01844; tel. 978-975-3060; E-mail: sal.petralia@lpl.com
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Tea & Treats



By Brenda Ghorashi

Autumn has quite suddenly arrived here in New England. This morning I awoke to find a distinct edge to the air. The sun was playing peek-a-boo through the clouds, creating a particularly stunning light. There was a pin-sharp clarity of the landscape; the trees, the river, the hills all casting long shadows; a mist covering everything in sight. It was truly magical. A perfect rainbow-making morning. Summer has slipped away and autumn has indeed arrived.

Since closing AntiquiTeas Tea Room in January, I was unemployed and home for the first spring and summer in many years. It was nothing short of traumatic for me. Particularly daunting was the fact that I knew I was going to be doing “nothing.” Nothing isn’t easy to do, especially for me. It took several weeks of walking in circles and wondering what my purpose in life was now that I was not working. Yes, I was tending my gardens, doing home repairs, working on my cookbook, visiting with friends and family, and helping my aging parents. Spring and summer is no doubt the absolute best time to be unemployed. Yet when people ask, “What are you doing these days?” I answer, “Nothing.” Wow. Success?

As the days get shorter and colder, I welcome the challenge of doing “nothing” through a long and isolating winter for what I have come to realize over this glorious summer — while spending time with friends and family, exploring work that

suits me well and reading a good book — is that there are hundreds of moments when I have touched on my reason for living ... my purpose. It may not be the “grand” purpose, but rather genuine delight and gratitude for the moment I’m in. What is important is to live it well and joyfully. I can do that right now. I shall spend some time and pursue my next big adventure this autumn and perhaps into the winter to seek gainful employment — something I haven’t done for over 30 years. I suspect it may be the hardest job I’ve ever had. It makes me a little hesitant though because now ... I’ve got “nothing” to lose.

To celebrate this new season, I’ve decided to make a pumpkin soup and bake something that will fill the house with wonderful aromas. The crisp air outside makes for mornings that are nice to stay inside and make heart- and tummy-warming recipes. Snuggling up with a good book or a loved one is also a good choice.

Pumpkin Pie Soup

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 15-oz. cans pumpkin
- 3½ cups (28 oz.) chicken broth
- 1½ cups half-and-half
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- 4 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice mix (8 tsp. ground cinnamon, 2 tsp. ground nutmeg, 2 tsp. ground ginger, 2 tsp. ground cloves. Store extra in airtight container)
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1½ cups light brown sugar

In a 3-quart saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Stir in pumpkin, broth, half-and-half, maple syrup, brown sugar and pumpkin pie spice mix. Bring just to boiling. Serve immediately.

Welcome, seasonal and life changes!

Sweet Potato Crisp

- 4 medium sweet potatoes, cooked, peeled and cubed
- ¼ cup chopped pecans
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 medium apples, quartered
- 1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup quick-cooking oats
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons cold butter

In a large bowl, beat the sweet potatoes, cream cheese and cinnamon until smooth. Spread evenly into an 11-by-7-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Place apples and cranberries in a food processor; cover and process until chopped. Spread over sweet potato mixture. In a small bowl, combine the flour, oats and brown sugar; cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in pecans; sprinkle over filling. Bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees for 35 to 40 minutes or until topping is golden brown and fruit is tender.

Buttered Orange Cider

- 6 cups apple cider or juice
- ½ medium unpeeled navel orange, sliced
- 8 whole allspice
- 8 whole cloves
- 2 cinnamon sticks (3 inches)
- 1 orange peel strip (3 inches)
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup butter, softened
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

In a large saucepan, combine the cider and orange slices. Place the allspice, cloves, cinnamon sticks and orange peel on a double thickness of cheesecloth; bring up corners of cloth and tie with kitchen string to form a bag. Add to pan. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 15 to 20 minutes. In a small bowl, combine the brown sugar, butter and cinnamon. Discard spice bag. Ladle cider into mugs; dot with butter mixture.

Brenda Ghorashi is the former owner of AntiquiTeas Tea Room in Salem and Londonderry, N.H.

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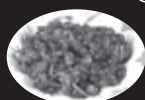
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Cozy coffee shop welcomes new friends

By Steve Whipple
MethuenLife Writer

Coffee ... check.
Comfy couch and chairs ... check.
Relaxing vibe ... check.

The only thing missing are Joey, Rachel and the rest of the "Friends" gang — and they can be replaced with any of the interesting people here in Methuen.

Downtown Java Joe's just opened in Methuen Square, and there's no shortage of

options for coffee, tea, hot chocolate, bagels and muffins. But the inviting 2,300-square-foot atmosphere created by Michelle Desrochers and "Java" Joe Kaczynski is equally impressive.

"I had gotten laid off. Michelle and I have lived in Methuen all our lives and we discussed how it would be nice to have a place downtown," explained Joe. "She has her hair salon (Creative Hair) across the street, so she

See COFFEE, Page 37



Joe Kaczynski and Michelle Desrochers just opened Downtown Java Joe's in the former Webster-Greene Antiques site in Methuen Square. It's open seven days a week.

Photos by Steve Whipple

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Bed bugs on the rise locally

Specially-trained dog can sniff them out

By John Basileco
MethuenLife Writer

Several times a day, a dog named Rascal goes to work searching for a tiny pesky insect that leaves red welts on people after sucking their blood.

The insect is a bed bug, which is the subject of a growing number of complaints in Methuen and across the nation.

The dog is a beagle trained to sniff out the insects so they can be exterminated.

Pest End Inc. in Methuen purchased Rascal at the beginning of June to bolster its battle against the nocturnal insects. The 2½-year-old dog was trained at a canine academy in Florida to sniff out bed bugs. It is one of only 70 dogs certified in the United States and Canada by the National Entomology Scent Detection Canine Association to locate bed bugs by picking up their scent.

The association certifies teams comprised of one dog and one or more human handlers who train together, said James Skinner, president of the association. A total of 70 dogs and 100 handlers are currently certified by the group, and the numbers continue to rise, he said.

Bed bugs aren't regarded as a health problem, Skinner said. They don't transmit diseases like mosquitoes do, he said. But having them in your house feeding on you is "unsettling and stressful."

"Over the past five years, we have seen an incredible rise in the bed-bug problem nationwide," he said. "The problem is growing exponentially. Bed bugs are becoming immune to the pesticides we're using today."

The growing problem convinced the owners of Pest End Inc., a family-owned extermination business in Methuen, that they needed a bed bug-sniffing dog of their own, said Adam Carace, one of the co-owners. Carace and employee Courtney Nicholson, who is also a certified handler, work with Rascal.



Rascal, who is specially trained to sniff out bed bugs, scratches at an area when he detects the blood-sucking insects. Rascal's handler Adam Carace says the name "bed bug" is misleading, as the dog has detected bed bugs in bathrooms and kitchens as well as furniture. Photos by Melissa Fili

"The last five years the bed-bug problem has just exploded," Carace said. "It's gone up 200 percent easily. The numbers are through the roof across the country."



Carace holds a vial containing a full-grown bed bug.

While it's easy for people to miss the bed bugs because they're so small, Rascal can quickly and accurately pinpoint the location of bed bugs in any given room in a house, hotel or apartment building, Carace said.

Once the dog sniffs a bed bug or a viable egg, he gets excited and puts his paw on the spot. Carace or another exterminator can then go to work applying insecticide or steam-cleaning the infected mattress or other piece of furniture with the infestation. Some homeowners toss out the infected mattress.

The dog has located thousands of the troublesome insects since the beginning of June, Carace said. The local company's territory includes the Boston area, Methuen and southern New Hampshire.

Carace said Rascal seems to enjoy sniffing out bed bugs.

"I think he loves it when we start him

See BUG, Page 39

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Coffee, continued from page 34

thought this would be good for her customers. We wanted something like Central Perk in (the hit TV show) 'Friends.'"

The earth-tone ceilings and walls are a nice change from the neon colors and bright lights of a national doughnut chain.

Over the course of four months, the former Webster-Greene Antiques store was transformed, now equipped with a couch, a pair of suede chairs, two televisions, WiFi, four large cushioned chairs, 30 bar stools and a handful of tables.

Let's talk coffee. A station has three Keurig coffee makers that, in seconds, brew about 200 flavors of coffee including Hawaiian Hazelnut, Kona Blend, Spicy Mayan

Chocolate and Mexican Organic. The same machines can brew tea and hot chocolate. An espresso machine is on the way.

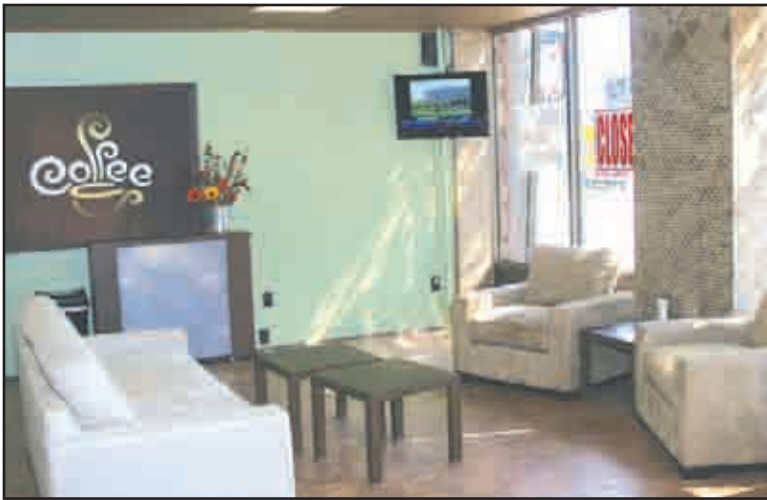
Over on the counter are the tall Green Mountain thermoses yielding four flavors, fine either hot or iced. You still have a free hand and that's for a muffin, bagel or — soon — breakfast sandwich.

And for the warmer days when something cold is preferred, Joe serves up Richie's slush or nine flavors of Dolce Freddo Gelato including pumpkin, black raspberry, chocolate and Berry Good sorbet.

"We wanted a place for friends to hang out, chill and not feel like they have to spend a million dollars," said Joe.

Though people with a million dollars are welcome, too. Two days after Downtown Java Joe's opened, Republican candidate for governor Charlie Baker stopped by while campaigning.

Downtown Java Joe's is open Monday through Saturday from 6 am to 8 pm and Sunday from 7 am to noon.



Michelle and Joe's goal was to give their shop the look and feel of Central Perk from the hit TV sitcom "Friends," which they did with earth-tone colors and a sofa and suede chairs.

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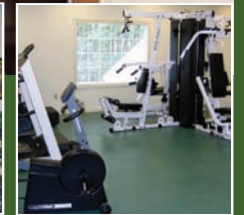
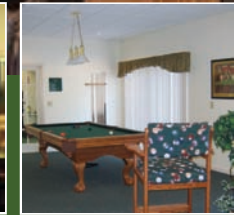
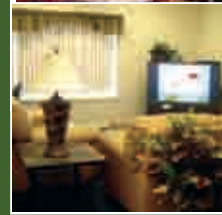
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Historical Snapshots

By Dan Gagnon

Duo on quest to tally city's Civil War vets

As the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War approaches (2011-2015), Methuen Historical Society President Joe Bella and I have been on a years-long quest to identify and document men from Methuen who served in what was known at the time as the Great Rebellion.

Though the City of Methuen officially lists the number of men from Methuen at 325, Joe and I have discovered nearly 600 who served. Granted, Joe and I are a little more liberal in our approach to what qualifies as a person from Methuen. The official record comes from those names that were attributed to the town by the state. These names were applied to the quotas that each town was required to send to the war. Joe and I used that list, but we also accepted those who were born, lived, worked, died or were buried in Methuen. Also added to that list were those veterans who were members of the Civil War Veterans organization Grand Army of the Republic Post 100 in Methuen.

At first Joe and I started researching Civil War veterans independently and unaware that the other was doing this. I became interested while researching other topics. Newspaper articles often referred to various community or business leaders as Civil War vets. It wasn't long before I came to realize that these men were the 19th-century equivalent of Tom Brokaw's "Greatest Generation." They had "Seen the Elephant," to use the 19th-century expression for experiencing combat. They had witnessed the worst that man can do to man and survived. Nothing could scare them, so they were willing to take risks. As a result they became successful in their chosen professions.

Joe, on the other hand, found the research as a natural extension of his general interest in Methuen history. He had studied Methuen's involvement in the other wars and found this period just as interesting.

Joe and I came to be aware of our mutual research at a meeting we were both attending. I told him about the recent information I had found about Methuen native Leverett Bradley, who was captain of the First Massachusetts Heavy Artillery from 1861 to 1862. Joe shared with me information that he had collected on the same person. About four years ago, we realized that we should work together and share what we found.

When I asked Joe recently which veteran he found the most interesting, he told me that he had two he could name.

"Leverett Bradley would be my first choice," Joe told me, "because he served with the 6th Massachusetts Militia during the Baltimore Riots in April 1861, and



Methuen residents and dedicated historical record-keepers Joe Bella (left) and Dan Gagnon are members of the Lawrence Civil War Memorial Guard. The unit they portray is Company I, 6th Massachusetts Militia, the first see hostile action in Baltimore. The men have teamed up to keep track of men from Methuen who served in the Civil War. Courtesy photo

the fact that he was related to one of the founders of the town and also to a militiaman who fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill."

His second choice was John Wesley Adams, who was a chaplain in the 2nd New Hampshire Infantry from 1863 to the end of the war.

Our research has found some fascinating stories. Leverett Bradley's son Jeremiah Bradley was only 14 years old when he went off with his father to the war. He stayed with the regiment until the end of the war and witnessed some of the most brutal fighting. His older brother, Leverett Jr., struggled emotionally after the war until he found peace in his religious faith and became an Episcopal minister. One local veteran became a pedophile and spent quite a few years in prison. Charles Wheeler was the town treasurer and in 1876 walked off with the entire town treasury.

Even non-Civil War vets' stories have been discovered. Charles H. Tenney, who built the chateau-styled mansion behind the Gate House, was drafted into the army but was exempt from service because he had no upper teeth.

To find these stories, Joe has been scouring newspapers looking for a hint at a Methuen name to add to our lists. He has found that obituaries have given him the most information. I, on the other hand, look through Regimental histories for information about people I already know about or to find the obscure mention of a



Methuen native Leverett Bradley, who was captain of the First Massachusetts Heavy Artillery from 1861 to 1862, is buried in Bellevue Cemetery, Lawrence. Bella and Gagnon have traveled to Maine and Virginia in search of info on Methuen's Civil War vets. Courtesy photo

soldier's hometown or birthplace. In one case, I found reference to Methuen native Isaac Thurlow in a footnote of an informal history of the 32nd Massachusetts Infantry. The author wrote that after a forced march toward Sharpsburg in September 1862, "no officers and one man (Thurlow) [were] present for duty." The author also mentioned that Thurlow was later promoted to lieutenant in the "Colored Troops," a segregated regiment with black soldiers and white officers. Thurlow was the only enlisted soldier mentioned in the book. He must have been an extraor-

See DUO, Page 39



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Duo, continued from page 38

dinary soldier. With this information I was began researching his later military service.

On one of the few occasions that Joe and I traveled together to do research, we went to the National Guard museum in Worcester. When the curator learned that Joe was a Vietnam vet and served in country during the same time as the curator, we were treated special. The curator offered all kinds of advice to help us with our research.

In researching these Civil War veterans, Joe and I agree that documenting the location of their final resting place is equally important. We have searched local cemeteries looking for their gravestones and have traveled outside the state in the hopes of bringing a photograph of the grave marker home to add to our files. Last summer, Joe traveled to a Torgus, Maine, cemetery in a lightning storm to photograph grave markers of four Methuen natives who were buried there. I've gone to Spotsylvania, Virginia, to try to get an idea of the landscape where men from Methuen fought. In nearby Fredericksburg, I was able to photograph the markers of seven Methuen soldiers who

died in combat and were buried at the National Cemetery.

Our work is far from complete. We are still finding new names and are updating information on the men we have already identified. In the end, Joe and I have the same belief: Whatever we find, we want to share with future generations. Eventually, Joe wants to have his Civil War collection donated to a historical institution. Joe says he believes that, "This era should not be forgotten and the soldiers should be remembered for their sacrifice in preserving the Union."

I, too, want to have my research preserved. I hope to eventually create a Web site for other researchers to access, and maybe even publish a book featuring some of the fascinating stories of these Methuen soldiers. After all, we don't want this 19th-century "Greatest Generation" to become the lost generation.

For more information about Methuen history, check out www.methuenhistory.org.

Bug, continued from page 35

on a job," he said. "We say, 'Are you ready to go to work?' His tail starts wagging and you can tell he gets all excited."

When he finds one of the bugs or an egg, he scratches on the spot with his paw, Carace said.

Methuen Health Director Brian LaGrasse said he has seen an increase in bed-bug complaints over the past five or more years. While the complaints were once "very, very rare," they are more common now, he said.

"We've had less than 10 complaints over the last year and a half," LaGrasse said. "It's not widespread but it is more common now. Before, we had almost no complaints. Now we have a few a year."

LaGrasse said his staff received some training on how to spot the insects about eight months ago.

People can contact the Health Department if they suspect they have a bed-bug problem, but the best course of action is to contact an exterminator right away, LaGrasse said. An extermination company can determine if there is a bed-bug problem and get rid of them, he said.

About 10 years ago, Pest End received a

bed-bug complaint once every few months, Carace said.

"Now, we have multiple jobs, multiple complaints every single day," he said.

Recently, Rascal checked out a total of 75 rooms between two hotels in Manchester, N.H., and found bed bugs in three of the rooms, Carace said.

Bed bugs don't discriminate between clean houses and apartments and dirty houses and apartments. A first-class hotel, for example, can have a bed-bug infestation if one of its guests unintentionally brings them into his room, Carace said. Despite their name, they don't limit themselves to beds. They are found in all types of furniture, includes bureaus, he said.

Earlier this year, the National Pest Management Association and the University of Kentucky surveyed American and international pest management companies about the state of the bed-bug problem. Ninety-five percent of American respondents indicated their company or organization had encountered a bed-bug infestation in the past year.

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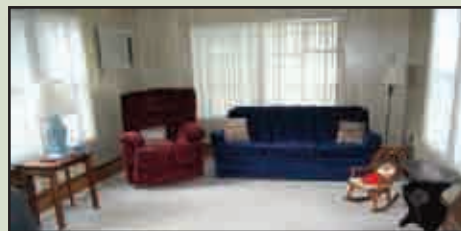


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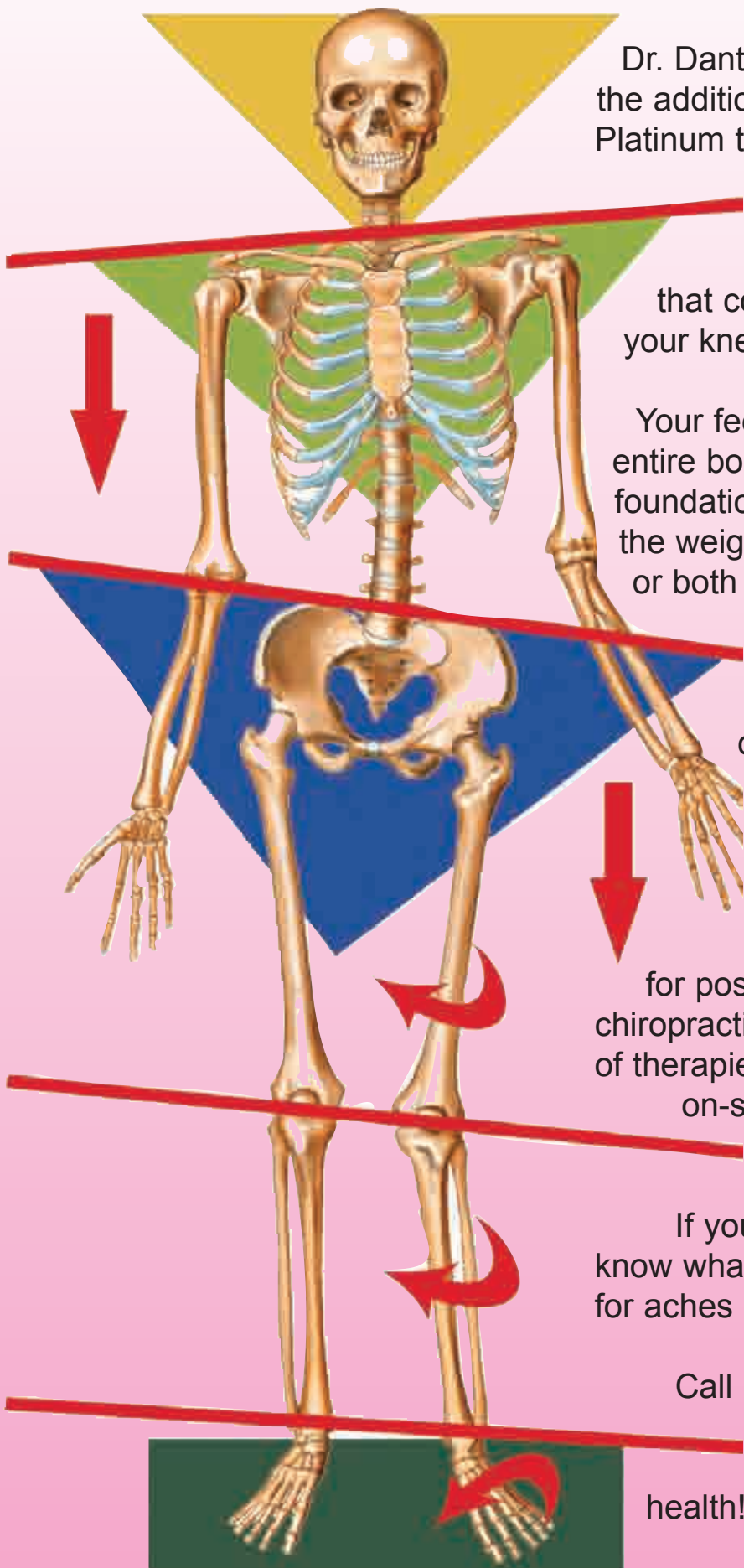


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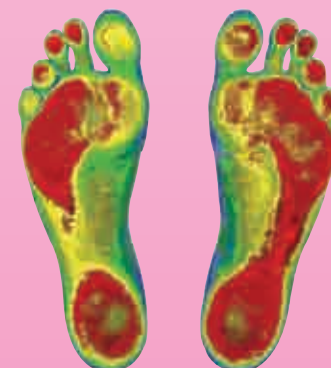


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Travel Talk

By Jim Keogh
MethuenLife Writer

In August, 48 adventurous, fun-loving passengers joined me for a four-day "By the Sea" mystery trip. We did not divulge our destination, and the only clue we provided was that we would enjoy an exciting "By the Sea" itinerary.

On our first day, we departed from Methuen at 7 am. After refreshment breaks, comfort stops and a mid-day lunch at a diner in Tarrytown, N.Y., we arrived in Ocean City, Md., at 6 pm. It had been overcast and misty for most of our ride, but once we crossed over the Delaware Memorial Bridge, the sun came out and stayed with us for the rest of our travel day. One of the mid-Atlantic's most popular beach resorts, Ocean City is situated on a thin strand of barrier island which features a 9-mile-long stretch of sandy beach that runs between the Delaware border and Ocean City's southernmost point at the inlet. A 3-mile boardwalk bustling with summer beach-time activities parallels the shoreline at the southern edge of Ocean City. Our oceanfront hotel provided us with balcony rooms directly facing the duned beach and the Atlantic.

In addition to enjoying the beach and boardwalk setting, we also included two boat cruises to nearby attractions. On the second day we drove to Crisfield, Md., and took a 90-minute cruise to Tangier Island, Va., in Chesapeake Bay. Discovered in 1608 by John Smith, Tangier Island has remained virtually unchanged and boasts a population of about 500 residents. Tourism comes in a close second to the island's major industry, which is crab and oyster fishing. We had a family-style lunch in modest, homey surroundings highlighting local crab cakes and Virginia ham.

On the third day, we headed to Chincoteague Island where we had chartered a fleet of small six-passenger boats. Chincoteague was the setting for Marguerite Henry's book "Misty of Chincoteague" which was made into a movie. It tells the fictionalized story, based on fact, about the wild ponies that inhabit Chincoteague and nearby Assateague. Once a year several of the ponies are rounded up and are encouraged to swim across Assateague Channel at low tide. They are led to a corral where they are examined by veterinarians and the next day they are sold at auction, where the proceeds are donated to the island's volunteer firefighting brigade. The main reason for this annual swimming and penning of the ponies is to trim down the herd so it will not exceed 150 wild ponies.

Our small boats were able to take us within only a few feet of some of the ponies who were eating dune and marsh grasses and drinking pond water. While cruising Chincoteague Bay we also saw several dolphins frolicking in the water, and a bald eagle perched on a tree stump on the shore. The



This group of vacationers from Methuen poses for a photo at the Dunes Manor Hotel in Ocean City, Md. Courtesy photo

government-sponsored National Park Service is responsible for the well-being of the wild ponies and the other precious wildlife in the region..

On our last day, we stopped at the Dover Air Force base in Delaware to visit the Air Mobility Command Museum. A few docents pointed out and provided information about the highlights of the museum's collection of Air Force planes. Some were housed inside a hangar, while several were stationed outdoors (Caribou, Stratotanker, Hercules, Constellation, etc.). While we were outdoors many Air Force training exercises were taking place, with USAF planes taking off and landing just over the chain-link fence from where we were standing.

On the morning after our arrival in Ocean City, the director of the city's Tourism Department made a point of greeting us before we took off for a day of sightseeing. She boarded our chartered bus while we were still parked at our hotel. She welcomed us to her city and presented each of our passengers with a gift bag containing specially prepared Ocean City souvenirs.

We responded by serenading her with our vocal rendition of "By the Sea, By the Sea, By the Beautiful Sea." She was thrilled to be among such an enthusiastic group of visitors! Ocean City and the surrounding Delmarva Peninsula must have been on Harold Atteridge's mind when he wrote that song's lyrics in 1914! It could not be more appropriate.

Jim Keogh is president of Cosmopolitan Travel & Cruise Center, Methuen.

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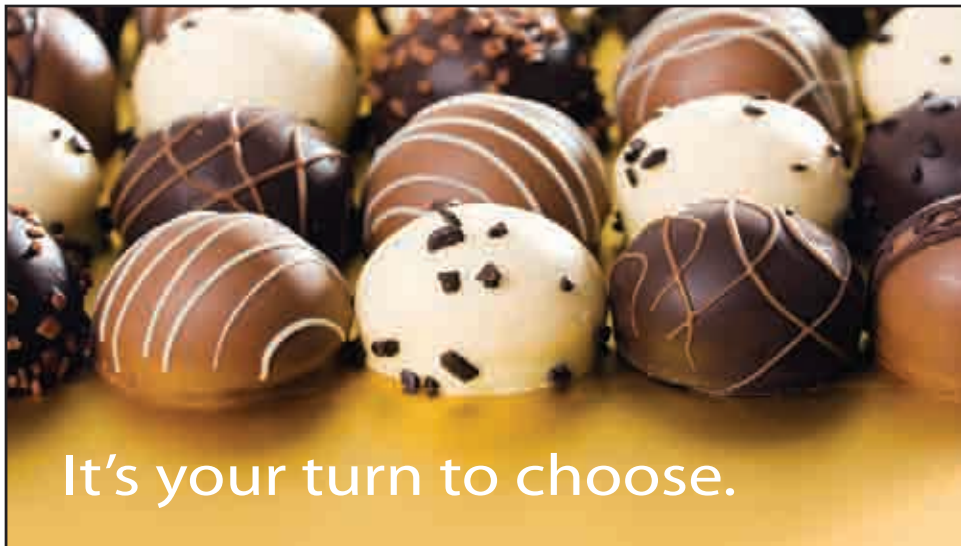
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On today's trip we will also spend a few hours at Mohegan Sun Casino before heading to The Nordic Lodge Restaurant. Dinner starts at 6PM.

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The employees of the Nevins Family of Services held a food drive for Lazarus House of Lawrence last month. Loading the 15 boxes they collected are the drivers of Trans Care who delivered them: (from left) Maddie Ortiz, Terence Acosta, Leo Lopez (on the left), Tom Turgeon, Henry Bodenrader, Robert Pena and Bill Conran. The Nevins Family of Services (which includes the Adult Day Health Center, the Alzheimer's Family Care Center, Trans Care and the nursing home) is a nonprofit organization that frequently gives back to the community. Employees are also helping the MSPCA with a collection of sheets, bedspreads, towels, blankets, etc., for the animals to snuggle up with during the winter months. In December, the employees will be collecting for Toys for Tots. *Photo by Sue Whipple*

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SPARKING SCIENCE SKILLS EARLY ON

Teachers aim to bring hands-on discovery to younger students

By **Melissa Fili**
MethuenLife Writer

Five Upper School teachers are hoping to share their love of science and hands-on experimentation with the younger students in their schools.

The fifth- through eighth-grade teachers — Cynthia Nugent, Renee Gately and Kristin Gallo from the Timony School and Kathy Turmel and Lorraine Levinson from Comprehensive Grammar School — have each received a fellowship through the National Science Foundation to bring “science inquiry” to Methuen students at all grade levels. The inquiry process hinges on each child’s curiosity, interest or passion to understand an observation or solve a problem.

“The goal is to get more science used in the K-to-8 classrooms, and to encourage teachers to incorporate science into their day,” explained Nugent, who is serving her second year as a fellow in this program. “In K-to-5, there’s so much to do in the day that science is always put on the back burner.”

The teachers are part of the Fulcrum Fellows Program for Master Teachers in Elementary and Middle School Science Education which is run through Tufts University. They are among 22 teachers across the state sharing grant money aimed at fostering an interest in science starting as early as kindergarten.

“We hope to bring exposure to science equipment, ideas and skills to those younger students,” said Nugent, adding that the grant pays for some supplies that would be used in the classrooms.

“We’ll use a more hands-on inquiry method with a lot of demonstration,” said Gately. “Inquiry pushes the curiosity of children, and it pushes children to use science equipment and not be afraid of it.”

According to Dr. Jennifer A. Smith, director of curriculum, instruction and assessment for the city’s public schools, Methuen is always trying to increase the amount of time devoted to science. The

See SCIENCE, Page 47



A group of Methuen teachers has received a National Science Foundation fellowship to foster hands-on science learning in kindergarten through grade five. Shown are (from left) Timony School teachers Kristin Gallo, Renee Gately and Cynthia Nugent. Teachers Kathy Turmel and Lorraine Levinson (not pictured) will share their science expertise at CGS.
Photo by Melissa Fili

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Ready Set Go Kids Fitness & Dionne's Karate opens

By Steve Whipple
MethuenLife Writer

For years, young people solemnly worked away to improve their grades at the Huntington Learning Center. These days, well, the mood is a lot lighter.

The quiet studying has been replaced with squeals of laughter and encouraging martial-arts commands.

Steve and Kristen Dionne have opened Dionne's Karate and Ready, Set, Go Kids Fitness at the former Huntington site next



Her hair not quite caught up with her body, Madelyn Zugell, 6, lands on the inflatable trampoline. Instructor Becky Enos is off to the side watching carefully.

to Heav'nly Donuts. Now in their ninth year, the couple relocated the two businesses from Lawrence.

"I really like the people of Methuen; they're independent. Everyone we've spoken to on the phone is excited we're here. We're getting a lot of positive feedback," said Steve. "This plaza is excellent. We've never had such a great open house."

Their open house on Sept. 11 brought in dozens of people to tour the 3,200-square-foot facility that includes the karate dojo, fitness area, waiting/viewing area and office.

Sensei Steve, a fourth-degree black belt in the Uechi Ryu Okinawa style karate, continues to study under well-known Buzz Durkin and imparts his knowledge to the next generation.

"We do a lot of character building as part of the martial arts," said Steve, as a group of brown and black belts ages 8 to 15 gathered for class. "We do low kicks and a lot of circle blocks like in 'Karate Kid.' We also do conditioning and traditional sparring."

Meanwhile, on the other side of the dojo, the room is abuzz with gymnastics, cheerleading, parent-tot classes and sports classes where youngsters 3½ to 5 years old are taught the basics of football, baseball, basketball, etc.

College sophomore Becky Enos in-



Sensei Steve Dionne works with Timony Grammar School student Steven Beaupre, 11, on his kicks. Photos by Steve Whipple

structs gymnastics and cheerleading, while Kristine leads the parent-tot classes that include a parachute, rings, tumbling and an air-blown (no steel springs) trampoline.

The facility is open Monday through

Thursday from 9 am to 7 pm; Friday, 9-2; and Saturday, 9-12.

They host birthday parties where supervised kids can use the equipment then enjoy cake and ice cream.



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Political debates airing on MCTV

Methuen Community Television will air two political debates where local candidates will go head-to-head on the issues.

On Oct. 12, state representative candidates for Methuen's 15th Essex District will join MCTV and MethuenLife for a live forum at 6:30 pm on Comcast 22 and Verizon 33. Moderator Seth Graham will lead the 90-minute discussion with the candidates. If you have a question you'd like to have asked, please submit it to info@methuentv.org by Oct. 9.

On Oct. 18, Mann Orchards will host the 5th Congressional District debate with Democrat Niki Tsongas and Republican challenger Jon Golnik. While the event will air live on the Internet at 7:30 pm, there will be repeat cablecasts on MCTV Comcast 22 and Verizon 33 on Oct. 19 at 9 pm and Oct. 20 at 12:30 pm.

Election Day is Nov. 2.

Fire, police host open houses

Methuen's fire and police departments are joining forces Oct. 9 and holding their open houses simultaneously from 10 am to 2 pm.

At the Central Fire Station, there will be free pizza and soda, giveaways and demonstrations like the Jaws of Life. Climb on the fire trucks, sit inside the ambulance, and meet the men and women who keep our city safe.

At the Quinn Building, located a short walk away, members of police force will serve free hot dogs, chips and refreshments. Visitors can check out the department's fleet of cruisers, motorcycles and ATVs; watch a canine demonstration and tour the police station. Child fingerprint and DNA ID kits will be handed out to parents. For any questions about the police tour, contact Sgt. Gunter at (978) 983-8792.

Costumed kids headed your way!

The City of Methuen has announced that Halloween trick-or-treating will be held Sunday, Oct. 31 from 5 to 7 pm.

Irises, compost up for discussion

Though summer is behind us, the Methuen

Garden Club is always thinking about the next growing season.

On Oct. 6, Linda Corapi presents "Irises in the Garden." Enjoy three slide presentations showing over 90 irises and many perennials through the spring, summer and fall seasons. Irises will be available for sale.

On Nov. 3, club member Dick Wilson will lead a discussion on "Composting Methods." He will address the importance of amending your soil annually. All members will be invited to share their composting tips.

Garden Club meetings are held at 7 pm at Nevins Memorial Library, 305 Broadway. New members are always welcome. If interested in joining the club, contact Vice President Linda Yuele at denlinyuele@comcast.net or (978) 687-9892. Visit www.methuengardenclub.org for more info.

Fall Festival at Grey Court Park

Residents are invited to the annual Fall Festival at Grey Court Park (located behind Methuen City Hall) on Oct. 23 from noon to 3 pm. Sponsored by the Recreation Department, the Youth Commission and Mayor William Manzi, the event will include a Halloween costume contest with prizes for different categories; face painting; pony rides; spooky story time; hot dogs and drinks; free popcorn; a balloon artist and pumpkin decorating. Free admission. Rain date is Oct. 24.

'Travels' exhibit wants your art!

Talented local artists are invited to join together to showcase their artwork at the 9th annual Art at the Library Art Exhibit and Sale.

The Methuen-based Arts Institute Group of the Merrimack Valley (AIGMV) is hosting its annual Fine Art and Fine Crafts Art Exhibit and Sale from Oct. 27 to Nov. 6 at Nevins Memorial Library's Great Hall, 305 Broadway, Methuen. This year's art show theme is "Travels." The art exhibit is open to the public Monday through Thursday, 10 am to 8 pm and Friday and Saturday, 10 am to 4 pm. An artists reception will be held Oct. 28 from 6:30 to 8 pm at the library.

AIGMV welcomes members and non-members working in the following mediums to

participate – oil, watercolor, acrylic, pastel, photography, pen/ink, mixed media as well as original fine artisan crafts, which include, but are not limited to wood working, beading, ceramics, glass, metal and sculpture. Fine craft submissions will be juried at Nevins Memorial Library's Great Hall on Oct. 7 from 6:30 to 8 pm. Artwork registration deadline is Oct. 14 for inclusion in the art exhibit program. An entry fee is required for artwork. New members are welcome.

The Arts Institute Group of the Merrimack Valley is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the arts in the area. For more information or an application, please visit www.artsinstitutegroup.org or contact Gail Fuller (617) 510-5742 or Pattie Beaulieu (603) 490-6531.

Self-defense for women

A free Women's Self-Defense Course will be held Oct. 14, 21 and 28 from 7 to 8 pm at the Methuen YMCA, 129 Haverhill St., Methuen. Learn the fundamentals of personal safety and self-protection while also gaining a sense of empowerment in this three-part course.

To register or learn more, contact the Methuen YMCA at (978) 683-5266.

'Pink chocolate' helps good cause

Once again, Edible Arrangements on East Street in Methuen is offering a special promotion during Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

In October, 10 percent of all proceeds from the Breast Cancer Awareness Line will go directly to breast-cancer research. Prices range from \$35 for a box of pink berries to \$59 for the Awareness Celebration (pineapples, grapes, honeydew, cantaloupe, and strawberries hand dipped in pink chocolate). The Methuen store is responsible for creating the "pink berry" – a dozen strawberries covered in pink gourmet chocolate – and now these arrangements are sold in over 900 locations nationwide.

Additionally, from Oct. 17 to 24 the Methuen store is selling its 12-count boxes of dipped fruit for \$10. Those boxes typically sell for \$25.

To find out more, contact Edible Arrangements at (978) 688-8117.

Ranger Band Fest is Oct. 10

If you love the sound of a great high school marching band, then be sure to attend the 2010 Methuen Ranger Band Fest. The event, held Oct. 10 at Nicholson Stadium, starts at 1 pm and features several high school and college marching bands. For info, visit www.methuen-rangerband.org or contact president@methuen-rangerband.org.

Recycle it all in 1 container

Going green just got easier!

The city of Methuen has started Single Stream Recycling. Residents no longer have to sort paper, plastic and cans. All items can be placed in the same container and left on the curb for pick-up.

Mayor William Manzi says that this new citywide program will save money and encourage more people to recycle by simplifying the process.

"Citizens have been asking us to do this for years," he stated in a press release. "Now that the recycling company is equipped to handle Single Stream, we are ready to move full speed ahead with this program."

Residents can continue to use the same blue recycling bins that they already use. They are also free to use a regular trash container as long as the container is marked with a blue "Single Stream" sticker. The stickers are available at City Hall, the Town Yard and the Transfer Station. Recycling is for paper, bottles and cans. Regular trash will still need to be separated.

It's OK to toss these items into your recycling bin:

Paper: catalogues, magazines, phone books, newspapers with inserts, flattened cardboard boxes, all mail and paperback books, paper, paper bags, paperboard, (no soiled paper or pizza boxes).

Glass: bottles and jars (rinse and remove lids/corks).

Metal: food/beverage cans, aluminum foil/pans, (no paint or aerosol cans).

Plastic: bottles/jars marked 1 through 7, as well as milk and juice cartons.



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CALENDAR

• **Blood drive:** Oct. 1, 1 to 6 pm at the Methuen YMCA, 129 Haverhill St. Call 1-800-GIVELIFE to schedule an appointment.

• **Blessing of the Animals,** Oct. 3, 9:30am at Grey Court Park in Methuen (behind City Hall). Bring your well-behaved animals, live and stuffed, or even pictures of animal friends who can't join the fun to Methuen's picturesque park for a blessing by St. Andrew's pastor, the Rev. Joseph Wilkes. Anyone who wishes to sit during the service is encouraged to bring a lawn chair or blanket. Refresh-

GET LISTED

To have an upcoming event listed in MethuenLife's calendar, send info to Melissa@MethuenLife.com or call (978) 682-4777.

ments to follow. In the case of inclement weather, please check the church voicemail (978.689.0463) for alternate arrangements.

• **BrickMan Triathlon** Oct. 3, 8 am in Lawrence. Start time is 8:00 a.m. The swim will be a 250-yard serpentine course in the Lawrence YMCA pool. The bike will consist of 3 loops of a 3.4-mile bike route. The run is 4.5 loops around the Campagnone Common providing many opportunities for your fans to cheer you on. To register, go to www.active.com. Runners must be a minimum of 18 years old on race day. All proceeds from the triathlon benefit the Merrimack Valley YMCA and Habitat for Humanity.

• **St. Mary's High School in Lawrence, Class of 1960** is planning their 50th reunion, to be held Oct. 3 at the elegant Seaglass Restaurant at Salisbury

Beach. Organizers are looking for contact information on classmates, so e-mail smhs1960@verizon.net or call (978) 686-2115 for further details about the reunion.

• **Trot for Special Tots 5K Road Race & Walk:** Oct. 3 at The Professional Center for Child Development, 32 Osgood St., Andover. Check-in/registration at 9 am. Racers take off first at 10 am, then walker, following the 3.1-mile fast, flat course along residential streets. Costume parade and cookout for participants. Entry fee for race is \$25 before Sept. 20, \$30 after or \$20 online. Entry fee for walk is \$15 before Sept. 20, \$20 after or \$10 online. To register: (978) 475-3806 ext. 222 or www.theprofessionalcenter.org. All proceeds benefit The Professional Center for Child Development, which has served children of all abilities – including typically developing toddlers, children with

developmental delays and children with complex health care needs – throughout northeast Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire for nearly 40 years.

• **In honor of National Coming Out Day** (Oct. 11): Northern Essex Community College's Gay Straight Alliance Club, in collaboration with the Haverhill Unitarian\Universalist Church, will show the 2007 documentary "For the Bible Tells Me So" on Oct. 7, 6:30 pm at the Technology Center, Haverhill. The film focuses on homosexuality and its perceived conflict with religion, as well as various interpretations of what the Bible says about same-sex sexuality and interviews with various religious parents on their experiences raising homosexual children. Free, and the film will be followed by a discussion. The film

Continued on page 51

Science, continued from page 43

younger children have a "very hands-on" science block at least two days a week, while fifth- to eighth-graders have science every day.

"It's always a squeeze trying to get everything into the school day. In the earliest grades, the focus has to be on literacy and math as those are fundamental skills," says Smith. "We are looking forward to having (these five educa-

tors) work with the teachers. Their role is to bring back what they're learning and help with professional development."

The science teachers will work with the homeroom teachers so that the science lessons are an enhancement to the curriculum, said Gallo. For example, first-graders who are learning about weather can make their own thermometers and discover how to record

temperatures. Last year, fourth-graders studying ecosystems went with Nugent to a nearby pond where they took water samples and used microscopes to examine life forms.

The Timony teachers say they have already reached out to their peers to get the ball rolling.

"We can model a lesson, do a workshop, give them ideas to develop a les-

son and offer support," said Nugent.

The five teachers qualified for the Fulcrum fellowships following a year-and-a-half-long science inquiry program taken through Tufts, where their own levels of curiosity and understanding were tested and they learned how to share this teaching method with fellow educators.

"We learn by doing," said Gately.

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By Sue Foster
MethuenLife Writer



So much to do at our Senior Center!

Methuen's own MCTV 22!

If you enjoy singing and want to have fun with a great bunch of folks, rehearsals are held at the center Thursdays from 12:30 to 2:30 pm. The Happy Hearts will be in full holiday swing as we prepare for the Christmas season.

Lunch Bunch news

Mark your calendars: On Tuesday, Nov. 9, we will travel to the Chateau in Andover for lunch. On the menu for the day is choice of chicken parmesan with penne, lasagna and eggplant cutlet parmesan with meatball or Haddock St. Germaine (haddock casserole with cream and Swiss cheese) served with Rice Florentine. Included are garden salad with house Italian dressing or cup of soup of the day, ice cream cake roll with hot fudge and whipped cream or chocolate mousse. Cost is \$17 per person, all inclusive. To sign up, call the main office at (978) 983-8825

Young join the fun

The Adopt-A-Grandparent Program has started for the ninth year at the center. Students from Methuen High School come to the center to share friendship, play cards, pool, shuffleboard or talk about the day's events. Come on down and have a great afternoon with great kids. When we look at the eyes of a child, it's the eyes of the past greeting the eyes of the future!

Come and be a part of a young adult's future. We all have something to offer each other. This program is held every Wednesday from 2:15 to 3:30 pm.

Did you know?

We do not have our own transportation services here at the Methuen Senior Center, however the City of Methuen contracts with the Merrimack Valley Transit Authority (MVRTA) for public transportation. Financial assistance is available to purchase ticket books for half-price for the EZ Services through a special Community Development Block Grant. MVRTA minibuses will pick you up at the curb after you have called to make a reservation.

If you are 60 years and over or are disabled, consider applying for this program. A one-page application can be completed in less than 5

minutes to save you hundreds of dollars toward the coupon books. Call us at (978) 983-8825 for more details about income eligibility.

Public meeting

A public meeting will be held at the center Oct. 6 at 6 pm to discuss the city's Social Services Grant administered by the Methuen Department of Community Development. All are welcome.

Office hours

The following hold office hours at the center every month:

State Rep. Linda Dean Campbell: every Friday, 11 am to noon.

Methuen Veterans Agent Tom Hargreaves: third Wednesday of the month, 10 to 11:30 am.

Attorney Karol Bisbee: third Wednesday of the month, by appointment.

Lois Marra, Merrimack Valley Hospice Bereavement counselor: fourth Tuesday of the month, 10:45 am.

Dr. Mendazon, foot doctor: third Tuesday, appointment needed.

Coming up

• **Saturday Night Ballroom Dancing:** Oct. 2, 7:30 to 11 pm, featuring the band Boots and Co. \$8 per person.

• **Chronic Pain Management Class 4 of 6.** Oct. 4.

• **TRIAD Senior Safety Program** will be hosting a "Yellow Dot" File of Life and "Is Your Number Up" program on Oct. 5, 9 to 11 am. Come down and get valuable information in case of emergencies.

• **Fuel Assistance and other senior programs:** Wednesday, Oct. 6, 10:30 am. Join state Rep. Barbara L'Italien, Linda Soucy, National Grid and Baystate Gas for this informational. Open to the public.

• **Dance:** Wednesday, Oct. 6, 1 to 3 pm. Jason McCollin is back by popular demand! Come and dance the afternoon away to your favorite country music. Refreshments will be served. Free. Sponsored by Senior Whole Health.

• **Ice Cream Social** sponsored by Mayor Manzi on Tuesday, Oct. 12, 1 to 3 pm. Music by Dick Arsenault.

• **Breakfast** hosted by state Rep. Linda Dean Campbell, Saturday, Oct. 16, 8 to 10 am.

• **Saturday Night Ballroom Dancing,** Oct. 16, 7:30 to 11 pm, featuring the music of the Entertainers. \$8 per person.

• **Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley Generation to Generation Walk:** Sunday, Oct. 17. Join ESMV for a great community fundraiser and help make a difference in the life of an elder, special to YOU! The G2G Walkabout is a leisurely walk winding around the Riverwalk Complex in Lawrence. This newly revamped walk will combine the successful aspects of past events with a new approach: anyone, at any age, can participate! Bring all generations of loved ones to enjoy a day filled with lots of family activities, music, great raffles and refreshments. Free tees to walkers with \$100 in donations. Registration is free. Call (800) 892-0890 or e-mail walkabout@esmv.org for more info.

• **Chronic Pain Management course,** Class 5 of 6, Monday, Oct. 18.

• **Coffee Time:** Coffee Hour sponsored by Phil Lahey, candidate for state representative, Tuesday, Oct. 19, 9:30 to 11 am.

• **Foot Care Clinic,** Tuesday, Oct. 19 at 1 pm by appointment. To book yours, please call (978) 983-8825.

• **The State 911 Department** is coming Thursday, Oct. 21 at 10:45 am to talk about an exciting program that could benefit you or a family member. It is a Massachusetts Equipment Distribution Program referred to as MassEDP. The program provides residents with a permanent disability access to the telephone network in their homes. By offering specialized telephones for free or a reduced cost, depending on income, this program fosters independence, empowerment and access to emergency services. See sampling of phones available and receive applications to the program.

• **Halloween Luncheon Social,** Thursday, Oct. 21, 12:30 to 3:30 pm. Hosted by the Methuen Activity Center staff. Meal by Borelli's includes chicken parmesan, ziti, green beans, bread, butter and cake. \$10 per person. Music provided by Dick Arsenault. Come dressed in costume and have a spook-tacular good time!

• **State Rep. Barbara L'Italien** or a staff member will hold office hours Friday, Oct. 22, 10:30

See SENIOR, Page 53



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Kid's stunning vehicle art is a gift from the heart

By Steve Whipple
MethuenLife Writer

When he was Methuen's school safety officer, "Officer Al" Torrissi met thousands of youngsters that made good impressions upon him. And vice versa.

Now that he's retired, you'd think those days are over. You'd be wrong.

He recently became friends with a young man with a talent that both fellows want to share.

Michael Karl, 11, has a fascination with vehicles that he's able to transfer to paper, mostly from memory.

Asperger Syndrome is a type of autism where a person develops intense interests. Since a young age, says his dad Warren, Michael has been highly focused on fans, spinning objects and vehicles.

So when Al rolled through Methuen Square in his 1937 Jaguar S100 reproduction – with its shiny wire wheels spinning away – Warren just had to get involved.

"I saw (Al) driving and I know Michael and cars, so I knew he's be drawn to this," explained Warren. "So I said, 'My son



Michael Karl, 11, holds the illustration he drew of "Officer Al" Torrissi's reproduction 1937 Jaguar. He drew the car from memory, as he has done with many other vehicles.

See ART, Page 51

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Art, continued from page 50

would love to see this car. Would you mind coming back to the house?' Al came and Michael said, 'Wow!' He loved the car."

After Michael had studied the car, Al drove off to do whatever it is that retired cops do.

Says Al, "Warren called me a couple weeks later and said, 'Come back over. Michael has something for you.' I was amazed."

Michael had drawn a very detailed picture of the car, which he proudly presented to his new Jag-driving friend.

"Everything has to be perfect in his world. The amount of detail he puts into the drawings is incredible. He'll spend hours on each drawing," said his dad.

When Al arrived at their house for a second visit, Michael critiqued his own sketch, annoyed that he was off slightly with the hood color.

The Karls live within walking distance of city hall, so Michael locked his sights on the city vehicles parked there, as well as the rigs used for road repairs and at the schools.

He began drawing them and presenting them as gifts to city officials.

"I just think how nice it would be to be giving them to the town," explained Michael, a sixth-grader in the Tenney Grammar School's "Fast Forward" program for advanced studies. "I don't expect anything back. You shouldn't be rewarded for doing a good deed."

Methuen DPW Director Ray DiFiore will soon display five of Michael's drawings in a new frame in his



Michael Karl, 11, has Asperger Syndrome which produces an intense interest in objects such as the 1937 Jaguar S100 replica owned by Methuen's retired school safety officer Al Torrissi. Michael presented Officer Al with the sketch, which is kept in the car and displayed. Photos by Steve Whipple



Michael Karl drew these five city trucks – three Ford F150s, a GMC pickup and a Mack dump truck – mostly from memory. The illustrations will soon be framed in Methuen DPW Director Ray DiFiore's office.

office. The drawings of five city trucks – three Ford F150s, a GMC pickup and a Mack dumptruck – are colored accurately and feature City of Methuen logos on the doors, photocopied to scale and adhered.

"The kid is amazing; the detail is incredible," said Ray, studying the display of illustrations. "Look, he even has the cutouts for the brakes in the wheels, and he put a shadow inside the wheelwell of the dump truck to show the other two wheels."

Ray pointed out that Michael had not overlooked the hydraulic lines that run between the truck's cab and dump body, nor the hooks that hang beneath the rear bumper that are used

to secure the compressor that is towed.

Not only can Michael recite the make and model of each city vehicle, but also their official number. The green Bronco is number one.

Michael says the feedback he gets is reward enough.

"When I hear, 'What a really nice job! We appreciate it!' it makes me feel good that I helped somebody and did something good," he said.

Michael said when he grows up he wants to be a graphic artist or an artist, drawing pictures for people.

He'll likely have a chauffeur ... in a reproduction Jaguar.

Calendar, continued from page 47

premiered at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival.

• **Paranormal Investigation:** Oct. 15 at the Tenney Gate House, Pleasant St., to benefit the Methuen Historical Society. At 6 pm, there's a Meet & Greet with paranormal experts from "Ghost Hunters," "Ghost Hunters International" and "Research: Paranormal" including Ce Ce The Huntress. From 9 pm to 2 am, learn how to conduct a proper paranormal investigation and possibly encounter spirits from the past. Tickets: \$60. Info: [HTTP://gatehouseGH.eventbrite.com](http://gatehouseGH.eventbrite.com) or Mike Roberts, (910) 231-1683.

• **4th annual Fall Craft Fair**, sponsored by St. Lucy Sodality, is set for Oct. 16, 9 am to 3 pm at St. Lucy Church Hall, 254 Merrimack St. Assortment of homemade craft items, bakery sale, free drawing. Refreshments will be available.

• **"It's Better with a Band"** starring Sylvia Greenberg singing Styne, Herman, Gershwin, Porter, Mercer and more. She's performing with the Doug Hammer Band on Oct. 16 at 8 pm at Nevins Memorial Library. Tickets: \$25. Reservations: (978) 373-5083.

• **Methuen High School Class of 1980 30th Reunion:** Oct. 22, 7 pm to midnight at Chester's at Bell Tower Mills, 60 Island St., Lawrence. Prepaid tickets are \$30 to MHS 1980, PO Box 124, Methuen, MA 01844. Last day to buy tickets is Oct. 15. To pay online or for more info, visit www.kigalidesigns.com/MHS1980.html. Questions? E-mail lori@lultvating.com.

• **Methuen Memorial Music Hall concert:** Oct. 22, 192 Broadway, featuring Paul Jacobs on the Great Organ. Doors open at 7:30 pm. Adults, \$20; children, \$5.

• **Fall Festival:** Oct. 23, 3 to 6 pm at the Methuen branch of the YMCA, 129 Haverhill St. Carnival games, family activities and "Trunk-or-Treat." Costumes welcome. \$4 per child for Y families; \$6 per child for community.

• **"Taste of Autumn" fund-raiser:** Enjoy samples from local restaurants, auction and raffle items, and fun with

friends, Oct. 26, 6 to 9 pm at Presentation of Mary Academy's Dupre Center, Lawrence Street. This St. Monica's School PTO fund-raiser is open to the public. Tickets: \$25. Info: Jen Bower, (508) 954-7941 or jennifer.bower9@comcast.net.

• **Election Day:** Nov. 2. Remember to vote!

• **Swap Soiree:** Women's clothing and accessory swap, to benefit the YWCA Domestic Violence Programs. De-clutter your closet and trade in your unwanted clothes and accessories for new pieces. Nov. 4, 6:30 to 9 pm at Chester's, 60 Island St., Lawrence. \$18 gen-

eral admission; \$25 VIP (for early swapping). Raffles and free fashion advice from a professional wardrobe stylist.

• **Meat Raffle Bingo:** Nov. 19 at Knights of Columbus/Gaythorne Hall, 462 Broadway, Methuen, to benefit Methuen High School Ranger Band. Try a new twist on Bingo and play to win a holiday turkey, roast, ham and door prizes. Doors open at 6:30 pm. Games begin at 7 pm. Admission: \$2. Bring your own snacks, soda or water. Bar service available. Contact president@methuenrangerband.org for more info.

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Senior, continued from page 49

to 11:30 am.

- **Breakfast** at the center Saturday, Oct. 23, 8 to 10 am hosted by Sheriff Frank Cousins of Essex County.
- **Pain Management Course's** final meeting is Oct. 25.
- **Ice Cream Social** on Tuesday, Oct. 26, 1 to 3 pm hosted by state Rep. Linda Dean Campbell.

Music provided by Chet Harnden.

- **Methuen Fire Department** is hosting a supper Wednesday, Oct. 27, 4 to 6 pm. Come and enjoy good food, great conversation and friendship with our firefighters where you will be treated to hot dogs and beans!
- **Day trip to Foxwoods**, Thursday, Oct. 28. \$25 per person. Reservation is required.

- **Saturday Night Ballroom Dancing** on Oct. 30, featuring the music of Pete Saran and New Life. Theme: Halloween! Dress in costume for a night of fun. 7:30 to 11 pm. \$8 per person.
- **Free breakfast** on Sunday, Oct. 31, 8 to 10 am, hosted by Phil Lahey, candidate for state representative.
- **Healthy Aging and Diabetes Expo** on Wednesday, Nov. 3, 9 to 11:30 am.
- **Annual Holiday Craft Fair** on Saturday,

Nov. 6, 9 am to 3 pm.

- **Veterans Coffee Time** on Monday, Nov. 8, 9:30 to 11 am.

Methuen Senior Center is located at 77 Lowell Street. Hours are Monday through Thursday, 8 am to 4 pm and Friday, 8 am to 12:30 pm. Staff includes Executive Director Corinne LaCharite, Linda, Lynne and Sue. For more information on activities, trips or functions, call (978) 983-8825.

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Softball season was a home run!

Last spring, the city's various softball leagues for the first time combined to form a single organization: the Methuen Girls Softball League.

There were over 500 players on 42 teams. The girls range in age from 7 to 17.

The league is open to any girl who wishes to play, regardless of ability. The organization provide a fun atmosphere to learn the game and develop friendships.

The league held its award ceremony last month at the Burnham Road field. Below are the championship teams.

For more info, visit www.methuengirlssoftball.com.



Champions in the U12 division (11- and 12-year-olds) were the Indians.



The Cubs clinched the top spot in the U10 division, featuring 9- and 10-year-olds.



The Red Sox captured the title in the U8 division, which includes 7- and 8-year-old players. Courtesy photos



The Mets claimed victory in the U18 division, which includes players ranging in age from 14 to high school seniors.



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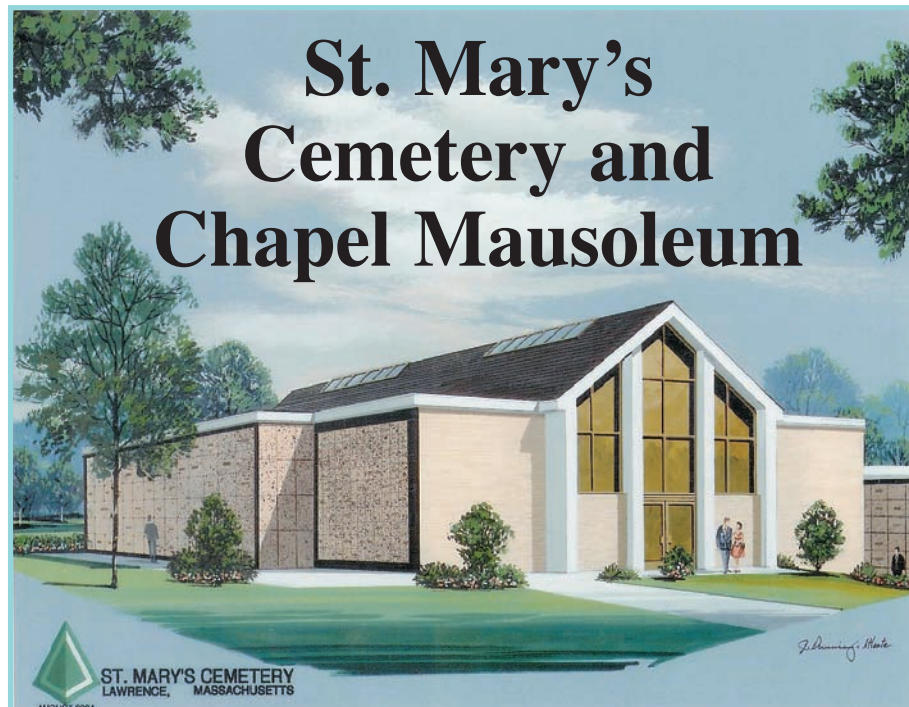
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