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I was a boy when I watched the \textit{Twilight Zone} episode, “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge.” Rod Serling, who created and produced the Twilight Zone, introduced the episode, “An occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge: in two forms, as it was dreamed... and as it was lived and died. This is the stuff of fantasy, the thread of imagination... the ingredients of the Twilight Zone.”

The story was so well done that my memory of the episode haunted me for a long time and still does.

Briefly, during the Civil War, Union soldiers ready a man for hanging. With noose around neck, he drops but the rope breaks and he slips into the river below and somehow makes it home to his wife. As he is about to fall into her arms, the reverie ends. He has not escaped and dies abruptly.

It was a well-made short and had won at Cannes, but I thought it just an episode and did not know its provenance. I was well into adulthood when I learned more about the author, Ambrose Bierce.

His \textit{The Devil's Dictionary} is how he comes to the attention of most people, unless some high school teacher assigns one of his short stories. \textit{The Devil's Dictionary} reveals a humorous, but deeply cynical man. Indeed, it is the quality that most defined Bierce. As an example, his definition of Inhumanity as “n. one of the signal and characteristic qualities of humanity” aptly makes the point.

Such people may not be born, but experiences of life lead them to look at the motives of men from a deeply skeptical viewpoint. How did Bierce get there?

It was the American Civil War that most influenced the man. In \textit{Ambrose Bierce and the Period of Honorable Strife: The Civil War and the Emergence of an American Writer} Christopher Kiernan Coleman studies the military career that left its indelible mark on the subject.

Bierce grew up in Indiana and tried his hand at a few trades until the Civil War arrived. For a time, he was at a military academy, but left after a year. Kentucky Military Institute (KMI) was mostly southern in sympathy and that might have had some effect, as he was from a staunchly abolitionist family.

When the war came, Bierce had been whiling away the time, and was the second man to enlist in the company that would become part of the Ninth Indiana Regiment. That unit would gain the nickname, “The Bloody Ninth.” The sobriquet gives an indication of what the young man was in for.

Coleman’s account makes it seem that before the war Bierce was a bit of a devil-may-care, or liked to think he was. His enlistment, however, was as an idealistic anti-slavery man as much as, if not more than, to save the Union.

War would change him. He would not lose his antipathy to involuntary servitude, but idealism would not survive. The mischievous lad might not have become a martinet, but he came to appreciate the need for discipline in the dangerous business of war.

The author speculates that, pre-war, at military school Bierce could stomach only the year he spent there. This he contrasts with “a positive preference...
BOOK REVIEW

Ambrose Bierce book

From preceding page

for spit-and-polish discipline while serving under Brigadier William Hazen” that Bierce acquired.

Hazen met Bierce and his unit after the campaign in Western Virginia. That effort had been successful and Hazen thought his command would be a disciplined force. As they did not meet his standards, he set about to put them in shape. This was not popular amongst the troops save for one. Bierce said of the general that he was “the best hated man that I ever knew, and his very memory is a terror to every unworthy soul in the service.”

Bravery in battle led to a promotion to sergeant. Distinguishing himself in that role saw Bierce raised to the rank of sergeant major. The young man was now the senior non-commissioned officer in his regiment. Considering that he was just shy of nineteen when he first enlisted, it could be considered a meteoric rise. Of course, the odd Confederate bullet may have opened up the possibility of advancement as well.

Bierce was not finished moving up. He would be commissioned a second lieutenant and eventually, a first. Hazen found him useful and he was the General’s topographic engineer. The making of maps, which he might have learned something of at KMI, was a valuable and necessary skill. Battles were lost due to lack of accurate geographic knowledge.

As he was clearly a man of skill and bravery in the profession of arms. Whence came the tendency to cynicism?

A possible clue to the change in spirit would be his wounding. He had been detailed by General Hazen to take the orders for advancing the picket line to the units involved. The troops would move forward watched by Confederate snipers who relished officers as targets.

Captain Eastman, leading from the front was shot, fatally as it would turn out. Bierce went to the assistance of the doomed man.

Coleman began Chapter 13, Casualties of War, with a Bierce story that parallels what happened to Ambrose to a point.

“The Butternut (i.e. a confederate soldier) takes aim; he pauses a second. The shot is more difficult this time. The happy camper could never apply to Bierce.

Albert said of the man post-wound, “he was never the same after that. Some of the iron of that shell seemed to stick in his brain, he became bitter and suspicious, especially of his close friends.”

Coleman’s account makes clear the words happy camper could never apply to Bierce.

Was the injury the origin of the literary career of the man who would write so cynically? If so, his fans owe some gratitude to the shot that wounded him. Bierce’s worldview meant he was not going to write Hallmark card level cheerfulness.

He would continue in the army and after the war, would work with General Hazen in government service and pursue a writer’s career. His end is mysterious as he disappeared presumably while traveling to another civil war; this time in Mexico. Considering his life and writings, it was fitting he went as a man of mystery. He might have wanted it that way.

No mind; he presses the trigger. A loud report, a flash, a puff of grey smoke, then nothing. For a moment the Butternut thinks he misses. But no; suddenly the second man falls to the ground. It is a good day for hunting Yankees.”

Obviously, the second officer would be Bierce. Coleman does not say it happened exactly that way, but a serious head wound was inflicted.

The story of his journey to the army hospital in Nashville is harrowing. The recuperation on leave home does not seem to have been complete. His romance with a local girl apparently died during the furlough.

The author quotes what Ambrose’s brother Albert said of the man post-wound, “He was never the same after that. Some of the iron of that shell seemed to stick in his brain, he became bitter and suspicious, especially of his close friends.”
Around my house I'm the one who takes out the garbage. It's just always been that way. At one time I tried to get that to be one of my kids' jobs, but somehow it never got done on time or when it got full, or something else happened that made me give up on the kids' chore idea. Ever since, I have just done it when it needs to be done.

Some time ago, (I guess everything happened 'some' time ago,) I found myself with the pleasant job, (sarcasm) of actually having to paw through one of those big black bags of trash after I had already put it in the outdoor can. I don't remember the reason I was there under the carport with my head nearly in that bag, but there I was. One of us had evidently lost something… car keys, I think, and 'some-one' had to look for it. For some reason, at our house, when some really gross job must be done, it's always mine to do. Go figure.

As I said, for whatever reason, and for whatever I was looking for, there I was, with my garden gloves, carefully removing the trash from that bag, piece by piece, and placing it into the open end of another one. As I did so I became more and more disgusted, and nauseated, especially, and I remember this part well… I never found whatever it was that I was supposed to find.

Later that day, after I had recovered from the sights and smells of the trash, I began to think a bit differently about that awful experience. I had already told several people about how poor old me had to do that disgusting job and had listed some of the 'stuff' I had pawed through, to them. The items were still fresh in my mind, if the word fresh can be used in this story, and it was, truly, an amazing list, believe it or not.

In that trash was the envelope from a wonderful card my granddaughter Sofi had given to us just days before, for our forty sixth anniversary. That young girl is such a treasure to us, as are all our grandkids. There were also several empty and discarded toddler food containers from the last time we had fed another beautiful granddaughter, two-year-old Nahla. She loves having lunch with Grammy and Papa. I had to move many bags from recent trips to Walmart, Hannaford's, and TJ Max, along with others. Evidently, in the time that trash bag was in our kitchen wastebasket, we had been able to make a lot of purchases at those stores.

There was a broken toy. (It's fun to watch Nahla play, but she tends to be a bit rough on her toys.) There were a few empty medicine bottles; We had received new ones. What would we do without those prescriptions? There was also a wrapper from a new shirt I had purchased, and several candy and cookie bags. I also remember seeing a soft drink-soaked coloring book picture that one of the grandkids and their grandmother had done together when they were visiting around the dining room table. Of course, there were lots of slimy food scraps and gross coffee grounds in the mix. Evidently, we had food, and plenty of it, including my morning coffee.

We in our country have so much to be truly thankful for. As strange as this may seem, counting our blessings may be as simple as counting our bags of trash. If you're the one at your house who always takes them out to the can, be thankful that you have them to take.
Jim Hennessey’s lens points to the heart of Sturbridge

By Elisa Krochmalnyckyj

Jim Hennessey isn’t quite sure how the photos he posts on Facebook have earned him an almost-celebrity status he has around town.

“I’ve only lived here a year, and when people in town see my name on my credit card or something, they say ‘are you that guy who takes those pictures?’” Hennessey said, looking mystified. “I wasn’t even sure if I should post any at all.”

It was about 15 years ago that Hennessey, who then worked full-time in Worcester and lived on a farm in Rutland, started carrying a camera around. He’d snap a shot now and then as he went about his day.

“I lived in the countryside, and saw things to take pictures of right out the car window. I just keep it next to me as I walked around,” he said. “A lot of shots I would have missed if I didn’t have it with me.”

Now having the camera at his side has become a habit, and after settling into his house on Cedar Lake, Hennessey set out with the camera and his 100-pound boxer and began to drive around.

“I am learning the town going on these roads,” he said. “I am even starting to break away and I’m getting to other parts of Sturbridge. I stay on the back roads and just drive around. Sometimes I get lost and I have to put the GPS on, and I found out I’m in Wales.”

Along the way, though, he takes all sorts of pictures — just things that catch his attention, because that’s what seems to work the best.

“I have a knack for seeing things. I am not good at any other art. I can’t draw, I can’t do anything like that. I notice things,” he said with a laugh. “That’s how I end up with traffic behind me and people honking.”

Soon after moving into Sturbridge, Hennessey found the Sturbridge MA Community Facebook page. He figured he’d post a few pictures there, thinking someone might enjoy them.

“There’s so much negative out there,” he said. “Everything is politics or religion or Trump — I try to throw something nice in between.”

Hennessey’s photos feature anything from tall-grass bushes to pictures of the town’s architecture. He also shares his own thoughts and observations about Sturbridge in the captions of his photos.

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“There’s so much negative out there. Everything is politics or religion or Trump. I try to throw something nice in between.”

— a single photo typically garners hundreds of likes and dozens of comments:

“These are stunning,” “I love your work and look for your pictures,” “Love this. What an eye you have,” “Boy, you have a gift,” “Wow wow wow! Amazing shots,” “Please keep them coming — they are gorgeous!” and “Good old Sturbridge!”

Some people have even asked if Hennessey would shoot a wedding for them, or if he gave lessons.

But Hennessey insists he’s nowhere close to professional.

“I’m embarrassed to say what kind of camera I have — it’s a two-hundred dollar camera, and a lot of stuff I shoot from my phone,” he said. “I don’t even crop. What I see in that lens is what gets posted. But if the pictures come out okay, then I guess it’s okay.”

Hennessey is far more impressed by his daughter MacKenzie’s photography, including an X Games photo that won her a $10,000 award from ESPN last year. Is it something she inherited from him?

“No,” he said, laughing. “I think I got it from her!”

Hennessey, every humble, said he’s been careful to avoid posting too often.

“I don’t want to overdo it,” he said. “It’s a community website, and I don’t want to overwhelm with pictures.”

He also limits the number of photos he puts up on each post.

“I usually put up four to six pictures,” he said. “If you start getting up to 15 or 18, they don’t get looked at.”

Hennessey estimates he spends about 10 hours a week on his photography.

“So many days I set out to take 100 great pictures and I get two,” he said. “Other days I set out to take 100 great pictures and I get like 80 of them.”

Getting up and out to take pictures has served him well, especially since he’s been living in a new town, he said.

“My wife is still working full-time, so I’ve been alone a lot of the time for the past year. When I was working at St.-Gobain — Norton — in Worcester, I saw a lot of people every day,” he said. “Now, some days I see maybe three or four people.”

Hennessey was quick to identify his favorite photo. His voice got a little quieter when he talked about it.

“It’s a sunrise at Old Orchard Beach,” he said. “First week of August, 2015. It was...” he looked off into the distance. “It was the hand of God in the clouds in the sun. It’s the one I am most proud of. I had about six seconds to take it, and then it was gone.”

sunrises, lakes, and the moon, to barns, landscapes and flowers, and from birdhouses and spiderwebs, to critters and even a car with a tree growing out of it.

He couldn’t believe the feedback he got every time he posted
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Celebrating the Season and Fighting Cancer Together
Be an elf for a food bank shelf

By Elisa Krochmalnycky

As holidays approach and dollars are stretched even further, food pantries in and around Sturbridge rely even more heavily on the kindness of strangers to help fill their pantry shelves.

“We make Thanksgiving food baskets, and it is so great when people make a donation specifically for those baskets,” said Ruth Hamilton, a volunteer at Food Pantry at St. Anne-St. Patrick Parish. “Whether it be a monetary amount, or several items, or a whole dinner, we would find a home for it.”

Donations are what keep the pantry, which is run by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, able to provide those baskets to anyone who needs them.

“Our goal in general is to help anyone with a need,” Hamilton said. “All they have to do is call us. Whoever is on call that week will call back and arrange to get them the food.”

The pantry is open to anyone from any town.

“We don’t discriminate and say you have to be from Sturbridge,” Hamilton said. “You can be from any other surrounding neighborhood. And some places have a limit, like you can only come in once a month, but we don’t do that. If you need food we’ll give it to you.”

Every year, the pantry gives out Thanksgiving food baskets. Part of the faith-formation program at St. Anne-St. Patrick calls for students to help fill and prepare those food baskets.

But there is still much else needed for the baskets.

“If anyone wants to make a donation specifically for Thanksgiving, that would be great,” Hamilton said. “

The pantry is run by the St. Anne-St. Patrick chapter.
of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which is a small group of volunteers who have kept the pantry going.

“We are kind of a well-kept secret,” she said. “We are there for anyone who needs help. It is not based on where they live, or religion, or anything. The only thing we ask is ‘do you need help?’”

Donations, which are needed year-round, can be made during Sunday Masses as well as at the parish office, which is open Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m., as Sturbridge Senior Center.

There is always food available at the Sturbridge Senior Center, whether in the outdoor “Little Free Pantry” that’s stocked by the Girl Scouts, or inside.

“We always have cereal in here,” said Leslie Wong, the Senior Center’s outreach coordinator. “Seniors donate, families donate — we love it when people donate. We always need cereal, soup, stuff like that.”

During good-weather months, the Little Free Pantry, which the Girl Scouts built last year just outside the Senior Center’s front door, is stocked by the Girls Scouts and their families with things that range from soup to soap.

“Once November’s here, we’ll bring everything inside and continue it all winter,” Wong said.

There is always a need for more donations.

“Whatever people bring, we can use,” Wong said. “We figure out who needs it, and we give it to them.”

Being able to drop off any donations whenever the Senior Center is open makes it easy for people to just grab a few extra items at the supermarket and drop them off at the Center on the way home, Wong said.

“They can bring it to the front desk at the Senior Center, and just say they are donating to the food pantry,” she said.

The pantry can use anything that doesn’t spoil.

“I’m looking at what we have right now. We have canned food, soy milk, pasta, mustard and ketchup, soups — they love soups — and I have Spaghettios,” Wong said, then laughed. “They love Spaghettios.”

Tri-Town Food Pantry

The Tri-Town Food Pantry, which operates out of the Wales Senior Center and serves Wales, Brimfield and Holland.

“We help whoever is hungry,” said di-
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Food pantries across the area

From preceding page

“We can use paper goods, shampoo and soap, condiments like ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise, canned spaghetti, coffee, tea, any kind of baking mixes — anything like that.

Making donations is easy, as there’s a collection bin at the town library.

“They have a big box there, and people can drop their donations there any time the library is open,” she said. “That makes it very convenient.”

Southbridge Food Share

It’s not always easy to find Southbridge Food Share, which occupies the basement floor of the Catholic Charities building at 79 Elm St., but that’s okay.

“Everyone knows where it is,” said Volunteer Coordinator Catalino Alicea. “We’ve been here for as long as anyone can remember.”

Food Share gets food from a variety of sources, but there’s still a constant need for more.

“We are always looking for donations,” Alicea said. “Could be toothpaste, soap, toilet paper — we use a lot of peanut butter and jelly, pancakes mix and syrup, crackers, and a lot of canned things: canned fruit, canned vegetables, canned pasta, canned soup. So many things.”

In addition to being able to use more donations, Food Share is always looking for volunteers, including some to help unload the deliveries that are trucked in from the Worcester Food Bank.

“Today we had a hard time, because we didn’t have too many people to unload the truck, but we managed,” Alicea said. “I used to do more, but my back is getting bad. If we had someone who we could call to come in when the truck comes, we would be happy.”

Alicea has been unloading trucks, stocking shelves and distributing food at the Food Share for 30 years. Why?

Alicea thought for a minute.

“My mother and father taught me to do good without looking at who the good is going to,” he said. “That’s what I’ve been doing for the past…thousand years, it seems like!”

Although the Food bank is not part of Catholic Charities, donations can be dropped off at the Catholic Charities office any time it’s open. Food is distributed at Food Share on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 10 to 11:15, but if someone needs something at a different time, that’s okay too.

“We are always getting a lot of new families — people who lose their job, families with children whose food stamps have been cut back, seniors,” Alicea said. “I am two minutes away from the Food Bank, and whenever they call me, I can come in and take care of them.”

St. Paul II Food Pantry

Every month, more than 900 people are served by the St. John Paul II Food Pantry, which is inside the church’s Ministry Center at 279 Hamilton St. in Southbridge. Thanks to support from local supermarkets, from the Community Food Collaborative and from a lot of individual donations, the pantry provides a supermarket-like experience.

“It’s a client-choice shopping experience, with fresh produce, dairy, eggs, frozen meat and bakery items,” said director Roberta Watson. “Plus we have a full array of non-perishable foods.”

The generosity of “loyal benefactors” — people who drop off donations to the pantry, whether it be cereal, pasta, peanut butter, jelly, or canned soups, fruits, vegetables and meat — has been key in keeping the shelves stocked, Watson said.

“It is often said ‘we couldn’t do it without you,’” she said. “This may be a simple message but it is so true.”

Because of that support, the pantry has been been able to help single people, fam-
ilies and senior citizens from both Southbridge and Sturbridge for more than 30 years.

During the summer months, the pantry gets a boost of fresh fruits and vegetables from the Community Food Collaborative, which is a community garden that donates everything grows to the food pantry.

But as the harvest season ends and the holidays approach, the pantry is even more in need of donations from individuals, families and groups who try to be a little more generous over the holidays. For that, the pantry and the people who benefit from it are grateful.

“So many people, so many faces, are smiling because of that generosity,” Watson said.

St. Luke’s Guest House

People often offer to donate food to St. Luke’s Guesthouse, a homeless shelter in Southbridge, but that isn’t what’s needed most at the shelter, said John Howland, said executive director of St. Luke’s and a family doctor in Southbridge.

“Kind-hearted souls often ask us ‘do you need anything?’” he said. “Yes, we do, but not what you might think.”

While there are always a few items, like laundry detergent and trash bags, that are on the shelter’s Wish List, those items don’t meet the most pressing needs.

“Food, clothing and such things are not usually the problem,” Howland said. “More than a hand-out, our guests need and want tools to help them achieve self-sufficiency. Our goal is to encourage self-respect and independence, not dependence.”

Always-appreciated financial donations to St. Luke’s can get their guests started on that journey, but it takes a certain type of support from the community to help them continue it.

“They need help with substance-abuse problems, they need help with basic skills, they need a job, and ultimately they dream of a place of their own,” Howland said.

Howland directs anyone interested in helping to the guesthouse’s Facebook page and webpage, stlukesguesthouse.wordpress.com.

“If we point people toward our website and Facebook page to learn, and get them on our mailing list, the more they will understand what our guests really need,” he said.
According to the conceptual plans, the first level of that building would comprise office space. The second floor would have about 16 condominium units, and the third floor would have eight condominium units. The building would have a roof deck for condominium owners.

A second, smaller building would be a single-story building for retail space, including a restaurant or café.

Having the buildings modeled after the old mill building will keep it consistent with other nearby buildings, Bubon said. That includes the Sturbridge Marketplace, which is the renovated historic cotton mill across from Micknuck’s, and the 1880s Blackington Building next to Micknuck’s, Bubon said.

“Both of those buildings are brick, and this new building is going to be a nice compliment to those structures,” Bubon said.

In addition to linking to the Grand Trunk Trail on the Holland side of the site, the new plans could potentially link the sit to the riverwalk above the 10-foot elevation drop to the Quinebaug River would include paved paths, seating, and an outdoor café at the retail building. It could eventually connect to the Grand Trunk Trail, which is further down Holland Road.

Retro design

The proposal calls for a main building that will look like the the once-grand old mill building that is being demolished.

“We are modeling it that way as kind of a homage to the historic aspect of the building,” said Project Engineer Frank Bacchieri, of Bertin Engineering.
Blackington Building and Sturbridge Marketplace on the Sturbridge side of the site. That would pull the whole section of town together, Bichieri said.

Bichieri and Developer Douglas Rawan brought the conceptual plans to the town in April for feedback from the town before moving forward.

“Mr. Rawan came before the Planning Board informally, and the board was very supportive of the plans and very pleased with the architectural design,” Bubon said. “There were no major concerns with the plans presented at the meeting.”
Lung cancer is the second most common cancer in both men and women. It is the leading cause of cancer death among both men and women.

Each year, more people die of lung cancer than colon, breast and prostate cancers combined. Lung cancer is more treatable when identified at an early stage. Unfortunately, symptoms do not often present in early lung cancer, making it difficult to recognize there is a problem. By the time most people are diagnosed, the cancer has spread and is at an advanced stage, making it difficult to treat and/or cure. Fortunately, medical advances over the past few years have given us the opportunity to find a better solution.

In 2015, Harrington joined a growing list of organizations across the nation who are participating in an Early Detection Lung Cancer Screening Program to identify at-risk patients sooner. The comprehensive program engages the patient, physician and radiologist. Since the program’s inception, Harrington has performed over 2,800 lung screenings.

**Step 1: The Screening**

A lung cancer screening consists of a CT scan that allows physicians to look at a detailed picture of your lungs to detect any abnormalities. A CT scan is the only proven, effective way to screen for lung cancer.

The identified highest, at-risk patient population who should be screened are those who:

- Are between the ages of 55 and 77;
- Are current smokers, or who have quit in the last 15 years;
- Have a personal history of 30 “pack years” -- meaning you smoke one pack a day for 30 years, two packs a day for 15 years, etc.

Low-dose CT scans expose people to an extremely low level of radiation. The test is painless and takes less than 10 minutes to complete.

**Step 2: Review What’s Next**

Lung scans are categorized as RAD 1-4, with 1 being negative and 4 being highly suspicious with additional testing(s) recommended.
exposure. Radon is a colorless, odorless, radioactive gas that occurs naturally in soil. One out of every 15 homes in the United States has a radon problem. Additional potential causes of lung cancer include particle pollution, hazardous chemicals and genetic factors.

When detected early, lung cancer patients have more treatment options and a far greater chance of survival. The 5-year survival rate for those diagnosed before the cancer has spread rises from 18 out of every 100 people to 55 out of every 100. The key is early screening for lung cancer.

Talk with your Primary Care Physician to see if you are a candidate for an Early Detection Screening Program. Yearly screening is covered by most insurance plans.

Jean Comeau, RN, RSN, is an interventional radiology nurse and the nurse navigator for Harrington’s Lung Screening Program in Southbridge. For questions regarding the program, call (508) 765-3024.

As developed by the American College of Radiology, Lung-RADS™ is a quality assurance tool designed to standardize lung cancer screening CT reporting and management recommendations, reduce confusion in lung cancer screening CT interpretations, and facilitate outcome monitoring.*

Risk Factors

There are a number of risk factors for lung cancer. Not surprisingly, smoking remains the number one cause, responsible for about 87 percent of cases. Tobacco smoke contains more than 60 carcinogens.

Surprisingly, though, having a family history does not rank as being one of the most influential reasons for cancer to develop. Instead, the second leading cause of lung cancer is Radon exposure.
The excitement is palpable. Worcester is getting its own baseball team, the Worcester Red Sox, or as they are already being nicknamed, WooSox. A civic renaissance is being predicted...again.

Here in Sturbridge and environs, we can only be jealous as there will never be a pro team with a catchy moniker like, say, the Sturbridge Wild Turkeys (the unofficial regional bird) easily nicknamed the Sturkeys. No stadium complex to lure fans in and get them to spend money in restaurants and shops. The injustice of it all. We are at the confluence of two major highways and that in itself should be a draw. Worcester, off of route 290, is all too often a traffic snarl.

Worcester will have those visions of people filling the stands and after, patronizing local bars and restaurants and in the process, spending a fortune in the city known as the “heart of the Commonwealth,” or less reverently, “Wormtown.”

Still, maybe we are not so bad off. The second largest city in New England has a history of schemes. Some, but not all have fulfilled the hype.

When I first came to Worcester from Boston in the early 80s, there was a shopping center downtown known as the Galleria with a number of well-known chain stores as well as some independents. It was a spiffy venue and it was never over-crowded. That was the problem. As time went on, under-crowded would be more in evidence.

There was a bookstore and I would spend the occasional lunch hour without having to worry about being bothered by other shoppers as I read.

The downward spiral led to the Galleria closing. Then someone got the idea of resurrecting the mall and bringing in new tenants and a new name. Funding was secured provided the city would allow Tax Incremental Financing or TIF. A TIF, is a big tax break that the average homeowner never gets.

So, the new Worcester Common Outlets had a good opening day, but after that, the downhill slide was even faster and the venue was eventually demolished. The city fathers had not...
backed a winner.

To be fair, the DCU Center has been a success, or so it seems as it has been difficult to get much information on the original financing. There are a lot of events with top talent. The record in keeping sports teams is not that good. Two hockey teams came and are gone. The Railers are the current effort. One can only hope the third time’s a charm at the DCU.

In the PawSox to WooSox gambit, the team had to be lured to Worcester. The city has some experience in wooing (pun intended) development. In the 60s the Umass Medical School arrived. No investment was required from the municipal government. It pays to have some sharp people elected to the General Court.

Can the City of Worcester score another success like the Med School? They better, because this time they are betting big money.

It was not much of a bidding war to get the franchise to move. Rhode Island was willing to pony up $38 million for a new stadium against Worcester’s $100.8 million. That figure is, however, not the total, but what the city will put on the credit card.

There are other infrastructure costs that will expand that figure significantly, and, people of Sturbridge and area towns, don’t think you will be left out. The Commonwealth is picking up $35 million and taxpayers outside of Wormtown will have their share to cover.

Who knows, maybe it will all work out, the bonds will be retired, the new hotels will always be filled and stadium attendance will set new records every year. City manager Ed Augustus will be hailed as a man with such unparalleled foresight that he will someday be elected governor by acclamation.

We referred the question as to whether or not this is a good idea to our official think tank, The Long Hill Institute for the Study of Stadium Deals and Other Boondoggles. With a level of reflection that can be described as less than vanishingly small, they suggested taking the money to the new MGM casino in Springfield might yield a better return. At least the period of suspense would be shorter. Also, the buffet is really good.

This is not to say there are not others spending more time on the subject. The Federal Reserve Bank of Saint Louis says that most economists oppose stadium subsidies because “Consumers who spend money on sporting events would likely spend the money on other forms of entertainment, which has a similar economic impact. Rather than subsidizing sports stadiums, governments could finance other projects such as infrastructure or education that have the potential to increase productivity and promote economic growth.”

So, if you don’t buy a ticket to the WooSox, that does not mean you won’t spend your entertainment dollars somewhere. There is not usually a large net benefit to a stadium, if at all.

Even worse news for those who have an edifice complex
Morchoe Commentary

It’s the WooSox

From Page 21

About stadiums came over the radio. They can be expensive losers. According to an August 23, 2018 WBUR FM broadcast segment reported by Callum Borchers, there are several cities who have had financial problems with their projects. Nashville taxpayers had to pay more than expected. Remember the baseball movie, Bull Durham? Well the city that film was about is still paying for a white elephant built 23 years ago. El Paso is having money problems with their ballpark.

There is a bright spot in Charlotte, NC. Their project is not doing badly. The city used a different approach. They refused to pick up the tab.

Maybe, everything will go right in Worcester. The city will pay off the debt and the park will be filled and then, when there has been a bond established between team and fans, management will be offered a better deal in another city and it will be sayonara WooSox.

Plans for Nine Holland Road, Sturbridge

From Page 17

Final plans would need approval from the Design Review Committee, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission. The plans would also have to get an okay from the state’s Natural Heritage Habitat, which protects state-listed rare wetlands wildlife and would review how the plans might affect the river, Bicchieri said.

“I believe there could be a type of mussel and a turtle there, and we have to make sure we keep their habitat for them,” he said. “They are in the water, and we don’t expect to have any impact on them. We just need to send Natural Heritage Habitat our plan as part of the review process.”

The development’s proposed storm-water plans would actually improve the quality of the water running into the river, Bicchieri said.

“One of the features is an above-ground storm-water management system, kind of like a rain garden,” he said.

That means that instead of being led downhill through storm drains that bring the water directly to the river, the water would be directed to low-lying natural areas with various plantings that let the water settle out and seep through the ground, which acts as a natural filter.

“The water currently goes untreated,” Bicchieri said. “This will allow the water that comes off the pavement and other impervious areas to go through the ground before it leaves the site.”

The plans are designed to be as much in keeping with the town’s goals as possible.

“That’s part of the town’s Master Plan for the Western Gateway, and we had that in mind as we developed it,” he said. “It is going to be an aesthetically pleasing mix of residential and office, where people can use the riverwalk. We are very happy the building is being well-received.”

About The Cover of This Magazine

John Small is an artist illustrator who draws and paints in narrative styles of Realism and Illustration. The mediums he uses are; charcoal, pastel and colored pencils as well as digital art.

John has been working in the style of Realism through The Ani Art Academy Wairulbis program, ‘The Language of Drawing’.

In 2016 he received his three-year Studio Arts Certificate from the Worcester Art Museum in Worcester, Massachusetts.

You can see more of his work at https://www.facebook.com/JohnSmallStudios/
OUR PETS

with Kathy Menard

Natural puppy and adult-dog interaction

Q. I have a three-month-old German Shepherd mix puppy who plays with my neighbor’s dog. Lately my neighbor’s dog growls at him when he jumps on her or tries to take her toys. I am afraid she will hurt him. Why does she do this, because otherwise it seems she loves him.

A. It is not unusual for an adult dog to correct a puppy for jumping on them or stealing their food or toys. They are attempting to teach them that there are rules and limits on how much they will get away with. If she seems to like him otherwise, and is now bowing him over in submission, I would just supervise them when playing. But beware — puppies give off an odor until approximately 4 months of age that tells adult dogs that they are just a baby, so most adults won’t hurt them. That odor goes away at around age four months and then the puppy is fair game for a full correction by them.

Q. I have two dogs — a three-year-old female and a year-old rescue dog we just got. The rescue barks at other dogs on walks but we can usually get it under control, but when we walk him with our female (who barks like crazy at all other dogs) he seems to copy her. How can we control this so we can walk them together?

A. You need to work with the dogs individually and get them under control when they are by themselves before you attempt to walk them together otherwise they feed off each other. I always recommend working with a professional trainer when dealing with behaviors that may be aggressive or fear based so they can guide you on the appropriate plan for your particular dog.

Kathy Menard has been a dog trainer for over 35 years and is certified through the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers. She has trained under three world-renowned Schutzhund trainers for 14 years and has competed in the American Kennel Club and the sport of Schutzhund, earning over 15 titles. Kathy is the owner of Compatible Canine in Fiskdale, MA.
Choosing the right firewood or pellets to warm your home

As Tree Warden I often get asked about firewood and wood pellets to heat a home. With winter approaching, I thought this to be a good time to discuss how to choose your firewood or pellets.

**Firewood**

Do you use firewood to heat your home? Here is a list of the types of firewood to burn sorted by high, medium, and low heat value as well as a few important wood-burning tips.

What makes some types of firewood better for burning than others? It comes down to two factors: density and water content. The denser and drier the firewood, the better it will burn and the more heat it can produce. Because of this, hardwoods, which tend to be denser, generally make for better firewood than softwoods. However, softwoods usually burn hotter, and are better if you just need a “quick warm up” of early fall or late into spring vs long steady heat for winter cold.

**Highest Firewood Heating Value:** 1 cord = 200 to 250 gallons of fuel oil

American beech, Apple, Ironwood, Red oak, Shagbark hickory, Sugar maple, White ash, White oak, and Yellow birch. The most common in the Sturbridge area are the Oaks, Maples and Ash.

**Medium Heat Value:** 1 cord = 150 to 200 gallons of fuel oil

American elm, Black cherry, Douglas fir, Red maple, Silver maple, Tamarack, and White birch. In this list, red maple, elm, and black cherry will be the most common.

**Low Heat Value:** 1 cord = 100 to 150 gallons of fuel oil

Aspen, Cottonwood, Hemlock, Spruce, Red cedar and White pine. Most firewood dealers do not sell these types of woods, because they burn hot and fast, so unless you are buying for an outdoor boiler, where burning this low value wood does provide the benefit of a fast-hot fire it may be cheap, but plan on frequent trips to the stove to refill.

**Firewood Burning Tips**

**How much wood is in a cord?** The cord is the standard measure of volume used for stacked wood. The volume of one cord of wood is 128 cubic feet of stacked wood. Generally, a cord is laid out in stacks that measure 4 feet wide, 4 feet tall, and 8 feet long (4’ x 4’ x 8’) in total. Due to air space between the stacked wood, the volume of solid wood in a cord may be only 70 to 90 cubic feet.

**What is a “rick” or “face cord” of wood?** Usually, a cord is made up of a few stacks of wood. One stack of a cord is called a “rick” or a “face cord.” Generally, a rick is 4 feet tall by 8 feet long, and the width of a rick will depend on the length of the individual pieces of firewood. Because of this variability in width, a rick could be equal to ¼ of a cord, ½ a cord, or more.

**What is heat value?** Heat value refers to the amount of heat a wood produces when burned. Heat value varies based on the type of wood: A cord of wood with “high heat value” provides the heat equivalent to that produced by burning 200 to 250 gallons of heating oil. Other heat values are listed above.

**Cutting/splitting wood:** Freshly cut wood contains up to 50 percent moisture and must be seasoned (dried) to 20 to 25 percent moisture content before burning. Wood containing more than 25 percent moisture is wet, or green, and should never be burned in a fireplace or wood stove. Wet wood is easier to split than dry wood. Wood must be split into pieces and stacked out of
the rain for at least six months to season properly.

Seasoning firewood: If steam bubbles and hisses out of the end grain as the firewood heats up on the fire, the wood is wet, or green, and needs to be seasoned longer before burning. Well-seasoned firewood generally has darkened ends with visible cracks or splits. It is relatively lightweight and makes a sharp, distinctive “clink” when two pieces strike each other.

Buy local: Only buy firewood from local sources. Buying and moving firewood from elsewhere (especially from state to state) is not only frowned upon, it may also be illegal. Transporting firewood from one place to another increases the chance of spreading invasive pests and diseases.

Pellet Stoves: Choosing the right pellets:

Wood pellets have been used in the heating industry for years. Different types of wood pellets allow for different experiences and wood pellet stove operation, affecting both the efficiency and running costs of this heating system. There are three main types of wood pellets which include:

Premium wood pellets – These wood pellets contain less than 0.5 percent organic ash content, and generally do not contain bark. They are often made from oak or maple wood species and cost more than lower grades.

Standard wood pellets – This type of wood pellet is most often manufactured from forestry industry waste and contains organic ash content at rates higher than 0.5 percent.

Food-grade wood pellets – Either premium or standard wood pellets can be labeled as food-grade, as long as no additives or binding agents are used in the manufacturing process.

Choosing the Best Product for Your Wood Pellet Stove

Your wood pellet stove will operate at optimum levels with higher quality wood pellets. Shop for products with less than 1 percent organic ash content. Oak pellets naturally have a lower ash content than maple pellets, making them a better choice on average.

Moisture content also makes a difference to wood pellet stove performance. Remember that dry pellets create more heat in the same amount of time. Select lower moisture levels to obtain peak levels of efficiency and the most comfortable levels of heat. Wood pellets, including some standard grade and most premium grade pellets, contain less than 5 percent moisture. Choose a product with no more than 8 percent moisture levels and pay more if necessary. Your wood pellet stove will crank out more heat from each pellet, saving you significant amounts of money over the long term.

The best quality wood pellets have low levels of organic ash content and moisture but come with a higher price tag. Good quality maple and oak wood pellets produce respectable levels of performance from your wood pellet stove, allowing you to maintain a comfortable home all season long. Many pellet stove manufacturers recommend a mix of pellet wood types, with more softwood pellets in the mix providing a hot burn, thus more heat than a hardwood pellet. Remember no matter what pellet you purchase, you have to keep the bags and pellets dry. Wet or moisture swollen pellets will clog your stove feed or not burn cleanly if at all.

Know your pellet stove:

Just as in any home appliance there are many pellet stoves to choose from. Shop around and buy one slightly larger than the calculated BTUs burn rate for your home. Once home, take the time to learn the temperature settings, and pellet feed rates for optimal heat production from your stove. The same holds true with pellets, shop around and try different brands. As discussed above, there is a lot to learn. Take the time to learn, and your stove will reward you with many warm years.

Tom Chamberland is the Tree Warden for the Town of Sturbridge and a Certified Arborist and a Massachusetts Qualified Tree Warden. He enjoys caring for plants that grow in his yard and welcomes reader suggestions for future articles. Email him at: tchamberland@town.sturbridge.ma.us
Being mindful while being grateful this Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a great time of year to spend with family and friends. For many of us, this is also a time to overeat and drink too much. The average American consumes a whopping 4500 calories and 229 grams of fat on Thanksgiving Day! My advice: Don’t stuff your turkey, and don’t stuff yourself either! Here’s some tips on how to make Thanksgiving a healthier day:

1. Start with a different mindset. Think differently about Thanksgiving. What is most important to you about that day? For me, it is time spent with family and friends. The food is definitely secondary. With that in mind, make the day more about family then food by organizing games and sporting events with your guests, such as a game of flag football, a crisp fall hike, or Thanksgiving-themed games. You can find some on housebeautiful.com (“13 Family Thanksgiving Games That Have Nothing to Do With Football,” 8/14/18, or countryliving.com (“16 Thanksgiving games for the Whole Family to Play,” 10/3/18).

2. Start the day off right. After you have adopted Tip #1, make sure you start the day off right with exercise and a healthy breakfast. Go for a run (newenglandrunner.com has a list of local turkey trots you can do on Thanksgiving day), an invigorating hike, or take an exercise class (I offer a Thanksgiving morning class every year at my studio; juliegerrish.com to get information and register). Getting in a workout jump-starts your metabolism and helps put you in the proper mindset to think twice about overeating.

Eating a healthy breakfast also helps put you in the right place mentally, and when you’re not starving you make much better choices and tend to eat less.

3. Make Thanksgiving more like any other meal. Have your Thanksgiving dinner at a regular time, like lunch or dinner, so your body stays on a regular schedule and you eat when you are usually hungry, and not ravenous because you waited until 3:00 PM to eat. Also, grab a smaller plate so you can control portion size. Make or bring some healthier dinner options this year, like salad, roasted veggies and quinoa salad, and some healthier desserts like baked apples, poached pears or a crustless pie (look for healthy recipes at eatingwell.com, foodandwine.com and foodnetwork.com). Keep the more calorie-dense foods (like stuffing or mashed potatoes) to a very small amount, and fill up on healthier dishes like salad, roasted veggies and turkey. As far as the turkey goes, forego the skin and gravy and stick to the less fattening white meat.

4. Move it after you eat. After Thanksgiving dinner comes dessert, football games on TV and naps, right? Wrong! Get moving so you can earn that dessert if you decide to have it! If you want to continue moving, the Tantasqua Education Foundation (TED) offers a Trot With TED 5K or 10K race in Sturbridge on Sunday, 11/25 (tedfound.org for more information and to register).

5. Plan ahead. Make a plan and stick to it with regards to your holiday eating and drinking. People will try to encourage you to eat or drink more than you like. You can make your own choices about how you want to celebrate this holiday food-wise. You are in control.

6. Don’t feel guilty. You may end up eating or drinking a bit more than you planned this holiday season. Be ok with the choices you made, and resolve to go back to healthy eating the next day and make better choices next time. Enjoy the food you decided to eat.

With these tips in mind, I want to wish you a happy and healthy holiday season. Enjoy Thanksgiving and your special time with family and friends.
A bountiful and festive dinner prepared by Head Chef, Daniel Finger with all your favorites and some of ours too. Our prix-fixe Thanksgiving Day Menu includes a house-made condiment tray, bakery basket, choice of soup or salad, entrée with sides, and choice of dessert—all for $39.95 per guest (plus tax & gratuity).

**CHOICE OF ENTRÉE**
- Traditional Roast Turkey & Stuffing
- King-Cut Prime Rib Dinner
- Mustard-Maple Glazed Salmon
- Butternut Squash Ravioli

Visit theducksturbridge.com/thanksgiving to view the complete menu. Make your reservation now by calling 508-347-2321.

**Thanksgiving Eve at The Duck**

Take a break from your holiday preparations and enjoy a great dinner, microbrew, or cocktail at The Duck or Avellino. We’ll even throw in a $5 Turkey Bucks coupon to sweeten the deal! (see below)

**$5 Turkey Bucks**
Valid Wed Nov 21, from 5pm–close only.
Good at The Duck or Avellino.
Please present coupon at time of ordering. Not valid with any other offer. One coupon per person, per visit. Customer responsible for applicable sales tax.

**THE BARN AT WIGHT FARM**

Thursday, November 22nd at The Barn

Join us Thanksgiving Day for a Bountiful Buffet at The Barn at Wight Farm.
- Hors d'oeuvre Station
- Salad Station
- Assorted Breads and Rolls
- Carving Station featuring Fresh Roast Turkey and Prime Rib of Beef
- Cracker Crusted Cod, Canadian Pork Meat Pie with all of the traditional accompaniments
- Additional chef’s holiday favorites
- Scrumptious Dessert Station

Cost is $37.95 per guest (plus tax & gratuity).

Visit thebarnatwightfarm.com/thanksgiving to view the complete menu. Make your reservation now by calling 774-241-8450.

**Buffet at The Barn**

420 Main Street | (774) 241-8450 | thebarnatwightfarm.com

**Cedar Street Café**

OPEN THANKSGIVING DAY FROM 7AM–NOON

Enjoy Cedar Street Café’s Scrumptious Thanksgiving Salads, Savory Sides, Sauces and Desserts at home!

See a full list of menu items available at cedarstreetcafesturbridge.com/thanksgiving

Pick up or order at the café or for orders over $200 and located within 10 miles, delivery can be arranged.

**Traditional Thanksgiving Day Feast at The Duck**

502 Main Street | (508) 347-2321 | www.theducksturbridge.com

Thursday, November 22nd at The Duck

A bountiful and festive dinner prepared by Head Chef, Daniel Finger with all your favorites and some of ours too. Our prix-fixe Thanksgiving Day Menu includes a house-made condiment tray, bakery basket, choice of soup or salad, entrée with sides, and choice of dessert—all for $39.95 per guest (plus tax & gratuity).

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- Cutting back perennial flowers and removing annuals
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  - Removal of leaves and debris from site

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Prices are based on property size and time needed to perform services. $225 is the minimum for Fall Cleanups.

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(Boston Outdoor Living-Our Hardscape & Carpentry Division)

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