

OTIS OBSERVER

Your Town, Your Neighborhood and You

October 2023 Vol IX Issue 6

A Labor of Love

By Sandy Balayan

“Cheryl and I are both New Englanders, born and raised. California was a nice place for our careers, but this project is a way to come home again.”
—Jim McIntire.

Falling into disrepair over the years, the yellow house with green trim on North Main Road looked abandoned and unloved. But, about three years ago it sold and magic seems to be slowly transforming it back to its original glory. Being my curious self, I slipped a note under the door and asked if they would agree to be interviewed for the Otis Observer so we could all understand and appreciate what they have been doing. So, here it is.

Many people in town have been wondering what is happening at the house almost across from the entrance to the Farmington River School. As it aged, it deteriorated to the point that we all probably thought if it did sell, it would be razed and replaced by a new build. But, Cheryl and Jim McIntire saw the house a little differently. Falling in love with the beautiful property with the Farmington River flowing through the park-like yard, they decided to buy the house because of the land.

Thinking they would build new, the structure and its history spoke to them, literally. They started tearing down some walls inside and found a penny from 1866. You can actually date a structure by the original materials and how the house was constructed. Knowing that post and beam homes stopped being built in the 1870s, they knew that their home preceded that and was a Greek Revival from the 1850s or 1860s. Armed with that information, and the penny, they knew that they could not tear down this piece of history and the renovation began to bring this home back to its original glory. Cheryl and Jim, with the blessing of a very supportive Larry Gould, began what would be a multi-year project to make this their forever home.



Interior damage
Photo: Jim McIntire



Working on the inside
Photo: Jim McIntire

Still living in California, but now retired, the McIntires have spent three summers working on the house. COVID threw a challenge into the mix they had not anticipated, but it seems to have been a mixed blessing as it forced them to take on the work virtually by themselves. Armed with great tools, good advice and

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AMVETS Christmas Fund Drive



AMVETS Post 77 would like to extend a heartfelt “thank you” to everyone who contributed to our Christmas fund drive last year. We were able to provide \$7,600 in Amazon gift cards to dozens of families in the area, allowing them to make a difficult time a little brighter for their children.

We hope that you can help again this year. The goal is to raise enough money to make sure all of the children have a great Christmas and with your help we can do it. We want to wish everyone a very happy holiday season.

Please contact Tom Soules at (413) 429-1119 with any questions about this program and to discuss eligibility to receive a gift card. Donations can be sent to AMVETS Post 77, P.O. Box 587, Otis, MA 01253. Please make checks payable to AMVETS Post 77. ☺

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

By Celeste Watman

At a crowded meeting of the Select Board on September 12th, among the items on the agenda was the Erbe lot. Larry Southard, the chairperson, summarized previous discussions about the property. The library applied for a grant that would pay for 75% of the eligible costs of a new structure, and the grant required that two viable sites be listed in the application. The town had previously agreed, during a prior grant request, that the new library could be at the Erbe site. At the August 22nd meeting of the Select Board, residents learned that because the library did not receive the prior grant, the Erbe site would be used for a multifunctional town annex. This resulted in many comments and questions from the more than 60 people who attended the meeting. During this discussion, it was announced that once again, the library had an opportunity to apply for a grant covering 70% of the eligible costs for a new building, and that it required a list of two building sites. However, since the use of the Erbe site did not seem possible, new locations needed to be found. Although no decisions were made, the Select Board stated that the discussion would continue.

Prior to the September 12th meeting, amicable conversations were held between two library board members and Mr. Southard. Then, on September 12th, at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Select Board, Mr. Southard stated that open meetings were held about the future use of the land, and there was a discussion about the Erbe site. Mr. Southard emphasized that the Select Board always supported the library, and when the trustees did not receive the previous grant, the Select Board thought that a multi-functional building was needed to provide space for the police, the recreation department and office space. Mr. Southard stated that the best use of the

Erbe property was a multi-use town building because of its proximity to town hall, the police garage, and parking spaces.

Next, Ms. Sue Brofman, chairperson of the Library Board stated that the Library Board supports the police and the town, and that all of us can work together to build a new library. Echoing Ms. Brofman's comments, the Library Director, Mr. Brad Havill, thanked the Select Board and the town administrator for their willingness to discuss the location of a new library building. After a brief history of the Otis Library, he said that the current library has outgrown its current 3,700 sq. ft. space, and only 985 of which are fully accessible. Furthermore, Mr. Havill mentioned the library circulation statistics, computer and patron usage and reference questions. Lastly, he reminded everyone that our library provides services to people of all ages, and is open to everyone.

Following the library director's comments, members of the community asked many questions. When is the deadline for the grant? It is May 31, 2024, and the grant is awarded in October, 2024. Does the library need to list two properties? Yes. What properties does the town own? This information is available from the web site of the town assessor, and it lists 118 properties some of which might be suitable for a library. Is the town considering purchasing the Fratelli property? A member of the Select Board said that it is premature for the town to buy this land for the library because the library does not yet have the grant. Can the multi-use annex be located somewhere else? The Erbe site will reduce overcrowding in the town hall, and provide nearby space. Did the library look at other places? Yes, but the Erbe site was the best location, and in the center of town. Did the library consider the land behind the Farmington River School? A library trustee responded that this was considered, however, access to this location requires a

new road to be built, and a well. How large is the multi-use annex? The town administrator stated that the structure will be two floors, and each floor will be 2,500 sq. ft.

A few residents asked about initiating a new study of the town's buildings and an assessment of future needs. Berkshire Regional Planning Commission was mentioned as a resource for this study. The response was that it will take too long, and it will not alleviate our concerns for space until sometime in the future.

Lastly, the town administrator stated that two firms responded to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ.) A recommendation will be made to the Select Board about who to hire to design a new multi-purpose town facility. This will be voted on at the annual town meeting in May, 2024.

Mr. Southard concluded this discussion by thanking the audience for their comments and participation, and reiterating that the Select Board supports the building of a new library.



Stacks of school supplies, gathered in Town Hall from the Otis community by the Otis Police Department. They were distributed to Otis families prior to the school year.

Photo: Terry Gould



OTIS FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

By Terry Gould

August is the month of "hurry up." Hurry up and vacation, hurry up and get ready for fall, for back to school, for the harvest; all of the "hurry ups" that we just can't keep count of.

We at the food pantry have a lot to be thankful for and don't want to miss any of the shout-outs. So I will do my best here to fill you in and remember all of the amazing neighbors that we have here.

First, to all of our little feathered ladies and their people, thank you for the overflowing of eggs. We are so grateful. Our Owls and Elves answered every single request for donations in the form of food, gift cards and monetary donations, even paper bags and egg crates. You keep the shelves stocked and we don't know what we would do without your kindness week after week.

Otis Ridge surprises us regularly with donations of all kinds and we can't thank you enough! Otis Ridge is truly family and we are grateful to be part of it.

A big shout out to the Berkshire Soccer Academy, to thank them for sharing their amazing food as they closed for the season. We have shared it far and wide with the Otis School and many other extra families. We are so grateful that you thought of us.

Bob, Diane and Dave, thank you again for your generosity. Smile Like Jack steps up regularly to make sure we have what we need. The *Otis Observer* publishes our little articles and we are grateful.

An extra shout out to Sergeant Tammy and the Otis PD for including us in the School Supply giveaway. I don't know about anyone else, but a trip to an office supply store is one of my

October, 2023

favorite things. And who doesn't love school snacks? We call them "school" snacks, but we are never too old for a little bag of corn chips or a crispy treat. Berkshire Bounty made sure we had enough extra oranges and apples as well, so from crayons to crackers our students could find everything they needed. Thank you to everyone who was part of this.

We would also like to thank Big Y in Lee for making baked goods available to the pantry. Week after week, a loaf of bread or extra sweet treat is a highlight at the pantry.

The Otis Community Garden has provided locally grown produce and there is never any left at the end of pantry day. Gideon's Garden also sends us lovely produce with the weekly Berkshire Bounty offering. Dairy products come to us from High Lawn Farm. Milk, eggs and butter are here each week for folks to pick up. Worhle's continues to offer a more than fair price for frozen meat for our patrons as well.

The Otis Town Hall and staff make sure our tables are available inside and out and never complain when we break down yet another pile of boxes for the transfer station. We are grateful to be guests at the town hall and thank everyone there for their support. The pantry has been in existence for three years, and is a testament to neighbors helping neighbors.

All of these things can't happen without the consistent group of volunteers who have made the Otis Food Pantry part of their weekly life. The short list looks like this: Deena, Jane, Sarah, Jane, Terry, Larry, Mary Kay, Kimberly, Karen, Kayleigh, Matt, Ron, Eric, Brandi, Heather, Kendra, Arlene, Frank, Jenny, Laura, Marina and Alyssa. If I missed anyone, please forgive me. Thank you everyone!

Happy fall! ☺



We Are Deeply Grateful to All Our Supporters for Donating to Our Ninth Anniversary Annual Appeal

- David Beekman
- Jessica Drenga
- Vicki June
- Karl Laird & Richard Kalb
- Nicole Lamberg
- Larry & Pam Pace
- Steve & Linda Penn
- Natalie Powell
- Robert Schlossberg
- Arlene & Frank Tolopko

We happily welcome any size donation, from \$1 on up.

Donations can be sent to

Otis Observer
PO Box 533, Otis, MA 01253
or online at
www.otisobserver.com



Next Meeting:

Tues., October 5, from 4:00 -5:30

Location:

Roosevelt Room, Otis Library

Book:

The Wind Knows My Name
by Isabel Allende

Books available at the Otis Library for anyone to borrow. All are welcome to join the book discussion!

A Labor of Love
Continued from page 1

YouTube videos, the couple have been doing almost all of the work themselves and loving it. And yes, that was Cheryl on the roof and up on the eaves of the house doing her restoration work.

“You have to believe in yourself and your vision,” says Cheryl about high perches and really dirty work that comes at times. “The number of mice and vermin, the droppings and dirt can feel daunting. But as our vision comes to life, we know it is all worth it.”

Summer one saw dumpsters being loaded with rotted wood and a demolished back porch too damaged to save. It was 2021, COVID was raging and the McIntires worked alone, tirelessly to tear away what couldn't be saved and learn what needed to be done.

Summer two was spent lifting the house on jacks and fixing the foundation. They spent many mortar-filled hours securing rocks in the basement and securing the integrity of the structure. Leveling the foundation and cleaning up the property was the main focus.

Summer three (this year) the thrust of the project was the replacement of all windows and the exterior, concentrating on sealing up the walls to lock out moisture and critters.



McIntire house

Photo: Sandy Balayan

The McIntires know that it is still a work in progress, but they love every moment of this restoration. They are hoping to contract over the winter for HVAC and plumbing so that when they return next summer they can start really moving on finishing the interior walls and the exterior. Big decisions are ahead of the couple, but they are in this together and are united in their goals. When the house is done, they will return to their New England roots. Cheryl's family is all in central Massachusetts and she looks forward to making Otis their home base. Retirement looks different for all of us, and for this husband and wife team, it looks like a beautiful home and life waits for them here in our beautiful community. Thanks goes out to them for bringing the history of this home back to its original glory. ☺

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Set up starts at 4 pm.

To sign up email townofotisrec@gmail.com your
Name, Contact Number, Trunk Theme, and
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Event sponsored by Otis Rec Center,
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Follow us on Facebook for updates
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<https://www.facebook.com/noticeotis/>

Additionally...

👻 Otis Trick-or-Treat will be 5-7 in Town

👻 Trunk-or-Treat event will be
6-8 at Ridge Parking Lot

👻 More info to come on
Haunted Lodge at Otis Ridge



A Bald Eagle photographed from a kayak, Southeast Bay,
Otis Reservoir

Photo: David Modzelewski



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SOAP & SUDS LAUNDRY

OTIS COMMUNITY GARDEN

By Joan Katter

Though the leaves are already beginning to fall from the trees as I write this, the Otis Community Garden is still thriving! We expect to continue to harvest produce to donate to the food pantries through October, unless there is an early frost.



Potatoes aplenty
Photo: Betsy Bobo

There was a good harvest of red potatoes, Betsy Bobo's bailiwick, and some sweet potatoes as well. Diane Saunders' dedicated weeding and care have helped produce yet another bumper crop of lettuces with beautiful marigolds



Marigolds, lettuce and sunflowers shine
Photo: Diane Saunders

bookending each row. Sunflowers are standing tall and blooming – a fall feast for the birds!

The yellow tomatoes are still going strong, and sweet enough to enjoy as a snack by themselves. Zucchini, yellow and pattypan squash continue to grow, hidden in their huge leaves, and a few dainty eggplants can be found. More vitamin-rich kale and spinach are ready for picking, too.

We'd like to thank Andy Pyenson (Otis Poultry Farm owner) for his generosity, which makes our garden possible, and Eve Kummel who coordinates us all. ☺



The *Otis Observer* would like to pass on compliments to two of our town departments, both well deserving of this praise.

Wishing to remain anonymous, a family who weekends here were sleeping and a sharp eyed neighbor across the lake noticed a fire near a dock that appeared to be growing. He jumped in his boat and raced to it and called 911 when he deemed it out of control. The homeowners wish to thank this Good Samaritan and the professionalism and efficiency of the **Otis Fire Department**. We are all grateful to have a community of such caring people.



Another anonymous grateful citizen asked the *Otis Observer* to give a shout out to our **Highway Department** for the incredible job they do taking care of our roads. We have all noticed that when you come over the town lines when there is inclement winter weather, the snow removal and care in Otis far surpasses our neighbors. Thanks to all of you who make this happen for all of us. Keep up the good work! ☺

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Cultural Council

There's Still Time!

By Jeanne Randorf

Do you have an idea for a cultural activity to share with your fellow Otisites? The Otis Cultural Council is looking for grant applicants to bring cultural enrichment to our community. The council is made up of volunteers who administer the state grant program in Otis. We support performers, artists, educators, lecturers, naturalists – any and all who want to bring programs that will further our mission. That mission is to provide access, education and diversity in the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences for adults, teens and children in Otis.

Applicants must be Massachusetts residents and are invited to apply through the MCC online application program at <http://mass-culture.org/>. Click on “Artists & Art” and scroll down to “Local Cultural Council Program.” There you will find a button for the application process. All applicants must use their login and password, or create one, in order to use the system. The application period is **September 1st through October 17, 2023 at 11:59 p.m.**

Also please note that the Mass Cultural Council webpage lists other grant opportunities for artists and art institutions. Those funds are available directly from the state and application information is listed there.

For more information, send email inquiries to culturalco.otis@yahoo.com or call Jeanne Randorf at (413) 329-8713. ☎



Laugh with Carolyn

Our resident joke teller, Carolyn Lawry, shares another one of her gems with us this month. Long known for sharing whatever tickles her funny bone with family and friends, Carolyn is a delight to talk to and loves to share her great sense of humor with the readers of the Otis Observer.

I've sure gotten old. I've had two bypass surgeries, hip replacement and new knees. Fought cancer and diabetes. I'm half blind, can't hear anything quieter than a jet engine, take 40 different medications that make me dizzy, winded and subject to blackouts. I have bouts of dementia, poor circulation and can hardly feel my hands and feet anymore. I can't remember if I'm 85 or 92. I've lost all my friends. But, thank God, I still have my driver's license. ☹



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Faerie Folk

By Sandy Balayan

One of Otis' finest artists, **Linda Dockey Graves**, featured in our September 2021 issue, is bringing her ethereal illustrations to a new level. Her beautiful artistic gift has transferred to the 3-D world and she is now creating a world of amazing characters similar to those depicted in her paintings. She calls these new friends "Faerie Folk" and she has spent the last couple years filling her studio with these stunning creations. Although she has gifted or sold a few, Linda has a hard time parting with her works of art. Over thirty decorate her studio and each figure in its own unique setting is a masterpiece of many different types of skills that Linda has perfected over her career.



*All fabric is dyed and hand embroidered by Linda.
Photo: Sandy Balayan*

After making one Faerie Folk, a fellow artist and dear friend encouraged her to continue on this path. Armed with a lifetime of collections of rocks, feathers, seashells, fabrics and so on, Linda began by creating an armature, a wire framework, to be able to sculpt around. Using a product called "Sculpey,"



*Notice the details of a gingerbread boy and baguettes in the basket
Photo: Sandy Balayan*

Linda is able to form the figure around the wire. The wire and Sculpey spend a few minutes in the oven hardening. She wraps cotton quilt batting around the figure to shape the body. She rolls a foil ball to put in the head area and sculpts around it. The Sculpey is painted, often with acrylics, after it hardens. Yarn is dyed for hair. The glass eyes are one of the only things she buys. Clothing is dyed and sewn often with hand embroidery. The faerie is mounted in a scene, all crafted by Linda. Adornments of all types, even pieces of old jewelry Linda has collected, are placed around the figure and secured. Words do not do justice to the finished product. These creations are amazing and breathtaking.

Linda is inspired by her wealth of knowledge about Scandinavian and Celtic folklore. Each one is unique and represents a story in Linda's head. Early in the morning, when Linda awakens, she finds herself dreaming and planning and often heads right into her studio. That quiet time really allows Linda to hone in on her plan for the day.

"They make themselves. They guide me in a direction and I follow it. Sometimes I do get a clear image but I like the creative process to unfold itself and evolve. Sometimes they seem so real and feel I am among friends. I find being in the



*Baba Yaga, a Slavic folklore character, sometimes good and sometimes evil
Photo: Sandy Balayan*

studio with these creations comforting," says Linda.

Linda spends one to two weeks on each creation. If she is not satisfied, she will redo and rethink. It is a process she thoroughly enjoys. In between, she is still making her phenomenal clothing designs and painting a bit, although most of her painting is on the fabric and settings for the faerie folks these days. Nature is interwoven into each of these settings and in the clothing she makes for the faeries. The materials are very organic and each little detail is placed by Linda. Even the ears that are covered with hair of hats are fully formed and detailed.

"Illustrating professionally has been very rewarding. But, this path has led me to a certain freedom I really enjoy. There are no deadlines or editors to deal with. When I create, I feel meditative and peaceful. I don't know where this will go but I'm enjoying this journey."

Linda, we can't wait to see where it takes you next.

Linda will be at the Illuxcon 2023 Art Show in Redding, PA **October 18th-22nd** and will be showing her work at a gallery in Baltimore in November. If you want to learn more about Linda and her work, email her at lgravesart@yahoo.com. @

Local Artist at the Becket Arts Center

Special to the Otis Observer

Otis resident and artist, **Gail Gelburd**, was recently featured in an exhibit at the Becket Arts Center. The Center displayed 20 of her major works that are a part of her series "The Personification of Nature."



Ms. Gelburd has exhibited throughout the US as well as in India, Australia, Greece and Barbados. Her past photographic travels to India, Japan, Nepal, China, Tibet and Greece were funded through numerous grants and awards.

The accompanying photograph depicts one of the works displayed at the Arts Center's event and is entitled "On the Shoulders of the Horizon." This three-dimensional sculpture features "... photographs printed on fabric and then molded into humanoid forms." ☉

Art Exhibit in Millerton, NY

Michael Lavin Flower, a seasoned photographer and educator (Music and Photography teacher at FRSSD) from Otis, has discovered cohesion and camaraderie at the recently inaugurated Mad Rose Gallery in Millerton, New York.

Flower, whose career has been dedicated to photography and education, will unveil a selection of works from three distinct portfolios commencing on **September 20th and continuing through October 29th, 2023.**

Michael Flower's current exhibition offers the community a compelling collection of large-scale photographs in both color and black and white, delving into themes of space reconstruction, abstraction of utilitarian and often overlooked objects, serene, picturesque moments to meticulously planned tableaux created for the camera to immortalize.



"Tata and Pipo Nursing Home"
Photo: Michael Lavin Flower

The gallery welcomes visitors from Wednesday through Sunday, with operating hours extending from noon to 5pm, and Saturdays featuring extended hours until 6pm. ☉



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**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14
7:00 PM**

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Music that honor Appalachian cottages, rural dance floors and urban concert halls. Their original compositions cross paths with older traditions resulting in a captivating sound.

\$20

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2 PM
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Join mushroom expert **Matt Glushien** for gathering, then continue for a cooking demonstration and optional natural wine tasting. Limit 10. \$30

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1 THROUGH OCTOBER 22
ANDRE LAMBERSTON DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY**

OPENING RECEPTION 4-6 pm. TALK 5 pm. Andre Lamberston is a photographer, filmmaker and teacher documenting the inspirational lives of resilient people around the globe. (Gallery open during events and by appointment.)

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 10 AM
SANDISFIELD WITHOUT THE TREES**

What would Sandisfield look like if all the trees were magically removed? See for yourself and learn about LIDAR (light detection and ranging) with **Prof. Will Quimet**, UCONN. Followed by apples, cider and donuts. \$5

GALLERY

FOR DETAILS VISIT SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG



OTIS LIBRARY NEWS

By Brad Havill

Located in northern Arizona, the Page Public Library was recently highlighted in the *Library Journal* as 2023's Best Small Library in America. Director Lynn Cormier stated, "No matter what people need, they call the library." The article is appropriately titled *Community Heartbeat* because of the services the library provides to the community. They attribute their success to continuously asking the community what they needed and then working to meet those needs, practices the Otis Library seeks to emulate.

I want to emphasize that we support the town and community in their entirety. As a veteran, I appreciate what it means to serve. We are on the same team and should remember that for the health of the town, the answer is "both/and!" not "either/or."

The 1891 Annual Town Meeting established the Otis Library which began with an immediate problem of inadequate space to house its collection. In 1910, a building fund was started

so that one day the library could have a home of its own, instead of bouncing from one room to another in various town residents' homes. By 1922, the library had its first librarian, Miss Retta Downs, and a collection numbering 1,721. The library grew to 3,375 books by 1948, making clear that the library needed to expand. Seventy years ago, the library moved to its current location, and by 1958 the collection swelled to 6,000 items. We now own 10,011 items.

I spoke about the collection at the last Select Board meeting and want to emphasize these points briefly, as I feel they are important. Mandated by the state, the library must spend 20% of our budget on new materials. For our library to house these new materials, we begin by removing items that have not circulated for a scant three years, with some exceptions. If space is still needed, we begin to take out materials under that three year threshold. Let's think about that for a moment, books that haven't circulated in less than three years are removed to make room for new items that we must add because we lack space. We have outgrown our 70 year old building.

Additionally, only 985 square feet of the 3,079 square foot building is available to those using mobility aids. Inaccessible areas include the restroom, non-fiction collection, young adult collection, and of course, the museum. That says nothing about initially getting into the building.

Since July 1, or 2½ months from our fiscal year's start, we have welcomed 1,907 visitors to the library, 259 computer/internet users, 217 telephone calls and 112 reference questions asked. This does not include the number of times we have faxed, scanned, emailed or copied for someone. We circulated 2,486 items between July 1 and September 1, excluding audio or e-books found on Libby or Overdrive. If the library does not meet the state's mandate, patrons could lose access to these and the ability to get items from other libraries.

During his lifetime, Andrew Carnegie funded some 1,600 libraries considering

his belief that the existence and welfare of the library was of paramount importance to the life of a community, a society and a nation. For Carnegie, it was without exaggeration to say that the public library, "outranks any other one thing that a community can do to help its people."



What Carnegie envisioned for libraries then, remains relevant for libraries today. Speaking to *Humanities Magazine*, Jennifer Howard said that most places in America have requirements for access, such as money or social status, places where loitering is discouraged or a purchase required.

One place remains open to everybody. The public library requires nothing of its visitors: no purchases, no membership fees and no dress code. You can stay all day, and you don't have to buy anything. You don't need money or a library card to access a multitude of on-site resources that includes books, e-books and magazines, job hunting assistance, computer stations, free Wi-Fi and much more. And the library will never share or sell your personal data.

In closing, I want to reiterate the "both/and" concept previously mentioned. The Town of Otis needs and deserves both a new home for the police department and new library, and can come together to make that happen. A library is the heart of a community and as such should be built in the middle of the community and the town center. We have a unique opportunity to build something to last generations, and town taxpayers need not pay for the whole project as long as we meet the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners' requirements. A library is not just books and movies, but community. I urge everyone to come together with the understanding that we are doing our best for now and the future. ☉



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Beautiful morning on Gibbs Road

Photo: Evelyn Garvey

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★ UPCOMING EVENTS ★

Oct 1st, 8th, 22nd, 29th - Musical Bingo 2pm

Knox Trail Trivia Night-Thursdays @7pm

Oct 7th The Rattletones 8pm

Oct 14th Barons of Becket 8pm

Oct 15th Hilltown Blues Jam

Oct 21st TBD



OPEN WED-FRI 5-9PM * SAT 12-10PM SUN*12-9PM * 413-269-4400 * 1898 EAST OTIS RD (RT 23) EAST OTIS, MA

The Rural ETHICIST

Salty Siren Songs

By Katharine Adams

One-biotic, two-biotic, three-biotic, four; a new kid, known as “postbiotic,” claims to add one more. (Sung to the tune of, “One Potato, Two Potato, Three Potato, Four.”)

As one who has spent untold time (some would say I’ve told plenty) and funds on health preservation in recent years, my antennae can’t help but train on the recent spate of microbiome-centric news.

The enteric nervous system that regulates activity in our trunk is often called our “second brain.”

“Although it can’t compose poetry or solve equations, this extensive network uses the same chemicals and cells,” according to Harvard Medical School’s *On the Brain* lecture series.

First, there were probiotics—those healthy digestive bacteria comprised of live microorganisms found in yogurt, kefir (properly pronounced “kuh-feer” yet I still cling to “kee-fir”), and fermented foods like sauerkraut. Strains go into the dozens, including *Bifidobacterium* and *Lactobacillus*, typically housed in a refrigerated bottle of capsules.

Next, prebiotics began to infuse the scene like a little sibling seeking attention. It took me a while to figure out the role of those little rascals. Wait, wasn’t “probiotic” good enough? Do I really need to absorb intel on yet another ‘biotic’?

Turns out I do. Because the older I get, the more my bossy health seeks attention: Hello, over here, it’s me again! Ugh. Can’t it just let me alone to my vices? Me and my potent coffee, fodmappy onions, ‘tater chips and oxalate-ridden cashews once had a marvelous, years-long romance.

We had each other ... we had the world.

Back when a carefree era of spontaneous California wanderlust was king, I’d blithely set bowls of kibble and water for the cats, hop in my infamously vented-air-only Civic, and zip off to swoon over the golden hills.

This was the era before I heard of ingesting items with any suffix like “biotic” following. This was the day of the ironclad belly.



Tater hands

Photo: Jan Vasek, jeshoots.com

I’d carry maybe \$37, felt rich, and my 37-mpg car and I would set off to careen through the blonde grass of the Sierra Nevadas without so much as a water bottle by my side. Those were days of gaining meals-on-the-fly from old roadside stores in towns with names like Nevada City or Rough & Ready. My traveling food du jour featured little packages of orange, cheesy crackers and original green Gatorade. I might buy a rusting banana from a basket set atop a cracked, gold rush era marble counter.

“Oh no, not me, I don’t really like sweets,” I would hear myself parrot amid friends during our food sin True Confessions sessions. “Nope, I’m a salt-and-grease addict.”

A few cake-ambivalent, fellow chip aficionados would nod. Rippled or wavy, their salty siren song sang my kind of salvation.

I’d say this as if patting myself on the back for not indulging a Twinkie. At

least *chips* stem from a vegetable. These were the days before I learned highly processed carbs don’t need to taste sweet to spike insulin.

Prebiotics act like a garden, feeding the probiotics. Fibrous and hard to digest—although those with robust conveyer belts don’t notice—they include fermentable carbohydrates such as garlic and onions, hearty grains and legumes.

Like reciting a string of tongue-twisting poetry, Senaka Ranadheera, Senior Lecturer of Food Processing & Preservation at the University of Melbourne states, “Certain combinations of probiotics and prebiotics can be used together to boost the beneficial effects of probiotics when consumed—and these are together known as synbiotics.”

The term might stem from “synthesized biotics,” but its origin is unclear.

Meanwhile, the International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics describes postbiotics as “a preparation of inanimate microorganisms and their components demonstrating host health benefit.” A polite way of describing good digestion.

Potato salad lovers, rejoice: cooked, cooled potatoes (especially waxy sorts like fingerling or red) gain increased prebiotic “resistant starch,” due to their altered amylose content, acting a bit more like dietary fiber.

Potato chips may not make the multi-biotic skinny, but at least this darling of processed junk food is a hero of potassium. Like chocolate and good friends, they sure seem keen to fix things. In a way, the humble spud is a remarkably loyal compadre. ☺



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Otis Wood Lands Celebrates 50 Years!

By Val Coleman

Otis Wood Lands, a private community that straddles both Otis and Sandisfield, celebrated its 50th anniversary on Labor Day weekend. Affectionately known as “OWL,” the community got its start in 1972-'73 when developer Ross Williams purchased all 345 acres of Camp Sequena from the Girl Scouts for \$240,000.



Otis Woodlands sign

Photo: Val Coleman

Aside from the woods, there wasn't much there. A barn, a cabin and three houses were on the property, including the Isaac Norton home, an old salt box, that Williams turned into a clubhouse. He divided the land into 252 home sites and

built roads to access them, and developed strict regulations to preserve the natural beauty of the place, which are still in effect today.

By 1982 Williams transferred the whole place over to the Otis Wood Lands Club, and ever since, the club has done a pretty good job at keeping it the way he envisioned it – a restful place amid the beauty of nature, where people can enjoy the woods and each other's company. Today there are 220 homes in OWL. A real community!



Otis Woodlands cake

Photo: Val Coleman

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The anniversary celebration included a community lunch, followed by a skit with members playing characters from the founding days and before. The land was first used in the 1930s by a nudist camp, so one member played the nudist minister who started and ran the colony for several years. The other characters included Ross Williams and three of the original homeowners, one who still calls OWL home. The event ended with a song written and performed by OWL members especially for the occasion. A history exhibit was displayed in the clubhouse, and portions of the exhibit will be given to the Otis Historical Museum for their archives.

Happy Anniversary Otis Wood Lands! 🦉



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I have been a real-estate agent since 1986, specializing in residential real estate and land in southeastern Berkshire County and adjacent Hampden and Hampshire Counties. We reside in beautiful Becket, MA where I am a long time member of the Zoning Board of Appeals and just finished serving on the Town Administrator search committee.

Prior to entering real estate sales, my profession was building, a profession I continued for many years in conjunction with being a real-estate agent. Many clients have found that background very helpful, whether preparing a house for sale, or discussing the possibilities of a potential purchase or repairs that might be needed.

It is my philosophy that the path to success is through helping clients to the best of my ability. In doing so, I have made many wonderful friends over the years. If you have questions about buying or selling real-estate, please feel free to call anytime to discuss them.



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eligible to enter.



If you have a picture you'd like featured in a future
contest, please email the above address. ☉

Contest Winner!

Monica Alexander of East Otis is the
winner of the Name Otisite Contest from our
September issue. She correctly identified the
woman in the "Name That Otisite" contest
in the September issue. The answer is Mary
Hawley, standing in front of the Strickland
home.

*Monica Alexander receives her prize of locally made
maple syrup*

Photo: Frank Tolopko



PHOTOS NEEDED!

Care to join in on the fun? Do you have a family photo you would share
with the *Otis Observer*?

Scan a photo and send to Lynne Geane at lynnegeane@gmail.com with
identifying information, your name, phone and email address. Or we'd
be glad to pick up your photo, scan it and return it to you.

You could be in on our contest. Who will guess the identity of your photo?



The newspaper *The Republican*, published in Springfield, started as a weekly in 1824 and became a daily in 1844. With a very interesting and rich history, the paper launched the careers of many famous journalists, including Charles Dow, founder of the Dow Jones and *The Wall Street Journal*. Otis was front and center in a 1929 issue as the “wettest” town in the Berkshires because of our number of ponds and lakes. It also earned the distinction of being the “dancing center of Berkshire Hills” because of “Fiddler Sammy Spring, the magnet that sets the merry whirl in motion with dances that started four years ago by the fire department.”



November 9, 1922 Springfield Republican

Source: Wikimedia

“Otis Memories” is an ongoing way to share your Otis memories with the community. If you have an idea for an article or think one of these memories would be a good feature, let us know. We also welcome old photographs. Send memories and ideas to otismemories@gmail.com. Looking forward to hearing from you!



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ASTROLOGY ✨

A Harvest of Infinite Possibilities

By Hilary Harley

A very gentle Taurus moon greets us on October 1st and boy, do we need all the calm we can get. Take a moment to gather yourself together by walking in nature, cooking nutritious food or working on a creative project. These will help you face the coming month ahead with a steady hand.

Cosmically, we move into smoother waters during October. Life is finally moving forward again. You will feel the wind behind your back encouraging you to get going. What is it you are called to do? Where are your talents needed most? Do not spread yourself too thin. Your time is a very precious commodity.

On Wednesday, October 4th, Messenger Mercury turns into Libra joining Mars and the Sun. We are at a crossroads, facing endless decisions. There is no going back to the way life was. There seem to be very few rules any more. Chaos and creativity abound. Remember: out of chaos comes order. This is a time of infinite possibilities.

Our decisions must be rooted in love. How do your options make you feel? Calm, excited or dull, resentful? Your answer points you toward the best path. *It is not selfish to make choices that*

are for your own well-being. Assisting our decision-making, Valuable Venus moves into Analytical Virgo on Monday, October 9th. In this efficient sign, Venus figures out how to make the most of our resources for the best decisions going forward.

Two days later, Powerful Pluto turns direct motion just as Motivating Mars moves into Scorpio. Our deepest desires emerge. We feel intensely. We yearn to get to the bottom of the matter. The gloves are off, so watch for power plays. It is vital to be your most honest, genuine self now.



Authenticity is the basis for the New Moon solar eclipse on Saturday, October 14th. The more real we are, everyone stands to benefit. With three planets in Libra, prudent judgment is on the table. We want to know *where do we go from here?* And, what is the

most effective path forward? Aim for reason, common sense and avoid rushed decisions. Take your time and ask, *what's in it for you?*

Carefully hand write your intentions on this potent New Moon. *Feel into your desires* to understand why you want what you desire. Your intuition offers heightened clarity now. *Even if others call you crazy, it is imperative to follow where you feel called.* Then plant your goals in the autumn earth or set safely afloat.

On Sunday, October 22nd, Mercury forms a powerful pairing with Mars in Scorpio. Together they unearth what must be seen. Expect a lot of dirt to be dished up, along with treasure to be revealed. As the sun rolls into Scorpio on October 24th, a highly productive stretch emerges with Venus' alignment to Jupiter: think beneficial, useful outcomes. It is harvest time and all of us profit.

We move toward a full moon lunar eclipse on Saturday, October 28th in Taurus, marking a significant ending with limitless opportunity for transformation and reinvention. Our focus is drawn toward resources: our time, energy, money, skills, talents, power and influence. How will you make the best use of yours? Our journey has taken us to the bottom of ourselves; yet there is so much work still to be done. We are called to have faith even where there is very little reason to believe. Which is precisely why we must. ☯



Otis resident Hilary Harley is a counseling astrologer and hosts *Mystical Messages* podcast. She is an art aficionado, a community volunteer, the mother of two daughters and owner of an elderly Tibetan Terrier.



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Otis resident to participate in Boston Marathon® Jimmy Fund Walk presented by Hyundai

One resident from Otis will participate in the Boston Marathon® Jimmy Fund Walk presented by Hyundai on Sunday, October 1.

Lisa Galasso, along with thousands of other walkers, will participate in the iconic annual event that will unite the community to raise funds to support all forms of adult and pediatric care and cancer research at the nation's premier cancer center, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. The Jimmy Fund Walk has raised more than \$167 million for Dana-Farber Cancer in its 34-year history, raising a record-breaking more than \$8.8 million in 2022.

“Throughout the past 34 years, the Jimmy Fund Walk has continuously supported life-saving research and cancer care at Dana-Farber. The 2023 Walk will be held during the Jimmy Fund’s 75th anniversary year and will aim to raise \$9 million in the effort to prevent, treat and defy cancer,” said Zack Blackburn, Director of the Jimmy Fund Walk. “This year also marks the 35th annual Jimmy Fund Walk. We are eager to get out on the course and see all our outstanding walkers and teams come together to support this great cause.”

The Jimmy Fund Walk is the only organized walk permitted on the famed Boston Marathon® course, and participants have the flexibility to

choose from four distance options: 5K walk (from Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s Longwood Medical Campus), 10K walk (from Newton), Half Marathon walk (from Wellesley), and Marathon walk (from Hopkinton).

Whatever route walkers choose, participants will be treated to 10 refueling stations as well as poster-sized photographs of patients – Jimmy Fund Walk Heroes – displayed at each mile and half-mile marker as inspiration. All four routes of the Jimmy Fund Walk will culminate at the Jimmy Fund Walk Finish Line powered by Schneider Electric. Due to construction in Copley Square, the Jimmy Fund Walk Finish Line location has been moved to the Fenway neighborhood for 2023. Walkers should know that distances may be slightly shorter as we finish the walk in front of Fenway Park. The finish line will include a celebration complete with food, music and a speaking program.

If walkers wish to participate a bit closer to home, the Jimmy Fund Walk has flexible opportunities. Participants can also join the event virtually by “walking their way” from wherever they are most comfortable—in their neighborhood, on a favorite hiking trail, or on a treadmill at home. Materials to support virtual walkers are available.



To register to walk or volunteer (#JimmyFundWalk) or to support a walker, visit **JimmyFundWalk.org** or call **(866) 531-9255**. Registrants can enter the

promo code NEWS for \$5 off the registration fee. All registered walkers will receive a bib, medal and a Jimmy Fund Walk T-shirt.

About the Jimmy Fund

The Jimmy Fund, celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2023, is comprised of community-based fundraising events and other programs that, solely and directly, benefit Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s lifesaving mission to provide compassionate patient care and groundbreaking cancer research for children and adults. The Jimmy Fund is an official charity of the Boston Red Sox, the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, the Pan-Mass Challenge and the Variety Children's Charity of New England. Since 1948, the generosity of millions of people has helped the Jimmy Fund save countless lives and reduce the burden of cancer for patients and families worldwide. Follow the Jimmy Fund on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: @TheJimmyFund. 🌐

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OTIS HISTORY

The Story of the Founding of Our Constitution

Part Three

By Peter Cameron

In last month's column we saw that at the Constitutional Convention, compromise led to a proposed three-tiered system of government with executive, legislative and judicial branches. The convention had decided that the House of Representatives would be based on population, with slaves counting as three-fifths of all other persons. The Senate would have equal representation for each state. Coming off a ten-day break, the convention was to consider a rough draft of a document.

On August 6, 1787, the convention accepted the first draft of the Constitution. It was an article-by-article draft that would become the United States Constitution. Most of the delegates viewed it as a success. One of the remaining issues involved commerce.

The southern states exported a huge amount of agricultural goods. That was their economy. What they didn't have was a lot of population and their slaves only counted as three fifths of a person. That amounted to less federal representation and power. They felt that if commerce was controlled by Congress,

then the north, which had more representation, would control the south through export taxes. The controversy deepened when a representative from Maryland proposed a tax on slave importation. Once again, a deal was cut. In exchange for the support of free slave trade for twenty years, the south agreed to a simple majority in congress for commerce issues. This was a crippling blow to early abolitionists, mostly northern religious groups, who vowed to oppose any Constitution that included a pro-slavery stance.

Then another issue was raised. Many outside the convention wanted a Bill of Rights, ensuring individual liberties, attached to the Constitution. George Mason proposed this to the convention, but it was overwhelmingly voted down. It would not be the last time this proposal would arise.

One of the last sticking points was the method of electing the President. Proposals included direct election by the people, by state legislatures, by state Governors, or by the national legislature. Once again, a compromise was indicated. The result was the Electoral College. The large states got proportional delegates, state legislatures chose delegates, and the House of Representatives got the right to choose the president in the event no candidate got a majority of electoral votes.

In early September the convention turned the annotated draft over to the Committee of Style and Arrangement for final writing. The pivotal session to

approve the Constitution convened on September 15th. Before the vote to accept the document, George Mason, Edmund Randolph and Elbridge Gerry proposed an amendment. They wanted all future amendments to the Constitution to be made by state legislatures. It was voted down. On the vote for acceptance of the Constitution, every delegation voted "Aye."

The final session convened on September 17th. All present, except Mason, Gerry and Randolph, signed the document. After four long months, the work of the Constitutional Convention was done.

There still was more work ahead. The document had to be ratified by 9 of the 13 states. This was not going to be a rubber stamp procedure. There were two camps, the Federalists and Anti-Federalists. The Federalists supported the new Constitution while the Anti-Federalists opposed it. Arguments were reshaped in the press and in taverns around the young nation. Riots even broke out between the two sides. The viciousness of the articles and speeches, for or against, took on new venom. Pennsylvania and New York were hotbeds of opposition.

The ratification process would keep Americans on the edge of their seats, as we shall see next month. ☉



Peter Cameron is an Otis, MA resident and a retired policeman. He is a graduate of Central Connecticut State University with a B.S. in History with a concentration in U.S. Colonial History.

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We invite submissions, news tips, photos, comments and suggestions including letters to the editor. For consideration they must be received by the **15th of the month prior to publication.**

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Prepared by Sue Brofman

*For inclusion in the Calendar,
please send notices to*

oobservercalendar@yahoo.com

**Note: Check events calendar
townofotisma.com for up-to-date
notifications/cancellations.**

OCTOBER

- 1. Otis Town Hall is open from 8 am – 3 pm, Monday - Thursday. Town Hall Closed October 9 for Columbus & Indigenous Peoples' Day**
- 2. Council on Aging Center will be open October 9**
- 3. Otis Winter Library Hours effective October 14**
 - **CLOSED Sunday, Monday, Tuesday**
 - **Wednesday – 11 am - 5 pm**
 - **Thursday – 12 pm - 6 pm**
 - **Friday - 11 am - 5 pm**
 - **Saturday – 9 am - 1 pm**
- 4. Otis Food Pantry open every Wednesday 9 – 11 am**
- 5. Rec Center - Temporarily Closed**
- 6. StoryWalk, children and adults will enjoy a reading of “Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf” by Lois Ehlert, while taking a walk along the Farmington River Trail.**
- 7. Farmington River School Closed October 9 for Columbus & Indigenous Peoples' Day**

Mon., Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30, 10 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging Open**, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Mon., Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30, 12:30 – 1:30 pm, **Council on Aging Fitness Class with Michelle from Soules Fitness**, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Mon., Oct. 2, 9:30 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging Haircuts**, Otis Town Hall, call for an appointment, Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Mon., Oct. 2, 7 – 8 pm, **School Committee Meeting**, Farmington River Regional Elementary School

Tues., Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31, 10 am, **Otis Play**, parent/child playgroup best for children birth – 5 years of age, this is a free program, no registration required, Otis Town Hall

Tues., Oct. 3, 4:30 – 6 pm, **Historical Commission**, Otis Town Hall

Wed., Oct. 4, 11, 18 and 25, 9 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging Open**, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Wed., Oct. 4, 9 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging, Foot Nurse** will be at the center, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Wed., Oct 4, 5 pm, **“Pirate Party with Ed the Wizard”**, Escape from the brig, Hoist the main sales, Hunt for treasure & more! Each pirate participant will leave with “booty” to bring home. The program is designed for children ages 5 to 8, however, all ages are welcome. Otis Library, Free. Pre-register by calling the library at **(413) 269-0109** or drop by the Otis Library.

Thurs Oct. 5, 12 and 26, 10 - 11 am, **Chair Yoga, Connie Wilson**, Ages 12+, Otis Town Hall, call or email Otis Rec Center for more information **(413) 269-4541, otisrec@verizon.net**

Thurs., Oct. 5, 12 noon, **Council on Aging, Out to Lunch** at The Tavern in Westfield, N. Elm Street, Westfield, MA, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Sat., Oct. 7, 14 and 28, 9:30 – 10:45 am, **Mat Yoga, Connie Wilson**, Ages 16+, Kripalu Yoga, all levels, Otis Town Hall, call or email Otis Rec Center for more information **(413) 269-4541, otisrec@verizon.net**

Mon., Oct. 9, 2 - 4 pm, **Board of Assessors Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Mon., Oct. 9, 7 - 9 pm, **Planning Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Tues., Oct. 10, 6:30 – 8 pm, Town of Otis **Select Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Thurs., Oct. 12, 6 pm, **Otis Library Meeting (In person and Zoom)**, inquire at **info@otislibraryma.org** for more information, Otis Library

Thurs., Oct. 12, 7 pm, **PTA Meeting (Zoom)**, Farmington River Regional Elementary School

Tues., Oct. 17, 6 - 9 pm, **Conservation Commission Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Wed., Oct. 18, 12 noon – 2pm, **Council on Aging Potluck Lunch** – Halloween Theme, enjoy music by a surprise guest, Otis Town Hall, please call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Fri., Oct. 20, 10 am – 12 noon, **CHP Van - Flu & Covid Booster Clinic**, if you need to be seen for a sick visit or wellness check, or, if you need a COVID

vaccine or booster, call **(413) 528-0457** to schedule your appointment, Otis Town Hall

Fri., Oct. 20, 10 am – 12 noon, **Council on Aging Brown Bag Program**, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Tues., Oct. 24, 6:30 – 8 pm, Town of Otis **Select Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Wed., Oct. 25, 9 – 11 am, **Council on Aging, Trip to Cranberry Bog**, for information contact Diane Dyer at **(413) 269-0100 ext. 5**, or email Diane at **ddyer555@hotmail.com**



Sat., Oct. 28, 6 pm, **Trunk or Treat and the Haunted Lodge, Otis Ridge**, signups required to decorate your car and hand out goodies. Set up starts at 4 pm. Call or email Otis Rec Center to sign up **(413) 269-4541, otisrec@verizon.net**



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