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Wednesday, Feb 21, 2024 - Vol. 20, No. 17

FREE

Flutie Foundation Helps Area Autistic Families

By Ava Moeckel, Reporter



Photo provided by Northeast Arc
Northeast Arc Autism Support Center staff members, Carmen Acevedo, Rachael Carr, Thea Koutoulas, Stephanie Carolan, Sara Murphy and Victoria Slazar (rear), Nancy Lucier and Gloria Ricardi Castillo (front)

REGIONAL -- Northeast Arc (NeArc) has been awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism to benefit traditionally under-served, under-funded and culturally diverse communities served by the Autism Support Center.

"We are honored to once again receive this important funding from the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism," said Gloria Ricardi-Castillo, director of family support centers at the NeArc.

"We serve a diverse range of families with varied needs, in communities from Lowell to Lynn, and this grant will allow us the flexibility to support our families in ways that are most impactful to them," she said.

Diagnosed at the age of three, Doug Flutie Jr., the son of professional and college football star quarterback Doug Flutie, continues to inspire everyone around him with his infectious smile and passion for all thing's sports, according to the foundation web site.

An annual grant program is offered by the Flutie foundation in Framingham.

Autism Community Impact Grants that the Flutie Foundation distributed this year support the foundation's areas of interest; providing pathways to education and vocational training, supporting recreational and active lifestyles and ensuring people with autism are informed, safe, and supported.

The NeArc changes lives of people with disabilities, children at risk of developing them and their families. Each year, the agency serves thousands of people in nearly 200 Massachusetts cities and towns through the Center for Linking Lives at Liberty Tree Mall in Danvers. It is the largest Arc in Massachusetts and one of the largest in the country.

Services include: Adult Family Care, the ArcWorks Community Art Center, Autism Services, Black Box Theater, Breaking Grounds Café, Continuous Care Nursing Services, Day Habilitation, Deaf Services, Early Intervention, Employment Services, Family Support, The Learning Center Childcare and Preschool, parcels retail store, Personal Care Assistance, Recreation, Residential, Shared Living and Transition and Skilled Intermittent Home Health Care.

Honoring Peter Pratt - Legendary Storyteller

By Stewart Lytle, Reporter



Peter W. Pratt

Photo provided by Scott Paganelli

REGIONAL – One of Georgetown's treasures was Peter Pratt, who for almost a half century sat behind a display case he used as a desk surrounded by an eclectic array of large and small toys, vintage coins and his favorite soap box derby kits.

The Pratt Hobby Shop at 20 Main St., Georgetown, buys and sells coins, silver and gold and an ever-changing inventory of model plane kits and other hobby kits. You never know what you might find there.

For more than forty years, Pratt generously advised friends and customers and the occasional newspaper reporter on everything from business to life. At times for those who needed a helping hand, he opened the register.

Scott Paganelli, who knew him as a friend and mentor since he was 10, recalls Peter helping those who needed gas money. He never expected to see it paid back, but was always pleased when it was.

Pratt W. Pratt, who touched many lives and was loved by many for his sense of humor, passed away unexpectedly on Aug. 30 at the Lawrence General Hospital.

His wife, Nancy, has scheduled a Celebration of Life to honor Peter from noon to 4 p.m. on June 8 in Coolidge Hall at the Topsfield Fair. Nancy also infused some of Peter's ashes into a blue t-shirt that is worn by a toy bear on a high shelf in the shop.

"If you want to say hello to Peter, he's still here," Paganelli said.

Born in Danvers, the oldest of 10 children to the late John W. and Mildred (Osborne) Peter is survived by his wife, Nancy (Jackson) of Bradford, their daughters, Laurie Mackillop of Amesbury, Jennifer Pratt of Vero Beach, FL, Amber and Zack Haggstrom and their children of Epping, NH. He is also survived by his siblings, Kenneth Pratt and his wife Jeanne of Haverhill, Brian Pratt and his wife Karen of Amesbury, Mildred Bromley of Wenham, Linda Pratt of Danvers,

Continued on page 3

ConCom Approves Trash Transfer Station

By Stewart Lytle, Reporter



Photo by Stewart Lytle

A large truck on the narrow Carleton Drive, Georgetown.

GEORGETOWN – The Conservation Commission (ConCom), under direction of the state Land Court, voted last week four to zero with two abstentions to approve the controversial trash transfer station on Carleton Drive.

The commission, which regulates wetlands and other environmental issues in the town, denied a permit to G. Mello Disposal Corp. on Jan. 3, 2022, but on appeal state Land Court Judge Kevin Smith last year ordered the ConCom to approve the trash station with conditions that are not "unreasonable, arbitrary and capricious."

The ConCom chair Rebecca Chase, members Ida Wye, Logan Umberger and Tom Howland voted for the motion, offered by Umberger, to approve the project, while vice chair Rachel Bancroft and Chris Candia abstained because they were not allowed under the court order to vote no.

Umberger thanked Jason Mello for his patience with the multi-year approval process, saying "there were places where the commission overstepped its authority."

The vote for the project cleared away the largest of the last barriers to the construction of the 550-ton station. The Planning Board, also under orders from the Land Court to approve the station, is negotiating with Mello to agree on the conditions it will impose on the station.

The ConCom rejected Mello's application for a permit because it believed the station would disturb the property's wetlands and did not adequately replicate the disturbed wetlands.

Mello plans to build a new road for the station through the wetlands. It plans to replace the disturbed wetlands by constructing new wetlands elsewhere on the property. Mello declined to use an existing road that

Continued on page 3

Help Wanted Ads - Page 7

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How to Submit Letters to the Editor



Marc Maravalli, B.S., R.Ph.
Publisher/Editor, The Town Common

Letters to the Editor provide a useful way of communicating concerns, issues, or suggestions to all members of the community.

The Town Common encourages all citizens to submit letters concerning issues of interest and concern to the local community.

Letters selected for publication may be edited for length and clarity. Some letters may serve as a catalyst for other articles or coverage, and community leaders and agencies will be offered an opportunity to respond to letters concerning their areas of responsibility.

All letters must be signed and include a daytime telephone number.

Letters may be submitted to:

The Editor
c/o The Town Common
77 Wethersfield St.
Rowley, MA 01969
or preferably via e-mail to:
editor@thetowncommon.com.

The Town Common deadline is 5pm Wednesday (except when a federal holiday necessitates an earlier deadline).

The Town Common serves the communities of the Upper North Shore of Mass. & Coastal New Hampshire and welcomes your participation. Send your Organization or Group Notices, Birth or Engagement Announcements, Photos, Articles and Letters to the Editor, by mail, phone, or e-mail to: 77 Wethersfield St., Rowley, MA 01969 Phone: 978-432-9669 E-mail: news@thetowncommon.com

The Town Common

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In loving memory of

Liz Ichizawa, '04-05 Reporter (1956 - 2005)
Jim Wilson, '20-22 Publisher/Editor (1954-2022)



Letters To The Editor

Michael Scarlata Republican State Committeeman Candidate.

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Michael Scarlata and I'm a candidate for Republican State Committeeman in the First Essex and Middlesex District which includes Rowley, Ipswich, Salisbury, Groveland, Georgetown to name a few . 17 Towns 2 Cities in total. It's probably a good bet that you aren't familiar with the position. Here are the responsibilities:

"The Massachusetts Republican State Committee is the governing body of the Republican Party in Massachusetts. Members of the State Committee play a key role in building the Republican Party in their districts by recruiting candidates, helping with fundraising, registering new voters, and growing the local Republican City and Town Committees in the district". One state committeeman and one state committeewoman are elected from each state senate district every four years. (Presidential Primary 3/5/24)

The goal of my candidacy and the Republican State Committee is to elect Republicans at the local and state level. I'm sure most of you will agree that one party rule in this state isn't working. When there is one party in control there are no checks and balances. Please visit my website scarlata4statecommittee.com to find out why I'm the most qualified candidate that has the experience to increase our Republican representation within our district. Early voting begins on Saturday February 24. Please visit your city or town's website for more information. Election Day is Tuesday March 5. I respectfully ask for your vote. Together we can start to change the Massachusetts political landscape.

Thank You
Michael Scarlata
Republican State Committeeman Candidate

LEGAL NOTICE BOXFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

You are hereby notified that a Public Hearing will be held via Zoom videoconference on Thursday March 7, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. or such other time when posted for the Notice of Intent by Applicant: Shannon and Geoff Bessin for the property located at: 53 Great Pond Drive, Map 19, Block 1, Lot 16.35 to install landscaping/hardscaping within 100-feet of Bordering Vegetated Wetland.

The Zoom connection information will be posted on the Town of Boxford website prior to the meeting. This is a joint hearing under the requirements of MGL Ch. 131, Sec. 40, s amended, and Boxford's Wetlands Protection Bylaw and Regulations. For more information, contact Ross Povenmire at rpovenmire@town.boxford.ma.us.

For the Commission,
Ross Povenmire, Conservation Director

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20 Tue	8:16	8.1	8:58	6.8	1:59	1.2	2:51	0.4	6:32	5:22	☾
21 Wed	9:11	8.1	9:49	6.9	2:56	1.1	3:43	0.4	6:30	5:23	☾
22 Thu	10:00	8.2	10:33	7.1	3:47	1.1	4:28	0.3	6:28	5:24	☾
23 Fri	10:43	8.2	11:13	7.2	4:32	0.9	5:08	0.3	6:27	5:25	☾
24 Sat	11:23	8.2	11:49	7.4	5:13	0.8	5:44	0.3	6:25	5:27	☾
25 Sun			12:01	8.1	5:52	0.7	6:19	0.3	6:24	5:28	☾
26 Mon	12:24	7.6	12:38	8.1	6:30	0.6	6:53	0.3	6:22	5:29	☾
27 Tue	12:59	7.8	1:16	7.9	7:08	0.5	7:28	0.5	6:21	5:30	☾



Letters To The Editor

West Newbury "Right to Farm" Bylaw Needed

Farming in West Newbury holds a wide variety of agriculture from tree growers, beekeepers, vegetable producers, and animal husbandry.

They are large and small to commercial growers to backyard gardens. From chickens and agricultural hobbies, the list is endless. There are no rules and regulations in West Newbury regarding the right to farm. Since and before the Covid pandemic more and more people are engaging in some type of agriculture, there needs to be a "Right to Farm" bylaw (bill) that will protect that right for the farmers and the general public.

We at Laurel Grange invite farmers and anyone interested in preserving any form of agriculture large or small to gather to develop a "Right to Farm" rules and regulation for the people of West Newbury

We invite you to attend the open meeting on March 8th, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. at the Grange Hall located at 21 Garden Street, West Newbury. Your voice and presence is requested to help make this a success.

We hope to see you at the meeting to make this a success.

Sincerely, Laurel Grange #161

Ipswich Fire Dept. Receives \$14,251 Grant for Equipment

IPSWICH — Fire Chief Paul Parisi is pleased to report that the Ipswich Fire Department received a \$14,251 grant from the Department of Fire Services Fiscal Year 2024 Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant Program.

Fire departments across Massachusetts were invited to apply to the Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant program, which provides reimbursement on purchases of 135 different types of eligible equipment. Eligible items include hoses and nozzles, turnout gear, ballistic protective equipment, gear washers and dryers, thermal imaging cameras, hand tools and extrication equipment, communications resources, hazardous gas meters, and more.

In many cases, the purchase of this equipment will help departments attain compliance with Occupational Safety & Health Administration or National Fire Protection Association safety standards. This is the fourth year that funding has been awarded through the program.

The Ipswich Fire Department will use the funding to purchase a positive pressure ventilation fan, a thermal imaging camera, and an accountability board for large-scale incidents.

"We greatly appreciate the continuing support that the Department of Fire Services provides to ensure our first responders continue to have the most up-to-date equipment possible," Chief Parisi said. "Thank you to state Sen. Bruce Tarr and state Rep. Kristin Kassner, who supported this expenditure in the budget."

"The Firefighter Safety Equipment Grants are an investment in the health and safety of Massachusetts firefighters," said State Fire Marshal Jon Davine. "The flexibility of the program is especially valuable because it allows each department to make purchases based on their specific needs and resources. It has become a vital part of the way the Massachusetts fire service prepares for the constantly evolving threats in the world around us."

ELECTION DATE
MARCH 5, 2024

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Republican State Committee
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ConCom Approves

Continued from page 1

would have disturbed the wetlands less because it would have required that the station face neighboring homes instead of the highway.

One condition that was agreed to by the commission and Mello must plant and maintain extensive vegetation on sections of the property.

The fight over the station is a major reason the ConCom and members of the SelectBoard have been in conflict in recent months. A divided SelectBoard has not been able to fill a vacancy created when SelectBoard chair Amy Smith demanded the resignation of the previous chair Carl Shreder.

The SelectBoard plans to meet next week to consider a petition by Michael Donahue that it remove Bancroft from the ConCom and the Community Preservation Commission. Bancroft, who also sits on the SelectBoard, has refused to resign from the two town committees.

The Board of Health earlier approved the Mello station, imposing several stringent conditions on it. Those conditions included rebuilding Carleton Road to standards set by an outside engineer, and limiting the size of the station to 150 tons for the first two years.

Mello's existing transfer station at 203 E. Main St., which will be closed under orders of the state Department of Environmental Protection, is currently limited to 50 tons. Neighbors objected to allowing Mello to build a station 10 times as large.

The tonnage ceiling for the new station during the first two years is expected to reduce the number of large tractor-trailer trucks to six per day using Carleton Drive.

Mello must apply to the Board of Health to increase operations in the third year to 350 tons, to 450 tons for the fourth year and to 550 tons for the fifth year and beyond.

The board required Mello to submit a report every two weeks on how much tonnage is being processed each day at the station, but it did not specify if there would be an independent review of those reports.

Probably the most costly expense the town imposed on the Mello is for rebuilding the narrow, deteriorating Carleton Drive to a standard determined by an engineer hired by the town. Miller Engineering, working with the town's Planning Board, has already determined that the 1,600-foot road must have a base of 20 inches of gravel, topped with 12 more inches of crushed gravel, 3 inches of binding material and 2 inches of asphalt.

Among the conditions the Planning Board is considering that will likely impact traffic in Georgetown involve management for the trucks at the intersection of Carleton Drive and state Highway 133. The large trash-carrying trucks entering and exiting the narrow street are expected to impact traffic on a major artery serving Georgetown.

Peter Pratt

Continued from page 1

Patricia Dow of Danville, NH, Janice Woodward and her husband Steven of Haverhill and Deborah Soehner of Haverhill as well as many nieces and nephews. Peter was predeceased by his son, Michael Mackillop, his siblings, Sally Griffin and John Pratt, Jr.

Peter graduated from Masconomet High School and became an entrepreneur from an early age. As the owner of the hobby shop, "He developed many friendships and never met a stranger. He loved people and was very outgoing in nature," his obituary states in what is an understatement.

Peter loved to sponsor the Little League and Scouts, especially the Pine Wood Car Derby. Over the years he ran parking lot races in the commuter parking lot, fixed model cars on Friday nights, sponsored an Ipswich racing group and spent 35 years helping troops 50 and 51 with the Pinewood Derby.

R.J. Kennedy wrote of Pratt, "In 2010, my eight-year-old son listened closely to Mr. Pratt as he offered helpful tips and insights on building the fastest Pinewood Derby car. We followed those tips to the letter -- and my son took first place in the Derby in Boxford. It was a very happy day."

For a few youthful derby car builders, who did not have the money, Pratt was known to advance the price of the kit. He said it was a chance to study the young person's character to see if he or she would return bringing the money.

He took pride in counseling generations of customers, young and old. Watching children grow up and come back into the shop with their own children meant the world to him.

Mary Jane Mullen, a friend, wrote on Facebook of him, "All were always welcome to stop in and say hello or needed Pete's expertise on multiple topics. The world is a sadder place without Pete in it."

It was almost impossible to have a short visit to his shop. Paganelli, who with his wife Rose bought the hobby shop in 2020, when his friend and mentor retired, called him "a legendary storyteller."

He matched his story to the listener, drawing on his wealth of knowledge and adventures not just to entertain, but to inspire and educate. He was particularly fond of regaling visitors to the shop about his hunts for coins.

"I recall speaking with Peter and he strongly believed there is still an undiscovered large treasure buried along a shore of Plum Island Sound or one of its tributary rivers," wrote Marc Maravalli, the founder and publisher of this newspaper.

Maravalli continued, "While chatting with Dana Perkins of Georgetown about Peter's passing, Dana recalled visiting Peter's shop years ago and hearing about this local treasure myth. Dana told me, 'Peter and his wife went on a treasure hunting trip in Florida with Mel Fisher.' Fisher is known for finding the 'Atocha' wreck of 1622. "Perkins recalled Peter saying, 'It was one of the most interesting days of my life. The crew wine and dined us and when we told them where we were from Mel spoke up and said, 'There's still a large pirate treasure to be discovered in Ipswich Bay.' The problem is that you

can't treasure hunt on Federal land."

One of his favorite stories, he told this reporter, was of finding a buried coin that commemorated the inauguration of President George Washington.

In his free time, particularly after he retired, Peter headed to his cabin in Unity, ME, where he enjoyed hunting, fishing and riding four wheelers. He was a great animal lover, especially his cats, Donald and Jackson.

On three occasions over the years, people walked into his shop to thank him for being a friend, then went home and passed away within hours, Maravalli said. He believed that he was the last person each of them spoke with before dying.

Pratt was also shrewd in his many investments. He talked of making and losing a million dollars through the years.

Paganelli recalled that a man sold him a trailer filled with molded plastic boats. Peter sold them on the sidewalk in front of his shop.

One investment as a children's educational book publisher did not pan out well. Before its time, the books were an interactive style that encouraged learning. An Asian publisher stole the idea and undersold him, Maravalli recalled. He kept a few of the books around the shop to support his story.

He talked of making and losing a million dollars twice over the years in other businesses. He made lots of money selling Beanie Babies, he said. He had a gift for spotting trends and jumped on what was hot, he said.

Peter was robbed in the shop several times. Maravalli recalls hearing one story where Peter clocked a robber so hard that he fell to the floor and his eye popped out of the socket. The guy put his hand up to his face and ran out of the shop.

During the winter, he plowed snow to make extra money. One snowfall, a customer, who was behind in his payments, called him to plow the driveway for a wedding reception. Peter agreed, but only on the condition that the customer pay him what he was owed. After he plowed the driveway, the customer tried not to pay him, which made Pratt so angry he went out and started pushing the snow back into the driveway. The customer paid him.

Pratt started as a night foreman at United Shoe in Beverly, but injured his lower back in 1972 and lost his job two years later.

He had always wanted to work for himself, so he opened the hobby shop in 1974. Ten years later, he invested in a chain of laundromats, a jewelry store, an antique shop and the educational publishing company.

As he neared 80, his wife, Nancy, told him he was working too hard. He had survived heart surgery and she wanted him to slow down. He sold the inventory to Paganelli and moved to Maine where they owned 125 acres on the area's highest hill. The property had five miles of trails for his four wheelers which he enjoyed riding on with friends and family.

On the 40th anniversary of his shop, Pratt said he had a wonderful 40 years in Georgetown. He had fun running the business and couldn't wait to come to work every day. If you love what you do, he was fond of telling those who came in the shop, "never give up. If you fail, just get back up and do it again."

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NO GLASS please!



Throughout the month of February, Ipswich-Rowley Rotary will hold its annual food drive to benefit the Open Door food pantry. This year's theme is 'Share the Love'.

The Open Door food pantry in Ipswich serves many residents in Ipswich and Rowley. A list of our most needed food items appears in the accompanying flier.

Rotarians, friends, neighbors, and the public are encouraged to help our neighbors in need avoid hunger this winter by donating food at any of the following locations.

The Institution for Savings, 2 Depot Square, or 112 County Road, Ipswich

Brookline Bank, 31 Market Street, Ipswich
Bank Gloucester, 143 High Street, Ipswich

North Shore 24 Fitness (formerly the MAC), 148 Newburyport Turnpike, Rowley

Ipswich Family YMCA, 110 County Road, Ipswich.

Last year's food drive collected a total of 1368 pounds of needed food items. This year, we hope to surpass that record with a goal of 1500 pounds.

Where to Find Family Fun Over Winter Break

Salisbury Beach Carousel Expands Schedule Inviting Families to Come Enjoy the Ride Over the Annual Winter Break

SALISBURY – Area students are excited for the annual Winter Break, and the Salisbury Beach Carousel announces expanded hours in conjunction with the vacation to provide a family-fun experience during the break, for both Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire school districts.

The Carousel will be spinning daily from February 17 through March 3rd from Noon to 5:00pm and Noon to 7:00pm on Fridays and Saturdays.

"We're looking at a decent forecast for the week, and families will enjoy getting out and visiting Salisbury Beach for a spin on the Carousel," said Amy Moore, the Carousel's director. "There is plenty to keep kids entertained here at the beach in addition to a carousel ride; the arcade, beach pizza and a healthy walk on the beach are a great way to expend some energy and enjoy the day together," she added.

For more information, direct questions to info@SalisburyBeachCarousel.org or call 978.467.0600.



Image by Derreck Feole

The Allard family of Salisbury, MA enjoys a spin on the historic carousel, which operates year-round in the heated Newburyport Bank Pavilion.

The Salisbury Beach Carousel returned to Broadway last summer, featuring 44 carvings, meticulously hand-crafted by artisans in 1909. The historic carousel is brought back to the beach courtesy of the

Salisbury Beach Partnership, a 501(C)3 nonprofit organization creating seaside experiences, year-round, on Salisbury Beach. Visit www.SalisburyBeachCarousel.org to learn more.

Ava Valianti Unveils Highly Anticipated Sophomore Single "Middle Ground"

NEWBURY – Rising star Ava Valianti, the 14-year-old singer-songwriter, is set to captivate audiences once again with the release of her much-anticipated sophomore single, "Middle Ground," scheduled to hit all major streaming platforms on Friday, February 23, 2024.

Following the success of her debut single, 'bubble wrap,' which has been making waves across global music platforms, Ava Valianti has garnered attention and praise from influential music bloggers worldwide. Notable reviews include accolades from ANR Factory, Clout Clout Clout, Le Future Wave, and Parapop, underscoring Ava's undeniable talent and unique blend of indie-folk-pop.

"At 14 years old, the Massachusetts-hailing indie folk-pop breakthrough artist Ava Valianti is delivering definitive proof that maturity doesn't come with age; it comes with emotional intelligence, and her emotional IQ is lyrical leagues above the rest," said ANR Factory reviewer Amelia Vandergast.

"At just 14-years-old, US singer-songwriter Ava Valianti is an artist who seems to have already found a distinctive and engrossing storytelling style on her debut single 'bubble wrap'. The stripped-back track showcases the raw and thoughtful appeal of the artist's sound, and the nuance and charm of her vocals and lyrics," said Clout reviewer Kieran Rogers.

Ava's musical journey reached new heights when her debut single, 'bubble wrap,' received radio play on WXRV The River 92.5's Homegrown Music Showcase on November 21, 2023, further solidifying her presence in the music scene.

Comparisons to industry heavyweights like Olivia Rodrigo, Gracie Abrams, and Billie Eilish highlight Ava's distinctive voice and indie pop musical style, setting her on a trajectory towards stardom.

Ava's sophomore release 'Middle Ground' will be celebrated with a series of performances at The Joy Nest in Newburyport, MA, on February 10th, March 16th, and April 13th. Fans and industry insiders alike can expect unforgettable performances filled with Ava's captivating melodies and infectious energy.

Alongside her producer Chris Plante of CP Pro Audio, Ava is currently hard at work in the studio, crafting more musical gems that will pave the way for an upcoming EP release in the coming months.

For more information visit www.avavaliati.com



Ava Valianti

Image by Ava Valianti

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Health & Wellness



By J. PETER ST. CLAIR, DMD

When we ask for a Kleenex® or a Ziploc® we may not necessarily get that brand, but we know we will get a tissue or a sealable plastic bag. It is always interesting to me hearing the different things people say in the dental office that seem to be “standard” among the general population.

For example, most people use the term “Novocain”. Even dentists, including myself, use this term daily to describe the local anesthetic used to anesthetize or “numb” teeth before they are worked on. Novocain® (procaine), apparently still available for purchase, has not been used in dentistry for probably 100 years, but we still use the term because everyone seems to know what we mean. We may say “Novocain” but that is not what we are writing in your medical record.

Another term that is commonly used by patients and those in the dental office is “cleaning”. This term is a poor choice of words to accurately describe the service that a hygienist performs. The problem with this word is that it

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downplays the actual procedure. “I need to cancel my cleaning appointment. Oh, you don’t have anything for me for 2 months? That’s okay, it’s just a cleaning”, is commonly heard in the dental office.

We say “cleaning” because it’s easier than saying, “We’ll see you Monday, Mary, for your periodontal maintenance and exam which includes a full periodontal exam, scaling and polishing of all surfaces of the teeth, full dental exam, oral cancer screening and an update from the doctor to review this information with you.” If you have, or should have your teeth cleaned every 3-6 months, the word “cleaning” to describe the service being performed is very inaccurate.

The term “crown”, or “cap” as some people use, usually make patients cringe. “I need a crown? I thought I just needed the filling replaced”, is common to hear. Patients tend to think that they are losing their tooth if they need a crown. While this is not the case, what if the dentist said that you need an onlay? Have you heard that term?

I read an article in the paper recently entitled, “Are Crowns Made in a Day Worth the No Wait?” This article describes some of the uses of CAD/CAM (computer-aided-design / computer-aided milling) technology to produce “crowns” for teeth the same day in the dental office. The technology is used in about 10-15% of dental offices.

In the article mentioned above, there

was not one mention of the term onlay. An onlay, or partial crown, for lack of a better description, is one of the major advantages of CAD/CAM technology. It often allows the dentist to perform more minimally invasive dentistry for specific teeth.

The primary focus of the article was to point out that these CAD/CAM crowns may not be the best choice for patients or dentists if used on front teeth. The argument is that a dental ceramist in a dental laboratory can make “prettier” teeth than a dentist can in a dental office. While this may be true for some circumstances, the column downplayed some of the major advantages I see with the use of this technology. We say “crown” but it really means, “an indirect, bonded, protective restoration.” A “crown” may cover the whole tooth or just part of the tooth.

The materials we use and the services we perform in the dental office are constantly changing. Let the dentist and dental hygienists use their knowledge, skills and technology to do great things to care for your dental health. Don’t get hung-up on words. Ask questions! Keep an open mind and become an active participant in your dental health.

Dr. St. Clair maintains a private dental practice in Rowley dedicated to health-centered family dentistry. He has a special interest in treating snoring, sleep apnea and TMJ problems. If there are certain topics you would like to see written about or questions you have please email them to him at jpsclair@stclairdmd.com

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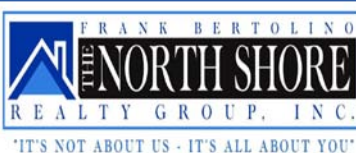
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