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Wednesday, May 15, 2024 - Vol. 20, No. 29

FREE

## Bye Bye Bus Blind Spots

By Stewart Lytle, Reporter



The MirrorEye system on Bus #2201

Photo provided by MeVa

REGIONAL – Those colorful buses that the Merrimack Valley Transit Authority (MeVa) runs in towns along the river are being equipped with digital cameras that someday may replace their mirrors.

Like the digital cameras on many new cars, MirrorEye is taking the place of traditional rear- and side-mirrors.

“MeVa was the first transit authority in the country to test the MirrorEye camera monitoring system in Gillig BRT buses, and the only operator in Massachusetts to install it in any vehicles,” the MeVa advisory board was told last week.

The board, made up of representatives of cities from Lawrence to Rowley, got to see the MirrorEye on Bus #2201. The MirrorEye displays are on both sides of the bus.

The system uses high-definition cameras and interior monitors to eliminate blind spots and prevent possible turn collisions with cars, pedestrians and stationary objects like light posts and curbs.

The system provides normal rearview and wide-angle views, as well as passenger-side views, in the same housing.

“It is because of our holding safety

as our top priority that we are testing the MirrorEye system now,” Berger wrote.

MirrorEye is also equipped with self-cleaning and defrosting functions, which enhance vision quality during rain, snow or ice, while an advanced image rendering system also blocks sunlight reflections and superior infrared-enhanced night vision improves visibility after dark. Initial tests in service have been very favorable, MeVa said.

“All the drivers that have had a chance to utilize it have been very impressed with it and have recommended installing in more buses,” MeVa Director Noah Berger told his board..

After further demonstration, the plan is to install the MirrorEye on the 31 newer Gillig BRT-style buses.

On other vehicles, the MirrorEye also saves fuel and emissions by up to 5 percent because it removes the exterior mirrors that create air drag.

But Berger said MeVa is not confident enough yet in the MirrorEye equipment to remove all the exterior mirrors.

“The reason we looked at the system is simply our being proactive with making sure we are maximizing safety. Like

Continued on page 3

## 3A Housing Mandate Opposed

By Stewart Lytle, Reporter

REGIONAL—Several North Shore towns appear to be girding for battle with the state government, opposing the mandate for MBTA communities to build multi-family housing.

At their Town Meetings last week, Rowley, Georgetown and West Newbury were among towns across the state that refused or postponed a decision to adopt new zoning overlay districts, which would allow builders to construct apartments and townhomes by right.

By right means town planning and zoning boards have less authority to regulate projects. In this case, builders could design and construct multi-family homes with less oversight from the municipalities.

The state’s goal is to speed up and make less expensive for private construction firms to add thousands of middle-income housing in hopes of easing the housing shortage that plague many communities. Many of the new housing districts would be near MBTA stations, such as the one in Rowley.

The controversial MBTA Communities Act Section 3A requires 177 communities to create zoning districts of at least 50 acres in size and permit multi-family projects with a density of at least 15 homes per acre. Larger towns and cities with better transit access are being required to allow more housing.

The communities have until Dec. 31 to adopt changes in local zoning laws or face a lawsuit from the state forcing them to comply.

The state government is also threatening to cut off some funds for



A Sign in Rowley

Photo by Stewart Lytle

municipalities that do not comply with the MBTA measure including money for local road, bridge, water and sewer improvements. This is funding that would be needed for additional housing.

Towns might also lose state Housing and Economic Development grants and Local Capital Projects funds, plus some discretionary aid.

Rowley SelectBoard Chair Clifford Pierce warned the Town Meeting members who gathered at the Pine Grove Elementary School that, “You don’t want to get into a lawsuit you are going to lose. And that is a lawsuit we would lose.”

Pierce’s warning fell on deaf ears. The 311 Rowley Town Meeting members were so opposed to the zoning change that the moderator saw no reason to hold a roll-call vote.

In Georgetown, Town Meeting Moderator David Surface passed over the warrant article that would have approved the Planning Board’s vote to implement the new zoning overlay districts without explanation. He said only that the town had until December to vote on the measure and could wait until the fall Town Meeting.

West Newbury also postponed a decision on the zoning change.

The concern is that towns that delay a decision until the fall Town Meeting will have too little time to make changes to the overlay districts before the

Continued on page 3

## Honoring Forgotten Souls

By Ava Moeckel, Reporter



Photo provided by Geordie Vining  
The granite markers

NEWBURYPORT -- The city planning department, working with the Newburyport Black History Initiative (NBI), will honor black residents who were buried in the historic African American section of the Old Hill Burying Ground this month.

“All these men, women, and children were distinct individuals who were recognized during their lifetime, even if their names have been forgotten today. These granite markers will serve as a means to locate their burial sites,” wrote Senior Planning Director Geordie Vining in announcing the unveiling of the plaque and stone on May 21.

The unmarked graves will now have a bronze plaque to tell visitors who is believed to be buried there and individual granite markers that bear the words, “Once Known”.

The bronze 12- by 24-inch plaque, with the title HISTORIC AFRICAN AMERICAN SECTION, will state: “THIS AREA

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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 Marc Maravalli, Founding Publisher / Editor editor@thetowncommon.com Graphic Design Services graphics@thetowncommon.com Advertising Opportunities advertise@thetowncommon.com 77 Wethersfield Street Rowley, MA 01969-1713 Phone: (978) 432-9669 www.thetowncommon.com The Town Common is not responsible for typographical errors or omissions, but reprint opportunities do exist for prompt notification of such errors. Advertisers should notify The Town Common of any errors in ads on the first day of issuance. No credits &/or refunds are offered or implied. All material and content cannot be duplicated without written consent of the publisher. The right is reserved to reject, omit, or edit any copy offered for publication. Copyright 2004-2024 The Town Common® - All Rights Reserved In loving memory of Liz Ichizawa, '04-05 Reporter (1956 - 2005) Jim Wilson, '20-22 Publisher/Editor (1954-2022)

### 100 Years of Boston Comedy

Wednesday, May 22, 6:30PM at the Rowley Library

Arts journalist Nick Zaino explores Boston's long history of comedy, from vaudeville to YouTube, highlighting some of the personalities that have defined laughter in America for 100 years.

Fred Allen found inspiration at the Boston Public Library to start his vaudeville career. Bob and Ray started their radio run in Gloucester at WHDH. Rusty Warren and Tom Lehrer shocked crowds in song. Norm Crosby and Bill Dana played the swinging supper clubs. Jay Leno, Paula Poundstone, Steven Wright, Conan O'Brien, Bo Burnham, Ziwe – all are part of the fabric of Boston comedy lore. Their history is a mirror of the history of American entertainment.

This is a one-hour in-person presentation with time allotted afterward for a lively Q&A and discussion with Nick, to dive deeper into the fascinating history of Boston's comedy legends.

Nick Zaino is a veteran arts journalist who has covered comedy for The Boston Globe since 2001, and also written for The Los Angeles Times, WBUR's ARTery blog, The Boston Phoenix, The Buffalo News, and other outlets. He is currently writing a book as a companion piece to the 100 Years of Boston Comedy presentation, and will launch Boston Comedy Radio, a streaming station dedicated to recorded comedy by Boston-related artists, on April 1, 2024.

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Rowley Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. Registration is appreciated; visit www.rowleylibrary.org/calendar. The Rowley Library is located at 141 Main St. in Rowley.

#### LEGAL NOTICE

#### NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Notice is hereby given by Newburyport Towing Service, Inc. 27 S. Hunt Road, Amesbury, MA, pursuant to the provisions of Mass G.L. c. 255, Section 39A, that they will auction the following vehicles May 30, 2024 on the website http://sta.ibidsmart.com. The auction will end at 1:00 pm and buyer registration is required. Those that do not sell at auction will be sold on or after March 30, 2024 by private or public sale to satisfy their garage keepers liens for towing, storage, and notices of sale:

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4. 2008 Ford Escape XLT VIN 1FMCU93138KD30558
5. 2004 Buick LeSabre VIN 1G4HP52K644126139
6. 2011 Subaru Forester VIN JF2SHAGCXBH751023

Vehicles are being stored at Newburyport Towing Service and may be viewed by appointment only. Walter L. Lowell 5/15, 5/22, 5/29

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15 Wed	5:43	7.9	6:24	7.2			12:11	0.8	5:18	8:01
16 Thu	6:40	7.7	7:19	7.3	12:30	1.6	1:05	1.0	5:17	8:02
17 Fri	7:37	7.5	8:12	7.4	1:29	1.6	1:58	1.1	5:16	8:03
18 Sat	8:33	7.4	9:01	7.7	2:26	1.4	2:48	1.2	5:15	8:04
19 Sun	9:24	7.4	9:45	7.9	3:18	1.2	3:33	1.2	5:14	8:05
20 Mon	10:11	7.4	10:27	8.2	4:05	0.9	4:16	1.2	5:13	8:06
21 Tue	10:55	7.4	11:06	8.4	4:49	0.7	4:56	1.2	5:12	8:07

### Anti-Racism Series Final Session

The Public is Invited to Take Part in Newburyport Anti-Racism Series Final Session on Thursday, May 16.

Help Create a Communitywide Pledge and Commitment to Diversity

NEWBURYPORT – The PEG Center for Art & Activism, the YWCA of Greater Newburyport, and Professor Eddie Carson invite the community to attend the final session of an anti-racism series on Thursday, May 16 from 6:30-7:45 p.m. in the cafeteria of the Francis T. Bresnahan School at 32 N. Atkinson Street in Newburyport (adjacent to the Senior Center).

“Committing to Change: Becoming Anti-Racist” wraps up the series with actionable items and commitments from local leaders, citizens, and friends to literally begin to change the face and forecast of the community. Suggested donation is \$10.

The series began on March 5 with a lecture “Being Black in White Spaces: A Brave Talk for Racial Justice” by Eddie Carson, followed on March 21 at the PEG Center with “What We Don't Know,” a powerful conversation among five people of color sharing their personal experience in the predominately white city of Newburyport. On April 18, the YWCA launched the “Colors Like Me” interactive youth art exhibition, which is on display at the PEG Center through the end of May. Amanda Bradbury, YWCA Director of Youth Services, and Anne Upton, YWCA Inclusion Specialist, showcased the YWCA's after-school program and their ongoing curriculum to embrace race and dismantle racism.

“Our goal for the May 16 event is to work together with you, in creating an anti-racist pledge for our community. We want your input—and commitments—whether you are a school, civic, or business leader. We want your input as anti-racist citizens in creating this pledge. We

feel that this pledge will be the beginning of a new direction of accountable actions that will start to truly make a difference in our becoming a diverse, equitable and multicultural community. We need your feedback to create this pledge!” said Paula Estey, Executive Director of the PEG Center.

The evening will consist of a short recap, then an overview from other cities which have created an anti-racist pledge. Participants will then break out into brief group sessions in three basic categories: Business and Civic, Education, and Activists.

“After we create an anti-racism pledge for Newburyport, we will talk about next steps, personal commitments and how we can encourage more folks to join. These efforts require individual and collective support to take hold and inspire change. We are looking for our teachers, principals, City Councilors, Mayor and State leaders to attend. And, most importantly, we hope you will join us,” said Professor Carson.

#### About the PEG Center for Art & Activism

The mission of the PEG Center for Art & Activism is to provide visitors with the transcendent beauty of contemporary art and to be a catalyst for conscious change. We seek to elevate the quality of our community and lives through creative expression, engaging conversations, and committed action. We create and nurture programming to address human rights, social justice, and the environment. Visit the PEG Center at 3 Harris St. in Newburyport, MA or follow us at www.thepegcenter.org for events, programs and more. Paula Estey can be reached at 978-376-4746 or info@thepegcenter.org.

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### Correction

Regarding last week's article 'Local

# Blind Spots

Continued from page 1

any vehicle, buses have blind spots. We obviously operate with pedestrians and passengers often walking near the bus, so closing blind spots is of particular benefit for a transit vehicle," Berger wrote.

Berger also announced at the board meeting that the transit authority's van service has reached a new safety record in the last five months with no accident. That is the longest accident-free stretch in its history, Berger said.

MeVa rewarded the drivers with lunch last week.

Unfortunately, the drivers for the full-size buses could not make the same accident-free claim. A bus was hit head-on while driving 20 passengers on state Rte. 10

"Fortunately, the 20 passengers and our driver were ok. Three passengers were taken to the hospital as a precaution, but released. The driver of the vehicle that hit us was in more serious condition and taken to Portsmouth Hospital by ambulance," Berger emailed.

After reviewing the video, Berger wrote that he was "very proud of how our driver reacted—as he was trained, he made sure that all his passengers were safe and was the model professional during a very difficult time."

The driver attributed his reaction to the accident to the training MeVa provided.

Berger wrote, "The reality is that all of our drivers have a very difficult job to do and conduct their duties with the utmost skill and professionalism."

# 3A Housing

Continued from page 1

December deadline. Some towns like Newbury have agreed to implement the zoning changes, but fear the additional housing will create significant financial challenges, such as more students to educate and more infrastructure.

Like many small towns in the state, Newbury is concerned creating an additional 154 units of multifamily housing in the town will force it or the builders to construct a public sewer or wastewater treatment plant it currently does not have or can afford.

All eyes are on how the courts rule on a suit by the town of Milton to stop the state from implementing the measure. Gov. Maura Healey called the Milton suit "unfortunate."

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# Honoring

Continued from page 1

HAS A CONCENTRATION OF GRAVES AND STONE MARKERS FOR BLACK MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN BURIED IN THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES. THERE ARE ALSO MANY UNIDENTIFIED GRAVES HERE, FOUND BY GROUND PENETRATING RADAR, WHICH ARE NOW MARKED 'ONCE KNOWN' - ALL WERE INDIVIDUALS KNOWN IN THEIR DAY EVEN IF WE NO LONGER KNOW THEIR NAMES TODAY. THIS SECTION OF THE CEMETERY IS ACROSS THE STREET FROM AN HISTORIC BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD CALLED "GUINEA VILLAGE" DURING THAT ERA."

Eighteen unmarked graves will be marked with 6-inch by 6-inch by 6-inch granite stones engraved with the words "Once Known."

Ed Balsky from GeoSource in

Sterling was hired to use ground-penetrating radar to discover the bodies buried in unmarked shallow graves in a 75 by 75-foot area of the historic cemetery.

Six graves in the area are marked with headstones. Most have been identified to be black residents from their inscriptions and old records.

Bethany Groff Dorau, director of the Museum of Old Newbury, local

was too small to have a separate black cemetery.

The Newburyport Black History Initiative received financial assistance from the Community Preservation Act for the ground radar tests and private donations. The Newburyport Lions Club, First Religious Society Unitarian Universalist church and several individual donors contributed more than \$5,000 to help fund the creation of the "Once Known" markers and plaque in the cemetery.

The cemetery event will be held at 3 p.m. on May 21 opposite 22 Auburn St.. Park on the street, remembering not to block driveways. The event will feature speeches from Mayor Sean Reardon, Rev. Rebecca Bryan from First Religious Society, Woodworth, Vining and other community leaders.

To contribute to the project, checks can be made to the City of Newburyport, Newburyport City Hall, c/o Geordie Vining, senior project manager, 60 Pleasant Street, Newburyport, MA 01950.

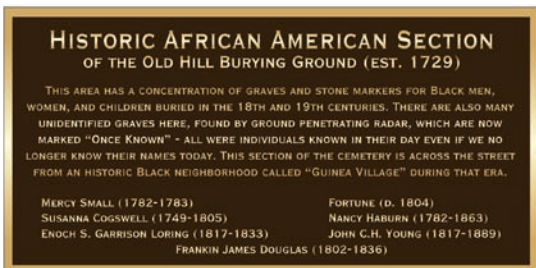


Photo provided by Geordie Vining  
*The bronze plaque*

historian Ghlee Woodworth and Vining, who supervised the search for graves, believe that the bodies discovered close to the Auburn Street entrance to the cemetery belong to African Americans.

Vining said the black residents were buried here because Newburyport

# Pentucket Spring Concert Schedule

WEST NEWBURY -- Students in the Pentucket Regional School District (PRSD) Fine and Performing Arts Department will be showcasing their work at the following free events unless otherwise noted. All community members are welcome.

The Pentucket Regional High Scs will be performing the music of jazz legends Duke Ellington, Sonny Rollins, Charles Mingus, and more.

PRSD Choir Jamboree: Thursday, May 16, in the PRMHS auditorium.

Elementary, middle, and high school choirs will perform in the auditorium beginning at 7 p.m.

PRMHS Bands & Percussion Concert: Tuesday, May 21, in the PRMHS auditorium.

The middle and high school band and percussion ensembles will perform. The event begins at 7:30 p.m.

# Audition & Sign Ups

**TTS PLAYERS BYFIELD**

**Disney Aladdin KIDS**

SUGGESTED FOR ACTORS AGES 5-13

**AUDITION**

All actors (ages 5-13) are welcome to audition or simply sign up at the audition since all are cast. (Leads should audition.) The auditions are fun and may include readings from the script, light choreography and singing to gauge vocal range.

**PRODUCTION FEE**  
\$175 (Siblings discount of \$25 off)

<b>WHEN</b>	<b>REHEARSALS</b>
Monday, May 20, 6-7:30 p.m. or Wednesday, May 22, 6-7:30 p.m. <i>Need only attend one.</i>	IN JUNE (Starting June 2): Sundays, 3:30-5:15 p.m. IN JULY (Starting July 6): Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6-7:30 p.m.

**WHERE**  
Byfield Community Arts Center  
7 Central Street, Byfield, MA

**SHOW DATES/TIMES (3 SHOWS)**

Friday, July 26, 6:30 p.m.	Saturday, July 27, 2 p.m.	Sunday, July 28, 2 p.m.
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**TTS PLAYERS BYFIELD**

**DREAMWORKS SHREK THE MUSICAL JR.**

SUGGESTED AGES 10-18  
DIRECTED BY MICHAEL FAY

**AUDITION**

All actors (ages 10-18) are welcome to audition which may include readings from the script, light choreography and singing to gauge vocal range.

<b>WHEN</b>	<b>REHEARSALS</b>
Monday, June 10, 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, June 13, 6:30-8 p.m.	In June Thursdays 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Sundays, 5:30-7:30 p.m. In July and August Mondays and Wednesdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. (Not everyone will be called to all rehearsals)

**WHERE**  
Byfield Community Arts Center  
7 Central Street, Byfield, MA

**SHOW DATES**

Friday, August 16, 7 p.m.	Saturday, August 17, 2 p.m.	Sunday, August 18, 2 p.m.
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**PRODUCTION FEE**  
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## The Northern Lights



Photo by Melanie Simard  
The Northern Lights as seen on 5/10/24 at 11:30 pm (approx.) in Ipswich, MA.

## 2024 Larkin Gala to Support Larkin Memorial Cottage Project

DANVERS -- Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School (ENSATS) is proud to announce that Essex Tech will once again host the annual Larkin Gala on Saturday, May 18, at 6 p.m., on the lawn at Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School, located at 565 Maple St, Danvers. The gala aims to raise crucial funds for the ongoing rebuild of the Catherine Larkin Memorial Practice Cottage on campus.

The Larkin Gala, named in honor of Lt. Catherine Larkin, serves as a cornerstone in the rebuilding efforts of the historic Larkin Memorial Cottage. The event will be held under a grand tent on the lawn in front of Smith Hall, offering attendees an evening of enchantment filled with music, delectable hors d'oeuvres, a lively auction, and a farm-to-table meal meticulously prepared by Essex Tech culinary students.

As part of the gala, ENSATS will bestow the esteemed 2024 Larkin Lifetime Achievement Award upon a distinguished community member who has exhibited remarkable success in the local agricultural industry.

Individual tickets for the gala are priced at \$150 each, or \$1,200 for a table of 10, and can be conveniently purchased online here.

In addition to ticket sales, organizers are actively seeking donations of items and services to be featured in the live and silent auctions. Furthermore, project sponsorship opportunities are available, with various recognition levels ranging from Iron to Platinum. Interested parties can sign up for sponsorship here.

"The historic significance of the Larkin Memorial Cottage, originally built in 1950 in memory of Lt. Catherine Larkin, underscores the importance of this restoration project," said Essex North Shore Superintendent Dr. Heidi Riccio. "Once completed, the Cottage will serve as a versatile multi-use facility, housing a historical museum, service kitchen, office space, exhibit hall, learning lab, and function space."

This project not only preserves local heritage but also provides invaluable hands-on experience to students in the Construction Career Technical Education (CTAE) programs. Students engage in all aspects of the design and construction process, learning directly from skilled workers in the union trades.

Recent progress on the cottage includes significant contributions from Carpentry, Construction Craft Laborers, Plumbing, Masonry, and Electrical students, with support from partnering contractors and generous donations from companies like Nardone Electric.

For more information about the Larkin Memorial Cottage Project and to view ongoing student work, please visit <https://essexnorthshore.org/larkin/>.




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# Health & Wellness



By J. PETER ST. CLAIR, DMD

## Brighter Smiles...

### DENTISTRY IN THE NEWS – PART 2

Teeth”, says “the latest data suggests that as many as 80 percent of people will develop problems with their wisdom teeth”. This is true. In most people, wisdom teeth either will not fit with all of the other teeth in the mouth or they erupt crowded. This may not cause a problem right away, but because they are difficult to clean, they either get decay or cause periodontal problems with the neighboring teeth. The current line of thinking is to remove these teeth between the ages of 16-18, or before the roots are fully developed. This generally makes for a much less traumatic surgery.

In the article entitled, “Taking the Cost Out of the Bite”, it is discussed what to do if you don’t have dental insurance. One of the suggestions is “to consider purchasing an individual dental policy”, and the other is to look for discount programs which “give members 10 to 60 percent off at certain providers”. This is tricky. If you don’t get dental insurance from your employer or are not covered under a spouse’s plan, you really have to look at the numbers and also at what you are entitled to with particular plans. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

The cost of purchasing your own indemnity dental insurance plan usually outweighs the benefits. Most, if not all dental insurance plans have annual maximums which average \$1000 per year. You pay the premium to the insurance company, which might be \$750 a year, but then you only get \$1000 in benefits. It may make sense for families but usually not for individuals. As far as the “discount plans” the column refers to – this is a buyer beware. These plans force you to choose a dentist from a list and this list is usually not very long. If a dentist is willing to accept 50% of their normal fee for a procedure, it is important to consider the quality of care.

Dental health is important to overall health on many different levels. Make it a priority!

*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](mailto:jpsclair@stclairdmd.com)*

Last week I discussed some of the content that was presented in a recent U.S. News & World Report which featured seven pages of information on dentistry. This is a continuation of that.

One of the columns in this section of the report entitled, “Guarding Kids’ First Choppers”, mentions that childhood tooth decay is “the most prevalent chronic disease in children”. This is true. According to the report, 28 percent of preschoolers have dental decay. There are many factors that contribute to dental decay, including poor dietary habits and insufficient oral hygiene. This increase is not only in preschoolers but right through high school.

However, the column goes on to say that “dental visits should begin no later than a child’s first birthday”. I think that is a little early and usually recommend seeing children by age three. However, parents should closely inspect their children’s teeth. If there is anything that is seen that is not tooth-colored or doesn’t look right, the child should be seen by a dentist. Pediatric dentists are one option but many general family dentists are more than willing to see children. If there are issues that warrant a pediatric specialist, the child can be referred.

Another column in the report entitled, “The Wisdom on Wisdom

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