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## Tulgan continues to tout characteristics of modern workers

By Susan Guerrero

Bruce Tulgan, a Pittsfield native and 1985 graduate of Pittsfield High School, has worn many hats in his 53 years of life including author, brother, business advisor, husband, karate expert, lawyer, lecturer, son, speaket and uncle.

His 21<sup>st</sup> book, "The Art of Being Indispensable at Work," (Harvard Business Review Press), came out in July. The rest of the title is "win, influence, beat overcommitment, and get the right things done."

Tulgan said anyone who wants to get better at work should read the book. The ideal reader is the person who is "ambitious and hardworking and wants to be that indispensable go-to person but struggles with overcommitment syndrome," he said.

He refers to and explains "go-to" people a lot. For example, "they understand the peculiar mathematics of real influence, lead from wherever they are, know when to say no and how to say yes, work smart, finish what they start, get better and better at working together, and promote go-to-ism," he said.

The author explained that his latest book is "aspirational—how can you add maximum value without becoming overcommitted?" In it, he asks how a person can win maximum influence by making one's self valuable to other people.

Tulgan, a dynamic and personable man, is the first to remind  
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people that if a person tries to do everything for everybody, the person will "end up doing nothing for anybody."

"You can't do everything so you have to make really good decisions and do the right things," he wrote, while answering questions via computer for this article. "It's not about trying to do everything. It's about being so professional and so methodical that you are totally service-minded, totally aligned with your boss and your chain of command, always tuning in to people's needs and giving them due diligence, giving people more and more confidence in your judgement, and then executing one concrete deliverable after another, building up relationships every step of the way."

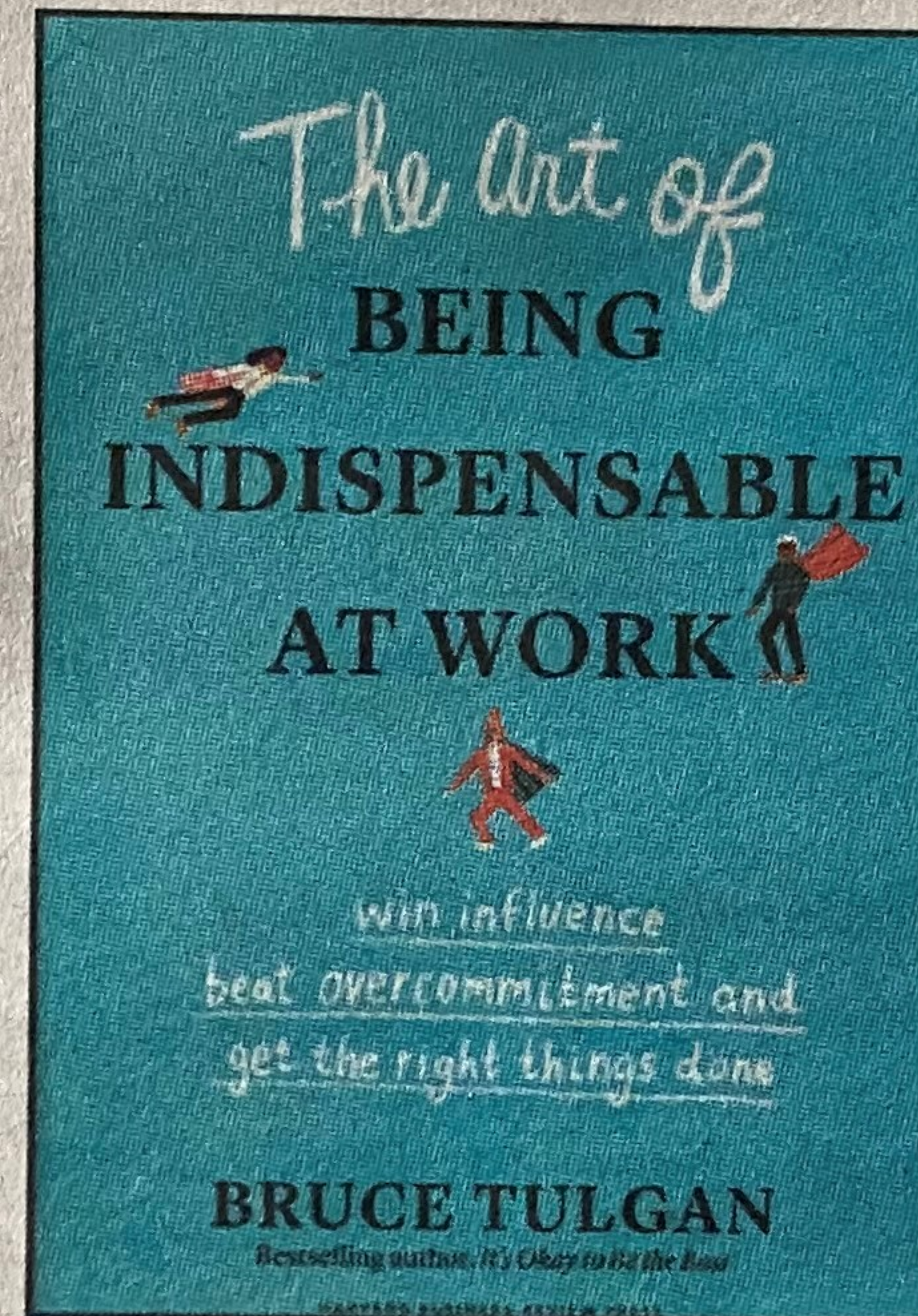
The author said he thinks anyone can be a go-to person but one has to be "ambitious."

"You have to want to serve others," he said. "You have to want to be valuable."

It also helps a lot if a person is "smart and good at learning," he said, and if the person is "hard working, has a good attitude, and wants to please."

"Then the key is being methodical and professional," Tulgan said, "taking the time to manage yourself, so you don't succumb to overcommitment syndrome."

"You can do great work and do lots of it, but if you don't take a systematic approach to manag-



ing yourself and managing your working relationships with others then you find yourself overcom-

mitted and frustrated with your inability to get what you need from others," he said.

Born in Pittsfield in June of 1967, Tulgan grew up in the family home on Palomino Drive. His mother, Norma, died in 2016. His father, Dr. Henry Tulgan, now 87, still lives in the city. He practiced medicine in Pittsfield for decades, his son noted, starting in 1962. He practiced cardiology and internal medicine and was a member of the medical staff at Berkshire Medical Center from 1962 to 2008. Dr. Tulgan served as chair of Cardiology and the Department of Medicine and eventually became director of Medical Education.

He also was Associate Dean at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and, according to

his son, is currently a professor of Medicine and Director of Continuing Medical Education at Baystate Wing Hospital since 2008.

Bruce Tulgan's mother, the late Norma Propp Tulgan, was a philosopher and teacher. She graduated with a degree in philosophy and art from Barnard College in 1958. Her son noted that she studied philosophy at the New School for Social Research. She completed a Master's in Education from North Adams State College, now called Massachusetts College of the Liberal Arts (MCLA). Mrs. Tulgan held several teaching positions and also ran a private training and coaching program to prepare high school students to take the Scholastic Aptitude Test. She served on numerous

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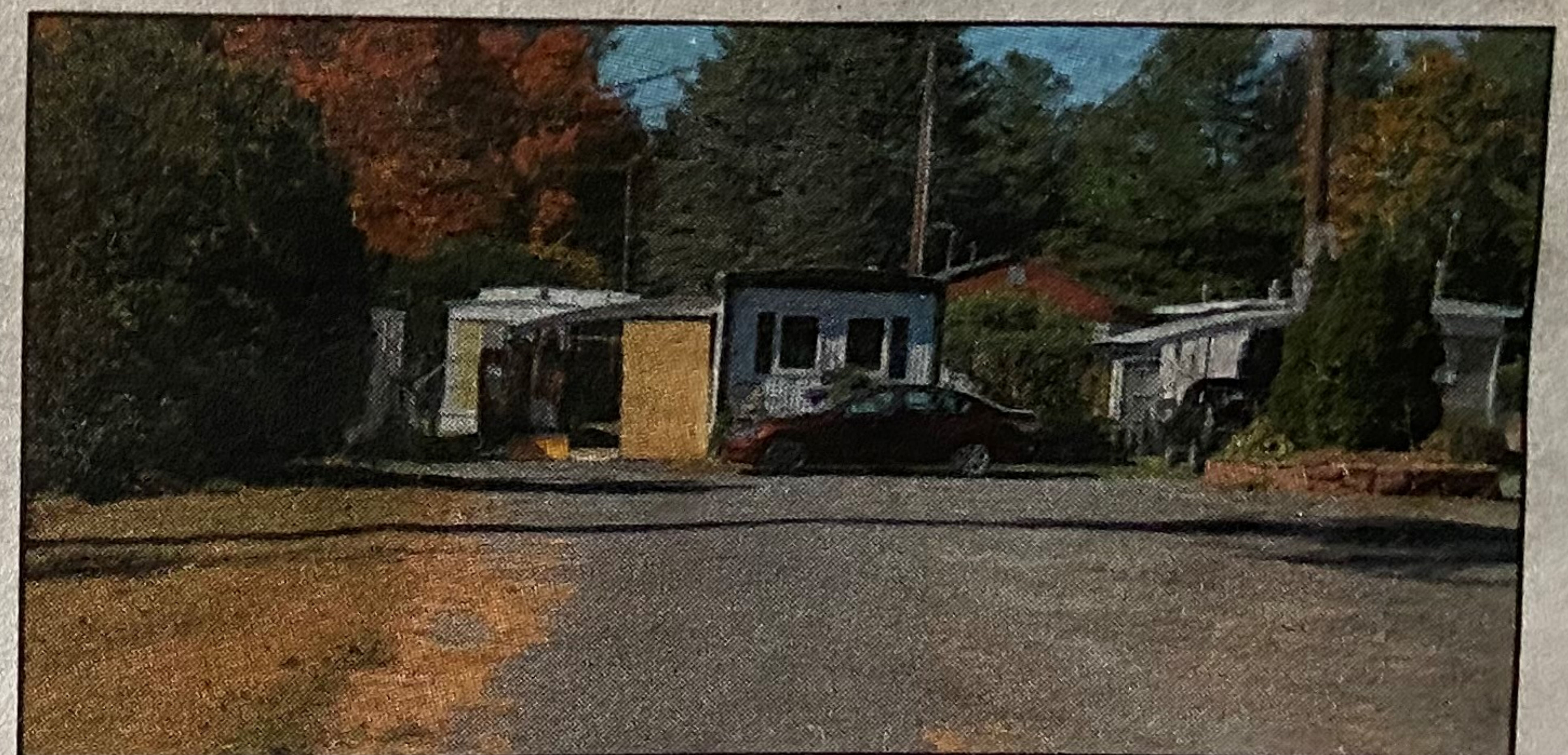
## Mobile home board awards rent hike

The mobile home rent control board on October 19 approved a \$110 rent increase for the Allendale Pines park.

Eagle Allendale LLC, owner of the Cheshire Road property, sought a rent increase that would boost rents at the 55 tracts at the site by \$120 per month.

The rent increase is to cover capital improvements that would cost a total of \$720,000 with costs split between an equity investment and the increased rents.

The increase involves \$50 per month in the first year, \$35 in the second year and \$25 in the next year. Brent White of White Engi-



A rent increase has been approved for capital improvements at the Allendale Pines mobile home park.

said, "these are improvements money go?" he asked. "What are that tenants need and want for. we getting for our money?"

# Tulgan highlights contemporaries

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local boards in the city.

His sister, Ronna Tulgan Os-theimer, is director of education at the Clark Art Museum in Williamstown. Her husband, Tom Ostheimer, is a long-time history and social studies teacher and coach at Mt. Greylock High School. They live in Williamstown.

"My brother, Jim Tulgan, has had lots of entrepreneurial jobs and still lives in Pittsfield with his partner, Debbie, and sometimes with their grandson, Emerson."

Tulgan's grandmother, Gertrude Tulgan, lived in Pittsfield from 1970 to 2000. She died at 100 years of age.

Bruce Tulgan, who once attended the former South Junior High School, now Herberg Middle School, said he has lots of memories of his days at PHS. His class was the first to complete ninth grade at the high school.

"I had a great experience at PHS and had so many great teachers," Tulgan said. "Notable for me is that I was gone for much of the 1983-84 school year because I was a United States House of Representatives Page in Washington, D.C. most of my junior year. So, I did not have the full four years."

He remembers many of his influential teachers such as Charles Gilson, "an amazingly talented and brilliant and kind and generous teacher," and Gale Johnson, "also a fantastic teacher."

"And Mrs. McCarthy," Tulgan wrote, "And Mrs. Powell, Herr Lizotte, for German, Mr. Belanger, a superb physical education teacher, and Mr. Plummer, my guidance counselor."

"What a great school," he said of PHS. "What a great education I was able to receive there."

After PHS, Tulgan was admitted to Amherst College. He even had a huge party at his parents' house while they were away, to celebrate being admitted.

"I have to say there were so many kids there in attendance, it is amazing that it went so well and that there were no problems," Tulgan said. "It's not the kind of thing you could easily get away with these days."

He said if he were to be asked

when he left Pittsfield, he'd respond by saying "You can take the boy out of Pittsfield but you cannot take Pittsfield out of the boy."

He left for Amherst College in 1985. It was his father's alma mater as well. Bruce majored in political science at Amherst and graduated magna cum laude in 1989.

The first week of freshman year, he met Debby Applegate. They lived in the same dormitory, South College. He even remembered that he lived in Room 111, below Debby's room, 211.

"Our first date was September 13, 1985," he recalled. "I asked her to marry me on our first date and she said, 'Don't be silly, I'm 17.'"

"We have been together ever since," Tulgan said. "We got married September 5, 1993."

His wife graduated summa cum laude in American Studies from Amherst College in 1989. She went on to earn her PhD in American Studies from Yale University in 1998.

Tulgan earned a JD, (Juris Doctor), from New York University School of Law, in 1998.

He said he and his wife both loved Amherst.

"My father went to Amherst, class of 54," Tulgan said. "He and I are both today our class secretaries. When I was a kid my dad would say, 'You can go to Amherst or join the Army.' " His father served as a major in the U.S. Army Reserve. When it came time to apply to colleges, Tulgan applied only to Amherst.

"We made so many of our closest friends at Amherst, including many of our best friends to this day," he said. "We learned how to learn. We read so many books and wrote so many papers. In many ways, our life is exactly the same. Always reading. Always writing. Always having a paper hanging over my head, a paper hanging over Debby's head."

His wife authored "The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher" and it won the Pulitzer Prize in 2007.

She just finished her second book, "Madam: The Life of Polly Adler, Secret Icon of the Jazz Age."

Tulgan has a deep regard for and expertise when it comes to karate. He's been studying it since he was

seven years old. He began lessons at 10 Lyman St in Pittsfield at the Uechi Karate School in the 1970s and 1980s, led by Frank Gorman.

He's studied ever since and earned a black belt in May of 1986. He tested for 6<sup>th</sup> degree black belt, the master rank in that style, in Okinawa in October of 2015.

Today, Tulgan has a home in New Haven, Connecticut, and an office next door where there is a dojo.

In addition, his lifelong karate teacher, Frank Gorman, has lived with the Tulgans for the past five years.

Gorman's grandson, Nathan, and his dog, Bentley, also live there.

Nathan, a college student, has been with them for two years.

"Bentley is not attending school," Tulgan chuckled, "but he is a very good boy."

"I do physical training of one sort or another 25-plus hours a week, including cardio and karate practice," Tulgan said. "It is a way of life."

The Tulgans have "books instead of kids," Tulgan said. They also have four nieces and two nephews. A niece, Frances, 21, is "like a daughter to me," he said.

"We've spent lots of time with her since the day she was born; she and her two rabbits lived here most recently for a year in 2018-2019."

Another nephew also lived with them for eight months.

Asked if he applies all of the strategies in his latest book to his own life, Tulgan had this to say:

"I try very hard to act on the strategies in this book and my others in my life, work, and relationships." It's similar to "take a walk every day and eat your vegetables," he said.

"All of my books are based on decades of research including hundreds of thousands of interviewees from hundreds of different companies," he said. "I know for sure, based on the research, what attitudes and behaviors are most effective."

He said he probably does not always live up to the ideals but continuously tries to.

Every day, the challenge is, try to practice being the best I can be," he said, "practice being the person

The Art of  
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**BRUCE TULGAN**  
Bestselling author, *It's Okay to Be the Boss*  
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I am trying to become. When I don't live up to those ideals, I try to give myself some kind but honest feedback and challenge myself to do better. What else can you do?"

Tulgan is the founder and CEO of Rainmaker Thinking. It is a management, research, consulting, and training firm. He got the idea for the firm while still working as a lawyer on Wall Street in New York City.

"I got the idea of becoming an expert on young people in the workplace because the older, more experienced lawyers at the fancy law firm where I was working seemed so clueless about managing the young lawyers," he said.

He founded the company as a research firm.

Prior to the current pandemic, Tulgan traveled incessantly for the past 26 years, averaging 140 travel days annually. Many are the times when he got up between

3 and 4 a.m. or caught the red eye specials.

"I haven't gotten on a plane since March," he said. "As soon as the pandemic set in, we put a tv studio in the office." His home is next door to the house in which the office is located.

"In the office, we now have a whole production studio, from which we can deliver our keynotes, workshops, focus groups, interviews, and in which we are producing lots of video training programs as well," the author said.

He said he didn't write his latest book with the pandemic in mind but feels like he might as well have.

"The lessons are all probably more essential now than they were before," he said. "I did write a special note for the pandemic, but I'm not sure I would have changed much about the rest of the book even if I had known."

Bruce Tulgan, definitely a "go-to" person, continues to be a progressive force in the world.