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December 2023



## Happy Birthday, Steve!

**Students and staff support Beloved school community member diagnosed with cancer.**

BY CHLOE ZHANG

Steve Bassignani is an adored member of the community and school of Hopedale.

Bass is a loved member of the community, but he is also a gifted self-taught photogra-

pher who spends his free time photographing high school sports.

After Bass's retirement in 2015, he devoted his time to his passion for photography. Steve believes that if you do something you enjoy, you never work a day in your life.

This summer Bass was unfortunately diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Bass started going through chemo shortly after and is still fighting the cancer. Due to his chemo,

**STEVE**

*continued on page 2*

## Hopedale hosts BVT summit

**Member towns discuss concerns related to mandatory contributions, admissions, charter relevance**

BY THERESA KNAPP

On Oct. 26, the Hopedale Select Board hosted representatives from the 13 towns that make up the Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School district.

Member towns include Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge.

In the invitation to the member towns, Town Administrator Mitch Ruscitti said, "The intent of this summit is to engage in a district-wide conversation about our individual and collective community needs, the role that the vocational school plays in meeting those needs, and the overall impact of bonded capital investments on our other public-school districts/systems. More succinctly put, there have been concerns expressed by constituents, boards, and committees across town boundaries regarding

tough decisions about the use of funding sources."

The 1.5-hour meeting was held at the Hopedale Community House.

As she welcomed the group, Hopedale Select Board Chairwoman Glenda Hazard said, "Over the years I've heard it said that the 13 towns in the BVT district don't really care how the rest of the towns in the district feel, and I called this meeting because I don't really believe that's true. There've been many times I've wondered how you all respond to financial constraints the majority of us are facing, and if there are other related concerns that we all share. To that end, I'm hoping that this is the beginning of a meaningful collaboration between all of us."

"Tonight's summit is a result of us having heard from many surrounding communities with a desire

**SUMMIT**

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STEVE

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Bass has not been able to come to sports games or the school. However, even though he has been away, he continues to impact the students of Hopedale Jr. Sr. High School.

The students of Hopedale continue to miss Steve, here are what some of the students have to say about Steve:

“Steve made and continues to make an indescribable impact on our community. His love and care for the students is incredible and he leaves a mark on every student in this school. His funny personality and contagious smile brighten every student’s school day and he is truly missed.” -Maida H.

“Steve has always been everyone’s number one fan! He always tries to make students feel included and welcomed. I am forever grateful for all the memories he has given me.” - Maddie D.

“Steve is such a big inspiration to me as a photographer because he’s always taking photos and spreading joy” - Luke W.

“Steve always brings a light to every room he walks into. He

is such a positive and uplifting person and never failed to put a smile on my face. I miss seeing in the hallway, at games or at town events. I am forever grateful for his role in this school.” - Mia C.

Since he was unable to see the students at school around his birthday, the staff and students of Hopedale came together to celebrate Bass. On Oct. 4, all students and staff wore shirts in support of Bass in unity, generously donated by an unknown community member. It is clear that Bass has left a great impact on the people of Hopedale and is greatly missed around the school by everyone. We all hope for him to continue fighting and recover quickly.

*Pancreatic Cancer is a type of cancer that occurs when malignant cells form in the Pancreas and cause them to deteriorate. Cancer of the pancreas is one of the deadliest types of cancer, with a survival rate of 12% in the United States. If you would like to help fight this deadly disease, here are some resources you can educate yourself and donate to: <https://lustgarten.org/> or <https://www.npcf.us/>*

# Average residential tax bill increase of \$807 is lower an anticipated

## Tax rate set at \$16.60 for residential, \$2904 for commercial, industrial, and personal property

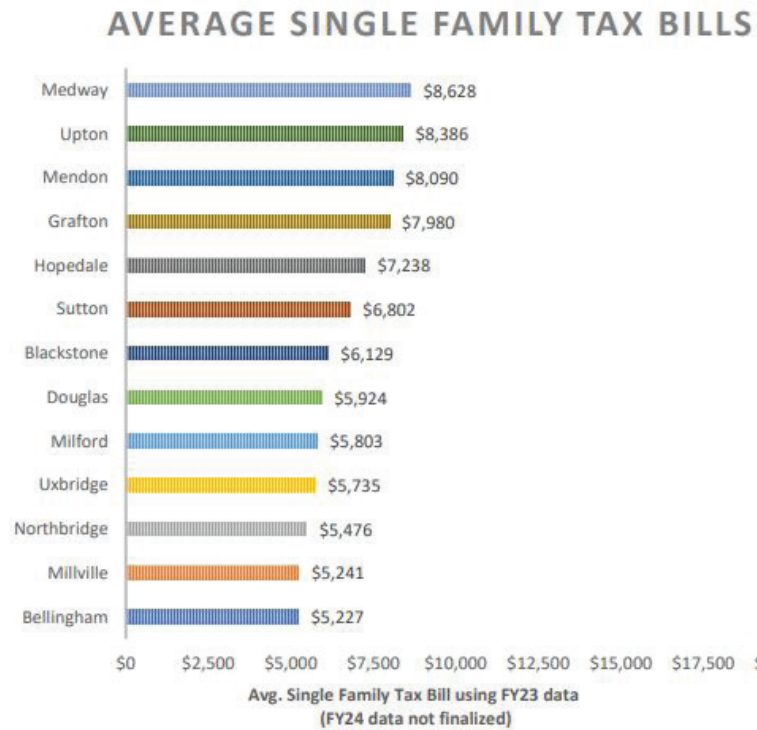
By THERESA KNAPP

As part of the Select Board meeting on Nov. 13, a tax classification hearing was held and the board agreed with the Board of Assessors’ recommendations to adopt a tax rate of \$16.60 for residential properties, and \$29.04 for commercial, industrial, and personal property (CIP).

The board also voted not to adopt a residential exemption or a small commercial exemption.

In a detailed presentation, Hopedale Principal Assessor Cheryl Hanly explained that the classification hearing “does not determine how much money can be raised nor does it decide the town’s budget. It only determines the distribution of the tax levy among the property class types.”

Hanly said the average value of a single-family home in Hopedale (based on values as of Jan. 1, 2023) is currently \$484,628, which she says is an increase of \$36,459 over the prior year. She also noted the changes in specific property class values: residential/single family (8.1%



increase), residential/condominium (9.7% increase), and commercial (2.3% increase).

The Board of Assessors recommended a shift in the tax rate of 1.60. Hanly said that shift “offers the most fair and equitable distribution of the tax levy for all taxpayers” and translates to

a residential tax rate of \$16.60 and a CIP tax rate of \$29.04. This will result in an average tax bill of \$8,044.82 for Hopedale residents.

### How it’s calculated

Hanly provided a breakdown of the average single family tax bill increase of \$806.88, which is lower than town officials had predicted earlier this year in discussions related to the \$1.35 million override that ultimately passed in June. At that time, it was anticipated the override would add \$562 to the average tax bill for the override alone, plus an estimated \$268 year-to-year incremental increase.

“So we forecasted a total impact of \$830 for that combined increase for the single family tax bill. The recommended 1.6 shift brings us in line with those projections, a little under actually, you can see it’s \$807 and results in an average single family tax bill of about \$8,045 for fiscal 2024,” said Hanly.

### Special exemptions

Hopedale does not currently have, nor did it vote to adopt

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### TAXES

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**SUMMIT**

*continued from page 1*

to discuss budgetary issues related to our vocational school. We feel this is absolutely in the spirit of the [BVT] charter.”

Hazard said that “BVT is a tremendous institution and one of best technical schools in the Commonwealth,” but noted that, like many other member towns, Hopedale “operates under a tight budget” and “must be responsible for every dollar we spend.” She said that, because of the nature of the state assessment process and the town’s resulting mandatory contribution, “we find ourselves forced to cut local programs and

services in response to costs such as those related to BVT that we can’t control. This scenario makes it difficult, if not impossible, to invest in our own public school students, facilities, and operating and capital improvements without asking for additional revenues from taxpayers in the form of overrides.”

She said that, because of the timing of BVT’s budget-setting timeline and Hopedale’s fiscal process, “Historically, by the time our annual town meeting comes around, we’re told that BVT already has enough votes in the other communities to pass [its budget], effectively negating our vote. Generally, we are presented with a figure that would be Hoped-

ale’s share without input from [the] local finance committee or Select Board and whether or not we feel we can afford it. This has been deeply concerning for both our local boards and our residents who tell us that they feel they are cut out of the process. We’ve heard that several of your towns feel the same way.”

Hazard said, “In Hopedale, we think that as towns included in the charter, we should all be able to determine what costs we can afford so that all students that reside in our towns are equitably supported. We often feel that Hopedale Public Schools are forced to cut, yet BVT hasn’t had to make the same kinds of sacrifices,” adding that Hoped-

ale had to ask residents for an override for FY24 but still had to make cuts to the school budget while BVT’s budget increased.

“As an institution, we [Hopedale] believe that BVT should have to operate within the same financial constraints that each municipal budget does...We think it should be clear that the goal is to provide a great education for all students in our communities, whether they go to BVT or stay in our local schools. We want to be able to invest in programs and facilities locally at the same level that we invest at BVT.”

Hopedale Town Moderator Mitch Ruscitti moderated the conversation.

Bellingham Selectboard Chair-

man Michael Connor thanked Hopedale for calling the summit. “I think it’s an exceptional opportunity...This is one of the best ideas that’s come along.”

Connor said their per student costs for BVT students “are dramatically higher” than they are within the Bellingham Public Schools. He, in addition to other attendees, expressed frustration that local town budgets go through detailed scrutiny from town boards and taxpayers, yet the BVT budget does not.

“The budget process is what has really skewed me the most over the

**SUMMIT**

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**TAXES**

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this year, a residential exemption, which shifts the tax burden

within the residential class from owners of moderately valued residential properties to the owners of vacation homes, higher valued homes and residential properties not occupied by the

owner, including apartments,” according to Hanly’s presentation. The Board of Assessors did not recommend adopting this exemption which applies mostly to resort towns (Nantucket, Prov-

incetown, Wellfleet) and larger municipalities with numerous apartments (Boston, Brookline, Cambridge).

In addition, Hopedale does not have, nor did it vote to adopt

this year, a small commercial exemption which would apply to businesses of no more than 10 employees and the exception would go to the building owner, not the small business itself. The Board of Assessors did not recommend this exemption because “too few businesses are eligible for this exemption as per the Department of Unemployment Assistance.”

*To see the full presentation, visit bit.ly/HopedaleTaxClassHearing-Nov2023*

**Impact of a Shift Tax Rate per Hopedale Board of Assessors**

CIP Shift	Res Factor	CIP Levy%	Res Levy%	Res Tax Rate	CIP Tax Rate	Avg Res Bill \$Change	Med C&I Bill \$Change	Avg Res Bill % Change	Med C&I Bill % Change
1.60	0.914800	19.9%	80.1%	\$16.60	\$29.04	\$647.21	\$921.56	10.3%	11.0%

Legend: “CIP” represents “commercial, industrial, and personal property” taxpayers  
Source: [www.hopedale-ma.gov](http://www.hopedale-ma.gov)

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# HJSHS Students Making a Difference in Career & Financial Literacy Education

By TALITHA OLIVERI

What is STREAM and what does that look like for a future career? Who should students speak ..with to gain insight into career paths? How does a young adult pay for monthly expenses, contribute money to a 401k and emergency savings fund, and maintain a good quality of life?

These are questions Hopedale Junior Senior High School Business Capstone and Project Management students have been working hard to answer. Over the past months, three student teams have been hard at work coordinating educational fairs and activities for students in grades 1-12. The Growing Minds

Fair, Career Fair, and FinFit Fair individually reach different age groups, but the overarching goal



may go into after high school.

Students in 9th and 10th grade will have the opportunity to speak to career professionals one-on-one in the cafeteria at booths,

engage children in grades 1-5 in fun STREAM-based activities. The Growing Minds Fair not only teaches these young students about STREAM but introduces it to them at a young age to spark interest in their future. This fair teaches these young in-



is the same - to prepare and educate students on careers and how those choices impact their future financial well-being.

Below are the dates and brief descriptions of each event.

**FinFit Fair:** 12/8/23 from 8am-12pm at the Draper Gymnasium

The FinFit Fair is an interactive simulation of students' lives at 25 years old that exposes them

to the types of monetary decisions they will make as young adults. The goal of the fair is to introduce students to smart spending decisions and to educate them on basic financial literacy skills they will need as soon-to-be-graduates. - Fair Coordinators: Will Adamski, Matt Carroll, and Kyle Maloney

**Career Fair:** 12/15/23 from 7:45 am-11:00 am in the High School Cafeteria

The Career Fair is an introduction to career fields students

participate in mock interviews, and have an in-depth presentation from a speaker panel of other professionals. Additionally, students in the 7th and 8th grades will participate in a career talk with professionals to educate them on future career opportunities. Fair Coordinators: Alexandra Goode, Emma Gosselin, and Antonia Rolo

**Growing Minds:** 12/20/23 from 3pm-5pm at the Memorial Elementary School

The Growing Minds Fair has partnered with non-profit organizations Children Across America and DCU For Kids to

dividuals about science, technology, research, engineering, art, and math. Fair Coordinators: Jonathan Araujo, Daniel Carroll and Brayden Lewis

Community members are invited to attend each of these events to see our students as they practice financial literacy skills, learn more about their future career opportunities, and participate in STREAM activities. For more information or to attend, please reach out to Business Capstone and Project Management teacher Talitha Oliveri at [toliveri@hopedaleschools.org](mailto:toliveri@hopedaleschools.org)

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**SUMMIT**

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last 15 years. When the Superintendent of BVT comes into our town meeting, the votes are 'locked up' - the process to speak up has long passed...[and] it's simply 'pay up' and I think we, as the communities of BVT, need to vet that process."

As a possible solution for future consideration, Connor suggested each member town would calculate its own public school budget increase from one year to the next, and the average budget increase among the 13 member towns would be the increase BVT would also receive.

Connor said, "We've never had a choice as to what the BVT budget would be" and said Bellingham has some ideas for future forum topics.

Millbury Select Board Chairman Chris Naff told the story of a Millbury student who was interested in attending BVT and would have been well-served there but their academic record was not strong enough to be admitted into BVT.

"That story can be told again and again. And I think the problem we all face today is the very students that BVT was founded for no longer have the opportunity to go. That, to me, is a very big problem."

"Our gracious host [Hazard] asked us not to disparage anyone tonight, but it's a matter of fact that one administrator told the Town of Millbury to no longer send its 'riff raff,'" said Naff, adding "That 'riff raff' are the very students BVT was founded for, and those students are being denied the opportunity they should have today."

"Until some reform is done, which I believe has to take place at the state level, and that reform is much needed and would be heavy-handed, until that is done, the conversation at the municipal level is only going to become more and more difficult each year because I

know as a fact that Millbury, and I think a lot of the communities like us, are becoming more and more tired of providing significant funding for what we believe to be a very significantly flawed system."

Millville Board of Selectmen Chair Jennifer Gill said her town was there to listen to area concerns, noting their BVT enrollment to date has been low and financially manageable but is growing.

BVT Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael Fitzpatrick was invited to respond, and started his remarks by saying he recognized several of the audience members "because I do make appearances at the finance committees, the public hearings, and the town meetings."

Fitzpatrick, who has been BVT's superintendent for 31 years, started his response by focusing on member towns of a different school system, Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School District, for supporting its recent district-wide request for a new school building expected to cost \$286 million.

"I guess it's appropriate, with the Tri-County voter approval this week of a \$300 million expansion, to congratulate the Tri-County district for supporting and recognizing quality vocational technical education. What's also interesting is if you look across the Commonwealth, Tri-County Regional Voc Tech was the fifth vocational school - Northeast Metropolitan, Minuteman Regional Voc Tech, Bristol-Plymouth, and Cape Cod Tech - all also approved \$300 million expansions [for] brand new facilities for their vocational technical schools. We have not requested that."

Fitzpatrick said that each year, BVT makes "a modest budgetary request which is inclusive of all expenses." He detailed the items that go into the BVT school budget, reiterated his frequent offers for town officials to visit the school, and said the BVT building is a model that other vocational technical schools hope to replicate.

Fitzpatrick said, "The state doesn't allow us to ask for equal-

ized costs or assessments in order to comply with the 1993 Ed Reform Bill;" acknowledged that Hopedale and Bellingham have been at the latter part of the budgetary process; and said that, if two-thirds of the towns vote to support then all towns are directed to honor the budget.

He said the BVT process is "very transparent;" the district is committed to collaborating with member towns; and said "it's embarrassing to think" any of their students are considered "riff raff."

Among the issues raised during the public comment segment were: revisiting the BVT charter which has not been reviewed since it was created in 1962; possible implementation of an admissions lottery; review of administrator and superintendent staffing levels, compensations, and benefits plans for BVT and the feeder districts; review of expenses related to extracurricular activities, campus amenities and student services for each district of BVT; review of admissions process; review of proposed capital projects; and agreement to a joint finance committee each year at which BVT makes one presentation to all member towns at one time.

Scott Savage of Hopedale, speaking as a resident and not a selectman, said, "It is my hope that the towns will reject the majority of the capital requests that BVT has put forward for next fiscal year. The town needs more time to review the need of these improvements and weigh the financial burden it will place on our own schools and town services."

Neal Sherman, a public school teacher in Milford, said, "I am concerned that [BVT] is not serving the needs of the sending towns. I see students in the hallways every day who would be well-served by access to a technical education but right now 75% of the graduates from BVT are college-bound...I think that it should be revisited to consider whether or not the school is serving its mission and allowing access to a high-quality education to all students from its sending

towns."

Chris Naff of Millbury asked Supt. Fitzpatrick if BVT uses a blind-lottery admission system. Fitzpatrick said they do not. "We've examined the merits of that along with colleagues throughout the Commonwealth and did not feel it represented the best way to recruit."

Naff noted that Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School uses a lottery. Fitzpatrick said Assabet is the only district in the state that uses a lottery, and "We've seen no results. We've seen nothing but turmoil. You're not speaking to the staff of the system," he said with a chuckle. "I don't want to bad-mouth any other system, but we would hardly follow the example that we've seen there."

Tony Fathom of Hopedale spoke as a parent who had three students attend BVT, and detailed their success stories.

Matt Wojcik, Town Administrator in Douglas, said he was reluctant to make a comment earlier in the evening because "our frustration level with BVT in the past has been very, very high and it has not necessarily simmered down completely as we sit here," but did note the agreement dates back to 1962 and can only be amended by unanimous vote of the member communities.

"If there's anything we need to reopen in this governance agreement, it is that each individual town needs to have its own voice, elected by its own people. We live in America, we have a representative democracy, and it is only fair that it be done that way. This governance model has outlived its useful life. Period. It can't continue like this."

*To watch the full meeting, visit [www.townhallstreams.com](http://www.townhallstreams.com)*

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# Select Board increases annual licensing fees for first time since 2014

## *Increases bring Hopedale fees closer to those charged in surrounding towns*

By THERESA KNAPP

The Town of Hopedale has increased its annual licensing fees for the first time since 2014.

Town Administrator Mitch Ruscitti told the Select Board at its Nov. 13 meeting, "Given the revenue situation we have in the community, and what the comps are for the surrounding communities, it does make sense to bump

some of these a little bit and work towards putting them in line with some of the surrounding communities."

He described the increases as "very incremental, small in nature, not projected to have adverse impact on the business community."

"They still, I will note, in many cases, particularly as it relates to the liquor licenses, are much

more affordable than Franklin, Hopkinton, and Milford by a degree of about a third in the case of Hopkinton and Franklin, and \$600 lower than Milford; so, we're still on the low end for our business community but it's more fair than where it was," said Ruscitti, noting this would be the first in a multi-step process to update fees.

### Hopedale's revised fee schedule for annual licensing

LICENSE TYPE	HOPEDALE 12/31/2014	HOPEDALE (RECOMMEND)
<b>Liquor MGL Ch. 138 Sec. 12 &amp; 15</b>		
All Alcohol on-premises	\$1,100	\$1,300
All Alcohol off-premises	\$1,100	\$1,200
Wine & Malt on-premises	\$1,100	\$1,200
Club	\$1,100	\$1,200
Inn-Holder	\$1,100	\$1,200
<b>One Day MGL Ch. 140 Sec. 14</b>		
One-day liquor non-profit	\$50	\$50
One-day liquor profit	\$100	\$100
<b>Common Victualler MGL Ch. 140 Sec. 2</b>		
	\$75	\$100
<b>Entertainment MGL Ch. 140 Sec. 183A</b>		
Annual Weekday	\$100	\$100
Annual Sunday*	\$100	\$100
Per event non-profit	\$50	\$50
Per event profit	\$100	\$100
<b>Automobile Sales MGL Ch. 140 Sec. 58</b>		
Class I	\$100	\$125
Class II	\$100	\$125
Class III (Special Permit Only)	\$100	\$125
<b>Automatic Amusement MGL Ch. 140 Sec. 177A</b>		
Coin operated device/pool table (each)	\$100	\$100
Non-coin operated pool table (each)	\$100	\$100

Source: [www.hopedale-ma.gov](http://www.hopedale-ma.gov)

# Hopedale Fire Dept. member Alexander Cappella one of 35 firefighters to graduate from Firefighting Academy

In November, State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine and Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Director Jeffrey P. Winn announced the graduation of 35

firefighters from the 50-day Career Recruit Firefighting Training Program.

Among the graduates was Alexander Cappella of the Hopedale

Fire Dept.

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more than ever," said State Fire Marshal Davine. "The hundreds of hours of foundational training they've received will provide them with the physical, mental, and

technical skills to perform their jobs effectively and safely."

*Submitted by Massachusetts Dept. of Fire Services*

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# Select Board gives update on Railroad litigation

## Oral arguments in state and federal cases expected in January

By THERESA KNAPP

The Town of Hopedale has several actions pending in the state and federal courts against the Grafton and Upton Railroad Co., Inc., regarding the land located at 364 West Street. The town is seeking to restore its right of first refusal in the state case, and is seeking relief from a preliminary injunction in the federal case “based on the admission by the owner of GURR that the railroad’s plans for the property are not workable.”

At a meeting of the Select Board on Oct. 23, under “Select Board Information Items,” Chairperson Glenda Hazard read a statement prepared by special town council Anderson Kreiger. No discussion was held. The following is a transcript of the update as read at the meeting.

“There are currently several active disputes between the Town of Hopedale and the Grafton Upton Railroad, they fall into two categories: [1] state court litigation about the right of first refusal to buy forestland under Chapter 61, and (2) federal court litigation about eminent domain under Chapter 79.

“State court litigation and Chapter 61. Hopedale is currently litigating in the Massachusetts Land Court against the GURR. That case involves whether Hopedale has a right of first refusal to buy the property at 364 West Street and whether GURR obtained the title to the property in violation of Chapter 61. Chapter 61 is a Massachusetts state statute that allows property owners to obtain favor-

able tax treatment in exchange for conserving the property as forestland. [For] the granting of this favorable tax treatment, the tax receives a first right of refusal if the property owner seeks to sell the property or change its use in any way from conservation. In this case, Hopedale alleges that GURR obtained title to 364 West Street in violation of this statute, and so the town should be given the chance to buy the property at the price paid by GURR. The town initially filed a claim in Land Court alleging a violation of Chapter 61 but then settled with GURR and dismissed the case. The Hopedale/GURR settlement agreement was later deemed ineffective by a Massachusetts Superior Court judge after a lawsuit by a group of residents in Hopedale. The Superior Court’s decision was later affirmed by the Massachusetts Appeals Court. In keeping with the decision by the Superior Court and the Appeals Court, the group of residents have now intervened in the Land Court case, meaning that they are full participants in that litigation. The group of residents and the town have motions to vacate the town’s dismissal in order to restore the Chapter 61 claim. GURR will respond to these motions and the Land Court judge will hear oral arguments in January.

“Federal court litigation under Chapter 79. In parallel to the state court litigation, the town is currently litigating in federal court against the GURR. The case involves whether Hopedale can take a portion of the 364

West Street by eminent domain under Chapter 79 of the Massachusetts General Laws. GURR has argued that a railroad-related federal law prevents the town from using eminent domain. The federal Trial Court agreed with GURR at a preliminary hearing and enjoined the town from taking the property. The pre-

liminary injunction is currently on appeal before the Federal Appellate Court with oral arguments tentatively scheduled for January. Based on the admission by the owner of GURR that the railroad’s plans for the property are not workable, the town is also seeking relief from preliminary injunction in the Trial Court. When the Trial Court enjoined Hopedale, it paused the federal case and ordered GURR

to file a case before the Surface Transportation Board, a federal agency that regulates rail carriers, to get its analysis of the dispute. GURR did so in April 2023 and its petition is pending before the STB.”

To watch the Oct. 23, 2023, meeting of the Hopedale Select Board, visit [bit.ly/HopedaleSB10232023](http://bit.ly/HopedaleSB10232023)

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# Bancroft Memorial Library

50 Hopedale Street, Hopedale  
 Contact: Tricia Perry, Library Director 508-634-2209  
 tperry@cwmars.org

## Holiday Hours

Monday, December 25  
 CLOSED  
 Monday, January 1 CLOSED

## Santa's Porch Drop Off Location

The Bancroft Memorial Library is now a drop off for Santa's Porch! Donations of new, unwrapped gifts will be accepted through Wednesday, December 20.

## Giving Tree

We invite our generous patrons to donate handmade knit items (hats, mittens, scarves, etc.) as well as gift cards or other items to be given to the Milford Food Pantry who will distribute the donations. Please add your name to one of the paper ornaments decorating our tree (which will be located upstairs at the Library) along with your donation.

You can make this winter a bit warmer for someone! Donations will be collected until Wednesday, December 20.

## Hopedale Downtown Winter Stroll

The Library will be open from 10am-6pm on Saturday, December 2 as part of the Winter Stroll with plenty of fun activities! Stop in anytime during the day to receive 1 free raffle ticket for a special gift basket!

Free Make and Take "Paint Stick Snowperson" Craft (for all ages): 10am - 5:30pm

Hot Cocoa and Hot Mulled Cider: 4pm - 6pm

Friends of the Library "A Book On Every Bed" Ongoing Book Sale: 12pm - 6pm

## Community Conversations Sponsored by Hopedale For Change

Community Conversations will meet this month on Wednesday, December 6 at 6:30pm. If you are interested in joining the conversation, please sign up at

the Circulation Desk or online on our website.

## Helen Symonds Book Group

The Helen Symonds Book Group will meet Dec. 6, 2023 at 1:00 pm in the Library meeting room. We will discuss *The Children's Blizzard* by Melanie Benjamin. If you are not on the current book group list, books are available in the Library. Everyone is welcome to join the discussion! "The brutal storm that whirled up suddenly on an enchantingly mild and sunny day in January 1888 just as schools let out became known as the Children's Blizzard for all the young lives it claimed. Drawing on oral histories of the Great Plains blizzard of 1888, Benjamin depicts the experiences of two teachers, a servant, and a reporter who risk everything to protect the children of immigrant homesteaders." - CWMARS summary

## Maker Mondays

Join our evening crafting

workshop on Monday, December 18 at 6:30pm. We will again be joined by Talia Lefton for an amazing felting workshop. This program is sponsored by The Friends of the Hopedale Library. Registration is required and space is limited. Register online today!

## Wednesday Needlework Group

The Wednesday Needlework Group will not meet this winter. See you in the spring!

## News from The Friends of the Hopedale Library

### Shop Our Ongoing Book Sale During the Winter Stroll

Be sure to stop by the Ongoing Book Sale area downstairs in the Library during the Winter Stroll on December 2nd. We will have a special selection of holiday books and decorations. Don't forget you can shop anytime the Library is open. We are constantly refreshing the selection. Funds raised go right back to the Library to support museum passes and programming.

### Holiday Harmony Quartet

Come hear the sounds of the season on Saturday, December 9th at 1 pm with the local a cappella group Holiday Harmony Quartet. This free event will take place in the upstairs Reading Room. To register, please sign up at the upstairs registration desk or call 508-634-2209.

## News from the Marjorie Hattersley Children's Room

Registration is encouraged but not required for all events. Please visit our website to register online.

### Afternoon Free Play - Preschoolers - Fridays (12/1, 15, 29) 1pm

Preschool age children can come together for playtime at the Library. Meet up with your friends and have some afternoon fun!

### Homeschool Meetup - Families - 1st Monday (12/4) 1pm

Get together, meet other families, share information and experiences while helping the Library learn what we can do to support you. Drop in.

### Rhyme Time - Ages 2 - 4 years - every Tuesday (12/5, 12, 19, 26) 10:00am

Fun with story time, music

and movement as we build beginner reading skills. Drop in.

### Toddler Tunes - Ages 1 - 3 - every Tuesday (12/5, 12, 19, 26) 11:00am

Gross motor skills are the focus as we have fun with dancing, throwing, catching, kicking and using instruments. Drop in.

### Teen Advisory - Grades 6 - 12 - 1st Wednesday (12/6) 5pm

Meet to discuss interests, activities and how the Library can best support Hopedale's teen community. We will share some pizza and there will be video games to play as well. Registration required.

### Alpha-nauts! - Ages 4 - 6 - every Thursday (12/7, 14, 21, 28) 10am

Come explore the universe of the Alphabet as we build emergent reading skills. Registration required.

### Busy Babies - Ages 0 - 18 mos - every Thursday (12/7, 14, 21, 28) 11am

Come for a story and fun with toys intended to encourage your infant's motor and language development and meet other beginning families in our community too! Drop in.

### Saturday Family Fun - Families - Saturdays (12/9, 23) 11am-1pm

Have some fun at the Library! Drop in. Check the calendar for more information.

Elementary Engineers - Ages 5-7 - 2nd Monday (12/11) 1pm  
 Elementary Engineers is a building-focused group activity. Building materials and an objective will be provided each class and the students must work collectively to complete the objective. Registration is required and is limited to 8 attendees.

### Book Cubs - Grades 2 - 3 - 2nd Wednesday (12/13) 4pm

Check out the book, read it over the month, then come together for a peer discussion and a related activity. Registration required.

### Monster Squad - Ages 8-12 - 3rd Monday (12/18) 1pm

Join the Monster Squad! Each month we will study a monster or cryptid. We will review the

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# The Clash Against The Magnificent Seven



Glenn Brown, CFP

Never before has the S&P 500 been this top-heavy.

The seven largest companies by market capitalization (Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Alphabet, Nvidia, Meta, and Tesla) comprise more than 29% of the S&P 500 index. These companies dubbed the "Magnificent Seven" have performed very well in 2023.

### The Only Band (of stocks) That Matters?

A November 14th Goldman Sachs report shared that the Magnificent Seven have gained 71% this year while the other 493 stocks in the S&P 500 have gained just 6%.

Given market cap distribution, which allows larger stocks to contribute more to the index's movements, the S&P 500 has gained +19% this year.

Thus, if one owns the other 493 stocks but not the Magnificent Seven, they're trailing the S&P 500 Index by ~13%.

### "Di-worse-ification"?!

As for other asset classes YTD through 11/14:

+9.1% - MSCI EAFE (International) Index.

- +7.5% - Gold.
- +5.1% - Dow Jones Industrial Average (Apple, Microsoft are components).
- +5.0% - MSCI Emerging Markets Index.
- +3.4% - U.S. Small Cap (Russell 2000) Index.
- +0.4% - U.S. Aggregate Bond Index.
- 0.6% - Morningstar U.S. Real Estate Index.

What of dividend stocks? Vanguard's Dividend Appreciation +7.9% trails S&P 500 Index by ~11% even though its largest holdings Apple and Microsoft are ~9%. It can't own other Magnificent Seven stocks because they don't pay dividends (yet).

Before asking, what about NASDAQ 100's +34.6%? Understand, Magnificent Seven are 44% of that index's 100 stocks.

### Death or Glory.

Yes, Magnificent Seven 2023 returns are eye-popping, but let's review 2022 then add together for net total return (not average) from 01/01/22 -11/14/23.

Apple: **2022 -26%**; 2023 +45%; Net +7%

Microsoft: **'22 -28%**; '23 +56%; Net +12%

Amazon: **'22 -50%**; '23 +74%; Net -13%

Alphabet: **'22 -39%**; '23 +51%; Net -8%

Nvidia: **'22 -51%**; '23 +240%; Net +69%

Meta: **'22 -64%**; '23 +179%; Net 0%

Tesla: **'22 -65%**; '23 +93%; Net -32%

Still, since 2018 the Magnificent Seven have outpaced the S&P 500 and Nasdaq 100. Not the first time a concentrated group of tech stocks outper-

formed 5 years to sit near the top of S&P 500.

### The Four Horsemen.

In the late 90s, Dell, Cisco Systems, Intel and Microsoft were deemed The Four Horsemen.

To end 1999, the Top 10 S&P 500 Index holdings were - Microsoft, General Electric, Cisco, ExxonMobil, Wal-Mart, Intel, Lucent, IBM, America Online and Citigroup. Notice 7 out of Top 10 were technology. Dell was #18, between Nortel Networks and MCI Worldcom.

A "What Happened To...?" article should be done, but understand from 2000-2009, aka "The Lost Decade", the S&P 500 Index lost -9%. The best performing Four Horseman, Microsoft, had a -36% decline for 2000s.

### Diversification and Equal-Weight At Work.

If S&P 500 was negative for the 2000s, so was everything else. Right?

Nope.

Per indices cited previously, Gold returned +274%, U.S. REITs +162%, Emerging Markets +154%, U.S. Bonds +85%, U.S. Small Caps +44%, and International stocks was +12%.

Additionally, the Equal-Weight S&P 500 Index was +65% for the 2000s.

An equal-weight index is when all components are weighted equally. In today's terms, a Magnificent Seven stock impacts the same as Lululemon, Hubbell and Blackstone, all recently added to S&P 500 Index.

### Should I Stay or Should I Go?

This isn't to say sell this or buy

that, as everyone's situation is different with goals, taxes, risk tolerance and timelines. It's to help educate, understand what you own and why you own it.

You should go to your CFP for your customized recommendations.

*The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual.*

Glenn Brown is a Holliston

resident and owner of PlanDynamic, LLC, www.PlanDynamic.com. Glenn is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ helping motivated people take control of their planning and investing, so they can balance kids, aging parents and financial independence.

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# Holiday Stroll Dec. 2

**The 12th Annual Hopedale Winter Stroll will be held on Saturday, Dec. 2, in downtown Hopedale.**

New This Year! We have added a Shop Hop to the event to include any Hopedale businesses & organizations that would like to take part but are not located downtown. The stroll takes place at many stops along Hopedale Street and Dutcher Street including many historic buildings such as the Draper Gym, Hopedale Community House, Bancroft Memorial Library, Hopedale Unitarian Church, Union

Evangelical Church and the Little Red Shop Museum. Our Shop Hop list will also include stops all over Hopedale for you to visit, shop, eat and enjoy! Multiple vendor locations will showcase work from local vintage vendors, hand makers, artisans, food vendors and mobile shops. Many businesses will take part in the Stroll and Shop Hop with special offers for customers.

Past years have included

performers setup along the route like live music at the park, costumed characters, outdoor movies and carolers roaming the route while our guests stroll from stop.

All of this ending in the long standing and popular town tradition of the tree lighting and Santa visit at the Hopedale Community House.

# Select Board makes appointments, accepts donations

By THERESA KNAPP

At its meetings on Oct. 23 and Nov. 13, the Hopedale Select Board made appointments and accepted donations:

The board:

- Appointed Lisa Donovan as Full-time Public Safety Dispatcher, effective Oct. 23
- Promoted Robert Minichiello to Call Firefighter, effective Oct. 23

- Appointed Timothy Morse as Provisional Full-time Firefighter/EMT, effective Nov. 15

The board also accepted the following donations:

- \$2,000 from Hopedale Friends of Elders, Inc. to supplement program funding
- \$63,519.41 from anonymous donor to fund legal fees associated with West Street litigation

# Openings on Hopedale High Alumni Association Board

The Alumni Association is looking for graduates of Hopedale Jr. Sr. High School to fill two volunteer positions on its Board of Directors.

As an independent, non-profit organization un-affiliated with the Hopedale school system, the Alumni Association oversees the distribution of annual trust fund scholarships awarded to HHS students, as well as academic grants for grades preschool through 12th.

The Board meets in-person quarterly at the Community House. Candidates with a background in finance or investing would be ideal, but this is not a mandatory requirement for consideration. If interested, please email [hopedalealumni@gmail.com](mailto:hopedalealumni@gmail.com)

Additional details on the Hopedale High School Alumni Association can be found at: <http://hopedale-alumni.org>

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### LIBRARY

*continued from page 8*

information, evidence and history regarding this creature. We will use scientific reasoning as we take notes and share thoughts to reach conclusions regarding the creature. We will end the class with a project related to what we have studied. Registration is required with a maximum of 12 registrations per class.

Raucous Readers - Grades 4 - 5 - 3rd Wednesday(12/20) 4pm  
Check out the book, read it over the month, then come together for a peer discussion and a related activity. Registration required.

Teen Movie Night - Wednesday(12/20) 6pm

Holiday Vacation  
Join us for fun activities during Holiday Vacation!  
Tuesday(12/26) - Art Fun  
Wednesday(12/27) -TBD  
Thursday(12/28) - Movie  
Friday(12/29)-TBD  
Saturday(12/30) Back to the 80s! Drop in from 10am-1pm for some 1980s fun at the Library! Make crafts, play games, and more. It will be totally rad! All ages welcome.

*For updates throughout the month, Friend us on Facebook and sign up at [www.wowbrary.org](http://www.wowbrary.org) to discover the Library's newest books, movies and music. Visit [www.hopedale-ma.gov/bancroft-memorial-library](http://www.hopedale-ma.gov/bancroft-memorial-library).*

# Hopedale Author Visit

By CHLOE ZHANG

Over the summer, junior high students of Hopedale read the books of Francisco Stork for their summer reading. Stork is a fictional writer for young adults, often writing stories derived from his own experiences. The students got to read his books that touched on real-life issues, such as mental illnesses and violence. Through his writing, Stork allows young adults to have a place in which they can escape reality.

Francisco Xavier Arguelles was born in Monterey, Mexico to a single mother. It wasn't until later in his life that his name would eventually be changed into Francisco Stork from his stepdad, Charles Stork. Charles supported Stork's dream to become a writer and encouraged him by giving him a typewriter for his birthday. This typewriter would not only allow Stork to start writing, but it also helped him to break into the world of writing on his own. Eventually, when Stork turned 9, Charles wanted to bring the family to America to create a better

life. his was not easy since Charles was 65 at the time.

The family lived in a series of apartments and trailer homes before being evicted. It was when Stork was thirteen, that Charles died in an automobile accident. Even through this difficult time, Stork's mom Ruth wanted to continue their life in the United States and eventually was able to obtain an apartment from a housing project in El Paso. It was around this time that Stork started to focus on his education, which would eventually lead him to receive a scholarship that allowed him to pursue school and his dream of writing. After college, Stork worked in law before publishing his first book "The Way of The Jaguar".

Stork's books speak about different aspects of mental illness, which helps him connect to his young-adult audience. He chooses to write about these things because he recognizes the stigma with mental health and wants to show teens that it's perfectly normal to.... Stork's pursuit and love for writing are

clearly shown through his writing and how he describes his favorite aspects of being a writer.

"To me, there's a lot of pleasure in writing, and the writing process. I think the reason why I enjoy writing so much is because I started writing at a fairly young age. I feel like journaling when I was younger allowed me to recognize that writing is a tool, a coping mechanism, and a way for people to escape reality. I write for the reason that I enjoy but also because it makes you forget the world around you and lose track of time."

Stork also shared his process of writing, and the steps that led him to become an author for the students who want to pursue a job in the creative writing field.

"You just have to have patience, you know, a lot of kids want to start writing and want to publish a book right away, but it takes a while. You have to believe in the practice of reading and writing. I think that a lot of kids at this age also don't know what they want to do with their life. Three things to keep in mind to



know what to do with your life, do something you love, do something you're good at, do something helpful to others."

On Oct. 11, the junior high students of Hopedale welcomed Stork to their school to speak with Stork and learn about his experiences. Many of the students enjoyed his writing and the different ways he incorporated mental illnesses, such as depression, throughout his story. The students enjoyed Stork's presentation and what he had to say.

"It was interesting how he can come up with all those ideas!"-Yousef A.

"The author's writing was

creative, how he related it to his writing, and how his stories reflect his life" - Adaline B.

"I thought that the author was inspiring due to his connection to his stories. You can tell how interested he is in sharing his reading journey."- Maggie F.

"I really really enjoyed his visit and I thought that it was very intriguing!" - Abby K.

Stork's visit at Hopedale allowed the students to learn more about the career field of creative writing, as well as ways they can also enter the field. Through his presentation, he was able to engage the students and teach them about the process of writing.

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By: ROGER M. KALDAWY, M.D.  
MILFORD FRANKLIN EYE CENTER

A chalazion, commonly known as a sty, is a small, painless lump that forms on the eyelid due to a blocked meibomian gland. This obstruction leads to the accumulation of oil and subsequent swelling. Although generally harmless, a chalazion can cause discomfort and aesthetic concerns. In this article, we will explore the multifaceted aspects of chalazion, including its origins, the potential role of Demodex mites, and whether a connection exists between a chalazion and domestic pets. Furthermore, we will delve into the significance of Xdemvy in the treatment of Demodex blepharitis, offering readers a thorough understanding of this very common ocular condi-

tion and its management.

#### Origins of Chalazion

A chalazion primarily stems from the occlusion of meibomian glands, responsible for secreting oils that lubricate the eyes. Several factors contribute to this occlusion, including:

- 1-Hypersecretion of Sebum: Excessive oil production can lead to the thickening of the sebum, hindering its proper flow from the gland.
- 2-Bacterial Infections: Infections can incite inflammation and glandular obstruction, culminating in the formation of a chalazion.
- 3-Demodex Mite Influence: Demodex mites,

microscopic organisms that inhabit hair follicles, including those on the eyelids, have been suggested to play a role in chalazion development. Studies indicate that an overpopulation of these mites may contribute to meibomian gland blockage, though further research is needed to establish a conclusive link.

#### The Role of Demodex Mites in Chalazion Development

Demodex mites, tiny arachnids that naturally inhabit human skin and hair follicles, are commonly found in the eyelid area and in particular on the eyelashes. While their presence is



considered normal in some cases, an excess of Demodex mites could potentially contribute to meibomian gland blockage, leading to the formation of a chalazion. Demodex mites infestation has been found in 50% of children with chalazion compared to no mites in healthy controls. This mite was also associated with recurrent and multiple chalazion. Ongoing research aims to elucidate the precise relationship between Demodex mites and chalazion, seeking to determine their significance as a contributing factor to the condition.

#### Blepharitis Treatment

Xdemvy, a topical medication, plays a pivotal role in the treatment of Demodex blepharitis, a condition characterized by an overpopulation of Demodex mites on the eyelids. This innovative formulation contains targeted ingredients designed to effectively combat Demodex mites, alleviating symptoms and facilitating recovery. Xdemvy has demonstrated remarkable efficacy in clinical trials, making it a valuable addition to the arsenal of treatments for Demodex-related ocular conditions.

#### Chalazion and Pets

Although owning cats or dogs is not directly linked to chalazion, it is important to note that Demodex mites are also prevalent in pets. Consequently, individuals who have close contact with pets, especially those that share sleeping spaces or maintain frequent physical proximity, may face a potential of Demodex mite transmission. It is crucial to emphasize that chalazion is not an inevitable consequence of pet ownership. Many factors enter in the equation including the owner immune system strength.

#### Comprehensive Treatment Options

**Warm Compresses:** Applying a warm compress to the affected eyelid for intervals of 10-15 minutes, several times a day, serves to soften the blockage and facilitate natural drainage. This simple yet effective technique can significantly alleviate discomfort.

**Eyelid Massages:** After applying a warm compress, gently massaging the eyelid in a circular motion can further aid in releasing the obstructed oil and hasten the resolution of the chalazion.

#### The Significance of Xdemvy in Demodex

EYES

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# Dancing Arts Center Presents The Nutcracker at The Norwood Theatre

Dancing Arts Center is pleased to announce the return of The Nutcracker at the Norwood Theatre on December 15-17, 2023. This will be Dancing Arts Center's ninth production of The Nutcracker presented in Norwood and will feature fresh choreography, fun surprises, and guest artists. Telling the story of Clara's Christmas Eve dream battling the Mouse Queen alongside her Nutcracker, dancing through the Land of Snow, sampling the Kingdom of Sweets, and meeting the Sugarplum Fairy and Cavalier, The Nutcracker has been captivating audiences and inspiring young dancers for generations. The beautiful and historic Norwood Theatre located in downtown Norwood, Massachusetts makes an ideal setting for this family-friendly and pro-

fessional production of the traditional holiday ballet. Dancing Arts Center co-Di-

rectors Patrick Notaro and Gregg Saulnier anticipate their spirited, diverse cast will bring much joy to the community this holiday season. The role of Clara will be danced en pointe by 13-year-olds Brooke Holden of Medfield

and Amelie Perrott of Holliston, while the featured roles of Spanish, Arabian, and Dew Drop natives Jacqueline Vaughn (aged 15) and Avery Marion (aged 14) will perform Columbine Doll, with 18-year-old John Fumia of Hopedale reprising his role as the Nutcracker Prince. "While much effort goes into ensuring our dancers are physically prepared, we really emphasize the storytelling aspect of our production," said Mr. Saulnier. "With Brooke and Amelie each bringing unique artistic interpretations to 'Clara' and our mix of newer and more seasoned dancers, our Nutcracker has a tremendous energy."

These young dancers will be joined by professional guest artists Kirsten Evans as the Sugarplum Fairy and Mamuka Kikalishvili as the Cavalier. Ms. Evans, a native of Seekonk, Massachusetts, danced many roles in her career with Ballet Rhode Island (formerly Festival Ballet Providence), while Mr. Kikalish-

vili is from Tbilisi, Georgia and danced with Hungarian National Ballet and Hong Kong Ballet. Dancing Arts Center is thrilled to have artists of such experience and caliber dance alongside its students for the 2023 production of The Nutcracker. In effort to support accessibility to the arts for the youth in our community, Dancing Arts Center will present a special Student Matinée performance of The Nutcracker at 10 a.m. on Friday, December 15. Student Matinée tickets are offered at a deep discount for public and private school groups of 10 or more. Home school and distance learning groups are also welcome.

Tickets are on sale now for four general public matinées and evening performances from December 15-17. Purchase options are available at <https://norwood-stage.com/the-nutcracker-2023>.



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Fairy will be danced by Gabrielle Schmid of Holliston and Meghan Bourque of North Attleboro, both aged 17. Holliston

## EYES

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**Antibiotic Ointments or Drops:** In instances where bacterial infection is suspected, a healthcare provider may prescribe topical antibiotics to combat the infection and expedite the healing process.

**Xdemvy Application:** In cases of Demodex-related ocular conditions, Xdemvy serves as a highly effective treatment option, targeting Demodex mites directly and aiding in their elimination.

**Steroid Injections:** For more persistent or severe chalazion, your ophthalmologist may administer a steroid injection to mitigate inflammation and hasten resolution.

**Surgical Drainage:** In cases where other treatments prove ineffective, a minor surgical procedure may be performed to create a small incision for drainage. This option is reserved for particularly stubborn or large chalazion.

## Conclusion

Chalazion, while generally benign, can be an uncomfortable and visually noticeable condition. Understanding the potential causes, including factors such as Demodex mites, and discern-

ing the potential connection with pets, can aid individuals in effectively managing this ocular ailment. Incorporating innovative treatments like Xdemvy in the management of Demodex-related ocular conditions adds a powerful tool to the healthcare provider's armamentarium. Should one suspect the presence of a chalazion or Demodex-related blepharitis, seeking consultation with your eyecare provider is paramount for accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment. With 2 full-time external disease specialists on staff, 7 ophthalmologists and optometrists, 3 locations including a surgery center in Milford, our eye centers offer state-of-the-art equipment to diagnose and treat eye problems, including chalazion. We have published research papers and lectured to other physicians on the subject. We are now a referral center for difficult cases of ocular surface disease, chalazion and ocular rosacea. We continue our mission to provide world class eye care for the entire family.

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# Sports

## Looking To Out-Do Mom

By CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,  
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Hopedale's Phoebe Carroll was thrust into sports at a young age and not by her own hand.

Her mother played basketball in high school and college and thought that it would be good for her daughter to get involved with it.

"I think it was around kindergarten when my mom forced me to play basketball because it was something that she did," Carroll said. "Originally I was not into it, but it eventually it became fun to play."

Carroll also takes part in volleyball and softball in addition to her time on the court for the Blue Raiders. The sophomore began

playing club basketball in the fifth grade for the Central Mass Swarm and as of late has been involved with the Mass Huskies.

Being that Hopedale Jr/Sr High School allows seventh- and eighth-graders to participate in their sporting programs, Carroll decided to try out for the team during her first year in the high school. As a seventh-grader she made the varsity squad but found it tough to get playing time with 11 talent athletes ahead of her. But she said she learned a lot sitting on the bench.

The following year she was part of the Blue Raiders' magical run through the Division 5 State Tournament. Along with her Hopedale teammates, the team



and earn themselves a spot in the tournament where they captured two wins before falling in the Round of 16.

"Phoebe has become a versatile player who is very athletic," the Hopedale Coach said. "She has been put into a leadership role at such a young age."

Coming into her sophomore season, the 6'0" center will be looked upon to do a lot for her team this year.

"It should be an interesting season," she said. "Last year we had no seniors on the team; this year we should be stronger and will defiantly be better."

Now that the Blue Raiders have some upper classmen on the squad, Carroll is hoping that the squad can once again go all the way through the Division 5 Tournament.

"I want to win it all again and being a part of getting the team to that point," she said. "As a team leader I want to help this team get another championship."

In addition to getting Hopedale into another Championship game and winning it, she has another goal. Before she graduates Hopedale Jr/Sr High School, she wants to eclipse that 1000-point barrier.

"My goal is to hit 1001 points during my Hopedale career," Carroll said. "MY mom's name is on that banner with 1000 points and I want my name to go above hers and beat out her record."

While she still has three seasons of basketball still on her docket, when she does leave Hopedale, Carroll is hoping that she can continue playing basketball on the collegiate level. She knows that at this point she is fully capable of driving to the hoop but would like to improve her shooting outside of the key, especially her three-point shooting.

With three years still remaining in her Blue Raiders career, Carroll has plenty of time to improve her game for college, but in the meantime, she is looking at putting up another State Championship banner for girls' basketball.



won all five of its games in pretty remarkable fashion. Hopedale had wins of 32, 29, 28, 2 and 10 points in the Championship contest.

"As an eighth-grader, I was starting with four seniors. It was scary, but by playing with them I became more confident in my game," she said. "The varsity game was much faster than anything I had ever been involved in and I had to keep up with them; eventually I got used to it."

The youngster had fun playing with the likes of Bre Frongillo that season and when it came time for the championship game, she was not really aware what they were actually playing for.

"That season was really fun and as stupid as it sounds, I was not even aware of what was going on - I thought it was just another game," Carroll said.

Although she didn't know what was at stake, Coach Jason Rojee noted that his eighth-grade forward had herself a phenomenal game. Carroll hauled down an incredible 23 rebounds during the game and was the team's leading scorer and rebounder throughout the regular

season with 14 points and 12 rebounds per game.

"She just went out and played her hardest, like she does every game," Cheryl Carroll said. "She was part of a special team that year and being so young she really didn't know what was going on, she was just doing her part."

Through the years Coach Rojee has seen Carroll's confidence and maturity grow and as a freshman last winter she took a lot on her shoulders. Although the Blue Raiders did not win another State Championship, the team did manage to go 9-11

## Real Estate Corner

### Recent Home Sales

Date	Hopedale	Amount
11/16/2023	113 Laurelwood Dr.	\$385,000
11/13/2023	10 Driftway St.	\$485,000
10/27/2023	27 Gannett Way	\$770,000
10/24/2023	4 Jackson Way	\$620,000
10/18/2023	6 Rockridge Rd.	\$875,000

Source: www.zillow.com / Compiled by Local Town Pages



The 4-bed, 4-bath, 7,885 sf house at 4 Jackson Way in Hopedale recently sold for \$620,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com

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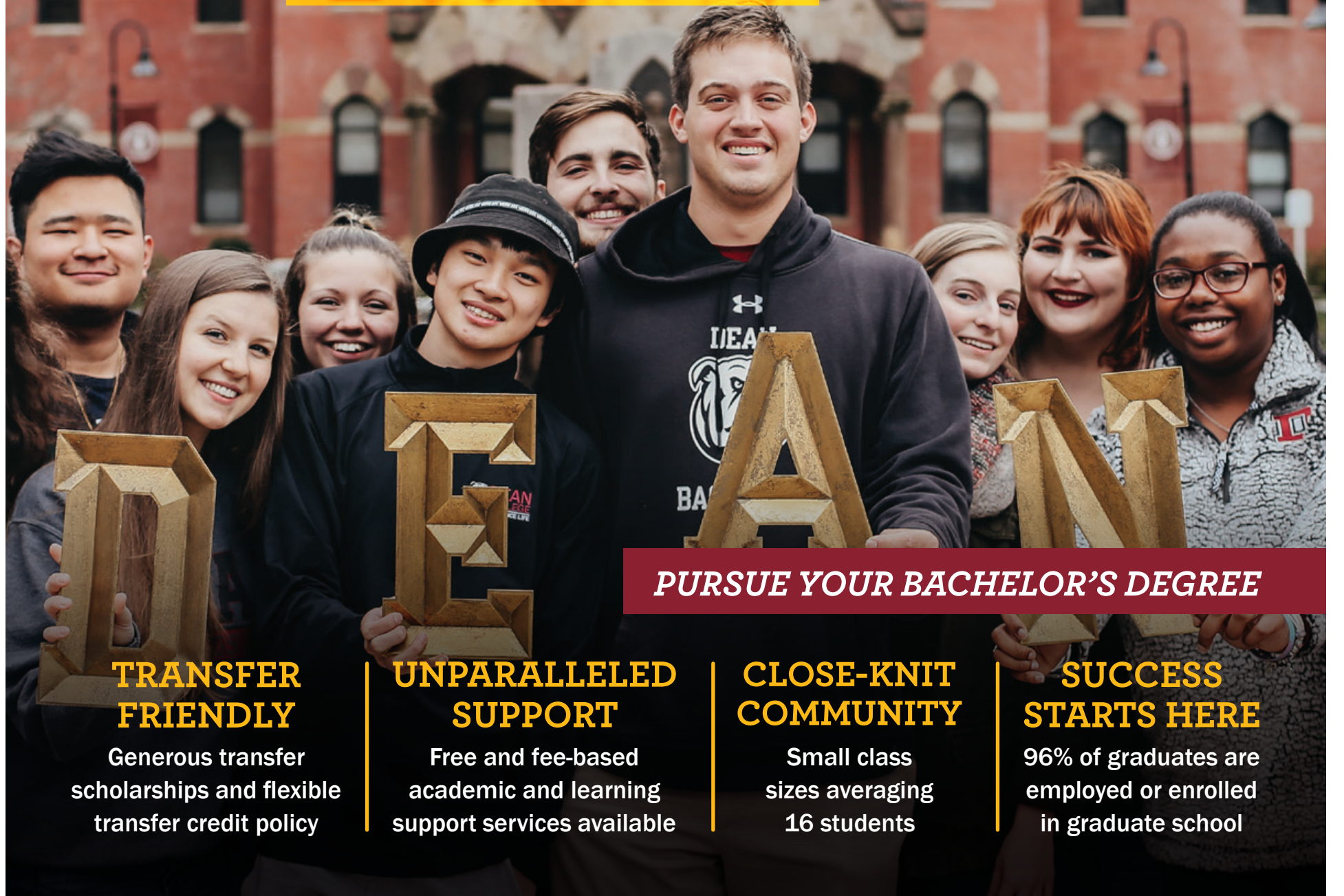
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1 12:00 pm Senior Center closes
4 9:00 am Free Panera 9:00 am Bridge 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 12:30 pm BINGO	5 9:00 am Yoga with Crystal 9:30 am Grocery Shopping 12:30 pm Mah-Jongg 12:30 pm Bridge 3:30 pm Dance Class  <i>Errand Van Available</i>	6 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 11:00 am Meditation 12:30 pm Literature 1:00 pm Cribbage	7 9:30 am "Trim the Tree" Party 10:00 am Watercolor Class 1:00 pm Tai Chi  <i>Medicare Open Enrollment Ends Errand Van Available</i>	8 12:00 pm Senior Center closes
11 9:00 am Free Panera 9:00 am Bridge 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise  12:30 pm BINGO	12 9:00 am Yoga with Crystal 12:30 pm Mah-Jongg 12:30 pm Bridge 3:30 pm Dance Class	13 9:30 am Nurse Clinic 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise 11:00 am Meditation 12:30 pm Literature 1:00 pm Cribbage	14 10:00 am Watercolor Class  <b>12:00 pm Holiday Party</b>  1:00 pm Tai Chi	15 12:00 pm Senior Center closes
18 9:00 am Free Panera 9:00 am Bridge 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise  12:00 pm Holiday Lunch and BINGO	19 9:00 am Yoga with Crystal 9:30 am Grocery Shopping 12:30 pm Mah-Jongg 12:30 pm Bridge 3:30 pm Dance Class  <i>Errand Van Available</i>	20 10:00 am Low Impact Exercise  <b>No Meditation Class No Literature Class</b> 1:00 pm Cribbage	21 10:00 am Watercolor Class 10:00 am Knitters' Group  1:00 pm Tai Chi  <b>No COA Board Meeting</b>  <i>Errand Van Available</i>	22 12:00 pm Senior Center closes
25 <b>CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY</b> 	26 9:00 am Yoga with Crystal 12:30 pm Mah-Jongg 12:30 pm Bridge  <b>No Dance Class</b>	27 <b>No Low Impact Exercise</b> 11:00 am Meditation 12:30 pm Literature 1:00 pm Cribbage	28 <b>No Watercolor Class</b>  1:00 pm Tai Chi	29 <b>No Low Impact Exercise</b> 12:00 pm Senior Center closes

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