

## Locals remember first-ever Aerosmith concert in Mendon

**Band's first performance was at Nipmuc in Nov. 1970**

By Linda Chuss

MENDON - Nearly everyone knows Aerosmith, the legendary band that formed in the 70s (and has been active ever since) and who was inducted into the Rock and Hall of Fame in 2001. Many people know the group hails from Massachusetts and think of them as Boston-based, but few know Aerosmith's earliest roots are right here in Mendon.

On Nov. 6, 1970, Joe Perry then of Hopedale, and his four bandmates played their first paid concert – at that time, considered a “student dance” – in the gym at Nipmuc Regional High School, now Miscoe Hill Middle School, in Mendon.

Among those who attended that night was Philip McRobert now of Hopkinton.



Aerosmith as Brad Whitford joins, 1971 (Photo: Chris Smith)

Photo entitled “Aerosmith as Brad Whitford joins, 1971 (Photo: Chris Smith)”. Photo courtesy of Dan Malloy at [www.hope1842.com/hope1842/aerosmithknowall.html](http://www.hope1842.com/hope1842/aerosmithknowall.html)

“I didn’t know who the band was, but my friend Mark Moser from Upton did and said we had to go because they were really good. Tickets were cheap,

under a dollar, so a small group of us went. At that point, we had already gradu-

**AEROSMITH**

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## MURSD slowly changing mascot imagery to reflect inclusivity



By Linda Chuss

The Mendon-Upton Regional School District works to unify two towns into one cohesive school system that reflects its mission and values, including belonging and inclusivity, according to Superintendent Maureen Cohen. Among

the forms that takes is how the schools are represented in their names and images.

“Over the past few years, the district has been modernizing

**MASCOT**

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# Nipmuc Athletic Director Chris Schmidt named District 2 Athletic Director of the Year

Mendon-Upton Regional School Superintendent Maureen Cohen and Nipmuc Regional High School Co-Principals Mary Anne Moran and John Clements are pleased to announce that Nipmuc Regional High School Athletic Director Chris Schmidt has been selected as Division 2 Athletic Director of the Year by

the Massachusetts Secondary Schools Athletic Directors Association (MSSADA)

Co-Principals Moran and Clements congratulated Schmidt, citing his leadership and significant accomplishments on behalf of the District and its students, such as revitalizing parent groups, establishing leadership training

for student-athletes, revamping awards and celebrations, and launching e-sports programs to expand student involvement.

Schmidt also has used his advocacy to expand awareness of mental health. In 2022 he collaborated with the Kyle Cares Foundation to host a conference with all Dual Valley Conference (DVC) captains.

Students received training, knowledge, and inspiration to use athletics to promote and destigmatize mental health. This led to the formation of a student club to continue this vital work.

“Over the course of his years at our school, Chris has led - without exaggeration - a transformational change in our athletic department,” Co-Principals Moran and Clements shared. “He began this work by meeting with student-athletes, coaches, teachers, parents, and community members to learn about their hopes for our athletic program. He then skillfully developed a formal vision and action plan that have helped Nipmuc athletics not only to achieve in competition but also



**Nipmuc Regional High School Athletic Director Chris Schmidt has been selected as Division 2 Athletic Director of the Year by the Massachusetts Secondary Schools Athletic Directors Association.** Photo Courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District

to be a driver of our core values and a tremendous source of school and community pride.”

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## ‘Welcome Guide’ assists Mendon-Upton Spanish Immersion Teachers in transition to new life

In the fall of 2022, four new Spanish immersion teachers arrived in Mendon-Upton Regional School District, all from Spain

Moving their families and settling in a new job in a new country is a tremendous transition. Several parents, administrators, and members of the MURSD Spanish Immersion Board recognized the challenges and wanted to make this transition easier.

This was the genesis of the Spanish Immersion Transition Sub-Committee, a group of parents, teachers and administrators who met regularly during the 2022-2023 academic year to develop ways to better support new educators making a significant move to the District.

The group created a “Welcome Guide” that included information about obtaining a driver’s license and Social Security card, finding a place

to live, identifying local doctors and child care options, among other potential needs. Parents in the group networked and researched resources. The guide can be found at [bit.ly/MURSD\\_SI\\_WelcomeGuide](http://bit.ly/MURSD_SI_WelcomeGuide)

Cayla McBee, one of the parents, said, “I am struck by the generosity of the parents who donated their time and expertise to the project and I am excited to see our efforts improve the transition experienced by teachers moving to our District.”

The group completed the Welcome Guide in June. Immersion teacher Marta Calvo translated the document and shared it with two incoming Immersion teachers this fall.

Nazaret Molina, one of these teachers, said, “I want to express my gratitude for the Welcome Guide document, which greatly helped me streamline the long documentation process for moving from Spain to the



Mendon-Upton presenters at the "Better Together: Family School Partnership Summit" were, from left, parents Aimee Osterhus and Cayla McBee, Spanish Immersion Program Coordinator Meagan Pike, teacher Nazaret Molina, Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Kirkpatrick, and parents Kristy Bradley and Ainar Lane. Photo Courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District

United States. It allowed me to get organized in advance, and made available resources that I would need to handle the transition. Its local focus made it an invaluable resource for settling in this new community. And

since I arrived, everyone has been so supportive.”

Group members were accepted to present their work at the second annual "Better Together: Family School Partnership Summit," held in

October in Marlborough by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

### WELCOME GUIDE

*continued on page 8*

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# Attend an all-ages rock concert to benefit childhood cancer research

By Linda Chuss

The public is invited to a rock concert at the Milford High School auditorium on Jan. 19 at 7 p.m. Proceeds from the event will go to the Ty Louis Campbell Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charity that funds the development of safer and less toxic treatments for childhood cancer.

Performers for the show are the Rockin' for a Reason band, made up of local middle and high school students who auditioned to be part of it, and Milford's Joe B. band. Tickets are \$10.

In 2012, the parents of Ty Campbell, of Carmel, NY, established the foundation after Campbell died from cancer at age five as a result of his treatment's side effects. Along with raising funds, the foundation aims to remind parents to enjoy fun times with their children and focus less on the stresses of everyday parenting. Fundraisers like Rockin' for a Reason reflect that spirit.

Jennifer Massaro Derocher of Upton is the concert organizer.

"Ty's dad, Louie, and I were childhood friends," she said. "We had lost touch, but when I heard about Ty's fight with cancer, I reached out to help. I've been a member of the foundation's board of directors since its inception.

"Our first Rockin' for a Reason concert was in 2013 at Nipmuc High School in Upton and we've had at least one every year since. This is our second benefit concert in Milford."

This Rockin' for a Reason band consists of 22 students from Milford, Nipmuc, Miscoe Hill, and Blackstone Valley Technical schools. On the show's lineup are classic favorites like The B-52's "Love Shack" and "I'm Shipping up to Boston" by the Dropkick Murphys.

The Joe B. band performs in the area, with a recent show at the Southwick Zoo's Winter Wonderland. Former band member Carlie Gonzalez was diagnosed with cancer in 2018, making the Rockin' for a Reason benefit especially meaningful to the group.

"It's a fun event, and by com-



ing, people can feel good about contributing to an important cause," Derocher said. According to the foundation, only one in five children diagnosed with cancer will lead a healthy and full life. Through fundraising, the foundation's intent is that children diagnosed with cancer have the opportunity to lead longer lives, without the disease and debilitating side effects of today's treatments.

"At the October Nipmuc concert, we raised over \$8,000,"

said Derocher. "Our goal for this school year is \$25,000. Over the years, Rockin' for a Reason has contributed over \$100,000 to the foundation. People can help by attending this concert, being an event sponsor, and making monetary donations."

Tickets for the show can be purchased at the door. To become a sponsor, contact Derocher at [jderocher@superty.org](mailto:jderocher@superty.org). Donations can be made online at [givebutter.com/rockinforareason2023](http://givebutter.com/rockinforareason2023).

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## Mendon Police Dept. Police Log

Between Nov. 25 and Dec. 25, the Mendon Police Department responded to hundreds of calls, many related to suspicious and disabled motor vehicles, motor vehicle violations and accidents, fire alarms, road hazards, parking violations, suspicious activity, civil complaints,

house and vehicle lockouts, and document service. They also conducted more than 200 motor vehicle stops during that time. Other entries of note during the month include:



**Nov. 27** at 11:03am, Cape Rd., hit and run motor vehicle collision

**Nov. 28** at 9:26am, Kinsley Ln., well-being check

**Nov. 29** at 2:05pm, Milford St., noise complaint

**Dec. 1** at 1:02am, Providence St., suspicious activity

**Dec. 1** at 12:16pm, Cape Rd., fraud

**Dec. 2** at 12:21pm, Millville St., larceny

**POLICE LOG**

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# Start moving toward retirement security



Mark Freeman

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It's not as well-known as Halloween, but National Retirement Security week happens every October – the third week, to be precise — and while it doesn't involve ghosts and goblins, it does deal with something even more frightening: the risk of not being able to enjoy a comfortable retirement. Through various events, this occasion highlights ideas about building retirement security. What steps can you take?

Here are some suggestions:

- **Don't underestimate your longevity.** Consider this: 65-year-old men can expect to live another 20 years, while 65-year-old women can anticipate almost 22 more years, according to the Society of Actuaries. And these figures are just averages, meaning you could well exceed these ages, perhaps by many years. So, in thinking about how much money you'll need as a retiree, be aware that you could spend two, or even three, decades in retirement.
- **Don't underestimate health care costs.** When you retire, some of your expenses — such as transportation, wardrobe and other costs associated with your career — will drop. Others will not and may even increase. Health care is a prime example: Many people assume that Medicare or their Medicare Advantage plan will take care of virtually all their health care costs in retirement, but that's not

the case. Generally speaking, you could plan on spending \$4,500 to \$6,500 per year on health care costs during retirement, excluding the large expenses connected with long-term care. Your actual costs could be higher or lower, depending on your health, prescription drugs and supplemental insurance coverage, but make sure you plan for sizable health care costs in your projected retirement budget.

- **Contribute as much as you can afford to your retirement plans.** Try to put in as much as you can afford to your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan and try to increase your contributions whenever your salary goes up. You may also be eligible to contribute to a traditional or Roth IRA, which offers tax benefits and a wide variety of investment options. (Contributions to a Roth IRA may be limited based on your income.) Once you reach retire-

ment, you can still make some moves that could help boost your financial security:

- **Maintain an appropriate investment mix.** When you retire, you might be tempted to shift most of your portfolio into highly conservative investments to “lock in” gains and avoid being over-exposed to market volatility that could cause short-term losses. Yet, even in retirement, you should still own some growth-oriented investments that can potentially help keep you ahead of inflation. In fact, it's important to periodically rebalance your investments back to your preferred mix to avoid taking too much or too little risk, so you may want to consult with a financial advisor.
- **Identify a suitable withdrawal rate.** You don't want to take out so much from your portfolio each year that you run the risk of outliving your money. So, you'll

want to determine an annual withdrawal rate that can reduce this danger. A common withdrawal rate to start retirement is 4%, but your own rate should be based on several factors: your age, size of portfolio, other sources of income and so on.

It can be challenging to make all the moves necessary to help achieve retirement security — but it's worth the effort.

If you would like to discuss your personal situation with a financial advisor contact:

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# Upton Police lobby was filled with Toys for Tots



In a Facebook post on Dec. 20, the Upton Police Department thanked “all who helped fill our lobby with toys these past few weeks. Our Toys for Tots bin was picked up to be

distributed to children in need this Christmas. In keeping with the holiday spirit, Sgt. Mansfield and Ofc. Deiana were thrilled to participate in this year’s Shop With A

Cop event in Framingham last night. Nearly 600 children were paired with officers to pick out the gift of their choosing.”  
Source: Facebook @uptonpolice

## MASCOT

*continued from page 1*

our logos with a thoughtful approach, based on input from students, alumni, and staff,” Cohen explained. This includes the intertwined MU logo for Mendon-Upton, the MH logo for the Miscosco Hill school, and the N logo for Nipmuc Regional High School, all with a similar look.

“It’s reflected in signs, uniforms, media, and merchandise, as the need for replacements arises,” she added.

Part of that process has been a move away from Native American imagery which, while nostalgic for some, can be considered insensitive and denigrating by others. A proposed law, H.477 in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and S.245 in the Senate, calls for public schools to remove all names and imagery using any racial, ethnic, gender, or religious groups, including Native Americans.

If enacted, the law would apply to the district’s Warriors and Braves mascots. While the names are used infrequently in district materials, there has been no official move to new mascots or nicknames. Outside of the schools, some programs in Upton and Mendon use Warriors and Braves imagery and branding, though the legislation would not apply to them.

Cohen said the district is aware of the proposed law and prior legislative efforts, and is poised to adhere to it and honor the wishes of the Nip-

muc nation.

On Nov. 13, the Massachusetts Joint Committee on Education held a hearing on the topic. As reported by WBZ-4 (CBS News) and the State House News Service, Rhonda Anderson, a representative on the state Commission on Indian Affairs, stated, “Those mascots are not of our choosing. They’re not who we are. We are over 576 ... vastly different communities and cultures, and what’s being used is a stereotype.”

At that same hearing, Faries Gray, a Massachusetts Native American said, “We’re not somebody of the past. We’re living people ... Most of the indigenous mascots classify us as warriors and things of that nature. Classifying us as a warrior class society -- which we were not. My tribe, we were primarily fisherman and farmers.”

The Grafton-based Has-sanamisco Nipmuc Band, a state-acknowledged tribe of Indigenous People, supports such legislation, per a general letter they issued on the topic in 2020 “to all interested parties” at [maindigenousagenda.org/native-mascots/](http://maindigenousagenda.org/native-mascots/). A similar resolution was approved by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees in 2021.

According to [sanfacon.com/mascots/schools\\_NE.html](http://sanfacon.com/mascots/schools_NE.html), even without state legislation, 67 districts in Massachusetts have replaced their indigenous imagery and names over the past 25 years. Now, only 23 districts retain them in some form. Other states that have adopted similar legislation include Maine and New York.

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## Upton Town Library Calendar of Events

9 Milford Street, Upton • 508-529-6272 • UptonLibrary.org • HOURS: Tues., Wed. & Thurs. 9-8 • Mon., Fri. & Sat. 9-4 • Sun. CLOSED

By Matthew Bachtold, Library Director and Lee Ann Murphy, Children's Librarian

### Upton Library is now at 9 Milford Street

The Library has moved and is now open at our new location at 9 Milford Street, inside the Upton Community Center.

### January Hours

Upton Town Library will be closed on Monday, January 15.

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### Yarn Tales Knitting

Have a knitting project? Want some advice, help or just company? Each Tuesday night from 6 - 7:30 p.m. the Yarn Tales knitting group meets at the Upton Town Library. Drop in to knit, chat and share. A community organized event.

### Technology Help

Adult Librarian Micaela is available on the first Tuesday of each month from 4 to 6 p.m. to provide drop-in technology help. Have questions about email or online documents? Need advice on using a phone app or a laptop? Bring your device and we'll try to help. You can also contact Micaela in advance to make an appointment.

### Special Events

**Board Game Night ages 16+ Thursday, Jan. 18 5:15**

### - 7:30 p.m.

Adults and teens are invited to a fun and relaxed board game night at the library. A variety of modern games will be available to play with one featured game to learn. If you see a game that interests you that you don't know how to play, a staff member will be there to help. Registration requested at [uptonlibrary.org](http://uptonlibrary.org)

### Children's Events

**Marble Mazes, Thursday, Jan. 18, 6 - 7 p.m.**

Kids will use their engineering skills to create their own marble mazes. Participants will use cardboard, masking tape, straws, and their imaginations to create a maze from beginning to end, and then test it with a marble. For ages 5 to 12. Pre-registration is required.

**Winter Luminaries, Saturday, Jan. 20, 1 - 2 p.m.**

Tweens and teens will create winter luminaries using glass jars

and Epsom salt. For ages 10 to 16. Pre-registration is required.

**Buildwave, Wednesday, Feb. 21, 1 - 2 p.m.**

Buildwave is a workshop event featuring a 1-hour high energy creative building program that encourages play and collaboration. Families are encouraged to come and build together. The program is designed for ages 5+ and features materials your kids already love, like Lego®, but in a gamified format that will amaze them. Generously funded by The Friends of the Upton Town Library.

**Big Backyard Bird Count, Saturday, Feb. 24, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., at West Hill Dam, Uxbridge**

Join Children's Librarian Mrs. Murphy and West Hill Dam Park Ranger Viola Bramel as we take part in the Big Backyard Bird Count. Spend time at West Hill Dam in Uxbridge watching birds and learning all

about them. This event takes place offsite at West Hill Dam in Uxbridge. For more details on any of our events, or to register, visit our website's Event Calendar at [uptonlibrary.org](http://uptonlibrary.org).

### MONTHLY LIBRARY EVENTS – REGISTER NOW

Please note changed times for many children's programs. All programs and events require pre-registration at [uptonlibrary.org](http://uptonlibrary.org) or call 508-529-6272. Registration for December programs opened November 1.

### Music & Movement – \*New Day\* - Select Mondays 9:30 a.m.

Music & Movement with Deb Hudgins will take place January 8 and 22 and February 5 and 12 in the Greatroom. Join us for stories, songs, and fun.

### UPTON LIBRARY

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WELCOME GUIDE

continued from page 3

"I was so inspired by the work of this group of parents and educators and I knew that other districts might benefit from hearing about the work this group did," Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Kirkpatrick said.

The group plans to continue to meet through the District's Spanish Immersion Advisory Board to improve the Welcome Guide, and use it as the impetus to create a similar guide for all newcomer families.

"Among the parents, teachers, students and administrators, our program has no lack of people wanting to be involved and help our program and its visiting teachers thrive," Spanish Immersion Program Coordinator Meagan Pike said. "It is an honor to be a part of this group who has created something so

useful and helpful in such a tangible way."

The Mendon-Upton Regional School District thanks group members for their commitment to improving the experiences of students and staff: Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Kirkpatrick; Memorial Elementary School Principal Wendy Bell; Spanish Immersion Program Coordinator Meagan Pike; Human Resources and Payroll Manager Laurie Petti; teachers Marta Calvo, Santiago Dominguez, Nazaret Molina, and Ana Belén Moreno López; and parents Abby Barlas, Kristy Bradley, Nicole Casasanta, Claudia Conte, Meg Halfpenny, Ainara Landry, Kristen Lipresti, Lola Martinez, Cayla McBee, Aimee Osterhus, Annie Righter, Catherine Wallace, and Alycia Welch.

Source: Mendon-Upton Regional School District

Pet of the Month: Charlie



Charlie is the king of all he surveys! His favorite spot is a tall treehouse condo in the center of the room where he can watch the other cats playing. You see this 5-year-old tuxedo cat was surrendered with a large group of cats and we think he enjoys his alone time. From up on his favorite perch, he is also certain to get some love from all the volunteers. If he doesn't get noticed right

away, he will let out a little chirp to remind you that he is there. Charlie is happy to play with toys with you for a little while or to be brushed occasionally. But mostly he likes to watch over his kingdom and bask in the attention of his loyal subjects!

For more information on Charlie or the other cats at the Milford Humane Society, please visit www.milfordhumane.org/

AEROSMITH

continued from page 1

ated high school. It was the Vietnam era and we'd just gotten our draft numbers and were wearing Army jackets, a popular style of coat then. Our hair was longer, we wore jeans and work boots, and probably a sweatshirt - we all dressed alike.

"We arrived late. It was a small gym and there were probably 50 to 100 people there. A bunch of guys stood around the outside of the floor and watched the band. People danced on the gym floor. We got as close to the stage as we could. The band was very good. After we heard about six songs, a teacher chaperoning the dance recognized Mark and knowing he was no longer a student, told us to leave. We may be the first people to get thrown out of an Aerosmith show."

Asked if he realized the band would become famous, McRobert said, "No. I like live music and I've heard a lot of talented musicians over the years. The ones that succeed also have a good, popular song. That's not something you could tell that night."

After the first concert, McRobert went to other local Aerosmith performances, including at the Cricket Lounge in Ashland. Over the years, he followed the group and still enjoys them. In Oct., McRobert went to Miscoe Hill School for an exhibition his granddaughter was participating in. He pointed out to her the gym where the concert had been.

As for the band, at that first show in Mendon in 1970, lead singer Steven Tyler wore a t-shirt that read "Nipmuc Phys. Ed.," and the rest, as they say, is history.

In 2023, Aerosmith announced its "Peace Out: The Farewell Tour" in 2023 which was then rescheduled due to Steven Tyler's vocal injury, according to www.aerosmith.com.

McRobert said he would be thrilled if Aerosmith performed their last-ever show in the same town where it all began - in Mendon.

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# The Cataract Surgery Center of Milford

## The Gold Standard for Surgical Eyecare

By: Roger M. Kaldawy, M.D.  
Milford Franklin Eye Center

The Milford-Franklin Eye Center - Cataract Surgery Center of Milford is pleased to announce our recertification by the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities (QUADA). This accreditation authority sets the Gold Standard and certifies thousands of facilities worldwide. We received no deficiencies, achieved full compliance, and earned a perfect score.

An accreditation certification by QUADA provides peace of mind, indicating our surgery center's highest standards in patient safety, surgical results, infectious disease control, and healthcare quality. We take pride in our staff's success in navigating this extremely strict and tedious process.

Milford-Franklin Eye Center has been delivering excellent eye care to the community for four decades. With offices in Milford, Franklin, and Millis, along with our award-winning surgery center in Milford and a support staff of 60, we stand as the leading medical and surgical eye care center in the area and one of the major eye care centers in the State. We are also one of the rare ophthalmology practices to own and operate our surgical center, the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford. No longer do you need to travel miles and hours for cataract surgery! Our experienced eye physicians/surgeons, along with four optometrists, provide comprehensive and excellent eye care to the entire family.

Milford-Franklin Eye Center acknowledges that you have choices when it comes to eye care. We set ourselves apart by focusing on excellent and advanced eye care and treating our patients as if each one is family. Our surgical results rival those of major centers in Boston, and we can prove it. We are deeply rooted in the community, most of us living here, and our primary focus is to serve the community. While some competing 'franchise' practices have a satellite office in the area with an occasional ophthalmologist,

we are here full-time, five days a week, with an eye surgeon ready to see you in case of an emergency. Did you know that seeing a surgeon from a 'franchise' practice means you are outside their referral network and your expenses may be higher? We are local and in the network of your local primary care physicians. In case there is a surgical emergency after cataract surgery, we see you immediately. With other practices, you may have to go to Boston to be seen. We are the only dedicated practice taking emergency call responsibilities at Milford Regional Hospital and have been doing the same for decades.

Our surgery center is Medicare-certified, State-licensed, and QUADA accredited. This center stands as a beacon of excellence in ophthalmic care, showcasing a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to restoring vision with precision and innovation. Equipped with cutting-edge technology and staffed by a team of highly skilled and experienced professionals, the center is at the forefront of cataract and glaucoma surgery. From advanced laser systems that enhance surgical accuracy to personalized treatment plans tailored to each patient's unique needs, the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford prioritizes both efficacy and patient comfort. The facility's commitment to staying abreast of the latest developments in the field ensures that individuals seeking cataract surgery receive the highest standard of care, making it a trusted destination for those looking to regain clarity of vision in a modern and sophisticated setting.

What about office-based cataract surgery? Some franchise practices are advocating for performing cataract surgery in their office. Unapproved by Medicare and major ophthalmology professional societies, this office-based surgery raises significant concerns about patient safety and the quality of care provided. Performing cataract surgery in an office setting may lack the rigorous standards and sterile environments main-

tained in dedicated surgical centers. The absence of dedicated anesthesia professionals and comprehensive medical support can compromise patient comfort and safety during surgery. Patients are advised to prioritize their well-being and consider established surgical centers with experienced medical teams and top-notch facilities to ensure optimal outcomes for cataract surgery. For instance, at the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford, a dedicated MD anesthesiologist is present full-time for all procedures, and your comfort and safety are titrated by using an IV line, which is lacking in the office-based surgery model.

With the new year 2024, we are proud to continue to serve our communities as we did for four decades.

Dr. Roger Kaldawy is an experienced eye physician and surgeon. Dr. Kaldawy, trained at the University of Rochester and

the University of Iowa. As Assistant Professor at Boston University, he directed the Cornea and External Disease program, influencing physicians worldwide. A pioneer in DSAEK corneal transplantation, he performed over 30,000 cataract surgeries, introducing advanced implants and bladeless laser assisted Femto cataract surgery at the Cataract and Laser Surgery Center of Milford, where he also serves as Medical Director.

Dr. Dan Liu earned her medical degree from Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in 2016. She was elected to the medical honor society, Alpha Omega Alpha. Completing her ophthalmology residency at Albany Medical Center, Dr. Liu received multiple accolades. She pursued fellowship training in Cornea, External Diseases, and Anterior Segment Surgery at Tufts Medical Center in Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Liu special-

izes in Cataract surgery, ORA technology, Cornea transplants, and various eye disorders. She is affiliated with several medical associations.

Dr. Arroyo, our vitreoretinal specialist, earned his degrees from Amherst College, Yale, and Duke. With 20+ years of experience, he's published extensively and held leadership roles, including past president of the New England Ophthalmological Society.

Dr. Shalin Zia, O.D., a Purdue and Indiana University graduate, brings extensive private practice experience, excelling in routine eye care, contact lenses, and disease diagnosis.

Dr. Adams, a John Carroll University graduate, has advanced training in corneal pathology, specialty contact lenses,

**EYES**

*continued on page 10*



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## Recent Home Sales

Date	Mendon	Amount
12/21/2023	62 Milford Street #A	\$379,900
12/08/2023	8 Mill River Drive	\$740,000
Date	Upton	Amount
12/20/2023	24 Shoemaker Lane #12	\$802,698
12/07/2023	21 Shore Drive	\$640,000
12/07/2023	56 Shannon Way#10630	\$652,075
11/30/2023	46 W River Street	\$815,000
11/29/2023	41 South Street	\$835,000

Source: www.zillow.com / Compiled by Upton Mendon Free Press



The 4-bed, 3-bath 2,630 sf home at 41 South Street in Upton recently sold for \$835,000 by RobynandSeanSoldMyHouse.com  
Photo credit www.zillow.com

## Central One Federal Credit Union donates \$15,000 to charitable organizations via casino-themed employee holiday party

At the beginning of December, Central One employees and their guests came together for a special casino-themed holiday party. This year's celebration was about more than enjoying the holiday together; it was also about giving back. At night's end, attendees cashed in their casino chips for raffle tickets, with fifteen winners choosing a worthy 501(c)(3) organization to receive a donation of \$1,000 on Central One's behalf.

Central One is delighted to announce the charities that winners selected to receive a monetary donation from Central One:

- Ahimsa Animal Rescue
- American Diabetes Association
- American Parkinson Disease Association
- Bay Path Humane Society
- Loaves & Fishes/Friendship Trays
- Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition
- North Quabbin Animal Control Shelter
- Polar Bears International
- Project New Hope, Inc.
- The Shine Initiative
- St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
- Veterans Inc.
- Why Me & Sherry's House
- Worcester Animal Rescue League

## EYES

continued from page 9

ocular disease, and laser refractive surgery.

Dr. Purvi Patel, OD, a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, brings teaching and leadership experience from the New England College of Optometry. Her clinical interests include diabetes, glaucoma, and community-based eye care.

At Milford Franklin Eye Center and The Cataract Surgery Center of Milford, our focus is on you, your vision, excellent surgical results without compromising your safety or comfort. You come first. We are available in your backyard and proud to offer world-class cataract surgery closer to home: Here in Milford! In a surgery center facility, not in an office. Our optical shop has its own dedicated lab and can cut and finish your glasses while you wait. All new patients receive a free pair of select glasses. We offer after-hours, same-day emergency appointments and Saturday appointments. We have great management focused on quality customer care. Four decades serving our communities and going strong. In 2024, we remain dedicated to the best in eye medicine and surgery closer to home.

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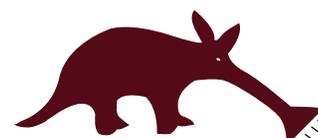
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# Upton Police brought Santa to town



In keeping with tradition, the Upton Police escorted Santa Claus during a visit to Upton on Christmas Eve day! Driving in the UPD special sleigh, Santa was able to parade through the streets of Upton waving to all who came out to greet him along his route. Photo courtesy of Wendy Watkins

# Letter to the Editor

Trees for Hope would like to thank everyone who continues to support our annual event. We appreciate you bringing your Christmas Spirit to the start of this wonderful season. Sending a huge thank you to our sponsors, our community who donated a decorated tree, friends and families who attended the event, and for those who purchased raffle tickets to win one of the gorgeous trees. Your generosity will assist the two organizations, Detec Together and the Alzheimer's Association, in further providing education and in helping to find cures for all those affected with these illnesses. We could not make this the event what it has become without your participation, donations, and support.

*Believing in Hope,  
Penny Bentley and the Trees for Hope Committee  
Upton, MA*



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**Shrewsbury - Coming Soon!**

# OBITUARIES

## Lori N. MacNaughton

Lori N. MacNaughton, 59, of Upton, Massachusetts passed away peacefully on December 15th after a courageous battle with brain cancer.

She was born on March 29, 1964, to the late Lillian M. (Clarke) MacNaughton and John "Scotty" MacNaughton.

She was survived by her loving children, Hayley S. Mozart and her husband Dana C. Mozart of Upton, MA, Sean C. McGann and fiancé Jessica M. Bates of Douglas, MA, and Christina E. McGann of Worcester, MA. Lori was also a loving "Ninni" to her two grandchildren, Ava and Wesley Mozart of Upton.

Lori was the youngest of 7 children and survived by her siblings: John P. MacNaughton and his partner Peggy Sue of Daytona, FL, Mona M. MacNaughton and her partner Edward of New Bedford, MA, Mark A. MacNaughton and his wife Donna MacNaughton of Mendon, MA, Gale A. Maher and her husband James R. Maher of Bellingham, MA, Lisa T. McTurk and her husband William T. McTurk of Mendon, MA. She was also predeceased by her brother Gary I. MacNaughton and niece Tonya L. DeLuca-Taylor.

She also leaves behind a loving sister-in-law, Joyce MacNaughton as well as 9 nieces and nephews and many great nieces and nephews, whom she adored.

Lori was a graduate of Nipmuc Regional High School and spent her last working years at the local flower shop as well as being her own shuttle trans-



portation service to her local community. She loved being involved and surrounded by her community, and always went out of her way to help others. Lori is known for her contagious smile, compassionate personality and unconditional love for Barry Manilow.

Despite her long struggle with illness, Lori faced every challenge with remarkable strength and resilience. Her big heart and unwavering love for her family and friends left an indelible mark on everyone who had the privilege of knowing her.

At the request of the family, services will be held privately.

For anyone wishing to honor Lori, donations can be made in Lori's name to the National Brain Tumor Society, 55 Chapel St. Ste 006, Newton, MA 02458, the Upton Bloomer Girls, PO Box 121, Upton, MA 01568 or to the Upton Fire & EMS Association Ambulance Fund, PO Box 1012, Upton, MA 01568.

Funeral arrangements are under the care and direction of the Pickering & Son Upton Funeral Home. UptonFunerals.com

## Joyce Anne Nass

Joyce Anne Nass, 92, of Southbridge, died on December 26th, at Webster Manor after fighting a battle of dementia. She was predeceased by her son, William Nass who died in 2017, and her husband, Donald W. Nass in 2008.

She leaves a daughter, Margaret "Peg" Whitney and her husband, Richard "Dick" of Southbridge; four grandchildren, Christopher Whitney and fiancé, Gabe of Webster, Erica Whitney Jajliardo of Southbridge, Andrew Nass and wife Robbie of Uxbridge and Sara Nass and husband, Curtis of Richmond, VA. Also, she leaves two Great-Grandchildren: Nolan Jajliardo and Mattie Nass.

Joyce (Bailey) Nass was born in Milford, MA in 1931, daughter of the late Samuel W. and Ruth (Herrick) Bailey of Upton, MA. She graduated from the former Grafton High School in 1949 and the Milford Hospital School of Nursing in 1952. She lived in Hopedale and Upton before moving to Southbridge after her graduation in 1953.

Mrs. Nass worked at Harrington Memorial Hospital as a Registered Nurse for 27 years. Later in life, she also worked part time as an RN at the Adult Day Care Center in Southbridge. She was an active member and former trustee of the United Methodist Church in Southbridge and was an auxiliary member of her husband's WWII China, Burma, India Veterans Association of the Worcester Basha. Most of all, she enjoyed time with her family, while her children were growing up; they camped many weekends & vacations all down



the east coast.

Prior to her children, Mrs. Nass had open heart surgery in 1953 in Boston, MA. She was nearly the first patient that had this procedure performed in the area.

As an avid Red Sox fan (learning the sport from her husband), she attended many spring training games in Florida during their traveling days after retiring along with other sites including Alaska, Hawaii, Canada and Europe. She also enjoyed going to the YMCA and playing Bridge with her friends. A special memory of the family is lengthy phone conversations (usually 1 hour) and her playing cards with her Children and Grandchildren.

A service was held on Friday, January 5, 2024, in the Pickering & Son Upton Funeral Home. Burial followed in Maplewood Cemetery, Upton.

The family wishes to thank the staff of the Webster Manor Nursing Home for their outstanding care given to Joyce for several years. We are also indebted to the several caregivers who helped keep her in her home for several years prior to moving to Webster Manor.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the American Heart Association; 2 Speen St. Framingham, MA 01701. UptonFunerals.com

## POLICE LOG

*continued from page 4*

- Dec. 3** at 9:26am, Mill River Dr., larceny
- Dec. 5** at 1:32am, Hartford Ave. West, threats
- Dec. 5** at 4:04pm, Millville St., stolen vehicle
- Dec. 6** at 11:50am, Millville St., stolen vehicle
- Dec. 9** at 12:40pm, Millville St., larceny
- Dec. 10** at 6:28am, Harvard Ave. West, missing person
- Dec. 11** at 7:23am, Calumet Cir., well-being check
- Dec. 12** at 2:17am, Strawberry Ln., parking complaint
- Dec. 12** at 2:49am, Sandra Cir., parking complaint
- Dec. 17** at 5:33pm, Bates St., structure fire
- Dec. 18** rainstorm: wires down, road hazards, motor vehicle crashes, disabled vehicles, electrical hazards, property damage, etc.
- Dec. 21** at 6:35am, Sandra Cir., fire hazard
- Dec. 21** at 8:02, Northbridge St., hit and run motor vehicle collision
- Dec. 22** at 12:44pm, Hartford Ave. East, assault
- Dec. 22** at 1:44pm, Uxbridge Rd., fraud
- Dec. 23** at 8:16pm, Millville St., "animal"
- Dec. 24** at 12:46am, Milford St., parking complaint
- Dec. 24** at 8:29am, Millville St., fire/electrical hazard
- Dec. 25** at 6:15am, Uxbridge Rd., suspicious activity

Source:

[www.mendonpolice.com/news/](http://www.mendonpolice.com/news/)

**PHOTO - Source: Facebook @ mendonpolice**

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*continued from page 7*

Best for ages 1-5. Partial funding for this program is through a grant from Beginning Bridges CFCE in Uxbridge. Pre-registration is required.

**Baby Storytime – Fridays at 9:30 a.m.**

Baby Storytime is for ages birth to 3 and is held on Fridays. This is a 20-30-minute lapsit program featuring stories, songs, and nursery rhymes. Pre-registration required.

**Preschool Storytime – Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.**

Preschool Storytime is for ages 3 to 5 and is held on Thursdays. This is a 45-minute program, featuring longer stories, songs, rhymes, and crafts. Pre-registration required.

**Saturday Storytime – Jan. 13 and Feb. 13 at 9:30 a.m.**

Once a month we offer a 30-45-minute Saturday Storytime, blending Baby and Preschool storytimes featur-

ing stories, songs, rhymes, and a craft. Can't join us for our weekday programs? This event is just for you. For ages 0-5. Pre-registration required.

**Teen Group – Tuesdays 3 p.m.**

This group meets weekly on Tuesdays from 3 - 4 p.m. and focuses on a new theme each month, sharing books, crafts, games, and more. For January, our theme will be Health and Fitness. This group is for tweens and teens ages 10-16. This is always a drop-in program.

**Teen Book Club - \*New\* - Thursday, Jan. 11 at 6 p.m.**

Are you a teen who loves reading? Then our Teen Book Club is for you. This group is for ages 13-18 and will meet once per season. Did you miss our fall meeting? Our next meeting will be Thursday, January 11 from 6 - 7 p.m. in the Conference Room. Meetings will involve sharing our own recent favorite titles, as well as learning about what's new and trendy in YA lit! Pre-registration is required.

**Kids' Book Club – Wednesday, Feb. 7 at 4 p.m.**

Our book club members explore popular juvenile and preteen titles on the first Wednesday of each month from 4 - 4:45 p.m. Our February adventure title is *Mountain Mission* by Kristin Earhart. Copies are available at the circulation desk. This group is for ages 8-12 and reads mostly middle grade titles. We welcome new members all year round. Pre-registration required.

**Upton Reads Book Group**

An eclectic mix of contemporary literary fiction with meetings on the second Tuesday afternoon and Thursday evening of each month in the Community Center classroom, with a Zoom remote option.

Tuesday, Feb. 13 at 12:45 p.m., and Thursday, Feb. 15 at 6:45 p.m.: *The River We Remember* by William Kent Krueger.

**Fic or No Fic Book Group**

An adult book group led by Librarian Micaela that alternates fiction and non-fiction selections. Meets on the last

Wednesday of each month at 6:45 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 31 at 6:45 p.m.: fiction title, *Nothing To See Here* by Kevin Wilson.

For more information or assistance with any library services, call 508-529-6272 or email mbachtol@cwmares.org

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# Tips for **Dry Eyes** in Cold Weather

**Stay hydrated** to maintain moisture in your eyes.

**Use a humidifier** to add moisture back into the air.

**Protect your eyes** from wind and particles.

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Dr. Steven Perryman, O.D.

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# I scream, you scream, we all scream for Girl Scout Cookies!

## Girl Scouts in eastern Massachusetts are now selling Girl Scout Cookies; support the next generation of women entrepreneurs

Today, Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts kicks-off the 2024 Girl Scout Cookie season as Girl Scouts and their troops rally the community to support the world's largest entrepreneurial program for girls. The annual cookie program will run through Friday, March 8.

Consumers can support local Girl Scouts by purchasing their favorite cookie flavors including Thin Mints®, Caramel deLites®, Peanut Butter Patties®, Adventurefuls®, Peanut Butter

Sandwich, Lemonades®, Trefoils®, Caramel Chocolate Chip (gluten-free and peanut-free), and Toast-Yay!®.

"This is my favorite time of the year! I love seeing our Girl Scouts out developing their sales pitches to sell Girl Scout Cookies," stated Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts CEO Barbara Fortier. "Our Girl Scout Cookie program provides our youth with the opportunity to build their entrepreneurial passions through customer ser-

vice, marketing and sales skills. Many of our alum credit the Girl Scout Cookie Program as a stepping stone into leadership positions. When you purchase a box of cookies you are unboxing an array of opportunities for our Girl Scouts."

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the world's largest entrepreneurial program for Girl Scouts. As a result, Girl Scouts obtain limitless barrier-breaking futures outside the box with transferable life skills. Girl Scouts can earn a variety of badges and awards to develop valuable business skills including Cookie Business badges, Financial Literacy badges, Cookie Entrepreneur Family pins and Entrepreneur badges.

Girl Scout Cookies are \$6 per package. There are many ways to support the Girl Scout Cookie program this season:

- If you know a registered Girl Scout, ask how you can purchase Girl Scout Cookies from them to support their goals.
- If you don't know a Girl Scout, visit [gsema.org/cookies](http://gsema.org/cookies) to find a cookie booth (pop-up shop) near you to purchase cookies from a local Girl Scout troop, or to connect with a local troop's online cookie shop to purchase cookies for a donation or shipment.
- Customers can make a purchase in-person or online and designate their purchase through our Cookie Share Donation program to benefit first responders and health-care professionals, the military and veterans' services organizations, local food pantries, and more.
- You can also text COOKIES

to 59618 to stay informed about how to purchase Girl Scout Cookies and other exciting Girl Scout news. Learn more about the Terms and Conditions and the SMS Privacy Policy.

Interested in joining Girl Scouts? You can join at any point from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Every Girl Scout experiences opportunities to learn hands-on leadership skills they'll use to make a difference in their community, especially when they earn the highest award in Girl Scouts: the Gold Award. To join or volunteer, visit [www.gsema.org](http://www.gsema.org).

For more information on Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts, please visit [www.gsema.org](http://www.gsema.org), or follow their social media channels, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, for the latest updates on the organization.

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## Taft Public Library Calendar of Events

29 North Avenue, Mendon • 508-473-3259 • TaftPublicLibrary.org • HOURS: Tues. & Wed. 10-7 • Thurs. 3-7 • Fri. 12-5 • Sat. 9-12 • Sun. & Mon. CLOSED

### ADULT PROGRAMS JANUARY 2024

#### Upcoming Events:

To register for an event, click on the Library Event Calendar & Registration link at the top of the library's homepage [www.taftpubliclibrary.org](http://www.taftpubliclibrary.org).

#### Handcrafting Group

Let's get crafty! Join us on Wednesday, January 3 and Wednesday, January 17 at 2 p.m. downstairs in the library and get your craft on. Bring your own craft project, whatever it might be, to work on while you visit. Intended for adults. Crafts are NOT supplied.

#### Adult Book Club

The Adult Book Club will meet on Monday, January 8 at 7 p.m. to discuss *Sourdough* by Robin Sloan. Adult Book Clubs are typically held on the second Monday of the month. For upcoming book clubs contact the library at 508-473-3259 to

request copies of the books or log in to your account from our website to request them through interlibrary loan. The upcoming Adult Book Club book discussion schedule is as follows:

**February:** *The Clockmaker's Daughter* by Kate Morton

**March:** *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton

**April:** *Find Her* by Lisa Gardner

**May:** *Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir* by Natasha Trethewey and the poetry of Amanda Lovelace

#### German Conversation Club

Are you looking for a place to practice what German you remember or to improve your German vocabulary? Conversations in German is no pressure, just fun. Lead by Library Assistant (and Mendon resident) Monika Schmid, the group typically meets the last Monday of each month. Mark your calendars for Monday, January 29 at 6 p.m. for the next session. Registration is required. To reg-

ister, visit our website.

#### Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club

The Footnotes Nonfiction Book Club meets downstairs in the library on a quarterly basis. Those interested are asked to stop at the downstairs desk to sign the Footnotes registration sheet and pick up a copy of the latest book.

Upcoming books in the Footnotes series:

*The Spy and the Traitor* by Ben Macintyre (Thursday, January 11 at 7 p.m.)

*The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams* by Stacy Schiff (April/May discussion date TBD)

#### Cooking with Chef Rob Scott

Chef Rob Scott returns with a whole new set of cooking demonstrations on Zoom. Rob joins us virtually from his kitchen in Long Island. All ages are welcome to participate. The recipes will be sent out before

each class if you want to cook alongside Chef Rob. Sessions are at 7 p.m. The next session is:

Tuesday, January 23: Winter Minestrone Soup and Coconut Hot Chocolate with Almond Whipped Cream.

Please visit our website to register for the session.

#### Friends of the Taft Public Library Meeting

The Friends of the Library will meet next on Tuesday, January 30 at 7 p.m. downstairs in the library's Art Holmes Community Room for their monthly board meeting. Board meetings are typically held on the last Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m., unless it falls on a holiday or during a school vacation. There will be no meeting in December. All are welcome (and encouraged) to attend. If you plan on attending, it's always a good idea to call the library at 508-473-3259 or email the Friends at [friendsoftaftlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoftaftlibrary@gmail.com) to confirm the date and

time of the meeting. The group will do its best to post any meeting changes on the Taft Library website.

#### TAFT CHILDREN'S NEWS- JANUARY 2024

Registration is required for all programs. Please log onto our website: [www.taftpubliclibrary.org](http://www.taftpubliclibrary.org) and find the events page to register along with more information for the programs.

#### Itty Bitty Story Time

Itty Bitty Story time is designed for our youngest patrons birth to 3 years old. Join us for a lot of fun on Tuesdays and select Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.

#### Story & Craft Time

Join us for story and craft time. Perfect for the preschool-aged child. All sessions take place on Tuesday mornings at 10:30 a.m.

#### Alphabet Storytime

It's all about the alphabet. Each week we will focus on a different letter. We will read a couple of books, sing songs, and learn about the letter of the week. Wednesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. Please note there is no Alphabet Storytime the first Wednesday of the month.

#### Coffee and Conversations & Puppet Storytime

**Dates:** Wednesdays, January 3, February 7, March 6, April 3, May 1 and June 5.

**Time:** 9:15 to 10:15 a.m.

**Location:** Taft Public Library, 29 North Ave., Mendon

Join us for an informal playtime where families will be able to build social connections and learn about early childhood development and family friendly resources. The library will supply Muffin House Muffins.

Please stay for the 10:30 a.m. Puppet Storytime. Join Newton & Friends of Through Me to You Puppetry for songs and stories. At the end of the 30-minute show, children can greet the puppets. Geared for children 2 to 5 years, but all are welcome.



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**TAFT LIBRARY**

*continued on page 17*

**TAFT LIBRARY**

*continued from page 16*

**Preschool Kidding Around Yoga**

We will learn yoga poses, dance, sing, and meditate. This class is all about fun- all abilities are welcome. Mats are available, or feel free to bring your own. Wednesday, January 10 at 9:30 a.m.

**Book Clubs**

**Graphic Novel Book Club:** This month we will be reading: *Otis & Peanut* by Naseem Hrab. The book club will be held downstairs on Tuesday, January 9 at 5 p.m.

**8-12 Book Club:** This month we will be reading: *It All Begins with Jelly Beans* by Nova Weetman. The book club will be held downstairs on Tuesday, January 16 at 5 p.m.

**6-9 Novel Book Club:** This

month we will be reading: *Bad Food: Game of Scones* by Eric Luper. The book club will be held downstairs on Tuesday, January 23 at 5 p.m.

**Parent/Caregiver Education Time Outs or Time Ins? How to Manage Dysregulation with Jill Vetstein**

Join us on Tuesday, January 23 at 7 p.m. on Zoom for an information workshop designed for parents/caregivers of children ages 18 months to 5 years old. Learn how to meet your child's needs when they are dysregulated and not able to listen. Gain a deeper understanding of how some approaches to times out are problematic and how other approaches can be developmentally appropriate for your child's emotional health.

To register please contact Emily at 508-473-5110 or email [Emurray@smoc.org](mailto:Emurray@smoc.org).



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SPORTS

# Nipmuc Boys' Basketball sets sights on postseason

## New coach hopes steady improvement will steer team toward goals

By Chris Villani

The Nipmuc boys' basketball team has a new coach this season but the goals for the program are familiar: get to the Clark Tournament, compete for a Dual Valley Conference crown, and earn a spot in the state playoffs.

In order to get there, head coach Jason Gosselin said his team will focus on day-to-day objectives.

"The goal for us is that we just want to get better every single day," Gosselin said. "It sounds cliché and simple, but it's not always easy. Winning is the goal, but it's not the focus for our group. I don't want them to get too happy when we are winning or too down when we are not."

The focal point for the team and its opponents once again figures to be 6-foot-6 big man James McKinney. The junior has exceeded the high expectations Gosselin had for him when he took over the program.

"He is always listening and asking what's needed of him, he is a great teammate, and he loves everybody in the gym," Gosselin said. "As a basketball player, he is hungry. A lot of his success has been based on being physically bigger, but he has learned to see the more detailed



James McKinney will be a focal point for Nipmuc this season. Photo credit Dawn Barnes

things on offense. He is using angles better and working on that left hand."

Gosselin is looking to add more depth and take some of the heat off his star center.



Logan DeMarzo throws down a dunk for the Nipmuc basketball team. Photo credit Dawn Barnes

Senior Brayden Kelly is an experienced player whom Gosselin said is committed to having a strong final campaign with the basketball program. Junior Chase Kelly is finding his place on the floor, his coach said, adding he is "doing well and doing all of the right things out there."

Gosselin also said he has found a "great surprise" in junior Logan DeMarzo, a 6-foot-3 forward.

"He had a great offseason, and he grew into his body a bit," Gosselin said. "He is learning

to play at the right pace and fit in alongside a great player in Jimmy."

In addition to bringing a more diverse offense to the court, Gosselin wants to change things up on defense and play more man-to-man. The changes will roll out throughout the season as the new coach learns more about his players.

"Seeing them play is different from looking at a stat report or last year's film," Gosselin said. "It's been good to come in and really get to know them."

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SPORTS

# BVT Boys' Basketball finding its footing

*Beavers bring experienced roster to floor this winter*



Senior captain Jon Powell (34) will be one of the leaders for the BVT boys' basketball team. Photo credit Whitney Russo

*By Chris Villani*

If Dan Morin has identified a flaw in the Blackstone Valley Tech boys' basketball team, it might be that this year's squad is too unselfish.

"It's a really good group of kids, and they are such good kids that they are passing too much and not always looking for that scoring opportunity or chance to attack," Morin said. "We are trying to get that fire in them."

The Beavers suffered a few early season setbacks, but Morin still likes his team's chances to compete in the Colonial Athletic League and for a spot in the Clark Tournament thanks to a roster loaded with eight returning seniors and a total of 11 players who gained varsity experience last year.

There is plenty of talent on the roster, Morin said, but he

is "looking for that one or two players to step up and be that game changer for us."

He has more than a few candidates. Senior captain John Powell is a strong presence on the interior and brings a streaky scoring presence to the team. Seniors Ryan Sauter and Alex Burgos combine to form a strong backcourt. Burgos, the quarterback of the Valley Tech football team is adjusting to a new position, Morin said, and will be handling the point guard duties.

"We want him to utilize those court vision skills and the IQ that he uses on the football field," Morin said. "He has a strong build for a point guard, we are hoping that will be beneficial. And he is very vocal."

Junior Nick Whitlock is a player Morin described as a "sleeper."

"He has got a lot of energy and he is very athletic," the coach said. "I am looking for him to connect the dots. A lot of these guys are trying to fit into their spots and figure out where they can excel for us."

Senior Tyler Bell is another potential linchpin for the Beavers. He has a strong shot and good range, Morin said, and is ratcheting up the intensity he will need to excel.

Morin said that getting to the Clark and winning the CAL, the latter of which is something Valley Tech competes for on a yearly basis.

The Beavers also have the challenge of competing in a higher division this year, having moved from Division IV to Division III.

"We are looking to try to break into the D3 playoffs for the first time," Morin said.

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