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February 2024

Ashland launches inaugural "Community Hero Award"

Izzy Assencoa and Joanne Duffy receive posthumously

BY THERESA KNAPP

Igidio "Izzy" Assencoa and Joanne Duffy have each received, posthumously, one of Ashland's first Community Hero Awards. Both recipients died in 2023.

"On behalf of the Council on Aging, we could not have two more appropriate and deserving recipients of the inaugural COA Community Hero Award," announced Ashland Council on Aging Vice Chair Steve Mitchell at the Jan. 17 meeting of the Select Board.

Mitchell said the purpose of this new award "is to recognize and acknowledge Ashland seniors who have demonstrated public service and volunteerism in support of the Ashland community; and individuals, groups, and/or organizations who have demonstrated and

supported advocacy for Ashland seniors regardless of age or residency."

Mitchell and COA Chair John "Fran" Blake presented

the awards to the families of Assencoa and Duffy.

AWARD

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Historic district proposed to govern future aesthetics of downtown Ashland

BY THERESA KNAPP

For the last few years, Jim Neilsen of the Ashland Historical Commission has been thinking about the demolition of buildings in town and how to preserve the character of the downtown area.

Neilsen said creating a local historic district (and related preservation bylaw) "is the only guaranteed way to have some say over what goes in in the downtown."

Currently, said Neilsen, "There's nothing really preventing anybody from taking anything [historic buildings] down if they really wanted to (the demolition delay is for a set period of time). I looked around at what other towns did for conservation and preservation, and what our mission is, which is the preservation of historic and cultural artifacts and buildings in the town of Ashland."

Neilsen said, even though there are signs on Main Street that say "Welcome to the Historic District of Ashland" – "Those signs are just signs, we do not have a local historic district."

He and his board have met with the Massachusetts Historical

Commission, and have worked with an historic preservation consultant to draw a map of the proposed district.

Neilsen said, "The proposed district literally starts at the Ashland Historical Society (the Ocean House), it continues along Main Street to the mill buildings...then down to The Corner Spot, the building next to the church, down that side of the street all the way down and around to where Erica's is right now (the restaurant) – that includes the library, that includes all those buildings on Front Street right there. And across the street, it goes from The Corner Spot all the way down to the Post Office which includes the Town Hall, John Stone's, the fire station, around the corner to the Post Office, across the street to the old pharmacy, the building next to it, then across the street to the railroad station, and back around."

Neilsen said that not all buildings in the district are historical but if a building were to be torn down,

AESTHETICS

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AESTHETICS

continued from page 1

any new construction would have to abide by the guidelines of the proposed bylaw which would influence the exterior architectural aspects of buildings within the district.

“There’s nothing about use or anything like that, people can do whatever they want with their buildings or properties; what this is, is strictly for what you can see from the street. So, if there’s something behind the building, or backyard, or something like that, it wouldn’t be historically relevant, it doesn’t matter – it’s what you can see from the street.”

Neilsen said that none of the buildings within the proposed district are on the National Register of Historic Places except for Town Hall.

Ashland Historical Commission member Helen Nickole said, “We do want to install, in the community itself, a sense of history and a sense of place that you have when you belong in a community, and when you have the history of the community sitting right there so that you have – what is the downtown historic district, or the downtown village area – it’s very important for it to remain in character and this will greatly help towards that end.”

The Historic Commission should soon receive a final report from the historic preservation consultant; they will work with town counsel to draft a bylaw for fall town meeting (which will require a two-thirds vote to pass); they will meet with various town boards and hold public forums to discuss the proposal.



A proposed Ashland Historic District outlined in dark blue, was discussed at the Jan. 17 meeting of the Select Board. Source: www.ashlandmass.com

Ashland Police welcome Jail Diversion Program clinician

BY THERESA KNAPP

At its meeting on Jan. 3, the Ashland Select Board welcomed Kirsten Quern as the town’s new Jail Diversion Program clinician.

“The Jail Diversion Program has been an important component of our public safety strategy over many years,” said Town Administrator Michael Herbert at the meeting. “Over the last couple of years, we’ve had difficulty finding and retaining a JDP clinician so I’m pleased to say we do not have that issue any more and we’ve contracted with Riverside [Community Care] and we have Kirsten Quern here who has accepted that job.”

Chief of Police Cara Rossi said the Jail Diversion Program has always been a “pet project”



Kirsten Quern is Ashland’s new Jail Diversion Program clinician. Source: www.ashlandmass.com

of hers for more than 10 years. “It is such a vital program for literally every aspect of our community from children to the elderly and everyone in between.”

As way of explanation, Rossi said that, “On a typical day, she’ll cull through the log and see what transpired the night before and what she could follow up with. So, there was a resident who was having issues with domestic violence last week that she followed through with. There are a lot of people suffering from substance abuse disorder that Kirsten went to a home and assisted with...The hope with Kirsten is that she will cut down with the amount of calls for service because we will get people to the appropriate after-care or services that they need...we’re trying to solve the problem.”

Rossi said that Quern “has the time, the bandwidth, the knowledge, the experience, the

training to follow up with these people...hopefully she’ll get them the services they need.”

Quern told the Select Board, “‘Jail Diversion’ is a little bit of a misnomer in a way because it’s really ‘mobile crisis,’ and the ability to go to where the issues are happening and respond either in the moment or, as the Chief said, that follow-up piece

of just making sure that we’re checking in and getting people connected because I know that the police officers don’t have the time for that.”

Quern is a licensed social worker and previously worked with Riverside in a mobile crisis role.

The position is grant-funded.



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AWARD

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Jan. 18, 2024, was "Izzy Assencoa Day" in the Town of Ashland

Igidio "Izzy" Assencoa

Mitchell said, "Izzy served on the Ashland Board of Registrars for 24 years, the Ashland Council on Aging for 17 years, and the Ashland Democratic Committee for 31 years. He was a proud member of the Ashland Lions Club, the Knights of Columbus, and the Friends of the Council on Aging... This is a man who spent his life in volunteerism."

Select Board Chair Robert Scherer presented a proclamation declaring Jan. 18, 2024, as "Izzy Assencoa Day" in the Town of Ashland.



Igidio "Izzy" Assencoa (d. 2023) was one of two recipients of Ashland's inaugural Community Hero Award.

Source: www.legacy.com

Jan. 19, 2024, was "Joanne Duffy Day" in the Town of Ashland

Joanne Duffy

Mitchell said, "Joanne Duffy served the Town of Ashland for 25 years, including 20 years as the Director of the Ashland Community Center. Joanne's office door was always open and she always had a smile... And I've just got fond memories of going into the Center and walking into her office and we would just gossip and it was good, we had a lot of fun... We talked about grandkids a lot, and we talked about dogs."

Select Board Chair Robert Scherer presented a proclamation declaring Jan. 19, 2024, as "Joanne Duffy Day" in the Town of Ashland.

A Community Hero plaque will be kept at the Ashland Community Center.

For more information about the award, including a nomination form, visit www.ashlandmass.com



Joanne Duffy (d. 2023) was one of the first two recipients of Ashland's Community Hero Award.

Source: www.mataresefuneral.com

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Advertising Sales

Susanne Odell Farber 508-954-8148 sue@odellconsult.com

Advertising Director

Jen Schofield 508-570-6544 jenschofield@localtownpages.com

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At a meeting in January, the Ashland Select Board proclaimed Jan. 31, 2024, as "Lois McAuliffe Day" in the town of Ashland in recognition of McAuliffe's retirement from the Ashland Public Library after 23 years of service. Source: www.ashlandmass.com

Overnight Parking Ban

The Town of Ashland's winter parking ban began on Nov. 1 and ends March 31. During that time period: "It shall be unlawful for the driver of any vehicle, other than one acting in an emergency, to park said vehicle on any street for the period of time longer than one hour between the hours of 2 am - 6 am any day of the week." Vehicles found in violation of the winter parking ban will be issued citations and/or towed at the owner's expense.

For any inquiries about DPW's winter operations, don't



hesitate to reach out at dpw@ashlandmass.com or call 508-881-0120. Residents can find more information on the DPW webpage of the town's website. Let's work together to stay safe and prepared for winter weather in Ashland!

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Realtor Willene Koziara: 'Anyone can have their dream home'



Business spotlight

Willene Koziara's enthusiasm and experience help anyone find their dream home or sell their current home

BY LINDA CHUSS

When meeting realtor Willene Koziara what clearly comes through is her genuine passion for helping people, specifically in buying and selling their homes. "Everyone needs a place to call home, one meant for them," said Koziara. "I like to say I don't sell houses – I sell dreams. I really enjoy getting to know people and what they want, then helping them achieve it."

For many years, Koziara harbored the dream of becoming a

realtor. "But life got in the way," she said. Eventually, Koziara realized that dream by obtaining her real estate license and joining Keller Williams Boston MetroWest Realty. Her initial year proved to be extremely fulfilling and included assisting a buyer in finding a home immediately after passing her exam to selling a million-dollar property within a week. She also successfully managed a property in Florida. Notably, in early January 2024, she already had a home under agreement.

Koziara also brings twenty years of experience working with contractors and inspectors. "I provide advice on what work to do and share contacts for getting it done," she said. "Sellers and

buyers benefit because I can talk knowledgeably with inspectors.

"Throughout the process, clear communication is critical. I listen to what clients want and keep them informed. Also, I'm fluent in Portuguese, which is more comfortable for clients who have that as their primary language."

As an Ashland resident for 15 years, Koziara remarked, "I would never leave the town. My four children have been in Ashland public schools. All of them play lacrosse and the younger ones play basketball. That's my husband's influence – he leads a physical education department in Framingham. Family and home are very important to us, and I like to help other people have a home for their families, in any MetroWest community.

"Some people think it's impossible to buy a house, but anyone can! There is a process to get ready to own and I like to help people through it, one step at a time, no matter how long it takes. To see the smile at the end is priceless. As my 8-year-old daughter says, 'If you can dream it, you can do it'."

"Every situation is somewhat unique. There's always something new and I like the challenges. For example, interest rates, which are currently a puzzle – everyone is hopeful they're moving down, but regardless, investing in real estate is worthwhile now."

Bianca S., a client who bought a home through Koziara, shared, "There are no words to describe how happy my husband and I were with the service and care provided by Willene. She was always attentive to details and willing to search as many houses as necessary until we found our perfect one, in the exact location and style we were looking for. From the beginning to the key handover, we cannot describe how grateful and happy we are to have had Willene with us on this journey."

As for sellers, Koziara said, "I want to make it headache-free

for them. Like if they're downsizing and moving from Ashland to somewhere warmer, I can help with selling here and buying there."

Koziara sold a home for Branden G., who commented, "Working with my realtor was an absolute pleasure. She went above and beyond to ensure that the sale of my home went smoothly."

Recommendations like those put a big smile on Koziara's face. "I want my clients to be satisfied because that's my reason for doing this."

For more information, visit KoziaraRealtor.com. To talk with Willene Koziara about finding the right home or selling a home, call 774-244-2301 or email contact@koziararealtor.com.

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Newly-renovated Nyanza Healing Garden reopened in November

BY THERESA KNAPP

In November, the newly-renovated and restored Nyanza Healing Garden reopened with repaired panels, updated landscaping, and an ADA-compliant walkway.

In 2016, a glass-topped gazebo was built as a place for peaceful reflection, but the stained-glass panels were vandalized soon after. Those replacement panels are made of a material more like plexiglass.

The site is located behind the left-field fence at the Ashland Middle School baseball field, and is dedicated to those who suffered from a rare form of cancer tied to contamination from the former Nyanza Colorant Plant.

For more information on the project, visit www.ashlandnyanzaproject.com/ashlandhealinggarden



The Nyanza Healing Garden reopened in November.
Source: www.facebook.com/TownofAshlandMA/

How to access the Nyanza Healing Garden:

To access the site, you can park on the MBTA access road and walk through the Baseball Field. We are currently working with the Town to create an access point on the road and a safe walking path into the garden in the future.

Source:
www.ashlandnyanzaproject.com

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Senior Community Center Activities for February 2024

New Programs & Activities:

Feb 1, at 9 Free Breakfast sponsored by Ashland Lions Club. Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Feb 1st at 10, COA Meeting

Feb 1st at noon, FOACO Meeting

Feb 1st at 6:00-7:30, NEW! TRIP INFORMATION NIGHT with Donna Shaw, Learn about upcoming Ashland and Callahan Senior Center Travel (Back up date in case of bad weather - Feb 8th from 6 - 7:30 pm)

Feb 2nd All Day, Wear RED Day *Wear Red Day* is a day dedicated to raising awareness about heart disease and heart health. Wear red and show your support.

Feb 5th at noon Lunch & Karen Spilka's Office Listening Hour Reservations for Lunch: Please use the payment box outside of the Main Office to reserve your seat. The cost is \$5 per person.

Feb 7th at 10, Computer Class - "Using Voice Mail" Call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Feb 8th at 10:30, Downton Abbey Tea Party and Showing of 3rd Episode

Call to reserve your seat at 508-

881-0140 x1.

Feb 9th 10:00-11:30 Legal Consultation with Arthur P. Bergeron will be held via Telephone.

Call to make an appointment 508-881-0140 x1.

Feb 12th at noon Valentine's Day Lunch with Jonathan Keezing, guitarist & vocalist Reservations for Lunch: Please use the payment box outside of the Main Office to reserve your seat. The cost is \$5 per person.

Feb 13th at 11, Mardi Gras Party - join us for pastries and mocktails. Space is limited. Please call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Feb 13th at 11:30, Ashland Sustainability Program Information Session about a paid opportunity for Seniors. presented by Samantha Riley, Ashland Sustainability Project Manager

Space is limited. Please call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Feb 14th 9-11:30 Veterans Coffee Hour - All Veterans are invited to join us for coffee & pastries. Meet Veterans Service Officer Richard Sabounjian. Please call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Feb 19 Closed Presidents Day

Feb 20th at 11 Lecture/Discussion about "Forgotten Black Women of the Civil Rights Movement" by Media Specialist Donna Halper Please call to reserve your seat at 508-881-0140 x1.

Feb 21st at 10, Town Manager's Coffee Hour

Feb 22nd 10-11:30, Clocktown Memory Cafe with performance by Retro Politan Duo Clocktown Cafe provides a welcoming place for individuals with Alzheimer's disease, dementia or a cognitive impairment, accompanied by the care partner.

Feb 26th at 10:30, Hearing Aid Cleaning with Hopkinton Audiology. Please call to make an appointment 508-881-0140 x1.

Feb 26th at noon, Lunch and Trivia Contest. Reservations for Lunch: Please use the payment box outside of the Main Office to reserve your seat. The cost is \$5 per person.

Feb 29th 6-8, FOACO sponsored "Sadie Hawkins Day" Dance with DJ Victor Ng. Plus appetizers and light refreshments. Please use the payment box outside of the Main Office to reserve your seat. The cost is \$10 per person.

Weather Cancellation Policy:

The Senior Center will be closed on all holidays observed by Town Hall employees.

Activities and transportation may be cancelled due to inclement weather.

The bus/van will not operate when weather causes school closings.

Stay tuned to your local TV station for listings of school closings.

WEEKLY PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES
Note: All classes are a suggested donation of \$4 per person Unless otherwise noted.

Bingo - First and Third Tuesdays of the month at 1 pm

Bowling - Tuesdays at Ryan's Amusement in Millis at 9 am

Blood Pressure Clinic - Wednesdays at 10:30 am

Canasta - Mondays at 1 pm

Chair Yoga - Wednesdays at 1 pm

Chair Volleyball - Tuesdays at 1 pm

Chess Class - Mondays at 1:30 pm

Craft Class Free - First and Third Friday of the Month at 11 am

Cribbage - Thursdays at 12:30 pm

Exercise with Joni - Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9:30

am (No Exercise Class on Feb. 9th and 19th)

Hearts - Wednesdays at 1 pm

In Stitches "DROP IN" Knitting Group - Second and Fourth Tuesday of the Month at 11 am

Intermediate and Advanced Watercolor Class - Tuesdays & Wednesdays at 9:30 am

Line Dancing with Lisa - Thursdays at 12 pm

Mahjong - Fridays at 9:30 am for Beginners and 10:30 am for regular play

NEW! Mindful Meditation - Thursdays at 11 am with Mary Green

Parkinsons Boxing - First and Third Wednesday of the Month at 1:30 pm

Parkinsons Support Group - Second Wednesday of the Month at 1:30 pm

Pins and Needles (Free Sewing Class) - Every 2nd & 4th Friday of the Month at 9 am

NEW! Poker - Tuesdays at 12:00 pm - Volunteer will instruct beginners. All level of players welcome.

Veterans Office Hours - Every other Wednesday of the Month from 9 -11:30 am

Tips for **Dry Eyes** in Cold Weather

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Your Money, Your Independence

Frugal February... A Different Take, One That's Sustainable.

Seen the "Frugal February" challenge recently?

The main idea is following holiday indulgences and resolutions being forgotten, use February (only 28 days) to do something difficult but important – get your finances back on track.

Popularity has grown amongst the F.I.R.E. (Financial Independence, Retire Early) bloggers. You know, the supposedly "retired at 33" gurus that post multiple times a day to promote a website with 6 Google ads and links for annual subscriptions payable to their LLC.



Glenn Brown, CFP

The challenge with this challenge?

Many use Frugal February as a month to not spend. While noble, how sustainable is this for improved outcomes, "Wow, \$2,200 saved last month, we deserve a vacation in the Caribbean!"?

Instead, let's discuss actions that provide yearlong benefits plus a better time to start.

Finding Time to Focus.

Weekends are likely full of family activities, kids sports and honey-do lists. Add an unofficial national holiday, Super Bowl

Sunday, and it's easy to be derailed.

So wait, start February 12th and go through March 11th. Kids activities have a break between winter to spring and family activities may be in a lull.

Focus One: Credit Utilization.

Run your annual credit report. If not above 780, plan to fix so it improves your future cost of borrowing.

Next, review your terms (interest rates, fees, available limits) of credit cards, loans and HELOCs, including the zero balances.

Also consolidate to 2-3 credit cards with high limits, then use one primarily that's paid off monthly. Now it's easier to track expenses for budgeting and maximizing rewards.

Speaking of rewards, shift from air/hotel rewards to cash back automatically used the following month on purchases. Consider how often air/hotel programs update for a destruction of stored value. A \$400 flight now likely needs 25,000 miles, whereas get 5% cash back on annual \$25,000 spend, \$1,250 was used on following month purchases.

Focus Two: Shop Insurance.

Been 3 years since shopped home, auto, umbrella and/or pet insurance? Good chance it increased over +30% without any claims to "cover increasing costs".

While partially true, consider, "We noticed you're still here, so we're betting on autopay and inertia to increase profits."

Focus Three: Your Automatic Payments.

Review all automatic payments and use of those services/products.

Yes, it's easy to cancel Peacock after a NFL playoff game. But what of subscriptions on products shipped by Amazon, Instacart, DoorDash? Are you still using it, how frequently and can it be found at a lower price?

What of new bundles offered to better meet your needs? Talking about subscription plans for your cellphone, internet, cable/streaming, music, fitness, data storage, kids gaming, kids activities, club memberships, pet supplies, etc.

Focus Four: Organize to Live with Less.

Declutter, purge, or just throw (bleep) out. Feng Shui touts the benefits of energy and flow, but to me it reduces the need to buy stuff that will re-clutter your space.

Speaking of space, if paying for a storage unit, please stop. At \$200 a month, \$2,400 annually and \$12,000 over 5 years, is the crap not good enough to be in your home worth \$12,000?

How about even \$1,000? Prove it by listing for sale.

Get \$600, then a \$3,000 win/win (or 3X return) over next 12 months.

Focus Five: Finish Your Taxes.

With taxes done by March 11th, there is time to complete deadline items like funding an IRA or Backdoor Roth, plus gain ~10 months to impact 2024 from discovery within the return. Also, you're worry-free for March Madness, St. Patrick's Day and kid's new spring activities.

To get more sustainable ways to improve finances, speak with your Certified Financial Planner.

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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Select Board found in violation of open meeting law due to untimely minutes

Members to attend specialized training due to 'intentional violation'

BY THERESA KNAPP

At a meeting of the Ashland Select Board in January, Town Manager Michael Herbert said the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office had found the town in violation of the open meeting law.

Herbert said, "As an overview, we did receive correspondence from the AG...they did find that the [Select] Board had violated the open meeting law by failing to timely approve five sets of minutes."

The original complaint, dated June 8, 2023, referenced seven sets of minutes but the Attorney

General's Office found that two sets had been filed appropriately.

Herbert said the AG's office "did determine this was an 'intentional violation' only in the sense that they had talked to us about this before and so it was a repeat violation. They did acknowledge the fact that, what we were trying to do is we were trying to reconcile some older meeting minutes that we were trying to clean up, and so therefore they did not issue a civil complaint."

Select Board Chair Robert Scherer said the infraction was not intentional.

Select Board Vice Chair Yolanda Greaves agreed. "It wasn't 'intentional.' We didn't purposely forget, we didn't. But I do know that, through the years, we've had sometimes difficulty getting our meeting minutes done and updated and approved; so I think now we're on a better schedule, we're getting them done on a timely basis, and I think that our goal has to be to maintain that schedule."

The AG directed Select Board members to attend a webinar related to the open meeting law.

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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

Celebrate Your Besties This Galentine's Day!

BY GINA WOELFEL

Galentine's Day falls on February 13th and is a day for women to celebrate their female friendships. It originated from the character Leslie Knope on the TV show "Parks and Recreation" and is now widely celebrated by countless gal-pals nationwide. On Galentine's Day, women recognize the importance of their female bonds and honor their tried and true friendships. It's the perfect opportunity to pay tribute to your besties who've been there for you through thick and thin.

We all have that special person in our lives: our go-to buddy, our confidant, our ride-or-die, forever friend. You know who she is. She's the person you call when you get engaged and the person who helps you cut the face out of your photographs when you break up. She's the person who cheers you when you succeed and the person who

tells you to get back up when you fall. She's part of your DNA and gets you. She's your person... That's your Galentine.

And guess what? Sometimes, your Galentine is you, and if that's the case, then February 13th is your Day to celebrate the strong, beautiful woman you are!

In The Beauty Beat, we often emphasize the importance of self-care. Last year, for Galentine's Day, we made the executive decision that spending quality time with friends is the best self-care there is. You can trust, laugh, and celebrate with your friends; they always make you feel more relaxed and beautiful after you hang out. Sounds familiar? Hmm, who else makes you feel that good? Ah, yes, The b.LUXE Beauty Team! We know how to make you look and feel fabulous, and we're excited to celebrate that this year.

2023 was a stellar year for



b.LUXE. We're so incredibly grateful for you, our wonderful clients, and thanks to your unwavering support and loyalty, it was our most successful year yet! We don't often get to share how much you mean to us, but when you're in our studio, you make our days better. Your conversation and personality propel us forward in our profession, and you're the reason we love our jobs.



To celebrate this milestone and show our appreciation, we're giving back in a big way with a bevy of surprises we're sure will delight you. There'll be complimentary gifts and pop-up services, and on select dates, we will reopen our books for our popular makeup lessons with celebrity artist Madison Elliot. These are just a few of the ways b.LUXE wants to thank you. You deserve a gift of luxury, and we have something special for every one of you!

To ensure you receive every promotion and gift, follow us on social media, update your contact information with our front desk, and watch for our text alerts, social media posts, and mailings.

**GALENINE'S DAY
SPA GIFT CARD PROMO**
Purchase a \$50 Galentine's Day Spa Gift Card for only \$40
Tuesday, February 13th
9 AM - 9 PM ONLINE ONLY

You can purchase as many as you like, but only one Galentine's Spa Gift Card per appointment. To grab your specially-priced Galentine's Day Gift Card, scan the QR code above on February 13th or go to bLUXE.com.



Of course, we couldn't forget good old Valentine's Day! b.LUXE gift cards are always available for easy purchase online and in-studio and are the perfect way to say Happy Valentine's Day to your special someone. You know how much your wives, mothers, and significant others love b.LUXE! So, hint, hint... Grab your honey the gift they really want!

We hope Galentine's/Valentine's Day finds you celebrating with all the people and things you love the most and wish you a joy-filled February.

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February 2024 at the Ashland Library

President's Day

Closed on Monday, February 19th

Adult:

HYBRID - Romance Book Club

Thursday, February 1 @ 6:30pm
Read Moroccan Romances

Virtual - Author Melanie Brooks: A Hard Silence

Thursday, February 1 @ 7pm
"A Hard Silence" is an intimate glimpse into author Melanie Brooks' memories of coping with the tragedy of her father's illness and enduring the loneliness and isolation of not being able to speak.

NEW (In-Person) - Friday Night Film Viewing

Friday, February 2 @ 7pm
We'll be watching "Two of Us"

Card Making with Jan Poppendieck

Monday, February 5 @ 6:30pm
Come join us for an evening of card making with Jan. We will learn stamping and card making techniques using our huge stash of supplies.

Virtual: Effective Grassroots Movements that Impact Voting Rights with Professor Rachael V. Cobb

Monday, February 5 @ 7pm
What does it take to take a Grassroots idea to a movement which can have a significant impact on voting and elec-

tions? Join us for this virtual panel discussion to see how that happens and what you can do to be part of that movement!

Decorating Cupcakes for Gal/Pal/ Valentine's Day

Tuesday, February 6 @ 6pm
Do you love decorating cupcakes but would like to up your game? Cake artist Dawn Rice Norton will be joining us to give us some real hands-on tips on how to decorate like a pro!

Virtual - Toni Morrison with Bill Thierfelder

Tuesday, February 6 @ 7pm
Explore the life and legacy of Toni Morrison, whose best-selling work examined racial and gender identity in America — particularly the often-crushing experience of black women — through incandescent prose resembling that of no other writer in English.

VIRTUAL Front Street Readers Book Club

Tuesday, February 6 @ 7pm
Read "American Indian Stories"

Virtual: The Salem Witch Trials with the Salem Witch Museum

Wednesday, February 7, 2024 @ 1pm
In the year 1692, the daughter and niece of Reverend Samuel Parris were plagued with a mysterious and

alarming illness. Soon, inhabitants of Salem Village were faced with their worst fear—confirmation that witches had arrived in Essex County. Ultimately, the colonists experienced the most severe and devastating witch-hunt to ever take place in North America.

Essential Oils with Hannah Stein: Rose Oils

Wednesday, February 7 @ 6:30pm
Join fellow Ashlanders and Hannah Stein, Owner of Ashland REIKI & Wellness Center, as we explore the benefits of using Rose Oil in your daily life.

Virtual - Environmental Book Club

Wednesday, February 7 @ 6:30pm
Read "A Terrible Thing to Waste"

Virtual - Ethics For When Sci-Fi Becomes Reality: Gene Editing As Medicine

Wednesday, February 7 @ 7pm
Gene editing is part of a broader class of new therapeutics called "gene therapy," the first of which was approved in 2017. Beginning with a total of five FDA-approved gene therapies, this number is on track to double this year, with dozens more in clinical development. Entering this strange new world, an abundance of questions arise—How do we decide what is treated with gene therapy and what is not? Who gets access to it? Should we do this at all?

Virtual - A Conversation Between Two Noah Charneys: At the Intersection of Art and Ecology

Thursday, February 8 @ 2pm
We hope you can join us for what is going to be an unusual and enlightening discussion - where will the two Noahs intersect, where will they diverge? How are art and ecology intertwined? Or, is it?

Paint Night with Ashwini Chitnavis

Thursday, February 8 @ 5:30pm
We're excited to bring Paint Night to Ashland! We welcome Ashwini Chitnavis to host this session where you learn to paint on canvas. No art experience necessary, just an open mind and a can-do attitude.

Virtual - Fantasy Romance Panel: The Turn Into "Romantasy"

Thursday, February 8 @ 6pm
We're so thrilled to participate in FaRoFeb - celebrating Fantasy Romance during the month of Feb! We welcome authors HR Moore, Vela Roth, and Nisha J. Tuli as they talk

about Romantasy - is it the same as Fantasy Romance? How is it different? And, where do our author's books fall into this spectrum? This is sure to be an amazing conversation!

Mystery Book Club

Friday, February 9 @ 12pm
Read Any Book by Agatha Christie

Virtual - Friday Night Film Discussion

Friday, February 9 @ 7pm
Watch "The Gold Rush"

Virtual - Author and Historian Toni Mount Discusses "How to Survive in Medieval England"

Saturday, February 10 @ 10am
Before the understanding of sterilization techniques, the FDA, even the importance of clean drinking water, millions survived through Medieval England. Some even survived into their 80s and 90s! How did they do it? Join author and historian, Toni Mount, as she discusses how it was done.

For more, visit our website.

Share the love with the Ashland Business Association

With the holiday season behind us and the new year well underway, the Ashland Business Association is also kicking off the new year ready to drive growth and achieve our goals, while supporting our network of professionals!

The ABA is always welcoming new members! As of 2024, we slightly raised our memberships to \$125 (from the previous \$100), to sustain our organization. Our memberships are robust and provide visibility for your business, promotion opportunities, education opportunities, networking events, exposure to regional connections.

If you aren't a member, please take a look at our Member Business Directory on our site and support our fabulous community by purchasing goods/services, and show your appreciation through referrals and comments/likes on social media!

We LOVE working with our community's businesses and organizations. We need your support, and want to shout out our gratitude from the rooftops! Partner with us and sponsor one of the many events we are hosting this year and promote your business while supporting our organization. When you become an event sponsor- your logo appears at the bottom of each event's promotional item, your business is mentioned by name in event de-

scriptions, and recognition at the event. We have sponsorship options ranging from \$100- 500.

More important updates for you!

One, we are thrilled to announce that we are rolling out a brand-new newsletter for 2024 using Constant Contact. Please sign up to receive important updates from our organization. Also, contact us if you have something to share- publicity@ashlandbusinessassociation.com

Two, NOW AVAILABLE- Our High School Senior College Scholarship Application for 2024! We are committed to support our town's High School Seniors, and the local charitable organizations in our community. Visit our website to learn about these methods of supporting our community!

SAVE THE DATES

Feb. 13- Ashland Town Update

March 21 - Virtual Lunch & Learn: Marketing your business in 2024

Events to watch out for in 2024- Speed Networking, MetroWest YMCA Regional Barbeque, Celebrate Rt. 126 Community Block Party, Movie Night, Comedy Night, the Networking Holiday Party, and more!

Dog Licenses

Dog License Registration is open!

Please register your dog before April 15, 2024. A \$50 fine will be added to each dog license after this date. The fee for intact dogs is \$20 per dog. The fee for spayed or neutered dogs is \$15 per dog but if you (the owner) are seventy (70) years of age or older then the tag is no charge. Don't forget to

bring an updated rabies certificate with you. Please note that the free license does not apply to kennels. You may license your dog using the Town of Ashland's online system, or by dropping off the form and payment to Town Hall. If you no longer reside in Ashland, or your dog is deceased, please contact the Town Clerk's Office by email, townclerkoffice@ashlandmass.com, or call 508-881-0100 ext. 7127 so records are updated.

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Community Aggregation Program

Ashland's 100% Green Energy Program
 Ashland is continuing the Municipal Aggregation Program for residents and businesses. The Program rate will be \$0.15988 per kWh and uses 100 percent green energy which is MAREq and 25% MA Class Recs. The basic Eversource service rate is \$0.17215 per kWh.

"We're pleased to continue offering an electric supply price that is less than Eversource's basic service rate. As Eversource costs continue to rise, participants in the program should see even more savings in the future." said Town Manager Michael Herbert.

No action is required by individual consumers. All accounts currently enrolled in the Program continue to be enrolled.

There are no enrollment, early termination, or cancellation fees attached to the Ashland electricity program. Residents who choose to opt-out can also opt-in at a later date if they so choose at no cost. However, anyone switching from a contract with a third-party supplier may be subject to penalties or early termination fees charged by that supplier. Ratepayers should verify terms before switching.

Basic Service rates change twice a year or more, depending on rate class. As a result, the aggregation rate may not always be lower than the Basic Service rate. The goal of the aggregation is to deliver savings over the life of the program against Eversource Basic Service. However, such savings and future savings cannot be guaranteed.

Residents may also visit colonialpowergroup.com/ashland or call (866) 485-5858 ext. 1 to learn more about Ashland's Community Choice Power Supply Program or to opt-in or opt-out.

For additional information, contact sriley@ashlandmass.com

Community Choice Power Supply Program Aggregation Plan

Click here for information regarding the Aggregation Plan Public Review.

The Community Choice Aggregation program is administered through Colonial Power. In the past five years, the program has saved rate payers over \$1 million in electricity costs through the bulk purchasing advantages of aggregation. Existing Eversource customers will be automatically enrolled in the Ashland Community Choice aggregation program, unless they choose to opt-out.

- Customers may leave the program at any time without early termination fees.
- Customers will continue to receive one bill from Eversource.
- Customers will continue to send payment to Eversource.
- Eversource will continue to respond to emergencies and outages.
- Reliability and quality of service will remain the same.
- Budget Plan/Low-Income delivery rate customers continue to receive benefits from Eversource. Aggregation Documents
- Public Notice - DPU 20-101 Ashland Notice of Filing and Public Hearing 2.2.21
- Public Notice - Community Choice Aggregation - 12 2020

Sharps Safe Disposal

The Town of Ashland has a safe and convenient way for you to dispose of your sharps!

DROP-OFF LOCATIONS:

Ashland Town Hall, 101 Main St.

Ashland Community Center, 162 West Union St.

Please note the following guidelines:

ACCEPTED ITEMS:

- One Time Syringes
- Hypodermic needles
- Catheters
- Surgical blades
- Veterinary sharps

NOT ACCEPTED:

- Broken glass
- Sharps in plastic or paper bags

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- DO NOT throw loose sharps in the trash
- DO NOT put sharps in recycling
- DO NOT flush sharps down the toilet



This service is proudly provided to you by the Board of Health. Let's keep Ashland safe and clean together!

FY24 Grant Awards Press Release

It's Official! The Ashland Cultural Council has completed its FY24 Grant Cycle and is pleased to announce that the following grants have been awarded for a total of \$10,595.00.

Congratulations to the following Grantees:

Program	Grantee
100 Years of Boston Comedy	Nick Zaino
Acoustic Memories	Sean Fullerton
Artifact	Bonnie Cochran
Ash Hop Porchfest 2024	Allison Burba Horgan
Ashland Farmers Market Music Series	Ashland Healthy Harvest, Inc
Celebrate Ashland at the HCA	Hopkinton Center for the Arts
Combating Hate and Prejudice	Janet Applefield
Crafting at the Ashland Library	Ashland Public Library
Culture School Onsite: Connecting Communities Through Cultural Workshops	Culture X Community, Inc
Discovery Museum Science Enrichment	Ashland PTO K-12, Inc
Illuminate Downtown Ashland	Christine Reynolds
Live Music Marking History Live - A Journey through the Roots of Popular Music	Jon Waterman
MA Law	Ashland Community Theater LLC
Pioneering Women of Early Rock and Roll	David Polatin
SheGrooves; Using Our Voices for Positive Change	Kaye Kelly
Sportified Color Competition	Sportified Inc

Program	Grantee
Stone Park Music Festival	Grace Soonjoo Moon
Stories Told	Joseph P. Keefe Technical High School
Summer Reading - Science and Nature Education at the Ashland Public Library	The Friends of the Ashland Public Library, Inc
The Mike and Beth Cabaret Show	Elizabeth Silvia
Theatrical Dance Recital	Seema Kasinathan
Yarning Around Massachusetts	Rosann Fleischauer

The mission of the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) and its Local Cultural Councils (LCC) partners is "to promote excellence, access, education and diversity in the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences, to improve the quality of life for all Massachusetts residents and to contribute to the economic vitality of our communities. The Ashland Cultural Council is part of a network of 329 Local Cultural Councils (LCC) serving all 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth. The LCC program is the largest grassroots cultural funding network in the nation, supporting thousands of community-based projects in the arts, sciences, and humanities every year. The State Legislature provides an annual appropriation to the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, which then allocates funds to each community's LCC. Decisions about which activities to support are made at the community level by a board of municipally appointed volunteers. For more information about the Ashland Cultural Council's criteria and priorities please visit <https://massculturalcouncil.org/local-council/ashland/>

How would you handle forced early retirement?



Mark Freeman

FINANCIAL FOCUS®
Provided by Edward Jones

When you plan to retire at a certain age, you can follow a strategy that incorporates your investment moves, your health insurance and other factors. But what happens if you're forced to retire earlier than you anticipated?

Unfortunately, this situation is not that uncommon. About 40% of Americans say they have been forced into retirement, according

to a recent survey from Edward Jones and Morning Consult, a research firm. If this were to happen to you because of a layoff, company downsizing or a health issue, would you be prepared to maintain your lifestyle today — and in the future?

Everyone's situation is different. If your forced retirement happened only a short time before you actually expected to retire, you might not need to take any steps at all. But if it was a matter of a year or more, you may need to look into the following areas:

- **Cash flow** – Obviously, a sudden, unexpected loss of employment will affect your cash flow. And if yours was the only source of income for your household, the situation could be especially concerning. Still, you may well have options that can help. You might find a part-time job, for one thing — many employers hire seniors for various types of service-oriented work. And if you've built an

emergency fund containing several months' worth of living expenses, now might be the time to tap into it. You also might need to start withdrawing funds from your IRA and 401(k), though, ideally, you'd like to delay this move as long as possible, as these withdrawals may be taxable.

- **Health insurance** – Health insurance can be a major concern if you face an unexpectedly early retirement. Once you're 65, you'll be eligible for Medicare, but what if you haven't reached that age? Through the COBRA legislation, you might be able to remain on your employer-based health insurance for a while — typically 18 months after your job ends. However, COBRA is expensive: If you're qualified, you might have to pay the entire premium for coverage, up to 102% of the cost of the plan, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. If you're

married, you might be able to get on your spouse's health insurance, but if this option isn't available, you could explore a Marketplace plan by visiting the healthcare.gov website.

- **Social Security** – A forced early retirement could affect your decision on when to start taking Social Security. You're eligible to begin collecting payments at 62, but your checks will be considerably bigger if you wait until your full retirement age, which is likely between 66 and 67, depending on when you were born. If your sudden retirement puts you in a real cash crunch, you might have to start taking payments regardless of your age, but if you have enough in savings, or your spouse's income is enough to keep you afloat, you may want to wait as long as possible so you can get the larger checks. Of course, if your retirement comes while you're still several years away

from Social Security eligibility, you won't have to make this now-or-later decision right away.

Being forced to retire before you planned can certainly be challenging. But by looking at the options available to you, in terms of finances and health insurance, you may well find choices that can help you minimize the disruption to your life.

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

Mark Freeman
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
77 West Main Street,
Hopkinton, MA
508-293-4017
Mark.Freeman@edwardjones.com

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Travel Opportunities with Ashland Senior Center

The Friends of the Ashland & Callahan Senior Centers have been working to create multiple travel opportunities for its members and friends for 2024. A wide range of trips will be offered to all seniors over 55 who are independent and can maneuver without assistance. Detailed flyers for each trip open for reservation are always available at each of the Senior Centers. Contact Donna Shaw at dcshaw5@gmail.com for any Flyer as well as the Reservation Form.

Be sure to check our travel boards regularly for added trips updated and posted at each center when a trip is confirmed, and reservations are open.

Since we need to meet specific requirements for any trip to be confirmed, don't hesitate to reserve your trips early.

Keep in mind that all who register will be contacted via email when trip numbers confirm our trip and with any needed updates. If you do not have an email, please provide us with an email of a family member or a close friend. A trip will be canceled when we do not have thirty registered travelers thirty days before our trip date—a reason to sign up early.

New Registration Procedures:

To reserve a spot on any trip, all travelers must complete a reservation/emergency form and enclose a nonrefundable \$10 deposit for a day trip or a \$20 nonrefundable deposit for a multi-day trip into a marked envelope and

drop it off at either center.

Your trip balance will be due when the trip is confirmed with thirty reservations, hopefully, thirty days prior to trip departure. All checks will be payable to FOACOA.

General Information:

- Travelers must arrive at the senior center 15 minutes before scheduled departure. The bus will leave at the scheduled time and will not wait for late arrivals.
- All travelers must meet at the designated times and locations during each trip: Ashland Senior Center in Ashland; The Academy Building parking lot at Cushing Park
- Most trips offer optional trip protection; see a trip flyer for specific details.

Cancellation Procedures:

Each trip has its cancellation policy. Please check the details of each trip's policy before booking. All efforts will be made to fill vacancies using an available waitlist.

March 11, 2024: Celtic Angels from Ireland, \$129 pp.

A joyous celebration of everything Irish will touch American soil this spring when the energetic, exciting stars of the Celtic Angels tour the US. Through their shared zeal and passion for Ireland's musical traditions, this troupe enables their audiences to experience the Real Ireland.

Package Includes:

- Elegant Luncheon Family style @ Aqua Turf Club, Plantsville, CT
- Menu: Tossed Salad & Penne Pasta, Corned Beef & Cabbage and Baked Scrod, Rolls & Butter Vegetable & Potato, Dessert - Coffee & Tea
- Celtic Angels Ireland Show
- Celtic Knight Dancers, including TWO former lead dancers of Riverdance
- The Trinity Band Ensemble of Dublin
- Meal Taxes and Gratuities
- Driver's Gratuity

April 4, 2024: MGM CASINO & CABARET, \$99 pp. A day that has it all!

Package Includes:

- Roundtrip Motorcoach
- Delicious Luncheon: Fresh Garden Salad Entrée Choices: Yankee Pot Roast or Baked Scrod Topped with herb cracker crumbs, Potato & Vegetable - Dessert, Coffee & Tea
- Fantastic Show
- Free time at MGM Springfield
- 50% off all Food at MGM (2nd meal!)
- * Must be over 50 years old and get a Players Card
- Meal Taxes and Server Gratuities
- Driver's Gratuity

April 19-26: BERMUDA CRUISE from BOSTON on the Norwegian GEM

Package Includes:

- Roundtrip Transfers to Pier in BOSTON, MA
- 7 Night Cruise to Bermuda from Boston
- All Meals and Entertainment on Board
- All Government Taxes and Port Charges
- All Taxes Included / NO Hidden Charges!
- Inside Stateroom \$1,299 pp; Oceanview Room \$1,499 pp; Balcony \$1,999 pp

June 16-22 - Mackinac Islandm, \$1030 pp Double

A US Passport is required for this trip

Trip includes:

- Motorcoach transportation
- 6 nights lodging, including four consecutive nights in Northern Michigan
- 10 meals: 6 breakfasts and four dinners
- Guided Tour of Mackinaw City
- Visit to Mackinac Island, including a Guided Carriage Tour
- Boat ride through the Soo Locks and free time and sight-seeing in Sault Sainte Marie
- Visit to Mackinaw Crossings

- Admission to Colonial Michilimackinac
- Gaming excitement at a Northern Michigan Casino

For more pictures, videos, and information, visit www.GroupTrips.com/ashlandtravelgroup - \$75 Due pp upon signing. Final Payment Due 4/9/2024

9/23-25 Margaritaville on Cape Cod with the cranberry bog and Cape Cod Canal cruise, \$599 double; \$559 triple; \$789 single

PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- Roundtrip Deluxe Motor Coach
- 2 Nights at the new Margaritaville Resort
- 2 Big Buffet Breakfasts at the Resort
- 2 Dinners Shows at the new Resort
- Mystery Show hosted by CVB & TTG
- Casino Visit with Free time
- Jimmy Buffet Tribute Show
- Free time at the Shops in Hyannis Village
- Cape Cod Canal Cruise
- Cranberry Bog on Cape Cod visit
- Baggage Handling & All Meal & Hotel Tax
- Driver Gratuity

Greater Ashland Lions Club

Happy St. Valentine's Day!

Thank You to all those that donated over 250 warm coats for children and adults.

Our annual Quiz / Trivia Night will be held on April 12th at the VFW Hall on Pleasant Street (6:30pm start time). Form a team (8 people maximum) for this fun and friendly trivia competition and win a Cash Prize. There will also be Raffles, Dessert Table, and a Cash Bar. Contact Lion Ro at 508.881.4743 or Lion Nicole at 781.718.6478 for tickets (\$20/per person).

In the planning stage is a Pasta Night. Check our column in next month's Ashland Local Town Pages for more information.

February observances: It is Black History Month. February 2nd is Ground Hog Day, the 4th is Thank Your Mailman Day, the 9th is National Pizza Day, on the 11th is Super Bowl Sunday. February 12 marks Abe Lincoln's Birthday, Mardi Gras starts on the 13th. George Washington's Birthday is the 22nd. Also on the 22nd is National Chili Day and

rounding out February is National Pancake Day on the 28th.

Do you have any used eyeglasses or un-needed hearing aids hanging around? We'll take them! Please bring them to the Police Station (located in the Public Safety Building at 12 Union St), Market Basket (Pond Street / Rte.126), the VFW (at 311 Pleasant Street), or the Town Hall (Main Street).

Wanting to get involved in the community? We're a low-pressure group of service-oriented folks always looking for new members. If you'd like to learn more about the Lions and our club, please

contact Lion Alexis at cvarnie@hotmail.com.

For more club information, please check us out on Facebook: Greater Ashland Lions Club. #weserve #kindnessmatters.

We are the Lions in Purple. We Serve!

SUBMITTED BY: LION ROSALIE PORTER, 2ND VP

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email sue@sodellconsult.com



Ashland Lions Club February 2024 Update

Congrats to our Youth Speech Contest winners!

The Ashland Lions and Greater Ashland Lions held their annual combined club-level Youth Speech Competition on December 21st. The contest was open to all Ashland students grades 9-12 provided they were sponsored by a Mass Lions Club or Leos Club. Judges not familiar with the contestants were selected to score each contestant on delivery, effectiveness, and the content of their speech. This year's topic was "With which historical figure would you most like to speak?", and each contestant had to prepare and present a speech 5-8 minutes long on the topic. All the contestants did an excellent job. Our first-place winner this year was sophomore Alisha Rose, and first runner up was sophomore Hasini Reddy. Ragav Iyer, a junior, was the first-place

winner for the Greater Ashland Lions. Since the contest was sponsored by both Lions Clubs in Ashland, the top two contestants both moved on to the Region/Zone competition to compete at the next level. All the contestants should be very proud of their accomplishments. Special thanks to our Leos Advisor Catherine Dicken, our event co-chairs Dan Mitchell of Ashland Lions and Patty Rokes of Greater Ashland Lions, the judges, timekeeper, scorekeepers, text reader and other volunteers who made this event possible.

Ashland Lions Meat Raffles

Ashland Lions is continuing another great year of meat raffles! Our next one will be held on Saturday, February 3rd at 12pm, at TJs Food and Spirits in Ashland, and continue the first Saturday of each month throughout the win-

ter. As always there will be great food, fun people, and great meat to choose from. See you there!

Ashland Lions Regatta on the Sudbury River!

The Ashland Lions will hold their 4th annual Lions Toy Boat "Regatta" on Saturday, March 23rd, 2023 (rain date Sunday March 24th). At 10:00am, numbered toy boats will be launched by a member of the Lions from the Sudbury River canoe launch at Gryncell Park in Ashland. The first three boats to reach the finish at Marathon Park will be the winners! You do not need to be present to win. Tickets, corresponding to the boat numbers, are \$5 each or 3 for \$10 and can be obtained from any Lion or by calling Lion "Dok" at (508)881-4664. All proceeds go to support our community and Lions Eye Research.

Eyeglasses and Cellphone Collection

Eyeglasses and cellphone collection is a year-round project with collection of used prescription and nonprescription eyeglasses, sunglasses, hearing aids and cell phones. In the past year we have collected almost 900 pairs of glasses!

Collection boxes are located at:

Ashland Post Office
Ashland Senior Center
Old train station - Ashland
Moody Optical - Ashland
Middlesex Bank - Ashland
Fayville, MA Post Office
Studio Optics - Framingham
Southborough Senior Center
Southboro Post Office on Rt.85
TJ's Food and Spirits
The Residence at Valley Farm

Senior Breakfasts

Seniors, why not join us and other members of the community for breakfast? Senior Breakfasts are on the first Thursday of each month, held at the Ashland Senior Center, 162 West Union St in Ashland. This event runs through May.

Stay up-to-date on Lions happenings

To see the latest status of our events, please visit our Ashland Lions Facebook page. Click the Like button and you will be automatically notified of changes or cancellations. While you're at it, be sure to follow Ashland Town News too!

KING LION DAN MITCHELL
ASHLAND LIONS CLUB
PRESIDENT

Great Decisions Discussion Group Starts In March

The Ashland Public Library is once again offering the Great Decisions discussion group. This group is open to people of all ages and will meet the third Thursday of every month beginning Thursday March 21. The meetings will be held on the third Thursday of every month March through October at 6:30-7:45 in the small meeting room at the Library.

Great Decisions is the longest-running and largest grassroots world affairs educational program of its kind and is sponsored by The Foreign Policy Association. The Foreign Policy Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring Americans to learn more about the world. Its mission is to serve as a catalyst for developing awareness, understanding, and informed opinion on U.S. foreign policy and global issues. The Great Decision program is offered as a high school or college-level course, as part of a life-long learning series, or is sponsored by various organizations in towns and cities across the country.

Each year The Foreign Policy Association selects critical topics related to major issues in the areas of US Foreign policy and international affairs. They publish the Great Decisions brief-

ing book with chapters on the selected topics written by diplomats, policy experts, academics, and foreign-service professionals who are experts in their field. These articles provide background information, current data, and policy opinions and serve as the focus for each Great Decisions group meeting.

The format for the discussion group meeting is much like that of a book club where everyone reads the article in the Great Decisions briefing book in advance, comes together to watch a video, and then one member of the group volunteers to facilitate the discussion. The topics for 2024 are: March 21st Mid-east Realignment; April 18th Climate Technology & Competition; May 16th Science Across Borders; June 20th China Trade Rivalry; July 18th NATO's Future; August 15th Understanding Indonesia; September 19th High Seas Treaty; October 17th Pandemic Preparedness.

Please join the Great Decisions discussion group if you want to share your thoughts, to expand your knowledge about global affairs, or you simply want to read and discuss topics of substance with other adults. Watch the Ashland Public Library website for information about how to register for this discussion series.

Downstairs Gallery Exhibit

"The Spirit of Nature Paintings by Dustin Neece Jan 17 -Feb 26, 2024

Southborough Artist and resident Dustin Neece has been painting for several decades. While in high school, Dustin studied with Hopkinton artist Jaime Alfonso. Dustin then did further studies in London and followed that with attending the Rhode Island School of Design. His work began to be recognized and collected by art dealers in New York. After RISD, Dustin studied with Odd Nerdrum in several locations in Europe. Over the years Dustin has received awards and commissions for his paintings, including a commemorative painting of Rick & Dick Hoyt on the 30th running of the Boston Marathon.

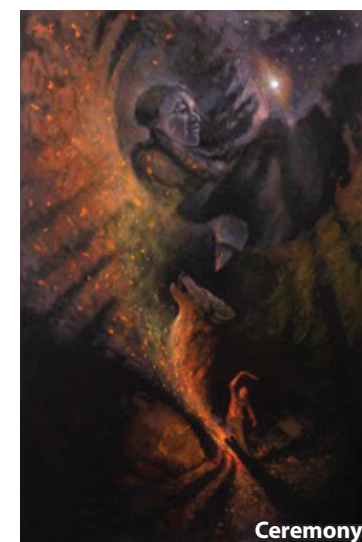
Dustin Neece is one of the few classically trained living artists that paints almost entirely from life and imagination. Over decades he has cultivated his visual and emotional sensitivity as well as his craft as an artist to capture the spirit of nature on canvas.

In Dustin's words:

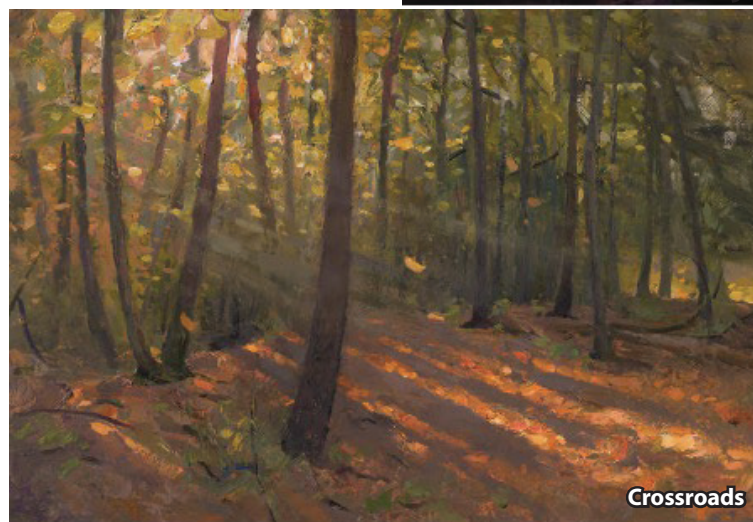
"Oil paintings hold the frequency of the energy that is put into them. By returning to paint my subjects on location over and over again until a work is com-

plete I am able to tune my paintings to the peaceful feelings and powerful beauty of nature.

We are all, each one of us, living aspects of this planet, constantly in communion with it. My paintings aim to increase your heartfelt experience of this reality. They can awaken new perceptions and deepen your relationship with the earth: and by extension, with spirit itself. Inviting my work into your home is



Ceremony



Crossroads

a blessing and an invocation of the magic you have experienced during your most precious moments in nature."

More of Dustin's work can be

found at: dustinneece.com

There will be an Artist's reception on Thursday, Feb 22, 5-7PM in the Downstairs Gallery of the APL

Sports

For the Love of the Game

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

In the past, the Ashland Youth Softball program was an important part of the feeder program to the high school.

However, a few years back, it seemed to go away, and the two entities were separate units. That is until last year when not one, but both groups found themselves with new leaders. Matt Matsen took over the high school softball team and Sean Weglage became the Vice President of the youth softball program in town. Together the two formed a bond that would eventually unite the programs once again.

“After deciding to build a partnership last year in our first years, we wanted to take it to the next level this year and do more,” the second-year Softball Coach said. “This year we’re looking to have clinics with youth coaches. All of our high school players have gone through the program and our future players are going through it now.”

According to Weglage, it will be the first time in some five or six years that Ashland will have winter clinics with the high school’s involvement. The Clocker athletes will be helping out the youth program looking to bring synergy back.

“Matt and I seem to be cut out of the same cloth so joining forces shows that the high school and youth softball programs in Ashland can come together,” Weglage said. “The youth program is supposed to be the feeder program to the high school in addition to showcasing the program and how the players are moving up the lad-

der and eventually into the high school.”

Over the past few years lacrosse has been pulling athletes from the softball field during the spring while club soccer and flag football have been taken athletes during the fall season. Weglage also noted that as the kids get older, the softball numbers have seemed to dwindle.

Matsen had coached 18 years in the Shrewsbury youth program before coming to Ashland to take over the Softball Coaching duties and he realized there needed to be a partnership.

“We are looking to get kids interested in the sport at a younger age once again and have them continue to play while high school players are now able to give back to the youth programs that they came up through,” he said.

Matsen believes that the high school program will benefit from joining forces with the town’s youth league. The Ashland coach noted that by the time that athletes arrive at the high school if they have any type of mechanical issues, it is usually too late to fix. However, if they catch it early on in the program it becomes not only better for the athlete but also the program down the line.

The two have also added fundraising to the partnership as there are always things that you can do outside of the normal ways of raising money. This year they have combined used equipment swap in addition to fund raising for the programs. “For the Love of the Game” will be held on March 2, and is organized in memory of Coach Andy Lymburner, a longtime Vice President, and Coach of



“By joining forces once again we want to show the kids how great it is to be playing a sport in a season for a team,” Weglage said. “But it is much more than that – it’s more about becoming a family.”

Ashland Youth Softball. Weglage also noted that although they cannot name a field after the coach, they have been able to dedicate the Warner School field in his honor with a sign.

Having started on Jan. 10 and continuing through March 13, the two programs will be having all sorts of clinics with MetroWest providing the facilities and Planet Fast Pitch the instructors. Pam Curtis, a softball player and the first female to play baseball in Ashland will also be helping out to give the kids the opportunity to learn the game. On March 30 they will host a softball Jamboree that began three years ago a pre-season tournament hosted by Ashland. Last year it was cancelled due to rain.

The two groups will also hold a mock middle school tryout showing the athletes that is not just something that you show up for, but how to prepare and get ready to take part in one.

FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME - 2024



Saturday, March 2, 10-1 @ The Corner Spot

6 Cherry Street, Ashland

Fundraiser to support Ashland Youth Softball & Ashland High School Softball programs

EXCITING RAFFLE ITEMS

Preview raffle prizes and order tickets online @ https://bit.ly/Softball_Raffle2024 or purchase in-person the day of the event



AT THE CORNER SPOT:

- Bake sale
- Gently used equipment swap - (softball and baseball gear)
- Face painting
- Crafts
- Activities & games





Organized in memory of Coach Andy Lymburner

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Real Estate Corner

Ashland Recent Home Sales

Date	Ashland	Amount
01/18/2024	373 America Blvd.	\$535,000
01/12/2024	20 Johnson St.	\$530,000
01/12/2024	59 E Bluff Rd.	\$571,000
01/11/2024	38 Wayside Ln.	\$781,000
01/10/2024	43 Oregon Rd.	\$700,000
01/05/2024	29 Spyglass Hill Dr.	\$450,000
01/03/2024	45 Shore Rd.	\$660,000
01/03/2024	186 Cordaville Rd.	\$585,000
12/29/2023	38 Lyndon Ln.	\$640,000
12/29/2023	160 Algonquin Tr.	\$610,000
12/28/2023	119 Cordaville Rd.	\$537,000
12/26/2023	108 Olive St.	\$465,000
12/20/2023	409 America Blvd.	\$680,000



The 3-bed, 2-bath, 1,608 square foot home at 119 Cordaville Road in Ashland recently sold for \$537,000.

Image credit: www.zillow.com

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

RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER



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REALTOR
BROKER AND FOUNDER

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www.Cordaville.com

Opioid Use Disorder

Signs of opioid abuse may be hard to see clearly, especially in someone close to you. Taking potentially addictive drugs not as prescribed or for an extended period of time increases the risk of misuse and addiction. Studies suggest that up to one-third of people who take opioids for chronic pain misuse them, and more than 10 percent become addicted over time.

If you have someone close to you who obtains opioids without a prescription, he or she is at increased risk of addiction. Persons using opioids that are obtained from unregulated sources are at increased risk of drug-related death. Drugs that pass hands illegally, such as fentanyl, may be


laced with life-threatening contaminants or much more powerful opioids. And people who use opioids illegally often turn to heroin, a cheap replacement with similar effects.

If your intuition is telling you there's a problem, speaking up could save the life of someone close to you. Reach out to your loved one's doctor who may be a critical partner if you determine it is time to take action. You may also contact SAMHSA (<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>) or SAMHSA's National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) for confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, information service for individuals and family members

facing mental and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations. You may also reach out to Ashland's Department of Prevention and Human Services at 508-881-0140.

Narcan is a life-saving drug that reverses the effects of opioids like heroin and fentanyl. Giving Narcan restores normal breathing and can prevent death of a loved-one, co-worker, neighbor...anyone who is experiencing an overdose caused by prescription narcotics or heroin.

Call the Ashland Board of Health Office to Obtain Free Narcan and Training at 508-881-0100 x 1975.




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Ashland Garden Club Members Create Winter Gardens

Did you ever wonder what the Ashland Garden Club members do when there aren't gardens or planters to be weeded, watered, and nurtured?

Well, like most gardeners, we never stop thinking about gardening regardless of the season.

Winter is a time to reflect on what we enjoyed about last summer's plantings while thinking about what we would like to do differently in the spring.

Gardening and seed catalogs help us in our planning as we think warm thoughts of spring. But a visit to a nursery can go a long way towards lifting our spirits when it is dark and dreary.

A recent visit to Weston Nursery sparked Master Gardener Elena Lapitsky's enthusiasm about Garden Club members creating our own "winter gardens" in the form of terrariums or planters. As the result, a group of Garden Club members joined Elena in visiting Weston Nursery to see their terrariums and to buy small



plants and the other materials needed to make our own terrariums or planters.

Jules Remenar welcomed us to use the meeting room at Ducle D Leche where we met to create our own versions of winter gardens. Everyone brought their own containers and small plants, and the Club provided all the planting materials. Elena

talked us through the planting process while explaining the materials and steps necessary to create the right environment for our tiny succulents. An added bonus to meeting at Ducle D Leche was the fact that we could enjoy drinks and snacks as we worked and after our work was finished many of us stayed to enjoy lunch or dessert.



Save the Date: Ashland Garden Club welcomes the public: March 9, 10-11:30 at the Ashland Public Library "From Rock and Grass to Italian-like Resort Gardens, A DIY Project."

Join Ashland Garden Club

member, Laura Johnson as she walks us through the multi-year transformation of her non-descript backyard into an Italian-like resort, complete with a bocce court, patio with a fire pit, and numerous gardens.

LOOKING TO SELL YOUR HOME IN 2024?

Plan now for the Spring Market. With over \$220M in sales, Experience Matters!

HOME SELLING 101

We all hear about homes selling so quickly because there is no inventory, but we may not realize all the prep work that goes into getting those homes ready. I am often called in months in advance of selling a home as people want to plan ahead and get the prep work done to generate the best price for their home.

As a first step, homeowners should call in an agent to discuss the process to put the home on the market. Agents will share with owners the value of their home, how to declutter, organize and stage it, suggest improvements

to increase their home's value and offer resources to help complete these tasks.

Kitchens and baths sell homes and are also the best investments for the highest rate of return. We refer clients to contractors to replace countertops, backsplashes, repaint or replace kitchens and baths, and we are often involved in the selection process.

We also recommend refinishing hardwood floors, repainting walls in current trending or neutral colors that may brighten up the space, replacing carpets, updating bathrooms, or power washing and or painting the

exterior. Sellers may also be required to have their well water quality and septic systems inspected. If there are problems with either, this allows enough time for repairs.

In addition to time, these tasks can require money, so planning ahead allows you to budget for these projects. Some may consider taking out a home equity line to do these improvements. Savvy real estate agents will be able to suggest alternatives if renovations aren't affordable. I encourage you as the first step of the home selling process to call in a real estate agent as soon as possible. They will make it less

overwhelming when the time comes to put your home on the market. Also, one of the best things about making improvements early is that you actually get to enjoy them before selling the home versus updating a home for someone else's pleasure.

Agents will discuss the strategy of when and how to put the home on the market and what price the home will bring. Knowing the value of your home will also help you understand what profits you will have to apply to the next home, so it's never too early to start the home selling process.

Contact me today to get started.

Call Kim to Sell Your Home Today!



Proudly Serving Boston
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Kim Foemmel
BROKER/OWNER
508.808.1149

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SCAN TO GET THE
VALUE OF YOUR HOME

