

Marking a Milestone

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The Blackstone Valley Tech Class of 2023 Commencement Ceremony concluded with cheers and applause for the graduates as they tossed their caps into the air.. Courtesy photo

The Blackstone Valley Tech Class of 2023 Commencement Ceremony was held at The Hanover Theatre & Conservatory for the Performing Arts, Worcester, MA, on May 25. The evening ceremony celebrated the accomplishments of its 294 graduates with all the pomp and circumstance they deserve.

"We all have great reasons to be proud as we gather to honor these students for completing a major milestone in their lives," said Assistant Superintendent-Director/Principal Mr. Anthony E. Steele II in his opening remarks. "We commend the members of the Class of 2023 for maintaining their focus and for

their dedication to reaching the goal of becoming a Blackstone Valley Tech graduate."

The ceremony included the National Anthem sung by graduate Carleigh Koopman of Northbridge. Next, Yvette Martin, Director of

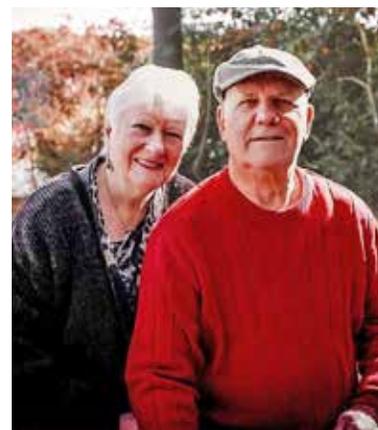
MILESTONE

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2023 Mendon Senior Citizens of the Year - Russ and Anne Dudley

The Mendon Council on Aging would like to thank everyone who submitted nominations for this year's Senior Citizen Award. It is pleased to announce that this year's winners are Russell and Anne Dudley. Russ, a lifelong Mendon resident, and Anne, who moved to Mendon in high school, have both been described by friends and family as kind, conscientious and devoted. They are devoted to each other, to their family and to their church. They have been married for 48 years and, although nominated together, each has made their fair share of contributions to the Mendon community. They boast a close-knit family, having raised five children in Mendon, four of whom live locally, and have seven grandchildren.

Russ was raised in Mendon along with six siblings. His roots go way back—to 1820 in fact. His great, great grandfather Silas Dudley, once owner of Harrison



Anne and Russ Dudley have been named Mendon's Senior Citizens of the Year for 2023. Photo contributed by Lauren Tetreault

Hall, now known as the Mendon Town Hall, donated the building to the Town. Russ has been referred to as down-to-earth and has a lengthy list of community involvement. He worked for the Mendon Post Office for thirty years, is a member of the Mend-

DUDLEY

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Mendon Neighbor Brigade, an easy way to get and give help

'Underutilized resource' seeks new co-leader

By Linda Chuss

A flyer hanging in a local barbershop nearly 15 years ago caught the attention of Alanna Bodio.

"The Neighbor Brigade was looking for volunteers to help community members in need of short-term assistance like meals, rides, and routine tasks," she said. "I realized it wouldn't take much time and I could choose to help when I was able." So, she joined the brigade.

When one of the group's co-leaders moved on, Bodio stepped up. Now, her co-leader has moved on, and Bodio needs a new partner.

"There's no fundraising or

money to manage. Co-leading is connecting volunteers with requests, reaching out to related groups to make sure they know about our services, and ensuring there are enough people helping. I know there's someone out there with the passion and bandwidth to join me."

Bodio added, "We're also welcoming people who need assistance to contact us. That's anyone facing a challenging illness or injury, a death in the family, or something like a house fire. The Senior Center and other groups sometimes recommend people to us. We learn what the person needs and set them up with volunteers

to assist them.

"Neighbor Brigade helps with friendly visits, rides to medical appointments, errands, dropping off meals, walking or feeding pets, and snow removal. It's one of the most underutilized resources in town. People don't want to ask for help, even when they could really use it. We encourage them to reach out. Requests are confidential, with only pertinent information released as needed."

After needs for assistance are identified, the co-leaders create an online sign-up sheet for volunteers, and send an email to the list of volunteers asking them to fill in the form indicating what they can provide.

"One memorable experience was a woman moving into Sunrise Apartments who needed furniture. We teamed up with the Brothers of the Brush and found furniture, drove through town to pick it up, and moved it in. Another time, we helped a group, rather than a person, by making grocery deliveries for the food pantry after they lost their van driver."

Mendon is one chapter among 20 in the parent organization, which is based in Massachusetts. They build and maintain the infrastructure, like the website, handling CORI checks, and providing the sched-



The Mendon Neighbor Brigade provides temporary help to people in need, and sometimes to groups, like to the Food Pantry when they needed help delivering groceries. Source: Facebook @MendonNeighborBrigade

uling application for all the groups.

According to www.neighborbrigade.org, the group was founded by Pam Manikas

Washek who was a "tireless champion for families in crisis." Washek lost her battle with cancer in 2021 but her legacy lives on through the missions and services of the organization.

To learn more about the organization including what it takes to volunteer, visit www.neighborbrigade.org/volunteer, www.facebook.com/mendonneighborbrigade, or email MendonMA@NeighborBrigade.org.

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Mendon Town Beach gets makeover

By Linda Chuss

This summer, people passing by the Mendon Town Beach at Nipmuc Pond are doing double-takes as an impressive improvement project for one of the town's greatest assets is now complete. While the new lawn and fencing are noticeable from the street, entering the facility reveals the stairs and ramp, retaining wall, landscaping, sand, and playground equipment that have all been replaced.

"We want more people in town to enjoy the beach, like we did when we were kids," said Parks and Recreation Commissioner Thomas Belland.

"But the condition had deteriorated. Working with a grant from the Community Preservation Committee and supportive contractors, plus pooling the skills of Parks and Recreation Director Dan Byer and fellow commissioner AJ Byrne, we were able to plan and oversee this project to restore the beach to something the town would be proud of again."

Issues of function and safety were addressed, which also made it more visually attractive.

"The old wall and stairs were sinking, and the fence was falling," Byer explained. "That's fixed with the replacements.

The ramp makes the area more accessible. Because of tree roots and erosion, the beach was uneven. Now, after removing stumps and leveling the grade, that area is bigger and more usable. Capping off the project is the playground restoration."

Byer added, "Unfortunately,

ash trees were infested and had to be removed to avoid toppling. We're grateful to National Grid for donating replacement sugar maples to provide welcome shade."

Belland, Byer and Byrne expressed appreciation to additional contributing organizations. Shawn's Landscaping helped with money-saving practices and provided good ideas. Unilock from Uxbridge donated pavers and provided blocks at cost. The Highway and Fire Departments installed a boat ramp from which paddlers can launch. The Highway Department added curbing and catch basins to help protect the water quality from runoff.

Town officials say residents can help by not using fertilizer because it ends up in the water system, creating unsafe conditions.

With events from cardboard boat races, concerts, and movie nights to recreational swimming and lessons, in addition to being a pleasant spot for meeting neighbors and friends, the pond and beach are a key part of the community.

"We expect the results of this project will make it even more so," Belland said.

Located at 45 Taft Ave., the town beach has free parking plus a snack stand. Hours are 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. For admission fees and more information, visit mendonma.gov/beach. For swim lessons, visit mendonma.gov/swim-lessons. For recreational programs, visit mendonma.gov/kids.



Before and after views of Mendon town beach wall, steps, grading, lawn, and trees that were restored as part of the project started in 2022 and completed in July 2023. Photo credit Dan Byer, courtesy of the Town of Mendon

Did you know...

In the 1960s, AJ Byrne's father was one of the earliest town beach directors, and for a short time after their move to Mendon, the family of six lived in the "house" at the beach.

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Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park and ValleyCAST to host annual World War II Program in August

Commemorate the Blackstone Valley's involvement in World War II during a special program this summer.

The Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park and ValleyCAST will present an informative and interactive afternoon of history at the Whitin Mill in Whitinsville, MA, on Sunday, August 13, from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Program will be presented in partnership with Open Sky Community Services.

During the 1940s, many workers in the Blackstone Valley mobilized to contribute to the war effort. In historic Whitinsville, MA, the Whitin Machine Works was transformed by the war, with changes in personnel and in the manufacturing focus. Come to the Whitin Mill to explore exhibits on manufacturing, see uniforms from the 1940s,

and listen to The Company Bees (2 – 3 p.m.) a duo who will perform music from the era. Rangers and partners will offer short lectures at 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. inside the Singh Theater. Free, drop-in activities will be available for kids throughout the day, offered by Battleship Cove.

This event will also include a station with information on America the Beautiful and Federal Recreational Land passes. Rangers will be onsite to distribute passes for eligible veterans and active-duty military personnel.

The Whitin Mill is located at 30-70 Douglas Road, Whitinsville. There will be plenty of free parking and accessible spaces. Event is free and open to all.

For details and more information, visit bit.ly/NPS_WWI-Program



On August 13, the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park and ValleyCAST will present an informative and interactive afternoon of history at the Whitin Mill. Courtesy photo

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Circus Days coming to Mendon

On Tuesday, July 18, and Wednesday, July 19, the Mendon Lions Club will sponsor The Zerbini Family Circus for two shows at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

The colorful Big Top tent will be located at the corner of Route 16 and North Ave. The show is a one-ring presentation featuring a Liberty horse act, amazing trained dogs and rounds out with acrobats, aerialists, jugglers and of course crazy

clown antics.

Advanced discount tickets are on sale at Willowbrook Restaurant and Charles River Bank in Mendon. Advanced prices are \$15 kids, under age 2 are free. Tickets sold at the box office will be \$18. Parking will be free at Clough School and the town field off North Ave. All proceeds will go to the Lions Scholarship fund and other Lions charities.

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Financial advisor Mark Freeman is a portfolio problem solver

By Christie Vogt
Contributing Writer

When work travel became too much for Mark Freeman and his family, he decided it was time to make his hobby his new career. “My mom was a CPA, and she got me into investing right out of college,” he explains. “From my 20s on, I was spending up to two hours a day on Yahoo Finance.” That passion paid off with Freeman finding the perfect professional fit as a financial advisor with Edward Jones. “It’s a job I love doing,” he says.

Prior to his career in finance, Freeman worked as a mechanical engineer and later as a software sales representative. “When I was in sales, I was encouraged to move on quickly after making a sale, and I didn’t enjoy that because I wanted to develop relationships with clients,” he says. “As a financial advisor, this job requires you to understand people and really develop a connection with them so you can provide individualized advice.”

Freeman says that when it comes to personal finance,

“a lot of people struggle with trying to figure out how to achieve everything.” They might already be putting away some money for retirement, for example, but soon additional factors come into play. “They start thinking: ‘How do I pay for college? How do I get a bigger house? And how do these things affect each other?’” Freeman explains. “The problem starts getting more complex, and that’s where I come in and start identifying what’s really important to them and putting a plan together to help them achieve their goals.”

With many local financial advisors to choose from, Freeman says his engineering background makes him unique. “I’m always asking ‘Why?’ and I’m always asking what can go wrong,” he says. “When I was an engineer, I used to create predictive equations based on looking at how things performed in the past. And that’s what I’m doing now with people’s portfolios.”

Edward Jones as a company also stands out among its com-

Business spotlight

petitors, Freeman says. “When I was interviewing with other companies, they spoke more about what was in it for advisors versus clients. Edward Jones, by contrast, spoke more about how its services benefit clients, and that was important to me.” Freeman notes, for example, that he is transparent with clients about anything that will cost money up front, and he might work with someone for years before receiving compensation himself.

Integrity is especially meaningful to Freeman given his community connections. He lives in nearby Holliston and his office is in Hopkinton. “I love the local community,” he says. “I’m also glad to sponsor organizations like the HCA Arts Center and to be a director on the board at Project Just Because.”

Freeman insists on crediting his wife when it comes to his



Mark Freeman lives in Holliston with his wife and daughters. Courtesy photo

success as an advisor and father. “She is the smartest person I know and has really helped me and our daughters through everything,” he says. “Raising kids is challenging, especially with us both having demanding jobs, but we’ve been able to balance it because of how smart and intuitive she is.”

Money is one of the biggest things people argue about in relationships, Freeman says.

“So, my job is to eliminate that.” Whether it’s saving for retirement or buying a first home, Freeman concludes that it all comes down to one thing: “I’m giving them advice to reduce stress in their life.”

For more information, contact Mark Freeman at 508-293-4017 or email Mark.Freeman@edwardjones.com.

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Mendon Senior Center news: July/August

Great News!

The Mendon Council on Aging and the Friends of Mendon Elders would like to say thank you to all the folks that attended Mendon's Annual Town Meeting and voted YES to our next step forward in our quest for the Mendon Senior Center Expansion. It was great to see so many familiar faces, and to get the positive result. Stay tuned for more information.

Calling all Cribbage Players!

We have moved our weekly Cribbage day and time. Cribbage will now meet on Wednesday at 9:45 a.m. Join us whether you are a seasoned pro or a novice. We love to see new faces.

Bocce Anyone?

The Mendon Senior Center bocce court is available for use. Call director Amy Wilson Kent at 508-478-6175 to reserve a time. Bring your own balls or ask to borrow ours. Special thank you to Warren Goodnow for maintaining the court.

Qigong Summer Workshop Sessions with Crystal Bowl Meditation by Faith Kennedy Wednesday, July 12, 26 & August 30 - 10 a.m.

Have you heard of Qigong? Qigong (pronounced Chee-gong) according to instructor Faith Kennedy is "meditation in motion." The Mendon Senior Center is pleased to offer summer workshops of this popular fitness program. It utilizes gentle stretching and breathing exer-

cises. Upon finishing this class students will feel relaxed yet energized. Faith will then offer crystal bowl therapy. Crystal bowl sound therapy is an ancient practice in which sound healers produce different sound frequencies with quartz crystal singing bowls to restore balance and harmony in the body. Participants will be seated for the majority of the class. The Friends of Mendon Elders Inc. is generously sponsoring these workshops. Space is limited. Please stop by the center or call Melissa Rezek at 508-478-6175 to register.

The COA Summer Cook-out/Eat-In Wednesday, July 19 - 12 p.m.

Join us at the Senior Center for a good old-fashioned cook-out prepared and served by the Mendon Council on Aging members and volunteers. We'll have hamburgers, hot dogs, summer side dishes, and all the fixings. The cookout is free, sponsored by the COA, but seating is limited. Please call or sign-up at the Senior Center, we'd love to see you.

The Senior Tea - Sunday, July 30 - 2 p.m.

The Council on Aging and Friends of Mendon Elders will be co-hosting a special reception honoring Mendon residents and senior center members aged 85 and older. Our afternoon tea will feature dessert and beverages along with beautiful piano music played by our own COA board

member Earl Pearlman. Save the date, and please call the Senior Center if you have not received your invitation by mid-July.

Silent Movie Performance Wednesday, August 2 - 1 p.m.

Thank you Friends of Mendon Elders for sponsoring this unique program. Join us on August 2 when Richard Hughes returns to the Mendon Senior Center presenting a real crowd pleaser: Harold Lloyd's comedy-romantic-action movie "Safety Last" with live musical accompaniment by Hughes. Pianist Hughes "adds a third dimension of Mood Music to the very best films of the 'Golden Age of Silent Movies.'" Please call 508-478-6175 or stop by the Mendon Senior Center to register for this free program.

Transportation Services -

The Senior Center van is currently available to offer transportation to Mendon residents, age 60 and over and to people with disabilities Mondays through Thursday for local medical appointments, shopping and errands and rides to and from Senior Center activities. No reason to stay home this summer. We have A/C on the Van and in the Senior Center. Come on down and beat the heat. The requested donation for round trip rides in town is one dollar and out of town rides, four dollars. Van passes or Vanbucks are available for a donation of ten dollars

to the Friends of Mendon Elders allowing for twelve in town rides. No senior or person with disabilities will be denied a ride due to the inability to pay the requested donation. Vanbucks will make the perfect birthday or thinking of you gift and can also be purchased to be donated to someone in financial need. Please call the Senior Center at two business days in advance to schedule a ride. Greater notice is, however, recommended as we book up quickly. Thank you.

For the general population: ATTENTION SNAP MEMBERS (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program)

Did you know that as a SNAP participant you automatically qualify for the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)? When you spend SNAP dollars on farm fresh fruits and vegetables at participating HIP retailers an equal amount of your monthly limit, is instantly added back to your EBT card. Your receipt will show the amount of additional SNAP dollars you've earned. You may spend your earned benefits anywhere that accepts SNAP.

Household size and monthly benefit limit: 1-2 \$40/month, 3-5 \$60/month, and 6+ \$80/month. Note—these funds do not rollover and you must have a balance on the EBT card at time of purchase. Additionally, if any Mendon residents need more information or if you are experiencing food insecurity please

contact our outreach coordinator Janet Hubener at the Mendon Senior Center at 508-478-6175 to learn how to access the Mendon Food Pantry.

Friends of Mendon Elders News: Friends of Mendon Elders Scholarship

This year's recipient of the 2023 Friends of Mendon Elders Scholarship is Lilly Rezek. Lilly completed 4 years at Blackstone Valley Tech and will be attending Fairfield University in CT to study Nursing. We are happy to help Lilly through her first year of this endeavor with a \$500 scholarship award. She was honored at our June 12 Friends Meeting.

A note from Dottie Garceau: President of Friends of Mendon Elders, Inc.

Our Progressive Yard Sale was a huge success once again. We would like to thank our generous sponsors for their continued support. Their clear commitment to aiding our efforts to provide beneficial programs and services for the Seniors of Mendon as well as enhancements to our Senior Center is greatly appreciated. Thank you as well to our friends and neighbors whom so graciously held yard sales. And to you, our shoppers, we deeply appreciate your participation and support for those holding yard sales—51 in total this year. We are thrilled with the community's response to our fundraiser and thank you all for your support.

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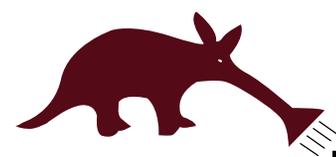


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July Programs at the Upton Community Center

Mediation & Mindfulness: Stress Reduction Class: Join us for a session on healing the body, mind, and spirit using meditation and mindfulness techniques. Free of charge, however a food pantry donation is appreciated. Wednesday July 19. Call to sign up at 508-529-4558.

Mindful Eating: 6-week course to discover mindful eating habits. Every Tuesday starting September 5 at 11 a.m. Advanced registration required. \$25 for the 6-week course. Scholarships available. Call the Center for more information at 508-529-4558.

Health Services: Hearing Aid Cleaning Services: Monthly hearing aid cleaning services and simple hearing assessments offered by At Home Hearing Health at the Upton

Community Center, Wednesday, July 5. Twenty-minute appointments. 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. Appointments book fast. Call the Center to reserve a session at 508-529-4558.

Podiatrist Appointments: Local Podiatrist comes to the Upton Community Center, bi-monthly. Next visit is Thursday, July 13, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Time slots fill quickly. Call the Center to schedule an appointment at 508-529-4558.

Exercise Classes:

- Tai Chi every Thursday at 11 a.m.
- Chair Yoga every Thursday at 9 a.m.
- Strength & Stretch every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 10:30 a.m.
- Special Summer Classes with guest instructor, Shirley Areano, Mondays & Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m.

Social Events:

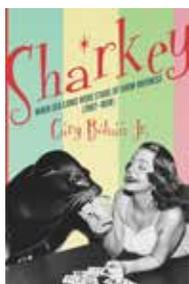
Weekly Mahjong every Wednesday at 12:30 p.m. All skill levels welcome.

Weekly card games like Hand & Foot Canasta and other games upon request. Every Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m.

Transportation Services: Daily Shuttle Service, Rides to Medical Appointments, Shopping, HIP Farmstands, and Summer Concert Series

UCC offers free daily shuttle service to and from the Upton Community Center. Morning, noon, and afternoons. The Center also offers rides for weekly shopping trips and to medical appointments. Seniors can also book a ride to the Upton beach Summer Concert Series 24-hour notice required. Call the Community Center for more information.

Local Author wins Book of the Year Award



Sharkey was published by Excelsior Editions, an imprint of SUNY Press. Courtesy photo

Sharkey: When Sea Lions Were Stars of Show Business (1907–1958) by Upton resident Gary Bohan Jr. has been named the 2022 Foreword INDIES Book of the Year in the Performing Arts and Music category. The INDIES recognizes the best

books published from independent and university presses and self-published authors. Over 2,600 entries were received in 55 categories. Librarians and booksellers picked the winners.

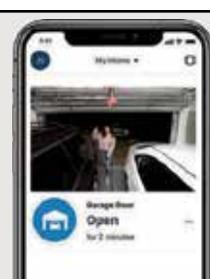
Sharkey tells the compelling story of an unusually gifted, trained sea lion who shared the stage with practically every important performer of the first half of the twentieth century—from Bob Hope to Ella Fitzgerald, from Broadway to Hollywood and beyond. Readers follow Sharkey and his flip-

pered colleagues as they travel the world, with stops at Ringling Brothers, Manhattan during the Harlem Renaissance, Radio City Music Hall, and the legendary studios of early radio, movies, and television, meeting a who's who of showbiz entertainers, sports superstars, and even a US president.

Gary is currently working on a feature documentary *Sharkey and His Pals!* based on his book. Visit his websites at GaryBohan.com and SharkeyAndHisPals.com.

Press release submitted by author.






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Date	Mendon	Amount
06/23/2023	5 Butler Road	\$700,000
06/22/2023	45 Cape Road	\$515,000
06/20/2023	19 Daniels Road	\$700,000
06/20/2023	34 Quissett Road	\$950,000
06/15/2023	14 Quissett Road	\$731,000
06/15/2023	8 Massasoit Way	\$800,000
06/06/2023	23 Tyler Lane	\$977,622
05/26/2023	22 Tyler Lane	\$930,113

Date	Upton	Amount
06/26/2023	3 Kensington Way	\$926,800
06/20/2023	5 Shoemaker Lane #2	\$797,374
06/16/2023	90 South Street	\$925,000
06/16/2023	28 Sienna Circle #57	\$599,995
06/12/2023	24 Warren Street	\$660,000
06/08/2023	40 Southboro Road	\$823,000
06/08/2023	56 Christian Hill Road	\$1.20 mil

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



The house at 45 Cape Road in Mendon recently sold for \$515,000. Photo credit www.zillow.com



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Ants ready to bug homeowners this spring

WPC Pest and Termite Control offers pest-prevention tips to keep ants from marching indoors

Summer is officially here and with it comes one of the most persistent warm-weather pests—ants. As temperatures rise, WPC Pest Control warns that America’s number one nuisance pest will invade homes across MetroWest in search of food. While most species present problems in people’s pantries and kitchens, some species can deliver painful bites while others inflict property damage. According to a survey from the National Pest Management Association (NPMA), more than half of consumers list ants as their top pest concern.

“As most homeowners know, ants are especially drawn to the kitchen and their sheer numbers can be daunting,” said Jim Mazzuchelli, owner at WPC Pest and Termite Control. “Carpenter ants are most likely to invade residential homes this spring, but eliminating food sources can help keep them at bay.”

Of all the U.S. ant species, carpenter ants and fire ants pose the most risk for homeowners. Carpenter ants excavate wood in order to build their nests, which can compromise a home’s structural soundness. Just seeing 3 to

5 ants a day could indicate an underlying problem that might only get worse and cause major damage to your home.

Although ants can be difficult to control once they have entered a home, the following preventative measures can play a major role in helping to avoid infestations:

- Wipe up crumbs and spills immediately
- Store garbage in sealed containers and remove from the home frequently
- Keep food packages closed or sealed and store products in air-tight containers

- A void leaving food out on the counter or pet food out on the floor for long periods of time
- Repair holes or gaps in window and door screens
- Seal cracks and holes on the outside of the home including entry points for utilities and pipes
- Keep tree branches and shrubbery well-trimmed and away from the house
- Replace weather-stripping and repair loose mortar around basement foundation and windows
- If you suspect an ant or any pest infestation in your home,

contact a licensed pest professional to inspect, identify and treat the problem

“With more than 700 species of ants in the U.S., many of which create huge colonies, prevention is the key to an ant-free home,” added Mazzuchelli.

For more information on ants, please visit www.nobugsnopests.com or call 508-366-1820 to set up a free inspection and a free outside treatment.

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John Eldridge was a proven public spokesperson

A common theme of the signage on the walls of Marty’s Kitchen restaurant in Milford encouraged all patrons to do the right thing by standing up for their beliefs. That mantra captures the life and world of John Eldridge, a Milford restaurateur and respected Blackstone citizen who passed from this world on Memorial Day weekend at the age of 79. Above all else, John was a catalyst for open communication. He was a person who served his country well and became one of the most vocal public servants the Town of Blackstone

will ever experience. Those who interacted with him will confirm that Eldridge possessed a strong moral compass and never strayed in his commitment to expand the political dialogue to capture all views. He was a person who maintained his integrity throughout his life while encouraging others to follow suit. As a school committee member and selectperson in Blackstone, he promoted a style of transparency which continues to serve as a model for all. Proud to know him, I had an opportunity to visit with him several times before he passed. Typical of this

humble man, he shared that he was accepting of his health situation, but he wished he could have done more before being called to his maker. He also conveyed apologies to his family and friends that he would exit before his upcoming 80th birthday in August.

John was well known as a voracious and spirited orator. He grabbed every opportunity to convey his message accompanied by occasional flailing gestures. His speaking venues included public forums, town board meetings and just about any conversation. He was a

throwback to the legislative and public speaking environs fostered by Marcus Cicero within the Senate of early Rome or Greek philosopher Demosthenes. Every patron of his restaurant received hot coffee from Nancy coupled with a full plate of breakfast garnished with politics from John.

Blackstone Valley Tech viewed John Eldridge as a culinary arts tradesperson as well as a respected public official. Former BVT School Committee member Art Morin of Milford and student interns would comment on how impressed they were by John’s wide range of experiences. Linking his messages and opinions with practical field-based experiences was just one of John’s techniques for influencing his listeners. Ever cognizant of the benefit of an informed citizenry the “John Eldridge Show”, with its capable tech support by Ashley on local



John Eldridge Show. Courtesy photo

cable, provided another source of inside information blended with data reference for pondering. They do not make many like John Eldridge and I convey appreciation to his family for sharing him with us.

Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District

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Summer Eye Safety

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

We all use sunscreen to protect our skin, but don't forget to protect your eyes as well. Summertime means more time spent outdoors, and studies show that exposure to bright sunlight may increase the risk of developing cataracts and growths on the eye, including cancer. The same risk applies when using tanning beds, so be sure to protect your eyes from indoor UV light as well. Sunlight reflected off sand and water can cause photokeratitis, the condition responsible for snow blindness, so beach- and pool-goers: Take note.

Independence Day is just around the corner. Your 4th of July holiday usually ends with enjoying professional fireworks and maybe even lighting a few of your own in the backyard. Before you light your first bottle rocket or sparkler, let's talk about the dangers of fireworks and how to keep you and your loved ones safe.

Most firework injuries happen in a one-month span from late June to late July. Each year approximately 16000 people visit an emergency room because of a fireworks-related injury, and there are 18 deaths. The number of people sustaining minor injuries not requiring an ER visit is thought to be much higher. The most common injuries are to the hands and fingers, legs, head, face, ears and arms. Sometimes people pick up packs of fireworks at the grocery store thinking they're safe because they're small and don't produce large displays. Often, these are the fireworks we give or use close to children. Consider the number of ER trips these common, "safer" fireworks cause each year. Many of us think the people most at risk of getting injured are those lighting the fuse,

but bystanders are the most at risk. Those on the sidelines account for 65% of all ER visits for firework-related injuries.

Eye injuries caused by fireworks are very common and can have devastating effects. Your eyes are delicate, and any fireworks injury could potentially cause permanent damage. Sparks, flames, smoke, and flying pieces of debris are all hazards inherent in any display. The four most common eye injuries are: detached retina, scratches on the cornea, ruptured eyeball and burns. Any eye injury can lead to long-term vision problems or even blindness. If your eye has been hurt, seek medical attention right away. Please leave fireworks to the professionals and let's all enjoy a safe 4th.

UV radiation, whether from natural sunlight or indoor artificial rays, can damage the eye's surface tissues as well as the cornea and lens. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the dangers UV light can pose. By wearing UV-blocking sunglasses, you can enjoy the summer safely while lowering your risk for potentially blinding eye diseases and tumors. It is important to start wearing proper eye protection at an early age to protect your eyes from years of ultraviolet exposure.

Everyone of any age and any degree of skin pigmentation is susceptible to UV damage. Children are particularly susceptible to UV damage. People with light colored eyes may have an increased risk of certain eye diseases tied to UV exposure, including eye cancer. Some studies show that people with certain eye diseases such as retinal dystrophy may be at greater risk for UV-related sun damage.

Cataract is a clouding of the eye's lens. The lens must be clear in order to focus light prop-

erly onto the retina. Extensive exposure to the sun is one of the major reasons why we develop cataracts. Cataract surgery is by far the most common surgery performed in the United States.

According to a national Sun Safety Survey conducted by the American Academy of Ophthalmology, only about half of people who wear sunglasses say they check the UV rating before buying. The good news is that you can easily protect yourself. In order to be eye smart in the sun, the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends the following:

Wear sunglasses labeled "100% UV protection": Use only glasses that block both UV-A and UV-B rays and that are labeled either UV400 or 100% UV protection.

Choose wraparound styles so that the sun's rays can't enter from the side.

If you wear UV-blocking contact lenses, you'll still need sunglasses.

Wear a hat along with your

sunglasses; broad-brimmed hats are best.

Remember the kids: It's best to keep children out of direct sunlight during the middle of the day. Make sure they wear sunglasses and hats whenever they are in the sun.

Know that clouds don't block UV light: The sun's rays can pass through haze and clouds. Sun damage to the eyes can occur any time of year, not just in summer.

Be extra careful in UV-intense conditions: Sunlight is strongest mid-day to early afternoon, at higher altitudes, and when reflected off of water, ice or snow.

By embracing these simple tips you and your family can enjoy the summer sun safely while protecting your vision ... And if you have a cataract and it's time for surgery, remember that new technologies exist to optimize vision and outcome: Bladeless laser cataract surgery is a major advancement in cataract treatment, is FDA approved and embraced by top Ophthalmolo-



gists in the US and around the world.

At Milford Franklin Eye Center, we offer in-house optical service with the best in UV protection sunglasses. And if you need cataract surgery, Dr. Kaldawy is proud to have been the first surgeon in the area and among the first in Massachusetts to offer bladeless laser assisted cataract surgery. We are happy to have been pioneers of this technology in our communities. We implant high quality premium lenses, with correction for distance, near and everything in between. Many cases of astigmatism are no longer a problem as these implants can now be offered even if you have

EYE SAFETY

continued on page 11

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Southwick's Zoo to host Boston 25 News Zip Trip

Southwick's Zoo is thrilled to announce its partnership with Boston 25 News to host a Zip Trip on July 14, 2023. The Zip Trip will take place at the event pavilion located across from the Southwick's Zoo main entrance, overlooking the beautiful African Plains.

Southwick's Zoo, family owned and operated, is one of the region's premier wildlife destinations and has captivated visitors for almost 60 years with its diverse collection of animals from around the world. Southwick's Zoo provides a unique experience for families, allowing them to connect with nature, enjoy

interactive exhibits and rides, learn about wildlife conservation and create lasting memories.

Boston 25 News Zip Trips have been a beloved summer tradition for two decades, bringing communities together and showcasing the unique businesses and local attractions of different towns and cities throughout the region. Southwick's Zoo, a treasured destination known for its commitment to conservation and education, is honored to be chosen as one of the venues for Boston 25 News 20th Anniversary of Zip Trips. The event will stream



live on television beginning at 6 a.m. and will include interviews with Mendon newsmakers, special guests, hometown teams, and local heroes. Residents of all ages are encouraged to come out and be part of the audience and share what makes their hometown a great place to live.

Psychic Gary McKinstry returns August 12

On Saturday, August 12, 6:30 p.m. Gary McKinstry, a well-known Medium, Psychic and Radio Personality will be making a big return to Upton at the Nipmuc Rod and Gun Club, 88 Fiske Mill Road.

The evening will feature McKinstry's talents in channeling spiritual contact with passed loved ones. This event is generously sponsored by the Upton Bloomer Girls, a 501(c)4 women's charity organization that offers resources, helping hands,

or other assistance to current Upton residents who are in need of additional support.

There will be opportunities to win great raffle prizes and to be singled out by Gary for a personal experience. Seating is limited. To purchase a ticket, call Ida at 508-529-2822 or visit Shear Excitement in Upton or Denise Smith at the Upton Town Hall

For more information, please go to Facebook.com/UptonBloomerGirls1.

DUDLEY

continued from page 1

ham Brothers of the Brush, was a member of Mendon's 350th Anniversary Committee and a member of the Historic District Commission for five years. Russ joined the Mendon Call Fire Department at the age of eighteen, achieved the rank of Lieutenant, and was a member for a total of fifteen years from 1968-1983. He was a member of the Mendon Parks Commission for four years in the 1970's and a Baseball Coach for Mendon Little League. Russ was an excellent athlete—playing both baseball and basketball. In his twenties, he played regional, recreational softball for a Mendon team sponsored by the New England Steak House and was nicknamed "Da Da Dudley" by his teammates. Another nickname from his youth is reportedly "the mayor." During his early retirement he worked as a part-time van driver for the Mendon Senior Center from 2013-2020.

Anne (LeMarbre) Dudley – moved to Mendon in 1966, sight unseen, from South Natick, with her parents and six siblings and began high school. Later, upon graduation from Regis College she taught science at Ashland Middle School. Anne and Russ married in 1975. After taking time-off to raise their family, Anne returned to teaching in the Mendon-Upton School District. She did substitute teaching, taught fourth grade for a year and eventually was a

full-time seventh grade teacher at Miscoe Hill School in the Mendon-Upton School District where she taught for over 10 years. She is remembered by her peers as being gentle, kind and dedicated—arriving early and staying late. Anne was a member of Mendon's 350th Anniversary Committee and a member of the Festival Committee in 1991 – for the Tree Lighting in Founder's Park and again in 2017 for the new Founder's Park Festival Committee. Some may say Anne truly embodied the role of Mrs. Claus from 2015-2019. Anne's knowledge of local history was put to use as a guide for the Mendon Senior Center historic van tours in 2014 and 2019 with Dick Grady and John Trainor.

Russ and Anne continue to be very active in what used to be St Michael's Parish located in Mendon and now St Gabriel's Parish (Mendon and Upton) located in Upton. Both Russ and Anne taught C.C.D. Anne has been a lector and is still active with St Gabriel's Women's Club. Russ is a member of the Knights of Columbus.

Please help us to congratulate Russ and Anne for this well-deserved honor. The Mendon Lions Club will be hosting a dinner on Sunday, September 17 at 11:30 a.m. at the Unitarian Church, 13 Maple St., Mendon recognizing the Dudley's and all Mendon senior citizens for their contributions. Please call the senior center at 508-478-1756 or stop by to register.

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Southwick's Zoo

ADVENTURE AWAITS

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Concierge Physical Therapy opens third local clinic

By Christie Vogt
Contributing Writer

Upton and Mendon residents have a new local option for resolving pain and mobility issues with the opening of Concierge Physical Therapy in Hopkinton. The physical therapy clinic debuted its third location on May 1, adding to its two clinics in Sutton and Shrewsbury.

Russ Berger, the owner of Red Rock Grill & Bar in Upton, is one of the clinic's satisfied patients. Berger, who is recovering from a hip replacement surgery, shared: "Years ago, I was a patient at an office in Boston, and I can tell you there is a difference. At Concierge, they really make sure that you get hands-on therapy. They give you personal treatment and make you feel you have their full attention. My recovery is going very well, and I am sure Concierge PT and the therapy Dr. Terino and staff are giving me has a great deal to do with that."

Unlike some states, Massachusetts has direct access to physical therapy; this means that potential patients do not have to see a doctor before receiving physical therapy services. "Most people think there are a lot of hoops to jump through, but you just have to pick up the phone and

call us," says Dr. Sean Lordan, the owner of Concierge Physical Therapy. "Physical therapists are the primary care providers for musculoskeletal medicine," he says. "For the most common issues, like lower back pain, your regular doctor is likely going to refer you to us anyway, so you're better off going straight to physical therapy."

"We want our services to be accessible," Lordan adds, "so we also accept most health insurance plans. My goal and mission is to help as many people as possible."

The physical therapists at Concierge use manual therapy, targeted exercises, stretching, dry needling, shockwave therapy and other proven techniques to bring relief to patients of all ages. The clinic's emphasis on manual therapy is one of the things that makes it unique, Lordan says. "We really believe in it. We're not the clinic that you go into and nobody touches you, and they just talk to you and give you a home exercise program and say, 'See you later,'" he explains. "We're the clinic where you get hands-on care that changes your tissue so you get better."

Shockwave therapy is another service that makes the clinic stand out. "Shockwave is

Business spotlight

unique in that it is really helpful for chronic pain, tendinopathy, tendinitis, plantar fasciitis, ankle pain and elbow pain," Lordan says. "It's a newer technique in the physical therapy world, even though the technology itself has been around for 20 years." Shockwave therapy can also be helpful prior to receiving a cortisone shot as it helps stimulate the healing process, he says.

In addition to its specialized techniques, Lordan says Concierge focuses on building relationships. "The connection and trust piece is so important," he says, "because we want to be able to guide people throughout their whole lives as different aches and pains arise."

When Lordan interviews prospective therapists for his clinics, he always asks how many return patients they have. "It's important because that means they're delivering value," he says. "They're making lives better."

Knowing that his team is helping people is what gets Lordan out of bed each day. "I've worked with professional



athletes and Olympic athletes, but what really makes me tick is when I fix people," he says. "When I see somebody six months later, and they're like, 'Hey, you fixed my low back pain, and because of you, my

life is better' — that's a pretty cool feeling."

To learn more, visit conciergephysicaltherapy.com or call 978-517-4500.

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EYE SAFETY

continued from page 9

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Mendon's summer reading program offers fun for everyone

By Linda Chuss

The summer reading program at the Taft Public Library stands out for its participants and unique activities. It offers incentives for reading, not just for children on school vacation but for adults too. Children's Librarian Tara Windsor added the adult component in 2016. Last year, over 200 people registered, the majority being adults. Participation in the program is free for all residents who register.

Activities include "Read Around Town," where a special guest reads stories to children at places like the Southwick Zoo

and the police station. Then there are fun contests like the popular cookie-stacking event and the rubber duckie race which is new this year.

"Libraries have evolved beyond just books," said Windsor. "We see ours as a community center for people to gather. The programs bring people together."

While the entertainment aspect may be a draw, participants also learn. As many can attest, stacking Oreos isn't as easy as expected, given the event is held outdoors and the cream can get warm, expand and melt causing stacks to shift and topple.

Friendly rivalries at the annual cardboard boat race drive residents and town department colleagues to pore over online articles about constructing and piloting the vessels they will ride in. The worm race, started by Library Director Andrew Jenrich, has even the squeamish intensely observing their own contestants as they name the worms and watch them advance to the finish line.

Weekly incentives are available for anyone who logs at least three hours of reading.

"All materials count, from newspapers and cookbooks to books read aloud," said Wind-



In the Children's Collection are materials for the "Find Your Voice" summer reading program and the evident enthusiasm of Library Director Andrew Jenrich and Children's Librarian Tara Windsor. Courtesy photo

sor. "Children up to Grade 4 can pick from the prize chest. Students in Grades 5 to 12 earn a gift card to places like the Muffin House. Adults can enter a weekly raffle drawing. Anyone completing 21 or more hours by August 11 can enter the end-of-summer drawing. As added incentive, Facebook followers can post about what they or their children are reading for a chance to win a weekly gift card to JJ's Ice Cream. Grateful acknowledgement goes to the Friends of the Library for their support."

Gretchen Tatch shared about her child's experience. "Our 8-year-old has always enjoyed being read to and loves going to our library. The summer reading program adds another level of excitement! By keeping track, she can see her time add up. An added bonus is picking her prize for each badge she earns."

To register or more information, including the current event calendar, visit the Taft Public Library at 29 North Avenue or at www.taftpubliclibrary.org.



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MILESTONE

continued from page 1

Student Services, delivered the benediction. Then, graduates Mason Day of Hopedale and Luke Scholl of Northbridge performed "Wild Horses" by the Rolling Stones, followed by several speakers.

Thanking those who helped them on their journey was a shared theme for those who spoke during the ceremony. Katelyn Steele of Upton, Valedictorian, spoke about the positive traits the Class of 2023 possess as 'Beavers,' such as constructing houses, treating sick patients, and engineering solutions to global problems. Isabel Cahill of Uxbridge, Senior Class President, urged living in the present and being proud of who we've become. Hunter Claffin of Douglas, Student Council President, talked about memories made. Natalia Vazquez of Mendon, Senior Class Historian, said our memories influence who

we are and who we will become. Thanks for the memories! Lastly, Maxwell Guyton of Uxbridge, Salutatorian, noted that today is not the end but the beginning of the incredible things we have yet to accomplish.

Assistant Principal Ms. Skye Bomba addressed the Class and took a moment to recognize those who were instrumental in helping our students get to this finish line. In closing, she encouraged the Class to live a life of kindness and compassion for others, reminding them that it costs nothing to be kind.

"Few know the obstacles you have overcome to be where you are today," said Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick. "You, the Class of 2023, are part of our legacy and forever a part of our collective voyage. As you set your sights on your future goals, do not give up on your dreams because real magic happens when you take a leap of faith and believe in yourself. We look forward to celebrating your continued success. Congratulations!"

Eagle Scout Cook built boardwalks and cleared trails at Stefan's Farm



Eagle Scout David Cook with his family including father Douglas Sr. and brother Douglas Jr., and brother Daniel and mother Shelley. Photo credit: Shelley Cook

Troop 132 of Upton recently announced that David Cook was named its 119th Eagle Scout in June 2022.

David's family has long been involved in Scouting. His

grandfather, father and older brothers are Eagle Scouts, and his mother was Scoutmaster of Troop 132.

For his Eagle project, David built boardwalks and cleared

trails at Stefan's Farm in Upton. After graduating from Nipmuc in 2022, David enrolled at Saint Joseph's College of Maine where he plays lacrosse.

Hurley was named Troop 132's 120th Eagle Scout

Eagle project included kiosks at town hiking trails

In June 2022, Upton Boy Scout Troop 132 held an Eagle Court of Honor at which time Sean Hurley became its 120th Eagle Scout.

Throughout his years in Scouts, Sean held numerous positions of responsibility, including Senior Patrol Leader, the troop's highest leadership position; and he earned an impressive 62 out of the 138 available merit badges.

For his Eagle project, Sean built four kiosks to mark hiking trails located on Warren Street and Fowler Street in Upton. He recently graduated from Nipmuc Regional High School and will attend St. Michael's College in Vermont this fall.



Sean Hurley of Upton became the 120th Eagle Scout of Upton Boy Scout Troop 132 last year. Courtesy photo



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Retirees: Talk finances with your grown children



Mark Freeman

FINANCIAL FOCUS

When you're retired, you'll likely have some financial concerns — just like all retirees. However, if you've invested regularly and followed a long-term financial strategy, you should be able to address most issues that come your way. But there's one important action that's sometimes overlooked by retirees: sharing their financial situation with their grown children. And this knowledge can

benefit everyone in your family.

You might be surprised by the concern your children have for your financial well-being. Consider these findings from a 2023 study by Age Wave and Edward Jones:

- 66% of millennials (generally defined as ranging from 27 to 42) worry that their parents or in-laws may not have enough money to live comfortably in retirement.
- 83% of millennials would rather know their parents are financially secure in their retirement, even if it means their parents pass on less money to them.

If you have children in this age range or older, or who soon will be, how can you address their concerns and potentially improve your financial outlook? Communication is the key. By openly communicating with your family about your financial status, you can reduce anxieties and misperceptions. If

you're in good financial shape, your adult children may be reassured that you won't be needing their assistance. And if you are feeling some financial pressures, you can inform your children of the steps you are taking to improve your situation.

One such step may be to reduce your cost of living — the less you spend day to day, the better your ability to preserve your investment and retirement accounts. You may be able to reduce costs in many small ways, such as ending streaming services you no longer use, but you could make an even bigger impact by downsizing your living arrangements. In fact, 72% of today's retirees have downsized or are willing to downsize to reduce their housing costs, according to the Age Wave/Edward Jones survey. Downsizing isn't for everyone, but if it's a possibility for you, it may be worth considering because the savings could be significant.

You may also be able to reduce or consolidate your debts. Start by understanding how much and what kinds of debt you have. Then, consider ways to lower your payments, such as refinancing. For example, if you're carrying a balance on multiple credit cards, you might be able to transfer the amounts you owe onto a single card with a more favorable interest rate.

Here's another move to consider: Adjust your investment mix to possibly provide you with more income in retirement. During your working years, you may have invested primarily for growth — after all, you could be retired for two or more decades, so you'll need to draw on as many financial assets as possible. But once you're retired, your investment focus may need to shift somewhat toward income-producing opportunities. Keep in mind, though, that you'll still need some growth potential to help

keep ahead of inflation.

One final suggestion: Let your children know if you already have a strategy in place to meet the potentially high costs of long-term care, such as a nursing home stay. This burden is certainly something you won't want your children to take on.

By informing your children about your financial picture, and how you're trying to improve it, you can ease everyone's minds — so keep the lines of communication open.

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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'Find Your Voice' is theme of Upton's summer reading program

By Linda Chuss

For the first time, the Upton Town Library's summer reading program for kids will use the town's new library.

"It's exciting to be in this space, with more room for programs and hanging out to read," said Children's Librarian Lee Ann Murphy. "Typically, about 200 kids participate in the program, though since we moved, many more people in general are coming in, so it could be more."

The program theme, "Find Your Voice," encourages kids to discover what inspires them and

what they love, while motivating them to read.

"One activity is decorating a person-shaped cutout to express who you are," said Murphy. "Mine is holding a book."

In addition to activities like bubble painting and a storytime quintet for the book "Peter and the Wolf," the program includes tracking reading time, participating in fun events in town, and earning prizes. Kids can choose which aspects to do. One favorite is "Read Around the Town" where special guests read a story at an Upton location kids will enjoy, like Town Line Dairy

and the DPW. Other highlights are Animal Adventures and a trek at Upton State Forest.

Murphy noted, "A change this year is events require registration, which can be done at the library or online."

Murphy plans all year for the program, and residents like Deirdre Munley certainly appreciate it.

"Both our kids love the summer reading program – the activities and prizes keep them excited about their reading all through the summer, and the programs and events are great ways to connect with other local kids and families."

To participate in the summer reading program, kids up through middle schoolers just stop by the library to register or complete the form online. A folder of materials is provided, containing activities, questions, a reading log, and more. The goal is to read something each day. Based on what is logged, kids can collect a stamp each week, with five stamps earning a



The Upton summer reading program is beloved by all, including Children's Librarian Lee Ann Murphy. Courtesy photo

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prize. A raffle ticket can also be collected for each weekly library visit. Impressive raffle prizes include tickets to the Swan Boats in Boston, a Bruin-autographed hockey puck, and book baskets.

The program concludes on August 12 with an ice cream

finale, courtesy of the Friends of the Upton Library.

For more information and to register, visit the library at 9 Milford St. or at uptonlibrary.org. To watch a video detailing the program, visit bit.ly/UptonLibrarySummerReading2023.

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Boston Mycological Club hosts a Mushroom Walk

The Boston Mycological Club (BMC) will conduct a hunt for fungi in the woods of the Daniels Farmstead, 286 Mendon Street, Blackstone, MA on Sunday, July 23, beginning at 10:30 a.m. This event includes collecting specimens for 1.5 hours and then returning to tables at the Daniels Barnyard for display, identification and information.

There are hundreds of thousands of fungi all around us. Some help trees to thrive, others decompose organic materials and turn them to soil, some are destructive, and some are edible. Mushrooms appear as if by magic after a rain and often disappear as quickly. This talk will be led by Isabella Roversi and David Babik, members of the Boston Mycological Club's ID committee. The BMC regularly searches for Fungi throughout MA and the walk leaders are very familiar with the types of mushrooms you may run across. July through October is the peak season for

mushrooms in our part of the country, so this talk comes at a perfect time. It will be a special opportunity to learn the basics of identifying the mushrooms you find as you explore the outdoors.

All ages are welcome. Persons interested in attending should be prepared for walking in the woods including closed-toed shoes and long pants (familiarize yourself with ticks and poison ivy). If possible, also bring the following items: a sharp knife for cutting specimens off of dead logs and a butter knife or spoon for digging up fungi growing in soil, a basket or paper bag for carrying specimens in, and a magnifying glass or better a jeweler's loupe. But really the most important thing to bring is curiosity! Experienced members of the BMC will be there to lead you and help identify the specimens you collect. Person interested in more information about fungi and joining the BMC may visit www.bostonmycologicalclub.org.

Upton Town Library Calendar of Events

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

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

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

Reserve study rooms and meeting space at the Community Center.

The classroom, conference room and study rooms are now available for use by the public.

Review room descriptions, read the usage policy and reserve spaces online through our website, uptonlibrary.org or call 508-529-6272

Veterans Memorial Playground

The Playground at 9 Milford Street is now open for use, dawn to dusk.

Upper playground is fully open. Lower program will remain closed while the grass lawn gets established.

Special Events

Our Annual Summer Reading Program continues this month.

Special events for July include Popsicle Stick Flowerpots for ages 5-12, a visit from Animal Adventures for ages 3+, a Forest Trek with Park Ranger Viola at the Upton State Forest for ages 5+, and a T-Shirt Tote craft for ages 10-16. Check our website for dates and times. Pre-registration is required for all events.

For more of our summer reading events, visit our Event Calendar at uptonlibrary.org.

Animal Adventures

Saturday, July 15, 10 a.m. A live animal presentation for children ages 5-12 Audience members will get a chance to view and pet various exotic animals in a one-hour presentation taught by an expert zookeeper.

Storytime Quintet

Tuesday, July 18 1 p.m. Music and stories for children ages 5-12 The Storytime Quintet introduces children to classical music by pairing it with classic children's literature. Our presentation will include a musical version of the story "Peter and the Wolf" performed by woodwind instruments.

Mystery of Bird Migration
Saturday, July 29 11 a.m.

With Sheryl Pereira from Mass Audobon.

Some birds are seen all year round, while other are only seen here just for the winter. Learn about why birds make seasonal journeys and what brings them back. For all ages and experience levels.

Library Events – Register now

Please note changed times for many children's programs. All programs and events require pre-registration at uptonlibrary.org or call 508-529-6272

Music & Movement – Select Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m.

Music & Movement with Deb Hudgins will take place July 11 and 25 from 9:30 - 10 a.m. in the Great Room. Join us for stories, songs, and fun. 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 every Friday in July. This is a 20-minute lapsit program featuring stories, songs, and nursery rhymes. For ages

0-3. Pre-registration required.

Preschool Storytime – Read Around the Town, Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.

Preschool Storytime is a 30-minute program, featuring longer stories, songs, rhymes, and crafts. For ages 3-5. Pre-registration required.

During the summer, Preschool Storytime is replaced by Read around the Town, when Mrs. Murphy visits locations throughout Upton for stories and songs with members of the community. Check our Event Calendar for details.

Saturday Storytime – July 8 at 9:30 a.m.

Once a month we offer a Saturday Storytime, blending Baby and Preschool storytimes featuring stories, songs, rhymes and a craft. For ages 0-5. Pre-registration required.

Teen Group – Tuesdays at 3 p.m.

This group meets weekly every Tuesday from 3 - 4 p.m. and focuses on a new theme each month, sharing books, crafts, games, and more. For July, our theme will follow our Summer Reading Program's theme of "Find Your Voice!" This group is for tweens and teens ages 10-16. This is always a drop-in program.

Interested in starting a Teen Book Club? Contact Mrs. Murphy at lmurphy@cwmar.org for assistance.

Kids' Book Club – August 2, at 4 p.m.

Our book club members explore popular juvenile and preteen titles on the first Wednesday of each month. On August 2 from 4 - 4:45 p.m. we will be discussing the mystery title, *Midnight at the Barclay Hotel* by Fleur Bradley. 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, July 11 at 12:45 p.m., and Thursday, July 13 at 6:45 p.m.: *Symphony of Secrets*, by Brendan Slocumb

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



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SCHOOLS

Mendon-Upton keeps the music going

The Mendon and Upton music department had a great year and finished strong this spring with fantastic performances by all of the music ensembles in the district. Audiences were treated to mature and complex performances by the Nipmuc Jazz Ensemble starting in March at the MAJE festival hosted at Nipmuc as well as the State Finals Festival hosted at Norwood High School. Students from the Nipmuc ensembles put themselves out there and performed at the MICCA festival, receiving feedback from clinicians and performing for other schools. The hard working students at Nipmuc kept the momentum going by putting on a spectacular performance of "Beauty and the Beast". All the performance ensembles in the district finished out the year with an incredible display of growth performing for packed audiences at the Nipmuc/Miscoe Pops Concerts, the 5th and 6th Grade Spring performances at Miscoe and the 4th grade combined choruses. The students in the music department never disappoint and should always be very proud of their hard work and dedication. The music department is excited to keep the music going over the summer with its jazz workshop in August and the Nipmuc students are excited to share their talents as they look to travel to Virginia in April of 2024!

A few students in the district went above and beyond in their musical journey, auditioning for and participating in the Central District Festival and All-State Festival: Danielle Jolie, Elisa Plano, Josie DeLorme, Lauren

Scott, Alexis Schwartzberg, Joe Trainer, Sam Mayo, Emma Cotter, Daniel Fransen, Leah Harris, Ethan LaRue, and Hannah Laurence. Finally, the Mendon Upton Music Boosters and along with the music department would like to recognize and thank all of the hard work our seniors have demonstrated throughout their time in the program and wish them luck in their future endeavors outside the Nipmuc music rooms.

Jacob Bigelow - *Umass Amherst - Electrical Engineering*
 Mallory Chace - *UMass Amherst - Animal Science*
 Josie DeLorme - *Holyoak Community College - Musical Theatre and Opera*
 Eva Diaz - *Worcester State University - Social Work*
 Brian Dubowik - *Providence College - Undecided*
 Daniel Franson - *Cornell University*
 Danielle Jolie - *Clark University - English and Creative Writing*
 Astrid Lee - *Clark University - Psychology, Pre Med*
 Sarah Ludwigson - *Connecticut College - Mathematics and Psychology*
 Ally Lukasek - *University of Kentucky - Nursing*
 Sam Mayo - *American Musical and Dramatic Academy - Acting*
 Bridget Murphy - *Wheaton College - Creative Writing and Film & New Media Studies*
 Sarah Page - *University of Vermont - English*
 Chanel Pires - *Study Abroad*
 Jason Raymond - *Nichols College - Criminal Justice*
 Ben Slayter - *College - Mathematics*
 Megan St. Jean - *Traveling*
 Luke Venable - *Vanderbilt University - Economics*
 Danielle Walsh - *Community College of Rhode Island - Dental Hygiene*

BVT Scholarships and Awards: A springboard for success!

Nearly \$7 Million in Student Scholarships awarded

The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District is proud to announce its Class of 2023 Scholarship and Award Recipients.

As BVT's newest graduates prepare to advance their career training, awards totaling nearly 7 million in renewable value are a springboard for success allowing its recipients the financial freedom to implement their career plans across various pathways.

"Some students purchase new tools, clothing, and equipment to launch their careers while others use financial aid to cover tuition at colleges or universities," said Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick. "The assistance of these scholarships and awards set our graduates in motion toward a bright future to contribute as well-trained, educated, and skilled members of the workforce."

The following is a list of the scholarships and awards earned by members of the Class of 2023, including immediate plans for career training. Students are categorized by town and listed alphabetically by last name. Scholarship amounts reflect the first-year total. For more details, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/scholarshiprecipients2023.

MENDON

Joshua Blalock – *University of Northwestern Ohio (Diesel Technology)* – John Lachapelle Memorial Award: \$500, Paul Perreault Memorial Scholarship: \$600, UNOH Diesel Technology Award: \$5,000, UNOH SkillsUSA Silver Award: \$8,000, UNOH SkillsUSA State Competition Second Place Scholarship: \$8,000

Katelyn Cote – *Boston Conservatory at Berklee (Commercial Dance)* – Conservatory Scholarship and Berklee Grant: \$25,300, DTA Scholarship: \$200

Rezek Lily – *Fairfield University (Nursing)* – Friends of Mendon Elders: \$500

Thomas Loucks – *Worcester State University (Undecided)*

– Worcester State University Housing Scholarship: \$1,000

Kellen Masters – *Auto Technician* – James Sochia Memorial Award for Tools: \$500, Paul Perreault Memorial Scholarship: \$500

Amanda Pajak – *University of Massachusetts Lowell (Business)* – Andrew Cocaine Memorial Scholarship: \$1,000, Andy Grove Scholarship: \$4,000, Dean's Scholarship: \$4,000, Director's Scholarship: \$2,500, John & Abigail Adams Scholarship: \$1,575

Kamryn Sellers – *Plymouth State University (Allied Health Services)* – Aspire Scholarship: \$8,000, Bay and Ocean States Scholarship: \$2,000, Campus Visit Scholarship: \$1,000

Natalia Vazquez – *Columbia University (Mechanical Engineering)* – C. Prescott Davis Scholarship: \$54,000, John & Abigail Adams Scholarship: \$1,400, St. Gabriel Women's Club Scholarship: \$500, Summers Family Education Scholarship: \$650

UPTON

Julia Bern – *Merrimack College (Criminal Justice)* – Mendon Lions Club Scholarship: \$1,000, Town of Upton Scholarship - Board of Selectmen: \$500, Upton Men's Club Scholarship: \$2,000, Upton Police Association Scholarship: \$500

Mitchell Depetrillo – *Quinsigamond Community College (General Studies)* – Valley Tech Ed Foundation: \$300

Jack Dunham – *Franklin Pierce University (Physician Assistant)* – Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizens Award: \$300, Franklin Pierce University Health Scholars Award: \$3,500, Franklin Pierce University Presidents Honors Scholarship: \$34,000, The First Unitarian Society of Upton Memorial Scholarship: \$500, Upton Board of Selectmen: \$500, Upton Fire & EMS Scholarship: \$500

Sarah Flynn – *University of Massachusetts Amherst (Biomedical Engineering)* – John & Abigail Adams Scholarship: \$1,714

Elisabeth Gronda – *Rollins College (Business)* – Centennial Scholarship: \$22,000

Sidney Laden – *Virginia Tech (Cybersecurity Management & Analytics)* – Town of Upton Scholarship: \$500

Miah Lanagan – *Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (Chemistry)* – Healthcare Professions Scholarship: \$32,000

Bradley Lyon – *Northeastern University (Architecture)* – College of Arts, Media and Design Creative Leaders Portfolio Scholarship: \$30,000, MSA Student Achievement Award: \$300

Nicholas Nasuti – *Nichols College (Business)* – Franklin Firefighter's Association: \$500, LEAP (Leadership Early Acceptance Program): \$2,500, President's Scholarship: \$25,000

Artem Plotkin – *University of Massachusetts Amherst (Electrical & Computer Engineering)* – John & Abigail Adams Scholarship: \$1,714

Jessica Powers – *University of Massachusetts Amherst (Biochemistry)* – John & Abigail Adams Scholarship: \$1,575

Tyler Raye – *Dean College (Psychology)* – Dean Appeal Grant: \$1,000, Dean Difference Award: \$3,000, Dean Grant: \$700, FAFSA Filer Award: \$2,000, Federal Pell Grant: \$4,045, MA Gilbert Grant: \$2,000, MASS Grant: \$1,500, Trustees Scholarship: \$29,000

Katelyn Steele – *Pennsylvania State University (Aerospace Engineering)* – Academic Excellence Scholarship: \$5,000, MASS Certificate of Academic Excellence: \$300, Town of Upton Annual Scholarship: \$500, Upton Men's Club Scholarship: \$2,000

Brynn Stiller – *Johnson & Wales University (Baking & Pastry Art)* – Michael Drinkwater Memorial Scholarship: \$1,000

Alex Taylor – *Manufacturing Technician* – Tattersall Machining Inc. Scholarship: \$1,000

Gillian Yordanopoulos – *Spa Tech Institute (Aesthetics)* – Upton Bloomer Girls Scholarship: \$1,000

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SCHOOLS

Hello Summer

Eight weeks to tackle proposed projects at Blackstone Valley Tech

It was a beautiful day to be outside. On June 16, teachers, administrators, and support staff at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School gathered under a bright blue sky to mark the official start of summer vacation by waving goodbye to students. There was a sense of excitement, smiles, and best wishes for a safe and happy summer before embarking on their sabbatical.



On June 16, teachers, administrators, and support staff at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School gathered under a bright blue sky to mark the official start of summer vacation by waving goodbye to students. Courtesy photo

The last day wave, held on the last day of the school year, is an annual tradition at BVT. It signifies that another school year has successfully come to an end. While students and teachers enjoy their well-deserved downtime, administrators, support staff, and the Facilities team are prepared to tackle many projects during the eight-week summer vacation.

"It's a lengthy and ambitious to-do-list," said BVT Facilities Manager Robert Dolegiewicz. "Some of the proposed summer projects include: painting

the old gym and the Construction Technology shop; a tank removal project; building new storage and workstations for the Technology department; replacing grease traps in the Culinary Arts and the Cafe area; replacing a dishwasher in the Cafe; planning for a Welding shop update; Central and Business Office floor replacement; baseball infield replacement; circuit breaker testing; replacement of the center of the football field;

and tech server room wall cut in addition to other annual summer projects, routine maintenance, and inspections."

Blackstone Valley Tech will welcome the Class of 2027 freshmen and parents at the Freshmen Cookout on Wednesday, August 16. Freshmen Orientation Days are August 17 and 18. The first day of school for all of BVT is August 21. Until then, have a fun, sun-soaked summer!

Attention BVT Class of 2016, destruction of student records set for August 1

BVT to comply with records regulations

In accordance with state and federal regulations, special education (IEP) and 504 student records shall be destroyed seven years after the student leaves the school. For the Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School Class of 2016, this date is August 1, 2023.

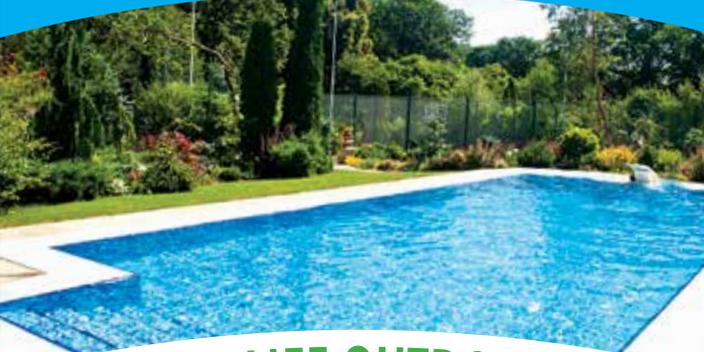
The Class of 2016 may request special education and 504 records before the August 1 shred date by written request. Be sure to indicate the year of graduation, and name while attending school, to Blackstone

Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School, Student Services Record Dept., 65 Pleasant Street, Upton, MA 01568.

Student transcripts (a record of grades) shall be destroyed 60 years after the student leaves the school. For the Class of 2016, that date is August 1, 2076. An alum from that class may request a transcript from their graduation date: May 2016 through August 1, 2076.

If you want to retain your records, learn how at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/studentrecords.

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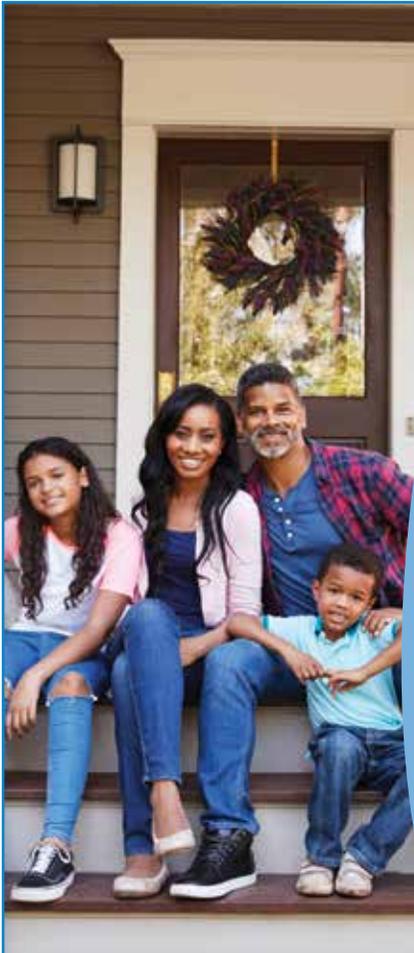
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SCHOOLS

Mendon-Upton Superintendent Maureen Cohen recognized by Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

The Mendon-Upton Regional School District is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.) has honored Superintendent Maureen Cohen with its President's Award for her continuous commitment to its professional development programs.

Cohen has been an integral part of Assistant Superintendent

program initiatives at M.A.S.S. for several years, collaborating with other superintendents to increase program opportunities. She is a co-leader of the Assistant Superintendent Mentor Program, a growing support network for assistant superintendent mentors and new members.

"Maureen is a doer. In whatever position she holds, Maureen is always looking to contribute

in some meaningful way," said Dianne Kelley, M.A.S.S. President and Superintendent of Revere Public Schools. "She is widely respected by her colleagues. Her intellect, sense of humor, breadth of experience and activist approach to address education policy and conditions which serve in the best interest of children is a hallmark of her leadership."

Cohen has contributed to numerous M.A.S.S. initiatives, serving on the M.A.S.S. Professional Development Committee, the M.A.S.S. Women's Educational Leadership Network, and the Worcester and Tri-County Roundtables. She has presented to the M.A.S.S. Executive Institute and Massachusetts Association of School Committees/Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Joint Conference on numerous educational topics.

She also has served on the Blackstone Valley Education Foundation, Blackstone Valley Superintendents Consortium, Massachusetts School Administrators' Association Board of Directors, and the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association Tournament Committee.

She was named M.A.S.S. Assistant Principal of the Year in 2012, and was named a finalist for Principal of the Year



The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents has honored Superintendent Maureen Cohen with its President's Award for her continuous commitment to its professional development programs. Photo courtesy Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

by the National Association of Secondary Schools Principals.

Cohen came to Mendon-Upton in 2013 as Director of Curriculum, and served as Assistant Superintendent before being selected as Superintendent in 2021.

"Thank you to M.A.S.S.," Cohen said. "I'm proud of the work we have done to support Assistant Superintendents through the mentor program and appreciative of M.A.S.S. for supporting the development of our new assistant superintendents. It has been so rewarding

to see the growth of the program and the positive impact on so many of our districts."

The President's Award is given annually to member superintendents for outstanding service to public education and the Association. Presentations were made during the M.A.S.S. Spring Conference in Marlborough on May 25. M.A.S.S. also presented President's Awards to Billerica Superintendent Tim Piwowar, Medfield Superintendent Jeffrey Marsden, and Springfield Superintendent Daniel Warwick.

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SCHOOLS

MURSD recognizes outstanding staff members with Golden Apple Award



Chairperson Erick Brown presents Lauren Poxon the Golden Apple Award. Photo courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District



Chairperson Erick Brown presents Kristen Aube the Golden Apple Award. Photo courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District



Chairperson Erick Brown presents Bill McInnis the Golden Apple Award. Photo courtesy Mendon-Upton Regional School District

Mendon-Upton Regional School District Superintendent Maureen Cohen is pleased to announce that three MURSD staff members have been recognized for their outstanding work as educators through the Golden Apple Awards.

The Golden Apple Awards were presented to recipients Kristen Aube, Kindergarten teacher at Memorial Elementary, Bill McInnis, Physical Education teacher at Miscoe Hill Middle School, and Lauren Poxon, Grade 2 Teacher at Henry P. Clough Elementary, on Monday, June 5, at the School Committee Meeting.

The District began awarding the Golden Apple in 2016 to highlight the excellent work of educators and other professionals who strive to make a difference in students' lives, in alignment with the District's mission, "We empower all learners to thrive." Nominations can come from any member of the community that would like to honor educators and staff members who have gone above and beyond to make a significant difference in the education and well-being of students. The School Committee selects approximately three recipients each year to be recognized and awarded with the award at a June School Committee meeting.

McInnis was recognized for his ability to work effortlessly with all members of the community, both as a leader and a

coach. His dedication to improving access to and efficiency of programs encourages students to be part of the solution.

McInnis' commitment to the District is seen by his enthusiasm and his ability to connect with students.

Poxon was cited for always going the extra mile for her students, and for rising to the occasion when leadership positions are needed. One nomination noted that Poxon is continuously in touch with her students' needs and comes up with new strategies, keeps parents informed of student progress, and is receptive to ideas and suggestions to ensure student success.

Aube was praised for her commitment to providing a safe and fun learning environment. She is a voice for the students

and a passionate advocate for each and every child. It was noted that she is known for incorporating song and dance as methods for engaged learning, and understands that kids learn differently, adjusting her teaching style to ensure that each student thrives in the classroom.

"Congratulations to Bill, Kristen, and Lauren on being awarded the Golden Apple.

All three of the awardees have close personal ties to our district and have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to their students throughout their time here," said Superintendent Cohen. "Thank you to the members of the Golden Apple Award Subcommittee for their hard work, and for bringing forward recipients who truly deserve this honor."

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SPORTS

Bilodeau stands out in sports and music

BVT student is a star in track and violin

By Chris Villani
Sports Writer

Blackstone Valley Tech rising junior Haley Bilodeau has big dreams on both the track and in the orchestra, and so far she is making great strides in both.

Bilodeau just wrapped up a spring track and field season that saw her finish on the podium in three events — the 100 meter hurdles, 400 meter hurdles, and the javelin.

“That really exceeded my expectations because the year before, I didn’t place,” Bilodeau said. “I thought I would just go out there and see how well I could do.”

She capped off the year with an 11th place finish in her first-ever appearance in the Meet of Champions in the low hurdles.

As if that were not enough, Bilodeau beat out thousands of violinists in an audition to earn

a spot with the New England Conservatory Prep Symphony Orchestra and will be performing in Greece next year.

“I started playing the violin when I was really young,” Bilodeau said. “I played sports when I was a kid and my parents thought I was really active, so they asked me if I wanted to play the piano or the violin. I kind of took to it naturally and now I play it every day for an hour.”

Bilodeau has shown a knack for sports as well. She was among the top point scorers for Valley Tech this spring and frequently earned wins in the high hurdles and the javelin.

Head coach Chelsea Swan asked her to give the low hurdles a shot and, in her first time running, she was just two seconds off the school record. Bilodeau later broke the record, and that was the event that earned her a spot in the

final meet of the spring at Fitchburg State.

“It was really fun,” Bilodeau said of the statewide meet. “It was a great environment. I have always wanted to go really far in track and go to a D1 college, so getting that far in only my second year of high school track was amazing to me.”

Bilodeau has not started the college search process yet, though Boston’s Northeastern University has caught her eye given its proximity to her orchestra. In addition to competing in track and field at the highest level, the Douglas resident said she wants to play for the Boston Symphony Orchestra someday. In the meantime, she is going to continue to train in both of her passions.

“I work up more of a sweat in track than violin,” she said, “but sometimes my arm does get pretty tired.”



BVT student Haley Bilodeau is a star in both track and field and while playing the violin. Courtesy photo



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SPORTS

Nipmuc's Ruggiero earns spot in national tourney

Baseball standout is part of inaugural Massachusetts team

By Chris Villani
Sports Writer

Anthony Ruggiero had been looking forward to the end of June for the entire spring. The Nipmuc rising senior found out he had earned a place on the first Massachusetts entry into the 2023 GEICO High School Baseball National Championship and was eager to take part in the showcase of some of the nation's top players.

"I feel like I do better when I play against high level competition and I feel like being around all of these elite players is going to make me want to be better," Ruggiero said from Dallas the night before the tournament began.

"I play summer ball with some of these kids, there are kids who are committed to my school and kids going to Power 5 colleges," he said. "Being around them is going to be fun."

A Mendon resident, Ruggiero is committed to play at Northeastern University and will join the Huskies in the fall of 2024. He joined team Massachusetts this spring after a standout campaign for Nipmuc. The centerfielder hit over .400 with five home runs and showed a knack for getting on base and stealing bases once he was there.

"I usually default to 'everything was better back in my day,' but this kid has got the prettiest swing I have seen, and I have seen just about every Nipmuc player for the past 30 years," head coach Anthony Leonelli said earlier this spring about his top offensive threat.

Ruggiero said he knew he

made the right choice in going to Northeastern when he visited the campus. "I just felt very welcomed there and I felt like they would run through a wall for me."

Going into the national tournament, which was played in temperatures exceeding 100 degrees in the sweltering Texas early summer, Ruggiero embraced a team-first mentality.

"This is not an individual thing," he said before the tourney began. "It's all hands on deck and I will play anywhere in the outfield they ask me to play."

The national tournament featured teams from Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, Nevada, Tennessee and Texas, in addition to the Bay State. The games took place at Dallas Baptist University's Horner Ballpark and were broadcast on the ESPN platform.

Ruggiero said he was thrilled to make the team and pleased with his success in a Nipmuc



Anthony Ruggiero earned a spot on a statewide Massachusetts all-star team after a stellar season for Nipmuc baseball. Courtesy photo

uniform this spring, but he isn't done trying to improve.

"My goal for next year is

just to become a bigger, better and stronger version of my-

self," he said. "Both as a baseball player and as a person."

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